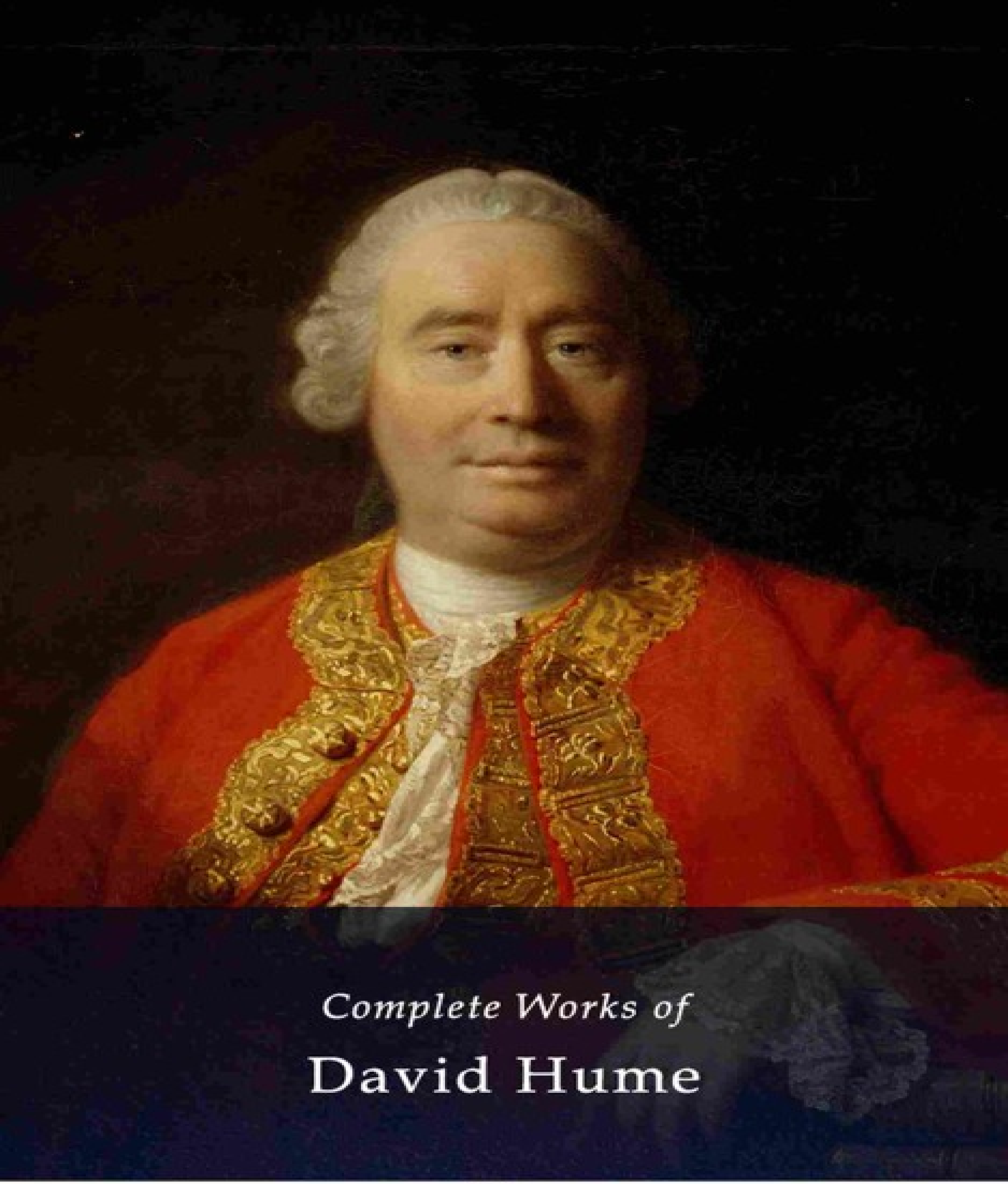

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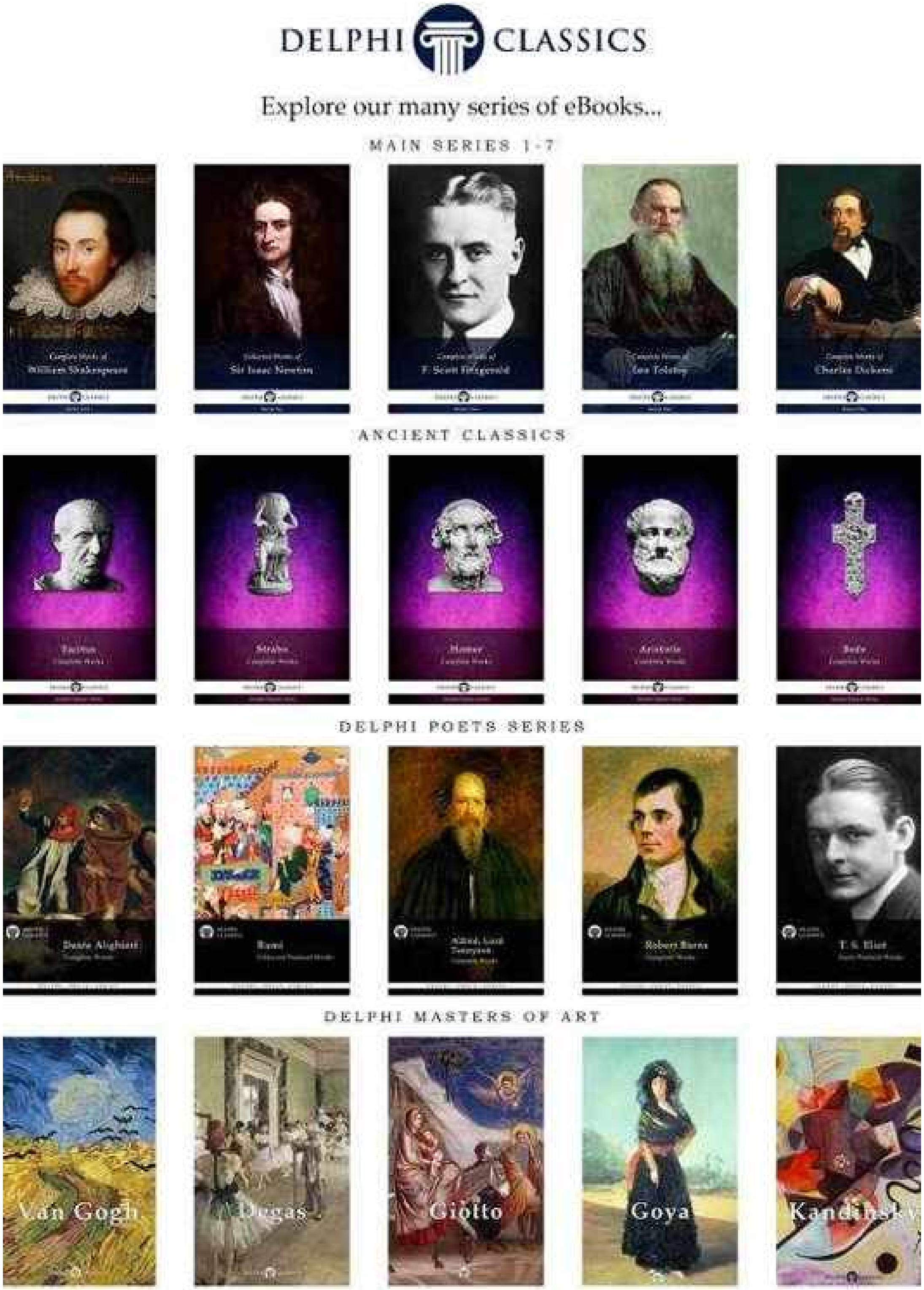
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The Complete Works of

DAVID HUME

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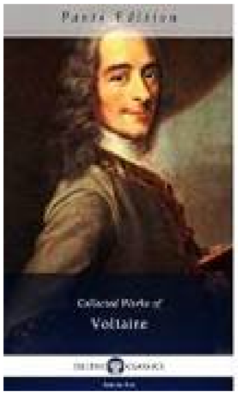
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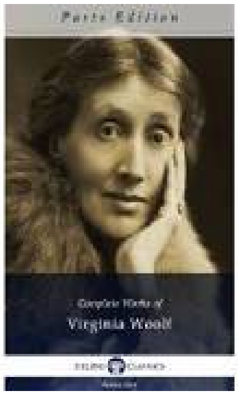
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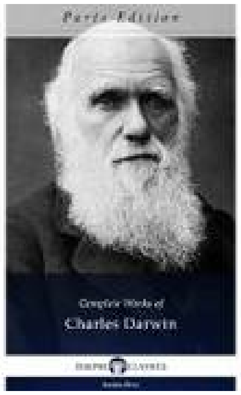
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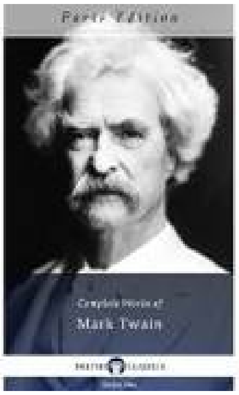
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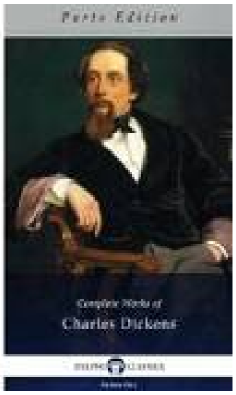
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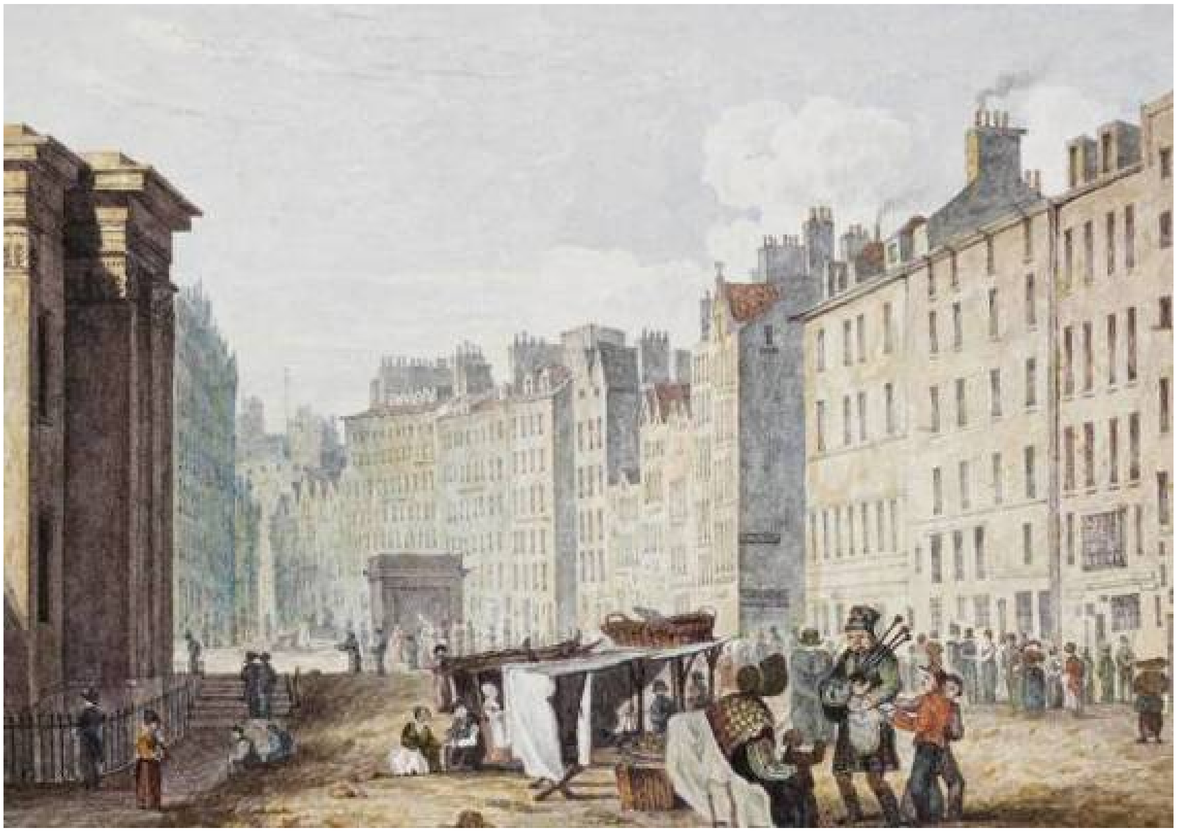
Site of Lawnmarket, Edinburgh — Hume's birthplace. This section of the High Street was rebuilt in 1828 following the Great Fire of Edinburgh in 1824.



'View of the Lawnmarket, 1825', by W. H. Lizars

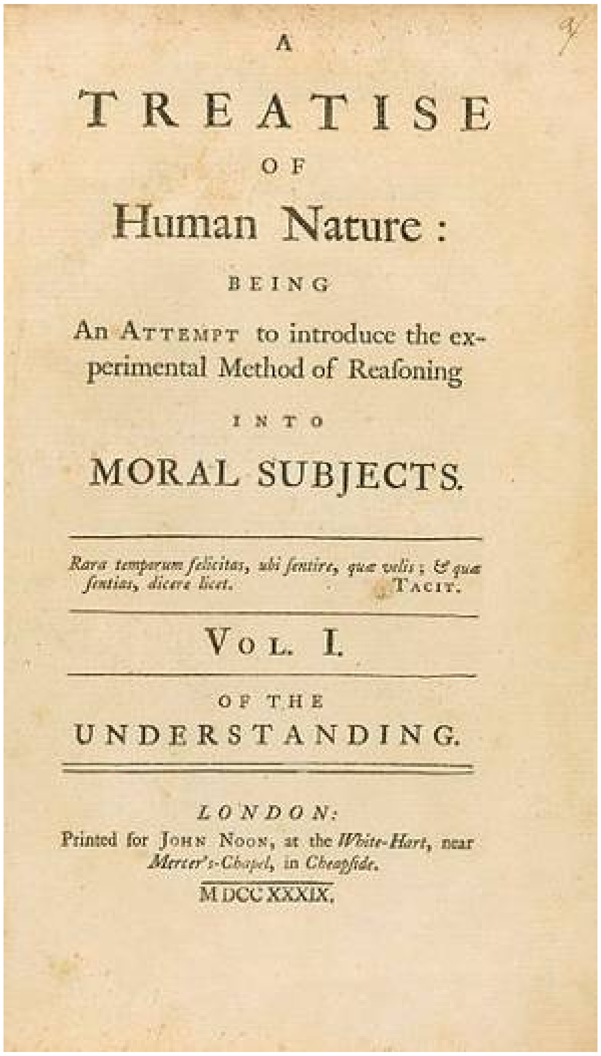
A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD OF REASONING INTO MORAL SUBJECTS

First published in parts from 1738 to 1740, this philosophical treatise is divided into three parts: Book 1: “Of the Understanding” – An investigation into human cognition; Important statements of Skepticism; Book 2: “Of the Passions” – A treatment of emotions and free will; Book 3: “Of Morals” – A treatment of moral ideas, justice, obligations, benevolence. *A Treatise of Human Nature* is generally considered to be Hume’s most important work and one of the most significant books in the history of philosophy, though upon its first release the British public were sceptical about its merits. After deciding that the Treatise had problems of style rather than of content, Hume reworked some of the material for more popular consumption in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748), which did not prove greatly successful either, but was somewhat more so than the first attempt.

The introduction presents the idea of placing all science and philosophy on a novel foundation: namely, an empirical investigation into human psychology. Hume begins by acknowledging “that common prejudice against metaphysical reasonings”, a prejudice formed in reaction to “the present imperfect condition of the sciences” (including the endless scholarly disputes and the inordinate influence of “eloquence” over reason). But since the truth “must lie very deep and abstruse” where “the greatest geniuses” have not found it, careful reasoning is still needed. All sciences, Hume continues, ultimately depend on “the science of man”: knowledge of “the extent and force of human understanding... the nature of the ideas we employ, and... the operations we perform in our reasonings” is needed to make real intellectual progress. So Hume hopes “to explain the principles of human nature”, thereby “proposing a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.” But an *a priori* psychology would be hopeless: the science of man must be pursued by the experimental methods of the natural sciences. This means we must rest content with well-confirmed empirical generalisations, forever ignorant of “the ultimate original qualities of human nature”. And in the absence of controlled experiments, we are left to “glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men’s behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures.”

In the first book, Hume opens with the argument that each simple idea is derived from a simple impression, so that all our ideas are ultimately derived from experience: thus Hume accepts concept empiricism and rejects the purely intellectual and innate ideas found in rationalist philosophy. His doctrine draws on two important distinctions: between impressions (the forceful perceptions found in experience, “all our sensations, passions and emotions”) and ideas (the faint perceptions found in “thinking and reasoning”), and between complex perceptions (which can be distinguished into simpler parts) and simple perceptions (which cannot). Our complex ideas, he acknowledges, may not directly correspond to anything in experience (e.g., we can form the complex idea of a heavenly city). But each simple idea directly corresponds to a simple impression resembling it — and this regular correspondence suggests that the two are causally connected. Since the simple impressions come before the simple ideas, and since those without functioning senses end up lacking the corresponding ideas, Hume concludes that simple ideas must be derived from simple impressions.


A

TREATISE

OF

Human Nature:

BEING

An ATTEMPT to introduce the experimental Method of Reaſoning

INTO

MORAL SUBJECTS.

Rara temporum felicitas, ubi ſentire, quæ velis; & quæ ſentias, dicere licet. TACIT.

VOL. I.

OF THE

UNDERSTANDING.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN NOON, at the *White-Hart*, near
Mercer's-Chapel, in *Cheapſide*.

MDCCXXXIX.

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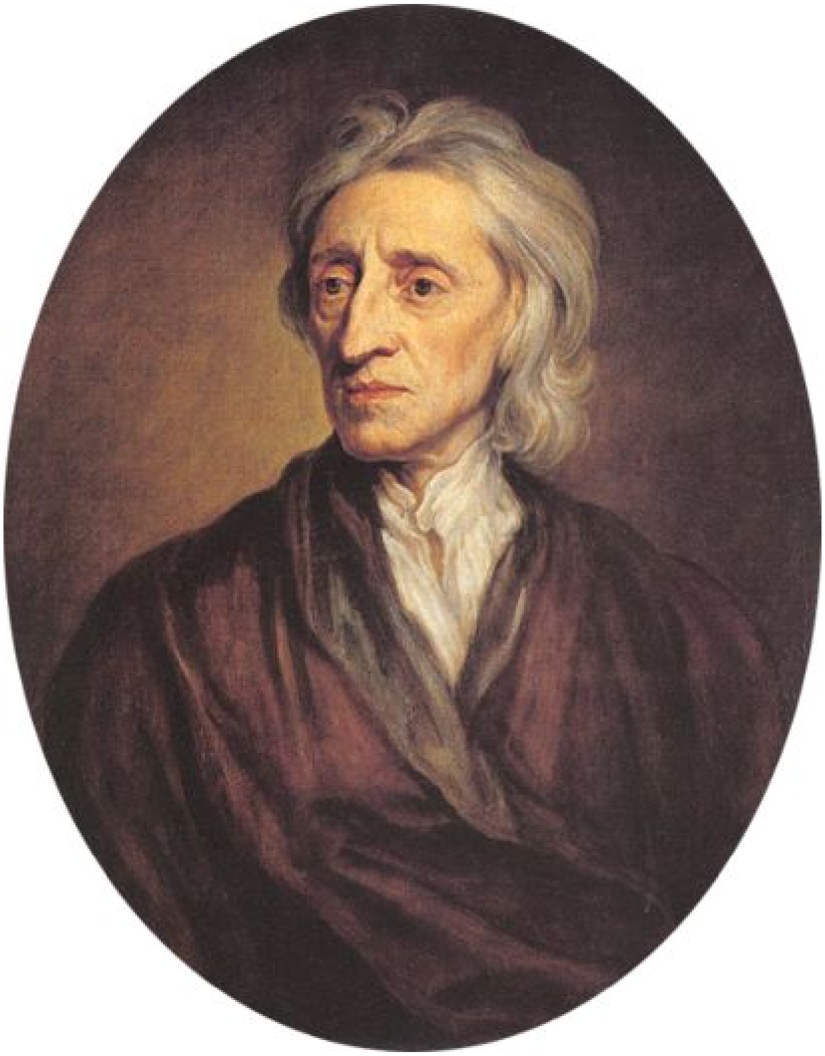

John Locke (1632-1704) was an English philosopher and physician, widely regarded as one of the most influential of Enlightenment thinkers and commonly known as the "Father of Liberalism". Locke's theory of mind is often cited as the origin of modern conceptions of identity and the self, figuring prominently in the work of later philosophers such as Hume, Rousseau and Kant.

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My design in the present work is sufficiently explained in the Introduction. The reader must only observe, that all the subjects I have there planned out to myself, are not treated of in these two volumes. The subjects of the Understanding and Passions make a compleat chain of reasoning by themselves; and I was willing to take advantage of this natural division, in order to try the taste of the public. If I have the good fortune to meet with success, I shall proceed to the examination of Morals, Politics, and Criticism; which will compleat this Treatise of Human Nature. The approbation of the public I consider as the greatest reward of my labours; but am determined to regard its judgment, whatever it be, as my best instruction.

INTRODUCTION.

Nothing is more usual and more natural for those, who pretend to discover anything new to the world in philosophy and the sciences, than to insinuate the praises of their own systems, by decrying all those, which have been advanced before them. And indeed were they content with lamenting that ignorance, which we still lie under in the most important questions, that can come before the tribunal of human reason, there are few, who have an acquaintance with the sciences, that would not readily agree with them. It is easy for one of judgment and learning, to perceive the weak foundation even of those systems, which have obtained the greatest credit, and have carried their pretensions highest to accurate and profound reasoning. Principles taken upon trust, consequences lamely deduced from them, want of coherence in the parts, and of evidence in the whole, these are every where to be met with in the systems of the most eminent philosophers, and seem to have drawn disgrace upon philosophy itself.

Nor is there required such profound knowledge to discover the present imperfect condition of the sciences, but even the rabble without doors may, judge from the noise and clamour, which they hear, that all goes not well within. There is nothing which is not the subject of debate, and in which men of learning are not of contrary opinions. The most trivial question escapes not our controversy, and in the most momentous we are not able to give any certain decision. Disputes are multiplied, as if every thing was uncertain; and these disputes are managed with the greatest warmth, as if every thing was certain. Amidst all this bustle it is not reason, which carries the prize, but eloquence; and no man needs ever despair of gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis, who has art enough to represent it in any favourable colours. The victory is not gained by the men at arms, who manage the pike and the sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers, and musicians of the army.

From hence in my opinion arises that common prejudice against metaphysical reasonings of all kinds, even amongst those, who profess themselves scholars, and have a just value for every other part of literature. By metaphysical reasonings, they do not understand those on any particular branch of science, but every kind of argument, which is any way abstruse, and requires some attention to be comprehended. We have so often lost our labour in such researches, that we commonly reject them without hesitation, and resolve, if we must for ever be a prey to errors and delusions, that they shall at least be natural and entertaining. And indeed nothing but the most determined scepticism, along with a great degree of indolence, can justify this aversion to metaphysics. For if truth be at all within the reach of human capacity, it is certain it must lie very deep and abstruse: and to hope we shall arrive at it without pains, while the greatest geniuses have failed with the utmost pains, must certainly be esteemed sufficiently vain and presumptuous. I pretend to no such advantage in the philosophy I am going to unfold, and would esteem it a strong presumption against it, were it so very easy and obvious.

It is evident, that all the sciences have a relation, greater or less, to human nature: and that however wide any of them may seem to run from it, they still return back by one passage or another. Even. Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of MAN; since the lie under the cognizance of men, and are judged of by their powers and faculties. It is impossible to tell what changes and improvements we might make in these sciences were we thoroughly acquainted with the extent and force of human understanding, and could explain the nature of the ideas we employ, and of the operations we perform in our reasonings. And these improvements are the more to be hoped for in natural religion, as it is not content with instructing us in the nature of superior powers, but carries its views farther, to their disposition towards us, and our duties towards them; and consequently we ourselves are not only the beings, that reason, but also one of the objects, concerning which we reason.

If therefore the sciences of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, have such a dependence on the knowledge of man, what may be expected in the other sciences, whose connexion with human nature is more close and intimate? The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas: morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments: and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. In these four sciences of Logic, Morals, Criticism, and Politics, is comprehended almost everything, which it can any way import us to be acquainted with, or which can tend either to the improvement or ornament of the human mind.

Here then is the only expedient, from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method, which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or center of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may every where else hope for an easy victory. From this station we may extend our conquests over all those sciences, which more intimately concern human life, and may afterwards proceed at leisure to discover more fully those, which are the objects of pore curiosity. There is no question of importance, whose decision is not comprised in the science of man; and there is none, which can be decided with any certainty, before we become acquainted with that science. In pretending, therefore, to explain the principles of human nature, we in effect propose a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new, and the only one upon which they can stand with any security.

And as the science of man is the-only solid foundation for the other sciences, so the only solid foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation. It is no astonishing reflection to consider, that the application of experimental philosophy to moral subjects should come after that to natural at the distance of above a whole century; since we find in fact, that there was about the same interval betwixt the origins of these sciences; and that reckoning from THALES to SOCRATES, the space of time is nearly equal to that betwixt, my Lord Bacon and some late philosophers [Mr. Locke, my Lord Shaftesbury, Dr. Mandeville, Mr. Hutchinson, Dr. Butler, etc.] in England, who have begun to put the science of man on a new footing, and have engaged the attention, and excited the curiosity of the public. So true it is, that however other nations may rival us in poetry, and excel us in some other agreeable arts, the improvements in reason and philosophy can only be owing to a land of toleration and of liberty.

Nor ought we to think, that this latter improvement in the science of man will do less honour to our native country than the former in natural philosophy, but ought rather to esteem it a greater glory, upon account of the greater importance of that science, as well as the necessity it lay under of such a reformation. For to me it seems evident, that the essence of the mind being equally unknown to us with that of external bodies, it must be equally impossible to form any notion of its powers and qualities otherwise than from careful and exact experiments, and the observation of those particular effects, which result from its different circumstances and situations. And though we must endeavour to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost, and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, it is still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis, that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature, ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical.

I do not think a philosopher, who would apply himself so earnestly to the explaining the ultimate principles of the soul, would show himself a great master in that very science of human nature, which he pretends to explain, or very knowing in what is naturally satisfactory to the mind of man. For nothing is more certain, than that despair has almost the same effect upon us with enjoyment, and that we are no sooner acquainted with the impossibility of satisfying any desire, than the desire itself vanishes. When we see, that we have arrived at the utmost extent of human reason, we sit down contented, though we be perfectly satisfied in the main of our ignorance, and perceive that we can give no reason for our most general and most refined principles, beside our experience of their reality; which is the reason of the mere vulgar, and what it required no study at first to have discovered for the most particular and most extraordinary phaenomenon. And as this impossibility of making any farther progress is enough to satisfy the reader, so the writer may derive a more delicate satisfaction from the free confession of his ignorance, and from his prudence in avoiding that error, into which so many have fallen, of imposing their conjectures and hypotheses on the world for the most certain principles. When this mutual contentment and satisfaction can be obtained betwixt the master and scholar, I know not what more we can require of our philosophy.

But if this impossibility of explaining ultimate principles should be esteemed a defect in the science of man, I will venture to affirm, that it is a defect common to it with all the sciences, and all the arts, in which we can employ ourselves, whether they be such as are cultivated in the schools of the philosophers, or practised in the shops of the meanest artizans. None of them can go beyond experience, or establish any principles which are not founded on that authority. Moral philosophy has, indeed, this peculiar disadvantage, which is not found in natural, that in collecting its experiments, it cannot make them purposely, with premeditation, and after such a manner as to satisfy itself concerning every particular difficulty which may be. When I am at a loss to know the effects of one body upon another in any situation, I need only put them in that situation, and observe what results from it. But should I endeavour to clear up after the same manner any doubt in moral philosophy, by placing myself in the same case with that which I consider, it is evident this reflection and premeditation would so disturb the operation of my natural principles, as must render it impossible to form any just conclusion from the phenomenon. We must therefore glean up our experiments in this science from a cautious observation of human life, and take them as they appear in the common course of the world, by men's behaviour in company, in affairs, and in their pleasures. Where experiments of this kind are judiciously collected and compared, we may hope to establish on them a science which will not be inferior in certainty, and will be much superior in utility to any other of human comprehension.

BOOK I. OF THE UNDERSTANDING

PART I. OF IDEAS, THEIR ORIGIN, COMPOSITION, CONNEXION, ABSTRACTION, ETC.

SECT. I. OF THE ORIGIN OF OUR IDEAS.

All the perceptions of the human mind resolve themselves into two distinct kinds, which I shall call IMPRESSIONS and IDEAS. The difference betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions: and under this name I comprehend all our sensations, passions and emotions, as they make their first appearance in the soul. By ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning; such as, for instance, are all the perceptions excited by the present discourse, excepting only those which arise from the sight and touch, and excepting the immediate pleasure or uneasiness it may occasion. I believe it will not be very necessary to employ many words in explaining this distinction. Every one of himself will readily perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking. The common degrees of these are easily distinguished; though it is not impossible but in particular instances they may very nearly approach to each other. Thus in sleep, in a fever, in madness, or in any very violent emotions of soul, our ideas may approach to our impressions, As on the other hand it sometimes happens, that our impressions are so faint and low, that we cannot distinguish them from our ideas. But notwithstanding this near resemblance in a few instances, they are in general so very different, that no-one can make a scruple to rank them under distinct heads, and assign to each a peculiar name to mark the difference [FN 1.].

[FN 1. I here make use of these terms, impression and idea, in a sense different from what is usual, and I hope this liberty will be allowed me. Perhaps I rather restore the word, idea, to its original sense, from which Mr LOCKE had perverted it, in making it stand for all our perceptions. By the terms of impression I would not be understood to express the manner, in which our lively perceptions are produced in the soul, but merely the perceptions themselves; for which there is no particular

name either in the English or any other language, that I
know of.]

There is another division of our perceptions, which it will be convenient to observe, and which extends itself both to our impressions and ideas. This division is into SIMPLE and COMPLEX. Simple perceptions or impressions and ideas are such as admit of no distinction nor separation. The complex are the contrary to these, and may be distinguished into parts. Though a particular colour, taste, and smell, are qualities all united together in this apple, it is easy to perceive they are not the same, but are at least distinguishable from each other.

Having by these divisions given an order and arrangement to our objects, we may now apply ourselves to consider with the more accuracy their qualities and relations. The first circumstance, that strikes my eye, is the great resemblance betwixt our impressions and ideas in every other particular, except their degree of force and vivacity. The one seem to be in a manner the reflexion of the other; so that all the perceptions of the mind are double, and appear both as impressions and ideas. When I shut my eyes and think of my chamber, the ideas I form are exact representations of the impressions I felt; nor is there any circumstance of the one, which is not to be found in the other. In running over my other perceptions, I find still the same resemblance and representation. Ideas and impressions appear always to correspond to each other. This circumstance seems to me remarkable, and engages my attention for a moment.

Upon a more accurate survey I find I have been carried away too far by the first appearance, and that I must make use of the distinction of perceptions into simple and complex, to limit this general decision, that all our ideas and impressions are resembling. I observe, that many of our complex ideas never had impressions, that corresponded to them, and that many of our complex impressions never are exactly copied in ideas. I can imagine to myself such a city as the New Jerusalem, whose pavement is gold and walls are rubies, though I never saw any such. I have seen Paris; but shall I affirm I can form such an idea of that city, as will perfectly represent all its streets and houses in their real and just proportions?

I perceive, therefore, that though there is in general a great, resemblance betwixt our complex impressions and ideas, yet the rule is not universally true, that they are exact copies of each other. We may next consider how the case stands with our simple, perceptions. After the most accurate examination, of which I am capable, I venture to affirm, that the rule here holds without any exception, and that every simple idea has a simple impression, which resembles it, and every simple impression a correspondent idea. That idea of red, which we form in the dark, and that impression which strikes our eyes in sun-shine, differ only in degree, not in nature. That the case is the same with all our simple impressions and ideas, it is impossible to prove by a particular enumeration of them. Every one may satisfy himself in this point by running over as many as he pleases. But if any one should deny this universal resemblance, I know no way of convincing him, but by desiring him to shew a simple impression, that has not a correspondent idea, or a simple idea, that has not a correspondent impression. If he does not answer this challenge, as it is certain he cannot, we may from his silence and our own observation establish our conclusion.

Thus we find, that all simple ideas and impressions resemble each other; and as the complex are formed from them, we may affirm in general, that these two species of perception are exactly correspondent. Having discovered this relation, which requires no farther examination, I am curious to find some other of their qualities. Let us consider how they stand with regard to their existence, and which of the impressions and ideas are causes, and which effects.

The full examination of this question is the subject of the present treatise; and therefore we shall here content ourselves with establishing one general proposition, THAT ALL OUR SIMPLE IDEAS IN THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE ARE DERIVED FROM SIMPLE IMPRESSIONS, WHICH ARE CORRESPONDENT TO THEM, AND WHICH THEY EXACTLY REPRESENT.

In seeking for phenomena to prove this proposition, I find only those of two kinds; but in each kind the phenomena are obvious, numerous, and conclusive. I first make myself certain, by a new, review, of what I have already asserted, that every simple impression is attended with a correspondent idea, and every simple idea with a correspondent impression. From this constant conjunction of resembling perceptions I immediately conclude, that there is a great connexion betwixt our correspondent impressions and ideas, and that the existence of the one has a considerable influence upon that of the other. Such a constant conjunction, in such an infinite number of instances, can never arise from chance; but clearly proves a dependence of the impressions on the ideas, or of the ideas on the impressions. That I may know on which side this dependence lies, I consider the order of their first appearance; and find by constant experience, that the simple impressions always take the precedence of their correspondent ideas, but never appear in the contrary order. To give a child an idea of scarlet or orange, of sweet or bitter, I present the objects, or in other words, convey to him these impressions; but proceed not so absurdly, as to endeavour to produce the impressions by exciting the ideas. Our ideas upon their appearance produce not their correspondent impressions, nor do we perceive any colour, or feel any sensation merely upon thinking of them. On the other hand we find, that any impression either of the mind or body is constantly followed by an idea, which resembles it, and is only different in the degrees of force and liveliness, The constant conjunction of our resembling perceptions, is a convincing proof, that the one are the causes of the other; and this priority of the impressions is an equal proof, that our impressions are the causes of our ideas, not our ideas of our impressions.

To confirm this I consider Another plain and convincing phaenomenon; which is, that, where-ever by any accident the faculties, which give rise to any impressions, are obstructed in their operations, as when one is born blind or deaf; not only the impressions are lost, but also their correspondent ideas; so that there never appear in the mind the least traces of either of them. Nor is this only true, where the organs of sensation are entirely destroyed, but likewise where they have never been put in action to produce a particular impression. We cannot form to ourselves a just idea of the taste of a pine apple, without having actually tasted it.

There is however one contradictory phaenomenon, which may prove, that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to go before their correspondent impressions. I believe it will readily be allowed that the several distinct ideas of colours, which enter by the eyes, or those of sounds, which are conveyed by the hearing, are really different from each other, though at the same time resembling. Now if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of the different shades of the same colour, that each of them produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest. For if this should be denied, it is possible, by the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it; and if you will not allow any of the means to be different, you cannot without absurdity deny the extremes to be the same. Suppose therefore a person to have enjoyed his sight for thirty years, and to have become perfectly well acquainted with colours of all kinds, excepting one particular shade of blue, for instance, which it never has been his fortune to meet with. Let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one, be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest; it is plain, that he will perceive a blank, where that shade is wanting, said will be sensible, that there is a greater distance in that place betwixt the contiguous colours, than in any other. Now I ask, whether it is possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, though it had never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can; and this may serve as a proof, that the simple ideas are not always derived from the correspondent impressions; though the instance is so particular and singular, that it is scarce worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we should alter our general maxim.

But besides this exception, it may not be amiss to remark on this head, that the principle of the priority of impressions to ideas must be understood with another limitation, viz., that as our ideas are images of our impressions, so we can form secondary ideas, which are images of the primary; as appears from this very reasoning concerning them. This is not, properly speaking, an exception to the rule so much as an explanation of it. Ideas produce the images of themselves in new ideas; but as the first ideas are supposed to be derived from impressions, it still remains true, that all our simple ideas proceed either mediately or immediately, from their correspondent impressions.

This then is the first principle I establish in the science of human nature; nor ought we to despise it because of the simplicity of its appearance. For it is remarkable, that the present question concerning the precedency of our impressions or ideas, is the same with what has made so much noise in other terms, when it has been disputed whether there be any INNATE IDEAS, or whether all ideas be derived from sensation and reflexion. We may observe, that in order to prove the ideas of extension and colour not to be innate, philosophers do nothing but shew that they are conveyed by our senses. To prove the ideas of passion and desire not to be innate, they observe that we have a preceding experience of these emotions in ourselves. Now if we carefully examine these arguments, we shall find that they prove nothing but that ideas are preceded by other more lively perceptions, from which the are derived, and which they represent. I hope this clear stating of the question will remove all disputes concerning it, and win render this principle of more use in our reasonings, than it seems hitherto to have been.

SECT. II. DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT.

Since it appears, that our simple impressions are prior to their correspondent ideas, and that the exceptions are very rare, method seems to require we should examine our impressions, before we consider our ideas. Impressions way be divided into two kinds, those Of SENSATION and those of REFLEXION. The first kind arises in the soul originally, from unknown causes. The second is derived in a great measure from our ideas, and that in the following order. An impression first strikes upon the senses, and makes us perceive heat or cold, thirst or hunger, pleasure or pain of some kind or other. Of this impression there is a copy taken by the mind, which remains after the impression ceases; and this we call an idea. This idea of pleasure or pain, when it returns upon the soul, produces the new impressions of desire and aversion, hope and fear, which may properly be called impressions of reflexion, because derived from it. These again are copied by the memory and imagination, and become ideas; which perhaps in their turn give rise to other impressions and ideas. So that the impressions of reflexion are only antecedent to their correspondent ideas; but posterior to those of sensation, and derived from them. The examination of our sensations belongs more to anatomists and natural philosophers than to moral; and therefore shall not at present be entered upon. And as the impressions of reflexion, viz. passions, desires, and emotions, which principally deserve our attention, arise mostly from ideas, it will be necessary to reverse that method, which at first sight seems most natural; and in order to explain the nature and principles of the human mind, give a particular account of ideas, before we proceed to impressions. For this reason I have here chosen to begin with ideas.

SECT. III. OF THE IDEAS OF THE MEMORY AND IMAGINATION.

We find by experience, that when any impression has been present with the mind, it again makes its appearance there as an idea; and this it may do after two different ways: either when in its new appearance it retains a considerable degree of its first vivacity, and is somewhat intermediate betwixt an impression and an idea: or when it entirely loses that vivacity, and is a perfect idea. The faculty, by which we repeat our impressions in the first manner, is called the MEMORY, and the other the IMAGINATION. It is evident at first sight, that the ideas of the memory are much more lively and strong than those of the imagination, and that the former faculty paints its objects in more distinct colours, than any which are employed by the latter. When we remember any past event, the idea of it flows in upon the mind in a forcible manner; whereas in the imagination the perception is faint and languid, and cannot without difficulty be preserved by the mind steddy and uniform for any considerable time. Here then is a sensible difference betwixt one species of ideas and another. But of this more fully hereafter.[Part II, Sect. 5.]

There is another difference betwixt these two kinds of ideas, which is no less evident, namely that though neither the ideas, of the memory nor imagination, neither the lively nor faint ideas can make their appearance in the mind, unless their correspondent impressions have gone before to prepare the way for them, yet the imagination is not restrained to the same order and form with the original impressions; while the memory is in a manner tied down in that respect, without any power of variation.

It is evident, that the memory preserves the original form, in which its objects were presented, and that where-ever we depart from it in recollecting any thing, it proceeds from some defect or imperfection in that faculty. An historian may, perhaps, for the more convenient Carrying on of his narration, relate an event before another, to which it was in fact posterior; but then he takes notice of this disorder, if he be exact; and by that means replaces the idea in its due position. It is the same case in our recollection of those places and persons, with which we were formerly acquainted. The chief exercise of the memory is not to preserve the simple ideas, but their order and position. In short, this principle is supported by such a number of common and vulgar phaenomena, that we may spare ourselves the trouble of insisting on it any farther.

The same evidence follows us in our second principle, OF THE LIBERTY OF THE IMAGINATION TO TRANSPOSE AND CHANGE ITS IDEAS. The fables we meet with in poems and romances put this entirely out of the question. Nature there is totally confounded, and nothing mentioned but winged horses, fiery dragons, and monstrous giants. Nor will this liberty of the fancy appear strange, when we consider, that all our ideas are copyed from our impressions, and that there are not any two impressions which are perfectly inseparable. Not to mention, that this is an evident consequence of the division of ideas into simple and complex. Where-ever the imagination perceives a difference among ideas, it can easily produce a separation.

SECT. IV. OF THE CONNEXION OR ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

As all simple ideas may be separated by the imagination, and may be united again in what form it pleases, nothing would be more unaccountable than the operations of that faculty, were it not guided by some universal principles, which render it, in some measure, uniform with itself in all times and places. Were ideas entirely loose and unconnected, chance alone would join them; and it is impossible the same simple ideas should fall regularly into complex ones (as they Commonly do) without some bond of union among them, some associating quality, by which one idea naturally introduces another. This uniting principle among ideas is not to be considered as an inseparable connexion; for that has been already excluded from the imagination: Nor yet are we to conclude, that without it the mind cannot join two ideas; for nothing is more free than that faculty: but we are only to regard it as a gentle force, which commonly prevails, and is the cause why, among other things, languages so nearly correspond to each other; nature in a manner pointing out to every one those simple ideas, which are most proper to be united in a complex one. The qualities, from which this association arises, and by which the mind is after this manner conveyed from one idea to another, are three, viz. RESEMBLANCE, CONTIGUITY in time or place, and CAUSE and EFFECT.

I believe it will not be very necessary to prove, that these qualities produce an association among ideas, and upon the appearance of one idea naturally introduce another. It is plain, that in the course of our thinking, and in the constant revolution of our ideas, our imagination runs easily from one idea to any other that resembles it, and that this quality alone is to the fancy a sufficient bond and association. It is likewise evident that as the senses, in changing their objects, are necessitated to change them regularly, and take them as they lie CONTIGUOUS to each other, the imagination must by long custom acquire the same method of thinking, and run along the parts of space and time in conceiving its objects. As to the connexion, that is made by the relation of cause and effect, we shall have occasion afterwards to examine it to the bottom, and therefore shall not at present insist upon it. It is sufficient to observe, that there is no relation, which produces a stronger connexion in the fancy, and makes one idea more readily recall another, than the relation of cause and effect betwixt their objects.

That we may understand the full extent of these relations, we must consider, that two objects are connected together in the imagination, not only when the one is immediately resembling, contiguous to, or the cause of the other, but also when there is interposed betwixt them a third object, which bears to both of them any of these relations. This may be carried on to a great length; though at the same time we may observe, that each remove considerably weakens the relation. Cousins in the fourth degree are connected by causation, if I may be allowed to use that term; but not so closely as brothers, much less as child and parent. In general we may observe, that all the relations of blood depend upon cause and effect, and are esteemed near or remote, according to the number of connecting causes interposed betwixt the persons.

Of the three relations above-mentioned this of causation is the most extensive. Two objects may be considered as placed in this relation, as well when one is the cause of any of the actions or motions of the other, as when the former is the cause of the existence of the latter. For as that action or motion is nothing but the object itself, considered in a certain light, and as the object continues the same in all its different situations, it is easy to imagine how such an influence of objects upon one another may connect them in the imagination.

We may carry this farther, and remark, not only that two objects are connected by the relation of cause and effect, when the one produces a motion or any action in the other, but also when it has a power of producing it. And this we may observe to be the source of all the relation, of interest and duty, by which men influence each other in society, and are placed in the ties of government and subordination. A master is such-a-one as by his situation, arising either from force or agreement, has a power of directing in certain particulars the actions of another, whom we call servant. A judge is one, who in all disputed cases can fix by his opinion the possession or property of any thing betwixt any members of the society. When a person is possessed of any power, there is no more required to convert it into action, but the exertion of the will; and that in every case is considered as possible, and in many as probable; especially in the case of authority, where the obedience of the subject is a pleasure and advantage to the superior.

These are therefore the principles of union or cohesion among our simple ideas, and in the imagination supply the place of that inseparable connexion, by which they are united in our memory. Here is a kind of ATTRACTION, which in the mental world will be found to have as extraordinary effects as in the natural, and to shew itself in as many and as various forms. Its effects are every where conspicuous; but as to its causes, they are mostly unknown, and must be resolved into original qualities of human nature, which I pretend not to explain. Nothing is more requisite for a true philosopher, than to restrain the intemperate desire of searching into causes, and having established any doctrine upon a sufficient number of experiments, rest contented with that, when he sees a farther examination would lead him into obscure and uncertain speculations. In that case his enquiry would be much better employed in examining the effects than the causes of his principle.

Amongst the effects of this union or association of ideas, there are none more remarkable, than those complex ideas, which are the common subjects of our thoughts and reasoning, and generally arise from some principle of union among our simple ideas. These complex ideas may be divided into Relations, Modes, and Substances. We shall briefly examine each of these in order, and shall subjoin some considerations concerning our general and particular ideas, before we leave the present subject, which may be considered as the elements of this philosophy.

SECT. V. OF RELATIONS.

The word RELATION is commonly used in two senses considerably different from each other. Either for that quality, by which two ideas are connected together in the imagination, and the one naturally introduces the other, after the manner above-explained: or for that particular circumstance, in which, even upon the arbitrary union of two ideas in the fancy, we may think proper to compare them. In common language the former is always the sense, in which we use the word, relation; and it is only in philosophy, that we extend it to mean any particular subject of comparison, without a connecting principle. Thus distance will be allowed by philosophers to be a true relation, because we acquire an idea of it by the comparing of objects: But in a common way we say, THAT NOTHING CAN BE MORE DISTANT THAN SUCH OR SUCH THINGS FROM EACH OTHER, NOTHING CAN HAVE LESS RELATION: as if distance and relation were incompatible.

It may perhaps be esteemed an endless task to enumerate all those qualities, which make objects admit of comparison, and by which the ideas of philosophical relation are produced. But if we diligently consider them, we shall find that without difficulty they may be comprised under seven general heads, which may be considered as the sources of all philosophical relation.

(1) The first is RESEMBLANCE: And this is a relation, without which no philosophical relation can exist; since no objects will admit of comparison, but what have some degree of resemblance. But though resemblance be necessary to all philosophical relation, it does not follow, that it always produces a connexion or association of ideas. When a quality becomes very general, and is common to a great many individuals, it leads not the mind directly to any one of them; but by presenting at once too great a choice, does thereby prevent the imagination from fixing on any single object.

(2) IDENTITY may be esteemed a second species of relation. This relation I here consider as applied in its strictest sense to constant and unchangeable objects; without examining the nature and foundation of

personal identity, which shall find its place afterwards. Of all relations the most universal is that of identity, being common to every being whose existence has any duration.

(3) After identity the most universal and comprehensive relations are those of SPACE and TIME, which are the sources of an infinite number of comparisons, such as distant, contiguous, above, below, before, after, etc.

(4) All those objects, which admit of QUANTITY, or NUMBER, may be compared in that particular; which is another very fertile source of relation.

(5) When any two objects possess the same QUALITY in common, the DEGREES, in which they possess it, form a fifth species of relation. Thus of two objects, which are both heavy, the one may be either of greater, or less weight than the other. Two colours, that are of the same kind, may yet be of different shades, and in that respect admit of comparison.

(6) The relation of CONTRARIETY may at first sight be regarded as an exception to the rule, THAT NO RELATION OF ANY KIND CAN SUBSIST WITHOUT SOME DEGREE OF RESEMBLANCE. But let us consider, that no two ideas are in themselves contrary, except those of existence and non-existence, which are plainly resembling, as implying both of them an idea of the object; though the latter excludes the object from all times and places, in which it is supposed not to exist.

(7) All other objects, such as fire and water, heat and cold, are only found to be contrary from experience, and from the contrariety of their causes or effects; which relation of cause and effect is a seventh philosophical relation, as well as a natural one. The resemblance implied in this relation, shall be explained afterwards.

It might naturally be expected, that I should join DIFFERENCE to the other relations. But that I consider rather as a negation of relation, than as anything real or positive. Difference is of two kinds as opposed either to identity or resemblance. The first is called a difference of number; the other of KIND.

SECT. VI. OF MODES AND SUBSTANCES

I would fain ask those philosophers, who found so much of their reasonings on the distinction of substance and accident, and imagine we have clear ideas of each, whether the idea of substance be derived from the impressions of sensation or of reflection? If it be conveyed to us by our senses, I ask, which of them; and after what manner? If it be perceived by the eyes, it must be a colour; if by the ears, a sound; if by the palate, a taste; and so of the other senses. But I believe none will assert, that substance is either a colour, or sound, or a taste. The idea, of substance must therefore be derived from an impression of reflection, if it really exist. But the impressions of reflection resolve themselves into our passions and emotions: none of which can possibly represent a substance. We have therefore no idea of substance, distinct from that of a collection of particular qualities, nor have we any other meaning when we either talk or reason concerning it.

The idea of a substance as well as that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of Simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection. But the difference betwixt these ideas consists in this, that the particular qualities, which form a substance, are commonly referred to an unknown something, in which they are supposed to inhere; or granting this fiction should not take place, are at least supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation. The effect of this is, that whatever new simple quality we discover to have the same connexion with the rest, we immediately comprehend it among them, even though it did not enter into the first conception of the substance. Thus our idea of gold may at first be a yellow colour, weight, malleableness, fusibility; but upon the discovery of its dissolubility in aqua regia, we join that to the other qualities, and suppose it to belong to the substance as much as if its idea had from the beginning made a part of the compound one. The principal of union being regarded as the chief part of the complex idea, gives entrance to whatever quality afterwards occurs, and is equally comprehended by it, as are the others, which first presented themselves.

That this cannot take place in modes, is evident from considering their mature. The simple ideas of which modes are formed, either represent qualities, which are not united by contiguity and causation, but are dispersed in different subjects; or if they be all united together, the uniting principle is not regarded as the foundation of the complex idea. The idea of a dance is an instance of the first kind of modes; that of beauty of the second. The reason is obvious, why such complex ideas cannot receive any new idea, without changing the name, which distinguishes the mode.

SECT. VII. OF ABSTRACT IDEAS.

A very material question has been started concerning ABSTRACT or GENERAL ideas, WHETHER THEY BE GENERAL OR PARTICULAR IN THE MIND’S CONCEPTION OF THEM. A great philosopher [Dr. Berkeley.] has disputed the received opinion in this particular, and has asserted, that all general ideas are nothing but particular ones, annexed to a certain term, which gives them a more extensive signification, and makes them recall upon occasion other individuals, which are similar to them. As I look upon this to be one of the greatest and most valuable discoveries that has been made of late years in the republic of letters, I shall here endeavour to confirm it by some arguments, which I hope will put it beyond all doubt and controversy.

It is evident, that in forming most of our general ideas, if not all of them, we abstract from every particular degree of quantity and quality, and that an object ceases not to be of any particular species on account of every small alteration in its extension, duration and other properties. It may therefore be thought, that here is a plain dilemma, that decides concerning the nature of those abstract ideas, which have afforded so much speculation to philosophers. The abstract idea of a man represents men of all sizes and all qualities; which it is concluded it cannot do, but either by representing at once all possible sizes and all possible qualities, or by, representing no particular one at all. Now it having been esteemed absurd to defend the former proposition, as implying an infinite capacity in the mind, it has been commonly inferred in favour of the latter: and our abstract ideas have been supposed to represent no particular degree either of quantity or quality. But that this inference is erroneous, I shall endeavour to make appear, first, by proving, that it is utterly impossible to conceive any quantity or quality, without forming a precise notion of its degrees: And secondly by showing, that though the capacity of the mind be not infinite, yet we can at once form a notion of all possible degrees of quantity and quality, in such a manner at least, as, however imperfect, may serve all the purposes of reflection and conversation.

To begin with the first proposition, THAT THE MIND CANNOT FORM ANY NOTION OF QUANTITY OR QUALITY WITHOUT FORMING A PRECISE NOTION OF DEGREES OF EACH; we may prove this by the three following arguments. First, We have observed, that whatever objects are different are distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable are separable by the thought and imagination. And we may here add, that these propositions are equally true in the inverse, and that whatever objects are separable are also distinguishable, and that whatever objects are distinguishable, are also different. For how is it possible we can separate what is not distinguishable, or distinguish what is not different? In order therefore to know, whether abstraction implies a separation, we need only consider it in this view, and examine, whether all the circumstances, which we abstract from in our general ideas, be such as are distinguishable and different from those, which we retain as essential parts of them. But it is evident at first sight, that the precise length of a line is not different nor distinguishable from the line itself nor the precise degree of any quality from the quality. These ideas, therefore, admit no more of separation than they do of distinction and difference. They are consequently conjoined with each other in the conception; and the general idea of a line, notwithstanding all our abstractions and refinements, has in its appearance in the mind a precise degree of quantity and quality; however it may be made to represent others, which have different degrees of both.

Secondly, it is contest, that no object can appear to the senses; or in other words, that no impression can become present to the mind, without being determined in its degrees both of quantity and quality. The confusion, in which impressions are sometimes involved, proceeds only from their faintness and unsteadiness, not from any capacity in the mind to receive any impression, which in its real existence has no particular degree nor proportion. That is a contradiction in terms; and even implies the flattest of all contradictions, viz. that it is possible for the same thing both to be and not to be.

Now since all ideas are derived from impressions, and are nothing but copies and representations of them, whatever is true of the one must be acknowledged concerning the other. Impressions and ideas differ only in their strength and vivacity. The foregoing conclusion is not founded on any particular degree of vivacity. It cannot therefore be affected by any variation in that particular. An idea is a weaker impression; and as a strong impression must necessarily have a determinate quantity and quality, the case must be the same with its copy or representative.

Thirdly, it is a principle generally received in philosophy that everything in nature is individual, and that it is utterly absurd to suppose a triangle really existent, which has no precise proportion of sides and angles. If this therefore be absurd in fact and reality, it must also be absurd in idea; since nothing of which we can form a clear and distinct idea is absurd and impossible. But to form the idea of an object, and to form an idea simply, is the same thing; the reference of the idea to an object being an extraneous denomination, of which in itself it bears no mark or character. Now as it is impossible to form an idea of an object, that is possest of quantity and quality, and yet is possest of no precise degree of either; it follows that there is an equal impossibility of forming an idea, that is not limited and confined in both these particulars. Abstract ideas are therefore in themselves individual, however they may become general in their representation. The image in the mind is only that of a particular object, though the application of it in our reasoning be the same, as if it were universal.

This application of ideas beyond their nature proceeds from our collecting all their possible degrees of quantity and quality in such an imperfect manner as may serve the purposes of life, which is the second proposition I proposed to explain. When we have found a resemblance [FN 2.] among several objects, that often occur to us, we apply the same name to all of them, whatever differences we may observe in the degrees of their quantity and quality, and whatever other differences may appear among them. After we have acquired a custom of this kind, the hearing of that name revives the idea of one of these objects, and makes the imagination conceive it with all its particular circumstances and proportions. But as the same word is supposed to have been frequently applied to other individuals, that are different in many respects from that idea, which is immediately present to the mind; the word not being able to revive the idea of all these individuals, but only touches the soul, if I may be allowed so to speak, and revives that custom, which we have acquired by surveying them. They are not really and in fact present to the mind, but only in power; nor do we draw them all out distinctly in the imagination, but keep ourselves in a readiness to survey any of them, as we may be prompted by a present design or necessity. The word raises up an individual idea, along with a certain custom; and that custom produces any other individual one, for which we may have occasion. But as the production of all the ideas, to which the name may be applied, is in most eases impossible, we abridge that work by a more partial consideration, and find but few inconveniences to arise in our reasoning from that abridgment.

[FN 2. It is evident, that even different simple ideas may have a similarity or resemblance to each other; nor is it necessary, that the point or circumstance of resemblance shoud be distinct or separable from that in which they differ. BLUE and GREEN are different simple ideas, but are more resembling than BLUE and SCARLET; tho their perfect simplicity excludes all possibility of separation or distinction. It is the same case with particular sounds, and tastes and smells. These admit of infinite resemblances upon the general appearance and comparison, without having any common circumstance the same. And of this we may be certain, even from the very abstract terms SIMPLE IDEA. They comprehend all simple ideas under them. These resemble each other in their simplicity. And yet from their very nature, which excludes all composition, this circumstance, In which they resemble, Is not distinguishable nor separable from the rest. It is the same case with all the degrees In any quality. They are all resembling and yet the quality, In any individual, Is not distinct from the degree.]

For this is one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the present affair, that after the mind has produced an individual idea, upon which we reason, the attendant custom, revived by the general or abstract term, readily suggests any other individual, if by chance we form any reasoning, that agrees not with it. Thus should we mention the word triangle, and form the idea of a particular equilateral one to correspond to it, and should we afterwards assert, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to each other, the other individuals of a scalenum and isosceles, which we overlooked at first, immediately crowd in upon us, and make us perceive the falshood of this proposition, though it be true with relation to that idea, which we had formed. If the mind suggests not always these ideas upon occasion, it proceeds from some imperfection in its faculties; and such a one as is often the source of false reasoning and sophistry. But this is principally the case with those ideas which are abstruse and compounded. On other occasions the custom is more entire, and it is seldom we run into such errors.

Nay so entire is the custom, that the very same idea may be annext to several different words, and may be employed in different reasonings, without any danger of mistake. Thus the idea of an equilateral triangle of an inch perpendicular may serve us in talking of a figure, of a rectilinear figure, of a regular figure, of a triangle, and of an equilateral triangle. All these terms, therefore, are in this case attended with the same idea; but as they are wont to be applied in a greater or lesser compass, they excite their particular habits, and thereby keep the mind in a readiness to observe, that no conclusion be formed contrary to any ideas, which are usually comprized under them.

Before those habits have become entirely perfect, perhaps the mind may not be content with forming the idea of only one individual, but may run over several, in order to make itself comprehend its own meaning, and the compass of that collection, which it intends to express by the general term. That we may fix the meaning of the word, figure, we may revolve in our mind the ideas of circles, squares, parallelograms, triangles of different sizes and proportions, and may not rest on one image or idea. However this may be, it is certain that we form the idea of individuals, whenever we use any general term; that we seldom or never can exhaust these individuals; and that those, which remain, are only represented by means of that habit, by which we recall them, whenever any present occasion requires it. This then is the nature of our abstract ideas and general terms; and it is after this manner we account for the foregoing paradox, THAT SOME IDEAS ARE PARTICULAR IN THEIR NATURE, BUT GENERAL IN THEIR REPRESENTATION. A particular idea becomes general by being annexed to a general term; that is, to a term, which from a customary conjunction has a relation to many other particular ideas, and readily recalls them in the imagination.

The only difficulty, that can remain on this subject, must be with regard to that custom, which so readily recalls every particular idea, for which we may have occasion, and is excited by any word or sound, to which we commonly annex it. The most proper method, in my opinion, of giving a satisfactory explication of this act of the mind, is by producing other instances, which are analogous to it, and other principles, which facilitate its operation. To explain the ultimate causes of our mental actions is impossible. It is sufficient, if we can give any satisfactory account of them from experience and analogy.

First then I observe, that when we mention any great number, such as a thousand, the mind has generally no adequate idea of it, but only a power of producing such an idea, by its adequate idea of the decimals, under which the number is comprehended. This imperfection, however, in our ideas, is never felt in our reasonings; which seems to be an instance parallel to the present one of universal ideas.

Secondly, we have several instances of habits, which may be revived by one single word; as when a person, who has by rote any periods of a discourse, or any number of verses, will be put in remembrance of the whole, which he is at a loss to recollect, by that single word or expression, with which they begin.

Thirdly, I believe every one, who examines the situation of his mind in reasoning will agree with me, that we do not annex distinct and compleat ideas to every term we make use of, and that in talking of government, church, negotiation, conquest, we seldom spread out in our minds all the simple ideas, of which these complex ones are composed. It is however observable, that notwithstanding this imperfection we may avoid talking nonsense on these subjects, and may perceive any repugnance among the ideas, as well as if we had a fall comprehension of them. Thus if instead of saying, that in war the weaker have always recourse to negotiation, we should say, that they have always recourse to conquest, the custom, which we have acquired of attributing certain relations to ideas, still follows the words, and makes us immediately perceive the absurdity of that proposition; in the same manner as one particular idea may serve us in reasoning concerning other ideas, however different from it in several circumstances.

Fourthly, As the individuals are collected together, said placed under a general term with a view to that resemblance, which they bear to each other, this relation must facilitate their entrance in the imagination, and make them be suggested more readily upon occasion. And indeed if we consider the common progress of the thought, either in reflection or conversation, we shall find great reason to be satisfyed in this particular. Nothing is more admirable, than the readiness, with which the imagination suggests its ideas, and presents them at the very instant, in which they become necessary or useful. The fancy runs from one end of the universe to the other in collecting those ideas, which belong to any subject. One would think the whole intellectual world of ideas was at once subjected to our view, and that we did nothing but pick out such as were most proper for our purpose. There may not, however, be any present, beside those very ideas, that are thus collected by a kind of magical faculty in the soul, which, though it be always most perfect in the greatest geniuses, and is properly what we call a genius, is however inexplicable by the utmost efforts of human understanding.

Perhaps these four reflections may help to remove an difficulties to the hypothesis I have proposed concerning abstract ideas, so contrary to that, which has hitherto prevailed in philosophy, But, to tell the truth I place my chief confidence in what I have already proved concerning the impossibility of general ideas, according to the common method of explaining them. We must certainly seek some new system on this head, and there plainly is none beside what I have proposed. If ideas be particular in their nature, and at the same time finite in their number, it is only by custom they can become general in their representation, and contain an infinite number of other ideas under them.

Before I leave this subject I shall employ the same principles to explain that distinction of reason, which is so much talked of, and is so little understood, in the schools. Of this kind is the distinction betwixt figure and the body figured; motion and the body moved. The difficulty of explaining this distinction arises from the principle above explained, that all ideas, which are different, are separable. For it follows from thence, that if the figure be different from the body, their ideas must be separable as well as distinguishable: if they be not different, their ideas can neither be separable nor distinguishable. What then is meant by a distinction of reason, since it implies neither a difference nor separation.

To remove this difficulty we must have recourse to the foregoing explication of abstract ideas. It is certain that the mind would never have dreamed of distinguishing a figure from the body figured, as being in reality neither distinguishable, nor different, nor separable; did it not observe, that even in this simplicity there might be contained many different resemblances and relations. Thus when a globe of white marble is presented, we receive only the impression of a white colour disposed in a certain form, nor are we able to separate and distinguish the colour from the form. But observing afterwards a globe of black marble and a cube of white, and comparing them with our former object, we find two separate resemblances, in what formerly seemed, and really is, perfectly inseparable. After a little more practice of this kind, we begin to distinguish the figure from the colour by a distinction of reason; that is, we consider the figure and colour together, since they are in effect the same and undistinguishable; but still view them in different aspects, according to the resemblances, of which they are susceptible. When we would consider only the figure of the globe of white marble, we form in reality an idea both of the figure and colour, but tacitly carry our eye to its resemblance with the globe of black marble: And in the same manner, when we would consider its colour only, we turn our view to its resemblance with the cube of white marble. By this means we accompany our ideas with a kind of reflection, of which custom renders us, in a great measure, insensible. A person, who desires us to consider the figure of a globe of white marble without thinking on its colour, desires an impossibility but his meaning is, that we should consider the figure and colour together, but still keep in our eye the resemblance to the globe of black marble, or that to any other globe of whatever colour or substance.

PART II. OF THE IDEAS OF SPACE AND TIME.

SECT. I. OF THE INFINITE DIVISIBILITY OF OUR IDEAS OF SPACE AND TIME.

Whatever has the air of a paradox, and is contrary to the first and most unprejudiced notions of mankind, is often greedily embraced by philosophers, as shewing the superiority of their science, which coued discover opinions so remote from vulgar conception. On the other hand, anything proposed to us, which causes surprize and admiration, gives such a satisfaction to the mind, that it indulges itself in those agreeable emotions, and will never be persuaded that its pleasure is entirely without foundation. From these dispositions in philosophers and their disciples arises that mutual complaisance betwixt them; while the former furnish such plenty of strange and unaccountable opinions, and the latter so readily believe them. Of this mutual complaisance I cannot give a more evident instance than in the doctrine of infinite divisibility, with the examination of which I shall begin this subject of the ideas of space and time.

It is universally allowed, that the capacity of the mind is limited, and can never attain a full and adequate conception of infinity: And though it were not allowed, it would be sufficiently evident from the plainest observation and experience. It is also obvious, that whatever is capable of being divided in infinitum, must consist of an infinite number of parts, and that it is impossible to set any bounds to the number of parts, without setting bounds at the same time to the division. It requires scarce any, induction to conclude from hence, that the idea, which we form of any finite quality, is not infinitely divisible, but that by proper distinctions and separations we may run up this idea to inferior ones, which will be perfectly simple and indivisible. In rejecting the infinite capacity of the mind, we suppose it may arrive at an end in the division of its ideas; nor are there any possible means of evading the evidence of this conclusion.

It is therefore certain, that the imagination reaches a minimum, and may raise up to itself an idea, of which it cannot conceive any sub-division, and which cannot be diminished without a total annihilation. When you tell me of the thousandth and ten thousandth part of a grain of sand, I have a distinct idea of these numbers and of their different proportions; but the images, which I form in my mind to represent the things themselves, are nothing different from each other, nor inferior to that image, by which I represent the grain of sand itself, which is supposed so vastly to exceed them. What consists of parts is distinguishable into them, and what is distinguishable is separable. But whatever we may imagine of the thing, the idea of a grain of sand is not distinguishable, nor separable into twenty, much less into a thousand, ten thousand, or an infinite number of different ideas.

It is the same case with the impressions of the senses as with the ideas of the imagination. Put a spot of ink upon paper, fix your eye upon that spot, and retire to such a distance, that, at last you lose sight of it; it is plain, that the moment before it vanished the image or impression was perfectly indivisible. It is not for want of rays of light striking on our eyes, that the minute parts of distant bodies convey not any sensible impression; but because they are removed beyond that distance, at which their impressions were reduced to a minimum, and were incapable of any farther diminution. A microscope or telescope, which renders them visible, produces not any new rays of light, but only spreads those, which always flowed from them; and by that means both gives parts to impressions, which to the naked eye appear simple and uncompounded, and advances to a minimum, what was formerly imperceptible.

We may hence discover the error of the common opinion, that the capacity of the mind is limited on both sides, and that it is impossible for the imagination to form an adequate idea, of what goes beyond a certain degree of minuteness as well as of greatness. Nothing can be more minute, than some ideas, which we form in the fancy; and images, which appear to the senses; since there are ideas and images perfectly simple and indivisible. The only defect of our senses is, that they give us disproportioned images of things, and represent as minute and uncompounded what is really great and composed of a vast number of parts. This mistake we are not sensible of: but taking the impressions of those minute objects, which appear to the senses, to be equal or nearly equal to the objects, and finding by reason, that there are other objects vastly more minute, we too hastily conclude, that these are inferior to any idea of our imagination or impression of our senses. This however is certain, that we can form ideas, which shall be no greater than the smallest atom of the animal spirits of an insect a thousand times less than a mite: And we ought rather to conclude, that the difficulty lies in enlarging our conceptions so much as to form a just notion of a mite, or even of an insect a thousand times less than a mite. For in order to form a just notion of these animals, we must have a distinct idea representing every part of them, which, according to the system of infinite divisibility, is utterly impossible, and, recording to that of indivisible parts or atoms, is extremely difficult, by reason of the vast number and multiplicity of these parts.

SECT. II. OF THE INFINITE DIVISIBILITY OF SPACE AND TIME.

Wherever ideas are adequate representations of objects, the relations, contradictions and agreements of the ideas are all applicable to the objects; and this we may in general observe to be the foundation of all human knowledge. But our ideas are adequate representations of the most minute parts of extension; and through whatever divisions and subdivisions we may suppose these parts to be arrived at, they can never become inferior to some ideas, which we form. The plain consequence is, that whatever appears impossible and contradictory upon the comparison of these ideas, must be really impossible and contradictory, without any farther excuse or evasion.

Every thing capable of being infinitely divided contains an infinite number of parts; otherwise the division would be stopt short by the indivisible parts, which we should immediately arrive at. If therefore any finite extension be infinitely divisible, it can be no contradiction to suppose, that a finite extension contains an infinite number of parts: And vice versa, if it be a contradiction to suppose, that a finite extension contains an infinite number of parts, no finite extension can be infinitely divisible. But that this latter supposition is absurd, I easily convince myself by the consideration of my clear ideas. I first take the least idea I can form of a part of extension, and being certain that there is nothing more minute than this idea, I conclude, that whatever I discover by its means must be a real quality of extension. I then repeat this idea once, twice, thrice, &c., and find the compound idea of extension, arising from its repetition, always to augment, and become double, triple, quadruple, &c., till at last it swells up to a considerable bulk, greater or smaller, in proportion as I repeat more or less the same idea. When I stop in the addition of parts, the idea of extension ceases to augment; and were I to carry on the addition in infinitum, I clearly perceive, that the idea of extension must also become infinite. Upon the whole, I conclude, that the idea of all infinite number of parts is individually the same idea with that of an infinite extension; that no finite extension is capable of containing an infinite number of parts; and consequently that no finite extension is infinitely divisible [FN 3.].

> [FN 3. It has been objected to me, that infinite divisibility supposes only an infinite number of PROPORTIONAL not of ALIQIOT parts, and that an infinite number of proportional parts does not form an infinite extension. But this distinction is entirely frivolous. Whether these parts be calld ALIQUOT or PROPORTIONAL, they cannot be inferior to those minute parts we conceive; and therefore cannot form a less extension by their conjunction.]

I may subjoin another argument proposed by a noted author [Mons. MALEZIEU], which seems to me very strong and beautiful. It is evident, that existence in itself belongs only to unity, and is never applicable to number, but on account of the unites, of which the number is composed. Twenty men may be said to exist; but it is only because one, two, three, four, &c. are existent, and if you deny the existence of the latter, that of the former falls of course. It is therefore utterly absurd to suppose any number to exist, and yet deny the existence of unites; and as extension is always a number, according to the common sentiment of metaphysicians, and never resolves itself into any unite or indivisible quantity, it follows, that extension can never at all exist. It is in vain to reply, that any determinate quantity of extension is an unite; but such-a-one as admits of an infinite number of fractions, and is inexhaustible in its sub-divisions. For by the same rule these twenty men may be considered as a unit. The whole globe of the earth, nay the whole universe, may be considered as a unit. That term of unity is merely a fictitious denomination, which the mind may apply to any quantity of objects it collects together; nor can such an unity any more exist alone than number can, as being in reality a true number. But the unity, which can exist alone, and whose existence is necessary to that of all number, is of another kind, and must be perfectly indivisible, and incapable of being resolved into any lesser unity.

All this reasoning takes place with regard to time; along with an additional argument, which it may be proper to take notice of. It is a property inseparable from time, and which in a manner constitutes its essence, that each of its parts succeeds another, and that none of them, however contiguous, can ever be co-existent. For the same reason, that the year 1737 cannot concur with the present year 1738 every moment must be distinct from, and posterior or antecedent to another. It is certain then, that time, as it exists, must be composed of indivisible moments. For if in time we could never arrive at an end of division, and if each moment, as it succeeds another, were not perfectly single and indivisible, there would be an infinite number of co-existent moments, or parts of time; which I believe will be allowed to be an arrant contradiction.

The infinite divisibility of space implies that of time, as is evident from the nature of motion. If the latter, therefore, be impossible, the former must be equally so.

I doubt not but, it will readily be allowed by the most obstinate defender of the doctrine of infinite divisibility, that these arguments are difficulties, and that it is impossible to give any answer to them which will be perfectly clear and satisfactory. But here we may observe, that nothing can be more absurd, than this custom of calling a difficulty what pretends to be a demonstration, and endeavouring by that means to elude its force and evidence. It is not in demonstrations as in probabilities, that difficulties can take place, and one argument counter-ballance another, and diminish its authority. A demonstration, if just, admits of no opposite difficulty; and if not just, it is a mere sophism, and consequently can never be a difficulty. It is either irresistible, or has no manner of force. To talk therefore of objections and replies, and ballancing of arguments in such a question as this, is to confess, either that human reason is nothing but a play of words, or that the person himself, who talks so, has not a Capacity equal to such subjects. Demonstrations may be difficult to be comprehended, because of abstractedness of the subject; but can never have such difficulties as will weaken their authority, when once they are comprehended.

It is true, mathematicians are wont to say, that there are here equally strong arguments on the other side of the question, and that the doctrine of indivisible points is also liable to unanswerable objections. Before I examine these arguments and objections in detail, I will here take them in a body, and endeavour by a short and decisive reason to prove at once, that it is utterly impossible they can have any just foundation.

It is an established maxim in metaphysics, That whatever the mind clearly conceives, includes the idea of possible existence, or in other words, that nothing we imagine is absolutely impossible. We can form the idea of a golden mountain, and from thence conclude that such a mountain may actually exist. We can form no idea of a mountain without a valley, and therefore regard it as impossible.

Now it is certain we have an idea of extension; for otherwise why do we talk and reason concerning it? It is likewise certain that this idea, as conceived by the imagination, though divisible into parts or inferior ideas, is not infinitely divisible, nor consists of an infinite number of parts: For that exceeds the comprehension of our limited capacities. Here then is an idea of extension, which consists of parts or inferior ideas, that are perfectly, indivisible: consequently this idea implies no contradiction: consequently it is possible for extension really to exist conformable to it: and consequently all the arguments employed against the possibility of mathematical points are mere scholastick quibbles, and unworthy of our attention.

These consequences we may carry one step farther, and conclude that all the pretended demonstrations for the infinite divisibility of extension are equally sophistical; since it is certain these demonstrations cannot be just without proving the impossibility of mathematical points; which it is an evident absurdity to pretend to.

SECT. III. OF THE OTHER QUALITIES OF OUR IDEA OF SPACE AND TIME.

No discovery coued have been made more happily for deciding all controversies concerning ideas, than that abovementioned, that impressions always take the precedency of them, and that every idea, with which the imagination is furnished, first makes its appearance in a correspondent impression. These latter perceptions are all so clear and evident, that they admit of no controversy; though many of our ideas are so obscure, that it is almost impossible even for the mind, which forms them, to tell exactly their nature and composition. Let us apply this principle, in order to discover farther the nature of our ideas of space and time.

Upon opening my eyes, and turning them to the surrounding objects, I perceive many visible bodies; and upon shutting them again, and considering the distance betwixt these bodies, I acquire the idea of extension. As every idea is derived from some impression, which is exactly similar to it, the impressions similar to this idea of extension, must either be some sensations derived from the sight, or some internal impressions arising from these sensations.

Our internal impressions are our passions, emotions, desires and aversions; none of which, I believe, will ever be asserted to be the model, from which the idea of space is derived. There remains therefore nothing but the senses, which can convey to us this original impression. Now what impression do oar senses here convey to us? This is the principal question, and decides without appeal concerning the nature of the idea.

The table before me is alone sufficient by its view to give me the idea of extension. This idea, then, is borrowed from, and represents some impression, which this moment appears to the senses. But my senses convey to me only the impressions of coloured points, disposed in a certain manner. If the eye is sensible of any thing farther, I desire it may be pointed out to me. But if it be impossible to shew any thing farther, we may conclude with certainty, that the idea of extension is nothing but a copy of these coloured points, and of the manner of their appearance.

Suppose that in the extended object, or composition of coloured points, from which we first received the idea of extension, the points were of a purple colour; it follows, that in every repetition of that idea we would not only place the points in the same order with respect to each other, but also bestow on them that precise colour, with which alone we are acquainted. But afterwards having experience of the other colours of violet, green, red, white, black, and of all the different compositions of these, and finding a resemblance in the disposition of coloured points, of which they are composed, we omit the peculiarities of colour, as far as possible, and found an abstract idea merely on that disposition of points, or manner of appearance, in which they agree. Nay even when the resemblance is carryed beyond the objects of one sense, and the impressions of touch are found to be Similar to those of sight in the disposition of their parts; this does not hinder the abstract idea from representing both, upon account of their resemblance. All abstract ideas are really nothing but particular ones, considered in a certain light; but being annexed to general terms, they are able to represent a vast variety, and to comprehend objects, which, as they are alike in some particulars, are in others vastly wide of each other.

The idea of time, being derived from the succession of our perceptions of every kind, ideas as well as impressions, and impressions of reflection as well as of sensations will afford us an instance of an abstract idea, which comprehends a still greater variety than that of space, and yet is represented in the fancy by some particular individual idea of a determinate quantity and quality.

As it is from the disposition of visible and tangible objects we receive the idea of space, so from the succession of ideas and impressions we form the idea of time, nor is it possible for time alone ever to make its appearance, or be taken notice of by the mind. A man in a sound sleep, or strongly occupyed with one thought, is insensible of time; and according as his perceptions succeed each other with greater or less rapidity, the same duration appears longer or shorter to his imagination. It has been remarked by a great philosopher, that our perceptions have certain bounds in this particular, which are fixed by the original nature and constitution of the mind, and beyond which no influence of external objects on the senses is ever able to hasten or retard our thought. If you wheel about a burning coal with rapidity, it will present to the senses an image of a circle of fire; nor will there seem to be any interval of time betwixt its revolutions; meerly because it is impossible for our perceptions to succeed each other with the same rapidity, that motion may be communicated to external objects. Wherever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even though there be a real succession in the objects. From these phenomena, as well as from many others, we may conclude, that time cannot make its appearance to the mind, either alone, or attended with a steady unchangeable object, but is always discovered some PERCEIVABLE succession of changeable objects.

To confirm this we may add the following argument, which to me seems perfectly decisive and convincing. It is evident, that time or duration consists of different parts: For otherwise we coued not conceive a longer or shorter duration. It is also evident, that these parts are not co-existent: For that quality of the co-existence of parts belongs to extension, and is what distinguishes it from duration. Now as time is composed of parts, that are not coexistent: an unchangeable object, since it produces none but coexistent impressions, produces none that can give us the idea of time; and consequently that idea must be derived from a succession of changeable objects, and time in its first appearance can never be severed from such a succession.

Having therefore found, that time in its first appearance to the mind is always conjoined with a succession of changeable objects, and that otherwise it can never fall under our notice, we must now examine whether it can be conceived without our conceiving any succession of objects, and whether it can alone form a distinct idea in the imagination.

In order to know whether any objects, which are joined in impression, be inseparable in idea, we need only consider, if they be different from each other; in which case, it is plain they may be conceived apart. Every thing, that is different is distinguishable: and everything, that is distinguishable, may be separated, according to the maxims above-explained. If on the contrary they be not different, they are not distinguishable: and if they be not distinguishable, they cannot be separated. But this is precisely the case with respect to time, compared with our successive perceptions. The idea of time is not derived from a particular impression mixed up with others, and plainly distinguishable from them; but arises altogether from the manner, in which impressions appear to the mind, without making one of the number. Five notes played on a flute give us the impression and idea of time; though time be not a sixth impression, which presents itself to the hearing or any other of the senses. Nor is it a sixth impression, which the mind by reflection finds in itself. These five sounds making their appearance in this particular manner, excite no emotion in the mind, nor produce an affection of any kind, which being observed by it can give rise to a new idea. For that is necessary to produce a new idea of reflection, nor can the mind, by revolving over a thousand times all its ideas of sensation, ever extract from them any new original idea, unless nature has so framed its faculties, that it feels some new original impression arise from such a contemplation. But here it only takes notice of the manner, in which the different sounds make their appearance; and that it may afterwards consider without considering these particular sounds, but may conjoin it with any other objects. The ideas of some objects it certainly must have, nor is it possible for it without these ideas ever to arrive at any conception of time; which since it, appears not as any primary distinct impression, can plainly be nothing but different ideas, or impressions, or objects disposed in a certain manner, that is, succeeding each other.

I know there are some who pretend, that the idea of duration is applicable in a proper sense to objects, which are perfectly unchangeable; and this I take to be the common opinion of philosophers as well as of the vulgar. But to be convinced of its falsehood we need but reflect on the foregoing conclusion, that the idea of duration is always derived from a succession of changeable objects, and can never be conveyed to the mind by any thing stedfast and unchangeable. For it inevitably follows from thence, that since the idea of duration cannot be derived from such an object, it can never-in any propriety or exactness be applied to it, nor can any thing unchangeable be ever said to have duration. Ideas always represent the Objects or impressions, from which they are derived, and can never without a fiction represent or be applied to any other. By what fiction we apply the idea of time, even to what is unchangeable, and suppose, as is common, that duration is a measure of rest as well as of motion, we shall consider [Sect 5.] afterwards.

There is another very decisive argument, which establishes the present doctrine concerning our ideas of space and time, and is founded only on that simple principle, that our ideas of them are compounded of parts, which are indivisible. This argument may be worth the examining.

Every idea, that is distinguishable, being also separable, let us take one of those simple indivisible ideas, of which the compound one of extension is formed, and separating it from all others, and considering it apart, let us form a judgment of its nature and qualities.

It is plain it is not the idea of extension. For the idea of extension consists of parts; and this idea, according to t-he supposition, is perfectly simple and indivisible. Is it therefore nothing? That is absolutely impossible. For as the compound idea of extension, which is real, is composed of such ideas; were these so many non-entities, there would be a real existence composed of non-entities; which is absurd. Here therefore I must ask, What is our idea of a simple and indivisible point? No wonder if my answer appear somewhat new, since the question itself has scarce ever yet been thought of. We are wont to dispute concerning the nature of mathematical points, but seldom concerning the nature of their ideas.

The idea of space is conveyed to the mind by two senses, the sight and touch; nor does anything ever appear extended, that is not either visible or tangible. That compound impression, which represents extension, consists of several lesser impressions, that are indivisible to the eye or feeling, and may be called impressions of atoms or corpuscles endowed with colour and solidity. But this is not all. It is not only requisite, that these atoms should be coloured or tangible, in order to discover themselves to our senses; it is also necessary we should preserve the idea of their colour or tangibility in order to comprehend them by our imagination. There is nothing but the idea of their colour or tangibility, which can render them conceivable by the mind. Upon the removal of the ideas of these sensible qualities, they are utterly annihilated to the thought or imagination.

Now such as the parts are, such is the whole. If a point be not considered as coloured or tangible, it can convey to us no idea; and consequently the idea of extension, which is composed of the ideas of these points, can never possibly exist. But if the idea of extension really can exist, as we are conscious it does, its parts must also exist; and in order to that, must be considered as coloured or tangible. We have therefore no idea of space or extension, but when we regard it as an object either of our sight or feeling.

The same reasoning will prove, that the indivisible moments of time must be filled with some real object or existence, whose succession forms the duration, and makes it be conceivable by the mind.

SECT. IV. OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Our system concerning space and time consists of two parts, which are intimately connected together. The first depends on this chain of reasoning. The capacity of the mind is not infinite; consequently no idea of extension or duration consists of an infinite number of parts or inferior ideas, but of a finite number, and these simple and indivisible: It is therefore possible for space and time to exist conformable to this idea: And if it be possible, it is certain they actually do exist conformable to it; since their infinite divisibility is utterly impossible and contradictory.

The other part of our system is a consequence of this. The parts, into which the ideas of space and time resolve themselves, become at last indivisible; and these indivisible parts, being nothing in themselves, are inconceivable when not filled with something real and existent. The ideas of space and time are therefore no separate or distinct ideas, but merely those of the manner or order, in which objects exist: Or in other words, it is impossible to conceive either a vacuum and extension without matter, or a time, when there was no succession or change in any real existence. The intimate connexion betwixt these parts of our system is the reason why we shall examine together the objections, which have been urged against both of them, beginning with those against the finite divisibility of extension.

I. The first of these objections, which I shall take notice of, is more proper to prove this connexion and dependence of the one part upon the other, than to destroy either of them. It has often been maintained in the schools, that extension must be divisible, in infinitum, because the system of mathematical points is absurd; and that system is absurd, because a mathematical point is a non-entity, and consequently can never by its conjunction with others form a real existence. This would be perfectly decisive, were there no medium betwixt the infinite divisibility of matter, and the non-entity of mathematical points. But there is evidently a medium, viz. the bestowing a colour or solidity on these points; and the absurdity of both the extremes is a demonstration of the truth and reality of this medium. The system of physical points, which is another medium, is too absurd to need a refutation. A real extension, such as a physical point is supposed to be, can never exist without parts, different from each other; and wherever objects are different, they are distinguishable and separable by the imagination.

II. The second objection is derived from the necessity there would be of PENETRATION, if extension consisted of mathematical points. A simple and indivisible atom, that touches another, must necessarily penetrate it; for it is impossible it can touch it by its external parts, from the very supposition of its perfect simplicity, which excludes all parts. It must therefore touch it intimately, and in its whole essence, SECUNDUM SE, TOTA, ET TOTALITER; which is the very definition of penetration. But penetration is impossible: Mathematical points are of consequence equally impossible.

I answer this objection by substituting a juster idea of penetration. Suppose two bodies containing no void within their circumference, to approach each other, and to unite in such a manner that the body, which results from their union, is no more extended than either of them; it is this we must mean when we talk of penetration. But it is evident this penetration is nothing but the annihilation of one of these bodies, and the preservation of the other, without our being able to distinguish particularly which is preserved and which annihilated. Before the approach we have the idea of two bodies. After it we have the idea only of one. It is impossible for the mind to preserve any notion of difference betwixt two bodies of the same nature existing in the same place at the same time.

Taking then penetration in this sense, for the annihilation of one body upon its approach to another, I ask any one, if he sees a necessity, that a coloured or tangible point should be annihilated upon the approach of another coloured or tangible point? On the contrary, does he not evidently perceive, that from the union of these points there results an object, which is compounded and divisible, and may be distinguished into two parts, of which each preserves its existence distinct and separate, notwithstanding its contiguity to the other? Let him aid his fancy by conceiving these points to be of different colours, the better to prevent their coalition and confusion. A blue and a red point may surely lie contiguous without any penetration or annihilation. For if they cannot, what possibly can become of them? Whether shall the red or the blue be annihilated? Or if these colours unite into one, what new colour will they produce by their union?

What chiefly gives rise to these objections, and at the same time renders it so difficult to give a satisfactory answer to them, is the natural infirmity and unsteadiness both of our imagination and senses, when employed on such minute objects. Put a spot of ink upon paper, and retire to such a distance, that the spot becomes altogether invisible; you will find, that upon your return and nearer approach the spot first becomes visible by short intervals; and afterwards becomes always visible; and afterwards acquires only a new force in its colouring without augmenting its bulk; and afterwards, when it has encreased to such a degree as to be really extended, it is still difficult for the imagination to break it into its component parts, because of the uneasiness it finds in the conception of such a minute object as a single point. This infirmity affects most of our reasonings on the present subject, and makes it almost impossible to answer in an intelligible manner, and in proper expressions, many questions which may arise concerning it.

III. There have been many objections drawn from the mathematics against the indivisibility of the parts of extension: though at first sight that science seems rather favourable to the present doctrine; and if it be contrary in its DEMONSTRATIONS, it is perfectly conformable in its definitions. My present business then must be to defend the definitions, and refute the demonstrations.

A surface is DEFINed to be length and breadth without depth: A line to be length without breadth or depth: A point to be what has neither length, breadth nor depth. It is evident that all this is perfectly unintelligible upon any other supposition than that of the composition of extension by indivisible points or atoms. How else coued any thing exist without length, without breadth, or without depth?

Two different answers, I find, have been made to this argument; neither of which is in my opinion satisfactory. The first is, that the objects of geometry, those surfaces, lines and points, whose proportions and positions it examines, are mere ideas in the mind; I and not only never did, but never can exist in nature. They never did exist; for no one will pretend to draw a line or make a surface entirely conformable to the definition: They never can exist; for we may produce demonstrations from these very ideas to prove, that they are impossible.

But can anything be imagined more absurd and contradictory than this reasoning? Whatever can be conceived by a clear and distinct idea necessarily implies the possibility of existence; and he who pretends to prove the impossibility of its existence by any argument derived from the clear idea, in reality asserts, that we have no clear idea of it, because we have a clear idea. It is in vain to search for a contradiction in any thing that is distinctly conceived by the mind. Did it imply any contradiction, it is impossible it coued ever be conceived.

There is therefore no medium betwixt allowing at least the possibility of indivisible points, and denying their idea; and it is on this latter principle, that the second answer to the foregoing argument is founded. It has been pretended [L'Art de penser.], that though it be impossible to conceive a length without any breadth, yet by an abstraction without a separation, we can consider the one without regarding the other; in the same manner as we may think of the length of the way betwixt two towns, and overlook its breadth. The length is inseparable from the breadth both in nature and in our minds; but this excludes not a partial consideration, and a distinction of reason, after the manner above explained.

In refuting this answer I shall not insist on the argument, which I have already sufficiently explained, that if it be impossible for the mind to arrive at a minimum in its ideas, its capacity must be infinite, in order to comprehend the infinite number of parts, of which its idea of any extension would be composed. I shall here endeavour to find some new absurdities in this reasoning.

A surface terminates a solid; a line terminates a surface; a point terminates a line; but I assert, that if the ideas of a point, line or surface were not indivisible, it is impossible we should ever conceive these terminations: For let these ideas be supposed infinitely divisible; and then let the fancy endeavour to fix itself on the idea of the last surface, line or point; it immediately finds this idea to break into parts; and upon its seizing the last of these parts, it loses its hold by a new division, and so on in infinitum, without any possibility of its arriving at a concluding idea. The number of fractions bring it no nearer the last division, than the first idea it formed. Every particle eludes the grasp by a new fraction; like quicksilver, when we endeavour to seize it. But as in fact there must be something, which terminates the idea of every finite quantity; and as this terminating idea cannot itself consist of parts or inferior ideas; otherwise it would be the last of its parts, which finished the idea, and so on; this is a clear proof, that the ideas of surfaces, lines and points admit not of any division; those of surfaces in depth; of lines in breadth and depth; and of points in any dimension.

The school were so sensible of the force of this argument, that some of them maintained, that nature has mixed among those particles of matter, which are divisible in infinitum, a number of mathematical points, in order to give a termination to bodies; and others eluded the force of this reasoning by a heap of unintelligible cavils and distinctions. Both these adversaries equally yield the victory. A man who hides himself, confesses as evidently the superiority of his enemy, as another, who fairly delivers his arms.

Thus it appears, that the definitions of mathematics destroy the pretended demonstrations; and that if we have the idea of indivisible points, lines and surfaces conformable to the definition, their existence is certainly possible: but if we have no such idea, it is impossible we can ever conceive the termination of any figure; without which conception there can be no geometrical demonstration.

But I go farther, and maintain, that none of these demonstrations can have sufficient weight to establish such a principle, as this of infinite divisibility; and that because with regard to such minute objects, they are not properly demonstrations, being built on ideas, which are not exact, and maxims, which are not precisely true. When geometry decides anything concerning the proportions of quantity, we ought not to look for the utmost precision and exactness. None of its proofs extend so far. It takes the dimensions and proportions of figures justly; but roughly, and with some liberty. Its errors are never considerable; nor would it err at all, did it not aspire to such an absolute perfection.

I first ask mathematicians, what they mean when they say one line or surface is EQUAL to, or GREATER or LESS than another? Let any of them give an answer, to whatever sect he belongs, and whether he maintains the composition of extension by indivisible points, or by quantities divisible in infinitum. This question will embarrass both of them.

There are few or no mathematicians, who defend the hypothesis of indivisible points; and yet these have the readiest and justest answer to the present question. They need only reply, that lines or surfaces are equal, when the numbers of points in each are equal; and that as the proportion of the numbers varies, the proportion of the lines and surfaces is also varyed. But though this answer be just, as well as obvious; yet I may affirm, that this standard of equality is entirely useless, and that it never is from such a comparison we determine objects to be equal or unequal with respect to each other. For as the points, which enter into the composition of any line or surface, whether perceived by the sight or touch, are so minute and so confounded with each other, that it is utterly impossible for the mind to compute their number, such a computation will Never afford us a standard by which we may judge of proportions. No one will ever be able to determine by an exact numeration, that an inch has fewer points than a foot, or a foot fewer than an ell or any greater measure: for which reason we seldom or never consider this as the standard of equality or inequality.

As to those, who imagine, that extension is divisible in infinitum, it is impossible they can make use of this answer, or fix the equality of any line or surface by a numeration of its component parts. For since, according to their hypothesis, the least as well as greatest figures contain an infinite number of parts; and since infinite numbers, properly speaking, can neither be equal nor unequal with respect to each other; the equality or inequality of any portions of space can never depend on any proportion in the number of their parts. It is true, it may be said, that the inequality of an ell and a yard consists in the different numbers of the feet, of which they are composed; and that of a foot and a yard in the number of the inches. But as that quantity we call an inch in the one is supposed equal to what we call an inch in the other, and as it is impossible for the mind to find this equality by proceeding in infinitum with these references to inferior quantities: it is evident, that at last we must fix some standard of equality different from an enumeration of the parts.

There are some [See Dr. Barrow’s mathematical lectures.], who pretend, that equality is best defined by congruity, and that any two figures are equal, when upon the placing of one upon the other, all their parts correspond to and touch each other. In order to judge of this definition let us consider, that since equality is a relation, it is not, strictly speaking, a property in the figures themselves, but arises merely from the comparison, which the mind makes betwixt them. If it consists, therefore, in this imaginary application and mutual contact of parts, we must at least have a distinct notion of these parts, and must conceive their contact. Now it is plain, that in this conception we would run up these parts to the greatest minuteness, which can possibly be conceived; since the contact of large parts would never render the figures equal. But the minutest parts we can conceive are mathematical points; and consequently this standard of equality is the same with that derived from the equality of the number of points; which we have already determined to be a just but an useless standard. We must therefore look to some other quarter for a solution of the present difficulty.

There are many philosophers, who refuse to assign any standard of equality, but assert, that it is sufficient to present two objects, that are equal, in order to give us a just notion of this proportion. All definitions, say they, are fruitless, without the perception of such objects; and where we perceive such objects, we no longer stand in need of any definition. To this reasoning, I entirely agree; and assert, that the only useful notion of equality, or inequality, is derived from the whole united appearance and the comparison of particular objects.

It is evident, that the eye, or rather the mind is often able at one view to determine the proportions of bodies, and pronounce them equal to, or greater or less than each other, without examining or comparing the number of their minute parts. Such judgments are not only common, but in many cases certain and infallible. When the measure of a yard and that of a foot are presented, the mind can no more question, that the first is longer than the second, than it can doubt of those principles, which are the most clear and self-evident.

There are therefore three proportions, which the mind distinguishes in the general appearance of its objects, and calls by the names of greater, less and equal. But though its decisions concerning these proportions be sometimes infallible, they are not always so; nor are our judgments of this kind more exempt from doubt and error than those on any other subject. We frequently correct our first opinion by a review and reflection; and pronounce those objects to be equal, which at first we esteemed unequal; and regard an object as less, though before it appeared greater than another. Nor is this the only correction, which these judgments of our senses undergo; but we often discover our error by a juxtaposition of the objects; or where that is impracticable, by the use of some common and invariable measure, which being successively applied to each, informs us of their different proportions. And even this correction is susceptible of a new correction, and of different degrees of exactness, according to the nature of the instrument, by which we measure the bodies, and the care which we employ in the comparison.

When therefore the mind is accustomed to these judgments and their corrections, and finds that the same proportion which makes two figures have in the eye that appearance, which we call equality, makes them also correspond to each other, and to any common measure, with which they are compared, we form a mixed notion of equality derived both from the looser and stricter methods of comparison. But we are not content with this. For as sound reason convinces us that there are bodies vastly more minute than those, which appear to the senses; and as a false reason would perswade us, that there are bodies infinitely more minute; we clearly perceive, that we are not possessed of any instrument or art of measuring, which can secure us from ill error and uncertainty. We are sensible, that the addition or removal of one of these minute parts, is not discernible either in the appearance or measuring; and as we imagine, that two figures, which were equal before, cannot be equal after this removal or addition, we therefore suppose some imaginary standard of equality, by which the appearances and measuring are exactly corrected, and the figures reduced entirely to that proportion. This standard is plainly imaginary. For as the very idea of equality is that of such a particular appearance corrected by juxtaposition or a common measure. The notion of any correction beyond what we have instruments and art to make, is a mere fiction of the mind, and useless as well as incomprehensible. But though this standard be only imaginary, the fiction however is very natural; nor is anything more usual, than for the mind to proceed after this manner with any action, even after the reason has ceased, which first determined it to begin. This appears very conspicuously with regard to time; where though it is evident we have no exact method of determining the proportions of parts, not even so exact as in extension, yet the various corrections of our measures, and their different degrees of exactness, have given as an obscure and implicit notion of a perfect and entire equality. The case is the same in many other subjects. A musician finding his ear becoming every day more delicate, and correcting himself by reflection and attention, proceeds with the same act of the mind, even when the subject fails him, and entertains a notion of a compleat TIERCE or OCTAVE, without being able to tell whence he derives his standard. A painter forms the same fiction with regard to colours. A mechanic with regard to motion. To the one light and shade; to the other swift and slow are imagined to be capable of an exact comparison and equality beyond the judgments of the senses.

We may apply the same reasoning to CURVE and RIGHT lines. Nothing is more apparent to the senses, than the distinction betwixt a curve and a right line; nor are there any ideas we more easily form than the ideas of these objects. But however easily we may form these ideas, it is impossible to produce any definition of them, which will fix the precise boundaries betwixt them. When we draw lines upon paper, or any continued surface, there is a certain order, by which the lines run along from one point to another, that they may produce the entire impression of a curve or right line; but this order is perfectly unknown, and nothing is observed but the united appearance. Thus even upon the system of indivisible points, we can only form a distant notion of some unknown standard to these objects. Upon that of infinite divisibility we cannot go even this length; but are reduced meerly to the general appearance, as the rule by which we determine lines to be either curve or right ones. But though we can give no perfect definition of these lines, nor produce any very exact method of distinguishing the one from the other; yet this hinders us not from correcting the first appearance by a more accurate consideration, and by a comparison with some rule, of whose rectitude from repeated trials we have a greater assurance. And it is from these corrections, and by carrying on the same action of the mind, even when its reason fails us, that we form the loose idea of a perfect standard to these figures, without being able to explain or comprehend it.

It is true, mathematicians pretend they give an exact definition of a right line, when they say, it is the shortest way betwixt two points. But in the first place I observe, that this is more properly the discovery of one of the properties of a right line, than a just deflation of it. For I ask any one, if upon mention of a right line he thinks not immediately on such a particular appearance, and if it is not by accident only that he considers this property? A right line can be comprehended alone; but this definition is unintelligible without a comparison with other lines, which we conceive to be more extended. In common life it is established as a maxim, that the straightest way is always the shortest; which would be as absurd as to say, the shortest way is always the shortest, if our idea of a right line was not different from that of the shortest way betwixt two points.

Secondly, I repeat what I have already established, that we have no precise idea of equality and inequality, shorter and longer, more than of a right line or a curve; and consequently that the one can never afford us a perfect standard for the other. An exact idea can never be built on such as are loose and undetermined.

The idea of a plain surface is as little susceptible of a precise standard as that of a right line; nor have we any other means of distinguishing such a surface, than its general appearance. It is in vain, that mathematicians represent a plain surface as produced by the flowing of a right line. It will immediately be objected, that our idea of a surface is as independent of this method of forming a surface, as our idea of an ellipse is of that of a cone; that the idea of a right line is no more precise than that of a plain surface; that a right line may flow irregularly, and by that means form a figure quite different from a plane; and that therefore we must suppose it to flow along two right lines, parallel to each other, and on the same plane; which is a description, that explains a thing by itself, and returns in a circle.

It appears, then, that the ideas which are most essential to geometry, viz. those of equality and inequality, of a right line and a plain surface, are far from being exact and determinate, according to our common method of conceiving them. Not only we are incapable of telling, if the case be in any degree doubtful, when such particular figures are equal; when such a line is a right one, and such a surface a plain one; but we can form no idea of that proportion, or of these figures, which is firm and invariable. Our appeal is still to the weak and fallible judgment, which we make from the appearance of the objects, and correct by a compass or common measure; and if we join the supposition of any farther correction, it is of such-a-one as is either useless or imaginary. In vain should we have recourse to the common topic, and employ the supposition of a deity, whose omnipotence may enable him to form a perfect geometrical figure, and describe a right line without any curve or inflexion. As the ultimate standard of these figures is derived from nothing but the senses and imagination, it is absurd to talk of any perfection beyond what these faculties can judge of; since the true perfection of any thing consists in its conformity to its standard.

Now since these ideas are so loose and uncertain, I would fain ask any mathematician what infallible assurance he has, not only of the more intricate, and obscure propositions of his science, but of the most vulgar and obvious principles? How can he prove to me, for instance, that two right lines cannot have one common segment? Or that it is impossible to draw more than one right line betwixt any two points? should he tell me, that these opinions are obviously absurd, and repugnant to our clear ideas; I would answer, that I do not deny, where two right lines incline upon each other with a sensible angle, but it is absurd to imagine them to have a common segment. But supposing these two lines to approach at the rate of an inch in twenty leagues, I perceive no absurdity in asserting, that upon their contact they become one. For, I beseech you, by what rule or standard do you judge, when you assert, that the line, in which I have supposed them to concur, cannot make the same right line with those two, that form so small an angle betwixt them? You must surely have some idea of a right line, to which this line does not agree. Do you therefore mean that it takes not the points in the same order and by the same rule, as is peculiar and essential to a right line? If so, I must inform you, that besides that in judging after this manner you allow, that extension is composed of indivisible points (which, perhaps, is more than you intend) besides this, I say, I must inform you, that neither is this the standard from which we form the idea of a right line; nor, if it were, is there any such firmness in our senses or imagination, as to determine when such an order is violated or preserved. The original standard of a right line is in reality nothing but a certain general appearance; and it is evident right lines may be made to concur with each other, and yet correspond to this standard, though corrected by all the means either practicable or imaginable.

To whatever side mathematicians turn, this dilemma still meets them. If they judge of equality, or any other proportion, by the accurate and exact standard, viz. the enumeration of the minute indivisible parts, they both employ a standard, which is useless in practice, and actually establish the indivisibility of extension, which they endeavour to explode. Or if they employ, as is usual, the inaccurate standard, derived from a comparison of objects, upon their general appearance, corrected by measuring and juxtaposition; their first principles, though certain and infallible, are too coarse to afford any such subtile inferences as they commonly draw from them. The first principles are founded on the imagination and senses: The conclusion, therefore, can never go beyond, much less contradict these faculties.

This may open our eyes a little, and let us see, that no geometrical demonstration for the infinite divisibility of extension can have so much force as what we naturally attribute to every argument, which is supported by such magnificent pretensions. At the same time we may learn the reason, why geometry falls of evidence in this single point, while all its other reasonings command our fullest assent and approbation. And indeed it seems more requisite to give the reason of this exception, than to shew, that we really must make such an exception, and regard all the mathematical arguments for infinite divisibility as utterly sophistical. For it is evident, that as no idea of quantity is infinitely divisible, there cannot be imagined a more glaring absurdity, than to endeavour to prove, that quantity itself admits of such a division; and to prove this by means of ideas, which are directly opposite in that particular. And as this absurdity is very glaring in itself, so there is no argument founded on it which is not attended with a new absurdity, and involves not an evident contradiction.

I might give as instances those arguments for infinite divisibility, which are derived from the point of contact. I know there is no mathematician, who will not refuse to be judged by the diagrams he describes upon paper, these being loose draughts, as he will tell us, and serving only to convey with greater facility certain ideas, which are the true foundation of all our reasoning. This I am satisfyed with, and am willing to rest the controversy merely upon these ideas. I desire therefore our mathematician to form, as accurately as possible, the ideas of a circle and a right line; and I then ask, if upon the conception of their contact he can conceive them as touching in a mathematical point, or if he must necessarily imagine them to concur for some space. Whichever side he chuses, he runs himself into equal difficulties. If he affirms, that in tracing these figures in his imagination, he can imagine them to touch only in a point, he allows the possibility of that idea, and consequently of the thing. If he says, that in his conception of the contact of those lines he must make them concur, he thereby acknowledges the fallacy of geometrical demonstrations, when carryed beyond a certain degree of minuteness; since it is certain he has such demonstrations against the concurrence of a circle and a right line; that is, in other words, he can prove an idea, viz. that of concurrence, to be INCOMPATIBLE with two other ideas, those of a circle and right line; though at the same time he acknowledges these ideas to be inseparable.

SECT. V. THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

If the second part of my system be true, that the idea of space or extension is nothing but the idea of visible or tangible points distributed in a certain order; it follows, that we can form no idea of a vacuum, or space, where there is nothing visible or tangible. This gives rise to three objections, which I shall examine together, because the answer I shall give to one is a consequence of that which I shall make use of for the others.

First, It may be said, that men have disputed for many ages concerning a vacuum and a plenum, without being able to bring the affair to a final decision; and philosophers, even at this day, think themselves at liberty to take part on either side, as their fancy leads them. But whatever foundation there may be for a controversy concerning the things themselves, it may be pretended, that the very dispute is decisive concerning the idea, and that it is impossible men coued so long reason about a vacuum, and either refute or defend it, without having a notion of what they refuted or defended.

Secondly, If this argument should be contested, the reality or at least the possibility of the idea of a vacuum may be proved by the following reasoning. Every idea is possible, which is a necessary and infallible consequence of such as are possible. Now though we allow the world to be at present a plenum, we may easily conceive it to be deprived of motion; and this idea will certainly be allowed possible. It must also be allowed possible, to conceive the annihilation of any part of matter by the omnipotence of the deity, while the other parts remain at rest. For as every idea, that is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination; and as every idea, that is separable by the imagination, may be conceived to be separately existent; it is evident, that the existence of one particle of matter, no more implies the existence of another, than a square figure in one body implies a square figure in every one. This being granted, I now demand what results from the concurrence of these two possible ideas of rest and annihilation, and what must we conceive to follow upon the annihilation of all the air and subtile matter in the chamber, supposing the walls to remain the same, without any motion or alteration? There are some metaphysicians, who answer, that since matter and extension are the same, the annihilation of one necessarily implies that of the other; and there being now no distance betwixt the walls of the chamber, they touch each other; in the same manner as my hand touches the paper, which is immediately before me. But though this answer be very common, I defy these metaphysicians to conceive the matter according to their hypothesis, or imagine the floor and roof, with all the opposite sides of the chamber, to touch each other, while they continue in rest, and preserve the same position. For how can the two walls, that run from south to north, touch each other, while they touch the opposite ends of two walls, that run from east to west? And how can the floor and roof ever meet, while they are separated by the four walls, that lie in a contrary position? If you change their position, you suppose a motion. If you conceive any thing betwixt them, you suppose a new creation. But keeping strictly to the two ideas of rest and annihilation, it is evident, that the idea, which results from them, is not that of a contact of parts, but something else; which is concluded to be the idea of a vacuum.

The third objection carries the matter still farther, and not only asserts, that the idea of a vacuum is real and possible, but also necessary and unavoidable. This assertion is founded on the motion we observe in bodies, which, it is maintained, would be impossible and inconceivable without a vacuum, into which one body must move in order to make way for another.. I shall not enlarge upon this objection, because it principally belongs to natural philosophy, which lies without our present sphere.

In order to answer these objections, we must take the matter pretty deep, and consider the nature and origin of several ideas, lest we dispute without understanding perfectly the subject of the controversy. It is evident the idea of darkness is no positive idea, but merely the negation of light, or more properly speaking, of coloured and visible objects. A man, who enjoys his sight, receives no other perception from turning his eyes on every side, when entirely deprived of light, than what is common to him with one born blind; and it is certain such-a-one has no idea either of light or darkness. The consequence of this is, that it is not from the mere removal of visible objects we receive the impression of extension without matter; and that the idea of utter darkness can never be the same with that of vacuum.

Suppose again a man to be supported in the air, and to be softly conveyed along by some invisible power; it is evident he is sensible of nothing, and never receives the idea of extension, nor indeed any idea, from this invariable motion. Even supposing he moves his limbs to and fro, this cannot convey to him that idea. He feels in that case a certain sensation or impression, the parts of which are successive to each other, and may give him the idea of time: But certainly are not disposed in such a manner, as is necessary to convey the idea of space or the idea of space or extension.

Since then it appears, that darkness and motion, with the utter removal of every thing visible and tangible, can never give us the idea of extension without matter, or of a vacuum; the next question is, whether they can convey this idea, when mixed with something visible and tangible?

It is commonly allowed by philosophers, that all bodies, which discover themselves to the eye, appear as if painted on a plain surface, and that their different degrees of remoteness from ourselves are discovered more by reason than by the senses. When I hold up my hand before me, and spread my fingers, they are separated as perfectly by the blue colour of the firmament, as they coued be by any visible object, which I coued place betwixt them. In order, therefore, to know whether the sight can convey the impression and idea of a vacuum, we must suppose, that amidst an entire darkness, there are luminous bodies presented to us, whose light discovers only these bodies themselves, without giving us any impression of the surrounding objects.

We must form a parallel supposition concerning the objects of our feeling. It is not proper to suppose a perfect removal of all tangible objects: we must allow something to be perceived by the feeling; and after an interval and motion of the hand or other organ of sensation, another object of the touch to be met with; and upon leaving that, another; and so on, as often as we please. The question is, whether these intervals do not afford us the idea of extension without body?

To begin with the first case; it is evident, that when only two luminous bodies appear to the eye, we can perceive, whether they be conjoined or separate: whether they be separated by a great or small distance; and if this distance varies, we can perceive its increase or diminution, with the motion of the bodies. But as the distance is not in this case any thing coloured or visible, it may be thought that there is here a vacuum or pure extension, not only intelligible to the mind, but obvious to the very senses.

This is our natural and most familiar way of thinking; but which we shall learn to correct by a little reflection. We may observe, that when two bodies present themselves, where there was formerly an entire darkness, the only change, that is discoverable, is in the appearance of these two objects, and that all the rest continues to be as before, a perfect negation of light, and of every coloured or visible object. This is not only true of what may be said to be remote from these bodies, but also of the very distance; which is interposed betwixt them; that being nothing but darkness, or the negation of light; without parts, without composition, invariable and indivisible. Now since this distance causes no perception different from what a blind man receives from his eyes, or what is conveyed to us in the darkest night, it must partake of the same properties: And as blindness and darkness afford us no ideas of extension, it is impossible that the dark and undistinguishable distance betwixt two bodies can ever produce that idea.

The sole difference betwixt an absolute darkness and the appearance of two or more visible luminous objects consists, as I said, in the objects themselves, and in the manner they affect our senses. The angles, which the rays of light flowing from them, form with each other; the motion that is required in the eye, in its passage from one to the other; and the different parts of the organs, which are affected by them; these produce the only perceptions, from which we can judge of the distance. But as these perceptions are each of them simple and indivisible, they can never give us the idea of extension.

We may illustrate this by considering the sense of feeling, and the imaginary distance or interval interposed betwixt tangible or solid objects. I suppose two cases, viz. that of a man supported in the air, and moving his limbs to and fro, without meeting any thing tangible; and that of a man, who feeling something tangible, leaves it, and after a motion, of which he is sensible, perceives another tangible object; and I then ask, wherein consists the difference betwixt these two cases? No one will make any scruple to affirm, that it consists meerly in the perceiving those objects, and that the sensation, which arises from the motion, is in both cases the same: And as that sensation is not capable of conveying to us an idea of extension, when unaccompanyed with some other perception, it can no more give us that idea, when mixed with the impressions of tangible objects; since that mixture produces no alteration upon it.

But though motion and darkness, either alone, or attended with tangible and visible objects, convey no idea of a vacuum or extension without matter, yet they are the causes why we falsly imagine we can form such an idea. For there is a close relation betwixt that motion and darkness, and a real extension, or composition of visible and tangible objects.

First, We may observe, that two visible objects appearing in the midst of utter darkness, affect the senses in the same manner, and form the same angle by the rays, which flow from them, and meet in the eye, as if the distance betwixt them were find with visible objects, that give us a true idea of extension. The sensation of motion is likewise the same, when there is nothing tangible interposed betwixt two bodies, as when we feel a compounded body, whose different parts are placed beyond each other.

Secondly, We find by experience, that two bodies, which are so placed as to affect the senses in the same manner with two others, that have a certain extent of visible objects interposed betwixt them, are capable of receiving the same extent, without any sensible impulse or penetration, and without any change on that angle, under which they appear to the senses. In like manner, where there is one object, which we cannot feel after another without an interval, and the perceiving of that sensation we call motion in our hand or organ of sensation; experience shews us, that it is possible the same object may be felt with the same sensation of motion, along with the interposed impression of solid and tangible objects, attending the sensation. That is, in other words, an invisible and intangible distance may be converted into a visible and tangible one, without any change on the distant objects.

Thirdly, We may observe, as another relation betwixt these two kinds of distance, that they have nearly the same effects on every natural phaenomenon. For as all qualities, such as heat, cold, light, attraction, &c. diminish in proportion to the distance; there is but little difference observed, whether this distance be marled out by compounded and sensible objects, or be known only by the manner, in which the distant objects affect the senses.

Here then are three relations betwixt that distance, which conveys the idea of extension, and that other, which is not filled with any coloured or solid object. The distant objects affect the senses in the same manner, whether separated by the one distance or the other; the second species of distance is found capable of receiving the first; and they both equally diminish the force of every quality.

These relations betwixt the two kinds of distance will afford us an easy reason, why the one has so often been taken for the other, and why we imagine we have an idea of extension without the idea of any object either of the sight or feeling. For we may establish it as a general maxim in this science of human nature, that wherever there is a close relation betwixt two ideas, the mind is very apt to mistake them, and in all its discourses and reasonings to use the one for the other. This phaenomenon occurs on so many occasions, and is of such consequence, that I cannot forbear stopping a moment to examine its causes. I shall only premise, that we must distinguish exactly betwixt the phaenomenon itself, and the causes, which I shall assign for it; and must not imagine from any uncertainty in the latter, that the former is also uncertain. The phaenomenon may be real, though my explication be chimerical. The falshood of the one is no consequence of that of the other; though at the same time we may observe, that it is very natural for us to draw such a consequence; which is an evident instance of that very principle, which I endeavour to explain.

When I received the relations of resemblance, contiguity and causation, as principles of union among ideas, without examining into their causes, it was more in prosecution of my first maxim, that we must in the end rest contented with experience, than for want of something specious and plausible, which I might have displayed on that subject. It would have been easy to have made an imaginary dissection of the brain, and have shewn, why upon our conception of any idea, the animal spirits run into all the contiguous traces, and rouze up the other ideas, that are related to it. But though I have neglected any advantage, which I might have drawn from this topic in explaining the relations of ideas, I am afraid I must here have recourse to it, in order to account for the mistakes that arise from these relations. I shall therefore observe, that as the mind is endowed with a power of exciting any idea it pleases; whenever it dispatches the spirits into that region of the brain, in which the idea is placed; these spirits always excite the idea, when they run precisely into the proper traces, and rummage that cell, which belongs to the idea. But as their motion is seldom direct, and naturally turns a little to the one side or the other; for this reason the animal spirits, falling into the contiguous traces, present other related ideas in lieu of that, which the mind desired at first to survey. This change we are not always sensible of; but continuing still the same train of thought, make use of the related idea, which is presented to us, and employ it in our reasoning, as if it were the same with what we demanded. This is the cause of many mistakes and sophisms in philosophy; as will naturally be imagined, and as it would be easy to show, if there was occasion.

Of the three relations above-mentioned that of resemblance is the most fertile source of error; and indeed there are few mistakes in reasoning, which do not borrow largely from that origin. Resembling ideas are not only related together, but the actions of the mind, which we employ in considering them, are so little different, that we are not able to distinguish them. This last circumstance is of great consequence, and we may in general observe, that wherever the actions of the mind in forming any two ideas are the same or resembling, we are very apt to confound these ideas, and take the one for the other. Of this we shall see many instances in the progress of this treatise. But though resemblance be the relation, which most readily produces a mistake in ideas, yet the others of causation and contiguity may also concur in the same influence. We might produce the figures of poets and orators, as sufficient proofs of this, were it as usual, as it is reasonable, in metaphysical subjects to draw our arguments from that quarter. But lest metaphysicians should esteem this below their dignity, I shall borrow a proof from an observation, which may be made on most of their own discourses, viz. that it is usual for men to use words for ideas, and to talk instead of thinking in their reasonings. We use words for ideas, because they are commonly so closely connected that the mind easily mistakes them. And this likewise is the reason, why we substitute the idea of a distance, which is not considered either as visible or tangible, in the room of extension, which is nothing but a composition of visible or tangible points disposed in a certain order. In causing this mistake there concur both the relations of causation and resemblance. As the first species of distance is found to be convertible into the second, it is in this respect a kind of cause; and the similarity of their manner of affecting the senses, and diminishing every quality, forms the relation of resemblance.

After this chain of reasoning and explication of my principles, I am now prepared to answer all the objections that have been offered, whether derived from metaphysics or mechanics. The frequent disputes concerning a vacuum, or extension without matter prove not the reality of the idea, upon which the dispute turns; there being nothing more common, than to see men deceive themselves in this particular; especially when by means of any close relation, there is another idea presented, which may be the occasion of their mistake.

We may make almost the same answer to the second objection, derived from the conjunction of the ideas of rest and annihilation. When every thing is annihilated in the chamber, and the walls continue immoveable, the chamber must be conceived much in the same manner as at present, when the air that fills it, is not an object of the senses. This annihilation leaves to the eye, that fictitious distance, which is discovered by the different parts of the organ, that are affected, and by the degrees of light and shade; — and to the feeling, that which consists in a sensation of motion in the hand, or other member of the body. In vain should we. search any farther. On whichever side we turn this subject, we shall find that these are the only impressions such an object can produce after the supposed annihilation; and it has already been remarked, that impressions can give rise to no ideas, but to such as resemble them.

Since a body interposed betwixt two others may be supposed to be annihilated, without producing any change upon such as lie on each hand of it, it is easily conceived, how it may be created anew, and yet produce as little alteration. Now the motion of a body has much the same effect as its creation. The distant bodies are no more affected in the one case, than in the other. This suffices to satisfy the imagination, and proves there is no repugnance in such a motion. Afterwards experience comes in play to persuade us that two bodies, situated in the manner above-described, have really such a capacity of receiving body betwixt them, and that there is no obstacle to the conversion of the invisible and intangible distance into one that is visible and tangible. However natural that conversion may seem, we cannot be sure it is practicable, before we have had experience of it.

Thus I seem to have answered the three objections above-mentioned; though at the same time I am sensible, that few will be satisfyed with these answers, but will immediately propose new objections and difficulties. It will probably be said, that my reasoning makes nothing to the matter in hands and that I explain only the manner in which objects affect the senses, without endeavouring to account for their real nature and operations. Though there be nothing visible or tangible interposed betwixt two bodies, yet we find BY EXPERIENCE, that the bodies may be placed in the same manner, with regard to the eye, and require the same motion of the hand in passing from one to the other, as if divided by something visible and tangible. This invisible and intangible distance is also found by experience to contain a capacity of receiving body, or of becoming visible and tangible. Here is the whole of my system; and in no part of it have I endeavoured to explain the cause, which separates bodies after this manner, and gives them a capacity of receiving others betwixt them, without any impulse or penetration.

I answer this objection, by pleading guilty, and by confessing that my intention never was to penetrate into the nature of bodies, or explain the secret causes of their operations. For besides that this belongs not to my present purpose, I am afraid, that such an enterprise is beyond the reach of human understanding, and that we can never pretend to know body otherwise than by those external properties, which discover themselves to the senses. As to those who attempt any thing farther, I cannot approve of their ambition, till I see, in some one instance at least, that they have met with success. But at present I content myself with knowing perfectly the manner in which objects affect my senses, and their connections with each other, as far as experience informs me of them. This suffices for the conduct of life; and this also suffices for my philosophy, which pretends only to explain the nature and causes of our perceptions, or impressions and ideas [FN 4.].

[FN 4. As long as we confine our speculations to the appearances of objects to our senses, without entering into disquisitions concerning their real nature and operations, we are safe from all difficulties, and can never be embarrassed by any question. Thus, if it be asked, if the invisible and intangible distance, interposed betwixt two objects, be something or nothing: It is easy to answer, that it is SOMETHING, VIZ. a property of the objects, which affect the SENSES after such a particular manner. If it be asked whether two objects, having such a distance betwixt them, touch or not: it may be answered, that this depends upon the definition of the word, TOUCH. If objects be said to touch, when there is nothing SENSIBLE interposed betwixt them, these objects touch: it objects be said to touch, when their IMAGES strike contiguous parts of the eye, and when the hand FEELS both objects successively, without any interposed motion, these objects do not touch. The appearances of objects to our senses are all consistent; and no difficulties can ever arise, but from the obscurity of the terms we make use of.

If we carry our enquiry beyond the appearances of objects to the senses, I am afraid, that most of our conclusions will

> be full of scepticism and uncertainty. Thus if it be asked, whether or not the invisible and intangible distance be always full of body, or of something that by an improvement of our organs might become visible or tangible, I must acknowledge, that I find no very decisive arguments on either side; though I am inclined to the contrary opinion, as being more suitable to vulgar and popular notions. If THE NEWTONIAN philosophy be rightly understood, it will be found to mean no more. A vacuum is asserted: That is, bodies are said to be placed after such a manner, is to receive bodies betwixt them, without impulsion or penetration. The real nature of this position of bodies is unknown. We are only acquainted with its effects on the senses, and its power of receiving body. Nothing is more suitable to that philosophy, than a modest scepticism to a certain degree, and a fair confession of ignorance in subjects, that exceed all human capacity.]

I shall conclude this subject of extension with a paradox, which will easily be explained from the foregoing reasoning. This paradox is, that if you are pleased to give to the in-visible and intangible distance, or in other words, to the capacity of becoming a visible and tangible distance, the name of a vacuum, extension and matter are the same, and yet there is a vacuum. If you will not give it that name, motion is possible in a plenum, without any impulse in infinitum, without returning in a circle, and without penetration. But however we may express ourselves, we must always confess, that we have no idea of any real extension without filling it with sensible objects, and conceiving its parts as visible or tangible.

As to the doctrine, that time is nothing but the manner, in which some real objects exist; we may observe, that it is liable to the same objections as the similar doctrine with regard to extension. If it be a sufficient proof, that we have the idea of a vacuum, because we dispute and reason concerning it; we must for the same reason have the idea of time without any changeable existence; since there is no subject of dispute more frequent and common. But that we really have no such idea, is certain. For whence should it be derived? Does it arise from an impression of sensation or of reflection? Point it out distinctly to us, that we may know its nature and qualities. But if you cannot point out any such impression, you may be certain you are mistaken, when you imagine you have any such idea.

But though it be impossible to shew the impression, from which the idea of time without a changeable existence is derived; yet we can easily point out those appearances, which make us fancy we have that idea. For we may observe, that there is a continual succession of perceptions in our mind; so that the idea of time being for ever present with us; when we consider a stedfast object at five-a-clock, and regard the same at six; we are apt to apply to it that idea in the same manner as if every moment were distinguished by a different position, or an alteration of the object. The first and second appearances of the object, being compared with the succession of our perceptions, seem equally removed as if the object had really changed. To which we may add, what experience shews us, that the object was susceptible of such a number of changes betwixt these appearances; as also that the unchangeable or rather fictitious duration has the same effect upon every quality, by encreasing or diminishing it, as that succession, which is obvious to the senses. From these three relations we are apt to confound our ideas, and imagine we can form the idea of a time and duration, without any change or succession.

SECT. VI. OF THE IDEA OF EXISTENCE, AND OF EXTERNAL EXISTENCE.

It may not be amiss, before we leave this subject, to explain the ideas of existence and of external existence; which have their difficulties, as well as the ideas of space and time. By this means we shall be the better prepared for the examination of knowledge and probability, when we understand perfectly all those particular ideas, which may enter into our reasoning.

There is no impression nor idea of any kind, of which we have any consciousness or memory, that is not conceived as existent; and it is evident, that from this consciousness the most perfect idea and assurance of being is derived. From hence we may form a dilemma, the most clear and conclusive that can be imagined, viz. that since we never remember any idea or impression without attributing existence to it, the idea of existence must either be derived from a distinct impression, conjoined with every perception or object of our thought, or must be the very same with the idea of the perception or object.

As this dilemma is an evident consequence of the principle, that every idea arises from a similar impression, so our decision betwixt the propositions of the dilemma is no more doubtful. So far from there being any distinct impression, attending every impression and every idea, that I do not think there are any two distinct impressions, which are inseparably conjoined. Though certain sensations may at one time be united, we quickly find they admit of a separation, and may be presented apart. And thus, though every impression and idea we remember be considered as existent, the idea of existence is not derived from any particular impression.

The idea of existence, then, is the very same with the idea of what we conceive to be existent. To reflect on any thing simply, and to reflect on it as existent, are nothing different from each other. That idea, when conjoined with the idea of any object, makes no addition to it. Whatever we conceive, we conceive to be existent. Any idea we please to form is the idea of a being; and the idea of a being is any idea we please to form.

Whoever opposes this, must necessarily point out that distinct impression, from which the idea of entity is derived, and must prove, that this impression is inseparable from every perception we believe to be existent. This we may without hesitation conclude to be impossible.

Our foregoing reasoning [Part I. Sect. 7.] concerning the distinction of ideas without any real difference will not here serve us in any stead. That kind of distinction is founded on the different resemblances, which the same simple idea may have to several different ideas. But no object can be presented resembling some object with respect to its existence, and different from others in the same particular; since every object, that is presented, must necessarily be existent.

A like reasoning will account for the idea of external existence. We may observe, that it is universally allowed by philosophers, and is besides pretty obvious of itself, that nothing is ever really present with the mind but its perceptions or impressions and ideas, and that external objects become known to us only by those perceptions they occasion. To hate, to love, to think, to feel, to see; all this is nothing but to perceive.

Now since nothing is ever present to the mind but perceptions, and since all ideas are derived from something antecedently present to the mind; it follows, that it is impossible for us so much as to conceive or form an idea of any thing specifically different from ideas and impressions. Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible: Let us chase our imagination to the heavens, or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions, which have appeared in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produced.

The farthest we can go towards a conception of external objects, when supposed SPECIFICALLY different from our perceptions, is to form a relative idea of them, without pretending to comprehend the related objects. Generally speaking we do not suppose them specifically different; but only attribute to them different relations, connections and durations. But of this more fully hereafter.[Part IV, Sect. 2.]

PART III. OF KNOWLEDGE AND PROBABILITY.

SECT. I. OF KNOWLEDGE.

There are seven [Part I. Sect. 5.] different kinds of philosophical relation, viz. RESEMBLANCE, IDENTITY, RELATIONS OF TIME AND PLACE, PROPORTION IN QUANTITY OR NUMBER, DEGREES IN ANY QUALITY, CONTRARIETY and CAUSATION. These relations may be divided into two classes; into such as depend entirely on the ideas, which we compare together, and such as may be changed without any change in the ideas. It is from the idea of a triangle, that we discover the relation of equality, which its three angles bear to two right ones; and this relation is invariable, as long as our idea remains the same. On the contrary, the relations of contiguity and distance betwixt two objects may be changed merely by an alteration of their place, without any change on the objects themselves or on their ideas; and the place depends on a hundred different accidents, which cannot be foreseen by the mind. It is the same case with identity and causation. Two objects, though perfectly resembling each other, and even appearing in the same place at different times, may be numerically different: And as the power, by which one object produces another, is never discoverable merely from their idea, it is evident cause and effect are relations, of which we receive information from experience, and not from any abstract reasoning or reflection. There is no single phaenomenon, even the most simple, which can be accounted for from the qualities of the objects, as they appear to us; or which we coued foresee without the help of our memory and experience.

It appears, therefore, that of these seven philosophical relations, there remain only four, which depending solely upon ideas, can be the objects of knowledge and certainty. These four are RESEMBLANCE, CONTRARIETY, DEGREES IN QUALITY, and PROPORTIONS IN QUANTITY OR NUMBER. Three of these relations are discoverable at first sight, and fall more properly under the province of intuition than demonstration. When any objects resemble each other, the resemblance will at first strike the eye, or rather the mind; and seldom requires a second examination. The case is the same with contrariety, and with the degrees of any quality. No one can once doubt but existence and non-existence destroy each other, and are perfectly incompatible and contrary. And though it be impossible to judge exactly of the degrees of any quality, such as colour, taste, heat, cold, when the difference betwixt them is very small: yet it is easy to decide, that any of them is superior or inferior to another, when their difference is considerable. And this decision we always pronounce at first sight, without any enquiry or reasoning.

We might proceed, after the same manner, in fixing the proportions of quantity or number, and might at one view observe a superiority or inferiority betwixt any numbers, or figures; especially where the difference is very great and remarkable. As to equality or any exact proportion, we can only guess at it from a single consideration; except in very short numbers, or very limited portions of extension; which are comprehended in an instant, and where we perceive an impossibility of falling into any considerable error. In all other cases we must settle the proportions with some liberty, or proceed in a more artificial manner.

I have already observed, that geometry, or the art, by which we fix the proportions of figures; though it much excels both in universality and exactness, the loose judgments of the senses and imagination; yet never attains a perfect precision and exactness. It's first principles are still drawn from the general appearance of the objects; and that appearance can never afford us any security, when we examine, the prodigious minuteness of which nature is susceptible. Our ideas seem to give a perfect assurance, that no two right lines can have a common segment; but if we consider these ideas, we shall find, that they always suppose a sensible inclination of the two lines, and that where the angle they form is extremely small, we have no standard of a I @ right line so precise as to assure us of the truth of this proposition. It is the same case with most of the primary decisions of the mathematics.

There remain, therefore, algebra and arithmetic as the only sciences, in which we can carry on a chain of reasoning to any degree of intricacy, and yet preserve a perfect exactness and certainty. We are possest of a precise standard, by which we can judge of the equality and proportion of numbers; and according as they correspond or not to that standard, we determine their relations, without any possibility of error. When two numbers are so combined, as that the one has always an unite answering to every unite of the other, we pronounce them equal; and it is for want of such a standard of equality in extension, that geometry can scarce be esteemed a perfect and infallible science.

But here it may not be amiss to obviate a difficulty, which may arise from my asserting, that though geometry falls short of that perfect precision and certainty, which are peculiar to arithmetic and algebra, yet it excels the imperfect judgments of our senses and imagination. The reason why I impute any defect to geometry, is, because its original and fundamental principles are derived merely from appearances; and it may perhaps be imagined, that this defect must always attend it, and keep it from ever reaching a greater exactness in the comparison of objects or ideas, than what our eye or imagination alone is able to attain. I own that this defect so far attends it, as to keep it from ever aspiring to a full certainty: But since these fundamental principles depend on the easiest and least deceitful appearances, they bestow on their consequences a degree of exactness, of which these consequences are singly incapable. It is impossible for the eye to determine the angles of a chiliagon to be equal to 1996 right angles, or make any conjecture, that approaches this proportion; but when it determines, that right lines cannot concur; that we cannot draw more than one right line between two given points; it’s mistakes can never be of any consequence. And this is the nature and use of geometry, to run us up to such appearances, as, by reason of their simplicity, cannot lead us into any considerable error.

I shall here take occasion to propose a second observation concerning our demonstrative reasonings, which is suggested by the same subject of the mathematics. It is usual with mathematicians, to pretend, that those ideas, which are their objects, are of so refined and spiritual a nature, that they fall not under the conception of the fancy, but must be comprehended by a pure and intellectual view, of which the superior faculties of the soul are alone capable. The same notion runs through most parts of philosophy, and is principally made use of to explain oar abstract ideas, and to shew how we can form an idea of a triangle, for instance, which shall neither be an isoceles nor scalenum, nor be confined to any particular length and proportion of sides. It is easy to see, why philosophers are so fond of this notion of some spiritual and refined perceptions; since by that means they cover many of their absurdities, and may refuse to submit to the decisions of clear ideas, by appealing to such as are obscure and uncertain. But to destroy this artifice, we need but reflect on that principle so oft insisted on, that all our ideas are copyed from our impressions. For from thence we may immediately conclude, that since all impressions are clear and precise, the ideas, which are copyed from them, must be of the same nature, and can never, but from our fault, contain any thing so dark and intricate. An idea is by its very nature weaker and fainter than an impression; but being in every other respect the same, cannot imply any very great mystery. If its weakness render it obscure, it is our business to remedy that defect, as much as possible, by keeping the idea steady and precise; and till we have done so, it is in vain to pretend to reasoning and philosophy.

SECT. II. OF PROBABILITY, AND OF THE IDEA OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

This is all I think necessary to observe concerning those four relations, which are the foundation of science; but as to the other three, which depend not upon the idea, and may be absent or present even while that remains the same, it will be proper to explain them more particularly. These three relations are identity, the situations in time and place, and causation.

All kinds of reasoning consist in nothing but a comparison, and a discovery of those relations, either constant or inconstant, which two or more objects bear to each other. This comparison we may make, either when both the objects are present to the senses, or when neither of them is present, or when only one. When both the objects are present to the senses along with the relation, we call this perception rather than reasoning; nor is there in this case any exercise of the thought, or any action, properly speaking, but a mere passive admission of the impressions through the organs of sensation. According to this way of thinking, we ought not to receive as reasoning any of the observations we may make concerning identity, and the relations of time and place; since in none of them the mind can go beyond what is immediately present to the senses, either to discover the real existence or the relations of objects. It is only causation, which produces such a connexion, as to give us assurance from the existence or action of one object, that it was followed or preceded by any other existence or action; nor can the other two relations be ever made use of in reasoning, except so far as they either affect or are affected by it. There is nothing in any objects to perswade us, that they are either always remote or always contiguous; and when from experience and observation we discover, that their relation in this particular is invariable, we, always conclude there is some secret cause, which separates or unites them. The same reasoning extends to identity. We readily suppose an object may continue individually the same, though several times absent from and present to the senses; and ascribe to it an identity, notwithstanding the interruption of the perception, whenever we conclude, that if we had kept our eye or hand constantly upon it, it would have conveyed an invariable and uninterrupted perception. But this conclusion beyond the impressions of our senses can be founded only on the connexion of cause and effect; nor can we otherwise have any security, that the object is not changed upon us, however much the new object may resemble that which was formerly present to the senses. Whenever we discover such a perfect resemblance, we consider, whether it be common in that species of objects; whether possibly or probably any cause coued operate in producing the change and resemblance; and according as we determine concerning these causes and effects, we form our judgment concerning the identity of the object.

Here then it appears, that of those three relations, which depend not upon the mere ideas, the only one, that can be traced beyond our senses and informs us of existences and objects, which we do not see or feel, is causation. This relation, therefore, we shall endeavour to explain fully before we leave the subject of the understanding.

To begin regularly, we must consider the idea of causation, and see from what origin it is derived. It is impossible to reason justly, without understanding perfectly the idea concerning which we reason; and it is impossible perfectly to understand any idea, without tracing it up to its origin, and examining that primary impression, from which it arises. The examination of the impression bestows a clearness on the idea; and the examination of the idea bestows a like clearness on all our reasoning.

Let us therefore cast our eye on any two objects, which we call cause and effect, and turn them on all sides, in order to find that impression, which produces an idea, of such prodigious consequence. At first sight I perceive, that I must not search for it in any of the particular qualities of the objects; since which-ever of these qualities I pitch on, I find some object, that is not possessed of it, and yet falls under the denomination of cause or effect. And indeed there is nothing existent, either externally or internally, which is not to be considered either as a cause or an effect; though it is plain there is no one quality, which universally belongs to all beings, and gives them a title to that denomination.

The idea, then, of causation must be derived from some relation among objects; and that relation we must now endeavour to discover. I find in the first place, that whatever objects are considered as causes or effects, are contiguous; and that nothing can operate in a time or place, which is ever so little removed from those of its existence. Though distant objects may sometimes seem productive of each other, they are commonly found upon examination to be linked by a chain of causes, which are contiguous among themselves, and to the distant objects; and when in any particular instance we cannot discover this connexion, we still presume it to exist. We may therefore consider the relation of CONTIGUITY as essential to that of causation; at least may suppose it such, according to the general opinion, till we can find a more [Part IV. Sect. 5.] proper occasion to clear up this matter, by examining what objects are or are not susceptible of juxtaposition and conjunction.

The second relation I shall observe as essential to causes and effects, is not so universally acknowledged, but is liable to some controversy. It is that of PRIORITY Of time in the cause before the effect. Some pretend that it is not absolutely necessary a cause should precede its effect; but that any object or action, in the very first moment of its existence, may exert its productive quality, and give rise to another object or action, perfectly co-temporary with itself. But beside that experience in most instances seems to contradict this opinion, we may establish the relation of priority by a kind of inference or reasoning. It is an established maxim both in natural and moral philosophy, that an object, which exists for any time in its full perfection without producing another, is not its sole cause; but is assisted by some other principle, which pushes it from its state of inactivity, and makes it exert that energy, of which it was secretly possest. Now if any cause may be perfectly co-temporary with its effect, it is certain, according to this maxim, that they must all of them be so; since any one of them, which retards its operation for a single moment, exerts not itself at that very individual time, in which it might have operated; and therefore is no proper cause. The consequence of this would be no less than the destruction of that succession of causes, which we observe in the world; and indeed, the utter annihilation of time. For if one cause were co-temporary with its effect, and this effect with its effect, and so on, it is plain there would be no such thing as succession, and all objects must be co-existent.

If this argument appear satisfactory, it is well. If not, I beg the reader to allow me the same liberty, which I have used in the preceding case, of supposing it such. For he shall find, that the affair is of no great importance.

Having thus discovered or supposed the two relations of contiguity and succession to be essential to causes and effects, I find I am stopt short, and can proceed no farther in considering any single instance of cause and effect. Motion in one body is regarded upon impulse as the cause of motion in another. When we consider these objects with utmost attention, we find only that the one body approaches the other; and that the motion of it precedes that of the other, but without any, sensible interval. It is in vain to rack ourselves with farther thought and reflection upon this subject. We can go no farther in considering this particular instance.

Should any one leave this instance, and pretend to define a cause, by saying it is something productive of another, it is evident he would say nothing. For what does he mean by production? Can he give any definition of it, that will not be the same with that of causation? If he can; I desire it may be produced. If he cannot; he here runs in a circle, and gives a synonimous term instead of a definition.

Shall we then rest contented with these two relations of contiguity and succession, as affording a complete idea of causation? By, no means. An object may be contiguous and prior to another, without being considered as its cause. There is a NECESSARY CONNEXION to be taken into consideration; and that relation is of much greater importance, than any of the other two above-mentioned.

Here again I turn the object on all sides, in order to discover the nature of this necessary connexion, and find the impression, or impressions, from which its idea may be derived. When I cast my eye on the known Qualities of objects, I immediately discover that the relation of cause and effect depends not in the least on them. When I consider their relations, I can find none but those of contiguity and succession; which I have already regarded as imperfect and unsatisfactory. Shall the despair of success make me assert, that I am here possest of an idea, which is not preceded by any similar impression? This would be too strong a proof of levity and inconstancy; since the contrary principle has been already so firmly established, as to admit of no farther doubt; at least, till we have more fully examined the present difficulty.

We must, therefore, proceed like those, who being in search of any thing, that lies concealed from them, and not finding it in the place they expected, beat about all the neighbouring fields, without any certain view or design, in hopes their good fortune will at last guide them to what they search for. It is necessary for us to leave the direct survey of this question concerning the nature of that necessary connexion, which enters into our idea of cause and effect; and endeavour to find some other questions, the examination of which will perhaps afford a hint, that may serve to clear up the present difficulty. Of these questions there occur two, which I shall proceed to examine, viz.

First, For what reason we pronounce it necessary, that every thing whose existence has a beginning, should also have a cause.

Secondly, Why we conclude, that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular effects; and what is the nature of that inference we draw from the one to the other, and of the belief we repose in it?

I shall only observe before I proceed any farther, that though the ideas of cause and effect be derived from the impressions of reflection as well as from those of sensation, yet for brevity's sake, I commonly mention only the latter as the origin of these ideas; though I desire that whatever I say of them may also extend to the former. Passions are connected with their objects and with one another; no less than external bodies are connected together. The same relation, then, of cause and effect, which belongs to one, must be common to all of them.

SECT. III. WHY A CAUSE IS ALWAYS NECESSARY.

To begin with the first question concerning the necessity of a cause: It is a general maxim in philosophy, that whatever begins to exist, must have a cause of existence. This is commonly taken for granted in all reasonings, without any proof given or demanded. It is supposed to be founded on intuition, and to be one of those maxims, which though they may be denyed with the lips, it is impossible for men in their hearts really to doubt of. But if we examine this maxim by the idea of knowledge above-explained, we shall discover in it no mark of any such intuitive certainty; but on the contrary shall find, that it is of a nature quite foreign to that species of conviction.

All certainty arises from the comparison of ideas, and from the discovery of such relations as are unalterable, so long as the ideas continue the same. These relations are RESEMBLANCE, PROPORTIONS IN QUANTITY AND NUMBER, DEGREES OF ANY QUALITY, and CONTRARIETY; none of which are implyed in this proposition, Whatever has a beginning has also a cause of existence. That proposition therefore is not intuitively certain. At least any one, who would assert it to be intuitively certain, must deny these to be the only infallible relations, and must find some other relation of that kind to be implyed in it; which it will then be time enough to examine.

But here is an argument, which proves at once, that the foregoing proposition is neither intuitively nor demonstrably certain. We can never demonstrate the necessity of a cause to every new existence, or new modification of existence, without shewing at the same time the impossibility there is, that any thing can ever begin to exist without some productive principle; and where the latter proposition cannot be proved, we must despair of ever being able to prove the former. Now that the latter proposition is utterly incapable of a demonstrative proof, we may satisfy ourselves by considering that as all distinct ideas are separable from each other, and as the ideas of cause and effect are evidently distinct, it will be easy for us to conceive any object to be non-existent this moment, and existent the next, without conjoining to it the distinct idea of a cause or productive principle. The separation, therefore, of the idea of a cause from that of a beginning of existence, is plainly possible for the imagination; and consequently the actual separation of these objects is so far possible, that it implies no contradiction nor absurdity; and is therefore incapable of being refuted by any reasoning from mere ideas; without which it is impossible to demonstrate the necessity of a cause.

Accordingly we shall find upon examination, that every demonstration, which has been produced for the necessity of a cause, is fallacious and sophistical. All the points of time and place, say some philosophers [Mr. Hobbes.], in which we can suppose any object to begin to exist, are in themselves equal; and unless there be some cause, which is peculiar to one time and to one place, and which by that means determines and fixes the existence, it must remain in eternal suspence; and the object can never begin to be, for want of something to fix its beginning. But I ask; Is there any more difficulty in supposing the time and place to be fixed without a cause, than to suppose the existence to be determined in that manner? The first question that occurs on this subject is always, whether the object shall exist or not: The next, when and where it shall begin to exist. If the removal of a cause be intuitively absurd in the one case, it must be so in the other: And if that absurdity be not clear without a proof in the one case, it will equally require one in the other. The absurdity, then, of the one supposition can never be a proof of that of the other; since they are both upon the same footing, and must stand or fall by the same reasoning.

The second argument [Dr. Clarke and others.], which I find used on this head, labours under an equal difficulty. Every thing, it is said, must have a cause; for if any thing wanted a cause, it would produce ITSELF; that is, exist before it existed; which is impossible. But this reasoning is plainly unconclusive; because it supposes, that in our denial of a cause we still grant what we expressly deny, viz. that there must be a cause; which therefore is taken to be the object itself; and that, no doubt, is an evident contradiction. But to say that any thing is produced, or to express myself more properly, comes into existence, without a cause, is not to affirm, that it is itself its own cause; but on the contrary in excluding all external causes, excludes a fortiori the thing itself, which is created. An object, that exists absolutely without any cause, certainly is not its own cause; and when you assert, that the one follows from the other, you suppose the very point in questions and take it for granted, that it is utterly impossible any thing can ever begin to exist without a cause, but that, upon the exclusion of one productive principle, we must still have recourse to another.

It is exactly the same case with the third argument [Mr. Locke.], which has been employed to demonstrate the necessity of a cause. Whatever is produced without any cause, is produced by nothing; or in other words, has nothing for its cause. But nothing can never be a cause, no more than it can be something, or equal to two right angles. By the same intuition, that we perceive nothing not to be equal to two right angles, or not to be something, we perceive, that it can never be a cause; and consequently must perceive, that every object has a real cause of its existence.

I believe it will not be necessary to employ many words in shewing the weakness of this argument, after what I have said of the foregoing. They are all of them founded on the same fallacy, and are derived from the same turn of thought. It is sufficient only to observe, that when we exclude all causes we really do exclude them, and neither suppose nothing nor the object itself to be the causes of the existence; and consequently can draw no argument from the absurdity of these suppositions to prove the absurdity of that exclusion. If every thing must have a cause, it follows, that upon the exclusion of other causes we must accept of the object itself or of nothing as causes. But it is the very point in question, whether every thing must have a cause or not; and therefore, according to all just reasoning, it ought never to be taken for granted.

They are still more frivolous, who say, that every effect must have a cause, because it is implyed in the very idea of effect. Every effect necessarily pre-supposes a cause; effect being a relative term, of which cause is the correlative. But this does not prove, that every being must be preceded by a cause; no more than it follows, because every husband must have a wife, that therefore every man must be marryed. The true state of the question is, whether every object, which begins to exist, must owe its existence to a cause: and this I assert neither to be intuitively nor demonstratively certain, and hope to have proved it sufficiently by the foregoing arguments.

Since it is not from knowledge or any scientific reasoning, that we derive the opinion of the necessity of a cause to every new production, that opinion must necessarily arise from observation and experience. The next question, then, should naturally be, how experience gives rise to such a principle? But as I find it will be more convenient to sink this question in the following, Why we conclude, that such particular causes must necessarily have such particular erects, and why we form an inference from one to another? we shall make that the subject of our future enquiry. It will, perhaps, be found in the end, that the same answer will serve for both questions.

SECT. IV. OF THE COMPONENT PARTS OF OUR REASONINGS CONCERNING CAUSE AND EFFECT.

Though the mind in its reasonings from causes or effects carries its view beyond those objects, which it sees or remembers, it must never lose sight of them entirely, nor reason merely upon its own ideas, without some mixture of impressions, or at least of ideas of the memory, which are equivalent to impressions. When we infer effects from causes, we must establish the existence of these causes; which we have only two ways of doing, either by an immediate perception of our memory or senses, or by an inference from other causes; which causes again we must ascertain in the same manner, either by a present impression, or by an inference from their causes, and so on, till we arrive at some object, which we see or remember. It is impossible for us to carry on our inferences IN INFINITUM; and the only thing, that can stop them, is an impression of the memory or senses, beyond which there is no room for doubt or enquiry.

To give an instance of this, we may chuse any point of history, and consider for what reason we either believe or reject it. Thus we believe that Caesar was killed in the senate-house on the ides of March; and that because this fact is established on the unanimous testimony of historians, who agree to assign this precise time and place to that event. Here are certain characters and letters present either to our memory or senses; which characters we likewise remember to have been used as the signs of certain ideas; and these ideas were either in the minds of such as were immediately present at that action, and received the ideas directly from its existence; or they were derived from the testimony of others, and that again from another testimony, by a visible gradation, it will we arrive at those who were eyewitnesses and spectators of the event. It is obvious all this chain of argument or connexion of causes and effects, is at first founded on those characters or letters, which are seen or remembered, and that without the authority either of the memory or senses our whole reasoning would be chimerical and without foundation. Every link of the chain would in that case hang upon another; but there would not be any thing fixed to one end of it, capable of sustaining the whole; and consequently there would be no belief nor evidence. And this actually is the case with all hypothetical arguments, or reasonings upon a supposition; there being in them, neither any present impression, nor belief of a real existence.

I need not observe, that it is no just objection to the present doctrine, that we can reason upon our past conclusions or principles, without having recourse to those impressions, from which they first arose. For even supposing these impressions should be entirely effaced from the memory, the conviction they produced may still remain; and it is equally true, that all reasonings concerning causes and effects are originally derived from some impression; in the same manner, as the assurance of a demonstration proceeds always from a comparison of ideas, though it may continue after the comparison is forgot.

SECT. V. OF THE IMPRESSIONS OF THE SENSES AND MEMORY.

In this kind of reasoning, then, from causation, we employ materials, which are of a mixed and heterogeneous nature, and which, however connected, are yet essentially different from each other. All our arguments concerning causes and effects consist both of an impression of the memory or, senses, and of the idea of that existence, which produces the object of the impression, or is produced by it. Here therefore we have three things to explain, viz. First, The original impression. Secondly, The transition to the idea of the connected cause or effect. Thirdly, The nature and qualities of that idea.

As to those impressions, which arise from the senses, their ultimate cause is, in my opinion, perfectly inexplicable by human reason, and it will always be impossible to decide with certainty, whether they arise immediately from the object, or are produced by the creative power of the mind, or are derived from the author of our being. Nor is such a question any way material to our present purpose. We may draw inferences from the coherence of our perceptions, whether they be true or false; whether they represent nature justly, or be mere illusions of the senses.

When we search for the characteristic, which distinguishes the memory from the imagination, we must immediately perceive, that it cannot lie in the simple ideas it presents to us; since both these faculties borrow their simple ideas from the impressions, and can never go beyond these original perceptions. These faculties are as little distinguished from each other by the arrangement of their complex ideas. For though it be a peculiar property of the memory to preserve the original order and position of its ideas, while the imagination transposes and changes them, as it pleases; yet this difference is not sufficient to distinguish them in their operation, or make us know the one from the other; it being impossible to recal the past impressions, in order to compare them with our present ideas, and see whether their arrangement be exactly similar. Since therefore the memory, is known, neither by the order of its complex ideas, nor the nature of its simple ones; it follows, that the difference betwixt it and the imagination lies in its superior force and vivacity. A man may indulge his fancy in feigning any past scene of adventures; nor would there be any possibility of distinguishing this from a remembrance of a like kind, were not the ideas of the imagination fainter and more obscure.

It frequently happens, that when two men have been engaged in any scene of action, the one shall remember it much better than the other, and shall have all the difficulty in the world to make his companion recollect it. He runs over several circumstances in vain; mentions the time, the place, the company, what was said, what was done on all sides; till at last he hits on some lucky circumstance, that revives the whole, and gives his friend a perfect memory of every thing. Here the person that forgets receives at first all the ideas from the discourse of the other, with the same circumstances of time and place; though he considers them as mere fictions of the imagination. But as soon as the circumstance is mentioned, that touches the memory, the very same ideas now appear in a new light, and have, in a manner, a different feeling from what they had before. Without any other alteration, beside that of the feeling, they become immediately ideas of the memory, and are assented to.

Since, therefore, the imagination can represent all the same objects that the memory can offer to us, and since those faculties are only distinguished by the different feeling of the ideas they present, it may be proper to consider what is the nature of that feeling. And here I believe every one will readily agree with me, that the ideas of the memory are more strong and lively than those of the fancy.

A painter, who intended to represent a passion or emotion of any kind, would endeavour to get a sight of a person actuated by a like emotion, in order to enliven his ideas, and give them a force and vivacity superior to what is found in those, which are mere fictions of the imagination. The more recent this memory is, the clearer is the idea; and when after a long interval he would return to the contemplation of his object, he always finds its idea to be much decayed, if not wholly obliterated. We are frequently in doubt concerning the ideas of the memory, as they become very weak and feeble; and are at a loss to determine whether any image proceeds from the fancy or the memory, when it is not drawn in such lively colours as distinguish that latter faculty. I think, I remember such an event, says one; but am not sure. A long tract of time has almost worn it out of my memory, and leaves me uncertain whether or not it be the pure offspring of my fancy.

And as an idea of the memory, by losing its force and vivacity, may degenerate to such a degree, as to be taken for an idea of the imagination; so on the other hand an idea of the imagination may acquire such a force and vivacity, as to pass for an idea of the memory, and counterfeit its effects on the belief and judgment. This is noted in the case of liars; who by the frequent repetition of their lies, come at last to believe and remember them, as realities; custom and habit having in this case, as in many others, the same influence on the mind as nature, and infixing the idea with equal force and vigour.

Thus it appears, that the belief or assent, which always attends the memory and senses, is nothing but the vivacity of those perceptions they present; and that this alone distinguishes them from the imagination. To believe is in this case to feel an immediate impression of the senses, or a repetition of that impression in the memory. It is merely the force and liveliness of the perception, which constitutes the first act of the judgment, and lays the foundation of that reasoning, which we build upon it, when we trace the relation of cause and effect.

SECT. VI. OF THE INFERENCE FROM THE IMPRESSION TO THE IDEA.

It is easy to observe, that in tracing this relation, the inference we draw from cause to effect, is not derived merely from a survey of these particular objects, and from such a penetration into their essences as may discover the dependance of the one upon the other. There is no object, which implies the existence of any other if we consider these objects in themselves, and never look beyond the ideas which we form of them. Such an inference would amount to knowledge, and would imply the absolute contradiction and impossibility of conceiving any thing different. But as all distinct ideas are separable, it is evident there can be no impossibility of that kind. When we pass from a present impression to the idea of any object, we might possibly have separated the idea from the impression, and have substituted any other idea in its room.

It is therefore by EXPERIENCE only, that we can infer the existence of one object from that of another. The nature of experience is this. We remember to have had frequent instances of the existence of one species of objects; and also remember, that the individuals of another species of objects have always attended them, and have existed in a regular order of contiguity and succession with regard to them. Thus we remember, to have seen that species of object we call flame, and to have felt that species of sensation we call heat. We likewise call to mind their constant conjunction in all past instances. Without any farther ceremony, we call the one cause and the other effect, and infer the existence of the one from that of the other. In all those instances, from which we learn the conjunction of particular causes and effects, both the causes and effects have been perceived by the senses, and are remembered But in all cases, wherein we reason concerning them, there is only one perceived or remembered, and the other is supplyed in conformity to our past experience.

Thus in advancing we have insensibly discovered a new relation betwixt cause and effect, when we least expected it, and were entirely employed upon another subject. This relation is their CONSTANT CONJUNCTION. Contiguity and succession are not sufficient to make us pronounce any two objects to be cause and effect, unless we perceive, that these two relations are preserved in several instances. We may now see the advantage of quitting the direct survey of this relation, in order to discover the nature of that necessary connexion, which makes so essential a part of it. There are hopes, that by this means we may at last arrive at our proposed end; though to tell the truth, this new-discovered relation of a constant conjunction seems to advance us but very little in our way. For it implies no more than this, that like objects have always been placed in like relations of contiguity and succession; and it seems evident, at least at first sight, that by this means we can never discover any new idea, and can only multiply, but not enlarge the objects of our mind. It may be thought, that what we learn not from one object, we can never learn from a hundred, which are all of the same kind, and are perfectly resembling in every circumstance. As our senses shew us in one instance two bodies, or motions, or qualities in certain relations of success and contiguity; so our memory presents us only with a multitude of instances, wherein we always find like bodies, motions, or qualities in like relations. From the mere repetition of any past impression, even to infinity, there never will arise any new original idea, such as that of a necessary connexion; and the number of impressions has in this case no more effect than if we confined ourselves to one only. But though this reasoning seems just and obvious; yet as it would be folly to despair too soon, we shall continue the thread of our discourse; and having found, that after the discovery of the constant conjunction of any objects, we always draw an inference from one object to another, we shall now examine the nature of that inference, and of the transition from the impression to the idea. Perhaps it will appear in the end, that the necessary connexion depends on the inference, instead of the inference's depending on the necessary connexion.

Since it appears, that the transition from an impression present to the memory or senses to the idea of an object, which we call cause or effect, is founded on past experience, and on our remembrance of their constant conjunction, the next question is, Whether experience produces the idea by means of the understanding or imagination; whether we are determined by reason to make the transition, or by a certain association and relation of perceptions. If reason determined us, it would proceed upon that principle, that instances, of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continues always uniformly the same. In order therefore to clear up this matter, let us consider all the arguments, upon which such a proposition may be supposed to be founded; and as these must be derived either from knowledge or probability, let us cast our eye on each of these degrees of evidence, and see whether they afford any just conclusion of this nature.

Our foregoing method of reasoning will easily convince us, that there can be no demonstrative arguments to prove, that those instances, of which we have, had no experience, resemble those, of which we have had experience. We can at least conceive a change in the course of nature; which sufficiently proves, that such a change is not absolutely impossible. To form a clear idea of any thing, is an undeniable argument for its possibility, and is alone a refutation of any pretended demonstration against it.

Probability, as it discovers not the relations of ideas, considered as such, but only those of objects, must in some respects be founded on the impressions of our memory and senses, and in some respects on our ideas. Were there no mixture of any impression in our probable reasonings, the conclusion would be entirely chimerical: And were there no mixture of ideas, the action of the mind, in observing the relation, would, properly speaking, be sensation, not reasoning. It is therefore necessary, that in all probable reasonings there be something present to the mind, either seen or remembered; and that from this we infer something connected with it, which is not seen nor remembered.

The only connexion or relation of objects, which can lead us beyond the immediate impressions of our memory and senses, is that of cause and effect; and that because it is the only one, on which we can found a just inference from one object to another. The idea of cause and effect is derived from experience, which informs us, that such particular objects, in all past instances, have been constantly conjoined with each other: And as an object similar to one of these is supposed to be immediately present in its impression, we thence presume on the existence of one similar to its usual attendant. According to this account of things, which is, I think, in every point unquestionable, probability is founded on the presumption of a resemblance betwixt those objects, of which we have had experience, and those, of which we have had none; and therefore it is impossible this presumption can arise from probability. The same principle cannot be both the cause and effect of another; and this is, perhaps, the only proposition concerning that relation, which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain.

Should any one think to elude this argument; and without determining whether our reasoning on this subject be derived from demonstration or probability, pretend that all conclusions from causes and effects are built on solid reasoning: I can only desire, that this reasoning may be produced, in order to be exposed to our examination. It may, perhaps, be said, that after experience of the constant conjunction of certain objects, we reason in the following manner. Such an object is always found to produce another. It is impossible it coued have this effect, if it was not endowed with a power of production. The power necessarily implies the effect; and therefore there is a just foundation for drawing a conclusion from the existence of one object to that of its usual attendant. The past production implies a power: The power implies a new production: And the new production is what we infer from the power and the past production.

It were easy for me to shew the weakness of this reasoning, were I willing to make use of those observations, I have already made, that the idea of production is the same with that of causation, and that no existence certainly and demonstratively implies a power in any other object; or were it proper to anticipate what I shall have occasion to remark afterwards concerning the idea we form of power and efficacy. But as such a method of proceeding may seem either to weaken my system, by resting one part of it on another, or to breed a confusion in my reasoning, I shall endeavour to maintain my present assertion without any such assistance.

It shall therefore be allowed for a moment, that the production of one object by another in any one instance implies a power; and that this power is connected with its effect. But it having been already proved, that the power lies not in the sensible qualities of the cause; and there being nothing but the sensible qualities present to us; I ask, why in other instances you presume that the same power still exists, merely upon the appearance of these qualities? Your appeal to past experience decides nothing in the present case; and at the utmost can only prove, that that very object, which produced any other, was at that very instant endowed with such a power; but can never prove, that the same power must continue in the same object or collection of sensible qualities; much less, that a like power is always conjoined with like sensible qualities, should it be said, that we have experience, that the same power continues united with the same object, and that like objects are endowed with like powers, I would renew my question, why from this experience we form any conclusion beyond those past instances, of which we have had experience. If you answer this question in, the same manner as the preceding, your answer gives still occasion to a new question of the same kind, even in infinitum; which clearly proves, that the foregoing reasoning had no just foundation.

Thus not only our reason fails us in the discovery of the ultimate connexion of causes and effects, but even after experience has informed us of their constant conjunction, it is impossible for us to satisfy ourselves by our reason, why we should extend that experience beyond those particular instances, which have fallen under our observation. We suppose, but are never able to prove, that there must be a resemblance betwixt those objects, of which we have had experience, and those which lie beyond the reach of our discovery.

We have already taken notice of certain relations, which make us pass from one object to another, even though there be no reason to determine us to that transition; and this we may establish for a general rule, that wherever the mind constantly and uniformly makes a transition without any reason, it is influenced by these relations. Now this is exactly the present case. Reason can never shew us the connexion of one object with another, though aided by experience, and the observation of their constant conjunction in all past instances. When the mind, therefore, passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determined by reason, but by certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects, and unite them in the imagination. Had ideas no more union in the fancy than objects seem to have to the understanding, we coued never draw any inference from causes to effects, nor repose belief in any matter of fact. The inference, therefore, depends solely on the union of ideas.

The principles of union among ideas, I have reduced to three general ones, and have asserted, that the idea or impression of any object naturally introduces the idea of any other object, that is resembling, contiguous to, or connected with it. These principles I allow to be neither the infallible nor the sole causes of an union among ideas. They are not the infallible causes. For one may fix his attention during Sometime on any one object without looking farther. They are not the sole causes. For the thought has evidently a very irregular motion in running along its objects, and may leap from the heavens to the earth, from one end of the creation to the other, without any certain method or order. But though I allow this weakness in these three relations, and this irregularity in the imagination; yet I assert that the only general principles, which associate ideas, are resemblance, contiguity and causation.

There is indeed a principle of union among ideas, which at first sight may be esteemed different from any of these, but will be found at the bottom to depend on the same origin. When every individual of any species of objects is found by experience to be constantly united with an individual of another species, the appearance of any new individual of either species naturally conveys the thought to its usual attendant. Thus because such a particular idea is commonly annexed to such a particular word, nothing is required but the hearing of that word to produce the correspondent idea; and it will scarce be possible for the mind, by its utmost efforts, to prevent that transition. In this case it is not absolutely necessary, that upon hearing such a particular sound we should reflect on any past experience, and consider what idea has been usually connected with the sound. The imagination of itself supplies the place of this reflection, and is so accustomed to pass from the word to the idea, that it interposes not a moment's delay betwixt the hearing of the one, and the conception of the other.

But though I acknowledge this to be a true principle of association among ideas, I assert it to be the very same with that betwixt the ideas of cause and effects and to be an essential part in all our reasonings from that relation. We have no other notion of cause and effect, but that of certain objects, which have been always conjoined together, and which in all past instances have been found inseparable. We cannot penetrate into the reason of the conjunction. We only observe the thing itself, and always find that from the constant conjunction the objects acquire an union in the imagination. When the impression of one becomes present to us, we immediately form an idea of its usual attendant; and consequently we may establish this as one part of the definition of an opinion or belief, that it is an idea related to or associated with a present impression.

Thus though causation be a philosophical relation, as implying contiguity, succession, and constant conjunction, yet it is only so far as it is a natural relation, and produces an union among our ideas, that we are able to reason upon it, or draw any inference from it.

SECT. VII. OF THE NATURE OF THE IDEA OR BELIEF.

The idea of an object is an essential part of the belief of it, but not the whole. We conceive many things, which we do not believe. In order then to discover more fully the nature of belief, or the qualities of those ideas we assent to, let us weigh the following considerations.

It is evident, that all reasonings from causes or effects terminate in conclusions, concerning matter of fact; that is, concerning the existence of objects or of their qualities. It is also evident, that the idea, of existence is nothing different from the idea of any object, and that when after the simple conception of any thing we would conceive it as existent, we in reality make no addition to or alteration on our first idea. Thus when we affirm, that God is existent, we simply form the idea of such a being, as he is represented to us; nor is the existence, which we attribute to him, conceived by a particular idea, which we join to the idea of his other qualities, and can again separate and distinguish from them. But I go farther; and not content with asserting, that the conception of the existence of any object is no addition to the simple conception of it, I likewise maintain, that the belief of the existence joins no new ideas to those which compose the idea of the object. When I think of God, when I think of him as existent, and when I believe him to be existent, my idea of him neither encreases nor diminishes. But as it is certain there is a great difference betwixt the simple conception of the existence of an object, and the belief of it, and as this difference lies not in the parts or composition of the idea, which we conceive; it follows, that it must lie in the manner, in which we conceive it.

Suppose a person present with me, who advances propositions, to which I do not assent, that Caesar dyed in his bed, that silver is more fusible, than lead, or mercury heavier than gold; it is evident, that notwithstanding my incredulity, I clearly understand his meaning, and form all the same ideas, which he forms. My imagination is endowed with the same powers as his; nor is it possible for him to conceive any idea, which I cannot conceive; nor conjoin any, which I cannot conjoin. I therefore ask, Wherein consists the difference betwixt believing and disbelieving any proposition? The answer is easy with regard to propositions, that are proved by intuition or demonstration. In that case, the person, who assents, not only conceives the ideas according to the proposition, but is necessarily determined to conceive them in that particular manner, either immediately or by the interposition of other ideas. Whatever is absurd is unintelligible; nor is it possible for the imagination to conceive any thing contrary to a demonstration. But as in reasonings from causation, and concerning matters of fact, this absolute necessity cannot take place, and the imagination is free to conceive both sides of the question, I still ask, Wherein consists the deference betwixt incredulity and belief? since in both cases the conception of the idea is equally possible and requisite.

It will not be a satisfactory answer to say, that a person, who does not assent to a proposition you advance; after having conceived the object in the same manner with you; immediately conceives it in a different manner, and has different ideas of it. This answer is unsatisfactory; not because it contains any falshood, but because it discovers not all the truth. It is contest, that in all cases, wherein we dissent from any person, we conceive both sides of the question; but as we can believe only one, it evidently follows, that the belief must make some difference betwixt that conception to which we assent, and that from which we dissent. We may mingle, and unite, and separate, and confound, and vary our ideas in a hundred different ways; but until there appears some principle, which fixes one of these different situations, we have in reality no opinion: And this principle, as it plainly makes no addition to our precedent ideas, can only change the manner of our conceiving them.

All the perceptions of the mind are of two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas, which differ from each other only in their different degrees of force and vivacity. Our ideas are copyed from our impressions, and represent them in all their parts. When you would any way vary the idea of a particular object, you can only encrease or diminish its force and vivacity. If you make any other change on it, it represents a different object or impression. The case is the same as in colours. A particular shade of any colour may acquire a new degree of liveliness or brightness without any other variation. But when you produce any other variation, it is no longer the same shade or colour. So that as belief does nothing but vary the manner, in which we conceive any object, it can only bestow on our ideas an additional force and vivacity. An opinion, therefore, or belief may be most accurately defined, a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression.

We may here take occasion to observe a very remarkable error, which being frequently inculcated in the schools, has become a kind of establishd maxim, and is universally received by all logicians. This error consists in the vulgar division of the acts of the understanding, into CONCEPTION, JUDGMENT and REASONING, and in the definitions we give of them. Conception is defind to be the simple survey of one or more ideas: Judgment to be the separating or uniting of different ideas: Reasoning to be the separating or uniting of different ideas by the interposition of others, which show the relation they bear to each other. But these distinctions and definitions are faulty in very considerable articles. For FIRST, it is far from being true, that in every judgment, which we form, we unite two different ideas; since in that proposition, GOD IS, or indeed any other, which regards existence, the idea of existence is no distinct idea, which we unite with that of the object, and which is capable of forming a compound idea by the union. SECONDLY, As we can thus form a proposition, which contains only one idea, so we may exert our reason without employing more than two ideas, and without having recourse to a third to serve as a medium betwixt them. We infer a cause immediately from its effect; and this inference is not only a true species of reasoning, but the strongest of all others, and more convincing than when we interpose another idea to connect the two extremes. What we may in general affirm concerning these three acts of the understanding is, that taking them in a proper light, they all resolve themselves into the first, and are nothing but particular ways of conceiving our objects. Whether we consider a single object, or several; whether we dwell on these objects, or run from them to others; and in whatever form or order we survey them, the act of the mind exceeds not a simple conception; and the only remarkable difference, which occurs on this occasion, is, when we join belief to the conception, and are persuaded of the truth of what we conceive. This act of the mind has never yet been explaind by any philosopher; and therefore I am at liberty to propose my hypothesis concerning it; which is, that it is only a strong and steady conception of any idea, and such as approaches in some measure to an immediate impression. [FN 5.]

[FN 5. Here are the heads of those arguments, which
lead us to this conclusion. When we infer the existence of

> an object from that of others, some object must always be present either to the memory or senses, in order to be the foundation of our reasoning; since the mind cannot run up with its inferences IN INFINITUM. Reason can never satisfy us that the existence of any one object does ever imply that of another; so that when we pass from the impression of one to the idea or belief of another, we are not determined by reason, but by custom or a principle of association. But belief is somewhat more than a simple idea. It is a particular manner of forming an idea: And as the same idea can only be varyed by a variation of its degrees of force and vivacity; it follows upon the whole, that belief is a lively idea produced by a relation to a present impression, according to the foregoing definition.]

This operation of the mind, which forms the belief of any matter of fact, seems hitherto to have been one of the greatest mysteries of philosophy; though no one has so much as suspected, that there was any difficulty in explaining it. For my part I must own, that I find a considerable difficulty in the case; and that even when I think I understand the subject perfectly, I am at a loss for terms to express my meaning. I conclude, by an induction which seems to me very evident, that an opinion or belief is nothing but an idea, that is different from a fiction, not in the nature or the order of its parts, but in the manner of its being conceived. But when I would explain this manner, I scarce find any word that fully answers the case, but am obliged to have recourse to every one’s feeling, in order to give him a perfect notion of this operation of the mind. An idea assented to FEELS different from a fictitious idea, that the fancy alone presents to us: And this different feeling I endeavour to explain by calling it a superior force, or vivacity, or solidity, or FIRMNESS, or steadiness. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of the mind, which renders realities more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. Provided we agree about the thing, it is needless to dispute about the terms. The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can join, and mix, and vary them in all the ways possible. It may conceive objects with all the circumstances of place and time. It may set them, in a manner, before our eyes in their true colours, just as they might have existed. But as it is impossible, that that faculty can ever, of itself, reach belief, it is evident, that belief consists not in the nature and order of our ideas, but in the manner of their conception, and in their feeling to the mind. T confess, that it is impossible to explain perfectly this feeling or manner of conception. We may make use of words, that express something near it. But its true and proper name is belief, which is a term that every one sufficiently understands in common life. And in philosophy we can go no farther, than assert, that it is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgment from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more force and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; infixes them in the mind; and renders them the governing principles of all our actions.

This definition will also be found to be entirely conformable to every one's feeling and experience. Nothing is more evident, than that those ideas, to which we assent, are more strong, firm and vivid, than the loose reveries of a castle-builder. If one person sits down to read a book as a romance, and another as a true history, they plainly receive the same ideas, and in the same order; nor does the incredulity of the one, and the belief of the other hinder them from putting the very same sense upon their author. His words produce the same ideas in both; though his testimony has not the same influence on them. The latter has a more lively conception of all the incidents. He enters deeper into the concerns of the persons: represents to himself their actions, and characters, and friendships, and enmities: He even goes so far as to form a notion of their features, and air, and person. While the former, who gives no credit to the testimony of the author, has a more faint and languid conception of all these particulars; and except on account of the style and ingenuity of the composition, can receive little entertainment from it.

SECT. VIII. OF THE CAUSES OF BELIEF.

Having thus explained the nature of belief, and shewn that it consists in a lively idea related to a present impression; let us now proceed to examine from what principles it is derived, and what bestows the vivacity on the idea.

I would willingly establish it as a general maxim in the science of human nature, that when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity. All the operations of the mind depend in a great measure on its disposition, when it performs them; and according as the spirits are more or less elevated, and the attention more or less fixed, the action will always have more or less vigour and vivacity. When therefore any object is presented, which elevates and enlivens the thought, every action, to which the mind applies itself, will be more strong and vivid, as Tong as that disposition continues, Now it is evident the continuance of the disposition depends entirely on the objects, about which the mind is employed; and that any new object naturally gives a new direction to the spirits, and changes the disposition; as on the contrary, when the mind fixes constantly on the same object, or passes easily and insensibly along related objects, the disposition has a much longer duration. Hence it happens, that when the mind is once inlivened by a present impression, it proceeds to form a more lively idea of the related objects, by a natural transition of the disposition from the one to the other. The change of the objects is so easy, that the mind is scarce sensible of it, but applies itself to the conception of the related idea with all the force and vivacity it acquired from the present impression.

If in considering the nature of relation, and that facility of transition, which is essential to it, we can satisfy ourselves concerning the reality of this phaenomenon, it is well: But I must confess I place my chief confidence in experience to prove so material a principle. We may, therefore, observe, as the first experiment to our present purpose, that upon the appearance of the picture of an absent friend, our idea of him is evidently inlivened by the resemblance, and that every passion, which that idea occasions, whether of joy or sorrow, acquires new force and vigour. In producing this effect there concur both a relation and a present impression. Where the picture bears him no resemblance, or at least was not intended for him, it never so much as conveys our thought to him: And where it is absent, as well as the person; though the mind may pass from the thought of the one to that of the other; it feels its idea to be rather weekend than inlivened by that transition. We take a pleasure in viewing the picture of a friend, when it is set before us; but when it is removed, rather choose to consider him directly, than by reflexion in an image, which is equally distinct and obscure.

The ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion may be considered as experiments of the same nature. The devotees of that strange superstition usually plead in excuse of the mummeries, with which they are upbraided, that they feel the good effect of those external motions, and postures, and actions, in enlivening their devotion, and quickening their fervour, which otherwise would decay away, if directed entirely to distant and immaterial objects. We shadow out the objects of our faith, say they, in sensible types and images, and render them more present to us by the immediate presence of these types, than it is possible for us to do, merely by an intellectual view and contemplation. Sensible objects have always a greater influence on the fancy than any other; and this influence they readily convey to those ideas, to which they are related, and which they Resemble. I shall only infer from these practices, and this reasoning, that the effect of resemblance in inlivening the idea is very common; and as in every case a resemblance and a present impression must concur, we are abundantly supplyed with experiments to prove the reality of the foregoing principle.

We may add force to these experiments by others of a different kind, in considering the effects of contiguity, as well as of resemblance. It is certain, that distance diminishes the force of every idea, and that upon our approach to any object; though it does not discover itself to our senses; it operates upon the mind with an influence that imitates an immediate impression. The thinking on any object readily transports the mind to what is contiguous; but it is only the actual presence of an object, that transports it with a superior vivacity. When I am a few miles from home, whatever relates to it touches me more nearly than when I am two hundred leagues distant; though even at that distance the reflecting on any thing in the neighbourhood of my friends and family naturally produces an idea of them. But as in this latter case, both the objects of the mind are ideas; notwithstanding there is an easy transition betwixt them; that transition alone is not able to give a superior vivacity to any of the ideas, for want of some immediate impression. [FN 6.]

[FN 6. NATURANE NOBIS, IN QUIT, DATUM DICAM, AN ERRORE QUODAM, UT, CUM EA LOCA VIDEAMUS, IN QUIBUS MEMORIA DIGNOS VIROS ACCEPERIMUS MULTURN ESSE VERSATOS, MAGIS MOVEAMUR, QUAM SIQUANDO EORUM IPSORUM AUT JACTA AUDIAMUS, AUT SCRIPTUM ALIQUOD LEGAMUS? VELUT EGO NUNC MOVEOR. VENIT ENIM MIHI PLATONIS IN MENTEM: QUEM ACCIPIMUS PRIMURN HIC DISPUTARE SOLITUM: CUJUS ETIAM ILLI HORTULI PROPINQUI NON MEMORIAM SOLUM MIHI AFFERUNT, SED IPSUM VIDENTUR IN CONSPECTU MEO HIC PONERE. HIC SPEUSIPPUS, HIC XENOCRATES, HIC EJUS AUDITOR POLEMO; CUJUS IPSA ILLA SESSIO FUIT, QUAM VIDEAMUS. EQUIDEM ETIAM CURIAM NOSTRAM, HOSTILIAM DICO, NON HANC NOVAM, QUAE MIHI MINOR ESSE VIDETUR POST QUAM EST MAJOR, SOLE BARN INTUENS SCIPIONEM, CATONEM, LACLIUM, NOSTRUM VERO IN PRIMIS AVUM COGITARE. TANTA VIS ADMONITIONIS INEST IN LOCIS; UT NON SINE CAUSA EX HIS MEMORIAE DUCTA SIT DISCIPLINA. Cicero de Finibus, lib. 5.

{“Should I, he said, “attribute to instinct or to some kind

> of illusion the fact that when we see those places in which we are told notable men spent much of their time, we are more powerfully affected than when we hear of the exploits of the men themselves or read something written? This is just what is happening to me now; for I am reminded of Plato who, we are told, was the first to make a practice of holding discussions here. Those gardens of his near by do not merely put me in mind of him; they seem to set the man himself before my very eyes. Speusippus was here; so was Xenocrates; so was his pupil, Polemo, and that very seat which we may view was his.
>
> “Then again, when I looked at our Senate-house (I mean the old building of Hostilius, not this new one; when it was enlarged, it diminished in my estimation), I used to think of Scipio, Cato, Laelius and in particular of my own grandfather.
>
> “Such is the power of places to evoke associations; so it is with good reason that they are used as a basis for memory training.”}]

No one can doubt but causation has the same influence as the other two relations; of resemblance and contiguity. Superstitious people are fond of the relicks of saints and holy men, for the same reason that they seek after types and images, in order to enliven their devotion, and give them a more intimate and strong conception of those exemplary lives, which they desire to imitate. Now it is evident, one of the best relicks a devotee coued procure, would be the handywork of a saint; and if his cloaths and furniture are ever to be considered in this light, it is because they were once at his disposal, and were moved and affected by him; in which respect they are to be considered as imperfect effects, and as connected with him by a shorter chain of consequences than any of those, from which we learn the reality of his existence. This phaenomenon clearly proves, that a present impression with a relation of causation may, inliven any idea, and consequently produce belief or assent, according to the precedent definition of it.

But why need we seek for other arguments to prove, that a present impression with a relation or transition of the fancy may inliven any idea, when this very instance of our reasonings from cause and effect will alone suffice to that purpose? It is certain we must have an idea of every matter of fact, which we believe. It is certain, that this idea arises only from a relation to a present impression. It is certain, that the belief super-adds nothing to the idea, but only changes our manner of conceiving it, and renders it more strong and lively. The present conclusion concerning the influence of relation is the immediate consequence of all these steps; and every step appears to me sure end infallible. There enters nothing into this operation of the mind but a present impression, a lively idea, and a relation or association in the fancy betwixt the impression and idea; so that there can be no suspicion of mistake.

In order to put this whole affair in a fuller light, let us consider it as a question in natural philosophy, which we must determine by experience and observation. I suppose there is an object presented, from which I draw a certain conclusion, and form to myself ideas, which I am said to believe or assent to. Here it is evident, that however that object, which is present to my senses, and that other, whose existence I infer by reasoning, may be thought to influence each other by their particular powers or qualities; yet as the phenomenon of belief, which we at present examine, is merely internal, these powers and qualities, being entirely unknown, can have no hand in producing it. It is the present impression, which is to be considered as the true and real cause of the idea, and of the belief which attends it. We must therefore endeavour to discover by experiments the particular qualities, by which it is enabled to produce so extraordinary an effect.

First then I observe, that the present impression has not this effect by its own proper power and efficacy, and when considered alone, as a single perception, limited to the present moment. I find, that an impression, from which, on its first appearance, I can draw no conclusion, may afterwards become the foundation of belief, when I have had experience of its usual consequences. We must in every case have observed the same impression in past instances, and have found it to be constantly conjoined with some other impression. This is confirmed by such a multitude of experiments, that it admits not of the smallest doubt.

From a second observation I conclude, that the belief, which attends the present impression, and is produced by a number of past impressions and conjunctions; that this belief, I say, arises immediately, without any new operation of the reason or imagination. Of this I can be certain, because I never am conscious of any such operation, and find nothing in the subject, on which it can be founded. Now as we call every thing CUSTOM, which proceeds from a past repetition, without any new reasoning or conclusion, we-may establish it as a certain truth, that all the belief, which follows upon any present impression, is derived solely from that origin. When we are accustomed to see two impressions conjoined together, the appearance or idea of the one immediately carries us to the idea of the other.

Being fully satisfyed on this head, I make a third set of experiments, in order to know, whether any thing be requisite, beside the customary transition, towards the production of this phaenomenon of belief. I therefore change the first impression into an idea; and observe, that though the customary transition to the correlative idea still remains, yet there is in reality no belief nor perswasion. A present impression, then, is absolutely requisite to this whole operation; and when after this I compare an impression with an idea, and find that their only difference consists in their different degrees of force and vivacity, I conclude upon the whole, that belief is a more vivid and intense conception of an idea, proceeding from its relation to a present impression.

Thus all probable reasoning is nothing but a species of sensation. It is not solely in poetry and music, we must follow our taste and sentiment, but likewise in philosophy. When I am convinced of any principle, it is only an idea, which strikes more strongly upon me. When I give the preference to one set of arguments above another, I do nothing but decide from my feeling concerning the superiority of their influence. Objects have no discoverable connexion together; nor is it from any other principle but custom operating upon the imagination, that we can draw any inference from the appearance of one to the existence of another.

It will here be worth our observation, that the past experience, on which all our judgments concerning cause and effect depend, may operate on our mind in such an insensible manner as never to be taken notice of, and may even in some measure be unknown to us. A person, who stops short in his journey upon meeting a river in his way, foresees the consequences of his proceeding forward; and his knowledge of these consequences is conveyed to him by past experience, which informs him of such certain conjunctions of causes and effects. But can we think, that on this occasion he reflects on any past experience, and calls to remembrance instances, that he has seen or heard of, in order to discover the effects of water on animal bodies? No surely; this is not the method, in which he proceeds in his reasoning. The idea of sinking is so closely connected with that of water, and the idea of suffocating with that of sinking, that the mind makes the transition without the assistance of the memory. The custom operates before we have time for reflection. The objects seem so inseparable, that we interpose not a moment's delay in passing from the one to the other. But as this transition proceeds from experience, and not from any primary connexion betwixt the ideas, we must necessarily acknowledge, that experience may produce a belief and a judgment of causes and effects by a secret operation, and without being once thought of. This removes all pretext, if there yet remains any, for asserting that the mind is convinced by reasoning of that principle, that instances of which we have no experience, must necessarily resemble those, of which we have. For we here find, that the understanding or imagination can draw inferences from past experience, without reflecting on it; much more without forming any principle concerning it, or reasoning upon that principle.

In general we may observe, that in all the most established and uniform conjunctions of causes and effects, such as those of gravity, impulse, solidity, &c. the mind never carries its view expressly to consider any past experience: Though in other associations of objects, which are more rare and unusual, it may assist the custom and transition of ideas by this reflection. Nay we find in some cases, that the reflection produces the belief without the custom; or more properly speaking, that the reflection produces the custom in an oblique and artificial manner. I explain myself. It is certain, that not only in philosophy, but even in common life, we may attain the knowledge of a particular cause merely by one experiment, provided it be made with judgment, and after a careful removal of all foreign and superfluous circumstances. Now as after one experiment of this kind, the mind, upon the appearance either of the cause or the effect, can draw an inference concerning the existence of its correlative; and as a habit can never be acquired merely by one instance; it may be thought, that belief cannot in this case be esteemed the effect of custom. But this difficulty will vanish, if we consider, that though we are here supposed to have had only one experiment of a particular effect, yet we have many millions to convince us of this principle; that like objects placed in like circumstances, will always produce like effects; and as this principle has established itself by a sufficient custom, it bestows an evidence and firmness on any opinion, to which it can be applied. The connexion of the ideas is not habitual after one experiment: but this connexion is comprehended under another principle, that is habitual; which brings us back to our hypothesis. In all cases we transfer our experience to instances, of which we have no experience, either expressly or tacitly, either directly or indirectly.

I must not conclude this subject without observing, that it is very difficult to talk of the operations of the mind with perfect propriety and exactness; because common language has seldom made any very nice distinctions among them, but has generally called by the same term all such as nearly resemble each other. And as this is a source almost inevitable of obscurity and confusion in the author; so it may frequently give rise to doubts and objections in the reader, which otherwise he would never have dreamed of. Thus my general position, that an opinion or belief is nothing but a strong and lively idea derived from a present impression related to it, maybe liable to the following objection, by reason of a little ambiguity in those words strong and lively. It may be said, that not only an impression may give rise to reasoning, but that an idea may also have the same influence; especially upon my principle, that all our ideas are derived from correspondent impressions. For suppose I form at present an idea, of which I have forgot the correspondent impression, I am able to conclude from this idea, that such an impression did once exist; and as this conclusion is attended with belief, it may be asked, from whence are the qualities of force and vivacity derived, which constitute this belief? And to this I answer very readily, from the present idea. For as this idea is not here considered, as the representation of any absent object, but as a real perception in the mind, of which we are intimately conscious, it must be able to bestow on whatever is related to it the same quality, call it firmness, or solidity, or force, or vivacity, with which the mind reflects upon it, and is assured of its present existence. The idea here supplies the place of an impression, and is entirely the same, so far as regards our present purpose.

Upon the same principles we need not be surprized to hear of the remembrance of an idea: that is, of the idea of an idea, and of its force and vivacity superior to the loose conceptions of the imagination. In thinking of our past thoughts we not only delineate out the objects, of which we were thinking, but also conceive the action of the mind in the meditation, that certain JE-NE-SCAI-QUOI, of which it is impossible to give any definition or description, but which every one sufficiently understands. When the memory offers an idea of this, and represents it as past, it is easily conceived how that idea may have more vigour and firmness, than when we think of a past thought, of which we have no remembrance.

After this any one will understand how we may form the idea of an impression and of an idea, and how we way believe the existence of an impression and of an idea.

SECT. IX. OF THE EFFECTS OF OTHER RELATIONS AND OTHER HABITS.

However convincing the foregoing arguments may appear, we must not rest contented with them, but must turn the subject on every side, in order to find some new points of view, from which we may illustrate and confirm such extraordinary, and such fundamental principles. A scrupulous hesitation to receive any new hypothesis is so laudable a disposition in philosophers, and so necessary to the examination of truth, that it deserves to be complyed with, and requires that every argument be produced, which may tend to their satisfaction, and every objection removed, which may stop them in their reasoning.

I have often observed, that, beside cause and effect, the two relations of resemblance and contiguity, are to be considered as associating principles of thought, and as capable of conveying the imagination from one idea to another. I have also observed, that when of two objects connected to-ether by any of these relations, one is immediately present to the memory or senses, not only the mind is conveyed to its co-relative by means of the associating principle; but likewise conceives it with an additional force and vigour, by the united operation of that principle, and of the present impression. All this I have observed, in order to confirm by analogy, my explication of our judgments concerning cause and effect. But this very argument may, perhaps, be turned against me, and instead of a confirmation of my hypothesis, may become an objection to it. For it may be said, that if all the parts of that hypothesis be true, viz. that these three species of relation are derived from the same principles; that their effects in informing and enlivening our ideas are the same; and that belief is nothing but a more forcible and vivid conception of an idea; it should follow, that that action of the mind may not only be derived from the relation of cause and effect, but also from those of contiguity and resemblance. But as we find by experience, that belief arises only from causation, and that we can draw no inference from one object to another, except they be connected by this relation, we may conclude, that there is some error in that reasoning, which leads us into such difficulties.

This is the objection; let us now consider its solution. It is evident, that whatever is present to the memory, striking upon the mind with a vivacity, which resembles an immediate impression, must become of considerable moment in all the operations of the mind, and must easily distinguish itself above the mere fictions of the imagination. Of these impressions or ideas of the memory we form a kind of system, comprehending whatever we remember to have been present, either to our internal perception or senses; and every particular of that system, joined to the present impressions, we are pleased to call a reality. But the mind stops not here. For finding, that with this system of perceptions, there is another connected by custom, or if you will, by the relation of cause or effect, it proceeds to the consideration of their ideas; and as it feels that it is in a manner necessarily determined to view these particular ideas, and that the custom or relation, by which it is determined, admits not of the least change, it forms them into a new system, which it likewise dignifies with the title of realities. The first of these systems is the object of the memory and senses; the second of the judgment.

It is this latter principle, which peoples the world, and brings us acquainted with such existences, as by their removal in time and place, lie beyond the reach of the senses and memory. By means of it I paint the universe in my imagination, and fix my attention on any part of it I please. I form an idea of ROME, which I neither see nor remember; but which is connected with such impressions as I remember to have received from the conversation and books of travellers and historians. This idea of Rome I place in a certain situation on the idea of an object, which I call the globe. I join to it the conception of a particular government, and religion, and manners. I look backward and consider its first foundation; its several revolutions, successes, and misfortunes. All this, and everything else, which I believe, are nothing but ideas; though by their force and settled order, arising from custom and the relation of cause and effect, they distinguish themselves from the other ideas, which are merely the offspring of the imagination.

As to the influence of contiguity and resemblance, we may observe, that if the contiguous and resembling object be comprehended in this system of realities, there is no doubt but these two relations will assist that of cause and effect, and infix the related idea with more force in the imagination. This I shall enlarge upon presently. Mean while I shall carry my observation a step farther, and assert, that even where the related object is but feigned, the relation will serve to enliven the idea, and encrease its influence. A poet, no doubt, will be the better able to form a strong description of the Elysian fields, that he prompts his imagination by the view of a beautiful meadow or garden; as at another time he may by his fancy place himself in the midst of these fabulous regions, that by the feigned contiguity he may enliven his imagination.

But though I cannot altogether exclude the relations of resemblance and contiguity from operating on the fancy in this manner, it is observable that, when single, their influence is very feeble and uncertain. As the relation of cause and effect is requisite to persuade us of any real existence, so is this persuasion requisite to give force to these other relations. For where upon the appearance of an impression we not only feign another object, but likewise arbitrarily, and of our mere good-will and pleasure give it a particular relation to the impression, this can have but a small effect upon the mind; nor is there any reason, why, upon the return of the same impression, we should be determined to place the same object in the same relation to it. There is no manner of necessity for the mind to feign any resembling and contiguous objects; and if it feigns such, there is as little necessity for it always to confine itself to the same, without any difference or variation. And indeed such a fiction is founded on so little reason, that nothing but pure caprice can determine the mind to form it; and that principle being fluctuating and uncertain, it is impossible it can ever operate with any considerable degree of force and constancy. The mind forsees and anticipates the change; and even from the very first instant feels the looseness of its actions, and the weak hold it has of its objects. And as this imperfection is very sensible in every single instance, it still encreases by experience and observation, when we compare the several instances we may remember, and form a general rule against the reposing any assurance in those momentary glimpses of light, which arise in the imagination from a feigned resemblance and contiguity.

The relation of cause and effect has all the opposite advantages. The objects it presents are fixt and unalterable. The impressions of the memory never change in any considerable degree; and each impression draws along with it a precise idea, which takes its place in the imagination as something solid and real, certain and invariable. The thought is always determined to pass from the impression to the idea, and from that particular impression to that particular idea, without any choice or hesitation.

But not content with removing this objection, I shall endeavour to extract from it a proof of the present doctrine. Contiguity and resemblance have an effect much inferior to causation; but still have some effect, and augment the conviction of any opinion, and the vivacity of any conception. If this can be proved in several new instances, beside what we have already observed, it will be allowed no inconsiderable argument, that belief is nothing but a lively idea related to a present impression.

To begin with contiguity; it has been remarked among the Mahometans as well as Christians, that those pilgrims, who have seen MECCA or the HOLY LAND, are ever after more faithful and zealous believers, than those who have not had that advantage. A man, whose memory presents him with a lively image of the Red-Sea, and the Desert, and Jerusalem, and Galilee, can never doubt of any miraculous events, which are related either by Moses or the Evangelists. The lively idea of the places passes by an easy transition to the facts, which are supposed to have been related to them by contiguity, and encreases the belief by encreasing the vivacity of the conception. The remembrance of these fields and rivers has the same influence on the vulgar as a new argument; and from the same causes.

We may form a like observation concerning resemblance. We have remarked, that the conclusion, which we draw from a present object to its absent cause or effect, is never founded on any qualities, which we observe in that object, considered in itself, or, in other words, that it is impossible to determine, otherwise than by experience, what will result from any phenomenon, or what has preceded it. But though this be so evident in itself, that it seemed not to require any, proof; yet some philosophers have imagined that there is an apparent cause for the communication of motion, and that a reasonable man might immediately infer the motion of one body from the impulse of another, without having recourse to any past observation. That this opinion is false will admit of an easy proof. For if such an inference may be drawn merely from the ideas of body, of motion, and of impulse, it must amount to a demonstration, and must imply the absolute impossibility of any contrary supposition. Every effect, then, beside the communication of motion, implies a formal contradiction; and it is impossible not only that it can exist, but also that it can be conceived. But we may soon satisfy ourselves of the contrary, by forming a clear and consistent idea of one body's moving upon another, and of its rest immediately upon the contact, or of its returning back in the same line in which it came; or of its annihilation; or circular or elliptical motion: and in short, of an infinite number of other changes, which we may suppose it to undergo. These suppositions are all consistent and natural; and the reason, Why we imagine the communication of motion to be more consistent and natural not only than those suppositions, but also than any other natural effect, is founded on the relation of resemblance betwixt the cause and effect, which is here united to experience, and binds the objects in the closest and most intimate manner to each other, so as to make us imagine them to be absolutely inseparable. Resemblance, then, has the same or a parallel influence with experience; and as the only immediate effect of experience is to associate our ideas together, it follows, that all belief arises from the association of ideas, according to my hypothesis.

It is universally allowed by the writers on optics, that the eye at all times sees an equal number of physical points, and that a man on the top of a mountain has no larger an image presented to his senses, than when he is cooped up in the narrowest court or chamber. It is only by experience that he infers the greatness of the object from some peculiar qualities of the image; and this inference of the judgment he confounds with sensation, as is common on other occasions. Now it is evident, that the inference of the judgment is here much more lively than what is usual in our common reasonings, and that a man has a more vivid conception of the vast extent of the ocean from the image he receives by the eye, when he stands on the top of the high promontory, than merely from hearing the roaring of the waters. He feels a more sensible pleasure from its magnificence; which is a proof of a more lively idea: And he confounds his judgment with sensation, which is another proof of it. But as the inference is equally certain and immediate in both cases, this superior vivacity of our conception in one case can proceed from nothing but this, that in drawing an inference from the sight, beside the customary conjunction, there is also a resemblance betwixt the image and the object we infer; which strengthens the relation, and conveys the vivacity of the impression to the related idea with an easier and more natural movement.

No weakness of human nature is more universal and conspicuous than what we commonly call CREDULITY, or a too easy faith in the testimony of others; and this weakness is also very naturally accounted for from the influence of resemblance. When we receive any matter of fact upon human testimony, our faith arises from the very same origin as our inferences from causes to effects, and from effects to causes; nor is there anything but our experience of the governing principles of human nature, which can give us any assurance of the veracity of men. But though experience be the true standard of this, as well as of all other judgments, we seldom regulate ourselves entirely by it; but have a remarkable propensity to believe whatever is reported, even concerning apparitions, enchantments, and prodigies, however contrary to daily experience and observation. The words or discourses of others have an intimate connexion with certain ideas in their mind; and these ideas have also a connexion with the facts or objects, which they represent. This latter connexion is generally much over-rated, and commands our assent beyond what experience will justify; which can proceed from nothing beside the resemblance betwixt the ideas and the facts. Other effects only point out their causes in an oblique manner; but the testimony of men does it directly, and is to be considered as an image as well as an effect. No wonder, therefore, we are so rash in drawing our inferences from it, and are less guided by experience in our judgments concerning it, than in those upon any other subject.

As resemblance, when conjoined with causation, fortifies our reasonings; so the want of it in any very great degree is able almost entirely to destroy them. Of this there is a remarkable instance in the universal carelessness and stupidity of men with regard to a future state, where they show as obstinate an incredulity, as they do a blind credulity on other occasions. There is not indeed a more ample matter of wonder to the studious, and of regret to the pious man, than to observe the negligence of the bulk of mankind concerning their approaching condition; and it is with reason, that many eminent theologians have not scrupled to affirm, that though the vulgar have no formal principles of infidelity, yet they are really infidels in their hearts, and have nothing like what we can call a belief of the eternal duration of their souls. For let us consider on the one hand what divines have displayed with such eloquence concerning the importance of eternity; and at the same time reflect, that though in matters of rhetoric we ought to lay our account with some exaggeration, we must in this case allow, that the strongest figures are infinitely inferior to the subject: And after this let us view on the other hand, the prodigious security of men in this particular: I ask, if these people really believe what is inculcated on them, and what they pretend to affirm; and the answer is obviously in the negative. As belief is an act of the mind arising from custom, it is not strange the want of resemblance should overthrow what custom has established, and diminish the force of the idea, as much as that latter principle encreases it. A future state is so far removed from our comprehension, and we have so obscure an idea of the manner, in which we shall exist after the dissolution of the body, that all the reasons we can invent, however strong in themselves, and however much assisted by education, are never able with slow imaginations to surmount this difficulty, or bestow a sufficient authority and force on the idea. I rather choose to ascribe this incredulity to the faint idea we form of our future condition, derived from its want of resemblance to the present life, than to that derived from its remoteness. For I observe, that men are everywhere concerned about what may happen after their death, provided it regard this world; and that there are few to whom their name, their family, their friends, and their country are in any period of time entirely indifferent.

And indeed the want of resemblance in this case so entirely destroys belief, that except those few, who upon cool reflection on the importance of the subject, have taken care by repeated meditation to imprint in their minds the arguments for a future state, there scarce are any, who believe the immortality of the soul with a true and established judgment; such as is derived from the testimony of travellers and historians. This appears very conspicuously wherever men have occasion to compare the pleasures and pains, the rewards and punishments of this life with those of a future; even though the case does not concern themselves, and there is no violent passion to disturb their judgment. The Roman Clatholicks are certainly the most zealous of any sect in the Christian world; and yet you’ll find few among the more sensible people of that communion who do not blame the Gunpowder-treason, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, as cruel and barbarous, though projected or executed against those very people, whom without any scruple they condemn to eternal and infinite punishments. All we can say in excuse for this inconsistency is, that they really do not believe what they affirm concerning a future state; nor is there any better proof of it than the very inconsistency.

We may add to this a remark; that in matters of religion men take a pleasure in being terrifyed, and that no preachers are so popular, as those who excite the most dismal and gloomy passions. In the common affairs of life, where we feel and are penetrated with the solidity of the subject, nothing can be more disagreeable than fear and terror; and it is only in dramatic performances and in religious discourses, that they ever give pleasure. In these latter cases the imagination reposes itself indolently on the idea; and the passion, being softened by the want of belief in the subject, has no more than the agreeable effect of enlivening the mind, and fixing the attention.

The present hypothesis will receive additional confirmation, if we examine the effects of other kinds of custom, as well as of other relations. To understand this we must consider, that custom, to which I attribute all belief and reasoning, may operate upon the mind in invigorating an idea after two several ways. For supposing that in all past experience we have found two objects to have been always conjoined together, it is evident, that upon the appearance of one of these objects in an impression, we must from custom make an easy transition to the idea of that object, which usually attends it; and by means of the present impression and easy transition must conceive that idea in a stronger and more lively manner, than we do any loose floating image of the fancy. But let us next suppose, that a mere idea alone, without any of this curious and almost artificial preparation, should frequently make its appearance in the mind, this idea must by degrees acquire a facility and force; and both by its firm hold and easy introduction distinguish itself from any new and unusual idea. This is the only particular, in which these two kinds of custom agree; and if it appear, that their effects on the judgment, are similar and proportionable, we may certainly conclude, that the foregoing explication of that faculty is satisfactory. But can we doubt of this agreement in their influence on the judgment, when we consider the nature and effects Of EDUCATION?

All those opinions and notions of things, to which we have been accustomed from our infancy, take such deep root, that it is impossible for us, by all the powers of reason and experience, to eradicate them; and this habit not only approaches in its influence, but even on many occasions prevails over that which a-rises from the constant and inseparable union of causes and effects. Here we most not be contented with saying, that the vividness of the idea produces the belief: We must maintain that they are individually the same. The frequent repetition of any idea infixes it in the imagination; but coued never possibly of itself produce belief, if that act of the mind was, by the original constitution of our natures, annexed only to a reasoning and comparison of ideas. Custom may lead us into some false comparison of ideas. This is the utmost effect we can conceive of it. But it is certain it coued never supply the place of that comparison, nor produce any act of the mind, which naturally belonged to that principle.

A person, that has lost a leg or an arm by amputation, endeavours for a long time afterwards to serve himself with them. After the death of any one, it is a common remark of the whole family, but especially of the servants, that they can scarce believe him to be dead, but still imagine him to be in his chamber or in any other place, where they were accustomed to find him. I have often heard in conversation, after talking of a person, that is any way celebrated, that one, who has no acquaintance with him, will say, I have never seen such-a-one, but almost fancy I have; so often have I heard talk of him. All these are parallel instances.

If we consider this argument from EDUCATION in a proper light, it will appear very convincing; and the more so, that it is founded on one of the most common phaenomena, that is any where to be met with. I am persuaded, that upon examination we shall find more than one half of those opinions, that prevail among mankind, to be owing to education, and that the principles, which are thus implicitely embraced, overballance those, which are owing either to abstract reasoning or experience. As liars, by the frequent repetition of their lies, come at last to remember them; so the judgment, or rather the imagination, by the like means, may have ideas so strongly imprinted on it, and conceive them in so full a light, that they may operate upon the mind in the same manner with those, which the senses, memory or reason present to us. But as education is an artificial and not a natural cause, and as its maxims are frequently contrary to reason, and even to themselves in different times and places, it is never upon that account recognized by philosophers; though in reality it be built almost on the same foundation of custom and repetition as our reasonings from causes and effects.

[FN 7. In general we may observe, that as our assent to all probable reasonings is founded on the vivacity of ideas, It resembles many of those whimsies and prejudices, which are rejected under the opprobrious character of being the offspring of the imagination. By this expression it appears that the word, imagination, is commonly usd in two different senses; and tho nothing be more contrary to true philosophy, than this inaccuracy, yet in the following reasonings I have often been obligd to fall into it. When I oppose the Imagination to the memory, I mean the faculty, by which we form our fainter ideas. When I oppose it to reason, I mean the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings. When I oppose it to neither, it is indifferent whether it be taken in the larger or more limited sense, or at least the context will sufficiently explain the meaning.]

SECT. X. OF THE INFLUENCE OF BELIEF.

But though education be disclaimed by philosophy, as a fallacious ground of assent to any opinion, it prevails nevertheless in the world, and is the cause why all systems are apt to be rejected at first as new and unusual. This perhaps will be the fate of what I have here advanced concerning belief, and though the proofs I have produced appear to me perfectly conclusive, I expect not to make many proselytes to my opinion. Men will scarce ever be persuaded, that effects of such consequence can flow from principles, which are seemingly so inconsiderable, and that the far greatest part of our reasonings with all our actions and passions, can be derived from nothing but custom and habit. To obviate this objection, I shall here anticipate a little what would more properly fall under our consideration afterwards, when we come to treat of the passions and the sense of beauty.

There is implanted in the human mind a perception of pain and pleasure, as the chief spring and moving principle of all its actions. But pain and pleasure have two ways of making their appearance in the mind; of which the one has effects very different from the other. They may either appear in impression to the actual feeling, or only in idea, as at present when I mention them. It is evident the influence of these upon our actions is far from being equal. Impressions always actuate the soul, and that in the highest degree; but it is not every idea which has the same effect. Nature has proceeded with caution in this came, and seems to have carefully avoided the inconveniences of two extremes. Did impressions alone influence the will, we should every moment of our lives be subject to the greatest calamities; because, though we foresaw their approach, we should not be provided by nature with any principle of action, which might impel us to avoid them. On the other hand, did every idea influence our actions, our condition would not be much mended. For such is the unsteadiness and activity of thought, that the images of every thing, especially of goods and evils, are always wandering in the mind; and were it moved by every idle conception of this kind, it would never enjoy a moment’s peace and tranquillity.

Nature has, therefore, chosen a medium, and has neither bestowed on every idea of good and evil the power of actuating the will, nor yet has entirely excluded them from this influence. Though an idle fiction has no efficacy, yet we find by experience, that the ideas of those objects, which we believe either are or will be existent, produce in a lesser degree the same effect with those impressions, which are immediately present to the senses and perception. The effect, then, of belief is to raise up a simple idea to an equality with our impressions, and bestow on it a like influence on the passions. This effect it can only have by making an idea approach an impression in force and vivacity. For as the different degrees of force make all the original difference betwixt an impression and an idea, they must of consequence be the source of all the differences in the effects of these perceptions, and their removal, in whole or in part, the cause of every new resemblance they acquire. Wherever we can make an idea approach the impressions in force and vivacity, it will likewise imitate them in its influence on the mind; and vice versa, where it imitates them in that influence, as in the present case, this must proceed from its approaching them in force and vivacity. Belief, therefore, since it causes an idea to imitate the effects of the impressions, must make it resemble them in these qualities, and is nothing but A MORE VIVID AND INTENSE CONCEPTION OF ANY IDEA. This, then, may both serve as an additional argument for the present system, and may give us a notion after what manner our reasonings from causation are able to operate on the will and passions.

As belief is almost absolutely requisite to the exciting our passions, so the passions in their turn are very favourable to belief; and not only such facts as convey agreeable emotions, but very often such as give pain, do upon that account become more readily the objects of faith and opinion. A coward, whose fears are easily awakened, readily assents to every account of danger he meets with; as a person of a sorrowful and melancholy disposition is very credulous of every thing, that nourishes his prevailing passion. When any affecting object is presented, it gives the alarm, and excites immediately a degree of its proper passion; especially in persons who are naturally inclined to that passion. This emotion passes by an easy transition to the imagination; and diffusing itself over our idea of the affecting object, makes us form that idea with greater force and vivacity, and consequently assent to it, according to the precedent system.

Admiration and surprize have the same effect as the other passions; and accordingly we may observe, that among the vulgar, quacks and projectors meet with a more easy faith upon account of their magnificent pretensions, than if they kept themselves within the bounds of moderation. The first astonishment, which naturally attends their miraculous relations, spreads itself over the whole soul, and so vivifies and enlivens the idea, that it resembles the inferences we draw from experience. This is a mystery, with which we may be already a little acquainted, and which we shall have farther occasion to be let into in the progress of this treatise.

After this account of the influence of belief on the passions, we shall find less difficulty in explaining its effects on the imagination, however extraordinary they may appear. It is certain we cannot take pleasure in any discourse, where our judgment gives no assent to those images which are presented to our fancy. The conversation of those who have acquired a habit of lying, though in affairs of no moment, never gives any satisfaction; and that because those ideas they present to us, not being attended with belief, make no impression upon the mind. Poets themselves, though liars by profession, always endeavour to give an air of truth to their fictions; and where that is totally neglected, their performances, however ingenious, will never be able to afford much pleasure. In short, we may observe, that even when ideas have no manner of influence on the will and passions, truth and reality are still requisite, in order to make them entertaining to the imagination.

But if we compare together all the phenomena that occur on this head, we shall find, that truth, however necessary it may seem in all works of genius, has no other effect than to procure an easy reception for the ideas, and to make the mind acquiesce in them with satisfaction, or at least without reluctance. But as this is an effect, which may easily be supposed to flow from that solidity and force, which, according to my system, attend those ideas that are established by reasonings from causation; it follows, that all the influence of belief upon the fancy may be explained from that system. Accordingly we may observe, that wherever that influence arises from any other principles beside truth or reality, they supply its place, and give an equal entertainment to the imagination. Poets have formed what they call a poetical system of things, which though it be believed neither by themselves nor readers, is commonly esteemed a sufficient foundation for any fiction. We have been so much accustomed to the names of MARS, JUPITER, VENUS, that in the same manner as education infixes any opinion, the constant repetition of these ideas makes them enter into the mind with facility, and prevail upon the fancy, without influencing the judgment. In like manner tragedians always borrow their fable, or at least the names of their principal actors, from some known passage in history; and that not in order to deceive the spectators; for they will frankly confess, that truth is not in any circumstance inviolably observed: but in order to procure a more easy reception into the imagination for those extraordinary events, which they represent. But this is a precaution, which is not required of comic poets, whose personages and incidents, being of a more familiar kind, enter easily into the conception, and are received without any such formality, even though at first night they be known to be fictitious, and the pure offspring of the fancy.

This mixture of truth and falshood in the fables of tragic poets not only serves our present purpose, by shewing, that the imagination can be satisfyed without any absolute belief or assurance; but may in another view be regarded as a very strong confirmation of this system. It is evident, that poets make use of this artifice of borrowing the names of their persons, and the chief events of their poems, from history, in order to procure a more easy reception for the whole, and cause it to make a deeper impression on the fancy and affections. The several incidents of the piece acquire a kind of relation by being united into one poem or representation; and if any of these incidents be an object of belief, it bestows a force and vivacity on the others, which are related to it. The vividness of the first conception diffuses itself along the relations, and is conveyed, as by so many pipes or canals, to every idea that has any communication with the primary one. This, indeed, can never amount to a perfect assurance; and that because the union among the ideas is, in a manner, accidental: But still it approaches so near, in its influence, as may convince us, that they are derived from the same origin. Belief must please the imagination by means of the force and vivacity which attends it; since every idea, which has force and vivacity, is found to be agreeable to that faculty.

To confirm this we may observe, that the assistance is mutual betwixt the judgment and fancy, as well as betwixt the judgment and passion; and that belief not only gives vigour to the imagination, but that a vigorous and strong imagination is of all talents the most proper to procure belief and authority. It is difficult for us to withhold our assent from what is painted out to us in all the colours of eloquence; and the vivacity produced by the fancy is in many cases greater than that which arises from custom and experience. We are hurried away by the lively imagination of our author or companion; and even he himself is often a victim to his own fire and genius.

Nor will it be amiss to remark, that as a lively imagination very often degenerates into madness or folly, and bears it a great resemblance in its operations; so they influence the judgment after the same manner, and produce belief from the very same principles. When the imagination, from any extraordinary ferment of the blood and spirits, acquires such a vivacity as disorders all its powers and faculties, there is no means of distinguishing betwixt truth and falshood; but every loose fiction or idea, having the same influence as the impressions of the memory, or the conclusions of the judgment, is received on the same footing, and operates with equal force on the passions. A present impression and a customary transition are now no longer necessary to enliven our ideas. Every chimera of the brain is as vivid and intense as any of those inferences, which we formerly dignifyed with the name of conclusions concerning matters of fact, and sometimes as the present impressions of the senses.

We may observe the same effect of poetry in a lesser degree; and this is common both to poetry and madness, that the vivacity they bestow on the ideas is not derived from the particular situations or connexions of the objects of these ideas, but from the present temper and disposition of the person. But how great soever the pitch may be, to which this vivacity rises, it is evident, that in poetry it never has the same feeling with that which arises in the mind, when we reason, though even upon the lowest species of probability. The mind can easily distinguish betwixt the one and the other; and whatever emotion the poetical enthusiasm may give to the spirits, it is still the mere phantom of belief or persuasion. The case is the same with the idea, as with the passion it occasions. There is no passion of the human mind but what may arise from poetry; though at the same time the feelings of the passions are very different when excited by poetical fictions, from what they are when they are from belief and reality. A passion, which is disagreeable in real life, may afford the highest entertainment in a tragedy, or epic poem. In the latter case, it lies not with that weight upon us: It feels less firm and solid: And has no other than the agreeable effect of exciting the spirits, and rouzing the attention. The difference in the passions is a clear proof of a like difference in those ideas, from which the passions are derived. Where the vivacity arises from a customary conjunction with a present impression; though the imagination may not, in appearance, be so much moved; yet there is always something more forcible and real in its actions, than in the fervors of poetry and eloquence. The force of our mental actions in this case, no more than in any other, is not to be measured by the apparent agitation of the mind. A poetical description may have a more sensible effect on the fancy, than an historical narration. It may collect more of those circumstances, that form a compleat image or picture. It may seem to set the object before us in more lively colours. But still the ideas it presents are different to the feeling from those, which arise from the memory and the judgment. There is something weak and imperfect amidst all that seeming vehemence of thought and sentiment, which attends the fictions of poetry.

We shall afterwards have occasion to remark both the resemblance and differences betwixt a poetical enthusiasm, and a serious conviction. In the mean time I cannot forbear observing, that the great difference in their feeling proceeds in some measure from reflection and GENERAL RULES. We observe, that the vigour of conception, which fictions receive from poetry and eloquence, is a circumstance merely accidental, of which every idea is equally susceptible; and that such fictions are connected with nothing that is real. This observation makes us only lend ourselves, so to speak, to the fiction: But causes the idea to feel very different from the eternal established persuasions founded on memory and custom. They are somewhat of the same kind: But the one is much inferior to the other, both in its causes and effects.

A like reflection on general rules keeps us from augmenting our belief upon every encrease of the force and vivacity of our ideas. Where an opinion admits of no doubt, or opposite probability, we attribute to it a full conviction: though the want of resemblance, or contiguity, may render its force inferior to that of other opinions. It is thus the understanding corrects the appearances of the senses, and makes us imagine, that an object at twenty foot distance seems even to the eye as large as one of the same dimensions at ten.

We may observe the same effect of poetry in a lesser degree; only with this difference, that the least reflection dissipates the illusions of poetry, and Places the objects in their proper light. It is however certain, that in the warmth of a poetical enthusiasm, a poet has a counterfeit belief, and even a kind of vision of his objects: And if there be any shadow of argument to support this belief, nothing contributes more to his full conviction than a blaze of poetical figures and images, which have their effect upon the poet himself, as well as upon his readers.

SECT. XI. OF THE PROBABILITY OF CHANCES.

But in order to bestow on this system its full force and evidence, we must carry our eye from it a moment to consider its consequences, and explain from the same principles some other species of reasoning, which are derived from the same origin.

Those philosophers, who have divided human reason into knowledge and probability, and have defined the first to be that evidence, which arises from the comparison of ideas, are obliged to comprehend all our arguments from causes or effects under the general term of probability. But though every one be free to use his terms in what sense he pleases; and accordingly in the precedent part of this discourse, I have followed this method of expression; it is however certain, that in common discourse we readily affirm, that many arguments from causation exceed probability, and may be received as a superior kind of evidence. One would appear ridiculous, who would say, that it is only probable the sun will rise to-morrow, or that all men must dye; though it is plain we have no further assurance of these facts, than what experience affords us. For this reason, it would perhaps be more convenient, in order at once to preserve the common signification of words, and mark the several degrees of evidence, to distinguish human reason into three kinds, viz. THAT FROM KNOWLEDGE, FROM PROOFS, AND FROM PROBABILITIES. By knowledge, I mean the assurance arising from the comparison of ideas. By proofs, those arguments, which are derived from the relation of cause and effect, and which are entirely free from doubt and uncertainty. By probability, that evidence, which is still attended with uncertainty. It is this last species of reasoning, I proceed to examine.

Probability or reasoning from conjecture may be divided into two kinds, viz. that which is founded on chance, and that which arises from causes. We shall consider each of these in order.

The idea of cause and effect is derived from experience, which presenting us with certain objects constantly conjoined with each other, produces such a habit of surveying them in that relation, that we cannot without a sensible violence survey them iii any other. On the other hand, as chance is nothing real in itself, and, properly speaking, is merely the negation of a cause, its influence on the mind is contrary to that of causation; and it is essential to it, to leave the imagination perfectly indifferent, either to consider the existence or non-existence of that object, which is regarded as contingent. A cause traces the way to our thought, and in a manner forces us to survey such certain objects, in such certain relations. Chance can only destroy this determination of the thought, and leave the mind in its native situation of indifference; in which, upon the absence of a cause, it is instantly re-instated.

Since therefore an entire indifference is essential to chance, no one chance can possibly be superior to another, otherwise than as it is composed of a superior number of equal chances. For if we affirm that one chance can, after any other manner, be superior to another, we must at the same time affirm, that there is something, which gives it the superiority, and determines the event rather to that side than the other: That is, in other words, we must allow of a cause, and destroy the supposition of chance; which we had before established. A perfect and total indifference is essential to chance, and one total indifference can never in itself be either superior or inferior to another. This truth is not peculiar to my system, but is acknowledged by every one, that forms calculations concerning chances.

And here it is remarkable, that though chance and causation be directly contrary, yet it is impossible for us to conceive this combination of chances, which is requisite to render one hazard superior to another, without supposing a mixture of causes among the chances, and a conjunction of necessity in some particulars, with a total indifference in others. Where nothing limits the chances, every notion, that the most extravagant fancy can form, is upon a footing of equality; nor can there be any circumstance to give one the advantage above another. Thus unless we allow, that there are some causes to make the dice fall, and preserve their form in their fall, and lie upon some one of their sides, we can form no calculation concerning the laws of hazard. But supposing these causes to operate, and supposing likewise all the rest to be indifferent and to be determined by chance, it is easy to arrive at a notion of a superior combination of chances. A dye that has four sides marked with a certain number of spots, and only two with another, affords us an obvious and easy instance of this superiority. The mind is here limited by the causes to such a precise number and quality of the events; and at the same time is undetermined in its choice of any particular event.

Proceeding then in that reasoning, wherein we have advanced three steps; that chance is merely the negation of a cause, and produces a total indifference in the mind; that one negation of a cause and one total indifference can never be superior or inferior to another; and that there must always be a mixture of causes among the chances, in order to be the foundation of any reasoning: We are next to consider what effect a superior combination of chances can have upon the mind, and after what manner it influences our judgment and opinion. Here we may repeat all the same arguments we employed in examining that belief, which arises from causes; and may prove, after the same manner, that a superior number of chances produces our assent neither by demonstration nor probability. It is indeed evident that we can never by the comparison of mere ideas make any discovery, which can be of consequence in this affairs and that it is impossible to prove with certainty, that any event must fall on that side where there is a superior number of chances. To, suppose in this case any certainty, were to overthrow what we have established concerning the opposition of chances, and their perfect equality and indifference.

Should it be said, that though in an opposition of chances it is impossible to determine with certainty, on which side the event will fall, yet we can pronounce with certainty, that it is more likely and probable, it will be on that side where there is a superior number of chances, than where there is an inferior: should this be said, I would ask, what is here meant by likelihood and probability? The likelihood and probability of chances is a superior number of equal chances; and consequently when we say it is likely the event win fall on the side, which is superior, rather than on the inferior, we do no more than affirm, that where there is a superior number of chances there is actually a superior, and where there is an inferior there is an inferior; which are identical propositions, and of no consequence. The question is, by what means a superior number of equal chances operates upon the mind, and produces belief or assent; since it appears, that it is neither by arguments derived from demonstration, nor from probability.

In order to clear up this difficulty, we shall suppose a person to take a dye, formed after such a manner as that four of its sides are marked with one figure, or one number of spots, and two with another; and to put this dye into the box with an intention of throwing it: It is plain, he must conclude the one figure to be more probable than the other, and give the preference to that which is inscribed on the greatest number of sides. He in a manner believes, that this will lie uppermost; though still with hesitation and doubt, in proportion to the number of chances, which are contrary: And according as these contrary chances diminish, and the superiority encreases on the other side, his belief acquires new degrees of stability and assurance. This belief arises from an operation of the mind upon the simple and limited object before us; and therefore its nature will be the more easily discovered and explained. We have nothing but one single dye to contemplate, in order to comprehend one of the most curious operations of the understanding.

This dye, formed as above, contains three circumstances worthy of our attention. First, Certain causes, such as gravity, solidity, a cubical figure, &c. which determine it to fall, to preserve its form in its fall, and to turn up one of its sides. Secondly, A certain number of sides, which are supposed indifferent. Thirdly, A certain figure inscribed on each side. These three particulars form the whole nature of the dye, so far as relates to our present purpose; and consequently are the only circumstances regarded by the mind in its forming a judgment concerning the result of such a throw. Let us, therefore, consider gradually and carefully what must be the influence of these circumstances on the thought and imagination.

First, We have already observed, that the mind is determined by custom to pass from any cause to its effect, and that upon the appearance of the one, it is almost impossible for it not to form an idea of the other. Their constant conjunction in past instances has produced such a habit in the mind, that it always conjoins them in its thought, and infers the existence of the one from that of its usual attendant. When it considers the dye as no longer supported by the box, it can not without violence regard it as suspended in the air; but naturally places it on the table, and views it as turning up one of its sides. This is the effect of the intermingled causes, which are requisite to our forming any calculation concerning chances.

Secondly, It is supposed, that though the dye be necessarily determined to fall, and turn up one of its sides, yet there is nothing to fix the particular side, but that this is determined entirely by chance. The very nature and essence of chance is a negation of causes, and the leaving the mind in a perfect indifference among those events, which are supposed contingent. When therefore the thought is determined by the causes to consider the dye as falling and turning up one of its sides, the chances present all these sides as equal, and make us consider every one of them, one after another, as alike probable and possible. The imagination passes from the cause, viz. the throwing of the dye, to the effect, viz. the turning up one of the six sides; and feels a kind of impossibility both of stopping short in the way, and of forming any other idea. But as all these six sides are incompatible, and the dye cannot turn up above one at once, this principle directs us not to consider all of them at once as lying uppermost; which we look upon as impossible: Neither does it direct us with its entire force to any particular side; for in that case this side would be considered as certain and inevitable; but it directs us to the whole six sides after such a manner as to divide its force equally among them. We conclude in general, that some one of them must result from the throw: We run all of them over in our minds: The determination of the thought is common to all; but no more of its force falls to the share of any one, than what is suitable to its proportion with the rest. It is after this manner the original impulse, and consequently the vivacity of thought, arising from the causes, is divided and split in pieces by the intermingled chances.

We have already seen the influence of the two first qualities of the dye, viz. the causes, and the number and indifference of the sides, and have learned how they give an impulse to the thought, and divide that impulse into as many parts as there are unites in the number of sides. We must now consider the effects of the third particular, viz. the figures inscribed on each side. It is evident that where several sides have the same figure inscribe on them, they must concur in their influence on the mind, and must unite upon one image or idea of a figure all those divided impulses, that were dispersed over the several sides, upon which that figure is inscribed. Were the question only what side will be turned up, these are all perfectly equal, and no one coued ever have any advantage above another. But as the question is concerning the figure, and as the same figure is presented by more than one side: it is evident, that the impulses belonging to all these sides must re-unite in that one figure, and become stronger and more forcible by the union. Four sides are supposed in the present case to have the same figure inscribed on them, and two to have another figure. The impulses of the former are, therefore, superior to those of the latter. But as the events are contrary, and it is impossible both these figures can be turned up; the impulses likewise become contrary, and the inferior destroys the superior, as far as its strength goes. The vivacity of the idea is always proportionable to the degrees of the impulse or tendency to the transition; and belief is the same with the vivacity of the idea, according to the precedent doctrine.

SECT. XII. OF THE PROBABILITY OF CAUSES.

What I have said concerning the probability of chances can serve to no other purpose, than to assist us in explaining the probability of causes; since it is commonly allowed by philosophers, that what the vulgar call chance is nothing but a secret and concealed cause. That species of probability, therefore, is what we must chiefly examine.

The probabilities of causes are of several kinds; but are all derived from the same origin, viz. THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS TO A PRESENT IMPRESSION. As the habit, which produces the association, arises from the frequent conjunction of objects, it must arrive at its perfection by degrees, and must acquire new force from each instance, that falls under our observation. The first instance has little or no force: The second makes some addition to it: The third becomes still more sensible; and it is by these slow steps, that our judgment arrives at a full assurance. But before it attains this pitch of perfection, it passes through several inferior degrees, and in all of them is only to be esteemed a presumption or probability. The gradation, therefore, from probabilities to proofs is in many cases insensible; and the difference betwixt these kinds of evidence is more easily perceived in the remote degrees, than in the near and contiguous.

It is worthy of remark on this occasion, that though the species of probability here explained be the first in order, and naturally takes place before any entire proof can exist, yet no one, who is arrived at the age of maturity, can any longer be acquainted with it. It is true, nothing is more common than for people of the most advanced knowledge to have attained only an imperfect experience of many particular events; which naturally produces only an imperfect habit and transition: But then we must consider, that the mind, having formed another observation concerning the connexion of causes and effects, gives new force to its reasoning from that observation; and by means of it can build an argument on one single experiment, when duly prepared and examined. What we have found once to follow from any object, we conclude will for ever follow from it; and if this maxim be not always built upon as certain, it is not for want of a sufficient number of experiments, but because we frequently meet with instances to the contrary; which leads us to the second species of probability, where there is a contrariety in our experience and observation.

It would be very happy for men in the conduct of their lives and actions, were the same objects always conjoined together, and, we had nothing to fear but the mistakes of our own judgment, without having any reason to apprehend the uncertainty of nature. But as it is frequently found, that one observation is contrary to another, and that causes and effects follow not in the same order, of which we have I had experience, we are obliged to vary our reasoning on, account of this uncertainty, and take into consideration the contrariety of events. The first question, that occurs on this head, is concerning the nature and causes of the contrariety.

The vulgar, who take things according to their first appearance, attribute the uncertainty of events to such an uncertainty in the causes, as makes them often fail of their usual influence, though they meet with no obstacle nor impediment in their operation. But philosophers observing, that almost in every part of nature there is contained a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness, find that it is at least possible the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. This possibility is converted into certainty by farther observation, when they remark, that upon an exact scrutiny, a contrariety of effects always betrays a contrariety of causes, and proceeds from their mutual hindrance and opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for the stopping of any clock or watch than to say, that commonly it does not go right: But an artizan easily perceives, that the same force in the spring or pendulum has always the same influence on the wheels; but fails of its usual effect, perhaps by reason of a grain of dust, which puts a stop to the whole movement. From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim, that the connexion betwixt all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes.

But however philosophers and the vulgar may differ in their explication of the contrariety of events, their inferences from it are always of the same kind, and founded on the same principles. A contrariety of events in the past may give us a kind of hesitating belief for the future after two several ways. First, By producing an imperfect habit and transition from the present impression to the related idea. When the conjunction of any two objects is frequent, without being entirely constant, the mind is determined to pass from one object to the other; but not with so entire a habit, as when the union is uninterrupted, and all the instances we have ever met with are uniform and of a piece-.. We find from common experience, in our actions as well as reasonings, that a constant perseverance in any course of life produces a strong inclination and tendency to continue for the future; though there are habits of inferior degrees of force, proportioned to the inferior degrees of steadiness and uniformity in our conduct.

There is no doubt but this principle sometimes takes place, and produces those inferences we draw from contrary phaenomena: though I am perswaded, that upon examination we shall not find it to be the principle, that most commonly influences the mind in this species of reasoning. When we follow only the habitual determination of the mind, we make the transition without any reflection, and interpose not a moment's delay betwixt the view of one object and the belief of that, which is often found to attend it. As the custom depends not upon any deliberation, it operates immediately, without allowing any time for reflection. But this method of proceeding we have but few instances of in our probable reasonings; and even fewer than in those, which are derived from the uninterrupted conjunction of objects. In the former species of reasoning we commonly take knowingly into consideration the contrariety of past events; we compare the different sides of the contrariety, and carefully weigh the experiments, which we have on each side: Whence we may conclude, that our reasonings of this kind arise not directly from the habit, but in an oblique manner; which we must now endeavour to explain.

It is evident, that when an object is attended with contrary effects, we judge of them only by our past experience, and always consider those as possible, which we have observed to follow from it. And as past experience regulates our judgment concerning the possibility of these effects, so it does that concerning their probability; and that effect, which has been the most common, we always esteem the most likely. Here then are two things to be considered, viz. the reasons which determine us to make the past a standard for the future, and the manner how we extract a single judgment from a contrariety of past events.

First we may observe, that the supposition, that the future resembles the past, is not founded on arguments of any kind, but is derived entirely from habit, by which we are determined to expect for the future the same train of objects, to which we have been accustomed. This habit or determination to transfer the past to the future is full and perfect; and consequently the first impulse of the imagination in this species of reasoning is endowed with the same qualities.

But, secondly, when in considering past experiments we find them of a contrary nature, this determination, though full and perfect in itself, presents us with no steady object, but offers us a number of disagreeing images in a certain order and proportion. The first impulse, therefore, is here broke into pieces, and diffuses itself over all those images, of which each partakes an equal share of that force and vivacity, that is derived from the impulse. Any of these past events may again happen; and we judge, that when they do happen, they will be mixed in the same proportion as in the past.

If our intention, therefore, be to consider the proportions of contrary events in a great number of instances, the images presented by our past experience must remain in their FIRST FORM, and preserve their first proportions. Suppose, for instance, I have found by long observation, that of twenty ships, which go to sea, only nineteen return. Suppose I see at present twenty ships that leave the port: I transfer my past experience to the future, and represent to myself nineteen of these ships as returning in safety, and one as perishing. Concerning this there can be no difficulty. But as we frequently run over those several ideas of past events, in order to form a judgment concerning one single event, which appears uncertain; this consideration must change the FIRST FORM of our ideas, and draw together the divided images presented by experience; since it is to it we refer the determination of that particular event, upon which we reason. Many of these images are supposed to concur, and a superior number to concur on one side. These agreeing images unite together, and render the idea more strong and lively, not only than a mere fiction of the imagination, but also than any idea, which is supported by a lesser number of experiments. Each new experiment is as a new stroke of the pencil, which bestows an additional vivacity on the colours without either multiplying or enlarging the figure. This operation of the mind has been so fully explained in treating of the probability of chance, that I need not here endeavour to render it more intelligible. Every past experiment may be considered as a kind of chance; I it being uncertain to us, whether the object will exist conformable to one experiment or another. And for this reason every thing that has been said on the one subject is applicable to both.

Thus upon the whole, contrary experiments produce an imperfect belief, either by weakening the habit, or by dividing and afterwards joining in different parts, that perfect habit, which makes us conclude in general, that instances, of which we have no experience, must necessarily resemble those of which we have.

To justify still farther this account of the second species of probability, where we reason with knowledge and reflection from a contrariety of past experiments, I shall propose the following considerations, without fearing to give offence by that air of subtilty, which attends them. Just reasoning ought still, perhaps, to retain its force, however subtile; in the same manner as matter preserves its solidity in the air, and fire, and animal spirits, as well as in the grosser and more sensible forms.

First, We may observe, that there is no probability so great as not to allow of a contrary possibility; because otherwise it would cease to be a probability, and would become a certainty. That probability of causes, which is most extensive, and which we at present examine, depends on a contrariety of experiments: and it is evident An experiment in the past proves at least a possibility for the future.

Secondly, The component parts of this possibility and probability are of the same nature, and differ in number only, but not in kind. It has been observed, that all single chances are entirely equal, and that the only circumstance, which can give any event, that is contingent, a superiority over another is a superior number of chances. In like manner, as the uncertainty of causes is discovery by experience, which presents us with a view of contrary events, it is plain, that when we transfer the past to the future, the known to the unknown, every past experiment has the same weight, and that it is only a superior number of them, which can throw the ballance on any side. The possibility, therefore, which enters into every reasoning of this kind, is composed of parts, which are of the same nature both among themselves, and with those, that compose the opposite probability.

Thirdly, We may establish it as a certain maxim, that in all moral as well as natural phaenomena, wherever any cause consists of a number of parts, and the effect encreases or diminishes, according to the variation of that number, the effects properly speaking, is a compounded one, and arises from the union of the several effects, that proceed from each part of the cause. Thus, because the gravity of a body encreases or diminishes by the encrease or diminution of its parts, we conclude that each part contains this quality and contributes to the gravity of the whole. The absence or presence of a part of the cause is attended with that of a proportionable part of the effect. This connexion or constant conjunction sufficiently proves the one part to be the cause of the other. As the belief which we have of any event, encreases or diminishes according to the number of chances or past experiments, it is to be considered as a compounded effect, of which each part arises from a proportionable number of chances or experiments.

Let us now join these three observations, and see what conclusion we can draw from them. To every probability there is an opposite possibility. This possibility is composed of parts, that are entirely of the same nature with those of the probability; and consequently have the same influence on the mind and understanding. The belief, which attends the probability, is a compounded effect, and is formed by the concurrence of the several effects, which proceed from each part of the probability. Since therefore each part of the probability contributes to the production of the belief, each part of the possibility must have the same influence on the opposite side; the nature of these parts being entirely the same. The contrary belief, attending the possibility, implies a view of a certain object, as well as the probability does an opposite view. In this particular both these degrees of belief are alike. The only manner then, in which the superior number of similar component parts in the one can exert its influence, and prevail above the inferior in the other, is by producing a stronger and more lively view of its object. Each part presents a particular view; and all these views uniting together produce one general view, which is fuller and more distinct by the greater number of causes or principles, from which it is derived.

The component parts of the probability and possibility, being alike in their nature, must produce like effects; and the likeness of their effects consists in this, that each of them presents a view of a particular object. But though these parts be alike in their nature, they are very different in their quantity and number; and this difference must appear in the effect as well as the similarity. Now as the view they present is in both cases full and entire, and comprehends the object in all its parts, it is impossible that in this particular there can be any difference; nor is there any thing but a superior vivacity in the probability, arising from the concurrence of a superior number of views, which can distinguish these effects.

Here is almost the same argument in a different light. All our reasonings concerning the probability of causes are founded on the transferring of past to future. The transferring of any past experiment to the future is sufficient to give us a view of the object; whether that experiment be single or combined with others of the same kind; whether it be entire, or opposed by others of a contrary kind. Suppose, then, it acquires both these qualities of combination and opposition, it loses not upon that account its former power of presenting a view of the object, but only concurs with and opposes other experiments, that have a like influence. A question, therefore, may arise concerning the manner both of the concurrence and opposition. As to the concurrence, there is only the choice left betwixt these two hypotheses. First, That the view of the object, occasioned by the transference of each past experiment, preserves itself entire, and only multiplies the number of views. Or, SECONDLY, That it runs into the other similar and correspondent views, and gives them a superior degree of force and vivacity. But that the first hypothesis is erroneous, is evident from experience, which informs us, that the belief, attending any reasoning, consists in one conclusion, not in a multitude of similar ones, which would only distract the mind, and in many cases would be too numerous to be comprehended distinctly by any finite capacity. It remains, therefore, as the only reasonable opinion, that these similar views run into each other, and unite their forces; so as to produce a stronger and clearer view, than what arises from any one alone. This is the manner, in which past experiments concur, when they are transfered to any future event. As to the manner of their opposition, it is evident, that as the contrary views are incompatible with each other, and it is impossible the object can at once exist conformable to both of them, their influence becomes mutually destructive, and the mind is determined to the superior only with that force, which remains, after subtracting the inferior.

I am sensible how abstruse all this reasoning must appear to the generality of readers, who not being accustomed to such profound reflections on the intellectual faculties of the mind, will be apt to reject as chimerical whatever strikes not in with the common received notions, and with the easiest and most obvious principles of philosophy. And no doubt there are some pains required to enter into these arguments; though perhaps very little are necessary to perceive the imperfection of every vulgar hypothesis on this subject, and the little light, which philosophy can yet afford us in such sublime and such curious speculations. Let men be once fully perswaded of these two principles, THAT THERE, IS NOTHING IN ANY OBJECT, CONSIDERed IN ITSELF, WHICH CAN AFFORD US A REASON FOR DRAWING A CONCLUSION BEYOND it; and, THAT EVEN AFTER THE OBSERVATION OF THE FREQUENT OR CONSTANT CONJUNCTION OF OBJECTS, WE HAVE NO REASON TO DRAW ANY INFERENCE CONCERNING ANY OBJECT BEYOND THOSE OF WHICH WE HAVE HAD EXPERIENCE; I say, let men be once fully convinced of these two principles, and this will throw them so loose from all common systems, that they will make no difficulty of receiving any, which may appear the most extraordinary. These principles we have found to be sufficiently convincing, even with regard to our most certain reasonings from causation: But I shall venture to affirm, that with regard to these conjectural or probable reasonings they still acquire a new degree of evidence.

First, It is obvious, that in reasonings of this kind, it is not the object presented to us, which, considered in itself, affords us any reason to draw a conclusion concerning any other object or event. For as this latter object is supposed uncertain, and as the uncertainty is derived from a concealed contrariety of causes in the former, were any of the causes placed in the known qualities of that object, they would no longer be concealed, nor would our conclusion be uncertain.

But, secondly, it is equally obvious in this species of reasoning, that if the transference of the past to the future were founded merely on a conclusion of the understanding, it coued never occasion any belief or assurance. When we transfer contrary experiments to the future, we can only repeat these contrary experiments with their particular proportions; which coued not produce assurance in any single event, upon which we reason, unless the fancy melted together all those images that concur, and extracted from them one single idea or image, which is intense and lively in proportion to the number of experiments from which it is derived, and their superiority above their antagonists. Our past experience presents no determinate object; and as our belief, however faint, fixes itself on a determinate object, it is evident that the belief arises not merely from the transference of past to future, but from some operation of the fancy conjoined with it. This may lead us to conceive the manner, in which that faculty enters into all our reasonings.

I shall conclude this subject with two reflections, which may deserve our attention. The FIRST may be explained after this manner. When the mind forms a reasoning concerning any matter of fact, which is only probable, it casts its eye backward upon past experience, and transferring it to the future, is presented with so many contrary views of its object, of which those that are of the same kind uniting together, and running into one act of the mind, serve to fortify and inliven it. But suppose that this multitude of views or glimpses of an object proceeds not from experience, but from a voluntary act of the imagination; this effect does not follow, or at least, follows not in the same degree. For though custom and education produce belief by such a repetition, as is not derived from experience, yet this requires a long tract of time, along with a very frequent and undesigned repetition. In general we may pronounce, that a person who would voluntarily repeat any idea in his mind, though supported by one past experience, would be no more inclined to believe the existence of its object, than if he had contented himself with one survey of it. Beside the effect of design; each act of the mind, being separate and independent, has a separate influence, and joins not its force with that of its fellows. Not being united by any common object, producing them, they have no relation to each other; and consequently make no transition or union of forces. This phaenomenon we shall understand better afterwards.

My second reflection is founded on those large probabilities, which the mind can judge of, and the minute differences it can observe betwixt them. When the chances or experiments on one side amount to ten thousand, and on the other to ten thousand and one, the judgment gives the preference to the latter, upon account of that superiority; though it is plainly impossible for the mind to run over every particular view, and distinguish the superior vivacity of the image arising from the superior number, where the difference is so inconsiderable. We have a parallel instance in the affections. It is evident, according to the principles above-mentioned, that when an object produces any passion in us, which varies according to the different quantity of the object; I say, it is evident, that the passion, properly speaking, is not a simple emotion, but a compounded one, of a great number of weaker passions, derived from a view of each part of the object. For otherwise it were impossible the passion should encrease by the encrease of these parts. Thus a man, who desires a thousand pound, has in reality a thousand or more desires which uniting together, seem to make only one passion; though the composition evidently betrays itself upon every alteration of the object, by the preference he gives to the larger number, if superior only by an unite. Yet nothing can be more certain, than that so small a difference would not be discernible in the passions, nor coued render them distinguishable from each other. The difference, therefore, of our conduct in preferring the greater number depends not upon our passions, but upon custom, and general rules. We have found in a multitude of instances, that the augmenting the numbers of any sum augments the passion, where the numbers are precise and the difference sensible. The mind can perceive from its immediate feeling, that three guineas produce a greater passion than two; and this it transfers to larger numbers, because of the resemblance; and by a general rule assigns to a thousand guineas, a stronger passion than to nine hundred and ninety nine. These general rules we shall explain presently.

But beside these two species of probability, which a-re derived from an imperfect experience and from contrary causes, there is a third arising from ANALOGY, which differs from them in some material circumstances. According to the hypothesis above explained all kinds of reasoning from causes or effects are founded on two particulars, viz., the constant conjunction of any two objects in all past experience, and the resemblance of a present object to any one of them. The effect of these two particulars is, that the present object invigorates and inlivens the imagination; and the resemblance, along with the constant union, conveys this force and vivacity to the related idea; which we are therefore said to believe, or assent to. If you weaken either the union or resemblance, you weaken the principle of transition, and of consequence that belief, which arises from it. The vivacity of the first impression cannot be fully conveyed to the related idea, either where the conjunction of their objects is not constant, or where the present impression does not perfectly resemble any of those, whose union we are accustomed to observe. In those probabilities of chance and causes above-explained, it is the constancy of the union, which is diminished; and in the probability derived from analogy, it is the resemblance only, which is affected. Without some degree of resemblance, as well as union, it is impossible there can be any reasoning: but as this resemblance admits of many different degrees, the reasoning becomes proportionably more or less firm and certain. An experiment loses of its force, when transferred to instances, which are not exactly resembling; though it is evident it may still retain as much as may be the foundation of probability, as long as there is any resemblance remaining.

SECT. XIII. OF UNPHILOSOPHICAL PROBABILITY.

All these kinds of probability are received by philosophers, and allowed to be reasonable foundations of belief and opinion. But there are others, that are derived from the same principles, though they have not had the good fortune to obtain the same sanction. The first probability of this kind may be accounted for thus. The diminution of the union, and of the resemblance, as above explained, diminishes the facility of the transition, and by that means weakens the evidence; and we may farther observe, that the same diminution of the evidence will follow from a diminution of the impression, and from the shading of those colours, under which it appears to the memory or senses. The argument, which we found on any matter of fact we remember, is more or less convincing according as the fact is recent or remote; and though the difference in these degrees of evidence be not received by philosophy as solid and legitimate; because in that case an argument must have a different force to day, from what it shall have a month hence; yet notwithstanding the opposition of philosophy, it is certain, this circumstance has a considerable influence on the understanding, and secretly changes the authority of the same argument, according to the different times, in which it is proposed to us. A greater force and vivacity in the impression naturally conveys a greater to the related idea; and it is on the degrees of force and vivacity, that the belief depends, according to the foregoing system.

There is a second difference, which we may frequently observe in our degrees of belief and assurance, and which never fails to take place, though disclaimed by philosophers. An experiment, that is recent and fresh in the memory, affects us more than one that is in some measure obliterated; and has a superior influence on the judgment, as well as on the passions. A lively impression produces more assurance than a faint one; because it has more original force to communicate to the related idea, which thereby acquires a greater force and vivacity. A recent observation has a like effect; because the custom and transition is there more entire, and preserves better the original force in the communication. Thus a drunkard, who has seen his companion die of a debauch, is struck with that instance for some time, and dreads a like accident for himself: But as the memory of it decays away by degrees, his former security returns, and the danger seems less certain and real.

I add, as a third instance of this kind, that though our reasonings from proofs and from probabilities be considerably different from each other, yet the former species of reasoning often degenerates insensibly into the latter, by nothing but the multitude of connected arguments. It is certain, that when an inference is drawn immediately from an object, without any intermediate cause or effect, the conviction is much stronger, and the persuasion more lively, than when the imagination is carryed through a long chain of connected arguments, however infallible the connexion of each link may be esteemed. It is from the original impression, that the vivacity of all the ideas is derived, by means of the customary transition of the imagination; and it is evident this vivacity must gradually decay in proportion to the distance, and must lose somewhat in each transition. Sometimes this distance has a greater influence than even contrary experiments would have; and a man may receive a more lively conviction from a probable reasoning, which is close and immediate, than from a long chain of consequences, though just and conclusive in each part. Nay it is seldom such reasonings produce any conviction; and one must have a very strong and firm imagination to preserve the evidence to the end, where it passes through so many, stages.

But here it may not be amiss to remark a very curious phaenomenon, which the present subject suggests to us. It is evident there is no point of ancient history, of which we can have any assurance, but by passing through many millions of causes and effects, and through a chain of arguments of almost an immeasurable length. Before the knowledge of the fact coued come to the first historian, it must be conveyed through many mouths; and after it is committed to writing, each new copy is a new object, of which the connexion with the foregoing is known only by experience and observation. Perhaps, therefore, it may be concluded from the precedent reasoning, that the evidence of all ancient history must now be lost; or at least, will be lost in time, as the chain of causes encreases, and runs on to a greater length. But as it seems contrary to common sense to think, that if the republic of letters, and the art of printing continue on the same footing as at present, our posterity, even after a thousand ages, can ever doubt if there has been such a man as JULIUS CAESAR; this may be considered as an objection to the present system. If belief consisted only in a certain vivacity, conveyed from an original impression, it would decay by the length of the transition, and must at last be utterly extinguished: And vice versa, if belief on some occasions be not capable of such an extinction; it must be something different from that vivacity.

Before I answer this objection I shall observe, that from this topic there has been borrowed a very celebrated argument against the Christian Religion; but with this difference, that the connexion betwixt each link of the chain in human testimony has been there supposed not to go beyond probability, and to be liable to a degree of doubt and uncertainty. And indeed it must be confest, that in this manner of considering the subject, (which however is not a true one) there is no history or tradition, but what must in the end lose all its force and evidence. Every new probability diminishes the original conviction; and however great that conviction may be supposed, it is impossible it can subsist under such re-iterated diminutions. This is true in general; though we shall find [Part IV. Sect. 1.] afterwards, that there is one very memorable exception, which is of vast consequence in the present subject of the understanding.

Mean while to give a solution of the preceding objection upon the supposition, that historical evidence amounts at first to an entire proof; let us consider, that though the links are innumerable, that connect any original fact with the present impression, which is the foundation of belief; yet they are all of the same kind, and depend on the fidelity of Printers and Copyists. One edition passes into another, and that into a third, and so on, till we come to that volume we peruse at present. There is no variation in the steps. After we know one we know all of them; and after we have made one, we can have no scruple as to the rest. This circumstance alone preserves the evidence of history, and will perpetuate the memory of the present age to the latest posterity. If all the long chain of causes and effects, which connect any past event with any volume of history, were composed of parts different from each other, and which it were necessary for the mind distinctly to conceive, it is impossible we should preserve to the end any belief or evidence. But as most of these proofs are perfectly resembling, the mind runs easily along them, jumps from one part to another with facility, and forms but a confused and general notion of each link. By this means a long chain of argument, has as little effect in diminishing the original vivacity, as a much shorter would have, if composed of parts, which were different from each other, and of which each required a distinct consideration.

A fourth unphilosophical species of probability is that derived from general rules, which we rashly form to ourselves, and which are the source of what we properly call PREJUDICE. An IRISHMAN cannot have wit, and a Frenchman cannot have solidity; for which reason, though the conversation of the former in any instance be visibly very agreeable, and of the latter very judicious, we have entertained such a prejudice against them, that they must be dunces or fops in spite of sense and reason. Human nature is very subject to errors of this kind; and perhaps this nation as much as any other.

Should it be demanded why men form general rules, and allow them to influence their judgment, even contrary to present observation and experience, I should reply, that in my opinion it proceeds from those very principles, on which all judgments concerning causes and effects depend. Our judgments concerning cause and effect are derived from habit and experience; and when we have been accustomed to see one object united to another, our imagination passes from the first to the second, by a natural transition, which precedes reflection, and which cannot be prevented by it. Now it is the nature of custom not only to operate with its full force, when objects are presented, that are exactly the same with those to which we have been accustomed; but also to operate in an inferior degree, when we discover such as are similar; and though the habit loses somewhat of its force by every difference, yet it is seldom entirely destroyed, where any considerable circumstances remain the same. A man, who has contracted a custom of eating fruit by the use of pears or peaches, will satisfy himself with melons, where he cannot find his favourite fruit; as one, who has become a drunkard by the use of red wines, will be carried almost with the same violence to white, if presented to him. From this principle I have accounted for that species of probability, derived from analogy, where we transfer our experience in past instances to objects which are resembling, but are not exactly the same with those concerning which we have had experience. In proportion as the resemblance decays, the probability diminishes; but still has some force as long as there remain any traces of the resemblance.

This observation we may carry farther; and may remark, that though custom be the foundation of all our judgments, yet sometimes it has an effect on the imagination in opposition to the judgment, and produces a contrariety in our sentiments concerning the same object. I explain myself. In almost all kinds of causes there is a complication of circumstances, of which some are essential, and others superfluous; some are absolutely requisite to the production of the effect, and others are only conjoined by accident. Now we may observe, that when these superfluous circumstances are numerous, and remarkable, and frequently conjoined with the essential, they have such an influence on the imagination, that even in the absence of the latter they carry us on to t-he conception of the usual effect, and give to that conception a force and vivacity, which make it superior to the mere fictions of the fancy. We may correct this propensity by a reflection on the nature of those circumstances: but it is still certain, that custom takes the start, and gives a biass to the imagination.

To illustrate this by a familiar instance, let us consider the case of a man, who, being hung out from a high tower in a cage of iron cannot forbear trembling, when he surveys the precipice below him, though he knows himself to be perfectly secure from falling, by his experience of the solidity of the iron, which supports him; and though the ideas of fall and descent, and harm and death, be derived solely from custom and experience. The same custom goes beyond the instances, from which it is derived, and to which it perfectly corresponds; and influences his ideas of such objects as are in some respect resembling, but fall not precisely under the same rule. The circumstances of depth and descent strike so strongly upon him, that their influence can-not be destroyed by the contrary circumstances of support and solidity, which ought to give him a perfect security. His imagination runs away with its object, and excites a passion proportioned to it. That passion returns back upon the imagination and inlivens the idea; which lively idea has a new influence on the passion, and in its turn augments its force and violence; and both his fancy and affections, thus mutually supporting each other, cause the whole to have a very great influence upon him.

But why need we seek for other instances, while the present subject of philosophical probabilities offers us so obvious an one, in the opposition betwixt the judgment and imagination arising from these effects of custom? According to my system, all reasonings are nothing but the effects of custom; and custom has no influence, but by inlivening the imagination, and giving us a strong conception of any object. It may, therefore, be concluded, that our judgment and imagination can never be contrary, and that custom cannot operate on the latter faculty after such a manner, as to render it opposite to the former. This difficulty we can remove after no other manner, than by supposing the influence of general rules. We shall afterwards take [Sect. 15.] notice of some general rules, by which we ought to regulate our judgment concerning causes and effects; and these rules are formed on the nature of our understanding, and on our experience of its operations in the judgments we form concerning objects. By them we learn to distinguish the accidental circumstances from the efficacious causes; and when we find that an effect can be produced without the concurrence of any particular circumstance, we conclude that that circumstance makes not a part of the efficacious cause, however frequently conjoined with it. But as this frequent conjunction necessity makes it have some effect on the imagination, in spite of the opposite conclusion from general rules, the opposition of these two principles produces a contrariety in our thoughts, and causes us to ascribe the one inference to our judgment, and the other to our imagination. The general rule is attributed to our judgment; as being more extensive and constant. The exception to the imagination, as being more capricious and uncertain.

Thus our general rules are in a manner set in opposition to each other. When an object appears, that resembles any cause in very considerable circumstances, the imagination naturally carries us to a lively conception of the usual effect, Though the object be different in the most material and most efficacious circumstances from that cause. Here is the first influence of general rules. But when we take a review of this act of the mind, and compare it with the more general and authentic operations of the understanding, we find it to be of an irregular nature, and destructive of all the most established principles of reasonings; which is the cause of our rejecting it. This is a second influence of general rules, and implies the condemnation of the former. Sometimes the one, sometimes the other prevails, according to the disposition and character of the person. The vulgar are commonly guided by the first, and wise men by the second. Mean while the sceptics may here have the pleasure of observing a new and signal contradiction in our reason, and of seeing all philosophy ready to be subverted by a principle of human nature, and again saved by a new direction of the very same principle. The following of general rules is a very unphilosophical species of probability; and yet it is only by following them that we can correct this, and all other unphilosophical probabilities.

Since we have instances, where general rules operate on the imagination even contrary to the judgment, we need not be surprized to see their effects encrease, when conjoined with that latter faculty, and to observe that they bestow on the ideas they present to us a force superior to what attends any other. Every one knows, there is an indirect manner of insinuating praise or blame, which is much less shocking than the open flattery or censure of any person. However he may communicate his sentiments by such secret insinuations, and make them known with equal certainty as by the open discovery of them, it is certain that their influence is not equally strong and powerful. One who lashes me with concealed strokes of satire, moves not my indignation to such a degree, as if he flatly told me I was a fool and coxcomb; though I equally understand his meaning, as if he did. This difference is to be attributed to the influence of general rules.

Whether a person openly, abuses me, or slyly intimates his contempt, in neither case do I immediately perceive his sentiment or opinion; and it is only by signs, that is, by its effects, I become sensible of it. The only difference, then, betwixt these two cases consists in this, that in the open discovery of his sentiments he makes use of signs, which are general and universal; and in the secret intimation employs such as are more singular and uncommon. The effect of this circumstance is, that the imagination, in running from the present impression to the absent idea, makes the transition with greater facility, and consequently conceives the object with greater force, where the connexion is common and universal, than where it is more rare and particular. Accordingly we may observe, that the open declaration of our sentiments is called the taking off the mask, as the secret intimation of our opinions is said to be the veiling of them. The difference betwixt an idea produced by a general connexion, and that arising from a particular one is here compared to the difference betwixt an impression and an idea. This difference in the imagination has a suitable effect on the passions; and this effect is augmented by another circumstance. A secret intimation of anger or contempt shews that we still have some consideration for the person, and avoid the directly abusing him. This makes a concealed satire less disagreeable; but still this depends on the same principle. For if an idea were not more feeble, when only intimated, it would never be esteemed a mark of greater respect to proceed in this method than in the other.

Sometimes scurrility is less displeasing than delicate satire, because it revenges us in a manner for the injury at the very time it is committed, by affording us a just reason to blame and contemn the person, who injures us. But this phaenomenon likewise depends upon the same principle. For why do we blame all gross and injurious language, unless it be, because we esteem it contrary to good breeding and humanity? And why is it contrary, unless it be more shocking than any delicate satire? The rules of good breeding condemn whatever is openly disobliging, and gives a sensible pain and confusion to those, with whom we converse. After this is once established, abusive language is universally blamed, and gives less pain upon account of its coarseness and incivility, which render the person despicable, that employs it. It becomes less disagreeable, merely because originally it is more so; and it is more disagreeable, because it affords an inference by general and common rules, that are palpable and undeniable.

To this explication of the different influence of open and concealed flattery or satire, I shall add the consideration of another phenomenon, which is analogous to it. There are many particulars in the point of honour both of men and women, whose violations, when open and avowed, the world never excuses, but which it is more apt to overlook, when the appearances are saved, and the transgression is secret and concealed. Even those, who know with equal certainty, that the fault is committed, pardon it more easily, when the proofs seem in some measure oblique and equivocal, than when they are direct and undeniable. The same idea is presented in both cases, and, properly speaking, is equally assented to by the judgment; and yet its influence is different, because of the different manner, in which it is presented.

Now if we compare these two cases, of the open and concealed violations of the laws of honour, we shall find, that the difference betwixt them consists in this, that in the first ease the sign, from which we infer the blameable action, is single, and suffices alone to be the foundation of our reasoning and judgment; whereas in the latter the signs are numerous, and decide little or nothing when alone and unaccompanyed with many minute circumstances, which are almost imperceptible. But it is certainly true, that any reasoning is always the more convincing, the more single and united it is to the eye, and the less exercise it gives to the imagination to collect all its parts, and run from them to the correlative idea, which forms the conclusion. The labour of the thought disturbs the regular progress of the sentiments, as we shall observe presently.[Part IV. Sect. 1.] The idea strikes not on us with ouch vivacity; and consequently has no such influence on the passion and imagination.

From the same principles we may account for those observations of the CARDINAL DE RETZ, that there are many things, in which the world wishes to be deceived; and that it more easily excuses a person in acting than in talking contrary to the decorum of his profession and character. A fault in words is commonly more open and distinct than one in actions, which admit of many palliating excuses, and decide not so clearly concerning the intention and views of the actor.

Thus it appears upon the whole, that every kind of opinion or judgment, which amounts not to knowledge, is derived entirely from the force and vivacity of the perception, and that these qualities constitute in the mind, what we call the BELIEF Of the existence of any object. This force and this vivacity are most conspicuous in the memory; and therefore our confidence in the veracity of that faculty is the greatest imaginable, and equals in many respects the assurance of a demonstration. The next degree of these qualities is that derived from the relation of cause and effect; and this too is very great, especially when the conjunction is found by experience to be perfectly constant, and when the object, which is present to us, exactly resembles those, of which we have had experience. But below this degree of evidence there are many others, which have an influence on the passions and imagination, proportioned to that degree of force and vivacity, which they communicate to the ideas. It is by habit we make the transition from cause to effect; and it is from some present impression we borrow that vivacity, which we diffuse over the correlative idea. But when we have not observed a sufficient number of instances, to produce a strong habit; or when these instances are contrary to each other; or when the resemblance is not exact; or the present impression is faint and obscure; or the experience in some measure obliterated from the memory; or the connexion dependent on a long chain of objects; or the inference derived from general rules, and yet not conformable to them: In all these cases the evidence diminishes by the diminution of the force and intenseness of the idea. This therefore is the nature of the judgment and probability.

What principally gives authority to this system is, beside the undoubted arguments, upon which each part is founded, the agreement of these parts, and the necessity of one to explain another. The belief, which attends our memory, is of the same nature with that, which is derived from our judgments: Nor is there any difference betwixt that judgment, which is derived from a constant and uniform connexion of causes and effects, and that which depends upon an interrupted and uncertain. It is indeed evident, that in all determinations, where the mind decides from contrary experiments, it is first divided within itself, and has an inclination to either side in proportion to the number of experiments we have seen and remember. This contest is at last determined to the advantage of that side, where we observe a superior number of these experiments; but still with a diminution of force in the evidence correspondent to the number of the opposite experiments. Each possibility, of which the probability is composed, operates separately upon the imagination; and it is the larger collection of possibilities, which at last prevails, and that with a force proportionable to its superiority. All these phenomena lead directly to the precedent system; nor will it ever be possible upon any other principles to give a satisfactory and consistent explication of them. Without considering these judgments as the effects of custom on the imagination, we shall lose ourselves in perpetual contradiction and absurdity.

SECT. XIV. OF THE IDEA OF NECESSARY CONNEXION.

Having thus explained the manner, in which we reason beyond our immediate impressions, and conclude that such particular causes must have such particular effects; we must now return upon our footsteps to examine that question, which [Sect. 2.] first occured to us, and which we dropt in our way, viz. What is our idea of necessity, when we say that two objects are necessarily connected together. Upon this head I repeat what I have often had occasion to observe, that as we have no idea, that is not derived from an impression, we must find some impression, that gives rise to this idea of necessity, if we assert we have really such an idea. In order to this I consider, in what objects necessity is commonly supposed to lie; and finding that it is always ascribed to causes and effects, I turn my eye to two objects supposed to be placed in that relation; and examine them in all the situations, of which they are susceptible. I immediately perceive, that they are contiguous in time and place, and that the object we call cause precedes the other we call effect. In no one instance can I go any farther, nor is it possible for me to discover any third relation betwixt these objects. I therefore enlarge my view to comprehend several instances; where I find like objects always existing in like relations of contiguity and succession. At first sight this seems to serve but little to my purpose. The reflection on several instances only repeats the same objects; and therefore can never give rise to a new idea. But upon farther enquiry I find, that the repetition is not in every particular the same, but produces a new impression, and by that means the idea, which I at present examine. For after a frequent repetition, I find, that upon the appearance of one of the objects, the mind is determined by custom to consider its usual attendant, and to consider it in a stronger light upon account of its relation to the first object. It is this impression, then, or determination, which affords me the idea of necessity.

I doubt not but these consequences will at first sight be received without difficulty, as being evident deductions from principles, which we have already established, and which we have often employed in our reasonings. This evidence both in the first principles, and in the deductions, may seduce us unwarily into the conclusion, and make us imagine it contains nothing extraordinary, nor worthy of our curiosity. But though such an inadvertence may facilitate the reception of this reasoning, it will make it be the more easily forgot; for which reason I think it proper to give warning, that I have just now examined one of the most sublime questions in philosophy, viz. that concerning the power and efficacy of causes; where all the sciences seem so much interested. Such a warning will naturally rouze up the attention of the reader, and make him desire a more full account of my doctrine, as well as of the arguments, on which it is founded. This request is so reasonable, that I cannot refuse complying with it; especially as I am hopeful that these principles, the more they are examined, will acquire the more force and evidence.

There is no question, which on account of its importance, as well as difficulty, has caused more disputes both among antient and modern philosophers, than this concerning the efficacy of causes, or that quality which makes them be followed by their effects. But before they entered upon these disputes, methinks it would not have been improper to have examined what idea we have of that efficacy, which is the subject of the controversy. This is what I find principally wanting in their reasonings, and what I shall here endeavour to supply.

I begin with observing that the terms of EFFICACY, AGENCY, POWER, FORCE, ENERGY, NECESSITY, CONNEXION, and PRODUCTIVE QUALITY, are all nearly synonymous; and therefore it is an absurdity to employ any of them in defining the rest. By this observation we reject at once all the vulgar definitions, which philosophers have given of power and efficacy; and instead of searching for the idea in these definitions, must look for it in the impressions, from which it is originally derived. If it be a compound idea, it must arise from compound impressions. If simple, from simple impressions.

I believe the most general and most popular explication of this matter, is to say [See Mr. Locke, chapter of power.], that finding from experience, that there are several new productions in matter, such as the motions and variations of body, and concluding that there must somewhere be a power capable of producing them, we arrive at last by this reasoning at the idea of power and efficacy. But to be convinced that this explication is more popular than philosophical, we need but reflect on two very obvious principles. First, That reason alone can never give rise to any original idea, and secondly, that reason, as distinguished from experience, can never make us conclude, that a cause or productive quality is absolutely requisite to every beginning of existence. Both these considerations have been sufficiently explained: and therefore shall not at present be any farther insisted on.

I shall only infer from them, that since reason can never give rise to the idea of efficacy, that idea must be derived from experience, and from some particular instances of this efficacy, which make their passage into the mind by the common channels of sensation or reflection. Ideas always represent their objects or impressions; and vice versa, there are some objects necessary to give rise to every idea. If we pretend, therefore, to have any just idea of this efficacy, we must produce some instance, wherein the efficacy is plainly discoverable to the mind, and its operations obvious to our consciousness or sensation. By the refusal of this, we acknowledge, that the idea is impossible and imaginary, since the principle of innate ideas, which alone can save us from this dilemma, has been already refuted, and is now almost universally rejected in the learned world. Our present business, then, must be to find some natural production, where the operation and efficacy of a cause can be clearly conceived and comprehended by the mind, without any danger of obscurity or mistake.

In this research we meet with very little encouragement from that prodigious diversity, which is found in the opinions of those philosophers, who have pretended to explain the secret force and energy of causes. [See Father Malbranche, Book vi. Part 2, cha. And the illustrations upon it.] There are some, who maintain, that bodies operate by their substantial form; others, by their accidents or qualities; several, by their matter and form; some, by their form and accidents; others, by certain virtues and faculties distinct from all this. All these sentiments again are mixed and varyed in a thousand different ways; and form a strong presumption, that none of them have any solidity or evidence, and that the supposition of an efficacy in any of the known qualities of matter is entirely without foundation. This presumption must encrease upon us, when we consider, that these principles of substantial forms, and accidents, and faculties, are not in reality any of the known properties of bodies, but are perfectly unintelligible and inexplicable. For it is evident philosophers would never have had recourse to such obscure and uncertain principles, had they met with any satisfaction in such as are clear and intelligible; especially in such an affair as this, which must be an object of the simplest understanding, if not of the senses. Upon the whole, we may conclude, that it is impossible in any one instance to shew the principle, in which the force and agency of a cause is placed; and that the most refined and most vulgar understandings are equally at a loss in this particular. If any one think proper to refute this assertion, he need not put himself to the trouble of inventing any long reasonings: but may at once shew us an instance of a cause, where we discover the power or operating principle. This defiance we are obliged frequently to make use of, as being almost the only means of proving a negative in philosophy.

The small success, which has been met with in all the attempts to fix this power, has at last obliged philosophers to conclude, that the ultimate force and efficacy of nature is perfectly unknown to us, and that it is in vain we search for it in all the known qualities of matter. In this opinion they are almost unanimous; and it is only in the inference they draw from it, that they discover any difference in their sentiments. For some of them, as the CARTESIANS in particular, having established it as a principle, that we are perfectly acquainted with the essence of matter, have very naturally inferred, that it is endowed with no efficacy, and that it is impossible for it of itself to communicate motion, or produce any of those effects, which we ascribe to it. As the essence of matter consists in extension, and as extension implies not actual motion, but only mobility; they conclude, that the energy, which produces the motion, cannot lie in the extension.

This conclusion leads them into another, which they regard as perfectly unavoidable. Matter, say they, is in itself entirely unactive, and deprived of any power, by which it may produce, or continue, or communicate motion: But since these effects are evident to our senses, and since the power, that produces them, must be placed somewhere, it must lie in the DEITY, or that divine being, who contains in his nature all excellency and perfection. It is the deity, therefore, who is the prime mover of the universe, and who not only first created matter, and gave it it’s original impulse, but likewise by a continued exertion of omnipotence, supports its existence, and successively bestows on it all those motions, and configurations, and qualities, with which it is endowed.

This opinion is certainly very curious, and well worth our attention; but it will appear superfluous to examine it in this place, if we reflect a moment on our present purpose in taking notice of it. We have established it as a principle, that as all ideas are derived from impressions, or some precedent perceptions, it is impossible we can have any idea of power and efficacy, unless some instances can be produced, wherein this power is perceived to exert itself. Now, as these instances can never be discovered in body, the Cartesians, proceeding upon their principle of innate ideas, have had recourse to a supreme spirit or deity, whom they consider as the only active being in the universe, and as the immediate cause of every alteration in matter. But the principle of innate ideas being allowed to be false, it follows, that the supposition of a deity can serve us in no stead, in accounting for that idea of agency, which we search for in vain in all the objects, which are presented to our senses, or which we are internally conscious of in our own minds. For if every idea be derived from an impression, the idea of a deity proceeds from the same origin; and if no impression, either of sensation or reflection, implies any force or efficacy, it is equally impossible to discover or even imagine any such active principle in the deity. Since these philosophers, therefore, have concluded, that matter cannot be endowed with any efficacious principle, because it is impossible to discover in it such a principle; the same course of reasoning should determine them to exclude it from the supreme being. Or if they esteem that opinion absurd and impious, as it really is, I shall tell them how they may avoid it; and that is, by concluding from the very first, that they have no adequate idea of power or efficacy in any object; since neither in body nor spirit, neither in superior nor inferior natures, are they able to discover one single instance of it.

The same conclusion is unavoidable upon the hypothesis of those, who maintain the efficacy of second causes, and attribute a derivative, but a real power and energy to matter. For as they confess, that this energy lies not in any of the known qualities of matter, the difficulty still remains concerning the origin of its idea. If we have really an idea of power, we may attribute power to an unknown quality: But as it is impossible, that that idea can be derived from such a quality, and as there is nothing in known qualities, which can produce it; it follows that we deceive ourselves, when we imagine we are possest of any idea of this kind, after the manner we commonly understand it. All ideas are derived from, and represent impressions. We never have any impression, that contains any power or efficacy. We never therefore have any idea of power.

Some have asserted, that we feel an energy, or power, in our own mind; and that having in this manner acquired the idea of power, we transfer that quality to matter, where we are not able immediately to discover it. The motions of our body, and the thoughts and sentiments of our mind, (say they) obey the will; nor do we seek any farther to acquire a just notion of force or power. But to convince us how fallacious this reasoning is, we need only consider, that the will being here considered as a cause, has no more a discoverable connexion with its effects, than any material cause has with its proper effect. So far from perceiving the connexion betwixt an act of volition, and a motion of the body; it is allowed that no effect is more inexplicable from the powers and essence of thought and matter. Nor is the empire of the will over our mind more intelligible. The effect is there distinguishable and separable from the cause, and coued not be foreseen without the experience of their constant conjunction. We have command over our mind to a certain degree, but beyond that, lose all empire over it: And it is evidently impossible to fix any precise bounds to our authority, where we consult not experience. In short, the actions of the mind are, in this respect, the same with those of matter. We perceive only their constant conjunction; nor can we ever reason beyond it. No internal impression has an apparent energy, more than external objects have. Since, therefore, matter is confessed by philosophers to operate by an unknown force, we should in vain hope to attain an idea of force by consulting our own minds. [FN 8.]

[FN 8. The same imperfection attends our ideas of the Deity; but this can have no effect either on religion or morals. The order of the universe proves an omnipotent mind; that is, a mind whose wili is CONSTANTLY ATTENDED with the obedience of every creature and being. Nothing more is requisite to give a foundation to all the articles of religion, nor is It necessary we shoud form a distinct idea of the force and energy of the supreme Being.]

It has been established as a certain principle, that general or abstract ideas are nothing but individual ones taken in a certain light, and that, in reflecting on any object, it is as impossible to exclude from our thought all particular degrees of quantity and quality as from the real nature of things. If we be possest, therefore, of any idea of power in general, we must also be able to conceive some particular species of it; and as power cannot subsist alone, but is always regarded as an attribute of some being or existence, we must be able to place this power in some particular being, and conceive that being as endowed with a real force and energy, by which such a particular effect necessarily results from its operation. We must distinctly and particularly conceive the connexion betwixt the cause and effect, and be able to pronounce, from a simple view of the one, that it must be followed or preceded by the other. This is the true manner of conceiving a particular power in a particular body: and a general idea being impossible without an individual; where the latter is impossible, it is certain the former can never exist. Now nothing is more evident, than that the human mind cannot form such an idea of two objects, as to conceive any connexion betwixt them, or comprehend distinctly that power or efficacy, by which they are united. Such a connexion would amount to a demonstration, and would imply the absolute impossibility for the one object not to follow, or to be conceived not to follow upon the other: Which kind of connexion has already been rejected in all cases. If any one is of a contrary opinion, and thinks he has attained a notion of power in any particular object, I desire he may point out to me that object. But till I meet with such-a-one, which I despair of, I cannot forbear concluding, that since we can never distinctly conceive how any particular power can possibly reside in any particular object, we deceive ourselves in imagining we can form any such general idea.

Thus upon the whole we may infer, that when we talk of any being, whether of a superior or inferior nature, as endowed with a power or force, proportioned to any effect; when we speak of a necessary connexion betwixt objects, and suppose, that this connexion depends upon an efficacy or energy, with which any of these objects are endowed; in all these expressions, so applied, we have really no distinct meaning, and make use only of common words, without any clear and determinate ideas. But as it is more probable, that these expressions do here lose their true meaning by being wrong applied, than that they never have any meaning; it will be proper to bestow another consideration on this subject, to see if possibly we can discover the nature and origin of those ideas, we annex to them.

Suppose two objects to be presented to us, of which the one is the cause and the other the effect; it is plain, that from the simple consideration of one, or both these objects we never shall perceive the tie by which they are united, or be able certainly to pronounce, that there is a connexion betwixt them. It is not, therefore, from any one instance, that we arrive at the idea of cause and effect, of a necessary connexion of power, of force, of energy, and of efficacy. Did we never see any but particular conjunctions of objects, entirely different from each other, we should never be able to form any such ideas.

But again; suppose we observe several instances, in which the same objects are always conjoined together, we immediately conceive a connexion betwixt them, and begin to draw an inference from one to another. This multiplicity of resembling instances, therefore, constitutes the very essence of power or connexion, and is the source from which the idea of it arises. In order, then, to understand the idea of power, we must consider that multiplicity; nor do I ask more to give a solution of that difficulty, which has so long perplexed us. For thus I reason. The repetition of perfectly similar instances can never alone give rise to an original idea, different from what is to be found in any particular instance, as has been observed, and as evidently follows from our fundamental principle, that all ideas are copyed from impressions. Since therefore the idea of power is a new original idea, not to be found in any one instance, and which yet arises from the repetition of several instances, it follows, that the repetition alone has not that effect, but must either discover or produce something new, which is the source of that idea. Did the repetition neither discover nor produce anything new, our ideas might be multiplyed by it, but would not be enlarged above what they are upon the observation of one single instance. Every enlargement, therefore, (such as the idea of power or connexion) which arises from the multiplicity of similar instances, is copyed from some effects of the multiplicity, and will be perfectly understood by understanding these effects. Wherever we find anything new to be discovered or produced by the repetition, there we must place the power, and must never look for it in any other object.

But it is evident, in the first place, that the repetition of like objects in like relations of succession and contiguity discovers nothing new in any one of them: since we can draw no inference from it, nor make it a subject either of our demonstrative or probable reasonings;[Sect. 6.] as has been already proved. Nay suppose we coued draw an inference, it would be of no consequence in the present case; since no kind of reasoning can give rise to a new idea, such as this of power is; but wherever we reason, we must antecedently be possest of clear ideas, which may be the objects of our reasoning. The conception always precedes the understanding; and where the one is obscure, the other is uncertain; where the one fails, the other must fail also.

Secondly, It is certain that this repetition of similar objects in similar situations produces nothing new either in these objects, or in any external body. For it will readily be allowed, that the several instances we have of the conjunction of resembling causes and effects are in themselves entirely independent, and that the communication of motion, which I see result at present from the shock of two billiard-balls, is totally distinct from that which I saw result from such an impulse a twelve-month ago. These impulses have no influence on each other. They are entirely divided by time and place; and the one might have existed and communicated motion, though the other never had been in being.

There is, then, nothing new either discovered or produced in any objects by their constant conjunction, and by the uninterrupted resemblance of their relations of succession and contiguity. But it is from this resemblance, that the ideas of necessity, of power, and of efficacy, are derived. These ideas, therefore, represent not anything, that does or can belong to the objects, which are constantly conjoined. This is an argument, which, in every view we can examine it, will be found perfectly unanswerable. Similar instances are still the first source of our idea of power or necessity; at the same time that they have no influence by their similarity either on each other, or on any external object. We must, therefore, turn ourselves to some other quarter to seek the origin of that idea.

Though the several resembling instances, which give rise to the idea of power, have no influence on each other, and can never produce any new quality in the object, which can be the model of that idea, yet the observation of this resemblance produces a new impression in the mind, which is its real model. For after we have observed the resemblance in a sufficient number of instances, we immediately feel a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and to conceive it in a stronger light upon account of that relation. This determination is the only effect of the resemblance; and therefore must be the same with power or efficacy, whose idea is derived from the resemblance. The several instances of resembling conjunctions lead us into the notion of power and necessity. These instances are in themselves totally distinct from each other, and have no union but in the mind, which observes them, and collects their ideas. Necessity, then, is the effect of this observation, and is nothing but an internal impression of the mind, or a determination to carry our thoughts from one object to another. Without considering it in this view, we can never arrive at the most distant notion of it, or be able to attribute it either to external or internal objects, to spirit or body, to causes or effects.

The necessary connexion betwixt causes and effects is the foundation of our inference from one to the other. The foundation of our inference is the transition arising from the accustomed union. These are, therefore, the same.

The idea of necessity arises from some impression. There is no impression conveyed by our senses, which can give rise to that idea. It must, therefore, be derived from some internal impression, or impression of reflection. There is no internal impression, which has any relation to the present business, but that propensity, which custom produces, to pass from an object to the idea of its usual attendant. This therefore is the essence of necessity. Upon the whole, necessity is something, that exists in the mind, not in objects; nor is it possible for us ever to form the most distant idea of it, considered as a quality in bodies. Either we have no idea of necessity, or necessity is nothing but that determination of the thought to pass from causes to effects, and from effects to causes, according to their experienced union.

Thus as the necessity, which makes two times two equal to four, or three angles of a triangle equal to two right ones, lies only in the act of the understanding, by which we consider and compare these ideas; in like manner the necessity or power, which unites causes and effects, lies in the determination of the mind to pass from the one to the other. The efficacy or energy of causes is neither placed in the causes themselves, nor in the deity, nor in the concurrence of these two principles; but belongs entirely to the soul, which considers the union of two or more objects in all past instances. It is here that the real power of causes is placed along with their connexion and necessity.

I am sensible, that of all the paradoxes, which I, have had, or shall hereafter have occasion to advance in the course of this treatise, the present one is the most violent, and that it is merely by dint of solid proof and reasoning I can ever hope it will have admission, and overcome the inveterate prejudices of mankind. Before we are reconciled to this doctrine, how often must we repeat to ourselves, that the simple view of any two objects or actions, however related, can never give us any idea, of power, or of a connexion betwixt them: that this idea arises from the repetition of their union: that the repetition neither discovers nor causes any thing in the objects, but has an influence only on the mind, by that customary transition it produces: that this customary transition is, therefore, the same with the power and necessity; which are consequently qualities of perceptions, not of objects, and are internally felt by the soul, and not perceivd externally in bodies? There is commonly an astonishment attending every thing extraordinary; and this astonishment changes immediately into the highest degree of esteem or contempt, according as we approve or disapprove of the subject. I am much afraid, that though the foregoing reasoning appears to me the shortest and most decisive imaginable; yet with the generality of readers the biass of the mind will prevail, and give them a prejudice against the present doctrine.

This contrary biass is easily accounted for. It is a common observation, that the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects, and to conjoin with them any internal impressions, which they occasion, and which always make their appearance at the same time that these objects discover themselves to the senses. Thus as certain sounds and smells are always found to attend certain visible objects, we naturally imagine a conjunction, even in place, betwixt the objects and qualities, though the qualities be of such a nature as to admit of no such conjunction, and really exist no where. But of this more fully hereafter [Part IV, Sect. 5.]. Mean while it is sufficient to observe, that the same propensity is the reason, why we suppose necessity and power to lie in the objects we consider, not in our mind that considers them; notwithstanding it is not possible for us to form the most distant idea of that quality, when it is not taken for the determination of the mind, to pass from the idea of an object to that of its usual attendant.

But though this be the only reasonable account we can give of necessity, the contrary notion if; so riveted in the mind from the principles above-mentioned, that I doubt not but my sentiments will be treated by many as extravagant and ridiculous. What! the efficacy of causes lie in the determination of the mind! As if causes did not operate entirely independent of the mind, and would not continue their operation, even though there was no mind existent to contemplate them, or reason concerning them. Thought may well depend on causes for its operation, but not causes on thought. This is to reverse the order of nature, and make that secondary, which is really primary, To every operation there is a power proportioned; and this power must be placed on the body, that operates. If we remove the power from one cause, we must ascribe it to another: But to remove it from all causes, and bestow it on a being, that is no ways related to the cause or effect, but by perceiving them, is a gross absurdity, and contrary to the most certain principles of human reason.

I can only reply to all these arguments, that the case is here much the same, as if a blind man should pretend to find a great many absurdities in the supposition, that the colour of scarlet is not the same with the sound of a trumpet, nor light the same with solidity. If we have really no idea of a power or efficacy in any object, or of any real connexion betwixt causes and effects, it will be to little purpose to prove, that an efficacy is necessary in all operations. We do not understand our own meaning in talking so, but ignorantly confound ideas, which are entirely distinct from each other. I am, indeed, ready to allow, that there may be several qualities both in material and immaterial objects, with which we are utterly unacquainted; and if we please to call these POWER or EFFICACY, it will be of little consequence to the world. But when, instead of meaning these unknown qualities, we make the terms of power and efficacy signify something, of which we have a clear idea, and which is incompatible with those objects, to which we apply it, obscurity and error begin then to take place, and we are led astray by a false philosophy. This is the case, when we transfer the determination of the thought to external objects, and suppose any real intelligible connexion betwixt them; that being a quality, which can only belong to the mind that considers them.

As to what may be said, that the operations of nature are independent of our thought and reasoning, I allow it; and accordingly have observed, that objects bear to each other the relations of contiguity and succession: that like objects may be observed in several instances to have like relations; and that all this is independent of, and antecedent to the operations of the understanding. But if we go any farther, and ascribe a power or necessary connexion to these objects; this is what we can never observe in them, but must draw the idea of it from what we feel internally in contemplating them. And this I carry so far, that I am ready to convert my present reasoning into an instance of it, by a subtility, which it will not be difficult to comprehend.

When any object is presented to us, it immediately conveys to the mind a lively idea of that object, which is usually found to attend it; and this determination of the mind forms the necessary connexion of these objects.

But when we change the point of view, from the objects to the perceptions; in that case the impression is to be considered as the cause, and the lively idea as the effect; and their necessary connexion is that new determination, which we feel to pass from the idea of the one to that of the other. The uniting principle among our internal perceptions is as unintelligible as that among external objects, and is not known to us any other way than by experience. Now the nature and effects of experience have been already sufficiently examined and explained. It never gives us any insight into the internal structure or operating principle of objects, but only accustoms the mind to pass from one to another.

It is now time to collect all the different parts of this reasoning, and by joining them together form an exact definition of the relation of cause and effect, which makes the subject of the present enquiry. This order would not have been excusable, of first examining our inference from the relation before we had explained the relation itself, had it been possible to proceed in a different method. But as the nature of the relation depends so much on that of the inference, we have been obliged to advance in this seemingly preposterous manner, and make use of terms before we were able exactly to define them, or fix their meaning. We shall now correct this fault by giving a precise definition of cause and effect.

There may two definitions be given of this relation, which are only different, by their presenting a different view of the same object, and making us consider it either as a philosophical or as a natural relation; either as a comparison of two ideas, or as an association betwixt them. We may define a CAUSE to be An object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the former are placed in like relations of precedency and contiguity to those objects that resemble the latter. I If this definition be esteemed defective, because drawn from objects foreign to the cause, we may substitute this other definition in its place, viz. A CAUSE is an object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the idea, of the one determines the mind to form the idea of the other, and the impression of the one to form a more lively idea of the other. 2 should this definition also be rejected for the same reason, I know no other remedy, than that the persons, who express this delicacy, should substitute a juster definition in its place. But for my part I must own my incapacity for such an undertaking. When I examine with the utmost accuracy those objects, which are commonly denominated causes and effects, I find, in considering a single instance, that the one object is precedent and contiguous to the other; and in inlarging my view to consider several instances, I find only, that like objects are constantly placed in like relations of succession and contiguity. Again, when I consider the influence of this constant conjunction, I perceive, that such a relation can never be an object of reasoning, and can never operate upon the mind, but by means of custom, which determines the imagination to make a transition from the idea of one object to that of its usual attendant, and from the impression of one to a more lively idea of the other. However extraordinary these sentiments may appear, I think it fruitless to trouble myself with any farther enquiry or reasoning upon the subject, but shall repose myself on them as on established maxims.

It will only be proper, before we leave this subject, to draw some corrollaries from it, by which we may remove several prejudices and popular errors, that have very much prevailed in philosophy. First, We may learn from the foregoing, doctrine, that all causes are of the same kind, and that in particular there is no foundation for that distinction, which we sometimes make betwixt efficient causes and causes sine qua non; or betwixt efficient causes, and formal, and material, and exemplary, and final causes. For as our idea of efficiency is derived from the constant conjunction of two objects, wherever this is observed, the cause is efficient; and where it is not, there can never be a cause of any kind. For the same reason we must reject the distinction betwixt cause and occasion, when supposed to signify any thing essentially different from each other. If constant conjunction be implyed in what we call occasion, it is a real cause. If not, it is no relation at all, and cannot give rise to any argument or reasoning.

Secondly, The same course of reasoning will make us conclude, that there is but one kind of necessity, as there is but one kind of cause, and that the common distinction betwixt moral and physical necessity is without any foundation in nature. This clearly appears from the precedent explication of necessity. It is the constant conjunction of objects, along with the determination of the mind, which constitutes a physical necessity: And the removal of these is the same thing with chance. As objects must either be conjoined or not, and as the mind must either be determined or not to pass from one object to another, it is impossible to admit of any medium betwixt chance and an absolute necessity. In weakening this conjunction and determination you do not change the nature of the necessity; since even in the operation of bodies, these have different degrees of constancy and force, without producing a different species of that relation.

The distinction, which we often make betwixt POWER and the EXERCISE of it, is equally without foundation.

Thirdly, We may now be able fully to overcome all that repugnance, which it is so natural for us to entertain against the foregoing reasoning, by which we endeavoured to prove, that the necessity of a cause to every beginning of existence is not founded on any arguments either demonstrative or intuitive. Such an opinion will not appear strange after the foregoing definitions. If we define a cause to be an object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the objects resembling the farmer are placed in a like relation of priority and contiguity to those objects, that resemble the latter; we may easily conceive, that there is no absolute nor metaphysical necessity, that every beginning of existence should be attended with such an object. If we define a cause to be, AN OBJECT PRECEDENT AND CONTIGUOUS TO ANOTHER, AND SO UNITED WITH IT IN THE IMAGINATION, THAT THE IDEA OF THE ONE DETERMINES THE MIND TO FORM THE IDEA OF THE OTHER, AND THE IMPRESSION OF THE ONE TO FORM A MORE LIVELY IDEA OF THE OTHER; we shall make still less difficulty of assenting to this opinion. Such an influence on the mind is in itself perfectly extraordinary and incomprehensible; nor can we be certain of its reality, but from experience and observation.

I shall add as a fourth corrollary that we can never have reason to believe that any object exists, of which we cannot form an idea. For as all our reasonings concerning existence are derived from causation, and as all our reasonings concerning causation are derived from the experienced conjunction of objects, not from any reasoning or reflection, the same experience must give us a notion of these objects, and must remove all mystery from our conclusions. This is so evident, that it would scarce have merited our attention, were it not to obviate certain objections of this kind, which might arise against the following reasonings concerning matter and substance. I need not observe, that a full knowledge of the object is not requisite, but only of those qualities of it, which we believe to exist.

SECT. XV. RULES BY WHICH TO JUDGE OF CAUSES AND EFFECTS.

According to the precedent doctrine, there are no objects which by the mere survey, without consulting experience, we can determine to be the causes of any other; and no objects, which we can certainly determine in the same manner not to be the causes. Any thing may produce any thing. Creation, annihilation, motion, reason, volition; all these may arise from one another, or from any other object we can imagine. Nor will this appear strange, if we compare two principles explained above, THAT THE CONSTANT CONJUNCTION OF OBJECTS DETERMINES THEIR CAUSATION, AND [Part I. Sect. 5.] THAT, PROPERTY SPEAKING, NO OBJECTS ARE CONTRARY TO EACH OTHER BUT EXISTENCE AND NON-EXISTENCE. Where objects are not contrary, nothing hinders them from having that constant conjunction, on which the relation of cause and effect totally depends.

Since therefore it is possible for all objects to become causes or effects to each other, it may be proper to fix some general rules, by which we may know when they really are so.

(1) The cause and effect must be contiguous in space and time.

(2) The cause must be prior to the effect.

(3) There must be a constant union betwixt the cause and effect. It is chiefly this quality, that constitutes the relation.

(4) The same cause always produces the same effect, and the same effect never arises but from the same cause. This principle we derive from experience, and is the source of most of our philosophical reasonings. For when by any clear experiment we have discovered the causes or effects of any phaenomenon, we immediately extend our observation to every phenomenon of the same kind, without waiting for that constant repetition, from which the first idea of this relation is derived.

(5) There is another principle, which hangs upon this, viz. that where several different objects produce the same effect, it must be by means of some quality, which we discover to be common amongst them. For as like

effects imply like causes, we must always ascribe the causation to the circumstance, wherein we discover the resemblance.

(6) The following principle is founded on the same reason. The difference in the effects of two resembling objects must proceed from that particular, in which they differ. For as like causes always produce like effects, when in any instance we find our expectation to be disappointed, we must conclude that this irregularity proceeds from some difference in the causes.

(7) When any object encreases or diminishes with the encrease or diminution of its cause, it is to be regarded as a compounded effect, derived from the union of the several different effects, which arise from the several different parts of the cause. The absence or presence of one part of the cause is here supposed to be always attended with the absence or presence of a proportionable part of the effect. This constant conjunction sufficiently proves, that the one part is the cause of the other. We must, however, beware not to draw such a conclusion from a few experiments. A certain degree of heat gives pleasure; if you diminish that heat, the pleasure diminishes; but it does not follow, that if you augment it beyond a certain degree, the pleasure will likewise augment; for we find that it degenerates into pain.

(8) The eighth and last rule I shall take notice of is, that an object, which exists for any time in its full perfection without any effect, is not the sole cause of that effect, but requires to be assisted by some other principle, which may forward its influence and operation. For as like effects necessarily follow from like causes, and in a contiguous time and place, their separation for a moment shews, that these causes are not compleat ones.

Here is all the LOGIC I think proper to employ in my reasoning; and perhaps even this was not very necessary, but might have been supplyd by the natural principles of our understanding. Our scholastic head-pieces and logicians shew no such superiority above the mere vulgar in their reason and ability, as to give us any inclination to imitate them in delivering a long system of rules and precepts to direct our judgment, in philosophy. All the rules of this nature are very easy in their invention, but extremely difficult in their application; and even experimental philosophy, which seems the most natural and simple of any, requires the utmost stretch of human judgment. There is no phaenomenon in nature, but what is compounded and modifyd by so many different circumstances, that in order to arrive at the decisive point, we must carefully separate whatever is superfluous, and enquire by new experiments, if every particular circumstance of the first experiment was essential to it. These new experiments are liable to a discussion of the same kind; so that the utmost constancy is requird to make us persevere in our enquiry, and the utmost sagacity to choose the right way among so many that present themselves. If this be the case even in natural philosophy, how much more in moral, where there is a much greater complication of circumstances, and where those views and sentiments, which are essential to any action of the mind, are so implicit and obscure, that they often escape our strictest attention, and are not only unaccountable in their causes, but even unknown in their existence? I am much afraid lest the small success I meet with in my enquiries will make this observation bear the air of an apology rather than of boasting.

If any thing can give me security in this particular, it will be the enlarging of the sphere of my experiments as much as possible; for which reason it may be proper in this place to examine the reasoning faculty of brutes, as well as that of human creatures.

SECT. XVI OF THE REASON OF ANIMALS

Next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is that of taking much pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endowd with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant.

We are conscious, that we ourselves, in adapting means to ends, are guided by reason and design, and that it is not ignorantly nor casually we perform those actions, which tend to self-preservation, to the obtaining pleasure, and avoiding pain. When therefore we see other creatures, in millions of instances, perform like actions, and direct them to the ends, all our principles of reason and probability carry us with an invincible force to believe the existence of a like cause. It is needless in my opinion to illustrate this argument by the enumeration of particulars. The smallest attention will supply us with more than are requisite. The resemblance betwixt the actions of animals and those of men is so entire in this respect, that the very first action of the first animal we shall please to pitch on, will afford us an incontestable argument for the present doctrine.

This doctrine is as useful as it is obvious, and furnishes us with a kind of touchstone, by which we may try every system in this species of philosophy. It is from the resemblance of the external actions of animals to those we ourselves perform, that we judge their internal likewise to resemble ours; and the same principle of reasoning, carryd one step farther, will make us conclude that since our internal actions resemble each other, the causes, from which they are derivd, must also be resembling. When any hypothesis, therefore, is advancd to explain a mental operation, which is common to men and beasts, we must apply the same hypothesis to both; and as every true hypothesis will abide this trial, so I may venture to affirm, that no false one will ever be able to endure it. The common defect of those systems, which philosophers have employd to account for the actions of the mind, is, that they suppose such a subtility and refinement of thought, as not only exceeds the capacity of mere animals, but even of children and the common people in our own species; who are notwithstanding susceptible of the same emotions and affections as persons of the most accomplishd genius and understanding. Such a subtility is a dear proof of the falshood, as the contrary simplicity of the truth, of any system.

Let us therefore put our present system concerning the nature of the understanding to this decisive trial, and see whether it will equally account for the reasonings of beasts as for these of the human species.

Here we must make a distinction betwixt those actions of animals, which are of a vulgar nature, and seem to be on a level with their common capacities, and those more extraordinary instances of sagacity, which they sometimes discover for their own preservation, and the propagation of their species. A dog, that avoids fire and precipices, that shuns strangers, and caresses his master, affords us an instance of the first kind. A bird, that chooses with such care and nicety the place and materials of her nest, and sits upon her eggs for a due time, and in suitable season, with all the precaution that a chymist is capable of in the most delicate projection, furnishes us with a lively instance of the second.

As to the former actions, I assert they proceed from a reasoning, that is not in itself different, nor founded on different principles, from that which appears in human nature. It is necessary in the first place, that there be some impression immediately present to their memory or senses, in order to be the foundation of their judgment. From the tone of voice the dog infers his masters anger, and foresees his own punishment. From a certain sensation affecting his smell, he judges his game not to be far distant from him.

Secondly, The inference he draws from the present impression is built on experience, and on his observation of the conjunction of objects in past instances. As you vary this experience, he varies his reasoning. Make a beating follow upon one sign or motion for some time, and afterwards upon another; and he will successively draw different conclusions, according to his most recent experience.

Now let any philosopher make a trial, and endeavour to explain that act of the mind, which we call BELIEF, and give an account of the principles, from which it is derivd, independent of the influence of custom on the imagination, and let his hypothesis be equally applicable to beasts as to the human species; and after he has done this, I promise to embrace his opinion. But at the same time I demand as an equitable condition, that if my system be the only one, which can answer to all these terms, it may be receivd as entirely satisfactory and convincing. And that it is the only one, is evident almost without any reasoning. Beasts certainly never perceive any real connexion among objects. It is therefore by experience they infer one from another. They can never by any arguments form a general conclusion, that those objects, of which they have had no experience, resemble those of which they have. It is therefore by means of custom alone, that experience operates upon them. All this was sufficiently evident with respect to man. But with respect to beasts there cannot be the least suspicion of mistake; which must be ownd to be a strong confirmation, or rather an invincible proof of my system.

Nothing shews more the force of habit in reconciling us to any phaenomenoun, than this, that men are not astonished at the operations of their own reason, at the same time, that they admire the instinct of animals, and find a difficulty in explaining it, merely because it cannot be reducd tothe very same principles. To consider the matter aright, reason is nothing but a wonderful and unintelligible instinct in our souls, which carries us along a certain train of ideas, and endows them with particular qualities, according to their particular situations and relations. This instinct, it is true, arises from past observation and experience; but can any one give the ultimate reason, why past experience and observation produces such an effect, any more than why nature alone shoud produce it? Nature may certainly produce whatever can arise from habit: Nay, habit is nothing but one of the principles of nature, and derives all its force from that origin.

PART IV. OF THE SCEPTICAL AND OTHER SYSTEMS OF PHILOSOPHY.

SECT. I. OF SCEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO REASON.

In all demonstrative sciences the rules are certain and infallible; but when we apply them, our fallible said uncertain faculties are very apt to depart from them, and fall into error. We must, therefore, in every reasoning form a new judgment, as a check or controul on our first judgment or belief; and must enlarge our view to comprehend a kind of history of all the instances, wherein our understanding has deceived us, compared with those, wherein its testimony was just and true. Our reason must be considered as a kind of cause, of which truth is the natural effect; but such-a-one as by the irruption of other causes, and by the inconstancy of our mental powers, may frequently be prevented. By this means all knowledge degenerates into probability; and this probability is greater or less, according to our experience of the veracity or deceitfulness of our understanding, and according to the simplicity or intricacy of the question.

There is no Algebraist nor Mathematician so expert in his science, as to place entire confidence in any truth immediately upon his discovery of it, or regard it as any thing, but a were probability. Every time he runs over his proofs, his confidence encreases; but still more by the approbation of his friends; and is raised to its utmost perfection by the universal assent and applauses of the learned world. Now it is evident, that this gradual encrease of assurance is nothing but the addition of new probabilities, and is derived from the constant union of causes and effects, according to past experience and observation.

In accompts of any length or importance, Merchants seldom trust to the infallible certainty of numbers for their security; but by the artificial structure of the accompts, produce a probability beyond what is derived from the skill and experience of the accomptant. For that is plainly of itself some degree of probability; though uncertain and variable, according to the degrees of his experience and length of the accompt. Now as none will maintain, that our assurance in a long numeration exceeds probability, I may safely affirm, that there scarce is any proposition concerning numbers, of which we can have a fuller security. For it is easily possible, by gradually diminishing the numbers, to reduce the longest series of addition to the most simple question, which can be formed, to an addition of two single numbers; and upon this supposition we shall find it impracticable to shew the precise limits of knowledge and of probability, or discover that particular number, at which the one ends and the other begins. But knowledge and probability are of such contrary and disagreeing natures, that they cannot well run insensibly into each other, and that because they will not divide, but must be either entirely present, or entirely absent. Besides, if any single addition were certain, every one would be so, and consequently the whole or total sum; unless the whole can be different from all its parts. I had almost said, that this was certain; but I reflect that it must reduce itself, as well as every other reasoning, and from knowledge degenerate into probability.

Since therefore all knowledge resolves itself into probability, and becomes at last of the same nature with that evidence, which we employ in common life, we must now examine this latter species of reasoning, and see on what foundation it stands.

In every judgment, which we can form concerning probability, as well as concerning knowledge, we ought always to correct the first judgment, derived from the nature of the object, by another judgment, derived from the nature of the understanding. It is certain a man of solid sense and long experience ought to have, and usually has, a greater assurance in his opinions, than one that is foolish and ignorant, and that our sentiments have different degrees of authority, even with ourselves, in proportion to the degrees of our reason and experience. In the man of the best sense and longest experience, this authority is never entire; since even such-a-one must be conscious of many errors in the past, and must still dread the like for the future. Here then arises a new species of probability to correct and regulate the first, and fix its just standard and proportion. As demonstration is subject to the controul of probability, so is probability liable to a new correction by a reflex act of the mind, wherein the nature of our understanding, and our reasoning from the first probability become our objects.

Having thus found in every probability, beside the original uncertainty inherent in the subject, a new uncertainty derived from the weakness of that faculty, which judges, and having adjusted these two together, we are obliged by our reason to add a new doubt derived from the possibility of error in the estimation we make of the truth and fidelity of our faculties. This is a doubt, which immediately occurs to us, and of which, if we would closely pursue our reason, we cannot avoid giving a decision. But this decision, though it should be favourable to our preceding judgment, being founded only on probability, must weaken still further our first evidence, and must itself be weakened by a fourth doubt of the same kind, and so on in infinitum: till at last there remain nothing of the original probability, however great we may suppose it to have been, and however small the diminution by every new uncertainty. No finite object can subsist under a decrease repeated IN INFINITUM; and even the vastest quantity, which can enter into human imagination, must in this manner be reduced to nothing. Let our first belief be never so strong, it must infallibly perish by passing through so many new examinations, of which each diminishes somewhat of its force and vigour. When I reflect on the natural fallibility of my judgment, I have less confidence in my opinions, than when I only consider the objects concerning which I reason; and when I proceed still farther, to turn the scrutiny against every successive estimation I make of my faculties, all the rules of logic require a continual diminution, and at last a total extinction of belief and evidence.

Should it here be asked me, whether I sincerely assent to this argument, which I seem to take such pains to inculcate, and whether I be really one of those sceptics, who hold that all is uncertain, and that our judgment is not in any thing possest of any measures of truth and falshood; I should reply, that this question is entirely superfluous, and that neither I, nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion. Nature, by an absolute and uncontroulable necessity has determined us to judge as well as to breathe and feel; nor can we any more forbear viewing certain objects in a stronger and fuller light, upon account of their customary connexion with a present impression, than we can hinder ourselves from thinking as long, as we are awake, or seeing the surrounding bodies, when we turn our eyes towards them in broad sunshine. Whoever has taken the pains to refute the cavils of this total scepticism, has really disputed without an antagonist, and endeavoured by arguments to establish a faculty, which nature has antecedently implanted in the mind, and rendered unavoidable.

My intention then in displaying so carefully the arguments of that fantastic sect, is only to make the reader sensible of the truth of my hypothesis, that all our reasonings concerning causes and effects are derived from nothing but custom; and that belief is more properly an act of the sensitive, than of the cogitative part of our natures. I have here proved, that the very same principles, which make us form a decision upon any subject, and correct that decision by the consideration of our genius and capacity, and of the situation of our mind, when we examined that subject; I say, I have proved, that these same principles, when carryed farther, and applied to every new reflex judgment, must, by continually diminishing the original evidence, at last reduce it to nothing, and utterly subvert all belief and opinion. If belief, therefore, were a simple act of the thought, without any peculiar manner of conception, or the addition of a force and vivacity, it must infallibly destroy itself, and in every case terminate in a total suspense of judgment. But as experience will sufficiently convince any one, who thinks it worth while to try, that though he can find no error in the foregoing arguments, yet he still continues to believe, and think, and reason as usual, he may safely conclude, that his reasoning and belief is some sensation or peculiar manner of conception, which it is impossible for mere ideas and reflections to destroy.

But here, perhaps, it may be demanded, how it happens, even upon my hypothesis, that these arguments above-explained produce not a total suspense of judgment, and after what manner the mind ever retains a degree of assurance in any subject? For as these new probabilities, which by their repetition perpetually diminish the original evidence, are founded on the very same principles, whether of thought or sensation, as the primary judgment, it may seem unavoidable, that in either case they must equally subvert it, and by the opposition, either of contrary thoughts or sensations, reduce the mind to a total uncertainty. I suppose, there is some question proposed to me, and that after revolving over the impressions of my memory and senses, and carrying my thoughts from them to such objects, as are commonly conjoined with them, I feel a stronger and more forcible conception on the one side, than on the other. This strong conception forms my first decision. I suppose, that afterwards I examine my judgment itself, and observing from experience, that it is sometimes just and sometimes erroneous, I consider it as regulated by contrary principles or causes, of which some lead to truth, and some to error; and in ballancing these contrary causes, I diminish by a new probability the assurance of my first decision. This new probability is liable to the same diminution as the foregoing, and so on, IN INFINITUM. It is therefore demanded, how it happens, that even after all we retain a degree of belief, which is sufficient for our purpose, either in philosophy or common life.

I answer, that after the first and second decision; as the action of the mind becomes forced and unnatural, and the ideas faint and obscure; though the principles of judgment, and the ballancing of opposite causes be the same as at the very beginning; yet their influence on the imagination, and the vigour they add to, or diminish from the thought, is by no means equal. Where the mind reaches not its objects with easiness and facility, the same principles have not the same effect as in a more natural conception of the ideas; nor does the imagination feel a sensation, which holds any proportion with that which arises from its common judgments and opinions. The attention is on the stretch: The posture of the mind is uneasy; and the spirits being diverted from their natural course, are not governed in their movements by the same laws, at least not to the same degree, as when they flow in their usual channel.

If we desire similar instances, it will not be very difficult to find them. The present subject of metaphysics will supply us abundantly. The same argument, which would have been esteemed convincing in a reasoning concerning history or politics, has little or no influence in these abstruser subjects, even though it be perfectly comprehended; and that because there is required a study and an effort of thought, in order to its being comprehended: And this effort of thought disturbs the operation of our sentiments, on which the belief depends. The case is the same in other subjects. The straining of the imagination always hinders the regular flowing of the passions and sentiments. A tragic poet, that would represent his heroes as very ingenious and witty in their misfortunes, would never touch the passions. As the emotions of the soul prevent any subtile reasoning and reflection, so these latter actions of the mind are equally prejudicial to the former. The mind, as well as the body, seems to be endowed with a certain precise degree of force and activity, which it never employs in one action, but at the expense of all the rest. This is more evidently true, where the actions are of quite different natures; since in that case the force of the mind is not only diverted, but even the disposition changed, so as to render us incapable of a sudden transition from one action to the other, and still more of performing both at once. No wonder, then, the conviction, which arises from a subtile reasoning, diminishes in proportion to the efforts, which the imagination makes to enter into the reasoning, and to conceive it in all its parts. Belief, being a lively conception, can never be entire, where it is not founded on something natural and easy.

This I take to be the true state of the question, and cannot approve of that expeditious way, which some take with the sceptics, to reject at once all their arguments without enquiry or examination. If the sceptical reasonings be strong, say they, it is a proof, that reason may have some force and authority: if weak, they can never be sufficient to invalidate all the conclusions of our understanding. This argument is not just; because the sceptical reasonings, were it possible for them to exist, and were they not destroyed by their subtility, would be successively both strong and weak, according to the successive dispositions of the mind. Reason first appears in possession of the throne, prescribing laws, and imposing maxims, with an absolute sway and authority. Her enemy, therefore, is obliged to take shelter under her protection, and by making use of rational arguments to prove the fallaciousness and imbecility of reason, produces, in a manner, a patent under her band and seal. This patent has at first an authority, proportioned to the present and immediate authority of reason, from which it is derived. But as it is supposed to be contradictory to reason, it gradually diminishes the force of that governing power and its own at the same time; till at last they both vanish away into nothing, by a regulax and just diminution. The sceptical and dogmatical reasons are of the same kind, though contrary in their operation and tendency; so that where the latter is strong, it has an enemy of equal force in the former to encounter; and as their forces were at first equal, they still continue so, as long as either of them subsists; nor does one of them lose any force in the contest, without taking as much from its antagonist. It is happy, therefore, that nature breaks the force of all sceptical arguments in time, and keeps them from having any considerable influence on the understanding. Were we to trust entirely to their self-destruction, that can never take place, until they have first subverted all conviction, and have totally destroyed human reason.

SECT. II. OF SCEPTICISM WITH REGARD TO THE SENSES.

Thus the sceptic still continues to reason and believe, even though be asserts, that he cannot defend his reason by reason; and by the same rule he must assent to the principle concerning the existence of body, though he cannot pretend by any arguments of philosophy to maintain its veracity. Nature has not left this to his choice, and has doubtless, esteemed it an affair of too great importance to be trusted to our uncertain reasonings and speculations. We may well ask, What causes induce us to believe in the existence of body? but it is in vain to ask, Whether there be body or not? That is a point, which we must take for granted in all our reasonings.

The subject, then, of our present enquiry is concerning the causes which induce us to believe in the existence of body: And my reasonings on this head I shall begin with a distinction, which at first sight may seem superfluous, but which will contribute very much to the perfect understanding of what follows. We ought to examine apart those two questions, which are commonly confounded together, viz. Why we attribute a continued existence to objects, even when they are not present to the senses; and why we suppose them to have an existence DISTINCT from the mind and perception. Under this last head I comprehend their situation as well as relations, their external position as well as the independence of their existence and operation. These two questions concerning the continued and distinct existence of body are intimately connected together. For if the objects of our senses continue to exist, even when they are not perceived, their existence is of course independent of and distinct from the perception: and vice versa, if their existence be independent of the perception and distinct from it, they must continue to exist, even though they be not perceived. But though the decision of the one question decides the other; yet that we may the more easily discover the principles of human nature, from whence the decision arises, we shall carry along with us this distinction, and shall consider, whether it be the senses, reason, or the imagination, that produces the opinion of a continued or of a distinct existence. These are the only questions, that are intelligible on the present subject. For as to the notion of external existence, when taken for something specially different from our perceptions [Part. II. Sect. 6.], we have already shewn its absurdity.

To begin with the SENSES, it is evident these faculties are incapable of giving rise to the notion of the continued existence of their objects, after they no longer appear to the senses. For that is a contradiction in terms, and suppose that the senses continue to operate, even after they have ceased all manner of operation. These faculties, therefore, if they have any influence in the present case, must produce the opinion of a distinct, not of a continued existence; and in order to that, must present their impressions either as images and representations, or as these very distinct and external existences.

That our senses offer not their impressions as the images of something distinct, or independent, and external, is evident; because they convey to us nothing but a single perception, and never give us the least intimation of any thing beyond. A single perception can never produce the idea of a double existence, but by some inference either of the reason or imagination. When the mind looks farther than what immediately appears to it, its conclusions can never be put to the account of the senses; and it certainly looks farther, when from a single perception it infers a double existence, and supposes the relations of resemblance and causation betwixt them.

If our senses, therefore, suggest any idea of distinct existences, they must convey the impressions as those very existences, by a kind of fallacy and illusion. Upon this bead we may observe, that all sensations are felt by the mind, such as they really are, and that when we doubt, whether they present themselves as distinct objects, or as mere impressions, the difficulty is not concerning their nature, but concerning their relations and situation. Now if the senses presented our impressions as external to, and independent of ourselves, both the objects and ourselves must be obvious to our senses, otherwise they coued not be compared by these faculties. The difficulty, then, is how fax we are ourselves the objects of our senses.

It is certain there is no question in philosophy more abstruse than that concerning identity, and the nature of the uniting principle, which constitutes a person. So far from being able by our senses merely to determine this question, we must have recourse to the most profound metaphysics to give a satisfactory answer to it; and in common life it is evident these ideas of self and person are never very fixed nor determinate.

It is absurd, therefore, to imagine the senses can ever distinguish betwixt ourselves and external objects.

Add to this, that every impression, external and internal, passions, affections, sensations, pains and pleasures, are originally on the same footing; and that whatever other differences we may observe among them, they appear, all of them, in their true colours, as impressions or perceptions. And indeed, if we consider the matter aright, it is scarce possible it should be otherwise, nor is it conceivable that our senses should be more capable of deceiving us in the situation and relations, than in the nature of our impressions. For since all actions and sensations of the mind are known to us by consciousness, they must necessarily appear in every particular what they are, and be what they appear. Every thing that enters the mind, being in reality a perception, it is impossible any thing should to feeling appear different. This were to suppose, that even where we are most intimately conscious, we might be mistaken.

But not to lose time in examining, whether it is possible for our senses to deceive us, and represent our perceptions as distinct from ourselves, that is as external to and independent of us; let us consider whether they really do so, and whether this error proceeds from an immediate sensation, or from some other causes.

To begin with the question concerning EXTERNAL existence, it may perhaps be said, that setting aside the metaphysical question of the identity of a thinking substance, our own body evidently belongs to us; and as several impressions appear exterior to the body, we suppose them also exterior to ourselves. The paper, on which I write at present, is beyond my hand. The table is beyond the paper. The walls of the chamber beyond the table. And in casting my eye towards the window, I perceive a great extent of fields and buildings beyond my chamber. From all this it may be infered, that no other faculty is required, beside the senses, to convince us of the external existence of body. But to prevent this inference, we need only weigh the three following considerations. First, That, properly speaking, it is not our body we perceive, when we regard our limbs and members, but certain impressions, which enter by the senses; so that the ascribing a real and corporeal existence to these impressions, or to their objects, is an act of the mind as difficult to explain, as that which we examine at present. Secondly, Sounds, and tastes, and smelts, though commonly regarded by the mind as continued independent qualities, appear not to have any existence in extension, and consequently cannot appear to the senses as situated externally to the body. The reason, why we ascribe a place to them, shall be: considered afterwards. Thirdly, Even our sight informs us not of distance or outness (so to speak) immediately and without a certain reasoning and experience, as is acknowledged by the most rational philosophers.

As to the independency of our perceptions on ourselves, this can never be an object of the senses; but any opinion we form concerning it, must be derived from experience and observation: And we shall see afterwards, that our conclusions from experience are far from being favourable to the doctrine of the independency of our perceptions. Mean while we may observe that when we talk of real distinct existences, we have commonly more in our eye their independency than external situation in place, and think an object has a sufficient reality, when its Being is uninterrupted, and independent of the incessant revolutions, which we are conscious of in ourselves.

Thus to resume what I have said concerning the senses; they give us no notion of continued existence, because they cannot operate beyond the extent, in which they really operate. They as little produce the opinion of a distinct existence, because they neither can offer it to the mind as represented, nor as original. To offer it as represented, they must present both an object and an image. To make it appear as original, they must convey a falshood; and this falshood must lie in the relations and situation: In order to which they must be able to compare the object with ourselves; and even in that case they do not, nor is it possible they should, deceive us. We may, therefore, conclude with certainty, that the opinion of a continued and of a distinct existence never arises from the senses.

To confirm this we may observe, that there are three different kinds of impressions conveyed by the senses. The first are those of the figure, bulk, motion and solidity of bodies. The second those of colours, tastes, smells, sounds, heat and cold. The third are the pains and pleasures, that arise from the application of objects to our bodies, as by the cutting of our flesh with steel, and such like. Both philosophers and the vulgar suppose the first of these to have a distinct continued existence. The vulgar only regard the second as on the same footing. Both philosophers and the vulgar, again, esteem the third to be merely perceptions and consequently interrupted and dependent beings.

Now it is evident, that, whatever may be our philosophical opinion, colours, Sounds, heat and cold, as far as appears to the senses, exist after the same manner with motion and solidity, and that the difference we make betwixt them in this respect, arises not from the mere perception. So strong the prejudice for the distinct continued existence Of the former qualities, that when the contrary opinion is advanced by modern philosophers, people imagine they can almost refute it from their feeling and experience, and that their very senses contradict this philosophy. It is also evident, that colours, sounds, &c. are originally on the same footing with the pain that arises from steel, and pleasure that proceeds from a fire; and that the difference betwixt them is founded neither on perception nor reason, but on the imagination. For as they are confest to be, both of them, nothing but perceptions arising from the particular configurations and motions of the parts of body, wherein possibly can their difference consist? Upon the whole, then, we may conclude, that as far as the senses are judges, all perceptions are the same in the manner of their existence.

We may also observe in this instance of sounds and colours, that we can attribute a distinct continued existence to objects without ever consulting REASON, or weighing our opinions by any philosophical principles. And indeed, whatever convincing arguments philosophers may fancy they can produce to establish the belief of objects independent of the mind, it is obvious these arguments are known but to very few, and that it is not by them, that children, peasants, and the greatest part of mankind are induced to attribute objects to some impressions, and deny them to others. Accordingly we find, that all the conclusions, which the vulgar form on this head, are directly contrary to those, which are confirmed by philosophy. For philosophy informs us, that every thing, which appears to the mind, is nothing but a perception, and is interrupted, and dependent on the mind: whereas the vulgar confound perceptions and objects, and attribute a distinct continued existence to the very things they feel or see. This sentiment, then, as it is entirely unreasonable, must proceed from some other faculty than the understanding. To which we may add, that as long as we take our perceptions and objects to be the same, we can never infer the existence of the one from that of the other, nor form any argument from the relation of cause and effect; which is the only one that earl assure us of matter of fact. Even after we distinguish our perceptions from our objects, it will appear presently, that we are still incapable of reasoning from the existence of one to that of the other: So that upon the whole our reason neither does, nor is it possible it ever should, upon any supposition, give us an assurance of the continued and distinct existence of body. That opinion must be entirely owing to the IMAGINATION: which must now be the subject of our enquiry.

Since all impressions are internal and perishing existences, and appear as such, the notion of their distinct and continued existence must arise from a concurrence of some of their qualities with the qualities of the imagination, and since this notion does not extend to all of them, it must arise from certain qualities peculiar to some impressions. It will therefore be easy for us to discover these qualities by a comparison of the impressions, to which we attribute a distinct and continued existence, with those, which we regard as internal and perishing.

We may observe, then, that it is neither upon account of the involuntariness of certain impressions, as is commonly supposed, nor of their superior force and violence, that we attribute to them a reality, and continued existence, which we refuse to others, that are voluntary or feeble. For it is evident our pains and pleasures, our passions and affections, which we never suppose to have any existence beyond our perception, operate with greater violence, and are equally involuntary, as the impressions of figure and extension, colour and sound, which we suppose to be permanent beings. The heat of a fire, when moderate, is supposed to exist in the fire; but the pain, which it causes upon a near approach, is not taken to have any being, except in the perception.

These vulgar opinions, then, being rejected, we must search for some other hypothesis, by which we may discover those peculiar qualities in our impressions, which makes us attribute to them a distinct and continued existence.

After a little examination, we shall find, that all those objects, to which we attribute a continued existence, have a peculiar constancy, which distinguishes them from the impressions, whose existence depends upon our perception. Those mountains, and houses, and trees, which lie at present under my eye, have always appeared to me in the same order; and when I lose sight of them by shutting my eyes or turning my head, I soon after find them return upon me without the least alteration. My bed and table, my books and papers, present themselves in the same uniform manner, and change not upon account of any interruption in my seeing or perceivilng them. This is the case with all the impressions, whose objects are supposed to have an external existence; and is the case with no other impressions, whether gentle or violent, voluntary or involuntary.

This constancy, however, is not so perfect as not to admit of very considerable exceptions. Bodies often change their position and qualities, and after a little absence or interruption may become hardly knowable. But here it is observable, that even in these changes they preserve a coherence, and have a regular dependence on each other; which is the foundation of a kind of reasoning from causation, and produces the opinion of their continued existence. When I return to my chamber after an hour's absence, I find not my fire in the same situation, in which I left it: But then I am accustomed in other instances to see a like alteration produced in a like time, whether I am present or absent, near or remote. This coherence, therefore, in their changes is one of the characteristics of external objects, as well as their constancy.

Having found that the opinion of the continued existence of body depends on the COHERENCE, and CONSTANCY of certain impressions, I now proceed to examine after what manner these qualities give rise to so extraordinary an opinion. To begin with the coherence; we may observe, that though those internal impressions, which we regard as fleeting and perishing, have also a certain coherence or regularity in their appearances, yet it is of somewhat a different nature, from that which we discover in bodies. Our passions are found by experience to have a mutual connexion with and dependence on each other; but on no occasion is it necessary to suppose, that they have existed and operated, when they were not perceived, in order to preserve the same dependence and connexion, of which we have had experience. The case is not the same with relation to external objects. Those require a continued existence, or otherwise lose, in a great measure, the regularity of their operation. I am here seated in my chamber with my face to the fire; and all the objects, that strike my senses, are contained in a few yards around me. My memory, indeed, informs me of the existence of many objects; but then this information extends not beyond their past existence, nor do either my senses or memory give any testimony to the continuance of their being. When therefore I am thus seated, and revolve over these thoughts, I hear on a sudden a noise as of a door turning upon its hinges; and a little after see a porter, who advances towards me. This gives occasion to many new reflections and reasonings. First, I never have observed, that this noise coued proceed from any thing but the motion of a door; and therefore conclude, that the present phaenomenon is a contradiction to all past experience, unless the door, which I remember on the other side the chamber, be still in being. Again, I have always found, that a human body was possest of a quality, which I call gravity, and which hinders it from mounting in the air, as this porter must have done to arrive at my chamber, unless the stairs I remember be not annihilated by my absence. But this is not all. I receive a letter, which upon, opening it I perceive by the hand-writing and subscription to have come from a friend, who says he is two hundred leagues distant. It is evident I can never account for this phenomenon, conformable to my experience in other instances, without spreading out in my mind the whole sea and continent between us, and supposing the effects and continued existence of posts and ferries, according to my Memory and observation. To consider these phaenomena of the porter and letter in a certain light, they are contradictions to common experience, and may be regarded as objections to those maxims, which we form concerning the connexions of causes and effects. I am accustomed to hear such a sound, and see such an object in motion at the same time. I have not received in this particular instance both these perceptions. These observations are contrary, unless I suppose that the door still remains, and that it was opened without my perceiving it: And this supposition, which was at first entirely arbitrary and hypothetical, acquires a force and evidence by its being the only one, upon which I can reconcile these contradictions. There is scarce a moment of my life, wherein there is not a similar instance presented to me, and I have not occasion to suppose the continued existence of objects, in order to connect their past and present appearances, and give them such an union with each other, as I have found by experience to be suitable to their particular natures and circumstances. Here then I am naturally led to regard the world, as something real and durable, and as preserving its existence, even when it is no longer present to my perception.

But though this conclusion from the coherence of appearances may seem to be of the same nature with our reasonings concerning causes and effects; as being derived from custom, and regulated by past experience; we shall find upon examination, that they are at the bottom considerably different from each other, and that this inference arises from the understanding, and from custom in an indirect and oblique manner. For it will readily be allowed, that since nothing is ever really present to the mind, besides its own perceptions, it is not only impossible, that any habit should ever be acquired otherwise than by the regular succession of these perceptions, but also that any habit should ever exceed that degree of regularity. Any degree, therefore, of regularity in our perceptions, can never be a foundation for us to infer a greater degree of regularity in some objects, which are not perceived; since this supposes a contradiction, viz. a habit acquired by what was never present to the mind. But it is evident, that whenever we infer the continued existence of the objects of sense from their coherence, and the frequency of their union, it is in order to bestow on the objects a greater regularity than what is observed in our mere perceptions. We remark a connexion betwixt two kinds of objects in their past appearance to the senses, but are not able to observe this connexion to be perfectly constant, since the turning about of our head or the shutting of our eyes is able to break it. What then do we suppose in this case, but that these objects still continue their usual connexion, notwithstanding their apparent interruption, and that the irregular appearances are joined by something, of which we are insensible? But as all reasoning concerning matters of fact arises only from custom, and custom can only be the effect of repeated perceptions, the extending of custom and reasoning beyond the perceptions can never be the direct and natural effect of the constant repetition and connexion, but must arise from the co-operation of some other principles.

I have already observed [Part II, Sect. 4.], in examining the foundation of mathematics, that the imagination, when set into any train of thinking, is apt to continue, even when its object fails it, and like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse. This I have assigned for the reason, why, after considering several loose standards of equality, and correcting them by each other, we proceed to imagine so correct and exact a standard of that relation, as is not liable to the least error or variation. The same principle makes us easily entertain this opinion of the continued existence of body. Objects have a certain coherence even as they appear to our senses; but this coherence is much greater and more uniform, if we suppose the object.% to have a continued existence; and as the mind is once in the train of observing an uniformity among objects, it naturally continues, till it renders the uniformity as compleat as possible. The simple supposition of their continued existence suffices for this purpose, and gives us a notion of a much greater regularity among objects, than what they have when we look no farther than our senses.

But whatever force we may ascribe to this principle, I am afraid it is too weak to support alone so vast an edifice, as is that of the continued existence of all external bodies; and that we must join the constancy of their appearance to the coherence, in order to give a satisfactory account of that opinion. As the explication of this will lead me into a considerable compass of very profound reasoning; I think it proper, in order to avoid confusion, to give a short sketch or abridgment of my system, and afterwards draw out all its parts in their full compass. This inference from the constancy of our perceptions, like the precedent from their coherence, gives rise to the opinion of the continued existence of body, which is prior to that of its distinct existence, and produces that latter principle.

When we have been accustomed to observe a constancy in certain impressions, and have found, that the perception of the sun or ocean, for instance, returns upon us after an absence or annihilation with like parts and in a like order, as at its first appearance, we are not apt to regard these interrupted perceptions as different, (which they really are) but on the contrary consider them as individually the same, upon account of their resemblance. But as this interruption of their existence is contrary to their perfect identity, and makes us regard the first impression as annihilated, and the second as newly created, we find ourselves somewhat at a loss, and are involved in a kind of contradiction. In order to free ourselves from this difficulty, we disguise, as much as possible, the interruption, or rather remove it entirely, by supposing that these interrupted perceptions are connected by a real existence, of which we are insensible. This supposition, or idea of continued existence, acquires a force and vivacity from the memory of these broken impressions, and from that propensity, which they give us, to suppose them the same; and according to the precedent reasoning, the very essence of belief consists in the force and vivacity of the conception.

In order to justify this system, there are four things requisite. First, To explain the PRINCIPIUM INDIVIDUATIONIS, or principle of identity. Secondly, Give a reason, why the resemblance of our broken and interrupted perceptions induces us to attribute an identity to them. Thirdly, Account for that propensity, which this illusion gives, to unite these broken appearances by a continued existence. Fourthly and lastly, Explain that force and vivacity of conception, which arises from the propensity.

First, As to the principle of individuation; we may observe, that the view of any one object is not sufficient to convey the idea of identity. For in that proposition, an object is the same with itself, if the idea expressed by the word, object, were no ways distinguished from that meant by itself; we really should mean nothing, nor would the proposition contain a predicate and a subject, which however are implyed in this affirmation. One single object conveys the idea of unity, not that of identity.

On the other hand, a multiplicity of objects can never convey this idea, however resembling they may be supposed. The mind always pronounces the one not to be the other, and considers them as forming two, three, or any determinate number of objects, whose existences are entirely distinct and independent.

Since then both number and unity are incompatible with the relation of identity, it must lie in something that is neither of them. But to tell the truth, at first sight this seems utterly impossible. Betwixt unity and number there can be no medium; no more than betwixt existence and nonexistence. After one object is supposed to exist, we must either suppose another also to exist; in which case we have the idea of number: Or we must suppose it not to exist; in which case the first object remains at unity.

To remove this difficulty, let us have recourse to the idea of time or duration. I have already observd [Part II, Sect. 5.], that time, in a strict sense, implies succession, and that when we apply its idea to any unchangeable object, it is only by a fiction of the imagination, by which the unchangeable object is supposd to participate of the changes of the co-existent objects, and in particular of that of our perceptions. This fiction of the imagination almost universally takes place; and it is by means of it, that a single object, placd before us, and surveyd for any time without our discovering in it any interruption or variation, is able to give us a notion of identity. For when we consider any two points of this time, we may place them in different lights: We may either survey them at the very same instant; in which case they give us the idea of number, both by themselves and by the object; which must be multiplyd, in order to be conceivd at once, as existent in these two different points of time: Or on the other hand, we may trace the succession of time by a like succession of ideas, and conceiving first one moment, along with the object then existent, imagine afterwards a change in the time without any VARIATION or INTERRUPTION in the object; in which case it gives us the idea of unity. Here then is an idea, which is a medium betwixt unity and number; or more properly speaking, is either of them, according to the view, in which we take it: And this idea we call that of identity. We cannot, in any propriety of speech, say, that an object is the same with itself, unless we mean, that the object existent at one time is the same with itself existent at another. By this means we make a difference, betwixt the idea meant by the word, OBJECT, and that meant by ITSELF, without going the length of number, and at the same time without restraining ourselves to a strict and absolute unity.

Thus the principle of individuation is nothing but the INVARIABLENESS and UNINTERRUPTEDNESS of any object, thro a supposd variation of time, by which the mind can trace it in the different periods of its existence, without any break of the view, and without being obligd to form the idea of multiplicity or number.

I now proceed to explain the SECOND part of my system, and shew why the constancy of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect numerical identity, tho there be very long intervals betwixt their appearance, and they have only one of the essential qualities of identity, VIZ, INVARIABLENESS. That I may avoid all ambiguity and confusion on this head, I shall observe, that I here account for the opinions and belief of the vulgar with regard to the existence of body; and therefore must entirely conform myself to their manner of thinking and of expressing themselves. Now we have already observd, that however philosophers may distinguish betwixt the objects and perceptions of the senses; which they suppose co-existent and resembling; yet this is a distinction, which is not comprehended by the generality of mankind, who as they perceive only one being, can never assent to the opinion of a double existence and representation. Those very sensations, which enter by the eye or ear, are with them the true objects, nor can they readily conceive that this pen or paper, which is immediately perceivd, represents another, which is different from, but resembling it. In order, therefore, to accommodate myself to their notions, I shall at first suppose; that there is only a single existence, which I shall call indifferently OBJECT or PERCEPTION, according as it shall seem best to suit my purpose, understanding by both of them what any common man means by a hat, or shoe, or stone, or any other impression, conveyd to him by his senses. I shall be sure to give warning, when I return to a more philosophical way of speaking and thinking.

To enter, therefore, upon the question concerning the source of the error and deception with regard to identity, when we attribute it to our resembling perceptions, notwithstanding their interruption; I must here recal an observation, which I have already provd and explaind [Part II. Sect. 5.]. Nothing is more apt to make us mistake one idea for another, than any relation betwixt them, which associates them together in the imagination, and makes it pass with facility from one to the other. Of all relations, that of resemblance is in this respect the most efficacious; and that because it not only causes an association of ideas, but also of dispositions, and makes us conceive the one idea by an act or operation of the mind, similar to that by which we conceive the other. This circumstance I have observd to be of great moment; and we may establish it for a general rule, that whatever ideas place the mind in the same disposition or in similar ones, are very apt to be confounded. The mind readily passes from one to the other, and perceives not the change without a strict attention, of which, generally speaking, it is wholly incapable.

In order to apply this general maxim, we must first examine the disposition of the mind in viewing any object which preserves a perfect identity, and then find some other object, that is confounded with it, by causing a similar disposition. When we fix our thought on any object, and suppose it to continue the same for some time; it is evident we suppose the change to lie only in the time, and never exert ourselves to produce any new image or idea of the object. The faculties of the mind repose themselves in a manner, and take no more exercise, than what is necessary to continue that idea, of which we were formerly possest, and which subsists without variation or interruption. The passage from one moment to another is scarce felt, and distinguishes not itself by a different perception or idea, which may require a different direction of the spirits, in order to its conception.

Now what other objects, beside identical ones, are capable of placing the mind in the same disposition, when it considers them, and of causing the same uninterrupted passage of the imagination from one idea to another? This question is of the last importance. For if we can find any such objects, we may certainly conclude, from the foregoing principle, that they are very naturally confounded with identical ones, and are taken for them in most of our reasonings. But though this question be very important, it is not very difficult nor doubtful. For I immediately reply, that a succession of related objects places the mind in this disposition, and is considered with the same smooth and uninterrupted progress of the imagination, as attends the view of the same invariable object. The very nature and essence of relation is to connect our ideas with each other, and upon the appearance of one, to facilitate the transition to its correlative. The passage betwixt related ideas is, therefore, so smooth and easy, that it produces little alteration on the mind, and seems like the continuation of the same action; and as the continuation of the same action is an effect of the continued view of the same object, it is for this reason we attribute sameness to every succession of related objects. The thought slides along the succession with equal facility, as if it considered only one object; and therefore confounds the succession with the identity.

We shall afterwards see many instances of this tendency of relation to make us ascribe an identity to different objects; but shall here confine ourselves to the present subject. We find by experience, that there is such a constancy in almost all the impressions of the senses, that their interruption produces no alteration on them, and hinders them not from returning the same in appearance and in situation as at their first existence. I survey the furniture of my chamber; I shut my eyes, and afterwards open them; and find the new perceptions to resemble perfectly those, which formerly struck my senses. This resemblance is observed in a thousand instances, and naturally connects together our ideas of these interrupted perceptions by the strongest relation, and conveys the mind with an easy transition from one to another. An easy transition or passage of the imagination, along the ideas of these different and interrupted perceptions, is almost the same disposition of mind with that in which we consider one constant and uninterrupted perception. It is therefore very natural for us to mistake the one for the other.

[FN 9 This reasoning, it must be confest, is somewhat abstruse, and difficult to be comprehended; but it is remarkable, that this very difficulty may be converted into a proof of the reasoning. We may observe, that there are two relations, and both of them resemblances, which contribute to our mistaking the succession of our interrupted perceptions for an identical object. The first is, the resemblance of the perceptions: The second is the

> resemblance, which the act of the mind in surveying a succession of resembling objects bears to that in surveying an identical object. Now these resemblances we are apt to confound with each other; and it is natural we shoud, according to this very reasoning. But let us keep them distinct, and we shall find no difficulty in conceiving the precedent argument.]

The persons, who entertain this opinion concerning the identity of our resembling perceptions, are in general an the unthinking and unphilosophical part of mankind, (that is, all of us, at one time or other) and consequently such as suppose their perceptions to be their only objects, and never think of a double existence internal and external, representing and represented. The very image, which is present to the senses, is with us the real body; and it is to these interrupted images we ascribe a perfect identity. But as the interruption of the appearance seems contrary to the identity, and naturally leads us to regard these resembling perceptions as different from each other, we here find ourselves at a loss how to reconcile such opposite opinions. The smooth passage of the imagination along the ideas of the resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them a perfect identity. The interrupted manner of their appearance makes us consider them as so many resembling, but still distinct beings, which appear after certain intervals. The perplexity arising from this contradiction produces a propension to unite these broken appearances by the fiction of a continued existence, which is the third part of that hypothesis I proposed to explain.

Nothing is more certain from experience, than that any contradiction either to the sentiments or passions gives a sensible uneasiness, whether it proceeds from without or from within; from the opposition of external objects, or from the combat of internal principles. On the contrary, whatever strikes in with the natural propensities, and either externally forwards their satisfaction, or internally concurs with their movements, is sure to give a sensible pleasure. Now there being here an opposition betwixt the notion of the identity of resembling perceptions, and the interruption of their appearance, the mind must be uneasy in that situation, and will naturally seek relief from the uneasiness. Since the uneasiness arises from the opposition of two contrary principles, it must look for relief by sacrificing the one to the other. But as the smooth passage of our thought along our resembling perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, we can never without reluctance yield up that opinion. We must, therefore, turn to the other side, and suppose that our perceptions are no longer interrupted, but preserve a continued as well as an invariable existence, and are by that means entirely the same. But here the interruptions in the appearance of these perceptions are so long and frequent, that it is impossible to overlook them; and as the appearance of a perception in the mind and its existence seem at first sight entirely the same, it may be doubted, whether we can ever assent to so palpable a contradiction, and suppose a perception to exist without being present to the mind. In order to clear up this matter, and learn how the interruption in the appearance of a perception implies not necessarily an interruption in its existence, it will be proper to touch upon some principles, which we shall have occasion to explain more fully afterwards. [Sect. 6.]

We may begin with observing, that the difficulty in the present case is not concerning the matter of fact, or whether the mind forms such a conclusion concerning the continued existence of its perceptions, but only concerning the manner in which the conclusion is formed, and principles from which it is derived. It is certain, that almost all mankind, and even philosophers themselves, for the greatest part of their lives, take their perceptions to be their only objects, and suppose, that the very being, which is intimately present to the mind, is the real body or material existence. It is also certain, that this very perception or object is supposed to have a continued uninterrupted being, and neither to be annihilated by our absence, nor to be brought into existence by our presence. When we are absent from it, we say it still exists, but that we do not feel, we do not see it. When we are present, we say we feel, or see it. Here then may arise two questions; First, How we can satisfy ourselves in supposing a perception to be absent from the mind without being annihilated. Secondly, After what manner we conceive an object to become present to the mind, without some new creation of a perception or image; and what we mean by this seeing, and feeling, and perceiving.

As to the first question; we may observe, that what we call a mind, is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations, and supposed, though falsely, to be endowed with a perfect simplicity and identity. Now as every perception is distinguishable from another, and may be considered as separately existent; it evidently follows, that there is no absurdity in separating any particular perception from the mind; that is, in breaking off all its relations, with that connected mass of perceptions, which constitute a thinking being.

The same reasoning affords us an answer to the second question. If the name of perception renders not this separation from a mind absurd and contradictory, the name of object, standing for the very same thing, can never render their conjunction impossible. External objects are seen, and felt, and become present to the mind; that is, they acquire such a relation to a connected heap of perceptions, as to influence them very considerably in augmenting their number by present reflections and passions, and in storing the memory with ideas. The same continued and uninterrupted Being may, therefore, be sometimes present to the mind, and sometimes absent from it, without any real or essential change in the Being itself. An interrupted appearance to the senses implies not necessarily an interruption in the existence. The supposition of the continued existence of sensible objects or perceptions involves no contradiction. We may easily indulge our inclination to that supposition. When the exact resemblance of our perceptions makes us ascribe to them an identity, we may remove the seeming interruption by feigning a continued being, which may fill those intervals, and preserve a perfect and entire identity to our perceptions.

But as we here not only feign but believe this continued existence, the question is, from whence arises such a belief; and this question leads us to the fourth member of this system. It has been proved already, that belief in general consists in nothing, but the vivacity of an idea; and that an idea may acquire this vivacity by its relation to some present impression. Impressions are naturally the most vivid perceptions of the mind; and this quality is in part conveyed by the relation to every connected idea. The relation causes a smooth passage from the impression to the idea, and even gives a propensity to that passage. The mind falls so easily from the one perception to the other, that it scarce perceives the change, but retains in the second a considerable share of the vivacity of the first. It is excited by the lively impression; and this vivacity is conveyed to the related idea, without any great diminution in the passage, by reason of the smooth transition and the propensity of the imagination.

But suppose, that this propensity arises from some other principle, besides that of relation; it is evident it must still have the same effect, and convey the vivacity from the impression to the idea. Now this is exactly the present case. Our memory presents us with a vast number of instances of perceptions perfectly resembling each other, that return at different distances of time, and after considerable interruptions. This resemblance gives us a propension to consider these interrupted perceptions as the same; and also a propension to connect them by a continued existence, in order to justify this identity, and avoid the contradiction, in which the interrupted appearance of these perceptions seems necessarily to involve us. Here then we have a propensity to feign the continued existence of all sensible objects; and as this propensity arises from some lively impressions of the memory, it bestows a vivacity on that fiction: or in other words, makes us believe the continued existence of body. If sometimes we ascribe a continued existence to objects, which are perfectly new to us, and of whose constancy and coherence we have no experience, it is because the manner, in which they present themselves to our senses, resembles that of constant and coherent objects; and this resemblance is a source of reasoning and analogy, and leads us to attribute the same qualities to similar objects.

I believe an intelligent reader will find less difficulty to assent to this system, than to comprehend it fully and distinctly, and will allow, after a little reflection, that every part carries its own proof along with it. It is indeed evident, that as the vulgar suppose their perceptions to be their only objects, and at the same time believe the continued existence of matter, we must account for the origin of the belief upon that supposition. Now upon that supposition, it is a false opinion that any of our objects, or perceptions, are identically the same after an interruption; and consequently the opinion of their identity can never arise from reason, but must arise from the imagination. The imagination is seduced into such an opinion only by means of the resemblance of certain perceptions; since we find they are only our resembling perceptions, which we have a propension to suppose the same. This propension to bestow an identity on our resembling perceptions, produces the fiction of a continued existence; since that fiction, as well as the identity, is really false, as is acknowledged by all philosophers, and has no other effect than to remedy the interruption of our perceptions, which is the only circumstance that is contrary to their identity. In the last place this propension causes belief by means of the present impressions of the memory; since without the remembrance of former sensations, it is plain we never should have any belief of the continued existence of body. Thus in examining all these parts, we find that each of them is supported by the strongest proofs: and that all of them together form a consistent system, which is perfectly convincing. A strong propensity or inclination alone, without any present impression, will sometimes cause a belief or opinion. How much more when aided by that circumstance?

But though we are led after this manner, by the natural propensity of the imagination, to ascribe a continued existence to those sensible objects or perceptions, which we find to resemble each other in their interrupted appearance; yet a very little reflection and philosophy is sufficient to make us perceive the fallacy of that opinion. I have already observed, that there is an intimate connexion betwixt those two principles, of a continued and of a distinct or independent existence, and that we no sooner establish the one than the other follows, as a necessary consequence. It is the opinion of a continued existence, which first takes place, and without much study or reflection draws the other along with it, wherever the mind follows its first and most natural tendency. But when we compare experiments, and reason a little upon them, we quickly perceive, that the doctrine of the independent existence of our sensible perceptions is contrary to the plainest experience. This leads us backward upon our footsteps to perceive our error in attributing a continued existence to our perceptions, and is the origin of many very curious opinions, which we shall here endeavour to account for.

It will first be proper to observe a few of those experiments, which convince us, that our perceptions are not possest of any independent existence. When we press one eye with a finger, we immediately perceive all the objects to become double, and one half of them to be removed from their common and natural position. But as we do not attribute to continued existence to both these perceptions, and as they are both of the same nature, we clearly perceive, that all our perceptions are dependent on our organs, and the disposition of our nerves and animal spirits. This opinion is confirmed by the seeming encrease and diminution of objects, according to their distance; by the apparent alterations in their figure; by the changes in their colour and other qualities from our sickness and distempers: and by an infinite number of other experiments of the same kind; from all which we learn, that our sensible perceptions are not possest of any distinct or independent existence.

The natural consequence of this reasoning should be, that our perceptions have no more a continued than an independent existence; and indeed philosophers have so far run into this opinion, that they change their system, and distinguish, (as we shall do for the future) betwixt perceptions and objects, of which the former are supposed to be interrupted, and perishing, and different at every different return; the latter to be uninterrupted, and to preserve a continued existence and identity. But however philosophical this new system may be esteemed, I assert that it is only a palliative remedy, and that it contains all the difficulties of the vulgar system, with some others, that are peculiar to itself. There are no principles either of the understanding or fancy, which lead us directly to embrace this opinion of the double existence of perceptions and objects, nor can we arrive at it but by passing through the common hypothesis of the identity and continuance of our interrupted perceptions. Were we not first perswaded, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue to exist even when they no longer make their appearance to the senses, we should never be led to think, that our perceptions and objects are different, and that our objects alone preserve a continued existence. The latter hypothesis has no primary recommendation either to reason or the imagination, but acquires all its influence on the imagination from the former. This proposition contains two parts, which we shall endeavour to prove as distinctly and clearly, as such abstruse subjects will permit.

As to the first part of the proposition, that this philosophical hypothesis has no primary recommendation, either to reason, or the imagination, we may soon satisfy ourselves with regard to reason by the following reflections. The only existences, of which we are certain, are perceptions, which being immediately present to us by consciousness, command our strongest assent, and are the first foundation of all our conclusions. The only conclusion we can draw from the existence of one thing to that of another, is by means of the relation of cause and effect, which shews, that there is a connexion betwixt them, and that the existence of one is dependent on that of the other. The idea of this relation is derived from past experience, by which we find, that two beings are constantly conjoined together, and are always present at once to the mind. But as no beings are ever present to the mind but perceptions; it follows that we may observe a conjunction or a relation of cause and effect between different perceptions, but can never observe it between perceptions and objects. It is impossible, therefore, that from the existence or any of the qualities of the former, we can ever form any conclusion concerning the existence of the latter, or ever satisfy our reason in this particular.

It is no less certain, that this philosophical system has no primary recommendation to the imagination, and that that faculty would never, of itself, and by its original tendency, have fallen upon such a principle. I confess it will be somewhat difficult to prove this to the fall satisfaction of the reader; because it implies a negative, which in many cases will not admit of any positive proof. If any one would take the pains to examine this question, and would invent a system, to account for the direct origin of this opinion from the imagination, we should be able, by the examination of that system, to pronounce a certain judgment in the present subject. Let it be taken for granted, that our perceptions are broken, and interrupted, and however like, are still different from each other; and let any one upon this supposition shew why the fancy, directly and immediately, proceeds to the belief of another existence, resembling these perceptions in their nature, but yet continued, and uninterrupted, and identical; and after he has done this to my satisfaction, I promise to renounce my present opinion. Mean while I cannot forbear concluding, from the very abstractedness and difficulty of the first supposition, that it is an improper subject for the fancy to work upon. Whoever would explain the origin of the common opinion concerning the continued and distinct existence of body, must take the mind in its common situation, and must proceed upon the supposition, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue to exist even when they are not perceived. Though this opinion be false, it is the most natural of any, and has alone any primary recommendation to the fancy.

As to the second part of the proposition, that the philosophical system acquires all its influence on the imagination from the vulgar one; we may observe, that this is a natural and unavoidable consequence of the foregoing conclusion, that it has no primary recommendation to reason or the imagination. For as the philosophical system is found by experience to take hold of many minds, and in particular of all those, who reflect ever so little on this subject, it must derive all its authority from the vulgar system; since it has no original authority of its own. The manner, in which these two systems, though directly contrary, are connected together, may be explains, as follows.

The imagination naturally runs on in this train of thinking. Our perceptions are our only objects: Resembling perceptions are the same, however broken or uninterrupted in their appearance: This appealing interruption is contrary to the identity: The interruption consequently extends not beyond the appearance, and the perception or object really continues to exist, even when absent from us: Our sensible perception s have, therefore, a continued and uninterrupted existence. But as a little reflection destroys this conclusion, that our perceptions have a continued existence, by shewing that they have a dependent one, it would naturally be expected, that we must altogether reject the opinion, that there is such a thing in nature as a continued existence, which is preserved even when it no longer appears to the senses. The case, however, is otherwise. Philosophers are so far from rejecting the opinion of a continued existence upon rejecting that of the independence and continuance of our sensible perceptions, that though all sects agree in the latter sentiment, the former, which is, in a manner, its necessary consequence, has been peculiar to a few extravagant sceptics; who after all maintained that opinion in words only, and were never able to bring themselves sincerely to believe it.

There is a great difference betwixt such opinions as we form after a calm and profound reflection, and such as we embrace by a kind of instinct or natural impulse, on account of their suitableness and conformity to the mind. If these opinions become contrary, it is not difficult to foresee which of them will have the advantage. As long as our attention is bent upon the subject, the philosophical and studyed principle may prevail; but the moment we relax our thoughts, nature will display herself, and draw us back to our former opinion. Nay she has sometimes such an influence, that she can stop our progress, even in the midst of our most profound reflections, and keep us from running on with all the consequences of any philosophical opinion. Thus though we clearly perceive the dependence and interruption of our perceptions, we stop short in our career, and never upon that account reject the notion of an independent and continued existence. That opinion has taken such deep root in the imagination, that it is impossible ever to eradicate it, nor will any strained metaphysical conviction of the dependence of our perceptions be sufficient for that purpose.

But though our natural and obvious principles here prevail above our studied reflections, it is certain there must be sonic struggle and opposition in the case: at least so long as these rejections retain any force or vivacity. In order to set ourselves at ease in this particular, we contrive a new hypothesis, which seems to comprehend both these principles of reason and imagination. This hypothesis is the philosophical, one of the double existence of perceptions and objects; which pleases our reason, in allowing, that our dependent perceptions are interrupted and different; and at the same time is agreeable to the imagination, in attributing a continued existence to something else, which we call objects. This philosophical system, therefore, is the monstrous offspring of two principles, which are contrary to each other, which are both at once embraced by the mind, and which are unable mutually to destroy each other. The imagination tells us, that our resembling perceptions have a continued and uninterrupted existence, and are not annihilated by their absence. Reflection tells us, that even our resembling perceptions are interrupted in their existence, and different from each other. The contradiction betwixt these opinions we elude by a new fiction, which is conformable to the hypotheses both of reflection and fancy, by ascribing these contrary qualities to different existences; the interruption to perceptions, and the continuance to objects. Nature is obstinate, and will not quit the field, however strongly attacked by reason; and at the same time reason is so clear in the point, that there is no possibility of disguising her. Not being able to reconcile these two enemies, we endeavour to set ourselves at ease as much as possible, by successively granting to each whatever it demands, and by feigning a double existence, where each may find something, that has all the conditions it desires. Were we fully convinced, that our resembling perceptions are continued, and identical, and independent, we should never run into this opinion of a double existence, since we should find satisfaction in our first supposition, and would not look beyond. Again, were we fully convinced, that our perceptions are dependent, and interrupted, and different, we should be as little inclined to embrace the opinion of a double existence; since in that case we should clearly perceive the error of our first supposition of a continued existence, and would never regard it any farther. It is therefore from the intermediate situation of the mind, that this opinion arises, and from such an adherence to these two contrary principles, as makes us seek some pretext to justify our receiving both; which happily at last is found in the system of a double existence.

Another advantage of this philosophical system is its similarity to the vulgar one; by which means we can humour our reason for a moment, when it becomes troublesome and sollicitous; and yet upon its least negligence or inattention, can easily return to our vulgar and natural notions. Accordingly we find, that philosophers neglect not this advantage; but immediately upon leaving their closets, mingle with the rest of mankind in those exploded opinions, that our perceptions are our only objects, and continue identically and uninterruptedly the same in all their interrupted appearances.

There are other particulars of this system, wherein we may remark its dependence on the fancy, in a very conspicuous manner. Of these, I shall observe the two following. First, We suppose external objects to resemble internal perceptions. I have already shewn, that the relation of cause and effect can never afford us any just conclusion from the existence or qualities of our perceptions to the existence of external continued objects: And I shall farther add, that even though they coued afford such a conclusion, we should never have any reason to infer, that our objects resemble our perceptions. That opinion, therefore, is derived from nothing but the quality of the fancy above-explained, (that it borrows all its ideas from some precedent perception). We never can conceive any thing but perceptions, and therefore must make every thing resemble them.

Secondly, As we suppose our objects in general to resemble our perceptions, so we take it for granted, that every particular object resembles that perception, which it causes. The relation of cause and effect determines us to join the other of resemblance; and the ideas of these existences being already united together in the fancy by the former relation, we naturally add the latter to compleat the union. We have a strong propensity to compleat every union by joining new relations to those which we have before observed betwixt any ideas, as we shall have occasion to observe presently. [Sect. 5.]

Having thus given an account of all the systems both popular and philosophical, with regard to external existences, I cannot forbear giving vent to a certain sentiment, which arises upon reviewing those systems. I begun this subject with premising, that we ought to have an implicit faith in our senses, and that this would be the conclusion, I should draw from the whole of my reasoning. But to be ingenuous, I feel myself at present of a quite contrary sentiment, and am more inclined to repose no faith at all in my senses, or rather imagination, than to place in it such an implicit confidence. I cannot conceive how such trivial qualities of the fancy, conducted by such false suppositions, can ever lead to any solid and rational system. They are the coherence and constancy of our perceptions, which produce the opinion of their continued existence; though these qualities of perceptions have no perceivable connexion with such an existence. The constancy of our perceptions has the most considerable effect, and yet is attended with the greatest difficulties. It is a gross illusion to suppose, that our resembling perceptions are numerically the same; and it is this illusion, which leads us into the opinion, that these perceptions are uninterrupted, and are still existent, even when they are not present to the senses. This is the case with our popular system. And as to our philosophical one, it is liable to the same difficulties; and is over-and-above loaded with this absurdity, that it at once denies and establishes the vulgar supposition. Philosophers deny our resembling perceptions to be identically the same, and uninterrupted; and yet have so great a propensity to believe them such, that they arbitrarily invent a new set of perceptions, to which they attribute these qualities. I say, a new set of perceptions: For we may well suppose in general, but it is impossible for us distinctly to conceive, objects to be in their nature any thing but exactly the same with perceptions. What then can we look for from this confusion of groundless and extraordinary opinions but error and falshood? And how can we justify to ourselves any belief we repose in them?

This sceptical doubt, both with respect to reason and the senses, is a malady, which can never be radically cured, but must return upon us every moment, however we may chace it away, and sometimes may seem entirely free from it. It is impossible upon any system to defend either our understanding or senses; and we but expose them farther when we endeavour to justify them in that manner. As the sceptical doubt arises naturally from a profound and intense reflection on those subjects, it always encreases, the farther we carry our reflections, whether in opposition or conformity to it. Carelessness and in-attention alone can afford us any remedy. For this reason I rely entirely upon them; and take it for granted, whatever may be the reader’s opinion at this present moment, that an hour hence he will be persuaded there is both an external and internal world; and going upon that supposition, I intend to examine some general systems both ancient and modern, which have been proposed of both, before I proceed to a more particular enquiry concerning our impressions. This will not, perhaps, in the end be found foreign to our present purpose.

SECT. III. OF THE ANTIENT PHILOSOPHY.

Several moralists have recommended it as an excellent method of becoming acquainted with our own hearts, and knowing our progress in virtue, to recollect our dreams in a morning, and examine them with the same rigour, that we would our most serious and most deliberate actions. Our character is the same throughout, say they, and appears best where artifice, fear, and policy have no place, and men can neither be hypocrites with themselves nor others. The generosity, or baseness of our temper, our meekness or cruelty, our courage or pusilanimity, influence the fictions of the imagination with the most unbounded liberty, and discover themselves in the most glaring colours. In like manner, I am persuaded, there might be several useful discoveries made from a criticism of the fictions of the antient philosophy, concerning substances, and substantial form, and accidents, and occult qualities; which, however unreasonable and capricious, have a very intimate connexion with the principles of human nature.

It is confest by the most judicious philosophers, that our ideas of bodies are nothing but collections formed by the mind of the ideas of the several distinct sensible qualities, of which objects are composed, and which we find to have a constant union with each other. But however these qualities may in themselves be entirely distinct, it is certain we commonly regard the compound, which they form, as ONE thing, and as continuing the SAME under very considerable alterations. The acknowledged composition is evidently contrary to this supposed simplicity, and the variation to the identity. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider the causes, which make us almost universally fall into such evident contradictions, as well as the means by which we endeavour to conceal them.

It is evident, that as the ideas of the several distinct, successive qualities of objects are united together by a very close relation, the mind, in looking along the succession, must be carryed from one part of it to another by an easy transition, and will no more perceive the change, than if it contemplated the same unchangeable object. This easy transition is the effect, or rather essence of relation; I and as the imagination readily takes one idea for another, where their influence on the mind is similar; hence it proceeds, that any such succession of related qualities is readily considered as one continued object, existing without any variation. The smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought, being alike in both cases, readily deceives the mind, and makes us ascribe an identity to the changeable succession of connected qualities.

But when we alter our method of considering the succession, and instead of traceing it gradually through the successive points of time, survey at once Any two distinct periods of its duration, and compare the different conditions of the successive qualities; in that case the variations, which were insensible when they arose gradually, do now appear of consequence, and seem entirely to destroy the identity. By this means there arises a kind of contrariety in our method of thinking, from the different points of view, in which we survey the object, and from the nearness or remoteness of those instants of time, which we compare together. When we gradually follow an object in its successive changes, the smooth progress of the thought makes us ascribe an identity to the succession; because it is by a similar act of the mind we consider an unchangeable object. When we compare its situation after a considerable change the progress of the thought is broke; and consequently we are presented with the idea of diversity: In order to reconcile which contradictions the imagination is apt to feign something unknown and invisible, which it supposes to continue the same under all these variations; and this unintelligible something it calls a substance, or original and first matter.

We entertain a like notion with regard to the simplicity of substances, and from like causes. Suppose an object perfectly simple and indivisible to be presented, along with another object, whose co-existent parts are connected together by a strong relation, it is evident the actions of the mind, in considering these two objects, are not very different. The imagination conceives the simple object at once, with facility, by a single effort of thought, without change or variation. The connexion of parts in the compound object has almost the same effect, and so unites the object within itself, that the fancy feels not the transition in passing from one part to another. Hence the colour, taste, figure, solidity, and other qualities, combined in a peach or melon, are conceived to form one thing; and that on account of their close relation, which makes them affect the thought in the same manner, as if perfectly uncompounded. But the mind rests not here.

Whenever it views the object in another light, it finds that all these qualities are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other; which view of things being destructive of its primary and more natural notions, obliges the imagination to feign an unknown something, or original substance and matter, as a principle of union or cohesion among these qualities, and as what may give the compound object a title to be called one thing, notwithstanding its diversity and composition.

The peripatetic philosophy asserts the original matter to be perfectly homogeneous in all bodies, and considers fire, water, earth, and air, as of the very same substance; on account of their gradual revolutions and changes into each other. At the same time it assigns to each of these species of objects a distinct substantial form, which it supposes to be the source of all those different qualities they possess, and to be a new foundation of simplicity and identity to each particular species. All depends on our manner of viewing the objects. When we look along the insensible changes of bodies, we suppose all of them to be of the same substance or essence. When we consider their sensible differences, we attribute to each of them a substantial and essential difference. And in order to indulge ourselves in both these ways of considering our objects, we suppose all bodies to have at once a substance and a substantial form.

The notion of accidents is an unavoidable consequence of this method of thinking with regard to substances and substantial forms; nor can we forbear looking upon colours, sounds, tastes, figures, and other properties of bodies, as existences, which cannot subsist apart, but require a subject of inhesion to sustain and support them. For having never discovered any of these sensible qualities, where, for the reasons above-mentioned, we did not likewise fancy a substance to exist; the same habit, which makes us infer a connexion betwixt cause and effect, makes us here infer a dependence of every quality on the unknown substance. The custom of imagining a dependence has the same effect as the custom of observing it would have. This conceit, however, is no more reasonable than any of the foregoing. Every quality being a distinct thing from another, may be conceived to exist apart, and may exist apart, not only from every other quality, but from that unintelligible chimera of a substance.

But these philosophers carry their fictions still farther in their sentiments concerning occult qualities, and both suppose a substance supporting, which they do not understand, and an accident supported, of which they have as imperfect an idea. The whole system, therefore, is entirely incomprehensible, and yet is derived from principles as natural as any of these above-explained.

In considering this subject we may observe a gradation of three opinions, that rise above each other, according as the persons, who form them, acquire new degrees of reason and knowledge. These opinions are that of the vulgar, that of a false philosophy, and that of the true; where we shall find upon enquiry, that the true philosophy approaches nearer to the sentiments of the vulgar, than to those of a mistaken knowledge. It is natural for men, in their common and care, less way of thinking, to imagine they perceive a connexion betwixt such objects as they have constantly found united together; and because custom has rendered it difficult to separate the ideas, they are apt to fancy such a separation to be in itself impossible and absurd. But philosophers, who abstract from the effects of custom, and compare the ideas of objects, immediately perceive the falshood of these vulgar sentiments, and discover that there is no known connexion among objects. Every different object appears to them entirely distinct and separate; and they perceive, that it is not from a view of the nature and qualities of objects we infer one from another, but only when in several instances we observe them to have been constantly conjoined. But these philosophers, instead of drawing a just inference from this observation, and concluding, that we have no idea of power or agency, separate from the mind, and belonging to causes; I say, instead of drawing this conclusion, they frequently search for the qualities, in which this agency consists, and are displeased with every system, which their reason suggests to them, in order to explain it. They have sufficient force of genius to free them from the vulgar error, that there is a natural and perceivable connexion betwixt the several sensible qualities and actions of matter; but not sufficient to keep them from ever seeking for this connexion in matter, or causes. Had they fallen upon the just conclusion, they would have returned back to the situation of the vulgar, and would have regarded all these disquisitions with indolence and indifference. At present they seem to be in a very lamentable condition, and such as the poets have given us but a faint notion of in their descriptions of the punishment of Sisyphus and Tantalus. For what can be imagined more tormenting, than to seek with eagerness, what for ever flies us; and seek for it in a place, where it is impossible it can ever exist?

But as nature seems to have observed a kind of justice and compensation in every thing, she has not neglected philosophers more than the rest of the creation; but has reserved them a consolation amid all their disappointments and afflictions. This consolation principally consists in their invention of the words: faculty and occult quality. For it being usual, after the frequent use of terms, which are really significant and intelligible, to omit the idea, which we would express by them, and to preserve only the custom, by which we recal the idea at pleasure; so it naturally happens, that after the frequent use of terms, which are wholly insignificant and unintelligible, we fancy them to be on the same footing with the precedent, and to have a secret meaning, which we might discover by reflection. The resemblance of their appearance deceives the mind, as is usual, and makes us imagine a thorough resemblance and conformity. By this means these philosophers set themselves at ease, and arrive at last, by an illusion, at the same indifference, which the people attain by their stupidity, and true philosophers by their moderate scepticism. They need only say, that any phenomenon, which puzzles them, arises from a faculty or an occult quality, and there is an end of all dispute and enquiry upon the matter.

But among all the instances, wherein the Peripatetics have shewn they were guided by every trivial propensity of the imagination, no one is more-remarkable than their sympathies, antipathies, and horrors of a vacuum. There is a very remarkable inclination in human nature, to bestow on external objects the same emotions, which it observes in itself; and to find every where those ideas, which are most present to it. This inclination, it is true, is suppressed by a little reflection, and only takes place in children, poets, and the antient philosophers. It appears in children, by their desire of beating the stones, which hurt them: In poets, by their readiness to personify every thing: And in the antient philosophers, by these fictions of sympathy and antipathy. We must pardon children, because of their age; poets, because they profess to follow implicitly the suggestions of their fancy: But what excuse shall we find to justify our philosophers in so signal a weakness?

SECT. IV. OF THE MODERN PHILOSOPHY.

But here it may be objected, that the imagination, according to my own confession, being the ultimate judge of all systems of philosophy, I am unjust in blaming the antient philosophers for making use of that faculty, and allowing themselves to be entirely guided by it in their reasonings. In order to justify myself, I must distinguish in the imagination betwixt the principles which are permanent, irresistible, and universal; such as the customary transition from causes to effects, and from effects to causes: And the principles, which are changeable, weak, and irregular; such as those I have just now taken notice of. The former are the foundation of all our thoughts and actions, so that upon their removal human nature must immediately perish and go to ruin. The latter are neither unavoidable to mankind, nor necessary, or so much as useful in the conduct of life; but on the contrary are observed only to take place in weak minds, and being opposite to the other principles of custom and reasoning, may easily be subverted by a due contrast and opposition. For this reason the former are received by philosophy, and the latter rejected. One who concludes somebody to be near him, when he hears an articulate voice in the dark, reasons justly and naturally; though that conclusion be derived from nothing but custom, which infixes and inlivens the idea of a human creature, on account of his usual conjunction with the present impression. But one, who is tormented he knows not why, with the apprehension of spectres in the dark, may, perhaps, be said to reason, and to reason naturally too: But then it must be in the same sense, that a malady is said to be natural; as arising from natural causes, though it be contrary to health, the most agreeable and most natural situation of man.

The opinions of the antient philosophers, their fictions of substance and accident, and their reasonings concerning substantial forms and occult qualities, are like the spectres in the dark, and are derived from principles, which, however common, are neither universal nor unavoidable in human nature. The modern philosophy pretends to be entirely free from this defect, and to arise only from the solid, permanent, and consistent principles of the imagination. Upon what grounds this pretension is founded must now be the subject of our enquiry.

The fundamental principle of that philosophy is the opinion concerning colours, sounds, tastes, smells, heat and cold; which it asserts to be nothing but impressions in the mind, derived from the operation of external objects, and without any resemblance to the qualities of the objects. Upon examination, I find only one of the reasons commonly produced for this opinion to be satisfactory, viz. that derived from the variations of those impressions, even while the external object, to all appearance, continues the same. These variations depend upon several circumstances. Upon the different situations of our health: A man in a malady feels a disagreeable taste in meats, which before pleased him the most. Upon the different complexions and constitutions of men That seems bitter to one, which is sweet to another. Upon the difference of their external situation and position: Colours reflected from the clouds change according to the distance of the clouds, and according to the angle they make with the eye and luminous body. Fire also communicates the sensation of pleasure at one distance, and that of pain at another. Instances of this kind are very numerous and frequent.

The conclusion drawn from them, is likewise as satisfactory as can possibly be imagined. It is certain, that when different impressions of the same sense arise from any object, every one of these impressions has not a resembling quality existent in the object. For as the same object cannot, at the same time, be endowed with different qualities of the same sense, and as the same quality cannot resemble impressions entirely different; it evidently follows, that many of our impressions have no external model or archetype. Now from like effects we presume like causes. Many of the impressions of colour, sound, &c. are confest to be nothing but internal existences, and to arise from causes, which no ways resemble them. These impressions are in appearance nothing different from the other impressions of colour, sound, &c. We conclude, therefore, that they are, all of them, derived from a like origin.

This principle being once admitted, all the other doctrines of that philosophy seem to follow by an easy consequence. For upon the removal of sounds, colours, beat, cold, and other sensible qualities, from the rank of continued independent existences, we are reduced merely to what are called primary qualities, as the only real ones, of which we have any adequate notion. These primary qualities are extension and solidity, with their different mixtures and modifications; figure, motion, gravity, and cohesion. The generation, encrease, decay, and corruption of animals and vegetables, are nothing but changes of figure and motion; as also the operations of all bodies on each other; of fire, of light, water, air, earth, and of all the elements and powers of nature. One figure and motion produces another figure and motion; nor does there remain in the material universe any other principle, either active or passive, of which we can form the most distant idea.

I believe many objections might be made to this system But at present I shall confine myself to one, which is in my opinion very decisive. I assert, that instead of explaining the operations of external objects by its means, we utterly annihilate all these objects, and reduce ourselves to the opinions of the most extravagant scepticism concerning them. If colours, sounds, tastes, and smells be merely perceptions, nothing we can conceive is possest of a real, continued, and independent existence; not even motion, extension and solidity, which are the primary qualities chiefly insisted on.

To begin with the examination of motion; it is evident this is a quality altogether inconceivable alone, and without a reference to some other object. The idea of motion necessarily supposes that of a body moving. Now what is our idea of the moving body, without which motion is incomprehensible? It must resolve itself into the idea of extension or of solidity; and consequently the reality of motion depends upon that of these other qualities.

This opinion, which is universally acknowledged concerning motion, I have proved to be true with regard to extension; and have shewn that it is impossible to conceive extension, but as composed of parts, endowed with colour or solidity. The idea of extension is a compound idea; but as it is not compounded of an infinite number of parts or inferior ideas, it must at last resolve itself into such as are perfectly simple and indivisible. These simple and indivisible parts, not being ideas of extension, must be non entities, unless conceived as coloured or solid. Colour is excluded from any real existence. The reality, therefore, of our idea of extension depends upon the reality of that of solidity, nor can the former be just while the latter is chimerical. Let us, then, lend our attention to the examination of the idea of solidity.

The idea of solidity is that of two objects, which being impelled by the utmost force, cannot penetrate each other; but still maintain a separate and distinct existence. Solidity, therefore, is perfectly incomprehensible alone, and without the conception of some bodies, which are solid, and maintain this separate and distinct existence. Now what idea have we of these bodies? The ideas of colours, sounds, and other secondary qualities are excluded. The idea of motion depends on that of extension, and the idea of extension on that of solidity. It is impossible, therefore, that the idea of solidity can depend on either of them. For that would be to run in a circle, and make one idea depend on another, while at the same time the latter depends on the former. Our modern philosophy, therefore, leaves us no just nor satisfactory idea of solidity; nor consequently of matter.

This argument will appear entirely conclusive to every one that comprehends it; but because it may seem abstruse and intricate to the generality of readers, I hope to be excused, if I endeavour to render it more obvious by some variation of the expression. In order to form an idea of solidity, we must conceive two bodies pressing on each other without any penetration; and it is impossible to arrive at this idea, when we confine ourselves to one object, much more without conceiving any. Two non-entities cannot exclude each other from their places; because they never possess any place, nor can be endowed with any quality. Now I ask, what idea do we form of these bodies or objects, to which we suppose solidity to belong? To say, that we conceive them merely as solid, is to run on in infinitum. To affirm, that we paint them out to ourselves as extended, either resolves all into a false idea, or returns in a circle. Extension must necessarily be considered either as coloured, which is a false idea; I or as solid, which brings us back to the first question. We may make the same observation concerning mobility and figure; and upon the whole must conclude, that after the exclusion of colours, sounds, heat and cold from the rank of external existences, there remains nothing, which can afford us a just and constituent idea of body.

Add to this, that, properly speaking, solidity or impenetrability is nothing, but an impossibility of annihilation, as [Part II. Sect. 4.] has been already observed: For which reason it is the more necessary for us to form some distinct idea of that object, whose annihilation we suppose impossible. An impossibility of being annihilated cannot exist, and can never be conceived to exist, by itself: but necessarily requires some object or real existence, to which it may belong. Now the difficulty still remains, how to form an idea of this object or existence, without having recourse to the secondary and sensible qualities.

Nor must we omit on this occasion our accustomed method of examining ideas by considering those impressions, from which they are derived. The impressions, which enter by the sight and hearing, the smell and taste, are affirmed by modern philosophy to be without any resembling objects; and consequently the idea of solidity, which is supposed to be real, can never be derived from any of these senses. There remains, therefore, the feeling as the only sense, that can convey the impression, which is original to the idea of solidity; and indeed we naturally imagine, that we feel the solidity of bodies, and need but touch any object in order to perceive this quality. But this method of thinking is more popular than philosophical; as will appear from the following reflections.

First, It is easy to observe, that though bodies are felt by means of their solidity, yet the feeling is a quite different thing from the solidity; and that they have not the least resemblance to each other. A man, who has the palsey in one hand, has as perfect an idea of impenetrability, when he observes that hand to be supported by the table, as when he feels the same table with the other hand. An object, that presses upon any of our members, meets with resistance; and that resistance, by the motion it gives to the nerves and animal spirits, conveys a certain sensation to the mind; but it does not follow, that the sensation, motion, and resistance are any ways resembling.

Secondly, The impressions of touch are simple impressions, except when considered with regard to their extension; which makes nothing to the present purpose: And from this simplicity I infer, that they neither represent solidity, nor any real object. For let us put two cases, viz. that of a man, who presses a stone, or any solid body, with his hand, and that of two stones, which press each other; it will readily be allowed, that these two cases are not in every respect alike, but that in the former there is conjoined with the solidity, a feeling or sensation, of which there is no appearance in the latter. In order, therefore, to make these two cases alike, it is necessary to remove some part of the impression, which the man feels by his hand, or organ of sensation; and that being impossible in a simple impression, obliges us to remove the whole, and proves that this whole impression has no archetype or model in external objects. To which we may add, that solidity necessarily supposes two bodies, along with contiguity and impulse; which being a compound object, can never be represented by a simple impression. Not to mention, that though solidity continues always invariably the same, the impressions of touch change every moment upon us; which is a clear proof that the latter are not representations of the former.

Thus there is a direct and total opposition betwixt our reason and our senses; or more properly speaking, betwixt those conclusions we form from cause and effect, and those that persuade us of the continued and independent existence of body. When we reason from cause and effect, we conclude, that neither colour, sound, taste, nor smell have a continued and independent existence. When we exclude these sensible qualities there remains nothing in the universe, which has such an existence.

SECT. V. OF THE IMMATERIALITY OF THE SOUL.

Having found such contradictions and difficulties in every system concerning external objects, and in the idea of matter, which we fancy so clear and determinate, We shall naturally expect still greater difficulties and contradictions in every hypothesis concerning our internal perceptions, and the nature of the mind, which we are apt to imagine so much more obscure, and uncertain. But in this we should deceive ourselves. The intellectual world, though involved in infinite obscurities, is not perplexed with any such contradictions, as those we have discovered in the natural. What is known concerning it, agrees with itself; and what is unknown, we must be contented to leave so.

It is true, would we hearken to certain philosophers, they promise to diminish our ignorance; but I am afraid it is at the hazard of running us into contradictions, from which the subject is of itself exempted. These philosophers are the curious reasoners concerning the material or immaterial substances, in which they suppose our perceptions to inhere. In order to put a stop to these endless cavils on both sides, I know no better method, than to ask these philosophers in a few words, What they mean by substance and inhesion? And after they have answered this question, it will then be reasonable, and not till then, to enter seriously into the dispute.

This question we have found impossible to be answered with regard to matter and body: But besides that in the case of the mind, it labours under all the same difficulties, it is burthened with some additional ones, which are peculiar to that subject. As every idea is derived from a precedent impression, had we any idea of the substance of our minds, we must also have an impression of it; which is very difficult, if not impossible, to be conceived. For how can an impression represent a substance, otherwise than by resembling it? And how can an impression resemble a substance, since, according to this philosophy, it is not a substance, and has none of the peculiar qualities or characteristics of a substance?

But leaving the question of what may or may not be, for that other what actually is, I desire those philosophers, who pretend that we have an idea of the substance of our minds, to point out the impression that produces it, and tell distinctly after what manner that impression operates, and from what object it is derived. Is it an impression of sensation or of reflection? Is it pleasant, or painful, or indifferent? I Does it attend us at all times, or does it only return at intervals? If at intervals, at what times principally does it return, and by what causes is it produced?

If instead of answering these questions, any one should evade the difficulty, by saying, that the definition of a substance is something which may exist by itself; and that this definition ought to satisfy us: should this be said, I should observe, that this definition agrees to every thing, that can possibly be conceived; and never will serve to distinguish substance from accident, or the soul from its perceptions. For thus I reason. Whatever is clearly conceived may exist; and whatever is clearly conceived, after any manner, may exist after the same manner. This is one principle, which has been already acknowledged. Again, every thing, which is different, is distinguishable, and every thing which is distinguishable, is separable by the imagination. This is another principle. My conclusion from both is, that since all our perceptions are different from each other, and from every thing else in the universe, they are also distinct and separable, and may be considered as separately existent, and may exist separately, and have no need of any thing else to support their existence. They are, therefore, substances, as far as this definition explains a substance.

Thus neither by considering the first origin of ideas, nor by means of a definition are we able to arrive at any satisfactory notion of substance; which seems to me a sufficient reason for abandoning utterly that dispute concerning the materiality and immateriality of the soul, and makes me absolutely condemn even the question itself. We have no perfect idea of any thing but of a perception. A substance is entirely different from a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of a substance. Inhesion in something is supposed to be requisite to support the existence of our perceptions. Nothing appears requisite to support the existence of a perception. We have, therefore, no idea of inhesion. What possibility then of answering that question, Whether perceptions inhere in a material or immaterial substance, when we do not so much as understand the meaning of the question?

There is one argument commonly employed for the immateriality of the soul, which seems to me remarkable. Whatever is extended consists of parts; and whatever consists of parts is divisible, if not in reality, at least in the imagination. But it is impossible anything divisible can be conjoined to a thought or perception, which is a being altogether inseparable and indivisible. For supposing such a conjunction, would the indivisible thought exist on the left or on the right hand of this extended divisible body? On the surface or in the middle? On the back or fore side of it? If it be conjoined with the extension, it must exist somewhere within its dimensions. If it exist within its dimensions, it must either exist in one particular part; and then that particular part is indivisible, and the perception is conjoined only with it, not with the extension: Or if the thought exists in every part, it must also be extended, and separable, and divisible, as well as the body; which is utterly absurd and contradictory. For can any one conceive a passion of a yard in length, a foot in breadth, and an inch in thickness? Thought, therefore, and extension are qualities wholly incompatible, and never can incorporate together into one subject.

This argument affects not the question concerning the substance of the soul, but only that concerning its local conjunction with matter; and therefore it may not be improper to consider in general what objects are, or are not susceptible of a local conjunction. This is a curious question, and may lead us to some discoveries of considerable moment.

The first notion of space and extension is derived solely from the senses of sight and feeling; nor is there any thing, but what is coloured or tangible, that has parts disposed after such a manner, as to convey that idea. When we diminish or encrease a relish, it is not after the same manner that we diminish or encrease any visible object; and when several sounds strike our hearing at once, custom and reflection alone make us form an idea of the degrees of the distance and contiguity of those bodies, from which they are derived. Whatever marks the place of its existence either must be extended, or must be a mathematical point, without parts or composition. What is extended must have a particular figure, as square, round, triangular; none of which will agree to a desire, or indeed to any impression or idea, except to these two senses above-mentioned. Neither ought a desire, though indivisible, to be considered as a mathematical point. For in that case it would be possible, by the addition of others, to make two, three, four desires, and these disposed and situated in such a manner, as to have a determinate length, breadth and thickness; which is evidently absurd.

It will not be surprising after this, if I deliver a maxim, which is condemned by several metaphysicians, and is esteemed contrary to the most certain principles of hum reason. This maxim is that an object may exist, and yet be no where: and I assert, that this is not only possible, but that the greatest part of beings do and must exist after this manner. An object may be said to be no where, when its parts are not so situated with respect to each other, as to form any figure or quantity; nor the whole with respect to other bodies so as to answer to our notions of contiguity or distance. Now this is evidently the case with all our perceptions and objects, except those of the sight and feeling. A moral reflection cannot be placed on the right or on the left hand of a passion, nor can a smell or sound be either of a circular or a square figure. These objects and perceptions, so far from requiring any particular place, are absolutely incompatible with it, and even the imagination cannot attribute it to them. And as to the absurdity of supposing them to be no where, we may consider, that if the passions and sentiments appear to the perception to have any particular place, the idea of extension might be derived from them, as well as from the sight and touch; contrary to what we have already established. If they APPEAR not to have any particular place, they may possibly exist in the same manner; since whatever we conceive is possible.

It will not now be necessary to prove, that those perceptions, which are simple, and exist no where, are incapable of any conjunction in place with matter or body, which is extended and divisible; since it is impossible to found a relation but on some common quality. It may be better worth our while to remark, that this question of the local conjunction of objects does not only occur in metaphysical disputes concerning the nature of the soul, but that even in common life we have every moment occasion to examine it. Thus supposing we consider a fig at one end of the table, and an olive at the other, it is evident, that in forming the complex ideas of these substances, one of the most obvious is that of their different relishes; and it is as evident, that we incorporate and conjoin these qualities with such as are coloured and tangible. The bitter taste of the one, and sweet of the other are supposed to lie in the very visible body, and to be separated from each other by the whole length of the table. This is so notable and so natural an illusion, that it may be proper to consider the principles, from which it is derived.

Though an extended object be incapable of a conjunction in place with another, that exists without any place or extension, yet are they susceptible of many other relations. Thus the taste and smell of any fruit are inseparable from its other qualities of colour and tangibility; and whichever of them be the cause or effect, it is certain they are always co-existent. Nor are they only co-existent in general, but also co-temporary in their appearance in the mind; and it is upon the application of the extended body to our senses we perceive its particular taste and smell. These relations, then, of causation, and contiguity in the time of their appearance, betwixt the extended object and the quality, which exists without any particular place, must have such an effect on the mind, that upon the appearance of one it will immediately turn its thought to the conception of the other. Nor is this all. We not only turn our thought from one to the other upon account of their relation, but likewise endeavour to give them a new relation, viz. that of a CONJUNCTION IN PLACE, that we may render the transition more easy and natural. For it is a quality, which I shall often have occasion to remark in human nature, and shall explain more fully in its proper place, that when objects are united by any relation, we have a strong propensity to add some new relation to them, in order to compleat the union. In our arrangement of bodies we never fail to place such as are resembling, in contiguity to each other, or at least in correspondent points of view: Why? but because we feel a satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or the resemblance of situation to that of qualities. The effects this propensity have been [Sect. 2, towards the end.] already observed in that resemblance, which we so readily suppose betwixt particular impressions and their external causes. But we shall not find a more evident effect of it, than in the present instance, where from the relations of causation and contiguity in time betwixt two objects, we feign likewise that of a conjunction in place, in order to strengthen the connexion.

But whatever confused notions we may form of an union in place betwixt an extended body, as a fig, and its particular taste, it is certain that upon reflection we must observe this union something altogether unintelligible and contradictory. For should we ask ourselves one obvious question, viz. if the taste, which we conceive to be contained in the circumference of the body, is in every part of it or in one only, we must quickly find ourselves at a loss, and perceive the impossibility of ever giving a satisfactory answer. We cannot rely, that it is only in one part: For experience convinces us, that every part has the same relish. We can as little reply, that it exists in every part: For then we must suppose it figured and extended; which is absurd and incomprehensible. Here then we are influenced by two principles directly contrary to each other, viz. that inclination of our fancy by which we are determined to incorporate the taste with the extended object, and our reason, which shows us the impossibility of such an union. Being divided betwixt these opposite principles, we renounce neither one nor the other, but involve the subject in such confusion and obscurity, that we no longer perceive the opposition. We suppose, that the taste exists within the circumference of the body, but in such a manner, that it fills the whole without extension, and exists entire in every part without separation. In short, we use in our most familiar way of thinking, that scholastic principle, which, when crudely proposed, appears so shocking, of TOTUM IN TOTO & TOLUM IN QUALIBET PARTE: Which is much the same, as if we should say, that a thing is in a certain place, and yet is not there.

All this absurdity proceeds from our endeavouring to bestow a place on what is utterly incapable of it; and that endeavour again arises from our inclination to compleat an union, which is founded on causation, and a contiguity of time, by attributing to the objects a conjunction in place. But if ever reason be of sufficient force to overcome prejudice, it is certain, that in the present case it must prevail. For we have only this choice left, either to suppose that some beings exist without any place; or that they are figured and extended; or that when they are incorporated with extended objects, the whole is in the whole, and the whole in every part. The absurdity of the two last suppositions proves sufficiently the veracity of the first. Nor is there any fourth opinion. For as to the supposition of their existence in the manner of mathematical points, it resolves itself into the second opinion, and supposes, that several passions may be placed in a circular figure, and that a certain number of smells, conjoined with a certain number of sounds, may make a body of twelve cubic inches; which appears ridiculous upon the bare mentioning of it.

But though in this view of things we cannot refuse to condemn the materialists, who conjoin all thought with extension; yet a little reflection will show us equal reason for blaming their antagonists, who conjoin all thought with a simple and indivisible substance. The most vulgar philosophy informs us, that no external object can make itself known to the mind immediately, and without the interposition of an image or perception.

That table, which just now appears to me, is only a perception, and all its qualities are qualities of a perception. Now the most obvious of all its qualities is extension. The perception consists of parts. These parts are so situated, as to afford us the notion of distance and contiguity; of length, breadth, and thickness. The termination of these three dimensions is what we call figure. This figure is moveable, separable, and divisible. Mobility, and separability are the distinguishing properties of extended objects. And to cut short all disputes, the very idea of extension is copyed from nothing but an impression, and consequently must perfectly agree to it. To say the idea of extension agrees to any thing, is to say it is extended.

The free-thinker may now triumph in his turn; and having found there are impressions and ideas really extended, may ask his antagonists, how they can incorporate a simple and indivisible subject with an extended perception? All the arguments of Theologians may here be retorted upon them. Is the indivisible subject, or immaterial substance, if you will, on the left or on the right hand of the perception? Is it in this particular part, or in that other? Is it in every part without being extended? Or is it entire in any one part without deserting the rest? It is impossible to give any answer to these questions, but what will both be absurd in itself, and will account for the union of our indivisible perceptions with an extended substance.

This gives me an occasion to take a-new into consideration the question concerning the substance of the soul; and though I have condemned that question as utterly unintelligible, yet I cannot forbear proposing some farther reflections concerning it. I assert, that the doctrine of the immateriality, simplicity, and indivisibility of a thinking substance is a true atheism, and will serve to justify all those sentiments, for which Spinoza is so universally infamous. From this topic, I hope at least to reap one advantage, that my adversaries will not have any pretext to render the present doctrine odious by their declamations, when they see that they can be so easily retorted on them.

The fundamental principle of the atheism of Spinoza is the doctrine of the simplicity of the universe, and the unity of that substance, in which he supposes both thought and matter to inhere. There is only one substance, says he, in the world; and that substance is perfectly simple and indivisible, and exists every where, without any local presence. Whatever we discover externally by sensation; whatever we feel internally by reflection; all these are nothing but modifications of that one, simple, and necessarily existent being, and are not possest of any separate or distinct existence. Every passion of the soul; every configuration of matter, however different and various, inhere in the same substance, and preserve in themselves their characters of distinction, without communicating them to that subject, in which they inhere. The same substratum, if I may so speak, supports the most different modifications, without any difference in itself; and varies them, without any variation. Neither time, nor place, nor all the diversity of nature are able to produce any composition or change in its perfect simplicity and identity.

I believe this brief exposition of the principles of that famous atheist will be sufficient for the present purpose, and that without entering farther into these gloomy and obscure regions, I shall be able to shew, that this hideous hypothesis is almost the same with that of the immateriality of the soul, which has become so popular. To make this evident, let us [Part II, Sect. 6.] remember, that as every idea is derived from a preceding perception, it is impossible our idea of a perception, and that of an object or external existence can ever represent what are specifically different from each other. Whatever difference we may suppose betwixt them, it is still incomprehensible to us; and we are obliged either to conceive an external object merely as a relation without a relative, or to make it the very same with a perception or impression.

The consequence I shall draw from this may, at first sight, appear a mere sophism; but upon the least examination will be found solid and satisfactory. I say then, that since we may suppose, but never can conceive a specific deference betwixt an object and impression; any conclusion we form concerning the connexion and repugnance of impressions, will not be known certainly to be applicable to objects; but that on the other hand, whatever conclusions of this kind we form concerning objects, will most certainly be applicable to impressions. The reason is not difficult. As an object is supposed to be different from an impression, we cannot be sure, that the circumstance, upon which we found our reasoning, is common to both, supposing we form the reasoning upon the impression. It is still possible, that the object may differ from it in that particular. But when we first form our reasoning concerning the object, it is beyond doubt, that the same reasoning must extend to the impression: And that because the quality of the object, upon which the argument is founded, must at least be conceived by the mind; and coued not be conceived, unless it were common to an impression; since we have no idea but what is derived from that origin. Thus we may establish it as a certain maxim, that we can never, by any principle, but by an irregular kind [Such as that of Sect. 2, form the coherence of our perceptions.] of reasoning from experience, discover a connexion or repugnance betwixt objects, which extends not to impressions; though the inverse proposition may not be equally true, that all the discoverable relations of impressions are common to objects.

To apply this to the present case; there are two different systems of being presented, to which I suppose myself under necessity of assigning some substance, or ground of inhesion. I observe first the universe of objects or of body: The sun, moon and stars; the earth, seas, plants, animals, men, ships, houses, and other productions either of art or nature. Here Spinoza appears, and tells me, that these are only modifications; and that the subject, in which they inhere, is simple, incompounded, and indivisible. After this I consider the other system of beings, viz. the universe of thought, or my impressions and ideas. There I observe another sun, moon and stars; an earth, and seas, covered and inhabited by plants and animals; towns, houses, mountains, rivers; and in short every thing I can discover or conceive in the first system. Upon my enquiring concerning these, Theologians present themselves, and tell me, that these also are modifications, and modifications of one simple, uncompounded, and indivisible substance. Immediately upon which I am deafened with the noise of a hundred voices, that treat the first hypothesis with detestation and scorn, and the second with applause and veneration. I turn my attention to these hypotheses to see what may be the reason of so great a partiality; and find that they have the same fault of being unintelligible, and that as far as we can understand them, they are so much alike, that it is impossible to discover any absurdity in one, which is not common to both of them. We have no idea of any quality in an object, which does not agree to, and may not represent a quality in an impression; and that because all our ideas are derived from our impressions. We can never, therefore, find any repugnance betwixt an extended object as a modification, and a simple uncompounded essence, as its substance, unless that repugnance takes place equally betwixt the perception or impression of that extended object, and the same uncompounded essence. Every idea of a quality in an object passes through an impression; and therefore every perceivable relation, whether of connexion or repugnance, must be common both to objects and impressions.

But though this argument, considered in general, seems evident beyond all doubt and contradiction, yet to make it more clear and sensible, let us survey it in detail; and see whether all the absurdities, which have been found in the system of Spinoza, may not likewise be discovered in that of Theologians. [See Bayle’s dictionary, article of Spinoza.]

First, It has been said against Spinoza, according to the scholastic way of talking, rather than thinking, that a mode, not being any distinct or separate existence, must be the very same with its substance, and consequently the extension of the universe, must be in a manner identifyed with that, simple, uncompounded essence, in which the universe is supposed to inhere. But this, it may be pretended, is utterly impossible and inconceivable unless the indivisible substance expand itself, so as to correspond to the extension, or the extension contract itself, so as to answer to the indivisible substance. This argument seems just, as far as we can understand it; and it is plain nothing is required, but a change in the terms, to apply the same argument to our extended perceptions, and the simple essence of the soul; the ideas of objects and perceptions being in every respect the same, only attended with the supposition of a difference, that is unknown and incomprehensible.

Secondly, It has been said, that we have no idea of substance, which is not applicable to matter; nor any idea of a distinct substance, which is not applicable to every distinct portion of matter. Matter, therefore, is not a mode but a substance, and each part of matter is not a distinct mode, but a distinct substance. I have already proved, that we have no perfect idea of substance; but that taking it for something, that can exist by itself, it is evident every perception is a substance, and every distinct part of a perception a distinct substance: And consequently the one hypothesis labours under the same difficulties in this respect with the other.

Thirdly, It has been objected to the system of one simple substance in the universe, that this substance being the support or substratum of every thing, must at the very same instant be modifyed into forms, which are contrary and incompatible. The round and square figures are incompatible in the same substance at the same time. How then is it possible, that the same substance can at once be modifyed into that square table, and into this round one? I ask the same question concerning the impressions of these tables; and find that the answer is no more satisfactory in one case than in the other.

It appears, then, that to whatever side we turn, the same difficulties follow us, and that we cannot advance one step towards the establishing the simplicity and immateriality o the soul, without preparing the way for a dangerous and irrecoverable atheism. It is the same case, if instead o calling thought a modification of the soul, we should give it the more antient, and yet more modish name of an action. By an action we mean much the same thing, as what is commonly called an abstract mode; that is, something, which, properly speaking, is neither distinguishable, nor separable from its substance, and is only conceived by a distinction of reason, or an abstraction. But nothing is gained by this change of the term of modification, for that of action; nor do we free ourselves from one single difficulty by its means; as will appear from the two following reflexions.

First, I observe, that the word, action, according to this explication of it, can never justly be applied to any perception, as derived from a mind or thinking substance. Our perceptions are all really different, and separable, and distinguishable from each other, and from everything else, which we can imagine: and therefore it is impossible to conceive, how they can be the action or abstract mode of any substance. The instance of motion, which is commonly made use of to shew after what manner perception depends, as an action, upon its substance, rather confounds than instructs us. Motion to all appearance induces no real nor essential change on the body, but only varies its relation to other objects. But betwixt a person in the morning walking a garden with company, agreeable to him; and a person in the afternoon inclosed in a dungeon, and full of terror, despair, and resentment, there seems to be a radical difference, and of quite another kind, than what is produced on a body by the change of its situation. As we conclude from the distinction and separability of their ideas, that external objects have a separate existence from each other; so when we make these ideas themselves our objects, we must draw the same conclusion concerning them, according to the precedent reasoning. At least it must be confest, that having idea of the substance of the soul, it is impossible for us to tell how it can admit of such differences, and even contrarieties of perception without any fundamental change; and consequently can never tell in what sense perceptions are actions of that substance. The use, therefore, of the word, action, unaccompanyed with any meaning, instead of that of modification, makes no addition to our knowledge, nor is of any advantage to the doctrine of the immateriality of the soul.

I add in the second place, that if it brings any advantage to that cause, it must bring an equal to the cause of atheism. For do our Theologians pretend to make a monopoly of the word, action, and may not the atheists likewise take possession of it, and affirm that plants, animals, men, &c. are nothing but particular actions of one simple universal substance, which exerts itself from a blind and absolute necessity? This you'll say is utterly absurd. I own it is unintelligible; but at the same time assert, according to the principles above-explained, that it is impossible to discover any absurdity in the supposition, that all the various objects in nature are actions of one simple substance, which absurdity will not be applicable to a like supposition concerning impressions and ideas.

From these hypotheses concerning the substance and local conjunction of our perceptions, we may pass to another, which is more intelligible than the former, and more important than the latter, viz. concerning the cause of our perceptions. Matter and motion, it is commonly said in the schools, however varyed, are still matter and motion, and produce only a difference in the position and situation of objects. Divide a body as often as you please, it is still body. Place it in any figure, nothing ever results but figure, or the relation of parts. Move it in any manner, you still find motion or a change of relation. It is absurd to imagine, that motion in a circle, for instance, should be nothing but merely motion in a circle; while motion in another direction, as in an ellipse, should also be a passion or moral reflection: That the shocking of two globular particles should become a sensation of pain, and that the meeting of two triangular ones should afford a pleasure. Now as these different shocks, and variations, and mixtures are the only changes, of which matter is susceptible, and as these never afford us any idea of thought or perception, it is concluded to be impossible, that thought can ever be caused by matter.

Few have been able to withstand the seeming evidence of this argument; and yet nothing in the world is more easy than to refute it. We need only reflect on what has been proved at large, that we are never sensible of any connexion betwixt causes and effects, and that it is only by our experience of their constant conjunction, we can arrive at any knowledge of this relation. Now as all objects, which are not contrary, are susceptible of a constant conjunction, and as no real objects are contrary [Part III. Sect. 15.]; I have inferred from these principles, that to consider the matter A PRIORI, any thing may produce any thing, and that we shall never discover a reason, why any object may or may not be the cause of any other, however great, or however little the resemblance may be betwixt them. This evidently destroys the precedent reasoning concerning the cause of thought or perception. For though there appear no manner of connexion betwixt motion or thought, the case is the same with all other causes and effects. Place one body of a pound weight on one end of a lever, and another body of the same weight on another end; you will never find in these bodies any principle of motion dependent on their distances from the center, more than of thought and perception. If you pretend, therefore, to prove a priori, that such a position of bodies can never cause thought; because turn it which way you will, it is nothing but a position of bodies; you must by the same course of reasoning conclude, that it can never produce motion; since there is no more apparent connexion in the one case than in the other. But as this latter conclusion is contrary to evident experience, and as it is possible we may have a like experience in the operations of the mind, and may perceive a constant conjunction of thought and motion; you reason too hastily, when from the mere consideration of the ideas, you conclude that it is impossible motion can ever produce thought, or a different position of parts give rise to a different passion or reflection. Nay it is not only possible we may have such an experience, but it is certain we have it; since every one may perceive, that the different dispositions of his body change his thoughts and sentiments. And should it be said, that this depends on the union of soul and body; I would answer, that we must separate the question concerning the substance of the mind from that concerning the cause of its thought; and that confining ourselves to the latter question we find by the comparing their ideas, that thought and motion are different from each other, and by experience, that they are constantly united; which being all the circumstances, that enter into the idea of cause and effect, when applied to the operations of matter, we may certainly conclude, that motion may be, and actually is, the cause of thought and perception.

There seems only this dilemma left us in the present case; either to assert, that nothing can be the cause of another, but where the mind can perceive the connexion in its idea of the objects: Or to maintain, that all objects, which we find constantly conjoined, are upon that account to be regarded as causes and effects. If we choose the first part of the dilemma, these are the consequences. First, We in reality affirm, that there is no such thing in the universe as a cause or productive principle, not even the deity himself; since our idea of that supreme Being is derived from particular impressions, none of which contain any efficacy, nor seem to have any connexion with any other existence. As to what may be said, that the connexion betwixt the idea of an infinitely powerful being, and that of any effect, which he wills, is necessary and unavoidable; I answer, that we have no idea of a being endowed with any power, much less of one endowed with infinite power. But if we will change expressions, we can only define power by connexion; and then in saying, that the idea, of an infinitely powerful being is connected with that of every effect, which he wills, we really do no more than assert, that a being, whose volition is connected with every effect, is connected with every effect: which is an identical proposition, and gives us no insight into the nature of this power or connexion. But, secondly, supposing, that the deity were the great and efficacious principle, which supplies the deficiency of all causes, this leads us into the grossest impieties and absurdities. For upon the same account, that we have recourse to him in natural operations, and assert that matter cannot of itself communicate motion, or produce thought, viz. because there is no apparent connexion betwixt these objects; I say, upon the very same account, we must acknowledge that the deity is the author of all our volitions and perceptions; since they have no more apparent connexion either with one another, or with the supposed but unknown substance of the soul. This agency of the supreme Being we know to have been asserted by [As father Malebranche and other Cartesians.] several philosophers with relation to all the actions of the mind, except volition, or rather an inconsiderable part of volition; though it is easy to perceive, that this exception is a mere pretext, to avoid the dangerous consequences of that doctrine. If nothing be active but what has an apparent power, thought is in no case any more active than matter; and if this inactivity must make us have recourse to a deity, the supreme being is the real cause of all our actions, bad as well as good, vicious as well as virtuous.

Thus we are necessarily reduced to the other side of the dilemma, viz.. that all objects, which are found to be constantly conjoined, are upon that account only to be regarded as causes and effects. Now as all objects, which are not contrary, are susceptible of a constant conjunction, and as no real objects are contrary: it follows, that for ought we can determine by the mere ideas, any thing may be the cause or effect of any thing; which evidently gives the advantage to the materialists above their antagonists.

To pronounce, then, the final decision upon the whole; the question concerning the substance of the soul is absolutely unintelligible: All our perceptions are not susceptible of a local union, either with what is extended or unextended: there being some of them of the one kind, and some of the other: And as the constant conjunction of objects constitutes the very essence of cause and effect, matter and motion may often be regarded as the causes of thought, as far as we have any notion of that relation.

It is certainly a kind of indignity to philosophy, whose sovereign authority ought every where to be acknowledged, to oblige her on every occasion to make apologies for her conclusions, and justify herself to every particular art and science, which may be offended at her. This puts one in mind of a king arrainged for high-treason against his subjects. There is only one occasion, when philosophy will think it necessary and even honourable to justify herself, and that is, when religion may seem to be in the least offended; whose rights are as dear to her as her own, and are indeed the same. If any one, therefore, should imagine that the foregoing arguments are any ways dangerous to religion, I hope the following apology will remove his apprehensions.

There is no foundation for any conclusion a priori, either concerning the operations or duration of any object, of which it is possible for the human mind to form a conception. Any object may be imagined to become entirely inactive, or to be annihilated in a moment; and it is an evident principle, that whatever we can imagine, is possible. Now this is no more true of matter, than of spirit; of an extended compounded substance, than of a simple and unextended. In both cases the metaphysical arguments for the immortality of the soul are equally inconclusive: and in both cases the moral arguments and those derived from the analogy of nature are equally strong and convincing. If my philosophy, therefore, makes no addition to the arguments for religion, I have at least the satisfaction to think it takes nothing from them, but that every thing remains precisely as before.

SECT. VI. OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence; and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both o its perfect identity and simplicity. The strongest sensation, the most violent passion, say they, instead of distracting us from this view, only fix it the more intensely, and make us consider their influence on self either by their pain or pleasure. To attempt a farther proof of this were to weaken its evidence; since no proof can be derived from any fact, of which we are so intimately conscious; nor is there any thing, of which we can be certain, if we doubt of this.

Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience, which is pleaded for them, nor have we any idea of self, after the manner it is here explained. For from what impression coued this idea be derived? This question it is impossible to answer without a manifest contradiction and absurdity; and yet it is a question, which must necessarily be answered, if we would have the idea of self pass for clear and intelligible, It must be some one impression, that gives rise to every real idea. But self or person is not any one impression, but that to which our several impressions and ideas are supposed to have a reference. If any impression gives rise to the idea of self, that impression must continue invariably the same, through the whole course of our lives; since self is supposed to exist after that manner. But there is no impression constant and invariable. Pain and pleasure, grief and joy, passions and sensations succeed each other, and never all exist at the same time. It cannot, therefore, be from any of these impressions, or from any other, that the idea of self is derived; and consequently there is no such idea.

But farther, what must become of all our particular perceptions upon this hypothesis? All these are different, and distinguishable, and separable from each other, and may be separately considered, and may exist separately, and have no Deed of tiny thing to support their existence. After what manner, therefore, do they belong to self; and how are they connected with it? For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception. When my perceptions are removed for any time, as by sound sleep; so long am I insensible of myself, and may truly be said not to exist. And were all my perceptions removed by death, and coued I neither think, nor feel, nor see, nor love, nor hate after the dissolution of my body, I should be entirely annihilated, nor do I conceive what is farther requisite to make me a perfect non-entity. If any one, upon serious and unprejudiced reflection thinks he has a different notion of himself, I must confess I call reason no longer with him. All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls himself; though I am certain there is no such principle in me.

But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement. Our eyes cannot turn in their sockets without varying our perceptions. Our thought is still more variable than our sight; and all our other senses and faculties contribute to this change; nor is there any single power of the soul, which remains unalterably the same, perhaps for one moment. The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no simplicity in it at one time, nor identity in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is composed.

What then gives us so great a propension to ascribe an identity to these successive perceptions, and to suppose ourselves possest of an invariable and uninterrupted existence through the whole course of our lives? In order to answer this question, we must distinguish betwixt personal identity, as it regards our thought or imagination, and as it regards our passions or the concern we take in ourselves. The first is our present subject; and to explain it perfectly we must take the matter pretty deep, and account for that identity, which we attribute to plants and animals; there being a great analogy betwixt it, and the identity of a self or person.

We have a distinct idea of an object, that remains invariable and uninterrupted through a supposed variation of time; and this idea we call that of identity or sameness. We have also a distinct idea of several different objects existing in succession, and connected together by a close relation; and this to an accurate view affords as perfect a notion of diversity, as if there was no manner of relation among the objects. But though these two ideas of identity, and a succession of related objects be in themselves perfectly distinct, and even contrary, yet it is certain, that in our common way of thinking they are generally confounded with each other. That action of the imagination, by which we consider the uninterrupted and invariable object, and that by which we reflect on the succession of related objects, are almost the same to the feeling, nor is there much more effort of thought required in the latter case than in the former. The relation facilitates the transition of the mind from one object to another, and renders its passage as smooth as if it contemplated one continued object. This resemblance is the cause of the confusion and mistake, and makes us substitute the notion of identity, instead of that of related objects. However at one instant we may consider the related succession as variable or interrupted, we are sure the next to ascribe to it a perfect identity, and regard it as enviable and uninterrupted. Our propensity to this mistake is so great from the resemblance above-mentioned, that we fall into it before we are aware; and though we incessantly correct ourselves by reflection, and return to a more accurate method of thinking, yet we cannot long sustain our philosophy, or take off this biass from the imagination. Our last resource is to yield to it, and boldly assert that these different related objects are in effect the same, however interrupted and variable. In order to justify to ourselves this absurdity, we often feign some new and unintelligible principle, that connects the objects together, and prevents their interruption or variation. Thus we feign the continued existence of the perceptions of our senses, to remove the interruption: and run into the notion of a soul, and self, and substance, to disguise the variation. But we may farther observe, that where we do not give rise to such a fiction, our propension to confound identity with relation is so great, that we are apt to imagine [FN 10] something unknown and mysterious, connecting the parts, beside their relation; and this I take to be the case with regard to the identity we ascribe to plants and vegetables. And even when this does not take place, we still feel a propensity to confound these ideas, though we a-re not able fully to satisfy ourselves in that particular, nor find any thing invariable and uninterrupted to justify our notion of identity.

[FN 10 If the reader is desirous to see how a great genius may be influencd by these seemingly trivial principles of the imagination, as well as the mere vulgar, let him read my Lord SHAFTSBURYS reasonings concerning the uniting principle of the universe, and the identity of plants and animals. See his MORALISTS: or, PHILOSOPHICAL RHAPSODY.]

Thus the controversy concerning identity is not merely a dispute of words. For when we attribute identity, in an improper sense, to variable or interrupted objects, our mistake is not confined to the expression, but is commonly attended with a fiction, either of something invariable and uninterrupted, or of something mysterious and inexplicable, or at least with a propensity to such fictions. What will suffice to prove this hypothesis to the satisfaction of every fair enquirer, is to shew from daily experience and observation, that the objects, which are variable or interrupted, and yet are supposed to continue the same, are such only as consist of a succession of parts, connected together by resemblance, contiguity, or causation. For as such a succession answers evidently to our notion of diversity, it can only be by mistake we ascribe to it an identity; and as the relation of parts, which leads us into this mistake, is really nothing but a quality, which produces an association of ideas, and an easy transition of the imagination from one to another, it can only be from the resemblance, which this act of the mind bears to that, by which we contemplate one continued object, that the error arises. Our chief business, then, must be to prove, that all objects, to which we ascribe identity, without observing their invariableness and uninterruptedness, are such as consist of a succession of related objects.

In order to this, suppose any mass of matter, of which the parts are contiguous and connected, to be placed before us; it is plain we must attribute a perfect identity to this mass, provided all the parts continue uninterruptedly and invariably the same, whatever motion or change of place we may observe either in the whole or in any of the parts. But supposing some very small or inconsiderable part to be added to the mass, or subtracted from it; though this absolutely destroys the identity of the whole, strictly speaking; yet as we seldom think so accurately, we scruple not to pronounce a mass of matter the same, where we find so trivial an alteration. The passage of the thought from the object before the change to the object after it, is so smooth and easy, that we scarce perceive the transition, and are apt to imagine, that it is nothing but a continued survey of the same object.

There is a very remarkable circumstance, that attends this experiment; which is, that though the change of any considerable part in a mass of matter destroys the identity of the whole, let we must measure the greatness of the part, not absolutely, but by its proportion to the whole. The addition or diminution of a mountain would not be sufficient to produce a diversity in a planet: though the change of a very few inches would be able to destroy the identity of some bodies. It will be impossible to account for this, but by reflecting that objects operate upon the mind, and break or interrupt the continuity of its actions not according to their real greatness, but according to their proportion to each other: And therefore, since this interruption makes an object cease to appear the same, it must be the uninterrupted progress o the thought, which constitutes the imperfect identity.

This may be confirmed by another phenomenon. A change in any considerable part of a body destroys its identity; but it is remarkable, that where the change is produced gradually and insensibly we are less apt to ascribe to it the same effect. The reason can plainly be no other, than that the mind, in following the successive changes of the body, feels an easy passage from the surveying its condition in one moment to the viewing of it in another, and at no particular time perceives any interruption in its actions. From which continued perception, it ascribes a continued existence and identity to the object.

But whatever precaution we may use in introducing the changes gradually, and making them proportionable to the whole, it is certain, that where the changes are at last observed to become considerable, we make a scruple of ascribing identity to such different objects. There is, however, another artifice, by which we may induce the imagination to advance a step farther; and that is, by producing a reference of the parts to each other, and a combination to some common end or purpose. A ship, of which a considerable part has been changed by frequent reparations, is still considered as the same; nor does the difference of the materials hinder us from ascribing an identity to it. The common end, in which the parts conspire, is the same under all their variations, and affords an easy transition of the imagination from one situation of the body to another.

But this is still more remarkable, when we add a sympathy of parts to their common end, and suppose that they bear to each other, the reciprocal relation of cause and effect in all their actions and operations. This is the case with all animals and vegetables; where not only the several parts have a reference to some general purpose, but also a mutual dependence on, and connexion with each other. The effect of so strong a relation is, that though every one must allow, that in a very few years both vegetables and animals endure a total change, yet we still attribute identity to them, while their form, size, and substance are entirely altered. An oak, that grows from a small plant to a large tree, is still the same oak; though there be not one particle of matter, or figure of its parts the same. An infant becomes a man-, and is sometimes fat, sometimes lean, without any change in his identity.

We may also consider the two following phaenomena, which are remarkable in their kind. The first is, that though we commonly be able to distinguish pretty exactly betwixt numerical and specific identity, yet it sometimes happens, that we confound them, and in our thinking and reasoning employ the one for the other. Thus a man, who bears a noise, that is frequently interrupted and renewed, says, it is still the same noise; though it is evident the sounds have only a specific identity or resemblance, and there is nothing numerically the same, but the cause, which produced them. In like manner it may be said without breach of the propriety of language, that such a church, which was formerly of brick, fell to ruin, and that the parish rebuilt the same church of free-stone, and according to modern architecture. Here neither the form nor materials are the same, nor is there any thing common to the two objects, but their relation to the inhabitants of the parish; and yet this alone is sufficient to make us denominate them the same. But we must observe, that in these cases the first object is in a manner annihilated before the second comes into existence; by which means, we are never presented in any one point of time with the idea of difference and multiplicity: and for that reason are less scrupulous in calling them the same.

Secondly, We may remark, that though in a succession of related objects, it be in a manner requisite, that the change of parts be not sudden nor entire, in order to preserve the identity, yet where the objects are in their nature changeable and inconstant, we admit of a more sudden transition, than would otherwise be consistent with that relation. Thus as the nature of a river consists in the motion and change of parts; though in less than four and twenty hours these be totally altered; this hinders not the river from continuing the same during several ages. What is natural and essential to any thing is, in a manner, expected; and what is expected makes less impression, and appears of less moment, than what is unusual and extraordinary. A considerable change of the former kind seems really less to the imagination, than the most trivial alteration of the latter; and by breaking less the continuity of the thought, has less influence in destroying the identity.

We now proceed to explain the nature of personal identity, which has become so great a question ill philosophy, especially of late years in England, where all the abstruser sciences are studyed with a peculiar ardour and application. And here it is evident, the same method of reasoning must be continued which has so successfully explained the identity of plants, and animals, and ships, and houses, and of all the compounded and changeable productions either of art or nature. The identity, which we ascribe to the mind of man, is only a fictitious one, and of a like kind with that which we ascribe to vegetables and animal bodies. It cannot, therefore, have a different origin, but must proceed from a like operation of the imagination upon like objects.

But lest this argument should not convince the reader; though in my opinion perfectly decisive; let him weigh the following reasoning, which is still closer and more immediate. It is evident, that the identity, which we attribute to the human mind, however perfect we may imagine it to be, is not able to run the several different perceptions into one, and make them lose their characters of distinction and difference, which are essential to them. It is still true, that every distinct perception, which enters into the composition of the mind, is a distinct existence, and is different, and distinguishable, and separable from every other perception, either contemporary or successive. But, as, notwithstanding this distinction and separability, we suppose the whole train of perceptions to be united by identity, a question naturally arises concerning this relation of identity; whether it be something that really binds our several perceptions together, or only associates their ideas in the imagination. That is, in other words, whether in pronouncing concerning the identity of a person, we observe some real bond among his perceptions, or only feel one among the ideas we form of them. This question we might easily decide, if we would recollect what has been already proud at large, that the understanding never observes any real connexion among objects, and that even the union of cause and effect, when strictly examined, resolves itself into a customary association of ideas. For from thence it evidently follows, that identity is nothing really belonging to these different perceptions, and uniting them together; but is merely a quality, which we attribute to them, because of the union of their ideas in the imagination, when we reflect upon them. Now the only qualities, which can give ideas an union in the imagination, are these three relations above-mentioned. There are the uniting principles in the ideal world, and without them every distinct object is separable by the mind, and may be separately considered, and appears not to have any more connexion with any other object, than if disjoined by the greatest difference and remoteness. It is, therefore, on some of these three relations of resemblance, contiguity and causation, that identity depends; and as the very essence of these relations consists in their producing an easy transition of ideas; it follows, that our notions of personal identity, proceed entirely from the smooth and uninterrupted progress of the thought along a train of connected ideas, according to the principles above-explained.

The only question, therefore, which remains, is, by what relations this uninterrupted progress of our thought is produced, when we consider the successive existence of a mind or thinking person. And here it is evident we must confine ourselves to resemblance and causation, and must drop contiguity, which has little or no influence in the present case.

To begin with resemblance; suppose we coued see clearly into the breast of another, and observe that succession of perceptions, which constitutes his mind or thinking principle, and suppose that he always preserves the memory of a considerable part of past perceptions; it is evident that nothing coued more contribute to the bestowing a relation on this succession amidst all its variations. For what is the memory but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of past perceptions? And as an image necessarily resembles its object, must not. The frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object? In this particular, then, the memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others.

As to causation; we may observe, that the true idea of the human mind, is to consider it as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which are linked together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and modify each other. Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; said these ideas in their turn produce other impressions. One thought chaces another, and draws after it a third, by which it is expelled in its turn. In this respect, I cannot compare the soul more properly to any thing than to a republic or commonwealth, in which the several members are united by the reciprocal ties of government and subordination, and give rise to other persons, who propagate the same republic in the incessant changes of its parts. And as the same individual republic may not only change its members, but also its laws and constitutions; in like manner the same person may vary his character and disposition, as well as his impressions and ideas, without losing his identity. Whatever changes he endures, his several parts are still connected by the relation of causation. And in this view our identity with regard to the passions serves to corroborate that with regard to the imagination, by the making our distant perceptions influence each other, and by giving us a present concern for our past or future pains or pleasures.

As a memory alone acquaints us with the continuance and extent of this succession of perceptions, it is to be considered, upon that account chiefly, as the source of personal identity. Had we no memory, we never should have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person. But having once acquired this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of car persons beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. For how few of our past actions are there, of which we have any memory? Who can tell me, for instance, what were his thoughts and actions on the 1st of January 1715, the 11th of March 1719, and the 3rd of August 1733? Or will he affirm, because he has entirely forgot the incidents of these days, that the present self is not the same person with the self of that time; and by that means overturn all the most established notions of personal identity? In this view, therefore, memory does not so much produce as discover personal identity, by shewing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions. It will be incumbent on those, who affirm that memory produces entirely our personal identity, to give a reason why we cm thus extend our identity beyond our memory.

The whole of this doctrine leads us to a conclusion, which is of great importance in the present affair, viz. that all the nice and subtile questions concerning personal identity can never possibly be decided, and are to be regarded rather as gramatical than as philosophical difficulties. Identity depends on the relations of ideas; and these relations produce identity, by means of that easy transition they occasion. But as the relations, and the easiness of the transition may diminish by insensible degrees, we have no just standard, by which we can decide any dispute concerning the time, when they acquire or lose a title to the name of identity. All the disputes concerning the identity of connected objects are merely verbal, except so fax as the relation of parts gives rise to some fiction or imaginary principle of union, as we have already observed.

What I have said concerning the first origin and uncertainty of our notion of identity, as applied to the human mind, may be extended with little or no variation to that of simplicity. An object, whose different co-existent parts are bound together by a close relation, operates upon the imagination after much the same manner as one perfectly simple and indivisible and requires not a much greater stretch of thought in order to its conception. From this similarity of operation we attribute a simplicity to it, and feign a principle of union as the support of this simplicity, and the center of all the different parts and qualities of the object.

Thus we have finished our examination of the several systems of philosophy, both of the intellectual and natural world; and in our miscellaneous way of reasoning have been led into several topics; which will either illustrate and confirm some preceding part of this discourse, or prepare the way for our following opinions. It is now time to return to a more close examination of our subject, and to proceed in the accurate anatomy of human nature, having fully explained the nature of our judgment and understandings.

SECT. VII. CONCLUSION OF THIS BOOK.

But before I launch out into those immense depths of philosophy, which lie before me, I find myself inclined to stop a moment in my present station, and to ponder that voyage, which I have undertaken, and which undoubtedly requires the utmost art and industry to be brought to a happy conclusion. Methinks I am like a man, who having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escaped shipwreck in passing a small frith, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. My memory of past errors and perplexities, makes me diffident for the future. The wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the faculties, I must employ in my enquiries, encrease my apprehensions. And the impossibility of amending or correcting these faculties, reduces me almost to despair, and makes me resolve to perish on the barren rock, on which I am at present, rather than venture myself upon that boundless ocean, which runs out into immensity. This sudden view of my danger strikes me with melancholy; and as it is usual for that passion, above all others, to indulge itself; I cannot forbear feeding my despair, with all those desponding reflections, which the present subject furnishes me with in such abundance.

I am first affrighted and confounded with that forelorn solitude, in which I am placed in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expelled all human commerce, and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. Fain would I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth; but cannot prevail with myself to mix with such deformity. I call upon others to join me, in order to make a company apart; but no one will hearken to me. Every one keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm, which beats upon me from every side. I have exposed myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians; and can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? I have declared my disapprobation of their systems; and can I be surprized, if they should express a hatred of mine and of my person? When I look abroad, I foresee on every side, dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny and detraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. All the world conspires to oppose and contradict me; though such is my weakness, that I feel all my opinions loosen and fall of themselves, when unsupported by the approbation of others. Every step I take is with hesitation, and every new reflection makes me dread an error and absurdity in my reasoning.

For with what confidence can I venture upon such bold enterprises, when beside those numberless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many which are common to human nature? Can I be sure, that in leaving all established opinions I am following truth; and by what criterion shall I distinguish her, even if fortune should at last guide me on her foot-steps? After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I should assent to it; and feel nothing but a strong propensity to consider objects strongly in that view, under which they appear to me. Experience is a principle, which instructs me in the several conjunctions of objects for the past. Habit is another principle, which determines me to expect the same for the future; and both of them conspiring to operate upon the imagination, make me form certain ideas in a more intense and lively manner, than others, which are not attended with the same advantages. Without this quality, by which the mind enlivens some ideas beyond others (which seemingly is so trivial, and so little founded on reason) we coued never assent to any argument, nor carry our view beyond those few objects, which are present to our senses. Nay, even to these objects we coued never attribute any existence, but what was dependent on the senses; and must comprehend them entirely in that succession of perceptions, which constitutes our self or person. Nay farther, even with relation to that succession, we coued only admit of those perceptions, which are immediately present to our consciousness, nor coued those lively images, with which the memory presents us, be ever received as true pictures of past perceptions. The memory, senses, and understanding are, therefore, all of them founded on the imagination, or the vivacity of our ideas.

No wonder a principle so inconstant and fallacious should lead us into errors, when implicitly followed (as it must be) in all its variations. It is this principle, which makes us reason from causes and effects; and it is the same principle, which convinces us of the continued existence of external objects, when absent from the senses. But though these two operations be equally natural and necessary in the human mind, yet in some circumstances they are [Sect. 4.] directly contrary, nor is it possible for us to reason justly and regularly from causes and effects, and at the same time believe the continued existence of matter. How then shall we adjust those principles together? Which of them shall we prefer? Or in case we prefer neither of them, but successively assent to both, as is usual among philosophers, with what confidence can we afterwards usurp that glorious title, when we thus knowingly embrace a manifest contradiction?

This contradiction [Part III. Sect. 14.] would be more excusable, were it compensated by any degree of solidity and satisfaction in the other parts of our reasoning. But the case is quite contrary. When we trace up the human understanding to its first principles, we find it to lead us into such sentiments, as seem to turn into ridicule all our past pains and industry, and to discourage us from future enquiries. Nothing is more curiously enquired after by the mind of man, than the causes of every phenomenon; nor are we content with knowing the immediate causes, but push on our enquiries, till we arrive at the original and ultimate principle. We would not willingly stop before we are acquainted with that energy in the cause, by which it operates on its effect; that tie, which connects them together; and that efficacious quality, on which the tie depends. This is our aim in all our studies and reflections: And how must we be disappointed, when we learn, that this connexion, tie, or energy lies merely in ourselves, and is nothing but that determination of the mind, which is acquired by custom, and causes us to make a transition from an object to its usual attendant, and from the impression of one to the lively idea of the other? Such a discovery not only cuts off all hope of ever attaining satisfaction, but even prevents our very wishes; since it appears, that when we say we desire to know the ultimate and operating principle, as something, which resides in the external object, we either contradict ourselves, or talk without a meaning.

This deficiency in our ideas is not, indeed, perceived in common life, nor are we sensible, that in the most usual conjunctions of cause and effect we are as ignorant of the ultimate principle, which binds them together, as in the most unusual and extraordinary. But this proceeds merely from an illusion of the imagination; and the question is, how far we ought to yield to these illusions. This question is very difficult, and reduces us to a very dangerous dilemma, whichever way we answer it. For if we assent to every trivial suggestion of the fancy; beside that these suggestions are often contrary to each other; they lead us into such errors, absurdities, and obscurities, that we must at last become ashamed of our credulity. Nothing is more dangerous to reason than the flights of the imagination, and nothing has been the occasion of more mistakes among philosophers. Men of bright fancies may in this respect be compared to those angels, whom the scripture represents as covering their eyes with their wings. This has already appeared in so many instances, that we may spare ourselves the trouble of enlarging upon it any farther.

But on the other hand, if the consideration of these instances makes us take a resolution to reject all the trivial suggestions of the fancy, and adhere to the understanding, that is, to the general and more established properties of the imagination; even this resolution, if steadily executed, would be dangerous, and attended with the most fatal consequences. For I have already shewn [Sect. 1.], that the understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general principles, entirely subverts itself, and leaves not the lowest degree of evidence in any proposition, either in philosophy or common life. We save ourselves from this total scepticism only by means of that singular and seemingly trivial property of the fancy, by which we enter with difficulty into remote views of things, and are not able to accompany them with so sensible an impression, as we do those, which are more easy and natural. Shall we, then, establish it for a general maxim, that no refined or elaborate reasoning is ever to be received? Consider well the consequences of such a principle. By this means you cut off entirely all science and philosophy: You proceed upon one singular quality of the imagination, and by a parity of reason must embrace all of them: And you expressly contradict yourself; since this maxim must be built on the preceding reasoning, which will be allowed to be sufficiently refined and metaphysical. What party, then, shall we choose among these difficulties? If we embrace this principle, and condemn all refined reasoning, we run into the most manifest absurdities. If we reject it in favour of these reasonings, we subvert entirely the human understanding. We have, therefore, no choice left but betwixt a false reason and none at all. For my part, know not what ought to be done in the present case. I can only observe what is commonly done; which is, that this difficulty is seldom or never thought of; and even where it has once been present to the mind, is quickly forgot, and leaves but a small impression behind it. Very refined reflections have little or no influence upon us; and yet we do not, and cannot establish it for a rule, that they ought not to have any influence; which implies a manifest contradiction.

But what have I here said, that reflections very refined and metaphysical have little or no influence upon us? This opinion I can scarce forbear retracting, and condemning from my present feeling and experience. The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have, I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, invironed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.

Here then I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. But notwithstanding that my natural propensity, and the course of my animal spirits and passions reduce me to this indolent belief in the general maxims of the world, I still feel such remains of my former disposition, that I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy. For those are my sentiments in that splenetic humour, which governs me at present. I may, nay I must yield to the current of nature, in submitting to my senses and understanding; and in this blind submission I shew most perfectly my sceptical disposition and principles. But does it follow, that I must strive against the current of nature, which leads me to indolence and pleasure; that I must seclude myself, in some measure, from the commerce and society of men, which is so agreeable; and that I must torture my brains with subtilities and sophistries, at the very time that I cannot satisfy myself concerning the reasonableness of so painful an application, nor have any tolerable prospect of arriving by its means at truth and certainty. Under what obligation do I lie of making such an abuse of time? And to what end can it serve either for the service of mankind, or for my own private interest? No: If I must be a fool, as all those who reason or believe any thing certainly are, my follies shall at least be natural and agreeable. Where I strive against my inclination, I shall have a good reason for my resistance; and will no more be led a wandering into such dreary solitudes, and rough passages, as I have hitherto met with.

These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence; and indeed I must confess, that philosophy has nothing to oppose to them, and expects a victory more from the returns of a serious good-humoured disposition, than from the force of reason and conviction. In all the incidents of life we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe, that fire warms, or water refreshes, it is only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise. Nay if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination, which we feel to the employing ourselves after that manner. Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us.

At the time, therefore, that I am tired with amusement and company, and have indulged a reverie in my chamber, or in a solitary walk by a river-side, I feel my mind all collected within itself, and am naturally inclined to carry my view into all those subjects, about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation. I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations, which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed; decide concerning truth and falshood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such t deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I feel I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.

But even suppose this curiosity and ambition should not transport me into speculations without the sphere of common life, it would necessarily happen, that from my very weakness I must be led into such enquiries. It is certain, that superstition is much more bold in its systems and hypotheses than philosophy; and while the latter contents itself with assigning new causes and principles to the phaenomena, which appear in the visible world, the former opens a world of its own, and presents us with scenes, and beings, and objects, which are altogether new. Since therefore it is almost impossible for the mind of man to rest, like those of beasts, in that narrow circle of objects, which are the subject of daily conversation and action, we ought only to deliberate concerning the choice of our guide, and ought to prefer that which is safest and most agreeable. And in this respect I make bold to recommend philosophy, and shall not scruple to give it the preference to superstition of every kind or denomination. For as superstition arises naturally and easily from the popular opinions of mankind, it seizes more strongly on the mind, and is often able to disturb us in the conduct of our lives and actions. Philosophy on the contrary, if just, can present us only with mild and moderate sentiments; and if false and extravagant, its opinions are merely the objects of a cold and general speculation, and seldom go so far as to interrupt the course of our natural propensities. The CYNICS are an extraordinary instance of philosophers, who from reasonings purely philosophical ran into as great extravagancies of conduct as any Monk or Dervise that ever was in the world. Generally speaking, the errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy only ridiculous.

I am sensible, that these two cases of the strength and weakness of the mind will not comprehend all mankind, and that there are in England, in particular, many honest gentlemen, who being always employed in their domestic affairs, or amusing themselves in common recreations, have carried their thoughts very little beyond those objects, which are every day exposed to their senses. And indeed, of such as these I pretend not to make philosophers, nor do I expect them either to be associates in these researches or auditors of these discoveries. They do well to keep themselves in their present situation; and instead of refining them into philosophers, I wish we coued communicate to our founders of systems, a share of this gross earthy mixture, as an ingredient, which they commonly stand much in need of, and which would serve to temper those fiery particles, of which they are composed. While a warm imagination is allowed to enter into philosophy, and hypotheses embraced merely for being specious and agreeable, we can never have any steady principles, nor any sentiments, which will suit with common practice and experience. But were these hypotheses once removed, we might hope to establish a system or set of opinions, which if not true (for that, perhaps, is too much to be hoped for) might at least be satisfactory to the human mind, and might stand the test of the most critical examination. Nor should we despair of attaining this end, because of the many chimerical systems, which have successively arisen and decayed away among men, would we consider the shortness of that period, wherein these questions have been the subjects of enquiry and reasoning. Two thousand years with such long interruptions, and under such mighty discouragements are a small space of time to give any tolerable perfection to the sciences; and perhaps we are still in too early an age of the world to discover any principles, which will bear the examination of the latest posterity. For my part, my only hope is, that I may contribute a little to the advancement of knowledge, by giving in some particulars a different turn to the speculations of philosophers, and pointing out to them more distinctly those subjects, where alone they can expect assurance and conviction. Human Nature is the only science of man; and yet has been hitherto the most neglected. It will be sufficient for me, if I can bring it a little more into fashion; and the hope of this serves to compose my temper from that spleen, and invigorate it from that indolence, which sometimes prevail upon me. If the reader finds himself in the same easy disposition, let him follow me in my future speculations. If not, let him follow his inclination, and wait the returns of application and good humour. The conduct of a man, who studies philosophy in this careless manner, is more truly sceptical than that of one, who feeling in himself an inclination to it, is yet so overwhelmed with doubts and scruples, as totally to reject it. A true sceptic will be diffident of his philosophical doubts, as well as of his philosophical conviction; and will never refuse any innocent satisfaction, which offers itself, upon account of either of them.

Nor is it only proper we should in general indulge our inclination in the most elaborate philosophical researches, notwithstanding our sceptical principles, but also that we should yield to that propensity, which inclines us to be positive and certain in particular points, according to the light, in which we survey them in any particular instant. It is easier to forbear all examination and enquiry, than to check ourselves in so natural a propensity, and guard against that assurance, which always arises from an exact and full survey of an object. On such an occasion we are apt not only to forget our scepticism, but even our modesty too; and make use of such terms as these, it is evident, it is certain, it is undeniable; which a due deference to the public ought, perhaps, to prevent. I may have fallen into this fault after the example of others; but I here enter a caveat against any Objections, which may be offered on that head; and declare that such expressions were extorted from me by the present view of the object, and imply no dogmatical spirit, nor conceited idea of my own judgment, which are sentiments that I am sensible can become no body, and a sceptic still less than any other.

BOOK II OF THE PASSIONS

PART I OF PRIDE AND HUMILITY

SECT. I DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

As all the perceptions of the mind may be divided into impressions and ideas, so the impressions admit of another division into original and secondary. This division of the impressions is the same with that which I formerly made use of [Book I. Part I. Sect. 2.] when I distinguished them into impressions of sensation and reflection. Original impressions or impressions of sensation are such as without any antecedent perception arise in the soul, from the constitution of the body, from the animal spirits, or from the application of objects to the external organs. Secondary, or reflective impressions are such as proceed from some of these original ones, either immediately or by the interposition of its idea. Of the first kind are all the impressions of the senses, and all bodily pains and pleasures: Of the second are the passions, and other emotions resembling them.

It is certain, that the mind, in its perceptions, must begin somewhere; and that since the impressions precede their correspondent ideas, there must be some impressions, which without any introduction make their appearance in the soul. As these depend upon natural and physical causes, the examination of them would lead me too far from my present subject, into the sciences of anatomy and natural philosophy. For this reason I shall here confine myself to those other impressions, which I have called secondary and reflective, as arising either from the original impressions, or from their ideas. Bodily pains and pleasures are the source of many passions, both when felt and considered by the mind; but arise originally in the soul, or in the body, whichever you please to call it, without any preceding thought or perception. A fit of the gout produces a long train of passions, as grief, hope, fear; but is not derived immediately from any affection or idea. The reflective impressions may be divided into two kinds, viz. the calm and the VIOLENT. Of the first kind is the sense of beauty and deformity in action, composition, and external objects. Of the second are the passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility. This division is far from being exact. The raptures of poetry and music frequently rise to the greatest height; while those other impressions, properly called PASSIONS, may decay into so soft an emotion, as to become, in a manner, imperceptible.

But as in general the passions are more violent than the emotions arising from beauty and deformity, these impressions have been commonly distinguished from each other. The subject of the human mind being so copious and various, I shall here take advantage of this vulgar and spacious division, that I may proceed with the greater order; and having said ali I thought necessary concerning our ideas, shall now explain those violent emotions or passions, their nature, origin, causes, and effects.

When we take a survey of the passions, there occurs a division of them into DIRECT and INDIRECT. By direct passions I understand such as arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. By indirect such as proceed from the same principles, but by the conjunction of other qualities. This distinction I cannot at present justify or explain any farther. I can only observe in general, that under the indirect passions I comprehend pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, generosity, with their dependants. And under the direct passions, desire, aversion, grief, joy, hope, fear, despair and security. I shall begin with the former.

SECT. II OF PRIDE AND HUMILITY, THEIR OBJECTS AND CAUSES

The passions of PRIDE and HUMILITY being simple and uniform impressions, it is impossible we can ever, by a multitude of words, give a just definition of them, or indeed of any of the passions. The utmost we can pretend to is a description of them, by an enumeration of such circumstances, as attend them: But as these words, PRIDE and humility, are of general use, and the impressions they represent the most common of any, every one, of himself, will be able to form a just idea of them, without any danger of mistake. For which reason, not to lose time upon preliminaries, I shall immediately enter upon the examination of these passions.

It is evident, that pride and humility, though directly contrary, have yet the same OBJECT. This object is self, or that succession of related ideas and impressions, of which we have an intimate memory and consciousness. Here the view always fixes when we are actuated by either of these passions. According as our idea of ourself is more or less advantageous, we feel either of those opposite affections, and are elated by pride, or dejected with humility. Whatever other objects may be comprehended by the mind, they are always considered with a view to ourselves; otherwise they would never be able either to excite these passions, or produce the smallest encrease or diminution of them. When self enters not into the consideration, there is no room either for pride or humility.

But though that connected succession of perceptions, which we call SELF, be always the object of these two passions, it is impossible it can be their CAUSE, or be sufficient alone to excite them. For as these passions are directly contrary, and have the same object in common; were their object also their cause; it coued never produce any degree of the one passion, but at the same time it must excite an equal degree of the other; which opposition and contrariety must destroy both. It is impossible a man can at the same time be both proud and humble; and where he has different reasons for these passions, as frequently happens, the passions either take place alternately; or if they encounter, the one annihilates the other, as far as its strength goes, and the remainder only of that, which is superior, continues to operate upon the mind. But in the present case neither of the passions coued ever become superior; because supposing it to be the view only of ourself, which excited them, that being perfectly indifferent to either, must produce both in the very same proportion; or in other words, can produce neither. To excite any passion, and at the same time raise an equal share of its antagonist, is immediately to undo what was done, and must leave the mind at last perfectly calm and indifferent.

We must therefore, make a distinction betwixt the cause and the object of these passions; betwixt that idea, which excites them, and that to which they direct their view, when excited. Pride and humility, being once raised, immediately turn our attention to ourself, and regard that as their ultimate and final object; but there is something farther requisite in order to raise them: Something, which is peculiar to one of the passions, and produces not both in the very same degree. The first idea, that is presented to the mind, is that of the cause or productive principle. This excites the passion, connected with it; and that passion, when excited, turns our view to another idea, which is that of self. Here then is a passion placed betwixt two ideas, of which the one produces it, and the other is produced by it. The first idea, therefore, represents the cause, the second the object of the passion.

To begin with the causes of pride and humility; we may observe, that their most obvious and remarkable property is the vast variety of subjects, on which they may be placed. Every valuable quality of the mind, whether of the imagination, judgment, memory or disposition; wit, good-sense, learning, courage, justice, integrity; all these are the cause of pride; and their opposites of humility. Nor are these passions confined to the mind but extend their view to the body likewise. A man may be proud of his beauty, strength, agility, good mein, address in dancing, riding, and of his dexterity in any manual business or manufacture. But this is not all. The passions looking farther, comprehend whatever objects are in the least allyed or related to us. Our country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths; any of these may become a cause either of pride or of humility.

From the consideration of these causes, it appears necessary we shoud make a new distinction in the causes of the passion, betwixt that QUALITY, which operates, and the subject, on which it is placed. A man, for instance, is vain of a beautiful house, which belongs to him, or which he has himself built and contrived. Here the object of the passion is himself, and the cause is the beautiful house: Which cause again is sub-divided into two parts, viz. the quality, which operates upon the passion, and the subject in which the quality inheres. The quality is the beauty, and the subject is the house, considered as his property or contrivance. Both these parts are essential, nor is the distinction vain and chimerical. Beauty, considered merely as such, unless placed upon something related to us, never produces any pride or vanity; and the strongest relation alone, without beauty, or something else in its place, has as little influence on that passion. Since, therefore, these two particulars are easily separated and there is a necessity for their conjunction, in order to produce the passion, we ought to consider them as component parts of the cause; and infix in our minds an exact idea of this distinction.

SECT. III WHENCE THESE OBJECTS AND CAUSES ARE DERIVED

Being so far advanced as to observe a difference betwixt the object of the passions and their cause, and to distinguish in the cause the quality, which operates on the passions, from the subject, in which it inheres; we now proceed to examine what determines each of them to be what it is, and assigns such a particular object, and quality, and subject to these affections. By this means we shall fully understand the origin of pride and humility.

It is evident in the first place, that these passions are derermined to have self for their object, not only by a natural but also by an original property. No one can doubt but this property is natural from the constancy and steadiness of its operations. It is always self, which is the object of pride and humility; and whenever the passions look beyond, it is still with a view to ourselves, nor can any person or object otherwise have any influence upon us.

That this proceeds from an original quality or primary impulse, will likewise appear evident, if we consider that it is the distinguishing characteristic of these passions Unless nature had given some original qualities to the mind, it coued never have any secondary ones; because in that case it would have no foundation for action, nor coued ever begin to exert itself. Now these qualities, which we must consider as original, are such as are most inseparable from the soul, and can be resolved into no other: And such is the quality, which determines the object of pride and humility. We may, perhaps, make it a greater question, whether the causes, that produce the passion, be as natural as the object, to which it is directed, and whether all that vast variety proceeds from caprice or from the constitution of the mind. This doubt we shall soon remove, if we cast our eye upon human nature, and consider that in all nations and ages, the same objects still give rise to pride and humility; and that upon the view even of a stranger, we can know pretty nearly, what will either encrease or diminish his passions of this kind. If there be any variation in this particular, it proceeds from nothing but a difference in the tempers and complexions of men; and is besides very inconsiderable. Can we imagine it possible, that while human nature remains the same, men will ever become entirely indifferent to their power, riches, beauty or personal merit, and that their pride and vanity will not be affected by these advantages?

But though the causes of pride and humility be plainly natural, we shall find upon examination, that they are not original, and that it is utterly impossible they should each of them be adapted to these passions by a particular provision, and primary constitution of nature, Beside their prodigious number, many of them are the effects of art, and arise partly from the industry, partly from the caprice, and partly from the good fortune of men, Industry produces houses, furniture, cloaths. Caprice determines their particular kinds and qualities. And good fortune frequently contributes to all this, by discovering the effects that result from the different mixtures and combinations of bodies. It is absurd, therefore, to imagine, that each of these was foreseen and provided for by nature, and that every new production of art, which causes pride or humility; instead of adapting itself to the passion by partaking of some general quality, that naturally operates on the mind; is itself the object of an original principle, which till then lay concealed in the soul, and is only by accident at last brought to light. Thus the first mechanic, that invented a fine scritoire, produced pride in him, who became possest of it, by principles different from those, which made him proud of handsome chairs and tables. As this appears evidently ridiculous, we must conclude, that each cause of pride and humility is not adapted to the passions by a distinct original quality; but that there are some one or more circumstances common to all of them, on which their efficacy depends.

Besides, we find in the course of nature, that though the effects be many, the principles, from which they arise, are commonly but few and simple, and that it is the sign of an unskilful naturalist to have recourse to a different quality, in order to explain every different operation. How much more must this be true with regard to the human mind, which being so confined a subject may justly be thought incapable of containing such a monstrous heap of principles, as would be necessary to excite the passions of pride and humility, were each distinct cause adapted to the passion by a distinct set of principles?

Here, therefore, moral philosophy is in the same condition as natural, with regard to astronomy before the time of COPERNICUS. The antients, though sensible of that maxim, THAT NATURE DOES NOTHING IN

VAIN, contrived such intricate systems of the heavens, as seemed inconsistent with true philosophy, and gave place at last to something more simple and natural. To invent without scruple a new principle to every new phaenomenon, instead of adapting it to the old; to overload our hypotheses with a variety of this kind; are certain proofs, that none of these principles is the just one, and that we only desire, by a number of falsehoods, to cover our ignorance of the truth.

SECT. IV OF THE RELATIONS OF IMPRESSIONS AND IDEAS

Thus we have established two truths without any obstacle or difficulty, that IT IS FROM NATURAL PRINCIPLES THIS VARIETY OF CAUSES EXCITES PRIDE AND HUMILITY, and that IT IS NOT BY A DIFFERENT PRINCIPLE EACH DIFFERENT CAUSE IS ADAPTED TO ITS PASSION. We shall now proceed to enquire how we may reduce these principles to a lesser number, and find among the causes something common, on which their influence depends.

In order to this we must reflect on certain properties of human nature, which though they have a mighty influence on every operation both of the understanding and passions, are not commonly much insisted on by philosophers. The first of these is the association of ideas, which I have so often observed and explained. It is impossible for the mind to fix itself steadily upon one idea for any considerable time; nor can it by its utmost efforts ever arrive at such a constancy. But however changeable our thoughts may be, they are not entirely without rule and method in their changes. The rule, by which they proceed, is to pass from one object to what is resembling, contiguous to, or produced by it. When one idea is present to the imagination, any other, united by these relations, naturally follows it, and enters with more facility by means of that introduction.

The second property I shall observe in the human mind is a like association of impressions. All resembling impressions are connected together, and no sooner one arises than the rest immediately follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again, till the whole circle be compleated. In like manner our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, pity, courage, pride, and the other resembling affections. It is difficult for the mind, when actuated by any passion, to confine itself to that passion alone, without any change or variation. Human nature is too inconstant to admit of any such regularity. Changeableness is essential to it. And to what can it so naturally change as to affections or emotions, which are suitable to the temper, and agree with that set of passions, which then prevail? It is evident, then, there is an attraction or association among impressions, as well as among ideas; though with this remarkable difference, that ideas are associated by resemblance, contiguity, and causation; and impressions only by resemblance.

In the THIRD place, it is observable of these two kinds of association, that they very much assist and forward each other, and that the transition is more easily made where they both concur in the same object. Thus a man, who, by any injury from another, is very much discomposed and ruffled in his temper, is apt to find a hundred subjects of discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions; especially if he can discover these subjects in or near the person, who was the cause of his first passion. Those principles, which forward the transition of ideas, here concur with those, which operate on the passions; and both uniting in one action, bestow on the mind a double impulse. The new passion, therefore, must arise with so much greater violence, and the transition to it must be rendered so much more easy and natural.

Upon this occasion I may cite the authority of an elegant writer, who expresses himself in the following manner.

“As the fancy delights in every thing that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, so it is capable of receiving a new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus any continued sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of waters, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place, that lie before him. Thus if there arises a fragrancy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the landschape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than when they enter the mind separately: As the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of the situation.” [Addison, SPECTATOR 412, final paragraph.]

In this phaenomenon we may remark the association both of impressions and ideas, as well as the mutual assistance they lend each other.

SECT. V OF THE INFLUENCE OF THESE RELATIONS ON PRIDE AND HUMILITY.

These principles being established on unquestionable experience, I begin to consider how we shall apply them, by revolving over all the causes of pride and humility, whether these causes be regarded, as the qualities, that operate, or as the subjects, on which the qualities are placed. In examining these qualities I immediately find many of them to concur in producing the sensation of pain and pleasure, independent of those affections, which I here endeavour to explain. Thus the beauty of our person, of itself, and by its very appearance, gives pleasure, as well as pride; and its deformity, pain as well as humility. A magnificent feast delights us, and a sordid one displeases. What I discover to be true in some instances, I suppose to be so in all; and take it for granted at present, without any farther proof, that every cause of pride, by its peculiar qualities, produces a separate pleasure, and of humility a separate uneasiness.

Again, in considering the subjects, to which these qualities adhere, I make a new supposition, which also appears probable from many obvious instances, viz, that these subjects are either parts of ourselves, or something nearly related to us. Thus the good and bad qualities of our actions and manners constitute virtue and vice, and determine our personal character, than which nothing operates more strongly on these passions. In like manner, it is the beauty or deformity of our person, houses, equipage, or furniture, by which we are rendered either vain or humble. The same qualities, when transfered to subjects, which bear us no relation, influence not in the smallest degree either of these affections.

Having thus in a manner supposed two properties of the causes of these affections, viz, that the qualities produce a separate pain or pleasure, and that the subjects, on which the qualities are placed, are related to self; I proceed to examine the passions themselves, in order to find something in them, correspondent to the supposed properties of their causes. First, I find, that the peculiar object of pride and humility is determined by an original and natural instinct, and that it is absolutely impossible, from the primary constitution of the mind, that these passions should ever look beyond self, or that individual person. of whose actions and sentiments each of us is intimately conscious. Here at last the view always rests, when we are actuated by either of these passions; nor can we, in that situation of mind, ever lose sight of this object. For this I pretend not to give any reason; but consider such a peculiar direction of the thought as an original quality.

The SECOND quality, which I discover in these passions, and which I likewise consider an an original quality, is their sensations, or the peculiar emotions they excite in the soul, and which constitute their very being and essence. Thus pride is a pleasant sensation, and humility a painful; and upon the removal of the pleasure and pain, there is in reality no pride nor humility. Of this our very feeling convinces us; and beyond our feeling, it is here in vain to reason or dispute.

If I compare, therefore, these two established properties of the passions, viz, their object, which is self, and their sensation, which is either pleasant or painful, to the two supposed properties of the causes, viz, their relation to self, and their tendency to produce a pain or pleasure, independent of the passion; I immediately find, that taking these suppositions to be just, the true system breaks in upon me with an irresistible evidence. That cause, which excites the passion, is related to the object, which nature has attributed to the passion; the sensation, which the cause separately produces, is related to the sensation of the passion: From this double relation of ideas and impressions, the passion is derived. The one idea is easily converted into its correlative; and the one impression into that, which resembles and corresponds to it: With how much greater facility must this transition be made, where these movements mutually assist each other, and the mind receives a double impulse from the relations both of its impressions and ideas?

That we may comprehend this the better, we must suppose, that nature has given to the organs of the human mind, a certain disposition fitted to produce a peculiar impression or emotion, which we call pride: To this emotion she has assigned a certain idea, viz, that of self, which it never fails to produce. This contrivance of nature is easily conceived. We have many instances of such a situation of affairs. The nerves of the nose and palate are so disposed, as in certain circumstances to convey such peculiar sensations to the mind: The sensations of lust and hunger always produce in us the idea of those peculiar objects, which are suitable to each appetite. These two circumstances are united in pride. The organs are so disposed as to produce the passion; and the passion, after its production, naturally produces a certain idea. All this needs no proof. It is evident we never should be possest of that passion, were there not a disposition of mind proper for it; and it is as evident, that the passion always turns our view to ourselves, and makes us think of our own qualities and circumstances.

This being fully comprehended, it may now be asked, WHETHER NATURE PRODUCES THE PASSION IMMEDIATELY, OF HERSELF; OR WHETHER SHE MUST BE ASSISTED BY THE CO-OPERATION OF OTHER CAUSES? For it is observable, that in this particular her conduct is different in the different passions and sensations. The palate must be excited by an external object, in order to produce any relish: But hunger arises internally, without the concurrence of any external object. But however the case may stand with other passions and impressions, it is certain, that pride requires the assistance of some foreign object, and that the organs, which produce it, exert not themselves like the heart and arteries, by an original internal movement. For first, daily experience convinces us, that pride requires certain causes to excite it, and languishes when unsupported by some excellency in the character, in bodily accomplishments, in cloaths, equipage or fortune. SECONDLY, it is evident pride would be perpetual, if it arose immediately from nature; since the object is always the same, and there is no disposition of body peculiar to pride, as there is to thirst and hunger. Thirdly, Humility is in the very same situation with pride; and therefore, either must, upon this supposition, be perpetual likewise, or must destroy the contrary passion from, the very first moment; so that none of them coued ever make its appearance. Upon the whole, we may rest satisfyed with the foregoing conclusion, that pride must have a cause, as well as an object, and that the one has no influence without the other.

The difficulty, then, is only to discover this cause, and find what it is that gives the first motion to pride, and sets those organs in action, which are naturally fitted to produce that emotion. Upon my consulting experience, in order to resolve this difficulty, I immediately find a hundred different causes, that produce pride; and upon examining these causes, I suppose, what at first I perceive to be probable, that all of them concur in two circumstances; which are, that of themselves they produce an impression, allyed to the passion, and are placed on a subject, allyed to the object of the passion. When I consider after this the nature of relation, and its effects both on the passions and ideas, I can no longer doubt, upon these suppositions, that it is the very principle, which gives rise to pride, and bestows motion on those organs, which being naturally disposed to produce that affection, require only a first impulse or beginning to their action. Any thing, that gives a pleasant sensation, and is related to self, excites the passion of pride, which is also agreeable, and has self for its object.

What I have said of pride is equally true of humility. The sensation of humility is uneasy, as that of pride is agreeable; for which reason the separate sensation, arising from the causes, must be reversed, while the relation to self continues the same. Though pride and humility are directly contrary in their effects, and in their sensations, they have notwithstanding the same object; so that it is requisite only to change the relation of impressions, without making any change upon that of ideas. Accordingly we find, that a beautiful house, belonging to ourselves, produces pride; and that the same house, still belonging to ourselves, produces humility, when by any accident its beauty is changed into deformity, and thereby the sensation of pleasure, which corresponded to pride, is transformed into pain, which is related to humility. The double relation between the ideas and impressions subsists in both cases, and produces an easy transition from the one emotion to the other.

In a word, nature has bestowed a kind of attraction on certain impressions and ideas, by which one of them, upon its appearance, naturally introduces its correlative. If these two attractions or associations of impressions and ideas concur on the same object, they mutually assist each other, and the transition of the affections and of the imagination is made with the greatest ease and facility. When an idea produces an impression, related to an impression, which is connected with an idea, related to the first idea, these two impressions must be in a manner inseparable, nor will the one in any case be unattended with the other. It is after this manner, that the particular causes of pride and humility are determined. The quality, which operates on the passion, produces separately an impression resembling it; the subject, to which the quality adheres, is related to self, the object of the passion: No wonder the whole cause, consisting of a quality and of a subject, does so unavoidably give rise to the pass on.

To illustrate this hypothesis we may compare it to that, by which I have already explained the belief attending the judgments, which we form from causation. I have observed, that in all judgments of this kind, there is always a present impression and a related idea; and that the present impression gives a vivacity to the fancy, and the relation conveys this vivacity, by an easy transition, to the related idea. Without the present impression, the attention is not fixed, nor the spirits excited. Without the relation, this attention rests on its first object, and has no farther consequence. There is evidently a great analogy betwixt that hypothesis and our present one of an impression and idea, that transfuse themselves into another impression and idea by means of their double relation: Which analogy must be allowed to be no despicable proof of both hypotheses.

SECT. VI LIMITATIONS OF THIS SYSTEM

But before we proceed farther in this subject, and examine particularly all the causes of pride and humility, it will be proper to make some limitations to the general system, THAT ALL AGREEABLE OBJECTS, RELATED TO OURSELVES, BY AN ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS AND OF IMPRESSIONS, PRODUCE PRIDE, AND DISAGREEABLE ONES, HUMILITY: And these limitations are derived from the very nature of the subject.

I. Suppose an agreeable object to acquire a relation to self, the first passion, that appears on this occasion, is joy; and this passion discovers itself upon a slighter relation than pride and vain-glory. We may feel joy upon being present at a feast, where our senses are regard with delicacies of every kind: But it is only the master of the feast, who, beside the same joy, has the additional passion of self-applause and vanity. It is true, men sometimes boast of a great entertainment, at which they have only been present; and by so small a relation convert their pleasure into pride: But however, this must in general be owned, that joy arises from a more inconsiderable relation than vanity, and that many things, which are too foreign to produce pride, are yet able to give us a delight and pleasure, The reason of the difference may be explained thus. A relation is requisite to joy, in order to approach the object to us, and make it give us any satisfaction. But beside this, which is common to both passions, it is requisite to pride, in order to produce a transition from one passion to another, and convert the falsification into vanity. As it has a double task to perform, it must be endowed with double force and energy. To which we may add, that where agreeable objects bear not a very close relation to ourselves, they commonly do to some other person; and this latter relation not only excels, but even diminishes, and sometimes destroys the former, as we shall see afterwards. [Part II. Sec. 4.]

Here then is the first limitation, we must make to our general position, that every thing related to us, which produces pleasure or pain, produces likewise pride or humility. There is not only a relation required, but a close one, and a closer than is required to joy.

II. The second limitation is, that the agreeable or disagreeable object be not only closely related, but also peculiar to ourselves, or at least common to us with a few persons. It is a quality observable in human nature, and which we shall endeavour to explain afterwards, that every thing, which is often presented and to which we have been long accustomed, loses its value in our eyes, and is in a little time despised and neglected. We likewise judge of objects more from comparison than from their real and intrinsic merit; and where we cannot by some contrast enhance their value, we are apt to overlook even what is essentially good in them. These qualities of the mind have an effect upon joy as well as pride; and it is remarkable, that goods which are common to all mankind, and have become familiar to us by custom, give us little satisfaction; though perhaps of a more excellent kind, than those on which, for their singularity, we set a much higher value. But though this circumstance operates on both these passions, it has a much greater influence on vanity. We are rejoiced for many goods, which, on account of their frequency, give us no pride. Health, when it returns after a long absence, affords us a very sensible satisfaction; but is seldom regarded as a subject of vanity, because it is shared with such vast numbers.

The reason, why pride is so much more delicate in this particular than joy, I take to be, as follows. In order to excite pride, there are always two objects we must contemplate, viz. the cause or that object which produces pleasure; and self, which is the real object of the passion. But joy has only one object necessary to its production, viz. that which gives pleasure; and though it be requisite, that this bear some relation to self, yet that is only requisite in order to render it agreeable; nor is self, properly speaking, the object of this passion. Since, therefore, pride has in a manner two objects, to which it directs our view; it follows, that where neither of them have any singularity, the passion must be more weakened upon that account, than a passion, which has only one object. Upon comparing ourselves with others, as we are every moment apt to do, we find we are not in the least distinguished; and upon comparing the object we possess, we discover still the same unlucky circumstance. By two comparisons so disadvantageous the passion must be entirely destroyed.

III The third limitation is, that the pleasant or painful object be very discernible and obvious, and that not only to ourselves, but to others also. This circumstance, like the two foregoing, has an effect upon joy, as well as pride. We fancy Ourselves more happy, as well as more virtuous or beautiful, when we appear so to others; but are still more ostentatious of our virtues than of our pleasures. This proceeds from causes, which I shall endeavour to explain afterwards.

IV. The fourth limitation is derived from the inconstancy of the cause of these passions, and from the short duration of its connexion with ourselves. What is casual and inconstant gives but little joy, and less pride. We are not much satisfyed with the thing itself; and are still less apt to feel any new degrees of self-satisfaction upon its account. We foresee and anticipate its change by the imagination; which makes us little satisfyed with the thing: We compare it to ourselves, whose existence is more durable; by which means its inconstancy appears still greater. It seems ridiculous to infer an excellency in ourselves from an object, which is of so much shorter duration, and attends us during so small a part of our existence. It will be easy to comprehend the reason, why this cause operates not with the same force in joy as in pride; since the idea of self is not so essential to the former passion as to the latter.

V. I may add as a fifth limitation, or rather enlargement of this system, that general rules have a great influence upon pride and humility, as well as on all the other passions. Hence we form a notion of different ranks of men, suitable to the power of riches they are possest of; and this notion we change not upon account of any peculiarities of the health or temper of the persons, which may deprive them of all enjoyment in their possessions. This may be accounted for from the same principles, that explained the influence of general rules on the understanding. Custom readily carries us beyond the just bounds in our passions, as well as in our reasonings.

It may not be amiss to observe on this occasion, that the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions very much contributes to facilitate the effects of all the principles, which we shall explain in the progress of this treatise. For it is evident, that if a person full-grown, and of the same nature with ourselves, were on a sudden-transported into our world, he would be very much embarrased with every object, and would not readily find what degree of love or hatred, pride or humility, or any other passion he ought to attribute to it. The passions are often varyed by very inconsiderable principles; and these do not always play with a perfect regularity, especially on the first trial. But as custom and practice have brought to light all these principles, and have settled the just value of every thing; this must certainly contribute to the easy production of the passions, and guide us, by means of general established maxims, in the proportions we ought to observe in preferring one object to another. This remark may, perhaps, serve to obviate difficulties, that mayarise concerning some causes, which I shall hereafter ascribe to particular passions, and which may be esteemed too refined to operate so universally and certainly, as they are found to do.

I shall close this subject with a reflection derived from these five limitations. This reflection is, that the persons, who are proudest, and who in the eye of the world have most reason for their pride, are not always the happiest; nor the most humble always the most miserable, as may at first sight be imagined from this system. An evil may be real. though its cause has no relation to us: It may be real, without being peculiar: It may be real, without shewing itself to others: It may be real, without being constant: And it may be real, without falling under the general rules. Such evils as these will not fail to render us miserable, though they have little tendency to diminish pride: And perhaps the most real and the most solid evils of life will be found of this nature.

SECT. VII OF VICE AND VIRTUE

Taking these limitations along with us, let us proceed to examine the causes of pride and humility; and see, whether in every case we can discover the double relations, by which they operate on the passions. If we find that all these causes are related to self, and produce a pleasure or uneasiness separate from the passion, there will remain no farther scruple with regard to the present system. We shall principally endeavour to prove the latter point; the former being in a manner self-evident.

To begin, with vice and virtue; which are the most obvious causes of these passions; it would be entirely foreign to my present purpose to enter upon the controversy, which of late years has so much excited the curiosity of the publick. WHETHER THESE MORAL DISTINCTIONS BE FOUNDED ON NATURAL AND ORIGINAL PRINCIPLES, OR ARISE FROM INTEREST AND EDUCATION. The examination of this I reserve for the following book; and in the mean time I shall endeavour to show, that my system maintains its ground upon either of these hypotheses; which will be a strong proof of its solidity.

For granting that morality had no foundation in nature, it must still be allowed, that vice and virtue, either from self-interest or the prejudices of education, produce in us a real pain and pleasure; and this we may observe to be strenuously asserted by the defenders of that hypothesis. Every passion, habit, or turn of character (say they) which has a tendency to our advantage or prejudice, gives a delight or uneasiness; and it is from thence the approbation or disapprobation arises. We easily gain from the liberality of others, but are always in danger of losing by their avarice: Courage defends us, but cowardice lays us open to every attack: Justice is the support of society, but injustice, unless checked would quickly prove its ruin: Humility exalts; but pride mortifies us. For these reasons the former qualities are esteemed virtues, and the latter regarded as vices. Now since it is granted there is a delight or uneasiness still attending merit or demerit of every kind, this is all that is requisite for my purpose.

But I go farther, and observe, that this moral hypothesis and my present system not only agree together, but also that, allowing the former to be just, it is an absolute and invincible proof of the latter. For if all morality be founded on the pain or pleasure, which arises from the prospect of any loss or advantage, that may result from our own characters, or from those of others, all the effects of morality must-be derived from the same pain or pleasure, and among the rest, the passions of pride and humility. The very essence of virtue, according to this hypothesis, is to produce pleasure and that of vice to give pain. The virtue and vice must be part of our character in order to excite pride or humility. What farther proof can we desire for the double relation of impressions and ideas?

The same unquestionable argument may be derived from the opinion of those, who maintain that morality is something real, essential, and founded on nature. The most probable hypothesis, which has been advanced to explain the distinction betwixt vice and virtue, and the origin of moral rights and obligations, is, that from a primary constitution of nature certain characters and passions, by the very view and contemplation, produce a pain, and others in like manner excite a pleasure. The uneasiness and satisfaction are not only inseparable from vice and virtue, but constitute their very nature and essence. To approve of a character is to feel an original delight upon its appearance. To disapprove of it is to be sensible of an uneasiness. The pain and pleasure, therefore, being the primary causes of vice and virtue, must also be the causes of all their effects, and consequently of pride and humility, which are the unavoidable attendants of that distinction.

But supposing this hypothesis of moral philosophy should be allowed to be false, it is still evident, that pain and pleasure, if not the causes of vice and virtue, are at least inseparable from them. A generous and noble character affords a satisfaction even in the survey; and when presented to us, though only in a poem or fable, never fails to charm and delight us. On the other hand cruelty and treachery displease from their very nature; nor is it possible ever to reconcile us to these qualities, either in ourselves or others. Thus one hypothesis of morality is an undeniable proof of the foregoing system, and the other at worst agrees with it. But pride and humility arise not from these qualities alone of the mind, which, according to the vulgar systems of ethicks, have been comprehended as parts of moral duty, but from any other that has a connexion with pleasure and uneasiness. Nothing flatters our vanity more than the talent of pleasing by our wit, good humour, or any other accomplishment; and nothing gives us a more sensible mortification than a disappointment in any attempt of that nature. No one has ever been able to tell what wit is, and to-shew why such a system of thought must be received under that denomination, and such another rejected. It is only by taste we can decide concerning it, nor are we possest of any other standard, upon which we can form a judgment of this kind. Now what is this taste, from which true and false wit in a manner receive their being, and without which no thought can have a title to either of these denominations? It is plainly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of uneasiness from false, without oar being able to tell the reasons of that pleasure or uneasiness. The power of bestowing these opposite sensations is. therefore, the very essence of true and false wit; and consequently the cause of that pride or humility, which arises from them.

There may, perhaps, be some, who being accustomed to the style of the schools and pulpit, and having never considered human nature in any other light, than that in which they place it, may here be surprized to hear me talk of virtue as exciting pride, which they look upon as a vice; and of vice as producing humility, which they have been taught to consider as a virtue. But not to dispute about words, I observe, that by pride I understand that agreeable impression, which arises in the mind, when the view either of our virtue, beauty, riches or power makes us satisfyed with ourselves: and that by humility I mean the opposite impression. It is evident the former impression is not always vicious, nor the latter virtuous. The most rigid morality allows us to receive a pleasure from reflecting on a generous action; and it is by none esteemed a virtue to feel any fruitless remorses upon the thoughts of past villainy and baseness. Let us, therefore, examine these impressions, considered in themselves; and enquire into their causes, whether placed on the mind or body, without troubling ourselves at present with that merit or blame, which may attend them.

SECT. VIII OF BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY

Whether we consider the body as a part of ourselves, or assent to those philosophers, who regard it as something external, it must still be allowed to be near enough connected with us to form one of these double relations, which I have asserted to be necessary to the causes of pride and humility. Wherever, therefore, we can find the other relation of impressions to join to this of ideas, we may expect with assurance either of these passions, according as the impression is pleasant or uneasy. But beauty of all kinds gives us a peculiar delight and satisfaction; as deformity produces pain, upon whatever subject it may be placed, and whether surveyed in an animate or inanimate object. If the beauty or deformity, therefore, be placed upon our own bodies, this pleasure or uneasiness must be converted into pride or humility, as having in this case all the circumstances requisite to produce a perfect transition of impressions and ideas. These opposite sensations are related to the opposite passions. The beauty or deformity is closely related to self, the object of both these passions. No wonder, then our own beauty becomes an object of pride, and deformity of humility.

But this effect of personal and bodily qualities is not only a proof of. the present system, by shewing that the passions arise not in this case without all the circumstances I have required, but may be employed as a stronger and more convincing argument. If we consider all the hypotheses, which have been formed either by philosophy or common reason, to explain the difference betwixt beauty and deformity, we shall find that all of them resolve into this, that beauty is such an order and construction of parts, as either by the primary constitution of our nature, by custom, or by caprice, is fitted to give a pleasure and satisfaction to the soul. This is the distinguishing character of beauty, and forms all the difference betwixt it and deformity, whose natural tendency is to produce uneasiness. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are not only necessary attendants of beauty and deformity, but constitute their very essence. And indeed, if we consider, that a great part of the beauty, which we admire either in animals or in other objects, is derived from the idea of convenience and utility, we shall make no scruple to assent to this opinion. That shape, which produces strength, is beautiful in one animal; and that which is a sign of agility in another. The order and convenience of a palace are no less essential to its beauty, than its mere figure and appearance. In like manner the rules of architecture require, that the top of a pillar should be more slender than its base, and that because such a figure conveys to us the idea of security, which is pleasant; whereas the contrary form gives us the apprehension of danger, which is uneasy. From innumerable instances of this kind, as well as from considering that beauty like wit, cannot be defined, but is discerned only by a taste or sensation, we may conclude, that beauty is nothing but a form, which produces pleasure, as deformity is a structure of parts, which conveys pain; and since the power of producing pain and pleasure make in this manner the essence of beauty and deformity, all the effects of these qualities must be derived from the sensation; and among the rest pride and humility, which of all their effects are the most common and remarkable.

This argument I esteem just and decisive; but in order to give greater authority to the present reasoning, let us suppose it false for a moment, and see what will follow. It is certain, then, that if the power of producing pleasure and pain forms not the essence of beauty and deformity, the sensations are at least inseparable from the qualities, and it is even difficult to consider them apart. Now there is nothing common to natural and moral beauty, (both of which are the causes of pride) but this power of producing pleasure; and as a common effect supposes always a common cause, it is plain the pleasure must in both cases be the real and influencing cause of the passion. Again; there is nothing originally different betwixt the beauty of our bodies and the beauty of external and foreign objects, but that the one has a near relation to ourselves, which is wanting in the other. This original difference, therefore, must be the cause of all their other differences, and among the rest, of their different influence upon the passion of pride, which is excited by the beauty of our person, but is not affected in the least by that of foreign and external objects. Placing, then, these two conclusions together, we find they compose the preceding system betwixt them, viz, that pleasure, as a related or resembling impression, when placed on a related object by a natural transition, produces pride; and its contrary, humility. This system, then, seems already sufficiently confirmed by experience; that we have not yet exhausted all our arguments.

It is not the beauty of the body alone that produces pride, but also its strength and force. Strength is a kind of power; and therefore the desire to excel in strength is to be considered as an inferior species of ambition. For this reason the present phaenomenon will be sufficiently accounted for, in explaining that passion.

Concerning all other bodily accomplishments we may observe in general, that whatever in ourselves is either useful, beautiful, or surprising, is an object of pride; and it’s contrary, of humility. Now it is obvious, that every thing useful, beautiful or surprising, agrees in producing a separate pleasure and agrees in nothing else. The pleasure, therefore, with the relation to self must be the cause of the passion.

Though it should be questioned, whether beauty be not something real, and different from the power of producing pleasure, it can never be disputed, that as surprize is nothing but a pleasure arising from novelty, it is not, properly speaking, a quality in any object, but merely a passion or impression in the soul. It must, therefore, be from that impression, that pride by a natural transition arises. And it arises so naturally, that there is nothing in us or belonging to us, which produces surprize, that does not at the same time excite that other passion. Thus we are vain of the surprising adventures we have met with, the escapes we have made, and dangers we have been exposed to. Hence the origin of vulgar lying; where men without any interest, and merely out of vanity, heap up a number of extraordinary events, which are either the fictions of their brain, or if true, have at least no connexion with themselves. Their fruitful invention supplies them with a variety of adventures; and where that talent is wanting, they appropriate such as belong to others, in order to satisfy their vanity.

In this phaenomenon are contained two curious experiments, which if we compare them together, according to the known rules, by which we judge of cause and effect in anatomy, natural philosophy, and other sciences, will be an undeniable argument for that influence of the double relations above-mentioned. By one of these experiments we find, that an object produces pride merely by the interposition of pleasure; and that because the quality, by which it produces pride, is in reality nothing but the power of producing pleasure. By the other experiment we find, that the pleasure produces the pride by a transition along related ideas; because when we cut off that relation the passion is immediately destroyed.. A surprising adventure, in which we have been ourselves engaged, is related to us, and by that means produces pride: But the adventures of others, though they may cause pleasure, yet for want of this relation of ideas, never excite that passion. What farther proof can be desired for the present system?

There is only one objection to this system with regard to our body: which is, that though nothing be more agreeable than health, and more painful than sickness, yet commonly men are neither proud of the one, nor mortifyed with the other. This will easily be accounted for, if we consider the second and fourth limitations, proposed to our general system. It was observed, that no object ever produces pride or humility, if it has not something peculiar to ourself; as also, that every cause of that passion must be in some measure constant, and hold some proportion to the duration of our self, which, is its object. Now as health and sickness vary incessantly to all men, and there is none, who is solely or certainly fixed in either, these accidental blessings and calamities are in a manner separated from us, and are never considered as connected with our being and existence. And that this account is just appears hence, that wherever a malady of any kind is so rooted in our constitution, that we no longer entertain any hopes of recovery, from that moment it becomes an object of humility; as is evident in old men, whom nothing mortifies more than the consideration of their age and infirmities. They endeavour, as long as possible, to conceal their blindness and deafness, their rheums and gouts; nor do they ever confess them without reluctance and uneasiness. And though young men are not ashamed of every head-ach or cold they fall into, yet no topic is so proper to mortify human pride, and make us entertain a mean opinion of our nature, than this, that we are every moment of our lives subject to such infirmities. This sufficiently proves that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility; though the custom of estimating every thing by comparison more than by its intrinsic worth and value, makes us overlook these calamities, which we find to be incident to every one, and causes us to form an idea of our merit and character independent of them.

We are ashamed of such maladies as affect others, and are either dangerous or disagreeable to them. Of the epilepsy; because it gives a horror to every one present: Of the itch; because it is infectious: Of the king’s-evil; because it commonly goes to posterity. Men always consider the sentiments of others in their judgment of themselves. This has evidently appeared in some of the foregoing reasonings; and will appear still more evidently, and be more fully explained afterwards.

SECT. IX OF EXTERNAL ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

But though pride and humility have the qualities of our mind and body that is self, for their natural and more immediate causes, we find by experience, that there are many other objects, which produce these affections, and that the primary one is, in some measure, obscured and lost by the multiplicity of foreign and extrinsic. We found a vanity upon houses, gardens, equipages, as well as upon personal merit and accomplishments; and though these external advantages be in themselves widely distant from thought or a person, yet they considerably influence even a passion, which is directed to that as its ultimate object, This, happens when external objects acquire any particular relation to ourselves, and are associated or connected with us. A beautiful fish in the ocean, an animal in a desart, and indeed any thing that neither belongs, nor is related to us, has no manner of influence on our vanity, whatever extraordinary qualities it may be endowed with, and whatever degree of surprize and admiration it may naturally occasion. It must be some way associated with us in order to touch our pride. Its idea must hang in a manner, upon that of ourselves and the transition from the one to the other must be easy and natural.

But here it is remarkable, that though the relation of resemblance operates upon the mind in the same manner as contiguity and causation, in conveying us from one idea to another, yet it is seldom a foundation either of pride or of humility. If we resemble a person in any of the valuable parts of his character, we must, in some degree, possess the quality, in which we resemble him; and this quality we always chuse to survey directly in ourselves rather than by reflexion in another person, when we would found upon it any degree of vanity. So that though a likeness may occasionally produce that passion by suggesting a more advantageous idea of ourselves, it is there the view fixes at last, and the passion finds its ultimate and final cause.

There are instances, indeed, wherein men shew a vanity in resembling a great man in his countenance, shape, air, or other minute circumstances, that contribute not in any degree to his reputation; but it must be confessed that this extends not very far, nor is of any considerable moment in these affections. For this I assign the following reason. We can never have a vanity of resembling in trifles any person, unless he be possessed of very shining qualities, which give us a respect and veneration for him. These qualities, then, are, properly speaking, the causes of our vanity, by means of their relation to ourselves. Now after what manner are they related to ourselves? They are parts of the person we value, and consequently connected with these trifles; which are also supposed to be parts of him. These trifles are connected with the resembling qualities in us; and these qualities in us, being parts, are connected with the whole; and by that means form a chain of several links of the person we resemble. But besides that this multitude of relations must weaken the connexion; it is evident the mind, in passing from the shining qualities to the trivial ones, must by that contrast the better perceive the minuteness of the latter, and be in some measure ashamed of the comparison and resemblance.

The relation, therefore, of contiguity, or that of causation, betwixt the cause and object of pride and humility, is alone requisite to give rise to these passions; and these relations are nothing else but qualities, by which the imagination is conveyed from one idea to another. Now let us consider what effect these can possibly have upon the mind, and by what means they become so requisite to the production of the passions. It is evident, that the association of ideas operates in so silent and imperceptible a manner, that we are scarce sensible of it, and discover it more by its effects than by any immediate feeling or perception. It produces no emotion, and gives rise to no new impression of any kind, but only modifies those ideas, of which the mind was formerly possessed, and which it coued recal upon occasion. From this reasoning, as well as from undoubted experience, we may conclude, that an association of ideas, however necessary, is not alone sufficient to give rise to any passion.

It is evident, then, that when the mind feels the passion either of pride or humility upon the appearance of related object, there is, beside the relation or transition of thought, an emotion or original impression produced by some other principle. The question is, whether the emotion first produced be the passion itself, or some other impression related to it. This question we cannot be long in deciding, For besides all the other arguments, with which this subject abounds, it must evidently appear, that the relation of ideas, which experience shews to be so requisite a circumstance to the production of the passion, would be entirely superfluous, were it not to second a relation of affections, and facilitate the transition from one impression to another. If nature produced immediately the passion of pride or humility, it would be compleated in itself, and would require no farther addition or encrease from any other affection. But supposing the first emotion to be only related to pride or humility, it is easily conceived to what purpose the relation of objects may serve, and how the two different associations, of impressions and ideas, by uniting their forces, may assist each other's operation. This is not only easily conceived, but I will venture to affirm it is the only manner, in which we can conceive this subject. An easy transition of ideas, which, of itself, causes no emotion, can never be necessary, or even useful to the passions, but by forwarding the transition betwixt some related impressions. Not to mention, that the same object causes a greater or smaller degree of pride, not only in proportion to the encrease or decrease of its qualities, but also to the distance or nearness of the relation; which is a clear argument for the transition of affections along the relation of ideas; since every change in the relation produces a proportionable change in the passion. Thus one part of the preceding system, concerning the relations of ideas is a sufficient proof of the other, concerning that of impressions; and is itself so evidently founded on experience, that it would be lost time to endeavour farther to prove it.

This will appear still more evidently in particular instances. Men are vain of the beauty of their country, of their county, of their parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure. This pleasure is related to pride. The object or cause of this pleasure is, by the supposition, related to self, or the object of pride. By this double relation of impressions and ideas, a transition is made from the one impression to the other.

Men are also vain of the temperature of the climate, in which they were born; of the fertility of their native soil; of the goodness of the wines, fruits or victuals, produced by it; of the softness or force of their language; with other particulars of that kind. These objects have plainly a reference to the pleasures of the senses, and are originally considered as agreeable to the feeling, taste or hearing. How is it possible they coued ever become objects of pride, except by means of that transition above-explained?

There are some, that discover a vanity of an opposite kind, and affect to depreciate their own country, in comparison of those, to which they have travelled. These persons find, when they are at home, and surrounded with their countrymen, that the strong relation betwixt them and their own nation is shared with so many, that it is in a manner lost to them; whereas their distant relation to a foreign country, which is formed by their having seen it and lived in it, is augmented by their considering how few there are who have done the same. For this reason they always admire the beauty, utility and rarity of what is abroad, above what is at home.

Since we can be vain of a country, climate or any inanimate object, which bears a relation to us, it is no wonder we are vain of the qualities of those, who are connected with us by blood or friendship. Accordingly we find, that the very same qualities, which in ourselves produce pride, produce also in a lesser degree the same affection, when discovered in persons related to us. The beauty, address, merit, credit and honours of their kindred are carefully displayed by the proud, as some of their most considerable sources of their vanity.

As we are proud of riches in ourselves, so to satisfy our vanity we desire that every one, who has any connexion with us, should likewise be possest of them, and are ashamed of any one, that is mean or poor, among our friends and relations. For this reason we remove the poor as far from us as possible; and as we cannot prevent poverty in some distant collaterals, and our forefathers are taken to be our nearest relations; upon this account every one affects to be of a good family, and to be descended from a long succession of rich and honourable ancestors.

I have frequently observed, that those, who boast of the antiquity of their families, are glad when they can join this circumstance, that their ancestors for many generations have been uninterrupted proprietors of the same portion of land, and that their family has never changed its possessions, or been transplanted into any other county or province. I have also observed, that it is an additional subject of vanity, when they can boast, that these possessions have been transmitted through a descent composed entirely of males, and that the honour, and fortune have never past through any female. Let us endeavour to explain these phaenomena by the foregoing system.

It is evident, that when any one boasts of the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are not merely the extent of time and number of ancestors, but also their riches and credit, which are supposed to reflect a lustre on himself on account of his relation to them. He first considers these objects; is affected by them in an agreeable manner; and then returning back to himself, through the relation of parent and child, is elevated with the passion of pride, by means of the double relation, of impressions and ideas. Since therefore the passion depends on these relations, whatever strengthens any of the relations must also encrease the passion, and whatever weakens the relations must diminish the passion. Now it is certain the identity of the possesion strengthens the relation of ideas arising from blood and kindred, and conveys the fancy with greater facility from one generation to another, from the remote ancestors to their posterity, who are both their heirs and their descendants. By this facility the impression is transmitted more entire, and excites a greater degree of pride and vanity.

The case is the same with the transmission of the honours and fortune through a succession of males without their passing through any female. It is a quality of human nature, which we shall consider [Part II. Sect, 2.] afterwards, that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable; and where two objects are presented to it, a small and a great one, usually leaves the former, and dwells entirely upon the latter. As in the society of marriage, the male sex has the advantage above the female, the husband first engages our attention; and whether we consider him directly, or reach him by passing through related objects, the thought both rests upon him with greater satisfaction, and arrives at him with greater facility than his consort. It is easy to see, that this property must strengthen the child’s relation to the father, and weaken that to the mother. For as all relations are nothing hut a propensity to pass from one idea ma another, whatever strengthens the propensity strengthens the relation; and as we have a stronger propensity to pass from the idea of the children to that of the father, than from the same idea to that of the mother, we ought to regard the former relation as the closer and more considerable. This is the reason why children commonly bear their father’s name, and are esteemed to be of nobler or baser birth, according to his family. And though the mother should be possest of a superior spirit and genius to the father, as often happens, the general rule prevails, notwithstanding the exceprion, according to the doctrine above-explained. Nay even when a superiority of any kind is so great, or when any other reasons have such an effect, as to make the children rather represent: the mother’s family than the father’s, the general rule still retains such an efficacy that it weakens the relation, and makes a kind of break in the line of ancestors. The imagination runs not along them with facility, nor is able to transfer the honour and credit of the ancestors to their posterity of the same name and family so readily, as when the transition is conformable to the general rules, and passes from father to son, or from brother to brother.

SECT. X OF PROPERTY AND RICHES

But the relation, which is esteemed the closest, and which of all others produces most commonly the passion of pride, is that of property. This relation it will be impossible for me fully to explain before I come to treat of justice and the other moral virtues. It is sufficient to observe on this occasion, that property may be defined, such a relation betwixt a person and an object as permits him, but forbids any other, the free use and possession of it, without violating the laws of justice and moral equity. If justice, therefore, be a virtue, which has a natural and original influence on the human mind, property may be looked upon as a particular species of causation; whether we consider the liberty it gives the proprietor to operate as he please upon the object or the advantages, which he reaps from it. It is the same case, if justice, according to the system of certain philosophers, should be esteemed an artificial and not a natural virtue. For then honour, and custom, and civil laws supply the place of natural conscience, and produce, in some degree, the same effects. This in the mean time is certain, that the mention of the property naturally carries our thought to the proprietor, and of the proprietor to the property; which being a proof of a perfect relation of ideas is all that is requisite to our present purpose. A relation of ideas, joined to that of impressions, always produces a transition of affections; and therefore, whenever any pleasure or pain arises from an object, connected with us by property. we may be certain, that either pride or humility must arise from this conjunction of relations; if the foregoing system be solid and satisfactory. And whether it be so or not, we may soon satisfy ourselves by the most cursory view of human life.

Every thing belonging to a vain man is the best that is any where to be found. His houses, equipage, furniture, doaths, horses, hounds, excel all others in his conceit; and it is easy to observe, that from the least advantage in any of these, he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you'll believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servants more expert; the air, in which he lives, more healthful; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier and to greater perfection: Such a thing is remarkable for its novelty;

such another for its antiquity: This is the workmanship of a famous artist; that belonged once to such a prince or great man: All objects, in a word, that are useful, beautiful or surprising, or are related to such, may, by means of property, give rise to this passion. These agree in giving pleasure, and agree in nothing else. This alone is common to them; and therefore must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect. As every new instance is a new argument, and as the instances are here without number, I may venture to affirm, that scarce any system was ever so fully proved by experience, as that which I have here advanced.

If the property of any thing, that gives pleasure either by its utility, beauty or novelty, produces also pride by a double relation of impressions and ideas; we need not be surprized, that the power of acquiring this property, should have the same effect. Now riches are to be considered as the power of acquiring the property of what pleases; and it is only in this view they have any influence on the passions. Paper will, on many occasions, be considered as riches, and that because it may convey the power of acquiring money: And money is not riches, as it is a metal endowed with certain qualities of solidity, weight and fusibility; but only as it has a relation to the pleasures and conveniences of life. Taking then this for granted, which is in itself so evident, we may draw from it one of the strongest arguments I have yet employed to prove the influence of the double relations on pride and humility.

It has been observed in treating of the understanding, that the distinction, which we sometimes make betwixt a power and the exercise of it, is entirely frivolous, and that neither man nor any other being ought ever to be thought possest of any ability, unless it be exerted and put in action. But though this be strictly true in a just and philosophical way of thinking, it is certain it is not the philosophy of our passions; but that many things operate upon them by means of the idea and supposition of power, independent of its actual exercise. We are pleased when we acquire an ability of procuring pleasure, and are displeased when another acquires a power of giving pain. This is evident from experience; but in order to give a just explication of the matter, and account for this satisfaction and uneasiness, we must weigh the following reflections.

It is evident the error of distinguishing power from its exercise proceeds not entirely from the scholastic doctrine of free-will, which, indeed, enters very little into common life, and has but small influence on our vulgar and popular ways of thinking. According to that doctrine, motives deprive us not of free-will, nor take away our power of performing or forbearing any action. But according to common notions a man has no power, where very considerable motives lie betwixt him and the satisfaction of his desires, and determine him to forbear what he wishes to perform. I do not think I have fallen into my enemy's power, when I see him pass me in the streets with a sword by his side, while I am unprovided of any weapon. I know that the fear of the civil magistrate is as strong a restraint as any of iron, and that I am in as perfect safety as if he were chained or imprisoned. But when a person acquires such an authority over me, that not only there is no external obstacle to his actions; but also that he may punish or reward me as he pleases, without any dread of punishment in his turn, I then attribute a full power to him, and consider myself as his subject or vassal.

Now if we compare these two cases, that of a person, who has very strong motives of interest or safety to forbear any action, and that of another, who lies under no such obligation, we shall find, according to the philosophy explained in the foregoing book, that the only known difference betwixt them lies in this, that in the former case we conclude from past experience, that the person never will perform that action, and in the latter, that he possibly or probably will perform it. Nothing is more fluctuating and inconstant on many occasions, than the will of man; nor is there any thing but strong motives, which can give us an absolute certainty in pronouncing concerning any of his future actions. When we see a person free from these motives, we suppose a possibility either of his acting or forbearing; and though in general we may conclude him to be determined by motives and causes, yet this removes not the uncertainty of our judgment concerning these causes, nor the influence of that uncertainty on the passions. Since therefore we ascribe a power of performing an action to every one, who has no very powerful motive to forbear it, and refuse it to such as have; it may justly be concluded, that power has always a reference to its exercise, either actual or probable, and that we consider a person as endowed with any ability when we find from past experience, that it is probable, or at least possible he may exert it. And indeed, as our passions always regard the real existence of objects, and we always judge of this reality from past instances; nothing can be more likely of itself, without any farther reasoning, than that power consists in the possibility or probability of any action, as discovered by experience and the practice of the world.

Now it is evident, that wherever a person is in such a situadon with regard to me, that there is no very powerful motive to deter him from injuring me, and consequently it is uncertain whether he will injure me or not, I must be uneasy in such a situation, and cannot consider the possibility or probability of that injury without a sensible concern. The passions are not only affected by such events as are certain and infallible, but also in an inferior degree by such as are possible and contingent. And though perhaps I never really feel any harm, and discover by the event, that, philosophically speaking, the person never had any power of harming me; since he did not exert any; this prevents not my uneasiness from the preceding uncertainty. The agreeable passions may here operate as well as the uneasy, and convey a pleasure when I perceive a good to become either possible or probable by the possibility or probability of another's bestowing it on me, upon the removal of any strong motives, which might formerly have hindered him.

But we may farther observe, that this satisfaction encreases, when any good approaches in such a manner that it it in one's own power to take or leave it, and there neither is any physical impediment, nor any very strong motive to hinder our enjoyment. As all men desire pleasure, nothing can be more probable, than its existence when there is no external obstacle to the producing it, and men perceive no danger in following their inclinations. In that case their imagination easily anticipates the satisfaction, and conveys the same joy, as if they were persuaded of its real and actual existence.

But this accounts not sufficiently for the satisfaction, which attends riches. A miser receives delight from his money; that is, from the power it affords him of procuring all the pleasures and conveniences of life, though he knows he has enjoyed his riches for forty years without ever employing them; and consequently cannot conclude by any species of reasoning, that the real existence of these pleasures is nearer, than if he were entirely deprived of all his possessions. But though he cannot form any such conclusion in a way of reasoning concerning she nearer approach of the pleasure, it is certain he imagines it to approach nearer, whenever all external obstacles are removed, along with the more powerful motives of interest and danger, which oppose it. For farther satisfaction on this head I must refer to my account of the will, where I shall [Part III. Sect. 2.] explain that false sensation of liberty, which make, us imagine we can perform any thing, that is not very dangerous or destructive. Whenever any other person is under no strong obligations of interest to forbear any pleasure, we judge from experience, that the pleasure will exist, and that he will probably obtain it. But when ourselves are in that situation, we judge from an illusion of the fancy, that the pleasure is still closer and more immediate. The will seems to move easily every way, and casts a shadow or image of itself, even to that side, on which it did not settle. By means of this image the enjoyment seems to approach nearer to us, and gives us the same lively satisfaction, as if it were perfectly certain and unavoidable.

It will now be easy to draw this whole reasoning to a paint, and to prove, that when riches produce any pride or vanity in their possessors, as they never fail so do, it is only by means of a double relation of impressions and ideas. The very essence of riches consists in the power of procuring the pleasures and conveniences of life. The very essence of this consists in the probability of its exercise, and in its causing us to anticipate, by a true or false reasoning, the real existence of the pleasure. This anticipation of pleasure is, in itself, a very considerable pleasure; and as its cause is some possession or property, which we enjoy, and which is thereby related to us, we here dearly see all the parts of the foregoing system most exactly and distinctly drawn out before us. For the same reason, that riches cause pleasure and pride, and poverty excites uneasiness and humility, power must produce the former emotions, and slavery the latter. Power or an authority over others makes us capable of satisfying all our desires; as slavery, by subjecting us to the will of others, exposes us to a thousand wants, and mortifications.

It is here worth observing, that the vanity of power, or shame of slavery, are much augmented by the consideration of the persons, over whom we exercise our authority, or who exercise it over us. For supposing it possible to frame statues of such an admirable mechanism, that they coued move and act in obedience to the will; it is evident the possession of them would give pleasure and pride, but not to such a degree, as the same authority, when exerted over sensible and rational creatures, whose condition, being compared to our own, makes it seem more agreeable and honourable. Comparison is in every case a sure method of augmenting our esteem of any thing. A rich man feels the felicity of his condition better by opposing it to that of a beggar. But there is a peculiar advantage in power, by the contrast, which is, in a manner, presented to us, betwixt ourselves and the person we command. The comparison is obvious and natural: The imagination finds it in the very subject: The passage of the thought to its conception is smooth and easy. And that this circumstance has a considerable effect in augmenting its influence, will appear afterwards in examining the nature of malice and envy.

SECT. XI OF THE LOVE OF FAME

But beside these original causes of pride and humility, there is a secondary one in the opinions of others, which has an equal influence on the affections. Our reputation, our character, our name are considerations of vast weight and importance; and even the other causes of pride; virtue, beauty and riches; have little influence, when not seconded by the opinions and sentiments of others. In order to account for this phaenomenon it will be necessary to take some compass, and first explain the nature of sympathy.

No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own. This is not only conspicuous in children, who implicitly embrace every opinion proposed to them; but also in men of the greatest judgment and understanding, who find it very difficult to follow their own reason or inclination, in opposition to that of their friends and daily companions. To this principle we ought to ascribe the great uniformity we may observe in the humours and turn of thinking of those of the same nation; and it is much more probable, that this resemblance arises from sympathy, than from any influence of the soil and climate, which, though they continue invariably the same, are not able to preserve the character of a nation the same for a century together. A good-natured man finds himself in an instant of the same humour with his company; and even the proudest and most surly take a tincture from their countrymen and acquaintance. A chearful countenance infuses a sensible complacency and serenity into my mind; as an angry or sorrowful one throws a sudden dump upon me. Hatred, resentment, esteem, love, courage, mirth and melancholy; all these passions I feel more from communication than from my own natural temper and disposition. So remarkable a phaenomenon merits our attention, and must be traced up to its first principles.

When any affection is infused by sympathy, it is at first known only by its effects, and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation, which convey an idea of it. This idea is presently converted into an impression, and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity, as to become the very passion itself, and produce an equal emotion, as any original affection. However instantaneous this change of the idea into an impression may be, it proceeds from certain views and reflections, which will not escape the strict scrutiny of a. philosopher, though they may the person himself, who makes them.

It is evident, that the idea, or rather impression of ourselves is always intimately present with us, and that our consciousness gives us so lively a conception of our own person, that it is not possible to imagine, that any thing can in this particular go beyond it. Whatever object, therefore, is related to ourselves must be conceived with a little vivacity of conception, according to the foregoing principles; and though this relation should not be so strong as that of causation, it must still have a considerable influence. Resemblance and contiguity are relations not to be neglected; especially when by an inference from cause and effect, and by the observation of external signs, we are informed of the real existence of the object, which is resembling or contiguous.

Now it is obvious, that nature has preserved a great resemblance among all human creatures, and that we never remark any passion or principle in others, of which, in some degree or other, we may not find a parallel in ourselves. The case is the same with the fabric of the mind, as with that of the body. However the parts may differ in shape or size, their structure and composition are in general the same. There is a very remarkable resemblance, which preserves itself amidst all their variety; and this resemblance must very much contribute to make us enter into the sentiments of others; and embrace them with facility and pleasure. Accordingly we find, that where, beside the general resemblance of our natures, there is any peculiar similarity in our manners, or character, or country, or language, it facilitates the sympathy. The stronger the relation is betwixt ourselves and any object, the more easily does the imagination make the transition, and convey to the related idea the vivacity of conception, with which we always form the idea of our own person.

Nor is resemblance the only relation, which has this effect, but receives new force from other relations, that may accompany it. The sentiments of others have little influence, when far removed from us, and require the relation of contiguity, to make them communicate themselves entirely. The relations of blood, being a species of causation, may sometimes contribute to the same effect; as also acquaintance, which operates in the same manner with education and custom; as we shall see more fully [Part II. Sect. 4.] afterwards. All these relations, when united together, convey the impression or consciousness of our own person to the idea of the sentiments or passions of others, and makes us conceive them in the strongest and most lively manner.

It has been remarked in the beginning of this treatise, that all ideas are borrowed from impressions, and that these two kinds of perceptions differ only in the degrees of force and vivacity, with which they strike upon the soul. The component part of ideas and impressions are precisely alike. The manner and order of their appearance may be the same. The different degrees of their force and vivacity are, therefore, the only particulars, that distinguish them: And as this difference may be removed, in some measure, by a relation betwixt the impressions and ideas, it is no wonder an idea of a sentiment or passion, may by this means be inlivened as to become the very sentiment or passion. The lively idea of any object always approaches is impression; and it is certain we may feel sickness and pain from the mere force of imagination, and make a malady real by often thinking of it. But this is most remarkable in the opinions and affections; and it is there principally that a lively idea is converted into an impression. Our affections depend more upon ourselves, and the internal operations of the mind, than any other impressions; for which reason they arise more naturally from the imagination, and from every lively idea we form of them. This is the nature and cause of sympathy; and it is after this manner we enter so deep into the opinions and affections of others, whenever we discover them.

What is principally remarkable in this whole affair is the strong confirmation these phaenomena give to the foregoing system concerning the understanding, and consequently to the present one concerning the passions; since these are analogous to each other. It is indeed evident, that when we sympathize with the passions and sentiments of others, these movements appear at first in our mind as mere ideas, and are conceived to belong to another person, as we conceive any other matter of fact. It is also evident, that the ideas of the affections of others are converted into the very impressions they represent, and that the passions arise in conformity to the images we form of them. All this is an object of the plainest experience, and depends not on any hypothesis of philosophy. That science can only be admitted to explain the phaenomena; though at the same time it must be confest, they are so clear of themselves, that there is but little occasion to employ it. For besides the relation of cause and effect, by which we are convinced of the reality of the passion, with which we sympathize; besides this, I say, we must be assisted by the relations of resemblance and contiguity, in order to feel the sympathy in its full perfection. And since these relations can entirely convert an idea into an impression, and convey the vivacity of the latter into the former, so perfectly as to lose nothing of it in the transition, we may easily conceive how the relation of cause and effect alone, may serve to strengthen and inliven an idea. In sympathy there is an evident conversion of an idea into an impression. This conversion arises from the relation of objects to ourself. Ourself is always intimately present to us. Let us compare all these circumstances, and we shall find, that sympathy is exactly correspondent to the operations of our understanding; and even contains something more surprizing and extraordinary.

It is now time to turn our view from the general consideration of sympathy, to its influence on pride and humility, when these passions arise from praise and blame, from reputation and infamy. We may observe, that no person is ever praised by another for any quality, which would not, if real, produce, of itself, a pride in the person possest of it. The elogiums either turn upon his power, or riches, or family, or virtue; all of which are subjects of vanity, that we have already explained and accounted for. It is certain, then, that if a person considered himself in the same light, in which he appears to his admirer, he would first receive a separate pleasure, and afterwards a pride or self-satisfaction, according to the hypothesis above explained. Now nothing is more natural than for us to embrace the opinions of others in this particular; both from sympathy, which renders all their sentiments intimately present to us; and from reasoning, which makes us regard their judgment, as a kind of argument for what they affirm. These two principles of authority and sympathy influence almost all our opinions; but must have a peculiar influence, when we judge of our own worth and character. Such judgments are always attended with passion [Book I, Part III. Sect. 10.]; and nothing tends more to disturb our understanding, and precipitate us into any opinions, however unreasonable, than their connexion with passion; which diffuses itself over the imagination, and gives an additional force to every related idea. To which we may add, that being conscious of great partiality in our own favour, we are peculiarly pleased with any thing, that confirms the good opinion we have of ourselves, and are easily shocked with whatever opposes it.

All this appears very probable in theory; but in order to bestow a full certainty on this reasoning, we must examine the phaenonena of the passions, and see if they agree with it.

Among these phaenomena we may esteem it a very favourable one to our present purposes that though fame in general be agreeable, yet we receive a much greater satisfaction from the approbation of those, whom we ourselves esteem and approve of, than of those, whom we hate and despise. In like measure we are principally mortifyed with the contempt of persons, upon whose judgment we set some value, and are, in a peat measure, indifferent about the opinions of the rest of mankind. But if the mind received from any original instinct a desire of fame and aversion to infamy, fame and infamy would influence us without distinction; and every opinion, according as it were favourabk or unfavourable, would equally excite that desire or aversion. The judgment of a fool is the judgment of another person, as well as that of a wise man, and is only inferior in its influence on our own judgment.

We are not only better pleased with the approbation of a wise man than with that of a fool, but receive an additional satisfaction from the former, when it is obtained after a long and intimate acquaintance. This is accounted for after the same manner.

The praises of others never give us much pleasure, unless they concur with our own opinion, and extol us for those qualities, in which we chiefly excel. A mere soldier little values the character of eloquence: A gownman of courage: A bishop of humour: Or a merchant of learning. Whatever esteem a man may have for any quality, abstractedly considered; when he is conscious he is not possest of it; the opinions of the whole world will give him little pleasure in that particular, and that because they never will be able to draw his own opinion after them.

Nothing is more usual than for men of good families, but narrow circumstances, to leave their friends and country, and rather seek their livelihood by mean and mechanical employments among strangers, than among those, who are acquainted with their birth and education. We shall be unknown, say they, where we go. No body will suspect from what family we are sprung. We shall be removed from all our friends and acquaintance, and our poverty and meanness will by that means sit more easy upon us. In examining these sentiments, I find they afford many very convincing arguments for my present purpose.

First, We may infer from them, that the uneasiness of being contemned depends on sympathy, and that sympathy depends on the relation of objects to ourselves; since we are most uneasy under the contempt of persons, who are both related to us by blood, and contiguous in place. Hence we-seek to diminish this sympathy and uneasiness by separating these relations, and placing ourselves in a contiguity to strangers, and at a distance from relations.

Secondly, We may conclude, that relations are requisite to sympathy, not absolutely considered as relations, but by their influence in converting our ideas of the sentiments of others into the very sentiments, by means of the association betwixt the idea of their persons, and that of our own. For here the relations of kindred and contiguity both subsist; but not being united in the same persons, they contribute in a less degree to the sympathy.

Thirdly, This very circumstance of the diminution of sympathy by the separation of relations is worthy of our attention. Suppose I am placed in a poor condition among strangers, and consequently am but lightly treated; I yet find myself easier in that situation, than when I was every day exposed to the contempt of my kindred and countrymen. Here I feel a double contempt; from my relations, but they are absent; from those about me, but they are strangers. This double contempt is likewise strengthened by the two relations of kindred and contiguity. But as the persons are not the same, who are connected with me by those two relations, this difference of ideas separates the impressions arising from the contempt, and keeps them from running into each other. The contempt of my neighbours has a certain influence; as has also that of my kindred: But these influences are distinct, and never unite; as when the contempt proceeds from persons who are at once both my neighbours and kindred. This phaenomenon is analogous to the system of pride and humility above-explained, which may seem so extraordinary to vulgar apprehensions.

Fourthly, A person in these circumstances naturally conceals his birth from those among whom he lives, and is very uneasy, if any one suspects him to be of a family, much superior to his present fortune and way of living. Every thing in this world is judged of by comparison. What is an immense fortune for a private gentleman is beggary for a prince. A peasant would think himself happy in what cannot afford necessaries for a gentleman. When a man has either been acustomed to a more splendid way of living, or thinks himself intitled to it by his birth and quality, every thing below is disagreeable and even shameful; and it is with she greatest industry he conceals his pretensions to a better fortune. Here he himself knows his misfortunes; but as those, with whom he lives. are ignorant of them, he has the disagreeable reflection and comparison suggested only by his own thoughts, and never receives it by a sympathy with others; which must contribute very much so his ease and satisfaction.

If there be any objections to this hypothesis, THAT THE PLEASURE, WHICH WE RECEIVE FROM PRAISE, ARISES FROM A COMMUNICATION OF SENTIMENTS, we shall find, uponexamination, that these objections, when taken in a properlight, will serve to confirm it. Popular fame may be agreeable even to a man, who despises the vulgar; but it is because their multitude gives them additional weight and authority. Plagiaries are delighted with praises, which they are conscious they do not deserve; but this is a kind of castle-building, where the imagination amuses itself with its own fictions, and strives to render them firm and stable by a sympathy with the sentiments of others. Proud men are most shocked with contempt, should they do not most readily assent to it; but it is because of the opposition betwixt the passion, which is natural so them, and that received by sympathy. A violent lover in like manner is very much disp pleased when you blame and condemn his love; though it is evident your opposition can have no influence, but by the hold it takes of himself, and by his sympathy with you. If he despises you, or perceives you are in jest, whatever you say has no effect upon him.

SECT. XII OF THE PRIDE AND HUMILITY OF ANIMALS

Thus in whatever light we consider this subject, we may still observe, that die causes of pride and humility correspond exactly to our hypothesis, and that nothing can excite either of these passions, unless it be both related to ourselves, and produces a pleasure or pain independent of the passion. We have not only proved, that a tendency to produce pleasure or pain is common to all the causes of pride or humility, but also that it is the only thing, which is common; and consequently is the quality, by which they operate. We have farther proved, that the most considerable causes of these passions are really nothing but the power of producing either agreeable or uneasy sensations; and therefore that all their effects, and amongst the rest, pride and humility, are derived solely from that origin. Such simple and natural principles, founded on such solid proofs, cannot fail to be received by philosophers, unless opposed by some objections, that have escaped me.

It is usual with anatomists to join their observations and experiments on human bodies to those on beasts, and from the agreement of these experiments to derive an additional argument for any particular hypothesis. It is indeed certain, that where the structure of parts in brutes is the same as in men, and the operation of these parts also the same, the causes of that operation cannot be different, and that whatever we discover to be true of the one species, may be concluded without hesitation to be certain of the other. Thus though the mixture of humours and the composition of minute parts may justly be presumed so be somewhat different in men from what it is in mere animals; and therefore any experiment we make upon the one concerning the effects of medicines will not always apply to the other; yet as the structure of the veins and muscles, the fabric and situation of the heart, of the lungs, the stomach, the liver and other parts, are the same or nearly the same in all animals, the very same hypothesis, which in one species explains muscular motion, the progress of the chyle, the circulation of the blood, must be applicable to every one; and according as it agrees or disagrees with the experiments we may make in any species of creatures, we may draw a proof of its truth or falshood on the whole. Let us, therefore, apply this method of enquiry, which is found so just and useful in reasonings concerning the body, to our present anatomy of the mind, and see what discoveries we can make by it.

In order to this we must first shew the correspondence of passions in men and animals, and afterwards compare the causes, which produce these passions.

It is plain, that almost in every species of creatures, but especially of the nobler kind, there are many evident marks of pride and humility. The very port and gait of a swan, or turkey, or peacock show the high idea he has entertained of himself, and his contempt of all others. This is the more remarkable, that in the two last species of animals, the pride always attends the beauty, and is discovered in the male only. The vanity and emulation of nightingales in singing have been commonly remarked; as likewise that of horses in swiftness, of hounds in sagacity and smell, of the bull and cock in strength, and of every other animal in his particular excellency. Add to this, that every species of creatures, which approach so often to man, as to familiarize themselves with him, show an evident pride in his approbation, and are pleased with his praises and caresses, independent of every other consideration. Nor are they the caresses of every one without distinction, which give them this vanity, but those principally of the persons they know and love; in the same manner as that passion is excited in mankind. All these are evident proofs, that pride and humility are not merely human passions, but extend themselves over the whole animal creation.

The CAUSES of these passions are likewise much the same in beasts as in us, making a just allowance for our superior knowledge and understanding. Thus animals have little or no sense of virtue or vice; they quickly lose sight of the relations of blood; and are incapable of that of right and property: For which reason the causes of their pride and humility must lie solely in the body, and can never be placed either in the mind or external objects. But so far as regards the body, the same qualities cause pride in the animal as in the human kind; and it is on beauty, strength, swiftness or some other useful or agreeable quality that this passion is always founded.

The next question is, whether, since those passions are the same, and arise from the same causes through the whole creation, the manner, in which the causes operate, be also the same. According to all rules of analogy, this is justly to be expected; and if we find upon trial, that the explication of these phaenomena, which we make use of in one species, will not apply to the rest, we may presume that that explication, however specious, is in reality without foundation.

In order to decide this question, let us consider, that there is evidently the same relation of ideas, and derived from the same causes, in the minds of animals as in those of men. A dog, that has hid a bone, often forgets the place; but when brought to it, his thought passes easily to what he formerly concealed, by means of the contiguity, which produces a relation among his ideas. In like manner, when he has been heartily beat in any place, he will tremble on his approach to it, even though he discover no signs of any present danger. The effects of resemblance are not so remarkable; but as that relation makes a considerable ingredient in causation, of which all animals shew so evident a judgment, we may conclude that the three relations of resemblance, contiguity and causation operate in the same manner upon beasts as upon human creatures.

There are also instances of the relation of impressions, sufficient to convince us, that there is an union of certain affections with each other in the inferior species of creatures as well as in the superior, and that their minds are frequently conveyed through a series of connected emotions. A dog, when elevated with joy, runs naturally into love and kindness, whether of his master or of the sex. In like manner, when full of pain and sorrow, he becomes quarrelsome and illnatured; and that passion; which at first was grief, is by the smallest occasion converted into anger.

Thus all the internal principles, that are necessary in us to produce either pride or humility, are commcm to all creaturn; and since the causes, which excite these passions, are likewise the same, we may justly conclude, that these causes operate after the same manner through the whole animal creation. My hypothesis Is so simple, and supposes so little reflection and judgment, that it is applicable to every sensible creature; which must not only be allowed to be a convincing proof of its veracity, but, I am confident, will be found an objection to every other system.

PART II OF LOVE AND HATRED

SECT. I OF THE OBJECT AND CAUSES OF LOVE AND HATRED

It is altogether impossible to give any definition of the passions of love and hatred; and that because they produce merely a simple impression, without any mixture or composition. Twould be as unnecessary to attempt any description of them, drawn from their nature, origin, causes and objects; and that both because these are the subjects of our present enquiry, and because these passions of themselves are sufficiently known from our common feeling and experience. This we have already observed concerning pride and humility, and here repeat it concerning love and hatred; and indeed there is so great a resemblance betwixt these two sets of passions, that we shall be obliged to begin with a kind of abridgment of our reasonings concerning the former, in order to explain the latter.

As the immediate object of pride and humility is self or that identical person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are intimately conscious; so the object of love and hatred is some other person, of whose thoughts, actions, and sensations we are not conscious. This is sufficiently evident from experience. Our love and hatred are always directed to some sensible being external to us; and when we talk of self-love, it is not in a proper sense, nor has the sensation it produces any thing in common with that tender emotion which is excited by a friend or mistress. It is the same case with hatred. We may be mortified by our own faults and follies; but never feel any anger or hatred except from the injuries of others.

But though the object of love and hatred be always some other person, it is plain that the object is not, properly speaking, the cause of these passions, or alone sufficient to excite them. For since love and hatred are directly contrary in their sensation, and have the same object in common, if that object were also their cause, it would produce these opposite passions in an equal degree; and as they must, from the very first moment, destroy each other, none of them would ever be able to make its appearance. There must, therefore, be some cause different from the object.

If we consider the causes of love and hatred, we shall find they are very much diversifyed, and have not many things in common. The virtue, knowledge, wit, good sense, good humour of any person, produce love and esteem; as the opposite qualities, hatred and contempt. The same passions arise from bodily accomplishments, such as beauty, force, swiftness, dexterity; and from their contraries; as likewise from the external advantages and disadvantages of family, possession, cloaths, nation and climate. There is not one of these objects, but what by its different qualities may produce love and esteem, or hatred and contempt.

From the view of these causes we may derive a new distinction betwixt the quality that operates, and the subject on which it is placed. A prince, that is possessed of a stately palace, commands the esteem of the people upon that account; and that first, by the beauty of the palace, and secondly, by the relation of property, which connects it with him. The removal of either of these destroys the passion; which evidently proves that the cause Is a compounded one.

Twould be tedious to trace the passions of love and hatred, through all the observations which we have formed concerning pride and humility, and which are equally applicable to both sets of passions. Twill be sufficient to remark in general, that the object of love and hatred is evidently some thinking person; and that the sensation of the former passion is always agreeable, and of the latter uneasy. We may also suppose with some shew of probability, THAT THE CAUSE OF BOTH THESE PASSIONS IS ALWAYS RELATED TO A THINKING BEING, AND THAT THE CAUSE OF THE FORMER PRODUCE A SEPARATE PLEASURE, AND OF THE LATTER A SEPARATE UNEASINESS.

One of these suppositions, viz, that the cause of love and hatred must be related to a person or thinking being, in order to produce these passions, is not only probable, but too evident to be contested. Virtue and vice, when considered in the abstract; beauty and deformity, when placed on inanimate objects; poverty and riches when belonging to a third person, excite no degree of love or hatred, esteem or contempt towards those, who have no relation to them. A person looking out at a window, sees me in the street, and beyond me a beautiful palace, with which I have no concern: I believe none will pretend, that this person will pay me the same respect, as if I were owner of the palace.

It is not so evident at first sight, that a relation of impressions is requisite to these passions, and that because in the transition the one impression is so much confounded with the other, that they become in a manner undistinguishable. But as in pride and humility, we have easily been able to make the separation, and to prove, that every cause of these passions, produces a separate pain or pleasure, I might here observe the same method with the same success, in examining particularly the several causes of love and hatred. But as I hasten a full and decisive proof of these systems, I delay this examination for a moment: And in the mean time shall endeavour to convert to my present purpose all my reaaonings concerning pride and humility, by an argument that is founded on unquestionable examination.

There are few persons, that are satisfyed with their own character, or genius, or fortune, who are nor desirous of shewing themselves to the world, and of acquiring the love and approbation of mankind. Now it is evident, that the very same qualities and circumstances, which are the causes of pride or self-esteem, are also the causes of vanity or the desire of reputation; and that we always put to view those particulars with which in ourselves we are best satisfyed. But if love and esteem were not produced by the same qualities as pride, according as these qualities are related to ourselves or others, this method of proceeding would be very absurd, nor coued men expect a correspondence in the sentiments of every other person, with those themselves have entertained. It is true, few can form exact systems of the passions, or make reflections on their general nature and resemblances. But without such a progress in philosophy, we are not subject to many mistakes in this particular, but are sufficiently guided by common experience, as well as by a kind of presentation; which tells us what will operate on others, by what we feel immediately in ourselves. Since then the same qualities that produce pride or humility, cause love or hatred; all the arguments that have been employed to prove, that the causes of the former passions excite a pain or pleasure independent of the passion, will be applicable with equal evidence to the causes of the latter.

SECT. II EXPERIMENTS TO CONFIRM THIS SYSTEM

Upon duly weighing these arguments, no one will make any scruple to assent to that condusion I draw from them, concerning the transition along related impressions and ideas, especially as it is a principle, in itself, so easy and natural. But that we may place this system beyond doubt both with regard to love and hatred, pride and humility, it will be proper to make some new experiments upon all these passions, as well as to recal a few of these observations, which I have formerly touched upon.

In order to make these experiments, let us suppose I am in company with a person, whom I formerly regarded without any sentiments either of friendship or enmity. Here I have the natural and ultimate object of all these four passions placed before me. Myself am the proper object of pride or humility; the other person of love or hatred.

Regard now with attention the nature of these passions, and their situation with respect to each other. It is evident here are four affections, placed, as it were, in a square or regular connexion with, and distance from each other. The passions of pride and humility, as well as those of love and hatred, are connected together by the identity of their object, which to the first set of passions is self, to the second some other person. These two lines of communication or connexion form two opposite sides of the square. Again, pride and love are agreeable passions; hatred and humility uneasy. This similitude of sensation betwixt pride and love, and that betwixt humility and hatred form a new connexion, and may be considered as the other two sides of the square. Upon the whole, pride is connected with humility, love with hatred, by their objects or ideas: Pride with love, humility with hatred, by their sensations or impressions.

I say then, that nothing can produce any of these passions without bearing it a double relation, viz, of ideas to the object of the passion, and of sensation to the passion itself. This we must prove by our experiments. First Experiment. To proceed with the greater order in these experiments, let us first suppose, that being placed in the situation above-mentioned, viz, in company with some other person, there is an object presented, that has no relation either of impressions or ideas to any of these passions. Thus suppose we regard together an ordinary stone, or other common object, belonging to neither of us, and causing of itself no emotion, or independent pain and pleasure: It is evident such an object will produce none of these four passions. Let us try it upon each of them successively. Let us apply it to love, to hatred, to humility, to pride; none of them ever arises in the smallest degree imaginable. Let us change the object, as oft as we please; provided still we choose one, that has neither of these two relations. Let us repeat the experiment in all the dispositions, of which the mind is susceptible. No object, in the vast variety of nature, will, in any disposition, produce any passion without these relations.

Second Experiment. Since an object, that wants both these relations can never produce any passion, let us bestow on it only one of these relations; and see what will follow. Thus suppose, I regard a stone or any common object, that belongs either to me or my companion, and by that means acquires a relation of ideas to the object of the passions: It is plain, that to consider the matter a priori, no emotion of any kind can reasonably be expected. For besides, that a relation of ideas operates secretly and calmly on the mind, it bestows an equal impulse towards the opposite passions of pride and humility, love and hatred, according as the object belongs to ourselves or others; which opposition of the passions must destroy both, and leave the mind perfectly free from any affection or emotion. This reasoning a priori is confirmed by experience. No trivial or vulgar object, that causes not a pain or pleasure, independent of the passion, will ever, by its property or other relations either to ourselves or others, be able to produce the affections of pride or humility, love or hatred.

Third Experiment. It is evident, therefore, that a relation of ideas is not able alone to give rise to these affections. Let us now remove this relation, and in its stead place a relation of impressions, by presenting an object, which is agreeable or disagreeable, but has no relation either to ourself or companion; and let us observe the consequences. To consider the matter first a priori, as in the preceding experiment; we may conclude, that the object will have a small, but an uncertain connexion with these passions. For besides, that this relation is not a cold and imperceptible one, it has not the inconvenience of the relation of ideas, nor directs us with equal force to two contrary passions, which by their opposition destroy each other. But if we consider, on the other hand, that this transition from the sensation to the affection is not forwarded by any principle, that produces a transition of ideas; but, on the contrary, that though the one impression be easily transfused into the other, yet the change of objects is supposed contrary to all the principles, that cause a transition of that kind; we may from thence infer, that nothing will ever be a steady or durable cause of any passion, that is connected with the passion merely by a relation of impressions. What our reason would conclude from analogy, after balancing these arguments, would be, that an object, which produces pleasure or uneasiness, but has no manner of connexion either with ourselves or others, may give such a turn to the disposition, as that may naturally fall into pride or love, humility or hatred, and search for other objects, upon which by a double relation, it can found these affections; but that an object, which has only one of these relations, though the most advantageous one, can never give rise to any constant and established passion.

Most fortunately all this reasoning is found to be exactly conformable to experience, and the phaenomena of the passions. Suppose I were travelling with a companion through a country, to which we are both utter strangers; it is evident, that if the prospects be beautiful, the roads agreeable, and the inns commodious, this may put me into good humour both with myself and fellow-traveller. But as we suppose, that this country has no relation either to myself or friend it can never be the immediate cause of pride or love; and therefore if I found not the passion on some other object, that bears either of us a closer relation, my emotions are rather to be considerd as the overflowings of an elevate or humane disposition, than as an established passion. The case is the same where the object produces uneasiness.

Fourth Experiment. Having found, that neither an object without any relation of ideas or impressions, nor an object, that has only one relation, can ever cause pride or humility, love or hatred; reason alone may convince us, without any farther experiment, that whatever has a double relation must necessarily excite these passions; since it is evident they must have some cause. But to leave as little room for doubt as possible, let us renew our experiments, and see whether the event in this case answers our expectation. I choose an object, such as virtue, that causes a separate satisfaction: On this object I bestow a relation to self; and find, that from this disposition of affairs, there immediately arises a passion. But what passion? That very one of pride, to which this object bears a double relation. Its idea is related to that of self, the object of the passion: The sensation it causes resembles the sensation of the passion. That I may be sure I am not mistaken in this experiment, I remove first one relation; then another; and find, that each removal destroys the passion, and leaves the object perfectly indifferent. But I am not content with this. I make a still farther trial; and instead of removing the relation, I only change it for one of a different kind. I suppose the virtue to belong to my companion, not to myself; and observe what follows from this alteration. I immediately perceive the affections wheel to about, and leaving pride, where there is only one relation, viz, of impressions, fall to the side of love, where they are attracted by a double relation of impressions and ideas. By repeating the same experiment, in changing anew the relation of ideas, I bring the affections back to pride; and by a new repetition I again place them at love or kindness. Being fully convinced of the influence of this relation, I try the effects of the other; and by changing virtue for vice, convert the pleasant impression, which arises from the former, into the disagreeable one, which proceeds from the latter. The effect still answers expectation. Vice, when placed on another, excites, by means of its double relations, the passion of hatred, instead of love, which for the same reason arises from virtue. To continue the experiment, I change anew the relation of ideas, and suppose the vice to belong to myself. What follows? What is usual. A subsequent change of the passion from hatred to humility. This humility I convert into pride by a new change of the impression; and find after all that I have compleated the round, and have by these changes brought back the passion to that very situation, in which I first found it.

But to make the matter still more certain, I alter the object; and instead of vice and virtue, make the trial upon beauty and deformity, riches and poverty, power and servitude. Each of these objects runs the circle of the passions in the same manner, by a change of their relations: And in whatever order we proceed, whether through pride, love, hatred, humility, or through humility, hatred, love, pride, the experiment is not in the least diversifyed. Esteem and contempt, indeed, arise on some occasions instead of love and hatred; but these are at the bottom the same passions, only diversifyed by some causes, which we shall explain afterwards.

Fifth Experiment. To give greater authority to these experiments, let us change the situation of affairs as much as possible, and place the passions and objects in all the different positions, of which they are susceptible. Let us suppose, beside the relations above-mentioned, that the person, along with whom I make all these experiments, is closely connected with me either by blood or friendship. He is, we shall suppose, my son or brother, or is united to me by a long and familiar acquaintance. Let us next suppose, that the cause of the passion acquires a double relation of impressions and ideas to this person; and let us see what the effects are of all these complicated attractions and relations.

Before we consider what they are in fact, let us determine what they ought to be, conformable to my hypothesis. It is plain, that, according as the impression is either pleasant or uneasy, the passion of love or hatred must arise towards the person, who is thus connected to the cause of the impression by these double relations, which I have all along required. The virtue of a brother must make me love him; as his vice or infamy must excite the contrary passion. But to judge only from the situation of affairs, I should not expect, that the affections would rest there, and never transfuse themselves into any other impression. As there is here a person, who by means of a double relation is the object of my passion, the very same reasoning leads me to think the passion will be carryed farther. The person has a relation of ideas to myself, according to the supposition; the passion, of which he is the object, by being either agreeable or uneasy, has a relation of impressions to pride or humility. It is evident, then, that one of these passions must arise from the love or hatred.

This is the reasoning I form in conformity to my hypothesis; and am pleased to find upon trial that every thing answers exactly to my expectation. The virtue or vice of a son or brother not only excites love or hatred, but by a new transition, from similar causes, gives rise to pride or humility. Nothing causes greater vanity than any shining quality in our relations; as nothing mortifies us more than their vice or infamy. This exact conformity of experience to our reasoning is a convincing proof of the solidity of that hypothesis, upon which we reason.

Sixth Experiment. This evidence will be still augmented, if we reverse the experiment, and preserving still the same relations, begin only with a different passion. Suppose, that instead of the virtue or vice of a son or brother, which causes first love or hatred, and afterwards pride or humility, we place these good or bad qualities on ourselves, without any immediate connexion with the person, who is related to us: Experience shews us, that by this change of situation the whole chain is broke, and that the mind is not conveyed from one passion to another, as in the preceding instance. We never love or hate a son or brother for the virtue or vice we discern in ourselves; though it is evident the same qualities in him give us a very sensible pride or humility. The transition from pride or humility to love or hatred is not so natural as from love or hatred to pride or humility. This may at first sight be esteemed contrary to my hypothesis; since the relations of impressions and ideas are in both cases precisely the same. Pride and humility are impressions related to love and hatred. Myself am related to the person. It should, therefore, be expected, that like causes must produce like effects, and a perfect transition arise from the double relation, as in all other cases. This difficulty we may easily solve by the following reflections.

It is evident, that as we are at all times intimately conscious of ourselves, our sentiments and passions, their ideas must strike upon us with greater vivacity than the ideas of the sentiments and passions of any other person. But every thing, that strikes upon us with vivacity, and appears in a full and strong light, forces itself, in a manner, into our consideration, and becomes present to the mind on the smallest hint and most trivial relation. For the same reason, when it is once present, it engages the attention, and keeps it from wandering to other objects, however strong may be their relation to our first object. The imagination passes easily from obscure to lively ideas, but with difficulty from lively to obscure. In the one case the relation is aided by another principle: In the other case, it is opposed by it.

Now I have observed, that those two faculties of the mind, the imagination and passions, assist each other in their operations when their propensities are similar, and when they act upon the same object. The mind has always a propensity to pass from a passion to any other related to it; and this propensity is forwarded when the object of the one passion is related to that of the other. The two impulses concur with each other, and render the whole transition more smooth and easy. But if it should happen, that while the relation of ideas, strictly speaking, continues the same, its influence, in causing a transition of the imagination, should no longer take place, it is evident its influence on the passions must also cease, as being dependent entirely on that transition. This is the reason why pride or humility is not transfused into love or hatred with the same ease, that the latter passions are changed into the former. If a person be my brother I am his likewise: but though the relations be reciprocal they have very different effects on the imagination. The passage is smooth and open from the consideration of any person related to us to that of ourself, of whom we are every moment conscious. But when the affections are once directed to ourself, the fancy passes not with the same facility from that object to any other person, how closely so ever connected with us. This easy or difficult transition of the imagination operates upon the passions, and facilitates or retards their transition, which is a clear proof, that these two faculties of the passions and imagination are connected together, and that the relations of ideas have an influence upon the affections. Besides innumerable experiments that prove this, we here find, that even when the relation remains; if by any particular circumstance its usual effect upon the fancy in producing an association or transition of ideas, is prevented; its usual effect upon the passions, in conveying us from one to another, is in like manner prevented.

Some may, perhaps, find a contradiction betwixt this phaenomenon and that of sympathy, where the mind passes easily from the idea of ourselves to that of any other object related to us. But this difficulty will vanish, if we consider that in sympathy our own person is not the object of any passion, nor is there any thing, that fixes our attention on ourselves; as in the present case, where we are supposed to be actuated with pride or humility. Ourself, independent of the perception of every other object, is in reality nothing: For which reason we must turn our view to external objects; and it is natural for us to consider with most attention such as lie contiguous to us, or resemble us. But when self is the object of a passion, it is not natural to quit the consideration of it, till the passion be exhausted: in which case the double relations of impressions and ideas can no longer operate.

Seventh Experiment. To put this whole reasoning to a farther trial, let us make a new experiment; and as we have already seen the effects of related passions and ideas, let us here suppose an identity of passions along with a relation of ideas; and let us consider the effects of this new situation. It is evident a transition of the passions from the one object to the other is here in all reason to be expected; since the relation of ideas is supposed still to continue, and identity of impressions must produce a stronger connexion, than the most perfect resemblance, that can be imagined. If a double relation, therefore, of impressions and ideas is able to produce a transition from one to the other, much more an identity of impressions with a relation of ideas. Accordingly we find, that when we either love or hate any person, the passions seldom continue within their first bounds; but extend themselves towards all the contiguous objects, and comprehend the friends and relations of him we love or hate. Nothing is more natural than to bear a kindness to one brother on account of our friendship for another, without any farther examination of his character. A quarrel with one person gives us a hatred for the whole family, though entirely innocent of that, which displeases us. Instances of this kind are every where to be met with.

There is only one difficulty in this experiment, which it will be necessary to account for, before we proceed any farther. It is evident, that though all passions pass easily from one object to another related to it, yet this transition is made with greater facility, where the more considerable object is first presented, and the lesser follows it, than where this order is reversed, and the lesser takes the precedence. Thus it is more natural for us to love the son upon account of the father, than the father upon account of the son; the servant for the master, than the master for the servant; the subject for the prince, than the prince for the subject. In like manner we more readily contract a hatred against a whole family, where our first quarrel is with the head of it, than where we are displeased with a son, or servant, or some inferior member. In short, our passions, like other objects, descend with greater facility than they ascend.

That we may comprehend, wherein consists the difficulty of explaining this phaenomenon, we must consider, that the very same reason, which determines the imagination to pass from remote to contiguous objects, with more facility than from contiguous to remote, causes it likewise to change with more ease, the less for the greater, than the greater for the less. Whatever has the greatest influence is most taken notice of; and whatever is most taken notice of, presents itself most readily to the imagination. We are more apt to over-look in any subject, what is trivial, than what appears of considerable moment; but especially if the latter takes the precedence, and first engages our attention. Thus if any accident makes us consider the Satellites of JUPITER, our fancy is naturally determined to form the idea of that planet; but if we first reflect on the principal planet, it is more natural for us to overlook its attendants. The mention of the provinces of any empire conveys our thought to the seat of the empire; but the fancy returns not with the same facility to the consideration of the provinces. The idea of the servant makes us think of the master; that of the subject carries our view to the prince. But the same relation has not an equal influence in conveying us back again. And on this is founded that reproach of Cornelia to her sons, that they ought to be ashamed she should be more known by the title of the daughter of Scipio than by that of the mother of the Gracchi. This was, in other words, exhorting them to render themselves as illustrious and famous as their grandfather, otherwise the imagination of the people, passing from her who was intermediate, and placed in an equal relation to both, would always leave them, and denominate her by what was more considerable and of greater moment. On the same principle is founded that common custom of making wives bear the name of their husbands, rather than husbands that of their wives; as also the ceremony of giving the precedency to those, whom we honour and respect. We might find many other instances to confirm this principle, were it not already sufficiently evident.

Now since the fancy finds the same facility in passing from the lesser to the greater, as from remote to contiguous, why does not this easy transition of ideas assist the transition of passions in the former case, as well as in the latter? The virtues of a friend or brother produce first love, and then pride; because in that case the imagination passes from remote to contiguous, according to its propensity. Our own virtues produce not first pride, and then love to a friend or brother; because the passage in that case would be from contiguous to remote, contrary to its propensity. But the love or hatred of an inferior causes not readily any passion to the superior, though that be the natural propensity of the imagination: While the love or hatred of a superior, causes a passion to the inferior, contrary to its propensity. In short, the same facility of transition operates not in the same manner upon superior and inferior as upon contiguous and remote. These two phaenomena appear contradictory, and require some attention to be reconciled.

As the transition of ideas is here made contrary to the natural propensity of the imagination, that faculty must be overpowered by some stronger principle of another kind; and as there is nothing ever present to the mind but impressions and ideas, this principle must necessarily lie in the impressions. Now it has been observed, that impressions or passions are connected only by their resemblance, and that where any two passions place the mind in the same or in similar dispositions, it very naturally passes from the one to the other: As on the contrary, a repugnance in the dispositions produces a difficulty in the transition of the passions. But it is observable, that this repugnance may arise from a difference of degree as well as of kind; nor do we experience a greater difficulty in passing suddenly from a small degree of love to a small degree of hatred, than from a small to a great degree of either of these affections. A man, when calm or only moderately agitated, is so different, in every respect, from himself, when disturbed with a violent passion, that no two persons can be more unlike; nor is it easy to pass from the one extreme to the other, without a considerable interval betwixt them.

The difficulty is not less, if it be not rather greater, in passing from the strong passion to the weak, than in passing from the weak to the strong, provided the one passion upon its appearance destroys the other, and they do not both of them exist at once. But the case is entirely altered, when the passions unite together, and actuate the mind at the same time. A weak passion, when added to a strong, makes not so considerable a change in the disposition, as a strong when added to a weak; for which reason there is a closer connexion betwixt the great degree and the small, than betwixt the small degree and the great.

The degree of any passion depends upon the nature of its object; and an affection directed to a person, who is considerable in our eyes, fills and possesses the mind much more than one, which has for its object a person we esteem of less consequence. Here then the contradiction betwixt the propensities of the imagination and passion displays itself. When we turn our thought to a great and a small object, the imagination finds more facility in passing from the small to the great, than from the great to the small; but the affections find a greater difficulty: And as the affections are a more powerful principle than the imagination, no wonder they prevail over it, and draw the mind to their side. In spite of the difficulty of passing from the idea of great to that of little, a passion directed to the former, produces always a similar passion towards the latter; when the great and little are related together. The idea of the servant conveys our thought most readily to the master; but the hatred or love of the master produces with greater facility anger or good-will to the servant. The strongest passion in this case takes the precedence; and the addition of the weaker making no considerable change on the disposition, the passage is by that means rendered more easy and natural betwixt them.

As in the foregoing experiment we found, that a relation of ideas, which, by any particular circumstance, ceases to produce its usual effect of facilitating the transition of ideas, ceases likewise to operate on the passions; so in the present experiment we find the same property of the impressions. Two different degrees of the same passion are surely related together; but if the smaller be first present, it has little or no tendency to introduce the greater; and that because the addition of the great to the little, produces a more sensible alteration on the temper, than the addition of the little to the great. These phaenomena, when duly weighed, will be found convincing proofs of this hypothesis.

And these proofs will be confirmed, if we consider the manner in which the mind here reconciles the contradiction, I have observed betwixt the passions and the imagination. The fancy passes with more facility from the less to the greater, than from the greater to the less: But on the contrary a violent passion produces more easily a feeble, than that does a violent. In this opposition the passion in the end prevails over the imagination; but it is commonly by complying with it, and by seeking another quality, which may counter-ballance that principle, from whence the opposition arises. When we love the father or master of a family, we little think of his children or servants. But when these are present with us, or when it lies any ways in our power to serve them, the nearness and contiguity in this case encreases their magnitude, or at least removes that opposition, which the fancy makes to the transition of the affections. If the imagination finds a difficulty in passing from greater to less, it finds an equal facility in passing from remote to contiguous, which brings the matter to an equality, and leaves the way open from the one passion to the other.

Eighth Experiment. I have observed that the transition from love or hatred to pride or humility, is more easy than from pride or humility to love or hatred; and that the difficulty, which the imagination finds in passing from contiguous to remote, is the cause why we scarce have any instance of the latter transition of the affections. I must, however, make one exception, viz, when the very cause of the pride and humility is placed in some other person. For in that case the imagination is necessitated to consider the person, nor can it possibly confine its view to ourselves. Thus nothing more readily produces kindness and affection to any person, than his approbation of our conduct and character: As on the other hand, nothing inspires us with a stronger hatred, than his blame or contempt. Here it is evident, that the original passion is pride or humility, whose object is self; and that this passion is transfused into love or hatred, whose object is some other person, notwithstanding the rule I have already established, THAT THE IMAGINATION PASSES WITH DIFFICULTY FROM CONTIGUOUS TO REMOTE. But the transition in this case is not made merely on account of the relation betwixt ourselves and the person; but because that very person is the real cause of our first passion, and of consequence is intimately connected with it. It is his approbation that produces pride; and disapprobation, humility. No wonder, then, the imagination returns back again attended with the related passions of love and hatred. This is not a contradiction, but an exception to the rule; and an exception that arises from the same reason with the rule itself.

Such an exception as this is, therefore, rather a confirmation of the rule. And indeed, if we consider all the eight experiments I have explained, we shall find that the same principle appears in all of them, and that it is by means of a transition arising from a double relation of impressions and ideas, pride and humility, love and hatred are produced. An object without [First Experiment.] a relation, or [Second and Third Experiments] with but one, never produces either of these passions; and it is [Fourth Experiment.] found that the passion always varies in conformity to the relation. Nay we may observe, that where the relation, by any particular circumstance, has not its usual effect of producing a transition either of [Sixth Experiment.] ideas or of impressions, it ceases to operate upon the passions, and gives rise neither to pride nor love, humility nor hatred. This rule we find still to hold good [Seventh and Eighth Experiments.] even under the appearance of its contrary; and as relation is frequently experienced to have no effect; which upon examination is found to proceed from some particular circumstance, that prevents the transition; so even in instances, where that circumstance, though present, prevents not the transition, it is found to arise from some other circumstance, which counter-balances it. Thus not only the variations resolve themselves into the general principle, but even the variations of these variations.

SECT. III DIFFICULTIES SOLVED

After so many and such undeniable proofs drawn from daily experience and observation, it may seem superfluous to enter into a particular examination of all the causes of love and hatred. I shall, therefore, employ the sequel of this part, First, In removing some difficulties, concerning particular causes of these passions. Secondly, In examining the compound affections, which arise from the mixture of love and hatred with other emotions.

Nothing is more evident, than that any person acquires our kindness, or is exposed to our ill-will, in proportion to the pleasure or uneasiness we receive from him, and that the passions keep pace exactly with the sensations in all their changes and variations. Whoever can find the means either by his services, his beauty, or his flattery, to render himself useful or agreeable to us, is sure of our affections: As on the other hand, whoever harms or displeases us never fails to excite our anger or hatred. When our own nation is at war with any other, we detest them under the character of cruel, perfidious, unjust and violent: But always esteem ourselves and allies equitable, moderate, and merciful. If the general of our enemies be successful, it is with difficulty we allow him the figure and character of a man. He is a sorcerer: He has a communication with daemons; as is reported of OLIVER CROMWELL, and the DUKE OF LUXEMBOURG: He is bloody-minded, and takes a pleasure in death and destruction. But if the success be on our side, our commander has all the opposite good qualities, and is a pattern of virtue, as well as of courage and conduct. His treachery we call policy: His cruelty is an evil inseparable from war. In short, every one of his faults we either endeavour to extenuate, or dignify it with the name of that virtue, which approaches it. It is evident the same method of thinking runs through common life.

There are some, who add another condition, and require not only that the pain and pleasure arise from the person, but likewise that it arise knowingly, and with a particular design and intention. A man, who wounds and harms us by accident, becomes not our enemy upon that account, nor do we think ourselves bound by any ties of gratitude to one, who does us any service after the same manner. By the intention we judge of the actions, and according as that is good or bad, they become causes of love or hatred.

But here we must make a distinction. If that quality in another, which pleases or displeases, be constant and inherent in his person and character, it will cause love or hatred independent of the intention: But otherwise a knowledge and design is requisite, in order to give rise to these passions. One that is disagreeable by his deformity or folly is the object of our aversion, though nothing be more certain, than that he has not the least intention of displeasing us by these qualities. But if the uneasiness proceed not from a quality, but an action, which is produced and annihilated in a moment, it is necessary, in order to produce some relation, and connect this action sufficiently with the person, that it be derived from a particular forethought and design. It is not enough, that the action arise from the person, and have him for its immediate cause and author. This relation alone is too feeble and inconstant to be a foundation for these passions. It reaches not the sensible and thinking part, and neither proceeds from any thing durable in him, nor leaves any thing behind it; but passes in a moment, and is as if it had never been. On the other hand, an intention shews certain qualities, which remaining after the action is performed, connect it with the person, and facilitate the transition of ideas from one to the other. We can never think of him without reflecting on these qualities; unless repentance and a change of life have produced an alteration in that respect: In which case the passion is likewise altered. This therefore is one reason, why an intention is requisite to excite either love or hatred.

But we must farther consider, that an intention, besides its strengthening the relation of ideas, is often necessary to produce a relation of impressions, and give rise to pleasure and uneasiness. For it is observable, that the principal part of an injury is the contempt and hatred, which it shews in the person, that injures us; and without that, the mere harm gives us a less sensible uneasiness. In like manner, a good office is agreeable, chiefly because it flatters our vanity, and is a proof of the kindness and esteem of the person, who performs it. The removal of the intention, removes the mortification in the one case, and vanity in the other, and must of course cause a remarkable diminution in the passions of love and hatred.

I grant, that these effects of the removal of design, in diminishing the relations of impressions and ideas, are not entire, nor able to remove every degree of these relations. But then I ask, if the removal of design be able entirely to remove the passion of love and hatred? Experience, I am sure, informs us of the contrary, nor is there any thing more certain, than that men often fall into a violent anger for injuries, which they themselves must own to be entirely involuntary and accidental. This emotion, indeed, cannot be of long continuance; but still is sufficient to shew, that there is a natural connexion betwixt uneasiness and anger, and that the relation of impressions will operate upon a very small relation of ideas. But when the violence of the impression is once a little abated, the defect of the relation begins to be better felt; and as the character of a person is no wise interested in such injuries as are casual and involuntary, it seldom happens that on their account, we entertain a lasting enmity.

To illustrate this doctrine by a parallel instance, we may observe, that not only the uneasiness, which proceeds from another by accident, has but little force to excite our passion, but also that which arises from an acknowledged necessity and duty. One that has a real design of harming us, proceeding not from hatred and ill-will, but from justice and equity, draws not upon him our anger, if we be in any degree reasonable; notwithstanding he is both the cause, and the knowing cause of our sufferings. Let us examine a little this phaenomenon.

It is evident in the first place, that this circumstance is not decisive; and though it may be able to diminish the passions, it is seldom it can entirely remove them. How few criminals are there, who have no ill-will to the person, that accuses them, or to the judge, that condemns them, even though they be conscious of their own deserts? In like manner our antagonist in a law-suit, and our competitor for any office, are commonly regarded as our enemies; though we must acknowledge, if we would but reflect a moment, that their motive is entirely as justifiable as our own.

Besides we may consider, that when we receive harm from any person, we are apt to imagine him criminal, and it is with extreme difficulty we allow of his justice and innocence. This is a clear proof, that, independent of the opinion of iniquity, any harm or uneasiness has a natural tendency to excite our hatred, and that afterwards we seek for reasons upon which we may justify and establish the passion. Here the idea of injury produces not the passion, but arises from it.

Nor is it any wonder that passion should produce the opinion of injury; since otherwise it must suffer a considerable diminution, which all the passions avoid as much as possible. The removal of injury may remove the anger, without proving that the anger arises only from the injury. The harm and the justice are two contrary objects, of which the one has a tendency to produce hatred, and the other love; and it is according to their different degrees, and our particular turn of thinking, that either of the objects prevails, and excites its proper passion.

SECT. IV OF THE LOVE OF RELATIONS

Having given a reason, why several actions, that cause a real pleasure or uneasiness, excite not any degree, or but a small one, of the passion of love or hatred towards the actors; it will be necessary to shew, wherein consists the pleasure or uneasiness of many objects, which we find by experience to produce these passions.

According to the preceding system there is always required a double relation of impressions and ideas betwixt the cause and effect, in order to produce either love or hatred. But though this be universally true, it is remarkable that the passion of love may be excited by only one relation of a different kind, viz, betwixt ourselves and the object; or more properly speaking, that this relation is always attended with both the others. Whoever is united to us by any connexion is always sure of a share of our love, proportioned to the connexion, without enquiring into his other qualities. Thus the relation of blood produces the strongest tie the mind is capable of in the love of parents to their children, and a lesser degree of the same affection, as the relation lessens. Nor has consanguinity alone this effect, but any other relation without exception. We love our country-men, our neighbours, those of the same trade, profession, and even name with ourselves. Every one of these relations is esteemed some tie, and gives a title to a share of our affection.

There is another phaenomenon, which is parallel to this, viz, that acquaintance, without any kind of relation, gives rise to love and kindness. When we have contracted a habitude and intimacy with any person; though in frequenting his company we have not been able to discover any very valuable quality, of which he is possessed; yet we cannot forebear preferring him to strangers, of whose superior merit we are fully convinced. These two phaenomena of the effects of relation and acquaintance will give mutual light to each other, and may be both explained from the same principle.

Those, who take a pleasure in declaiming against human nature, have observed, that man is altogether insufficient to support himself; and that when you loosen all the holds, which he has of external objects, he immediately drops down into the deepest melancholy and despair. From this, say they, proceeds that continual search after amusement in gaming, in hunting, in business; by which we endeavour to forget ourselves, and excite our spirits from the languid state, into which they fall, when not sustained by some brisk and lively emotion. To this method of thinking I so far agree, that I own the mind to be insufficient, of itself, to its own entertainment, and that it naturally seeks after foreign objects, which may produce a lively sensation, and agitate the spirits. On the appearance of such an object it awakes, as it were, from a dream: The blood flows with a new tide: The heart is elevated: And the whole man acquires a vigour, which he cannot command in his solitary and calm moments. Hence company is naturally so rejoicing, as presenting the liveliest of all objects, viz, a rational and thinking Being like ourselves, who communicates to us all the actions of his mind; makes us privy to his inmost sentiments and affections; and lets us see, in the very instant of their production, all the emotions, which are caused by any object. Every lively idea is agreeable, but especially that of a passion, because such an idea becomes a kind of passion, and gives a more sensible agitation to the mind, than any other image or conception.

This being once admitted, all the rest is easy. For as the company of strangers is agreeable to us for a short time, by inlivening our thought; so the company of our relations and acquaintance must be peculiarly agreeable, because it has this effect in a greater degree, and is of more durable influence. Whatever is related to us is conceived in a lively manner by the easy transition from ourselves to the related object. Custom also, or acquaintance facilitates the entrance, and strengthens the conception of any object. The first case is parallel to our reasonings from cause and effect; the second to education. And as reasoning and education concur only in producing a lively and strong idea of any object; so is this the only particular, which is common to relation and acquaintance. This must, therefore, be the influencing quality, by which they produce all their common effects; and love or kindness being one of these effects, it must be from the force and liveliness of conception, that the passion is derived. Such a conception is peculiarly agreeable, and makes us have an affectionate regard for every thing, that produces it, when the proper object of kindness and goodwill.

It is obvious, that people associate together according to their particular tempers and dispositions, and that men of gay tempers naturally love the gay; as the serious bear an affection to the serious. This not only happens, where they remark this resemblance betwixt themselves and others, but also by the natural course of the disposition, and by a certain sympathy, which always arises betwixt similar characters. Where they remark the resemblance, it operates after the manner of a relation, by producing a connexion of ideas. Where they do not remark it, it operates by some other principle; and if this latter principle be similar to the former, it must be received as a confirmation of the foregoing reasoning.

The idea of ourselves is always intimately present to us, and conveys a sensible degree of vivacity to the idea of any other object, to which we are related. This lively idea changes by degrees into a real impression; these two kinds of perception being in a great measure the same, and differing only in their degrees of force and vivacity. But this change must be produced with the greater ease, that our natural temper gives us a propensity to the same impression, which we observe in others, and makes it arise upon any slight occasion. In that case resemblance converts the idea into an impression, not only by means of the relation, and by transfusing the original vivacity into the related idea; but also by presenting such materials as take fire from the least spark. And as in both cases a love or affection arises from the resemblance, we may learn that a sympathy with others is agreeable only by giving an emotion to the spirits, since an easy sympathy and correspondent emotions are alone common to RELATION, ACQUAINTANCE, and RESEMBLANCE.

The great propensity men have to pride may be considered as another similar phaenomenon. It often happens, that after we have lived a considerable time in any city; however at first it might be disagreeable to us; yet as we become familiar with the objects, and contact an acquaintance, though merely with the streets and buildings, the aversion diminishes by degrees, and at last changes into the opposite passion. The mind finds a satisfaction and ease in the view of objects, to which it is accustomed, and naturally prefers them to others, which, though, perhaps, in themselves more valuable, are less known to it. By the same quality of the mind we are seduced into a good opinion of ourselves, and of all objects, that belong to us. They appear in a stronger light; are more agreeable; and consequently fitter subjects of pride and vanity, than any other.

It may not be amiss, in treating of the affection we bear our acquaintance and relations, to observe some pretty curious phaenomena, which attend it.

It is easy to remark in common life, that children esteem their relation to their mother to be weakened, in a great measure, by her second marriage, and no longer regard her with the same eye, as if she had continued in her state of widow-hood. Nor does this happen only, when they have felt any inconveniences from her second marriage, or when her husband is much her inferior; but even without any of these considerations, and merely because she has become part of another family. This also takes place with regard to the second marriage of a father; but in a much less degree: And it is certain the ties of blood are not so much loosened in the latter case as by the marriage of a mother. These two phaenomena are remarkable in themselves, but much more so when compared.

In order to produce a perfect relation betwixt two objects, it is requisite, not only that the imagination be conveyed from one to the other by resemblance, contiguity or causation, but also that it return back from the second to the first with the same ease and facility. At first sight this may seem a necessary and unavoidable consequence. If one object resemble another, the latter object must necessarily resemble the former. If one object be the cause of another, the second object is effect to its cause. It is the same case with contiguity: And therefore the relation being always reciprocal, it may be thought, that the return of the imagination from the second to the first must also, in every case, be equally natural as its passage from the first to the second. But upon farther examination we shall easily discover our mistake. For supposing the second object, beside its reciprocal relation to the first, to have also a strong relation to a third object; in that case the thought, passing from the first object to the second, returns not back with the same facility, though the relation continues the same; but is readily carryed on to the third object, by means of the new relation, which presents itself, and gives a new impulse to the imagination. This new relation, therefore, weakens the tie betwixt the first and second objects. The fancy is by its very nature wavering and inconstant; and considers always two objects as more strongly related together, where it finds the passage equally easy both in going and returning, than where the transition is easy only in one of these motions. The double motion is a kind of a double tie, and binds the objects together in the closest and most intimate manner.

The second marriage of a mother breaks not the relation of child and parent; and that relation suffices to convey my imagination from myself to her with the greatest ease and facility. But after the imagination is arrived at this point of view, it finds its object to be surrounded with so many other relations, which challenge its regard, that it knows not which to prefer, and is at a loss what new object to pitch upon. The ties of interest and duty bind her to another family, and prevent that return of the fancy from her to myself, which is necessary to support the union. The thought has no longer the vibration, requisite to set it perfectly at ease, and indulge its inclination to change. It goes with facility, but returns with difficulty; and by that interruption finds the relation much weakened from what it would be were the passage open and easy on both sides.

Now to give a reason, why this effect follows not in the same degree upon the second marriage of a father: we may reflect on what has been proved already, that though the imagination goes easily from the view of a lesser object to that of a greater, yet it returns not with the same facility from the greater to the less. When my imagination goes from myself to my father, it passes not so readily from him to his second wife, nor considers him as entering into a different family, but as continuing the head of that family, of which I am myself a part. His superiority prevents the easy transition of the thought from him to his spouse, but keeps the passage still open for a return to myself along the same relation of child and parent. He is not sunk in the new relation he acquires; so that the double motion or vibration of thought is still easy and natural. By this indulgence of the fancy in its inconstancy, the tie of child and parent still preserves its full force and influence. A mother thinks not her tie to a son weakened, because it is shared with her husband: Nor a son his with a parent, because it is shared with a brother. The third object is here related to the first, as well as to the second; so that the imagination goes and comes along all of them with the greatest facility.

SECT. V OF OUR ESTEEM FOR THE RICH AND POWERFUL

Nothing has a greater tendency to give us an esteem for any person, than his power and riches; or a contempt, than his poverty and meanness: And as esteem and contempt are to be considered as species of love and hatred, it will be proper in this place to explain these phaenomena.

Here it happens most fortunately, that the greatest difficulty is not to discover a principle capable of producing such an effect, but to choose the chief and predominant among several, that present themselves. The satisfaction we take in the riches of others, and the esteem we have for the possessors may be ascribed to three different causes. FIRST, To the objects they possess; such as houses, gardens, equipages; which, being agreeable in themselves, necessarily produce a sentiment of pleasure in every one; that either considers or surveys them. SECONDLY, To the expectation of advantage from the rich and powerful by our sharing their possessions. THIRDLY, To sympathy, which makes us partake of the satisfaction of every one, that approaches us. All these principles may concur in producing the present phaenomenon. The question is, to which of them we ought principally to ascribe it.

It is certain, that the first principle, viz, the reflection on agreeable objects, has a greater influence, than what, at first sight, we may be apt to imagine. We seldom reflect on what is beautiful or ugly, agreeable or disagreeable, without an emotion of pleasure or uneasiness; and though these sensations appear not much in our common indolent way of thinking, it is easy, either in reading or conversation, to discover them. Men of wit always turn the discourse on subjects that are entertaining to the imagination; and poets never present any objects but such as are of the same nature. Mr Philips has chosen CYDER for the subject of an excellent poem. Beer would not have been so proper, as being neither so agreeable to the taste nor eye. But he would certainly have preferred wine to either of them, coued his native country have afforded him so agreeable a liquor. We may learn from thence, that every thing, which is agreeable to the senses, is also in some measure agreeable to the fancy, and conveys to the thought an image of that satisfaction, which it gives by its real application to the bodily organs.

But though these reasons may induce us to comprehend this delicacy of the imagination among the causes of the respect, which we pay the rich and powerful, there are many other reasons, that may keep us from regarding it as the sole or principal. For as the ideas of pleasure can have an influence only by means of their vivacity, which makes them approach impressions, it is most natural those ideas should have that influence, which are favoured by most circumstances, and have a natural tendency to become strong and lively; such as our ideas of the passions and sensations of any human creature. Every human creature resembles ourselves, and by that means has an advantage above any other object, in operating on the imagination.

Besides, if we consider the nature of that faculty, and the great influence which all relations have upon it, we shall easily be persuaded, that however the ideas of the pleasant wines, music, or gardens, which the rich man enjoys, may become lively and agreeable, the fancy will not confine itself to them, but will carry its view to the related objects; and in particular, to the person, who possesses them. And this is the more natural, that the pleasant idea or image produces here a passion towards the person, by means of his relation to the object; so that it is unavoidable but he must enter into the original conception, since he makes the object of the derivative passion: But if he enters into the original conception, and is considered as enjoying these agreeable objects, it is sympathy, which is properly the cause of the affection; and the third principle is more powerful and universal than the first.

Add to this, that riches and power alone, even though unemployed, naturally cause esteem and respect: And consequently these passions arise not from the idea of any beautiful or agreeable objects. It is true; money implies a kind of representation of such objects, by the power it affords of obtaining them; and for that reason may still be esteemed proper to convey those agreeable images, which may give rise to the passion. But as this prospect is very distant, it is more natural for us to take a contiguous object, viz, the satisfaction, which this power affords the person, who is possest of it. And of this we shall be farther satisfyed, if we consider, that riches represent the goods of life, only by means of the will; which employs them; and therefore imply in their very nature an idea of the person, and cannot be considered without a kind of sympathy with his sensations and enjoyments.

This we may confirm by a reflection, which to some will, perhaps, appear too subtile and refined. I have already observed, that power, as distinguished from its exercise, has either no meaning at all, or is nothing but a possibility or probability of existence; by which any object approaches to reality, and has a sensible influence on the mind. I have also observed, that this approach, by an illusion of the fancy, appears much greater, when we ourselves are possest of the power, than when it is enjoyed by another; and that in the former case the objects seem to touch upon the very verge of reality, and convey almost an equal satisfaction, as if actually in our possession. Now I assert, that where we esteem a person upon account of his riches, we must enter into this sentiment of the proprietor, and that without such a sympathy the idea of the agreeable objects, which they give him the power to produce, would have but a feeble influence upon us. An avaritious man is respected for his money, though he scarce is possest of a power; that is, there scarce is a probability or even possibility of his employing it in the acquisition of the pleasures and conveniences of life. To himself alone this power seems perfect and entire; and therefore we must receive his sentiments by sympathy, before we can have a strong intense idea of these enjoyments, or esteem him upon account of them.

Thus we have found, that the first principle, viz, the agreeable idea of those objects, which riches afford the enjoyment of; resolves itself in a great measure into the third, and becomes a sympathy with the person we esteem or love. Let us now examine the second principle, viz, the agreeable expectation of advantage, and see what force we may justly attribute to it.

It is obvious, that though riches and authority undoubtedly give their owner a power of doing us service, yet this power is not to be considered as on the same footing with that, which they afford him, of pleasing himself, and satisfying his own appetites. Self-love approaches the power and exercise very near each other in the latter case; but in order to produce a similar effect in the former, we must suppose a friendship and good-will to be conjoined with the riches. Without that circumstance it is difficult to conceive on what we can found our hope of advantage from the riches of others, though there is nothing more certain, than that we naturally esteem and respect the rich, even before we discover in them any such favourable disposition towards us.

But I carry this farther, and observe, not only that we respect the rich and powerful, where they shew no inclination to serve us, but also when we lie so much out of the sphere of their activity, that they cannot even be supposed to be endowed with that power. Prisoners of war are always treated with a respect suitable to their condition; and it is certain riches go very far towards fixing the condition of any person. If birth and quality enter for a share, this still affords us an argument of the same kind. For what is it we call a man of birth, but one who is descended from a long succession of rich and powerful ancestors, and who acquires our esteem by his relation to persons whom we esteem? His ancestors, therefore, though dead, are respected, in some measure, on account of their riches, and consequently without any kind of expectation.

But not to go so far as prisoners of war and the dead to find instances of this disinterested esteem for riches, let us observe with a little attention those phaenomena that occur to us in common life and conversation. A man, who is himself of a competent fortune, upon coming into a company of strangers, naturally treats them with different degrees of respect and deference, as he is informed of their different fortunes and conditions; though it is impossible he can ever propose, and perhaps would not accept of any advantage from them. A traveller is always admitted into company, and meets with civility, in proportion as his train and equipage speak him a man of great or moderate fortune. In short, the different ranks of men are, in a great measure, regulated by riches, and that with regard to superiors as well as inferiors, strangers as well as acquaintance.

There is, indeed, an answer to these arguments, drawn from the influence of general rules. It may be pretended, that being accustomed to expect succour and protection from the rich and powerful, and to esteem them upon that account, we extend the same sentiments to those, who resemble them in their fortune, but from whom we can never hope for any advantage. The general rule still prevails, and by giving a bent to the imagination draws along the passion, in the same manner as if its proper object were real and existent.

But that this principle does not here take place, will easily appear, if we consider, that in order to establish a general rule, and extend it beyond its proper bounds, there is required a certain uniformity in our experience, and a great superiority of those instances, which are conformable to the rule, above the contrary. But here the case is quite otherwise. Of a hundred men of credit and fortune I meet with, there is not, perhaps, one from whom I can expect advantage; so that it is impossible any custom can ever prevail in the present case.

Upon the whole, there remains nothing, which can give us an esteem for power and riches, and a contempt for meanness and poverty, except the principle of sympathy, by which we enter into the sentiments of the rich and poor, and partake of their pleasure and uneasiness. Riches give satisfaction to their possessor; and this satisfaction is conveyed to the beholder by the imagination, which produces an idea resembling the original impression in force and vivacity. This agreeable idea or impression is connected with love, which is an agreeable passion. It proceeds from a thinking conscious being, which is the very object of love. From this relation of impressions, and identity of ideas, the passion arises, according to my hypothesis.

The best method of reconciling us to this opinion is to take a general survey of the universe, and observe the force of sympathy through the whole animal creation, and the easy communication of sentiments from one thinking being to another. In all creatures, that prey not upon others, and are not agitated with violent passions, there appears a remarkable desire of company, which associates them together, without any advantages they can ever propose to reap from their union. This is still more conspicuous in man, as being the creature of the universe, who has the most ardent desire of society, and is fitted for it by the most advantages. We can form no wish, which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer. Every pleasure languishes when enjoyed a-part from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable. Whatever other passions we may be actuated by; pride, ambition, avarice, curiosity, revenge or lust; the soul or animating principle of them all is sympathy; nor would they have any force, were we to abstract entirely from the thoughts and sentiments of others. Let all the powers and elements of nature conspire to serve and obey one man: Let the sun rise and set at his command: The sea and rivers roll as he pleases, and the earth furnish spontaneously whatever may be useful or agreeable to him: He will still be miserable, till you give him some one person at least, with whom he may share his happiness, and whose esteem and friendship he may enjoy.

This conclusion from a general view of human nature, we may confirm by particular instances, wherein the force of sympathy is very remarkable. Most kinds of beauty are derived from this origin; and though our first object be some senseless inanimate piece of matter, it is seldom we rest there, and carry not our view to its influence on sensible and rational creatures. A man, who shews us any house or building, takes particular care among other things to point out the convenience of the apartments, the advantages of their situation, and the little room lost in the stairs, antichambers and passages; and indeed it is evident, the chief part of the beauty consists in these particulars. The observation of convenience gives pleasure, since convenience is a beauty. But after what manner does it give pleasure? It is certain our own interest is not in the least concerned; and as this is a beauty of interest, not of form, so to speak, it must delight us merely by communication, and by our sympathizing with the proprietor of the lodging. We enter into his interest by the force of imagination, and feel the same satisfaction, that the objects naturally occasion in him.

This observation extends to tables, chairs, scritoires, chimneys, coaches, sadles, ploughs, and indeed to every work of art; it being an universal rule, that their beauty is chiefly derived from their utility, and from their fitness for that purpose, to which they are destined. But this is an advantage, that concerns only the owner, nor is there any thing but sympathy, which can interest the spectator.

It is evident, that nothing renders a field more agreeable than its fertility, and that scarce any advantages of ornament or situation will be able to equal this beauty. It is the same case with particular trees and plants, as with the field on which they grow. I know not but a plain, overgrown with furze and broom, may be, in itself, as beautiful as a hill covered with vines or olive-trees; though it will never appear so to one, who is acquainted with the value of each. But this is a beauty merely of imagination, and has no foundation in what appears to the senses. Fertility and value have a plain reference to use; and that to riches, joy, and plenty; in which though we have no hope of partaking, yet we enter into them by the vivacity of the fancy, and share them, in some measure, with the proprietor.

There is no rule in painting more reasonable than that of ballancing the figures, and placing them with the greatest exactness on their proper centers of gravity. A figure, which is not justly ballanced, is disagreeable; and that because it conveys the ideas of its fall, of harm, and of pain: Which ideas are painful, when by sympathy they acquire any degree of force and vivacity.

Add to this, that the principal part of personal beauty is an air of health and vigour, and such a construction of members as promises strength and activity. This idea of beauty cannot be accounted for but by sympathy.

In general we may remark, that the minds of men are mirrors to one another, not only because they reflect each others emotions, but also because those rays of passions, sentiments and opinions may be often reverberated, and may decay away by insensible degrees. Thus the pleasure, which a rich man receives from his possessions, being thrown upon the beholder, causes a pleasure and esteem; which sentiments again, being perceived and sympathized with, encrease the pleasure of the possessor; and being once more reflected, become a new foundation for pleasure and esteem in the beholder. There is certainly an original satisfaction in riches derived from that power, which they bestow, of enjoying all the pleasures of life; and as this is their very nature and essence, it must be the first source of all the passions, which arise from them. One of the most considerable of these passions is that of love or esteem in others, which therefore proceeds from a sympathy with the pleasure of the possessor. But the possessor has also a secondary satisfaction in riches arising from the love and esteem he acquires by them, and this satisfaction is nothing but a second reflexion of that original pleasure, which proceeded from himself. This secondary satisfaction or vanity becomes one of the principal recommendations of riches, and is the chief reason, why we either desire them for ourselves, or esteem them in others. Here then is a third rebound of the original pleasure; after which it is difficult to distinguish the images and reflexions, by reason of their faintness and confusion.

SECT. VI OF BENEVOLENCE AND ANGER

Ideas may be compared to the extension and solidity of matter, and impressions, especially reflective ones, to colours, tastes, smells and other sensible qualities. Ideas never admit of a total union, but are endowed with a kind of impenetrability, by which they exclude each other, and are capable of forming a compound by their conjunction, not by their mixture. On the other hand, impressions and passions are susceptible of an entire union; and like colours, may be blended so perfectly together, that each of them may lose itself, and contribute only to vary that uniform impression, which arises from the whole. Some of the most curious phaenomena of the human mind are derived from this property of the passions.

In examining those ingredients, which are capable of uniting with love and hatred, I begin to be sensible, in some measure, of a misfortune, that has attended every system of philosophy, with which the world has been yet acquainted. It is commonly found, that in accounting for the operations of nature by any particular hypothesis; among a number of experiments, that quadrate exactly with the principles we would endeavour to establish; there is always some phaenomenon, which is more stubborn, and will not so easily bend to our purpose. We need not be surprized, that this should happen in natural philosophy. The essence and composition of external bodies are so obscure, that we must necessarily, in our reasonings, or rather conjectures concerning them, involve ourselves in contradictions and absurdities. But as the perceptions of the mind are perfectly known, and I have used all imaginable caution in forming conclusions concerning them, I have always hoped to keep clear of those contradictions, which have attended every other system. Accordingly the difficulty, which I have at present in my eye, is nowise contrary to my system; but only departs a little from that simplicity, which has been hitherto its principal force and beauty.

The passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoined with benevolence and anger. It is this conjunction, which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action. But love and hatred are not compleated within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce, but carry the mind to something farther. Love is always followed by a desire of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery: As hatred produces a desire of the misery and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. So remarkable a difference betwixt these two sets of passions of pride and humility, love and hatred, which in so many other particulars correspond to each other, merits our attention.

The conjunction of this desire and aversion with love and hatred may be accounted for by two different hypotheses. The first is, that love and hatred have not only a cause, which excites them, viz, pleasure and pain; and an object, to which they are directed, viz, a person or thinking being; but likewise an end, which they endeavour to attain, viz, the happiness or misery of the person beloved or hated; all which views, mixing together, make only one passion. According to this system, love is nothing but the desire of happiness to another person, and hatred that of misery. The desire and aversion constitute the very nature of love and hatred. They are not only inseparable but the same.

But this is evidently contrary to experience. For though it is certain we never love any person without desiring his happiness, nor hate any without wishing his misery, yet these desires arise only upon the ideas of the happiness or misery of our friend or enemy being presented by the imagination, and are not absolutely essential to love and hatred. They are the most obvious and natural sentiments of these affections, but not the only ones. The passions may express themselves in a hundred ways, and may subsist a considerable time, without our reflecting on the happiness or misery of their objects; which clearly proves, that these desires are not the same with love and hatred, nor make any essential part of them.

We may, therefore, infer, that benevolence and anger are passions different from love and hatred, and only conjoined with them, by the original constitution of the mind. As nature has given to the body certain appetites and inclinations, which she encreases, diminishes, or changes according to the situation of the fluids or solids; she has proceeded in the same manner with the mind. According as we are possessed with love or hatred, the correspondent desire of the happiness or misery of the person, who is the object of these passions, arises in the mind, and varies with each variation of these opposite passions. This order of things, abstractedly considered, is not necessary. Love and hatred might have been unattended with any such desires, or their particular connexion might have been entirely reversed. If nature had so pleased, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire of producing misery annexed to love, and of happiness to hatred. If the sensation of the passion and desire be opposite, nature coued have altered the sensation without altering the tendency of the desire, and by that means made them compatible with each other.

SECT. VII OF COMPASSION

But though the desire of the happiness or misery of others, according to the love or hatred we bear them, be an arbitrary and original instinct implanted in our nature, we find it may be counterfeited on many occasions, and may arise from secondary principles. Pity is a concern for, and malice a joy in the misery of others, without any friendship or enmity to occasion this concern or joy. We pity even strangers, and such as are perfectly indifferent to us: And if our ill-will to another proceed from any harm or injury, it is not, properly speaking, malice, but revenge. But if we examine these affections of pity and malice we shall find them to be secondary ones, arising from original affections, which are varied by some particular turn of thought and imagination.

It will be easy to explain the passion of pity, from the precedent reasoning concerning sympathy. We have a lively idea of every thing related to us. All human creatures are related to us by resemblance. Their persons, therefore, their interests, their passions, their pains and pleasures must strike upon us in a lively manner, and produce an emotion similar to the original one; since a lively idea is easily converted into an impression. If this be true in general, it must be more so of affliction and sorrow. These have always a stronger and more lasting influence than any pleasure or enjoyment.

A spectator of a tragedy passes through a long train of grief, terror, indignation, and other affections, which the poet represents in the persons he introduces. As many tragedies end happily, and no excellent one can be composed without some reverses of fortune, the spectator must sympathize with all these changes, and receive the fictitious joy as well as every other passion. Unless, therefore, it be asserted, that every distinct passion is communicated by a distinct original quality, and is not derived from the general principle of sympathy above-explained, it must be allowed, that all of them arise from that principle. To except any one in particular must appear highly unreasonable. As they are all first present in the mind of one person, and afterwards appear in the mind of another; and as the manner of their appearance, first as an idea, then as an impression, is in every case the same, the transition must arise from the same principle. I am at least sure, that this method of reasoning would be considered as certain, either in natural philosophy or common life.

Add to this, that pity depends, in a great measure, on the contiguity, and even sight of the object; which is a proof, that it is derived from the imagination. Not to mention that women and children are most subject to pity, as being most guided by that faculty. The same infirmity, which makes them faint at the sight of a naked sword, though in the hands of their best friend, makes them pity extremely those, whom they find in any grief or affliction. Those philosophers, who derive this passion from I know not what subtile reflections on the instability of fortune, and our being liable to the same miseries we behold, will find this observation contrary to them among a great many others, which it were easy to produce.

There remains only to take notice of a pretty remarkable phaenomenon of this passion; which is, that the communicated passion of sympathy sometimes acquires strength from the weakness of its original, and even arises by a transition from affections, which have no existence. Thus when a person obtains any honourable office, or inherits a great fortune, we are always the more rejoiced for his prosperity, the less sense he seems to have of it, and the greater equanimity and indifference he shews in its enjoyment. In like manner a man, who is not dejected by misfortunes, is the more lamented on account of his patience; and if that virtue extends so far as utterly to remove all sense of uneasiness, it still farther encreases our compassion. When a person of merit falls into what is vulgarly esteemed a great misfortune, we form a notion of his condition; and carrying our fancy from the cause to the usual effect, first conceive a lively idea of his sorrow, and then feel an impression of it, entirely over-looking that greatness of mind, which elevates him above such emotions, or only considering it so far as to encrease our admiration, love and tenderness for him. We find from experience, that such a degree of passion is usually connected with such a misfortune; and though there be an exception in the present case, yet the imagination is affected by the general rule, and makes us conceive a lively idea of the passion, or rather feel the passion itself, in the same manner, as if the person were really actuated by it. From the same principles we blush for the conduct of those, who behave themselves foolishly before us; and that though they shew no sense of shame, nor seem in the least conscious of their folly. All this proceeds from sympathy; but it is of a partial kind, and views its objects only on one side, without considering the other, which has a contrary effect, and would entirely destroy that emotion, which arises from the first appearance.

We have also instances, wherein an indifference and insensibility under misfortune encreases our concern for the misfortunate, even though the indifference proceed not from any virtue and magnanimity. It is an aggravation of a murder, that it was committed upon persons asleep and in perfect security; as historians readily observe of any infant prince, who is captive in the hands of his enemies, that he is the more worthy of compassion the less sensible he is of his miserable condition. As we ourselves are here acquainted with the wretched situation of the person, it gives us a lively idea and sensation of sorrow, which is the passion that generally attends it; and this idea becomes still more lively, and the sensation more violent by a contrast with that security and indifference, which we observe in the person himself. A contrast of any kind never fails to affect the imagination, especially when presented by the subject; and it is on the imagination that pity entirely depends.

[FN 11. To prevent all ambiguity, I must observe, that where I oppose the imagination to the memory, I mean in general the faculty that presents our fainter ideas. In all other places, and particularly when it is opposed to the understanding, I understand the same faculty, excluding only our demonstrative and probable reasonings.]

SECT. VIII OF MALICE AND ENVY

We must now proceed to account for the passion of malice, which imitates the effects of hatred, as pity does those of love; and gives us a joy in the sufferings and miseries of others, without any offence or injury on their part.

So little are men governed by reason in their sentiments and opinions, that they always judge more of objects by comparison than from their intrinsic worth and value. When the mind considers, or is accustomed to, any degree of perfection, whatever falls short of it, though really esteemable, has notwithstanding the same effect upon the passions; as what is defective and ill. This is an original quality of the soul, and similar to what we have every day experience of in our bodies. Let a man heat one band and cool the other; the same water will, at the same time, seem both hot and cold, according to the disposition of the different organs. A small degree of any quality, succeeding a greater, produces the same sensation, as if less than it really is, and even sometimes as the opposite quality. Any gentle pain, that follows a violent one, seems as nothing, or rather becomes a pleasure; as on the other hand a violent pain, succeeding a gentle one, is doubly grievous and uneasy.

This no one can doubt of with regard to our passions and sensations. But there may arise some difficulty with regard to our ideas and objects. When an object augments or diminishes to the eye or imagination from a comparison with others, the image and idea of the object are still the same, and are equally extended in the retina, and in the brain or organ of perception. The eyes refract the rays of light, and the optic nerves convey the images to the brain in the very same manner, whether a great or small object has preceded; nor does even the imagination alter the dimensions of its object on account of a comparison with others. The question then is, how from the same impression and the same idea we can form such different judgments concerning the same object, and at one time admire its bulk, and at another despise its littleness. This variation in our judgments must certainly proceed from a variation in some perception; but as the variation lies not in the immediate impression or idea of the object, it must lie in some other impression, that accompanies it.

In order to explain this matter, I shall just touch upon two principles, one of which shall be more fully explained in the progress of this treatise; the other has been already accounted for. I believe it may safely be established for a general maxim, that no object is presented to the senses, nor image formed in the fancy, but what is accompanyed with some emotion or movement of spirits proportioned to it; and however custom may make us insensible of this sensation and cause us to confound it with the object or idea, it will be easy, by careful and exact experiments, to separate and distinguish them. For to instance only in the cases of extension and number; it is evident, that any very bulky object, such as the ocean, an extended plain, a vast chain of mountains, a wide forest: or any very numerous collection of objects, such as an army, a fleet, a crowd, excite in the mind a sensible emotion; and that the admiration, which arises on the appearance of such objects, is one of the most lively pleasures, which human nature is capable of enjoying. Now as this admiration encreases or diminishes by the encrease or diminution of the objects, we may conclude, according to our foregoing [Book I. Part III. Sect. 15.] principles, that it is a compound effect, proceeding from the conjunction of the several effects, which arise from each part of the cause. Every part, then, of extension, and every unite of number has a separate emotion attending it; and though that emotion be not always agreeable, yet by its conjunction with others, and by its agitating the spirits to a just pitch, it contributes to the production of admiration, which is always agreeable. If this be allowed with respect to extension and number, we can make no difficulty with respect to virtue and vice, wit and folly, riches and poverty, happiness and misery, and other objects of that kind, which are always attended with an evident emotion.

The second principle I shall take notice of is that of our adherence to general rules; which has such a mighty influence on the actions and understanding, and is able to impose on the very senses. When an object is found by-experience to be always accompanyed with another; whenever the first object appears, though changed in very material circumstances; we naturally fly to the conception of the second, and form an idea of it in as lively and strong a manner, as if we had infered its existence by the justest and most authentic conclusion of our understanding. Nothing can undeceive us, not even our senses, which, instead of correcting this false judgment, are often perverted by it, and seem to authorize its errors.

The conclusion I draw from these two principles, joined to the influence of comparison above-mentioned, is very short and decisive. Every object is attended with some emotion proportioned to it; a great object with a great emotion, a small object with a small emotion. A great object, therefore, succeeding a small one makes a great emotion succeed a small one. Now a great emotion succeeding a small one becomes still greater, and rises beyond its ordinary proportion. But as there is a certain degree of an emotion, which commonly attends every magnitude of an object; when the emotion encreases, we naturally imagine that the object has likewise encreased. The effect conveys our view to its usual cause, a certain degree of emotion to a certain magnitude of the object; nor do we consider, that comparison may change the emotion without changing anything in the object. Those who are acquainted with the metaphysical part of optics and know how we transfer the judgments and conclusions of the understanding to the senses, will easily conceive this whole operation.

But leaving this new discovery of an impression, that secretly attends every idea; we must at least allow of that principle, from whence the discovery arose, that objects appear greater or less by a comparison with others. We have so many instances of this, that it is impossible we can dispute its veracity; and it is from this principle I derive the passions of malice and envy.

It is evident we must receive a greater or less satisfaction or uneasiness from reflecting on our own condition and circumstances, in proportion as they appear more or less fortunate or unhappy, in proportion to the degrees of riches, and power, and merit, and reputation, which we think ourselves possest of. Now as we seldom judge of objects from their intrinsic value, but form our notions of them from a comparison with other objects; it follows, that according as we observe a greater or less share of happiness or misery in others, we must make an estimate of our own, and feel a consequent pain or pleasure. The misery of another gives us a more lively idea of our happiness, and his happiness of our misery. The former, therefore, produces delight; and the latter uneasiness.

Here then is a kind of pity reverst, or contrary sensations arising in the beholder, from those which are felt by the person, whom he considers. In general we may observe, that in all kinds of comparison an object makes us always receive from another, to which it is compared, a sensation contrary to what arises from itself in its direct and immediate survey. A small object makes a great one appear still greater. A great object makes a little one appear less. Deformity of itself produces uneasiness; but makes us receive new pleasure by its contrast with a beautiful object, whose beauty is augmented by it; as on the other hand, beauty, which of itself produces pleasure, makes us receive a new pain by the contrast with any thing ugly, whose deformity it augments. The case, therefore, must be the same with happiness and misery. The direct survey of another's pleasure naturally gives us pleasure, and therefore produces pain when compared with our own. His pain, considered in itself, is painful to us, but augments the idea of our own happiness, and gives us pleasure.

Nor will it appear strange, that we may feel a reverst sensation from the happiness and misery of others; since we find the same comparison may give us a kind of malice against ourselves, and make us rejoice for our pains, and grieve for our pleasures. Thus the prospect of past pain is agreeable, when we are satisfyed with our present condition; as on the other hand our past pleasures give us uneasiness, when we enjoy nothing at present equal to them. The comparison being the same, as when we reflect on the sentiments of others, must be attended with the same effects.

Nay a person may extend this malice against himself, even to his present fortune, and carry it so far as designedly to seek affliction, and encrease his pains and sorrows. This may happen upon two occasions. First, Upon the distress and misfortune of a friend, or person dear to him. Secondly, Upon the feeling any remorses for a crime, of which he has been guilty. It is from the principle of comparison that both these irregular appetites for evil arise. A person, who indulges himself in any pleasure, while his friend lies under affliction, feels the reflected uneasiness from his friend more sensibly by a comparison with the original pleasure, which he himself enjoys. This contrast, indeed, ought also to inliven the present pleasure. But as grief is here supposed to be the predominant passion, every addition falls to that side, and is swallowed up in it, without operating in the least upon the contrary affection. It is the same case with those penances, which men inflict on themselves for their past sins and failings. When a criminal reflects on the punishment he deserves, the idea of it is magnifyed by a comparison with his present ease and satisfaction; which forces him, in a manner, to seek uneasiness, in order to avoid so disagreeable a contrast.

This reasoning will account for the origin of envy as well as of malice. The only difference betwixt these passions lies in this, that envy is excited by some present enjoyment of another, which by comparison diminishes our idea of our own: Whereas malice is the unprovoked desire of producing evil to another, in order to reap a pleasure from the comparison. The enjoyment, which is the object of envy, is commonly superior to our own. A superiority naturally seems to overshade us, and presents a disagreeable comparison. But even in the case of an inferiority, we still desire a greater distance, in order to augment, still more the idea of ourself. When this distance diminishes, the comparison is less to our advantage; and consequently gives us less pleasure, and is even disagreeable. Hence arises that species of envy, which men feel, when they perceive their inferiors approaching or overtaking them in the pursuits of glory or happiness. In this envy we may see the effects of comparison twice repeated. A man, who compares himself to his inferior, receives a pleasure from the comparison: And when the inferiority decreases by the elevation of the inferior, what should only have been a decrease of pleasure, becomes a real pain, by a new comparison with its preceding condition.

It is worthy of observation concerning that envy, which arises from a superiority in others, that it is not the great disproportion betwixt ourself and another, which produces it; but on the contrary, our proximity. A common soldier bears no such envy to his general as to his sergeant or corporal; nor does an eminent writer meet with so great jealousy in common hackney scriblers, as in authors, that more nearly approach him. It may, indeed, be thought, that the greater the disproportion is, the greater must be the uneasiness from the comparison. But we may consider on the other hand, that the great disproportion cuts off the relation, and either keeps us from comparing ourselves with what is remote from us, or diminishes the effects of the comparison. Resemblance and proximity always produce a relation of ideas; and where you destroy these ties, however other accidents may bring two ideas together; as they have no bond or connecting quality to join them in the imagination; it is impossible they can remain long united, or have any considerable influence on each other.

I have observed in considering the nature of ambition, that the great feel a double pleasure in authority from the comparison of their own condition with that of their slaves; and that this comparison has a double influence, because it is natural, and presented by the subject. When the fancy, in the comparison of objects, passes not easily from the one object to the other, the action of the mind is, in a great measure, broke, and the fancy, in considering the second object, begins, as it were, upon a new footing. The impression, which attends every object, seems not greater in that case by succeeding a less of the same kind; but these two impressions are distinct, and produce their distinct effects, without any communication together. The want of relation in the ideas breaks the relation of the impressions, and by such a separation prevents their mutual operation and influence.

To confirm this we may observe, that the proximity in the degree of merit is not alone sufficient to give rise to envy, but must be assisted by other relations. A poet is not apt to envy a philosopher, or a poet of a different kind, of a different nation, or of a different age. All these differences prevent or weaken the comparison, and consequently the passion.

This too is the reason, why all objects appear great or little, merely by a comparison with those of the same species. A mountain neither magnifies nor diminishes a horse in our eyes; but when a Flemish and a Welsh horse are seen together, the one appears greater and the other less, than when viewed apart.

From the same principle we may account for that remark of historians, that any party in a civil war always choose to call in a foreign enemy at any hazard rather than submit to their fellow-citizens. Guicciardin applies this remark to the wars in Italy, where the relations betwixt the different states are, properly speaking, nothing but of name, language, and contiguity. Yet even these relations, when joined with superiority, by making the comparison more natural, make it likewise more grievous, and cause men to search for some other superiority, which may be attended with no relation, and by that means may have a less sensible influence on the imagination. The mind quickly perceives its several advantages and disadvantages; and finding its situation to be most uneasy, where superiority is conjoined with other relations, seeks its repose as much as possible, by their separation, and by breaking that association of ideas, which renders the comparison so much more natural and efficacious. When it cannot break the association, it feels a stronger desire to remove the superiority; and this is the reason why travellers are commonly so lavish of their praises to the Chinese and Persians, at the same time, that they depreciate those neighbouring nations, which may stand upon a foot of rivalship with their native country.

These examples from history and common experience are rich and curious; but we may find parallel ones in the arts, which are no less remarkable. should an author compose a treatise, of which one part was serious and profound, another light and humorous, every one would condemn so strange a mixture, and would accuse him of the neglect of all rules of art and criticism. These rules of art are founded on the qualities of human nature; and the quality of human nature, which requires a consistency in every performance is that which renders the mind incapable of passing in a moment from one passion and disposition to a quite different one. Yet this makes us not blame Mr Prior for joining his Alma and his Solomon in the same volume; though that admirable poet has succeeded perfectly well in the gaiety of the one, as well as in the melancholy of the other. Even supposing the reader should peruse these two compositions without any interval, he would feel little or no difficulty in the change of passions: Why, but because he considers these performances as entirely different, and by this break in the ideas, breaks the progress of the affections, and hinders the one from influencing or contradicting the other?

An heroic and burlesque design, united in one picture, would be monstrous; though we place two pictures of so opposite a character in the same chamber, and even close by each other, without any scruple or difficulty.

In a word, no ideas can affect each other, either by comparison, or by the passions they separately produce, unless they be united together by some relation, which may cause an easy transition of the ideas, and consequently of the emotions or impressions, attending the ideas; and may preserve the one impression in the passage of the imagination to the object of the other. This principle is very remarkable, because it is analogous to what we have observed both concerning the understanding and the passions. Suppose two objects to be presented to me, which are not connected by any kind of relation. Suppose that each of these objects separately produces a passion; and that these two passions are in themselves contrary: We find from experience, that the want of relation in the objects or ideas hinders the natural contrariety of the passions, and that the break in the transition of the thought removes the affections from each other, and prevents their opposition. It is the same case with comparison; and from both these phaenomena we may safely conclude, that the relation of ideas must forward the transition of impressions; since its absence alone is able to prevent it, and to separate what naturally should have operated upon each other. When the absence of an object or quality re moves any usual or natural effect, we may certalnly conclude that its presence contributes to the production of the effect.

SECT. IX OF THE MIXTURE OF BENEVOLENCE AND ANGER WITH COMPASSION AND MALICE

Thus we have endeavoured to account for pity and malice. Both these affections arise from the imagination, according to the light, in which it places its object. When our fancy considers directly the sentiments of others, and enters deep into them, it makes us sensible of all the passions it surveys, but in a particular manner of grief or sorrow. On the contrary, when we compare the sentiments of others to our own, we feel a sensation directly opposite to the original one, viz. a joy from the grief of others, and a grief from their joy. But these are only the first foundations of the affections of pity and malice. Other passions are afterwards confounded with them. There is always a mixture of love or tenderness with pity, and of hatred or anger with malice. But it must be confessed, that this mixture seems at first sight to be contradictory to my system. For as pity is an uneasiness, and malice a joy, arising from the misery of others, pity should naturally, as in all other cases, produce hatred; and malice, love. This contradiction I endeavour to reconcile, after the following manner.

In order to cause a transition of passions, there is required a double relation of impressions and ideas, nor is one relation sufficient to produce this effect. But that we may understand the full force of this double relation, we must consider, that it is not the present sensation alone or momentary pain or pleasure, which determines the character of any passion, but the whole bent or tendency of it from the beginning to the end. One impression may be related to another, not only when their sensations are resembling, as we have all along supposed in the preceding cases; but also when their impulses or directions are similar and correspondent. This cannot take place with regard to pride and humility; because these are only pure sensations, without any direction or tendency to action. We are, therefore, to look for instances of this peculiar relation of impressions only in such affections, as are attended with a certain appetite or desire; such as those of love and hatred.

Benevolence or the appetite, which attends love, is a desire of the happiness of the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery; as anger or the appetite, which attends hatred, is a desire of the misery of the person hated, and an aversion to his happiness. A desire, therefore, of the happiness of another, and aversion to his misery, are similar to benevolence; and a desire of his misery and aversion to his happiness are correspondent to anger. Now pity is a desire of happiness to another, and aversion to his misery; as malice is the contrary appetite. Pity, then, is related to benevolence; and malice to anger: And as benevolence has been already found to be connected with love, by a natural and original quality, and anger with hatred; it is by this chain the passions of pity and malice are connected with love and hatred.

This hypothesis is founded on sufficient experience. A man, who from any motives has entertained a resolution of performing an action, naturally runs into every other view or motive, which may fortify that resolution, and give it authority and influence on the mind. To confirm us in any design, we search for motives drawn from interest, from honour, from duty. What wonder, then, that pity and benevolence, malice, and anger, being the same desires arising from different principles, should so totally mix together as to be undistinguishable? As to the connexion betwixt benevolence and love, anger and hatred, being original and primary, it admits of no difficulty.

We may add to this another experiment, viz, that benevolence and anger, and consequently love and hatred, arise when our happiness or misery have any dependance on the happiness or misery of another person, without any farther relation. I doubt not but this experiment will appear so singular as to excuse us for stopping a moment to consider it.

Suppose, that two persons of the same trade should seek employment in a town, that is not able to maintain both, it is plain the success of one is perfectly incompatible with that of the other, and that whatever is for the interest of either is contrary to that of his rival, and so vice versa. Suppose again, that two merchants, though living in different parts of the world, should enter into co-partnership together, the advantage or loss of one becomes immediately the advantage or loss of his partner, and the same fortune necessarily attends both. Now it is evident, that in the first case, hatred always follows upon the contrariety of interests; as in the second, love arises from their union. Let us consider to what principle we can ascribe these passions.

It is plain they arise not from the double relations of impressions and ideas, if we regard only the present sensation. For takeing the first case of rivalship; though the pleasure and advantage of an antagonist necessarily causes my pain and loss, yet to counter-ballance this, his pain and loss causes my pleasure and advantage; and supposing him to be unsuccessful, I may by this means receive from him a superior degree of satisfaction. In the same manner the success of a partner rejoices me, but then his misfortunes afflict me in an equal proportion; and it is easy to imagine, that the latter sentiment may in many cases preponderate. But whether the fortune of a rival or partner be good or bad, I always hate the former and love the latter.

This love of a partner cannot proceed from the relation or connexion betwixt us; in the same manner as I love a brother or countryman. A rival has almost as close a relation to me as a partner. For as the pleasure of the latter causes my pleasure, and his pain my pain; so the pleasure of the former causes my pain, and his pain my pleasure. The connexion, then, of cause and effect is the same in both cases; and if in the one case, the cause and effect have a farther relation of resemblance, they have that of contrariety in the other; which, being also a species of resemblance, leaves the matter pretty equal.

The only explication, then, we can give of this phaenomenon is derived from that principle of a parallel direction above-mentioned. Our concern for our own interest gives us a pleasure in the pleasure, and a pain in the pain of a partner, after the same manner as by sympathy we feel a sensation correspondent to those, which appear in any person, who is present with us. On the other hand, the same concern for our interest makes us feel a pain in the pleasure, and a pleasure in the pain of a rival; and in short the same contrariety of sentiments as arises from comparison and malice. Since, therefore, a parallel direction of the affections, proceeding from interest, can give rise to benevolence or anger, no wonder the same parallel direction, derived from sympathy and from comparison, should have the same effect.

In general we may observe, that it is impossible to do good to others, from whatever motive, without feeling some touches of kindness and good-will towards them; as the injuries we do, not only cause hatred in the person, who suffers them, but even in ourselves. These phaenomena, indeed, may in part be accounted for from other principles.

But here there occurs a considerable objection, which it will be necessary to examine before we proceed any farther. I have endeavoured to prove, that power and riches, or poverty and meanness; which give rise to love or hatred, without producing any original pleasure or uneasiness; operate upon us by means of a secondary sensation derived from a sympathy with that pain or satisfaction, which they produce in the person, who possesses them. From a sympathy with his pleasure there arises love; from that with his uneasiness, hatred. But it is a maxim, which I have just now established, and which is absolutely necessary to the explication of the phaenomena of pity and malice, that it is not the present sensation or momentary pain or pleasure, which determines the character of any passion, but the general bent or tendency of it from the beginning to the end. For this reason, pity or a sympathy with pain produces love, and that because it interests us in the fortunes of others, good or bad, and gives us a secondary sensation correspondent to the primary; in which it has the same influence with love and benevolence. Since then this rule holds good in one case, why does it not prevail throughout, and why does sympathy in uneasiness ever produce any passion beside good-will and kindness? Is it becoming a philosopher to alter his method of reasoning, and run from one principle to its contrary, according to the particular phaenomenon, which he would explain?

I have mentioned two different causes, from which a transition of passion may arise, viz, a double relation of ideas and impressions, and what is similar to it, a conformity in the tendency and direction of any two desires, which arise from different principles. Now I assert, that when a sympathy with uneasiness is weak, it produces hatred or contempt by the former cause; when strong, it produces love or tenderness by the latter. This is the solution of the foregoing difficulty, which seems so urgent; and this is a principle founded on such evident arguments, that we ought to have established it, even though it were not necessary to the explication of any phaenomenon.

It is certain, that sympathy is not always limited to the present moment, but that we often feel by communication the pains and pleasures of others, which are not in being, and which we only anticipate by the force of imagination. For supposing I saw a person perfectly unknown to me, who, while asleep in the fields, was in danger of being trod under foot by horses, I should immediately run to his assistance; and in this I should be actuated by the same principle of sympathy, which makes me concerned for the present sorrows of a stranger. The bare mention of this is sufficient. Sympathy being nothing but a lively idea converted into an impression, it is evident, that, in considering the future possible or probable condition of any person, we may enter into it with so vivid a conception as to make it our own concern; and by that means be sensible of pains and pleasures, which neither belong to ourselves, nor at the present instant have any real existence.

But however we may look forward to the future in sympathizing with any person, the extending of our sympathy depends in a great measure upon our sense of his present condition. It is a great effort of imagination, to form such lively ideas even of the present sentiments of others as to feel these very sentiments; but it is impossible we coued extend this sympathy to the future, without being aided by some circumstance in the present, which strikes upon us in a lively manner. When the present misery of another has any strong influence upon me, the vivacity of the conception is not confined merely to its immediate object, but diffuses its influence over all the related ideas, and gives me a lively notion of all the circumstances of that person, whether past, present, or future; possible, probable or certain. By means of this lively notion I am interested in them; take part with them; and feel a sympathetic motion in my breast, conformable to whatever I imagine in his. If I diminish the vivacity of the first conception, I diminish that of the related ideas; as pipes can convey no more water than what arises at the fountain. By this diminution I destroy the future prospect, which is necessary to interest me perfectly in the fortune of another. I may feel the present impression, but carry my sympathy no farther, and never transfuse the force of the first conception into my ideas of the related objects. If it be another’s misery, which is presented in this feeble manner, I receive it by communication, and am affected with all the passions related to it: But as I am not so much interested as to concern myself in his good fortune, as well as his bad, I never feel the extensive sympathy, nor the passions related to it.

Now in order to know what passions are related to these different kinds of sympathy, we must consider, that benevolence is an original pleasure arising from the pleasure of the person beloved, and a pain proceeding from his pain: From which correspondence of impressions there arises a subsequent desire of his pleasure, and aversion to his pain. In order, then, to make a passion run parallel with benevolence, it is requisite we should feel these double impressions, correspondent to those of the person, whom we consider; nor is any one of them alone sufficient for that purpose. When we sympathize only with one impression, and that a painful one, this sympathy is related to anger and to hatred, upon account of the uneasiness it conveys to us. But as the extensive or limited sympathy depends upon the force of the first sympathy; it follows, that the passion of love or hatred depends upon the same principle. A strong impression, when communicated, gives a double tendency of the passions; which is related to benevolence and love by a similarity of direction; however painful the first impression might have been. A weak impression, that is painful, is related to anger and hatred by the resemblance of sensations. Benevolence, therefore, arises from a great degree of misery, or any degree strongly sympathized with: Hatred or contempt from a small degree, or one weakly sympathized with; which is the principle I intended to prove and explain.

Nor have we only our reason to trust to for this principle, but also experience. A certain degree of poverty produces contempt; but a degree beyond causes compassion and good-will. We may under-value a peasant or servant; but when the misery of a beggar appears very great, or is painted in very lively colours, we sympathize with him in his afflictions; and feel in our heart evident touches of pity and benevolence. The same object causes contrary passions according to its different degrees. The passions, therefore, must depend upon principles, that operate in such certain degrees, according to my hypothesis. The encrease of the sympathy has evidently the same effect as the encrease of the misery.

A barren or desolate country always seems ugly and disagreeable, and commonly inspires us with contempt for the inhabitants. This deformity, however, proceeds in a great measure from a sympathy with the inhabitants, as has been already observed; but it is only a weak one, and reaches no farther than the immediate sensation, which is disagreeable. The view of a city in ashes conveys benevolent sentiments; because we there enter so deep into the interests of the miserable inhabitants, as to wish for their prosperity, as well as feel their adversity.

But though the force of the impression generally produces pity and benevolence, it is certain, that by being carryed too far it ceases to have that effect. This, perhaps, may be worth our notice. When the uneasiness is either small in itself, or remote from us, it engages not the imagination, nor is able to convey an equal concern for the future and contingent good, as for the present and real evil Upon its acquiring greater force, we become so interested in the concerns of the person, as to be sensible both of his good and had fortune; and from that compleat sympathy there arises pity and benevolence. But it will easily be imagined, that where the present evil strikes with more than ordinary force, it may entirely engage our attention, and prevent that double sympathy, above-mentioned. Thus we find, that though every one, but especially women, are apt to contract a kindness for criminals, who go to the scaffold, and readily imagine them to be uncommonly handsome and wellshaped; yet one, who is present at the cruel execution of the rack, feels no such tender emotions; but is in a manner overcome with horror, and has no leisure to temper this uneasy sensation by any opposite sympathy.

But the instance, which makes the most clearly for my hypothesis, is that wherein by a change of the objects we separate the double sympathy even from a midling degree of the passion; in which case we find, that pity, instead of producing love and tenderness as usual, always gives rise to the contrary affection. When we observe a person in misfortunes, we are affected with pity and love; but the author of that misfortune becomes the object of our strongest hatred, and is the more detested in proportion to the degree of our compassion. Now for what reason should the same passion of pity produce love to the person, who suffers the misfortune, and hatred to the person, who causes it; unless it be because in the latter case the author bears a relation only to the misfortune; whereas in considering the sufferer we carry our view on every side, and wish for his prosperity, as well as are sensible of his affliction?

I. shall just observe, before I leave the present subject, that this phaenomenon of the double sympathy, and its tendency to cause love, may contribute to the production of the kindness, which we naturally bear our relations and acquaintance. Custom and relation make us enter deeply into the sentiments of others; and whatever fortune we suppose to attend them, is rendered present to us by the imagination, and operates as if originally our own. We rejoice in their pleasures, and grieve for their sorrows, merely from the force of sympathy. Nothing that concerns them is indifferent to us; and as this correspondence of sentiments is the natural attendant of love, it readily produces that affection.

SECT. X OF RESPECT AND CONTEMPT

There now remains only to explain the passion of respect and contempt, along with the amorous affection, in order to understand all the passions which have any mixture of love or hatred. Let us begin with respect and contempt.

In considering the qualities and circumstances of others, we may either regard them as they really are in themselves; or may make a comparison betwixt them and our own qualities and circumstances; or may join these two methods of consideration. The good qualities of others, from the first point of view, produce love; from the second, humility; and from the third, respect; which is a mixture of these two passions. Their bad qualities, after the same manner, cause either hatred, or pride, or contempt, according to the light in which we survey them.

That there is a mixture of pride in contempt, and of humility in respect, is, I think, too evident, from their very feeling or appearance, to require any particular proof. That this mixture arises from a tacit comparison of the person contemned or respected with ourselves is no less evident. The same man may cause either respect, love, or contempt by his condition and talents, according as the person, who considers him, from his inferior becomes his equal or superior. In changing the point of view, though the object may remain the same, its proportion to ourselves entirely alters; which is the cause of an alteration in the passions. These passions, therefore, arise from our observing the proportion; that is, from a comparison.

I have already observed, that the mind has a much stronger propensity to pride than to humility, and have endeavoured, from the principles of human nature, to assign a cause for this phaenomenon. Whether my reasoning be received or not, the phaenomenon is undisputed, and appears in many instances. Among the rest, it is the reason why there is a much greater mixture of pride in contempt, than of humility in respect, and why we are more elevated with the view of one below us, than mortifyed with the presence of one above us. Contempt or scorn has so strong a tincture of pride, that there scarce is any other passion discernable: Whereas in esteem or respect, love makes a more considerable ingredient than humility. The passion of vanity is so prompt, that it rouzes at the least call; while humility requires a stronger impulse to make it exert itself.

But here it may reasonably be asked, why this mixture takes place only in some cases, and appears not on every occasion. All those objects, which cause love, when placed on another person, are the causes of pride, when transfered to ourselves; and consequently ought to be causes of humility, as well as love, while they belong to others, and are only compared to those, which we ourselves possess. In like manner every quality, which, by being directly considered, produces hatred, ought always to give rise to pride by comparison, and by a mixture of these passions of hatred and pride ought to excite contempt or scorn. The difficulty then is, why any objects ever cause pure love or hatred, and produce not always the mixt passions of respect and contempt.

I have supposed all along, that the passions of love and pride, and those of humility and hatred are similar in their sensations, and that the two former are always agreeable, and the two latter painful. But though this be universally true, it is observable, that the two agreeable, as well as the two painful passions, have some difference, and even contrarieties, which distinguish them. Nothing invigorates and exalts the mind equally with pride and vanity; though at the same time love or tenderness is rather found to weaken and infeeble it. The same difference is observable betwixt the uneasy passions. Anger and hatred bestow a new force on all our thoughts and actions; while humility and shame deject and discourage us. Of these qualities of the passions, it will be necessary to form a distinct idea. Let us remember, that pride and hatred invigorate the soul; and love and humility infeeble it.

From this it follows, that though the conformity betwixt love and hatred in the agreeableness of their sensation makes them always be excited by the same objects, yet this other contrariety is the reason, why they are excited in very different degrees. Genius and learning are pleasant and magnificent objects, and by both these circumstances are adapted to pride and vanity; but have a relation to love by their pleasure only. Ignorance and simplicity are disagreeable and mean, which in the same manner gives them a double connexion with humility, and a single one with hatred. We may, therefore, consider it as certain, that though the same object always produces love and pride, humility and hatred, according to its different situations, yet it seldom produces either the two former or the two latter passions, in the same proportion.

It is here we must seek for a solution of the difficulty above-mentioned, why any object ever excites pure love or hatred, and does not always produce respect or contempt, by a mixture of humility or pride. No quality in another gives rise to humility by comparison, unless it would have produced pride by being placed in ourselves; and vice versa no object excites pride by comparison, unless it would have produced humility by the direct survey. This is evident, objects always produce by comparison a sensation directly contrary to their original one. Suppose, therefore, an object to be presented, which is peculiarly fitted to produce love, but imperfectly to excite pride; this object, belonging to another, gives rise directly to a great degree of love, but to a small one of humility by comparison; and consequently that latter passion is scarce felt in the compound, nor is able to convert the love into respect. This is the case with good nature, good humour, facility, generosity, beauty, and many other qualities. These have a peculiar aptitude to produce love in others; but not so great a tendency to excite pride in ourselves: For which reason the view of them, as belonging to another person, produces pure love, with but a small mixture of humility and respect. It is easy to extend the same reasoning to the opposite passions.

Before we leave this subject, it may not be amiss to account for a pretty curious phaenomenon, viz, why we commonly keep at a distance such as we contemn, and allow not our inferiors to approach too near even in place and situation. It has already been observed, that almost every kind of idea is attended with some emotion, even the ideas of number and extension, much more those of such objects as are esteemed of consequence in life, and fix our attention. It is not with entire indifference we can survey either a rich man or a poor one, but must feel some faint touches at least, of respect in the former case, and of contempt in the latter. These two passions are contrary to each other; but in order to make this contrariety be felt, the objects must be someway related; otherwise the affections are totally separate and distinct, and never encounter. The relation takes place wherever the persons become contiguous; which is a general reason why we are uneasy at seeing such disproportioned objects, as a rich man and a poor one, a nobleman and a porter, in that situation.

This uneasiness, which is common to every spectator, must be more sensible to the superior; and that because the near approach of the inferior is regarded as a piece of ill-breeding, and shews that he is not sensible of the disproportion, and is no way affected by it. A sense of superiority in another breeds in all men an inclination to keep themselves at a distance from him, and determines them to redouble the marks of respect and reverence, when they are obliged to approach him; and where they do not observe that conduct, it is a proof they are not sensible of his superiority. From hence too it proceeds, that any great difference in the degrees of any quality is called a distance by a common metaphor, which, however trivial it may appear, is founded on natural principles of the imagination. A great difference inclines us to produce a distance. The ideas of distance and difference are, therefore, connected together. Connected ideas are readily taken for each other; and this is in general the source of the metaphor, as we shall have occasion to observe afterwards.

SECT. XI OF THE AMOROUS PASSION, OR LOVE BETWIXT THE SEXES

Of all the compound passions, which proceed from a mixture of love and hatred with other affections, no one better deserves our attention, than that love, which arises betwixt the sexes, as well on account of its force and violence, as those curious principles of philosophy, for which it affords us an uncontestable argument. It is plain, that this affection, in its most natural state, is derived from the conjunction of three different impressions or passions, viz. The pleasing sensation arising from beauty; the bodily appetite for generation; and a generous kindness or good-will. The origin of kindness from beauty may be explained from the foregoing reasoning. The question is how the bodily appetite is excited by it.

The appetite of generation, when confined to a certain degree, is evidently of the pleasant kind, and has a strong connexion with, all the agreeable emotions. Joy, mirth, vanity, and kindness are all incentives to this desire; as well as music, dancing, wine, and good cheer. On the other hand, sorrow, melancholy, poverty, humility are destructive of it. From this quality it is easily conceived why it should be connected with the sense of beauty.

But there is another principle that contributes to the same effect. I have observed that the parallel direction of the desires is a real relation, and no less than a resemblance in their sensation, produces a connexion among them. That we may fully comprehend the extent of this relation, we must consider, that any principal desire may be attended with subordinate ones, which are connected with it, and to which if other desires are parallel, they are by that means related to the principal one. Thus hunger may oft be considered as the primary inclination of the soul, and the desire of approaching the meat as the secondary one; since it is absolutely necessary to the satisfying that appetite. If an object, therefore, by any separate qualities, inclines us to approach the meat, it naturally encreases our appetite; as on the contrary, whatever inclines us to set our victuals at a distance, is contradictory to hunger, and diminishes our inclination to them. Now it is plain that beauty has the first effect, and deformity the second:

Which is the reason why the former gives us a keener appetite for our victuals, and the latter is sufficient to disgust us at the most savoury dish that cookery has invented. All this is easily applicable to the appetite for generation.

From these two relations, viz, resemblance and a parallel desire, there arises such a connexion betwixt the sense of beauty, the bodily appetite, and benevolence, that they become in a manner inseparable: And we find from experience that it is indifferent which of them advances first; since any of them is almost sure to be attended with the related affections. One, who is inflamed with lust, feels at least a momentary kindness towards the object of it, and at the same time fancies her more beautiful than ordinary; as there are many, who begin with kindness and esteem for the wit and merit of the person, and advance from that to the other passions. But the most common species of love is that which first arises from beauty, and afterwards diffuses itself into kindness and into the bodily appetite. Kindness or esteem, and the appetite to generation, are too remote to unite easily together. The one is, perhaps, the most refined passion of the soul; the other the most gross and vulgar. The love of beauty is placed in a just medium betwixt them, and partakes of both their natures: From whence it proceeds, that it is so singularly fitted to produce both.

This account of love is not peculiar to my system, but is unavoidable on any hypothesis. The three affections, which compose this passion, are evidently distinct, and has each of them its distinct object. It is certain, therefore, that it is only by their relation they produce each other. But the relation of passions is not alone sufficient. It is likewise necessary, there should be a relation of ideas. The beauty of one person never inspires us with love for another. This then is a sensible proof of the double relation of impressions and ideas. From one instance so evident as this we may form a judgment of the rest.

This may also serve in another view to illustrate what I have insisted on concerning the origin of pride and humility, love and hatred. I have observed, that though self be the object of the first set of passions, and some other person of the second, yet these objects cannot alone be the causes of the passions; as having each of them a relation to two contrary affections, which must from the very first moment destroy each other. Here then is the situation of the mind, as I have already described it. It has certain organs naturally fitted to produce a passion; that passion, when produced, naturally turns the view to a certain object. But this not being sufficient to produce the passion, there is required some other emotion, which by a double relation of impressions and ideas may set these principles in action, and bestow on them their first impulse. This situation is still more remarkable with regard to the appetite of generation. Sex is not only the object, but also the cause of the appetite. We not only turn our view to it, when actuated by that appetite; but the reflecting on it suffices to excite the appetite. But as this cause loses its force by too great frequency, it is necessary it should be quickened by some new impulse; and that impulse we find to arise from the beauty of the person; that is, from a double relation of impressions and ideas. Since this double relation is necessary where an affection has both a distinct cause, and object, how much more so, where it has only a distinct object, without any determinate cause?

SECT. XII OF THE LOVE AND HATRED OF ANIMALS

But to pass from the passions of love and hatred, and from their mixtures and compositions, as they appear m man, to the same affections, as they display themselves in brutes; we may observe, not only that love and hatred are common to the whole sensitive creation, but likewise that their causes, as above-explained, are of so simple a nature, that they may easily be supposed to operate on mere animals. There is no force of reflection or penetration required. Every thing is conducted by springs and principles, which are not peculiar to man, or any one species of animals. The conclusion from this is obvious in favour of the foregoing system.

Love in animals, has not for its only object animals of the same species, but extends itself farther, and comprehends almost every sensible and thinking being. A dog naturally loves a man above his own species, and very commonly meets with a return of affection.

As animals are but little susceptible either of the pleasures or pains of the imagination, they can judge of objects only by the sensible good or evil, which they produce, and from that must regulate their affections towards them. Accordingly we find, that by benefits or injuries we produce their love or hatred; and that by feeding and cherishing any animal, we quickly acquire his affections; as by beating and abusing him we never fail to draw on us his enmity and ill-will.

Love in beasts is not caused so much by relation, as in our species; and that because their thoughts are not so active as to trace relations, except in very obvious instances. Yet it is easy to remark, that on some occasions it has a considerable influence upon them. Thus acquaintance, which has the same effect as relation, always produces love in animals either to men or to each other. For the same reason any likeness among them is the source of affection. An ox confined to a park with horses, will naturally join their company, if I may so speak, but always leaves it to enjoy that of his own species, where he has the choice of both.

The affection of parents to their young proceeds from a peculiar instinct in animals, as well as in our species.

It is evident, that sympathy, or the communication of passions, takes place among animals, no less than among men. Fear, anger, courage, and other affections are frequently communicated from one animal to another, without their knowledge of that cause, which produced the original passion. Grief likewise is received by sympathy; and produces almost all the same consequences, and excites the same emotions as in our species. The howlings and lamentations of a dog produce a sensible concern in his fellows. And it is remarkable, that though almost all animals use in play the same member, and nearly the same action as in fighting; a lion, a tyger, a cat their paws; an ox his horns; a dog his teeth; a horse his heels: Yet they most carefully avoid harming their companion, even though they have nothing to fear from his resentment; which is an evident proof of the sense brutes have of each other’s pain and pleasure.

Every one has observed how much more dogs are animated when they hunt in a pack, than when they pursue their game apart; and it is evident this can proceed from nothing but from sympathy. It is also well known to hunters, that this effect follows in a greater degree, and even in too great a degree, where two packs, that are strangers to each other, are joined together. We might, perhaps, be at a loss to explain this phaenomenon, if we had not experience of a similar in ourselves.

Envy and malice are passions very remarkable in animals. They are perhaps more common than pity; as requiring less effort of thought and imagination.

PART III OF THE WILL AND DIRECT PASSIONS

SECT. I OF LIBERTY AND NECESSITY

We come now to explain the direct passions, or the impressions, which arise immediately from good or evil, from pain or pleasure. Of this kind are, desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear.

Of all the immediate effects of pain and pleasure, there is none more remarkable than the WILL; and though properly speaking, it be not comprehended among the passions, yet as the full understanding of its nature and properties, is necessary to the explanation of them, we shall here make it the subject of our enquiry. I desire it may be observed, that by the will, I mean nothing but the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind. This impression, like the preceding ones of pride and humility, love and hatred, it is impossible to define, and needless to describe any farther; for which reason we shall cut off all those definitions and distinctions, with which philosophers are wont to perplex rather than dear up this question; and entering at first upon the subject, shall examine that long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity; which occurs so naturally in treating of the will.

It is universally acknowledged, that the operations of external bodies are necessary, and that in the communication of their motion, in their attraction, and mutual cohesion, there are nor the least traces of indifference or liberty. Every object is determined by an absolute fate toa certain degree and direction of irs motion, and can no more depart from that precise line, in which it moves, than it can convert itself into an angel, or spirit, or any superior substance. The actions, therefore, of matter are to be regarded as instances of necessary actions; and whatever is in this respect on the same footing with matter, must be acknowledged to be necessary. That we may know whether this be the case with the actions of the mind, we shall begin with examining matter, and considering on what the idea of a necessity in its operations are founded, and why we conclude one body or action to be the infallible cause of another.

It has been observed already, that in no single instance the ultimate connexion of any objects is discoverable, either by our senses or reason, and that we can never penetrate so far into the essence and construction of bodies, as to perceive the principle, on which their mutual influence depends. It is their constant union alone, with which we are acquainted; and it is from the constant union the necessity arises. If objects had nor an uniform and regular conjunction with each other, we should never arrive at any idea of cause and effect; and even after all, the necessity, which enters into that idea, is nothing but a determination of the mind to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and infer the existence of one from that of the other. Here then are two particulars, which we are to consider as essential to necessity, viz, the constant union and the inference of the mind; and wherever we discover these we must acknowledge a necessity. As the actions of matter have no necessity, but what is derived from these circumstances, and it is not by any insight into the essence of bodies we discover their connexion, the absence of this insight, while the union and inference remain, will never, in any case, remove the necessity. It is the observation of the union, which produces the inference; for which reason it might be thought sufficient, if we prove a constant union in the actions of the mind, in order to establish the inference, along with the necessity of these actions. But that I may bestow a greater force on my reasoning, I shall examine these particulars apart, and shall first prove from experience that our actions have a constant union with our motives, tempers, and circumstances, before I consider the inferences we draw from it.

To this end a very slight and general view of the common course of human affairs will be sufficient. There is no light, in which we can take them, that does nor confirm this principle. Whether we consider mankind according to the difference of sexes, ages, governments, conditions, or methods of education; the same uniformity and regular operation of natural principles are discernible. Uke causes still produce like effects; in the same manner as in the mutual action of the elements and powers of nature.

There are different trees, which regularly produce fruit, whose relish is different from each other; and this regularity will be admitted as an instance of necessity and causes in external bodies. But are the products of Guienne and of Champagne more regularly different than the sentiments, actions, and passions of the two sexes, of which the one are distinguished by their force and maturity, the other by their delicacy and softness?

Are the changes of our body from infancy to old age more regular and certain than those of our mind and conduct? And would a man be more ridiculous, who would expect that an infant of four years old will raise a weight of three hundred pound, than one, who from a person of the same age would look for a philosophical reasoning, or a prudent and well-concerted action?

We must certainly allow, that the cohesion of the parts of matter arises from natural and necessary principles, whatever difficulty we may find in explaining them: And for a reason we must allow, that human society is founded on like principles; and our reason in the latter case, is better than even that in the former; because we not only observe, that men always seek society, but can also explain the principles, on which this universal propensity is founded. For is it more certain, that two flat pieces of marble will unite together, than that two young savages of different sexes will copulate? Do the children arise from this copulation more uniformly, than does the parents care for their safety and preservation? And after they have arrived at years of discretion by the care of their parents, are the inconveniencies attending their separation more certain than their foresight of these inconveniencies and their care of avoiding them by a close union and confederacy?

The skin, pores, muscles, and nerves of a day-labourer are different from those of a man of quality: So are his sentiments, actions and manners. The different stations of life influence the whole fabric, external and internal; and different stations arise necessarily, because uniformly, from the necessary and uniform principles of human nature. Men cannot live without society, and cannot be associated without government. Government makes a distinction of property, and establishes the different ranks of men. This produces industry, traffic, manufactures, law-suits, war, leagues, alliances, voyages, travels, cities, fleets, ports, and all those other actions and objects, which cause such a diversity, and at the same time maintain such an uniformity in human life.

Should a traveller, returning from a far country, tell us, that he had seen a climate in the fiftieth degree of northern latitude, where all the fruits ripen and come to perfection in the winter, and decay in the summer, after the same manner as in England they are produced and decay in the contrary seasons, he would find few so credulous as to believe him. I am apt to think a travellar would meet with as little credit, who should inform us of people exactly of the same character with those in Plato’s republic on the one hand, or those in Hobbes’s Leviathan on the other. There is a general course of nature in human actions, as well as in the operations of the sun and the climate. There are also characters peculiar to different nations and particular persons, as well as common to mankind. The knowledge of these characters is founded on the observation of an uniformity in the actions, that flow from them; and this uniformity forms the very essence of necessity.

I can imagine only one way of eluding this argument, which is by denying that uniformity of human actions, on which it is founded. As long as actions have a constant union and connexion with the situation and temper of the agent, however we may in words refuse to acknowledge the necessity, we really allow the thing. Now some may, perhaps, find a pretext to deny this regular union and connexion. For what is more capricious than human actions? What more inconstant than the desires of man? And what creature departs more widely, not only from right reason, but from his own character and disposition? An hour, a moment is sufficient to make him change from one extreme to another, and overturn what cost the greatest pain and labour to establish. Necessity is regular and certain. Human conduct is irregular and uncertain. The one, therefore, proceeds not from the other.

To this I reply, that in judging of the actions of men we must proceed upon the same maxims, as when we reason concerning external objects. When any phaenomena are constantly and invariably conjoined together, they acquire such a connexion in the imagination, that it passes from one to the other, without any doubt or hesitation. But below this there are many inferior degrees of evidence and probability, nor does one single contrariety of experiment entirely destroy all our reasoning. The mind ballances the contrary experiments, and deducting the inferior from the superior, proceeds with that degree of assurance or evidence, which remains. Even when these contrary experiments are entirely equal, we remove not the notion of causes and necessity; but supposing that the usual contrariety proceeds from the operation of contrary and concealed causes, we conclude, that the chance or indifference lies only in our judgment on account of our imperfect knowledge, not in the things themselves, which are in every case equally necessary, though to appearance not equally constant or certain. No union can be more constant and certain, than that of some actions with some motives and characters; and if in other cases the union is uncertain, it is no more than what happens in the operations of body, nor can we conclude any thing from the one irregularity, which will not follow equally from the other.

It is commonly allowed that mad-men have no liberty. But were we to judge by their actions, these have less regularity and constancy than the actions of wise-men, and consequently are farther removed from necessity. Our way of thinking in this particular is, therefore, absolutely inconsistent; but is a natural consequence of these confused ideas and undefined terms, which we so commonly make use of in our reasonings, especially on the present subject.

We must now shew, that as the union betwixt motives and actions has the same constancy, as that in any natural operations, so its influence on the understanding is also the same, in determining us to infer the existence of one from that of another. If this shall appear, there is no known circumstance, that enters into the connexion and production of the actions of matter, that is not to be found in all the operations of the mind; and consequently we cannot, without a manifest absurdity, attribute necessity to the one, and refuse into the other.

There is no philosopher, whose judgment is so riveted to this fantastical system of liberty, as not to acknowledge the force of moral evidence, and both in speculation and practice proceed upon it, as upon a reasonable foundation. Now moral evidence is nothing but a conclusion concerning the actions of men, derived from the consideration of their motives, temper and situation. Thus when we see certain characters or figures described upon paper, we infer that the person, who produced them, would affirm such facts, the death of Caesar, the success of Augustus, the cruelty of Nero; and remembering many other concurrent testimonies we conclude, that those facts were once really existant, and that so many men, without any interest, would never conspire to deceive us; especially since they must, in the attempt, expose themselves to the derision of all their contemporaries, when these facts were asserted to be recent and universally known. The same kind of reasoning runs through politics, war, commerce, economy, and indeed mixes itself so entirely in human life, that it is impossible to act or subsist a moment without having recourse to it. A prince, who imposes a tax upon his subjects, expects their compliance. A general, who conducts an army, makes account of a certain degree of courage. A merchant looks for fidelity and skill in his factor or super-cargo. A man, who gives orders for his dinner, doubts not of the obedience of his servants. In short, as nothing more nearly interests us than our own actions and those of others, the greatest part of our reasonings is employed in judgments concerning them. Now I assert, that whoever reasons after this manner, does ipso facto believe the actions of the will to arise from necessity, and that he knows not what he means, when he denies it.

All those objects, of which we call the one cause and the other effect, considered in themselves, are as distinct and separate from each other, as any two things in nature, nor can we ever, by the most accurate survey of them, infer the existence of the one from that of the other. It is only from experience and the observation of their constant union, that we are able to form this inference; and even after all, the inference is nothing but the effects of custom on the imagination. We must not here be content with saying, that the idea of cause and effect arises from objects constantly united; but must affirm, that it is the very same with the idea of those objects, and that the necessary connexion is not discovered by a conclusion of the understanding, but is merely a perception of the mind. Wherever, therefore, we observe the same union, and wherever the union operates in the same manner upon the belief and opinion, we have the idea of causes and necessity, though perhaps we may avoid those expressions. Motion in one body in all past instances, that have fallen under our observation, is followed upon impulse by motion in another. It is impossible for the mind to penetrate farther. From this constant union it forms the idea of cause and effect, and by its influence feels the necessity. As there is the same constancy, and the same influence in what we call moral evidence, I ask no more. What remains can only be a dispute of words.

And indeed, when we consider how aptly natural and moral evidence cement together, and form only one chain of argument betwixt them, we shall make no scruple to allow, that they are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. A prisoner, who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of his escape, as well from the obstinacy of the goaler, as from the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and in all attempts for his freedom chuses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one, than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards as from the operation of the ax or wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas: The refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape, the action of the executioner; the separation of the head and body; bleeding, convulsive motions, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference betwixt them in passing from one link to another; nor is less certain of the future event than if it were connected with the present impressions of the memory and senses by a train of causes cemented together by what we are pleased to call a physical necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volitions and actions; or figure and motion. We may change the names of things; but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change.

I dare be positive no one will ever endeavour to refute these reasonings otherwise than by altering my definitions, and assigning a different meaning to the terms of cause, and effect, and necessity, and liberty, and chance. According to my definitions, necessity makes an essential part of causation; and consequently liberty, by removing necessity, removes also causes, and is the very same thing with chance. As chance is commonly thought to imply a contradiction, and is at least directly contrary to experience, there are always the same arguments against liberty or free-will. If any one alters the definitions, I cannot pretend to argue with him, until I know the meaning he assigns to these terms.

SECT. II THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUEd

I believe we may assign the three following reasons for the prevalance of the doctrine of liberty, however absurd it may be in one sense, and unintelligible in any other. First, After we have performed any action; though we confess we were influenced by particular views and motives; it is difficult for us to persuade ourselves we were governed by necessity, and that it was utterly impossible for us to have acted otherwise; the idea of necessity seeming to imply something of force, and violence, and constraint, of which we are not sensible. Few are capable of distinguishing betwixt the liberty of spontaniety, as it is called in the schools, and the liberty of indifference; betwixt that which is opposed to violence, and that which means a negation of necessity and causes. The first is even the most common sense of the word; and as it is only that species of liberty, which it concerns us to preserve, our thoughts have been principally turned towards it, and have almost universally confounded it with the other.

Secondly, There is a false sensation or experience even of the liberty of indifference; which is regarded as an argument for its real existence. The necessity of any action, whether of matter or of the mind, is not properly a quality in the agent, but in any thinking or intelligent being, who may consider the action, and consists in the determination of his thought to infer its existence from some preceding objects: As liberty or chance, on the other hand, is nothing but the want of that determination, and a certain looseness, which we feel in passing or not passing from the idea of one to that of the other. Now we may observe, that though in reflecting on human actions we seldom feel such a looseness or indifference, yet it very commonly happens, that in performing the actions themselves we are sensible of something like it: And as all related or resembling objects are readily taken for each other, this has been employed as a demonstrative or even an intuitive proof of human liberty. We feel that our actions are subject to our will on most occasions, and imagine we feel that the will itself is subject to nothing; because when by a denial of it we are provoked to try, we feel that it moves easily every way, and produces an image of itself even on that side, on which it did not settle. This image or faint motion, we persuade ourselves, coued have been compleated into the thing itself; because, should that be denyed, we find, upon a second trial, that it can. But these efforts are all in vain; and whatever capricious and irregular actions we may perform; as the desire of showing our liberty is the sole motive of our actions; we can never free ourselves from the bonds of necessity. We may imagine we feel a liberty within ourselves; but a spectator can commonly infer our actions from our motives and character; and even where he cannot, he concludes in general, that he might, were he perfectly acquainted with every circumstance of our situation and temper, and the most secret springs of our complexion and disposition. Now this is the very essence of necessity, according to the foregoing doctrine.

A third reason why the doctrine of liberty has generally been better received in the world, than its antagonist, proceeds from religion, which has been very unnecessarily interested in this question. There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour to refute any hypothesis by a pretext of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads us into absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence. Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be foreborn, as serving nothing to the discovery of truth, but only to make the person of an antagonist odious. This I observe in general, without pretending to draw any advantage from it. I submit myself frankly to an examination of this kind, and dare venture to affirm, that the doctrine of necessity, according to my explication of it, is not only innocent, but even advantageous to religion and morality.

I define necessity two ways, conformable to the two definitions of cause, of which it makes an essential part. I place it either in the constant union and conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the mind from the one to the other. Now necessity, in both these senses, has universally, though tacitely, in the schools, in the pulpit, and in common life, been allowed to belong to the will of man, and no one has ever pretended to deny, that we can draw inferences concerning human actions, and that those inferences are founded on the experienced union of like actions with like motives and circumstances. The only particular in which any one can differ from me, is either, that perhaps he will refuse to call this necessity. But as long as the meaning is understood, I hope the word can do no harm. Or that he will maintain there is something else in the operations of matter. Now whether it be so or not is of no consequence to religion, whatever it may be to natural philosophy. I may be mistaken in asserting, that we have no idea of any other connexion in the actions of body, and shall be glad to be farther instructed on that head: But sure I am, I ascribe nothing to the actions of the mind, but what must readily be allowed of. Let no one, therefore, put an invidious construction on my words, by saying simply, that I assert the necessity of human actions, and place them on the same footing with the operations of senseless matter. I do not ascribe to the will that unintelligible necessity, which is supposed to lie in matter. But I ascribe to matter, that intelligible quality, call it necessity or not, which the most rigorous orthodoxy does or must allow to belong to the will. I change, therefore, nothing in the received systems, with regard to the will, but only with regard to material objects.

Nay I shall go farther, and assert, that this kind of necessity is so essential to religion and morality, that without it there must ensue an absolute subversion of both, and that every other supposition is entirely destructive to all laws both divine and human. It is indeed certain, that as all human laws are founded on rewards and punishments, it is supposed as a fundamental principle, that these motives have an influence on the mind, and both produce the good and prevent the evil actions. We may give to this influence what name we please; but as it is usually conjoined with the action, common sense requires it should be esteemed a cause, and be booked upon as an instance of that necessity, which I would establish.

This reasoning is equally solid, when applied to divine laws, so far as the deity is considered as a legislator, and is supposed to inflict punishment and bestow rewards with a design to produce obedience. But I also maintain, that even where he acts not in his magisterial capacity, but is regarded as the avenger of crimes merely on account of their odiousness and deformity, not only it is impossible, without the necessary connexion of cause and effect in human actions, that punishments coued be inflicted compatible with justice and moral equity; but also that it coued ever enter into the thoughts of any reasonable being to inflict them. The constant and universal object of hatred or anger is a person or creature endowed with thought and consciousness; and when any criminal or injurious actions excite that passion, it is only by their relation to the person or connexion with him. But according to the doctrine of liberty or chance, this connexion is reduced to nothing, nor are men more accountable for those actions, which are designed and premeditated, than for such as are the most casual and accidental. Actions are by their very nature temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some cause in the characters and disposition of the person, who performed them, they infix not themselves upon him, and can neither redound to his honour, if good, nor infamy, if evil. The action itself may be blameable; it may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: But the person is not responsible for it; and as it proceeded from nothing in him, that is durable or constant, and leaves nothing of that nature behind it, it is impossible he can, upon its account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the hypothesis of liberty, therefore, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crimes, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character any way concerned in his actions; since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other. It is only upon the principles of necessity, that a person acquires any merit or demerit from his actions, however the common opinion may incline to the contrary.

But so inconsistent are men with themselves, that though they often assert, that necessity utterly destroys all merit and demerit either towards mankind or superior powers, yet they continue still to reason upon these very principles of necessity in all their judgments concerning this matter. Men are not blamed for such evil actions as they perform ignorantly and casually, whatever may be their consequences. Why? but because the causes of these actions are only momentary, and terminate in them alone. Men are less blamed for such evil actions, as they perform hastily and unpremeditately, than for such as proceed from thought and deliberation. For what reason? but because a hasty temper, though a constant cause in the mind, operates only by intervals, and infects not the whole character. Again, repentance wipes off every crime, especially if attended with an evident reformation of life and manners. How is this to be accounted for? But by asserting that actions render a person criminal, merely as they are proofs of criminal passions or principles in the mind; and when by any alteration of these principles they cease to be just proofs, they likewise cease to be criminal. But according to the doctrine of liberty or chance they never were just proofs, and consequently never were criminal.

Here then I turn to my adversary, and desire him to free his own system from these odious consequences before he charge them upon others. Or if he rather chuses, that this question should be decided by fair arguments before philosophers, than by declamations before the people, let him return to what I have advanced to prove that liberty and chance are synonimous; and concerning the nature of moral evidence and the regularity of human actions. Upon a review of these reasonings, I cannot doubt of an entire victory; and therefore having proved, that all actions of the will have particular causes, I proceed to explain what these causes are, and how they operate.

SECT. III OF THE INFLUENCING MOTIVES OF THE WILL

Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. Every rational creature, it is said, is obliged to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or principle challenge the direction of his conduct, he ought to oppose it, till it be entirely subdued, or at least brought to a conformity with that superior principle. On this method of thinking the greatest part of moral philosophy, antient and modern, seems to be founded; nor is there an ampler field, as well for metaphysical arguments, as popular declamations, than this supposed pre-eminence of reason above passion. The eternity, invariableness, and divine origin of the former have been displayed to the best advantage: The blindness, unconstancy, and deceitfulness of the latter have been as strongly insisted on. In order to shew the fallacy of all this philosophy, I shall endeavour to prove first, that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will.

The understanding exerts itself after two different ways, as it judges from demonstration or probability; as it regards the abstract relations of our ideas, or those relations of objects, of which experience only gives us information. I believe it scarce will be asserted, that the first species of reasoning alone is ever the cause of any action. As its proper province is the world of ideas, and as the will always places us in that of realities, demonstration and volition seem, upon that account, to be totally removed, from each other. Mathematics, indeed, are useful in all mechanical operations, and arithmetic in almost every art and profession: But it is not of themselves they have any influence: Mechanics are the art of regulating the motions of bodies to some designed end or purpose; and the reason why we employ arithmetic in fixing the proportions of numbers, is only that we may discover the proportions of their influence and operation. A merchant is desirous of knowing the sum total of his accounts with any person: Why? but that he may learn what sum will have the same effects in paying his debt, and going to market, as all the particular articles taken together. Abstract or demonstrative reasoning, therefore, never influences any of our actions, but only as it directs our judgment concerning causes and effects; which leads us to the second operation of the understanding.

It is obvious, that when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity, and are carryed to avoid or embrace what will give us this uneasines or satisfaction. It is also obvious, that this emotion rests not here, but making us cast our view on every side, comprehends whatever objects are connected with its original one by the relation of cause and effect. Here then reasoning takes place to discover this relation; and according as our reasoning varies, our actions receive a subsequent variation. But it is evident in this case that the impulse arises not from reason, but is only directed by it. It is from the prospect of pain or pleasure that the aversion or propensity arises towards any object: And these emotions extend themselves to the causes and effects of that object, as they are pointed out to us by reason and experience. It can never in the least concern us to know, that such objects are causes, and such others effects, if both the causes and effects be indifferent to us. Where the objects themselves do not affect us, their connexion can never give them any influence; and it is plain, that as reason is nothing but the discovery of this connexion, it cannot be by its means that the objects are able to affect us.

Since reason alone can never produce any action, or give rise to volition, I infer, that the same faculty is as incapable of preventing volition, or of disputing the preference with any passion or emotion. This consequence is necessary. It is impossible reason coued have the latter effect of preventing volition, but by giving an impulse in a contrary direction to our passion; and that impulse, had it operated alone, would have been able to produce volition. Nothing can oppose or retard the impulse of passion, but a contrary impulse; and if this contrary impulse ever arises from reason, that latter faculty must have an original influence on the will, and must be able to cause, as well as hinder any act of volition. But if reason has no original influence, it is impossible it can withstand any principle, which has such an efficacy, or ever keep the mind in suspence a moment. Thus it appears, that the principle, which opposes our passion, cannot be the same with reason, and is only called so in an improper sense. We speak not strictly and philosophically when we talk of the combat of passion and of reason.

Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them. As this opinion may appear somewhat extraordinary, it may not be improper to confirm it by some other considerations.

A passion is an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality, which renders it a copy of any other existence or modification. When I am angry, I am actually possest with the passion, and in that emotion have no more a reference to any other object, than when I am thirsty, or sick, or more than five foot high. It is impossible, therefore, that this passion can be opposed by, or be contradictory to truth and reason; since this contradiction consists in the disagreement of ideas, considered as copies, with those objects, which they represent.

What may at first occur on this head, is, that as nothing can be contrary to truth or reason, except what has a reference to it, and as the judgments of our understanding only have this reference, it must follow, that passions can be contrary to reason only so far as they are accompanyed with some judgment or opinion. According to this principle, which is so obvious and natural, it is only in two senses, that any affection can be called unreasonable. First, When a passion, such as hope or fear, grief or joy, despair or security, is founded on the supposition or the existence of objects, which really do not exist. Secondly, When in exerting any passion in action, we chuse means insufficient for the designed end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects. Where a passion is neither founded on false suppositions, nor chuses means insufficient for the end, the understanding can neither justify nor condemn it. It is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger. It is not contrary to reason for me to chuse my total ruin, to prevent the least uneasiness of an Indian or person wholly unknown to me. It is as little contrary to reason to prefer even my own acknowledgeed lesser good to my greater, and have a more ardent affection for the former than the latter. A trivial good may, from certain circumstances, produce a desire superior to what arises from the greatest and most valuable enjoyment; nor is there any thing more extraordinary in this, than in mechanics to see one pound weight raise up a hundred by the advantage of its situation. In short, a passion must be accompanyed with some false judgment in order to its being unreasonable; and even then it is not the passion, properly speaking, which is unreasonable, but the judgment.

The consequences are evident. Since a passion can never, in any sense, be called unreasonable, but when founded on a false supposition or when it chuses means insufficient for the designed end, it is impossible, that reason and passion can ever oppose each other, or dispute for the government of the will and actions. The moment we perceive the falshood of any supposition, or the insufficiency of any means our passions yield to our reason without any opposition. I may desire any fruit as of an excellent relish; but whenever you convince me of my mistake, my longing ceases. I may will the performance of certain actions as means of obtaining any desired good; but as my willing of these actions is only secondary, and founded on the supposition, that they are causes of the proposed effect; as soon as I discover the falshood of that supposition, they must become indifferent to me.

It is natural for one, that does not examine objects with a strict philosophic eye, to imagine, that those actions of the mind are entirely the same, which produce not a different sensation, and are not immediately distinguishable to the feeling and perception. Reason, for instance, exerts itself without producing any sensible emotion; and except in the more sublime disquisitions of philosophy, or in the frivolous subtilties of the school, scarce ever conveys any pleasure or uneasiness. Hence it proceeds, that every action of the mind, which operates with the same calmness and tranquillity, is confounded with reason by all those, who judge of things from the first view and appearance. Now it is certain, there are certain calm desires and tendencies, which, though they be real passions, produce little emotion in the mind, and are more known by their effects than by the immediate feeling or sensation. These desires are of two kinds; either certain instincts originally implanted in our natures, such as benevolence and resentment, the love of life, and kindness to children; or the general appetite to good, and aversion to evil, considered merely as such. When any of these passions are calm, and cause no disorder in the soul, they are very readily taken for the determinations of reason, and are supposed to proceed from the same faculty, with that, which judges of truth and falshood. Their nature and principles have been supposed the same, because their sensations are not evidently different.

Beside these calm passions, which often determine the will, there are certain violent emotions of the same kind, which have likewise a great influence on that faculty. When I receive any injury from another, I often feel a violent passion of resentment, which makes me desire his evil and punishment, independent of all considerations of pleasure and advantage to myself. When I am immediately threatened with any grievous ill, my fears, apprehensions, and aversions rise to a great height, and produce a sensible emotion.

The common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their interest: For which reason the view of the greatest possible good does not always influence them. Men often counter-act a violent passion in prosecution of their interests and designs: It is not therefore the present uneasiness alone, which determines them. In general we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the general character or present disposition of the person. What we call strength of mind, implies the prevalence of the calm passions above the violent; though we may easily observe, there is no man so constantly possessed of this virtue, as never on any occasion to yield to the sollicitations of passion and desire. From these variations of temper proceeds the great difficulty of deciding concerning the actions and resolutions of men, where there is any contrariety of motives and passions.

SECT. IV OF THE CAUSES OF THE VIOLENT PASSIONS

There is not-in philosophy a subject of more nice speculation than this of the different causes and effects of the calm and violent passions. It is evident passions influence not the will in proportion to their violence, or the disorder they occasion in the temper; but on the contrary, that when a passion has once become a settled principle of action, and is the predominant inclination of the soul, it commonly produces no longer any sensible agitation. As repeated custom and its own force have made every thing yield to it, it directs the actions and conduct without that opposition and emotion, which so naturally attend every momentary gust of passion. We must, therefore, distinguish betwixt a calm and a weak passion; betwixt a violent and a strong one. But notwithstanding this, it is certain, that when we would govern a man, and push him to any action, it will commonly be better policy to work upon the violent than the calm passions, and rather take him by his inclination, than what is vulgarly called his reason. We ought to place the object in such particular situations as are proper to encrease the violence of the passion. For we may observe, that all depends upon the situation of the object, and that a variation in this particular will be able to change the calm and the violent passions into each other. Both these kinds of passions pursue good, and avoid evil; and both of them are encreased or diminished by the encrease or diminution of the good or evil. But herein lies the difference betwixt them: The same good, when near, will cause a violent passion, which, when remote, produces only a calm one. As this subject belongs very properly to the present question concerning the will, we shall here examine it to the bottom, and shall consider some of those circumstances and situations of objects, which render a passion either calm or violent.

It is a remarkable property of human nature, that any emotion, which attends a passion, is easily converted into it, though in their natures they be originally different from, and even contrary to each other. It is true; in order to make a perfect union among passions, there is always required a double relation of impressions and ideas; nor is one relation sufficient for that purpose. But though this be confirmed by undoubted experience, we must understand it with its proper limitations, and must regard the double relation, as requisite only to make one passion produce another. When two passions are already produced by their separate causes, and are both present in the mind, they readily mingle and unite, though they have but one relation, and sometimes without any. The predominant passion swallows up the inferior, and converts it into itself. The spirits, when once excited, easily receive a change in their direction; and it is natural to imagine this change will come from the prevailing affection. The connexion is in many respects closer betwixt any two passions, than betwixt any passion and indifference.

When a person is once heartily in love, the little faults and caprices of his mistress, the jealousies and quarrels, to which that commerce is so subject; however unpleasant and related to anger and hatred; are yet found to give additional force to the prevailing passion. It is a common artifice of politicians, when they would affect any person very much by a matter of fact, of which they intend to inform him, first to excite his curiosity; delay as long as possible the satisfying it; and by that means raise his anxiety and impatience to the utmost, before they give him a full insight into the business. They know that his curiosity will precipitate him into the passion they design to raise, and assist the object in its influence on the mind. A soldier advancing to the battle, is naturally inspired with courage and confidence, when he thinks on his friends and fellow-soldiers; and is struck with fear and terror, when he reflects on the enemy. Whatever new emotion, therefore, proceeds from the former naturally encreases the courage; as the same emotion, proceeding from the latter, augments the fear; by the relation of ideas, and the conversion of the inferior emotion into the predominant. Hence it is that in martial discipline, the uniformity and lustre of our habit, the regularity of our figures and motions, with all the pomp and majesty of war, encourage ourselves and allies; while the same objects in the enemy strike terror into us, though agreeable and beautiful in themselves.

Since passions, however independent, are naturally transfused into each other, if they are both present at the same time; it follows, that when good or evil is placed in such a situation, as to cause any particular emotion, beside its direct passion of desire or aversion, that latter passion must acquire new force and violence.

This happens, among other cases, whenever any object excites contrary passions. For it is observable that an opposition of passions commonly causes a new emotion in the spirits, and produces more disorder, than the concurrence of any two affections of equal force. This new emotion is easily converted into the predominant passion, and encreases its violence, beyond the pitch it would have arrived at had it met with no opposition. Hence we naturally desire what is forbid, and take a pleasure in performing actions, merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposite to the passions, is seldom able to overcome them; and when it fails of that effect, is apt rather to encrease them, by producing an opposition in our motives and principles. The same effect follows whether the opposition arises from internal motives or external obstacles. The passion commonly acquires new force and violence in both cases.

The efforts, which the mind makes to surmount the obstacle, excite the spirits and inliven the passion.

Uncertainty has the same influence as opposition. The agitation of the thought; the quick turns it makes from one view to another; the variety of passions, which succeed each other, according to the different views; All these produce an agitation in the mind, and transfuse themselves into the predominant passion.

There is not in my opinion any other natural cause, why security diminishes the passions, than because it removes that uncertainty, which encreases them. The mind, when left to itself, immediately languishes; and in order to preserve its ardour, must be every moment supported by a new flow of passion. For the same reason, despair, though contrary to security, has a like influence.

It is certain nothing more powerfully animates any affection, than to conceal some part of its object by throwing it into a kind of shade, which at the same time that it chews enough to pre-possess us in favour of the object, leaves still some work for the imagination. Besides that obscurity is always attended with a kind of uncertainty; the effort, which the fancy makes to compleat the idea, rouzes the spirits, and gives an additional force to the passion.

As despair and security, though contrary to each other, produce the same effects; so absence is observed to have contrary effects, and in different circumstances either encreases or diminishes our affections. The Duc de La Rochefoucault has very well observed, that absence destroys weak passions, but encreases strong; as the wind extinguishes a candle, but blows up a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea, and diminishes the passion: But where the idea is so strong and lively as to support itself, the uneasiness, arising from absence, encreases the passion and gives it new force and violence.

SECT. V OF THE EFFECTS OF CUSTOM

But nothing has a greater effect both to encrease and diminish our passions, to convert pleasure into pain, and pain into pleasure, than custom and repetition. Custom has two original effects upon the mind, in bestowing a facility in the performance of any action or the conception of any object; and afterwards a tendency or inclination towards it; and from these we may account for all its other effects, however extraordinary.

When the soul applies itself to the performance of any action, or the conception of any object, to which it is not accustomed, there is a certain unpliableness in the faculties, and a difficulty of the spirit's moving in their new direction. As this difficulty excites the spirits, it is the source of wonder, surprize, and of all the emotions, which arise from novelty; and is in itself very agreeable, like every thing, which inlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But though surprize be agreeable in itself, yet as it puts the spirits in agitation, it not only augments our agreeable affections, but also our painful, according to the foregoing principle, that every emotion, which precedes or attends a passion, is easily converted into it. Hence every thing, that is new, is most affecting, and gives us either more pleasure or pain, than what, strictly speaking, naturally belongs to it. When it often returns upon us, the novelty wears off; the passions subside; the hurry of the spirits is over; and we survey the objects with greater tranquillity.

By degrees the repetition produces a facility of the human mind, and an infallible source of pleasure, where the facility goes not beyond a certain degree. And here it is remarkable that the pleasure, which arises from a moderate facility, has not the same tendency with that which arises from novelty, to augment the painful, as well as the agreeable affections. The pleasure of facility does not so much consist in any ferment of the spirits, as in their orderly motion; which will sometimes be so powerful as even to convert pain into pleasure, and give us a relish in time what at first was most harsh and disagreeable.

But again, as facility converts pain into pleasure, so it often converts pleasure into pain, when it is too great, and renders the actions of the mind so faint and languid, that they are no longer able to interest and support it.

And indeed, scarce any other objects become disagreeable through custom; but such as are naturally attended with some emotion or affection, which is destroyed by the too frequent repetition. One can consider the clouds, and heavens, and trees, and stones, however frequently repeated, without ever feeling any aversion. But when the fair sex, or music, or good cheer, or any thing, that naturally ought to be agreeable, becomes indifferent, it easily produces the opposite affection.

But custom not only gives a facility to perform any action, but likewise an inclination and tendency towards it, where it is not entirely disagreeable, and can never be the object of inclination. And this is the reason why custom encreases all active habits, but diminishes passive, according to the observation of a late eminent philosopher. The facility takes off from the force of the passive habits by rendering the motion of the spirits faint and languid. But as in the active, the spirits are sufficiently supported of themselves, the tendency of the mind gives them new force, and bends them more strongly to the action.

SECT. VI OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE IMAGINATION ON THE PASSIONS

It is remarkable, that the imagination and affections have close union together, and that nothing, which affects the former, can be entirely indifferent to the latter. Wherever our ideas of good or evil acquire a new vivacity, the passions become more violent; and keep pace with the imagination in all its variations. Whether this proceeds from the principle above-mentioned, that any attendant emotion is easily converted into the predominant, I shall not determine. It is sufficient for my present purpose, that we have many instances to confirm this influence of the imagination upon the passions.

Any pleasure, with which we are acquainted, affects us more than any other, which we own to be superior, but of whose nature we are wholly ignorant. Of the one we can form a particular and determinate idea: The other we conceive under the general notion of pleasure; and it is certain, that the more general and universal any of our ideas are, the less influence they have upon the imagination. A general idea, though it be nothing but a particular one considered in a certain view, is commonly more obscure; and that because no particular idea, by which we represent a general one, is ever fixed or determinate, but may easily be changed for other particular ones, which will serve equally in the representation.

There is a noted passage in the history of Greece, which may serve for our present purpose. Themistocles told the Athenians, that he had formed a design, which would be highly useful to the public, but which it was impossible for him to communicate to them without ruining the execution, since its success depended entirely on the secrecy with which it should be conducted. The Athenians, instead of granting him full power to act as he thought fitting, ordered him to communicate his design to Aristides, in whose prudence they had an entire confidence, and whose opinion they were resolved blindly to submit to. The design of Themistocles was secretly to set fire to the fleet of all the Grecian commonwealths, which was assembled in a neighbouring port, and which being once destroyed would give the Athenians the empire of the sea without any rival Aristides returned to the assembly, and told them, that nothing coued be more advantageous than the design of Themistocles but at the same time that nothing coued be more unjust: Upon which the people unanimously rejected the project.

A late celebrated historian [Mons. Rollin {Charles Rollin, HISTOIRE ANCIENNE.(Paris 1730-38)}.] admires this passage of antient history, as one of the most singular that is any where to be met.

“Here,” says he, “they are not philosophers, to whom it is easy in their schools to establish the finest maxims and most sublime rules of morality, who decide that interest ought never to prevail above justice. It is a whole people interested in the proposal which is made to them, who consider it as of importance to the public good, and who notwithstanding reject it unanimously, and without hesitation, merely because it is contrary to justice.”

For my part I see nothing so extraordinary in this proceeding of the Athenians. The same reasons, which render it so easy for philosophers to establish these sublime maxims, tend, in part, to diminish the merit of such a conduct in that people. Philosophers never ballance betwixt profit and honesty, because their decisions are general, and neither their passions nor imaginations are interested in the objects. And though in the present case the advantage was immediate to the Athenians, yet as it was known only under the general notion of advantage, without being conceived by any particular idea, it must have had a less considerable influence on their imaginations, and have been a less violent temptation, than if they had been acquainted with all its circumstances: Otherwise it is difficult to conceive, that a whole people, unjust and violent as men commonly are, should so unanimously have adhered to justice, and rejected any considerable advantage.

Any satisfaction, which we lately enjoyed, and of which the memory is fresh and recent, operates on the will with more violence, than another of which the traces are decayed, and almost obliterated. From whence does this proceed, but that the memory in the first case assists the fancy and gives an additional force and vigour to its conceptions? The image of the past pleasure being strong and violent, bestows these qualities on the idea of the future pleasure, which is connected with it by the relation of resemblance.

A pleasure, which is suitable to the way of life, in which we are engaged, excites more our desires and appetites than another, which is foreign to it. This phaenomenon may be explained from the same principle.

Nothing is more capable of infusing any passion into the mind, than eloquence, by which objects are represented in their strongest and most lively colours. We may of ourselves acknowledge, that such an object is valuable, and such another odious; but until an orator excites the imagination, and gives force to these ideas, they may have but a feeble influence either on the will or the affections.

But eloquence is not always necessary. The bare opinion of another, especially when inforced with passion, will cause an idea of good or evil to have an influence upon us, which would otherwise have been entirely neglected. This proceeds from the principle of sympathy or communication; and sympathy, as I have already observed, is nothing but the conversion of an idea into an impression by the force of imagination.

It is remarkable, that lively passions commonly attend a lively imagination. In this respect, as well as others, the force of the passion depends as much on the temper of the person, as the nature or situation of the object.

I have already observed, that belief is nothing but a lively idea related to a present impression. This vivacity is a requisite circumstance to the exciting all our passions, the calm as well as the violent; nor has a mere fiction of the imagination any considerable influence upon either of them. It is too weak to take hold of the mind, or be attended with emotion.

SECT. VII OF CONTIGUITY AND DISTANCE IN SPACE AND TIME

There is an easy reason, why every thing contiguous to us, either in space or time, should be conceived with a peculiar force and vivacity, and excel every other object, in its influence on the imagination. Ourself is intimately present to us, and whatever is related to self must partake of that quality. But where an object is so far removed as to have lost the advantage of this relation, why, as it is farther removed, its idea becomes still fainter and more obscure, would, perhaps, require a more particular examination.

It is obvious, that the imagination can never totally forget the points of space and time, in which we are existent; but receives such frequent advertisements of them from the passions and senses, that however it may turn its attention to foreign and remote objects, it is necessitated every moment to reflect on the present. IOt is also remarkable, that in the conception of those objects, which we regard as real and existent, we take them in their proper order and situation, and never leap from one object to another, which is distant from it, without running over, at least in a cursory manner, all those objects, which are interposed betwixt them. When we reflect, therefore, on any object distant from ourselves, we are obliged not only to reach it at first by passing through all the intermediate space betwixt ourselves and the object, but also to renew our progress every moment; being every moment recalled to the consideration of ourselves and our present situation. It is easily conceived, that this interruption must weaken the idea by breaking the action of the mind, and hindering the conception from being so intense and continued, as when we reflect on a nearer object. The fewer steps we make to arrive at the object, and the smoother the road is, this diminution of vivacity is less sensibly felt, but still may be observed more or less in proportion to the degrees of distance and difficulty.

Here then we are to consider two kinds of objects, the contiguous and remote; of which the former, by means of their relation to ourselves, approach an impression in force and vivacity; the latter by reason of the interruption in our manner of conceiving them, appear in a weaker and more imperfect light. This is their effect on the imagination. If my reasoning be just, they must have a proportionable effect on the will and passions. Contiguous objects must have an influence much superior to the distant and remote. Accordingly we find in common life, that men are principally concerned about those objects, which are not much removed either in space or time, enjoying the present, and leaving what is afar off to the care of chance and fortune. Talk to a man of his condition thirty years hence, and he will not regard you. Speak of what is to happen tomorrow, and he will lend you attention. The breaking of a mirror gives us more concern when at home, than the burning of a house, when abroad, and some hundred leagues distant.

But farther; though distance both in space and time has a considerable effect on the imagination, and by that means on the will and passions, yet the consequence of a removal in space are much inferior to those of a removal in time. Twenty years are certainly but a small distance of time in comparison of what history and even the memory of some may inform them of, and yet I doubt if a thousand leagues, or even the greatest distance of place this globe can admit of, will so remarkably weaken our ideas, and diminish our passions. A West-Indian merchant will tell you, that he is not without concern about what passes in Jamaica; though few extend their views so far into futurity, as to dread very remote accidents.

The cause of this phaenomenon must evidently lie in the different properties of space and time. Without having recourse to metaphysics, any one may easily observe, that space or extension consists of a number of co-existent parts disposed in a certain order, and capable of being at once present to the sight or feeling. On the contrary, time or succession, though it consists likewise of parts, never presents to us more than one at once; nor is it possible for any two of them ever to be co-existent. These qualities of the objects have a suitable effect on the imagination. The parts of extension being susceptible of an union to the senses, acquire an union in the fancy; and as the appearance of one part excludes not another, the transition or passage of the thought through the contiguous parts is by that means rendered more smooth and easy. On the other hand, the incompatibility of the parts of time in their real existence separates them in the imagination, and makes it more difficult for that faculty to trace any long succession or series of events. Every part must appear single and alone, nor can regularly have entrance into the fancy without banishing what is supposed to have been immediately precedent. By this means any distance in time causes a greater interruption in the thought than an equal distance in space, and consequently weakens more considerably the idea, and consequently the passions; which depend in a great measure, on the imagination, according to my system.

There is another phaenomenon of a like nature with the foregoing, viz, the superior effects of the same distance in futurity above that in the past. This difference with respect to the will is easily accounted for. As none of our actions can alter the past, it is not strange it should never determine the will. But with respect to the passions the question is yet entire, and well worth the examining.

Besides the propensity to a gradual progression through the points of space and time, we have another peculiarity in our method of thinking, which concurs in producing this phaenomenon. We always follow the succession of time in placing our ideas, and from the consideration of any object pass more easily to that, which follows immediately after it, than to that which went before it. We may learn this, among other instances, from the order, which is always observed in historical narrations. Nothing but an absolute necessity can oblige an historian to break the order of time, and in his narration give the precedence to an event, which was in reality posterior to another.

This will easily be applied to the question in hand, if we reflect on what I have before observed, that the present situation of the person is always that of the imagination, and that it is from thence we proceed to the conception of any distant object. When the object is past, the progression of the thought in passing to it from the present is contrary to nature, as proceeding from one point of time to that which is preceding, and from that to another preceding, in opposition to the natural course of the succession. On the other hand, when we turn our thought to a future object, our fancy flows along the stream of time, and arrives at the object by an order, which seems most natural, passing always from one point of time to that which is immediately posterior to it. This easy progression of ideas favours the imagination, and makes it conceive its object in a stronger and fuller light, than when we are continually opposed in our passage, and are obliged to overcome the difficulties arising from the natural propensity of the fancy. A small degree of distance in the past has, therefore, a greater effect, in interupting and weakening the conception, than a much greater in the future. From this effect of it on the imagination is derived its influence on the will and passions.

There is another cause, which both contributes to the same effect, and proceeds from the same quality of the fancy, by which we are determined to trace the succession of time by a similar succession of ideas. When from the present instant we consider two points of time equally distant in the future and in the past, it is evident, that, abstractedly considered, their relation to the present is almost equal. For as the future will sometime be present, so the past was once present. If we coued, therefore, remove this quality of the imagination, an equal distance in the past and in the future, would have a similar influence. Nor is this only true, when the fancy remains fixed, and from the present instant surveys the future and the past; but also when it changes its situation, and places us in different periods of time. For as on the one hand, in supposing ourselves existent in a point of time interposed betwixt the present instant and the future object, we find the future object approach to us, and the past retire, and become more distant: so on the other hand, in supposing ourselves existent in a point of time interposed betwixt the present and the past, the past approaches to us, and the future becomes more distant. But from the property of the fancy above-mentioned we rather chuse to fix our thought on the point of time interposed betwixt the present and the future, than on that betwixt the present and the past. We advance, rather than retard our existence; and following what seems the natural succession of time, proceed from past to present, and from present to future. By which means we conceive the future as flowing every moment nearer us, and the past as retiring. An equal distance, therefore, in the past and in the future, has not the same effect on the imagination; and that because we consider the one as continually encreasing, and the other as continually diminishing. The fancy anticipates the course of things, and surveys the object in that condition, to which it tends, as well as in that, which is regarded as the present.

SECT. VIII THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUEd

Thus we have accounted for three phaenomena, which seem pretty remarkable. Why distance weakens the conception and passion: Why distance in time has a greater effect than that in space: And why distance in past time has still a greater effect than that in future. We must now consider three phaenomena, which seem to be, in a manner, the reverse of these: Why a very great distance encreases our esteem and admiration for an object; Why such a distance in time encreases it more than that in space: And a distance in past time more than that in future. The curiousness of the subject will, I hope, excuse my dwelling on it for some time.

To begin with the first phaenomenon, why a great distance encreases our esteem and admiration for an object; it is evident that the mere view and contemplation of any greatness, whether successive or extended, enlarges the soul, and give it a sensible delight and pleasure. A wide plain, the ocean, eternity, a succession of several ages; all these are entertaining objects, and excel every thing, however beautiful, which accompanies not its beauty with a suitable greatness. Now when any very distant object is presented to the imagination, we naturally reflect on the interposed distance, and by that means, conceiving something great and magnificent, receive the usual satisfaction. But as the fancy passes easily from one idea to another related to it, and transports to the second all the passions excited by the first, the admiration, which is directed to the distance, naturally diffuses itself over the distant object. Accordingly we find, that it is not necessary the object should be actually distant from us, in order to cause our admiration; but that it is sufficient, if, by the natural association of ideas, it conveys our view to any considerable distance. A great traveller, though in the same chamber, will pass for a very extraordinary person; as a Greek medal, even in our cabinet, is always esteemed a valuable curiosity. Here the object, by a natural transition, conveys our views to the distance; and the admiration, which arises from that distance, by another natural transition, returns back to the object.

But though every great distance produces an admiration for the distant object, a distance in time has a more considerable effect than that in space.

Antient busts and inscriptions are more valued than Japan tables: And not to mention the Greeks and Romans, it is certain we regard with more veneration the old Chaldeans and Egyptians, than the modern Chinese and Persians, and bestow more fruitless pains to dear up the history and chronology of the former, than it would cost us to make a voyage, and be certainly informed of the character, learning and government of the latter. I shall be obliged to make a digression in order to explain this phaenomenon.

It is a quality very observable in human nature, that any opposition, which does not entirely discourage and intimidate us, has rather a contrary effect, and inspires us with a more than ordinary grandeur and magnanimity. In collecting our force to overcome the opposition, we invigorate the soul, and give it an elevation with which otherwise it would never have been acquainted. Compliance, by rendering our strength useless, makes us insensible of it: but opposition awakens and employs it.

This is also true in the universe. Opposition not only enlarges the soul; but the soul, when full of courage and magnanimity, in a manner seeks opposition.

SPUMANTEMQUE DARI PECORA INTER INERTIA VOTIS OPTAT APRUM, AUT FULVUM DESCENDERE MONTE LEONEM.

[And, among the tamer beasts, [he] longs to be granted, in answer to his prayers, a slavering boar, or to have a tawny lion come down from the mountain.]

Whatever supports and fills the passions is agreeable to us; as on the contrary, what weakens and infeebles them is uneasy. As opposition has the first effect, and facility the second, no wonder the mind, in certain dispositions, desires the former, and is averse to the latter.

These principles have an effect on the imagination as well as on the passions. To be convinced of this we need only consider the influence of heights and depths on that faculty. Any great elevation of place communicates a kind of pride or sublimity of imagination, and gives a fancyed superiority over those that lie below; and, vice versa, a sublime and strong imagination conveys the idea of ascent and elevation. Hence it proceeds, that we associate, in a manner, the idea of whatever is good with that of height, and evil with lowness. Heaven is supposed to be above, and hell below. A noble genius is called an elevate and sublime one. ATQUE UDAM SPERNIT HUMUM FUGIENTE PENNA. [Spurns the dank soil in winged flight.] On the contrary, a vulgar and trivial conception is stiled indifferently low or mean. Prosperity is denominated ascent, and adversity descent. Kings and princes are supposed to be placed at the top of human affairs; as peasants and day-labourers are said to be in the lowest stations. These methods of thinking, and of expressing ourselves, are not of so little consequence as they may appear at first sight.

It is evident to common sense, as well as philosophy, that there is no natural nor essential difference betwixt high and low, and that this distinction arises only from the gravitation of matter, which produces a motion from the one to the other. The very same direction, which in this part of the globe is called ascent, is denominated descent in our antipodes; which can proceed from nothing but the contrary tendency of bodies. Now it is certain, that the tendency of bodies, continually operating upon our senses, must produce, from custom, a like tendency in the fancy, and that when we consider any object situated in an ascent, the idea of its weight gives us a propensity to transport it from the place, in which it is situated, to the place immediately below it, and so on, until we come to the ground, which equally stops the body and our imagination. For a like reason we feel a difficulty in mounting, and pass not without a kind of reluctance from the inferior to that which is situated above it; as if our ideas acquired a kind of gravity from their objects. As a proof of this, do we not find, that the facility, which is so much studyed in music and poetry, is called the fail or cadency of the harmony or period; the idea of facility communicating to us that of descent, in the same manner as descent produces a facility?

Since the imagination, therefore, in running from low to high, finds an opposition in its internal qualities and principles, and since the soul, when elevated with joy and courage, in a manner seeks opposition, and throws itself with alacrity into any scene of thought or action, where its courage meets with matter to nourish and employ it; it follows, that everything, which invigorates and inlivens the soul, whether by touching the passions or imagination naturally conveys to the fancy this inclination for ascent, and determines it to run against the natural stream of its thoughts and conceptions. This aspiring progress of the imagination suits the present disposition of the mind; and the difficulty, instead of extinguishing its vigour and alacrity, has the contrary affect, of sustaining and encreasing it. Virtue, genius, power, and riches are for this reason associated with height and sublimity; as poverty, slavery, and folly are conjoined with descent and lowness. Were the case the same with us as Milton represents it to be with the angels, to whom descent is adverse, and who cannot sink without labour and compulsion, this order of things would be entirely inverted; as appears hence, that the very nature of ascent and descent is derived from the difficulty and propensity, and consequently every one of their effects proceeds from that origin.

All this is easily applied to the present question, why a considerable distance in time produces a greater veneration for the distant objects than a like removal in space. The imagination moves with more difficulty in passing from one portion of time to another, than in a transition through the parts of space; and that because space or extension appears united to our senses, while time or succession is always broken and divided. This difficulty, when joined with a small distance, interrupts and weakens the fancy: But has a contrary effect in a great removal. The mind, elevated by the vastness of its object, is still farther elevated by the difficulty of the conception; and being obliged every moment to renew its efforts in the transition from one part of time to another, feels a more vigorous and sublime disposition, than in a transition through the parts of space, where the ideas flow along with easiness and facility. In this disposition, the imagination, passing, as is usual, from the consideration of the distance to the view of the distant objects, gives us a proportionable veneration for it; and this is the reason why all the relicts of antiquity are so precious in our eyes, and appear more valuable than what is brought even from the remotest parts of the world.

The third phaenomenon I have remarked will be a full confirmation of this. It is not every removal in time, which has the effect of producing veneration and esteem. We are not apt to imagine our posterity will excel us, or equal our ancestors. This phaenomenon is the more remarkable, because any distance in futurity weakens not our ideas so much as an equal removal in the past. Though a removal in the past, when very great, encreases our passions beyond a like removal in the future, yet a small removal has a greater influence in diminishing them.

In our common way of thinking we are placed in a kind of middle station betwixt the past and future; and as our imagination finds a kind of difficulty in running along the former, and a facility in following the course of the latter, the difficulty conveys the notion of ascent, and the facility of the contrary. Hence we imagine our ancestors to be, in a manner, mounted above us, and our posterity to lie below us. Our fancy arrives not at the one without effort, but easily reaches the other: Which effort weakens the conception, where the distance is small; but enlarges and elevates the imagination, when attended with a suitable object. As on the other hand, the facility assists the fancy in a small removal, but takes off from its force when it contemplates any considerable distance.

It may not be improper, before we leave this subject of the will, to resume, in a few words, all that has been said concerning it, in order to set the whole more distinctly before the eyes of the reader. What we commonly understand by passion is a violent and sensible emotion of mind, when any good or evil is presented, or any object, which, by the original formation of our faculties, is fitted to excite an appetite. By reason we mean affections of the very same kind with the former; but such as operate more calmly, and cause no disorder in the temper: Which tranquillity leads us into a mistake concerning them, and causes us to regard them as conclusions only of our intellectual faculties. Both the causes and effects of these violent and calm passions are pretty variable, and depend, in a great measure, on the peculiar temper and disposition of every individual. Generally speaking, the violent passions have a more powerful influence on the will; though it is often found, that the calm ones, when corroborated by reflection, and seconded by resolution, are able to controul them in their most furious movements. What makes this whole affair more uncertain, is, that a calm passion may easily be changed into a violent one, either by a change of temper, or of the circumstances and situation of the object, as by the borrowing of force from any attendant passion, by custom, or by exciting the imagination. Upon the whole, this struggle of passion and of reason, as it is called, diversifies human life, and makes men so different not only from each other, but also from themselves in different times. Philosophy can only account for a few of the greater and more sensible events of this war; but must leave all the smaller and more delicate revolutions, as dependent on principles too fine and minute for her comprehension.

SECT. IX OF THE DIRECT PASSIONS

It is easy to observe, that the passions, both direct and indirect, are founded on pain and pleasure, and that in order to produce an affection of any kind, it is only requisite to present some good or evil. Upon the removal of pain and pleasure there immediately follows a removal of love and hatred, pride and humility, desire and aversion, and of most of our reflective or secondary impressions.

The impressions, which arise from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation are the direct passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind by an original instinct tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil, though they be conceived merely in idea, and be considered as to exist in any future period of time.

But supposing that there is an immediate impression of pain or pleasure, and that arising from an object related to ourselves or others, this does not prevent the propensity or aversion, with the consequent emotions, but by concurring with certain dormant principles of the human mind, excites the new impressions of pride or humility, love or hatred. That propensity, which unites us to the object, or separates us from it, still continues to operate, but in conjunction with the indirect passions, which arise from a double relation of impressions and ideas.

These indirect passions, being always agreeable or uneasy, give in their turn additional force to the direct passions, and encrease our desire and aversion to the object. Thus a suit of fine cloaths produces pleasure from their beauty; and this pleasure produces the direct passions, or the impressions of volition and desire. Again, when these cloaths are considered as belonging to ourself, the double relation conveys to us the sentiment of pride, which is an indirect passion; and the pleasure, which attends that passion, returns back to the direct affections, and gives new force to our desire or volition, joy or hope.

When good is certain or probable, it produces joy. When evil is in the same situation there arises GRIEF or SORROW.

When either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to FEAR or HOPE, according to the degrees of uncertainty on the one side or the other.

DESIRE arises from good considered simply, and AVERSION is derived from evil. The WILL exerts itself, when either the good or the absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body.

Beside good and evil, or in other words, pain and pleasure, the direct passions frequently arise from a natural impulse or instinct, which is perfectly unaccountable. Of this kind is the desire of punishment to our enemies, and of happiness to our friends; hunger, lust, and a few other bodily appetites. These passions, properly speaking, produce good and evil, and proceed not from them, like the other affections.

None of the direct affections seem to merit our particular attention, except hope and fear, which we shall here endeavour to account for. It is evident that the very same event, which by its certainty would produce grief or joy, gives always rise to fear or hope, when only probable and uncertain. In order, therefore, to understand the reason why this circumstance makes such a considerable difference, we must reflect on what I have already advanced in the preceding book concerning the nature of probability.

Probability arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, by which the mind is not allowed to fix on either side, but is incessantly tost from one to another, and at one moment is determined to consider an object as existent, and at another moment as the contrary. The imagination or understanding, call it which you please, fluctuates betwixt the opposite views; and though perhaps it may be oftener turned to the one side than the other, it is impossible for it, by reason of the opposition of causes or chances, to rest on either. The pro and con of the question alternately prevail; and the mind, surveying the object in its opposite principles, finds such a contrariety as utterly destroys all certainty and established opinion.

Suppose, then, that the object, concerning whose reality we are doubtful, is an object either of desire or aversion, it is evident, that, according as the mind turns itself either to the one side or the other, it must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow. An object, whose existence we desire, gives satisfaction, when we reflect on those causes, which produce it; and for the same reason excites grief or uneasiness from the opposite consideration: So that as the understanding, in all probable questions, is divided betwixt the contrary points of view, the affections must in the same manner be divided betwixt opposite emotions.

Now if we consider the human mind, we shall find, that with regard to the passions, it is not the nature of a wind-instrument of music, which in running over all the notes immediately loses the sound after the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where after each stroke the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays. The imagination is extreme quick and agile; but the passions are slow and restive: For which reason, when any object is presented, that affords a variety of views to the one, and emotions to the other; though the fancy may change its views with great celerity; each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion, but the one passion will always be mixt and confounded with the other. According as the probability inclines to good or evil, the passion of joy or sorrow predominates in the composition: Because the nature of probability is to cast a superior number of views or chances on one side; or, which is the same thing, a superior number of returns of one passion; or since the dispersed passions are collected into one, a superior degree of that passion. That is, in other words, the grief and joy being intermingled with each other, by means of the contrary views of the imagination, produce by their union the passions of hope and fear.

Upon this head there may be started a very curious question concerning that contrariety of passions, which is our present subject. It is observable, that where the objects of contrary passions are presented at once, beside the encrease of the predominant passion (which has been already explained, and commonly arises at their first shock or rencounter) it sometimes happens, that both the passions exist successively, and by short intervals; sometimes, that they destroy each other, and neither of them takes place; and sometimes that both of them remain united in the mind. It may, therefore, be asked, by what theory we can explain these variations, and to what general principle we can reduce them.

When the contrary passions arise from objects entirely different, they take place alternately, the want of relation in the ideas separating the impressions from each other, and preventing their opposition. Thus when a man is afflicted for the loss of a law-suit, and joyful for the birth of a son, the mind running from the agreeable to the calamitous object, with whatever celerity it may perform this motion, can scarcely temper the one affection with the other, and remain betwixt them in a state of indifference.

It more easily attains that calm situation, when the same event is of a mixt nature, and contains something adverse and something prosperous in its different circumstances. For in that case, both the passions, mingling with each other by means of the relation, become mutually destructive, and leave the mind in perfect tranquility.

But suppose, in the third place, that the object is not a compound of good or evil, but is considered as probable or improbable in any degree; in that case I assert, that the contrary passions will both of them be present at once in the soul, and instead of destroying and tempering each other, will subsist together, and produce a third impression or affection by their union. Contrary passions are not capable of destroying each other, except when their contrary movements exactly rencounter, and are opposite in their direction, as well as in the sensation they produce. This exact rencounter depends upon the relations of those ideas, from which they are derived, and is more or less perfect, according to the degrees of the relation. In the case of probability the contrary chances are so far related, that they determine concerning the existence or non-existence of the same object. But this relation is far from being perfect; since some of the chances lie on the side of existence, and others on that of non-existence; which are objects altogether incompatible. It is impossible by one steady view to survey the opposite chances, and the events dependent on them; but it is necessary, that the imagination should run alternately from the one to the other. Each view of the imagination produces its peculiar passion, which decays away by degrees, and is followed by a sensible vibration after the stroke. The incompatibility of the views keeps the passions from shocking in a direct line, if that expression may be allowed; and yet their relation is sufficient to mingle their fainter emotions. It is after this manner that hope and fear arise from the different mixture of these opposite passions of grief and joy, and from their imperfect union and conjunction.

Upon the whole, contrary passions succeed each other alternately, when they arise from different objects: They mutually destroy each other, when they proceed from different parts of the same: And they subsist both of them and mingle together, when they are derived from the contrary and incompatible chances or possibilities, on which any one object depends. The influence of the relations of ideas is plainly seen in this whole affair. If the objects of the contrary passions be totally different, the passions are like two opposite liquors in different bottles, which have no influence on each other. If the objects be intimately connected, the passions are like an alcali and an acid, which, being mingled, destroy each other. If the relation be more imperfect, and consists in the contradictory views of the same object, the passions are like oil and vinegar, which, however mingled, never perfectly unite and incorporate.

As the hypothesis concerning hope and fear carries its own evidence along with it, we shall be the more concise in our proofs. A few strong arguments are better than many weak ones.

The passions of fear and hope may arise when the chances are equal on both sides, and no superiority can be discovered in the one above the other. Nay, in this situation the passions are rather the strongest, as the mind has then the least foundation to rest upon, and is tossed with the greatest uncertainty. Throw in a superior degree of probability to the side of grief, you immediately see that passion diffuse itself over the composition, and tincture it into fear. Encrease the probability, and by that means the grief, the fear prevails still more and more, till at last it runs insensibly, as the joy continually diminishes, into pure grief. After you have brought it to this situation, diminish the grief, after the same manner that you encreased it; by diminishing the probability on that side, and you'll see the passion clear every moment, until it changes insensibly into hope; which again runs, after the same manner, by slow degrees, into joy, as you encrease that part of the composition by the encrease of the probability. Are not these as plain proofs, that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy, as in optics it is a proof, that a coloured ray of the sun passing through a prism, is a composition of two others, when, as you diminish or encrease the quantity of either, you find it prevail proportionably more or less in the composition? I am sure neither natural nor moral philosophy admits of stronger proofs.

Probability is of two kinds, either when the object is really in itself uncertain, and to be determined by chance; or when, though the object be already certain, yet it is uncertain to our judgment, which finds a number of proofs on each side of the question. Both these kinds of probabilities cause fear and hope; which can only proceed from that property, in which they agree, viz, the uncertainty and fluctuation they bestow on the imagination by that contrariety of views, which is common to both.

It is a probable good or evil, that commonly produces hope or fear; because probability, being a wavering and unconstant method of surveying an object, causes naturally a like mixture and uncertainty of passion. But we may observe, that wherever from other causes this mixture can be produced, the passions of fear and hope will arise, even though there be no probability; which must be allowed to be a convincing proof of the present hypothesis. We find that an evil, barely conceived as possible, does sometimes produce fear; especially if the evil be very great. A man cannot think of excessive pains and tortures without trembling, if he be in the least danger of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is compensated by the greatness of the evil; and the sensation is equally lively, as if the evil were more probable. One view or glimpse of the former, has the same effect as several of the latter.

But they are not only possible evils, that cause fear, but even some allowed to be impossible; as when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, though we know ourselves to be in perfect security, and have it in our choice whether we wili advance a step farther. This proceeds from the immediate presence of the evil, which influences the imagination in the same manner as the certainty of it would do; but being encountered by the reflection on our security, is immediately retracted, and causes the same kind of passion, as when from a contrariety of chances contrary passions are produced.

Evils, that are certain, have sometimes the same effect in producing fear, as the possible or impossible. Thus a man in a strong prison well-guarded, without the least means of escape, trembles at the thought of the rack, to which he is sentenced. This happens only when the certain evil is terrible and confounding; in which case the mind continually rejects it with horror, while it continually presses in upon the thought. The evil is there flxed and established, but the mind cannot endure to fix upon it; from which fluctuation and uncertainty there arises a passion of much the same appearance with fear.

But it is not only where good or evil is uncertain, as to its existence, but also as to its kind, that fear or hope arises. Let one be told by a person, whose veracity he cannot doubt of, that one of his sons is suddenly killed, it is evident the passion this event would occasion, would not settle into pure grief, till he got certain information, which of his sons he had lost. Here there is an evil certain, but the kind of it uncertain. Consequently the fear we feel on this occasion is without the least mixture of joy, and arises merely from the fluctuation of the fancy betwixt its objects. And though each side of the question produces here the same passion, yet that passion cannot settle, but receives from the imagination a tremulous and unsteady motion, resembling in its cause, as well as in its sensation, the mixture and contention of grief and joy.

From these principles we may account for a phaenomenon in the passions, which at first sight seems very extraordinary, viz, that surprize is apt to change into fear, and every thing that is unexpected affrights us. The most obvious conclusion from this is, that human nature is in general pusillanimous; since upon the sudden appearance of any object. we immediately conclude it to be an evil, and without waiting till we can examine its nature, whether it be good or bad, are at first affected with fear. This I say is the most obvious conclusion; but upon farther examination we shall find that the phaenomenon is otherwise to be accounted for. The suddenness and strangeness of an appearance naturally excite a commotion in the mind, like every thing for which we are not prepared, and to which we are not accustomed. This commotion, again, naturally produces a curiosity or inquisitiveness, which being very violent, from the strong and sudden impulse of the object, becomes uneasy, and resembles in its fluctuation and uncertainty, the sensation of fear or the mixed passions of grief and joy. This image of fear naturally converts into the thing itself, and gives us a real apprehension of evil, as the mind always forms its judgments more from its present disposition than from the nature of its objects.

Thus all kinds of uncertainty have a strong connexion with fear, even though they do not cause any opposition of passions by the opposite views and considerations they present to us. A person, who has left his friend in any malady, will feel more anxiety upon his account, than if he were present, though perhaps he is not only incapable of giving him assistance, but likewise of judging of the event of his sickness. In this case, though the principal object of the passion, viz, the life or death of his friend, be to him equally uncertain when present as when absent; yet there are a thousand little circumstances of his friend's situation and condition, the knowledge of which fixes the idea, and prevents that fluctuation and uncertainty so near allyed to fear. Uncertainty is, indeed, in one respect as near allyed to hope as to fear, since it makes an essential part in the composition of the former passion; but the reason, why it inclines not to that side, is, that uncertainty alone is uneasy, and has a reladon of impressions to the uneasy passions.

It is thus our uncertainty concerning any minute circumstance relating to a person encreases our apprehensions of his death or misfortune. Horace has remarked this phaenomenon.

UT ASSIDENS IMPLUMI BUS PULLUS AVIS SERPENTIUM ALLAPSUS TIRNET, MAGIS RELICTIS; NON, UT ADSIT, AUXILI LATURA PLUS PRESENTIBUS.

[As a bird, watching over her fledgelings, is more afraid of their being attacked by snakes if she were to leave them even though, were she to stay, she would not be any more capable of helping them, when they were with her.]

But this principle of the connexion of fear with uncertainty I carry farther, and observe that any doubt produces that passion, even though it presents nothing to us on any side but what is good and desireable. A virgin, on her bridalnight goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, though she expects nothing but pleasure of the highest kind, and what she has long wished for. The newness and greatness of the event, the confusion of wishes and joys so embarrass the mind, that it knows not on what passion to fix itself; from whence arises a fluttering or unsettledness of the spirits which being, in some degree, uneasy, very naturally degenerates into fear.

Thus we still find, that whatever causes any fluctuation or mixture of passions, with any degree of uneasiness, always produces fear, or at least a passion so like it, that they are scarcely to be distinguished.

I have here confined myself to the examination of hope and fear in their most simple and natural situation, without considering all the variations they may receive from the mixture of different views and reflections. Terror, consternation, astonishment, anxiety, and other passions of that kind, are nothing but different species and degrees of fear. It is easy to imagine how a different situation of the object, or a different turn of thought, may change even the sensation of a passion; and this may in general account for all the particular sub-divisions of the other affections, as well as of fear. Love may shew itself in the shape of tenderness, friendship, intimacy, esteem, good-will, and in many other appearances; which at the bottom are the same affections; and arise from the same causes, though with a small variation, which it is not necessary to give any particular account of. It is for this reason I have all along confined myself to the principal passion.

The same care of avoiding prolixity is the reason why I wave the examination of the will and direct passions, as they appear in animals; since nothing is more evident, than that they are of the same nature, and excited by the same causes as in human creatures. I leave this to the reader's own observation; desiring him at the same time to consider the additional force this bestows on the present system.

SECT. X OF CURIOSITY, OR THE LOVE OF TRUTH

But methinks we have been not a little inattentive to run over so many different parts of the human mind, and examine so many passions, without taking once into the consideration that love of truth, which was the first source of all our enquiries. Twill therefore be proper, before we leave this subject, to bestow a few reflections on that passion, and shew its origin in human nature. It is an affection of so peculiar a kind, that it would have been impossible to have treated of it under any of those heads, which we have examined, without danger of obscurity and confusion.

Truth is of two kinds, consisting either in the discovery of the proportions of ideas, considered as such, or in the conformity of our ideas of objects to their real existence. It is certain, that the former species of truth, is not desired merely as truth, and that it is not the justness of our conclusions, which alone gives the pleasure. For these conclusions are equally just, when we discover the equality of two bodies by a pair of compasses, as when we learn it by a mathematical demonstration; and though in the one case the proofs be demonstrative, and in the other only sensible, yet generally speaking, the mind acquiesces with equal assurance in the one as in the other. And in an arithmetical operation, where both the truth and the assurance are of the same nature, as in the most profound algebraical problem, the pleasure is very inconsiderable, if rather it does not degenerate into pain: Which is an evident proof, that the satisfaction, which we sometimes receive from the discovery of truth, proceeds not from it, merely as such, but only as endowed with certain qualities.

The first and most considerable circumstance requisite to render truth agreeable, is the genius and capacity, which is employed in its invention and discovery. What is easy and obvious is never valued; and even what is in itself difficult, if we come to the knowledge of it without difficulty, and without any stretch of thought or judgment, is but little regarded. We love to trace the demonstrations of mathematicians; but should receive small entertainment from a person, who should barely inform us of the proportions of lines and angles, though we reposed the utmost confidence both in his judgment and veracity. In this case it is sufficient to have ears to learn the truth. We never are obliged to fix our attention or exert our genius; which of all other exercises of the mind is the most pleasant and agreeable.

But though the exercise of genius be the principal source of that satisfaction we receive from the sciences, yet I doubt, if it be alone sufficient to give us any considerable enjoyment. The truth we discover must also be of some importance. It is easy to multiply algebraical problems to infinity, nor is there any end in the discovery of the proportions of conic sections; though few mathematicians take any pleasure in these researches, but turn their thoughts to what is more useful and important. Now the question is, after what manner this utility and importance operate upon us? The difficulty on this head arises from hence, that many philosophers have consumed their time, have destroyed their health, and neglected their fortune, in the search of such truths, as they esteemed important and useful to the world, though it appeared from their whole conduct and behaviour, that they were not endowed with any share of public spirit, nor had any concern for the interests of mankind. Were they convinced, that their discoveries were of no consequence, they would entirely lose all relish for their studies, and that though the consequences be entirely indifferent to them; which seems to be a contradiction.

To remove this contradiction, we must consider, that there are certain desires and inclinations, which go no farther than the imagination, and are rather the faint shadows and images of passions, than any real affections. Thus, suppose a man, who takes a survey of the fortifications of any city; considers their strength and advantages, natural or acquired; observes the disposition and contrivance of the bastions, ramparts, mines, and other military works; it is plain, that in proportion as all these are fitted to attain their ends he will receive a suitable pleasure and satisfaction. This pleasure, as it arises from the utility, not the form of the objects, can be no other than a sympathy with the inhabitants, for whose security all this art is employed; though it is possible, that this person, as a stranger or an enemy, may in his heart have no kindness for them, or may even entertain a hatred against them.

It may indeed be objected, that such a remote sympathy is a very slight foundation for a passion, and that so much industry and application, as we frequently observe in philosophers, can never be derived from so inconsiderable an original. But here I return to what I have already remarked, that the pleasure of study conflicts chiefly in the action of the mind, and the exercise of the genius and understanding in the discovery or comprehension of any truth. If the importance of the truth be requisite to compleat the pleasure, it is not on account of any considerable addition, which of itself it brings to our enjoyment, but only because it is, in some measure, requisite to fix our attention. When we are careless and inattentive, the same action of the understanding has no effect upon us, nor is able to convey any of that satisfaction, which arises from it, when we are in another disposition.

But beside the action of the mind, which is the principal foundation of the pleasure, there is likewise required a degree of success in the attainment of the end, or the discovery of that truth we examine. Upon this head I shall make a general remark, which may be useful on many occasions, viz, that where the mind pursues any end with passion; though that passion be not derived originally from the end, but merely from the action and pursuit; yet by the natural course of the affections, we acquire a concern for the end itself, and are uneasy under any disappointment we meet with in the pursuit of it. This proceeds from the relation and parallel direction of the passions above-mentioned.

To illustrate all this by a similar instance, I shall observe, that there cannot be two passions more nearly resembling each other, than those of hunting and philosophy, whatever disproportion may at first sight appear betwixt them. It is evident, that the pleasure of hunting conflicts in the action of the mind and body; the motion, the attention, the difficulty, and the uncertainty. It is evident likewise, that these actions must be attended with an idea of utility, in order to their having any effect upon us. A man of the greatest fortune, and the farthest removed from avarice, though he takes a pleasure in hunting after patridges and pheasants, feels no satisfaction in shooting crows and magpies; and that because he considers the first as fit for the table, and the other as entirely useless. Here it is certain, that the utility or importance of itself causes no real passion, but is only requisite to support the imagination; and the same person, who over-looks a ten times greater profit in any other subject, is pleased to bring home half a dozen woodcocks or plovers, after having employed several hours in hunting after them. To make the parallel betwixt hunting and philosophy more compleat, we may observe, that though in both cases the end of our action may in itself be despised, yet in the heat of the action we acquire such an attention to this end, that we are very uneasy under any disappointments, and are sorry when we either miss our game, or fall into any error in our reasoning.

If we want another parallel to these affections, we may consider the passion of gaming, which affords a pleasure from the same principles as hunting and philosophy. It has been remarked, that the pleasure of gaming arises not from interest alone; since many leave a sure gain for this entertainment: Neither is it derived from the game alone; since the same persons have no satisfaction, when they play for nothing: But proceeds from both these causes united, though separately they have no effect. It is here, as in certain chymical preparations, where the mixture of two clear and transparent liquids produces a third, which is opaque and coloured..

The interest, which we have in any game, engages our attention, without which we can have no enjoyment, either in that or in any other action. Our attention being once engaged, the difficulty, variety, and sudden reverses of fortune, still farther interest us; and it is from that concern our satisfaction arises. Human life is so tiresome a scene, and men generally are of such indolent dispositions, that whatever amuses them, though by a passion mixt with pain, does in the main give them a sensible pleasure. And this pleasure is here encreased by the nature of the objects, which being sensible, and of a narrow compass, are entered into with facility, and are agreeable to the imagination.

The same theory, that accounts for the love of truth in mathematics and algebra may be extended to morals, politics, natural philosophy, and other studies, where we consider not the other abstract relations of ideas, but their real connexions and existence. But beside the love of knowledge, which displays itself in the sciences, there is a certain curiosity implanted in human nature, which is a passion derived from a quite different principle. Some people have an insatiable desire of knowing the actions and circumstances of their neighbours, though their interest be no way concerned in them, and they must entirely depend on others for their information; in which case there is no room for study or application. Let us search for the reason of this phaenomenon.

It has been proved at large, that the influence of belief is at once to inliven and infix any idea in the imagination, and prevent all kind of hesitation and uncertainty about it. Both these circumstances are advantageous. By the vivacity of the idea we interest the fancy, and produce, though in a lesser degree, the same pleasure, which arises from a moderate passion. As the vivacity of the idea gives pleasure, so its certainty prevents uneasiness, by fixing one particular idea in the mind, and keeping it from wavering in the choice of its objects. It is a quality of human nature, which is conspicuous on many occasions, and is common both to the mind and body, that too sudden and violent a change is unpleasant to us, and that however any objects may in themselves be indifferent, yet their alteration gives uneasiness. As it is the nature of doubt to cause a variation in the thought, and transport us suddenly from one idea to another, it must of consequence be the occasion of pain. This pain chiefly takes place, where interest, relation, or the greatness and novelty of any event interests us in it. It is not every matter of fact, of which we have a curiosity to be informed; neither are they such only as we have an interest to know. It is sufficient if the idea strikes on us with such force, and concerns us so nearly, as to give us an uneasiness in its instability and inconstancy. A stranger, when he arrives first at any town, may be entirely indifferent about knowing the history and adventures of the inhabitants; but as he becomes farther acquainted with them, and has lived any considerable time among them, he acquires the same curiosity as the natives. When we are reading the history of a nation, we may have an ardent desire of clearing up any doubt or difficulty, that occurs in it; but become careless in such researches, when the ideas of these events are, in a great measure, obliterated.

BOOK III OF MORALS

PART I OF VIRTUE AND VICE IN GENERAL

SECT. I MORAL DISTINCTIONS NOT DERIVed FROM REASON

There is an inconvenience which attends all abstruse reasoning that it may silence, without convincing an antagonist, and requires the same intense study to make us sensible of its force, that was at first requisite for its invention. When we leave our closet, and engage in the common affairs of life, its conclusions seem to vanish, like the phantoms of the night on the appearance of the morning; and it is difficult for us to retain even that conviction, which we had attained with difficulty. This is still more conspicuous in a long chain of reasoning, where we must preserve to the end the evidence of the first propositions, and where we often lose sight of all the most received maxims, either of philosophy or common life. I am not, however, without hopes, that the present system of philosophy will acquire new force as it advances; and that our reasonings concerning morals will corroborate whatever has been said concerning the UNDERSTANDING and the PASSIONS. Morality is a subject that interests us above all others: We fancy the peace of society to be at stake in every decision concerning it; and it is evident, that this concern must make our speculations appear more real and solid, than where the subject is, in a great measure, indifferent to us. What affects us, we conclude can never be a chimera; and as our passion is engaged on the one side or the other, we naturally think that the question lies within human comprehension; which, in other cases of this nature, we are apt to entertain some doubt of. Without this advantage I never should have ventured upon a third volume of such abstruse philosophy, in an age, wherein the greatest part of men seem agreed to convert reading into an amusement, and to reject every thing that requires any considerable degree of attention to be comprehended.

It has been observed, that nothing is ever present to the mind but its perceptions; and that all the actions of seeing, hearing, judging, loving, hating, and thinking, fall under this denomination. The mind can never exert itself in any action, which we may not comprehend under the term of perception; and consequently that term is no less applicable to those judgments, by which we distinguish moral good and evil, than to every other operation of the mind. To approve of one character, to condemn another, are only so many different perceptions.

Now as perceptions resolve themselves into two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas, this distinction gives rise to a question, with which we shall open up our present enquiry concerning morals. WHETHER IT IS BY MEANS OF OUR IDEAS OR IMPRESSIONS WE DISTINGUISH BETWIXT VICE AND VIRTUE, AND PRONOUNCE AN ACTION BLAMEABLE OR PRAISEWORTHY? This will immediately cut off all loose discourses and declamations, and reduce us to something precise and exact on the present subject.

Those who affirm that virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself: All these systems concur in the opinion, that morality, like truth, is discerned merely by ideas, and by their juxta-position and comparison. In order, therefore, to judge of these systems, we need only consider, whether it be possible, from reason alone, to distinguish betwixt moral good and evil, or whether there must concur some other principles to enable us to make that distinction.

If morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions, it were in vain to take such pains to inculcate it; and nothing would be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound. Philosophy is commonly divided into speculative and practical; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, it is supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding. And this is confirmed by common experience, which informs us, that men are often governed by their duties, and are detered from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impelled to others by that of obligation.

Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be derived from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already proved, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality therefore, are not conclusions of our reason.

No one, I believe, will deny the justness of this inference; nor is there any other means of evading it, than by denying that principle, on which it is founded. As long as it is allowed, that reason has no influence on our passions and action, it is in vain to pretend, that morality is discovered only by a deduction of reason. An active principle can never be founded on an inactive; and if reason be inactive in itself, it must remain so in all its shapes and appearances, whether it exerts itself in natural or moral subjects, whether it considers the powers of external bodies, or the actions of rational beings.

It would be tedious to repeat all the arguments, by which I have proved [Book II. Part III. Sect 3.], that reason is perfectly inert, and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection, it will be easy to recollect what has been said upon that subject. I shall only recall on this occasion one of these arguments, which I shall endeavour to render still more conclusive, and more applicable to the present subject.

Reason is the discovery of truth or falshood. Truth or falshood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore, is not susceptible of this agreement or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason. Now it is evident our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions. It is impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason.

This argument is of double advantage to our present purpose. For it proves DIRECTLY, that actions do not derive their merit from a conformity to reason, nor their blame from a contrariety to it; and it proves the same truth more INDIRECTLY, by shewing us, that as reason can never immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving of it, it cannot be the source of moral good and evil, which are found to have that influence. Actions may be laudable or blameable; but they cannot be reasonable: Laudable or blameable, therefore, are not the same with reasonable or unreasonable. The merit and demerit of actions frequently contradict, and sometimes controul our natural propensities. But reason has no such influence. Moral distinctions, therefore, are not the offspring of reason. Reason is wholly inactive, and can never be the source of so active a principle as conscience, or a sense of morals.

But perhaps it may be said, that though no will or action can be immediately contradictory to reason, yet we may find such a contradiction in some of the attendants of the action, that is, in its causes or effects. The action may cause a judgment, or may be obliquely caused by one, when the judgment concurs with a passion; and by an abusive way of speaking, which philosophy will scarce allow of, the same contrariety may, upon that account, be ascribed to the action. How far this truth or faishood may be the source of morals, it will now be proper to consider.

It has been observed, that reason, in a strict and philosophical sense, can have influence on our conduct only after two ways: Either when it excites a passion by informing us of the existence of something which is a proper object of it; or when it discovers the connexion of causes and effects, so as to afford us means of exerting any passion. These are the only kinds of judgment, which can accompany our actions, or can be said to produce them in any manner; and it must be allowed, that these judgments may often be false and erroneous. A person may be affected with passion, by supposing a pain or pleasure to lie in an object, which has no tendency to produce either of these sensations, or which produces the contrary to what is imagined. A person may also take false measures for the attaining his end, and may retard, by his foolish conduct, instead of forwarding the execution of any project. These false judgments may be thought to affect the passions and actions, which are connected with them, and may be said to render them unreasonable, in a figurative and improper way of speaking. But though this be acknowledged, it is easy to observe, that these errors are so far from being the source of all immorality, that they are commonly very innocent, and draw no manner of guilt upon the person who is so unfortunate as to fail into them. They extend not beyond a mistake of fact, which moralists have not generally supposed criminal, as being perfectly involuntary. I am more to be lamented than blamed, if I am mistaken with regard to the influence of objects in producing pain or pleasure, or if I know not the proper means of satisfying my desires. No one can ever regard such errors as a defect in my moral character. A fruit, for instance, that is really disagreeable, appears to me at a distance, and through mistake I fancy it to be pleasant and delicious. Here is one error. I choose certain means of reaching this fruit, which are not proper for my end. Here is a second error;

nor is there any third one, which can ever possibly enter into our reasonings concerning actions. I ask, therefore, if a man, in this situation, and guilty of these two errors, is to be regarded as vicious and criminal, however unavoidable they might have been? Or if it be possible to imagine, that such errors are the sources of all immorality?

And here it may be proper to observe, that if moral distinctions be derived from the truth or falshood of those judgments, they must take place wherever we form the judgments; nor will there be any difference, whether the question be concerning an apple or a kingdom, or whether the error be avoidable or unavoidable. For as the very essence of morality is supposed to consist in an agreement or disagreement to reason, the other circumstances are entirely arbitrary, and can never either bestow on any action the character of virtuous or vicious, or deprive it of that character. To which we may add, that this agreement or disagreement, not admitting of degrees, all virtues and vices would of course be equal.

Should it be pretended, that though a mistake of fact be not criminal, yet a mistake of right often is; and that this may be the source of immorality: I would answer, that it is impossible such a mistake can ever be the original source of immorality, since it supposes a real right and wrong; that is, a real distinction in morals, independent of these judgments. A mistake, therefore, of right may become a species of immorality; but it is only a secondary one, and is founded on some other, antecedent to it.

As to those judgments which are the effects of our actions, and which, when false, give occasion to pronounce the actions contrary to truth and reason; we may observe, that our actions never cause any judgment, either true or false, in ourselves, and that it is only on others they have such an influence. It is certain, that an action, on many occasions, may give rise to false conclusions in others; and that a person, who through a window sees any lewd behaviour of mine with my neighbour’s wife, may be so simple as to imagine she is certainly my own. In this respect my action resembles somewhat a lye or falshood; only with this difference, which is material, that I perform not the action with any intention of giving rise to a false judgment in another, but merely to satisfy my lust and passion. It causes, however, a mistake and false judgment by accident; and the falshood of its effects may be ascribed, by some odd figurative way of speaking, to the action itself. But still I can see no pretext of reason for asserting, that the tendency to cause such an error is the first spring or original source of all immorality.

[FN 12. One might think it were entirely superfluous to prove this, if a late author [William Wollaston, THE RELIGION OF NATURE DELINEATED (London 1722)], who has had the good fortune to obtain some reputation, had not seriously affirmed, that such a falshood is the foundation of all guilt and moral deformity. That we may discover the fallacy of his hypothesis, we need only consider, that a false conclusion is drawn from an action, only by means of an obscurity of natural principles, which makes a cause be secretly interrupted In its operation, by contrary causes, and renders the connexion betwixt two objects uncertain and variable. Now, as a like uncertainty and variety of causes take place, even in natural objects, and produce a like error in our judgment, if that tendency to produce error were the very essence of vice and immorality, it should follow, that even inanimate objects might be vicious and immoral.

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It is in vain to urge, that inanimate objects act without liberty and choice. For as liberty and choice are not necessary to make an action produce in us an erroneous conclusion, they can be, in no respect, essential to morality; and I do not readily perceive, upon this system, how they can ever come to be regarded by it. If the tendency to cause error be the origin of immorality, that tendency and immorality would in every case be inseparable.

Add to this, that if I had used the precaution of shutting the windows, while I indulged myself in those liberties with my neighbour’s wife, I should have been guilty of no immorality; and that because my action, being perfectly concealed, would have had no tendency to produce any false conclusion.

For the same reason, a thief, who steals In by a ladder at a window, and takes all imaginable care to cause no disturbance, is in no respect criminal. For either he will not be perceived, or if he be, it is impossible he can produce any error, nor will any one, from these circumstances, take him to be other than what he really is.

It is well known, that those who are squint-sighted, do very readily cause mistakes in others, and that we Imagine they salute or are talking to one person, while they address themselves to anther. Are they therefore, upon that account, immoral?

Besides, we may easily observe, that in all those arguments there is an evident reasoning in a circle. A person who takes possession of another’s goods, and uses them as his own, in a manner declares them to be his own; and this falshood is the source of the immorality of injustice. But is property, or right, or obligation, intelligible, without

> an antecedent morality?
>
> A man that is ungrateful to his benefactor, in a manner affirms, that he never received any favours from him. But in what manner? Is it because it is his duty to be grateful? But this supposes, that there is some antecedent rule of duty and morals. Is it because human nature is generally grateful, and makes us conclude, that a man who does any harm never received any favour from the person he harmed? But human nature is not so generally grateful, as to justify such a conclusion. Or if it were, is an exception to a general rule in every case criminal, for no other reason than because it is an exception?
>
> But what may suffice entirely to destroy this whimsical system is, that it leaves us under the same difficulty to give a reason why truth is virtuous and falshood vicious, as to account for the merit or turpitude of any other action. I shall allow, if you please, that all immorality is derived from this supposed falshood in action, provided you can give me any plausible reason, why such a falshood is immoral. If you consider rightly of the matter, you will find yourself in the same difficulty as at the beginning.
>
> This last argument is very conclusive; because, if there be not an evident merit or turpitude annexed to this species of truth or falahood, It can never have any influence upon our actions. For, who ever thought of forbearing any action, because others might possibly draw false conclusions from it? Or, who ever performed any, that he might give rise to true conclusions?]

Thus upon the whole, it is impossible, that the distinction betwixt moral good and evil, can be made to reason; since that distinction has an influence upon our actions, of which reason alone is incapable. Reason and judgment may, indeed, be the mediate cause of an action, by prompting, or by directing a passion: But it is not pretended, that a judgment of this kind, either in its truth or falshood, is attended with virtue or vice. And as to the judgments, which are caused by our judgments, they can still less bestow those moral qualities on the actions, which are their causes.

But to be more particular, and to shew, that those eternal immutable fitnesses and unfitnesses of things cannot be defended by sound philosophy, we may weigh the following considerations.

If the thought and understanding were alone capable of fixing the boundaries of right and wrong, the character of virtuous and vicious either must lie in some relations of objects, or must be a matter of fact, which is discovered by our reasoning. This consequence is evident. As the operations of human understanding divide themselves into two kinds, the comparing of ideas, and the inferring of matter of fact; were virtue discovered by the understanding; it must be an object of one of these operations, nor is there any third operation of the understanding. which can discover it. There has been an opinion very industriously propagated by certain philosophers, that morality is susceptible of demonstration; and though no one has ever been able to advance a single step in those demonstrations; yet it is taken for granted, that this science may be brought to an equal certainty with geometry or algebra. Upon this supposition vice and virtue must consist in some relations; since it is allowed on all hands, that no matter of fact is capable of being demonstrated. Let us, therefore, begin with examining this hypothesis, and endeavour, if possible, to fix those moral qualities, which have been so long the objects of our fruitless researches. Point out distinctly the relations, which constitute morality or obligation, that we may know wherein they consist, and after what manner we must judge of them.

If you assert, that vice and virtue consist in relations susceptible of certainty and demonstration, you must confine yourself to those four relations, which alone admit of that degree of evidence; and in that case you run into absurdities, from which you will never be able to extricate yourself. For as you make the very essence of morality to lie in the relations, and as there is no one of these relations but what is applicable, not only to an irrational, but also to an inanimate object; it follows, that even such objects must be susceptible of merit or demerit. RESEMBLANCE, CONTRARIETY, DEGREES IN QUALITY, and PROPORTIONS IN QUANTITY AND NUMBER; all these relations belong as properly to matter, as to our actions, passions, and volitions. It is unquestionable, therefore, that morality lies not in any of these relations, nor the sense of it in their discovery.

[FN 13. As a proof, how confused our way of thinking on this subject commonly is, we may observe, that those who assert, that morality is demonstrable, do not say, that morality lies in the relations, and that the relations are distinguishable by reason. They only say, that reason can discover such an action, In such relations, to be virtuous, and such another vicious. It seems they thought it sufficient, if they could bring the word, Relation, into the proposition, without troubling themselves whether it was to the purpose or not. But here, I think, is plain argument. Demonstrative reason discovers only relations. But that reason, according to this hypothesis, discovers also vice and virtue. These moral qualities, therefore, must be relations. When we blame any action, in any situation, the whole complicated object, of action and situation, must form certain relations, wherein the essence of vice consists. This hypothesis is not otherwise intelligible. For what does reason discover, when it pronounces any action vicious? Does it discover a relation or a matter of fact? These questions are decisive, and must not be eluded.]

Should it be asserted, that the sense of morality consists in the discovery of some relation, distinct from these, and that our enumeration was not compleat, when we comprehended all demonstrable relations under four general heads: To this I know not what to reply, till some one be so good as to point out to me this new relation. It is impossible to refute a system, which has never yet been explained. In such a manner of fighting in the dark, a man loses his blows in the air, and often places them where the enemy is not present.

I must, therefore, on this occasion, rest contented with requiring the two following conditions of any one that would undertake to clear up this system. First, As moral good and evil belong only to the actions of the mind, and are derived from our situation with regard to external objects, the relations, from which these moral distinctions arise, must lie only betwixt internal actions, and external objects, and must not be applicable either to internal actions, compared among themselves, or to external objects, when placed in opposition to other external objects. For as morality is supposed to attend certain relations, if these relations coued belong to internal actions considered singly, it would follow, that we might be guilty of crimes in ourselves, and independent of our situation, with respect to the universe: And in like manner, if these moral relations coued be applied to external objects, it would follow, that even inanimate beings would be susceptible of moral beauty and deformity. Now it seems difficult to imagine, that any relation can be discovered betwixt our passions, volitions and actions, compared to external objects, which relation might not belong either to these passions and volitions, or to these external objects, compared among themselves. But it will be still more difficult to fulfil the second condition, requisite to justify this system. According to the principles of those who maintain an abstract rational difference betwixt moral good and evil, and a natural fitness and unfitness of things, it is not only supposed, that these relations, being eternal and immutable, are the same, when considered by every rational creature, but their effects are also supposed to be necessarily the same; and it is concluded they have no less, or rather a greater, influence in directing the will of the deity, than in governing the rational and virtuous of our own species. These two particulars are evidently distinct. It is one thing to know virtue, and another to conform the will to it. In order, therefore, to prove, that the measures of right and wrong are eternal laws, obligatory on every rational mind, it is not sufficient to shew the relations upon which they are founded: We must also point out the connexion betwixt the relation and the will; and must prove that this connexion is so necessary, that in every well-disposed mind, it must take place and have its influence; though the difference betwixt these minds be in other respects immense and infinite. Now besides what I have already proved, that even in human nature no relation can ever alone produce any action: besides this, I say, it has been shewn, in treating of the understanding, that there is no connexion of cause and effect, such as this is supposed to be, which is discoverable otherwise than by experience, and of which we can pretend to have any security by the simple consideration of the objects. All beings in the universe, considered in themselves, appear entirely loose and independent of each other. It is only by experience we learn their influence and connexion; and this influence we ought never to extend beyond experience.

Thus it will be impossible to fulfil the first condition required to the system of eternal measures of right and wrong; because it is impossible to shew those relations, upon which such a distinction may be founded: And it is as impossible to fulfil the second condition; because we cannot prove A PRIORI, that these relations, if they really existed and were perceived, would be universally forcible and obligatory.

But to make these general reflections more dear and convincing, we may illustrate them by some particular instances, wherein this character of moral good or evil is the most universally acknowledged. Of all crimes that human creatures are capable of committing, the most horrid and unnatural is ingratitude, especially when it is committed against parents, and appears in the more flagrant instances of wounds and death. This is acknowledged by all mankind, philosophers as well as the people; the question only arises among philosophers, whether the guilt or moral deformity of this action be discovered by demonstrative reasoning, or be felt by an internal sense, and by means of some sentiment, which the reflecting on such an action naturally occasions. This question will soon be decided against the former opinion, if we can shew the same relations in other objects, without the notion of any guilt or iniquity attending them. Reason or science is nothing but the comparing of ideas, and the discovery of their relations; and if the same relations have different characters, it must evidently follow, that those characters are not discovered merely by reason. To put the affair, therefore, to this trial, let us chuse any inanimate object, such as an oak or elm; and let us suppose, that by the dropping of its seed, it produces a sapling below it, which springing up by degrees, at last overtops and destroys the parent tree: I ask, if in this instance there be wanting any relation, which is discoverable in parricide or ingratitude? Is not the one tree the cause of the other's existence; and the latter the cause of the destruction of the former, in the same manner as when a child murders his parent? It is not sufficient to reply, that a choice or will is wanting. For in the case of parricide, a will does not give rise to any DIFFERENT relations, but is only the cause from which the action is derived; and consequently produces the same relations, that in the oak or elm arise from some other principles. It is a will or choice, that determines a man to kill his parent; and they are the laws of matter and motion, that determine a sapling to destroy the oak, from which it sprung. Here then the same relations have different causes; but still the relations are the same: And as their discovery is not in both cases attended with a notion of immorality, it follows, that that notion does not arise from such a discovery.

But to chuse an instance, still more resembling; I would fain ask any one, why incest in the human species is criminal, and why the very same action, and the same relations in animals have not the smallest moral turpitude and deformity? If it be answered, that this action is innocent in animals, because they have not reason sufficient to discover its turpitude; but that man, being endowed with that faculty which ought to restrain him to his duty, the same action instantly becomes criminal to him; should this be said, I would reply, that this is evidently arguing in a circle. For before reason can perceive this turpitude, the turpitude must exist; and consequently is independent of the decisions of our reason, and is their object more properly than their effect. According to this system, then, every animal, that has sense, and appetite, and will; that is, every animal must be susceptible of all the same virtues and vices, for which we ascribe praise and blame to human creatures. All the difference is, that our superior reason may serve to discover the vice or virtue, and by that means may augment the blame or praise: But still this discovery supposes a separate being in these moral distinctions, and a being, which depends only on the will and appetite, and which, both in thought and reality, may be distinguished from the reason. Animals are susceptible of the same relations, with respect to each other, as the human species, and therefore would also be susceptible of the same morality, if the essence of morality consisted in these relations. Their want of a sufficient degree of reason may hinder them from perceiving the duties and obligations of morality, but can never hinder these duties from existing; since they must antecedently exist, in order to their being perceived. Reason must find them, and can never produce them. This argument deserves to be weighed, as being, in my opinion, entirely decisive.

Nor does this reasoning only prove, that morality consists not in any relations, that are the objects of science; but if examined, will prove with equal certainty, that it consists not in any matter of fact, which can be discovered by the understanding. This is the second part of our argument; and if it can be made evident, we may conclude, that morality is not an object of reason. But can there be any difficulty in proving, that vice and virtue are not matters of fact, whose existence we can infer by reason? Take any action allowed to be vicious: Wilful murder, for instance. Examine it in all lights, and see if you can find that matter of fact, or real existence, which you call vice. In which-ever way you take it, you find only certain passions, motives, volitions and thoughts. There is no other matter of fact in the case.

The vice entirely escapes you, as long as you consider the object. You never can find it, till you turn your reflection into your own breast, and find a sentiment of disapprobation, which arises in you, towards this action. Here is a matter of fact; but it is the object of feeling, not of reason. It lies in yourself, not in the object. So that when you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind: And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a considerable advancement of the speculative sciences; though, like that too, it has little or no influence on practice. Nothing can be more real, or concern us more, than our own sentiments of pleasure and uneasiness; and if these be favourable to virtue, and unfavourable to vice, no more can be requisite to the regulation of our conduct and behaviour.

I cannot forbear adding to these reasonings an observation, which may, perhaps, be found of some importance. In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprized to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see, that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.

SECT. II MORAL DISTINCTIONS DERIVed FROM A MORAL SENSE

Thus the course of the argument leads us to conclude, that since vice and virtue are not discoverable merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas, it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them. Our decisions concerning moral rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of; though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle, that we are apt to confound it with an idea, according to our common custom of taking all things for the same, which have any near resemblance to each other.

The next question is, Of what nature are these impressions, and after what manner do they operate upon us? Here we cannot remain long in suspense, but must pronounce the impression arising from virtue, to be agreeable, and that proceding from vice to be uneasy. Every moments experience must convince us of this. There is no spectacle so fair and beautiful as a noble and generous action; nor any which gives us more abhorrence than one that is cruel and treacherous. No enjoyment equals the satisfaction we receive from the company of those we love and esteem; as the greatest of all punishments is to be obliged to pass our lives with those we hate or contemn. A very play or romance may afford us instances of this pleasure, which virtue conveys to us; and pain, which arises from vice.

Now since the distinguishing impressions, by which moral good or evil is known, are nothing but particular pains or pleasures; it follows, that in all enquiries concerning these moral distinctions, it will be sufficient to shew the principles, which make us feel a satisfaction or uneasiness from the survey of any character, in order to satisfy us why the character is laudable or blameable. An action, or sentiment, or character is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to feel a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very feeling constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no farther; nor do we enquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases: But in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations. Our approbation is implyed in the immediate pleasure they convey to us.

I have objected to the system, which establishes eternal rational measures of right and wrong, that it is impossible to shew, in the actions of reasonable creatures, any relations, which are not found in external objects; and therefore, if morality always attended these relations, it were possible for inanimate matter to become virtuous or vicious. Now it may, in like manner, be objected to the present system, that if virtue and vice be determined by pleasure and pain, these qualities must, in every case, arise from the sensations; and consequently any object, whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, might become morally good or evil, provided it can excite a satisfaction or uneasiness. But though this objection seems to be the very same, it has by no means the same force, in the one case as in the other. For, first, tis evident, that under the term pleasure, we comprehend sensations, which are very different from each other, and which have only such a distant resemblance, as is requisite to make them be expressed by the same abstract term. A good composition of music and a bottle of good wine equally produce pleasure; and what is more, their goodness is determined merely by the pleasure. But shall we say upon that account, that the wine is harmonious, or the music of a good flavour? In like manner an inanimate object, and the character or sentiments of any person may, both of them, give satisfaction; but as the satisfaction is different, this keeps our sentiments concerning them from being confounded, and makes us ascribe virtue to the one, and not to the other. Nor is every sentiment of pleasure or pain, which arises from characters and actions, of that peculiar kind, which makes us praise or condemn. The good qualities of an enemy are hurtful to us; but may still command our esteem and respect. It is only when a character is considered in general, without reference to our particular interest, that it causes such a feeling or sentiment, as denominates it morally good or evil. It is true, those sentiments, from interest and morals, are apt to be confounded, and naturally run into one another. It seldom happens, that we do not think an enemy vicious, and can distinguish betwixt his opposition to our interest and real villainy or baseness. But this hinders not, but that the sentiments are, in themselves, distinct; and a man of temper and judgment may preserve himself from these illusions. In like manner, though it is certain a musical voice is nothing but one that naturally gives a particular kind of pleasure; yet it is difficult for a man to be sensible, that the voice of an enemy is agreeable, or to allow it to be musical. But a person of a fine ear, who has the command of himself, can separate these feelings, and give praise to what deserves it.

SECONDLY, We may call to remembrance the preceding system of the passions, in order to remark a still more considerable difference among our pains and pleasures. Pride and humility, love and hatred are excited, when there is any thing presented to us, that both bears a relation to the object of the passion, and produces a separate sensation related to the sensation of the passion. Now virtue and vice are attended with these circumstances. They must necessarily be placed either in ourselves or others, and excite either pleasure or uneasiness; and therefore must give rise to one of these four passions; which clearly distinguishes them from the pleasure and pain arising from inanimate objects, that often bear no relation to us: And this is, perhaps, the most considerable effect that virtue and vice have upon the human mind.

It may now be asked in general, concerning this pain or pleasure, that distinguishes moral good and evil, FROM WHAT PRINCIPLES IS IT DERIVED, AND WHENCE DOES IT ARISE IN THE HUMAN MIND? To this I reply, first, that it is absurd to imagine, that in every particular instance, these sentiments are produced by an original quality and primary constitution. For as the number of our duties is, in a manner, infinite, it is impossible that our original instincts should extend to each of them, and from our very first infancy impress on the human mind all that multitude of precepts, which are contained in the compleatest system of ethics. Such a method of proceeding is not conformable to the usual maxims, by which nature is conducted, where a few principles produce all that variety we observe in the universe, and every thing is carryed on in the easiest and most simple manner. It is necessary, therefore, to abridge these primary impulses, and find some more general principles, upon which all our notions of morals are founded.

But in the second place, should it be asked, Whether we ought to search for these principles in nature, or whether we must look for them in some other origin? I would reply, that our answer to this question depends upon the definition of the word, Nature, than which there is none more ambiguous and equivocal. If nature be opposed to miracles, not only the distinction betwixt vice and virtue is natural, but also every event, which has ever happened in the world, EXCEPTING THOSE MIRACLES, ON WHICH OUR RELIGION IS FOUNDED. In saying, then, that the sentiments of vice and virtue are natural in this sense, we make no very extraordinary discovery.

But nature may also be opposed to rare and unusual; and in this sense of the word, which is the common one, there may often arise disputes concerning what is natural or unnatural; and one may in general affirm, that we are not possessed of any very precise standard, by which these disputes can be decided. Frequent and rare depend upon the number of examples we have observed; and as this number may gradually encrease or diminish, it will be impossible to fix any exact boundaries betwixt them. We may only affirm on this head, that if ever there was any thing, which coued be called natural in this sense, the sentiments of morality certainly may; since there never was any nation of the world, nor any single person in any nation, who was utterly deprived of them, and who never, in any instance, shewed the least approbation or dislike of manners. These sentiments are so rooted in our constitution and temper, that without entirely confounding the human mind by disease or madness, it is impossible to extirpate and destroy them.

But nature may also be opposed to artifice, as well as to what is rare and unusual; and in this sense it may be disputed, whether the notions of virtue be natural or not. We readily forget, that the designs, and projects, and views of men are principles as necessary in their operation as heat and cold, moist and dry: But taking them to be free and entirely our own, it is usual for us to set them in opposition to the other principles of nature should it, therefore, be demanded, whether the sense of virtue be natural or artificial, I am of opinion, that it is impossible for me at present to give any precise answer to this question. Perhaps it will appear afterwards, that our sense of some virtues is artificial, and that of others natural. The discussion of this question will be more proper, when we enter upon an exact detail of each particular vice and virtue.

[FN 14. In the following discourse natural is also opposed sometimes to civil, sometimes to moral. The opposition will always discover the sense, in which it is taken.]

Mean while it may not be amiss to observe from these definitions of natural and unnatural, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems, which assert, that virtue is the same with what is natural, and vice with what is unnatural. For in the first sense of the word, Nature, as opposed to miracles, both vice and virtue are equally natural; and in the second sense, as opposed to what is unusual, perhaps virtue will be found to be the most unnatural. At least it must be owned, that heroic virtue, being as unusual, is as little natural as the most brutal barbarity. As to the third sense of the word, it is certain, that both vice and virtue are equally artificial, and out of nature. For however it may be disputed, whether the notion of a merit or demerit in certain actions be natural or artificial, it is evident, that the actions themselves are artificial, and are performed with a certain design and intention; otherwise they coued never be ranked under any of these denominations. It is impossible, therefore, that the character of natural and unnatural can ever, in any sense, mark the boundaries of vice and virtue.

Thus we are still brought back to our first position, that virtue is distinguished by the pleasure, and vice by the pain, that any action, sentiment or character gives us by the mere view and contemplation. This decision is very commodious; because it reduces us to this simple question, Why any action or sentiment upon the general view or survey, gives a certain satisfaction or uneasiness, in order to shew the origin of its moral rectitude or depravity, without looking for any incomprehensible relations and qualities, which never did exist in nature, nor even in our imagination, by any clear and distinct conception. I flatter myself I have executed a great part of my present design by a state of the question, which appears to me so free from ambiguity and obscurity.

PART II OF JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

SECT. I JUSTICE, WHETHER A NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL VIRTUE?

I have already hinted, that our sense of every kind of virtue is not natural; but that there are some virtues, that produce pleasure and approbation by means of an artifice or contrivance, which arises from the circumstances and necessity of mankind. Of this kind I assert justice to be; and shall endeavour to defend this opinion by a short, and, I hope, convincing argument, before I examine the nature of the artifice, from which the sense of that virtue is derived.

It is evident, that when we praise any actions, we regard only the motives that produced them, and consider the actions as signs or indications of certain principles in the mind and temper. The external performance has no merit. We must look within to find the moral quality. This we cannot do directly; and therefore fix our attention on actions, as on external signs. But these actions are still considered as signs; and the ultimate object of our praise and approbation is the motive, that produced them.

After the same manner, when we require any action, or blame a person for not performing it, we always suppose, that one in that situation should be influenced by the proper motive of that action, and we esteem it vicious in him to be regardless of it. If we find, upon enquiry, that the virtuous motive was still powerful over his breast, though checked in its operation by some circumstances unknown to us, we retract our blame, and have the same esteem for him, as if he had actually performed the action, which we require of him.

It appears, therefore, that all virtuous actions derive their merit only from virtuous motives, and are considered merely as signs of those motives. From this principle I conclude, that the first virtuous motive, which bestows a merit on any action, can never be a regard to the virtue of that action, but must be some other natural motive or principle. To suppose, that the mere regard to the virtue of the action may be the first motive, which produced the action, and rendered it virtuous, is to reason in a circle. Before we can have such a regard, the action must be really virtuous; and this virtue must be derived from some virtuous motive: And consequently the virtuous motive must be different from the regard to the virtue of the action. A virtuous motive is requisite to render an action virtuous. An action must be virtuous, before we can have a regard to its virtue. Some virtuous motive, therefore, must be antecedent to that regard.

Nor is this merely a metaphysical subtilty; but enters into all our reasonings in common life, though perhaps we may not be able to place it in such distinct philosophical terms. We blame a father for neglecting his child. Why? because it shews a want of natural affection, which is the duty of every parent. Were not natural affection a duty, the care of children coued not be a duty; and it were impossible we coued have the duty in our eye in the attention we give to our offspring. In this case, therefore, all men suppose a motive to the action distinct from a sense of duty.

Here is a man, that does many benevolent actions; relieves the distressed, comforts the afflicted, and extends his bounty even to the greatest strangers. No character can be more amiable and virtuous. We regard these actions as proofs of the greatest humanity. This humanity bestows a merit on the actions. A regard to this merit is, therefore, a secondary consideration, and derived from the antecedent principle of humanity, which is meritorious and laudable.

In short, it may be established as an undoubted maxim, THAT NO ACTION CAN BE VIRTUOUS, OR MORALLY GOOD, UNLESS THERE BE IN HUMAN NATURE SOME MOTIVE TO PRODUCE IT, DISTINCT FROM THE SENSE OF ITS MORALITY.

But may not the sense of morality or duty produce an action, without any other motive? I answer, It may: But this is no objection to the present doctrine. When any virtuous motive or principle is common in human nature, a person, who feels his heart devoid of that motive, may hate himself upon that account, and may perform the action without the motive, from a certain sense of duty, in order to acquire by practice, that virtuous principle, or at least, to disguise to himself, as much as possible, his want of it. A man that really feels no gratitude in his temper, is still pleased to perform grateful actions, and thinks he has, by that means, fulfilled his duty. Actions are at first only considered as signs of motives: But it is usual, in this case, as in all others, to fix our attention on the signs, and neglect, in some measure, the thing signifyed. But though, on some occasions, a person may perform an action merely out of regard to its moral obligation, yet still this supposes in human nature some distinct principles, which are capable of producing the action, and whose moral beauty renders the action meritorious.

Now to apply all this to the present case; I suppose a person to have lent me a sum of money, on condition that it be restored in a few days; and also suppose, that after the expiration of the term agreed on, he demands the sum: I ask, What reason or motive have I to restore the money? It will, perhaps, be said, that my regard to justice, and abhorrence of villainy and knavery, are sufficient reasons for me, if I have the least grain of honesty, or sense of duty and obligation. And this answer, no doubt, is just and satisfactory to man in his civilized state, and when trained up according to a certain discipline and education. But in his rude and more natural condition, if you are pleased to call such a condition natural, this answer would be rejected as perfectly unintelligible and sophistical. For one in that situation would immediately ask you, WHEREIN CONSISTS THIS HONESTY AND JUSTICE, WHICH YOU FIND IN RESTORING A LOAN, AND ABSTAINING FROM THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS? It does not surely lie in the external action. It must, therefore be placed in the motive, from which the external action is derived. This motive can never be a regard to the honesty of the action. For it is a plain fallacy to say, that a virtuous motive is requisite to render an action honest, and at the same time that a regard to the honesty is the motive of the action. We can never have a regard to the virtue of an action, unless the action be antecedently virtuous. No action can be virtuous, but so far as it proceeds from a virtuous motive. A virtuous motive, therefore, must precede the regard to the virtue, and it is impossible, that the virtuous motive and the regard to the virtue can be the same.

It is requisite, then, to find some motive to acts of justice and honesty, distinct from our regard to the honesty; and in this lies the great difficulty. For should we say, that a concern for our private interest or reputation is the legitimate motive to all honest actions; it would follow, that wherever that concern ceases, honesty can no longer have place. But it is certain, that self-love, when it acts at its liberty, instead of engaging us to honest actions, is the source of all injustice and violence; nor can a man ever correct those vices, without correcting and restraining the natural movements of that appetite.

But should it be affirmed, that the reason or motive of such actions is the regard to publick interest, to which nothing is more contrary than examples of injustice and dishonesty; should this be said, I would propose the three following considerations, as worthy of our attention. First, public interest is not naturally attached to the observation of the rules of justice; but is only connected with it, after an artificial convention for the establishment of these rules, as shall be shewn more at large hereafter. Secondly, if we suppose, that the loan was secret, and that it is necessary for the interest of the person, that the money be restored in the same manner (as when the lender would conceal his riches) in that case the example ceases, and the public is no longer interested in the actions of the borrower; though I suppose there is no moralist, who will affirm, that the duty and obligation ceases. Thirdly, experience sufficiently proves, that men, in the ordinary conduct of life, look not so far as the public interest, when they pay their creditors, perform their promises, and abstain from theft, and robbery, and injustice of every kind. That is a motive too remote and too sublime to affect the generality of mankind, and operate with any force in actions so contrary to private interest as are frequently those of justice and common honesty.

In general, it may be affirmed, that there is no such passion in human minds, as the love of mankind, merely as such, independent of personal qualities, of services, or of relation to ourseit It is true, there is no human, and indeed no sensible, creature, whose happiness or misery does not, in some measure, affect us when brought near to us, and represented in lively colours: But this proceeds merely from sympathy, and is no proof of such an universal affection to mankind, since this concern extends itself beyond our own species. An affection betwixt the sexes is a passion evidently implanted in human nature; and this passion not only appears in its peculiar symptoms, but also in inflaming every other principle of affection, and raising a stronger love from beauty, wit, kindness, than what would otherwise flow from them. Were there an universal love among all human creatures, it would appear after the same manner. Any degree of a good quality would cause a stronger affection than the same degree of a bad quality would cause hatred; contrary to what we find by experience. Men’s tempers are different, and some have a propensity to the tender, and others to the rougher, affections: But in the main, we may affirm, that man in general, or human nature, is nothing but the object both of love and hatred, and requires some other cause, which by a double relation of impressions and ideas, may excite these passions. In vain would we endeavour to elude this hypothesis. There are no phaenomena that point out any such kind affection to men, independent of their merit, and every other circumstance. We love company in general; but it is as we love any other amusement. An Englishman in Italy is a friend: A Euro paean in China; and perhaps a man would be beloved as such, were we to meet him in the moon. But this proceeds only from the relation to ourselves; which in these cases gathers force by being confined to a few persons.

If public benevolence, therefore, or a regard to the interests of mankind, cannot be the original motive to justice, much less can private benevolence, or a regard to the interests of the party concerned, be this motive. For what if he be my enemy, and has given me just cause to hate him? What if he be a vicious man, and deserves the hatred of all mankind? What if he be a miser, and can make no use of what I would deprive him of? What if he be a profligate debauchee, and would rather receive harm than benefit from large possessions? What if I be in necessity, and have urgent motives to acquire something to my family? In all these cases, the original motive to justice would fail; and consequently the justice itself, and along with it all property, tight, and obligation.

A rich man lies under a moral obligation to communicate to those in necessity a share of his superfluities. Were private benevolence the original motive to justice, a man would not be obliged to leave others in the possession of more than he is obliged to give them. At least the difference would be very inconsiderable. Men generally fix their affections more on what they are possessed of, than on what they never enjoyed: For this reason, it would be greater cruelty to dispossess a man of any thing, than not to give it him. But who will assert, that this is the only foundation of justice?

Besides, we must consider, that the chief reason, why men attach themselves so much to their possessions is, that they consider them as their property, and as secured to them inviolably by the laws of society. But this is a secondary consideration, and dependent on the preceding notions of justice and property.

A man’s property is supposed to be fenced against every mortal, in every possible case. But private benevolence is, and ought to be, weaker in some persons, than in others: And in many, or indeed in most persons, must absolutely fail. Private benevolence, therefore, is not the original motive of justice.

From all this it follows, that we have no real or universal motive for observing the laws of equity, but the very equity and merit of that observance; and as no action can be equitable or meritorious, where it cannot arise from some separate motive, there is here an evident sophistry and reasoning in a circle. Unless, therefore, we will allow, that nature has established a sophistry, and rendered it necessary and unavoidable, we must allow, that the sense of justice and injustice is not derived from nature, but arises artificially, though necessarily from education, and human conventions.

I shall add, as a corollary to this reasoning, that since no action can be laudable or blameable, without some motives or impelling passions, distinct from the sense of morals, these distinct passions must have a great influence on that sense. It is according to their general force in human nature, that we blame or praise. In judging of the beauty of animal bodies, we always carry in our eye the oeconomy of a certain species; and where the limbs and features observe that proportion, which is common to the species, we pronounce them handsome and beautiful. In like manner we always consider the natural and usual force of the passions, when we determine concerning vice and virtue; and if the passions depart very much from the common measures on either side, they are always disapproved as vicious. A man naturally loves his children better than his nephews, his nephews better than his cousins, his cousins better than strangers, where every thing else is equal. Hence arise our common measures of duty, in preferring the one to the other. Our sense of duty always follows the common and natural course of our passions.

To avoid giving offence, I must here observe, that when I deny justice to be a natural virtue, I make use of the word, natural, only as opposed to artificial. In another sense of the word; as no principle of the human mind is more natural than a sense of virtue; so no virtue is more natural than justice. Mankind is an inventive species; and where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as any thing that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection. Though the rules of justice be artificial, they are not arbitrary. Nor is the expression improper to call them Laws of Nature; if by natural we understand what is common to any species, or even if we confine it to mean what is inseparable from the species.

SECT. II OF THE ORIGIN OF JUSTICE AND PROPERTY

We now proceed to examine two questions, viz, CONCERNING THE MANNER, IN WHICH THE RULES OF JUSTICE ARE ESTABLISHed BY THE ARTIFICE OF MEN; and CONCERNING THE REASONS, WHICH DETERMINE US TO ATTRIBUTE TO THE OBSERVANCE OR NEGLECT OF THESE RULES A MORAL BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY. These questions will appear afterwards to be distinct. We shall begin with the former.

Of all the animals, with which this globe is peopled, there is none towards whom nature seems, at first sight, to have exercised more cruelty than towards man, in the numberless wants and necessities, with which she has loaded him, and in the slender means, which she affords to the relieving these necessities. In other creatures these two particulars generally compensate each other. If we consider the lion as a voracious and carnivorous animal, we shall easily discover him to be very necessitous; but if we turn our eye to his make and temper, his agility, his courage, his arms, and his force, we shall find, that his advantages hold proportion with his wants. The sheep and ox are deprived of all these advantages; but their appetites are moderate, and their food is of easy purchase. In man alone, this unnatural conjunction of infirmity, and of necessity, may be observed in its greatest perfection. Not only the food, which is required for his sustenance, flies his search and approach, or at least requires his labour to be produced, but he must be possessed of cloaths and lodging, to defend him against the injuries of the weather; though to consider him only in himself, he is provided neither with arms, nor force, nor other natural abilities, which are in any degree answerable to so many necessities.

It is by society alone he is able to supply his defects, and raise himself up to an equality with his fellow-creatures, and even acquire a superiority above them. By society all his infirmities are compensated; and though in that situation his wants multiply every moment upon him, yet his abilities are still more augmented, and leave him in every respect more satisfied and happy, than it is possible for him, in his savage and solitary condition, ever to become. When every individual person labours a-part, and only for himself, his force is too small to execute any considerable work; his labour being employed in supplying all his different necessities, he never attains a perfection in any particular art; and as his force and success are not at all times equal, the least failure in either of these particulars must be attended with inevitable ruin and misery. Society provides a remedy for these three inconveniences. By the conjunction of forces, our power is augmented: By the partition of employments, our ability encreases: And by mutual succour we are less exposed to fortune and accidents. It is by this additional force, ability, and security, that society becomes advantageous.

But in order to form society, it is requisite not only that it be advantageous, but also that men be sensible of these advantages; and it is impossible, in their wild uncultivated state, that by study and reflection alone, they should ever be able to attain this knowledge. Most fortunately, therefore, there is conjoined to those necessities, whose remedies are remote and obscure, another necessity, which having a present and more obvious remedy, may justly be regarded as the first and original principle of human society. This necessity is no other than that natural appetite betwixt the sexes, which unites them together, and preserves their union, till a new tye takes place in their concern for their common offspring. This new concern becomes also a principle of union betwixt the parents and offspring, and forms a more numerous society; where the parents govern by the advantage of their superior strength and wisdom, and at the same time are restrained in the exercise of their authority by that natural affection, which they bear their children. In a little time, custom and habit operating on the tender minds of the children, makes them sensible of the advantages, which they may reap from society, as well as fashions them by degrees for it, by rubbing off those rough corners and untoward affections, which prevent their coalition.

For it must be confest, that however the circumstances of human nature may render an union necessary, and however those passions of lust and natural affection may seem to render it unavoidable; yet there are other particulars in our natural temper, and in our outward circumstances, which are very incommodious, and are even contrary to the requisite conjunction. Among the former, we may justly esteem our selfishness to be the most considerable. I am sensible, that generally speaking, the representations of this quality have been carried much too far; and that the descriptions, which certain philosophers delight so much to form of mankind in this particular, are as wide of nature as any accounts of monsters, which we meet with in fables and romances. So far from thinking, that men have no affection for any thing beyond themselves, I am of opinion, that though it be rare to meet with one, who loves any single person better than himself; yet it is as rare to meet with one, in whom all the kind affections, taken together, do not overbalance all the selfish. Consult common experience: Do you not see, that though the whole expence of the family be generally under the direction of the master of it, yet there are few that do not bestow the largest part of their fortunes on the pleasures of their wives, and the education of their children, reserving the smallest portion for their own proper use and entertainment This is what we may observe concerning such as have those endearing ties; and may presume, that the case would be the same with others, were they placed in a like situation.

But though this generosity must be acknowledged to the honour of human nature, we may at the same time remark, that so noble an affection, instead of fitting men for large societies, is almost as contrary to them, as the most narrow selfishness. For while each person loves himself better than any other single person, and in his love to others bears the greatest affection to his relations and acquaintance, this must necessarily produce an oppositon of passions, and a consequent opposition of actions; which cannot but be dangerous to the new-established union.

It is however worth while to remark, that this contrariety of passions would be attended with but small danger, did it not concur with a peculiarity in our outward circumstances, which affords it an opportunity of exerting itself. There are different species of goods, which we are possessed of; the internal satisfaction of our minds, the external advantages of our body, and the enjoyment of such possessions as we have acquired by our industry and good fortune. We are perfectly secure in the enjoyment of the first. The second may be ravished from us, but can be of no advantage to him who deprives us of them. The last only are both exposed to the violence of others, and may be transferred without suffering any loss or alteration; while at the same time, there is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one’s desires and necessities. As the improvement, therefore, of these goods is the chief advantage of society, so the instability of their possession, along with their scarcity, is the chief impediment.

In vain should we expect to find, in uncultivated nature, a remedy to this inconvenience; or hope for any inartificial principle of the human mind, which might controul those partial affections, and make us overcome the temptations arising from our circumstances. The idea of justice can never serve to this purpose, or be taken for a natural principle, capable of inspiring men with an equitable conduct towards each other. That virtue, as it is now understood, would never have been dreamed of among rude and savage men. For the notion of injury or injustice implies an immorality or vice committed against some other person: And as every immorality is derived from some defect or unsoundness of the passions, and as this defect must be judged of, in a great measure, from the ordinary course of nature in the constitution of the mind; it will be easy to know, whether we be guilty of any immorality, with regard to others, by considering the natural, and usual force of those several affections, which are directed towards them. Now it appears, that in the original frame of our mind, our strongest attention is confined to ourselves; our next is extended to our relations and acquaintance; and it is only the weakest which reaches to strangers and indifferent persons. This partiality, then, and unequal affection, must not only have an influence on our behaviour and conduct in society, but even on our ideas of vice and virtue; so as to make us regard any remarkable transgression of such a degree of partiality, either by too great an enlargement, or contraction of the affections, as vicious and immoral. This we may observe in our common judgments concerning actions, where we blame a person, who either centers all his affections in his family, or is so regardless of them, as, in any opposition of interest, to give the preference to a stranger, or mere chance acquaintance. From all which it follows, that our natural uncultivated ideas of morality, instead of providing a remedy for the partiality of our affections, do rather conform themselves to that partiality, and give it an additional force and influence.

The remedy, then, is not derived from nature, but from artifice; or more e properly speaking, nature provides a remedy in the judgment and understanding, for what is irregular and incommodious in the affections. For when men, from their early education in society, have become sensible of the infinite advantages that result from it, and have besides acquired a new affection to company and conversation; and when they have observed, that the principal disturbance in society arises from those goods, which we call external, and from their looseness and easy transition from one person to another; they must seek for a remedy by putting these goods, as far as possible, on the same footing with the fixed and constant advantages of the mind and body. This can be done after no other manner, than by a convention entered into by all the members of the society to bestow stability on the possession of those external goods, and leave every one in the peaceable enjoyment of what he may acquire by his fortune and industry. By this means, every one knows what he may safely possess; and the passions ale restrained in their partial and contradictory motions. Nor is such a restraint contrary to these passions; for if so, it coued never be entered into, nor maintained; but it is only contrary to their heedless and impetuous movement. Instead of departing from our own interest, or from that of our nearest friends, by abstaining from the possessions of others, we cannot better consult both these interests, than by such a convention; because it is by that means we maintain society, which is so necessary to their well-being and subsistence, as well as to our own.

This convention is not of the nature of a promise: For even promises themselves, as we shall see afterwards, arise from human conventions. It is only a general sense of common interest; which sense all the members of the society express to one another, and which induces them to regulate their conduct by certain rules. I observe, that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, provided he will act in the same manner with regard to me. He is sensible of a like interest in the regulation of his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually expressed, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may properly enough be called a convention or agreement betwixt us, though without the interposition of a promise; since the actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are performed upon the supposition, that something is to be performed on the other part. Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other. Nor is the rule concerning the stability of possession the less derived from human conventions, that it arises gradually, and acquires force by a slow progression, and by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it. On the contrary, this experience assures us still more, that the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us a confidence of the future regularity of their conduct: And it is only on the expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded. In like manner are languages gradually established by human conventions without any promise. In like manner do gold and silver become the common measures of exchange, and are esteemed sufficient payment for what is of a hundred times their value.

After this convention, concerning abstinence from the possessions of others, is entered into, and every one has acquired a stability in his possessions, there immediately arise the ideas of justice and injustice; as also those of property, right, and obligation. The latter are altogether unintelligible without first understanding the former. Our property is nothing but those goods, whose constant possession is established by the laws of society; that is, by the laws of justice. Those, therefore, who make use of the words property, or right, or obligation, before they have explained the origin of justice, or even make use of them in that explication, are guilty of a very gross fallacy, and can never reason upon any solid foundation. A man's property is some object related to him. This relation is not natural, but moral, and founded on justice. It is very preposterous, therefore, to imagine, that we can have any idea of property, without fully comprehending the nature of justice, and shewing its origin in the artifice and contrivance of man. The origin of justice explains that of property. The same artifice gives rise to both. As our first and most natural sentiment of morals is founded on the nature of our passions, and gives the preference to ourselves and friends, above strangers; it is impossible there can be naturally any such thing as a fixed right or property, while the opposite passions of men impel them in contrary directions, and are not restrained by any convention or agreement.

No one can doubt, that the convention for the distinction of property, and for the stability of possession, is of all circumstances the most necessary to the establishment of human society, and that after the agreement for the fixing and observing of this rule, there remains little or nothing to be done towards settling a perfect harmony and concord. All the other passions, besides this of interest, are either easily restrained, or are not of such pernicious consequence, when indulged. Vanity is rather to be esteemed a social passion, and a bond of union among men. Pity and love are to be considered in the same light. And as to envy and revenge, though pernicious, they operate only by intervals, and are directed against particular persons, whom we consider as our superiors or enemies. This avidity alone, of acquiring goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends, is insatiable, perpetual, universal, and directly destructive of society. There scarce is any one, who is not actuated by it; and there is no one, who has not reason to fear from it, when it acts without any restraint, and gives way to its first and most natural movements. So that upon the whole, we are to esteem the difficulties in the establishment of society, to be greater or less, according to those we encounter in regulating and restraining this passion.

It is certain, that no affection of the human mind has both a sufficient force, and a proper direction to counterbalance the love of gain, and render men fit members of society, by making them abstain from the possessions of others. Benevolence to strangers is too weak for this purpose; and as to the other passions, they rather inflame this avidity, when we observe, that the larger our possessions are, the more ability we have of gratifying all our appetites. There is no passion, therefore, capable of controlling the interested affection, but the very affection itself, by an alteration of its direction. Now this alteration must necessarily take place upon the least reflection; since it is evident, that the passion is much better satisfyed by its restraint, than by its liberty, and that in preserving society, we make much greater advances in the acquiring possessions, than in the solitary and forlorn condition, which must follow upon violence and an universal licence. The question, therefore, concerning the wickedness or goodness of human nature, enters not in the least into that other question concerning the origin of society; nor is there any thing to be considered but the degrees of men’s sagacity or folly. For whether the passion of self-interest be esteemed vicious or virtuous, it is all a case; since itself alone restrains it: So that if it be virtuous, men become social by their virtue; if vicious, their vice has the same effect.

Now as it is by establishing the rule for the stability of possession, that this passion restrains itself; if that rule be very abstruse, and of difficult invention; society must be esteemed, in a manner, accidental, and the effect of many ages. But if it be found, that nothing can be more simple and obvious than that rule; that every parent, in order to preserve peace among his children, must establish it; and that these first rudiments of justice must every day be improved, as the society enlarges: If all this appear evident, as it certainly must, we may conclude, that it is utterly impossible for men to remain any considerable time in that savage condition, which precedes society; but that his very first state and situation may justly be esteemed social. This, however, hinders not, but that philosophers may, if they please, extend their reasoning to the supposed state of nature; provided they allow it to be a mere philosophical fiction, which never had, and never coued have any reality. Human nature being composed of two principal parts, which are requisite in all its actions, the affections and understanding; it is certain, that the blind motions of the former, without the direction of the latter, incapacitate men for society: And it may be allowed us to consider separately the effects, that result from the separate operations of these two component parts of the mind. The same liberty may be permitted to moral, which is allowed to natural philosophers; and it is very usual with the latter to consider any motion as compounded and consisting of two parts separate from each other, though at the same time they acknowledge it to be in itself uncompounded and inseparable.

This state of nature, therefore, is to be regarded as a mere fiction, not unlike that of the golden age, which poets have invented; only with this difference, that the former is described as full of war, violence and injustice; whereas the latter is pointed out to us, as the most charming and most peaceable condition, that can possibly be imagined. The seasons, in that first age of nature, were so temperate, if we may believe the poets, that there was no necessity for men to provide themselves with cloaths and houses as a security against the violence of heat and cold. The rivers flowed with wine and milk: The oaks yielded honey; and nature spontaneously produced her greatest delicacies. Nor were these the chief advantages of that happy age. The storms and tempests were not alone removed from nature; but those more furious tempests were unknown to human breasts, which now cause such uproar, and engender such confusion. Avarice, ambition, cruelty, selfishness, were never heard of: Cordial affection, compassion, sympathy, were the only movements, with which the human mind was yet acquainted. Even the distinction of mine and thine was banished from that happy race of mortals, and carryed with them the very notions of property and obligation, justice and injustice.

This, no doubt, is to be regarded as an idle fiction; but yet deserves our attention, because nothing can more evidently shew the origin of those virtues, which are the subjects of our present enquiry. I have already observed, that justice takes its rise from human conventions; and that these are intended as a remedy to some inconveniences, which proceed from the concurrence of certain qualities of the human mind with the situation of external objects. The qualities of the mind are selfishness and limited generosity: And the situation of external objects is their easy change, joined to their scarcity in comparison of the wants and desires of men. But however philosophers may have been bewildered in those speculations, poets have been guided more infallibly, by a certain taste or common instinct, which in most kinds of reasoning goes farther than any of that art and philosophy, with which we have been yet acquainted. They easily perceived, if every man had a tender regard for another, or if nature supplied abundantly all our wants and desires, that the jealousy of interest, which justice supposes, could no longer have place; nor would there be any occasion for those distinctions and limits of property and possession, which at present are in use among mankind. Encrease to a sufficient degree the benevolence of men, or the bounty of nature, and you render justice useless, by supplying its place with much nobler virtues, and more valuable blessings. The selfishness of men is animated by the few possessions we have, in proportion to our wants; and it is to restrain this selfishness, that men have been obliged to separate themselves from the community, and to distinguish betwixt their own goods and those of others.

Nor need we have recourse to the fictions of poets to learn this; but beside the reason of the thing, may discover the same truth by common experience and observation. It is easy to remark, that a cordial affection renders all things common among friends; and that married people in particular mutually lose their property, and are unacquainted with the mine and thine, which are so necessary, and yet cause such disturbance in human society. The same effect arises from any alteration in the circumstances of mankind; as when there is such a plenty of any thing as satisfies all the desires of men: In which case the distinction of property is entirely lost, and every thing remains in common. This we may observe with regard to air and water, though the most valuable of all external objects; and may easily conclude, that if men were supplied with every thing in the same abundance, or if every one had the same affection and tender regard for every one as for himself; justice and injustice would be equally unknown among mankind.

Here then is a proposition, which, I think, may be regarded as certain, that it is only from the selfishness and confined generosity of men, along with the scanty provision nature has made for his wants, that justice derives its origin. If we look backward we shall find, that this proposition bestows an additional force on some of those observations, which we have already made on this subject.

First, we may conclude from it, that a regard to public interest, or a strong extensive benevolence, is not our first and original motive for the observation of the rules of justice; since it is allowed, that if men were endowed with such a benevolence, these rules would never have been dreamt of.

Secondly, we may conclude from the same principle, that the sense of justice is not founded on reason, or on the discovery of certain connexions and relations of ideas, which are eternal, immutable, and universally obligatory. For since it is confest, that such an alteration as that above-mentioned, in the temper and circumstances of mankind, would entirely alter our duties and obligations, it is necessary upon the common system, that the sense of virtue is derived from reason, to shew the change which this must produce in the relations and ideas. But it is evident, that the only cause, why the extensive generosity of man, and the perfect abundance of every thing, would destroy the very idea of justice, is because they render it useless; and that, on the other hand, his confined benevolence, and his necessitous condition, give rise to that virtue, only by making it requisite to the publick interest, and to that of every individual. Twas therefore a concern for our own, and the publick interest, which made us establish the laws of justice; and nothing can be more certain, than that it is not any relation of ideas, which gives us this concern, but our impressions and sentiments, without which every thing in nature is perfectly indifferent to us, and can never in the least affect us. The sense of justice, therefore, is not founded on our ideas, but on our impressions.

Thirdly, we may farther confirm the foregoing proposition, THAT THOSE IMPRESSIONS, WHICH GIVE RISE TO THIS SENSE OF JUSTICE, ARE NOT NATURAL TO THE MIND OF MAN, BUT ARISE FROM ARTIFICE AND HUMAN CONVENTIONS. For since any considerable alteration of temper and circumstances destroys equally justice and injustice; and since such an alteration has an effect only by changing our own and the publick interest; it follows, that the first establishment of the rules of justice depends on these different interests. But if men pursued the publick interest naturally, and with a hearty affection, they would never have dreamed of restraining each other by these rules; and if they pursued their own interest, without any precaution, they would run head-long into every kind of injustice and violence. These rules, therefore, are artificial, and seek their end in an oblique and indirect manner; nor is the interest, which gives rise to them, of a kind that coued be pursued by the natural and inartificial passions of men.

To make this more evident, consider, that though the rules of justice are established merely by interest, their connexion with interest is somewhat singular, and is different from what may be observed on other occasions. A single act of justice is frequently contrary to public interest; and were it to stand alone, without being followed by other acts, may, in itself, be very prejudicial to society. When a man of merit, of a beneficent disposition, restores a great fortune to a miser, or a seditious bigot, he has acted justly and laudably, but the public is a real sufferer. Nor is every single act of justice, considered apart, more conducive to private interest, than to public; and it is easily conceived how a man may impoverish himself by a signal instance of integrity, and have reason to wish, that with regard to that single act, the laws of justice were for a moment suspended in the universe. But however single acts of justice may be contrary, either to public or private interest, it is certain, that the whole plan or scheme is highly conducive, or indeed absolutely requisite, both to the support of society, and the well-being of every individual. It is impossible to separate the good from the ill. Property must be stable, and must be fixed by general rules. Though in one instance the public be a sufferer, this momentary ill is amply compensated by the steady prosecution of the rule, and by the peace and order, which it establishes in society. And even every individual person must find himself a gainer, on ballancing the account; since, without justice society must immediately dissolve, and every one must fall into that savage and solitary condition, which is infinitely worse than the worst situation that can possibly be supposed in society. When therefore men have had experience enough to observe, that whatever may be the consequence of any single act of justice, performed by a single person, yet the whole system of actions, concurred in by the whole society, is infinitely advantageous to the whole, and to every part; it is not long before justice and property take place. Every member of society is sensible of this interest: Every one expresses this sense to his fellows, along with the resolution he has taken of squaring his actions by it, on condition that others will do the same. No more is requisite to induce any one of them to perform an act of justice, who has the first opportunity. This becomes an example to others. And thus justice establishes itself by a kind of convention or agreement; that is, by a sense of interest, supposed to be common to all, and where every single act is performed in expectation that others are to perform the like. Without such a convention, no one would ever have dreamed, that there was such a virtue as justice, or have been induced to conform his actions to it. Taking any single act, my justice may be pernicious in every respect; and it is only upon the supposition that others are to imitate my example, that I can be induced to embrace that virtue; since nothing but this combination can render justice advantageous, or afford me any motives to conform my self to its rules.

We come now to the second question we proposed, viz. Why we annex the idea of virtue to justice, and of vice to injustice. This question will not detain us long after the principles, which we have already established, All we can say of it at present will be dispatched in a few words: And for farther satisfaction, the reader must wait till we come to the third part of this book. The natural obligation to justice, viz, interest, has been fully explained; but as to the moral obligation, or the sentiment of right and wrong, it will first be requisite to examine the natural virtues, before we can give a full and satisfactory account of it. After men have found by experience, that their selfishness and confined generosity, acting at their liberty, totally incapacitate them for society; and at the same time have observed, that society is necessary to the satisfaction of those very passions, they are naturally induced to lay themselves under the restraint of such rules, as may render their commerce more safe and commodious. To the imposition then, and observance of these rules, both in general, and in every particular instance, they are at first induced only by a regard to interest; and this motive, on the first formation of society, is sufficiently strong and forcible. But when society has become numerous, and has encreased to a tribe or nation, this interest is more remote; nor do men so readily perceive, that disorder and confusion follow upon every breach of these rules, as in a more narrow and contracted society. But though in our own actions we may frequently lose sight of that interest, which we have in maintaining order, and may follow a lesser and more present interest, we never fail to observe the prejudice we receive, either mediately or immediately, from the injustice of others; as not being in that case either blinded by passion, or byassed by any contrary temptation. Nay when the injustice is so distant from us, as no way to affect our interest, it still displeases us; because we consider it as prejudicial to human society, and pernicious to every one that approaches the person guilty of it. We partake of their uneasiness by sympathy; and as every thing, which gives uneasiness in human actions, upon the general survey, is called Vice, and whatever produces satisfaction, in the same manner, is denominated Virtue; this is the reason why the sense of moral good and evil follows upon justice and injustice. And though this sense, in the present case, be derived only from contemplating the actions of others, yet we fail not to extend it even to our own actions. The general rule reaches beyond those instances, from which it arose; while at the same time we naturally sympathize with others in the sentiments they entertain of us. Thus self-interest is the original motive to the establishment of justice: but a sympathy with public interest is the source of the moral approbation, which attends that virtue.

Though this progress of the sentiments be natural, and even necessary, it is certain, that it is here forwarded by the artifice of politicians, who, in order to govern men more easily, and preserve peace in human society, have endeavoured to produce an esteem for justice, and an abhorrence of injustice. This, no doubt, must have its effect; but nothing can be more evident, than that the matter has been carryed too far by certain writers on morals, who seem to have employed their utmost efforts to extirpate all sense of virtue from among mankind. Any artifice of politicians may assist nature in the producing of those sentiments, which she suggests to us, and may even on some occasions, produce alone an approbation or esteem for any particular action; but it is impossible it should be the sole cause of the distinction we make betwixt vice and virtue. For if nature did not aid us in this particular, it would be in vain for politicians to talk of honourable or dishonourable, praiseworthy or blameable. These words would be perfectly unintelligible, and would no more have any idea annexed to them, than if they were of a tongue perfectly unknown to us. The utmost politicians can perform, is, to extend the natural sentiments beyond their original bounds; but still nature must furnish the materials, and give us some notion of moral distinctions.

As publick praise and blame encrease our esteem for justice; so private education and instruction contribute to the same effect. For as parents easily observe, that a man is the more useful, both to himself and others, the greater degree of probity and honour he is endowed with; and that those principles have greater force, when custom and education assist interest and reflection: For these reasons they are induced to inculcate on their children, from their earliest infancy, the principles of probity, and teach them to regard the observance of those rules, by which society is maintained, as worthy and honourable, and their violation as base and infamous. By this means the sentiments of honour may take root in their tender minds, and acquire such firmness and solidity, that they may fall little short of those principles, which are the most essential to our natures, and the most deeply radicated in our internal constitution.

What farther contributes to encrease their solidity, is the interest of our reputation, after the opinion, that a merit or demerit attends justice or injustice, is once firmly established among mankind. There is nothing, which touches us more nearly than our reputation, and nothing on which our reputation more depends than our conduct, with relation to the property of others. For this reason, every one, who has any regard to his character, or who intends to live on good terms with mankind, must fix an inviolable law to himself, never, by any temptation, to be induced to violate those principles, which are essential to a man of probity and honour.

I shall make only one observation before I leave this subject, viz, that though I assert, that in the state of nature, or that imaginary state, which preceded society, there be neither justice nor injustice, yet I assert not, that it was allowable, in such a state, to violate the property of others. I only maintain, that there was no such thing as property; and consequently coued be no such thing as justice or injustice. I shall have occasion to make a similar reflection with regard to promises, when I come to treat of them; and I hope this reflection, when duly weighed, will suffice to remove all odium from the foregoing opinions, with regard to justice and injustice.

SECT. III OF THE RULES WHICH DETERMINE PROPERTY

Though the establishment of the rule, concerning the stability of possession, be not only useful, but even absolutely necessary to human society, it can never serve to any purpose, while it remains in such general terms. Some method must be shewn, by which we may distinguish what particular goods are to be assigned to each particular person, while the rest of mankind are excluded from their possession and enjoyment. Our next business, then, must be to discover the reasons which modify this general rule, and fit it to the common use and practice of the world.

It is obvious, that those reasons are not derived from any utility or advantage, which either the particular person or the public may reap from his enjoyment of any particular goods, beyond what would result from the possession of them by any other person. Twere better, no doubt, that every one were possessed of what is most suitable to him, and proper for his use: But besides, that this relation of fitness may be common to several at once, it is liable to so many controversies, and men are so partial and passionate in judging of these controversies, that such a loose and uncertain rule would be absolutely incompatible with the peace of human society. The convention concerning the stability of possession is entered into, in order to cut off all occasions of discord and contention; and this end would never be attained, were we allowed to apply this rule differently in every particular case, according to every particular utility, which might be discovered in such an application. Justice, in her decisions, never regards the fitness or unfitness of objects to particular persons, but conducts herself by more extensive views. Whether a man be generous, or a miser, he is equally well received by her, and obtains with the same facility a decision in his favours, even for what is entirely useless to him.

It follows therefore, that the general rule, that possession must be stable, is not applied by particular judgments, but by other general rules, which must extend to the whole society, and be inflexible either by spite or favour. To illustrate this, I propose the following instance. I first consider men in their savage and solitary condition; and suppose, that being sensible of the misery of that state, and foreseeing the advantages that would result from society, they seek each other's company, and make an offer of mutual protection and assistance. I also suppose, that they are endowed with such sagacity as immediately to perceive, that the chief impediment to this project of society and partnership lies in the avidity and selfishness of their natural temper; to remedy which, they enter into a convention for the stability of possession, and for mutual restraint and forbearance. I am sensible, that this method of proceeding is not altogether natural; but besides that I here only suppose those reflections to be formed at once, which in fact arise insensibly and by degrees; besides this, I say, it is very possible, that several persons, being by different accidents separated from the societies, to which they formerly belonged, may be obliged to form a new society among themselves; in which case they are entirely in the situation above-mentioned.

It is evident, then, that their first difficulty, in this situation, after the general convention for the establishment of society, and for the constancy of possession, is, how to separate their possessions, and assign to each his particular portion, which he must for the future inalterably enjoy. This difficulty will not detain them long; but it must immediately occur to them, as the most natural expedient, that every one continue to enjoy what he is at present master of, and that property or constant possession be conjoined to the immediate possession. Such is the effect of custom, that it not only reconciles us to any thing we have long enjoyed, but even gives us an affection for it, and makes us prefer it to other objects, which may be more valuable, but are less known to us. What has long lain under our eye, and has often been employed to our advantage, that we are always the most unwilling to part with; but can easily live without possessions, which we never have enjoyed, and are not accustomed to. It is evident, therefore, that men would easily acquiesce in this expedient, that every one continue to enjoy what he is at present possessed of; and this is the reason, why they would so naturally agree in preferring it.

[FN 15. No questions in philosophy are more
difficult, than when a number of causes present themselves
for the same phaenomenon, to determine which is the
principal and predominant. There seldom is any very precise
argument to fix our choice, and men must be contented to be
guided by a kind of taste or fancy, arising from analogy,

and a comparison of familiar instances. Thus, in the present case, there are, no doubt, motives of public interest for most of the rules, which determine property; but still I suspect, that these rules are principally fixed by the imagination, or the more frivolous properties of our thought and conception. I shall continue to explain these causes, leaving it to the reader’s choice, whether he will prefer those derived from publick utility, or those derived from the imagination. We shall begin with the right of the present possessor.

It is a quality, which I have already observed in human nature, that when two objects appear in a close relation to each other, the mind is apt to ascribe to them any additional relation, in order to compleat the union; and this inclination is so strong, as often to make us run into errors (such as that of the conjunction of thought and matter) if we find that they can serve to that purpose. Many of our impressions are incapable of place or local position; and yet those very impressions we suppose to have a local conjunction with the impressions of sight and touch, merely because they are conjoined by causation, and are already united in the imagination. Since, therefore, we can feign a new relation, and even an absurd one, in order to compleat any union, it will easily be imagined, that if there be any relations, which depend on the mind, it will readily conjoin them to any preceding relation, and unite, by a new bond, such objects as have already an union in the fancy. Thus for instance, we never fail, in our arrangement of bodies, to place those which are resembling in contiguity to each other, or at least in correspondent points of view; because we feel a satisfaction in joining the relation of contiguity to that of resemblance, or the resemblance of situation to that of qualities. And this is easily accounted for from the known properties of human nature. When the mind is determined to join certain objects, but undetermined in its choice of the particular objects, It naturally turns its eye to such as are related together. They are already united in the mind: They present themselves at the same time to the conception; and instead of requiring any new reason for their conjunction, it would require a very powerful reason to make us over-look this natural affinity. This we shall have occasion to explain more fully afterwards, when we come to treat of beauty. In the mean time, we may content ourselves with observing, that the same love of order and uniformity, which arranges the books in a library, and the chairs in a parlour, contribute to the formation of society, and to the well-being of mankind, by modifying the general rule concerning the stability of possession. And as property forms a relation betwixt a person and an object, it is natural to found it on some preceding relation; and as property Is nothing but a constant possession, secured by the laws of society, it is natural to add it to the present possession, which is a relation that resembles it. For this also has its influence. If it be natural to conjoin all sorts of relations, it is more so, to conjoin such relations as are resembling, and are related together.]

But we may observe, that though the rule of the assignment of property to the present possessor be natural, and by that means useful, yet its utility extends not beyond the first formation of society; nor would any thing be more pernicious, than the constant observance of it; by which restitution would be excluded, and every injustice would be authorized and rewarded. We must, therefore, seek for some other circumstance, that may give rise to property after society is once established; and of this kind, I find four most considerable, viz. Occupation, Prescription, Accession, and Succession. We shall briefly examine each of these, beginning with Occupation.

The possession of all external goods is changeable and uncertain; which is one of the most considerable impediments to the establishment of society, and is the reason why, by universal agreement, express or tacite, men restrain themselves by what we now call the rules of justice and equity. The misery of the condition, which precedes this restraint, is the cause why we submit to that remedy as quickly as possible; and this affords us an easy reason, why we annex the idea of property to the first possession, or to occupation. Men are unwilling to leave property in suspense, even for the shortest time, or open the least door to violence and disorder. To which we may add, that the first possession always engages the attention most; and did we neglect it, there would be no colour of reason for assigning property to any succeeding possession.

[FN 16. Some philosophers account for the right of occupation, by saying, that every one has a property in his own labour; and when he joins that labour to any thing, it gives him the property of the whole: But, 1. There are several kinds of occupation, where we cannot be said to join our labour to the object we acquire: As when we possess a meadow by grazing our cattle upon it. 2. This accounts for the matter by means of accession; which is taking a needless circuit. 3. We cannot be said to join our labour to any thing but in a figurative sense. Properly speaking, we only make an alteration on it by our labour. This forms a relation betwixt us and the object; and thence arises the property, according to the preceding principles.]

There remains nothing, but to determine exactly, what is meant by possession; and this is not so easy as may at first sight be imagined. We are said to be in possession of any thing, not only when we immediately touch it, but also when we are so situated with respect to it, as to have it in our power to use it; and may move, alter, or destroy it, according to our present pleasure or advantage. This relation, then, is a species of cause and effect; and as property is nothing but a stable possession, derived from the rules of justice, or the conventions of men, it is to be considered as the same species of relation. But here we may observe, that as the power of using any object becomes more or less certain, according as the interruptions we may meet with are more or less probable; and as this probability may increase by insensible degrees; it is in many cases impossible to determine when possession begins or ends; nor is there any certain standard, by which we can decide such controversies. A wild boar, that falls into our snares, is deemed to be in our possession, if it be impossible for him to escape. But what do we mean by impossible? How do we separate this impossibility from an improbability? And how distinguish that exactly from a probability? Mark the precise limits of the one and the other, and shew the standard, by which we may decide all disputes that may arise, and, as we find by experience, frequently do arise upon this subject.

[FN 17. If we seek a solution of these difficulties in reason and public interest, we never shall find satisfaction; and If we look for it in the imagination, it is evident, that the qualities, which operate upon that faculty, run so insensibly and gradually into each other, that it is impossible to give them any precise bounds or termination. The difficulties on this head must encrease, when we consider, that our judgment alters very sensibly, according to the subject, and that the same power and proximity will be deemed possession in one case, which is not esteemed such in another. A person, who has hunted a hare to the last degree of weariness, would look upon it as an injustice for another to rush in before him, and seize his prey. But the same person advancing to pluck an apple, that hangs within his reach, has no reason to complain, if another, more alert, passes him, and takes possession. What is the reason of this difference, but that immobility, not being natural to the hare, but the effect of industry, forms in that case a strong relation with the hunter, which is wanting in the other?

Here then it appears, that a certain and infallible power of enjoyment, without touch or some other sensible relation, often produces not property: And I farther observe, that a sensible relation, without any present power, is sometimes sufficient to give a title to any object. The sight of a thing is seldom a considerable relation, and is only regarded as such, when the object is hidden, or very obscure; in which case we find, that the view alone conveys a property; according to that maxim, THAT EVEN A WHOLE CONTINENT BELONGS TO THE NATION, WHICH FIRST DISCOVERED IT.

It is however remarkable that both in the case of discovery and that of possession, the first discoverer and possessor must join to the relation an intention of rendering himself proprietor, otherwise the relation will not have Its effect; and that because the connexion in our fancy betwixt the property and the relation is not so great, but that it requires to be helped by such an intention.

From all these circumstances, it is easy to see how perplexed many questions may become concerning the acquisition of property by occupation; and the least effort of thought may present us with instances, which are not susceptible of any reasonable decision. If we prefer examples, which are real, to such as are feigned, we may consider the following one, which is to be met with In almost every writer, that has treated of the laws of nature. Two Grecian colonies, leaving their native country, in search of new feats, were informed that a city near them was deserted by its inhabitants. To know the truth of this report, they dispatched at once two messengers, one from each colony; who finding on their approach, that their information was true, begun a race together with an intention to take possession of the city, each of them for his countrymen. One of these messengers, finding that he was not an equal match for the other, launched his spear at the gates of the city, and was so fortunate as to fix it there before the arrival of his companion. This produced a dispute betwixt the two colonies, which of them was the proprietor of the empty city and this dispute still subsists among philosophers. For my part I find the dispute impossible to be decided, and that because the whole question hangs upon the fancy, which in this case is not possessed of any precise or determinate standard, upon which it can give sentence. To make this evident, let us consider, that if these two persons had been simply members of the colonies, and not messengers or deputies, their actions would not have been of any consequence; since in that case their relation to the colonies would have been but feeble and imperfect. Add to this, that nothing determined them to run to the gates rather than the walls, or any other part of the city, but that the gates, being the most obvious and remarkable part, satisfy the fancy best in taking them for the whole;

as we find by the poets, who frequently draw their images and metaphors from them. Besides we may consider, that the touch or contact of the one messenger is not properly possession, no more than the piercing the gates with a spear; but only forms a relation; and there is a relation, in the other case, equally obvious, tho' not, perhaps, of equal force. Which of these relations, then, conveys a right and property, or whether any of them be sufficient for that effect, I leave to the decision of such as are wiser than myself.]

But such disputes may not only arise concerning the real existence of property and possession, but also concerning their extent; and these disputes are often susceptible of no decision, or can be decided by no other faculty than the imagination. A person who lands on the shore of a small island, that is desart and uncultivated, is deemed its possessor from the very first moment, and acquires the property of the whole; because the object is there bounded and circumscribed in the fancy, and at the same time is proportioned to the new possessor. The same person landing on a desart island, as large as Great Britain, extends his property no farther than his immediate possession; though a numerous colony are esteemed the proprietors of the whole from the instant of their debarkment.

But it often happens, that the title of first possession becomes obscure through time; and that it is impossible to determine many controversies, which may arise concerning it. In that case long possession or prescription naturally takes place, and gives a person a sufficient property in any thing he enjoys. The nature of human society admits not of any great accuracy; nor can we always remount to the first origin of things, in order to determine their present condition. Any considerable space of time sets objects at such a distance, that they seem, in a manner, to lose their reality, and have as little influence on the mind, as if they never had been in being. A man's title, that is clear and certain at present, will seem obscure and doubtful fifty years hence, even though the facts, on which it is founded, should be proved with the greatest evidence and certainty. The same facts have not the same influence after so long an interval of time. And this may be received as a convincing argument for our preceding doctrine with regard to property and justice. Possession during a long tract of time conveys a title to any object. But as it is certain, that, however every thing be produced in time, there is nothing real that is produced by time; it follows, that property being produced by time, is not any thing real in the objects, but is the off-spring of the sentiments, on which alone time is found to have any influence.

[FN 18. Present possession is plainly a relation betwixt a person and an object; but is not sufficient to counter-ballance the relation of first possession, unless the former be long and uninterrupted: In which case the relation is encreased on the side of the present possession, by the extent of time, and dlminished on that of first possession, by the distance, This change in the relation produces a consequent change in the property.]

We acquire the property of objects by accession, when they are connected in an intimate manner with objects that are already our property, and at the same time are inferior to them. Thus the fruits of our garden, the offspring of our cattle, and the work of our slaves, are all of them esteemed our property, even before possession. Where objects are connected together in the imagination, they are apt to be put on the same footing, and are commonly supposed to be endowed with the same qualities. We readily pass from one to the other, and make no difference in our judgments concerning them; especially if the latter be inferior to the former.

[FN 19. This source of property can never be explained but from the imaginations; and one may affirm, that the causes are here unmixed. We shall proceed to explain them more particularly, and illustrate them by examples from common life and experience.

It has been observed above, that the mind has a natural propensity to join relations, especially resembling ones, and finds a hind of fitness and uniformity in such an union. From this propensity are derived these laws of nature, that upon the first formation of society, property always follows the present possession; and afterwards, that it arises from first or from long possession. Now we may easily observe, that relation is not confined merely to one degree; but that from an object, that is related to us, we acquire a relation to every other object, which is related to it, and so on, till the thought loses the chain by too long a progress, However the relation may weaken by each remove, it is not immediately destroyed; but frequently connects two objects by means of an intermediate one, which is related to both. And this principle is of such force as to give rise to the right of accession, and causes us to acquire the property not only of such objects as we are immediately possessed of; but also of such as are closely connected with them.

Suppose a German, a Frenchman, and a Spaniard to come into a room, where there are placed upon the table three bottles of wine, Rhenish, Burgundy and Port; and suppose they shoued fall a quarrelling about the division of them; a person, who was chosen for umpire would naturally, to shew his impartiality, give every one the product of his own country: And this from a principle, which, in some measure, is the source of those laws of nature, that ascribe property to occupation, prescription and accession.

In all these Cases, and particularly that of accession, there is first a natural union betwixt the Idea of the person and that of the object, and afterwards a new and moral union produced by that right or property, which we ascribe to the person. But here there occurs a difficulty, which merits our attention, and may afford us an opportunity of putting to tryal that singular method of reasoning, which has been employed on the present subject. I have already observed that the imagination passes with greater facility from little to great, than from great to littie, and that the transition of ideas is always easier and smoother in the former case than in the latter. Now as the right of accession arises from the easy transition of ideas, by which related objects are connected together, it shoued naturally be imagined, that the right of accession must encrease in strength, in proportion as the transition of ideas is performed with greater facility. It may, therefore, be thought, that when we have acquired the property of any small object, we shall readily consider any great object related to it as an accession, and as belonging to the proprietor of the small one; since the transition is in that case very easy from the small object to the great one, and shoued connect them together in the closest manner. But In fact the case is always found to be otherwise, The empire of Great Britain seems to draw along with it the dominion of the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the isle of Man, and the Isle of Wight; but the authority over those lesser islands does not naturally imply any title to Great Britain. In short, a small object naturally follows a great one as its accession; but a great one Is never supposed to belong to the proprietor of a small one related to it, merely on account of that property and relation. Yet in this latter case the transition of ideas is smoother from the proprietor to the small object, which is his property, and from the small object to the great one, than in the former case from the proprietor to the great object, and from the great one to the small. It may therefore be thought, that these phaenomena are objections to the foregoing hypothesis, THAT THE ASCRIBING OF PROPERTY TO ACCESSION IS NOTHING BUT AN AFFECT OF THE RELATIONS OF IDEAS, AND OF THE SMOOTH TRANSITION OF THE IMAGINATION.

It will be easy to solve this objection, if we consider the agility and unsteadiness of the imagination, with the different views, in which it is continually placing its objects. When we attribute to a person a property in two objects, we do not always pass from the person to one object, and from that to the other related to it. The objects being here to be considered as the property of the person, we are apt to join them together, and place them in the same light. Suppose, therefore, a great and a small object to be related together; if a person be strongly related to the great object, he will likewise be strongly related to both the objects, considered together, because he Is related to the most considerable part. On the contrary, if he be only related to the small object, he will not be strongly related to both, considered together, since his relation lies only with the most trivial part, which is not apt to strike us in any great degree, when we consider the whole. And this Is the reason, why small objects become accessions to great ones, and not great to small.

It is the general opinion of philosophers and civilians, that the sea is incapable of becoming the property of any nation; and that because it is impossible to take possession of it, or form any such distinct relation with it, as may be the foundation of property. Where this reason ceases, property immediately takes place. Thus the most strenuous advocates for the liberty of the seas universally allow, that friths and hays naturally belong as an accession to the proprietors of the surrounding continent. These have properly no more bond or union with the land, than the pacific ocean would have; but having an union in the fancy, and being at the same time inferior, they are of course regarded as an accession.

The property of rivers, by the laws of most nations, and by the natural turn of our thought, Is attributed to the proprietors of their banks, excepting such vast rivers as the Rhine or the Danube, which seem too large to the imagination to follow as an accession the property of the neighbouring fields. Yet even these rivers are considered as the property of that nation, thro’ whose dominions they run; the idea of a nation being of a suitable bulk to correspond with them, and bear them such a relation in the fancy.

The accessions, which are made to lands bordering upon rivers, follow the land, say the civilians, provided it be made by what they call alluvion, that is, Insensibly and Imperceptibly; which are circumstances that mightily assist the imagination in the conjunction. Where there Is any considerable portion torn at once from one bank, and joined to another, it becomes not his property, whose land it falls on, till it unite with the land, and till the trees or plants have spread their roots into both. Before that, the imagination does not sufficiently join them.

There are other cases, which somewhat resemble this of accession, but which, at the bottom, are considerably different, and merit our attention. Of this kind Is the conjunction of the properties of different persons, after such a manner as not to admit of separation. The question is, to whom the united mass must belong.

Where this conjunction is of such a nature as to admit of division, but not of separation, the decision is natural and easy. The whole mass must be supposed to be common betwixt the proprietors of the several parts, and afterwards must be divided according to the proportions of these parts. But here I cannot forbear taking notice of a remarkable subtilty of the Roman law, in distinguishing betwixt confusion and commixtion. Confusion is an union of two bodies, such as different liquors, where the parts become entirely undistinguishable. Commixtion is the blending of two bodies, such as two bushels of corn, where the parts remain separate in an obvious and visible manner. As in the latter case the imagination discovers not so entire an union as in the former, but is able to trace and preserve a distinct idea of the property of each; this is the reason, why the civil law, tho’ it established an entire community in the case of confusion, and after that a proportional division, yet in the case of commixtion, supposes each of the proprietors to maintain a distinct right; however necessity may at last force them to submit to the same division.

QUOD SI FRUMENTUM TITII FRUMENTO TUO MISTUM FUERIT: SIQUIDEM EX VOLUNTATE VESTRA, COMMUNE EST: QUIA SINGULA CORPORA, ID EST, SINGULA GRANA, QUAE CUJUSQUE PRO PRIA FUERUNT, EX CONSENSU VESTRO COMMUNICATA SUNT. QUOD SI CASU ID MISTUM FUERIT, VEL TITIUS ID MISCUERIT SINE TUA VOLUNT ATE, NON VIDETUR ID COMMUNE ESSE; QUIA SINGULA CORPORA IN SUA SUBSTANTIA DURANT. SED NEC MAGIS ISTIS CASIBUS COMMUNE SIT FRUMENTUM QUAM GREX INTELLIGITUR ESSE CORN MUNIS, SI PECORA TITII TUIS PECORIBUS MISTA FUERINT. SED SI AB ALTERUTRO VESTRUM TOTUM ID FRUMENTUM RETINEATUR, IN REM QUIDEM ACTIO PRO MODO FRUMENTI CUJUSQUE CORN PETIT. ARBITRIO AUTEM JUDICIS, UT IPSE AESTIMET QUALE CUJUSQUE FRUMENTUM FUERIT.

Inst. Lib. IL Tit. i. Sect 28.

(In the case that your grain was mixed with that of Titius, if it was done voluntarily on the part of both of you, it is common property, inasmuch as the individual items, i.e., the single grains, which were the peculiar property of either of you, were combined with your joint consent. If, however, the mixture was accidental, or if Titius mixed it without your consent, it does not appear that it is common property, Inasmuch as the several components retain their original identity. Rather, in circumstances of this sort the grain does not become common property, any more than a herd of cattle is regarded as common property, If Titius beasts should have become mixed up with yours.

However, if all of the aforesaid corn is kept by either of you, this gives rise to a suit to determine the ownership of property, in respect of the amount of corn belonging to each. It is in the discretion of the judge to determine which is the corn belonging to either party.]
Where the properties of two persons are united after such a manner as neither to admit of division nor separation, as when one builds a house on another’s ground, in that case, the whole must belong to one of the proprietors: And here I assert, that it naturally is conceived to belong to the proprietor of the most considerable part. For however the compound object may have a relation to two different persons, and carry our view at once to both of them, yet as the most considerable part principally engages our attention, and by the strict union draws the inferior along it; for this reason, the whole bears a relation to the proprietor of that part, and is regarded as his property.
The only difficulty is, what we shall be pleased to call the most considerable part, and most attractive to the imagination.

This quality depends on several different circumstances, which have little connexion with each other. One part of a compound object may become more considerable than another, either because it is more constant and durable; because it is of greater value; because it is more obvious and remarkable; because it is of greater extent; or because its existence is more separate and independent. It will be easy to conceive, that, as these circumstances may be conjoined and opposed in all the different ways, and according to all the different degrees, which can be imagined, there will result many cases, where the reasons on both sides are so equally balanced, that it is impossible for us to give any satisfactory decision. Here then is the proper business of municipal laws, to fix what the principles of human nature have left undetermined.

The superficies yields to the soil, says the civil law: The writing to the paper: The canvas to the picture. These decisions do not well agree together, and are a proof of the contrariety of those principles, from which they are derived.

But of all the questions of this kind the most curious is that, which for so many ages divided the disciples of Proculus and Sabinus. Suppose a person shoued make a cup from the metal of another, or a ship from his wood, and suppose the proprietor of the metal or wood shoued demand his goods, the question is, whether he acquires a title to the cup or ship. Sabinus maintained the affirmative, and asserted that the substance or matter is the foundation of all the qualities; that it is incorruptible and immortal, and therefore superior to the form, which is casual and dependent. On the other hand, Proculus observed, that the form is the most obvious and remarkable part, and that from it bodies are denominated of this or that particular species. To which he might have added, that the matter or substance is in most bodies so fluctuating and uncertain, that it is utterly impossible to trace it in all its changes. For my part, I know not from what principles such a controversy can be certainly determined. I shall therefore content my self with observing, that the decision of Trebonian seems to me pretty ingenious; that the cup belongs to the proprietor of the metal, because it can be brought back to its first form: But that the ship belongs to the author of its form for a contrary reason. But however ingenious this reason may seem, it plainly depends upon the fancy, which by the possibility of such a reduction, finds a closer connexion and relation betwixt a cup and the proprietor of its metal, than betwixt a ship and the

proprietor of its wood, where the substance is more fixed
and unalterable.]

The right of succession is a very natural one, from the presumed consent of the parent or near relation, and from the general interest of mankind, which requires, that men's possessions should pass to those, who are dearest to them, in order to render them more industrious and frugal. Perhaps these causes are seconded by the influence of relation, or the association of ideas, by which we are naturally directed to consider the son after the parent's decease, and ascribe to him a title to his father's possessions. Those goods must become the property of some body: But of whom is the question. Here it is evident the persons children naturally present themselves to the mind; and being already. connected to those possessions by means of their deceased parent, we are apt to connect them still farther by the relation of property. Of this there are many parallel instances.

[FN 20 In examining the different titles to authority
in government, we shall meet with many reasons to convince
us, that the right of succession depends, in a great measure
on the imagination. Mean while I shall rest contented with
observing one example, which belongs to the present subject.
Suppose that a person die without children, and that a
dispute arises among his relations concerning his
inheritance; it is evident, that if his riches be deriv'd
partly from his father, partly from his mother, the most
natural way of determining such a dispute, is, to divide his
possessions, and assign each part to the family, from whence
it is deriv'd. Now as the person is suppos'd to have been
once the full and entire proprietor of those goods; I ask,
what is it makes us find a certain equity and natural reason
in this partition, except it be the imagination? His
affection to these families does not depend upon his
possessions; for which reason his consent can never be
presum'd precisely for such a partition. And as to the
public interest, it seems not to be in the least concern'd
on the one side or the other.]

SECT. IV OF THE TRANSFERENCE OF PROPERTY BY CONSENT

However useful, or even necessary, the stability of possession may be to human society, it is attended with very considerable inconveniences. The relation of fitness or suitableness ought never to enter into consideration, in distributing the properties of mankind; but we must govern ourselves by rules, which are more general in their application, and more free from doubt and uncertainty. Of this kind is present possession upon the first establishment of society; and afterwards occupation, prescription, accession, and succession. As these depend very much on chance, they must frequently prove contradictory both to men's wants and desires; and persons and possessions must often be very ill adjusted. This is a grand inconvenience, which calls for a remedy. To apply one directly, and allow every man to seize by violence what he judges to be fit for him, would destroy society; and therefore the rules of justice seek some medium betwixt a rigid stability, and this changeable and uncertain adjustment. But there is no medium better than that obvious one, that possession and property should always be stable, except when the proprietor consents to bestow them on some other person. This rule can have no ill consequence, in occasioning wars and dissentions; since the proprietor's consent, who alone is concerned, is taken along in the alienation: And it may serve to many good purposes in adjusting property to persons. Different parts of the earth produce different commodities; and not only so, but different men both are by nature fitted for different employments, and attain to greater perfection in any one, when they confine themselves to it alone. All this requires a mutual exchange and commerce; for which reason the translation of property by consent is founded on a law of nature, as well as its stability without such a consent.

So far is determined by a plain utility and interest. But perhaps it is from more trivial reasons, that delivery, or a sensible transference of the object is commonly required by civil laws, and also by the laws of nature, according to most authors, as a requisite circumstance in the translation of property. The property of an object, when taken for something real, without any reference to morality, or the sentiments of the mind, is a quality perfectly insensible, and even inconceivable; nor can we form any distinct notion, either of its stability or translation. This imperfection of our ideas is less sensibly felt with regard to its stability, as it engages less our attention, and is easily past over by the mind, without any scrupulous examination. But as the translation of property from one person to another is a more remarkable event, the defect of our ideas becomes more sensible on that occasion, and obliges us to turn ourselves on every side in search of some remedy. Now as nothing more enlivens any idea than a present impression, and a relation betwixt that impression and the idea; it is natural for us to seek some false light from this quarter. In order to aid the imagination in conceiving the transference of property, we take the sensible object, and actually transfer its possession to the person, on whom we would bestow the property. The supposed resemblance of the actions, and the presence of this sensible delivery, deceive the mind, and make it fancy, that it conceives the mysterious transition of the property. And that this explication of the matter is just, appears hence, that men have invented a symbolical delivery, to satisfy the fancy, where the real one is impracticable. Thus the giving the keys of a granary is understood to be the delivery of the corn contained in it: The giving of stone and earth represents the delivery of a mannor. This is a kind of superstitious practice in civil laws, and in the laws of nature, resembling the Roman catholic superstitions in religion. As the Roman catholics represent the inconceivable mysteries of the Christian religion, and render them more present to the mind, by a taper, or habit, or grimace, which is supposed to resemble them; so lawyers and moralists have run into like inventions for the same reason, and have endeavoured by those means to satisfy themselves concerning the transference of property by consent.

SECT. V OF THE OBLIGATION OF PROMISES

That the rule of morality, which enjoins the performance of promises, is not natural, will sufficiently appear from these two propositions, which I proceed to prove, viz, that a promise would not be intelligible, before human conventions had established it; and that even if it were intelligible, it would not be attended with any moral obligation.

I say, first, that a promise is not intelligible naturally, nor antecedent to human conventions; and that a man, unacquainted with society, could never enter into any engagements with another, even though they could perceive each other's thoughts by intuition. If promises be natural and intelligible, there must be some act of the mind attending these words, I promise; and on this act of the mind must the obligation depend. Let us, therefore, run over all the faculties of the soul, and see which of them is exerted in our promises.

The act of the mind, exprest by a promise, is not a resolution to perform any thing: For that alone never imposes any obligation. Nor is it a desire of such a performance: For we may bind ourselves without such a desire, or even with an aversion, declared and avowed. Neither is it the willing of that action, which we promise to perform: For a promise always regards some future time, and the will has an influence only on present actions. It follows, therefore, that since the act of the mind, which enters into a promise, and produces its obligation, is neither the resolving, desiring, nor willing any particular performance, it must necessarily be the willing of that obligation, which arises from the promise. Nor is this only a conclusion of philosophy; but is entirely conformable to our common ways of thinking and of expressing ourselves, when we say that we are bound by our own consent, and that the obligation arises from our mere will and pleasure. The only question then is, whether there be not a manifest absurdity in supposing this act of the mind, and such an absurdity as no man coued fall into, whose ideas are not confounded with prejudice and the fallacious use of language.

All morality depends upon our sentiments; and when any action, or quality of the mind, pleases us after a certain manner, we say it is virtuous; and when the neglect, or nonperformance of it, displeases us after a like manner, we say that we lie under an obligation to perform it. A change of the obligation supposes a change of the sentiment; and a creation of a new obligation supposes some new sentiment to arise. But it is certain we can naturally no more change our own sentiments, than the motions of the heavens; nor by a single act of our will, that is, by a promise, render any action agreeable or disagreeable, moral or immoral; which, without that act, would have produced contrary impressions, or have been endowed with different qualities. It would be absurd, therefore, to will any new obligation, that is, any new sentiment of pain or pleasure; nor is it possible, that men coued naturally fall into so gross an absurdity. A promise, therefore, is naturally something altogether unintelligible, nor is there any act of the mind belonging to it.

[FN 21 Were morality discoverable by reason, and not by sentiment, it would be still more evident, that promises cou'd make no alteration upon it. Morality is suppos'd to consist in relation. Every new imposition of morality, therefore, must arise from some new relation of objects; and consequently the will coud not produce immediately any change in morals, but cou'd have that effect only by producing a change upon the objects. But as the moral obligation of a promise is the pure effect of the will, without the least change in any part of the universe; it follows, that promises have no natural obligation.

Shou'd it be said, that this act of the will being in effect a new object, produces new relations and new duties; I wou'd answer, that this is a pure sophism, which may be detected by a very moderate share of accuracy and exactness. To will a new obligation, is to will a new relation of objects; and therefore, if this new relation of objects were form'd by the volition itself, we should in effect will the volition; which is plainly absurd and impossible. The will has here no object to which it cou'd tend; but must return upon itself in infinitum. The new obligation depends upon new relations. The new relations depend upon a new volition. The new volition has for object a new obligation, and consequently new relations, and consequently a new volition; which

> volition again has in view a new obligation, relation and volition, without any termination. It is impossible, therefore, we cou’d ever will a new obligation; and consequently it is impossible the will cou’d ever accompany a promise, or produce a new obligation of morality.]

But, secondly, if there was any act of the mind belonging to it, it could not naturally produce any obligation. This appears evidently from the foregoing reasoning. A promise creates a new obligation. A new obligation supposes new sentiments to arise. The will never creates new sentiments. There could not naturally, therefore, arise any obligation from a promise, even supposing the mind could fall into the absurdity of willing that obligation.

The same truth may be proved still more evidently by that reasoning, which proved justice in general to be an artificial virtue. No action can be required of us as our duty, unless there be implanted in human nature some actuating passion or motive, capable of producing the action. This motive cannot be the sense of duty. A sense of duty supposes an antecedent obligation: And where an action is not required by any natural passion, it cannot be required by any natural obligation; since it may be omitted without proving any defect or imperfection in the mind and temper, and consequently without any vice. Now it is evident we have no motive leading us to the performance of promises, distinct from a sense of duty. If we thought, that promises had no moral obligation, we never should feel any inclination to observe them. This is not the case with the natural virtues. Though there was no obligation to relieve the miserable, our humanity would lead us to it; and when we omit that duty, the immorality of the omission arises from its being a proof, that we want the natural sentiments of humanity. A father knows it to be his duty to take care of his children: But he has also a natural inclination to it. And if no human creature had that indination, no one coued lie under any such obligation. But as there is naturally no inclination to observe promises, distinct from a sense of their obligation; it follows, that fidelity is no natural virtue, and that promises have no force, antecedent to human conventions.

If any one dissent from this, he must give a regular proof of these two propositions, viz. THAT THERE IS A PECULIAR ACT OF THE MIND, ANNEXT TO PROMISES; AND THAT CONSEQUENT TO THIS ACT OF THE MIND, THERE ARISES AN INCLINATION TO PERFORM, DISTINCT FROM A SENSE OF DUTY. I presume, that it is impossible to prove either of these two points; and therefore I venture to conclude that promises are human inventions, founded on the necessities and interests of society.

In order to discover these necessities and interests, we must consider the same qualities of human nature, which we have already found to give rise to the preceding laws of society. Men being naturally selfish, or endowed only with a confined generosity, they are not easily induced to perform any action for the interest of strangers, except with a view to some reciprocal advantage, which they had no hope of obtaining but by such a performance. Now as it frequently happens, that these mutual performances cannot be finished at the same instant, it is necessary, that one party be contented to remain in uncertainty, and depend upon the gratitude of the other for a return of kindness. But so much corruption is there among men, that, generally speaking, this becomes but a slender security; and as the benefactor is here supposed to bestow his favours with a view to self-interest, this both takes off from the obligation, and sets an example to selfishness, which is the true mother of ingratitude. Were we, therefore, to follow the natural course of our passions and inclinations, we should perform but few actions for the advantage of others, from distinterested views; because we are naturally very limited in our kindness and affection: And we should perform as few of that kind, out of a regard to interest; because we cannot depend upon their gratitude. Here then is the mutual commerce of good offices in a manner lost among mankind, and every one reduced to his own skill and industry for his well-being and subsistence. The invention of the law of nature, concerning the stability of possession, has already rendered men tolerable to each other; that of the transference of property and possession by consent has begun to render them mutually advantageous: But still these laws of nature, however strictly observed, are not sufficient to render them so serviceable to each other, as by nature they are fitted to become. Though possession be stable, men may often reap but small advantage from it, while they are possessed of a greater quantity of any species of goods than they have occasion for, and at the same time suffer by the want of others. The transference of property, which is the proper remedy for this inconvenience, cannot remedy it entirely; because it can only take place with regard to such objects as are present and individual, but not to such as are absent or general. One cannot transfer the property of a particular house, twenty leagues distant; because the consent cannot be attended with delivery, which is a requisite circumstance. Neither can one transfer the property of ten bushels of corn, or five hogsheads of wine, by the mere expression and consent; because these are only general terms, and have no direct relation to any particular heap of corn, or barrels of wine. Besides, the commerce of mankind is not confined to the barter of commodities, but may extend to services and actions, which we may exchange to our mutual interest and advantage. Your corn is ripe to-day; mine will be so tomorrow. It is profitable for us both, that I should labour with you to-day, and that you should aid me to-morrow. I have no kindness for you, and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and should I labour with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I should be disappointed, and that I should in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labour alone: You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security.

All this is the effect of the natural and inherent principles and passions of human nature; and as these passions and principles are inalterable, it may be thought, that our conduct, which depends on them, must be so too, and that it would be in vain, either for moralists or politicians, to tamper with us, or attempt to change the usual course of our actions, with a view to public interest. And indeed, did the success of their designs depend upon their success in correcting the selfishness and ingratitude of men, they would never make any progress, unless aided by omnipotence, which is alone able to new-mould the human mind, and change its character in such fundamental articles. All they can pretend to, is, to give a new direction to those natural passions, and teach us that we can better satisfy our appetites in an oblique and artificial manner, than by their headlong and impetuous motion. Hence I learn to do a service to another, without bearing him any real kindness; because I forsee, that he will return my service, in expectation of another of the same kind, and in order to maintain the same correspondence of good offices with me or with others. And accordingly, after I have served him, and he is in possession of the advantage arising from my action, he is induced to perform his part, as foreseeing the consequences of his refusal.

But though this self-interested commerce of man begins to take place, and to predominate in society, it does not entirely abolish the more generous and noble intercourse of friendship and good offices. I may still do services to such persons as I love, and am more particularly acquainted with, without any prospect of advantage; and they may make me a return in the same manner, without any view but that of recompensing my past services. In order, therefore, to distinguish those two different sorts of commerce, the interested and the disinterested, there is a certain form of words invented for the former, by which we bind ourselves to the performance of any action. This form of words constitutes what we call a promise, which is the sanction of the interested commerce of mankind. When a man says he promises any thing, he in effect expresses a resolution of performing it; and along with that, by making use of this form of words, subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure. A resolution is the natural act of the mind, which promises express: But were there no more than a resolution in the case, promises would only declare our former motives, and would not create any new motive or obligation. They are the conventions of men, which create a new motive, when experience has taught us, that human affairs would be conducted much more for mutual advantage, were there certain symbols or signs instituted, by which we might give each, other security of our conduct in any particular incident, After these signs are instituted, whoever uses them is immediately bound by his interest to execute his engagements, and must never expect to be trusted any more, if he refuse to perform what he promised.

Nor is that knowledge, which is requisite to make mankind sensible of this interest in the institution and observance of promises, to be esteemed superior to the capacity of human nature, however savage and uncultivated. There needs but a very little practice of the world, to make us perceive all these consequences and advantages. The shortest experience of society discovers them to every mortal; and when each individual perceives the same sense of interest in all his fellows, he immediately performs his part of any contract, as being assured, that they will not be wanting in theirs. All of them, by concert, enter into a scheme of actions, calculated for common benefit, and agree to be true to their word; nor is there any thing requisite to form this concert or convention, but that every one have a sense of interest in the faithful fulfilling of engagements, and express that sense to other members of the society. This immediately causes that interest to operate upon them; and interest is the first obligation to the performance of promises.

Afterwards a sentiment of morals concurs with interest, and becomes a new obligation upon mankind. This sentiment of morality, in the performance of promises, arises from the same principles as that in the abstinence from the property of others. Public interest, education, and the artifices of politicians, have the same effect in both cases. The difficulties, that occur to us, in supposing a moral obligation to attend promises, we either surmount or elude. For instance; the expression of a resolution is not commonly supposed to be obligatory; and we cannot readily conceive how the making use of a certain form of words should be able to cause any material difference. Here, therefore, we feign a new act of the mind, which we call the willing an obligation; and on this we suppose the morality to depend. But we have proved already, that there is no such act of the mind, and consequently that promises impose no natural obligation.

To confirm this, we may subjoin some other reflections concerning that will, which is supposed to enter into a promise, and to cause its obligation. It is evident, that the will alone is never supposed to cause the obligation, but must be expressed by words or signs, in order to impose a tye upon any man. The expression being once brought in as subservient to the will, soon becomes the principal part of the promise; nor will a man be less bound by his word, though he secretly give a different direction to his intention, and with-hold himself both from a resolution, and from willing an obligation. But though the expression makes on most occasions the whole of the promise, yet it does not always so; and one, who should make use of any expression, of which he knows not the meaning, and which he uses without any intention of binding himself, would not certainly be bound by it. Nay, though he knows its meaning, yet if he uses it in jest only, and with such signs as shew evidently he has no serious intention of binding himself, he would not lie under any obligation of performance; but it is necessary, that the words be a perfect expression of the will, without any contrary signs. Nay, even this we must not carry so far as to imagine, that one, whom, by our quickness of understanding, we conjecture, from certain signs, to have an intention of deceiving us, is not bound by his expression or verbal promise, if we accept of it; but must limit this conclusion to those cases, where the signs are of a different kind from those of deceit. All these contradictions are easily accounted for, if the obligation of promises be merely a human invention for the convenience of society; but will never be explained, if it be something real and natural, arising from any action of the mind or body.

I shall farther observe, that since every new promise imposes a new obligation of morality on the person who promises, and since this new obligation arises from his will; it is one of the most mysterious and incomprehensible operations that can possibly be imagined, and may even be compared to TRANSUBSTANTIATION, or HOLY ORDERS [I mean so far, as holy orders are suppos'd to produce the indelible character. In other respects they are only a legal qualification.], where a certain form of words, along with a certain intention, changes entirely the nature of an external object, and even of a human nature. But though these mysteries be so far alike, it is very remarkable, that they differ widely in other particulars, and that this difference may be regarded as a strong proof of the difference of their origins. As the obligation of promises is an invention for the interest of society, it is warped into as many different forms as that interest requires, and even runs into direct contradictions, rather than lose sight of its object. But as those other monstrous doctines are mere priestly inventions, and have no public interest in view, they are less disturbed in their progress by new obstacles; and it must be owned, that, after the first absurdity, they follow more directly the current of reason and good sense. Theologians clearly perceived, that the external form of words, being mere sound, require an intention to make them have any efficacy; and that this intention being once considered as a requisite circumstance, its absence must equally prevent the effect, whether avowed or concealed, whether sincere or deceitful. Accordingly they have commonly determined, that the intention of the priest makes the sacrament, and that when he secretly withdraws his intention, he is highly criminal in himself; but still destroys the baptism, or communion, or holy orders. The terrible consequences of this doctrine were not able to hinder its taking place; as the inconvenience of a similar doctrine, with regard to promises, have prevented that doctrine from establishing itself. Men are always more concerned about the present life than the future; and are apt to think the smallest evil, which regards the former, more important than the greatest, which regards the latter.

We may draw the same conclusion, concerning the origin of promises, from the force, which is supposed to invalidate all contracts, and to free us from their obligation. Such a principle is a proof, that promises have no natural obligation, and are mere artificial contrivances for the convenience and advantage of society. If we consider aright of the matter, force is not essentially different from any other motive of hope or fear, which may induce us to engage our word, and lay ourselves under any obligation. A man, dangerously wounded, who promises a competent sum to a surgeon to cure him, would certainly be bound to performance; though the case be not so much different from that of one, who promises a sum to a robber, as to produce so great a difference in our sentiments of morality, if these sentiments were not built entirely on public interest and convenience.

SECT. VI SOME FARTHER REFLECTIONS CONCERNING JUSTICE AND INJUSTICE

We have now run over the three fundamental laws of nature, that of the stability of possession, of its transference by consent, and of the performance of promises. It is on the strict t observance of those three laws, that the peace and security of human society entirely depend; nor is there any possibility of establishing a good correspondence among men, where these are neglected. Society is absolutely necessary for the well-being of men; and these are as necessary to the support of society. Whatever restraint they may impose on the passions of men, they are the real offspring of those passions, and are only a more artful and more refined way of satisfying them. Nothing is more vigilant and inventive than our passions; and nothing is more obvious, than the convention for the observance of these rules. Nature has, therefore, trusted this affair entirely to the conduct of men, and has not placed in the mind any peculiar original principles, to determine us to a set of actions, into which the other principles of our frame and constitution were sufficient to lead us. And to convince us the more fully of this truth, we may here stop a moment, and from a review of the preceding reasonings may draw some new arguments, to prove that those laws, however necessary, are entirely artificial, and of human invention; and consequently that justice is an artificial, and not a natural virtue.

(1) The first argument I shall make use of is derived from the vulgar definition of justice. Justice is commonly defined to be a constant and perpetual will of giving every one his due. In this definition it is supposed, that there are such things as right and property, independent of justice, and antecedent to it; and that they would have subsisted, though men had never dreamt of practising such a virtue. I have already observed, in a cursory manner, the fallacy of this opinion, and shall here continue to open up a little more distinctly my sentiments on that subject.

I shall begin with observing, that this quality, which we shall call property, is like many of the imaginary qualities of the peripatetic philosophy, and vanishes upon a more accurate inspection into the subject, when considered a-part from our moral sentiments. It is evident property does not consist in any of the sensible qualities of the object. For these may continue invariably the same, while the property changes. Property, therefore, must consist in some relation of the object. But it is not in its relation with regard to other external and inanimate objects. For these may also continue invariably the same, while the property changes. This quality, therefore, consists in the relations of objects to intelligent and rational beings. But it is not the external and corporeal relation, which forms the essence of property. For that relation may be the same betwixt inanimate objects, or with regard to brute creatures; though in those cases it forms no property. It is, therefore, in some internal relation, that the property consists; that is, in some influence, which the external relations of the object have on the mind and actions. Thus the external relation, which we call occupation or first possession, is not of itself imagined to be the property of the object, but only to cause its property. Now it is evident, this external relation causes nothing in external objects, and has only an influence on the mind, by giving us a sense of duty in abstaining from that object, and in restoring it to the first possessor. These actions are properly what we call justice; and consequently it is on that virtue that the nature of property depends, and not the virtue on the property.

If any one, therefore, would assert, that justice is a natural virtue, and injustice a natural vice, he must assert, that abstracting from the nations of property, and right and obligation, a certain conduct and train of actions, in certain external relations of objects, has naturally a moral beauty or deformity, and causes an original pleasure or uneasiness. Thus the restoring a man’s goods to him is considered as virtuous, not because nature has annexed a certain sentiment of pleasure to such a conduct, with regard to the property of others, but because she has annexed that sentiment to such a conduct, with regard to those external objects, of which others have had the first or long possession, or which they have received by the consent of those, who have had first or long possession. If nature has given us no such sentiment, there is not, naturally, nor antecedent to human conventions, any such thing as property. Now, though it seems sufficiently evident, in this dry and accurate consideration of the present subject, that nature has annexed no pleasure or sentiment of approbation to such a conduct; yet that I may leave as little room for doubt as possible, I shall subjoin a few more arguments to confirm my opinion.

First, If nature had given us a pleasure of this kind, it would have been as evident and discernible as on every other occasion; nor should we have found any difficulty to perceive, that the consideration of such actions, in such a situation, gives a certain pleasure and sentiment of approbation. We should not have been obliged to have recourse to notions of property in the definition of justice, and at the same time make use of the notions of justice in the definition of property. This deceitful method of reasoning is a plain proof, that there are contained in the subject some obscurities and difficulties, which we are not able to surmount, and which we desire to evade by this artifice.

Secondly, Those rules, by which properties, rights, and obligations are determined, have in them no marks of a natural origin but many of artifice and contrivance. They are too numerous to have proceeded from nature: They are changeable by human laws: And have all of them a direct and evident tendency to public good, and the support, of civil society. This last circumstance is remarkable upon two accounts. First, because, though the cause of the establishment of these laws had been a regard for the public good, as much as the public good is their natural tendency, they would still have been artificial, as being purposely contrived and directed to a certain end. Secondly, because, if men had been endowed with such a strong regard for public good, they would never have restrained themselves by these rules; so that the laws of justice arise from natural principles in a manner still more oblique and artificial. It is self-love which is their real origin; and as the self-love of one person is naturally contrary to that of another, these several interested passions are obliged to adjust themselves after such a manner as to concur in some system of conduct and behaviour. This system, therefore, comprehending the interest of each individual, is of course advantageous to the public; though it be not intended for that purpose by die inventors.

(2) In the second place we may observe, that all kinds of vice and virtue run insensibly into each other, and may approach by such imperceptible degrees as will make it very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to determine when the one ends, and the other begins; and from this observation we may derive a new argument for the foregoing principle. For whatever may be the case, with regard to all kinds of vice and virtue, it is certain, that rights, and obligations, and property, admit of no such insensible gradation, but that a man either has a full and perfect property, or

none at all; and is either entirely obliged to perform any action, or lies under no manner of obligation. However civil laws may talk of a perfect dominion, and of an imperfect, it is easy to observe, that this arises from a fiction, which has no foundation in reason, and can never enter into our notions of natural justice and equity. A man that hires a horse, though but for a day, has as full a right to make use of it for that time, as he whom we call its proprietor has to make use of it any other day; and it was evident, that however the use may be bounded in time or degree, the right itself is not susceptible of any such gradation, but is absolute and entire, so far as it extends. Accordingly we may observe, that this right both arises and perishes in an instant; and that a man entirely acquires the property of any object by occupation, or the consent of the proprietor; and loses it by his own consent; without any of that insensible gradation, which is remarkable in other qualities and relations, Since, therefore, this is die case with regard to property, and rights, and obligations, I ask, how it stands with regard to justice and injustice? After whatever manner you answer this question, you run into inextricable difficulties. If you reply, that justice and injustice admit of degree, and run insensibly into each other, you expressly contradict the foregoing position, that obligation and property are not susceptible of such a gradation. These depend entirely upon justice and injustice, and follow them in all their variations. Where the justice is entire, the property is also entire: Where the justice is imperfect, the property must also be imperfect And vice versa, if the property admit of no such variations, they must also be incompatible with justice. If you assent, therefore, to this last proposition, and assert, that justice and injustice are not susceptible of degrees, you in effect assert, that they are not naturally either vicious or virtuous; since vice and virtue, moral good and evil, and indeed all natural qualities, run insensibly into each other, and are, on many occasions, undistinguishable.

And here it may be worth while to observe, that though abstract reasoning, and the general maxims of philosophy and law establish this position, that property, and right, and obligation admit not of degrees, yet in our common and negligent way of thinking, we find great difficulty to entertain that opinion, and do even secretly embrace the contrary principle. An object must either be in the possession of one person or another. An action must either be performed or not The necessity there is of choosing one side in these dilemmas, and the impossibility there often is of finding any just medium, oblige us, when we reflect on the matter, to acknowledge, that all property and obligations are entire. But on the other hand, when we consider the origin of property and obligation, and find that they depend on public utility, and sometimes on the propensities of the imagination, which are seldom entire on any side; we are naturally inclined to imagine, that these moral relations admit of an insensible gradation. Hence it is, that in references, where the consent of the parties leave the referees entire masters of the subject, they commonly discover so much equity and justice on both sides, as induces them to strike a medium, and divide the difference betwixt the parties. Civil judges, who have not this liberty, but are obliged to give a decisive sentence on some one side, are often at a loss how to determine, and are necessitated to proceed on the most frivolous reasons in the world. Half rights and obligations, which seem so natural in common life, are perfect absurdities in their tribunal; for which reason they are often obliged to take half arguments for whole ones, in order to terminate the affair one way or other.

(3) The third argument of this kind I shall make use of may be explained thus. If we consider the ordinary course of human actions, we shall find, that the mind restrains not itself by any general and universal rules; but acts on most occasions as it is determined by its present motives and inclination. As each action is a particular individual event, it must proceed from particular principles, and from our immediate situation within ourselves, and with respect to the rest of the universe. If on some occasions we extend our motives beyond those very circumstances, which gave rise to them, and form something like general rules for our conduct, it is easy to observe, that these rules are not perfectly inflexible, but allow of many exceptions. Since, therefore, this is the ordinary course of human actions, we may conclude, that the laws of justice, being universal and perfectly inflexible, can never be derived from nature, nor be the immediate offspring of any natural motive or inclination. No action can be either morally good or evil, unless there be some natural passion or motive to impel us to it, or deter us from it; and it is evident, that die morality must be susceptible of all the same variations, which are natural to the passion. Here are two persons, who dispute for an estate; of whom one is rich, a fool, and a batchelor; the other poor, a man of sense, and has a numerous family: The first is my enemy; the second my friend. Whether I be actuated in this affair by a view to public or private interest, by friendship or enmity, I must be induced to do my utmost

to procure the estate to the latter. Nor would any consideration of the right and property of the persons be able to restrain me, were I actuated only by natural motives, without any combination or convention with others. For as all property depends on morality; and as all morality depends on the ordinary course of our passions and actions; and as these again are only directed by particular motives; it is evident, such a partial conduct must be suitable to the strictest morality, and coued never be a violation of property. Were men, therefore, to take the liberty of acting with regard to the laws of society, as they do in every other affair, they would conduct themselves, on most occasions, by particular judgments, and would take into consideration the characters and circumstances of the persons, as well as the general nature of the question. But it is easy to observe, that this would produce an infinite confusion in human society, and that the avidity and partiality of men would quickly bring disorder into the world, if not restrained by some general and inflexible principles. Twas, therefore, with a view to this inconvenience, that men have established those principles, and have agreed to restrain themselves by general rules, which are unchangeable by spite and favour, and by particular views of private or public interest. These rules, then, are artificially invented for a certain purpose, and are contrary to the common principles of human nature, which accommodate themselves to circumstances, and have no stated invariable method of operation.

Nor do I perceive how I can easily be mistaken in this matter. I see evidently, that when any man imposes on himself general inflexible rules in his conduct with others, he considers certain objects as their property, which he supposes to be sacred and inviolable. But no proposition can be more evident, than that property is perfectly unintelligible without first supposing justice and injustice; and that these virtues and vices are as unintelligible, unless we have motives, independent of the morality, to impel us to just actions, and deter us from unjust ones. Let those motives, therefore, be what they will, they must accommodate themselves to circumstances, and must admit of all the variations, which human affairs, in their incessant revolutions, are susceptible of. They are consequently a very improper foundation for such rigid inflexible rules as the laws of nature; and it is evident these laws can only be derived from human conventions, when men have perceived the disorders that result from following their natural and variable principles.

Upon the whole, then, we are to consider this distinction betwixt justice and injustice, as having two different foundations, viz, that of interest, when men observe, that it is impossible to live in society without restraining themselves by certain rules; and that of morality, when this interest is once observed and men receive a pleasure from the view of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and an uneasiness from such as are contrary to it. It is the voluntary convention and artifice of men, which makes the first interest take place; and therefore those laws of justice are so far to be considered as artifrial. After that interest is once established and acknowledged, the sense of morality in the observance of these rules follows naturally, and of itself; though it is certain, that it is also augmented by a new artifice, and that the public instructions of politicians, and the private education of parents, contribute to the giving us a sense of honour and duty in the strict regulation of our actions with regard to the properties of others.

SECT. VII OF THE ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

Nothing is more certain, than that men are, in a great measure, governed by interest, and that even when they extend their concern beyond themselves, it is not to any great distance; nor is it usual for them, in common life, to look farther than their nearest friends and acquaintance. It is no less certain, that it is impossible for men to consult, their interest in so effectual a manner, as by an universal and inflexible observance of the rules of justice, by which alone they can preserve society, and keep themselves from falling into that wretched and savage condition, which is commonly represented as the state of nature. And as this interest, which all men have in the upholding of society, and the observation of the rules of justice, is great, so is it palpable and evident, even to the most rude and uncultivated of human race; and it is almost impossible for any one, who has had experience of society, to be mistaken in this particular. Since, therefore, men are so sincerely attached to their interest, and their interest is so much concerned in the observance of justice, and this interest is so certain and avowed; it may be asked, how any disorder can ever arise in society, and what principle there is in human nature so powerful as to overcome so strong a passion, or so violent as to obscure so clear a knowledge?

It has been observed, in treating of the passions, that men are mightily governed by the imagination, and proportion their affections more to the light, under which any object appears to them, than to its real and intrinsic value. What strikes upon them with a strong and lively idea commonly prevails above what lies in a more obscure light; and it must be a great superiority of value, that is able to compensate this advantage. Now as every thing, that is contiguous to us, either in space or time, strikes upon us with such an idea, it has a proportional effect on the will and passions, and commonly operates with more force than any object, that lies in a more distant and obscure light. Though we may be fully convinced, that the latter object excels the former, we are not able to regulate our actions by this judgment; but yield to the sollicitations of our passions, which always plead in favour of whatever is near and contiguous.

This is the reason why men so often act in contradiction to their known interest; and in particular why they prefer any trivial advantage, that is present, to the maintenance of order in society, which so much depends on the observance of justice. The consequences of every breach of equity seem to lie very remote, and are not able to counter-ballance any immediate advantage, that may be reaped from it. They are, however, never the less real for being remote; and as all men are, in some degree, subject to the same weakness, it necessarily happens, that the violations of equity must become very frequent in society, and the commerce of men, by that means, be rendered very dangerous and uncertain. You have the same propension, that I have, in favour of what is contiguous above what is remote. You are, therefore, naturally carried to commit acts of injustice as well as me. Your example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity, by shewing me, that I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone should impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others.

This quality, therefore, of human nature, not only is very dangerous to society, but also seems, on a cursory view, to be incapable of any remedy. The remedy can only come from the consent of men; and if men be incapable of themselves to prefer remote to contiguous, they will never consent to any thing, which would oblige them to such a choice, and contradict, in so sensible a manner, their natural principles and propensities. Whoever chuses the means, chuses also the end; and if it be impossible for us to prefer what is remote, it is equally impossible for us to submit to any necessity, which would oblige us to such a method of acting.

But here it is observable, that this infirmity of human nature becomes a remedy to itself, and that we provide against our negligence about remote objects, merely because we are naturally inclined to that negligence. When we consider any objects at a distance, all their minute distinctions vanish, and we always give the preference to whatever is in itself preferable, without considering its situation and circumstances. This gives rise to what in an improper sense we call reason, which is a principle, that is often contradictory to those propensities that display themselves upon the approach of the object. In reflecting on any action, which I am to perform a twelve-month hence, I always resolve to prefer the greater good, whether at that time it will be more contiguous or remote; nor does any difference in that particular make a difference in my present intentions and resolutions.

My distance from the final determination makes all those minute differences vanish, nor am I affected by any thing, but the general and more discernible qualities of good and evil. But on my nearer approach, those circumstances, which I at first over-looked, begin to appear, and have an influence on my conduct and affections. A new inclination to the present good springs up, and makes it difficult for me to adhere inflexibly to my first purpose and resolution. This natural infirmity I may very much regret, and I may endeavour, by all possible means, to free my self from it. I may have recourse to study and reflection within myself; to the advice of friends; to frequent meditation, and repeated resolution: And having experienced how ineffectual all these are, I may embrace with pleasure any other expedient, by which I may impose a restraint upon myself, and guard against this weakness.

The only difficulty, therefore, is to find out this expedient, by which men cure their natural weakness, and lay themselves under the necessity of observing the laws of justice and equity, notwithstanding their violent propension to prefer contiguous to remote. It is evident such a remedy can never be effectual without correcting this propensity; and as it is impossible to change or correct any thing material in our nature, the utmost we can do is to change our circumstances and situation, and render the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest, and their violation our most remote. But this being impracticable with respect to all mankind, it can only take place with respect to a few, whom we thus immediately interest in the execution of justice. There are the persons, whom we call civil magistrates, kings and their ministers, our governors and rulers, who being indifferent persons to the greatest part of the state, have no interest, or but a remote one, in any act of injustice; and being satisfied with their present condition, and with their part in society, have an immediate interest in every execution of justice, which is so necessary to the upholding of society. Here then is the origin of civil government and society. Men are not able radically to cure, either in themselves or others, that narrowness of soul, which makes them prefer the present to the remote. They cannot change their natures. All they can do is to change their situation, and render the observance of justice the immediate interest of some particular persons, and its violation their more remote. These persons, then, are not only induced to observe those rules in their own conduct, but also to constrain others to a like regularity, and inforce the dictates of equity through the whole society. And if it be necessary, they may also interest others more immediately in the execution of justice, and create a number of officers, civil and military, to assist them in their government.

But this execution of justice, though the principal, is not the only advantage of government. As violent passion hinder men from seeing distinctly the interest they have in an equitable behaviour towards others; so it hinders them from seeing that equity itself, and gives them a remarkable partiality in their own favours. This inconvenience is corrected in the same manner as that above-mentioned. The same persons, who execute the laws of justice, will also decide all controversies concerning them; and being indifferent to the greatest part of the society, will decide them more equitably than every one would in his own case.

By means of these two advantages, in the execution and decision of justice, men acquire a security against each others weakness and passion, as well as against their own, and under the shelter of their governors, begin to taste at ease the sweets of society and mutual assistance. But government extends farther its beneficial influence; and not contented to protect men in those conventions they make for their mutual interest, it often obliges them to make such conventions, and forces them to seek their own advantage, by a concurrence in some common end or purpose. There is no quality in human nature, which causes more fatal errors in our conduct, than that which leads us to prefer whatever is present to the distant and remote, and makes us desire objects more according to their situation than their intrinsic value. Two neighbours may agree to drain a meadow, which they possess in common; because it is easy for them to know each others mind; and each must perceive, that the immediate consequence of his failing in his part, is, the abandoning the whole project. But it is very difficult, and indeed impossible, that a thousand persons should agree in any such action; it being difficult for them to concert so complicated a design, and still more difficult for them to execute it; while each seeks a pretext to free himself of the trouble and expence, and would lay the whole burden on others. Political society easily remedies both these inconveniences. Magistrates find an immediate interest in the interest of any considerable part of their subjects. They need consult no body but themselves to form any scheme for the promoting of that interest. And as the failure of any one piece in the execution is connected, though not immediately, with the failure of the whole, they prevent that failure, because they find no interest in it, either immediate or remote. Thus bridges are built; harbours opened; ramparts raised; canals formed; fleets equiped; and armies disciplined every where, by the care of government, which, though composed of men subject to all human infirmities, becomes, by one of the finest and most subtle inventions imaginable, a composition, which is, in some measure, exempted from all these infirmities.

SECT. VIII OF THE SOURCE OF ALLEGIANCE

Though government be an invention very advantageous, and even in some circumstances absolutely necessary to mankind; it is not necessary in all circumstances, nor is it impossible for men to preserve society for some time, without having recourse to such an invention. Men, it is true, are always much inclined to prefer present interest to distant and remote; nor is it easy for them to resist the temptation of any advantage, that they may immediately enjoy, in apprehension of an evil that lies at a distance from them: But still this weakness is less conspicuous where the possessions, and the pleasures of life are few, and of little value, as they always are in the infancy of society. An Indian is but little tempted to dispossess another of his hut, or to steal his bow, as being already provided of the same advantages; and as to any superior fortune, which may attend one above another in hunting and fishing, it is only casual and temporary, and will have but small tendency to disturb society. And so far am I from thinking with some philosophers, that men are utterly incapable of society without government, that I assert the first rudiments of government to arise from quarrels, not among men of the same society, but among those of different societies. A less degree of riches will suffice to this latter effect, than is requisite for the former. Men fear nothing from public war and violence but the resistance they meet with, which, because they share it in common, seems less terrible; and because it comes from strangers, seems less pernicious in its consequences, than when they are exposed singly against one whose commerce is advantageous to them, and without whose society it is impossible they can subsist. Now foreign war to a society without government necessarily produces civil war. Throw any considerable goods among men, they instantly fall a quarrelling, while each strives to get possession of what pleases him, without regard to the consequences. In a foreign war the most considerable of all goods, life and limbs, are at stake; and as every one shuns dangerous ports, seizes the best arms, seeks excuse for the slightest wounds, the laws, which may be well enough observed while men were calm, can now no longer take place, when they are in such commotion.

This we find verified in the American tribes, where men live in concord and amity among themselves without any established government and never pay submission to any of their fellows, except in time of war, when their captain enjoys a shadow of authority, which he loses after their return from the field, and the establishment of peace with the neighbouring tribes. This authority, however, instructs them in the advantages of government, and teaches them to have recourse to it, when either by the pillage of war, by commerce, or by any fortuitous inventions, their riches and possessions have become so considerable as to make them forget, on every emergence, the interest they have in the preservation of peace and justice. Hence we may give a plausible reason, among others, why all governments are at first monarchical, without any mixture and variety; and why republics arise only from the abuses of monarchy and despotic power. Camps are the true mothers of cities; and as war cannot be administered, by reason of the suddenness of every exigency, without some authority in a single person, the same kind of authority naturally takes place in that civil government, which succeeds the military. And this reason I take to be more natural, than the common one derived from patriarchal government, or the authority of a father, which is said first to take place in one family, and to accustom the members of it to the government of a single person. The state of society without government is one of the most natural states of men, and must submit with the conjunction of many families, and long after the first generation. Nothing but an encrease of riches and possessions coued oblige men to quit it; and so barbarous and uninstructed are all societies on their first formation, that many years must elapse before these can encrease to such a degree, as to disturb men in the enjoyment of peace and concord. But though it be possible for men to maintain a small uncultivated society without government, it is impossible they should maintain a society of any kind without justice, and the observance of those three fundamental laws concerning the stability of possession, its translation by consent, and the performance of promises. These are, therefore, antecedent to government, and are supposed to impose an obligation before the duty of allegiance to civil magistrates has once been thought of. Nay, I shall go farther, and assert, that government, upon its first establishment, would naturally be supposed. to derive its obligation from those laws of nature, and, in particular, from that concerning the performance of promises. When men have once perceived the necessity of government to maintain peace, and execute justice, they would naturally assemble together, would chuse magistrates, determine power, and promise them obedience. As a promise is supposed to be a bond or security already in use, and attended with a moral obligation, it is to be considered as the original sanction of government, and as the source of the first obligation to obedience. This reasoning appears so natural, that it has become the foundation of our fashionable system of politics, and is in a manner the creed of a party amongst us, who pride themselves, with reason, on the soundness of their philosophy, and their liberty of thought. All men, say they, are born free and equal: Government and superiority can only be established by consent: The consent of men, in establishing government, imposes on them a new obligation, unknown to the laws of nature. Men, therefore, are bound to obey their magistrates, only because they promise it; and if they had not given their word, either expressly or tacitly, to preserve allegiance, it would never have become a part of their moral duty. This conclusion, however, when carried so far as to comprehend government in all its ages and situations, is entirely erroneous; and I maintain, that though the duty of allegiance be at first grafted on the obligation of promises, and be for some time supported by that obligation, yet it quickly takes root of itself, and has an original obligation and authority, independent of all contracts. This is a principle of moment, which we must examine with care and attention, before we proceed any farther.

It is reasonable for those philosophers, who assert justice to be a natural virtue, and antecedent to human conventions, to resolve all civil allegiance into the obligation of a promise, and assert that it is our own consent alone, which binds us to any submission to magistracy. For as all government is plainly an invention of men, and the origin of most governments is known in history, it is necessary to mount higher, in order to find the source of our political duties, if we would assert them to have any natural obligation of morality. These philosophers, therefore, quickly observe, that society is as antient as the human species, and those three fundamental laws of nature as antient as society: So that taking advantage of the antiquity, and obscure origin of these laws, they first deny them to be artificial and voluntary inventions of men, and then seek to ingraft on them those other duties, which are more plainly artificial. But being once undeceived in this particular, and having found that natural, as well as civil justice, derives its origin from human conventions, we shall quickly perceive, how fruitless it is to resolve the one into the other, and seek, in the laws of nature, a stronger foundation for our political duties than interest, and human conventions; while these laws themselves are built on the very same foundation. On which ever side we turn this subject, we shall find, that these two kinds of duty are exactly on the same footing, and have the same source both of their first invention and moral obligation. They are contrived to remedy like inconveniences, and acquire their moral sanction in the same manner, from their remedying those inconveniences. These are two points, which we shall endeavour to prove as distinctly as possible.

We have already shewn, that men invented the three fundamental laws of nature, when they observed the necessity of society to their mutual subsistance, and found, that it was impossible to maintain any correspondence together, without some restraint on their natural appetites. The same self-love, therefore, which renders men so incommodious to each other, taking a new and more convenient direction, produces the rules of justice, and is the first motive of their observance. But when men have observed, that though the rules of justice be sufficient to maintain any society, yet it is impossible for them, of themselves, to observe those rules, in large and polished societies; they establish government, as a new invention to attain their ends, and preserve the old, or procure new advantages, by a more strict execution of justice. So far, therefore, our civil duties are connected with our natural, that the former are invented chiefly for the sake of the latter; and that the principal object of government is to constrain men to observe the laws of nature. In this respect, however, that law of nature, concerning the performance of promises, is only comprized along with the rest; and its exact observance is to be considered as an effect of the institution of government, and not the obedience to government as an effect of the obligation of a promise. Though the object of our civil duties be the enforcing of our natural, yet the first [First in time, not in dignity or force.] motive of the invention, as well as performance of both, is nothing but self-interest: and since there is a separate interest in the obedience to government, from that in the performance of promises, we must also allow of a separate obligation. To obey the civil magistrate is requisite to preserve order and concord in society. To perform promises is requisite to beget mutual trust and confidence in the common offices of life. The ends, as well as the means, are perfectly distinct; nor is the one subordinate to the other.

To make this more evident, let us consider, that men will often bind themselves by promises to the performance of what it would have been their interest to perform, independent of these promises; as when they would give others a fuller security, by super-adding a new obligation of interest to that which they formerly lay under. The interest in the performance of promises, besides its moral obligation, is general, avowed, and of the last consequence in life. Other interests may be more particular and doubtful; and we are apt to entertain a greater suspicion, that men may indulge their humour, or passion, in acting contrary to them. Here, therefore, promises come naturally in play, and are often required for fuller satisfaction and security. But supposing those other interests to be as general and avowed as the interest in the performance of a promise, they will be regarded as on the same footing, and men will begin to repose the same confidence in them. Now this is exactly the case with regard to our civil duties, or obedience to the magistrate; without which no government coued subsist, nor any peace or order be maintained in large societies, where there are so many possessions on the one hand, and so many wants, real or imaginary, on the other. Our civil duties, therefore, must soon detach themselves from our promises, and acquire a separate force and influence. The interest in both is of the very same kind: It is general, avowed, and prevails in all times and places. There is, then, no pretext of reason for founding the one upon the other; while each of them has a foundation peculiar to itself. We might as well resolve the obligation to abstain from the possessions of others, into the obligation of a promise, as that of allegiance. The interests are not more distinct in the one case than the other. A regard to property is not more necessary to natural society, than obedience is to civil society or government; nor is the former society more necessary to the being of mankind, than the latter to their well-being and happiness. In short, if the performance of promises be advantageous, so is obedience to government: If the former interest be general, so is the latter: If the one interest be obvious and avowed, so is the other. And as these two rules are founded on like obligations of interest, each of them must have a peculiar authority, independent of the other.

But it is not only the natural obligations of interest, which are distinct in promises and allegiance; but also the moral obligations of honour and conscience: Nor does the merit or demerit of the one depend in the least upon that of the other. And indeed, if we consider the close connexion there is betwixt the natural and moral obligations, we shall find this conclusion to be entirely unavoidable. Our interest is always engaged on the side of obedience to magistracy; and there is nothing but a great present advantage, that can lead us to rebellion, by making us over-look the remote interest, which we have in the preserving of peace and order in society. But though a present interest may thus blind us with regard to our own actions, it takes not place with regard to those of others; nor hinders them from appearing in their true colours, as highly prejudicial to public interest, and to our own in particular. This naturally gives us an uneasiness, in considering such seditious and disloyal actions, and makes us attach to them the idea of vice and moral deformity. It is the same principle, which causes us to disapprove of all kinds of private injustice, and in particular of the breach of promises. We blame all treachery and breach of faith; because we consider, that the freedom and extent of human commerce depend entirely on a fidelity with regard to promises. We blame all disloyalty to magistrates; because we perceive, that the execution of justice, in the stability of possession, its translation by consent, and the performance of promises, is impossible, without submission to government. As there are here two interests entirely distinct from each other, they must give rise to two moral obligations, equally separate and independent. Though there was no such thing as a promise in the world, government would still be necessary in all large and civilized societies; and if promises had only their own proper obligation, without the separate sanction of government, they would have but little efficacy in such societies. This separates the boundaries of our public and private duties, and shews that the latter are more dependant on the former, than the former on the latter. Education, and the artifice of politicians, concur to bestow a farther morality on loyalty, and to brand all rebellion with a greater degree of guilt and infamy. Nor is it a wonder, that politicians should be very industrious in inculcating such notions, where their interest is so particularly concerned.

Lest those arguments should not appear entirely conclusive (as I think they are) I shall have recourse to authority, and shall prove, from the universal consent of mankind, that the obligation of submission to government is not derived from any promise of the subjects. Nor need any one wonder, that though I have all along endeavoured to establish my system on pure reason, and have scarce ever cited the judgment even of philosophers or historians on any article, I should now appeal to popular authority, and oppose the sentiments of the rabble to any philosophical reasoning. For it must be observed, that the opinions of men, in this case, carry with them a peculiar authority, and are, in a great measure, infallible. The distinction of moral good and evil is founded on the pleasure or pain, which results from the view of any sentiment, or character; and as that pleasure or pain cannot be unknown to the person who feels it, it follows [FN 22], that there is just so much vice or virtue in any character, as every one places in it, and that it is impossible in this particular we can ever be mistaken. And though our judgments concerning the origin of any vice or virtue, be not so certain as those concerning their degrees; yet, since the question in this case regards not any philosophical origin of an obligation, but a plain matter of fact, it is not easily conceived how we can fall into an error. A man, who acknowledges himself to be bound to another, for a certain sum, must certainly know whether it be by his own bond, or that of his father; whether it be of his mere good-will, or for money lent him; and under what conditions, and for what purposes he has bound himself. In like manner, it being certain, that there is a moral obligation to submit to government, because every one thinks so; it must be as certain, that this obligation arises not from a promise; since no one, whose judgment has not been led astray by too strict adherence to a system of philosophy, has ever yet dreamt of ascribing it to that origin. Neither magistrates nor subjects have formed this idea of our civil duties.

[FN 22 This proposition must hold strictly true, with regard to every quality, that is determin'd merely by sentiment. In what sense we can talk either of a right or a wrong taste in morals, eloquence, or beauty, shall be considerd afterwards. In the mean time, it may be observ'd, that there is such an uniformity in the GENERAL sentiments of mankind, as to render such questions of but small importance.]

We find, that magistrates are so far from deriving their authority, and the obligation to obedience in their subjects, from the foundation of a promise or original contract, that they conceal, as far as possible, from their people, especially from the vulgar, that they have their origin from thence. Were this the sanction of government, our rulers would never receive it tacitly, which is the utmost that can be pretended; since what is given tacitly and insensibly can never have such influence on mankind, as what is performed expressly and openly. A tacit promise is, where the will is signified by other more diffuse signs than those of speech; but a will there must certainly be in the case, and that can never escape the person’s notice, who exerted it, however silent or tacit. But were you to ask the far greatest part of the nation, whether they had ever consented to the authority of their rulers, or promised to obey them, they would be inclined to think very strangely of you; and would certainly reply, that the affair depended not on their consent, but that they were born to such an obedience. In consequence of this opinion, we frequently see them imagine such persons to be their natural rulers, as are at that time deprived of all power and authority, and whom no man, however foolish, would voluntarily chuse; and this merely because they are in that line, which ruled before, and in that degree of it, which used to succeed; though perhaps in so distant a period, that scarce any man alive coued ever have given any promise of obedience. Has a government, then, no authority over such as these, because they never consented to it, and would esteem the very attempt of such a free choice a piece of arrogance and impiety? We find by experience, that it punishes them very freely for what it calls treason and rebellion, which, it seems, according to this system, reduces itself to common injustice. If you say, that by dwelling in its dominions, they in effect consented to the established government; I answer, that this can only be, where they think the affair depends on their choice, which few or none, beside those philosophers, have ever yet imagined. It never was pleaded as an excuse for a rebel, that the first act he performed, after he came to years of discretion, was to levy war against the sovereign of the state; and that while he was a child he coued not bind himself by his own consent, and having become a man, showed plainly, by the first act he performed, that he had no design to impose on himself any obligation to obedience. We find, on the contrary, that civil laws punish this crime at the same age as any other, which is criminal, of itself, without our consent; that is, when the person is come to the full use of reason: Whereas to this crime they ought in justice to allow some intermediate time, in which a tacit consent at least might be supposed. To which we may add, that a man living under an absolute government, would owe it no allegiance; since, by its very nature, it depends not on consent. But as that is as natural and common a government as any, it must certainly occasion some obligation; and it is plain from experience, that men, who are subjected to it, do always think so. This is a clear proof, that we do not commonly esteem our allegiance to be derived from our consent or promise; and a farther proof is, that when our promise is upon any account expressly engaged, we always distinguish exactly betwixt the two obligations, and believe the one to add more force to the other, than in a repetition of the same promise. Where no promise is given, a man looks not on his faith as broken in private matters, upon account of rebellion; but keeps those two duties of honour and allegiance perfectly distinct and separate. As the uniting of them was thought by these philosophers a very subtile invention, this is a convincing proof, that it is not a true one; since no man can either give a promise, or be restrained by its sanction and obligation unknown to himself.

SECT. IX OF THE MEASURES OF ALLEGIANCE

Those political writers, who have had recourse to a promise, or original contract, as the source of our allegiance to government, intended to establish a principle, which is perfectly just and reasonable; though the reasoning, upon which they endeavoured to establish it, was fallacious and sophistical. They would prove, that our submission to government admits of exceptions, and that an egregious tyranny in the rulers is sufficient to free the subjects from all ties of allegiance. Since men enter into society, say they, and submit themselves to government, by their free and voluntary consent, they must have in view certain advantages, which they propose to reap from it, and for which they are contented to resign their native liberty. There is, therefore, something mutual engaged on the part of the magistrate, viz, protection and security; and it is only by the hopes he affords of these advantages, that he can ever persuade men to submit to him. But when instead of protection and security, they meet with tyranny and oppression, they are freeed from their promises, (as happens in all conditional contracts) and return to that state of liberty, which preceded the institution of government. Men would never be so foolish as to enter into such engagements as should turn entirely to the advantage of others, without any view of bettering their own condition. Whoever proposes to draw any profit from our submission, must engage himself, either expressly or tacitly, to make us reap some advantage from his authority; nor ought he to expect, that without the performance of his part we will ever continue in obedience.

I repeat it: This conclusion is just, though the principles be erroneous; and I flatter myself, that I can establish the same conclusion on more reasonable principles. I shall not take such a compass, in establishing our political duties, as to assert, that men perceive the advantages of government; that they institute government with a view to those advantages; that this institution requires a promise of obedience; which imposes a moral obligation to a certain degree, but being conditional, ceases to be binding, whenever the other contracting party performs not his part of the engagement. I perceive, that a promise itself arises entirely from human conventions, and is invented with a view to a certain interest. I seek, therefore, some such interest more immediately connected with government, and which may be at once the original motive to its institution, and the source of our obedience to it. This interest I find to consist in the security and protection, which we enjoy in political society, and which we can never attain, when perfectly free and independent. As interest, therefore, is the immediate sanction of government, the one can have no longer being than the other; and whenever the civil magistrate carries his oppression so far as to render his authority perfectly intolerable, we are no longer bound to submit to it. The cause ceases; the effect must cease also.

So far the conclusion is immediate and direct, concerning the natural obligation which we have to allegiance. As to the moral obligation, we may observe, that the maxim would here be false, that when the cause ceases, the effect must cease also. For there is a principle of human nature, which we have frequently taken notice of, that men are mightily addicted to general rules, and that we often carry our maxims beyond those reasons, which first induced us to establish them. Where cases are similar in many circumstances, we are apt to put them on the same footing, without considering, that they differ in the most material circumstances, and that the resemblance is more apparent than real. It may, therefore, be thought, that in the case of allegiance our moral obligation of duty will not cease, even though the natural obligation of interest, which is its cause, has ceased; and that men may be bound by conscience to submit to a tyrannical government against their own and the public interest. And indeed, to the force of this argument I so far submit, as to acknowledge, that general rules commonly extend beyond the principles, on which they are founded; and that we seldom make any exception to them, unless that exception have the qualities of a general rule, and be founded on very numerous and common instances. Now this I assert to be entirely the present case. When men submit to the authority of others, it is to procure themselves some security against the wickedness and injustice of men, who are perpetually carried, by their unruly passions, and by their present and immediate interest, to the violation of all the laws of society. But as this imperfection is inherent in human nature, we know that it must attend men in all their states and conditions; and that these, whom we chuse for rulers, do not immediately become of a superior nature to the rest of mankind, upon account of their superior power and authority. What we expect from them depends not on a change of their nature but of their situation, when they acquire a more immediate interest in the preservation of order and the execution of justice. But besides that this interest is only more immediate in the execution of justice among their subjects; besides this, I say, we may often expect, from the irregularity of human nature, that they will neglect even this immediate interest, and be transported by their passions into all the excesses of cruelty and ambition.. Our general knowledge of human nature, our observation of the past history of mankind, our experience of present times; all these causes must induce us to open the door to exceptions, and must make us conclude, that we may resist the more violent effects of supreme power, without any crime or injustice.

Accordingly we may observe, that this is both the general practice and principle of mankind, and that no nation, that coued find any remedy, ever yet suffered the cruel ravages of a tyrant, or were blamed for their resistance. Those who took up arms against Dionysius or Nero, or Philip the second, have the favour of every reader in the perusal of their history: and nothing but the most violent perversion of common sense can ever lead us to condemn them. It is certain, therefore, that in all our notions of morals we never entertain such an absurdity as that of passive obedience, but make allowances for resistance in the more flagrant instances of tyranny and oppression. The general opinion of mankind has some authority in all cases; but in this of morals it is perfectly infallible. Nor is it less infallible, because men cannot distinctly explain the principles, on which it is founded. Few persons can carry on this train of reasoning:

Government is a mere human invention for the interest of society. Where the tyranny of the governor removes this interest, it also removes the natural obligation to obedience. The moral obligation is founded on the natural, and therefore must cease where that ceases; especially where the subject is such as makes us foresee very many occasions wherein the natural obligation may cease, and causes us to form a kind of general rule for the regulation of our conduct in such occurrences.

But though this train of reasoning be too subtile for the vulgar, it is certain, that all men have an implicit notion of it, and are sensible, that they owe obedience to government merely on account of the public interest; and at the same time, that human nature is so subject to frailties and passions, as may easily pervert this institution, and change their governors into tyrants and public enemies. If the sense of common interest were not our original motive to obedience, I would fain ask, what other principle is there in human nature capable of subduing the natural ambition of men, and forcing them to such a submission? Imitation and custom are not sufficient. For the question still recurs, what motive first produces those instances of submission, which we imitate, and that train of actions, which produces the custom? There evidently is no other principle than public interest; and if interest first produces obedience to government, the obligation to obedience must cease, whenever the interest ceases, in any great degree, and in a considerable number of instances.

SECT. X OF THE OBJECTS OF ALLEGIANCE

But though, on some occasions, it may be justifiable, both in sound politics and morality, to resist supreme power, it is certain, that in the ordinary course of human affairs nothing can be more pernicious and criminal; and that besides the convulsions, which always attend revolutions, such a practice tends directly to the subversion of all government, and the causing an universal anarchy and confusion among mankind. As numerous and civilized societies cannot subsist without government, so government is entirely useless without an exact obedience. We ought always to weigh the advantages, which we reap from authority, against the disadvantages; and by this means we shall become more scrupulous of putting in practice the doctrine of resistance. The common rule requires submission; and it is only in cases of grievous tyranny and oppression, that the exception can take place.

Since then such a blind submission is commonly due to magistracy, the next question is, to whom it is due, and whom we are to regard as our lawful magistrates? In order to answer this question, let us recollect what we have already established concerning the origin of government and political society. When men have once experienced the impossibility of preserving any steady order in society, while every one is his own master, and violates or observes the laws of society, according to his present interest or pleasure, they naturally run into the invention of government, and put it out of their own power, as far as possible, to transgress the laws of society. Government, therefore, arises from the same voluntary conversation of men; and it is evident, that the same convention, which establishes government, will also determine the persons who are to govern, and will remove all doubt and ambiguity in this particular. And the voluntary consent of men must here have the greater efficacy, that the authority of the magistrate does at first stand upon the foundation of a promise of the subjects, by which they bind themselves to obedience; as in every other contract or engagement. The same promise, then, which binds them to obedience, ties them down to a particular person, and makes him the object of their allegiance.

But when government has been established on this footing for some considerable time, and the separate interest, which we have in submission, has produced a separate sentiment of morality, the case is entirely altered, and a promise is no longer able to determine the particular magistrate since it is no longer considered as the foundation of government. We naturally suppose ourselves born to submission; and imagine, that such particular persons have a right to command, as we on our part are bound to obey. These notions of right and obligation are derived from nothing but the advantage we reap from government, which gives us a repugnance to practise resistance ourselves, and makes us displeased with any instance of it in others. But here it is remarkable, that in this new state of affairs, the original sanction of government, which is interest, is not admitted to determine the persons, whom we are to obey, as the original sanction did at first, when affairs were on the footing of a promise. A promise fixes and determines the persons, without any uncertainty: But it is evident, that if men were to regulate their conduct in this particular, by the view of a peculiar interest, either public or private, they would involve themselves in endless confusion, and would render all government, in a great measure, ineffectual. The private interest of every one is different; and though the public interest in itself be always one and the same, yet it becomes the source of as great dissentions, by reason of the different opinions of particular persons concerning it. The same interest, therefore, which causes us to submit to magistracy, makes us renounce itself in the choice of our magistrates, and binds us down to a certain form of government, and to particular persons, without allowing us to aspire to the utmost perfection in either. The case is here the same as in that law of nature concerning the stability of possession. It is highly advantageous, and even absolutely necessary to society, that possession should be stable; and this leads us to the establishment of such a rule: But we find, that were we to follow the same advantage, in assigning particular possessions to particular persons, we should disappoint our end, and perpetuate the confusion, which that rule is intended to prevent. We must, therefore, proceed by general rules, and regulate ourselves by general interests, in modifying the law of nature concerning the stability of possession. Nor need we fear, that our attachment to this law will diminish upon account of the seeming frivolousness of those interests, by which it is determined. The impulse of the mind is derived from a very strong interest; and those other more minute interests serve only to direct the motion, without adding any thing to it, or diminishing from it. It is the same case with government. Nothing is more advantageous to society than such an invention; and this interest is sufficient to make us embrace it with ardour and alacrity; though we are obliged afterwards to regulate and direct our devotion to government by several considerations, which are not of the same importance, and to chuse our magistrates without having in view any particular advantage from the choice.

The first of those principles I shall take notice of, as a foundation of the right of magistracy, is that which gives authority to all the most established governments of the world without exception: I mean, long possession in any one form of government, or succession of princes. It is certain, that if we remount to the first origin of every nation, we shall find, that there scarce is any race of kings, or form of a commonwealth, that is not primarily founded on usurpation and rebellion, and whose title is not at first worse than doubtful and uncertain. Time alone gives solidity to their right; and operating gradually on the minds of men, reconciles them to any authority, and makes it seem just and reasonable. Nothing causes any sentiment to have a greater influence upon us than custom, or turns our imagination more strongly to any object. When we have been long accustomed to obey any set of men, that general instinct or tendency, which we have to suppose a moral obligation attending loyalty, takes easily this direction, and chuses that set of men for its objects. It is interest which gives the general instinct; but it is custom which gives the particular direction.

And here it is observable, that the same length of time has a different influence on our sentiments of morality, according to its different influence on the mind. We naturally judge of every thing by comparison; and since in considering the fate of kingdoms and republics, we embrace a long extent of time, a small duration has not in this case a like influence on our sentiments, as when we consider any other object. One thinks he acquires a right to a horse, or a suit of cloaths, in a very short time; but a century is scarce sufficient to establish any new government, or remove all scruples in the minds of the subjects concerning it. Add to this, that a shorter period of time will suffice to give a prince a title to any additional power he may usurp, than will serve to fix his right, where the whole is an usurpation. The kings of France have not been possessed of absolute power for above two reigns; and yet nothing will appear more extravagant to Frenchmen than to talk of their liberties. If we consider what has been said concerning accession, we shall easily account for this phaenomenon.

When there is no form of government established by long possession, the present possession is sufficient to supply its place, and may be regarded as the second source of all public authority. Right to authority is nothing but the constant possession of authority, maintained by the laws of society and the interests of mankind; and nothing can be more natural than to join this constant possession to the present one, according to the principles above-mentioned. If the same principles did not take place with regard to the property of private persons, it was because these principles were counter-ballanced by very strong considerations of interest; when we observed, that all restitution would by that means be prevented, and every violence be authorized and protected. And though the same motives may seem to have force, with regard to public authority, yet they are opposed by a contrary interest; which consists in the preservation of peace, and the avoiding of all changes, which, however they may be easily produced in private affairs, are unavoidably attended with bloodshed and confusion, where the public is interested.

Any one, who finding the impossibility of accounting for the right of the present possessor, by any received system of ethics, should resolve to deny absolutely that right, and assert, that it is not authorized by morality, would be justly thought to maintain a very extravagant paradox, and to shock the common sense and judgment of mankind. No maxim is more conformable, both to prudence and morals, than to submit quietly to the government, which we find established in the country where we happen to live, without enquiring too curiously into its origin and first establishment. Few governments will bear being examined so rigorously. How many kingdoms are there at present in the world, and how many more do we find in history, whose governors have no better foundation for their authority than that of present possession? To confine ourselves to the Roman and Grecian empire; is it not evident, that the long succession of emperors, from the dissolution of the Roman liberty, to the final extinction of that empire by the Turks, coued not so much as pretend to any other title to the empire? The election of the senate was a mere form, which always followed the choice of the legions; and these were almost always divided in the different provinces, and nothing but the sword was able to terminate the difference. It was by the sword, therefore, that every emperor acquired, as well as defended his right; and we must either say, that all the known world, for so many ages, had no government, and owed no allegiance to any one, or must allow, that the right of the stronger, in public affairs, is to be received as legitimate, and authorized by morality, when not opposed by any other title.

The right of conquest may be considered as a third source of the title of sovereigns. This right resembles very much that of present possession; but has rather a superior force, being seconded by the notions of glory and honour, which we ascribe to conquerors, instead of the sentiments of hatred and detestation, which attend usurpers. Men naturally favour those they love; and therefore are more apt to ascribe a right to successful violence, betwixt one sovereign and another, than to the successful rebellion of a subject against his sovereign.

[FN 23 It is not here asserted, that present possession or conquest are sufficient to give a title against long possession and positive laws but only that they have some force, and will be able to call the ballance where the titles are otherwise equal, and will even be sufficient sometimes to sanctify the weaker title. What degree of force they have is difficult to determine. I believe all moderate men will allow, that they have great force in all disputes concerning the rights of princes.]

When neither long possession, nor present possession, nor conquest take place, as when the first sovereign, who founded any monarchy, dies; in that case, the right of succession naturally prevails in their stead, and men are commonly induced to place the son of their late monarch on the throne, and suppose him to inherit his father’s authority. The presumed consent of the father, the imitation of the succession to private families, the interest, which the state has in chusing the person, who is most powerful, and has the most numerous followers; all these reasons lead men to prefer the son of their late monarch to any other person.

[FN 24 To prevent mistakes I must observe, that this case of succession is not the same with that of hereditary monarchies, where custom has fix’d the right of succession. These depend upon the principle of long possession above explain’d.]

These reasons have some weight; but I am persuaded, that to one, who considers impartially of the matter, it will appear, that there concur some principles of the imagination, along with those views of interest. The royal authority seems to be connected with the young prince even in his father's life-time, by the natural transition of the thought; and still more after his death: So that nothing is more natural than to compleat this union by a new relation, and by putting him actually in possession of what seems so naturally to belong to him.

To confirm this we may weigh the following phaenomena, which are pretty curious in their kind. In elective monarchies the right of succession has no place by the laws and settled custom; and yet its influence is so natural, that it is impossible entirely to exclude it from the imagination, and render the subjects indifferent to the son of their deceased monarch. Hence in some governments of this kind, the choice commonly falls on one or other of the royal family; and in some governments they are all excluded. Those contrary phaenomena proceed from the same principle. Where the royal family is excluded, it is from a refinement in politics, which makes people sensible of their propensity to chuse a sovereign in that family, and gives them a jealousy of their liberty, lest their new monarch, aided by this propensity, should establish his family, and destroy the freedom of elections for the future.

The history of Artaxerxes, and the younger Cyrus, may furnish us with some reflections to the same purpose. Cyrus pretended a right to the throne above his elder brother, because he was born after his father's accession. I do not pretend, that this reason was valid. I would only infer from it, that he would never have made use of such a pretext, were it not for the qualities of the imagination above-mentioned, by which we are naturally inclined to unite by a new relation whatever objects we find already united. Artaxerxes had an advantage above his brother, as being the eldest son, and the first in succession: But Cyrus was more closely related to the royal authority, as being begot after his father was invested with it.

Should it here be pretended, that the view of convenience may be the source of all the right of succession, and that men gladly take advantage of any rule, by which they can fix the successor of their late sovereign, and prevent that anarchy and confusion, which attends all new elections? To this I would answer, that I readily allow, that this motive may contribute something to the effect; but at the same time I assert, that without another principle, it is impossible such a motive should take place. The interest of a nation requires, that the succession to the crown should be fixed one way or other; but it is the same thing to its interest in what way it be fixed: So that if the relation of blood had not an effect independent of public interest, it would never have been regarded, without a positive law; and it would have been impossible, that so many positive laws of different nations coued ever have concured precisely in the same views and intentions.

This leads us to consider the fifth source of authority, viz. positive laws; when the legislature establishes a certain form of government and succession of princes. At first sight it may be thought, that this must resolve into some of the preceding titles of authority. The legislative power, whence the positive law is derived, must either be established by original contract, long possession, present possession, conquest, or succession; and consequently the positive law must derive its force from some of those principles. But here it is remarkable, that though a positive law can only derive its force from these principles, yet it acquires not all the force of the principle from whence it is derived, but loses considerably in the transition; as it is natural to imagine. For instance; a government is established for many centuries on a certain system of laws, forms, and methods of succession. The legislative power, established by this long succession, changes all on a sudden the whole system of government, and introduces a new constitution in its stead. I believe few of the subjects will think themselves bound to comply with this alteration, unless it have an evident tendency to the public good: But men think themselves still at liberty to return to the antient government. Hence the notion of fundamental laws; which are supposed to be inalterable by the will of the sovereign: And of this nature the Salic law is understood to be in France. How far these fundamental laws extend is not determined in any government; nor is it possible it ever should. There is such an indefensible gradation from the most material laws to the most trivial, and from the most antient laws to the most modem, that it will be impossible to set bounds to the legislative power, and determine how far it may innovate in the principles of government. That is the work more of imagination and passion than of reason.

Whoever considers the history of the several nations of the world; their revolutions, conquests, increase, and diminution; the manner in which their particular governments are established, and the successive right transmitted from one person to another, will soon learn to treat very lightly all disputes concerning the rights of princes, and will be convinced, that a strict adherence to any general rules, and the rigid loyalty to particular persons and families, on which some people set so high a value, are virtues that hold less of reason, than of bigotry and superstition. In this particular, the study of history confirms the reasonings of true philosophy; which, shewing us the original qualities of human nature, teaches us to regard the controversies in politics as incapable of any decision in most cases, and as entirely subordinate to the interests of peace and liberty. Where the public good does not evidently demand a change; it is certain, that the concurrence of all those titles, original contract, long possession, present possession, succession, and positive laws, forms the strongest title to sovereignty, and is justly regarded as sacred and inviolable. But when these titles are mingled and opposed in different degrees, they often occasion perplexity; and are less capable of solution from the arguments of lawyers and philosophers, than from the swords of the soldiery. Who shall tell me, for instance, whether Germanicus, or Drufus, ought to have succeeded Tiberius, had he died while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood in a nation, where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the eldest son, because he was born before Drufus; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where the eldest brother had no advantage in the succession to private families? Ought the Roman empire at that time to be esteemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation? Upon whatever principles we may pretend to answer these and such like questions, I am afraid we shall never be able to satisfy an impartial enquirer, who adopts no party in political controversies, and will be satisfied with nothing but sound reason and philosophy.

But here an English reader will be apt to enquire concerning that famous revolution, which has had such a happy influence on our constitution, and has been attended with such mighty consequences. We have already remarked, that in the case of enormous tyranny and oppression, it is lawful to take arms even against supreme power; and that as government is a mere human invention for mutual advantage and security, it no longer imposes any obligation, either natural or moral, when once it ceases to have that tendency. But though this general principle be authorized by common sense, and the practice of all ages, it is certainly impossible for the laws, or even for philosophy, to establish any particular rules, by which we may know when resistance is lawful; and decide all controversies, which may arise on that subject. This may not only happen with regard to supreme power; but it is possible, even in some constitutions, where the legislative authority is not lodged in one person, that there may be a magistrate so eminent and powerful, as to oblige the laws to keep silence in this particular. Nor would this silence be an effect only of their respect, but also of their prudence; since it is certain, that in the vast variety of circumstances, which occur in all governments, an exercise of power, in so great a magistrate, may at one time be beneficial to the public, which at another time would be pernicious and tyrannical. But notwithstanding this silence of the laws in limited monarchies, it is certain, that the people still retain the right of resistance; since it is impossible, even in the most despotic governments, to deprive them of it. The same necessity of self-preservation, and the same motive of public good, give them the same liberty in the one case as in the other. And we may farther observe, that in such mixed governments, the cases, wherein resistance is lawful, must occur much oftener, and greater indulgence be given to the subjects to defend themselves by force of arms, than in arbitrary governments. Not only where the chief magistrate enters into measures, in themselves, extremely pernicious to the public, but even when he would encroach on the other parts of the constitution, and extend his power beyond the legal bounds, it is allowable to resist and dethrone him; though such resistance and violence may, in the general tenor of the laws, be deemed unlawful and rebellious. For besides that nothing is more essential to public interest, than the preservation of public liberty; it is evident, that if such a mixed government be once supposed to be established, every part or member of the constitution must have a right of self-defence, and of maintaining its antient bounds against the enaoachment of every other authority. As matter would have been created in vain, were it deprived of a power of resistance, without which no part of it coued preserve a distinct existence, and the whole might be crowded up into a single point: So it is a gross absurdity to suppose, in any government, a right without a remedy, or allow, that the supreme power is shared with the people, without allowing, that it is lawful for them to defend their share against every invader. Those, therefore, who would seem to respect our free government, and yet deny the right of resistance, have renounced all pretensions to common sense, and do not merit a serious answer.

It does not belong to my present purpose to shew, that these general principles are applicable to the late revolution; and that all the rights and privileges, which ought to be sacred to a free nation, were at that time threatened with the utmost danger. I am better pleased to leave this controverted subject, if it really admits of controversy; and to indulge myself in some philosophical reflections, which naturally arise from that important event.

First, We may observe, that should the lords and commons in our constitution, without any reason from public interest, either depose the king in being, or after his death exclude the prince, who, by laws and settled custom, ought to succeed, no one would esteem their proceedings legal, or think themselves bound to comply with them. But should the king, by his unjust practices, or his attempts for a tyrannical and despotic power, justly forfeit his legal, it then not only becomes morally lawful and suitable to the nature of political society to dethrone him; but what is more, we are apt likewise to think, that the remaining members of the constitution acquire a right of excluding his next heir, and of chusing whom they please for his successor. This is founded on a very singular quality of our thought and imagination. When a king forfeits his authority, his heir ought naturally to remain in the same situation, as if the king were removed by death; unless by mixing himself in the tyranny, he forfeit it for himself. But though this may seem reasonable, we easily comply with the contrary opinion. The deposition of a king, in such a government as ours, is certainly an act beyond all common authority, and an illegal assuming a power for public good, which, in the ordinary course of government, can belong to no member of the constitution. When the public good is so great and so evident as to justify the action, the commendable use of this licence causes us naturally to attribute to the parliament a right of using farther licences; and the antient bounds of the laws being once transgressed with approbation, we are not apt to be so strict in confining ourselves precisely within their limits. The mind naturally runs on with any train of action, which it has begun; nor do we commonly make any scruple concerning our duty, after the first action of any kind, which we perform. Thus at the revolution, no one who thought the deposition of the father justifiable, esteemed themselves to be confined to his infant son; though had that unhappy monarch died innocent at that time, and had his son, by any accident, been conveyed beyond seas, there is no doubt but a regency would have been appointed till he should come to age, and coued be restored to his dominions. As the slightest properties of the imagination have an effect on the judgments of the people, it shews the wisdom of the laws and of the parliament to take advantage of such properties, and to chuse the magistrates either in or out of a line, according as the vulgar will most naturally attribute authority and right to them.

Secondly, Though the accession of the Prince of Orange to the throne might at first give occasion to many disputes, and his title be contested, it ought not now to appear doubtful, but must have acquired a sufficient authority from those three princes, who have succeeded him upon the same title. Nothing is more usual, though nothing may, at first sight, appear more unreasonable, than this way of thinking. Princes often seem to acquire a right from their successors, as well as from their ancestors; and a king, who during his life-time might justly be deemed an usurper, will be regarded by posterity as a lawful prince, because he has had the good fortune to settle his family on the throne, and entirely change the antient form of government. Julius Caesar is regarded as the first Roman emperor; while Sylla and Marius, whose titles were really the same as his, are treated as tyrants and usurpers. Time and custom give authority to all forms of government, and all successions of princes; and that power, which at first was founded only on injustice and violence, becomes in time legal and obligatory. Nor does the mind rest there; but returning back upon its footsteps, transfers to their predecessors and ancestors that right, which it naturally ascribes to the posterity, as being related together, and united in the imagination. The present king of France makes Hugh Capet a more lawful prince than Cromwell; as the established liberty of the Dutch is no inconsiderable apology for their obstinate resistance to Philip the second.

SECT. XI OF THE LAWS OF NATIONS

When civil government has been established over the greatest part of mankind, and different societies have been formed contiguous to each other, there arises a new set of duties among the neighbouring states, suitable to the nature of that commerce, which they carry on with each other. Political writers tell us, that in every kind of intercourse, a body politic is to be considered as one person; and indeed this assertion is so far just, that different nations, as well as private persons, require mutual assistance; at the same time that their selfishness and ambition are perpetual sources of war and discord. But though nations in this particular resemble individuals, yet as they are very different in other respects, no wonder they regulate themselves by different maxims, and give rise to a new set of rules, which we call the laws of nations. Under this head we may comprize the sacredness of the persons of ambassadors, the declaration of war, the abstaining from poisoned arms, with other duties of that kind, which are evidently calculated for the commerce, that is peculiar to different societies.

But though these rules be super-added to the laws of nature, the former do not entirely abolish the latter; and one may safely affirm, that the three fundamental rules of justice, the stability of possession, its transference by consent, and the performance of promises, are duties of princes, as well as of subjects. The same interest produces the same effect in both cases. Where possession has no stability, there must be perpetual war. Where property is not transferred by consent, there can be no commerce. Where promises are not observed, there can be no leagues nor alliances. The advantages, therefore, of peace, commerce, and mutual succour, make us extend to different kingdoms the same notions of justice, which take place among individuals.

There is a maxim very current in the world, which few politicians are willing to avow, but which has been authorized by the practice of all ages, that there is a system of morals cakulated for princes, much more free than that which ought to govern private parsons. It is evident this is not to be understood of the lesser extent of public duties and obligations; nor will any one be so extravagant as to assert, that the most solemn treaties ought to have no force among princes. For as princes do actually form treaties among themselves, they must propose some advantage from the execution of them; and the prospect of such advantage for the future must engage them to perform their part, and must establish that law of nature. The meaning, therefore, of this political maxim is, that though the morality of princes has the same extent, yet it has not the same force as that of private persons, and may lawfully be trangressed from a more trivial motive. However shocking such a proposition may appear to certain philosophers, it will be easy to defend it upon those principles, by which we have accounted for the origin of justice and equity.

When men have found by experience, that it is impossible to subsist without society, and that it is impossible to maintain society, while they give free course to their appetites; so urgent an interest quickly restrains their actions, and imposes an obligation to observe those rules, which we call the laws of justice. This obligation of interest rests nor here; but by the necessary course of the passions and sentiments, gives rise to the moral obligation of duty; while we approve of such actions as tend to the peace of society, and disapprove of such as tend to its disturbance. The same natural obligation of interest takes place among independent kingdoms, and gives rise to the same morality; so that no one of ever so corrupt morals will approve of a prince, who voluntarily, and of his own accord, breaks his word, or violates any treaty. But here we may observe, that though the intercourse of different states be advantageous, and even sometimes necessary, yet it is nor so necessary nor advantageous as that among individuals, without which it is utterly impossible for human nature ever to subsist. Since, therefore, the natural obligation to justice, among different states, is not so strong as among individuals, the moral obligation, which arises from it, must partake of its weakness; and we must necessarily give a greater indulgence to a prince or minister, who deceives another; than to a private gentleman, who breaks his word of honour.

Should it be asked, what proportion these two species of morality bear to each other? I would answer, that this is a question, to which we can never give any precise answer; nor is it possible to reduce to numbers the proportion, which we ought to fix betwixt them. One may safely affirm, that this proportion finds itself, without any art or study of men; as we may observe on many other occasions. The practice of the world goes farther in teaching us the degrees of our duty, than the most subtile philosophy, which was ever yet invented. And this may serve as a convincing proof, that all men have an implicit notion of the foundation of those moral rules concerning natural and civil justice, and are sensible, that they arise merely from human conventions, and from the interest, which we have in the preservation of peace and order. For otherwise the diminution of the interest would never produce a relaxation of the morality, and reconcile us more easily to any transgression of justice among princes and republics, than in the private commerce of one subject with another.

SECT. XII OF CHASTITY AND MODESTY

If any difficulty attend this system concerning the laws of nature and nations, it will be with regard to the universal approbation or blame, which follows their observance or transgression, and which some may not think sufficiently explained from the general interests of society. To remove, as far as possible, all scruples of this kind, I shall here consider another set of duties, viz, the modesty and chastity which belong to the fair sex: And I doubt not but these virtues will be found to be still more conspicuous instances of the operation of those principles, which I have insisted on.

There are some philosophers, who attack the female virtues with great vehemence, and fancy they have gone very far in detecting popular errors, when they can show, that there is no foundation in nature for all that exterior modesty, which we require in the expressions, and dress, and behaviour of the fair sex. I believe I may spare myself the trouble of insisting on so obvious a subject, and may proceed, without farther preparation, to examine after what manner such notions arise from education, from the voluntary conventions of men, and from the interest of society.

Whoever considers the length and feebleness of human infancy, with the concern which both sexes naturally have for their offspring, will easily perceive, that there must be an union of male and female for the education of the young, and that this union must be of considerable duration. But in order to induce the men to impose on themselves this restraint, and undergo chearfully all the fatigues and expences, to which it subjects them, they must believe, that the children are their own, and that their natural instinct is not directed to a wrong object, when they give a loose to love and tenderness. Now if we examine the structure of the human body, we shall find, that this security is very difficult to be attained on our part; and that since, in the copulation of the sexes, the principle of generation goes from the man to the woman, an error may easily take place on the side of the former, though it be utterly impossible with regard to the latter. From this trivial and anatomical observation is derived that vast difference betwixt the education and duties of the two sexes.

Were a philosopher to examine the matter a priori, he would reason after the following manner. Men are induced to labour for the maintenance and education of their children, by the persuasion that they are really their own; and therefore it is reasonable, and even necessary, to give them some security in this particular. This security cannot consist entirely in the imposing of severe punishments on any transgressions of conjugal fidelity on the part of the wife; since these public punishments cannot be inflicted without legal proof, which it is difficult to meet with in this subject. What restraint, therefore, shall we impose on women, in order to counter-balance so strong a temptation as they have to infidelity? There seems to be no restraint possible, but in the punishment of bad fame or reputation; a punishment, which has a mighty influence on the human mind, and at the same time is inflicted by the world upon surmizes, and conjectures, and proofs, that would never be received in any court of judicature. In order, therefore, to impose a due restraint on the female sex, we must attach a peculiar degree of shame to their infidelity, above what arises merely from its injustice, and must bestow proportionable praises on their chastity.

But though this be a very strong motive to fidelity, our philosopher would quickly discover, that it would not alone be sufficient to that purpose. All human creatures, especially of the female sex, are apt to over-look remote motives in favour of any present temptation: The temptation is here the strongest imaginable: Its approaches are insensible and seducing: And a woman easily finds, or flatters herself she shall find, certain means of securing her reputation, and preventing all the pernicious consequences of her pleasures. It is necessary, therefore, that, beside the infamy attending such licences, there should be some preceding backwardness or dread, which may prevent their first approaches, and may give the female sex a repugnance to all expressions, and postures, and liberties, that have an immediate relation to that enjoyment.

Such would be the reasonings of our speculative philosopher: But I am persuaded, that if he had not a perfect knowledge of human nature, he would be apt to regard them as mere chimerical speculations, and would consider the infamy attending infidelity, and backwardness to all its approaches, as principles that were rather to be wished than hoped for in the world. For what means, would he say, of persuading mankind, that the transgressions of conjugal duty are more infamous than any other kind of injustice, when it is evident they are more excusable, upon account of the greatness of the temptation? And what possibility of giving a backwardness to the approaches of a pleasure, to which nature has inspired so strong a propensity; and a propensity that it is absolutely necessary in the end to comply with, for the support of the species?

But speculative reasonings, which cost so much pains to philosophers, are often formed by the world naturally, and without reflection: As difficulties, which seem unsurmountable in theory, are easily got over in practice. Those, who have an interest in the fidelity of women, naturally disapprove of their infidelity, and all the approaches to it. Those, who have no interest, are carried along with the stream. Education takes possession of the ductile minds of the fair sex in their infancy. And when a general rule of this kind is once established, men are apt to extend it beyond those principles, from which it first arose. Thus batchelors, however debauched, cannot chuse but be shocked with any instance of lewdness or impudence in women. And though all these maxims have a plain reference to generation, yet women past child-bearing have no more privilege in this respect, than those who are in the flower of their youth and beauty. Men have undoubtedly an implicit notion, that all those ideas of modesty and decency have a regard to generation; since they impose not the same laws, with the same force, on the male sex, where that reason takes nor place. The exception is there obvious and extensive, and founded on a remarkable difference, which produces a clear separation and disjunction of ideas. But as the case is not the same with regard to the different ages of women, for this reason, though men know, that these notions are founded on the public interest, yet the general rule carries us beyond the original principle, and makes us extend the notions of modesty over the whole sex, from their earliest infancy to their extremest old-age and infirmity.

Courage, which is the point of honour among men, derives its merit, in a great measure, from artifice, as well as the chastity of women; though it has also some foundation in nature, as we shall see afterwards.

As to the obligations which the male sex lie under, with regard to chastity, we may observe, that according to the general notions of the world, they bear nearly the same proportion to the obligations of women, as the obligations of the law of nations do to those of the law of nature. It is contrary to the interest of civil society, that men should have an entire liberty of indulging their appetites in venereal enjoyment: But as this interest is weaker than in the case of the female sex, the moral obligation, arising from it, must be proportionably weaker. And to prove this we need only appeal to the practice and sentiments of all nations and ages.

PART III OF THE OTHER VIRTUES AND VICES

SECT. I OF THE ORIGIN OF THE NATURAL VIRTUES AND VICES

We come now to the examination of such virtues and vices as are entirely natural, and have no dependance on the artifice and contrivance of men. The examination of these will conclude this system of morals.

The chief spring or actuating principle of the human mind is pleasure or pain; and when these sensations are removed, both from our thought and feeling, we are, in a great measure, incapable of passion or action, of desire or volition. The most immediate effects of pleasure and pain are the propense and averse motions of the mind; which are diversified into volition, into desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, according as the pleasure or pain changes its situation, and becomes probable or improbable, certain or uncertain, or is considered as out of our power for the present moment. But when along with this, the objects, that cause pleasure or pain, acquire a relation to ourselves or others; they still continue to excite desire and aversion, grief and joy: But cause, at the same time, the indirect passions of pride or humility, love or hatred, which in this case have a double relation of impressions and ideas to the pain or pleasure.

We have already observed, that moral distinctions depend entirely on certain peculiar sentiments of pain and pleasure, and that whatever mental quality in ourselves or others gives us a satisfaction, by the survey or reflection, is of course virtuous; as every thing of this nature, that gives uneasiness, is vicious. Now since every quality in ourselves or others, which gives pleasure, always causes pride or love; as every one, that produces uneasiness, excites humility or hatred: It follows, that these two particulars are to be considered as equivalent, with regard to our mental qualities, virtue and the power of producing love or pride, vice and the power of producing humility or hatred. In every case, therefore, we must judge of the one by the other; and may pronounce any quality of the mind virtuous, which causes love or pride; and any one vicious, which causes hatred or humility.

If any action be either virtuous or vicious, it is only as a sign of some quality or character. It must depend upon durable principles of the mind, which extend over the whole conduct, and enter into the personal character. Actions themselves, not proceeding from any constant principle, have no influence on love or hatred, pride or humility; and consequently are never considered in morality.

This reflection is self-evident, and deserves to be attended to, as being of the utmost importance in the present subject. We are never to consider any single action in our enquiries concerning the origin of morals; but only the quality or character from which the action proceeded. These alone are durable enough to affect our sentiments concerning the person. Actions are, indeed, better indications of a character than words, or even wishes and sentiments; but it is only so far as they are such indications, that they are attended with love or hatred, praise or blame.

To discover the true origin of morals, and of that love or hatred, which arises from mental qualities, we must take the matter pretty deep, and compare some principles, which have been already examined and explained.

We may begin with considering a-new the nature and force of sympathy. The minds of all men are similar in their feelings and operations; nor can any one be actuated by any affection, of which all others are not, in some degree, susceptible. As in strings equally wound up, the motion of one communicates itself to the rest; so all the affections readily pass from one person to another, and beget correspondent movements in every human creature. When I see the effects of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes from these effects to their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself. In like manner, when I perceive the causes of any emotion, my mind is conveyed to the effects, and is actuated with a like emotion. Were I present at any of the more terrible operations of surgery, it is certain, that even before it begun, the preparation of the instruments, the laying of the bandages in order, the heating of the irons, with all the signs of anxiety and concern in the patient and assistants, would have a great effect upon my mind, and excite the strongest sentiments of pity and terror. No passion of another discovers itself immediately to the mind. We are only sensible of its causes or effects. From these we infer the passion: And consequently these give rise to our sympathy.

Our sense of beauty depends very much on this principle; and where any object has atendency to produce pleasure in its possessor, it is always regarded as beautiful; as every object, that has a tendency to produce pain, is disagreeable and deformed. Thus the conveniency of a house, the fertility of a field, the strength of a horse, the capacity, security, and swift-sailing of a vessel, form the principal beauty of these several objects. Here the object, which is denominated beautiful, pleases only by its tendency to produce a certain effect. That effect is the pleasure or advantage of some other person. Now the pleasure of a stranger, for whom we have no friendship, pleases us only by sympathy. To this principle, therefore, is owing the beauty, which we find in every thing that is useful. How considerable a part this is of beauty can easily appear upon reflection. Wherever an object has a tendency to produce pleasure in the possessor, or in other words, is the proper cause of pleasure, it is sure to please the spectator, by a delicate sympathy with the possessor. Most of the works of art are esteemed beautiful, in proportion to their fitness for the use of man, and even many of the productions of nature derive their beauty from that source. Handsome and beautiful, on most occasions, is nor an absolute but a relative quality, and pleases us by nothing but its tendency to produce an end that is agreeable.

> [FN 25 Decentior equus cujus astricta sunt ilia; sed idem velocior. Pulcher aspectu sit athieta, cujus lacertos exercitatio expressit; idem certamini paratior. Nunquam vero species ab utilitate dividitur. Sed hoc quidem discernere, modici judicii est. Quinct. lib. 8. (A horse with narrow flanks looks more comely; It also moves faster. An athlete whose muscles have been developed by training presents a handsome appearance; he is also better prepared for the contest. Attractive appearance is invariably associated with efficient functioning. Yet it takes no outstanding powers of judgement to wake this distinction.)]

The same principle produces, in many instances, our sentiments of morals, as well as those of beauty. No virtue is more esteemed than justice, and no vice more detested than injustice; nor are there any qualities, which go farther to the fixing the character, either as amiable or odious. Now justice is a moral virtue, merely because it has that tendency to the good of mankind; and, indeed, is nothing but an artificial invention to that purpose. The same may be said of allegiance, of the laws of nations, of modesty, and of good-manners. All these are mere human contrivances for the interest of society. And since there is a very strong sentiment of morals, which in all nations, and all ages, has attended them, we must allow, that the reflecting on the tendency of characters and mental qualities, is sufficient to give us the sentiments of approbation and blame. Now as the means to an end can only be agreeable, where the end is agreeable; and as the good of society, where our own interest is not concerned, or that of our friends, pleases only by sympathy: It follows, that sympathy is the source of the esteem, which we pay to all the artificial virtues.

Thus it appears, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature, that it has a great influence on our taste of beauty, and that it produces our sentiment of morals in all the artificial virtues. From thence we may presume, that it also gives rise to many of the other virtues; and that qualities acquire our approbation, because of their tendency to the good of mankind. This presumption must become a certainty, when we find that most of those qualities, which we naturally approve of, have actually that tendency, and render a man a proper member of society: While the qualities, which we naturally disapprove of, have a contrary tendency, and render any intercourse with the person dangerous or disagreeable. For having found, that such tendencies have force enough to produce the strongest sentiment of morals, we can never reasonably, in these cases, look for any other cause of approbation or blame; it being an inviolable maxim in philosophy, that where any particular cause is sufficient for an effect, we ought to rest satisfied with it, and ought not to multiply causes without necessity. We have happily attained experiments in the artificial virtues, where the tendency of qualities to the good of society, is the sole cause of our approbation, without any suspicion of the concurrence of another principle. From thence we learn the force of that principle. And where that principle may take place, and the quality approved of is really beneficial to society, a true philosopher will never require any other principle to account for the strongest approbation and esteem.

That many of the natural virtues have this tendency to the good of society, no one can doubt of. Meekness, beneficence, charity, generosity, clemency, moderation, equity bear the greatest figure among the moral qualities, and are commonly denominated the social virtues, to mark their tendency to the good of society. This goes so far, that some philosophers have represented all moral distinctions as the effect of artifice and education, when skilful politicians endeavoured to restrain the turbulent passions of men, and make them operate to the public good, by the notions of honour and shame. This system, however, is nor consistent with experience. For, first, there are other virtues and vices beside those which have this tendency to the public advantage and loss. Secondly, had not men a natural sentiment of approbation and blame, it coued never be excited by politicians; nor would the words laudable and praise-worthy, blameable and odious be any more intelligible, than if they were a language perfectly known to us, as we have already observed. But though this system be erroneous, it may teach us, that moral distinctions arise, in a great measure, from the tendency of qualities and characters to the interests of society, and that it is our concern for that interest, which makes us approve or disapprove of them. Now we have no such extensive concern for society but from sympathy; and consequently it is that principle, which takes us so far out of ourselves, as to give us the same pleasure or uneasiness in the characters of others, as if they had a tendency to our own advantage or loss.

The only difference betwixt the natural virtues and justice lies in this, that the good, which results from the former, arises from every single act, and is the object of some natural passion: Whereas a single act of justice, considered in itself, may often be contrary to the public good; and it is only the concurrence of mankind, in a general scheme or system of action, which is advantageous. When I relieve persons in distress, my natural humanity is my motive; and so far as my succour extends, so far have I promoted the happiness of my fellow-creatures. But if we examine all the questions, that come before any tribunal of justice, we shall find, that, considering each case apart, it would as often be an instance of humanity to decide contrary to the laws of justice as conformable them. Judges take from a poor man to give to a rich; they bestow on the dissolute the labour of the industrious; and put into the hands of the vicious the means of harming both themselves and others. The whole scheme, however, of law and justice is advantageous to the society; and it was with a view to this advantage, that men, by their voluntary conventions, established it. After it is once established by these conventions, it is naturally attended with a strong sentiment of morals; which can proceed from nothing but our sympathy with the interests of society. We need no other explication of that esteem, which attends such of the natural virtues, as have a tendency to the public good. I must farther add, that there are several circumstances, which render this hypothesis much more probable with regard to the natural than the artificial virtues. It is certain that the imagination is more affected by what is particular, than by what is general; and that the sentiments are always moved with difficulty, where their objects are, in any degree, loose and undetermined: Now every particular act of justice is not beneficial to society, but the whole scheme or system: And it may not, perhaps, be any individual person for whom we are concerned, who receives benefit from justice, but the whole society alike. On the contrary, every particular act of generosity, or relief of the industrious and indigent, is beneficial; and is beneficial to a particular person, who is not undeserving of it. It is more natural, therefore, to think, that the tendencies of the latter virtue will affect our sentiments, and command our approbation, than those of the former; and therefore, since we find, that the approbation of the former arises from their tendencies, we may ascribe, with better reason, the same cause to the approbation of the latter. In any number of similar effects, if a cause can be discovered for one, we ought to extend that cause to all the other effects, which can be accounted for by it: But much more, if these other effects be attended with peculiar circumstances, which facilitate the operation of that cause.

Before I proceed farther, I must observe two remarkable circumstances in this affair, which may seem objections to the present system. The first may be thus explained. When any quality, or character, has a tendency to the good of mankind, we are pleased with it, and approve of it; because it presents the lively idea of pleasure; which idea affects us by sympathy, and is itself a kind of pleasure. But as this sympathy is very variable, it may be thought that our sentiments of morals must admit of all the same variations. We sympathize more with persons contiguous to us, than with persons remote from us: With our acquaintance, than with strangers: With our countrymen, than with foreigners. But notwithstanding this variation of our sympathy, we give the same approbation to the same moral qualities in China as in England. They appear equally virtuous, and recommend themselves equally to the esteem of a judicious spectator. The sympathy varies without a variation in our esteem. Our esteem, therefore, proceeds not from sympathy.

To this I answer: The approbation of moral qualities most certainly is not derived from reason, or any comparison of ideas; but proceeds entirely from a moral taste, and from certain sentiments of pleasure or disgust, which arise upon the contemplation and view of particular qualities or characters. Now it is evident, that those sentiments, whence-ever they are derived, must vary according to the distance or contiguity of the objects; nor can I feel the same lively pleasure from the virtues of a person, who lived in Greece two thousand years ago, that I feel from the virtues of a familiar friend and acquaintance. Yet I do not say, that I esteem the one more than the other: And therefore, if the variation of the sentiment, without a variation of the esteem, be an objection, it must have equal force against every other system, as against that of sympathy. But to consider the matter a-right, it has no force at all; and it is the easiest matter in the world to account for it. Our situation, with regard both to persons and things, is in continual fluctuation; and a man, that lies at a distance from us, may, in a little time, become a familiar acquaintance. Besides, every particular man has a peculiar position with regard to others; and it is impossible we coued ever converse together on any reasonable terms, were each of us to consider characters and persons, only as they appear from his peculiar point of view. In order, therefore, to prevent those continual contradictions, and arrive at a more stable judgment of things, we fix on some steady and general points of view; and always, in our thoughts, place ourselves in them, whatever may be our present situation. In like manner, external beauty is determined merely by pleasure; and it is evident, a beautiful countenance cannot give so much pleasure, when seen at the distance of twenty paces, as when it is brought nearer us. We say not, however, that it appears to us less beautiful: Because we know what effect it will have in such a position, and by that reflection we correct its momentary appearance.

In general, all sentiments of blame or praise are variable, according to our situation of nearness or remoteness, with regard to the person blamed or praised, and according to the present disposition of our mind. But these variations we regard not in our general decision, but still apply the terms expressive of our liking or dislike, in the same manner, as if we remained in one point of view. Experience soon teaches us this method of correcting our sentiments, or at least, of correcting our language, where the sentiments are more stubborn and inalterable. Our servant, if diligent and faithful, may excite stronger sentiments of love and kindness than Marcus Brutus, as represented in history; but we say not upon that account, that the former character is more laudable than the latter. We know, that were we to approach equally near to that renowned patriot, he would command a much higher degree of affection and admiration. Such corrections are common with regard to all the senses; and indeed it were impossible we could ever make use of language, or communicate our sentiments to one another, did we not correct the momentary appearances of things, and overlook our present situation.

It is therefore from the influence of characters and qualities, upon those who have an intercourse with any person, that we blame or praise him. We consider not whether the persons, affected by the qualities, be our acquaintance or strangers, countrymen or foreigners. Nay, we over-look our own interest in those general judgments; and blame not a man for opposing us in any of our pretensions, when his own interest is particularly concerned. We make allowance for a certain degree of selfishness in men; because we know it to be inseparable from human nature, and inherent in our frame and constitution. By this reflection we correct those sentiments of blame, which so naturally arise upon any opposition.

But however the general principle of our blame or praise may be corrected by those other principles, it is certain, they are not altogether efficacious, nor do our passions often correspond entirely to the present theory. It is seldom men heartily love what lies at a distance from them, and what no way redounds to their particular benefit; as it is no less rare to meet with persons, who can pardon another any opposition he makes to their interest, however justifiable that opposition may be by the general rules of morality. Here we are contented with saying, that reason requires such an Impartial conduct, but that it is seldom we can bring ourselves to it, and that our passions do not readily follow the determination of our judgment. This language will be easily understood, if we consider what we formerly said concerning that reason, which is able to oppose our passion; and which we have found to be nothing but a general calm determination of the passions, founded on some distant view or reflection. When we form our judgments of persons, merely from the tendency of their characters to our own benefit, or to that of our friends, we find so many contradictions to our sentiments in society and conversation, and such an uncertainty from the incessant changes of our situation, that we seek some other standard of merit and demerit, which may not admit of so great variation. Being thus loosened from our first station, we cannot afterwards fix ourselves so commodiously by any means as by a sympathy with those, who have any commerce with the person we consider. This is far from being as lively as when our own interest is concerned, or that of our particular friends; nor has it such an influence on our love and hatred: But being equally conformable to our calm and general principles, it is said to have an equal authority over our reason, and to command our judgment and opinion. We blame equally a bad action, which we read of in history, with one performed in our neighbourhood the other day: The meaning of which is, that we know from reflection, that the former action would excite as strong sentiments of disapprobation as the latter, were it placed in the same position.

I now proceed to the second remarkable circumstance, which I proposed to take notice of. Where a person is possessed of a character, that in its natural tendency is beneficial to society, we esteem him virtuous, and are delighted with the view of his character, even though particular accidents prevent its operation, and incapacitate him from being serviceable to his friends and country. Virtue in rags is still virtue; and the love, which it procures, attends a man into a dungeon or desart, where the virtue can no longer be exerted in action, and is lost to all the world. Now this may be esteemed an objection to the present system. Sympathy interests us in the good of mankind; and if sympathy were the source of our esteem for virtue, that sentiment of approbation coued only take place, where the virtue actually attained its end, and was beneficial to mankind. Where it fails of its end, it is only an imperfect means; and therefore can never acquire any merit from that end. The goodness of an end can bestow a merit on such means alone as are compleat, and actually produce the end.

To this we may reply, that where any object, in all its parts, is fitted to attain any agreeable end, it naturally gives us pleasure, and is esteemed beautiful, even though some external circumstances be wanting to render it altogether effectual. It is sufficient if every thing be compleat in the object itself. A house, that is contrived with great judgment for all the commodities of life, pleases us upon that account; though perhaps we are sensible, that noone will ever dwell in it. A fertile soil, and a happy climate, delight us by a reflection on the happiness which they would afford the inhabitants, though at present the country be desart and uninhabited. A man, whose limbs and shape promise strength and activity, is esteemed handsome, though condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The imagination has a set of passions belonging to it, upon which our sentiments of beauty much depend. These passions are moved by degrees of liveliness and strength, which are inferior to belief, and independent of the real existence of their objects. Where a character is, in every respect, fitted to be beneficial to society, the imagination passes easily from the cause to the effect, without considering that there are some circumstances wanting to render the cause a complete one. General rules create a species of probability, which sometimes influences the judgment, and always the imagination.

It is true, when the cause is compleat, and a good disposition is attended with good fortune, which renders it really beneficial to society, it gives a stronger pleasure to the spectator, and is attended with a more lively sympathy. We are more affected by it; and yet we do not say that it is more virtuous, or that we esteem it more. We know, that an alteration of fortune may render the benevolent disposition entirely impotent; and therefore we separate, as much as possible, the fortune from the disposition. The case is the same, as when we correct the different sentiments of virtue, which proceed from its different distances from ourselves. The passions do not always follow our corrections; but these corrections serve sufficiently to regulate our abstract notions, and are alone regarded, when we pronounce in general concerning the degrees of vice and virtue.

It is observed by critics, that all words or sentences, which are difficult to the pronunciation, are disagreeable to the ear. There is no difference, whether a man hear them pronounced, or read them silently to himself. When I run over a book with my eye, I Imagine I hear it all; and also, by the force of imagination, enter into the uneasiness, which the delivery of it would give the speaker. The uneasiness is not real; but as such a composition of words has a natural tendency to produce it, this is sufficient to affect the mind with a painful sentiment, and render the discourse harsh and disagreeable. It is a similar case, where any real quality is, by accidental circumstances, rendered impotent, and is deprived of its natural influence on society.

Upon these principles we may easily remove any contradiction, which may appear to be betwixt the extensive sympathy, on which our sentiments of virtue depend, and that limited generosity which I have frequently observed to be natural to men, and which justice and property suppose, according to the precedent reasoning. My sympathy with another may give me the sentiment of pain and disapprobation, when any object is presented, that has a tendency to give him uneasiness; though I may not be willing to sacrifice any thing of my own interest, or cross any of my passions, for his satisfaction. A house may displease me by being ill-contrived for the convenience of the owner; and yet I may refuse to give a shilling towards the rebuilding of it. Sentiments must touch the heart, to make them controul our passions: But they need not extend beyond the imagination, to make them influence our taste. When a building seems clumsy and tottering to the eye, it is ugly and disagreeable; though we be fully assured of the solidity of the workmanship. It is a kind of fear, which causes this sentiment of disapprobation; but the passion is not the same with that which we feel, when obliged to stand under a wall, that we really think tottering and insecure. The seeming tendencies of objects affect the mind: And the emotions they excite are of a like species with those, which proceed from the real consequences of objects, but their feeling is different. Nay, these emotions are so different in their feeling, that they may often be contrary, without destroying each other; as when the fortifications of a city belonging to an enemy are esteemed beautiful upon account of their strength, though we coued wish that they were entirely destroyed. The imagination adheres to the general views of things, and distinguishes the feelings they produce, from those which arise from our particular and momentary situation.

If we examine the panegyrics that are commonly made of great men, we shall find, that most of the qualities, which are attributed to them, may be divided into two kinds, viz. such as make them perform their part in society; and such as render them serviceable to themselves, and enable them to promote their own interest. Their prudence, temperance, frugality, industry, assiduity, enterprize, dexterity, are celebrated, as well as their generosity and humanity. If we ever give an indulgence to any quality, that disables a man from making a figure in life, it is to that of indolence, which is not supposed to deprive one of his parts and capacity, but only suspends their exercise; and that without any inconvenience to the person himself, since it is, in some measure, from his own choice. Yet indolence is always allowed to be a fault, and a very great one, if extreme: Nor do a man’s friends ever acknowledge him to be subject to it, but in order to save his character in more material articles. He coued make a figure, say they, if he pleased to give application: His understanding is sound, his conception quick, and his memory tenacious; but he hates business, and is indifferent about his fortune. And this a man sometimes may make even a subject of vanity; though with the air of confessing a fault: Because he may think, that his incapacity for business implies much more noble qualities; such as a philosophical spirit, a fine taste, a delicate wit, or a relish for pleasure and society. But take any other case: Suppose a quality, that without being an indication of any other good qualities, incapacitates a man always for business, and is destructive to his interest; such as a blundering understanding, and a wrong judgment of every thing in life; inconstancy and irresolution; or a want of address in the management of men and business: These are all allowed to be imperfections in a character; and many men would rather acknowledge the greatest crimes, than have it suspected, that they are, in any degree, subject to them.

It is very happy, in our philosophical researches, when we find the same phaenomenon diversified by a variety of circumstances; and by discovering what is common among them, can the better assure ourselves of the truth of any hypothesis we may make use of to explain it. Were nothing esteemed virtue but what were beneficial to society, I am persuaded, that the foregoing explication of the moral sense ought still to be received, and that upon sufficient evidence: But this evidence must grow upon us, when we find other kinds of virtue, which will not admit of any explication except from that hypothesis. Here is a man, who is not remarkably defective in his social qualities; but what principally recommends him is his dexterity in business, by which he has extricated himself from the greatest difficulties, and conducted the most delicate affairs with a singular address and prudence. I find an esteem for him immediately to arise in me: His company is a satisfaction to me; and before I have any farther acquaintance with him, I would rather do him a service than another, whose character is in every other respect equal, but is deficient in that particular. In this case, the qualities that please me are all considered as useful to the person, and as having a tendency to promote his interest and satisfaction. They are only regarded as means to an end, and please me in proportion to their fitness for that end. The end, therefore, must be agreeable to me. But what makes the end agreeable? The person is a stranger: I am no way interested in him, nor lie under any obligation to him: His happiness concerns not me, farther than the happiness of every human, and indeed of every sensible creature: That is, it affects me only by sympathy. From that principle, whenever I discover his happiness and good, whether in its causes or effects, I enter so deeply into it, that it gives me a sensible emotion. The appearance of qualities, that have a tendency to promote it, have an agreeable effect upon my imagination, and command my love and esteem.

This theory may serve to explain, why the same qualities, in all cases, produce both pride and love, humility and hatred; and the same man is always virtuous or vicious, accomplished or despicable to others, who is so to himself. A person, in whom we discover any passion or habit, which originally is only incommodious to himself, becomes always disagreeable to us, merely on its account; as on the other hand, one whose character is only dangerous and disagreeable to others, can never be satisfied with himself, as long as he is sensible of that disadvantage. Nor is this observable only with regard to characters and manners, but may be remarked even in the most minute circumstances. A violent cough in another gives us uneasiness; though in itself it does not in the least affect us. A man will be mortified, if you tell him he has a stinking breath; though it is evidently no annoyance to himself. Our fancy easily changes its situation; and either surveying ourselves as we appear to others, or considering others as they feel themselves, we enter, by that means, into sentiments, which no way belong to us, and in which nothing but sympathy is able to interest us. And this sympathy we sometimes carry so far, as even to be displeased with a quality commodious to us, merely because it displeases others, and makes us disagreeable in their eyes; though perhaps we never can have any interest in rendering ourselves agreeable to them.

There have been many systems of morality advanced by philosophers in all ages; but if they are strictly examined, they may be reduced to two, which alone merit our attention. Moral good and evil are certainly distinguished by our sentiments, not by reason: But these sentiments may arise either from the mere species or appearance of characters and passions, or from reflections on their tendency to the happiness of mankind, and of particular persons. My opinion is, that both these causes are intermixed in our judgments of morals; after the same manner as they are in our decisions concerning most kinds of external beauty: Though I am also of opinion, that reflections on the tendencies of actions have by far the greatest influence, and determine all the great lines of our duty. There are, however, instances, in cases of less moment, wherein this immediate taste or sentiment produces our approbation. Wit, and a certain easy and disengaged behaviour, are qualities immediately agreeable to others, and command their love and esteem. Some of these qualities produce satisfaction in others by particular original principles of human nature, which cannot be accounted for: Others may be resolved into principles, which are more general. This will best appear upon a particular enquiry.

As some qualities acquire their merit from their being immediately agreeable to others, without any tendency to public interest; so some are denominated virtuous from their being immediately agreeable to the person himself, who possesses them. Each of the passions and operations of the mind has a particular feeling, which must be either agreeable or disagreeable. The first is virtuous, the second vicious. This particular feeling constitutes the very nature of the passion; and therefore needs not be accounted for.

But however directly the distinction of vice and virtue may seem to flow from the immediate pleasure or uneasiness, which particular qualities cause to ourselves or others; it is easy to observe, that it has also a considerable dependence on the principle of sympathy so often insisted on. We approve of a person, who is possessed of qualities immediately agreeable to those, with whom he has any commerce; though perhaps we ourselves never reaped any pleasure from them. We also approve of one, who is possessed of qualities, that are immediately agreeable to himself; though they be of no service to any mortal. To account for this we must have recourse to the foregoing principles.

Thus, to take a general review of the present hypothesis: Every quality of the mind is denominated virtuous, which gives pleasure by the mere survey; as every quality, which produces pain, is called vicious. This pleasure and this pain may arise from four different sources. For we reap a pleasure from the view of a character, which is naturally fitted to be useful to others, or to the person himself, or which is agreeable to others, or to the person himself. One may, perhaps, be surprized. that amidst all these interests and pleasures, we should forget our own, which touch us so nearly on every other occasion. But we shall easily satisfy ourselves on this head, when we consider, that every particular person s pleasure and interest being different, it is impossible men coued ever agree in their sentiments and judgments, unless they chose some common point of view, from which they might survey their object, and which might cause it to appear the same to all of them. Now in judging of characters, the only interest or pleasure, which appears the same to every spectator, is that of the person himself, whose character is examined; or that of persons, who have a connexion with him. And though such interests and pleasures touch us more faintly than our own, yet being more constant and universal, they counter-ballance the latter even in practice, and are alone admitted in speculation as the standard of virtue and morality. They alone produce that particular feeling or sentiment, on which moral distinctions depend.

As to the good or ill desert of virtue or vice, it is an evident consequence of the sentiments of pleasure or uneasiness. These sentiments produce love or hatred; and love or hatred, by the original constitution of human passion, is attended with benevolence or anger; that is, with a desire of making happy the person we love, and miserable the person we hate. We have treated of this more fully on another occasion.

SECT. II OF GREATNESS OF MIND

It may now be proper to illustrate this general system of morals, by applying it to particular instances of virtue and vice, and shewing how their merit or demerit arises from the four sources here explained. We shall begin with examining the passions of pride and humility, and shall consider the vice or virtue that lies in their excesses or just proportion. An excessive pride or overweaning conceit of ourselves is always esteemed vicious, and is universally hated; as modesty, or a just sense of our weakness, is esteemed virtuous, and procures the good-will of every-one. Of the four sources of moral distinctions, this is to be ascribed to the third; viz, the immediate agreeableness and disagreeableness of a quality to others, without any reflections on the tendency of that quality.

In order to prove this, we must have recourse to two principles, which are very conspicuous in human nature. The first of these is the sympathy, and communication of sentiments and passions above-mentioned. So close and intimate is the correspondence of human souls, that no sooner any person approaches me, than he diffuses on me all his opinions, and draws along my judgment in a greater or lesser degree. And though, on many occasions, my sympathy with him goes not so far as entirely to change my sentiments, and way of thinking; yet it seldom is so weak as not to disturb the easy course of my thought, and give an authority to that opinion, which is recommended to me by his assent and approbation. Nor is it any way material upon what subject he and I employ our thoughts. Whether we judge of an indifferent person, or of my own character, my sympathy gives equal force to his decision: And even his sentiments of his own merit make me consider him in the same light, in which he regards himself.

This principle of sympathy is of so powerful and insinuating a nature, that it enters into most of our sentiments and passions, and often takes place under the appearance of its contrary. For it is remarkable, that when a person opposes me in any thing, which I am strongly bent upon, and rouzes up my passion by contradiction, I have always a degree of sympathy with him, nor does my commotion proceed from any other origin. We may here observe an evident conflict or rencounter of opposite principles and passions. On the one side there is that passion or sentiment, which is natural to me; and it is observable, that the stronger this passion is, the greater is the commotion. There must also be some passion or sentiment on the other side; and this passion can proceed from nothing but sympathy. The sentiments of others can never affect us, but by becoming, in some measure, our own; in which case they operate upon us, by opposing and encreasing our passions, in the very same manner, as if they had been originally derived from our own temper and disposition. While they remain concealed in the minds of others, they can never have an influence upon us: And even when they are known, if they went no farther than the imagination, or conception; that faculty is so accustomed to objects of every different kind, that a mere idea, though contrary to our sentiments and inclinations, would never alone be able to affect us.

The second principle I shall take notice of is that of comparison, or the variation of our judgments concerning objects, according to the proportion they bear to those with which we compare them. We judge more, of objects by comparison, than by their intrinsic worth and value; and regard every thing as mean, when set in opposition to what is superior of the same kind. But no comparison is more obvious than that with ourselves; and hence it is that on all occasions it takes place, and mixes with most of our passions. This kind of comparison is directly contrary to sympathy in its operation, as we have observed in treating of compassion and malice. [Book II. Part II. Sect. VIII.] IN ALL KINDS OF COMPARISON AN OBJECT MAKES US ALWAYS RECEIVE FROM ANOTHER, TO WHICH IT IS COMPARED, A SENSATION CONTRARY TO WHAT ARISES FROM ITSELF IN ITS DIRECT AND IMMEDIATE SURVEY. THE DIRECT SURVEY OF ANOTHER’S PLEASURE NATURALLY GIVES US PLEASURE; AND THEREFORE PRODUCES PAIN, WHEN COMPARed WITH OUR OWN. HIS PAIN, CONSIDERED IN ITSELF, IS PAINFUL; BUT AUGMENTS THE IDEA OF OUR OWN HAPPINESS, AND GIVES US PLEASURE.

Since then those principles of sympathy, and a comparison with ourselves, are directly contrary, it may be worth while to consider, what general rules can be formed, beside the particular temper of the person, for the prevalence of the one or the other. Suppose I am now in safety at land, and would willingly reap some pleasure from this consideration: I must think on the miserable condition of those who are at sea in a storm, and must endeavour to render this idea as strong and lively as possible, in order to make me more sensible of my own happiness. But whatever pains I may take, the comparison will never have an equal efficacy, as if I were really on the shore [FN 26], and saw a ship at a distance tossed by a tempest, and in danger every moment of perishing on a rock or sand-bank. But suppose this idea to become still more lively. Suppose the ship to be driven so near me, that I can perceive distinctly the horror, painted on the countenance of the seamen and passengers, hear their lamentable cries, see the dearest friends give their last adieu, or embrace with a resolution to perish in each others arms: No man has so savage a heart as to reap any pleasure from such a spectacle, or withstand the motions of the tenderest compassion and sympathy. It is evident, therefore, there is a medium in this case; and that if the idea be too feint, it has no influence by comparison; and on the other hand, if it be too strong, it operates on us entirely by sympathy, which is the contrary to comparison. Sympathy being the conversion of an idea into an impression, demands a greater force and vivacity in the idea than is requisite to comparison.

[FN 26. Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis E
terra magnum alterius spectare laborem; Non quia vexari
quenquam eat jucunda voluptas, Sed quibus ipse malls caress
qula cernere sauv' est. LUCRET.

(There is something pleasant in watching, from dry land, the
great difficulties another man is undergoing out on the high
sea, with the winds lashing the waters. This is not because
one derives delight from any man's distress, but because it
is pleasurable to perceive from what troubles one is oneself
free.)]

All this is easily applied to the present subject. We sink very much in our own eyes, when in the presence of a great man, or one of a superior genius; and this humility makes a considerable ingredient in that respect, which we pay our superiors, according to our foregoing reasonings on that passion [Book II. Part II. Sect. X.]. Sometimes even envy and hatred arise from the comparison; but in the greatest part of men, it rests at respect and esteem. As sympathy has such a powerful influence on the human mind, it causes pride to have, in some measure, the same effect as merit; and by making us enter into those elevated sentiments, which the proud man entertains of himself, presents that comparison, which is so mortifying and disagreeable. Our judgment does not entirely accompany him in the flattering conceit, in which he pleases himself; but still is so shaken as to receive the idea it presents, and to give it an influence above the loose conceptions of the imagination. A man, who, in an idle humour, would form a notion of a person of a merit very much superior to his own, would not be mortified by that fiction: But when a man, whom we are really persuaded to be of inferior merit, is presented to us; if we observe in him any extraordinary degree of pride and self-conceit; the firm persuasion he has of his own merit, takes hold of the imagination, and diminishes us in our own eyes, in the same manner, as if he were really possessed of all the good qualities which he so liberally attributes to himself. Our idea is here precisely in that medium, which is requisite to make it operate on us by comparison. Were it accompanied with belief, and did the person appear to have the same merit, which he assumes to himself, it would have a contrary effect, and would operate on us by sympathy. The influence of that principle would then be superior to that of comparison, contrary to what happens where the person’s merit seems below his pretensions.

The necessary consequence of these principles is, that pride, or an over-weaning conceit of ourselves, must be vicious; since it causes uneasiness in all men, and presents them every moment with a disagreeable comparison. It is a trite observation in philosophy, and even in common life and conversation, that it is our own pride, which makes us so much displeased with the pride of other people; and that vanity becomes insupportable to us merely because we are vain. The gay naturally associate themselves with the gay, and the amorous with the amorous: But the proud never can endure the proud, and rather seek the company of those who are of an opposite disposition. As we are, all of us, proud in some degree, pride is universally blamed and condemned by all mankind; as having a natural tendency to cause uneasiness in others by means of comparison. And this effect must follow the more naturally, that those, who have an ill-grounded conceit of themselves, are for ever making those comparisons, nor have they any other method of supporting their vanity. A man of sense and merit is pleased with himself, independent of all foreign considerations: But a fool must always find some person, that is more foolish, in order to keep himself in good humour with his own parts and understanding.

But though an over-weaning conceit of our own merit be vicious and disagreeable, nothing can be more laudable, than to have a value for ourselves, where we really have qualities that are valuable. The utility and advantage of any quality to ourselves is a source of virtue, as well as its agreeableness to others; and it is certain, that nothing is more useful to us in the conduct of life, than a due degree of pride, which makes us sensible of our own merit, and gives us a confidence and assurance in all our projects and enterprizes. Whatever capacity any one may be endowed with, it is entirely useless to him, if he be not acquainted with it, and form not designs suitable to it. It is requisite on all occasions to know our own force; and were it allowable to err on either side, it would be more advantageous to over-rate our merit, than to form ideas of it, below its just standard. Fortune commonly favours the bold and enterprizing; and nothing inspires us with more boldness than a good opinion of ourselves.

Add to this, that though pride, or self-applause, be sometimes disagreeable to others, it is always agreeable to ourselves; as on the other hand, modesty, though it gives pleasure to every one, who observes it, produces often uneasiness in the person endowed with it. Now it has been observed, that our own sensations determine the vice and virtue of any quality, as well as those sensations, which it may excite in others.

Thus self-satisfaction and vanity may not only be allowable, but requisite in a character. It is, however, certain, that good-breeding and decency require that we should avoid all signs and expressions, which tend directly to show that passion. We have, all of us, a wonderful partiality for ourselves, and were we always to give vent to our sentiments in this particular, we should mutually cause the greatest indignation in each other, not only by the immediate presence of so disagreeable a subject of comparison, but also by the contrariety of our judgments. In like manner, therefore, as we establish the laws of nature, in order to secure property in society, and prevent the opposition of self-interest; we establish the rules of good-breeding, in order to prevent the opposition of men’s pride, and render conversation agreeable and inoffensive. Nothing is more disagreeable than a man’s over-weaning conceit of himself: Every one almost has a strong propensity to this vice: No one can well distinguish in himself betwixt the vice and virtue, or be certain, that his esteem of his own merit is well-founded: For these reasons, all direct expressions of this passion are condemned; nor do we make any exception to this rule in favour of men of sense and merit. They are not allowed to do themselves justice openly, in words, no more than other people; and even if they show a reserve and secret doubt in doing themselves justice in their own thoughts, they will be more applauded. That impertinent, and almost universal propensity of men, to over-value themselves, has given us such a prejudice against self-applause, that we are apt to condemn it, by a general rule, wherever we meet with it; and it is with some difficulty we give a privilege to men of sense, even in their most secret thoughts. At least, it must be owned, that some disguise in this particular is absolutely requisite; and that if we harbour pride in our breasts, we must carry a fair outside, and have the appearance of modesty and mutual deference in all our conduct and behaviour. We must, on every occasion, be ready to prefer others to ourselves; to treat them with a kind of deference, even though they be our equals; to seem always the lowest and least in the company, where we are not very much distinguished above them: And if we observe these rules in our conduct, men will have more indulgence for our secret sentiments, when we discover them in an oblique manner.

I believe no one, who has any practice of the world, and can penetrate into the inward sentiments of men, will assert, that the humility, which good-breeding and decency require of us, goes beyond the outside, or that a thorough sincerity in this particular is esteemed a real part of our duty. On the contrary, we may observe, that a genuine and hearty pride, or self-esteem, if well concealed and well founded, is essential to the character of a man of honour, and that there is no quality of the mind, which is more indispensibly requisite to procure the esteem and approbation of mankind. There are certain deferences and mutual submissions, which custom requires of the different ranks of men towards each other; and whoever exceeds in this particular, if through interest, is accused of meanness; if through ignorance, of simplicity. It is necessary, therefore, to know our rank and station in the world, whether it be fixed by our birth, fortune, employments, talents or reputation. It is necessary to feel the sentiment and passion of pride in conformity to it, and to regulate our actions accordingly. And should it be said, that prudence may suffice to regulate our actions in this particular, without any real pride, I would observe, that here the object of prudence is to conform our actions to the general usage and custom; and, that it is impossible those tacit airs of superiority should ever have been established and authorized by custom, unless men were generally proud, and unless that passion were generally approved, when well-grounded.

If we pass from common life and conversation to history, this reasoning acquires new force, when we observe, that all those great actions and sentiments, which have become the admiration of mankind, are founded on nothing but pride and self-esteem. Go, says Alexander the Great to his soldiers, when they refused to follow him to the Indies, go tell your countrymen, that you left Alexander corn pleating the conquest of the world. This passage was always particularly admired by the prince of Conde, as we learn from St Evremond.

"ALEXANDER," said that prince, "abandoned by his soldiers, among barbarians, not yet fully subdued, felt in himself such a dignity of right and of empire, that he coued not believe it possible any one coued refuse to obey him. Whether in Europe or in Asia, among Greeks or Persians, all was indifferent to him: Wherever he found men, he fancied he found subjects."

In general we may observe, that whatever we call heroic virtue, and admire under the character of greatness and elevation of mind, is either nothing but a steady and wellestablished pride and self-esteem, or partakes largely of that passion. Courage, intrepidity, ambition, love of glory, magnanimity, and all the other shining virtues of that kind, have plainly a strong mixture of self-esteem in them, and derive a great part of their merit from that origin. Accordingly we find, that many religious declaimers decry those virtues as purely pagan and natural, and represent to us the excellency of the Christian religion, which places humility in the rank of virtues, and corrects the judgment of the world, and even of philosophers, who so generally admire all the efforts of pride and ambition. Whether this virtue of humility has been rightly understood, I shall not pretend to determine. I am content with the concession, that the world naturally esteems a well-regulated pride, which secretly animates our conduct, without breaking out into such indecent expressions of vanity, as many offend the vanity of others.

The merit of pride or self-esteem is derived from two circumstances, viz, its utility and its agreeableness to ourselves; by which it capacitates us for business, and, at the same time, gives us an immediate satisfaction. When it goes beyond its just bounds, it loses the first advantage, and even becomes prejudicial; which is the reason why we condemn an extravagant pride and ambition, however regulated by the decorums of good-breeding and politeness. But as such a passion is still agreeable, and conveys an elevated and sublime sensation to the person, who is actuated by it, the sympathy with that satisfaction diminishes considerably the blame, which naturally attends its dangerous influence on his conduct and behaviour. Accordingly we may observe, that an excessive courage and magnanimity, especially when it displays itself under the frowns of fortune, contributes in a great measure, to the character of a hero, and will render a person the admiration of posterity; at the same time, that it ruins his affairs, and leads him into dangers and difficulties, with which otherwise he would never have been acquainted.

Heroism, or military glory, is much admired by the generality of mankind. They consider it as the most sublime kind of merit. Men of cool reflection are not so sanguine in their praises of it. The infinite confusions and disorder, which it has caused in the world, diminish much of its merit in their eyes. When they would oppose the popular notions on this head, they always paint out the evils, which this supposed virtue has produced in human society; the subversion of empires, the devastation of provinces, the sack of cities. As long as these are present to us, we are more inclined to hate than admire the ambition of heroes. But when we fix our view on the person himself, who is the author of all this mischief, there is something so dazzling in his character, the mere contemplation of it so elevates the mind, that we cannot refuse it our admiration. The pain, which we receive from its tendency to the prejudice of society, is over-powered by a stronger and more immediate sympathy.

Thus our explication of the merit or demerit, which attends the degrees of pride or self-esteem, may serve as a strong argument for the preceding hypothesis, by shewing the effects of those principles above explained in all the variations of our judgments concerning that passion. Nor will this reasoning be advantageous to us only by shewing, that the distinction of vice and virtue arises from the four principles of the advantage and of the pleasure of the person himself, and of others: But may also afford us a strong proof of some under-parts of that hypothesis.

No one, who duly considers of this matter, will make any scruple of allowing, that any piece of in-breeding, or any expression of pride and haughtiness, is displeasing to us, merely because it shocks our own pride, and leads us by sympathy into a comparison, which causes the disagreeable passion of humility. Now as an insolence of this kind is blamed even in a person who has always been civil to ourselves in particular; nay, in one, whose name is only known to us in history; it follows, that our disapprobation proceeds from a sympathy with others, and from the reflection, that such a character is highly displeasing and odious to every one, who converses or has any intercourse with the person possest of it. We sympathize with those people in their uneasiness; and as their uneasiness proceeds in part from a sympathy with the person who insults them, we may here observe a double rebound of the sympathy; which is a principle very similar to what we have observed. [Book II. Part II. Sect. V.]

SECT. III OF GOODNESS AND BENEVOLENCE

Having thus explained the origin of that praise and approbation, which attends every thing we call great in human affections; we now proceed to give an account of their goodness, and shew whence its merit is derived.

When experience has once given us a competent knowledge of human affairs, and has taught us the proportion they bear to human passion, we perceive, that the generosity of men is very limited, and that it seldom extends beyond their friends and family, or, at most, beyond their native country. Being thus acquainted with the nature of man, we expect not any impossibilities from him; but confine our view to that narrow circle, in which any person moves, in order to form a judgment of his moral character. When the natural tendency of his passions leads him to be serviceable and useful within his sphere, we approve of his character, and love his person, by a sympathy with the sentiments of those, who have a more particular connexion with him. We are quickly obliged to forget our own interest in our judgments of this kind, by reason of the perpetual contradictions, we meet with in society and conversation, from persons that are not placed in the same situation, and have not the same interest with ourselves. The only point of view, in which our sentiments concur with those of others, is, when we consider the tendency of any passion to the advantage or harm of those, who have any immediate connexion or intercourse with the person possessed of it. And though this advantage or harm be often very remote from ourselves, yet sometimes it is very near us, and interests us strongly by sympathy. This concern we readily extend to other cases, that are resembling; and when these are very remote, our sympathy is proportionably weaker, and our praise or blame fainter and more doubtful. The case is here the same as in our judgments concerning external bodies. All objects seem to diminish by their distance: But though the appearance of objects to our senses be the original standard, by which we judge of them, yet we do not say, that they actually diminish by the distance; but correcting the appearance by reflection, arrive at a more constant and established judgment concerning them. In like manner, though sympathy be much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and a sympathy with persons remote from us much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous; yet we neglect all these differences in our calm judgments concerning the characters of men. Besides, that we ourselves often change our situation in this particular, we every day meet with persons, who are in a different situation from ourselves, and who coued never converse with us on any reasonable terms, were we to remain constantly in that situation and point of view, which is peculiar to us. The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general inalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And though the heart does not always take part with those general notions, or regulate its love and hatred by them, yet are they sufficient for discourse, and serve all our purposes m company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools.

From these principles we may easily account for that merit, which is commonly ascribed to generosity, humanity, compassion, gratitude, friendship, fidelity, zeal, disinterestedness, liberality, and all those other qualities, which form the character of good and benevolent. A propensity to the tender passions makes a man agreeable and useful in all the parts of life; and gives a just direction to all his other quailties, which otherwise may become prejudicial to society. Courage and ambition, when not regulated by benevolence, are fit only to make a tyrant and public robber. It is the same case with judgment and capacity, and all the qualities of that kind. They are indifferent in themselves to the interests of society, and have a tendency to the good or ill of mankind, according as they are directed by these other passions.

As Love is immediately agreeable to the person, who is actuated by it, and hatred immediately disagreeable; this may also be a considerable reason, why we praise all the passions that partake of the former, and blame all those that have any considerable share of the latter. It is certain we are infinitely touched with a tender sentiment, as well as with a great one. The tears naturally start in our eyes at the conception of it; nor can we forbear giving a loose to the same tenderness towards the person who exerts it. All this seems to me a proof, that our approbation has, in those cases, an origin different from the prospect of utility and advantage, either to ourselves or others. To which we may add, that men naturally, without reflection, approve of that character, which is most like their own. The man of a mild disposition and tender affections, in forming a notion of the most perfect virtue, mixes in it more of benevolence and humanity, than the man of courage and enterprize, who naturally looks upon a certain elevation of mind as the most accomplished character. This must evidently proceed from an immediate sympathy, which men have with characters similar to their own. They enter with more warmth into such sentiments, and feel more sensibly the pleasure, which arises from them.

It is remarkable, that nothing touches a man of humanity more than any instance of extraordinary delicacy in love or friendship, where a person is attentive to the smallest concerns of his friend, and is willing to sacrifice to them the most considerable interest of his own. Such delicacies have little influence on society; because they make us regard the greatest trifles: But they are the more engaging, the more minute the concern is, and are a proof of the highest merit in any one, who is capable of them. The passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts. Where friendship appears in very signal instances, my heart catches the same passion, and is warmed by those warm sentiments, that display themselves before me. Such agreeable movements must give me an affection to every one that excites them. This is the case with every thing that is agreeable in any person. The transition from pleasure to love is easy: But the transition must here be still more easy; since the agreeable sentiment, which is excited by sympathy, is love itself; and there is nothing required but to change the object.

Hence the peculiar merit of benevolence in all its shapes and appearances. Hence even its weaknesses are virtuous and amiable; and a person, whose grief upon the loss of a friend were excessive, would be esteemed upon that account. His tenderness bestows a merit, as it does a pleasure, on his melancholy.

We are not, however, to imagine, that all the angry passions are vicious, though they are disagreeable. There is a certain indulgence due to human nature in this respect. Anger and hatred are passions inherent in Our very frame and constitutions. The want of them, on some occasions, may even be a proof of weakness and imbecillity. And where they appear only in a low degree, we not only excuse them because they are natural; but even bestow our applauses on them, because they are inferior to what appears in the greatest part of mankind.

Where these angry passions rise up to cruelty, they form the most detested of all vices. All the pity and concern which we have for the miserable sufferers by this vice, turns against the person guilty of it, and produces a stronger hatred than we are sensible of on any other occasion. Even when the vice of inhumanity rises not to this extreme degree, our sentiments concerning it are very much influenced by reflections on the harm that results from it. And we may observe in general, that if we can find any quality in a person, which renders him incommodious to those, who live and converse with him, we always allow it to be a fault or blemish, without any farther examination. On the other hand, when we enumerate the good qualities of any person, we always mention those parts of his character, which render him a safe companion, an easy friend, a gentle master, an agreeable husband, or an indulgent father. We consider him with all his relations in society; and love or hate him, according as he affects those, who have any immediate intercourse with him. And it is a most certain rule, that if there be no relation of life, in which I coued not wish to stand to a particular person, his character must so far be allowed to be perfect. If he be as little wanting to himself as to others, his character is entirely perfect. This is the ultimate test of merit and virtue.

SECT. IV OF NATURAL ABILITIES

No distinction is more usual in all systems of ethics, than that betwixt natural abilities and moral virtues; where the former are placed on the same footing with bodily endowments, and are supposed to have no merit or moral worth annexed to them. Whoever considers the matter accurately, will find, that a dispute upon this head would be merely a dispute of words, and that though these qualities are not altogether of the same kind, yet they agree in the most material circumstances. They are both of them equally mental qualities: And both of them equally produce pleasure; and have of course an equal tendency to procure the love and esteem of mankind. There are few, who are not as jealous of their character, with regard to sense and knowledge, as to honour and courage; and much more than with regard to temperance and sobriety. Men are even afraid of passing for goodnatured; lest that should be taken for want of understanding: And often boast of more debauches than they have been really engaged in, to give themselves airs of fire and spirit. In short, the figure a man makes in the world, the reception he meets with in company, the esteem paid him by his acquaintance; all these advantages depend almost as much upon his good sense and judgment, as upon any other part of his character. Let a man have the best intentions in the world, and be the farthest from all injustice and violence, he will never be able to make himself be much regarded without a moderate share, at least, of parts and understanding. Since then natural abilities, though, perhaps, inferior, yet are on the same footing, both as to their causes and effects, with those qualities which we call moral virtues, why should we make any distinction betwixt them?

Though we refuse to natural abilities the title of virtues, we must allow, that they procure the love and esteem of mankind; that they give a new lustre to the other virtues; and that a man possessed of them is much more intitled to our good-will and services, than one entirely void of them. It may, indeed, be pretended that the sentiment of approbation, which those qualities produce, besides its being inferior, is also somewhat different from that, which attends the other virtues. But this, in my opinion, is not a sufficient reason for excluding them from the catalogue of virtues. Each of the virtues, even benevolence, justice, gratitude, integrity, excites a different sentiment or feeling in the spectator. The characters of Caesar and Cato, as drawn by Sallust, are both of them virtuous, in the strictest sense of the word; but in a different way: Nor are the sentiments entirely the same, which arise from them. The one produces love; the other esteem: The one is amiable; the other awful: We could wish to meet with the one character in a friend; the other character we would be ambitious of in ourselves. In like manner, the approbation which attends natural abilities, may be somewhat different to the feeling from that, which arises from the other virtues, without making them entirely of a different species. And indeed we may observe, that the natural abilities, no more than the other virtues, produce not, all of them, the same kind of approbation. Good sense and genius beget esteem: Wit and humour excite love.

[FN 27 Love and esteem are at the bottom the same passions, and arise from like causes. The qualities, that produce both, are agreeable, and give pleasure. But where this pleasure is severe and serious; or where its object is great, and makes a strong impression; or where it produces any degree of humility and awe: In all these cases, the passion, which arises from the pleasure, is more properly denominated esteem than love. Benevolence attends both: But is connected with love in a more eminent degree.]

Those, who represent the distinction betwixt natural abilities and moral virtues as very material, may say, that the former are entirely involuntary, and have therefore no merit attending them, as having no dependance on liberty and free-will. But to this I answer, first, that many of those qualities, which all moralists, especially the antients, comprehend under the title of moral virtues, are equally involuntary and necessary, with the qualities of the judgment and imagination. Of this nature are constancy, fortitude, magnanimity; and, in short, all the qualities which form the great man. I might say the same, in some degree, of the others; it being almost impossible for the mind to change its character in any considerable article, or cure itself of a passionate or splenetic temper, when they are natural to it. The greater degree there is of these blameable qualities, the more vicious they become, and yet they are the less voluntary. Secondly, I would have anyone give me a reason, why virtue and vice may not be involuntary, as well as beauty and deformity. These moral distinctions arise from the natural distinctions of pain and pleasure; and when we receive those feelings from the general consideration of any quality or character, we denominate it vicious or virtuous. Now I believe no one will assert, that a quality can never produce pleasure or pain to the person who considers it, unless it be perfectly voluntary in the person who possesses it. Thirdly, As to free-will, we have shewn that it has no place with regard to the actions, no more than the qualities of men. It is not a just consequence, that what is voluntary is free. Our actions are more voluntary than our judgments; but we have not more liberty in the one than in the other.

But though this distinction betwixt voluntary and involuntary be not sufficient to justify the distinction betwixt natural abilities and moral virtues, yet the former distinction will afford us a plausible reason, why moralists have invented the latter. Men have observed, that though natural abilities and moral qualities be in the main on the same footing, there is, however, this difference betwixt them, that the former are almost invariable by any art or industry; while the latter, or at least, the actions, that proceed from them, may be changed by the motives of rewards and punishments, praise and blame. Hence legislators, and divines, and moralists, have principally applied themselves to the regulating these voluntary actions, and have endeavoured to produce additional motives, for being virtuous in that particular. They knew, that to punish a man for folly, or exhort him to be prudent and sagacious, would have but little effect; though the same punishments and exhortations, with regard to justice and injustice, might have a considerable influence. But as men, in common life and conversation, do not carry those ends in view, but naturally praise or blame whatever pleases or displeases them, they do not seem much to regard this distinction, but consider prudence under the character of virtue as well as benevolence, and penetration as well as justice. Nay, we find, that all moralists, whose judgment is not perverted by a strict adherence to a system, enter into the same way of thinking; and that the antient moralists in particular made no scruple of placing prudence at the head of the cardinal virtues. There is a sentiment of esteem and approbation, which may be excited, in some degree, by any faculty of the mind, in its perfect state and condition; and to account for this sentiment is the business of Philosophers. It belongs to Grammarians to examine what qualities are entitled to the denomination of virtue; nor will they find, upon trial, that this is so easy a task, as at first sight they may be apt to imagine.

The principal reason why natural abilities are esteemed, is because of their tendency to be useful to the person, who is possessed of them. It is impossible to execute any design with success, where it is not conducted with prudence and discretion; nor will the goodness of our intentions alone suffice to procure us a happy issue to our enterprizes. Men are superior to beasts principally by the superiority of their reason; and they are the degrees of the same faculty, which set such an infinite difference betwixt one man and another. All the advantages of art are owing to human reason; and where fortune is not very capricious, the most considerable part of these advantages must fall to the share of the prudent and sagacious.

When it is asked, whether a quick or a slow apprehension be most valuable? whether one, that at first view penetrates into a subject, but can perform nothing upon study; or a contrary character, which must work out every thing by dint of application? whether a clear head, or a copious invention? whether a profound genius, or a sure judgment? in short, what character, or peculiar understanding, is more excellent than another? It is evident we can answer none of these questions, without considering which of those qualities capacitates a man best for the world, and carries him farthest in any of his undertakings.

There are many other qualities of the mind, whose merit is derived from the same origin, industry, perseverance, patience, activity, vigilance, application, constancy, with other virtues of that kind, which it will be easy to recollect, are esteemed valuable upon no other account, than their advantage in the conduct of life. It is the same case with temperance, frugality, economy, resolution: As on the other hand, prodigality, luxury, irresolution, uncertainty, are vicious, merely because they draw ruin upon us, and incapacitate us for business and action.

As wisdom and good-sense are valued, because they are useful to the person possessed of them; so wit and eloquence are valued, because they are immediately agreeable to others. On the other hand, good humour is loved and esteemed, because it is immediately agreeable to the person himself. It is evident, that the conversation of a man of wit is very satisfactory; as a chearful good-humoured companion diffuses a joy over the whole company, from a sympathy with his gaiety. These qualities, therefore, being agreeable, they naturally beget love and esteem, and answer to all the characters of virtue.

It is difficult to tell, on many occasions, what it is that renders one man’s conversation so agreeable and entertaining, and another’s so insipid and distasteful. As conversation is a transcript of the mind as well as books, the same qualities, which render the one valuable, must give us an esteem for the other. This we shall consider afterwards. In the mean time it may be affirmed in general, that all the merit a man may derive from his conversation (which, no doubt, may be very considerable) arises from nothing but the pleasure it conveys to those who are present.

In this view, cleanliness is also to be regarded as a virtue; since it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is a very considerable source of love and affection. No one will deny, that a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation, which it excites in others, we may in this instance, seemingly so trivial, dearly discover the origin of the moral distinction of vice and virtue in other instances.

Besides all those qualities, which render a person lovely or valuable, there is also a certain JE-NE-SCAI-QUOI of agreeable and handsome, that concurs to the same effect. In this case, as well as in that of wit and eloquence, we must have recourse to a certain sense, which acts without reflection, and regards not the tendencies of qualities and characters. Some moralists account for all the sentiments of virtue by this sense. Their hypothesis is very plausible. Nothing but a particular enquiry can give the preference to any other hypothesis. When we find, that almost all the virtues have such particular tendencies; and also find, that these tendencies are sufficient alone to give a strong sentiment of approbation: We cannot doubt, after this, that qualities are approved of, in proportion to the advantage, which results from them.

The decorum or indecorum of a quality, with regard to the age, or character, or station, contributes also to its praise or blame. This decorum depends, in a great measure, upon experience. It is usual to see men lose their levity, as they advance in years. Such a degree of gravity, therefore, and such years, are connected together in our thoughts. When we observe them separated in any person’s character, this imposes a kind of violence on our imagination, and is disagreeable.

That faculty of the soul, which, of all others, is of the least consequence to the character, and has the least virtue or vice in its several degrees, at the same time, that it admits of a great variety of degrees, is the memory.

Unless it rise up to that stupendous height as to surprize us, or sink so low as, in some measure, to affect the judgment, we commonly take no notice of its variations, nor ever mention them to the praise or dispraise of any person. It is so far from being a virtue to have a good memory, that men generally affect to complain of a bad one; and endeavouring to persuade the world, that what they say is entirely of their own invention, sacrifice it to the praise of genius and judgment. Yet to consider the matter abstractedly, it would be difficult to give a reason, why the faculty of recalling past ideas with truth and clearness, should not have as much merit in it, as the faculty of placing our present ideas, in such an order, as to form true propositions and opinions. The reason of the difference certainly must be, that the memory is exerted without any sensation of pleasure or pain; and in all its middling degrees serves almost equally well in business and affairs. But the least variations in the judgment are sensibly felt in their consequences; while at the same time that faculty is never exerted in any eminent degree, without an extraordinary delight and satisfaction. The sympathy with this utility and pleasure bestows a merit on the understanding; and the absence of it makes us consider the memory as a faculty very indifferent to blame or praise.

Before I leave this subject of natural abilities, I must observe, that, perhaps, one source of the esteem and affection, which attends them, is derived from the importance and weight, which they bestow on the person possessed of them. He becomes of greater consequence in life. His resolutions and actions affect a greater number of his fellow-creatures. Both his friendship and enmity are of moment. And it is easy to observe, that whoever is elevated, after this manner, above the rest of mankind, must excite in us the sentiments of esteem and approbation. Whatever is important engages our attention, fixes our thought, and is contemplated with satisfaction. The histories of kingdoms are more interesting than domestic stories: The histories of great empires more than those of small cities and principalities: And the histories of wars and revolutions more than those of peace and order. We sympathize with the persons that suffer, in all the various sentiments which belong to their fortunes. The mind is occupied by the multitude of the objects, and by the strong passions, that display themselves. And this occupation or agitation of the mind is commonly agreeable and amusing. The same theory accounts for the esteem and regard we pay to men of extraordinary parts and abilities. The good and ill of multitudes are connected with their actions. Whatever they undertake is important, and challenges our attention. Nothing is to be over-looked and despised, that regards them. And where any person can excite these sentiments, he soon acquires our esteem; unless other circumstances of his character render him odious and disagreeable.

SECT. V SOME FARTHER REFLECTIONS CONCERNING THE NATURAL VIRTUES

It has been observed, in treating of the passions, that pride and humility, love and hatred, are excited by any advantages or disadvantages of the mind, body, or fortune; and that these advantages or disadvantages have that effect by producing a separate impression of pain or pleasure. The pain or pleasure, which arises from the general survey or view of any action or quality of the mind, constitutes its vice or virtue, and gives rise to our approbation or blame, which is nothing but a fainter and more imperceptible love or hatred. We have assigned four different sources of this pain and pleasure; and in order to justify more fully that hypothesis, it may here be proper to observe, that the advantages or disadvantages of the body and of fortune, produce a pain or pleasure from the very same principles. The tendency of any object to be useful to the person possessed of it, or to others; to convey pleasure to him or to others; all these circumstances convey an immediate pleasure to the person, who considers the object, and command his love and approbation.

To begin with the advantages of the body; we may observe a phaenomenon, which might appear somewhat trivial and ludicrous, if any thing coued be trivial, which fortified a conclusion of such importance, or ludicrous, which was employed in a philosophical reasoning. It is a general remark, that those we call good women’s men, who have either signalized themselves by their amorous exploits, or whose make of body promises any extraordinary vigour of that kind, are well received by the fair sex, and naturally engage the affections even of those, whose virtue prevents any design of ever giving employment to those talents. Here it is evident, that the ability of such a person to give enjoyment, is the real source of that love and esteem he meets with among the females; at the same time that the women, who love and esteem him, have no prospect of receiving that enjoyment themselves, and can only be affected by means of their sympathy with one, that has a commerce of love with him. This instance is singular, and merits our attention.

Another source of the pleasure we receive from considering bodily advantages, is their utility to the person himself, who is possessed of them. It is certain, that a considerable part of the beauty of men, as well as of other animals, consists in such a conformation of members, as we find by experience to be attended with strength and agility, and to capacitate the creature for any action or exercise. Broad shoulders, a lank belly, firm joints, taper legs; all these are beautiful in our species because they are signs of force and vigour, which being advantages we naturally sympathize with, they convey to the beholder a share of that satisfaction they produce in the possessor.

So far as to the utility, which may attend any quality of the body. As to the immediate pleasure, it is certain, that an air of health, as well as of strength and agility, makes a considerable part of beauty; and that a sickly air in another is always disagreeable, upon account of that idea of pain and uneasiness, which it conveys to us. On the other hand, we are pleased with the regularity of our own features, though it be neither useful to ourselves nor others; and it is necessary at a distance, to make it convey to us any satisfaction. We commonly consider ourselves as we appear in the eyes of others, and sympathize with the advantageous sentiments they entertain with regard to us.

How far the advantages of fortune produce esteem and approbation from the same principles, we may satisfy ourselves by reflecting on our precedent reasoning on that subject. We have observed, that our approbation of those, who are possess d of the advantages of fortune, may be ascribed to three different causes. First, To that immediate pleasure, which a rich man gives us, by the view of the beautiful cloaths, equipage, gardens, or houses, which he possesses. Secondly, To the advantage, which we hope to reap from him by his generosity and liberality. Thirdly, To the pleasure and advantage, which he himself reaps from his possessions, and which produce an agreeable sympathy in us. Whether we ascribe our esteem of the rich and great to one or all of these causes, we may clearly see the traces of those principles, which give rise to the sense of vice and virtue. I believe most people, at first sight, will be inclined to ascribe our esteem of the rich to self-interest, and the prospect of advantage. But as it is certain, that our esteem or deference extends beyond any prospect of advantage to ourselves, it is evident, that that sentiment must proceed from a sympathy with those, who are dependent on the person we esteem and respect, and who have an immediate connexion with him. We consider him as a person capable of contributing to the happiness or enjoyment of his fellow-creatures, whose sentiments, with regard to him, we naturally embrace. And this consideration will serve to justify my hypothesis in preferring the third principle to the other two, and ascribing our esteem of the rich to a sympathy with the pleasure and advantage, which they themselves receive from their possessions. For as even the other two principles cannot operate to a due extent, or account for all the phaenomena, without having recourse to a sympathy of one kind or other; it is much more natural to chuse that sympathy, which is immediate and direct, than that which is remote and indirect. To which we may add, that where the riches or power are very great, and render the person considerable and important in the world, the esteem attending them, may, in part, be ascribed to another source, distinct from these three, viz. their interesting the mind by a prospect of the multitude, and importance of their consequences: Though, in order to account for the operation of this principle, we must also have recourse to sympathy; as we have observed in the preceding section.

It may not be amiss, on this occasion, to remark the flexibility of our sentiments, and the several changes they so readily receive from the objects, with which they are conjoined. All the sentiments of approbation, which attend any particular species of objects, have a great resemblance to each other, though derived from different sources; and, on the other hand, those sentiments, when directed to different objects, are different to the feeling, though derived from the same source. Thus the beauty of all visible objects causes a pleasure pretty much the same, though it be sometimes derived from the mere species and appearance of the objects; sometimes from sympathy, and an idea of their utility. In like manner, whenever we survey the actions and characters of men, without any particular interest in them, the pleasure, or pain, which arises from the survey (with some minute differences) is, in the main, of the same kind, though perhaps there be a great diversity in the causes, from which it is derived. On the other hand, a convenient house, and a virtuous character, cause not the same feeling of approbation; even though the source of our approbation be the same, and flow from sympathy and an idea of their utility. There is something very inexplicable in this variation of our feelings; but it is what we have experience of with regard to all our passions and sentiments.

SECT. VI CONCLUSION OF THIS BOOK

Thus upon the whole I am hopeful, that nothing is wanting to an accurate proof of this system of ethics. We are certain, that sympathy is a very powerful principle in human nature. We are also certain, that it has a great influence on our sense of beauty, when we regard external objects, as well as when we judge of morals. We find, that it has force sufficient to give us the strongest sentiments of approbation, when it operates alone, without the concurrence of any other principle; as in the cases of justice, allegiance, chastity, and good-manners. We may observe, that all the circumstances requisite for its operation are found in most of the virtues; which have, for the most part, a tendency to the good of society, or to that of the person possessed of them. If we compare all these circumstances, we shall not doubt, that sympathy is the chief source of moral distinctions; especially when we reflect, that no objection can be raised against this hypothesis in one case, which will not extend to all cases. Justice is certainly approved of for no other reason, than because it has a tendency to the public good: And the public good is indifferent to us, except so far as sympathy interests us in it. We may presume the like with regard to all the other virtues, which have a like tendency to the public good. They must derive all their merit from our sympathy with those, who reap any advantage from them: As the virtues, which have a tendency to the good of the person possessed of them, derive their merit from our sympathy with him.

Most people will readily allow, that the useful qualities of the mind are virtuous, because of their utility. This way of thinking is so natural, and occurs on so many occasions, that few will make any scruple of admitting it. Now this being once admitted, the force of sympathy must necessarily be acknowledged. Virtue is considered as means to an end. Means to an end are only valued so far as the end is valued. But the happiness of strangers affects us by sympathy alone. To that principle, therefore, we are to ascribe the sentiment of approbation, which arises from the survey of all those virtues, that are useful to society, or to the person possessed of them. These form the most considerable part of morality.

Were it proper in such a subject to bribe the reader’s assent, or employ any thing but solid argument, we are here abundantly supplied with topics to engage the affections. All lovers of virtue (and such we all are in speculation, however we may degenerate in practice) must certainly be pleased to see moral distinctions derived from so noble a source, which gives us a just notion both of the generosity and capacity of human nature. It requires but very little knowledge of human affairs to perceive, that a sense of morals is a principle inherent in the soul, and one of the most powerful that enters into the composition. But this sense must certainly acquire new force, when reflecting on itself, it approves of those principles, from whence it is derived, and finds nothing but what is great and good in its rise and origin. Those who resolve the sense of morals into original instincts of the human mind, may defend the cause of virtue with sufficient authority; but want the advantage, which those possess, who account for that sense by an extensive sympathy with mankind. According to their system, not only virtue must be approved of, but also the sense of virtue: And not only that sense, but also the principles, from whence it is derived. So that nothing is presented on any side, but what is laudable and good.

This observation may be extended to justice, and the other virtues of that kind. Though justice be artificial, the sense of its morality is natural. It is the combination of men, in a system of conduct, which renders any act of justice beneficial to society. But when once it has that tendency, we naturally approve of it; and if we did not so, it is impossible any combination or convention coued ever produce that sentiment.

Most of the inventions of men are subject to change. They depend upon humour and caprice. They have a vogue for a time, and then sink into oblivion. It may, perhaps, be apprehended, that if justice were allowed to be a human invention, it must be placed on the same footing. But the cases are widely different. The interest, on which justice is founded, is the greatest imaginable, and extends to all times and places. It cannot possibly be served by any other invention. It is obvious, and discovers itself on the very first formation of society. All these causes render the rules of justice stedfast and immutable; at least, as immutable as human nature. And if they were founded on original instincts, coued they have any greater stability?

The same system may help us to form a just notion of the happiness, as well as of the dignity of virtue, and may interest every principle of our nature in the embracing and cherishing that noble quality. Who indeed does not feel an accession of alacrity in his pursuits of knowledge and ability of every kind, when he considers, that besides the advantage, which immediately result from these acquisitions, they also give him a new lustre in the eyes of mankind, and are universally attended with esteem and approbation? And who can think any advantages of fortune a sufficient compensation for the least breach of the social virtues, when he considers, that not only his character with regard to others, but also his peace and inward satisfaction entirely depend upon his strict observance of them; and that a mind will never be able to bear its own survey, that has been wanting in its part to mankind and society? But I forbear insisting on this subject. Such reflections require a work a-part, very different from the genius of the present. The anatomist ought never to emulate the painter; nor in his accurate dissections and portraitures of the smaller parts of the human body, pretend to give his figures any graceful and engaging attitude or expression. There is even something hideous, or at least minute in the views of things, which he presents; and it is necessary the objects should be set more at a distance, and be more covered up from sight, to make them engaging to the eye and imagination. An anatomist, however, is admirably fitted to give advice to a painter; and it is even impracticable to excel in the latter art, without the assistance of the former. We must have an exact knowledge of the parts, their situation and connexion, before we can design with any elegance or correctness. And thus the most abstract speculations concerning human nature, however cold and unentertaining, become subservient to practical morality; and may render this latter science more correct in its precepts, and more persuasive in its exhortations.

APPENDIX

There is nothing I would more willingly lay hold of, than an opportunity of confessing my errors; and should esteem such a return to truth and reason to be more honourable than the most unerring judgment. A man, who is free from mistakes, can pretend to no praises, except from the justness of his understanding: But a man, who corrects his mistakes, shews at once the justness of his understanding, and the candour and ingenuity of his temper. I have not yet been so fortunate as to discover any very considerable mistakes in the reasonings delivered in the preceding volumes, except on one article: But I have found by experience, that some of my expressions have not been so well chosen, as to guard against all mistakes in the readers; and it is chiefly to remedy this defect, I have subjoined the following appendix.

We can never be induced to believe any matter of fact, except where its cause, or its effect, is present to us; but what the nature is of that belief, which arises from the relation of cause and effect, few have had the curiosity to ask themselves. In my opinion, this dilemma is inevitable. Either the belief is some new idea, such as that of reality or existence, which we join to the simple conception of an object, or it is merely a peculiar feeling or sentiment. That it is not a new idea, annexed to the simple conception, may be evinced from these two arguments. First, We have no abstract idea of existence, distinguishable and separable from the idea of particular objects. It is impossible, therefore, that this idea of existence can be annexed to the idea of any object, or form the difference betwixt a simple conception and belief. Secondly, The mind has the command over all its ideas, and can separate, unite, mix, and vary them, as it pleases; so that if belief consisted merely in a new idea, annexed to the conception, it would be in a man’s power to believe what he pleased. We may, therefore, conclude, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment; in something, that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters. When we are convinced of any matter of fact, we do nothing but conceive it, along with a certain feeling, different from what attends the mere reveries of the imagination. And when we express our incredulity concerning any fact, we mean, that the arguments for the fact produce not that feeling. Did not the belief consist in a sentiment different from our mere conception, whatever objects were presented by the wildest imagination, would be on an equal footing with the most established truths founded on history and experience. There is nothing but the feeling, or sentiment, to distinguish the one from the other.

This, therefore, being regarded as an undoubted truth, that belief is nothing but a peculiar feeling, different from the simple conception, the next question, that naturally occurs, is, what is the nature of this feeling, or sentiment, and whether it be analogous to any other sentiment of the human mind? This question is important. For if it be not analogous to any other sentiment, we must despair of explaining its causes, and must consider it as an original principle of the human mind. If it be analogous, we may hope to explain its causes from analogy, and trace it up to more general principles. Now that there is a greater firmness and solidity in the conceptions, which are the objects of conviction and assurance, than in the loose and indolent reveries of a castle-builder, every one will readily own. They strike upon us with more force; they are more present to us; the mind has a firmer hold of them, and is more actuated and moved by them. It acquiesces in them; and, in a manner, fixes and reposes itself on them. In short, they approach nearer to the impressions, which are immediately present to us; and are therefore analogous to many other operations of the mind.

There is not, in my opinion, any possibility of evading this conclusion, but by asserting, that belief, beside the simple conception, consists in some impression or feeling, distinguishable from the conception. It does not modify the conception, and render it more present and intense: It is only annexed to it, after the same manner that will and desire are annexed to particular conceptions of good and pleasure. But the following considerations will, I hope, be sufficient to remove this hypothesis. First, It is directly contrary to experience, and our immediate consciousness. All men have ever allowed reasoning to be merely an operation of our thoughts or ideas; and however those ideas may be varied to the feeling, there is nothing ever enters into our conclusions but ideas, or our fainter conceptions. For instance; I hear at present a person’s voice, whom I am acquainted with; and this sound comes from the next room. This impression of my senses immediately conveys my thoughts to the person, along with all the surrounding objects. I paint them out to myself as existent at present, with the same qualities and relations, that I formerly knew them possessed of. These ideas take faster hold of my mind, than the ideas of an inchanted castle. They are different to the feeling; but there is no distinct or separate impression attending them. It is the same case when I recollect the several incidents of a journey, or the events of any history. Every particular fact is there the object of belief. Its idea is modified differently from the loose reveries of a castle-builder: But no distinct impression attends every distinct idea, or conception of matter of fact. This is the subject of plain experience. If ever this experience can be disputed on any occasion, it is when the mind has been agitated with doubts and difficulties; and afterwards, upon taking the object in a new point of view, or being presented with a new argument, fixes and reposes itself in one settled conclusion and belief. In this case there is a feeling distinct and separate from the conception. The passage from doubt and agitation to tranquility and repose, conveys a satisfaction and pleasure to the mind. But take any other case. Suppose I see the legs and thighs of a person in motion, while some interposed object conceals the rest of his body. Here it is certain, the imagination spreads out the whole figure. I give him a head and shoulders, and breast and neck. These members I conceive and believe him to be possessed of. Nothing can be more evident, than that this whole operation is performed by the thought or imagination alone. The transition is immediate. The ideas presently strike us. Their customary connexion with the present impression, varies them and modifies them in a certain manner, but produces no act of the mind, distinct from this peculiarity of conception. Let any one examine his own mind, and he will evidently find this to be the truth.

Secondly, Whatever may be the case, with regard to this distinct impression, it must be allowed, that the mind has a firmer hold, or more steady conception of what it takes to be matter of fact, than of fictions. Why then look any farther, or multiply suppositions without necessity?

Thirdly, We can explain the causes of the firm conception, but not those of any separate impression. And not only so, but the causes of the firm conception exhaust the whole subject, and nothing is left to produce any other effect. An inference concerning a matter of fact is nothing but the idea of an object, that is frequently conjoined, or is associated with a present impression. This is the whole of it. Every part is requisite to explain, from analogy, the more steady conception; and nothing remains capable of producing any distinct impression.

Fourthly, The effects of belief, in influencing the passions and imagination, can all be explained from the firm conception; and there is no occasion to have recourse to any other principle. These arguments, with many others, enumerated in the foregoing volumes, sufficiently prove, that belief only modifies the idea or conception; and renders it different to the feeling, without producing any distinct impression. Thus upon a general view of the subject, there appear to be two questions of importance, which we may venture to recommend to the consideration of philosophers, Whether there be any thing to distinguish belief from the simple conception beside the feeling of sentiment? And, Whether this feeling be any thing but a firmer conception, or a faster hold, that we take of the object?

If, upon impartial enquiry, the same conclusion, that I have formed, be assented to by philosophers, the next business is to examine the analogy, which there is betwixt belief, and other acts of the mind, and find the cause of the firmness and strength of conception: And this I do not esteem a difficult task. The transition from a present impression, always enlivens and strengthens any idea. When any object is presented, the idea of its usual attendant immediately strikes us, as something real and solid. It is felt, rather than conceived, and approaches the impression, from which it is derived, in its force and influence. This I have proved at large. I cannot add any new arguments.

I had entertained some hopes, that however deficient our theory of the intellectual world might be, it would be free from those contradictions, and absurdities, which seem to attend every explication, that human reason can give of the material world. But upon a more strict review of the section concerning personal identity, I find myself involved in such a labyrinth, that, I must confess, I neither know how to correct my former opinions, nor how to render them consistent. If this be not a good general reason for scepticism, it is at least a sufficient one (if I were not already abundantly supplied) for me to entertain a diffidence and modesty in all my decisions. I shall propose the arguments on both sides, beginning with those that induced me to deny the strict and proper identity and simplicity of a self or thinking being.

When we talk of self or substance, we must have an idea annexed to these terms, otherwise they are altogether unintelligible. Every idea is derived from preceding impressions; and we have no impression of self or substance, as something simple and individual. We have, therefore, no idea of them in that sense.

Whatever is distinct, is distinguishable; and whatever is distinguishable, is separable by the thought or imagination. All perceptions are distinct. They are, therefore, distinguishable, and separable, and may be conceived as separately existent, and may exist separately, without any contradiction or absurdity.

When I view this table and that chimney, nothing is present to me but particular perceptions, which are of a like nature with all the other perceptions. This is the doctrine of philosophers. But this table, which is present to me, and the chimney, may and do exist separately. This is the doctrine of the vulgar, and implies no contradiction. There is no contradiction, therefore, in extending the same doctrine to all the perceptions.

In general, the following reasoning seems satisfactory. All ideas are borrowed from preceding perceptions. Our ideas of objects, therefore, are derived from that source. Consequently no proposition can be intelligible or consistent with regard to objects, which is not so with regard to perceptions. But it is intelligible and consistent to say, that objects exist distinct and independent, without any common simple substance or subject of inhesion. This proposition, therefore, can never be absurd with regard to perceptions.

When I turn my reflection on myself, I never can perceive this self without some one or more perceptions; nor can I ever perceive any thing but the perceptions. It is the composition of these, therefore, which forms the self. We can conceive a thinking being to have either many or few perceptions. Suppose the mind to be reduced even below the life of an oyster. Suppose it to have only one perception, as of thirst or hunger. Consider it in that situation. Do you conceive any thing but merely that perception? Have you any notion of self or substance? If not, the addition of other perceptions can never give you that notion.

The annihilation, which some people suppose to follow upon death, and which entirely destroys this self, is nothing but an extinction of all particular perceptions; love and hatred, pain and pleasure, thought and sensation. These therefore must be the same with self; since the one cannot survive the other.

Is self the same with substance? If it be, how can that question have place, concerning the subsistence of self, under a change of substance? If they be distinct, what is the difference betwixt them? For my part, I have a notion of neither, when conceived distinct from particular perceptions.

Philosophers begin to be reconciled to the principle, that we have no idea of external substance, distinct from the ideas of particular qualities. This must pave the way for a like principle with regard to the mind, that we have no notion of it, distinct from the particular perceptions.

So far I seem to be attended with sufficient evidence. But having thus loosened all our particular perceptions, when I proceed to explain the principle of connexion, which binds them together, and makes us attribute to them a real simplicity and identity; I am sensible, that my account is very defective, and that nothing but the seeming evidence of the precedent reasonings coued have induced me to receive it. If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only feel a connexion or determination of the thought, to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that the thought alone finds personal identity, when reflecting on the train of past perceptions, that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other. However extraordinary this conclusion may seem, it need not surprize us. Most philosophers seem inclined to think, that personal identity arises from consciousness; and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has so far a promising aspect. But all my hopes vanish, when I come to explain the principles, that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory, which gives me satisfaction on this head.

In short there are two principles, which I cannot render consistent; nor is it in my power to renounce either of them, viz, that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple and individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case. For my part, I must plead the privilege of a sceptic, and confess, that this difficulty is too hard for my understanding. I pretend not, however, to pronounce it absolutely insuperable. Others, perhaps, or myself, upon more mature reflections, may discover some hypothesis, that will reconcile those contradictions.

I shall also take this opportunity of confessing two other errors of less importance, which more mature reflection has discovered to me in my reasoning. The first may be found in Vol. I. page 106. where I say, that the distance betwixt two bodies is known, among other things, by the angles, which the rays of light flowing from the bodies make with each other. It is certain, that these angles are not known to the mind, and consequently can never discover the distance. The second error may be found in Vol. I. page 144 where I say, that two ideas of the same object can only be different by their different degrees of force and vivacity. I believe there are other differences among ideas, which cannot properly be comprehended under these terms. Had I said, that two ideas of the same object can only be different by their different feeling, I should have been nearer the truth.

AN ABSTRACT OF A BOOK LATELY PUBLISHED ENTITLED A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE ETC.

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PREFACE.

MY expectations in this small performance may seem somewhat extraordinary, when I declare that my intentions are to render a larger work more intelligible to ordinary capacities, by abridging it. ’Tis however certain, that those who are not accustomed to abstract reasoning, are apt to lose the thread of argument, where it is drawn out to a great length, and each part fortified with all the arguments, guarded against all the objections, and illustrated with all the views, which occur to a writer in the diligent survey of his subject. Such Readers will more readily apprehend a chain of reasoning, that is more single and concise, where the chief propositions only are linkt on to each other, illustrated by some simple examples, and confirmed by a few of the more forcible arguments. The parts lying nearer together can better be compared, and the connexion be more easily traced from the first principles to the last conclusion.

THE work, of which I here present the Reader with an abstract, has been complained of as obscure and difficult to be comprehended, and I am apt to think, that this proceeded as much from the length as from the abstractedness of the argument. If I have remedy’d this inconvenience in any degree, I have attain’d my end. The book seem’d to me to have such an air of singularity, and novelty as claim’d the attention of the public; especially if it be found, as the Author seems to insinuate, that were his philosophy receiv’d, we must alter from the foundation the greatest part of the sciences. Such bold attempts are always advantageous in the republic of letters, because they shake off the yoke of authority, accustom men to think for themselves, give new hints, which men of genius may carry further, and by the very opposition, illustrate points, wherein no one before suspected any difficulty.

THE Author must be contented to wait with patience for some time before the learned world can agree in their sentiments of his performance. ’Tis his misfortune, that he cannot make an appeal to the people, who in all matters of common reason and eloquence are found so infallible a tribunal. He must be judg’d by the FEW, whose verdict is more apt to be corrupted by partiality and prejudice, especially as no one is a proper judge in these subjects, who has not often thought of them; and such are apt to form to themselves systems of their own, which they resolve not to relinquish. I hope the Author will excuse me for intermeddling in this affair, since my aim is only to encrease his auditory, by removing some difficulties, which have kept many from apprehending his meaning.

I have chosen one simple argument, which I have carefully traced from the beginning to the end. This is the only point I have taken care to finish. The rest is only hints of particular passages, which seem’d to me curious and remarkable.

AN ABSTRACT OF A BOOK LATELY PUBLISHED, ENTITULED, A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE, &C.

THIS book seems to be wrote upon the same plan with several other works that have had a great vogue of late years in England. The philosophical spirit, which has been so much improved all over Europe within these last fourscore years, has been carried to as great a length in this kingdom as in any other. Our writers seem even to have started a new kind of philosophy, which promises more both to the entertainment and advantage of mankind, than any other with which the world has been yet acquainted. Most of the philosophers of antiquity, who treated of human nature, have shewn more of a delicacy of sentiment, a just sense of morals, or a greatness of soul, than a depth of reasoning and reflection. They content themselves with representing the common sense of mankind in the strongest lights, and with the best turn of thought and expression, without following out steadily a chain of propositions, or forming the several truths into a regular science. But ’tis at least worth while to try if the science of man will not admit of the same accuracy which several parts of natural philosophy are found susceptible of. There seems to be all the reason in the world to imagine that it may be carried to the greatest degree of exactness. If, in examining several phaenomena, we find that they resolve themselves into one common principle, and can trace this principle into another, we shall at last arrive at those few simple principles, on which all the rest depend. And tho’ we can never arrive at the ultimate principles, ’tis a satisfaction to go as far as our faculties will allow us.

THIS seems to have been the aim of our late philosophers, and, among the rest, of this author. He proposes to anatomize human nature in a regular manner, and promises to draw no conclusions but where he is authorized by experience. He talks with contempt of hypotheses; and insinuates, that such of our countrymen as have banished them from moral philosophy, have done a more signal service to the world, than my Lord Bacon, whom he considers as the father of experimental physicks. He mentions, on this occasion, Mr. Locke, my Lord Shaftsbury, Dr. Mandeville, Mr. Hutchison, Dr. Butler, who, tho’ they differ in many points among themselves, seem all to agree in founding their accurate disquisitions of human nature intirely upon experience.

BESIDE the satisfaction of being acquainted with what most nearly concerns us, it may be safely affirmed, that almost all the sciences are comprehended in the science of human nature, and are dependent on it. The sole end of logic is to explain the principles and Operations of our reasoning faculty, and the nature of our ideas; morals and criticism regard our tastes and sentiments; and politics consider men as united in society, and dependent on each other. This treatise therefore of human nature seems intended for a system of the sciences. The author has finished what regard logic, and has laid the foundation of the other parts in his account of the passions.

THE celebrated Monsieur Leibnitz has observed it to be a defect in the common systems of logic, that they are very copious when they explain the operations of the understanding in the forming of demonstrations, but are too concise when they treat of probabilities, and those other measures of evidence on which life and action intirely depend, and which are our guides even in most of our philosophical speculations. In this censure, he comprehends the essay on human understanding, le recherche de la verité, and l’art de penser. The author of the treatise of human nature seems to have been sensible of this defect in these philosophers, and has endeavoured, as much as he can, to supply it. As his book contains a great number of speculations very new and remarkable, it will be impossible to give the reader a just notion of the whole. We shall therefore chiefly confine ourselves to his explication of our reasonings from cause and effect. If we can make this intelligible to the reader, it may serve as a specimen of the whole.

OUR author begins with some definitions. He calls a perception whatever can be present to the mind, whether we employ our senses, or are actuated with passion, or exercise our thought and reflection. He divides our perceptions into two kinds, viz. impressions and ideas. When we feel a passion or emotion of any kind, or have the images of external objects conveyed by our senses; the perception of the mind is what he calls an impression, which is a word that he employs in a new sense. When we reflect on a passion or an object which is not present, this perception is an idea. Impressions, therefore, are our lively and strong perceptions; ideas are the fainter and weaker. This distinction is evident; as evident as that betwixt feeling and thinking.

THE first proposition he advances, is, that all our ideas, or weak perceptions, are derived from our impressions, or strong perceptions, and that we can never think of any thing which we have not seen without us, or felt in our own minds. This proposition seems to be equivalent to that which Mr. Locke has taken such pains to establish, viz. that no ideas are innate. Only it may be observed, as an inaccuracy of that famous philosopher, that he comprehends all our perceptions under the term of idea, in which sense it is false, that we have no innate ideas. For it is evident our stronger perceptions or impressions are innate, and that natural affection, love of virtue, resentment, and all the other passions, arise immediately from nature. I am perswaded, whoever would take the question in this light, would be easily able to reconcile all parties. Father Malebranche would find himself at a loss to point out any thought of the mind, which did not represent something antecedently felt by it, either internally, or by means of the external senses, and must allow, that however we may compound, and mix, and augment, and diminish our ideas, they are all derived from these sources. Mr. Locke, on the other hand, would readily acknowledge, that all our passions are a kind of natural instincts, derived from nothing but the original constitution of the human mind.

OUR author thinks,

“that no discovery could have been made more happily for deciding all controversies concerning ideas than this, that impressions always take the precedency of them, and that every idea with which the imagination is furnished, first makes its appearance in a correspondent impression. These latter perceptions are all so clear and evident, that they admit of no controversy; tho’ many of our ideas are so obscure, that ’tis almost impossible even for the mind, which forms them, to tell exactly their nature and composition.”

Accordingly, wherever any idea is ambiguous, he has always recourse to the impression, which must render it clear and precise. And when he suspects that any philosophical term has no idea annexed to it (as is too common) he always asks from what impression that idea is derived? And if no impression can be produced, he concludes that the term is altogether insignificant. ’Tis after this manner he examines our idea of substance and essence; and it were to be wished, that this rigorous method were more practised in all philosophical debates.

‘TIS evident, that all reasonings concerning matter of fact are founded on the relation of cause and effect, and that we can never infer the existence of one object from another, unless they be connected together, either mediately or immediately. In order therefore to understand these reasonings, we must be perfectly acquainted with the idea of a cause; and in order to that, must look about us to find something that is the cause of another.

HERE is a billiard-ball lying on the table, and another ball moving towards it with rapidity. They strike; and the ball, which was formerly at rest, now acquires a motion. This is as perfect an instance of the relation of cause and effect as any which we know, either by sensation or reflection. Let us therefore examine it. ’Tis evident, that the two balls touched one another before the motion was communicated, and that there was no interval betwixt the shock and the motion. Contiguity in time and place is therefore a requisite circumstance to the operation of all causes. ’Tis evident likewise, that the motion, which was the cause, is prior to the motion, which was the effect. Priority in time, is therefore another requisite circumstance in every cause. But this is not all. Let us try any other balls of the same kind in a like situation, and we shall always find, that the impulse of the one produces motion in the other. Here therefore is a third circumstance, viz. that of a constant conjunction betwixt the cause and effect. Every object like the cause, produces always some object like the effect. Beyond these three circumstances of contiguity, priority, and constant conjunction, I can discover nothing in this cause. The first ball is in motion; touches the second; immediately the second is in motion: and when I try the experiment with the same or like balls, in the same or like circumstances, I find, that upon the motion and touch of the one ball, motion always follows in the other. In whatever shape I turn this matter, and however I examine it, I can find nothing farther.

THIS is the case when both the cause and effect are present to the senses. Let us now see upon what our inference is founded, when we conclude from the one that the other has existed or will exist. Suppose I see a ball moving in a streight line towards another, I immediately conclude, that they will shock, and that the second will be in motion. This is the inference from cause to effect; and of this nature are all our reasonings in the conduct of life: on his is founded all our belief in history: and from hence is derived all philosophy, excepting only geometry and arithmetic. If we can explain the inference from the shock of two balls, we shall be able to account for this operation of the mind in all instances.

WERE a man, such as Adam, created in the full vigour of understanding, without experience, he would never be able to infer motion in the second ball from the motion and impulse of the first. It is not any thing that reason sees in the cause, which make us infer the effect. Such an inference, were it possible, would amount to a demonstration, as being founded merely on the comparison of ideas. But no inference from cause to effect amounts to a demonstration. Of which there is this evident proof. The mind can always conceive any effect to follow from any cause, and indeed any event to follow upon another: whatever we conceive is possible, at least in a metaphysical sense: but wherever a demonstration takes place, the contrary is impossible, and implies a contradiction. There is no demonstration, therefore, for any conjunction of cause and effect. And this is a principle, which is generally allowed by philosophers.

IT would have been necessary, therefore, for Adam (if he was not inspired) to have had experience of the effect, which followed upon the impulse of these two balls. He must have seen, in several instances, that when the one ball struck upon the other, the second always acquired motion. If he had seen a sufficient number of instances of this kind, whenever he saw the one ball moving towards the other, he would always conclude without hesitation, that the second would acquire motion. His understanding would anticipate his sight, and form a conclusion suitable to his past experience.

IT follows, then, that all reasonings concerning cause and effect, are founded on experience, and that all reasonings from experience are founded on the supposition, that the course of nature will continue uniformly the same. We conclude, that like causes, in like circumstances, will always produce like effects. It may now be worth while to consider, what determines us to form a conclusion of such infinite consequence.

‘TIS evident, that Adam with all his science, would never have been able to demonstrate, that the course of nature must continue uniformly the same, and that the future must be conformable to the past. What is possible can never be demonstrated to be false; and ’tis possible the course of nature may change, since we can conceive such a change. Nay, I will go farther, and assert, that he could not so much as prove by any probable arguments, that the future must be conformable to the past. All probable arguments are built on the supposition, that there is this conformity betwixt the future and the past, and therefore can never prove it. This conformity is a matter of fact, and if it must be proved, will admit of no proof but from experience. But our experience in the past can be a proof of nothing for the future, but upon a supposition, that there is a resemblance betwixt them. This therefore is a point, which can admit of no proof at all, and which we take for granted without any proof.

WE are determined by CUSTOM alone to suppose the future conformable to the past. When I see a billiard-ball moving towards another, my mind is immediately carry'd by habit to the usual effect, and anticipates my sight by conceiving the second ball in motion. There is nothing in these objects, abstractly considered, and independent of experience, which leads me to form any such conclusion: and even after I have had experience of many repeated effects of this kind, there is no argument, which determines me to suppose, that the effect will be conformable to past experience. The powers, by which bodies operate, are entirely unknown. We perceive only their sensible qualities: and what reason have we to think, that the same powers will always be conjoined with the same sensible qualities?

'TIS not, therefore, reason, which is the guide of life, but custom. That alone determines the mind, in all instances, to suppose the future conformable to the past. However easy this step may seem, reason would never, to all eternity, be able to make it.

THIS is a very curious discovery, but leads us to others, that are still more curious. When I see a billiard ball moving towards another, my mind is immediately carried by habit to the usualand anticipate my sight by conceiving the second ball in motion. But is this all? Do I nothing but CONCEIVE the motion of the second ball? No surely. I also BELIEVE that it will move. What then is this belief? And how does it differ from the simple conception of any thing? Here is a new question unthought of by philosophers.

When a demonstration convinces me of any proposition, it not only makes me conceive the proposition, but also makes me sensible, that 'tis impossible to conceive any thing contrary. What is demonstratively false implies a contradiction; and what implies a contradiction cannot be conceived. But with regard to any matter of fact, however strong the proof may be from experience, I can always conceive the contrary, tho' I cannot always believe it. The belief, therefore, makes some difference betwixt the conception to which we assent, and that to which we do not assent.

To account for this, there are only two hypotheses. It may be said, that belief joins some new idea to those which we may conceive without assenting to them. But this hypothesis is false. For first, no such idea can be produced. When we simply conceive an object, we conceive it in all its parts. We conceive it as it might exist, tho’ we do not believe it to exist. Our belief of it would discover no new qualities. We may paint out the entire object in imagination without believing it. We may set it, in a manner, before our eyes, with every circumstance of time and place. ’Tis the very object conceived as it might exist; and when we believe it, we can do no more.

Secondly, THE mind has a faculty of joining all ideas together, which involve not a contradiction; and therefore if belief consisted in some idea, which we add to the simple conception, it would be in a man’s power, by adding this idea to it, to believe any thing, which he can conceive.

SINCE therefore belief implies a conception, and yet is something more; and since it adds no new idea to the conception; it follows, that it is a different MANNER of conceiving an object; something that is distinguishable to the feeling, and depends not upon our will, as all our ideas do. My mind runs by habit from the visible object of one ball moving towards another, to the usual effect of motion in the second ball. It not only conceives that motion, but feels something different in the conception of it from a mere reverie of the imagination. The presence of this visible object, and the constant conjunction of that particular effect, render the idea different to the feeling from those loose ideas, which come into the mind without any introduction. This conclusion seems a little surprizing; but we are led into it by a chain of propositions, which admit of no doubt. To ease the reader’s memory I shall briefly resume them. No matter of fact can be proved but from its cause or its effect. Nothing can be known to be the cause of another but by experience. We can give no reason for extending to the future our experience in the past; but are entirely determined by custom, when we conceive an effect to follow from its usual cause. But we also believe an effect to follow, as well as conceive it. This belief joins no new idea to the conception. It only varies the manner of conceiving, and makes a difference to the feeling or sentiment. Belief, therefore, in all matters of fact arises only from custom, and is an idea conceived in a peculiar manner.

OUR author proceeds to explain the manner or feeling, which renders belief different from a loose conception. He seems sensible, that ’tis impossible by words to describe this feeling, which every one must be conscious of in his own breast. He calls it sometimes a stronger conception, sometimes a more lively, a more vivid, a firmer, or a more intense conception. And indeed, whatever name we may give to this feeling, which constitutes belief, our author thinks it evident, that it has a more forcible effect on the mind than fiction and mere conception. This he proves by its influence on the passions and on the imagination; which are only moved by truth or what is taken for such. Poetry, with all its art, can never cause a passion, like one in real life. It fails in the original conception of its objects, which never feel in the same manner as those which command our belief and opinion.

OUR author presuming, that he had sufficiently proved, that the ideas we assent to are different to the feeling from the other ideas, and that this feeling is more firm and lively than our common conception, endeavours in the next place to explain the cause of this lively feeling by an analogy with other acts of the mind. His reasoning seems to be curious; but could scarce be rendered intelligible, or at least probable to the reader, without a long detail, which would exceed the compass I have prescribed to myself.

I have likewise omitted many arguments, which he adduces to prove that belief consists merely in a peculiar feeling or sentiment. I shall only mention one; our past experience is not always uniform. Sometimes one effect follows from a cause, sometimes another: In which case we always believe, that that will exist which is most common. I see a billiard-ball moving towards another. I cannot distinguish whether it moves upon its axis, or was struck so as to skim along the table. In the first case, I know it will not stop after the shock. In the second it may stop. The first is most common, and therefore I lay my account with that effect. But I also conceive the other effect, and conceive it as possible, and as connected with the cause. Were not the one conception different in the feeling or sentiment from the other, there would be no difference betwixt them.

WE have confin’d ourselves in this whole reasoning to the relation of cause and effect, as discovered in the motions and operations of matter. But the same reasoning extends to the operations of the mind. Whether we consider the influence of the will in moving our body, or in governing our thought, it may safely be affirmed, that we could never foretel the effect, merely from the consideration of the cause, without experience. And even after we have experience of these effects, ’tis custom alone, not reason, which determines us to make it the standard of our future judgments. When the cause is presented, the mind, from habit, immediately passes to the conception and belief of the usual effect. This belief is something different from the conception. It does not, however, join any new idea to it. It only makes it be felt differently, and renders it stronger and more lively.

HAVING dispatcht this material point concerning the nature of the inference from cause and effect, our author returns upon his footsteps, and examines anew the idea of that relation. In the considering of motion communicated from one ball to another, we could find nothing but contiguity, priority in the cause, and constant conjunction. But, beside these circumstances, ’tis commonly suppos’d, that there is a necessary connexion betwixt the cause and effect, and that the cause possesses something, which we call a power, or force, or energy. The question is, what idea is annex’d to these terms? If all our ideas or thoughts be derived from our impressions, this power must either discover itself to our senses, or to our internal feeling. But so little does any power discover itself to the senses in the operations of matter, that the Cartesians have made no scruple to assert, that matter is utterly deprived of energy, and that all its operations are perform’d merely by the energy of the supreme Being. But the question still recurs, What idea have we of energy or power even in the supreme Being? All our idea of a Deity (according to those who deny innate ideas) is nothing but a composition of those ideas, which we acquire from reflecting on the operations of our own minds. Now our own minds afford us no more notion of energy than matter does. When we consider our will or volition a priori, abstracting from experience, we should never be able to infer any effect from it. And when we take the assistance of experience, it only shows us objects contiguous, successive, and constantly conjoined. Upon the whole, then, either we have no idea at all of force and energy, and these words are altogether insignificant, or they can mean nothing but that determination of the thought, acquir’d by habit, to pass from the cause to its usual effect. But who-ever would thoroughly understand this must consult the author himself. ’Tis sufficient, if I can make the learned world apprehend, that there is some difficulty in the case, and that who-ever solves the difficulty must say some thing very new and extraordinary; as new as the difficulty itself.

BY all that has been said the reader will easily perceive, that the philosophy contain’d in this book is very sceptical, and tends to give us a notion of the imperfections and narrow limits of human understanding. Almost all reasoning is there reduced to experience; and the belief, which attends experience, is explained to be nothing but a peculiar sentiment, or lively conception produced by habit. Nor is this all, when we believe any thing of external existence, or suppose an object to exist a moment after it is no longer perceived, this belief is nothing but a sentiment of the same kind. Our author insists upon several other sceptical topics; and upon the whole concludes, that we assent to our faculties, and employ our reason only because we cannot help it. Philosophy wou’d render us entirely Pyrrhonian, were not nature too strong for it.

I shall conclude the logics of this author with an account of two opinions, which seem to be peculiar to himself, as indeed are most of his opinions. He asserts, that the soul, as far as we can conceive it, is nothing but a system or train of different perceptions, those of heat and cold, love and anger, thoughts and sensations; all united together, but without any perfect simplicity or identity. Des Cartes maintained that thought was the essence of the mind; not this thought or that thought, but thought in general. This seems to be absolutely unintelligible, since every thing, that exists, is particular: And therefore it must be our several particular perceptions, that compose the mind. I say, compose the mind, not belong to it. The mind is not a substance, in which the perceptions inhere. That notion is as unintelligible as the Cartesian, that thought or perception in general is the essence of the mind. We have no idea of substance of any kind, since we have no idea but what is derived from some impression, and we have no impression of any substance either material or spiritual. We know nothing but particular qualities and perceptions. As our idea of any body, a peach, for instance, is only that of a particular taste, colour, figure, size, consistence, &c. So our idea of any mind is only that of particular perceptions, without the notion of any thing we call substance, either simple or compound.

THE second principle, which I proposed to take notice of, is with regard to Geometry. Having denied the infinite divisibility of extension, our author finds himself obliged to refute those mathematical arguments, which have been adduced for it; and these indeed are the only ones of any weight. This he does by denying Geometry to be a science exact enough to admit of conclusions so subtile as those which regard infinite divisibility. His arguments may be thus explained. All Geometry is founded on the notions of equality and inequality, and therefore according as we have or have not an exact standard of that relation, the science itself will or will not admit of great exactness. Now there is an exact standard of equality, if we suppose that quantity is composed of indivisible points. Two lines are equal when the numbers of the points, that compose them, are equal, and when there is a point in one corresponding to a point in the other. But tho' this standard be exact, 'tis useless; since we can never compute the number of points in any line. It is besides founded on the supposition of finite divisibility, and therefore can never afford any conclusion against it. If we reject this standard of equality, we have none that has any pretensions to exactness. I find two that are commonly made use of. Two lines above a yard, for instance, are said to be equal, when they contain any inferior quantity, as an inch, an equal number of times. But this runs in a circle. For the quantity we call an inch in the one is supposed to be equal to what we call an inch in the other: And the question still is, by what standard we proceed when we judge them to be equal; or, in other words, what we mean when we say they are equal. If we take still inferior quantities, we go on in infinitum. This therefore is no standard of equality. The greatest part of philosophers, when ask'd what they mean by equality, say, that the word admits of no definition, and that it is sufficient to place before us two equal bodies, such as two diameters of a circle, to make us understand that term. Now this is taking the general appearance of the objects for the standard of that proportion, and renders our imagination and senses the ultimate judges of it. But such a standard admits of no exactness, and can never afford any conclusion contrary to the imagination and senses. Whether this question be just or not, must be left to the learned world to judge. 'Twere certainly to be wish'd, that some expedient were fallen upon to reconcile philosophy and common sense, which with regard to the question of infinite divisibility have wag'd most cruel wars with each other.

WE must now proceed to give some account of the second volume of this work, which treats of the PASSIONS. 'Tis of more easy comprehension than the first; but contains opinions, that are altogether as new and extraordinary. The author begins with Pride and humility. He observes, that the objects which excite these passions, are very numerous, and seemingly very different from each other. Pride or self-esteem may arise from the qualities of the mind; wit, good-sense, learning, courage, integrity: from those of the body; beauty, strength, agility, good mein, address in dancing, riding, fencing: from external advantages; country, family, children, relations, riches, houses, gardens, horses, dogs, cloaths. He afterwards proceeds to find out that common circumstance, in which all these objects agree, and which causes them to operate on the passions. His theory likewise extends to love and hatred, and other affections. As these questions, tho’ curious, could not be rendered intelligible without a long discourse, we shall here omit them.

IT may perhaps be more acceptable to the reader to be informed of what our author says concerning free-will. He has laid the foundation of his doctrine in what he said concerning cause and effect, as above explained.

“ ’Tis universally acknowledged, that the operations of external bodies are necessary, and that in the communication of their motion, in their attraction and mutual cohesion, there are not the least traces of indifference or liberty.”

—

“Whatever therefore is in this respect on the same footing with matter, must be acknowledged to be necessary. That we may know whether this be the case with the actions of the mind, we may examine matter, and consider on what the idea of a necessity in its operations are founded, and why we conclude one body or action to be the infallible cause of another.”

“It has been observed already, that in no single instance the ultimate connexion of any object is discoverable either by our senses or reason, and that we can never penetrate so far into the essence and construction of bodies, as to perceive the principle on which their mutual influence is founded. ’Tis their constant union alone, with which we are acquainted; and ’tis from the constant union the necessity arises, when the mind is determined to pass from one object to its usual attendant, and infer the existence of one from that of the other. Here then are two particulars, which we are to regard as essential to necessity, viz. the constant union and the inference of the mind, and wherever we discover these we must acknowledge a necessity.”

Now nothing is more evident than the constant union of particular actions with particular motives. If all actions be not constantly united with their proper motives, this uncertainty is no more than what may be observed every day in the actions of matter, where by reason of the mixture and uncertainty of causes, the effect is often variable and uncertain. Thirty grains of opium will kill any man that is not accustomed to it; tho’ thirty grains of rhubarb will not always purge him. In like manner the fear of death will always make a man go twenty paces out of his road; tho’ it will not always make him do a bad action.

AND as there is often a constant conjunction of the actions of the will with their motives, so the inference from the one to the other is often as certain as any reasoning concerning bodies: and there is always an inference proportioned to the constancy of the conjunction. On this is founded our belief in witnesses, our credit in history, and indeed all kinds of moral evidence, and almost the whole conduct of life.

OUR author pretends, that this reasoning puts the whole controversy in a new light, by giving a new definition of necessity. And, indeed, the most zealous advocates for freewill must allow this union and inference with regard to human actions. They will only deny, that this makes the whole of necessity. But then they must shew, that we have an idea of something else in the actions of matter; which, according to the foregoing reasoning, is impossible.

THRO’ this whole book, there are great pretensions to new discoveries in philosophy; but if any thing can intitle the author to so glorious a name as that of an inventor, ’tis the use he makes of the principle of the association of ideas, which enters into most of his philosophy. Our imagination has a great authority over our ideas; and there are no ideas that are different from each other, which it cannot separate, and join, and compose into all the varieties of fiction. But notwithstanding the empire of the imagination, there is a secret tie or union among particular ideas, which causes the mind to conjoin them more frequently together, and makes the one, upon its appearance, introduce the other. Hence arises what we call the apropos of discourse: hence the connection of writing: and hence that thread, or chain of thought, which a man naturally supports even in the loosest reverie. These principles of association are reduced to three, viz. Resemblance; a picture naturally makes us think of the man it was drawn for. Contiguity; when St. Dennis is mentioned, the idea of Paris naturally occurs. Causation; when we think of the son, we are apt to carry our attention to the father. ‘Twill be easy to conceive of what vast consequence these principles must be in the science of human nature, if we consider, that so far as regards the mind, these are the only links that bind the parts of the universe together, or connect us with any person or object exterior to ourselves. For as it is by means of thought only that any thing operates upon our passions, and as these are the only ties of our thoughts, they are really to us the cement of the universe, and all the operations of the mind must, in a great measure, depend on them.

FINIS.

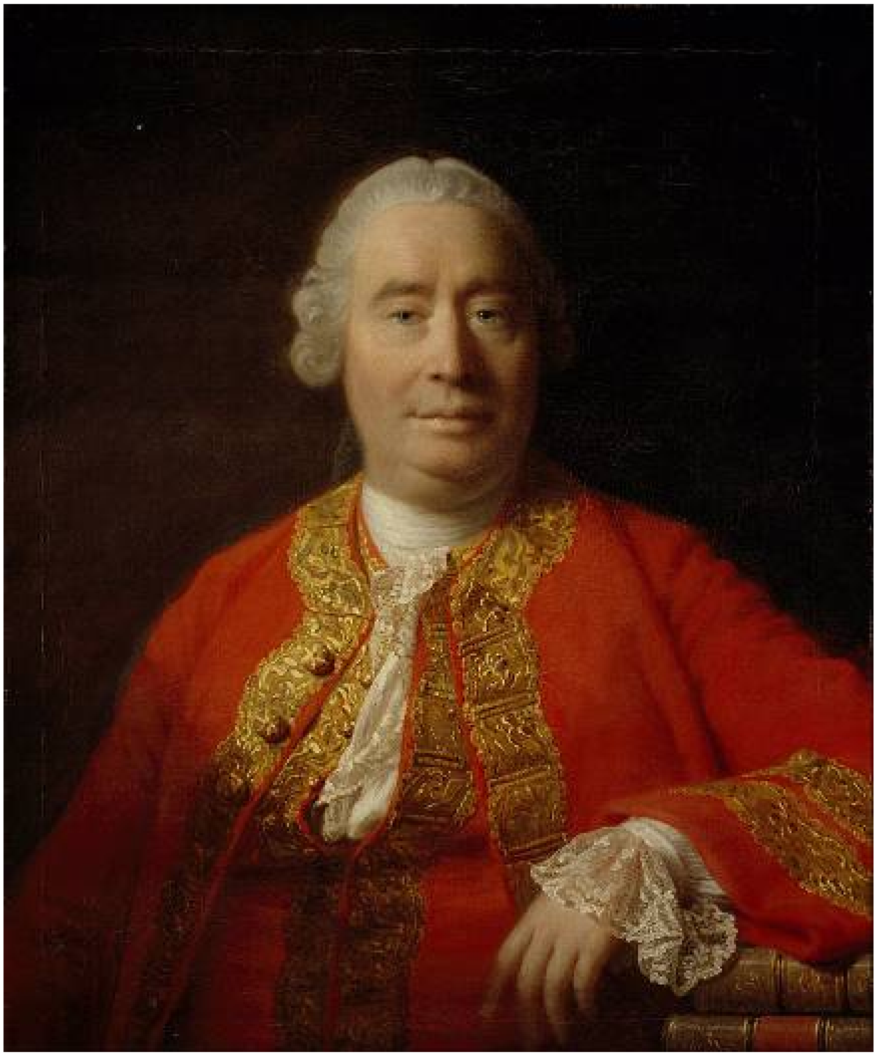
ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY

1777 Edition

First appearing in 1741, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary* is a two-volume compilation of essays that largely cover political and aesthetic issues. It is formed of pieces written and published over many years, though most were collected together in 1753–4. Many of the essays are focused on topics in politics and economics, though they also range over questions of aesthetic judgement, love, marriage and polygamy, and the demographics of ancient Greece and Rome, to name just a few of the topics considered. The Essays reveal influence from Addison's *Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which Hume read avidly in his youth.

Upon its first publication, the collection won some success. Perhaps encouraged by this, Hume became a candidate for the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh in 1744. Objectors alleged heresy and even atheism, pointing to the *A Treatise of Human Nature* as evidence. Unsuccessful, Hume left the city, where he had been living since 1740, and began a period of wandering. He would continue to add to and edit the collection of essays for the rest of his life.

The text provided here is the definitive 1777 edition of *Essays, Moral, and Literary,* which made up Volume I of the 1777 posthumous *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects*. It also includes ten essays that were withdrawn or left unpublished by Hume for various reasons. Some were deemed too controversial for the religious climate of his time.



David Hume by Allan Ramsay, 1766

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THE LIFE OF DAVID HUME, ESQ.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

MY OWN LIFE

It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings; as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: my father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's, or Hume's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate, which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: the title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

During my retreat in France, first at Reims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I composed my Treatise of Human Nature. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my Treatise, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country-house, and was employing himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742, I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my Essays: the work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. — I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and

Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the general, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so; in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the Treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London of my Essays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my Essays, which I called Political Discourses, and also my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which is another part of my treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters. In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London, my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

In 1752, the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian, that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759, I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable success.

But, notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship's repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway.

Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I resiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was chargé d'affaires till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But, in 1767, I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

In spring 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name the period of my life, which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

April 18, 1776.

Adam Smith
Nov. 9, 1776
Kirkaldy, Fifeshire
William Strahan

LETTER FROM ADAM SMITH, LL.D. TO WILLIAM STRAHAN, ESQ.

Kirkaldy, Fifeshire,
Nov. 9, 1776.

DEAR SIR,

It is with a real, though a very melancholy pleasure, that I sit down to give you some account of the behaviour of our late excellent friend, Mr. Hume, during his last illness.

Though, in his own judgment, his disease was mortal and incurable, yet he allowed himself to be prevailed upon, by the entreaty of his friends, to try what might be the effects of a long journey. A few days before he set out, he wrote that account of his own life, which, together with his other papers, he has left to your care. My account, therefore, shall begin where his ends.

He set out for London towards the end of April, and at Morpeth met with Mr. John Home and myself, who had both come down from London on purpose to see him, expecting to have found him at Edinburgh. Mr. Home returned with him, and attended him during the whole of his stay in England, with that care and attention which might be expected from a temper so perfectly friendly and affectionate. As I had written to my mother that she might expect me in Scotland, I was under the necessity of continuing my journey. His disease seemed to yield to exercise and change of air, and when he arrived in London, he was apparently in much better health than when he left Edinburgh. He was advised to go to Bath to drink the waters, which appeared for some time to have so good an effect upon him, that even he himself began to entertain, what he was not apt to do, a better opinion of his own health. His symptoms, however, soon returned with their usual violence, and from that moment he gave up all thoughts of recovery, but submitted with the utmost cheerfulness, and the most perfect complacency and resignation. Upon his return to Edinburgh, though he found himself much weaker, yet his cheerfulness never abated, and he continued to divert himself, as usual, with correcting his own works for a new edition, with reading books of amusement, with the conversation of his friends; and, sometimes in the evening, with a party at his favourite game of whist. His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. “I shall tell your friend, Colonel Edmondstone,” said Doctor Dundas to him one day, “that I left you much better, and in a fair way of recovery.” “Doctor,” said he, “as I believe you would not chuse to tell any thing but the truth, you had better tell him, that I am dying as fast as my enemies, if I have any, could wish, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire.” Colonel Edmondstone soon afterwards came to see him, and take leave of him; and on his way home, he could not forbear writing him a letter bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him, as to a dying man, the beautiful French verses in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend, the Marquis de la Fare. Mr. Hume’s magnanimity and firmness were such, that his most affectionate friends knew, that they hazarded nothing in talking or writing to him as to a dying man, and that so far from being hurt by this frankness, he was rather pleased and flattered by it. I happened to come into his room while he was reading this letter, which he had just received, and which he immediately showed me. I told him, that though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances were in many respects very bad, yet his cheerfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed still to be so very strong in him, that I could not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, “Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhoea of more than a year’s standing, would be a very bad disease at any age: at my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I must soon die.” “Well,” said I, “if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, your brother’s family in particular, in great prosperity.” He said that he felt that satisfaction so sensibly, that when he was reading a few days before, Lucian’s Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; he had no house to finish, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. “I could not well imagine,” said he, “what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do, and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them; I, therefore, have all reason to die contented.” He then diverted himself with inventing several jocular excuses, which he supposed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them. “Upon further consideration,” said he, “I thought I might say to him, Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time, that I may see how the Public receives the alterations.” But Charon would answer, “When you have seen the effect of these, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat.” But I might still urge, “Have a little patience, good Charon, I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the Public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfal of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.” But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. “You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy loitering rogue.”

But, though Mr. Hume always talked of his approaching dissolution with great cheerfulness, he never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. He never mentioned the subject but when the conversation naturally led to it, and never dwelt longer upon it than the course of the conversation happened to require: it was a subject indeed which occurred pretty frequently, in consequence of the inquiries which his friends, who came to see him, naturally made concerning the state of his health. The conversation which I mentioned above, and which passed on Thursday the 8th of August, was the last, except one, that I ever had with him. He had now become so very weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulness was still so great, his complaisance and social disposition were still so entire, that when any friend was with him, he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than suited the weakness of his body. At his own desire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was staying partly upon his account, and returned to my mother’s house here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would send for me whenever he wished to see me; the physician who saw him most frequently, Doctor Black, undertaking, in the mean time, to write me occasionally an account of the state of his health.

On the 22d of August, the Doctor wrote me the following letter:

“Since my last, Mr. Hume has passed his time pretty easily, but is much weaker. He sits up, goes down stairs once a day, and amuses himself with reading, but seldom sees any body. He finds that even the conversation of his most intimate friends fatigues and oppresses him; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits, and passes his time very well with the assistance of amusing books.”

I received the day after a letter from Mr. Hume himself, of which the following is an extract.

Mr. Hume
23d August, 1776
Edinburgh
William Strahan
Edinburgh,
23d August, 1776.

“my dearest friend, I am obliged to make use of my nephew’s hand in writing to you, as I do not rise to-day. . . .

“I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness, but unluckily it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day, but Doctor Black can better inform you concerning the degree of strength which may from time to time remain with me. Adieu, &c.”

Three days after I received the following letter from Doctor Black.

Doctor Black
Monday, 26th August, 1776
Edinburgh
William Strahan
Edinburgh,

Monday, 26th August, 1776.

“DEAR SIR, Yesterday about four o’clock afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much, that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued to the last perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak, and he died in such a happy composure of mind, that nothing could exceed it.”

Thus died our most excellent, and never to be forgotten friend; concerning whose philosophical opinions men will, no doubt, judge variously, every one approving, or condemning them, according as they happen to coincide or disagree with his own; but concerning whose character and conduct there can scarce be a difference of opinion. His temper, indeed, seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded, not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantry was the genuine effusion of good-nature and good-humour, tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not perhaps any one of all his great and amiable qualities, which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper, so agreeable in society, but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was in him certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the nature of human frailty will permit.

I ever am, dear Sir,
Most affectionately your’s,

Adam Smith.

PART I: ESSAYS MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY

ESSAY I: OF THE DELICACY OF TASTE AND PASSION

Some People are subject to a certain delicacy of passion, which makes them extremely sensible to all the accidents of life, and gives them a lively joy upon every prosperous event, as well as a piercing grief, when they meet with misfortunes and adversity. Favours and good offices easily engage their friendship; while the smallest injury provokes their resentment. Any honour or mark of distinction elevates them above measure; but they are as sensibly touched with contempt. People of this character have, no doubt, more lively enjoyments, as well as more pungent sorrows, than men of cool and sedate tempers: But, I believe, when every thing is balanced, there is no one, who would not rather be of the latter character, were he entirely master of his own disposition. Good or ill fortune is very little at our disposal: And when a person, that has this sensibility of temper, meets with any misfortune, his sorrow or resentment takes entire possession of him, and deprives him of all relish in the common occurrences of life; the right enjoyment of which forms the chief part of our happiness. Great pleasures are much less frequent than great pains; so that a sensible temper must meet with fewer trials in the former way than in the latter. Not to mention, that men of such lively passions are apt to be transported beyond all bounds of prudence and discretion, and to take false steps in the conduct of life, which are often irretrievable.

There is a delicacy of taste observable in some men, which very much resembles this delicacy of passion, and produces the same sensibility to beauty and deformity of every kind, as that does to prosperity and adversity, obligations and injuries. When you present a poem or a picture to a man possessed of this talent, the delicacy of his feeling makes him be sensibly touched with every part of it; nor are the masterly strokes perceived with more exquisite relish and satisfaction, than the negligences or absurdities with disgust and uneasiness. A polite and judicious conversation affords him the highest entertainment; rudeness or impertinence is as great a punishment to him. In short, delicacy of taste has the same effect as delicacy of passion: It enlarges the sphere both of our happiness and misery, and makes us sensible to pains as well as pleasures, which escape the rest of mankind.

I believe, however, every one will agree with me, that, notwithstanding this resemblance, delicacy of taste is as much to be desired and cultivated as delicacy of passion is to be lamented, and to be remedied, if possible. The good or ill accidents of life are very little at our disposal; but we are pretty much masters what books we shall read, what diversions we shall partake of, and what company we shall keep. Philosophers have endeavoured to render happiness entirely independent of every thing external. That degree of perfection is impossible to be attained: But every wise man will endeavour to place his happiness on such objects chiefly as depend upon himself: and that is not to be attained so much by any other means as by this delicacy of sentiment. When a man is possessed of that talent, he is more happy by what pleases his taste, than by what gratifies his appetites, and receives more enjoyment from a poem or a piece of reasoning than the most expensive luxury can afford.

Whatever connection there may be originally between these two species of delicacy, I am persuaded, that nothing is so proper to cure us of this delicacy of passion, as the cultivating of that higher and more refined taste, which enables us to judge of the characters of men, of compositions of genius, and of the productions of the nobler arts. A greater or less relish for those obvious beauties, which strike the senses, depends entirely upon the greater or less sensibility of the temper: But with regard to the sciences and liberal arts, a fine taste is, in some measure, the same with strong sense, or at least depends so much upon it, that they are inseparable. In order to judge aright of a composition of genius, there are so many views to be taken in, so many circumstances to be compared, and such a knowledge of human nature requisite, that no man, who is not possessed of the soundest judgment, will ever make a tolerable critic in such performances. And this is a new reason for cultivating a relish in the liberal arts. Our judgment will strengthen by this exercise: We shall form juster notions of life: Many things, which please or afflict others, will appear to us too frivolous to engage our attention: And we shall lose by degrees that sensibility and delicacy of passion, which is so incommodious.

But perhaps I have gone too far in saying, that a cultivated taste for the polite arts extinguishes the passions, and renders us indifferent to those objects, which are so fondly pursued by the rest of mankind. On farther reflection, I find, that it rather improves our sensibility for all the tender and agreeable passions; at the same time that it renders the mind incapable of the rougher and more boisterous emotions.

- Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
- Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

For this, I think there may be assigned two very natural reasons. In the first place, nothing is so improving to the temper as the study of the beauties, either of poetry, eloquence, music, or painting. They give a certain elegance of sentiment to which the rest of mankind are strangers. The emotions which they excite are soft and tender. They draw off the mind from the hurry of business and interest; cherish reflection; dispose to tranquillity; and produce an agreeable melancholy, which, of all dispositions of the mind, is the best suited to love and friendship.

In the second place, a delicacy of taste is favourable to love and friendship, by confining our choice to few people, and making us indifferent to the company and conversation of the greater part of men. You will seldom find, that mere men of the world, whatever strong sense they may be endowed with, are very nice in distinguishing characters, or in marking those insensible differences and gradations, which make one man preferable to another. Any one, that has competent sense, is sufficient for their entertainment: They talk to him, of their pleasure and affairs, with the same frankness that they would to another; and finding many, who are fit to supply his place, they never feel any vacancy or want in his absence. But to make use of the allusion of a celebrated French author, the judgment may be compared to a clock or watch, where the most ordinary machine is sufficient to tell the hours; but the most elaborate alone can point out the minutes and seconds, and distinguish the smallest differences of time. One that has well digested his knowledge both of books and men, has little enjoyment but in the company of a few select companions. He feels too sensibly, how much all the rest of mankind fall short of the notions which he has entertained. And, his affections being thus confined within a narrow circle, no wonder he carries them further, than if they were more general and undistinguished. The gaiety and frolic of a bottle companion improves with him into a solid friendship: And the ardours of a youthful appetite become an elegant passion.

ESSAY II: OF THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS

Nothing is more apt to surprise a foreigner, than the extreme liberty, which we enjoy in this country, of communicating whatever we please to the public, and of openly censuring every measure, entered into by the king or his ministers. If the administration resolve upon war, it is affirmed, that, either wilfully or ignorantly, they mistake the interests of the nation, and that peace, in the present situation of affairs, is infinitely preferable. If the passion of the ministers lie towards peace, our political writers breathe nothing but war and devastation, and represent the pacific conduct of the government as mean and pusillanimous. As this liberty is not indulged in any other government, either republican or monarchical; in Holland and Venice, more than in France or Spain; it may very naturally give occasion to a question, How it happens that Great Britain alone enjoys this peculiar privilege?

The reason, why the laws indulge us in such a liberty seems to be derived from our mixed form of government, which is neither wholly monarchical, nor wholly republican. It will be found, if I mistake not, a true observation in politics, that the two extremes in government, liberty and slavery, commonly approach nearest to each other; and that, as you depart from the extremes, and mix a little of monarchy with liberty, the government becomes always the more free; and on the other hand, when you mix a little of liberty with monarchy, the yoke becomes always the more grievous and intolerable. In a government, such as that of France, which is absolute, and where law, custom, and religion concur, all of them, to make the people fully satisfied with their condition, the monarch cannot entertain any jealousy against his subjects, and therefore is apt to indulge them in great liberties both of speech and action. In a government altogether republican, such as that of Holland, where there is no magistrate so eminent as to give jealousy to the state, there is no danger in intrusting the magistrates with large discretionary powers; and though many advantages result from such powers, in preserving peace and order, yet they lay a considerable restraint on men’s actions, and make every private citizen pay a great respect to the government. Thus it seems evident, that the two extremes of absolute monarchy and of a republic, approach near to each other in some material circumstances. In the first, the magistrate has no jealousy of the people: in the second, the people have none of the magistrate: Which want of jealousy begets a mutual confidence and trust in both cases, and produces a species of liberty in monarchies, and of arbitrary power in republics.

To justify the other part of the foregoing observation, that, in every government, the means are most wide of each other, and that the mixtures of monarchy and liberty render the yoke either more easy or more grievous; I must take notice of a remark in Tacitus with regard to the Romans under the emperors, that they neither could bear total slavery nor total liberty, Nec totam servitutem, nec totam libertatem pati possunt. This remark a celebrated poet has translated and applied to the English, in his lively description of queen Elizabeth's policy and government,

- Et fit aimer son joug a l'Anglois indompté,
- Qui ne peut ni servir, ni vivre en liberté,
- Henriade, liv. I.

According to these remarks, we are to consider the Roman government under the emperors as a mixture of despotism and liberty, where the despotism prevailed; and the English government as a mixture of the same kind, where the liberty predominates. The consequences are conformable to the foregoing observation; and such as may be expected from those mixed forms of government, which beget a mutual watchfulness and jealousy. The Roman emperors were, many of them, the most frightful tyrants that ever disgraced human nature; and it is evident, that their cruelty was chiefly excited by their jealousy, and by their observing that all the great men of Rome bore with impatience the dominion of a family, which, but a little before, was no wise superior to their own. On the other hand, as the republican part of the government prevails in England, though with a great mixture of monarchy, it is obliged, for its own preservation, to maintain a watchful jealousy over the magistrates, to remove all discretionary powers, and to secure every one's life and fortune by general and inflexible laws. No action must be deemed a crime but what the law has plainly determined to be such: No crime must be imputed to a man but from a legal proof before his judges; and even these judges must be his fellow-subjects, who are obliged, by their own interest, to have a watchful eye over the encroachments and violence of the ministers. From these causes it proceeds, that there is as much liberty, and even, perhaps, licentiousness in Great Britain, as there were formerly slavery and tyranny in Rome.

These principles account for the great liberty of the press in these kingdoms, beyond what is indulged in any other government. It is apprehended, that arbitrary power would steal in upon us, were we not careful to prevent its progress, and were there not an easy method of conveying the alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other. The spirit of the people must frequently be rouzed, in order to curb the ambition of the court; and the dread of rouzing this spirit must be employed to prevent that ambition. Nothing so effectual to this purpose as the liberty of the press, by which all the learning, wit, and genius of the nation may be employed on the side of freedom, and every one be animated to its defence. As long, therefore, as the republican part of our government can maintain itself against the monarchical, it will naturally be careful to keep the press open, as of importance to its own preservation.

It must however be allowed, that the unbounded liberty of the press, though it be difficult, perhaps impossible, to propose a suitable remedy for it, is one of the evils, attending those mixt forms of government.

ESSAY III: THAT POLITICS MAY BE REDUCED TO A SCIENCE

It is a question with several, whether there be any essential difference between one form of government and another? and, whether every form may not become good or bad, according as it is well or ill administered? Were it once admitted, that all governments are alike, and that the only difference consists in the character and conduct of the governors, most political disputes would be at an end, and all Zeal for one constitution above another, must be esteemed mere bigotry and folly. But, though a friend to moderation, I cannot forbear condemning this sentiment, and should be sorry to think, that human affairs admit of no greater stability, than what they receive from the casual humours and characters of particular men.

It is true; those who maintain, that the goodness of all government consists in the goodness of the administration, may cite many particular instances in history, where the very same government, in different hands, has varied suddenly into the two opposite extremes of good and bad. Compare the French government under Henry III. and under Henry IV. Oppression, levity, artifice on the part of the rulers; faction, sedition, treachery, rebellion, disloyalty on the part of the subjects: These compose the character of the former miserable æra. But when the patriot and heroic prince, who succeeded, was once firmly seated on the throne, the government, the people, every thing seemed to be totally changed; and all from the difference of the temper and conduct of these two sovereigns. Instances of this kind may be multiplied, almost without number, from ancient as well as modern history, foreign as well as domestic.

But here it may be proper to make a distinction. All absolute governments must very much depend on the administration; and this is one of the great inconveniences attending that form of government. But a republican and free government would be an obvious absurdity, if the particular checks and controuls, provided by the constitution, had really no influence, and made it not the interest, even of bad men, to act for the public good. Such is the intention of these forms of government, and such is their real effect, where they are wisely constituted: As on the other hand, they are the source of all disorder, and of the blackest crimes, where either skill or honesty has been wanting in their original frame and institution.

So great is the force of laws, and of particular forms of government, and so little dependence have they on the humours and tempers of men, that consequences almost as general and certain may sometimes be deduced from them, as any which the mathematical sciences afford us.

The constitution of the Roman republic gave the whole legislative power to the people, without allowing a negative voice either to the nobility or consuls. This unbounded power they possessed in a collective, not in a representative body. The consequences were: When the people, by success and conquest, had become very numerous, and had spread themselves to a great distance from the capital, the city-tribes, though the most contemptible, carried almost every vote: They were, therefore, most cajoled by every one that affected popularity: They were supported in idleness by the general distribution of corn, and by particular bribes, which they received from almost every candidate: By this means, they became every day more licentious, and the Campus Martius was a perpetual scene of tumult and sedition: Armed slaves were introduced among these rascally citizens; so that the whole government fell into anarchy, and the greatest happiness, which the Romans could look for, was the despotic power of the Cæsars. Such are the effects of democracy without a representative.

A Nobility may possess the whole, or any part of the legislative power of a state, in two different ways. Either every nobleman shares the power as part of the whole body, or the whole body enjoys the power as composed of parts, which have each a distinct power and authority. The Venetian aristocracy is an instance of the first kind of government: The Polish of the second. In the Venetian government the whole body of nobility possesses the whole power, and no nobleman has any authority which he receives not from the whole. In the Polish government every nobleman, by means of his fiefs, has a distinct hereditary authority over his vassals, and the whole body has no authority but what it receives from the concurrence of its parts. The different operations and tendencies of these two species of government might be made apparent even a priori. A Venetian nobility is preferable to a Polish, let the humours and education of men be ever so much varied. A nobility, who possess their power in common, will preserve peace and order, both among themselves, and their subjects; and no member can have authority enough to controul the laws for a moment. The nobles will preserve their authority over the people, but without any grievous tyranny, or any breach of private property; because such a tyrannical government promotes not the interests of the whole body, however it may that of some individuals. There will be a distinction of rank between the nobility and people, but this will be the only distinction in the state. The whole nobility will form one body, and the whole people another, without any of those private feuds and animosities, which spread ruin and desolation every where. It is easy to see the disadvantages of a Polish nobility in every one of these particulars.

It is possible so to constitute a free government, as that a single person, call him doge, prince, or king, shall possess a large share of power, and shall form a proper balance or counterpoise to the other parts of the legislature. This chief magistrate may be either elective or hereditary; and though the former institution may, to a superficial view, appear the most advantageous; yet a more accurate inspection will discover in it greater inconveniencies than in the latter, and such as are founded on causes and principles eternal and immutable. The filling of the throne, in such a government, is a point of too great and too general interest, not to divide the whole people into factions: Whence a civil war, the greatest of ills, may be apprehended, almost with certainty, upon every vacancy. The prince elected must be either a Foreigner or a Native: The former will be ignorant of the people whom he is to govern; suspicious of his new subjects, and suspected by them; giving his confidence entirely to strangers, who will have no other care but of enriching themselves in the quickest manner, while their master’s favour and authority are able to support them. A native will carry into the throne all his private animosities and friendships, and will never be viewed in his elevation, without exciting the sentiment of envy in those, who formerly considered him as their equal. Not to mention that a crown is too high a reward ever to be given to merit alone, and will always induce the candidates to employ force, or money, or intrigue, to procure the votes of the electors: So that such an election will give no better chance for superior merit in the prince, than if the state had trusted to birth alone for determining their sovereign.

It may therefore be pronounced as an universal axiom in politics, That an hereditary prince, a nobility without vassals, and a people voting by their representatives, form the best monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. But in order to prove more fully, that politics admit of general truths, which are invariable by the humour or education either of subject or sovereign, it may not be amiss to observe some other principles of this science, which may seem to deserve that character.

It may easily be observed, that, though free governments have been commonly the most happy for those who partake of their freedom; yet are they the most ruinous and oppressive to their provinces: And this observation may, I believe, be fixed as a maxim of the kind we are here speaking of. When a monarch extends his dominions by conquest, he soon learns to consider his old and his new subjects as on the same footing; because, in reality, all his subjects are to him the same, except the few friends and favourites, with whom he is personally acquainted. He does not, therefore, make any distinction between them in his general laws; and, at the same time, is careful to prevent all particular acts of oppression on the one as well as on the other. But a free state necessarily makes a great distinction, and must always do so, till men learn to love their neighbours as well as themselves. The conquerors, in such a government, are all legislators, and will be sure to contrive matters, by restrictions on trade, and by taxes, so as to draw some private, as well as public, advantage from their conquests. Provincial governors have also a better chance, in a republic, to escape with their plunder, by means of bribery or intrigue; and their fellow-citizens, who find their own state to be enriched by the spoils of the subject provinces, will be the more inclined to tolerate such abuses. Not to mention, that it is a necessary precaution in a free state to change the governors frequently; which obliges these temporary tyrants to be more expeditious and rapacious, that they may accumulate sufficient wealth before they give place to their successors. What cruel tyrants were the Romans over the world during the time of their commonwealth! It is true, they had laws to prevent oppression in their provincial magistrates; but Cicero informs us, that the Romans could not better consult the interests of the provinces than by repealing these very laws. For, in that case, says he, our magistrates, having entire impunity, would plunder no more than would satisfy their own rapaciousness; whereas, at present, they must also satisfy that of their judges, and of all the great men in Rome, of whose protection they stand in need. Who can read of the cruelties and oppressions of Verres without horror and astonishment? And who is not touched with indignation to hear, that, after Cicero had exhausted on that abandoned criminal all the thunders of his eloquence, and had prevailed so far as to get him condemned to the utmost extent of the laws; yet that cruel tyrant lived peaceably to old age, in opulence and ease, and, thirty years afterwards, was put into the proscription by Mark Anthony, on account of his exorbitant wealth, where he fell with Cicero himself, and all the most virtuous men of Rome? After the dissolution of the commonwealth, the Roman yoke became easier upon the provinces, as Tacitus informs us; and it may be observed, that many of the worst emperors, Domitian, for instance, were careful to prevent all oppression on the provinces. In Tiberius's time, Gaul was esteemed richer than Italy itself: Nor, do I find, during the whole time of the Roman monarchy, that the empire became less rich or populous in any of its provinces; though indeed its valour and military discipline were always upon the decline. The oppression and tyranny of the Carthaginians over their subject states in Africa went so far, as we learn from Polybius, that, not content with exacting the half of all the produce of the land, which of itself was a very high rent, they also loaded them with many other taxes. If we pass from ancient to modern times, we shall still find the observation to hold. The provinces of absolute monarchies are always better treated than those of free states. Compare the Païs conquis of France with Ireland, and you will be convinced of this truth; though this latter kingdom, being, in a good measure, peopled from England, possesses so many rights and privileges as should naturally make it challenge better treatment than that of a conquered province. Corsica is also an obvious instance to the same purpose.

There is an observation in Machiavel, with regard to the conquests of Alexander the Great, which I think, may be regarded as one of those eternal political truths, which no time nor accidents can vary. It may seem strange, says that politician, that such sudden conquests, as those of Alexander, should be possessed so peaceably by his successors, and that the Persians, during all the confusions and civil wars among the Greeks, never made the smallest effort towards the recovery of their former independent government. To satisfy us concerning the cause of this remarkable event, we may consider, that a monarch may govern his subjects in two different ways. He may either follow the maxims of the eastern princes, and stretch his authority so far as to leave no distinction of rank among his subjects, but what proceeds immediately from himself; no advantages of birth; no hereditary honours and possessions; and, in a word, no credit among the people, except from his commission alone. Or a monarch may exert his power after a milder manner, like other European princes; and leave other sources of honour, beside his smile and favour: Birth, titles, possessions, valour, integrity, knowledge, or great and fortunate atchievements. In the former species of government, after a conquest, it is impossible ever to shake off the yoke; since no one possesses, among the people, so much personal credit and authority as to begin such an enterprize: Whereas, in the latter, the least misfortune, or discord among the victors, will encourage the vanquished to take arms, who have leaders ready to prompt and conduct them in every undertaking.

Such is the reasoning of Machiavel, which seems solid and conclusive; though I wish he had not mixed falsehood with truth, in asserting, that monarchies, governed according to eastern policy, though more easily kept when once subdued, yet are the most difficult to subdue; since they cannot contain any powerful subject, whose discontent and faction may facilitate the enterprizes of an enemy. For besides, that such a tyrannical government enervates the courage of men, and renders them indifferent towards the fortunes of their sovereign; besides this, I say, we find by experience, that even the temporary and delegated authority of the generals and magistrates; being always, in such governments, as absolute within its sphere, as that of the prince himself; is able, with barbarians, accustomed to a blind submission, to produce the most dangerous and fatal revolutions. So that, in every respect, a gentle government is preferable, and gives the greatest security to the sovereign as well as to the subject.

Legislators, therefore, ought not to trust the future government of a state entirely to chance, but ought to provide a system of laws to regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity. Effects will always correspond to causes; and wise regulations in any commonwealth are the most valuable legacy that can be left to future ages. In the smallest court or office, the stated forms and methods, by which business must be conducted, are found to be a considerable check on the natural depravity of mankind. Why should not the case be the same in public affairs? Can we ascribe the stability and wisdom of the Venetian government, through so many ages, to any thing but the form of government? And is it not easy to point out those defects in the original constitution, which produced the tumultuous governments of Athens and Rome, and ended at last in the ruin of these two famous republics? And so little dependance has this affair on the humours and education of particular men, that one part of the same republic may be wisely conducted, and another weakly, by the very same men, merely on account of the difference of the forms and institutions, by which these parts are regulated. Historians inform us that this was actually the case with Genoa. For while the state was always full of sedition, and tumult, and disorder, the bank of St. George, which had become a considerable part of the people, was conducted, for several ages, with the utmost integrity and wisdom.

The ages of greatest public spirit are not always most eminent for private virtue. Good laws may beget order and moderation in the government, where the manners and customs have instilled little humanity or justice into the tempers of men. The most illustrious period of the Roman history, considered in a political view, is that between the beginning of the first and end of the last Punic war; the due balance between the nobility and the people being then fixed by the contests of the tribunes, and not being yet lost by the extent of conquests. Yet at this very time, the horrid practice of poisoning was so common, that, during part of a season, a Prætor punished capitally for this crime above three thousand persons in a part of Italy; and found informations of this nature still multiplying upon him. There is a similar, or rather a worse instance, in the more early times of the commonwealth. So depraved in private life were that people, whom in their histories we so much admire. I doubt not but they were really more virtuous during the time of the two Triumvirates; when they were tearing their common country to pieces, and spreading slaughter and desolation over the face of the earth, merely for the choice of tyrants.,

Here, then, is a sufficient inducement to maintain, with the utmost Zeal, in every free state, those forms and institutions, by which liberty is secured, the public good consulted, and the avarice or ambition of particular men restrained and punished. Nothing does more honour to human nature, than to see it susceptible of so noble a passion; as nothing can be a greater indication of meanness of heart in any man, than to see him destitute of it. A man who loves only himself, without regard to friendship and desert, merits the severest blame; and a man, who is only susceptible of friendship, without public spirit, or a regard to the community, is deficient in the most material part of virtue.

But this is a subject which needs not be longer insisted on at present. There are enow of zealots on both sides who kindle up the passions of their partizans, and under pretence of public good, pursue the interests and ends of their particular faction. For my part, I shall always be more fond of promoting moderation than zeal; though perhaps the surest way of producing moderation in every party is to increase our zeal for the public. Let us therefore try, if it be possible, from the foregoing doctrine, to draw a lesson of moderation with regard to the parties, into which our country is at present divided; at the same time, that we allow not this moderation to abate the industry and passion, with which every individual is bound to pursue the good of his country.

Those who either attack or defend a minister in such a government as ours, where the utmost liberty is allowed, always carry matters to an extreme, and exaggerate his merit or demerit with regard to the public. His enemies are sure to charge him with the greatest enormities, both in domestic and foreign management; and there is no meanness or crime, of which, in their account, he is not capable. Unnecessary wars, scandalous treaties, profusion of public treasure, oppressive taxes, every kind of mal-administration is ascribed to him. To aggravate the charge, his pernicious conduct, it is said, will extend its baleful influence even to posterity, by undermining the best constitution in the world, and disordering that wise system of laws, institutions, and customs, by which our ancestors, during so many centuries, have been so happily governed. He is not only a wicked minister in himself, but has removed every security provided against wicked ministers for the future.

On the other hand, the partizans of the minister make his panegyric run as high as the accusation against him, and celebrate his wise, steady, and moderate conduct in every part of his administration. The honour and interest of the nation supported abroad, public credit maintained at home, persecution restrained, faction subdued; the merit of all these blessings is ascribed solely to the minister. At the same time, he crowns all his other merits by a religious care of the best constitution in the world, which he has preserved in all its parts, and has transmitted entire, to be the happiness and security of the latest posterity.

When this accusation and panegyric are received by the partizans of each party, no wonder they beget an extraordinary ferment on both sides, and fill the nation with violent animosities. But I would fain persuade these party-zealots, that there is a flat contradiction both in the accusation and panegyric, and that it were impossible for either of them to run so high, were it not for this contradiction. If our constitution be really that noble fabric, the pride of Britain, the envy of our neighbours, raised by the labour of so many centuries, repaired at the expence of so many millions, and cemented by such a profusion of blood; I say, if our constitution does in any degree deserve these eulogies, it would never have suffered a wicked and weak minister to govern triumphantly for a course of twenty years, when opposed by the greatest geniuses in the nation, who exercised the utmost liberty of tongue and pen, in parliament, and in their frequent appeals to the people. But, if the minister be wicked and weak, to the degree so strenuously insisted on, the constitution must be faulty in its original principles, and he cannot consistently be charged with undermining the best form of government in the world. A constitution is only so far good, as it provides a remedy against mal-administration; and if the British, when in its greatest vigour, and repaired by two such remarkable events, as the Revolution and Accession, by which our ancient royal family was sacrificed to it; if our constitution, I say, with so great advantages, does not, in fact, provide any such remedy, we are rather beholden to any minister who undermines it, and affords us an opportunity of erecting a better in its place.

I would employ the same topics to moderate the zeal of those who defend the minister. Is our constitution so excellent? Then a change of ministry can be no such dreadful event; since it is essential to such a constitution, in every ministry, both to preserve itself from violation, and to prevent all enormities in the administration. Is our constitution very bad? Then so extraordinary a jealousy and apprehension, on account of changes, is ill placed; and a man should no more be anxious in this case, than a husband, who had married woman from the stews, should be watchful to prevent her infidelity. Public affairs, in such a government, must necessarily go to confusion, by whatever hands they are conducted; and the zeal of patriots is in that case much less requisite than the patience and submission of philosophers. The virtue and good intentions of Cato and Brutus are highly laudable; but, to what purpose did their zeal serve? Only to hasten the fatal period of the Roman government, and render its convulsions and dying agonies more violent and painful.

I would not be understood to mean, that public affairs deserve no care and attention at all. Would men be moderate and consistent, their claims might be admitted; at least might be examined. The country-party might still assert, that our constitution, though excellent, will admit of mal-administration to a certain degree; and therefore, if the minister be bad, it is proper to oppose him with a suitable degree of zeal. And, on the other hand, the court-party may be allowed, upon the supposition that the minister were good, to defend, and with some zeal too, his administration. I would only persuade men not to contend, as if they were fighting pro aris & focis, and change a good constitution into a bad one, by the violence of their factions.

I have not here considered any thing that is personal in the present controversy. In the best civil constitution, where every man is restrained by the most rigid laws, it is easy to discover either the good or bad intentions of a minister, and to judge, whether his personal character deserve love or hatred. But such questions are of little importance to the public, and lay those, who employ their pens upon them, under a just suspicion either of malevolence or of flattery.

ESSAY IV: OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

Nothing appears more surprizing to those, who consider human affairs with a philosophical eye, than the easiness with which the many are governed by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers. When we enquire by what means this wonder is effected, we shall find, that, as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded; and this maxim extends to the most despotic and most military governments, as well as to the most free and most popular. The soldan of Egypt, or the emperor of Rome, might drive his harmless subjects, like brute beasts, against their sentiments and inclination: But he must, at least, have led his mamalukes, or prætorian bands, like men, by their opinion.

Opinion is of two kinds, to wit, opinion of interest, and opinion of right. By opinion of interest, I chiefly understand the sense of the general advantage which is reaped from government; together with the persuasion, that the particular government, which is established, is equally advantageous with any other that could easily be settled. When this opinion prevails among the generality of a state, or among those who have the force in their hands, it gives great security to any government.

Right is of two kinds, right to Power and right to Property. What prevalence opinion of the first kind has over mankind, may easily be understood, by observing the attachment which all nations have to their ancient government, and even to those names, which have had the sanction of antiquity. Antiquity always begets the opinion of right; and whatever disadvantageous sentiments we may entertain of mankind, they are always found to be prodigal both of blood and treasure in the maintenance of public justice. There is, indeed, no particular, in which, at first sight, there may appear a greater contradiction in the frame of the human mind than the present. When men act in a faction, they are apt, without shame or remorse, to neglect all the ties of honour and morality, in order to serve their party; and yet, when a faction is formed upon a point of right or principle, there is no occasion, where men discover a greater obstinacy, and a more determined sense of justice and equity. The same social disposition of mankind is the cause of these contradictory appearances.

It is sufficiently understood, that the opinion of right to property is of moment in all matters of government. A noted author has made property the foundation of all government; and most of our political writers seem inclined to follow him in that particular. This is carrying the matter too far; but still it must be owned, that the opinion of right to property has a great influence in this subject.

Upon these three opinions, therefore, of public interest, of right to power, and of right to property, are all governments founded, and all authority of the few over the many. There are indeed other principles, which add force to these, and determine, limit, or alter their operation; such as self-interest, fear, and affection: But still we may assert, that these other principles can have no influence alone, but suppose the antecedent influence of those opinions above-mentioned. They are, therefore, to be esteemed the secondary, not the original principles of government.

For, first, as to self-interest, by which I mean the expectation of particular rewards, distinct from the general protection which we receive from government, it is evident that the magistrate's authority must be antecedently established, at least be hoped for, in order to produce this expectation. The prospect of reward may augment his authority with regard to some particular persons; but can never give birth to it, with regard to the public. Men naturally look for the greatest favours from their friends and acquaintance; and therefore, the hopes of any considerable number of the state would never center in any particular set of men, if these men had no other title to magistracy, and had no separate influence over the opinions of mankind. The same observation may be extended to the other two principles of fear and affection. No man would have any reason to fear the fury of a tyrant, if he had no authority over any but from fear; since, as a single man, his bodily force can reach but a small way, and all the farther power he possesses must be founded either on our own opinion, or on the presumed opinion of others. And though affection to wisdom and virtue in a sovereign extends very far, and has great influence; yet he must antecedently be supposed invested with a public character, otherwise the public esteem will serve him in no stead, nor will his virtue have any influence beyond a narrow sphere.

A Government may endure for several ages, though the balance of power, and the balance of property do not coincide. This chiefly happens, where any rank or order of the state has acquired a large share in the property; but from the original constitution of the government, has no share in the power. Under what pretence would any individual of that order assume authority in public affairs? As men are commonly much attached to their ancient government, it is not to be expected, that the public would ever favour such usurpations. But where the original constitution allows any share of power, though small, to an order of men, who possess a large share of the property, it is easy for them gradually to stretch their authority, and bring the balance of power to coincide with that of property. This has been the case with the house of commons in England.

Most writers, that have treated of the British government, have supposed, that, as the lower house represents all the commons of Great Britain, its weight in the scale is proportioned to the property and power of all whom it represents. But this principle must not be received as absolutely true. For though the people are apt to attach themselves more to the house of commons, than to any other member of the constitution; that house being chosen by them as their representatives, and as the public guardians of their liberty; yet are there instances where the house, even when in opposition to the crown, has not been followed by the people; as we may particularly observe of the tory house of commons in the reign of king William. Were the members obliged to receive instructions from their constituents, like the Dutch deputies, this would entirely alter the case; and if such immense power and riches, as those of all the commons of Great Britain, were brought into the scale, it is not easy to conceive, that the crown could either influence that multitude of people, or withstand that overbalance of property. It is true, the crown has great influence over the collective body in the elections of members; but were this influence, which at present is only exerted once in seven years, to be employed in bringing over the people to every vote, it would soon be wasted; and no skill, popularity, or revenue, could support it. I must, therefore, be of opinion, that an alteration in this particular would introduce a total alteration in our government, and would soon reduce it to a pure republic; and, perhaps, to a republic of no inconvenient form. For though the people, collected in a body like the Roman tribes, be quite unfit for government, yet when dispersed in small bodies, they are more susceptible both of reason and order; the force of popular currents and tides is, in a great measure, broken; and the public interest may be pursued with some method and constancy. But it is needless to reason any farther concerning a form of government, which is never likely to have place in Great Britain, and which seems not to be the aim of any party amongst us. Let us cherish and improve our ancient government as much as possible, without encouraging a passion for such dangerous novelties.

ESSAY V: OF THE ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

Man, born in a family, is compelled to maintain society, from necessity, from natural inclination, and from habit. The same creature, in his farther progress, is engaged to establish political society, in order to administer justice; without which there can be no peace among them, nor safety, nor mutual intercourse. We are, therefore, to look upon all the vast apparatus of our government, as having ultimately no other object or purpose but the distribution of justice, or, in other words, the support of the twelve judges. Kings and parliaments, fleets and armies, officers of the court and revenue, ambassadors, ministers, and privy-counsellors, are all subordinate in their end to this part of administration. Even the clergy, as their duty leads them to inculcate morality, may justly be thought, so far as regards this world, to have no other useful object of their institution.

All men are sensible of the necessity of justice to maintain peace and order; and all men are sensible of the necessity of peace and order for the maintenance of society. Yet, notwithstanding this strong and obvious necessity, such is the frailty or perverseness of our nature! it is impossible to keep men, faithfully and unerringly, in the paths of justice. Some extraordinary circumstances may happen, in which a man finds his interests to be more promoted by fraud or rapine, than hurt by the breach which his injustice makes in the social union. But much more frequently, he is seduced from his great and important, but distant interests, by the allurement of present, though often very frivolous temptations. This great weakness is incurable in human nature.

Men must, therefore, endeavour to palliate what they cannot cure. They must institute some persons, under the appellation of magistrates, whose peculiar office it is, to point out the decrees of equity, to punish transgressors, to correct fraud and violence, and to oblige men, however reluctant, to consult their own real and permanent interests. In a word, Obedience is a new duty which must be invented to support that of Justice; and the tyes of equity must be corroborated by those of allegiance.

But still, viewing matters in an abstract light, it may be thought, that nothing is gained by this alliance, and that the factitious duty of obedience, from its very nature, lays as feeble a hold of the human mind, as the primitive and natural duty of justice. Peculiar interests and present temptations may overcome the one as well as the other. They are equally exposed to the same inconvenience. And the man, who is inclined to be a bad neighbour, must be led by the same motives, well or ill understood, to be a bad citizen and subject. Not to mention, that the magistrate himself may often be negligent, or partial, or unjust in his administration.

Experience, however, proves, that there is a great difference between the cases. Order in society, we find, is much better maintained by means of government; and our duty to the magistrate is more strictly guarded by the principles of human nature, than our duty to our fellow-citizens. The love of dominion is so strong in the breast of man, that many, not only submit to, but court all the dangers, and fatigues, and cares of government; and men, once raised to that station, though often led astray by private passions, find, in ordinary cases, a visible interest in the impartial administration of justice. The persons, who first attain this distinction by the consent, tacit or express, of the people, must be endowed with superior personal qualities of valour, force, integrity, or prudence, which command respect and confidence: and after government is established, a regard to birth, rank, and station has a mighty influence over men, and enforces the decrees of the magistrate. The prince or leader exclaims against every disorder, which disturbs his society. He summons all his partizans and all men of probity to aid him in correcting and redressing it: and he is readily followed by all indifferent persons in the execution of his office. He soon acquires the power of rewarding these services; and in the progress of society, he establishes subordinate ministers and often a military force, who find an immediate and a visible interest, in supporting his authority. Habit soon consolidates what other principles of human nature had imperfectly founded; and men, once accustomed to obedience, never think of departing from that path, in which they and their ancestors have constantly trod, and to which they are confined by so many urgent and visible motives.

But though this progress of human affairs may appear certain and inevitable, and though the support which allegiance brings to justice, be founded on obvious principles of human nature, it cannot be expected that men should beforehand be able to discover them, or foresee their operation. Government commences more casually and more imperfectly. It is probable, that the first ascendant of one man over multitudes begun during a state of war; where the superiority of courage and of genius discovers itself most visibly, where unanimity and concert are most requisite, and where the pernicious effects of disorder are most sensibly felt. The long continuance of that state, an incident common among savage tribes, enured the people to submission; and if the chieftain possessed as much equity as prudence and valour, he became, even during peace, the arbiter of all differences, and could gradually, by a mixture of force and consent, establish his authority. The benefit sensibly felt from his influence, made it be cherished by the people, at least by the peaceable and well disposed among them; and if his son enjoyed the same good qualities, government advanced the sooner to maturity and perfection; but was still in a feeble state, till the farther progress of improvement procured the magistrate a revenue, and enabled him to bestow rewards on the several instruments of his administration, and to inflict punishments on the refractory and disobedient. Before that period, each exertion of his influence must have been particular, and founded on the peculiar circumstances of the case. After it, submission was no longer a matter of choice in the bulk of the community, but was rigorously exacted by the authority of the supreme magistrate.

In all governments, there is a perpetual intestine struggle, open or secret, between Authority and Liberty; and neither of them can ever absolutely prevail in the contest. A great sacrifice of liberty must necessarily be made in every government; yet even the authority, which confines liberty, can never, and perhaps ought never, in any constitution, to become quite entire and uncontroulable. The sultan is master of the life and fortune of any individual; but will not be permitted to impose new taxes on his subjects: a French monarch can impose taxes at pleasure; but would find it dangerous to attempt the lives and fortunes of individuals. Religion also, in most countries, is commonly found to be a very intractable principle; and other principles or prejudices frequently resist all the authority of the civil magistrate; whose power, being founded on opinion, can never subvert other opinions, equally rooted with that of his title to dominion. The government, which, in common appellation, receives the appellation of free, is that which admits of a partition of power among several members, whose united authority is no less, or is commonly greater than that of any monarch; but who, in the usual course of administration, must act by general and equal laws, that are previously known to all the members and to all their subjects. In this sense, it must be owned, that liberty is the perfection of civil society; but still authority must be acknowledged essential to its very existence: and in those contests, which so often take place between the one and the other, the latter may, on that account, challenge the preference. Unless perhaps one may say (and it may be said with some reason) that a circumstance, which is essential to the existence of civil society, must always support itself, and needs be guarded with less jealousy, than one that contributes only to its perfection, which the indolence of men is so apt to neglect, or their ignorance to overlook.

ESSAY VI: OF THE INDEPENDENCY OF PARLIAMENT

Political writers have established it as a maxim, that, in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controuls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a knave, and to have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and, by means of it, make him, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition, co-operate to public good. Without this, say they, we shall in vain boast of the advantages of any constitution, and shall find, in the end, that we have no security for our liberties or possessions, except the good-will of our rulers; that is, we shall have no security at all.

It is, therefore, a just political maxim, that every man must be supposed a knave: Though at the same time, it appears somewhat strange, that a maxim should be true in politics, which is false in fact. But to satisfy us on this head, we may consider, that men are generally more honest in their private than in their public capacity, and will go greater lengths to serve a party, than when their own private interest is alone concerned. Honour is a great check upon mankind: But where a considerable body of men act together, this check is, in a great measure, removed; since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party, for what promotes the common interest; and he soon learns to despise the clamours of adversaries. To which we may add, that every court or senate is determined by the greater number of voices; so that, if self-interest influences only the majority, (as it will always do) the whole senate follows the allurements of this separate interest, and acts as if it contained not one member, who had any regard to public interest and liberty.

When there offers, therefore, to our censure and examination, any plan of government, real or imaginary, where the power is distributed among several courts, and several orders of men, we should always consider the separate interest of each court, and each order; and, if we find that, by the skilful division of power, this interest must necessarily, in its operation, concur with public, we may pronounce that government to be wise and happy. If, on the contrary, separate interest be not checked, and be not directed to the public, we ought to look for nothing but faction, disorder, and tyranny from such a government. In this opinion I am justified by experience, as well as by the authority of all philosophers and politicians, both antient and modern.

How much, therefore, would it have surprised such a genius as Cicero, or Tacitus, to have been told, that, in a future age, there should arise a very regular system of mixed government, where the authority was so distributed, that one rank, whenever it pleased, might swallow up all the rest, and engross the whole power of the constitution. Such a government, they would say, will not be a mixed government. For so great is the natural ambition of men, that they are never satisfied with power; and if one order of men, by pursuing its own interest, can usurp upon every other order, it will certainly do so, and render itself, as far as possible, absolute and uncontroulable.

But, in this opinion, experience shews they would have been mistaken. For this is actually the case with the British constitution. The share of power, allotted by our constitution to the house of commons, is so great, that it absolutely commands all the other parts of the government. The king's legislative power is plainly no proper check to it. For though the king has a negative in framing laws; yet this, in fact, is esteemed of so little moment, that whatever is voted by the two houses, is always sure to pass into a law, and the royal assent is little better than a form. The principal weight of the crown lies in the executive power. But besides that the executive power in every government is altogether subordinate to the legislative; besides this, I say, the exercise of this power requires an immense expence; and the commons have assumed to themselves the sole right of granting money. How easy, therefore, would it be for that house to wrest from the crown all these powers, one after another; by making every grant conditional, and choosing their time so well, that their refusal of supply should only distress the government, without giving foreign powers any advantage over us? Did the house of commons depend in the same manner on the king, and had none of the members any property but from his gift, would not he command all their resolutions, and be from that moment absolute? As to the house of lords, they are a very powerful support to the Crown, so long as they are, in their turn, supported by it; but both experience and reason shew, that they have no force or authority sufficient to maintain themselves alone, without such support.

How, therefore, shall we solve this paradox? And by what means is this member of our constitution confined within the proper limits; since, from our very constitution, it must necessarily have as much power as it demands, and can only be confined by itself? How is this consistent with our experience of human nature? I answer, that the interest of the body is here restrained by that of the individuals, and that the house of commons stretches not its power, because such an usurpation would be contrary to the interest of the majority of its members. The crown has so many offices at its disposal, that, when assisted by the honest and disinterested part of the house, it will always command the resolutions of the whole so far, at least, as to preserve the antient constitution from danger. We may, therefore, give to this influence what name we please; we may call it by the invidious appellations of corruption and dependence; but some degree and some kind of it are inseparable from the very nature of the constitution, and necessary to the preservation of our mixed government.

Instead then of asserting absolutely, that the dependence of parliament, in every degree, is an infringement of British liberty, the country-party should have made some concessions to their adversaries, and have only examined what was the proper degree of this dependence, beyond which it became dangerous to liberty. But such a moderation is not to be expected in party-men of any kind. After a concession of this nature, all declamation must be abandoned; and a calm enquiry into the proper degree of court-influence and parliamentary dependence would have been expected by the readers. And though the advantage, in such a controversy, might possibly remain to the country-party; yet the victory would not be so compleat as they wish for, nor would a true patriot have given an entire loose to his zeal, for fear of running matters into a contrary extreme, by diminishing too far the influence of the crown. It was, therefore, thought best to deny, that this extreme could ever be dangerous to the constitution, or that the crown could ever have too little influence over members of parliament.

All questions concerning the proper medium between extremes are difficult to be decided; both because it is not easy to find words proper to fix this medium, and because the good and ill, in such cases, run so gradually into each other, as even to render our sentiments doubtful and uncertain. But there is a peculiar difficulty in the present case, which would embarrass the most knowing and most impartial examiner. The power of the crown is always lodged in a single person, either king or minister; and as this person may have either a greater or less degree of ambition, capacity, courage, popularity, or fortune, the power, which is too great in one hand, may become too little in another. In pure republics, where the authority is distributed among several assemblies or senates, the checks and controuls are more regular in their operation; because the members of such numerous assemblies may be presumed to be always nearly equal in capacity and virtue; and it is only their number, riches, or authority, which enter into consideration. But a limited monarchy admits not of any such stability; nor is it possible to assign to the crown such a determinate degree of power, as will, in every hand, form a proper counterbalance to the other parts of the constitution. This is an unavoidable disadvantage, among the many advantages, attending that species of government.

ESSAY VII: WHETHER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT INCLINES MORE TO ABSOLUTE MONARCHY, OR TO A REPUBLIC

It affords a violent prejudice against almost every science, that no prudent man, however sure of his principles, dares prophesy concerning any event, or foretel the remote consequences of things. A physician will not venture to pronounce concerning the condition of his patient a fortnight or month after: And still less dares a politician foretel the situation of public affairs a few years hence. Harrington thought himself so sure of his general principle, that the balance of power depends on that of property, that he ventured to pronounce it impossible ever to re-establish monarchy in England: But his book was scarcely published when the king was restored; and we see, that monarchy has ever since subsisted upon the same footing as before. Notwithstanding this unlucky example, I will venture to examine an important question, to wit, Whether the British government inclines more to absolute monarchy, or to a republic; and in which of these two species of government it will most probably terminate? As there seems not to be any great danger of a sudden revolution either way, I shall at least escape the shame attending my temerity, if I should be found to have been mistaken.

Those who assert, that the balance of our government inclines towards absolute monarchy, may support their opinion by the following reasons. That property has a great influence on power cannot possibly be denied; but yet the general maxim, that the balance of one depends on the balance of the other, must be received with several limitations. It is evident, that much less property in a single hand will be able to counterbalance a greater property in several; not only because it is difficult to make many persons combine in the same views and measures; but because property, when united, causes much greater dependence, than the same property, when dispersed. A hundred persons, of 1000l. a year a-piece, can consume all their income, and no body shall ever be the better for them, except their servants and tradesmen, who justly regard their profits as the product of their own labour. But a man possessed of 100,000l. a year, if he has either any generosity or any cunning, may create a great dependence by obligations, and still a greater by expectations. Hence we may observe, that, in all free governments, any subject exorbitantly rich has always created jealousy, even though his riches bore no proportion to those of the state. Crassus’s fortune, if I remember well, amounted only to about two millions and a half of our money;, yet we find, that, though his genius was nothing extraordinary, he was able, by means of his riches alone, to counterbalance, during his lifetime, the power of Pompey as well as that of Cæsar, who afterwards became master of the world. The wealth of the Medici made them masters of Florence; though, it is probable, it was not considerable, compared to the united property of that opulent republic.

These considerations are apt to make one entertain a magnificent idea of the British spirit and love of liberty; since we could maintain our free government, during so many centuries, against our sovereigns, who, besides the power and dignity and majesty of the crown, have always been possessed of much more property than any subject has ever enjoyed in any commonwealth. But it may be said, that this spirit, however great, will never be able to support itself against that immense property, which is now lodged in the king, and which is still encreasing. Upon a moderate computation, there are near three millions a year at the disposal of the crown. The civil list amounts to near a million; the collection of all taxes to another; and the employments in the army and navy, together with ecclesiastical preferments, to above a third million: An enormous sum, and what may fairly be computed to be more than a thirtieth part of the whole income and labour of the kingdom. When we add to this great property, the encreasing luxury of the nation, our proneness to corruption, together with the great power and prerogatives of the crown, and the command of military force, there is no one but must despair of being able, without extraordinary efforts, to support our free government much longer under these disadvantages.

On the other hand, those who maintain, that the byass of the British government leans towards a republic, may support their opinion by specious arguments. It may be said, that, though this immense property in the crown, be joined to the dignity of first magistrate, and to many other legal powers and prerogatives, which should naturally give it greater influence; yet it really becomes less dangerous to liberty upon that very account. Were England a republic, and were any private man possessed of a revenue, a third, or even a tenth part as large as that of the crown, he would very justly excite jealousy; because he would infallibly have great authority, in the government: And such an irregular authority, not avowed by the laws, is always more dangerous than a much greater authority, derived from them. A man, possessed of usurped power, can set no bounds to his pretensions: His partizans have liberty to hope for every thing in his favour: His enemies provoke his ambition, with his fears, by the violence of their opposition: And the government being thrown into a ferment, every corrupted humour in the state naturally gathers to him. On the contrary, a legal authority, though great, has always some bounds, which terminate both the hopes and pretensions of the person possessed of it: The laws must have provided a remedy against its excesses: Such an eminent magistrate has much to fear, and little to hope from his usurpations: And as his legal authority is quietly submitted to, he has small temptation and small opportunity of extending it farther. Besides, it happens, with regard to ambitious aims and projects, what may be observed with regard to sects of philosophy and religion. A new sect excites such a ferment, and is both opposed and defended with such vehemence, that it always spreads faster, and multiplies its partizans with greater rapidity, than any old established opinion, recommended by the sanction of the laws and of antiquity. Such is the nature of novelty, that, where any thing pleases, it becomes doubly agreeable, if new; but if it displeases, it is doubly displeasing, upon that very account. And, in most cases, the violence of enemies is favourable to ambitious projects, as well as the zeal of partizans.

It may farther be said, that, though men be much governed by interest; yet even interest itself, and all human affairs, are entirely governed by opinion. Now, there has been a sudden and sensible change in the opinions of men within these last fifty years, by the progress of learning and of liberty. Most people, in this island, have divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority: The clergy have much lost their credit: Their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed; and even religion can scarcely support itself in the world. The mere name of king commands little respect; and to talk of a king as GOD’s vicegerent on earth, or to give him any of those magnificent titles, which formerly dazzled mankind, would but excite laughter in every one. Though the crown, by means of its large revenue, may maintain its authority in times of tranquillity, upon private interest and influence; yet, as the least shock or convulsion must break all these interests to pieces, the royal power, being no longer supported by the settled principles and opinions of men, will immediately dissolve. Had men been in the same disposition at the revolution, as they are at present, monarchy would have run a great risque of being entirely lost in this island.

Durst I venture to deliver my own sentiments amidst these opposite arguments, I would assert, that, unless there happen some extraordinary convulsion, the power of the crown, by means of its large revenue, is rather upon the encrease; though, at the same time I own, that its progress seems very slow, and almost insensible. The tide has run long, and with some rapidity, to the side of popular government, and is just beginning to turn towards monarchy.

It is well known, that every government must come to a period, and that death is unavoidable to the political as well as to the animal body. But, as one kind of death may be preferable to another, it may be enquired, whether it be more desirable for the British constitution to terminate in a popular government, or in absolute monarchy? Here I would frankly declare, that, though liberty be preferable to slavery, in almost every case; yet I should rather wish to see an absolute monarch than a republic in this island. For, let us consider, what kind of republic we have reason to expect. The question is not concerning any fine imaginary republic, of which a man may form a plan in his closet. There is no doubt, but a popular government may be imagined more perfect than absolute monarchy, or even than our present constitution. But what reason have we to expect that any such government will ever be established in Great Britain, upon the dissolution of our monarchy? If any single person acquire power enough to take our constitution to pieces, and put it up a-new, he is really an absolute monarch; and we have already had an instance of this kind, sufficient to convince us, that such a person will never resign his power, or establish any free government. Matters, therefore, must be trusted to their natural progress and operation; and the house of commons, according to its present constitution, must be the only legislature in such a popular government. The inconveniencies attending such a situation of affairs, present themselves by thousands. If the house of commons, in such a case, ever dissolve itself, which is not to be expected, we may look for a civil war every election. If it continue itself, we shall suffer all the tyranny of a faction, subdivided into new factions. And, as such a violent government cannot long subsist, we shall, at last, after many convulsions, and civil wars, find repose in absolute monarchy, which it would have been happier for us to have established peaceably from the beginning. Absolute monarchy, therefore, is the easiest death, the true Euthanasia of the British constitution.

Thus, if we have reason to be more jealous of monarchy, because the danger is more imminent from that quarter; we have also reason to be more jealous of popular government, because that danger is more terrible. This may teach us a lesson of moderation in all our political controversies.

ESSAY VIII: OF PARTIES IN GENERAL

Of all men, that distinguish themselves by memorable achievements, the first place of honour seems due to Legislators and founders of states, who transmit a system of laws and institutions to secure the peace, happiness, and liberty of future generations. The influence of useful inventions in the arts and sciences may, perhaps, extend farther than that of wise laws, whose effects are limited both in time and place; but the benefit arising from the former, is not so sensible as that which results from the latter. Speculative sciences do, indeed, improve the mind; but this advantage reaches only to a few persons, who have leisure to apply themselves to them. And as to practical arts, which encrease the commodities and enjoyments of life, it is well known, that men's happiness consists not so much in an abundance of these, as in the peace and security with which they possess them; and those blessings can only be derived from good government. Not to mention, that general virtue and good morals in a state, which are so requisite to happiness, can never arise from the most refined precepts of philosophy, or even the severest injunctions of religion; but must proceed entirely from the virtuous education of youth, the effect of wise laws and institutions. I must, therefore, presume to differ from Lord Bacon in this particular, and must regard antiquity as somewhat unjust in its distribution of honours, when it made gods of all the inventors of useful arts, such as Ceres, Bacchus, Æsculapius; and dignify legislators, such as Romulus and Theseus, only with the appellation of demigods and heroes.

As much as legislators and founders of states ought to be honoured and respected among men, as much ought the founders of sects and factions to be detested and hated; because the influence of faction is directly contrary to that of laws. Factions subvert government, render laws impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities among men of the same nation, who ought to give mutual assistance and protection to each other. And what should render the founders of parties more odious is, the difficulty of extirpating these weeds, when once they have taken root in any state. They naturally propagate themselves for many centuries, and seldom end but by the total dissolution of that government, in which they are sown. They are, besides, plants which grow most plentifully in the richest soil; and though absolute governments be not wholly free from them, it must be confessed, that they rise more easily, and propagate themselves faster in free governments, where they always infect the legislature itself, which alone could be able, by the steady application of rewards and punishments, to eradicate them.

Factions may be divided into Personal and Real; that is, into factions, founded on personal friendship or animosity among such as compose the contending parties, and into those founded on some real difference of sentiment or interest. The reason of this distinction is obvious; though I must acknowledge, that parties are seldom found pure and unmixed, either of the one kind or the other. It is not often seen, that a government divides into factions, where there is no difference in the views of the constituent members, either real or apparent, trivial or material: And in those factions, which are founded on the most real and most material difference, there is always observed a great deal of personal animosity or affection. But notwithstanding this mixture, a party may be denominated either personal or real, according to that principle which is predominant, and is found to have the greatest influence.

Personal factions arise most easily in small republics. Every domestic quarrel, there, becomes an affair of state. Love, vanity, emulation, any passion, as well as ambition and resentment, begets public division. The Neri and Bianchi of Florence, the Fregosi and Adorni of Genoa, the Colonesi and Orsini of modern Rome, were parties of this kind.

Men have such a propensity to divide into personal factions, that the smallest appearance of real difference will produce them. What can be imagined more trivial than the difference between one colour of livery and another in horse races? Yet this difference begat two most inveterate factions in the Greek empire, the Prasini and Veneti, who never suspended their animosities, till they ruined that unhappy government.

We find in the Roman history a remarkable dissension between two tribes, the Pollia and Papiria, which continued for the space of near three hundred years, and discovered itself in their suffrages at every election of magistrates. This faction was the more remarkable, as it could continue for so long a tract of time; even though it did not spread itself, nor draw any of the other tribes into a share of the quarrel. If mankind had not a strong propensity to such divisions, the indifference of the rest of the community must have suppressed this foolish animosity, that had not any aliment of new benefits and injuries, of general sympathy and antipathy, which never fail to take place, when the whole state is rent into two equal factions.

Nothing is more usual than to see parties, which have begun upon a real difference, continue even after that difference is lost. When men are once inlisted on opposite sides, they contract an affection to the persons with whom they are united, and an animosity against their antagonists: And these passions they often transmit to their posterity. The real difference between Guelf and Ghibbelline was long lost in Italy, before these factions were extinguished. The Guelfs adhered to the pope, the Ghibbellines to the emperor; yet the family of Sforza, who were in alliance with the emperor, though they were Guelfs, being expelled Milan by the king of France, assisted by Jacomo Trivulzio and the Ghibbellines, the pope concurred with the latter, and they formed leagues with the pope against the emperor.

The civil wars which arose some few years ago in Morocco, between the blacks and whites, merely on account of their complexion, are founded on a pleasant difference. We laugh at them; but I believe, were things rightly examined, we afford much more occasion of ridicule to the Moors. For, what are all the wars of religion, which have prevailed in this polite and knowing part of the world? They are certainly more absurd than the Moorish civil wars. The difference of complexion is a sensible and a real difference: But the controversy about an article of faith, which is utterly absurd and unintelligible, is not a difference in sentiment, but in a few phrases and expressions, which one party accepts of, without understanding them; and the other refuses in the same manner.

Real factions may be divided into those from interest, from principle, and from affection. Of all factions, the first are the most reasonable, and the most excusable. Where two orders of men, such as the nobles and people, have a distinct authority in a government, not very accurately balanced and modelled, they naturally follow a distinct interest; nor can we reasonably expect a different conduct, considering that degree of selfishness implanted in human nature. It requires great skill in a legislator to prevent such parties; and many philosophers are of opinion, that this secret, like the grand elixir, or perpetual motion, may amuse men in theory, but can never possibly be reduced to practice. In despotic governments, indeed, factions often do not appear; but they are not the less real; or rather, they are more real and more pernicious, upon that very account. The distinct orders of men, nobles and people, soldiers and merchants, have all a distinct interest; but the more powerful oppresses the weaker with impunity, and without resistance; which begets a seeming tranquillity in such governments.

There has been an attempt in England to divide the landed and trading part of the nation; but without success. The interests of these two bodies are not really distinct, and never will be so, till our public debts encrease to such a degree, as to become altogether oppressive and intolerable.

Parties from principle, especially abstract speculative principle, are known only to modern times, and are, perhaps, the most extraordinary and unaccountable phænomenon, that has yet appeared in human affairs. Where different principles beget a contrariety of conduct, which is the case with all different political principles, the matter may be more easily explained. A man, who esteems the true right of government to lie in one man, or one family, cannot easily agree with his fellow-citizen, who thinks that another man or family is possessed of this right. Each naturally wishes that right may take place, according to his own notions of it. But where the difference of principle is attended with no contrariety of action, but every one may follow his own way, without interfering with his neighbour, as happens in all religious controversies; what madness, what fury can beget such unhappy and such fatal divisions?

Two men travelling on the highway, the one east, the other west, can easily pass each other, if the way be broad enough: But two men, reasoning upon opposite principles of religion, cannot so easily pass, without shocking; though one should think, that the way were also, in that case, sufficiently broad, and that each might proceed, without interruption, in his own course. But such is the nature of the human mind, that it always lays hold on every mind that approaches it; and as it is wonderfully fortified by an unanimity of sentiments, so is it shocked and disturbed by any contrariety. Hence the eagerness, which most people discover in a dispute; and hence their impatience of opposition, even in the most speculative and indifferent opinions.

This principle, however frivolous it may appear, seems to have been the origin of all religious wars and divisions. But as this principle is universal in human nature, its effects would not have been confined to one age, and to one sect of religion, did it not there concur with other more accidental causes, which raise it to such a height, as to produce the greatest misery and devastation. Most religions of the ancient world arose in the unknown ages of government, when men were as yet barbarous and uninstructed, and the prince, as well as peasant, was disposed to receive, with implicit faith, every pious tale or fiction, which was offered him. The magistrate embraced the religion of the people, and entering cordially into the care of sacred matters, naturally acquired an authority in them, and united the ecclesiastical with the civil power. But the Christian religion arising, while principles directly opposite to it were firmly established in the polite part of the world, who despised the nation that first broached this novelty; no wonder, that, in such circumstances, it was but little countenanced by the civil magistrate, and that the priesthood was allowed to engross all the authority in the new sect. So bad a use did they make of this power, even in those early times, that the primitive persecutions may, perhaps, in part, be ascribed to the violence instilled by them into their followers. And the same principles of priestly government continuing, after Christianity became the established religion, they have engendered a spirit of persecution, which has ever since been the poison of human society, and the source of the most inveterate factions in every government. Such divisions, therefore, on the part of the people, may justly be esteemed factions of principle; but, on the part of the priests, who are the prime movers, they are really factions of interest.

There is another cause (beside the authority of the priests, and the separation of the ecclesiastical and civil powers) which has contributed to render Christendom the scene of religious wars and divisions. Religions, that arise in ages totally ignorant and barbarous, consist mostly of traditional tales and fictions, which may be different in every sect, without being contrary to each other; and even when they are contrary, every one adheres to the tradition of his own sect, without much reasoning or disputation. But as philosophy was widely spread over the world, at the time when Christianity arose, the teachers of the new sect were obliged to form a system of speculative opinions; to divide, with some accuracy, their articles of faith; and to explain, comment, confute, and defend with all the subtilty of argument and science. Hence naturally arose keenness in dispute, when the Christian religion came to be split into new divisions and heresies: And this keenness assisted the priests in their policy, of begetting a mutual hatred and antipathy among their deluded followers. Sects of philosophy, in the ancient world, were more zealous than parties of religion; but in modern times, parties of religion are more furious and enraged than the most cruel factions that ever arose from interest and ambition.

I have mentioned parties from affection as a kind of real parties, beside those from interest and principle. By parties from affection, I understand those which are founded on the different attachments of men towards particular families and persons, whom they desire to rule over them. These factions are often very violent; though, I must own, it may seem unaccountable, that men should attach themselves so strongly to persons, with whom they are no wise acquainted, whom perhaps they never saw, and from whom they never received, nor can ever hope for any favour. Yet this we often find to be the case, and even with men, who, on other occasions, discover no great generosity of spirit, nor are found to be easily transported by friendship beyond their own interest. We are apt to think the relation between us and our sovereign very close and intimate. The splendour of majesty and power bestows an importance on the fortunes even of a single person. And when a man’s good-nature does not give him this imaginary interest, his ill-nature will, from spite and opposition to persons whose sentiments are different from his own.

ESSAY IX: OF THE PARTIES OF GREAT BRITAIN

Were the British government proposed as a subject of speculation, one would immediately perceive in it a source of division and party, which it would be almost impossible for it, under any administration, to avoid. The just balance between the republican and monarchical part of our constitution is really, in itself, so extremely delicate and uncertain, that, when joined to men's passions and prejudices, it is impossible but different opinions must arise concerning it, even among persons of the best understanding. Those of mild tempers, who love peace and order, and detest sedition and civil wars, will always entertain more favourable sentiments of monarchy, than men of bold and generous spirits, who are passionate lovers of liberty, and think no evil comparable to subjection and slavery. And though all reasonable men agree in general to preserve our mixed government; yet, when they come to particulars, some will incline to trust greater powers to the crown, to bestow on it more influence, and to guard against its encroachments with less caution, than others who are terrified at the most distant approaches of tyranny and despotic power. Thus are there parties of Principle involved in the very nature of our constitution, which may properly enough be denominated those of Court and Country. The strength and violence of each of these parties will much depend upon the particular administration. An administration may be so bad, as to throw a great majority into the opposition; as a good administration will reconcile to the court many of the most passionate lovers of liberty. But however the nation may fluctuate between them, the parties themselves will always subsist, so long as we are governed by a limited monarchy.

But, besides this difference of Principle, those parties are very much fomented by a difference of Interest, without which they could scarcely ever be dangerous or violent. The crown will naturally bestow all trust and power upon those, whose principles, real or pretended, are most favourable to monarchical government; and this temptation will naturally engage them to go greater lengths than their principles would otherwise carry them. Their antagonists, who are disappointed in their ambitious aims, throw themselves into the party whose sentiments incline them to be most jealous of royal power, and naturally carry those sentiments to a greater height than sound politics will justify. Thus Court and Country, which are the genuine offspring of the British government, are a kind of mixed parties, and are influenced both by principle and by interest. The heads of the factions are commonly most governed by the latter motive; the inferior members of them by the former.

As to ecclesiastical parties; we may observe, that, in all ages of the world, priests have been enemies to liberty; and it is certain, that this steady conduct of theirs must have been founded on fixed reasons of interest and ambition. Liberty of thinking, and of expressing our thoughts, is always fatal to priestly power, and to those pious frauds, on which it is commonly founded; and, by an infallible connexion, which prevails among all kinds of liberty, this privilege can never be enjoyed, at least has never yet been enjoyed, but in a free government. Hence it must happen, in such a constitution as that of Great Britain, that the established clergy, while things are in their natural situation, will always be of the Court-party; as, on the contrary, dissenters of all kinds will be of the Country-party; since they can never hope for that toleration, which they stand in need of, but by means of our free government. All princes, that have aimed at despotic power, have known of what importance it was to gain the established clergy: As the clergy, on their part, have shewn a great facility in entering into the views of such princes. Gustavus Vaza was, perhaps, the only ambitious monarch, that ever depressed the church, at the same time that he discouraged liberty. But the exorbitant power of the bishops in Sweden, who, at that time, overtopped the crown itself, together with their attachment to a foreign family, was the reason of his embracing such an unusual system of politics.

This observation, concerning the propensity of priests to the government of a single person, is not true with regard to one sect only. The Presbyterian and Calvinistic clergy in Holland were professed friends to the family of Orange; as the Arminians, who were esteemed heretics, were of the Louvestein faction, and zealous for liberty. But if a prince have the choice of both, it is easy to see, that he will prefer the episcopal to the presbyterian form of government, both because of the greater affinity between monarchy and episcopacy, and because of the facility, which he will find, in such a government, of ruling the clergy, by means of their ecclesiastical superiors.

If we consider the first rise of parties in England, during the great rebellion, we shall observe, that it was conformable to this general theory, and that the species of government gave birth to them, by a regular and infallible operation. The English constitution, before that period, had lain in a kind of confusion; yet so, as that the subjects possessed many noble privileges, which, though not exactly bounded and secured by law, were universally deemed, from long possession, to belong to them as their birth-right. An ambitious, or rather a misguided, prince arose, who deemed all these privileges to be concessions of his predecessors, revokeable at pleasure; and, in prosecution of this principle, he openly acted in violation of liberty, during the course of several years. Necessity, at last, constrained him to call a parliament: The spirit of liberty arose and spread itself: The prince, being without any support, was obliged to grant every thing required of him: And his enemies, jealous and implacable, set no bounds to their pretensions. Here then began those contests, in which it was no wonder, that men of that age were divided into different parties; since, even at this day, the impartial are at a loss to decide concerning the justice of the quarrel. The pretensions of the parliament, if yielded to, broke the balance of the constitution, by rendering the government almost entirely republican. If not yielded to, the nation was, perhaps, still in danger of absolute power, from the settled principles and inveterate habits of the king, which had plainly appeared in every concession that he had been constrained to make to his people. In this question, so delicate and uncertain, men naturally fell to the side which was most conformable to their usual principles; and the more passionate favourers of monarchy declared for the king, as the zealous friends of liberty sided with the parliament. The hopes of success being nearly equal on both sides, interest had no general influence in this contest: So that Round-head and Cavalier were merely parties of principle; neither of which disowned either monarchy or liberty; but the former party inclined most to the republican part of our government, the latter to the monarchical. In this respect, they may be considered as court and country-party, enflamed into a civil war, by an unhappy concurrence of circumstances, and by the turbulent spirit of the age. The commonwealth’s men, and the partizans of absolute power, lay concealed in both parties, and formed but an inconsiderable part of them.

The clergy had concurred with the king’s arbitrary designs; and, in return, were allowed to persecute their adversaries, whom they called heretics and schismatics. The established clergy were episcopal; the non-conformists presbyterian: So that all things concurred to throw the former, without reserve, into the king's party; and the latter into that of the parliament.

Every one knows the event of this quarrel; fatal to the king first, to the parliament afterwards. After many confusions and revolutions, the royal family was at last restored, and the ancient government re-established. Charles II. was not made wiser by the example of his father; but prosecuted the same measures, though at first, with more secrecy and caution. New parties arose, under the appellation of Whig and Tory, which have continued ever since to confound and distract our government. To determine the nature of these parties is, perhaps, one of the most difficult problems, that can be met with, and is a proof that history may contain questions, as uncertain as any to be found in the most abstract sciences. We have seen the conduct of the two parties, during the course of seventy years, in a vast variety of circumstances, possessed of power, and deprived of it, during peace, and during war: Persons, who profess themselves of one side or other, we meet with every hour, in company, in our pleasures, in our serious occupations: We ourselves are constrained, in a manner, to take party; and living in a country of the highest liberty, every one may openly declare all his sentiments and opinions: Yet are we at a loss to tell the nature, pretensions, and principles of the different factions.

When we compare the parties of Whig and Tory with those of Round-head and Cavalier, the most obvious difference, that appears between them, consists in the principles of passive obedience, and indefeasible right, which were but little heard of among the Cavaliers, but became the universal doctrine, and were esteemed the true characteristic of a Tory. Were these principles pushed into their most obvious consequences, they imply a formal renunciation of all our liberties, and an avowal of absolute monarchy; since nothing can be a greater absurdity than a limited power, which must not be resisted, even when it exceeds its limitations. But as the most rational principles are often but a weak counterpoise to passion; it is no wonder that these absurd principles were found too weak for that effect. The Tories, as men, were enemies to oppression; and also as Englishmen, they were enemies to arbitrary power. Their zeal for liberty, was, perhaps, less fervent than that of their antagonists; but was sufficient to make them forget all their general principles, when they saw themselves openly threatened with a subversion of the ancient government. From these sentiments arose the revolution; an event of mighty consequence, and the firmest foundation of British liberty. The conduct of the Tories, during that event, and after it, will afford us a true insight into the nature of that party.

In the first place, they appear to have had the genuine sentiments of Britons in their affection for liberty, and in their determined resolution not to sacrifice it to any abstract principle whatsoever, or to any imaginary rights of princes. This part of their character might justly have been doubted of before the revolution, from the obvious tendency of their avowed principles, and from their compliances with a court, which seemed to make little secret of its arbitrary designs. The revolution shewed them to have been, in this respect, nothing, but a genuine court-party, such as might be expected in a British government: That is, Lovers of liberty, but greater lovers of monarchy. It must, however, be confessed, that they carried their monarchical principles farther, even in practice, but more so in theory, than was, in any degree, consistent with a limited government.

Secondly, Neither their principles nor affections concurred, entirely or heartily, with the settlement made at the revolution, or with that which has since taken place. This part of their character may seem opposite to the former; since any other settlement, in those circumstances of the nation, must probably have been dangerous, if not fatal to liberty. But the heart of man is made to reconcile contradictions; and this contradiction is not greater than that between passive obedience, and the resistance employed at the revolution. A Tory, therefore, since the revolution, may be defined in a few words, to be a lover of monarchy, though without abandoning liberty; and a partizan of the family of Stuart. As a Whig may be defined to be a lover of liberty though without renouncing monarchy; and a friend to the settlement in the Protestant line.

These different views, with regard to the settlement of the crown, were accidental, but natural additions to the principles of the court and country parties, which are the genuine divisions in the British government. A passionate lover of monarchy is apt to be displeased at any change of the succession; as savouring too much of a commonwealth: A passionate lover of liberty is apt to think that every part of the government ought to be subordinate to the interests of liberty.

Some, who will not venture to assert, that the real difference between Whig and Tory was lost at the revolution, seem inclined to think, that the difference is now abolished, and that affairs are so far returned to their natural state, that there are at present no other parties among us but court and country; that is, men, who, by interest or principle, are attached either to monarchy or liberty. The Tories have been so long obliged to talk in the republican stile, that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments, as well as language of their adversaries. There are, however, very considerable remains of that party in England, with all their old prejudices; and a proof that court and country are not our only parties, is, that almost all the dissenters side with the court, and the lower clergy, at least, of the church of England, with the opposition. This may convince us, that some biass still hangs upon our constitution, some extrinsic weight, which turns it from its natural course, and causes a confusion in our parties.,

ESSAY X: OF SUPERSTITION AND ENTHUSIASM

That the corruption of the best things produces the worst, is grown into a maxim, and is commonly proved, among other instances, by the pernicious effects of superstition and enthusiasm, the corruptions of true religion.

These two species of false religion, though both pernicious, are yet of a very different, and even of a contrary nature. The mind of man is subject to certain unaccountable terrors and apprehensions, proceeding either from the unhappy situation of private or public affairs, from ill health, from a gloomy and melancholy disposition, or from the concurrence of all these circumstances. In such a state of mind, infinite unknown evils are dreaded from unknown agents; and where real objects of terror are wanting, the soul, active to its own prejudice, and fostering its predominant inclination, finds imaginary ones, to whose power and malevolence it sets no limits. As these enemies are entirely invisible and unknown, the methods taken to appease them are equally unaccountable, and consist in ceremonies, observances, mortifications, sacrifices, presents, or in any practice, however absurd or frivolous, which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity. Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of Superstition.

But the mind of man is also subject to an unaccountable elevation and presumption, arising from prosperous success, from luxuriant health, from strong spirits, or from a bold and confident disposition. In such a state of mind, the imagination swells with great, but confused conceptions, to which no sublunary beauties or enjoyments can correspond. Every thing mortal and perishable vanishes as unworthy of attention. And a full range is given to the fancy in the invisible regions or world of spirits, where the soul is at liberty to indulge itself in every imagination, which may best suit its present taste and disposition. Hence arise raptures, transports, and surprising flights of fancy; and confidence and presumption still encreasing, these raptures, being altogether unaccountable, and seeming quite beyond the reach of our ordinary faculties, are attributed to the immediate inspiration of that Divine Being, who is the object of devotion. In a little time, the inspired person comes to regard himself as a distinguished favourite of the Divinity; and when this frenzy once takes place, which is the summit of enthusiasm, every whimsy is consecrated: Human reason, and even morality are rejected as fallacious guides: And the fanatic madman delivers himself over, blindly, and without reserve, to the supposed illapses of the spirit, and to inspiration from above. Hope, pride, presumption, a warm imagination, together with ignorance, are, therefore, the true sources of Enthusiasm.

These two species of false religion might afford occasion to many speculations; but I shall confine myself, at present, to a few reflections concerning their different influence on government and society.

My first reflection is, That superstition is favourable to priestly power, and enthusiasm not less or rather more contrary to it, than sound reason and philosophy. As superstition is founded on fear, sorrow, and a depression of spirits, it represents the man to himself in such despicable colours, that he appears unworthy, in his own eyes, of approaching the divine presence, and naturally has recourse to any other person, whose sanctity of life, or, perhaps, impudence and cunning, have made him be supposed more favoured by the Divinity. To him the superstitious entrust their devotions: To his care they recommend their prayers, petitions, and sacrifices: And by his means, they hope to render their addresses acceptable to their incensed Deity. Hence the origin of Priests, who may justly be regarded as an invention of a timorous and abject superstition, which, ever diffident of itself, dares not offer up its own devotions, but ignorantly thinks to recommend itself to the Divinity, by the mediation of his supposed friends and servants. As superstition is a considerable ingredient in almost all religions, even the most fanatical; there being nothing but philosophy able entirely to conquer these unaccountable terrors; hence it proceeds, that in almost every sect of religion there are priests to be found: But the stronger mixture there is of superstition, the higher is the authority of the priesthood.

On the other hand, it may be observed, that all enthusiasts have been free from the yoke of ecclesiastics, and have expressed great independence in their devotion; with a contempt of forms, ceremonies, and traditions. The quakers are the most egregious, though, at the same time, the most innocent enthusiasts that have yet been known; and are, perhaps, the only sect, that have never admitted priests amongst them. The independents, of all the English sectaries, approach nearest to the quakers in fanaticism, and in their freedom from priestly bondage. The presbyterians follow after, at an equal distance in both particulars. In short this observation is founded in experience; and will also appear to be founded in reason, if we consider, that, as enthusiasm arises from a presumptuous pride and confidence, it thinks itself sufficiently qualified to approach the Divinity, without any human mediator. Its rapturous devotions are so fervent, that it even imagines itself actually to approach him by the way of contemplation and inward converse; which makes it neglect all those outward ceremonies and observances, to which the assistance of the priests appears so requisite in the eyes of their superstitious votaries. The fanatic consecrates himself, and bestows on his own person a sacred character, much superior to what forms and ceremonious institutions can confer on any other.

My second reflection with regard to these species of false religion is, that religions, which partake of enthusiasm are, on their first rise, more furious and violent than those which partake of superstition; but in a little time become more gentle and moderate. The violence of this species of religion, when excited by novelty, and animated by opposition, appears from numberless instances; of the anabaptists in Germany, the camisars in France, the levellers and other fanatics in England, and the covenanters in Scotland. Enthusiasm being founded on strong spirits, and a presumptuous boldness of character, it naturally begets the most extreme resolutions; especially after it rises to that height as to inspire the deluded fanatic with the opinion of divine illuminations, and with a contempt for the common rules of reason, morality, and prudence.

It is thus enthusiasm produces the most cruel disorders in human society; but its fury is like that of thunder and tempest, which exhaust themselves in a little time, and leave the air more calm and serene than before. When the first fire of enthusiasm is spent, men naturally, in all fanatical sects, sink into the greatest remissness and coolness in sacred matters; there being no body of men among them, endowed with sufficient authority, whose interest is concerned to support the religious spirit: No rites, no ceremonies, no holy observances, which may enter into the common train of life, and preserve the sacred principles from oblivion. Superstition, on the contrary, steals in gradually and insensibly; renders men tame and submissive; is acceptable to the magistrate, and seems inoffensive to the people: Till at last the priest, having firmly established his authority, becomes the tyrant and disturber of human society, by his endless contentions, persecutions, and religious wars. How smoothly did the Romish church advance in her acquisition of power?

But into what dismal convulsions did she throw all Europe, in order to maintain it? On the other hand, our sectaries, who were formerly such dangerous bigots, are now become very free reasoners; and the quakers seem to approach nearly the only regular body of deists in the universe, the literati, or the disciples of Confucius in China.

My third observation on this head is, that superstition is an enemy to civil liberty, and enthusiasm a friend to it. As superstition groans under the dominion of priests, and enthusiasm is destructive of all ecclesiastical power, this sufficiently accounts for the present observation. Not to mention, that enthusiasm, being the infirmity of bold and ambitious tempers, is naturally accompanied with a spirit of liberty; as superstition, on the contrary, renders men tame and abject, and fits them for slavery. We learn from English history, that, during the civil wars, the independents and deists, though the most opposite in their religious principles; yet were united in their political ones, and were alike passionate for a commonwealth. And since the origin of whig and tory, the leaders of the whigs have either been deists or profest latitudinarians in their principles; that is, friends to toleration, and indifferent to any particular sect of christians: While the sectaries, who have all a strong tincture of enthusiasm, have always, without exception, concurred with that party, in defence of civil liberty. The resemblance in their superstitions long united the high-church tories, and the Roman catholics, in support of prerogative and kingly power; though experience of the tolerating spirit of the whigs seems of late to have reconciled the catholics to that party.

The molinists and jansenists in France have a thousand unintelligible disputes, which are not worthy the reflection of a man of sense: But what principally distinguishes these two sects, and alone merits attention, is the different spirit of their religion. The molinists conducted by the jesuits, are great friends to superstition, rigid observers of external forms and ceremonies, and devoted to the authority of the priests, and to tradition. The jansenists are enthusiasts, and zealous promoters of the passionate devotion, and of the inward life; little influenced by authority; and, in a word, but half catholics. The consequences are exactly conformable to the foregoing reasoning. The jesuits are the tyrants of the people, and the slaves of the court: And the jansenists preserve alive the small sparks of the love of liberty, which are to be found in the French nation.

ESSAY XI: OF THE DIGNITY OR MEANNESS OF HUMAN NATURE

There are certain sects, which secretly form themselves in the learned world, as well as factions in the political; and though sometimes they come not to an open rupture, they give a different turn to the ways of thinking of those who have taken part on either side. The most remarkable of this kind are the sects, founded on the different sentiments with regard to the dignity of human nature; which is a point that seems to have divided philosophers and poets, as well as divines, from the beginning of the world to this day. Some exalt our species to the skies, and represent man as a kind of human demigod, who derives his origin from heaven, and retains evident marks of his lineage and descent. Others insist upon the blind sides of human nature, and can discover nothing, except vanity, in which man surpasses the other animals, whom he affects so much to despise. If an author possess the talent of rhetoric and declamation, he commonly takes part with the former: If his turn lie towards irony and ridicule, he naturally throws himself into the other extreme.

I am far from thinking, that all those, who have depreciated our species, have been enemies to virtue, and have exposed the frailties of their fellow creatures with any bad intention. On the contrary, I am sensible that a delicate sense of morals, especially when attended with a splenetic temper, is apt to give a man a disgust of the world, and to make him consider the common course of human affairs with too much indignation. I must, however, be of opinion, that the sentiments of those, who are inclined to think favourably of mankind, are more advantageous to virtue, than the contrary principles, which give us a mean opinion of our nature. When a man is prepossessed with a high notion of his rank and character in the creation, he will naturally endeavour to act up to it, and will scorn to do a base or vicious action, which might sink him below that figure which he makes in his own imagination. Accordingly we find, that all our polite and fashionable moralists insist upon this topic, and endeavour to represent vice as unworthy of man, as well as odious in itself.

We find few disputes, that are not founded on some ambiguity in the expression; and I am persuaded, that the present dispute, concerning the dignity or meanness of human nature, is not more exempt from it than any other. It may, therefore, be worth while to consider, what is real, and what is only verbal, in this controversy.

That there is a natural difference between merit and demerit, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, no reasonable man will deny: Yet is it evident, that in affixing the term, which denotes either our approbation or blame, we are commonly more influenced by comparison than by any fixed unalterable standard in the nature of things. In like manner, quantity, and extension, and bulk, are by every one acknowledged to be real things: But when we call any animal great or little, we always form a secret comparison between that animal and others of the same species; and it is that comparison which regulates our judgment concerning its greatness. A dog and a horse may be of the very same size, while the one is admired for the greatness of its bulk, and the other for the smallness. When I am present, therefore, at any dispute, I always consider with myself, whether it be a question of comparison or not that is the subject of the controversy; and if it be, whether the disputants compare the same objects together, or talk of things that are widely different.

In forming our notions of human nature, we are apt to make a comparison between men and animals, the only creatures endowed with thought that fall under our senses. Certainly this comparison is favourable to mankind. On the one hand, we see a creature, whose thoughts are not limited by any narrow bounds, either of place or time; who carries his researches into the most distant regions of this globe, and beyond this globe, to the planets and heavenly bodies; looks backward to consider the first origin, at least, the history of human race; casts his eye forward to see the influence of his actions upon posterity, and the judgments which will be formed of his character a thousand years hence; a creature, who traces causes and effects to a great length and intricacy; extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries; corrects his mistakes; and makes his very errors profitable. On the other hand, we are presented with a creature the very reverse of this; limited in its observations and reasonings to a few sensible objects which surround it; without curiosity, without foresight; blindly conducted by instinct, and attaining, in a short time, its utmost perfection, beyond which it is never able to advance a single step. What a wide difference is there between these creatures! And how exalted a notion must we entertain of the former, in comparison of the latter!

There are two means commonly employed to destroy this conclusion: First, By making an unfair representation of the case, and insisting only upon the weaknesses of human nature. And secondly, By forming a new and secret comparison between man and beings of the most perfect wisdom. Among the other excellencies of man, this is one, that he can form an idea of perfections much beyond what he has experience of in himself; and is not limited in his conception of wisdom and virtue. He can easily exalt his notions and conceive a degree of knowledge, which, when compared to his own, will make the latter appear very contemptible, and will cause the difference between that and the sagacity of animals, in a manner, to disappear and vanish. Now this being a point, in which all the world is agreed, that human understanding falls infinitely short of perfect wisdom; it is proper we should know when this comparison takes place, that we may not dispute where there is no real difference in our sentiments. Man falls much more short of perfect wisdom, and even of his own ideas of perfect wisdom, than animals do of man; yet the latter difference is so considerable, that nothing but a comparison with the former can make it appear of little moment.

It is also usual to compare one man with another; and finding very few whom we can call wise or virtuous, we are apt to entertain a contemptible notion of our species in general. That we may be sensible of the fallacy of this way of reasoning, we may observe, that the honourable appellations of wise and virtuous, are not annexed to any particular degree of those qualities of wisdom and virtue; but arise altogether from the comparison we make between one man and another. When we find a man, who arrives at such a pitch of wisdom as is very uncommon, we pronounce him a wise man: So that to say, there are few wise men in the world, is really to say nothing; since it is only by their scarcity, that they merit that appellation. Were the lowest of our species as wise as Tully, or lord Bacon, we should still have reason to say, that there are few wise men. For in that case we should exalt our notions of wisdom, and should not pay a singular honour to any one, who was not singularly distinguished by his talents. In like manner, I have heard it observed by thoughtless people, that there are few women possessed of beauty, in comparison of those who want it; not considering, that we bestow the epithet of beautiful only on such as possess a degree of beauty, that is common to them with a few. The same degree of beauty in a woman is called deformity, which is treated as real beauty in one of our sex.

As it is usual, in forming a notion of our species, to compare it with the other species above or below it, or to compare the individuals of the species among themselves; so we often compare together the different motives or actuating principles of human nature, in order to regulate our judgment concerning it. And, indeed, this is the only kind of comparison, which is worth our attention, or decides any thing in the present question. Were our selfish and vicious principles so much predominant above our social and virtuous, as is asserted by some philosophers, we ought undoubtedly to entertain a contemptible notion of human nature.

There is much of a dispute of words in all this controversy. When a man denies the sincerity of all public spirit or affection to a country and community, I am at a loss what to think of him. Perhaps he never felt this passion in so clear and distinct a manner as to remove all his doubts concerning its force and reality. But when he proceeds afterwards to reject all private friendship, if no interest or self-love intermix itself; I am then confident that he abuses terms, and confounds the ideas of things; since it is impossible for any one to be so selfish, or rather so stupid, as to make no difference between one man and another, and give no preference to qualities, which engage his approbation and esteem. Is he also, say I, as insensible to anger as he pretends to be to friendship? And does injury and wrong no more affect him than kindness or benefits? Impossible: He does not know himself: He has forgotten the movements of his heart; or rather he makes use of a different language from the rest of his countrymen, and calls not things by their proper names. What say you of natural affection? (I subjoin) Is that also a species of self-love? Yes: All is self-love. Your children are loved only because they are yours: Your friend for a like reason: And your country engages you only so far as it has a connexion with yourself: Were the idea of self removed, nothing would affect you: You would be altogether unactive and insensible: Or, if you ever gave yourself any movement, it would only be from vanity, and a desire of fame and reputation to this same self. I am willing, reply I, to receive your interpretation of human actions, provided you admit the facts. That species of self-love, which displays itself in kindness to others, you must allow to have great influence over human actions, and even greater, on many occasions, than that which remains in its original shape and form. For how few are there, who, having a family, children, and relations, do not spend more on the maintenance and education of these than on their own pleasures? This, indeed, you justly observe, may proceed from their self-love, since the prosperity of their family and friends is one, or the chief of their pleasures, as well as their chief honour. Be you also one of these selfish men, and you are sure of every one's good opinion and good will; or not to shock your ears with these expressions, the self-love of every one, and mine among the rest, will then incline us to serve you, and speak well of you.

In my opinion, there are two things which have led astray those philosophers, that have insisted so much on the selfishness of man. In the first place, they found, that every act of virtue or friendship was attended with a secret pleasure; whence they concluded, that friendship and virtue could not be disinterested. But the fallacy of this is obvious. The virtuous sentiment or passion produces the pleasure, and does not arise from it. I feel a pleasure in doing good to my friend, because I love him; but do not love him for the sake of that pleasure.

In the second place, it has always been found, that the virtuous are far from being indifferent to praise; and therefore they have been represented as a set of vain-glorious men, who had nothing in view but the applauses of others. But this also is a fallacy. It is very unjust in the world, when they find any tincture of vanity in a laudable action, to depreciate it upon that account, or ascribe it entirely to that motive. The case is not the same with vanity, as with other passions. Where avarice or revenge enters into any seemingly virtuous action, it is difficult for us to determine how far it enters, and it is natural to suppose it the sole actuating principle. But vanity is so closely allied to virtue, and to love the fame of laudable actions approaches so near the love of laudable actions for their own sake, that these passions are more capable of mixture, than any other kinds of affection; and it is almost impossible to have the latter without some degree of the former. Accordingly, we find, that this passion for glory is always warped and varied according to the particular taste or disposition of the mind on which it falls. Nero had the same vanity in driving a chariot, that Trajan had in governing the empire with justice and ability. To love the glory of virtuous deeds is a sure proof of the love of virtue.

ESSAY XII: OF CIVIL LIBERTY

Those who employ their pens on political subjects, free from party-rage, and party-prejudices, cultivate a science, which, of all others, contributes most to public utility, and even to the private satisfaction of those who addict themselves to the study of it. I am apt, however, to entertain a suspicion, that the world is still too young to fix many general truths in politics, which will remain true to the latest posterity. We have not as yet had experience of three thousand years; so that not only the art of reasoning is still imperfect in this science, as in all others, but we even want sufficient materials upon which we can reason. It is not fully known, what degree of refinement, either in virtue or vice, human nature is susceptible of; nor what may be expected of mankind from any great revolution in their education, customs, or principles. Machiavel was certainly a great genius; but having confined his study to the furious and tyrannical governments of ancient times, or to the little disorderly principalities of Italy, his reasonings especially upon monarchical government, have been found extremely defective; and there scarcely is any maxim in his prince, which subsequent experience has not entirely refuted. A weak prince, says he, is incapable of receiving good counsel; for if he consult with several, he will not be able to choose among their different counsels. If he abandon himself to one, that minister may, perhaps, have capacity; but he will not long be a minister: He will be sure to dispossess his master, and place himself and his family upon the throne. I mention this, among many instances of the errors of that politician, proceeding, in a great measure, from his having lived in too early an age of the world, to be a good judge of political truth. Almost all the princes of Europe are at present governed by their ministers; and have been so for near two centuries; and yet no such event has ever happened, or can possibly happen. Sejanus might project dethroning the Cæsars; but Fleury, though ever so vicious, could not, while in his senses, entertain the least hopes of dispossessing the Bourbons.

Trade was never esteemed an affair of state till the last century; and there scarcely is any ancient writer on politics, who has made mention of it. Even the Italians have kept a profound silence with regard to it, though it has now engaged the chief attention, as well of ministers of state, as of speculative reasoners. The great opulence, grandeur, and military achievements of the two maritime powers seem first to have instructed mankind in the importance of an extensive commerce.

Having, therefore, intended in this essay to make a full comparison of civil liberty and absolute government, and to show the great advantages of the former above the latter; I began to entertain a suspicion, that no man in this age was sufficiently qualified for such an undertaking; and that whatever any one should advance on that head would, in all probability, be refuted by further experience, and be rejected by posterity. Such mighty revolutions have happened in human affairs, and so many events have arisen contrary to the expectation of the ancients, that they are sufficient to beget the suspicion of still further changes.

It had been observed by the ancients, that all the arts and sciences arose among free nations; and, that the Persians and Egyptians, notwithstanding their ease, opulence, and luxury, made but faint efforts towards a relish in those finer pleasures, which were carried to such perfection by the Greeks, amidst continual wars, attended with poverty, and the greatest simplicity of life and manners. It had also been observed, that, when the Greeks lost their liberty, though they increased mightily in riches, by means of the conquests of Alexander; yet the arts, from that moment, declined among them, and have never since been able to raise their head in that climate. Learning was transplanted to Rome, the only free nation at that time in the universe; and having met with so favourable a soil, it made prodigious shoots for above a century; till the decay of liberty produced also the decay of letters, and spread a total barbarism over the world. From these two experiments, of which each was double in its kind, and shewed the fall of learning in absolute governments, as well as its rise in popular ones, Longinus thought himself sufficiently justified, in asserting, that the arts and sciences could never flourish, but in a free government: And in this opinion, he has been followed by several eminent writers in our own country, who either confined their view merely to ancient facts, or entertained too great a partiality in favour of that form of government, established amongst us.

But what would these writers have said, to the instances of modern Rome and of Florence? Of which the former carried to perfection all the finer arts of sculpture, painting, and music, as well as poetry, though it groaned under tyranny, and under the tyranny of priests: While the latter made its chief progress in the arts and sciences, after it began to lose its liberty by the usurpation of the family of Medici. Ariosto, Tasso, Galileo, more than Raphael, and Michael Angelo, were not born in republics. And though the Lombard school was famous as well as the Roman, yet the Venetians have had the smallest share in its honours, and seem rather inferior to the other Italians, in their genius for the arts and sciences. Rubens established his school at Antwerp, not at Amsterdam: Dresden, not Hamburgh, is the centre of politeness in Germany.

But the most eminent instance of the flourishing of learning in absolute governments, is that of France, which scarcely ever enjoyed any established liberty, and yet has carried the arts and sciences as near perfection as any other nation. The English are, perhaps, greater philosophers; the Italians better painters and musicians; the Romans were greater orators: But the French are the only people, except the Greeks, who have been at once philosophers, poets, orators, historians, painters, architects, sculptors, and musicians. With regard to the stage, they have excelled even the Greeks, who far excelled the English. And, in common life, they have, in a great measure, perfected that art, the most useful and agreeable of any, l’Art de Vivre, the art of society and conversation.

If we consider the state of the sciences and polite arts in our own country, Horace’s observation, with regard to the Romans, may, in a great measure, be applied to the British.

- — Sed in longum tamen ævum
- Manserunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.

The elegance and propriety of style have been very much neglected among us. We have no dictionary of our language, and scarcely a tolerable grammar. The first polite prose we have, was writ by a man who is still alive. As to Sprat, Locke and, even Temple, they knew too little of the rules of art to be esteemed elegant writers. The prose of Bacon, Harrington, and Milton, is altogether stiff and pedantic; though their sense be excellent. Men, in this country, have been so much occupied in the great disputes of Religion, Politics, and Philosophy, that they had no relish for the seemingly minute observations of grammar and criticism. And though this turn of thinking must have considerably improved our sense and our talent of reasoning; it must be confessed, that, even in those sciences above-mentioned, we have not any standard-book, which we can transmit to posterity: And the utmost we have to boast of, are a few essays towards a more just philosophy; which, indeed, promise well, but have not, as yet, reached any degree of perfection.

It has become an established opinion, that commerce can never flourish but in a free government; and this opinion seems to be founded on a longer and larger experience than the foregoing, with regard to the arts and sciences. If we trace commerce in its progress through Tyre, Athens, Syracuse, Carthage, Venice, Florence, Genoa, Antwerp, Holland, England, &c. we shall always find it to have fixed its seat in free governments. The three greatest trading towns now in Europe, are London, Amsterdam, and Hamburgh; all free cities, and protestant cities; that is, enjoying a double liberty. It must, however, be observed, that the great jealousy entertained of late, with regard to the commerce of France, seems to prove, that this maxim is no more certain and infallible than the foregoing, and that the subjects of an absolute prince may become our rivals in commerce, as well as in learning.

Durst I deliver my opinion in an affair of so much uncertainty, I would assert, that, notwithstanding the efforts of the French, there is something hurtful to commerce inherent in the very nature of absolute government, and inseparable from it: Though the reason I should assign for this opinion, is somewhat different from that which is commonly insisted on. Private property seems to me almost as secure in a civilized European monarchy, as in a republic; nor is danger much apprehended in such a government, from the violence of the sovereign; more than we commonly dread harm from thunder, or earthquakes, or any accident the most unusual and extraordinary. Avarice, the spur of industry, is so obstinate a passion, and works its way through so many real dangers and difficulties, that it is not likely to be scared by an imaginary danger, which is so small, that it scarcely admits of calculation. Commerce, therefore, in my opinion, is apt to decay in absolute governments, not because it is there less secure, but because it is less honourable. A subordination of ranks is absolutely necessary to the support of monarchy. Birth, titles, and place, must be honoured above industry and riches. And while these notions prevail, all the considerable traders will be tempted to throw up their commerce, in order to purchase some of those employments, to which privileges and honours are annexed.

Since I am upon this head, of the alterations which time has produced, or may produce in politics, I must observe, that all kinds of government, free and absolute, seem to have undergone, in modern times, a great change for the better, with regard both to foreign and domestic management. The balance of power is a secret in politics, fully known only to the present age; and I must add, that the internal Police of states has also received great improvements within the last century. We are informed by Sallust, that Catiline's army was much augmented by the accession of the highwaymen about Rome; though I believe, that all of that profession, who are at present dispersed over Europe, would not amount to a regiment. In Cicero's pleadings for Milo, I find this argument, among others, made use of to prove, that his client had not assassinated Clodius. Had Milo, said he, intended to have killed Clodius, he had not attacked him in the daytime, and at such a distance from the city: He had way-laid him at night, near the suburbs, where it might have been pretended, that he was killed by robbers; and the frequency of the accident would have favoured the deceit. This is a surprizing proof of the loose police of Rome, and of the number and force of these robbers; since Clodius was at that time attended by thirty slaves, who were completely armed, and sufficiently accustomed to blood and danger in the frequent tumults excited by that seditious tribune.

But though all kinds of government be improved in modern times, yet monarchical government seems to have made the greatest advances towards perfection. It may now be affirmed of civilized monarchies, what was formerly said in praise of republics alone, that they are a government of Laws, not of Men. They are found susceptible of order, method, and constancy, to a surprizing degree. Property is there secure; industry encouraged; the arts flourish; and the prince lives secure among his subjects, like a father among his children. There are perhaps, and have been for two centuries, near two hundred absolute princes, great and small, in Europe; and allowing twenty years to each reign, we may suppose, that there have been in the whole two thousand monarchs or tyrants, as the Greeks would have called them: Yet of these there has not been one, not even Philip II. of Spain, so bad as Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, who were four in twelve amongst the Roman emperors. It must, however, be confessed, that, though monarchical governments have approached nearer to popular ones, in gentleness and stability; they are still inferior. Our modern education and customs instil more humanity and moderation than the ancient; but have not as yet been able to overcome entirely the disadvantages of that form of government.

But here I must beg leave to advance a conjecture, which seems probable, but which posterity alone can fully judge of. I am apt to think, that, in monarchical governments there is a source of improvement, and in popular governments a source of degeneracy, which in time will bring these species of civil polity still nearer an equality. The greatest abuses, which arise in France, the most perfect model of pure monarchy, proceed not from the number or weight of the taxes, beyond what are to be met with in free countries; but from the expensive, unequal, arbitrary, and intricate method of levying them, by which the industry of the poor, especially of the peasants and farmers, is, in a great measure, discouraged, and agriculture rendered a beggarly and slavish employment. But to whose advantage do these abuses tend? If to that of the nobility, they might be esteemed inherent in that form of government; since the nobility are the true supports of monarchy; and it is natural their interest should be more consulted, in such a constitution, than that of the people. But the nobility are, in reality, the chief losers by this oppression; since it ruins their estates, and beggars their tenants. The only gainers by it are the Finançiers, a race of men rather odious to the nobility and the whole kingdom. If a prince or minister, therefore, should arise, endowed with sufficient discernment to know his own and the public interest, and with sufficient force of mind to break through ancient customs, we might expect to see these abuses remedied; in which case, the difference between that absolute government and our free one, would not appear so considerable as at present.

The source of degeneracy, which may be remarked in free governments, consists in the practice of contracting debt, and mortgaging the public revenues, by which taxes may, in time, become altogether intolerable, and all the property of the state be brought into the hands of the public. This practice is of modern date. The Athenians, though governed by a republic, paid near two hundred per Cent. for those sums of money, which any emergence made it necessary for them to borrow; as we learn from Xenophon. Among the moderns, the Dutch first introduced the practice of borrowing great sums at low interest, and have well nigh ruined themselves by it. Absolute princes have also contracted debt; but as an absolute prince may make a bankruptcy when he pleases, his people can never be oppressed by his debts. In popular governments, the people, and chiefly those who have the highest offices, being commonly the public creditors, it is difficult for the state to make use of this remedy, which, however it may sometimes be necessary, is always cruel and barbarous. This, therefore seems to be an inconvenience, which nearly threatens all free governments; especially our own, at the present juncture of affairs. And what a strong motive is this, to encrease our frugality of public money; lest for want of it, we be reduced, by the multiplicity of taxes, or what is worse, by our public impotence and inability for defence, to curse our very liberty, and wish ourselves in the same state of servitude with all the nations that surround us?

ESSAY XIII: OF ELOQUENCE

Those, who consider the periods and revolutions of human kind, as represented in history, are entertained with a spectacle full of pleasure and variety, and see, with surprize, the manners, customs, and opinions of the same species susceptible of such prodigious changes in different periods of time. It may, however, be observed, that, in civil history, there is found a much greater uniformity than in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negociations, and politics of one age resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles. Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions; and these passions are of a very stubborn and intractable nature, in comparison of the sentiments and understanding, which are easily varied by education and example. The Goths were much more inferior to the Romans, in taste and science, than in courage and virtue.

But not to compare together nations so widely different; it may be observed, that even this later period of human learning is, in many respects, of an opposite character to the ancient; and that, if we be superior in philosophy, we are still, notwithstanding all our refinements, much inferior in eloquence.

In ancient times, no work of genius was thought to require so great parts and capacity, as the speaking in public; and some eminent writers have pronounced the talents, even of a great poet or philosopher, to be of an inferior nature to those which are requisite for such an undertaking. Greece and Rome produced, each of them, but one accomplished orator; and whatever praises the other celebrated speakers might merit, they were still esteemed much inferior to these great models of eloquence. It is observable, that the ancient critics could scarcely find two orators in any age, who deserved to be placed precisely in the same rank, and possessed the same degree of merit. Calvus, Cælius, Curio, Hortensius, Cæsar rose one above another: But the greatest of that age was inferior to Cicero, the most eloquent speaker, that had ever appeared in Rome. Those of fine taste, however, pronounced this judgment of the Roman orator, as well as of the

Grecian, that both of them surpassed in eloquence all that had ever appeared, but that they were far from reaching the perfection of their art, which was infinite, and not only exceeded human force to attain, but human imagination to conceive. Cicero declares himself dissatisfied with his own performances; nay, even with those of Demosthenes. Ita sunt avidæ & capaces meæ aures, says he, & semper aliquid immensum, infinitumque desiderant.,

Of all the polite and learned nations, England alone possesses a popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. But what has England to boast of in this particular? In enumerating the great men, who have done honour to our country, we exult in our poets and philosophers; but what orators are ever mentioned? Or where are the monuments of their genius to be met with? There are found, indeed, in our histories, the names of several, who directed the resolutions of our parliament: But neither themselves nor others have taken the pains to preserve their speeches; and the authority, which they possessed, seems to have been owing to their experience, wisdom, or power, more than to their talents for oratory. At present, there are above half a dozen speakers in the two houses, who, in the judgment of the public, have reached very near the same pitch of eloquence; and no man pretends to give any one the preference above the rest. This seems to me a certain proof, that none of them have attained much beyond a mediocrity in their art, and that the species of eloquence, which they aspire to, gives no exercise to the sublimer faculties of the mind, but may be reached by ordinary talents and a slight application. A hundred cabinet-makers in London can work a table or a chair equally well; but no one poet can write verses with such spirit and elegance as Mr. Pope.

We are told, that, when Demosthenes was to plead, all ingenious men flocked to Athens from the most remote parts of Greece, as to the most celebrated spectacle of the world. At London you may see men sauntering in the court of requests, while the most important debate is carrying on in the two houses; and many do not think themselves sufficiently compensated, for the losing of their dinners, by all the eloquence of our most celebrated speakers. When old Cibber is to act, the curiosity of several is more excited, than when our prime minister is to defend himself from a motion for his removal or impeachment.

Even a person, unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge, from a few strokes, that the stile or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to. How absurd would it appear, in our temperate and calm speakers, to make use of an Apostrophe, like that noble one of Demosthenes, so much celebrated by Quintilian and Longinus, when justifying the unsuccessful battle of Chæronea, he breaks out, No, my Fellow-Citizens, No: You have not erred. I swear by the manes of those heroes, who fought for the same cause in the plains of Marathon and Platæa. Who could now endure such a bold and poetical figure, as that which Cicero employs, after describing in the most tragical terms the crucifixion of a Roman citizen. Should I paint the horrors of this scene, not to Roman citizens, not to the allies of our state, not to those who have ever heard of the Roman Name, not even to men, but to brute-creatures; or, to go farther, should I lift up my voice in the most desolate solitude, to the rocks and mountains, yet should I surely see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action. With what a blaze of eloquence must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace, or cause it to make any impression on the hearers? And what noble art and sublime talents are requisite to arrive, by just degrees, at a sentiment so bold and excessive: To inflame the audience, so as to make them accompany the speaker in such violent passions, and such elevated conceptions: And to conceal, under a torrent of eloquence, the artifice, by which all this is effectuated! Should this sentiment even appear to us excessive, as perhaps it justly may, it will at least serve to give an idea of the stile of ancient eloquence, where such swelling expressions were not rejected as wholly monstrous and gigantic.

Suitable to this vehemence of thought and expression, was the vehemence of action, observed in the ancient orators. The supplosio pedis, or stamping with the foot, was one of the most usual and moderate gestures which they made use of; though that is now esteemed too violent, either for the senate, bar, or pulpit, and is only admitted into the theatre, to accompany the most violent passions, which are there represented.

One is somewhat at a loss to what cause we may ascribe so sensible a decline of eloquence in later ages. The genius of mankind, at all times, is, perhaps, equal: The moderns have applied themselves, with great industry and success, to all the other arts and sciences: And a learned nation possesses a popular government; a circumstance which seems requisite for the full display of these noble talents: But notwithstanding all these advantages, our progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable, in comparison of the advances, which we have made in all other parts of learning.

Shall we assert, that the strains of ancient eloquence are unsuitable to our age, and ought not to be imitated by modern orators? Whatever reasons may be made use of to prove this, I am persuaded they will be found, upon examination, to be unsound and unsatisfactory.

First, It may be said, that, in ancient times, during the flourishing period of Greek and Roman learning, the municipal laws, in every state, were but few and simple, and the decision of causes, was, in a great measure, left to the equity and common sense of the judges. The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and incompatible with every other study or profession. The great statesmen and generals among the Romans were all lawyers; and Cicero, to shew the facility of acquiring this science, declares, that, in the midst of all his occupations, he would undertake, in a few days, to make himself a complete civilian. Now, where a pleader addresses himself to the equity of his judges, he has much more room to display his eloquence, than where he must draw his arguments from strict laws, statutes, and precedents. In the former case, many circumstances must be taken in; many personal considerations regarded; and even favour and inclination, which it belongs to the orator, by his art and eloquence, to conciliate, may be disguised under the appearance of equity. But how shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome occupations, in order to gather the flowers of Parnassus? Or what opportunity shall he have of displaying them, amidst the rigid and subtile arguments, objections, and replies, which he is obliged to make use of? The greatest genius, and greatest orator, who should pretend to plead before the Chancellor, after a month’s study of the laws, would only labour to make himself ridiculous.

I am ready to own, that this circumstance, of the multiplicity and intricacy of laws, is a discouragement to eloquence in modern times: But I assert, that it will not entirely account for the decline of that noble art. It may banish oratory from Westminster-Hall, but not from either house of parliament. Among the Athenians, the Areopagites expressly forbad all allurements of eloquence; and some have pretended that in the Greek orations, written in the judiciary form, there is not so bold and rhetorical a stile, as appears in the Roman. But to what a pitch did the Athenians carry their eloquence in the deliberative kind, when affairs of state were canvassed, and the liberty, happiness, and honour of the republic were the subject of debate? Disputes of this nature elevate the genius above all others, and give the fullest scope to eloquence; and such disputes are very frequent in this nation.

Secondly, It may be pretended that the decline of eloquence is owing to the superior good sense of the moderns, who reject with disdain all those rhetorical tricks, employed to seduce the judges, and will admit of nothing but solid argument in any debate or deliberation. If a man be accused of murder, the fact must be proved by witnesses and evidence; and the laws will afterwards determine the punishment of the criminal. It would be ridiculous to describe, in strong colours, the horror and cruelty of the action: To introduce the relations of the dead; and, at a signal, make them throw themselves at the feet of the judges, imploring justice with tears and lamentations: And still more ridiculous would it be, to employ a picture representing the bloody deed, in order to move the judges by the display of so tragical a spectacle: Though we know, that this artifice was sometimes practised by the pleaders of old. Now, banish the pathetic from public discourses, and you reduce the speakers merely to modern eloquence; that is, to good sense, delivered in proper expression.

Perhaps it may be acknowledged, that our modern customs, or our superior good sense, if you will, should make our orators more cautious and reserved than the ancient, in attempting to inflame the passions, or elevate the imagination of their audience: But, I see no reason, why it should make them despair absolutely of succeeding in that attempt. It should make them redouble their art, not abandon it entirely. The ancient orators seem also to have been on their guard against this jealousy of their audience; but they took a different way of eluding it. They hurried away with such a torrent of sublime and pathetic, that they left their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice, by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow; and then communicated those impetuous movements to his audience.

Does any man pretend to have more good sense than Julius Cæsar? yet that haughty conqueror, we know, was so subdued by the charms of

Cicero’s eloquence, that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn.

Some objections, I own, notwithstanding his vast success, may lie against some passages of the Roman orator. He is too florid and rhetorical: His figures are too striking and palpable: The divisions of his discourse are drawn chiefly from the rules of the schools: And his wit disdains not always the artifice even of a pun, rhyme, or jingle of words. The Grecian addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the Roman senate or judges. The lowest vulgar of Athens were his sovereigns, and the arbiters of his eloquence. Yet is his manner more chaste and austere than that of the other. Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. It is rapid harmony, exactly adjusted to the sense: It is vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art: It is disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument: And of all human productions, the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models, which approach the nearest to perfection.

Thirdly, It may be pretended, that the disorders of the ancient governments, and the enormous crimes, of which the citizens were often guilty, afforded much ampler matter for eloquence than can be met with among the moderns. Were there no Verres or Catiline, there would be no Cicero. But that this reason can have no great influence, is evident. It would be easy to find a Philip in modern times; but where shall we find a Demosthenes?

What remains, then, but that we lay the blame on the want of genius, or of judgment in our speakers, who either found themselves incapable of reaching the heights of ancient eloquence, or rejected all such endeavours, as unsuitable to the spirit of modern assemblies? A few successful attempts of this nature might rouze the genius of the nation, excite the emulation of the youth, and accustom our ears to a more sublime and more pathetic elocution, than what we have been hitherto entertained with. There is certainly something accidental in the first rise and the progress of the arts in any nation. I doubt whether a very satisfactory reason can be given, why ancient Rome, though it received all its refinements from Greece, could attain only to a relish for statuary, painting and architecture, without reaching the practice of these arts: While modern Rome has been excited, by a few remains found among the ruins of antiquity, and has produced artists of the greatest eminence and distinction. Had such a cultivated genius for oratory, as Waller's for poetry, arisen, during the civil wars, when liberty began to be fully established, and popular assemblies to enter into all the most material points of government; I am persuaded so illustrious an example would have given a quite different turn to British eloquence, and made us reach the perfection of the ancient model. Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets, geometers, and philosophers, and British Ciceros have appeared, as well as British Archimedeses and Virgils.,

It is seldom or never found, when a false taste in poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been preferred to a true, upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models, to lead men into a juster apprehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When these appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and, by their natural and powerful charms, gain over, even the most prejudiced, to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion, and of every sentiment, is in every man; and when touched properly, they rise to life, and warm the heart, and convey that satisfaction, by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And if this observation be true, with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so, with regard to eloquence; which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges; but must submit to the public verdict, without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such, by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent speaker may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective: Yet, whenever the true genius arises, he draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational; and, if properly executed, will always have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of any thing better: But the ancients had experience of both, and, upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind, of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I mistake not, our modern eloquence is of the same stile or species with that which ancient critics denominated Attic eloquence, that is, calm, elegant, and subtile, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common discourse. Such was the eloquence of Lysias among the Athenians, and of Calvus among the Romans. These were esteemed in their time; but when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance, and subtilty, and force of argument, with the former; but what rendered them chiefly admirable, was that pathetic and sublime, which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolution of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarcely had any instance in England, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances, which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord Bolingbroke’s productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy which our orators scarcely ever aim at; though it is evident, that such an elevated stile has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. It is there seconded by the graces of voice and action: The movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience: And the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give propriety to the strongest figures and expressions. It is true, there is a great prejudice against set speeches; and a man cannot escape ridicule, who repeats a discourse as a school-boy does his lesson, and takes no notice of any thing that has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity? A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse. If any thing new occur, he may supply it from his invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same impetus or force, which it has acquired by its motion; as a vessel, once impelled by the oars, carries on its course for some time, when the original impulse is suspended.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, even though our modern orators should not elevate their stile or aspire to a rivalship with the ancient; yet is there, in most of their speeches, a material defect, which they might correct, without departing from that composed air of argument and reasoning, to which they limit their ambition. Their great affectation of extemporary discourses has made them reject all order and method, which seems so requisite to argument, and without which it is scarcely possible to produce an entire conviction on the mind. It is not, that one would recommend many divisions in a public discourse, unless the subject very evidently offer them: But it is easy, without this formality, to observe a method, and make that method conspicuous to the hearers, who will be infinitely pleased to see the arguments rise naturally from one another, and will retain a more thorough persuasion, than can arise from the strongest reasons, which are thrown together in confusion.

ESSAY XIV: OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES

Nothing requires greater nicety, in our enquiries concerning human affairs, than to distinguish exactly what is owing to chance, and what proceeds from causes; nor is there any subject, in which an author is more liable to deceive himself by false subtilties and refinements. To say, that any event is derived from chance, cuts short all farther enquiry concerning it, and leaves the writer in the same state of ignorance with the rest of mankind. But when the event is supposed to proceed from certain and stable causes, he may then display his ingenuity, in assigning these causes; and as a man of any subtilty can never be at a loss in this particular, he has thereby an opportunity of swelling his volumes, and discovering his profound knowledge, in observing what escapes the vulgar and ignorant.

The distinguishing between chance and causes must depend upon every particular man’s sagacity, in considering every particular incident. But, if I were to assign any general rule to help us in applying this distinction, it would be the following, What depends upon a few persons is, in a great measure, to be ascribed to chance, or secret and unknown causes: What arises from a great number, may often be accounted for by determinate and known causes.

Two natural reasons may be assigned for this rule. First, If you suppose a dye to have any biass, however small, to a particular side, this biass, though, perhaps, it may not appear in a few throws, will certainly prevail in a great number, and will cast the balance entirely to that side. In like manner, when any causes beget a particular inclination or passion, at a certain time, and among a certain people; though many individuals may escape the contagion, and be ruled by passions peculiar to themselves; yet the multitude will certainly be seized by the common affection, and be governed by it in all their actions.

Secondly, Those principles or causes, which are fitted to operate on a multitude, are always of a grosser and more stubborn nature, less subject to accidents, and less influenced by whim and private fancy, than those which operate on a few only. The latter are commonly so delicate and refined, that the smallest incident in the health, education, or fortune of a particular person, is sufficient to divert their course, and retard their operation; nor is it possible to reduce them to any general maxims or observations. Their influence at one time will never assure us concerning their influence at another; even though all the general circumstances should be the same in both cases.

To judge by this rule, the domestic and the gradual revolutions of a state must be a more proper subject of reasoning and observation, than the foreign and the violent, which are commonly produced by single persons, and are more influenced by whim, folly, or caprice, than by general passions and interests. The depression of the lords, and rise of the commons in England, after the statutes of alienation and the encrease of trade and industry, are more easily accounted for by general principles, than the depression of the Spanish, and rise of the French monarchy, after the death of Charles Quint. Had Harry IV. Cardinal Richlieu, and Louis XIV. been Spaniards; and Philip II. III. and IV. and Charles II. been Frenchmen, the history of these two nations had been entirely reversed.

For the same reason, it is more easy to account for the rise and progress of commerce in any kingdom, than for that of learning; and a state, which should apply itself to the encouragement of the one, would be more assured of success, than one which should cultivate the other. Avarice, or the desire of gain, is an universal passion, which operates at all times, in all places, and upon all persons: But curiosity, or the love of knowledge, has a very limited influence, and requires youth, leisure, education, genius, and example, to make it govern any person. You will never want booksellers, while there are buyers of books: But there may frequently be readers where there are no authors. Multitudes of people, necessity and liberty, have begotten commerce in Holland: But study and application have scarcely produced any eminent writers.

We may, therefore, conclude, that there is no subject, in which we must proceed with more caution, than in tracing the history of the arts and sciences; lest we assign causes which never existed, and reduce what is merely contingent to stable and universal principles. Those who cultivate the sciences in any state, are always few in number: The passion, which governs them, limited: Their taste and judgment delicate and easily perverted: And their application disturbed with the smallest accident.

Chance, therefore, or secret and unknown causes, must have a great influence on the rise and progress of all the refined arts.

But there is a reason, which induces me not to ascribe the matter altogether to chance. Though the persons, who cultivate the sciences with such astonishing success, as to attract the admiration of posterity, be always few, in all nations and all ages; it is impossible but a share of the same spirit and genius must be antecedently diffused throughout the people among whom they arise, in order to produce, form, and cultivate, from their earliest infancy, the taste and judgment of those eminent writers. The mass cannot be altogether insipid, from which such refined spirits are extracted. There is a God within us, says Ovid, who breathes that divine fire, by which we are animated. Poets, in all ages, have advanced this claim to inspiration. There is not, however, any thing supernatural in the case. Their fire is not kindled from heaven. It only runs along the earth; is caught from one breast to another; and burns brightest, where the materials are best prepared, and most happily disposed. The question, therefore, concerning the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is not altogether a question concerning the taste, genius, and spirit of a few, but concerning those of a whole people; and may, therefore, be accounted for, in some measure, by general causes and principles. I grant, that a man, who should enquire, why such a particular poet, as Homer, for instance, existed, at such a place, in such a time, would throw himself headlong into chimæra, and could never treat of such a subject, without a multitude of false subtilties and refinements. He might as well pretend to give a reason, why such particular generals, as Fabius and Scipio, lived in Rome at such a time, and why Fabius came into the world before Scipio. For such incidents as these, no other reason can be given than that of Horace:

- Scit genius, natale comes, qui temperat astrum,
- Naturæ Deus humanæ, mortalis in unum —
- — Quodque caput, vultu mutabilis, albus & ater.

But I am persuaded, that in many cases good reasons might be given, why such a nation is more polite and learned, at a particular time, than any of its neighbours. At least, this is so curious a subject, that it were a pity to abandon it entirely, before we have found whether it be susceptible of reasoning, and can be reduced to any general principles.

My first observation on this head is, That it is impossible for the arts and sciences to arise, at first, among any people unless that people enjoy the blessing of a free government.

In the first ages of the world, when men are as yet barbarous and ignorant, they seek no farther security against mutual violence and injustice, than the choice of some rulers, few or many, in whom they place an implicit confidence, without providing any security, by laws or political institutions, against the violence and injustice of these rulers. If the authority be centered in a single person, and if the people, either by conquest, or by the ordinary course of propagation, encrease to a great multitude, the monarch, finding it impossible, in his own person, to execute every office of sovereignty, in every place, must delegate his authority to inferior magistrates, who preserve peace and order in their respective districts. As experience and education have not yet refined the judgments of men to any considerable degree, the prince, who is himself unrestrained, never dreams of restraining his ministers, but delegates his full authority to every one, whom he sets over any portion of the people. All general laws are attended with inconveniencies, when applied to particular cases; and it requires great penetration and experience, both to perceive that these inconveniencies are fewer than what result from full discretionary powers in every magistrate; and also to discern what general laws are, upon the whole, attended with fewest inconveniencies. This is a matter of so great difficulty, that men may have made some advances, even in the sublime arts of poetry and eloquence, where a rapidity of genius and imagination assists their progress, before they have arrived at any great refinement in their municipal laws, where frequent trials and diligent observation can alone direct their improvements. It is not, therefore, to be supposed, that a barbarous monarch, unrestrained and uninstructed, will ever become a legislator, or think of restraining his Bashaws, in every province, or even his Cadis in every village. We are told, that the late Czar, though actuated with a noble genius, and smit with the love and admiration of European arts; yet professed an esteem for the Turkish policy in this particular, and approved of such summary decisions of causes, as are practised in that barbarous monarchy, where the judges are not restrained by any methods, forms, or laws. He did not perceive, how contrary such a practice would have been to all his other endeavours for refining his people. Arbitrary power, in all cases, is somewhat oppressive and debasing; but it is altogether ruinous and intolerable, when contracted into a small compass; and becomes still worse, when the person, who possesses it, knows that the time of his authority is limited and uncertain. Habet subjectos tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos. He governs the subjects with full authority, as if they were his own; and with negligence or tyranny, as belonging to another. A people, governed after such a manner, are slaves in the full and proper sense of the word; and it is impossible they can ever aspire to any refinements of taste or reason. They dare not so much as pretend to enjoy the necessaries of life in plenty or security.

To expect, therefore, that the arts and sciences should take their first rise in a monarchy, is to expect a contradiction. Before these refinements have taken place, the monarch is ignorant and uninstructed; and not having knowledge sufficient to make him sensible of the necessity of balancing his government upon general laws, he delegates his full power to all inferior magistrates. This barbarous policy debases the people, and for ever prevents all improvements. Were it possible, that, before science were known in the world, a monarch could possess so much wisdom as to become a legislator, and govern his people by law, not by the arbitrary will of their fellow-subjects, it might be possible for that species of government to be the first nursery of arts and sciences. But that supposition seems scarcely to be consistent or rational.

It may happen, that a republic, in its infant state, may be supported by as few laws as a barbarous monarchy, and may entrust as unlimited an authority to its magistrates or judges. But, besides that the frequent elections by the people, are a considerable check upon authority; it is impossible, but, in time, the necessity of restraining the magistrates, in order to preserve liberty, must at last appear, and give rise to general laws and statutes. The Roman Consuls, for some time, decided all causes, without being confined by any positive statutes, till the people, bearing this yoke with impatience, created the decemvirs, who promulgated the twelve tables; a body of laws, which, though, perhaps, they were not equal in bulk to one English act of parliament, were almost the only written rules, which regulated property and punishment, for some ages, in that famous republic. They were, however, sufficient, together with the forms of a free government, to secure the lives and properties of the citizens, to exempt one man from the dominion of another; and to protect every one against the violence or tyranny of his fellow-citizens. In such a situation the sciences may raise their heads and flourish: But never can have being amidst such a scene of oppression and slavery, as always results from barbarous monarchies, where the people alone are restrained by the authority of the magistrates, and the magistrates are not restrained by any law or statute. An unlimited despotism of this nature, while it exists, effectually puts a stop to all improvements, and keeps men from attaining that knowledge, which is requisite to instruct them in the advantages, arising from a better police, and more moderate authority.

Here then are the advantages of free states. Though a republic should be barbarous, it necessarily, by an infallible operation, gives rise to Law, even before mankind have made any considerable advances in the other sciences. From law arises security: From security curiosity: And from curiosity knowledge. The latter steps of this progress may be more accidental; but the former are altogether necessary. A republic without laws can never have any duration. On the contrary, in a monarchical government, law arises not necessarily from the forms of government. Monarchy, when absolute, contains even something repugnant to law. Great wisdom and reflexion can alone reconcile them. But such a degree of wisdom can never be expected, before the greater refinements and improvements of human reason. These refinements require curiosity, security, and law. The first growth, therefore, of the arts and sciences can never be expected in despotic governments.

There are other causes, which discourage the rise of the refined arts in despotic governments; though I take the want of laws, and the delegation of full powers to every petty magistrate, to be the principal. Eloquence certainly springs up more naturally in popular governments: Emulation too in every accomplishment must there be more animated and enlivened: And genius and capacity have a fuller scope and career. All these causes render free governments the only proper nursery for the arts and sciences.

The next observation, which I shall make on this head, is, That nothing is more favourable to the rise of politeness and learning, than a number of neighbouring and independent states, connected together by commerce and policy. The emulation, which naturally arises among those neighbouring states, is an obvious source of improvement: But what I would chiefly insist on is the stop, which such limited territories give both to power and to authority.

Extended governments, where a single person has great influence, soon become absolute; but small ones change naturally into commonwealths. A large government is accustomed by degrees to tyranny; because each act of violence is at first performed upon a part, which, being distant from the majority, is not taken notice of, nor excites any violent ferment. Besides, a large government, though the whole be discontented, may, by a little art, be kept in obedience; while each part, ignorant of the resolutions of the rest, is afraid to begin any commotion or insurrection. Not to mention, that there is a superstitious reverence for princes, which mankind naturally contract when they do not often see the sovereign, and when many of them become not acquainted with him so as to perceive his weaknesses. And as large states can afford a great expence, in order to support the pomp of majesty; this is a kind of fascination on men, and naturally contributes to the enslaving of them.

In a small government, any act of oppression is immediately known throughout the whole: The murmurs and discontents, proceeding from it, are easily communicated: And the indignation arises the higher, because the subjects are not apt to apprehend in such states, that the distance is very wide between themselves and their sovereign. “No man,” said the prince of Conde, “is a hero to his Valet de Chambre.” It is certain that admiration and acquaintance are altogether incompatible towards any mortal creature. Sleep and love convinced even Alexander himself that he was not a God: But I suppose that such as daily attended him could easily, from the numberless weaknesses to which he was subject, have given him many still more convincing proofs of his humanity.

But the divisions into small states are favourable to learning, by stopping the progress of authority as well as that of power. Reputation is often as great a fascination upon men as sovereignty, and is equally destructive to the freedom of thought and examination. But where a number of neighbouring states have a great intercourse of arts and commerce, their mutual jealousy keeps them from receiving too lightly the law from each other, in matters of taste and of reasoning, and makes them examine every work of art with the greatest care and accuracy. The contagion of popular opinion spreads not so easily from one place to another. It readily receives a check in some state or other, where it concurs not with the prevailing prejudices. And nothing but nature and reason, or, at least, what bears them a strong resemblance, can force its way through all obstacles, and unite the most rival nations into an esteem and admiration of it.

Greece was a cluster of little principalities, which soon became republics; and being united both by their near neighbourhood, and by the ties of the same language and interest, they entered into the closest intercourse of commerce and learning. There concurred a happy climate, a soil not unfertile, and a most harmonious and comprehensive language; so that every circumstance among that people seemed to favour the rise of the arts and sciences. Each city produced its several artists and philosophers, who refused to yield the preference to those of the neighbouring republics: Their contention and debates sharpened the wits of men: A variety of objects was presented to the judgment, while each challenged the preference to the rest: and the sciences, not being dwarfed by the restraint of authority, were enabled to make such considerable shoots, as are, even at this time, the objects of our admiration. After the Roman christian, or catholic church had spread itself over the civilized world, and had engrossed all the learning of the times; being really one large state within itself, and united under one head; this variety of sects immediately disappeared, and the Peripatetic philosophy was alone admitted into all the schools, to the utter depravation of every kind of learning. But mankind, having at length thrown off this yoke, affairs are now returned nearly to the same situation as before, and Europe is at present a copy at large, of what Greece was formerly a pattern in miniature. We have seen the advantage of this situation in several instances. What checked the progress of the Cartesian philosophy, to which the French nation shewed such a strong propensity towards the end of the last century, but the opposition made to it by the other nations of Europe, who soon discovered the weak sides of that philosophy? The severest scrutiny, which Newton's theory has undergone, proceeded not from his own countrymen, but from foreigners; and if it can overcome the obstacles, which it meets with at present in all parts of Europe, it will probably go down triumphant to the latest posterity. The English are become sensible of the scandalous licentiousness of their stage, from the example of the French decency and morals. The French are convinced, that their theatre has become somewhat effeminate, by too much love and gallantry; and begin to approve of the more masculine taste of some neighbouring nations.

In China, there seems to be a pretty considerable stock of politeness and science, which, in the course of so many centuries, might naturally be expected to ripen into something more perfect and finished, than what has yet arisen from them. But China is one vast empire, speaking one language, governed by one law, and sympathizing in the same manners. The authority of any teacher, such as Confucius, was propagated easily from one corner of the empire to the other. None had courage to resist the torrent of popular opinion. And posterity was not bold enough to dispute what had been universally received by their ancestors. This seems to be one natural reason, why the sciences have made so slow a progress in that mighty empire.

If we consider the face of the globe, Europe, of all the four parts of the world, is the most broken by seas, rivers, and mountains; and Greece of all countries of Europe. Hence these regions were naturally divided into several distinct governments. And hence the sciences arose in Greece; and Europe has been hitherto the most constant habitation of them.

I have sometimes been inclined to think, that interruptions in the periods of learning, were they not attended with such a destruction of ancient books, and the records of history, would be rather favourable to the arts and sciences, by breaking the progress of authority, and dethroning the tyrannical usurpers over human reason. In this particular, they have the same influence, as interruptions in political governments and societies. Consider the blind submission of the ancient philosophers to the several masters in each school, and you will be convinced, that little good could be expected from a hundred centuries of such a servile philosophy. Even the Eclectics, who arose about the age of Augustus, notwithstanding their professing to chuse freely what pleased them from every different sect, were yet, in the main, as slavish and dependent as any of their brethren; since they sought for truth not in nature, but in the several schools; where they supposed she must necessarily be found, though not united in a body, yet dispersed in parts. Upon the revival of learning, those sects of Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Pythagoricians, could never regain any credit or authority; and, at the same time, by the example of their fall, kept men from submitting, with such blind deference, to those new sects, which have attempted to gain an ascendant over them.

The third observation, which I shall form on this head, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, is, That though the only proper Nursery of these noble plants be a free state; yet may they be transplanted into any government; and that a republic is most favourable to the growth of the sciences, a civilized monarchy to that of the polite arts.

To balance a large state or society, whether monarchical or republican, on general laws, is a work of so great difficulty, that no human genius, however comprehensive, is able, by the mere dint of reason and reflection, to effect it. The judgments of many must unite in this work: Experience must guide their labour: Time must bring it to perfection: And the feeling of inconveniencies must correct the mistakes, which they inevitably fall into, in their first trials and experiments. Hence appears the impossibility, that this undertaking should be begun and carried on in any monarchy; since such a form of government, ere civilized, knows no other secret or policy, than that of entrusting unlimited powers to every governor or magistrate, and subdividing the people into so many classes and orders of slavery. From such a situation, no improvement can ever be expected in the sciences, in the liberal arts, in laws, and scarcely in the manual arts and manufactures. The same barbarism and ignorance, with which the government commences, is propagated to all posterity, and can never come to a period by the efforts or ingenuity of such unhappy slaves.

But though law, the source of all security and happiness, arises late in any government, and is the slow product of order and of liberty, it is not preserved with the same difficulty, with which it is produced; but when it has once taken root, is a hardy plant, which will scarcely ever perish through the ill culture of men, or the rigour of the seasons. The arts of luxury, and much more the liberal arts, which depend on a refined taste or sentiment, are easily lost; because they are always relished by a few only, whose leisure, fortune, and genius fit them for such amusements. But what is profitable to every mortal, and in common life, when once discovered, can scarcely fall into oblivion, but by the total subversion of society, and by such furious inundations of barbarous invaders, as obliterate all memory of former arts and civility. Imitation also is apt to transport these coarser and more useful arts from one climate to another, and make them precede the refined arts in their progress; though perhaps they sprang after them in their first rise and propagation. From these causes proceed civilized monarchies; where the arts of government, first invented in free states, are preserved to the mutual advantage and security of sovereign and subject.

However perfect, therefore, the monarchical form may appear to some politicians, it owes all its perfection to the republican; nor is it possible, that a pure despotism, established among a barbarous people, can ever, by its native force and energy, refine and polish itself. It must borrow its laws, and methods, and institutions, and consequently its stability and order, from free governments. These advantages are the sole growth of republics. The extensive despotism of a barbarous monarchy, by entering into the detail of the government, as well as into the principal points of administration, for ever prevents all such improvements.

In a civilized monarchy, the prince alone is unrestrained in the exercise of his authority, and possesses alone a power, which is not bounded by any thing but custom, example, and the sense of his own interest. Every minister or magistrate, however eminent, must submit to the general laws, which govern the whole society, and must exert the authority delegated to him after the manner, which is prescribed. The people depend on none but their sovereign, for the security of their property. He is so far removed from them, and is so much exempt from private jealousies or interests, that this dependence is scarcely felt. And thus a species of government arises, to which, in a high political rant, we may give the name of Tyranny, but which, by a just and prudent administration, may afford tolerable security to the people, and may answer most of the ends of political society.

But though in a civilized monarchy, as well as in a republic, the people have security for the enjoyment of their property; yet in both these forms of government, those who possess the supreme authority have the disposal of many honours and advantages, which excite the ambition and avarice of mankind. The only difference is, that, in a republic, the candidates for office must look downwards, to gain the suffrages of the people; in a monarchy, they must turn their attention upwards, to court the good graces and favour of the great. To be successful in the former way, it is necessary for a man to make himself useful, by his industry, capacity, or knowledge: To be prosperous in the latter way, it is requisite for him to render himself agreeable, by his wit, complaisance, or civility. A strong genius succeeds best in republics: A refined taste in monarchies. And consequently the sciences are the more natural growth of the one, and the polite arts of the other.

Not to mention, that monarchies, receiving their chief stability from a superstitious reverence to priests and princes, have commonly abridged the liberty of reasoning, with regard to religion, and politics, and consequently metaphysics and morals. All these form the most considerable branches of science. Mathematics and natural philosophy, which only remain, are not half so valuable.

Among the arts of conversation, no one pleases more than mutual deference or civility, which leads us to resign our own inclinations to those of our companion, and to curb and conceal that presumption and arrogance, so natural to the human mind. A good-natured man, who is well educated, practises this civility to every mortal, without premeditation or interest. But in order to render that valuable quality general among any people, it seems necessary to assist the natural disposition by some general motive. Where power rises upwards from the people to the great, as in all republics, such refinements of civility are apt to be little practised; since the whole state is, by that means, brought near to a level, and every member of it is rendered, in a great measure, independent of another. The people have the advantage, by the authority of their suffrages: The great, by the superiority of their station. But in a civilized monarchy, there is a long train of dependence from the prince to the peasant, which is not great enough to render property precarious, or depress the minds of the people; but is sufficient to beget in every one an inclination to please his superiors, and to form himself upon those models, which are most acceptable to people of condition and education. Politeness of manners, therefore, arises most naturally in monarchies and courts; and where that flourishes, none of the liberal arts will be altogether neglected or despised.

The republics in Europe are at present noted for want of politeness. The good-manners of a Swiss civilized in Holland, is an expression for rusticity among the French. The English, in some degree, fall under the same censure, notwithstanding their learning and genius. And if the Venetians be an exception to the rule, they owe it, perhaps, to their communication with the other Italians, most of whose governments beget a dependence more than sufficient for civilizing their manners.

It is difficult to pronounce any judgment concerning the refinements of the ancient republics in this particular: But I am apt to suspect, that the arts of conversation were not brought so near to perfection among them as the arts of writing and composition. The scurrility of the ancient orators, in many instances, is quite shocking, and exceeds all belief. Vanity too is often not a little offensive in authors of those ages; as well as the common licentiousness and immodesty of their stile, Quicunque impudicus, adulter, ganeo, manu, ventre, pene, bona patria laceraverat, says Sallust in one of the gravest and most moral passages of his history. Nam fuit ante Helenam Cunnus teterrima belli Causa, is an expression of Horace, in tracing the origin of moral good and evil. Ovid and Lucretius are almost as licentious in their stile as Lord Rochester; though the former were fine gentlemen and delicate writers, and the latter, from the corruptions of that court, in which he lived, seems to have thrown off all regard to shame and decency. Juvenal inculcates modesty with great zeal; but sets a very bad example of it, if we consider the impudence of his expressions.

I shall also be bold to affirm, that among the ancients, there was not much delicacy of breeding, or that polite deference and respect, which civility obliges us either to express or counterfeit towards the persons with whom we converse. Cicero was certainly one of the finest gentlemen of his age; yet I must confess I have frequently been shocked with the poor figure under which he represents his friend Atticus, in those dialogues, where he himself is introduced as a speaker. That learned and virtuous Roman, whose dignity, though he was only a private gentleman, was inferior to that of no one in Rome, is there shewn in rather a more pitiful light than Philalethes's friend in our modern dialogues. He is a humble admirer of the orator, pays him frequent compliments, and receives his instructions, with all the deference which a scholar owes to his master. Even Cato is treated in somewhat of a cavalier manner in the dialogues de finibus.,

One of the most particular details of a real dialogue, which we meet with in antiquity, is related by Polybius; when Philip, king of Macedon, a prince of wit and parts, met with Titus Flamininus, one of the politest of the Romans, as we learn from Plutarch, accompanied with ambassadors from almost all the Greek cities. The Ætolian ambassador very abruptly tells the king, that he talked like a fool or a madman (ληρεῖν). That's evident, says his majesty, even to a blind man; which was a raillery on the blindness of his excellency. Yet all this did not pass the usual bounds: For the conference was not disturbed; and Flamininus was very well diverted with these strokes of humour. At the end, when Philip craved a little time to consult with his friends, of whom he had none present, the Roman general, being desirous also to shew his wit, as the historian says, tells him, that perhaps the reason, why he had none of his friends with him, was because he had murdered them all; which was actually the case. This unprovoked piece of rusticity is not condemned by the historian; caused no farther resentment in Philip, than to excite a Sardonian smile, or what we call a grin; and hindered him not from renewing the conference next day. Plutarch too mentions this raillery amongst the witty and agreeable sayings of Flamininus.,

Cardinal Wolsey apologized for his famous piece of insolence, in saying, Ego et Rex meus, I and my king, by observing, that this expression was conformable to the Latin idiom, and that a Roman always named himself before the person to whom, or of whom he spake. Yet this seems to have been an instance of want of civility among that people. The ancients made it a rule, that the person of the greatest dignity should be mentioned first in the discourse; insomuch, that we find the spring of a quarrel and jealousy between the Romans and Ætolians, to have been a poet's naming the Ætolians before the Romans, in celebrating a victory gained by their united arms over the Macedonians. Thus Livia disgusted Tiberius by placing her own name before his in an inscription.,

No advantages in this world are pure and unmixed. In like manner, as modern politeness, which is naturally so ornamental, runs often into affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity; so the ancient simplicity, which is naturally so amiable and affecting, often degenerates into rusticity and abuse, scurrility and obscenity.

If the superiority in politeness should be allowed to modern times, the modern notions of gallantry, the natural produce of courts and monarchies, will probably be assigned as the causes of this refinement. No one denies this invention to be modern: But some of the more zealous partizans of the ancients, have asserted it to be foppish and ridiculous, and a reproach, rather than a credit, to the present age. It may here be proper to examine this question.

Nature has implanted in all living creatures an affection between the sexes, which, even in the fiercest and most rapacious animals, is not merely confined to the satisfaction of the bodily appetite, but begets a friendship and mutual sympathy, which runs through the whole tenor of their lives. Nay, even in those species, where nature limits the indulgence of this appetite to one season and to one object, and forms a kind of marriage or association between a single male and female, there is yet a visible complacency and benevolence, which extends farther, and mutually softens the affections of the sexes towards each other. How much more must this have place in man, where the confinement of the appetite is not natural; but either is derived accidentally from some strong charm of love, or arises from reflections on duty and convenience? Nothing, therefore, can proceed less from affectation than the passion of gallantry. It is natural in the highest degree. Art and education, in the most elegant courts, make no more alteration on it, than on all the other laudable passions. They only turn the mind more towards it; they refine it; they polish it; and give it a proper grace and expression.

But gallantry is as generous as it is natural. To correct such gross vices, as lead us to commit real injury on others, is the part of morals, and the object of the most ordinary education. Where that is not attended to, in some degree, no human society can subsist. But in order to render conversation, and the intercourse of minds more easy and agreeable, good-manners have been invented, and have carried the matter somewhat farther. Wherever nature has given the mind a propensity to any vice, or to any passion disagreeable to others, refined breeding has taught men to throw the biass on the opposite side, and to preserve, in all their behaviour, the appearance of sentiments different from those to which they naturally incline. Thus, as we are commonly proud and selfish, and apt to assume the preference above others, a polite man learns to behave with deference towards his companions, and to yield the superiority to them in all the common incidents of society. In like manner, wherever a person's situation may naturally beget any disagreeable suspicion in him, it is the part of good-manners to prevent it, by a studied display of sentiments, directly contrary to those of which he is apt to be jealous. Thus, old men know their infirmities, and naturally dread contempt from the youth: Hence, well-educated youth redouble the instances of respect and deference to their elders. Strangers and foreigners are without protection: Hence, in all polite countries, they receive the highest civilities, and are entitled to the first place in every company. A man is lord in his own family, and his guests are, in a manner, subject to his authority: Hence, he is always the lowest person in the company; attentive to the wants of every one; and giving himself all the trouble, in order to please, which may not betray too visible an affectation, or impose too much constraint on his guests. Gallantry is nothing but an instance of the same generous attention. As nature has given man the superiority above woman, by endowing him with greater strength both of mind and body; it is his part to alleviate that superiority, as much as possible, by the generosity of his behaviour, and by a studied deference and complaisance for all her inclinations and opinions. Barbarous nations display this superiority, by reducing their females to the most abject slavery; by confining them, by beating them, by selling them, by killing them. But the male sex, among a polite people, discover their authority in a more generous, though not a less evident manner; by civility, by respect, by complaisance, and, in a word, by gallantry. In good company, you need not ask, Who is the master of the feast? The man, who sits in the lowest place, and who is always industrious in helping every one, is certainly the person. We must either condemn all such instances of generosity, as foppish and affected, or admit of gallantry among the rest. The ancient Muscovites wedded their wives with a whip, instead of a ring. The same people, in their own houses, took always the precedency above foreigners, even foreign ambassadors. These two instances of their generosity and politeness are much of a piece.

Gallantry is not less compatible with wisdom and prudence, than with nature and generosity; and when under proper regulations, contributes more than any other invention, to the entertainment and improvement of the youth of both sexes. Among every species of animals, nature has founded on the love between the sexes their sweetest and best enjoyment. But the satisfaction of the bodily appetite is not alone sufficient to gratify the mind; and even among brute-creatures, we find, that their play and dalliance, and other expressions of fondness, form the greatest part of the entertainment. In rational beings, we must certainly admit the mind for a considerable share. Were we to rob the feast of all its garniture of reason, discourse, sympathy, friendship, and gaiety, what remains would scarcely be worth acceptance, in the judgment of the truly elegant and luxurious.

What better school for manners, than the company of virtuous women; where the mutual endeavour to please must insensibly polish the mind, where the example of the female softness and modesty must communicate itself to their admirers, and where the delicacy of that sex puts every one on his guard, lest he give offence by any breach of decency?

Among the ancients, the character of the fair-sex was considered as altogether domestic; nor were they regarded as part of the polite world or of good company. This, perhaps, is the true reason why the ancients have not left us one piece of pleasantry that is excellent, (unless one may except the Banquet of Xenophon, and the Dialogues of Lucian) though many of their serious compositions are altogether inimitable. Horace condemns the coarse railleries and cold jests of Plautus: But, though the most easy, agreeable, and judicious writer in the world, is his own talent for ridicule very striking or refined? This, therefore, is one considerable improvement, which the polite arts have received from gallantry, and from courts, where it first arose.

But, to return from this digression, I shall advance it as a fourth observation on this subject, of the rise and progress of the arts and sciences, That when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive in that nation, where they formerly flourished.

It must be confessed, that this maxim, though conformable to experience, may, at first sight, be esteemed contrary to reason. If the natural genius of mankind be the same in all ages, and in almost all countries, (as seems to be the truth) it must very much forward and cultivate this genius, to be possessed of patterns in every art, which may regulate the taste, and fix the objects of imitation. The models left us by the ancients gave birth to all the arts about 200 years ago, and have mightily advanced their progress in every country of Europe: Why had they not a like effect during the reign of Trajan and his successors; when they were much more entire, and were still admired and studied by the whole world? So late as the emperor Justinian, the Poet, by way of distinction, was understood, among the Greeks, to be Homer; among the Romans, Virgil. Such admiration still remained for these divine geniuses; though no poet had appeared for many centuries, who could justly pretend to have imitated them.

A man’s genius is always, in the beginning of life, as much unknown to himself as to others; and it is only after frequent trials, attended with success, that he dares think himself equal to those undertakings, in which those, who have succeeded, have fixed the admiration of mankind. If his own nation be already possessed of many models of eloquence, he naturally compares his own juvenile exercises with these; and being sensible of the great disproportion, is discouraged from any farther attempts, and never aims at a rivalship with those authors, whom he so much admires. A noble emulation is the source of every excellence. Admiration and modesty naturally extinguish this emulation. And no one is so liable to an excess of admiration and modesty, as a truly great genius.

Next to emulation, the greatest encourager of the noble arts is praise and glory. A writer is animated with new force, when he hears the applauses of the world for his former productions; and, being roused by such a motive, he often reaches a pitch of perfection, which is equally surprizing to himself and to his readers. But when the posts of honour are all occupied, his first attempts are but coldly received by the public; being compared to productions, which are both in themselves more excellent, and have already the advantage of an established reputation. Were Moliere and Corneille to bring upon the stage at present their early productions, which were formerly so well received, it would discourage the young poets, to see the indifference and disdain of the public. The ignorance of the age alone could have given admission to the Prince of Tyre; but it is to that we owe the Moor: Had Every man in his humour been rejected, we had never seen Volpone.

Perhaps, it may not be for the advantage of any nation to have the arts imported from their neighbours in too great perfection. This extinguishes emulation, and sinks the ardour of the generous youth. So many models of Italian painting brought into England, instead of exciting our artists, is the cause of their small progress in that noble art. The same, perhaps, was the case of Rome, when it received the arts from Greece. That multitude of polite productions in the French language, dispersed all over Germany and the North, hinder these nations from cultivating their own language, and keep them still dependent on their neighbours for those elegant entertainments.

It is true, the ancients had left us models in every kind of writing, which are highly worthy of admiration. But besides that they were written in languages, known only to the learned; besides this, I say, the comparison is not so perfect or entire between modern wits, and those who lived in so remote an age. Had Waller been born in Rome, during the reign of Tiberius, his first productions had been despised, when compared to the finished odes of Horace. But in this island the superiority of the Roman poet diminished nothing from the fame of the English. We esteemed ourselves sufficiently happy, that our climate and language could produce but a faint copy of so excellent an original.

In short, the arts and sciences, like some plants, require a fresh soil; and however rich the land may be, and however you may recruit it by art or care, it will never, when once exhausted, produce any thing that is perfect or finished in the kind.

ESSAY XV: THE EPICUREAN

It is a great mortification to the vanity of man, that his utmost art and industry can never equal the meanest of nature's productions, either for beauty or value. Art is only the under-workman, and is employed to give a few strokes of embellishment to those pieces, which come from the hand of the master. Some of the drapery may be of his drawing; but he is not allowed to touch the principal figure. Art may make a suit of clothes: But nature must produce a man.

Even in those productions, commonly denominated works of art, we find that the noblest of the kind are beholden for their chief beauty to the force and happy influence of nature. To the native enthusiasm of the poets, we owe whatever is admirable in their productions. The greatest genius, where nature at any time fails him, (for she is not equal) throws aside the lyre, and hopes not, from the rules of art, to reach that divine harmony, which must proceed from her inspiration alone. How poor are those songs, where a happy flow of fancy has not furnished materials for art to embellish and refine!

But of all the fruitless attempts of art, no one is so ridiculous, as that which the severe philosophers have undertaken, the producing of an artificial happiness, and making us be pleased by rules of reason, and by reflection. Why did none of them claim the reward, which Xerxes promised to him, who should invent a new pleasure? Unless, perhaps, they invented so many pleasures for their own use, that they despised riches, and stood in no need of any enjoyments, which the rewards of that monarch could procure them. I am apt, indeed, to think, that they were not willing to furnish the Persian court with a new pleasure, by presenting it with so new and unusual an object of ridicule. Their speculations, when confined to theory, and gravely delivered in the schools of Greece, might excite admiration in their ignorant pupils: But the attempting to reduce such principles to practice would soon have betrayed their absurdity.

You pretend to make me happy by reason, and by rules of art. You must, then, create me anew by rules of art. For on my original frame and structure does my happiness depend. But you want power to effect this; and skill too, I am afraid: Nor can I entertain a less opinion of nature's wisdom than of yours. And let her conduct the machine, which she has so wisely framed. I find, that I should only spoil it by my tampering.

To what purpose should I pretend to regulate, refine, or invigorate any of those springs or principles, which nature has implanted in me? Is this the road by which I must reach happiness? But happiness implies ease, contentment, repose, and pleasure; not watchfulness, care, and fatigue. The health of my body consists in the facility, with which all its operations are performed. The stomach digests the aliments: The heart circulates the blood: The brain separates and refines the spirits: And all this without my concerning myself in the matter. When by my will alone I can stop the blood, as it runs with impetuosity along its canals, then may I hope to change the course of my sentiments and passions. In vain should I strain my faculties, and endeavour to receive pleasure from an object, which is not fitted by nature to affect my organs with delight. I may give myself pain by my fruitless endeavours; but shall never reach any pleasure.

Away then with all those vain pretences of making ourselves happy within ourselves, of feasting on our own thoughts, of being satisfied with the consciousness of well-doing, and of despising all assistance and all supplies from external objects. This is the voice of Pride, not of Nature. And it were well, if even this pride could support itself, and communicate a real inward pleasure, however melancholy or severe. But this impotent pride can do no more than regulate the outside; and with infinite pains and attention compose the language and countenance to a philosophical dignity, in order to deceive the ignorant vulgar. The heart, mean while, is empty of all enjoyment: And the mind, unsupported by its proper objects, sinks into the deepest sorrow and dejection. Miserable, but vain mortal! Thy mind be happy within itself! With what resources is it endowed to fill so immense a void, and supply the place of all thy bodily senses and faculties? Can thy head subsist without thy other members? In such a situation,

- What foolish figure must it make?
- Do nothing else but sleep and ake.

Into such a lethargy, or such a melancholy, must thy mind be plunged, when deprived of foreign occupations and enjoyments.

Keep me, therefore, no longer in this violent constraint. Confine me not within myself; but point out to me those objects and pleasures, which afford the chief enjoyment. But why do I apply to you, proud and ignorant sages, to shew me the road to happiness? Let me consult my own passions and inclinations. In them must I read the dictates of nature; not in your frivolous discourses.

But see, propitious to my wishes, the divine, the amiable Pleasure, the supreme love of GODS and men, advances towards me. At her approach, my heart beats with genial heat, and every sense and every faculty is dissolved in joy; while she pours around me all the embellishments of the spring, and all the treasures of the autumn. The melody of her voice charms my ears with the softest music, as she invites me to partake of those delicious fruits, which, with a smile that diffuses a glory on the heavens and the earth, she presents to me. The sportive Cupids, who attend her, or fan me with their odoriferous wings, or pour on my head the most fragrant oils, or offer me their sparkling nectar in golden goblets. O! for ever let me spread my limbs on this bed of roses, and thus, thus feel the delicious moments, with soft and downy steps, glide along. But cruel chance! Whither do you fly so fast? Why do my ardent wishes, and that load of pleasures, under which you labour, rather hasten than retard your unrelenting pace? Suffer me to enjoy this soft repose, after all my fatigues in search of happiness. Suffer me to satiate myself with these delicacies, after the pains of so long and so foolish an abstinence.

But it will not do. The roses have lost their hue: The fruit its flavour: And that delicious wine, whose fumes, so late, intoxicated all my senses with such delight, now solicits in vain the sated palate. Pleasure smiles at my languor. She beckons her sister, Virtue, to come to her assistance. The gay, the frolic Virtue observes the call, and brings along the whole troop of my jovial friends. Welcome, thrice welcome, my ever dear companions, to these shady bowers, and to this luxurious repast. Your presence has restored to the rose its hue, and to the fruit its flavour. The vapours of this sprightly nectar now again play around my heart; while you partake of my delights, and discover in your chearful looks, the pleasure which you receive from my happiness and satisfaction. The like do I receive from yours; and encouraged by your joyous presence, shall again renew the feast, with which, from too much enjoyment, my senses were well nigh sated; while the mind kept not pace with the body, nor afforded relief to her o’erburthened partner.

In our chearful discourses, better than in the formal reasonings of the schools, is true wisdom to be found. In our friendly endearments, better than in the hollow debates of statesmen and pretended patriots, does true virtue display itself. Forgetful of the past, secure of the future, let us here enjoy the present; and while we yet possess a being, let us fix some good, beyond the power of fate or fortune. To-morrow will bring its own pleasures along with it: Or should it disappoint our fond wishes, we shall at least enjoy the pleasure of reflecting on the pleasures of to-day.

Fear not, my friends, that the barbarous dissonance of Bacchus, and of his revellers, should break in upon this entertainment, and confound us with their turbulent and clamorous pleasures. The sprightly muses wait around; and with their charming symphony, sufficient to soften the wolves and tygers of the savage desert, inspire a soft joy into every bosom. Peace, harmony and concord reign in this retreat; nor is the silence ever broken but by the music of our songs, or the chearful accents of our friendly voices.

But hark! the favourite of the muses, the gentle Damon, strikes the lyre; and while he accompanies its harmonious notes with his more harmonious song, he inspires us with the same happy debauch of fancy, by which he is himself transported. “Ye happy youth,” he sings, “Ye favoured of heaven, while the wanton spring pours upon you all her blooming honours, let not glory seduce you, with her delusive blaze, to pass in perils and dangers this delicious season, this prime of life. Wisdom points out to you the road to pleasure: Nature too beckons you to follow her in that smooth and flowery path. Will you shut your ears to their commanding voice? Will you harden your heart to their soft allurements? Oh, deluded mortals, thus to lose your youth, thus to throw away so invaluable a present, to trifle with so perishing a blessing. Contemplate well your recompence. Consider that glory, which so allures your proud hearts, and seduces you with your own praises. It is an echo, a dream, nay the shadow of a dream, dissipated by every wind, and lost by every contrary breath of the ignorant and ill-judging multitude. You fear not that even death itself shall ravish it from you. But behold! while you are yet alive, calumny bereaves you of it; ignorance neglects it; nature enjoys it not; fancy alone, renouncing every pleasure receives this airy recompence, empty and unstable as herself."

Thus the hours pass unperceived along, and lead in their wanton train all the pleasures of sense, and all the joys of harmony and friendship. Smiling innocence closes the procession; and while she presents herself to our ravished eyes, she embellishes the whole scene, and renders the view of these pleasures as transporting, after they have past us, as when, with laughing countenances, they were yet advancing towards us.

But the sun has sunk below the horizon; and darkness, stealing silently upon us, has now buried all nature in an universal shade. "Rejoice, my friends, continue your repast, or change it for soft repose. Though absent, your joy or your tranquillity shall still be mine." But whither do you go? Or what new pleasures call you from our society? Is there aught agreeable without your friends? And can aught please, in which we partake not? "Yes, my friends; the joy which I now seek, admits not of your participation. Here alone I wish your absence: And here alone can I find a sufficient compensation for the loss of your society."

But I have not advanced far through the shades of the thick wood, which spreads a double night around me, ere, me-thinks, I perceive through the gloom, the charming Cælia, the mistress of my wishes, who wanders impatient through the grove, and preventing the appointed hour, silently chides my tardy steps. But the joy, which she receives from my presence, best pleads my excuse; and dissipating every anxious and every angry thought, leaves room for nought but mutual joy and rapture. With what words, my fair one, shall I express my tenderness, or describe the emotions which now warm my transported bosom! Words are too faint to describe my love; and if, alas! you feel not the same flame within you, in vain shall I endeavour to convey to you a just conception of it. But your every word and every motion suffice to remove this doubt; and while they express your passion, serve also to enflame mine. How amiable this solitude, this silence, this darkness! No objects now importune the ravished soul. The thought, the sense, all full of nothing but our mutual happiness, wholly possess the mind, and convey a pleasure, which deluded mortals vainly seek for in every other enjoyment. —

But why does your bosom heave with these sighs, while tears bathe your glowing cheeks? Why distract your heart with such vain anxieties? Why so often ask me, How long my love shall yet endure? Alas, my Cælia, can I resolve this question? Do I know how long my life shall yet endure? But does this also disturb your tender breast? And is the image of our frail mortality for ever present with you, to throw a damp on your gayest hours, and poison even those joys which love inspires? Consider rather, that if life be frail, if youth be transitory, we should well employ the present moment, and lose no part of so perishable an existence. Yet a little moment and these shall be no more. We shall be, as if we had never been. Not a memory of us be left upon earth; and even the fabulous shades below will not afford us a habitation. Our fruitless anxieties, our vain projects, our uncertain speculations shall all be swallowed up and lost. Our present doubts, concerning the original cause of all things, must never, alas! be resolved. This alone we may be certain of, that, if any governing mind preside, he must be pleased to see us fulfil the ends of our being, and enjoy that pleasure, for which alone we were created. Let this reflection give ease to your anxious thoughts; but render not your joys too serious, by dwelling for ever upon it. It is sufficient, once, to be acquainted with this philosophy, in order to give an unbounded loose to love and jollity, and remove all the scruples of a vain superstition: But while youth and passion, my fair one, prompt our eager desires, we must find gayer subjects of discourse, to intermix with these amorous caresses.

ESSAY XVI: THE STOIC

There is this obvious and material difference in the conduct of nature, with regard to man and other animals, that, having endowed the former with a sublime celestial spirit, and having given him an affinity with superior beings, she allows not such noble faculties to lie lethargic or idle; but urges him, by necessity, to employ, on every emergence, his utmost art and industry. Brute-creatures have many of their necessities supplied by nature, being cloathed and armed by this beneficent parent of all things: And where their own industry is requisite on any occasion, nature, by implanting instincts, still supplies them with the art, and guides them to their good, by her unerring precepts. But man, exposed naked and indigent to the rude elements, rises slowly from that helpless state, by the care and vigilance of his parents; and having attained his utmost growth and perfection, reaches only a capacity of subsisting, by his own care and vigilance. Every thing is sold to skill and labour; and where nature furnishes the materials, they are still rude and unfinished, till industry, ever active and intelligent, refines them from their brute state, and fits them for human use and convenience.

Acknowledge, therefore, O man, the beneficence of nature; for she has given thee that intelligence which supplies all thy necessities. But let not indolence, under the false appearance of gratitude, persuade thee to rest contented with her presents. Wouldest thou return to the raw herbage for thy food, to the open sky for thy covering, and to stones and clubs for thy defence against the ravenous animals of the desert? Then return also to thy savage manners, to thy timorous superstition, to thy brutal ignorance; and sink thyself below those animals, whose condition thou admirest, and wouldest so fondly imitate.

Thy kind parent, nature, having given thee art and intelligence, has filled the whole globe with materials to employ these talents: Hearken to her voice, which so plainly tells thee, that thou thyself shouldest also be the object of thy industry, and that by art and attention alone thou canst acquire that ability, which will raise thee to thy proper station in the universe. Behold this artizan, who converts a rude and shapeless stone into a noble metal; and molding that metal by his cunning hands, creates, as it were by magic, every weapon for his defence, and every utensil for his convenience. He has not this skill from nature: Use and practice have taught it him: And if thou wouldest emulate his success, thou must follow his laborious footsteps.

But while thou ambitiously aspirest to perfecting thy bodily powers and faculties, wouldest thou meanly neglect thy mind, and from a preposterous sloth, leave it still rude and uncultivated, as it came from the hands of nature? Far be such folly and negligence from every rational being. If nature has been frugal in her gifts and endowments, there is the more need of art to supply her defects. If she has been generous and liberal, know that she still expects industry and application on our part, and revenges herself in proportion to our negligent ingratitude. The richest genius, like the most fertile soil, when uncultivated, shoots up into the rankest weeds; and instead of vines and olives for the pleasure and use of man, produces, to its slothful owner, the most abundant crop of poisons.

The great end of all human industry, is the attainment of happiness. For this were arts invented, sciences cultivated, laws ordained, and societies modelled, by the most profound wisdom of patriots and legislators. Even the lonely savage, who lies exposed to the inclemency of the elements, and the fury of wild beasts, forgets not, for a moment, this grand object of his being. Ignorant as he is of every art of life, he still keeps in view the end of all those arts, and eagerly seeks for felicity amidst that darkness with which he is environed. But as much as the wildest savage is inferior to the polished citizen, who, under the protection of laws, enjoys every convenience which industry has invented; so much is this citizen himself inferior to the man of virtue, and the true philosopher, who governs his appetites, subdues his passions, and has learned, from reason, to set a just value on every pursuit and enjoyment. For is there an art and apprenticeship necessary for every other attainment? And is there no art of life, no rule, no precepts to direct us in this principal concern? Can no particular pleasure be attained without skill; and can the whole be regulated without reflection or intelligence, by the blind guidance of appetite and instinct? Surely then no mistakes are ever committed in this affair; but every man, however dissolute and negligent, proceeds in the pursuit of happiness, with as unerring a motion, as that which the celestial bodies observe, when, conducted by the hand of the Almighty, they roll along the ethereal plains. But if mistakes be often, be inevitably committed, let us register these mistakes; let us consider their causes; let us weigh their importance; let us enquire for their remedies. When from this we have fixed all the rules of conduct, we are philosophers: When we have reduced these rules to practice, we are sages.

Like many subordinate artists, employed to form the several wheels and springs of a machine: Such are those who excel in all the particular arts of life. He is the master workman who puts those several parts together; moves them according to just harmony and proportion; and produces true felicity as the result of their conspiring order.

While thou hast such an alluring object in view, shall that labour and attention, requisite to the attainment of thy end, ever seem burdensome and intolerable? Know, that this labour itself is the chief ingredient of the felicity to which thou aspirest, and that every enjoyment soon becomes insipid and distasteful, when not acquired by fatigue and industry. See the hardy hunters rise from their downy couches, shake off the slumbers which still weigh down their heavy eye-lids, and, ere Aurora has yet covered the heavens with her flaming mantle, hasten to the forest. They leave behind, in their own houses, and in the neighbouring plains, animals of every kind, whose flesh furnishes the most delicious fare, and which offer themselves to the fatal stroke. Laborious man disdains so easy a purchase. He seeks for a prey, which hides itself from his search, or flies from his pursuit, or defends itself from his violence. Having exerted in the chace every passion of the mind, and every member of the body, he then finds the charms of repose, and with joy compares its pleasures to those of his engaging labours.

And can vigorous industry give pleasure to the pursuit even of the most worthless prey, which frequently escapes our toils? And cannot the same industry render the cultivating of our mind, the moderating of our passions, the enlightening of our reason, an agreeable occupation; while we are every day sensible of our progress, and behold our inward features and countenance brightening incessantly with new charms? Begin by curing yourself of this lethargic indolence; the task is not difficult: You need but taste the sweets of honest labour. Proceed to learn the just value of every pursuit; long study is not requisite: Compare, though but for once, the mind to the body, virtue to fortune, and glory to pleasure. You will then perceive the advantages of industry: You will then be sensible what are the proper objects of your industry.

In vain do you seek repose from beds of roses: In vain do you hope for enjoyment from the most delicious wines and fruits. Your indolence itself becomes a fatigue: Your pleasure itself creates disgust. The mind, unexercised, finds every delight insipid and loathsome; and ere yet the body, full of noxious humours, feels the torment of its multiplied diseases, your nobler part is sensible of the invading poison, and seeks in vain to relieve its anxiety by new pleasures, which still augment the fatal malady.

I need not tell you, that, by this eager pursuit of pleasure, you more and more expose yourself to fortune and accidents, and rivet your affections on external objects, which chance may, in a moment, ravish from you. I shall suppose, that your indulgent stars favour you still with the enjoyment of your riches and possessions. I prove to you, that even in the midst of your luxurious pleasures, you are unhappy; and that by too much indulgence, you are incapable of enjoying what prosperous fortune still allows you to possess.

But surely the instability of fortune is a consideration not to be overlooked or neglected. Happiness cannot possibly exist, where there is no security; and security can have no place, where fortune has any dominion. Though that unstable deity should not exert her rage against you, the dread of it would still torment you; would disturb your slumbers, haunt your dreams, and throw a damp on the jollity of your most delicious banquets.

The temple of wisdom is seated on a rock, above the rage of the fighting elements, and inaccessible to all the malice of man. The rolling thunder breaks below; and those more terrible instruments of human fury reach not to so sublime a height. The sage, while he breathes that serene air, looks down with pleasure, mixed with compassion, on the errors of mistaken mortals, who blindly seek for the true path of life, and pursue riches, nobility, honour, or power, for genuine felicity. The greater part he beholds disappointed of their fond wishes: Some lament, that having once possessed the object of their desires, it is ravished from them by envious fortune: And all complain, that even their own vows, though granted, cannot give them happiness, or relieve the anxiety of their distracted minds.

But does the sage always preserve himself in this philosophical indifference, and rest contented with lamenting the miseries of mankind, without ever employing himself for their relief? Does he constantly indulge this severe wisdom, which, by pretending to elevate him above human accidents, does in reality harden his heart, and render him careless of the interests of mankind, and of society? No; he knows that in this sullen Apathy, neither true wisdom nor true happiness can be found. He feels too strongly the charm of the social affections ever to counteract so sweet, so natural, so virtuous a propensity. Even when, bathed in tears, he laments the miseries of human race, of his country, of his friends, and unable to give succour, can only relieve them by compassion; he yet rejoices in the generous disposition, and feels a satisfaction superior to that of the most indulged sense. So engaging are the sentiments of humanity, that they brighten up the very face of sorrow, and operate like the sun, which, shining on a dusky cloud or falling rain, paints on them the most glorious colours which are to be found in the whole circle of nature.

But it is not here alone, that the social virtues display their energy. With whatever ingredient you mix them, they are still predominant. As sorrow cannot overcome them, so neither can sensual pleasure obscure them. The joys of love, however tumultuous, banish not the tender sentiments of sympathy and affection. They even derive their chief influence from that generous passion; and when presented alone, afford nothing to the unhappy mind but lassitude and disgust. Behold this sprightly debauchee, who professes a contempt of all other pleasures but those of wine and jollity: Separate him from his companions, like a spark from a fire, where before it contributed to the general blaze: His alacrity suddenly extinguishes; and though surrounded with every other means of delight, he lothes the sumptuous banquet, and prefers even the most abstracted study and speculation, as more agreeable and entertaining.

But the social passions never afford such transporting pleasures, or make so glorious an appearance in the eyes both of GOD and man, as when, shaking off every earthly mixture, they associate themselves with the sentiments of virtue, and prompt us to laudable and worthy actions. As harmonious colours mutually give and receive a lustre by their friendly union; so do these ennobling sentiments of the human mind. See the triumph of nature in parental affection! What selfish passion; what sensual delight is a match for it! Whether a man exults in the prosperity and virtue of his offspring, or flies to their succour, through the most threatening and tremendous dangers?

Proceed still in purifying the generous passion, you will still the more admire its shining glories. What charms are there in the harmony of minds, and in a friendship founded on mutual esteem and gratitude! What satisfaction in relieving the distressed, in comforting the afflicted, in raising the fallen, and in stopping the career of cruel fortune, or of more cruel man, in their insults over the good and virtuous! But what supreme joy in the victories over vice as well as misery, when, by virtuous example or wise exhortation, our fellow-creatures are taught to govern their passions, reform their vices, and subdue their worst enemies, which inhabit within their own bosoms?

But these objects are still too limited for the human mind, which, being of celestial origin, swells with the divinest and most enlarged affections, and carrying its attention beyond kindred and acquaintance, extends its benevolent wishes to the most distant posterity. It views liberty and laws as the source of human happiness, and devotes itself, with the utmost alacrity, to their guardianship and protection. Toils, dangers, death itself carry their charms, when we brave them for the public good, and ennoble that being, which we generously sacrifice for the interests of our country. Happy the man, whom indulgent fortune allows to pay to virtue what he owes to nature, and to make a generous gift of what must otherwise be ravished from him by cruel necessity!

In the true sage and patriot are united whatever can distinguish human nature, or elevate mortal man to a resemblance with the divinity. The softest benevolence, the most undaunted resolution, the tenderest sentiments, the most sublime love of virtue, all these animate successively his transported bosom. What satisfaction, when he looks within, to find the most turbulent passions tuned to just harmony and concord, and every jarring sound banished from this enchanting music! If the contemplation, even of inanimate beauty, is so delightful; if it ravishes the senses, even when the fair form is foreign to us: What must be the effects of moral beauty? And what influence must it have, when it embellishes our own mind, and is the result of our own reflection and industry?

But where is the reward of virtue? And what recompence has nature provided for such important sacrifices, as those of life and fortune, which we must often make to it? Oh, sons of earth! Are ye ignorant of the value of this celestial mistress? And do ye meanly enquire for her portion, when ye observe her genuine charms? But know, that nature has been indulgent to human weakness, and has not left this favourite child, naked and unendowed. She has provided virtue with the richest dowry; but being careful, lest the allurements of interest should engage such suitors, as were insensible of the native worth of so divine a beauty, she has wisely provided, that this dowry can have no charms but in the eyes of those who are already transported with the love of virtue. Glory is the portion of virtue, the sweet reward of honourable toils, the triumphant crown, which covers the thoughtful head of the disinterested patriot, or the dusty brow of the victorious warrior. Elevated by so sublime a prize, the man of virtue looks down with contempt on all the allurements of pleasure, and all the menaces of danger. Death itself loses its terrors, when he considers, that its dominion extends only over a part of him, and that, in spite of death and time, the rage of the elements, and the endless vicissitude of human affairs, he is assured of an immortal fame among all the sons of men.

There surely is a being who presides over the universe; and who, with infinite wisdom and power, has reduced the jarring elements into just order and proportion. Let speculative reasoners dispute, how far this beneficent being extends his care, and whether he prolongs our existence beyond the grave, in order to bestow on virtue its just reward, and render it fully triumphant. The man of morals, without deciding any thing on so dubious a subject, is satisfied with the portion, marked out to him by the supreme disposer of all things. Gratefully he accepts of that farther reward prepared for him; but if disappointed, he thinks not virtue an empty name; but justly esteeming it its own reward, he gratefully acknowledges the bounty of his creator, who, by calling him into existence, has thereby afforded him an opportunity of once acquiring so invaluable a possession.

ESSAY XVII: THE PLATONIST

To some philosophers it appears matter of surprize, that all mankind, possessing the same nature, and being endowed with the same faculties, should yet differ so widely in their pursuits and inclinations, and that one should utterly condemn what is fondly sought after by another. To some it appears matter of still more surprize, that a man should differ so widely from himself at different times; and, after possession, reject with disdain what, before, was the object of all his vows and wishes. To me this feverish uncertainty and irresolution, in human conduct, seems altogether unavoidable; nor can a rational soul, made for the contemplation of the Supreme Being, and of his works, ever enjoy tranquillity or satisfaction, while detained in the ignoble pursuits of sensual pleasure or popular applause. The divinity is a boundless ocean of bliss and glory: Human minds are smaller streams, which, arising at first from this ocean, seek still, amid all their wanderings, to return to it, and to lose themselves in that immensity of perfection. When checked in this natural course, by vice or folly, they become furious and enraged; and, swelling to a torrent, do then spread horror and devastation on the neighbouring plains.

In vain, by pompous phrase and passionate expression, each recommends his own pursuit, and invites the credulous hearers to an imitation of his life and manners. The heart belies the countenance, and sensibly feels, even amid the highest success, the unsatisfactory nature of all those pleasures, which detain it from its true object. I examine the voluptuous man before enjoyment; I measure the vehemence of his desire, and the importance of his object; I find that all his happiness proceeds only from that hurry of thought, which takes him from himself, and turns his view from his guilt and misery. I consider him a moment after; he has now enjoyed the pleasure, which he fondly sought after. The sense of his guilt and misery returns upon him with double anguish: His mind tormented with fear and remorse; his body depressed with disgust and satiety.

But a more august, at least a more haughty personage, presents himself boldly to our censure; and assuming the title of a philosopher and man of morals, offers to submit to the most rigid examination. He challenges, with a visible, though concealed impatience, our approbation and applause; and seems offended, that we should hesitate a moment before we break out into admiration of his virtue. Seeing this impatience, I hesitate still more: I begin to examine the motives of his seeming virtue: But behold! ere I can enter upon this enquiry, he flings himself from me; and addressing his discourse to that crowd of heedless auditors, fondly abuses them by his magnificent pretensions.

O philosopher! thy wisdom is vain, and thy virtue unprofitable. Thou seekest the ignorant applauses of men, not the solid reflections of thy own conscience, or the more solid approbation of that being, who, with one regard of his all-seeing eye, penetrates the universe. Thou surely art conscious of the hollowness of thy pretended probity, whilst calling thyself a citizen, a son, a friend, thou forgettest thy higher sovereign, thy true father, thy greatest benefactor. Where is the adoration due to infinite perfection, whence every thing good and valuable is derived? Where is the gratitude, owing to thy creator, who called thee forth from nothing, who placed thee in all these relations to thy fellow-creatures, and requiring thee to fulfil the duty of each relation, forbids thee to neglect what thou owest to himself, the most perfect being, to whom thou art connected by the closest tye?

But thou art thyself thy own idol: Thou worshippest thy imaginary perfections: Or rather, sensible of thy real imperfections, thou seekest only to deceive the world, and to please thy fancy, by multiplying thy ignorant admirers. Thus, not content with neglecting what is most excellent in the universe, thou desirest to substitute in his place what is most vile and contemptible.

Consider all the works of mens hands; all the inventions of human wit, in which thou affectest so nice a discernment: Thou wilt find, that the most perfect production still proceeds from the most perfect thought, and that it is MIND alone, which we admire, while we bestow our applause on the graces of a well-proportioned statue, or the symmetry of a noble pile. The statuary, the architect comes still in view, and makes us reflect on the beauty of his art and contrivance, which, from a heap of unformed matter, could extract such expressions and proportions. This superior beauty of thought and intelligence thou thyself acknowledgest, while thou invitest us to contemplate, in thy conduct, the harmony of affections, the dignity of sentiments, and all those graces of a mind, which chiefly merit our attention. But why stoppest thou short? Seest thou nothing farther that is valuable? Amid thy rapturous applauses of beauty and order, art thou still ignorant where is to be found the most consummate beauty? the most perfect order? Compare the works of art with those of nature. The one are but imitations of the other. The nearer art approaches to nature, the more perfect is it esteemed. But still, how wide are its nearest approaches, and what an immense interval may be observed between them? Art copies only the outside of nature, leaving the inward and more admirable springs and principles; as exceeding her imitation; as beyond her comprehension. Art copies only the minute productions of nature, despairing to reach that grandeur and magnificence, which are so astonishing in the masterly works of her original. Can we then be so blind as not to discover an intelligence and a design in the exquisite and most stupendous contrivance of the universe? Can we be so stupid as not to feel the warmest raptures of worship and adoration, upon the contemplation of that intelligent being, so infinitely good and wise?

The most perfect happiness, surely, must arise from the contemplation of the most perfect object. But what more perfect than beauty and virtue? And where is beauty to be found equal to that of the universe? Or virtue, which can be compared to the benevolence and justice of the Deity? If aught can diminish the pleasure of this contemplation, it must be either the narrowness of our faculties, which conceals from us the greatest part of these beauties and perfections; or the shortness of our lives, which allows not time sufficient to instruct us in them. But it is our comfort, that, if we employ worthily the faculties here assigned us, they will be enlarged in another state of existence, so as to render us more suitable worshippers of our maker: And that the task, which can never be finished in time, will be the business of an eternity.

ESSAY XVIII: THE SCEPTIC

I have long entertained a suspicion, with regard to the decisions of philosophers upon all subjects, and found in myself a greater inclination to dispute, than assent to their conclusions. There is one mistake, to which they seem liable, almost without exception; they confine too much their principles, and make no account of that vast variety, which nature has so much affected in all her operations. When a philosopher has once laid hold of a favourite principle, which perhaps accounts for many natural effects, he extends the same principle over the whole creation, and reduces to it every phænomenon, though by the most violent and absurd reasoning. Our own mind being narrow and contracted, we cannot extend our conception to the variety and extent of nature; but imagine, that she is as much bounded in her operations, as we are in our speculation.

But if ever this infirmity of philosophers is to be suspected on any occasion, it is in their reasonings concerning human life, and the methods of attaining happiness. In that case, they are led astray, not only by the narrowness of their understandings, but by that also of their passions. Almost every one has a predominant inclination, to which his other desires and affections submit, and which governs him, though, perhaps, with some intervals, through the whole course of his life. It is difficult for him to apprehend, that any thing, which appears totally indifferent to him, can ever give enjoyment to any person, or can possess charms, which altogether escape his observation. His own pursuits are always, in his account, the most engaging: The objects of his passion, the most valuable: And the road, which he pursues, the only one that leads to happiness.

But would these prejudiced reasoners reflect a moment, there are many obvious instances and arguments, sufficient to undeceive them, and make them enlarge their maxims and principles. Do they not see the vast variety of inclinations and pursuits among our species; where each man seems fully satisfied with his own course of life, and would esteem it the greatest unhappiness to be confined to that of his neighbour? Do they not feel in themselves, that what pleases at one time, displeases at another, by the change of inclination; and that it is not in their power, by their utmost efforts, to recall that taste or appetite, which formerly bestowed charms on what now appears indifferent or disagreeable? What is the meaning therefore of those general preferences of the town or country life, of a life of action or one of pleasure, of retirement or society; when besides the different inclinations of different men, every one's experience may convince him, that each of these kinds of life is agreeable in its turn, and that their variety or their judicious mixture chiefly contributes to the rendering all of them agreeable.

But shall this business be allowed to go altogether at adventures? And must a man consult only his humour and inclination, in order to determine his course of life, without employing his reason to inform him what road is preferable, and leads most surely to happiness? Is there no difference then between one man's conduct and another?

I answer, there is a great difference. One man, following his inclination, in chusing his course of life, may employ much surer means for succeeding than another, who is led by his inclination into the same course of life, and pursues the same object. Are riches the chief object of your desires? Acquire skill in your profession; be diligent in the exercise of it; enlarge the circle of your friends and acquaintance; avoid pleasure and expence; and never be generous, but with a view of gaining more than you could save by frugality. Would you acquire the public esteem? Guard equally against the extremes of arrogance and fawning. Let it appear that you set a value upon yourself, but without despising others. If you fall into either of the extremes, you either provoke men's pride by your insolence, or teach them to despise you by your timorous submission, and by the mean opinion which you seem to entertain of yourself.

These, you say, are the maxims of common prudence, and discretion; what every parent inculcates on his child, and what every man of sense pursues in the course of life, which he has chosen. — What is it then you desire more? Do you come to a philosopher as to a cunning man, to learn something by magic or witchcraft, beyond what can be known by common prudence and discretion? — Yes; we come to a philosopher to be instructed, how we shall chuse our ends, more than the means for attaining these ends: We want to know what desire we shall gratify, what passion we shall comply with, what appetite we shall indulge. As to the rest, we trust to common sense, and the general maxims of the world for our instruction.

I am sorry then, I have pretended to be a philosopher: For I find your questions very perplexing; and am in danger, if my answer be too rigid and severe, of passing for a pedant and scholastic; if it be too easy and free, of being taken for a preacher of vice and immorality. However, to satisfy you, I shall deliver my opinion upon the matter, and shall only desire you to esteem it of as little consequence as I do myself. By that means you will neither think it worthy of your ridicule nor your anger.

If we can depend upon any principle, which we learn from philosophy, this, I think, may be considered as certain and undoubted, that there is nothing, in itself, valuable or despicable, desirable or hateful, beautiful or deformed; but that these attributes arise from the particular constitution and fabric of human sentiment and affection. What seems the most delicious food to one animal, appears loathsome to another: What affects the feeling of one with delight, produces uneasiness in another. This is confessedly the case with regard to all the bodily senses: But if we examine the matter more accurately, we shall find, that the same observation holds even where the mind concurs with the body, and mingles its sentiment with the exterior appetite.

Desire this passionate lover to give you a character of his mistress: He will tell you, that he is at a loss for words to describe her charms, and will ask you very seriously if ever you were acquainted with a goddess or an angel? If you answer that you never were: He will then say, that it is impossible for you to form a conception of such divine beauties as those which his charmer possesses; so complete a shape; such well-proportioned features; so engaging an air; such sweetness of disposition; such gaiety of humour. You can infer nothing, however, from all this discourse, but that the poor man is in love; and that the general appetite between the sexes, which nature has infused into all animals, is in him determined to a particular object by some qualities, which give him pleasure. The same divine creature, not only to a different animal, but also to a different man, appears a mere mortal being, and is beheld with the utmost indifference.

Nature has given all animals a like prejudice in favour of their offspring. As soon as the helpless infant sees the light, though in every other eye it appears a despicable and a miserable creature, it is regarded by its fond parent with the utmost affection, and is preferred to every other object, however perfect and accomplished. The passion alone, arising from the original structure and formation of human nature, bestows a value on the most insignificant object.

We may push the same observation further, and may conclude, that, even when the mind operates alone, and feeling the sentiment of blame or approbation, pronounces one object deformed and odious, another beautiful and amiable; I say, that, even in this case, those qualities are not really in the objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment of that mind which blames or praises. I grant, that it will be more difficult to make this proposition evident, and as it were, palpable, to negligent thinkers; because nature is more uniform in the sentiments of the mind than in most feelings of the body, and produces a nearer resemblance in the inward than in the outward part of human kind. There is something approaching to principles in mental taste; and critics can reason and dispute more plausibly than cooks or perfumers. We may observe, however, that this uniformity among human kind, hinders not, but that there is a considerable diversity in the sentiments of beauty and worth, and that education, custom, prejudice, caprice, and humour, frequently vary our taste of this kind. You will never convince a man, who is not accustomed to Italian music, and has not an ear to follow its intricacies, that a Scotch tune is not preferable. You have not even any single argument, beyond your own taste, which you can employ in your behalf: And to your antagonist, his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary. If you be wise, each of you will allow, that the other may be in the right; and having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess, that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature, and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.

By this diversity of sentiment, observable in human kind, nature has, perhaps, intended to make us sensible of her authority, and let us see what surprizing changes she could produce on the passions and desires of mankind, merely by the change of their inward fabric, without any alteration on the objects. The vulgar may even be convinced by this argument: But men, accustomed to thinking, may draw a more convincing, at least a more general argument, from the very nature of the subject.

In the operation of reasoning, the mind does nothing but run over its objects, as they are supposed to stand in reality, without adding any thing to them, or diminishing any thing from them. If I examine the Ptolomaic and

Copernican systems, I endeavour only, by my enquiries, to know the real situation of the planets; that is in other words, I endeavour to give them, in my conception, the same relations, that they bear towards each other in the heavens. To this operation of the mind, therefore, there seems to be always a real, though often an unknown standard, in the nature of things; nor is truth or falsehood variable by the various apprehensions of mankind. Though all human race should for ever conclude, that the sun moves, and the earth remains at rest, the sun stirs not an inch from his place for all these reasonings; and such conclusions are eternally false and erroneous.

But the case is not the same with the qualities of beautiful and deformed, desirable and odious, as with truth and falsehood. In the former case, the mind is not content with merely surveying its objects, as they stand in themselves: It also feels a sentiment of delight or uneasiness, approbation or blame, consequent to that survey; and this sentiment determines it to affix the epithet beautiful or deformed, desirable or odious. Now, it is evident, that this sentiment must depend upon the particular fabric or structure of the mind, which enables such particular forms to operate in such a particular manner, and produces a sympathy or conformity between the mind and its objects. Vary the structure of the mind or inward organs, the sentiment no longer follows, though the form remains the same. The sentiment being different from the object, and arising from its operation upon the organs of the mind, an alteration upon the latter must vary the effect, nor can the same object, presented to a mind totally different, produce the same sentiment.

This conclusion every one is apt to draw of himself, without much philosophy, where the sentiment is evidently distinguishable from the object. Who is not sensible, that power, and glory, and vengeance, are not desirable of themselves, but derive all their value from the structure of human passions, which begets a desire towards such particular pursuits? But with regard to beauty, either natural or moral, the case is commonly supposed to be different. The agreeable quality is thought to lie in the object, not in the sentiment; and that merely because the sentiment is not so turbulent and violent as to distinguish itself, in an evident manner, from the perception of the object.

But a little reflection suffices to distinguish them. A man may know exactly all the circles and ellipses of the Copernican system, and all the irregular spirals of the Ptolomaic, without perceiving that the former is more beautiful than the latter. Euclid has fully explained every quality of the circle, but has not, in any proposition, said a word of its beauty. The reason is evident. Beauty is not a quality of the circle. It lies not in any part of the line whose parts are all equally distant from a common center. It is only the effect, which that figure produces upon a mind, whose particular fabric or structure renders it susceptible of such sentiments. In vain would you look for it in the circle, or seek it, either by your senses, or by mathematical reasonings, in all the properties of that figure.

The mathematician, who took no other pleasure in reading Virgil, but that of examining Eneas’s voyage by the map, might perfectly understand the meaning of every Latin word, employed by that divine author; and consequently, might have a distinct idea of the whole narration. He would even have a more distinct idea of it, than they could attain who had not studied so exactly the geography of the poem. He knew, therefore, every thing in the poem: But he was ignorant of its beauty; because the beauty, properly speaking, lies not in the poem, but in the sentiment or taste of the reader. And where a man has no such delicacy of temper, as to make him feel this sentiment, he must be ignorant of the beauty, though possessed of the science and understanding of an angel.

The inference upon the whole is, that it is not from the value or worth of the object, which any person pursues, that we can determine his enjoyment, but merely from the passion with which he pursues it, and the success which he meets with in his pursuit. Objects have absolutely no worth or value in themselves. They derive their worth merely from the passion. If that be strong, and steady, and successful, the person is happy. It cannot reasonably be doubted, but a little miss, dressed in a new gown for a dancing-school ball, receives as compleat enjoyment as the greatest orator, who triumphs in the spendor of his eloquence, while he governs the passions and resolutions of a numerous assembly.

All the difference, therefore, between one man and another, with regard to life, consists either in the passion, or in the enjoyment: And these differences are sufficient to produce the wide extremes of happiness and misery.

To be happy, the passion must neither be too violent nor too remiss. In the first case, the mind is in a perpetual hurry and tumult; in the second, it sinks into a disagreeable indolence and lethargy.

To be happy, the passion must be benign and social; not rough or fierce. The affections of the latter kind are not near so agreeable to the feeling, as those of the former. Who will compare rancour and animosity, envy and revenge, to friendship, benignity, clemency, and gratitude?

To be happy, the passion must be chearful and gay, not gloomy and melancholy. A propensity to hope and joy is real riches: One to fear and sorrow, real poverty.

Some passions or inclinations, in the enjoyment of their object, are not so steady or constant as others, nor convey such durable pleasure and satisfaction. Philosophical devotion, for instance, like the enthusiasm of a poet, is the transitory effect of high spirits, great leisure, a fine genius, and a habit of study and contemplation: But notwithstanding all these circumstances, an abstract, invisible object, like that which natural religion alone presents to us, cannot long actuate the mind, or be of any moment in life. To render the passion of continuance, we must find some method of affecting the senses and imagination, and must embrace some historical, as well as philosophical account of the divinity. Popular superstitions and observances are even found to be of use in this particular.

Though the tempers of men be very different, yet we may safely pronounce in general, that a life of pleasure cannot support itself so long as one of business, but is much more subject to satiety and disgust. The amusements, which are the most durable, have all a mixture of application and attention in them; such as gaming and hunting. And in general, business and action fill up all the great vacancies in human life.

But where the temper is the best disposed for any enjoyment, the object is often wanting: And in this respect, the passions, which pursue external objects, contribute not so much to happiness, as those which rest in ourselves; since we are neither so certain of attaining such objects, nor so secure in possessing them. A passion for learning is preferable, with regard to happiness, to one for riches.

Some men are possessed of great strength of mind; and even when they pursue external objects, are not much affected by a disappointment, but renew their application and industry with the greatest chearfulness. Nothing contributes more to happiness than such a turn of mind.

According to this short and imperfect sketch of human life, the happiest disposition of mind is the virtuous; or, in other words, that which leads to action and employment, renders us sensible to the social passions, steels the heart against the assaults of fortune, reduces the affections to a just moderation, makes our own thoughts an entertainment to us, and inclines us rather to the pleasures of society and conversation, than to those of the senses. This, in the mean time, must be obvious to the most careless reasoner, that all dispositions of mind are not alike favourable to happiness, and that one passion or humour may be extremely desirable, while another is equally disagreeable. And indeed, all the difference between the conditions of life depends upon the mind; nor is there any one situation of affairs, in itself, preferable to another. Good and ill, both natural and moral, are entirely relative to human sentiment and affection. No man would ever be unhappy, could he alter his feelings. Proteus-like, he would elude all attacks, by the continual alterations of his shape and form.

But of this resource nature has, in a great measure, deprived us. The fabric and constitution of our mind no more depends on our choice, than that of our body. The generality of men have not even the smallest notion, that any alteration in this respect can ever be desirable. As a stream necessarily follows the several inclinations of the ground, on which it runs; so are the ignorant and thoughtless part of mankind actuated by their natural propensities. Such are effectually excluded from all pretensions to philosophy, and the medicine of the mind, so much boasted. But even upon the wise and thoughtful, nature has a prodigious influence; nor is it always in a man’s power, by the utmost art and industry, to correct his temper, and attain that virtuous character, to which he aspires. The empire of philosophy extends over a few; and with regard to these too, her authority is very weak and limited. Men may well be sensible of the value of virtue, and may desire to attain it; but it is not always certain, that they will be successful in their wishes.

Whoever considers, without prejudice, the course of human actions, will find, that mankind are almost entirely guided by constitution and temper, and that general maxims have little influence, but so far as they affect our taste or sentiment. If a man have a lively sense of honour and virtue, with moderate passions, his conduct will always be conformable to the rules of morality; or if he depart from them, his return will be easy and expeditious. On the other hand, where one is born of so perverse a frame of mind, of so callous and insensible a disposition, as to have no relish for virtue and humanity, no sympathy with his fellow-creatures, no desire of esteem and applause; such a one must be allowed entirely incurable, nor is there any remedy in philosophy. He reaps no satisfaction but from low and sensual objects, or from the indulgence of malignant passions: He feels no remorse to controul his vicious inclinations: He has not even that sense or taste, which is requisite to make him desire a better character: For my part, I know not how I should address myself to such a one, or by what arguments I should endeavour to reform him. Should I tell him of the inward satisfaction which results from laudable and humane actions, the delicate pleasure of disinterested love and friendship, the lasting enjoyments of a good name and an established character, he might still reply, that these were, perhaps, pleasures to such as were susceptible of them; but that, for his part, he finds himself of a quite different turn and disposition. I must repeat it; my philosophy affords no remedy in such a case, nor could I do any thing but lament this person's unhappy condition. But then I ask, If any other philosophy can afford a remedy; or if it be possible, by any system, to render all mankind virtuous, however perverse may be their natural frame of mind? Experience will soon convince us of the contrary; and I will venture to affirm, that, perhaps, the chief benefit, which results from philosophy, arises in an indirect manner, and proceeds more from its secret, insensible influence, than from its immediate application.

It is certain, that a serious attention to the sciences and liberal arts softens and humanizes the temper, and cherishes those fine emotions, in which true virtue and honour consists. It rarely, very rarely happens, that a man of taste and learning is not, at least, an honest man, whatever frailties may attend him. The bent of his mind to speculative studies must mortify in him the passions of interest and ambition, and must, at the same time, give him a greater sensibility of all the decencies and duties of life. He feels more fully a moral distinction in characters and manners; nor is his sense of this kind diminished, but, on the contrary, it is much encreased, by speculation.

Besides such insensible changes upon the temper and disposition, it is highly probable, that others may be produced by study and application. The prodigious effects of education may convince us, that the mind is not altogether stubborn and inflexible, but will admit of many alterations from its original make and structure. Let a man propose to himself the model of a character, which he approves: Let him be well acquainted with those particulars, in which his own character deviates from this model: Let him keep a constant watch over himself, and bend his mind, by a continual effort, from the vices, towards the virtues; and I doubt not but, in time, he will find, in his temper, an alteration for the better.

Habit is another powerful means of reforming the mind, and implanting in it good dispositions and inclinations. A man, who continues in a course of sobriety and temperance, will hate riot and disorder: If he engage in business or study, indolence will seem a punishment to him: If he constrain himself to practise beneficence and affability, he will soon abhor all instances of pride and violence. Where one is thoroughly convinced that the virtuous course of life is preferable; if he have but resolution enough, for some time, to impose a violence on himself; his reformation needs not be despaired of. The misfortune is, that this conviction and this resolution never can have place, unless a man be, before-hand, tolerably virtuous.

Here then is the chief triumph of art and philosophy: It insensibly refines the temper, and it points out to us those dispositions which we should endeavour to attain, by a constant bent of mind, and by repeated habit. Beyond this I cannot acknowledge it to have great influence; and I must entertain doubts concerning all those exhortations and consolations, which are in such vogue among speculative reasoners.

We have already observed, that no objects are, in themselves, desirable or odious, valuable or despicable; but that objects acquire these qualities from the particular character and constitution of the mind, which surveys them. To diminish therefore, or augment any person’s value for an object, to excite or moderate his passions, there are no direct arguments or reasons, which can be employed with any force or influence. The catching of flies, like Domitian, if it give more pleasure, is preferable to the hunting of wild beasts, like William Rufus, or conquering of kingdoms, like Alexander.

But though the value of every object can be determined only by the sentiment or passion of every individual, we may observe, that the passion, in pronouncing its verdict, considers not the object simply, as it is in itself, but surveys it with all the circumstances, which attend it. A man transported with joy, on account of his possessing a diamond, confines not his view to the glistering stone before him: He also considers its rarity, and thence chiefly arises his pleasure and exultation. Here therefore a philosopher may step in, and suggest particular views, and considerations, and circumstances, which otherwise would have escaped us; and, by that means, he may either moderate or excite any particular passion.

It may seem unreasonable absolutely to deny the authority of philosophy in this respect: But it must be confessed, that there lies this strong presumption against it, that, if these views be natural and obvious, they would have occurred of themselves, without the assistance of philosophy; if they be not natural, they never can have any influence on the affections. These are of a very delicate nature, and cannot be forced or constrained by the utmost art or industry. A consideration, which we seek for on purpose, which we enter into with difficulty, which we cannot retain without care and attention, will never produce those genuine and durable movements of passion, which are the result of nature, and the constitution of the mind. A man may as well pretend to cure himself of love, by viewing his mistress through the artificial medium of a microscope or prospect, and beholding there the coarseness of her skin, and monstrous disproportion of her features, as hope to excite or moderate any passion by the artificial arguments of a Seneca or an Epictetus. The remembrance of the natural aspect and situation of the object, will, in both cases, still recur upon him. The reflections of philosophy are too subtile and distant to take place in common life, or eradicate any affection. The air is too fine to breathe in, where it is above the winds and clouds of the atmosphere.

Another defect of those refined reflections, which philosophy suggests to us, is, that commonly they cannot diminish or extinguish our vicious passions, without diminishing or extinguishing such as are virtuous, and rendering the mind totally indifferent and unactive. They are, for the most part, general, and are applicable to all our affections. In vain do we hope to direct their influence only to one side. If by incessant study and meditation we have rendered them intimate and present to us, they will operate throughout, and spread an universal insensibility over the mind. When we destroy the nerves, we extinguish the sense of pleasure, together with that of pain, in the human body.

It will be easy, by one glance of the eye, to find one or other of these defects in most of those philosophical reflections, so much celebrated both in ancient and modern times. Let not the injuries or violence of men, say the philosophers, ever discompose you by anger or hatred. Would you be angry at the ape for its malice, or the tyger for its ferocity? This reflection leads us into a bad opinion of human nature, and must extinguish the social affections. It tends also to prevent all remorse for a man’s own crimes;

when he considers, that vice is as natural to mankind, as the particular instincts to brute-creatures.

All ills arise from the order of the universe, which is absolutely perfect. Would you wish to disturb so divine an order for the sake of your own particular interest? What if the ills I suffer arise from malice or oppression? But the vices and imperfections of men are also comprehended in the order of the universe:

- If plagues and earthquakes break not heav’n’s design,
- Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?

Let this be allowed; and my own vices will also be a part of the same order.

To one who said, that none were happy, who were not above opinion, a Spartan replied, then none are happy but knaves and robbers.,

Man is born to be miserable; and is he surprized at any particular misfortune? And can he give way to sorrow and lamentation upon account of any disaster? Yes: He very reasonably laments, that he should be born to be miserable. Your consolation presents a hundred ills for one, of which you pretend to ease him.

You should always have before your eyes death, disease, poverty, blindness, exile, calumny, and infamy, as ills which are incident to human nature. If any one of these ills falls to your lot, you will bear it the better, when you have reckoned upon it. I answer, if we confine ourselves to a general and distant reflection on the ills of human life, that can have no effect to prepare us for them. If by close and intense meditation we render them present and intimate to us, that is the true secret for poisoning all our pleasures, and rendering us perpetually miserable.

Your sorrow is fruitless, and will not change the course of destiny. Very true: And for that very reason I am sorry.

Cicero’s consolation for deafness is somewhat curious. How many languages are there, says he, which you do not understand? The Punic, Spanish, Gallic, Ægyptian, &c. With regard to all these, you are as if you were deaf, yet you are indifferent about the matter. Is it then so great a misfortune to be deaf to one language more?

I like better the repartee of Antipater the Cyreniac, when some women were condoling with him for his blindness: What! says he, Do you think there are no pleasures in the dark?

Nothing can be more destructive, says Fontenelle, to ambition, and the passion for conquest, than the true system of astronomy. What a poor thing is even the whole globe in comparison of the infinite extent of nature? This consideration is evidently too distant ever to have any effect. Or, if it had any, would it not destroy patriotism as well as ambition? The same gallant author adds with some reason, that the bright eyes of the ladies are the only objects, which lose nothing of their lustre or value from the most extensive views of astronomy, but stand proof against every system. Would philosophers advise us to limit our affection to them?

Exile, says Plutarch to a friend in banishment, is no evil: Mathematicians tell us, that the whole earth is but a point, compared to the heavens. To change one’s country then is little more than to remove from one street to another. Man is not a plant, rooted to a certain spot of earth: All soils and all climates are alike suited to him. These topics are admirable, could they fall only into the hands of banished persons. But what if they come also to the knowledge of those who are employed in public affairs, and destroy all their attachment to their native country? Or will they operate like the quack’s medicine, which is equally good for a diabetes and a dropsy?

It is certain, were a superior being thrust into a human body, that the whole of life would to him appear so mean, contemptible, and puerile, that he never could be induced to take part in any thing, and would scarcely give attention to what passes around him. To engage him to such a condescension as to play even the part of a Philip with zeal and alacrity, would be much more difficult, than to constrain the same Philip, after having been a king and a conqueror during fifty years, to mend old shoes with proper care and attention; the occupation which Lucian assigns him in the infernal regions. Now all the same topics of disdain towards human affairs, which could operate on this supposed being, occur also to a philosopher; but being, in some measure, disproportioned to human capacity, and not being fortified by the experience of any thing better, they make not a full impression on him. He sees, but he feels not sufficiently their truth; and is always a sublime philosopher, when he needs not; that is, as long as nothing disturbs him, or rouzes his affections. While others play, he wonders at their keenness and ardour; but he no sooner puts in his own stake, than he is commonly transported with the same passions, that he had so much condemned, while he remained a simple spectator.

There are two considerations chiefly, to be met with in books of philosophy, from which any important effect is to be expected, and that because these considerations are drawn from common life, and occur upon the most superficial view of human affairs. When we reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of life, how despicable seem all our pursuits of happiness? And even, if we would extend our concern beyond our own life, how frivolous appear our most enlarged and most generous projects; when we consider the incessant changes and revolutions of human affairs, by which laws and learning, books and governments are hurried away by time, as by a rapid stream, and are lost in the immense ocean of matter? Such a reflection certainly tends to mortify all our passions: But does it not thereby counterwork the artifice of nature, who has happily deceived us into an opinion, that human life is of some importance? And may not such a reflection be employed with success by voluptuous reasoners, in order to lead us, from the paths of action and virtue, into the flowery fields of indolence and pleasure?

We are informed by Thucydides, that, during the famous plague of Athens, when death seemed present to every one, a dissolute mirth and gaiety prevailed among the people, who exhorted one another to make the most of life as long as it endured. The same observation is made by Boccace with regard to the plague of Florence., A like principle makes soldiers, during war, be more addicted to riot and expence, than any other race of men. Present pleasure is always of importance; and whatever diminishes the importance of all other objects must bestow on it an additional influence and value.

The second philosophical consideration, which may often have an influence on the affections, is derived from a comparison of our own condition with the condition of others. This comparison we are continually making, even in common life; but the misfortune is, that we are rather apt to compare our situation with that of our superiors, than with that of our inferiors. A philosopher corrects this natural infirmity, by turning his view to the other side, in order to render himself easy in the situation, to which fortune has confined him. There are few people, who are not susceptible of some consolation from this reflection, though, to a very good-natured man, the view of human miseries should rather produce sorrow than comfort, and add, to his lamentations for his own misfortunes, a deep compassion for those of others. Such is the imperfection, even of the best of these philosophical topics of consolation.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, though virtue be undoubtedly the best choice, when it is attainable; yet such is the disorder and confusion of human affairs, that no perfect or regular distribution of happiness and misery is ever, in this life, to be expected. Not only the goods of fortune, and the endowments of the body (both of which are important), not only these advantages, I say, are unequally divided between the virtuous and vicious, but even the mind itself partakes, in some degree, of this disorder, and the most worthy character, by the very constitution of the passions, enjoys not always the highest felicity.

It is observable, that, though every bodily pain proceeds from some disorder in the part or organ, yet the pain is not always proportioned to the disorder; but is greater or less, according to the greater or less sensibility of the part, upon which the noxious humours exert their influence. A tooth-ach produces more violent convulsions of pain than a phthisis or a dropsy. In like manner, with regard to the œconomy of the mind, we may observe, that all vice is indeed pernicious; yet the disturbance or pain is not measured out by nature with exact proportion to the degree of vice, nor is the man of highest virtue, even abstracting from external accidents, always the most happy. A gloomy and melancholy disposition is certainly, to our sentiments, a vice or imperfection; but as it may be accompanied with great sense of honour and great integrity, it may be found in very worthy characters; though it is sufficient alone to imbitter life, and render the person affected with it completely miserable. On the other hand, a selfish villain may possess a spring and alacrity of temper, a certain gaiety of heart, which is indeed a good quality, but which is rewarded much beyond its merit, and when attended with good fortune, will compensate for the uneasiness and remorse arising from all the other vices.

I shall add, as an observation to the same purpose, that, if a man be liable to a vice or imperfection, it may often happen, that a good quality, which he possesses along with it, will render him more miserable, than if he were completely vicious. A person of such imbecility of temper as to be easily broken by affliction, is more unhappy for being endowed with a generous and friendly disposition, which gives him a lively concern for others, and exposes him the more to fortune and accidents. A sense of shame, in an imperfect character, is certainly a virtue; but produces great uneasiness and remorse, from which the abandoned villain is entirely free. A very amorous complexion, with a heart incapable of friendship, is happier than the same excess in love, with a generosity of temper, which transports a man beyond himself, and renders him a total slave to the object of his passion.

In a word, human life is more governed by fortune than by reason; is to be regarded more as a dull pastime than as a serious occupation; and is more influenced by particular humour, than by general principles. Shall we engage ourselves in it with passion and anxiety? It is not worthy of so much concern. Shall we be indifferent about what happens? We lose all the pleasure of the game by our phlegm and carelessness. While we are reasoning concerning life, life is gone; and death, though perhaps they receive him differently, yet treats alike the fool and the philosopher. To reduce life to exact rule and method, is commonly a painful, oft a fruitless occupation: And is it not also a proof, that we overvalue the prize for which we contend? Even to reason so carefully concerning it, and to fix with accuracy its just idea, would be overvaluing it, were it not that, to some tempers, this occupation is one of the most amusing, in which life could possibly be employed.

ESSAY XIX: OF POLYGAMY AND DIVORCES

As marriage is an engagement entered into by mutual consent, and has for its end the propagation of the species, it is evident, that it must be susceptible of all the variety of conditions, which consent establishes, provided they be not contrary to this end.

A man, in conjoining himself to a woman, is bound to her according to the terms of his engagement: In begetting children, he is bound, by all the ties of nature and humanity, to provide for their subsistence and education. When he has performed these two parts of duty, no one can reproach him with injustice or injury. And as the terms of his engagement, as well as the methods of subsisting his offspring, may be various, it is mere superstition to imagine, that marriage can be entirely uniform, and will admit only of one mode or form. Did not human laws restrain the natural liberty of men, every particular marriage would be as different as contracts or bargains of any other kind or species.

As circumstances vary, and the laws propose different advantages, we find, that, in different times and places, they impose different conditions on this important contract. In Tonquin, it is usual for the sailors, when the ships come into harbour, to marry for the season; and notwithstanding this precarious engagement, they are assured, it is said, of the strictest fidelity to their bed, as well as in the whole management of their affairs, from those temporary spouses.

I cannot, at present, recollect my authorities; but I have somewhere read, that the republic of Athens, having lost many of its citizens by war and pestilence, allowed every man to marry two wives, in order the sooner to repair the waste which had been made by these calamities. The poet Euripides happened to be coupled to two noisy Vixens who so plagued him with their jealousies and quarrels, that he became ever after a professed woman hater; and is the only theatrical writer, perhaps the only poet, that ever entertained an aversion to the sex.

In that agreeable romance, called the History of the Sevarambians, where a great many men and a few women are supposed to be shipwrecked on a desert coast; the captain of the troop, in order to obviate those endless quarrels which arose, regulates their marriages after the following manner: He takes a handsome female to himself alone; assigns one to every couple of inferior officers; and to five of the lowest rank he gives one wife in common.

The ancient Britons had a singular kind of marriage, to be met with among no other people. Any number of them, as ten or a dozen, joined in a society together, which was perhaps requisite for mutual defence in those barbarous times. In order to link this society the closer, they took an equal number of wives in common; and whatever children were born, were reputed to belong to all of them, and were accordingly provided for by the whole community.

Among the inferior creatures, nature herself, being the supreme legislator, prescribes all the laws which regulate their marriages, and varies those laws according to the different circumstances of the creature. Where she furnishes, with ease, food and defence to the newborn animal, the present embrace terminates the marriage; and the care of the offspring is committed entirely to the female. Where the food is of more difficult purchase, the marriage continues for one season, till the common progeny can provide for itself; and then the union immediately dissolves, and leaves each of the parties free to enter into a new engagement at the ensuing season. But nature, having endowed man with reason, has not so exactly regulated every article of his marriage contract, but has left him to adjust them, by his own prudence, according to his particular circumstances and situation. Municipal laws are a supply to the wisdom of each individual; and, at the same time, by restraining the natural liberty of men, make private interest submit to the interest of the public. All regulations, therefore, on this head are equally lawful, and equally conformable to the principles of nature; though they are not all equally convenient, or equally useful to society. The laws may allow of polygamy, as among the Eastern nations; or of voluntary divorces, as among the Greeks and Romans; or they may confine one man to one woman, during the whole course of their lives, as among the modern Europeans. It may not be disagreeable to consider the advantages and disadvantages, which result from each of these institutions.

The advocates for polygamy may recommend it as the only effectual remedy for the disorders of love, and the only expedient for freeing men from that slavery to the females, which the natural violence of our passions has imposed upon us. By this means alone can we regain our right of sovereignty; and, sating our appetite, re-establish the authority of reason in our minds, and, of consequence, our own authority in our families. Man, like a weak sovereign, being unable to support himself against the wiles and intrigues of his subjects, must play one faction against another, and become absolute by the mutual jealousy of the females. To divide and to govern is an universal maxim; and by neglecting it, the Europeans undergo a more grievous and a more ignominious slavery than the Turks or Persians, who are subjected indeed to a sovereign, that lies at a distance from them, but in their domestic affairs rule with an uncontroulable sway.

On the other hand, it may be urged with better reason, that this sovereignty of the male is a real usurpation, and destroys that nearness of rank, not to say equality, which nature has established between the sexes. We are, by nature, their lovers, their friends, their patrons: Would we willingly exchange such endearing appellations, for the barbarous title of master and tyrant?

In what capacity shall we gain by this inhuman proceeding? As lovers, or as husbands? The lover, is totally annihilated; and courtship, the most agreeable scene in life, can no longer have place, where women have not the free disposal of themselves, but are bought and sold, like the meanest animal. The husband is as little a gainer, having found the admirable secret of extinguishing every part of love, except its jealousy. No rose without its thorn; but he must be a foolish wretch indeed, that throws away the rose and preserves only the thorn.

But the Asiatic manners are as destructive to friendship as to love. Jealousy excludes men from all intimacies and familiarities with each other. No one dares bring his friend to his house or table, lest he bring a lover to his numerous wives. Hence all over the east, each family is as much separate from another, as if they were so many distinct kingdoms. No wonder then, that Solomon, living like an eastern prince, with his seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, without one friend, could write so pathetically concerning the vanity of the world. Had he tried the secret of one wife or mistress, a few friends, and a great many companions, he might have found life somewhat more agreeable. Destroy love and friendship; what remains in the world worth accepting?

The bad education of children, especially children of condition, is another unavoidable consequence of these eastern institutions. Those who pass the early part of life among slaves, are only qualified to be, themselves, slaves and tyrants; and in every future intercourse, either with their inferiors or superiors, are apt to forget the natural equality of mankind. What attention, too, can it be supposed a parent, whose seraglio affords him fifty sons, will give to instilling principles of morality or science into a progeny, with whom he himself is scarcely acquainted, and whom he loves with so divided an affection? Barbarism, therefore, appears, from reason as well as experience, to be the inseparable attendant of polygamy.

To render polygamy more odious, I need not recount the frightful effects of jealousy, and the constraint in which it holds the fair-sex all over the east. In those countries men are not allowed to have any commerce with the females, not even physicians, when sickness may be supposed to have extinguished all wanton passions in the bosoms of the fair, and, at the same time, has rendered them unfit objects of desire. Tournefort tells us, that, when he was brought into the grand signior's seraglio as a physician, he was not a little surprized, in looking along a gallery, to see a great number of naked arms, standing out from the sides of the room. He could not imagine what this could mean; till he was told, that those arms, belonged to bodies, which he must cure, without knowing any more about them, than what he could learn from the arms. He was not allowed to ask a question of the patient, or even of her attendants, lest he might find it necessary to enquire concerning circumstances, which the delicacy of the seraglio allows not to be revealed. Hence physicians in the east pretend to know all diseases from the pulse; as our quacks in Europe undertake to cure a person merely from seeing his water. I suppose, had Monsieur Tournefort been of this latter kind, he would not, in Constantinople, have been allowed by the jealous Turks to be furnished with materials requisite for exercising his art.

In another country, where polygamy is also allowed, they render their wives cripples, and make their feet of no use to them, in order to confine them to their own houses. But it will, perhaps, appear strange, that, in a European country, jealousy can yet be carried to such a height, that it is indecent so much as to suppose that a woman of rank can have feet or legs. Witness the following story, which we have from very good authority. When the mother of the late king of Spain was on her road towards Madrid, she passed through a little town in Spain, famous for its manufactory of gloves and stockings. The magistrates of the place thought they could not better express their joy for the reception of their new queen, than by presenting her with a sample of those commodities, for which alone their town was remarkable. The major domo, who conducted the princess, received the gloves very graciously: But when the stockings were presented, he flung them away with great indignation, and severely reprimanded the magistrates for this egregious piece of indecency. Know, says he, that a queen of Spain has no legs. The young queen, who, at that time, understood the language but imperfectly, and had often been frightened with stories of Spanish jealousy, imagined that they were to cut off her legs. Upon which she fell a crying, and begged them to conduct her back to Germany; for that she never could endure the operation: And it was with some difficulty they could appease her. Philip IV. is said never in his life to have laughed heartily, but at the recital of this story.

Having rejected polygamy, and matched one man with one woman, let us now consider what duration we shall assign to their union, and whether we shall admit of those voluntary divorces, which were customary among the Greeks and Romans. Those who would defend this practice may employ the following reasons.

How often does disgust and aversion arise after marriage, from the most trivial accidents, or from an incompatibility of humour; where time, instead of curing the wounds, proceeding from mutual injuries, festers them every day the more, by new quarrels and reproaches? Let us separate hearts, which were not made to associate together. Each of them may, perhaps, find another for which it is better fitted. At least, nothing can be more cruel than to preserve, by violence, an union, which, at first, was made by mutual love, and is now, in effect, dissolved by mutual hatred.

But the liberty of divorces is not only a cure to hatred and domestic quarrels: It is also an admirable preservative against them, and the only secret for keeping alive that love, which first united the married couple. The heart of man delights in liberty: The very image of constraint is grievous to it: When you would confine it by violence, to what would otherwise have been its choice, the inclination immediately changes, and desire is turned into aversion. If the public interest will not allow us to enjoy in polygamy that variety, which is so agreeable in love; at least, deprive us not of that liberty, which is so essentially requisite. In vain you tell me, that I had my choice of the person, with whom I would conjoin myself. I had my choice, it is true, of my prison; but this is but a small comfort, since it must still be a prison.

Such are the arguments which may be urged in favour of divorces: But there seem to be these three unanswerable objections against them. First, What must become of the children, upon the separation of the parents? Must they be committed to the care of a step-mother; and instead of the fond attention and concern of a parent, feel all the indifference or hatred of a stranger or an enemy? These inconveniencies are sufficiently felt, where nature has made the divorce by the doom inevitable to all mortals: And shall we seek to multiply those inconveniencies, by multiplying divorces, and putting it in the power of parents, upon every caprice, to render their posterity miserable?

Secondly, If it be true, on the one hand, that the heart of man naturally delights in liberty, and hates every thing to which it is confined; it is also true, on the other, that the heart of man naturally submits to necessity, and soon loses an inclination, when there appears an absolute impossibility of gratifying it. These principles of human nature, you'll say, are contradictory: But what is man but a heap of contradictions! Though it is remarkable, that, where principles are, after this manner, contrary in their operation, they do not always destroy each other; but the one or the other may predominate on any particular occasion, according as circumstances are more or less favourable to it. For instance, love is a restless and impatient passion, full of caprices and variations: arising in a moment from a feature, from an air, from nothing, and suddenly extinguishing after the same manner. Such a passion requires liberty above all things; and therefore Eloisa had reason, when, in order to preserve this passion, she refused to marry her beloved Abelard.

- How oft, when prest to marriage, have I said,
- Curse on all laws but those which love has made:
- Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
- Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.

But friendship is a calm and sedate affection, conducted by reason and cemented by habit; springing from long acquaintance and mutual obligations; without jealousies or fears, and without those feverish fits of heat and cold, which cause such an agreeable torment in the amorous passion. So sober an affection, therefore, as friendship, rather thrives under constraint, and never rises to such a height, as when any strong interest or necessity binds two persons together, and gives them some common object of pursuit. We need not, therefore, be afraid of drawing the marriage-knot, which chiefly subsists by friendship, the closest possible. The amity between the persons, where it is solid and sincere, will rather gain by it: And where it is wavering and uncertain, this is the best expedient for fixing it. How many frivolous quarrels and disgusts are there, which people of common prudence endeavour to forget, when they lie under a necessity of passing their lives together; but which would soon be inflamed into the most deadly hatred, were they pursued to the utmost, under the prospect of an easy separation?

In the third place, we must consider, that nothing is more dangerous than to unite two persons so closely in all their interests and concerns, as man and wife, without rendering the union entire and total. The least possibility of a separate interest must be the source of endless quarrels and suspicions. The wife, not secure of her establishment, will still be driving some separate end or project; and the husband’s selfishness, being accompanied with more power, may be still more dangerous.

Should these reasons against voluntary divorces be deemed insufficient, I hope no body will pretend to refuse the testimony of experience. At the time when divorces were most frequent among the Romans, marriages were most rare; and Augustus was obliged, by penal laws, to force men of fashion into the married state: A circumstance which is scarcely to be found in any other age or nation. The more ancient laws of Rome, which prohibited divorces, are extremely praised by Dionysius Halycarnassæus. Wonderful was the harmony, says the historian, which this inseparable union of interests produced between married persons; while each of them considered the inevitable necessity by which they were linked together, and abandoned all prospect of any other choice or establishment.

The exclusion of polygamy and divorces sufficiently recommends our present European practice with regard to marriage.

ESSAY XX: OF SIMPLICITY AND REFINEMENT IN WRITING

Fine writing, according to Mr. Addison, consists of sentiments, which are natural, without being obvious. There cannot be a juster, and more concise definition of fine writing.

Sentiments, which are merely natural, affect not the mind with any pleasure, and seem not worthy of our attention. The pleasantries of a waterman, the observations of a peasant, the ribaldry of a porter or hackney coachman, all of these are natural, and disagreeable. What an insipid comedy should we make of the chit-chat of the tea-table, copied faithfully and at full length? Nothing can please persons of taste, but nature drawn with all her graces and ornaments, la belle nature; or if we copy low life, the strokes must be strong and remarkable, and must convey a lively image to the mind. The absurd naivety of Sancho Pancho is represented in such inimitable colours by Cervantes, that it entertains as much as the picture of the most magnanimous hero or softest lover.

The case is the same with orators, philosophers, critics, or any author who speaks in his own person, without introducing other speakers or actors. If his language be not elegant, his observations uncommon, his sense strong and masculine, he will in vain boast his nature and simplicity. He may be correct; but he never will be agreeable. It is the unhappiness of such authors, that they are never blamed or censured. The good fortune of a book, and that of a man, are not the same. The secret deceiving path of life, which Horace talks of, fallentis semita vitæ, may be the happiest lot of the one; but is the greatest misfortune, which the other can possibly fall into.

On the other hand, productions, which are merely surprising, without being natural, can never give any lasting entertainment to the mind. To draw chimeras is not, properly speaking, to copy or imitate. The justness of the representation is lost, and the mind is displeased to find a picture, which bears no resemblance to any original. Nor are such excessive refinements more agreeable in the epistolary or philosophic style, than in the epic or tragic. Too much ornament is a fault in every kind of production. Uncommon expressions, strong flashes of wit, pointed similies, and epigrammatic turns, especially when they recur too frequently, are a disfigurement, rather than any embellishment of discourse. As the eye, in surveying a Gothic building, is distracted by the multiplicity of ornaments, and loses the whole by its minute attention to the parts; so the mind, in perusing a work overstocked with wit, is fatigued and disgusted with the constant endeavour to shine and surprize. This is the case where a writer overabounds in wit, even though that wit, in itself, should be just and agreeable. But it commonly happens to such writers, that they seek for their favourite ornaments, even where the subject does not afford them; and by that means, have twenty insipid conceits for one thought which is really beautiful.

There is no subject in critical learning more copious, than this of the just mixture of simplicity and refinement in writing; and therefore, not to wander in too large a field, I shall confine myself to a few general observations on that head.

First, I observe, That though excesses of both kinds are to be avoided, and though a proper medium ought to be studied in all productions; yet this medium lies not in a point, but admits of a considerable latitude. Consider the wide distance, in this respect, between Mr. Pope and Lucretius. These seem to lie in the two greatest extremes of refinement and simplicity, in which a poet can indulge himself, without being guilty of any blameable excess. All this interval may be filled with poets, who may differ from each other, but may be equally admirable, each in his peculiar stile and manner. Corneille and Congreve, who carry their wit and refinement somewhat farther than Mr. Pope (if poets of so different a kind can be compared together), and Sophocles and Terence, who are more simple than Lucretius, seem to have gone out of that medium, in which the most perfect productions are found, and to be guilty of some excess in these opposite characters. Of all the great poets, Virgil and Racine, in my opinion, lie nearest the center, and are the farthest removed from both the extremities.

My second observation on this head is, That it is very difficult, if not impossible, to explain by words, where the just medium lies between the excesses of simplicity and refinement, or to give any rule by which we can know precisely the bounds between the fault and the beauty. A critic may not only discourse very judiciously on this head, without instructing his readers, but even without understanding the matter perfectly himself. There is not a finer piece of criticism than the dissertation on pastorals by

Fontenelle; in which, by a number of reflections and philosophical reasonings, he endeavours to fix the just medium, which is suitable to that species of writing. But let any one read the pastorals of that author, and he will be convinced, that this judicious critic, notwithstanding his fine reasonings, had a false taste, and fixed the point of perfection much nearer the extreme of refinement than pastoral poetry will admit of. The sentiments of his shepherds are better suited to the toilettes of Paris, than to the forests of Arcadia. But this it is impossible to discover from his critical reasonings. He blames all excessive painting and ornament as much as Virgil could have done, had that great poet writ a dissertation on this species of poetry. However different the tastes of men, their general discourse on these subjects is commonly the same. No criticism can be instructive, which descends not to particulars, and is not full of examples and illustrations. It is allowed on all hands, that beauty, as well as virtue, always lies in a medium; but where this medium is placed, is the great question, and can never be sufficiently explained by general reasonings.

I shall deliver it as a third observation on this subject, That we ought to be more on our guard against the excess of refinement than that of simplicity; and that because the former excess is both less beautiful, and more dangerous than the latter.

It is a certain rule, that wit and passion are entirely incompatible. When the affections are moved, there is no place for the imagination. The mind of man being naturally limited, it is impossible that all its faculties can operate at once: And the more any one predominates, the less room is there for the others to exert their vigour. For this reason, a greater degree of simplicity is required in all compositions, where men, and actions, and passions are painted, than in such as consist of reflections and observations. And as the former species of writing is the more engaging and beautiful, one may safely, upon this account, give the preference to the extreme of simplicity above that of refinement.

We may also observe, that those compositions, which we read the oftenest, and which every man of taste has got by heart, have the recommendation of simplicity, and have nothing surprizing in the thought, when divested of that elegance of expression, and harmony of numbers, with which it is cloathed. If the merit of the composition lie in a point of wit; it may strike at first; but the mind anticipates the thought in the second perusal, and is no longer affected by it. When I read an epigram of Martial, the first line recalls the whole; and I have no pleasure in repeating to myself what I know already. But each line, each word in Catullus, has its merit; and I am never tired with the perusal of him. It is sufficient to run over Cowley once: But Parnel, after the fiftieth reading, is as fresh as at the first. Besides, it is with books as with women, where a certain plainness of manner and of dress is more engaging than that glare of paint and airs and apparel, which may dazzle the eye, but reaches not the affections. Terence is a modest and bashful beauty, to whom we grant every thing, because he assumes nothing, and whose purity and nature make a durable, though not a violent impression on us.

But refinement, as it is the less beautiful, so is it the more dangerous extreme, and what we are the aptest to fall into. Simplicity passes for dulness, when it is not accompanied with great elegance and propriety. On the contrary, there is something surprizing in a blaze of wit and conceit. Ordinary readers are mightily struck with it, and falsely imagine it to be the most difficult, as well as most excellent way of writing. Seneca abounds with agreeable faults, says Quintilian, abundat dulcibus vitiis; and for that reason is the more dangerous, and the more apt to pervert the taste of the young and inconsiderate.

I shall add, that the excess of refinement is now more to be guarded against than ever; because it is the extreme, which men are the most apt to fall into, after learning has made some progress, and after eminent writers have appeared in every species of composition. The endeavour to please by novelty leads men wide of simplicity and nature, and fills their writings with affectation and conceit. It was thus the Asiatic eloquence degenerated so much from the Attic: It was thus the age of Claudius and Nero became so much inferior to that of Augustus in taste and genius: And perhaps there are, at present, some symptoms of a like degeneracy of taste, in France as well as in England.

ESSAY XXI: OF NATIONAL CHARACTERS

The vulgar are apt to carry all national characters to extremes; and having once established it as a principle, that any people are knavish, or cowardly, or ignorant, they will admit of no exception, but comprehend every individual under the same censure. Men of sense condemn these undistinguishing judgments: Though at the same time, they allow, that each nation has a peculiar set of manners, and that some particular qualities are more frequently to be met with among one people than among their neighbours. The common people in Switzerland have probably more honesty than those of the same rank in Ireland; and every prudent man will, from that circumstance alone, make a difference in the trust which he reposes in each. We have reason to expect greater wit and gaiety in a Frenchman than in a Spaniard; though Cervantes was born in Spain. An Englishman will naturally be supposed to have more knowledge than a Dane; though Tycho Brahe was a native of Denmark.

Different reasons are assigned for these national characters; while some account for them from moral, others from physical causes. By moral causes, I mean all circumstances, which are fitted to work on the mind as motives or reasons, and which render a peculiar set of manners habitual to us. Of this kind are, the nature of the government, the revolutions of public affairs, the plenty or penury in which the people live, the situation of the nation with regard to its neighbours, and such like circumstances. By physical causes I mean those qualities of the air and climate, which are supposed to work insensibly on the temper, by altering the tone and habit of the body, and giving a particular complexion, which, though reflection and reason may sometimes overcome it, will yet prevail among the generality of mankind, and have an influence on their manners.

That the character of a nation will much depend on moral causes, must be evident to the most superficial observer; since a nation is nothing but a collection of individuals, and the manners of individuals are frequently determined by these causes. As poverty and hard labour debase the minds of the common people, and render them unfit for any science and ingenious profession; so where any government becomes very oppressive to all its subjects, it must have a proportional effect on their temper and genius, and must banish all the liberal arts from among them.

The same principle of moral causes fixes the character of different professions, and alters even that disposition, which the particular members receive from the hand of nature. A soldier and a priest are different characters, in all nations, and all ages; and this difference is founded on circumstances, whose operation is eternal and unalterable.

The uncertainty of their life makes soldiers lavish and generous, as well as brave: Their idleness, together with the large societies, which they form in camps or garrisons, inclines them to pleasure and gallantry: By their frequent change of company, they acquire good breeding and an openness of behaviour: Being employed only against a public and an open enemy, they become candid, honest, and undesigning: And as they use more the labour of the body than that of the mind, they are commonly thoughtless and ignorant.

It is a trite, but not altogether a false maxim, that priests of all religions are the same; and though the character of the profession will not, in every instance, prevail over the personal character, yet is it sure always to predominate with the greater number. For as chymists observe, that spirits, when raised to a certain height, are all the same, from whatever materials they be extracted; so these men, being elevated above humanity, acquire a uniform character, which is entirely their own, and which, in my opinion, is, generally speaking, not the most amiable that is to be met with in human society. It is, in most points, opposite to that of a soldier; as is the way of life, from which it is derived.

As to physical causes, I am inclined to doubt altogether of their operation in this particular; nor do I think, that men owe any thing of their temper or genius to the air, food, or climate. I confess, that the contrary opinion may justly, at first sight, seem probable; since we find, that these circumstances have an influence over every other animal, and that even those creatures, which are fitted to live in all climates, such as dogs, horses, &c. do not attain the same perfection in all. The courage of bull-dogs and game-cocks seems peculiar to England. Flanders is remarkable for large and heavy horses: Spain for horses light, and of good mettle. And any breed of these creatures, transplanted from one country to another, will soon lose the qualities, which they derived from their native climate. It may be asked, why not the same with men?,

There are few questions more curious than this, or which will oftener occur in our enquiries concerning human affairs; and therefore it may be proper to give it a full examination.

The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other’s sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasions of their intercourse must be so frequent, for defence, commerce, and government, that, together with the same speech or language, they must acquire a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual. Now though nature produces all kinds of temper and understanding in great abundance, it does not follow, that she always produces them in like proportions, and that in every society the ingredients of industry and indolence, valour and cowardice, humanity and brutality, wisdom and folly, will be mixed after the same manner. In the infancy of society, if any of these dispositions be found in greater abundance than the rest, it will naturally prevail in the composition, and give a tincture to the national character. Or should it be asserted, that no species of temper can reasonably be presumed to predominate, even in those contracted societies, and that the same proportions will always be preserved in the mixture; yet surely the persons in credit and authority, being still a more contracted body, cannot always be presumed to be of the same character; and their influence on the manners of the people, must, at all times, be very considerable. If on the first establishment of a republic, a Brutus should be placed in authority, and be transported with such an enthusiasm for liberty and public good, as to overlook all the ties of nature, as well as private interest, such an illustrious example will naturally have an effect on the whole society, and kindle the same passion in every bosom. Whatever it be that forms the manners of one generation, the next must imbibe a deeper tincture of the same dye; men being more susceptible of all impressions during infancy, and retaining these impressions as long as they remain in the world. I assert, then, that all national characters, where they depend not on fixed moral causes, proceed from such accidents as these, and that physical causes have no discernible operation on the human mind. It is a maxim in all philosophy, that causes, which do not appear, are to be considered as not existing.

If we run over the globe, or revolve the annals of history, we shall discover every where signs of a sympathy or contagion of manners, none of the influence of air or climate.

First. We may observe, that, where a very extensive government has been established for many centuries, it spreads a national character over the whole empire, and communicates to every part a similarity of manners. Thus the Chinese have the greatest uniformity of character imaginable: though the air and climate, in different parts of those vast dominions, admit of very considerable variations.

Secondly. In small governments, which are contiguous, the people have notwithstanding a different character, and are often as distinguishable in their manners as the most distant nations. Athens and Thebes were but a short day’s journey from each other; though the Athenians were as remarkable for ingenuity, politeness, and gaiety, as the Thebans for dulness, rusticity, and a phlegmatic temper. Plutarch, discoursing of the effects of air on the minds of men, observes, that the inhabitants of the Piræum possessed very different tempers from those of the higher town in Athens, which was distant about four miles from the former: But I believe no one attributes the difference of manners in Wapping and St. James’s, to a difference of air or climate.

Thirdly. The same national character commonly follows the authority of government to a precise boundary; and upon crossing a river or passing a mountain, one finds a new set of manners, with a new government. The Languedocians and Gascons are the gayest people in France; but whenever you pass the Pyrenees, you are among Spaniards. Is it conceivable, that the qualities of the air should change exactly with the limits of an empire, which depend so much on the accidents of battles, negociations, and marriages?

Fourthly. Where any set of men, scattered over distant nations, maintain a close society or communication together, they acquire a similitude of manners, and have but little in common with the nations amongst whom they live. Thus the Jews in Europe, and the Armenians in the east, have a peculiar character; and the former are as much noted for fraud, as the latter for probity. The Jesuits, in all Roman-catholic countries, are also observed to have a character peculiar to themselves.

Fifthly. Where any accident, as a difference in language or religion, keeps two nations, inhabiting the same country, from mixing with each other, they will preserve, during several centuries, a distinct and even opposite set of manners. The integrity, gravity, and bravery of the Turks, form an exact contrast to the deceit, levity, and cowardice of the modern Greeks.

Sixthly. The same set of manners will follow a nation, and adhere to them over the whole globe, as well as the same laws and language. The Spanish, English, French and Dutch colonies are all distinguishable even between the tropics.

Seventhly. The manners of a people change very considerably from one age to another; either by great alterations in their government, by the mixtures of new people, or by that inconstancy, to which all human affairs are subject. The ingenuity, industry, and activity of the ancient Greeks have nothing in common with the stupidity and indolence of the present inhabitants of those regions. Candour, bravery, and love of liberty formed the character of the ancient Romans; as subtilty, cowardice, and a slavish disposition do that of the modern. The old Spaniards were restless, turbulent, and so addicted to war, that many of them killed themselves, when deprived of their arms by the Romans. One would find an equal difficulty at present, (at least one would have found it fifty years ago) to rouze up the modern Spaniards to arms. The Batavians were all soldiers of fortune, and hired themselves into the Roman armies. Their posterity make use of foreigners for the same purpose that the Romans did their ancestors. Though some few strokes of the French character be the same with that which Cæsar has ascribed to the Gauls; yet what comparison between the civility, humanity, and knowledge of the modern inhabitants of that country, and the ignorance, barbarity, and grossness of the ancient? Not to insist upon the great difference between the present possessors of Britain, and those before the Roman conquest; we may observe that our ancestors, a few centuries ago, were sunk into the most abject superstition, last century they were inflamed with the most furious enthusiasm, and are now settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters, that is to be found in any nation of the world.

Eighthly. Where several neighbouring nations have a very close communication together, either by policy, commerce, or travelling, they acquire a similitude of manners, proportioned to the communication. Thus all the Franks appear to have a uniform character to the eastern nations. The differences among them are like the peculiar accents of different provinces, which are not distinguishable, except by an ear accustomed to them, and which commonly escape a foreigner.

Ninthly. We may often remark a wonderful mixture of manners and characters in the same nation, speaking the same language, and subject to the same government: And in this particular the English are the most remarkable of any people, that perhaps ever were in the world. Nor is this to be ascribed to the mutability and uncertainty of their climate, or to any other physical causes; since all these causes take place in the neighbouring country of Scotland, without having the same effect. Where the government of a nation is altogether republican, it is apt to beget a peculiar set of manners. Where it is altogether monarchical, it is more apt to have the same effect; the imitation of superiors spreading the national manners faster among the people. If the governing part of a state consist altogether of merchants, as in Holland, their uniform way of life will fix their character. If it consists chiefly of nobles and landed gentry, like Germany, France, and Spain, the same effect follows. The genius of a particular sect or religion is also apt to mould the manners of a people. But the English government is a mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The people in authority are composed of gentry and merchants. All sects of religion are to be found among them. And the great liberty and independency, which every man enjoys, allows him to display the manners peculiar to him. Hence the English, of any people in the universe, have the least of a national character; unless this very singularity may pass for such.

If the characters of men depended on the air and climate, the degrees of heat and cold should naturally be expected to have a mighty influence; since nothing has a greater effect on all plants and irrational animals. And indeed there is some reason to think, that all the nations, which live beyond the polar circles or between the tropics, are inferior to the rest of the species, and are incapable of all the higher attainments of the human mind. The poverty and misery of the northern inhabitants of the globe, and the indolence of the southern, from their few necessities, may, perhaps, account for this remarkable difference, without our having recourse to physical causes. This however is certain, that the characters of nations are very promiscuous in the temperate climates, and that almost all the general observations, which have been formed of the more southern or more northern people in these climates, are found to be uncertain and fallacious.

Shall we say, that the neighbourhood of the sun inflames the imagination of men, and gives it a peculiar spirit and vivacity. The French, Greeks, Egyptians, and Persians are remarkable for gaiety. The Spaniards, Turks, and Chinese are noted for gravity and a serious deportment, without any such difference of climate as to produce this difference of temper.

The Greeks and Romans, who called all other nations barbarians, confined genius and a fine understanding to the more southern climates, and pronounced the northern nations incapable of all knowledge and civility. But our island has produced as great men, either for action or learning, as Greece or Italy has to boast of.

It is pretended, that the sentiments of men become more delicate as the country approaches nearer to the sun; and that the taste of beauty and elegance receives proportional improvements in every latitude; as we may particularly observe of the languages, of which the more southern are smooth and melodious, the northern harsh and untuneable. But this observation holds not universally. The Arabic is uncouth and disagreeable: The Muscovite soft and musical. Energy, strength, and harshness form the character of the Latin tongue: The Italian is the most liquid, smooth, and effeminate language that can possibly be imagined. Every language will depend somewhat on the manners of the people; but much more on that original stock of words and sounds, which they received from their ancestors, and which remain unchangeable, even while their manners admit of the greatest alterations. Who can doubt, but the English are at present a more polite and knowing people than the Greeks were for several ages after the siege of Troy? Yet is there no comparison between the language of Milton and that of Homer. Nay, the greater are the alterations and improvements, which happen in the manners of a people, the less can be expected in their language. A few eminent and refined geniuses will communicate their taste and knowledge to a whole people, and produce the greatest improvements; but they fix the tongue by their writings, and prevent, in some degree, its farther changes.

Lord Bacon has observed, that the inhabitants of the south are, in general, more ingenious than those of the north; but that, where the native of a cold climate has genius, he rises to a higher pitch than can be reached by the southern wits. This observation a late writer confirms, by comparing the southern wits to cucumbers, which are commonly all good in their kind; but at best are an insipid fruit: While the northern geniuses are like melons, of which not one in fifty is good; but when it is so, it has an exquisite relish. I believe this remark may be allowed just, when confined to the European nations, and to the present age, or rather to the preceding one: But I think it may be accounted for from moral causes. All the sciences and liberal arts have been imported to us from the south; and it is easy to imagine, that, in the first ardor of application, when excited by emulation and by glory, the few, who were addicted to them, would carry them to the greatest height, and stretch every nerve, and every faculty, to reach the pinnacle of perfection. Such illustrious examples spread knowledge every where, and begot an universal esteem for the sciences: After which, it is no wonder, that industry relaxes; while men meet not with suitable encouragement, nor arrive at such distinction by their attainments. The universal diffusion of learning among a people, and the entire banishment of gross ignorance and rusticity, is, therefore, seldom attended with any remarkable perfection in particular persons. It seems to be taken for granted in the dialogue de Oratoribus, that knowledge was much more common in Vespasian’s age than in that of Cicero and Augustus. Quintilian also complains of the profanation of learning, by its becoming too common. “Formerly,” says Juvenal, “science was confined to Greece and Italy. Now the whole world emulates Athens and Rome. Eloquent Gaul has taught Britain, knowing in the laws. Even Thule entertains thoughts of hiring rhetoricians for its instruction.” This state of learning is remarkable; because Juvenal is himself the last of the Roman writers, that possessed any degree of genius. Those, who succeeded, are valued for nothing but the matters of fact, of which they give us information. I hope the late conversion of Muscovy to the study of the sciences will not prove a like prognostic to the present period of learning.

Cardinal Bentivoglio gives the preference to the northern nations above the southern with regard to candour and sincerity; and mentions, on the one hand, the Spaniards and Italians, and on the other, the Flemings and Germans. But I am apt to think, that this has happened by accident. The ancient Romans seem to have been a candid sincere people, as are the modern Turks. But if we must needs suppose, that this event has arisen from fixed causes, we may only conclude from it, that all extremes are apt to concur, and are commonly attended with the same consequences. Treachery is the usual concomitant of ignorance and barbarism; and if civilized nations ever embrace subtle and crooked politics, it is from an excess of refinement, which makes them disdain the plain direct path to power and glory.

Most conquests have gone from north to south; and it has hence been inferred, that the northern nations possess a superior degree of courage and ferocity. But it would have been juster to have said, that most conquests are made by poverty and want upon plenty and riches. The Saracens, leaving the deserts of Arabia, carried their conquests northwards upon all the fertile provinces of the Roman empire; and met the Turks half way, who were coming southwards from the deserts of Tartary.

An eminent writer has remarked, that all courageous animals are also carnivorous, and that greater courage is to be expected in a people, such as the English, whose food is strong and hearty, than in the half-starved commonalty of other countries. But the Swedes, notwithstanding their disadvantages in this particular, are not inferior, in martial courage, to any nation that ever was in the world.

In general, we may observe, that courage, of all national qualities, is the most precarious; because it is exerted only at intervals, and by a few in every nation; whereas industry, knowledge, civility, may be of constant and universal use, and for several ages, may become habitual to the whole people. If courage be preserved, it must be by discipline, example, and opinion. The tenth legion of Cæsar, and the regiment of Picardy in France were formed promiscuously from among the citizens; but having once entertained a notion, that they were the best troops in the service, this very opinion really made them such.

As a proof how much courage depends on opinion, we may observe, that, of the two chief tribes of the Greeks, the Dorians, and Ionians, the former were always esteemed, and always appeared more brave and manly than the latter; though the colonies of both the tribes were interspersed and intermingled throughout all the extent of Greece, the Lesser Asia, Sicily, Italy, and the islands of the Ægean sea. The Athenians were the only Ionians that ever had any reputation for valour or military atchievements; though even these were deemed inferior to the Lacedemonians, the bravest of the Dorians.

The only observation, with regard to the difference of men in different climates, on which we can rest any weight, is the vulgar one, that people in the northern regions have a greater inclination to strong liquors, and those in the southern to love and women. One can assign a very probable physical cause for this difference. Wine and distilled waters warm the frozen blood in the colder climates, and fortify men against the injuries of the weather: As the genial heat of the sun, in the countries exposed to his beams, inflames the blood, and exalts the passion between the sexes.

Perhaps too, the matter may be accounted for by moral causes. All strong liquors are rarer in the north, and consequently are more coveted. Diodorus Siculus tells us, that the Gauls in his time were great drunkards, and much addicted to wine; chiefly, I suppose, from its rarity and novelty. On the other hand, the heat in the southern climates, obliging men and women to go half naked, thereby renders their frequent commerce more dangerous, and inflames their mutual passion. This makes parents and husbands more jealous and reserved; which still farther inflames the passion. Not to mention, that, as women ripen sooner in the southern regions, it is necessary to observe greater jealousy and care in their education; it being evident, that a girl of twelve cannot possess equal discretion to govern this passion, with one who feels not its violence till she be seventeen or eighteen. Nothing so much encourages the passion of love as ease and leisure, or is more destructive to it than industry and hard labour; and as the necessities of men are evidently fewer in the warm climates than in the cold ones, this circumstance alone may make a considerable difference between them.

But perhaps the fact is doubtful, that nature has, either from moral or physical causes, distributed these respective inclinations to the different climates. The ancient Greeks, though born in a warm climate, seem to have been much addicted to the bottle; nor were their parties of pleasure any thing but matches of drinking among men, who passed their time altogether apart from the fair. Yet when Alexander led the Greeks into Persia, a still more southern climate, they multiplied their debauches of this kind, in imitation of the Persian manners. So honourable was the character of a drunkard among the Persians, that Cyrus the younger, soliciting the sober Lacedemonians for succour against his brother Artaxerxes, claims it chiefly on account of his superior endowments, as more valorous, more bountiful, and a better drinker. Darius Hystaspes made it be inscribed on his tombstone, among his other virtues and princely qualities, that no one could bear a greater quantity of liquor. You may obtain any thing of the Negroes by offering them strong drink; and may easily prevail with them to sell, not only their children, but their wives and mistresses, for a cask of brandy. In France and Italy few drink pure wine, except in the greatest heats of summer; and indeed, it is then almost as necessary, in order to recruit the spirits, evaporated by heat, as it is in Sweden, during the winter, in order to warm the bodies congealed by the rigour of the season.

If jealousy be regarded as a proof of an amorous disposition, no people were more jealous than the Muscovites, before their communication with Europe had somewhat altered their manners in this particular.

But supposing the fact true, that nature, by physical principles, has regularly distributed these two passions, the one to the northern, the other to the southern regions; we can only infer, that the climate may affect the grosser and more bodily organs of our frame; not that it can work upon those finer organs, on which the operations of the mind and understanding depend. And this is agreeable to the analogy of nature. The races of animals never degenerate when carefully tended; and horses, in particular, always show their blood in their shape, spirit, and swiftness: But a coxcomb may beget a philosopher; as a man of virtue may leave a worthless progeny.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that though the passion for liquor be more brutal and debasing than love, which, when properly managed, is the source of all politeness and refinement; yet this gives not so great an advantage to the southern climates, as we may be apt, at first sight, to imagine. When love goes beyond a certain pitch, it renders men jealous, and cuts off the free intercourse between the sexes, on which the politeness of a nation will commonly much depend. And if we would subtilize and refine upon this point, we might observe, that the people, in very temperate climates, are the most likely to attain all sorts of improvement; their blood not being so inflamed as to render them jealous, and yet being warm enough to make them set a due value on the charms and endowments of the fair sex.

ESSAY XXII: OF TRAGEDY

It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle; and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece is at an end. One scene of full joy and contentment and security is the utmost, that any composition of this kind can bear; and it is sure always to be the concluding one. If, in the texture of the piece, there be interwoven any scenes of satisfaction, they afford only faint gleams of pleasure, which are thrown in by way of variety, and in order to plunge the actors into deeper distress, by means of that contrast and disappointment. The whole art of the poet is employed, in rouzing and supporting the compassion and indignation, the anxiety and resentment of his audience. They are pleased in proportion as they are afflicted, and never are so happy as when they employ tears, sobs, and cries to give vent to their sorrow, and relieve their heart, swoln with the tenderest sympathy and compassion.

The few critics who have had some tincture of philosophy, have remarked this singular phænomenon, and have endeavoured to account for it.

L’Abbe Dubos, in his reflections on poetry and painting, asserts, that nothing is in general so disagreeable to the mind as the languid, listless state of indolence, into which it falls upon the removal of all passion and occupation. To get rid of this painful situation, it seeks every amusement and pursuit; business, gaming, shews, executions; whatever will rouze the passions, and take its attention from itself. No matter what the passion is: Let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered; it is still better than that insipid languor, which arises from perfect tranquillity and repose.

It is impossible not to admit this account, as being, at least in part, satisfactory. You may observe, when there are several tables of gaming, that all the company run to those, where the deepest play is, even though they find not there the best players. The view, or, at least, imagination of high passions, arising from great loss or gain, affects the spectator by sympathy, gives him some touches of the same passions, and serves him for a momentary entertainment. It makes the time pass the easier with him, and is some relief to that oppression, under which men commonly labour, when left entirely to their own thoughts and meditations.

We find that common liars always magnify, in their narrations, all kinds of danger, pain, distress, sickness, deaths, murders, and cruelties; as well as joy, beauty, mirth, and magnificence. It is an absurd secret, which they have for pleasing their company, fixing their attention, and attaching them to such marvellous relations, by the passions and emotions, which they excite.

There is, however, a difficulty in applying to the present subject, in its full extent, this solution, however ingenious and satisfactory it may appear. It is certain, that the same object of distress, which pleases in a tragedy, were it really set before us, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness; though it be then the most effectual cure to languor and indolence. Monsieur Fontenelle seems to have been sensible of this difficulty; and accordingly attempts another solution of the phænomenon; at least makes some addition to the theory above mentioned.

“Pleasure and pain,” says he, “which are two sentiments so different in themselves, differ not so much in their cause. From the instance of tickling, it appears, that the movement of pleasure, pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the movement of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence it proceeds, that there is such a thing as a sorrow, soft and agreeable: It is a pain weakened and diminished. The heart likes naturally to be moved and affected. Melancholy objects suit it, and even disastrous and sorrowful, provided they are softened by some circumstance. It is certain, that, on the theatre, the representation has almost the effect of reality; yet it has not altogether that effect. However we may be hurried away by the spectacle; whatever dominion the senses and imagination may usurp over the reason, there still lurks at the bottom a certain idea of falsehood in the whole of what we see. This idea, though weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts it into a pleasure. We weep for the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached. In the same instant we comfort ourselves, by reflecting, that it is nothing but a fiction: And it is precisely that mixture of sentiments, which composes an agreeable sorrow, and tears that delight us. But as that affliction, which is caused by exterior and sensible objects, is stronger than the consolation which arises from an internal reflection, they are the effects and symptoms of sorrow, that ought to predominate in the composition.”

This solution seems just and convincing; but perhaps it wants still some new addition, in order to make it answer fully the phænomenon, which we here examine. All the passions, excited by eloquence, are agreeable in the highest degree, as well as those which are moved by painting and the theatre. The epilogues of Cicero are, on this account chiefly, the delight of every reader of taste; and it is difficult to read some of them without the deepest sympathy and sorrow. His merit as an orator, no doubt, depends much on his success in this particular. When he had raised tears in his judges and all his audience, they were then the most highly delighted, and expressed the greatest satisfaction with the pleader. The pathetic description of the butchery, made by Verres of the Sicilian captains, is a masterpiece of this kind: But I believe none will affirm, that the being present at a melancholy scene of that nature would afford any entertainment. Neither is the sorrow here softened by fiction: For the audience were convinced of the reality of every circumstance. What is it then, which in this case raises a pleasure from the bosom of uneasiness, so to speak; and a pleasure, which still retains all the features and outward symptoms of distress and sorrow?

I answer: This extraordinary effect proceeds from that very eloquence, with which the melancholy scene is represented. The genius required to paint objects in a lively manner, the art employed in collecting all the pathetic circumstances, the judgment displayed in disposing them: the exercise, I say, of these noble talents, together with the force of expression, and beauty of oratorial numbers, diffuse the highest satisfaction on the audience, and excite the most delightful movements. By this means, the uneasiness of the melancholy passions is not only overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole impulse of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us. The same force of oratory, employed on an uninteresting subject, would not please half so much, or rather would appear altogether ridiculous; and the mind, being left in absolute calmness and indifference, would relish none of those beauties of imagination or expression, which, if joined to passion, give it such exquisite entertainment. The impulse or vehemence, arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter, being the predominant emotion, seize the whole mind, and convert the former into themselves, at least tincture them so strongly as totally to alter their nature. And the soul, being, at the same time, rouzed by passion, and charmed by eloquence, feels on the whole a strong movement, which is altogether delightful.

The same principle takes place in tragedy; with this addition, that tragedy is an imitation; and imitation is always of itself agreeable. This circumstance serves still farther to smooth the motions of passion, and convert the whole feeling into one uniform and strong enjoyment. Objects of the greatest terror and distress please in painting, and please more than the most beautiful objects, that appear calm and indifferent. The affection, rouzing the mind, excites a large stock of spirit and vehemence; which is all transformed into pleasure by the force of the prevailing movement. It is thus the fiction of tragedy softens the passion, by an infusion of a new feeling, not merely by weakening or diminishing the sorrow. You may by degrees weaken a real sorrow, till it totally disappears; yet in none of its gradations will it ever give pleasure; except, perhaps, by accident, to a man sunk under lethargic indolence, whom it rouzes from that languid state.

To confirm this theory, it will be sufficient to produce other instances, where the subordinate movement is converted into the predominant, and gives force to it, though of a different, and even sometimes though of a contrary nature.

Novelty naturally rouzes the mind, and attracts our attention; and the movements, which it causes, are always converted into any passion, belonging to the object, and join their force to it. Whether an event excite joy or sorrow, pride or shame, anger or good-will, it is sure to produce a stronger affection, when new or unusual. And though novelty of itself be agreeable, it fortifies the painful, as well as agreeable passions.

Had you any intention to move a person extremely by the narration of any event, the best method of encreasing its effect would be artfully to delay informing him of it, and first to excite his curiosity and impatience before you let him into the secret. This is the artifice practised by Iago in the famous scene of Shakespeare; and every spectator is sensible, that Othello’s jealousy acquires additional force from his preceding impatience, and that the subordinate passion is here readily transformed into the predominant one.

Difficulties encrease passions of every kind; and by rouzing our attention, and exciting our active powers, they produce an emotion, which nourishes the prevailing affection.

Parents commonly love that child most, whose sickly infirm frame of body has occasioned them the greatest pains, trouble, and anxiety in rearing him. The agreeable sentiment of affection here acquires force from sentiments of uneasiness.

Nothing endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

Jealousy is a painful passion; yet without some share of it, the agreeable affection of love has difficulty to subsist in its full force and violence. Absence is also a great source of complaint among lovers, and gives them the greatest uneasiness: Yet nothing is more favourable to their mutual passion than short intervals of that kind. And if long intervals often prove fatal, it is only because, through time, men are accustomed to them, and they cease to give uneasiness. Jealousy and absence in love compose the dolce peccante of the Italians, which they suppose so essential to all pleasure.

There is a fine observation of the elder Pliny, which illustrates the principle here insisted on. It is very remarkable, says he, that the last works of celebrated artists, which they left imperfect, are always the most prized, such as the Iris of Aristides, the Tyndarides of Nicomachus, the Medea of Timomachus, and the Venus of Apelles. These are valued even above their finished productions: The broken lineaments of the piece, and the half-formed idea of the painter are carefully studied; and our very grief for that curious hand, which had been stopped by death, is an additional encrease to our pleasure.

These instances (and many more might be collected) are sufficient to afford us some insight into the analogy of nature, and to show us, that the pleasure, which poets, orators, and musicians give us, by exciting grief, sorrow, indignation, compassion, is not so extraordinary or paradoxical, as it may at first sight appear. The force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of numbers, the charms of imitation; all these are naturally, of themselves, delightful to the mind: And when the object presented lays also hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us, by the conversion of this subordinate movement into that which is predominant. The passion, though, perhaps, naturally, and when excited by the simple appearance of a real object, it may be painful; yet is so smoothed, and softened, and mollified, when raised by the finer arts, that it affords the highest entertainment.

To confirm this reasoning, we may observe, that if the movements of the imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows; and the former, being now subordinate, is converted into the latter, and still farther encreases the pain and affliction of the sufferer.

Who could ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of elocution, the irreparable loss, which he has met with by the death of a favourite child? The more power of imagination and expression you here employ, the more you encrease his despair and affliction.

The shame, confusion, and terror of Verres, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble eloquence and vehemence of Cicero: So also did his pain and uneasiness. These former passions were too strong for the pleasure arising from the beauties of elocution; and operated, though from the same principle, yet in a contrary manner, to the sympathy, compassion, and indignation of the audience.

Lord Clarendon, when he approaches towards the catastrophe of the royal party, supposes, that his narration must then become infinitely disagreeable; and he hurries over the king’s death, without giving us one circumstance of it. He considers it as too horrid a scene to be contemplated with any satisfaction, or even without the utmost pain and aversion. He himself, as well as the readers of that age, were too deeply concerned in the events, and felt a pain from subjects, which an historian and a reader of another age would regard as the most pathetic and most interesting, and, by consequence, the most agreeable.

An action, represented in tragedy, may be too bloody and atrocious. It may excite such movements of horror as will not soften into pleasure; and the greatest energy of expression, bestowed on descriptions of that nature, serves only to augment our uneasiness. Such is that action represented in the Ambitious Stepmother, where a venerable old man, raised to the height of fury and despair, rushes against a pillar, and striking his head upon it, besmears it all over with mingled brains and gore. The English theatre abounds too much with such shocking images.

Even the common sentiments of compassion require to be softened by some agreeable affection, in order to give a thorough satisfaction to the audience. The mere suffering of plaintive virtue, under the triumphant tyranny and oppression of vice, forms a disagreeable spectacle, and is carefully avoided by all masters of the drama. In order to dismiss the audience with entire satisfaction and contentment, the virtue must either convert itself into a noble courageous despair, or the vice receive its proper punishment.

Most painters appear in this light to have been very unhappy in their subjects. As they wrought much for churches and convents, they have chiefly represented such horrible subjects as crucifixions and martyrdoms, where nothing appears but tortures, wounds, executions, and passive suffering, without any action or affection. When they turned their pencil from this ghastly mythology, they had commonly recourse to Ovid, whose fictions, though passionate and agreeable, are scarcely natural or probable enough for painting.

The same inversion of that principle, which is here insisted on, displays itself in common life, as in the effects of oratory and poetry. Raise so the subordinate passion that it becomes the predominant, it swallows up that affection which it before nourished and encreased. Too much jealousy extinguishes love: Too much difficulty renders us indifferent: Too much sickness and infirmity disgusts a selfish and unkind parent.

What so disagreeable as the dismal, gloomy, disastrous stories, with which melancholy people entertain their companions? The uneasy passion being there raised alone, unaccompanied with any spirit, genius, or eloquence, conveys a pure uneasiness, and is attended with nothing that can soften it into pleasure or satisfaction.

ESSAY XXIII: OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE

The great variety of Taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowledge are able to remark a difference of taste in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government, and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those, who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprized at the great inconsistence and contrariety. We are apt to call barbarous whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension: But soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self-conceit is at last startled, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiment, to pronounce positively in its own favour.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless enquirer; so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language, which import blame, and others praise; and all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing; and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brilliancy: But when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science, the case is opposite: The difference among men is there oftener found to lie in generals than in particulars; and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explanation of the terms commonly ends the controversy; and the disputants are surprized to find, that they had been quarrelling, while at bottom they agreed in their judgment.

Those who found morality on sentiment, more than on reason, are inclined to comprehend ethics under the former observation, and to maintain, that, in all questions, which regard conduct and manners, the difference among men is really greater than at first sight it appears. It is indeed obvious, that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, veracity; and in blaming the opposite qualities. Even poets and other authors, whose compositions are chiefly calculated to please the imagination, are yet found from Homer down to Fenelon, to inculcate the same moral precepts, and to bestow their applause and blame on the same virtues and vices. This great unanimity is usually ascribed to the influence of plain reason; which, in all these cases, maintains similar sentiments in all men, and prevents those controversies, to which the abstract sciences are so much exposed. So far as the unanimity is real, this account may be admitted as satisfactory: But we must also allow that some part of the seeming harmony in morals may be accounted for from the very nature of language. The word virtue, with its equivalent in every tongue, implies praise; as that of vice does blame: And no one, without the most obvious and grossest impropriety, could affix reproach to a term, which in general acceptation is understood in a good sense; or bestow applause, where the idiom requires disapprobation. Homer's general precepts, where he delivers any such, will never be controverted; but it is obvious, that, when he draws particular pictures of manners, and represents heroism in Achilles and prudence in Ulysses, he intermixes a much greater degree of ferocity in the former, and of cunning and fraud in the latter, than Fenelon would admit of. The sage Ulysses in the Greek poet seems to delight in lies and fictions, and often employs them without any necessity or even advantage: But his more scrupulous son, in the French epic writer, exposes himself to the most imminent perils, rather than depart from the most exact line of truth and veracity.

The admirers and followers of the Alcoran insist on the excellent moral precepts interspersed throughout that wild and absurd performance. But it is to be supposed, that the Arabic words, which correspond to the English, equity, justice, temperance, meekness, charity, were such as, from the constant use of that tongue, must always be taken in a good sense; and it would have argued the greatest ignorance, not of morals, but of language, to have mentioned them with any epithets, besides those of applause and approbation. But would we know, whether the pretended prophet had really attained a just sentiment of morals? Let us attend to his narration; and we shall soon find, that he bestows praise on such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge, bigotry, as are utterly incompatible with civilized society. No steady rule of right seems there to be attended to; and every action is blamed or praised, so far only as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

The merit of delivering true general precepts in ethics is indeed very small. Whoever recommends any moral virtues, really does no more than is implied in the terms themselves. That people, who invented the word charity, and used it in a good sense, inculcated more clearly and much more efficaciously, the precept, be charitable, than any pretended legislator or prophet, who should insert such a maxim in his writings. Of all expressions, those, which, together with their other meaning, imply a degree either of blame or approbation, are the least liable to be perverted or mistaken.

It is natural for us to seek a Standard of Taste; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least, a decision, afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.

There is a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men may entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right: Because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation between the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity, is as fruitless an enquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter; and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental, as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind, is found, in one instance at least, to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

But though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense; there is certainly a species of common sense which opposes it, at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as Teneriffe, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to the former authors; no one pays attention to such a taste; and we pronounce without scruple the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot, and while we admit it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

It is evident that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings a priori, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they any thing but general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry and even of eloquence are founded on falsehood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of terms from their natural meaning. To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it would produce a work, which, by universal experience, has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions: They have possessed other beauties, which were conformable to just criticism; and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. Ariosto pleases; but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind: And however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: It would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blameable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults; let the pleasure, which they produce, be ever so unexpected and unaccountable.

But though all the general rules of art are founded only on experience and on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature, we must not imagine, that, on every occasion, the feelings of men will be conformable to these rules. Those finer emotions of the mind are of a very tender and delicate nature, and require the concurrence of many favourable circumstances to make them play with facility and exactness, according to their general and established principles. The least exterior hindrance to such small springs, or the least internal disorder, disturbs their motion, and confounds the operation of the whole machine. When we would make an experiment of this nature, and would try the force of any beauty or deformity, we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition. A perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object; if any of these circumstances be wanting, our experiment will be fallacious, and we shall be unable to judge of the catholic and universal beauty. The relation, which nature has placed between the form and the sentiment, will at least be more obscure; and it will require greater accuracy to trace and discern it. We shall be able to ascertain its influence not so much from the operation of each particular beauty, as from the durable admiration, which attends those works, that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy.

The same Homer, who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and at London. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language, have not been able to obscure his glory.

Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator; but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances: But when these obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments, immediately display their energy; and while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

It appears then, that, amidst all the variety and caprice of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature, there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If, in the sound state of the organ, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light, to the eye of a man in health, is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

Many and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give pleasure, it is not to be expected, that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

One obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that delicacy of imagination, which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to: Every one talks of it; and would reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this essay is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy, than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in Don Quixote.

It is with good reason, says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: This is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead, which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it; and after mature reflection pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather, which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favour of the wine; but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom, an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.

The great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree, or may be mixed and confounded with each other, it often happens, that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder, in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the literal or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use; being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree: And if the same qualities, in a continued composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong; which justified the verdict of Sancho’s kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges who had condemned them. Though the hogshead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid: But it would have been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every by-stander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged; the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove, that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive or feel its influence: He must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse.

It is acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ, and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavours; but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner, a quick and acute perception of beauty and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste; nor can a man be satisfied with himself while he suspects, that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case, the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense or feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both to a man himself and to his friends: But a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality; because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to meet with approbation; and the best way of ascertaining it is to appeal to those models and principles, which have been established by the uniform consent and experience of nations and ages.

But though there be naturally a wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothing tends further to encrease and improve this talent, than practice in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment, which attends them, is obscure and confused; and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellencies of the performance; much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed, it is the utmost that can be expected; and even this judgment, a person, so unpractised, will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice: He not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects; and he discerns that very degree and kind of approbation or displeasure, which each part is naturally fitted to produce. The mist dissipates, which seemed formerly to hang over the object: The organ acquires greater perfection in its operations; and can pronounce, without danger of mistake, concerning the merits of every performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired by the same means, in the judging of it.

So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that, before we can give judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite, that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights with attention and deliberation. There is a flutter or hurry of thought which attends the first perusal of any piece, and which confounds the genuine sentiment of beauty. The relation of the parts is not discerned: The true characters of style are little distinguished: The several perfections and defects seem wrapped up in a species of confusion, and present themselves indistinctly to the imagination. Not to mention, that there is a species of beauty, which, as it is florid and superficial, pleases at first; but being found incompatible with a just expression either of reason or passion, soon palls upon the taste, and is then rejected with disdain, at least rated at a much lower value.

It is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form comparisons between the several species and degrees of excellence, and estimating their proportion to each other. A man, who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty, is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest daubing contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person, familiarized to superior beauties, would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellence of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity: As the most finished object, with which we are acquainted, is naturally supposed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, and to be entitled to the highest applause. One accustomed to see, and examine, and weigh the several performances, admired in different ages and nations, can alone rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius.

But to enable a critic the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all prejudice, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object which is submitted to his examination. We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that which is required by the performance. An orator addresses himself to a particular audience, and must have a regard to their particular genius, interests, opinions, passions, and prejudices; otherwise he hopes in vain to govern their resolutions, and inflame their affections. Should they even have entertained some prepossessions against him, however unreasonable, he must not overlook this disadvantage; but, before he enters upon the subject, must endeavour to conciliate their affection, and acquire their good graces. A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. In like manner, when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances. A person influenced by prejudice, complies not with this condition; but obstinately maintains his natural position, without placing himself in that point of view, which the performance supposes. If the work be addressed to persons of a different age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices; but, full of the manners of his own age and country, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated. If the work be executed for the public, he never sufficiently enlarges his comprehension, or forgets his interest as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgotten himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard; and of consequence loses all credit and authority.

It is well known, that in all questions, submitted to the understanding, prejudice is destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: It is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiment of beauty. It belongs to good sense to check its influence in both cases; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him, whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other, in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose, for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view, when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes. Besides, every kind of composition, even the most poetical, is nothing but a chain of propositions and reasonings; not always, indeed, the justest and most exact, but still plausible and specious, however disguised by the colouring of the imagination. The persons introduced in tragedy and epic poetry, must be represented as reasoning, and thinking, and concluding, and acting, suitably to their character and circumstances; and without judgment, as well as taste and invention, a poet can never hope to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Not to mention, that the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom, or never happens, that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man who has a just taste without a sound understanding.

Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the object of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.

But where are such critics to be found? By what marks are they to be known? How distinguish them from pretenders? These questions are embarrassing; and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this essay, we have endeavoured to extricate ourselves.

But if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and enquiry: But that such a character is valuable and estimable will be agreed in by all mankind. Where these doubts occur, men can do no more than in other disputable questions, which are submitted to the understanding: They must produce the best arguments, that their invention suggests to them; they must acknowledge a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.

But in reality the difficulty of finding, even in particulars, the standard of taste, is not so great as it is represented. Though in speculation, we may readily avow a certain criterion in science and deny it in sentiment, the matter is found in practice to be much more hard to ascertain in the former case than in the latter. Theories of abstract philosophy, systems of profound theology, have prevailed during one age: In a successive period, these have been universally exploded: Their absurdity has been detected: Other theories and systems have supplied their place, which again gave place to their successors: And nothing has been experienced more liable to the revolutions of chance and fashion than these pretended decisions of science. The case is not the same with the beauties of eloquence and poetry. Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public applause, which they maintain for ever. Aristotle, and Plato, and Epicurus, and Descartes, may successively yield to each other: But Terence and Virgil maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of Cicero has lost its credit: The vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration.

Though men of delicate taste be rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a faint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing any fine stroke, which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the real poet or orator is the cause of some new conversion. And though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment. Thus, though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err, in their affection for a favourite epic or tragic author.

But notwithstanding all our endeavours to fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the discordant apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which are not sufficient indeed to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, but will often serve to produce a difference in the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: Where men vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion in the faculties may commonly be remarked; proceeding either from prejudice, from want of practice, or want of delicacy; and there is just reason for approving one taste, and condemning another. But where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain degree of diversity in judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.

A young man, whose passions are warm, will be more sensibly touched with amorous and tender images, than a man more advanced in years, who takes pleasure in wise, philosophical reflections concerning the conduct of life and moderation of the passions. At twenty, Ovid may be the favourite author; Horace at forty; and perhaps Tacitus at fifty. Vainly would we, in such cases, endeavour to enter into the sentiments of others, and divest ourselves of those propensities, which are natural to us. We choose our favourite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humour and disposition. Mirth or passion, sentiment or reflection; whichever of these most predominates in our temper, it gives us a peculiar sympathy with the writer who resembles us.

One person is more pleased with the sublime; another with the tender; a third with raillery. One has a strong sensibility to blemishes, and is extremely studious of correctness: Another has a more lively feeling of beauties, and pardons twenty absurdities and defects for one elevated or pathetic stroke. The ear of this man is entirely turned towards conciseness and energy; that man is delighted with a copious, rich, and harmonious expression. Simplicity is affected by one; ornament by another. Comedy, tragedy, satire, odes, have each its partizans, who prefer that particular species of writing to all others. It is plainly an error in a critic, to confine his approbation to one species or style of writing, and condemn all the rest. But it is almost impossible not to feel a predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition. Such preferences are innocent and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard, by which they can be decided.

For a like reason, we are more pleased, in the course of our reading, with pictures and characters, that resemble objects which are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs. It is not without some effort, that we reconcile ourselves to the simplicity of ancient manners, and behold princesses carrying water from the spring, and kings and heroes dressing their own victuals. We may allow in general, that the representation of such manners is no fault in the author, nor deformity in the piece; but we are not so sensibly touched with them. For this reason, comedy is not easily transferred from one age or nation to another. A Frenchman or Englishman is not pleased with the Andria of Terence, or Clitia of Machiavel; where the fine lady, upon whom all the play turns, never once appears to the spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes, suitably to the reserved humour of the ancient Greeks and modern Italians. A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners; but a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments, as to relish pictures which no wise resemble them.

But here there occurs a reflection, which may, perhaps, be useful in examining the celebrated controversy concerning ancient and modern learning; where we often find the one side excusing any seeming absurdity in the ancients from the manners of the age, and the other refusing to admit this excuse, or at least, admitting it only as an apology for the author, not for the performance. In my opinion, the proper boundaries in this subject have seldom been fixed between the contending parties. Where any innocent peculiarities of manners are represented, such as those above mentioned, they ought certainly to be admitted; and a man, who is shocked with them, gives an evident proof of false delicacy and refinement. The poet's monument more durable than brass, must fall to the ground like common brick or clay, were men to make no allowance for the continual revolutions of manners and customs, and would admit of nothing but what was suitable to the prevailing fashion. Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors, because of their ruffs and fardingales? But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the ancient poets, even sometimes by Homer and the Greek tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives modern authors an advantage over them. We are not interested in the fortunes and sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeased to find the limits of vice and virtue so much confounded: And whatever indulgence we may give to the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.

The case is not the same with moral principles, as with speculative opinions of any kind. These are in continual flux and revolution. The son embraces a different system from the father. Nay, there scarcely is any man, who can boast of great constancy and uniformity in this particular. Whatever speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract but little from the value of those compositions. There needs but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions, which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatsoever.

Of all speculative errors, those, which regard religion, are the most excusable in compositions of genius; nor is it ever permitted to judge of the civility or wisdom of any people, or even of single persons, by the grossness or refinement of their theological principles. The same good sense, that directs men in the ordinary occurrences of life, is not hearkened to in religious matters, which are supposed to be placed altogether above the cognizance of human reason. On this account, all the absurdities of the pagan system of theology must be overlooked by every critic, who would pretend to form a just notion of ancient poetry; and our posterity, in their turn, must have the same indulgence to their forefathers. No religious principles can ever be imputed as a fault to any poet, while they remain merely principles, and take not such strong possession of his heart, as to lay him under the imputation of bigotry or superstition. Where that happens, they confound the sentiments of morality, and alter the natural boundaries of vice and virtue. They are therefore eternal blemishes, according to the principle abovementioned; nor are the prejudices and false opinions of the age sufficient to justify them.

It is essential to the Roman catholic religion to inspire a violent hatred of every other worship, and to represent all pagans, mahometans, and heretics as the objects of divine wrath and vengeance. Such sentiments, though they are in reality very blameable, are considered as virtues by the zealots of that communion, and are represented in their tragedies and epic poems as a kind of divine heroism. This bigotry has disfigured two very fine tragedies of the French theatre, Polieucte and Athalia; where an intemperate zeal for particular modes of worship is set off with all the pomp imaginable, and forms the predominant character of the heroes. “What is this,” says the sublime Joad to Josabet, finding her in discourse with Mathan, the priest of

Baal, “Does the daughter of David speak to this traitor? Are you not afraid, lest the earth should open and pour forth flames to devour you both? Or lest these holy walls should fall and crush you together? What is his purpose? Why comes that enemy of God hither to poison the air, which we breathe, with his horrid presence?” Such sentiments are received with great applause on the theatre of Paris; but at London the spectators would be full as much pleased to hear Achilles tell Agamemnon, that he was a dog in his forehead, and a deer in his heart, or Jupiter threaten Juno with a sound drubbing, if she will not be quiet.

Religious principles are also a blemish in any polite composition, when they rise up to superstition, and intrude themselves into every sentiment, however remote from any connection with religion. It is no excuse for the poet, that the customs of his country had burthened life with so many religious ceremonies and observances, that no part of it was exempt from that yoke. It must for ever be ridiculous in Petrarch to compare his mistress, Laura, to Jesus Christ. Nor is it less ridiculous in that agreeable libertine, Boccace, very seriously to give thanks to God Almighty and the ladies, for their assistance in defending him against his enemies.

PART II: ESSAYS MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY

ESSAY I: OF COMMERCE

The greater part of mankind may be divided into two classes; that of shallow thinkers, who fall short of the truth; and that of abstruse thinkers, who go beyond it. The latter class are by far the most rare: and I may add, by far the most useful and valuable. They suggest hints, at least, and start difficulties, which they want, perhaps, skill to pursue; but which may produce fine discoveries, when handled by men who have a more just way of thinking. At worst, what they say is uncommon; and if it should cost some pains to comprehend it, one has, however, the pleasure of hearing something that is new. An author is little to be valued, who tells us nothing but what we can learn from every coffee-house conversation.

All people of shallow thought are apt to decry even those of solid understanding, as abstruse thinkers, and metaphysicians, and refiners; and never will allow any thing to be just which is beyond their own weak conceptions. There are some cases, I own, where an extraordinary refinement affords a strong presumption of falsehood, and where no reasoning is to be trusted but what is natural and easy. When a man deliberates concerning his conduct in any particular affair, and forms schemes in politics, trade, œconomy, or any business in life, he never ought to draw his arguments too fine, or connect too long a chain of consequences together. Something is sure to happen, that will disconcert his reasoning, and produce an event different from what he expected. But when we reason upon general subjects, one may justly affirm, that our speculations can scarcely ever be too fine, provided they be just; and that the difference between a common man and a man of genius is chiefly seen in the shallowness or depth of the principles upon which they proceed. General reasonings seem intricate, merely because they are general; nor is it easy for the bulk of mankind to distinguish, in a great number of particulars, that common circumstance in which they all agree, or to extract it, pure and unmixed, from the other superfluous circumstances. Every judgment or conclusion, with them, is particular. They cannot enlarge their view to those universal propositions, which comprehend under them an infinite number of individuals, and include a whole science in a single theorem. Their eye is confounded with such an extensive prospect; and the conclusions, derived from it, even though clearly expressed, seem intricate and obscure. But however intricate they may seem, it is certain, that general principles, if just and sound, must always prevail in the general course of things, though they may fail in particular cases; and it is the chief business of philosophers to regard the general course of things. I may add, that it is also the chief business of politicians; especially in the domestic government of the state, where the public good, which is, or ought to be their object, depends on the concurrence of a multitude of causes; not, as in foreign politics, on accidents and chances, and the caprices of a few persons. This therefore makes the difference between particular deliberations and general reasonings, and renders subtilty and refinement much more suitable to the latter than to the former.

I thought this introduction necessary before the following discourses on commerce, money, interest, balance of trade, &c. where, perhaps, there will occur some principles which are uncommon, and which may seem too refined and subtile for such vulgar subjects. If false, let them be rejected: But no one ought to entertain a prejudice against them, merely because they are out of the common road.

The greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent soever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive greater security, in the possession of their trade and riches, from the power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men. This maxim is true in general; though I cannot forbear thinking, that it may possibly admit of exceptions, and that we often establish it with too little reserve and limitation. There may be some circumstances, where the commerce and riches and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies, and diminish its authority among the neighbouring nations. Man is a very variable being, and susceptible of many different opinions, principles, and rules of conduct. What may be true, while he adheres to one way of thinking, will be found false, when he has embraced an opposite set of manners and opinions.

The bulk of every state may be divided into husbandmen and manufacturers. The former are employed in the culture of the land; the latter work up the materials furnished by the former, into all the commodities which are necessary or ornamental to human life. As soon as men quit their savage state, where they live chiefly by hunting and fishing, they must fall into these two classes; though the arts of agriculture employ at first the most numerous part of the society. Time and experience improve so much these arts, that the land may easily maintain a much greater number of men, than those who are immediately employed in its culture, or who furnish the more necessary manufactures to such as are so employed.

If these superfluous hands apply themselves to the finer arts, which are commonly denominated the arts of luxury, they add to the happiness of the state; since they afford to many the opportunity of receiving enjoyments, with which they would otherwise have been unacquainted. But may not another scheme be proposed for the employment of these superfluous hands? May not the sovereign lay claim to them, and employ them in fleets and armies, to encrease the dominions of the state abroad, and spread its fame over distant nations? It is certain that the fewer desires and wants are found in the proprietors and labourers of land, the fewer hands do they employ; and consequently the superfluities of the land, instead of maintaining tradesmen and manufacturers, may support fleets and armies to a much greater extent, than where a great many arts are required to minister to the luxury of particular persons. Here therefore seems to be a kind of opposition between the greatness of the state and the happiness of the subject. A state is never greater than when all its superfluous hands are employed in the service of the public. The ease and convenience of private persons require, that these hands should be employed in their service. The one can never be satisfied, but at the expence of the other. As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench on the luxury of individuals; so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force, and check the ambition of the sovereign.

Nor is this reasoning merely chimerical; but is founded on history and experience. The republic of Sparta was certainly more powerful than any state now in the world, consisting of an equal number of people; and this was owing entirely to the want of commerce and luxury. The Helotes were the labourers: The Spartans were the soldiers or gentlemen. It is evident, that the labour of the Helotes could not have maintained so great a number of Spartans, had these latter lived in ease and delicacy, and given employment to a great variety of trades and manufactures. The like policy may be remarked in Rome. And indeed, throughout all ancient history, it is observable, that the smallest republics raised and maintained greater armies, than states consisting of triple the number of inhabitants, are able to support at present. It is computed, that, in all European nations, the proportion between soldiers and people does not exceed one to a hundred. But we read, that the city of Rome alone, with its small territory, raised and maintained, in early times, ten legions against the Latins. Athens, the whole of whose dominions was not larger than Yorkshire, sent to the expedition against Sicily near forty thousand men. Dionysius the elder, it is said, maintained a standing army of a hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horse, besides a large fleet of four hundred sail; though his territories extended no farther than the city of Syracuse, about a third of the island of Sicily, and some sea-port towns and garrisons on the coast of Italy and Illyricum. It is true, the ancient armies, in time of war, subsisted much upon plunder: But did not the enemy plunder in their turn? which was a more ruinous way of levying a tax, than any other that could be devised. In short, no probable reason can be assigned for the great power of the more ancient states above the modern, but their want of commerce and luxury. Few artizans were maintained by the labour of the farmers, and therefore more soldiers might live upon it. Livy says, that Rome, in his time, would find it difficult to raise as large an army as that which, in her early days, she sent out against the Gauls and Latins. Instead of those soldiers who fought for liberty and empire in Camillus's time, there were, in Augustus's days, musicians, painters, cooks, players, and tailors; and if the land was equally cultivated at both periods, it could certainly maintain equal numbers in the one profession as in the other. They added nothing to the mere necessaries of life, in the latter period more than in the former.

It is natural on this occasion to ask, whether sovereigns may not return to the maxims of ancient policy, and consult their own interest in this respect, more than the happiness of their subjects? I answer, that it appears to me, almost impossible; and that because ancient policy was violent, and contrary to the more natural and usual course of things. It is well known with what peculiar laws Sparta was governed, and what a prodigy that republic is justly esteemed by every one, who has considered human nature as it has displayed itself in other nations, and other ages. Were the testimony of history less positive and circumstantial, such a government would appear a mere philosophical whim or fiction, and impossible ever to be reduced to practice. And though the Roman and other ancient republics were supported on principles somewhat more natural, yet was there an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances to make them submit to such grievous burthens. They were free states; they were small ones; and the age being martial, all their neighbours were continually in arms. Freedom naturally begets public spirit, especially in small states; and this public spirit, this amor patriæ, must encrease, when the public is almost in continual alarm, and men are obliged, every moment, to expose themselves to the greatest dangers for its defence. A continual succession of wars makes every citizen a soldier: He takes the field in his turn: And during his service he is chiefly maintained by himself. This service is indeed equivalent to a heavy tax; yet is it less felt by a people addicted to arms, who fight for honour and revenge more than pay, and are unacquainted with gain and industry as well as pleasure. Not to mention the great equality of fortunes among the inhabitants of the ancient republics, where every field, belonging to a different proprietor, was able to maintain a family, and rendered the numbers of citizens very considerable, even without trade and manufactures.

But though the want of trade and manufactures, among a free and very martial people, may sometimes have no other effect than to render the public more powerful, it is certain, that, in the common course of human affairs, it will have a quite contrary tendency. Sovereigns must take mankind as they find them, and cannot pretend to introduce any violent change in their principles and ways of thinking. A long course of time, with a variety of accidents and circumstances, are requisite to produce those great revolutions, which so much diversify the face of human affairs. And the less natural any set of principles are, which support a particular society, the more difficulty will a legislator meet with in raising and cultivating them. It is his best policy to comply with the common bent of mankind, and give it all the improvements of which it is susceptible. Now, according to the most natural course of things, industry and arts and trade encrease the power of the sovereign as well as the happiness of the subjects; and that policy is violent, which aggrandizes the public by the poverty of individuals. This will easily appear from a few considerations, which will present to us the consequences of sloth and barbarity.

Where manufactures and mechanic arts are not cultivated, the bulk of the people must apply themselves to agriculture; and if their skill and industry encrease, there must arise a great superfluity from their labour beyond what suffices to maintain them. They have no temptation, therefore, to encrease their skill and industry; since they cannot exchange that superfluity for any commodities, which may serve either to their pleasure or vanity. A habit of indolence naturally prevails. The greater part of the land lies uncultivated. What is cultivated, yields not its utmost for want of skill and assiduity in the farmers. If at any time the public exigencies require, that great numbers should be employed in the public service, the labour of the people furnishes now no superfluities, by which these numbers can be maintained. The labourers cannot encrease their skill and industry on sudden. Lands uncultivated cannot be brought into tillage for some years. The armies, mean while, must either make sudden and violent conquests, or disband for want of subsistence. A regular attack or defence, therefore, is not to be expected from such a people, and their soldiers must be as ignorant and unskilful as their farmers and manufacturers.

Every thing in the world is purchased by labour; and our passions are the only causes of labour. When a nation abounds in manufactures and mechanic arts, the proprietors of land, as well as the farmers, study agriculture as a science, and redouble their industry and attention. The superfluity, which arises from their labour, is not lost; but is exchanged with manufactures for those commodities, which men’s luxury now makes them covet. By this means, land furnishes a great deal more of the necessaries of life, than what suffices for those who cultivate it. In times of peace and tranquillity, this superfluity goes to the maintenance of manufacturers, and the improvers of liberal arts. But it is easy for the public to convert many of these manufacturers into soldiers, and maintain them by that superfluity, which arises from the labour of the farmers. Accordingly we find, that this is the case in all civilized governments. When the sovereign raises an army, what is the consequence? He imposes a tax. This tax obliges all the people to retrench what is least necessary to their subsistence. Those, who labour in such commodities, must either enlist in the troops, or turn themselves to agriculture, and thereby oblige some labourers to enlist for want of business. And to consider the matter abstractedly, manufactures encrease the power of the state only as they store up so much labour, and that of a kind to which the public may lay claim, without depriving any one of the necessaries of life. The more labour, therefore, is employed beyond mere necessaries, the more powerful is any state; since the persons engaged in that labour may easily be converted to the public service. In a state without manufactures, there may be the same number of hands; but there is not the same quantity of labour, nor of the same kind. All the labour is there bestowed upon necessaries, which can admit of little or no abatement.

Thus the greatness of the sovereign and the happiness of the state are, in a great measure, united with regard to trade and manufactures. It is a violent method, and in most cases impracticable, to oblige the labourer to toil, in order to raise from the land more than what subsists himself and family. Furnish him with manufactures and commodities, and he will do it of himself. Afterwards you will find it easy to seize some part of his superfluous labour, and employ it in the public service, without giving him his wonted return. Being accustomed to industry, he will think this less grievous, than if, at once, you obliged him to an augmentation of labour without any reward. The case is the same with regard to the other members of the state. The greater is the stock of labour of all kinds, the greater quantity may be taken from the heap, without making any sensible alteration in it.

A public granary of corn, a storehouse of cloth, a magazine of arms; all these must be allowed real riches and strength in any state. Trade and industry are really nothing but a stock of labour, which, in times of peace and tranquillity, is employed for the ease and satisfaction of individuals; but in the exigencies of state, may, in part, be turned to public advantage. Could we convert a city into a kind of fortified camp, and infuse into each breast so martial a genius, and such a passion for public good, as to make every one willing to undergo the greatest hardships for the sake of the public; these affections might now, as in ancient times, prove alone a sufficient spur to industry, and support the community. It would then be advantageous, as in camps, to banish all arts and luxury; and, by restrictions on equipage and tables, make the provisions and forage last longer than if the army were loaded with a number of superfluous retainers. But as these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support, it is requisite to govern men by other passions, and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury. The camp is, in this case, loaded with a superfluous retinue; but the provisions flow in proportionably larger. The harmony of the whole is still supported; and the natural bent of the mind being more complied with, individuals, as well as the public, find their account in the observance of those maxims.

The same method of reasoning will let us see the advantage of foreign commerce, in augmenting the power of the state, as well as the riches and happiness of the subject. It encreases the stock of labour in the nation; and the sovereign may convert what share of it he finds necessary to the service of the public. Foreign trade, by its imports, furnishes materials for new manufactures; and by its exports, it produces labour in particular commodities, which could not be consumed at home. In short, a kingdom, that has a large import and export, must abound more with industry, and that employed upon delicacies and luxuries, than a kingdom which rests contented with its native commodities. It is, therefore, more powerful, as well as richer and happier. The individuals reap the benefit of these commodities, so far as they gratify the senses and appetites. And the public is also a gainer, while a greater stock of labour is, by this means, stored up against any public exigency; that is, a greater number of laborious men are maintained, who may be diverted to the public service, without robbing any one of the necessaries, or even the chief conveniencies of life.

If we consult history, we shall find, that, in most nations, foreign trade has preceded any refinement in home manufactures, and given birth to domestic luxury. The temptation is stronger to make use of foreign commodities, which are ready for use, and which are entirely new to us, than to make improvements on any domestic commodity, which always advance by slow degrees, and never affect us by their novelty. The profit is also very great, in exporting what is superfluous at home, and what bears no price, to foreign nations, whose soil or climate is not favourable to that commodity. Thus men become acquainted with the pleasures of luxury and the profits of commerce; and their delicacy and industry, being once awakened, carry them on to farther improvements, in every branch of domestic as well as foreign trade. And this perhaps is the chief advantage which arises from a commerce with strangers. It rouses men from their indolence; and presenting the gayer and more opulent part of the nation with objects of luxury, which they never before dreamed of, raises in them a desire of a more splendid way of life than what their ancestors enjoyed. And at the same time, the few merchants, who possess the secret of this importation and exportation, make great profits; and becoming rivals in wealth to the ancient nobility, tempt other adventurers to become their rivals in commerce. Imitation soon diffuses all those arts; while domestic manufactures emulate the foreign in their improvements, and work up every home commodity to the utmost perfection of which it is susceptible. Their own steel and iron, in such laborious hands, become equal to the gold and rubies of the Indies.

When the affairs of the society are once brought to this situation, a nation may lose most of its foreign trade, and yet continue a great and powerful people. If strangers will not take any particular commodity of ours, we must cease to labour in it. The same hands will turn themselves towards some refinement in other commodities, which may be wanted at home. And there must always be materials for them to work upon; till every person in the state, who possesses riches, enjoys as great plenty of home commodities, and those in as great perfection, as he desires; which can never possibly happen. China is represented as one of the most flourishing empires in the world; though it has very little commerce beyond its own territories.

It will not, I hope, be considered as a superfluous digression, if I here observe, that, as the multitude of mechanical arts is advantageous, so is the great number of persons to whose share the productions of these arts fall. A too great disproportion among the citizens weakens any state. Every person, if possible, ought to enjoy the fruits of his labour, in a full possession of all the necessaries, and many of the conveniencies of life. No one can doubt, but such an equality is most suitable to human nature, and diminishes much less from the happiness of the rich than it adds to that of the poor. It also augments the power of the state, and makes any extraordinary taxes or impositions be paid with more chearfulness. Where the riches are engrossed by a few, these must contribute very largely to the supplying of the public necessities. But when the riches are dispersed among multitudes, the burthen feels light on every shoulder, and the taxes make not a very sensible difference on any one’s way of living.

Add to this, that, where the riches are in few hands, these must enjoy all the power, and will readily conspire to lay the whole burthen on the poor, and oppress them still farther, to the discouragement of all industry.

In this circumstance consists the great advantage of England above any nation at present in the world, or that appears in the records of any story. It is true, the English feel some disadvantages in foreign trade by the high price of labour, which is in part the effect of the riches of their artisans, as well as of the plenty of money: But as foreign trade is not the most material circumstance, it is not to be put in competition with the happiness of so many millions. And if there were no more to endear to them that free government under which they live, this alone were sufficient. The poverty of the common people is a natural, if not an infallible effect of absolute monarchy; though I doubt, whether it be always true, on the other hand, that their riches are an infallible result of liberty. Liberty must be attended with particular accidents, and a certain turn of thinking, in order to produce that effect. Lord Bacon, accounting for the great advantages obtained by the English in their wars with France, ascribes them chiefly to the superior ease and plenty of the common people amongst the former; yet the government of the two kingdoms was, at that time, pretty much alike. Where the labourers and artisans are accustomed to work for low wages, and to retain but a small part of the fruits of their labour, it is difficult for them, even in a free government, to better their condition, or conspire among themselves to heighten their wages. But even where they are accustomed to a more plentiful way of life, it is easy for the rich, in an arbitrary government, to conspire against them, and throw the whole burthen of the taxes on their shoulders.

It may seem an odd position, that the poverty of the common people in France, Italy, and Spain, is, in some measure, owing to the superior riches of the soil and happiness of the climate; yet there want not reasons to justify this paradox. In such a fine mould or soil as that of those more southern regions, agriculture is an easy art; and one man, with a couple of sorry horses, will be able, in a season, to cultivate as much land as will pay a pretty considerable rent to the proprietor. All the art, which the farmer knows, is to leave his ground fallow for a year, as soon as it is exhausted; and the warmth of the sun alone and temperature of the climate enrich it, and restore its fertility. Such poor peasants, therefore, require only a simple maintenance for their labour. They have no stock or riches, which claim more; and at the same time, they are for ever dependant on their landlord, who gives no leases, nor fears that his land will be spoiled by the ill methods of cultivation. In England, the land is rich, but coarse; must be cultivated at a great expence; and produces slender crops, when not carefully managed, and by a method which gives not the full profit but in a course of several years. A farmer, therefore, in England must have a considerable stock, and a long lease; which beget proportional profits. The fine vineyards of Champagne and Burgundy, that often yield to the landlord above five pounds per acre, are cultivated by peasants, who have scarcely bread: The reason is, that such peasants need no stock but their own limbs, with instruments of husbandry, which they can buy for twenty shillings. The farmers are commonly in some better circumstances in those countries. But the grasiers are most at their ease of all those who cultivate the land. The reason is still the same. Men must have profits proportionable to their expence and hazard. Where so considerable a number of the labouring poor as the peasants and farmers are in very low circumstances, all the rest must partake of their poverty, whether the government of that nation be monarchical or republican.

We may form a similar remark with regard to the general history of mankind. What is the reason, why no people, living between the tropics, could ever yet attain to any art or civility, or reach even any police in their government, and any military discipline; while few nations in the temperate climates have been altogether deprived of these advantages? It is probable that one cause of this phænomenon is the warmth and equality of weather in the torrid zone, which render clothes and houses less requisite for the inhabitants, and thereby remove, in part, that necessity, which is the great spur to industry and invention. Curis acuens mortalia corda. Not to mention, that the fewer goods or possessions of this kind any people enjoy, the fewer quarrels are likely to arise amongst them, and the less necessity will there be for a settled police or regular authority to protect and defend them from foreign enemies, or from each other.

ESSAY II: OF REFINEMENT IN THE ARTS

Luxury is a word of an uncertain signification, and may be taken in a good as well as in a bad sense. In general, it means great refinement in the gratification of the senses; and any degree of it may be innocent or blameable, according to the age, or country, or condition of the person. The bounds between the virtue and the vice cannot here be exactly fixed, more than in other moral subjects. To imagine, that the gratifying of any sense, or the indulging of any delicacy in meat, drink, or apparel, is of itself a vice, can never enter into a head, that is not disordered by the frenzies of enthusiasm. I have, indeed, heard of a monk abroad, who, because the windows of his cell opened upon a noble prospect, made a covenant with his eyes never to turn that way, or receive so sensual a gratification. And such is the crime of drinking Champagne or Burgundy, preferably to small beer or porter. These indulgences are only vices, when they are pursued at the expence of some virtue, as liberality or charity; in like manner as they are follies, when for them a man ruins his fortune, and reduces himself to want and beggary. Where they entrench upon no virtue, but leave ample subject whence to provide for friends, family, and every proper object of generosity or compassion, they are entirely innocent, and have in every age been acknowledged such by almost all moralists. To be entirely occupied with the luxury of the table, for instance, without any relish for the pleasures of ambition, study, or conversation, is a mark of stupidity, and is incompatible with any vigour of temper or genius. To confine one’s expence entirely to such a gratification, without regard to friends or family, is an indication of a heart destitute of humanity or benevolence. But if a man reserve time sufficient for all laudable pursuits, and money sufficient for all generous purposes, he is free from every shadow of blame or reproach.

Since luxury may be considered either as innocent or blameable, one may be surprized at those preposterous opinions, which have been entertained concerning it; while men of libertine principles bestow praises even on vicious luxury, and represent it as highly advantageous to society; and on the other hand, men of severe morals blame even the most innocent luxury, and represent it as the source of all the corruptions, disorders, and factions, incident to civil government. We shall here endeavour to correct both these extremes, by proving, first, that the ages of refinement are both the happiest and most virtuous; secondly, that wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree too far, is a quality pernicious, though perhaps not the most pernicious, to political society.

To prove the first point, we need but consider the effects of refinement both on private and on public life. Human happiness, according to the most received notions, seems to consist in three ingredients; action, pleasure, and indolence: And though these ingredients ought to be mixed in different proportions, according to the particular disposition of the person; yet no one ingredient can be entirely wanting, without destroying, in some measure, the relish of the whole composition. Indolence or repose, indeed, seems not of itself to contribute much to our enjoyment; but, like sleep, is requisite as an indulgence to the weakness of human nature, which cannot support an uninterrupted course of business or pleasure. That quick march of the spirits, which takes a man from himself, and chiefly gives satisfaction, does in the end exhaust the mind, and requires some intervals of repose, which, though agreeable for a moment, yet, if prolonged, beget a languor and lethargy, that destroys all enjoyment. Education, custom, and example, have a mighty influence in turning the mind to any of these pursuits; and it must be owned, that, where they promote a relish for action and pleasure, they are so far favourable to human happiness. In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour. The mind acquires new vigour; enlarges its powers and faculties; and by an assiduity in honest industry, both satisfies its natural appetites, and prevents the growth of unnatural ones, which commonly spring up, when nourished by ease and idleness. Banish those arts from society, you deprive men both of action and of pleasure; and leaving nothing but indolence in their place, you even destroy the relish of indolence, which never is agreeable, but when it succeeds to labour, and recruits the spirits, exhausted by too much application and fatigue.

Another advantage of industry and of refinements in the mechanical arts, is, that they commonly produce some refinements in the liberal; nor can one be carried to perfection, without being accompanied, in some degree, with the other. The same age, which produces great philosophers and politicians, renowned generals and poets, usually abounds with skilful weavers, and ship-carpenters. We cannot reasonably expect, that a piece of woollen cloth will be wrought to perfection in a nation, which is ignorant of astronomy, or where ethics are neglected. The spirit of the age affects all the arts; and the minds of men, being once roused from their lethargy, and put into a fermentation, turn themselves on all sides, and carry improvements into every art and science. Profound ignorance is totally banished, and men enjoy the privilege of rational creatures, to think as well as to act, to cultivate the pleasures of the mind as well as those of the body.

The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment. Thus industry, knowledge, and humanity, are linked together by an indissoluble chain, and are found, from experience as well as reason, to be peculiar to the more polished, and, what are commonly denominated, the more luxurious ages.

Nor are these advantages attended with disadvantages, that bear any proportion to them. The more men refine upon pleasure, the less will they indulge in excesses of any kind; because nothing is more destructive to true pleasure than such excesses. One may safely affirm, that the Tartars are oftener guilty of beastly gluttony, when they feast on their dead horses, than European courtiers with all their refinements of cookery. And if libertine love, or even infidelity to the marriage-bed, be more frequent in polite ages, when it is often regarded only as a piece of gallantry; drunkenness, on the other hand, is much less common: A vice more odious, and more pernicious both to mind and body. And in this matter I would appeal, not only to an Ovid or a Petronius, but to a Seneca or a Cato. We know, that Cæsar, during Catiline's conspiracy, being necessitated to put into Cato's hands a billetdoux, which discovered an intrigue with Servilia, Cato’s own sister, that stern philosopher threw it back to him with indignation; and in the bitterness of his wrath, gave him the appellation of drunkard, as a term more opprobrious than that with which he could more justly have reproached him.

But industry, knowledge, and humanity, are not advantageous in private life alone: They diffuse their beneficial influence on the public, and render the government as great and flourishing as they make individuals happy and prosperous. The encrease and consumption of all the commodities, which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life, are advantageous to society; because, at the same time that they multiply those innocent gratifications to individuals, they are a kind of storehouse of labour, which, in the exigencies of state, may be turned to the public service. In a nation, where there is no demand for such superfluities, men sink into indolence, lose all enjoyment of life, and are useless to the public, which cannot maintain or support its fleets and armies, from the industry of such slothful members.

The bounds of all the European kingdoms are, at present, nearly the same they were two hundred years ago: But what a difference is there in the power and grandeur of those kingdoms? Which can be ascribed to nothing but the encrease of art and industry. When Charles VIII. of France invaded Italy, he carried with him about 20,000 men: Yet this armament so exhausted the nation, as we learn from Guicciardin, that for some years it was not able to make so great an effort. The late king of France, in time of war, kept in pay above 400,000 men; though from Mazarine’s death to his own, he was engaged in a course of wars that lasted near thirty years.

This industry is much promoted by the knowledge inseparable from ages of art and refinement; as, on the other hand, this knowledge enables the public to make the best advantage of the industry of its subjects. Laws, order, police, discipline; these can never be carried to any degree of perfection, before human reason has refined itself by exercise, and by an application to the more vulgar arts, at least, of commerce and manufacture. Can we expect, that a government will be well modelled by a people, who know not how to make a spinning-wheel, or to employ a loom to advantage? Not to mention, that all ignorant ages are infested with superstition, which throws the government off its bias, and disturbs men in the pursuit of their interest and happiness.

Knowledge in the arts of government naturally begets mildness and moderation, by instructing men in the advantages of humane maxims above rigour and severity, which drive subjects into rebellion, and make the return to submission impracticable, by cutting off all hopes of pardon. When the tempers of men are softened as well as their knowledge improved, this humanity appears still more conspicuous, and is the chief characteristic which distinguishes a civilized age from times of barbarity and ignorance. Factions are then less inveterate, revolutions less tragical, authority less severe, and seditions less frequent. Even foreign wars abate of their cruelty; and after the field of battle, where honour and interest steel men against compassion as well as fear, the combatants divest themselves of the brute, and resume the man.

Nor need we fear, that men, by losing their ferocity, will lose their martial spirit, or become less undaunted and vigorous in defence of their country or their liberty. The arts have no such effect in enervating either the mind or body. On the contrary, industry, their inseparable attendant, adds new force to both. And if anger, which is said to be the whetstone of courage, loses somewhat of its asperity, by politeness and refinement; a sense of honour, which is a stronger, more constant, and more governable principle, acquires fresh vigour by that elevation of genius which arises from knowledge and a good education. Add to this, that courage can neither have any duration, nor be of any use, when not accompanied with discipline and martial skill, which are seldom found among a barbarous people. The ancients remarked, that Datames was the only barbarian that ever knew the art of war. And Pyrrhus, seeing the Romans marshal their army with some art and skill, said with surprize, These barbarians have nothing barbarous in their discipline! It is observable, that, as the old Romans, by applying themselves solely to war, were almost the only uncivilized people that ever possessed military discipline; so the modern Italians are the only civilized people, among Europeans, that ever wanted courage and a martial spirit. Those who would ascribe this effeminacy of the Italians to their luxury, or politeness, or application to the arts, need but consider the French and English, whose bravery is as uncontestable, as their love for the arts, and their assiduity in commerce. The Italian historians give us a more satisfactory reason for this degeneracy of their countrymen. They shew us how the sword was dropped at once by all the Italian sovereigns; while the Venetian aristocracy was jealous of its subjects, the Florentine democracy applied itself entirely to commerce; Rome was governed by priests, and Naples by women. War then became the business of soldiers of fortune, who spared one another, and to the astonishment of the world, could engage a whole day in what they called a battle, and return at night to their camp, without the least bloodshed.

What has chiefly induced severe moralists to declaim against refinement in the arts, is the example of ancient Rome, which, joining, to its poverty and rusticity, virtue and public spirit, rose to such a surprizing height of grandeur and liberty; but having learned from its conquered provinces the Asiatic luxury, fell into every kind of corruption; whence arose sedition and civil wars, attended at last with the total loss of liberty. All the Latin classics, whom we peruse in our infancy, are full of these sentiments, and universally ascribe the ruin of their state to the arts and riches imported from the East: Insomuch that Sallust represents a taste for painting as a vice, no less than lewdness and drinking. And so popular were these sentiments, during the later ages of the republic, that this author abounds in praises of the old rigid Roman virtue, though himself the most egregious instance of modern luxury and corruption; speaks contemptuously of the Grecian eloquence, though the most elegant writer in the world; nay, employs preposterous digressions and declamations to this purpose, though a model of taste and correctness.

But it would be easy to prove, that these writers mistook the cause of the disorders in the Roman state, and ascribed to luxury and the arts, what really proceeded from an ill modelled government, and the unlimited extent of conquests. Refinement on the pleasures and conveniencies of life has no natural tendency to beget venality and corruption. The value, which all men put upon any particular pleasure, depends on comparison and experience; nor is a porter less greedy of money, which he spends on bacon and brandy, than a courtier, who purchases champagne and ortolans. Riches are valuable at all times, and to all men; because they always purchase pleasures, such as men are accustomed to, and desire: Nor can any thing restrain or regulate the love of money, but a sense of honour and virtue; which, if it be not nearly equal at all times, will naturally abound most in ages of knowledge and refinement.

Of all European kingdoms, Poland seems the most defective in the arts of war as well as peace, mechanical as well as liberal; yet it is there that venality and corruption do most prevail. The nobles seem to have preserved their crown elective for no other purpose, than regularly to sell it to the highest bidder. This is almost the only species of commerce, with which that people are acquainted.

The liberties of England, so far from decaying since the improvements in the arts, have never flourished so much as during that period. And though corruption may seem to encrease of late years; this is chiefly to be ascribed to our established liberty, when our princes have found the impossibility of governing without parliaments, or of terrifying parliaments by the phantom of prerogative. Not to mention, that this corruption or venality prevails much more among the electors than the elected; and therefore cannot justly be ascribed to any refinements in luxury.

If we consider the matter in a proper light, we shall find, that a progress in the arts is rather favourable to liberty, and has a natural tendency to preserve, if not produce a free government. In rude unpolished nations, where the arts are neglected, all labour is bestowed on the cultivation of the ground; and the whole society is divided into two classes, proprietors of land, and their vassals or tenants. The latter are necessarily dependent, and fitted for slavery and subjection; especially where they possess no riches, and are not valued for their knowledge in agriculture; as must always be the case where the arts are neglected. The former naturally erect themselves into petty tyrants; and must either submit to an absolute master, for the sake of peace and order; or if they will preserve their independency, like the ancient barons, they must fall into feuds and contests among themselves, and throw the whole society into such confusion, as is perhaps worse than the most despotic government. But where luxury nourishes commerce and industry, the peasants, by a proper cultivation of the land, become rich and independent; while the tradesmen and merchants acquire a share of the property, and draw authority and consideration to that middling rank of men, who are the best and firmest basis of public liberty. These submit not to slavery, like the peasants, from poverty and meanness of spirit; and having no hopes of tyrannizing over others, like the barons, they are not tempted, for the sake of that gratification, to submit to the tyranny of their sovereign. They covet equal laws, which may secure their property, and preserve them from monarchical, as well as aristocratical tyranny.

The lower house is the support of our popular government; and all the world acknowledges, that it owed its chief influence and consideration to the encrease of commerce, which threw such a balance of property into the hands of the commons. How inconsistent then is it to blame so violently a refinement in the arts, and to represent it as the bane of liberty and public spirit!

To declaim against present times, and magnify the virtue of remote ancestors, is a propensity almost inherent in human nature: And as the sentiments and opinions of civilized ages alone are transmitted to posterity, hence it is that we meet with so many severe judgments pronounced against luxury, and even science; and hence it is that at present we give so ready an assent to them. But the fallacy is easily perceived, by comparing different nations that are contemporaries; where we both judge more impartially, and can better set in opposition those manners, with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Treachery and cruelty, the most pernicious and most odious of all vices, seem peculiar to uncivilized ages; and by the refined Greeks and Romans were ascribed to all the barbarous nations, which surrounded them. They might justly, therefore, have presumed, that their own ancestors, so highly celebrated, possessed no greater virtue, and were as much inferior to their posterity in honour and humanity, as in taste and science. An ancient Frank or Saxon may be highly extolled: But I believe every man would think his life or fortune much less secure in the hands of a Moor or Tartar, than in those of a French or English gentleman, the rank of men the most civilized in the most civilized nations.

We come now to the second position which we proposed to illustrate, to wit, that, as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and conveniencies of life, is advantageous to the public; so wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though, perhaps, not the most pernicious, to political society.

Let us consider what we call vicious luxury. No gratification, however sensual, can of itself be esteemed vicious. A gratification is only vicious, when it engrosses all a man’s expence, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune. Suppose, that he correct the vice, and employ part of his expence in the education of his children, in the support of his friends, and in relieving the poor; would any prejudice result to society? On the contrary, the same consumption would arise; and that labour, which, at present, is employed only in producing a slender gratification to one man, would relieve the necessitous, and bestow satisfaction on hundreds. The same care and toil that raise a dish of peas at Christmas, would give bread to a whole family during six months. To say, that, without a vicious luxury, the labour would not have been employed at all, is only to say, that there is some other defect in human nature, such as indolence, selfishness, inattention to others, for which luxury, in some measure, provides a remedy; as one poison may be an antidote to another. But virtue, like wholesome food, is better than poisons, however corrected.

Suppose the same number of men, that are at present in Great Britain, with the same soil and climate; I ask, is it not possible for them to be happier, by the most perfect way of life that can be imagined, and by the greatest reformation that Omnipotence itself could work in their temper and disposition? To assert, that they cannot, appears evidently ridiculous. As the land is able to maintain more than all its present inhabitants, they could never, in such a Utopian state, feel any other ills than those which arise from bodily sickness; and these are not the half of human miseries. All other ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow. You must only take care to remove all the vices. If you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing vicious luxury, without curing sloth and an indifference to others, you only diminish industry in the state, and add nothing to men’s charity or their generosity. Let us, therefore, rest contented with asserting, that two opposite vices in a state may be more advantageous than either of them alone; but let us never pronounce vice in itself advantageous. Is it not very inconsistent for an author to assert in one page, that moral distinctions are inventions of politicians for public interest; and in the next page maintain, that vice is advantageous to the public? And indeed it seems upon any system of morality, little less than a contradiction in terms, to talk of a vice, which is in general beneficial to society.

I thought this reasoning necessary, in order to give some light to a philosophical question, which has been much disputed in England. I call it a philosophical question, not a political one. For whatever may be the consequence of such a miraculous transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every species of virtue, and free them from every species of vice; this concerns not the magistrate, who aims only at possibilities. He cannot cure every vice by substituting a virtue in its place. Very often he can only cure one vice by another; and in that case, he ought to prefer what is least pernicious to society. Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills; but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more hurtful both to private persons and to the public. When sloth reigns, a mean uncultivated way of life prevails amongst individuals, without society, without enjoyment. And if the sovereign, in such a situation, demands the service of his subjects, the labour of the state suffices only to furnish the necessaries of life to the labourers, and can afford nothing to those who are employed in the public service.

ESSAY III: OF MONEY

Money is not, properly speaking, one of the subjects of commerce; but only the instrument which men have agreed upon to facilitate the exchange of one commodity for another. It is none of the wheels of trade: It is the oil which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and easy. If we consider any one kingdom by itself, it is evident, that the greater or less plenty of money is of no consequence; since the prices of commodities are always proportioned to the plenty of money, and a crown in Harry VII.'s time served the same purpose as a pound does at present. It is only the public which draws any advantage from the greater plenty of money; and that only in its wars and negociations with foreign states. And this is the reason, why all rich and trading countries from Carthage to Great Britain and Holland, have employed mercenary troops, which they hired from their poorer neighbours. Were they to make use of their native subjects, they would find less advantage from their superior riches, and from their great plenty of gold and silver; since the pay of all their servants must rise in proportion to the public opulence. Our small army of 20,000 men is maintained at as great expence as a French army twice as numerous. The English fleet, during the late war, required as much money to support it as all the Roman legions, which kept the whole world in subjection, during the time of the emperors.

The greater number of people and their greater industry are serviceable in all cases; at home and abroad, in private, and in public. But the greater plenty of money, is very limited in its use, and may even sometimes be a loss to a nation in its commerce with foreigners.

There seems to be a happy concurrence of causes in human affairs, which checks the growth of trade and riches, and hinders them from being confined entirely to one people; as might naturally at first be dreaded from the advantages of an established commerce. Where one nation has gotten the start of another in trade, it is very difficult for the latter to regain the ground it has lost; because of the superior industry and skill of the former, and the greater stocks, of which its merchants are possessed, and which enable them to trade on so much smaller profits. But these advantages are compensated, in some measure, by the low price of labour in every nation which has not an extensive commerce, and does not much abound in gold and silver. Manufactures, therefore gradually shift their places, leaving those countries and provinces which they have already enriched, and flying to others, whither they are allured by the cheapness of provisions and labour; till they have enriched these also, and are again banished by the same causes. And, in general, we may observe, that the dearness of every thing, from plenty of money, is a disadvantage, which attends an established commerce, and sets bounds to it in every country, by enabling the poorer states to undersel the richer in all foreign markets.

This has made me entertain a doubt concerning the benefit of banks and paper-credit, which are so generally esteemed advantageous to every nation. That provisions and labour should become dear by the encrease of trade and money, is, in many respects, an inconvenience; but an inconvenience that is unavoidable, and the effect of that public wealth and prosperity which are the end of all our wishes. It is compensated by the advantages, which we reap from the possession of these precious metals, and the weight, which they give the nation in all foreign wars and negociations. But there appears no reason for encreasing that inconvenience by a counterfeit money, which foreigners will not accept of in any payment, and which any great disorder in the state will reduce to nothing. There are, it is true, many people in every rich state, who having large sums of money, would prefer paper with good security; as being of more easy transport and more safe custody. If the public provide not a bank, private bankers will take advantage of this circumstance; as the goldsmiths formerly did in London, or as the bankers do at present in Dublin: And therefore it is better, it may be thought, that a public company should enjoy the benefit of that paper-credit, which always will have place in every opulent kingdom. But to endeavour artificially to encrease such a credit, can never be the interest of any trading nation; but must lay them under disadvantages, by encreasing money beyond its natural proportion to labour and commodities, and thereby heightening their price to the merchant and manufacturer. And in this view, it must be allowed, that no bank could be more advantageous, than such a one as locked up all the money it received, and never augmented the circulating coin, as is usual, by returning part of its treasure into commerce. A public bank, by this expedient, might cut off much of the dealings of private bankers and money-jobbers; and though the state bore the charge of salaries to the directors and tellers of this bank (for, according to the preceding supposition, it would have no profit from its dealings), the national advantage, resulting from the low price of labour and the destruction of paper-credit, would be a sufficient compensation. Not to mention, that so large a sum, lying ready at command, would be a convenience in times of great public danger and distress; and what part of it was used might be replaced at leisure, when peace and tranquillity was restored to the nation.

But of this subject of paper credit we shall treat more largely hereafter. And I shall finish this essay on money, by proposing and explaining two observations, which may, perhaps, serve to employ the thoughts of our speculative politicians.

It was a shrewd observation of Anacharsis the Scythian, who had never seen money in his own country, that gold and silver seemed to him of no use to the Greeks, but to assist them in numeration and arithmetic. It is indeed evident, that money is nothing but the representation of labour and commodities, and serves only as a method of rating or estimating them. Where coin is in greater plenty; as a greater quantity of it is required to represent the same quantity of goods; it can have no effect, either good or bad, taking a nation within itself; any more than it would make an alteration on a merchant’s books, if, instead of the Arabian method of notation, which requires few characters, he should make use of the Roman, which requires a great many. Nay, the greater quantity of money, like the Roman characters, is rather inconvenient, and requires greater trouble both to keep and transport it. But notwithstanding this conclusion, which must be allowed just, it is certain, that, since the discovery of the mines in America, industry has encreased in all the nations of Europe, except in the possessors of those mines; and this may justly be ascribed, amongst other reasons, to the encrease of gold and silver. Accordingly we find, that, in every kingdom, into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face: labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising, the manufacturer more diligent and skilful, and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention. This is not easily to be accounted for, if we consider only the influence which a greater abundance of coin has in the kingdom itself, by heightening the price of commodities, and obliging every one to pay a greater number of these little yellow or white pieces for every thing he purchases. And as to foreign trade, it appears, that great plenty of money is rather disadvantageous, by raising the price of every kind of labour.

To account, then, for this phenomenon, we must consider, that though the high price of commodities be a necessary consequence of the encrease of gold and silver, yet it follows not immediately upon that encrease; but some time is required before the money circulates through the whole state, and makes its effect be felt on all ranks of people. At first, no alteration is perceived; by degrees the price rises, first of one commodity, then of another; till the whole at last reaches a just proportion with the new quantity of specie which is in the kingdom. In my opinion, it is only in this interval or intermediate situation, between the acquisition of money and rise of prices, that the encreasing quantity of gold and silver is favourable to industry. When any quantity of money is imported into a nation, it is not at first dispersed into many hands; but is confined to the coffers of a few persons, who immediately seek to employ it to advantage. Here are a set of manufacturers or merchants, we shall suppose, who have received returns of gold and silver for goods which they sent to Cadiz. They are thereby enabled to employ more workmen than formerly, who never dream of demanding higher wages, but are glad of employment from such good paymasters. If workmen become scarce, the manufacturer gives higher wages, but at first requires an encrease of labour; and this is willingly submitted to by the artisan, who can now eat and drink better, to compensate his additional toil and fatigue. He carries his money to market, where he finds every thing at the same price as formerly, but returns with greater quantity and of better kinds, for the use of his family. The farmer and gardener, finding, that all their commodities are taken off, apply themselves with alacrity to the raising more; and at the same time can afford to take better and more cloths from their tradesmen, whose price is the same as formerly, and their industry only whetted by so much new gain. It is easy to trace the money in its progress through the whole commonwealth; where we shall find, that it must first quicken the diligence of every individual, before it encrease the price of labour.

And that the specie may encrease to a considerable pitch, before it have this latter effect, appears, amongst other instances, from the frequent operations of the French king on the money; where it was always found, that the augmenting of the numerary value did not produce a proportional rise of the prices, at least for some time. In the last year of Louis XIV.

money was raised three-sevenths, but prices augmented only one. Corn in France is now sold at the same price, or for the same number of livres, it was in 1683; though silver was then at 30 livres the mark, and is now at 50. Not to mention the great addition of gold and silver, which may have come into that kingdom since the former period.

From the whole of this reasoning we may conclude, that it is of no manner of consequence, with regard to the domestic happiness of a state, whether money be in a greater or less quantity. The good policy of the magistrate consists only in keeping it, if possible, still encreasing; because, by that means, he keeps alive a spirit of industry in the nation, and encreases the stock of labour, in which consists all real power and riches. A nation, whose money decreases, is actually, at that time, weaker and more miserable than another nation, which possesses no more money, but is on the encreasing hand. This will be easily accounted for, if we consider, that the alterations in the quantity of money, either on one side or the other, are not immediately attended with proportionable alterations in the price of commodities. There is always an interval before matters be adjusted to their new situation; and this interval is as pernicious to industry, when gold and silver are diminishing, as it is advantageous when these metals are encreasing. The workman has not the same employment from the manufacturer and merchant; though he pays the same price for every thing in the market. The farmer cannot dispose of his corn and cattle; though he must pay the same rent to his landlord. The poverty, and beggary, and sloth, which must ensue, are easily foreseen.

II. The second observation which I proposed to make with regard to money, may be explained after the following manner. There are some kingdoms, and many provinces in Europe, (and all of them were once in the same condition) where money is so scarce, that the landlord can get none at all from his tenants; but is obliged to take his rent in kind, and either to consume it himself, or transport it to places where he may find a market. In those countries, the prince can levy few or no taxes, but in the same manner: And as he will receive small benefit from impositions so paid, it is evident that such a kingdom has little force even at home; and cannot maintain fleets and armies to the same extent, as if every part of it abounded in gold and silver. There is surely a greater disproportion between the force of Germany, at present, and what it was three centuries ago, than there is in its industry, people, and manufactures. The Austrian dominions in the empire are in general well peopled and well cultivated, and are of great extent; but have not a proportionable weight in the balance of Europe; proceeding, as is commonly supposed, from the scarcity of money. How do all these facts agree with that principle of reason, that the quantity of gold and silver is in itself altogether indifferent? According to that principle wherever a sovereign has numbers of subjects, and these have plenty of commodities, he should of course be great and powerful, and they rich and happy, independent of the greater or lesser abundance of the precious metals. These admit of divisions and subdivisions to a great extent; and where the pieces might become so small as to be in danger of being lost, it is easy to mix the gold or silver with a baser metal, as is practised in some countries of Europe; and by that means raise the pieces to a bulk more sensible and convenient. They still serve the same purposes of exchange, whatever their number may be, or whatever colour they may be supposed to have.

To these difficulties I answer, that the effect, here supposed to flow from scarcity of money, really arises from the manners and customs of the people; and that we mistake, as is too usual, a collateral effect for a cause. The contradiction is only apparent; but it requires some thought and reflection to discover the principles, by which we can reconcile reason to experience.

It seems a maxim almost self-evident, that the prices of every thing depend on the proportion between commodities and money, and that any considerable alteration on either has the same effect, either of heightening or lowering the price. Encrease the commodities, they become cheaper; encrease the money, they rise in their value. As, on the other hand, a diminution of the former, and that of the latter, have contrary tendencies.

It is also evident, that the prices do not so much depend on the absolute quantity of commodities and that of money, which are in a nation, as on that of the commodities, which come or may come to market, and of the money which circulates. If the coin be locked up in chests, it is the same thing with regard to prices, as if it were annihilated; if the commodities be hoarded in magazines and granaries, a like effect follows. As the money and commodities, in these cases, never meet, they cannot affect each other. Were we, at any time, to form conjectures concerning the price of provisions, the corn, which the farmer must reserve for seed and for the maintenance of himself and family, ought never to enter into the estimation. It is only the overplus, compared to the demand, that determines the value.

To apply these principles, we must consider, that, in the first and more uncultivated ages of any state, ere fancy has confounded her wants with those of nature, men, content with the produce of their own fields, or with those rude improvements which they themselves can work upon them, have little occasion for exchange, at least for money, which, by agreement, is the common measure of exchange. The wool of the farmer's own flock, spun in his own family, and wrought by a neighbouring weaver, who receives his payment in corn or wool, suffices for furniture and cloathing. The carpenter, the smith, the mason, the tailor, are retained by wages of a like nature; and the landlord himself, dwelling in the neighbourhood, is content to receive his rent in the commodities raised by the farmer. The greater part of these he consumes at home, in rustic hospitality: The rest, perhaps, he disposes of for money to the neighbouring town, whence he draws the few materials of his expence and luxury.

But after men begin to refine on all these enjoyments, and live not always at home, nor are content with what can be raised in their neighbourhood, there is more exchange and commerce of all kinds, and more money enters into that exchange. The tradesmen will not be paid in corn; because they want something more than barely to eat. The farmer goes beyond his own parish for the commodities he purchases, and cannot always carry his commodities to the merchant who supplies him. The landlord lives in the capital, or in a foreign country; and demands his rent in gold and silver, which can easily be transported to him. Great undertakers, and manufacturers, and merchants, arise in every commodity; and these can conveniently deal in nothing but in specie. And consequently, in this situation of society, the coin enters into many more contracts, and by that means is much more employed than in the former.

The necessary effect is, that, provided the money encrease not in the nation, every thing must become much cheaper in times of industry and refinement, than in rude, uncultivated ages. It is the proportion between the circulating money, and the commodities in the market, which determines the prices. Goods, that are consumed at home, or exchanged with other goods in the neighbourhood, never come to market; they affect not in the least the current specie; with regard to it they are as if totally annihilated; and consequently this method of using them sinks the proportion on the side of the commodities, and encreases the prices. But after money enters into all contracts and sales, and is every where the measure of exchange, the same national cash has a much greater task to perform; all commodities are then in the market; the sphere of circulation is enlarged; it is the same case as if that individual sum were to serve a larger kingdom; and therefore, the proportion being here lessened on the side of the money, every thing must become cheaper, and the prices gradually fall.

By the most exact computations, that have been formed all over Europe, after making allowance for the alteration in the numerary value or the denomination, it is found, that the prices of all things have only risen three, or at most, four times, since the discovery of the West Indies. But will any one assert, that there is not much more than four times the coin in Europe, that was in the fifteenth century, and the centuries preceding it? The Spaniards and Portuguese from their mines, the English, French, and Dutch, by their African trade, and by their interlopers in the West Indies, bring home about six millions a year, of which not above a third goes to the East-Indies. This sum alone, in ten years, would probably double the ancient stock of money in Europe. And no other satisfactory reason can be given, why all prices have not risen to a much more exorbitant height, except that which is derived from a change of customs and manners. Besides that more commodities are produced by additional industry, the same commodities come more to market, after men depart from their ancient simplicity of manners. And though this encrease has not been equal to that of money, it has, however, been considerable, and has preserved the proportion between coin and commodities nearer the ancient standard.

Were the question proposed, Which of these methods of living in the people, the simple or refined, is the most advantageous to the state or public? I should, without much scruple, prefer the latter, in a view to politics at least; and should produce this as an additional reason for the encouragement of trade and manufactures.

While men live in the ancient simple manner, and supply all their necessaries from domestic industry or from the neighbourhood, the sovereign can levy no taxes in money from a considerable part of his subjects; and if he will impose on them any burthens, he must take payment in commodities, with which alone they abound; a method attended with such great and obvious inconveniencies, that they need not here be insisted on. All the money he can pretend to raise, must be from his principal cities, where alone it circulates; and these, it is evident, cannot afford him so much as the whole state could, did gold and silver circulate throughout the whole. But besides this obvious diminution of the revenue, there is another cause of the poverty of the public in such a situation. Not only the sovereign receives less money, but the same money goes not so far as in times of industry and general commerce. Every thing is dearer, where the gold and silver are supposed equal; and that because fewer commodities come to market, and the whole coin bears a higher proportion to what is to be purchased by it; whence alone the prices of every thing are fixed and determined.

Here then we may learn the fallacy of the remark, often to be met with in historians, and even in common conversation, that any particular state is weak, though fertile, populous, and well cultivated, merely because it wants money. It appears, that the want of money can never injure any state within itself: For men and commodities are the real strength of any community. It is the simple manner of living which here hurts the public, by confining the gold and silver to few hands, and preventing its universal diffusion and circulation. On the contrary, industry and refinements of all kinds incorporate it with the whole state, however small its quantity may be: They digest it into every vein, so to speak; and make it enter into every transaction and contract. No hand is entirely empty of it. And as the prices of every thing fall by that means, the sovereign has a double advantage: He may draw money by his taxes from every part of the state; and what he receives, goes farther in every purchase and payment.

We may infer, from a comparison of prices, that money is not more plentiful in China, than it was in Europe three centuries ago: But what immense power is that empire possessed of, if we may judge by the civil and military establishment maintained by it? Polybius tells us, that provisions were so cheap in Italy during his time, that in some places the stated price for a meal at the inns was a semis a head, little more than a farthing! Yet the Roman power had even then subdued the whole known world. About a century before that period, the Carthaginian ambassador said, by way of raillery, that no people lived more sociably amongst themselves than the Romans; for that, in every entertainment, which, as foreign ministers, they received, they still observed the same plate at every table. The absolute quantity of the precious metals is a matter of great indifference. There are only two circumstances of any importance, namely, their gradual encrease, and their thorough concoction and circulation through the state; and the influence of both these circumstances has here been explained.

In the following Essay we shall see an instance of a like fallacy as that above mentioned; where a collateral effect is taken for a cause, and where a consequence is ascribed to the plenty of money; though it be really owing to a change in the manners and customs of the people.

ESSAY IV: OF INTEREST

Nothing is esteemed a more certain sign of the flourishing condition of any nation than the lowness of interest: And with reason; though I believe the cause is somewhat different from what is commonly apprehended. Lowness of interest is generally ascribed to plenty of money. But money, however plentiful, has no other effect, if fixed, than to raise the price of labour. Silver is more common than gold; and therefore you receive a greater quantity of it for the same commodities. But do you pay less interest for it? Interest in Batavia and Jamaica is at 10 per cent. in Portugal at 6; though these places, as we may learn from the prices of every thing, abound more in gold and silver than either London or Amsterdam.

Were all the gold in England annihilated at once, and one and twenty shillings substituted in the place of every guinea, would money be more plentiful or interest lower? No surely: We should only use silver instead of gold. Were gold rendered as common as silver, and silver as common as copper; would money be more plentiful or interest lower? We may assuredly give the same answer. Our shillings would then be yellow, and our halfpence white; and we should have no guineas. No other difference would ever be observed; no alteration on commerce, manufactures, navigation, or interest; unless we imagine, that the colour of the metal is of any consequence.

Now, what is so visible in these greater variations of scarcity or abundance in the precious metals, must hold in all inferior changes. If the multiplying of gold and silver fifteen times makes no difference, much less can the doubling or tripling them. All augmentation has no other effect than to heighten the price of labour and commodities; and even this variation is little more than that of a name. In the progress towards these changes, the augmentation may have some influence, by exciting industry; but after the prices are settled, suitably to the new abundance of gold and silver, it has no manner of influence.

An effect always holds proportion with its cause. Prices have risen near four times since the discovery of the Indies; and it is probable gold and silver have multiplied much more: But interest has not fallen much above half. The rate of interest, therefore, is not derived from the quantity of the precious metals.

Money having chiefly a fictitious value, the greater or less plenty of it is of no consequence, if we consider a nation within itself; and the quantity of specie, when once fixed, though ever so large, has no other effect, than to oblige every one to tell out a greater number of those shining bits of metal, for clothes, furniture or equipage, without encreasing any one convenience of life. If a man borrow money to build a house, he then carries home a greater load; because the stone, timber, lead, glass, &c. with the labour of the masons and carpenters, are represented by a greater quantity of gold and silver. But as these metals are considered chiefly as representations, there can no alteration arise, from their bulk or quantity, their weight or colour, either upon their real value or their interest. The same interest, in all cases, bears the same proportion to the sum. And if you lent me so much labour and so many commodities; by receiving five per cent. you always receive proportional labour and commodities, however represented, whether by yellow or white coin, whether by a pound or an ounce. It is in vain, therefore, to look for the cause of the fall or rise of interest in the greater or less quantity of gold and silver, which is fixed in any nation.

High interest arises from three circumstances: A great demand for borrowing; little riches to supply that demand; and great profits arising from commerce: And these circumstances are a clear proof of the small advance of commerce and industry, not of the scarcity of gold and silver. Low interest, on the other hand, proceeds from the three opposite circumstances: A small demand for borrowing; great riches to supply that demand; and small profits arising from commerce: And these circumstances are all connected together, and proceed from the encrease of industry and commerce, not of gold and silver. We shall endeavour to prove these points; and shall begin with the causes and the effects of a great or small demand for borrowing.

When a people have emerged ever so little from a savage state, and their numbers have encreased beyond the original multitude, there must immediately arise an inequality of property; and while some possess large tracts of land, others are confined within narrow limits, and some are entirely without any landed property. Those who possess more land than they can labour, employ those who possess none, and agree to receive a determinate part of the product. Thus the landed interest is immediately established; nor is there any settled government, however rude, in which affairs are not on this footing. Of these proprietors of land, some must presently discover themselves to be of different tempers from others; and while one would willingly store up the produce of his land for futurity, another desires to consume at present what should suffice for many years. But as the spending of a settled revenue is a way of life entirely without occupation; men have so much need of somewhat to fix and engage them, that pleasures, such as they are, will be the pursuit of the greater part of the landholders, and the prodigals among them will always be more numerous than the misers. In a state, therefore, where there is nothing but a landed interest, as there is little frugality, the borrowers must be very numerous, and the rate of interest must hold proportion to it. The difference depends not on the quantity of money, but on the habits and manners which prevail. By this alone the demand for borrowing is encreased or diminished. Were money so plentiful as to make an egg be sold for sixpence; so long as there are only landed gentry and peasants in the state, the borrowers must be numerous, and interest high. The rent for the same farm would be heavier and more bulky: But the same idleness of the landlord, with the higher price of commodities, would dissipate it in the same time, and produce the same necessity and demand for borrowing.

Nor is the case different with regard to the second circumstance which we proposed to consider, namely, the great or little riches to supply the demand. This effect also depends on the habits and way of living of the people, not on the quantity of gold and silver. In order to have, in any state, a great number of lenders, it is not sufficient nor requisite, that there be great abundance of the precious metals. It is only requisite, that the property or command of that quantity, which is in the state, whether great or small, should be collected in particular hands, so as to form considerable sums, or compose a great monied interest. This begets a number of lenders, and sinks the rate of usury; and this I shall venture to affirm, depends not on the quantity of specie, but on particular manners and customs, which make the specie gather into separate sums or masses of considerable value.

For suppose, that, by miracle, every man in Great Britain should have five pounds slipt into his pocket in one night; this would much more than double the whole money that is at present in the kingdom; yet there would not next day, nor for some time, be any more lenders, nor any variation in the interest. And were there nothing but landlords and peasants in the state, this money, however abundant, could never gather into sums; and would only serve to encrease the prices of every thing, without any farther consequence. The prodigal landlord dissipates it, as fast as he receives it; and the beggarly peasant has no means, nor view, nor ambition of obtaining above a bare livelihood. The overplus of borrowers above that of lenders continuing still the same, there will follow no reduction of interest. That depends upon another principle; and must proceed from an encrease of industry and frugality, of arts and commerce.

Every thing useful to the life of man arises from the ground; but few things arise in that condition which is requisite to render them useful. There must, therefore, beside the peasants and the proprietors of land, be another rank of men, who receiving from the former the rude materials, work them into their proper form, and retain part for their own use and subsistence. In the infancy of society, these contracts between the artisans and the peasants, and between one species of artisans and another are commonly entered into immediately by the persons themselves, who, being neighbours, are easily acquainted with each other's necessities, and can lend their mutual assistance to supply them. But when men's industry encreases, and their views enlarge, it is found, that the most remote parts of the state can assist each other as well as the more contiguous, and that this intercourse of good offices may be carried on to the greatest extent and intricacy. Hence the origin of merchants, one of the most useful races of men, who serve as agents between those parts of the state, that are wholly unacquainted, and are ignorant of each other's necessities. Here are in a city fifty workmen in silk and linen, and a thousand customers; and these two ranks of men, so necessary to each other, can never rightly meet, till one man erects a shop, to which all the workmen and all the customers repair. In this province, grass rises in abundance: The inhabitants abound in cheese, and butter, and cattle; but want bread and corn, which, in a neighbouring province, are in too great abundance for the use of the inhabitants. One man discovers this. He brings corn from the one province and returns with cattle; and supplying the wants of both, he is, so far, a common benefactor. As the people encrease in numbers and industry, the difficulty of their intercourse encreases: The business of the agency or merchandize becomes more intricate; and divides, subdivides, compounds, and mixes to a greater variety. In all these transactions, it is necessary, and reasonable, that a considerable part of the commodities and labour should belong to the merchant, to whom, in a great measure, they are owing. And these commodities he will sometimes preserve in kind, or more commonly convert into money, which is their common representation. If gold and silver have encreased in the state together with the industry, it will require a great quantity of these metals to represent a great quantity of commodities and labour. If industry alone has encreased, the prices of every thing must sink, and a small quantity of specie will serve as a representation.

There is no craving or demand of the human mind more constant and insatiable than that for exercise and employment; and this desire seems the foundation of most of our passions and pursuits. Deprive a man of all business and serious occupation, he runs restless from one amusement to another; and the weight and oppression, which he feels from idleness, is so great, that he forgets the ruin which must follow him from his immoderate expences. Give him a more harmless way of employing his mind or body, he is satisfied, and feels no longer that insatiable thirst after pleasure. But if the employment you give him be lucrative, especially if the profit be attached to every particular exertion of industry, he has gain so often in his eye, that he acquires, by degrees, a passion for it, and knows no such pleasure as that of seeing the daily encrease of his fortune. And this is the reason why trade encreases frugality, and why, among merchants, there is the same overplus of misers above prodigals, as, among the possessors of land, there is the contrary.

Commerce encreases industry, by conveying it readily from one member of the state to another, and allowing none of it to perish or become useless. It encreases frugality, by giving occupation to men, and employing them in the arts of gain, which soon engage their affection, and remove all relish for pleasure and expence. It is an infallible consequence of all industrious professions, to beget frugality, and make the love of gain prevail over the love of pleasure. Among lawyers and physicians who have any practice, there are many more who live within their income, than who exceed it, or even live up to it. But lawyers and physicians beget no industry; and it is even at the expence of others they acquire their riches; so that they are sure to diminish the possessions of some of their fellow-citizens, as fast as they encrease their own. Merchants, on the contrary, beget industry, by serving as canals to convey it through every corner of the state: And at the same time, by their frugality, they acquire great power over that industry, and collect a large property in the labour and commodities, which they are the chief instruments in producing. There is no other profession, therefore, except merchandize, which can make the monied interest considerable, or, in other words, can encrease industry, and, by also encreasing frugality, give a great command of that industry to particular members of the society. Without commerce, the state must consist chiefly of landed gentry, whose prodigality and expence make a continual demand for borrowing; and of peasants, who have no sums to supply that demand. The money never gathers into large stocks or sums, which can be lent at interest. It is dispersed into numberless hands, who either squander it in idle show and magnificence, or employ it in the purchase of the common necessaries of life. Commerce alone assembles it into considerable sums; and this effect it has merely from the industry which it begets, and the frugality which it inspires, independent of that particular quantity of precious metal which may circulate in the state.

Thus an encrease of commerce, by a necessary consequence, raises a great number of lenders, and by that means produces lowness of interest. We must now consider how far this encrease of commerce diminishes the profits arising from that profession, and gives rise to the third circumstance requisite to produce lowness of interest.

It may be proper to observe on this head, that low interest and low profits of merchandize are two events, that mutually forward each other, and are both originally derived from that extensive commerce, which produces opulent merchants, and renders the monied interest considerable. Where merchants possess great stocks, whether represented by few or many pieces of metal, it must frequently happen, that, when they either become tired of business, or leave heirs unwilling or unfit to engage in commerce, a great proportion of these riches naturally seeks an annual and secure revenue. The plenty diminishes the price, and makes the lenders accept of a low interest. This consideration obliges many to keep their stock employed in trade, and rather be content with low profits than dispose of their money at an under-value. On the other hand, when commerce has become extensive, and employs large stocks, there must arise rivalships among the merchants, which diminish the profits of trade, at the same time that they encrease the trade itself. The low profits of merchandize induce the merchants to accept more willingly of a low interest, when they leave off business, and begin to indulge themselves in ease and indolence. It is needless, therefore, to enquire which of these circumstances, to wit, low interest or low profits, is the cause, and which the effect? They both arise from an extensive commerce, and mutually forward each other. No man will accept of low profits, where he can have high interest; and no man will accept of low interest, where he can have high profits. An extensive commerce, by producing large stocks, diminishes both interest and profits; and is always assisted, in its diminution of the one, by the proportional sinking of the other. I may add, that, as low profits arise from the encrease of commerce and industry, they serve in their turn to its farther encrease, by rendering the commodities cheaper, encouraging the consumption, and heightening the industry. And thus, if we consider the whole connexion of causes and effects, interest is the barometer of the state, and its lowness is a sign almost infallible of the flourishing condition of a people. It proves the encrease of industry, and its prompt circulation through the whole state, little inferior to a demonstration. And though, perhaps, it may not be impossible but a sudden and a great check to commerce may have a momentary effect of the same kind, by throwing so many stocks out of trade; it must be attended with such misery and want of employment in the poor, that, besides its short duration, it will not be possible to mistake the one case for the other.

Those who have asserted, that the plenty of money was the cause of low interest, seem to have taken a collateral effect for a cause; since the same industry, which sinks the interest, commonly acquires great abundance of the precious metals. A variety of fine manufactures, with vigilant enterprising merchants, will soon draw money to a state, if it be any where to be found in the world. The same cause, by multiplying the conveniencies of life, and encreasing industry, collects great riches into the hands of persons, who are not proprietors of land, and produces, by that means, a lowness of interest. But though both these effects, plenty of money and low interest, naturally arise from commerce and industry, they are altogether independent of each other. For suppose a nation removed into the Pacific ocean, without any foreign commerce, or any knowledge of navigation: Suppose, that this nation possesses always the same stock of coin, but is continually encreasing in its numbers and industry: It is evident, that the price of every commodity must gradually diminish in that kingdom; since it is the proportion between money and any species of goods, which fixes their mutual value; and, upon the present supposition, the conveniencies of life become every day more abundant, without any alteration in the current specie. A less quantity of money, therefore, among this people, will make a rich man, during the times of industry, than would suffice to that purpose, in ignorant and slothful ages. Less money will build a house, portion a daughter, buy an estate, support a manufactory, or maintain a family and equipage. These are the uses for which men borrow money; and therefore, the greater or less quantity of it in a state has no influence on the interest. But it is evident, that the greater or less stock of labour and commodities must have a great influence; since we really and in effect borrow these, when we take money upon interest. It is true, when commerce is extended all over the globe, the most industrious nations always abound most with the precious metals: So that low interest and plenty of money are in fact almost inseparable. But still it is of consequence to know the principle whence any phenomenon arises, and to distinguish between a cause and a concomitant effect. Besides that the speculation is curious, it may frequently be of use in the conduct of public affairs. At least, it must be owned, that nothing can be of more use than to improve, by practice, the method of reasoning on these subjects, which of all others are the most important; though they are commonly treated in the loosest and most careless manner.

Another reason of this popular mistake with regard to the cause of low interest, seems to be the instance of some nations; where, after a sudden acquisition of money or of the precious metals, by means of foreign conquest, the interest has fallen, not only among them, but in all the neighbouring states, as soon as that money was dispersed, and had insinuated itself into every corner. Thus, interest in Spain fell near a half immediately after the discovery of the West Indies, as we are informed by Garcilasso de la Vega: And it has been ever since gradually sinking in every kingdom of Europe. Interest in Rome, after the conquest of Egypt, fell from 6 to 4 per cent. as we learn from Dion.

The causes of the sinking of interest, upon such an event, seem different in the conquering country and in the neighbouring states; but in neither of them can we justly ascribe that effect merely to the encrease of gold and silver.

In the conquering country, it is natural to imagine, that this new acquisition of money will fall into a few hands, and be gathered into large sums, which seek a secure revenue, either by the purchase of land or by interest; and consequently the same effect follows, for a little time, as if there had been a great accession of industry and commerce. The encrease of lenders above the borrowers sinks the interest; and so much the faster, if those, who have acquired those large sums, find no industry or commerce in the state, and no method of employing their money but by lending it at interest. But after this new mass of gold and silver has been digested, and has circulated through the whole state, affairs will soon return to their former situation; while the landlords and new money-holders, living idly, squander above their income; and the former daily contract debt, and the latter encroach on their stock till its final extinction. The whole money may still be in the state, and make itself felt by the encrease of prices: But not being now collected into any large masses or stocks, the disproportion between the borrowers and lenders is the same as formerly, and consequently the high interest returns.

Accordingly we find, in Rome, that, so early as Tiberius's time, interest had again mounted to 6 per cent. though no accident had happened to drain the empire of money. In Trajan's time, money lent on mortgages in Italy, bore 6 per cent.; on common securities in Bithynia, 12. And if interest in Spain has not risen to its old pitch; this can be ascribed to nothing but the continuance of the same cause that sunk it, to wit, the large fortunes continually made in the Indies, which come over to Spain from time to time, and supply the demand of the borrowers. By this accidental and extraneous cause, more money is to be lent in Spain, that is, more money is collected into large sums than would otherwise be found in a state, where there are so little commerce and industry.

As to the reduction of interest, which has followed in England, France, and other kingdoms of Europe, that have no mines, it has been gradual; and has not proceeded from the encrease of money, considered merely in itself; but from that of industry, which is the natural effect of the former encrease, in that interval, before it raises the price of labour and provisions. For to return to the foregoing supposition; if the industry of England had risen as much from other causes, (and that rise might easily have happened, though the stock of money had remained the same) must not all the same consequences have followed, which we observe at present? The same people would, in that case, be found in the kingdom, the same commodities, the same industry, manufactures, and commerce; and consequently the same merchants, with the same stocks, that is, with the same command over labour and commodities, only represented by a smaller number of white or yellow pieces; which being a circumstance of no moment, would only affect the waggoner, porter, and trunk-maker. Luxury, therefore, manufactures, arts, industry, frugality, flourishing equally as at present, it is evident, that interest must also have been as low; since that is the necessary result of all these circumstances; so far as they determine the profits of commerce, and the proportion between the borrowers and lenders in any state.

ESSAY V: OF THE BALANCE OF TRADE

It is very usual, in nations ignorant of the nature of commerce, to prohibit the exportation of commodities, and to preserve among themselves whatever they think valuable and useful. They do not consider, that, in this prohibition, they act directly contrary to their intention; and that the more is exported of any commodity, the more will be raised at home, of which they themselves will always have the first offer.

It is well known to the learned, that the ancient laws of Athens rendered the exportation of figs criminal; that being supposed a species of fruit so excellent in Attica, that the Athenians deemed it too delicious for the palate of any foreigner. And in this ridiculous prohibition they were so much in earnest, that informers were thence called sycophants among them, from two Greek words, which signify figs and discoverer., There are proofs in many old acts of parliament of the same ignorance in the nature of commerce, particularly in the reign of Edward III. And to this day, in France, the exportation of corn is almost always prohibited; in order, as they say, to prevent famines; though it is evident, that nothing contributes more to the frequent famines, which so much distress that fertile country.

The same jealous fear, with regard to money, has also prevailed among several nations; and it required both reason and experience to convince any people, that these prohibitions serve to no other purpose than to raise the exchange against them, and produce a still greater exportation.

These errors, one may say, are gross and palpable: But there still prevails, even in nations well acquainted with commerce, a strong jealousy with regard to the balance of trade, and a fear, that all their gold and silver may be leaving them. This seems to me, almost in every case, a groundless apprehension; and I should as soon dread, that all our springs and rivers should be exhausted, as that money should abandon a kingdom where there are people and industry. Let us carefully preserve these latter advantages; and we need never be apprehensive of losing the former.

It is easy to observe, that all calculations concerning the balance of trade are founded on very uncertain facts and suppositions. The custom-house books are allowed to be an insufficient ground of reasoning; nor is the rate of exchange much better; unless we consider it with all nations, and know also the proportions of the several sums remitted; which one may safely pronounce impossible. Every man, who has ever reasoned on this subject, has always proved his theory, whatever it was, by facts and calculations, and by an enumeration of all the commodities sent to all foreign kingdoms.

The writings of Mr. Gee struck the nation with an universal panic, when they saw it plainly demonstrated, by a detail of particulars, that the balance was against them for so considerable a sum as must leave them without a single shilling in five or six years. But luckily, twenty years have since elapsed, with an expensive foreign war; yet is it commonly supposed, that money is still more plentiful among us than in any former period.

Nothing can be more entertaining on this head than Dr. Swift; an author so quick in discerning the mistakes and absurdities of others. He says, in his short view of the state of Ireland, that the whole cash of that kingdom formerly amounted but to 500,000 l.; that out of this the Irish remitted every year a neat million to England, and had scarcely any other source from which they could compensate themselves, and little other foreign trade than the importation of French wines, for which they paid ready money. The consequence of this situation, which must be owned to be disadvantageous, was, that, in a course of three years, the current money of Ireland, from 500,000 l. was reduced to less than two. And at present, I suppose, in a course of 30 years it is absolutely nothing. Yet I know not how, that opinion of the advance of riches in Ireland, which gave the Doctor so much indignation, seems still to continue, and gain ground with every body.

In short, this apprehension of the wrong balance of trade, appears of such a nature, that it discovers itself, wherever one is out of humour with the ministry, or is in low spirits; and as it can never be refuted by a particular detail of all the exports, which counterbalance the imports, it may here be proper to form a general argument, that may prove the impossibility of this event, as long as we preserve our people and our industry.

Suppose four-fifths of all the money in Great Britain to be annihilated in one night, and the nation reduced to the same condition, with regard to specie, as in the reigns of the Harrys and Edwards, what would be the consequence? Must not the price of all labour and commodities sink in proportion, and every thing be sold as cheap as they were in those ages? What nation could then dispute with us in any foreign market, or pretend to navigate or to sell manufactures at the same price, which to us would afford sufficient profit? In how little time, therefore, must this bring back the money which we had lost, and raise us to the level of all the neighbouring nations? Where, after we have arrived, we immediately lose the advantage of the cheapness of labour and commodities; and the farther flowing in of money is stopped by our fulness and repletion.

Again, suppose, that all the money of Great Britain were multiplied fivefold in a night, must not the contrary effect follow? Must not all labour and commodities rise to such an exorbitant height, that no neighbouring nations could afford to buy from us; while their commodities, on the other hand, became comparatively so cheap, that, in spite of all the laws which could be formed, they would be run in upon us, and our money flow out; till we fall to a level with foreigners, and lose that great superiority of riches, which had laid us under such disadvantages?

Now, it is evident, that the same causes, which would correct these exorbitant inequalities, were they to happen miraculously, must prevent their happening in the common course of nature, and must for ever, in all neighbouring nations, preserve money nearly proportionable to the art and industry of each nation. All water, wherever it communicates, remains always at a level. Ask naturalists the reason; they tell you, that, were it to be raised in any one place, the superior gravity of that part not being balanced, must depress it, till it meet a counterpoise; and that the same cause, which redresses the inequality when it happens, must for ever prevent it, without some violent external operation.

Can one imagine, that it had ever been possible, by any laws, or even by any art or industry, to have kept all the money in Spain, which the galleons have brought from the Indies? Or that all commodities could be sold in France for a tenth of the price which they would yield on the other side of the Pyrenees, without finding their way thither, and draining from that immense treasure? What other reason, indeed, is there, why all nations, at present, gain in their trade with Spain and Portugal; but because it is impossible to heap up money, more than any fluid, beyond its proper level? The sovereigns of these countries have shown, that they wanted not inclination to keep their gold and silver to themselves, had it been in any degree practicable.

But as any body of water may be raised above the level of the surrounding element, if the former has no communication with the latter; so in money, if the communication be cut off, by any material or physical impediment, (for all laws alone are ineffectual) there may, in such a case, be a very great inequality of money. Thus the immense distance of China, together with the monopolies of our India companies, obstructing the communication, preserve in Europe the gold and silver, especially the latter, in much greater plenty than they are found in that kingdom. But, notwithstanding this great obstruction, the force of the causes abovementioned is still evident. The skill and ingenuity of Europe in general surpasses perhaps that of China, with regard to manual arts and manufactures; yet are we never able to trade thither without great disadvantage. And were it not for the continual recruits, which we receive from America, money would soon sink in Europe, and rise in China, till it came nearly to a level in both places. Nor can any reasonable man doubt, but that industrious nation, were they as near us as Poland or Barbary, would drain us of the overplus of our specie, and draw to themselves a larger share of the West Indian treasures. We need not have recourse to a physical attraction, in order to explain the necessity of this operation. There is a moral attraction, arising from the interests and passions of men, which is full as potent and infallible.

How is the balance kept in the provinces of every kingdom among themselves, but by the force of this principle, which makes it impossible for money to lose its level, and either to rise or sink beyond the proportion of the labour and commodities which are in each province? Did not long experience make people easy on this head, what a fund of gloomy reflections might calculations afford to a melancholy Yorkshireman, while he computed and magnified the sums drawn to London by taxes, absentees, commodities, and found on comparison the opposite articles so much inferior? And no doubt, had the Heptarchy subsisted in England, the legislature of each state had been continually alarmed by the fear of a wrong balance; and as it is probable that the mutual hatred of these states would have been extremely violent on account of their close neighbourhood, they would have loaded and oppressed all commerce, by a jealous and superfluous caution. Since the union has removed the barriers between Scotland and England, which of these nations gains from the other by this free commerce? Or if the former kingdom has received any encrease of riches, can it reasonably be accounted for by any thing but the encrease of its art and industry? It was a common apprehension in England, before the union, as we learn from L’abbe du Bos, that Scotland would soon drain them of their treasure, were an open trade allowed; and on the other side the Tweed a contrary apprehension prevailed: With what justice in both, time has shown.

What happens in small portions of mankind, must take place in greater. The provinces of the Roman empire, no doubt, kept their balance with each other, and with Italy, independent of the legislature; as much as the several counties of Great Britain, or the several parishes of each county. And any man who travels over Europe at this day, may see, by the prices of commodities, that money, in spite of the absurd jealousy of princes and states, has brought itself nearly to a level; and that the difference between one kingdom and another is not greater in this respect, than it is often between different provinces of the same kingdom. Men naturally flock to capital cities, sea-ports, and navigable rivers. There we find more men, more industry, more commodities, and consequently more money; but still the latter difference holds proportion with the former, and the level is preserved.

Our jealousy and our hatred of France are without bounds; and the former sentiment, at least, must be acknowledged reasonable and well-grounded. These passions have occasioned innumerable barriers and obstructions upon commerce, where we are accused of being commonly the aggressors. But what have we gained by the bargain? We lost the French market for our woollen manufactures, and transferred the commerce of wine to Spain and Portugal, where we buy worse liquor at a higher price. There are few Englishmen who would not think their country absolutely ruined, were French wines sold in England so cheap and in such abundance as to supplant, in some measure, all ale, and home-brewed liquors: But would we lay aside prejudice, it would not be difficult to prove, that nothing could be more innocent, perhaps advantageous. Each new acre of vineyard planted in France, in order to supply England with wine, would make it requisite for the French to take the produce of an English acre, sown in wheat or barley, in order to subsist themselves; and it is evident, that we should thereby get command of the better commodity.

There are many edicts of the French king, prohibiting the planting of new vineyards, and ordering all those which are lately planted to be grubbed up: So sensible are they, in that country, of the superior value of corn, above every other product.

Mareschal Vauban complains often, and with reason, of the absurd duties which load the entry of those wines of Languedoc, Guienne, and other southern provinces, that are imported into Britanny and Normandy. He entertained no doubt but these latter provinces could preserve their balance, notwithstanding the open commerce which he recommends. And it is evident, that a few leagues more navigation to England would make no difference; or if it did, that it must operate alike on the commodities of both kingdoms.

There is indeed one expedient by which it is possible to sink, and another by which we may raise money beyond its natural level in any kingdom; but these cases, when examined, will be found to resolve into our general theory, and to bring additional authority to it.

I scarcely know any method of sinking money below its level, but those institutions of banks, funds, and paper-credit, which are so much practised in this kingdom. These render paper equivalent to money, circulate it throughout the whole state, make it supply the place of gold and silver, raise proportionably the price of labour and commodities, and by that means either banish a great part of those precious metals, or prevent their farther encrease. What can be more shortsighted than our reasonings on this head? We fancy, because an individual would be much richer, were his stock of money doubled, that the same good effect would follow were the money of every one encreased; not considering, that this would raise as much the price of every commodity, and reduce every man, in time, to the same condition as before. It is only in our public negociations and transactions with foreigners, that a greater stock of money is advantageous; and as our paper is there absolutely insignificant, we feel, by its means, all the ill effects arising from a great abundance of money, without reaping any of the advantages.

Suppose that there are 12 millions of paper, which circulate in the kingdom as money, (for we are not to imagine, that all our enormous funds are employed in that shape) and suppose the real cash of the kingdom to be 18 millions: Here is a state which is found by experience to be able to hold a stock of 30 millions. I say, if it be able to hold it, it must of necessity have acquired it in gold and silver, had we not obstructed the entrance of these metals by this new invention of paper. Whence would it have acquired that sum? From all the kingdoms of the world. But why? Because, if you remove these 12 millions, money in this state is below its level, compared with our neighbours; and we must immediately draw from all of them, till we be full and saturate, so to speak, and can hold no more. By our present politics, we are as careful to stuff the nation with this fine commodity of bank-bills and chequer-notes, as if we were afraid of being overburthened with the precious metals.

It is not to be doubted, but the great plenty of bullion in France is, in a great measure, owing to the want of paper-credit. The French have no banks: Merchants bills do not there circulate as with us: Usury or lending on interest is not directly permitted; so that many have large sums in their coffers: Great quantities of plate are used in private houses; and all the churches are full of it. By this means, provisions and labour still remain cheaper among them, than in nations that are not half so rich in gold and silver. The advantages of this situation, in point of trade as well as in great public emergencies, are too evident to be disputed.

The same fashion a few years ago prevailed in Genoa, which still has place in England and Holland, of using services of China-ware instead of plate; but the senate, foreseeing the consequence, prohibited the use of that brittle commodity beyond a certain extent; while the use of silver-plate was left unlimited. And I suppose, in their late distresses, they felt the good effect of this ordinance. Our tax on plate is, perhaps, in this view, somewhat impolitic.

Before the introduction of paper-money into our colonies, they had gold and silver sufficient for their circulation. Since the introduction of that commodity, the least inconveniency that has followed is the total banishment of the precious metals. And after the abolition of paper, can it be doubted but money will return, while these colonies possess manufactures and commodities, the only thing valuable in commerce, and for whose sake alone all men desire money.

What pity Lycurgus did not think of paper-credit, when he wanted to banish gold and silver from Sparta! It would have served his purpose better than the lumps of iron he made use of as money; and would also have prevented more effectually all commerce with strangers, as being of so much less real and intrinsic value.

It must, however, be confessed, that, as all these questions of trade and money are extremely complicated, there are certain lights, in which this subject may be placed, so as to represent the advantages of paper-credit and banks to be superior to their disadvantages. That they banish specie and bullion from a state is undoubtedly true; and whoever looks no farther than this circumstance does well to condemn them; but specie and bullion are not of so great consequence as not to admit of a compensation, and even an overbalance from the encrease of industry and of credit, which may be promoted by the right use of paper-money. It is well known of what advantage it is to a merchant to be able to discount his bills upon occasion; and every thing that facilitates this species of traffic is favourable to the general commerce of a state. But private bankers are enabled to give such credit by the credit they receive from the depositing of money in their shops; and the bank of England in the same manner, from the liberty it has to issue its notes in all payments. There was an invention of this kind, which was fallen upon some years ago by the banks of Edinburgh; and which, as it is one of the most ingenious ideas that has been executed in commerce, has also been thought advantageous to Scotland. It is there called a Bank-Credit; and is of this nature. A man goes to the bank and finds surety to the amount, we shall suppose, of a thousand pounds. This money, or any part of it, he has the liberty of drawing out whenever he pleases, and he pays only the ordinary interest for it, while it is in his hands. He may, when he pleases, repay any sum so small as twenty pounds, and the interest is discounted from the very day of the repayment. The advantages, resulting from this contrivance, are manifold. As a man may find surety nearly to the amount of his substance, and his bank-credit is equivalent to ready money, a merchant does hereby in a manner coin his houses, his household furniture, the goods in his warehouse, the foreign debts due to him, his ships at sea; and can, upon occasion, employ them in all payments, as if they were the current money of the country. If a man borrow a thousand pounds from a private hand, besides that it is not always to be found when required, he pays interest for it, whether he be using it or not: His bank-credit costs him nothing except during the very moment, in which it is of service to him: And this circumstance is of equal advantage as if he had borrowed money at much lower interest. Merchants, likewise, from this invention, acquire a great facility in supporting each other’s credit, which is a considerable security against bankruptcies. A man, when his own bank-credit is exhausted, goes to any of his neighbours who is not in the same condition; and he gets the money, which he replaces at his convenience.

After this practice had taken place during some years at Edinburgh, several companies of merchants at Glasgow carried the matter farther. They associated themselves into different banks, and issued notes so low as ten shillings, which they used in all payments for goods, manufactures, tradesmen's labour of all kinds; and these notes, from the established credit of the companies, passed as money in all payments throughout the country. By this means, a stock of five thousand pounds was able to perform the same operations as if it were six or seven; and merchants were thereby enabled to trade to a greater extent, and to require less profit in all their transactions. But whatever other advantages result from these inventions, it must still be allowed that, besides giving too great facility to credit, which is dangerous, they banish the precious metals; and nothing can be a more evident proof of it, than a comparison of the past and present condition of Scotland in that particular. It was found, upon the recoinage made after the union, that there was near a million of specie in that country: But notwithstanding the great encrease of riches, commerce and manufactures of all kinds, it is thought, that, even where there is no extraordinary drain made by England, the current specie will not now amount to a third of that sum.

But as our projects of paper-credit are almost the only expedient, by which we can sink money below its level; so, in my opinion, the only expedient, by which we can raise money above it, is a practice which we should all exclaim against as destructive, namely, the gathering of large sums into a public treasure, locking them up, and absolutely preventing their circulation. The fluid, not communicating with the neighbouring element, may, by such an artifice, be raised to what height we please. To prove this, we need only return to our first supposition, of annihilating the half or any part of our cash; where we found, that the immediate consequence of such an event would be the attraction of an equal sum from all the neighbouring kingdoms. Nor does there seem to be any necessary bounds set, by the nature of things, to this practice of hoarding. A small city, like Geneva, continuing this policy for ages, might engross nine-tenths of the money of Europe. There seems, indeed, in the nature of man, an invincible obstacle to that immense growth of riches. A weak state, with an enormous treasure, will soon become a prey to some of its poorer, but more powerful neighbours. A great state would dissipate its wealth in dangerous and ill-concerted projects; and probably destroy, with it, what is much more valuable, the industry, morals, and numbers of its people. The fluid, in this case, raised to too great a height, bursts and destroys the vessel that contains it; and mixing itself with the surrounding element, soon falls to its proper level.

So little are we commonly acquainted with this principle, that, though all historians agree in relating uniformly so recent an event, as the immense treasure amassed by Harry VII. (which they make amount to 2,700,000 pounds,) we rather reject their concurring testimony, than admit of a fact, which agrees so ill with our inveterate prejudices. It is indeed probable, that this sum might be three-fourths of all the money in England. But where is the difficulty in conceiving, that such a sum might be amassed in twenty years, by a cunning, rapacious, frugal, and almost absolute monarch? Nor is it probable, that the diminution of circulating money was ever sensibly felt by the people, or ever did them any prejudice. The sinking of the prices of all commodities would immediately replace it, by giving England the advantage in its commerce with the neighbouring kingdoms.

Have we not an instance, in the small republic of Athens with its allies, who, in about fifty years, between the Median and Peloponnesian wars, amassed a sum not much inferior to that of Harry VII.? For all the Greek historians and orators agree, that the Athenians collected in the citadel more than 10,000 talents, which they afterwards dissipated to their own ruin, in rash and imprudent enterprizes. But when this money was set a running, and began to communicate with the surrounding fluid; what was the consequence? Did it remain in the state? No. For we find, by the memorable census mentioned by Demosthenes and Polybius, that, in about fifty years afterwards, the whole value of the republic, comprehending lands, houses, commodities, slaves, and money, was less than 6000 talents.

What an ambitious high-spirited people was this, to collect and keep in their treasury, with a view to conquests, a sum, which it was every day in the power of the citizens, by a single vote, to distribute among themselves, and which would have gone near to triple the riches of every individual! For we must observe, that the numbers and private riches of the Athenians are said, by ancient writers, to have been no greater at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, than at the beginning of the Macedonian.

Money was little more plentiful in Greece during the age of Philip and Perseus, than in England during that of Harry VII.: Yet these two monarchs in thirty years collected from the small kingdom of Macedon, a larger treasure than that of the English monarch. Paulus Æmilius brought to Rome about 1,700,000 pounds Sterling. Pliny says, 2,400,000. And that was but a part of the Macedonian treasure. The rest was dissipated by the resistance and flight of Perseus.

We may learn from Stanian, that the canton of Berne had 300,000 pounds lent at interest, and had above six times as much in their treasury. Here then is a sum hoarded of 1,800,000 pounds Sterling, which is at least quadruple what should naturally circulate in such a petty state; and yet no one, who travels in the Pais de Vaux, or any part of that canton, observes any want of money more than could be supposed in a country of that extent, soil, and situation. On the contrary, there are scarce any inland provinces in the continent of France or Germany, where the inhabitants are at this time so opulent, though that canton has vastly encreased its treasure since 1714, the time when Stanian wrote his judicious account of Switzerland.

The account given by Appian of the treasure of the Ptolemies, is so prodigious, that one cannot admit of it; and so much the less, because the historian says, that the other successors of Alexander were also frugal, and had many of them treasures not much inferior. For this saving humour of the neighbouring princes must necessarily have checked the frugality of the Egyptian monarchs, according to the foregoing theory. The sum he mentions is 740,000 talents, or 191,166,666 pounds 13 shillings and 4 pence, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's computation. And yet Appian says, that he extracted his account from the public records; and he was himself a native of Alexandria.

From these principles we may learn what judgment we ought to form of those numberless bars, obstructions, and imposts, which all nations of Europe, and none more than England, have put upon trade; from an exorbitant desire of amassing money, which never will heap up beyond its level, while it circulates; or from an ill-grounded apprehension of losing their specie, which never will sink below it. Could any thing scatter our riches, it would be such impolitic contrivances. But this general ill effect, however, results from them, that they deprive neighbouring nations of that free communication and exchange which the Author of the world has intended, by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other.

Our modern politics embrace the only method of banishing money, the using of paper-credit; they reject the only method of amassing it, the practice of hoarding; and they adopt a hundred contrivances, which serve to no purpose but to check industry, and rob ourselves and our neighbours of the common benefits of art and nature.

All taxes, however, upon foreign commodities, are not to be regarded as prejudicial or useless, but those only which are founded on the jealousy above-mentioned. A tax on German linen encourages home manufactures, and thereby multiplies our people and industry. A tax on brandy encreases the sale of rum, and supports our southern colonies. And as it is necessary, that imposts should be levied, for the support of government, it may be thought more convenient to lay them on foreign commodities, which can easily be intercepted at the port, and subjected to the impost. We ought, however, always to remember the maxim of Dr. Swift, That, in the arithmetic of the customs, two and two make not four, but often make only one. It can scarcely be doubted, but if the duties on wine were lowered to a third, they would yield much more to the government than at present: Our people might thereby afford to drink commonly a better and more wholesome liquor; and no prejudice would ensue to the balance of trade, of which we are so jealous. The manufacture of ale beyond the agriculture is but inconsiderable, and gives employment to few hands. The transport of wine and corn would not be much inferior.

But are there not frequent instances, you will say, of states and kingdoms, which were formerly rich and opulent, and are now poor and beggarly? Has not the money left them, with which they formerly abounded? I answer, If they lose their trade, industry, and people, they cannot expect to keep their gold and silver: For these precious metals will hold proportion to the former advantages. When Lisbon and Amsterdam got the East-India trade from Venice and Genoa, they also got the profits and money which arose from it. Where the seat of government is transferred, where expensive armies are maintained at a distance, where great funds are possessed by foreigners; there naturally follows from these causes a diminution of the specie. But these, we may observe, are violent and forcible methods of carrying away money, and are in time commonly attended with the transport of people and industry. But where these remain, and the drain is not continued, the money always finds its way back again, by a hundred canals, of which we have no notion or suspicion. What immense treasures have been spent, by so many nations, in Flanders, since the revolution, in the course of three long wars? More money perhaps than the half of what is at present in Europe. But what has now become of it? Is it in the narrow compass of the Austrian provinces? No, surely: It has most of it returned to the several countries whence it came, and has followed that art and industry, by which at first it was acquired. For above a thousand years, the money of Europe has been flowing to Rome, by an open and sensible current; but it has been emptied by many secret and insensible canals: And the want of industry and commerce renders at present the papal dominions the poorest territory in all Italy.

In short, a government has great reason to preserve with care its people and its manufactures. Its money, it may safely trust to the course of human affairs, without fear or jealousy. Or if it ever give attention to this latter circumstance, it ought only to be so far as it affects the former.

ESSAY VI: OF THE JEALOUSY OF TRADE

Having endeavoured to remove one species of ill-founded jealousy, which is so prevalent among commercial nations, it may not be amiss to mention another, which seems equally groundless. Nothing is more usual, among states which have made some advances in commerce, than to look on the progress of their neighbours with a suspicious eye, to consider all trading states as their rivals, and to suppose that it is impossible for any of them to flourish, but at their expence. In opposition to this narrow and malignant opinion, I will venture to assert, that the encrease of riches and commerce in any one nation, instead of hurting, commonly promotes the riches and commerce of all its neighbours; and that a state can scarcely carry its trade and industry very far, where all the surrounding states are buried in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism.

It is obvious, that the domestic industry of a people cannot be hurt by the greatest prosperity of their neighbours; and as this branch of commerce is undoubtedly the most important in any extensive kingdom, we are so far removed from all reason of jealousy. But I go farther, and observe, that where an open communication is preserved among nations, it is impossible but the domestic industry of every one must receive an encrease from the improvements of the others. Compare the situation of Great Britain at present, with what it was two centuries ago. All the arts both of agriculture and manufactures were then extremely rude and imperfect. Every improvement, which we have since made, has arisen from our imitation of foreigners; and we ought so far to esteem it happy, that they had previously made advances in arts and ingenuity. But this intercourse is still upheld to our great advantage: Notwithstanding the advanced state of our manufactures, we daily adopt, in every art, the inventions and improvements of our neighbours. The commodity is first imported from abroad, to our great discontent, while we imagine that it drains us of our money: Afterwards, the art itself is gradually imported, to our visible advantage: Yet we continue still to repine, that our neighbours should possess any art, industry, and invention; forgetting that, had they not first instructed us, we should have been at present barbarians; and did they not still continue their instructions, the arts must fall into a state of languor, and lose that emulation and novelty, which contribute so much to their advancement.

The encrease of domestic industry lays the foundation of foreign commerce. Where a great number of commodities are raised and perfected for the home-market, there will always be found some which can be exported with advantage. But if our neighbours have no art or cultivation, they cannot take them; because they will have nothing to give in exchange. In this respect, states are in the same condition as individuals. A single man can scarcely be industrious, where all his fellow-citizens are idle. The riches of the several members of a community contribute to encrease my riches, whatever profession I may follow. They consume the produce of my industry, and afford me the produce of theirs in return.

Nor needs any state entertain apprehensions, that their neighbours will improve to such a degree in every art and manufacture, as to have no demand from them. Nature, by giving a diversity of geniuses, climates, and soils, to different nations, has secured their mutual intercourse and commerce, as long as they all remain industrious and civilized. Nay, the more the arts encrease in any state, the more will be its demands from its industrious neighbours. The inhabitants, having become opulent and skilful, desire to have every commodity in the utmost perfection; and as they have plenty of commodities to give in exchange, they make large importations from every foreign country. The industry of the nations, from whom they import, receives encouragement: Their own is also encreased, by the sale of the commodities which they give in exchange.

But what if a nation has any staple commodity, such as the woollen manufacture is in England? Must not the interfering of our neighbours in that manufacture be a loss to us? I answer, that, when any commodity is denominated the staple of a kingdom, it is supposed that this kingdom has some peculiar and natural advantages for raising the commodity; and if, notwithstanding these advantages, they lose such a manufacture, they ought to blame their own idleness, or bad government, not the industry of their neighbours. It ought also to be considered, that, by the encrease of industry among the neighbouring nations, the consumption of every particular species of commodity is also encreased; and though foreign manufactures interfere with them in the market, the demand for their product may still continue, or even encrease. And should it diminish, ought the consequence to be esteemed so fatal? If the spirit of industry be preserved, it may easily be diverted from one branch to another; and the manufacturers of wool, for instance, be employed in linen, silk, iron, or any other commodities, for which there appears to be a demand. We need not apprehend, that all the objects of industry will be exhausted, or that our manufacturers, while they remain on an equal footing with those of our neighbours, will be in danger of wanting employment. The emulation among rival nations serves rather to keep industry alive in all of them: And any people is happier who possess a variety of manufactures, than if they enjoyed one single great manufacture, in which they are all employed. Their situation is less precarious; and they will feel less sensibly those revolutions and uncertainties, to which every particular branch of commerce will always be exposed.

The only commercial state, that ought to dread the improvements and industry of their neighbours, is such a one as the Dutch, who enjoying no extent of land, nor possessing any number of native commodities, flourish only by their being the brokers, and factors, and carriers of others. Such a people may naturally apprehend, that, as soon as the neighbouring states come to know and pursue their interest, they will take into their own hands the management of their affairs, and deprive their brokers of that profit, which they formerly reaped from it. But though this consequence may naturally be dreaded, it is very long before it takes place; and by art and industry it may be warded off for many generations, if not wholly eluded. The advantage of superior stocks and correspondence is so great, that it is not easily overcome; and as all the transactions encrease by the encrease of industry in the neighbouring states, even a people whose commerce stands on this precarious basis, may at first reap a considerable profit from the flourishing condition of their neighbours. The Dutch, having mortgaged all their revenues, make not such a figure in political transactions as formerly; but their commerce is surely equal to what it was in the middle of the last century, when they were reckoned among the great powers of Europe.

Were our narrow and malignant politics to meet with success, we should reduce all our neighbouring nations to the same state of sloth and ignorance that prevails in Morocco and the coast of Barbary. But what would be the consequence? They could send us no commodities: They could take none from us: Our domestic commerce itself would languish for want of emulation, example, and instruction: And we ourselves should soon fall into the same abject condition, to which we had reduced them. I shall therefore venture to acknowledge, that, not only as a man, but as a British subject, I pray for the flourishing commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy, and even France itself. I am at least certain, that Great Britain, and all those nations, would flourish more, did their sovereigns and ministers adopt such enlarged and benevolent sentiments towards each other.

ESSAY VII: OF THE BALANCE OF POWER

It is a question whether the idea of the balance of power be owing entirely to modern policy, or whether the phrase only has been invented in these later ages? It is certain, that Xenophon, in his Institution of Cyrus, represents the combination of the Asiatic powers to have arisen from a jealousy of the encreasing force of the Medes and Persians; and though that elegant composition should be supposed altogether a romance, this sentiment, ascribed by the author to the eastern princes, is at least a proof of the prevailing notion of ancient times.

In all the politics of Greece, the anxiety, with regard to the balance of power, is apparent, and is expressly pointed out to us, even by the ancient historians. Thucydides represents the league, which was formed against Athens, and which produced the Peloponnesian war, as entirely owing to this principle. And after the decline of Athens, when the Thebans and Lacedemonians disputed for sovereignty, we find, that the Athenians (as well as many other republics) always threw themselves into the lighter scale, and endeavoured to preserve the balance. They supported Thebes against Sparta, till the great victory gained by Epaminondas at Leuctra; after which they immediately went over to the conquered, from generosity, as they pretended, but in reality from their jealousy of the conquerors.

Whoever will read Demosthenes’s oration for the Megalopolitans, may see the utmost refinements on this principle, that ever entered into the head of a Venetian or English speculatist. And upon the first rise of the Macedonian power, this orator immediately discovered the danger, sounded the alarm throughout all Greece, and at last assembled that confederacy under the banners of Athens, which fought the great and decisive battle of Chaeronea.

It is true, the Grecian wars are regarded by historians as wars of emulation rather than of politics; and each state seems to have had more in view the honour of leading the rest, than any well-grounded hopes of authority and dominion. If we consider, indeed, the small number of inhabitants in any one republic, compared to the whole, the great difficulty of forming sieges in those times, and the extraordinary bravery and discipline of every freeman among that noble people; we shall conclude, that the balance of power was, of itself, sufficiently secured in Greece, and needed not to have been guarded with that caution which may be requisite in other ages. But whether we ascribe the shifting of sides in all the Grecian republics to jealous emulation or cautious politics, the effects were alike, and every prevailing power was sure to meet with a confederacy against it, and that often composed of its former friends and allies.

The same principle, call it envy or prudence, which produced the Ostracism of Athens, and Petalism of Syracuse, and expelled every citizen whose fame or power overtopped the rest; the same principle, I say, naturally discovered itself in foreign politics, and soon raised enemies to the leading state, however moderate in the exercise of its authority.

The Persian monarch was really, in his force, a petty prince, compared to the Grecian republics; and therefore it behoved him, from views of safety more than from emulation, to interest himself in their quarrels, and to support the weaker side in every contest. This was the advice given by Alcibiades to Tissaphernes, and it prolonged near a century the date of the Persian empire; till the neglect of it for a moment, after the first appearance of the aspiring genius of Philip, brought that lofty and frail edifice to the ground, with a rapidity of which there are few instances in the history of mankind.

The successors of Alexander showed great jealousy of the balance of power; a jealousy founded on true politics and prudence, and which preserved distinct for several ages the partition made after the death of that famous conqueror. The fortune and ambition of Antigonus threatened them anew with a universal monarchy; but their combination, and their victory at Ipsus saved them. And in subsequent times, we find, that, as the Eastern princes considered the Greeks and Macedonians as the only real military force, with whom they had any intercourse, they kept always a watchful eye over that part of the world. The Ptolemies, in particular, supported first Aratus and the Achaeans, and then Cleomenes king of Sparta, from no other view than as a counterbalance to the Macedonian monarchs. For this is the account which Polybius gives of the Egyptian politics.

The reason, why it is supposed, that the ancients were entirely ignorant of the balance of power, seems to be drawn from the Roman history more than the Grecian; and as the transactions of the former are generally more familiar to us, we have thence formed all our conclusions. It must be owned, that the Romans never met with any such general combination or confederacy against them, as might naturally have been expected from the rapid conquests and declared ambition; but were allowed peaceably to subdue their neighbours, one after another, till they extended their dominion over the whole known world. Not to mention the fabulous history of their Italic wars; there was, upon Hannibal’s invasion of the Roman state, a remarkable crisis, which ought to have called up the attention of all civilized nations. It appeared afterwards (nor was it difficult to be observed at the time) that this was a contest for universal empire; yet no prince or state seems to have been in the least alarmed about the event or issue of the quarrel. Philip of Macedon remained neuter, till he saw the victories of Hannibal; and then most imprudently formed an alliance with the conqueror, upon terms still more imprudent. He stipulated, that he was to assist the Carthaginian state in their conquest of Italy; after which they engaged to send over forces into Greece, to assist him in subduing the Grecian commonwealths.

The Rhodian and Achaean republics are much celebrated by ancient historians for their wisdom and sound policy; yet both of them assisted the Romans in their wars against Philip and Antiochus. And what may be esteemed still a stronger proof, that this maxim was not generally known in those ages; no ancient author has remarked the imprudence of these measures, nor has even blamed that absurd treaty above-mentioned, made by Philip with the Carthaginians. Princes and statesmen, in all ages, may, before-hand, be blinded in their reasonings with regard to events: But it is somewhat extraordinary, that historians, afterwards, should not form a sounder judgment of them.

Massinissa, Attalus, Prusias, in gratifying their private passions, were, all of them, the instruments of the Roman greatness; and never seem to have suspected, that they were forging their own chains, while they advanced the conquests of their ally. A simple treaty and agreement between Massinissa and the Carthaginians, so much required by mutual interest, barred the Romans from all entrance into Africa, and preserved liberty to mankind.

The only prince we meet with in the Roman history, who seems to have understood the balance of power, is Hiero king of Syracuse. Though the ally of Rome, he sent assistance to the Carthaginians, during the war of the auxiliaries; “Esteeming it requisite,” says Polybius, “both in order to retain his dominions in Sicily, and to preserve the Roman friendship, that Carthage should be safe; lest by its fall the remaining power should be able, without contrast or opposition, to execute every purpose and undertaking. And here he acted with great wisdom and prudence. For that is never, on any account, to be overlooked; nor ought such a force ever to be thrown into one hand, as to incapacitate the neighbouring states from defending their rights against it.” Here is the aim of modern politics pointed out in express terms.

In short, the maxim of preserving the balance of power is founded so much on common sense and obvious reasoning, that it is impossible it could altogether have escaped antiquity, where we find, in other particulars, so many marks of deep penetration and discernment. If it was not so generally known and acknowledged as at present, it had, at least, an influence on all the wiser and more experienced princes and politicians. And indeed, even at present, however generally known and acknowledged among speculative reasoners, it has not, in practice, an authority much more extensive among those who govern the world.

After the fall of the Roman empire, the form of government, established by the northern conquerors, incapacitated them, in a great measure, for farther conquests, and long maintained each state in its proper boundaries. But when vassalage and the feudal militia were abolished, mankind were anew alarmed by the danger of universal monarchy, from the union of so many kingdoms and principalities in the person of the emperor Charles. But the power of the house of Austria, founded on extensive but divided dominions, and their riches, derived chiefly from mines of gold and silver, were more likely to decay, of themselves, from internal defects, than to overthrow all the bulwarks raised against them. In less than a century, the force of that violent and haughty race was shattered, their opulence dissipated, their splendor eclipsed. A new power succeeded, more formidable to the liberties of Europe, possessing all the advantages of the former, and labouring under none of its defects; except a share of that spirit of bigotry and persecution, with which the house of Austria was so long, and still is so much infatuated.

In the general wars, maintained against this ambitious power, Great Britain has stood foremost; and she still maintains her station. Beside her advantages of riches and situation, her people are animated with such a national spirit, and are so fully sensible of the blessings of their government, that we may hope their vigour never will languish in so necessary and so just a cause. On the contrary, if we may judge by the past, their passionate ardour seems rather to require some moderation; and they have oftener erred from a laudable excess than from a blameable deficiency.

In the first place, we seem to have been more possessed with the ancient Greek spirit of jealous emulation, than actuated by the prudent views of modern politics. Our wars with France have been begun with justice, and even, perhaps, from necessity; but have always been too far pushed from obstinacy and passion. The same peace, which was afterwards made at Ryswick in 1697, was offered so early as the year ninety-two; that concluded at Utrecht in 1712 might have been finished on as good conditions at Gertruytenberg in the year eight; and we might have given at Frankfort, in 1743, the same terms, which we were glad to accept of at Aix-la-Chapelle in the year forty-eight. Here then we see, that above half of our wars with France, and all our public debts, are owing more to our own imprudent vehemence, than to the ambition of our neighbours.

In the second place, we are so declared in our opposition to French power, and so alert in defence of our allies, that they always reckon upon our force as upon their own; and expecting to carry on war at our expence, refuse all reasonable terms of accommodation. Habent subjectos, tanquam suos; viles, ut alienos. All the world knows, that the factious vote of the House of Commons, in the beginning of the last parliament, with the professed humour of the nation, made the queen of Hungary inflexible in her terms, and prevented that agreement with Prussia, which would immediately have restored the general tranquillity of Europe.

In the third place, we are such true combatants, that, when once engaged, we lose all concern for ourselves and our posterity, and consider only how we may best annoy the enemy. To mortgage our revenues at so deep a rate, in wars, where we were only accessories, was surely the most fatal delusion, that a nation, which had any pretension to politics and prudence, has ever yet been guilty of. That remedy of funding, if it be a remedy, and not rather a poison, ought, in all reason, to be reserved to the last extremity; and no evil, but the greatest and most urgent, should ever induce us to embrace so dangerous an expedient.

These excesses, to which we have been carried, are prejudicial; and may, perhaps, in time, become still more prejudicial another way, by begetting, as is usual, the opposite extreme, and rendering us totally careless and supine with regard to the fate of Europe. The Athenians, from the most bustling, intriguing, warlike people of Greece, finding their error in thrusting themselves into every quarrel, abandoned all attention to foreign affairs; and in no contest ever took part on either side, except by their flatteries and complaisance to the victor.

Enormous monarchies are, probably, destructive to human nature; in their progress, in their continuance, and even in their downfal, which never can be very distant from their establishment. The military genius, which aggrandized the monarchy, soon leaves the court, the capital, and the center of such a government; while the wars are carried on at a great distance, and interest so small a part of the state. The ancient nobility, whose affections attach them to their sovereign, live all at court; and never will accept of military employments, which would carry them to remote and barbarous frontiers, where they are distant both from their pleasures and their fortune. The arms of the state, must, therefore, be entrusted to mercenary strangers, without zeal, without attachment, without honour; ready on every occasion to turn them against the prince, and join each desperate malcontent, who offers pay and plunder. This is the necessary progress of human affairs: Thus human nature checks itself in its airy elevation: Thus ambition blindly labours for the destruction of the conqueror, of his family, and of every thing near and dear to him. The Bourbons, trusting to the support of their brave, faithful, and affectionate nobility, would push their advantage, without reserve or limitation. These, while fired with glory and emulation, can bear the fatigues and dangers of war; but never would submit to languish in the garrisons of Hungary or Lithuania, forgot at court, and sacrificed to the intrigues of every minion or mistress, who approaches the prince. The troops are filled with Cravates and Tartars, Hussars and Cossacs; intermingled, perhaps, with a few soldiers of fortune from the better provinces: And the melancholy fate of the Roman emperors, from the same cause, is renewed over and over again, till the final dissolution of the monarchy.

ESSAY VIII: OF TAXES

There is a prevailing maxim, among some reasoners, that every new tax creates a new ability in the subject to bear it, and that each encrease of public burdens encreases proportionably the industry of the people. This maxim is of such a nature as is most likely to be abused; and is so much the more dangerous, as its truth cannot be altogether denied: but it must be owned, when kept within certain bounds, to have some foundation in reason and experience.

When a tax is laid upon commodities, which are consumed by the common people, the necessary consequence may seem to be, either that the poor must retrench something from their way of living, or raise their wages, so as to make the burden of the tax fall entirely upon the rich. But there is a third consequence, which often follows upon taxes, namely, that the poor encrease their industry, perform more work, and live as well as before, without demanding more for their labour. Where taxes are moderate, are laid on gradually, and affect not the necessaries of life, this consequence naturally follows; and it is certain, that such difficulties often serve to excite the industry of a people, and render them more opulent and laborious, than others, who enjoy the greatest advantages. For we may observe, as a parallel instance, that the most commercial nations have not always possessed the greatest extent of fertile land; but, on the contrary, that they have laboured under many natural disadvantages. Tyre, Athens, Carthage, Rhodes, Genoa, Venice, Holland, are strong examples to this purpose. And in all history, we find only three instances of large and fertile countries, which have possessed much trade; the Netherlands, England, and France. The two former seem to have been allured by the advantages of their maritime situation, and the necessity they lay under of frequenting foreign ports, in order to procure what their own climate refused them. And as to France, trade has come late into that kingdom, and seems to have been the effect of reflection and observation in an ingenious and enterprizing people, who remarked the riches acquired by such of the neighbouring nations as cultivated navigation and commerce.

The places mentioned by Cicero, as possessed of the greatest commerce in his time, are Alexandria, Colchus, Tyre, Sidon, Andros, Cyprus, Pamphylia, Lycia, Rhodes, Chios, Byzantium, Lesbos, Smyrna, Miletum, Coos. All these, except Alexandria, were either small islands, or narrow territories. And that city owed its trade entirely to the happiness of its situation.

Since therefore some natural necessities or disadvantages may be thought favourable to industry, why may not artificial burdens have the same effect? Sir William Temple, we may observe, ascribes the industry of the Dutch entirely to necessity, proceeding from their natural disadvantages; and illustrates his doctrine by a striking comparison with Ireland; “where,” says he, “by the largeness and plenty of the soil, and scarcity of people, all things necessary to life are so cheap, that an industrious man, by two days labour, may gain enough to feed him the rest of the week. Which I take to be a very plain ground of the laziness attributed to the people. For men naturally prefer ease before labour, and will not take pains if they can live idle; though when, by necessity, they have been inured to it, they cannot leave it, being grown a custom necessary to their health, and to their very entertainment. Nor perhaps is the change harder, from constant ease to labour, than from constant labour to ease.” After which the author proceeds to confirm his doctrine, by enumerating, as above, the places where trade has most flourished, in ancient and modern times; and which are commonly observed to be such narrow confined territories, as beget a necessity for industry.

The best taxes are such as are levied upon consumptions, especially those of luxury; because such taxes are least felt by the people. They seem, in some measure, voluntary; since a man may chuse how far he will use the commodity which is taxed: They are paid gradually and insensibly: They naturally produce sobriety and frugality, if judiciously imposed: And being confounded with the natural price of the commodity, they are scarcely perceived by the consumers. Their only disadvantage is, that they are expensive in the levying.

Taxes upon possessions are levied without expence; but have every other disadvantage. Most states, however, are obliged to have recourse to them, in order to supply the deficiencies of the other.

But the most pernicious of all taxes are the arbitrary. They are commonly converted, by their management, into punishments on industry; and also, by their unavoidable inequality, are more grievous, than by the real burden which they impose. It is surprising, therefore, to see them have place among any civilized people.

In general, all poll-taxes, even when not arbitrary, which they commonly are, may be esteemed dangerous: Because it is so easy for the sovereign to add a little more, and a little more, to the sum demanded, that these taxes are apt to become altogether oppressive and intolerable. On the other hand, a duty upon commodities checks itself; and a prince will soon find, that an encrease of the impost is no encrease of his revenue. It is not easy, therefore, for a people to be altogether ruined by such taxes.

Historians inform us, that one of the chief causes of the destruction of the Roman state, was the alteration, which Constantine introduced into the finances, by substituting an universal poll-tax, in lieu of almost all the tithes, customs, and excises, which formerly composed the revenue of the empire. The people, in all the provinces, were so grinded and oppressed by the publicans, that they were glad to take refuge under the conquering arms of the barbarians; whose dominion, as they had fewer necessities and less art, was found preferable to the refined tyranny of the Romans.

It is an opinion, zealously promoted by some political writers, that, since all taxes, as they pretend, fall ultimately upon land, it were better to lay them originally there, and abolish every duty upon consumptions. But it is denied, that all taxes fall ultimately upon land. If a duty be laid upon any commodity, consumed by an artisan, he has two obvious expedients for paying it; he may retrench somewhat of his expence, or he may encrease his labour. Both these resources are more easy and natural, than that of heightening his wages. We see, that, in years of scarcity, the weaver either consumes less or labours more, or employs both these expedients of frugality and industry, by which he is enabled to reach the end of the year. It is but just, that he should subject himself to the same hardships, if they deserve the name, for the sake of the publick, which gives him protection. By what contrivance can he raise the price of his labour? The manufacturer who employs him, will not give him more: Neither can he, because the merchant, who exports the cloth, cannot raise its price, being limited by the price which it yields in foreign markets. Every man, to be sure, is desirous of pushing off from himself the burden of any tax, which is imposed, and of laying it upon others: But as every man has the same inclination, and is upon the defensive; no set of men can be supposed to prevail altogether in this contest. And why the landed gentleman should be the victim of the whole, and should not be able to defend himself, as well as others are, I cannot readily imagine. All tradesmen, indeed, would willingly prey upon him, and divide him among them, if they could: But this inclination they always have, though no taxes were levied; and the same methods, by which he guards against the imposition of tradesmen before taxes, will serve him afterwards, and make them share the burden with him. They must be very heavy taxes, indeed, and very injudiciously levied, which the artizan will not, of himself, be enabled to pay, by superior industry and frugality, without raising the price of his labour.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that we have, with regard to taxes, an instance of what frequently happens in political institutions, that the consequences of things are diametrically opposite to what we should expect on the first appearance. It is regarded as a fundamental maxim of the Turkish government, that the Grand Signior, though absolute master of the lives and fortunes of each individual, has no authority to impose a new tax; and every Ottoman prince, who has made such an attempt, either has been obliged to retract, or has found the fatal effects of his perseverance. One would imagine, that this prejudice or established opinion were the firmest barrier in the world against oppression; yet it is certain, that its effect is quite contrary. The emperor, having no regular method of encreasing his revenue, must allow all the bashaws and governors to oppress and abuse the subjects: And these he squeezes after their return from their government. Whereas, if he could impose a new tax, like our European princes, his interest would so far be united with that of his people, that he would immediately feel the bad effects of these disorderly levies of money, and would find, that a pound, raised by a general imposition, would have less pernicious effects, than a shilling taken in so unequal and arbitrary a manner.

ESSAY IX: OF PUBLIC CREDIT

It appears to have been the common practice of antiquity, to make provision, during peace, for the necessities of war, and to hoard up treasures before-hand, as the instruments either of conquest or defence; without trusting to extraordinary impositions, much less to borrowing, in times of disorder and confusion. Besides the immense sums above mentioned, which were amassed by Athens, and by the Ptolemies, and other successors of Alexander; we learn from Plato, that the frugal Lacedemonians had also collected a great treasure; and Arrian and Plutarch take notice of the riches which Alexander got possession of on the conquest of Susa and Ecbatana, and which were reserved, some of them, from the time of Cyrus. If I remember right, the scripture also mentions the treasure of Hezekiah and the Jewish princes; as profane history does that of Philip and Perseus, kings of Macedon. The ancient republics of Gaul had commonly large sums in reserve. Every one knows the treasure seized in Rome by Julius Cæsar, during the civil wars: and we find afterwards, that the wiser emperors, Augustus, Tiberius, Vespasian, Severus, &c. always discovered the prudent foresight, of saving great sums against any public exigency.

On the contrary, our modern expedient, which has become very general, is to mortgage the public revenues, and to trust that posterity will pay off the incumbrances contracted by their ancestors: And they, having before their eyes, so good an example of their wise fathers, have the same prudent reliance on their posterity; who, at last, from necessity more than choice, are obliged to place the same confidence in a new posterity. But not to waste time in declaiming against a practice which appears ruinous, beyond all controversy; it seems pretty apparent, that the ancient maxims are, in this respect, more prudent than the modern; even though the latter had been confined within some reasonable bounds, and had ever, in any instance, been attended with such frugality, in time of peace, as to discharge the debts incurred by an expensive war. For why should the case be so different between the public and an individual, as to make us establish different maxims of conduct for each? If the funds of the former be greater, its necessary expences are proportionably larger; if its resources be more numerous, they are not infinite; and as its frame should be calculated for a much longer duration than the date of a single life, or even of a family, it should embrace maxims, large, durable, and generous, agreeably to the supposed extent of its existence. To trust to chances and temporary expedients, is, indeed, what the necessity of human affairs frequently renders unavoidable; but whoever voluntarily depend on such resources, have not necessity, but their own folly, to accuse for their misfortunes, when any such befal them.

If the abuses of treasures be dangerous, either by engaging the state in rash enterprizes, or making it neglect military discipline, in confidence of its riches; the abuses of mortgaging are more certain and inevitable; poverty, impotence, and subjection to foreign powers.

According to modern policy war is attended with every destructive circumstance; loss of men, encrease of taxes, decay of commerce, dissipation of money, devastation by sea and land. According to ancient maxims, the opening of the public treasure, as it produced an uncommon affluence of gold and silver, served as a temporary encouragement to industry, and atoned, in some degree, for the inevitable calamities of war.

It is very tempting to a minister to employ such an expedient, as enables him to make a great figure during his administration, without overburthening the people with taxes, or exciting any immediate clamours against himself. The practice, therefore, of contracting debt will almost infallibly be abused, in every government. It would scarcely be more imprudent to give a prodigal son a credit in every banker’s shop in London, than to impower a statesman to draw bills, in this manner, upon posterity.

What then shall we say to the new paradox, that public incumbrances, are, of themselves, advantageous, independent of the necessity of contracting them; and that any state, even though it were not pressed by a foreign enemy, could not possibly have embraced a wiser expedient for promoting commerce and riches, than to create funds, and debts, and taxes, without limitation? Reasonings, such as these, might naturally have passed for trials of wit among rhetoricians, like the panegyrics on folly and a fever, on Busiris and Nero, had we not seen such absurd maxims patronized by great ministers, and by a whole party among us.

Let us examine the consequences of public debts, both in our domestic management, by their influence on commerce and industry; and in our foreign transactions, by their effect on wars and negociations.

Public securities are with us become a kind of money, and pass as readily at the current price as gold or silver. Wherever any profitable undertaking offers itself, how expensive soever, there are never wanting hands enow to embrace it; nor need a trader, who has sums in the public stocks, fear to launch out into the most extensive trade; since he is possessed of funds, which will answer the most sudden demand that can be made upon him. No merchant thinks it necessary to keep by him any considerable cash. Bank-stock, or India-bonds, especially the latter, serve all the same purposes; because he can dispose of them, or pledge them to a banker, in a quarter of an hour; and at the same time they are not idle, even when in his scritoire, but bring him in a constant revenue. In short, our national debts furnish merchants with a species of money, that is continually multiplying in their hands, and produces sure gain, besides the profits of their commerce. This must enable them to trade upon less profit. The small profit of the merchant renders the commodity cheaper, causes a greater consumption, quickens the labour of the common people, and helps to spread arts and industry throughout the whole society.

There are also, we may observe, in England and in all states, which have both commerce and public debts, a set of men, who are half merchants, half stock-holders, and may be supposed willing to trade for small profits; because commerce is not their principal or sole support, and their revenues in the funds are a sure resource for themselves and their families. Were there no funds, great merchants would have no expedient for realizing or securing any part of their profit, but by making purchases of land; and land has many disadvantages in comparison of funds. Requiring more care and inspection, it divides the time and attention of the merchant; upon any tempting offer or extraordinary accident in trade, it is not so easily converted into money; and as it attracts too much, both by the many natural pleasures it affords, and the authority it gives, it soon converts the citizen into the country gentleman. More men, therefore, with large stocks and incomes, may naturally be supposed to continue in trade, where there are public debts; and this, it must be owned, is of some advantage to commerce, by diminishing its profits, promoting circulation, and encouraging industry.

But, in opposition to these two favourable circumstances, perhaps of no very great importance, weigh the many disadvantages which attend our public debts, in the whole interior œconomy of the state: You will find no comparison between the ill and the good which result from them.

First, It is certain, that national debts cause a mighty confluence of people and riches to the capital, by the great sums, levied in the provinces to pay the interest; and perhaps, too, by the advantages in trade above mentioned, which they give the merchants in the capital above the rest of the kingdom. The question is, whether, in our case, it be for the public interest, that so many privileges should be conferred on London, which has already arrived at such an enormous size, and seems still encreasing? Some men are apprehensive of the consequences. For my own part, I cannot forbear thinking, that, though the head is undoubtedly too large for the body, yet that great city is so happily situated, that its excessive bulk causes less inconvenience than even a smaller capital to a greater kingdom. There is more difference between the prices of all provisions in Paris and Languedoc, than between those in London and Yorkshire. The immense greatness, indeed, of London, under a government which admits not of discretionary power, renders the people factious, mutinous, seditious, and even perhaps rebellious. But to this evil the national debts themselves tend to provide a remedy. The first visible eruption, or even immediate danger, of public disorders must alarm all the stockholders, whose property is the most precarious of any; and will make them fly to the support of government, whether menaced by Jacobitish violence or democratical frenzy.

Secondly, Public stocks, being a kind of paper-credit, have all the disadvantages attending that species of money. They banish gold and silver from the most considerable commerce of the state, reduce them to common circulation, and by that means render all provisions and labour dearer than otherwise they would be.

Thirdly, The taxes, which are levied to pay the interests of these debts, are apt either to heighten the price of labour, or be an oppression on the poorer sort.

Fourthly, As foreigners possess a great share of our national funds, they render the public, in a manner, tributary to them, and may in time occasion the transport of our people and our industry.

Fifthly, The greater part of the public stock being always in the hands of idle people, who live on their revenue, our funds, in that view, give great encouragement to an useless and unactive life.

But though the injury, that arises to commerce and industry from our public funds, will appear, upon balancing the whole, not inconsiderable, it is trivial, in comparison of the prejudice that results to the state considered as a body politic, which must support itself in the society of nations, and have various transactions with other states in wars and negociations. The ill, there, is pure and unmixed, without any favourable circumstance to atone for it; and it is an ill too of a nature the highest and most important.

We have, indeed, been told, that the public is no weaker upon account of its debts; since they are mostly due among ourselves, and bring as much property to one as they take from another. It is like transferring money from the right hand to the left; which leaves the person neither richer nor poorer than before. Such loose reasonings and specious comparisons will always pass, where we judge not upon principles. I ask, Is it possible, in the nature of things, to overburthen a nation with taxes, even where the sovereign resides among them? The very doubt seems extravagant; since it is requisite, in every community, that there be a certain proportion observed between the laborious and the idle part of it. But if all our present taxes be mortgaged, must we not invent new ones? And may not this matter be carried to a length that is ruinous and destructive?

In every nation, there are always some methods of levying money more easy than others, agreeably to the way of living of the people, and the commodities they make use of. In Great Britain, the excises upon malt and beer afford a large revenue; because the operations of malting and brewing are tedious, and are impossible to be concealed; and at the same time, these commodities are not so absolutely necessary to life, as that the raising of their price would very much affect the poorer sort. These taxes being all mortgaged, what difficulty to find new ones! what vexation and ruin of the poor!

Duties upon consumptions are more equal and easy than those upon possessions. What a loss to the public, that the former are all exhausted, and that we must have recourse to the more grievous method of levying taxes!

Were all the proprietors of land only stewards to the public, must not necessity force them to practise all the arts of oppression used by stewards;

where the absence or negligence of the proprietor render them secure against enquiry?

It will scarcely be asserted, that no bounds ought ever to be set to national debts; and that the public would be no weaker, were twelve or fifteen shillings in the pound, land-tax, mortgaged, with all the present customs and excises. There is something, therefore, in the case, beside the mere transferring of property from the one hand to another. In 500 years, the posterity of those now in the coaches, and of those upon the boxes, will probably have changed places, without affecting the public by these revolutions.

Suppose the public once fairly brought to that condition, to which it is hastening with such amazing rapidity; suppose the land to be taxed eighteen or nineteen shillings in the pound; for it can never bear the whole twenty; suppose all the excises and customs to be screwed up to the utmost which the nation can bear, without entirely losing its commerce and industry; and suppose that all those funds are mortgaged to perpetuity, and that the invention and wit of all our projectors can find no new imposition, which may serve as the foundation of a new loan; and let us consider the necessary consequences of this situation. Though the imperfect state of our political knowledge, and the narrow capacities of men, make it difficult to fortel the effects which will result from any untried measure, the seeds of ruin are here scattered with such profusion as not to escape the eye of the most careless observer.

In this unnatural state of society, the only persons, who possess any revenue beyond the immediate effects of their industry, are the stock-holders, who draw almost all the rent of the land and houses, besides the produce of all the customs and excises. These are men, who have no connexions with the state, who can enjoy their revenue in any part of the globe in which they chuse to reside, who will naturally bury themselves in the capital or in great cities, and who will sink into the lethargy of a stupid and pampered luxury, without spirit, ambition, or enjoyment. Adieu to all ideas of nobility, gentry, and family. The stocks can be transferred in an instant, and being in such a fluctuating state, will seldom be transmitted during three generations from father to son. Or were they to remain ever so long in one family, they convey no hereditary authority or credit to the possessor; and by this means, the several ranks of men, which form a kind of independent magistracy in a state, instituted by the hand of nature, are entirely lost; and every man in authority derives his influence from the commission alone of the sovereign. No expedient remains for preventing or suppressing insurrections, but mercenary armies: No expedient at all remains for resisting tyranny: Elections are swayed by bribery and corruption alone: And the middle power between king and people being totally removed, a grievous despotism must infallibly prevail. The landholders, despised for their poverty, and hated for their oppressions, will be utterly unable to make any opposition to it.

Though a resolution should be formed by the legislature never to impose any tax which hurts commerce and discourages industry, it will be impossible for men, in subjects of such extreme delicacy, to reason so justly as never to be mistaken, or amidst difficulties so urgent, never to be seduced from their resolution. The continual fluctuations in commerce require continual alterations in the nature of the taxes; which exposes the legislature every moment to the danger both of wilful and involuntary error. And any great blow given to trade, whether by injudicious taxes or by other accidents, throws the whole system of government into confusion.

But what expedient can the public now employ, even supposing trade to continue in the most flourishing condition, in order to support its foreign wars and enterprizes, and to defend its own honour and interests, or those of its allies? I do not ask how the public is to exert such a prodigious power as it has maintained during our late wars; where we have so much exceeded, not only our own natural strength, but even that of the greatest empires. This extravagance is the abuse complained of, as the source of all the dangers, to which we are at present exposed. But since we must still suppose great commerce and opulence to remain, even after every fund is mortgaged; these riches must be defended by proportional power; and whence is the public to derive the revenue which supports it? It must plainly be from a continual taxation of the annuitants, or, which is the same thing, from mortgaging anew, on every exigency, a certain part of their annuities; and thus making them contribute to their own defence, and to that of the nation. But the difficulties, attending this system of policy, will easily appear, whether we suppose the king to have become absolute master, or to be still controuled by national councils, in which the annuitants themselves must necessarily bear the principal sway.

If the prince has become absolute, as may naturally be expected from this situation of affairs, it is so easy for him to encrease his exactions upon the annuitants, which amount only to the retaining money in his own hands, that this species of property would soon lose all its credit, and the whole income of every individual in the state must lie entirely at the mercy of the sovereign: A degree of despotism, which no oriental monarchy has ever yet attained. If, on the contrary, the consent of the annuitants be requisite for every taxation, they will never be persuaded to contribute sufficiently even to the support of government; as the diminution of their revenue must in that case be very sensible, would not be disguised under the appearance of a branch of excise or customs, and would not be shared by any other order of the state, who are already supposed to be taxed to the utmost. There are instances, in some republics, of a hundredth penny, and sometimes of the fiftieth, being given to the support of the state; but this is always an extraordinary exertion of power, and can never become the foundation of a constant national defence. We have always found, where a government has mortgaged all its revenues, that it necessarily sinks into a state of languor, inactivity, and impotence.

Such are the inconveniencies, which may reasonably be foreseen, of this situation, to which Great Britain is visibly tending. Not to mention, the numberless inconveniencies, which cannot be foreseen, and which must result from so monstrous a situation as that of making the public the chief or sole proprietor of land, besides investing it with every branch of customs and excise, which the fertile imagination of ministers and projectors have been able to invent.

I must confess, that there is a strange supineness, from long custom, creeped into all ranks of men, with regard to public debts, not unlike what divines so vehemently complain of with regard to their religious doctrines. We all own, that the most sanguine imagination cannot hope, either that this or any future ministry will be possessed of such rigid and steady frugality, as to make a considerable progress in the payment of our debts; or that the situation of foreign affairs will, for any long time, allow them leisure and tranquillity for such an undertaking. What then is to become of us? Were we ever so good Christians, and ever so resigned to Providence; this, methinks, were a curious question, even considered as a speculative one, and what it might not be altogether impossible to form some conjectural solution of. The events here will depend little upon the contingencies of battles, negociations, intrigues, and factions. There seems to be a natural progress of things, which may guide our reasoning. As it would have required but a moderate share of prudence, when we first began this practice of mortgaging, to have foretold, from the nature of men and of ministers, that things would necessarily be carried to the length we see; so now, that they have at last happily reached it, it may not be difficult to guess at the consequences. It must, indeed, be one of these two events; either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation. It is impossible that they can both subsist, after the manner they have been hitherto managed, in this, as well as in some other countries.

There was, indeed, a scheme for the payment of our debts, which was proposed by an excellent citizen, Mr. Hutchinson, above thirty years ago, and which was much approved of by some men of sense, but never was likely to take effect. He asserted, that there was a fallacy in imagining that the public owed this debt; for that really every individual owed a proportional share of it, and paid, in his taxes, a proportional share of the interest, beside the expence of levying these taxes. Had we not better, then, says he, make a distribution of the debt among ourselves, and each of us contribute a sum suitable to his property, and by that means discharge at once all our funds and public mortgages? He seems not to have considered, that the laborious poor pay a considerable part of the taxes by their annual consumptions, though they could not advance, at once, a proportional part of the sum required. Not to mention, that property in money and stock in trade might easily be concealed or disguised; and that visible property in lands and houses would really at last answer for the whole: An inequality and oppression, which never would be submitted to. But though this project is not likely to take place; it is not altogether improbable, that, when the nation becomes heartily sick of their debts, and is cruelly oppressed by them, some daring projector may arise with visionary schemes for their discharge. And as public credit will begin, by that time, to be a little frail, the least touch will destroy it, as happened in France during the regency; and in this manner it will die of the doctor.

But it is more probable, that the breach of national faith will be the necessary effect of wars, defeats, misfortunes, and public calamities, or even perhaps of victories and conquests. I must confess, when I see princes and states fighting and quarrelling, amidst their debts, funds, and public mortgages, it always brings to my mind a match of cudgel-playing fought in a China shop. How can it be expected, that sovereigns will spare a species of property, which is pernicious to themselves and to the public, when they have so little compassion on lives and properties, that are useful to both? Let the time come (and surely it will come) when the new funds, created for the exigencies of the year, are not subscribed to, and raise not the money projected. Suppose, either that the cash of the nation is exhausted; or that our faith, which has hitherto been so ample, begins to fail us. Suppose, that, in this distress, the nation is threatened with an invasion; a rebellion is suspected or broken out at home; a squadron cannot be equipped for want of pay, victuals, or repairs; or even a foreign subsidy cannot be advanced. What must a prince or minister do in such an emergence? The right of self-preservation is unalienable in every individual, much more in every community. And the folly of our statesmen must then be greater than the folly of those who first contracted debt, or, what is more, than that of those who trusted, or continue to trust this security, if these statesmen have the means of safety in their hands, and do not employ them. The funds, created and mortgaged, will, by that time, bring in a large yearly revenue, sufficient for the defence and security of the nation: Money is perhaps lying in the exchequer, ready for the discharge of the quarterly interest: Necessity calls, fear urges, reason exhorts, compassion alone exclaims: The money will immediately be seized for the current service, under the most solemn protestations, perhaps, of being immediately replaced. But no more is requisite. The whole fabric, already tottering, falls to the ground, and buries thousands in its ruins. And this, I think, may be called the natural death of public credit: For to this period it tends as naturally as an animal body to its dissolution and destruction.

So great dupes are the generality of mankind, that, notwithstanding such a violent shock to public credit, as a voluntary bankruptcy in England would occasion, it would not probably be long ere credit would again revive in as flourishing a condition as before. The present king of France, during the late war, borrowed money at lower interest than ever his grandfather did; and as low as the British parliament, comparing the natural rate of interest in both kingdoms. And though men are commonly more governed by what they have seen, than by what they foresee, with whatever certainty; yet promises, protestations, fair appearances, with the allurements of present interest, have such powerful influence as few are able to resist. Mankind are, in all ages, caught by the same baits: The same tricks, played over and over again, still trepan them. The heights of popularity and patriotism are still the beaten road to power and tyranny; flattery to treachery; standing armies to arbitrary government; and the glory of God to the temporal interest of the clergy. The fear of an everlasting destruction of credit, allowing it to be an evil, is a needless bugbear. A prudent man, in reality, would rather lend to the public immediately after we had taken a spunge to our debts, than at present; as much as an opulent knave, even though one could not force him to pay, is a preferable debtor to an honest bankrupt: For the former, in order to carry on business, may find it his interest to discharge his debts, where they are not exorbitant: The latter has it not in his power. The reasoning of Tacitus, as it is eternally true, is very applicable to our present case. Sed vulgus ad magnitudinem beneficiorum aderat: Stultissimus quisque pecuniis mercabatur: Apud sapientes cassa habebantur, quæ neque dari neque accipi, salva republica, poterant. The public is a debtor, whom no man can oblige to pay. The only check which the creditors have upon her, is the interest of preserving credit; an interest, which may easily be overbalanced by a great debt, and by a difficult and extraordinary emergence, even supposing that credit irrecoverable. Not to mention, that a present necessity often forces states into measures, which are, strictly speaking, against their interest.

These two events, supposed above, are calamitous, but not the most calamitous. Thousands are thereby sacrificed to the safety of millions. But we are not without danger, that the contrary event may take place, and that millions may be sacrificed for ever to the temporary safety of thousands. Our popular government, perhaps, will render it difficult or dangerous for a minister to venture on so desperate an expedient, as that of a voluntary bankruptcy. And though the house of Lords be altogether composed of proprietors of land, and the house of Commons chiefly; and consequently neither of them can be supposed to have great property in the funds. Yet the connections of the members may be so great with the proprietors, as to render them more tenacious of public faith, than prudence, policy, or even justice, strictly speaking, requires. And perhaps too, our foreign enemies may be so politic as to discover, that our safety lies in despair, and may not, therefore, show the danger, open and barefaced, till it be inevitable. The balance of power in Europe, our grandfathers, our fathers, and we, have all deemed too unequal to be preserved without our attention and assistance. But our children, weary of the struggle, and fettered with incumbrances, may sit down secure, and see their neighbours oppressed and conquered; till, at last, they themselves and their creditors lie both at the mercy of the conqueror. And this may properly enough be denominated the violent death of our public credit.

These seem to be the events, which are not very remote, and which reason foresees as clearly almost as she can do any thing that lies in the womb of time. And though the ancients maintained, that in order to reach the gift of prophecy, a certain divine fury or madness was requisite, one may safely affirm, that, in order to deliver such prophecies as these, no more is necessary, than merely to be in one’s senses, free from the influence of popular madness and delusion.

ESSAY X: OF SOME REMARKABLE CUSTOMS

I shall observe three remarkable customs in three celebrated governments; and shall conclude from the whole, that all general maxims in politics ought to be established with great caution; and that irregular and extraordinary appearances are frequently discovered in the moral, as well as in the physical world. The former, perhaps, we can better account for, after they happen, from springs and principles, of which every one has, within himself, or from observation, the strongest assurance and conviction: But it is often fully as impossible for human prudence, before-hand, to foresee and foretel them.

I. One would think it essential to every supreme council or assembly, which debates, that entire liberty of speech should be granted to every member, and that all motions or reasonings should be received, which can any wise tend to illustrate the point under deliberation. One would conclude, with still greater assurance, that, after a motion was made, which was voted and approved by that assembly in which the legislative power is lodged, the member who made the motion must for ever be exempted from future trial or enquiry. But no political maxim can, at first sight, appear more undisputable, than that he must, at least, be secured from all inferior jurisdiction; and that nothing less than the same supreme legislative assembly, in their subsequent meetings, could make him accountable for those motions and harangues, to which they had before given their approbation. But these axioms, however irrefragable they may appear, have all failed in the Athenian government, from causes and principles too, which appear almost inevitable.

By the γραφὴ παρανόμων, or indictment of illegality, (though it has not been remarked by antiquaries or commentators) any man was tried and punished in a common court of judicature, for any law which had passed upon his motion, in the assembly of the people, if that law appeared to the court unjust, or prejudicial to the public. Thus Demosthenes, finding that ship-money was levied irregularly, and that the poor bore the same burden as the rich in equipping the gallies, corrected this inequality by a very useful law, which proportioned the expence to the revenue and income of each individual. He moved for this law in the assembly: he proved its advantages; he convinced the people, the only legislature in Athens; the law passed, and was carried into execution: Yet was he tried in a criminal court for that law, upon the complaint of the rich, who resented the alteration that he had introduced into the finances. He was indeed acquitted, upon proving anew the usefulness of his law.

Ctesiphon moved in the assembly of the people, that particular honours should be conferred on Demosthenes, as on a citizen affectionate and useful to the commonwealth: The people, convinced of this truth, voted those honours: Yet was Ctesiphon tried by the γραφὴ παρανόμων. It was asserted, among other topics, that Demosthenes was not a good citizen, nor affectionate to the commonwealth: And the orator was called upon to defend his friend, and consequently himself; which he executed by that sublime piece of eloquence, that has ever since been the admiration of mankind.

After the battle of Chæronea, a law was passed upon the motion of Hyperides, giving liberty to slaves, and inrolling them in the troops. On account of this law, the orator was afterwards tried by the indictment above-mentioned, and defended himself, among other topics, by that stroke celebrated by Plutarch and Longinus. It was not I, said he, that moved for this law: It was the necessities of war; it was the battle of Chæronea. The orations of Demosthenes abound with many instances of trials of this nature, and prove clearly, that nothing was more commonly practised.

The Athenian Democracy was such a tumultuous government as we can scarcely form a notion of in the present age of the world. The whole collective body of the people voted in every law, without any limitation of property, without any distinction of rank, without controul from any magistracy or senate; and consequently without regard to order, justice, or prudence. The Athenians soon became sensible of the mischiefs attending this constitution: But being averse to checking themselves by any rule or restriction, they resolved, at least, to check their demagogues or counsellors, by the fear of future punishment and enquiry. They accordingly instituted this remarkable law; a law esteemed so essential to their form of government, that Æschines insists on it as a known truth, that, were it abolished or neglected, it were impossible for the Democracy to subsist.

The people feared not any ill consequence to liberty from the authority of the criminal courts; because these were nothing but very numerous juries, chosen by lot from among the people. And they justly considered themselves as in a state of perpetual pupillage; where they had an authority, after they came to the use of reason, not only to retract and controul whatever had been determined, but to punish any guardian for measures which they had embraced by his persuasion. The same law had place in Thebes; and for the same reason.

It appears to have been a usual practice in Athens, on the establishment of any law esteemed very useful or popular, to prohibit for ever its abrogation and repeal. Thus the demagogue, who diverted all the public revenues to the support of shows and spectacles, made it criminal so much as to move for a repeal of this law. Thus Leptines moved for a law, not only to recal all the immunities formerly granted, but to deprive the people for the future of the power of granting any more. Thus all bills of attainder were forbid, or laws that affected one Athenian, without extending to the whole commonwealth. These absurd clauses, by which the legislature vainly attempted to bind itself for ever, proceeded from an universal sense in the people of their own levity and inconstancy.

II. A wheel within a wheel, such as we observe in the German empire, is considered by Lord Shaftesbury as an absurdity in politics: But what must we say to two equal wheels, which govern the same political machine, without any mutual check, controul, or subordination; and yet preserve the greatest harmony and concord? To establish two distinct legislatures, each of which possesses full and absolute authority within itself, and stands in no need of the other’s assistance, in order to give validity to its acts; this may appear, before-hand, altogether impracticable, as long as men are actuated by the passions of ambition, emulation, and avarice, which have hitherto been their chief governing principles. And should I assert, that the state I have in my eye was divided into two distinct factions, each of which predominated in a distinct legislature, and yet produced no clashing in these independent powers; the supposition may appear incredible. And if, to augment the paradox, I should affirm, that this disjointed, irregular government, was the most active, triumphant, and illustrious commonwealth, that ever yet appeared; I should certainly be told, that such a political chimera was as absurd as any vision of priests or poets. But there is no need for searching long, in order to prove the reality of the foregoing suppositions: For this was actually the case with the Roman republic.

The legislative power was there lodged in the comitia centuriata and comitia tributa. In the former, it is well known, the people voted according to their census; so that when the first class was unanimous, though it contained not, perhaps, the hundredth part of the commonwealth, it determined the whole; and, with the authority of the senate, established a law. In the latter, every vote was equal; and as the authority of the senate was not there requisite, the lower people entirely prevailed, and gave law to the whole state. In all party-divisions, at first between the Patricians and Plebeians, afterwards between the nobles and the people, the interest of the Aristocracy was predominant in the first legislature; that of the Democracy in the second: The one could always destroy what the other had established: Nay, the one, by a sudden and unforeseen motion, might take the start of the other, and totally annihilate its rival, by a vote, which, from the nature of the constitution, had the full authority of a law. But no such contest is observed in the history of Rome: No instance of a quarrel between these two legislatures; though many between the parties that governed in each. Whence arose this concord, which may seem so extraordinary?

The legislature established in Rome, by the authority of Servius Tullius, was the comitia centuriata, which, after the expulsion of the kings, rendered the government, for some time, very aristocratical. But the people, having numbers and force on their side, and being elated with frequent conquests and victories in their foreign wars, always prevailed when pushed to extremity, and first extorted from the senate the magistracy of the tribunes, and next the legislative power of the comitia tributa. It then behoved the nobles to be more careful than ever not to provoke the people. For beside the force which the latter were always possessed of, they had now got possession of legal authority, and could instantly break in pieces any order or institution which directly opposed them. By intrigue, by influence, by money, by combination, and by the respect paid to their character, the nobles might often prevail, and direct the whole machine of government: But had they openly set their comitia centuriata in opposition to the tributa, they had soon lost the advantage of that institution, together with their consuls, prætors, ediles, and all the magistrates elected by it. But the comitia tributa, not having the same reason for respecting the centuriata, frequently repealed laws favourable to the Aristocracy: They limited the authority of the nobles, protected the people from oppression, and controuled the actions of the senate and magistracy. The centuriata found it convenient always to submit; and though equal in authority, yet being inferior in power, durst never directly give any shock to the other legislature, either by repealing its laws, or establishing laws, which, it foresaw, would soon be repealed by it.

No instance is found of any opposition or struggle between these comitia; except one slight attempt of this kind, mentioned by Appian in the third book of his civil wars. Mark Anthony, resolving to deprive Decimus Brutus of the government of Cisalpine Gaul, railed in the Forum, and called one of the comitia, in order to prevent the meeting of the other, which had been ordered by the senate. But affairs were then fallen into such confusion, and the Roman constitution was so near its final dissolution, that no inference can be drawn from such an expedient. This contest, besides, was founded more on form than party. It was the senate who ordered the comitia tributa, that they might obstruct the meeting of the centuriata, which, by the constitution, or at least forms of the government, could alone dispose of provinces.

Cicero was recalled by the comitia centuriata, though banished by the tributa, that is, by a plebiscitum. But his banishment, we may observe, never was considered as a legal deed, arising from the free choice and inclination of the people. It was always ascribed to the violence alone of Clodius, and to the disorders introduced by him into the government.

III. The third custom, which we purpose to remark, regards England, and though it be not so important as those which we have pointed out in Athens and Rome, is no less singular and unexpected. It is a maxim in politics, which we readily admit as undisputed and universal, that a power, however great, when granted by law to an eminent magistrate, is not so dangerous to liberty, as an authority, however inconsiderable, which he acquires from violence and usurpation. For, besides that the law always limits every power which it bestows, the very receiving it as a concession establishes the authority whence it is derived, and preserves the harmony of the constitution. By the same right that one prerogative is assumed without law, another may also be claimed, and another, with still greater facility; while the first usurpations both serve as precedents to the following, and give force to maintain them. Hence the heroism of Hampden’s conduct, who sustained the whole violence of royal prosecution, rather than pay a tax of twenty shillings, not imposed by parliament; hence the care of all English patriots to guard against the first encroachments of the crown; and hence alone the existence, at this day, of English liberty.

There is, however, one occasion, where the parliament has departed from this maxim; and that is, in the pressing of seamen. The exercise of an irregular power is here tacitly permitted in the crown; and though it has frequently been under deliberation, how that power might be rendered legal, and granted, under proper restrictions, to the sovereign, no safe expedient could ever be proposed for that purpose; and the danger to liberty always appeared greater from law than from usurpation. While this power is exercised to no other end than to man the navy, men willingly submit to it, from a sense of its use and necessity; and the sailors, who are alone affected by it, find no body to support them, in claiming the rights and privileges, which the law grants, without distinction, to all English subjects. But were this power, on any occasion, made an instrument of faction or ministerial tyranny, the opposite faction, and indeed all lovers of their country, would immediately take the alarm, and support the injured party; the liberty of Englishmen would be asserted; juries would be implacable; and the tools of tyranny, acting both against law and equity, would meet with the severest vengeance. On the other hand, were the parliament to grant such an authority, they would probably fall into one of these two inconveniencies: They would either bestow it under so many restrictions as would make it lose its effect, by cramping the authority of the crown; or they would render it so large and comprehensive, as might give occasion to great abuses, for which we could, in that case, have no remedy. The very irregularity of the practice, at present, prevents its abuses, by affording so easy a remedy against them.

I pretend not, by this reasoning, to exclude all possibility of contriving a register for seamen, which might man the navy, without being dangerous to liberty. I only observe, that no satisfactory scheme of that nature has yet been proposed. Rather than adopt any project hitherto invented, we continue a practice seemingly the most absurd and unaccountable. Authority, in times of full internal peace and concord, is armed against law. A continued violence is permitted in the crown, amidst the greatest jealousy and watchfulness in the people; nay proceeding from those very principles: Liberty, in a country of the highest liberty, is left entirely to its own defence, without any countenance or protection: The wild state of nature is renewed, in one of the most civilized societies of mankind: And great violence and disorder are committed with impunity; while the one party pleads obedience to the supreme magistrate, the other the sanction of fundamental laws.

ESSAY XI: OF THE POPULOUSNESS OF ANCIENT NATIONS

There is very little ground, either from reason or observation, to conclude the world eternal or incorruptible. The continual and rapid motion of matter, the violent revolutions with which every part is agitated, the changes remarked in the heavens, the plain traces as well as tradition of an universal deluge, or general convulsion of the elements; all these prove strongly the mortality of this fabric of the world, and its passage, by corruption or dissolution, from one state or order to another. It must therefore, as well as each individual form which it contains, have its infancy, youth, manhood, and old age; and it is probable, that, in all these variations, man, equally with every animal and vegetable, will partake. In the flourishing age of the world, it may be expected, that the human species should possess greater vigour both of mind and body, more prosperous health, higher spirits, longer life, and a stronger inclination and power of generation. But if the general system of things, and human society of course, have any such gradual revolutions, they are too slow to be discernible in that short period which is comprehended by history and tradition. Stature and force of body, length of life, even courage and extent of genius, seem hitherto to have been naturally, in all ages, pretty much the same. The arts and sciences, indeed, have flourished in one period, and have decayed in another: But we may observe, that, at the time when they rose to greatest perfection among one people, they were perhaps totally unknown to all the neighbouring nations; and though they universally decayed in one age, yet in a succeeding generation they again revived, and diffused themselves over the world. As far, therefore, as observation reaches, there is no universal difference discernible in the human species; and though it were allowed, that the universe, like an animal body, had a natural progress from infancy to old age; yet as it must still be uncertain, whether, at present, it be advancing to its point of perfection, or declining from it, we cannot thence presuppose any decay in human nature. To prove, therefore, or account for that superior populousness of antiquity, which is commonly supposed, by the imaginary youth or vigour of the world, will scarcely be admitted by any just reasoner.

These general physical causes ought entirely to be excluded from this question.

There are indeed some more particular physical causes of importance. Diseases are mentioned in antiquity, which are almost unknown to modern medicine; and new diseases have arisen and propagated themselves, of which there are no traces in ancient history. In this particular we may observe, upon comparison, that the disadvantage is much on the side of the moderns. Not to mention some others of less moment; the small-pox commits such ravages, as would almost alone account for the great superiority ascribed to ancient times. The tenth or the twelfth part of mankind, destroyed every generation, should make a vast difference, it may be thought, in the numbers of the people; and when joined to venereal distempers, a new plague diffused every where, this disease is perhaps equivalent, by its constant operation, to the three great scourges of mankind, war, pestilence, and famine. Were it certain, therefore, that ancient times were more populous than the present, and could no moral causes be assigned for so great a change; these physical causes alone, in the opinion of many, would be sufficient to give us satisfaction on that head.

But is it certain, that antiquity was so much more populous, as is pretended? The extravagancies of Vossius, with regard to this subject, are well known. But an author of much greater genius and discernment has ventured to affirm, that, according to the best computations which these subjects will admit of, there are not now, on the face of the earth, the fiftieth part of mankind, which existed in the time of Julius Cæsar. It may easily be observed, that the comparison, in this case, must be imperfect, even though we confine ourselves to the scene of ancient history; Europe, and the nations round the Mediterranean. We know not exactly the numbers of any European kingdom, or even city, at present: How can we pretend to calculate those of ancient cities and states, where historians have left us such imperfect traces? For my part, the matter appears to me so uncertain, that, as I intend to throw together some reflections on that head, I shall intermingle the enquiry concerning causes with that concerning facts; which ought never to be admitted, where the facts can be ascertained with any tolerable assurance. We shall, first, consider whether it be probable, from what we know of the situation of society in both periods, that antiquity must have been more populous; secondly, whether in reality it was so. If I can make it appear, that the conclusion is not so certain as is pretended, in favour of antiquity, it is all I aspire to.

In general, we may observe, that the question, with regard to the comparative populousness of ages or kingdoms, implies important consequences, and commonly determines concerning the preference of their whole police, their manners, and the constitution of their government. For as there is in all men, both male and female, a desire and power of generation, more active than is ever universally exerted, the restraints, which they lie under, must proceed from some difficulties in their situation, which it belongs to a wise legislature carefully to observe and remove. Almost every man who thinks he can maintain a family will have one; and the human species, at this rate of propagation, would more than double every generation. How fast do mankind multiply in every colony or new settlement; where it is an easy matter to provide for a family; and where men are nowise straitened or confined, as in long established governments? History tells us frequently of plagues, which have swept away the third or fourth part of a people: Yet in a generation or two, the destruction was not perceived; and the society had again acquired their former number. The lands which were cultivated, the houses built, the commodities raised, the riches acquired, enabled the people, who escaped, immediately to marry, and to rear families, which supplied the place of those who had perished. And for a like reason, every wise, just, and mild government, by rendering the condition of its subjects easy and secure, will always abound most in people, as well as in commodities and riches. A country, indeed, whose climate and soil are fitted for vines, will naturally be more populous than one which produces corn only, and that more populous than one which is only fitted for pasturage. In general, warm climates, as the necessities of the inhabitants are there fewer, and vegetation more powerful, are likely to be most populous: But if every thing else be equal, it seems natural to expect, that, wherever there are most happiness and virtue, and the wisest institutions, there will also be most people.

The question, therefore, concerning the populousness of ancient and modern times, being allowed of great importance, it will be requisite, if we would bring it to some determination, to compare both the domestic and political situation of these two periods, in order to judge of the facts by their moral causes; which is the first view in which we proposed to consider them.

The chief difference between the domestic œconomy of the ancients and that of the moderns consists in the practice of slavery, which prevailed among the former, and which has been abolished for some centuries throughout the greater part of Europe. Some passionate admirers of the ancients, and zealous partizans of civil liberty, (for these sentiments, as they are, both of them, in the main, extremely just, are found to be almost inseparable) cannot forbear regretting the loss of this institution; and whilst they brand all submission to the government of a single person with the harsh denomination of slavery, they would gladly reduce the greater part of mankind to real slavery and subjection. But to one who considers coolly on the subject it will appear, that human nature, in general, really enjoys more liberty at present, in the most arbitrary government of Europe, than it ever did during the most flourishing period of ancient times. As much as submission to a petty prince, whose dominions extend not beyond a single city, is more grievous than obedience to a great monarch; so much is domestic slavery more cruel and oppressive than any civil subjection whatsoever. The more the master is removed from us in place and rank, the greater liberty we enjoy; the less are our actions inspected and controled; and the fainter that cruel comparison becomes between our own subjection, and the freedom, and even dominion of another. The remains which are found of domestic slavery, in the American colonies, and among some European nations, would never surely create a desire of rendering it more universal. The little humanity, commonly observed in persons, accustomed, from their infancy, to exercise so great authority over their fellow-creatures, and to trample upon human nature, were sufficient alone to disgust us with that unbounded dominion. Nor can a more probable reason be assigned for the severe, I might say, barbarous manners of ancient times, than the practice of domestic slavery; by which every man of rank was rendered a petty tyrant, and educated amidst the flattery, submission, and low debasement of his slaves.

According to ancient practice, all checks were on the inferior, to restrain him to the duty of submission; none on the superior, to engage him to the reciprocal duties of gentleness and humanity. In modern times, a bad servant finds not easily a good master, nor a bad master a good servant; and the checks are mutual, suitably to the inviolable and eternal laws of reason and equity.

The custom of exposing old, useless, or sick slaves in an island of the Tyber, there to starve, seems to have been pretty common in Rome; and whoever recovered, after having been so exposed, had his liberty given him, by an edict of the emperor Claudius; in which it was likewise forbidden to kill any slave merely for old age or sickness. But supposing that this edict was strictly obeyed, would it better the domestic treatment of slaves, or render their lives much more comfortable? We may imagine what others would practise, when it was the professed maxim of the elder Cato, to sell his superannuated slaves for any price, rather than maintain what he esteemed a useless burden.

The ergastula, or dungeons, where slaves in chains were forced to work, were very common all over Italy. Columella advises, that they be always built under ground; and recommends it as the duty of a careful overseer, to call over every day the names of these slaves, like the mustering of a regiment or ship's company, in order to know presently when any of them had deserted. A proof of the frequency of these ergastula, and of the great number of slaves usually confined in them.

A chained slave for a porter, was usual in Rome, as appears from Ovid, and other authors. Had not these people shaken off all sense of compassion towards that unhappy part of their species, would they have presented their friends, at the first entrance, with such an image of the severity of the master, and misery of the slave?

Nothing so common in all trials, even of civil causes, as to call for the evidence of slaves; which was always extorted by the most exquisite torments. Demosthenes says, that, where it was possible to produce, for the same fact, either freemen or slaves, as witnesses, the judges always preferred the torturing of slaves, as a more certain evidence.

Seneca draws a picture of that disorderly luxury, which changes day into night, and night into day, and inverts every stated hour of every office in life. Among other circumstances, such as displacing the meals and times of bathing, he mentions, that, regularly about the third hour of the night, the neighbours of one, who indulges this false refinement, hear the noise of whips and lashes; and, upon enquiry, find that he is then taking an account of the conduct of his servants, and giving them due correction and discipline. This is not remarked as an instance of cruelty, but only of disorder, which, even in actions the most usual and methodical, changes the fixed hours that an established custom had assigned for them.

But our present business is only to consider the influence of slavery on the populousness of a state. It is pretended, that, in this particular, the ancient practice had infinitely the advantage, and was the chief cause of that extreme populousness, which is supposed in those times. At present, all masters discourage the marrying of their male servants, and admit not by any means the marriage of the female, who are then supposed altogether incapacitated for their service. But where the property of the servants is lodged in the master, their marriage forms his riches, and brings him a succession of slaves that supply the place of those whom age and infirmity have disabled. He encourages, therefore, their propagation as much as that of his cattle; rears the young with the same care; and educates them to some art or calling, which may render them more useful or valuable to him. The opulent are, by this policy, interested in the being at least, though not in the well-being of the poor; and enrich themselves, by encreasing the number and industry of those who are subjected to them. Each man, being a sovereign in his own family, has the same interest with regard to it, as the prince with regard to the state; and has not, like the prince, any opposite motives of ambition or vain-glory, which may lead him to depopulate his little sovereignty. All of it is, at all times, under his eye; and he has leisure to inspect the most minute detail of the marriage and education of his subjects.

Such are the consequences of domestic slavery, according to the first aspect and appearance of things: But if we enter more deeply into the subject, we shall perhaps find reason to retract our hasty determinations. The comparison is shocking between the management of human creatures and that of cattle; but being extremely just, when applied to the present subject, it may be proper to trace the consequences of it. At the capital, near all great cities, in all populous, rich, industrious provinces, few cattle are bred. Provisions, lodging, attendance, labour are there dear; and men find their account better in buying the cattle, after they come to a certain age, from the remoter and cheaper countries. These are consequently the only breeding countries for cattle; and by a parity of reason, for men too, when the latter are put on the same footing with the former. To rear a child in London, till he could be serviceable, would cost much dearer, than to buy one of the same age from Scotland or Ireland; where he had been bred in a cottage, covered with rags, and fed on oatmeal or potatoes. Those who had slaves, therefore, in all the richer and more populous countries, would discourage the pregnancy of the females, and either prevent or destroy the birth. The human species would perish in those places where it ought to encrease the fastest; and a perpetual recruit be wanted from the poorer and more desert provinces. Such a continued drain would tend mightily to depopulate the state, and render great cities ten times more destructive than with us; where every man is master of himself, and provides for his children from the powerful instinct of nature, not the calculations of sordid interest. If London, at present, without much encreasing, needs a yearly recruit from the country, of 5000 people, as is usually computed, what must it require, if the greater part of the tradesmen and common people were slaves, and were hindered from breeding by their avaricious masters?

All ancient authors tell us, that there was a perpetual flux of slaves to Italy from the remoter provinces, particularly Syria, Cilicia, Cappadocia, and the Lesser Asia, Thrace, and Ægypt: Yet the number of people did not encrease in Italy; and writers complain of the continual decay of industry and agriculture. Where then is that extreme fertility of the Roman slaves, which is commonly supposed? So far from multiplying, they could not, it seems, so much as keep up the stock, without immense recruits. And though great numbers were continually manumitted and converted into Roman citizens, the numbers even of these did not encrease, till the freedom of the city was communicated to foreign provinces.

The term for a slave, born and bred in the family, was verna; and these slaves seem to have been entitled by custom to privileges and indulgences beyond others; a sufficient reason why the masters would not be fond of rearing many of that kind. Whoever is acquainted with the maxims of our planters, will acknowledge the justness of this observation.

Atticus is much praised by his historian for the care, which he took in recruiting his family from the slaves born in it: May we not thence infer, that this practice was not then very common?

The names of slaves in the Greek comedies, Syrus, Mysus, Geta, Thrax, Davus, Lydus, Phryx, &c. afford a presumption, that, at Athens at least, most of the slaves were imported from foreign countries. The Athenians, says Strabo, gave to their slaves, either the names of the nations whence they were bought, as Lydus, Syrus; or the names that were most common among those nations, as Manes or Midas to a Phrygian, Tibias to a Paphlagonian.

Demosthenes, having mentioned a law which forbad any man to strike the slave of another, praises the humanity of this law; and adds, that, if the barbarians from whom the slaves were bought, had information, that their countrymen met with such gentle treatment, they would entertain a great esteem for the Athenians. Isocrates too insinuates, that the slaves of the Greeks were generally or very commonly barbarians. Aristotle in his Politics plainly supposes, that a slave is always a foreigner. The ancient comic writers represented the slaves as speaking a barbarous language. This was an imitation of nature.

It is well known that Demosthenes, in his nonage, had been defrauded of a large fortune by his tutors, and that afterwards he recovered, by a prosecution at law, the value of his patrimony. His orations, on that occasion, still remain, and contain an exact detail of the whole substance left by his father, in money, merchandise, houses, and slaves, together with the value of each particular. Among the rest were 52 slaves, handicraftsmen, namely, 32 sword-cutlers, and 20 cabinet-makers; all males; not a word of any wives, children or family, which they certainly would have had, had it been a common practice at Athens to breed from the slaves: And the value of the whole must have much depended on that circumstance. No female slaves are even so much as mentioned, except some house-maids, who belonged to his mother. This argument has great force, if it be not altogether conclusive.

Consider this passage of Plutarch, speaking of the Elder Cato. “He had a great number of slaves, whom he took care to buy at the sales of prisoners of war; and he chose them young, that they might easily be accustomed to any diet or manner of life, and be instructed in any business or labour, as men teach any thing to young dogs or horses. — And esteeming love the chief source of all disorders, he allowed the male slaves to have a commerce with the female in his family, upon paying a certain sum for this privilege: But he strictly prohibited all intrigues out of his family.” Are there any symptoms in this narration of that care which is supposed in the ancients, of the marriage and propagation of their slaves? If that was a common practice, founded on general interest, it would surely have been embraced by Cato, who was a great œconomist, and lived in times when the ancient frugality and simplicity of manners were still in credit and reputation.

It is expressly remarked by the writers of the Roman law, that scarcely any ever purchase slaves with a view of breeding from them.

Our lackeys and house-maids, I own, do not serve much to multiply their species: But the ancients, besides those who attended on their person, had almost all their labour performed, and even manufactures executed, by slaves, who lived, many of them, in their family; and some great men possessed to the number of 10,000. If there be any suspicion, therefore, that this institution was unfavourable to propagation, (and the same reason, at least in part, holds with regard to ancient slaves as modern servants) how destructive must slavery have proved?

History mentions a Roman nobleman, who had 400 slaves under the same roof with him: And having been assassinated at home by the furious revenge of one of them, the law was executed with rigour, and all without exception were put to death. Many other Roman noblemen had families equally, or more numerous; and I believe every one will allow, that this would scarcely be practicable, were we to suppose all the slaves married, and the females to be breeders.

So early as the poet Hesiod, married slaves, whether male or female, were esteemed inconvenient. How much more, where families had encreased to such an enormous size as in Rome, and where the ancient simplicity of manners was banished from all ranks of people?

Xenophon in his Oeconomics, where he gives directions for the management of a farm, recommends a strict care and attention of laying the male and the female slaves at a distance from each other. He seems not to suppose that they are ever married. The only slaves among the Greeks that appear to have continued their own race, were the Helotes, who had houses apart, and were more the slaves of the public than of individuals.

The same author tells us, that Nicias’s overseer, by agreement with his master, was obliged to pay him an obolus a day for each slave; besides maintaining them, and keeping up the number. Had the ancient slaves been all breeders, this last circumstance of the contract had been superfluous.

The ancients talk so frequently of a fixed, stated portion of provisions assigned to each slave, that we are naturally led to conclude, that slaves lived almost all single, and received that portion as a kind of board-wages.

The practice, indeed, of marrying slaves seems not to have been very common, even among the country-labourers, where it is more naturally to be expected. Cato, enumerating the slaves requisite to labour a vineyard of a hundred acres, makes them amount to 15; the overseer and his wife, villicus and villica, and 13 male slaves; for an olive plantation of 240 acres, the overseer and his wife, and 11 male slaves; and so in proportion to a greater or less plantation or vineyard.

Varro, quoting this passage of Cato, allows his computation to be just in every respect, except the last. For as it is requisite, says he, to have an overseer and his wife, whether the vineyard or plantation be great or small, this must alter the exactness of the proportion. Had Cato's computation been erroneous in any other respect, it had certainly been corrected by Varro, who seems fond of discovering so trivial an error.

The same author, as well as Columella, recommends it as requisite to give a wife to the overseer, in order to attach him the more strongly to his master's service. This was therefore a peculiar indulgence granted to a slave, in whom so great confidence was reposed.

In the same place, Varro mentions it as an useful precaution, not to buy too many slaves from the same nation, lest they beget factions and seditions in the family: A presumption, that in Italy, the greater part, even of the country labouring slaves, (for he speaks of no other) were bought from the remoter provinces. All the world knows, that the family slaves in Rome, who were instruments of show and luxury, were commonly imported from the east. Hoc profecere, says Pliny, speaking of the jealous care of masters, mancipiorum legiones, et in domo turba externa, ac servorum quoque causa nomenclator adhibendus.

It is indeed recommended by Varro, to propagate young shepherds in the family from the old ones. For as grasing farms were commonly in remote and cheap places, and each shepherd lived in a cottage apart, his marriage and encrease were not liable to the same inconveniencies as in dearer places, and where many servants lived in the family; which was universally the case in such of the Roman farms as produced wine or corn. If we consider this exception with regard to shepherds, and weigh the reasons of it, it will serve for a strong confirmation of all our foregoing suspicions.

Columella, I own, advises the master to give a reward, and even liberty to a female slave, that had reared him above three children: A proof, that sometimes the ancients propagated from their slaves; which, indeed, cannot be denied. Were it otherwise, the practice of slavery, being so common in antiquity, must have been destructive to a degree which no expedient could repair. All I pretend to infer from these reasonings is, that slavery is in general disadvantageous both to the happiness and populousness of mankind, and that its place is much better supplied by the practice of hired servants.

The laws, or, as some writers call them, the seditions of the Gracchi, were occasioned by their observing the encrease of slaves all over Italy, and the diminution of free citizens. Appian ascribes this encrease to the propagation of the slaves: Plutarch to the purchasing of barbarians, who were chained and imprisoned, βαρβαρικα δεσμωτηρια. It is to be presumed that both causes concurred.

Sicily, says Florus, was full of ergastula, and was cultivated by labourers in chains. Eunus and Athenio excited the servile war, by breaking up these monstrous prisons, and giving liberty to 60,000 slaves. The younger Pompey augmented his army in Spain by the same expedient. If the country labourers, throughout the Roman empire, were so generally in this situation, and if it was difficult or impossible to find separate lodgings for the families of the city servants, how unfavourable to propagation, as well as to humanity, must the institution of domestic slavery be esteemed?

Constantinople, at present, requires the same recruits of slaves from all the provinces, that Rome did of old; and these provinces are of consequence far from being populous.

Egypt, according to Mons. Maillet, sends continual colonies of black slaves to the other parts of the Turkish empire; and receives annually an equal return of white: The one brought from the inland parts of Africa; the other from Mingrelia, Circassia, and Tartary.

Our modern convents are, no doubt, bad institutions: But there is reason to suspect, that anciently every great family in Italy, and probably in other parts of the world, was a species of convent. And though we have reason to condemn all those popish institutions, as nurseries of superstition, burthensome to the public, and oppressive to the poor prisoners, male as well as female; yet may it be questioned whether they be so destructive to the populousness of a state, as is commonly imagined. Were the land, which belongs to a convent, bestowed on a nobleman, he would spend its revenue on dogs, horses, grooms, footmen, cooks, and house-maids; and his family would not furnish many more citizens than the convent.

The common reason, why any parent thrusts his daughters into nunneries, is, that he may not be overburthened with too numerous a family; but the ancients had a method almost as innocent, and more effectual to that purpose, to wit, exposing their children in early infancy. This practice was very common; and is not spoken of by any author of those times with the horror it deserves, or scarcely even with disapprobation. Plutarch, the humane, good-natured Plutarch, mentions it as a merit in Attalus, king of Pergamus, that he murdered, or, if you will, exposed all his own children, in order to leave his crown to the son of his brother, Eumenes; signalizing in this manner his gratitude and affection to Eumenes, who had left him his heir preferably to that son. It was Solon, the most celebrated of the sages of Greece, that gave parents permission by law to kill their children.

Shall we then allow these two circumstances to compensate each other, to wit, monastic vows and the exposing of children, and to be unfavourable, in equal degrees, to the propagation of mankind? I doubt the advantage is here on the side of antiquity. Perhaps, by an odd connexion of causes, the barbarous practice of the ancients might rather render those times more populous. By removing the terrors of too numerous a family it would engage many people in marriage; and such is the force of natural affection, that very few, in comparison, would have resolution enough, when it came to the push, to carry into execution their former intentions.

China, the only country where this practice of exposing children prevails at present, is the most populous country we know of; and every man is married before he is twenty. Such early marriages could scarcely be general, had not men the prospect of so easy a method of getting rid of their children. I own, that Plutarch speaks of it as a very general maxim of the poor to expose their children; and as the rich were then averse to marriage, on account of the courtship they met with from those who expected legacies from them, the public must have been in a bad situation between them.

Of all sciences there is none, where first appearances are more deceitful than in politics. Hospitals for foundlings seem favourable to the encrease of numbers; and perhaps, may be so, when kept under proper restrictions. But when they open the door to every one, without distinction, they have probably a contrary effect, and are pernicious to the state. It is computed, that every ninth child born at Paris, is sent to the hospital; though it seems certain, according to the common course of human affairs, that it is not a hundredth child whose parents are altogether incapacitated to rear and educate him. The great difference, for health, industry, and morals, between an education in an hospital and that in a private family, should induce us not to make the entrance into the former too easy and engaging. To kill one's own child is shocking to nature, and must therefore be somewhat unusual; but to turn over the care of him upon others, is very tempting to the natural indolence of mankind.

Having considered the domestic life and manners of the ancients, compared to those of the moderns; where, in the main, we seem rather superior, so far as the present question is concerned; we shall now examine the political customs and institutions of both ages, and weigh their influence in retarding or forwarding the propagation of mankind.

Before the encrease of the Roman power, or rather till its full establishment, almost all the nations, which are the scene of ancient history, were divided into small territories or petty commonwealths, where of course a great equality of fortune prevailed, and the center of the government was always very near its frontiers.

This was the situation of affairs not only in Greece and Italy, but also in Spain, Gaul, Germany, Afric, and a great part of the Lesser Asia: And it must be owned, that no institution could be more favourable to the propagation of mankind. For, though a man of an overgrown fortune, not being able to consume more than another, must share it with those who serve and attend him; yet their possession being precarious, they have not the same encouragement to marry, as if each had a small fortune, secure and independent. Enormous cities are, besides, destructive to society, beget vice and disorder of all kinds, starve the remoter provinces, and even starve themselves, by the prices to which they raise all provisions. Where each man had his little house and field to himself, and each county had its capital, free and independent; what a happy situation of mankind! How favourable to industry and agriculture; to marriage and propagation! The prolific virtue of men, were it to act in its full extent, without that restraint which poverty and necessity imposes on it, would double the number every generation: And nothing surely can give it more liberty, than such small commonwealths, and such an equality of fortune among the citizens. All small states naturally produce equality of fortune, because they afford no opportunities of great encrease; but small commonwealths much more, by that division of power and authority which is essential to them.

When Xenophon returned after the famous expedition with Cyrus, he hired himself and 6000 of the Greeks into the service of Seuthes, a prince of Thrace; and the articles of his agreement were, that each soldier should receive a daric a month, each captain two darics, and he himself, as general, four: A regulation of pay which would not a little surprise our modern officers.

Demosthenes and Æschines, with eight more, were sent ambassadors to Philip of Macedon, and their appointments for above four months were a thousand drachmas, which is less than a drachma a day for each ambassador. But a drachma a day, nay sometimes two, was the pay of a common foot-soldier.

A centurion among the Romans had only double pay to a private man, in Polybius's time, and we accordingly find the gratuities after a triumph regulated by that proportion. But Mark Anthony and the triumvirate gave the centurions five times the reward of the other. So much had the encrease of the commonwealth encreased the inequality among the citizens.

It must be owned, that the situation of affairs in modern times, with regard to civil liberty, as well as equality of fortune, is not near so favourable, either to the propagation or happiness of mankind. Europe is shared out mostly into great monarchies; and such parts of it as are divided into small territories, are commonly governed by absolute princes, who ruin their people by a mimicry of the greater monarchs, in the splendor of their court and number of their forces. Swisserland alone and Holland resemble the ancient republics; and though the former is far from possessing any advantage either of soil, climate, or commerce, yet the numbers of people, with which it abounds, notwithstanding their enlisting themselves into every service in Europe, prove sufficiently the advantages of their political institutions.

The ancient republics derived their chief or only security from the numbers of their citizens. The Trachinians having lost great numbers of their people, the remainder, instead of enriching themselves by the inheritance of their fellow-citizens, applied to Sparta, their metropolis, for a new stock of inhabitants. The Spartans immediately collected ten thousand men; among whom the old citizens divided the lands of which the former proprietors had perished.

After Timoleon had banished Dionysius from Syracuse, and had settled the affairs of Sicily, finding the cities of Syracuse and Sellinuntium extremely depopulated by tyranny, war, and faction, he invited over from Greece some new inhabitants to repeople them. Immediately forty thousand men (Plutarch says sixty thousand) offered themselves; and he distributed so many lots of land among them, to the great satisfaction of the ancient inhabitants: A proof at once of the maxims of ancient policy, which affected populousness more than riches; and of the good effects of these maxims, in the extreme populousness of that small country, Greece, which could at once supply so great a colony. The case was not much different with the Romans in early times. He is a pernicious citizen, said M. Curius, who cannot be content with seven acres. Such ideas of equality could not fail of producing great numbers of people.

We must now consider what disadvantages the ancients lay under with regard to populousness, and what checks they received from their political maxims and institutions. There are commonly compensations in every human condition: and though these compensations be not always perfectly equal, yet they serve, at least, to restrain the prevailing principle. To compare them and estimate their influence, is indeed difficult, even where they take place in the same age, and in neighbouring countries: But where several ages have intervened, and only scattered lights are afforded us by ancient authors; what can we do but amuse ourselves by talking pro and con, on an interesting subject, and thereby correcting all hasty and violent determinations?

First, We may observe, that the ancient republics were almost in perpetual war, a natural effect of their martial spirit, their love of liberty, their mutual emulation, and that hatred which generally prevails among nations that live in close neighbourhood. Now, war in a small state is much more destructive than in a great one; both because all the inhabitants, in the former case, must serve in the armies; and because the whole state is frontier, and is all exposed to the inroads of the enemy.

The maxims of ancient war were much more destructive than those of modern; chiefly by that distribution of plunder, in which the soldiers were indulged. The private men in our armies are such a low set of people, that we find any abundance, beyond their simple pay, breeds confusion and disorder among them, and a total dissolution of discipline. The very wretchedness and meanness of those, who fill the modern armies, render them less destructive to the countries which they invade: One instance, among many of the deceitfulness of first appearances in all political reasonings.

Ancient battles were much more bloody, by the very nature of the weapons employed in them. The ancients drew up their men 16 or 20, sometimes 50 men deep, which made a narrow front; and it was not difficult to find a field, in which both armies might be marshalled, and might engage with each other. Even where any body of the troops was kept off by hedges, hillocks, woods, or hollow ways, the battle was not so soon decided between the contending parties, but that the others had time to overcome the difficulties which opposed them, and take part in the engagement. And as the whole army was thus engaged, and each man closely buckled to his antagonist, the battles were commonly very bloody, and great slaughter was made on both sides, especially on the vanquished. The long thin lines, required by fire-arms, and the quick decision of the fray, render our modern engagements but partial rencounters, and enable the general, who is foiled in the beginning of the day, to draw off the greater part of his army, sound and entire.

The battles of antiquity, both by their duration, and their resemblance to single combats, were wrought up to a degree of fury quite unknown to later ages. Nothing could then engage the combatants to give quarter, but the hopes of profit, by making slaves of their prisoners. In civil wars, as we learn from Tacitus, the battles were the most bloody, because the prisoners were not slaves.

What a stout resistance must be made, where the vanquished expected so hard a fate! How inveterate the rage, where the maxims of war were, in every respect, so bloody and severe!

Instances are frequent, in ancient history, of cities besieged, whose inhabitants, rather than open their gates, murdered their wives and children, and rushed themselves on a voluntary death, sweetened perhaps by a little prospect of revenge upon the enemy. Greeks, as well as Barbarians, have often been wrought up to this degree of fury. And the same determined spirit and cruelty must, in other instances less remarkable, have been destructive to human society, in those petty commonwealths, which lived in close neighbourhood, and were engaged in perpetual wars and contentions.

Sometimes the wars in Greece, says Plutarch, were carried on entirely by inroads, and robberies, and piracies. Such a method of war must be more destructive in small states, than the bloodiest battles and sieges.

By the laws of the twelve tables, possession during two years formed a prescription for land; one year for moveables: An indication, that there was not in Italy, at that time, much more order, tranquillity, and settled police, than there is at present among the Tartars.

The only cartel I remember in ancient history, is that between Demetrius Poliorcetes and the Rhodians; when it was agreed, that a free citizen should be restored for 1000 drachmas, a slave bearing arms for 500.

But, secondly, it appears that ancient manners were more unfavourable than the modern, not only in times of war, but also in those of peace; and that too in every respect, except the love of civil liberty and of equality, which is, I own, of considerable importance. To exclude faction from a free government, is very difficult, if not altogether impracticable; but such inveterate rage between the factions, and such bloody maxims, are found, in modern times amongst religious parties alone. In ancient history, we may always observe, where one party prevailed, whether the nobles or people (for I can observe no difference in this respect) that they immediately butchered all of the opposite party who fell into their hands, and banished such as had been so fortunate as to escape their fury. No form of process, no law, no trial, no pardon. A fourth, a third, perhaps near half of the city was slaughtered, or expelled, every revolution; and the exiles always joined foreign enemies, and did all the mischief possible to their fellow-citizens; till fortune put it in their power to take full revenge by a new revolution. And as these were frequent in such violent governments, the disorder, diffidence, jealousy, enmity, which must prevail, are not easy for us to imagine in this age of the world.

There are only two revolutions I can recollect in ancient history, which passed without great severity, and great effusion of blood in massacres and assassinations, namely, the restoration of the Athenian Democracy by Thrasybulus, and the subduing of the Roman republic by Cæsar. We learn from ancient history, that Thrasybulus passed a general amnesty for all past offences; and first introduced that word, as well as practice, into Greece. It appears, however, from many orations of Lysias, that the chief, and even some of the subaltern offenders, in the preceding tyranny, were tried, and capitally punished. And as to Cæsar's clemency, though much celebrated, it would not gain great applause in the present age. He butchered, for instance, all Cato's senate, when he became master of Utica; and these, we may readily believe, were not the most worthless of the party. All those who had borne arms against that usurper, were attainted; and, by Hirtius's law, declared incapable of all public offices.

These people were extremely fond of liberty; but seem not to have understood it very well. When the thirty tyrants first established their dominion at Athens, they began with seizing all the sycophants and informers, who had been so troublesome during the Democracy, and putting them to death by an arbitrary sentence and execution. Every man, says Sallust and Lysias, was rejoiced at these punishments; not considering, that liberty was from that moment annihilated.

The utmost energy of the nervous style of Thucydides, and the copiousness and expression of the Greek language, seem to sink under that historian, when he attempts to describe the disorders, which arose from faction throughout all the Grecian commonwealths. You would imagine, that he still labours with a thought greater than he can find words to communicate. And he concludes his pathetic description with an observation, which is at once refined and solid. "In these contests," says he, "those who were the dullest, and most stupid, and had the least foresight, commonly prevailed. For being conscious of this weakness, and dreading to be overreached by those of greater penetration, they went to work hastily, without premeditation, by the sword and poinard, and thereby got the start of their antagonists, who were forming fine schemes and projects for their destruction."

Not to mention Dionysius the elder, who is computed to have butchered in cool blood above 10,000 of his fellow-citizens; or Agathocles, Nabis, and others, still more bloody than he; the transactions, even in free governments, were extremely violent and destructive. At Athens, the thirty tyrants and the nobles, in a twelvemonth, murdered, without trial, about 1200 of the people, and banished above the half of the citizens that remained. In Argos, near the same time, the people killed 1200 of the nobles; and afterwards their own demagogues, because they had refused to carry their prosecutions farther. The people also in Corcyra killed 1500 of the nobles, and banished a thousand. These numbers will appear the more surprising, if we consider the extreme smallness of these states. But all ancient history is full of such instances.

When Alexander ordered all the exiles to be restored throughout all the cities; it was found, that the whole amounted to 20,000 men; the remains probably of still greater slaughters and massacres. What an astonishing multitude in so narrow a country as ancient Greece! And what domestic confusion, jealousy, partiality, revenge, heartburnings, must tear those cities, where factions were wrought up to such a degree of fury and despair.

It would be easier, says Isocrates to Philip, to raise an army in Greece at present from the vagabonds than from the cities.

Even when affairs came not to such extremities (which they failed not to do almost in every city twice or thrice every century) property was rendered very precarious by the maxims of ancient government. Xenophon, in the Banquet of Socrates, gives us a natural unaffected description of the tyranny of the Athenian people. “In my poverty,” says Charmides, “I am much more happy than I ever was while possessed of riches: as much as it is happier to be in security than in terrors, free than a slave, to receive than to pay court, to be trusted than suspected. Formerly I was obliged to caress every informer; some imposition was continually laid upon me; and it was never allowed me to travel, or be absent from the city. At present, when I am poor I look big, and threaten others. The rich are afraid of me, and show me every kind of civility and respect; and I am become a kind of tyrant in the city.”

In one of the pleadings of Lysias, the orator very coolly speaks of it, by the by, as a maxim of the Athenian people, that, whenever they wanted money, they put to death some of the rich citizens as well as strangers, for the sake of the forfeiture. In mentioning this, he seems not to have any intention of blaming them; still less of provoking them, who were his audience and judges.

Whether a man was a citizen or a stranger among that people, it seems indeed requisite, either that he should impoverish himself, or that the people would impoverish him, and perhaps kill him into the bargain. The orator last mentioned gives a pleasant account of an estate laid out in the public service; that is, above the third of it in raree-shows and figured dances.

I need not insist on the Greek tyrannies, which were altogether horrible. Even the mixed monarchies, by which most of the ancient states of Greece were governed, before the introduction of republics, were very unsettled.

Scarcely any city, but Athens, says Isocrates, could show a succession of kings for four or five generations.

Besides many other obvious reasons for the instability of ancient monarchies, the equal division of property among the brothers in private families, must, by a necessary consequence, contribute to unsettle and disturb the state. The universal preference given to the elder by modern laws, though it encreases the inequality of fortunes, has, however, this good effect, that it accustoms men to the same idea in public succession, and cuts off all claim and pretension of the younger.

The new settled colony of Heraclea, falling immediately into faction applied to Sparta, who sent Heripidas with full authority to quiet their dissentions. This man, not provoked by any opposition, not inflamed by party rage, knew no better expedient than immediately putting to death about 500 of the citizens. A strong proof how deeply rooted these violent maxims of government were throughout all Greece.

If such was the disposition of men's minds among that refined people, what may be expected in the commonwealths of Italy, Afric, Spain, and Gaul, which were denominated barbarous? Why otherwise did the Greeks so much value themselves on their humanity, gentleness, and moderation, above all other nations? This reasoning seems very natural. But unluckily the history of the Roman commonwealth, in its earlier times, if we give credit to the received accounts, presents an opposite conclusion. No blood was ever shed in any sedition at Rome, till the murder of the Gracchi. Dionysius Halicarnassæus, observing the singular humanity of the Roman people in this particular, makes use of it as an argument that they were originally of Grecian extraction: Whence we may conclude, that the factions and revolutions in the barbarous republics were usually more violent than even those of Greece above-mentioned.

If the Romans were so late in coming to blows, they made ample compensation, after they had once entered upon the bloody scene; and Appian's history of their civil wars contains the most frightful picture of massacres, proscriptions, and forfeitures, that ever was presented to the world. What pleases most, in that historian, is, that he seems to feel a proper resentment of these barbarous proceedings; and talks not with that provoking coolness and indifference, which custom had produced in many of the Greek historians.

The maxims of ancient politics contain, in general, so little humanity and moderation, that it seems superfluous to give any particular reason for the acts of violence committed at any particular period. Yet I cannot forbear observing, that the laws, in the later period of the Roman commonwealth, were so absurdly contrived, that they obliged the heads of parties to have recourse to these extremities. All capital punishments were abolished: However criminal, or, what is more, however dangerous any citizen might be, he could not regularly be punished otherwise than by banishment: And it became necessary, in the revolutions of party, to draw the sword of private vengeance; nor was it easy, when laws were once violated, to set bounds to these sanguinary proceedings. Had Brutus himself prevailed over the triumvirate, could he, in common prudence, have allowed Octavius and Anthony, to live, and have contented himself with banishing them to Rhodes or Marseilles, where they might still have plotted new commotions and rebellions? His executing C. Antonius, brother to the triumvir, shows evidently his sense of the matter. Did not Cicero, with the approbation of all the wise and virtuous of Rome, arbitrarily put to death Catiline's accomplices, contrary to law, and without any trial or form of process? And if he moderated his executions, did it not proceed, either from the clemency of his temper, or the conjunctures of the times? A wretched security in a government which pretends to laws and liberty!

Thus, one extreme produces another. In the same manner as excessive severity in the laws is apt to beget great relaxation in their execution; so their excessive lenity naturally produces cruelty and barbarity. It is dangerous to force us, in any case, to pass their sacred boundaries.

One general cause of the disorders, so frequent in all ancient governments, seems to have consisted in the great difficulty of establishing any Aristocracy in those ages, and the perpetual discontents and seditions of the people, whenever even the meanest and most beggarly were excluded from the legislature and from public offices. The very quality of freemen gave such a rank, being opposed to that of slave, that it seemed to entitle the possessor to every power and privilege of the commonwealth. Solon's laws excluded no freeman from votes or elections, but confined some magistracies to a particular census; yet were the people never satisfied till those laws were repealed. By the treaty with Antipater, no Athenian was allowed a vote whose census was less than 2000 drachmas (about 60 l. Sterling). And though such a government would to us appear sufficiently democratical, it was so disagreeable to that people, that above two-thirds of them immediately left their country. Cassander reduced that census to the half; yet still the government was considered as an oligarchical tyranny, and the effect of foreign violence.

Servius Tullius's laws seem equal and reasonable, by fixing the power in proportion to the property: Yet the Roman people could never be brought quietly to submit to them.

In those days there was no medium between a severe, jealous Aristocracy, ruling over discontented subjects; and a turbulent, factious, tyrannical Democracy. At present, there is not one republic in Europe, from one extremity of it to the other, that is not remarkable for justice, lenity, and stability, equal to, or even beyond Marseilles, Rhodes, or the most celebrated in antiquity. Almost all of them are well-tempered Aristocracies.

But thirdly, there are many other circumstances, in which ancient nations seem inferior to the modern, both for the happiness and encrease of mankind. Trade, manufactures, industry, were no where, in former ages, so flourishing as they are at present in Europe. The only garb of the ancients, both for males and females, seems to have been a kind of flannel, which they wore commonly white or grey, and which they scoured as often as it became dirty. Tyre, which carried on, after Carthage, the greatest commerce of any city in the Mediterranean, before it was destroyed by Alexander, was no mighty city, if we credit Arrian's account of its inhabitants. Athens is commonly supposed to have been a trading city: But it was as populous before the Median war as at any time after it, according to Herodotus; yet its commerce, at that time, was so inconsiderable, that, as the same historian observes, even the neighbouring coasts of Asia were as little frequented by the Greeks as the pillars of Hercules: For beyond these he conceived nothing.

Great interest of money, and great profits of trade, are an infallible indication, that industry and commerce are but in their infancy. We read in Lysias of 100 per cent. profit made on a cargo of two talents, sent to no greater distance than from Athens to the Adriatic: Nor is this mentioned as an instance of extraordinary profit. Antidorus, says Demosthenes, paid three talents and a half for a house which he let at a talent a year: And the orator blames his own tutors for not employing his money to like advantage. My fortune, says he, in eleven years minority, ought to have been tripled. The value of 20 of the slaves left by his father, he computes at 40 minas, and the yearly profit of their labour at 12. The most moderate interest at Athens, (for there was higher often paid) was 12 per cent., and that paid monthly. Not to insist upon the high interest, to which the vast sums distributed in elections had raised money at Rome, we find, that Verres, before that factious period, stated 24 per cent. for money which he left in the hands of the publicans: And though Cicero exclaims against this article, it is not on account of the extravagant usury; but because it had never been customary to state any interest on such occasions. Interest, indeed, sunk at Rome, after the settlement of the empire: But it never remained any considerable time so low, as in the commercial states of modern times.

Among the other inconveniencies, which the Athenians felt from the fortifying of Decelia by the Lacedemonians, it is represented by Thucydides, as one of the most considerable, that they could not bring over their corn from Eubea by land, passing by Oropus; but were obliged to embark it, and to sail round the promontory of Sunium. A surprising instance of the imperfection of ancient navigation! For the water-carriage is not here above double the land.

I do not remember a passage in any ancient author, where the growth of a city is ascribed to the establishment of a manufacture. The commerce, which is said to flourish, is chiefly the exchange of those commodities, for which different soils and climates were suited. The sale of wine and oil into Africa, according to Diodorus Siculus, was the foundation of the riches of Agrigentum. The situation of the city of Sybaris, according to the same author was the cause of its immense populousness; being built near the two rivers Crathys and Sybaris. But these two rivers, we may observe, are not navigable; and could only produce some fertile vallies, for agriculture and tillage; an advantage so inconsiderable, that a modern writer would scarcely have taken notice of it.

The barbarity of the ancient tyrants, together with the extreme love of liberty, which animated those ages, must have banished every merchant and manufacturer, and have quite depopulated the state, had it subsisted upon industry and commerce. While the cruel and suspicious Dionysius was carrying on his butcheries, who, that was not detained by his landed property, and could have carried with him any art or skill to procure a subsistence in other countries, would have remained exposed to such implacable barbarity? The persecutions of Philip II. and Lewis XIV. filled all Europe with the manufacturers of Flanders and of France.

I grant, that agriculture is the species of industry chiefly requisite to the subsistence of multitudes; and it is possible, that this industry may flourish, even where manufactures and other arts are unknown and neglected. Swisserland is at present a remarkable instance; where we find, at once, the most skilful husbandmen, and the most bungling tradesmen, that are to be met with in Europe. That agriculture flourished in Greece and Italy, at least in some parts of them, and at some periods, we have reason to presume; And whether the mechanical arts had reached the same degree of perfection, may not be esteemed so material; especially, if we consider the great equality of riches in the ancient republics, where each family was obliged to cultivate, with the greatest care and industry, its own little field, in order to its subsistence.

But is it just reasoning, because agriculture may, in some instances, flourish without trade or manufactures, to conclude, that, in any great extent of country, and for any great tract of time, it would subsist alone? The most natural way, surely, of encouraging husbandry, is, first, to excite other kinds of industry, and thereby afford the labourer a ready market for his commodities, and a return of such goods as may contribute to his pleasure and enjoyment. This method is infallible and universal; and, as it prevails more in modern government than in the ancient, it affords a presumption of the superior populousness of the former.

Every man, says Xenophon, may be a farmer: No art or skill is requisite: All consists in industry, and in attention to the execution. A strong proof, as Columella hints, that agriculture was but little known in the age of Xenophon

All our later improvements and refinements, have they done nothing towards the easy subsistence of men, and consequently towards their propagation and encrease? Our superior skill in mechanics; the discovery of new worlds, by which commerce has been so much enlarged; the establishment of posts; and the use of bills of exchange: These seem all extremely useful to the encouragement of art, industry, and populousness. Were we to strike off these, what a check should we give to every kind of business and labour, and what multitudes of families would immediately perish from want and hunger? And it seems not probable, that we could supply the place of these new inventions by any other regulation or institution.

Have we reason to think, that the police of ancient states was any wise comparable to that of modern, or that men had then equal security, either at home, or in their journies by land or water? I question not, but every impartial examiner would give us the preference in this particular.

Thus, upon comparing the whole, it seems impossible to assign any just reason, why the world should have been more populous in ancient than in modern times. The equality of property among the ancients, liberty, and the small divisions of their states, were indeed circumstances favourable to the propagation of mankind: But their wars were more bloody and destructive, their governments more factious and unsettled, commerce and manufactures more feeble and languishing, and the general police more loose and irregular. These latter disadvantages seem to form a sufficient counterbalance to the former advantages; and rather favour the opposite opinion to that which commonly prevails with regard to this subject.

But there is no reasoning, it may be said, against matter of fact. If it appear, that the world was then more populous than at present, we may be assured, that our conjectures are false, and that we have overlooked some material circumstance in the comparison. This I readily own: All our preceding reasonings, I acknowledge to be mere trifling, or, at least, small skirmishes and frivolous rencounters, which decide nothing. But unluckily the main combat, where we compare facts, cannot be rendered much more decisive. The facts, delivered by ancient authors, are either so uncertain or so imperfect as to afford us nothing positive in this matter. How indeed could it be otherwise? The very facts, which we must oppose to them, in computing the populousness of modern states, are far from being either certain or complete. Many grounds of calculation proceeded on by celebrated writers, are little better than those of the Emperor Heliogabalus, who formed an estimate of the immense greatness of Rome, from ten thousand pound weight of cobwebs which had been found in that city.

It is to be remarked, that all kinds of numbers are uncertain in ancient manuscripts, and have been subject to much greater corruptions than any other part of the text; and that for an obvious reason. Any alteration, in other places, commonly affects the sense or grammar, and is more readily perceived by the reader and transcriber.

Few enumerations of inhabitants have been made of any tract of country by any ancient author of good authority, so as to afford us a large enough view for comparison.

It is probable, that there was formerly a good foundation for the number of citizens assigned to any free city; because they entered for a share in the government, and there were exact registers kept of them. But as the number of slaves is seldom mentioned, this leaves us in as great uncertainty as ever, with regard to the populousness even of single cities.

The first page of Thucydides is, in my opinion, the commencement of real history. All preceding narrations are so intermixed with fable, that philosophers ought to abandon them, in a great measure, to the embellishment of poets and orators.

With regard to remote times, the numbers of people assigned are often ridiculous, and lose all credit and authority. The free citizens of Sybaris, able to bear arms, and actually drawn out in battle, were 300,000. They encountered at Siagra with 100,000 citizens of Crotona, another Greek city contiguous to them; and were defeated. This is Diodorus Siculus's account; and is very seriously insisted on by that historian. Strabo also mentions the same number of Sybarites.

Diodorus Siculus, enumerating the inhabitants of Agrigentum, when it was destroyed by the Carthaginians, says, that they amounted to 20,000 citizens, 200,000 strangers, besides slaves, who, in so opulent a city as he represents it, would probably be, at least, as numerous. We must remark, that the women and the children are not included; and that, therefore, upon the whole, this city must have contained near two millions of inhabitants. And what was the reason of so immense an encrease! They were industrious in cultivating the neighbouring fields, not exceeding a small English county; and they traded with their wine and oil to Africa, which, at that time, produced none of these commodities.

Ptolemy, says Theocritus, commands 33,339 cities. I suppose the singularity of the number was the reason of assigning it. Diodorus Siculus assigns three millions of inhabitants to Ægypt, a small number: But then he makes the number of cities amount to 18,000: An evident contradiction.

He says, the people were formerly seven millions. Thus remote times are always most envied and admired.

That Xerxes's army was extremely numerous, I can readily believe; both from the great extent of his empire, and from the practice among the eastern nations, of encumbering their camp with a superfluous multitude: But will any rational man cite Herodotus’s wonderful narrations as an authority? There is something very rational, I own, in Lysias’s argument upon this subject. Had not Xerxes’s army been incredibly numerous, says he, he had never made a bridge over the Hellespont: It had been much easier to have transported his men over so short a passage, with the numerous shipping of which he was master.

Polybius says, that the Romans, between the first and second Punic wars, being threatened with an invasion from the Gauls, mustered all their own forces, and those of their allies, and found them amount to seven hundred thousand men able to bear arms: A great number surely, and which, when joined to the slaves, is probably not less, if not rather more, than that extent of country affords at present. The enumeration too seems to have been made with some exactness; and Polybius gives us the detail of the particulars. But might not the number be magnified, in order to encourage the people?

Diodorus Siculus makes the same enumeration amount to near a million. These variations are suspicious. He plainly too supposes, that Italy in his time was not so populous: Another suspicious circumstance. For who can believe, that the inhabitants of that country diminished from the time of the first Punic war to that of the triumvirates?

Julius Cæsar according to Appian, encountered four millions of Gauls, killed one million, and made another million prisoners. Supposing the number of the enemy’s army and that of the slain could be exactly assigned, which never is possible; how could it be known how often the same man returned into the armies, or how distinguish the new from the old levied soldiers? No attention ought ever to be given to such loose, exaggerated calculations; especially where the author does not tell us the mediums, upon which the calculations were founded.

Paterculus makes the number of Gauls killed by Cæsar amount only to 400,000: A more probable account, and more easily reconciled to the history of these wars given by that conqueror himself in his Commentaries. The most bloody of his battles were fought against the Helvetii and the Germans.

One would imagine, that every circumstance of the life and actions of Dionysius the elder might be regarded as authentic, and free from all fabulous exaggeration; both because he lived at a time when letters flourished most in Greece, and because his chief historian was Philistus, a man allowed to be of great genius, and who was a courtier and minister of that prince. But can we admit, that he had a standing army of 100,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and a fleet of 400 gallies? These, we may observe, were mercenary forces, and subsisted upon pay, like our armies in Europe. For the citizens were all disarmed; and when Dion afterwards invaded Sicily, and called on his countrymen to vindicate their liberty, he was obliged to bring arms along with him, which he distributed among those who joined him. In a state where agriculture alone flourishes, there may be many inhabitants; and if these be all armed and disciplined, a great force may be called out upon occasion: But great bodies of mercenary troops can never be maintained, without either great trade and numerous manufactures, or extensive dominions. The United Provinces never were masters of such a force by sea and land, as that which is said to belong to Dionysius; yet they possess as large a territory, perfectly well cultivated, and have much more resources from their commerce and industry. Diodorus Siculus allows, that, even in his time, the army of Dionysius appeared incredible; that is, as I interpret it, was entirely a fiction, and the opinion arose from the exaggerated flattery of the courtiers, and perhaps from the vanity and policy of the tyrant himself.

It is a usual fallacy, to consider all the ages of antiquity as one period, and to compute the numbers contained in the great cities mentioned by ancient authors, as if these cities had been all cotemporary. The Greek colonies flourished extremely in Sicily during the age of Alexander: But in Augustus's time they were so decayed, that almost all the produce of that fertile island was consumed in Italy.

Let us now examine the numbers of inhabitants assigned to particular cities in antiquity; and omitting the numbers of Nineveh, Babylon, and the Egyptian Thebes, let us confine ourselves to the sphere of real history, to the Grecian and Roman states. I must own, the more I consider this subject, the more am I inclined to scepticism, with regard to the great populousness ascribed to ancient times.

Athens is said by Plato to be a very great city; and it was surely the greatest of all the Greek cities, except Syracuse, which was nearly about the same size in Thucydides's time, and afterwards encreased beyond it. For Cicero mentions it as the greatest of all the Greek cities in his time; not comprehending, I suppose, either Antioch or Alexandria under that denomination. Athenæus says, that, by the enumeration of Demetrius Phalereus, there were in Athens 21,000 citizens, 10,000 strangers, and 400,000 slaves. This number is much insisted on by those whose opinion I call in question, and is esteemed a fundamental fact to their purpose: But, in my opinion, there is no point of criticism more certain, than that Athenæus and Ctesicles, whom he quotes, are here mistaken, and that the number of slaves is, at least, augmented by a whole cypher, and ought not to be regarded as more than 40,000.

First, When the number of citizens is said to be 21,000 by Athenæus, men of full age are only understood. For, (1.) Herodotus says, that Aristagoras, ambassador from the Ionians, found it harder to deceive one Spartan than 30,000 Athenians; meaning, in a loose way, the whole state, supposed to be met in one popular assembly, excluding the women and children. (2.) Thucydides says, that, making allowance for all the absentees in the fleet, army, garrisons, and for people employed in their private affairs, the Athenian assembly never rose to five thousand. (3.) The forces, enumerated by the same historian, being all citizens, and amounting to 13,000 heavy-armed infantry, prove the same method of calculation; as also the whole tenor of the Greek historians, who always understand men of full age, when they assign the number of citizens in any republic. Now, these being but the fourth of the inhabitants, the free Athenians were by this account 84,000; the strangers 40,000; and the slaves, calculating by the smaller number, and allowing that they married and propagated at the same rate with freemen, were 160,000; and the whole of the inhabitants 284,000: A number surely large enough. The other number, 1,720,000, makes Athens larger than London and Paris united.

Secondly, There were but 10,000 houses in Athens.

Thirdly, Though the extent of the walls, as given us by Thucydides, be great, (to wit, eighteen miles, beside the sea-coast): Yet Xenophon says, there was much waste ground within the walls. They seem indeed to have joined four distinct and separate cities.

Fourthly, No insurrection of the slaves, or suspicion of insurrection, is ever mentioned by historians; except one commotion of the miners.

Fifthly, The treatment of slaves by the Athenians is said by Xenophon, and Demosthenes, and Plautus, to have been extremely gentle and indulgent: Which could never have been the case, had the disproportion been twenty to one. The disproportion is not so great in any of our colonies; yet are we obliged to exercise a rigorous military government over the negroes.

Sixthly, No man is ever esteemed rich for possessing what may be reckoned an equal distribution of property in any country, or even triple or quadruple that wealth. Thus every person in England is computed by some to spend six-pence a day: Yet is he esteemed but poor who has five times that sum. Now Timarchus is said by Æschines to have been left in easy circumstances; but he was master only of ten slaves employed in manufactures. Lysias and his brother, two strangers, were proscribed by the thirty for their great riches; though they had but sixty a-piece. Demosthenes was left very rich by his father; yet he had no more than fifty-two slaves. His workhouse, of twenty cabinet-makers, is said to be a very considerable manufactory.

Seventhly, During the Decelian war, as the Greek historians call it, 20,000 slaves deserted, and brought the Athenians to great distress, as we learn from Thucydides. This could not have happened, had they been only the twentieth part. The best slaves would not desert.

Eighthly, Xenophon proposes a scheme for maintaining by the public 10,000 slaves: And that so great a number may possibly be supported, any one will be convinced, says he, who considers the numbers we possessed before the Decelian war. A way of speaking altogether incompatible with the larger number of Athenæus.

Ninthly, The whole census of the state of Athens was less than 6000 talents. And though numbers in ancient manuscripts be often suspected by critics, yet this is unexceptionable; both because Demosthenes, who gives it, gives also the detail, which checks him; and because Polybius assigns the same number, and reasons upon it. Now, the most vulgar slave could yield by his labour an obolus a day, over and above his maintenance, as we learn from Xenophon, who says, that Nicias's overseer paid his master so much for slaves, whom he employed in mines. If you will take the pains to estimate an obolus a day, and the slaves at 400,000, computing only at four years purchase, you will find the sum above 12,000 talents; even though allowance be made for the great number of holidays in Athens. Besides, many of the slaves would have a much greater value from their art. The lowest that Demosthenes estimates any of his father's slaves is two minas a head. And upon this supposition, it is a little difficult, I confess, to reconcile even the number of 40,000 slaves with the census of 6000 talents.

Tenthly, Chios is said by Thucydides, to contain more slaves than any Greek city, except Sparta. Sparta then had more than Athens, in proportion to the number of citizens. The Spartans were 9000 in the town, 30,000 in the country. The male slaves, therefore, of full age, must have been more than 780,000; the whole more than 3,120,000. A number impossible to be maintained in a narrow barren country, such as Laconia, which had no trade. Had the Helotes been so very numerous, the murder of 2000 mentioned by Thucydides, would have irritated them, without weakening them.

Besides, we are to consider, that the number assigned by Athenæus, whatever it is, comprehends all the inhabitants of Attica, as well as those of Athens. The Athenians affected much a country life, as we learn from Thucydides; and when they were all chased into town, by the invasion of their territory during the Peloponnesian war, the city was not able to contain them; and they were obliged to lie in the porticoes, temples, and even streets, for want of lodging.

The same remark is to be extended to all the other Greek cities; and when the number of citizens is assigned, we must always understand it to comprehend the inhabitants of the neighbouring country, as well as of the city. Yet, even with this allowance, it must be confessed, that Greece was a populous country, and exceeded what we could imagine concerning so narrow a territory, naturally not very fertile, and which drew no supplies of corn from other places. For, excepting Athens, which traded to Pontus for that commodity, the other cities seem to have subsisted chiefly from their neighbouring territory.

Rhodes is well known to have been a city of extensive commerce, and of great fame and splendor; yet it contained only 6000 citizens able to bear arms, when it was besieged by Demetrius.

Thebes was always one of the capital cities of Greece: But the number of its citizens exceeded not those of Rhodes. Phliasia is said to be a small city by Xenophon, yet we find, that it contained 6000 citizens. I pretend not to reconcile these two facts.aa Perhaps, Xenophon calls Phliasia a small town, because it made but a small figure in Greece, and maintained only a subordinate alliance with Sparta; or perhaps the country, belonging to it, was extensive, and most of the citizens were employed in the cultivation of it, and dwelt in the neighbouring villages.

Mantinea was equal to any city in Arcadia: Consequently it was equal to Megalopolis, which was fifty stadia, or six miles and a quarter in circumference. But Mantinea had only 3000 citizens. The Greek cities, therefore, contained often fields and gardens, together with the houses; and we cannot judge of them by the extent of their walls. Athens contained no more than 10,000 houses; yet its walls, with the sea-coast, were above twenty miles in extent. Syracuse was twenty-two miles in circumference; yet was scarcely ever spoken of by the ancients as more populous than Athens. Babylon was a square of fifteen miles, or sixty miles in circuit; but it contained large cultivated fields and inclosures, as we learn from Pliny. Though Aurelian’s wall was fifty miles in circumference; the circuit of all the thirteen divisions of Rome, taken apart, according to Publius Victor, was only about forty-three miles. When an enemy invaded the country, all the inhabitants retired within the walls of the ancient cities, with their cattle and furniture, and instruments of husbandry: and the great height, to which the walls were raised, enabled a small number to defend them with facility.

Sparta, says Xenophon, is one of the cities of Greece that has the fewest inhabitants. Yet Polybius says, that it was forty-eight stadia in circumference, and was round.

All the Ætolians able to bear arms in Antipater’s time, bbdeducting some few garrisons, were but ten thousand men.

Polybius tells us, that the Achæan league might, without any inconvenience, march 30 or 40,000 men: And this account seems probable: For that league comprehended the greater part of Peloponnesus. Yet Pausanias, speaking of the same period, says, that all the Achæans able to bear arms, even when several manumitted slaves were joined to them, did not amount to fifteen thousand.

The Thessalians, till their final conquest by the Romans, were, in all ages, turbulent, factious, seditious, disorderly. It is not therefore natural to suppose, that this part of Greece abounded much in people.

ccWe are told by Thucydides, that the part of Peloponnesus, adjoining to Pylos, was desart and uncultivated. Herodotus says, that Macedonia was full of lions and wild bulls; animals which can only inhabit vast unpeopled forests. These were the two extremities of Greece.

All the inhabitants of Epirus, of all ages, sexes and conditions, who were sold by Paulus Æmilius, amounted only to 150,000. Yet Epirus might be double the extent of Yorkshire.dd

eeJustin tells us, that, when Philip of Macedon was declared head of the Greek confederacy, he called a congress of all the states, except the Lacedemonians, who refused to concur; and he found the force of the whole, upon computation, to amount to 200,000 infantry, and 15,000 cavalry. This must be understood to be all the citizens capable of bearing arms. For as the Greek republics maintained no mercenary forces, and had no militia distinct from the whole body of the citizens, it is not conceivable what other medium there could be of computation. That such an army could ever, by Greece, be brought into the field, and be maintained there, is contrary to all history. Upon this supposition, therefore, we may thus reason. The free Greeks of all ages and sexes were 860,000. The slaves, estimating them by the number of Athenian slaves as above, who seldom married or had families, were double the male citizens of full age, to wit, 430,000. And all the inhabitants of ancient Greece, excepting Laconia, were about one million two hundred and ninety thousand: No mighty number, nor exceeding what may be found at present in Scotland, a country of not much greater extent, and very indifferently peopled.

We may now consider the numbers of people in Rome and Italy, and collect all the lights afforded us by scattered passages in ancient authors. We shall find, upon the whole, a great difficulty, in fixing any opinion on that head; and no reason to support those exaggerated calculations, so much insisted on by modern writers.

Dionysius Halicarnassæus says, that the ancient walls of Rome were nearly of the same compass with those of Athens, but that the suburbs ran out to a great extent; and it was difficult to tell, where the town ended or the country began. In some places of Rome, it appears, from the same author, from Juvenal, and from other ancient writers, that the houses were high, and families lived in separate storeys, one above another: But it is probable, that these were only the poorer citizens, and only in some few streets. If we may judge from the younger Pliny’s account of his own house, and from Bartoli’s plans of ancient buildings, the men of quality had very spacious palaces; and their buildings were like the Chinese houses at this day, where each apartment is separated from the rest, and rises no higher than a single storey. To which if we add, that the Roman nobility much affected extensive porticoes, and even woods in town; we may perhaps allow Vossius (though there is no manner of reason for it) to read the famous passage of the elder Pliny his own way, without admitting the extravagant consequences which he draws from it.

The number of citizens who received corn by the public distribution in the time of Augustus, were two hundred thousand. This one would esteem a pretty certain ground of calculation: Yet is it attended with such circumstances as throw us back into doubt and uncertainty.

Did the poorer citizens only receive the distribution? It was calculated, to be sure, chiefly for their benefit. But it appears from a passage in Cicero that the rich might also take their portion, and that it was esteemed no reproach in them to apply for it.

To whom was the corn given; whether only to heads of families, or to every man, woman, and child? The portion every month was five modii to each (about ⅚ of a bushel). This was too little for a family, and too much for an individual. A very accurate antiquary, therefore, infers, that it was given to every man of full age: But he allows the matter to be uncertain.

Was it strictly enquired, whether the claimant lived within the precincts of Rome; or was it sufficient, that he presented himself at the monthly distribution? This last seems more probable.

Were there no false claimants? We are told, that Cæsar struck off at once 170,000, who had creeped in without a just title; and it is very little probable, that he remedied all abuses.

But, lastly, what proportion of slaves must we assign to these citizens? This is the most material question; and the most uncertain. It is very doubtful, whether Athens can be established as a rule for Rome. Perhaps the Athenians had more slaves, because they employed them in manufactures, for which a capital city, like Rome, seems not so proper. Perhaps, on the other hand, the Romans had more slaves, on account of their superior luxury and riches.

There were exact bills of mortality kept at Rome; but no ancient author has given us the number of burials, except Suetonius, who tells us, that in one season, there were 30,000 names carried to the temple of Libitina: But this was during a plague; which can afford no certain foundation for any inference.

The public corn, though distributed only to 200,000 citizens, affected very considerably the whole agriculture of Italy: a fact no wise reconcileable to some modern exaggerations with regard to the inhabitants of that country.

The best ground of conjecture I can find concerning the greatness of ancient Rome, is this: We are told by Herodian, that Antioch and Alexandria were very little inferior to Rome. It appears from Diodorus Siculus, that one straight street of Alexandria reaching from gate to gate, was five miles long; and as Alexandria was much more extended in length than breadth, it seems to have been a city nearly of the bulk of Paris; and Rome might be about the size of London.

There lived in Alexandria, in Diodorus Siculus's time, 300,000 free people, comprehending, I suppose, women and children. But what number of slaves? Had we any just ground to fix these at an equal number with the free inhabitants, it would favour the foregoing computation.

There is a passage in Herodian, which is a little surprising. He says positively, that the palace of the Emperor was as large as all the rest of the city. This was Nero's golden house, which is indeed represented by Suetonius and Pliny as of an enormous extent, but no power of imagination can make us conceive it to bear any proportion to such a city as London.

We may observe, had the historian been relating Nero's extravagance, and had he made use of such an expression, it would have had much less weight; these rhetorical exaggerations being so apt to creep into an author's style, even when the most chaste and correct. But it is mentioned by Herodian only by the by, in relating the quarrels between Geta and Caracalla.

It appears from the same historian, that there was then much land uncultivated, and put to no manner of use; and he ascribes it as a great praise to Pertinax, that he allowed every one to take such land either in Italy or elsewhere, and cultivate it as he pleased, without paying any taxes. Lands uncultivated, and put to no manner of use! This is not heard of in any part of Christendom; except in some remote parts of Hungary; as I have been informed. And it surely corresponds very ill with that idea of the extreme populousness of antiquity, so much insisted on.

We learn from Vopiscus, that there was even in Etruria much fertile land uncultivated, which the Emperor Aurelian intended to convert into vineyards, in order to furnish the Roman people with a gratuitous distribution of wine; a very proper expedient for depopulating still farther that capital and all the neighbouring territories.

It may not be amiss to take notice of the account which Polybius gives of the great herds of swine to be met with in Tuscany and Lombardy, as well as in Greece, and of the method of feeding them which was then practised. “There are great herds of swine,” says he, “throughout all Italy, particularly in former times, through Etruria and Cisalpine Gaul. And a herd frequently consists of a thousand or more swine. When one of these herds in feeding meets with another, they mix together; and the swine-herds have no other expedient for separating them than to go to different quarters, where they sound their horn; and these animals, being accustomed to that signal, run immediately each to the horn of his own keeper. Whereas in Greece, if the herds of swine happen to mix in the forests, he who has the greater flock, takes cunningly the opportunity of driving all away. And thieves are very apt to purloin the straggling hogs, which have wandered to a great distance from their keeper in search of food.”

May we not infer from this account, that the north of Italy, as well as Greece, was then much less peopled, and worse cultivated, than at present? How could these vast herds be fed in a country so full of inclosures, so improved by agriculture, so divided by farms, so planted with vines and corn intermingled together? I must confess, that Polybius’s relation has more the air of that œconomy which is to be met with in our American colonies, than the management of a European country.

We meet with a reflection in Aristotle’s Ethics, which seems unaccountable on any supposition, and by proving too much in favour of our present reasoning, may be thought really to prove nothing. That philosopher, treating of friendship, and observing, that this relation ought neither to be contracted to a very few, nor extended over a great multitude, illustrates his opinion by the following argument. “In like manner,” says he, “as a city cannot subsist, if it either have so few inhabitants as ten, or so many as a hundred thousand; so is there a mediocrity required in the number of friends; and you destroy the essence of friendship by running into either extreme.” What! impossible that a city can contain a hundred thousand inhabitants! Had Aristotle never seen nor heard of a city so populous? This, I must own, passes my comprehension.

Pliny tells us that Seleucia, the seat of the Greek empire in the East, was reported to contain 600,000 people. Carthage is said by Strabo to have contained 700,000. The inhabitants of Pekin are not much more numerous. London, Paris, and Constantinople, may admit of nearly the same computation; at least, the two latter cities do not exceed it. Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, we have already spoken of. From the experience of past and present ages, one might conjecture that there is a kind of impossibility, that any city could ever rise much beyond this proportion. Whether the grandeur of a city be founded on commerce or on empire, there seem to be invincible obstacles, which prevent its farther progress. The seats of vast monarchies, by introducing extravagant luxury, irregular expence, idleness, dependence, and false ideas of rank and superiority, are improper for commerce. Extensive commerce checks itself, by raising the price of all labour and commodities. When a great court engages the attendance of a numerous nobility, possessed of overgrown fortunes, the middling gentry remain in their provincial towns, where they can make a figure on a moderate income. And if the dominions of a state arrive at an enormous size, there necessarily arise many capitals, in the remoter provinces, whither all the inhabitants, except a few courtiers, repair for education, fortune, and amusement. London, by uniting extensive commerce and middling empire, has, perhaps, arrived at a greatness, which no city will ever be able to exceed.

Chuse Dover or Calais for a center: Draw a circle of two hundred miles radius: You comprehend London, Paris, the Netherlands, the United Provinces, and some of the best cultivated parts of France and England. It may safely, I think, be affirmed, that no spot of ground can be found, in antiquity, of equal extent, which contained near so many great and populous cities, and was so stocked with riches and inhabitants. To balance, in both periods, the states, which possessed most art, knowledge, civility, and the best police, seems the truest method of comparison.

It is an observation of L’Abbe du Bos, that Italy is warmer at present than it was in ancient times. “The annals of Rome tell us,” says he, “that in the year 480 ab U.C. the winter was so severe that it destroyed the trees. The Tyber froze in Rome, and the ground was covered with snow for forty days. When Juvenal describes a superstitious woman, he represents her as breaking the ice of the Tyber, that she might perform her ablutions:

- Hybernum fracta glacie descendet in amnem,
- Ter matutino Tyberi mergetur.

He speaks of that river’s freezing as a common event. Many passages of Horace suppose the streets of Rome full of snow and ice. We should have more certainty with regard to this point, had the ancients known the use of thermometers: But their writers, without intending it, give us information, sufficient to convince us, that the winters are now much more temperate at Rome than formerly. At present the Tyber no more freezes at Rome than the Nile at Cairo. The Romans esteem the winters very rigorous, if the snow lie two days, and if one see for eight and forty hours a few icicles hang from a fountain that has a north exposure.”

The observation of this ingenious critic may be extended to other European climates. Who could discover the mild climate of France in Diodorus Siculus’s description of that of Gaul? “As it is a northern climate,” says he, “it is infested with cold to an extreme degree. In cloudy weather, instead of rain there fall great snows; and in clear weather it there freezes so excessive hard, that the rivers acquire bridges of their own substance, over which, not only single travellers may pass, but large armies, accompanied with all their baggage and loaded waggons. And there being many rivers in Gaul, the Rhone, the Rhine, &c. almost all of them are frozen over; and it is usual, in order to prevent falling, to cover the ice with chaff and straw at the places where the road passes.” ffColder than a Gallic Winter, is used by Petronius as a proverbial expression. Aristotle says, that Gaul is so cold a climate that an ass could not live in it.

North of the Cevennes, says Strabo, Gaul produces not figs and olives: And the vines, which have been planted, bear not grapes, that will ripen.

Ovid positively maintains, with all the serious affirmation of prose, that the Euxine sea was frozen over every winter in his time; and he appeals to Roman governours, whom he names, for the truth of his assertion. This seldom or never happens at present in the latitude of Tomi, whither Ovid was banished. All the complaints of the same poet seem to mark a rigour of the seasons, which is scarcely experienced at present in Petersburgh or Stockholm.

Tournefort, a Provençal, who had travelled into the same country, observes, that there is not a finer climate in the world: And he asserts, that nothing but Ovid’s melancholy could have given him such dismal ideas of it. But the facts, mentioned by that poet, are too circumstantial to bear any such interpretation.

Polybius says, that the climate in Arcadia was very cold, and the air moist.

“Italy,” says Varro, “is the most temperate climate in Europe. The inland parts” (Gaul, Germany, and Pannonia, no doubt) “have almost perpetual winter.”

The northern parts of Spain, according to Strabo, are but ill inhabited, because of the great cold.

Allowing, therefore, this remark to be just, that Europe is become warmer than formerly; how can we account for it? Plainly, by no other method, than by supposing, that the land is at present much better cultivated, and that the woods are cleared, which formerly threw a shade upon the earth, and kept the rays of the sun from penetrating to it. Our northern colonies in America become more temperate, in proportion as the woods are felled; but in general, every one may remark, that cold is still much more severely felt, both in North and South America, than in places under the same latitude in Europe.

Saserna, quoted by Columella, affirmed, that the disposition of the heavens was altered before his time, and that the air had become much milder and warmer; as appears hence, says he, that many places now abound with vineyards and olive plantations, which formerly, by reason of the rigour of the climate, could raise none of these productions. Such a change, if real, will be allowed an evident sign of the better cultivation and peopling of countries before the age of Saserna; and if it be continued to the present times, is a proof, that these advantages have been continually encreasing throughout this part of the world.

Let us now cast our eye over all the countries which are the scene of ancient and modern history, and compare their past and present situation: We shall not, perhaps, find such foundation for the complaint of the present emptiness and desolation of the world. Ægypt is represented by Maillet, to whom we owe the best account of it, as extremely populous; though he esteems the number of its inhabitants to be diminished. Syria, and the Lesser Asia, as well as the coast of Barbary, I can readily own, to be desart in comparison of their ancient condition. The depopulation of Greece is also obvious. But whether the country now called Turky in Europe may not, in general, contain more inhabitants than during the flourishing period of Greece, may be a little doubtful. The Thracians seem then to have lived like the Tartars at present, by pasturage and plunder: The Getes were still more uncivilized: And the Illyrians were no better. These occupy nine-tenths of that country: And though the government of the Turks be not very favourable to industry and propagation; yet it preserves at least peace and order among the inhabitants; and is preferable to that barbarous, unsettled condition, in which they anciently lived.

Poland and Muscovy in Europe are not populous; but are certainly much more so than the ancient Sarmatia and Scythia; where no husbandry or tillage was ever heard of, and pasturage was the sole art by which the people were maintained. The like observation may be extended to Denmark and Sweden. No one ought to esteem the immense swarms of people, which formerly came from the North, and over-ran all Europe, to be any objection to this opinion. Where a whole nation, or even half of it remove their seat; it is easy to imagine, what a prodigious multitude they must form; with what desperate valour they must make their attacks; and how the terror they strike into the invaded nations will make these magnify, in their imagination, both the courage and multitude of the invaders. Scotland is neither extensive nor populous; but were the half of its inhabitants to seek new seats, they would form a colony as numerous as the Teutons and Cimbri; and would shake all Europe, supposing it in no better condition for defence than formerly.

Germany has surely at present twenty times more inhabitants than in ancient times, when they cultivated no ground, and each tribe valued itself on the extensive desolation which it spread around; as we learn from Cæsar, and Tacitus, and Strabo. A proof, that the division into small republics will not alone render a nation populous, unless attended with the spirit of peace, order, and industry.

The barbarous condition of Britain in former times is well known, and the thinness of its inhabitants may easily be conjectured, both from their barbarity, and from a circumstance mentioned by Herodian, that all Britain was marshy, even in Severus’s time, after the Romans had been fully settled in it above a century.

It is not easily imagined, that the Gauls were anciently much more advanced in the arts of life than their northern neighbours; since they travelled to this island for their education in the mysteries of the religion and philosophy of the Druids. I cannot, therefore, think, that Gaul was then near so populous as France is at present.

Were we to believe, indeed, and join together the testimony of Appian, and that of Diodorus Siculus, we must admit of an incredible populousness in Gaul. The former historian says, that there were 400 nations in that country; the latter affirms, that the largest of the Gallic nations consisted of 200,000 men, besides women and children, and the least of 50,000. Calculating, therefore, at a medium, we must admit of near 200 millions of people, in a country, which we esteem populous at present, though supposed to contain little more than twenty. Such calculations, therefore, by their extravagance, lose all manner of authority. We may observe, that the equality of property, to which the populousness of antiquity may be ascribed, had no place among the Gauls. Their intestine wars also, before Cæsar's time, were almost perpetual. And Strabo observes, that, though all Gaul was cultivated, yet was it not cultivated with any skill or care; the genius of the inhabitants leading them less to arts than arms, till their slavery under Rome produced peace among themselves.

Cæsar enumerates very particularly the great forces which were levied in Belgium to oppose his conquests; and makes them amount to 208,000. These were not the whole people able to bear arms: For the same historian tells us, that the Bellovaci could have brought a hundred thousand men into the field, though they engaged only for sixty. Taking the whole, therefore, in this proportion of ten to six, ggthe sum of fighting men in all the states of Belgium was about 350,000; all the inhabitants a million and a half. And Belgium being about a fourth of Gaul, that country might contain six millions, which is nothh near the third of its present inhabitants. jjWe are informed by Cæsar, that the Gauls had no fixed property in land; but that the chieftains, when any death happened in a family, made a new division of all the lands among the several members of the family. This is the custom of Tanistry, which so long prevailed in Ireland, and which retained that country in a state of misery, barbarism, and desolation.

The ancient Helvetia was 250 miles in length, and 180 in breadth, according to the same author; yet contained only 360,000 inhabitants. The canton of Berne alone has, at present, as many people.

After this computation of Appian and Diodorus Siculus, I know not, whether I dare affirm, that the modern Dutch are more numerous than the ancient Batavi.

Spain is, perhaps, decayed from what it was three centuries ago; but if we step backward two thousand years, and consider the restless, turbulent, unsettled condition of its inhabitants, we may probably be inclined to think, that it is now much more populous. Many Spaniards killed themselves, when deprived of their arms by the Romans. It appears from Plutarch, that robbery and plunder were esteemed honourable among the Spaniards. Hirtius represents in the same light the situation of that country in Cæsar's time; and he says, that every man was obliged to live in castles and walled towns for his security. It was not till its final conquest under Augustus, that these disorders were repressed. The account which Strabo and Justin give of Spain, corresponds exactly with those above mentioned. How much, therefore, must it diminish from our idea of the populousness of antiquity, when we find, that Tully, comparing Italy, Afric, Gaul, Greece, and Spain, mentions the great number of inhabitants, as the peculiar circumstance, which rendered this latter country formidable?

Italy, however, it is probable, has decayed: But how many great cities does it still contain? Venice, Genoa, Pavia, Turin, Milan, Naples, Florence, Leghorn, which either subsisted not in ancient times, or were then very inconsiderable? If we reflect on this, we shall not be apt to carry matters to so great an extreme as is usual, with regard to this subject.

When the Roman authors complain, that Italy, which formerly exported corn, became dependent on all the provinces for its daily bread, they never ascribe this alteration to the encrease of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage and agriculture. A natural effect of that pernicious practice of importing corn, in order to distribute it gratis among the Roman citizens, and a very bad means of multiplying the inhabitants of any country. The sportula, so much talked of by Martial and Juvenal, being presents regularly made by the great lords to their smaller clients, must have had a like tendency to produce idleness, debauchery, and a continual decay among the people. The parish-rates have at present the same bad consequences in England.

Were I to assign a period, when I imagine this part of the world might possibly contain more inhabitants than at present, I should pitch upon the age of Trajan and the Antonines; the great extent of the Roman empire being then civilized and cultivated, settled almost in a profound peace both foreign and domestic, and living under the same regular police and government. But we are told, that all extensive governments, especially absolute monarchies, are pernicious to population, and contain a secret vice and poison, which destroy the effect of all these promising appearances. To confirm this, there is a passage cited from Plutarch, which being somewhat singular, we shall here examine it.

That author, endeavouring to account for the silence of many of the oracles, says, that it may be ascribed to the present desolation of the world, proceeding from former wars and factions; which common calamity, he adds, has fallen heavier upon Greece than on any other country; insomuch, that the whole could scarcely at present furnish three thousand warriors; a number which, in the time of the Median war, were supplied by the single city of Megara. The gods, therefore, who affect works of dignity and importance, have suppressed many of their oracles, and deign not to use so many interpreters of their will to so diminutive a people.

I must confess, that this passage contains so many difficulties, that I know not what to make of it. You may observe, that Plutarch assigns, for a cause of the decay of mankind, not the extensive dominion of the Romans, but the former wars and factions of the several states; all which were quieted by the Roman arms. Plutarch's reasoning, therefore, is directly contrary to the inference, which is drawn from the fact he advances.

Polybius supposes, that Greece had become more prosperous and flourishing after the establishment of the Roman yoke; and though that historian wrote before these conquerors had degenerated, from being the patrons, to be the plunderers of mankind; yet as we find from Tacitus, that the severity of the emperors afterwards corrected the licence of the governors, we have no reason to think that extensive monarchy so destructive as it is often represented.

We learn from Strabo, that the Romans, from their regard to the Greeks, maintained, to his time, most of the privileges and liberties of that celebrated nation; and Nero afterwards rather encreased them. How therefore can we imagine, that the Roman yoke was so burdensome over that part of the world? The oppression of the proconsuls was checked; and the magistracies in Greece being all bestowed, in the several cities, by the free votes of the people, there was no necessity for the competitors to attend the emperor's court. If great numbers went to seek their fortunes in Rome, and advance themselves by learning or eloquence, the commodities of their native country, many of them would return with the fortunes which they had acquired, and thereby enrich the Grecian commonwealths.

But Plutarch says, that the general depopulation had been more sensibly felt in Greece than in any other country. How is this reconcileable to its superior privileges and advantages?

Besides, this passage, by proving too much, really proves nothing. Only three thousand men able to bear arms in all Greece! Who can admit so strange a proposition, especially if we consider the great number of Greek cities, whose names still remain in history, and which are mentioned by writers long after the age of Plutarch? There are there surely ten times more people at present, when there scarcely remains a city in all the bounds of ancient Greece. That country is still tolerably cultivated, and furnishes a sure supply of corn, in case of any scarcity in Spain, Italy, or the south of France.

We may observe, that the ancient frugality of the Greeks, and their equality of property, still subsisted during the age of Plutarch; as appears from Lucian. Nor is there any ground to imagine, that that country was possessed by a few masters, and a great number of slaves.

It is probable, indeed, that military discipline, being entirely useless, was extremely neglected in Greece after the establishment of the Roman empire; and if these commonwealths, formerly so warlike and ambitious, maintained each of them a small city-guard, to prevent mobbish disorders, it is all they had occasion for: And these, perhaps, did not amount to 3000 men, throughout all Greece. I own, that, if Plutarch had this fact in his eye, he is here guilty of a gross paralogism, and assigns causes no wise proportioned to the effects. But is it so great a prodigy, that an author should fall into a mistake of this nature?

But whatever force may remain in this passage of Plutarch, we shall endeavour to counterbalance it by as remarkable a passage in Diodorus Siculus, where the historian, after mentioning Ninus’s army of 1,700,000 foot and 200,000 horse, endeavours to support the credibility of this account by some posterior facts; and adds, that we must not form a notion of the ancient populousness of mankind from the present emptiness and depopulation which is spread over the world. Thus an author, who lived at that very period of antiquity which is represented as most populous, complains of the desolation which then prevailed, gives the preference to former times, and has recourse to ancient fables as a foundation for his opinion. The humour of blaming the present, and admiring the past, is strongly rooted in human nature, and has an influence even on persons endued with the profoundest judgment and most extensive learning.

ESSAY XII: OF THE ORIGINAL CONTRACT

As no party, in the present age, can well support itself, without a philosophical or speculative system of principles, annexed to its political or practical one; we accordingly find, that each of the factions, into which this nation is divided, has reared up a fabric of the former kind, in order to protect and cover that scheme of actions, which it pursues. The people being commonly very rude builders, especially in this speculative way, and more especially still, when actuated by party-zeal; it is natural to imagine, that their workmanship must be a little unshapely, and discover evident marks of that violence and hurry, in which it was raised. The one party, by tracing up government to the Deity, endeavour to render it so sacred and inviolate, that it must be little less than sacrilege, however tyrannical it may become, to touch or invade it, in the smallest article. The other party, by founding government altogether on the consent of the People, suppose that there is a kind of original contract, by which the subjects have tacitly reserved the power of resisting their sovereign, whenever they find themselves aggrieved by that authority, with which they have, for certain purposes, voluntarily entrusted him. These are the speculative principles of the two parties; and these too are the practical consequences deduced from them.

I shall venture to affirm, That both these systems of speculative principles are just; though not in the sense, intended by the parties: And, That both the schemes of practical consequences are prudent; though not in the extremes, to which each party, in opposition to the other, has commonly endeavoured to carry them.

That the Deity is the ultimate author of all government, will never be denied by any, who admit a general providence, and allow, that all events in the universe are conducted by an uniform plan, and directed to wise purposes. As it is impossible for the human race to subsist, at least in any comfortable or secure state, without the protection of government; this institution must certainly have been intended by that beneficent Being, who means the good of all his creatures: And as it has universally, in fact, taken place, in all countries, and all ages; we may conclude, with still greater certainty, that it was intended by that omniscient Being, who can never be deceived by any event or operation. But since he gave rise to it, not by any particular or miraculous interposition, but by his concealed and universal efficacy; a sovereign cannot, properly speaking, be called his vice-gerent, in any other sense than every power or force, being derived from him, may be said to act by his commission. Whatever actually happens is comprehended in the general plan or intention of providence; nor has the greatest and most lawful prince any more reason, upon that account, to plead a peculiar sacredness or inviolable authority, than an inferior magistrate, or even an usurper, or even a robber and a pyrate. The same divine superintendant, who, for wise purposes, invested a Titus or a Trajan with authority, did also, for purposes, no doubt, equally wise, though unknown, bestow power on a Borgia or an Angria. The same causes, which gave rise to the sovereign power in every state, established likewise every petty jurisdiction in it, and every limited authority. A constable, therefore, no less than a king, acts by a divine commission, and possesses an indefeasible right.

When we consider how nearly equal all men are in their bodily force, and even in their mental powers and faculties, till cultivated by education; we must necessarily allow, that nothing but their own consent could, at first, associate them together, and subject them to any authority. The people, if we trace government to its first origin in the woods and desarts, are the source of all power and jurisdiction, and voluntarily, for the sake of peace and order, abandoned their native liberty, and received laws from their equal and companion. The conditions, upon which they were willing to submit, were either expressed, or were so clear and obvious, that it might well be esteemed superfluous to express them. If this, then, be meant by the original contract, it cannot be denied, that all government is, at first, founded on a contract, and that the most ancient rude combinations of mankind were formed chiefly by that principle. In vain, are we asked in what records this charter of our liberties is registered. It was not written on parchment, nor yet on leaves or barks of trees. It preceded the use of writing and all the other civilized arts of life. But we trace it plainly in the nature of man, and in the equality, or something approaching equality, which we find in all the individuals of that species. The force, which now prevails, and which is founded on fleets and armies, is plainly political, and derived from authority, the effect of established government. A man's natural force consists only in the vigour of his limbs, and the firmness of his courage;

which could never subject multitudes to the command of one. Nothing but their own consent, and their sense of the advantages resulting from peace and order, could have had that influence.

Yet even this consent was long very imperfect, and could not be the basis of a regular administration. The chieftain, who had probably acquired his influence during the continuance of war, ruled more by persuasion than command; and till he could employ force to reduce the refractory and disobedient, the society could scarcely be said to have attained a state of civil government. No compact or agreement, it is evident, was expressly formed for general submission; an idea far beyond the comprehension of savages: Each exertion of authority in the chieftain must have been particular, and called forth by the present exigencies of the case: The sensible utility, resulting from his interposition, made these exertions become daily more frequent; and their frequency gradually produced an habitual, and, if you please to call it so, a voluntary, and therefore precarious, acquiescence in the people.

But philosophers, who have embraced a party (if that be not a contradiction in terms) are not contented with these concessions. They assert, not only that government in its earliest infancy arose from consent or rather the voluntary acquiescence of the people; but also, that, even at present, when it has attained full maturity, it rests on no other foundation. They affirm, that all men are still born equal, and owe allegiance to no prince or government, unless bound by the obligation and sanction of a promise. And as no man, without some equivalent, would forego the advantages of his native liberty, and subject himself to the will of another; this promise is always understood to be conditional, and imposes on him no obligation, unless he meet with justice and protection from his sovereign. These advantages the sovereign promises him in return; and if he fail in the execution, he has broken, on his part, the articles of engagement, and has thereby freed his subject from all obligations to allegiance. Such, according to these philosophers, is the foundation of authority in every government; and such the right of resistance, possessed by every subject.

But would these reasoners look abroad into the world, they would meet with nothing that, in the least, corresponds to their ideas, or can warrant so refined and philosophical a system. On the contrary, we find, every where, princes, who claim their subjects as their property, and assert their independent right of sovereignty, from conquest or succession. We find also, every where, subjects, who acknowledge this right in their prince, and suppose themselves born under obligations of obedience to a certain sovereign, as much as under the ties of reverence and duty to certain parents. These connexions are always conceived to be equally independent of our consent, in Persia and China; in France and Spain; and even in Holland and England, wherever the doctrines above-mentioned have not been carefully inculcated. Obedience or subjection becomes so familiar, that most men never make any enquiry about its origin or cause, more than about the principle of gravity, resistance, or the most universal laws of nature. Or if curiosity ever move them; as soon as they learn, that they themselves and their ancestors have, for several ages, or from time immemorial, been subject to such a form of government or such a family; they immediately acquiesce, and acknowledge their obligation to allegiance. Were you to preach, in most parts of the world, that political connexions are founded altogether on voluntary consent or a mutual promise, the magistrate would soon imprison you, as seditious, for loosening the ties of obedience; if your friends did not before shut you up as delirious, for advancing such absurdities. It is strange, that an act of the mind, which every individual is supposed to have formed, and after he came to the use of reason too, otherwise it could have no authority; that this act, I say, should be so much unknown to all of them, that, over the face of the whole earth, there scarcely remain any traces or memory of it.

But the contract, on which government is founded, is said to be the original contract; and consequently may be supposed too old to fall under the knowledge of the present generation. If the agreement, by which savage men first associated and conjoined their force, be here meant, this is acknowledged to be real; but being so ancient, and being obliterated by a thousand changes of government and princes, it cannot now be supposed to retain any authority. If we would say any thing to the purpose, we must assert, that every particular government, which is lawful, and which imposes any duty of allegiance on the subject, was, at first, founded on consent and a voluntary compact. But besides that this supposes the consent of the fathers to bind the children, even to the most remote generations, (which republican writers will never allow) besides this, I say, it is not justified by history or experience, in any age or country of the world.

Almost all the governments, which exist at present, or of which there remains any record in story, have been founded originally, either on usurpation or conquest, or both, without any pretence of a fair consent, or voluntary subjection of the people. When an artful and bold man is placed at the head of an army or faction, it is often easy for him, by employing, sometimes violence, sometimes false pretences, to establish his dominion over a people a hundred times more numerous than his partizans. He allows no such open communication, that his enemies can know, with certainty, their number or force. He gives them no leisure to assemble together in a body to oppose him. Even all those, who are the instruments of his usurpation, may wish his fall; but their ignorance of each other's intention keeps them in awe, and is the sole cause of his security. By such arts as these, many governments have been established; and this is all the original contract, which they have to boast of.

The face of the earth is continually changing, by the encrease of small kingdoms into great empires, by the dissolution of great empires into smaller kingdoms, by the planting of colonies, by the migration of tribes. Is there any thing discoverable in all these events, but force and violence? Where is the mutual agreement or voluntary association so much talked of?

Even the smoothest way, by which a nation may receive a foreign master, by marriage or a will, is not extremely honourable for the people; but supposes them to be disposed of, like a dowry or a legacy, according to the pleasure or interest of their rulers.

But where no force interposes, and election takes place; what is this election so highly vaunted? It is either the combination of a few great men, who decide for the whole, and will allow of no opposition: Or it is the fury of a multitude, that follow a seditious ringleader, who is not known, perhaps, to a dozen among them, and who owes his advancement merely to his own impudence, or to the momentary caprice of his fellows.

Are these disorderly elections, which are rare too, of such mighty authority, as to be the only lawful foundation of all government and allegiance?

In reality, there is not a more terrible event, than a total dissolution of government, which gives liberty to the multitude, and makes the determination or choice of a new establishment depend upon a number, which nearly approaches to that of the body of the people: For it never comes entirely to the whole body of them. Every wise man, then, wishes to see, at the head of a powerful and obedient army, a general, who may speedily seize the prize, and give to the people a master, which they are so unfit to chuse for themselves. So little correspondent is fact and reality to those philosophical notions.

Let not the establishment at the Revolution deceive us, or make us so much in love with a philosophical origin to government, as to imagine all others monstrous and irregular. Even that event was far from corresponding to these refined ideas. It was only the succession, and that only in the regal part of the government, which was then changed: And it was only the majority of seven hundred, who determined that change for near ten millions. I doubt not, indeed, but the bulk of those ten millions acquiesced willingly in the determination: But was the matter left, in the least, to their choice? Was it not justly supposed to be, from that moment, decided, and every man punished, who refused to submit to the new sovereign? How otherwise could the matter have ever been brought to any issue or conclusion?

The republic of Athens was, I believe, the most extensive democracy, that we read of in history: Yet if we make the requisite allowances for the women, the slaves, and the strangers, we shall find, that that establishment was not, at first, made, nor any law ever voted, by a tenth part of those who were bound to pay obedience to it: Not to mention the islands and foreign dominions, which the Athenians claimed as theirs by right of conquest. And as it is well known, that popular assemblies in that city were always full of licence and disorder, notwithstanding the institutions and laws by which they were checked: How much more disorderly must they prove, where they form not the established constitution, but meet tumultuously on the dissolution of the ancient government, in order to give rise to a new one? How chimerical must it be to talk of a choice in such circumstances?

The Achæans enjoyed the freest and most perfect democracy of all antiquity; yet they employed force to oblige some cities to enter into their league, as we learn from Polybius.

Harry the IVth and Harry the VIIth of England, had really no title to the throne but a parliamentary election; yet they never would acknowledge it, lest they should thereby weaken their authority. Strange, if the only real foundation of all authority be consent and promise!

It is in vain to say, that all governments are or should be, at first, founded on popular consent, as much as the necessity of human affairs will admit. This favours entirely my pretension. I maintain, that human affairs will never admit of this consent; seldom of the appearance of it. But that conquest or usurpation, that is, in plain terms, force, by dissolving the ancient governments, is the origin of almost all the new ones, which were ever established in the world. And that in the few cases, where consent may seem to have taken place, it was commonly so irregular, so confined, or so much intermixed either with fraud or violence, that it cannot have any great authority.

My intention here is not to exclude the consent of the people from being one just foundation of government where it has place. It is surely the best and most sacred of any. I only pretend, that it has very seldom had place in any degree, and never almost in its full extent. And that therefore some other foundation of government must also be admitted.

Were all men possessed of so inflexible a regard to justice, that, of themselves, they would totally abstain from the properties of others; they had for ever remained in a state of absolute liberty, without subjection to any magistrate or political society: But this is a state of perfection, of which human nature is justly deemed incapable. Again; were all men possessed of so perfect an understanding, as always to know their own interests, no form of government had ever been submitted to, but what was established on consent, and was fully canvassed by every member of the society: But this state of perfection is likewise much superior to human nature. Reason, history, and experience shew us, that all political societies have had an origin much less accurate and regular; and were one to choose a period of time, when the people's consent was the least regarded in public transactions, it would be precisely on the establishment of a new government. In a settled constitution, their inclinations are often consulted; but during the fury of revolutions, conquests, and public convulsions, military force or political craft usually decides the controversy.

When a new government is established, by whatever means, the people are commonly dissatisfied with it, and pay obedience more from fear and necessity, than from any idea of allegiance or of moral obligation. The prince is watchful and jealous, and must carefully guard against every beginning or appearance of insurrection. Time, by degrees, removes all these difficulties, and accustoms the nation to regard, as their lawful or native princes, that family, which, at first, they considered as usurpers or foreign conquerors. In order to found this opinion, they have no recourse to any notion of voluntary consent or promise, which, they know, never was, in this case, either expected or demanded. The original establishment was formed by violence, and submitted to from necessity. The subsequent administration is also supported by power, and acquiesced in by the people, not as a matter of choice, but of obligation. They imagine not, that their consent gives their prince a title: But they willingly consent, because they think, that, from long possession, he has acquired a title, independent of their choice or inclination.

Should it be said, that, by living under the dominion of a prince, which one might leave, every individual has given a tacit consent to his authority, and promised him obedience; it may be answered, that such an implied consent can only have place, where a man imagines, that the matter depends on his choice. But where he thinks (as all mankind do who are born under established governments) that by his birth he owes allegiance to a certain prince or certain form of government; it would be absurd to infer a consent or choice, which he expressly, in this case, renounces and disclaims.

Can we seriously say, that a poor peasant or artizan has a free choice to leave his country, when he knows no foreign language or manners, and lives from day to day, by the small wages which he acquires? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish, the moment he leaves her.

What if the prince forbid his subjects to quit his dominions; as in Tiberius's time, it was regarded as a crime in a Roman knight that he had attempted to fly to the Parthians, in order to escape the tyranny of that emperor? Or as the ancient Muscovites prohibited all travelling under pain of death? And did a prince observe, that many of his subjects were seized with the frenzy of migrating to foreign countries, he would doubtless, with great reason and justice, restrain them, in order to prevent the depopulation of his own kingdom. Would he forfeit the allegiance of all his subjects, by so wise and reasonable a law? Yet the freedom of their choice is surely, in that case, ravished from them.

A company of men, who should leave their native country, in order to people some uninhabited region, might dream of recovering their native freedom; but they would soon find, that their prince still laid claim to them, and called them his subjects, even in their new settlement. And in this he would but act conformably to the common ideas of mankind.

The truest tacit consent of this kind, that is ever observed, is when a foreigner settles in any country, and is beforehand acquainted with the prince, and government, and laws, to which he must submit: Yet is his allegiance, though more voluntary, much less expected or depended on, than that of a natural born subject. On the contrary, his native prince still asserts a claim to him. And if he punish not the renegade, when he seizes him in war with his new prince's commission; this clemency is not founded on the municipal law, which in all countries condemns the prisoner; but on the consent of princes, who have agreed to this indulgence, in order to prevent reprisals.

Did one generation of men go off the stage at once, and another succeed, as is the case with silk-worms and butterflies, the new race, if they had sense enough to choose their government, which surely is never the case with men, might voluntarily, and by general consent, establish their own form of civil polity, without any regard to the laws or precedents, which prevailed among their ancestors. But as human society is in perpetual flux, one man every hour going out of the world, another coming into it, it is necessary, in order to preserve stability in government, that the new brood should conform themselves to the established constitution, and nearly follow the path which their fathers, treading in the footsteps of theirs, had marked out to them. Some innovations must necessarily have place in every human institution, and it is happy where the enlightened genius of the age give these a direction to the side of reason, liberty, and justice: but violent innovations no individual is entitled to make: they are even dangerous to be attempted by the legislature: more ill than good is ever to be expected from them: and if history affords examples to the contrary, they are not to be drawn into precedent, and are only to be regarded as proofs, that the science of politics affords few rules, which will not admit of some exception, and which may not sometimes be controuled by fortune and accident. The violent innovations in the reign of Henry VIII. proceeded from an imperious monarch, seconded by the appearance of legislative authority: Those in the reign of Charles I. were derived from faction and fanaticism; and both of them have proved happy in the issue: But even the former were long the source of many disorders, and still more dangers; and if the measures of allegiance were to be taken from the latter, a total anarchy must have place in human society, and a final period at once be put to every government.

Suppose, that an usurper, after having banished his lawful prince and royal family, should establish his dominion for ten or a dozen years in any country, and should preserve so exact a discipline in his troops, and so regular a disposition in his garrisons, that no insurrection had ever been raised, or even murmur heard, against his administration: Can it be asserted, that the people, who in their hearts abhor his treason, have tacitly consented to his authority, and promised him allegiance, merely because, from necessity, they live under his dominion? Suppose again their native prince restored, by means of an army, which he levies in foreign countries: They receive him with joy and exultation, and shew plainly with what reluctance they had submitted to any other yoke. I may now ask, upon what foundation the prince's title stands? Not on popular consent surely: For though the people willingly acquiesce in his authority, they never imagine, that their consent made him sovereign. They consent; because they apprehend him to be already, by birth, their lawful sovereign. And as to that tacit consent, which may now be inferred from their living under his dominion, this is no more than what they formerly gave to the tyrant and usurper.

When we assert, that all lawful government arises from the consent of the people, we certainly do them a great deal more honour than they deserve, or even expect and desire from us. After the Roman dominions became too unwieldly for the republic to govern them, the people, over the whole known world, were extremely grateful to Augustus for that authority, which, by violence, he had established over them; and they shewed an equal disposition to submit to the successor, whom he left them, by his last will and testament. It was afterwards their misfortune, that there never was, in one family, any long regular succession; but that their line of princes was continually broken, either by private assassinations or public rebellions. The prætorian bands, on the failure of every family, set up one emperor; the legions in the East a second; those in Germany, perhaps, a third: And the sword alone could decide the controversy. The condition of the people, in that mighty monarchy, was to be lamented, not because the choice of the emperor was never left to them; for that was impracticable: But because they never fell under any succession of masters, who might regularly follow each other. As to the violence and wars and bloodshed, occasioned by every new settlement; these were not blameable, because they were inevitable.

The house of Lancaster ruled in this island about sixty years; yet the partizans of the white rose seemed daily to multiply in England. The present establishment has taken place during a still longer period. Have all views of right in another family been utterly extinguished; even though scarce any man now alive had arrived at years of discretion, when it was expelled, or could have consented to its dominion, or have promised it allegiance? A sufficient indication surely of the general sentiment of mankind on this head. For we blame not the partizans of the abdicated family, merely on account of the long time, during which they have preserved their imaginary loyalty. We blame them for adhering to a family, which, we affirm, has been justly expelled, and which, from the moment the new settlement took place, had forfeited all title to authority.

But would we have a more regular, at least a more philosophical, refutation of this principle of an original contract or popular consent; perhaps, the following observations may suffice.

All moral duties may be divided into two kinds. The first are those, to which men are impelled by a natural instinct or immediate propensity, which operates on them, independent of all ideas of obligation, and of all views, either to public or private utility. Of this nature are, love of children, gratitude to benefactors, pity to the unfortunate. When we reflect on the advantage, which results to society from such humane instincts, we pay them the just tribute of moral approbation and esteem: But the person, actuated by them, feels their power and influence, antecedent to any such reflection.

The second kind of moral duties are such as are not supported by any original instinct of nature, but are performed entirely from a sense of obligation, when we consider the necessities of human society, and the impossibility of supporting it, if these duties were neglected. It is thus justice or a regard to the property of others, fidelity or the observance of promises, become obligatory, and acquire an authority over mankind. For as it is evident, that every man loves himself better than any other person, he is naturally impelled to extend his acquisitions as much as possible; and nothing can restrain him in this propensity, but reflection and experience, by which he learns the pernicious effects of that licence, and the total dissolution of society which must ensue from it. His original inclination, therefore, or instinct, is here checked and restrained by a subsequent judgment or observation.

The case is precisely the same with the political or civil duty of allegiance, as with the natural duties of justice and fidelity. Our primary instincts lead us, either to indulge ourselves in unlimited freedom, or to seek dominion over others: And it is reflection only, which engages us to sacrifice such strong passions to the interests of peace and public order. A small degree of experience and observation suffices to teach us, that society cannot possibly be maintained without the authority of magistrates, and that this authority must soon fall into contempt, where exact obedience is not payed to it. The observation of these general and obvious interests is the source of all allegiance, and of that moral obligation, which we attribute to it.

What necessity, therefore, is there to found the duty of allegiance or obedience to magistrates on that of fidelity or a regard to promises, and to suppose, that it is the consent of each individual, which subjects him to government; when it appears, that both allegiance and fidelity stand precisely on the same foundation, and are both submitted to by mankind, on account of the apparent interests and necessities of human society? We are bound to obey our sovereign, it is said; because we have given a tacit promise to that purpose. But why are we bound to observe our promise? It must here be asserted, that the commerce and intercourse of mankind, which are of such mighty advantage, can have no security where men pay no regard to their engagements. In like manner, may it be said, that men could not live at all in society, at least in a civilized society, without laws and magistrates and judges, to prevent the encroachments of the strong upon the weak, of the violent upon the just and equitable. The obligation to allegiance being of like force and authority with the obligation to fidelity, we gain nothing by resolving the one into the other. The general interests or necessities of society are sufficient to establish both.

If the reason be asked of that obedience, which we are bound to pay to government, I readily answer, because society could not otherwise subsist: And this answer is clear and intelligible to all mankind. Your answer is, because we should keep our word. But besides, that no body, till trained in a philosophical system, can either comprehend or relish this answer: Besides this, I say, you find yourself embarrassed, when it is asked, why we are bound to keep our word? Nor can you give any answer, but what would, immediately, without any circuit, have accounted for our obligation to allegiance.

But to whom is allegiance due? And who is our lawful sovereign? This question is often the most difficult of any, and liable to infinite discussions. When people are so happy, that they can answer, Our present sovereign, who inherits, in a direct line, from ancestors, that have governed us for many ages; this answer admits of no reply; even though historians, in tracing up to the remotest antiquity, the origin of that royal family, may find, as commonly happens, that its first authority was derived from usurpation and violence. It is confessed, that private justice, or the abstinence from the properties of others, is a most cardinal virtue: Yet reason tells us, that there is no property in durable objects, such as lands or houses, when carefully examined in passing from hand to hand, but must, in some period, have been founded on fraud and injustice. The necessities of human society, neither in private nor public life, will allow of such an accurate enquiry: And there is no virtue or moral duty, but what may, with facility, be refined away, if we indulge a false philosophy, in sifting and scrutinizing it, by every captious rule of logic, in every light or position, in which it may be placed.

The questions with regard to private property have filled infinite volumes of law and philosophy, if in both we add the commentators to the original text; and in the end, we may safely pronounce, that many of the rules, there established, are uncertain, ambiguous, and arbitrary. The like opinion may be formed with regard to the succession and rights of princes and forms of government. Several cases, no doubt, occur, especially in the infancy of any constitution, which admit of no determination from the laws of justice and equity: And our historian Rapin pretends, that the controversy between Edward the Third and Philip de Valois was of this nature, and could be decided only by an appeal to heaven, that is, by war and violence.

Who shall tell me, whether Germanicus or Drusus ought to have succeeded to Tiberius, had he died, while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation, where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the elder son because he was born before Drusus; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where he had no advantage in the succession of private families? Ought the Roman empire at that time to be deemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger or to the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation?

Commodus mounted the throne after a pretty long succession of excellent emperors, who had acquired their title, not by birth, or public election, but by the fictitious rite of adoption. That bloody debauchee being murdered by a conspiracy suddenly formed between his wench and her gallant, who happened at that time to be Prætorian Præfect; these immediately deliberated about choosing a master to human kind, to speak in the style of those ages; and they cast their eyes on Pertinax. Before the tyrant’s death was known, the Præfect went secretly to that senator, who, on the appearance of the soldiers, imagined that his execution had been ordered by Commodus. He was immediately saluted emperor by the officer and his attendants; chearfully proclaimed by the populace; unwillingly submitted to by the guards; formally recognized by the senate; and passively received by the provinces and armies of the empire.

The discontent of the Prætorian bands broke out in a sudden sedition, which occasioned the murder of that excellent prince: And the world being now without a master and without government, the guards thought proper to set the empire formally to sale. Julian, the purchaser, was proclaimed by the soldiers, recognized by the senate, and submitted to by the people; and must also have been submitted to by the provinces, had not the envy of the legions begotten opposition and resistance. Pescennius Niger in Syria elected himself emperor, gained the tumultuary consent of his army, and was attended with the secret good-will of the senate and people of Rome. Albinus in Britain found an equal right to set up his claim; but Severus, who governed Pannonia, prevailed in the end above both of them. That able politician and warrior, finding his own birth and dignity too much inferior to the imperial crown, professed, at first, an intention only of revenging the death of Pertinax. He marched as general into Italy; defeated Julian; and without our being able to fix any precise commencement even of the soldiers’ consent, he was from necessity acknowledged emperor by the senate and people; and fully established in his violent authority by subduing Niger and Albinus.

Inter hæc Gordianus Cæsar (says Capitolinus, speaking of another period) sublatus a militibus. Imperator est appellatus, quia non erat alius in præsenti. It is to be remarked, that Gordian was a boy of fourteen years of age.

Frequent instances of a like nature occur in the history of the emperors; in that of Alexander’s successors; and of many other countries: Nor can any thing be more unhappy than a despotic government of this kind; where the succession is disjointed and irregular, and must be determined, on every vacancy, by force or election. In a free government, the matter is often unavoidable, and is also much less dangerous. The interests of liberty may there frequently lead the people, in their own defence, to alter the succession of the crown. And the constitution, being compounded of parts, may still maintain a sufficient stability, by resting on the aristocratical or democratical members, though the monarchical be altered, from time to time, in order to accommodate it to the former.

In an absolute government, when there is no legal prince, who has a title to the throne, it may safely be determined to belong to the first occupant. Instances of this kind are but too frequent, especially in the eastern monarchies. When any race of princes expires, the will or destination of the last sovereign will be regarded as a title. Thus the edict of Lewis the XIVth, who called the bastard princes to the succession in case of the failure of all the legitimate princes, would, in such an event, have some authority. Thus the will of Charles the Second disposed of the whole Spanish monarchy. The cession of the ancient proprietor, especially when joined to conquest, is likewise deemed a good title. The general obligation, which binds us to government, is the interest and necessities of society; and this obligation is very strong. The determination of it to this or that particular prince or form of government is frequently more uncertain and dubious. Present possession has considerable authority in these cases, and greater than in private property; because of the disorders which attend all revolutions and changes of government.

We shall only observe, before we conclude, that, though an appeal to general opinion may justly, in the speculative sciences of metaphysics, natural philosophy, or astronomy, be deemed unfair and inconclusive, yet in all questions with regard to morals, as well as criticism, there is really no other standard, by which any controversy can ever be decided. And nothing is a clearer proof, that a theory of this kind is erroneous, than to find, that it leads to paradoxes, repugnant to the common sentiments of mankind, and to the practice and opinion of all nations and all ages. The doctrine, which founds all lawful government on an original contract, or consent of the people, is plainly of this kind; nor has the most noted of its partizans, in prosecution of it, scrupled to affirm, that absolute monarchy is inconsistent with civil society, and so can be no form of civil government at all; and that the supreme power in a state cannot take from any man, by taxes and impositions, any part of his property, without his own consent or that of his representatives. What authority any moral reasoning can have, which leads into opinions so wide of the general practice of mankind, in every place but this single kingdom, it is easy to determine.

The only passage I meet with in antiquity, where the obligation of obedience to government is ascribed to a promise, is in Plato’s Crito: where Socrates refuses to escape from prison, because he had tacitly promised to obey the laws. Thus he builds a tory consequence of passive obedience, on a whig foundation of the original contract.

New discoveries are not to be expected in these matters. If scarce any man, till very lately, ever imagined that government was founded on compact, it is certain, that it cannot, in general, have any such foundation.

The crime of rebellion among the ancients was commonly expressed by the terms νεωτερίζειν, novas res moliri.

ESSAY XIII: OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE

In the former essay, we endeavoured to refute the speculative systems of politics advanced in this nation; as well the religious system of the one party, as the philosophical of the other. We come now to examine the practical consequences, deduced by each party, with regard to the measures of submission due to sovereigns.

As the obligation to justice is founded entirely on the interests of society, which require mutual abstinence from property, in order to preserve peace among mankind; it is evident, that, when the execution of justice would be attended with very pernicious consequences, that virtue must be suspended, and give place to public utility, in such extraordinary and such pressing emergencies. The maxim, fiat Justitia & ruat Cœlum, let justice be performed, though the universe be destroyed, is apparently false, and by sacrificing the end to the means, shews a preposterous idea of the subordination of duties. What governor of a town makes any scruple of burning the suburbs, when they facilitate the approaches of the enemy? Or what general abstains from plundering a neutral country, when the necessities of war require it, and he cannot otherwise subsist his army? The case is the same with the duty of allegiance; and common sense teaches us, that, as government binds us to obedience only on account of its tendency to public utility, that duty must always, in extraordinary cases, when public ruin would evidently attend obedience, yield to the primary and original obligation. Salus populi suprema Lex, the safety of the people is the supreme law. This maxim is agreeable to the sentiments of mankind in all ages: Nor is any one, when he reads of the insurrections against Nero or Philip the Second, so infatuated with party-systems, as not to wish success to the enterprize, and praise the undertakers. Even our high monarchical party, in spite of their sublime theory, are forced, in such cases, to judge, and feel, and approve, in conformity to the rest of mankind.

Resistance, therefore, being admitted in extraordinary emergencies, the question can only be among good reasoners, with regard to the degree of necessity, which can justify resistance, and render it lawful or commendable. And here I must confess, that I shall always incline to their side, who draw the bond of allegiance very close, and consider an infringement of it, as the last refuge in desperate cases, when the public is in the highest danger, from violence and tyranny. For besides the mischiefs of a civil war, which commonly attends insurrection; it is certain, that, where a disposition to rebellion appears among any people, it is one chief cause of tyranny in the rulers, and forces them into many violent measures which they never would have embraced, had every one been inclined to submission and obedience. Thus the tyrannicide or assassination, approved of by ancient maxims, instead of keeping tyrants and usurpers in awe, made them ten times more fierce and unrelenting; and is now justly, upon that account, abolished by the laws of nations, and universally condemned as a base and treacherous method of bringing to justice these disturbers of society.

Besides we must consider, that, as obedience is our duty in the common course of things, it ought chiefly to be inculcated; nor can any thing be more preposterous than an anxious care and solicitude in stating all the cases, in which resistance may be allowed. In like manner, though a philosopher reasonably acknowledges, in the course of an argument, that the rules of justice may be dispensed with in cases of urgent necessity; what should we think of a preacher or casuist, who should make it his chief study to find out such cases, and enforce them with all the vehemence of argument and eloquence? Would he not be better employed in inculcating the general doctrine, than in displaying the particular exceptions, which we are, perhaps, but too much inclined, of ourselves, to embrace and to extend?

There are, however, two reasons, which may be pleaded in defence of that party among us, who have, with so much industry, propagated the maxims of resistance; maxims, which, it must be confessed, are, in general, so pernicious, and so destructive of civil society. The first is, that their antagonists carrying the doctrine of obedience to such an extravagant height, as not only never to mention the exceptions in extraordinary cases (which might, perhaps, be excusable) but even positively to exclude them; it became necessary to insist on these exceptions, and defend the rights of injured truth and liberty. The second, and, perhaps, better reason, is founded on the nature of the British constitution and form of government.

It is almost peculiar to our constitution to establish a first magistrate with such high pre-eminence and dignity, that, though limited by the laws, he is, in a manner, so far as regards his own person, above the laws, and can neither be questioned nor punished for any injury or wrong, which may be committed by him. His ministers alone, or those who act by his commission, are obnoxious to justice; and while the prince is thus allured, by the prospect of personal safety, to give the laws their free course, an equal security is, in effect, obtained by the punishment of lesser offenders, and at the same time a civil war is avoided, which would be the infallible consequence, were an attack, at every turn, made directly upon the sovereign. But though the constitution pays this salutary compliment to the prince, it can never reasonably be understood, by that maxim, to have determined its own destruction, or to have established a tame submission, where he protects his ministers, perseveres in injustice, and usurps the whole power of the commonwealth. This case, indeed, is never expressly put by the laws; because it is impossible for them, in their ordinary course, to provide a remedy for it, or establish any magistrate, with superior authority, to chastise the exorbitancies of the prince. But as a right without a remedy would be an absurdity; the remedy in this case, is the extraordinary one of resistance, when affairs come to that extremity, that the constitution can be defended by it alone. Resistance therefore must, of course, become more frequent in the British government, than in others, which are simpler, and consist of fewer parts and movements. Where the king is an absolute sovereign, he has little temptation to commit such enormous tyranny as may justly provoke rebellion: But where he is limited, his imprudent ambition, without any great vices, may run him into that perilous situation. This is frequently supposed to have been the case with Charles the First; and if we may now speak truth, after animosities are ceased, this was also the case with James the Second. These were harmless, if not, in their private character, good men; but mistaking the nature of our constitution, and engrossing the whole legislative power, it became necessary to oppose them with some vehemence; and even to deprive the latter formally of that authority, which he had used with such imprudence and indiscretion.

ESSAY XIV: OF THE COALITION OF PARTIES

To abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable, in a free government. The only dangerous parties are such as entertain opposite views with regard to the essentials of government, the succession of the crown, or the more considerable privileges belonging to the several members of the constitution; where there is no room for any compromise or accommodation, and where the controversy may appear so momentous as to justify even an opposition by arms to the pretensions of antagonists. Of this nature was the animosity, continued for above a century past, between the parties in England; an animosity which broke out sometimes into civil war, which occasioned violent revolutions, and which continually endangered the peace and tranquillity of the nation. But as there have appeared of late the strongest symptoms of an universal desire to abolish these party distinctions; this tendency to a coalition affords the most agreeable prospect of future happiness, and ought to be carefully cherished and promoted by every lover of his country.

There is not a more effectual method of promoting so good an end, than to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame, which we bestow on either side. The two former Essays, concerning the original contract and passive obedience, are calculated for this purpose with regard to the philosophical and practical controversies between the parties, and tend to show that neither side are in these respects so fully supported by reason as they endeavour to flatter themselves. We shall proceed to exercise the same moderation with regard to the historical disputes between the parties, by proving that each of them was justified by plausible topics; that there were on both sides wise men, who meant well to their country; and that the past animosity between the factions had no better foundation than narrow prejudice or interested passion.

The popular party, who afterwards acquired the name of whigs, might justify, by very specious arguments, that opposition to the crown, from which our present free constitution is derived. Though obliged to acknowledge, that precedents in favour of prerogative had uniformly taken place during many reigns before Charles the First, they thought, that there was no reason for submitting any longer to so dangerous an authority. Such might have been their reasoning: As the rights of mankind are for ever to be deemed sacred, no prescription of tyranny or arbitrary power can have authority sufficient to abolish them. Liberty is a blessing so inestimable, that, wherever there appears any probability of recovering it, a nation may willingly run many hazards, and ought not even to repine at the greatest effusion of blood or dissipation of treasure. All human institutions, and none more than government, are in continual fluctuation. Kings are sure to embrace every opportunity of extending their prerogatives: And if favourable incidents be not also laid hold of for extending and securing the privileges of the people, an universal despotism must for ever prevail amongst mankind. The example of all the neighbouring nations proves, that it is no longer safe to entrust with the crown the same high prerogatives, which had formerly been exercised during rude and simple ages. And though the example of many late reigns may be pleaded in favour of a power in the prince somewhat arbitrary, more remote reigns afford instances of stricter limitations imposed on the crown; and those pretensions of the parliament, now branded with the title of innovations, are only a recovery of the just rights of the people.

These views, far from being odious, are surely large, and generous, and noble: To their prevalence and success the kingdom owes its liberty; perhaps its learning, its industry, commerce, and naval power: By them chiefly the English name is distinguished among the society of nations, and aspires to a rivalship with that of the freest and most illustrious commonwealths of antiquity. But as all these mighty consequences could not reasonably be foreseen at the time when the contest began, the royalists of that age wanted not specious arguments on their side, by which they could justify their defence of the then established prerogatives of the prince. We shall state the question, as it might have appeared to them at the assembling of that parliament, which, by its violent encroachments on the crown, began the civil wars.

The only rule of government, they might have said, known and acknowledged among men, is use and practice: Reason is so uncertain a guide that it will always be exposed to doubt and controversy: Could it ever render itself prevalent over the people, men had always retained it as their sole rule of conduct: They had still continued in the primitive, unconnected, state of nature, without submitting to political government, whose sole basis is, not pure reason, but authority and precedent. Dissolve these ties, you break all the bonds of civil society, and leave every man at liberty to consult his private interest, by those expedients, which his appetite, disguised under the appearance of reason, shall dictate to him. The spirit of innovation is in itself pernicious, however favourable its particular object may sometimes appear: A truth so obvious, that the popular party themselves are sensible of it; and therefore cover their encroachments on the crown by the plausible pretence of their recovering the ancient liberties of the people.

But the present prerogatives of the crown, allowing all the suppositions of that party, have been incontestably established ever since the accession of the House of Tudor; a period, which, as it now comprehends a hundred and sixty years, may be allowed sufficient to give stability to any constitution. Would it not have appeared ridiculous, in the reign of the Emperor Adrian, to have talked of the republican constitution as the rule of government; or to have supposed, that the former rights of the senate, and consuls, and tribunes were still subsisting?

But the present claims of the English monarchs are much more favourable than those of the Roman emperors during that age. The authority of Augustus was a plain usurpation, grounded only on military violence, and forms such an epoch in the Roman history, as is obvious to every reader. But if Henry VII. really, as some pretend, enlarged the power of the crown, it was only by insensible acquisitions, which escaped the apprehension of the people, and have scarcely been remarked even by historians and politicians. The new government, if it deserve the epithet, is an imperceptible transition from the former; is entirely engrafted on it; derives its title fully from that root; and is to be considered only as one of those gradual revolutions, to which human affairs, in every nation, will be for ever subject.

The House of Tudor, and after them that of Stuart, exercised no prerogatives, but what had been claimed and exercised by the Plantagenets. Not a single branch of their authority can be said to be an innovation. The only difference is, that, perhaps, former kings exerted these powers only by intervals, and were not able, by reason of the opposition of their barons, to render them so steady a rule of administration. But the sole inference from this fact is, that those ancient times were more turbulent and seditious; and that royal authority, the constitution, and the laws have happily of late gained the ascendant.

Under what pretence can the popular party now speak of recovering the ancient constitution? The former controul over the kings was not placed in the commons, but in the barons: The people had no authority, and even little or no liberty; till the crown, by suppressing these factious tyrants, enforced the execution of the laws, and obliged all the subjects equally to respect each others rights, privileges, and properties. If we must return to the ancient barbarous and feudal constitution; let those gentlemen, who now behave themselves with so much insolence to their sovereign, set the first example. Let them make court to be admitted as retainers to a neighbouring baron; and by submitting to slavery under him, acquire some protection to themselves; together with the power of exercising rapine and oppression over their inferior slaves and villains. This was the condition of the commons among their remote ancestors.

But how far back must we go, in having recourse to ancient constitutions and governments? There was a constitution still more ancient than that to which these innovators affect so much to appeal. During that period there was no magna charta: The barons themselves possessed few regular, stated privileges: And the house of commons probably had not an existence.

It is ridiculous to hear the commons, while they are assuming, by usurpation, the whole power of government, talk of reviving ancient institutions. Is it not known, that, though representatives received wages from their constituents; to be a member of the lower house was always considered as a burden, and an exemption from it as a privilege? Will they persuade us, that power, which, of all human acquisitions, is the most coveted, and in comparison of which even reputation and pleasure and riches are slighted, could ever be regarded as a burden by any man?

The property, acquired of late by the commons, it is said, entitles them to more power than their ancestors enjoyed. But to what is this encrease of their property owing, but to an encrease of their liberty and their security? Let them therefore acknowledge, that their ancestors, while the crown was restrained by the seditious barons, really enjoyed less liberty than they themselves have attained, after the sovereign acquired the ascendant: And let them enjoy that liberty with moderation; and not forfeit it by new exorbitant claims, and by rendering it a pretence for endless innovations.

The true rule of government is the present established practice of the age. That has most authority, because it is recent: It is also best known, for the same reason. Who has assured those tribunes, that the Plantagenets did not exercise as high acts of authority as the Tudors? Historians, they say, do not mention them. But historians are also silent with regard to the chief exertions of prerogative by the Tudors. Where any power or prerogative is fully and undoubtedly established, the exercise of it passes for a thing of course, and readily escapes the notice of history and annals. Had we no other monuments of Elizabeth's reign, than what are preserved even by Camden, the most copious, judicious, and exact of our historians, we should be entirely ignorant of the most important maxims of her government.

Was not the present monarchical government, in its full extent, authorized by lawyers, recommended by divines, acknowledged by politicians, acquiesced in, nay passionately cherished, by the people in general; and all this during a period of at least a hundred and sixty years, and till of late, without the smallest murmur or controversy? This general consent surely, during so long a time, must be sufficient to render a constitution legal and valid. If the origin of all power be derived, as is pretended, from the people; here is their consent in the fullest and most ample terms that can be desired or imagined.

But the people must not pretend, because they can, by their consent, lay the foundations of government, that therefore they are to be permitted, at their pleasure, to overthrow and subvert them. There is no end of these seditious and arrogant claims. The power of the crown is now openly struck at: The nobility are also in visible peril: The gentry will soon follow: The popular leaders, who will then assume the name of gentry, will next be exposed to danger: And the people themselves, having become incapable of civil government, and lying under the restraint of no authority, must, for the sake of peace, admit, instead of their legal and mild monarchs, a succession of military and despotic tyrants.

These consequences are the more to be dreaded, as the present fury of the people, though glossed over by pretensions to civil liberty, is in reality incited by the fanaticism of religion; a principle the most blind, headstrong, and ungovernable, by which human nature can possibly be actuated. Popular rage is dreadful, from whatever motive derived: But must be attended with the most pernicious consequences, when it arises from a principle, which disclaims all controul by human law, reason, or authority.

These are the arguments, which each party may make use of to justify the conduct of their predecessors, during that great crisis. The event, if that can be admitted as a reason, has shown, that the arguments of the popular party were better founded; but perhaps, according to the established maxims of lawyers and politicians, the views of the royalists ought, before-hand, to have appeared more solid, more safe, and more legal. But this is certain, that the greater moderation we now employ in representing past events; the nearer shall we be to produce a full coalition of the parties, and an entire acquiescence in our present establishment. Moderation is of advantage to every establishment: Nothing but zeal can overturn a settled power: And an over-active zeal in friends is apt to beget a like spirit in antagonists. The transition from a moderate opposition against an establishment, to an entire acquiescence in it, is easy and insensible.

There are many invincible arguments, which should induce the malcontent party to acquiesce entirely in the present settlement of the constitution. They now find, that the spirit of civil liberty, though at first connected with religious fanaticism, could purge itself from that pollution, and appear under a more genuine and engaging aspect; a friend to toleration, and an encourager of all the enlarged and generous sentiments that do honour to human nature. They may observe, that the popular claims could stop at a proper period; and after retrenching the high claims of prerogative, could still maintain a due respect to monarchy, to nobility, and to all ancient institutions. Above all, they must be sensible, that the very principle, which made the strength of their party, and from which it derived its chief authority, has now deserted them, and gone over to their antagonists. The plan of liberty is settled; its happy effects are proved by experience; a long tract of time has given it stability; and whoever would attempt to overturn it, and to recall the past government or abdicated family, would, besides other more criminal imputations, be exposed, in their turn, to the reproach of faction and innovation. While they peruse the history of past events, they ought to reflect, both that those rights of the crown are long since annihilated, and that the tyranny, and violence, and oppression, to which they often gave rise, are ills, from which the established liberty of the constitution has now at last happily protected the people. These reflections will prove a better security to our freedom and privileges, than to deny, contrary to the clearest evidence of facts, that such regal powers ever had an existence. There is not a more effectual method of betraying a cause, than to lay the stress of the argument on a wrong place, and by disputing an untenable post, enure the adversaries to success and victory.

ESSAY XV: OF THE PROTESTANT SUCCESSION

I suppose, that a member of parliament, in the reign of King William or Queen Anne, while the establishment of the Protestant Succession was yet uncertain, were deliberating concerning the party he would chuse in that important question, and weighing, with impartiality, the advantages and disadvantages on each side. I believe the following particulars would have entered into his consideration.

He would easily perceive the great advantage resulting from the restoration of the Stuart family; by which we should preserve the succession clear and undisputed, free from a pretender, with such a specious title as that of blood, which, with the multitude, is always the claim, the strongest and most easily comprehended. It is in vain to say, as many have done, that the question with regard to governors, independent of government, is frivolous, and little worth disputing, much less fighting about. The generality of mankind never will enter into these sentiments; and it is much happier, I believe, for society, that they do not, but rather continue in their natural prepossessions. How could stability be preserved in any monarchical government, (which, though, perhaps, not the best, is, and always has been, the most common of any) unless men had so passionate a regard for the true heir of their royal family; and even though he be weak in understanding, or infirm in years, gave him so sensible a preference above persons the most accomplished in shining talents, or celebrated for great atchievements? Would not every popular leader put in his claim at every vacancy, or even without any vacancy; and the kingdom become the theatre of perpetual wars and convulsions? The condition of the Roman empire, surely, was not, in this respect, much to be envied; nor is that of the Eastern nations, who pay little regard to the titles of their sovereign, but sacrifice them, every day, to the caprice or momentary humour of the populace or soldiery. It is but a foolish wisdom, which is so carefully displayed, in undervaluing princes, and placing them on a level with the meanest of mankind. To be sure, an anatomist finds no more in the greatest monarch than in the lowest peasant or day-labourer; and a moralist may, perhaps, frequently find less. But what do all these reflections tend to? We, all of us, still retain these prejudices in favour of birth and family; and neither in our serious occupations, nor most careless amusements, can we ever get entirely rid of them. A tragedy, that should represent the adventures of sailors, or porters, or even of private gentlemen, would presently disgust us; but one that introduces kings and princes, acquires in our eyes an air of importance and dignity. Or should a man be able, by his superior wisdom, to get entirely above such prepossessions, he would soon, by means of the same wisdom, again bring himself down to them, for the sake of society, whose welfare he would perceive to be intimately connected with them. Far from endeavouring to undeceive the people in this particular, he would cherish such sentiments of reverence to their princes; as requisite to preserve a due subordination in society. And though the lives of twenty thousand men be often sacrificed to maintain a king in possession of his throne, or preserve the right of succession undisturbed, he entertains no indignation at the loss, on pretence that every individual of these was, perhaps, in himself, as valuable as the prince he served. He considers the consequences of violating the hereditary right of kings: Consequences, which may be felt for many centuries; while the loss of several thousand men brings so little prejudice to a large kingdom, that it may not be perceived a few years after.

The advantages of the Hanover succession are of an opposite nature, and arise from this very circumstance, that it violates hereditary right; and places on the throne a prince, to whom birth gave no title to that dignity. It is evident, from the history of this island, that the privileges of the people have, during near two centuries, been continually upon the encrease, by the division of the church-lands, by the alienations of the barons’ estates, by the progress of trade, and above all, by the happiness of our situation, which, for a long time, gave us sufficient security, without any standing army or military establishment. On the contrary, public liberty has, almost in every other nation of Europe, been, during the same period, extremely upon the decline; while the people were disgusted at the hardships of the old feudal militia, and rather chose to entrust their prince with mercenary armies, which he easily turned against themselves. It was nothing extraordinary, therefore, that some of our British sovereigns mistook the nature of the constitution, at least, the genius of the people; and as they embraced all the favourable precedents left them by their ancestors, they overlooked all those which were contrary, and which supposed a limitation in our government. They were encouraged in this mistake, by the example of all the neighbouring princes, who bearing the same title or appellation, and being adorned with the same ensigns of authority, naturally led them to claim the same powers and prerogatives. It appears from the speeches, and proclamations of James I. and the whole train of that prince's actions, as well as his son's, that he regarded the English government as a simple monarchy, and never imagined that any considerable part of his subjects entertained a contrary idea. This opinion made those monarchs discover their pretensions, without preparing any force to support them; and even without reserve or disguise, which are always employed by those, who enter upon any new project, or endeavour to innovate in any government. The flattery of courtiers farther confirmed their prejudices; and above all, that of the clergy, who from several passages of scripture, and these wrested too, had erected a regular and avowed system of arbitrary power. The only method of destroying, at once, all these high claims and pretensions, was to depart from the true hereditary line, and choose a prince, who, being plainly a creature of the public, and receiving the crown on conditions, expressed and avowed, found his authority established on the same bottom with the privileges of the people. By electing him in the royal line, we cut off all hopes of ambitious subjects, who might, in future emergencies, disturb the government by their cabals and pretensions: By rendering the crown hereditary in his family, we avoided all the inconveniencies of elective monarchy: And by excluding the lineal heir, we secured all our constitutional limitations, and rendered our government uniform and of piece. The people cherish monarchy, because protected by it: The monarch favours liberty, because created by it. And thus every advantage is obtained by the new establishment, as far as human skill and wisdom can extend itself.

These are the separate advantages of fixing the succession, either in the house of Stuart, or in that of Hanover. There are also disadvantages in each establishment, which an impartial patriot would ponder and examine, in order to form a just judgment upon the whole.

The disadvantages of the protestant succession consist in the foreign dominions, which are possessed by the princes of the Hanover line, and which, it might be supposed, would engage us in the intrigues and wars of the continent, and lose us, in some measure, the inestimable advantage we possess, of being surrounded and guarded by the sea, which we command. The disadvantages of recalling the abdicated family consist chiefly in their religion, which is more prejudicial to society than that established amongst us, is contrary to it, and affords no toleration, or peace, or security to any other communion.

It appears to me, that these advantages and disadvantages are allowed on both sides; at least, by every one who is at all susceptible of argument or reasoning. No subject, however loyal, pretends to deny, that the disputed title and foreign dominions of the present royal family are a loss. Nor is there any partizan of the Stuarts, but will confess, that the claim of hereditary, indefeasible right, and the Roman Catholic religion, are also disadvantages in that family. It belongs, therefore, to a philosopher alone, who is of neither party, to put all the circumstances in the scale, and assign to each of them its proper poise and influence. Such a one will readily, at first, acknowledge that all political questions are infinitely complicated, and that there scarcely ever occurs, in any deliberation, a choice, which is either purely good, or purely ill. Consequences, mixed and varied, may be foreseen to flow from every measure: And many consequences, unforeseen, do always, in fact, result from every one. Hesitation, and reserve, and suspence, are, therefore, the only sentiments he brings to this essay or trial. Or if he indulges any passion, it is that of derision against the ignorant multitude, who are always clamorous and dogmatical, even in the nicest questions, of which, from want of temper, perhaps still more than of understanding, they are altogether unfit judges.

But to say something more determinate on this head, the following reflections will, I hope, show the temper, if not the understanding of a philosopher.

Were we to judge merely by first appearances, and by past experience, we must allow that the advantages of a parliamentary title in the house of Hanover are greater than those of an undisputed hereditary title in the house of Stuart; and that our fathers acted wisely in preferring the former to the latter. So long as the house of Stuart ruled in Great Britain, which, with some interruption, was above eighty years, the government was kept in a continual fever, by the contention between the privileges of the people and the prerogatives of the crown. If arms were dropped, the noise of disputes continued: Or if these were silenced, jealousy still corroded the heart, and threw the nation into an unnatural ferment and disorder. And while we were thus occupied in domestic disputes, a foreign power, dangerous to public liberty, erected itself in Europe, without any opposition from us, and even sometimes with our assistance.

But during these last sixty years, when a parliamentary establishment has taken place; whatever factions may have prevailed either among the people or in public assemblies, the whole force of our constitution has always fallen to one side, and an uninterrupted harmony has been preserved between our princes and our parliaments. Public liberty, with internal peace and order, has flourished almost without interruption: Trade and manufactures, and agriculture, have encreased: The arts, and sciences, and philosophy, have been cultivated. Even religious parties have been necessitated to lay aside their mutual rancour: And the glory of the nation has spread itself all over Europe; derived equally from our progress in the arts of peace, and from valour and success in war. So long and so glorious a period no nation almost can boast of: Nor is there another instance in the whole history of mankind, that so many millions of people have, during such a space of time, been held together, in a manner so free, so rational, and so suitable to the dignity of human nature.

But though this recent experience seems clearly to decide in favour of the present establishment, there are some circumstances to be thrown into the other scale; and it is dangerous to regulate our judgment by one event or example.

We have had two rebellions during the flourishing period above mentioned, besides plots and conspiracies without number. And if none of these have produced any very fatal event, we may ascribe our escape chiefly to the narrow genius of those princes who disputed our establishment; and we may esteem ourselves so far fortunate. But the claims of the banished family, I fear, are not yet antiquated; and who can foretel, that their future attempts will produce no greater disorder?

The disputes between privilege and prerogative may easily be composed by laws, and votes, and conferences, and concessions; where there is tolerable temper or prudence on both sides, or on either side. Among contending titles, the question can only be determined by the sword, and by devastation, and by civil war.

A prince, who fills the throne with a disputed title, dares not arm his subjects; the only method of securing a people fully, both against domestic oppression and foreign conquest.

Notwithstanding our riches and renown, what a critical escape did we make, by the late peace, from dangers, which were owing not so much to bad conduct and ill success in war, as to the pernicious practice of mortgaging our finances, and the still more pernicious maxim of never paying off our incumbrances? Such fatal measures would not probably have been embraced, had it not been to secure a precarious establishment.

But to convince us, that an hereditary title is to be embraced rather than a parliamentary one, which is not supported by any other views or motives; a man needs only transport himself back to the æra of the restoration, and suppose, that he had had a seat in that parliament which recalled the royal family, and put a period to the greatest disorders that ever arose from the opposite pretensions of prince and people. What would have been thought of one, that had proposed, at that time, to set aside Charles II. and settle the crown on the Duke of York, or Gloucester, merely in order to exclude all high claims, like those of their father and grandfather? Would not such a one have been regarded as an extravagant projector, who loved dangerous remedies, and could tamper and play with a government and national constitution, like a quack with a sickly patient?

In reality, the reason assigned by the nation for excluding the race of Stuart, and so many other branches of the royal family, is not on account of their hereditary title (a reason, which would, to vulgar apprehensions, have appeared altogether absurd), but on account of their religion. Which leads us to compare the disadvantages above mentioned in each establishment.

I confess, that, considering the matter in general, it were much to be wished, that our prince had no foreign dominions, and could confine all his attention to the government of this island. For not to mention some real inconveniencies that may result from territories on the continent, they afford such a handle for calumny and defamation, as is greedily seized by the people, always disposed to think ill of their superiors. It must, however, be acknowledged, that Hanover, is, perhaps, the spot of ground in Europe the least inconvenient for a King of England. It lies in the heart of Germany, at a distance from the great powers, which are our natural rivals: It is protected by the laws of the empire, as well as by the arms of its own sovereign: And it serves only to connect us more closely with the house of Austria, our natural ally.

The religious persuasion of the house of Stuart is an inconvenience of a much deeper dye, and would threaten us with much more dismal consequences. The Roman Catholic religion, with its train of priests and friers, is more expensive than ours: Even though unaccompanied with its natural attendants of inquisitors, and stakes, and gibbets, it is less tolerating: And not content with dividing the sacerdotal from the regal office (which must be prejudicial to any state), it bestows the former on a foreigner, who has always a separate interest from that of the public, and may often have an opposite one.

But were this religion ever so advantageous to society, it is contrary to that which is established among us, and which is likely to keep possession, for a long time, of the minds of the people. And though it is much to be hoped, that the progress of reason will, by degrees, abate the acrimony of opposite religions all over Europe; yet the spirit of moderation has, as yet, made too slow advances to be entirely trusted.

Thus, upon the whole, the advantages of the settlement in the family of Stuart, which frees us from a disputed title, seem to bear some proportion with those of the settlement in the family of Hanover, which frees us from the claims of prerogative: But at the same time, its disadvantages, by placing on the throne a Roman Catholic, are greater than those of the other establishment, in settling the crown on a foreign prince. What party an impartial patriot, in the reign of K. William or Q. Anne, would have chosen amidst these opposite views, may, perhaps, to some appear hard to determine.

But the settlement in the house of Hanover has actually taken place. The princes of that family, without intrigue, without cabal, without solicitation on their part, have been called to mount our throne, by the united voice of the whole legislative body. They have, since their accession, displayed, in all their actions, the utmost mildness, equity, and regard to the laws and constitution. Our own ministers, our own parliaments, ourselves have governed us; and if aught ill has befallen us, we can only blame fortune or ourselves. What a reproach must we become among nations, if, disgusted with a settlement so deliberately made, and whose conditions have been so religiously observed, we should throw every thing again into confusion; and by our levity and rebellious disposition, prove ourselves totally unfit for any state but that of absolute slavery and subjection?

The greatest inconvenience, attending a disputed title, is, that it brings us in danger of civil wars and rebellions. What wise man, to avoid this inconvenience, would run directly into a civil war and rebellion? Not to mention, that so long possession, secured by so many laws, must, ere this time, in the apprehension of a great part of the nation, have begotten a title in the house of Hanover, independent of their present possession: So that now we should not, even by a revolution, obtain the end of avoiding a disputed title.

No revolution made by national forces, will ever be able, without some other great necessity, to abolish our debts and incumbrances, in which the interest of so many persons is concerned. And a revolution made by foreign forces, is a conquest: A calamity, with which the precarious balance of power threatens us, and which our civil dissentions are likely, above all other circumstances, to bring upon us.

ESSAY XVI: IDEA OF A PERFECT COMMONWEALTH

It is not with forms of government, as with other artificial contrivances; where an old engine may be rejected, if we can discover another more accurate and commodious, or where trials may safely be made, even though the success be doubtful. An established government has an infinite advantage, by that very circumstance of its being established; the bulk of mankind being governed by authority, not reason, and never attributing authority to any thing that has not the recommendation of antiquity. To tamper, therefore, in this affair, or try experiments merely upon the credit of supposed argument and philosophy, can never be the part of a wise magistrate, who will bear a reverence to what carries the marks of age; and though he may attempt some improvements for the public good, yet will he adjust his innovations, as much as possible, to the ancient fabric, and preserve entire the chief pillars and supports of the constitution.

The mathematicians in Europe have been much divided concerning that figure of a ship, which is the most commodious for sailing; and Huygens, who at last determined the controversy, is justly thought to have obliged the learned, as well as commercial world; though Columbus had sailed to America, and Sir Francis Drake made the tour of the world, without any such discovery. As one form of government must be allowed more perfect than another, independent of the manners and humours of particular men; why may we not enquire what is the most perfect of all, though the common botched and inaccurate governments seem to serve the purposes of society, and though it be not so easy to establish a new system of government, as to build a vessel upon a new construction? The subject is surely the most worthy curiosity of any the wit of man can possibly devise. And who knows, if this controversy were fixed by the universal consent of the wise and learned, but, in some future age, an opportunity might be afforded of reducing the theory to practice, either by a dissolution of some old government, or by the combination of men to form a new one, in some distant part of the world? In all cases, it must be advantageous to know what is most perfect in the kind, that we may be able to bring any real constitution or form of government as near it as possible, by such gentle alterations and innovations as may not give too great disturbance to society.

All I pretend to in the present essay is to revive this subject of speculation; and therefore I shall deliver my sentiments in as few words as possible. A long dissertation on that head would not, I apprehend, be very acceptable to the public, who will be apt to regard such disquisitions both as useless and chimerical.

All plans of government, which suppose great reformation in the manners of mankind, are plainly imaginary. Of this nature, are the Republic of Plato, and the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. The Oceana is the only valuable model of a commonwealth, that has yet been offered to the public.

The chief defects of the Oceana seem to be these. First, Its rotation is inconvenient, by throwing men, of whatever abilities, by intervals, out of public employments. Secondly, Its Agrarian is impracticable. Men will soon learn the art, which was practised in ancient Rome, of concealing their possessions under other people's name; till at last, the abuse will become so common, that they will throw off even the appearance of restraint. Thirdly, The Oceana provides not a sufficient security for liberty, or the redress of grievances. The senate must propose, and the people consent; by which means, the senate have not only a negative upon the people, but, what is of much greater consequence, their negative goes before the votes of the people. Were the King's negative of the same nature in the English constitution, and could he prevent any bill from coming into parliament, he would be an absolute monarch. As his negative follows the votes of the houses, it is of little consequence: Such a difference is there in the manner of placing the same thing. When a popular bill has been debated in parliament, is brought to maturity, all its conveniencies and inconveniencies, weighed and balanced; if afterwards it be presented for the royal assent, few princes will venture to reject the unanimous desire of the people. But could the King crush a disagreeable bill in embryo (as was the case, for some time, in the Scottish parliament, by means of the lords of the articles), the British government would have no balance, nor would grievances ever be redressed: And it is certain, that exorbitant power proceeds not, in any government, from new laws, so much as from neglecting to remedy the abuses, which frequently rise from the old ones. A government, says Machiavel, must often be brought back to its original principles. It appears then, that, in the Oceana, the whole legislature may be said to rest in the senate; which Harrington would own to be an inconvenient form of government, especially after the Agrarian is abolished.

Here is a form of government, to which I cannot, in theory, discover any considerable objection.

Let Great Britain and Ireland, or any territory of equal extent, be divided into 100 counties, and each county into 100 parishes, making in all 10,000. If the country, proposed to be erected into a commonwealth be of more narrow extent, we may diminish the number of counties; but never bring them below thirty. If it be of greater extent, it were better to enlarge the parishes, or throw more parishes into a county, than encrease the number of counties.

Let all the freeholders of twenty pounds a-year in the county, and all the householders worth 500 pounds in the town parishes, meet annually in the parish church, and chuse, by ballot, some freeholder of the county for their member, whom we shall call the county representative.

Let the 100 county representatives, two days after their election, meet in the county town, and chuse by ballot, from their own body, ten county magistrates, and one senator. There are, therefore, in the whole commonwealth, 100 senators, 1100 county magistrates, and 10,000 county representatives. For we shall bestow on all senators the authority of county magistrates, and on all county magistrates the authority of county representatives.

Let the senators meet in the capital, and be endowed with the whole executive power of the commonwealth; the power of peace and war, of giving orders to generals, admirals, and ambassadors, and, in short, all the prerogatives of a British King, except his negative.

Let the county representatives meet in their particular counties, and possess the whole legislative power of the commonwealth; the greater number of counties deciding the question; and where these are equal, let the senate have the casting vote.

Every new law must first be debated in the senate; and though rejected by it, if ten senators insist and protest, it must be sent down to the counties. The senate, if they please, may join to the copy of the law their reasons for receiving or rejecting it.

Because it would be troublesome to assemble all the county representatives for every trivial law, that may be requisite, the senate have their choice of sending down the law either to the county magistrates or county representatives.

The magistrates, though the law be referred to them, may, if they please, call the representatives, and submit the affair to their determination.

Whether the law be referred by the senate to the county magistrates or representatives, a copy of it, and of the senate's reasons, must be sent to every representative eight days before the day appointed for the assembling, in order to deliberate concerning it. And though the determination be, by the senate, referred to the magistrates, if five representatives of the county order the magistrates to assemble the whole court of representatives, and submit the affair to their determination, they must obey.

Either the county magistrates or representatives may give, to the senator of the county, the copy of a law to be proposed to the senate; and if five counties concur in the same order, the law, though refused by the senate, must come either to the county magistrates or representatives, as is contained in the order of the five counties.

Any twenty counties, by a vote either of their magistrates or representatives, may throw any man out of all public offices for a year. Thirty counties for three years.

The senate has a power of throwing out any member or number of members of its own body, not to be re-elected for that year. The senate cannot throw out twice in a year the senator of the same county.

The power of the old senate continues for three weeks after the annual election of the county representatives. Then all the new senators are shut up in a conclave, like the cardinals; and by an intricate ballot, such as that of Venice or Malta, they chuse the following magistrates; a protector, who represents the dignity of the commonwealth, and presides in the senate; two secretaries of state; these six councils, a council of state, a council of religion and learning, a council of trade, a council of laws, a council of war, a council of the admiralty, each council consisting of five persons; together with six commissioners of the treasury and a first commissioner. All these must be senators. The senate also names all the ambassadors to foreign courts, who may either be senators or not.

The senate may continue any or all of these, but must re-elect them every year.

The protector and two secretaries have session and suffrage in the council of state. The business of that council is all foreign politics. The council of state has session and suffrage in all the other councils.

The council of religion and learning inspects the universities and clergy. That of trade inspects every thing that may affect commerce. That of laws inspects all the abuses of law by the inferior magistrates, and examines what improvements may be made of the municipal law. That of war inspects the militia and its discipline, magazines, stores, &c. and when the republic is in war, examines into the proper orders for generals. The council of admiralty has the same power with regard to the navy, together with the nomination of the captains and all inferior officers.

None of these councils can give orders themselves, except where they receive such powers from the senate. In other cases, they must communicate every thing to the senate.

When the senate is under adjournment, any of the councils may assemble it before the day appointed for its meeting.

Besides these councils or courts, there is another called the court of competitors; which is thus constituted. If any candidates for the office of senator have more votes than a third of the representatives, that candidate, who has most votes, next to the senator elected, becomes incapable for one year of all public offices, even of being a magistrate or representative: But he takes his seat in the court of competitors. Here then is a court which may sometimes consist of a hundred members, sometimes have no members at all; and by that means, be for a year abolished.

The court of competitors has no power in the commonwealth. It has only the inspection of public accounts, and the accusing of any man before the senate. If the senate acquit him, the court of competitors may, if they please, appeal to the people, either magistrates or representatives. Upon that appeal, the magistrates or representatives meet on the day appointed by the court of competitors, and chuse in each county three persons; from which number every senator is excluded. These, to the number of 300, meet in the capital, and bring the person accused to a new trial.

The court of competitors may propose any law to the senate; and if refused, may appeal to the people, that is, to the magistrates or representatives, who examine it in their counties. Every senator, who is thrown out of the senate by a vote of the court, takes his seat in the court of competitors.

The senate possesses all the judicative authority of the house of Lords, that is, all the appeals from the inferior courts. It likewise appoints the Lord Chancellor, and all the officers of the law.

Every county is a kind of republic within itself, and the representatives may make bye-laws; which have no authority ‘till three months after they are voted. A copy of the law is sent to the senate, and to every other county. The senate, or any single county, may, at any time, annul any bye-law of another county.

The representatives have all the authority of the British justices of peace in trials, commitments, &c.

The magistrates have the appointment of all the officers of the revenue in each county. All causes with regard to the revenue are carried ultimately by appeal before the magistrates. They pass the accompts of all the officers; but must have their own accompts examined and passed at the end of the year by the representatives.

The magistrates name rectors or ministers to all the parishes.

The Presbyterian government is established; and the highest ecclesiastical court is an assembly or synod of all the presbyters of the county. The magistrates may take any cause from this court, and determine it themselves.

The magistrates may try, and depose or suspend any presbyter.

The militia is established in imitation of that of Swisserland, which being well known, we shall not insist upon it. It will only be proper to make this addition, that an army of 20,000 men be annually drawn out by rotation, paid and encamped during six weeks in summer; that the duty of a camp may not be altogether unknown.

The magistrates appoint all the colonels and downwards. The senate all upwards. During war, the general appoints the colonel and downwards, and his commission is good for a twelvemonth. But after that, it must be confirmed by the magistrates of the county, to which the regiment belongs. The magistrates may break any officer in the county regiment. And the senate may do the same to any officer in the service. If the magistrates do not think proper to confirm the general’s choice, they may appoint another officer in the place of him they reject.

All crimes are tried within the county by the magistrates and a jury. But the senate can stop any trial, and bring it before themselves.

Any county may indict any man before the senate for any crime.

The protector, the two secretaries, the council of state, with any five or more that the senate appoints, are possessed, on extraordinary emergencies, of dictatorial power for six months.

The protector may pardon any person condemned by the inferior courts.

In time of war, no officer of the army that is in the field can have any civil office in the commonwealth.

The capital, which we shall call London, may be allowed four members in the senate. It may therefore be divided into four counties. The representatives of each of these chuse one senator, and ten magistrates. There are therefore in the city four senators, forty-four magistrates, and four hundred representatives. The magistrates have the same authority as in the counties. The representatives also have the same authority; but they never meet in one general court: They give their votes in their particular county, or division of hundreds.

When they enact any bye-law, the greater number of counties or divisions determines the matter. And where these are equal, the magistrates have the casting vote.

The magistrates chuse the mayor, sheriff, recorder, and other officers of the city.

In the commonwealth, no representative, magistrate, or senator, as such, has any salary. The protector, secretaries, councils, and ambassadors, have salaries.

The first year in every century is set apart for correcting all inequalities, which time may have produced in the representative. This must be done by the legislature.

The following political aphorisms may explain the reason of these orders.

The lower sort of people and small proprietors are good judges enough of one not very distant from them in rank or habitation; and therefore, in their parochial meetings, will probably chuse the best, or nearly the best representative: But they are wholly unfit for county-meetings, and for electing into the higher offices of the republic. Their ignorance gives the grandees an opportunity of deceiving them.

Ten thousand, even though they were not annually elected, are a basis large enough for any free government. It is true, the nobles in Poland are more than 10,000, and yet these oppress the people. But as power always continues there in the same persons and families, this makes them, in a manner, a different nation from the people. Besides the nobles are there united under a few heads of families.

All free governments must consist of two councils, a lesser and greater; or, in other words, of a senate and people. The people, as Harrington observes, would want wisdom, without the senate: The senate, without the people, would want honesty.

A large assembly of 1000, for instance, to represent the people, if allowed to debate, would fall into disorder. If not allowed to debate, the senate has a negative upon them, and the worst kind of negative, that before resolution.

Here therefore is an inconvenience, which no government has yet fully remedied, but which is the easiest to be remedied in the world. If the people debate, all is confusion: If they do not debate, they can only resolve; and then the senate carves for them. Divide the people into many separate bodies; and then they may debate with safety, and every inconvenience seems to be prevented.

Cardinal de Retz says, that all numerous assemblies, however composed, are mere mob, and swayed in their debates by the least motive. This we find confirmed by daily experience. When an absurdity strikes a member, he conveys it to his neighbour, and so on, till the whole be infected. Separate this great body; and though every member be only of middling sense, it is not probable, that any thing but reason can prevail over the whole. Influence and example being removed, good sense will always get the better of bad among a number of people.

There are two things to be guarded against in every senate: Its combination, and its division. Its combination is most dangerous. And against this inconvenience we have provided the following remedies. 1. The great dependence of the senators on the people by annual elections; and that not by an undistinguishing rabble, like the English electors, but by men of fortune and education. 2. The small power they are allowed. They have few offices to dispose of. Almost all are given by the magistrates in the counties. 3. The court of competitors, which being composed of men that are their rivals, next to them in interest, and uneasy in their present situation, will be sure to take all advantages against them.

The division of the senate is prevented, 1. By the smallness of their number. 2. As faction supposes a combination in a separate interest, it is prevented by their dependence on the people. 3. They have a power of expelling any factious member. It is true, when another member of the same spirit comes from the county, they have no power of expelling him: Nor is it fit they should; for that shows the humour to be in the people, and may possibly arise from some ill conduct in public affairs. 4. Almost any man, in a senate so regularly chosen by the people, may be supposed fit for any civil office. It would be proper, therefore, for the senate to form some general resolutions with regard to the disposing of offices among the members: Which resolutions would not confine them in critical times, when extraordinary parts on the one hand, or extraordinary stupidity on the other, appears in any senator; but they would be sufficient to prevent intrigue and faction, by making the disposal of the offices a thing of course. For instance, let it be a resolution, That no man shall enjoy any office, till he has sat four years in the senate: That, except ambassadors, no man shall be in office two years following: That no man shall attain the higher offices but through the lower: That no man shall be protector twice, &c. The senate of Venice govern themselves by such resolutions.

In foreign politics the interest of the senate can scarcely ever be divided from that of the people; and therefore it is fit to make the senate absolute with regard to them; otherwise there could be no secrecy or refined policy. Besides, without money no alliance can be executed; and the senate is still sufficiently dependant. Not to mention, that the legislative power being always superior to the executive, the magistrates or representatives may interpose whenever they think proper.

The chief support of the British government is the opposition of interests; but that, though in the main serviceable, breeds endless factions. In the foregoing plan, it does all the good without any of the harm. The competitors have no power of controlling the senate: They have only the power of accusing, and appealing to the people.

It is necessary, likewise, to prevent both combination and division in the thousand magistrates. This is done sufficiently by the separation of places and interests.

But lest that should not be sufficient, their dependence on the 10,000 for their elections, serves to the same purpose.

Nor is that all: For the 10,000 may resume the power whenever they please; and not only when they all please, but when any five of a hundred please, which will happen upon the very first suspicion of a separate interest.

The 10,000 are too large a body either to unite or divide, except when they meet in one place, and fall under the guidance of ambitious leaders. Not to mention their annual election, by the whole body of the people, that are of any consideration.

A small commonwealth is the happiest government in the world within itself, because every thing lies under the eye of the rulers: But it may be subdued by great force from without. This scheme seems to have all the advantages both of a great and a little commonwealth.

Every county-law may be annulled either by the senate or another county; because that shows an opposition of interest: In which case no part ought to decide for itself. The matter must be referred to the whole, which will best determine what agrees with general interest.

As to the clergy and militia, the reasons of these orders are obvious. Without the dependence of the clergy on the civil magistrates, and without a militia, it is in vain to think that any free government will ever have security or stability.

In many governments, the inferior magistrates have no rewards but what arise from their ambition, vanity, or public spirit. The salaries of the French judges amount not to the interest of the sums they pay for their offices. The Dutch burgo-masters have little more immediate profit than the English justices of peace, or the members of the house of commons formerly. But lest any should suspect, that this would beget negligence in the administration (which is little to be feared, considering the natural ambition of mankind), let the magistrates have competent salaries. The senators have access to so many honourable and lucrative offices, that their attendance needs not be bought. There is little attendance required of the representatives.

That the foregoing plan of government is practicable, no one can doubt, who considers the resemblance that it bears to the commonwealth of the United Provinces, a wise and renowned government. The alterations in the present scheme seem all evidently for the better. 1. The representation is more equal. 2. The unlimited power of the burgo-masters in the towns, which forms a perfect aristocracy in the Dutch commonwealth, is corrected by a well-tempered democracy, in giving to the people the annual election of the county representatives. 3. The negative, which every province and town has upon the whole body of the Dutch republic, with regard to alliances, peace and war, and the imposition of taxes, is here removed. 4. The counties, in the present plan, are not so independent of each other, nor do they form separate bodies so much as the seven provinces; where the jealousy and envy of the smaller provinces and towns against the greater, particularly Holland and Amsterdam, have frequently disturbed the government. 5. Larger powers, though of the safest kind, are intrusted to the senate than the States-General possess; by which means, the former may become more expeditious, and secret in their resolutions, than it is possible for the latter.

The chief alterations that could be made on the British government, in order to bring it to the most perfect model of limited monarchy, seem to be the following. First, The plan of Cromwell’s parliament ought to be restored, by making the representation equal, and by allowing none to vote in the county elections who possess not a property of 200 pounds value. Secondly, As such a house of Commons would be too weighty for a frail house of Lords, like the present, the Bishops and Scotch Peers ought to be removed: The number of the upper house ought to be raised to three or four hundred: Their seats not hereditary, but during life: They ought to have the election of their own members; and no commoner should be allowed to refuse a seat that was offered him. By this means the house of Lords would consist entirely of the men of chief credit, abilities, and interest in the nation; and every turbulent leader in the house of Commons might be taken off, and connected by interest with the house of Peers. Such an aristocracy would be an excellent barrier both to the monarchy and against it. At present, the balance of our government depends in some measure on the abilities and behaviour of the sovereign; which are variable and uncertain circumstances.

This plan of limited monarchy, however corrected, seems still liable to three great inconveniencies. First, It removes not entirely, though it may soften, the parties of court and country. Secondly, The king’s personal character must still have great influence on the government. Thirdly, The sword is in the hands of a single person, who will always neglect to discipline the militia, in order to have a pretence for keeping up a standing army.

We shall conclude this subject, with observing the falsehood of the common opinion, that no large state, such as France or Great Britain, could ever be modelled into a commonwealth, but that such a form of government can only take place in a city or small territory. The contrary seems probable. Though it is more difficult to form a republican government in an extensive country than in a city; there is more facility, when once it is formed, of preserving it steady and uniform, without tumult and faction. It is not easy, for the distant parts of a large state to combine in any plan of free government; but they easily conspire in the esteem and reverence for a single person, who, by means of this popular favour, may seize the power, and forcing the more obstinate to submit, may establish a monarchical government. On the other hand, a city readily concurs in the same notions of government, the natural equality of property favours liberty, and the nearness of habitation enables the citizens mutually to assist each other. Even under absolute princes, the subordinate government of cities is commonly republican; while that of counties and provinces is monarchical. But these same circumstances, which facilitate the erection of commonwealths in cities, render their constitution more frail and uncertain. Democracies are turbulent. For however the people may be separated or divided into small parties, either in their votes or elections; their near habitation in a city will always make the force of popular tides and currents very sensible. Aristocracies are better adapted for peace and order, and accordingly were most admired by ancient writers; but they are jealous and oppressive. In a large government, which is modelled with masterly skill, there is compass and room enough to refine the democracy, from the lower people, who may be admitted into the first elections or first concoction of the commonwealth, to the higher magistrates, who direct all the movements. At the same time, the parts are so distant and remote, that it is very difficult, either by intrigue, prejudice, or passion, to hurry them into any measures against the public interest.

It is needless to enquire, whether such a government would be immortal. I allow the justness of the poet’s exclamation on the endless projects of human race, Man and for ever! The world itself probably is not immortal. Such consuming plagues may arise as would leave even a perfect government a weak prey to its neighbours. We know not to what length enthusiasm, or other extraordinary movements of the human mind, may transport men, to the neglect of all order and public good. Where difference of interest is removed, whimsical and unaccountable factions often arise, from personal favour or enmity. Perhaps, rust may grow to the springs of the most accurate political machine, and disorder its motions. Lastly, extensive conquests, when pursued, must be the ruin of every free government; and of the more perfect governments sooner than of the imperfect; because of the very advantages which the former possess above the latter. And though such a state ought to establish a fundamental law against conquests; yet republics have ambition as well as individuals, and present interest makes men forgetful of their posterity. It is a sufficient incitement to human endeavours, that such a government would flourish for many ages; without pretending to bestow, on any work of man, that immortality, which the Almighty seems to have refused to his own productions.

ESSAYS WITHDRAWN AND UNPUBLISHED

ESSAY I: OF ESSAY-WRITING

The elegant Part of Mankind, who are not immers’d in the animal Life, but employ themselves in the Operations of the Mind, may be divided into the learned and conversible. The Learned are such as have chosen for their Portion the higher and more difficult Operations of the Mind, which require Leisure and Solitude, and cannot be brought to Perfection, without long Preparation and severe Labour. The conversible World join to a sociable Disposition, and a Taste of Pleasure, an Inclination to the easier and more gentle Exercises of the Understanding, to obvious Reflections on human Affairs, and the Duties of common Life, and to the Observation of the Blemishes or Perfections of the particular Objects, that surround them. Such Subjects of Thought furnish not sufficient Employment in Solitude, but require the Company and Conversation of our Fellow-Creatures, to render them a proper Exercise for the Mind: And this brings Mankind together in Society, where every one displays his Thoughts and Observations in the best Manner he is able, and mutually gives and receives Information, as well as Pleasure.

The Separation of the Learned from the conversible World seems to have been the great Defect of the last Age, and must have had a very bad Influence both on Books and Company: For what Possibility is there of finding Topics of Conversation fit for the Entertainment of rational Creatures, without having Recourse sometimes to History, Poetry, Politics, and the more obvious Principles, at least, of Philosophy? Must our whole Discourse be a continued Series of gossipping Stories and idle Remarks? Must the Mind never rise higher, but be perpetually

- Stun’d and worn out with endless Chat
- Of WILL did this, and NAN said that.

This wou’d be to render the Time spent in Company the most unentertaining, as well as the most unprofitable Part of our Lives.

On the other Hand, Learning has been as great a Loser by being shut up in Colleges and Cells, and secluded from the World and good Company. By that Means, every Thing of what we call Belles Lettres became totally barbarous, being cultivated by Men without any Taste of Life or Manners, and without that Liberty and Facility of Thought and Expression, which can only be acquir'd by Conversation. Even Philosophy went to Wrack by this moaping recluse Method of Study, and became as chimerical in her Conclusions as she was unintelligible in her Stile and Manner of Delivery. And indeed, what cou'd be expected from Men who never consulted Experience in any of their Reasonings, or who never search'd for that Experience, where alone it is to be found, in common Life and Conversation?

'Tis with great Pleasure I observe, That Men of Letters, in this Age, have lost, in a great Measure, that Shyness and Bashfulness of Temper, which kept them at a Distance from Mankind; and, at the same Time, That Men of the World are proud of borrowing from Books their most agreeable Topics of Conversation. 'Tis to be hop'd, that this League betwixt the learned and conversible Worlds, which is so happily begun, will be still farther improv'd to their mutual Advantage; and to that End, I know nothing more advantageous than such Essays as these with which I endeavour to entertain the Public. In this View, I cannot but consider myself as a Kind of Resident or Ambassador from the Dominions of Learning to those of Conversation; and shall think it my constant Duty to promote a good Correspondence betwixt these two States, which have so great a Dependence on each other. I shall give Intelligence to the Learned of whatever passes in Company, and shall endeavour to import into Company whatever Commodities I find in my native Country proper for their Use and Entertainment. The Balance of Trade we need not be jealous of, nor will there be any Difficulty to preserve it on both Sides. The Materials of this Commerce must chiefly be furnish'd by Conversation and common Life: The manufacturing of them alone belongs to Learning.

As 'twou'd be an unpardonable Negligence in an Ambassador not to pay his Respects to the Sovereign of the State where he is commission'd to reside; so it wou'd be altogether inexcusable in me not to address myself, with a particular Respect, to the Fair Sex, who are the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation. I approach them with Reverence; and were not my Countrymen, the Learned, a stubborn independent Race of Mortals, extremely jealous of their Liberty, and unaccustom'd to Subjection, I shou'd resign into their fair Hands the sovereign Authority over the

Republic of Letters. As the Case stands, my Commission extends no farther, than to desire a League, offensive and defensive, against our common Enemies, against the Enemies of Reason and Beauty, People of dull Heads and cold Hearts. From this Moment let us pursue them with the severest Vengeance: Let no Quarter be given, but to those of sound Understandings and delicate Affections; and these Characters, ’tis to be presum’d, we shall always find inseparable.

To be serious, and to quit the Allusion before it be worn thread-bare, I am of Opinion, that Women, that is, Women of Sense and Education (for to such alone I address myself) are much better Judges of all polite Writing than Men of the same Degree of Understanding; and that ’tis a vain Pannic, if they be so far terrify’d with the common Ridicule that is levell’d against learned Ladies, as utterly to abandon every Kind of Books and Study to our Sex. Let the Dread of that Ridicule have no other Effect, than to make them conceal their Knowledge before Fools, who are not worthy of it, nor of them. Such will still presume upon the vain Title of the Male Sex to affect a Superiority above them: But my fair Readers may be assur’d, that all Men of Sense, who know the World, have a great Deference for their Judgment of such Books as ly within the Compass of their Knowledge, and repose more Confidence in the Delicacy of their Taste, tho’ unguided by Rules, than in all the dull Labours of Pedants and Commentators. In a neighbouring Nation, equally famous for good Taste, and for Gallantry, the Ladies are, in a Manner, the Sovereigns of the learned World, as well as of the conversible; and no polite Writer pretends to venture upon the Public, without the Approbation of some celebrated Judges of that Sex. Their Verdict is, indeed, sometimes complain’d of; and, in particular, I find, that the Admirers of Corneille, to save that great Poet’s Honour upon the Ascendant that Racine began to take over him, always said, That it was not to be expected, that so old a Man could dispute the Prize, before such Judges, with so young a Man as his Rival. But this Observation has been found unjust, since Posterity seems to have ratify’d the Verdict of that Tribunal: And Racine, tho’ dead, is still the Favourite of the Fair Sex, as well as of the best Judges among the Men.

There is only one Subject, on which I am apt to distrust the Judgment of Females, and that is, concerning Books of Gallantry and Devotion, which they commonly affect as high flown as possible; and most of them seem more delighted with the Warmth, than with the justness of the Passion. I mention Gallantry and Devotion as the same Subject, because, in Reality, they become the same when treated in this Manner; and we may observe, that they both depend upon the very same Complexion. As the Fair Sex have a great Share of the tender and amorous Disposition, it perverts their Judgment on this Occasion, and makes them be easily affected, even by what has no Propriety in the Expression nor Nature in the Sentiment. Mr. Addison’s elegant Discourses of Religion have no Relish with them, in Comparison of Books of mystic Devotion: And Otway’s Tragedies are rejected for the Rants of Mr. Dryden.

Wou’d the Ladies correct their false Taste in this Particular; Let them accustom themselves a little more to Books of all Kinds: Let them give Encouragement to Men of Sense and Knowledge to frequent their Company: And finally, let them concur heartily in that Union I have projected betwixt the learned and conversible Worlds. They may, perhaps, meet with more Complaisance from their usual Followers than from Men of Learning; but they cannot reasonably expect so sincere an Affection: And, I hope, they will never be guilty of so wrong a Choice, as to sacrifice the Substance to the Shadow.

ESSAY II: OF MORAL PREJUDICES

There is a Set of Men lately sprung up amongst us, who endeavour to distinguish themselves by ridiculing every Thing, that has hitherto appear’d sacred and venerable in the Eyes of Mankind. Reason, Sobriety, Honour, Friendship, Marriage, are the perpetual Subjects of their insipid Raillery: And even public Spirit, and a Regard to our Country, are treated as chimerical and romantic. Were the Schemes of these Anti-reformers to take Place, all the Bonds of Society must be broke, to make Way for the Indulgence of a licentious Mirth and Gaiety: The Companion of our drunken Frollics must be prefer’d to a Friend or Brother: Dissolute Prodigality must be supply’d at the Expence of every Thing valuable, either in public or private: And Men shall have so little Regard to any Thing beyond themselves, that, at last, a free Constitution of Government must become a Scheme perfectly impracticable among Mankind, and must degenerate into one universal System of Fraud and Corruption.

There is another Humour, which may be observ’d in some Pretenders to Wisdom, and which, if not so pernicious as the idle petulant Humour above-mention’d, must, however, have a very bad Effect on those, who indulge it. I mean that grave philosophic Endeavour after Perfection, which, under Pretext of reforming Prejudices and Errors, strikes at all the most endearing Sentiments of the Heart, and all the most useful Byasses and Instincts, which can govern a human Creature. The Stoics were remarkable for this Folly among the Antients; and I wish some of more venerable Characters in latter Times had not copy’d them too faithfully in this Particular. The virtuous and tender Sentiments, or Prejudices, if you will, have suffer’d mightily by these Reflections; while a certain sullen Pride or Contempt of Mankind has prevail’d in their Stead, and has been esteem’d the greatest Wisdom; tho’, in Reality, it be the most egregious Folly of all others. Statilius being sollicited by Brutus to make one of that noble Band, who struck the GOD-like Stroke for the Liberty of Rome, refus’d to accompany them, saying, That all Men were Fools or Mad, and did not deserve that a wise Man should trouble his Head about them.

My learned Reader will here easily recollect the Reason, which an antient Philosopher gave, why he wou'd not be reconcil'd to his Brother, who sollicited his Friendship. He was too much a Philosopher to think, that the Connexion of having sprung from the same Parent, ought to have any Influence on a reasonable Mind, and exprest his Sentiment after such a Manner as I think not proper to repeat. When your Friend is in Affliction, says Epictetus, you may counterfeit a Sympathy with him, if it give him Relief; but take Care not to allow any Compassion to sink into your Heart, or disturb that Tranquillity, which is the Perfection of Wisdom. Diogenes being askt by his Friends in his Sickness, What should be done with him after his Death? Why, says he, throw me out into the Fields. "What! reply'd they, to the Birds or Beasts." No: Place a Cudgel by me, to defend myself withal. "To what Purpose, say they, you will not have any Sense, nor any Power of making Use of it." Then if the Beasts shou'd devour me, cries he, shall I be any more sensible of it? I know none of the Sayings of that Philosopher, which shews more evidently both the Liveliness and Ferocity of his Temper.

How different from these are the Maxims by which Eugenius conducts himself! In his Youth he apply'd himself, with the most unwearied Labour, to the Study of Philosophy; and nothing was ever able to draw him from it, except when an Opportunity offer'd of serving his Friends, or doing a Pleasure to some Man of Merit. When he was about thirty Years of Age, he was determin'd to quit the free Life of a Batchelor (in which otherwise he wou'd have been inclin'd to remain) by considering, that he was the last Branch of an antient Family, which must have been extinguish'd had he died without Children. He made Choice of the virtuous and beautiful Emira for his Consort, who, after being the Solace of his Life for many Years, and having made him the Father of several Children, paid at last the general Debt to Nature. Nothing cou'd have supported him under so severe an Affliction, but the Consolation he receiv'd from his young Family, who were now become dearer to him on account of their deceast Mother. One Daughter in particular is his Darling, and the secret Joy of his Soul; because her Features, her Air, her Voice recal every Moment the tender Memory of his Spouse, and fill his Eyes with Tears. He conceals this Partiality as much as possible; and none but his intimate Friends are acquainted with it. To them he reveals all his Tenderness; nor is he so affectedly Philosophical, as even to call it by the Name of Weakness. They know, that he still keeps the

Birth-day of Emira with Tears, and a more fond and tender Recollection of past Pleasures; in like Manner as it was celebrated in her Lifetime with Joy and Festivity. They know, that he preserves her Picture with the utmost Care, and has one Picture in Miniature, which he always wears next to his Bosom: That he has left Orders in his last Will, that, in whatever Part of the World he shall happen to die, his Body shall be transported, and laid in the same Grave with her's: And that a Monument shall be erected over them, and their mutual Love and Happiness celebrated in an Epitaph, which he himself has compos'd for that Purpose.

A few Years ago I receiv'd a Letter from a Friend, who was abroad on his Travels, and shall here communicate it to the Public. It contains such an Instance of a Philosophic Spirit, as I think pretty extraordinary, and may serve as an Example, not to depart too far from the receiv'd Maxims of Conduct and Behaviour, by a refin'd Search after Happiness or Perfection. The Story I have been since assur'd of as Matter of Fact.

Paris,
Aug. 2, 1737.

Sir, —

I know you are more curious of Accounts of Men than of Buildings, and are more desirous of being inform'd of private History than of public Transactions; for which Reason, I thought the following Story, which is the common Topic of Conversation in this City, wou'd be no unacceptable Entertainment to you.

A young Lady of Birth and Fortune, being left intirely at her own Disposal, persisted long in a Resolution of leading a single Life, notwithstanding several advantageous Offers that had been made to her. She had been determin'd to embrace this Resolution, by observing the many unhappy Marriages among her Acquaintance, and by hearing the Complaints, which her Female Friends made of the Tyranny, Inconstancy, Jealousy or Indifference of their Husbands. Being a Woman of strong Spirit and an uncommon Way of thinking, she found no Difficulty either in forming or maintaining this Resolution, and cou'd not suspect herself of such Weakness, as ever to be induc'd, by any Temptation, to depart from it. She had, however, entertain'd a strong Desire of having a Son, whose Education she was resolv'd to make the principal Concern of her Life, and by that Means supply the Place of those other Passions, which she was resolv’d for ever to renounce. She push’d her Philosophy to such an uncommon Length, as to find no Contradiction betwixt such a Desire and her former Resolution; and accordingly look’d about, with great Deliberation, to find, among all her Male-Acquaintance, one whose Character and Person were agreeable to her, without being able to satisfy herself on that Head. At Length, being in the Play-house one Evening, she sees in the Parterre, a young Man of a most engaging Countenance and modest Deportment; and feels such a Pre-possession in his Favour, that she had Hopes this must be the Person she had long sought for in vain. She immediately dispatches a Servant to him; desiring his Company, at her Lodgings, next Morning. The young Man was over-joy’d at the Message, and cou’d not command his Satisfaction, upon receiving such an Advance from a Lady of so great Beauty, Reputation and Quality. He was, therefore, much disappointed, when he found a Woman, who wou’d allow him no Freedoms; and amidst all her obliging Behaviour, confin’d and over-aw’d him to the Bounds of rational Discourse and Conversation. She seem’d, however, willing to commence a Friendship with him; and told him, that his Company wou’d always be acceptable to her, whenever he had a leisure Hour to bestow. He needed not much Entreaty to renew his Visits, being so struck with her Wit and Beauty, that he must have been unhappy, had he been debarr’d her Company. Every Conversation serv’d only the more to inflame his Passion, and gave him more Occasion to admire her Person and Understanding, as well as to rejoice in his own Good-fortune. He was not, however, without Anxiety, when he consider’d the Disproportion of their Birth and Fortune; nor was his Uneasiness allay’d even when he reflected on the extraordinary Manner in which their Acquaintance had commenc’d. Our Philosophical Heroine, in the mean Time, discover’d, that her Lover’s personal Qualities did not belye his Phisiognomy; so that, judging there was no Occasion for any farther Trial, she takes a proper Opportunity of communicating to him her whole Intention. Their Intercourse continu’d for sometime, till at last her Wishes were crown’d, and she was now Mother of a Boy, who was to be the Object of her future Care and Concern. Gladly wou’d she have continu’d her Friendship with the Father; but finding him too passionate a Lover to remain within the Bounds of Friendship, she was oblig’d to put Violence upon herself. She sends him a Letter, in which she had inclos’d a Bond of Annuity for a Thousand Crowns; desiring him, at the same Time, never to see her more, and to forget, if possible, all past

Favours and Familiarities. He was Thunder-struck at receiving this Message; and, having tried, in vain, all the Arts that might win upon the Resolution of a Woman, resolv’d at last to attack her by her Foible. He commences a Law-suit against her before the Parliament of Paris; and claims his Son, whom he pretends a Right to educate as he pleas’d, according to the usual Maxims of the Law in such Cases. She pleads, on the other Hand, their express Agreement before their Commerce, and pretends, that he had renounc’d all Claim to any Offspring that might arise from their Embraces. It is not yet known, how the Parliament will determine in this extraordinary Case, which puzzles all the Lawyers, as much as it does the Philosophers. As soon as they come to any Issue, I shall inform you of it, and shall embrace any Opportunity of subscribing myself, as I do at present.

SIR,
Your most humble Servant.

ESSAY III: OF THE MIDDLE STATION OF LIFE

The Moral of the following Fable will easily discover itself, without my explaining it. One Rivulet meeting another, with whom he had been long united in strictest Amity, with noisy Haughtiness and Disdain thus bespoke him, “What, Brother! Still in the same State! Still low and creeping! Are you not asham’d, when you behold me, who, tho’ lately in a like Condition with you, am now become a great River, and shall shortly be able to rival the Danube or the Rhine, provided those friendly Rains continue, which have favour’d my Banks, but neglected yours.” Very true, replies the humble Rivulet; “You are now, indeed, swoln to great Size: But methinks you are become, withal, somewhat turbulent and muddy. I am contented with my low Condition and my Purity.”

Instead of commenting upon this Fable, I shall take Occasion, from it, to compare the different Stations of Life, and to perswade such of my Readers as are plac’d in the Middle Station to be satisfy’d with it, as the most eligible of all others. These form the most numerous Rank of Men, that can be suppos’d susceptible of Philosophy; and therefore, all Discourses of Morality ought principally to be address’d to them. The Great are too much immers’d in Pleasure; and the Poor too much occupy’d in providing for the Necessities of Life, to hearken to the calm Voice of Reason. The Middle Station, as it is most happy in many Respects, so particularly in this, that a Man, plac’d in it, can, with the greatest Leisure, consider his own Happiness, and reap a new Enjoyment, from comparing his Situation with that of Persons above or below him.

Agur’s Prayer is sufficiently noted. Two Things have I requir’d of thee, deny me them not before I die, Remove far from me Vanity and Lies; Give me neither Poverty nor Riches, feed me with Food convenient for me: Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the Name of my GOD in vain. The middle Station is here justly recommended, as affording the fullest Security for Virtue; and I may also add, that it gives Opportunity for the most ample Exercise of it, and furnishes Employment for every good Quality, which we can possibly be possest of. Those, who are plac’d among the lower Rank of Men, have little

Opportunity of exerting any other Virtue, besides those of Patience, Resignation, Industry and Integrity. Those, who are advanc'd into the higher Stations, have full Employment for their Generosity, Humanity, Affability and Charity. When a Man lyes betwixt these two Extremes, he can exert the former Virtues towards his Superiors, and the latter towards his Inferiors. Every moral Quality, which the human Soul is susceptible of, may have its Turn, and be called up to Action: And a Man may, after this Manner, be much more certain of his Progress in Virtue, than where his good Qualities lye dormant, and without Employment.

But there is another Virtue, that seems principally to ly among Equals, and is, for that Reason, chiefly calculated for the middle Station of Life. This Virtue is Friendship. I believe most Men of generous Tempers are apt to envy the Great, when they consider the large Opportunities such Persons have of doing Good to their Fellow-creatures, and of acquiring the Friendship and Esteem of Men of Merit. They make no Advances in vain, and are not oblig'd to associate with those whom they have little Kindness for; like People of inferior Stations, who are subject to have their Proffers of Friendship rejected, even where they wou'd be most fond of placing their Affections. But tho' the Great have more Facility in acquiring Friendships, they cannot be so certain of the Sincerity of them, as Men of a lower Rank; since the Favours, they bestow, may acquire them Flattery, instead of Good-will and Kindness. It has been very judiciously remark'd, that we attach ourselves more by the Services we perform than by those we receive, and that a Man is in Danger of losing his Friends by obliging them too far. I shou'd, therefore, chuse to ly in the middle Way, and to have my Commerce with my Friend varied both by Obligations given and receiv'd. I have too much Pride to be willing that all the Obligations should ly on my Side; and shou'd be afraid, that, if they all lay on his, he wou'd also have too much Pride to be entirely easy under them, or have a perfect Complacency in my Company.

We may also remark of the middle Station of Life, that it is more favourable to the acquiring of Wisdom and Ability, as well as of Virtue, and that a Man so situate has a better Chance for attaining a Knowledge both of Men and Things, than those of a more elevated Station. He enters, with more Familiarity, into human Life: Every Thing appears in its natural Colours before him: He has more Leisure to form Observations; and has, beside, the Motive of Ambition to push him on in his Attainments; being certain, that he can never rise to any Distinction or Eminence in the World, without his own Industry. And here I cannot forbear communicating a Remark, which may appear somewhat extraordinary, viz. That ’tis wisely ordain’d by Providence, that the middle Station shou’d be the most favourable to the improving our natural Abilities, since there is really more Capacity requisite to perform the Duties of that Station, than is requisite to act in the higher Spheres of Life. There are more natural Parts, and a stronger Genius requisite to make a good Lawyer or Physician, than to make a great Monarch. For let us take any Race or Succession of Kings, where Birth alone gives a Title to the Crown: The English Kings, for Instance; who have not been esteemed the most shining in History. From the Conquest to the Succession of his present Majesty, we may reckon twenty eight Sovereigns, omitting those who died Minors. Of these, eight are esteem’d Princes of great Capacity, viz. the Conqueror, Harry II. Edward I. Edward III. Harry V. and VII. Elisabeth, and the late King William. Now, I believe every one will allow, that, in the common Run of Mankind, there are not eight out of twenty eight, who are fitted, by Nature, to make a Figure either on the Bench or at the Bar. Since Charles VII. ten Monarchs have reign’d in France, omitting Francis II. Five of these have been esteem’d Princes of Capacity, viz. Loüis XI. XII. and XIV. Francis I. and Harry IV. In short, the governing of Mankind well, requires a great deal of Virtue, Justice, and Humanity, but not a surprising Capacity. A certain Pope, whose Name I have forgot, us’d to say, Let us divert ourselves, my Friends, the World governs itself. There are, indeed, some critical Times, such as those in which Harry IV. liv’d, that call for the utmost Vigour; and a less Courage and Capacity, than what appear’d in that great Monarch, must have sunk under the Weight. But such Circumstances are rare; and even then, Fortune does, at least, one Half of the Business.

Since the common Professions, such as Law or Physic, require equal, if not superior Capacity, to what are exerted in the higher Spheres of Life, ’tis evident, that the Soul must be made of still a finer Mold, to shine in Philosophy or Poetry, or in any of the higher Parts of Learning. Courage and Resolution are chiefly requisite in a Commander: Justice and Humanity in a Statesman: But Genius and Capacity in a Scholar. Great Generals, and great Politicians, are found in all Ages and Countries of the World, and frequently start up, at once, even amongst the greatest Barbarians. Sweden was sunk in Ignorance, when it produc’d Gustavus Ericson, and Gustavus

Adolphus: Muscovy, when the Czar appear'd: And, perhaps, Carthage, when it gave Birth to Hannibal. But England must pass thro' a long Gradation of its Spencers, Johnsons, Wallers, Drydens, before it arrive at an Addison or a Pope. A happy Talent for the liberal Arts and Sciences, is a Kind of Prodigy among Men. Nature must afford the richest Genius that comes from her Hands; Education and Example must cultivate it from the earliest Infancy; And Industry must concur to carry it to any Degree of Perfection. No Man needs be surprised to see Kouli-Kan among the Persians: but Homer, in so early an Age, among the Greeks, is certainly Matter of the highest Wonder.

A Man cannot show a Genius for War, who is not so fortunate as to be trusted with Command; and it seldom happens, in any State or Kingdom, that several, at once, are plac'd in that Situation. How many Marlboroughs were there in the confederate Army, who never rose so much as to the Command of a Regiment? But I am perswaded, there has been but one Milton in England within these hundred Years; because every one may exert the Talents for Poetry who is possest of them; and no one cou'd exert them under greater Disadvantages than that divine Poet. If no Man were allow'd to write Verses, but who was, before-hand, nam'd to be laureat, cou'd we expect a Poet in ten thousand Years?

Were we to distinguish the Ranks of Men by their Genius and Capacity more, than by their Virtue and Usefulness to the Public, great Philosophers wou'd certainly challenge the first Rank, and must be plac'd at the Top of human Kind. So rare is this Character, that, perhaps, there has not, as yet, been above two in the World, who can lay a just Claim to it. At least, Galilæo and Newton seem to me so far to excel all the rest, that I cannot admit any other into the same Class with them.

Great Poets may challenge the second Place; and this Species of Genius, tho' rare, is yet much more frequent than the former. Of the Greek Poets that remain, Homer alone seems to merit this Character: Of the Romans, Virgil, Horace and Lucretius: Of the English, Milton and Pope: Corneille, Racine, Boileau and Voltaire of the French: And Tasso and Ariosto of the Italians.

Great Orators and Historians are, perhaps, more rare than great Poets: But as the Opportunities for exerting the Talents requisite for Eloquence, or acquiring the Knowledge requisite for writing History, depend, in some

Measure, upon Fortune, we cannot pronounce these Productions of Genius to be more extraordinary than the former.

I should now return from this Digression, and show, that the middle Station of Life is more favourable to Happiness, as well as to Virtue and Wisdom: But as the Arguments, that prove this, seem pretty obvious, I shall here forbear insisting on them.

ESSAY IV: OF IMPUDENCE AND MODESTY

I am of opinion, That the common complaints against Providence are ill-grounded, and that the good or bad qualities of men are the causes of their good or bad fortune, more than what is generally imagined. There are, no doubt, instances to the contrary, and these too pretty numerous; but few, in comparison of the instances we have of a right distribution of prosperity and adversity: nor indeed could it be otherwise from the common course of human affairs. To be endowed with a benevolent disposition, and to love others, will almost infallibly procure love and esteem; which is the chief circumstance in life, and facilitates every enterprize and undertaking; besides the satisfaction, which immediately results from it. The case is much the same with the other virtues. Prosperity is naturally, though not necessarily, attached to virtue and merit; and adversity, in like manner, to vice and folly.

I must, however, confess, that this rule admits of an exception, with regard to one moral quality; and that modesty has a natural tendency to conceal a man’s talents, as impudence displays them to the utmost, and has been the only cause why many have risen in the world, under all the disadvantages of low birth and little merit. Such indolence and incapacity is there in the generality of mankind, that they are apt to receive a man for whatever he has a mind to put himself off for; and admit his overbearing airs as proofs of that merit which he assumes to himself. A decent assurance seems to be the natural attendant of virtue; and few men can distinguish impudence from it: As, on the other hand, diffidence, being the natural result of vice and folly, has drawn disgrace upon modesty, which in outward appearance so nearly resembles it.

As impudence, though really a vice, has the same effects upon a man’s fortune, as if it were a virtue; so we may observe, that it is almost as difficult to be attained, and is, in that respect, distinguished from all the other vices, which are acquired with little pains, and continually encrease upon indulgence. Many a man, being sensible that modesty is extremely prejudicial to him in making his fortune, has resolved to be impudent, and to put a bold face upon the matter: But, it is observable, that such people have seldom succeeded in the attempt, but have been obliged to relapse into their primitive modesty. Nothing carries a man through the world like a true genuine natural impudence. Its counterfeit is good for nothing, nor can ever support itself. In any other attempt, whatever faults a man commits and is sensible of, he is so much the nearer his end. But when he endeavours at impudence, if he ever failed in the attempt, the remembrance of that failure will make him blush, and will infallibly disconcert him: After which every blush is a cause for new blushes, till he be found out to be an arrant cheat, and a vain pretender to impudence.

If any thing can give a modest man more assurance, it must be some advantages of fortune, which chance procures to him. Riches naturally gain a man a favourable reception in the world, and give merit a double lustre, when a person is endowed with it; and supply its place, in a great measure, when it is absent. It is wonderful to observe what airs of superiority fools and knaves, with large possessions, give themselves above men of the greatest merit in poverty. Nor do the men of merit make any strong opposition to these usurpations; or rather seem to favour them by the modesty of their behaviour. Their good sense and experience make them diffident of their judgment, and cause them to examine every thing with the greatest accuracy: As, on the other hand, the delicacy of their sentiments makes them timorous lest they commit faults, and lose in the practice of the world that integrity of virtue, so to speak, of which they are so jealous. To make wisdom agree with confidence, is as difficult as to reconcile vice and modesty.

These are the reflections which have occurred upon this subject of impudence and modesty; and I hope the reader will not be displeased to see them wrought into the following allegory,

Jupiter, in the beginning, joined Virtue, Wisdom, and Confidence together; and Vice, Folly, and Diffidence: And thus connected, sent them into the world. But though he thought he had matched them with great judgment, and said that Confidence was the natural companion of Virtue, and that Vice deserved to be attended with Diffidence, they had not gone far before dissension arose among them. Wisdom, who was the guide of the one company, was always accustomed before she ventured upon any road, however beaten, to examine it carefully; to enquire whither it led; what dangers, difficulties and hindrances might possibly or probably occur in it. In these deliberations she usually consumed some time; which delay was very displeasing to Confidence, who was always inclined to hurry on, without much forethought or deliberation, in the first road he met. Wisdom and Virtue were inseparable: But Confidence one day, following his impetuous nature, advanced a considerable way before his guides and companions; and not feeling any want of their company, he never enquired after them, nor ever met with them more. In like manner, the other society, though joined by Jupiter, disagreed and separated. As Folly saw very little way before her, she had nothing to determine concerning the goodness of roads, nor could give the preference to one above another; and this want of resolution was encreased by Diffidence, who, with her doubts and scruples, always retarded the journey. This was a great annoyance to Vice, who loved not to hear of difficulties and delays, and was never satisfied without his full career, in whatever his inclinations led him to. Folly, he knew, though she harkened to Diffidence, would be easily managed when alone; and therefore, as a vicious horse throws his rider, he openly beat away this controller of all his pleasures, and proceeded in his journey with Folly, from whom he is inseparable. Confidence and Diffidence being, after this manner, both thrown loose from their respective companies, wandered for some time; till at last chance led them at the same time to one village. Confidence went directly up to the great house, which belonged to Wealth, the lord of the village; and without staying for a porter, intruded himself immediately into the innermost apartments, where he found Vice and Folly well received before him. He joined the train; recommended himself very quickly to his landlord; and entered into such familiarity with Vice, that he was enlisted in the same company with Folly. They were frequent guests of Wealth, and from that moment inseparable. Diffidence, in the mean time, not daring to approach the great house, accepted of an invitation from Poverty, one of the tenants; and entering the cottage, found Wisdom and Virtue, who being repulsed by the landlord, had retired thither. Virtue took compassion of her, and Wisdom found, from her temper, that she would easily improve: So they admitted her into their society. Accordingly, by their means, she altered in a little time somewhat of her manner, and becoming much more amiable and engaging, was now known by the name of Modesty. As ill company has a greater effect than good, Confidence, though more refractory to counsel and example, degenerated so far by the society of Vice and Folly, as to pass by the name of Impudence. Mankind, who saw these societies as Jupiter first joined them, and know nothing of these mutual desertions, are thereby led into strange mistakes; and wherever they see Impudence, make account of finding Virtue and Wisdom; and wherever they observe Modesty, call her attendants Vice and Folly.

ESSAY V: OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE

I know not whence it proceeds, that women are so apt to take amiss every thing which is said in disparagement of the married state; and always consider a satyr upon matrimony as a satyr upon themselves. Do they mean, that they are the parties principally concerned, and that if a backwardness to enter into that state should prevail in the world, they would be the greatest sufferers? Or, are they sensible, that the misfortunes and miscarriages of the married state are owing more to their sex than to ours? I hope they do not intend to confess either of these two particulars, or to give such an advantage to their adversaries, the men, as even to allow them to suspect it.

I have often had thoughts of complying with this humour of the fair sex, and of writing a panegyric upon marriage: But, in looking around for materials, they seemed to be of so mixed a nature, that at the conclusion of my reflections, I found that I was as much disposed to write a satyr, which might be placed on the opposite pages of the panegyric: And I am afraid, that as satyr is, on most occasions, thought to contain more truth than panegyric, I should have done their cause more harm than good by this expedient. To misrepresent facts is what, I know, they will not require of me. I must be more a friend to truth, than even to them, where their interests are opposite.

I shall tell the women what it is our sex complains of most in the married state; and if they be disposed to satisfy us in this particular, all the other differences will easily be accommodated. If I be not mistaken, ’tis their love of dominion, which is the ground of the quarrel; tho’ ’tis very likely, that they will think it an unreasonable love of it in us, which makes us insist so much upon that point. However this may be, no passion seems to have more influence on female minds, than this for power; and there is a remarkable instance in history of its prevailing above another passion, which is the only one that can be supposed a proper counterpoise for it. We are told that all the women in Scythia once conspired against the men, and kept the secret so well, that they executed their design before they were suspected. They surprised the men in drink, or asleep; bound them all fast in chains; and having called a solemn council of the whole sex, it was debated what expedient should be used to improve the present advantage, and prevent their falling again into slavery. To kill all the men did not seem to the relish of any part of the assembly, notwithstanding the injuries formerly received; and they were afterwards pleased to make a great merit of this lenity of theirs. It was, therefore, agreed to put out the eyes of the whole male sex, and thereby resign in all future time the vanity which they could draw from their beauty, in order to secure their authority. We must no longer pretend to dress and show, say they; but then we shall be free from slavery. We shall hear no more tender sighs; but in return we shall hear no more imperious commands. Love must for ever leave us; but he will carry subjection along with him.

’Tis regarded by some as an unlucky circumstance, since the women were resolved to maim the men, and deprive them of some of their senses, in order to render them humble and dependent, that the sense of hearing could not serve their purpose, since ’tis probable the females would rather have attacked that than the sight: And I think it is agreed among the learned, that, in a married state, ’tis not near so great an inconvenience to lose the former sense as the latter. However this may be, we are told by modern anecdotes, that some of the Scythian women did secretly spare their husband’s eyes; presuming, I suppose, that they could govern them as well by means of that sense as without it. But so incorrigible and untractable were these men, that their wives were all obliged, in a few years, as their youth and beauty decayed, to imitate the example of their sisters; which it was no difficult matter to do in a state where the female sex had once got the superiority.

I know not if our Scottish ladies derive any thing of this humour from their Scythian ancestors; but, I must confess that I have often been surprized to see a woman very well pleased to take a fool for her mate, that she might govern with the less controul; and could not but think her sentiments, in this respect, still more barbarous than those of the Scythian women above-mentioned; as much as the eyes of the understanding are more valuable than those of the body.

But to be just, and to lay the blame more equally, I am afraid it is the fault of our sex, if the women be so fond of rule, and that if we did not abuse our authority, they would never think it worth while to dispute it. Tyrants, we know, produce rebels; and all history informs us, that rebels, when they prevail, are apt to become tyrants in their turn. For this reason, I could wish there were no pretensions to authority on either side; but that every thing was carried on with perfect equality, as between two equal members of the same body. And to induce both parties to embrace those amicable sentiments, I shall deliver to them Plato's account of the origin of love and marriage.

Mankind, according to that fanciful philosopher, were not, in their original, divided into male and female, as at present; but each individual person was a compound of both sexes, and was in himself both husband and wife, melted down into one living creature. This union, no doubt, was very intire, and the parts very well adjusted together, since there resulted a perfect harmony betwixt the male and female, altho' they were obliged to be inseparable companions. And so great were the harmony and happiness flowing from it, that the Androgynes (for so Plato calls them) or men-women, became insolent upon their prosperity, and rebelled against the Gods. To punish them for this temerity, Jupiter could contrive no better expedient, than to divorce the male-part from the female, and make two imperfect beings of the compound, which was before so perfect. Hence the origin of men and women, as distinct creatures. But notwithstanding this division, so lively is our remembrance of the happiness which we enjoyed in our primæval state, that we are never at rest in this situation; but each of these halves is continually searching thro' the whole species to find the other half, which was broken from it: And when they meet, they join again with the greatest fondness and sympathy. But it often happens, that they are mistaken in this particular; that they take for their half what no way corresponds to them; and that the parts do not meet nor join in with each other, as is usual in fractures. In this case the union was soon dissolved, and each part is set loose again to hunt for its lost half, joining itself to every one whom it meets, by way of trial, and enjoying no rest till its perfect sympathy with its partner shews, that it has at last been successful in its endeavours.

Were I disposed to carry on this fiction of Plato, which accounts for the mutual love betwixt the sexes in so agreeable a manner, I would do it by the following allegory.

When Jupiter had separated the male from the female, and had quelled their pride and ambition by so severe an operation, he could not but repent him of the cruelty of his vengeance, and take compassion on poor mortals, who were now become incapable of any repose or tranquillity. Such cravings, such anxieties, such necessities arose, as made them curse their creation, and think existence itself a punishment. In vain had they recourse to every other occupation and amusement. In vain did they seek after every pleasure of sense, and every refinement of reason. Nothing could fill that void, which they felt in their hearts, or supply the loss of their partner, who was so fatally separated from them. To remedy this disorder, and to bestow some comfort, at least, on the human race in their forlorn situation, Jupiter sent down Love and Hymen to collect the broken halves of human kind, and piece them together in the best manner possible. These two deities found such a prompt disposition in mankind to unite again in their primæval state, that they proceeded on their work with wonderful success for some time; till at last, from many unlucky accidents, dissension arose betwixt them. The chief counsellor and favourite of Hymen was Care, who was continually filling his patron’s head with prospects of futurity; a settlement, family, children, servants; so that little else was regarded in all the matches they made. On the other hand, Love had chosen Pleasure for his favourite, who was as pernicious a counsellor as the other, and would never allow Love to look beyond the present momentary gratification, or the satisfying of the prevailing inclination. These two favourites became, in a little time, irreconcileable enemies, and made it their chief business to undermine each other in all their undertakings. No sooner had Love fixed upon two halves, which he was cementing together, and forming to a close union, but Care insinuates himself, and bringing Hymen along with him, dissolves the union produced by love, and joins each half to some other half, which he had provided for it. To be revenged of this, Pleasure creeps in upon a pair already joined by Hymen; and calling Love to his assistance, they under hand contrive to join each half by secret links, to halves, which Hymen was wholly unacquainted with. It was not long before this quarrel was felt in its pernicious consequences; and such complaints arose before the throne of Jupiter, that he was obliged to summon the offending parties to appear before him, in order to give an account of their proceedings. After hearing the pleadings on both sides, he ordered an immediate reconcilement betwixt Love and Hymen, as the only expedient for giving happiness to mankind: And that he might be sure this reconcilement should be durable, he laid his strict injunctions on them never to join any halves without consulting their favourites Care and Pleasure, and obtaining the consent of both to the conjunction. Where this order is strictly observed, the Androgyne is perfectly restored, and the human race enjoy the same happiness as in their primæval state. The seam is scarce perceived that joins the two beings; but both of them combine to form one perfect and happy creature.

ESSAY VI: OF THE STUDY OF HISTORY

There is nothing which I would recommend more earnestly to my female readers than the study of history, as an occupation, of all others, the best suited both to their sex and education, much more instructive than their ordinary books of amusement, and more entertaining than those serious compositions, which are usually to be found in their closets. Among other important truths, which they may learn from history, they may be informed of two particulars, the knowledge of which may contribute very much to their quiet and repose; That our sex, as well as theirs, are far from being such perfect creatures as they are apt to imagine, and, That Love is not the only passion, which governs the male-world, but is often overcome by avarice, ambition, vanity, and a thousand other passions. Whether they be the false representations of mankind in those two particulars, which endear romances and novels so much to the fair sex, I know not; but must confess that I am sorry to see them have such an aversion to matter of fact, and such an appetite for falshood. I remember I was once desired by a young beauty, for whom I had some passion, to send her some novels and romances for her amusement in the country; but was not so ungenerous as to take the advantage, which such a course of reading might have given me, being resolved not to make use of poisoned arms against her. I therefore sent her Plutarch’s lives, assuring her, at the same time, that there was not a word of truth in them from beginning to end. She perused them very attentively, ‘till she came to the lives of Alexander and Cæsar, whose names she had heard of by accident; and then returned me the book, with many reproaches for deceiving her.

I may indeed be told, that the fair sex have no such aversion to history, as I have represented, provided it be secret history, and contain some memorable transaction proper to excite their curiosity. But as I do not find that truth, which is the basis of history, is at all regarded in those anecdotes, I cannot admit of this as a proof of their passion for that study. However this may be, I see not why the same curiosity might not receive a more proper direction, and lead them to desire accounts of those who lived in past ages, as well as of their cotemporaries. What is it to Cleora, whether Fulvia entertains a secret commerce of Love with Philander or not? Has she not equal reason to be pleased, when she is informed (what is whispered about among historians) that Cato's sister had an intrigue with Cæsar, and palmed her son, Marcus Brutus, upon her husband for his own, tho' in reality he was her gallant's? And are not the loves of Messalina or Julia as proper subjects of discourse as any intrigue that this city has produced of late years?

But I know not whence it comes, that I have been thus seduced into a kind of raillery against the ladies: Unless, perhaps, it proceed from the same cause, which makes the person, who is the favourite of the company, be often the object of their good-natured jests and pleasantries. We are pleased to address ourselves after any manner, to one who is agreeable to us; and, at the same time, presume, that nothing will be taken amiss by a person, who is secure of the good opinion and affections of every one present. I shall now proceed to handle my subject more seriously, and shall point out the many advantages, which flow from the study of history, and show how well suited it is to every one, but particularly to those who are debarred the severer studies, by the tenderness of their complexion, and the weakness of their education. The advantages found in history seem to be of three kinds, as it amuses the fancy, as it improves the understanding, and as it strengthens virtue.

In reality, what more agreeable entertainment to the mind, than to be transported into the remotest ages of the world, and to observe human society, in its infancy, making the first faint essays towards the arts and sciences: To see the policy of government, and the civility of conversation refining by degrees, and every thing which is ornamental to human life advancing towards its perfection. To remark the rise, progress, declension, and final extinction of the most flourishing empires: The virtues, which contributed to their greatness, and the vices, which drew on their ruin. In short, to see all human race, from the beginning of time, pass, as it were, in review before us; appearing in their true colours, without any of those disguises, which, during their life-time, so much perplexed the judgment of the beholders. What spectacle can be imagined, so magnificent, so various, so interesting? What amusement, either of the senses or imagination, can be compared with it? Shall those trifling pastimes, which engross so much of our time, be preferred as more satisfactory, and more fit to engage our attention? How perverse must that taste be, which is capable of so wrong a choice of pleasures?

But history is a most improving part of knowledge, as well as an agreeable amusement; and a great part of what we commonly call Erudition, and value so highly, is nothing but an acquaintance with historical facts. An extensive knowledge of this kind belongs to men of letters; but I must think it an unpardonable ignorance in persons of whatever sex or condition, not to be acquainted with the history of their own country, together with the histories of ancient Greece and Rome. A woman may behave herself with good manners, and have even some vivacity in her turn of wit; but where her mind is so unfurnished, 'tis impossible her conversation can afford any entertainment to men of sense and reflection.

I must add, that history is not only a valuable part of knowledge, but opens the door to many other parts, and affords materials to most of the sciences. And indeed, if we consider the shortness of human life, and our limited knowledge, even of what passes in our own time, we must be sensible that we should be for ever children in understanding, were it not for this invention, which extends our experience to all past ages, and to the most distant nations; making them contribute as much to our improvement in wisdom, as if they had actually lain under our observation. A man acquainted with history may, in some respect, be said to have lived from the beginning of the world, and to have been making continual additions to his stock of knowledge in every century.

There is also an advantage in that experience which is acquired by history, above what is learned by the practice of the world, that it brings us acquainted with human affairs, without diminishing in the least from the most delicate sentiments of virtue. And, to tell the truth, I know not any study or occupation so unexceptionable as history in this particular. Poets can paint virtue in the most charming colours; but, as they address themselves entirely to the passions, they often become advocates for vice. Even philosophers are apt to bewilder themselves in the subtilty of their speculations; and we have seen some go so far as to deny the reality of all moral distinctions. But I think it a remark worthy the attention of the speculative, that the historians have been, almost without exception, the true friends of virtue, and have always represented it in its proper colours, however they may have erred in their judgments of particular persons.

Machiavel himself discovers a true sentiment of virtue in his history of Florence. When he talks as a Politician, in his general reasonings, he considers poisoning, assassination and perjury, as lawful arts of power; but when he speaks as an Historian, in his particular narrations, he shows so keen an indignation against vice, and so warm an approbation of virtue, in many passages, that I could not forbear applying to him that remark of Horace, That if you chace away nature, tho' with ever so great indignity, she will always return upon you. Nor is this combination of historians in favour of virtue at all difficult to be accounted for. When a man of business enters into life and action, he is more apt to consider the characters of men, as they have relation to his interest, than as they stand in themselves; and has his judgment warped on every occasion by the violence of his passion. When a philosopher contemplates characters and manners in his closet, the general abstract view of the objects leaves the mind so cold and unmoved, that the sentiments of nature have no room to play, and he scarce feels the difference between vice and virtue. History keeps in a just medium betwixt these extremes, and places the objects in their true point of view. The writers of history, as well as the readers, are sufficiently interested in the characters and events, to have a lively sentiment of blame or praise; and, at the same time, have no particular interest or concern to pervert their judgment.

- Veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
- Eliciuntur.
- Lucret.,

ESSAY VII: OF AVARICE

’Tis easy to observe, that comic writers exaggerate every character, and draw their fop, or coward with stronger features than are any where to be met with in nature. This moral kind of painting for the stage has been often compared to the painting for cupolas and cielings, where the colours are over-charged, and every part is drawn excessively large, and beyond nature. The figures seem monstrous and disproportioned, when seen too nigh; but become natural and regular, when set at a distance, and placed in that point of view, in which they are intended to be surveyed. For a like reason, when characters are exhibited in theatrical representations, the want of reality removes, in a manner, the personages; and rendering them more cold and unentertaining, makes it necessary to compensate, by the force of colouring, what they want in substance. Thus we find in common life, that when a man once allows himself to depart from truth in his narrations, he never can keep within the bounds of probability; but adds still some new circumstance to render his stories more marvellous, and to satisfy his imagination. Two men in buckram suits became eleven to Sir John Falstaff before the end of his story.

There is only one vice, which may be found in life with as strong features, and as high a colouring as needs be employed by any satyrist or comic poet; and that is Avarice. Every day we meet with men of immense fortunes, without heirs, and on the very brink of the grave, who refuse themselves the most common necessaries of life, and go on heaping possessions on possessions, under all the real pressures of the severest poverty. An old usurer, says the story, lying in his last agonies, was presented by the priest with the crucifix to worship. He opens his eyes a moment before he expires, considers the crucifix, and cries, These jewels are not true; I can only lend ten pistoles upon such a pledge. This was probably the invention of some epigrammatist; and yet every one, from his own experience, may be able to recollect almost as strong instances of perseverance in avarice. ’Tis commonly reported of a famous miser in this city, that finding himself near death, he sent for some of the magistrates, and gave them a bill of an hundred pounds, payable after his decease; which sum he intended should be disposed of in charitable uses; but scarce were they gone, when he orders them to be called back, and offers them ready money, if they would abate five pounds of the sum. Another noted miser in the north, intending to defraud his heirs, and leave his fortune to the building of an hospital, protracted the drawing of his will from day to day; and ’tis thought, that if those interested in it had not paid for the drawing it, he had died intestate. In short, none of the most furious excesses of love and ambition are in any respect to be compared to the extremes of avarice.

The best excuse that can be made for avarice is, that it generally prevails in old men, or in men of cold tempers, where all the other affections are extinct; and the mind being incapable of remaining without some passion or pursuit, at last finds out this monstrously absurd one, which suits the coldness and inactivity of its temper. At the same time, it seems very extraordinary, that so frosty, spiritless a passion should be able to carry us farther than all the warmth of youth and pleasure: but if we look more narrowly into the matter, we shall find, that this very circumstance renders the explication of the case more easy. When the temper is warm and full of vigour, it naturally shoots out more ways than one, and produces inferior passions to counter-balance, in some degree, its predominant inclination. ’Tis impossible for a person of that temper, however bent on any pursuit, to be deprived of all sense of shame, or all regard to the sentiments of mankind. His friends must have some influence over him: And other considerations are apt to have their weight. All this serves to restrain him within some bounds. But ’tis no wonder that the avaritious man, being, from the coldness of his temper, without regard to reputation, to friendship, or to pleasure, should be carried so far by his prevailing inclination, and should display his passion in such surprising instances.

Accordingly we find no vice so irreclaimable as avarice: And though there scarcely has been a moralist or philosopher, from the beginning of the world to this day, who has not levelled a stroke at it, we hardly find a single instance of any person’s being cured of it. For this reason, I am more apt to approve of those, who attack it with wit and humour, than of those who treat it in a serious manner. There being so little hopes of doing good to the people infected with this vice, I would have the rest of mankind, at least, diverted by our manner of exposing it: As indeed there is no kind of diversion, of which they seem so willing to partake.

Among the fables of Monsieur de la Motte, there is one levelled against avarice, which seems to me more natural and easy, than most of the fables of that ingenious author. A miser, says he, being dead, and fairly interred, came to the banks of the Styx, desiring to be ferried over along with the other ghosts. Charon demands his fare, and is surprized to see the miser, rather than pay it, throw himself into the river, and swim over to the other side, notwithstanding all the clamour and opposition that could be made to him. All hell was in an uproar; and each of the judges was meditating some punishment, suitable to a crime of such dangerous consequence to the infernal revenues. Shall he be chained to the rock with Prometheus? Or tremble below the precipice in company with the Danaides? Or assist Sisyphus in rolling his stone? No, says Minos, none of these. We must invent some severer punishment. Let him be sent back to the earth, to see the use his heirs are making of his riches.

I hope it will not be interpreted as a design of setting myself in opposition to this celebrated author, if I proceed to deliver a fable of my own, which is intended to expose the same vice of avarice. The hint of it was taken from these lines of Mr. Pope.

- Damn’d to the mines, an equal fate betides
- The slave that digs it, and the slave that hides.

Our old mother Earth once lodged an indictment against Avarice before the courts of heaven, for her wicked and malicious council and advice, in tempting, inducing, persuading, and traiterously seducing the children of the plaintiff to commit the detestable crime of parricide upon her, and, mangling her body, ransack her very bowels for hidden treasure. The indictment was very long and verbose; but we must omit a great part of the repetitions and synonymous terms, not to tire our readers too much with our tale. Avarice, being called before Jupiter to answer to this charge, had not much to say in her own defence. The injustice was clearly proved upon her. The fact, indeed, was notorious, and the injury had been frequently repeated. When therefore the plaintiff demanded justice, Jupiter very readily gave sentence in her favour; and his decree was to this purpose, That since dame Avarice, the defendant, had thus grievously injured dame Earth, the plaintiff, she was hereby ordered to take that treasure, of which she had feloniously robbed the said plaintiff, by ransacking her bosom, and in the same manner, as before, opening her bosom, restore it back to her, without diminution or retention. From this sentence, it shall follow, says Jupiter to the by-standers, That, in all future ages, the retainers of Avarice shall bury and conceal their riches, and thereby restore to the earth what they took from her.

ESSAY VIII: A CHARACTER OF SIR ROBERT WALPOLE

There never was a man, whose actions and character have been more earnestly and openly canvassed, than those of the present minister, who, having governed a learned and free nation for so long a time, amidst such mighty opposition, may make a large library of what has been wrote for and against him, and is the subject of above half the paper that has been blotted in the nation within these twenty years. I wish for the honour of our country, that any one character of him had been drawn with such judgment and impartiality, as to have some credit with posterity, and to shew, that our liberty has, once at least, been employed to good purpose. I am only afraid, of failing in the former quality of judgment: But if it should be so, ’tis but one page more thrown away, after an hundred thousand, upon the same subject, that have perished, and become useless. In the mean time, I shall flatter myself with the pleasing imagination, that the following character will be adopted by future historians.

Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, prime minister of Great Britain, is a man of ability, not a genius; good-natured, not virtuous; constant, not magnanimous; moderate, not equitable; His virtues, in some instances, are free from the allay of those vices, which usually accompany such virtues: He is a generous friend, without being a bitter enemy. His vices, in other instances, are not compensated by those virtues which are nearly allyed to them; His want of enterprise is not attended with frugality. The private character of the man is better than the public: His virtues more than his vices: His fortune greater than his fame. With many good qualities he has incurred the public hatred: With good capacity he has not escaped ridicule. He would have been esteemed more worthy of his high station had he never possessed it; and is better qualified for the second than for the first place in any government. His ministry has been more advantageous to his family than to the public, better for this age than for posterity, and more pernicious by bad precedents than by real grievances. During his time trade has flourished, liberty declined, and learning gone to ruin. As I am a man, I love him; as I am a scholar, I hate him; as I am a Briton, I calmly wish his fall.

And were I a member of either house, I would give my vote for removing him from St. James’s; but should be glad to see him retire to Houghton-Hall, to pass the remainder of his days in ease and pleasure.

ESSAY IX: OF SUICIDE

One considerable advantage, that arises from philosophy, consists in the sovereign antidote, which it affords to superstition and false religion. All other remedies against that pestilent distemper are vain, or, at least, uncertain. Plain good-sense, and the practice of the world, which alone serve most purposes of life, are here found ineffectual: History, as well as daily experience, affords instances of men, endowed with the strongest capacity for business and affairs, who have all their lives crouched under slavery to the grossest superstition. Even gaiety and sweetness of temper, which infuse a balm into every other wound, afford no remedy to so virulent a poison; as we may particularly observe of the fair sex, who, tho' commonly possessed of these rich presents of nature, feel many of their joys blasted by this importunate intruder. But when sound philosophy has once gained possession of the mind, superstition is effectually excluded; and one may safely affirm, that her triumph over this enemy is more compleat than over most of the vices and imperfections, incident to human nature. Love or anger, ambition or avarice, have their root in the temper and affections, which the soundest reason is scarce ever able fully to correct. But superstition, being founded on false opinion, must immediately vanish, when true philosophy has inspired juster sentiments of superior powers. The contest is here more equal between the distemper and the medicine: And nothing can hinder the latter from proving effectual, but its being false and sophisticated.

It will here be superfluous to magnify the merits of philosophy, by displaying the pernicious tendency of that vice, of which it cures the human mind. The superstitious man, says Tully, is miserable in every scene, in every incident of life. Even sleep itself, which banishes all other cares of unhappy mortals, affords to him matter of new terror; while he examines his dreams, and finds in those visions of the night, prognostications of future calamities. I may add, that, tho' death alone can put a full period to his misery, he dares not fly to this refuge, but still prolongs a miserable existence, from a vain fear, lest he offend his maker, by using the power, with which that beneficent being has endowed him. The presents of God and Nature are ravished from us by this cruel enemy; and notwithstanding that one step would remove us from the regions of pain and sorrow, her menaces still chain us down to a hated being, which she herself chiefly contributes to render miserable.

It is observed of such as have been reduced by the calamities of life to the necessity of employing this fatal remedy, that, if the unseasonable care of their friends deprive them of that species of death, which they proposed to themselves, they seldom venture upon any other, or can summon up so much resolution, a second time, as to execute their purpose. So great is our horror of death, that when it presents itself under any form, besides that to which a man has endeavoured to reconcile his imagination, it acquires new terrors, and overcomes his feeble courage. But when the menaces of superstition are joined to this natural timidity, no wonder it quite deprives men of all power over their lives; since even many pleasures and enjoyments, to which we are carried by a strong propensity, are torn from us by this inhuman tyrant. Let us here endeavour to restore men to their native liberty, by examining all the common arguments against Suicide, and shewing, that That action may be free from every imputation of guilt or blame; according to the sentiments of all the antient philosophers.

If Suicide be criminal, it must be a transgression of our duty, either to God, our neighbour, or ourselves.

To prove, that Suicide is no transgression of our duty to God, the following considerations may perhaps suffice. In order to govern the material world, the almighty creator has established general and immutable laws, by which all bodies, from the greatest planet to the smallest particle of matter, are maintained in their proper sphere and function. To govern the animal world, he has endowed all living creatures with bodily and mental powers; with senses, passions, appetites, memory, and judgment; by which they are impelled or regulated in that course of life, to which they are destined. These two distinct principles of the material and animal world continually encroach upon each other, and mutually retard or forward each other's operation. The powers of men and of all other animals are restrained and directed by the nature and qualities of the surrounding bodies; and the modifications and actions of these bodies are incessantly altered by the operation of all animals. Man is stopped by rivers in his passage over the surface of the earth; and rivers, when properly directed, lend their force to the motion of machines, which serve to the use of man. But tho' the provinces of the material and animal powers are not kept entirely separate, there result from thence no discord or disorder in the creation: On the contrary, from the mixture, union, and contrast of all the various powers of inanimate bodies and living creatures, arises that surprizing harmony and proportion, which affords the surest argument of supreme wisdom.

The providence of the deity appears not immediately in any operation, but governs every thing by those general and immutable laws, which have been established from the beginning of time. All events, in one sense, may be pronounced the action of the almighty: They all proceed from those powers, with which he has endowed his creatures. A house, which falls by its own weight, is not brought to ruin by his providence more than one destroyed by the hands of men; nor are the human faculties less his workmanship than the laws of motion and gravitation. When the passions play, when the judgment dictates, when the limbs obey; this is all the operation of God; and upon these animate principles, as well as upon the inanimate, has he established the government of the universe.

Every event is alike important in the eyes of that infinite being, who takes in, at one glance, the most distant regions of space and remotest periods of time. There is no one event, however important to us, which he has exempted from the general laws that govern the universe, or which he has peculiarly reserved for his own immediate action and operation. The revolutions of states and empires depend upon the smallest caprice or passion of single men; and the lives of men are shortened or extended by the smallest accident of air or diet, sunshine or tempest. Nature still continues her progress and operation; and if general laws be ever broke by particular volitions of the deity, ’tis after a manner which entirely escapes human observation. As on the one hand, the elements and other inanimate parts of the creation carry on their action without regard to the particular interest and situation of men; so men are entrusted to their own judgment and discretion in the various shocks of matter, and may employ every faculty, with which they are endowed, in order to provide for their ease, happiness, or preservation.

What is the meaning, then, of that principle, that a man, who, tired of life, and hunted by pain and misery, bravely overcomes all the natural terrors of death, and makes his escape from this cruel scene; that such a man, I say, has incurred the indignation of his creator, by encroaching on the office of divine providence, and disturbing the order of the universe? Shall we assert, that the Almighty has reserved to himself, in any peculiar manner, the disposal of the lives of men, and has not submitted that event, in common with others, to the general laws, by which the universe is governed? This is plainly false. The lives of men depend upon the same laws as the lives of all other animals; and these are subjected to the general laws of matter and motion. The fall of a tower or the infusion of a poison will destroy a man equally with the meanest creature: An inundation sweeps away every thing, without distinction, that comes within the reach of its fury. Since therefore the lives of men are for ever dependent on the general laws of matter and motion; is a man's disposing of his life criminal, because, in every case, it is criminal to encroach upon these laws, or disturb their operation? But this seems absurd. All animals are entrusted to their own prudence and skill for their conduct in the world, and have full authority, as far as their power extends, to alter all the operations of nature. Without the exercise of this authority, they could not subsist a moment. Every action, every motion of a man innovates in the order of some parts of matter, and diverts, from their ordinary course, the general laws of motion. Putting together, therefore, these conclusions, we find, that human life depends upon the general laws of matter and motion, and that 'tis no encroachment on the office of providence to disturb or alter these general laws. Has not every one, of consequence, the free disposal of his own life? And may he not lawfully employ that power with which nature has endowed him?

In order to destroy the evidence of this conclusion, we must shew a reason, why this particular case is excepted. Is it because human life is of so great importance, that it is a presumption for human prudence to dispose of it? But the life of man is of no greater importance to the universe than that of an oyster. And were it of ever so great importance, the order of nature has actually submitted it to human prudence, and reduced us to a necessity, in every incident, of determining concerning it.

Were the disposal of human life so much reserved as the peculiar province of the almighty that it were an encroachment on his right for men to dispose of their own lives; it would be equally criminal to act for the preservation of life as for its destruction. If I turn aside a stone, which is falling upon my head, I disturb the course of nature, and I invade the peculiar province of the almighty, by lengthening out my life, beyond the period, which, by the general laws of matter and motion, he had assigned to it.

A hair, a fly, an insect is able to destroy this mighty being, whose life is of such importance. Is it an absurdity to suppose, that human prudence may lawfully dispose of what depends on such insignificant causes?

It would be no crime in me to divert the Nile or Danube from its course, were I able to effect such purposes. Where then is the crime of turning a few ounces of blood from their natural chanels!

Do you imagine that I repine at providence or curse my creation, because I go out of life, and put a period to a being, which, were it to continue, would render me miserable? Far be such sentiments from me. I am only convinced of a matter of fact, which you yourself acknowledge possible, that human life may be unhappy, and that my existence, if farther prolonged, would become uneligible. But I thank providence, both for the good, which I have already enjoyed, and for the power, with which I am endowed, of escaping the ill that threatens me. To you it belongs to repine at providence, who foolishly imagine that you have no such power, and who must still prolong a hated being, tho’ loaded with pain and sickness, with shame and poverty.

Do you not teach, that when any ill befalls me, tho’ by the malice of my enemies, I ought to be resigned to providence; and that the actions of men are the operations of the almighty as much as the actions of inanimate beings? When I fall upon my own sword, therefore, I receive my death equally from the hands of the deity, as if it had proceeded from a lion, a precipice, or a fever.

The submission, which you require to providence, in every calamity, that befalls me, excludes not human skill and industry; if possibly, by their means, I can avoid or escape the calamity. And why may I not employ one remedy as well as another?

If my life be not my own, it were criminal for me to put it in danger, as well as to dispose of it: Nor could one man deserve the appellation of Hero, whom glory or friendship transports into the greatest dangers, and another merit the reproach of Wretch or Miscreant, who puts a period to his life, from the same or like motives.

There is no being, which possesses any power or faculty, that it receives not from its creator; nor is there any one, which, by ever so irregular an action, can encroach upon the plan of his providence, or disorder the universe. Its operations are his work equally with that chain of events, which it invades; and which ever principle prevails, we may, for that very reason, conclude it to be most favoured by him. Be it animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, ’tis all a case: It’s power is still derived from the supreme creator, and is alike comprehended in the order of his providence. When the horror of pain prevails over the love of life: When a voluntary action anticipates the effect of blind causes; it is only in consequence of those powers and principles, which he has implanted in his creatures. Divine providence is still inviolate, and placed far beyond the reach of human injuries.

It is impious, says the old Roman superstition, to divert rivers from their course, or invade the prerogatives of nature. ’Tis impious, says the French superstition, to inoculate for the small-pox, or usurp the business of providence, by voluntarily producing distempers and maladies. ’Tis impious, says the modern European superstition, to put a period to our own life, and thereby rebel against our creator. And why not impious, say I, to build houses, cultivate the ground, and sail upon the ocean? In all these actions, we employ our powers of mind and body to produce some innovation in the course of nature; and in none of them do we any more. They are all of them, therefore, equally innocent or equally criminal.

But you are placed by providence, like a sentinel, in a particular station; and when you desert it, without being recalled, you are guilty of rebellion against your almighty sovereign, and have incurred his displeasure. I ask, why do you conclude, that Providence has placed me in this station? For my part, I find, that I owe my birth to a long chain of causes, of which many and even the principal, depended upon voluntary actions of men. But Providence guided all these causes, and nothing happens in the universe without its consent and co-operation. If so, then neither does my death, however voluntary, happen without it’s consent; and whenever pain and sorrow so far overcome my patience as to make me tired of life, I may conclude, that I am recalled from my station, in the clearest and most express terms.

It is providence, surely, that has placed me at present in this chamber: But may I not leave it, when I think proper, without being liable to the imputation of having deserted my post or station? When I shall be dead, the principles, of which I am composed, will still perform their part in the universe, and will be equally useful in the grand fabric, as when they composed this individual creature. The difference to the whole will be no greater than between my being in a chamber and in the open air. The one change is of more importance to me than the other; but not more so to the universe.

It is a kind of blasphemy to imagine, that any created being can disturb the order of the world, or invade the business of providence. It supposes, that that being possesses powers and faculties, which it received not from its creator, and which are not subordinate to his government and authority. A man may disturb society, no doubt; and thereby incur the displeasure of the almighty: But the government of the world is placed far beyond his reach and violence. And how does it appear, that the almighty is displeased with those actions, that disturb society? By the principles which he has implanted in human nature, and which inspire us with a sentiment of remorse, if we ourselves have been guilty of such actions, and with that of blame and disapprobation, if we ever observe them in others. Let us now examine, according to the method proposed, whether Suicide be of this kind of actions, and be a breach of our duty to our neighbour and to society.

A man, who retires from life, does no harm to society. He only ceases to do good; which, if it be an injury, is of the lowest kind.

All our obligations to do good to society seem to imply something reciprocal. I receive the benefits of society, and therefore ought to promote it’s interest. But when I withdraw myself altogether from society, can I be bound any longer?

But allowing, that our obligations to do good were perpetual, they have certainly some bounds. I am not obliged to do a small good to society, at the expence of a great harm to myself. Why then should I prolong a miserable existence, because of some frivolous advantage, which the public may, perhaps, receive from me? If upon account of age and infirmities, I may lawfully resign any office, and employ my time altogether in fencing against these calamities, and alleviating, as much as possible, the miseries of my future life: Why may I not cut short these miseries at once by an action, which is no more prejudicial to society?

But suppose, that it is no longer in my power to promote the interest of the public: Suppose, that I am a burthen to it: Suppose, that my life hinders some person from being much more useful to the public. In such cases my resignation of life must not only be innocent but laudable. And most people, who lie under any temptation to abandon existence, are in some such situation. Those, who have health, or power, or authority, have commonly better reason to be in humour with the world.

A man is engaged in a conspiracy for the public interest; is seized upon suspicion; is threatened with the rack; and knows, from his own weakness, that the secret will be extorted from him: Could such a one consult the public interest better than by putting a quick period to a miserable life? This was the case of the famous and brave Strozzi of Florence.

Again, suppose a malefactor justly condemned to a shameful death; can any reason be imagined, why he may not anticipate his punishment, and save himself all the anguish of thinking on its dreadful approaches? He invades the business of providence no more than the magistrate did, who ordered his execution; and his voluntary death is equally advantageous to society, by ridding it of a pernicious member.

That Suicide may often be consistent with interest and with our duty to ourselves, no one can question, who allows, that age, sickness, or misfortune may render life a burthen, and make it worse even than annihilation. I believe that no man ever threw away life, while it was worth keeping. For such is our natural horror of death, that small motives will never be able to reconcile us to it. And tho’ perhaps the situation of a man’s health or fortune did not seem to require this remedy, we may at least be assured, that any one, who, without apparent reason, has had recourse to it, was curst with such an incurable depravity or gloominess of temper, as must poison all enjoyment, and render him equally miserable as if he had been loaded with the most grievous misfortunes.

If Suicide be supposed a crime, ’tis only cowardice can impel us to it. If it be no crime, both prudence and courage should engage us to rid ourselves at once of existence, when it becomes a burthen. ’Tis the only way, that we can then be useful to society, by setting an example, which, if imitated, would preserve to every one his chance for happiness in life, and would effectually free him from all danger of misery.

ESSAY X: OF THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

By the mere light of reason it seems difficult to prove the Immortality of the Soul. The arguments for it are commonly derived either from metaphysical topics, or moral or physical. But in reality, it is the gospel, and the gospel alone, that has brought life and immortality to light.

I. Metaphysical topics are founded on the supposition that the soul is immaterial, and that it is impossible for thought to belong to a material substance.

But just metaphysics teach us, that the notion of substance is wholly confused and imperfect, and that we have no other idea of any substance than as an aggregate of particular qualities, inhering in an unknown something. Matter, therefore, and spirit are at bottom equally unknown; and we cannot determine what qualities may inhere in the one or in the other.

They likewise teach us, that nothing can be decided a priori concerning any cause or effect; and that experience being the only source of our judgments of this nature, we cannot know from any other principle, whether matter, by its structure or arrangement, may not be the cause of thought. Abstract reasonings cannot decide any question of fact or existence.

But admitting a spiritual substance to be dispersed throughout the universe, like the etherial fire of the Stoics, and to be the only inherent subject of thought; we have reason to conclude from analogy, that nature uses it after the same manner she does the other substance, matter. She employs it as a kind of paste or clay; modifies it into a variety of forms and existences; dissolves after a time each modification; and from it’s substance erects a new form. As the same material substance may successively compose the body of all animals, the same spiritual substance may compose their minds: Their consciousness, or that system of thought, which they formed during life, may be continually dissolved by death; and nothing interest them in the new modification. The most positive asserters of the mortality of the soul, never denied the immortality of its substance. And that an immaterial substance, as well as a material, may lose its memory or consciousness appears, in part, from experience, if the soul be immaterial.

Reasoning from the common course of nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the supreme cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy; what is incorruptible must also be ingenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth: And if the former state of existence no wise concerned us, neither will the latter.

Animals undoubtedly feel, think, love, hate, will, and even reason, tho' in a more imperfect manner than man. Are their souls also immaterial and immortal?

II. Let us now consider the moral arguments, chiefly those arguments derived from the justice of God, which is supposed to be farther interested in the farther punishment of the vicious, and reward of the virtuous.

But these arguments are grounded on the supposition, that God has attributes beyond what he has exerted in this universe, with which alone we are acquainted. Whence do we infer the existence of these attributes?

It is very safe for us to affirm, that, whatever we know the deity to have actually done, is best; but it is very dangerous to affirm, that he must always do what to us seems best. In how many instances would this reasoning fail us with regard to the present world?

But if any purpose of nature be clear, we may affirm, that the whole scope and intention of man's creation, so far as we can judge by natural reason, is limited to the present life. With how weak a concern, from the original, inherent structure of the mind and passions, does he ever look farther? What comparison, either for steddiness or efficacy, between so floating an idea, and the most doubtful persuasion of any matter of fact, that occurs in common life.

There arise, indeed, in some minds, some unaccountable terrors with regard to futurity: But these would quickly vanish, were they not artificially fostered by precept and education. And those, who foster them; what is their motive? Only to gain a livelihood, and to acquire power and riches in this world. Their very zeal and industry, therefore, are an argument against them.

What cruelty, what iniquity, what injustice in nature, to confine thus all our concern, as well as all our knowledge, to the present life, if there be another scene still awaiting us, of infinitely greater consequence? Ought this barbarous deceit to be ascribed to a beneficent and wise being?

Observe with what exact proportion the task to be performed and the performing powers are adjusted throughout all nature. If the reason of man gives him a great superiority above other animals, his necessities are proportionably multiplied upon him. His whole time, his whole capacity, activity, courage, passion, find sufficient employment, in fencing against the miseries of his present condition. And frequently, nay almost always, are too slender for the business assigned them.

A pair of shoes, perhaps, was never yet wrought to the highest degree of perfection, which that commodity is capable of attaining. Yet is it necessary, at least very useful, that there should be some politicians and moralists, even some geometers, historians, poets, and philosophers among mankind.

The powers of men are no more superior to their wants, considered merely in this life, than those of foxes and hares are, compared to their wants and to their period of existence. The inference from parity of reason is therefore obvious.

On the theory of the soul's mortality, the inferiority of women's capacity is easily accounted for: Their domestic life requires no higher faculties either of mind or body. This circumstance vanishes and becomes absolutely insignificant, on the religious theory: The one sex has an equal task to perform with the other: Their powers of reason and resolution ought also to have been equal, and both of them infinitely greater than at present.

As every effect implies a cause, and that another, till we reach the first cause of all, which is the Deity; every thing, that happens, is ordained by him; and nothing can be the object of his punishment or vengeance.

By what rule are punishments and rewards distributed? What is the divine standard of merit and demerit? Shall we suppose, that human sentiments have place in the deity? However bold that hypothesis, we have no conception of any other sentiments.

According to human sentiments, sense, courage, good manners, industry, prudence, genius, &c. are essential parts of personal merit. Shall we therefore erect an elysium for poets and heroes, like that of the antient mythology? Why confine all rewards to one species of virtue?

Punishment, without any proper end or purpose, is inconsistent with our ideas of goodness and justice; and no end can be served by it after the whole scene is closed.

Punishment, according to our conceptions, should bear some proportion to the offence. Why then eternal punishment for the temporary offences of so frail a creature as man? Can any one approve of Alexander’s rage, who intended to exterminate a whole nation, because they had seized his favourite horse, Bucephalus?

Heaven and hell suppose two distinct species of men, the good and the bad. But the greatest part of mankind float between vice and virtue.

Were one to go round the world with an intention of giving a good supper to the righteous and a sound drubbing to the wicked, he would frequently be embarrassed in his choice, and would find, that the merits and demerits of most men and women scarcely amount to the value of either.

To suppose measures of approbation and blame, different from the human, confounds every thing. Whence do we learn, that there is such a thing as moral distinctions but from our own sentiments?

What man, who has not met with personal provocation (or what good natur’d man who has) could inflict on crimes, from the sense of blame alone, even the common, legal, frivolous punishments? And does any thing steel the breast of judges and juries against the sentiments of humanity but reflections on necessity and public interest?

By the Roman law, those who had been guilty of parricide and confessed their crime, were put into a sack, along with an ape, a dog, and a serpent; and thrown into the river: Death alone was the punishment of those, who denied their guilt, however fully proved. A criminal was tryed before Augustus, and condemned after full conviction: But the humane emperor, when he put the last interrogatory, gave it such a turn as to lead the wretch into a denial of his guilt. You surely, said the prince, did not kill your father. This lenity suits our natural ideas of RIGHT, even towards the greatest of all criminals, and even tho’ it prevents so inconsiderable a sufferance. Nay, even the most bigotted priest would naturally, without reflection, approve of it; provided the crime was not heresy or infidelity. For as these crimes hurt himself in his temporal interests and advantages; perhaps he may not be altogether so indulgent to them.

The chief source of moral ideas is the reflection on the interests of human society. Ought these interests, so short, so frivolous, to be guarded by punishments, eternal and infinite? The damnation of one man is an infinitely greater evil in the universe, than the subversion of a thousand million of kingdoms.

Nature has rendered human infancy peculiarly frail and mortal; as it were on purpose to refute the notion of a probationary state. The half of mankind dye before they are rational creatures.

III. The physical arguments from the analogy of nature are strong for the mortality of the soul; and these are really the only philosophical arguments, which ought to be admitted with regard to this question, or indeed any question of fact.

Where any two objects are so closely connected, that all alterations, which we have ever seen in the one, are attended with proportionable alterations in the other; we ought to conclude, by all rules of analogy, that, when there are still greater alterations produced in the former, and it is totally dissolved, there follows a total dissolution of the latter.

Sleep, a very small effect on the body, is attended with a temporary extinction; at least, a great confusion in the soul.

The weakness of the body and that of the mind in infancy are exactly proportioned; their vigor in manhood; their sympathetic disorder in sickness; their common gradual decay in old age. The step farther seems unavoidable; their common dissolution in death.

The last symptoms, which the mind discovers, are disorder, weakness, insensibility, stupidity, the forerunners of its annihilation. The farther progress of the same causes, encreasing the same effects, totally extinguish it.

Judging by the usual analogy of nature, no form can continue, when transferred to a condition of life very different from the original one, in which it was placed. Trees perish in the water; fishes in the air; animals in the earth. Even so small a difference as that of climate is often fatal. What reason then to imagine, that an immense alteration, such as is made on the soul by the dissolution of its body and all its organs of thought and sensation, can be effected without the dissolution of the whole?

Every thing is in common between soul and body. The organs of the one are all of them the organs of the other. The existence therefore of the one must be dependent on that of the other.

The souls of animals are allowed to be mortal; and these bear so near a resemblance to the souls of men, that the analogy from one to the other forms a very strong argument. Their bodies are not more resembling; yet no one rejects the arguments drawn from comparative anatomy. The Metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind, that philosophy can so much as hearken to.

Nothing in this world is perpetual. Every being, however seemingly firm, is in continual flux and change: The world itself gives symptoms of frailty and dissolution: How contrary to analogy, therefore, to imagine, that one single form, seemingly the frailest of any, and from the slightest causes, subject, to the greatest disorders, is immortal and indissoluble? What a daring theory is that! How lightly, not to say, how rashly entertained!

How to dispose of the infinite number of posthumous existences ought also to embarrass the religious theory. Every planet, in every solar system, we are at liberty to imagine peopled with intelligent, mortal beings: At least, we can fix on no other supposition. For these, then, a new universe must, every generation, be created, beyond the bounds of the present universe; or one must have been created at first so prodigiously wide as to admit of this continual influx of beings. Ought such bold suppositions to be received by any philosophy; and that merely on pretence of a bare possibility?

When it is asked, whether Agamemnon, Thersites, Hannibal, Nero, and every stupid clown, that ever existed in Italy, Scythia, Bactria, or Guinea, are now alive; can any man think, that a scrutiny of nature will furnish arguments strong enough to answer so strange a question in the affirmative? The want of arguments, without revelation, sufficiently establishes the negative.

Quanto facilius, says Pliny, certiusque sibi quemque credere, ac specimen securitatis antigenitali sumere experimento. Our insensibility, before the composition of the body, seems to natural reason a proof of a like state after its dissolution.

Were our horror of annihilation an original passion, not the effect of our general love of happiness, it would rather prove the mortality of the soul. For as nature does nothing in vain, she would never give us a horror against an impossible event. She may give us a horror against an unavoidable event, provided our endeavours, as in the present case, may often remove it to some distance. Death is in the end unavoidable; yet the human species could not be preserved, had not nature inspired us with an aversion towards it.

All doctrines are to be suspected, which are favoured by our passions. And the hopes and fears which give rise to this doctrine, are very obvious.

It is an infinite advantage in every controversy, to defend the negative. If the question be out of the common experienced course of nature, this circumstance is almost, if not altogether, decisive. By what arguments or analogies can we prove any state of existence, which no one ever saw, and which no wise resembles any that ever was seen? Who will repose such trust in any pretended philosophy, as to admit upon its testimony the reality of so marvellous a scene? Some new species of logic is requisite for that purpose; and some new faculties of the mind, which may enable us to comprehend that logic.

Nothing could set in a fuller light the infinite obligations, which mankind have to divine revelation; since we find, that no other medium could ascertain this great and important truth.

A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN TO HIS FRIEND IN EDINBURGH

CONTAINING SOME OBSERVATIONS ON A SPECIMEN OF THE PRINCIPLES CONCERNING RELIGION AND MORALITY, SAID TO BE MAINTAIN'D IN A BOOK LATELY PUBLISH'D, INTITULED A TREATISE OF HUMAN NATURE ETC.

EDINBURGH

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Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, &c.
Sum of the Charge.

SIR,

I Have read over the Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, said to be maintain’d in a Book lately published, intituled, *A Treatise of Human Nature*; being an Attempt to introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects. I have also read over what is called *the Sum of the Charge*. Which Papers, as you inform me, have been industriously spread about, and were put into your Hands some few Days ago.

I was perswaded that the Clamour of *Scepticism*, *Atheism*, &c. had been so often employ’d by the worst of Men against the best, that it had now lost all its Influence; and should never have thought of making any Remarks on these *maim’d Excerpts*, if you had not laid your Commands on me, as a Piece of common Justice to the Author, and for undeceiving some well-meaning People, on whom it seems the enormous Charge has made Impression.

I shall insert the Accusation at full Length, and then go regularly through what is called the *Sum of the Charge*; because it is intended, I suppose, to contain the Substance of the whole. I shall also take notice of the *Specimen* as I go along.

Specimen of the Principles concerning Religion and Morality, &c.

The Author puts on his Title-page (Vol. 1. printed for *J. Noon*, 1739.) a Passage of *Tacitus* to this Purpose; “Rare Happiness of our Times, that you may think as you will, and speak as you think.”

He expresses his Deference to the Publick in these Words (Advertisement, .) “The Approbation of the Publick I consider as the *greatest* Reward of my Labours; but am determined to regard its Judgment, *whatever it be*, as my *best* Instruction.”

(458.) He gives us the summary View of his (459.) Philosophy from . to 470.— “I am confounded with that forlorn Solitude, in which I am placed in my Philosophy. — I have exposed myself to the Enmity of all Metaphysicians, Logicians, Mathematicians, and even Theologians. — I have declared my Disapprobations of their Systems. — When I turn my Eye inward, I find nothing but Doubt and Ignorance. All the World conspires to oppose and contradict me; tho’ such is my Weakness, that I feel all my Opinions loosen and fall of themselves, when unsupported by the Approbation of (460.) others. — Can I be sure, that, in leaving all established Opinions, I am following Truth? and by what Criterion shall I distinguish her, even if *Fortune* should at last guide me on her Footsteps? After the most accurate and exact of my Reasonings, I can give no Reason why I should assent to it; and feel nothing but a strong Propensity to consider Objects strongly in that View under which they (461.) appear to me. — The Memory, Senses, and Understanding, are all of them founded on the *Imagination*. — No Wonder a Principle so inconstant and fallacious should lead us into Errors, when implicitely followed (as it must be) in all its (464.) Variations. — I have already shown, that the Understanding, when it acts alone, and according to its most general Principles, *entirely* subverts itself, and leaves not the *lowest Degree* of Evidence in any Proposition either in Philosophy or (465.) common Life. — We have no Choice left, (466.) but betwixt a *false Reason* and *none at (467.) all*. — Where am I, or what? From what Causes do I derive my Existence, and to what Condition shall I return? Whose Favour shall I court, and whose Anger must I dread?

What Beings surround me? On whom have I any Influence, or who have any Influence on me? I am confounded with all these Questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable Condition imaginable, invironed with the deepest Darkness, and utterly deprived of the Use of every Member (468.) and Faculty. — If I must be *a Fool*, as all those who reason or believe any Thing certainly are, my Follies shall at least be (469.) natural and agreeable. — In all the Incidents of Life, we ought still to preserve our Scepticism: If we believe that *Fire warms*, or *Water refreshes*, ’tis only because it costs us *too much Pains* to think otherwise; nay, if we are Philosophers, *it ought only* to be upon sceptical Principles. (470.) — I cannot forbear having a Curiosity to be acquainted with the Principles of moral Good and Evil, *&c*. I am concerned for the Condition of the *learned World*, which lies under such a deplorable Ignorance in all these Particulars. I feel an Ambition arise in me of contributing to the Instruction of Mankind, and of acquiring *a Name by my Inventions and Discoveries*. — Should I endeavour to banish these Sentiments, I feel I should be a Loser in point of Pleasure; and this is the Origin of my Philosophy.”

Agreeable to this summary View, he tells us, . “Let us fix our Attention *out of ourselves* as much as possible. — We really never advance a Step *beyond ourselves*; nor can conceive any Kind of Existence, but these Perceptions which have appeared in that narrow Compass: This is the Universe of the Imagination, nor have we any Idea but what is there produced.” — Accordingly, “An Opinion or Belief may be most accurately (172.) defined, *A lively Idea related or associated (321.) with a present Impression*; and is more properly an Act of the sensitive than of the cogitive Part of our Natures.” And, (363.) “Belief in general consists in nothing but (122.) the Vivacity of an Idea. Again, the Idea of *Existence* is the very same with the Idea of what we conceive to be existent. — Any Idea we please to form is the Idea of a Being; and the Idea of a Being is any Idea we please to form. And as to the Notion of an external Existence, when taken for something specifically different from our Perceptions, we have shown its (330.) Absurdity: And what we call a Mind is nothing but a Heap or Collection of different Perceptions united together by certain Relations, and supposed, tho’ falsly, (361.) to be endowed with a perfect Simplicity.” (370.) And, “The only Existence, of which we are certain, are Perceptions. (438.) When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular Perception or other. — I never can catch *myself* at any Time without a Perception, and never can observe *any (439.) Thing but the Perception*. — If any one think he has a different Notion of himself, I must confess I can reason no longer with him. — I may venture to affirm of the rest of Mankind, that they are nothing but a Bundle of Perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable Rapidity, and are in a perpetual Flux and Movement.” — And lest the Reader should forget to apply all this to the Supreme Mind, and the Existence of the First Cause, he has a long Disquisition concerning *Causes* and *Effects*, the Sum of (321.) which amounts to this, That all our Reasonings (138.) concerning Causes and Effects are derived from *nothing* but *Custom*: That, “if any pretend to define a Cause by saying it is something productive of another, ’tis evident he would say nothing; for (298.) what does he mean by Production? That we may define a Cause to be *an Object precedent and contiguous to another, and where all the Objects resembling the former are placed in like Relations of Precedency and Contiguity to these Objects that resemble the latter*; or, a *Cause is an Object precedent and contiguous to another, and so united with it, that the Idea of the one determines the Mind to form the Idea of the other, and the Impression of the one to form a more lively Idea of the other*.” From these clear and plain Definitions he infers, “That all Causes are of the same Kind; and there is no Foundation for the Distinction betwixt efficient Causes, and Causes *sine qua non*; or betwixt *efficient* Causes, and formal and material, and exemplary, (300.) and final Causes: And that there is but one Kind of Necessity, and (301.) the common Distinction betwixt Moral and Physical is without any Foundation in Nature: And that the Distinction we often make betwixt Power, and the Exercise of it, is equally without Foundation: And that the Necessity of a Cause to every Beginning of Existence, is not founded on any Arguments demonstrative or intuitive: And in fine, That *any Thing* may produce *any Thing*; Creation, Annihilation, Motion, Reason, Volition; all these may arise from one another, or from any other Object we can imagine.” This curious *Nostrum* he often repeats, (284.) , 434. Again he tells us, “That when we talk of any Being, whether of a Superior or Inferior Nature, as endowed with a Power or Force proportioned to any Effect, — We have really no distinct Meaning, and make Use only of common Words, without any clear and (294.) determinate Ideas. And if we have really no Idea of Power or Efficacy in any Object, or of any real Connection betwixt Causes and Effects, ‘twill be to little Purpose to prove that an Efficacy is necessary in all Operations. We do not understand our own Meaning in talking so, but ignorantly confound Ideas which are intirely distinct from each (291.) other.” Again he says, “The Efficacy or Energy of Causes is neither placed in the Causes themselves, nor in the Deity, nor in the Concurrence of these two Principles, but belongs entirely to the Soul (*or the Bundle of Perceptions*) which considers the Union of two or more Objects in all past Instances: ’Tis here that the real Power of Causes is placed, along with their Connection and Necessity. And in fine, we may observe a Conjunction or a Relation of Cause *and Effect between different Perceptions*, but can never observe it between Perceptions and Objects.” ’Tis impossible therefore, that, from the Existence or any of the Qualities of the former, we can ever form any Conclusion concerning the Existence of the latter, or ever satisfy our Reason in this Particular with regard to the Existence of a Supreme Being. ’Tis well known that this Principle, *Whatever begins to exist must have a Cause of Existence*, is the first Step in the Argument for the Being of a Supreme Cause; and that, without it, ’tis impossible to go one Step further in that Argument. Now this Maxim he is at great Pains from . to explode, and to show, “That it is neither intuitively nor demonstratively certain;” and he says, “Reason can never satisfy us that the Existence of any

Object does ever imply that of (173.) another. So that, when we pass from the Impression of one to the Idea and Belief of another, we are not determined (172.) by Reason, but by Custom.” In a marginal Note on the preceeding Page he says, “In that Proposition, *God is*, or indeed any other which regards Existence, the Idea of Existence is no distinct Idea which we unite with that of the Object, and which is capable of forming a compound Idea by the Union.” Concerning (280.) this Principle, *That the Deity is the prime Mover of the Universe, who first created Matter, and gave its original Impulse, and likewise supports its Existence, and successively bestows on it its Motions*; he says, “This Opinion is certainly very curious, but it will appear superfluous to examine it in this Place. — For, if the very Idea be derived from an Impression, the Idea of a Deity proceeds from the same Origin; and, if no Impression implies any Force or Efficacy, ’tis equally impossible to discover, or even imagine, any such active Principle in the Deity. — Since Philosophers therefore have concluded, that Matter cannot be endowed with any efficacious Principle, because it is impossible to discover in it such a Principle; the same Course of Reasoning should determine them to exclude it from the Supreme Being: Or if they esteem that Opinion absurd and impious, as it really is, I shall tell them how they may avoid it, and that is, by *concluding from the very first*, that they have no adequate Idea of Power or Efficacy in any Object; since neither in Body nor Spirit, neither in Superior nor Inferior Natures, are they able to discover one single Instance of it." And (432.) says he, "We have no Idea of a Being endowed with any Power, much less of one endowed with infinite Power."

Concerning *the Immateriality of the Soul* (from which the Argument is taken for its natural Immortality, or that it cannot perish by Dissolution as the Body) he (431.) says, "We certainly may conclude that Motion may be and actually is the Cause of (434.) Thought and Perception: And no wonder, for any Thing may be the Cause or Effect of *any Thing*; which evidently gives the Advantage to the Materialists (418.) above their Adversaries." But yet more plainly, "I assert, says he, that the Doctrine of the Immateriality, Simplicity, and Indivisibility of a thinking Substance, *is a true Atheism*, and will serve to justify *all* these Sentiments for which *Spinoza* (419.) is so universally infamous." This hideous Hypothesis is almost the same with that of the Immateriality of the Soul, which has (423.) become so popular. And again he endeavours to prove, that all the Absurdities which have been found in the Systems of *Spinoza*, may likewise be discovered in that (425.) of the Theologians: And concludes, that "We cannot advance one Step towards the establishing the Simplicity and Immateriality of the Soul, without preparing the Way for a dangerous and irrecoverable Atheism."

The Author's Sentiments in Morality we have in Vol. 3. printed for *T. Longman*, (.) 1740. He there tells us, that "Reason has no Influence on our Passions and Actions: Actions may be laudable or blameable, but they cannot be *reasonable* (19.) or *unreasonable*. That all Beings in the Universe, considered in themselves, appear entirely loose and independent of each other; 'Tis only by Experience we learn their Influence and Connection, and this Influence we ought *never* to extend beyond *Experience*."

He takes great Pains to prove, from . That Justice is not a natural, but an artificial Virtue; and gives one pretty odd (128.) Reason for it: "We may conclude, that the Laws of Justice, being universal and perfectly inflexible, can never be derived (101.) from Nature. I suppose (says he) a Person to have lent me a Sum of Money, on Condition that it be restored in a few Days; and also suppose, that, after Expiration of the Term agreed on, he demands the Sum: I ask, *What Reason or (43.) Motive have I to restore the*

Money? Publick Interest is not naturally attach’d to the Observation of the Rules of Justice, but (48.) is only connected with it, after an artificial Convention, for the Establishment of these Rules. Unless we will allow that Nature has established a *Sophistry*, and rendered it necessary and unavoidable; we must allow that the Sense of Justice and Injustice is not derived from Nature, but arises artificially, tho’ necessarily, (69.) from Education and human Conventions. Here is a Proposition which I think may be regarded as certain, *That it is only from the Selfishness and confined Generosity of Men, along with the scanty Provision Nature has made for his Wants, that Justice derives its Origin*. These Impressions, which give Rise to this Sense of Justice, are not natural to the Mind of Man, but arise from Artifice (734.) and human Conventions. Without such a Convention, no one would ever have dreamed that there was such a Virtue as Justice, or have been induced to conform his Actions to it. Taking any single Act, my Justice may be pernicious in every Respect: And ’tis only upon the Supposition that others are to imitate my Example, that I can be induced to embrace that Virtue; since nothing but the Combination can render Justice advantageous, or afford me any Motive to conform myself to its Rules. (44.) And in general it may be affirmed, that there is no such Passion in human Minds, *as the Love of Mankind* merely as such, independent of personal Qualities, of Service or of Relation to ourself.”

Mr. *Hobbs*, who was at Pains to shake loose all other natural Obligations, yet found it necessary to leave, or pretended to leave, the Obligation of Promises or Pactions; but our Author strikes a bolder Stroke: (101.) “That the Rule of Morality (says he) which enjoins the Performance of *Promises*, is not natural, will sufficiently appear from these two Propositions, which I proceed to prove, *viz. That a Promise would not be intelligible before human Conventions had established it; and that, (114.) even if it were intelligible, it would not be attended with any moral Obligation*.”

And he concludes, “That Promises impose no natural Obligation.” And, . “I shall further observe, That since every new Promise imposes a new Obligation of Morality upon the Person who promises, and since this new Obligation arises from his Will, it is one of the most mysterious and incomprehensible Operations that can possibly be imagined, and may even be compared to Transubstantiation or *Holy Orders*, where a certain Form of Words, along with a certain Intention, changes entirely the Nature of an external Object, and even (117.) of a human Creature. In fine (says he) as

Force is supposed to invalidate all Contracts, such a Principle is a Proof that Promises have no natural Obligation, and are mere artificial Contrivances, for the Conveniency and Advantage of Society.”

Sum of the Charge.

From the preceeding Specimen it will appear, that the Author maintains,

1. Universal Scepticism. See his Assertions, , — 470. where he doubts of every Thing (his own Existence excepted) and maintains the Folly of pretending to believe any Thing with Certainty.

2. Principles leading to downright Atheism, by denying the Doctrine of Causes and Effects, , 138, 298, 300, 301, 303, 430, 434, 284. where he maintains, that the Necessity of a Cause to every Beginning of Existence is not founded on any Arguments demonstrative or intuitive.

3. Errors concerning the very Being and Existence of a God. For Instance, Marginal Note, . as to that Proposition, *God is*, he says (or indeed as to any other Thing which regards Existence) “The Idea of Existence is no distinct Idea which we unite with that of the Object, and which is capable of forming a compound Idea by Union.”

4. Errors concerning God’s being the first Cause, and prime Mover of the Universe: For as to this Principle, That the Deity first created Matter, and gave it its original Impulse, and likewise supports its Existence, he says, “This Opinion is certainly very curious, but it will appear superfluous to examine it in this Place, *&c*.” .

5. He is chargable with denying the Immateriality of the Soul, and the Consequences flowing from this Denial, , 4, 418, 419, 423.

6. With sapping the Foundations of Morality, by denying the natural and essential Difference betwixt Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Justice and Injustice; making the Difference only artificial, and to arise from human Conventions and Compacts, Vol. 2. , 19, 128, 41, 43, 48, 69, 70, 73, 4, 44.

You see, *Dear Sir*, that I have concealed no Part of the Accusation, but have inserted the *Specimen* and *Charge*, as transmitted to me, without the smallest Variation. I shall now go regularly thro’ what is called the *Sum of the Charge*, because it is intended, I suppose, to contain the Substance of the whole; and shall take Notice of the *Specimen* as I go along.

1*st*, As to the *Scepticism* with which the Author is charged, I must observe, that the Doctrines of the *Pyrrhonians* or *Scepticks* have been regarded in all Ages as Principles of mere Curiosity, or a Kind of *Jeux d’* *esprit*, without any Influence on a Man's steady Principles or Conduct in Life. In Reality, a Philosopher who affects to doubt of the Maxims of *common Reason*, and even of his *Senses*, declares sufficiently that he is not in earnest, and that he intends not to advance an Opinion which he would recommend as Standards of Judgment and Action. All he means by these Scruples is to abate the Pride of *mere human Reasoners*, by showing them, that even with regard to Principles which seem the clearest, and which they are necessitated from the strongest Instincts of Nature to embrace, they are not able to attain a full Consistence and absolute Certainty. *Modesty* then, and *Humility*, with regard to the Operations of our natural Faculties, is the Result of *Scepticism*; not an universal Doubt, which it is impossible for any Man to support, and which the first and most trivial Accident in Life must immediately disconcert and destroy.

How is such a Frame of Mind prejudicial to Piety? And must not a Man be ridiculous to assert that our Author denies the Principles of Religion, when he looks upon them as equally certain with the Objects of his Senses? If I be as much assured of these Principles, as that this Table at which I now write is before me; can any Thing further be desired by the most rigorous Antagonist? 'Tis evident, that so extravagant a Doubt as that which Scepticism may seem to recommend, by destroying *every Thing*, really affects *nothing*, and was never intended to be understood *seriously*, but was meant as a *mere* Philosophical Amusement, or Trial of *Wit* and *Subtilty*

This is a Construction suggested by the very Nature of the Subject; but he has not been contented with that, but expresly declared it. And all those Principles, cited in the *Specimen* as Proofs of his Scepticism, are positively renounced in a few Pages afterwards, and called the Effects of *Philosophical Melancholy* and *Delusion*. These are his very Words; and his Accuser's overlooking them may be thought very prudent, but is a Degree of Unfairness which appears to me altogether astonishing.

Were Authorities proper to be employed in any Philosophical Reasoning, I could cite you that of *Socrates* the wisest and most religious of the *Greek* Philosophers, as well as *Cicero* among the *Romans*, who both of them carried their Philosophical Doubts to the highest Degree of Scepticism. All the antient Fathers, as well as our first Reformers, are copious in representing the Weakness and Uncertainty of *mere* human Reason. And Monsieur *Huet* the learned Bishop of *Avaranches* (so celebrated for his *Demonstration Evangelique* which contains all the great Proofs of the

Christian Religion) wrote also a Book on this very Topick, wherein he endeavours to revive all the Doctrines of the antient *Scepticks* or *Pyrrhonians*.

In Reality, whence come all the various Tribes of Hereticks, the *Arians*, *Socinians* and *Deists*, but from too great a Confidence in mere human Reason, which they regard as the *Standard* of every Thing, and which they will not submit to the superior Light of Revelation? And can one do a more essential Service to Piety, than by showing them that this boasted Reason of theirs, so far from accounting for the great Mysteries of the Trinity and Incarnation, is not able fully to satisfy itself with regard to its own Operations, and must in some Measure fall into a Kind of implicite Faith, even in the most obvious and familiar Principles?

II. The Author is charged with Opinions leading to *downright Atheism*, chiefly by denying this Principle, *That whatever begins to exist must have a Cause of Existence*. To give you a Notion of the Extravagance of this Charge, I must enter into a little Detail. It is common for Philosophers to distinguish the Kinds of Evidence into *intuitive*, *demonstrative*, *sensible*, and *moral*; by which they intend *only* to mark a Difference betwixt them, not to denote a Superiority of one above another. *Moral Certainty* may reach as *high* a Degree of Assurance as *Mathematical*; and our Senses are surely to be comprised amongst the clearest and most convincing of all Evidences. Now, it being the Author's Purpose, in the Pages cited in the Specimen, to examine the Grounds of that Proposition; he used the Freedom of disputing the common Opinion, that it was founded on *demonstrative* or *intuitive Certainty*; but asserts, that it is supported by *moral Evidence*, and is followed by a Conviction of the same Kind with these Truths, *That all Men must die*, and that *the Sun will rise To-morrow*. Is this any Thing like denying the Truth of that Proposition, which indeed *a Man must have lost all common Sense to doubt of*?

But, granting that he had denied it, how is this a Principle that leads to Atheism? It would be no difficult Matter to show, that the Arguments *a posteriori* from the Order and Course of Nature, these Arguments so sensible, so convincing, and so obvious, remain still in their full Force; and that nothing is affected by it but the *metaphysical* Argument *a priori*, which many Men of Learning cannot comprehend, and which many Men both of Piety and Learning show no great Value for. Bishop *Tillotson* has used a Degree of Freedom on this Head, which I would not willingly allow myself;

’tis in his excellent Sermon *concerning the Wisdom of being religious*, where he says, *That the Being of a God is not capable of Demonstration, but of moral Evidence*. I hope none will pretend that that pious Prelate intended by these Assertions to weaken the Evidences for a Divine Existence, but only to distinguish accurately its Species of Evidence.

I say further, that even the metaphysical Arguments for a Deity are not affected by a Denial of the Proposition above-mentioned. It is only Dr. *Clark*’s Argument which can be supposed to be any way concerned. Many other Arguments of the same Kind still remain; *Des Cartes*’s for Instance, which has always been esteemed as solid and convincing as the other. I shall add, that a great Distinction ought always to be made betwixt a Man’s positive and avowed Opinions, and the Inferences which it may please others to draw from them. Had the Author really denied the Truth of the foregoing Proposition (which the most superficial Reader cannot think ever entred his Head) still he could not properly be charged as designing to invalidate any one Argument that any Philosopher has employed for a *Divine Existence*; that is only an Inference and Construction of others, which he may refuse if he thinks proper.

Thus you may judge of the Candor of the whole Charge, when you see the assigning of *one Kind of Evidence* for a Proposition, instead of *another*, is called denying that Proposition; that the invalidating only *one Kind* of Argument for the Divine Existence is called *positive Atheism*; nay, that the weakning only of *one individual Argument* of that Kind is called rejecting that *whole Species of Argument*, and the Inferences of others are ascribed to the Author as his real Opinion.

’Tis impossible ever to satisfy a captious Adversary, but it would be easy for me to convince the severest Judge, that all the solid Arguments for Natural Religion retain their full Force upon the Author’s Principles concerning Causes and Effects, and that there is no Necessity even for altering the common Methods of expressing or conceiving these Arguments. The Author has indeed asserted, That we can judge only of the Operations of Causes by Experience, and that, reasoning *a priori*, any thing might appear able to produce any thing. We could not know that Stones would descend, or Fire burn, had we not Experience of these Effects; and indeed, without such Experience, we could not certainly infer the Existence of one Thing from that of another. This is no great Paradox, but seems to have been the Opinion of several Philosophers, and seems the most obvious and familiar Sentiment on that Subject; but, tho’ all Inferences concerning Matter of Fact be thus resolved into Experience, these Inferences are noway weakned by such an Assertion, but on the contrary will be found to acquire more Force, as long as Men are disposed to trust to their Experience rather than to mere human Reasoning. Wherever I see Order, I infer from Experience that *there*, there hath been Design and Contrivance. And the same Principle which leads me into this Inference, when I contemplate a Building, regular and beautiful in its whole Frame and Structure; the same Principle obliges me to infer an infinitely perfect Architect, from the infinite Art and Contrivance which is display’d in the whole Fabrick of the Universe. Is not this the Light in which this Argument hath been placed by all Writers concerning Natural Religion?

III. The next Proof of Atheism is so unaccountable, that I know not what to make of it. Our Author indeed asserts, after the present pious and learned Bishop of *Cloyne*, That we have no *abstract* or *general Ideas*, properly so speaking; and that those Ideas, which are called general, are nothing but particular Ideas affixed to general Terms. Thus, when I think of a Horse in general, I must always conceive that Horse as black or white, fat or lean, *&c*. and can form no Notion of a Horse that is not of some particular Colour or Size. In Prosecution of the same Topick, the Author hath said, That we have no general Idea of Existence, distinct from every particular Existence. But a Man must have strange Sagacity, that could discover Atheism in so harmless a Proposition. This, in my Opinion, might be justified before the University of *Salamanca*, or a *Spanish* Inquisition. I do indeed believe, that, when we assert the Existence of a Deity, we do not form a general abstract Idea of Existence, which we unite with the Idea of God, and which is capable of forming a compound Idea by Union; but this is the Case with regard to every Proposition concerning Existence. So that, by this Course of Reasoning, we must deny the Existence of every Thing, even of ourselves, of which at least even the Accuser himself will admit our Author is perswaded.

IV. Ere answering the fourth Charge, I must use the Freedom to deliver a short History of a particular Opinion in Philosophy. When Men considered the several Effects and Operations of Nature, they were led to examine into the Force or Power by which they were performed; and they divided into several Opinions upon this Head, according as their *other* Principles were more or less favourable to Religion. The Followers of *Epicurus* and *Strato* asserted, That this Force was original and inherent in Matter, and, operating blindly, produced all the various Effects which we behold. The *Platonick* and *Peripatetick* Schools, perceiving the Absurdity of this Proposition, ascribed the Origin of all Force to one primary efficient Cause, who first bestowed it on Matter, and successively guided it in all its Operations. But all the antient Philosophers agreed, that there was a real Force in Matter, either original or derived; and that it was really Fire which burnt, and Food that nourished, when we observed any of these Effects to follow upon the Operations of these Bodies: The Schoolmen supposed also a real Power in Matter, to whose Operations however the continual Concurrence of the Deity was requisite, as well as to the Support of that Existence which had been bestowed on Matter, and which they considered as a perpetual Creation. No one, till *Des Cartes* and *Malbranche*, ever entertained an Opinion that Matter had no Force either *primary* or *secondary*, and *independent* or *concurrent*, and could not so much as properly be called an *Instrument* in the Hands of the Deity, to serve any of the Purposes of Providence. These Philosophers last-mentioned substituted the Notion of *occasional Causes*, by which it was asserted that a Billiard Ball did not move another by its Impulse, but was only the Occasion why the Deity, in pursuance of general Laws, bestowed Motion on the second Ball. But, tho’ this Opinion be very innocent, it never gained great Credit, especially in *England*, where it was considered as too much contrary to received popular Opinions, and too little supported by Philosophical Arguments, ever to be admitted as any Thing but a *mere Hypothesis*. *Cudworth*, *Lock* and *Clark* make little or no mention of it. Sir *Isaac Newton* (tho’ some of his Followers have taken a different Turn of thinking) plainly rejects it, by substituting the Hypothesis of an ÆAEoriginally ‘Æ’; separated to make searching the text easiertherial Fluid, not the immediate Volition of the Deity, as the Cause of Attraction. And, in short, this has been a Dispute left entirely to the Arguments of Philosophers, and in which Religion has never been supposed to be in the least concerned.

Now it is evidently concerning this *Cartesian Doctrine*, of *secondary Causes*, the Author is treating, when he says, (in the Passage referred to in the Charge) *That it was a curious Opinion, but which it would appear superfluous to examine in that Place*.

The Topick there handled is somewhat abstract: But I believe any Reader will easily perceive the Truth of this Assertion, and that the Author is far from pretending to deny (as asserted in the Charge) *God's being the first Cause and prime Mover of the Universe*. That the Author's Words could have no such Meaning as they stand connected, is to me so evident, that I could pledge on this Head, not only my small Credit as a Philosopher, but even all my Pretensions to Trust or Belief in the common Affairs of Life.

V. As to the fifth Article; The Author has not anywhere that I remember denied the Immateriality of the Soul in the common Sense of the Word. He only says, That that Question did not admit of any distinct Meaning; because we had no distinct Idea of Substance. This Opinion may be found everywhere in Mr. *Lock*, as well as in Bishop *Berkley*.

VI. I come now to the last Charge, which, according to the prevalent Opinion of Philosophers in this Age, will certainly be regarded as the severest, *viz*. the Author's destroying all the Foundations of Morality.

He hath indeed denied the eternal Difference of Right and Wrong in the Sense in which *Clark* and *Woolaston* maintained them, *viz*. That the Propositions of Morality were of the same Nature with the Truths of Mathematicks and the abstract Sciences, the Objects *merely* of Reason, not the *Feelings* of our internal *Tastes* and *Sentiments*. In this Opinion he concurs with all the antient Moralists, as well as with Mr. *Hutchison* Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of *Glasgow*, who, with others, has revived the antient Philosophy in this Particular. How poor the Artifice, to cite a *broken Passage* of a Philosophical Discourse, in order to throw an Odium on the Author!

When the Author asserts that Justice is an *artificial* not a *natural Virtue*, he seems sensible that he employed Words that admit of an invidious Construction; and therefore makes use of all proper Expedients, by *Definitions* and *Explanations*, to prevent it. But of these his Accuser takes no Notice. By the *natural Virtues* he plainly understands *Compassion* and *Generosity*, and such as we are immediately carried to by a *natural Instinct*; and by the *artificial Virtues* he means *Justice*, *Loyalty*, and such as require, along with a *natural Instinct*, a certain Reflection on the general Interests of Human Society, and a Combination with others. In the same Sense, Sucking is an Action natural to Man, and Speech is artificial. But what is there in this Doctrine that can be supposed in the least pernicious? Has he not expresly asserted, That Justice, in another Sense of the Word, is so natural to Man, that no Society of Men, and even no individual Member of any Society, was ever entirely devoid of all Sense of it? Some Persons (tho' without any Reason, in my Opinion) are displeased with Mr. *Hutchison*'s Philosophy, in founding all the Virtues so much on *Instinct*, and admitting so little of *Reason* and *Reflection*. Those should be pleased to find that so considerable a Branch of the Moral Duties are founded on that Principle.

The Author has likewise taken care in positive Terms to assert, That he does not maintain that Men ly under no Obligation to observe Contracts, independent of Society; but only, that they never would have formed Contracts, and even would not have understood the Meaning of them, independent of Society. And whereas it is observed in the Specimen, That our Author offers further to prove, that, suppose a Promise was intelligible before Human Conventions had established it, it would not be attended with any Moral Obligation. The most careless Reader must perceive that he does not understand *Moral* in such an extended Sense, as to deny the Obligation of Promises, independent of Society; seeing he not only asserts what is above-represented, but likewise that the Laws of Justice are universal, and perfectly inflexible. It is evident, that suppose Mankind, in some primitive unconnected State, should by some Means come to the Knowledge of the Nature of those Things which we call Contracts and Promises; that this Knowledge would have laid them under no such actual Obligation, if not placed in such Circumstances as give rise to these Contracts.

I am sorry I should be obliged to cite from my Memory, and cannot mention Page and Chapter so accurately as the Accuser. I came hither by Post, and brought no Books along with me, and cannot now provide myself in the Country with the Book referred to.

This long Letter, with which I have troubled you, was composed in one Morning, that I might gratify your Demand of an immediate Answer to the heavy Charge brought against your Friend; and this, I hope, will excuse any Inaccuracies that may have crept into it. I am indeed of Opinion, that the Author had better delayed the publishing of that Book; not on account of any dangerous Principles contained in it, but because on more mature Consideration he might have rendered it much less imperfect by further Corrections and Revisals. I must not at the same Time omit observing, that nothing can be wrote so accurately or innocently, which may not be perverted by such Arts as have been imployed on this Occasion. No Man would undertake so invidious a Task as that of our Author's Accuser, who was not actuated by particular Interests; and you know how easy it is, by broken and partial Citations, to pervert any Discourse, much more one of so abstract a Nature, where it is difficult, or almost impossible, to justify one's self to the Publick. The Words which have been carefully pickt out from a large Volume will no doubt have a dangerous Aspect to careless Readers; and the Author, in my Apprehension, cannot fully defend himself without a particular Detail, which it is impossible for a careless Reader to enter into. This Advantage of the Ground has been trusted to by his Accuser, and surely never more abused than on the present Occasion. But he has one Advantage, I trust, which is worth a Hundred of what his Opposers can boast of, viz. *that of Innocence*; and I hope he has also another Advantage, *viz. that of Favour*, if we really live in a Country of Freedom, where Informers and Inquisitors are so deservedly held in universal Detestation, where Liberty, at least of Philosophy, is so highly valu'd and esteem'd. I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant.

May 8*th*
1745.

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

OXFORD SECOND EDITION, 1902; REPRINTED FROM THE POSTHUMOUS EDITION OF 1777

First published in 1748, this treatise was a revision of the earlier *Treatise of Human Nature*, published anonymously in London in 1739–40. Hume was disappointed with the reception of the first book and so was determined to disseminate his more developed ideas to the public by writing a shorter and more polemical work. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* dispensed with much of the material from the Treatise, in favour of clarifying and emphasising its most important aspects, as more vital propositions, while Hume's argument for the role of habit in a theory of knowledge is retained. This book would become highly influential and is now widely regarded as a classic in modern philosophical literature.

The argument of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* proceeds by a series of incremental steps, separated into chapters that logically succeed one another. After expounding his epistemology (the theory of knowledge), Hume explains how to apply his principles to specific topics. In the first section, Hume provides a brief introduction to philosophy as a whole. Philosophy, for Hume, can be divided into two general parts: natural philosophy and the philosophy of human nature (moral philosophy). The latter investigates both actions and thoughts. Hume emphasises in this section, by way of warning, that philosophers with nuanced thoughts will likely be cast aside in favour of those whose conclusions more intuitively match popular opinion. However, he insists, precision helps art and craft of all kinds, including the craft of philosophy.

Following on from this, Hume discusses the distinction between impressions and ideas. By “impressions”, he means sensations, while by “ideas”, he means memories and imaginings. According to Hume, the difference between the two is that ideas are less vivacious than impressions.

Writing within the tradition of empiricism, he argues that impressions are the source of all ideas. Hume accepts that ideas may be either the product of mere sensation, or of the imagination working in conjunction with sensation. The creative faculty makes use of four mental operations that produce imaginings out of sense impressions. These operations are compounding (or the addition of one idea onto another, such as a horn on a horse to create a unicorn); transposing (or the substitution of one part of a thing with the part from another, such as with the body of a man upon a horse to make a centaur); augmenting (as with the case of a giant, whose size has been augmented); and diminishing (as with Lilliputians, whose size has been diminished).

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SECTION I.

OF THE DIFFERENT SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY.

1. Moral philosophy, or the science of human nature, may be treated after two different manners; each of which has its peculiar merit, and may contribute to the entertainment, instruction, and reformation of mankind. The one considers man chiefly as born for action; and as influenced in his measures by taste and sentiment; pursuing one object, and avoiding another, according to the value which these objects seem to possess, and according to the light in which they present themselves. As virtue, of all objects, is allowed to be the most valuable, this species of philosophers paint her in the most amiable colours; borrowing all helps from poetry and eloquence, and treating their subject in an easy and obvious manner, and such as is best fitted to please the imagination, and engage the affections. They select the most striking observations and instances from common life; place opposite characters in a proper contrast; and alluring us into the paths of virtue by the views of glory and happiness, direct our steps in these paths by the soundest precepts and most illustrious examples. They make us *feel* the difference between vice and virtue; they excite and regulate our sentiments; and so they can but bend our hearts to the love of probity and true honour, they think, that they have fully attained the end of all their labours.

2. The other species of philosophers consider man in the light of a reasonable rather than an active being, and endeavour to form his understanding more than cultivate his manners. They regard human nature as a subject of speculation; and with a narrow scrutiny examine it, in order to find those principles, which regulate our understanding, excite our sentiments, and make us approve or blame any particular object, action, or behaviour. They think it a reproach to all literature, that philosophy should not yet have fixed, beyond controversy, the foundation of morals, reasoning, and criticism; and should for ever talk of truth and falsehood, vice and virtue, beauty and deformity, without being able to determine the source of these distinctions. While they attempt this arduous task, they are

deterred by no difficulties; but proceeding from particular instances to general principles, they still push on their enquiries to principles more general, and rest not satisfied till they arrive at those original principles, by which, in every science, all human curiosity must be bounded. Though their speculations seem abstract, and even unintelligible to common readers, they aim at the approbation of the learned and the wise; and think themselves sufficiently compensated for the labour of their whole lives, if they can discover some hidden truths, which may contribute to the instruction of posterity.

3. It is certain that the easy and obvious philosophy will always, with the generality of mankind, have the preference above the accurate and abstruse; and by many will be recommended, not only as more agreeable, but more useful than the other. It enters more into common life; moulds the heart and affections; and, by touching those principles which actuate men, reforms their conduct, and brings them nearer to that model of perfection which it describes. On the contrary, the abstruse philosophy, being founded on a turn of mind, which cannot enter into business and action, vanishes when the philosopher leaves the shade, and comes into open day; nor can its principles easily retain any influence over our conduct and behaviour. The feelings of our heart, the agitation of our passions, the vehemence of our affections, dissipate all its conclusions, and reduce the profound philosopher to a mere plebeian.

4. This also must be confessed, that the most durable, as well as justest fame, has been acquired by the easy philosophy, and that abstract reasoners seem hitherto to have enjoyed only a momentary reputation, from the caprice or ignorance of their own age, but have not been able to support their renown with more equitable posterity. It is easy for a profound philosopher to commit a mistake in his subtile reasonings; and one mistake is the necessary parent of another, while he pushes on his consequences, and is not deterred from embracing any conclusion, by its unusual appearance, or its contradiction to popular opinion. But a philosopher, who purposes only to represent the common sense of mankind in more beautiful and more engaging colours, if by accident he falls into error, goes no farther; but renewing his appeal to common sense, and the natural sentiments of the mind, returns into the right path, and secures himself from any dangerous illusions. The fame of Cicero flourishes at present; but that of Aristotle is utterly decayed. La Bruyere passes the seas, and still

maintains his reputation: But the glory of Malebranche is confined to his own nation, and to his own age. And Addison, perhaps, will be read with pleasure, when Locke shall be entirely forgotten.

The mere philosopher is a character, which is commonly but little acceptable in the world, as being supposed to contribute nothing either to the advantage or pleasure of society; while he lives remote from communication with mankind, and is wrapped up in principles and notions equally remote from their comprehension. On the other hand, the mere ignorant is still more despised; nor is any thing deemed a surer sign of an illiberal genius in an age and nation where the sciences flourish, than to be entirely destitute of all relish for those noble entertainments. The most perfect character is supposed to lie between those extremes; retaining an equal ability and taste for books, company, and business; preserving in conversation that discernment and delicacy which arise from polite letters; and in business, that probity and accuracy which are the natural result of a just philosophy. In order to diffuse and cultivate so accomplished a character, nothing can be more useful than compositions of the easy style and manner, which draw not too much from life, require no deep application or retreat to be comprehended, and send back the student among mankind full of noble sentiments and wise precepts, applicable to every exigence of human life. By means of such compositions, virtue becomes amiable, science agreeable, company instructive, and retirement entertaining.

Man is a reasonable being; and as such, receives from science his proper food and nourishment: But so narrow are the bounds of human understanding, that little satisfaction can be hoped for in this particular, either from the extent of security or his acquisitions. Man is a sociable, no less than a reasonable being: But neither can he always enjoy company agreeable and amusing, or preserve the proper relish for them. Man is also an active being; and from that disposition, as well as from the various necessities of human life, must submit to business and occupation: But the mind requires some relaxation, and cannot always support its bent to care and industry. It seems, then, that nature has pointed out a mixed kind of life as most suitable to the human race, and secretly admonished them to allow none of these biasses to *draw* too much, so as to incapacitate them for other occupations and entertainments. Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man.

5. Were the generality of mankind contented to prefer the easy philosophy to the abstract and profound, without throwing any blame or contempt on the latter, it might not be improper, perhaps, to comply with this general opinion, and allow every man to enjoy, without opposition, his own taste and sentiment. But as the matter is often carried farther, even to the absolute rejecting of all profound reasonings, or what is commonly called *metaphysics*, we shall now proceed to consider what can reasonably be pleaded in their behalf.

We may begin with observing, that one considerable advantage, which results from the accurate and abstract philosophy, is, its subserviency to the easy and humane; which, without the former, can never attain a sufficient degree of exactness in its sentiments, precepts, or reasonings. All polite letters are nothing but pictures of human life in various attitudes and situations; and inspire us with different sentiments, of praise or blame, admiration or ridicule, according to the qualities of the object, which they set before us. An artist must be better qualified to succeed in this undertaking, who, besides a delicate taste and a quick apprehension, possesses an accurate knowledge of the internal fabric, the operations of the understanding, the workings of the passions, and the various species of sentiment which discriminate vice and virtue. How painful soever this inward search or enquiry may appear, it becomes, in some measure, requisite to those, who would describe with success the obvious and outward appearances of life and manners. The anatomist presents to the eye the most hideous and disagreeable objects; but his science is useful to the painter in delineating even a Venus or an Helen. While the latter employs all the richest colours of his art, and gives his figures the most graceful and engaging airs; he must still carry his attention to the inward structure of the human body, the position of the muscles, the fabric of the bones, and the use and figure of every part or organ. Accuracy is, in every case, advantageous to beauty, and just reasoning to delicate sentiment. In vain would we exalt the one by depreciating the other.

Besides, we may observe, in every art or profession, even those which most concern life or action, that a spirit of accuracy, however acquired, carries all of them nearer their perfection, and renders them more subservient to the interests of society. And though a philosopher may live remote from business, the genius of philosophy, if carefully cultivated by several, must gradually diffuse itself throughout the whole society, and bestow a similar correctness on every art and calling. The politician will acquire greater foresight and subtility, in the subdividing and balancing of power; the lawyer more method and finer principles in his reasonings; and the general more regularity in his discipline, and more caution in his plans and operations. The stability of modern governments above the ancient, and the accuracy of modern philosophy, have improved, and probably will still improve, by similar gradations.

6. Were there no advantage to be reaped from these studies, beyond the gratification of an innocent curiosity, yet ought not even this to be despised; as being one accession to those few safe and harmless pleasures, which are bestowed on human race. The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of science and learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind. And though these researches may appear painful and fatiguing, it is with some minds as with some bodies, which being endowed with vigorous and florid health, require severe exercise, and reap a pleasure from what, to the generality of mankind, may seem burdensome and laborious. Obscurity, indeed, is painful to the mind as well as to the eye; but to bring light from obscurity, by whatever labour, must needs be delightful and rejoicing.

But this obscurity in the profound and abstract philosophy, is objected to, not only as painful and fatiguing, but as the inevitable source of uncertainty and error. Here indeed lies the justest and most plausible objection against a considerable part of metaphysics, that they are not properly a science; but arise either from the fruitless efforts of human vanity, which would penetrate into subjects utterly inaccessible to the understanding, or from the craft of popular superstitions, which, being unable to defend themselves on fair ground, raise these intangling brambles to cover and protect their weakness. Chaced from the open country, these robbers fly into the forest, and lie in wait to break in upon every unguarded avenue of the mind, and overwhelm it with religious fears and prejudices. The stoutest antagonist, if he remit his watch a moment, is oppressed. And many, through cowardice and folly, open the gates to the enemies, and willingly receive them with reverence and submission, as their legal sovereigns.

7. But is this a sufficient reason, why philosophers should desist from such researches, and leave superstition still in possession of her retreat? Is it not proper to draw an opposite conclusion, and perceive the necessity of carrying the war into the most secret recesses of the enemy? In vain do we hope, that men, from frequent disappointment, will at last abandon such airy sciences, and discover the proper province of human reason. For, besides, that many persons find too sensible an interest in perpetually recalling such topics; besides this, I say, the motive of blind despair can never reasonably have place in the sciences; since, however unsuccessful former attempts may have proved, there is still room to hope, that the industry, good fortune, or improved sagacity of succeeding generations may reach discoveries unknown to former ages. Each adventurous genius will still leap at the arduous prize, and find himself stimulated, rather that discouraged, by the failures of his predecessors; while he hopes that the glory of achieving so hard an adventure is reserved for him alone. The only method of freeing learning, at once, from these abstruse questions, is to enquire seriously into the nature of human understanding, and show, from an exact analysis of its powers and capacity, that it is by no means fitted for such remote and abstruse subjects. We must submit to this fatigue, in order to live at ease ever after: And must cultivate true metaphysics with some care, in order to destroy the false and adulterate. Indolence, which, to some persons, affords a safeguard against this deceitful philosophy, is, with others, overbalanced by curiosity; and despair, which, at some moments, prevails, may give place afterwards to sanguine hopes and expectations. Accurate and just reasoning is the only catholic remedy, fitted for all persons and all dispositions; and is alone able to subvert that abstruse philosophy and metaphysical jargon, which, being mixed up with popular superstition, renders it in a manner impenetrable to careless reasoners, and gives it the air of science and wisdom.

8. Besides this advantage of rejecting, after deliberate enquiry, the most uncertain and disagreeable part of learning, there are many positive advantages, which result from an accurate scrutiny into the powers and faculties of human nature. It is remarkable concerning the operations of the mind, that, though most intimately present to us, yet, whenever they

become the object of reflexion, they seem involved in obscurity; nor can the eye readily find those lines and boundaries, which discriminate and distinguish them. The objects are too fine to remain long in the same aspect or situation; and must be apprehended in an instant, by a superior penetration, derived from nature, and improved by habit and reflexion. It becomes, therefore, no inconsiderable part of science barely to know the different operations of the mind, to separate them from each other, to class them under their proper heads, and to correct all that seeming disorder, in which they lie involved, when made the object of reflexion and enquiry. This talk of ordering and distinguishing, which has no merit, when performed with regard to external bodies, the objects of our senses, rises in its value, when directed towards the operations of the mind, in proportion to the difficulty and labour, which we meet with in performing it. And if we can go no farther than this mental geography, or delineation of the distinct parts and powers of the mind, it is at least a satisfaction to go so far; and the more obvious this science may appear (and it is by no means obvious) the more contemptible still must the ignorance of it be esteemed, in all pretenders to learning and philosophy.

Nor can there remain any suspicion, that this science is uncertain and chimerical; unless we should entertain such a scepticism as is entirely subversive of all speculation, and even action. It cannot be doubted, that the mind is endowed with several powers and faculties, that these powers are distinct from each other, that what is really distinct to the immediate perception may be distinguished by reflexion; and consequently, that there is a truth and falsehood in all propositions on this subject, and a truth and falsehood, which lie not beyond the compass of human understanding. There are many obvious distinctions of this kind, such as those between the will and understanding, the imagination and passions, which fall within the comprehension of every human creature; and the finer and more philosophical distinctions are no less real and certain, though more difficult to be comprehended. Some instances, especially late ones, of success in these enquiries, may give us a juster notion of the certainty and solidity of this branch of learning. And shall we esteem it worthy the labour of a philosopher to give us a true system of the planets, and adjust the position and order of those remote bodies; while we affect to overlook those, who, with so much success, delineate the parts of the mind, in which we are so intimately concerned?

9. But may we not hope, that philosophy, if cultivated with care, and encouraged by the attention of the public, may carry its researches still farther, and discover, at least in some degree, the secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is actuated in its operations? Astronomers had long contented themselves with proving, from the phaenomena, the true motions, order, and magnitude of the heavenly bodies: Till a philosopher, at last, arose, who seems, from the happiest reasoning, to have also determined the laws and forces, by which the revolutions of the planets are governed and directed. The like has been performed with regard to other parts of nature. And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our enquiries concerning the mental powers and economy, if prosecuted with equal capacity and caution. It is probable, that one operation and principle of the mind depends on another; which, again, may be resolved into one more general and universal: And how far these researches may possibly be carried, it will be difficult for us, before, or even after, a careful trial, exactly to determine. This is certain, that attempts of this kind are every day made even by those who philosophize the most negligently: And nothing can be more requisite than to enter upon the enterprize with thorough care and attention; that, if it lie within the compass of human understanding, it may at last be happily achieved; if not, it may, however, be rejected with some confidence and security. This last conclusion, surely, is not desirable; nor ought it to be embraced too rashly. For how much must we diminish from the beauty and value of this species of philosophy, upon such a supposition? Moralists have hitherto been accustomed, when they considered the vast multitude and diversity of those actions that excite our approbation or dislike, to search for some common principle, on which this variety of sentiments might depend. And though they have sometimes carried the matter too far, by their passion for some one general principle; it must, however, be confessed, that they are excusable in expecting to find some general principles, into which all the vices and virtues were justly to be resolved. The like has been the endeavour of critics, logicians, and even politicians: Nor have their attempts been wholly unsuccessful; though perhaps longer time, greater accuracy, and more ardent application may bring these sciences still nearer their perfection. To throw up at once all pretensions of this kind may justly be deemed more rash, precipitate, and dogmatical, than even the boldest and

most affirmative philosophy, that has ever attempted to impose its crude dictates and principles on mankind.

10. What though these reasonings concerning human nature seem abstract, and of difficult comprehension? This affords no presumption of their falsehood. On the contrary, it seems impossible, that what has hitherto escaped so many wise and profound philosophers can be very obvious and easy. And whatever pains these researches may cost us, we may think ourselves sufficiently rewarded, not only in point of profit but of pleasure, if, by that means, we can make any addition to our stock of knowledge, in subjects of such unspeakable importance.

But as, after all, the abstractedness of these speculations is no recommendation, but rather a disadvantage to them, and as this difficulty may perhaps be surmounted by care and art, and the avoiding of all unnecessary detail, we have, in the following enquiry, attempted to throw some light upon subjects, from which uncertainty has hitherto deterred the wise, and obscurity the ignorant. Happy, if we can unite the boundaries of the different species of philosophy, by reconciling profound enquiry with clearness, and truth with novelty! And still more happy, if, reasoning in this easy manner, we can undermine the foundations of an abstruse philosophy, which seems to have hitherto served only as a shelter to superstition, and a cover to absurdity and error!

SECTION II

OF THE ORIGIN OF IDEAS.

11. Every one will readily allow, that there is a considerable difference between the perceptions of the mind, when a man feels the pain of excessive heat, or the pleasure of moderate warmth, and when he afterwards recalls to his memory this sensation, or anticipates it by his imagination. These faculties may mimic or copy the perceptions of the senses; but they never can entirely reach the force and vivacity of the original sentiment. The utmost we say of them, even when they operate with greatest vigour, is, that they represent their object in so lively a manner, that we could *almost* say we feel or see it: But, except the mind be disordered by disease or madness, they never can arrive at such a pitch of vivacity, as to render these perceptions altogether undistinguishable. All the colours of poetry, however splendid, can never paint natural objects in such a manner as to make the description be taken for a real landskip. The most lively thought is still inferior to the dullest sensation.

We may observe a like distinction to run through all the other perceptions of the mind. A man in a fit of anger, is actuated in a very different manner from one who only thinks of that emotion. If you tell me, that any person is in love, I easily understand your meaning, and form a just conception of his situation; but never can mistake that conception for the real disorders and agitations of the passion. When we reflect on our past sentiments and affections, our thought is a faithful mirror, and copies its objects truly; but the colours which it employs are faint and dull, in comparison of those in which our original perceptions were clothed. It requires no nice discernment or metaphysical head to mark the distinction between them.

12. Here therefore we may divide all the perceptions of the mind into two classes or species, which are distinguished by their different degrees of force and vivacity. The less forcible and lively are commonly denominated *Thoughts* or *Ideas*. The other species want a name in our language, and in most others; I suppose, because it was not requisite for any, but

philosophical purposes, to rank them under a general term or appellation. Let us, therefore, use a little freedom, and call them *Impressions*; employing that word in a sense somewhat different from the usual. By the term *impression*, then, I mean all our more lively perceptions, when we hear, or see, or feel, or love, or hate, or desire, or will. And impressions are distinguished from ideas, which are the less lively perceptions, of which we are conscious, when we reflect on any of those sensations or movements above mentioned.

13. Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man, which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters, and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty; the thought can in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe; or even beyond the universe, into the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen, or heard of, may yet be conceived; nor is any thing beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, *gold*, and *mountain*, with which we were formerly acquainted. A virtuous horse we can conceive; because, from our own feeling, we can conceive virtue; and this we may unite to the figure and shape of a horse, which is an animal familiar to us. In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: the mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will. Or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.

14. To prove this, the two following arguments will, I hope, be sufficient. First, when we analyze our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas,

which, at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this enquiry to what length we please; where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who would assert that this position is not universally true nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression, or lively perception, which corresponds to it.

15. Secondly. If it happen, from a defect of the organ, that a man is not susceptible of any species of sensation, we always find that he is as little susceptible of the correspondent ideas. A blind man can form no notion of colours; a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense in which he is deficient; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet for the ideas; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects. The case is the same, if the object, proper for exciting any sensation, has never been applied to the organ. A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine. And though there are few or no instances of a like deficiency in the mind, where a person has never felt or is wholly incapable of a sentiment or passion that belongs to his species; yet we find the same observation to take place in a less degree. A man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate revenge or cruelty; nor can a selfish heart easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity. It is readily allowed, that other beings may possess many senses of which we can have no conception; because the ideas of them have never been introduced to us in the only manner by which an idea can have access to the mind, to wit, by the actual feeling and sensation.

16. There is, however, one contradictory phenomenon, which may prove that it is not absolutely impossible for ideas to arise, independent of their correspondent impressions. I believe it will readily be allowed, that the several distinct ideas of colour, which enter by the eye, or those of sound, which are conveyed by the ear, are really different from each other; though, at the same time, resembling. Now if this be true of different colours, it must be no less so of the different shades of the same colour; and each

shade produces a distinct idea, independent of the rest. For if this should be denied, it is possible, by the continual gradation of shades, to run a colour insensibly into what is most remote from it; and if you will not allow any of the means to be different, you cannot, without absurdity, deny the extremes to be the same. Suppose, therefore, a person to have enjoyed his sight for thirty years, and to have become perfectly acquainted with colours of all kinds except one particular shade of blue, for instance, which it never has been his fortune to meet with. Let all the different shades of that colour, except that single one, be placed before him, descending gradually from the deepest to the lightest; it is plain that he will perceive a blank, where that shade is wanting, and will be sensible that there is a greater distance in that place between the contiguous colours than in any other. Now I ask, whether it be possible for him, from his own imagination, to supply this deficiency, and raise up to himself the idea of that particular shade, though it had never been conveyed to him by his senses? I believe there are few but will be of opinion that he can: and this may serve as a proof that the simple ideas are not always, in every instance, derived from the correspondent impressions; though this instance is so singular, that it is scarcely worth our observing, and does not merit that for it alone we should alter our general maxim.

17. Here, therefore, is a proposition, which not only seems, in itself, simple and intelligible; but, if a proper use were made of it, might render every dispute equally intelligible, and banish all that jargon, which has so long taken possession of metaphysical reasonings, and drawn disgrace upon them. All ideas, especially abstract ones, are naturally faint and obscure: the mind has but a slender hold of them: they are apt to be confounded with other resembling ideas; and when we have often employed any term, though without a distinct meaning, we are apt to imagine it has a determinate idea annexed to it. On the contrary, all impressions, that is, all sensations, either outward or inward, are strong and vivid: the limits between them are more exactly determined: nor is it easy to fall into any error or mistake with regard to them. When we entertain, therefore, any suspicion that a philosophical term is employed without any meaning or idea (as is but too frequent), we need but enquire, *from what impression is that supposed idea derived*? And if it be impossible to assign any, this will serve to confirm our suspicion. By bringing ideas into so clear a light we may reasonably hope to remove all dispute, which may arise, concerning their nature and reality.

SECTION III.

OF THE ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

18. It is evident that there is a principle of connexion between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and that, in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity. In our more serious thinking or discourse this is so observable that any particular thought, which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas, is immediately remarked and rejected. And even in our wildest and most wandering reveries, nay in our very dreams, we shall find, if we reflect, that the imagination ran not altogether at adventures, but that there was still a connexion upheld among the different ideas, which succeeded each other. Were the loosest and freest conversation to be transcribed, there would immediately be observed something which connected it in all its transitions. Or where this is wanting, the person who broke the thread of discourse might still inform you, that there had secretly revolved in his mind a succession of thought, which had gradually led him from the subject of conversation. Among different languages, even where we cannot suspect the least connexion or communication, it is found, that the words, expressive of ideas, the most compounded, do yet nearly correspond to each other: a certain proof that the simple ideas, comprehended in the compound ones, were bound together by some universal principle, which had an equal influence on all mankind.

19. Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together; I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me, there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, *Resemblance*, *Contiguity* in time or place, and *Cause or Effect*.

That these principles serve to connect ideas will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original: the mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an enquiry or discourse concerning the others: and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it. But that this enumeration is complete, and that there are no other principles of association except these, may be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the reader, or even to a man’s own satisfaction. All we can do, in such cases, is to run over several instances, and examine carefully the principle which binds the different thoughts to each other, never stopping till we render the principle as general as possible. The more instances we examine, and the more care we employ, the more assurance shall we acquire, that the enumeration, which we form from the whole, is complete and entire.

SECTION IV.

SCEPTICAL DOUBTS CONCERNING THE OPERATIONS OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

PART I.

20. All the objects of human reason or enquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, *Relations of Ideas*, and *Matters of Fact*. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and in short, every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstratively certain. *That the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the square of the two sides*, is a proposition which expresses a relation between these figures. *That three times five is equal to the half of thirty*, expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would for ever retain their certainty and evidence.

21. Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner; nor is our evidence of their truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible; because it can never imply a contradiction, and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness, as if ever so conformable to reality. *That the sun will not rise to-morrow* is no less intelligible a proposition, and implies no more contradiction than the affirmation, *that it will rise*. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstratively false, it would imply a contradiction, and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.

It may, therefore, be a subject worthy of curiosity, to enquire what is the nature of that evidence which assures us of any real existence and matter of fact, beyond the present testimony of our senses, or the records of our memory. This part of philosophy, it is observable, has been little cultivated, either by the ancients or moderns; and therefore our doubts and errors, in the prosecution of so important an enquiry, may be the more excusable; while we march through such difficult paths without any guide or direction. They may even prove useful, by exciting curiosity, and destroying that implicit faith and security, which is the bane of all reasoning and free enquiry. The discovery of defects in the common philosophy, if any such there be, will not, I presume, be a discouragement, but rather an incitement, as is usual, to attempt something more full and satisfactory than has yet been proposed to the public.

22. All reasonings concerning matter of fact seem to be founded on the relation of *Cause and Effect*. By means of that relation alone we can go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses. If you were to ask a man, why he believes any matter of fact, which is absent; for instance, that his friend is in the country, or in France; he would give you a reason; and this reason would be some other fact; as a letter received from him, or the knowledge of his former resolutions and promises. A man finding a watch or any other machine in a desert island, would conclude that there had once been men in that island. All our reasonings concerning fact are of the same nature. And here it is constantly supposed that there is a connexion between the present fact and that which is inferred from it. Were there nothing to bind them together, the inference would be entirely precarious. The hearing of an articulate voice and rational discourse in the dark assures us of the presence of some person: Why? because these are the effects of the human make and fabric, and closely connected with it. If we anatomize all the other reasonings of this nature, we shall find that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect, and that this relation is either near or remote, direct or collateral. Heat and light are collateral effects of fire, and the one effect may justly be inferred from the other.

23. If we would satisfy ourselves, therefore, concerning the nature of that evidence, which assures us of matters of fact, we must enquire how we arrive at the knowledge of cause and effect.

I shall venture to affirm, as a general proposition, which admits of no exception, that the knowledge of this relation is not, in any instance, attained by reasonings *a priori*; but arises entirely from experience, when we find that any particular objects are constantly conjoined with each other. Let an object be presented to a man of ever so strong natural reason and abilities; if that object be entirely new to him, he will not be able, by the most accurate examination of its sensible qualities, to discover any of its causes or effects. Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of water that it would suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of fire that it would consume him. No object ever discovers, by the qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which will arise from it; nor can our reason, unassisted by experience, ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact.

24. This proposition, *that causes and effects are discoverable, not by reason but by experience*, will readily be admitted with regard to such objects, as we remember to have once been altogether unknown to us; since we must be conscious of the utter inability, which we then lay under, of foretelling what would arise from them. Present two smooth pieces of marble to a man who has no tincture of natural philosophy; he will never discover that they will adhere together in such a manner as to require great force to separate them in a direct line, while they make so small a resistance to a lateral pressure. Such events, as bear little analogy to the common course of nature, are also readily confessed to be known only by experience; nor does any man imagine that the explosion of gunpowder, or the attraction of a loadstone, could ever be discovered by arguments *a priori*. In like manner, when an effect is supposed to depend upon an intricate machinery or secret structure of parts, we make no difficulty in attributing all our knowledge of it to experience. Who will assert that he can give the ultimate reason, why milk or bread is proper nourishment for a man, not for a lion or a tiger?

But the same truth may not appear, at first sight, to have the same evidence with regard to events, which have become familiar to us from our first appearance in the world, which bear a close analogy to the whole course of nature, and which are supposed to depend on the simple qualities of objects, without any secret structure of parts. We are apt to imagine that we could discover these effects by the mere operation of our reason, without experience. We fancy, that were we brought on a sudden into this world, we could at first have inferred that one Billiard-ball would communicate motion to another upon impulse; and that we needed not to have waited for the event, in order to pronounce with certainty concerning it. Such is the influence of custom, that, where it is strongest, it not only covers our natural ignorance, but even conceals itself, and seems not to take place, merely because it is found in the highest degree.

25. But to convince us that all the laws of nature, and all the operations of bodies without exception, are known only by experience, the following reflections may, perhaps, suffice. Were any object presented to us, and were we required to pronounce concerning the effect, which will result from it, without consulting past observation; after what manner, I beseech you, must the mind proceed in this operation? It must invent or imagine some event, which it ascribes to the object as its effect; and it is plain that this invention must be entirely arbitrary. The mind can never possibly find the effect in the supposed cause, by the most accurate scrutiny and examination. For the effect is totally different from the cause, and consequently can never be discovered in it. Motion in the second Billiard-ball is a quite distinct event from motion in the first; nor is there anything in the one to suggest the smallest hint of the other. A stone or piece of metal raised into the air, and left without any support, immediately falls: but to consider the matter *a priori*, is there anything we discover in this situation which can beget the idea of a downward, rather than an upward, or any other motion, in the stone or metal? And as the first imagination or invention of a particular effect, in all natural operations, is arbitrary, where we consult not experience; so must we also esteem the supposed tie or connexion between the cause and effect, which binds them together, and renders it impossible that any other effect could result from the operation of that cause. When I see, for instance, a Billiard-ball moving in a straight line towards another; even suppose motion in the second ball should by accident be suggested to me, as the result of their contact or impulse; may I not conceive, that a hundred different events might as well follow from that cause? May not both these balls remain at absolute rest? May not the first ball return in a straight line, or leap off from the second in any line or direction? All these suppositions are consistent and conceivable. Why then should we give the preference to one, which is no more consistent or conceivable than the rest? All our reasonings *a priori* will never be able to show us any foundation for this preference.

In a word, then, every effect is a distinct event from its cause. It could not, therefore, be discovered in the cause, and the first invention or conception of it, *a priori*, must be entirely arbitrary. And even after it is suggested, the conjunction of it with the cause must appear equally arbitrary; since there are always many other effects, which, to reason, must seem fully as consistent and natural. In vain, therefore, should we pretend to determine any single event, or infer any cause or effect, without the assistance of observation and experience.

26. Hence we may discover the reason why no philosopher, who is rational and modest, has ever pretended to assign the ultimate cause of any natural operation, or to show distinctly the action of that power, which produces any single effect in the universe. It is confessed, that the utmost effort of human reason is to reduce the principles, productive of natural phenomena, to a greater simplicity, and to resolve the many particular effects into a few general causes, by means of reasonings from analogy, experience, and observation. But as to the causes of these general causes, we should in vain attempt their discovery; nor shall we ever be able to satisfy ourselves, by any particular explication of them. These ultimate springs and principles are totally shut up from human curiosity and enquiry. Elasticity, gravity, cohesion of parts, communication of motion by impulse; these are probably the ultimate causes and principles which we shall ever discover in nature; and we may esteem ourselves sufficiently happy, if, by accurate enquiry and reasoning, we can trace up the particular phenomena to, or near to, these general principles. The most perfect philosophy of the natural kind only staves off our ignorance a little longer: as perhaps the most perfect philosophy of the moral or metaphysical kind serves only to discover larger portions of it. Thus the observation of human blindness and weakness is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it.

27. Nor is geometry, when taken into the assistance of natural philosophy, ever able to remedy this defect, or lead us into the knowledge of ultimate causes, by all that accuracy of reasoning for which it is so justly celebrated. Every part of mixed mathematics proceeds upon the supposition that certain laws are established by nature in her operations; and abstract reasonings are employed, either to assist experience in the discovery of these laws, or to determine their influence in particular instances, where it depends upon any precise degree of distance and quantity. Thus, it is a law of motion, discovered by experience, that the moment or force of any body in motion is in the compound ratio or proportion of its solid contents and its velocity; and consequently, that a small force may remove the greatest obstacle or raise the greatest weight, if, by any contrivance or machinery, we can

increase the velocity of that force, so as to make it an overmatch for its antagonist. Geometry assists us in the application of this law, by giving us the just dimensions of all the parts and figures which can enter into any species of machine; but still the discovery of the law itself is owing merely to experience, and all the abstract reasonings in the world could never lead us one step towards the knowledge of it. When we reason *a priori,* and consider merely any object or cause, as it appears to the mind, independent of all observation, it never could suggest to us the notion of any distinct object, such as its effect; much less, show us the inseparable and inviolable connexion between them. A man must be very sagacious who could discover by reasoning that crystal is the effect of heat, and ice of cold, without being previously acquainted with the operation of these qualities.

PART II.

28. But we have not yet attained any tolerable satisfaction with regard to the question first proposed. Each solution still gives rise to a new question as difficult as the foregoing, and leads us on to farther enquiries. When it is asked, *What is the nature of all our reasonings concerning matter of fact?* the proper answer seems to be, that they are founded on the relation of cause and effect. When again it is asked, *What is the foundation of all our reasonings and conclusions concerning that relation?* it may be replied in one word, Experience. But if we still carry on our sifting humour, and ask, *What is the foundation of all conclusions from experience?* this implies a new question, which may be of more difficult solution and explication. Philosophers, that give themselves airs of superior wisdom and sufficiency, have a hard task when they encounter persons of inquisitive dispositions, who push them from every corner to which they retreat, and who are sure at last to bring them to some dangerous dilemma. The best expedient to prevent this confusion, is to be modest in our pretensions; and even to discover the difficulty ourselves before it is objected to us. By this means, we may make a kind of merit of our very ignorance.

I shall content myself, in this section, with an easy task, and shall pretend only to give a negative answer to the question here proposed. I say then, that, even after we have experience of the operations of cause and effect, our conclusions from that experience are *not* founded on reasoning, or any process of the understanding. This answer we must endeavour both to explain and to defend.

29. It must certainly be allowed, that nature has kept us at a great distance from all her secrets, and has afforded us only the knowledge of a few superficial qualities of objects; while she conceals from us those powers and principles on which the influence of those objects entirely depends. Our senses inform us of the colour, weight, and consistence of bread; but neither sense nor reason can ever inform us of those qualities which fit it for the nourishment and support of a human body. Sight or feeling conveys an idea of the actual motion of bodies; but as to that wonderful force or power, which would carry on a moving body for ever in a continued change of place, and which bodies never lose but by communicating it to others; of this we cannot form the most distant conception. But notwithstanding this ignorance of natural powers and principles, we always presume, when we see like sensible qualities, that they have like secret powers, and expect that effects, similar to those which we have experienced, will follow from them. If a body of like colour and consistence with that bread, which we have formerly eat, be presented to us, we make no scruple of repeating the experiment, and foresee, with certainty, like nourishment and support. Now this is a process of the mind or thought, of which I would willingly know the foundation. It is allowed on all hands that there is no known connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; and consequently, that the mind is not led to form such a conclusion concerning their constant and regular conjunction, by anything which it knows of their nature. As to past *Experience*, it can be allowed to give *direct* and *certain* information of those precise objects only, and that precise period of time, which fell under its cognizance: but why this experience should be extended to future times, and to other objects, which for aught we know, may be only in appearance similar; this is the main question on which I would insist. The bread, which I formerly eat, nourished me; that is, a body of such sensible qualities was, at that time, endued with such secret powers: but does it follow, that other bread must also nourish me at another time, and that like sensible qualities must always be attended with like secret powers? The consequence seems nowise necessary. At least, it must be acknowledged that there is here a consequence drawn by the mind; that there is a certain step taken; a process of thought, and an inference, which wants to be explained. These two

propositions are far from being the same, *I have found that such an object has always been attended with such an effect*, and *I foresee, that other objects, which are, in appearance, similar, will be attended with similar effects*. I shall allow, if you please, that the one proposition may justly be inferred from the other: I know, in fact, that it always is inferred. But if you insist that the inference is made by a chain of reasoning, I desire you to produce that reasoning. The connexion between these propositions is not intuitive. There is required a medium, which may enable the mind to draw such an inference, if indeed it be drawn by reasoning and argument. What that medium is, I must confess, passes my comprehension; and it is incumbent on those to produce it, who assert that it really exists, and is the origin of all our conclusions concerning matter of fact.

30. This negative argument must certainly, in process of time, become altogether convincing, if many penetrating and able philosophers shall turn their enquiries this way and no one be ever able to discover any connecting proposition or intermediate step, which supports the understanding in this conclusion. But as the question is yet new, every reader may not trust so far to his own penetration, as to conclude, because an argument escapes his enquiry, that therefore it does not really exist. For this reason it may be requisite to venture upon a more difficult task; and enumerating all the branches of human knowledge, endeavour to show that none of them can afford such an argument.

All reasonings may be divided into two kinds, namely, demonstrative reasoning, or that concerning relations of ideas, and moral reasoning, or that concerning matter of fact and existence. That there are no demonstrative arguments in the case seems evident; since it implies no contradiction that the course of nature may change, and that an object, seemingly like those which we have experienced, may be attended with different or contrary effects. May I not clearly and distinctly conceive that a body, falling from the clouds, and which, in all other respects, resembles snow, has yet the taste of salt or feeling of fire? Is there any more intelligible proposition than to affirm, that all the trees will flourish in December and January, and decay in May and June? Now whatever is intelligible, and can be distinctly conceived, implies no contradiction, and can never be proved false by any demonstrative argument or abstract reasoning *priori*.

If we be, therefore, engaged by arguments to put trust in past experience, and make it the standard of our future judgement, these arguments must be probable only, or such as regard matter of fact and real existence, according to the division above mentioned. But that there is no argument of this kind, must appear, if our explication of that species of reasoning be admitted as solid and satisfactory. We have said that all arguments concerning existence are founded on the relation of cause and effect; that our knowledge of that relation is derived entirely from experience; and that all our experimental conclusions proceed upon the supposition that the future will be conformable to the past. To endeavour, therefore, the proof of this last supposition by probable arguments, or arguments regarding existence, must be evidently going in a circle, and taking that for granted, which is the very point in question.

31. In reality, all arguments from experience are founded on the similarity which we discover among natural objects, and by which we are induced to expect effects similar to those which we have found to follow from such objects. And though none but a fool or madman will ever pretend to dispute the authority of experience, or to reject that great guide of human life, it may surely be allowed a philosopher to have so much curiosity at least as to examine the principle of human nature, which gives this mighty authority to experience, and makes us draw advantage from that similarity which nature has placed among different objects. From causes which appear *similar* we expect similar effects. This is the sum of all our experimental conclusions. Now it seems evident that, if this conclusion were formed by reason, it would be as perfect at first, and upon one instance, as after ever so long a course of experience. But the case is far otherwise. Nothing so like as eggs; yet no one, on account of this appearing similarity, expects the same taste and relish in all of them. It is only after a long course of uniform experiments in any kind, that we attain a firm reliance and security with regard to a particular event. Now where is that process of reasoning which, from one instance, draws a conclusion, so different from that which it infers from a hundred instances that are nowise different from that single one? This question I propose as much for the sake of information, as with an intention of raising difficulties. I cannot find, I cannot imagine any such reasoning. But I keep my mind still open to instruction, if any one will vouchsafe to bestow it on me.

32. Should it be said that, from a number of uniform experiments, we *infer* a connexion between the sensible qualities and the secret powers; this, I must confess, seems the same difficulty, couched in different terms. The

question still recurs, on what process of argument this *inference* is founded? Where is the medium, the interposing ideas, which join propositions so very wide of each other? It is confessed that the colour, consistence, and other sensible qualities of bread appear not, of themselves, to have any connexion with the secret powers of nourishment and support. For otherwise we could infer these secret powers from the first appearance of these sensible qualities, without the aid of experience; contrary to the sentiment of all philosophers, and contrary to plain matter of fact. Here, then, is our natural state of ignorance with regard to the powers and influence of all objects. How is this remedied by experience? It only shows us a number of uniform effects, resulting from certain objects, and teaches us that those particular objects, at that particular time, were endowed with such powers and forces. When a new object, endowed with similar sensible qualities, is produced, we expect similar powers and forces, and look for a like effect. From a body of like colour and consistence with bread we expect like nourishment and support. But this surely is a step or progress of the mind, which wants to be explained. When a man says, *I have found, in all past instances, such sensible qualities conjoined with such secret powers*: And when he says, *Similar sensible qualities will always be conjoined with similar secret powers*, he is not guilty of a tautology, nor are these propositions in any respect the same. You say that the one proposition is an inference from the other. But you must confess that the inference is not intuitive; neither is it demonstrative: Of what nature is it, then? To say it is experimental, is begging the question. For all inferences from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past, and that similar powers will be conjoined with similar sensible qualities. If there be any suspicion that the course of nature may change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion. It is impossible, therefore, that any arguments from experience can prove this resemblance of the past to the future; since all these arguments are founded on the supposition of that resemblance. Let the course of things be allowed hitherto ever so regular; that alone, without some new argument or inference, proves not that, for the future, it will continue so. In vain do you pretend to have learned the nature of bodies from your past experience. Their secret nature, and consequently all their effects and influence, may change, without any change in their sensible qualities. This happens sometimes, and with regard to some objects: Why may it not happen always, and with regard to all objects? What logic, what process of argument secures you against this supposition? My practice, you say, refutes my doubts. But you mistake the purport of my question. As an agent, I am quite satisfied in the point; but as a philosopher, who has some share of curiosity, I will not say scepticism, I want to learn the foundation of this inference. No reading, no enquiry has yet been able to remove my difficulty, or give me satisfaction in a matter of such importance. Can I do better than propose the difficulty to the public, even though, perhaps, I have small hopes of obtaining a solution? We shall at least, by this means, be sensible of our ignorance, if we do not augment our knowledge.

33. I must confess that a man is guilty of unpardonable arrogance who concludes, because an argument has escaped his own investigation, that therefore it does not really exist. I must also confess that, though all the learned, for several ages, should have employed themselves in fruitless search upon any subject, it may still, perhaps, be rash to conclude positively that the subject must, therefore, pass all human comprehension. Even though we examine all the sources of our knowledge, and conclude them unfit for such a subject, there may still remain a suspicion, that the enumeration is not complete, or the examination not accurate. But with regard to the present subject, there are some considerations which seem to remove all this accusation of arrogance or suspicion of mistake.

It is certain that the most ignorant and stupid peasants — nay infants, nay even brute beasts — improve by experience, and learn the qualities of natural objects, by observing the effects which result from them. When a child has felt the sensation of pain from touching the flame of a candle, he will be careful not to put his hand near any candle; but will expect a similar effect from a cause which is similar in its sensible qualities and appearance. If you assert, therefore, that the understanding of the child is led into this conclusion by any process of argument or ratiocination, I may justly require you to produce that argument; nor have you any pretence to refuse so equitable a demand. You cannot say that the argument is abstruse, and may possibly escape your enquiry; since you confess that it is obvious to the capacity of a mere infant. If you hesitate, therefore, a moment, or if, after reflection, you produce any intricate or profound argument, you, in a manner, give up the question, and confess that it is not reasoning which engages us to suppose the past resembling the future, and to expect similar effects from causes which are, to appearance, similar. This is the proposition which I intended to enforce in the present section. If I be right, I pretend not to have made any mighty discovery. And if I be wrong, I must acknowledge myself to be indeed a very backward scholar; since I cannot now discover an argument which, it seems, was perfectly familiar to me long before I was out of my cradle.

SECTION V.

SCEPTICAL SOLUTION OF THESE DOUBTS.

PART I.

34. The passion for philosophy, like that for religion, seems liable to this inconvenience, that, though it aims at the correction of our manners, and extirpation of our vices, it may only serve, by imprudent management, to foster a predominant inclination, and push the mind, with more determined resolution, towards that side which already *draws* too much, by the bias and propensity of the natural temper. It is certain that, while we aspire to the magnanimous firmness of the philosophic sage, and endeavour to confine our pleasures altogether within our own minds, we may, at last, render our philosophy like that of Epictetus, and other *Stoics*, only a more refined system of selfishness, and reason ourselves out of all virtue as well as social enjoyment. While we study with attention the vanity of human life, and turn all our thoughts towards the empty and transitory nature of riches and honours, we are, perhaps, all the while flattering our natural indolence, which, hating the bustle of the world, and drudgery of business, seeks a pretence of reason to give itself a full and uncontrolled indulgence. There is, however, one species of philosophy which seems little liable to this inconvenience, and that because it strikes in with no disorderly passion of the human mind, nor can mingle itself with any natural affection or propensity; and that is the Academic or Sceptical philosophy. The academics always talk of doubt and suspense of judgement, of danger in hasty determinations, of confining to very narrow bounds the enquiries of the understanding, and of renouncing all speculations which lie not within the limits of common life and practice. Nothing, therefore, can be more contrary than such a philosophy to the supine indolence of the mind, its rash arrogance, its lofty pretensions, and its superstitious credulity. Every passion is mortified by it, except the love of truth; and that passion never is, nor can be, carried to too high a degree. It is surprising, therefore, that this

philosophy, which, in almost every instance, must be harmless and innocent, should be the subject of so much groundless reproach and obloquy. But, perhaps, the very circumstance which renders it so innocent is what chiefly exposes it to the public hatred and resentment. By flattering no irregular passion, it gains few partizans: By opposing so many vices and follies, it raises to itself abundance of enemies, who stigmatize it as libertine profane, and irreligious.

Nor need we fear that this philosophy, while it endeavours to limit our enquiries to common life, should ever undermine the reasonings of common life, and carry its doubts so far as to destroy all action, as well as speculation. Nature will always maintain her rights, and prevail in the end over any abstract reasoning whatsoever. Though we should conclude, for instance, as in the foregoing section, that, in all reasonings from experience, there is a step taken by the mind which is not supported by any argument or process of the understanding; there is no danger that these reasonings, on which almost all knowledge depends, will ever be affected by such a discovery. If the mind be not engaged by argument to make this step, it must be induced by some other principle of equal weight and authority; and that principle will preserve its influence as long as human nature remains the same. What that principle is may well be worth the pains of enquiry.

35. Suppose a person, though endowed with the strongest faculties of reason and reflection, to be brought on a sudden into this world; he would, indeed, immediately observe a continual succession of objects, and one event following another; but he would not be able to discover anything farther. He would not, at first, by any reasoning, be able to reach the idea of cause and effect; since the particular powers, by which all natural operations are performed, never appear to the senses; nor is it reasonable to conclude, merely because one event, in one instance, precedes another, that therefore the one is the cause, the other the effect. Their conjunction may be arbitrary and casual. There may be no reason to infer the existence of one from the appearance of the other. And in a word, such a person, without more experience, could never employ his conjecture or reasoning concerning any matter of fact, or be assured of anything beyond what was immediately present to his memory and senses.

Suppose, again, that he has acquired more experience, and has lived so long in the world as to have observed familiar objects or events to be constantly conjoined together; what is the consequence of this experience?

He immediately infers the existence of one object from the appearance of the other. Yet he has not, by all his experience, acquired any idea or knowledge of the secret power by which the one object produces the other; nor is it, by any process of reasoning, he is engaged to draw this inference. But still he finds himself determined to draw it: And though he should be convinced that his understanding has no part in the operation, he would nevertheless continue in the same course of thinking. There is some other principle which determines him to form such a conclusion.

36. This principle is Custom or Habit. For wherever the repetition of any particular act or operation produces a propensity to renew the same act or operation, without being impelled by any reasoning or process of the understanding, we always say, that this propensity is the effect of *Custom*. By employing that word, we pretend not to have given the ultimate reason of such a propensity. We only point out a principle of human nature, which is universally acknowledged, and which is well known by its effects. Perhaps we can push our enquiries no farther, or pretend to give the cause of this cause; but must rest contented with it as the ultimate principle, which we can assign, of all our conclusions from experience. It is sufficient satisfaction, that we can go so far, without repining at the narrowness of our faculties because they will carry us no farther. And it is certain we here advance a very intelligible proposition at least, if not a true one, when we assert that, after the constant conjunction of two objects — heat and flame, for instance, weight and solidity — we are determined by custom alone to expect the one from the appearance of the other. This hypothesis seems even the only one which explains the difficulty, why we draw, from a thousand instances, an inference which we are not able to draw from one instance, that is, in no respect, different from them. Reason is incapable of any such variation. The conclusions which it draws from considering one circle are the same which it would form upon surveying all the circles in the universe. But no man, having seen only one body move after being impelled by another, could infer that every other body will move after a like impulse. All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, not of reasoning.

Custom, then, is the great guide of human life. It is that principle alone which renders our experience useful to us, and makes us expect, for the future, a similar train of events with those which have appeared in the past.

Without the influence of custom, we should be entirely ignorant of every matter of fact beyond what is immediately present to the memory and senses. We should never know how to adjust means to ends, or to employ our natural powers in the production of any effect. There would be an end at once of all action, as well as of the chief part of speculation.

37. But here it may be proper to remark, that though our conclusions from experience carry us beyond our memory and senses, and assure us of matters of fact which happened in the most distant places and most remote ages, yet some fact must always be present to the senses or memory, from which we may first proceed in drawing these conclusions. A man, who should find in a desert country the remains of pompous buildings, would conclude that the country had, in ancient times, been cultivated by civilized inhabitants; but did nothing of this nature occur to him, he could never form such an inference. We learn the events of former ages from history; but then we must peruse the volumes in which this instruction is contained, and thence carry up our inferences from one testimony to another, till we arrive at the eyewitnesses and spectators of these distant events. In a word, if we proceed not upon some fact, present to the memory or senses, our reasonings would be merely hypothetical; and however the particular links might be connected with each other, the whole chain of inferences would have nothing to support it, nor could we ever, by its means, arrive at the knowledge of any real existence. If I ask why you believe any particular matter of fact, which you relate, you must tell me some reason; and this reason will be some other fact, connected with it. But as you cannot proceed after this manner, *in infinitum*, you must at last terminate in some fact, which is present to your memory or senses; or must allow that your belief is entirely without foundation.

38. What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? A simple one; though, it must be confessed, pretty remote from the common theories of philosophy. All belief of matter of fact or real existence is derived merely from some object, present to the memory or senses, and a customary conjunction between that and some other object. Or in other words; having found, in many instances, that any two kinds of objects — flame and heat, snow and cold — have always been conjoined together; if flame or snow be presented anew to the senses, the mind is carried by custom to expect heat or cold, and to *believe* that such a quality does exist, and will discover itself upon a nearer approach. This belief is the necessary result of placing the

mind in such circumstances. It is an operation of the soul, when we are so situated, as unavoidable as to feel the passion of love, when we receive benefits; or hatred, when we meet with injuries. All these operations are a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able either to produce or to prevent.

At this point, it would be very allowable for us to stop our philosophical researches. In most questions we can never make a single step farther; and in all questions we must terminate here at last, after our most restless and curious enquiries. But still our curiosity will be pardonable, perhaps commendable, if it carry us on to still farther researches, and make us examine more accurately the nature of this *belief*, and of the *customary conjunction*, whence it is derived. By this means we may meet with some explications and analogies that will give satisfaction; at least to such as love the abstract sciences, and can be entertained with speculations, which, however accurate, may still retain a degree of doubt and uncertainty. As to readers of a different taste; the remaining part of this section is not calculated for them, and the following enquiries may well be understood, though it be neglected.

PART II.

39. Nothing is more free than the imagination of man; and though it cannot exceed that original stock of ideas furnished by the internal and external senses, it has unlimited power of mixing, compounding, separating, and dividing these ideas, in all the varieties of fiction and vision. It can feign a train of events, with all the appearance of reality, ascribe to them a particular time and place, conceive them as existent, and paint them out to itself with every circumstance, that belongs to any historical fact, which it believes with the greatest certainty. Wherein, therefore, consists the difference between such a fiction and belief? It lies not merely in any peculiar idea, which is annexed to such a conception as commands our assent, and which is wanting to every known fiction. For as the mind has authority over all its ideas, it could voluntarily annex this particular idea to any fiction, and consequently be able to believe whatever it pleases; contrary to what we find by daily experience. We can, in our conception, join the head of a man to the body of a horse; but it is not in our power to believe that such an animal has ever really existed.

It follows, therefore, that the difference between *fiction* and *belief* lies in some sentiment or feeling, which is annexed to the latter, not to the former, and which depends not on the will, nor can be commanded at pleasure. It must be excited by nature, like all other sentiments; and must arise from the particular situation, in which the mind is placed at any particular juncture. Whenever any object is presented to the memory or senses, it immediately, by the force of custom, carries the imagination to conceive that object, which is usually conjoined to it; and this conception is attended with a feeling or sentiment, different from the loose reveries of the fancy. In this consists the whole nature of belief. For as there is no matter of fact which we believe so firmly that we cannot conceive the contrary, there would be no difference between the conception assented to and that which is rejected, were it not for some sentiment which distinguishes the one from the other. If I see a billiard-ball moving towards another, on a smooth table, I can easily conceive it to stop upon contact. This conception implies no contradiction; but still it feels very differently from that conception by which I represent to myself the impulse and the communication of motion from one ball to another.

40. Were we to attempt a *definition* of this sentiment, we should, perhaps, find it a very difficult, if not an impossible task; in the same manner as if we should endeavour to define the feeling of cold or passion of anger, to a creature who never had any experience of these sentiments. Belief is the true and proper name of this feeling; and no one is ever at a loss to know the meaning of that term; because every man is every moment conscious of the sentiment represented by it. It may not, however, be improper to attempt a *description* of this sentiment; in hopes we may, by that means, arrive at some analogies, which may afford a more perfect explication of it. I say, then, that belief is nothing but a more vivid, lively, forcible, firm, steady conception of an object, than what the imagination alone is ever able to attain. This variety of terms, which may seem so unphilosophical, is intended only to express that act of the mind, which renders realities, or what is taken for such, more present to us than fictions, causes them to weigh more in the thought, and gives them a superior influence on the passions and imagination. Provided we agree about the thing, it is needless to dispute about the terms. The imagination has the command over all its ideas, and can join and mix and vary them, in all the ways possible. It may conceive fictitious objects with all the circumstances of place and time. It

may set them, in a manner, before our eyes, in their true colours, just as they might have existed. But as it is impossible that this faculty of imagination can ever, of itself, reach belief, it is evident that belief consists not in the peculiar nature or order of ideas, but in the *manner* of their conception, and in their *feeling* to the mind. I confess, that it is impossible perfectly to explain this feeling or manner of conception. We may make use of words which express something near it. But its true and proper name, as we observed before, is *belief*; which is a term that every one sufficiently understands in common life. And in philosophy, we can go no farther than assert, that *belief* is something felt by the mind, which distinguishes the ideas of the judgement from the fictions of the imagination. It gives them more weight and influence; makes them appear of greater importance; enforces them in the mind; and renders them the governing principle of our actions. I hear at present, for instance, a person's voice, with whom I am acquainted; and the sound comes as from the next room. This impression of my senses immediately conveys my thought to the person, together with all the surrounding objects. I paint them out to myself as existing at present, with the same qualities and relations, of which I formerly knew them possessed. These ideas take faster hold of my mind than ideas of an enchanted castle. They are very different to the feeling, and have a much greater influence of every kind, either to give pleasure or pain, joy or sorrow.

Let us, then, take in the whole compass of this doctrine, and allow, that the sentiment of belief is nothing but a conception more intense and steady than what attends the mere fictions of the imagination, and that this *manner* of conception arises from a customary conjunction of the object with something present to the memory or senses: I believe that it will not be difficult, upon these suppositions, to find other operations of the mind analogous to it, and to trace up these phenomena to principles still more general.

41. We have already observed that nature has established connexions among particular ideas, and that no sooner one idea occurs to our thoughts than it introduces its correlative, and carries our attention towards it, by a gentle and insensible movement. These principles of connexion or association we have reduced to three, namely, *Resemblance*, *Contiguity* and *Causation*; which are the only bonds that unite our thoughts together, and beget that regular train of reflection or discourse, which, in a greater or less

degree, takes place among all mankind. Now here arises a question, on which the solution of the present difficulty will depend. Does it happen, in all these relations, that, when one of the objects is presented to the senses or memory, the mind is not only carried to the conception of the correlative, but reaches a steadier and stronger conception of it than what otherwise it would have been able to attain? This seems to be the case with that belief which arises from the relation of cause and effect. And if the case be the same with the other relations or principles of associations, this may be established as a general law, which takes place in all the operations of the mind.

We may, therefore, observe, as the first experiment to our present purpose, that, upon the appearance of the picture of an absent friend, our idea of him is evidently enlivened by the *resemblance*, and that every passion, which that idea occasions, whether of joy or sorrow, acquires new force and vigour. In producing this effect, there concur both a relation and a present impression. Where the picture bears him no resemblance, at least was not intended for him, it never so much as conveys our thought to him: And where it is absent, as well as the person, though the mind may pass from the thought of the one to that of the other, it feels its idea to be rather weakened than enlivened by that transition. We take a pleasure in viewing the picture of a friend, when it is set before us; but when it is removed, rather choose to consider him directly than by reflection in an image, which is equally distant and obscure.

The ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion may be considered as instances of the same nature. The devotees of that superstition usually plead in excuse for the mummeries, with which they are upbraided, that they feel the good effect of those external motions, and postures, and actions, in enlivening their devotion and quickening their fervour, which otherwise would decay, if directed entirely to distant and immaterial objects. We shadow out the objects of our faith, say they, in sensible types and images, and render them more present to us by the immediate presence of these types, than it is possible for us to do merely by an intellectual view and contemplation. Sensible objects have always a greater influence on the fancy than any other; and this influence they readily convey to those ideas to which they are related, and which they resemble. I shall only infer from these practices, and this reasoning, that the effect of resemblance in enlivening the ideas is very common; and as in every case a resemblance and a present impression must concur, we are abundantly supplied with experiments to prove the reality of the foregoing principle.

42. We may add force to these experiments by others of a different kind, in considering the effects of *contiguity* as well as of *resemblance*. It is certain that distance diminishes the force of every idea, and that, upon our approach to any object; though it does not discover itself to our senses; it operates upon the mind with an influence, which imitates an immediate impression. The thinking on any object readily transports the mind to what is contiguous; but it is only the actual presence of an object, that transports it with a superior vivacity. When I am a few miles from home, whatever relates to it touches me more nearly than when I am two hundred leagues distant; though even at that distance the reflecting on any thing in the neighbourhood of my friends or family naturally produces an idea of them. But as in this latter case, both the objects of the mind are ideas; notwithstanding there is an easy transition between them; that transition alone is not able to give a superior vivacity to any of the ideas, for want of some immediate impression.

43. No one can doubt but causation has the same influence as the other two relations of resemblance and contiguity. Superstitious people are fond of the reliques of saints and holy men, for the same reason, that they seek after types or images, in order to enliven their devotion, and give them a more intimate and strong conception of those exemplary lives, which they desire to imitate. Now it is evident, that one of the best reliques, which a devotee could procure, would be the handywork of a saint; and if his cloaths and furniture are ever to be considered in this light, it is because they were once at his disposal, and were moved and affected by him; in which respect they are to be considered as imperfect effects, and as connected with him by a shorter chain of consequences than any of those, by which we learn the reality of his existence.

Suppose, that the son of a friend, who had been long dead or absent, were presented to us; it is evident, that this object would instantly revive its correlative idea, and recal to our thoughts all past intimacies and familiarities, in more lively colours than they would otherwise have appeared to us. This is another phaenomenon, which seems to prove the principle above mentioned.

44. We may observe, that, in these phaenomena, the belief of the correlative object is always presupposed; without which the relation could

have no effect. The influence of the picture supposes, that we *believe* our friend to have once existed. Contiguity to home can never excite our ideas of home, unless we *believe* that it really exists. Now I assert, that this belief, where it reaches beyond the memory or senses, is of a similar nature, and arises from similar causes, with the transition of thought and vivacity of conception here explained. When I throw a piece of dry wood into a fire, my mind is immediately carried to conceive, that it augments, not extinguishes the flame. This transition of thought from the cause to the effect proceeds not from reason. It derives its origin altogether from custom and experience. And as it first begins from an object, present to the senses, it renders the idea or conception of flame more strong and lively than any loose, floating reverie of the imagination. That idea arises immediately. The thought moves instantly towards it, and conveys to it all that force of conception, which is derived from the impression present to the senses. When a sword is levelled at my breast, does not the idea of wound and pain strike me more strongly, than when a glass of wine is presented to me, even though by accident this idea should occur after the appearance of the latter object? But what is there in this whole matter to cause such a strong conception, except only a present object and a customary transition to the idea of another object, which we have been accustomed to conjoin with the former? This is the whole operation of the mind, in all our conclusions concerning matter of fact and existence; and it is a satisfaction to find some analogies, by which it may be explained. The transition from a present object does in all cases give strength and solidity to the related idea.

Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone on in the same train with the other works of nature. Custom is that principle, by which this correspondence has been effected; so necessary to the subsistence of our species, and the regulation of our conduct, in every circumstance and occurrence of human life. Had not the presence of an object, instantly excited the idea of those objects, commonly conjoined with it, all our knowledge must have been limited to the narrow sphere of our memory and senses; and we should never have been able to adjust means to ends, or employ our natural powers, either to the producing of good, or avoiding of evil. Those, who delight in the discovery and contemplation of *final causes*, have here ample subject to employ their wonder and admiration.

45. I shall add, for a further confirmation of the foregoing theory, that, as this operation of the mind, by which we infer like effects from like causes, and *vice versa*, is so essential to the subsistence of all human creatures, it is not probable, that it could be trusted to the fallacious deductions of our reason, which is slow in its operations; appears not, in any degree, during the first years of infancy; and at best is, in every age and period of human life, extremely liable to error and mistake. It is more conformable to the ordinary wisdom of nature to secure so necessary an act of the mind, by some instinct or mechanical tendency, which may be infallible in its operations, may discover itself at the first appearance of life and thought, and may be independent of all the laboured deductions of the understanding. As nature has taught us the use of our limbs, without giving us the knowledge of the muscles and nerves, by which they are actuated; so has she implanted in us an instinct, which carries forward the thought in a correspondent course to that which she has established among external objects; though we are ignorant of those powers and forces, on which this regular course and succession of objects totally depends.

SECTION VI

OF PROBABILITY.

46. Though there be no such thing as *Chance* in the world; our ignorance of the real cause of any event has the same influence on the understanding, and begets a like species of belief or opinion.

There is certainly a probability, which arises from a superiority of chances on any side; and according as this superiority encreases, and surpasses the opposite chances, the probability receives a proportionable encrease, and begets still a higher degree of belief or assent to that side, in which we discover the superiority. If a dye were marked with one figure or number of spots on four sides, and with another figure or number of spots on the two remaining sides, it would be more probable, that the former would turn up than the latter; though, if it had a thousand sides marked in the same manner, and only one side different, the probability would be much higher, and our belief or expectation of the event more steady and secure. This process of the thought or reasoning may seem trivial and obvious; but to those who consider it more narrowly, it may, perhaps, afford matter for curious speculation.

It seems evident, that, when the mind looks forward to discover the event, which may result from the throw of such a dye, it considers the turning up of each particular side as alike probable; and this is the very nature of chance, to render all the particular events, comprehended in it, entirely equal. But finding a greater number of sides concur in the one event than in the other, the mind is carried more frequently to that event, and meets it oftener, in revolving the various possibilities or chances, on which the ultimate result depends. This concurrence of several views in one particular event begets immediately, by an inexplicable contrivance of nature, the sentiment of belief, and gives that event the advantage over its antagonist, which is supported by a smaller number of views, and recurs less frequently to the mind. If we allow, that belief is nothing but a firmer and stronger conception of an object than what attends the mere fictions of the imagination, this operation may, perhaps, in some measure, be accounted for. The concurrence of these several views or glimpses imprints the idea more strongly on the imagination; gives it superior force and vigour; renders its influence on the passions and affections more sensible; and in a word, begets that reliance or security, which constitutes the nature of belief and opinion.

47. The case is the same with the probability of causes, as with that of chance. There are some causes, which are entirely uniform and constant in producing a particular effect; and no instance has ever yet been found of any failure or irregularity in their operation. Fire has always burned, and water suffocated every human creature: The production of motion by impulse and gravity is an universal law, which has hitherto admitted of no exception. But there are other causes, which have been found more irregular and uncertain; nor has rhubarb always proved a purge, or opium a soporific to every one, who has taken these medicines. It is true, when any cause fails of producing its usual effect, philosophers ascribe not this to any irregularity in nature; but suppose, that some secret causes, in the particular structure of parts, have prevented the operation. Our reasonings, however, and conclusions concerning the event are the same as if this principle had no place. Being determined by custom to transfer the past to the future, in all our inferences; where the past has been entirely regular and uniform, we expect the event with the greatest assurance, and leave no room for any contrary supposition. But where different effects have been found to follow from causes, which are to *appearance* exactly similar, all these various effects must occur to the mind in transferring the past to the future, and enter into our consideration, when we determine the probability of the event. Though we give the preference to that which has been found most usual, and believe that this effect will exist, we must not overlook the other effects, but must assign to each of them a particular weight and authority, in proportion as we have found it to be more or less frequent. It is more probable, in almost every country of Europe, that there will be frost sometime in January, than that the weather will continue open throughout that whole month; though this probability varies according to the different climates, and approaches to a certainty in the more northern kingdoms. Here then it seems evident, that, when we transfer the past to the future, in order to determine the effect, which will result from any cause, we transfer all the different events, in the same proportion as they have appeared in the

past, and conceive one to have existed a hundred times, for instance, another ten times, and another once. As a great number of views do here concur in one event, they fortify and confirm it to the imagination, beget that sentiment which we call *belief*, and give its object the preference above the contrary event, which is not supported by an equal number of experiments, and recurs not so frequently to the thought in transferring the past to the future. Let any one try to account for this operation of the mind upon any of the received systems of philosophy, and he will be sensible of the difficulty. For my part, I shall think it sufficient, if the present hints excite the curiosity of philosophers, and make them sensible how defective all common theories are in treating of such curious and such sublime subjects.

SECTION VII.

OF THE IDEA OF NECESSARY CONNEXION.

PART I.

48. The great advantage of the mathematical sciences above the moral consists in this, that the ideas of the former, being sensible, are always clear and determinate, the smallest distinction between them is immediately perceptible, and the same terms are still expressive of the same ideas, without ambiguity or variation. An oval is never mistaken for a circle, nor an hyperbola for an ellipsis. The isosceles and scalenum are distinguished by boundaries more exact than vice and virtue, right and wrong. If any term be defined in geometry, the mind readily, of itself, substitutes, on all occasions, the definition for the term defined: Or even when no definition is employed, the object itself may be presented to the senses, and by that means be steadily and clearly apprehended. But the finer sentiments of the mind, the operations of the understanding, the various agitations of the passions, though really in themselves distinct, easily escape us, when surveyed by reflection; nor is it in our power to recal the original object, as often as we have occasion to contemplate it. Ambiguity, by this means, is gradually introduced into our reasonings: Similar objects are readily taken to be the same: And the conclusion becomes at last very wide of the premises.

One may safely, however, affirm, that, if we consider these sciences in a proper light, their advantages and disadvantages nearly compensate each other, and reduce both of them to a state of equality. If the mind, with greater facility, retains the ideas of geometry clear and determinate, it must carry on a much longer and more intricate chain of reasoning, and compare ideas much wider of each other, in order to reach the abstruser truths of that science. And if moral ideas are apt, without extreme care, to fall into obscurity and confusion, the inferences are always much shorter in these disquisitions, and the intermediate steps, which lead to the conclusion, much fewer than in the sciences which treat of quantity and number. In reality, there is scarcely a proposition in Euclid so simple, as not to consist of more parts, than are to be found in any moral reasoning which runs not into chimera and conceit. Where we trace the principles of the human mind through a few steps, we may be very well satisfied with our progress; considering how soon nature throws a bar to all our enquiries concerning causes, and reduces us to an acknowledgment of our ignorance. The chief obstacle, therefore, to our improvement in the moral or metaphysical sciences is the obscurity of the ideas, and ambiguity of the terms. The principal difficulty in the mathematics is the length of inferences and compass of thought, requisite to the forming of any conclusion. And, perhaps, our progress in natural philosophy is chiefly retarded by the want of proper experiments and phaenomena, which are often discovered by chance, and cannot always be found, when requisite, even by the most diligent and prudent enquiry. As moral philosophy seems hitherto to have received less improvement than either geometry or physics, we may conclude, that, if there be any difference in this respect among these sciences, the difficulties, which obstruct the progress of the former, require superior care and capacity to be surmounted.

49. There are no ideas, which occur in metaphysics, more obscure and uncertain, than those of *power, force, energy* or *necessary connexion*, of which it is every moment necessary for us to treat in all our disquisitions. We shall, therefore, endeavour, in this section, to fix, if possible, the precise meaning of these terms, and thereby remove some part of that obscurity, which is so much complained of in this species of philosophy.

It seems a proposition, which will not admit of much dispute, that all our ideas are nothing but copies of our impressions, or, in other words, that it is impossible for us to *think* of any thing, which we have not antecedently *felt*, either by our external or internal senses. I have endeavoured to explain and prove this proposition, and have expressed my hopes, that, by a proper application of it, men may reach a greater clearness and precision in philosophical reasonings, than what they have hitherto been able to attain. Complex ideas may, perhaps, be well known by definition, which is nothing but an enumeration of those parts or simple ideas, that compose them. But when we have pushed up definitions to the most simple ideas, and find still some ambiguity and obscurity; what resource are we then possessed of? By what invention can we throw light upon these ideas, and render them altogether precise and determinate to our intellectual view? Produce the impressions or original sentiments, from which the ideas are copied. These impressions are all strong and sensible. They admit not of ambiguity. They are not only placed in a full light themselves, but may throw light on their correspondent ideas, which lie in obscurity. And by this means, we may, perhaps, attain a new microscope or species of optics, by which, in the moral sciences, the most minute, and most simple ideas may be so enlarged as to fall readily under our apprehension, and be equally known with the grossest and most sensible ideas, that can be the object of our enquiry.

50. To be fully acquainted, therefore, with the idea of power or necessary connexion, let us examine its impression; and in order to find the impression with greater certainty, let us search for it in all the sources, from which it may possibly be derived.

When we look about us towards external objects, and consider the operation of causes, we are never able, in a single instance, to discover any power or necessary connexion; any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other. The impulse of one billiard-ball is attended with motion in the second. This is the whole that appears to the *outward* senses. The mind feels no sentiment or *inward* impression from this succession of objects: Consequently, there is not, in any single, particular instance of cause and effect, any thing which can suggest the idea of power or necessary connexion.

From the first appearance of an object, we never can conjecture what effect will result from it. But were the power or energy of any cause discoverable by the mind, we could foresee the effect, even without experience; and might, at first, pronounce with certainty concerning it, by mere dint of thought and reasoning.

In reality, there is no part of matter, that does ever, by its sensible qualities, discover any power or energy, or give us ground to imagine, that it could produce any thing, or be followed by any other object, which we could denominate its effect. Solidity, extension, motion; these qualities are all complete in themselves, and never point out any other event which may result from them. The scenes of the universe are continually shifting, and one object follows another in an uninterrupted succession; but the power of force, which actuates the whole machine, is entirely concealed from us, and never discovers itself in any of the sensible qualities of body. We know, that, in fact, heat is a constant attendant of flame; but what is the connexion between them, we have no room so much as to conjecture or imagine. It is impossible, therefore, that the idea of power can be derived from the contemplation of bodies, in single instances of their operation; because no bodies ever discover any power, which can be the original of this idea.

51. Since, therefore, external objects as they appear to the senses, give us no idea of power or necessary connexion, by their operation in particular instances, let us see, whether this idea be derived from reflection on the operations of our own minds, and be copied from any internal impression. It may be said, that we are every moment conscious of internal power; while we feel, that, by the simple command of our will, we can move the organs of our body, or direct the faculties of our mind. An act of volition produces motion in our limbs, or raises a new idea in our imagination. This influence of the will we know by consciousness. Hence we acquire the idea of power or energy; and are certain, that we ourselves and all other intelligent beings are possessed of power. This idea, then, is an idea of reflection, since it arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and on the command which is exercised by will, both over the organs of the body and faculties of the soul.

52. We shall proceed to examine this pretension; and first with regard to the influence of volition over the organs of the body. This influence, we may observe, is a fact, which, like all other natural events, can be known only by experience, and can never be foreseen from any apparent energy or power in the cause, which connects it with the effect, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. The motion of our body follows upon the command of our will. Of this we are every moment conscious. But the means, by which this is effected; the energy, by which the will performs so extraordinary an operation; of this we are so far from being immediately conscious, that it must for ever escape our most diligent enquiry.

For *first*; is there any principle in all nature more mysterious than the union of soul with body; by which a supposed spiritual substance acquires such an influence over a material one, that the most refined thought is able to actuate the grossest matter? Were we empowered, by a secret wish, to remove mountains, or control the planets in their orbit; this extensive authority would not be more extraordinary, nor more beyond our comprehension. But if by consciousness we perceived any power or energy in the will, we must know this power; we must know its connexion with the effect; we must know the secret union of soul and body, and the nature of both these substances; by which the one is able to operate, in so many instances, upon the other.

Secondly, We are not able to move all the organs of the body with a like authority; though we cannot assign any reason besides experience, for so remarkable a difference between one and the other. Why has the will an influence over the tongue and fingers, not over the heart or liver? This question would never embarrass us, were we conscious of a power in the former case, not in the latter. We should then perceive, independent of experience, why the authority of will over the organs of the body is circumscribed within such particular limits. Being in that case fully acquainted with the power or force, by which it operates, we should also know, why its influence reaches precisely to such boundaries, and no farther.

A man, suddenly struck with palsy in the leg or arm, or who had newly lost those members, frequently endeavours, at first to move them, and employ them in their usual offices. Here he is as much conscious of power to command such limbs, as a man in perfect health is conscious of power to actuate any member which remains in its natural state and condition. But consciousness never deceives. Consequently, neither in the one case nor in the other, are we ever conscious of any power. We learn the influence of our will from experience alone. And experience only teaches us, how one event constantly follows another; without instructing us in the secret connexion, which binds them together, and renders them inseparable.

Thirdly, We learn from anatomy, that the immediate object of power in voluntary motion, is not the member itself which is moved, but certain muscles, and nerves, and animal spirits, and, perhaps, something still more minute and more unknown, through which the motion is successively propagated, ere it reach the member itself whose motion is the immediate object of volition. Can there be a more certain proof, that the power, by which this whole operation is performed, so far from being directly and fully known by an inward sentiment or consciousness, is, to the last degree mysterious and unintelligible? Here the mind wills a certain event: Immediately another event, unknown to ourselves, and totally different from the one intended, is produced: This event produces another, equally unknown: Till at last, through a long succession, the desired event is produced. But if the original power were felt, it must be known: Were it known, its effect also must be known; since all power is relative to its effect. And *vice versa,* if the effect be not known, the power cannot be known nor felt. How indeed can we be conscious of a power to move our limbs, when we have no such power; but only that to move certain animal spirits, which, though they produce at last the motion of our limbs, yet operate in such a manner as is wholly beyond our comprehension?

We may, therefore, conclude from the whole, I hope, without any temerity, though with assurance; that our idea of power is not copied from any sentiment or consciousness of power within ourselves, when we give rise to animal motion, or apply our limbs to their proper use and office. That their motion follows the command of the will is a matter of common experience, like other natural events: But the power or energy by which this is effected, like that in other natural events, is unknown and inconceivable.

53. Shall we then assert, that we are conscious of a power or energy in our own minds, when, by an act or command of our will, we raise up a new idea, fix the mind to the contemplation of it, turn it on all sides, and at last dismiss it for some other idea, when we think that we have surveyed it with sufficient accuracy? I believe the same arguments will prove, that even this command of the will gives us no real idea of force or energy.

First, It must be allowed, that, when we know a power, we know that very circumstance in the cause, by which it is enabled to produce the effect: For these are supposed to be synonimous. We must, therefore, know both the cause and effect, and the relation between them. But do we pretend to be acquainted with the nature of the human soul and the nature of an idea, or the aptitude of the one to produce the other? This is a real creation; a production of something out of nothing: Which implies a power so great, that it may seem, at first sight, beyond the reach of any being, less than infinite. At least it must be owned, that such a power is not felt, nor known, nor even conceivable by the mind. We only feel the event, namely, the existence of an idea, consequent to a command of the will: But the manner, in which this operation is performed, the power by which it is produced, is entirely beyond our comprehension.

Secondly, The command of the mind over itself is limited, as well as its command over the body; and these limits are not known by reason, or any acquaintance with the nature of cause and effect, but only by experience and observation, as in all other natural events and in the operation of external objects. Our authority over our sentiments and passions is much weaker than that over our ideas; and even the latter authority is circumscribed within very narrow boundaries. Will any one pretend to assign the ultimate reason of these boundaries, or show why the power is deficient in one case, not in another.

Thirdly, This self-command is very different at different times. A man in health possesses more of it than one languishing with sickness. We are more master of our thoughts in the morning than in the evening: Fasting, than after a full meal. Can we give any reason for these variations, except experience? Where then is the power, of which we pretend to be conscious? Is there not here, either in a spiritual or material substance, or both, some secret mechanism or structure of parts, upon which the effect depends, and which, being entirely unknown to us, renders the power or energy of the will equally unknown and incomprehensible?

Volition is surely an act of the mind, with which we are sufficiently acquainted. Reflect upon it. Consider it on all sides. Do you find anything in it like this creative power, by which it raises from nothing a new idea, and with a kind of *Fiat*, imitates the omnipotence of its Maker, if I may be allowed so to speak, who called forth into existence all the various scenes of nature? So far from being conscious of this energy in the will, it requires as certain experience as that of which we are possessed, to convince us that such extraordinary effects do ever result from a simple act of volition.

54. The generality of mankind never find any difficulty in accounting for the more common and familiar operations of nature — such as the descent of heavy bodies, the growth of plants, the generation of animals, or the nourishment of bodies by food: But suppose that, in all these cases, they perceive the very force or energy of the cause, by which it is connected with its effect, and is for ever infallible in its operation. They acquire, by long habit, such a turn of mind, that, upon the appearance of the cause, they immediately expect with assurance its usual attendant, and hardly conceive it possible that any other event could result from it. It is only on the discovery of extraordinary phaenomena, such as earthquakes, pestilence, and prodigies of any kind, that they find themselves at a loss to assign a proper cause, and to explain the manner in which the effect is produced by it. It is usual for men, in such difficulties, to have recourse to some invisible intelligent principle as the immediate cause of that event which surprises them, and which, they think, cannot be accounted for from the common powers of nature. But philosophers, who carry their scrutiny a little farther,

immediately perceive that, even in the most familiar events, the energy of the cause is as unintelligible as in the most unusual, and that we only learn by experience the frequent *Conjunction* of objects, without being ever able to comprehend anything like *Connexion* between them.

55. Here, then, many philosophers think themselves obliged by reason to have recourse, on all occasions, to the same principle, which the vulgar never appeal to but in cases that appear miraculous and supernatural. They acknowledge mind and intelligence to be, not only the ultimate and original cause of all things, but the immediate and sole cause of every event which appears in nature. They pretend that those objects which are commonly denominated *causes*, are in reality nothing but *occasions;* and that the true and direct principle of every effect is not any power or force in nature, but a volition of the Supreme Being, who wills that such particular objects should for ever be conjoined with each other. Instead of saying that one billiard-ball moves another by a force which it has derived from the author of nature, it is the Deity himself, they say, who, by a particular volition, moves the second ball, being determined to this operation by the impulse of the first ball, in consequence of those general laws which he has laid down to himself in the government of the universe. But philosophers advancing still in their inquiries, discover that, as we are totally ignorant of the power on which depends the mutual operation of bodies, we are no less ignorant of that power on which depends the operation of mind on body, or of body on mind; nor are we able, either from our senses or consciousness, to assign the ultimate principle in one case more than in the other. The same ignorance, therefore, reduces them to the same conclusion. They assert that the Deity is the immediate cause of the union between soul and body; and that they are not the organs of sense, which, being agitated by external objects, produce sensations in the mind; but that it is a particular volition of our omnipotent Maker, which excites such a sensation, in consequence of such a motion in the organ. In like manner, it is not any energy in the will that produces local motion in our members: It is God himself, who is pleased to second our will, in itself impotent, and to command that motion which we erroneously attribute to our own power and efficacy. Nor do philosophers stop at this conclusion. They sometimes extend the same inference to the mind itself, in its internal operations. Our mental vision or conception of ideas is nothing but a revelation made to us by our Maker. When we voluntarily turn our thoughts to any object, and raise up its image

in the fancy, it is not the will which creates that idea: It is the universal Creator, who discovers it to the mind, and renders it present to us.

56. Thus, according to these philosophers, every thing is full of God. Not content with the principle, that nothing exists but by his will, that nothing possesses any power but by his concession: They rob nature, and all created beings, of every power, in order to render their dependence on the Deity still more sensible and immediate. They consider not that, by this theory, they diminish, instead of magnifying, the grandeur of those attributes, which they affect so much to celebrate. It argues surely more power in the Deity to delegate a certain degree of power to inferior creatures than to produce every thing by his own immediate volition. It argues more wisdom to contrive at first the fabric of the world with such perfect foresight that, of itself, and by its proper operation, it may serve all the purposes of providence, than if the great Creator were obliged every moment to adjust its parts, and animate by his breath all the wheels of that stupendous machine.

But if we would have a more philosophical confutation of this theory, perhaps the two following reflections may suffice.

57. *First*, it seems to me that this theory of the universal energy and operation of the Supreme Being is too bold ever to carry conviction with it to a man, sufficiently apprized of the weakness of human reason, and the narrow limits to which it is confined in all its operations. Though the chain of arguments which conduct to it were ever so logical, there must arise a strong suspicion, if not an absolute assurance, that it has carried us quite beyond the reach of our faculties, when it leads to conclusions so extraordinary, and so remote from common life and experience. We are got into fairy land, long ere we have reached the last steps of our theory; and *there* we have no reason to trust our common methods of argument, or to think that our usual analogies and probabilities have any authority. Our line is too short to fathom such immense abysses. And however we may flatter ourselves that we are guided, in every step which we take, by a kind of verisimilitude and experience, we may be assured that this fancied experience has no authority when we thus apply it to subjects that lie entirely out of the sphere of experience. But on this we shall have occasion to touch afterwards.

Secondly, I cannot perceive any force in the arguments on which this theory is founded. We are ignorant, it is true, of the manner in which bodies operate on each other: Their force or energy is entirely incomprehensible: But are we not equally ignorant of the manner or force by which a mind, even the supreme mind, operates either on itself or on body? Whence, I beseech you, do we acquire any idea of it? We have no sentiment or consciousness of this power in ourselves. We have no idea of the Supreme Being but what we learn from reflection on our own faculties. Were our ignorance, therefore, a good reason for rejecting any thing, we should be led into that principle of denying all energy in the Supreme Being as much as in the grossest matter. We surely comprehend as little the operations of one as of the other. Is it more difficult to conceive that motion may arise from impulse than that it may arise from volition? All we know is our profound ignorance in both cases.

PART II.

58. But to hasten to a conclusion of this argument, which is already drawn out to too great a length: We have sought in vain for an idea of power or necessary connexion in all the sources from which we could suppose it to be derived. It appears that, in single instances of the operation of bodies, we never can, by our utmost scrutiny, discover any thing but one event following another, without being able to comprehend any force or power by which the cause operates, or any connexion between it and its supposed effect. The same difficulty occurs in contemplating the operations of mind on body — where we observe the motion of the latter to follow upon the volition of the former, but are not able to observe or conceive the tie which binds together the motion and volition, or the energy by which the mind produces this effect. The authority of the will over its own faculties and ideas is not a whit more comprehensible: So that, upon the whole, there appears not, throughout all nature, any one instance of connexion which is conceivable by us. All events seem entirely loose and separate. One event follows another; but we never can observe any tie between them. They seem *conjoined*, but never *connected*. And as we can have no idea of any thing which never appeared to our outward sense or inward sentiment, the necessary conclusion *seems* to be that we have no idea of connexion or power at all, and that these words are absolutely without any meaning, when employed either in philosophical reasonings or common life.

59. But there still remains one method of avoiding this conclusion, and one source which we have not yet examined. When any natural object or event is presented, it is impossible for us, by any sagacity or penetration, to discover, or even conjecture, without experience, what event will result from it, or to carry our foresight beyond that object which is immediately present to the memory and senses. Even after one instance or experiment where we have observed a particular event to follow upon another, we are not entitled to form a general rule, or foretell what will happen in like cases; it being justly esteemed an unpardonable temerity to judge of the whole course of nature from one single experiment, however accurate or certain. But when one particular species of event has always, in all instances, been conjoined with another, we make no longer any scruple of foretelling one upon the appearance of the other, and of employing that reasoning, which can alone assure us of any matter of fact or existence. We then call the one object, *Cause;* the other, *Effect.* We suppose that there is some connexion between them; some power in the one, by which it infallibly produces the other, and operates with the greatest certainty and strongest necessity.

It appears, then, that this idea of a necessary connexion among events arises from a number of similar instances which occur of the constant conjunction of these events; nor can that idea ever be suggested by any one of these instances, surveyed in all possible lights and positions. But there is nothing in a number of instances, different from every single instance, which is supposed to be exactly similar; except only, that after a repetition of similar instances, the mind is carried by habit, upon the appearance of one event, to expect its usual attendant, and to believe that it will exist. This connexion, therefore, which we *feel* in the mind, this customary transition of the imagination from one object to its usual attendant, is the sentiment or impression from which we form the idea of power or necessary connexion. Nothing farther is in the case. Contemplate the subject on all sides; you will never find any other origin of that idea. This is the sole difference between one instance, from which we can never receive the idea of connexion, and a number of similar instances, by which it is suggested. The first time a man saw the communication of motion by impulse, as by the shock of two billiard balls, he could not pronounce that the one event was *connected:* but only that it was *conjoined* with the other. After he has observed several instances of this nature, he then pronounces them to be *connected.* What alteration has happened to give rise to this new idea of *connexion?* Nothing but that he now *feels* these events to be connected in his imagination, and can readily foretell the existence of one from the appearance of the other. When we say, therefore, that one object is connected with another, we mean only that they have acquired a connexion in our thought, and give rise to this inference, by which they become proofs of each other’s existence: A conclusion which is somewhat extraordinary, but which seems founded on sufficient evidence. Nor will its evidence be weakened by any general diffidence of the understanding, or sceptical suspicion concerning every conclusion which is new and extraordinary. No conclusions can be more agreeable to scepticism than such as make discoveries concerning the weakness and narrow limits of human reason and capacity.

60. And what stronger instance can be produced of the surprising ignorance and weakness of the understanding than the present? For surely, if there be any relation among objects which it imports to us to know perfectly, it is that of cause and effect. On this are founded all our reasonings concerning matter of fact or existence. By means of it alone we attain any assurance concerning objects which are removed from the present testimony of our memory and senses. The only immediate utility of all sciences, is to teach us, how to control and regulate future events by their causes. Our thoughts and enquiries are, therefore, every moment, employed about this relation: Yet so imperfect are the ideas which we form concerning it, that it is impossible to give any just definition of cause, except what is drawn from something extraneous and foreign to it. Similar objects are always conjoined with similar. Of this we have experience. Suitably to this experience, therefore, we may define a cause to be *an object, followed by another, and where all the objects similar to the first are followed by objects similar to the second*. Or in other words *where, if the first object had not been, the second never had existed*. The appearance of a cause always conveys the mind, by a customary transition, to the idea of the effect. Of this also we have experience. We may, therefore, suitably to this experience, form another definition of cause, and call it, *an object followed by another, and whose appearance always conveys the thought to that other.* But though both these definitions be drawn from circumstances foreign to the cause, we cannot remedy this inconvenience, or attain any more perfect definition, which may point out that circumstance in the cause, which gives it a connexion with its effect. We have no idea of this connexion, nor even any distinct notion what it is we desire to know, when we endeavour at a

conception of it. We say, for instance, that the vibration of this string is the cause of this particular sound. But what do we mean by that affirmation? We either mean *that this vibration is followed by this sound, and that all similar vibrations have been followed by similar sounds:* Or, *that this vibration is followed by this sound, and that upon the appearance of one the mind anticipates the senses, and forms immediately an idea of the other.* We may consider the relation of cause and effect in either of these two lights; but beyond these, we have no idea of it.

61. To recapitulate, therefore, the reasonings of this section: Every idea is copied from some preceding impression or sentiment; and where we cannot find any impression, we may be certain that there is no idea. In all single instances of the operation of bodies or minds, there is nothing that produces any impression, nor consequently can suggest any idea of power or necessary connexion. But when many uniform instances appear, and the same object is always followed by the same event; we then begin to entertain the notion of cause and connexion. We then *feel* a new sentiment or impression, to wit, a customary connexion in the thought or imagination between one object and its usual attendant; and this sentiment is the original of that idea which we seek for. For as this idea arises from a number of similar instances, and not from any single instance, it must arise from that circumstance, in which the number of instances differ from every individual instance. But this customary connexion or transition of the imagination is the only circumstance in which they differ. In every other particular they are alike. The first instance which we saw of motion communicated by the shock of two billiard balls (to return to this obvious illustration) is exactly similar to any instance that may, at present, occur to us; except only, that we could not, at first, *infer* one event from the other; which we are enabled to do at present, after so long a course of uniform experience. I know not whether the reader will readily apprehend this reasoning. I am afraid that, should I multiply words about it, or throw it into a greater variety of lights, it would only become more obscure and intricate. In all abstract reasonings there is one point of view which, if we can happily hit, we shall go farther towards illustrating the subject than by all the eloquence and copious expression in the world. This point of view we should endeavour to reach, and reserve the flowers of rhetoric for subjects which are more adapted to them.

SECTION VIII.

OF LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

PART I.

62. It might reasonably be expected in questions which have been canvassed and disputed with great eagerness, since the first origin of science and philosophy, that the meaning of all the terms, at least, should have been agreed upon among the disputants; and our enquiries, in the course of two thousand years, been able to pass from words to the true and real subject of the controversy. For how easy may it seem to give exact definitions of the terms employed in reasoning, and make these definitions, not the mere sound of words, the object of future scrutiny and examination? But if we consider the matter more narrowly, we shall be apt to draw a quite opposite conclusion. From this circumstance alone, that a controversy has been long kept on foot, and remains still undecided, we may presume that there is some ambiguity in the expression, and that the disputants affix different ideas to the terms employed in the controversy. For as the faculties of the mind are supposed to be naturally alike in every individual; otherwise nothing could be more fruitless than to reason or dispute together; it were impossible, if men affix the same ideas to their terms, that they could so long form different opinions of the same subject; especially when they communicate their views, and each party turn themselves on all sides, in search of arguments which may give them the victory over their antagonists. It is true, if men attempt the discussion of questions which lie entirely beyond the reach of human capacity, such as those concerning the origin of worlds, or the economy of the intellectual system or region of spirits, they may long beat the air in their fruitless contests, and never arrive at any determinate conclusion. But if the question regard any subject of common life and experience, nothing, one would think, could preserve the dispute so long undecided but some ambiguous expressions, which keep the

antagonists still at a distance, and hinder them from grappling with each other.

63. This has been the case in the long disputed question concerning liberty and necessity; and to so remarkable a degree that, if I be not much mistaken, we shall find, that all mankind, both learned and ignorant, have always been of the same opinion with regard to this subject, and that a few intelligible definitions would immediately have put an end to the whole controversy. I own that this dispute has been so much canvassed on all hands, and has led philosophers into such a labyrinth of obscure sophistry, that it is no wonder, if a sensible reader indulge his ease so far as to turn a deaf ear to the proposal of such a question, from which he can expect neither instruction or entertainment. But the state of the argument here proposed may, perhaps, serve to renew his attention; as it has more novelty, promises at least some decision of the controversy, and will not much disturb his ease by any intricate or obscure reasoning.

I hope, therefore, to make it appear that all men have ever agreed in the doctrine both of necessity and of liberty, according to any reasonable sense, which can be put on these terms; and that the whole controversy has hitherto turned merely upon words. We shall begin with examining the doctrine of necessity.

64. It is universally allowed that matter, in all its operations, is actuated by a necessary force, and that every natural effect is so precisely determined by the energy of its cause that no other effect, in such particular circumstances, could possibly have resulted from it. The degree and direction of every motion is, by the laws of nature, prescribed with such exactness that a living creature may as soon arise from the shock of two bodies as motion in any other degree or direction than what is actually produced by it. Would we, therefore, form a just and precise idea of *necessity*, we must consider whence that idea arises when we apply it to the operation of bodies.

It seems evident that, if all the scenes of nature were continually shifted in such a manner that no two events bore any resemblance to each other, but every object was entirely new, without any similitude to whatever had been seen before, we should never, in that case, have attained the least idea of necessity, or of a connexion among these objects. We might say, upon such a supposition, that one object or event has followed another; not that one was produced by the other. The relation of cause and effect must be utterly unknown to mankind. Inference and reasoning concerning the operations of nature would, from that moment, be at an end; and the memory and senses remain the only canals, by which the knowledge of any real existence could possibly have access to the mind. Our idea, therefore, of necessity and causation arises entirely from the uniformity observable in the operations of nature, where similar objects are constantly conjoined together, and the mind is determined by custom to infer the one from the appearance of the other. These two circumstances form the whole of that necessity, which we ascribe to matter. Beyond the constant *conjunction* of similar objects, and the consequent *inference* from one to the other, we have no notion of any necessity or connexion.

If it appear, therefore, that all mankind have ever allowed, without any doubt or hesitation, that these two circumstances take place in the voluntary actions of men, and in the operations of mind; it must follow, that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of necessity, and that they have hitherto disputed, merely for not understanding each other.

65. As to the first circumstance, the constant and regular conjunction of similar events, we may possibly satisfy ourselves by the following considerations. It is universally acknowledged that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions. The same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit: these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises, which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? Study well the temper and actions of the French and English: You cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and

revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle, and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world.

Should a traveller, returning from a far country, bring us an account of men, wholly different from any with whom we were ever acquainted; men, who were entirely divested of avarice, ambition, or revenge; who knew no pleasure but friendship, generosity, and public spirit; we should immediately, from these circumstances, detect the falsehood, and prove him a liar, with the same certainty as if he had stuffed his narration with stories of centaurs and dragons, miracles and prodigies. And if we would explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument, than to prove, that the actions ascribed to any person are directly contrary to the course of nature, and that no human motives, in such circumstances, could ever induce him to such a conduct. The veracity of Quintus Curtius is as much to be suspected, when he describes the supernatural courage of Alexander, by which he was hurried on singly to attack multitudes, as when he describes his supernatural force and activity, by which he was able to resist them. So readily and universally do we acknowledge a uniformity in human motives and actions as well as in the operations of body.

Hence likewise the benefit of that experience, acquired by long life and a variety of business and company, in order to instruct us in the principles of human nature, and regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation. By means of this guide, we mount up to the knowledge of men’s inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again descend to the interpretation of their actions from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. The general observations treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue of human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies. Pretexts and appearances no longer deceive us. Public declarations pass for the specious colouring of a cause. And though virtue and honour be allowed their proper weight and authority, that perfect disinterestedness, so often pretended to, is never expected in multitudes and parties; seldom in their leaders; and scarcely even in individuals of any rank or station. But were there no uniformity in human actions, and were every experiment which we could form of this kind irregular and anomalous, it were impossible to collect any general observations concerning mankind; and no experience, however accurately digested by reflection, would ever serve to any purpose. Why is the aged husbandman more skilful in his calling than the young beginner but because there is a certain uniformity in the operation of the sun, rain, and earth towards the production of vegetables; and experience teaches the old practitioner the rules by which this operation is governed and directed.

66. We must not, however, expect that this uniformity of human actions should be carried to such a length as that all men, in the same circumstances, will always act precisely in the same manner, without making any allowance for the diversity of characters, prejudices, and opinions. Such a uniformity in every particular, is found in no part of nature. On the contrary, from observing the variety of conduct in different men, we are enabled to form a greater variety of maxims, which still suppose a degree of uniformity and regularity.

Are the manners of men different in different ages and countries? We learn thence the great force of custom and education, which mould the human mind from its infancy and form it into a fixed and established character. Is the behaviour and conduct of the one sex very unlike that of the other? Is it thence we become acquainted with the different characters which nature has impressed upon the sexes, and which she preserves with constancy and regularity? Are the actions of the same person much diversified in the different periods of his life, from infancy to old age? This affords room for many general observations concerning the gradual change of our sentiments and inclinations, and the different maxims which prevail in the different ages of human creatures. Even the characters, which are peculiar to each individual, have a uniformity in their influence; otherwise our acquaintance with the persons and our observation of their conduct could never teach us their dispositions, or serve to direct our behaviour with regard to them.

67. I grant it possible to find some actions, which seem to have no regular connexion with any known motives, and are exceptions to all the measures of conduct which have ever been established for the government of men. But if we would willingly know what judgement should be formed of such irregular and extraordinary actions, we may consider the sentiments

commonly entertained with regard to those irregular events which appear in the course of nature, and the operations of external objects. All causes are not conjoined to their usual effects with like uniformity. An artificer, who handles only dead matter, may be disappointed of his aim, as well as the politician, who directs the conduct of sensible and intelligent agents.

The vulgar, who take things according to their first appearance, attribute the uncertainty of events to such an uncertainty in the causes as makes the latter often fail of their usual influence; though they meet with no impediment in their operation. But philosophers, observing that, almost in every part of nature, there is contained a vast variety of springs and principles, which are hid, by reason of their minuteness or remoteness, find, that it is at least possible the contrariety of events may not proceed from any contingency in the cause, but from the secret operation of contrary causes. This possibility is converted into certainty by farther observation, when they remark that, upon an exact scrutiny, a contrariety of effects always betrays a contrariety of causes, and proceeds from their mutual opposition. A peasant can give no better reason for the stopping of any clock or watch than to say that it does not commonly go right: But an artist easily perceives that the same force in the spring or pendulum has always the same influence on the wheels; but fails of its usual effect, perhaps by reason of a grain of dust, which puts a stop to the whole movement. From the observation of several parallel instances, philosophers form a maxim that the connexion between all causes and effects is equally necessary, and that its seeming uncertainty in some instances proceeds from the secret opposition of contrary causes.

Thus, for instance, in the human body, when the usual symptoms of health or sickness disappoint our expectation; when medicines operate not with their wonted powers; when irregular events follow from any particular cause; the philosopher and physician are not surprised at the matter, nor are ever tempted to deny, in general, the necessity and uniformity of those principles by which the animal economy is conducted. They know that a human body is a mighty complicated machine: That many secret powers lurk in it, which are altogether beyond our comprehension: That to us it must often appear very uncertain in its operations: And that therefore the irregular events, which outwardly discover themselves, can be no proof that the laws of nature are not observed with the greatest regularity in its internal operations and government.

68. The philosopher, if he be consistent, must apply the same reasoning to the actions and volitions of intelligent agents. The most irregular and unexpected resolutions of men may frequently be accounted for by those who know every particular circumstance of their character and situation. A person of an obliging disposition gives a peevish answer: But he has the toothache, or has not dined. A stupid fellow discovers an uncommon alacrity in his carriage: But he has met with a sudden piece of good fortune. Or even when an action, as sometimes happens, cannot be particularly accounted for, either by the person himself or by others; we know, in general, that the characters of men are, to a certain degree, inconstant and irregular. This is, in a manner, the constant character of human nature; though it be applicable, in a more particular manner, to some persons who have no fixed rule for their conduct, but proceed in a continued course of caprice and inconstancy. The internal principles and motives may operate in a uniform manner, notwithstanding these seeming irregularities; in the same manner as the winds, rain, clouds, and other variations of the weather are supposed to be governed by steady principles; though not easily discoverable by human sagacity and enquiry.

69. Thus it appears, not only that the conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature; but also that this regular conjunction has been universally acknowledged among mankind, and has never been the subject of dispute, either in philosophy or common life. Now, as it is from past experience that we draw all inferences concerning the future, and as we conclude that objects will always be conjoined together which we find to have always been conjoined; it may seem superfluous to prove that this experienced uniformity in human actions is a source whence we draw *inferences* concerning them. But in order to throw the argument into a greater variety of lights we shall also insist, though briefly, on this latter topic.

The mutual dependence of men is so great in all societies that scarce any human action is entirely complete in itself, or is performed without some reference to the actions of others, which are requisite to make it answer fully the intention of the agent. The poorest artificer, who labours alone, expects at least the protection of the magistrate, to ensure him the enjoyment of the fruits of his labour. He also expects that, when he carries his goods to market, and offers them at a reasonable price, he shall find purchasers, and shall be able, by the money he acquires, to engage others to supply him with those commodities which are requisite for his subsistence. In proportion as men extend their dealings, and render their intercourse with others more complicated, they always comprehend, in their schemes of life, a greater variety of voluntary actions, which they expect, from the proper motives, to co-operate with their own. In all these conclusions they take their measures from past experience, in the same manner as in their reasonings concerning external objects; and firmly believe that men, as well as all the elements, are to continue, in their operations, the same that they have ever found them. A manufacturer reckons upon the labour of his servants for the execution of any work as much as upon the tools which he employs, and would be equally surprised were his expectations disappointed. In short, this experimental inference and reasoning concerning the actions of others enters so much into human life that no man, while awake, is ever a moment without employing it. Have we not reason, therefore, to affirm that all mankind have always agreed in the doctrine of necessity according to the foregoing definition and explication of it?

70. Nor have philosophers ever entertained a different opinion from the people in this particular. For, not to mention that almost every action of their life supposes that opinion, there are even few of the speculative parts of learning to which it is not essential. What would become of *history*, had we not a dependence on the veracity of the historian according to the experience which we have had of mankind? How could *politics* be a science, if laws and forms of goverment had not a uniform influence upon society? Where would be the foundation of *morals*, if particular characters had no certain or determinate power to produce particular sentiments, and if these sentiments had no constant operation on actions? And with what pretence could we employ our *criticism* upon any poet or polite author, if we could not pronounce the conduct and sentiments of his actors either natural or unnatural to such characters, and in such circumstances? It seems almost impossible, therefore, to engage either in science or action of any kind without acknowledging the doctrine of necessity, and this *inference* from motive to voluntary actions, from characters to conduct.

And indeed, when we consider how aptly *natural* and *moral* evidence link together, and form only one chain of argument, we shall make no scruple to allow that they are of the same nature, and derived from the same principles. A prisoner who has neither money nor interest, discovers the impossibility of his escape, as well when he considers the obstinacy of the gaoler, as the walls and bars with which he is surrounded; and, in all attempts for his freedom, chooses rather to work upon the stone and iron of the one, than upon the inflexible nature of the other. The same prisoner, when conducted to the scaffold, foresees his death as certainly from the constancy and fidelity of his guards, as from the operation of the axe or wheel. His mind runs along a certain train of ideas: The refusal of the soldiers to consent to his escape; the action of the executioner; the separation of the head and body; bleeding, convulsive motions, and death. Here is a connected chain of natural causes and voluntary actions; but the mind feels no difference between them in passing from one link to another: Nor is less certain of the future event than if it were connected with the objects present to the memory or senses, by a train of causes, cemented together by what we are pleased to call a *physical* necessity. The same experienced union has the same effect on the mind, whether the united objects be motives, volition, and actions; or figure and motion. We may change the name of things; but their nature and their operation on the understanding never change.

Were a man, whom I know to be honest and opulent, and with whom I live in intimate friendship, to come into my house, where I am surrounded with my servants, I rest assured that he is not to stab me before he leaves it in order to rob me of my silver standish; and I no more suspect this event than the falling of the house itself, which is new, and solidly built and founded. — *But he may have been seized with a sudden and unknown frenzy.* — So may a sudden earthquake arise, and shake and tumble my house about my ears. I shall therefore change the suppositions. I shall say that I know with certainty that he is not to put his hand into the fire and hold it there till it be consumed: And this event, I think I can foretell with the same assurance, as that, if he throw himself out at the window, and meet with no obstruction, he will not remain a moment suspended in the air. No suspicion of an unknown frenzy can give the least possibility to the former event, which is so contrary to all the known principles of human nature. A man who at noon leaves his purse full of gold on the pavement at Charing-Cross, may as well expect that it will fly away like a feather, as that he will find it untouched an hour after. Above one half of human reasonings contain inferences of a similar nature, attended with more or less degrees of certainty proportioned to our experience of the usual conduct of mankind in such particular situations.

71. I have frequently considered, what could possibly be the reason why all mankind, though they have ever, without hesitation, acknowledged the doctrine of necessity in their whole practice and reasoning, have yet discovered such a reluctance to acknowledge it in words, and have rather shown a propensity, in all ages, to profess the contrary opinion. The matter, I think, may be accounted for after the following manner. If we examine the operations of body, and the production of effects from their causes, we shall find that all our faculties can never carry us farther in our knowledge of this relation than barely to observe that particular objects are *constantly conjoined* together, and that the mind is carried, by a *customary transition*, from the appearance of one to the belief of the other. But though this conclusion concerning human ignorance be the result of the strictest scrutiny of this subject, men still entertain a strong propensity to believe that they penetrate farther into the powers of nature, and perceive something like a necessary connexion between the cause and the effect. When again they turn their reflections towards the operations of their own minds, and *feel* no such connexion of the motive and the action; they are thence apt to suppose, that there is a difference between the effects which result from material force, and those which arise from thought and intelligence. But being once convinced that we know nothing farther of causation of any kind than merely the *constant conjunction* of objects, and the consequent *inference* of the mind from one to another, and finding that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary actions; we may be more easily led to own the same necessity common to all causes. And though this reasoning may contradict the systems of many philosophers, in ascribing necessity to the determinations of the will, we shall find, upon reflection, that they dissent from it in words only, not in their real sentiment. Necessity, according to the sense in which it is here taken, has never yet been rejected, nor can ever, I think, be rejected by any philosopher. It may only, perhaps, be pretended that the mind can perceive, in the operations of matter, some farther connexion between the cause and effect; and connexion that has not place in voluntary actions of intelligent beings. Now whether it be so or not, can only appear upon examination; and it is incumbent on these philosophers to make good their assertion, by

defining or describing that necessity, and pointing it out to us in the operations of material causes.

72. It would seem, indeed, that men begin at the wrong end of this question concerning liberty and necessity, when they enter upon it by examining the faculties of the soul, the influence of the understanding, and the operations of the will. Let them first discuss a more simple question, namely, the operations of body and of brute unintelligent matter; and try whether they can there form any idea of causation and necessity, except that of a constant conjunction of objects, and subsequent inference of the mind from one to another. If these circumstances form, in reality, the whole of that necessity, which we conceive in matter, and if these circumstances be also universally acknowledged to take place in the operations of the mind, the dispute is at an end; at least, must be owned to be thenceforth merely verbal. But as long as we will rashly suppose, that we have some farther idea of necessity and causation in the operations of external objects; at the same time, that we can find nothing farther in the voluntary actions of the mind; there is no possibility of bringing the question to any determinate issue, while we proceed upon so erroneous a supposition. The only method of undeceiving us is to mount up higher; to examine the narrow extent of science when applied to material causes; and to convince ourselves that all we know of them is the constant conjunction and inference above mentioned. We may, perhaps, find that it is with difficulty we are induced to fix such narrow limits to human understanding: But we can afterwards find no difficulty when we come to apply this doctrine to the actions of the will. For as it is evident that these have a regular conjunction with motives and circumstances and characters, and as we always draw inferences from one to the other, we must be obliged to acknowledge in words that necessity, which we have already avowed, in every deliberation of our lives, and in every step of our conduct and behaviour.

73. But to proceed in this reconciling project with regard to the question of liberty and necessity; the most contentious question of metaphysics, the most contentious science; it will not require many words to prove, that all mankind have ever agreed in the doctrine of liberty as well as in that of necessity, and that the whole dispute, in this respect also, has been hitherto merely verbal. For what is meant by liberty, when applied to voluntary actions? We cannot surely mean that actions have so little connexion with motives, inclinations, and circumstances, that one does not follow with a

certain degree of uniformity from the other, and that one affords no inference by which we can conclude the existence of the other. For these are plain and acknowledged matters of fact. By liberty, then, we can only mean *a power of acting or not acting, according to the determinations of the will;* that is, if we choose to remain at rest, we may; if we choose to move, we also may. Now this hypothetical liberty is universally allowed to belong to every one who is not a prisoner and in chains. Here, then, is no subject of dispute.

74. Whatever definition we may give of liberty, we should be careful to observe two requisite circumstances; *first,* that it be consistent with plain matter of fact; *secondly,* that it be consistent with itself. If we observe these circumstances, and render our definition intelligible, I am persuaded that all mankind will be found of one opinion with regard to it.

It is universally allowed that nothing exists without a cause of its existence, and that chance, when strictly examined, is a mere negative word, and means not any real power which has anywhere a being in nature. But it is pretended that some causes are necessary, some not necessary. Here then is the advantage of definitions. Let any one *define* a cause, without comprehending, as a part of the definition, a *necessary connexion* with its effect; and let him show distinctly the origin of the idea, expressed by the definition; and I shall readily give up the whole controversy. But if the foregoing explication of the matter be received, this must be absolutely impracticable. Had not objects a regular conjunction with each other, we should never have entertained any notion of cause and effect; and this regular conjunction produces that inference of the understanding, which is the only connexion, that we can have any comprehension of. Whoever attempts a definition of cause, exclusive of these circumstances, will be obliged either to employ unintelligible terms or such as are synonymous to the term which he endeavours to define. And if the definition above mentioned be admitted; liberty, when opposed to necessity, not to constraint, is the same thing with chance; which is universally allowed to have no existence.

PART II.

75. There is no method of reasoning more common, and yet none more blameable, than, in philosophical disputes, to endeavour the refutation of

any hypothesis, by a pretence of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads to absurdities, it is certainly false; but it is not certain that an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence. Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be forborne; as serving nothing to the discovery of truth, but only to make the person of an antagonist odious. This I observe in general, without pretending to draw any advantage from it. I frankly submit to an examination of this kind, and shall venture to affirm that the doctrines, both of necessity and of liberty, as above explained, are not only consistent with morality, but are absolutely essential to its support.

Necessity may be defined two ways, conformably to the two definitions of *cause*, of which it makes an essential part. It consists either in the constant conjunction of like objects, or in the inference of the understanding from one object to another. Now necessity, in both these senses, (which, indeed, are at bottom the same) has universally, though tacitly, in the schools, in the pulpit, and in common life, been allowed to belong to the will of man; and no one has ever pretended to deny that we can draw inferences concerning human actions, and that those inferences are founded on the experienced union of like actions, with like motives, inclinations, and circumstances. The only particular in which any one can differ, is, that either, perhaps, he will refuse to give the name of necessity to this property of human actions: But as long as the meaning is understood, I hope the word can do no harm: Or that he will maintain it possible to discover something farther in the operations of matter. But this, it must be acknowledged, can be of no consequence to morality or religion, whatever it may be to natural philosophy or metaphysics. We may here be mistaken in asserting that there is no idea of any other necessity or connexion in the actions of body: But surely we ascribe nothing to the actions of the mind, but what everyone does, and must readily allow of. We change no circumstance in the received orthodox system with regard to the will, but only in that with regard to material objects and causes. Nothing, therefore, can be more innocent, at least, than this doctrine.

76. All laws being founded on rewards and punishments, it is supposed as a fundamental principle, that these motives have a regular and uniform influence on the mind, and both produce the good and prevent the evil actions. We may give to this influence what name we please; but, as it is usually conjoined with the action, it must be esteemed a *cause*, and be

looked upon as an instance of that necessity, which we would here establish.

The only proper object of hatred or vengeance is a person or creature, endowed with thought and consciousness; and when any criminal or injurious actions excite that passion, it is only by their relation to the person, or connexion with him. Actions are, by their very nature, temporary and perishing; and where they proceed not from some *cause* in the character and disposition of the person who performed them, they can neither redound to his honour, if good; nor infamy, if evil. The actions themselves may be blameable; they may be contrary to all the rules of morality and religion: But the person is not answerable for them; and as they proceeded from nothing in him that is durable and constant, and leave nothing of that nature behind them, it is impossible he can, upon their account, become the object of punishment or vengeance. According to the principle, therefore, which denies necessity, and consequently causes, a man is as pure and untainted, after having committed the most horrid crime, as at the first moment of his birth, nor is his character anywise concerned in his actions, since they are not derived from it, and the wickedness of the one can never be used as a proof of the depravity of the other.

Men are not blamed for such actions as they perform ignorantly and casually, whatever may be the consequences. Why? but because the principles of these actions are only momentary, and terminate in them alone. Men are less blamed for such actions as they perform hastily and unpremeditately than for such as proceed from deliberation. For what reason? but because a hasty temper, though a constant cause or principle in the mind, operates only by intervals, and infects not the whole character. Again, repentance wipes off every crime, if attended with a reformation of life and manners. How is this to be accounted for? but by asserting that actions render a person criminal merely as they are proofs of criminal principles in the mind; and when, by an alteration of these principles, they cease to be just proofs, they likewise cease to be criminal. But, except upon the doctrine of necessity, they never were just proofs, and consequently never were criminal.

77. It will be equally easy to prove, and from the same arguments, that *liberty*, according to that definition above mentioned, in which all men agree, is also essential to morality, and that no human actions, where it is wanting, are susceptible of any moral qualities, or can be the objects either

of approbation or dislike. For as actions are objects of our moral sentiment, so far only as they are indications of the internal character, passions, and affections; it is impossible that they can give rise either to praise or blame, where they proceed not from these principles, but are derived altogether from external violence.

78. I pretend not to have obviated or removed all objections to this theory, with regard to necessity and liberty. I can foresee other objections, derived from topics which have not here been treated of. It may be said, for instance, that, if voluntary actions be subjected to the same laws of necessity with the operations of matter, there is a continued chain of necessary causes, pre-ordained and pre-determined, reaching from the original cause of all to every single volition of every human creature. No contingency anywhere in the universe; no indifference; no liberty. While we act, we are, at the same time, acted upon. The ultimate Author of all our volitions is the Creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in that particular position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable necessity, must result. Human actions, therefore, either can have no moral turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause; or if they have any turpitude, they must involve our Creator in the same guilt, while he is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author. For as a man, who fired a mine, is answerable for all the consequences whether the train he employed be long or short; so wherever a continued chain of necessary causes is fixed, that Being, either finite or infinite, who produces the first, is likewise the author of all the rest, and must both bear the blame and acquire the praise which belong to them. Our clear and unalterable ideas of morality establish this rule, upon unquestionable reasons, when we examine the consequences of any human action; and these reasons must still have greater force when applied to the volitions and intentions of a Being infinitely wise and powerful. Ignorance or impotence may be pleaded for so limited a creature as man; but those imperfections have no place in our Creator. He foresaw, he ordained, he intended all those actions of men, which we so rashly pronounce criminal. And we must therefore conclude, either that they are not criminal, or that the Deity, not man, is accountable for them. But as either of these positions is absurd and impious, it follows, that the doctrine from which they are deduced cannot possibly be true, as being liable to all the same objections. An absurd consequence, if necessary, proves the original doctrine to be

absurd; in the same manner as criminal actions render criminal the original cause, if the connexion between them be necessary and evitable.

This objection consists of two parts, which we shall examine separately; *First*, that, if human actions can be traced up, by a necessary chain, to the Deity, they can never be criminal; on account of the infinite perfection of that Being from whom they are derived, and who can intend nothing but what is altogether good and laudable. Or, *Secondly*, if they be criminal, we must retract the attribute of perfection, which we ascribe to the Deity, and must acknowledge him to be the ultimate author of guilt and moral turpitude in all his creatures.

79. The answer to the first objection seems obvious and convincing. There are many philosophers who, after an exact scrutiny of all the phenomena of nature, conclude, that the WHOLE, considered as one system, is, in every period of its existence, ordered with perfect benevolence; and that the utmost possible happiness will, in the end, result to all created beings, without any mixture of positive or absolute ill or misery. Every physical ill, say they, makes an essential part of this benevolent system, and could not possibly be removed, even by the Deity himself, considered as a wise agent, without giving entrance to greater ill, or excluding greater good, which will result from it. From this theory, some philosophers, and the ancient *Stoics* among the rest, derived a topic of consolation under all afflictions, while they taught their pupils that those ills under which they laboured were, in reality, goods to the universe; and that to an enlarged view, which could comprehend the whole system of nature, every event became an object of joy and exultation. But though this topic be specious and sublime, it was soon found in practice weak and ineffectual. You would surely more irritate than appease a man lying under the racking pains of the gout by preaching up to him the rectitude of those general laws, which produced the malignant humours in his body, and led them through the proper canals, to the sinews and nerves, where they now excite such acute torments. These enlarged views may, for a moment, please the imagination of a speculative man, who is placed in ease and security; but neither can they dwell with constancy on his mind, even though undisturbed by the emotions of pain or passion; much less can they maintain their ground when attacked by such powerful antagonists. The affections take a narrower and more natural survey of their object; and by an economy, more

suitable to the infirmity of human minds, regard alone the beings around us, and are actuated by such events as appear good or ill to the private system.

80. The case is the same with *moral* as with *physical* ill. It cannot reasonably be supposed, that those remote considerations, which are found of so little efficacy with regard to one, will have a more powerful influence with regard to the other. The mind of man is so formed by nature that, upon the appearance of certain characters, dispositions, and actions, it immediately feels the sentiment of approbation or blame; nor are there any emotions more essential to its frame and constitution. The characters which engage our approbation are chiefly such as contribute to the peace and security of human society; as the characters which excite blame are chiefly such as tend to public detriment and disturbance: Whence it may reasonably be presumed, that the moral sentiments arise, either mediately or immediately, from a reflection of these opposite interests. What though philosophical meditations establish a different opinion or conjecture; that everything is right with regard to the WHOLE, and that the qualities, which disturb society, are, in the main, as beneficial, and are as suitable to the primary intention of nature as those which more directly promote its happiness and welfare? Are such remote and uncertain speculations able to counterbalance the sentiments which arise from the natural and immediate view of the objects? A man who is robbed of a considerable sum; does he find his vexation for the loss anywise diminished by these sublime reflections? Why then should his moral resentment against the crime be supposed incompatible with them? Or why should not the acknowledgment of a real distinction between vice and virtue be reconcileable to all speculative systems of philosophy, as well as that of a real distinction between personal beauty and deformity? Both these distinctions are founded in the natural sentiments of the human mind: And these sentiments are not to be controuled or altered by any philosophical theory or speculation whatsoever.

81. The *second* objection admits not of so easy and satisfactory an answer; nor is it possible to explain distinctly, how the Deity can be the mediate cause of all the actions of men, without being the author of sin and moral turpitude. These are mysteries, which mere natural and unassisted reason is very unfit to handle; and whatever system she embraces, she must find herself involved in inextricable difficulties, and even contradictions, at every step which she takes with regard to such subjects. To reconcile the

indifference and contingency of human actions with prescience; or to defend absolute decrees, and yet free the Deity from being the author of sin, has been found hitherto to exceed all the power of philosophy. Happy, if she be thence sensible of her temerity, when she pries into these sublime mysteries; and leaving a scene so full of obscurities and perplexities, return, with suitable modesty, to her true and proper province, the examination of common life; where she will find difficulties enough to employ her enquiries, without launching into so boundless an ocean of doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction!

SECTION IX.

OF THE REASON OF ANIMALS.

82. All our reasonings concerning matter of fact are founded on a species of Analogy, which leads us to expect from any cause the same events, which we have observed to result from similar causes. Where the causes are entirely similar, the analogy is perfect, and the inference, drawn from it, is regarded as certain and conclusive: nor does any man ever entertain a doubt, where he sees a piece of iron, that it will have weight and cohesion of parts; as in all other instances, which have ever fallen under his observation. But where the objects have not so exact a similarity, the analogy is less perfect, and the inference is less conclusive; though still it has some force, in proportion to the degree of similarity and resemblance. The anatomical observations, formed upon one animal, are, by this species of reasoning, extended to all animals; and it is certain, that when the circulation of the blood, for instance, is clearly proved to have place in one creature, as a frog, or fish, it forms a strong presumption, that the same principle has place in all. These analogical observations may be carried farther, even to this science, of which we are now treating; and any theory, by which we explain the operations of the understanding, or the origin and connexion of the passions in man, will acquire additional authority, if we find, that the same theory is requisite to explain the same phenomena in all other animals. We shall make trial of this, with regard to the hypothesis, by which we have, in the foregoing discourse, endeavoured to account for all experimental reasonings; and it is hoped, that this new point of view will serve to confirm all our former observations.

83. *First*, It seems evident, that animals as well as men learn many things from experience, and infer, that the same events will always follow from the same causes. By this principle they become acquainted with the more obvious properties of external objects, and gradually, from their birth, treasure up a knowledge of the nature of fire, water, earth, stones, heights, depths, &c., and of the effects which result from their operation. The

ignorance and inexperience of the young are here plainly distinguishable from the cunning and sagacity of the old, who have learned, by long observation, to avoid what hurt them, and to pursue what gave ease or pleasure. A horse, that has been accustomed to the field, becomes acquainted with the proper height which he can leap, and will never attempt what exceeds his force and ability. An old greyhound will trust the more fatiguing part of the chace to the younger, and will place himself so as to meet the hare in her doubles; nor are the conjectures, which he forms on this occasion, founded in any thing but his observation and experience.

This is still more evident from the effects of discipline and education on animals, who, by the proper application of rewards and punishments, may be taught any course of action, and most contrary to their natural instincts and propensities. Is it not experience, which renders a dog apprehensive of pain, when you menace him, or lift up the whip to beat him? Is it not even experience, which makes him answer to his name, and infer, from such an arbitrary sound, that you mean him rather than any of his fellows, and intend to call him, when you pronounce it in a certain manner, and with a certain tone and accent?

In all these cases, we may observe, that the animal infers some fact beyond what immediately strikes his senses; and that this inference is altogether founded on past experience, while the creature expects from the present object the same consequences, which it has always found in its observation to result from similar objects.

84. *Secondly*, It is impossible, that this inference of the animal can be founded on any process of argument or reasoning, by which he concludes, that like events must follow like objects, and that the course of nature will always be regular in its operations. For if there be in reality any arguments of this nature, they surely lie too abstruse for the observation of such imperfect understandings; since it may well employ the utmost care and attention of a philosophic genius to discover and observe them. Animals, therefore, are not guided in these inferences by reasoning: Neither are children: Neither are the generality of mankind, in their ordinary actions and conclusions: Neither are philosophers themselves, who, in all the active parts of life, are, in the main, the same with the vulgar, and are governed by the same maxims. Nature must have provided some other principle, of more ready, and more general use and application; nor can an operation of such immense consequence in life, as that of inferring effects from causes, be

trusted to the uncertain process of reasoning and argumentation. Were this doubtful with regard to men, it seems to admit of no question with regard to the brute creation; and the conclusion being once firmly established in the one, we have a strong presumption, from all the rules of analogy, that it ought to be universally admitted, without any exception or reserve. It is custom alone, which engages animals, from every object, that strikes their senses, to infer its usual attendant, and carries their imagination, from the appearance of the one, to conceive the other, in that particular manner, which we denominate *belief*. No other explication can be given of this operation, in all the higher, as well as lower classes of sensitive beings, which fall under our notice and observation .

85. But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it, which they derive from the original hand of nature; which much exceed the share of capacity they possess on ordinary occasions; and in which they improve, little or nothing, by the longest practice and experience. These we denominate Instincts, and are so apt to admire as something very extraordinary, and inexplicable by all the disquisitions of human understanding. But our wonder will, perhaps, cease or diminish, when we consider, that the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves; and in its chief operations, is not directed by any such relations or comparisons of ideas, as are the proper objects of our intellectual faculties. Though the instinct be different, yet still it is an instinct, which teaches a man to avoid the fire; as much as that, which teaches a bird, with such exactness, the art of incubation, and the whole economy and order of its nursery.

SECTION X

OF MIRACLES.

PART I.

86. There is, in Dr. Tillotson’s writings, an argument against the *real presence*, which is as concise, and elegant, and strong as any argument can possibly be supposed against a doctrine, so little worthy of a serious refutation. It is acknowledged on all hands, says that learned prelate, that the authority, either of the scripture or of tradition, is founded merely in the testimony of the apostles, who were eye-witnesses to those miracles of our Saviour, by which he proved his divine mission. Our evidence, then, for the truth of the *Christian* religion is less than the evidence for the truth of our senses; because, even in the first authors of our religion, it was no greater; and it is evident it must diminish in passing from them to their disciples; nor can any one rest such confidence in their testimony, as in the immediate object of his senses. But a weaker evidence can never destroy a stronger; and therefore, were the doctrine of the real presence ever so clearly revealed in scripture, it were directly contrary to the rules of just reasoning to give our assent to it. It contradicts sense, though both the scripture and tradition, on which it is supposed to be built, carry not such evidence with them as sense; when they are considered merely as external evidences, and are not brought home to every one’s breast, by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit.

Nothing is so convenient as a decisive argument of this kind, which must at least *silence* the most arrogant bigotry and superstition, and free us from their impertinent solicitations. I flatter myself, that I have discovered an argument of a like nature, which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and consequently, will be useful as long as the world endures. For so long, I presume, will the accounts of miracles and prodigies be found in all history, sacred and profane.

87. Though experience be our only guide in reasoning concerning matters of fact; it must be acknowledged, that this guide is not altogether infallible, but in some cases is apt to lead us into errors. One, who in our climate, should expect better weather in any week of June than in one of December, would reason justly, and conformably to experience; but it is certain, that he may happen, in the event, to find himself mistaken. However, we may observe, that, in such a case, he would have no cause to complain of experience; because it commonly informs us beforehand of the uncertainty, by that contrariety of events, which we may learn from a diligent observation. All effects follow not with like certainty from their supposed causes. Some events are found, in all countries and all ages, to have been constantly conjoined together: Others are found to have been more variable, and sometimes to disappoint our expectations; so that, in our reasonings concerning matter of fact, there are all imaginable degrees of assurance, from the highest certainty to the lowest species of moral evidence.

A wise man, therefore, proportions his belief to the evidence. In such conclusions as are founded on an infallible experience, he expects the event with the last degree of assurance, and regards his past experience as a full *proof* of the future existence of that event. In other cases, he proceeds with more caution: He weighs the opposite experiments: He considers which side is supported by the greater number of experiments: to that side he inclines, with doubt and hesitation; and when at last he fixes his judgement, the evidence exceeds not what we properly call *probability*. All probability, then, supposes an opposition of experiments and observations, where the one side is found to overbalance the other, and to produce a degree of evidence, proportioned to the superiority. A hundred instances or experiments on one side, and fifty on another, afford a doubtful expectation of any event; though a hundred uniform experiments, with only one that is contradictory, reasonably beget a pretty strong degree of assurance. In all cases, we must balance the opposite experiments, where they are opposite, and deduct the smaller number from the greater, in order to know the exact force of the superior evidence.

88. To apply these principles to a particular instance; we may observe, that there is no species of reasoning more common, more useful, and even necessary to human life, than that which is derived from the testimony of men, and the reports of eye-witnesses and spectators. This species of reasoning, perhaps, one may deny to be founded on the relation of cause

and effect. I shall not dispute about a word. It will be sufficient to observe that our assurance in any argument of this kind is derived from no other principle than our observation of the veracity of human testimony, and of the usual conformity of facts to the reports of witnesses. It being a general maxim, that no objects have any discoverable connexion together, and that all the inferences, which we can draw from one to another, are founded merely on our experience of their constant and regular conjunction; it is evident, that we ought not to make an exception to this maxim in favour of human testimony, whose connexion with any event seems, in itself, as little necessary as any other. Were not the memory tenacious to a certain degree, had not men commonly an inclination to truth and a principle of probity; were they not sensible to shame, when detected in a falsehood: Were not these, I say, discovered by experience to be qualities, inherent in human nature, we should never repose the least confidence in human testimony. A man delirious, or noted for falsehood and villany, has no manner of authority with us.

And as the evidence, derived from witnesses and human testimony, is founded on past experience, so it varies with the experience, and is regarded either as a *proof* or a *probability*, according as the conjunction between any particular kind of report and any kind of object has been found to be constant or variable. There are a number of circumstances to be taken into consideration in all judgements of this kind; and the ultimate standard, by which we determine all disputes, that may arise concerning them, is always derived from experience and observation. Where this experience is not entirely uniform on any side, it is attended with an unavoidable contrariety in our judgements, and with the same opposition and mutual destruction of argument as in every other kind of evidence. We frequently hesitate concerning the reports of others. We balance the opposite circumstances, which cause any doubt or uncertainty; and when we discover a superiority on any side, we incline to it; but still with a diminution of assurance, in proportion to the force of its antagonist.

89. This contrariety of evidence, in the present case, may be derived from several different causes; from the opposition of contrary testimony; from the character or number of the witnesses; from the manner of their delivering their testimony; or from the union of all these circumstances. We entertain a suspicion concerning any matter of fact, when the witnesses contradict each other; when they are but few, or of a doubtful character;

when they have an interest in what they affirm; when they deliver their testimony with hesitation, or on the contrary, with too violent asseverations. There are many other particulars of the same kind, which may diminish or destroy the force of any argument, derived from human testimony.

Suppose, for instance, that the fact, which the testimony endeavours to establish, partakes of the extraordinary and the marvellous; in that case, the evidence, resulting from the testimony, admits of a diminution, greater or less, in proportion as the fact is more or less unusual. The reason why we place any credit in witnesses and historians, is not derived from any *connexion*, which we perceive *a priori*, between testimony and reality, but because we are accustomed to find a conformity between them. But when the fact attested is such a one as has seldom fallen under our observation, here is a contest of two opposite experiences; of which the one destroys the other, as far as its force goes, and the superior can only operate on the mind by the force, which remains. The very same principle of experience, which gives us a certain degree of assurance in the testimony of witnesses, gives us also, in this case, another degree of assurance against the fact, which they endeavour to establish; from which contradition there necessarily arises a counterpoize, and mutual destruction of belief and authority.

I should not believe such a story were it told me by Cato, was a proverbial saying in Rome, even during the lifetime of that philosophical patriot. The incredibility of a fact, it was allowed, might invalidate so great an authority.

The Indian prince, who refused to believe the first relations concerning the effects of frost, reasoned justly; and it naturally required very strong testimony to engage his assent to facts, that arose from a state of nature, with which he was unacquainted, and which bore so little analogy to those events, of which he had had constant and uniform experience. Though they were not contrary to his experience, they were not conformable to it.

90. But in order to encrease the probability against the testimony of witnesses, let us suppose, that the fact, which they affirm, instead of being only marvellous, is really miraculous; and suppose also, that the testimony considered apart and in itself, amounts to an entire proof; in that case, there is proof against proof, of which the strongest must prevail, but still with a diminution of its force, in proportion to that of its antagonist.

A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. Why is it more than probable, that all men must die; that lead cannot, of itself, remain suspended in the air; that fire consumes wood, and is extinguished by water; unless it be, that these events are found agreeable to the laws of nature, and there is required a violation of these laws, or in other words, a miracle to prevent them? Nothing is esteemed a miracle, if it ever happen in the common course of nature. It is no miracle that a man, seemingly in good health, should die on a sudden: because such a kind of death, though more unusual than any other, has yet been frequently observed to happen. But it is a miracle, that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed in any age or country. There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation. And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full *proof*, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle; nor can such a proof be destroyed, or the miracle rendered credible, but by an opposite proof, which is superior.

91. The plain consequence is (and it is a general maxim worthy of our attention), 'That no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous, than the fact, which it endeavours to establish; and even in that case there is a mutual destruction of arguments, and the superior only gives us an assurance suitable to that degree of force, which remains, after deducting the inferior.' When anyone tells me, that he saw a dead man restored to life, I immediately consider with myself, whether it be more probable, that this person should either deceive or be deceived, or that the fact, which he relates, should really have happened. I weigh the one miracle against the other; and according to the superiority, which I discover, I pronounce my decision, and always reject the greater miracle. If the falsehood of his testimony would be more miraculous, than the event which he relates; then, and not till then, can he pretend to command my belief or opinion.

PART II.

92. In the foregoing reasoning we have supposed, that the testimony, upon which a miracle is founded, may possibly amount to an entire proof, and that the falsehood of that testimony would be a real prodigy: But it is easy

to shew, that we have been a great deal too liberal in our concession, and that there never was a miraculous event established on so full an evidence.

For *first*, there is not to be found, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good-sense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity, as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind, as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and at the same time, attesting facts performed in such a public manner and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable: All which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in the testimony of men.

93. *Secondly*. We may observe in human nature a principle which, if strictly examined, will be found to diminish extremely the assurance, which we might, from human testimony, have, in any kind of prodigy. The maxim, by which we commonly conduct ourselves in our reasonings, is, that the objects, of which we have no experience, resembles those, of which we have; that what we have found to be most usual is always most probable; and that where there is an opposition of arguments, we ought to give the preference to such as are founded on the greatest number of past observations. But though, in proceeding by this rule, we readily reject any fact which is unusual and incredible in an ordinary degree; yet in advancing farther, the mind observes not always the same rule; but when anything is affirmed utterly absurd and miraculous, it rather the more readily admits of such a fact, upon account of that very circumstance, which ought to destroy all its authority. The passion of *surprise* and *wonder*, arising from miracles, being an agreeable emotion, gives a sensible tendency towards the belief of those events, from which it is derived. And this goes so far, that even those who cannot enjoy this pleasure immediately, nor can believe those miraculous events, of which they are informed, yet love to partake of the satisfaction at second-hand or by rebound, and place a pride and delight in exciting the admiration of others.

With what greediness are the miraculous accounts of travellers received, their descriptions of sea and land monsters, their relations of wonderful adventures, strange men, and uncouth manners? But if the spirit of religion join itself to the love of wonder, there is an end of common sense; and human testimony, in these circumstances, loses all pretensions to authority.

A religionist may be an enthusiast, and imagine he sees what has no reality: he may know his narrative to be false, and yet persevere in it, with the best intentions in the world, for the sake of promoting so holy a cause: or even where this delusion has not place, vanity, excited by so strong a temptation, operates on him more powerfully than on the rest of mankind in any other circumstances; and self-interest with equal force. His auditors may not have, and commonly have not, sufficient judgement to canvass his evidence: what judgement they have, they renounce by principle, in these sublime and mysterious subjects: or if they were ever so willing to employ it, passion and a heated imagination disturb the regularity of its operations. Their credulity increases his impudence: and his impudence overpowers their credulity.

Eloquence, when at its highest pitch, leaves little room for reason or reflection; but addressing itself entirely to the fancy or the affections, captivates the willing hearers, and subdues their understanding. Happily, this pitch it seldom attains. But what a Tully or a Demosthenes could scarcely effect over a Roman or Athenian audience, every *Capuchin*, every itinerant or stationary teacher can perform over the generality of mankind, and in a higher degree, by touching such gross and vulgar passions.

The many instances of forged miracles, and prophecies, and supernatural events, which, in all ages, have either been detected by contrary evidence, or which detect themselves by their absurdity, prove sufficiently the strong propensity of mankind to the extraordinary and the marvellous, and ought reasonably to beget a suspicion against all relations of this kind. This is our natural way of thinking, even with regard to the most common and most credible events. For instance: There is no kind of report which rises so easily, and spreads so quickly, especially in country places and provincial towns, as those concerning marriages; insomuch that two young persons of equal condition never see each other twice, but the whole neighbourhood immediately join them together. The pleasure of telling a piece of news so interesting, of propagating it, and of being the first reporters of it, spreads the intelligence. And this is so well known, that no man of sense gives attention to these reports, till he find them confirmed by some greater evidence. Do not the same passions, and others still stronger, incline the generality of mankind to believe and report, with the greatest vehemence and assurance, all religious miracles?

94. *Thirdly*. It forms a strong presumption against all supernatural and miraculous relations, that they are observed chiefly to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations; or if a civilized people has ever given admission to any of them, that people will be found to have received them from ignorant and barbarous ancestors, who transmitted them with that inviolable sanction and authority, which always attend received opinions. When we peruse the first histories of all nations, we are apt to imagine ourselves transported into some new world; where the whole frame of nature is disjointed, and every element performs its operations in a different manner, from what it does at present. Battles, revolutions, pestilence, famine and death, are never the effect of those natural causes, which we experience. Prodigies, omens, oracles, judgements, quite obscure the few natural events, that are intermingled with them. But as the former grow thinner every page, in proportion as we advance nearer the enlightened ages, we soon learn, that there is nothing mysterious or supernatural in the case, but that all proceeds from the usual propensity of mankind towards the marvellous, and that, though this inclination may at intervals receive a check from sense and learning, it can never be thoroughly extirpated from human nature.

It is strange, a judicious reader is apt to say, upon the perusal of these wonderful historians, *that such prodigious events never happen in our days*. But it is nothing strange, I hope, that men should lie in all ages. You must surely have seen instances enough of that frailty. You have yourself heard many such marvellous relations started, which, being treated with scorn by all the wise and judicious, have at last been abandoned even by the vulgar. Be assured, that those renowned lies, which have spread and flourished to such a monstrous height, arose from like beginnings; but being sown in a more proper soil, shot up at last into prodigies almost equal to those which they relate.

It was a wise policy in that false prophet, Alexander, who though now forgotten, was once so famous, to lay the first scene of his impostures in Paphlagonia, where, as Lucian tells us, the people were extremely ignorant and stupid, and ready to swallow even the grossest delusion. People at a distance, who are weak enough to think the matter at all worth enquiry, have no opportunity of receiving better information. The stories come magnified to them by a hundred circumstances. Fools are industrious in propagating the imposture; while the wise and learned are contented, in general, to deride its absurdity, without informing themselves of the particular facts, by which it may be distinctly refuted. And thus the impostor above mentioned was enabled to proceed, from his ignorant Paphlagonians, to the enlisting of votaries, even among the Grecian philosophers, and men of the most eminent rank and distinction in Rome: nay, could engage the attention of that sage emperor Marcus Aurelius; so far as to make him trust the success of a military expedition to his delusive prophecies.

The advantages are so great, of starting an imposture among an ignorant people, that, even though the delusion should be too gross to impose on the generality of them (*which, though seldom, is sometimes the case*) it has a much better chance for succeeding in remote countries, than if the first scene had been laid in a city renowned for arts and knowledge. The most ignorant and barbarous of these barbarians carry the report abroad. None of their countrymen have a large correspondence, or sufficient credit and authority to contradict and beat down the delusion. Men’s inclination to the marvellous has full opportunity to display itself. And thus a story, which is universally exploded in the place where it was first started, shall pass for certain at a thousand miles distance. But had Alexander fixed his residence at Athens, the philosophers of that renowned mart of learning had immediately spread, throughout the whole Roman empire, their sense of the matter; which, being supported by so great authority, and displayed by all the force of reason and eloquence, had entirely opened the eyes of mankind. It is true; Lucian, passing by chance through Paphlagonia, had an opportunity of performing this good office. But, though much to be wished, it does not always happen, that every Alexander meets with a Lucian, ready to expose and detect his impostures.

95. I may add as a *fourth* reason, which diminishes the authority of prodigies, that there is no testimony for any, even those which have not been expressly detected, that is not opposed by an infinite number of witnesses; so that not only the miracle destroys the credit of testimony, but the testimony destroys itself. To make this the better understood, let us consider, that, in matters of religion, whatever is different is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China should, all of them, be established on any solid foundation. Every miracle, therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct scope is to establish the

particular system to which it is attributed; so has it the same force, though more indirectly, to overthrow every other system. In destroying a rival system, it likewise destroys the credit of those miracles, on which that system was established; so that all the prodigies of different religions are to be regarded as contrary facts, and the evidences of these prodigies, whether weak or strong, as opposite to each other. According to this method of reasoning, when we believe any miracle of Mahomet or his successors, we have for our warrant the testimony of a few barbarous Arabians: And on the other hand, we are to regard the authority of Titus Livius, Plutarch, Tacitus, and, in short, of all the authors and witnesses, Grecian, Chinese, and Roman Catholic, who have related any miracle in their particular religion; I say, we are to regard their testimony in the same light as if they had mentioned that Mahometan miracle, and had in express terms contradicted it, with the same certainty as they have for the miracle they relate. This argument may appear over subtile and refined; but is not in reality different from the reasoning of a judge, who supposes, that the credit of two witnesses, maintaining a crime against any one, is destroyed by the testimony of two others, who affirm him to have been two hundred leagues distant, at the same instant when the crime is said to have been committed.

96. One of the best attested miracles in all profane history, is that which Tacitus reports of Vespasian, who cured a blind man in Alexandria, by means of his spittle, and a lame man by the mere touch of his foot; in obedience to a vision of the god Serapis, who had enjoined them to have recourse to the Emperor, for these miraculous cures. The story may be seen in that fine historian; where every circumstance seems to add weight to the testimony, and might be displayed at large with all the force of argument and eloquence, if any one were now concerned to enforce the evidence of that exploded and idolatrous superstition. The gravity, solidity, age, and probity of so great an emperor, who, through the whole course of his life, conversed in a familiar manner with his friends and courtiers, and never affected those extraordinary airs of divinity assumed by Alexander and Demetrius. The historian, a cotemporary writer, noted for candour and veracity, and withal, the greatest and most penetrating genius, perhaps, of all antiquity; and so free from any tendency to credulity, that he even lies under the contrary imputation, of atheism and profaneness: The persons, from whose authority he related the miracle, of established character for judgement and veracity, as we may well presume; eye-witnesses of the fact,

and confirming their testimony, after the Flavian family was despoiled of the empire, and could no longer give any reward, as the price of a lie. *Utrumque, qui interfuere, nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium*. To which if we add the public nature of the facts, as related, it will appear, that no evidence can well be supposed stronger for so gross and so palpable a falsehood.

There is also a memorable story related by Cardinal de Retz, which may well deserve our consideration. When that intriguing politician fled into Spain, to avoid the persecution of his enemies, he passed through Saragossa, the capital of Arragon, where he was shewn, in the cathedral, a man, who had served seven years as a door-keeper, and was well known to every body in town, that had ever paid his devotions at that church. He had been seen, for so long a time, wanting a leg; but recovered that limb by the rubbing of holy oil upon the stump; and the cardinal assures us that he saw him with two legs. This miracle was vouched by all the canons of the church; and the whole company in town were appealed to for a confirmation of the fact; whom the cardinal found, by their zealous devotion, to be thorough believers of the miracle. Here the relater was also cotemporary to the supposed prodigy, of an incredulous and libertine character, as well as of great genius; the miracle of so *singular* a nature as could scarcely admit of a counterfeit, and the witnesses very numerous, and all of them, in a manner, spectators of the fact, to which they gave their testimony. And what adds mightily to the force of the evidence, and may double our surprise on this occasion, is, that the cardinal himself, who relates the story, seems not to give any credit to it, and consequently cannot be suspected of any concurrence in the holy fraud. He considered justly, that it was not requisite, in order to reject a fact of this nature, to be able accurately to disprove the testimony, and to trace its falsehood, through all the circumstances of knavery and credulity which produced it. He knew, that, as this was commonly altogether impossible at any small distance of time and place; so was it extremely difficult, even where one was immediately present, by reason of the bigotry, ignorance, cunning, and roguery of a great part of mankind. He therefore concluded, like a just reasoner, that such an evidence carried falsehood upon the very face of it, and that a miracle, supported by any human testimony, was more properly a subject of derision than of argument.

There surely never was a greater number of miracles ascribed to one person, than those, which were lately said to have been wrought in France upon the tomb of Abb(c) Paris, the famous Jansenist, with whose sanctity the people were so long deluded. The curing of the sick, giving hearing to the deaf, and sight to the blind, were every where talked of as the usual effects of that holy sepulchre. But what is more extraordinary; many of the miracles were immediately proved upon the spot, before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction, in a learned age, and on the most eminent theatre that is now in the world. Nor is this all: a relation of them was published and dispersed every where; nor were the *Jesuits*, though a learned body, supported by the civil magistrate, and determined enemies to those opinions, in whose favour the miracles were said to have been wrought, ever able distinctly to refute or detect them. Where shall we find such a number of circumstances, agreeing to the corroboration of one fact? And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events, which they relate? And this surely, in the eyes of all reasonable people, will alone be regarded as a sufficient refutation.

97. Is the consequence just, because some human testimony has the utmost force and authority in some cases, when it relates the battle of Philippi or Pharsalia for instance; that therefore all kinds of testimony must, in all cases, have equal force and authority? Suppose that the Caesarean and Pompeian factions had, each of them, claimed the victory in these battles, and that the historians of each party had uniformly ascribed the advantage to their own side; how could mankind, at this distance, have been able to determine between them? The contrariety is equally strong between the miracles related by Herodotus or Plutarch, and those delivered by Mariana, Bede, or any monkish historian.

The wise lend a very academic faith to every report which favours the passion of the reporter; whether it magnifies his country, his family, or himself, or in any other way strikes in with his natural inclinations and propensities. But what greater temptation than to appear a missionary, a prophet, an ambassador from heaven? Who would not encounter many dangers and difficulties, in order to attain so sublime a character? Or if, by the help of vanity and a heated imagination, a man has first made a convert of himself, and entered seriously into the delusion; who ever scruples to make use of pious frauds, in support of so holy and meritorious a cause?

The smallest spark may here kindle into the greatest flame; because the materials are always prepared for it. The *avidum genus auricularum*, the gazing populace, receive greedily, without examination, whatever sooths superstition, and promotes wonder.

How many stories of this nature have, in all ages, been detected and exploded in their infancy? How many more have been celebrated for a time, and have afterwards sunk into neglect and oblivion? Where such reports, therefore, fly about, the solution of the phenomenon is obvious; and we judge in conformity to regular experience and observation, when we account for it by the known and natural principles of credulity and delusion. And shall we, rather than have a recourse to so natural a solution, allow of a miraculous violation of the most established laws of nature?

I need not mention the difficulty of detecting a falsehood in any private or even public history, at the place, where it is said to happen; much more when the scene is removed to ever so small a distance. Even a court of judicature, with all the authority, accuracy, and judgement, which they can employ, find themselves often at a loss to distinguish between truth and falsehood in the most recent actions. But the matter never comes to any issue, if trusted to the common method of altercations and debate and flying rumours; especially when men’s passions have taken part on either side.

In the infancy of new religions, the wise and learned commonly esteem the matter too inconsiderable to deserve their attention or regard. And when afterwards they would willingly detect the cheat, in order to undeceive the deluded multitude, the season is now past, and the records and witnesses, which might clear up the matter, have perished beyond recovery.

No means of detection remain, but those which must be drawn from the very testimony itself of the reporters: and these, though always sufficient with the judicious and knowing, are commonly too fine to fall under the comprehension of the vulgar.

98. Upon the whole, then, it appears, that no testimony for any kind of miracle has ever amounted to a probability, much less to a proof; and that, even supposing it amounted to a proof, it would be opposed by another proof; derived from the very nature of the fact, which it would endeavour to establish. It is experience only, which gives authority to human testimony; and it is the same experience, which assures us of the laws of nature. When, therefore, these two kinds of experience are contrary, we have nothing to do but substract the one from the other, and embrace an opinion, either on one

side or the other, with that assurance which arises from the remainder. But according to the principle here explained, this substraction, with regard to all popular religions, amounts to an entire annihilation; and therefore we may establish it as a maxim, that no human testimony can have such force as to prove a miracle, and make it a just foundation for any such system of religion.

99. I beg the limitations here made may be remarked, when I say, that a miracle can never be proved, so as to be the foundation of a system of religion. For I own, that otherwise, there may possibly be miracles, or violations of the usual course of nature, of such a kind as to admit of proof from human testimony; though, perhaps, it will be impossible to find any such in all the records of history. Thus, suppose, all authors, in all languages, agree, that, from the first of January 1600, there was a total darkness over the whole earth for eight days: suppose that the tradition of this extraordinary event is still strong and lively among the people: that all travellers, who return from foreign countries, bring us accounts of the same tradition, without the least variation or contradiction: it is evident, that our present philosophers, instead of doubting the fact, ought to receive it as certain, and ought to search for the causes whence it might be derived. The decay, corruption, and dissolution of nature, is an event rendered probable by so many analogies, that any phenomenon, which seems to have a tendency towards that catastrophe, comes within the reach of human testimony, if that testimony be very extensive and uniform.

But suppose, that all the historians who treat of England, should agree, that, on the first of January 1600, Queen Elizabeth died; that both before and after her death she was seen by her physicians and the whole court, as is usual with persons of her rank; that her successor was acknowledged and proclaimed by the parliament; and that, after being interred a month, she again appeared, resumed the throne, and governed England for three years: I must confess that I should be surprised at the concurrence of so many odd circumstances, but should not have the least inclination to believe so miraculous an event. I should not doubt of her pretended death, and of those other public circumstances that followed it: I should only assert it to have been pretended, and that it neither was, nor possibly could be real. You would in vain object to me the difficulty, and almost impossibility of deceiving the world in an affair of such consequence; the wisdom and solid judgement of that renowned queen; with the little or no advantage which she could reap from so poor an artifice: All this might astonish me; but I would still reply, that the knavery and folly of men are such common phenomena, that I should rather believe the most extraordinary events to arise from their concurrence, than admit of so signal a violation of the laws of nature.

But should this miracle be ascribed to any new system of religion; men, in all ages, have been so much imposed on by ridiculous stories of that kind, that this very circumstance would be a full proof of a cheat, and sufficient, with all men of sense, not only to make them reject the fact, but even reject it without farther examination. Though the Being to whom the miracle is ascribed, be, in this case, Almighty, it does not, upon that account, become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from the experience which we have of his productions, in the usual course of nature. This still reduces us to past observation, and obliges us to compare the instances of the violation of truth in the testimony of men, with those of the violation of the laws of nature by miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable. As the violations of truth are more common in the testimony concerning religious miracles, than in that concerning any other matter of fact; this must diminish very much the authority of the former testimony, and make us form a general resolution, never to lend any attention to it, with whatever specious pretence it may be covered.

Lord Bacon seems to have embraced the same principles of reasoning. ‘We ought,’ says he, ‘to make a collection or particular history of all monsters and prodigious births or productions, and in a word of every thing new, rare, and extraordinary in nature. But this must be done with the most severe scrutiny, lest we depart from truth. Above all, every relation must be considered as suspicious, which depends in any degree upon religion, as the prodigies of Livy: And no less so, every thing that is to be found in the writers of natural magic or alchimy, or such authors, who seem, all of them, to have an unconquerable appetite for falsehood and fable.’

100. I am the better pleased with the method of reasoning here delivered, as I think it may serve to confound those dangerous friends or disguised enemies to the *Christian Religion*, who have undertaken to defend it by the principles of human reason. Our most holy religion is founded on *Faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is, by no means, fitted to endure. To make this more evident, let us examine

those miracles, related in scripture; and not to lose ourselves in too wide a field, let us confine ourselves to such as we find in the *Pentateuch*, which we shall examine, according to the principles of these pretended Christians, not as the word or testimony of God himself, but as the production of a mere human writer and historian. Here then we are first to consider a book, presented to us by a barbarous and ignorant people, written in an age when they were still more barbarous, and in all probability long after the facts which it relates, corroborated by no concurring testimony, and resembling those fabulous accounts, which every nation gives of its origin. Upon reading this book, we find it full of prodigies and miracles. It gives an account of a state of the world and of human nature entirely different from the present: Of our fall from that state: Of the age of man, extended to near a thousand years: Of the destruction of the world by a deluge: Of the arbitrary choice of one people, as the favourites of heaven; and that people the countrymen of the author: Of their deliverance from bondage by prodigies the most astonishing imaginable: I desire any one to lay his hand upon his heart, and after a serious consideration declare, whether he thinks that the falsehood of such a book, supported by such a testimony, would be more extraordinary and miraculous than all the miracles it relates; which is, however, necessary to make it be received, according to the measures of probability above established.

101. What we have said of miracles may be applied, without any variation, to prophecies; and indeed, all prophecies are real miracles, and as such only, can be admitted as proofs of any revelation. If it did not exceed the capacity of human nature to foretell future events, it would be absurd to employ any prophecy as an argument for a divine mission or authority from heaven. So that, upon the whole, we may conclude, that the *Christian Religion* not only was at first attended with miracles, but even at this day cannot be believed by any reasonable person without one. Mere reason is insufficient to convince us of its veracity: And whoever is moved by *Faith* to assent to it, is conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience.

SECTION XI.

OF A PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE AND OF A FUTURE STATE.

102. I was lately engaged in conversation with a friend who loves sceptical paradoxes; where, though he advanced many principles, of which I can by no means approve, yet as they seem to be curious, and to bear some relation to the chain of reasoning carried on throughout this enquiry, I shall here copy them from my memory as accurately as I can, in order to submit them to the judgement of the reader.

Our conversation began with my admiring the singular good fortune of philosophy, which, as it requires entire liberty above all other privileges, and chiefly flourishes from the free opposition of sentiments and argumentation, received its first birth in an age and country of freedom and toleration, and was never cramped, even in its most extravagant principles, by any creeds, concessions, or penal statutes. For, except the banishment of Protagoras, and the death of Socrates, which last event proceeded partly from other motives, there are scarcely any instances to be met with, in ancient history, of this bigotted jealousy, with which the present age is so much infested. Epicurus lived at Athens to an advanced age, in peace and tranquillity: Epicureans were even admitted to receive the sacerdotal character, and to officiate at the altar, in the most sacred rites of the established religion: And the public encouragement of pensions and salaries was afforded equally, by the wisest of all the Roman emperors, to the professors of every sect of philosophy. How requisite such kind of treatment was to philosophy, in her early youth, will easily be conceived, if we reflect, that, even at present, when she may be supposed more hardy and robust, she bears with much difficulty the inclemency of the seasons, and those harsh winds of calumny and persecution, which blow upon her.

You admire, says my friend, as the singular good fortune of philosophy, what seems to result from the natural course of things, and to be unavoidable in every age and nation. This pertinacious bigotry, of which you complain, as so fatal to philosophy, is really her offspring, who, after allying with superstition, separates himself entirely from the interest of his parent, and becomes her most inveterate enemy and persecutor. Speculative dogmas of religion, the present occasions of such furious dispute, could not possibly be conceived or admitted in the early ages of the world; when mankind, being wholly illiterate, formed an idea of religion more suitable to their weak apprehension, and composed their sacred tenets of such tales chiefly as were the objects of traditional belief, more than of argument or disputation. After the first alarm, therefore, was over, which arose from the new paradoxes and principles of the philosophers; these teachers seem ever after, during the ages of antiquity, to have lived in great harmony with the established superstition, and to have made a fair partition of mankind between them; the former claiming all the learned and wise, the latter possessing all the vulgar and illiterate.

103. It seems then, say I, that you leave politics entirely out of the question, and never suppose, that a wise magistrate can justly be jealous of certain tenets of philosophy, such as those of Epicurus, which, denying a divine existence, and consequently a providence and a future state, seem to loosen, in a great measure, the ties of morality, and may be supposed, for that reason, pernicious to the peace of civil society.

I know, replied he, that in fact these persecutions never, in any age, proceeded from calm reason, or from experience of the pernicious consequences of philosophy; but arose entirely from passion and prejudice. But what if I should advance farther, and assert, that if Epicurus had been accused before the people, by any of the *sycophants* or informers of those days, he could easily have defended his cause, and proved his principles of philosophy to be as salutary as those of his adversaries, who endeavoured, with such zeal, to expose him to the public hatred and jealousy?

I wish, said I, you would try your eloquence upon so extraordinary a topic, and make a speech for Epicurus, which might satisfy, not the mob of Athens, if you will allow that ancient and polite city to have contained any mob, but the more philosophical part of his audience, such as might be supposed capable of comprehending his arguments.

The matter would not be difficult, upon such conditions, replied he: And if you please, I shall suppose myself Epicurus for a moment, and make you stand for the Athenian people, and shall deliver you such an harangue as will fill all the urn with white beans, and leave not a black one to gratify the malice of my adversaries.

Very well: Pray proceed upon these suppositions.

104. I come hither, O ye Athenians, to justify in your assembly what I maintained in my school, and I find myself impeached by furious antagonists, instead of reasoning with calm and dispassionate enquirers. Your deliberations, which of right should be directed to questions of public good, and the interest of the commonwealth, are diverted to the disquisitions of speculative philosophy; and these magnificent, but perhaps fruitless enquiries, take place of your more familiar but more useful occupations. But so far as in me lies, I will prevent this abuse. We shall not here dispute concerning the origin and government of worlds. We shall only enquire how far such questions concern the public interest. And if I can persuade you, that they are entirely indifferent to the peace of society and security of government, I hope that you will presently send us back to our schools, there to examine, at leisure, the question the most sublime, but at the same time, the most speculative of all philosophy.

The religious philosophers, not satisfied with the tradition of your forefathers, and doctrine of your priests (in which I willingly acquiesce), indulge a rash curiosity, in trying how far they can establish religion upon the principles of reason; and they thereby excite, instead of satisfying, the doubts, which naturally arise from a diligent and scrutinous enquiry. They paint, in the most magnificent colours, the order, beauty, and wise arrangement of the universe; and then ask, if such a glorious display of intelligence could proceed from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, or if chance could produce what the greatest genius can never sufficiently admire. I shall not examine the justness of this argument. I shall allow it to be as solid as my antagonists and accusers can desire. It is sufficient, if I can prove, from this very reasoning, that the question is entirely speculative, and that, when, in my philosophical disquisitions, I deny a providence and a future state, I undermine not the foundations of society, but advance principles, which they themselves, upon their own topics, if they argue consistently, must allow to be solid and satisfactory.

105. You then, who are my accusers, have acknowledged, that the chief or sole argument for a divine existence (which I never questioned) is derived from the order of nature; where there appear such marks of intelligence and design, that you think it extravagant to assign for its cause, either chance, or the blind and unguided force of matter. You allow, that this is an argument drawn from effects to causes. From the order of the work,

you infer, that there must have been project and forethought in the workman. If you cannot make out this point, you allow, that your conclusion fails; and you pretend not to establish the conclusion in a greater latitude than the phenomena of nature will justify. These are your concessions. I desire you to mark the consequences.

When we infer any particular cause from an effect, we must proportion the one to the other, and can never be allowed to ascribe to the cause any qualities, but what are exactly sufficient to produce the effect. A body of ten ounces raised in any scale may serve as a proof, that the counterbalancing weight exceeds ten ounces; but can never afford a reason that it exceeds a hundred. If the cause, assigned for any effect, be not sufficient to produce it, we must either reject that cause, or add to it such qualities as will give it a just proportion to the effect. But if we ascribe to it farther qualities, or affirm it capable of producing other effects, we can only indulge the licence of conjecture, and arbitrarily suppose the existence of qualities and energies, without reason or authority.

The same rule holds, whether the cause assigned be brute unconscious matter, or a rational intelligent being. If the cause be known only by the effect, we never ought to ascribe to it any qualities, beyond what are precisely requisite to produce the effect: Nor can we, by any rules of just reasoning, return back from the cause, and infer other effects from it, beyond those by which alone it is known to us. No one, merely from the sight of one of Zeuxis’s pictures, could know, that he was also a statuary or architect, and was an artist no less skilful in stone and marble than in colours. The talents and taste, displayed in the particular work before us; these we may safely conclude the workman to be possessed of. The cause must be proportioned to the effect; and if we exactly and precisely proportion it, we shall never find in it any qualities, that point farther, or afford an inference concerning any other design or performance. Such qualities must be somewhat beyond what is merely requisite for producing the effect, which we examine.

106. Allowing, therefore, the gods to be the authors of the existence or order of the universe; it follows, that they possess that precise degree of power, intelligence, and benevolence, which appears in their workmanship; but nothing farther can ever be proved, except we call in the assistance of exaggeration and flattery to supply the defects of argument and reasoning. So far as the traces of any attributes, at present, appear, so far may we

conclude these attributes to exist. The supposition of farther attributes is mere hypothesis; much more the supposition, that, in distant regions of space or periods of time, there has been, or will be, a more magnificent display of these attributes, and a scheme of administration more suitable to such imaginary virtues. We can never be allowed to mount up from the universe, the effect, to Jupiter, the cause; and then descend downwards, to infer any new effect from that cause; as if the present effects alone were not entirely worthy of the glorious attributes, which we ascribe to that deity. The knowledge of the cause being derived solely from the effect, they must be exactly adjusted to each other; and the one can never refer to anything farther, or be the foundation of any new inference and conclusion.

You find certain phenomena in nature. You seek a cause or author. You imagine that you have found him. You afterwards become so enamoured of this offspring of your brain, that you imagine it impossible, but he must produce something greater and more perfect than the present scene of things, which is so full of ill and disorder. You forget, that this superlative intelligence and benevolence are entirely imaginary, or, at least, without any foundation in reason; and that you have no ground to ascribe to him any qualities, but what you see he has actually exerted and displayed in his productions. Let your gods, therefore, O philosophers, be suited to the present appearances of nature: and presume not to alter these appearances by arbitrary suppositions, in order to suit them to the attributes, which you so fondly ascribe to your deities.

107. When priests and poets, supported by your authority, O Athenians, talk of a golden or silver age, which preceded the present state of vice and misery, I hear them with attention and with reverence. But when philosophers, who pretend to neglect authority, and to cultivate reason, hold the same discourse, I pay them not, I own, the same obsequious submission and pious deference. I ask; who carried them into the celestial regions, who admitted them into the councils of the gods, who opened to them the book of fate, that they thus rashly affirm, that their deities have executed, or will execute, any purpose beyond what has actually appeared? If they tell me, that they have mounted on the steps or by the gradual ascent of reason, and by drawing inferences from effects to causes, I still insist, that they have aided the ascent of reason by the wings of imagination; otherwise they could not thus change their manner of inference, and argue from causes to effects; presuming, that a more perfect production than the present world

would be more suitable to such perfect beings as the gods, and forgetting that they have no reason to ascribe to these celestial beings any perfection or any attribute, but what can be found in the present world.

Hence all the fruitless industry to account for the ill appearances of nature, and save the honour of the gods; while we must acknowledge the reality of that evil and disorder, with which the world so much abounds. The obstinate and intractable qualities of matter, we are told, or the observance of general laws, or some such reason, is the sole cause, which controlled the power and benevolence of Jupiter, and obliged him to create mankind and every sensible creature so imperfect and so unhappy. These attributes then, are, it seems, beforehand, taken for granted, in their greatest latitude. And upon that supposition, I own that such conjectures may, perhaps, be admitted as plausible solutions of the ill phenomena. But still I ask; Why take these attributes for granted, or why ascribe to the cause any qualities but what actually appear in the effect? Why torture your brain to justify the course of nature upon suppositions, which, for aught you know, may be entirely imaginary, and of which there are to be found no traces in the course of nature?

The religious hypothesis, therefore, must be considered only as a particular method of accounting for the visible phenomena of the universe: but no just reasoner will ever presume to infer from it any single fact, and alter or add to the phenomena, in any single particular. If you think, that the appearances of things prove such causes, it is allowable for you to draw an inference concerning the existence of these causes. In such complicated and sublime subjects, every one should be indulged in the liberty of conjecture and argument. But here you ought to rest. If you come backward, and arguing from your inferred causes, conclude, that any other fact has existed, or will exist, in the course of nature, which may serve as a fuller display of particular attributes; I must admonish you, that you have departed from the method of reasoning, attached to the present subject, and have certainly added something to the attributes of the cause, beyond what appears in the effect; otherwise you could never, with tolerable sense or propriety, add anything to the effect, in order to render it more worthy of the cause.

108. Where, then, is the odiousness of that doctrine, which I teach in my school, or rather, which I examine in my gardens? Or what do you find in this whole question, wherein the security of good morals, or the peace and order of society, is in the least concerned?

I deny a providence, you say, and supreme governor of the world, who guides the course of events, and punishes the vicious with infamy and disappointment, and rewards the virtuous with honour and success, in all their undertakings. But surely, I deny not the course itself of events, which lies open to every one's inquiry and examination. I acknowledge, that, in the present order of things, virtue is attended with more peace of mind than vice, and meets with a more favourable reception from the world. I am sensible, that, according to the past experience of mankind, friendship is the chief joy of human life, and moderation the only source of tranquillity and happiness. I never balance between the virtuous and the vicious course of life; but am sensible, that, to a well-disposed mind, every advantage is on the side of the former. And what can you say more, allowing all your suppositions and reasonings? You tell me, indeed, that this disposition of things proceeds from intelligence and design. But whatever it proceeds from, the disposition itself, on which depends our happiness or misery, and consequently our conduct and deportment in life is still the same. It is still open for me, as well as you, to regulate my behaviour, by my experience of past events. And if you affirm, that, while a divine providence is allowed, and a supreme distributive justice in the universe, I ought to expect some more particular reward of the good, and punishment of the bad, beyond the ordinary course of events; I here find the same fallacy, which I have before endeavoured to detect. You persist in imagining, that, if we grant that divine existence, for which you so earnestly contend, you may safely infer consequences from it, and add something to the experienced order of nature, by arguing from the attributes which you ascribe to your gods. You seem not to remember, that all your reasonings on this subject can only be drawn from effects to causes; and that every argument, deducted from causes to effects, must of necessity be a gross sophism; since it is impossible for you to know anything of the cause, but what you have antecedently, not inferred, but discovered to the full, in the effect.

109. But what must a philosopher think of those vain reasoners, who, instead of regarding the present scene of things as the sole object of their contemplation, so far reverse the whole course of nature, as to render this life merely a passage to something farther; a porch, which leads to a greater, and vastly different building; a prologue, which serves only to introduce the piece, and give it more grace and propriety? Whence, do you think, can such philosophers derive their idea of the gods? From their own conceit and

imagination surely. For if they derived it from the present phenomena, it would never point to anything farther, but must be exactly adjusted to them. That the divinity may *possibly* be endowed with attributes, which we have never seen exerted; may be governed by principles of action, which we cannot discover to be satisfied: all this will freely be allowed. But still this is mere *possibility* and hypothesis. We never can have reason to *infer* any attributes, or any principles of action in him, but so far as we know them to have been exerted and satisfied.

Are there any marks of a distributive justice in the world? If you answer in the affirmative, I conclude, that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude, that you have then no reason to ascribe justice, in our sense of it, to the gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying, that the justice of the gods, at present, exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent; I answer, that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only so far as you see it, *at present,* exert itself.

110. Thus I bring the dispute, O Athenians, to a short issue with my antagonists. The course of nature lies open to my contemplation as well as to theirs. The experienced train of events is the great standard, by which we all regulate our conduct. Nothing else can be appealed to in the field, or in the senate. Nothing else ought ever to be heard of in the school, or in the closet. In vain would our limited understanding break through those boundaries, which are too narrow for our fond imagination. While we argue from the course of nature, and infer a particular intelligent cause, which first bestowed, and still preserves order in the universe, we embrace a principle, which is both uncertain and useless. It is uncertain; because the subject lies entirely beyond the reach of human experience. It is useless; because our knowledge of this cause being derived entirely from the course of nature, we can never, according to the rules of just reasoning, return back from the cause with any new inference, or making additions to the common and experienced course of nature, establish any new principles of conduct and behaviour.

111. I observe (said I, finding he had finished his harangue) that you neglect not the artifice of the demagogues of old; and as you were pleased to make me stand for the people, you insinuate yourself into my favour by embracing those principles, to which, you know, I have always expressed a particular attachment. But allowing you to make experience (as indeed I

think you ought) the only standard of our judgement concerning this, and all other questions of fact; I doubt not but, from the very same experience, to which you appeal, it may be possible to refute this reasoning, which you have put into the mouth of Epicurus. If you saw, for instance, a half-finished building, surrounded with heaps of brick and stone and mortar, and all the instruments of masonry; could you not *infer* from the effect, that it was a work of design and contrivance? And could you not return again, from this inferred cause, to infer new additions to the effect, and conclude, that the building would soon be finished, and receive all the further improvements, which art could bestow upon it? If you saw upon the sea-shore the print of one human foot, you would conclude, that a man had passed that way, and that he had also left the traces of the other foot, though effaced by the rolling of the sands or inundation of the waters. Why then do you refuse to admit the same method of reasoning with regard to the order of nature? Consider the world and the present life only as an imperfect building, from which you can infer a superior intelligence; and arguing from that superior intelligence, which can leave nothing imperfect; why may you not infer a more finished scheme or plan, which will receive its completion in some distant point of space or time? Are not these methods of reasoning exactly similar? And under what pretence can you embrace the one, while you reject the other?

112. The infinite difference of the subjects, replied he, is a sufficient foundation for this difference in my conclusions. In works of *human* art and contrivance, it is allowable to advance from the effect to the cause, and returning back from the cause, to form new inferences concerning the effect, and examine the alterations, which it has probably undergone, or may still undergo. But what is the foundation of this method of reasoning? Plainly this; that man is a being, whom we know by experience, whose motives and designs we are acquainted with, and whose projects and inclinations have a certain connexion and coherence, according to the laws which nature has established for the government of such a creature. When, therefore, we find, that any work has proceeded from the skill and industry of man; as we are otherwise acquainted with the nature of the animal, we can draw a hundred inferences concerning what may be expected from him; and these inferences will all be founded in experience and observation. But did we know man only from the single work or production which we examine, it were impossible for us to argue in this manner; because our

knowledge of all the qualities, which we ascribe to him, being in that case derived from the production, it is impossible they could point to anything farther, or be the foundation of any new inference. The print of a foot in the sand can only prove, when considered alone, that there was some figure adapted to it, by which it was produced: but the print of a human foot proves likewise, from our other experience, that there was probably another foot, which also left its impression, though effaced by time or other accidents. Here we mount from the effect to the cause; and descending again from the cause, infer alterations in the effect; but this is not a continuation of the same simple chain of reasoning. We comprehend in this case a hundred other experiences and observations, concerning the *usual* figure and members of that species of animal, without which this method of argument must be considered as fallacious and sophistical.

113. The case is not the same with our reasonings from the works of nature. The Deity is known to us only by his productions, and is a single being in the universe, not comprehended under any species or genus, from whose experienced attributes or qualities, we can, by analogy, infer any attribute or quality in him. As the universe shews wisdom and goodness, we infer wisdom and goodness. As it shews a particular degree of these perfections, we infer a particular degree of them, precisely adapted to the effect which we examine. But farther attributes or farther degrees of the same attributes, we can never be authorised to infer or suppose, by any rules of just reasoning. Now, without some such licence of supposition, it is impossible for us to argue from the cause, or infer any alteration in the effect, beyond what has immediately fallen under our observation. Greater good produced by this Being must still prove a greater degree of goodness: a more impartial distribution of rewards and punishments must proceed from a greater regard to justice and equity. Every supposed addition to the works of nature makes an addition to the attributes of the Author of nature; and consequently, being entirely unsupported by any reason or argument, can never be admitted but as mere conjecture and hypothesis.

The great source of our mistake in this subject, and of the unbounded licence of conjecture, which we indulge, is, that we tacitly consider ourselves, as in the place of the Supreme Being, and conclude, that he will, on every occasion, observe the same conduct, which we ourselves, in his situation, would have embraced as reasonable and eligible. But, besides that the ordinary course of nature may convince us, that almost everything is regulated by principles and maxims very different from ours; besides this, I say, it must evidently appear contrary to all rules of analogy to reason, from the intentions and projects of men, to those of a Being so different, and so much superior. In human nature, there is a certain experienced coherence of designs and inclinations; so that when, from any fact, we have discovered one intention of any man, it may often be reasonable, from experience, to infer another, and draw a long chain of conclusions concerning his past or future conduct. But this method of reasoning can never have place with regard to a Being, so remote and incomprehensible, who bears much less analogy to any other being in the universe than the sun to a waxen taper, and who discovers himself only by some faint traces or outlines, beyond which we have no authority to ascribe to him any attribute or perfection. What we imagine to be a superior perfection, may really be a defect. Or were it ever so much a perfection, the ascribing of it to the Supreme Being, where it appears not to have been really exerted, to the full, in his works, savours more of flattery and panegyric, than of just reasoning and sound philosophy. All the philosophy, therefore, in the world, and all the religion, which is nothing but a species of philosophy, will never be able to carry us beyond the usual course of experience, or give us measures of conduct and behaviour different from those which are furnished by reflections on common life. No new fact can ever be inferred from the religious hypothesis; no event foreseen or foretold; no reward or punishment expected or dreaded, beyond what is already known by practice and observation. So that my apology for Epicurus will still appear solid and satisfactory; nor have the political interests of society any connexion with the philosophical disputes concerning metaphysics and religion.

114. There is still one circumstance, replied I, which you seem to have overlooked. Though I should allow your premises, I must deny your conclusion. You conclude, that religious doctrines and reasonings *can* have no influence on life, because they *ought* to have no influence; never considering, that men reason not in the same manner you do, but draw many consequences from the belief of a divine Existence, and suppose that the Deity will inflict punishments on vice, and bestow rewards on virtue, beyond what appear in the ordinary course of nature. Whether this reasoning of theirs be just or not, is no matter. Its influence on their life and conduct must still be the same. And, those, who attempt to disabuse them of such prejudices, may, for aught I know, be good reasoners, but I cannot

allow them to be good citizens and politicians; since they free men from one restraint upon their passions, and make the infringement of the laws of society, in one respect, more easy and secure.

After all, I may, perhaps, agree to your general conclusion in favour of liberty, though upon different premises from those, on which you endeavour to found it. I think, that the state ought to tolerate every principle of philosophy; nor is there an instance, that any government has suffered in its political interests by such indulgence. There is no enthusiasm among philosophers; their doctrines are not very alluring to the people; and no restraint can be put upon their reasonings, but what must be of dangerous consequence to the sciences, and even to the state, by paving the way for persecution and oppression in points, where the generality of mankind are more deeply interested and concerned.

115. But there occurs to me (continued I) with regard to your main topic, a difficulty, which I shall just propose to you without insisting on it; lest it lead into reasonings of too nice and delicate a nature. In a word, I much doubt whether it be possible for a cause to be known only by its effect (as you have all along supposed) or to be of so singular and particular a nature as to have no parallel and no similarity with any other cause or object, that has ever fallen under our observation. It is only when two *species* of objects are found to be constantly conjoined, that we can infer the one from the other; and were an effect presented, which was entirely singular, and could not be comprehended under any known *species*, I do not see, that we could form any conjecture or inference at all concerning its cause. If experience and observation and analogy be, indeed, the only guides which we can reasonably follow in inferences of this nature; both the effect and cause must bear a similarity and resemblance to other effects and causes, which we know, and which we have found, in many instances, to be conjoined with each other. I leave it to your own reflection to pursue the consequences of this principle. I shall just observe, that, as the antagonists of Epicurus always suppose the universe, an effect quite singular and unparalleled, to be the proof of a Deity, a cause no less singular and unparalleled; your reasonings, upon that supposition, seem, at least, to merit our attention. There is, I own, some difficulty, how we can ever return from the cause to the effect, and, reasoning from our ideas of the former, infer any alteration on the latter, or any addition to it.

SECTION XII.

OF THE ACADEMICAL OR SCEPTICAL PHILOSOPHY.

PART I.

116. There is not a greater number of philosophical reasonings, displayed upon any subject, than those, which prove the existence of a Deity, and refute the fallacies of *Atheists*; and yet the most religious philosophers still dispute whether any man can be so blinded as to be a speculative atheist. How shall we reconcile these contradictions? The knights-errant, who wandered about to clear the world of dragons and giants, never entertained the least doubt with regard to the existence of these monsters.

The *Sceptic* is another enemy of religion, who naturally provokes the indignation of all divines and graver philosophers; though it is certain, that no man ever met with any such absurd creature, or conversed with a man, who had no opinion or principle concerning any subject, either of action or speculation. This begets a very natural question; What is meant by a sceptic? And how far it is possible to push these philosophical principles of doubt and uncertainty?

There is a species of scepticism, *antecedent* to all study and philosophy, which is much inculcated by Des Cartes and others, as a sovereign preservative against error and precipitate judgement. It recommends an universal doubt, not only of all our former opinions and principles, but also of our very faculties; of whose veracity, say they, we must assure ourselves, by a chain of reasoning, deduced from some original principle, which cannot possibly be fallacious or deceitful. But neither is there any such original principle, which has a prerogative above others, that are self-evident and convincing: or if there were, could we advance a step beyond it, but by the use of those very faculties, of which we are supposed to be already diffident. The Cartesian doubt, therefore, were it ever possible to be attained by any human creature (as it plainly is not) would be entirely incurable; and no reasoning could ever bring us to a state of assurance and conviction upon any subject.

It must, however, be confessed, that this species of scepticism, when more moderate, may be understood in a very reasonable sense, and is a necessary preparative to the study of philosophy, by preserving a proper impartiality in our judgements, and weaning our mind from all those prejudices, which we may have imbibed from education or rash opinion. To begin with clear and self-evident principles, to advance by timorous and sure steps, to review frequently our conclusions, and examine accurately all their consequences; though by these means we shall make both a slow and a short progress in our systems; are the only methods, by which we can ever hope to reach truth, and attain a proper stability and certainty in our determinations.

117. There is another species of scepticism, *consequent* to science and enquiry, when men are supposed to have discovered, either the absolute fallaciousness of their mental faculties, or their unfitness to reach any fixed determination in all those curious subjects of speculation, about which they are commonly employed. Even our very senses are brought into dispute, by a certain species of philosophers; and the maxims of common life are subjected to the same doubt as the most profound principles or conclusions of metaphysics and theology. As these paradoxical tenets (if they may be called tenets) are to be met with in some philosophers, and the refutation of them in several, they naturally excite our curiosity, and make us enquire into the arguments, on which they may be founded.

I need not insist upon the more trite topics, employed by the sceptics in all ages, against the evidence of *sense*; such as those which are derived from the imperfection and fallaciousness of our organs, on numberless occasions; the crooked appearance of an oar in water; the various aspects of objects, according to their different distances; the double images which arise from the pressing one eye; with many other appearances of a like nature. These sceptical topics, indeed, are only sufficient to prove, that the senses alone are not implicitly to be depended on; but that we must correct their evidence by reason, and by considerations, derived from the nature of the medium, the distance of the object, and the disposition of the organ, in order to render them, within their sphere, the proper *criteria* of truth and falsehood. There are other more profound arguments against the senses, which admit not of so easy a solution.

118. It seems evident, that men are carried, by a natural instinct or prepossession, to repose faith in their senses; and that, without any reasoning, or even almost before the use of reason, we always suppose an external universe, which depends not on our perception, but would exist, though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated. Even the animal creation are governed by a like opinion, and preserve this belief of external objects, in all their thoughts, designs, and actions.

It seems also evident, that, when men follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the very images, presented by the senses, to be the external objects, and never entertain any suspicion, that the one are nothing but representations of the other. This very table, which we see white, and which we feel hard, is believed to exist, independent of our perception, and to be something external to our mind, which perceives it. Our presence bestows not being on it: our absence does not annihilate it. It preserves its existence uniform and entire, independent of the situation of intelligent beings, who perceive or contemplate it.

But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us, that nothing can ever be present to the mind but an image or perception, and that the senses are only the inlets, through which these images are conveyed, without being able to produce any immediate intercourse between the mind and the object. The table, which we see, seems to diminish, as we remove farther from it: but the real table, which exists independent of us, suffers no alteration: it was, therefore, nothing but its image, which was present to the mind. These are the obvious dictates of reason; and no man, who reflects, ever doubted, that the existences, which we consider, when we say, *this house* and *that tree*, are nothing but perceptions in the mind, and fleeting copies or representations of other existences, which remain uniform and independent.

119. So far, then, are we necessitated by reasoning to contradict or depart from the primary instincts of nature, and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses. But here philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed, when she would justify this new system, and obviate the cavils and objections of the sceptics. She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature: for that led us to a quite different system, which is acknowledged fallible and even erroneous. And to justify this pretended philosophical system, by a chain of clear and

convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity.

By what argument can it be proved, that the perceptions of the mind must be caused by external objects, entirely different from them, though resembling them (if that be possible) and could not arise either from the energy of the mind itself, or from the suggestion of some invisible and unknown spirit, or from some other cause still more unknown to us? It is acknowledged, that, in fact, many of these perceptions arise not from anything external, as in dreams, madness, and other diseases. And nothing can be more inexplicable than the manner, in which body should so operate upon mind as ever to convey an image of itself to a substance, supposed of so different, and even contrary a nature.

It is a question of fact, whether the perceptions of the senses be produced by external objects, resembling them: how shall this question be determined? By experience surely; as all other questions of a like nature. But here experience is, and must be entirely silent. The mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects. The supposition of such a connexion is, therefore, without any foundation in reasoning.

120. To have recourse to the veracity of the supreme Being, in order to prove the veracity of our senses, is surely making a very unexpected circuit. If his veracity were at all concerned in this matter, our senses would be entirely infallible; because it is not possible that he can ever deceive. Not to mention, that, if the external world be once called in question, we shall be at a loss to find arguments, by which we may prove the existence of that Being or any of his attributes.

121. This is a topic, therefore, in which the profounder and more philosophical sceptics will always triumph, when they endeavour to introduce an universal doubt into all subjects of human knowledge and enquiry. Do you follow the instincts and propensities of nature, may they say, in assenting to the veracity of sense? But these lead you to believe that the very perception or sensible image is the external object. Do you disclaim this principle, in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only representations of something external? You here depart from your natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy your reason, which can never find any convincing argument

from experience to prove, that the perceptions are connected with any external objects.

122. There is another sceptical topic of a like nature, derived from the most profound philosophy; which might merit our attention, were it requisite to dive so deep, in order to discover arguments and reasonings, which can so little serve to any serious purpose. It is universally allowed by modern enquirers, that all the sensible qualities of objects, such as hard, soft, hot, cold, white, black, &c. are merely secondary, and exist not in the objects themselves, but are perceptions of the mind, without any external archetype or model, which they represent. If this be allowed, with regard to secondary qualities, it must also follow, with regard to the supposed primary qualities of extension and solidity; nor can the latter be any more entitled to that denomination than the former. The idea of extension is entirely acquired from the senses of sight and feeling; and if all the qualities, perceived by the senses, be in the mind, not in the object, the same conclusion must reach the idea of extension, which is wholly dependent on the sensible ideas or the ideas of secondary qualities. Nothing can save us from this conclusion, but the asserting, that the ideas of those primary qualities are attained by *Abstraction*, an opinion, which, if we examine it accurately, we shall find to be unintelligible, and even absurd. An extension, that is neither tangible nor visible, cannot possibly be conceived: and a tangible or visible extension, which is neither hard nor soft, black nor white, is equally beyond the reach of human conception. Let any man try to conceive a triangle in general, which is neither *Isosceles* nor *Scalenum*, nor has any particular length or proportion of sides; and he will soon perceive the absurdity of all the scholastic notions with regard to abstraction and general ideas.

123. Thus the first philosophical objection to the evidence of sense or to the opinion of external existence consists in this, that such an opinion, if rested on natural instinct, is contrary to reason, and if referred to reason, is contrary to natural instinct, and at the same time carries no rational evidence with it, to convince an impartial enquirer. The second objection goes farther, and represents this opinion as contrary to reason: at least, if it be a principle of reason, that all sensible qualities are in the mind, not in the object. Bereave matter of all its intelligible qualities, both primary and secondary, you in a manner annihilate it, and leave only a certain unknown,

inexplicable *something*, as the cause of our perceptions; a notion so imperfect, that no sceptic will think it worth while to contend against it.

PART II.

124. It may seem a very extravagant attempt of the sceptics to destroy *reason* by argument and ratiocination; yet is this the grand scope of all their enquiries and disputes. They endeavour to find objections, both to our abstract reasonings, and to those which regard matter of fact and existence.

The chief objection against all *abstract* reasonings is derived from the ideas of space and time; ideas, which, in common life and to a careless view, are very clear and intelligible, but when they pass through the scrutiny of the profound sciences (and they are the chief object of these sciences) afford principles, which seem full of absurdity and contradiction. No priestly *dogmas*, invented on purpose to tame and subdue the rebellious reason of mankind, ever shocked common sense more than the doctrine of the infinitive divisibility of extension, with its consequences; as they are pompously displayed by all geometricians and metaphysicians, with a kind of triumph and exultation. A real quantity, infinitely less than any finite quantity, containing quantities infinitely less than itself, and so on *in infinitum*; this is an edifice so bold and prodigious, that it is too weighty for any pretended demonstration to support, because it shocks the clearest and most natural principles of human reason. But what renders the matter more extraordinary, is, that these seemingly absurd opinions are supported by a chain of reasoning, the clearest and most natural; nor is it possible for us to allow the premises without admitting the consequences. Nothing can be more convincing and satisfactory than all the conclusions concerning the properties of circles and triangles; and yet, when these are once received, how can we deny, that the angle of contact between a circle and its tangent is infinitely less than any rectilineal angle, that as you may increase the diameter of the circle *in infinitum*, this angle of contact becomes still less, even *in infinitum*, and that the angle of contact between other curves and their tangents may be infinitely less than those between any circle and its tangent, and so on, *in infinitum*? The demonstration of these principles seems as unexceptionable as that which proves the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right ones, though the latter opinion be natural and easy, and the former big with contradiction and absurdity. Reason here seems to be thrown into a kind of amazement and suspence, which, without the suggestions of any sceptic, gives her a diffidence of herself, and of the ground on which she treads. She sees a full light, which illuminates certain places; but that light borders upon the most profound darkness. And between these she is so dazzled and confounded, that she scarcely can pronounce with certainty and assurance concerning any one object.

125. The absurdity of these bold determinations of the abstract sciences seems to become, if possible, still more palpable with regard to time than extension. An infinite number of real parts of time, passing in succession, and exhausted one after another, appears so evident a contradiction, that no man, one should think, whose judgement is not corrupted, instead of being improved, by the sciences, would ever be able to admit of it.

Yet still reason must remain restless, and unquiet, even with regard to that scepticism, to which she is driven by these seeming absurdities and contradictions. How any clear, distinct idea can contain circumstances, contradictory to itself, or to any other clear, distinct idea, is absolutely incomprehensible; and is, perhaps, as absurd as any proposition, which can be formed. So that nothing can be more sceptical, or more full of doubt and hesitation, than this scepticism itself, which arises from some of the paradoxical conclusions of geometry or the science of quantity.

126. The sceptical objections to *moral* evidence, or to the reasonings concerning matter of fact, are either *popular* or *philosophical*. The popular objections are derived from the natural weakness of human understanding; the contradictory opinions, which have been entertained in different ages and nations; the variations of our judgement in sickness and health, youth and old age, prosperity and adversity; the perpetual contradiction of each particular man’s opinions and sentiments; with many other topics of that kind. It is needless to insist farther on this head. These objections are but weak. For as, in common life, we reason every moment concerning fact and existence, and cannot possibly subsist, without continually employing this species of argument, any popular objections, derived from thence, must be insufficient to destroy that evidence. The great subverter of *Pyrrhonism* or the excessive principles of scepticism is action, and employment, and the occupations of common life. These principles may flourish and triumph in the schools; where it is, indeed, difficult, if not impossible, to refute them. But as soon as they leave the shade, and by the presence of the real objects, which actuate our passions and sentiments, are put in opposition to the more

powerful principles of our nature, they vanish like smoke, and leave the most determined sceptic in the same condition as other mortals.

127. The sceptic, therefore, had better keep within his proper sphere, and display those *philosophical* objections, which arise from more profound researches. Here he seems to have ample matter of triumph; while he justly insists, that all our evidence for any matter of fact, which lies beyond the testimony of sense or memory, is derived entirely from the relation of cause and effect; that we have no other idea of this relation than that of two objects, which have been frequently *conjoined* together; that we have no argument to convince us, that objects, which have, in our experience, been frequently conjoined, will likewise, in other instances, be conjoined in the same manner; and that nothing leads us to this inference but custom or a certain instinct of our nature; which it is indeed difficult to resist, but which, like other instincts, may be fallacious and deceitful. While the sceptic insists upon these topics, he shows his force, or rather, indeed, his own and our weakness; and seems, for the time at least, to destroy all assurance and conviction. These arguments might be displayed at greater length, if any durable good or benefit to society could ever be expected to result from them.

128. For here is the chief and most confounding objection to *excessive* scepticism, that no durable good can ever result from it; while it remains in its full force and vigour. We need only ask such a sceptic, *What his meaning is? And what he proposes by all these curious researches?* He is immediately at a loss, and knows not what to answer. A Copernican or Ptolemaic, who supports each his different system of astronomy, may hope to produce a conviction, which will remain constant and durable, with his audience. A Stoic or Epicurean displays principles, which may not be durable, but which have an effect on conduct and behaviour. But a Pyrrhonian cannot expect, that his philosophy will have any constant influence on the mind: or if it had, that its influence would be beneficial to society. On the contrary, he must acknowledge, if he will acknowledge anything, that all human life must perish, were his principles universally and steadily to prevail. All discourse, all action would immediately cease; and men remain in a total lethargy, till the necessities of nature, unsatisfied, put an end to their miserable existence. It is true; so fatal an event is very little to be dreaded. Nature is always too strong for principle. And though a Pyrrhonian may throw himself or others into a momentary amazement and

confusion by his profound reasonings; the first and most trivial event in life will put to flight all his doubts and scruples, and leave him the same, in every point of action and speculation, with the philosophers of every other sect, or with those who never concerned themselves in any philosophical researches. When he awakes from his dream, he will be the first to join in the laugh against himself, and to confess, that all his objections are mere amusement, and can have no other tendency than to show the whimsical condition of mankind, who must act and reason and believe; though they are not able, by their most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections, which may be raised against them.

PART III.

129. There is, indeed, a more *mitigated* scepticism or *academical* philosophy, which may be both durable and useful, and which may, in part, be the result of this Pyrrhonism, or *excessive* scepticism, when its undistinguished doubts are, in some measure, corrected by common sense and reflection. The greater part of mankind are naturally apt to be affirmative and dogmatical in their opinions; and while they see objects only on one side, and have no idea of any counterpoising argument, they throw themselves precipitately into the principles, to which they are inclined; nor have they any indulgence for those who entertain opposite sentiments. To hesitate or balance perplexes their understanding, checks their passion, and suspends their action. They are, therefore, impatient till they escape from a state, which to them is so uneasy: and they think, that they could never remove themselves far enough from it, by the violence of their affirmations and obstinacy of their belief. But could such dogmatical reasoners become sensible of the strange infirmities of human understanding, even in its most perfect state, and when most accurate and cautious in its determinations; such a reflection would naturally inspire them with more modesty and reserve, and diminish their fond opinion of themselves, and their prejudice against antagonists. The illiterate may reflect on the disposition of the learned, who, amidst all the advantages of study and reflection, are commonly still diffident in their determinations: and if any of the learned be inclined, from their natural temper, to haughtiness and obstinacy, a small tincture of Pyrrhonism might abate their

pride, by showing them, that the few advantages, which they may have attained over their fellows, are but inconsiderable, if compared with the universal perplexity and confusion, which is inherent in human nature. In general, there is a degree of doubt, and caution, and modesty, which, in all kinds of scrutiny and decision, ought for ever to accompany a just reasoner.

130. Another species of *mitigated* scepticism which may be of advantage to mankind, and which may be the natural result of the Pyrrhonian doubts and scruples, is the limitation of our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding. The *imagination* of man is naturally sublime, delighted with whatever is remote and extraordinary, and running, without control, into the most distant parts of space and time in order to avoid the objects, which custom has rendered too familiar to it. A correct *Judgement* observes a contrary method, and avoiding all distant and high enquiries, confines itself to common life, and to such subjects as fall under daily practice and experience; leaving the more sublime topics to the embellishment of poets and orators, or to the arts of priests and politicians. To bring us to so salutary a determination, nothing can be more serviceable, than to be once thoroughly convinced of the force of the Pyrrhonian doubt, and of the impossibility, that anything, but the strong power of natural instinct, could free us from it. Those who have a propensity to philosophy, will still continue their researches; because they reflect, that, besides the immediate pleasure, attending such an occupation, philosophical decisions are nothing but the reflections of common life, methodized and corrected. But they will never be tempted to go beyond common life, so long as they consider the imperfection of those faculties which they employ, their narrow reach, and their inaccurate operations. While we cannot give a satisfactory reason, why we believe, after a thousand experiments, that a stone will fall, or fire burn; can we ever satisfy ourselves concerning any determination, which we may form, with regard to the origin of worlds, and the situation of nature, from, and to eternity?

This narrow limitation, indeed, of our enquiries, is, in every respect, so reasonable, that it suffices to make the slightest examination into the natural powers of the human mind and to compare them with their objects, in order to recommend it to us. We shall then find what are the proper subjects of science and enquiry.

131. It seems to me, that the only objects of the abstract science or of demonstration are quantity and number, and that all attempts to extend this

more perfect species of knowledge beyond these bounds are mere sophistry and illusion. As the component parts of quantity and number are entirely similar, their relations become intricate and involved; and nothing can be more curious, as well as useful, than to trace, by a variety of mediums, their equality or inequality, through their different appearances. But as all other ideas are clearly distinct and different from each other, we can never advance farther, by our utmost scrutiny, than to observe this diversity, and, by an obvious reflection, pronounce one thing not to be another. Or if there be any difficulty in these decisions, it proceeds entirely from the undeterminate meaning of words, which is corrected by juster definitions. That *the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides,* cannot be known, let the terms be ever so exactly defined, without a train of reasoning and enquiry. But to convince us of this proposition, *that where there is no property, there can be no injustice*, it is only necessary to define the terms, and explain injustice to be a violation of property. This proposition is, indeed, nothing but a more imperfect definition. It is the same case with all those pretended syllogistical reasonings, which may be found in every other branch of learning, except the sciences of quantity and number; and these may safely, I think, be pronounced the only proper objects of knowledge and demonstration.

132. All other enquiries of men regard only matter of fact and existence; and these are evidently incapable of demonstration. Whatever *is* may *not be*. No negation of a fact can involve a contradiction. The non-existence of any being, without exception, is as clear and distinct an idea as its existence. The proposition, which affirms it not to be, however false, is no less conceivable and intelligible, than that which affirms it to be. The case is different with the sciences, properly so called. Every proposition, which is not true, is there confused and unintelligible. That the cube root of 64 is equal to the half of 10, is a false proposition, and can never be distinctly conceived. But that Caesar, or the angel Gabriel, or any being never existed, may be a false proposition, but still is perfectly conceivable, and implies no contradiction.

The existence, therefore, of any being can only be proved by arguments from its cause or its effect; and these arguments are founded entirely on experience. If we reason *a priori*, anything may appear able to produce anything. The falling of a pebble may, for aught we know, extinguish the sun; or the wish of a man control the planets in their orbits. It is only experience, which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human knowledge, and is the source of all human action and behaviour.

Moral reasonings are either concerning particular or general facts. All deliberations in life regard the former; as also all disquisitions in history, chronology, geography, and astronomy.

The sciences, which treat of general facts, are politics, natural philosophy, physic, chemistry, &c. where the qualities, causes and effects of a whole species of objects are enquired into.

Divinity or Theology, as it proves the existence of a Deity, and the immortality of souls, is composed partly of reasonings concerning particular, partly concerning general facts. It has a foundation in *reason*, so far as it is supported by experience. But its best and most solid foundation is *faith* and divine revelation.

Morals and criticism are not so properly objects of the understanding as of taste and sentiment. Beauty, whether moral or natural, is felt, more properly than perceived. Or if we reason concerning it, and endeavour to fix its standard, we regard a new fact, to wit, the general tastes of mankind, or some such fact, which may be the object of reasoning and enquiry.

When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE BEHAVIOURS AND CONDUCT OF ARCHIBALD STEWART

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A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT OF ARCHIBALD STEWART, ESQ LATE LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.
POSTSCRIPT.

Non potuit meamens, quinesset gratia teneri,
Sit, precor, officio non gravis ira pio.

A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE BEHAVIOUR AND CONDUCT OF ARCHIBALD STEWART, ESQ LATE LORD PROVOST OF EDINBURGH.

SIR,

YOU inform me that you had great Curiosity to be acquainted with all Provost Stewart's Story, and the Circumstances of his Conduct in Edinburgh, when that City was taken by the Rebels in 1745: And that having got Copies of the In formations for and against him, you had been frightened from the Perusal of them by the Sight of two such long Law Papers, which, you imagined, must be full of Citations and technical Terms, and abstract Reasonings, of which you are wholly ignorant. But allow me to tell you, your Delicacy is very ill founded. I shall say nothing of the Information against him; and I doubt not, but, as it was drawn by a Lawyer of known Capacity, it is as good as the Subject would admit of. But the Information for him is really an extream good Paper, and worthy of your Perusal. And could you doubt of it, when you know the Importance of the Cause, the Expectations of the Publick, and above all, when you saw, at the Foot, the Gentleman's Name who composed it?

You desire me to give you an Abstract of the Story, in more familiar Terms, and in a Form, which would give you less Trouble to comprehend it. I must own, I would not indulge your Laziness so far, at the Expence of my own, were it not that I had great Obligations to Mr. Stewart, as well as a great personal Regard for him; and am desirous of putting his Cause in a just Light to you, who had once been so far seduced by Calumny and vulgar Reports, as to have entertained some Doubts of his Innocence.

Your former Prejudices are not at all surprizeing. Whatever general Contempt we may entertain for popular Rumours, 'tis difficult, when they come full upon us, not to lend, at first, some Attention to them; and they fortify themselves with so many Stories, and such numerous Circumstances, that it becomes difficult, at last, not to give even some Credit to them. But here is Mr. Stewart's Advantage, which he has now happily attained, after suffering the greatest Hardships, and after the most tedious Delays: He is placed before a Court of Judicature. His Calumniators must cease their furious Obloquy and loose Accusations, and harken to the more sober Voice of his Prosecutors. These have reduced their Charge to Article and Proposition, which they are engaged to prove and defend. He has had an Opportunity to answer; and his Answer is so good, so solid, so convincing, that the goodnatured Mob begin to retract their Calumnies; and even the furious Zealots confess with Regret, that he has been so cunning and sagacious, as to screen himself from all legal Proof and Punishment: The utmost Confession, surely, you will ever expect from them.

As often as I heard this Subject handled in Conversation (and nothing else almost was talked of for some time) I desired only every zealous Declaimer to consider the Force of the Garrison which the Provost commanded, and the Strength of the Place he was to defend. These are surely very obvious Considerations, and yet few People ever entered into them, otherwise it were impossible for such ridiculous Calumnies to have made such strong and durable Impressions. Let us run over them a little, in order to set the Matter in a just Light. This may lead us into some general, as well as particular Topics, that may not be uninstructive or unentertaining.

The great Difference betwixt the State of this Island at present, and what it was a few Centuries ago, is obvious to every one. At that time, the whole Defence of both Kingdoms was trusted to the People; who, tho’ they received no Pay, yet never neglected the Use of Arms; tho’ disperst in their own Houses, yet lived under a regular military Subordination to their Superiors and Chieftains; and tho’ obliged to labour for their Subsistance, considered, all of them, their civil Occupations as a Drudgery they submitted to from mere Necessity, but regarded their military Atchievements as the only Source of Honour and Glory. What Actions of desperate Valour have been performed by such Troops, and what well-disputed Fields they have fought, is known to every one that has the least Acquaintance with the History of this or of any other Nation. And the Behaviour of the present Highlander, who preserves but a small Part of these ancient Institutions, may set the Matter still more strongly before us.

The Highlanders are altogether as ignorant of Discipline as the Low-Country Ploughmen, and know as little the Nature of Encampments, Marches, Ranks, Evolutions, Firing, and all the other Parts of military Exercise, which preserves Order in an Army, and renders it so formidable. They advance to Battle in a confused Heap, which some People have been pleased to call a Column: They can use no Weapon but the Broad-Sword, which gives not one Wound in ten that is mortal, and obliges each Combatant to occupy double the Ground that would suffice, did he employ the Pushing-Sword or the Bayonet. And they become weaker by their Victories; while they disperse to their Homes, in order to secure the Plunder they have acquired: But still, as long as they retain a devoted Obedience to their Chiestain, who is their Officer, and value themselves upon military Courage above all Endowments, they can never justly be regarded as a contemptible Enemy.

When Men have fallen into a more civilized Life, and have been allowed to addict themselves entirely to the Cultivation of Arts and Manufactures, the Habit of their Mind, still more than that of their Body, soon renders them entirely unfit for the Use of Arms, and gives a different Direction to their Ambition. Every Man is then desirous to excel his Neighbour in Riches or Address, and laugh at the Imputation of Cowardice or Effeminacy. But the barbarous Highlander, living chiefly by Pasturage, has Leisure to cultivate the Ideas of military Honour; and hearing of nought else but the noble Exploits of his Tribe or Clan, and the renowned Heroes of his Lineage, he soon fancies that he himself is born a Hero as well as a Gentleman. The Songs recited at their Festivals, the Fables transmitted from their Ancestors, the continual Strain of their Conversation; all this nourishes their martial Spirit, and renders them, from their Cradle, compleat Soldiers in every thing but the Knowledge of Discipline.

In the antient Civil Wars of Scotland, we find that the Highland Families were always of little Weight on either Side, and that the Battles were decided entirely by the Douglasses, Carrs, Humes, and the other Low-Country Borderers; who, preserving the same Manners and Institutions with their Countrymen in the Mountains, had acquired a superior Address and Bravery, by their frequent Skirmishes and Battles with the English.

We also find, that when all the Highlanders joined to all the Lowlanders, much more numerous and brave than they, invaded England, under the legal Authority of their Prince or Sovereign, that Nation were so far from being alarmed at the Storm, that it scarce sufficed to rouse them from their Indolence and Repose. The Militia of the Northern Counties was commonly strong enough to repel the Invaders; and the Inhabitants of London, when Battles were fought in Northumberland, or the Bishoprick of Durham (for our Ancestors seldom advanced farther) heard of these Combats with as great Security, as now they read of the Wars betwixt the Persians and the Indians. ’Twas only when an ambitious Prince, like Edward the First or Third, undertook the Conquest of Scotland, that the whole Force of England was mustered up against us.

But now, (how can we think of it without Shame and Indignation?) when not above a fifth Part of these miserable Highlanders (who are no braver than their Ancestors) rose in Rebellion, they trampled down the whole Low-Countries, who were generally averse to their Cause, and whose Ancestors could have dissipated twenty times the Force of such Barbarians: They advanced into the middle of England, without meeting any Resistance: They threw a prodigious Alarm into the Capital itself, the greatest City in the Universe; they shook and rent the whole Fabrick of the Government, and the whole System of Credit on which it was built. And tho’ there were three regular Armies in England, each of them much more numerous than they, they retreated back into their own Country; and still maintained their Ground. Nor can any reasonable Man doubt, that if these Armies had been removed, eight Millions of People must have been subdued and reduced to Slavery by five Thousand, the bravest, but still the most worthless amongst them.

I shall never forget the Conversation on these Events, I had at that time with a Swiss Gentleman, that could not sufficiently admire how so great a People, who really are Lords of the Ocean, and who boast of holding in their Hand the Ballance of Power in Europe, could be so impotent and defenceless against so mean a Foe. Let those Highlanders, says he, have invaded my Country, and the Militia of three Swiss Parishes would have repelled, what the whole Force of your three Kingdoms is scarce able to master. And if we allow only a Battalion to a Parish (which seems reasonable in so populous a Country, and where every Man is disciplined) we shall find that this Boast contains no Exaggeration, but a serious, and, to us, a very melancholy Truth.

Since then, the Disposition and Discipline of this Age and Nation is such; what reasonable Man could be surprized to hear, that the Rebels had become Masters of Edinburgh, while it was not defended, but deserted by its timid Inhabitants. Methinks, we should at first have expected that Event as firmly as that they would enter Kelso, Penrith, or any defenceless open Village that lay upon their Road. I might add London to the Number, and suppose only, that the Rebels had advanced from Derby, and that Lord Stair, instead of encamping on Finchly Common, had led his Army down to Exeter or Plymouth. Would my Lord Mayor, who commands near a Million of People, have ventured to give them the smallest Opposition; or, like a Drawcansir, have stood alone in their way, armed with his Mace and great Cap of Maintenance? For I take it for granted, that every Mortal, Citizen and Courtier, Laity and Clergy, Man and Woman, old and young, would have deserted him.

I wish his Majesty would be pleased to honour me with the Command of either of the Highland Battalions, and that I had some honest Jesuitical Clergyman to lay my Scruples; I should think it a very easy Exploit to march them from Dover to Inverness, rob the Bank of England in my Way, and carry my Spoils, without Interruption, thro' the whole Nation; provided the Army were disposed to continue mere Spectators of my Prowess.

To tell the Truth, one of the Persons whom I should be the most sorry to meet with on my Road, would be Mr. Stewart. For by all that I can learn of his Conduct, he acted the Part of so vigilant, active, and even brave a Migistrate (so far as he was tried) that he might create me some Trouble: But still, if his Force was no greater than what it was during the last Rebellion, he would not be able to give me any great Interruption.

Let us ennumerate that Force, in order to judge the better of it, and determine whether it was likely to resist the Rebels. We shall surely find a List of Heroes equal to those of which Homer, has given us a Catalogue, if not in his Illiad, at least in his Batrachomyomachia, or Battle of the Frogs and Mice.

There were of the Town Guards ninety six Men, augmented at that Time to 126. These are rather elderly Men, but pretty well disciplined; and indeed, the only real Force the Provost was Master of. The rest were, in a Word, undisciplined Britons, which implies just as formidable an Idea as undisciplined Romans, or undisciplined Indians. They were nominally divided into the Trained-Bands, the Edinburgh Regiment, and the Volunteers. But this Division was really what the Schoolmen call a Distinction without a Difference. For with Regard to military Prowess, they were much the same.

As to the Trained-Bands, in what Condition that formidable Body may be in at present, or might have been in, at the time of the Rebellion, I cannot tell; but I remember, when I was a Boy, I had a very contemptible Idea of their Courage. For as they were usually drawn out on Birth Days, and marched up through the main Street, it was very common for any of them, that was bolder than usual, and would give himself Airs before his Wife or Mistress, to fire his Piece, in the Street, without any Authority or Command from his Officers. But I always observed, that they shut their Eyes, before they ventured on this military, Exploit; and I, who had at that time been accustomed to fire at Rooks and Magpyes, was very much diverted with their Timorousness. However, I question not, but there are many very honest substantial Tradesmen amongst them, and as long as that is granted, I suppose they will allow any one to make as merry as he pleases with their military Character.

His Majesty’s Warrant to raise the Edinburgh Regiment was not delivered to the Provost, till the 9th of September, seven Days before the Rebels entered the Town. The oldest enlisted, therefore, were now Veteran Troops of seven Days standing: the youngest not less than a Quarter of an Hour. Their Number might amount to about 300. I am told, that their Appearance resembled very much that of Falstaff’s Tatterdemallion Company, which his Friend supposed he had leviod by unloading the Gibbets and pressing the dead Bodies. But the merry Knight defended his Company, by saying, Tut, mortal Men, mortal Men, good enough to toss, Food for Powder. Tho’ it is my humble Opinion, that had the Mortality of the Regiment abovementioned depended on their being Food for Powder, they would have deserved the Epithet of the immortal Body, as much as the King of Persia’s Guards, who, as Herodotus tells us, were dignified with that Appellation. But not to be too hard upo• our Countrymen, I shall allow, that notwithstanding their Poverty, they would have behaved as well as the Million Regiment of London, so called from the Property of the Soldiers, which, it seems, amounted to that Sum.

The Volunteers, who come next, to the Number of 400, and close the Rear, the Post of Honour in all Retreats, will, perhaps, expect to be treated with greater Gravity and Respect: And no doubt they deserve it, were it only for their well meant Endeavours in Defence of their King and Country. As to their Discipline and Experience, it was much the same with that of the others. I need not add their Courage: For these are Points almost inseparable. Religious Zeal makes a mighty Addition to Discipline; but is of no Moment when alone. Cromwell’s Enthusiasts conquered all the Nobility and Gentry of England; and at the Battle of Dunkirk struck the French and Spaniards with Admiration, even under a Turenne and a Condé. But their

Brethren at Bothwell-Bridge fled before they came within Sight of the Enemy. Which of these Examples our Volunteers were most likely to imitate, I leave to their own Conscience to determine. A Friend of mine, who has a poetical Genius, has made a Description of their March from the Lawn-Market to the West-Port, when they went out to meet the Rebels; and has invented a very magnificent Simile to illustrate it. He compares it to the Course of the Rhine, which rolling pompously it Waves through fertile Fields, instead of augmenting in its Course, is continually drawn off by a thousand Canals, and, at last, becomes a small Rivulet, which loses itself in the Sand before it reaches the Ocean.

Such were the Forces over whom the Provost had some Authority. His Auxiliaries were two Regiments of Dragoons, under Mr. F… then a Brigadier General, now happily a Major General, in his Majesty's Service. Of what Importance these were to the Defence of the Town, shall be considered afterwards.

I remember Cardinal de Retz says, that a great Prince made very merry with the new levied Troops of Paris, during the Civil Wars; and when he mentioned the Defence that might be expected from the City against the King's Troops, usually called it, La guerre des pots de chambre, The War of the Chamber-pots. As it is well known, that a Chamber-pot is a very formidable Machine in Edinburgh, I wonder it has not been comprized amongst Provost Stewart's Forces; at least, amongst his Auxiliaries, in Conjunction with the rest abovementioned.

Having thus given a faithful Account of the Garrison, let us now bestow some Considerations on the Place, the Defence of which was expected from Mr. Stewart, and which he is supposed to have lost by Negligence or bad Intentions. A weak or no Garrison, in a Place weakly fortified, or not fortified at all, must be the Consummation of all Weakness. We are forbid by Philosophy to seek for more Causes then are requisite to explain any Phaenomenon. And I think it will fairly be allowed, that if these two Circumstances are admitted, 'twill be quite superfluous to have recourse to a third, viz. a weak or a treacherous Governor, in order to account for the Surrender of the Place.

You know, that the City of Edinburgh is surrounded for the greatest part, by a plain Wall about twenty Foot high, where highest, and about two and a half or three Foot thick, where thickest. It is not, in many Places, flanked by any Bastions: It has not Strength or Thickness enough to bear Cannon. The

Besieged would not even have room to handle or charge their Pieces; but must be set up aloft as Marks to the Enemy, who can annoy them infinitely more and receive less Harm from them, than if both stood in an open Field.

You know, that this Wall, tho’ near two Miles in Length, surrounds not the whole Town, but is supplied on the North by a Lake which is fordable in many Places.

You know, that this Wall, for a very considerable Space, is overlooked by Houses, which stand within five or six Paces of it, and which it was impossible to destroy because of their Number and Value.

The Town is supplied with Water entirely by Pipes. Its Bread is even, strictly speaking, its daily Bread. For the Bakers never have by them more Flower than serves them a Day, but bring it continually from their Milns on the Water of Leith, as Occasion requires.

Besides, as happens in all Civil Wars, there were so many disaffected Persons in Town, that had it been held out but for three Hours (which indeed was impossible) it was justly feared, that it would have been set on fire from within, in order to facilitate the Entry of the Rebels; nay, it was easily possible for the Rebels themselves to set fire to it from without, and force it, by that means, to a speedy Surrender.

It is obvious to every one, however ignorant of military Affairs, that any Governor who incloses himself in such a Place, fights with Disadvantage, and has infinitely better Chance for Success, if he fairly opens his Gates, and marches forth to combat his Enemy in an equal Battle. For not to insist on the other Disadvantages above mentioned, the Circuit of these Walls is too large to be guarded by any moderate Garrison; the Enemy can draw them together to any one Place by a false Alarm, in the Night, or even in the Day; while he breaks in at a distant Place, that is weakly defended, and the Garrison, entangled among the Houses and Garden-Walls, must be cut in Pieces, almost without Resistance.

This Measure therefore, of meeting the Rebels before they reached Edinburgh, was very prudently resolved on by General Guest, on the sixteenth of September, when Intelligence was brought, that the Highlanders were approaching; and he ordered Brigadier F… to advance with his Dragoons to the Colt-Bridge for that Purpose; he also desired Mr. Stewart to join what Infantry he could to sustain the Dragoons. The Provost ordered upon this Duty all the Town Guards, and all the Edinburgh Regiment that were fit for Service. He had no Power to order the Volunteers out of Town: He only consented, that, as many as pleased, should be allowed to march out. But, it seems, they had as little Inclination to go, as he had Power to order them; a few of them made a faint Effort; but, ’tis said, met with Opposition from some of the zealously affected, who represented to them the infinite Value of their Lives, in comparison of those Ruffians, the Highlanders. This Opposition they were never able to overcome.

Brigadier F… (whose Conduct in this whole Affair is too remarkable to be forgot) tho’ he had only two Regiments of Dragoons, and a very few Infantry, was still a formidable Enemy to the Rebels. For, as much as regular veteran Infantry are superior to Cavalry, as much are Cavalry, especially in an open Field, superior to an irregular Infantry, such as the Highlanders; who cannot keep their Ranks, wherein consists all the Force of Foot; who cannot fire regularly in Platoons; who know not the Use of the Bayonet, and whose sole Weapon is their Broad-Sword, in which a Horseman, by his very Situation, has an infinite Advantage above them. Or if it were too sanguine to hope for a Victory from such a Force as the Brigadier commanded, a leisurely and a regular Retreat might at least have been made, tho’ he had advanced within a Musket-shot of the Enemy.

But before the Rebels came within Sight of the King’s Forces, before they came within three Miles distance of them, Orders were issued to the Dragoons to wheel; which they immediately did, with the greatest Order and Regularity imaginable. As ’tis known, nothing is more beautiful than the Evolutions and Motions of Cavalry, the Spectators stood in Expectation what fine warlike Manaeuvre this might terminate in; when new Orders were immediately issued to retreat. They immediately retreated, and began to march in the usual Pace of Cavalry. Orders were repeated, every Furlong, to quicken their Pace; and both Precept and Example concurring, they quickened it so well, that before they reached Edinburgh, they had come to a pretty smart Gallop. They passed, in an inexpressible Hurry and Confusion, through the narrow Lanes at Barefoot’s Parks, in the Sight of all the North Part of the Town, to the infinite Joy of the Disaffected, and equal Grief and Consternation of all the other Inhabitants. They rushed like a Torrent down to Leith; where they endeavoured to draw Breath: But some unlucky Boy (I suppose, a Jacobite in his Heart) calling to them that the Highlanders were approaching, they immediately took to their Heels again, and galloped to Prestonpans about six Miles further. Here in a literal Sense, Timor addidit alas, their Fear added Wings; I mean to the Rebels. For otherwise, they could not possibly imagine, that these formidable Enemies could be within several Miles of them. But at Prestonpans, the same Alarm was renewed, The Philistines be upon thee Sampson, they galloped to Northberwick; and being now about twenty Miles on the other Side of Edinburgh, they thought they might safely dismount from their Horses, and look out for Victuals. Accordingly, like the antient Grecian Heroes, each of them began to kill and dress his Provisions. Egit amor dapis atque pugnae, they were actuated by the Desire of Supper and a Battle. The Sheep and Turkies of Northberwick paid for this warlike Disposition. But behold! the Uncertainty of human Happiness; when the Mutton was just ready to be put upon Table, they heard, or thought they heard, the same Cry of the Highlanders. Their Fear proved stronger than their Hunger; they again got on Horseback, but were informed time enough of the Falseness of the Alarm, to prevent the spoiling of their Meal.

By such Rudiments as these, the Dragoons were trained; till at last they became so perfect in their Lesson, that at the Battle of Preston, they could practise it of themselves; tho’ even there the same good Example was not wanting.

I have seen an Italian Opera called Caesare in Egitto, or Caesar in Egypt; where in the first Scene Caesar is introduced in a great Hurry, giving Orders to his Soldiers, Fugge, fugge: a’llo scampo. Fly, fly: to your Heels. This is a Proof, that the Commander at the Colt-Bridge is not the first Hero that gave such Orders to his Troops.

’Twas in Consideration of such great Example, I suppose, that he has been so honourably acquitted, and since promoted; while Mr. Stewart has been imprisoned for fourteen Months, forced to give a Recognizance of 15000 l. for his Appearance, and three times, in a manner, brought upon his Trial. So true the old Proverb, That it is safer for one Man to steal a Horse, than for another to look over a Hedge.

But Mr. Stewart asserts, very justly, that he neither stole the Horse, nor looked over the Hedge. He neither incurred any real Guilt, nor gave the smallest Foundation for any such Suspicion; the only adviseable Expedient for saving the Town was tried; and failing, with such multiplied Circumstances of Terror and Consternation, it left him, if possible, in a worse Situation than before, by that Discouragement, with which it imprest every one. The Volunteers, before that time, had thought fit of themselves to give up their Arms to the Castle; the Edinburgh Regiment had also given up their Arms: The Burghers or Trained-Bands, deserted by the regular Forces, refused to expose their Lives, when they understood, by repeated Threatnings from the Rebels, that every Man, who made any Resistance, should be put to Death. In short an universal Panic, and that not groundless, had seized the People. ’Tis what the bravest and best disciplined Forces have been subject to, and what is, with great Difficulty cured, by the most expert Commanders. But ’tis unavoidable in every undisciplined Multitude, and is there perfectly incurable.

What tho’ some faint Glimpse of Hope was afforded, by the Intelligence received, towards the Evening of this fatal Day, that Sir J… C… with his Army had been seen at Sea, off Dunbar. This Succour was too distant to relieve them from an Enemy, who was at their Gates. And the Minds of Men were now unbent, and had, with great Reason, abandoned all Thoughts of Defence, which they could not resume again, in such immediate Danger, and without any probable or possible View of Success.

In this Confusion, when nobody did his Duty, when nobody but Mr. Stewart seemed to think he had now any Duty to do, the Town always ungarrisoned, always unfortified, now in an universal Consternation, perhaps divided within itself, was entered without Resistance by the Rebels.

I should think it an Affront on your Understanding to shew you more particularly how unavoidable this Event is to be esteemed; and therefore having put this main Point in a just Light, I shall touch, tho’ briefly, on the other Articles of Accusation. They are, I own, like the Provost’s Forces, pretty numerous; but surely the most disorderly, undisciplined Rabble that ever were led into the Field. They are rather the Subject of Ridicule than of any serious Opposition. For Instance.

The Lord Justice Clerk, several of the Judges, along with the King’s Council, gave it unanimously as their Opinion, that the levying of a Regiment, without his Majesty’s Warrant, was illegal: His Majesty, when applied to, confirmed that Doubt by granting that Warrant: And the plain Words of the Statute requires such an Authority; yet the raising a Doubt upon this Head is deemed a Crime; tho’ that Doubt, or any other Doubt, were it ever so ill grounded, must be allowed intirely innocent.

The Provost also is said to have raised a Doubt about the Legality of inlisting the Volunteers. And indeed, this Case is so much alike, or so much the same with the other, of raising a Regiment, that no wonder such a

Scruple did arise. But he took Care, immediately, to consult the Lord Advocate; and he also took Care, immediately, to acquiesce in his Lordship’s Judgment. Yet this is one Article of Charge against him.

The Town-Council intrusted the Inspection and Care of the Work to a Committee under another Person: The Works projected were all finished before the Arrival of the Rebels. Are you not surprized he must answer for them, as if they were unfinished; or, as if they had chiefly been put under his Direction.

Some Zealots had proposed to set up Marks of Distinction, from mere Suspicion on several Citizens, who behaved themselves peaceably. The Provost rejected so imprudent, so pernicious a Measure. Is he therefore criminal? He offered Pay and Victuals to some Volunteers, that came from the Country; need I repeat the Question, if this Proposal renders him criminal?

A Gentleman, Mr. Alves, travelling on the Road towards Edinburgh, passes the Rebels; and the Duke of Perth gives him a threatning Message to deliver to the Provost: The Provost does not immediately commit him; both because it did not appear, that he was any way guilty, in relating to the Chief Magistrate, a Story in which he had been involuntarily engaged; and because there was Danger of spreading the Story the faster, and intimidating the Inhabitants, by such a Commitment. Hearing a few Hours afterwards, that the Gentleman had been so imprudent as to tell his Message to others, he immediately committed him. You are not surprized, I suppose, after what you have read above, to find, that this is an Article of Accusation.

He is also charged with receiving a Petition from the Inhabitants, keeping a Meeting with them, and hearing a Letter read from the Pretender’s Son. The receiving the Petition was innocent, and also unavoidable, unless he had shut himself up in his Closet. The calling a Meeting of the Inhabitants at such a Juncture, would also have been innocent. But he called no such Meeting. The Inhabitants, under Terror of the approaching Danger, pressed in upon him wherever he went, and would have their Complaints and Remonstrances heard; and the Provost, so far from consenting to read the Letter, openly and strongly opposed it, and left the Company to avoid hearing it. All these Facts are public and notorious.

On the 15th of September, the Provost was called in the Evening to Lord Justice Clerk’s, where Lord Advocate, General Guest, Brigadier F…, and several other Officers, were present. A Proposal was there made, that the

Dragoons should be brought into Town, with a View to give them some Rest and Refreshment, and have their Horses fed in the Streets. But upon Reflection it appeared, that the Avenues of the Town might be taken possession of by the Rebels, and the Streets barricadoed, the Houses lined, and the Dragoons by that means fall into the Hands of the Enemy. This Proposal, therefore, was most justly rejected. Next Day, after the near Approach of the Rebels, after the Flight of the Dragoons, after the universal Consternation of all Ranks, Mr. Stewart refused to sign any Order to these Dragoons, over whom he had no Authority, to return and enter into the Town; tho' he promised them all Kind of good Reception and Entertainment, if they thought proper to come. When I find the Refusal to sign such an Order, stated as an Article of Accusation against the Provost, I cannot think but the Accuser, foreseeing the Circumstances of Merit, which the Accused would plead, laid immediate Claim to them as his own Right; like a prudent General, who takes Possession of those Eminences or strong Grounds, that may be of Service to the Enemy. This Observation is, indeed, applicable to almost all the Articles; there is scarce any of them but might be cited as a Proof of Mr. Stewart's Vigilance, Prudence, Activity, or Moderation.

If the Volunteers, in the Hurry of so active a Day, as the 16th of September, waited some time for Orders, without receiving any; this is also made an Article of Charge.

The 10th Article is of the same Force with all the rest; tho' I shall not tire either you or myself, by narrating or refuting it. I shall only add a few Words, with regard to the Eleventh Article, which charges him with allowing the City Arms to fall into the Hands of the Rebels; because some People think there is a Foundation for this Charge, tho' they frankly allow all the rest to be frivolous, and even ridiculous,

First, Without mentioning the Insignificancy of these Arms, Mr. Stewart pleads, with regard to this Article, and with regard to all Articles, that have been, or may ever be charged against him, that, tho' Chief Magistrate, and President of the Town-Council, he was really but one Member, and had but one Vote. The supreme Command was in the Council. They were criminal, if there be any Crime. It is not, nor can it be pretended, that he, in this or any other Instance, opposed, or over-ruled, or contradicted their Determination.

Secondly, There had several Messages come from the Rebels, threatning Destruction, if the City either resisted or secreted their Arms. It is a Question whether the Magistrates, for the saving of a few rusty Arms, ought in Prudence to have run the Risque of having these Threats executed, considering the known Barbarity of the Clans, and the then unknown Moderation of their Chieftains. But it is no Question, however the Magistrates had determined, that the People would not have consented; and consequently, that the secreting these Arms was absolutely impracticable.

Thirdly, Mr. Stewart showed all along a particular Attention to keep Arms out of the Hands of the Rebels. When it was proposed, after the News arrived of Sir J… C…'s being seen off Dunbar, to desire back again from the Castle, the Arms which the Volunteers and the Edinburgh Regiment had carried thither; the Provost, apprehensive of the Consequences, rejected the Proposal; till he should see, as he said, a better Disposition in the Inhabitants, to make use of Arms. And he even sent a Message to General Guest in the Castle, informing him of the Consternation of the Town, and the little Authority which the Magistrates had, to force the Trained-Bands to deliver up their Arms; and desiring, at the same time, the General to send down a Party to carry up the Arms, or use some other Expedient to that Purpose.

Fourthly, It is proper to consider, in this Case, the Uncertainty of the Situation to which the Magistrates and Council were reduced, during the last and most distressing Scene of this unlucky Affair: Sometimes terrified with the immediate Approach of the Rebels; at other times, incouraged with some Prospect of Relief; even towards the End of this Period there were some Hopes of the Return of the Dragoons. Nor was that Expectation quite over in the Meeting of the Council; until they heard the Rebels had entered the Town. Had the Dragoons returned to the City, and animated the People in its Defence, the Charge against the Provost then, would have been inverted: Why did he send up the Arms to the Castle? Why did he carry them out of the way, when they might be instantly wanted for the Defence of the Town, and the near Approach of the Rebels made a Moment's Delay of great Consequence? And the Citation might have been adduced, which has been misapplied in the present Case, Quod puncto saepe temporis maximarum rerum occasiones amittuntur, That Success in the greatest Affairs, frequently depends on a Moment.

But, Fifthly, what if Mr. Stewart should say (which indeed he has here no manner of Occasion for) that he was in the wrong, and that in the general Hurry and Consternation, it was difficult not to forget something. Would any Man lay this as a criminal Accusation against him. I grant, in War, it is never allowed a General to say, Non cogitavi, I did not think of it. Marlborough or Eugene might be ashamed of such an Excuse: But the Provost was bred to a different Profession. And I dare affirm, that even these great Generals, had they been ingenuous, might, twenty times in their Lives, have made use of this Apology.

The Twelfth, and last Article is, if possible, still more extraordinary than all the rest. It makes the Provost the Scape Goat, and charges him with the Sins of the whole People; because the People want Charity, and judge him criminal, therefore he must really be so. You may read, indeed, in your Machiavel, that, by a very peculiar and very absurd Law in the Republick of Florence, whereever the popular Opinion condemned a Man, it was lawful for a certain Magistrate, called the Gonfalioneré, immediately to put him to death, without any Trial or Form of Process. I have no Intention to deny, that Mr. Stewart would have fared very ill, had he been in Florence two Years ago; and had the present Provost been Gonfalioneré. Tho’ now I believe he would have no Reluctance to submit himself to a popular Tribunal.

The People’s Voice is odd,
It is, and it is not the Voice of God.

But tho’ popular Clamours are not here, as in Florence, authorized by Law, it is plain, that, in Practice, at least in Mr. Stewart’s Case, they draw very terrible Consequences after them. He was sensible of the Disadvantage he lay under; yet this would not discourage him from attending his Duty in Parliament. He put himself into the Hands of his Enemies; for such the Ministry had become; nor need we be in the least surprized at it. He suffered a severe Confinement for some time; and tho’ this was by Degrees remitted, yet still it continued a Confinement for fourteen Months, very grievous to any Man, and very prejudicial to a Man of Business.

I have been certainly informed, that, very often when the Ministry, in prosecution of their usual Lenity, was resolved to give Mr. Stewart his Liberty, their Hands were continually stopped by a fresh Cargo of Lies and

Calumnies imported to them from Scotland; and which it required some time to examine and discuss.

But when, at last, he got his Liberty, and had the Prospect of a fair Trial, this happy Time, which should put a Period to all his Sufferings, was continually protracted, in the most unaccountable Manner in the World. At the first Diet in March, he was put off till June, and afterwards till August. When every Thing was then ready for a Trial, the Prosecutor deserted the Diet, and Mr. Stewart, as well as the Public, imagined, that all was over, and that his Enemies, conscious of his Innocence, were to free him from all farther Prosecution. But he is again, it seems, to be brought on his Taial with additional Expence, and Vexation and Trouble. How long this may yet last is uncertain; and ’tis evident any Man might me ruined by the Continuation and Repetition of such a Practice: For which, it seems, our Law provides no Remedy.

All these vexatious Measures gave the more Indignation, when we consider again it whom, and by whom, they are exercised. You are perfectly well acquainted with Mr. Stewart, and know him to be a good Magistrate, a good Friend, a good Companion, a fair Dealer: A Man in every Action of his Life, full of Humanity, Justice and Moderation.

The Government too, is surely the fullest of Mildness, Equity and Justice in the World. The present Instance is, I believe, the only one, in near sixty Years, of an innocent Man, that has ever lain under the least Oppression. If our Government is faulty in any Thing, ’tis rather in the opposite Extreme; and the present Times show sufficient Examples of it.

The Town of Edinburgh was lost; a most unexpected, and most unaccountable Event surely! But what was it when the Battle of Falkirk was lost; when a numerous, a veteran and a brave Army fled before a Handful of Highlanders, whom they had scarce seen? I never heard that the Author of that Calamity has been punished, or even questioned, or has met with the smallest Discouragement; I mean, from the higher Powers. For I was very well diverted, t’other Day, by the Account of a Sarcasm, he met with from a private Hand, which was the severest in the World.

When the Army fled to Linlithgow, they immediately quartered themselves about in all the Houses, and even in the Palace, where there dwelt, at that Time, a Lady noted for Wit and Beauty; who observing their disorderly Proceedings, was apprehensive they would fire the Palace. She immediately went to remonstrate to a certain great General, and was received pro solitâ suâ humanitate, with his usual Humanity. Finding her Remonstrances vain, she took her Leave in these Words, To take care, says she, of the King’s House, is your Concern: For my Part, I can run from Fire as fast as any of you.

So spoke the Cherub, and her grave Rebuke,
Severe in youthful Beauty, added Grace
Invincible. Abash’d the Devil stood, &c. &c.

It would be cruel to mention the unfortunate K…t; and, I believe, since we live in an acquitting Age, every Body is glad he was acquitted. I have heard, that all the Winter after the Battle of Preston, he was carried about London in his Chair, with the Curtains drawn, to escape the Derision of the Mob; till the News of the Battle of Falkirk arrived, and then he pulled back the Curtains, and showed his Face and his r… R… to all the World. Thus the Reputation which the Hero of the Colt-Bridge was the chief Cause of depriving him of, the Hero of Falkirk, in a great Measure restored to him.

Saepe, premente Deo, fert Deus alter open.

I need not insist on the Mayor of Carlisle, Mr. Pattison (not Paterson) who defended so gloriously a fortified Town against the Rebels.

I shall only say, If all these Enormities pass unpunished, and Mr. Stewart alone the Victim, there are some People, to make Use of the Allusion of a witty Author, that resemble very much the Monster in Rabelais, that could swallow a Wind-mill every Morning to Breakfast, and was at last choaked with a Pound of Fresh-Butter hot from an Oven.

I am, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Intended to have sent this by but not being able to meet him before he left this Country, I was obliged to keep it by me till this time, when I hear, to my great Satisfaction, that Mr. Stewart has been acquitted by the Jury Nemine contradicente, and that all the Facts contained in his Information, and in the foregoing Letter, were proved with an Evidence and Conviction, even beyond what he himself imagined. The Trial was the longest and most solemn that ever was known in this Country; and the Judges were even obliged, by Necessity, to break through an established Custom and Law, and adjourned the Court, on Account of the absolute Impossibility of supporting, without Interruption, the Fatigues of so long a Trial. Mr. Stewart intended to have abridged their Trouble, by resting his Defence intirely on the Pursuer's Evidence, without adducing a single Witness of his own: But he was over-ruled in this by his Council, who approved of the Confidence arising from Innocence, but still insisted upon having two Witnesses adduced, for all the principle Facts, upon which he grounded his Defence.

Several of the Jury had been Volunteers during the Rebellion, and all of them were particularly distinguished by their warm Zeal for the Government. As some People had been foolish enough to make this Trial a Party Business, all Mr. Stewart's Friends were alarmed, when they saw the Names of the Jury. For tho' they were sensible of the Probity of these Gentlemen, yet they dreaded their Prejudices, and were afraid that Truth and Innocence would not obtain so full a Triumph (as they did afterwards) over Passion and Party-Zeal.

I can assure you the King's Advocate did not want Keenness in this Affair, to give the mildest Appellation to his Conduct. And here I must inform you, that what I heard of his Speech suggested to me a Remark, which I had often made to the Honour of our Age and Nation, in one Particular, above the antient Times of Greece and Rome. Mr. Grant was very copious in insisting on the Suspicions this Country lay under with Regard to Jacobitism, the apparent Diffidence the Ministry had shewn to trust us with the Trials of the Rebels, the strong Conviction every one in

England had of Mr. Stewart’s Guilt, and the great Scandal his Acquital would bring on the Country; to which he added, that a very slight Punishment was intended, a few Days Imprisonment, and a small Fine, which one so rich as Mr. Stewart could easily bear. But though you know that such extraneous and popular Topicks as these, are very usual in all the Poems and Epilogues of Cicero, and even of Demosthenes; yet I can assure you this Imitation of the antient Orators was not at all approved of, either by the Jury or the By-standers.

You will be very much surprized, I suppose, to hear, that many of the Whigs have betrayed such a furious Zeal on this Occasion, that they are mortified, or rather indeed inraged to the last Degree, that an innocent Man has been found innocent: And this has given Occasion to the Opposite Party, to make his Acquital a Matter of infinite Triumph and Rejoicing; as much almost as the Defeat of Val, or the Surprizal of Bergen-op-zoom, or any other publick Calamity, that has ever befallen us. Whatever opposes or disappoints the Government will always be, without Distinction, a great Satisfaction to them.

But I shall further explain to you the great Difference betwixt a political and a religious Whig, in Order to account for these odd Transactions. The Idea I form of a political Whig is, that of a Man of Sense and Moderation, a Lover of Laws and Liberty, whose chief Regard to particular Princes and Families, is founded on a Regard to the publick Good: The Leaders of this Party amongst us, are Men of great Worth, the President, for instance, and Lord Justice Clerk, especially the Former. I fay, especially the Former: for tho’ ’tis certain the Conduct of the Justice Clerk was altogether commendable, as far as the Circumstances and Situations, in which he was placed, would admit; yet that of the President has been so singularly good and great, to be the Subject of Admiration, and even of Envy, if Virtue could ever excite that Passion.

The religious Whigs are a very different Set of Mortals, and in my Opinion, are much worse than the religious Tories; as the political Tories are inferior to the political Whigs. I know not how it happens, but it seems to me, that a Zeal for Bishops, and for the Book of Common-Prayer, tho’ equally groundless, has never been able, when mixt up with Party Notions, to form so virulent and exalted a Poison in human Breasts, as the opposite Principles. Dissimulation, Hypocrisy, Violence, Calumny, Selfishness are, generally speaking, the true and legitimate Offspring of the Kind of Zeal.

This Species of Whigs, whatever they may imagine, form but the Fag-end of the Party and are, at the Bottom, very heartily despised by their own Leaders. Once on a Time, indeed the Breech got over the Head; when Cromwell Ireton, Warriston, &c. ruled our Councils and Armies; and then there was fine Work indeed. But ever since, though their Assistance has been taken at Elections, and they have been allowed▪ in Return, to rail and make a Noise as much as they please, they have had but little Influence of our publick Determinations; and long may continue so.

These are Mr. Stewart’s greatest, and indeed only Enemies. The political Whigs are, many of them, his personal Friends; and all of them are extremely pleased with his Acquital, because they believe, what is, indeed, undeniable, that it was founded on his Innocence. I am charitably enough to suppose, that the Joy of many of the Tories flowed from the same Motive. And as to those, if there were any such, who had a dif…ferent Motive, he will not, I believe, give them any Thanks for a Concern, which is more likely to hurt than to serve him.

FINIS.

AN ENQUIRY CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLES OF MORALS

1777 Edition

An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals is a reworking of material from Book 3 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*, concerning morality, but with a significantly different emphasis. The book was thought by Hume to be the best of his writings. In the treatise, Hume argues, among other things, that the foundations of morals lie with sentiment, not reason. The book was originally published in 1751, three years after the first Enquiry: *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Hume's approach in the second Enquiry is largely empirical. Instead of beginning his moral inquiry with questions of how morality ought to operate, he purports to investigate primarily how we actually make moral judgments. Furthermore, Hume purports to provide a naturalistic account of morality, at least to the extent that it is something that is common among the human species. But, whether in the end Hume purports to provide a normative ethical theory, rather than a merely descriptive theory of moral psychology, is a contentious issue among critics.

Hume defends his sympathy-based moral sentimentalism by claiming that, contrary to moral rationalism, we can never make moral judgments based on reason alone. Reason deals with facts and draws conclusions from them, but, all else being equal, it could not lead us to choose one option over the other; only our sentiments can do this, according to Hume. Hume argues that sentimentalism as a foundation for ethics primarily as a meta-ethical theory about the epistemology of morality. Hume's sentimentalism is similar to the moral epistemology of intuitionism (although, of course, different in many respects). According to such a theory, one's epistemological access to moral truths is not primarily via an evidentially mediated faculty, such as reason. Rather, one's epistemological access is more direct. According to Hume, we know moral truths via our sentiments — our feelings of approval and disapproval.

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SECTION I. OF THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MORALS.

DISPUTES with men, pertinaciously obstinate in their principles, are, of all others, the most irksome; except, perhaps, those with persons, entirely disingenuous, who really do not believe the opinions they defend, but engage in the controversy, from affectation, from a spirit of opposition, or from a desire of showing wit and ingenuity, superior to the rest of mankind. The same blind adherence to their own arguments is to be expected in both; the same contempt of their antagonists; and the same passionate vehemence, in inforcing sophistry and falsehood. And as reasoning is not the source, whence either disputant derives his tenets; it is in vain to expect, that any logic, which speaks not to the affections, will ever engage him to embrace sounder principles.

Those who have denied the reality of moral distinctions, may be ranked among the disingenuous disputants; nor is it conceivable, that any human creature could ever seriously believe, that all characters and actions were alike entitled to the affection and regard of everyone. The difference, which nature has placed between one man and another, is so wide, and this difference is still so much farther widened, by education, example, and habit, that, where the opposite extremes come at once under our apprehension, there is no scepticism so scrupulous, and scarce any assurance so determined, as absolutely to deny all distinction between them. Let a man’s insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with the images of Right and Wrong; and let his prejudices be ever so obstinate, he must observe, that others are susceptible of like impressions. The only way, therefore, of converting an antagonist of this kind, is to leave him to himself. For, finding that nobody keeps up the controversy with him, it is probable he will, at last, of himself, from mere weariness, come over to the side of common sense and reason.

There has been a controversy started of late, much better worth examination, concerning the general foundation of Morals; whether they be derived from Reason, or from Sentiment; whether we attain the knowledge of them by a chain of argument and induction, or by an immediate feeling and finer internal sense; whether, like all sound judgement of truth and falsehood, they should be the same to every rational intelligent being; or whether, like the perception of beauty and deformity, they be founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species.

The ancient philosophers, though they often affirm, that virtue is nothing but conformity to reason, yet, in general, seem to consider morals as deriving their existence from taste and sentiment. On the other hand, our modern enquirers, though they also talk much of the beauty of virtue, and deformity of vice, yet have commonly endeavoured to account for these distinctions by metaphysical reasonings, and by deductions from the most abstract principles of the understanding. Such confusion reigned in these subjects, that an opposition of the greatest consequence could prevail between one system and another, and even in the parts of almost each individual system; and yet nobody, till very lately, was ever sensible of it. The elegant Lord Shaftesbury, who first gave occasion to remark this distinction, and who, in general, adhered to the principles of the ancients, is not, himself, entirely free from the same confusion.

It must be acknowledged, that both sides of the question are susceptible of specious arguments. Moral distinctions, it may be said, are discernible by pure reason: else, whence the many disputes that reign in common life, as well as in philosophy, with regard to this subject: the long chain of proofs often produced on both sides; the examples cited, the authorities appealed to, the analogies employed, the fallacies detected, the inferences drawn, and the several conclusions adjusted to their proper principles. Truth is disputable; not taste: what exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgement; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment. Propositions in geometry may be proved, systems in physics may be controverted; but the harmony of verse, the tenderness of passion, the brilliancy of wit, must give immediate pleasure. No man reasons concerning another’s beauty; but frequently concerning the justice or injustice of his actions. In every criminal trial the first object of the prisoner is to disprove the facts alleged, and deny the actions imputed to him: the second to prove, that, even if these actions were real, they might be justified, as innocent and lawful. It is confessedly by deductions of the understanding, that the first point is ascertained: how can we suppose that a different faculty of the mind is employed in fixing the other? On the other hand, those who would resolve all moral determinations into sentiment, may endeavour to show, that it is impossible for reason ever to draw conclusions of this nature. To virtue, say they, it belongs to be amiable, and vice odious. This forms their very nature or essence. But can reason or argumentation distribute these different epithets to any subjects, and pronounce beforehand, that this must produce love, and that hatred? Or what other reason can we ever assign for these affections, but the original fabric and formation of the human mind, which is naturally adapted to receive them?

The end of all moral speculations is to teach us our duty; and, by proper representations of the deformity of vice and beauty of virtue, beget correspondent habits, and engage us to avoid the one, and embrace the other. But is this ever to be expected from inferences and conclusions of the understanding, which of themselves have no hold of the affections or set in motion the active powers of men? They discover truths: but where the truths which they discover are indifferent, and beget no desire or aversion, they can have no influence on conduct and behaviour. What is honourable, what is fair, what is becoming, what is noble, what is generous, takes possession of the heart, and animates us to embrace and maintain it. What is intelligible, what is evident, what is probable, what is true, procures only the cool assent of the understanding; and gratifying a speculative curiosity, puts an end to our researches.

Extinguish all the warm feelings and prepossessions in favour of virtue, and all disgust or aversion to vice: render men totally indifferent towards these distinctions; and morality is no longer a practical study, nor has any tendency to regulate our lives and actions.

These arguments on each side (and many more might be produced) are so plausible, that I am apt to suspect, they may, the one as well as the other, be solid and satisfactory, and that reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions. The final sentence, it is probable, which pronounces characters and actions amiable or odious, praise-worthy or blameable; that which stamps on them the mark of honour or infamy, approbation or censure; that which renders morality an active principle and constitutes virtue our happiness, and vice our misery; it is probable, I say, that this final sentence depends on some internal sense or feeling, which nature has made universal in the whole species. For what else can have an influence of this nature? But in order to pave the way for such a sentiment, and give a proper discernment of its object, it is often necessary, we find, that much reasoning should precede, that nice distinctions be made, just conclusions drawn, distant comparisons formed, complicated relations examined, and general facts fixed and ascertained. Some species of beauty, especially the natural kinds, on their first appearance, command our affection and approbation; and where they fail of this effect, it is impossible for any reasoning to redress their influence, or adapt them better to our taste and sentiment. But in many orders of beauty, particularly those of the finer arts, it is requisite to employ much reasoning, in order to feel the proper sentiment; and a false relish may frequently be corrected by argument and reflection. There are just grounds to conclude, that moral beauty partakes much of this latter species, and demands the assistance of our intellectual faculties, in order to give it a suitable influence on the human mind.

But though this question, concerning the general principles of morals, be curious and important, it is needless for us, at present, to employ farther care in our researches concerning it. For if we can be so happy, in the course of this enquiry, as to discover the true origin of morals, it will then easily appear how far either sentiment or reason enters into all determinations of this nature [Footnote: See Appendix I]. In order to attain this purpose, we shall endeavour to follow a very simple method: we shall analyse that complication of mental qualities, which form what, in common life, we call Personal Merit: we shall consider every attribute of the mind, which renders a man an object either of esteem and affection, or of hatred and contempt; every habit or sentiment or faculty, which, if ascribed to any person, implies either praise or blame, and may enter into any panegyric or satire of his character and manners. The quick sensibility, which, on this head, is so universal among mankind, gives a philosopher sufficient assurance, that he can never be considerably mistaken in framing the catalogue, or incur any danger of misplacing the objects of his contemplation: he needs only enter into his own breast for a moment, and consider whether or not he should desire to have this or that quality ascribed to him, and whether such or such an imputation would proceed from a friend or an enemy. The very nature of language guides us almost infallibly in forming a judgement of this nature; and as every tongue possesses one set of words which are taken in a good sense, and another in the opposite, the least acquaintance with the idiom suffices, without any reasoning, to direct us in collecting and arranging the estimable or blameable qualities of men. The only object of reasoning is to discover the circumstances on both sides, which are common to these qualities; to observe that particular in which the estimable qualities agree on the one hand, and the blameable on the other; and thence to reach the foundation of ethics, and find those universal principles, from which all censure or approbation is ultimately derived. As this is a question of fact, not of abstract science, we can only expect success, by following the experimental method, and deducing general maxims from a comparison of particular instances. The other scientific method, where a general abstract principle is first established, and is afterwards branched out into a variety of inferences and conclusions, may be more perfect in itself, but suits less the imperfection of human nature, and is a common source of illusion and mistake in this as well as in other subjects. Men are now cured of their passion for hypotheses and systems in natural philosophy, and will hearken to no arguments but those which are derived from experience. It is full time they should attempt a like reformation in all moral disquisitions; and reject every system of ethics, however subtle or ingenious, which is not founded on fact and observation.

We shall begin our enquiry on this head by the consideration of the social virtues, Benevolence and Justice. The explication of them will probably give us an opening by which the others may be accounted for.

SECTION II. OF BENEVOLENCE.

PART I.

It may be esteemed, perhaps, a superfluous task to prove, that the benevolent or softer affections are estimable; and wherever they appear, engage the approbation and good-will of mankind. The epithets SOCIABLE, GOOD-NATURED, HUMANE, MERCIFUL, GRATEFUL, FRIENDLY, GENEROUS, BENEFICENT, or their equivalents, are known in all languages, and universally express the highest merit, which HUMAN NATURE is capable of attaining. Where these amiable qualities are attended with birth and power and eminent abilities, and display themselves in the good government or useful instruction of mankind, they seem even to raise the possessors of them above the rank of HUMAN NATURE, and make them approach in some measure to the divine. Exalted capacity, undaunted courage, prosperous success; these may only expose a hero or politician to the envy and ill-will of the public: but as soon as the praises are added of humane and beneficent; when instances are displayed of lenity, tenderness or friendship; envy itself is silent, or joins the general voice of approbation and applause.

When Pericles, the great Athenian statesman and general, was on his death-bed, his surrounding friends, deeming him now insensible, began to indulge their sorrow for their expiring patron, by enumerating his great qualities and successes, his conquests and victories, the unusual length of his administration, and his nine trophies erected over the enemies of the republic. YOU FORGET, cries the dying hero, who had heard all, YOU FORGET THE MOST EMINENT OF MY PRAISES, WHILE YOU DWELL SO MUCH ON THOSE VULGAR ADVANTAGES, IN WHICH FORTUNE HAD A PRINCIPAL SHARE. YOU HAVE NOT OBSERVED THAT NO CITIZEN HAS EVER YET WORNE MOURNING ON MY ACCOUNT. [Plut. in Pericle]

In men of more ordinary talents and capacity, the social virtues become, if possible, still more essentially requisite; there being nothing eminent, in that case, to compensate for the want of them, or preserve the person from our severest hatred, as well as contempt. A high ambition, an elevated courage, is apt, says Cicero, in less perfect characters, to degenerate into a turbulent ferocity. The more social and softer virtues are there chiefly to be regarded. These are always good and amiable [Cic. de Officiis, lib. I].

The principal advantage, which Juvenal discovers in the extensive capacity of the human species, is that it renders our benevolence also more extensive, and gives us larger opportunities of spreading our kindly influence than what are indulged to the inferior creation [Sat. XV. 139 and seq.]. It must, indeed, be confessed, that by doing good only, can a man truly enjoy the advantages of being eminent. His exalted station, of itself but the more exposes him to danger and tempest. His sole prerogative is to afford shelter to inferiors, who repose themselves under his cover and protection.

But I forget, that it is not my present business to recommend generosity and benevolence, or to paint, in their true colours, all the genuine charms of the social virtues. These, indeed, sufficiently engage every heart, on the first apprehension of them; and it is difficult to abstain from some sally of panegyric, as often as they occur in discourse or reasoning. But our object here being more the speculative, than the practical part of morals, it will suffice to remark, (what will readily, I believe, be allowed) that no qualities are more intitled to the general good-will and approbation of mankind than beneficence and humanity, friendship and gratitude, natural affection and public spirit, or whatever proceeds from a tender sympathy with others, and a generous concern for our kind and species. These wherever they appear seem to transfuse themselves, in a manner, into each beholder, and to call forth, in their own behalf, the same favourable and affectionate sentiments, which they exert on all around.

PART II.

We may observe that, in displaying the praises of any humane, beneficent man, there is one circumstance which never fails to be amply insisted on, namely, the happiness and satisfaction, derived to society from his intercourse and good offices. To his parents, we are apt to say, he endears himself by his pious attachment and duteous care still more than by the connexions of nature. His children never feel his authority, but when employed for their advantage. With him, the ties of love are consolidated by beneficence and friendship. The ties of friendship approach, in a fond observance of each obliging office, to those of love and inclination. His domestics and dependants have in him a sure resource; and no longer dread the power of fortune, but so far as she exercises it over him. From him the hungry receive food, the naked clothing, the ignorant and slothful skill and industry. Like the sun, an inferior minister of providence he cheers, invigorates, and sustains the surrounding world.

If confined to private life, the sphere of his activity is narrower; but his influence is all benign and gentle. If exalted into a higher station, mankind and posterity reap the fruit of his labours.

As these topics of praise never fail to be employed, and with success, where we would inspire esteem for any one; may it not thence be concluded, that the utility, resulting from the social virtues, forms, at least, a PART of their merit, and is one source of that approbation and regard so universally paid to them?

When we recommend even an animal or a plant as USEFUL and BENEFICIAL, we give it an applause and recommendation suited to its nature. As, on the other hand, reflection on the baneful influence of any of these inferior beings always inspires us with the sentiment of aversion. The eye is pleased with the prospect of corn-fields and loaded vine-yards; horses grazing, and flocks pasturing: but flies the view of briars and brambles, affording shelter to wolves and serpents.

A machine, a piece of furniture, a vestment, a house well contrived for use and conveniency, is so far beautiful, and is contemplated with pleasure and approbation. An experienced eye is here sensible to many excellencies, which escape persons ignorant and uninstructed.

Can anything stronger be said in praise of a profession, such as merchandize or manufacture, than to observe the advantages which it procures to society; and is not a monk and inquisitor enraged when we treat his order as useless or pernicious to mankind?

The historian exults in displaying the benefit arising from his labours. The writer of romance alleviates or denies the bad consequences ascribed to his manner of composition.

In general, what praise is implied in the simple epithet USEFUL! What reproach in the contrary!

Your Gods, says Cicero [De Nat. Deor. lib. i.], in opposition to the Epicureans, cannot justly claim any worship or adoration, with whatever imaginary perfections you may suppose them endowed. They are totally useless and inactive. Even the Egyptians, whom you so much ridicule, never consecrated any animal but on account of its utility.

The sceptics assert [Sext. Emp. adrersus Math. lib. viii.], though absurdly, that the origin of all religious worship was derived from the utility of inanimate objects, as the sun and moon, to the support and well-being of mankind. This is also the common reason assigned by historians, for the deification of eminent heroes and legislators [Diod. Sic. passim.].

To plant a tree, to cultivate a field, to beget children; meritorious acts, according to the religion of Zoroaster.

In all determinations of morality, this circumstance of public utility is ever principally in view; and wherever disputes arise, either in philosophy or common life, concerning the bounds of duty, the question cannot, by any means, be decided with greater certainty, than by ascertaining, on any side, the true interests of mankind. If any false opinion, embraced from appearances, has been found to prevail; as soon as farther experience and sounder reasoning have given us juster notions of human affairs, we retract our first sentiment, and adjust anew the boundaries of moral good and evil.

Giving alms to common beggars is naturally praised; because it seems to carry relief to the distressed and indigent: but when we observe the encouragement thence arising to idleness and debauchery, we regard that species of charity rather as a weakness than a virtue.

Tyrannicide, or the assassination of usurpers and oppressive princes, was highly extolled in ancient times; because it both freed mankind from many of these monsters, and seemed to keep the others in awe, whom the sword or poinard could not reach. But history and experience having since convinced us, that this practice increases the jealousy and cruelty of princes, a Timoleon and a Brutus, though treated with indulgence on account of the prejudices of their times, are now considered as very improper models for imitation.

Liberality in princes is regarded as a mark of beneficence, but when it occurs, that the homely bread of the honest and industrious is often thereby converted into delicious cates for the idle and the prodigal, we soon retract our heedless praises. The regrets of a prince, for having lost a day, were noble and generous: but had he intended to have spent it in acts of generosity to his greedy courtiers, it was better lost than misemployed after that manner.

Luxury, or a refinement on the pleasures and conveniences of life, had not long been supposed the source of every corruption in government, and the immediate cause of faction, sedition, civil wars, and the total loss of liberty. It was, therefore, universally regarded as a vice, and was an object of declamation to all satirists, and severe moralists. Those, who prove, or attempt to prove, that such refinements rather tend to the increase of industry, civility, and arts regulate anew our MORAL as well as POLITICAL sentiments, and represent, as laudable or innocent, what had formerly been regarded as pernicious and blameable.

Upon the whole, then, it seems undeniable, THAT nothing can bestow more merit on any human creature than the sentiment of benevolence in an eminent degree; and THAT a PART, at least, of its merit arises from its tendency to promote the interests of our species, and bestow happiness on human society. We carry our view into the salutary consequences of such a character and disposition; and whatever has so benign an influence, and forwards so desirable an end, is beheld with complacency and pleasure. The social virtues are never regarded without their beneficial tendencies, nor viewed as barren and unfruitful. The happiness of mankind, the order of society, the harmony of families, the mutual support of friends, are always considered as the result of their gentle dominion over the breasts of men.

How considerable a PART of their merit we ought to ascribe to their utility, will better appear from future disquisitions; [Footnote: Sect. III. and IV.] as well as the reason, why this circumstance has such a command over our esteem and approbation. [Footnote: Sect. V.]

SECTION III. OF JUSTICE.

PART I.

THAT Justice is useful to society, and consequently that PART of its merit, at least, must arise from that consideration, it would be a superfluous undertaking to prove. That public utility is the SOLE origin of justice, and that reflections on the beneficial consequences of this virtue are the SOLE foundation of its merit; this proposition, being more curious and important, will better deserve our examination and enquiry.

Let us suppose that nature has bestowed on the human race such profuse ABUNDANCE of all EXTERNAL conveniencies, that, without any uncertainty in the event, without any care or industry on our part, every individual finds himself fully provided with whatever his most voracious appetites can want, or luxurious imagination wish or desire. His natural beauty, we shall suppose, surpasses all acquired ornaments: the perpetual clemency of the seasons renders useless all clothes or covering: the raw herbage affords him the most delicious fare; the clear fountain, the richest beverage. No laborious occupation required: no tillage: no navigation. Music, poetry, and contemplation form his sole business: conversation, mirth, and friendship his sole amusement. It seems evident that, in such a happy state, every other social virtue would flourish, and receive tenfold increase; but the cautious, jealous virtue of justice would never once have been dreamed of. For what purpose make a partition of goods, where every one has already more than enough? Why give rise to property, where there cannot possibly be any injury? Why call this object MINE, when upon the seizing of it by another, I need but stretch out my hand to possess myself to what is equally valuable? Justice, in that case, being totally useless, would be an idle ceremonial, and could never possibly have place in the catalogue of virtues.

We see, even in the present necessitous condition of mankind, that, wherever any benefit is bestowed by nature in an unlimited abundance, we leave it always in common among the whole human race, and make no subdivisions of right and property. Water and air, though the most necessary of all objects, are not challenged as the property of individuals; nor can any man commit injustice by the most lavish use and enjoyment of these blessings. In fertile extensive countries, with few inhabitants, land is regarded on the same footing. And no topic is so much insisted on by those, who defend the liberty of the seas, as the unexhausted use of them in navigation. Were the advantages, procured by navigation, as inexhaustible, these reasoners had never had any adversaries to refute; nor had any claims ever been advanced of a separate, exclusive dominion over the ocean.

It may happen, in some countries, at some periods, that there be established a property in water, none in land [Footnote: Genesis, chaps. xiii. and xxi.]; if the latter be in greater abundance than can be used by the inhabitants, and the former be found, with difficulty, and in very small quantities.

Again; suppose, that, though the necessities of human race continue the same as at present, yet the mind is so enlarged, and so replete with friendship and generosity, that every man has the utmost tenderness for every man, and feels no more concern for his own interest than for that of his fellows; it seems evident, that the use of justice would, in this case, be suspended by such an extensive benevolence, nor would the divisions and barriers of property and obligation have ever been thought of. Why should I bind another, by a deed or promise, to do me any good office, when I know that he is already prompted, by the strongest inclination, to seek my happiness, and would, of himself, perform the desired service; except the hurt, he thereby receives, be greater than the benefit accruing to me? in which case, he knows, that, from my innate humanity and friendship, I should be the first to oppose myself to his imprudent generosity. Why raise landmarks between my neighbour’s field and mine, when my heart has made no division between our interests; but shares all his joys and sorrows with the same force and vivacity as if originally my own? Every man, upon this supposition, being a second self to another, would trust all his interests to the discretion of every man; without jealousy, without partition, without distinction. And the whole human race would form only one family; where all would lie in common, and be used freely, without regard to property; but cautiously too, with as entire regard to the necessities of each individual, as if our own interests were most intimately concerned.

In the present disposition of the human heart, it would, perhaps, be difficult to find complete instances of such enlarged affections; but still we may observe, that the case of families approaches towards it; and the stronger the mutual benevolence is among the individuals, the nearer it approaches; till all distinction of property be, in a great measure, lost and confounded among them. Between married persons, the cement of friendship is by the laws supposed so strong as to abolish all division of possessions; and has often, in reality, the force ascribed to it. And it is observable, that, during the ardour of new enthusiasms, when every principle is inflamed into extravagance, the community of goods has frequently been attempted; and nothing but experience of its inconveniencies, from the returning or disguised selfishness of men, could make the imprudent fanatics adopt anew the ideas of justice and of separate property. So true is it, that this virtue derives its existence entirely from its necessary USE to the intercourse and social state of mankind.

To make this truth more evident, let us reverse the foregoing suppositions; and carrying everything to the opposite extreme, consider what would be the effect of these new situations. Suppose a society to fall into such want of all common necessaries, that the utmost frugality and industry cannot preserve the greater number from perishing, and the whole from extreme misery; it will readily, I believe, be admitted, that the strict laws of justice are suspended, in such a pressing emergence, and give place to the stronger motives of necessity and self-preservation. Is it any crime, after a shipwreck, to seize whatever means or instrument of safety one can lay hold of, without regard to former limitations of property? Or if a city besieged were perishing with hunger; can we imagine, that men will see any means of preservation before them, and lose their lives, from a scrupulous regard to what, in other situations, would be the rules of equity and justice? The use and tendency of that virtue is to procure happiness and security, by preserving order in society: but where the society is ready to perish from extreme necessity, no greater evil can be dreaded from violence and injustice; and every man may now provide for himself by all the means, which prudence can dictate, or humanity permit. The public, even in less urgent necessities, opens granaries, without the consent of proprietors; as justly supposing, that the authority of magistracy may, consistent with equity, extend so far: but were any number of men to assemble, without the tie of laws or civil jurisdiction; would an equal partition of bread in a famine, though effected by power and even violence, be regarded as criminal or injurious?

Suppose likewise, that it should be a virtuous man's fate to fall into the society of ruffians, remote from the protection of laws and government; what conduct must he embrace in that melancholy situation? He sees such a desperate rapaciousness prevail; such a disregard to equity, such contempt of order, such stupid blindness to future consequences, as must immediately have the most tragical conclusion, and must terminate in destruction to the greater number, and in a total dissolution of society to the rest. He, meanwhile, can have no other expedient than to arm himself, to whomever the sword he seizes, or the buckler, may belong: To make provision of all means of defence and security: And his particular regard to justice being no longer of use to his own safety or that of others, he must consult the dictates of self-preservation alone, without concern for those who no longer merit his care and attention.

When any man, even in political society, renders himself by his crimes, obnoxious to the public, he is punished by the laws in his goods and person; that is, the ordinary rules of justice are, with regard to him, suspended for a moment, and it becomes equitable to inflict on him, for the BENEFIT of society, what otherwise he could not suffer without wrong or injury.

The rage and violence of public war; what is it but a suspension of justice among the warring parties, who perceive, that this virtue is now no longer of any USE or advantage to them? The laws of war, which then succeed to those of equity and justice, are rules calculated for the ADVANTAGE and UTILITY of that particular state, in which men are now placed. And were a civilized nation engaged with barbarians, who observed no rules even of war, the former must also suspend their observance of them, where they no longer serve to any purpose; and must render every action or recounter as bloody and pernicious as possible to the first aggressors.

Thus, the rules of equity or justice depend entirely on the particular state and condition in which men are placed, and owe their origin and existence to that utility, which results to the public from their strict and regular observance. Reverse, in any considerable circumstance, the condition of men: Produce extreme abundance or extreme necessity: Implant in the human breast perfect moderation and humanity, or perfect rapaciousness and malice: By rendering justice totally USELESS, you thereby totally destroy its essence, and suspend its obligation upon mankind. The common situation of society is a medium amidst all these extremes. We are naturally partial to ourselves, and to our friends; but are capable of learning the advantage resulting from a more equitable conduct. Few enjoyments are given us from the open and liberal hand of nature; but by art, labour, and industry, we can extract them in great abundance. Hence the ideas of property become necessary in all civil society: Hence justice derives its usefulness to the public: And hence alone arises its merit and moral obligation.

These conclusions are so natural and obvious, that they have not escaped even the poets, in their descriptions of the felicity attending the golden age or the reign of Saturn. The seasons, in that first period of nature, were so temperate, if we credit these agreeable fictions, that there was no necessity for men to provide themselves with clothes and houses, as a security against the violence of heat and cold: The rivers flowed with wine and milk: The oaks yielded honey; and nature spontaneously produced her greatest delicacies. Nor were these the chief advantages of that happy age. Tempests were not alone removed from nature; but those more furious tempests were unknown to human breasts, which now cause such uproar, and engender such confusion. Avarice, ambition, cruelty, selfishness, were never heard of: Cordial affection, compassion, sympathy, were the only movements with which the mind was yet acquainted. Even the punctilious distinction of MINE and THINE was banished from among the happy race of mortals, and carried with it the very notion of property and obligation, justice and injustice.

This POETICAL fiction of the GOLDEN AGE, is in some respects, of a piece with the PHILOSOPHICAL fiction of the STATE OF NATURE; only that the former is represented as the most charming and most peaceable condition, which can possibly be imagined; whereas the latter is painted out as a state of mutual war and violence, attended with the most extreme necessity. On the first origin of mankind, we are told, their ignorance and savage nature were so prevalent, that they could give no mutual trust, but must each depend upon himself and his own force or cunning for protection and security. No law was heard of: No rule of justice known: No distinction of property regarded: Power was the only measure of right; and a perpetual war of all against all was the result of men’s untamed selfishness and barbarity.

[Footnote: This fiction of a state of nature, as a state of war, was not first started by Mr. Hobbes, as is commonly imagined. Plato endeavours to refute an hypothesis very like it in the second, third, and fourth books de republica. Cicero, on the contrary, supposes it certain and universally acknowledged in the following passage. ‘Quis enim vestrum, judices, ignorat, ita naturam rerum tulisse, ut quodam tempore homines, nondum neque naturali neque civili jure descripto, fusi per agros ac dispersi vagarentur tantumque haberent quantum manu ac viribus, per caedem ac vulnera, aut eripere aut retinere potuissent? Qui igitur primi virtute & consilio praestanti extiterunt, ii perspecto genere humanae docilitatis atque ingenii, dissipatos unum in locum congregarunt, eosque ex feritate illa ad justitiam ac mansuetudinem transduxerunt. Tum res ad communem utilitatem, quas publicas appellamus, tum conventicula hominum, quae postea civitates nominatae sunt, tum domicilia conjuncta, quas urbes dicamus, invento & divino & humano jure moenibus sepserunt. Atque inter hanc vitam, perpolitam humanitate, & llam immanem, nihil tam interest quam JUS atque VIS. Horum utro uti nolimus, altero est utendum. Vim volumus extingui. Jus valeat necesse est, idi est, judicia, quibus omne jus continetur. Judicia displicent, ant nulla sunt. Vis dominetur necesse est. Haec vident omnes.’ Pro Sext. sec. 42.]

Whether such a condition of human nature could ever exist, or if it did, could continue so long as to merit the appellation of a STATE, may justly be doubted. Men are necessarily born in a family-society, at least; and are trained up by their parents to some rule of conduct and behaviour. But this must be admitted, that, if such a state of mutual war and violence was ever real, the suspension of all laws of justice, from their absolute inutility, is a necessary and infallible consequence.

The more we vary our views of human life, and the newer and more unusual the lights are in which we survey it, the more shall we be convinced, that the origin here assigned for the virtue of justice is real and satisfactory.

Were there a species of creatures intermingled with men, which, though rational, were possessed of such inferior strength, both of body and mind, that they were incapable of all resistance, and could never, upon the highest provocation, make us feel the effects of their resentment; the necessary consequence, I think, is that we should be bound by the laws of humanity to give gentle usage to these creatures, but should not, properly speaking, lie under any restraint of justice with regard to them, nor could they possess any right or property, exclusive of such arbitrary lords. Our intercourse with them could not be called society, which supposes a degree of equality; but absolute command on the one side, and servile obedience on the other. Whatever we covet, they must instantly resign: Our permission is the only tenure, by which they hold their possessions: Our compassion and kindness the only check, by which they curb our lawless will: And as no inconvenience ever results from the exercise of a power, so firmly established in nature, the restraints of justice and property, being totally USELESS, would never have place in so unequal a confederacy.

This is plainly the situation of men, with regard to animals; and how far these may be said to possess reason, I leave it to others to determine. The great superiority of civilized Europeans above barbarous Indians, tempted us to imagine ourselves on the same footing with regard to them, and made us throw off all restraints of justice, and even of humanity, in our treatment of them. In many nations, the female sex are reduced to like slavery, and are rendered incapable of all property, in opposition to their lordly masters. But though the males, when united, have in all countries bodily force sufficient to maintain this severe tyranny, yet such are the insinuation, address, and charms of their fair companions, that women are commonly able to break the confederacy, and share with the other sex in all the rights and privileges of society.

Were the human species so framed by nature as that each individual possessed within himself every faculty, requisite both for his own preservation and for the propagation of his kind: Were all society and intercourse cut off between man and man, by the primary intention of the supreme Creator: It seems evident, that so solitary a being would be as much incapable of justice, as of social discourse and conversation. Where mutual regards and forbearance serve to no manner of purpose, they would never direct the conduct of any reasonable man. The headlong course of the passions would be checked by no reflection on future consequences. And as each man is here supposed to love himself alone, and to depend only on himself and his own activity for safety and happiness, he would, on every occasion, to the utmost of his power, challenge the preference above every other being, to none of which he is bound by any ties, either of nature or of interest. But suppose the conjunction of the sexes to be established in nature, a family immediately arises; and particular rules being found requisite for its subsistence, these are immediately embraced; though without comprehending the rest of mankind within their prescriptions. Suppose that several families unite together into one society, which is totally disjoined from all others, the rules, which preserve peace and order, enlarge themselves to the utmost extent of that society; but becoming then entirely useless, lose their force when carried one step farther. But again suppose, that several distinct societies maintain a kind of intercourse for mutual convenience and advantage, the boundaries of justice still grow larger, in proportion to the largeness of men’s views, and the force of their mutual connexions. History, experience, reason sufficiently instruct us in this natural progress of human sentiments, and in the gradual enlargement of our regards to justice, in proportion as we become acquainted with the extensive utility of that virtue.

PART II.

If we examine the PARTICULAR laws, by which justice is directed, and property determined; we shall still be presented with the same conclusion. The good of mankind is the only object of all these laws and regulations. Not only is it requisite, for the peace and interest of society, that men’s possessions should be separated; but the rules, which we follow, in making the separation, are such as can best be contrived to serve farther the interests of society.

We shall suppose that a creature, possessed of reason, but unacquainted with human nature, deliberates with himself what rules of justice or property would best promote public interest, and establish peace and security among mankind: His most obvious thought would be, to assign the largest possessions to the most extensive virtue, and give every one the power of doing good, proportioned to his inclination. In a perfect theocracy, where a being, infinitely intelligent, governs by particular volitions, this rule would certainly have place, and might serve to the wisest purposes: But were mankind to execute such a law; so great is the uncertainty of merit, both from its natural obscurity, and from the self-conceit of each individual, that no determinate rule of conduct would ever result from it; and the total dissolution of society must be the immediate consequence. Fanatics may suppose, THAT DOMINION IS FOUNDED ON GRACE, and THAT SAINTS ALONE INHERIT THE EARTH; but the civil magistrate very justly puts these sublime theorists on the same footing with common robbers, and teaches them by the severest discipline, that a rule, which, in speculation, may seem the most advantageous to society, may yet be found, in practice, totally pernicious and destructive.

That there were RELIGIOUS fanatics of this kind in England, during the civil wars, we learn from history; though it is probable, that the obvious TENDENCY of these principles excited such horror in mankind, as soon obliged the dangerous enthusiasts to renounce, or at least conceal their tenets. Perhaps the LEVELLERS, who claimed an equal distribution of property, were a kind of POLITICAL fanatics, which arose from the religious species, and more openly avowed their pretensions; as carrying a more plausible appearance, of being practicable in themselves, as well as useful to human society. It must, indeed, be confessed, that nature is so liberal to mankind, that, were all her presents equally divided among the species, and improved by art and industry, every individual would enjoy all the necessaries, and even most of the comforts of life; nor would ever be liable to any ills but such as might accidentally arise from the sickly frame and constitution of his body. It must also be confessed, that, wherever we depart from this equality, we rob the poor of more satisfaction than we add to the rich, and that the slight gratification of a frivolous vanity, in one individual, frequently costs more than bread to many families, and even provinces. It may appear withal, that the rule of equality, as it would be highly USEFUL, is not altogether IMPRACTICABLE; but has taken place, at least in an imperfect degree, in some republics; particularly that of Sparta; where it was attended, it is said, with the most beneficial consequences. Not to mention that the Agrarian laws, so frequently claimed in Rome, and carried into execution in many Greek cities, proceeded, all of them, from a general idea of the utility of this principle.

But historians, and even common sense, may inform us, that, however specious these ideas of PERFECT equality may seem, they are really, at bottom, IMPRACTICABLE; and were they not so, would be extremely PERNICIOUS to human society. Render possessions ever so equal, men’s different degrees of art, care, and industry will immediately break that equality. Or if you check these virtues, you reduce society to the most extreme indigence; and instead of preventing want and beggary in a few, render it unavoidable to the whole community. The most rigorous inquisition too is requisite to watch every inequality on its first appearance; and the most severe jurisdiction, to punish and redress it. But besides, that so much authority must soon degenerate into tyranny, and be exerted with great partialities; who can possibly be possessed of it, in such a situation as is here supposed? Perfect equality of possessions, destroying all subordination, weakens extremely the authority of magistracy, and must reduce all power nearly to a level, as well as property.

We may conclude, therefore, that, in order to establish laws for the regulation of property, we must be acquainted with the nature and situation of man; must reject appearances, which may be false, though specious; and must search for those rules, which are, on the whole, most USEFUL and BENEFICIAL. Vulgar sense and slight experience are sufficient for this purpose; where men give not way to too selfish avidity, or too extensive enthusiasm.

Who sees not, for instance, that whatever is produced or improved by a man’s art or industry ought, for ever, to be secured to him, in order to give encouragement to such USEFUL habits and accomplishments? That the property ought also to descend to children and relations, for the same USEFUL purpose? That it may be alienated by consent, in order to beget that commerce and intercourse, which is so BENEFICIAL to human society? And that all contracts and promises ought carefully to be fulfilled, in order to secure mutual trust and confidence, by which the general INTEREST of mankind is so much promoted?

Examine the writers on the laws of nature; and you will always find, that, whatever principles they set out with, they are sure to terminate here at last, and to assign, as the ultimate reason for every rule which they establish, the convenience and necessities of mankind. A concession thus extorted, in opposition to systems, has more authority than if it had been made in prosecution of them.

What other reason, indeed, could writers ever give, why this must be MINE and that YOURS; since uninstructed nature surely never made any such distinction? The objects which receive those appellations are, of themselves, foreign to us; they are totally disjoined and separated from us; and nothing but the general interests of society can form the connexion.

Sometimes the interests of society may require a rule of justice in a particular case; but may not determine any particular rule, among several, which are all equally beneficial. In that case, the slightest analogies are laid hold of, in order to prevent that indifference and ambiguity, which would be the source of perpetual dissension. Thus possession alone, and first possession, is supposed to convey property, where no body else has any preceding claim and pretension. Many of the reasonings of lawyers are of this analogical nature, and depend on very slight connexions of the imagination.

Does any one scruple, in extraordinary cases, to violate all regard to the private property of individuals, and sacrifice to public interest a distinction which had been established for the sake of that interest? The safety of the people is the supreme law: All other particular laws are subordinate to it, and dependent on it: And if, in the COMMON course of things, they be followed and regarded; it is only because the public safety and interest COMMONLY demand so equal and impartial an administration.

Sometimes both UTILITY and ANALOGY fail, and leave the laws of justice in total uncertainty. Thus, it is highly requisite, that prescription or long possession should convey property; but what number of days or months or years should be sufficient for that purpose, it is impossible for reason alone to determine. CIVIL LAWS here supply the place of the natural CODE, and assign different terms for prescription, according to the different UTILITIES, proposed by the legislator. Bills of exchange and promissory notes, by the laws of most countries, prescribe sooner than bonds, and mortgages, and contracts of a more formal nature.

In general we may observe that all questions of property are subordinate to the authority of civil laws, which extend, restrain, modify, and alter the rules of natural justice, according to the particular CONVENIENCE of each community. The laws have, or ought to have, a constant reference to the constitution of government, the manners, the climate, the religion, the commerce, the situation of each society. A late author of genius, as well as learning, has prosecuted this subject at large, and has established, from these principles, a system of political knowledge, which abounds in ingenious and brilliant thoughts, and is not wanting in solidity.

[Footnote: The author of L’ESPRIT DES LOIX, This illustrious writer, however, sets out with a different theory, and supposes all right to be founded on certain RAPPORTS or relations; which is a system, that, in my opinion, never will be reconciled with true philosophy. Father Malebranche, as far as I can learn, was the first that started this abstract theory of morals, which was afterwards adopted by Cudworth, Clarke, and others; and as it excludes all sentiment, and pretends to found everything on reason, it has not wanted followers in this philosophic age. See Section I, Appendix I. With regard to justice, the virtue here treated of, the inference against this theory seems short and conclusive. Property is allowed to be dependent on civil laws; civil laws are allowed to have no other object, but the interest of society: This therefore must be allowed to be the sole foundation of property and justice. Not to mention, that our obligation itself to obey the magistrate and his laws is founded on nothing but the interests of society. If the ideas of justice, sometimes, do not follow the dispositions of civil law; we shall find, that these cases, instead of objections, are confirmations of the theory delivered above. Where a civil law is so perverse as to cross all the interests of society, it loses all its authority, and men judge by the ideas of natural justice, which are conformable to those interests. Sometimes also civil laws, for useful purposes, require a ceremony or form to any deed; and where that is wanting, their decrees run contrary to the usual tenour of justice; but one who takes advantage of such chicanes, is not commonly regarded as an honest man. Thus, the interests of society require, that contracts be fulfilled; and there is not a more material article either of natural or civil justice: But the omission of a trifling circumstance will often, by law, invalidate a contract, in foro humano, but not in foro conscientiae, as divines express themselves. In these cases, the magistrate is supposed only to withdraw his power of enforcing the right, not to have altered the right. Where his intention extends to the right, and is conformable to the interests of

> society; it never fails to alter the right; a clear proof of
> the origin of justice and of property, as assigned above.]

WHAT IS A MAN'S PROPERTY? Anything which it is lawful for him, and for him alone, to use. BUT WHAT RULE HAVE WE, BY WHICH WE CAN DISTINGUISH THESE OBJECTS? Here we must have recourse to statutes, customs, precedents, analogies, and a hundred other circumstances; some of which are constant and inflexible, some variable and arbitrary. But the ultimate point, in which they all professedly terminate, is the interest and happiness of human society. Where this enters not into consideration, nothing can appear more whimsical, unnatural, and even superstitious, than all or most of the laws of justice and of property.

Those who ridicule vulgar superstitions, and expose the folly of particular regards to meats, days, places, postures, apparel, have an easy task; while they consider all the qualities and relations of the objects, and discover no adequate cause for that affection or antipathy, veneration or horror, which have so mighty an influence over a considerable part of mankind. A Syrian would have starved rather than taste pigeon; an Egyptian would not have approached bacon: But if these species of food be examined by the senses of sight, smell, or taste, or scrutinized by the sciences of chemistry, medicine, or physics, no difference is ever found between them and any other species, nor can that precise circumstance be pitched on, which may afford a just foundation for the religious passion. A fowl on Thursday is lawful food; on Friday abominable: Eggs in this house and in this diocese, are permitted during Lent; a hundred paces farther, to eat them is a damnable sin. This earth or building, yesterday was profane; to-day, by the muttering of certain words, it has become holy and sacred. Such reflections as these, in the mouth of a philosopher, one may safely say, are too obvious to have any influence; because they must always, to every man, occur at first sight; and where they prevail not, of themselves, they are surely obstructed by education, prejudice, and passion, not by ignorance or mistake.

It may appear to a careless view, or rather a too abstracted reflection, that there enters a like superstition into all the sentiments of justice; and that, if a man expose its object, or what we call property, to the same scrutiny of sense and science, he will not, by the most accurate enquiry, find any foundation for the difference made by moral sentiment. I may lawfully nourish myself from this tree; but the fruit of another of the same species, ten paces off, it is criminal for me to touch. Had I worn this apparel an hour ago, I had merited the severest punishment; but a man, by pronouncing a few magical syllables, has now rendered it fit for my use and service. Were this house placed in the neighbouring territory, it had been immoral for me to dwell in it; but being built on this side the river, it is subject to a different municipal law, and by its becoming mine I incur no blame or censure. The same species of reasoning it may be thought, which so successfully exposes superstition, is also applicable to justice; nor is it possible, in the one case more than in the other, to point out, in the object, that precise quality or circumstance, which is the foundation of the sentiment.

But there is this material difference between SUPERSTITION and JUSTICE, that the former is frivolous, useless, and burdensome; the latter is absolutely requisite to the well-being of mankind and existence of society. When we abstract from this circumstance (for it is too apparent ever to be overlooked) it must be confessed, that all regards to right and property, seem entirely without foundation, as much as the grossest and most vulgar superstition. Were the interests of society nowise concerned, it is as unintelligible why another's articulating certain sounds implying consent, should change the nature of my actions with regard to a particular object, as why the reciting of a liturgy by a priest, in a certain habit and posture, should dedicate a heap of brick and timber, and render it, thenceforth and for ever, sacred.

[Footnote: It is evident, that the will or consent alone never transfers property, nor causes the obligation of a promise (for the same reasoning extends to both), but the will must be expressed by words or signs, in order to impose a tie upon any man. The expression being once brought in as subservient to the will, soon becomes the principal part of the promise; nor will a man be less bound by his word, though he secretly give a different direction to his intention, and withhold the assent of his mind. But though the expression makes, on most occasions, the whole of the promise, yet it does not always so; and one who should make use of any expression, of which he knows not the meaning, and which he uses without any sense of the consequences, would not certainly be bound by it. Nay, though he know its meaning, yet if he use it in jest only, and with such signs as evidently show, that he has no serious intention of binding himself, he would not lie under any obligation of performance; but it is necessary, that the words be a perfect expression of the will, without any contrary signs. Nay, even this we must not carry so far as to imagine, that one, whom, by our quickness of understanding, we conjecture, from certain signs, to have an intention of deceiving us, is not bound by his expression or verbal promise, if we accept of it; but must limit this conclusion to those cases where the signs are of a different nature from those of deceit. All these contradictions are easily accounted for, if justice arise entirely from its usefulness to society; but will never be explained on any other hypothesis.

It is remarkable that the moral decisions of the JESUITS and other relaxed casuists, were commonly formed in prosecution of some such subtilties of reasoning as are here pointed out, and proceed as much from the habit of scholastic refinement as from any corruption of the heart, if we may follow the authority of Mons. Bayle. See his Dictionary, article Loyola. And why has the indignation of mankind risen so high against these casuists; but because every one perceived, that human society could not subsist were such practices authorized, and that morals must always be handled with a view to public interest, more than philosophical regularity? If the secret direction of the intention, said every man of sense, could invalidate a contract; where is our security? And yet a metaphysical schoolman might think, that, where an intention was supposed to be requisite, if that intention really had not place, no consequence ought to follow, and no obligation be imposed. The casuistical subtilties may not be greater than the snbtilties of lawyers, hinted at above; but as the former are PERNICIOUS, and the latter INNOCENT and even NECESSARY, this is the reason of the very different reception they meet with from the world.

It is a doctrine of the Church of Rome, that the priest, by a secret direction of his intention, can invalidate any sacrament. This position is derived from a strict and regular prosecution of the obvious truth, that empty words alone, without any meaning or intention in the speaker, can never be attended with any effect. If the same conclusion be not admitted in reasonings concerning civil contracts, where the affair is allowed to be of so much less consequence than the eternal salvation of thousands, it proceeds entirely from men's sense of the danger and inconvenience of the doctrine in the former case: And we may thence observe, that however positive, arrogant, and dogmatical any superstition may appear, it never can convey any thorough persuasion of the reality of its objects, or put them, in any degree, on a balance with the common incidents of life, which we learn from daily observation and experimental reasoning.]

These reflections are far from weakening the obligations of justice, or diminishing anything from the most sacred attention to property. On the contrary, such sentiments must acquire new force from the present reasoning. For what stronger foundation can be desired or conceived for any duty, than to observe, that human society, or even human nature, could not subsist without the establishment of it; and will still arrive at greater degrees of happiness and perfection, the more inviolable the regard is, which is paid to that duty?

The dilemma seems obvious: As justice evidently tends to promote public utility and to support civil society, the sentiment of justice is either derived from our reflecting on that tendency, or like hunger, thirst, and other appetites, resentment, love of life, attachment to offspring, and other passions, arises from a simple original instinct in the human breast, which nature has implanted for like salutary purposes. If the latter be the case, it follows, that property, which is the object of justice, is also distinguished by a simple original instinct, and is not ascertained by any argument or reflection. But who is there that ever heard of such an instinct? Or is this a subject in which new discoveries can be made? We may as well expect to discover, in the body, new senses, which had before escaped the observation of all mankind.

But farther, though it seems a very simple proposition to say, that nature, by an instinctive sentiment, distinguishes property, yet in reality we shall find, that there are required for that purpose ten thousand different instincts, and these employed about objects of the greatest intricacy and nicest discernment. For when a definition of PROPERTY is required, that relation is found to resolve itself into any possession acquired by occupation, by industry, by prescription, by inheritance, by contract, &c. Can we think that nature, by an original instinct, instructs us in all these methods of acquisition?

These words too, inheritance and contract, stand for ideas infinitely complicated; and to define them exactly, a hundred volumes of laws, and a thousand volumes of commentators, have not been found sufficient. Does nature, whose instincts in men are all simple, embrace such complicated and artificial objects, and create a rational creature, without trusting anything to the operation of his reason?

But even though all this were admitted, it would not be satisfactory. Positive laws can certainly transfer property. It is by another original instinct, that we recognize the authority of kings and senates, and mark all the boundaries of their jurisdiction? Judges too, even though their sentence be erroneous and illegal, must be allowed, for the sake of peace and order, to have decisive authority, and ultimately to determine property. Have we original innate ideas of praetors and chancellors and juries? Who sees not, that all these institutions arise merely from the necessities of human society?

All birds of the same species in every age and country, built their nests alike: In this we see the force of instinct. Men, in different times and places, frame their houses differently: Here we perceive the influence of reason and custom. A like inference may be drawn from comparing the instinct of generation and the institution of property.

How great soever the variety of municipal laws, it must be confessed, that their chief outlines pretty regularly concur; because the purposes, to which they tend, are everywhere exactly similar. In like manner, all houses have a roof and walls, windows and chimneys; though diversified in their shape, figure, and materials. The purposes of the latter, directed to the conveniencies of human life, discover not more plainly their origin from reason and reflection, than do those of the former, which point all to a like end.

I need not mention the variations, which all the rules of property receive from the finer turns and connexions of the imagination, and from the subtilties and abstractions of law-topics and reasonings. There is no possibility of reconciling this observation to the notion of original instincts.

What alone will beget a doubt concerning the theory, on which I insist, is the influence of education and acquired habits, by which we are so accustomed to blame injustice, that we are not, in every instance, conscious of any immediate reflection on the pernicious consequences of it. The views the most familiar to us are apt, for that very reason, to escape us; and what we have very frequently performed from certain motives, we are apt likewise to continue mechanically, without recalling, on every occasion, the reflections, which first determined us. The convenience, or rather necessity, which leads to justice is so universal, and everywhere points so much to the same rules, that the habit takes place in all societies; and it is not without some scrutiny, that we are able to ascertain its true origin. The matter, however, is not so obscure, but that even in common life we have every moment recourse to the principle of public utility, and ask, WHAT MUST BECOME OF THE WORLD, IF SUCH PRACTICES PREVAIL? HOW COULD SOCIETY SUBSIST UNDER SUCH DISORDERS? Were the distinction or separation of possessions entirely useless, can any one conceive, that it ever should have obtained in society?

Thus we seem, upon the whole, to have attained a knowledge of the force of that principle here insisted on, and can determine what degree of esteem or moral approbation may result from reflections on public interest and utility. The necessity of justice to the support of society is the sole foundation of that virtue; and since no moral excellence is more highly esteemed, we may conclude that this circumstance of usefulness has, in general, the strongest energy, and most entire command over our sentiments. It must, therefore, be the source of a considerable part of the merit ascribed to humanity, benevolence, friendship, public spirit, and other social virtues of that stamp; as it is the sole source of the moral approbation paid to fidelity, justice, veracity, integrity, and those other estimable and useful qualities and principles. It is entirely agreeable to the rules of philosophy, and even of common reason; where any principle has been found to have a great force and energy in one instance, to ascribe to it a like energy in all similar instances. This indeed is Newton’s chief rule of philosophizing [Footnote: Principia. Lib. iii.].

SECTION IV.

OF POLITICAL SOCIETY.

Had every man sufficient SAGACITY to perceive, at all times, the strong interest which binds him to the observance of justice and equity, and STRENGTH OF MIND sufficient to persevere in a steady adherence to a general and a distant interest, in opposition to the allurements of present pleasure and advantage; there had never, in that case, been any such thing as government or political society, but each man, following his natural liberty, had lived in entire peace and harmony with all others. What need of positive law where natural justice is, of itself, a sufficient restraint? Why create magistrates, where there never arises any disorder or iniquity? Why abridge our native freedom, when, in every instance, the utmost exertion of it is found innocent and beneficial? It is evident, that, if government were totally useless, it never could have place, and that the sole foundation of the duty of allegiance is the ADVANTAGE, which it procures to society, by preserving peace and order among mankind.

When a number of political societies are erected, and maintain a great intercourse together, a new set of rules are immediately discovered to be USEFUL in that particular situation; and accordingly take place under the title of Laws of Nations. Of this kind are, the sacredness of the person of ambassadors, abstaining from poisoned arms, quarter in war, with others of that kind, which are plainly calculated for the ADVANTAGE of states and kingdoms in their intercourse with each other.

The rules of justice, such as prevail among individuals, are not entirely suspended among political societies. All princes pretend a regard to the rights of other princes; and some, no doubt, without hypocrisy. Alliances and treaties are every day made between independent states, which would only be so much waste of parchment, if they were not found by experience to have SOME influence and authority. But here is the difference between kingdoms and individuals. Human nature cannot by any means subsist, without the association of individuals; and that association never could have place, were no regard paid to the laws of equity and justice. Disorder, confusion, the war of all against all, are the necessary consequences of such a licentious conduct. But nations can subsist without intercourse. They may even subsist, in some degree, under a general war. The observance of justice, though useful among them, is not guarded by so strong a necessity as among individuals; and the moral obligation holds proportion with the USEFULNESS. All politicians will allow, and most philosophers, that reasons of state may, in particular emergencies, dispense with the rules of justice, and invalidate any treaty or alliance, where the strict observance of it would be prejudicial, in a considerable degree, to either of the contracting parties. But nothing less than the most extreme necessity, it is confessed, can justify individuals in a breach of promise, or an invasion of the properties of others.

In a confederated commonwealth, such as the Achaean republic of old, or the Swiss Cantons and United Provinces in modern times; as the league has here a peculiar UTILITY, the conditions of union have a peculiar sacredness and authority, and a violation of them would be regarded as no less, or even as more criminal, than any private injury or injustice.

The long and helpless infancy of man requires the combination of parents for the subsistence of their young; and that combination requires the virtue of chastity or fidelity to the marriage bed. Without such a UTILITY, it will readily be owned, that such a virtue would never have been thought of.

[Footnote: The only solution, which Plato gives to all the objections that might be raised against the community of women, established in his imaginary commonwealth, is, [Greek quotation here]. Scite enim istud et dicitur et dicetur, Id quod utile sit honestum esse, quod autem inutile sit turpe esse. [De Rep lib v p 457 ex edit Ser]. And this maxim will admit of no doubt, where public utility is concerned, which is Plato’s meaning. And indeed to what other purpose do all the ideas of chastity and modesty serve? “Nisi utile est quod facimus, frustra est gloria,” says Phaedrus. [Greek quotation here], says Plutarch, de vitioso pudore. “Nihil eorum quae damnosa sunt, pulchrum est.” The same was the opinion of the Stoics [Greek quotation here; from Sept. Emp lib III cap 20].

An infidelity of this nature is much more PERNICIOUS in WOMEN than in MEN. Hence the laws of chastity are much stricter over the one sex than over the other.

These rules have all a reference to generation; and yet women past child-bearing are no more supposed to be exempted from them than those in the flower of their youth and beauty. GENERAL RULES are often extended beyond the principle whence they first arise; and this in all matters of taste and sentiment. It is a vulgar story at Paris, that, during the rage of the Mississippi, a hump-backed fellow went every day into the Rue de Quincempoix, where the stock-jobbers met in great crowds, and was well paid for allowing them to make use of his hump as a desk, in order to sign their contracts upon it. Would the fortune, which he raised by this expedient, make him a handsome fellow; though it be confessed, that personal beauty arises very much from ideas of utility? The imagination is influenced by associations of ideas; which, though they arise at first from the judgement, are not easily altered by every particular exception that occurs to us. To which we may add, in the present case of chastity, that the example of the old would be pernicious to the young; and that women, continually foreseeing that a certain time would bring them the liberty of indulgence, would naturally advance that period, and think more lightly of this whole duty, so requisite to society.

Those who live in the same family have such frequent opportunities of licence of this kind, that nothing could prevent purity of manners, were marriage allowed, among the nearest relations, or any intercourse of love between them ratified by law and custom. Incest, therefore, being PERNICIOUS in a superior degree, has also a superior turpitude and moral deformity annexed to it.

What is the reason, why, by the Athenian laws, one might marry a half-sister by the father, but not by the mother? Plainly this: The manners of the Athenians were so reserved, that a man was never permitted to approach the women's apartment, even in the same family, unless where he visited his own mother. His step-mother and her children were as much shut up from him as the woman of any other family, and there was as little danger of any criminal correspondence between them. Uncles and nieces, for a like reason, might marry at Athens; but neither these, nor half-brothers and sisters, could contract that alliance at Rome, where the intercourse was more open between the sexes. Public utility is the cause of all these variations.

To repeat, to a man's prejudice, anything that escaped him in private conversation, or to make any such use of his private letters, is highly blamed. The free and social intercourse of minds must be extremely checked, where no such rules of fidelity are established.

Even in repeating stories, whence we can foresee no ill consequences to result, the giving of one's author is regarded as a piece of indiscretion, if not of immorality. These stories, in passing from hand to hand, and receiving all the usual variations, frequently come about to the persons concerned, and produce animosities and quarrels among people, whose intentions are the most innocent and inoffensive.

To pry into secrets, to open or even read the letters of others, to play the spy upon their words and looks and actions; what habits more inconvenient in society? What habits, of consequence, more blameable?

This principle is also the foundation of most of the laws of good manners; a kind of lesser morality, calculated for the ease of company and conversation. Too much or too little ceremony are both blamed, and everything, which promotes ease, without an indecent familiarity, is useful and laudable.

Constancy in friendships, attachments, and familiarities, is commendable, and is requisite to support trust and good correspondence in society. But in places of general, though casual concourse, where the pursuit of health and pleasure brings people promiscuously together, public conveniency has dispensed with this maxim; and custom there promotes an unreserved conversation for the time, by indulging the privilege of dropping afterwards every indifferent acquaintance, without breach of civility or good manners.

Even in societies, which are established on principles the most immoral, and the most destructive to the interests of the general society, there are required certain rules, which a species of false honour, as well as private interest, engages the members to observe. Robbers and pirates, it has often been remarked, could not maintain their pernicious confederacy, did they not establish a pew distributive justice among themselves, and recall those laws of equity, which they have violated with the rest of mankind.

I hate a drinking companion, says the Greek proverb, who never forgets. The follies of the last debauch should be buried in eternal oblivion, in order to give full scope to the follies of the next.

Among nations, where an immoral gallantry, if covered with a thin veil of mystery, is, in some degree, authorized by custom, there immediately arise a set of rules, calculated for the conveniency of that attachment. The famous court or parliament of love in Provence formerly decided all difficult cases of this nature.

In societies for play, there are laws required for the conduct of the game; and these laws are different in each game. The foundation, I own, of such societies is frivolous; and the laws are, in a great measure, though not altogether, capricious and arbitrary. So far is there a material difference between them and the rules of justice, fidelity, and loyalty. The general societies of men are absolutely requisite for the subsistence of the species; and the public conveniency, which regulates morals, is inviolably established in the nature of man, and of the world, in which he lives. The comparison, therefore, in these respects, is very imperfect. We may only learn from it the necessity of rules, wherever men have any intercourse with each other.

They cannot even pass each other on the road without rules. Waggoners, coachmen, and postilions have principles, by which they give the way; and these are chiefly founded on mutual ease and convenience. Sometimes also they are arbitrary, at least dependent on a kind of capricious analogy like many of the reasonings of lawyers.

[Footnote: That the lighter machine yield to the heavier, and, in machines of the same kind, that the empty yield to the loaded; this rule is founded on convenience. That those who are going to the capital take place of those who are coming from it; this seems to be founded on some idea of dignity of the great city, and of the preference of the future to the past. From like reasons, among foot-walkers, the right-hand entitles a man to the wall, and prevents jostling, which peaceable people find very disagreeable and inconvenient.]

To carry the matter farther, we may observe, that it is impossible for men so much as to murder each other without statutes, and maxims, and an idea of justice and honour. War has its laws as well as peace; and even that sportive kind of war, carried on among wrestlers, boxers, cudgel-players, gladiators, is regulated by fixed principles. Common interest and utility beget infallibly a standard of right and wrong among the parties concerned.

SECTION V. WHY UTILITY PLEASES.

PART I.

It seems so natural a thought to ascribe to their utility the praise, which we bestow on the social virtues, that one would expect to meet with this principle everywhere in moral writers, as the chief foundation of their reasoning and enquiry. In common life, we may observe, that the circumstance of utility is always appealed to; nor is it supposed, that a greater eulogy can be given to any man, than to display his usefulness to the public, and enumerate the services, which he has performed to mankind and society. What praise, even of an inanimate form, if the regularity and elegance of its parts destroy not its fitness for any useful purpose! And how satisfactory an apology for any disproportion or seeming deformity, if we can show the necessity of that particular construction for the use intended! A ship appears more beautiful to an artist, or one moderately skilled in navigation, where its prow is wide and swelling beyond its poop, than if it were framed with a precise geometrical regularity, in contradiction to all the laws of mechanics. A building, whose doors and windows were exact squares, would hurt the eye by that very proportion; as ill adapted to the figure of a human creature, for whose service the fabric was intended.

What wonder then, that a man, whose habits and conduct are hurtful to society, and dangerous or pernicious to every one who has an intercourse with him, should, on that account, be an object of disapprobation, and communicate to every spectator the strongest sentiment of disgust and hatred.

[Footnote: We ought not to imagine, because an inanimate object may be useful as well as a man, that therefore it ought also, according to this system, to merit he appellation of VIRTUOUS. The sentiments, excited by utility, are, in the two cases, very different; and the one is mixed with affection, esteem, approbation, &c., and not the other. In like manner, an inanimate object may have good colour and proportions as well as a human figure. But can we ever be in love with the former?

There are a numerous set of passions and sentiments, of which thinking rational beings are, by the original constitution of nature, the only proper objects: and though the very same qualities be transferred to an insensible, inanimate being, they will not excite the same sentiments. The beneficial qualities of herbs and minerals are, indeed, sometimes called their VIRTUES; but this is an effect of the caprice of language, which out not to be regarded in reasoning. For though there be a species of approbation attending even inanimate objects, when beneficial, yet this sentiment is so weak, and so different from that which is directed to beneficent magistrates or statesman; that they ought not to be ranked under the same class or appellation.

A very small variation of the object, even where the same qualities are preserved, will destroy a sentiment. Thus, the same beauty, transferred to a different sex, excites no amorous passion, where nature is not extremely perverted.]

But perhaps the difficulty of accounting for these effects of usefulness, or its contrary, has kept philosophers from admitting them into their systems of ethics, and has induced them rather to employ any other principle, in explaining the origin of moral good and evil. But it is no just reason for rejecting any principle, confirmed by experience, that we cannot give a satisfactory account of its origin, nor are able to resolve it into other more general principles. And if we would employ a little thought on the present subject, we need be at no loss to account for the influence of utility, and to deduce it from principles, the most known and avowed in human nature.

From the apparent usefulness of the social virtues, it has readily been inferred by sceptics, both ancient and modern, that all moral distinctions arise from education, and were, at first, invented, and afterwards encouraged, by the art of politicians, in order to render men tractable, and subdue their natural ferocity and selfishness, which incapacitated them for society. This principle, indeed, of precept and education, must so far be owned to have a powerful influence, that it may frequently increase or diminish, beyond their natural standard, the sentiments of approbation or dislike; and may even, in particular instances, create, without any natural principle, a new sentiment of this kind; as is evident in all superstitious practices and observances: But that ALL moral affection or dislike arises from this origin, will never surely be allowed by any judicious enquirer.

Had nature made no such distinction, founded on the original constitution of the mind, the words, HONOURABLE and SHAMEFUL, LOVELY and ODIOUS, NOBLE and DESPICABLE, had never had place in any language; nor could politicians, had they invented these terms, ever have been able to render them intelligible, or make them convey any idea to the audience. So that nothing can be more superficial than this paradox of the sceptics; and it were well, if, in the abstruser studies of logic and metaphysics, we could as easily obviate the cavils of that sect, as in the practical and more intelligible sciences of politics and morals.

The social virtues must, therefore, be allowed to have a natural beauty and amiableness, which, at first, antecedent to all precept or education, recommends them to the esteem of uninstructed mankind, and engages their affections. And as the public utility of these virtues is the chief circumstance, whence they derive their merit, it follows, that the end, which they have a tendency to promote, must be some way agreeable to us, and take hold of some natural affection. It must please, either from considerations of self-interest, or from more generous motives and regards.

It has often been asserted, that, as every man has a strong connexion with society, and perceives the impossibility of his solitary subsistence, he becomes, on that account, favourable to all those habits or principles, which promote order in society, and insure to him the quiet possession of so inestimable a blessing, As much as we value our own happiness and welfare, as much must we applaud the practice of justice and humanity, by which alone the social confederacy can be maintained, and every man reap the fruits of mutual protection and assistance.

This deduction of morals from self-love, or a regard to private interest, is an obvious thought, and has not arisen wholly from the wanton sallies and sportive assaults of the sceptics. To mention no others, Polybius, one of the gravest and most judicious, as well as most moral writers of antiquity, has assigned this selfish origin to all our sentiments of virtue. [Footnote: Undutifulness to parents is disapproved of by mankind, [Greek quotation inserted here]. Ingratitude for a like reason (though he seems there to mix a more generous regard) [Greek quotation inserted here] Lib. vi ca. (Ed. Gronorius.) Perhaps the historian only meant, that our sympathy and humanity was more enlivened, by our considering the similarity of our case with that of the person suffering; which is a just sentiment.] But though the solid practical sense of that author, and his aversion to all vain subtilties, render his authority on the present subject very considerable; yet is not this an affair to be decided by authority, and the voice of nature and experience seems plainly to oppose the selfish theory.

We frequently bestow praise on virtuous actions, performed in very distant ages and remote countries; where the utmost subtilty of imagination would not discover any appearance of self-interest, or find any connexion of our present happiness and security with events so widely separated from us.

A generous, a brave, a noble deed, performed by an adversary, commands our approbation; while in its consequences it may be acknowledged prejudicial to our particular interest.

Where private advantage concurs with general affection for virtue, we readily perceive and avow the mixture of these distinct sentiments, which have a very different feeling and influence on the mind. We praise, perhaps, with more alacrity, where the generous humane action contributes to our particular interest: But the topics of praise, which we insist on, are very wide of this circumstance. And we may attempt to bring over others to our sentiments, without endeavouring to convince them, that they reap any advantage from the actions which we recommend to their approbation and applause.

Frame the model of a praiseworthy character, consisting of all the most amiable moral virtues: Give instances, in which these display themselves after an eminent and extraordinary manner: You readily engage the esteem and approbation of all your audience, who never so much as enquire in what age and country the person lived, who possessed these noble qualities: A circumstance, however, of all others, the most material to self-love, or a concern for our own individual happiness. Once on a time, a statesman, in the shock and contest of parties, prevailed so far as to procure, by his eloquence, the banishment of an able adversary; whom he secretly followed, offering him money for his support during his exile, and soothing him with topics of consolation in his misfortunes. ALAS! cries the banished statesman, WITH WHAT REGRET MUST I LEAVE MY FRIENDS IN THIS CITY, WHERE EVEN ENEMIES ARE SO GENEROUS! Virtue, though in an enemy, here pleased him: And we also give it the just tribute of praise and approbation; nor do we retract these sentiments, when we hear, that the action passed at Athens, about two thousand years ago, and that the persons’ names were Eschines and Demosthenes.

WHAT IS THAT TO ME? There are few occasions, when this question is not pertinent: And had it that universal, infallible influence supposed, it would turn into ridicule every composition, and almost every conversation, which contain any praise or censure of men and manners.

It is but a weak subterfuge, when pressed by these facts and arguments, to say, that we transport ourselves, by the force of imagination, into distant ages and countries, and consider the advantage, which we should have reaped from these characters, had we been contemporaries, and had any commerce with the persons. It is not conceivable, how a REAL sentiment or passion can ever arise from a known IMAGINARY interest; especially when our REAL interest is still kept in view, and is often acknowledged to be entirely distinct from the imaginary, and even sometimes opposite to it.

A man, brought to the brink of a precipice, cannot look down without trembling; and the sentiment of IMAGINARY danger actuates him, in opposition to the opinion and belief of REAL safety. But the imagination is here assisted by the presence of a striking object; and yet prevails not, except it be also aided by novelty, and the unusual appearance of the object. Custom soon reconciles us to heights and precipices, and wears off these false and delusive terrors. The reverse is observable in the estimates which we form of characters and manners; and the more we habituate ourselves to an accurate scrutiny of morals, the more delicate feeling do we acquire of the most minute distinctions between vice and virtue. Such frequent occasion, indeed, have we, in common life, to pronounce all kinds of moral determinations, that no object of this kind can be new or unusual to us; nor could any FALSE views or prepossessions maintain their ground against an experience, so common and familiar. Experience being chiefly what forms the associations of ideas, it is impossible that any association could establish and support itself, in direct opposition to that principle.

Usefulness is agreeable, and engages our approbation. This is a matter of fact, confirmed by daily observation. But, USEFUL? For what? For somebody’s interest, surely. Whose interest then? Not our own only: For our approbation frequently extends farther. It must, therefore, be the interest of those, who are served by the character or action approved of; and these we may conclude, however remote, are not totally indifferent to us. By opening up this principle, we shall discover one great source of moral distinctions.

PART II.

Self-love is a principle in human nature of such extensive energy, and the interest of each individual is, in general, so closely connected with that of the community, that those philosophers were excusable, who fancied that all our concern for the public might be resolved into a concern for our own happiness and preservation. They saw every moment, instances of approbation or blame, satisfaction or displeasure towards characters and actions; they denominated the objects of these sentiments, VIRTUES, or VICES; they observed, that the former had a tendency to increase the happiness, and the latter the misery of mankind; they asked, whether it were possible that we could have any general concern for society, or any disinterested resentment of the welfare or injury of others; they found it simpler to consider all these sentiments as modifications of self-love; and they discovered a pretence, at least, for this unity of principle, in that close union of interest, which is so observable between the public and each individual.

But notwithstanding this frequent confusion of interests, it is easy to attain what natural philosophers, after Lord Bacon, have affected to call the experimentum crucis, or that experiment which points out the right way in any doubt or ambiguity. We have found instances, in which private interest was separate from public; in which it was even contrary: And yet we observed the moral sentiment to continue, notwithstanding this disjunction of interests. And wherever these distinct interests sensibly concurred, we always found a sensible increase of the sentiment, and a more warm affection to virtue, and detestation of vice, or what we properly call, GRATITUDE and REVENGE. Compelled by these instances, we must renounce the theory, which accounts for every moral sentiment by the principle of self-love. We must adopt a more public affection, and allow, that the interests of society are not, even on their own account, entirely indifferent to us. Usefulness is only a tendency to a certain end; and it is a contradiction in terms, that anything pleases as means to an end, where the end itself no wise affects us. If usefulness, therefore, be a source of moral sentiment, and if this usefulness be not always considered with a reference to self; it follows, that everything, which contributes to the happiness of society, recommends itself directly to our approbation and good-will. Here is a principle, which accounts, in great part, for the origin of morality: And what need we seek for abstruse and remote systems, when there occurs one so obvious and natural?

[FOOTNOTE: It is needless to push our researches so far as to ask, why we have humanity or a fellow-feeling with others. It is sufficient, that this is experienced to be a principle in human nature. We must stop somewhere in our examination of causes; and there are, in every science, some general principles, beyond which we cannot hope to find any principle more general. No man is absolutely indifferent to the happiness and misery of others. The first has a natural tendency to give pleasure; the second, pain. This every one may find in himself. It is not probable, that these principles can be resolved into principles more simple and universal, whatever attempts may have been made to that purpose. But if it were possible, it belongs not to the present subject; and we may here safely consider these principles as original; happy, if we can render all the consequences sufficiently plain and perspicuous!]

Have we any difficulty to comprehend the force of humanity and benevolence? Or to conceive, that the very aspect of happiness, joy, prosperity, gives pleasure; that of pain, suffering, sorrow, communicates uneasiness? The human countenance, says Horace ['Uti ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent Humani vultus,' — Hor.], borrows smiles or tears from the human countenance. Reduce a person to solitude, and he loses all enjoyment, except either of the sensual or speculative kind; and that because the movements of his heart are not forwarded by correspondent movements in his fellow-creatures. The signs of sorrow and mourning, though arbitrary, affect us with melancholy; but the natural symptoms, tears and cries and groans, never fail to infuse compassion and uneasiness. And if the effects of misery touch us in so lively a manner; can we be supposed altogether insensible or indifferent towards its causes; when a malicious or treacherous character and behaviour are presented to us?

We enter, I shall suppose, into a convenient, warm, well-contrived apartment: We necessarily receive a pleasure from its very survey; because it presents us with the pleasing ideas of ease, satisfaction, and enjoyment. The hospitable, good-humoured, humane landlord appears. This circumstance surely must embellish the whole; nor can we easily forbear reflecting, with pleasure, on the satisfaction which results to every one from his intercourse and good-offices.

His whole family, by the freedom, ease, confidence, and calm enjoyment, diffused over their countenances, sufficiently express their happiness. I have a pleasing sympathy in the prospect of so much joy, and can never consider the source of it, without the most agreeable emotions.

He tells me, that an oppressive and powerful neighbour had attempted to dispossess him of his inheritance, and had long disturbed all his innocent and social pleasures. I feel an immediate indignation arise in me against such violence and injury.

But it is no wonder, he adds, that a private wrong should proceed from a man, who had enslaved provinces, depopulated cities, and made the field and scaffold stream with human blood. I am struck with horror at the prospect of so much misery, and am actuated by the strongest antipathy against its author.

In general, it is certain, that, wherever we go, whatever we reflect on or converse about, everything still presents us with the view of human happiness or misery, and excites in our breast a sympathetic movement of pleasure or uneasiness. In our serious occupations, in our careless amusements, this principle still exerts its active energy.

A man who enters the theatre, is immediately struck with the view of so great a multitude, participating of one common amusement; and experiences, from their very aspect, a superior sensibility or disposition of being affected with every sentiment, which he shares with his fellow-creatures.

He observes the actors to be animated by the appearance of a full audience, and raised to a degree of enthusiasm, which they cannot command in any solitary or calm moment.

Every movement of the theatre, by a skilful poet, is communicated, as it were by magic, to the spectators; who weep, tremble, resent, rejoice, and are inflamed with all the variety of passions, which actuate the several personages of the drama.

Where any event crosses our wishes, and interrupts the happiness of the favourite characters, we feel a sensible anxiety and concern. But where their sufferings proceed from the treachery, cruelty, or tyranny of an enemy, our breasts are affected with the liveliest resentment against the author of these calamities. It is here esteemed contrary to the rules of art to represent anything cool and indifferent. A distant friend, or a confident, who has no immediate interest in the catastrophe, ought, if possible, to be avoided by the poet; as communicating a like indifference to the audience, and checking the progress of the passions.

Few species of poetry are more entertaining than PASTORAL; and every one is sensible, that the chief source of its pleasure arises from those images of a gentle and tender tranquillity, which it represents in its personages, and of which it communicates a like sentiment to the reader. Sannazarius, who transferred the scene to the sea-shore, though he presented the most magnificent object in nature, is confessed to have erred in his choice. The idea of toil, labour, and danger, suffered by the fishermen, is painful; by an unavoidable sympathy, which attends every conception of human happiness or misery.

When I was twenty, says a French poet, Ovid was my favourite: Now I am forty, I declare for Horace. We enter, to be sure, more readily into sentiments, which resemble those we feel every day: But no passion, when well represented, can be entirely indifferent to us; because there is none, of which every man has not, within him, at least the seeds and first principles. It is the business of poetry to bring every affection near to us by lively imagery and representation, and make it look like truth and reality: A certain proof, that, wherever that reality is found, our minds are disposed to be strongly affected by it.

Any recent event or piece of news, by which the fate of states, provinces, or many individuals is affected, is extremely interesting even to those whose welfare is not immediately engaged. Such intelligence is propagated with celerity, heard with avidity, and enquired into with attention and concern. The interest of society appears, on this occasion, to be in some degree the interest of each individual. The imagination is sure to be affected; though the passions excited may not always be so strong and steady as to have great influence on the conduct and behaviour.

The perusal of a history seems a calm entertainment; but would be no entertainment at all, did not our hearts beat with correspondent movements to those which are described by the historian.

Thucydides and Guicciardin support with difficulty our attention; while the former describes the trivial encounters of the small cities of Greece, and the latter the harmless wars of Pisa. The few persons interested and the small interest fill not the imagination, and engage not the affections. The deep distress of the numerous Athenian army before Syracuse; the danger which so nearly threatens Venice; these excite compassion; these move terror and anxiety.

The indifferent, uninteresting style of Suetonius, equally with the masterly pencil of Tacitus, may convince us of the cruel depravity of Nero or Tiberius: But what a difference of sentiment! While the former coldly relates the facts; and the latter sets before our eyes the venerable figures of a Soranus and a Thrasea, intrepid in their fate, and only moved by the melting sorrows of their friends and kindred. What sympathy then touches every human heart! What indignation against the tyrant, whose causeless fear or unprovoked malice gave rise to such detestable barbarity!

If we bring these subjects nearer: If we remove all suspicion of fiction and deceit: What powerful concern is excited, and how much superior, in many instances, to the narrow attachments of self-love and private interest! Popular sedition, party zeal, a devoted obedience to factious leaders; these are some of the most visible, though less laudable effects of this social sympathy in human nature.

The frivolousness of the subject too, we may observe, is not able to detach us entirely from what carries an image of human sentiment and affection.

When a person stutters, and pronounces with difficulty, we even sympathize with this trivial uneasiness, and suffer for him. And it is a rule in criticism, that every combination of syllables or letters, which gives pain to the organs of speech in the recital, appears also from a species of sympathy harsh and disagreeable to the ear. Nay, when we run over a book with our eye, we are sensible of such unharmonious composition; because we still imagine, that a person recites it to us, and suffers from the pronunciation of these jarring sounds. So delicate is our sympathy!

Easy and unconstrained postures and motions are always beautiful: An air of health and vigour is agreeable: Clothes which warm, without burthening the body; which cover, without imprisoning the limbs, are well-fashioned. In every judgement of beauty, the feelings of the person affected enter into consideration, and communicate to the spectator similar touches of pain or pleasure.

[Footnote: ‘Decentior equus cujus astricta suntilia; sed idem velocior. Pulcher aspectu sit athleta, cujus lacertos executatio expressit; idem certamini paratior nunquam enim SPECIES ab UTILITATE dividitur. Sed hoc quidem discernere modici judicii est.’ — Quintilian, Inst. lib. viii. ca.]

What wonder, then, if we can pronounce no judgement concerning the character and conduct of men, without considering the tendencies of their actions, and the happiness or misery which thence arises to society? What association of ideas would ever operate, were that principle here totally unactive.

[Footnote: In proportion to the station which a man possesses, according to the relations in which he is placed; we always expect from him a greater or less degree of good, and when disappointed, blame his inutility; and much more do we blame him, if any ill or prejudice arise from his conduct and behaviour. When the interests of one country interfere with those of another, we estimate the merits of a statesman by the good or ill, which results to his own country from his measures and councils, without regard to the prejudice which he brings on its enemies and rivals. His fellow-citizens are the objects, which lie nearest the eye, while we determine his character. And as nature has implanted in every one a superior affection to his own country, we never expect any regard to distant nations, where a competition arises. Not to mention, that, while every man consults the good of his own community, we are sensible, that the general interest of mankind is better promoted, than any loose indeterminate views to the good of a species, whence no beneficial action could ever result, for want of a duly limited object, on which they could exert themselves.]

If any man from a cold insensibility, or narrow selfishness of temper, is unaffected with the images of human happiness or misery, he must be equally indifferent to the images of vice and virtue: As, on the other hand, it is always found, that a warm concern for the interests of our species is attended with a delicate feeling of all moral distinctions; a strong resentment of injury done to men; a lively approbation of their welfare. In this particular, though great superiority is observable of one man above another; yet none are so entirely indifferent to the interest of their fellow-creatures, as to perceive no distinctions of moral good and evil, in consequence of the different tendencies of actions and principles. How, indeed, can we suppose it possible in any one, who wears a human heart, that if there be subjected to his censure, one character or system of conduct, which is beneficial, and another which is pernicious to his species or community, he will not so much as give a cool preference to the former, or ascribe to it the smallest merit or regard? Let us suppose such a person ever so selfish; let private interest have ingrossed ever so much his attention; yet in instances, where that is not concerned, he must unavoidably feel SOME propensity to the good of mankind, and make it an object of choice, if everything else be equal. Would any man, who is walking along, tread as willingly on another's gouty toes, whom he has no quarrel with, as on the hard flint and pavement? There is here surely a difference in the case. We surely take into consideration the happiness and misery of others, in weighing the several motives of action, and incline to the former, where no private regards draw us to seek our own promotion or advantage by the injury of our fellow-creatures. And if the principles of humanity are capable, in many instances, of influencing our actions, they must, at all times, have some authority over our sentiments, and give us a general approbation of what is useful to society, and blame of what is dangerous or pernicious. The degrees of these sentiments may be the subject of controversy; but the reality of their existence, one should think, must be admitted in every theory or system.

A creature, absolutely malicious and spiteful, were there any such in nature, must be worse than indifferent to the images of vice and virtue. All his sentiments must be inverted, and directly opposite to those, which prevail in the human species. Whatever contributes to the good of mankind, as it crosses the constant bent of his wishes and desires, must produce uneasiness and disapprobation; and on the contrary, whatever is the source of disorder and misery in society, must, for the same reason, be regarded with pleasure and complacency. Timon, who probably from his affected spleen more than an inveterate malice, was denominated the manhater, embraced Alcibiades with great fondness. GO ON, MY BOY! cried he, ACQUIRE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE: YOU WILL ONE DAY, I FORESEE, BE THE CAUSE OF GREAT CALAMITIES TO THEM [Footnote: Plutarch fit vita Ale.]. Could we admit the two principles of the Manicheans, it is an infallible consequence, that their sentiments of human actions, as well as of everything else, must be totally opposite, and that every instance of justice and humanity, from its necessary tendency, must please the one deity and displease the other. All mankind so far resemble the good principle, that, where interest or revenge or envy perverts not our disposition, we are always inclined, from our natural philanthropy, to give the preference to the happiness of society, and consequently to virtue above its opposite. Absolute, unprovoked, disinterested malice has never perhaps place in any human breast; or if it had, must there pervert all the sentiments of morals, as well as the feelings of humanity. If the cruelty of Nero be allowed entirely voluntary, and not rather the effect of constant fear and resentment; it is evident that Tigellinus, preferably to Seneca or Burrhus, must have possessed his steady and uniform approbation.

A statesman or patriot, who serves our own country in our own time, has always a more passionate regard paid to him, than one whose beneficial influence operated on distant ages or remote nations; where the good, resulting from his generous humanity, being less connected with us, seems more obscure, and affects us with a less lively sympathy. We may own the merit to be equally great, though our sentiments are not raised to an equal height, in both cases. The judgement here corrects the inequalities of our internal emotions and perceptions; in like manner, as it preserves us from error, in the several variations of images, presented to our external senses. The same object, at a double distance, really throws on the eye a picture of but half the bulk; yet we imagine that it appears of the same size in both situations; because we know that on our approach to it, its image would expand on the eye, and that the difference consists not in the object itself, but in our position with regard to it. And, indeed, without such a correction of appearances, both in internal and external sentiment, men could never think or talk steadily on any subject; while their fluctuating situations produce a continual variation on objects, and throw them into such different and contrary lights and positions.

[Footnote: For a little reason, the tendencies of actions and characters, not their real accidental consequences, are alone regarded in our more determinations or general judgements; though in our real feeling or sentiment, we cannot help paying greater regard to one whose station, joined to virtue, renders him really useful to society, then to one, who exerts the social virtues only in good intentions and benevolent affections. Separating the character from the furtone, by an easy and necessary effort of thought, we pronounce these persons alike, and give them the appearance: But is not able entirely to prevail our sentiment.

Why is this peach-tree said to be better than that other; but because it produces more or better fruit? And would not the same praise be given it, though snails or vermin had destroyed the peaches, before they came to full maturity? In morals too, is not THE TREE KNOWN BY THE FRUIT?

And cannot we easily distinguish between nature and accident, in the one case as well as in the other?]

The more we converse with mankind, and the greater social intercourse we maintain, the more shall we be familiarized to these general preferences and distinctions, without which our conversation and discourse could scarcely be rendered intelligible to each other. Every man’s interest is peculiar to himself, and the aversions and desires, which result from it, cannot be supposed to affect others in a like degree. General language, therefore, being formed for general use, must be moulded on some more general views, and must affix the epithets of praise or blame, in conformity to sentiments, which arise from the general interests of the community. And if these sentiments, in most men, be not so strong as those, which have a reference to private good; yet still they must make some distinction, even in persons the most depraved and selfish; and must attach the notion of good to a beneficent conduct, and of evil to the contrary. Sympathy, we shall allow, is much fainter than our concern for ourselves, and sympathy with persons remote from us much fainter than that with persons near and contiguous; but for this very reason it is necessary for us, in our calm judgements and discourse concerning the characters of men, to neglect all these differences, and render our sentiments more public and social. Besides, that we ourselves often change our situation in this particular, we every day meet with persons who are in a situation different from us, and who could never converse with us were we to remain constantly in that position and point of view, which is peculiar to ourselves. The intercourse of sentiments, therefore, in society and conversation, makes us form some general unalterable standard, by which we may approve or disapprove of characters and manners. And though the heart takes not part entirely with those general notions, nor regulates all its love and hatred by the universal abstract differences of vice and virtue, without regard to self, or the persons with whom we are more intimately connected; yet have these moral differences a considerable influence, and being sufficient, at least for discourse, serve all our purposes in company, in the pulpit, on the theatre, and in the schools.

[Footnote: It is wisely ordained by nature, that private connexions should commonly prevail over univeral views and considerations; otherwise our affections and actions would be dissopated and lost, for want of a proper limited object. Thus a small benefit done to ourselves, or our near friends, excites more lively sentiments of love and approbation than a great benefit done to a distant commonwealth: But still we know here, as in all the senses, to correct these inequalities by reflection, and retain a general standard of vice and virtue, founded chiefly on a general usefulness.]

Thus, in whatever light we take this subject, the merit, ascribed to the social virtues, appears still uniform, and arises chiefly from that regard, which the natural sentiment of benevolence engages us to pay to the interests of mankind and society. If we consider the principles of the human make, such as they appear to daily experience and observation, we must, A PRIORI, conclude it impossible for such a creature as man to be totally indifferent to the well or ill-being of his fellow-creatures, and not readily, of himself, to pronounce, where nothing gives him any particular bias, that what promotes their happiness is good, what tends to their misery is evil, without any farther regard or consideration. Here then are the faint rudiments, at least, or outlines, of a GENERAL distinction between actions; and in proportion as the humanity of the person is supposed to increase, his connexion with those who are injured or benefited, and his lively conception of their misery or happiness; his consequent censure or approbation acquires proportionable vigour. There is no necessity, that a generous action, barely mentioned in an old history or remote gazette, should communicate any strong feelings of applause and admiration. Virtue, placed at such a distance, is like a fixed star, which, though to the eye of reason it may appear as luminous as the sun in his meridian, is so infinitely removed as to affect the senses, neither with light nor heat. Bring this virtue nearer, by our acquaintance or connexion with the persons, or even by an eloquent recital of the case; our hearts are immediately caught, our sympathy enlivened, and our cool approbation converted into the warmest sentiments of friendship and regard. These seem necessary and infallible consequences of the general principles of human nature, as discovered in common life and practice.

Again; reverse these views and reasonings: Consider the matter a posteriori; and weighing the consequences, enquire if the merit of social virtue be not, in a great measure, derived from the feelings of humanity, with which it affects the spectators. It appears to be matter of fact, that the circumstance of UTILITY, in all subjects, is a source of praise and approbation: That it is constantly appealed to in all moral decisions concerning the merit and demerit of actions: That it is the SOLE source of that high regard paid to justice, fidelity, honour, allegiance, and chastity: That it is inseparable from all the other social virtues, humanity, generosity, charity, affability, lenity, mercy, and moderation: And, in a word, that it is a foundation of the chief part of morals, which has a reference to mankind and our fellow-creatures.

It appears also, that, in our general approbation of characters and manners, the useful tendency of the social virtues moves us not by any regards to self-interest, but has an influence much more universal and extensive. It appears that a tendency to public good, and to the promoting of peace, harmony, and order in society, does always, by affecting the benevolent principles of our frame, engage us on the side of the social virtues. And it appears, as an additional confirmation, that these principles of humanity and sympathy enter so deeply into all our sentiments, and have so powerful an influence, as may enable them to excite the strongest censure and applause. The present theory is the simple result of all these inferences, each of which seems founded on uniform experience and observation.

Were it doubtful, whether there were any such principle in our nature as humanity or a concern for others, yet when we see, in numberless instances, that whatever has a tendency to promote the interests of society, is so highly approved of, we ought thence to learn the force of the benevolent principle; since it is impossible for anything to please as means to an end, where the end is totally indifferent. On the other hand, were it doubtful, whether there were, implanted in our nature, any general principle of moral blame and approbation, yet when we see, in numberless instances, the influence of humanity, we ought thence to conclude, that it is impossible, but that everything which promotes the interest of society must communicate pleasure, and what is pernicious give uneasiness. But when these different reflections and observations concur in establishing the same conclusion, must they not bestow an undisputed evidence upon it?

It is however hoped, that the progress of this argument will bring a farther confirmation of the present theory, by showing the rise of other sentiments of esteem and regard from the same or like principles.

SECTION VI. OF QUALITIES USEFUL TO OURSELVES.

PART I.

IT seems evident, that where a quality or habit is subjected to our examination, if it appear in any respect prejudicial to the person possessed of it, or such as incapacitates him for business and action, it is instantly blamed, and ranked among his faults and imperfections. Indolence, negligence, want of order and method, obstinacy, fickleness, rashness, credulity; these qualities were never esteemed by any one indifferent to a character; much less, extolled as accomplishments or virtues. The prejudice, resulting from them, immediately strikes our eye, and gives us the sentiment of pain and disapprobation.

No quality, it is allowed, is absolutely either blameable or praiseworthy. It is all according to its degree. A due medium, says the Peripatetics, is the characteristic of virtue. But this medium is chiefly determined by utility. A proper celerity, for instance, and dispatch in business, is commendable. When defective, no progress is ever made in the execution of any purpose: When excessive, it engages us in precipitate and ill-concerted measures and enterprises: By such reasonings, we fix the proper and commendable mediocrity in all moral and prudential disquisitions; and never lose view of the advantages, which result from any character or habit. Now as these advantages are enjoyed by the person possessed of the character, it can never be SELF-LOVE which renders the prospect of them agreeable to us, the spectators, and prompts our esteem and approbation. No force of imagination can convert us into another person, and make us fancy, that we, being that person, reap benefit from those valuable qualities, which belong to him. Or if it did, no celerity of imagination could immediately transport us back, into ourselves, and make us love and esteem the person, as different from us. Views and sentiments, so opposite to known truth and to each other, could never have place, at the same time, in the same person. All suspicion, therefore, of selfish regards, is here totally excluded. It is a quite different principle, which actuates our bosom, and interests us in the felicity of the person whom we contemplate. Where his natural talents and acquired abilities give us the prospect of elevation, advancement, a figure in life, prosperous success, a steady command over fortune, and the execution of great or advantageous undertakings; we are struck with such agreeable images, and feel a complacency and regard immediately arise towards him. The ideas of happiness, joy, triumph, prosperity, are connected with every circumstance of his character, and diffuse over our minds a pleasing sentiment of sympathy and humanity.

[Footnote: One may venture to affirm, that there is no human nature, to whom the appearance of happiness (where envy or revenge has no place) does not give pleasure, that of misery, uneasiness. This seems inseparable from our make and constitution. But they are only more generous minds, that are thence prompted to seek zealously the good of others, and to have a real passion for their welfare. With men of narrow and ungenerous spirits, this sympathy goes not beyond a slight feeling of the imagination, which serves only to excite sentiments of complacency or ensure, and makes them apply to the object either honorable or dishonorable appellations. A griping miser, for instance, praises extremely INDUSTRY and FRUGALITY even in others, and sets them, in his estimation, above all the other virtues. He knows the good that results from them, and feels that species of happiness with a more lively sympathy, than any other you could represent to him; though perhaps he would not part with a shilling to make the fortune of the industrious man, whom he praises so highly.]

Let us suppose a person originally framed so as to have no manner of concern for his fellow-creatures, but to regard the happiness and misery of all sensible beings with greater indifference than even two contiguous shades of the same colour. Let us suppose, if the prosperity of nations were laid on the one hand, and their ruin on the other, and he were desired to choose; that he would stand like the schoolman’s ass, irresolute and undetermined, between equal motives; or rather, like the same ass between two pieces of wood or marble, without any inclination or propensity to either side. The consequence, I believe, must be allowed just, that such a person, being absolutely unconcerned, either for the public good of a community or the private utility of others, would look on every quality, however pernicious, or however beneficial, to society, or to its possessor, with the same indifference as on the most common and uninteresting object.

But if, instead of this fancied monster, we suppose a MAN to form a judgement or determination in the case, there is to him a plain foundation of preference, where everything else is equal; and however cool his choice may be, if his heart be selfish, or if the persons interested be remote from him; there must still be a choice or distinction between what is useful, and what is pernicious. Now this distinction is the same in all its parts, with the MORAL DISTINCTION, whose foundation has been so often, and so much in vain, enquired after. The same endowments of the mind, in every circumstance, are agreeable to the sentiment of morals and to that of humanity; the same temper is susceptible of high degrees of the one sentiment and of the other; and the same alteration in the objects, by their nearer approach or by connexions, enlivens the one and the other. By all the rules of philosophy, therefore, we must conclude, that these sentiments are originally the same; since, in each particular, even the most minute, they are governed by the same laws, and are moved by the same objects.

Why do philosophers infer, with the greatest certainty, that the moon is kept in its orbit by the same force of gravity, that makes bodies fall near the surface of the earth, but because these effects are, upon computation, found similar and equal? And must not this argument bring as strong conviction, in moral as in natural disquisitions?

To prove, by any long detail, that all the qualities, useful to the possessor, are approved of, and the contrary censured, would be superfluous. The least reflection on what is every day experienced in life, will be sufficient. We shall only mention a few instances, in order to remove, if possible, all doubt and hesitation.

The quality, the most necessary for the execution of any useful enterprise, is discretion; by which we carry on a safe intercourse with others, give due attention to our own and to their character, weigh each circumstance of the business which we undertake, and employ the surest and safest means for the attainment of any end or purpose. To a Cromwell, perhaps, or a De Retz, discretion may appear an alderman-like virtue, as Dr. Swift calls it; and being incompatible with those vast designs, to which their courage and ambition prompted them, it might really, in them, be a fault or imperfection. But in the conduct of ordinary life, no virtue is more requisite, not only to obtain success, but to avoid the most fatal miscarriages and disappointments. The greatest parts without it, as observed by an elegant writer, may be fatal to their owner; as Polyphemus, deprived of his eye, was only the more exposed, on account of his enormous strength and stature.

The best character, indeed, were it not rather too perfect for human nature, is that which is not swayed by temper of any kind; but alternately employs enterprise and caution, as each is useful to the particular purpose intended. Such is the excellence which St. Evremond ascribes to Mareschal Turenne, who displayed every campaign, as he grew older, more temerity in his military enterprises; and being now, from long experience, perfectly acquainted with every incident in war, he advanced with greater firmness and security, in a road so well known to him. Fabius, says Machiavel, was cautious; Scipio enterprising: And both succeeded, because the situation of the Roman affairs, during the command of each, was peculiarly adapted to his genius; but both would have failed, had these situations been reversed. He is happy, whose circumstances suit his temper; but he is more excellent, who can suit his temper to any circumstances.

What need is there to display the praises of industry, and to extol its advantages, in the acquisition of power and riches, or in raising what we call a FORTUNE in the world? The tortoise, according to the fable, by his perseverance, gained the race of the hare, though possessed of much superior swiftness. A man’s time, when well husbanded, is like a cultivated field, of which a few acres produce more of what is useful to life, than extensive provinces, even of the richest soil, when over-run with weeds and brambles.

But all prospect of success in life, or even of tolerable subsistence, must fail, where a reasonable frugality is wanting. The heap, instead of increasing, diminishes daily, and leaves its possessor so much more unhappy, as, not having been able to confine his expences to a large revenue, he will still less be able to live contentedly on a small one. The souls of men, according to Plato [Footnote: Phaedo.], inflamed with impure appetites, and losing the body, which alone afforded means of satisfaction, hover about the earth, and haunt the places, where their bodies are deposited; possessed with a longing desire to recover the lost organs of sensation. So may we see worthless prodigals, having consumed their fortune in wild debauches, thrusting themselves into every plentiful table, and every party of pleasure, hated even by the vicious, and despised even by fools.

The one extreme of frugality is avarice, which, as it both deprives a man of all use of his riches, and checks hospitality and every social enjoyment, is justly censured on a double account. PRODIGALITY, the other extreme, is commonly more hurtful to a man himself; and each of these extremes is blamed above the other, according to the temper of the person who censures, and according to his greater or less sensibility to pleasure, either social or sensual.

Qualities often derive their merit from complicated sources. Honesty, fidelity, truth, are praised for their immediate tendency to promote the interests of society; but after those virtues are once established upon this foundation, they are also considered as advantageous to the person himself, and as the source of that trust and confidence, which can alone give a man any consideration in life. One becomes contemptible, no less than odious, when he forgets the duty, which, in this particular, he owes to himself as well as to society.

Perhaps, this consideration is one CHIEF source of the high blame, which is thrown on any instance of failure among women in point of CHASTITY. The greatest regard, which can be acquired by that sex, is derived from their fidelity; and a woman becomes cheap and vulgar, loses her rank, and is exposed to every insult, who is deficient in this particular. The smallest failure is here sufficient to blast her character. A female has so many opportunities of secretly indulging these appetites, that nothing can give us security but her absolute modesty and reserve; and where a breach is once made, it can scarcely ever be fully repaired. If a man behave with cowardice on one occasion, a contrary conduct reinstates him in his character. But by what action can a woman, whose behaviour has once been dissolute, be able to assure us, that she has formed better resolutions, and has self-command enough to carry them into execution?

All men, it is allowed, are equally desirous of happiness; but few are successful in the pursuit: One considerable cause is the want of strength of mind, which might enable them to resist the temptation of present ease or pleasure, and carry them forward in the search of more distant profit and enjoyment. Our affections, on a general prospect of their objects, form certain rules of conduct, and certain measures of preference of one above another: and these decisions, though really the result of our calm passions and propensities, (for what else can pronounce any object eligible or the contrary?) are yet said, by a natural abuse of terms, to be the determinations of pure REASON and reflection. But when some of these objects approach nearer to us, or acquire the advantages of favourable lights and positions, which catch the heart or imagination; our general resolutions are frequently confounded, a small enjoyment preferred, and lasting shame and sorrow entailed upon us. And however poets may employ their wit and eloquence, in celebrating present pleasure, and rejecting all distant views to fame, health, or fortune; it is obvious, that this practice is the source of all dissoluteness and disorder, repentance and misery. A man of a strong and determined temper adheres tenaciously to his general resolutions, and is neither seduced by the allurements of pleasure, nor terrified by the menaces of pain; but keeps still in view those distant pursuits, by which he, at once, ensures his happiness and his honour.

Self-satisfaction, at least in some degree, is an advantage, which equally attends the fool and the wise man: But it is the only one; nor is there any other circumstance in the conduct of life, where they are upon an equal footing. Business, books, conversation; for all of these, a fool is totally incapacitated, and except condemned by his station to the coarsest drudgery, remains a useless burthen upon the earth. Accordingly, it is found, that men are extremely jealous of their character in this particular; and many instances are seen of profligacy and treachery, the most avowed and unreserved; none of bearing patiently the imputation of ignorance and stupidity. Dicaearchus, the Macedonian general, who, as Polybius tells us [Footnote: Lib. xvi. Ca.], openly erected one altar to impiety, another to injustice, in order to bid defiance to mankind; even he, I am well assured, would have started at the epithet of FOOL, and have meditated revenge for so injurious an appellation. Except the affection of parents, the strongest and most indissoluble bond in nature, no connexion has strength sufficient to support the disgust arising from this character. Love itself, which can subsist under treachery, ingratitude, malice, and infidelity, is immediately extinguished by it, when perceived and acknowledged; nor are deformity and old age more fatal to the dominion of that passion. So dreadful are the ideas of an utter incapacity for any purpose or undertaking, and of continued error and misconduct in life!

When it is asked, whether a quick or a slow apprehension be most valuable? Whether one, that, at first view, penetrates far into a subject, but can perform nothing upon study; or a contrary character, which must work out everything by dint of application? Whether a clear head or a copious invention? Whether a profound genius or a sure judgement? In short, what character, or peculiar turn of understanding, is more excellent than another? It is evident, that we can answer none of these questions, without considering which of those qualities capacitates a man best for the world, and carries him farthest in any undertaking.

If refined sense and exalted sense be not so USEFUL as common sense, their rarity, their novelty, and the nobleness of their objects make some compensation, and render them the admiration of mankind: As gold, though less serviceable than iron, acquires from its scarcity a value which is much superior.

The defects of judgement can be supplied by no art or invention; but those of memory frequently may, both in business and in study, by method and industry, and by diligence in committing everything to writing; and we scarcely ever hear a short memory given as a reason for a man’s failure in any undertaking. But in ancient times, when no man could make a figure without the talent of speaking, and when the audience were too delicate to bear such crude, undigested harangues as our extemporary orators offer to public assemblies; the faculty of memory was then of the utmost consequence, and was accordingly much more valued than at present. Scarce any great genius is mentioned in antiquity, who is not celebrated for this talent; and Cicero enumerates it among the other sublime qualities of Caesar himself. [Footnote: Fruit in Illo Ingenium, ratio, memoria, literae, cura, cogitatio, diligentia &c. Philli.].

Particular customs and manners alter the usefulness of qualities: they also alter their merit. Particular situations and accidents have, in some degree, the same influence. He will always be more esteemed, who possesses those talents and accomplishments, which suit his station and profession, than he whom fortune has misplaced in the part which she has assigned him. The private or selfish virtues are, in this respect, more arbitrary than the public and social. In other respects they are, perhaps, less liable to doubt and controversy.

In this kingdom, such continued ostentation, of late years, has prevailed among men in ACTIVE life with regard to PUBLIC SPIRIT, and among those in SPECULATIVE with regard to BENEVOLENCE; and so many false pretensions to each have been, no doubt, detected, that men of the world are apt, without any bad intention, to discover a sullen incredulity on the head of those moral endowments, and even sometimes absolutely to deny their existence and reality. In like manner I find, that, of old, the perpetual cant of the STOICS and CYNICS concerning VIRTUE, their magnificent professions and slender performances, bred a disgust in mankind; and Lucian, who, though licentious with regard to pleasure, is yet in other respects a very moral writer, cannot sometimes talk of virtue, so much boasted without betraying symptoms of spleen and irony. But surely this peevish delicacy, whence-ever it arises can never be carried so far as to make us deny the existence of every species of merit, and all distinction of manners and behaviour. Besides DISCRETION, CAUTION, ENTERPRISE, INDUSTRY, ASSIDUITY, FRUGALITY, ECONOMY, GOOD-SENSE, PRUDENCE, DISCERNMENT; besides these endowments, I say, whose very names force an avowal of their merit, there are many others, to which the most determined scepticism cannot for a moment refuse the tribute of praise and approbation. TEMPERANCE, SOBRIETY, PATIENCE, CONSTANCY, PERSEVERANCE, FORETHOUGHT, CONSIDERATENESS, SECRECY, ORDER, INSINUATION, ADDRESS, PRESENCE OF MIND, QUICKNESS OF CONCEPTION, FACILITY OF EXPRESSION, these, and a thousand more of the same kind, no man will ever deny to be excellencies and perfections. As their merit consists in their tendency to serve the person, possessed of them, without any magnificent claim to public and social desert, we are the less jealous of their pretensions, and readily admit them into the catalogue of laudable qualities. We are not sensible that, by this concession, we have paved the way for all the other moral excellencies, and cannot consistently hesitate any longer, with regard to disinterested benevolence, patriotism, and humanity.

It seems, indeed, certain, that first appearances are here, as usual, extremely deceitful, and that it is more difficult, in a speculative way, to resolve into self-love the merit which we ascribe to the selfish virtues above mentioned, than that even of the social virtues, justice and beneficence. For this latter purpose, we need but say, that whatever conduct promotes the good of the community is loved, praised, and esteemed by the community, on account of that utility and interest, of which every one partakes; and though this affection and regard be, in reality, gratitude, not self-love, yet a distinction, even of this obvious nature, may not readily be made by superficial reasoners; and there is room, at least, to support the cavil and dispute for a moment. But as qualities, which tend only to the utility of their possessor, without any reference to us, or to the community, are yet esteemed and valued; by what theory or system can we account for this sentiment from self-love, or deduce it from that favourite origin? There seems here a necessity for confessing that the happiness and misery of others are not spectacles entirely indifferent to us; but that the view of the former, whether in its causes or effects, like sunshine or the prospect of well-cultivated plains (to carry our pretensions no higher), communicates a secret joy and satisfaction; the appearance of the latter, like a lowering cloud or barren landscape, throws a melancholy damp over the imagination. And this concession being once made, the difficulty is over; and a natural unforced interpretation of the phenomena of human life will afterwards, we may hope, prevail among all speculative enquirers.

PART II.

It may not be improper, in this place, to examine the influence of bodily endowments, and of the goods of fortune, over our sentiments of regard and esteem, and to consider whether these phenomena fortify or weaken the present theory. It will naturally be expected, that the beauty of the body, as is supposed by all ancient moralists, will be similar, in some respects, to that of the mind; and that every kind of esteem, which is paid to a man, will have something similar in its origin, whether it arise from his mental endowments, or from the situation of his exterior circumstances.

It is evident, that one considerable source of BEAUTY in all animals is the advantage which they reap from the particular structure of their limbs and members, suitably to the particular manner of life, to which they are by nature destined. The just proportions of a horse, described by Xenophon and Virgil, are the same that are received at this day by our modern jockeys; because the foundation of them is the same, namely, experience of what is detrimental or useful in the animal.

Broad shoulders, a lank belly, firm joints, taper legs; all these are beautiful in our species, because signs of force and vigour. Ideas of utility and its contrary, though they do not entirely determine what is handsome or deformed, are evidently the source of a considerable part of approbation or dislike.

In ancient times, bodily strength and dexterity, being of greater USE and importance in war, was also much more esteemed and valued, than at present. Not to insist on Homer and the poets, we may observe, that historians scruple not to mention FORCE OF BODY among the other accomplishments even of Epaminondas, whom they acknowledge to be the greatest hero, statesman, and general of all the Greeks. [Footnote: CUM ALACRIBUS, SALTU; CUMM VELOCIBUS, CURSU; CUM VALIDIS RECTE CERTABATA. Sallust apud Veget.] A like praise is given to Pompey, one of the greatest of the Romans. [Footnote: Diodorus Siculus, lib. xv. It may be improper to give the character of Epaminondas, as drawn by the historian, in order to show the idea of perfect merit, which prevailed in those ages. In other illustrious men, say he, you will observe, that each possessed some one shining quality, which was the foundation of his fame: In Epaminondas all the VIRTUES are found united; force of body. eloquence of expression, vigour of mind, contempt of riches, gentleness of disposition, and what is chiefly to be regarded, courage and conduct of war.] This instance is similar to what we observed above with regard to memory.

What derision and contempt, with both sexes, attend IMPOTENCE; while the unhappy object is regarded as one deprived of so capital a pleasure in life, and at the same time, as disabled from communicating it to others. BARRENNESS in women, being also a species of INUTILITY, is a reproach, but not in the same degree: of which the reason is very obvious, according to the present theory.

There is no rule in painting or statuary more indispensible than that of balancing the figures, and placing them with the greatest exactness on their proper centre of gravity. A figure, which is not justly balanced, is ugly; because it conveys the disagreeable ideas of fall, harm, and pain.

[Footenote: All men are equally liable to pain and disease and sickness;
and may again recover health and ease. These circumstances, as they make
no distinction between one man and another, are no source of pride or
humility, regard or contempt. But comparing our own species to superior
ones, it is a very mortifying consideration, that we should all be so
liable to diseases and infirmities; and divines accordingly employ this

topic, in order to depress self-conceit and vanity. They would have more success, if the common bent of our thoughts were not perpetually turned to compare ourselves with others.

The infirmities of old age are mortifying; because a comparison with the young may take place. The king's evil is industriously concealed, because it affects others, and is often transmitted to posterity. The case is nearly the same with such diseases as convey any nauseous or frightful images; the epilepsy, for instance, ulcers, sores, scabs, &c.]

A disposition or turn of mind, which qualifies a man to rise in the world and advance his fortune, is entitled to esteem and regard, as has already been explained. It may, therefore, naturally be supposed, that the actual possession of riches and authority will have a considerable influence over these sentiments.

Let us examine any hypothesis by which we can account for the regard paid to the rich and powerful; we shall find none satisfactory, but that which derives it from the enjoyment communicated to the spectator by the images of prosperity, happiness, ease, plenty, authority, and the gratification of every appetite. Self-love, for instance, which some affect so much to consider as the source of every sentiment, is plainly insufficient for this purpose. Where no good-will or friendship appears, it is difficult to conceive on what we can found our hope of advantage from the riches of others; though we naturally respect the rich, even before they discover any such favourable disposition towards us.

We are affected with the same sentiments, when we lie so much out of the sphere of their activity, that they cannot even be supposed to possess the power of serving us. A prisoner of war, in all civilized nations, is treated with a regard suited to his condition; and riches, it is evident, go far towards fixing the condition of any person. If birth and quality enter for a share, this still affords us an argument to our present purpose. For what is it we call a man of birth, but one who is descended from a long succession of rich and powerful ancestors, and who acquires our esteem by his connexion with persons whom we esteem? His ancestors, therefore, though dead, are respected, in some measure, on account of their riches; and consequently, without any kind of expectation.

But not to go so far as prisoners of war or the dead, to find instances of this disinterested regard for riches; we may only observe, with a little attention, those phenomena which occur in common life and conversation. A man, who is himself, we shall suppose, of a competent fortune, and of no profession, being introduced to a company of strangers, naturally treats them with different degrees of respect, as he is informed of their different fortunes and conditions; though it is impossible that he can so suddenly propose, and perhaps he would not accept of, any pecuniary advantage from them. A traveller is always admitted into company, and meets with civility, in proportion as his train and equipage speak him a man of great or moderate fortune. In short, the different ranks of men are, in a great measure, regulated by riches; and that with regard to superiors as well as inferiors, strangers as well as acquaintance.

What remains, therefore, but to conclude, that, as riches are desired for ourselves only as the means of gratifying our appetites, either at present or in some imaginary future period, they beget esteem in others merely from their having that influence. This indeed is their very nature or offence: they have a direct reference to the commodities, conveniences, and pleasures of life. The bill of a banker, who is broke, or gold in a desert island, would otherwise be full as valuable. When we approach a man who is, as we say, at his ease, we are presented with the pleasing ideas of plenty, satisfaction, cleanliness, warmth; a cheerful house, elegant furniture, ready service, and whatever is desirable in meat, drink, or apparel. On the contrary, when a poor man appears, the disagreeable images of want, penury, hard labour, dirty furniture, coarse or ragged clothes, nauseous meat and distasteful liquor, immediately strike our fancy. What else do we mean by saying that one is rich, the other poor? And as regard or contempt is the natural consequence of those different situations in life, it is easily seen what additional light and evidence this throws on our preceding theory, with regard to all moral distinctions.

[Footnote: There is something extraordinary, and seemingly unaccountable in the operation of our passions, when we consider the fortune and situation of others. Very often another’s advancement and prosperity produces envy, which has a strong mixture of hatred, and arises chiefly from the comparison of ourselves with the person. At the very same time, or at least in very short intervals, we may feel the passion of respect, which is a species of affection or good-will, with a mixture of humility. On the other hand, the misfortunes of our fellows often cause pity, which has in it a strong mixture of good-will. This sentiment of pity is nearly allied to contempt, which is a species of dislike, with a mixture of pride. I only point out these phenomena, as a subject of speculation to such as are curious with regard to moral enquiries. It is sufficient for the present purpose to observe in general, that power and riches commonly cause respect, poverty and meanness contempt, though particular views and incidents may sometimes raise the passions of envy and of pity.]

A man who has cured himself of all ridiculous pre-possessions, and is fully, sincerely, and steadily convinced, from experience as well as philosophy, that the difference of fortune makes less difference in happiness than is vulgarly imagined; such a one does not measure out degrees of esteem according to the rent-rolls of his acquaintance. He may, indeed, externally pay a superior deference to the great lord above the vassal; because riches are the most convenient, being the most fixed and determinate, source of distinction. But his internal sentiments are more regulated by the personal characters of men, than by the accidental and capricious favours of fortune.

In most countries of Europe, family, that is, hereditary riches, marked with titles and symbols from the sovereign, is the chief source of distinction. In England, more regard is paid to present opulence and plenty. Each practice has its advantages and disadvantages. Where birth is respected, unactive, spiritless minds remain in haughty indolence, and dream of nothing but pedigrees and genealogies: the generous and ambitious seek honour and authority, and reputation and favour. Where riches are the chief idol, corruption, venality, rapine prevail: arts, manufactures, commerce, agriculture flourish. The former prejudice, being favourable to military virtue, is more suited to monarchies. The latter, being the chief spur to industry, agrees better with a republican government. And we accordingly find that each of these forms of government, by varying the utility of those customs, has commonly a proportionable effect on the sentiments of mankind.

SECTION VII.

OF QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEABLE TO OURSELVES.

Whoever has passed an evening with serious melancholy people, and has observed how suddenly the conversation was animated, and what sprightliness diffused itself over the countenance, discourse, and behaviour of every one, on the accession of a good-humoured, lively companion; such a one will easily allow that cheerfulness carries great merit with it, and naturally conciliates the good-will of mankind. No quality, indeed, more readily communicates itself to all around; because no one has a greater propensity to display itself, in jovial talk and pleasant entertainment. The flame spreads through the whole circle; and the most sullen and morose are often caught by it. That the melancholy hate the merry, even though Horace says it, I have some difficulty to allow; because I have always observed that, where the jollity is moderate and decent, serious people are so much the more delighted, as it dissipates the gloom with which they are commonly oppressed, and gives them an unusual enjoyment.

From this influence of cheerfulness, both to communicate itself and to engage approbation, we may perceive that there is another set of mental qualities, which, without any utility or any tendency to farther good, either of the community or of the possessor, diffuse a satisfaction on the beholders, and procure friendship and regard. Their immediate sensation, to the person possessed of them, is agreeable. Others enter into the same humour, and catch the sentiment, by a contagion or natural sympathy; and as we cannot forbear loving whatever pleases, a kindly emotion arises towards the person who communicates so much satisfaction. He is a more animating spectacle; his presence diffuses over us more serene complacency and enjoyment; our imagination, entering into his feelings and disposition, is affected in a more agreeable manner than if a melancholy, dejected, sullen, anxious temper were presented to us. Hence the affection and probation which attend the former: the aversion and disgust with which we regard the latter.

[Footnote: There is no man, who, on particular occasions, is not affected with all the disagreeable passions, fear, anger, dejection, grief, melancholy, anxiety, &c. But these, so far as they are natural, and universal, make no difference between one man and another, and can never be the object of blame. It is only when the disposition gives a PROPENSITY to any of these disagreeable passions, that they disfigure the character, and by giving uneasiness, convey the sentiment of disapprobation to the spectator.]

Few men would envy the character which Caesar gives of Cassius:

He loves no play,
As thou do'st, Anthony: he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be mov'd to smile at any thing.

Not only such men, as Caesar adds, are commonly DANGEROUS, but also, having little enjoyment within themselves, they can never become agreeable to others, or contribute to social entertainment. In all polite nations and ages, a relish for pleasure, if accompanied with temperance and decency, is esteemed a considerable merit, even in the greatest men; and becomes still more requisite in those of inferior rank and character. It is an agreeable representation, which a French writer gives of the situation of his own mind in this particular, VIRTUE I LOVE, says he, WITHOUT AUSTERITY: PLEASURE WITHOUT EFFEMINACY: AND LIFE, WITHOUT FEARING ITS END. [Footnote: 'J'aime la vertu, sans rudesse; J'aime le plaisir, sans molesse; J'aime la vie, et n'en crains point la fin.'-ST. EVREMONT.]

Who is not struck with any signal instance of greatness of mind or dignity of character; with elevation of sentiment, disdain of slavery, and with that noble pride and spirit, which arises from conscious virtue? The sublime, says Longinus, is often nothing but the echo or image of magnanimity; and where this quality appears in any one, even though a syllable be not uttered, it excites our applause and admiration; as may be observed of the famous silence of Ajax in the Odyssey, which expresses more noble disdain and resolute indignation than any language can convey [Footnote: Ca.].

WERE I Alexander, said Parmenio, I WOULD ACCEPT OF THESE OFFERS MADE BY DARIUS. SO WOULD I TOO, replied Alexander, WERE I PARMENIO. This saying is admirable, says Longinus, from a like principle. [Footnote: Idem.]

GO! cries the same hero to his soldiers, when they refused to follow him to the Indies, GO TELL YOUR COUNTRYMEN, THAT YOU LEFT Alexander COMPLETING THE CONQUEST OF THE WORLD. ‘Alexander,’ said the Prince of Conde, who always admired this passage, ‘abandoned by his soldiers, among barbarians, not yet fully subdued, felt in himself such a dignity and right of empire, that he could not believe it possible that any one would refuse to obey him. Whether in Europe or in Asia, among Greeks or Persians, all was indifferent to him: wherever he found men, he fancied he should find subjects.’

The confident of Medea in the tragedy recommends caution and submission; and enumerating all the distresses of that unfortunate heroine, asks her, what she has to support her against her numerous and implacable enemies. MYSELF, replies she; MYSELF I SAY, AND IT IS ENOUGH. Boileau justly recommends this passage as an instance of true sublime [Footnote: Reflexion 10 sur Longin.].

When Phocion, the modest, the gentle Phocion, was led to execution, he turned to one of his fellow-sufferers, who was lamenting his own hard fate, IS IT NOT GLORY ENOUGH FOR YOU, says he, THAT YOU DIE WITH PHOCION? [Footnote: Plutarch in Phoc.]

Place in opposition the picture which Tacitus draws of Vitellius, fallen from empire, prolonging his ignominy from a wretched love of life, delivered over to the merciless rabble; tossed, buffeted, and kicked about; constrained, by their holding a poinard under his chin, to raise his head, and expose himself to every contumely. What abject infamy! What low humiliation! Yet even here, says the historian, he discovered some symptoms of a mind not wholly degenerate. To a tribune, who insulted him, he replied, I AM STILL YOUR EMPEROR.

[Footnote: Tacit. hist. lib. iii. The author entering upon the narration, says, LANIATA VESTE, FOEDUM SPECACULUM DUCEBATUR, MULTIS INCREPANTIBUS, NULLO INLACRIMANTE: deformatitas exitus misericordiam abstulerat. To enter thoroughly into this method of thinking, we must make allowance for the ancient maxims, that no one ought to prolong his life after it became dishonourable; but, as he had always a right to dispose of it, it then became a duty to part with it.]

We never excuse the absolute want of spirit and dignity of character, or a proper sense of what is due to one's self, in society and the common intercourse of life. This vice constitutes what we properly call MEANNESS; when a man can submit to the basest slavery, in order to gain his ends; fawn upon those who abuse him; and degrade himself by intimacies and familiarities with undeserving inferiors. A certain degree of generous pride or self-value is so requisite, that the absence of it in the mind displeases, after the same manner as the want of a nose, eye, or any of the most material feature of the face or member of the body.

[Footnote: The absence of virtue may often be a vice; and that of the highest kind; as in the instance of ingratitude, as well as meanness. Where we expect a beauty, the disappointment gives an uneasy sensation, and produces a real deformity. An abjectness of character, likewise, is disgustful and contemptible in another view. Where a man has no sense of value in himself, we are not likely to have any higher esteem of him. And if the same person, who crouches to his superiors, is insolent to his inferiors (as often happens), this contrariety of behaviour, instead of correcting the former vice, aggravates it extremely by the addition of a vice still more odious. See Sect. VIII.]

The utility of courage, both to the public and to the person possessed of it, is an obvious foundation of merit. But to any one who duly considers of the matter, it will appear that this quality has a peculiar lustre, which it derives wholly from itself, and from that noble elevation inseparable from it. Its figure, drawn by painters and by poets, displays, in each feature, a sublimity and daring confidence; which catches the eye, engages the affections, and diffuses, by sympathy, a like sublimity of sentiment over every spectator.

Under what shining colours does Demosthenes [Footnote: De Corona.] represent Philip; where the orator apologizes for his own administration, and justifies that pertinacious love of liberty, with which he had inspired the Athenians. 'I beheld Philip,' says he, 'he with whom was your contest, resolutely, while in pursuit of empire and dominion, exposing himself to every wound; his eye gored, his neck wrested, his arm, his thigh pierced, what ever part of his body fortune should seize on, that cheerfully relinquishing; provided that, with what remained, he might live in honour and renown. And shall it be said that he, born in Pella, a place heretofore mean and ignoble, should be inspired with so high an ambition and thirst of fame: while you, Athenians, &c.' These praises excite the most lively admiration; but the views presented by the orator, carry us not, we see, beyond the hero himself, nor ever regard the future advantageous consequences of his valour.

The material temper of the Romans, inflamed by continual wars, had raised their esteem of courage so high, that, in their language, it was called VIRTUE, by way of excellence and of distinction from all other moral qualities. THE Suevi, in the opinion of Tacitus, tus, [Footnote: De moribus Germ.] DRESSED THEIR HAIR WITH A LAUDIBLE INTENT: NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF LOVING OR BEING LOVES; THEY DORNED THEMSELVES ONLY FOR THEIR ENEMIES, AND IN ORDER TO APPEAR MORE TERRIBLE. A sentiment of the historian, which would sound a little oddly in other nations and other ages.

The Scythians, according to Herodotus, [Footnote: Lib. iv.] after scalping their enemies, dressed the skin like leather, and used it as a towel; and whoever had the most of those towels was most esteemed among them. So much had martial bravery, in that nation, as well as in many others, destroyed the sentiments of humanity; a virtue surely much more useful and engaging.

It is indeed observable, that, among all uncultivated nations, who have not as yet had full experience of the advantages attending beneficence, justice, and the social virtues, courage is the predominant excellence; what is most celebrated by poets, recommended by parents and instructors, and admired by the public in general. The ethics of Homer are, in this particular, very different from those of Fenelon, his elegant imitator; and such as were well suited to an age, when one hero, as remarked by Thucydides [Lib.i.], could ask another, without offence, whether he were a robber or not. Such also very lately was the system of ethics which prevailed in many barbarous parts of Ireland; if we may credit Spencer, in his judicious account of the state of that kingdom.

[Footnote from Spencer: It is a common use, says he, amongst their gentlemen's sons, that, as soon as they are able to use their weapons, they strait gather to themselves three or four stragglers or kern, with whom wandering a while up and down idly the country, taking only meat, he at last falleth into some bad occasion, that shall be

offered; which being once made known, he is thenceforth counted a man of
worth, in whom there is courage.]

Of the same class of virtues with courage is that undisturbed philosophical tranquillity, superior to pain, sorrow, anxiety, and each assault of adverse fortune. Conscious of his own virtue, say the philosophers, the sage elevates himself above every accident of life; and securely placed in the temple of wisdom, looks down on inferior mortals engaged in pursuit of honours, riches, reputation, and every frivolous enjoyment. These pretentious, no doubt, when stretched to the utmost, are by far too magnificent for human nature. They carry, however, a grandeur with them, which seizes the spectator, and strikes him with admiration. And the nearer we can approach in practice to this sublime tranquillity and indifference (for we must distinguish it from a stupid insensibility), the more secure enjoyment shall we attain within ourselves, and the more greatness of mind shall we discover to the world. The philosophical tranquillity may, indeed, be considered only as a branch of magnanimity.

Who admires not Socrates; his perpetual serenity and contentment, amidst the greatest poverty and domestic vexations; his resolute contempt of riches, and his magnanimous care of preserving liberty, while he refused all assistance from his friends and disciples, and avoided even the dependence of an obligation? Epictetus had not so much as a door to his little house or hovel; and therefore, soon lost his iron lamp, the only furniture which he had worth taking. But resolving to disappoint all robbers for the future, he supplied its place with an earthen lamp, of which he very peacefully kept possession ever after.

Among the ancients, the heroes in philosophy, as well as those in war and patriotism, have a grandeur and force of sentiment, which astonishes our narrow souls, and is rashly rejected as extravagant and supernatural. They, in their turn, I allow, would have had equal reason to consider as romantic and incredible, the degree of humanity, clemency, order, tranquillity, and other social virtues, to which, in the administration of government, we have attained in modern times, had any one been then able to have made a fair representation of them. Such is the compensation, which nature, or rather education, has made in the distribution of excellencies and virtues, in those different ages.

The merit of benevolence, arising from its utility, and its tendency to promote the good of mankind has been already explained, and is, no doubt, the source of a CONSIDERABLE part of that esteem, which is so universally paid to it. But it will also be allowed, that the very softness and tenderness of the sentiment, its engaging endearments, its fond expressions, its delicate attentions, and all that flow of mutual confidence and regard, which enters into a warm attachment of love and friendship: it will be allowed, I say, that these feelings, being delightful in themselves, are necessarily communicated to the spectators, and melt them into the same fondness and delicacy. The tear naturally starts in our eye on the apprehension of a warm sentiment of this nature: our breast heaves, our heart is agitated, and every humane tender principle of our frame is set in motion, and gives us the purest and most satisfactory enjoyment.

When poets form descriptions of Elysian fields, where the blessed inhabitants stand in no need of each other's assistance, they yet represent them as maintaining a constant intercourse of love and friendship, and sooth our fancy with the pleasing image of these soft and gentle passions. The idea of tender tranquillity in a pastoral Arcadia is agreeable from a like principle, as has been observed above. [Footnote: Sect. v. Part 2.]

Who would live amidst perpetual wrangling, and scolding, and mutual reproaches? The roughness and harshness of these emotions disturb and displease us: we suffer by contagion and sympathy; nor can we remain indifferent spectators, even though certain that no pernicious consequences would ever follow from such angry passions.

As a certain proof that the whole merit of benevolence is not derived from its usefulness, we may observe, that in a kind way of blame, we say, a person is TOO GOOD; when he exceeds his part in society, and carries his attention for others beyond the proper bounds. In like manner, we say, a man is too HIGH-SPIRITED, TOO INTREPID, TOO INDIFFERENT ABOUT FORTUNE: reproaches, which really, at bottom, imply more esteem than many panegyrics. Being accustomed to rate the merit and demerit of characters chiefly by their useful or pernicious tendencies, we cannot forbear applying the epithet of blame, when we discover a sentiment, which rises to a degree, that is hurtful; but it may happen, at the same time, that its noble elevation, or its engaging tenderness so seizes the heart, as rather to increase our friendship and concern for the person.

[Footnote: Cheerfulness could scarce admit of blame from its excess, were it not that dissolute mirth, without a proper cause or subject, is a sure symptom and characteristic of folly, and on that account disgustful.]

The amours and attachments of Harry the IVth of France, during the civil wars of the league, frequently hurt his interest and his cause; but all the young, at least, and amorous, who can sympathize with the tender passions, will allow that this very weakness, for they will readily call it such, chiefly endears that hero, and interests them in his fortunes.

The excessive bravery and resolute inflexibility of Charles the XIIth ruined his own country, and infested all his neighbours; but have such splendour and greatness in their appearance, as strikes us with admiration; and they might, in some degree, be even approved of, if they betrayed not sometimes too evident symptoms of madness and disorder.

The Athenians pretended to the first invention of agriculture and of laws: and always valued themselves extremely on the benefit thereby procured to the whole race of mankind. They also boasted, and with reason, of their war like enterprises; particularly against those innumerable fleets and armies of Persians, which invaded Greece during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes. But though there be no comparison in point of utility, between these peaceful and military honours; yet we find, that the orators, who have writ such elaborate panegyrics on that famous city, have chiefly triumphed in displaying the warlike achievements. Lysias, Thucydides, Plato, and Isocrates discover, all of them, the same partiality; which, though condemned by calm reason and reflection, appears so natural in the mind of man.

It is observable, that the great charm of poetry consists in lively pictures of the sublime passions, magnanimity, courage, disdain of fortune; or those of the tender affections, love and friendship; which warm the heart, and diffuse over it similar sentiments and emotions. And though all kinds of passion, even the most disagreeable, such as grief and anger, are observed, when excited by poetry, to convey a satisfaction, from a mechanism of nature, not easy to be explained: Yet those more elevated or softer affections have a peculiar influence, and please from more than one cause or principle. Not to mention that they alone interest us in the fortune of the persons represented, or communicate any esteem and affection for their character.

And can it possibly be doubted, that this talent itself of poets, to move the passions, this pathetic and sublime of sentiment, is a very considerable merit; and being enhanced by its extreme rarity, may exalt the person possessed of it, above every character of the age in which he lives? The prudence, address, steadiness, and benign government of Augustus, adorned with all the splendour of his noble birth and imperial crown, render him but an unequal competitor for fame with Virgil, who lays nothing into the opposite scale but the divine beauties of his poetical genius.

The very sensibility to these beauties, or a delicacy of taste, is itself a beauty in any character; as conveying the purest, the most durable, and most innocent of all enjoyments.

These are some instances of the several species of merit, that are valued for the immediate pleasure which they communicate to the person possessed of them. No views of utility or of future beneficial consequences enter into this sentiment of approbation; yet is it of a kind similar to that other sentiment, which arises from views of a public or private utility. The same social sympathy, we may observe, or fellow-feeling with human happiness or misery, gives rise to both; and this analogy, in all the parts of the present theory, may justly be regarded as a confirmation of it.

SECTION VIII.

OF QUALITIES IMMEDIATELY AGREEABLE TO OTHERS.

[Footnote: It is the nature and, indeed, the definition of virtue, that it is A QUALITY OF THE MIND AGREEABLE TO OR APPROVED OF BY EVERY ONE WHO CONSIDERS OR CONTEMPLATES IT. But some qualities produce pleasure, because they are useful to society, or useful or agreeable to the person himself; others produce it more immediately, which is the case with the class of virtues here considered.]

AS the mutual shocks, in SOCIETY, and the oppositions of interest and self-love have constrained mankind to establish the laws of JUSTICE, in order to preserve the advantages of mutual assistance and protection: in like manner, the eternal contrarieties, in COMPANY, of men’s pride and self-conceit, have introduced the rules of Good Manners or Politeness, in order to facilitate the intercourse of minds, and an undisturbed commerce and conversation. Among well-bred people, a mutual deference is affected; contempt of others disguised; authority concealed; attention given to each in his turn; and an easy stream of conversation maintained, without vehemence, without interruption, without eagerness for victory, and without any airs of superiority. These attentions and regards are immediately AGREEABLE to others, abstracted from any consideration of utility or beneficial tendencies: they conciliate affection, promote esteem, and extremely enhance the merit of the person who regulates his behaviour by them.

Many of the forms of breeding are arbitrary and casual; but the thing expressed by them is still the same. A Spaniard goes out of his own house before his guest, to signify that he leaves him master of all. In other countries, the landlord walks out last, as a common mark of deference and regard.

But, in order to render a man perfect GOOD COMPANY, he must have Wit and Ingenuity as well as good manners. What wit is, it may not be easy to define; but it is easy surely to determine that it is a quality immediately AGREEABLE to others, and communicating, on its first appearance, a lively joy and satisfaction to every one who has any comprehension of it. The most profound metaphysics, indeed, might be employed in explaining the various kinds and species of wit; and many classes of it, which are now received on the sole testimony of taste and sentiment, might, perhaps, be resolved into more general principles. But this is sufficient for our present purpose, that it does affect taste and sentiment, and bestowing an immediate enjoyment, is a sure source of approbation and affection.

In countries where men pass most of their time in conversation, and visits, and assemblies, these COMPANIONABLE qualities, so to speak, are of high estimation, and form a chief part of personal merit. In countries where men live a more domestic life, and either are employed in business, or amuse themselves in a narrower circle of acquaintance, the more solid qualities are chiefly regarded. Thus, I have often observed, that, among the French, the first questions with regard to a stranger are, IS HE POLITE? HAS HE WIT? In our own country, the chief praise bestowed is always that of a GOOD-NATURED, SENSIBLE FELLOW.

In conversation, the lively spirit of dialogue is AGREEABLE, even to those who desire not to have any share in the discourse: hence the teller of long stories, or the pompous declaimer, is very little approved of. But most men desire likewise their turn in the conversation, and regard, with a very evil eye, that LOQUACITY which deprives them of a right they are naturally so jealous of.

There is a sort of harmless LIARS, frequently to be met with in company, who deal much in the marvellous. Their usual intention is to please and entertain; but as men are most delighted with what they conceive to be truth, these people mistake extremely the means of pleasing, and incur universal blame. Some indulgence, however, to lying or fiction is given in HUMOROUS stories; because it is there really agreeable and entertaining, and truth is not of any importance.

Eloquence, genius of all kinds, even good sense, and sound reasoning, when it rises to an eminent degree, and is employed upon subjects of any considerable dignity and nice discernment; all these endowments seem immediately agreeable, and have a merit distinct from their usefulness.

Rarity, likewise, which so much enhances the price of every thing, must set an additional value on these noble talents of the human mind.

Modesty may be understood in different senses, even abstracted from chastity, which has been already treated of. It sometimes means that tenderness and nicety of honour, that apprehension of blame, that dread of intrusion or injury towards others, that Pudor, which is the proper guardian of every kind of virtue, and a sure preservative against vice and corruption. But its most usual meaning is when it is opposed to IMPUDENCE and ARROGANCE, and expresses a diffidence of our own judgement, and a due attention and regard for others. In young men chiefly, this quality is a sure sign of good sense; and is also the certain means of augmenting that endowment, by preserving their ears open to instruction, and making them still grasp after new attainments. But it has a further charm to every spectator; by flattering every man’s vanity, and presenting the appearance of a docile pupil, who receives, with proper attention and respect, every word they utter.

Men have, in general, a much greater propensity to overvalue than undervalue themselves; notwithstanding the opinion of Aristotle [Footnote: Ethic. ad Nicomachum.]. This makes us more jealous of the excess on the former side, and causes us to regard, with a peculiar indulgence, all tendency to modesty and self-diffidence; as esteeming the danger less of falling into any vicious extreme of that nature. It is thus in countries where men’s bodies are apt to exceed in corpulency, personal beauty is placed in a much greater degree of slenderness, than in countries where that is the most usual defect. Being so often struck with instances of one species of deformity, men think they can never keep at too great a distance from it, and wish always to have a leaning to the opposite side. In like manner, were the door opened to self-praise, and were Montaigne’s maxim observed, that one should say as frankly, I HAVE SENSE, I HAVE LEARNING, I HAVE COURAGE, BEAUTY, OR WIT, as it is sure we often think so; were this the case, I say, every one is sensible that such a flood of impertinence would break in upon us, as would render society wholly intolerable. For this reason custom has established it as a rule, in common societies, that men should not indulge themselves in self-praise, or even speak much of themselves; and it is only among intimate friends or people of very manly behaviour, that one is allowed to do himself justice. Nobody finds fault with Maurice, Prince of Orange, for his reply to one who asked him, whom he esteemed the first general of the age, THE MARQUIS OF SPINOLA, said he, IS THE SECOND. Though it is observable, that the self-praise implied is here better implied, than if it had been directly expressed, without any cover or disguise.

He must be a very superficial thinker, who imagines that all instances of mutual deference are to be understood in earnest, and that a man would be more esteemable for being ignorant of his own merits and accomplishments. A small bias towards modesty, even in the internal sentiment, is favourably regarded, especially in young people; and a strong bias is required in the outward behaviour; but this excludes not a noble pride and spirit, which may openly display itself in its full extent, when one lies under calumny or oppression of any kind. The generous contumacy of Socrates, as Cicero calls it, has been highly celebrated in all ages; and when joined to the usual modesty of his behaviour, forms a shining character. Iphicrates, the Athenian, being accused of betraying the interests of his country, asked his accuser, WOULD YOU, says he, HAVE, ON A LIKE OCCASION, BEEN GUILTY OF THAT CRIME? BY NO MEANS, replied the other. AND CAN YOU THEN IMAGINE, cried the hero, that Iphicrates WOULD BE GUILTY? [Footnote: Quinctil. lib. v. ca.] — In short, a generous spirit and self-value, well founded, decently disguised, and courageously supported under distress and calumny, is a great excellency, and seems to derive its merit from the noble elevation of its sentiment, or its immediate agreeableness to its possessor. In ordinary characters, we approve of a bias towards modesty, which is a quality immediately agreeable to others: the vicious excess of the former virtue, namely, insolence or haughtiness, is immediately disagreeable to others; the excess of the latter is so to the possessor. Thus are the boundaries of these duties adjusted.

A desire of fame, reputation, or a character with others, is so far from being blameable, that it seems inseparable from virtue, genius, capacity, and a generous or noble disposition. An attention even to trivial matters, in order to please, is also expected and demanded by society; and no one is surprised, if he find a man in company to observe a greater elegance of dress and more pleasant flow of conversation, than when he passes his time at home, and with his own family. Wherein, then, consists Vanity, which is so justly regarded as a fault or imperfection. It seems to consist chiefly in such an intemperate display of our advantages, honours, and accomplishments; in such an importunate and open demand of praise and admiration, as is offensive to others, and encroaches too far on their secret vanity and ambition. It is besides a sure symptom of the want of true dignity and elevation of mind, which is so great an ornament in any character. For why that impatient desire of applause; as if you were not justly entitled to it, and might not reasonably expect that it would for ever at tend you? Why so anxious to inform us of the great company which you have kept; the obliging things which were said to you; the honours, the distinctions which you met with; as if these were not things of course, and what we could readily, of ourselves, have imagined, without being told of them?

Decency, or a proper regard to age, sex, character, and station in the world, may be ranked among the qualities which are immediately agreeable to others, and which, by that means, acquire praise and approbation. An effeminate behaviour in a man, a rough manner in a woman; these are ugly because unsuitable to each character, and different from the qualities which we expect in the sexes. It is as if a tragedy abounded in comic beauties, or a comedy in tragic. The disproportions hurt the eye, and convey a disagreeable sentiment to the spectators, the source of blame and disapprobation. This is that INDECORUM, which is explained so much at large by Cicero in his Offices.

Among the other virtues, we may also give Cleanliness a place; since it naturally renders us agreeable to others, and is no inconsiderable source of love and affection. No one will deny, that a negligence in this particular is a fault; and as faults are nothing but smaller vices, and this fault can have no other origin than the uneasy sensation which it excites in others; we may, in this instance, seemingly so trivial, clearly discover the origin of moral distinctions, about which the learned have involved themselves in such mazes of perplexity and error.

But besides all the AGREEABLE qualities, the origin of whose beauty we can, in some degree, explain and account for, there still remains something mysterious and inexplicable, which conveys an immediate satisfaction to the spectator, but how, or why, or for what reason, he cannot pretend to determine. There is a manner, a grace, an ease, a genteelness, an I-know-not-what, which some men possess above others, which is very different from external beauty and comeliness, and which, however, catches our affection almost as suddenly and powerfully. And though this MANNER be chiefly talked of in the passion between the sexes, where the concealed magic is easily explained, yet surely much of it prevails in all our estimation of characters, and forms no inconsiderable part of personal merit. This class of accomplishments, therefore, must be trusted entirely to the blind, but sure testimony of taste and sentiment; and must be considered as a part of ethics, left by nature to baffle all the pride of philosophy, and make her sensible of her narrow boundaries and slender acquisitions.

We approve of another, because of his wit, politeness, modesty, decency, or any agreeable quality which he possesses; although he be not of our acquaintance, nor has ever given us any entertainment, by means of these accomplishments. The idea, which we form of their effect on his acquaintance, has an agreeable influence on our imagination, and gives us the sentiment of approbation. This principle enters into all the judgements which we form concerning manners and characters.

SECTION IX. CONCLUSION.

PART I.

IT may justly appear surprising that any man in so late an age, should find it requisite to prove, by elaborate reasoning, that Personal Merit consists altogether in the possession of mental qualities, USEFUL or AGREEABLE to the PERSON HIMSELF or to OTHERS. It might be expected that this principle would have occurred even to the first rude, unpractised enquirers concerning morals, and been received from its own evidence, without any argument or disputation. Whatever is valuable in any kind, so naturally classes itself under the division of USEFUL or AGREEABLE, the UTILE or the DULCE, that it is not easy to imagine why we should ever seek further, or consider the question as a matter of nice research or inquiry. And as every thing useful or agreeable must possess these qualities with regard either to the PERSON HIMSELF or to OTHERS, the complete delineation or description of merit seems to be performed as naturally as a shadow is cast by the sun, or an image is reflected upon water. If the ground, on which the shadow is cast, be not broken and uneven; nor the surface from which the image is reflected, disturbed and confused; a just figure is immediately presented, without any art or attention. And it seems a reasonable presumption, that systems and hypotheses have perverted our natural understanding, when a theory, so simple and obvious, could so long have escaped the most elaborate examination.

But however the case may have fared with philosophy, in common life these principles are still implicitly maintained; nor is any other topic of praise or blame ever recurred to, when we employ any panegyric or satire, any applause or censure of human action and behaviour. If we observe men, in every intercourse of business or pleasure, in every discourse and conversation, we shall find them nowhere, except the schools, at any loss upon this subject. What so natural, for instance, as the following dialogue? You are very happy, we shall suppose one to say, addressing himself to another, that you have given your daughter to Cleanthes. He is a man of honour and humanity. Every one, who has any intercourse with him, is sure of FAIR and KIND treatment. [Footnote: Qualities useful to others.] I congratulate you too, says another, on the promising expectations of this son-in-law; whose assiduous application to the study of the laws, whose quick penetration and early knowledge both of men and business, prognosticate the greatest honours and advancement. [Footnote: Qualities useful to the person himself.] You surprise me, replies a third, when you talk of Cleanthes as a man of business and application. I met him lately in a circle of the gayest company, and he was the very life and soul of our conversation: so much wit with good manners; so much gallantry without affectation; so much ingenious knowledge so genteelly delivered, I have never before observed in any one. [Footnote: Qualities immediately agreeable to others,] You would admire him still more, says a fourth, if you knew him more familiarly. That cheerfulness, which you might remark in him, is not a sudden flash struck out by company: it runs through the whole tenor of his life, and preserves a perpetual serenity on his countenance, and tranquillity in his soul. He has met with severe trials, misfortunes as well as dangers; and by his greatness of mind, was still superior to all of them [Footnote: Qualities immediately agreeable to the person himself]. The image, gentlemen, which you have here delineated of Cleanthes, cried I, is that of accomplished merit. Each of you has given a stroke of the pencil to his figure; and you have unawares exceeded all the pictures drawn by Gratian or Castiglione. A philosopher might select this character as a model of perfect virtue.

And as every quality which is useful or agreeable to ourselves or others is, in common life, allowed to be a part of personal merit; so no other will ever be received, where men judge of things by their natural, unprejudiced reason, without the delusive glosses of superstition and false religion. Celibacy, fasting, penance, mortification, self-denial, humility, silence, solitude, and the whole train of monkish virtues; for what reason are they everywhere rejected by men of sense, but because they serve to no manner of purpose; neither advance a man’s fortune in the world, nor render him a more valuable member of society; neither qualify him for the entertainment of company, nor increase his power of self-enjoyment? We observe, on the contrary, that they cross all these desirable ends; stupify the understanding and harden the heart, obscure the fancy and sour the temper. We justly, therefore, transfer them to the opposite column, and place them in the catalogue of vices; nor has any superstition force sufficient among men of the world, to pervert entirely these natural sentiments. A gloomy, hair-brained enthusiast, after his death, may have a place in the calendar; but will scarcely ever be admitted, when alive, into intimacy and society, except by those who are as delirious and dismal as himself.

It seems a happiness in the present theory, that it enters not into that vulgar dispute concerning the DEGREES of benevolence or self-love, which prevail in human nature; a dispute which is never likely to have any issue, both because men, who have taken part, are not easily convinced, and because the phenomena, which can be produced on either side, are so dispersed, so uncertain, and subject to so many interpretations, that it is scarcely possible accurately to compare them, or draw from them any determinate inference or conclusion. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if it be allowed, what surely, without the greatest absurdity cannot be disputed, that there is some benevolence, however small, infused into our bosom; some spark of friendship for human kind; some particle of the dove kneaded into our frame, along with the elements of the wolf and serpent. Let these generous sentiments be supposed ever so weak; let them be insufficient to move even a hand or finger of our body, they must still direct the determinations of our mind, and where everything else is equal, produce a cool preference of what is useful and serviceable to mankind, above what is pernicious and dangerous. A MORAL DISTINCTION, therefore, immediately arises; a general sentiment of blame and approbation; a tendency, however faint, to the objects of the one, and a proportionable aversion to those of the other. Nor will those reasoners, who so earnestly maintain the predominant selfishness of human kind, be any wise scandalized at hearing of the weak sentiments of virtue implanted in our nature. On the contrary, they are found as ready to maintain the one tenet as the other; and their spirit of satire (for such it appears, rather than of corruption) naturally gives rise to both opinions; which have, indeed, a great and almost an indissoluble connexion together.

Avarice, ambition, vanity, and all passions vulgarly, though improperly, comprised under the denomination of SELF-LOVE, are here excluded from our theory concerning the origin of morals, not because they are too weak, but because they have not a proper direction for that purpose. The notion of morals implies some sentiment common to all mankind, which recommends the same object to general approbation, and makes every man, or most men, agree in the same opinion or decision concerning it. It also implies some sentiment, so universal and comprehensive as to extend to all mankind, and render the actions and conduct, even of the persons the most remote, an object of applause or censure, according as they agree or disagree with that rule of right which is established. These two requisite circumstances belong alone to the sentiment of humanity here insisted on. The other passions produce in every breast, many strong sentiments of desire and aversion, affection and hatred; but these neither are felt so much in common, nor are so comprehensive, as to be the foundation of any general system and established theory of blame or approbation.

When a man denominates another his ENEMY, his RIVAL, his ANTAGONIST, his ADVERSARY, he is understood to speak the language of self-love, and to express sentiments, peculiar to himself, and arising from his particular circumstances and situation. But when he bestows on any man the epithets of VICIOUS or ODIOUS or DEPRAVED, he then speaks another language, and expresses sentiments, in which he expects all his audience are to concur with him. He must here, therefore, depart from his private and particular situation, and must choose a point of view, common to him with others; he must move some universal principle of the human frame, and touch a string to which all mankind have an accord and symphony. If he mean, therefore, to express that this man possesses qualities, whose tendency is pernicious to society, he has chosen this common point of view, and has touched the principle of humanity, in which every man, in some degree, concurs. While the human heart is compounded of the same elements as at present, it will never be wholly indifferent to public good, nor entirely unaffected with the tendency of characters and manners. And though this affection of humanity may not generally be esteemed so strong as vanity or ambition, yet, being common to all men, it can alone be the foundation of morals, or of any-general system of blame or praise. One man’s ambition is not another’s ambition, nor will the same event or object satisfy both; but the humanity of one man is the humanity of every one, and the same object touches this passion in all human creatures.

But the sentiments, which arise from humanity, are not only the same in all human creatures, and produce the same approbation or censure; but they also comprehend all human creatures; nor is there any one whose conduct or character is not, by their means, an object to every one of censure or approbation. On the contrary, those other passions, commonly denominated selfish, both produce different sentiments in each individual, according to his particular situation; and also contemplate the greater part of mankind with the utmost indifference and unconcern. Whoever has a high regard and esteem for me flatters my vanity; whoever expresses contempt mortifies and displeases me; but as my name is known but to a small part of mankind, there are few who come within the sphere of this passion, or excite, on its account, either my affection or disgust. But if you represent a tyrannical, insolent, or barbarous behaviour, in any country or in any age of the world, I soon carry my eye to the pernicious tendency of such a conduct, and feel the sentiment of repugnance and displeasure towards it. No character can be so remote as to be, in this light, wholly indifferent to me. What is beneficial to society or to the person himself must still be preferred. And every quality or action, of every human being, must, by this means, be ranked under some class or denomination, expressive of general censure or applause.

What more, therefore, can we ask to distinguish the sentiments, dependent on humanity, from those connected with any other passion, or to satisfy us, why the former are the origin of morals, not the latter? Whatever conduct gains my approbation, by touching my humanity, procures also the applause of all mankind, by affecting the same principle in them; but what serves my avarice or ambition pleases these passions in me alone, and affects not the avarice and ambition of the rest of mankind. There is no circumstance of conduct in any man, provided it have a beneficial tendency, that is not agreeable to my humanity, however remote the person; but every man, so far removed as neither to cross nor serve my avarice and ambition, is regarded as wholly indifferent by those passions. The distinction, therefore, between these species of sentiment being so great and evident, language must soon be moulded upon it, and must invent a peculiar set of terms, in order to express those universal sentiments of censure or approbation, which arise from humanity, or from views of general usefulness and its contrary. Virtue and Vice become then known; morals are recognized; certain general ideas are framed of human conduct and behaviour; such measures are expected from men in such situations. This action is determined to be conformable to our abstract rule; that other, contrary. And by such universal principles are the particular sentiments of self-love frequently controlled and limited.

[Footnote: It seems certain, both from reason and experience,
that a rude, untaught savage regulates chiefly his love and hatred by

the ideas of private utility and injury, and has but faint conceptions of a general rule or system of behaviour. The man who stands opposite to him in battle, he hates heartedly, not only for the present moment, which is almost unavoidable, but for ever after; nor is he satisfied without the most extreme punishment and vengeance. But we, accustomed to society, and to more enlarged reflections, consider, that this man is serving his own country and community; that any man, in the same situation, would do the same; that we ourselves, in like circumstances, observe a like conduct; that; in general, human society is best supported on such maxims: and by these suppositions and views, we correct, in some measure, our ruder and narrower positions. And though much of our friendship and enemity be still regulated by private considerations of benefit and harm, we pay, at least, this homage to general rules, which we are accustomed to respect, that we commonly perver our adversary’s conduct, by imputing malice or injustice to him, in order to give vent to those passions, which arise from self-love and private interest. When the heart is full of rage, it never wants pretences of this nature; though sometimes as frivolous, as those from which Horace, being almost crushed by the fall of a tree, effects to accuse of parricide the first planter of it.]

From instances of popular tumults, seditions, factions, panics, and of all passions, which are shared with a multitude, we may learn the influence of society in exciting and supporting any emotion; while the most ungovernable disorders are raised, we find, by that means, from the slightest and most frivolous occasions. Solon was no very cruel, though, perhaps, an unjust legislator, who punished neuters in civil wars; and few, I believe, would, in such cases, incur the penalty, were their affection and discourse allowed sufficient to absolve them. No selfishness, and scarce any philosophy, have there force sufficient to support a total coolness and indifference; and he must be more or less than man, who kindles not in the common blaze. What wonder then, that moral sentiments are found of such influence in life; though springing from principles, which may appear, at first sight, somewhat small and delicate? But these principles, we must remark, are social and universal; they form, in a manner, the PARTY of humankind against vice or disorder, its common enemy. And as the benevolent concern for others is diffused, in a greater or less degree, over all men, and is the same in all, it occurs more frequently in discourse, is cherished by society and conversation, and the blame and approbation, consequent on it, are thereby roused from that lethargy into which they are probably lulled, in solitary and uncultivated nature. Other passions, though perhaps originally stronger, yet being selfish and private, are often overpowered by its force, and yield the dominion of our breast to those social and public principles.

Another spring of our constitution, that brings a great addition of force to moral sentiments, is the love of fame; which rules, with such uncontrolled authority, in all generous minds, and is often the grand object of all their designs and undertakings. By our continual and earnest pursuit of a character, a name, a reputation in the world, we bring our own deportment and conduct frequently in review, and consider how they appear in the eyes of those who approach and regard us. This constant habit of surveying ourselves, as it were, in reflection, keeps alive all the sentiments of right and wrong, and begets, in noble natures, a certain reverence for themselves as well as others, which is the surest guardian of every virtue. The animal conveniencies and pleasures sink gradually in their value; while every inward beauty and moral grace is studiously acquired, and the mind is accomplished in every perfection, which can adorn or embellish a rational creature.

Here is the most perfect morality with which we are acquainted: here is displayed the force of many sympathies. Our moral sentiment is itself a feeling chiefly of that nature, and our regard to a character with others seems to arise only from a care of preserving a character with ourselves; and in order to attain this end, we find it necessary to prop our tottering judgement on the correspondent approbation of mankind.

But, that we may accommodate matters, and remove if possible every difficulty, let us allow all these reasonings to be false. Let us allow that, when we resolve the pleasure, which arises from views of utility, into the sentiments of humanity and sympathy, we have embraced a wrong hypothesis. Let us confess it necessary to find some other explication of that applause, which is paid to objects, whether inanimate, animate, or rational, if they have a tendency to promote the welfare and advantage of mankind. However difficult it be to conceive that an object is approved of on account of its tendency to a certain end, while the end itself is totally indifferent: let us swallow this absurdity, and consider what are the consequences. The preceding delineation or definition of Personal Merit must still retain its evidence and authority: it must still be allowed that every quality of the mind, which is USEFUL or AGREEABLE to the PERSON HIMSELF or to OTHERS, communicates a pleasure to the spectator, engages his esteem, and is admitted under the honourable denomination of virtue or merit. Are not justice, fidelity, honour, veracity, allegiance, chastity, esteemed solely on account of their tendency to promote the good of society? Is not that tendency inseparable from humanity, benevolence, lenity, generosity, gratitude, moderation, tenderness, friendship, and all the other social virtues? Can it possibly be doubted that industry, discretion, frugality, secrecy, order, perseverance, forethought, judgement, and this whole class of virtues and accomplishments, of which many pages would not contain the catalogue; can it be doubted, I say, that the tendency of these qualities to promote the interest and happiness of their possessor, is the sole foundation of their merit? Who can dispute that a mind, which supports a perpetual serenity and cheerfulness, a noble dignity and undaunted spirit, a tender affection and good-will to all around; as it has more enjoyment within itself, is also a more animating and rejoicing spectacle, than if dejected with melancholy, tormented with anxiety, irritated with rage, or sunk into the most abject baseness and degeneracy? And as to the qualities, immediately AGREEABLE to OTHERS, they speak sufficiently for themselves; and he must be unhappy, indeed, either in his own temper, or in his situation and company, who has never perceived the charms of a facetious wit or flowing affability, of a delicate modesty or decent genteelness of address and manner.

I am sensible, that nothing can be more unphilosophical than to be positive or dogmatical on any subject; and that, even if excessive scepticism could be maintained, it would not be more destructive to all just reasoning and inquiry. I am convinced that, where men are the most sure and arrogant, they are commonly the most mistaken, and have there given reins to passion, without that proper deliberation and suspense, which can alone secure them from the grossest absurdities. Yet, I must confess, that this enumeration puts the matter in so strong a light, that I cannot, at PRESENT, be more assured of any truth, which I learn from reasoning and argument, than that personal merit consists entirely in the usefulness or agreeableness of qualities to the person himself possessed of them, or to others, who have any intercourse with him. But when I reflect that, though the bulk and figure of the earth have been measured and delineated, though the motions of the tides have been accounted for, the order and economy of the heavenly bodies subjected to their proper laws, and Infinite itself reduced to calculation; yet men still dispute concerning the foundation of their moral duties. When I reflect on this, I say, I fall back into diffidence and scepticism, and suspect that an hypothesis, so obvious, had it been a true one, would, long ere now, have been received by the unanimous suffrage and consent of mankind.

PART II.

Having explained the moral APPROBATION attending merit or virtue, there remains nothing but briefly to consider our interested OBLIGATION to it, and to inquire whether every man, who has any regard to his own happiness and welfare, will not best find his account in the practice of every moral duty. If this can be clearly ascertained from the foregoing theory, we shall have the satisfaction to reflect, that we have advanced principles, which not only, it is hoped, will stand the test of reasoning and inquiry, but may contribute to the amendment of men’s lives, and their improvement in morality and social virtue. And though the philosophical truth of any proposition by no means depends on its tendency to promote the interests of society; yet a man has but a bad grace, who delivers a theory, however true, which, he must confess, leads to a practice dangerous and pernicious. Why rake into those corners of nature which spread a nuisance all around? Why dig up the pestilence from the pit in which it is buried? The ingenuity of your researches may be admired, but your systems will be detested; and mankind will agree, if they cannot refute them, to sink them, at least, in eternal silence and oblivion. Truths which are pernicious to society, if any such there be, will yield to errors which are salutary and ADVANTAGEOUS.

But what philosophical truths can be more advantageous to society, than those here delivered, which represent virtue in all her genuine and most engaging charms, and makes us approach her with ease, familiarity, and affection? The dismal dress falls off, with which many divines, and some philosophers, have covered her; and nothing appears but gentleness, humanity, beneficence, affability; nay, even at proper intervals, play, frolic, and gaiety. She talks not of useless austerities and rigours, suffering and self-denial. She declares that her sole purpose is to make her votaries and all mankind, during every instant of their existence, if possible, cheerful and happy; nor does she ever willingly part with any pleasure but in hopes of ample compensation in some other period of their lives. The sole trouble which she demands, is that of just calculation, and a steady preference of the greater happiness. And if any austere pretenders approach her, enemies to joy and pleasure, she either rejects them as hypocrites and deceivers; or, if she admit them in her train, they are ranked, however, among the least favoured of her votaries.

And, indeed, to drop all figurative expression, what hopes can we ever have of engaging mankind to a practice which we confess full of austerity and rigour? Or what theory of morals can ever serve any useful purpose, unless it can show, by a particular detail, that all the duties which it recommends, are also the true interest of each individual? The peculiar advantage of the foregoing system seems to be, that it furnishes proper mediums for that purpose.

That the virtues which are immediately USEFUL or AGREEABLE to the person possessed of them, are desirable in a view to self-interest, it would surely be superfluous to prove. Moralists, indeed, may spare themselves all the pains which they often take in recommending these duties. To what purpose collect arguments to evince that temperance is advantageous, and the excesses of pleasure hurtful, when it appears that these excesses are only denominated such, because they are hurtful; and that, if the unlimited use of strong liquors, for instance, no more impaired health or the faculties of mind and body than the use of air or water, it would not be a whit more vicious or blameable?

It seems equally superfluous to prove, that the COMPANIONABLE virtues of good manners and wit, decency and genteelness, are more desirable than the contrary qualities. Vanity alone, without any other consideration, is a sufficient motive to make us wish for the possession of these accomplishments. No man was ever willingly deficient in this particular. All our failures here proceed from bad education, want of capacity, or a perverse and unpliable disposition. Would you have your company coveted, admired, followed; rather than hated, despised, avoided? Can any one seriously deliberate in the case? As no enjoyment is sincere, without some reference to company and society; so no society can be agreeable, or even tolerable, where a man feels his presence unwelcome, and discovers all around him symptoms of disgust and aversion.

But why, in the greater society or confederacy of mankind, should not the case be the same as in particular clubs and companies? Why is it more doubtful, that the enlarged virtues of humanity, generosity, beneficence, are desirable with a view of happiness and self-interest, than the limited endowments of ingenuity and politeness? Are we apprehensive lest those social affections interfere, in a greater and more immediate degree than any other pursuits, with private utility, and cannot be gratified, without some important sacrifice of honour and advantage? If so, we are but ill-instructed in the nature of the human passions, and are more influenced by verbal distinctions than by real differences.

Whatever contradiction may vulgarly be supposed between the SELFISH and SOCIAL sentiments or dispositions, they are really no more opposite than selfish and ambitious, selfish and revengeful, selfish and vain. It is requisite that there be an original propensity of some kind, in order to be a basis to self-love, by giving a relish to the objects of its pursuit; and none more fit for this purpose than benevolence or humanity. The goods of fortune are spent in one gratification or another: the miser who accumulates his annual income, and lends it out at interest, has really spent it in the gratification of his avarice. And it would be difficult to show why a man is more a loser by a generous action, than by any other method of expense; since the utmost which he can attain by the most elaborate selfishness, is the indulgence of some affection.

Now if life, without passion, must be altogether insipid and tiresome; let a man suppose that he has full power of modelling his own disposition, and let him deliberate what appetite or desire he would choose for the foundation of his happiness and enjoyment. Every affection, he would observe, when gratified by success, gives a satisfaction proportioned to its force and violence; but besides this advantage, common to all, the immediate feeling of benevolence and friendship, humanity and kindness, is sweet, smooth, tender, and agreeable, independent of all fortune and accidents. These virtues are besides attended with a pleasing consciousness or remembrance, and keep us in humour with ourselves as well as others; while we retain the agreeable reflection of having done our part towards mankind and society. And though all men show a jealousy of our success in the pursuits of avarice and ambition; yet are we almost sure of their good-will and good wishes, so long as we persevere in the paths of virtue, and employ ourselves in the execution of generous plans and purposes. What other passion is there where we shall find so many advantages united; an agreeable sentiment, a pleasing consciousness, a good reputation? But of these truths, we may observe, men are, of themselves, pretty much convinced; nor are they deficient in their duty to society, because they would not wish to be generous, friendly, and humane; but because they do not feel themselves such.

Treating vice with the greatest candour, and making it all possible concessions, we must acknowledge that there is not, in any instance, the smallest pretext for giving it the preference above virtue, with a view of self-interest; except, perhaps, in the case of justice, where a man, taking things in a certain light, may often seem to be a loser by his integrity. And though it is allowed that, without a regard to property, no society could subsist; yet according to the imperfect way in which human affairs are conducted, a sensible knave, in particular incidents, may think that an act of iniquity or infidelity will make a considerable addition to his fortune, without causing any considerable breach in the social union and confederacy. That HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY, may be a good general rule, but is liable to many exceptions; and he, it may perhaps be thought, conducts himself with most wisdom, who observes the general rule, and takes advantage of all the exceptions. I must confess that, if a man think that this reasoning much requires an answer, it would be a little difficult to find any which will to him appear satisfactory and convincing. If his heart rebel not against such pernicious maxims, if he feel no reluctance to the thoughts of villainy or baseness, he has indeed lost a considerable motive to virtue; and we may expect that this practice will be answerable to his speculation. But in all ingenuous natures, the antipathy to treachery and roguery is too strong to be counter-balanced by any views of profit or pecuniary advantage. Inward peace of mind, consciousness of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man, who feels the importance of them.

Such a one has, besides, the frequent satisfaction of seeing knaves, with all their pretended cunning and abilities, betrayed by their own maxims; and while they purpose to cheat with moderation and secrecy, a tempting incident occurs, nature is frail, and they give into the snare; whence they can never extricate themselves, without a total loss of reputation, and the forfeiture of all future trust and confidence with mankind.

But were they ever so secret and successful, the honest man, if he has any tincture of philosophy, or even common observation and reflection, will discover that they themselves are, in the end, the greatest dupes, and have sacrificed the invaluable enjoyment of a character, with themselves at least, for the acquisition of worthless toys and gewgaws. How little is requisite to supply the necessities of nature? And in a view to pleasure, what comparison between the unbought satisfaction of conversation, society, study, even health and the common beauties of nature, but above all the peaceful reflection on one's own conduct; what comparison, I say, between these and the feverish, empty amusements of luxury and expense? These natural pleasures, indeed, are really without price; both because they are below all price in their attainment, and above it in their enjoyment.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I. CONCERNING MORAL SENTIMENT

IF the foregoing hypothesis be received, it will now be easy for us to determine the question first started, [FOOTNOTE: Sect. 1.] concerning the general principles of morals; and though we postponed the decision of that question, lest it should then involve us in intricate speculations, which are unfit for moral discourses, we may resume it at present, and examine how far either REASON or SENTIMENT enters into all decisions of praise or censure.

One principal foundation of moral praise being supposed to lie in the usefulness of any quality or action, it is evident that REASON must enter for a considerable share in all decisions of this kind; since nothing but that faculty can instruct us in the tendency of qualities and actions, and point out their beneficial consequences to society and to their possessor. In many cases this is an affair liable to great controversy: doubts may arise; opposite interests may occur; and a preference must be given to one side, from very nice views, and a small overbalance of utility. This is particularly remarkable in questions with regard to justice; as is, indeed, natural to suppose, from that species of utility which attends this virtue [Footnote: See App. II.]. Were every single instance of justice, like that of benevolence, useful to society; this would be a more simple state of the case, and seldom liable to great controversy. But as single instances of justice are often pernicious in their first and immediate tendency, and as the advantage to society results only from the observance of the general rule, and from the concurrence and combination of several persons in the same equitable conduct; the case here becomes more intricate and involved. The various circumstances of society; the various consequences of any practice; the various interests which may be proposed; these, on many occasions, are doubtful, and subject to great discussion and inquiry. The object of municipal laws is to fix all the questions with regard to justice: the debates of civilians; the reflections of politicians; the precedents of history and public records, are all directed to the same purpose. And a very accurate REASON or JUDGEMENT is often requisite, to give the true determination, amidst such intricate doubts arising from obscure or opposite utilities.

But though reason, when fully assisted and improved, be sufficient to instruct us in the pernicious or useful tendency of qualities and actions; it is not alone sufficient to produce any moral blame or approbation. Utility is only a tendency to a certain end; and were the end totally indifferent to us, we should feel the same indifference towards the means. It is requisite a SENTIMENT should here display itself, in order to give a preference to the useful above the pernicious tendencies. This SENTIMENT can be no other than a feeling for the happiness of mankind, and a resentment of their misery; since these are the different ends which virtue and vice have a tendency to promote. Here therefore REASON instructs us in the several tendencies of actions, and HUMANITY makes a distinction in favour of those which are useful and beneficial.

This partition between the faculties of understanding and sentiment, in all moral decisions, seems clear from the preceding hypothesis. But I shall suppose that hypothesis false: it will then be requisite to look out for some other theory that may be satisfactory; and I dare venture to affirm that none such will ever be found, so long as we suppose reason to be the sole source of morals. To prove this, it will be proper to weigh the five following considerations.

I. It is easy for a false hypothesis to maintain some appearance of truth, while it keeps wholly in generals, makes use of undefined terms, and employs comparisons, instead of instances. This is particularly remarkable in that philosophy, which ascribes the discernment of all moral distinctions to reason alone, without the concurrence of sentiment. It is impossible that, in any particular instance, this hypothesis can so much as be rendered intelligible, whatever specious figure it may make in general declamations and discourses. Examine the crime of INGRATITUDE, for instance; which has place, wherever we observe good-will, expressed and known, together with good-offices performed, on the one side, and a return of ill-will or indifference, with ill-offices or neglect on the other: anatomize all these circumstances, and examine, by your reason alone, in what consists the demerit or blame. You never will come to any issue or conclusion.

Reason judges either of MATTER OF FACT or of RELATIONS. Enquire then, first, where is that matter of fact which we here call crime; point it out; determine the time of its existence; describe its essence or nature; explain the sense or faculty to which it discovers itself. It resides in the mind of the person who is ungrateful. He must, therefore, feel it, and be conscious of it. But nothing is there, except the passion of ill-will or absolute indifference. You cannot say that these, of themselves, always, and in all circumstances, are crimes. No, they are only crimes when directed towards persons who have before expressed and displayed good-will towards us. Consequently, we may infer, that the crime of ingratitude is not any particular individual FACT; but arises from a complication of circumstances, which, being presented to the spectator, excites the SENTIMENT of blame, by the particular structure and fabric of his mind.

This representation, you say, is false. Crime, indeed, consists not in a particular FACT, of whose reality we are assured by reason; but it consists in certain MORAL RELATIONS, discovered by reason, in the same manner as we discover by reason the truths of geometry or algebra. But what are the relations, I ask, of which you here talk? In the case stated above, I see first good-will and good-offices in one person; then ill-will and ill-offices in the other. Between these, there is a relation of CONTARIETY. Does the crime consist in that relation? But suppose a person bore me ill-will or did me ill-offices; and I, in return, were indifferent towards him, or did him good offices. Here is the same relation of CONTRARIETY; and yet my conduct is often highly laudable. Twist and turn this matter as much as you will, you can never rest the morality on relation; but must have recourse to the decisions of sentiment.

When it is affirmed that two and three are equal to the half of ten, this relation of equality I understand perfectly. I conceive, that if ten be divided into two parts, of which one has as many units as the other; and if any of these parts be compared to two added to three, it will contain as many units as that compound number. But when you draw thence a comparison to moral relations, I own that I am altogether at a loss to understand you. A moral action, a crime, such as ingratitude, is a complicated object. Does the morality consist in the relation of its parts to each other? How? After what manner? Specify the relation: be more particular and explicit in your propositions, and you will easily see their falsehood.

No, say you, the morality consists in the relation of actions to the rule of right; and they are denominated good or ill, according as they agree or disagree with it. What then is this rule of right? In what does it consist? How is it determined? By reason, you say, which examines the moral relations of actions. So that moral relations are determined by the comparison of action to a rule. And that rule is determined by considering the moral relations of objects. Is not this fine reasoning?

All this is metaphysics, you cry. That is enough; there needs nothing more to give a strong presumption of falsehood. Yes, reply I, here are metaphysics surely; but they are all on your side, who advance an abstruse hypothesis, which can never be made intelligible, nor quadrate with any particular instance or illustration. The hypothesis which we embrace is plain. It maintains that morality is determined by sentiment. It defines virtue to be WHATEVER MENTAL ACTION OR QUALITY GIVES TO A SPECTATOR THE PLEASING SENTIMENT OF APPROBATION; and vice the contrary. We then proceed to examine a plain matter of fact, to wit, what actions have this influence. We consider all the circumstances in which these actions agree, and thence endeavour to extract some general observations with regard to these sentiments. If you call this metaphysics, and find anything abstruse here, you need only conclude that your turn of mind is not suited to the moral sciences.

II. When a man, at any time, deliberates concerning his own conduct (as, whether he had better, in a particular emergence, assist a brother or a benefactor), he must consider these separate relations, with all the circumstances and situations of the persons, in order to determine the superior duty and obligation; and in order to determine the proportion of lines in any triangle, it is necessary to examine the nature of that figure, and the relation which its several parts bear to each other. But notwithstanding this appearing similarity in the two cases, there is, at bottom, an extreme difference between them. A speculative reasoner concerning triangles or circles considers the several known and given relations of the parts of these figures; and thence infers some unknown relation, which is dependent on the former. But in moral deliberations we must be acquainted beforehand with all the objects, and all their relations to each other; and from a comparison of the whole, fix our choice or approbation. No new fact to be ascertained; no new relation to be discovered. All the circumstances of the case are supposed to be laid before us, ere we can fix any sentence of blame or approbation. If any material circumstance be yet unknown or doubtful, we must first employ our inquiry or intellectual faculties to assure us of it; and must suspend for a time all moral decision or sentiment. While we are ignorant whether a man were aggressor or not, how can we determine whether the person who killed him be criminal or innocent? But after every circumstance, every relation is known, the understanding has no further room to operate, nor any object on which it could employ itself. The approbation or blame which then ensues, cannot be the work of the judgement, but of the heart; and is not a speculative proposition or affirmation, but an active feeling or sentiment. In the disquisitions of the understanding, from known circumstances and relations, we infer some new and unknown. In moral decisions, all the circumstances and relations must be previously known; and the mind, from the contemplation of the whole, feels some new impression of affection or disgust, esteem or contempt, approbation or blame.

Hence the great difference between a mistake of FACT and one of RIGHT; and hence the reason why the one is commonly criminal and not the other. When Oedipus killed Laius, he was ignorant of the relation, and from circumstances, innocent and involuntary, formed erroneous opinions concerning the action which he committed. But when Nero killed Agrippina, all the relations between himself and the person, and all the circumstances of the fact, were previously known to him; but the motive of revenge, or fear, or interest, prevailed in his savage heart over the sentiments of duty and humanity. And when we express that detestation against him to which he himself, in a little time, became insensible, it is not that we see any relations, of which he was ignorant; but that, for the rectitude of our disposition, we feel sentiments against which he was hardened from flattery and a long perseverance in the most enormous crimes.

In these sentiments then, not in a discovery of relations of any kind, do all moral determinations consist. Before we can pretend to form any decision of this kind, everything must be known and ascertained on the side of the object or action. Nothing remains but to feel, on our part, some sentiment of blame or approbation; whence we pronounce the action criminal or virtuous.

III. This doctrine will become still more evident, if we compare moral beauty with natural, to which in many particulars it bears so near a resemblance. It is on the proportion, relation, and position of parts, that all natural beauty depends; but it would be absurd thence to infer, that the perception of beauty, like that of truth in geometrical problems, consists wholly in the perception of relations, and was performed entirely by the understanding or intellectual faculties. In all the sciences, our mind from the known relations investigates the unknown. But in all decisions of taste or external beauty, all the relations are beforehand obvious to the eye; and we thence proceed to feel a sentiment of complacency or disgust, according to the nature of the object, and disposition of our organs.

Euclid has fully explained all the qualities of the circle; but has not in any proposition said a word of its beauty. The reason is evident. The beauty is not a quality of the circle. It lies not in any part of the line, whose parts are equally distant from a common centre. It is only the effect which that figure produces upon the mind, whose peculiar fabric of structure renders it susceptible of such sentiments. In vain would you look for it in the circle, or seek it, either by your senses or by mathematical reasoning, in all the properties of that figure.

Attend to Palladio and Perrault, while they explain all the parts and proportions of a pillar. They talk of the cornice, and frieze, and base, and entablature, and shaft, and architrave; and give the description and position of each of these members. But should you ask the description and position of its beauty, they would readily reply, that the beauty is not in any of the parts or members of a pillar, but results from the whole, when that complicated figure is presented to an intelligent mind, susceptible to those finer sensations. Till such a spectator appear, there is nothing but a figure of such particular dimensions and proportions: from his sentiments alone arise its elegance and beauty.

Again; attend to Cicero, while he paints the crimes of a Verres or a Catiline. You must acknowledge that the moral turpitude results, in the same manner, from the contemplation of the whole, when presented to a being whose organs have such a particular structure and formation. The orator may paint rage, insolence, barbarity on the one side; meekness, suffering, sorrow, innocence on the other. But if you feel no indignation or compassion arise in you from this complication of circumstances, you would in vain ask him, in what consists the crime or villainy, which he so vehemently exclaims against? At what time, or on what subject it first began to exist? And what has a few months afterwards become of it, when every disposition and thought of all the actors is totally altered or annihilated? No satisfactory answer can be given to any of these questions, upon the abstract hypothesis of morals; and we must at last acknowledge, that the crime or immorality is no particular fact or relation, which can be the object of the understanding, but arises entirely from the sentiment of disapprobation, which, by the structure of human nature, we unavoidably feel on the apprehension of barbarity or treachery.

IV. Inanimate objects may bear to each other all the same relations which we observe in moral agents; though the former can never be the object of love or hatred, nor are consequently susceptible of merit or iniquity. A young tree, which over-tops and destroys its parent, stands in all the same relations with Nero, when he murdered Agrippina; and if morality consisted merely in relations, would no doubt be equally criminal.

V. It appears evident that — the ultimate ends of human actions can never, in any case, be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiments and affections of mankind, without any dependance on the intellectual faculties. Ask a man WHY HE USES EXERCISE; he will answer, BECAUSE HE DESIRES TO KEEP HIS HEALTH. If you then enquire, WHY HE DESIRES HEALTH, he will readily reply, BECAUSE SICKNESS IS PAINFUL. If you push your enquiries farther, and desire a reason WHY HE HATES PAIN, it is impossible he can ever give any. This is an ultimate end, and is never referred to any other object.

Perhaps to your second question, WHY HE DESIRES HEALTH, he may also reply, that IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE EXERCISE OF HIS CALLING. If you ask, WHY HE IS ANXIOUS ON THAT HEAD, he will answer, BECAUSE HE DESIRES TO GET MONEY. If you demand WHY? IT IS THE INSTRUMENT OF PLEASURE, says he. And beyond this it is an absurdity to ask for a reason. It is impossible there can be a progress IN INFINITUM; and that one thing can always be a reason why another is desired. Something must be desirable on its own account, and because of its immediate accord or agreement with human sentiment and affection.

Now as virtue is an end, and is desirable on its own account, without fee and reward, merely for the immediate satisfaction which it conveys; it is requisite that there should be some sentiment which it touches, some internal taste or feeling, or whatever you may please to call it, which distinguishes moral good and evil, and which embraces the one and rejects the other.

Thus the distinct boundaries and offices of REASON and of TASTE are easily ascertained. The former conveys the knowledge of truth and falsehood: the latter gives the sentiment of beauty and deformity, vice and virtue. The one discovers objects as they really stand in nature, without addition and diminution: the other has a productive faculty, and gilding or staining all natural objects with the colours, borrowed from internal sentiment, raises in a manner a new creation. Reason being cool and disengaged, is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination, by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery: Taste, as it gives pleasure or pain, and thereby constitutes happiness or misery, becomes a motive to action, and is the first spring or impulse to desire and volition. From circumstances and relations, known or supposed, the former leads us to the discovery of the concealed and unknown: after all circumstances and relations are laid before us, the latter makes us feel from the whole a new sentiment of blame or approbation. The standard of the one, being founded on the nature of things, is eternal and inflexible, even by the will of the Supreme Being: the standard of the other arising from the eternal frame and constitution of animals, is ultimately derived from that Supreme Will, which bestowed on each being its peculiar nature, and arranged the several classes and orders of existence.

APPENDIX II. OF SELF-LOVE.

THERE is a principle, supposed to prevail among many, which is utterly incompatible with all virtue or moral sentiment; and as it can proceed from nothing but the most depraved disposition, so in its turn it tends still further to encourage that depravity. This principle is, that all BENEVOLENCE is mere hypocrisy, friendship a cheat, public spirit a farce, fidelity a snare to procure trust and confidence; and that while all of us, at bottom, pursue only our private interest, we wear these fair disguises, in order to put others off their guard, and expose them the more to our wiles and machinations. What heart one must be possessed of who possesses such principles, and who feels no internal sentiment that belies so pernicious a theory, it is easy to imagine: and also what degree of affection and benevolence he can bear to a species whom he represents under such odious colours, and supposes so little susceptible of gratitude or any return of affection. Or if we should not ascribe these principles wholly to a corrupted heart, we must at least account for them from the most careless and precipitate examination. Superficial reasoners, indeed, observing many false pretences among mankind, and feeling, perhaps, no very strong restraint in their own disposition, might draw a general and a hasty conclusion that all is equally corrupted, and that men, different from all other animals, and indeed from all other species of existence, admit of no degrees of good or bad, but are, in every instance, the same creatures under different disguises and appearances.

There is another principle, somewhat resembling the former; which has been much insisted on by philosophers, and has been the foundation of many a system; that, whatever affection one may feel, or imagine he feels for others, no passion is, or can be disinterested; that the most generous friendship, however sincere, is a modification of self-love; and that, even unknown to ourselves, we seek only our own gratification, while we appear the most deeply engaged in schemes for the liberty and happiness of mankind. By a turn of imagination, by a refinement of reflection, by an enthusiasm of passion, we seem to take part in the interests of others, and imagine ourselves divested of all selfish considerations: but, at bottom, the most generous patriot and most niggardly miser, the bravest hero and most abject coward, have, in every action, an equal regard to their own happiness and welfare.

Whoever concludes from the seeming tendency of this opinion, that those, who make profession of it, cannot possibly feel the true sentiments of benevolence, or have any regard for genuine virtue, will often find himself, in practice, very much mistaken. Probity and honour were no strangers to Epicurus and his sect. Atticus and Horace seem to have enjoyed from nature, and cultivated by reflection, as generous and friendly dispositions as any disciple of the austerer schools. And among the modern, Hobbes and Locke, who maintained the selfish system of morals, lived irreproachable lives; though the former lay not under any restraint of religion which might supply the defects of his philosophy.

An epicurean or a Hobbist readily allows, that there is such a thing as a friendship in the world, without hypocrisy or disguise; though he may attempt, by a philosophical chymistry, to resolve the elements of this passion, if I may so speak, into those of another, and explain every affection to be self-love, twisted and moulded, by a particular turn of imagination, into a variety of appearances. But as the same turn of imagination prevails not in every man, nor gives the same direction to the original passion; this is sufficient even according to the selfish system to make the widest difference in human characters, and denominate one man virtuous and humane, another vicious and meanly interested. I esteem the man whose self-love, by whatever means, is so directed as to give him a concern for others, and render him serviceable to society: as I hate or despise him, who has no regard to any thing beyond his own gratifications and enjoyments. In vain would you suggest that these characters, though seemingly opposite, are at bottom the same, and that a very inconsiderable turn of thought forms the whole difference between them. Each character, notwithstanding these inconsiderable differences, appears to me, in practice, pretty durable and untransmutable. And I find not in this more than in other subjects, that the natural sentiments arising from the general appearances of things are easily destroyed by subtile reflections concerning the minute origin of these appearances. Does not the lively, cheerful colour of a countenance inspire me with complacency and pleasure; even though I learn from philosophy that all difference of complexion arises from the most minute differences of thickness, in the most minute parts of the skin; by means of which a superficies is qualified to reflect one of the original colours of light, and absorb the others?

But though the question concerning the universal or partial selfishness of man be not so material as is usually imagined to morality and practice, it is certainly of consequence in the speculative science of human nature, and is a proper object of curiosity and enquiry. It may not, therefore, be unsuitable, in this place, to bestow a few reflections upon it.

[Footnote: Benevolence naturally divides into two kinds, the GENERAL and the PARTICULAR. The first is, where we have no friendship or connexion or esteem for the person, but feel only a general sympathy with him or a compassion for his pains, and a congratulation with his pleasures. The other species of benevolence is founded on an opinion of virtue, on services done us, or on some particular connexions. Both these sentiments must be allowed real in human nature: but whether they will resolve into some nice considerations of self-love, is a question more curious than important. The former sentiment, to wit, that of general benevolence, or humanity, or sympathy, we shall have occasion frequently to treat of in the course of this inquiry; and I assume it as real, from general experience, without any other proof.]

The most obvious objection to the selfish hypothesis is, that, as it is contrary to common feeling and our most unprejudiced notions, there is required the highest stretch of philosophy to establish so extraordinary a paradox. To the most careless observer there appear to be such dispositions as benevolence and generosity; such affections as love, friendship, compassion, gratitude. These sentiments have their causes, effects, objects, and operations, marked by common language and observation, and plainly distinguished from those of the selfish passions. And as this is the obvious appearance of things, it must be admitted, till some hypothesis be discovered, which by penetrating deeper into human nature, may prove the former affections to be nothing but modifications of the latter. All attempts of this kind have hitherto proved fruitless, and seem to have proceeded entirely from that love of SIMPLICITY which has been the source of much false reasoning in philosophy. I shall not here enter into any detail on the present subject. Many able philosophers have shown the insufficiency of these systems. And I shall take for granted what, I believe, the smallest reflection will make evident to every impartial enquirer.

But the nature of the subject furnishes the strongest presumption, that no better system will ever, for the future, be invented, in order to account for the origin of the benevolent from the selfish affections, and reduce all the various emotions of the human mind to a perfect simplicity. The case is not the same in this species of philosophy as in physics. Many an hypothesis in nature, contrary to first appearances, has been found, on more accurate scrutiny, solid and satisfactory. Instances of this kind are so frequent that a judicious, as well as witty philosopher, [Footnote: Mons. Fontenelle.] has ventured to affirm, if there be more than one way in which any phenomenon may be produced, that there is general presumption for its arising from the causes which are the least obvious and familiar. But the presumption always lies on the other side, in all enquiries concerning the origin of our passions, and of the internal operations of the human mind. The simplest and most obvious cause which can there be assigned for any phenomenon, is probably the true one. When a philosopher, in the explication of his system, is obliged to have recourse to some very intricate and refined reflections, and to suppose them essential to the production of any passion or emotion, we have reason to be extremely on our guard against so fallacious an hypothesis. The affections are not susceptible of any impression from the refinements of reason or imagination; and it is always found that a vigorous exertion of the latter faculties, necessarily, from the narrow capacity of the human mind, destroys all activity in the former. Our predominant motive or intention is, indeed, frequently concealed from ourselves when it is mingled and confounded with other motives which the mind, from vanity or self-conceit, is desirous of supposing more prevalent: but there is no instance that a concealment of this nature has ever arisen from the abstruseness and intricacy of the motive. A man that has lost a friend and patron may flatter himself that all his grief arises from generous sentiments, without any mixture of narrow or interested considerations: but a man that grieves for a valuable friend, who needed his patronage and protection; how can we suppose, that his passionate tenderness arises from some metaphysical regards to a self-interest, which has no foundation or reality? We may as well imagine that minute wheels and springs, like those of a watch, give motion to a loaded waggon, as account for the origin of passion from such abstruse reflections.

Animals are found susceptible of kindness, both to their own species and to ours; nor is there, in this case, the least suspicion of disguise or artifice. Shall we account for all THEIR sentiments, too, from refined deductions of self-interest? Or if we admit a disinterested benevolence in the inferior species, by what rule of analogy can we refuse it in the superior?

Love between the sexes begets a complacency and good-will, very distinct from the gratification of an appetite. Tenderness to their offspring, in all sensible beings, is commonly able alone to counter-balance the strongest motives of self-love, and has no manner of dependance on that affection. What interest can a fond mother have in view, who loses her health by assiduous attendance on her sick child, and afterwards languishes and dies of grief, when freed, by its death, from the slavery of that attendance?

Is gratitude no affection of the human breast, or is that a word merely, without any meaning or reality? Have we no satisfaction in one man’s company above another's, and no desire of the welfare of our friend, even though absence or death should prevent us from all participation in it? Or what is it commonly, that gives us any participation in it, even while alive and present, but our affection and regard to him?

These and a thousand other instances are marks of a general benevolence in human nature, where no REAL interest binds us to the object. And how an IMAGINARY interest known and avowed for such, can be the origin of any passion or emotion, seems difficult to explain. No satisfactory hypothesis of this kind has yet been discovered; nor is there the smallest probability that the future industry of men will ever be attended with more favourable success.

But farther, if we consider rightly of the matter, we shall find that the hypothesis which allows of a disinterested benevolence, distinct from self-love, has really more SIMPLICITY in it, and is more conformable to the analogy of nature than that which pretends to resolve all friendship and humanity into this latter principle. There are bodily wants or appetites acknowledged by every one, which necessarily precede all sensual enjoyment, and carry us directly to seek possession of the object. Thus, hunger and thirst have eating and drinking for their end; and from the gratification of these primary appetites arises a pleasure, which may become the object of another species of desire or inclination that is secondary and interested. In the same manner there are mental passions by which we are impelled immediately to seek particular objects, such as fame or power, or vengeance without any regard to interest; and when these objects are attained a pleasing enjoyment ensues, as the consequence of our indulged affections. Nature must, by the internal frame and constitution of the mind, give an original propensity to fame, ere we can reap any pleasure from that acquisition, or pursue it from motives of self-love, and desire of happiness. If I have no vanity, I take no delight in praise: if I be void of ambition, power gives me no enjoyment: if I be not angry, the punishment of an adversary is totally indifferent to me. In all these cases there is a passion which points immediately to the object, and constitutes it our good or happiness; as there are other secondary passions which afterwards arise, and pursue it as a part of our happiness, when once it is constituted such by our original affections. Were there no appetite of any kind antecedent to self-love, that propensity could scarcely ever exert itself; because we should, in that case, have felt few and slender pains or pleasures, and have little misery or happiness to avoid or to pursue.

Now where is the difficulty in conceiving, that this may likewise be the case with benevolence and friendship, and that, from the original frame of our temper, we may feel a desire of another’s happiness or good, which, by means of that affection, becomes our own good, and is afterwards pursued, from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyments? Who sees not that vengeance, from the force alone of passion, may be so eagerly pursued, as to make us knowingly neglect every consideration of ease, interest, or safety; and, like some vindictive animals, infuse our very souls into the wounds we give an enemy; [Footnote: Animasque in vulnere ponunt. VIRG, Dum alteri noceat, sui negligens says Seneca of Anger. De Ira, I. i.] and what a malignant philosophy must it be, that will not allow to humanity and friendship the same privileges which are undisputably granted to the darker passions of enmity and resentment; such a philosophy is more like a satyr than a true delineation or description of human nature; and may be a good foundation for paradoxical wit and raillery, but is a very bad one for any serious argument or reasoning.

APPENDIX III. SOME FARTHER CONSIDERATIONS WITH REGARD TO JUSTICE.

The intention of this Appendix is to give some more particular explication of the origin and nature of Justice, and to mark some differences between it and the other virtues.

The social virtues of humanity and benevolence exert their influence immediately by a direct tendency or instinct, which chiefly keeps in view the simple object, moving the affections, and comprehends not any scheme or system, nor the consequences resulting from the concurrence, imitation, or example of others. A parent flies to the relief of his child; transported by that natural sympathy which actuates him, and which affords no leisure to reflect on the sentiments or conduct of the rest of mankind in like circumstances. A generous man cheerfully embraces an opportunity of serving his friend; because he then feels himself under the dominion of the beneficent affections, nor is he concerned whether any other person in the universe were ever before actuated by such noble motives, or will ever afterwards prove their influence. In all these cases the social passions have in view a single individual object, and pursue the safety or happiness alone of the person loved and esteemed. With this they are satisfied: in this they acquiesce. And as the good, resulting from their benign influence, is in itself complete and entire, it also excites the moral sentiment of approbation, without any reflection on farther consequences, and without any more enlarged views of the concurrence or imitation of the other members of society. On the contrary, were the generous friend or disinterested patriot to stand alone in the practice of beneficence, this would rather enhance his value in our eyes, and join the praise of rarity and novelty to his other more exalted merits.

The case is not the same with the social virtues of justice and fidelity. They are highly useful, or indeed absolutely necessary to the well-being of mankind: but the benefit resulting from them is not the consequence of every individual single act; but arises from the whole scheme or system concurred in by the whole, or the greater part of the society. General peace and order are the attendants of justice or a general abstinence from the possessions of others; but a particular regard to the particular right of one individual citizen may frequently, considered in itself, be productive of pernicious consequences. The result of the individual acts is here, in many instances, directly opposite to that of the whole system of actions; and the former may be extremely hurtful, while the latter is, to the highest degree, advantageous. Riches, inherited from a parent, are, in a bad man's hand, the instrument of mischief. The right of succession may, in one instance, be hurtful. Its benefit arises only from the observance of the general rule; and it is sufficient, if compensation be thereby made for all the ills and inconveniences which flow from particular characters and situations.

Cyrus, young and unexperienced, considered only the individual case before him, and reflected on a limited fitness and convenience, when he assigned the long coat to the tall boy, and the short coat to the other of smaller size. His governor instructed him better, while he pointed out more enlarged views and consequences, and informed his pupil of the general, inflexible rules, necessary to support general peace and order in society.

The happiness and prosperity of mankind, arising from the social virtue of benevolence and its subdivisions, may be compared to a wall, built by many hands, which still rises by each stone that is heaped upon it, and receives increase proportional to the diligence and care of each workman. The same happiness, raised by the social virtue of justice and its subdivisions, may be compared to the building of a vault, where each individual stone would, of itself, fall to the ground; nor is the whole fabric supported but by the mutual assistance and combination of its corresponding parts.

All the laws of nature, which regulate property, as well as all civil laws, are general, and regard alone some essential circumstances of the case, without taking into consideration the characters, situations, and connexions of the person concerned, or any particular consequences which may result from the determination of these laws in any particular case which offers. They deprive, without scruple, a beneficent man of all his possessions, if acquired by mistake, without a good title; in order to bestow them on a selfish miser, who has already heaped up immense stores of superfluous riches. Public utility requires that property should be regulated by general inflexible rules; and though such rules are adopted as best serve the same end of public utility, it is impossible for them to prevent all particular hardships, or make beneficial consequences result from every individual case. It is sufficient, if the whole plan or scheme be necessary to the support of civil society, and if the balance of good, in the main, do thereby preponderate much above that of evil. Even the general laws of the universe, though planned by infinite wisdom, cannot exclude all evil or inconvenience in every particular operation.

It has been asserted by some, that justice arises from Human Conventions, and proceeds from the voluntary choice, consent, or combination of mankind. If by CONVENTION be here meant a PROMISE (which is the most usual sense of the word) nothing can be more absurd than this position. The observance of promises is itself one of the most considerable parts of justice, and we are not surely bound to keep our word because we have given our word to keep it. But if by convention be meant a sense of common interest, which sense each man feels in his own breast, which he remarks in his fellows, and which carries him, in concurrence with others, into a general plan or system of actions, which tends to public utility; it must be owned, that, in this sense, justice arises from human conventions. For if it be allowed (what is, indeed, evident) that the particular consequences of a particular act of justice may be hurtful to the public as well as to individuals; it follows that every man, in embracing that virtue, must have an eye to the whole plan or system, and must expect the concurrence of his fellows in the same conduct and behaviour. Did all his views terminate in the consequences of each act of his own, his benevolence and humanity, as well as his self-love, might often prescribe to him measures of conduct very different from those which are agreeable to the strict rules of right and justice.

Thus, two men pull the oars of a boat by common convention for common interest, without any promise or contract; thus gold and silver are made the measures of exchange; thus speech and words and language are fixed by human convention and agreement. Whatever is advantageous to two or more persons, if all perform their part; but what loses all advantage if only one perform, can arise from no other principle There would otherwise be no motive for any one of them to enter into that scheme of conduct.

[Footnote: This theory concerning the origin of property, and consequently of justice, is, in the main, the same with that hinted at and adopted by Grotius, ‘Hinc discimus, quae fuerit causa, ob quam a primaeva communione rerum primo mobilium, deinde et immobilinm discessum est: nimirum quod cum non contenti homines vesci sponte natis, antra habitare, corpore aut nudo agere, aut corticibus arborum ferarumve pellibus vestito, vitae genus exquisitius delegissent, industria opus fuit, quam singuli rebus singulls adhiberent. Quo minus autem fructus in commune conferrentur, primum obstitit locorum, in quae homines discesserunt, distantia, deinde justitiae et amoris defectus, per quem fiebat, ut nee in labore, nee in consumtione fructuum, quae debebat, aequalitas servaretur. Simul discimus, quomodo res in proprietatem iverint; non animi actu solo, neque enim scire alii poterant, quid alil suum esse vellent, ut eo abstinerent, et idem velle plures poterant; sed pacto quodam aut expresso, ut per divisionem, aut tacito, ut per occupationem.’ De jure belli et pacis. Lib. ii. ca. sec. 2. art. 4 and 5.]

The word NATURAL is commonly taken in so many senses and is of so loose a signification, that it seems vain to dispute whether justice be natural or not. If self-love, if benevolence be natural to man; if reason and forethought be also natural; then may the same epithet be applied to justice, order, fidelity, property, society. Men’s inclination, their necessities, lead them to combine; their understanding and experience tell them that this combination is impossible where each governs himself by no rule, and pays no regard to the possessions of others: and from these passions and reflections conjoined, as soon as we observe like passions and reflections in others, the sentiment of justice, throughout all ages, has infallibly and certainly had place to some degree or other in every individual of the human species. In so sagacious an animal, what necessarily arises from the exertion of his intellectual faculties may justly be esteemed natural.

[Footnote: Natural may be opposed, either to what is UNUSUAL, MIRACULOUS or ARTIFICIAL. In the two former senses, justice and property are undoubtedly natural. But as they suppose reason, forethought, design, and a social union and confederacy among men, perhaps that epithet cannot strictly, in the last sense, be applied to them. Had men lived without society, property had never been known, and neither justice nor injustice had ever existed. But society among human creatures had been impossible without reason and forethought. Inferior animals, that unite, are guided by instinct, which supplies the place for reason. But all these disputes are merely verbal.]

Among all civilized nations it has been the constant endeavour to remove everything arbitrary and partial from the decision of property, and to fix the sentence of judges by such general views and considerations as may be equal to every member of society. For besides, that nothing could be more dangerous than to accustom the bench, even in the smallest instance, to regard private friendship or enmity; it is certain, that men, where they imagine that there was no other reason for the preference of their adversary but personal favour, are apt to entertain the strongest ill-will against the magistrates and judges. When natural reason, therefore, points out no fixed view of public utility by which a controversy of property can be decided, positive laws are often framed to supply its place, and direct the procedure of all courts of judicature. Where these too fail, as often happens, precedents are called for; and a former decision, though given itself without any sufficient reason, justly becomes a sufficient reason for a new decision. If direct laws and precedents be wanting, imperfect and indirect ones are brought in aid; and the controverted case is ranged under them by analogical reasonings and comparisons, and similitudes, and correspondencies, which are often more fanciful than real. In general, it may safely be affirmed that jurisprudence is, in this respect, different from all the sciences; and that in many of its nicer questions, there cannot properly be said to be truth or falsehood on either side. If one pleader bring the case under any former law or precedent, by a refined analogy or comparison; the opposite pleader is not at a loss to find an opposite analogy or comparison: and the preference given by the judge is often founded more on taste and imagination than on any solid argument. Public utility is the general object of all courts of judicature; and this utility too requires a stable rule in all controversies: but where several rules, nearly equal and indifferent, present themselves, it is a very slight turn of thought which fixes the decision in favour of either party.

[Footnote: That there be a separation or distinction of possessions, and that this separation be steady and constant; this is absolutely required by the interests of society, and hence the origin of justice and property. What possessions are assigned to particular persons; this is, generally speaking, pretty indifferent; and is often determined by very frivolous views and considerations. We shall mention a few particulars.

Were a society formed among several independent members, the most obvious rule, which could be agreed on, would be to annex property to PRESENT possession, and leave every one a right to what he at present enjoys. The relation of possession, which takes place between the person and the object, naturally draws on the relation of property.

For a like reason, occupation or first possession becomes the foundation of property.

Where a man bestows labour and industry upon any object, which before belonged to no body; as in cutting down and shaping a tree, in cultivating a field, &c., the alterations, which he produces, causes a relation between him and the object, and naturally engages us to annex it to him by the new relation of property. This cause here concurs with the public utility, which consists in the encouragement given to industry and labour.

Perhaps too, private humanity towards the possessor concurs, in this instance, with the other motives, and engages us to leave with him what he has acquired by his sweat and labour; and what he has flattered himself in the constant enjoyment of. For though private humanity can, by no means, be the origin of justice; since the latter virtue so often contradicts the former; yet when the rule of separate and constant possession is once formed by the indispensable necessities of society, private humanity, and an aversion to the doing a hardship to another, may, in a particular instance, give rise to a particular rule of property.

I am much inclined to think, that the right succession or inheritance much depends on those connexions of the imagination, and that the relation to a former proprietor begetting a relation to the object, is the cause why the property is transferred to a man after the death of his kinsman. It is true; industry is more encouraged by the transference of possession to children or near relations: but this consideration will only have place in a cultivated society; whereas the right of succession is regarded even among the greatest Barbarians.

Acquisition of property by accession can be explained no way but by having recourse to the relations and connexions of the imaginations.

The property of rivers, by the laws of most nations, and by the natural turn of our thoughts, is attributed to the proprietors of their banks, excepting such vast rivers as the Rhine or the Danube, which seem too large to follow as an accession to the property of the neighbouring fields. Yet even these rivers are considered as the property of that nation, through whose dominions they run; the idea of a nation being of a suitable bulk to correspond with them, and bear them such a relation in the fancy.

The accessions, which are made to land, bordering upon rivers, follow the land, say the civilians, provided it be made by what they call alluvion, that is, insensibly and imperceptibly; which are circumstances, that assist the imagination in the conjunction.

Where there is any considerable portion torn at once from one bank and added to another, it becomes not his property, whose land it falls on, till it unite with the land, and till the trees and plants have spread their roots into both. Before that, the thought does not sufficiently join them.

In short, we must ever distinguish between the necessity of a separation and constancy in men’s possession, and the rules, which assign particular objects to particular persons. The first necessity is obvious, strong, and invincible: the latter may depend on a public utility more light and frivolous, on the sentiment of private humanity and aversion to private hardship, on positive laws, on precedents, analogies, and very fine connexions and turns of the imagination.]

We may just observe, before we conclude this subject, that after the laws of justice are fixed by views of general utility, the injury, the hardship, the harm, which result to any individual from a violation of them, enter very much into consideration, and are a great source of that universal blame which attends every wrong or iniquity. By the laws of society, this coat, this horse is mine, and OUGHT to remain perpetually in my possession: I reckon on the secure enjoyment of it: by depriving me of it, you disappoint my expectations, and doubly displease me, and offend every bystander. It is a public wrong, so far as the rules of equity are violated: it is a private harm, so far as an individual is injured. And though the second consideration could have no place, were not the former previously established: for otherwise the distinction of MINE and THINE would be unknown in society: yet there is no question but the regard to general good is much enforced by the respect to particular. What injures the community, without hurting any individual, is often more lightly thought of. But where the greatest public wrong is also conjoined with a considerable private one, no wonder the highest disapprobation attends so iniquitous a behaviour.

APPENDIX IV. OF SOME VERBAL DISPUTES.

Nothing is more usual than for philosophers to encroach upon the province of grammarians; and to engage in disputes of words, while they imagine that they are handling controversies of the deepest importance and concern. It was in order to avoid altercations, so frivolous and endless, that I endeavoured to state with the utmost caution the object of our present enquiry; and proposed simply to collect, on the one hand, a list of those mental qualities which are the object of love or esteem, and form a part of personal merit; and on the other hand, a catalogue of those qualities which are the object of censure or reproach, and which detract from the character of the person possessed of them; subjoining some reflections concerning the origin of these sentiments of praise or blame. On all occasions, where there might arise the least hesitation, I avoided the terms VIRTUE and VICE; because some of those qualities, which I classed among the objects of praise, receive, in the English language, the appellation of TALENTS, rather than of virtues; as some of the blameable or censurable qualities are often called defects, rather than vices. It may now, perhaps, be expected that before we conclude this moral enquiry, we should exactly separate the one from the other; should mark the precise boundaries of virtues and talents, vices and defects; and should explain the reason and origin of that distinction. But in order to excuse myself from this undertaking, which would, at last, prove only a grammatical enquiry, I shall subjoin the four following reflections, which shall contain all that I intend to say on the present subject.

First, I do not find that in the English, or any other modern tongue, the boundaries are exactly fixed between virtues and talents, vices and defects, or that a precise definition can be given of the one as contradistinguished from the other. Were we to say, for instance, that the esteemable qualities alone, which are voluntary, are entitled to the appellations of virtues; we should soon recollect the qualities of courage, equanimity, patience, self-command; with many others, which almost every language classes under this appellation, though they depend little or not at all on our choice. Should we affirm that the qualities alone, which prompt us to act our part in society, are entitled to that honourable distinction; it must immediately occur that these are indeed the most valuable qualities, and are commonly denominated the SOCIAL virtues; but that this very epithet supposes that there are also virtues of another species. Should we lay hold of the distinction between INTELLECTUAL and MORAL endowments, and affirm the last alone to be the real and genuine virtues, because they alone lead to action; we should find that many of those qualities, usually called intellectual virtues, such as prudence, penetration, discernment, discretion, had also a considerable influence on conduct. The distinction between the heart and the head may also be adopted: the qualities of the first may be defined such as in their immediate exertion are accompanied with a feeling of sentiment; and these alone may be called the genuine virtues: but industry, frugality, temperance, secrecy, perseverance, and many other laudable powers or habits, generally stilled virtues are exerted without any immediate sentiment in the person possessed of them, and are only known to him by their effects. It is fortunate, amidst all this seeming perplexity, that the question, being merely verbal, cannot possibly be of any importance. A moral, philosophical discourse needs not enter into all these caprices of language, which are so variable in different dialects, and in different ages of the same dialect. But on the whole, it seems to me, that though it is always allowed, that there are virtues of many different kinds, yet, when a man is called virtuous, or is denominated a man of virtue, we chiefly regard his social qualities, which are, indeed, the most valuable. It is, at the same time, certain, that any remarkable defect in courage, temperance, economy, industry, understanding, dignity of mind, would bereave even a very good-natured, honest man of this honourable appellation. Who did ever say, except by way of irony, that such a one was a man of great virtue, but an egregious blockhead?

But, Secondly, it is no wonder that languages should not be very precise in marking the boundaries between virtues and talents, vices and defects; since there is so little distinction made in our internal estimation of them. It seems indeed certain, that the SENTIMENT of conscious worth, the self-satisfaction proceeding from a review of a man’s own conduct and character; it seems certain, I say, that this sentiment, which, though the most common of all others, has no proper name in our language,

[Footnote: The term, pride, is commonly taken in a bad sense; but this sentiment seems indifferent, and may be either good or bad, according as it is well or ill founded, and according to the other circumstances which accompany it. The French express this sentiment by the term, AMOUR PROPRE, but as they also express self-love as well as vanity by the same term, there arises thence a great confusion in Rochefoucault, and many of their moral writers.]

arises from the endowments of courage and capacity, industry and ingenuity, as well as from any other mental excellencies. Who, on the other hand, is not deeply mortified with reflecting on his own folly and dissoluteness, and feels not a secret sting or compunction whenever his memory presents any past occurrence, where he behaved with stupidity of ill-manners? No time can efface the cruel ideas of a man’s own foolish conduct, or of affronts, which cowardice or impudence has brought upon him. They still haunt his solitary hours, damp his most aspiring thoughts, and show him, even to himself, in the most contemptible and most odious colours imaginable.

What is there too we are more anxious to conceal from others than such blunders, infirmities, and meannesses, or more dread to have exposed by raillery and satire? And is not the chief object of vanity, our bravery or learning, our wit or breeding, our eloquence or address, our taste or abilities? These we display with care, if not with ostentation; and we commonly show more ambition of excelling in them, than even in the social virtues themselves, which are, in reality, of such superior excellence. Good-nature and honesty, especially the latter, are so indispensably required, that, though the greatest censure attends any violation of these duties, no eminent praise follows such common instances of them, as seem essential to the support of human society. And hence the reason, in my opinion, why, though men often extol so liberally the qualities of their heart, they are shy in commending the endowments of their head: because the latter virtues, being supposed more rare and extraordinary, are observed to be the more usual objects of pride and self-conceit; and when boasted of, beget a strong suspicion of these sentiments.

It is hard to tell, whether you hurt a man’s character most by calling him a knave or a coward, and whether a beastly glutton or drunkard be not as odious and contemptible, as a selfish, ungenerous miser. Give me my choice, and I would rather, for my own happiness and self-enjoyment, have a friendly, humane heart, than possess all the other virtues of Demosthenes and Philip united: but I would rather pass with the world for one endowed with extensive genius and intrepid courage, and should thence expect stronger instances of general applause and admiration. The figure which a man makes in life, the reception which he meets with in company, the esteem paid him by his acquaintance; all these advantages depend as much upon his good sense and judgement, as upon any other part of his character. Had a man the best intentions in the world, and were the farthest removed from all injustice and violence, he would never be able to make himself be much regarded, without a moderate share, at least, of parts and understanding.

What is it then we can here dispute about? If sense and courage, temperance and industry, wisdom and knowledge confessedly form a considerable part of PERSONAL MERIT: if a man, possessed of these qualities, is both better satisfied with himself, and better entitled to the good-will, esteem, and services of others, than one entirely destitute of them; if, in short, the SENTIMENTS are similar which arise from these endowments and from the social virtues; is there any reason for being so extremely scrupulous about a WORD, or disputing whether they be entitled to the denomination of virtues? It may, indeed, be pretended, that the sentiment of approbation, which those accomplishments produce, besides its being INFERIOR, is also somewhat DIFFERENT from that which attends the virtues of justice and humanity. But this seems not a sufficient reason for ranking them entirely under different classes and appellations. The character of Caesar and that of Cato, as drawn by Sallust, are both of them virtuous, in the strictest and most limited sense of the word; but in a different way: nor are the sentiments entirely the same which arise from them. The one produces love, the other esteem: the one is amiable, the other awful: we should wish to meet the one character in a friend; the other we should be ambitious of in ourselves. In like manner the approbation, which attends temperance or industry or frugality, may be somewhat different from that which is paid to the social virtues, without making them entirely of a different species. And, indeed, we may observe, that these endowments, more than the other virtues, produce not, all of them, the same kind of approbation. Good sense and genius beget esteem and regard: wit and humour excite love and affection.

[Footnote: Love and esteem are nearly the same passion, and arise from similar causes. The qualities, which produce both, are such as communicate pleasures. But where this pleasure is severe and serious; or where its object is great, and makes a strong impression, or where it produces any degree of humility and awe; in all these cases, the passion, which arises from the pleasure, is more properly denominated esteem than love. Benevolence attends both; but is connected with love in a more eminent degree. There seems to be still a stronger mixture of pride in contempt than of humility in esteem; and the reason would not be difficulty to one, who studied accurately the passions. All these various mixtures and compositions and appearances of sentiment from a very curious subject of speculation, but are wide for our present purpose. Throughout this enquiry, we always consider in general, what qualities are a subject of praise or of censure, without entering into all the minute differences of sentiment, which they excite. It is evident, that whatever is contemned, is also disliked, as well as what is hated; and we here endeavour to take objects, according to their most simple views and appearances. These sciences are but too apt to appear abstract to common readers, even with all the precautions which we can take to clear them from superfluous speculations, and bring them down to every capacity.]

Most people, I believe, will naturally, without premeditation, assent to the definition of the elegant and judicious poet:

Virtue (for mere good-nature is a fool) Is sense and spirit with humanity.

[Footnote: The Art of preserving Health. Book 4]

What pretensions has a man to our generous assistance or good offices, who has dissipated his wealth in profuse expenses, idle vanities, chimerical projects, dissolute pleasures or extravagant gaming? These vices (for we scruple not to call them such) bring misery unpitied, and contempt on every one addicted to them.

Achaeus, a wise and prudent prince, fell into a fatal snare, which cost him his crown and life, after having used every reasonable precaution to guard himself against it. On that account, says the historian, he is a just object of regard and compassion: his betrayers alone of hatred and contempt [Footnote: Polybius, lib. iii. ca].

The precipitate flight and improvident negligence of Pompey, at the beginning of the civil wars, appeared such notorious blunders to Cicero, as quite palled his friendship towards that great man. In the same manner, says he, as want of cleanliness, decency, or discretion in a mistress are found to alienate our affections. For so he expresses himself, where he talks, not in the character of a philosopher, but in that of a statesman and man of the world, to his friend Atticus. [Lib. ix. epist. 10]. But the same Cicero, in imitation of all the ancient moralists, when he reasons as a philosopher, enlarges very much his ideas of virtue, and comprehends every laudable quality or endowment of the mind, under that honourable appellation. This leads to the THIRD reflection, which we proposed to make, to wit, that the ancient moralists, the best models, made no material distinction among the different species of mental endowments and defects, but treated all alike under the appellation of virtues and vices, and made them indiscriminately the object of their moral reasonings. The prudence explained in Cicero’s Offices [Footnote: Lib. i. ca.] is that sagacity, which leads to the discovery of truth, and preserves us from error and mistake. MAGNANIMITY, TEMPERANCE, DECENCY, are there also at large discoursed of. And as that eloquent moralist followed the common received division of the four cardinal virtues, our social duties form but one head, in the general distribution of his subject.

[Footnote: The following passage of Cicero is worth quoting, as being the most clear and express to our purpose, that any thing can be imagined, and, in a dispute, which is chiefly verbal, must, on account of the author, carry an authority, from which there can be no appeal.

‘Virtus autem, quae est per se ipsa laudabilis, et sine qua nihil laudari potest, tamen habet plures partes, quarum alia est alia ad laudationem aptior. Sunt enim aliae virtutes, quae videntur in moribus hominum, et quadam comitate ac beneficentia positae: aliae quae in ingenii aliqua facultate, aut animi magnitudine ac robore. Nam clementia, justitia, benignitas, fides, fortitudo in periculis communibus, jucunda est auditu in laudationibus. Omnes enim hae virtutes non tam ipsis, qui eas in se habent, quam generi hominum fructuosae putantur. Sapientia et magnitude animi, qua omnes res humanae tenues et pro nihilo putantur, et in cogitando vis quaedam ingenii, et ipsa eloquentia admirationis habet non minus, jucunditatis minus. Ipsos enim magis videntur, quos laudamus, quam illos, apud quos laudamus ornare ac tueri: sed tamen in laudenda jungenda sunt eliam haec genera virtutum. Ferunt enim aures bominum, cum ilia quae jucunda et grata, tum etiam ilia, quae mirabilia sunt in virtute, laudari.’ De orat. lib. ii. ca.

I suppose, if Cicero were now alive, it would be found difficult to fetter his moral sentiments by narrow systems; or persuade him, that no qualities were to be admitted as virtues, or acknowledged to be a part of PERSONAL MERIT, but what were recommended by The Whole Duty of Man.]

We need only peruse the titles of chapters in Aristotle’s Ethics to be convinced that he ranks courage, temperance, magnificence, magnanimity, modesty, prudence, and a manly openness, among the virtues, as well as justice and friendship.

To SUSTAIN and to ABSTAIN, that is, to be patient and continent, appeared to some of the ancients a summary comprehension of all morals.

Epictetus has scarcely ever mentioned the sentiment of humanity and compassion, but in order to put his disciples on their guard against it. The virtue of the Stoics seems to consist chiefly in a firm temper and a sound understanding. With them, as with Solomon and the eastern moralists, folly and wisdom are equivalent to vice and virtue.

Men will praise thee, says David, [Footnote: Psalm 49th.] when thou dost well unto thyself. I hate a wise man, says the Greek poet, who is not wise to himself [Footnote: Here, Hume quotes Euripedes in Greek]. Plutarch is no more cramped by systems in his philosophy than in his history. Where he compares the great men of Greece and Rome, he fairly sets in opposition all their blemishes and accomplishments of whatever kind, and omits nothing considerable, which can either depress or exalt their characters. His moral discourses contain the same free and natural censure of men and manners.

The character of Hannibal, as drawn by Livy, [Footnote: Lib. xxi. ca] is esteemed partial, but allows him many eminent virtues. Never was there a genius, says the historian, more equally fitted for those opposite offices of commanding and obeying; and it were, therefore, difficult to determine whether he rendered himself DEARER to the general or to the army. To none would Hasdrubal entrust more willingly the conduct of any dangerous enterprize; under none did the soldiers discover more courage and confidence. Great boldness in facing danger; great prudence in the midst of it. No labour could fatigue his body or subdue his mind. Cold and heat were indifferent to him: meat and drink he sought as supplies to the necessities of nature, not as gratifications of his voluptuous appetites. Waking or rest he used indiscriminately, by night or by day. — These great Virtues were balanced by great Vices; inhuman cruelty; perfidy more than punic; no truth, no faith, no regard to oaths, promises, or religion.

The character of Alexander the Sixth, to be found in Guicciardin, [Footnote: Lib. i.] is pretty similar, but juster; and is a proof that even the moderns, where they speak naturally, hold the same language with the ancients. In this pope, says he, there was a singular capacity and judgement: admirable prudence; a wonderful talent of persuasion; and in all momentous enterprizes a diligence and dexterity incredible. But these VIRTUES were infinitely overbalanced by his VICES; no faith, no religion, insatiable avarice, exorbitant ambition, and a more than barbarous cruelty.

Polybius, [Footnote: Lib. xii.] reprehending Timaeus for his partiality against Agathocles, whom he himself allows to be the most cruel and impious of all tyrants, says: if he took refuge in Syracuse, as asserted by that historian, flying the dirt and smoke and toil of his former profession of a potter; and if proceeding from such slender beginnings, he became master, in a little time, of all Sicily; brought the Carthaginian state into the utmost danger; and at last died in old age, and in possession of sovereign dignity: must he not be allowed something prodigious and extraordinary, and to have possessed great talents and capacity for business and action? His historian, therefore, ought not to have alone related what tended to his reproach and infamy; but also what might redound to his Praise and Honour.

In general, we may observe, that the distinction of voluntary or involuntary was little regarded by the ancients in their moral reasonings; where they frequently treated the question as very doubtful, WHETHER VIRTUE COULD BE TAUGHT OR NOT [Vid. Plato in Menone, Seneca de otio sap. ca. So also Horace, Virtutem doctrina paret, naturane donet, Epist. lib. I. e. Aeschines Socraticus, Dial. I.]? They justly considered that cowardice, meanness, levity, anxiety, impatience, folly, and many other qualities of the mind, might appear ridiculous and deformed, contemptible and odious, though independent of the will. Nor could it be supposed, at all times, in every man’s power to attain every kind of mental more than of exterior beauty.

And here there occurs the FOURTH reflection which I purposed to make, in suggesting the reason why modern philosophers have often followed a course in their moral enquiries so different from that of the ancients. In later times, philosophy of all kinds, especially ethics, have been more closely united with theology than ever they were observed to be among the heathens; and as this latter science admits of no terms of composition, but bends every branch of knowledge to its own purpose, without much regard to the phenomena of nature, or to the unbiassed sentiments of the mind, hence reasoning, and even language, have been warped from their natural course, and distinctions have been endeavoured to be established where the difference of the objects was, in a manner, imperceptible. Philosophers, or rather divines under that disguise, treating all morals as on a like footing with civil laws, guarded by the sanctions of reward and punishment, were necessarily led to render this circumstance, of VOLUNTARY or INVOLUNTARY, the foundation of their whole theory. Every one may employ TERMS in what sense he pleases: but this, in the mean time, must be allowed, that SENTIMENTS are every day experienced of blame and praise, which have objects beyond the dominion of the will or choice, and of which it behoves us, if not as moralists, as speculative philosophers at least, to give some satisfactory theory and explication.

A blemish, a fault, a vice, a crime; these expressions seem to denote different degrees of censure and disapprobation; which are, however, all of them, at the bottom, pretty nearly all the same kind of species. The explication of one will easily lead us into a just conception of the others; and it is of greater consequence to attend to things than to verbal appellations. That we owe a duty to ourselves is confessed even in the most vulgar system of morals; and it must be of consequence to examine that duty, in order to see whether it bears any affinity to that which we owe to society. It is probable that the approbation attending the observance of both is of a similar nature, and arises from similar principles, whatever appellation we may give to either of these excellencies.

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR OF THE DELINEATION OF THE NATURE AND OBLIGATION OF MORALITY

LETTER FROM DAVID HUME, ESQ. TO THE AUTHOR OF THE DELINEATION OF THE NATURE AND OBLIGATION OF MORALITY.

SIR,

WHEN I write you, I know not to whom I am addressing myself; I only know he is one who has done me a great deal of honour, and to whose civilities I am obliged. If we be strangers, I beg we may be acquainted as soon as you think proper to discover yourself; if we be acquainted already, I beg we may be friends; if friends, I beg we may be more so. Our connexion with each other, as men of letters, is greater than our difference as adhering to different sects or systems. Let us revive the happy times, when Atticus and Cassius the Epicureans, Cicero the Academic, and Brutus the Stoic, could, all of them, live in unreserved friendship, together, and were insensible to all those distinctions, except so far as they furnished agreeable matter to discourse and conversation. Perhaps you are a young man, and being full of those sublime ideas, which you have so well exprest, think there can be no virtue upon a more confined system. I am not an old one; but being of a cool temperament, have always found, that more simple views were sufficient to make me act in a reasonable manner; in this faith have I lived, and hope to die.

Your civilities to me so much overbalance your severities, that I should be ungrateful to take notice of some expressions, which, in the heat of composition, have dropt from your pen. I must only complain of you a little for ascribing to me the sentiments which I had put into the mouth of the Sceptic in the Dialogue. I have surely endeavoured to refute the Sceptic with all the force of which I am master; and my refutation must be allowed sincere, because drawn from the capital principles of my system. But you impute to me both the sentiments of the Sceptic and the sentiments of his antagonist, which I can never admit of. In every Dialogue, no more than one person can be supposed to represent the author.

Your severity on one head, that of Chastity, is so great, and I am so little conscious of having given any just occasion to it, that it has afforded me a hint to form a conjecture, perhaps ill grounded, concerning your person.

I hope to steal a little leisure from my other occupations, in order to defend my philosophy against your attacks. If I have occasion to give a new edition of the work, which you have honoured with an answer, I shall make great advantage of your remarks, and hope to obviate some of your criticisms.

Your style is elegant, and full of agreeable imagery. In some few places, it does not fully come up to my ideas of purity and correctness. I suppose mine falls still further short of your ideas. In this respect, we may certainly be of use to each other. With regard to our Philosophical systems, I suppose we are both so fixt, that there is no hope of any conversions betwixt us; and for my part, I doubt not but we shall both do as well to remain as we are.

I am, Sir,
With great regard,
Your most obliged humble servant,
DAVID HUME.
EDIN. 15th March,
1753.

SCOTTICISMS

Will, in the first person, as *I will walk, we will walk,* expresses the intention or resolution of the person, along with the future event: In the second and third person, as, *you will, he will, they will,* it expresses the future action or event, without comprehending or excluding the volition.

Shall, in the first person, whether singular or plural, expressess the future action or event, without excluding or comprehending the intention or resolution: But in the *second* or *third* person, it marks a necessity, and commonly a necessity proceeding from the person who speaks; as, *he shall walk*, *you shall repent it.*

These variations seem to have proceeded from a politeness in the *English*, who, in speaking to others, or of others, made use of the term *will,* which implies volition, even where the event may be the subject of necessity and constraint. And in speaking of themselves, made use of the term *shall*, which implies constraint, even though the event may be the object of choice.

Wou'd and *shou'd* are conjunctive moods, subject to the same rule; only, we may observe, that in a sentence, where there is a condition exprest, and a consequence of that condition, the former always requires *shou'd*, and the latter *wou'd,* in the second and third persons; as, *if he shou'd fall*, *he wou'd break his leg,* &c.

These is the plural of *this; those* of *that.* The former, therefore, expresses what is near: the latter, what is more remote. As, in these lines of the Duke of Buckingham,

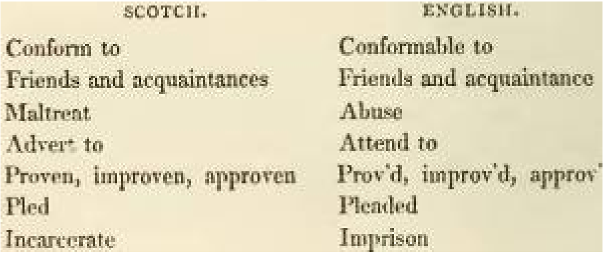
“Philosophers and poets vainly strove,
“In every age, the lumpish mass to move.
“But THOSE were pedants if compared with THESE,
“Who knew not only to instruct, but please.”

Where a relative is to follow, and the subject has not been mentioned immediately before, *those* is always required. *Those observations which he* *made*. *Those kingdoms which Alexander conquered.*

In the verbs, which end in *t*, or *te*, we frequently omit *ed* in the preterperfect and in the participle; as, *he operate*, *it was cultivate*. *Milton* says, *in thought more elevate;* but he is the only author who uses that expression.

Notice shou'd not be used as a verb. The proper phrase is *take notice*. Yet I find Lord Shaftesbury uses *notic'd*, the participle: And *unnotic'd* is very common.

Hinder to do, is Scotch. The English phrase is, hinder from doing. Yet Milton says, Hindered not Satan to pervert the mind. Book IX.



SCOTCH.	ENGLISH.
Conform to	Conformable to
Friends and acquaintances	Friends and acquaintance
Maltreat	Abuse
Advert to	Attend to
Proven, improven, approven	Prov'd, improv'd, approv'
Pled	Pleaded
Incarcerate	Imprison

SCOTCH.	ENGLISH.
Tear to pieces	Tear in pieces
Drunk, run	Drank, ran
Fresh weather	Open weather
Tender	Sickly
In the long run	At long run
Notwithstanding of that	Notwithstanding that
Contented himself to do	Contented himself with doing
'Tis a question if	'Tis a question whether
Discretion	Civility
With child to a man	With child by a man
Out of hand	Presently
Simply impossible	Absolutely impossible
A park	An enclosure
In time coming	In time to come
Nothing else	No other thing
Mind it	Remember it
Denuded	Divested
Severals	Several
Some better	Something better
Anent	With regard to
Allenarly	Solely
Alongst. Yet the *English* say both amid, amidst, among, and amongst	Along
Evenly	Even
As I shall answer	I protest or declare
Cause him do it. Yet 'tis good *English* to say, make him do it	Cause him to do it
Marry upon	Marry to
Learn	Teach
There, where	Thither, whither
Effectuate. This word in *English* means to effect with pains and difficulty.	Effect

SCOTCH.	ENGLISH.
A wright. Yet 'tis good *English* to say, a wheelwright	A Carpenter
Defunct	Deceast
Evite	Avoid
Part with child	Miscarry
Notour	Notorious
To want it	To be without a thing, even though it be not desirable
To be difficulted	To be puzzled
Rebuted	Discouraged by repulses
For ordinary	Usually
Think shame	Asham'd
In favours of	In favour of
Dubiety	Doubtfulness
Prejudge	Hurt
Compete	Enter into competition
Heritable	Hereditary
To remeed	To remedy
Bankier	Banker
Adduce a proof	Produce a proof
Superplus	Surplus
Forfaulture	Forfeiture
In no event	In no case
Common soldiers	Private men
Big with a man	Great with a man
Bygone	Past
Debitor	Debtor
Excemed	Exempted
Yesternight	Last night
Big coat	Great coat
A chimney	A grate
Annualrent	Interest
Tenible argument	Good argument
Amissing	Missing
To condescend upon	To specify

SCOTCH.	ENGLISH.
To discharge	To forbid
To extinguish an obligation	To cancel an obligation
To depone	To depose
A compliment	A present
To inquire at a man	To inquire of a man
To be angry at a man	To be angry with a man
To send an errand	To send off an errand
To furnish goods to him	To furnish him with goods
To open up	To open, or lay open
Thucydide, Herodot, Sueton,	*Thucydides, Herodotus. Suetonius*
Butter and bread	Bread and butter
Pepper and vinegar	Vinegar and pepper
Paper, pen and ink	Pen, ink and paper
Readily	Probably
On a sudden	Of a sudden
As ever I saw	As I ever saw
For my share	For my part
Misgive	Fail
Rather chuse to buy as sell	Rather chuse to buy than sell
Deduce	Deduct
Look't over the window	Look't out at the window
A pretty enough girl	A pretty girl enough
'Tis a week since he left this	'Tis a week since he left this place
Come in to the fire	Come near the fire
To take off a new coat	To make up a new suit
Alwise	Always
Cut out his hair	Cut off his hair
Cry him	Call him
To crave	To dun, to ask payment
To get a stomach	To get an appetite
Vacance	Vacation

FOUR DISSERTATIONS

1757 Edition

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DISSERTATION I. THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RELIGION.

As every enquiry which regards religion is of the utmost importance, there are two questions in particular which challenge our principal attention, to wit, that concerning its foundation in reason, and that concerning its origin in human nature. Happily, the first question, which is the most important, admits of the most obvious, at least the clearest solution. The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion. But the other question, concerning the origin of religion in human nature, is exposed to some more difficulty. The belief of invisible, intelligent power has been very generally diffused over the human race, in all places and in all ages; but it has neither perhaps been so universal as to admit of no exceptions, nor has it been, in any degree, uniform in the ideas which it has suggested. Some nations have been discovered, who entertained no sentiments of Religion, if travellers and historians may be credited; and no two nations, and scarce any two men, have ever agreed precisely in the same sentiments. It would appear, therefore, that this preconception springs not from an original instinct or primary impression of nature, such as gives rise to self-love, affection between the sexes, love of progeny, gratitude, resentment; since every instinct of this kind has been found absolutely universal in all nations and ages, and has always a precise determinate object, which it inflexibly pursues. The first religious principles must be secondary; such as may easily be perverted by various accidents and causes, and whose operation too, in some cases, may by an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances be altogether prevented. What those principles are, which give rise to the original belief, and what those accidents and causes are, which direct its operation, is the subject of our present enquiry.

SECT. I: That Polytheism was the primary Religion of Men.

It appears to me, that if we consider the improvement of human society, from rude beginnings to a state of greater perfection, polytheism or idolatry was, and necessarily must have been, the first and most ancient religion of mankind. This opinion I shall endeavor to confirm by the following arguments.

It is a matter of fact incontestable, that about 1,700 years ago all mankind were polytheists. The doubtful and sceptical principles of a few philosophers, or the theism, and that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, form no objection worth regarding. Behold then the clear testimony of history. The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into polytheism. No marks, no symptoms of any more perfect religion. The most ancient records of the human race still present us with that system as the popular and established creed. The north, the south, the east, the west, give their unanimous testimony to the same fact. What can be opposed to so full an evidence?

As far as writing or history reaches, mankind, in ancient times, appear universally to have been polytheists. Shall we assert, that in more ancient times, before the knowledge of letters, or the discovery of any art or science, men entertained the principles of pure theism? That is, while they were ignorant and barbarous, they discovered truth; but fell into error, as soon as they acquired learn- and politeness.

But in this assertion you not only contradict all appearance of probability, but also our present experience concerning the principles and opinions of barbarous nations. The savage tribes of America, Africa, and Asia, are all idolaters. Not a single exception to this rule. Insomuch that, were a traveller to transport himself into any unknown region; if he found inhabitants cultivated with arts and sciences, though even upon that supposition there are odds against their being theists, yet could he not safely, till farther inquiry, pronounce any thing on that head: but if he found them ignorant and barbarous, he might beforehand declare them idolaters; and there scarcely is a possibility of his being mistaken.

It seems certain that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some grovelling and familiar notion of superior powers, before they stretch their conception to that perfect Being who bestowed order on the whole frame of nature. We may as resonably imagine that men inhabited palaces before huts and cottages, or studied geometry before agriculture; as assert that the Deity appeared to them a pure spirit, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent, before he was apprehended to be a powerful, though limited being, with human passions and appetites, limbs and organs. The mind rises gradually, from inferior to superior: by abstracting from what is imperfect, it forms an idea of perfection: and slowly distinguishing the nobler parts of its own frame from the grosser, it learns to transfer only the former, much elevated and refined, to its divinity. Nothing could disturb this natural progress of thought, but some obvious and invincible argument, which might immediately lead the mind into the pure principles of theism, and make it overleap, at one bound, the vast interval which is interposed between the human and the divine nature. But though I allow that the order and frame of the universe, when accurately examined, affords such an argument; yet I can never think that this consideration could have an influence on mankind, when they formed their first rude notions of religion.

The causes of such objects as are quite familiar to us, never strike our attention or curiosity; and however extraordinary or surprising these objects in themselves, they are passed over, by the raw and ignorant multitude, without much examination or enquiry. Adam, rising at once in Paradise, and in the full perfection of his faculties, would naturally, as represented by Milton, be astonished at the glorious appearances of nature, the heavens, the air, the earth, his own organs and members; and would be led to ask, whence this wonderful scene arose. But a barbarous, necessitous animal (such as man is on the first origin of society), pressed by such numerous wants and passions, has no leisure to admire the regular face of nature, or make enquiries concerning the cause of objects to which, from his infancy, he has been gradually accustomed. On the contrary, the more regular and uniform, that is, the more perfect nature appears, the more is he familiarised to it, and the less inclined to scrutinise and examine it. A monstrous birth excites his curiosity, and is deemed a prodigy. It alarms him from its novelty; and immediately sets him a-trembling, and sacrificing, and praying. But an animal complete in all its limbs and organs, is to him an ordinary spectacle, and produces no religious opinion or affection. Ask him, whence that animal arose; he will tell you, from the copulation of its parents. And these, whence? From the copulation of theirs. A few removes satisfy his curiosity, and set the objects at such a distance, that he entirely loses sight of them. Imagine not that he will so much as start the question, whence the first animal; much less, whence the whole system or united fabric of the universe arose. Or, if you start such a question to him, expect not that he will employ his mind with any anxiety about a subject so remote, so uninteresting, and which so much exceeds the bounds of his capacity.

But farther, if men were at first led into the belief of one superior Being, by reasoning from the frame of nature, they could never possibly leave that belief, in order to embrace polytheism; but the same principles of reason which at first produced and diffused over mankind so magnificent an opinion, must be able, with greater facility, to preserve it. The first invention and proof of any doctrine is much more difficult than the supporting and retaining of it.

There is a great difference between historical facts and speculative opinions; nor is the knowledge of the one propagated in the same manner with that of the other. An historical fact, while it passes by oral tradition from eye-witnesses and contemporaries, is disguised in every successive narration, and may at last retain but very small, if any, resemblance of the original truth on which it was founded. The frail memories of men, their love of exaggeration, their supine carelessness; these principles, if not corrected by books and writing, soon pervert the account of historical events, where argument or reasoning has little or no place, nor can ever recal the truth which has once escaped those narrations. It is thus the fables of Hercules, Theseus, Bacchus, are supposed to have been originally founded in true history, corrupted by tradition. But with regard to speculative opinions, the case is far otherwise. If these opinions be founded in arguments so clear and obvious as to carry conviction with the generality of mankind, the same arguments which at first diffused the opinions will still preserve them in their original purity. If the arguments be more abstruse, and more remote from vulgar apprehension, the opinions will always be confined to a few persons; and as soon as men leave the contemplation of the arguments, the opinions will immediately be lost and be buried in oblivion. Whichever side of this dilemma we take, it must appear impossible that theism could, from reasoning, have been the primary religion of human race, and have afterwards, by its corruption, given birth to polytheism and to all the various superstitions of the heathen world. Reason, when obvious, prevents these corruptions: when abstruse, it keeps the principles entirely from the knowledge of the vulgar, who are alone liable to corrupt any principle or opinion.

SECT. II: Origin of Polytheism.

If we would, therefore, indulge our curiosity, in enquiring concerning the origin of religion, we must turn our thoughts towards polytheism, the primitive religion of uninstructed mankind.

Were men led into the apprehension of invisible, intelligent power, by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts, according to one regular plan or connected system. For though, to persons of a certain turn of mind, it may not appear altogether absurd that several independent beings, endowed with superior wisdom, might conspire in the contrivance and execution of one regular plan: yet is this a merely arbitrary supposition, which, even if allowed possible, must be confessed neither to be supported by probability nor necessity. All things in the universe are evidently of a piece. Everything is adjusted to everything. One design prevails throughout the whole. And this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author; because the conception of different authors, without any distinction of attributes or operations, serves only to give perplexity to the imagination, without bestowing any satisfaction on the understanding. The statue of Laocoon, as we learn from Pliny, was the work of three artists: but it is certain that, were we not told so, we should never have imagined that a group of figures, cut from one stone, and united in one plan, was not the work and contrivance of one statuary. To ascribe any single effect to the combination of several causes, is not surely a natural and obvious supposition.

On the other hand, if, leaving the works of nature, we trace the footsteps of invisible power in the various and contrary events of human life, we are necessarily led into polytheism, and to the acknowledgment of several limited and imperfect deities. Storms and tempests ruin what is nourished by the sun. The sun destroys what is fostered by the moisture of dews and rains. War may be favorable to a nation whom the inclemency of the seasons afflicts with famine. Sickness and pestilence may depopulate a kingdom, amidst the most profuse plenty. The same nation is not, at the same time, equally successful by sea and land. And a nation which now triumphs over its enemies, may anon submit to their more prosperous arms. In short, the conduct of events, or what we call the plan of a particular providence, is so full of variety and uncertainty, that, if we suppose it immediately ordered by any intelligent beings, we must acknowledge a contrariety in their designs and intentions, a constant combat of opposite powers, and a repentance or change of intention in the same power, from impotence or levity. Each nation has its tutelar deity. Each element is subto its invisible power or agent. The province of each god is separate from that of another. Nor are the operations of the same god always certain and invariable. To-day he protects: to-morrow he abandons us. Prayers and sacrifices, rites and ceremonies, well or ill performed, are the sources of his favor or enmity, and produce all the good or ill fortune which are to be found amongst mankind.

We may conclude, therefore, that in all nations which have embraced polytheism, the first ideas of religion arose, not from a contemplation of the works of nature, but from a concern with regard to the events of life, and from the incessant hopes and fears which actuate the human mind. Accordingly we find that all idolaters, having separated the provinces of their deities, have recourse to that invisible agent to whose authority they are immediately subjected, and whose province it is to superintend that course of actions in which they are at any time engaged. Juno is invoked at marriages; Lucina at births. Neptune receives the prayers of seamen; and Mars of warriors. The husbandman cultivates his field under the protection of Ceres; and the merchant acknowledges the authority of Mercury. Each natural event is supposed to be governed by some intelligent agent; and nothing prosperous or adverse can happen in life, which may not be the subject of peculiar prayers or thanksgivings.

It must necessarily, indeed, be allowed, that in order to carry men’s attention beyond the present course of things, or lead them into any inference concerning invisible intelligent power, they must be actuated by some passion which prompts their thought and reflection; some motive which urges their first inquiry. But what passion shall we here have recourse to, for explaining an effect of such mighty consequence? Not speculative curiosity surely, or the pure love of truth. That motive is too refined for such gross apprehensions, and would lead men into inquiries concerning the frame of nature; a subject too large and comprehensive for their narrow capacities. No passions, therefore, can be supposed to work upon such barbarians, but the ordinary affections of human life; the anxious concern for happiness, the dread of future misery, the terror of death, the thirst of revenge, the appetite for food and other necessaries. Agitated by hopes and fears of this nature, especially the latter, men scrutinise, with a trembling curiosity, the course of future causes, and examine the various and contrary events of human life. And in this disordered scene, with eyes still more disordered and astonished, they see the first obscure traces of divinity.

SECT. III: The same subject continued.

We are placed in this world, as in a great theatre, where the true springs and causes of every event are entirely unknown to us; nor have we either sufficient wisdom to foresee, or power to prevent, those ills with which we are continually threatened. We hang in perpetual suspense between life and death, health and sickness, plenty and want, which are distributed amongst the human species by secret and unknown causes, whose operation is oft unexpected, and always unaccountable. These unknown causes, then, become the constant object of our hope and fear; and while the passions are kept in perpetual alarm by an anxious expectation of the events, the imagination is equally employed in forming ideas of those powers on which we have so entire a dependence. Could men anatomise nature, according to the most probable, at least the most intelligible philosophy, they would find that these causes are nothing but the particular fabric and structure of the minute parts of their own bodies and of external objects; and that, by a regular and constant machinery, all the events are produced about which they are so much concerned. But this philosophy exceeds the comprehension of the ignorant multitude, who can only conceive the unknown causes in a general and confused manner, though their imagination, perpetually employed on the same subject, must labor to form some particular and distinct idea of them. The more they consider these causes themselves, and the uncertainty of their operation, the less satisfaction do they meet with in their research; and, however unwilling, they must at last have abandoned so arduous an attempt, were it not for a propensity in human nature, which leads into a system that gives them some satisfaction.

There is an universal tendency amongst mankind to conceive all beings like themselves, and to transfer to every object those qualities with which they are familiarly acquainted, and of which they are intimately conscious. We find human faces in the moon, armies in the clouds; and by a natural propensity, if not corrected by experience and reflection, ascribe malice and good will to everything that hurts or pleases us. Hence the frequency and beauty of the prosopopœia in poetry, where trees, mountains, and streams are personified, and the inanimate parts of nature acquire sentiment and passion. And though these poetical figures and expressions gain not on the belief, they may serve, at least, to prove a certain tendency in the imagination, without which they could neither be beautiful nor natural. Nor is a river-god or hamadryad always taken for a mere poetical or imaginary personage; but may sometimes enter into the real creed of the ignorant vulgar; while each grove or field is represented as possessed of a particular genius or invisible power, which inhabits or protects it. Nay, philosophers cannot entirely exempt themselves from this natural frailty; but have oft ascribed to inanimate matter the horror of a vacuum, sympathies, antipathies, and other affections of human nature. The absurdity is not less, while we cast our eyes upwards; and transferring, as is too usual, human passions and infirmities to the deity, represent him as jealous and revengeful, capricious and partial, and, in short, a wicked and foolish man, in every respect but his superior power and authority. No wonder, then, that mankind, being placed in such an absolute ignorance of causes, and being at the same time so anxious concerning their future fortunes, should immediately acknowledge a dependence on invisible powers possessed of sentiment and intelligence. The unknown causes, which continually employ their thought, appearing always in the same aspect, are all apprehended to be of the same kind or species. Nor is it long before we ascribe to them thought, and reason, and passion, and sometimes even the limbs and figures of men, in order to bring them nearer to a resemblance with ourselves.

In proportion as any man’s course of life is governed by accident, we always find that he increases in superstition, as may particularly be observed of gamesters and sailors, who, though of all mankind the least capable of serious consideration, abound most in frivolous and superstitious apprehensions. The Gods, says Coriolanus in Dionysius, have an influence in every affair, but above all in war, where the event is so uncertain. All human life, especially before the institution of order and good government, being subject to fortuitous accidents, it is natural that superstition should prevail everywhere in barbarous ages, and put men on the most earnest inquiry concerning those invisible powers who dispose of their happiness or misery. Ignorant of astronomy and the anatomy of plants and animals, and too little curious to observe the admirable adjustment of final causes, they remain still unacquainted with a first and supreme creator, and with that infinitely perfect spirit who alone by his almighty will bestowed order on the whole frame of nature. Such a magnificent idea is too big for their narrow conceptions, which can neither observe the beauty of the work, nor comprehend the grandeur of its author. They suppose their deities, however potent and invisible, to be nothing but a species of human creatures, perhaps raised from among mankind, and retaining all human passions and appetites, together with corporeal limbs and organs. Such limited beings, though masters of human fate, being each of them incapable of extending his influence everywhere, must be vastly multiplied, in order to answer that variety of events which happen over the whole face of nature. Thus every place is stored with a crowd of local deities; and thus polytheism has prevailed, and still prevails, among the greatest part of uninstructed mankind.

Any of the human affections may lead us into the notion of invisible, intelligent power, hope as well as fear, gratitude as well as affliction; but if we examine our own hearts, or observe what passes around us, we shall find that men are much oftener thrown on their knees by the melancholy than by the agreeable passions. Prosperity is easily received as our due, and few questions are asked concerning its cause or author. It begets cheerfulness and activity and alacrity and a lively enjoyment of every social and sensual pleasure; and during this state of mind men have little leisure or inclination to think of the unknown invisible regions. On the other hand, every disastrous accident alarms us, and sets us on enquiries concerning the principles whence it arose; apprehensions spring up with regard to futurity; and the mind, sunk into diffidence, terror, and melancholy, has recourse to every method of appeasing those sacred intelligent powers on whom our fortune is supposed entirely to depend.

No topic is more usual with all popular divines than to display the advantages of affliction in bringing men to a due sense of religion, by subduing their confidence and sensuality, which in times of prosperity make them forgetful of a divine providence. Nor is this topic confined merely to modern religions. The ancients have also employed it. “Fortune has never liberally, without envy,” says a Greek historian, “bestowed an unmixed happiness on mankind; but with all her gifts has ever conjoined some disastrous circumstance, in order to chastise men into a reverence for the Gods, whom, in a continued course of prosperity, they are apt to neglect and forget.”

What age or period of life is the most addicted to superstition? The weakest and most timid. What sex? The same answer must be given. “The leaders and examples of every kind of superstition”, says Strabo, “are the women. These excite the men to devotion and supplications, and the observance of religious days. It is rare to meet with one that lives apart from the females, and yet is addicted to such practices. And nothing can, for this reason, be more improbable than the account given of an order of men amongst the Getes, who practised celibacy, and were notwithstanding the most religious fanatics.” A method of reasoning which would lead us to entertain a bad idea of the devotion of monks; did we not know, by an experience not so common, perhaps, in Strabo’s days, that one may practice celibacy, and profess chastity, and yet maintain the closest connexions, and most entire sympathy, with that timorous and pious sex.

SECT. IV: Deities not considered as Creators or Formers of the World.

The only point of theology in which we shall find a consent of mankind almost universal, is that there is invisible, intelligent power in the world; but whether this power be supreme or subordinate; whether confined to one being or distributed among several; what attributes, qualities, connexions, or principles of action ought to be ascribed to those beings — concerning all these points there is the widest difference in the popular systems of theology. Our ancestors in Europe, before the revival of letters, believed, as we do at present, that there was one supreme God, the author of nature, whose power, though in itself uncontrollable, was yet often exerted by the interposition of his angels and subordinate ministers, who executed his sacred purposes. But they also believed that all nature was full of other invisible powers — fairies, goblins, elves, sprights, beings stronger and mightier than men, but much inferior to the celestial natures who surround the throne of God. Now, suppose that anyone in those ages had denied the existence of God and his angels, would not his impiety justly have deserved the appellation of Atheism, even though he had still allowed, by some odd capricious reasoning, that the popular stories of elves and fairies were just and well-grounded? The difference, on the one hand, between such a person and a genuine Theist, is infinitely greater than that, on the other, between him and one that absolutely excludes all invisible intelligent power. And it is a fallacy, merely from the casual resemblance of names, without any conformity of meaning, to rank such opposite opinions under the same denomination.

To anyone who considers justly of the matter, it will appear that the Gods of all polytheists are no better than the elves or fairies of our ancestors, and merit as little any pious worship or veneration. These pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious Atheists, and acknowledge no being that corresponds to our idea of a deity. No first principle of mind or thought: No supreme government and administration: No divine contrivance or intention in the fabric of the world.

The Chinese, when their prayers are not answered, beat their idols. The deities of the Laplanders are any large stone which they meet with of an extraordinary shape. The Egyptian mythologists, in order to account for animal worship, said that the Gods, pursued by the violence of earthborn men, who were their enemies, had formerly been obliged to disguise themselves under the semblance of beasts. The Caunii, a nation in the Lesser Asia, resolving to admit no strange Gods among them, regularly, at certain seasons, assembled themselves completely armed, beat the air with their lances, and proceeded in that manner to their frontiers, in order, as they said, to expel the foreign deities. “Not even the immortal Gods”, said some German nations to Cæsar, “are a match for the Suevi”.

Many ills, says Dione in Homer to Venus wounded by Diomede, many ills, my daughter, have the Gods inflicted on men, and many ills, in return, have men inflicted on the Gods. We need but open any classic author to meet with these gross representations of the deities; and Longinus, with reason, observes that such ideas of the divine nature, if literally taken, contain a true Atheism.

Some writers have been surprised, that the impieties of Aristophanes should have been tolerated, nay publicly acted and applauded by the Athenians; a people so superstitious and so jealous of the public religion, that at that very time they put Socrates to death for his imagined incredulity. But these writers consider not that the ludicrous, familiar images, under which the Gods are represented by that comic poet, instead of appearing impious, were the genuine lights in which the ancients conceived their divinities. What conduct can be more criminal or mean, than that of Jupiter in Amphitrion? Yet that play, which represented his gallant exploits, was supposed so agreeable to him that it was always acted in Rome by public authority, when the state was threatened with pestilence, famine, or any general calamity. The Romans supposed, that, like all old letchers, he would be highly pleased with the rehearsal of his former feats of prowess and vigor, and that no topic was so proper, upon which to flatter his vanity.

The Lacedemonians, says Xenophon, always during war put up their petitions very early in the morning, in order to be beforehand with their enemies, and, by being the first solicitors, pre-engaged the Gods in their favor. We may gather from Seneca that it was usual for the votaries in the temple to make interest with the beadle or sexton that they might have a seat near the image of the deity, in order to be the best heard in their prayers and applications to him. The Tyrians, when besieged by Alexander, threw chains on the statue of Hercules to prevent that deity from deserting to the enemy. Augustus, having twice lost his fleet by storms, forbad Neptune to be carried in procession along with the other Gods, and fancied that he had sufficiently revenged himself by that expedient. After Germanicus's death the people were so enraged at their Gods that they stoned them in their temples, and openly renounced all allegiance to them.

To ascribe the origin and fabric of the universe to these imperfect beings never enters into the imagination of any Polytheist or idolater. Hesiod, whose writings, with those of Homer, contained the canonical system of the heathens — Hesiod, I say, supposes Gods and men to have sprung equally from the unknown powers of nature. And throughout the whole theogony of that author Pandora is the only instance of creation or a voluntary production; and she, too, was formed by the Gods merely from despite to Prometheus, who had furnished men with stolen fire from the celestial regions. The ancient mythologists, indeed, seem throughout to have rather embraced the idea of generation than that of creation or formation, and to have thence accounted for the origin of this universe.

Ovid, who lived in a learned age, and had been instructed by philosophers in the principles of a divine creation or formation of the world; finding that such an idea would not agree with the popular mythology which he delivers, leaves it, in a manner, loose and detached from his system. Quisquis fuit ille Deorum? Whichever of the Gods it was, says he, that dissipated the chaos, and introduced order into the universe, it could neither be Saturn, he knew, nor Jupiter, nor Neptune, nor any of the received deities of paganism. His theological system had taught him nothing upon that head; and he leaves the matter equally undetermined.

Diodorus Sculus, beginning his work with an enumeration of the most reasonable opinions concerning the origin of the world, makes no mention of a deity or intelligent mind; though it is evident from his history, that he had a much greater proneness to superstition than to irreligion. And in another passage, talking of the Ichthyophages, a nation in India, he says that, there being so great difficulty in accounting for their descent, we must conclude them to be aborigines, without any beginning of their generation, propagating their race from all eternity; as some of the physiologers, in treating of the origin of nature, have justly observed. "But in such subjects as these," adds the historian, "which exceed all human capacity, it may well happen, that those who discourse the most, know the least; reaching a specious appearance of truth in their reasonings, while extremely wide of the real truth and matter of fact."

A strange sentiment in our eyes, to be embraced by a professed and zealous religionist! But it was merely by accident that the question concerning the origin of the world did ever in ancient times enter into religious systems, or was treated of by theologers. The philosophers alone made profession of delivering systems of this kind; and it was pretty late too before these bethought themselves of having recourse to a mind or supreme intelligence, as the first cause of all. So far was it from being esteemed profane in those days to account for the origin of things without a deity, that Thales, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, and others, who embraced that system of cosmogony, passed unquestioned; while Anaxagoras, the first undoubted theist among the philosophers, was perhaps the first that ever was accused of Atheism.

We are told by Sextus Empiricus that Epicurus, when a boy, reading with his preceptor these verses of Hesiod —

- Eldest of beings, chaos first arose;
- Next earth, wide-stretch'd, the seat of all —

the young scholar first betrayed his inquisitive genius by asking, "And chaos whence?" But was told by his preceptor, that he must have recourse to the philosophers for a solution of such questions. And from this hint Epicurus left philology and all other studies, in order to betake himself to that science, whence alone he expected satisfaction with regard to these sublime subjects.

The common people were never likely to push their researches so far, or derive from reasoning their systems of religion; when philologers and mythologists, we see, scarcely ever discovered so much penetration. And even the philosophers, who discoursed of such topics, readily assented to the grossest theory, and admitted the joint origin of Gods and men from night and chaos; from fire, water, air, or whatever they established to be the ruling element.

Nor was it only on their first origin that the Gods were supposed dependent on the powers of nature. Throughout the whole period of their existence they were subjected to the dominion of fate or destiny. “Think of the force of necessity,” says Agrippa to the Roman people; “that force, to which even the Gods must submit.” And the Younger Pliny, agreeably to this way of reasoning, tells us that, amidst the darkness, horror, and confusion which ensued upon the first eruption of Vesuvius, several concluded that all nature was going to wreck, and that Gods and men were perishing in one common ruin.

It is great complaisance, indeed, if we dignify with the name of religion such an imperfect system of theology, and put it on a level with latter systems, which are founded on principles more just and more sublime. For my part, I can scarcely allow the principles even of Marcus Aurelius, Plutarch, and some other Stoics and Academics, though much more refined than the Pagan superstition, to be worthy of the honourable denomination of theism. For if the mythology of the heathen resemble the ancient European system of spiritual beings, excluding God and angels, and leaving only fairies and sprites; the creed of these philosophers may justly be said to exclude a deity, and to leave only angels and fairies.

SECT. V: Various Forms of Polytheism: Allegory, Hero-Worship.

But it is chiefly our present business to consider the gross polytheism of the vulgar, and to trace all its various appearances in the principles of human nature, whence they are derived.

Whoever learns, by argument, the existence of invisible intelligent power, must reason from the admirable contrivance of natural objects, and must suppose the world to be the workmanship of that Divine Being, the original cause of all things. But the vulgar polytheist, so far from admitting that idea, deifies every part of the universe, and conceives all the conspicuous productions of nature to be themselves so many real divinities. The sun, moon, and stars are all Gods according to his system: fountains are inhabited by nymphs, and trees by hamadryads: even monkeys, dogs, cats, and other animals often become sacred in his eyes, and strike him with a religious veneration. And thus, however strong men's propensity to believe invisible, intelligent power in nature, their propensity is equally strong to rest their attention on sensible, visible objects; and, in order to reconcile these opposite inclinations, they are led to unite the invisible power with some visible object.

The distribution also of distinct provinces to the several deities is apt to cause some allegory, both physical and moral, to enter into the vulgar systems of polytheism. The God of war will naturally be represented as furious, cruel, and impetuous; the God of poetry as elegant, polite, and amiable; the God of merchandise, especially in early times, as thievish and deceitful. The allegories supposed in Homer and other mythologists, I allow, have been often so strained that men of sense are apt entirely to reject them, and to consider them as the production merely of the fancy and conceit of critics and commentators. But that allegory really has place in the heathen mythology is undeniable even on the least reflexion. Cupid the son of Venus, the Muses the daughters of Memory, Prometheus the wise brother, Epimetheus the foolish; Hygieia, or the Goddess of health, descended from Æsculapius, or the God of physic: who sees not in these, and in many other instances, the plain traces of allegory? When a God is supposed to preside over any passion, event, or system of actions, it is almost unavoidable to give him a genealogy, attributes, and adventures, suitable to his supposed powers and influence, and to carry on that similitude and comparison which is naturally so agreeable to the mind of man.

Allegories, indeed, entirely perfect, we ought not to expect as the products of ignorance and superstition; there being no work of genius that requires a nicer hand, or has been more rarely executed with success. That Fear and Terror are the sons of Mars is just, but why by Venus? That Harmony is the daughter of Venus is regular, but why by Mars? That Sleep is the brother of Death is suitable, but why describe him as enamored of the Graces? And since the ancient mythologists fall into mistakes so gross and obvious, we have no reason surely to expect such refined and long-spun allegories, as some have endeavored to deduce from their fictions.

Lucretius was plainly seduced by the strong appearance of allegory which is observable in the pagan fictions. He first addresses himself to Venus as to that generating power which animates, renews, and beautifies the universe; but is soon betrayed by the mythology into incoherencies, while he prays to that allegorical personage to appease the furies of her lover Mars — an idea not drawn from allegory, but from the popular religion, and which Lucretius, as an Epicurean, could not consistently admit of.

The deities of the vulgar are so little superior to human creatures that, where men are affected with strong sentiments of veneration or gratitude for any hero or public benefactor, nothing can be more natural than to convert him into a God, and fill the heavens, after this manner, with continual recruits from amongst mankind. Most of the divinities of the ancient world are supposed to have once been men, and to have been beholden for their apotheosis to the admiration and affection of the people. The real history of their adventures, corrupted by tradition, and elevated by the marvellous, became a plentiful source of fable, especially in passing through the hands of poets, allegorists, and priests, who successively improved upon the wonder and astonishment of the ignorant multitude.

Painters too, and sculptors, came in for their share of profit in the sacred mysteries, and furnishing men with sensible representations of their divinities, whom they clothed in human figures, gave great increase to the public devotion, and determined its object. It was probably for want of these arts in rude and barbarous ages that men deified plants, animals, and even brute, unorganised matter; and rather than be without a sensible object of worship, affixed divinity to such ungainly forms. Could any statuary of Syria, in early times, have formed a just figure of Apollo, the conic stone, Heliogabalus, had never become the object of such profound adoration, and been received as a representation of the solar deity.

Stilpo was banished by the council of Areopagus for affirming that the Minerva in the citadel was no divinity, but the workmanship of Phidias the sculptor. What degree of reason must we expect in the religious belief of the vulgar in other nations, when Athenians and Areopagites could entertain such gross conceptions?

These, then, are the general principles of polytheism, founded in human nature, and little or nothing dependent on caprice and accident. As the causes which bestow happiness or misery are, in general, very little known and very uncertain, our anxious concern endeavors to attain a determinate idea of them, and finds no better expedient than to represent them as intelligent, voluntary agents, like ourselves; only somewhat superior in power and wisdom. The limited influence of these agents, and their great proximity to human weakness, introduce the various distribution and division of their authority; and thereby give rise to allegory. The same principles naturally deify mortals, superior in power, courage, or understanding, and produce hero-worship, together with fabulous history and mythological tradition, in all its wild and unaccountable forms. And as an invisible spiritual intelligence is an object too refined for vulgar apprehension, men naturally affix it to some sensible representation; such as either the more conspicuous parts of nature, or the statues, images, and pictures which a more refined age forms of its divinities.

Almost all idolaters, of whatever age or country, concur in these general principles and conceptions; and even the particular characters and provinces which they assign to their deities are not extremely different. The Greek and Roman travellers and conquerors, without much difficulty, found their own deities everywhere; and said, “This is Mercury, that Venus, this Mars, that Neptune,” by whatever title the strange Gods might be denominated. The goddess Hertha, of our Saxon ancestors, seems to be no other, according to Tacitus, than the Mater Tellus of the Romans; and his conjecture was evidently just.

SECT. VI: Origin of Theism from Polytheism.

The doctrine of one supreme deity, the author of nature, is very ancient, has spread itself over great and populous nations, and among them has been embraced by all ranks and conditions of persons. But whoever thinks that it has owed its success to the prevalent force of those invincible reasons, on which it is undoubtedly founded, would show himself little acquainted with the ignorance and stupidity of the people, and their incurable prejudices in favor of their particular superstitions. Even at this day, and in Europe, ask any of the vulgar why he believes in an Omnipotent Creator of the world: he will never mention the beauty of final causes, of which he is wholly ignorant: he will not hold out his hand, and bid you contemplate the suppleness and variety of joints in his fingers, their bending all one way, the counterpoise which they receive from the thumb, the softness and fleshy parts of the inside of his hand, with all the other circumstances which render that member fit for the use to which it was destined. To these he has been long accustomed, and he beholds them with listlessness and unconcern. He will tell you of the sudden and unexpected death of such a one; the fall and bruise of such another; the excessive drought of this season; the cold and rains of another. These he ascribes to the immediate operation of Providence. And such events as, with good reasoners, are the chief difficulties in admitting a Supreme Intelligence, are with him the sole arguments for it.

Many theists, even the most zealous and refined, have denied a particular providence, and have asserted that the Sovereign mind or first principle of all things, having fixed general laws, by which nature is governed, gives free and uninterrupted course to these laws, and disturbs not, at every turn, the settled order of events by particular volitions. From the beautiful connexion, say they, and rigid observance of established rules, we draw the chief arguments for theism; and from the same principles are enabled to answer the principal objections against it. But so little is this understood by the generality of mankind, that wherever they observe any one to ascribe all events to natural causes, and to remove the particular interposition of a deity, they are apt to suspect him of the grossest infidelity. “A little philosophy," says my Lord Bacon, "makes men Atheists; a great deal reconciles them to religion." For men, being taught by superstitious prejudices to lay the stress on a wrong place, when that fails them, and they discover, by a little reflexion, that this very regularity and uniformity is the strongest proof of design and of a supreme intelligence, they return to that belief which they had deserted; and they are now able to establish it on a firmer and more durable foundation.

Convulsions in nature, disorders, prodigies, miracles, though the most opposite to the plan of a wise superintendent, impress mankind with the strongest sentiments of religion, the causes of events seeming then the most unknown and unaccountable. Madness, fury, rage, and an inflamed imagination, though they sink men nearest the level of beasts, are, for a like reason, often supposed to be the only dispositions in which we can have any immediate communication with the deity.

We must conclude, therefore, on the whole, that since the vulgar, in nations which have embraced the doctrine of theism, still build it upon irrational and superstitious opinions, they are never led into that opinion by any process of argument, but by a certain train of thinking more suitable to their genius and capacity.

It may readily happen, in an idolatrous nation, that though men admit the existence of several limited deities, yet is there some one God whom, in a particular manner, they make the object of their worship and adoration. They may either suppose that, in the distribution of power and territory among the Gods, their nation was subjected to the jurisdiction of that particular deity; or, reducing heavenly objects to the model of things below, they might represent one God as the prince or supreme magistrate of the rest, who, though of the same nature, rules them with an authority like that which an earthly sovereign exercises over his subjects and vassals. Whether this God, therefore, be considered as their peculiar patron, or as the general sovereign of heaven, his votaries will endeavor by every art to insinuate themselves into his favor; and supposing him to be pleased, like themselves, with praise and flattery, there is no eulogy or exaggeration which will be spared in their addresses to him. In proportion as men's fears or distresses become more urgent, they still invent new strains of adulation; and even he who outdoes his predecessors in swelling up the titles of his divinity, is sure to be outdone by his successors in newer and more pompous epithets of praise. Thus they proceed; till at last they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no farther progress. And it is well if, in striving to get farther, and to represent a magnificent simplicity, they run not into inexplicable mystery, and destroy the intelligent nature of their deity, on which alone any rational worship or adoration can be founded. While they confine themselves to the notion of a perfect being, the creator of the world, they coincide, by chance, with the principles of reason and true philosophy; though they are guided to that notion, not by reason, of which they are in a great measure incapable, but by the adulation and fears of the most vulgar superstition.

We often find, amongst barbarous nations, and even sometimes amongst civilized, that when every strain of flattery has been exhausted towards arbitrary princes, when every human quality has been applauded to the utmost, their servile courtiers represent them at last as real divinities, and point them out to the people as objects of adoration. How much more natural, therefore, is it that a limited deity, who is at first supposed only the immediate author of the particular goods and ills in life, should in the end be represented as sovereign maker and modifier of the universe?

Even where this notion of a supreme deity is already established, though it ought naturally to lessen every other worship, and abase every object of reverence, yet if a nation has entertained the opinion of a subordinate tutelar divinity, saint, or angel, their addresses to that being gradually rise upon them, and encroach on the adoration due to their supreme deity. The Virgin Mary, ere checked by the Reformation, had proceeded from being merely a good woman, to usurp many attributes of the Almighty. God and St. Nicholas go hand in hand in all the prayers and petitions of the Muscovites.

Thus the deity who, from love, converted himself into a bull, in order to carry off Europa, and who from ambition dethroned his father, Saturn, became the Optimus Maximus of the heathens. Thus the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, became the supreme deity or Jehovah of the Jews.

The Jacobins, who denied the immaculate conception, have ever been very unhappy in their doctrine, even though political reasons have kept the Romish church from condemning it. The Cordeliers have run away with all the popularity. But in the fifteenth century, as we learn from Boulainvilliers, an Italian Cordelier maintained that during the three days when Christ was interred, the hypostatic union was dissolved, and that his human nature was not a proper object of adoration during that period. Without the art of divination, one might foretell that so gross and impious a blasphemy would not fail to be anathematized by the people. It was the occasion of great insults on the part of the Jacobins, who now got some recompense for their misfortunes in the war about the immaculate conception.

Rather than relinquish this propensity to adulation, religionists in all ages have involved themselves in the greatest absurdities and contradictions.

Homer, in one passage, calls Oceanus and Tethys the original parents of all things, conformably to the established mythology and traditions of the Greeks. Yet, in other passages, he could not forbear complimenting Jupiter, the reigning deity, with that magnificent appellation; and accordingly denominates him the father of Gods and men. He forgets that every temple, every street, was full of the ancestors, uncles, brothers, and sisters of this Jupiter, who was, in reality, nothing but an upstart parricide and usurper. A like contradiction is observable in Hesiod, and is so much the less excusable as his professed intention was to deliver a true genealogy of the Gods.

Were there a religion (and we may suspect Mahometanism of this inconsistence) which sometimes painted the deity in the most sublime colors, as the creator of heaven and earth; sometimes degraded him nearly to a level with human creatures in his powers and faculties; while at the same time it ascribed to him suitable infirmities, passions, and partialities of the moral kind. That religion, after it was extinct, would also be cited as an instance of those contradictions, which arise from the gross, vulgar, natural conceptions of mankind, opposed to their continual propensity towards flattery and exaggeration. Nothing indeed would prove more strongly the divine origin of any religion than to find (and happily this is the case with Christianity) that it is free from a contradiction so incident to human nature.

SECT. VII: Confirmation of this Doctrine.

It appears certain that, though the original notions of the vulgar represent the Divinity as a limited being, and consider him only as the particular cause of health or sickness, plenty or want, prosperity or adversity; yet, when more magnificent ideas are urged upon them, they esteem it dangerous to refuse their assent. Will you say that your deity is finite and bounded in his perfections; may be overcome by a greater force; is subject to human passions, pains, and infirmities; has a beginning, and may have an end? This they dare not affirm; but, thinking it safest to comply with the higher encomiums, they endeavor, by an affected ravishment and devotion, to ingratiate themselves with him. As a confirmation of this, we may observe that the assent of the vulgar is, in this case, merely verbal, and that they are incapable of conceiving those sublime qualities which they seemingly attribute to the deity. Their real idea of him, notwithstanding their pompous language, is still as poor and frivolous as ever.

That original intelligence, say the Magians, who is the first principle of all things, discovers himself immediately to the mind and understanding alone; but has placed the sun as his image in the visible universe; and when that bright luminary diffuses its beams over the earth and the firmament, it is a faint copy of the glory which resides in the higher heavens. If you would escape the displeasure of this divine being, you must be careful never to set your bare foot upon the ground, nor spit into a fire, nor throw any water upon it, even though it were consuming a whole city. Who can express the perfections of the Almighty? say the Mahometans. Even the noblest of his works, if compared to him, are but dust and rubbish. How much more must human conception fall short of his infinite perfections? His smile and favor renders men for ever happy; and to obtain it for your children, the best method is to cut off from them, while infants, a little bit of skin, about half the breadth of a farthing. Take two bits of cloth, say the Roman Catholics, about an inch or an inch and a half square, join them by the corners with two strings of pieces of tape about sixteen inches long, throw this over your head, and make one of the bits of cloth lie upon your breast, and the other upon your back, keeping them next your skin; there is not a better secret for recommending yourself to that infinite being, who exists from eternity to eternity.

The Getes, commonly called immortal, from their steady belief of the soul’s immortality, were genuine theists and unitarians. They affirmed Zamolxis, their deity, to be the only true God; and asserted the worship of all other nations to be addressed to mere fictions and chimeras. But were their religious principles any more refined, on account of these magnificent pretensions? Every sixth year they sacrificed a human victim, whom they sent as a messenger to their deity, in order to inform him of their wants and necessities. And when it thundered, they were so provoked, that, in order to return the defiance, they let fly arrows at him, and declined not the combat as unequal. Such at least is the account which Herodotus gives of the theism of the immortal Getes.

SECT. VIII: Flux and Reflux of Polytheism and Theism.

It is remarkable that the principles of religion have a kind of flux and reflux in the human mind, and that men have a natural tendency to rise from idolatry to theism, and to sink again from theism into idolatry. The vulgar, that is, indeed, all mankind, a few excepted, being ignorant and unstructed, never elevate their contemplation to the heavens, or penetrate by their disquisitions into the secret structure of vegetable or animal bodies; so as to discover a supreme mind or original providence, which bestowed order on every part of nature. They consider these admirable works in a more confined and selfish view; and finding their own happiness and misery to depend on the secret influence and unforeseen concurrence of external objects, they regard, with perpetual attention, the unknown causes which govern all these natural events, and distribute pleasure and pain, good and ill, by their powerful but silent operation. The unknown causes are still appealed to on every emergency; and in this general appearance or confused image are the perpetual objects of human hopes and fears, wishes and apprehensions. By degrees, the active imagination of men, uneasy in this abstract conception of objects about which it is incessantly employed, begins to render them more particular, and to clothe them in shapes more suitable to its natural comprehension. It represents them to be sensible, intelligent beings, like mankind; actuated by love and hatred, and flexible by gifts and entreaties, by prayers and sacrifices. Hence the origin of religion: And hence the origin of idolatry or polytheism.

But the same anxious concern for happiness which begets the idea of these invisible, intelligent powers, allows not mankind to remain long in the first simple conception of them as powerful but limited beings, masters of human fate, but slaves to destiny and the course of nature. Men’s exaggerated praises and compliments still swell their idea upon them; and elevating their deities to the utmost bounds of perfection, at last beget the attributes of unity and infinity, simplicity and spirituality. Such refined ideas, being somewhat disproportioned to vulgar comprehension, remain not long in their original purity; but require to be supported by the notion of inferior mediators or subordinate agents, which interpose between mankind and their supreme deity. These demi-gods or middle beings, partaking more of human nature and being more familiar to us, become the chief objects of devotion, and gradually recall that idolatry which had been formerly banished by the ardent prayers and panegyrics of timorous and indigent mortals. But as these idolatrous religions fall every day into grosser and more vulgar conceptions, they at last destroy themselves, and, by the vile representations which they form of their deities, make the tide turn again towards theism. But so great is the propensity, in this alternate revolution of human sentiments, to return back to idolatry, that the utmost precaution is not able effectually to prevent it. And of this, some theists, particularly the Jews and Mahometans, have been sensible; as appears by their banishing all the arts of statuary and painting, and not allowing the representations even of human figures to be taken by marble or colors, lest the common infirmity of mankind should thence produce idolatry. The feeble apprehensions of men cannot be satisfied with conceiving their deity as a pure spirit and perfect intelligence; and yet their natural terrors keep them from imputing to him the least shadow of limitation and imperfection. They fluctuate between these opposite sentiments. The same infirmity still drags them downwards, from an omnipotent and spiritual deity, to a limited and corporeal one, and from a corporeal and limited deity to a statue or visible representation. The same endeavor at elevation still pushes them upwards, from the statue or material image to the invisible power; and from the invisible power to an infinitely perfect deity, the creator and sovereign of the universe.

SECT. IX: Comparison of these Religions with regard to Persecution and Toleration.

Polytheism or idolatrous worship, being founded entirely in vulgar traditions, is liable to this great inconvenience, that any practice or opinion, however barbarous or corrupted, may be authorized by it; and full scope is left for knavery to impose on credulity till morals and humanity be expelled from the religious systems of mankind. At the same time, idolatry is attended with this evident advantage, that, by limiting the powers and functions of its deities, it naturally admits the Gods of other sects and nations to a share of divinity, and renders all the various deities, as well as rites, ceremonies, or traditions, compatible with each other. Theism is opposite both in its advantages and disadvantages. As that system supposes one sole deity, the perfection of reason and goodness, it should, if justly prosecuted, banish everything frivolous, unreasonable, or inhuman from religious worship, and set before men the most illustrious example, as well as the most commanding motives of justice and benevolence. These mighty advantages are not indeed over-balanced (for that is not possible), but somewhat diminished, by inconveniences, which arise from the vices and prejudices of mankind. While one sole object of devotion is acknowleged, the worship of other deities is regarded as absurd and impious. Nay, this unity of object seems naturally to require the unity of faith and ceremonies, and furnishes designing men with a pretence for representing their adversaries as profane, and the objects of divine as well as human vengeance. For as each sect is positive that its own faith and worship are entirely acceptable to the deity, and as no one can conceive that the same being should be pleased with different and opposite rites and principles, the several sects fall naturally into animosity, and mutually discharge on each other that sacred zeal and rancour, the most furious and implacable of all human passions.

The tolerating spirit of idolaters, both in ancient and modern times, is very obvious to anyone who is the least conversant in the writings of historians or travellers. When the oracle of Delphi was asked, what rites or worship was most acceptable to the Gods? “Those legally established in each city," replied the oracle. Even priests, in those ages, could, it seems, allow salvation to those of a different communion. The Romans commonly adopted the Gods of the conquered people; and never disputed the attributes of those local and national deities in whose territories they resided. The religious wars and persecutions of the Egyptian idolaters are indeed an exception to this rule; but are accounted for by ancient authors from reasons singular and remarkable. Different species of animals were the deities of the different sects among the Egyptians; and the deities being in continual war, engaged their votaries in the same contention. The worshippers of dogs could not long remain in peace with the adorers of cats or wolves. But where that reason took not place, the Egyptian superstition was not so incompatible as is commonly imagined; since we learn from Herodotus, that very large contributions were given by Amasis towards rebuilding the temple of Delphi.

The intolerance of almost all religions which have maintained the unity of God is as remarkable as the contrary principle of polytheists. The implacable narrow spirit of the Jews is well known. Mahometanism set out with still more bloody principles; and even to this day, deals out damnation, though not fire and faggot, to all other sects. And if, among Christians, the English and Dutch have embraced the principles of toleration, this singularity has proceeded from the steady resolution of the civil magistrate, in opposition to the continued efforts of priest and bigots.

The disciples of Zoroaster shut the doors of heaven against all but the Magians. Nothing could more obstruct the progress of the Persian conquests than the furious zeal of that nation against the temples and images of the Greeks. And after the overthrow of that empire, we find Alexander, as a polytheist, immediately re-establishing the worship of the Babylonians, which their former princes, as monotheists, had carefully abolished. Even the blind and devoted attachment of that conqueror to the Greek superstition hindered not but he himself sacrificed according to the Babylonish rites and ceremonies.

So sociable is polytheism, that the utmost fierceness and aversion which it meets with in an opposite religion is scarcely able to disgust it, and keep it at a distance. Augustus praised extremely the reserve of his grandson, Caius Cæsar, when this latter prince, passing by Jerusalem, deigned not to sacrifice according to the Jewish law. But for what reason did Augustus so much approve of this conduct? Only because that religion was by the Pagans esteemed ignoble and barbarous.

I may venture to affirm that few corruptions of idolatry and polytheism are more pernicious to political society than this corruption of theism, when carried to the utmost height. The human sacrifices of the Carthaginians, Mexicans, and many barbarous nations, scarcely exceed the Inquisition and persecutions of Rome and Madrid. For besides that the effusion of blood may not be so great in the former case as in the latter; besides this, I say, the human victims, being chosen by lot, or by some exterior signs, affect not in so considerable a degree the rest of the society. Whereas virtue, knowledge, love of liberty, are the qualities which call down the fatal vengeance of inquisitors; and when expelled, leave the society in the most shameful ignorance, corruption, and bondage. The illegal murder of one man by a tyrant is more pernicious than the death of a thousand by pestilence, famine, or any undistinguishing calamity.

In the temple of Diana at Aricia near Rome, whoever murdered the present priest was legally entitled to be installed his successor. A very singular institution! For, however barbarous and bloody the common superstitions often are to the laity, they usually turn to the advantage of the holy order.

SECT. X: With regard to Courage or Abasement.

From the comparison of theism and idolatry, we may form some other observations, which will also confirm the vulgar observation that the corruption of the best things gives rise to the worst.

Where the deity is represented as infinitely superior to mankind, this belief, though altogether just, is apt, when joined with superstitious terrors, to sink the human mind into the lowest submission and abasement, and to represent the monkish virtues of mortification, penance, humility, and passive suffering, as the only qualities which are acceptable to him. But where the Gods are conceived to be only a little superior to mankind, and to have been, many of them, advanced from that inferior rank, we are more at our ease in our addresses to them, and may even, without profaneness, aspire sometimes to a rivalship and emulation of them. Hence activity, spirit, courage, magnanimity, love of liberty, and all the virtues which aggrandise a people.

The heroes in paganism correspond exactly to the saints in popery and holy dervises in Mahometanism. The place of Hercules, Theseus, Hector, Romulus, is now supplied by Dominic, Francis, Anthony, and Benedict. Instead of the destruction of monsters, the subduing of tyrants, the defence of our native country; whippings and fastings, cowardice and humility, abject submission and slavish obedience, are become the means of obtaining celestial honors among mankind.

One great incitement to the pious Alexander in his warlike expeditions was his rivalship of Hercules and Bacchus, whom he justly pretended to have excelled. Brasidas, that generous and noble Spartan, after falling in battle, had heroic honors paid him by the inhabitants of Amphipolis, whose defence he had embraced. And in general, all founders of states and colonies amongst the Greeks were raised to this inferior rank of divinity, by those who reaped the benefit of their labors.

This gave rise to the observation of Machiavel, that the doctrines of the Christian religion (meaning the Catholic; for he knew no other) which recommend only passive courage and suffering, had subdued the spirit of mankind, and had fitted them for slavery and subjection. An observation which would certainly be just, were there not many other circumstances in human society which control the genius and character of a religion.

Brasidas seized a mouse, and being bit by it, let it go. “There is nothing so contemptible,” says he, “but what may be safe, if it has but courage to defend itself.” Bellarmine patiently and humbly allowed the fleas and other odious vermin to prey upon him. “We shall have heaven,” said he, “to reward us for our sufferings; but these poor creatures have nothing but the enjoyment of the present life.” Such difference is there between the maxims of a Greek hero and a Catholic saint.

SECT. XI: With regard to Reason or Absurdity.

Here is another observation to the same purpose, and a new proof that the corruption of the best things begets the worst. If we examine, without prejudice, the ancient heathen mythology, as contained in the poets, we shall not discover in it any such monstrous absurdity as we may be apt at first to apprehend. Where is the difficulty of conceiving that the same powers or principles, whatever they were, which formed this visible world, men and animals, produced also a species of intelligent creatures, of more refined substance and greater authority than the rest? That these creatures may be capricious, revengeful, passionate, voluptuous, is easily conceived; nor is any circumstance more apt, among ourselves, to engender such vices, than the licence of absolute authority. And in short, the whole mythological system is so natural, that in the vast variety of planets and worlds, contained in this universe, it seems more than probable that, somewhere or other, it is really carried into execution.

The chief objection to it with regard to this planet, is that it is not ascertained by any just reason or authority. The ancient tradition, insisted on by heathen priests and theologers, is but a weak foundation; and transmitted also such a number of contradictory reports, supported, all of them, by equal authority, that it became absolutely impossible to fix a preference amongst them. A few volumes, therefore, must contain all the polemical writings of pagan priests. Their whole theology must consist more of traditional stories and superstitious practices than of philosophical argument and controversy.

But where theism forms the fundamental principle of any popular religion, that tenet is so conformable to sound reason, that philosophy is apt to incorporate itself with such a system of theology. And if the other dogmas of that system be contained in a sacred book, such as the Alcoran, or be determined by any visible authority, like that of the Roman pontif, speculative reasoners naturally carry on their assent, and embrace a theory which has been instilled into them by their earliest education, and which also possesses some degree of consistence and uniformity. But as these appearances are sure, all of them, to prove deceitful, philosophy will soon find herself very unequally yoked with her new associate; and instead of regulating each principle, as they advance together, she is at every turn perverted to serve the purposes of superstition. For besides the unavoidable incoherences which must be reconciled and adjusted, one may safely affirm that all popular theology, especially the scholastic, has a kind of appetite for absurdity and contradiction. If that theology went not beyond reason and common sense, her doctrines would appear too easy and familiar. Amazement must of necessity be raised; mystery affected; darkness and obscurity sought after; and a foundation of merit afforded the devout votaries, who desire an opportunity of subduing their rebellious reason, by the belief of the most unintelligible sophisms.

Ecclesiastical history sufficiently confirms these reflexions. When a controversy is started, some people pretend always with certainty to foretell the issue. Whichever opinion, say they, is most contrary to plain sense is sure to prevail, even where the general interest of the system requires not that decision. Though the reproach of heresy may for some time be bandied about among the disputants, it always rests at last on the side of reason. Any one, it is pretended, that has but learning enough of this kind to know the definition of Arian, Pelagian, Erastian, Socinian, Sabellian, Eutychian, Nestorian, Monothelite, etc., not to mention Protestant, whose fate is yet uncertain, will be convinced of the truth of this observation. It is thus a system becomes more absurd in the end, merely from its being reasonable and philosophical in the beginning.

To oppose the torrent of scholastic religion by such feeble maxims as these: that “it is impossible for the same to be and not to be”, that “the whole is greater than a part”, that “two and three make five”, is pretending to stop the ocean with a bull-rush. Will you set up profane reason against sacred mystery? No punishment is great enough for your impiety. And the same fires which were kindled for heretics will serve also for the destruction of philosophers.

SECT. XII: With regard to Doubt or Conviction.

We meet every day with people so sceptical with regard to history, that they assert it impossible for any nation ever to believe such absurd principles as those of Greek and Egyptian paganism; and at the same time so dogmatical with regard to religion, that they think the same absurdities are to be found in no other communion. Cambyses entertained like prejudices; and very impiously ridiculed, and even wounded, Apis, the great God of the Egyptians, who appeared to his profane senses nothing but a large spotted bull. But Herodotus judiciously ascribes this sally of passion to a real madness or disorder of the brain. Otherwise, says the historian, he never would have openly affronted any established worship. For on that head, continues he, every nation are best satisfied with their own, and think they have the advantage over every other nation.

It must be allowed that the Roman Catholics are a very learned sect, and that no one communion but that of the Church of England can dispute their being the most learned of all the Christian Churches. Yet Averroes, the famous Arabian, who, no doubt, has heard of the Egyptian superstitions, declares that of all religions the most absurd and nonsensical is that whose votaries eat, after having created, their deity.

I believe, indeed, that there is no tenet in all paganism which would give so fair a scope to ridicule as this of the real presence. For it is so absurd, that it eludes the force of all argument. There are even some pleasant stories of that kind, which, though somewhat profane, are commonly told by the Catholics themselves. One day, a priest, it is said, gave inadvertently, instead of the sacrament, a counter, which had by accident fallen among the holy wafers. The communicant waited patiently for some time, expecting it would dissolve on his tongue; but finding that it still remained entire, he took it off. “I wish,” cried he to the priest, “you have not committed some mistake. “I wish you have not given me God the Father: He is so hard and tough there is no swallowing him.”

A famous general, at that time in the Muscovite service, having come to Paris for the recovery of his wounds, brought along with him a young Turk, whom he had taken prisoner. Some of the doctors of the Sorbonne (who are altogether as positive as the dervises of Constantinople), thinking it a pity that the poor Turk should be damned for want of instruction, solicited Mustapha very hard to turn Christian, and promised him, for his encouragement, plenty of good wine in this world, and paradise in the next. These allurements were too powerful to be resisted; and therefore, having been well instructed and catechised, he at last agreed to receive the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper. The priest, however, to make everything sure and solid, still continued his instructions: and began the next day with the usual question, "How many Gods are there?" "None at all," replies Benedict; for that was his new name. "How! None at all!" cries the priest. "To be sure," said the honest proselyte. "You have told me all along that there is but one God: And yesterday I ate him."

Such are the doctrines of our brethren the Catholics. But to these doctrines we are so accustomed, that we never wonder at them, though, in a future age, it will probably become difficult to persuade some nations that any human, two-legged creature could ever embrace such principles. And it is a thousand to one but these nations themselves shall have something full as absurd in their own creed, to which they will give a most implicit and most religious assent.

I lodged once at Paris in the same hotel with an ambassador from Tunis, who, having passed some years at London, was returning home that way. One day I observed his Moorish excellency diverting himself under the porch with surveying the splendid equipages that drove along; when there chanced to pass that way some Capucin friars, who had never seen a Turk; as he, on his part, though accustomed to the European dresses, had never seen the grotesque figure of a Capucin. And there is no expressing the mutual admiration with which they inspired each other. Had the chaplain of the embassy entered into a dispute with these Franciscans, their reciprocal surprise had been of the same nature. Thus all mankind stand staring at one another; and there is no beating it out of their heads, that the turban of the African is not just as good or as bad a fashion as the cowl of the European. "He is a very honest man", said the Prince of Sallee, speaking of de Ruyter: "It is a pity he were a Christian."

"How can you worship leeks and onions?" we shall suppose a Sorbonnist to say to a priest of Sais. "If we worship them", replies the latter, "at least, we do not, at the same time, eat them." "But what strange objects of adoration are cats and monkeys?" says the learned doctor. "They are at least as good as the relics or rotten bones of martyrs," answers his no less learned antagonist. "Are you not mad," insists the Catholic, "to cut one another's throat about the preference of a cabbage or a cucumber?" "Yes," says the pagan; "I allow it, if you will confess that those are still madder who fight about the preference among volumes of sophistry, ten thousand of which are not equal in value to one cabbage or cucumber."

Every bystander will easily judge (but unfortunately the bystanders are few) that if nothing were requisite to establish any popular system but exposing the absurdities of other systems, every votary of every superstition could give a sufficient reason for his blind and bigotted attachment to the principles in which he has been educated. But without so extensive a knowledge on which to ground this assurance (and perhaps better without it) there is not wanting a sufficient stock of religious zeal and faith amongst mankind. Diodorus Siculus gives a remarkable instance to this purpose, of which he was himself an eyewitness. While Egypt lay under the greatest terror of the Roman name, a legionary soldier having inadvertently been guilty of the sacriligious impiety of killing a cat, the whole people rose upon him with the utmost fury, and all the efforts of the prince were not able to save him. The senate and people of Rome, I am persuaded, would not then have been so delicate with regard to their national deities. They very frankly, a little after that time, voted Augustus a place in the celestial mansions; and would have dethroned every God in heaven for his sake, had he seemed to desire it. "Presens divus habebitur Augustus," says Horace. That is a very important point; and in other nations and other ages, the same circumstance has not been esteemed altogether indifferent.

"Notwithstanding the sanctity of our holy religion," says Tully, "no crime is more common with us than sacrilege." But was it ever heard of, that an Egyptian violated the temple of a cat, an ibis, or a crocodile? "There is no torture an Egyptian would not undergo", says the same author in another place, "rather than injure an ibis, an aspic, a cat, a dog, or a crocodile." Thus it is strictly true what Dryden observes:

- "Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,
- Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
- In his defence his servants are as bold,
- As if he had been born of beaten gold."

- Absalom and Achitophel.

Nay, the baser the materials are of which the divinity is composed, the greater devotion is he likely to excite in the breasts of his deluded votaries. They exult in their shame, and make a merit with their deity, in braving for his sake all the ridicule and contumely of his enemies. Ten thousand Crusaders enlist themselves under the holy banners, and even openly triumph in those parts of their religion which their adversaries regard as the most reproachful.

There occurs, I own, a difficulty in the Egyptian system of theology, as indeed few systems are entirely free from difficulties. It is evident, from their method of propagation, that a couple of cats, in fifty years, would stock a whole kingdom; and if that religious veneration were still paid them, it would, in twenty more, not only be easier in Egypt to find a God than a man, which Petronius says was the case in some parts of Italy, but the Gods must at last entirely starve the men, and leave themselves neither priests nor votaries remaining. It is probable, therefore, that this wise nation, the most celebrated in antiquity for prudence and sound policy, foreseeing such dangerous consequences, reserved all their worship for the full-grown divinities, and used the freedom to drown the holy spawn or little sucking Gods, without any scruple or remorse. And thus the practice of warping the tenets of religion, in order to serve temporal interests, is not by any means to be regarded as an invention of these latter ages.

The learned, philosophical Varro, discoursing of religion, pretends not to deliver anything beyond probabilities and appearances. Such was his good sense and moderation. But the passionate, the zealous Augustin, insults the noble Roman on his scepticism and reserve, and professes the most thorough belief and assurance. A heathen poet, however, contemporary with the saint, absurdly esteems the religious system of the latter so false, that even the credulity of children, he says, could not engage them to believe it.

Is it strange, when mistakes are so common, to find everyone positive and dogmatical; and that the zeal often rises in proportion to the error? “Moverunt,” says Spartian, “et ea tempestate Judæi bellum quod vetabantur mutilare genitalia.”

If ever there was a nation or a time in which the public religion lost all authority over mankind, we might expect that infidelity in Rome during the Ciceronian age would openly have erected its throne, and that Cicero himself, in every speech and action, would have been its most declared abettor. But it appears that whatever sceptical liberties that great man might use in his writings or in philosophical conversation, he yet avoided, in the common conduct of life, the imputation of deism and profaneness. Even in his own family, and to his wife Terentia, whom he highly trusted, he was willing to appear a devout religionist; and there remains a letter, addressed to her, in which he seriously desires her to offer sacrifice to Apollo and Æsculapius, in gratitude for the recovery of his health.

Pompey's devotion was much more sincere. In all his conduct, during the civil wars, he paid a great regard to auguries, dreams, and prophesies. Augustus was tainted with superstition of every kind. As it is reported of Milton, that his poetical genius never flowed with ease and abundance in the spring; so Augustus observed that his own genius for dreaming never was so perfect during that season, nor was so much to be relied on, as during the rest of the year. That great and able emperor was also extremely uneasy when he happened to change his shoes, and put the right foot shoe on the left foot. In short, it cannot be doubted but the votaries of the established superstition of antiquity were as numerous in every state as those of the modern religion are at present. Its influence was as universal, though it was not so great. As many people gave their assent to it, though that assent was not seemingly so strong, precise, and affirmative.

We may observe that, notwithstanding the dogmatical, imperious style of all superstition, the convinction of the religionists, in all ages, is more affected than real, and scarcely ever approaches in any degree to that solid belief and persuasion which governs us in the common affairs of life. Men dare not avow, even to their own hearts, the doubts which they entertain on such subjects. They make a merit of implicit faith, and disguise to themselves their real infidelity by the strongest asseverations and most positive bigotry. But nature is too hard for all their endeavors, and suffers not the obscure, glimmering light afforded in those shadowy regions, to equal the strong impressions made by common sense and by experience. The usual course of men's conduct belies their words, and shows that the assent in these matters is some unaccountable operation of the mind between disbelief and conviction, but approaching much nearer the former than the latter.

Since, therefore, the mind of man appears of so loose and unsteady a contexture that, even at present, when so many persons find an interest in continually employing on it the chisel and the hammer, yet are they not able to engrave theological tenets with any lasting impression; how much more must this have been the case in ancient times, when the retainers to the holy function were so much fewer in comparison? No wonder that the appearances were then very inconsistent, and that men, on some occasions, might seem determined infidels, and enemies to the established religion, without being so in reality; or, at least, without knowing their own minds in that particular.

Another cause which rendered the ancient religions much looser than the modern is that the former were traditional and the latter are scriptural; and the tradition in the former was complex, contradictory, and, on many occasions, doubtful; so that it could not possibly be reduced to any standard and canon, or afford any determinate articles of faith. The stories of the Gods were numberless, like the popish legends; and though everyone, almost, believed a part of these stories, yet no one could believe or know the whole; while, at the same time, all must have acknowledged that no one part stood on a better foundation than the rest. The traditions of different cities and nations were also, on many occasions, directly opposite; and no reason could be assigned for preferring one to the other. And as there was an infinite number of stories, with regard to which tradition was nowise positive, the gradation was insensible, from the most fundamental articles of faith, to those loose and precarious fictions. The pagan religion, therefore, seemed to vanish like a cloud, whenever one approached to it, and examined it piecemeal. It could never be ascertained by any fixed dogmas and principles. And though this did not convert the generality of mankind from so absurd a faith; for when will the people be reasonable? yet it made them falter and hesitate more in maintaining their principles, and was even apt to produce, in certain dispositions of mind, some practices and opinions which had the appearance of determined infidelity.

To which we may add, that the fables of the pagan religion were, of themselves, light, easy, and familiar; without devils, or seas of brimstone, or any object that could much terrify the imagination. Who could forbear smiling, when he thought of the loves of Mars and Venus, or the amorous frolics of Jupiter and Pan? In this respect it was a true poetical religion, if it had not rather too much levity for the graver kinds of poetry. We find that it has been adopted by modern bards; nor have these talked with greater freedom and irreverence of the Gods whom they regarded as fictions, than the ancient did of the real objects of their devotion.

The inference is by no means just, that because a system of religion has made no deep impression on the minds of a people, it must therefore have been positively rejected by all men of common sense, and that opposite principles, in spite of the prejudices of education, were generally established by argument and reasoning. I know not but a contrary inference may be more probable. The less importunate and assuming any species of superstition appears, the less will it provoke men’s spleen and indignation, or engage them into enquiries concerning its foundation and origin. This in the mean time is obvious, that the empire of all religious faith over the understanding is wavering and uncertain, subject to every variety of humour, and dependent on the present incidents, which strike the imagination. The difference is only in the degrees. An ancient will place a stroke of impiety and one of superstition alternately, throughout a whole discourse. A modern often thinks in the same way, though he may be more guarded in his expressions.

Lucian tells us expressly, that whoever believed not the most ridiculous fables of paganism was deemed by the people profane and impious. To what purpose, indeed, would that agreeable author have employed the whole force of his wit and satire against the national religion, had not that religion been generally believed by his countrymen and contemporaries?

Livy acknowledges, as frankly as any divine would at present, the common incredulity of his age; but then he condemns it as severely. And who can imagine that a national superstition, which could delude so great a man, would not also impose on the generality of the people?

The Stoics bestowed many magnificent and even impious epithets on their sage; that he alone was rich, free, a king, and equal to the immortal Gods. They forgot to add that he was not superior in prudence and understanding to an old woman. For surely nothing can be more pitiful than the sentiments which that sect entertained with regard to religious matters; while they seriously agree with the common augurs that when a raven croaks from the left it is a good omen, but a bad one when a rook makes a noise from the same quarter. Panætius was the only Stoic among the Greeks who so much as doubted with regard to auguries and divinations. Marcus Antoninus tells us that he himself had received many admonitions from the Gods in his sleep. It is true, Epictetus forbids us to regard the language of rooks and ravens, but it is not that they do not speak truth: it is only because they can foretell nothing but the breaking of our neck or the forfeiture of our estate, which are circumstances, says he, that nowise concern us. Thus the Stoics join a philosophical enthusiasm to a religious superstition. The force of their mind, being all turned to the side of morals, unbent itself in that of religion.

Plato introduces Socrates affirming that the accusation of impiety raised against him was owing entirely to his rejecting such fables as those of Saturn’s castrating his father, Uranus, and Jupiter’s dethroning Saturn. Yet, in a subsequent dialogue, Socrates confesses that the doctrine of the mortality of the soul was the received opinion of the people. Is there here any contradiction? Yes, surely. But the contradiction is not in Plato; it is in the people, whose religious principles in general are always composed of the most discordant parts, especially in an age when superstition sat so easy and light upon them.

The same Cicero who affected in his own family to appear a devout religionist, makes no scruple, in a public court of judicature, of treating the doctrine of a future state as a ridiculous fable to which nobody could give any attention. Sallust represents Cæsar as speaking the same language in the open senate.

But that all these freedoms implied not a total and universal infidelity and scepticism amongst the people is too apparent to be denied. Though some parts of the national religion hung loose upon the minds of men, other parts adhered more closely to them. And it was the great business of the sceptical philosophers to show that there was no more foundation for one than for the other. This is the artifice of Cotta in the dialogues concerning the nature of the Gods. He refutes the whole system of mythology by leading the orthodox, gradually, from the more momentous stories, which were believed, to the more frivolous, which everyone ridiculed. From the gods to the goddesses; from the goddesses to the nymphs; from the nymphs to the fawns and satyrs. His master, Carneades, had employed the same method of reasoning.

Upon the whole, the greatest and most observable differences between a traditional mythological religion and a systematical scholastical one, are two. The former is often more reasonable, as consisting only of a multitude of stories, which, however groundless, imply no express absurdity and demonstrative contradiction; and sits also so easy and light on men’s minds, that, though it may be as universally received, it happily makes no such deep impression on the affections and understanding.

SECT. XIII: Impious conceptions of the divine nature in popular religions of both kinds.

The primary religion of mankind arises chiefly from an anxious fear of future events; and what ideas will naturally be entertained of invisible, unknown powers, while men lie under dismal apprehensions of any kind, may easily be conceived. Every image of vengeance, severity, cruelty, and malice must occur, and must augment the ghastliness and horror which oppresses the amazed religionist. A panic having once seized the mind, the active fancy still farther multiplies the objects of terror; while that profound darkness, or, what is worse, that glimmering light, with which we are environed, represents the spectres of divinity under the most dreadful appearances imaginable. And no idea of perverse wickedness can be framed which those terrified devotees do not readily, without scruple, apply to their deity.

This appears the natural state of religion, when surveyed in one light. But if we consider, on the other hand, that spirit of praise and eulogy which necessarily has place in all religions, and which is the consequence of these very terrors, we must expect a quite contrary system of theology to prevail. Every virtue, every excellence, must be ascribed to the divinity, and no exaggeration will be deemed sufficient to reach those perfections with which he is endowed. Whatever strains of panegyric can be invented, are immediately embraced, without consulting any arguments or phænemena. It is esteemed a sufficient confirmation of them that they give us more magnificent ideas of the divine object of our worship and adoration.

Here, therefore, is a kind of contradiction between the different principles of human nature which enter into religion. Our natural terrors present the notion of a devilish and malicious deity: our propensity to praise leads us to acknowledge an excellent and divine. And the influence of these opposite principles is various, according to the different situation of the human understanding.

In very barbarous and ignorant nations, such as the Africans and Indians, nay, even the Japanese, who can form no extensive ideas of power and knowledge, worship may be paid to a being whom they confess to be wicked and detestable; though they may be cautious, perhaps, of pronouncing this judgment of him in public, or in his temple, where he may be supposed to hear their reproaches.

Such rude, imperfect ideas of the divinity adhere long to all idolaters; and it may safely be affirmed that the Greeks themselves never got entirely rid of them. It is remarked by Xenophon, in praise of Socrates, that this philosopher assented not to the vulgar opinion, which supposed the gods to know some things and be ignorant of others. He maintained that they knew everything; what was done, said, or even thought. But as this was a strain of philosophy much above the conception of his countrymen, we need not be surprised if very frankly, in their books and conversation, they blamed the deities whom they worshipped in their temples. It is observable that Herodotus in particular scruples not, in many passages, to ascribe envy to the Gods; a sentiment of all others the most suitable to a mean and devilish nature. The pagan hymns, however, sung in public worship, contained nothing but epithets of praise, even while the actions ascribed to the Gods were the most barbarous and detestable. When Timotheus, the poet, recited a hymn to Diana, where he enumerated, with the greatest eulogies, all the actions and attributes of that cruel, capricious goddess, “May your daughter,” said one present, “become such as the deity whom you celebrate.”

But as men farther exalt their idea of their divinity, it is their notion of his power and knowledge only, not of his goodness, which is improved. On the contrary, in proportion to the supposed extent of his science and authority, their terrors naturally augment; while they believe that no secrecy can conceal them from his scrutiny, and that even the inmost recesses of their breast lie open before him. They must then be careful not to form expressly any sentiment of blame and disapprobation. All must be applause, ravishment, ecstacy. And while their gloomy apprehensions make them ascribe to him measures of conduct which, in human creatures, would be highly blamed, they must still affect to praise and admire that conduct in the object of their devotional addresses. Thus it may safely be affirmed that popular religions are really, in the conception of their more vulgar votaries, a species of dæmonism; and the higher the deity is exalted in power and knowledge, the lower of course is he depressed in goodness and benevolence, whatever epithets of praise may be bestowed on him by his amazed adorers. Among idolaters, the words may be false, and belie the secret opinion. But among more exalted religionists, the opinion itself often contracts a kind of falsehood, and belies the inward sentiment. The heart secretly detests such measures of cruel and implacable vengeance, but the judgment dares not but pronounce them perfect and adorable. And the additional misery of this inward struggle aggravates all the other terrors by which these unhappy victims to superstition are for ever haunted.

Lucian observes that a young man who reads the history of the gods in Homer or Hesiod, and finds their factions, wars, injustice, incest, adultery, and other immoralities so highly celebrated, is much surprised afterwards, when he comes into the world, to observe that punishments are by law inflicted on the same actions which he had been taught to ascribe to superior beings. The contradiction is still perhaps stronger between the representations given us by some later religions and our natural ideas of generosity, lenity, impartiality, and justice; and in proportion to the multiplied terrors of these religions, the barbarous conceptions of the divinity are multiplied upon us. Nothing can preserve untainted the genuine principles of morals in our judgment of human conduct but the absolute necessity of these principles to the existence of society. If common conception can indulge princes in a system of ethics somewhat different from that which should regulate private persons, how much more those superior beings whose attributes, views, and nature are so totally unknown to us? Sunt superis sua jura. The gods have maxims of justice peculiar to themselves.

SECT. XIV: Bad influence of popular religions on morality.

Here I cannot forbear observing a fact which may be worth the attention of such as make human nature the object of their enquiry. It is certain that in every religion, however sublime the verbal definition which it gives of its divinity, many of the votaries, perhaps the greatest number, will still seek the divine favor, not by virtue and good morals, which alone can be acceptable to a perfect being, but either by frivolous observances, by intemperate zeal, by rapturous ecstasies, or by the belief of mysterious and absurd opinions. The least part of the Sadder, as well as of the Pentateuch, consists in precepts of morality; and we may be assured also that that part was always the least observed and regarded. When the old Romans were attacked with a pestilence, they never ascribed their sufferings to their vices, or dreamed of repentance and amendment. They never thought that they were the general robbers of the world, whose ambition and avarice made desolate the earth and reduced opulent nations to want and beggary. They only created a dictator, in order to drive a nail into a door, and by that means they thought that they had sufficiently appeased their incensed deity.

In Ægina, one faction, forming a conspiracy, barbarously and treacherously assassinated seven hundred of their fellow citizens; and carried their fury so far that, one miserable fugitive having fled to the temple, they cut off his hands, by which he clung to the gates, and carrying him out of holy ground, immediately murdered him. “By this impiety”, says Herodotus (not by the other many cruel assassinations), “they offended the gods, and contracted an inexpiable guilt.”

Nay, if we should suppose, what seldom happens, that a popular religion were found, in which it was expressly declared that nothing but morality could gain the divine favor; if an order of priests were instituted to inculcate this opinion in daily sermons and with all the arts of persuasion; yet so inveterate are the people’s prejudices, that, for want of some other superstition, they would make the very attendance on these sermons the essentials of religion, rather than place them in virtue and good morals. The sublime prologue of Zaleucus’s laws inspired not the Locrians, so far as we can learn, with any sounder notions of the measures of acceptance with the deity than were familiar to the other Greeks.

This observation, then, holds universally. But still one may be at some loss to account for it. It is not sufficient to observe that the people everywhere degrade their deities into a similitude with themselves, and consider them merely as a species of human creatures, somewhat more potent and intelligent. This will not remove the difficulty. For there is no man so stupid, as that, judging by his natural reason, he would not esteem virtue and honesty the most valuable qualities which any person could possess. Why not ascribe the same sentiment to his deity? Why not make all religion, or the chief part of it, to consist in these attainments?

Nor is it satisfactory to say that the practice of morality is more difficult than that of superstition, and is therefore rejected. For, not to mention the excessive penances of the Brachmans and Talapoins, it is certain that the Rhamadan of the Turks, during which the poor wretches, for many days, often in the hottest months of the year, and in some of the hottest climates of the world, remain without eating or drinking from the rising to the setting sun. This Rhamadan, I say, must be more severe than the practice of any moral duty, even to the most vicious and depraved of mankind. The four lents of the Muscovites, and the austerities of some Roman Catholics, appear more disagreeable than meekness and benevolence. In short, all virtue, when men are reconciled to it by ever so little practice, is agreeable. All superstition is for ever odious and burdensome.

Perhaps the following account may be received as a true solution of the difficulty. The duties which a man performs as a friend or parent seem merely owing to his benefactor or children; nor can he be wanting to these duties without breaking through all the ties of nature and morality. A strong inclination may prompt him to the performance. A sentiment of order and moral beauty joins its force to these natural ties; and the whole man, if truly virtuous, is drawn to his duty without any effort or endeavour. Even with regard to the virtues which are more austere, and more founded on reflection, such as public spirit, filial duty, temperance, or integrity, the moral obligation, in our apprehension, removes all pretence to religious merit; and the virtuous conduct is deemed no more than what we owe to society and to ourselves. In all this a superstitious man finds nothing which he has properly performed for the sake of his deity, or which can peculiarly recommend him to the divine favor and protection. He considers not that the most genuine method of serving the divinity is by promoting the happiness of his creatures. He still looks out for some more immediate service of the supreme being, in order to allay those terrors with which he is haunted. And any practice recommended to him which either serves to no purpose in life, or offers the strongest violence to his natural inclinations, that practice he will the more readily embrace, on account of those very circumstances which should make him absolutely reject it. It seems the more purely religious because it proceeds from no mixture of any other motive or consideration. And if, for its sake, he sacrifices much of his ease and quiet, his claim of merit appears still to rise upon him in proportion to the zeal and devotion which he discovers. In restoring a loan or paying a debt his divinity is nowise beholden to him; because these acts of justice are what he was bound to perform, and what many would have performed were there no God in the universe. But if he fast a day, or give himself a sound whipping, this has a direct reference, in his opinion, to the service of God. No other motive could engage him to such austerities. By these distinguished marks of devotion he has now acquired the divine favor; and may expect, in recompense, protection and safety in this world and eternal happiness in the next.

Hence the greatest crimes have been found, in many instances, compatible with a superstitious piety and devotion. Hence it is justly regarded as unsafe to draw any certain inference in favor of a man's morals from the fervor or strictness of his religious exercises, even though he himself believe them sincere. Nay, it has been observed that enormities of the blackest dye have been rather apt to produce superstitious terrors, and increase the religious passion. Bomilcar, having formed a conspiracy for assassinating at once the whole senate of Carthage, and invading the liberties of his country, lost the opportunity, from a continual regard to omens and prophecies. "Those who undertake the most criminal and most dangerous enterprises are commonly the most superstitious;" as an ancient historian remarks on this occasion. Their devotion and spiritual faith rise with their fears. Catiline was not contented with the established deities and received rites of the national religion. His anxious terrors made him seek new inventions of this kind, which he never probably had dreamed of, had he remained a good citizen, and obedient to the laws of his country.

To which we may add that, even after the commission of crimes, there arise remorses and secret horrors, which give no rest to the mind, but make it have recourse to religious rites and ceremonies, as expiations of its offences. Whatever weakens or disorders the internal frame promotes the interests of superstition; and nothing is more destructive to them than a manly steady virtue, which either preserves us from disastrous, melancholy accidents, or teaches us to bear them. During such calm sunshine of the mind, these spectres of false divinity never make their appearance. On the other hand, while we abandon ourselves to the natural undisciplined suggestions of our timid and anxious hearts, every kind of barbarity is ascribed to the supreme Being, from the terrors with which we are agitated; and every kind of caprice, from the methods which we embrace in order to appease him. Barbarity, caprice; these qualities, however nominally disguised, we may universally observe, form the ruling character of the deity in popular religions. Even priests, instead of correcting these depraved ideas of mankind, have often been found ready to foster and encourage them. The more tremendous the divinity is represented, the more tame and submissive do men become to his ministers; and the more unaccountable the measures of acceptance required by him, the more necessary does it become to abandon our natural reason, and yield to their ghostly guidance and direction. Thus it may be allowed that the artifices of men aggravate our natural infirmities and follies of this kind, but never originally beget them. Their root strikes deeper into the mind, and springs from the essential and universal properties of human nature.

SECT. XV: General Corollary.

Though the stupidity of men, barbarous and uninstructed, be so great that they may not see a sovereign author in the more obvious works of nature, to which they are so much familiarized; yet it scarcely seems possible that any one of good understanding should reject that idea, when once it is suggested to him. A purpose, an intention, a design, is evident in everything; and when our comprehension is so far enlarged as to contemplate the first rise of this visible system, we must adopt, with the strongest conviction, the idea of some intelligent cause or author. The uniform maxims, too, which prevail throughout the whole frame of the universe, naturally, if not necessarily, lead us to conceive this intelligence as single and undivided, where the prejudices of education oppose not so reasonable a theory. Even the contrarieties of nature, by discovering themselves everywhere, become proofs of some consistent plan, and establish one single purpose or intention, however inexplicable and incomprehensible.

Good and ill are universally intermingled and confounded; happiness and misery, wisdom and folly, virtue and vice. Nothing is purely and entirely of a piece. All advantages are attended with disadvantages. An universal compensation prevails in all conditions of being and existence. And it is not possible for us, by our most chimerical wishes, to form the idea of a station or situation altogether desirable. The draughts of life, according to the poet's fiction, are always mixed from the vessels on each hand of Jupiter; or if any cup be presented altogether pure, it is drawn only, as the same poet tells us, from the left-handed vessel.

The more exquisite any good is, of which a small specimen is afforded us, the sharper is the evil allied to it; and few exceptions are found to this uniform law of nature. The most sprightly wit borders on madness; the highest effusions of joy produce the deepest melancholy; the most ravishing pleasures are attended with the most cruel lassitude and disgust; the most flattering hopes make way for the severest disappointments. And in general, no course of life has such safety (for happiness is not to be dreamed of) as the temperate and moderate, which maintains, as far as possible, a mediocrity and a kind of insensibility in everything.

As the good, the great, the sublime, the ravishing, are found eminently in the genuine principles of theism; it may be expected, from the analogy of nature, that the base, the absurd, the mean, the terrifying, will be discovered equally in religious fictions and chimeras.

The universal propensity to believe in invisible, intelligent power, if not an original instinct, being at least a general attendant of human nature, may be considered as a kind of mark or stamp, which the divine workman has set upon his work; and nothing surely can more dignify mankind than to be thus selected from all the other parts of the creation, and to bear the image or impression of the universal Creator. But consult this image, as it appears in the popular religions of the world. How is the deity disfigured in our representations of him! What caprice, absurdity, and immorality are attributed to him! How much is he degraded even below the character which we should naturally, in common life, ascribe to a man of sense and virtue!

What a noble privilege is it of human reason to attain the knowledge of the supreme Being; and, from the visible works of nature, be enabled to infer so sublime a principle as its supreme Creator? But turn the reverse of the medal. Survey most nations and most ages. Examine the religious principles which have, in fact, prevailed in the world. You will scarcely be persuaded that they are other than sick men's dreams; or perhaps will regard them more as the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape than the serious, positive, dogmatical asseverations of a being who dignifies himself with the name of rational.

Hear the verbal protestations of all men. Nothing they are so certain of as their religious tenets. Examine their lives. You will scarcely think that they repose the smallest confidence in them.

The greatest and truest zeal gives us no security against hypocrisy. The most open impiety is attended with a secret dread and compunction.

No theological absurdities so glaring as have not, sometimes, been embraced by men of the greatest and most cultivated understanding. No religious precepts so rigorous as have not been adopted by the most voluptuous and most abandoned of men.

Ignorance is the mother of Devotion: a maxim that is proverbial, and confirmed by general experience. Look out for a people entirely void of religion: if you find them at all, be assured that they are but few degrees removed from brutes.

What so pure as some of the morals included in some theological systems? What so corrupt as some of the practices to which these systems give rise?

The comfortable views exhibited by the belief of futurity are ravishing and delightful. But how quickly they vanish on the appearance of its terrors, which keep a more firm and durable possession of the human mind!

The whole is a riddle, an enigma, an inexplicable mystery. Doubt, uncertainty, suspense of judgment, appear the only result of our most accurate scrutiny concerning this subject. But such is the frailty of human reason, and such the irresistible contagion of opinion, that even this deliberate doubt could scarcely be upheld, did we not enlarge our view, and, opposing one species of superstition to another, set them a quarrelling; while we ourselves, during their fury and contention, happily make our escape into the calm, though obscure, regions of philosophy.

DISSERTATION II. OF THE PASSIONS.

SECT. I.

1. SOME objects produce immediately an agreeable sensation, by the original structure of our organs, and are thence denominated GOOD; as others, from their immediate disagreeable sensation, acquire the appellation of EVIL. Thus moderate warmth is agreeable and good; excessive heat painful and evil.

SOME objects again, by being naturally conformable or contrary to passion, excite an agreeable or painful sensation; and are thence called Good or Evil. The punis••ent of an adversary, by gratifying revenge, is good; the sickness of a companion, by affecting friendship, is evil.

2. ALL good or evil, whence-ever it arises, produces various passions and affections, according to the light, in which it is surveyed.

WHEN good is certain or very probable, it produces JOY: When evil is in the same situation, there arises GRIEF or SORROW.

WHEN either good or evil is uncertain, it gives rise to FEAR or HOPE, according to the degrees of uncertainty on one side or the other.

DESIRE arises from good considered simply; and AVERSION, from evil. The WILL exerts itself, when either the presence of the good or absence of the evil may be attained by any action of the mind or body.

3. NONE of these passions seem to contain any thing curious or remarkable, except Hope and Fear, which, being derived from the probability of any good or evil, are mixt passions, that merit our attention.

PROBABILITY arises from an opposition of contrary chances or causes, by which the mind is not allowed to fix on either side; but is incessantly tost from one to another, and in one moment is determined to consider an object as existent, and in another moment as the contrary. The imagination or understanding, call it which you please, fluctuates betwixt the opposite views; and tho’ perhaps it may be oftener turned to one side than the other, it is impossible for it, by reason of the opposition of causes or chances, to rest on either. The pro and con of the question alternately prevail; and the mind, surveying the objects in their opposite causes, finds such a contrariety as utterly destroys all certainty or established opinion.

SUPPOSE, then, that the object, concerning which we are doubtful, produces either desire or aversion; it is evident, that, according as the mind turns itself to one side or the other, it must feel a momentary impression of joy or sorrow. An object, whose existence we desire, gives satisfaction, when we think of those causes, which produce it; and for the same reason, excites grief or uneasiness, from the opposite consideration. So that, as the understanding, in probable questions, is divided betwixt the contrary points of view, the heart must in the same manner be divided betwixt opposite emotions.

NOW, if we consider the human mind, we shall observe, that, with regard to the passions, it is not like a wind-instrument of music, which, in running over all the notes, immediately loses the sound when the breath ceases; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where, after each stroke, the vibrations still retain some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays. The imagination is extremely quick and agile; but the passions, in comparison, are slow and restive: For which reason, when any object is presented, which affords a variety of views to the one and emotions to the other; tho' the fancy may change its views with great celerity; each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion, but the one passion will always be mixt and confounded with the other. According as the probability inclines to good or evil, the passion of grief or joy predominates in the composition; and these passions, being intermingled by means of the contrary views of the imagination, produce by the union the passions of hope or fear.

4. AS this theory seems to carry its own evidence along with it, we shall be more concise in our proofs.

THE passions of fear and hope may arise, when the chances are equal on both sides, and no superiority can be discovered in one above the other. Nay, in this situation the passions are rather the strongest, as the mind has then the least foundation to rest upon, and is tost with the greatest uncertainty. Throw in a superior degree of probability to the side of grief, you immediately see that passion diffuse itself over the composition, and tincture it into fear. Encrease the probability, and by that means the grief; the fear prevails still more and more, till at last it runs insensibly, as the joy continually diminishes, into pure grief. After you have brought it to this situation, diminish the grief, by a contrary operation to that, which encreased it, to wit, by diminishing the probability on the melancholy side; and you will see the passion clear every moment, till it changes insensibly into hope; which again runs, by slow degrees, into joy, as you encrease that part of the composition, by the encrease of the probability. Are not these as plain proofs, that the passions of fear and hope are mixtures of grief and joy, as in optics it is a proof, that a coloured ray of the sun, passing thro’ a prism, is a composition of two others, when, as you diminish or encrease the quantity of either, you find it prevail proportionably, more or less, in the composition?

5. PROBABILITY is of two kinds; either when the object is itself uncertain, and to be determined by chance; or when, tho’ the object be already certain, yet is it uncertain to our judgment, which finds a number of proofs or presumptions on each side of the question. Both these kinds of probability cause fear and hope; which must proceed from that property, in which they agree; to wit, the uncertainty and fluctuation which they bestow on the passion, by that contrariety of views, which is common to both.

6. IT is a probable good or evil, which commonly causes hope or fear; because probability, producing an inconstant and wavering survey of an object, occasions naturally a like mixture and uncertainty of passion. But we may observe, that, wherever, from other causes, this mixture can be produced, the passions of fear and hope will arise, even tho’ there be no probability.

AN evil, conceived as barely possible, sometimes produces fear; especially if the evil be very great. A man cannot think of excessive pain and torture without trembling, if he runs the least risque of suffering them. The smallness of the probability is compensated by the greatness of the evil.

BUT even impossible evils cause fear; as when we tremble on the brink of a precipice, tho’ we know ourselves to be in perfect security, and have it in our choice, whether we will advance a step farther. The immediate presence of the evil influences the imagination and produces a species of belief; but being opposed by the reflection on our security, that belief is immediately retracted, and causes the same kind of passion, as when, from a contrariety of chances, contrary passions are produced.

EVILS, which are certain, have sometimes the same effect as the possible or impossible. A man, in a strong prison, without the least means of escape, trembles at the thoughts of the rack, to which he is sentenced. The evil is here fixed in itself; but the mind has not courage to fix upon it; and this fluctuation gives rise to a passion of a similar appearance with fear.

7. BUT it is not only where good or evil is uncertain as to its existence, but also as to its kind, that fear or hope arises. If any one were told, that one of his sons is suddenly killed; the passion, occasioned by this event, would not settle into grief, till he got certain information, which of his sons he had lost. Tho' each side of the question produces here the same passion; that passion cannot settle, but receives from the imagination, which is unfixt, a tremulous, unsteddy motion, resembling the mixture and contention of grief and joy.

8. THUS all kinds of uncertainty have a strong connexion with fear, even tho' they do not cause any opposition of passions, by the opposite views, which they present to us. Should I leave a friend in any malady, I should feel more anxiety upon his account, than if he were present; tho' perhaps I am not only incapable of giving him assistance, but likewise of judging concerning the event of his sickness. There are a thousand little circumstances of his situation and condition, which I desire to know; and the knowledge of them would prevent that fluctuation and uncertainty, so nearly allied to fear. Horace has remarked this phaenomenon:

Ut assidens implumibus pullus avis
Serpentûm allapsus timet,
Magis relictis; non, ut adsit, auxili
Latura plus praesentibus.

A VIRGIN on her bridal-night goes to bed full of fears and apprehensions, tho' she expects nothing but pleasure. The confusion of wishes and joys, the newness and greatness of the unknown event, so embarrass the mind, that it knows not in what image or passion to fix itself.

9. CONCERNING the mixture of affections, we may remark, in general, that when contrary passions arise from objects no way connected together, they take place alternately. Thus when a man is afflicted for the loss of a law-suit, and joyful for the birth of a son, the mind, running from the agreeable to the calamitous object; with whatever celerity it may perform this motion, can scarcely temper the one affection with the other, and remain betwixt them in a state of indifference.

IT more easily attains that calm situation, when the same event is of a mixt nature, and contains something adverse and something prosperous in its different circumstances. For in that case, both the passions, mingling with each other by means of the relation, often become mutually destructive, and leave the mind in perfect tranquillity.

BUT suppose, that the object is not a compound of good and evil, but is considered as probable or improbable in any degree; in that case, the contrary passions will both of them be present at once in the soul, and instead of ballancing and tempering each other, will subsist together, and by their union, produce a third impression or affection, such as hope or fear.

THE influence of the relations of ideas (which we shall afterwards explain more fully) is plainly seen in this affair. In contrary passions, if the objects be totally different, the passions are like two opposite liquors in different bottles, which have no influence on each other. If the objects be intimately connected, the passions are like an alcali or an acid, which, being mingled, destroy each other. If the relation be more imperfect, and consists in the contradictory views of the same object, the passions are like oil and vinegar, which, however mingled, never perfectly unite and incorporate.

THE effect of a mixture of passions, when one of them is predominant and swallows up the other, shall be explained afterwards.

SECT. II.

1. BESIDES those passions abovementioned, which arise from a direct pursuit of good and aversion to evil, there are others of a more complicated nature, and imply more than one view or consideration. Thus Pride is a certain satisfaction in ourselves, on account of some accomplishment or possession, which we enjoy: Humility, on the other hand, is a dissatisfaction with ourselves, on account of some defect or infirmity.

LOVE or Friendship is a complacency in another, on account of his accomplishments or services: Hatred, the contrary.

2. IN these two sets of passions, there is an obvious distinction to be made betwixt the object of the passion and its cause. The object of pride and humility is self: The cause of the passion is some excellence in the former case; some fault, in the latter. The object of love and hatred is some other person: The causes, in like manner, are either excellencies or faults.

WITH regard to all these passions, the causes are what excite the emotion; the object is what the mind directs its view to when the emotion is excited. Our merit, for instance, raises pride; and it is essential to pride to turn our view on ourself with complacency and satisfaction.

Now as the causes of these passions are very numerous and various, tho' their object be uniform and simple; it may be a subject of curiosity to consider, what that circumstance is, in which all these various causes agree; or, in other words, what is the real, efficient cause of the passion. We shall begin with pride and humility.

3. IN order to explain the causes of these passions, we must reflect on certain properties, which, tho' they have a mighty influence on every operation, both of the understanding and passions, are not commonly much insisted on by philosophers. The first of these is the assciation of ideas, or that principle, by which we make an easy transition from one idea to another. However uncertain and changeable our thoughts may be, they are not entirely without rule and method in their changes. They usually pass with regularity, from one object, to what resembles it, is contiguous to it, or produced by it. When one idea is present to the imagination; any other,

united by these relations, naturally follows it, and enters with more facility, by means of that introduction.

THE second property, which I shall observe in the human mind, is a like association of impressions or emotions. All resembling impressions are connected together; and no sooner one arises, than the rest naturally follow. Grief and disappointment give rise to anger, anger to envy, envy to malice, and malice to grief again. In like manner, our temper, when elevated with joy, naturally throws itself into love, generosity, courage, pride, and other resembling affections.

IN the third place, it is observable of these two kinds of association, that they very much assist and forward each other, and that the transition is more easily made, where they both concur in the same object. Thus, a man, who, by any injury from another, is very much discomposed and ruffled in his temper, is apt to find a hundred subjects of hatred, discontent, impatience, fear, and other uneasy passions; especially, if he can discover these subjects in or near the person, who was the object of his first emotion. Those principles, which forward the transition of ideas, here concur with those, which operate on the passions; and both, uniting in one action, bestow on the mind a double impulse.

UPON this occasion, I may cite a passage from an elegant writer, who expresses himself in the following manner.

“As the fancy delights in every thing, that is great, strange, or beautiful, and is still the more pleased the more it finds of these perfections in the same object, so it is capable of receiving new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense. Thus, any continued sound, as the music of birds, or a fall of waters, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder, and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the place, that lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fragrancy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasure of the imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses recommend each other, and are pleasanter together than where they enter the mind separately: As the different colours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage of the situation.”

In these phaenomena, we may remark the association both of impressions and ideas; as well as the mutual assistance these associations lend to each other.

4. IT seems to me, that both these species of relation have place in producing Pride or Humility, and are the real, efficient causes of the passion.

WITH regard to the first relation, that of ideas, there can be no question. Whatever we are proud of, must, in some manner, belong to us. It is always our knowledge, our sense, beauty, possessions, family, on which we value ourselves. Self, which is the object of the passion, must still be related to that quality or circumstance, which causes the passion. There must be a connexion betwixt them; an easy transition of the imagination; or a facility of the conception in passing from one to the other. Where this connexion is wanting, no object can either excite pride or humility; and the more you weaken the connexion, the more you weaken the passion.

5. THE only subject of enquiry is, whether there be a like relation of impressions or sentiments, wherever pride or humility is felt; whether the circumstance, which causes the passion, produces antecedently a sentiment similar to the passion; and whether there be an easy transfusion of the one into the other.

THE feeling or sentiment of pride is agreeable; of humility, painful. An agreeable sensation is, therefore, related to the former; a painful, to the latter. And if we find, after examination, that every object, which produces pride, produces also a separate pleasure; and every object, that causes humility, excites in like manner a separate uneasiness; we must allow, in that case, that the present theory is fully proved and ascertained. The double relation of ideas and sentiments will be acknowledged incontestible.

6. To begin with personal merit and demerit, the most obvious causes of these passions; it would be entirely foreign to our present purpose to examine the foundation of moral distinctions. It is sufficient to observe, that the foregoing theory concerning the origin of the passions may be defended on any hypothesis. The most probable system, which has been advanced to explain the difference betwixt vice and virtue, is, that either from a primary constitution of nature, or from a sense of public or private interest, certain characters, upon the very view and contemplation, produce uneasiness; and others, in like manner, excite pleasure. The uneasiness and satisfaction, produced in the spectator, are essential to vice and virtue. To approve of a character, is to feel a delight upon its appearance. To disapprove of it, is to be sensible of an uneasiness. The pain and pleasure, therefore, being, in a manner, the primary source of blame or praise, must also be the causes of

all their effects; and consequently, the causes of pride and humility, which are the unavoidable attendants of that distinction.

BUT supposing this theory of morals should not be received; it is still evident, that pain and pleasure, if not the sources of moral distinctions, are at least inseparable from them. A generous and noble character affords a satisfaction even in the survey; and when presented to us, tho’ only in a poem or fable, never fails to charm and delight us. On the other hand, cruelty and treachery displease from their very nature; nor is it possible ever to reconcile us to these qualities, either in ourselves or others. Virtue, therefore, produces always a pleasure distinct from the pride or self satisfaction, which attends it: Vice, an uneasiness separate from the humility or remorse.

BUT a high or low conceit of ourselves arises not from those qualities alone of the mind, which, according to common systems of ethics, have been defined parts of moral duty; but from any other, which have a connexion with pleasure or uneasiness. Nothing flatters our vanity more than the talent of pleasing by our wit, good humour, or any other accomplishment; and nothing gives us a more sensible mortification, than a disappointment in any attempt of that kind. No one has ever been able to tell precisely, what wit is, and to shew why such a system of thought must be received under that denomination, and such another rejected. It is by taste alone we can decide concerning it; nor are we possest of any other standard, by which we can form a judgment of this nature. Now what is this taste, from which true and false wit in a manner receive their being, and without which no thought can have a title to either of these denominations? It is plainly nothing but a sensation of pleasure from true wit, and of disgust from false, without our being able to tell the reasons of that satisfaction or uneasiness. The power of exciting these opposite sensations is, therefore, the very essence of true of false wit; and consequently, the cause of that vanity or mortification, which arises from one or the other.

7. BEAUTY of all kinds gives us a peculiar delight and satisfaction; as deformity produces pain, upon whatever subject it may be placed, and whether surveyed in an animate or inanimate object. If the beauty or deformity belong to our own face, shape, or person, this pleasure or uneasiness is converted into pride or humility; as having in this case all the circumstances requisite to produce a perfect transition, according to the present theory.

IT would seem, that the very essence of beauty consists in its power of producing pleasure. All its effects, therefore, must proceed from this circumstance: And if beauty is so universally the subject of vanity, it is only from its being the cause of pleasure.

CONCERNING all other bodily accomplishments, we may observe in general, that whatever in ourselves is either useful, beautiful, or surprizing, is an object of pride; and the contrary, of humility. These qualities agree in producing a separate pleasure; and agree in nothing else.

WE are vain of the surprizing adventures which we have met with, the escapes which we have made, the dangers to which we have been exposed; as well as of our surprising feats of vigour and activity. Hence the origin of vulgar lying; where men, without any interest, and merely out of vanity, heap up a number of extraordinary events, which are either the fictions of their brain; or, if true, have no connexion with themselves. Their fruitful invention supplies them with a variety of adventures; and where that talent is wanting, they appropriate such as belong to others, in order to gratify their vanity: For betwixt that passion, and the sentiment of pleasure, there is always a close connexion.

8. BUT tho’ pride and humility have the qualities of our mind and body, that is, of self, for their natural and more immediate causes; we find by experience, that many other objects produce these affections. We found vanity upon houses, gardens, equipage, and other external objects; as well as upon personal merit and accomplishments. This happens when external objects any particular relation to ourselves, and are associated or connected with us. A beautiful fish in the ocean, a well proportioned animal in a forest, and indeed any thing, which neither belongs nor is related to us, has no manner of influence on our vanity; whatever extraordinary qualities it may be endowed with, and whatever degree of surprize and admiration it may naturally occasion. It must be someway associated with us, in order to touch our pride. It’s idea must hang, in a manner, upon that of ourselves; and the transition from one to the other must be easy and natural.

MEN are vain of the beauty either of their country, or their county, or even of their parish. Here the idea of beauty plainly produces a pleasure. This pleasure is related to pride. The object or cause of this pleasure is, by the supposition, related to self, the object of pride. By this double relation of sentiments and ideas, a transition is made from one to the other.

MEN are also vain of the temperature of the climate, in which they are born; of the fertility of their native soil; of the goodness of the wines, fruits, or victuals, produced by it; of the softness or force of their language, with other particulars of that kind. These objects have plainly a reference to the pleasures of the senses, and are originally considered as agreeable to the feeling, taste, or hearing. How could they become causes of pride, except by means of that transition above explained?

THERE are some, who discover a vanity of an opposite kind, and affect to depreciate their own country, in comparison of those, to which they have travelled. These persons find, when they are at home, and surrounded with their countrymen, that the strong relation betwixt them and their own nation is shar’d with so many, that it is in a manner lost to them; whereas, that distant relation to a foreign country, which is formed by their having seen it, and lived in it, is augmented by their considering how few have done the same. For this reason, they always admire the beauty, utility, and rarity of what they have met with abroad, above what they find at home.

SINCE we can be vain of a country, climate, or any inanimate object, which bears a relation to us; it is no wonder we should be vain of the qualities of those, who are connected with us by blood or friendship. Accordingly we find, that any qualities, which, when belonging to ourself, produce pride, produce also, in a less degree, the same affection, when discovered in persons, related to us. The beauty, address, merit, credit, and honours of their kindred are carefully displayed by the proud, and are considerable sources of their vanity.

As we are proud of riches in ourselves, we desire, in order to gratify our vanity, that every one, who has any connexion with us, should likewise be possest of them, and are ashamed of such as are mean or poor among our friends and relations. Our forefathers being conceived as our nearest relations; every one naturally affects to be of a good family, and to be descended from a long succession of rich and honourable ancestors.

THOSE, who boast of the antiquity of their families, are glad when they can join this circumstance, that their ancestors, for many generations, have been uinnterrupted proprietors of the same portion of land, and that their family has never changed its possessions, or been transplanted into any other county or province. It is an additional subject of vanity, when they can boast, that these possessions have been transmitted thro’ a descent, composed entirely of males, and that the honours and fortune have never past thro’ any female. Let us endeavour to explain these phaenomena from the foregoing theory.

WHEN any one values himself on the antiquity of his family, the subjects of his vanity are not merely the extent of time and number of ancestors (for in that respect all mankind are alike) but these circumstances, joined to the riches and credit of his ancestors, which are supposed to reflect a lustre on himself, upon account of his connextion with them. Since therefore the passion depends on the connexion, whatever strengthens the connexion must also encrease the passion, and whatever weakens the connexion must diminish the passion. But it is evident, that the sameness of the possessions must strengthen the relation of ideas, arising from blood and kindred, and convey the fancy with greater facility from one generation to another; from the remotest ancestors to their posterity, who are both their heirs and their descendants. By this facility, the sentiment is transmitted more entire, and excites a greater degree of pride and vanity.

THE case is the same with the transmission of the honours and fortune, thro’ a succession of males, without their passing thro’ any female. It is an obvious quality of human nature, that the imagination naturally turns to whatever is important and considerable; and where two objects are presented, a small and a great, it usually leaves the former, and dwells entirely on the latter. This is the reason, why children commonly bear their fathers name, and are esteemed to be of a nobler or meaner birth, according to his family. And tho’ the mother should be possest of superior qualities to the father, as often happens, the general rule prevails, notwithstanding the exception, according to the doctrine, which shall be explained afterwards. Nay, even when a superiority of any kind is so great, or when any other reasons have such an effect, as to make the children rather represent the mother’s family than the father’s, the general rule still retains an efficacy, sufficient to weaken the relation, and make a kind of breach in the line of ancestors. The imagination runs not along them with the same facility, nor is able to transfer the honour and credit of the ancestors to their posterity of the same name and family so readily, as when the transition is conformable to the general rules, and passes thro’ the male line, from father to son, or from brother to brother.

9. BUT property, as it gives us the fullest power and authority over any object, is the relation, which has the greatest influence on these passions.

EVERY thing, belonging to a vain man, is the best that is any where to be found. His houses, equipage, furniture, cloaths, horses, hounds, excel all others in his conceit; and it is easy to observe, that, from the least advantage in any of these, he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you will believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servants more expert; the air, in which he lives, more healthful; the soil, which he cultivates, more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and in greater perfection: Such a thing is remarkable for it's novelty; such another for it's antiquity: This is the workmanship of a famous artist; that belonged once to such a prince or great man. All objects, in a word, which are useful, beautiful, or surprizing, or are related to such, may, by means of property, give rise to this passion. These all agree in giving pleasure. This alone is common to them; and therefore must be the quality, that produces the passion, which is their common effect. As every new instance is a new argument, and as the instances are here without number; it would seem, that this theory is sufficiently confirmed by experience.

RICHES imply the power of acquiring whatever is agreeable; and as they comprehend many particular objects of vanity, necessarily become one of the chief causes of that passion.

10. OUR opinions of all kinds are strongly affected by society and sympathy, and it is almost impossible for us to support any principle or sentiment, against the universal consent of every one, with whom we have any friendship or correspondence. But of all our opinions, those, which we form in our own favour; however lofty or presuming; are, at bottom, the frailest, and the most easily shaken by the contradiction and opposition of others. Our great concern, in this case, makes us soon alarmed, and keeps our passions upon the watch: Our consciousness of partiality still makes us dread a mistake: And the very difficulty of judging concerning an object, which is never set at a due distance from us, nor is seen in a proper point of view, makes us hearken anxiously to the opinions of others, who are better qualified to form just opinions concerning us. Hence that strong love of fame, with which all mankind are possest. It is in order to fix and confirm their favourable opinion of themselves, not from any original passion, that they seek the applauses of others. And when a man desires to be praised, it is for the same reason, that a beauty is pleased with surveying herself in a favorable looking-glass, and seeing the reflexion of her own charms.

THO’ it be difficult in all points of speculation to distinguish a cause, which encreases an effect, from one, which solely produces it; yet in the present case the phaenomena seem pretty strong and satisfactory in confirmation of the foregoing principle.

WE receive a much greater satisfaction from the approbation of those, whom we ourselves esteem and approve of, than of those, whom we contemn and despise.

WHEN esteem is obtained after a long and intimate acquaintance, it gratifies our vanity in a peculiar manner.

THE suffrage of those, who are shy and backward in giving praise, is attended with an additional relish and enjoyment, if we can obtain it in our favour.

WHERE a great man is nice in his choice of favourites, every one courts with greater earnestness his countenance and protection.

PRAISE never gives us much pleasure, unless it concur with our own opinion, and extol us for those qualities, in which we chiefly excel.

THESE phaenomena seem to prove, that the favourable opinions of others are regarded only as authorities, or as confirmations of our own opinion. And if they have more influence in this subject than in any other, it is easily accounted for from the nature of the subject.

11. THUS few objects, however related to us, and whatever pleasure they produce, are able to excite a great degree of pride or self-satisfaction; unless they be also obvious to others, and engage the approbation of the spectators. What disposition of mind so desirable as the peaceful, resigned, contented; which readily submits to all the dispensations of providence, and preserves a constant serenity amidst the greatest misfortunes and disappointments? Yet this disposition, tho’ acknowledged to be a virtue or excellence, is seldom the foundation of great vanity or self-applause; having no brilliant or exterior lustre, and rather cheering the heart, than animating the behaviour and conversation. The case is the same with many other qualities of the mind, body, or fortune; and this circumstance, as well as the double relations above mentioned, must be admitted to be of consequence in the production of these passions.

A SECOND circumstance, which is of consequence in this affair, is the constancy and duration of the object. What is very casual and inconstant, beyond the common course of human affairs, gives little joy, and less pride. We are not much satisfied with the thing itself; and are still less apt to feel any new degree of selfsatisfaction upon its account. We foresee and anticipate its change; which makes us little satisfied with the thing itself: We compare it to ourselves, whose existence is more durable; by which means its inconstancy appears still greater. It seems ridiculous to make ourselves the object of a passion, on account of a quality or possession, which is of so much shorter duration, and attends us during so small a part of our existence.

A THIRD circumstance, not to be neglected, is, that the objects, in order to produce pride or self-value, must be peculiar to us, or at least, common to us with a few others. The advantages of sun-shine, weather, climate, &c. distinguish us not from any of our companions, and give us no preference or superiority. The comparison, which we are every moment apt to make, presents no inference to our advantage; and we still remain, notwithstanding these enjoyments, on a level with all our friends and acquaintance.

AS health and sickness vary incessantly to all men, and there is no one, who is solely or certainly fixed in either; these accidental blessings and calamities are in a manner separated from us, and are not considered as a foundation for vanity or humiliation. But wherever a malady of any kind is so rooted in our constitution, that we no longer entertain any hopes of recovery, from that moment it damps our self-conceit; as is evident in old men, whom nothing mortifies more than the consideration of their age and infirmities. They endeavour, as long as possible, to conceal their blindness and deafness, their rheums and gouts; nor do they ever avow them without reluctance and uneasiness. And tho' young men are not ashamed of every head-ach or cold which they fall into; yet no topic is more proper to mortify human pride, and make us entertain a mean opinion of our nature, than this, that we are every moment of our lives subject to such infirmities. This proves, that bodily pain and sickness are in themselves proper causes of humility; tho' the custom of estimating every thing, by comparison, more than by its intrinsic worth and value, makes us overlook those calamities, which we find incident to every one, and causes us to form an idea of our merit and character, independent of them.

WE are ashamed of such maladies as affect others, and are either dangerous or disagreeable to them. Of the epilepsy; because it gives a horror to every one present: Of the itch; because it is infectious: Of the king's evil; because it often goes to posterity. Men always consider the sentiments of others in their judgment of themselves.

A FOURTH circumstance, which has an influence on these passions, is general rules; by which we form a notion of different ranks of men, suitable to the power or riches of which they are possest; and this notion is not changed by any peculiarities of the health or temper of the persons, which may deprive them of all enjoyment in their possessions. Custom readily carries us beyond the just bounds in our passions, as well as in our reasonings.

IT may not be amiss to observe on this occasion, that the influence of general rules and maxims on the passions very much contributes to facilitate the effects of all the principles or internal mechanism, which we here explain. For it seems evident, that, if a person full-grown, and of the same nature with ourselves, were on a sudden transported into our world, he would be very much embarrassed with every object, and would not readily determine what degree of love or hatred, of pride or humility, or of any other passion should be excited by it. The passions are often varied by very inconsiderable principles; and these do not always play with perfect regularity, especially on the the first tryal. But as custom or practice has brought to light all these principles, and has settled the just value of every thing; this must certainly contribute to the easy production of the passions, and guide us, by means of general established rules, in the proportions, which we ought to observe in prefering one object to another. This remark may, perhaps, serve to obviate difficulties, that may arise concerning some causes, which we here ascribe to particular passions, and which may be esteemed too refined to operate so universally and certainly, as they are found to do.

SECT. III.

1. IN running over all the causes, which produce the passion of pride or that of humility; it would readily occur, that the same circumstance, if transferred from ourself to another person, would render him the object of love or hatred, esteem or contempt. The virtue, genius, beauty, family, riches, and authority of others beget favourable sentiments in their behalf; and their vice, folly, deformity, poverty, and meanness excite the contrary sentiments. The double relation of impressions and ideas still operates on these passions of love and hatred; as on the former of pride and humility. Whatever gives a separate pleasure or pain, and is related to another person or connected with him, makes him the object of our affection or disgust.

HENCE too injury or contempt is one of the greatest sources of hatred; services or esteem of friendship.

2. SOMETIMES a relation to ourself excites affection towards any person. But there is always here implied a relation of sentiments, without which the other relation would have no influence.

A PERSON, who is related to us, or connected with us, by blood, by similitude of fortune, of adventures, profession, or country, soon becomes an agreeable companion to us; because we enter easily and familiarly into his sentiments and conceptions: Nothing is strange or new to us: Our imagination, passing from self, which is ever intimately present to us, runs smoothly along the relation or connexion, and conceives with a full sympathy the person, who is nearly related to self. He renders himself immediately acceptable, and is at once on an easy footing with us: No distance, no reserve has place, where the person introduced is supposed so closely connected with us.

RELATION has here the same influence as custom or acquaintance, in exciting affection; and from like causes. The ease and satisfaction, which, in both cases, attend our intercourse or commerce, is the source of the friendship.

3. THE passions of love and hatred are always followed by, or rather conjoined with, benevolence and anger. It is this conjunction, which chiefly distinguishes these affections from pride and humility. For pride and

humility are pure emotions in the soul, unattended with any desire, and not immediately exciting us to action. But love and hatred are not compleat within themselves, nor rest in that emotion, which they produce; but carry the mind to something farther. Love is always followed by a desire of happiness to the person beloved, and an aversion to his misery: As hatred produces a desire of the misery, and an aversion to the happiness of the person hated. These opposite desires seem to be originally and primarily conjoined with the passions of love and hatred. It is a constitution of nature, of which we can give no farther explication.

4. COMPASSION frequently arises, where there is no preceding esteem or friendship; and compassion is an uneasiness in the sufferings of another. It seems to spring from the intimate and strong conception of his sufferings; and our imagination proceeds by degrees, from the lively idea, to the real feeling of another's misery.

MALICE and envy also arise in the mind without any preceding hatred or injury; tho' their tendency is exactly the same with that of anger and ill-will. The comparison of ourselves with others seems the source of envy and malice. The more unhappy another is, the more happy do we ourselves appear in our own conception.

5. THE similar tendency of compassion to that of benevolence, and of envy to anger, forms a very close relation betwixt these two sets of passions; tho' of a different kind from that insisted on above. It is not a resemblance of feeling or sentiment, but a resemblance of tendency or direction. Its effect, however, is the same, in producing an association of passions. Compassion is seldom or never felt without some mixture of tenderness or friendship; and envy is naturally accompanied with anger or ill-will. To desire the happiness of another, from whatever motive, is a good preparative to affection: And to delight in another's misery almost unavoidably begets aversion towards him.

EVEN where interest is the source of our concern, it is commonly attended with the same consequences. A partner is a natural object of friendship; a rival of enmity.

6. POVERTY, meanness, disappointment, produce contempt and dislike: But when these misfortunes are very great, or are represented to us in very strong colours, they excite compassion, and tenderness, and friendship. How is this contradiction to be accounted for? The poverty and meanness of another, in their common appearance, gives us uneasiness, by a species of

imperfect sympathy; and this uneasiness produces aversion or dislike, from the resemblance of sentiment. But when we enter more intimately into another's concerns, and wish for his happiness, as well as feel his misery, friendship or good-will arises, from the similar tendency of the inclinations.

7. IN respect, there is a mixture of humility, along with the esteem or affection: In contempt, a mixture of pride.

THE amorous passion is usually compounded of complacency in beauty, a bodily appetite, and friendship or affection. The close relation of these sentiments is very obvious, as well as their origin from each other, by means of that relation. Were there no other phaenomenon to reconcile as to the present theory, this alone, methinks, were sufficient.

SECT. IV.

1. THE present theory of the passions depends entirely on the double relations of sentiments and ideas, and the mutual assistance, which these relations lend to each other. It may not, therefore, be improper to illustrate these principles by some farther instances.

2. THE virtues, talents, accomplishments, and possessions of others make us love and esteem them: Because these objects excite a pleasant sensation, which is related to love; and having also a relation or connexion with the person, this union of ideas forwards the union of sentiments, according to the foregoing reasoning.

BUT suppose, that the person, whom we love, is also related to us, by blood, country, or friendship; it is evident, that a species of pride must also be excited by his accomplishments and possessions; there being the same double relation, which we have all along insisted on. The person is related to us, or there is an easy transition of thought from him to us; and the sentiments, excited by his advantages and virtues, are agreeable, and consequently related to pride. Accordingly we find, that people are naturally vain of the good qualities or high fortune of their friends and countrymen.

3. BUT it is observable, that, if we reverse the order of the passions, the same effect does not follow. We pass easily from love and affection to pride and vanity; but not from the latter passions to the former, tho’ all the relations be the same. We love not those related to us on account of our own merit; tho’ they are naturally vain on account of our merit. What is the reason of this difference? The transition of the imagination to ourselves, from objects related to us, is always very easy; both on account of the relation, which facilitates the transition, and because we there pass from remoter objects to those which are contiguous. But in passing from ourselves to objects, related to us; tho’ the former principle forwards the transition of thought, yet the latter opposes it; and consequently there is not the same easy transfusion of passions from pride to love as from love to pride.

4. THE virtues, services, and fortune of one man inspire us readily with esteem and affection for another related to him. The son of our friend is naturally entitled to our friendship: The kindred of a very great man value themselves, and are valued by others, on account of that relation. The force of the double relation is here fully displayed.

5. THE following are instances of another kind, where the operation of these principles may still be discovered. Envy arises from a superiority in others; but it is observable, that it is not the great disproportion betwixt us, which excites that passion, but on the contrary, our proximity. A great disproportion cuts off the relation of the ideas, and either keeps us from comparing ourselves with what is remote from us, or diminishes the effects of the comparison.

A POET is not apt to envy a philosopher or a poet of a different kind, of a different nation, or of a different age. All these differences, if they do not prevent, at least weaken the comparison, and consequently the passion.

THIS too is the reason, why all objects appear great or little, merely by a comparison with those of the same species. A mountain neither magnifies nor diminishes a horse in our eyes: But when a Flemish and a Welch horse are seen together, the one appears greater and the other less, than when viewed apart.

FROM the same principle we may account for that remark of historians, that any party, in a civil war, or even factious division, always choose to call in a foreign enemy at any hazard rather than submit to their fellow-citizens. Guicciardin applies this remark to the wars in Italy; where the relations betwixt the different states are, properly speaking, nothing but of name, language, and contiguity. Yet even these relations, when joined with superiority, by making the comparison more natural, make it likewise more grievous, and cause men to search for some other superiority, which may be attended with no relation, and by that means, may have a less sensible influence on the imagination. When we cannot break the association, we feel a stronger desire to remove the superiority. This seems to be the reason, why travellers, tho' commonly lavish of their praises to the Chinese and Persians, take care to depreciate those neighbouring nations, which may stand upon a footing of rivalship with their native country.

6. THE fine arts afford us parallel instances. Should an author compose a treati&;se, of which one part was serious and profound, another light and humourous; every one would condemn so strange a mixture, and would

blame him for the neglect of all rules of art and criticism. Yet we accuse not Prior for joining his Alma and Solomon in the same volume; tho' that amiable poet has succeeded perfectly in the gaiety of the one, as well as in the melancholy of the other. Even suppose the reader should peruse these two compositions without any interval, he would feel little or no difficulty in the change of the passions. Why? but because he considers these performances as entirely different; and by that break in the ideas, breaks the progress of the affections, and hinders the one from influencing or contradicting the other.

AN heroic and burlesque design, united in one picture, would be monstrous; tho' we place two pictures of so opposite a character in the same chamber, and even close together, without any scruple.

7. IT needs be no matter of wonder, that the easy transition of the imagination should have such an influence on all the passions. It is this very circumstance, which forms all the relations and connexions amongst objects. We know no real connexion betwixt one thing and another. We know only, that the idea of one thing is associated with that of another, and that the imagination makes an easy transition betwixt them. And as the easy transition of ideas, and that of sentiments mutually assist each other; we might beforehand expect, that this principle must have a mighty influence on all our internal movements and affections. And experience sufficiently confirms the theory.

FOR, not to repeat all the foregoing instances: Suppose, that I were travelling with a companion thro' a country, to which we are both utter strangers; it is evident, that, if the prospects be beautiful, the roads agreeable, and the fields finely cultivated; this may serve to put me in good humour, both with myself and fellow-traveller. But as the country has no connexion with myself or friend, it can never be the immediate cause either of self-value or of regard to him: And therefore, if I found not the passion on some other object, which bears to one of us a closer relation, my emotions are rather to be considered as the overflowings of an elevated or humane disposition, than as an established passion. But supposing the agreeable prospect before us to be surveyed either from his countryseat or from mine; this new connexion of ideas gives a new direction to the sentiment of pleasure, proceeding from the prospect, and raises the emotion of regard or vanity, according to the nature of the connexion. There is not here, methinks, much room for doubt or difficulty.

SECT. V.

1. IT seems evident, that reason, in a strict sense, as meaning the judgment of truth and falshood, can never, of itself, be any motive to the will, and can have no influence but so far as it touches some passion or affection. Abstract relations of ideas are the object of curiosity, not of volition. And matters of fact, where they are neither good nor evil, where they neither excite desire nor aversion, are totally indifferent; and whether known or unknown, whether mistaken or rightly apprehended, cannot be regarded as any motive to action.

2. WHAT is commonly, in a popular sense, called reason, and is so much recommended in moral discourses, is nothing but a general and a calm passion, which takes a comprehensive and distant view of its object, and actuates the will, without exciting any sensible emotion. A man, we say, is diligent in his profession from reason; that is, from a calm desire of riches and a fortune. A man adheres to justice from reason; that is, from a calm regard to a character with himself and others.

3. THE same objects, which recommend themselves to reason in this sense of the word, are also the objects of what we call passion, when they are brought near to us, and acquire some other advantages, either of external situation, or congruity to our internal temper; and by that means, excite a turbulent and sensible emotion. Evil, at a great distance, is avoided, we say, from reason: Evil, near at hand, produces aversion, horror, fear, and is the object of passion.

4. THE common error of metaphysicians has lain in ascribing the direction of the will entirely to one of these principles, and supposing the other to have no influence. Men often act knowingly against their interest: It is not therefore the view of the greatest possible good which always influences them. Men often counteract a violent passion, in prosecution of their distant interests and designs: It is not therefore the present uneasiness alone, which determines them. In general, we may observe, that both these principles operate on the will; and where they are contrary, that either of them prevails, according to the general character or present disposition of the person. What we call strength of mind implies the prevalence of the

calm passions above the violent; tho’ we may easily observe, that there is no person so constantly possest of this virtue, as never, on any occasion, to yield to the sollicitation of violent affections and desires. From these variations of temper proceeds the great difficulty of deciding concerning the future actions and resolutions of men, where there is any contrariety of motives and passions.

SECT. VI.

1. WE shall here enumerate some of those circumstances, which render a passion calm or violent, which heighten or diminish any emotion.

IT is a property in human nature, that any emotion, which attends a passion, is easily converted into it; tho’ in their natures they be originally different from, and even contrary to each other. It is true, in order to cause a perfect union amongst passions, and make one produce the other, there is always required a double relation, according to the theory above delivered. But when two passions are already produced by their separate causes, and are both present in the mind, they readily mingle and unite; tho’ they have but one relation, and sometimes without any. The predominant passion swallows up the inferior, and converts it into itself. The spirits, when once excited, easily receive a change in their direction; and it is natural to imagine, that this change will come from the prevailing affection. The connexion is in many cases closer betwixt any two passions, than betwixt any passion and indifference.

WHEN a person is once heartily in love, the little faults and caprices of his mistress, the jealousies and quarrels, to which that commerce is so subject; however unpleasant they be, and rather connected with anger and hatred; are yet found, in many instances, to give additional force to the prevailing passion. It is a common artifice of politicians, when they would affect any person very much by a matter of fact, of which they intend to inform him, first to excite his curiosity; delay as long as possible the satisfying it; and by that means raise his anxiety and impatience to the utmost, before they give him a full insight into the business. They know, that his curiosity will precipitate him into the passion, which they purpose to raise, and will assist the object in its influence on the mind. A soldier, advancing to battle, is naturally inspired with courage and confidence, when he thinks on his friends and fellow-soldiers; and is struck with fear and terror, when he reflects on the enemy. Whatever new emotion, therefore, proceeds from the former naturally encreases the courage; as the same emotion proceeding from the latter, augments the fear. Hence in martial discipline, the uniformity and lustre of habit, the regularity of figures and motions, with all the pomp and majesty of war, encourage ourselves and our allies; while the same objects in the enemy strike terror into us, tho’ agreeable and beautiful in themselves.

HOPE is, in itself, an agreeable passion, and allied to friendship and benevolence; yet is it able sometimes to blow up anger, when that is the predominant passion. Spes addita suscitat iras. Virg.

2. SINCE passions, however independent, are naturally transfused into each other, if they are both present at the same time; it follows, that when good or evil is placed in such a situation as to cause any particular emotion, besides its direct passion of desire or aversion, that latter passion must acquire new force and violence.

3. THIS often happens, when any object excites contrary passions. For it is observable, that an opposition of passions commonly causes a new emotion in the spirits and produces more disorder than the concurrence of any two affections of equal force. This new emotion is easily converted into the predominant passion, and in many instances, is observed to encrease its violence, beyond the pitch, at which it would have arrived, had it met with no opposition. Hence we naturally desire what is forbid, and often take a pleasure in performing actions, merely because they are unlawful. The notion of duty, when opposite to the passions, is not always able to overcome them; and when it fails of that influence, is apt rather to encrease and irritate them, by producing an opposition in our motives and principles.

4. THE same effect follows, whether the opposition arises from internal motives or external obstacles. The passion commonly acquires new force in both cases. The efforts, which the mind makes to surmount the obstacle, excite the spirits, and enliven the passion.

5. UNCERTAINTY has the same effect as opposition. The agitation of the thought, the quick turns which it makes from one view to another, the variety of passions, which succeed each other, according to the different views: All these produce an agitation in the mind; and this agitation transfuses itself into the predominant passion.

SECURITY, on the contrary, diminishes the passions. The mind, when left to itself, immediately languishes; and in order to preserve its ardour, must be every moment supported by a new flow of passion. For the same reason, despair, tho’ contrary to security, has a like influence.

6. NOTHING more powerfully excites any affection than to conceal some part of its object, by throwing it into a kind of shade, which, at the

same time, that it shows enough to prepossess us in favour of the object, leaves still some work for the imagination. Besides, that obscurity is always attended with a kind of uncertainty; the effort, which the fancy makes to compleat the idea, rouzes the spirits, and gives an additional force to the passion.

7. As despair and security, tho’ contrary, produce the same effects; so absence is observed to have contrary effects, and in different circumstances either encreases or diminishes our affection. Rochesoucault has very well remarked, that absence destroys weak passions, but encreases strong; as the wind extinguishes a candle, but blows up a fire. Long absence naturally weakens our idea, and diminishes the passion: But where the passion is so strong and lively as to support itself, the uneasiness, arising from absence, encreases the passion, and gives it new force and influence.

8. WHEN the soul applies itself to the performance of any action, or the conception of any object, to which it is not accustomed, there is a certain unpliableness in the faculties, and a difficulty of the spirits moving in their new direction. As this difficulty excites the spirits, it is the source of wonder, surprize, and of all the emotions, which arise from novelty; and is in itself very agreeable, like every thing, which inlivens the mind to a moderate degree. But tho’ surprise be agreeable in itself, yet as it puts the spirits in agitation, it not only augments our agreeable affections, but also our painful, according to the foregoing principle. Hence every thing, that is new, is most affecting, and gives us either more pleasure or pain, than what, strictly speaking, should naturally follow from it. When it often returns upon us, the novelty wears off; the passions subside; the hurry of the spirits is over; and we survey the object with greater tranquillity.

9. THE imagination and affections have a close union together. The vivacity of the former, gives force to the latter. Hence the prospect of any pleasure, with which we are acquainted, affects us more than any other pleasure, which we may own superior, but of whose nature we are wholly ignorant. Of the one we can form a particular and determinate idea: The other, we conceive under the general notion of pleasure.

ANY satisfaction, which we lately enjoyed, and of which the memory is fresh and recent, operates on the will with more violence, than another of which the traces are decayed and almost obliterated.

A PLEASURE, which is suitable to the way of life, in which we are engaged, excites more our desires and appetites than another, which is foreign to it.

NOTHING is more capable of infusing any passion into the mind, than eloquence, by which objects are represented in the strongest and most lively colours. The bare opinion of another, especially when inforced with passion, will cause an idea to have an influence upon us, tho’ that idea might otherwise have been entirely neglected.

IT is remarkable, that lively passions commonly attend a lively imagination. In this respect, as well as others, the force of the passion depends as much on the temper of the person, as on the nature or situation of the object.

WHAT is distant, either in place or time, has not equal influence with what is near and contiguous.

I PRETEND not here to have exhausted this subject. It is sufficient for my purpose, if I have made it appear, that, in the production and conduct of the passions, there is a certain regular mechanism, which is susceptible of as accurate a disquisition, as the laws of motion, optics, hydrostatics, or any part of natural philosophy.

DISSERTATION III. OF TRAGEDY.

IT seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-wrote tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, which are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle, and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece is at an end. One scene of full joy and contentment and security is the utmost, that any composition of this kind can bear; and it is sure always to be the concluding one. If in the texture of the piece, there be interwoven any scenes of satisfaction, they afford only faint gleams of pleasure, which are thrown in by way of variety, and in order to plunge the actors into deeper distress, by means of that contrast and disappointment. The whole art of the poet is employed, in rouzing and supporting the compassion and indignation, the anxiety and resentment of his audience. They are pleased in proportion as they are afflicted; and never are so happy as when they employ tears, sobs, and cries to give vent to their sorrow, and relieve their heart, swoln with the tenderest sympathy and compassion.

THE few critics, who have had some tincture of philosophy, have remarked this singular phaenomenon, and have endeavoured to account for it.

L’ABBE. Dubos, in his reflections on poetry and painting, asserts, that nothing is in general so disagreeable to the mind as the languid, listless state of indolence, into which it falls upon the removal of every passion and occupation. To get rid of this painful situation, it seeks every amusement and pursuit; business, gaming, shows, executions; whatever will rouze the passions, and take its attention from itself. No matter, what the passion is: Let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered; it is still better, than that insipid languor, which arises from perfect tranquillity and repose.

IT is impossible not to admit this account, as being, at least, in part satisfactory. You may observe, when there are several tables of gaming, that all the company run to those, where the deepest play is, even tho’ they find not there the finest players. The view, or at least, imagination of high passions, arising from great loss or gain, affects the spectators by sympathy, gives them some touches of the same passions, and serves them for a momentary entertainment. It makes the time pass the easier with them, and is some relief to that oppression, under which men commonly labour, when left entirely to their own thoughts and meditations.

WE find, that common lyars always magnify, in their narrations, all kinds of danger, pain, distress, sickness, deaths, murders, and cruelties; as well as joy, beauty, mirth, and magnificence. It is an absurd secret, which they have for pleasing their company, fixing their attention, and attaching them to such marvellous relations, by the passions and emotions, which they excite.

THERE is, however, a difficulty of applying to the present subject, in its full extent, this solution, however ingenious and satisfactory it may appear. It is certain, that the same object of distress which pleases in a tragedy, were it really set before us, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness, tho' it be then the most effectual cure of languor and indolence. Monsieur Fontenelle seems to have been sensible of this difficulty; and accordingly attempts another solution of the phaenomenon; at least, makes some addition to the theory abovementioned.

"PLEASURE and pain,"

says he,

"which are two sentiments so different in themselves, differ not so much in their cause. From the instance of tickling, it appears, that the movement of pleasure pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the movement of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence it proceeds, that there is such a thing as a sorrow, soft and agreeable: It is a pain weakened and diminished. The heart likes naturally to be moved and affected. Melancholy objects suit it, and even disastrous and sorrowful, provided they are softened by some circumstance. It is certain, that on the theatre the representation has almost the effect of reality; but yet is has not altogether that effect. However we may be hurried away by the spectacle; whatever dominion the senses and imagination may usurp over the reason, there still lurks at the bottom a certain idea of falshood in the whole of what we see. This idea, tho' weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts it into a pleasure. We weep for the misfortune of a hero, to whom we are attached: In the same instant we comfort ourselves, by reflecting, that it is nothing but a fiction: And it is precisely, that mixture of sentiments, which composes an agreeable sorrow, and tears that delight us. But as that affliction, which is caused by exterior and sensible objects, is stronger than the consolation, which arises from an internal reflection, they are the effects and symptoms of sorrow, which ought to prevail in the composition.”

THIS solution seems just and convincing; but perhaps it wants still some new addition, in order to make it answer fully the phaenomenon, which we here examine. All the passions, excited by eloquence, are agreeable in the highest degree, as well as those which are moved by painting and the theatre. The epilogues of Cicero are, on this account chiefly, the delight of every reader of taste; and it is difficult to read some of them without the deepest sympathy and sorrow. His merit as an orator, no doubt, depends much on his success in this particular. When he had raised tears in his judges and all his audience, they were then the most highly delighted, and expressed the greatest satisfaction with the pleader. The pathetic description of the butchery made by Verres of the Sicilian captains is a master-piece of this kind: But I believe none will affirm, that the being present at a melancholy scene of that nature would afford any entertainment. Neither is the sorrow here softened by fiction: For the audience were convinced of the reality of every circumstance. What is it then, which in this case raises a pleasure from the bosom of uneasiness, so to speak; and a pleasure, which still retains all the features and outward symptoms of distress and sorrow?

I ANSWER: This extraordinary effect proceeds from that very eloquence, with which the melancholy scene is represented. The genius required to paint objects in a lively manner, the art employed in collecting all the pathetic circumstances, the judgment displayed in disposing them; the exercise, I say, of these noble talents, along with the force of expression, and beauty of oratorial numbers, diffuse the highest satisfaction on the audience, and excite the most delightful movements. By this means, the uneasiness of the melancholy passions is not only overpowered and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole movement of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight, which the eloquence raises in us. The same force of oratory, employed on an uninteresting subject, would not please half so much, or rather would appear altogether ridiculous; and the mind, being left in absolute calmness and indifference, would relish none of those beauties of imagination or expression, which, if joined to passion, give it such exquisite entertainment. The impulse or vehemence, arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter, being the predominant emotions, seize the whole mind, and convert the former into themselves, or at least, tincture them so strongly as totally to alter their nature: And the soul, being, at the same time, rouzed by passion, and charmed by eloquence, feels on the whole a strong movement, which is altogether delightful.

THE same principle takes place in tragedy; along with this addition, that tragedy is an imitation, and imitation is always of itself agreeable. This circumstance serves still farther to smooth the motions of passion, and convert the whole feeling into one uniform and strong enjoyment. Objects of the greatest terror and distress please in painting, and please more than the most beautiful objects, that appear calm and indifferent. The affection, rouzing the mind, excites a large stock of spirit and vehemence; which is all transformed into pleasure by the force of the prevailing movement. It is thus the fiction of tragedy softens the passion, by an infusion of a new feeling, not merely by weakening or diminishing the sorrow. You may by degrees weaken a real sorrow, till it totally disappears; yet in none of its gradations will it ever give pleasure; except, perhaps, by accident, to a man sunk under lethargic indolence, whom it rouzes from that languid state.

To confirm this theory, it will be sufficient to produce other instances, where the subordinate movement is converted into the predominant, and gives force to it, tho' of a different, and even sometimes tho' of a contrary nature.

NOVELTY naturally excites the mind and attracts our attention; and the movements, which it causes, are always converted into any passion, belonging to the object, and join their force to it. Whether an event excites joy or sorrow, pride or shame, anger or goodwill, it is sure to produce a stronger affection, when new and unusual. And tho' novelty, of itself, be agreeable, it enforces the painful, as well as agreeable passions.

HAD you any intention to move a person extremely by the narration of any event, the best method of encreasing its effect would be artfully to delay informing him of it, and first excite his curiosity and impatience before you let him into the secret. This is the artifice, practiced by Iago in the famous scene of Shakespeare; and every spectator is sensible, that Othello's jealousy acquires additional force from his preceding impatience, and that the subordinate passion is here readily transformed into the predominant.

DIFFICULTIES encrease passions of every kind; and by rouzing our attention, and exciting our active powers, they produce an emotion, which nourishes the prevailing affection.

PARENTS commonly love that child most, whose sickly infirm frame of body has occasioned them the greatest pains, trouble, and anxiety in rearing him. The agreeable sentiment of affection here acquires force from sentiments of uneasiness.

NOTHING endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

JEALOUSY is a painful passion, yet without some share of it, the agreeable affection of love has difficulty to subsist in its full force and violence. Absence is also a great source of complaint amongst lovers, and gives them the greatest uneasiness: Yet nothing is more favorable to their mutual passion than short intervals of that kind. And if long intervals be pernicious, it is only because, thro' time, men are accustomed to them, and they cease to give uneasiness. Jealousy and absence in love compose the dolce piccante of the Italians, which they suppose so essential to all pleasure.

THERE is a fine observation of the elder Pliny, which illustrates the principle here insisted on. It is very remarkable, says he, that the last works of celebrated artists, which they left imperfect, are always the most prized, such as the Iris of Aristides, the Tyndarides of Nicomachus, the Medea of Timomachus, and the Venus of Apelles. These are valued even above their finished productions: The broken lineamentsof the piece and the half formed idea of the painter are carefully studied; and our very grief for that curious hand, which had been stoped by death, is an additional encrease to our pleasure.

THESE instances (and many more might be collected) are sufficient to afford us some insight into the analogy of nature, and to show us, that the pleasure, which poets, orators, and musicians give us, by exciting grief, sorrow, indignation, compassion, is not so extraordinary nor paradoxical, as it may at first sight appear. The force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of numbers, the charms of imitation; all these are naturally, of themselves, delightful to the mind; and when the object presented lays also hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us, by the conversion of this subordinate movement, into that which is predominant. The passion, tho', perhaps, naturally, and when excited by the simple appearance of a real object, it may be painful; yet is so smoothed, and softened, and mollified, when raised by the finer arts, that it affords the highest entertainment.

TO confirm this reasoning, we may observe, that if the movements of the imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows; and the former, being now subordinate, is converted into the latter, and still farther encreases the pain and affliction of the sufferer.

WHO could ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of oratory, the irreparable loss, which he has met with by the death of a favorite child? The more power of imagination and expression you here employ, the more you encrease his despair and affliction.

THE shame, confusion, and terror of Verres, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble eloquence and vehemence of Cicero: So also did his pain and uneasiness. These former passions were too strong for the pleasure arising from the beauties of elocution; and operated, tho’ from the same principle, yet in a contrary manner, to the sympathy, compassion, and indignation of the audience.

LORD Clarendon, when he approaches the catastrophe of the royal party, supposes, that his narration must then become infinitely disagreeable; and he hurries over the King’s death, without giving us one circumstance of it. He considers it as too horrid a scene to be contemplated with any satisfaction, or even without the utmost pain and aversion. He himself, as well as the readers of that age, were too deeply interested in the events, and felt a pain from subjects, which an historian and a reader of another age would regard as the most pathetic and most interesting, and by consequence, the most agreeable.

AN action, represented in tragedy, may be too bloody and atrocious. It may excite such movements of horror as will not soften into pleasure; and the greatest energy of expression bestowed on descriptions of that nature serves only to augment our uneasiness. Such is that action represented in the ambitious Stepmother, where a venerable old man, raised to the height of fury and despair, rushes against a pillar, and striking his head upon it, besmears it all over with mingled brains and gore. The English theatre abounds too much with such images.

EVEN the common sentiments of compassion require to be softened by some agreeable affection, in order to give a thorough satisfaction to the audience. The mere suffering of plaintive virtue, under the triumphant tyranny and oppression of vice, forms a disagreeable spectacle, and is carefully avoided by all masters of the theatre. In order to dismiss the audience with entire satisfaction and contentment, the virtue must either convert itself into a noble courageous despair, or the vice receive its proper punishment.

MOST painters appear in this light to have been very unhappy in their subjects. As they wrought for churches and convents, they have chiefly represented such horrible subjects as crucifixions and martyrdoms, where nothing appears but tortures, wounds, executions, and passive suffering, without any action or affection. When they turned their pencil from this ghastly mythology, they had recourse commonly to Ovid, whose fictions, tho’ passionate and agreeable, are scarce natural or probable enough for painting.

THE same inversion of that principle, which is here insisted on, displays itself in common life, as in the effects of oratory and poetry. Raise so the subordinate passion that it becomes the predominant, it swallows up that affection, which it before nourished and encreased. Too much jealousy extinguishes love: Too much difficulty renders us indifferent: Too much sickness and infirmity disgusts a selfish and unkind parent.

WHAT so disagreeable as the dismal, gloomy, disastrous stories, with which melancholy people entertain their companions? The uneasy passion, being there raised alone, unaccompanied with any spirit, genius, or eloquence, conveys a pure uneasiness, and is attended with nothing that can soften it into pleasure or satisfaction.

DISSERTATION IV. OF THE STANDARD OF TASTE.

THE great variety of Tastes, as well as of opinions, which prevail in the world, is too obvious not to have fallen under every one's observation. Men of the most confined knowledge are able to remark a difference in the narrow circle of their acquaintance, even where the persons have been educated under the same government, and have early imbibed the same prejudices. But those who can enlarge their view to contemplate distant nations and remote ages, are still more surprised at the great inconsistence and contradiction. We are apt to call barbarous whatever departs widely from our own taste and apprehension: But soon find the epithet of reproach retorted on us. And the highest arrogance and self conceit is at last startled, on observing an equal assurance on all sides, and scruples, amidst such a contest of sentiments, to pronounce positively in its own favour.

As this variety of taste is obvious to the most careless enquirer; so will it be found, on examination, to be still greater in reality than in appearance. The sentiments of men often differ with regard to beauty and deformity of all kinds, even while their general discourse is the same. There are certain terms in every language, which import blame, and others praise; and all men, who use the same tongue, must agree in their application of them. Every voice is united in applauding elegance, propriety, simplicity, spirit in writing; and in blaming fustian, affectation, coldness, and a false brilliant: But when critics come to particulars, this seeming unanimity vanishes; and it is found, that they had affixed a very different meaning to their expressions. In all matters of opinion and science, the case is opposite: The difference among men is there oftner found to lie in generals than in particulars; and to be less in reality than in appearance. An explication of the terms commonly ends the controversy; and the disputants are surprized to find, that they had been quarrelling, while at bottom they agreed in their judgment.

THOSE who found morality on sentiment, more than on reason, are inclined to comprehend ethics under the former observation, and to suppose, that in all questions, which regard conduct and manners, the difference among men is really greater than at first fight it appears. It is indeed obvious, that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, veracity; and in blaming the opposite qualities. Even poets and other authors, whose compositions are chiefly calculated to please the imagination, are yet found, from Homer down to Fenelon, to inculcate the same moral precepts, and to bestow their applause and blame on the same virtues and vices. This great unanimity is usually ascribed to the influence of plain reason; which, in all these cases, maintains similar sentiments in all men, and prevents those controversies, to which the abstract sciences are so much exposed. So far as the unanimity is real, the account may be admitted as satisfactory: But it must also be allowed, that some part of the seeming harmony in morals may be accounted for from the very nature of language. The word, virtue, with its equivalent in every tongue, implies praise; as that of vice does blame: And no one, without the most obvious and grossest impropriety, could affix reproach to a term, which in general use is understood in a good sense; or bestow applause, where the idiom requires disapprobation. Homer's general precepts, where he delivers any such, will never be controverted; but it is very obvious, that when he draws particular pictures of manners, and represents heroism in Achilles and prudence in Ulysses, he intermixes a much greater degree of ferocity in the former, and of cunning and fraud in the latter, than Fenelon would admit of. The sage Ulysses in the Greek poet seems to delight in lies and fictions, and often employs them without any necessity or even advantage: But his more scrupulous son in the French epic writer exposes himself to the most imminent perils, rather than depart from the exactest line of truth and veracity.

THE admirers and followers of the Alcoran insist very much on the excellent moral precepts, which are interspersed throughout that wild performance. But it is to be supposed, that the Arabic words, which correspond to the English, equity, justice, temperance, meekness, charity, were such as, from the constant use of that tongue, must always be taken in a good sense; and it would have argued the greatest ignorance, not of morals, but of language, to have mentioned them with any epithets, besides those of applause and approbation. But would we know, whether the pretended prophet had really attained a just sentiment of morals? Let us attend to his narration; and we shall soon find, that he bestows praise on such instances of treachery, inhumanity, cruelty, revenge, bigotry, as are utterly incompatible with civilized society. No steddy rule of right seems there to be attended to; and every action is blamed or praised, so far only as it is beneficial or hurtful to the true believers.

THE merit of delivering true general precepts in ethics is indeed very small. Whoever recommends any moral virutes, really does no more than is implied in the terms themselves. The people, who invented the word modesty, and used it in a good sense, inculcated more clearly and much more efficaciously, the precept, be modest, than any pretended legislator or prophet, who should insert such a maxim in his writings. Of all expressions, those, which, together with their other meaning, imply a degree either of blame or approbation, are the least liable to be perverted or mistaken.

It is very natural for us to seek a Standard of Taste; a rule, by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; or at least, a decision afforded, confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.

THERE is a species of philosophy, which cuts off all hopes of success in such an attempt, and represents the impossibility of ever attaining any standard of taste. The difference, it is said, is very wide between judgment and sentiment. All sentiment is right; because sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it. But all determinations of the understanding are not right; because they have a reference to something beyond themselves, to wit, real matter of fact; and are not always conformable to that standard. Among a thousand different opinions which different men amy entertain of the same subject, there is one, and but one, that is just and true; and the only difficulty is to fix and ascertain it. On the contrary, a thousand different sentiments, excited by the same object, are all right: Because no sentiment represents what is really in the object. It only marks a certain conformity or relation betwixt the object and the organs or faculties of the mind; and if that conformity did not really exist, the sentiment could never possibly have a being. Beauty is no quality in things themselves: It exists merely in the mind which contemplates them; and each mind perceives a different beauty. One person may even perceive deformity, where another is sensible of beauty; and every individual ought to acquiesce in his own sentiment, without pretending to regulate those of others. To seek the real beauty, or real deformity is as fruitless an enquiry, as to pretend to ascertain the real sweet or real bitter. According to the disposition of the organs, the same object may be both sweet and bitter; and the proverb has justly determined it to be fruitless to dispute concerning tastes. It is very natural, and even quite necessary, to extend this axiom to mental, as well as bodily taste; and thus common sense, which is so often at variance with philosophy, especially with the sceptical kind, is found, in one instance at least, to agree in pronouncing the same decision.

BUT though this axiom, by passing into a proverb, seems to have attained the sanction of common sense; there is certainly a species of common sense which opposes it, or at least serves to modify and restrain it. Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance betwixt Ogilby and Milton, or Bunyan and Addison, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a molehill to be as high as Teneriffe, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. Though there may be found persons, who give the preference to the former authors; no one pays attention to such a taste; and we pronounce without scruple the sentiment of these pretended critics to be absurd and ridiculous. The principle of the natural equality of tastes is then totally forgot; and while we admit of it on some occasions, where the objects seem near an equality, it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together.

IT is evident, that none of the rules of composition are fixed by reasonings a priori, or can be esteemed abstract conclusions of the understanding, from comparing those habitudes and relations of ideas, which are eternal and immutable. Their foundation is the same with that of all the practical sciences, experience; nor are they any thing but general observations, concerning what has been universally found to please in all countries and in all ages. Many of the beauties of poetry and even of eloquence are founded on falshood and fiction, on hyperboles, metaphors, and an abuse or perversion of expressions from their natural meaning. To check the sallies of the imagination, and to reduce every expression to geometrical truth and exactness, would be the most contrary to the laws of criticism; because it would produce a work, which, by universal experience has been found the most insipid and disagreeable. But though poetry can never submit to exact truth, it must be confined by rules of art, discovered to the author either by genius or observation. If some negligent or irregular writers have pleased, they have not pleased by their transgressions of rule or order, but in spite of these transgressions: They have possessed other beauties, which were conformable to just criticism; and the force of these beauties has been able to overpower censure, and give the mind a satisfaction superior to the disgust arising from the blemishes. Ariosto pleases; but not by his monstrous and improbable fictions, by his bizarre mixture of the serious and comic styles, by the want of coherence in his stories, or by the continual interruptions of his narration. He charms by the force and clearness of his expression, by the readiness and variety of his inventions, and by his natural pictures of the passions, especially those of the gay and amorous kind: And however his faults may diminish our satisfaction, they are not able entirely to destroy it. Did our pleasure really arise from those parts of his poem, which we denominate faults, this would be no objection to criticism in general: It would only be an objection to those particular rules of criticism, which would establish such circumstances to be faults, and would represent them as universally blameable. If they are found to please, they cannot be faults; let the pleasure, which they produce, be ever so unexpected and unaccountable.

BUT though all the general rules of art are founded only on experience and on the observation of the common sentiments of human nature, we must not imagine, that, on every occasion, the feelings of men will be conformable to these rules. Those finer emotions of the mind are of a very tender and delicate nature, and require the concurrence of many favourable circumstances to make them play with facility and exactness, according to their general and established principles. The least exterior hindrance to such small springs, or the least internal disorder, disturbs their motion, and confounds the operation of the whole machine. When we would make an experiment of this nature, and would try the force of any beauty or deformity, we must choose with care a proper time and place, and bring the fancy to a suitable situation and disposition. A perfect serenity of mind, a recollection of thought, a due attention to the object; if any of these circumstances be wanting our experiment will be fallacious, and we shall be unable to judge of the catholic and universal beauty. The relation, which nature has placed betwixt the form and the sentiment, will at least be more obscure; and it will require greater accuracy to trace and discern it. We shall be able to ascertain its influence not so much from the operation of each particular beauty, as from the durable admiration, which attends those works, that have survived all the caprices of mode and fashion, all the mistakes of ignorance and envy.

THE same Homer, who pleased at Athens and Rome two thousand years ago, is still admired at Paris and at London. All the changes of climate, government, religion, and language have not been able to obscure his glory. Authority or prejudice may give a temporary vogue to a bad poet or orator; but his reputation will never be durable or general. When his compositions are examined by posterity or by foreigners, the enchantment is dissipated, and his faults appear in their true colours. On the contrary, a real genius, the longer his works endure, and the more wide they are spread, the more sincere is the admiration which he meets with. Envy and jealousy have too much place in a narrow circle; and even familiar acquaintance with his person may diminish the applause due to his performances: But when these obstructions are removed, the beauties, which are naturally fitted to excite agreeable sentiments immediately display their energy; and while the world endures, they maintain their authority over the minds of men.

IT appears then, that amidst all the variety and caprices of taste, there are certain general principles of approbation or blame, whose influence a careful eye may trace in all operations of the mind. Some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric, are calculated to please, and others to displease; and if they fail of their effect in any particular instance, it is from some apparent defect or imperfection in the organ. A man in a fever would not insist on his palate as able to decide concerning flavours; nor would one, affected with the jaundice, pretend to give a verdict with regard to colours. In each creature, there is a sound and a defective state; and the former alone can be supposed to afford us a true standard of taste and sentiment. If in the sound state of the organs, there be an entire or a considerable uniformity of sentiment among men, we may thence derive an idea of the perfect and universal beauty; in like manner as the appearance of objects in day-light to the eye of a man in health is denominated their true and real colour, even while colour is allowed to be merely a phantasm of the senses.

MANY and frequent are the defects in the internal organs, which prevent or weaken the influence of those general principles, on which depends our sentiment of beauty or deformity. Though some objects, by the structure of the mind, be naturally calculated to give pleasure, it is not to be expected, that in every individual the pleasure will be equally felt. Particular incidents and situations occur, which either throw a false light on the objects, or hinder the true from conveying to the imagination the proper sentiment and perception.

ONE obvious cause, why many feel not the proper sentiment of beauty, is the want of that delicacy of imagination, which is requisite to convey a sensibility of those finer emotions. This delicacy every one pretends to: Every one talks of it; and would reduce every kind of taste or sentiment to its standard. But as our intention in this dissertation is to mingle some light of the understanding with the feelings of sentiment, it will be proper to give a more accurate definition of delicacy, than has hitherto been attempted. And not to draw our philosophy from too profound a source, we shall have recourse to a noted story in Don Quixote.

‘TIS with good reason, says Sancho to the squire with the great nose, that I pretend to have a judgment in wine: This is a quality hereditary in our family. Two of my kinsmen were once called to give their opinion of a hogshead, which was supposed to be excellent, being old and of a good vintage. One of them tastes it; considers it, and after mature reflection pronounces the wine to be good, were it not for a small taste of leather, which he perceived in it. The other, after using the same precautions, gives also his verdict in favour of the wine; but with the reserve of a taste of iron, which he could easily distinguish. You cannot imagine how much they were both ridiculed for their judgment. But who laughed in the end? On emptying the hogshead, there was found at the bottom, an old key with a leathern thong tied to it.

THE great resemblance between mental and bodily taste will easily teach us to apply this story. Though it be certain, that beauty and deformity, no more than sweet and bitter, are not qualities in objects, but belong entirely to the sentiment, internal or external; it must be allowed, that there are certain qualities in objects, which are fitted by nature to produce those particular feelings. Now as these qualities may be found in a small degree or may be mixt and confounded with each other, it often happens, that the taste is not affected with such minute qualities, or is not able to distinguish all the particular flavours, amidst the disorder, in which they are presented. Where the organs are so fine, as to allow nothing to escape them; and at the same time so exact as to perceive every ingredient in the composition: This we call delicacy of taste, whether we employ these terms in the natural or metaphorical sense. Here then the general rules of beauty are of use; being drawn from established models, and from the observation of what pleases or displeases, when presented singly and in a high degree: And if the same qualities, in a continued composition and in a smaller degree, affect not the organs with a sensible delight or uneasiness, we exclude the person from all pretensions to this delicacy. To produce these general rules or avowed patterns of composition is like finding the key with the leathern thong; which justified the verdict of Sancho’s kinsmen, and confounded those pretended judges, who had condemned them. Though the hogshead had never been emptied, the taste of the one was still equally delicate, and that of the other equally dull and languid: But it would have been more difficult to have proved the superiority of the former, to the conviction of every by-stander. In like manner, though the beauties of writing had never been methodized, or reduced to general principles; though no excellent models had ever been acknowledged; the different degrees of taste would still have subsisted, and the judgment of one man been preferable to that of another; but it would not have been so easy to silence the bad critic, who might always insist upon his particular sentiment, and refuse to submit to his antagonist. But when we show him an avowed principle of art; when we illustrate this principle by examples, whose operation, from his own particular taste, he acknowledges to be conformable to the principle; when we prove, that the same principle may be applied to the present case, where he did not perceive nor feel its influence: He must conclude, upon the whole, that the fault lies in himself, and that he wants the delicacy, which is requisite to make him sensible of every beauty and every blemish, in any composition or discourse.

’Tis acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation. The smaller the objects are, which become sensible to the eye, the finer is that organ, and the more elaborate its make and composition. A good palate is not tried by strong flavours; but by a mixture of small ingredients, where we are still sensible of each part, notwithstanding its minuteness and its confusion with the rest. In like manner, a quick and acute perception of beauty and deformity must be the perfection of our mental taste, nor can a man be satisfied with himself, while he suspects, that any excellence or blemish in a discourse has passed him unobserved. In this case, the perfection of the man, and the perfection of the sense or feeling, are found to be united. A very delicate palate, on many occasions, may be a great inconvenience both to a man himself and to his friends; but a delicate taste of wit or beauty must always be a desirable quality; because it is the source of all the finest and most innocent enjoyments, of which human nature is susceptible. In this decision, the sentiments of all mankind are agreed. Wherever you can fix or ascertain a delicacy of taste, it is sure to be approved of; and the best way of fixing it is to appeal to those models and principles, which have been established by the uniform approbation and experience of nations and ages.

BUT though there be naturally a very wide difference in point of delicacy between one person and another, nothings tends further to encrease and improve this talent, than practice in a particular art, and the frequent survey or contemplation of a particular species of beauty. When objects of any kind are first presented to the eye or imagination, the sentiment, which attends them, is obscure and confused: and the mind is, in a great measure, incapable of pronouncing concerning their merits or defects. The taste cannot perceive the several excellencies of the performance; much less distinguish the particular character of each excellency, and ascertain its quality and degree. If it pronounce the whole in general to be beautiful or deformed ’tis the utmost which can be expected; and even this judgment a person, so unpractised, will be apt to deliver with great hesitation and reserve. But allow him to acquire experience in those objects, his feeling becomes more exact and nice: He not only perceives the beauties and defects of each part, but marks the distinguishing species of each quality, and assigns it suitable praise or blame. A clear and distinct sentiment attends him through the whole survey of the objects; and he discerns that very degree and kind of aaprobation or displeasure, which each part is naturally fitted to produce. The mist dissipates, which seemed formerly to hang over the object: The organ acquires greater perfection in its operations; and can pronounce, without danger of mistake, concerning the merits of each performance. In a word, the same address and dexterity, which practice gives to the execution of any work, is also acquired, by the same means, in the judging of it.

So advantageous is practice to the discernment of beauty, that before we can pronounce judgment on any work of importance, it will even be requisite, that that very individual performance be more than once perused by us, and be surveyed in different lights, with attention and deliberation. There is a flutter or hurry of thought, which attends the first perusal of any piece, and which confounds the genuin sentiment of beauty. The reference of the parts is not discerned: The true characters of style are little distinguished: The several perfections and defects seem wrapped up in a species of confusion, and present themselves indistinctly to the imagination. Not to mention, that there is a species of beauty, which, as it is florid and superficial, pleases at first; but being found incompatible with a just expression either of reason or passion, soon palls upon the taste, and is then rejected with disdain, at least rated at a much lower value.

IT is impossible to continue in the practice of contemplating any order of beauty, without being frequently obliged to form comparisons between the several species and degrees of excellency, and estimating their proportion to each other. A man, who has had no opportunity of comparing the different kinds of beauty, is indeed totally unqualified to pronounce an opinion with regard to any object presented to him. By comparison alone we fix the epithets of praise or blame, and learn how to assign the due degree of each. The coarsest dawbing of a sign-post contains a certain lustre of colours and exactness of imitation, which are so far beauties, and would affect the mind of a peasant or Indian with the highest admiration. The most vulgar ballads are not entirely destitute of harmony or nature; and none but a person, familiarized to superior beauties, would pronounce their numbers harsh, or narration uninteresting. A great inferiority of beauty gives pain to a person conversant in the highest excellency of the kind, and is for that reason pronounced a deformity: As the most finished object, with which we are acquainted, is naturally supposed to have reached the pinnacle of perfection, and to be entitled to the highest applause. A man who has had opportunities of seeing, and examining, and weighing the several performances, admired in different ages and nations, can alone rate the merits of a work exhibited to his view, and assign its proper rank among the productions of genius.

BUT to enable him the more fully to execute this undertaking, he must preserve his mind free from all prejudice, and allow nothing to enter into his consideration, but the very object, which is submitted to his examination. We may observe, that every work of art, in order to produce its due effect on the mind, must be surveyed in a certain point of view, and cannot be fully relished by persons, whose situation, real or imaginary, is not conformable to that required by the performance. An orator addresses himself to a particular audience, and must have a regard to their particular genius, interests, opinions, passions, and prejudices; otherwise he hopes in vain to govern their resolutions, and inflame their affections. Should they even have entertained some prepossessions against him, however unreasonable, he must not overlook this disadvantage; but before he enters upon the subject, must endeavour to conciliate their affection, and acquire their good graces. A critic of a different age or nation, who should peruse this discourse, must have all these circumstances in his eye, and must place himself in the same situation as the audience, in order to form a true judgment of the oration. In like manner, when any work is addressed to the public, though I should have a friendship or enmity with the author, I must depart from this particular situation; and considering myself as a man in general, forget, if possible, my individual being and my peculiar circumstances. A person, influenced by prejudice, complies not with this condition; but obstinately maintains his natural position, without entering into that required by the performance. If the work be addressed to persons of a different age or nation, he makes no allowance for their peculiar views and prejudices; but full of the manners of his own times, rashly condemns what seemed admirable in the eyes of those for whom alone the discourse was calculated. If the work be executed for the public, he never sufficiently enlarges his comprehension, or forgets his interests as a friend or enemy, as a rival or commentator. By this means, his sentiments are perverted; nor have the same beauties and blemishes the same influence upon him, as if he had imposed a proper violence on his imagination, and had forgot himself for a moment. So far his taste evidently departs from the true standard; and of consequence loses all credit and authority.

IT is well known, that, in all questions, submitted to the understanding, prejudice is most destructive of sound judgment, and perverts all operations of the intellectual faculties: It is no less contrary to good taste; nor has it less influence to corrupt our sentiments of beauty. It belongs to good sense to check its influence in both cases; and in this respect, as well as in many others, reason, if not an essential part of taste, is at least requisite to the operations of this latter faculty. In all the nobler productions of genius, there is a mutual relation and correspondence of parts; nor can either the beauties or blemishes be perceived by him, whose thought is not capacious enough to comprehend all those parts, and compare them with each other, in order to perceive the consistence and uniformity of the whole. Every work of art has also a certain end or purpose, for which it is calculated; and is to be deemed more or less perfect, as it is more or less fitted to attain this end. The object of eloquence is to persuade, of history to instruct, of poetry to please by means of the passions and the imagination. These ends we must carry constantly in our view, when we peruse any performance; and we must be able to judge how far the means employed are adapted to their respective purposes. Besides, every kind of composition, even the most poetical, is nothing but a chain of propositions and reasonings; not always indeed the justest and most exact, but still plausible and specious, however disguised by the colouring of the imagination. The persons, introduced in tragedy and epic poetry, must be represented as reasoning and thinking, and concluding and acting, suitable to their characters and circumstances; and without judgment, as well as taste and invention, a poet can never hope to succeed in so delicate an undertaking. Not to mention, that the same excellence of faculties which contributes to the improvement of reason, the same clearness of conception, the same exactness of distinction, the same vivacity of apprehension, are essential to the operations of true taste, and are its infallible concomitants. It seldom, or never happens, that a man of sense, who has experience in any art, cannot judge of its beauty; and it is no less rare to meet with a man, who has a just taste, without a sound understanding.

THUS, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles their full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles. They either labour under some defect, or are vitiated by some disorder; and by that means, excite a sentiment, which may be pronounced erroneous. When the critic has no delicacy, he judges without any distinction, and is only affected by the grosser and more palpable qualities of the object: The finer touches pass unnoticed and disregarded. Where he is not aided by practice, his verdict is attended with confusion and hesitation. Where no comparison has been employed, the most frivolous beauties, such as rather merit the name of defects, are the objects of his admiration. Where he lies under the influence of prejudice, all his natural sentiments are perverted. Where good sense is wanting, he is not qualified to discern the beauties of design and reasoning, which are the highest and most excellent. Under some or other of these imperfections, the generality of men labour; and hence a true judge in the finer arts is observed, even during the most polished ages, to be so rare a character: Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, whereever they are to be found, is the true standard of taste and beauty.

BUT where are such critics to be found? By what marks are they to be known? How distinguish them from pretenders? These questions are embarrassing; and seem to throw us back into the same uncertainty, from which, during the course of this dissertation, we have endeavoured to extricate ourselves.

BUT if we consider the matter aright, these are questions of fact, not of sentiment. Whether any particular person be endowed with good sense and a delicate imagination, free from prejudice, may often be the subject of dispute, and be liable to great discussion and enquiry: But that such a character is valuable and estimable will be agreed by all mankind. Where these doubts occur, men can do no more than in other disputable questions, which are submitted to the understanding: They must produce the best arguments, which their invention suggests to them; they must acknowledge a true and decisive standard to exist somewhere, to wit, real existence and matter of fact; and they must have indulgence to such as differ from them in their appeals to this standard. It is sufficient for our present purpose, if we have proved, that the taste of all individuals is not upon an equal footing, and that some men in general, however difficult to be particularly pitched upon, will be acknowledged by universal sentiment to have a preference above others.

BUT in reality the difficulty of finding, even in particulars, the standard of taste, is not so great as is represented. Though in speculation, we may readily avow a certain criterion in science and deny it in sentiment, the matter is found in practice to be much more hard to ascertain in the former case than in the latter. Theories of abstract philosophy, systems of profound theology have prevailed during one age: In a successive period, these have been universally exploded: Their absurdity has been detected: Other theories and systems have supplied their place, which again gave way to their successors: And nothing has been experienced more liable to the revolutions of chance and fashion than these pretended decisions of science. The case is not the same with the beauties of eloquence and poetry. Just expressions of passion and nature are sure, after a little time, to gain public vogue, which they maintain for ever. Aristotle and Plato, and Epicurus and Descartes, may successively yield to each other: But Terence and Virgil maintain an universal, undisputed empire over the minds of men. The abstract philosophy of Cicero has lost its credit: The vehemence of his oratory is still the object of our admiration.

THOUGH men of delicate taste are rare, they are easily to be distinguished in society, by the soundness of their understanding and the superiority of their faculties above the rest of mankind. The ascendant, which they acquire, gives a prevalence to that lively approbation, with which they receive any productions of genius, and renders it generally predominant. Many men, when left to themselves, have but a saint and dubious perception of beauty, who yet are capable of relishing any fine stroke, which is pointed out to them. Every convert to the admiration of the true poet or orator is the cause of some new conversion. And though prejudices may prevail for a time, they never unite in celebrating any rival to the true genius, but yield at last to the force of nature and just sentiment. And thus though a civilized nation may easily be mistaken in the choice of their admired philosopher, they never have been found long to err in their affection for a favourite epic or tragic author.

BUT notwithstanding all our endeavours to-fix a standard of taste, and reconcile the various apprehensions of men, there still remain two sources of variation, which, tho’ they be not sufficient to confound all the boundaries of beauty and deformity, will often serve to vary the degrees of our approbation or blame. The one is the different humours of particular men; the other, the particular manners and opinions of our age and country. The general principles of taste are uniform in human nature: Where men vary in their judgments, some defect or perversion in the faculties may commonly be remarked; proceeding either from prejudice, from want of practice, or want of delicacy; and there is just reason for approving one taste and condemning another. But where there is such a diversity in the internal frame or external situation as is entirely blameless on both sides, and leaves no room to give one the preference above the other; in that case a certain diversity of judgment is unavoidable, and we seek in vain for a standard, by which we can reconcile the contrary sentiments.

A young man, whose passions are warm, will be more sensibly touched with amorous and tender images, than a man more advanced in years who takes pleasure in wise and philosophical prefections concerning the conduct of life and moderation of the passions. At twenty, Ovid may be the favourite author; Horace at forty; and perhaps Tacitus at fifty. Vainly would we, in such cases, endeavour to enter into the sentiments of others, and divest ourselves of those propensities, which are natural to us. We chuse our favourite author as we do our friend, from a conformity of humours and dispositions. Mirth or passion, sentiment or reflection; which ever of these most predominates in our temper, it gives us a peculiar sympathy with the writer, who resembles us.

ONE person is more pleased with the sublime; another with the tender; a third with raillery. One has a strong sensibility to blemishes, and is extremely studious of correctness: Another has a more lively feeling of beauties, and pardons twenty absurdities and defects for one elevated or pathetic stroke. The ear of this man is entirely turned towards conciseness and energy; that man is delighted with a copious, rich, and harmonious expression. Simplicity is affected by one; ornament by another. Comedy, tragedy, satire, odes have each their partizans, who preser that particular species of writing to all others. It is plainly an error in a critic to confine his approbation to one species or style of writing and condemn all the rest. But it is almost impossible not to feel a predilection for that which suits our particular turn and disposition. Such preferences are innocent and unavoidable, and can never reasonably be the object of dispute, because there is no standard, by which they can be decided.

For a like reason, we are more pleased with pictures of characters, which resemble such as are found in our own age or country, than with those which describe a different set of customs. ’Tis not without some effort, that we reconcile ourselves to the simplicity of antient manners, and behold princesses drawing water from a spring, and kings and heroes dressing their own victuals. We may allow in general, that the representation of such manners is no fault in the author, nor deformity in the piece; but we are not so sensibly touched with them. For this reason, comedy is not transferred easily from one age or nation to another. A Frenchman or Englishman is not pleased with the Andria of Terence, or Clitia of Machiavel, where the fine lady, upon whom all the play turns, never once appears to the spectators, but is always kept behind the scenes, suitable to the reserved humour of the antient Greeks and modern Italians. A man of learning and reflection can make allowance for these peculiarities of manners; but a common audience can never divest themselves so far of their usual ideas and sentiments as to relish pictures which no way resemble them.

AND here there occurs a reflection, which may, perhaps, be useful in examining the celebrated controversy concerning antient and modern learning; where we often find the one side excusing any seeming absurdity in the antients from the manners of the age, and the others refusing to admit this excuse, or at least, admitting it only as an apology for the author, not for the performance. In my opinion, the proper bounds in this subject have seldom been fixed between the contending parties. Where any innocent peculiarities of manners are represented, such as those abovementioned, they ought certainly to be admitted; and a man who is shocked with them, gives an evident proof of false delicacy and refinement. The poets monument more durable than brass, must fall to the ground like common brick or clay, were men to make no allowance for the continual revolutions of manners and customs, and would admit nothing but what was suitable to the prevailing fashion. Must we throw aside the pictures of our ancestors, because of their ruffs and fardingales? But where the ideas of morality and decency alter from one age to another, and where vicious manners are described, without being marked with the proper characters of blame and disapprobation; this must be allowed to disfigure the poem, and to be a real deformity. I cannot, nor is it proper I should, enter into such sentiments; and however I may excuse the poet, on account of the manners of his age, I never can relish the composition. The want of humanity and of decency, so conspicuous in the characters drawn by several of the antient poets, even sometimes by Homer and the Greek tragedians, diminishes considerably the merit of their noble performances, and gives modern authors a great advantage over them. We are not interested in the fortunes and sentiments of such rough heroes: We are displeased to find the limits of vice and virtue so confounded: And whatever indulgence we may give the writer on account of his prejudices, we cannot prevail on ourselves to enter into his sentiments, or bear an affection to characters, which we plainly discover to be blameable.

THE case is not the same with moral principles as with speculative opinions of any kind. These are in continual flux and revolution. The son embraces a different system from the father. Nay, there scarce is any man, who can boast of great constancy and uniformity in this particular. Whatever speculative errors may be found in the polite writings of any age or country, they detract but little from the value of those compositions. There needs but a certain turn of thought or imagination to make us enter into all the opinions, which then prevailed, and relish the sentiments or conclusions derived from them. But a very violent effort is requisite to change our judgment of manners, and excite sentiments of approbation or blame, love or hatred, different from those to which the mind from long custom has been familiarized. And where a man is confident of the rectitude of that moral standard, by which he judges, he is justly jealous of it, and will not pervert the sentiments of his heart for a moment, in complaisance to any writer whatever.

OF all speculative errors, those which regard religion, are the most excusable in compositions of genius; nor is it ever permitted to judge of the civility or wisdom of any people, or even of single persons, by the grossness or refinement of their theological principles. The same good sense, that directs men in the ordinary occurrences of life, is not hearkened to in religious matters, which are supposed to be placed entirely above the cognizance of human reason. Upon this account, all the absurdities of the pagan system of theology must be overlooked by every critic, who would pretend to form a just notion of antient poetry; and our posterity, in their turn, must have the same indulgence to their forefathers. No religious principles can ever be imputed as a fault to any poet, while they remain merely principles, and take not such strong possession of his heart, as to lay him under the imputation of bigotry or superstition. Where that happens, they confound the sentiments of morality and alter the natural boundaries of vice and virtue. They are therefore eternal blemishes, according to the principle abovementioned; nor are the prejudices and false opinions of the age sufficient to justify them.

’Tis essential to the Roman catholic religion to inspire a violent hatred to every other worship, and represent all pagans, mahometans, and heretics as the objects of divine wrath and vengeance. Such sentiments, though they are in reality extremely blameable, are considered as virtues by the zealots of that communion, and are represented in their tragedies and epic poems as a kind of divine heroism. This bigotry has disfigured two very fine tragedies of the French theatre, Polieucte and Athalia; where an intemperate zeal for particular modes of worship is set off with all the pomp imaginable, and forms the predominant character of the heroes.

“What is this,”

says the heroic Joad to Josabet, finding her in discourse with Mattan, the priest of Baal, “Does the daughter of David speak to this traitor? Are you not afraid, left the earth should open and pour forth flames to devour you both? Or that these holy walls should fall and crush you together? What is his purpose? Why comes that enemy of God hither to poison the air, which we breath, with his horrid presence?”

Such sentiments are received with great applause on the theatre of Paris; but at London the spectators would be full as much pleased to hear Achilles tell Agamemnon, that he was a dog in his forehead and a deer in his heart, or Jupiter threaten Juno with a sound drubbing, if she will not be quiet.

RELIGIOUS principles are also a blemish in any polite composition, when they rise up to superstition, and intrude themselves into every sentiment, however remote from any connection with religion. ’Tis no excuse for the poet, that the customs of his country had burthened life with so many religious ceremonies and observances, that no part of it was exempt from that yoak. It must be for ever ridiculous in Petrarch to compare his mistress, Laura, to Jesus Christ. Nor is it less ridiculous in that agreeable libertine, Boccace, very seriously to give thanks to God Almighty, and the ladies, for their assistance in desending him against his enemies.

FINIS.

THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

OR, THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

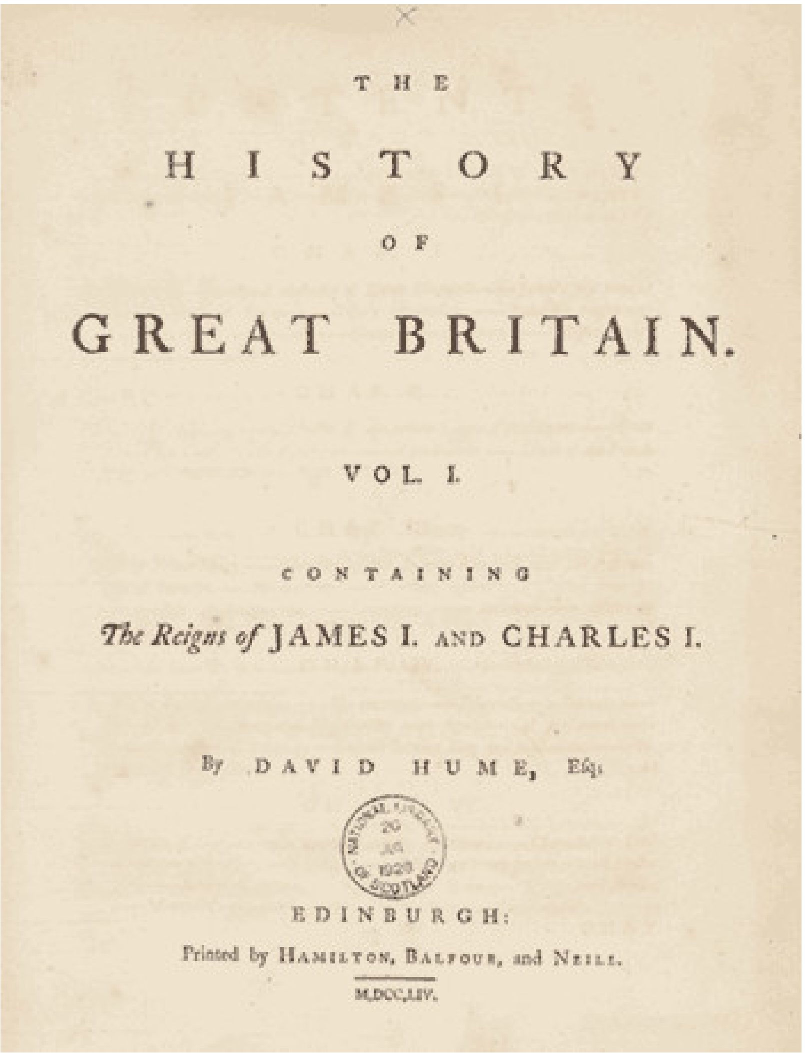
Hume’s great work on the history of England, which he wrote in instalments, while he was librarian to the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, was published in six volumes in 1754, 1756, 1759 and 1761. The first publication was greeted with outrage by all political factions, though the book eventually became a best-seller, finally giving Hume the financial independence he had long sought. Initially, Hume only intended to write a history of England under the Stuart monarchs James I and Charles I in the 1754 publication. He followed this with a second history that continued to the Revolution of 1688. With the relative success of these two volumes, Hume researched the history of earlier eras and finally produced a total of six volumes, culminating with the Commonwealth and the reigns of Charles II and James II.

The final contents of the History (in chronological order) can be set out as:

- The history of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the accession of Henry VII (first published in 1762)
- The history of England under the House of Tudor (1759)
- The history of Great Britain, containing the reigns of James I and Charles I (1754)
- The history of Great Britain, containing the Commonwealth, and the reigns of Charles II and James II (1757)

Since the time of its publication, the book has been accused of historical revisionism intending to promote Toryism. In the United States, Thomas Jefferson considered it a “poison” and was so critical of the work that he censored it from the University of Virginia library. In an 1810 letter to William Duane Jefferson wrote: “It is this book which has undermined the free principles of the English government,” And in a letter to John Adams dated 25 November 1816, he wrote: “This single book has done more to sap the free principles of the English Constitution than the largest standing army.” Though generally acknowledged as a plagiarised version of Hume’s work, John Baxter’s *A New and Impartial History of England* (1796) was cited by Jefferson as a remedy to Hume’s revisionism: “He has taken Hume’s work, corrected in the text his misrepresentations, supplied the truths which he suppressed, and yet has given the mass of the work in Hume’s own words.”

At the end of his life, Hume wrote: “... though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty”.



THE

HISTORY

OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

VOL. I.

CONTAINING

The Reigns of JAMES I. AND CHARLES I.

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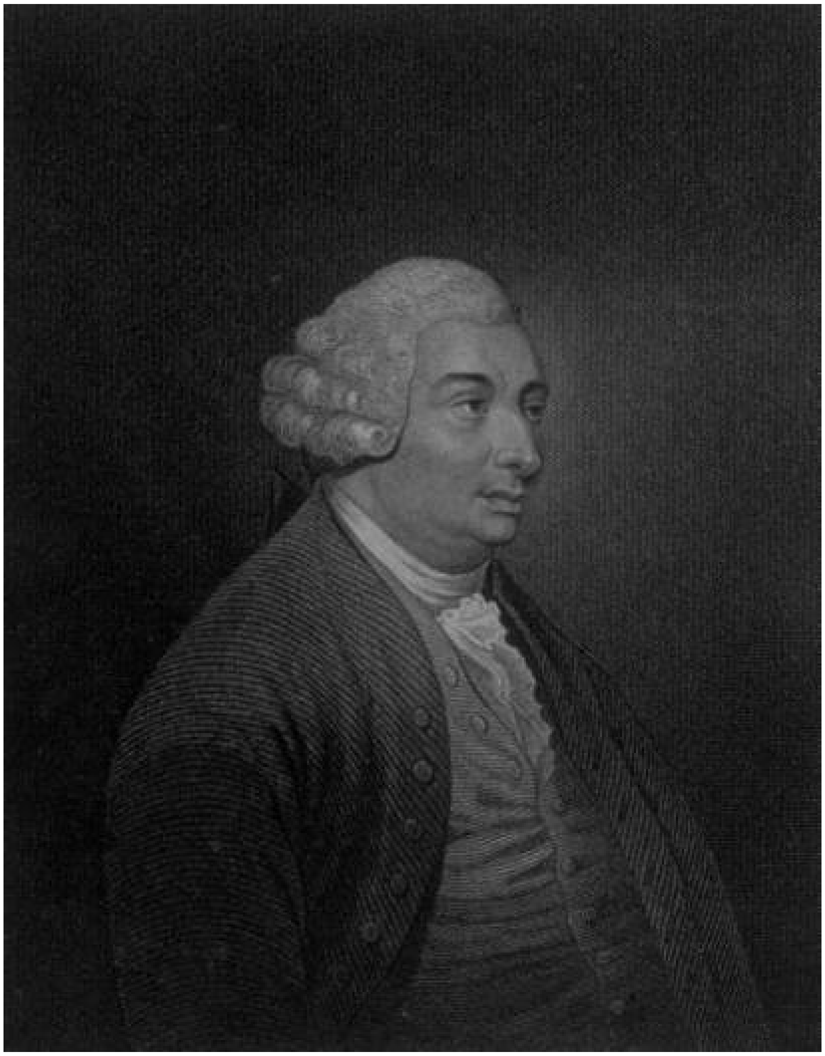

An engraving of Hume from the first volume of ‘The History of England’, 1754

CHAPTER I.

THE BRITONS.

The curiosity entertained by all civilized nations, of inquiring into the exploits and adventures of their ancestors, commonly excites a regret that the history of remote ages should always be so much involved in obscurity, uncertainty, and contradiction. Ingenious men, possessed of leisure, are apt to push their researches beyond the period in which literary monuments are framed or preserved; without reflecting, that the history of past events is immediately lost or disfigured when intrusted to memory and oral tradition, and that the adventures of barbarous nations, even if they were recorded, could afford little or no entertainment to men born in a more cultivated age. The convulsions of a civilized state usually compose the most instructive and most interesting part of its history; but the sudden, violent, and unprepared revolutions incident to barbarians, are so much guided by caprice, and terminate so often in cruelty, that they disgust us by the uniformity of their appearance; and it is rather fortunate for letters that they are buried in silence and oblivion. The only certain means by which nations can indulge their curiosity in researches concerning their remote origin, is to consider the language, manners, and customs of their ancestors, and to compare them with those of the neighboring nations. The fables, which are commonly employed to supply the place of true history, ought entirely to be disregarded; or if any exception be admitted to this general rule, it can only be in favor of the ancient Grecian fictions, which are so celebrated and so agreeable, that they will ever be the objects of the attention of mankind. Neglecting, therefore, all traditions, or rather tales, concerning the more early history of Britain, we shall only consider the state of the inhabitants as it appeared to the Romans on their invasion of this country: we shall briefly run over the events which attended the conquest made by that empire, as belonging more to Roman than British story: we shall hasten through the obscure and uninteresting period of Saxon annals; and shall reserve a more full narration for those times, when the truth is both so well ascertained, and so complete, as to promise entertainment and instruction to the reader.

All ancient writers agree in representing the first inhabitants of Britain as a tribe of the Gauls or Celtæ, who peopled that island from the neighboring continent. Their language was the same, their manners, their government, their superstition; varied only by those small differences which time or a communication with the bordering nations must necessarily introduce. The inhabitants of Gaul, especially in those parts which lie contiguous to Italy, had acquired, from a commerce with their southern neighbors, some refinement in the arts, which gradually diffused themselves northwards, and spread but a very faint light over this island. The Greek and Roman navigators or merchants (for there were scarcely any other travellers in those ages) brought back the most shocking accounts of the ferocity of the people, which they magnified, as usual, in order to excite the admiration of their countrymen. The south-east parts, however, of Britain had already, before the age of Cæsar, made the first and most requisite step towards a civil settlement; and the Britons, by tillage and agriculture, had there increased to a great multitude. [1]

[1 Cæsar, lib. iv.]

The other inhabitants of the island still maintained themselves by pasture: they were clothed with skins of beasts: they dwelt in huts, which they reared in the forests and marshes, with which the country was covered: they shifted easily their habitation, when actuated either by the hopes of plunder or the fear of an enemy: the convenience of feeding their cattle was even a sufficient motive for removing their seats and as they were ignorant of all the refinements of life, their wants and their possessions were equally scanty and limited.

The Britons were divided into many small nations or tribes and being a military people, whose sole property was then arms and their cattle, It was impossible, after they had acquired a relish of liberty for their princes or chieftains to establish any despotic authority over them. Their governments, though monarchical, [1] were free, as well as those of all the Celtic nations; and the common people seem even to have enjoyed more liberty among them, [2] than among the nations of Gaul, [3] from whom they were descended. Each state was divided into factions within itself: [4] it was agitated with jealousy or animosity against the neighboring states: and while the arts of peace were yet unknown, wars were the chief occupation, and formed the chief object of ambition, among the people.

[1 Diod. Sic. lib. iv. Mela, lib. iii. ca. Strabo, lib. iv.]

[2] Dion Cassius, lib. lxxv.]

[3] Cæsar, lib. vi.]

[4] Tacit. Agr.]

The religion of the Britons was one of the most considerable parts of their government; and the druids, who were their priests, possessed great authority among them. Besides ministering at the altar, and directing all religious duties, they presided over the education of youth; they enjoyed an immunity from wars and taxes; they possessed both the civil and criminal jurisdiction; they decided all controversies among states as well as among private persons, and whoever refused to submit to their decree was exposed to the most severe penalties. The sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him: he was forbidden access to the sacrifices or public worship: he was debarred all intercourse with his fellow-citizens, even in the common affairs of life: his company was universally shunned, as profane and dangerous: he was refused the protection of law: [1] and death itself became an acceptable relief from the misery and infamy to which he was exposed. Thus the bands of government, which were naturally loose among that rude and turbulent people, were happily corroborated by the terrors of their superstition.

[1] Cæsar, lib. vi. Strabo, lib. iv.]

No species of superstition was ever more terrible than that of the druids. Besides the severe penalties, which it was in the power of the ecclesiastics to inflict in this world, they inculcated the eternal transmigration of souls; and thereby extended their authority as far as the fears of their timorous votaries. They practised their rites in dark groves or other secret recesses; [1] and in order to throw a greater mystery over their religion, they communicated their doctrines only to the initiated, and strictly forbade the committing of them to writing, lest they should at any time be exposed to the examination of the profane vulgar.

[1] Plin. lib. xii. ca.

Human sacrifices were practised among them: the spoils of war were often devoted to their divinities; and they punished with the severest tortures whoever dared to secrete any part of the consecrated offering: these treasures they kept in woods and forests, secured by no other guard than the terrors of their religion; [1] and this steady conquest over human avidity may be regarded as more signal than their prompting men to the most extraordinary and most violent efforts. No idolatrous worship ever attained such an ascendant over mankind as that of the ancient Gauls and Britons; and the Romans, after their conquest, finding it impossible to reconcile those nations to the laws and institutions of their masters, while it maintained its authority, were at last obliged to abolish it by penal statutes; a violence which had never, in any other instance, been practised by those tolerating conquerors. [2]

[1] Cæsar, lib. vi.

[1] Sueton. in vita Claudii.

THE ROMANS.

The Britons had long remained in this rude but independent state, when Cæsar, having overrun all Gaul by his victories, first cast his eye on their island. He was not allured either by its riches or its renown; but being ambitious of carrying the Roman arms into a new world, then mostly unknown, he took advantage of a short interval in his Gaulic wars, and made an invasion on Britain. The natives, informed of his intention, were sensible of the unequal contest, and endeavored to appease him by submissions, which, however, retarded not the execution of his design. After some resistance, he landed, as is supposed, at Deal, [Anno ante, C. 55;] and having obtained several advantages over the Britons, and obliged them to promise hostages for their future obedience, he was constrained, by the necessity of his affairs, and the approach of winter, to withdraw his forces into Gaul. The Britons relieved, from the terror of his arms, neglected the performance of their stipulations; and that haughty conqueror resolved next summer to chastise them for this breach of treaty. He landed with a greater force; and though he found a more regular resistance from the Britons, who had united under Cassivelaunus, one of their petty princes, he discomfited them in every action. He advanced into the country; passed the Thames in the face of the enemy; took and burned the capital of Cassivelaunus; established his ally, Mandubratius, in the sovereignty of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make him new submissions, he again returned with his army into Gaul, and left the authority of the Romans more nominal than real in this island.

The civil wars which ensued, and which prepared the way for the establishment of monarchy in Rome, saved the Britons from that yoke which was ready to be imposed upon them. Augustus, the successor of Cæsar, content with the victory obtained over the liberties of his own country, was little ambitious of acquiring fame by foreign wars; and being apprehensive lest the same unlimited extent of dominion, which had subverted the republic, might also overwhelm the empire, he recommended it to his successors never to enlarge the territories of the Romans. Tiberius, jealous of the fame which might be acquired by his generals, made this advice of Augustus a pretence for his inactivity. [1]

[1 Tacit. Agr.]

The mad sallies of Caligula, in which he menaced Britain with an invasion, served only to expose himself and the empire to ridicule; and the Britons had now, during almost a century, enjoyed their liberty unmolested, when the Romans, in the reign of Claudius, began to think seriously of reducing them under their dominion. Without seeking any more justifiable reasons of hostility than were employed by the late Europeans in subjecting the Africans and Americans, they sent over an army, [A. D. 43,] under the command of Plautius, an able general, who gained some victories, and made a considerable progress in subduing the inhabitants. Claudius himself, finding matters sufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey into Britain, and received the submission of several British states, the Cantii, Atrebates, Regni, and Trinobantes, who inhabited the south-east parts of the island, and whom their possessions and more cultivated manner of life rendered willing to purchase peace at the expense of their liberty. The other Britons, under the command of Caractacus, still maintained an obstinate resistance, and the Romans made little progress against them; till Ostorius Scapula was sent over to command their armies. [A. D. 50.] This general advanced the Roman conquests over the Britons; pierced into the country of the Silures, a warlike nation, who inhabited the banks of the Severn; defeated Caractacus in a great battle; took him prisoner, and sent him to Rome, where his magnanimous behavior procured him better treatment than those conquerors usually bestowed on captive princes. [1]

[1 Tacit. Ann lib. xii.]

Notwithstanding these misfortunes, the Britons were not subdued; and this island was regarded by the ambitious Romans as a field in which military honor might still be acquired. [A. D. 59.] Under the reign of Nero, Suetonius Paulinus was invested with the command, and prepared to signalize his name by victories over those barbarians. Finding that the island of Mona, now Anglesey, was the chief seat of the druids, he resolved to attack it, and to subject a place which was the centre of their superstition, and which afforded protection to all their baffled forces. The Britons endeavored to obstruct his landing on this sacred island, both by the force of their arms and the terrors of their religion. The women and priests were intermingled with the soldiers upon the shore; and running about with flaming torches in their hands, and tossing their dishevelled hair, they struck greater terror into the astonished Romans by their bowlings, cries, and execrations, than the real danger from the armed forces was able to inspire. But Suetonius, exhorting his troops to despise the menaces of a superstition which they despised, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the druids in the same fires which those priests had prepared for their captive enemies, destroyed all the consecrated groves and altars; and having thus triumphed over the religion of the Britons, he thought his future progress would be easy in reducing the people to subjection. But he was disappointed in his expectations. The Britons, taking advantage of his absence, were all in arms; and headed by Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, who had been treated in the most ignominious manner by the Roman tribunes, had already attacked, with success, several settlements of their insulting conquerors. Suetonius hastened to the protection of London, which was already a flourishing Roman colony; but found, on his arrival, that it would be requisite for the general safety, to abandon that place to the merciless fury of the enemy. London was reduced to ashes; such of the inhabitants as remained in it were cruelly massacred; the Romans and all strangers, to the number of seventy thousand, were every where put to the sword without distinction; and the Britons, by rendering the war thus bloody, seemed determined to cut off all hopes of peace or composition with the enemy. But this cruelty was revenged by Suetonius in a great and decisive battle, where eighty thousand of the Britons are said to have perished, and Boadicea herself, rather than fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her own life by poison. [1] Nero soon after recalled Suetonius from a government, where, by suffering and inflicting so many severities, he was judged improper for composing the angry and alarmed minds of the inhabitants. After some interval, Cerealis received the command from Vespasian, and by his bravery propagated the terror of the Roman arms, Julius Frontinus succeeded Cerealis both in authority and in reputation: but the general who finally established the dominion of the Romans in this island, was Julius Agricola, who governed it in the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and distinguished himself in that scene of action.

This great commander formed a regular plan for subduing Britain, and rendering the acquisition useful to the conquerors. He carried his victorious arms northwards, defeated the Britons in every encounter, pierced into the inaccessible forests and mountains of Caledonia, reduced every state to subjection in the southern parts of the island, and chased before him all the men of fiercer and more intractable spirits, who deemed war and death itself less intolerable than servitude under the victors. He even defeated them in a decisive action, which they fought under Galgacus, their leader; and having fixed a chain of garrisons between the Friths of Clyde and Forth, he thereby cut off the ruder and more barren parts of the island, and secured the Roman province from the incursions of the barbarous inhabitants. [1]

[1 Tacit Ann. lib. xiv.]

During these military enterprises, he neglected not the arts of peace. He introduced laws and civility among the Britons, taught them to desire and raise all the conveniences of life, reconciled them to the Roman language and manners, instructed them in letters and science, and employed every expedient to render those chains which he had forged both easy and agreeable to them. [1]

[1 Tacit. Agr.]

The inhabitants, having experienced how unequal their own force was to resist that of the Romans, acquiesced in the dominion of their masters, and were gradually incorporated as a part of that mighty empire.

This was the last durable conquest made by the Romans, and Britain, once subdued, gave no further inquietude to the victor. Caledonia alone, defended by its barren mountains, and by the contempt which the Romans entertained for it, sometimes infested the more cultivated parts of the island by the incursions of its inhabitants. The better to secure the frontiers of the empire, Adrian, who visited this island, built a rampart between the River Tyne and the Frith of Solway; Lollius Urbicus, under Antoninus Pius, erected one in the place where Agricola had formerly established his garrisons, Severus, who made an expedition into Britain, and carried his arms to the most northern extremity of it, added new fortifications to the wall of Adrian; and during the reigns of all the Roman emperors, such a profound tranquillity prevailed in Britain, that little mention is made of the affairs of that island by any historian. The only incidents which occur, are some seditions or rebellions of the Roman legions quartered there, and some usurpations of the imperial dignity by the Roman governors. The natives, disarmed, dispirited, and submissive, had lost all desire and even idea of their former liberty and independence.

But the period was now come, when that enormous fabric of the Roman empire, which had diffused slavery and oppression, together with peace and civility, over so considerable a part of the globe, was approaching towards its final dissolution. Italy, and the centre of the empire, removed during so many ages from all concern in the wars, had entirely lost the military spirit, and were peopled by an enervated race, equally disposed to submit to a foreign yoke, or to the tyranny of their own rulers. The emperors found themselves obliged to recruit their legions from the frontier provinces, where the genius of war, though languishing, was not totally extinct; and these mercenary forces, careless of laws and civil institutions, established a military government no less dangerous to the sovereign than to the people. The further progress of the same disorders introduced the bordering barbarians into the service of the Romans; and those fierce nations, having now added discipline to their native bravery, could no longer be restrained by the impotent policy of the emperors, who were accustomed to employ one in the destruction of the others. Sensible of their own force, and allured by the prospect of so rich a prize, the northern barbarians, in the reign of Arcadius and Honorius, assailed at once all the frontiers of the Roman empire; and having first satiated their avidity by plunder, began to think of fixing a settlement in the wasted provinces. The more distant barbarians, who occupied the deserted habitations of the former, advanced in their acquisitions, and pressed with their incumbent weight the Roman state, already unequal to the load which it sustained. Instead of arming the people in their own defence, the emperors recalled all the distant legions, in whom alone they could repose confidence; and collected the whole military force for the defence of the capital and centre of the empire. The necessity of self-preservation had superseded the ambition of power; and the ancient point of honor, never to contract the limits of the empire, could no longer be attended to in this desperate extremity.

Britain by its situation was removed from the fury of these barbarous incursions; and being also a remote province, not much valued by the Romans, the legions which defended it were carried over to the protection of Italy and Gaul. But that province, though secured by the sea against the inroads of the greater tribes of barbarians, found enemies on its frontiers, who took advantage of its present defenceless situation. The Picts and Scots, who dwelt in the northern parts, beyond the wall of Antoninus, made incursions upon their peaceable and effeminate neighbors; and besides the temporary depredations which they committed, these combined nations threatened the whole province with subjection, or, what the inhabitants more dreaded, with plunder and devastation, The Picts seem to have been a tribe of the native British race, who, having been chased into the northern parts by the conquests of Agricola, had there intermingled with the ancient inhabitants: the Scots were derived from the same Celtic origin, had first been established in Ireland, had migrated to the north-west coasts of this island, and had long been accustomed, as well from their old as their new seats, to infest the Roman province by piracy and rapine.

[[1] See note A, at the end of the volume.]

These tribes finding their more opulent neighbors exposed to invasion, soon broke over the Roman wall, no longer defended by the Roman arms; and, though a contemptible enemy in themselves, met with no resistance from the unwarlike inhabitants. The Britons, accustomed to have recourse to the emperors for defence as well as government, made supplications to Rome: and one legion was sent over for their protection. This force was an overmatch for the barbarians, repelled their invasion, touted them in every engagement, and having chased them into their ancient limits, returned in triumph to the defence of the southern provinces of the empire. [[1]]

[[1] Gildas, Bede, lib. i. ca.]

Their retreat brought on a new invasion of the enemy. The Britons made again an application to Rome, and again obtained the assistance of a legion, which proved effectual for their relief: but the Romans, reduced to extremities at home, and fatigued with those distant expeditions, informed the Britons that they must no longer look to them for succor, exhorted them to arm in their own defence, and urged, that, as they were now their own masters, it became them to protect by their valor that independence which their ancient lords had conferred upon them. [[1]] That they might leave the island with the better grace, the Romans assisted them in erecting anew the wall of Severus, which was built entirely of stone, and which the Britons had not at that time artificers skilful enough to repair. [1]

[1] Paul. Diacon. .

And having done this last good office to the inhabitants, they bade a final adieu to Britain, about the year 448, after being masters of the more considerable part of it during the course of near four centuries.

THE BRITONS.

The abject Britons regarded this present of liberty as fatal to them; and were in no condition to put in practice the prudent counsel given them by the Romans, to arm in their own defence. Unaccustomed both to the perils of war and to the cares of civil government, they found themselves incapable of forming or executing any measures for resisting the incursions of the barbarians. Gratian also and Constantine, two Romans who had a little before assumed the purple in Britain, had carried over to the continent the flower of the British youth; and having perished in their unsuccessful attempts on the imperial throne, had despoiled the island of those who, in this desperate extremity, were best able to defend it. The Picts and Scots, finding that the Romans had finally relinquished Britain, now regarded the whole as their prey, and attacked the northern wall with redoubled forces. The Britons, already subdued by their own fears, found the ramparts but a weak defence for them; and deserting their station, left the country entirely open to the inroads of the barbarous enemy. The invaders carried devastation and ruin along with them; and exerted to the utmost their native ferocity, which was not mitigated by the helpless condition and submissive behavior of the inhabitants. [1]

[1] Gildas, Bede, lib. i. Allured. Beverl. .]

The unhappy Britons had a third time recourse to Rome, which had declared its resolution forever to abandon them. Ætius, the patrician, sustained at that time, by his valor and magnanimity, the tottering ruins of the empire, and revived for a moment among the degenerate Romans the spirit, as well as discipline, of their ancestors. The British ambassadors carried to him the letter of their countrymen, which was inscribed, “The groans of the Britons.” The tenor of the epistle was suitable to its superscription. “The barbarians,” say they, “on the one hand, chase us into the sea; the sea, on the other, throws us back upon the barbarians; and we have only the hard choice left us of perishing by the sword or by the waves.” [1]

[1] Gildas, Bede, lib. i. ca. William of Malmesbury, lib. i. ca Alured. Beverl. .]

But Ætius, pressed by the arms of Attila, the most terrible enemy that ever assailed the empire, had no leisure to attend to the complaints of allies, whom generosity alone could induce him to assist. [1]

[1] Saxon Chron. , edit. 1692.]

The Britons, thus rejected, were reduced to despair, deserted their habitations, abandoned tillage, and flying for protection to the forests and mountains, suffered equally from hunger and from the enemy. The barbarians themselves began to feel the pressures of famine in a country which they had ravaged; and being harassed by the dispersed Britons, who had not dared to resist them in a body, they retreated with their spoils into their own country. [1]

[1] Alured. Beverl, .]

The Britons, taking advantage of this interval, returned to their usual occupations; and the favorable seasons which succeeded, seconding their industry, made them soon forget their past miseries, and restored to them great plenty of all the necessaries of life. No more can be imagined to have been possessed by a people so rude, who had not, without the assistance of the Romans, art of masonry sufficient to raise a stone rampart for their own defence; yet the monkish historians, [1] who treat of those events, complain of the luxury of the Britons during this period, and ascribe to that vice, not to their cowardice or improvident counsels, all their subsequent calamities.

[1] Gildas, Bede, lib. i. ca.]

The Britons, entirely occupied in the enjoyment of the present interval of peace, made no provision for resisting the enemy, who, invited by their former timid behavior, soon threatened them with a new invasion. We are not exactly informed what species of civil government the Romans, on their departure, had left among the Britons, but it appears probable that the great men in the different districts assumed a kind of regal, though precarious authority, and lived in a great measure independent of each other. [1]

[1 Gildas, Usher, Ant. Brit. , 347.]

To this disunion of counsels were also added the disputes of theology; and the disciples of Pelagius, who was himself a native of Britain, having increased to a great multitude, gave alarm to the clergy, who seem to have been more intent on suppressing them, than on opposing the public enemy. [1]

[1 Gildas, Bede, lib. i. ca. Constant, in Vita Germ.]

Laboring under these domestic evils, and menaced with a foreign invasion, the Britons attended only to the suggestions of their present fears, and following the counsels of Vortigern, prince of Dumnonium, who, though stained with every vice, possessed the chief authority among them, [1] they sent into Germany a deputation to invite over the Saxons for their protection and assistance.

[1 Gildas, W. Malms. .]

THE SAXONS.

Of all the barbarous nations, known either in ancient or modern times, the Germans seem to have been the most distinguished both by their manners and political institutions, and to have carried to the highest pitch the virtues of valor and love of liberty; the only virtues which can have place among an uncivilized people, where justice and humanity are commonly neglected. Kingly government, even when established among the Germans, (for it was not universal,) possessed a very limited authority; and though the sovereign was usually chosen from among the royal family, he was directed in every measure by the common consent of the nation over whom he presided. When any important affairs were transacted, all the warriors met in arms; the men of greatest authority employed persuasion to engage their consent; the people expressed their approbation by rattling their armor, or their dissent by murmurs; there was no necessity for a nice scrutiny of votes among a multitude, who were usually carried with a strong current to one side or the other; and the measure, thus suddenly chosen by general agreement, was executed with alacrity, and prosecuted with vigor. Even in war, the princes governed more by example than by authority, but in peace, the civil union was in a great measure dissolved, and the inferior leaders administered justice, after an independent manner, each in his particular district. These were elected by the votes of the people in their great councils; and though regard was paid to nobility in the choice, their personal qualities, chiefly their valor, procured them, from the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, that honorable but dangerous distinction. The warriors of each tribe attached themselves to the [2possibly this word is their] leader, with the most devoted affection and most unshaken constancy. They attended him as his ornament in peace, as his defence in war, as his council in the administration of justice. Their constant emulation in military renown dissolved not that inviolable friendship which they professed to their chieftain and to each other. To die for the honor of their band was their chief ambition; to survive its disgrace, or the death of their leader, was infamous. They even carried into the field their women and children, who adopted all the martial sentiments of the men: and being thus impelled by every human motive, they were invincible; where they were no [2possibly the word is not] opposed, either by the similar manners and institutions of the neighboring Germans, or by the superior discipline, arms, and numbers of the Romans. [1]

[1] Caesar, lib. vi.]

The leaders and their military companions were maintained by the labor of their slaves, or by that of the weaker and less warlike part of the community whom they defended. The contributions which they levied went not beyond a bare subsistence; and the honors, acquired by a superior rank, were the only reward of their superior dangers and fatigues. All the refined arts of life were unknown among the Germans: tillage itself was almost wholly neglected; they even seem to have been anxious to prevent any improvements of that nature; and the leaders, by annually distributing anew all the land among the inhabitants of each village, kept them from attaching themselves to particular possessions, or making such progress in agriculture as might divert their attention from military expeditions, the chief occupation of the community. [1]

[1] Tacit. de Mor. Germ]

The Saxons had been for some time regarded as one of the most warlike tribes of this fierce people, and had become the terror of the neighboring nations. [1]

[1] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. Orosius.]

They had diffused themselves from the northern parts of Germany and the Cimbrian Chersonesus, and had taken possession of all the sea-coast from the mouth of the Rhine to Jutland; whence they had long infested by their piracies all the eastern and southern parts of Britain, and the northern of Gaul. [1]

[1] Amm. Marcell. lib. xxvii. ca. lib. xxviii. ca]

In order to oppose their inroads, the Romans had established an officer, whom they called “Count of the Saxon shore;” and as the naval arts can flourish among a civilized people alone, they seem to have been more successful in repelling the Saxons than any of the other barbarians by whom they were invaded. The dissolution of the Roman power invited them to renew their inroads; and it was an acceptable circumstance that the deputies of the Britons appeared among them, and prompted them to undertake an enterprise to which they were of themselves sufficiently inclined. [1]

[1] W. Malms, .]

Hengist and Horsa, two brothers, possessed great credit among the Saxons, and were much celebrated both for their valor and nobility. They were reputed, as most of the Saxon princes, to be sprung from Woden, who was worshipped as a god among those nations, and they are said to be his great grandsons; [1] a circumstance which added much to their authority.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Chron. Sax. . Nennius, cap. 28.]

We shall not attempt to trace any higher the origin of those princes and nations. It is evident what fruitless labor it must be to search, in those barbarous and illiterate ages, for the annals of a people, when their first leaders, known in any true history, were believed by them to be the fourth in descent from a fabulous deity, or from a man exalted by ignorance into that character. The dark industry of antiquaries, led by imaginary analogies of names, or by uncertain traditions, would in vain attempt to pierce into that deep obscurity which covers the remote history of those nations.

These two brothers, observing the other provinces of Germany to be occupied by a warlike and necessitous people, and the rich provinces of Gaul already conquered or overrun by other German tribes, found it easy to persuade their countrymen to embrace the sole enterprise which promised a favorable opportunity of displaying their valor and gratifying their avidity. They embarked their troops in three vessels and about the year 449 or 450, [1] earned over one thousand six hundred men, who landed in the Isle of Thanet, and immediately marched to the defence of the Britons against the northern invaders. The Scots and Picts were unable to resist the valor of these auxiliaries; and the Britons, applauding their own wisdom in calling over the Saxons, hoped thenceforth to enjoy peace and security under the powerful protection of that warlike people.

But Hengist and Horsa, perceiving, from their easy victory over the Scots and Picts, with what facility they might subdue tae Britons themselves, who had not been able to resist those feeble invaders, were determined to conquer and fight for their own grandeur, not for the defence of their degenerate allies. They sent intelligence to Saxony of the fertility and riches of Britain, and represented as certain the subjection of a people so long disused to arms, who, being now cut off from the Roman empire, of which they had been a province during so many ages, had not yet acquired any union among themselves, and were destitute of all affection to their new liberties, and of all national attachments and regards. [2] The vices, and pusillanimity of Vortigern, the British leader, were a new ground of hope; and the Saxons in Germany, following such agreeable prospects, soon reënforced Hengist and Horsa with five thousand men, who came over in seventeen vessels. The Britons now began to entertain apprehensions of their allies, whose numbers they found continually augmenting; but thought of no remedy, except a passive submission and connivance. This weak expedient soon failed them. The Saxons sought a quarrel, by complaining that their subsidies were ill paid, and their provisions withdrawn; [3] and immediately taking off the mask, they formed an alliance with the Picts and Scots, and proceeded to open hostility against the Britons.

The Britons, impelled by these violent extremities, ana roused to indignation against their treacherous auxiliaries, were necessitated to take arms; and having deposed Vortigern, who had become odious from his vices, and from the bad event of his rash counsels, they put themselves under the Command of his son, Vortimer. They fought many battles with their enemies; and though the victories in these actions be disputed between the British and Saxon annalists, the progress still made by the Saxons proves that the advantage was commonly on their side.

[1] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, . Hunting, lib. U. . Ethelwerd, Brompton, .]

[2] Chron. Sax. . Alured. Beverl. .]

[3] Bede, lib. i ca. Nennius, ca. Gildas, sect 2d.]

In one battle, however, fought at Faglesford, now Ailsford, Horsa, the Saxon general, was slain and left the sole command over his countrymen in the hands of Hengist. This active general, continually reënforced oy fresh numbers from Germany, carried devastation into the most remote corners of Britain; and being chiefly anxious to spread the terror of his arms, he spared neither age, nor sex, nor condition, wherever he marched with his victorious forces. The private and public edifices of the Britons were reduced to ashes; the priests were slaughtered on the altars by those idolatrous ravagers; the bishops and nobility shared the fate of the vulgar; the people, flying to the mountains and deserts, were intercepted and butchered in heaps: some were glad to accept of life and servitude under their victors: others, deserting their native country, took shelter in the province of Armorica; where, being charitably received by a people of the same language and manners, they settled in great numbers, and gave the country the name of Brittany. [1]

The British writers assign one cause which facilitated the entrance of the Saxons into this island — the love with which Vortigern was at first seized for Rovena, the daughter of Hengist, and which that artful warrior made use of to blind the eyes of the imprudent monarch. [2] The same historians add, that Vortimer died; and that Vortigern, being restored to the throne, accepted of a banquet from Hengist, at Stonehenge, where three hundred of his nobility were treacherously slaughtered, and himself detained captive. [3] But these stories seem to have been invented by the Welsh authors, in order to palliate the weak resistance made at first by their countrymen, and to account for the rapid progress and licentious devastations of the Saxons. [4]

After the death of Vortimer, Ambrosius, a Briton, though of Roman descent, was invested with the command over his countrymen, and endeavored, not without success, to unite them in their resistance against the Saxons. Those contests increased the animosity between the two rations, and roused the military spirit of the ancient inhabitants, which had before been sunk into a fatal lethargy.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Usher, . Gildas, sect. 24.]

[2] Nennius, Galfr. lib. vi. ca.]

[3] Nennius, ca. Galfr.]

[4] Stillingfleet's Orig. Britt. ,325.]

Hengist, however, notwithstanding their opposition, still maintained his ground in Britain and in order to divide the forces and attention of the natives he called over a new tribe of Saxons, under the command of his brother Octa, and of Ebissa, the son of Octa; and he settled them in Northumberland. He himself remained in the southern parts of the island, and laid the foundation of their kingdom of Kent, comprehending the county of that name Middlesex, Essex, and part of Surrey. He fixed his royal seat at Canterbury, where he governed about forty years, and he died in or near the year 488, leaving his new-acquired dominions to his posterity.

The success of Hengist excited the avidity of the other northern Germans; and at different times, and under different leaders, they flocked over in multitudes to the invasion of mis island. These conquerors were chiefly composed of three tribes, the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, [1] who all passed under the common appellation, sometimes, of *Saxons*, sometimes of *Angles*; and speaking the same language, and being governed by the same institutions, they were naturally led, from these causes, as well as from their common interest, to unite themselves against the ancient inhabitants. The resistance, however, though unequal, was still maintained by the Britons; but became every day more feeble; and their calamities admitted of few intervals, till they were driven into Cornwall and Wales, and received protection from the remote situation or inaccessible mountains of those countries.

The first Saxon state, after that of Kent, which was established in Britain, was the kingdom of South Saxony. In the year 477, [2] Ælla, a Saxon chief, brought over an army from Germany; and, landing on the southern coast, proceeded to take possession of the neighboring territory. The Britons, now armed, did not tamely abandon their possessions; nor were they expelled till defeated in many battles by their war-like invaders. The most memorable action, mentioned by historians, is that of Mearcredes Burn; [3] where, though the Saxons seem to have obtained the victory, they suffered so considerable a loss, as somewhat retarded the progress of their conquests.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Ethelwerd, , edit. Camdeni. Chron. Sax. . Alured. Beverl. . The inhabitants of Kent and the Isle of Wight were Jutes. Essex, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex, and all the southern counties to

Cornwall, were peopled by Saxons: Mercis mud other parts of the kingdom were inhabited by Angles.]

[2 Chron. Sax. p.14. Alured Beverl. .]

[3 Chron. Sax. A. D. 485. Flor. Wigron]

But Ælla, reénforced by fresh numbers of his countrymen, again took the field against the Britons; and laid siege to Ancired Ceaster, which was defended by the garrison and inhabitants with desperate valor. [1] The Saxons, enraged by this resistance, and by the fatigues and dangers which they had sustained, redoubled their efforts against the place; and, when masters of it, put all their enemies to the sword without distinction. This decisive advantage secured the conquests of Ælla, who assumed the name of king, and extended his dominion over Sussex and a great part of Surrey He was stopped in his progress to the east by the kingdom of Kent; in that to the west by another tribe of Saxons, who had taken possession of that territory.

These Saxons, from the situation of the country in which they settled, were called the *West Saxons*, and landed in the year 495, under the command of Cerdic, and of his son Kenric. [2] The Britons were, by past experience, so much on their guard, and so well prepared to receive the enemy, that they gave battle to Cerdic the very day of his landing; and, though vanquished, still defended, for some time, their liberties against the invaders. None of the other tribes of Saxons met with such vigorous resistance, or exerted such valor and perseverance in pushing their conquests. Cerdic was even obliged to call for the assistance of his countrymen from the kingdoms of Kent and Sussex, as well as from Germany, and he was thence joined by a fresh army under the command of Porte, and of his sons Bleda and Megla. [3] Strengthened by these succors, he fought, in the year 508, a desperate battle with the Britons, commanded by Nazan Leod, who was victorious in the beginning of the action, and routed the wing in which Cerdic himself commanded. But Kenric, who had prevailed in the other wing, brought timely assistance to his father, and restored the battle, which ended in a complete victory gained by the Saxons. [4] Nazan Leod perished, with five thousand of his army; but left the Britons more weakened than discouraged by his death. The war still continued, though the success was commonly on the side of the Saxons, whose short swords and manner of fighting gave them great advantage over the missile weapons of the Britons.

[1] H. Hunting, lib. ii.]

[2] W. Malms, lib. i. cap. I, . Chron. Sax. p. 15.]

[3] Chron. Sax. .]

[4] H. Hunting, lib ii. Ethelwerd, lib. i. Chron. Sax. .]

Cerdic was not wanting to in good fortune; and in order to extend his conquests, he laid siege to Mount Badon or Banesdowne, near Bath, whither the most obstinate of the discomfited Britons had retired. The southern Britons, in this extremity, applied for assistance to Arthur, prince of the Silures, whose heroic valor now sustained the declining fate of his country. [1] This is that Arthur so much celebrated in the songs of Thaliessin, and the other British bards, and whose military achievements have been blended with so many fables, as even to give occasion for entertaining a doubt of his real existence. But poets, though they disfigure the most certain history by their fictions, ana use strange liberties with truth where they are the sole historians, as among the Britons, have commonly some foundation for their wildest exaggerations. Certain it is, that the siege of Badon was raised by the Britons in the year 520; and the Saxons were there discomfited in a great battle. [2] This misfortune stopped the progress of Cerdic; but was not sufficient to wrest from him the conquests which he had already made. He and his son Kenric, who succeeded him, established the kingdom of the West Saxons, or of Wessex, over the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and the Isle of Wight, and left their new-acquired dominions to their posterity. Cerdic died in 534, Kenric in 560.

While the Saxons made this progress in the south, their countrymen were not less active in other quarters. In the year 527, a great tribe of adventurers, under several leaders, landed on the east coast of Britain; and after fighting many battles, of which history has preserved no particular account, they established three new kingdoms in this island. Uffa assumed the title of king of the East Angles in 575; Crida, that of Mercia in 585; [3] and Erkenwin, that of East Saxony, or Essex, nearly about the same time; but the year is uncertain. This latter kingdom was dismembered from that of Kent, and comprehended Essex, Middlesex, and part of Hertfordshire; that of the East Angles, the counties of Cambridge, Suffolk, and Norfolk: Mercia was extended over all the middle counties from the banks of the Severn to the frontiers of these two kingdoms.

[1] H. Hunting, lib. ii.]

[2] Gildas, Chron. Sax. H. Hunting, lib. ii.]

[3] M. West. H. Hunting, lib. ii.]

The Saxons, soon after the landing of Hengist, had been planted in Northumberland; but as they met with an obstinate resistance, and made but small progress in subduing the inhabitants, their affairs were in so unsettled a condition, that none of their princes for a long time assumed the appellation of king. At last, in 547, [1] Ida, a Saxon prince of great valor, [2] who claimed a descent, as did all the other princes of that nation, from Woden, brought over a reénforcement from Germany, and enabled the Northumbrians to carry on their conquests over the Britons. He entirely subdued the county now called Northumberland, the bishopric of Durham, as well as some of the south-east counties of Scotland; and he assumed the crown under the title of king of Bernicia. Nearly about the same time, Ælla, another Saxon prince, having conquered Lancashire and the greater part of Yorkshire, received the appellation of king of Deïri. [3] These two kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelfrid, grandson of Ida, who married Acca, the daughter of Ælla; and expelling her brother Edwin, established one of the most powerful of the Saxon kingdoms, by the title of Northumberland. How far his dominions extended into the country now called Scotland is uncertain: but it cannot be doubted, that all the lowlands, especially the east coast of that country, were peopled in a great measure from Germany; though the expeditions, made by the several Saxon adventurers, have escaped the records of history. The language spoken in those countries, which is purely Saxon, is a stronger proof of this event than can be opposed by the imperfect, or rather fabulous annals, which are obtruded on us by the Scottish historians.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] W. Malms, .]

[3] Alured, Beverl.].

THE HEPTARCHY

Thus was established, after a violent contest of near a hundred and fifty years, the Heptarchy, or seven Saxon kingdoms, in Britain; and the whole southern part of the island, except Wales and Cornwall, had totally changed its inhabitants, language, customs, and political institutions. The Britons, under the Roman dominion, had made such advances towards arts and civil manners, that they had built twenty-eight considerable cities within their province, besides a great number of villages and country seats; [1] but the fierce conquerors, by whom they were now subdued, threw every thing back into ancient barbarity; and those few natives, who were not either massacred or expelled their habitations, were reduced to the most abject slavery.

[1] Gildas, Sede, lib, i.]

None of the other northern conquerors, the Franks, Goths, Vandals, or Burgundians, though they overran the southern provinces of the empire like a mighty torrent, made such devastations in the conquered territories, or were inflamed into so violent an animosity against the ancient inhabitants. As the Saxons came over at intervals in separate bodies, the Britons, however at first unwarlike, were tempted to make resistance; and hostilities, being thereby prolonged, proved more destructive to both parties, especially to the vanquished. The first invaders from Germany, instead of excluding other adventurers, who must share with them the spoils of the ancient inhabitants, were obliged to solicit fresh supplies from their own country; and a total extermination of the Britons became the sole expedient for providing a settlement and subsistence to the new planters. Hence there have been found in history few conquests more ruinous than that of the Saxons, and few revolutions more violent than that which they introduced.

So long as the contest was maintained with the natives, the several Saxon princes preserved a union of counsels and interests; but after the Britons were shut up in the barren countries of Cornwall and Wales, and gave no further disturbance to the conquerors, the band of alliance was in a great measure dissolved among the princes of the Heptarchy. Though one prince seems still to have been allowed, or to have assumed, an ascendant over the whole, his authority, if it ought ever to be deemed regular or legal, was extremely limited; and each state acted as if it had been independent, and wholly separate from the rest Wars, therefore, and revolutions and dissensions, were unavoidable among a turbulent and military people; and these events, however intricate or confused, ought now to become the objects of our attention But, added to the difficulty of carrying on at once the history of seven independent kingdoms, there is great discouragement to a writer, arising from the uncertainty, at least barrenness, of the accounts transmitted to us. The monks, who were the only annalists during those ages, lived remote from public affairs, considered the civil transactions as entirely subordinate the ecclesiastical, and, besides partaking of the ignorance and barbarity which were then universal, were strongly infected with credulity, with the love of wonder, and with a propensity to imposture; vices almost inseparable from their profession and manner of life. The history of that period abounds in names, but is extremely barren of events; or the events are related so much without circumstances and causes, that the most profound or most eloquent writer must despair of rendering them either instructive or entertaining to the reader. Even the great learning and vigorous imagination of Milton sunk under the weight; and this author scruples not to declare, that the skirmishes of kites or crows as much merited a particular narrative, as the confused transactions and battles of the Saxon Heptarchy. [1] In order, however, to connect the events in some tolerable measure, we shall give a succinct account of the successions of kings, and of the more remarkable revolutions in each particular kingdom; beginning with that of Kent, which was the first established.

[1] Milton in Kennet,]

THE KINGDOM OF KENT

Escus succeeded his father, Hengist, in the kingdom of Kent; but seems not to have possessed the military genius of that conqueror, who first made way for the entrance of the Saxon arms into Britain. All the Saxons, who sought either the fame of valor, or new establishments by arms, flocked to the standard of Ælla, king of Sussex, who was carrying on successful war against the Britons, and laying the foundations of a new kingdom. Escus was content to possess in tranquillity the kingdom of Kent, which he left in 512 to his son Octet, in whose time the East Saxons established their monarchy, and dismembered the provinces of Essex and Middlesex from that of Kent. His death, after a reign of twenty two years, made room for his son Hermenric in 534, who performed nothing memorable during a reign of thirty-two years; excepting associating with him his son Ethelbert in the government, that he might secure the succession hi his family, and prevent such revolutions as are incident to a turbulent and barbarous monarchy.

Ethelbert revived the reputation of his family, which had languished for some generations. The inactivity of his predecessors, and the situation of his country, secured from all hostility with the Britons, seem to have much enfeebled the warlike genius of the Kentish Saxons; and Ethelbert, in his first attempt to aggrandize his country, and distinguish his own name, was unsuccessful. [1] He was twice discomfited in battle by Ceaulin, king of Wessex, and obliged to yield the superiority in the Heptarchy to that ambitious monarch, who preserved no moderation in his victory, and by reducing the kingdom of Sussex to subjection, excited jealousy in all the other princes. An association was formed against him; and Ethelbeit, intrusted with the command of the allies, gave him battle, and obtained a decisive victory. [2] Ceaulin died soon after; and Ethelbert succeeded as well to his ascendant among the Saxon states, as to his other ambitious projects. He reduced all the princes, except the king of Northumberland, to a strict dependence upon him; and even established himself by force on the throne of Mercia, the most extensive of the Saxon kingdoms. Apprehensive, however, of a dangerous league against him, like that by which he himself had been enabled to overthrow Ceaulin, he had the prudence to resign the kingdom of Mercia to Webba, the rightful heir, the son of Crida, who had first founded that monarchy. But governed still by ambition more than by justice, he gave Webba possession of the crown on such conditions, as rendered him little better than a tributary prince under his artful benefactor.

But the most memorable event which distinguished the reign of this great prince, was the introduction of the Christian religion among the English Saxons. The superstition of the Germans, particularly that of the Saxons, was of the grossest and most barbarous kind; and being founded on traditional tales, received from their ancestors, not reduced to any system, not supported by political institutions, like that of the druids, it seems to have made little impression on its votaries, and to have easily resigned its place to the new doctrine promulgated to them. Woden, whom they deemed the ancestor of all their princes, was regarded as the god of war, and, by a natural consequence, became their supreme deity, and the chief object of their religious worship. They believed that, if they obtained the favor of this divinity by their valor, (for they made less account of the other virtues,) they should be admitted after their death into his hall; and reposing on couches, should satiate themselves with ale from the skulls of their enemies, whom they had slain in battle. Incited by this idea of paradise, which gratified at once the passion of revenge and that of intemperance, the ruling inclinations of barbarians, they despised the dangers of war, and increased their native ferocity against the vanquished by their religious prejudices.

We know little of the other theological tenets of the Saxons; we only learn that they were polytheists; that they worshipped the sun and moon; that they adored the god of thunder, under the name of Thor; that they had images in their temples; that they practised sacrifices; believed firmly in spells and enchantments; and admitted in general a system of doctrines which they held as sacred, but which, like all other superstition must carry the air of the wildest extravagance, if propounded to those who are not familiarized to it from their earliest infancy.

The constant hostilities which the Saxons maintained against the Britons, would naturally indispose them for receiving the Christian faith, when

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[[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[[2] H. Hunting, lib ii.]

preached to them by such inveterate enemies; and perhaps the Britons, as is objected to them by Gildas and Bede, were not over-fond of communicating to their cruel invaders the doctrine of eternal life and salvation. But as a civilized people, however subdued by arms, still maintain a sensible superiority over barbarous and ignorant nations, all the other northern conquerors of Europe had been already induced to embrace the Christian faith, which they found established in the empire; and it was impossible but the Saxons, informed of this event, must have regarded with some degree of veneration a doctrine which had acquired the ascendant over all their brethren. However limited in their news, they could not but have perceived a degree of cultivation in the southern countries beyond what they themselves possessed; and it was natural for them to yield to that superior knowledge, as well as zeal, by which the inhabitants of the Christian kingdoms were even at that time distinguished.

But these causes might long have failed of producing any considerable effect, had not a favorable incident prepared the means of introducing Christianity into Kent. Ethelbert, in his father's lifetime, had married Bertha, the only daughter of Cariben, king of Paris, [1] one of the descendants of Clovis, the conqueror of Gaul.

[1] Greg, of Tours, lib, ix. ca. H. Hunting, lib. ii.]

But before he was admitted to this alliance, he was obliged to stipulate, that the princess should enjoy the free exercise of her religion; a concession not difficult to be obtained from the idolatrous Saxons. [1] Bertha brought over a French bishop to the court of Canterbury; and being zealous for the propagation of her religion, she had been very assiduous in her devotional exercises, had supported the credit of her faith by an irreproachable conduct, and had employed every an of insinuation and address to reconcile her husband to her religious principles. Her popularity in the court, and her influence over Ethelbert, had so well paved the way for the reception of the Christian doctrine, that Gregory, surnamed the Great, then Roman pontiff, began to entertain hopes of effecting a project which lie himself, before he mounted the papal throne, had once embraced, of converting the British Saxons.

It happened that this prelate, at that time in a private station, had observed in the market place of Rome some Saxon youth exposed to sale, whom the Roman merchants, in their trading voyages to Britain, had bought of their mercenary parents. Struck with the beauty of their fair complexions and blooming countenances, Gregory asked to what country they belonged; and being told they were “Angles,” he replied that they ought more properly to be denominated “angels.” it were a pity that the prince of darkness should enjoy so fair a prey, and that so beautiful a frontispiece should cover a mind destitute of internal grace and righteousness. Inquiring further concerning the name of their province, he was Informed, that it was “Deïri,” a district of Northumberland. “Deïri!” replied he, “that is good! They are called to the mercy of God from his anger — *de ira*. But what is the name of the king of that province?” He was told it was “Ælla,” or “Alia.” “Alleluiah;” cried he, “we must endeavor that the praises of God be sung in their country.” Moved by these allusions, which appeared to him so happy, he deter mined to undertake himself a mission into Britain; and having obtained the pope’s approbation, he prepared for that perilous journey; but his popularity at home was so great, that the Romans, unwilling to expose him to such dangers, opposed his design, and he was obliged for the present to lay aside all further thoughts of executing that pious purpose. [2]

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Brompton, .]

[2] Bede, lib. ii. ca. Spell. Concil. .]

The controversy between the pagans and the Christians was not entirely cooled in that age; and no pontiff before Gregory had ever carried to greater excess an intemperate zeal against the former religion. He had waged war with all the precious monuments of the ancients, and even with their writings, which, as appears from the strain of his own wit, as well as from the style of his compositions, he had not taste or genius sufficient to comprehend. Ambitious to distinguish his pontificate by the conversion of the British Saxons, he pitched on Augustine, a Roman monk, and sent him with forty associates to preach the gospel in this island. These missionaries, terrified with the dangers which might attend their proposing a new doctrine to so fierce a people, of whose language they were ignorant, stopped some time in France, and sent back Augustine to lay the hazards and difficulties before the pope, and crave his permission to desist from the undertaking. But Gregory exorted them to persevere in their purpose, advised them to choose some interpreters from among the Franks, who still spoke the same language with the Saxons, [1] and recommended them to the good offices of Queen Brunehaut, who had at this time usurped the sovereign power in France. This princess, though stained with every vice of treachery and cruelty, either possessed or pretended great zeal for the cause; and Gregory acknowledged, that to her friendly assistance was, in a great measure, owing the success of that undertaking. [2]

Augustine, on his arrival in Kent in the year 597, [3] found the danger much less than he had apprehended. Ethelbert, already well disposed towards the Christian faith, assigned him a habitation in the Isle of Thanet, and soon after admitted him to a conference. Apprehensive, however, lest spells or enchantments might be employed against him by priests, who brought an unknown worship from a distant country, he had the precaution to receive them in the open air, where, he believed, the force of their magic would be more easily dissipated, [4] Here Augustine, by means of his interpreters, delivered to him the tenets of the Christian faith, and promised him eternal joys above, and a kingdom in heaven without end, if he would be persuaded to receive that salutary doctrine.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca.]

[2] Greg. Epist. lib. ix. epist. 56. Spell. Concil. .]

[3] Higden Polychron. lib. v. Chron. Sax. .]

[4] Bede, lib. i. ca. H. Hunting, lib. iii. Brompton, Parker, Antiq. Brit. Eccel. p 61.]

“Our words and promises,” [1] replied Ethelbert, “are fair; but because they are new and uncertain, I cannot entirely yield to them, and relinquish the principles which I and my ancestors have so long maintained. You are welcome, however, to remain here in peace; and as you have undertaken so long a journey, solely, as it appears, for what you believe to be for our advantage, I will supply you with all necessaries, and permit you to deliver your doctrine to my subjects.” [2]

Augustine, encouraged by this favorable reception, and seeing now a prospect of success, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the gospel to the Kentish Saxons. He attracted their attention by the austerity of his manners, by the severe penances to which he subjected himself, by the abstinence find self-denial which he practised; and having excited then wonder by a course of life which appeared so contrary to nature, he procured more easily their belief of miracles, which, it was pretended, he wrought for their conversion. Influenced by these motives, and by the declared favor of the court, numbers of the Kentish men were baptized; and the king himself was persuaded to submit to that rite of Christianity. His example had great influence with his subjects; but he employed no force to bring them over to the new doctrine. Augustine thought proper, in the commencement of his mission, to assume the appearance of the greatest lenity; he told Ethelbert, that the service of Christ must be entirely voluntary, and that no violence ought ever to be used in propagating so salutary a doctrine. [4]

The intelligence received of these spiritual conquests afforded great joy to the Romans, who now exulted as much in those peaceful trophies as their ancestors had ever done in their most sanguinary triumphs and most splendid victories. Gregory wrote a letter to Ethelbert, in which, after informing him that the end of the world was approaching, he exhorted him to display his zeal in the conversion of his subjects, to exert rigor against the worship of idols, and to build up the good work of holiness by every expedient of exhortation, terror, blandishment, or correction; [5] a doctrine more suitable to that age, and to the usual papal maxims, than the tolerating principles which Augustine had thought it prudent to inculcate.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Chron. W. Thorn, p. 1759.]

[2] Bede, lib. i. ca. H. Hunting, lib. iii. Brompton,]

[3] Bede, lib. i. ca.]

[4] Bede, cap 26. H. Hunting, lib. iii.] Concil, 785]

The pontiff also answered some questions, which the missionary had put concerning the government of the new church of Kent. Besides other queries, which it is not material here to relate, Augustine asked, “Whether cousins-german might be allowed to marry.” Gregory answered, that that liberty had indeed been formerly granted by the Roman law; but that experience had shown that no issue could ever come from such marriages; and he therefore prohibited them. Augustine asked, “Whether a woman pregnant might be baptized.” Gregory answered, that he saw no objection. “How soon after the birth the child might receive baptism.” It was answered, immediately, if necessary. “How soon a husband might have commerce with his wife after her delivery.” Not till she had given suck to her child; a practice to which Gregory exhorts all women. “How; soon a man might enter the church, or receive the sacrament, after having had commerce with his wife.” It was replied, that, unless he had approached her without desire, merely for the sake of propagating his species, he was not without sin; but in all cases it was requisite for him, before he entered the church, or communicated, to purge himself by prayer and ablution; and he ought not, even after using these precautions, to participate immediately of the sacred duties. [1] There are some other questions and replies still more indecent and more ridiculous. [2] And on the whole it appears that Gregory and his missionary, if sympathy of manners have any influence, were better calculated than men of more refined understandings, for making a progress with the ignorant and barbarous Saxons.

The more to facilitate the reception of Christianity, Gregory enjoined Augustine to remove the idols from the heathen altars, but not to destroy the altars themselves; because the people, he said, would be allured to frequent the Christian worship, when they found it celebrated in a place which they were accustomed to revere.

[1] Bede, lib. i. ca. Spell. Concil. , 98, 99, &c.]

[2] Augustine asks, “Si mulier menstrua consuetudine tenetur, an ecclesiam intrare et licet, aut sacræ communionis sacramenta percipere?” Gregory answers, “Santæ communionis mysterium in eisdem diebus percipere non debet prohiberi. Si autem ex veneratione magna percipere non præsumitur, laudanda est.” Augustine asks, “Si post illusionem, quae par somnum solet accidere, vel corpus Domini quilibet accipere valeat; vel, si sacerdos sit, sacra mysteria celebrare?” Gregory answers this learned question by many learned distinctions.]

And as the pagans practised sacrifices, and feasted with the priests on their offerings, he also exhorted the missionary to persuade them, on Christian festivals, to kill their cattle in the neighborhood of the church, and to indulge themselves in those cheerful entertainments to which they had been habituated. [1] These political compliances show that, notwithstanding his ignorance and prejudices, he was not unacquainted with the arts of governing mankind. Augustine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, was endowed by Gregory with authority over all the British churches, and received the pall, a badge of ecclesiastical honor, from Rome. [2] Gregory also advised him not to be too much elated with his gift of working miracles; [3] and as Augustine, proud of the success of his mission, seemed to think himself entitled to extend his authority over the bishops of Gaul, the pope informed him that they lay entirely without the bounds of his jurisdiction. [4]

The marriage of Ethelbert with Bertha, and, much more his embracing Christianity, begat a connection of his subjects with the French, Italians, and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim them from that gross ignorance and barbarity, in which all the Saxon tribes had been hitherto involved. [5] Ethelbert also enacted, [6] with the consent of the states of his kingdom, a body of laws, the first written laws promulgated by any of the northern conquerors; and his reign was in every respect glorious to himself and beneficial to his people. He governed the kingdom of Kent fifty years; and dying in 616, left the succession to his son, Eadbald. This prince, seduced by a passion for his mother-in-law, deserted, for some time, the Christian faith, which permitted not these incestuous marriages: his whole people immediately returned with him to idolatry. Laurentius, the successor of Augustine found the Christian worship wholly abandoned, and was prepared to return to France, in order to escape the mortification of preaching the gospel without fruit to the infidels.

[[1] Bede lib. i. ca. Spell. Concil. . Greg. Epist. lib. ix. epist. 71.]

[[2] Chron. Sax. ,24.]

[[3] H. Hunting, lib. iii. Spell. Concil. . Bede, lib. i. Greg Epist. lib. ix. epist. 60.]

[4] Bede, lib. i. ca.]

[6] Wilkins, Leges Sax. .]

Mellitus and Justus, who had been consecrated bishops of London and Rochester, had already departed the kingdom, [1] when Laurentius, before he should entirely abandon his dignity, made one effort to reclaim the king. He appeared before that prince, and, throwing off his vestments, showed his body all torn with bruises and stripes which he had received. Eadbald, wondering that any man should have dared to treat in that manner a person of his rank, was told by Laurentius, that he had received this chastisement from St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, who had appeared to him in a vision, and severely reproving him for his intention to desert his charge, had inflicted on him these visible marks of his displeasure. [2] Whether Eadbald was struck with the miracle, or influenced by some other motive, he divorced himself from his mother-in-law, and returned to the profession of Christianity: [3] his whole people returned with him. Eadbald reached not the fame or authority of his father, and died in 640, after a reign of twenty-five years, leaving two sons, Erminfrid and Ercombert.

[1] Bede, lib. ii. cap 5.]

[2] Bede, lib. ii ca. Chron. Sax. . Higden, lib. v]

[3] Brompton, p 739.]

Ercombert, though the younger son, by Emma, a French princess, found means to mount the throne. He is celebrated by Bede for two exploits — for establishing the fast of Lent in his kingdom, and for utterly extirpating idolatry, which, notwithstanding the prevalence of Christianity, had hitherto been tolerated by the two preceding monarchs. He reigned twenty-four years, and left the crown to Egbert, his son, who reigned nine years. This prince is renowned for his encouragement of learning; but infamous for putting to death his two cousins-german, sons of Erminfrid, his uncle. The ecclesiastical writers praise him for his bestowing on his sister, Domnona, some lands in the Isle of Thanet, where she founded a monastery.

The bloody precaution of Egbert could not fix the crown on the head of his son Edric. Lothaire, brother of the deceased prince, took possession of the kingdom; and in order to secure the power in his family, he associated with him Richard, his son, in the administration of the government. Edric, the dispossessed prince, had recourse to Edilwach, king of Sussex, for assistance; and being supported by that prince, fought a battle with his uncle, who was defeated and slain. Richard fled into Germany, and afterwards died in Lucca, a city of Tuscany. William of Malmsbury ascribes Lothaire’s bad fortune to two crimes — his concurrence in the murder of his cousins, and his contempt for relics. [1]

Lothaire reigned eleven years; Edric, his successor, only two. Upon the death of the latter, which happened in 686 Widred, his brother, obtained possession of the crown. But as the succession had been of late so much disjointed by revolutions and usurpations, faction began to prevail among the nobility; which invited Cedwalla, king of Wessex, with his brother Mollo, to attack the kingdom. These invaders committed great devastations in Kent; but the death of Mollo, who was slain in a skirmish, [2] gave a short breathing time to that kingdom. Widred restored the affairs of Kent, and, after a reign of thirty-two years, [3] left the crown to his posterity. Eadbert, Ethelbert, and Alric, his descendants, successively mounted the throne. After the death of the last, which happened in 794, the royal family of Kent was extinguished; and every factious leader, who could entertain hopes of ascending the throne, threw the state into confusion. [4] Egbert, who first succeeded, reigned but two years; Cuthred, brother to the king of Mercia, six years; Baldred, an illegitimate branch of the royal family, eighteen; and after a troublesome and precarious reign, he was, in the year 823, expelled by Egbert, king of Wessex, who dissolved the Saxon Heptarchy, and united the several kingdoms under his dominion.

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] Higden, lib. v.]

[3] Chron. Sax. .]

[4 W. Malms, lib. i. ca, p.11.]

THE KINGDOM OF NORTHUMBERLAND

Adelfrid, king of Bernicia, having married Acca, the daughter of Ælla, king of Deïri, and expelled her infant brother, Edwin, had united all the counties north of Humber into one monarchy, and acquired a great ascendant in the Heptarchy. He also spread the terror of the Saxon arms to the neighboring people; and by his victories over the Scots and Picts, as well as Welsh, extended on all sides the bounds of his dominions. Having laid siege to Chester, the Britons marched out with all their forces to engage him; and they were attended by a body of twelve hundred and fifty monks from the monastery of Bangor, who stood at a small distance from the field of battle, in order to encourage the combatants by their presence and exhortations. Adelfrid, inquiring into the purpose of this unusual appearance, was told that these priests had come to pray against him: “Then are they as much our enemies,” said he, “as those who intend to fight against us;” [1] and he immediately sent a detachment, who fell upon them, and did such execution, that only fifty escaped with their lives. [2] The Britons, astonished at this event, received a total defeat: Chester was obliged to surrender; and Adelfrid, pursuing his victory, made himself master of Bangor, and entirely demolished the monastery, a building so extensive, that there was a mile’s distance from one gate of it to another; and it contained two thousand one hundred monks, who are said to have been there maintained by their own labor. [3] Notwithstanding Adelfrid’s success in war, he lived in inquietude on account of young Edwin, whom he had unjustly dispossessed of the crown of Deïri. This prince, now grown to man’s estate, wandered from place to place, in continual danger from the attempts of Adelfrid; and received at last protection in the court of Redwald, king of the East Angles; where his engaging and gallant deportment procured him general esteem and affection. Redwald, however, was strongly solicited, by the king of Northumberland, to kill or deliver up his guest: rich presents were promised him if he would comply, and war denounced against him in case of his refusal. After rejecting several messages of this kind, his generosity began to yield to the motives of interest; and he retained the last ambassador, till he should come to a resolution in a case of such importance. Edwin, informed of his friend’s perplexity, was yet determined at all hazards to remain in East Anglia; and thought, that if the protection of that court failed him, it were better to die than prolong a life so much exposed to the persecutions of his powerful rival. This confidence in Redwald’s honor and friendship, with his other accomplishments, engaged the queen on his side; and she effectually represented to her husband the infamy of delivering up to certain destruction their royal guest, who had fled to them for protection against his cruel and jealous enemies. [4] Redwald, embracing more generous resolutions, thought it safest to prevent Adelfrid, before that prince was aware of his intention, and to attack him while he was yet unprepared for defence.

[1] Brompton, .]

[2] Trivet, apud Spell. Concil. .]

[3] Bede, lib. ii. ca. W. Malms, lib. i. cap. 3.]

[4] W. Malms, lib. i. ca. H. Hunting, lib. iii. Bede.]

He marched suddenly with an army into the kingdom of Northumberland, and fought a battle with Adelfrid; in which that monarch was defeated and killed, after revenging himself by the death of Regner, son of Redwald. [1] His own sons, Eanfrid. Oswald, and Oswy, yet infants, were carried into Scotland; and Edwin obtained possession of the crown of Northumberland.

Edwin was the greatest prince of the Heptarchy in that age, and distinguished himself, both by his influence over the other kingdoms, [2] and by the strict execution of justice in his own dominions. He reclaimed his subjects from the licentious life to which they had been accustomed; and it was a common saying, that during his reign a woman or child might openly carry every where a purse of gold, without any danger of violence or robbery. There is a remarkable instance, transmitted to us, of the affection borne him by his servants. Cuichelme, king of Wessex, was his enemy; but finding himself unable to maintain open war against so gallant and powerful a prince, he determined to use treachery against him, and he employed one Eumer for that criminal purpose, The assassin, having obtained admittance, by pretending to deliver a message from Cuichelme, drew his dagger, and rushed upon the king. Lilla, an officer of his army, seeing his master's danger, and having no other means of defence, interposed with his own body between the king and Burner's dagger, which was pushed with such violence, that, after piercing Lilla, it even wounded Edwin; but before the assassin could renew his blow, he was despatched by the king's attendants.

The East Angles conspired against Redwald, their king; and having put him to death, they offered their crown to Edwin, of whose valor and capacity they had had experience, while he resided among them. But Edwin, from a sense o£ gratitude towards his benefactor, obliged them to submit to Earpwold, the son of Redwald; and that prince preserved his authority, though on a precarious footing, under the protection of the Northumbrian monarch. [3]

[1] Bede, lib. ii. ca. Bromton, .]

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

[3] W. Malms, lib. i. ca]

Edwin, after his accession to the crown, married Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent. This princess, emulating the glory of her mother, Bertha, who had been the instrument for converting her husband and his people to Christianity, carried Paullinus, a learned bishop, along with her; [1] and besides stipulating a toleration for the exercise of her own religion, which was readily granted her, she used every reason to persuade the king to embrace it. Edwin, like a prudent prince, hesitated on the proposal, but promised to examine the foundations of that doctrine, and declared that, if he found them satisfactory, he was willing to be converted. [2] Accordingly he held several conferences with Paullinus; canvassed the arguments propounded with the wisest of his counsellors; retired frequently from company, in order to revolve alone that important question; and, after a serious and long inquiry, declared in favor of the Christian religion; [3] the people soon after imitated his example. Besides the authority and influence of the king, they were moved by another striking example. Coifi, the high priest, being converted after a public conference with Paullinus, led the way in destroying the images, which he had so long worshipped, and was forward in making this atonement for his past idolatry. [4]

This able prince perished with his son Osfrid, in a great battle which he fought against Penda, king of Mercia, and Caedwalla, king of the Britons. [5] That event, which happened in the forty-eighth year of Edwin's age and seventeenth of his reign, [6] divided the monarchy of Northumberland, which that prince had united in his person. Eanfrid, the son of Adelfrid, returned with his brothers, Oswald and Oswy, from Scotland, and took possession of Bernicia, his paternal kingdom; Osric, Edwin's cousin-german, established himself in Deïri, the inheritance of his family, but to which the sons of Edwin had a preferable title. Eanfrid, the elder surviving son, fled to Penda, by whom he was treacherously slain. The younger son, Vuscfraea, with Yffi, the grandson of Edwin, by Osfrid, sought protection in Kent, and not finding themselves in safety there, retired into France to King Dagobert, where they died. [7]

Osric, king of Deïri and Eanfrid of Bernicia, returned to paganism; and the whole people seem to have returned with them; since Paullinus, who was the first archbishop of York; and who had converted them, thought proper to retire with Ethelburga, the queen dowager, into Kent. Both these

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[1] H. Hunting, lib. iii.]

[2] Bede, lib. ii. ca.]

[3] Bede, lib. ii. ca. W. Malms, lib. i. cap. 3.]

[4] Bede, lib. ii. ca. Brompton, Higden, lib. v.]

[6] W. Malms, lib. i. ca.]

[7] Bede, lib. ii, ca.]

Northumbrian kings perished soon after, the first in battle against Caedwalla, the Briton; the second by the treachery of that prince. Oswald, the brother of Eanfrid, of the race of Bernicia, united again the kingdom of Northumberland in the year 634, and restored the Christian religion in his dominions. He gained a bloody and well-disputed battle against Caedwalla; the last vigorous effort which the Britons made against the Saxons. Oswald is much celebrated for his sanctity and charity by the monkish historians; and they pretend that his relics wrought miracles, particularly the curing of a sick horse, which had approached the place of his interment. [1]

[1] Bede, lib. iii. ca.

He died in battle against Penda, king of Mercia, and was succeeded by his brother Oswy, who established himself in the government of the whole Northumbrian kingdom, by putting to death Oswin, the son of Osric, the last king of the race of Deïri. His son Egfrid succeeded him; who perishing in battle against the Picts, without leaving any children, because Adelthrid, his wife, refused to violate her vow of chastity, Alfred, his natural brother, acquired possession of the kingdom, which he governed for nineteen years; and he left it to Osred, his son, a boy of eight years of age. This prince, after a reign of eleven years, was murdered by Kenred, his kinsman, who, after enjoying the crown only a year, perished by a like fate. Osric, and after him Celwulph, the son of Kenred, next mounted the throne, which the latter relinquished in the year 738, in favor of Eadbert, his cousin-german, who, imitating his predecessor, abdicated the crown, and retired into a monastery. Oswolf, son of Eadbert, was slain in a sedition, a year after his accession to the crown; and Mollo, who was not of the royal family, seized the crown. He perished by the treachery of Ailred, a prince of the blood; and Ailred, having succeeded in his design upon the throne, was soon after expelled by his subjects. Ethelred, his successor, the son of Mollo, underwent a like fate. Celwold, the next king, the brother of Ailred, was deposed and slain by the people; and his place was filled by Osred, his nephew, who, after a short reign of a year, made way for Ethelbert, another son of Mollo whose death was equally tragical with that of almost all his predecessors. After Ethelbert's death, a universal anarchy prevailed in Northumberland; and the people having, by so many fatal revolutions, lost all attachment to their government and princes, were well prepared for subjection to a foreign yoke; which Egbert, king of Wessex, finally imposed upon them.

THE KINGDOM OF EAST ANGLIA

The history of this kingdom contains nothing memorable except the conversion of Earpwold, the fourth king, and great-grandson of Una, the founder of the monarchy. The authority of Edwin, king of Northumberland, on whom that prince entirety depended, engaged him to take this step; but soon after, his wife, who was an idolatress, brought him back to her religion; and he was found unable to resist those allurements which have seduced the wisest of mankind. After his death, which was violent, like that of most of the Saxon princes that did not early retire into monasteries, Sigebert, his successor and half-brother, who had been educated in France, restored Christianity, and introduced learning among the East Angles. Some pretend that he founded the university of Cambridge, or rather some schools in that place. It is almost impossible, and quite needless, to be more particular in relating the transactions of the East Angles. What instruction or entertainment can it give the reader, to hear a long bead-roll of barbarous names, Egric, Annas, Ethelbert, Ethelwald, Aldulf, Elfwald, Beorne, Ethelred, Ethelbert, who successively murdered, expelled, or inherited from each other, and obscurely filled the throne of that kingdom? Ethelbert, the last of these princes, was treacherously murdered by Offa, king of Mercia, in the year 792, and his state was thenceforth [1mited] with that of Offa, as we shall relate presently.

THE KINGDOM OF MERCIA

Mercia, the largest, if not the most powerful, kingdom of the Heptarchy, comprehended all the middle counties of England; and as its frontiers extended to those of all the other kingdoms, as well as to Wales, it received its name from that circumstance. Wibba, the son of Crida, founder of the monarchy, being placed on the throne by Ethelbert, king of Kent, governed his paternal dominions by a precarious authority; and after his death, Ceorl, his kinsman, was, by the influence of the Kentish monarch, preferred to his son Penda, whose turbulent character appeared dangerous to that prince. Penda was thus fifty years of age before he mounted the throne; and his temerity and restless disposition were found nowise abated by time, experience, or reflection. He engaged in continual hostilities against all the neighboring states; and, by his injustice and violence, rendered himself equally odious to his own subjects and to strangers. Sigebert, Egric, and Annas, three kings of East Anglia, perished successively in battle against him; as did also Edwin and Oswald, the two greatest princes that had reigned over Northumberland. At last Oswy, brother to Oswald, having defeated and slain him in a decisive battle, freed the world from this sanguinary tyrant. Peada, his son, mounted the throne of Mercia in 655, and lived under the protection of Oswy, whose daughter he had espoused. This princess was educated in the Christian faith, and she employed her influence, with success, in converting her husband and his subjects to that religion. Thus the fair sex have had the merit of introducing the Christian doctrine into all the most considerable kingdoms of the Saxon Heptarchy. Peada died a violent death. [1] His son Wolfhere succeeded to the government; and, after having reduced to dependence the kingdoms of Essex and East Anglia, he left the crown to his brother Ethelred, who, though a lover of peace, showed himself not unfit for military enterprises. Besides making a successful expedition into Kent, he repulsed Egfrid, king of Northumberland, who had invaded his dominions; and he slew in battle Elswin, the brother of that prince. Desirous, however, of composing all animosities with Egfrid, he paid him a sum of money as a compensation for the loss of his brother. After a prosperous reign of thirty years, he resigned the crown to Kendred, son of Wolfhere, and retired into the monastery of Bardney. [2]

[1] Hugo Candidas () says, that he was treacherously murdered by his queen, by whose persuasion he had embraced Christianity; but this account of the matter is found in that historian alone.]

[2] Bede, lib. v.]

Kendred returned the present of the crown to Ceolred, the son of Ethelred; and making a pilgrimage to Rome, passed his life there in penance and devotion. The place of Ceolred was supplied by Ethelbald, great-grand-nephew to Penda, by Alwy, his brother; and this prince, being slain in a mutiny, was succeeded by Offa, who was a degree more remote from Penda, by Eawa, another brother.

This prince, who mounted the throne in 755, [1] had some great qualities, and was successful in his warlike enterprises against Lothaire, king of Kent, and Kenwulph, king of Wessex, He defeated the former in a bloody battle, at Otford upon the Darent, and reduced his kingdom to a state of dependence; he gained a victory over the latter at Bensington, in Oxfordshire; and conquering that county, together with that of Glocester, annexed both to his dominions. But all these successes were stained by his treacherous murder of Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, and his violent seizing of that kingdom. This young prince, who is said to have possessed great merit, had paid his addresses to Elfrida, the daughter of Offa, and was invited with all his retinue to Hereford, in order to solemnize the nuptials: amidst the joy and festivity of these entertainments, he was seized by Offa, and secretly beheaded; and though Elfrida, who abhorred her father's treachery, had time to give warning to the East Anglian nobility, who escaped into their own country, Offa, having extinguished the royal family, succeeded in his design of subduing that kingdom. [2] The perfidious prince, desirous of reestablishing his character in the world, and perhaps of appeasing the remorses of his own conscience, paid great court to the clergy, and practised all the monkish devotion so much esteemed in that ignorant and superstitious age. He gave the tenth of his goods to the church; [3] bestowed rich donations on the cathedral of Hereford, and even made a pilgrimage to Rome, where his great power and riches could not fail of procuring him the papal absolution. The better to ingratiate himself with the sovereign pontiff, he engaged to pay him a yearly donation for the support of an English college at Rome, [4] and in order to raise the sum, he imposed a tax of a penny on each house possessed of thirty pence a year. This imposition, being afterwards levied on all England, was commonly denominated *Peter's pence*; [5] and though conferred at first as a gift, was afterwards claimed as a tribute by the Roman pontiff.

Carrying his hypocrisy still further, Offa, feigning to be directed by a vision from heaven, discovered at Verulam the relics of St Alban, the martyr, and endowed a magnificent monastery in that place. [1] Moved by al these acts of piety, Malmsbury, one of the best of the old English historians, declares himself at a loss to determine [2] whether the merits or crimes of this prince preponderated. Offa died, after a reign of thirty-nine years, in 794. [3]

This prince was become so considerable in the Heptarchy, that the emperor Charlemagne entered into an alliance and friendship with him; a circumstance which did honor to Offa; as distant princes at that time had usually little communication with each other. That emperor being a great lover of learning and learned men, in an age very barren of that ornament, Offa, at his desire, sent him over Alcuin, a clergyman much celebrated for his knowledge, who received great honors from Charlemagne, and even became his preceptor in the sciences. The chief reason why he had at first desired the company of Alcuin, was that he might oppose his learning to the heresy of Felix, bishop of Urgel, in Catalonia; who maintained that Jesus Christ, considered in his human nature, could more properly be denominated the adoptive than the natural son of God. [4] This heresy was condemned in the council of Francfort, held in 794, and consisting of three hundred bishops. Such were the questions which were agitated in that age, and which employed the attention not only of cloistered scholars, but of the wisest and greatest princes. [5]

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[1] Chron. Sax. .

[2] Brompton, , 751, 752.

[3] Spell. Concil. p 308. Brompton, .

[4] Spell. Concil. , 310, 312.

Egfrith succeeded to his father Offa, but survived him only five months; [6] when he made way for Kenulph, a descendant of the royal family. This prince waged war against Kent, and taking Egbert, the king, prisoner, he cut off his hands, and put out his eyes; leaving Cuthred, his own brother, in possession of the crown of that kingdom. Kenulph was killed in an insurrection of the East Anglians, whose crown his predecessor, Offa, had usurped. He left his son Kenelm, a minor; who was murdered the same year by his sister Quendrade, who had entertained the ambitious views of assuming the government. [7]

[1 Ingulph. . W. Malms, lib. i. ca.]

[2 Lib. i. ca.]

[3 Chron. Sax. .]

[4 Dupin, cent. viii. cha]. Wales, drew a rampart or ditch of a hundred miles in length, from Basinwerke in Flintshire to the south sea near Bristol. See Speed's Description of Wales.]

[6 Ingulph.]

[7 Ingulph, . Brompton, .]

But she was supplanted by her uncle Ceolulf; who, two years after, was dethroned by Beornulf The reign of this usurper, who was not of the royal family, was short and unfortunate; he was defeated by the West Saxons, and killed by his own subjects, the East Angles. [1] Ludican, his successor, underwent the same fate; [2] and Wiglaff, who mounted this unstable throne, and found everything in the utmost confusion, could not withstand the fortune of Egbert, who united all the Saxon kingdoms into one great monarchy.

[[1] Ingulph. .]

[[2] Alured. Beverl. .]

THE KINGDOM OF ESSEX.

This kingdom made no great figure in the Heptarchy; and the history of it is very imperfect. Sleda succeeded to his father, Erkinwin, the founder of the monarchy; and made way for his son Sebert, who, being nephew to Ethelbert, king of Kent, was persuaded by that prince to embrace the Christian faith. [3] His sons and conjunct successors, Sexted and Seward, relapsed into idolatry, and were soon after slain in a battle against the West Saxons. To show the rude manner of living in that age, Bede tells us, [4] that these two kings expressed great desire to eat the white bread, distributed by Mellitus, the bishop, at the communion. [5] But on his refusing them, unless they would submit to be baptized, they expelled him their dominions. The names of the other princes, who reigned successively in Essex, are Sigebert the little, Sigebert the good, who restored Christianity, Swithelm, Sigheri, Offa. This last prince, having made a vow of chastity, notwithstanding his marriage with Keneswitha, a Mercian princess, daughter to Penda, went in pilgrimage to Rome, and shut himself up during the rest of his life in a cloister. Selred, his successor, reigned thirty-eight years; and was the last of the royal line; the failure of which threw the kingdom into great confusion, and reduced it to dependence under Mercia. [6] Switherd first acquired the crown, by the concession of the Mercian princes; and his death made way for Sigeric, who ended his life in a pilgrimage to Rome. His successor. Sigered, unable to defend his kingdom, submitted to the victorious arms of Egbert.

[3 Chron. Sax.].

[4 Lib. ii. ca.] 743. Bede.]

[6 W Malms, lib. i. ca.]

THE KINGDOM OF SUSSEX.

The history of this kingdom, the smallest in the Heptarchy, is still more imperfect than that of Essex. Ælla, the founder of the monarchy, left the crown to his son Cissa, who is chiefly remarkable for his long reign of seventy-six years. During his time, the South Saxons fell almost into a total dependence on the kingdom of Wessex; and we scarcely know the names of the princes who were possessed of this titular sovereignty. Adelwalch, the last of them, was subdued in battle by Ceadwalla, king of Wessex, and was slain in the action; leaving two infant sons, who, falling into the hand of the conqueror, were murdered by him. The abbot of Bedford opposed the order for this execution; but could only prevail on Ceadwalla to suspend it till they should be baptized. Bercthun and Audhum, two noblemen of character, resisted some time the violence of the West Saxons; but their opposition served only to prolong the miseries of their country; and the subduing of this kingdom was the first step which the West Saxons made towards acquiring the sole monarchy of England. [1]

[1 Brompton, .]

THE KINGDOM OF WESSEX.

The kingdom of Wessex, which finally swallowed up all the other Saxon states, met with great resistance on its first establishment; and the Britons, who were now inured to arms, yielded not tamely their possessions to those invaders. Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, and his son Kenric, fought many successful, and some unsuccessful battles, against the natives; and the martial spirit, common to all the Saxons, was, by means of these hostilities, carried to the greatest height among this tribe. Ceaulin, who was the son and successor of Kenric, and who began his reign in 560, was still, more ambitious and enterprising than his predecessors; and by waging continual war against the Britons, he added a great part of the counties of Devon and Somerset to his other dominions. Carried along by the tide of success, he invaded the other Saxon states in his neighborhood, and becoming terrible to all, he provoked a general confederacy against him. This alliance proved successful under the conduct of Ethelbert, king of Kent; and Ceaulin, who had lost the affections of his own subjects by his violent disposition, and had now fallen into contempt from his misfortunes, was expelled the throne, [2]and died in exile and misery. Cuichelme, and Cuthwin, his sons, governed jointly the kingdom, till the expulsion of the latter in 591, and the death of the former in 593, made way for Cealric, to whom succeeded Ceobaîd in 593, by whose death, which happened in 611, Kynegils inherited the crown.

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

This prince embraced Christianity, [1] through the persuasion of Oswald, king of Northumberland, who had married his daughter, and who had Attained a great ascendant in the Heptarchy. Kenwalch next succeeded to the monarchy, and dying in 672, left the succession so much disputed, that Sexburga, his widow, a woman of spirit, [2] kept possession of the government till her death, which happened two years after. Escwin then peaceably acquired the crown; and, after a short reign of two years, made way for Kentwin, who governed nine years. Ceodwalla, his successor, mounted not the throne without opposition; but proved a great prince, according to the ideas of those times; that is, he was enterprising, warlike, and successful. He entirely subdued the kingdom of Sussex, and annexed it to his own dominions He made inroads into Kent; but met with resistance from Widred, the king, who proved successful against Mollo, brother to Ceodwalla, and slew him in a skirmish. Ceodwalla at last, tired with wars and bloodshed, was seized with a fit of devotion; bestowed several endowments on the church; and made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he received baptism, and died in 689. Ina, his successor, inherited the military virtues of Ceodwalla, and added to them the more valuable ones of justice, policy, and prudence. He made war upon the Britons in Somerset; and, having finally subdued that province, he treated the vanquished with a humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. He allowed the proprietors to retain possession of their lands, encouraged marriages and alliances between them and his ancient subjects, and gave them the privilege of being governed by the same laws. These laws he augmented and ascertained; and though he was disturbed by some insurrections at home, his long reign of thirty-seven years may be regarded as one of the most glorious and most prosperous of the Heptarchy. In the decline of his age he made a pilgrimage to Rome; and after his return, shut himself up in a cloister, where he died.

Though the kings of Wessex had always been princes of the blood, descended from Cerdic, the founder of the monarchy, the order of succession had been far from exact; and a more remote prince had often found means to mount the throne, in preference to one descended from a nearer branch of the royal family. Ina, therefore, having no children of his own and lying much under the influence of Ethelburga, his queen, left by will the succession to Adelard, her brother, who was his remote kinsman; but this destination did not take place without some difficulty. Oswald, a prince more nearly allied to the crown, took arms against Adelard; but he being suppressed, and dying soon after, the title of Adelard was not any further disputed; and in the year 741, he was succeeded by his cousin Cudred. The reign of this prince was distinguished by a great victory, which

[1] Higden, lib. v. Chron. Sax. . Alured Beverl .]

[2] Bede, lib. iv. cap., 12. Chron. Sax. .]

he obtained by means of Edelhun, his general, over Ethelbald, king of Mercia. His death made way for Sigebert, his kinsman, who governed so ill, that his people rose in an insurrection, and dethroned him, crowning Cenulph in his stead. The exiled prince found a refuge with Duke Cumbran, governor of Hampshire; who, that he might add new obligations to Sigebert, gave him many salutary counsels for his future conduct, accompanied with some reprehensions for the past. But these were so much resented by the ungrateful prince, that he conspired against the life of his protector, and treacherously murdered him. After this infamous action, he was forsaken by all the world; and skulking about in the wilds and forests, was at last discovered by a servant of Cumbran's, who instantly took revenge upon him for the murder of his master. [1]

Cenulph, who had obtained the crown on the expulsion of Sigebert, was fortunate in many expeditions against the Britons of Cornwall; but afterwards lost some reputation by his ill success against Offa, king of Mercia. [2] Kynehard also, brother to the deposed Sigebert, gave him disturbance; and though expelled the kingdom, he hovered on the frontiers, and watched an opportunity for attacking his rival. The king had an intrigue with a young woman, who lived at Merton, in Surrey, whither having secretly retired, he was on a sudden environed, in the night time, by Kynehard and his followers, and after making a vigorous resistance, was murdered, with all his attendants. The nobility and people of the neighborhood, rising next day in arms, took revenge on Kynehard for the slaughter of their king, and put every one to the sword who had been engaged in that criminal enterprise. This event happened in 784.

[1] Higden, lib. v. W. Malms, lib. i. ca.]

[2] W. Malms, lib. i. ca.]

Brthric next obtained possession of the government, though remotely descended from the royal family; but he enjoyed not that dignity without inquietude. Eoppa, nephew to King Ina, by his brother Ingild, who died before that prince, had begot Eata, father to Alchmond, from whom sprung Egbert, [1] a young man of the most promising hopes, who gave great jealousy to Brithric, the reigning prince, both because he seemed by his birth better entitled to the crown, and because he had acquired, to an eminent degree, the affections of the people. Egbert, sensible of his danger from the suspicions of Brithric, secretly withdrew into France; [2] where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living in the court, and serving in the armies of that prince, the most able and most generous that had appeared in Europe during several ages, he acquired those accomplishments which afterwards enabled him to make such a shining figure on the throne. And familiarizing himself to the manners of the French, who, as Malmsbury observes, [3] were eminent both for valor and civility above all the western nations, he learned to polish the rudeness and barbarity of the Saxon character: his early misfortunes thus proved of singular advantage to him.

It was not long ere Egbert had opportunities of displaying his natural and acquired talents. Brithric, king of Wessex, had married Eadburga, natural daughter of Offa, king of Mercia, a profligate woman, equally infamous for cruelty and for incontinence. Having great influence over her husband, she often instigated him to destroy such of the nobility as were obnoxious to her; and where this expedient failed, she scrupled not being herself active in traitorous attempts against them. She had mixed a cup of poison for a young nobleman, who had acquired her husband's friendship, and had on that account become the object of her jealousy; but unfortunately the king drank of the fatal cup along with his favorite, and soon after expired. [4] This tragical incident, joined to her other crimes, rendered Eadburga so odious, that she was obliged to fly into France; whence Egbert was at the same time recalled by the nobility, in order to ascend the throne of his ancestors. [5] He attained that dignity in the last year of the eighth century.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] H. Hunting. lib. iv.]

[3] Lib. ii. ca.]

[4] Higden, lib. v. M West. . Asser. in vita Alfiredi, p, 3. ex edit, Camdeni.]

In the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, an exact rule of succession was either unknown or not strictly observed; and thence the reigning prince was continually agitated with jealousy against all the princes of the blood, whom he still considered as rivals, and whose death alone could give him entire security in his possession of the throne. From this fatal cause, together with the admiration of the monastic life, and the opinion of merit attending the preservation of chastity even in a married state, the royal families had been entirely extinguished in all the kingdoms except that of Wessex; and the emulations, suspicions, and conspiracies, which had formerly been confined to the princes of the blood alone, were now diffused among all the nobility in the several Saxon states. Egbert was the sole descendant of those first conquerors who subdued Britain, and who enhanced their authority by claiming a pedigree from Woden, the supreme divinity of their ancestors. But that prince, though invited by this favorable circumstance to make attempts on the neighboring Saxons, gave them for some time no disturbance, and rather chose to turn his arms against the Britons in Cornwall, whom he defeated in several battles. [1] He was recalled from the conquest of that country by an invasion made upon his dominions by Bernulf, king of Mercia.

The Mercians, before the accession of Egbert, had very nearly attained the absolute sovereignty in the Heptarchy: they had reduced the East Angles under subjection, and established tributary princes in the kingdoms of Kent and Essex. Northumberland was involved in anarchy; and no state of any consequence remained but that of Wessex, which, much inferior in extent to Mercia, was supported solely by the great qualities of its sovereign. Egbert led his army against the invaders; and encountering them at Ellandun, in Wiltshire, obtained a complete victory, and by the great slaughter which he made of them in their flight, gave a mortal blow to the power of the Mercians. Whilst he himself, In prosecution of his victory, entered their country on the side of Oxfordshire, and threatened the heart of their dominions, he sent an army into Kent, commanded by Ethelwolph, his eldest son, [2] and, expelling Baldred. The tributary king, soon made himself master of that county.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] Ethelwerd, lib iii. ca.]

The kingdom of Essex was conquered with equal facility; and the East Angles, from their hatred to the Mercian government, which had been established over them by treachery and violence, and probably exercised with tyranny, immediately rose in arms, and craved the protection of Egbert. [1] Bernulf, the Mercian king, who marched against them, was feated and siain; and two years after, Ludican, his successor, met with the same fate. These insurrections and calamities facilitated the enterprises of Egbert, who advanced into the centre of the Mercian territories, and made easy conquests over a dispirited and divided people. In order to engage them more easily to submission, he allowed Wiglef, their countryman, to retain the title of king, whilst he himself exercised the real powers of sovereignty. [2] The anarchy which prevailed in Northumberland tempted him to carry still farther his victorious arms; and the inhabitants, unable to resist his power, and desirous of possessing some established form of government, were forward, on his first appearance, to send deputies, who submitted to his authority, and swore allegiance to him as their sovereign. Egbert, however, still allowed to Northumberland, as he had done to Mercia, and East Anglia, the power of electing a king, who paid him tribute, and was dependent on him.

Thus were united all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy in one great state, near four hundred years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain; and the fortunate arms and prudent policy of Egbert at last effected what had been so often attempted in vain by so many princes. [3] Kent, Northumberland, and Mercia, which had successively aspired to general dominion, were now incorporated in his empire; and the other subordinate kingdoms seemed willingly to share the same fate. His territories were nearly of the same extent with what is now properly called England; and a favorable prospect was afforded to the Anglo-Saxons of establishing a civilized monarchy, possessed of tranquillity within itself, and secure against foreign invasion. This great event happened in the year 827. [4]

[1 Ethelwerd, lib. iii. ca.]

[2 Ingulph. , 8, 19.]

[3 Chron. Sax. .]

[4] Chron. Sax. .

The Saxons, though they had been so long settled in the island, seem not as yet to have been much improved beyond their German ancestors, either hi arts, civility, knowledge, humanity, justice, or obedience to the laws. Even Christianity, though it opened the way to connections between their and the more polished states of Europe, had not hitherto been very effectual in banishing their ignorance, or softening their barbarous manners. As they received that doctrine through the corrupted channels of Rome, it carried along with it a great mixture of credulity and superstition, equally destructive to the understanding and to morals. The reverence towards saints and relics seems to have almost supplanted the idoration of the Supreme Being; monastic observances were esteemed more meritorious than the active virtues; the knowledge of natural causes was neglected, from the universal belief of miraculous interpositions and judgments; bounty to the church atoned for every violence against society; and the remorses for cruelty, murder, treachery, assassination, and the more robust vices, were appeased, not by amendment of life, but by penances, servility to the monks, and an abject and illiberal devotion. [1] The reverence for the clergy had been carried to such a height, that, wherever a person appeared in a sacerdotal habit, though on the highway, the people flocked around him, and, showing him all marks of profound respect, received every word he uttered as the most sacred oracle. [2] Even the military virtues, so inherent in all the Saxon tribes, began to be neglected; and the nobility, preferring the security and sloth of the cloister to the tumults and glory of war, valued themselves chiefly on endowing monasteries, of which they assumed the government. [3] The several kings too, being extremely impoverished by continual benefactions to the church, to which the states of their kingdoms had weakly assented, could bestow no rewards on valor or military services, and retained not even sufficient influence to support their government. [4]

[1] These abuses were common to all the European churches; but the priests in Italy, Spain, and Gaul, made some atonement for them by other advantages which they rendered society. For several ages, they were almost all Romans, or, in other words, the ancient natives; and they preserved the Roman language and laws, with some remains of the former civility. But the priests in the Heptarchy, after the first missionaries, were wholly Saxons, and almost as ignorant and Barbarous as the laity. They contributed, therefore, little to no improvement of society in knowledge or the arts.]

[[2] Bede, lib. iii. ca.]

[[3] Bede, lib. v. ca. Bedae Epist. ad Egbert.]

[[4] Bedse Epist. ad Egbert.]

Another inconvenience which attended this corrupt species of Christianity, was the superstitious attachment to Rome, and the gradual subjection of the kingdom to a foreign jurisdiction. The Britons, having never acknowledged any subordination to the Roman pontiff, had conducted all ecclesiastical government by their domestic synods and councils; [1] but the Saxons, receiving their religion from Roman monks, were taught at the same time a profound reverence for that see, and were naturally led to regard it as the capital of their religion. Pilgrimages to Rome were represented as the most meritorious acts of devotion. Not only noblemen and ladies of rank undertook this tedious journey, [2] but kings themselves, abdicating their crowns, sought for a secure passport to heaven at the feet of the Roman pontiff. New relics, perpetually sent from that endless mint of superstition, and magnified by lying miracles, invented in convents, operated on the astonished minds of the multitude. And every prince has attained the eulogies of the monks, the only historians of those ages, not in proportion to his civil and military virtues, but to his devoted attachment towards their order, and his superstitious reverence for Rome.

The sovereign pontiff, encouraged by this blindness and submissive disposition of the people, advanced every day in his encroachments on the independence of the English churches. Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisferne, the sole prelate of the Northumbrian kingdom, increased this subjection in the eighth century, by his making an appeal to Rome against the decisions of an English synod, which had abridged his diocese by the erection of some new bishoprics. [3] Agatho, the pope, readily embraced this precedent of an appeal to his court; and Wilfrid, though the haughtiest and most luxurious prelate of his age, [4] having obtained with the people the character of sanctity, was thus able to lay the foundation of this papal pretension.

[1] Append, to Bede, numb. 10, ex edit. 1722. Spehn. Concil p.108, 109.]

[2] Bede. lib. v. ca.]

[3] See Appendix to Bede, numb. 19. Higden, lib. v.]

[4] Eddius, vita Vilfr. sect. 24, 60]

The great topic by which Wilfrid confounded the imaginations of men, was, that St. Peter, to whos custody the keys of heaven were intrusted, would certainly refuse admittance to every one who should be wanting in respect to his successor, This conceit, well suited to vulgar conceptions, made great impression on the people during several ages, and has act even at present lost all influence in the Catholic countries. Had this abject superstition produced general peace and tranquillity, it had made some atonement for the ills attending it; but besides the usual avidity of men for power and riches, frivolous controversies in theology were engendered by it, which were so much the more fatal, as they admitted not, like the others, of any final determination from established possession. The disputes, excited in Britain, were of the most ridiculous kind, and entirely worthy of those ignorant and barbarous ages. There were some intricacies, observed by all the Christian churches, in adjusting the day of keeping Easter; which depended on a complicated consideration of the course of the sun and moon; and it happened that the missionaries, who had converted the Scots and Britons, had followed a different calendar from that which was observed at Rome, in the age when Augustine converted the Saxons. The priests also of all the Christian churches were accustomed to shave part of their head; but the form given to this tonsure was different in the former from what was practised in the latter. The Scots and Britons pleaded the antiquity of *their* usages; the Romans and their disciples, the Saxons, insisted on the universality of *theirs*. That Easter must necessarily be kept by a rule, which comprehended both the day of the year and age of the moon, was agreed by all; that the tonsure of a priest could not be omitted without the utmost impiety, was a point undisputed; but the Romans and Saxons called their antagonists schismatics, because they celebrated Easter on the very day of the full moon in March, if that day fell on a Sunday, instead of waiting till the Sunday following; and because they shaved the fore part of their head from ear to ear, instead of making that tonsure on the crown of the head, and in a circular form. In order to render their antagonists odious, they affirmed that, once in seven years, they concurred with the Jews in the time of celebrating that festival; [1] and that they might recommend their own form of tonsure, they maintained, that it imitated symbolically the crown of thorns worn by Christ in his passion; whereas the other form was invented by Simon Magus, without any regard to that representation. [2]

[1] Bede, lib. ii. ca.

[2] Bede, lib. v. ca. Eddius, sect. 24

These controversies had, from the beginning, excited such animosity between the British and Romish priests that, instead of concurring in their endeavors to convert the idolatrous Saxons, they refused all communion together, and each regarded his opponent as no better than a pagan. [1] The dispute lasted more than a century; and was at last finished, not by men’s discovering the folly of it, which would have been too great an effort for human reason to accomplish, but by the entire prevalence of the Romish ritual over the Scotch and British. [2] Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisferne, acquired great merit, both with the court of Rome and with all the southern Saxons, by expelling the quartodeciman schism, as it was called, from the Northumbrian kingdom, into which the neighborhood of the Scots had formerly introduced it. [3]

Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury, called, in the year 680, a synod at Hatfield, consisting of all the bishops in Britain, [4] where was accepted and ratified the decree of the Lateran council, summoned by Martin, against the heresy of the Monothelites. The council and synod maintained, in opposition to these heretics, that, though the divine and human nature in Christ made but one person, yet had they different inclinations, wills, acts, and sentiments, and that the unity of the person implied not any unity in the consciousness. [5] This opinion it seems somewhat difficult to comprehend; and no one, unacquainted with the ecclesiastical history of those ages, could imagine the height of zeal and violence with which it was then inculcated.

The decree of the Lateran council calls the Monothelites impious, execrable, wicked, abominable, and even diabolical; and curses and anathematizes them to all eternity. [6]

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[1] Bede, lib. ii. ca, 4, 20. Eddius, sect. 12.]

[2] Bede, lib. v. ca, 22.]

[3] Bede, lib. iii. ca. Eddius, sect. 12.]

[4] Spell. Concil. vol. i. .]

[6] Spell. Concil. vol. i. , 173, 174.]

CHAPTER II.

The Saxons, from the first introduction of Christianity among them, had admitted the use of images; and perhaps that religion, without some of those exterior ornaments, had not made so quick a progress with these idolaters; but they had not paid any species of worship or address to images; and this abuse never prevailed among Christians, till it received the sanction of the second council of Nice.

EGBERT.

827.

The kingdoms of the Heptarchy, though united by a recent conquest, seemed to be firmly cemented into one state under Egbert; and the inhabitants of the several provinces had lost all desire of revolting from that monarch, or of restoring their former independent governments. Their language was every where nearly the same, their customs, laws, institutions, civil and religious; and as the race of the ancient kings was totally extinct in all the subjected states, the people readily transferred their allegiance to a prince who seemed to merit it by the splendor of his victories, the vigor of hia administration, and the superior nobility of his birth. A union also in government opened to them the agreeable prospect of future tranquillity; and it appeared more probable that they would thenceforth become formidable to their neighbors, than be exposed to their inroads and devastations. But these flattering views were soon overcast by the appearance of the Danes, who, during some centuries, kept the Anglo-Saxons in perpetual inquietude, committed the most barbarous ravages upon them, and at last reduced them to grievous servitude.

The emperor Charlemagne, though naturally generous and humane, had been induced by bigotry to exercise great severities upon the pagan Saxons in Germany, whom he subdued; and besides often ravaging their country with fire and sword, he had, in cool blood, decimated all the inhabitants for their revolts, and had obliged them, by the most rigorous edicts, to make a seeming compliance with the Christian doctrine. That religion, which had easily made its way among the British Saxons by insinuation and address, appeared shocking to their German brethren, when imposed on them by the violence of Charlemagne; and the more generous and warlike of these pagans had fled northward into Jutland, in order to escape the fury of his persecutions. Meeting there with a people of similar manners, they were readily received among them; and they soon stimulated the natives to concur in enterprises which both promised revenge on the haughty conqueror, and afforded subsistence to those numerous inhabitants with which the northern countries were now overburdened. [1] They invaded the provinces of France, which were exposed by the degeneracy and dissensions of Charlemagne's posterity; and being there known under the general name of Normans, which they received from their northern situation, they became the terror of all the maritime and even of the inland countries. They were also tempted to visit England in their frequent excursions; and being able, by sudden inroads, to make great progress over a people who were not defended by any naval force, who had relaxed their military institutions, and who were sunk into a superstition which had become odious to the Danes and ancient Saxons, they made no distinction in their hostilities between the French and English kingdoms. Their first appearance in this island was in the year 787, [2] when Brithric reigned in Wessex. A small body of them landed in that kingdom, with a view of learning the state of the country; and when the magistrate of the place questioned them concerning their enterprise, and summoned them to appear before the king, and account for their intentions, they killed him, and, flying to, their ships, escaped into their own country. The next alarm was given to Northumberland in the year 794, [3] when a body of these pirates pillaged a monastery; but their ships being much damaged by a storm, and their leader slain in a skirmish, they were at last defeated by the inhabitants, and the remainder of them put to the sword. [Sidenote: 832] Five years after Egbert had established his monarchy over England, the Danes landed in the Isle of Shepey, and having pillaged it, escaped with impunity. [4] They were not so fortunate in their next year's enterprise, when they disembarked from thirty-five ships, and were encountered by Egbert, at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire. The battle was bloody; but though the Danes lost great numbers, they maintained the post which they had taken, and thence made good their retreat to their ships. [5]

[1] Ypod. Neust. .]

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

[3] Chron. Sax. . Alured. Beveri. .]

[4] Chron. Sax.] ca.]

Having learned, by experience, that they must expect a vigorous resistance from this warlike prince, they entered into an alliance with the Britons of Cornwall; and, landing two years after in that country, made an inroad with their confederates into the county of Devon, but were met at Hengesdown by Egbert, and totally defeated. [1] While England remained in this state of anxiety, and defended itself more by temporary expedients than by any regular plan of administration, Egbert, who alone was able to provide effectually against this new evil, unfortunately died, and left the government to his son Ethelwolf.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

ETHELWOLF.

This prince had neither the abilities nor the vigor of his father, and was better qualified for governing a convent than a kingdom. [1] He began his reign with making a partition of his dominions, and delivering over to his eldest son, Athelstan, the new-conquered provinces of Essex, Kent, and Sussex. But no inconveniences seem to have arisen from this partition as the continual terror of the Danish invasions prevented all domestic dissension. A fleet of these ravagers, consisting of thirty-three sail, appeared at Southampton, but were repulsed with loss by Wolfhere, governor of the neighboring country. [2] The same year, Æthelhelm, governor of Dorsetshire, routed another band, which had disembarked at Portsmouth; but he obtained the victory after a furious engagement, and he bought it with the loss of his life. [3]

[1 W. Malms, lib. ii. cap 2.]

[2 Chron. Sax. . Ethelwerd, lib. iii. cap. 3.]

[3 Chron. Sax. . H. Hunting, lib. v.]

Next year, the Danes made several inroads into England, and fought battles, or rather skirmishes, in East Anglia and Lindesey and Kent; where, though they were sometimes repulsed and defeated, they always obtained their end, of committing spoil upon the country, and carrying off their booty. They avoided coming to a general engagement, which was not suited to their plan of operations. Their vessels were small, and ran easily up the creeks and rivers, where they drew them ashore, and, having formed an intrenchment round them, which they guarded with part of their number, the remainder scattered themselves every where, and carrying off the inhabitants, and cattle, and goods, they hastened to their ships, and quickly disappeared. If the military force of the county were assembled, (for there was no time for troops to march from a distance,) the Danes either were able to repulse them, and to continue their ravages with impunity, or they betook themselves to their vessels, and, setting sail, suddenly invaded some distant quarter, which was not prepared for their reception.

Every part of England was held in continual alarm; and the inhabitants of one county durst not give assistance to those of another, lest their own families and property should in the mean time be exposed by their absence to the fury of these barbarous ravagers. [1]

[1 Alured. Beverl. .]

All orders of men were involved in this calamity; and the priests and monks, who had been commonly spared in the domestic quarrels of the Heptarchy, were the chief objects on which the Danish idolaters exercised their rage and animosity. Every season of the year was dangerous, and the absence of the enemy was no reason why any man could esteem himself a moment in safety.

These incursions had now become almost annual; when the Danes, encouraged by their successes against France as well as England, (for both kingdoms were alike exposed to this dreadful calamity,) invaded the last in so numerous a body as seemed to threaten it with universal subjection. But the English, more military than the Britons, whom a few centuries before they had treated with like violence, roused themselves with a vigor proportioned to the exigency. Ceorle, governor of Devonshire, fought a battle with one body of the Danes at Wiganburgh, [1] and put them to rout with great slaughter.

[1 H. Hunting, lib. v. Ethelwerd, lib. iii. cap 3. Sim. Dunelm. .]

King Athelstan attacked another at sea, near Sandwich, sunk nine of their ships, and put the rest to flight. [1]

[1 Chron. Sax. . Asser. .]

A body of them, however, ventured, for the first time, to take up winter quarters in England; and receiving in the spring a strong reënforcement of their countrymen, in three hundred and fifty vessels, they advanced from the Isle of Thanet, where they had stationed themselves, burnt the cities of London and Canterbury, and having put to flight Brichtric, who now governed Mercia under the title of king, they marched into the heart of Surrey, and laid every place waste around them. Ethelwolf, impelled by the urgency of the danger, marched against them at the head of the West Saxons; and, carrying with him his second son, Ethelbald, gave them battle at Okely, and gained a bloody victory over them. This advantage procured but a short respite to the English. The Danes still maintained their settlement in the Isle of Thanet; and, being attacked by Ealher and Huda, governors of Kent and Surrey, though defeated in the beginning of the action, they finally repulsed the assailants, and killed both the governors, removed thence to the Isle of Shepey, where they took up their winter quarters, that they might farther extend their devastation and ravages.

This unsettled state of England hindered not Ethelwolf from making a pilgrimage to Rome, whither he carried his fourth and favorite son, Alfred, then only six years of age. [1] He passed there a twelvemonth in exercises of devotion; and failed not in that most essential part of devotion, liberality to the church of Rome. Besides giving presents to the more distinguished ecclesiastics, he made a perpetual grant of three hundred mancuses [2] a year to that see; one third to support the lamps of St. Peter's, another those of St. Paul's, a third to the pope himself. [3] In his return home, he married Judith, daughter of the emperor Charles the Bald; but, on his landing in England, he met with an opposition which he little looked for.

His eldest son, Athelstan, being dead, Ethelbald, his second, who had assumed the government, formed, in concert with many of the nobles, the project of excluding his father from a throne which his weakness and superstition seem to have rendered him so ill qualified to fill. The people were divided between the two princes, and a bloody civil war, joined to all the other calamities under which the English labored, appeared inevitable, when Ethelwolf had the facility to yield to the greater part of his son's pretensions. He made with him a partition of the kingdom; and, taking to himself the eastern part, which was always, at that time, esteemed the least considerable, as well as the most exposed, [4] he delivered over to Ethelbald the sovereignty of the western. Immediately after, he summoned the states of the whole kingdom, and with the same facility conferred a perpetual and important donation on the church.

[[1] Asser. . Chron. Sax. 76. H. Hunting, lib. v.]

[2] A mancus was about the weight of our present half crown. See Spelman’s Glossary, in verbo Mancus.]

[3] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

[4] Asser. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. M. West. , 8.]

The ecclesiastics, in those days of ignorance, made rapid advances in the acquisition of power and grandeur; and, inculcating the most absurd and most interested doctrines, though they sometimes met, from the contrary interests of the laity, with an opposition which it required time and address to overcome, they found no obstacle in their reason or understanding. Not content with the donations of land made them by the Saxon princes and nobles, and with temporary oblations from the devotion of the people, they had cast a wishful eye on a vast revenue, which they claimed as belonging to them by a sacred and indefeasible title. However little versed in the Scriptures, they had been able to discover that, under the Jewish law, a tenth of all the produce of land was conferred on the priesthood; and, forgetting what they themselves taught, that the moral part only of that law was obligatory on Christians, they insisted that this donation conveyed a perpetual property, inherent by divine right in those who officiated at the altar. During some centuries, the whole scope of sermons and homilies was directed to this purpose; and one would have imagined, from the general tenor of these discourses, that all the practical parts of Christianity were comprised in the exact and faithful payment of tithes to the clergy. [1] Encouraged by their success in inculcating these doctrines, they ventured farther than they were warranted even by the Levitical law, and pretended to draw the tenth of all industry, merchandise, wages of laborers, and pay of soldiers; [2] nay, some canonists went so far as to affirm that the clergy were entitled to the tithe of the profits made by courtesans in the exercise of their profession. [3] Though parishes had been instituted in England by Honorius, archbishop of Canterbury, near two centuries before, [4] the ecclesiastics had never yet been able to get possession of the tithes; they therefore seized the present favorable opportunity of making that acquisition; when a weak, superstitious prince filled the throne, and when the people, discouraged by their losses from the Danes, and terrified with the fear of future invasions, were susceptible of any impression which bore the appearance of religion.[5] So meritorious was this concession deemed by the English, that, trusting entirely to supernatural assistance, they neglected the ordinary means of safety; and agreed, even in the present desperate extremity, that the revenues of the church should be exempted from all burdens, though imposed for national defence and security.[6]

[1] Padre Paolo, sopra beneficii ecclesiastici, p. 51, 52, edit. Colon. 1675.]

[2] Spell. Concil. vol. i. .]

[3] Padre Paolo, .]

[4] Parker, .] c. 8.]

[6] Asser. . Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Ethelwerd, lib. iii. ca. M. West. p. 158. Ingulph. . Alured. Beverl. .]

ETHELBALD AND ETHELBERT.

Ethelwolf lived only two years after making this grant; and by his will he shared England between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert; the west being assigned to the former, the east to the latter. Ethelbald was a profligate prince; and marrying Judith, his mother-in-law, gave great offence to the people; but moved by the remonstrances of Swithun, bishop of Winchester, he was at last prevailed on to divorce her. His reign was short; and Ethelbert, his brother, succeeding to the government, behaved himself, during a reign of five years, in a manner more worthy of his birth and station. The kingdom, however, was still infested by the Danes, who made an inroad and sacked Winchester, but were there defeated. A body also of these pirates, who were quartered in the Isle of Thanet, having deceived the English by a treaty, unexpectedly broke into Kent, and committed great outrages.

ETHERED

Ethelbert was succeeded by his brother Ethered, who, though he defended himself with bravery, enjoyed, during his whole reign, no tranquillity from those Danish irruptions. His younger brother, Alfred, seconded him in all his enterprises, and generously sacrificed to the public good all resentment, which he might entertain on account of his being excluded by Ethered from a large patrimony which had been left him by his father.

The first landing of the Danes, in the reign of Ethered, was among the East Angles, who, more anxious for their present safety than for the common interest, entered into a separate treaty with the enemy, and furnished them with horses, which enabled them to make an irruption by land into the kingdom of Northumberland. They there seized the city of York, and defended it against Osbricht and Ælia, two Northumbrian princes, who perished in the assault. [1] Encouraged by these successes, and by the superiority which they had acquired in arms, they now ventured, under the command of Hinguar and Hubba, to leave the sea-coast, and penetrating into Mercia, they took up their winter quarters at Nottingham, where they threatened the kingdom with a final subjection.

[1 Asser, . Chron. Sax. .]

The Mercians, in this extremity, applied to Ethered for succor; and that prince, with his brother Alfred, conducting a great army to Nottingham, obliged the enemy to dislodge, and to retreat into Northumberland.

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Their restless disposition, and their avidity for plunder, allowed them not to remain long in those quarters; they broke into East Anglia, defeated and took prisoner Edmund, the king of that country, whom they afterwards murdered in cool blood; and, committing the most barbarous ravages on the people, particularly on the monasteries, they gave the East Angles cause to regret the temporary relief which they had obtained, by assisting the common enemy.

The next station of the Danes was at Reading; whence they infested the neighboring country by their incursions. The Mercians, desirous of shaking off their dependence on Ethered, refused to join him with their forces; and that prince, attended by Alfred, was obliged to march against the enemy with the West Saxons alone, his hereditary subjects. The Danes, being defeated in an action, shut themselves up in their garrison; but quickly making thence an irruption, they routed the West Saxons, and obliged them to raise the siege. An action soon after ensued at Aston, in Berkshire, where the English, in the beginning of the day, were in danger of a total defeat. Alfred, advancing with one division of the army, was surrounded by the enemy in disadvantageous ground; and Ethered, who was at that time hearing mass, refused to march to his assistance till prayers should be finished; [1] but, as he afterwards obtained the victory, this success, not the danger of Alfred, was ascribed by the monks to the piety of that monarch.

[1] Asser. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca Sim. Dunelm. . Anglia Sacra, vol. i. .

ALFRED.

This battle of Aston did not terminate the war; another battle was a little after fought at Basing, where the Danes were more successful; and being reënforced by a new army from their own country, they became every day more terrible to the English. Amidst these confusions, Ethered died of a wound which he had received in an action with the Danes; and left the inheritance of his cares and misfortunes, rather than of his grandeur, to his brother Alfred, who was now twenty-two years of age.

This prince gave very early marks of those great virtues and shining talents, by which, during the most difficult times, he saved his country from utter ruin and subversion. Ethelwolf, his father, the year after his return with Alfred from Rome, had again sent the young prince thither with a numerous retinue; and a report being spread of the king's death, the Pope, Leo III., gave Alfred the royal unction; [1] whether prognosticating his future greatness from the appearances of his pregnant genius, or willing to pretend, even in that age, to the right of conferring kingdoms. Alfred, on his return home, became every day more the object of his father's affections; but being indulged in all youthful pleasures, he was much neglected in his education; and he had already reached his twelfth year, when he was yet totally ignorant of the lowest elements of literature. His genius was first roused by the recital of Saxon poems, in which the queen took delight; and this species of erudition, which is sometimes able to make a considerable progress even among barbarians, expanded those noble and elevated sentiments which he had received from nature. [2] Encouraged by the queen, and stimulated by his own ardent inclination, he soon learned to read those compositions; and proceeded thence to acquire the knowledge of the Latin tongue, in which he met with authors that better prompted his heroic spirit, and directed his generous views. Absorbed in these elegant pursuits, he regarded his accession to royalty rather as an object of regret than of triumph; [3] but being called to the throne, in preference to his brother's children, as well by the will of his father, — a circumstance which had great authority with the Anglo-Saxons [4] — as by the vows of the whole nation, and the urgency of public affairs, he shook off his literary indolence, and exerted himself in the defence of his people. He had scarcely buried his brother, when he was obliged to take the field, in order to oppose the Danes, who had seized Wilton, and were exercising their usual ravages on the countries around.

He marched against them with the few troops which he could assemble on a sudden, and, giving them battle, gained at first an advantage; but, by his pursuing the victory too far, the superiority of the enemy's numbers prevailed, and recovered them the day. Their loss, however, in the action, was so considerable, that, fearing Alfred would receive daily reënforcements from his subjects, they were content to stipulate for a safe retreat, and promised to depart the kingdom. For that purpose, they were conducted to London, and allowed to take up winter quarters there; but, careless of their engagements, they immediately set themselves to the committing of spoil on the neighboring country. Burrhed, king of Mercia, in whose territories London was situated, made a new stipulation with them, and engaged them, by presents of money, to remove to Lindesey, in Lincolnshire, a country which they had already reduced to ruin and desolation. Finding, therefore, no object in that place, either for their rapine or violence, they suddenly turned back upon Mercia, in a quarter where they expected to find it without defence; and fixing their station at Repton, in Derbyshire, they laid the whole country desolate with fire and sword. Burrhed, despairing of success against an enemy whom no force could resist, and no treaties bind, abandoned his kingdom, and, flying to Rome, took shelter in a cloister. [1] He was brother-in-law to Alfred, and the last who bore the title of king in Mercia.

[1 Asser. . W. Malms, lib. ii. cha. Ingulph. . Sim. Dunelm. , 139.]

[2 Asser. . M. West, .]

[3 Asser. .]

[4 Asser. . Sim. Dunelm. .]

The West Saxons were now the only remaining power in England; and though supported by the vigor and abilities of Alfred, they were unable to sustain the efforts of those ravagers, who from all quarters invaded them. A new swarm of Danes came over this year under three princes, Guthrum, Oscitel, and Amund; and having first joined their countrymen at Repton, they soon found the necessity of separating, in order to provide for their subsistence. Part of them, under the command of Haldene, their chieftain, [2] marched into Northumberland, where they fixed their residence; part of them took quarters at Cambridge, whence they dislodged in the ensuing summer and seized Wereham, in the county of Dorset, the very centre of Alfred's dominions. That prince so straitened them in these quarters, that they were content to come to a treaty with him, and stipulated to depart his country. Alfred, well acquainted with their usual perfidy, obliged them to swear upon the holy relics to the observance of the treaty; [3] not that he expected they would pay any veneration to the relics; but he hoped that, if they now violated this oath, their impiety would infallibly draw down upon them the vengeance of Heaven.

[1] Asser. . Chron. Sax. . Ethelwerd, lib. iv. ca.]

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

[3] Asser. p 8.]

But the Danes, little apprehensive of the danger suddenly, without seeking any pretence, fell upon Alfred's army; and having put it to rout, marched westward, and took possession of Exeter. The prince collected new forces, and exerted such vigor, that he fought in one year eight battles with the enemy, [1] and reduced them to the utmost extremity. He hearkened, however, to new proposals of peace, and was satisfied to stipulate with them, that they would settle somewhere in England, [2] and would not permit the entrance of more ravagers into the kingdom. But while he was expecting the execution of this treaty, which it seemed the interest of the Danes themselves to fulfil, he heard that another body had landed, and, having collected all the scattered troops of their country men, had surprised

Chippenham, then a considerable town, and were exercising their usual ravages all around them.

This last incident quite broke the spirit of the Saxons, and reduced them to despair. Finding that, after all the miserable havoc which they had undergone in their persons and in their property, after all the vigorous actions which they had exerted in their own defence, a new band, equally greedy of spoil and slaughter, had disembarked among them, they believed themselves abandoned by Heaven to destruction, and delivered over to those swarms of robbers which the fertile north thus incessantly poured forth against them. Some left their country and retired into Wales, or fled beyond sea; others submitted to the conquerors, in hopes of appeasing their fury by a servile obedience. [3] And every man's attention being now engrossed in concern for his own preservation, no one would hearken to the exhortations of the king, who summoned them to make, under his conduct, one effort more in defence of their prince, their country, and their liberties. Alfred himself was obliged to relinquish the ensigns of his dignity, to dismiss his servants, and to seek shelter in the meanest disguises from the pursuit and fury of his enemies. He concealed himself under a peasant's habit, and lived some time in the house of a neat-herd, who had been intrusted with the care of some of his cows. [4]

[1] Asser. . The Saxon Chronicle, , says nine battles.]

[2] Asser. . Alured. Beverl. .]

[3] Chron. Sax. . Alured. Beverl. .]

[4] Asser. .]

There passed here an incident, which has been recorded by all the historians, and was long preserved by popular tradition, though it contains nothing memorable in itself, except so far as every circumstance is interesting which attends so much virtue and dignity reduced to such distress. The wife of the neat-herd was ignorant of the condition of her royal guest; and observing him one day busy, by the fireside, in trimming his bow and arrows, she desired him to take care of some cakes which were toasting, while she was employed elsewhere in other domestic affairs. But Alfred, whose thoughts were otherwise engaged, neglected this injunction; and the good woman, on her return, finding her cakes all burnt, rated the king very severely, and upbraided him, that he always seemed very well pleased to eat her warm cakes though he was thus negligent in toasting them. [1]

By degrees, Alfred, as he found the search of the enemy become more remiss, collected some of his retainers, and retired into the centre of a bog, formed by the stagnating waters of the Thone and Parret, in Somersetshire. He here found two acres of firm ground; and building a habitation on them, rendered himself secure by its fortifications, and still more by the unknown and inaccessible roads which led to it, and by the forests and morasses with which it was every way environed. This place he called Æthelingay, or the Isle of Nobles; [2] and it now bears the name of Athelney. He thence made frequent and unexpected sallies upon the Danes, who often felt the vigor of his arm, but knew not from what quarter the blow came. He subsisted himself and his followers by the plunder which he acquired; he procured them consolation by revenge; and from small successes, he opened their minds to hope that, notwithstanding his present low condition, more important victories might at length attend his valor. [1 Asser. . M. West. .]

[2 Chron. Sax. . W Malms, lib. ii. ca. Ethelwerd, lib iv. ca. Ingulph. .]

Alfred lay here concealed, but not inactive, during a twelvemonth; when the news of a prosperous event reached his ears, and called him to the field. Hubba the Dane, having spread devastation, fire, and slaughter over Wales, had landed in Devonshire from twenty-three vessels, and laid siege to the castle of Kinwith, a place situated near the mouth of the small river Tau. Oddune, earl of Devonshire, with his followers, had taken shelter there; and being ill supplied with provisions, and even with water, he determined, by some vigorous blow, to prevent the necessity of submitting to the barbarous enemy. He made a sudden sally on the Danes before sun-rising; and taking them unprepared, he put them to rout, pursued them with great slaughter, killed Hubba himself, and got possession of the famous Reafen, or enchanted standard, in which the Danes put great confidence. [1] It contained the figure of a raven, which had been inwoven by the three sisters of Hinguar and Hubba, with many magical incantations, and which, by its different movements, prognosticated, as the Danes believed, the good or bad success of any enterprise. [2]

When Alfred observed this symptom of successful resistance in his subjects, he left his retreat; but before he would assemble them in arms, or urge them to any attempt, which, if unfortunate, might, in their present despondency, prove fatal, he resolved to inspect himself the situation of the enemy, and to judge of the probability of success. For this purpose he entered their camp under the disguise of a harper, and passed unsuspected through every quarter. He so entertained them with his music and facetious humors, that he met with a welcome reception, and was even introduced to the tent of Guthrum, their prince, where he remained some days. [3] He remarked the supine security of the Danes, their contempt of the English, their negligence in foraging and plundering, and their dissolute wasting of what they gained by rapine and violence. Encouraged by these favorable appearances, he secretly sent emissaries to the most considerable of his subjects, and summoned them to a rendezvous, attended by their warlike followers, at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood Forest. [4] The English, who had hoped to put an end to their calamities by servile submission, now found the insolence and rapine of the conqueror more intolerable than all past fatigues and dangers; and at the appointed day, they joyfully resorted to their prince. On his appearance, they received him with shouts of applause, [5] and could not satiate their eyes with the sight of this beloved monarch, whom they had long regarded as dead, and who now, with voice and looks expressing his confidence of success, called them to liberty and to vengeance.

[1] Asser. . Chron. Sax. . Abbas Rieval. . Alured. Beverl. .]

[2] Asser. .]

[3] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

[4] Chron Sax. .]

Alured. Beverl. . Abbas Rieval. .]

He instantly conducted them to Eddington, where the Danes were encamped; and taking advantage of his previous knowledge of the place, he directed his attack against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy. The Danes, surprised to see an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, and still more astonished to hear that Alfred was at their head, made but a faint resistance, notwithstanding their superiority of number, and were soon put to flight with great slaughter. The remainder of the routed army, with their prince, was besieged by Alfred in a fortified camp to which they fled; but being reduced to extremity by want and hunger, they had recourse to the clemency of the victor, and offered to submit on any conditions. The king, no less generous than brave, gave them their lives, and even formed a scheme for converting them from mortal enemies into faithful subjects and confederates. He knew that the kingdoms of East Anglia and Northumberland were totally desolated by the frequent inroads of the Danes, and he now proposed to repeople them, by settling there Guthrum and his followers. He hoped that the new planters would at last betake themselves to industry, when, by reason of his resistance, and the exhausted condition of the country, they could no longer subsist by plunder; and that they might serve him as a rampart against any future incursions of their countrymen. But before he ratified these mild conditions with the Danes, he required that they should give him one pledge of their submission, and of their inclination to incorporate with the English, by declaring their conversion to Christianity. [1] Guthrum and his army had no aversion to the proposal; and, without much instruction, or argument, or conference, they were all admitted to baptism. The king answered for Guthrum at the font, gave him the name of Athelstan, and received him as his adopted son. [2]

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] Asser. . Chron. Sax. .]

The success of this expedient seemed to correspond to Alfred's hopes: the greater part of the Danes settled peaceably in their new quarters: some smaller bodies of the same nation, which were dispersed in Mercia, were distributed into the five cities of Derby, Leicester, Stamford, Lincoln, and Nottingham, and were thence called the Fif or Five-burgers. The more turbulent and unquiet made an expedition into France, under the command of Hastings; [1] and except by a short incursion of Danes, who sailed up the Thames, and landed at Fulham, but suddenly retreated to their ships, on finding the country in a posture of defence, Alfred was not for some years infested by the inroads of those barbarians. [2]

[1 W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Ingulph. .]

[2 Asser. .]

The king employed this interval of tranquillity in restoring order to the state, which had been shaken by so many violent convulsions; in establishing civil and military institutions; in composing the minds of men to industry and justice; and in providing against the return of like calamities. He was, more properly than his grandfather Egbert, the sole monarch of the English, (for so the Saxons were now universally called,) because the kingdom of Mercia was at last incorporated in his state, and was governed by Ethelbert, his brother-in-law, who bore the title of earl; and though the Danes, who peopled East Anglia and Northumberland, were for some time ruled immediately by their own princes, they all acknowledged a subordination to Alfred, and submitted to his superior authority. As equality among subjects is the great source of concord, Alfred gave the same laws to the Danes and English, and put them entirely on a like footing in the administration both of civil and criminal justice. The fine for the murder of a Dane was the same with that for the murder of an Englishman; the great symbol of equality in those ages.

The king, after rebuilding the ruined cities, particularly London, [1] which had been destroyed by the Danes in the reign of Ethelwolf, established a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He ordained that all his people should be armed and registered; he assigned them a regular rotation of duty; he distributed part into the castles and fortresses, which he built at proper places; [2] he required another part to take the field on any alarm, and to assemble at stated places of rendezvous; and he left a sufficient number at home, who were employed in the cultivation of the land, and who afterwards took their turn in military service. [3]

[1] Asser. . Chron. Sax. . M. West. . Sim. Dunelm. . Brompton, . Alured. Beverl. ex edit. Hearns, .]

[2] Asser. p 18. Ingulph. .]

[3] Chron. Sax. , 93.]

The whole kingdom was like one great garrison; and the Danes could no sooner appear in one place, than a sufficient number was assembled to oppose them, without leaving the other quarters defenceless or disarmed. [1]

[1] Spelman's Life of Alfred, , edit. 1709.]

But Alfred, sensible that the proper method of opposing an enemy who made incursions by sea, was to meet them on their own element, took care to provide himself with a naval force, [1] which, though the most natural defence of an island, had hitherto been totally neglected by the English. He increased the shipping of his kingdom both in number and strength, and trained his subjects in the practice as well of sailing as of naval action. He distributed his armed vessels in proper stations around the island, and was sure to meet the Danish ships, either before or after they had landed their troops, and to pursue them in all their incursions. Though the Danes might suddenly, by surprise, disembark on the coast, which was generally become desolate by their frequent ravages, they were encountered by the English fleet in their retreat; and escaped not, as formerly, by abandoning their booty, but paid, by their total destruction, the penalty of the disorders which they had committed.

[1] Asser. . M. West. .]

In this manner Alfred repelled several inroads of these piratical Danes, and maintained his kingdom, during some years, in safety and tranquillity. A fleet of a hundred and twenty ships of war was stationed upon the coast; and being provided with warlike engines, as well as with expert seamen, both Frisians and English, (for Alfred supplied the defects of his own subjects by engaging able foreigners in his service,) maintained a superiority over those smaller bands, with which England had so often been infested. [1]

[1] Asser. . Chiron Sax , 87. M. West. .]

But at last Hastings, the famous Danish chief, having ravaged all the provinces of France, both along the sea-coast and the Loire and Seine, and being obliged to quit that country, more by the desolation which he himself had occasioned, than by the resistance of the inhabitants, appeared off the coast of Kent with a fleet of three hundred and thirty sail. The greater part of the enemy disembarked in the Rother and seized the fort of Apuldore. Hastings himself, commanding a fleet of eighty sail, entered the Thames, and fortifying Milton, in Kent, began to spread his forces over the country, and to commit the most destructive ravages. But Alfred, on the first alarm of this descent, flew to the defence of his people, at the head of a select band of soldiers, whom he always kept about his person, [1] and, gathering to him the armed militia from all quarters, appeared in the field with a force superior to the enemy. All straggling parties, whom necessity, or love of plunder, had drawn to a distance from their chief encampment, were cut off by the English; [2] and these pirates, instead of increasing their spoil, found themselves cooped up in their fortifications, and obliged to subsist by the plunder which they had brought from France. Tired of this situation, which must in the end prove ruinous to them, the Danes at Apuldore rose suddenly from their encampment, with an intention of marching towards the Thames, and passing over into Essex: but they escaped not the vigilance of Alfred, who encountered them at Farnham, put them to rout, [3] seized all their horses and baggage, and chased the runaways on board their ships, which carried them up the Colne to Mersey, in Essex, where they intrenched themselves. Hastings, at the same time, and probably by concert, made a like movement; and deserting Milton, took possession of Bamflete, near the Isle of Canvey, in the same county, [4] where he hastily threw up fortifications for his defence against the power of Alfred.

[1] Asser. .]

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

[3] Chron. Sax. . Flor. Wigorn. .]

[4] Chron. Sax. .]

Unfortunately for the English, Guthrum, prince of the East Anglian Danes, was now dead; as was also Guthred, whom the king had appointed governor of the Northumbrians; and those restless tribes, being no longer restrained by the authority of their princes, and being encouraged by the appearance of so great a body of their countrymen, broke into rebellion, shook off the authority of Alfred, and yielding to their inveterate habits of war and depredation, [1] embarked on board two hundred and forty vessels, and appeared before Exeter, in the west of England. Alfred lost not a moment in opposing this new enemy. Having left some forces at London to make head against Hastings and the other Danes, he marched suddenly to the west, [2] and, falling on the rebels before they were aware, pursued them to their ships with great slaughter.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] Chron. Sax. .]

These ravagers, sailing next to Sussex, began to plunder the country near Chichester; but the order which Alfred had everywhere established, sufficed here, without his presence, for the defence of the place, and the rebels, meeting with a new repulse, in which many of them were killed, and some of their ships taken, [1] were obliged to put again to sea, and were discouraged from attempting any other enterprise.

[1] Chron. Sax . Flor. Wigorn. .]

Meanwhile the Danish invaders in Essex, having united their force under the command of Hastings, advanced into the inland country, and made spoil of all around them; but soon had reason to repent of their temerity. The English army left in London, assisted by a body of the citizens, attacked the enemy’s intrenchments at Bamflete, overpowered the garrison, and having done great execution upon them, carried off the wife and two sons of

Hastings. [1] Alfred generously spared these captives, and even restored them to Hastings, [2] on condition that he should depart the kingdom.

[1] Chron. Sax. . M. West. w 178.

[2] M. West, .

But though the king had thus honorably rid himself of this dangerous enemy, he had not entirely subdued or expelled the invaders. The piratical Danes willingly followed in an excursion any prosperous leader who gave them hopes of booty, but were not so easily induced to relinquish their enterprise, or submit to return, baffled and without plunder, into their native country. Great numbers of them, after the departure of Hastings, seized and fortified Shobury, at the mouth of the Thames; and having left a garrison there, they marched along the river, till they came to Boddington, in the county of Glocester; where, being reënforced by some Welsh, they threw up intrenchments, and prepared for their defence. The king here surrounded them with the whole force of his dominions; [1] and as he had now a certain prospect of victory, he resolved to trust nothing to chance, but rather to master his enemies by famine than assault. They were reduced to such extremities, that having eaten their own horses, and having many of them perished with hunger, [2] they made a desperate sally upon the English; and though the greater number fell in the action, a considerable body made their escape. [3]

[1] Chron. Sax. .

[2] Chron. Sax. . M. West. . Flor. Wigorn. .

[3] Chron. Sax .

These roved about for some time in England, still pursued by the vigilance of Alfred; they attacked Leicester with success, defended themselves in Hartford, and then fled to Quatford, where they were finally broken and subdued. The small remains of them either dispersed themselves among their countrymen in Northumberland and East Anglia, [1] or had recourse again to the sea, where they exercised piracy, under the command of Sigefert, a Northumbrian.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

This freebooter, well acquainted with Alfred’s naval preparations, had framed vessels of a new construction, higher, and longer, and swifter than those of the English; but the king soon discovered his superior skill, by building vessels still higher, and longer, and swifter than those of the Northumbrians; and falling upon them, while they were exercising their ravages in the west, he took twenty of their ships; and having tried all the prisoners at Winchester, he hanged them as pirates, the common enemies of mankind.

The well-timed severity of this execution, together with the excellent posture of defence established every where, restored full tranquillity in England, and provided for the future security of the government. The East Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, on the first appearance of Alfred upon their frontiers, made anew the most humble submissions to him; and he thought it prudent to take them under his immediate government, without establishing over them a viceroy of their own nation. [1] The Welsh also acknowledged his authority; and this great prince had now, by prudence, and justice, and valor, established his sovereignty over all the southern parts of the island, from the English Channel to the frontiers of Scotland; when he died,

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in the vigor of his age and the full strength of his faculties, after a glorious reign of twenty-nine years and a half, [2] in which he deservedly attained the appellation of Alfred the Great, and the title of founder of the English monarchy.

[1] Flor. Wigorn. .]

[2] Asser. . Chron. Sax. .]

The merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any monarch, or citizen, which the annals of any age, or any nation, can present to us. He seems, indeed, to be the model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage or wise man, philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it really existing; so happily were all his virtues tempered together, so justly were they blended, and so powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper boundaries. He knew how to reconcile the most enterprising spirit with the coolest moderation; the most obstinate perseverance with the easiest flexibility: the most severe justice with the gentlest lenity; the greatest vigor in commanding with the most perfect affability of deportment; [1] the highest capacity and inclination for science with the most shining talents for action.

[1] Asser. .]

His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration; excepting only that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature, also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him every bodily accomplishment — vigor of limbs, dignity of shape and air, with a pleasing, engaging, and open countenance. Fortune alone, by throwing him into that barbarous age, deprived him of historians worthy to transmit his fame to posterity; and we wish to see him delineated in more lively colors, and with more particular strokes, that we may at least perceive some of those small specks and blemishes, from which, as a man, it is impossible he could be entirely exempted.

But we should give but an imperfect idea of Alfred’s merit, were we to confine our narration to his military exploits, and were not more particular in our account of his institutions for the execution of justice, and of his zeal for the encouragement of arts and sciences.

After Alfred had subdued, and had settled or expelled the Danes, he found the kingdom in the most wretched condition; desolated by the ravages of those barbarians, and thrown into disorders which were calculated to perpetuate its misery. Though the great armies of the Danes were broken, the country was full of straggling troops of that nation, who, being accustomed to live by plunder, were become incapable of industry; and who, from the natural ferocity of their manners, indulged themselves in committing violence, even beyond what was requisite to supply their necessities. The English themselves, reduced to the most extreme indigence by those continued depredations, had shaken off all bands of government; and those who had been plundered to-day, betook themselves next day to a like disorderly life, and, from despair, joined the robbers in pillaging and ruining their fellow-citizens. These were the evils for which it was necessary that the vigilance and activity of Alfred should provide a remedy.

That he might render the execution of justice strict and regular, he divided all England into counties: these counties he subdivided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings. Every householder was answerable for the behavior of his family and slaves, and even of his guests, if they lived above three days in his house. Ten neighboring householders were formed into one corporation, who, under the name of a tithing, decennary, or fribourg, were answerable for each other’s conduct, and over whom, one person, called a tithing-man, headbourg, or borsholder, was appointed to preside. Every man was punished as an outlaw who did not register himself in some tithing. And no man could change his habitation without a warrant or certificate from the borsholder of the tithing to which he formerly belonged.

When any person, in any tithing or decennary, was guilty of a crime, the borsholder was summoned to answer for him; and if he were not willing to be surety for his appearance, and his clearing himself, the criminal was committed to prison, and there detained till his trial. If he fled, either before or after finding sureties, the borsholder and decennary became liable to inquiry, and were exposed to the penalties of law. Thirty-one days were allowed them for producing the criminal; and if that time elapsed without their being able to find him, the borsholder, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, and, together with three chief members of the three neighboring decennaries, (making twelve in all,) to swear that his decennary was free from all privity, both of the crime committed, and of the escape of the criminal. If the borsholder could not find such a number to answer for their innocence, the decennary was compelled by fine to make satisfaction to the king, according to the degree of the offence. [1]

[1] Leges St. Edw. ca, apud Wilkins, .]

By this institution, every man was obliged, from his own interest, to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of his neighbors; and was in a manner surety for the behavior of those who were placed under the division to which he belonged; whence these decennaries received the name of frank-pledges.

Such a regular distribution of the people, with such a strict confinement in their habitation, may not be necessary in times when men are more inured to obedience and justice; and it might, perhaps, be regarded as destructive of liberty and commerce in a polished state; but it was well calculated to reduce that fierce and licentious people under the salutary restraint of law and government. But Alfred took care to temper these rigors by other institutions favorable to the freedom of the citizens; and nothing could be more popular and liberal than his plan for the administration of justice. The borsholder summoned together his whole decennary to assist him in deciding any lesser differences which occurred among the members of this small community. In affairs of greater moment, in appeals from the decennary, or in controversies arising between members of different decennaries, the cause was brought before the hundred, which consisted of ten decennaries, or a hundred families of freemen, and which was regularly assembled once in four weeks, for the deciding of causes. [1] Their method of decision deserves to be noted, as being the origin of juries; an institution admirable in itself, and the best calculated for the preservation of liberty and the administration of justice that ever was devised by the wit of man. Twelve freeholders were chosen, who, having sworn, together with the hundreder, or presiding magistrate of that division, to administer impartial justice, [2] proceeded to the examination of that cause which was submitted to their jurisdiction. And beside these monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting, appointed for a more general inspection of the police of the district; for the inquiry into crimes, the correction of abuses in magistrates, and the obliging of every person to show the decennary in which he was registered. The people, in imitation of their ancestors, the ancient Germans, assembled there in arms; whence a hundred was sometimes called a wapentake, and its courts served both for the support of military discipline and for the administration of civil justice. [3]

[1] Leges St. Edw. ca.]

[2] Foedus Alfred. et Gothurn. apud Wilkins, ca, . Leg. Ethelstani ca, apud Wilkins, . LL. Ethelr. sect. 4. Wilkins, .]

[3] Spelman, in voce Wapentake.]

The next superior court to that of the hundred was the county court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Easter, and consisted of the freeholders of the county, who possessed an equal vote in the decision of causes. The bishop presided in this court, together with the alderman; and the proper object of the court was, the receiving of appeals from the hundreds and decennaries, and the deciding of such controversies as arose between men of different hundreds. Formerly, the alderman possessed both the civil and military authority; but Alfred, sensible that this conjunction of powers rendered the nobility dangerous and independent, appointed also a sheriff in each county, who enjoyed a coördinate authority with the former in the judicial function. [1] His office also impowered him to guard the rights of the crown in the county, and to levy the fines imposed, which in that age formed no contemptible part of the public revenue.

[1] Ingulph. .]

There lay an appeal, in default of justice, from all these courts, to the king himself in council; and as the people, sensible of the equity and great talents of Alfred, placed their chief confidence in him, he was soon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of England. He was indefatigable in the despatch of these causes; [1] but finding that his time must be entirely engrossed by this branch of duty, he resolved to obviate the inconvenience, by correcting the ignorance or corruption of the inferior magistrates, from which it arose. [2] He took care to have his nobility instructed in letters and the laws; [3] he chose the earls and sheriffs from among the men most celebrated for probity and knowledge; he punished severely all malversation in office; [4] and he removed all the earls whom he found unequal to the trust; [5] allowing only some of the more elderly to serve by a deputy, till their death should make room for more worthy successors.

[1] Asser. .]

[2] Asser. , 21. Flor. Wigorn. . Abbas Rieval. .]

[3] Flor. Wigorn. . Brompton, .]

[4] Le Miroir de Justice, cha.]

The better to guide the magistrates in the administration of justice, Alfred framed a body of laws, which, though now lost, served long as the basis of English jurisprudence, and is generally deemed the origin of what is denominated the COMMON LAW. He appointed regular meetings of the states of England twice a year, in London, [1] a city which he himself had repaired and beautified, and which he thus rendered the capital of the kingdom.

[1] Le Miroir de Justice.]

The similarity of these institutions to the customs of the ancient Germans, to the practice of the other northern conquerors, and to the Saxon laws during the Heptarchy, prevents us from regarding Alfred as the sole author of this plan of government, and leads us rather to think, that, like a wise-man, he contented himself with reforming, extending, and executing the institutions which he found previously established. But, on the whole, such success attended his legislation, that everything bore suddenly a new face in England. Robberies and iniquities of all kinds were repressed by the punishment or reformation of the criminals; [1] and so exact was the general police, that Alfred, it is said, hung up, by way of bravado, golden bracelets near the highways, and no man dared to touch them. [2] Yet, amidst these rigors of justice, this great prince preserved the most sacred regard to the liberty of his people; and it is a memorable sentiment preserved in his will, that it was just the English should forever remain as free as their own thoughts. [3]

[1] Ingulph. .]

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

[1] Asset, .]

As good morals and knowledge are almost inseparable, in every age, though not in every individual, the care of Alfred for the encouragement of learning among his subjects was another useful branch of his legislation, and tended to reclaim the English from their former dissolute and ferocious manners; but the king was guided, in this pursuit, less by political views than by his natural bent and propensity towards letters. When he came to the throne, he found the nation sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders in the government, and from the ravages of the Danes. The monasteries were destroyed, the monks butchered or dispersed, their libraries burnt; and thus the only seats of erudition in those ages were totally subverted. Alfred himself complains, that on his accession he knew not one person, south of the Thames, who could so much as interpret the Latin service, and very few in the northern parts who had reached even that pitch of erudition. But this prince invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he established schools every where for the instruction of his people; he founded, at least repaired, the University of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges revenues, and immunities; he enjoined by law all freeholders possessed of two hides [1] of land, or more, to send their children to school, for their instruction; he gave preferment both in church and state to such only as had made some proficiency in knowledge; and by all these expedients he had the satisfaction, before his death, to see a great change in the face of affairs; and in a work of his, which is still extant, he congratulates himself on the progress which learning, under his patronage, had already made in England.

[1] A hide contained land sufficient to employ one plough. See H. Hunting, lib. vi. in A. D. 1008. Annal. Waverl. in A. D. 1083. Gervase of Tilbury says, it commonly contained about one hundred acres.]

But the most effectual expedient, employed by Alfred for the encouragement of learning, was his own example, and the constant assiduity with which, notwithstanding the multiplicity and urgency of his affairs, he employed himself in the pursuits of knowledge. He usually divided his time into three equal portions: one was employed in sleep, and the refection of his body by diet and exercise; another, in the despatch of business; a third, in study and devotion; and that he might more exactly measure the hours, he made use of burning tapers of equal length, which he fixed in lanterns, [1] an expedient suited to that rude age, when the geometry of dialling, and the mechanism of clocks and watches, were totally unknown. And by such a regular distribution of his time though he often labored under great bodily infirmities, [2] this martial hero, who fought in person fifty-six battles by sea and land, [3] was able, during a life of no extraordinary length, to acquire more knowledge, and even to compose more books, than most studious men, though blessed with the greatest leisure and application, have, in more fortunate ages, made the object of their uninterrupted industry.

[1] Asser. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Ingulph. .]

[2] Asser. p.4, 12, 13, 17, J W. Malms, lib. iv. ca.]

[3] Asser. .]

Sensible that the people, at all times, especially when their understandings are obstructed by ignorance and bad education, are not much susceptible of speculative instruction, Alfred endeavored to convey his morality by apologues, parables, stories, apothegms, couched in poetry; and besides propagating among his subjects former compositions of that kind, which he found in the Saxon tongue, [1] he exercised his genius in inventing works of a like nature, [2] as well as in translating from the Greek the elegant Fables of Æsop. He also gave Saxon translations of Orosius's and Bede's histories; and of Boethius concerning the consolation of philosophy. [3] And he deemed it nowise derogatory from his other great characters of sovereign, legislator, warrior, and politician, thus to lead the way to his people in the pursuits of literature.

[1] Spelruan, .]

[2] Abbas Rieval. .]

[3] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca, Brompton, .]

Meanwhile, this prince was not negligent in encouraging the vulgar and mechanical arts, which have a more sensible, though not a closer connection with the interests of society. He invited, from all quarters, industrious foreigners to re-people his country, which had been desolated by the ravages of the Danes. [1] He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds, and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art did he suffer to go unrewarded. [2] He prompted men of activity to betake themselves to navigation, to push commerce into the most remote countries, and to acquire riches by propagating industry among their fellow-citizens. He set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue for maintaining a number of workmen, whom he constantly employed in rebuilding the ruined cities, castles, palaces, and monasteries. [3] Even the elegances of life were brought to him from the Mediterranean and the Indies; [4] and his subjects, by seeing those productions of the peaceful arts, were taught to respect the virtues of justice and industry, from which alone they could arise. Both living and dead, Alfred was regarded by foreigners, no less than by his own subjects, as the greatest prince, after Charlemagne, that had appeared in Europe during several ages, and as one of the wisest and best that had ever adorned the annals of any nation.

[1] Asser. . Flor. Wigorn. .]

[2] Asser. .]

[3] Asser. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

[4] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

Alfred had, by his wife Ethelswitha, daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Edmund, died without issue, in his father’s lifetime. The third, Ethelward, inherited his father’s passion for letters, and lived a private life. The second, Edward, succeeded to his power, and passes by the appellation of Edward the Elder, being the first of that name who sat on the English throne.

EDWARD THE ELDER.

This prince, who equalled his father in military talents, though inferior to him in knowledge and erudition, [1] found immediately on his accession, a specimen of that turbulent life to which all princes, and even all individuals, were exposed, in an age when men, less restrained by law or justice, and less occupied by industry, had no aliment for their inquietude out wars, insurrections, convulsions, rapine, and depredation.

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii ca, Hoveden, .]

Ethelwald, his cousin-german, son of King Ethelbert, the elder brother of Alfred, insisted on his preferable title; [1] and arming his partisans, took possession of Winburne, where he seemed determined to defend himself to the last extremity, and to await the issue of his pretensions. [2] But when the king approached the town with a great army, Ethelwald, having the prospect of certain destruction, made his escape, and fled first into Normandy, thence into Northumberland, where he hoped that the people, who had been recently subdued by Alfred, and who were impatient of peace, would, on the intelligence of that great prince's death, seize the first pretence or opportunity of rebellion. The event did not disappoint his expectations: the Northumbrians declared for him, [3] and Ethelwald, having thus connected his interests with the Danish tribes, went beyond sea, and collecting a body of these freebooters, he excited the hopes of all those who had been accustomed to subsist by rapine and violence. [4]

[1] Chron. Sax. , 100.]

[2] Chron. Sax. . H. Hunting, lib. v. p. 352.]

[3] Chron. Sax. . H. Hunting, lib. v. p. 352.]

[4] Chron. Sax. . Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, .]

The East Anglian Danes joined his party; the Five-burgers, who were seated in the heart of Mercia, began to put themselves in motion; and the English found that they were again menaced with those convulsions from which the valor and policy of Alfred had so lately rescued them. The rebels, headed by Ethelwald, made an incursion into the counties of Glocester, Oxford, and Wilts; and having exercised their ravages in these places, they retired with their booty, before the king, who had assembled an army, was able to approach them. Edward, however, who was determined that his preparations should not be fruitless, conducted his forces into East Anglia, and retaliated the injuries which the inhabitants had committed, by spreading the like devastation among them. Satiated with revenge, and loaded with booty, he gave orders to retire; but the authority of those ancient kings, which was feeble in peace, was not much better established in the field; and the Kentish men, greedy of more spoil, ventured, contrary to repeated orders, to stay behind him, and to take up their quarters in Bury. This disobedience proved, in the issue, fortunate to Edward. The Danes assaulted the Kentish men, but met with so vigorous a resistance, that, though they gained the field of battle, they bought that advantage by the loss of their bravest leaders, and, among the rest, by that of Ethelwald, who perished in the action. [1] The king, freed from the fear of so dangerous a competitor, made peace on advantageous terms with the East Angles. [2]

[1] Chron. Sax. . Brompton, .]

[2] Chron. Sax. . Brompton, . M West. .]

In order to restore England to such a state of tranquillity as it was then capable of attaining, nought was wanting but the subjection of the Northumbrians, who, assisted by the scattered Danes in Mercia, continually infested the bowels of the kingdom. Edward, in order to divert the force of these enemies, prepared a fleet to attack them by sea, hoping that when his ships appeared on their coast, they must at least remain at home, and provide for their defence. But the Northumbrians were less anxious to secure their own property, than greedy to commit spoil on their enemy; and, concluding that the chief strength of the English was embarked on board the fleet, they thought the opportunity favorable, and entered Edward’s territories with all their forces. The king, who was prepared against this event, attacked them, on their return, at Tetenhall in the county of Stafford, put them to rout, recovered all the booty, and pursued them with great slaughter into their own country.

All the rest of Edward's reign was a scene of continued and successful action against the Northumbrians, the East Angles, the Five-burgers, and the foreign Danes, who invaded him from Normandy and Brittany. Nor was he less provident in putting his kingdom in a posture of defence, than vigorous in assaulting the enemy. He fortified the towns of Chester, Eddesbury, Warwick, Cherbury, Buckingham, Towcester, Maldon, Huntingdon, and Colchester. He fought two signal battles at Temsford and Maldon. [1]

[1 Chron. Sax. , Flor. Wigorn. .]

He vanquished Thurketill, a great Danish chief, and obliged him to retire with his followers into France, in quest of spoil and adventures. He subdued the East Angles, and forced them to swear allegiance to him: he expelled the two rival princes of Northumberland, Reginald and Sidroc, and acquired, for the present, the dominion of that province: several tribes of the Britons were subjected by him; and even the Scots, who, during the reign of Egbert, had, under the conduct of Kenneth, their king, increased their power by the final subjection of the Picts, were nevertheless obliged to give him marks of submission. [1] In all these fortunate achievements, he was assisted by the activity and prudence of his sister Ethelfleda, who was widow of Ethelbert, earl of Mercia, and who after her husband's death, retained the government of that province. This princess, who had been reduced to extremity in childbed, refused afterwards all commerce with her husband; not from any weak superstition, as was common in that age, but because she deemed all domestic occupations unworthy of her masculine and ambitious spirit. [2] She died before her brother; and Edward, during the remainder of his reign, took upon himself the immediate government of Mercia, which before had been intrusted to the authority of a governor. [3] The Saxon Chronicle fixes the death of this prince in 925 his kingdom devolved to Athelstan, his natural son.

[1 Chron. Sax. . Hoveden, .]

[2] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. M. West. . Ingulph. . Higgen .]

[3] Chron. Sax. . Brompton, .]

ATHELSTAN.

925.

The stain in this prince’s birth was not, in those times, deemed so considerable as to exclude him from the throne; and Athelstan, being of an age, as well as of a capacity, fitted for government, obtained the preference to Edward’s younger children, who, though legitimate, were of too tender years to rule a nation so much exposed both to foreign invasion and to domestic convulsions. Some discontents, however, prevailed on his accession; and Alfred, a nobleman of considerable power, was thence encouraged to enter into a conspiracy against him. This incident is related by historians, with circumstances which the reader, according to the degree of credit he is disposed to give them, may impute either to the invention of monks, who forged them, or to their artifice, who found means of making them real. Alfred, it is said, being seized upon strong suspicions, but without any certain proof, firmly denied the conspiracy imputed to him; and, in order to justify himself, he offered to swear to his innocence before the pope, whose person, it was supposed, contained such superior sanctity, that no one could presume to give a false oath in his presence, and yet hope to escape the immediate vengeance of Heaven. The king accepted of the condition, and Alfred was conducted to Rome, where, either conscious of his innocence, or neglecting the superstition to which he appealed, he ventured to make the oath required of him, before John, who then filled the papal chair; but no sooner had he pronounced the fatal words, than he fell into convulsions, of which, three days after, he expired. The king, as if the guilt, of the conspirator were now fully ascertained, confiscated his estate, and made a present of it to the monastery of Malmesbury, [1] secure that no doubts would ever thenceforth be entertained concerning the justice of his proceedings.

[1] W. Malms. lib. ii. ca. Spel. Concil. .]

The dominion of Athelstan was no sooner established over his English subjects, than he endeavored to give security to the government, by providing against the insurrections of the Danes, which had created so much disturbance to his predecessors. He marched into Northumberland; and, finding that the inhabitants bore with impatience the English yoke, he thought it prudent to confer on Sithric, a Danish nobleman, the title of king, and to attach him to his interests by giving him his sister Editha in marriage. But this policy proved by accident the source of dangerous consequences. Sithric died in a twelvemonth after; and his two sons by a former marriage, Anlaf and Godfrid, founding pretensions on their father's elevation, assumed the sovereignty, without waiting for Athelstan's consent. They were soon expelled by the power of that monarch; and the former took shelter in Ireland, as the latter did in Scotland, where he received, during some time, protection from Constantine, who then enjoyed the crown of that kingdom. The Scottish prince, however, continually solicited, and even menaced by Athelstan, at last promised to deliver up his guest; but secretly detesting this treachery, he gave Godfrid warning to make his escape; [1] and that fugitive, after subsisting by piracy for some years, freed the king, by his death, from any further anxiety. Athelstan, resenting Constantine's behavior, entered Scotland with an army, and ravaging the country with impunity, [2] he reduced the Scots to such distress, that their king was content to preserve his crown by making submissions to the enemy. The English historians assert, [3] that Constantine did homage to Athelstan for his kingdom; and they add, that the latter prince, being urged by his courtiers to push the present favorable opportunity, and entirely subdue Scotland, replied, that it was more glorious to confer than conquer kingdoms. [4]

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.]

[2] Chron. Sax. . Hoveden, . H. Hunting, lib. v. .]

[3] Hoveden, .]

[4] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Anglia Sacra, vol. i. .]

But those annals, so uncertain and imperfect in themselves, lose all credit when national prepossessions and animosities have place; and, on that account, the Scotch historians, who, without having any more knowledge of the matter, strenuously deny the fact, seem more worthy of belief.

Constantine, whether he owed the retaining of his crown to the moderation of Athelstan, who was unwilling to employ all his advantages against him, or to the policy of that prince who esteemed the humiliation of an enemy a greater acquisition than the subjection of a discontented and mutinous people thought the behavior of the English monarch more an object of resentment than of gratitude. He entered into a confederacy with Anlaf, who had collected a great body of Danish pirates, whom he found hovering in the Irish seas, and with some Welsh princes, who were terrified at the growing power of Athelstan; and all these allies made by concert an irruption with a great army into England. Athelstan, collecting his forces, met the enemy hear Brunsbury, in Northumberland, and defeated them in a general engagement. This victory was chiefly ascribed to the valor of Turketul, the English chancellor; for, in those turbulent ages, no one was so much occupied in civil employments as wholly to lay aside the military character. [1]

[1] The office of chancellor, among the Anglo- Saxons, resembled more that of a secretary of state than that of our present chancellor See Spelman in voce Cancellarius.]

There is a circumstance, not unworthy of notice, which historians relate, with regard to the transactions of this war. Anlaf, on the approach of the English army, thought that he could not venture too much to insure a fortunate event, and employing the artifice formerly practised by Alfred against the Danes, he entered the enemy’s camp, in the habit of a minstrel. The stratagem was, for the present, attended with like success. He gave such satisfaction to the soldiers, who flocked about him, that they introduced him to the king’s tent; and Anlaf, having played before that prince and his nobles during their repast, was dismissed with a handsome reward. His prudence kept him from refusing the present; Dut his pride determined him, on his departure, to bury it while he fancied that he was unespied by all the world. But a soldier in Athelstan’s camp, who had formerly served under Anlaf, had been struck with some suspicion on the first appearance of the minstrel, and was engaged by curiosity to observe all his motions. He regarded this last action as a full proof of Anlaf's disguise; and he immediately carried the intelligence to Athelstan, who blamed him for not sooner giving him information, that he might have seized his enemy. But the soldier told him, that, as he had formerly sworn fealty to Anlaf, he could never have pardoned himself the treachery of betraying and ruining his ancient master; and that Athelstan himself, after such an instance of his criminal conduct, would have had equal reason to distrust his allegiance. Athelstan, having praised the generosity of the soldier's principles, reflected on the incident, which he foresaw might be attended with important consequences. He removed his station in the camp; and as a bishop arrived that evening with a reënforcement of troops, (for the ecclesiastics were then no less warlike than the civil magistrates,) he occupied with his train that very place which had been left vacant by the king's removal. The precaution of Athelstan was found prudent; for no sooner had darkness fallen, than Anlaf broke into the camp, and hastening directly to the place where he had left the king's tent, put the bishop to death, before he had time to prepare for his defence. [1]

There fell several Danish and Welsh princes in the action of Brunsbury; [2] and Constantine and Anlaf made their escape with difficulty, leaving the greater part of their army on the field of battle. After this success, Athelstan enjoyed his crown in tranquillity; and he is regarded as one of the ablest and most active of those ancient princes. He passed a remarkable law, which was calculated for the encouragement of commerce, and which it required some liberality of mind in that age to have devised — that a merchant, who had made three long sea voyages on his own account, should be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman. This prince died at Glocester, in the year 94l, [3] after a reign of sixteen years, and was succeeded by Edmund, his legitimate brother.

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Higden, .]

[2] Brompton, Ingulph. .]

[3] Chron. Sax.]

EDMUND.

941.

Edmund, on his accession, met with disturbance from the restless Northumbrians, who lay in wait for every opportunity of breaking into rebellion. But marching suddenly with his forces into their country, he so overawed the rebels that they endeavored to appease him by the most humble submissions. [1]

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Brompton, p 857.

In order to give him the surer pledge of their obedience, they offered to embrace Christianity; a religion which the English Danes had frequently professed, when reduced to difficulties, but which, for that very reason, they regarded as a badge of servitude, and shook off as soon as a favorable opportunity offered. Edmund, trusting little to their sincerity in this forced submission, used the precaution of removing the Five-burgers from the towns of Mercia, in which they had been allowed to settle; because it was always found that they took advantage of every commotion, and introduced the rebellious or foreign Danes into the heart of the kingdom. He also conquered Cumberland from the Britons; and conferred that territory on Malcolm, king of Scotland, on condition that he should do him homage for it, and protect the north from all future incursions of the Danes.

Edmund was young when he came to the crown; yet was his reign short, as his death was violent. One day, as he was solemnizing a festival in the county of Glocester, he remarked that Leolf, a notorious robber, whom he had sentenced to banishment, had yet the boldness to enter the hall where he himself dined, and to sit at table with his attendants. Enraged at this insolence, he ordered him to leave the room; but on his refusing to obey, the king, whose temper, naturally choleric, was inflamed by this additional insult, leaped on him himself, and seized him by the hair; but the ruffian, pushed to extremity, drew his dagger, and gave Edmund a wound of which he immediately expired. This event happened in the year 946, and in the sixth year of the king’s reign. Edmund left male issue, but so young, that they were incapable of governing the kingdom; and his brother, Edred, was promoted to the throne.

EDRED

946.

The reign of this prince, as those of his predecessors, was disturbed by the rebellions and incursions of the Northumbrian Danes, who, though frequently quelled, were never entirely subdued, nor had ever paid a sincere allegiance to the crown of England. The accession of a new king seemed to them a favorable opportunity for shaking off the yoke; but on Edred's appearance with an army, they made him their wonted submissions; and the king, having wasted the country with fire and sword, as a punishment of their rebellion, obliged them to renew their oaths of allegiance; and he straight retired with his forces. The obedience of the Danes lasted no longer than the present terror. Provoked at the devastations of Edred, and even reduced by necessity to subsist on plunder, they broke into a new rebellion, and were again subdued; but the king, now instructed by experience, took greater precautions against their future revolt. He fixed English garrisons in their most considerable towns, and placed over them an English governor, who might watch all their motions, and suppress any insurrection on its first appearance. He obliged also Malcolm, king of Scotland, to renew his homage for the lands which he held in England.

Edred, though not unwarlike, nor unfit for active life, lay under the influence of the lowest superstition, and had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of Dunstan commonly called *St. Dunstan*, abbot of Glastonbury, whom he advanced to the highest offices, and who covered, under the appearance of sanctity, the most violent and most insolent ambition. Taking advantage of the implicit confidence reposed in him by the king, this churchman imported into England a new order of monks, who much changed the state of ecclesiastical affairs, and excited, on their first establishment, the most violent commotions.

From the introduction of Christianity among the Saxons, there had been monasteries in England; and these establishments had extremely multiplied by the donations of the princes and nobles, whose superstition, derived from their ignorance and precarious life, and increased by remorses for the crimes into which they were so frequently betrayed, knew no other expedient for appeasing the Deity, than a profuse liberality towards the ecclesiastics. But the monks had hitherto been a species of secular priests, who lived after the manner of the present canons or prebendaries, and were both intermingled, in some degree, with the world, and endeavored to render themselves useful to it. They were employed in the education of youth; [1] they had the disposal of their own time and industry; they were not subjected to the rigid rules of an order; they had made no vows of implicit to their superiors; [1] and they still retained the choice, without quitting the convent, either of a married or a single life. [2]

[1 Osberne in Anglia Sacra, tom. ii. .]

[2 See Wharton's notes to Anglia Sacra, tom. ii. . Gervase, p 1645. Chron. Wint. MS. apud Spel. Concil. .] The Pope, having cast his eye on the monks as the basis of his authority, was determined to reduce them under strict rules of obedience, to procure them the credit of sanctity by an appearance of the most rigid mortification,

and to break off all their other ties which might interfere with his spiritual policy. Under pretence, therefore, of reforming abuses which were in some degree unavoidable in the ancient establishments, he had already spread over the southern countries of Europe the severe laws of the monastic life, and began to form attempts towards a like innovation in England. The favorable opportunity offered itself, (and it was greedily seized,) arising from the weak superstition of Edred, and the violent, impetuous character of Dunstan.

As the bishops and parochial clergy lived apart with their families, and were more connected with the world, the hopes of success with them were fainter, and the pretence for making them renounce marriage was much less plausible.

But a mistaken piety had produced in Italy a new species of monks, called Benedictines; who, carrying farther the plan sible principles of mortification, secluded themselves entirely from the world, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the most inviolable chastity. These practices and principles, which superstition at first engendered, were greedily embraced and promoted by the policy of the court of Rome. The Roman pontiff, who was making every day great advances towards an absolute sovereignty over the ecclesiastics, perceived that the celibacy of the clergy alone could break off entirely their connection with the civil power, and, depriving them of every other object of ambition, engage them to promote, with unceasing industry, the grandeur of their own order. He was sensible that so long as the monks were indulged in marriage, and were permitted to rear families, they never could be subjected to strict discipline, or reduced to that slavery, under their superiors, which was requisite to procure to the mandates, issued from Rome, a ready and zealous obedience. Celibacy, therefore, began to be extolled as the indispensable duty of priests; and the pope undertook to make all the clergy, throughout the western world, renounce at once the privilege of marriage; a fortunate policy, but at the same time an undertaking the most difficult of any, since he had the strongest propensities of human nature to encounter, and found that the same connections with the female sex, which generally encourage devotion, were here unfavorable to the success of his project. It is no wonder, therefore, that this master-stroke of art should have met with violent contradiction, and that the interests of the hierarchy, and the inclinations of the priests, being now placed in this singular opposition, should, notwithstanding the continued efforts of Rome have retarded the execution of that bold scheme during the course of near three centuries.

Dunstan was born of noble parents in the west of England; and being educated under his uncle Aldhelm, then archbishop of Canterbury, had betaken himself to the ecclesiastical life, and had acquired some character in the court of Edmund. He was, however, represented to that prince as a man of licentious manners; [1] and finding his fortune blasted by these suspicions, his ardent ambition prompted him to repair his indiscretions, by running into an opposite extreme. He secluded himself entirely from the world; he framed a cell so small, that he could neither stand erect in it, nor stretch out his limbs during his repose; and he here employed himself perpetually either in devotion or in manual labor. [2] It is probable that his brain became gradually crazed by these solitary occupations, and that his head was filled with chimeras, which, being believed by himself and his stupid votaries, procured him the general character of sanctity among the people. He fancied that the devil, among the frequent visits which he paid him, was one day more earnest than usual in his temptations, till Dunstan, provoked at his importunity, seized him by the nose with a pair of red-hot pincers, as he put his head into the cell; and he held him there till that malignant spirit made the whole neighborhood resound with his bellowings. This notable exploit was seriously credited and extolled by the public; it is transmitted to posterity by one, who, considering the age in which he lived, may pass for a writer of some elegance; [3] and it insured to Dunstan a reputation which no real piety, much less virtue, could, even in the most enlightened period, have ever procured him with the people.

[1] Osberne, . M. West, .

[2] Osberne, .

[3] Osberne, .

Supported by the character obtained in his retreat, Dunstan appeared again in the world; and gained such an ascendent over Edred who had succeeded to the crown, as made him not only the director of that prince’s conscience, but his counsellor in the most momentous affairs of government. He was placed at the head of the treasury, [1] and being thus possessed both of power at court, and of credit with the populace, he was enabled to attempt with success the most arduous enterprises. Finding that his advancement had been owing to the opinion of his austerity, he professed himself a partisan of the rigid monastic rules; and after introducing that reformation into the convents of Glastonbury and Abingdon, he endeavored to render it universal in the kingdom.

The minds of men were already well prepared for this innovation. The praises of an inviolable chastity had been carried to the highest extravagance by some of the first preachers of Christianity among the Saxons: the pleasures of love had been represented as incompatible with Christian perfection; and a total abstinence from all commerce with the sex was deemed such a meritorious penance, as was sufficient to atone for the greatest enormities. The consequence seemed natural, that those, at least, who officiated at the altar, should be clear of this pollution; and when the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was now creeping in, [2] was once fully established, the reverence to the real body of Christ in the eucharist bestowed on this argument an additional force and influence.

[1] Osberne, . “Wallingford,” ,]

[2] Spel. Concil. vol. i. .]

The monks knew how to avail themselves of all these popular topics, and to set off their own character to the best advantage. They affected the greatest austerity of life and manners; they indulged themselves in the highest strains of devotion; they inveighed bitterly against the vices and pretended luxury of the age; they were particularly vehement against the dissolute lives of the secular clergy, their rivals; every instance of libertinism in any individual of that order was represented as a general corruption; and where other topics of defamation were wanting, their marriage became a sure subject of invective, and their wives received the name of concubine, or other more opprobrious appellation. The secular clergy, on the other hand, who were numerous and rich, and possessed of the ecclesiastical dignities, defended themselves with vigor and endeavored to retaliate upon their adversaries. The people were thrown into agitation; and few instances occur of more violent dissensions, excited by the most material differences in religion; or rather by the most frivolous; since it is a just remark, that the more affinity there is between theological parties, the greater commonly is their animosity.

The progress of the monks, which was become considerable, was somewhat retarded by the death of Edred, their partisan, who expired after a reign of nine years. He left children; but as they were infants, his nephew Edwy, son of Edmund, was placed on the throne.

EDWY

955.

Edwy, at the time of his accession, was not above sixteen or seventeen years of age, was possessed of the most amiable figure, and was even endowed, according to authentic accounts, with the most promising virtues. [1] He would have been the favorite of his people, had he not unhappily, at the commencement of his reign, been engaged in a controversy with the monks, whose rage neither the graces of the body nor virtues of the mind could mitigate, and who have pursued his memory with the same unrelenting vengeance, which they exercised against his person and dignity during his short and unfortunate reign. There was a beautiful princess of the royal blood, called Elgiva, who had made impression on the tender heart of Edwy; and as he was of an age when the force of the passions first begins to be felt, he had ventured, contrary to the advice of his gravest counsellors, and the remonstrances of the more dignified ecclesiastics, [2] to espouse her; though she was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon law. [3]

[1 Chron. Sax. p, 115.]

[2 H. Hunting, lib. v. .]

[3 W. Malms. lib. ii. ca.]

As the austerity affected by the monks made them particularly violent on this occasion, Edwy entertained a strong prepossession against them; and seemed, on that account, determined not to second their project of expelling the seculars from all the convents, and of possessing themselves of those rich establishments. War was therefore declared between the king and the monks; and the former soon found reason to repent his provoking such dangerous enemies. On the day of his coronation, his nobility were assembled in a great hall, and were indulging themselves in that riot and disorder, which, from the example of their German ancestors, had become habitual to the English; [1] when Edwy, attracted by softer pleasures, retired into the queen's apartment, and in that privacy gave reins to his fondness towards his wife, which was only moderately checked by the presence of her mother. Dunstan conjectured the reason of the king's retreat; and, carrying along with him Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an absolute ascendant, he burst into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his lasciviousness, probably bestowed on the queen the most opprobrious epithet that can be applied to her sex, and tearing him from her arms, pushed him back, in a disgraceful manner, into the banquet of the nobles. [2] Edwy, though young, and opposed by the prejudices of the people, found an opportunity of taking revenge for this public insult. He questioned Dunstan concerning the administration of the treasury during the reign of his predecessor; [3] and when that minister refused to give any account of money expended, as he affirmed, by orders of the late king, he accused him of malversation in his office, and banished him the kingdom. But Dunstan's cabal was not inactive during his absence: they filled the public with high panegyrics on his sanctity: they exclaimed against the impiety of the king and queen; and having poisoned the minds of the people by these declamations, they proceeded to still more outrageous acts of violence against the royal authority. Archbishop Odo sent into the palace a party of soldiers, who seized the queen; and having burned her face with a rod-hot iron, in order to destroy that fatal beauty which had seduced Edwy, they carried her by force into Ireland, there to remain in perpetual exile. [4] Edwy, finding it in vain to resist, was obliged to consent to his divorce, which was pronounced by Odo; [5] and a catastrophe still more dismal awaited the unhappy Elgiva. That amiable princess being cured of her wounds, and having even obliterated the scars with which Odo had hoped to deface her beauty, returned into England, and was flying to the embraces of the king, whom she still regarded as her husband; when she fell into the hands of a party whom the primate had sent to intercept her. Nothing but her death could now give security to Odo and the monks, and the most cruel death was requisite to satiate their vengeance. She was hamstringed; and expired a few days after at Glocester in the most acute torments. [6]

[1] Wallingford, .]

[2] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Osberne, , 105. M. West. , 196.]

[3] Wallingford, . Alured. Beverl. .]

[4] Osberne, . Gervase, .]

[6] Osberne, . Gervase, , 1646]

The English, blinded with superstition, instead of being shocked with this inhumanity, exclaimed that the misfortunes of Edwy and his consort were a just judgment for their dissolute contempt of the ecclesiastical statutes. They even proceeded to rebellion against their sovereign; and having placed Edgar at their head, the younger brother of Edwy, a boy of thirteen years of age, they soon put him in possession of Mercia, Northumberland, East Anglia, and chased Edwy into the southern counties. That it might not be doubtful at whose instigation this revolt was undertaken, Dunstan returned into England, and took upon him the government of Edgar and his party. He was first installed in the see of Worcester, then in that of London, [2] and, on Odo’s death, and the violent expulsion of Brithelm, his successor, in that of Canterbury; [3] of all which he long kept possession. Odo is transmitted to us by the monks under the character of a man of piety: Dunstan was even canonized; and is one of those numerous saints of the same stamp, who disgrace the Romish calendar. Meanwhile the unhappy Edwy was excommunicated, [4] and pursued with unrelenting vengeance; but his death, which happened soon after, freed his enemies from all further inquietude, and gave Edgar peaceable possession of the government. [5]

[2] Chron. Sax. . Flor. Wigorn. . Wallingford,]

[3] Hoveden, . Osberne, .]

[4 Brompton, .]

EDGAR

959.

This prince, who mounted the throne in such early youth, soon discovered an excellent capacity in the administration of affairs, and his reign is one of the most fortunate that we meet with in the ancient English history. He showed no aversion to war; he made the wisest preparations against invaders; and, by this vigor and foresight, he was enabled without any danger of suffering insults, to indulge his inclination towards peace, and to employ himself in supporting and improving the internal government of his kingdom. He maintained a body of disciplined troops; which he quartered in the north, in order to keep the mutinous Northumbrians in subjection, and to repel the inroads of the Scots. He built an supported a powerful navy; [1] and that he might retain the seamen in the practice of their duty, and always present a formidable armament to his enemies, he stationed three squadrons off the coast, and ordered them to make, from time to time, the circuit of his dominions. [2] The foreign Danes dared not to approach a country which appeared in such a posture of defence: the domestic Danes saw inevitable destruction to be the consequence of their tumults and insurrections: the neighboring sovereigns, the king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the Isle of Man, of the Orkneys, and even of Ireland, [3] were reduced to pay submission to so formidable a monarch. He carried his superiority to a great height, and might have excited a universal combination against him, had not his power been so well established, as to deprive his enemies of hopes of shaking it It is said, that residing once at Chester, and having purposed to go by water to the abbey of St. John the Baptist, he obliged eight of his tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee. [4] The English historians are fond of mentioning the name of Kenneth III., king of Scots, among the number: the Scottish historians either deny the fact, or assert that their king, if ever he acknowledged himself a vassal to Edgar, did him homage, not for his crown, but for the dominions which he held in England.

But the chief means by which Edgar maintained his authority, and preserved public peace, was the paying of court to Dunstan and the monks, who had at first placed him on the throne, and who, by their pretensions to superior sanctity and purity of manners, had acquired an ascendant over the people. He favored their scheme for dispossessing the secular canons of all the monasteries; [5] he bestowed preferment on none but their partisans; he allowed Dunstan to resign the see of Worcester into the hands of Oswald, one of his creatures; [6] and to place Ethelwold, another of them, in that of Winchester; [7] he consulted these prelates in the administration of all ecclesiastical and even in that of many civil affairs; and though the vigor of his own genius prevented him from being implicitly guided by them, the king and the bishops found such advantages in their mutual agreement, that they always acted in concert, and united their influence in preserving the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom.

In order to complete the great work of placing the new order of monks in all the convents, Edgar summoned a general council of the prelates, and the heads of the religious orders. He here inveighed against the dissolute lives of the secular clergy; the smallness of their tonsure, which, it is probable,

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[1] Higden, .]

[2] See note C, at the end of the volume]

[3] Spel. Concil. .]

[4] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Hoveden, . H. Hunting, lib. v.].

ca. Hoveden, , 426. Osberne, .]

[6] W. Malms. lib. ii. ca. Hoveden, p. 425.]

[7] Gervase, . Brompton, , Flor. Wigorn. . Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, , 28.]

maintained no longer any resemblance to the crown of thorns; their negligence in attending the exercise of their function; their mixing with the laity in the pleasures of gaming, hunting, dancing, and singing; and their openly living with concubines, by which it is commonly supposed he meant their wives. He then turned himself to Dunstan, the primate; and in the name of King Edred, whom he supposed to look down from heaven with indignation against all those enormities, he thus addressed him: "It is you, Dunstan, by whose advice I founded monasteries, built churches, and expended my treasure in the support of religion and religious houses. You were my counsellor and assistant in all my schemes: you were the director of my conscience: to you I was obedient in all things. When did you call for supplies, which I refused you? Was my assistance ever wanting to the poor? Did I deny support and establishments to the clergy and the convents? Did I not hearken to your instructions, who told me that these charities were, of all others, the most grateful to my Maker, and fixed a perpetual fund for the support of religion? And are all our pious endeavors now frustrated by the dissolute lives of the priests? Not that I throw any blame on you: you have reasoned, besought, inculcated, inveighed; but it now behoves you to use sharper and more vigorous remedies; and conjoining your spiritual authority with the civil power, to purge effectually the temple of God from thieves and intruders." [1]

[1] Abbas Rieval. , 361. Spel. Concil. p. 476, 477, 478.]

It is easy to imagine that this harangue had the desired effect; and that, when the king and prelates thus concurred with popular prejudices, it was not long before the monks prevailed, and established their new discipline in almost all the convents.

We may remark, that the declamations against the secular clergy are, both here and in all the historians, conveyed in general terms; and as that order of men are commonly restrained by the decency of their character, it is difficult to believe that the complaints against their dissolute manners could be so universally just as is pretended. It is more probable that the monks paid court to the populace by an affected austerity of life; and representing the most innocent liberties taken by the other clergy as great and unpardonable enormities, thereby prepared the way for the increase of their own power and influence. Edgar, however, like a true politician, concurred with the prevailing party; and he even indulged them in pretensions, which, though they might, when complied with, engage the monks to support royal authority during his own reign, proved afterwards dangerous to his successors, and gave disturbance to the whole civil power. He seconded the policy of the court of Rome, in granting to some monasteries an exemption from episcopal jurisdiction; he allowed the convents, even those of royal foundation, to usurp the election of their own abbot; and he admitted their forgeries of ancient charters, by which, from the pretended grant of former kings, they assumed many privileges and immunities. [1]

These merits of Edgar have procured him the highest panegyrics from the monks; and he is transmitted to us, not only under the character of a consummate statesman and an active prince, — praises to which beseems to have been justly entitled, — but under that of a great saint and a man of virtue. But nothing could more betray both his hypocrisy in inveighing against the licentiousness of the secular clergy, and the interested spirit of his partisans in bestowing such eulogies on his piety, than the usual tenor of his conduct, which was licentious to the highest degree, and violated every law, human and divine. Yet those very monks, who, as we are told by Ingulf, a very ancient historian, had no idea of any moral or religious merit, except chastity and obedience, not only connived at his enormities, but loaded him with the greatest praises. History, however, has preserved some instances of his amours, from which, as from a specimen, we may form a conjecture of the rest.

Edgar broke into a convent, carried off Editha, a nun, by force, and even committed violence on her person. [2]

For this act of sacrilege he was reprimanded by Dunstan; and that he might reconcile himself to the church, he was obliged, not to separate from his mistress, but to abstain from wearing his crown during seven years, and to deprive himself so long of that vain ornament; [1] a punishment very unequal to that which had been inflicted on the unfortunate Edwy, who, for a marriage, which in the strictest sense could only deserve the name of irregular, was expelled his kingdom, saw his queen treated with singular

[1 Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Seldom Spicileg, ad Eadm. , 157.]

[2 W. Malms, lib. ii ca. Osberne, . Diceto, . Higden, , 267, 268. Spel. Concil. p. 481.]

barbarity, was loaded with calumnies, and has been represented to us under the most odious colors. Such is the ascendant which may be attained, by hypocrisy and cabal, over mankind.

[[1] Osberne, .]

There was another mistress of Edgar’s, with whom he first formed a connection by a kind of accident. Passing one day by Andover, he lodged in the house of a nobleman, whose daughter, being endowed with all the graces of person and behavior, inflamed him at first sight with the highest desire; and he resolved by any expedient to gratify it. As he had not leisure to employ courtship or address for attaining his purpose, he went directly to her mother, declared the violence of his passion, and desired that the young lady might be allowed to pass that very night with him. The mother was a woman of virtue, and determined not to dishonor her daughter and her family by compliance; but being well acquainted with the impetuosity of the king’s temper, she thought it would be easier, as well as safer, to deceive than refuse him. She feigned therefore a submission to his will; but secretly ordered a waiting maid, of no disagreeable figure, to steal into the king’s bed, after all the company should be retired to rest. In the morning, before daybreak, the damsel, agreeably to the injunctions of her mistress, offered to retire; but Edgar, who had no reserve in his pleasures, and whose love to his bed-fallow was rather inflamed by enjoyment, refused his consent, and employed force and entreaties to detain her. Elfleda (for that was the name of the maid) trusting to her own charms, and to the love with which, she hoped, she had now inspired the king, made probably but a faint resistance; and the return of light discovered the deceit to Edgar. He had passed a night so much to his satisfaction, that he expressed no displeasure with the old lady on account of her fraud; his love was transferred to Elfleda; she became his favorite mistress, and maintained her ascendant over him, till his marriage with Elfrida. [[1]]

[[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Higden, .]

The circumstances of his marriage with this lady were more singular and more criminal. Elfrida was daughter and heir of Olgar, earl of Devonshire; and though she had been educated in the country, and had never appeared at court, she had filled all England with the reputation of her beauty. Edgar himself, who was indifferent to no accounts of this nature, found his curiosity excited by the frequent panegyrics which he heard of Elfrida; and reflecting on her noble birth, he resolved, if he found her charms answerable to their fame, to obtain possession of her on honorable terms. He communicated his intention to Earl Athelwold, his favorite, but used the precaution, before he made any advances to her parents, to order that nobleman, on some pretence, to pay them a visit, and to bring him a certain account of the beauty of their daughter. Athelwold, when introduced to the young lady, found general report to have fallen short of the truth; and being actuated by the most vehement love, he determined to sacrifice to this new passion his fidelity to his master, and to the trust reposed in him. He returned to Edgar, and told him, that the riches alone, and high quality of Elfrida, had been the ground of the admiration paid her, and that her charms, far from being any wise extraordinary would have been overlooked in a woman of inferior station. When he had, by this deceit, diverted the king from his purpose he took an opportunity, after some interval, of turning again the conversation on Elfrida; he remarked, that though the parentage and fortune of the lady had not produced on him, as on others, any illusion with regard to her beauty, he could not forbear reflecting, that she would, on the whole, be an advantageous match for him, and might, by her birth and riches, make him sufficient compensation for the homeliness of her person. If the king, therefore, gave his approbation he was determined to make proposals in his own behalf to the earl of Devonshire, and doubted not to obtain his, as well as the young lady's, consent to the marriage. Edgar, pleased with an expedient for establishing his favorite's fortune, not only exhorted him to execute his purpose but forwarded his success by his recommendations to the parents of Elfrida; and Athelwold was soon made happy in the possession of his mistress. Dreading, however, the detection of the artifice, he employed every pretence for detaining Elfrida in the country, and for keeping her at a distance from Edgar.

The violent passion of Athelwold had rendered him blind to the necessary consequences which must attend his conduct, and the advantages which the numerous enemies, that always pursue a royal favorite, would, by its means, be able to make against him. Edgar was soon informed of the truth; but before he would execute vengeance on Athelwold's treachery, he resolved to satisfy himself, with his own eyes, of the certainty and full extent of his guilt. He told him that he intended to pay him a visit in his castle, and be introduced to the acquaintance of his new-married wife; and Athelwold, as he could not refuse the honor, only craved leave to go before him a few hours, that he might the better prepare every thing for his reception. He then discovered the whole matter to Elfrida; and begged her, if she had any regard either to her own honor or his life, to conceal from Edgar, by every circumstance of dress and behavior, that fatal beauty which had seduced him from fidelity to his friend, and had betrayed him into so many falsehoods. Elfrida promised compliance, though nothing was farther from her intentions. She deemed herself little beholden to Athelwold for a passion which had deprived her of a crown; and knowing the force of her own charms, she did not despair, even yet, of reaching that dignity, of which her husband's artifice had bereaved her. She appeared before the king with all the advantages which the richest attire, and the most engaging airs, could bestow upon her, and she excited at once in his bosom the highest love towards herself, and the most furious desire of revenge against her husband. He knew, however, how to dissemble these passions; and seducing Athelwold into a wood, on pretence of hunting, he stabbed him with his own hand, and soon after publicly espoused Elfrida. [1]

[[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Hoveden, . Brompton, p. 865, 866. Flor. Wigorn. . Higden, .]

Before we conclude our account of this reign, we must mention two circumstances, which are remarked by historians. The reputation of Edgar allured a great number of foreigners to visit his court; and he gave them encouragement to settle in England. [1]

[[1] Chron. Sax. . H. Hunting, lib. v. . Brompton, .]

We are told that they imported all the vices of their respective countries, and contributed to corrupt the simple manners of the natives; [1] but as this simplicity of manners so highly and often so injudiciously extolled, did not preserve them from barbarity and treachery, the greatest of all vices, and the most incident to a rude, uncultivated people, we ought perhaps to deem their acquaintance with foreigners rather an advantage; as it tended to enlarge their views, and to cure them of those illiberal prejudices and rustic manners to which islanders are often subject.

Another remarkable incident of this reign was the extirpation of wolves from England. This advantage was attained by the industrious policy of

Edgar. He took great pains in hunting and pursuing those ravenous animals; and when he found that all that escaped him had taken shelter in the mountains and forests of Wales, he changed the tribute of money imposed on the Welsh princes of Athelstan, his predecessor, [2] into an annual tribute of three hundred heads of wolves; which produced such diligence in hunting them, that the animal has been no more seen in this island.

Edgar died after a reign of sixteen years, and in the thirty-third of his age. He was succeeded by Edward, whom he had by his first marriage with the daughter of Earl Ordmer.

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca.

[2] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Brompton, ,

EDWARD THE MARTYR

957.

The succession of this prince, who was only fifteen years of age at his father’s death, did not take place without much difficulty and opposition. Elfrida, his step-mother, had a son, Ethelred, seven years old, whom she attempted to raise to the throne: she affirmed that Edgar’s marriage with the mother of Edward was exposed to insuperable objections; and as she had possessed great credit with her husband, she had found means to acquire partisans, who seconded all her pretensions. But the title of Edward was supported by many advantages. He was appointed successor by the will of his father; [1] he was approaching to man’s estate, and might soon be able to take into his own hands the reins of government; the principal nobility, dreading the imperious temper of Clirida, were averse to her son’s government, which must enlarge her authority, and probably put her in possession of the regency; above all, Dunstan, whose character of sanctity had given him the highest credit with the people, hud espoused the cause of Edward, over whom he had already acquired a great ascendant; [2] and he was determined to execute the will of Edgar in his favor. To cut off all opposite pretensions, Dunstan resolutely anointed and crowned the young prince at Kingston; and the whole kingdom, without further dispute, submitted to him. [3]

[1] Hoveden, . Eadmer .]

[2] Eadmer, .]

[3] W. Malms, lib. ii ca. Hoveden, . Osberne, .]

It was of great importance to Dunstan and the monks to place on the throne a king favorable to their cause; the secular clergy had still partisans in England, who wished to support them in the possession of the convents, and of the ecclesiastical authority. On the first intelligence of Edgar’s death, Alfere, duke of Mercia, expelled the new orders of monks from all the monasteries which lay within his jurisdiction; [3] but Elfwin, duke of East Anglia, and Brithnot, duke of the East Saxons, protected them within their territories, and insisted upon the execution of the late laws enacted in their favor. In order to settle this controversy, there were summoned several synods, which, according to the practice of those times, consisted partly of ecclesiastical members, partly of the lay nobility. The monks were able to prevail in these assemblies; though, as it appears, contrary to the secret wishes, if not the declared inclination, of the leading men in he nation. [4] They had more invention in forging miracles to support their cause; or having been so fortunate as to obtain, by their pretended austerities, the character of piety, their miracles were more credited by the populace.

[3] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, lib. ii. cap. 9. Hoveden, Brompton, . Flor. Wigorn. p, 307.]

[4] W. Malms. lib. ii. ca.]

In one synod, Dunstan, finding the majority of votes against him, rose up, and informed the audience, that he had that instant received an immediate revelation in behalf of the monks: the assembly was so astonished at this intelligence, or probably so overawed by the populace, that they proceeded no farther in their deliberations. In another synod, a voice issued from the crucifix, and informed the members that the establishment of the monks was founded on the will of Heaven and could not be opposed without impiety. [1] But the miracle performed in the third synod was still more alarming: the floor of the hall in which the assembly met, sunk of a sudden, and a great number of the members were either bruised or killed by the fall. It was remarked, that Dunstan had that day prevented the king from attending the synod, and that the beam on which his own chair stood was the only one that did not sink under the weight of the assembly; [2] but these circumstances, instead of begetting any suspicion of contrivance, were regarded as the surest proof of the immediate interposition of Providence in behalf of those favorites of Heaven.

[1] W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Osberne, . Gervase, , Brompton, . Higden, .]

[2] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, lib. ii. ca. Hoveden, . H. Hunting, lib. v. . Gervase, p. 1647. Brompton, . Flor. Wigorn. Higden, p 269. Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo,]

Edward lived four years after his accession, and there passed nothing memorable during his reign. His death alone was memorable and tragical. [1]

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

This young prince was endowed with the most amiable innocence of manners; and as his own intentions were always pure, he was incapable of entertaining any suspicion against others. Though his step-mother had opposed his succession, and had raised a party in favor of her own son, he always showed her marks of regard, and even expressed, on all occasions, the most tender affection towards his brother. He was hunting one day in Dorsetshire, and being led by the chase near Corfe Castle, where Elfrida resided, he took the opportunity of paying her visit, unattended by any of his retinue, and he thereby presented her with the opportunity which she had long wished for. After he had mounted his horse, he desired some liquor to be brought him: while he was holding the cup to his head, a servant of Elfrida approached him, and gave him a stab behind. The prince, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but becoming faint by loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, his foot stuck in the stirrup, and he was dragged along by his unruly horse till he expired. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found, and was privately interred at Wereham by his servants.

The youth and innocence of this prince, with his tragical death, begat such compassion among the people, that they believed miracles to be wrought at his tomb; and they gave him the appellation of *martyr*, though his murder had no connection with any religious principle or opinion. Elfrida built monasteries, and performed many penances, in order to atone for her guilt; but could never, by all her hypocrisy or remorses, recover the good opinion of the public, though so easily deluded in those ignorant ages.

CHAPTER III.

ETHELRED

978

THE freedom which England had so long enjoyed from the depredations of the Danes, seems to have proceeded, partly from the establishments which that piratical nation had obtained in the north of France, and which employed all then superfluous hands to people and maintain them; partly from the vigor and warlike spirit of a long race of English princes, who preserved the kingdom in a posture of defence, by sea and land, and either prevented or repelled every attempt of the invaders. But a new generation of men being now sprung up in the northern regions, who could no longer disburden themselves on Normandy, the English had reason to dread that the Danes would again visit an island to which they were invited, both by the memory of their past successes, and by the expectation of assistance from their countrymen, who, though long established in the kingdom, were not yet thoroughly incorporated with the natives, nor had entirely forgotten their inveterate habits of war and depredation. And as the reigning prince was a minor, and even when he attained to man’s estate, never discovered either courage or capacity sufficient to govern his own subjects, much less to repel a formidable enemy, the people might justly apprehend the worst calamities from so dangerous a crisis.

981.

The Danes, before they durst attempt any important enterprise against England, made an inconsiderable descent by way of trial; and having landed from seven vessels near Southamptom, they ravaged the country, enriched themselves by spoil, and departed with impunity. Six years after, they made a like attempt in the west, and met with like success. The invaders, having now found affairs in a very different situation from that in which they formerly appeared, encouraged their countrymen to assemble a greater force, and to hope for more considerable advantages.

They landed in Essex, under the command of two leaders; and having defeated and slain, at Maldon, Brithnot, duke of that county, who ventured with a small body to attack them, they spread their devastations over all the neighboring provinces. In this extremity, Ethelred, to whom historians give the epithet of the *Unready*, instead of rousing his people to defend with courage their honor and their property, hearkened to the advice of Siricius, archbishop of Canterbury, which was seconded by many of the degenerate nobility; and paying the enemy the sum of ten thousand pounds, he bribed them to depart the kingdom. This shameful expedient was attended with the success which might be expected. The Danes next year appeared off the eastern coast, in hopes of subduing a people who defended themselves by their money, which invited assailants, instead of their arms, which repelled them. But the English, sensible of their folly, had in the interval assembled in a great council, and had determined to collect at London a fleet able to give battle to the enemy; [1] though that judicious measure failed of success, from the treachery of Alfric, duke of Mercia, whose name is infamous in the annals of that age, by the calamities which his repeated perfidy brought upon his country. This nobleman had, in 983, succeeded to his father, Alfere, in that extensive command; but, being deprived of it two years after, and banished the kingdom, he was obliged to employ all his intrigue, and all his power, which was too great for a subject, to be restored to his country, and reinstated in his authority. Having had experience of the credit and malevolence of his enemies, he thenceforth trusted for security, not to his services, or to the affections of his fellow-citizens, but to the influence which he had obtained over his vassals, and to the public calamities, which he thought must, in every revolution, render his assistance necessary. Having fixed this resolution, he determined to prevent all such successes as might establish the royal authority, or render his own situation dependent or precarious. As the English had formed the plan of surrounding and destroying the Danish fleet in harbor, he privately informed the enemy of their danger; and when they put to sea, in consequence of this intelligence, he deserted to them, with the squadron under his command, the night before the engagement, and thereby disappointed all the efforts of his countrymen. [2] Ethelred, enraged at his perfidy, seized his son Alfgar, and ordered his eyes to be put out. [3]

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, . Higden, .]

[3] Chror. Sax. . W. Malms, .]

But such was the power of Alfric, that he again forced himself into authority; and though he had given this specimen of his character, and received this grievous provocation, it was found necessary to intrust him anew with the government of Mercia. This conduct of the court, which, in all its circumstances, is so barbarous, weak, and imprudent both merited and prognosticated the most grievous calamities.

993.

The northern invaders, now well acquainted with the defenceless condition of England, made a powerful descent under the command of Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olave king of Norway; and sailing up the Humber, spread on all sides their destructive ravages. Lindesey was laid waste; Banbury was destroyed; and all the Northumbrians, though mostly of Danish descent, were constrained either to join the invaders, or to suffer under their depredations. A powerful army was assembled to oppose the Danes, and a general action ensued; but the English were deserted in the battle, from the cowardice or treachery of their three leaders, all of them men of Danish race, Frena, Frithegist, and Godwin, who gave the example of a shameful flight to the troops under their command.

Encouraged by this success, and still more by the contempt which it inspired for their enemy, the pirates ventured to attack the centre of the kingdom; and entering the Thames in ninety-four vessels, laid siege to London, and threatened it with total destruction. But the citizens, alarmed at the danger, and firmly united among themselves, made a bolder defence than the cowardice of the nobility and gentry gave the invaders reason to apprehend; and the besiegers, after suffering the greatest hardships, were finally frustrated in their attempt. In order to revenge themselves, they laid waste Essex, Sussex, and Hampshire; and having there procured horses, they were thereby enabled to spread through the more inland counties the fury of their depredations. In this extremity, Ethelred and his nobles had recourse to the former expedient; and sending ambassadors to the two northern kings, they promised them subsistence and tribute, on condition they would, for the present, put an end to their ravages, and soon after depart the kingdom. Sweyn and Olave agreed to the terms, and peaceably took up their quarters at Southampton, where the sum of sixteen thousand pounds was paid to them. Olave even made a journey to Andover, where Ethelred resided; and he received the rite of confirmation from the English bishops, as well as many rich presents from the king. He here promised that he would never more infest the English territories; and he faithfully fulfilled the engagement. This prince receives the appellation of St. Olave from the church of Rome; and, notwithstanding the general presumption, which lies either against the understanding or morals of every one who in those ignorant ages was dignified with that title, he seems to have been a man of merit and of virtue, Sweyn, though less scrupulous than Olave, was constrained, upon the departure of the Norwegian prince, to evacuate also the kingdom, with all his followers.

997.

This composition brought only a short interval to the miseries of the English. The Danish pirates appeared soon after in the Severn; and having committed spoil in Wales, as well as in Cornwall and Devonshire, they sailed round to the south coast, and entering the Tamar, completed the devastation of these two counties. They then returned to the Bristol Channel; and penetrating into the country by the Avon, spread themselves over all that neighborhood, and carried fire and sword even into Dorsetshire. They next changed the seat of war; and after ravaging the Isle of Wight, they entered the Thames and Medway, and laid siege to Rochester, where they defeated the Kentish men in a pitched battle. After this victory, the whole province of Kent was made a scene of slaughter, fire, and devastation. The extremity of these miseries forced the English into counsels for common defence, both by sea and land; but the weakness of the king, the divisions among the nobility, the treachery of some, the cowardice of others, the want of concert in all, frustrated every endeavor; their fleets and armies either came too late to attack the enemy, or were repulsed with dishonor; and the people were thus equally ruined by resistance or by submission. The English, therefore, destitute both of prudence and unanimity in council, of courage and conduct in the field, had recourse to the same weak expedient which, by experience, they had already found so ineffectual: they offered the Danes to buy peace, by paying them a large sum of money, These ravagers rose continually in their demands; and now required the payment of twenty-four thousand pounds, to which the English were so mean and imprudent as to submit. [1]

[1 Hoveden, . Chron. Malm. .]

The departure of the Danes procured them another short interval of repose, which they enjoyed as if it were to be perpetual without making any effectual preparations for a more vigorous resistance upon the next return of the enemy.

Besides receiving this sum, the Danes were engaged by another motive to depart a kingdom which appeared so little in a situation to resist their efforts. They were invited over by their countrymen in Normandy, who at this time were hard pressed by the arms of Robert, king of France, and who found it difficult to defend the settlement, which, with so much advantage to themselves, and glory to their nation, they had made in that country. It is probable, also, that Ethelred, observing the close connections thus maintained among all the Danes, however divided in government or situation, was desirous of forming an alliance with that formidable people. For this purpose, being now a widower, he made his addresses to Emma, sister to Richard II., duke of Normandy, and he soon succeeded in his negotiation. The princess came over this year

1001.

to England, and was married to Ethelred. [1]

[1 H, Hunting, . Higden, .]

In the end of the ninth and beginning of the tenth century — when the north, not yet exhausted by that multitude of people, or rather nations, which she had successively emitted, sent forth a new race, not of conquerors, as before, but of pirates and ravagers, who infested the countries possessed by her once warlike sons — lived Rollo, a petty prince or chieftain in Denmark, whose valor and abilities soon en gaged, the attention of his countrymen. He was exposed in his youth to the jealousy of the king of Denmark, who attacked his small but independent principality, and who, being foiled in every assault, had recourse at last to perfidy for effecting his purpose, which he had often attempted in vain by force of arms. [2]

[2] Dudo, ex edit. Duchesne, , 71. Gul. Gemeticenia, lib. ii, ca, 3.]

He lulled Rollo into security by an insidious peace and falling suddenly upon him, murdered his brother and his bravest officers, and forced him to fly for safety into Scandinavia. Here many of his ancient subjects, induced partly by affection to their prince, partly by the oppressions of the Danish monarch, ranged themselves under his standard, and offered to follow him in every enterprise. Rollo, instead of attempting to recover his paternal dominions, where he must expect a vigorous resistance from the Danes, determined to pursue an easier but more important undertaking, and to make rus fortune, in imitation of his countrymen, by pillaging the richer and more southern coasts of Europe. He collected a body of troops, which, like that of all those ravagers, was composed of Norwegians, Swedes, Frisians, Danes, and adventurers of all nations, who being accustomed to a roving, unsettled life, took delight in nothing but war and plunder. His reputation brought him associates from all quarters; and a vision, which he pretended to have appeared to him in his sleep, and which, according to his interpretation of it, prognosticated the greatest successes, proved also a powerful incentive with those ignorant and superstitious people. [1]

[1] Dudo, . Gul. Gemet. in epist. ad Gul. Conq.]

The first attempt made by Rollo was on England, near the end of Alfred’s reign, when that great monarch, having settled Guthrum and his followers in East Anglia, and others of those freebooters in Northumberland, and having restored peace to his harassed country, had established the most excellent military, as well as civil, institutions among the English. The prudent Dane, finding that no advantages could be gained over such a people, governed by such a prince, soon turned his enterprises against France, which he found more exposed to his inroads; [2] and during the reigns of Eudes, a usurper, and of Charles the Simple, a weak prince, he committed the most destructive ravages, both on the inland and maritime provinces of that kingdom. The French, having no means of defence against a leader who united all the valor of his countrymen with the policy of more civilized nations, were obliged to submit to the expedient practised by Alfred, and to offer the invaders a settlement in some of those provinces which they had depopulated by their arms. [3]

[2] Gul Gemet lib. ii. cap 6.]

[3] Dudo, .]

The reason why the Danes, for many years, pursued measures so different from those which had been embraced by the Goths, Vandals, Franks, Burgundians, Lombards, and other northern conquerors, was the great difference in the method of attack which was practised by these several nations, and to which the nature of their respective situations necessarily confined them. The latter tribes, living in an inland country, made incursions by land upon the Roman empire; and when they entered far into the frontiers, they were obliged to carry along with them their wives and families, whom they had no hopes of soon revisiting, and who could not otherwise participate of their plunder. This circumstance quickly made them think of forcing a settlement in the provinces which they had overrun: and these barbarians, spreading themselves over the country, found an interest in protecting the property and industry of the people whom they had subdued. But the Danes and Norwegians, invited by their maritime situation, and obliged to maintain themselves in their uncultivated country by fishing, had acquired some experience of navigation; and, in their military excursions, pursued the method practised against the Roman empire by the more early Saxons. They made descents in small bodies from their ships, or rather boats, and ravaging the coasts, returned with the booty to their families, whom they could not conveniently carry along with them in those hazardous enterprises. But when they increased their armaments, made incursions into the inland countries, and found it safe to remain longer in the midst of the enfeebled enemy, they had been accustomed to crowd their vessels with their wives and children, and having no longer any temptation to return to their own country, they willingly embraced an opportunity of settling in the warm climates and cultivated fields of the south.

Affairs were in this situation with Rollo and his followers, when Charles proposed to relinquish to them part of the province formerly called Neustria, and to purchase peace on these hard conditions. After all the terms were fully settled, there appeared only one circumstance shocking to the haughty Dane: he was required to do homage to Charles for this province, and to put himself in that humiliating posture imposed on vassals by the rites of the feudal law. He long refused to submit to this indignity; but, being unwilling to lose such important advantages for a mere ceremony, he made a sacrifice of his pride to his interest, and acknowledged himself, in form, the vassal of the French monarch. [1] Charles gave him his daughter Gisla in marriage; and, that he might bind him faster to his interests, made him a donation of a considerable territory, besides that which he was obliged to surrender to him by his stipulation.

[1 Ypod. Neust. .]

When some of the French nobles informed him that, in return for so generous a present, it was expected that he should throw himself at the king's feet, and make suitable acknowledgments for his bounty, Rollo replied, that he would rather decline the present; and it was with some difficulty they could persuade him to make that compliment by one of his captains. The Dane, commissioned for this purpose, full of indignation at the order, and despising so unwarlike a prince, caught Charles by the foot, and pretending to carry it to his mouth, that he might kiss it, overthrew him before all his courtiers. The French, sensible of their present weakness, found it prudent to overlook this insult. [1]

[1 Gul. Gemet. lib. ii. ca.]

Rollo, who was now in the decline of life, and was tired of wars and depredations, applied himself, with mature counsels to the settlement of his new-acquired territory, which was thenceforth called Normandy; and he parcelled it out among his captains and followers. He followed, in this partition, the customs of the feudal law, which was then universally established in the southern countries of Europe, and which suited the peculiar circumstances of that age. He treated the French subjects, who submitted to him, with mildness and justice; he reclaimed his ancient followers from their ferocious violence; he established law and order throughout his state; and after a life spent in tumults and ravages, he died peaceably in a good old age, and left his dominions to his posterity. [2]

[2] Gul. Gemet. lib. ii. ca, 20, 21.

William I., who succeeded him, governed the duchy twenty-five years; and, during that time, the Normans, who were thoroughly intermingled with the French, had acquired their language, had imitated their manners, and had made such progress towards cultivation, that, on the death of William, his son Richard, though a minor, [3] inherited his dominions; a sure proof that the Normans were already somewhat advanced in civility, and that their government could now rest secure on its laws and civil institutions, and was not wholly sustained by the abilities of the sovereign. Richard, after a long reign of fifty-four years, was succeeded by his son, of the same name, in the year 996, [4] which was eighty-five years after the first establishment of the Normans in France. This was the duke who gave his sister Emma in marriage to Ethelred, king of England, and who thereby formed connections with a country which his posterity was so soon after destined to subdue.

[3] Order. Vitalis, . Grl. Geinet, lib. iv. cu.

[4] Order. Vitalis, .

The Danes had been established during a longer period in England than in France; and though the similarity of their original language to that of the Saxons invited them to a more early coalition with the natives, they had hitherto found so little example of civilized manners among the English, that they retained all their ancient ferocity, and valued themselves only on their national character of military bravery. The recent, as well as more ancient achievements of their countrymen tended to support this idea; and the English princes particularly Athelstan and Edgar, sensible of that superiority had been accustomed to keep in pay bodies of Danish troops, who were quartered about the country, and committed many violences upon the inhabitants. These mercenaries had attained to such a height of luxury, according to the old English writers, [1] that they combed their hair once a day, bathed themselves once a week, changed their clothes frequently; and by all these arts of effeminacy, as well as by their military character, had rendered themselves so agreeable to the fair sex, that they debauched the wives and daughters of the English, and dishonored many families. But what most provoked the inhabitants was, that instead of defending them against invaders, they were ever ready to betray them to the foreign Danes, and to associate themselves with all straggling parties of that nation.

The animosity between the inhabitants of English and Danish race, had, from these repeated injuries, risen to a great height, when Ethelred, from a policy incident to weak princes embraced the cruel resolution of massacring the latter throughout all his dominions. [2]

[1] Wallingford, .]

[2] See note D, at the end of the volume.]

1002.

Secret orders were despatched to commence the execution every where on the same day, and the festival of St. Brice, which fell on a Sunday, [November 13,] the day on which the Danes usually bathed themselves, was chosen for that purpose. It is needless to repeat the accounts transmitted concerning the barbarity of this massacre: the rage of the populace, excited by so many injuries, sanctioned by authority, and stimulated by example, distinguished not between innocence and guilt, spared neither sex nor age, and was not satiated without the tortures as well as death of the unhappy victims. Even Gunilda, sister to the king of Denmark, who had married Earl Paling, and had embraced Christianity, was, by the advice of Edric, earl of Wilts, seized and condemned to death by Ethelred, after seeing her husband and children butchered before her face. This unhappy princess foretold, in the agonies of despair, that her murder would soon be avenged by the total ruin of the English nation.

1003.

Never was prophecy better fulfilled; and never did barbarous policy prove more fatal to the authors. Sweyn and his Danes, who wanted but a pretence for invading the English, appeared off the western coast, and threatened to take full revenge for the slaughter of their countrymen. Exeter fell first into their hands, from the negligence or treachery of Earl Hugh, a Norman, who had been made governor by the interest of Queen Emma. They began to spread their devastations over the country, when the English, sensible what outrages they must now expect from their barbarous and offended enemy, assembled more early, and in greater numbers than usual, and made an appearance of vigorous resistance. But all these preparations were frustrated by the treachery of Duke Alfric, who was intrusted with the command, and who, feigning sickness, refused to lead the army against the Danes, till it was dispirited, and at last dissipated, by his fatal misconduct. Alfric soon after died, and Edric, a greater traitor than he, who had married the king’s daughter, and had acquired a total ascendant over him, succeeded Alfric in the government of Mercia, and in the command of the English armies. A great famine, proceeding partly from the bad seasons, partly from the decay of agriculture, added to all the other miseries of the inhabitants.

1007

The country, wasted by the Danes, harassed by the fruitless expeditions of its own forces, was reduced to the utmost desolation, and at last submitted to the infamy of purchasing a precarious peace from the enemy, by the payment of thirty thousand pounds.

The English endeavored to employ this interval in making preparations against the return of the Danes, which they had reason soon to expect. A law was made, ordering the proprietors of eight hides of land to provide each a horseman and a complete suit of armor, and those of three hundred and ten hides to equip a ship for the defence of the coast. When this navy was assembled, which must have consisted of near eight hundred vessels, [1] all hopes of its success were disappointed by the factions, animosities, and dissensions of the nobility. Edric had impelled his brother Brightric to prefer an accusation of treason against Wolfnoth, governor of Sussex, the father of the famous Earl Godwin; and that nobleman, well acquainted with the malevolence as well as power of his enemy, found no means of safety Dut in deserting with twenty ships to the Danes.

[1 There were two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides in England. Consequently, the ships equipped must be seven hundred and eighty-five. The cavalry was thirty thousand four hundred and fifty men.]

Brightric pursued him with a fleet of eighty sail; but his ships being shattered in a tempest, and stranded on the coast, he was suddenly attacked by Wolfnoth, and all his vessels burnt and destroyed. The imbecility of the king was little capable of repairing this misfortune. The treachery of Edric frustrated every plan for future defence; and the English navy, disconcerted, discouraged, and divided, was at last scattered into its several harbors.

It is almost impossible, or would be tedious, to relate particularly all the miseries to which the English were henceforth exposed. We hear of nothing but the sacking and burning of towns; the devastation of the open country; the appearance of the enemy in every quarter of the kingdom; their cruel diligence in discovering any corner which had not been ransacked by their former violence. The broken and disjointed narration of the ancient historians is here well adapted to the nature of the war, which was conducted by such sudden inroads, as would have been dangerous even to a united and well-governed kingdom, but proved fatal where nothing but a general consternation and mutual diffidence and dissension prevailed. The governors of one province refused to march to the assistance of another, and were at last terrified from assembling their forces for the defence of their own province. General councils were summoned; but either no resolution was taken, or none was carried into execution. And the only expedient in which the English agreed, was the base and imprudent one of buying a new peace from the Danes, by the payment of forty-eight thousand pounds.

1011.

This measure did not bring them even that short interval of repose which they had expected from it. The Danes, disregarding all engagements, continued their devastations and hostilities; levied a new contribution of eight thousand pounds upon the county of Kent alone; murdered the archbishop of Canterbury, who had refused to countenance this exaction; and the English nobility found no other resource than that of submitting everywhere to the Danish monarch, swearing allegiance to him, and delivering him hostages for their fidelity. Ethelred equally afraid of the violence of the enemy, and the treachery of his own subjects, fled into Normandy,

1013

whither he had sent before him Queen Emma, and her two sons, Alfred and Edward. Richard received his unhappy guests with a generosity that does honor to his memory.

1014

The king had not been above six weeks in Normandy, when he heard of the death of Sweyn, who expired at Gainsborough, before he had time to establish himself in his new-acquired dominions. The English prelates and nobility, taking advantage of this event, sent over a deputation to Normandy, inviting Ethelred to return to them, expressing a desire of being again governed by their native prince, and intimating their hopes that, being now tutored by experience, he would avoid all those errors which had been attended with such misfortunes to himself and to his people. But the misconduct of Ethelred was incurable; and on his resuming the government, he discovered the same incapacity, indolence, cowardice, and credulity, which had so often exposed him to the insults of his enemies. His son-in-law Edric, notwithstanding his repeated treasons, retained such influence at court, as to instil into the king jealousies of Sigefert and Morcar, two of the chief nobles of Mercia. Edric allured them into his house, where he murdered them; while Ethelred participated in the infamy of the action, by confiscating their estates, and thrusting into a convent the widow of Sigefert. She was a woman of singular beauty and merit; and in a visit which was paid her, during her confinement, by Prince Edmond, the king’s eldest son, she inspired him with so violent an affection, that he released her from the convent, and soon after married her, without the consent of his father.

Meanwhile the English found in Canute, the son and successor of Sweyn, an enemy no less terrible than the prince from whom death had so lately delivered them. He ravaged the eastern coast with merciless fury, and put ashore all the English hostages at Sandwich, after having cut off their hands and noses. He was obliged, by the necessity of his affairs, to make a voyage to Denmark; but, returning soon after, he continued his depredations along the southern coast He even broke into the counties of Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset where an army was assembled against him, under the command of Prince Edmond and Duke Edric. The latter still continued his perfidious machinations, and after endeavoring in vain to got the prince into his power, he found means to disperse the army, and he then openly deserted to Canute with forty vessels.

1015.

Notwithstanding this misfortune, Edmond was not disconcerted; but assembling all the force of England, was in a condition to give battle to the enemy. The king had had such frequent experience of perfidy among his subjects, that he had lost all confidence in them: he remained at London, pretending sickness, but really from apprehensions that they intended to buy their peace, by delivering him into the hands of his enemies. The army called aloud for their sovereign to march at their head against the Danes; and, on his refusal to take the field, they were so discouraged, that those vast preparations became ineffectual for the defence of the kingdom. Edmond, deprived of all regular supplies to maintain his soldiers, was obliged to commit equal ravages with those which were practised by the Danes; and, after making some fruitless expeditions into the north, which had submitted entirely to Canute’s power, he retired to London, determined there to maintain to the last extremity the small remains of English liberty. He here found every thing in confusion by the death of the king, who expired after an unhappy and inglorious reign of thirty-five years.

1016.

He left two sons by his first marriage, Edmond, who succeeded him, and Edwy, whom Canute afterwards murdered. His two sons by the second marriage, Anred and Edward, were, immediately upon Ethelred’s death, conveyed into Normandy by Queen Emma.

EDMOND IRONSIDE

This prince, who received the name of *Ironside* from his hardy valor, possessed courage and abilities sufficient to have prevented his country from sinking into those calamities, but not to raise it from that abyss of misery into which it had already fallen. Among the other misfortunes of the English, treachery and disaffection had crept in among the nobility and prelates; and Edmond found no better expedient for stopping the further progress of these fatal evils, than to lead his army instantly into the field, and to employ them against the common enemy. After meeting with some success at Gillingnam, he prepared himself to decide, in one general engagement, the fate of his crown: and at Scoerston, in the county of Glocester, he offered battle to the enemy, who were commanded by Canute and Edric. Fortune, in the beginning of the day, declared for him; but Edric, having cut off the head of one Osmer, whose countenance resembled that of Edmond fixed it on a spear, carried it through the ranks in triumph, and called aloud to the English, that it was time to fly; for, behold! the head of their sovereign. And though Edmond, observing the consternation of the troops, took off his helmet, and showed himself to them, the utmost he could gain by his activity and valor was to leave the victory undecided. Edric now took a surer method to ruin him, by pretending to desert to him; and as Edmond was well acquainted with his power, and probably knew no other of the chief nobility in whom he could repose more confidence, he was obliged, notwithstanding the repeated perfidy of the man, to give him a considerable command in the army. A battle soon after ensued at Assington, in Essex; where Edric, flying in the beginning of the day, occasioned the total defeat of the English, followed by a great slaughter of the nobility. The indefatigable Edmond, however, had still resources. Assembling a new army at Glocester, he was again in condition to dispute the field; when the Danish and English nobility, equally harassed with those convulsions obliged their kings to come to a compromise, and to divide the kingdom between them by treaty. Canute reserved to himself the northern division, consisting of Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland, which he had entirely subdued. The southern parts were left to Edmond. The prince survived the treaty about a month. He was murdered at Oxford by two of his chamberlains, accomplices of Edric, who thereby made way for the succession of Canute the Dane to the crown of England.

CANUTE

1017.

The English, who had been unable to defend their country, and maintain their independency, under so active and brave a prince as Edmond, could after his death expect nothing but total subjection from Canute, who, active and brave himself, and at the head of a great force, was ready to take advantage of the minority of Edwin and Edward, the two sons of Edmond. Yet this conqueror, who was commonly so little scrupulous, showed himself anxious to cover his injustice under plausible pretences. Before he seized the dominions of the English princes, he summoned a general assembly of the states, in order to fix the succession of the kingdom. He here suborned some nobles to depose that, in the treaty of Glocester it had been verbally agreed, either to name Canute, in case of Edmond’s death, successor to his dominions, or tutor to hit children, (for historians vary in this particular;) and that evidence, supported by the great power of Canute, determined the states immediately to put the Danish monarch in possession of the government. Canute, jealous of the two princes, but sensible that he should render himself extremely odious if he ordered them to be despatched in England, sent them abroad to his ally, the king of Sweden, whom he desired, as soon as they arrived at his court, to free him, by their death, from a& farther anxiety. The Swedish monarch was too generous to comply with the request; but being afraid of drawing on himself a quarrel with Canute, by protecting the young princes, he sent them to Solomon, king of Hungary, to be educated in his court. The elder, Edwin, was afterwards married to the sister of the king of Hungary; but the English prince dying without issue, Solomon gave his sister-in-law, Agatha, daughter of the emperor Henry the Second, in marriage to Edward, the younger brother; and she bore him Edgar, Atheling, Margaret, afterwards queen of Scotland, and Christina, who retired into a convent.

Canute, though he had reached the great point of his ambition in obtaining possession of the English crown, was obliged at first to make great sacrifices to it; and to gratify the chief of the nobility, by bestowing on them the most extensive governments and jurisdictions. He created Thurkill earl or duke of East Anglia, (for these titles were then nearly of the same import,) Yric of Northumberland, and Edric of Mercia; reserving only to himself the administration of Wessex. But seizing afterwards a favorable opportunity, he expelled Thurkill and Yric from their governments, and banished them the kingdom; he put to death many of the English nobility, on whose fidelity he could not rely, and whom he hated on account of their disloyalty to their native prince. And even the traitor Edric, having had the assurance to reproach him with his services, was condemned to be executed, and his body to be thrown into the Thames; a suitable reward for his multiplied acts of perfidy and rebellion.

Canute also found himself obliged, in the beginning of his reign, to load the people with heavy taxes, in order to reward his Danish followers: he exacted from them at one time the sum of seventy-two thousand pounds; besides eleven thousand pounds which he levied on London alone. He was probably willing, from political motives, to mulct severely that city, on account of the affection which it had borne to Edmond, and the resistance which it had made to the Danish power in two obstinate sieges. [1] But these rigors were imputed to necessity, and Canute, like a wise prince, was determined that the English, now deprived of all their dangerous leaders, should be reconciled to the Danish yoke, by the justice and impartiality of his administration. He sent back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could safely spare; he restored the Saxon customs in a general assembly of the states; he made no distinction between Danes and English in the distribution of justice; and he took care, by a strict execution of law, to protect the lives and properties of all his people. The Danes were gradually incorporated with his new objects; and both were glad to obtain a little respite from those multiplied calamities, from which the one, no less than the other, had, in their fierce contest for power, experienced such fatal consequences.

The removal of Edmond’s children into so distant a country as Hungary, was, next to their death, regarded by Canute as the greatest security to his government: he had no further anxiety, except with regard to Alfred and Edward, who were protected and supported by their uncle Richard, duke of Normandy. Richard even fitted out a great armament, in order to restore the English princes to the throne of their ancestors; and though the navy was dispersed by a storm, Canute saw the danger to which he was exposed, from the enmity of so warlike a people as the Normans. In order to acquire the friendship of the duke, he paid his addresses to Queen Emma, sister of that prince; and promised that he would leave the children, whom he should have by that marriage, in possession of the crown of England. Richard complied with his demand, and sent over Emma to England, where she was soon after married to Canute. [2] The English, though they disapproved of her espousing the mortal enemy of her former husband and his family, were pleased to find at court a sovereign to whom they were accustomed, and who had already formed connections with them; and thus Canute besides securing, by this marriage, the alliance of Normandy gradually acquired, by the same means, the confidence of his own subjects. [3] The Norman prince did not long survive the marriage of Emma; and he left the inheritance of the duchy to his eldest son of the same name; who, dying a year after him without children, was succeeded by his brother Robert, a man of valor and abilities.

[1] W. Malms, . In one of these sieges, Canute diverted the coarse of the Thames, and by that means brought his ships above London bridge.]

[2] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, .]

[3] W. Malms, . Higden, p 275.]

Canute, having settled his power in England beyond all danger of a revolution, made a voyage to Denmark, in order to resist the attacks of the king of Sweden; and he carried along with him a great body of the English, under the command of Earl Godwin. This nobleman had here an opportunity of performing a service, by which he both reconciled the king’s mind to the English nation, and gaining to himself the friendship of his sovereign, laid the foundation of that immense fortune which he acquired to his family. He was stationed next the Swedish camp, and observing a favorable opportunity, which he was obliged suddenly to seize, he Attacked the enemy in the night, drove them from their trenches, threw them into disorder, pursued his advantage, and obtained a decisive victory over them. Next morning, Canute, seeing the English camp entirely abandoned, imagined that those disaffected troops had deserted to the enemy: he was agreeably surprised to find that they were at that time engaged in pursuit of the discomfited Swedes. He was so pleased with this success, and with the manner of obtaining it that he bestowed his daughter in marriage upon Godwin, and treated him ever after with entire confidence and regard.

1028.

In another voyage, which he made afterwards to Denmark, Canute attacked Norway, and expelling the just but unwarlike Olaus, kept possession of his kingdom till the death of that prince. He had now by his conquests and valor attained the utmost height of grandeur: having leisure from wars and intrigues, he felt the unsatisfactory nature of all human enjoyments; and equally weary of the glories and turmoils of this life, he began to cast his view towards that future existence, which it is so natural for the human mind, whether satiated by prosperity or disgusted with adversity, to make the object of its attention. Unfortunately, the spirit which prevailed in that age gave a wrong direction to his devotion: instead of making compensation to those whom he had injured by his former acts of violence, he employed himself entirely in those exercises of piety which the monks represented as the most meritorious. He built churches, he endowed monasteries, he enriched the ecclesiastics, and he bestowed revenues for the support of chantries at Assington and other places; where he appointed prayers to be said for the souls of those who had there fallen in battle against him. He even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, where he resided a considerable time: besides obtaining from the pope some privileges for the English school erected there, he engaged all the princes, through whose dominions he was obliged to pass, to desist from those heavy impositions and tolls which they were accustomed to exact from the English pilgrims. By this spirit of devotion no less than by his equitable and politic administration, he gained, in a good measure, the affections of his subjects.

Canute, the greatest and most powerful monarch of his time, sovereign of Denmark and Norway, as well as of England, could not fail of meeting with adulation from his courtiers; a tribute which is liberally paid even to the meanest and weakest princes. Some of his flatterers breaking out one day in admiration of his grandeur, exclaimed that every thing was possible for him; upon which the monarch, it is said, ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore, while the tide was rising; and as the waters approached, he commanded them to retire, and to obey the voice of him who was lord of the ocean. He feigned to sit some time in expectation of their submission; but when the sea still advanced towards him, and began to wash him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them, that every creature in the universe was feeble and impotent, and that power resided with one being alone, in whose hands were all the elements of nature; who could say to the ocean, “Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther;” and who could level with his nod the most towering piles of human pride and ambition.

1031.

The only memorable action which Canute performed after his return from Rome, was an expedition against Malcolm, king of Scotland. During the reign of Ethelred, a tax of a shilling a hide had been imposed on all the lands of England. It was commonly called ‘danegelt;’ because the revenue bar been employed either in buying peace with the Danes, or in making preparations against the inroads of that hostile nation. That monarch had required that the same tax should be paid by Cumberland, which was held by the Scots; but Malcolm a warlike prince, told him, that as he was always able to repulse the Danes by his own power, he would neither submit to buy peace of his enemies, nor pay others for resisting them. Ethelred, offended at this reply, which contained a secret reproach on his own conduct, undertook an expedition against Cumberland; but though he committed ravages upon the country, he could never bring Malcolm to a temper more humble or submissive. Canute, after his accession, summoned the Scottish king to acknowledge himself a vassal for Cumberland to the crown of England; but Malcolm refused compliance, on pretence that he owed homage to those princes only who inherited that kingdom by right of blood. Canute was not of a temper to bear this insult; and the king of Scotland soon found, that the sceptre was in very different hands from those of the feeble and irresolute Ethelred. Upon Canute’s appearing on the frontiers with a formidable army Malcolm agreed that his grandson and heir, Duncan, whom he put in possession of Cumberland, should make the submissions required, and that the heirs of Scotland should always acknowledge themselves vassals to England for that province. [1] Canute passed four years in peace after this enterprise, and he died at Shaftesbury;[2] leaving three sons, Sweyn, Harold, and Hardicanute. Sweyn, whom he had by his first marriage with Alfwen, daughter of the earl of Hampshire, was crowned in Norway: Hardicanute, whom Emma had borne him, was in possession of Denmark: Harold, who was of the same marriage with Sweyn, was at that time in England.

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] Chron Sax . W. Malms,]

HAROLD HAREFOOT

1035.

Though Canute, in his treaty with Richard, duke of Normandy, had stipulated that his children by Emma should succeed to the crown of England, he had either considered himself as released from that engagement by the death of Richard, or esteemed it dangerous to leave an unsettled and newly-conquered kingdom in the hands of so young a prince as Hardicanute: he therefore appointed, by his will, Harold successor to the crown. This prince was besides present, to maintain his claim; he was favored by all the Danes; and he got immediately possession of his father's treasures, which might be equally useful, whether he found it necessary to proceed by force or intrigue, in insuring his succession. On the other hand, Hardicanute had the suffrages of the English, who, on account of his being from among them of Queen Emma, regarded him as their countryman; he was favored by the articles of treaty with the duke of Normandy; and above all, his party was espoused by Earl Godwin, the most powerful nobleman in the kingdom, especially in the province of Wessex, the chief seat of the ancient English. Affairs were likely to terminate in a civil war; when, by the interposition of the nobility of both parties, a compromise was made; and it was agreed that Harold should enjoy, together with London, all the provinces north of the Thames, while the possession of the south should remain to Hardicanute: and till that prince should appear and take possession of his dominions, Emma fixed her residence at Winchester, and established her authority over her son's share of the partition.

Meanwhile Robert, duke of Normandy, died in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and being succeeded by a son, yet a minor, the two English princes, Alfred and Edward, who found no longer any countenance or protection in that country, gladly embraced the opportunity of paying a visit, with a numerous retinue, to their mother, Emma, who seemed to be placed in a state of so much power and splendor at Winchester. But the face of affairs soon wore a melancholy aspect. Earl Godwin had been gained by the arts of

Harold, who promised to espouse the daughter of that nobleman; and while the treaty was yet a secret, these two tyrants laid a plan for the destruction of the English princes. Alfred was invited to London by Harold with many professions of friendship; but when he had reached Guilford, he was set upon by Godwin’s vassals, about six hundred of his train were murdered in the most cruel manner, he himself was taken prisoner, his eyes were put out, and he was conducted to the monastery of Ely, where he died soon after. [1] Edward and Emma, apprised of the fate which was awaiting them, fled beyond sea, the former into Normandy, the latter into Flanders; while Harold, triumphing in his bloody policy, took possession, without resistance, of all the dominions assigned to his brother.

[1] H. Hunting, . Ypod. Neust. . Hoveden, . Chron. Mailr. . Higden, . Chron. St. Petri de Burgo, . Sim. Dunelm. . Abbas Rieval. , 374. Brompton, . Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca. M. West. Flor. Wigorn, . Alured. Beverl. .]

This is the only memorable action performed, during a reign of four years, by this prince, who gave so bad a specimen of his character, and whose bodily accomplishments alone are known to us by his appellation of *Harefoot*, which he acquired from his agility in running and walking. He died on the 14th of April, 1039, little regretted or esteemed by his subjects, and left the succession open to his brother Hardicanute.

HARDICANUTE

1039.

Hardicanute, or Canute the hardy, that is, the robust, (for he top is chiefly known by his bodily accomplishments,) though, by remaining so long in Denmark, he had been deprived of his share in the partition of the kingdom, had not abandoned his pretensions; and he had determined, before Harold's death, to recover by arms what he had lost, either by his own negligence or by the necessity of his affairs. On pretence of paying a visit to the queen dowager in Flanders, ne had assembled a fleet of sixty sail, and was preparing to make a descent on England, when intelligence of his brother's death induced him to sail immediately to London, where he was received in triumph, and acknowledged king without opposition.

The first act of Hardicanute's government afforded his subjects a bad prognostic of his future conduct. He was so enraged at Harold for depriving him of his share of the kingdom, and for the cruel treatment of his brother Alfred, that in an impotent desire of revenge against the dead, he ordered his body to be dug up, and to be thrown into the Thames; and when it was found by some fishermen, and buried in London, he ordered it again to be dug up, and to be thrown again into the river; but it was fished up a second time, and then interred with great secrecy. Godwin, equally servile and insolent, submitted to be his instrument in this unnatural and brutal action.

That nobleman knew that he was universally believed to have been an accomplice in the barbarity exercised on Alfred, and that he was on that account obnoxious to Hardicanute; and perhaps he hoped, by displaying this rage against Harold's memory, to justify himself from having had any participation in his counsels. But Prince Edward, being invited over by the king, immediately on his appearance preferred an accusation against Godwin for the murder of Alfred, and demanded justice for that crime. Godwin, in order to appease the king; made him a magnificent present of a galley with a gilt stern, rowed by fourscore men, who wore each of them a gold bracelet on his arm, weighing sixteen ounces, and were armed and clothed in the most sumptuous manner. Hardicanute, pleased with the splendor of this spectacle, quickly forgot his brother’s murder; and on Godwin’s swearing that he was innocent of the crime, he allowed him to be acquitted.

Though Hardicanute before his accession had been called over by the vows of the English, he soon lost the affections of the nation by his misconduct; but nothing appeared more grievous to them than his renewing the imposition of danegelt, and obliging the nation to pay a great sum of money to the fleet which brought him from Denmark. The discontents ran high in many places: in Worcester the populace rose, and put to death two of the collectors. The king, enraged at this opposition, swore vengeance against the city, and ordered three noblemen, Godwin, duke of Wessex, Siward, duke of Northumberland, and Leofric, duke of Mercia, to execute his menaces with the utmost rigor. They were obliged to set fire to the city, and deliver it up to be plundered by their soldiers; but they saved the lives of the inhabitants, whom they confined in a small island of the Severn, called Beverey, till, by their intercession, they were able to appease the king, and obtain the pardon of the supplicants.

This violent government was of short duration. Hardicanute died in two years after his accession, at the nuptials of a Danish lord, which he had honored with his presence. His usual habits of intemperance were so well known, that, notwithstanding his robust constitution, his sudden death gave as little surprise as it did sorrow to his subjects.

EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

1041.

The English, on the death of Hardicanute, saw a favorable opportunity for recovering their liberty, and for shaking off the Danish yoke, under which they had so long labored. Sweyn, king of Norway, the eldest son of Canute, was absent; and as the two last kings had died without issue, none of that race presented himself, nor any whom the Danes could support as successor to the throne. Prince Edward was fortunately at court on his brother’s demise; and though the descendants of Edmond Ironside were the true heirs of the Saxon family, yet their absence in so remote a country as Hungary, appeared a sufficient reason for their exclusion to a people, like the English, so little accustomed to observe a regular order in the succession of their monarchs. All delays might be dangerous, and the present occasion must hastily be embraced, while the Danes, without concert, without a leader, astonished at the present incident, and anxious only for their personal safety, durst not oppose the united voice of the nation.

But this concurrence of circumstances in favor of Edward might have failed of its effect, had his succession been opposed by Godwin, whose power, alliances, and abilities gave him a great influence at all times, especially amidst those sudden opportunities which always attend a revolution of government, and which, either seized or neglected, commonly prove decisive. There were opposite reasons, which divided men’s hopes and fears with regard to Godwin’s conduct. On the one hand, the credit of that nobleman lay chiefly in Wessex, which was almost entirely inhabited by English; it was therefore presumed that he would second the wishes of that people in restoring the Saxon line, and in humbling the Danes, from whom he, as well as they, had reason to dread, as they had already felt, the most grievous oppressions. On the other hand, there subsisted a declared animosity between Edward and Godwin, on account of Alfred’s murder; of which the latter had publicly been accused by the prince, and which he might believe so deep an offence, as could never, on account of any subsequent merits, be sincerely pardoned. But their common friends here interposed; and representing the necessity of their good correspondence, obliged them to lay aside all jealousy and rancor, and concur in restoring liberty to their native country. Godwin only stipulated that Edward, as a pledge of his sincere reconciliation, should promise to marry his daughter Editha; and having fortified himself by this alliance, he summoned a general council at Gillingham, and prepared every measure for securing the succession to Edward. The English were unanimous and zealous in their resolutions; the Danes were divided and dispirited: any small opposition, which appeared in this assembly, was browbeaten and suppressed; and Edward was crowned king, with every Demonstration of duty and affection.

The triumph of the English upon this signal and decisive advantage, was at first attended with some insult and violence against the Danes, but the king, by the mildness of his character, soon reconciled the latter to his administration, and the distinction between the two nations gradually disappeared. The Danes were interspersed with the English in most of the provinces; they spoke nearly the same language; they differed little in their manners and laws; domestic dissensions in Denmark prevented, for some years, any powerful invasion from thence which might awaken past animosities; and as the Norman conquest, which ensued soon after, reduced both nations to equal subjection, there is no further mention in history of any difference between them. The joy, however, of their present deliverance made such impression on the minds of the English, that they instituted an annual festival for celebrating that great event; and it was observed in some counties, even to the time of Spelman. [1]

[1] Spelm. Glossary in verbo Hocday.]

The popularity which Edward enjoyed on his accession was not destroyed by the first act of his administration, his resuming all the grants of his immediate predecessors; an attempt which is commonly attended with the most dangerous consequences. The poverty of the crown convinced the nation that this act of violence was become absolutely necessary; and as the loss fell chiefly on the Danes, who had obtained large grants from the late kings, their countrymen, on account of their services in subduing the kingdom, the English were rather pleased to see them reduced to their primitive poverty. The king’s severity also towards his mother, the queen dowager, though exposed to some more censure, met not with very, general disapprobation. He had hitherto lived on indifferent terms with that princess; he accused her of neglecting him and his brother during their adverse fortune; [2] he remarked that, as the superior qualities of Canute, and his better treatment of her, had made her entirely indifferent to the memory of Etheldred, she also gave the preference to her children of the second bed, and always regarded Hardicanute as her favorite.

[2 Anglia Sacra, vol. i. p.237]

The same reasons had probably made her unpopular in England; and though her benefactions to the monks obtained her the favor of that order, the nation was not, in general, displeased to see her stripped by Edward of immense treasures which she had amassed. He confined her, during the remainder of her life, in a monastery at Winchester; but carried his rigor against her no farther. The stories of his accusing her of a participation in her son Alfred's murder, and of a criminal correspondence with the bishop of Winchester, and also of her justifying herself by treading barefoot, without receiving any hurt, over nine burning ploughshares, were the inventions of the monkish historians, and were propagated and believed from the silly wonder of posterity. [1]

[1 Higden, .]

The English flattered themselves that, by the accession of Edward, they were delivered forever from the dominion of foreigners; but they soon found that this evil was not yet entirely removed. The king had been educated in Normandy, and had contracted many intimacies with the natives of that country, as well as an affection for their manners. [2] The court of England was soon filled with Normans, who, being distinguished both by the favor of Edward, and by a degree of cultivation superior to that which was attained by the English in those ages, soon rendered their language, customs, and laws fashionable in the kingdom. The study of the French tongue became general among the people. The courtiers affected to imitate that nation in their dress, equipage, and entertainments; even the lawyers employed a foreign language in their deeds and papers; [3] but above all, the church felt the influence and dominion of those strangers: Ulf and William, two Normans, who had formerly been the king's chaplains, were created bishops of Dorchester and London. Robert, a Norman also, was promoted to the see of Canterbury, [4] and always enjoyed the highest favor of his master, of which his abilities rendered him not unworthy. And though the king's prudence, or his want of authority, made him confer almost all the civil and military employments on the natives, the ecclesiastical preferments fell often to the share of the Normans; and as the latter possessed Edward's confidence, they had secretly a great influence on public affairs, and excited the jealousy of the English, particularly of Earl Godwin. [5]

[2] Ingulph. .]

[3] Ingulph. .]

[4] Chron. Sax. .]

This powerful nobleman, besides being duke or earl of Wessex, had the counties of Kent and Sussex annexed to his government. His eldest son, Sweyn, possessed the same authority in the counties of Oxford, Berks, Glocester, and Hereford; and Harold, his second son, was duke of East Anglia, and at the same time governor of Essex. The great authority of this family was supported by immense possessions and powerful alliances; and the abilities, as well as ambition of Godwin himself, contributed to render it still more dangerous. A prince of greater capacity and vigor than Edward would have found it difficult to support the dignity of the crown under such circumstances; and as the haughty temper of Godwin made him often forget the respect due to his prince Edward's animosity against him was grounded on personal as well as political considerations, on recent as well as more ancient injuries. The king, in pursuance of his engagements, had indeed married Editha, the daughter of Godwin; [1] but this alliance became a fresh source of enmity between them. Edward's hatred of the father was transferred to that princess-; and Editha, though possessed of many amiable accomplishments, could never acquire the confidence and affection of her husband. It is even pretended, that, during the whole course of her life, he abstained from all commerce of love with her; and such was the absurd admiration paid to an inviolable chastity during those ages, that his conduct in this particular is highly celebrated by the monkish historians, and greatly contributed to his acquiring the title of saint and confessor [2]

1048.

[1] Chron. Sax. .]

[2] W. Malms, , Higden, . Abbae Rieval. , 377 M. West. . Chron. Thorn. Wykes, , Anglia Sacra, vol i. p, 241.]

The most popular pretence on which Godwin could ground his disaffection to the king and his administration, was to complain of the influence of the Normans in the government; and a declared opposition had thence arisen between him and these favorites. It was not long before this animosity broke out into action. Eustace, count of Boulogne, having paid a visit to the king, passed by Dover in his return: one of his train, being refused entrance to a lodging, which had been assigned him, attempted to make his way by force, and in the contest he wounded the master of the house. The inhabitants revenged this insult by the death of the stranger; the count and his train took arms, and murdered the wounded townsman; a tumult ensued; near twenty persons were killed on each side; and Eustace, being overpowered by numbers, was obliged to save his life by flight from the fury of the populace.

He hurried immediately to court, and complained of tne usage he had met with: the king entered zealously into the quarrel, and was highly displeased that a stranger of such distinction, whom he had invited over to his court, should, without any just cause, as he believed, have felt so sensibly the insolence and animosity of his people. He gave orders to Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, to repair immediately to the place, and to punish the inhabitants for tne crime; but Godwin, who desired rather to encourage than express the popular discontents against foreigners, refused obedience, and endeavored to throw the whole blame of the riot on the count of Boulogne and his retinue. [1] Edward, touched in so sensible a point, saw the necessity of exerting the royal authority; and he threatened Godwin, if he persisted in his disobedience, to make him feel the utmost effects of his resentment.

[1] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, . Higden, p. 279]

The earl, perceiving a rupture to be unavoidable, and pleased to embark in a cause where it was likely he should be supported by his countrymen, made preparations for his own defence, or rather for an attack on Edward. Under pretence of repressing some disorders on the Welsh frontier, he secretly assembled a great army, and was approaching the king, who resided, without any military force, and without suspicion, at Glocester. [2]

[2] Chron. Sax. . W. Mabus. .]

Edward applied for protection to Siward, duke of Northumberland, and Leofric, duke of Mercia, two powerful noblemen, whose jealousy of Godwin's greatness, as well as their duty to the crown, engaged them to defend the king in this extremity. They hastened to him with such of their followers as they could assemble on a sudden; and finding the danger much greater than they had at first apprehended, they issued orders for mustering all the forces within their respective governments, and for marching them without delay to the defence of the king's person and authority. Edward, meanwhile, endeavored to gain time by negotiation; while Godwin, who thought the king entirely in his power, and who was willing to save appearances, fell into the snare; and not sensible that he ought to have no further reserve after he had proceeded so far, he lost the favorable opportunity of rendering himself master of the government.

The English, though they had no high idea of Edward's vigor and capacity, bore him great affection on account of his humanity, justice, and piety, as well as the long race of their native kings, from whom he was descended; and they hastened from all quarters to defend him from the present danger. Hia army was now so considerable, that he ventured to take the field; and marching to London, he summoned a great council to judge of the rebellion of Godwin and his sons. These noblemen pretended at first that they were willing to stand their trial; but having in vain endeavored to make their adherents persist in rebellion, they offered to come to London, provided they might receive hostages for their safety: this proposal being rejected, they were obliged to disband the remains of their forces, and have recourse to flight. Baldwin, earl of Flanders, gave protection to Godwin and his three sons, Gurth, Sweyn, and Tosti, the latter of whom had married the daughter of that prince; Harold and Leofwin, two others of his sons, took shelter in Ireland. The estates of the father and sons were confiscated; their governments were given to others; Queen Editha was confined in a monastery at Warewel; and the greatness of this family, once so formidable, seemed now to be totally supplanted and overthrown But Godwin had fixed his authority on too firm a basis, and he was too strongly supported by alliances both foreign and domestic, not to occasion further disturbances, and make new efforts for his reëstablishment.

1052.

The earl of Flanders permitted him to purchase and hire ships within his harbors; and Godwin, having manned them with his followers, and with freebooters of all nations, put to sea, and attempted to make a descent at Sandwich. The king, informed of his preparations, had equipped a considerable fleet, much superior to that of the enemy; and the earl hastily, before their appearance, made his retreat into the Flemish harbors. [1] The English court, allured by the present security, and destitute of all vigorous counsels, allowed the seamen to disband, and the fleet to go to decay; [2] while Godwin, expecting this event, kept his men in readiness for action. He put to sea immediately, and sailed to the Isle of Wight, where he was joined by Harold with a squadron, which that nobleman had collected in Ireland. He was now master of the sea; and entering every harbor in the southern coast, he seized all the ships, [3] and summoned his followers in those counties, which had so long been subject to his government, to assist him in procuring justice to himself his family, and his country, against the tyranny of foreigners.

[1] Sim. Dunelm. .]

[2] Chron. Sax.]

[3] Chron. Sax. .]

Reënforced by great numbers from all quarters, he entered the Thames; and appearing before London, threw every thing into confusion. The king alone seemed resolute to defend himself to the last extremity; but the interposition of the English nobility, many of whom favored Godwin's pretensions, made Edward hearken to terms of accommodation; and the feigned humility of the earl, who disclaimed all intentions of offering violence to his sovereign, and desired only to justify himself by a fair and open trial, paved the way for his more easy admission. It was stipulated that he should give hostages for his good behavior, and that the primate and all the foreigners should be banished: by this treaty the present danger of a civil war was obviated, but the authority of the crown was considerably impaired, or rather entirely annihilated. Edward, sensible that he had not power sufficient to secure Godwin's hostages in England, sent them over to his kinsman, the young duke of Normandy.

Godwin's death, which happened soon after, while he was sitting at table with the king, prevented him from further establishing the authority which he had acquired, and from reducing Edward to still greater subjection. [1] He was succeeded in the government of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, and Essex, and in the office of steward of the household, a place of great power, by his son Harold, who was actuated by an ambition equal to that of his father, and was superior to him in address, in insinuation, and in virtue. By a modest and gentle demeanor, he acquired the good will of Edward; at least, softened that hatred which the prince had so long borne his family; [2] and gaining every day new partisans by his bounty and affability, he proceeded, in a more silent, and therefore a more dangerous manner, to the increase of his authority. The king, who had not sufficient vigor directly to oppose his progress, knew of no other expedient than that hazardous one of raising him a rival in the family of Leofric, duke of Mercia, whose son Algar was invested with the government of East Anglia, which, before the banishment of Harold, had belonged to the latter nobleman. But this policy, of balancing opposite parties, required a more steady hand to manage it than that of Edward, and naturally produced faction and even civil broils, among nobles of such mighty and independent authority.

[1] See note E, at the end of the volume.

[2] Brompton,

Algar was soon after expelled his government by the intrigues and power of Harold; but being protected by Griffith, prince of Wales, who had married his daughter, as well as by the power of his father Leofric, he obliged Harold to submit to an accommodation, and was reinstated in the government of East Anglia. This peace was not of long duration: Harold, taking advantage of Leofric’s death, which happened soon after, expelled Algar anew, and banished him the kingdom: and though that nobleman made a fresh irruption into East Anglia with an army of Norwegians, and overran the country, his death soon freed Harold from the pretensions of so dangerous a rival. Edward, the eldest son of Algar, was indeed advanced to the government of Mercia; but the balance which the king desired to establish between those potent families, was wholly lost, and the influence of Harold greatly preponderated.

1055.

The death of Siward, duke of Northumberland, made the way still more open to the ambition of that nobleman. Siward, besides his other merits, had acquired honor to England by his successful conduct in the only foreign enterprise undertaken during the reign of Edward. Duncan, king of Scotland, was a prince of a gentle disposition, but possessed not the genius requisite for governing a country so turbulent, and so much infested by the intrigues and animosities of the great. Macbeth, a powerful nobleman, and nearly allied to the crown, not content with curbing the king’s authority, carried still farther his pestilent ambition: he put his sovereign to death; chased Malcolm Kenmore, his son and heir, into England, and usurped the crown. Siward, whose daughter was married to Duncan, embraced, by Edward’s orders, the protection of this distressed family: he marched an army into Scotland; and having defeated and killed Macbeth in battle, he restored Malcolm to the throne of his ancestors. [1]

[1] W. Malms, . Hoveden, . Chron. Mailr. Buchanan, p, 115, edit. 1715].

This service, added to his former connections with the royal family of Scotland, brought a great accession to the authority of Siward in the north; but as he had lost his eldest son, Osberne, in the action with Macbeth, it proved in the issue fatal to his family. His second son, Walthoef, appeared, on his father’s death, too young to be intrusted with the government of Northumberland; and Harold’s influence obtained that dukedom for his own brother Tosti.

There are two circumstances related of Siward, which discover his high sense of honor, and his martial disposition. When intelligence was brought him of his son Osberne’s death, he was inconsolable; till he heard that the wound was received in the breast, and that he had behaved with great gallantry in the action. When he found his own death approaching, he ordered his servants to clothe him in a complete suit of armor; and sitting erect on the couch, with a spear in his hand, declared, that in that posture, the only one worthy of a warrior, he would patiently await the fatal moment.

The king, now worn out with cares and infirmities, felt himself far advanced in the decline of life; and having no issue himself, began to think of appointing a successor to the kingdom. He sent a deputation to Hungary, to invite over his nephew Edward, son of his elder brother, and the only remaining heir of the Saxon line. That prince, whose succession to the crown would have been easy and undisputed, came to England with his children, Edgar, surnamed Atheling, Margaret, and Christina; but his death, which happened a few days after his arrival, threw the king into new difficulties. He saw that the great power and ambition of Harold had tempted him to think of obtaining possession of the throne on the first vacancy, and that Edgar, on account of his youth and inexperience, was very unfit to oppose the pretensions of so popular and enterprising a rival. The animosity which he had long borne to Earl Godwin, made him averse to the succession of his son; and he could not, without extreme reluctance, think of an increase of grandeur to a family which had risen on the ruins of royal authority, and which, by the murder of Alfred, his brother, had contributed so much to the weakening of the Saxon line. In this uncertainty, he secretly cast his eye towards his kinsman, William duke of Normandy, as the only person whose power, and reputation, and capacity, could support any destination which he might make in his favor, to the exclusion of Harold and his family. [1]

[1] Irgulph.

This famous prince was natural son of Robert, duke of Normandy, by Harlotta, daughter of a tanner in Falaise, [2] and was very early established in that grandeur, from which his birth seemed to have set him at so great a distance.

[2] Brompton, .]

While he was but nine years of age, his father had resolved to undertake a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; a fashionable act of devotion, which had taken place of the pilgrimages to Rome, and which, as it was attended with more difficulty and danger, and carried those religious adventurers to the first sources of Christianity, appeared to them more meritorious. Before his departure, he assembled the states of the duchy; and in forming them of his design, he engaged them to swear allegiance to his natural son, William, whom, as he had no legitimate issue, he intended, in case he should die in the pilgrimage, to leave successor to his dominions. [1] As he was a prudent prince, he could not but foresee the great inconveniencies which must attend this journey, and this settlement of his succession; arising from the perpetual turbulency of the great, the claims of other branches of the ducal family and the power of the French monarch; but all these considerations were surmounted by the prevailing zeal for pilgrimages; [2] and probably the more important they were, the more would Robert exult in sacrificing them to what he imagined to be his religious duty.

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] Ypod. Neust. .]

This prince, as he had apprehended, died in his pilgrimage; and the minority of his son was attended with all those disorders which were almost unavoidable in that situation. The licentious nobles, freed from the awe of sovereign authority, broke out into personal animosities against each other, and made the whole country a scene of war and devastation. [3] Roger, count of Toni, and Alain, count of Brittany, advanced claims to the dominion of the state; and Henry the First king of France, thought the opportunity favorable for reducing the power of a vassal, who had originally acquired his settlement in so violent and invidious a manner, and who had long appeared formidable to his sovereign. [4] The regency established by Robert encountered great difficulties in supporting the government under his complication of dangers; and the young prince, when he came to maturity, found himself reduced to a very low condition. But the great qualities which he soon displayed in the field and in the cabinet, gave encouragement to his friends, and struck a terror into his enemies. He opposed himself on all sides against his rebellious subjects, and against foreign invaders; and by his valor and conduct prevailed in every action.

[3] Malms, . Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca]

[4] W. Malms, .]

He obliged the French king to grant him peace on reasonable terms; he expelled all pretenders to the sovereignty; and he reduced his turbulent barons to pay submission to his authority, and to suspend their mutual animosities. The natural severity of his temper appeared in a rigorous administration of justice; and having found the happy effects of this plan of government, without which the laws in those ages became totally impotent, he regarded it as a fixed maxim, that an inflexible conduct was the first duty of a sovereign.

The tranquillity which he had established in his dominions, had given William leisure to pay a visit to the king of England, during the time of Godwin's banishment; and he was received in a manner suitable to the great reputation which he had acquired, to the relation by which he was connected with Edward, and to the obligations which that prince owed to his family. [1] On the return of Godwin, and the expulsion of the Norman favorites, Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, had, before his departure, persuaded Edward to think of adopting William as his successor; a counsel which was favored by the king's aversion to Godwin, his prepossessions for the Normans, and his esteem of the duke. That prelate, therefore, received a commission to inform William of the king's intentions in his favor; and he was the first person that opened the mind of the prince to entertain those ambitious hopes. [2] But Edward, irresolute and feeble in his purpose, finding that the English would more easily acquiesce in the restoration of the Saxon line, and in the mean time invited his brother's descendants from Hungary, with a view of having them recognized heirs to the crown.

[1] Hoveden, . Ingulph. p, 65. Chron. Mailr. Higden, .]

[2] Ingulph. . Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca Order Vitalis. .]

The death of his nephew, and the inexperience and unpromising qualities of young Edgar, made him resume his former intentions in favor of the duke of Normandy; though his aversion to hazardous enterprises engaged him to postpone the execution, and even to keep his purpose secret from all his ministers.

Harold, meanwhile, proceeded after a more open manner, in increasing his popularity, in establishing his power, and in preparing the way for his advancement on the first vacancy; an event which, from the age and infirmities of the king, appeared not very distant. But there was still an obstacle, which it was requisite for him previously to overcome. Earl Godwin, when restored to his power and fortune, had given hostages for his good behavior; and among the rest one son and one grandson, whom Edward, for greater security, as has been related, had consigned to the custody of the duke of Normandy. Harold, though not aware of the duke's being his competitor, was uneasy that such near relations should be detained prisoners in a foreign country; and he was afraid lest William should, in favor of Edgar, retain these pledges as a check on the ambition of any other pretender. He represented, therefore, to the king his unfeigned submission to royal authority, his steady duty to his prince, and the little necessity there was, after such a uniform trial of his obedience, to detain any longer those hostages, who had been required on the first composing of civil discords. By these topics, enforced by his great power, he extorted the king's consent to release them; and in order to effect his purpose, he immediately proceeded, with a numerous retinue, on his journey to Normandy. A tempest drove him on the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu, who, being informed of his quality, immediately detained him prisoner, and demanded an exorbitant sum for his ransom. Harold found means to convey intelligence of his situation to the duke of Normandy; and represented that, while he was proceeding to his court, in execution of a commission from the king of England, he had met with this harsh treatment from the mercenary disposition of the count of Ponthieu.

William was immediately sensible of the importance of the incident. He foresaw that, if he could once gain Harold, either by favors or menaces, his way to the throne of England would be open, and Edward would meet with no further obstacle in executing the favorable intentions which he had entertained in his behalf. He sent, therefore, a messenger to Guy, in order to demand the liberty of his prisoner; and that nobleman, not daring to refuse so great a prince, put Harold into the hands of the Norman, who conducted him to Rouen. William received him with every demonstration of respect and friendship; and after showing himself disposed to comply with his desire in delivering up the hostages, he look an opportunity of disclosing to him the great secret of his pretensions to the crown of England, and of the will which Edward intended to make in his favor. He desired the assistance of Harold in perfecting that design; he made professions of the utmost gratitude in return for so great an obligation; he promised that the present grandeur of Harold's family, which supported itself with difficulty under the jealousy and hatred of Edward, should receive new increase from a successor, who would be so greatly beholden to him for his advancement Harold was surprised at this declaration of the duke; but being sensible that he should never recover his own liberty, much less that of his brother and nephew, if he refused the demand, he feigned a compliance with William, renounced all hopes of the crown for himself, and professed his sincere intention of supporting the will of Edward, and seconding the ptetensions of the duke of Normandy. William, to bind him faster to his interests, besides offering him one of his daughters in marriage, required him to take an oath that, he would fulfil his promises; and in order to render the oath more obligatory, he employed an artifice well suited to the ignorance and superstition of the age. He secretly conveyed under the altar, on which Harold agreed to swear, the relics of some of the most revered martyrs; and when Harold had taken the oath, he showed him the relics, and admonished him to observe religiously an engagement which had been ratified by so tremendous a sanction. [1] The English nobleman was astonished; but dissembling his concern, he renewed the same professions, and was dismissed with all the marks of mutual confidence by the duke of Normandy.

[1] Wace, , 460. MS. penes Carte, . W. Malms, H Hunting, p 366. Hoveden, . Brompton, p. 947.]

When Harold found himself at liberty, his ambition suggested casuistry sufficient to justify to him the violation of an oath, which had been extorted from him by fear, and which, if fulfilled, might be attended with the subjection of his native country to a foreign power. He continued still to practise every art of popularity; to increase the number of his partisans; to reconcile the minds of the English to the idea of his succession; to revive their hatred of the Normans; and, by an ostentation of his power and influence, to deter the timorous Edward from executing his intended destination in favor of William. Fortune, about this time, threw two incidents in his way, by which he was enabled to acquire general favor, and to increase the character, which he had already attained, of virtue and abilities.

The Welsh, though a less formidable enemy than the Danes, had long been accustomed to infest the western borders; and after committing spoil on the low countries, they usually made a hasty retreat into their mountains, where they were sheltered from the pursuit of their enemies, and were ready to seize the first favorable opportunity of renewing their depredations. Griffith, the reigning prince, had greatly distinguished himself in those incursions; and his name had become so terrible to the English, that Harold found he could do nothing more acceptable to the public, and more honorable for himself, than the suppressing of so dangerous an enemy. He formed the plan of an expedition against Wales; and having prepared some light-armed foot to pursue the natives in their fastnesses, some cavalry to scour the open country, and a squadron of ships to attack the sea-coast, he employed at once all these forces against the Welsh, prosecuted his advantages with vigor, made no intermission in his assaults, and at last reduced the enemy to such distress, that, in order to prevent their total destruction, they made a sacrifice of their prince, whose head they cut off, and sent to Harold; and they were content to receive as their sovereigns two Welsh noblemen appointed by Edward to rule over them. The other incident was no less honorable to Harold.

Tosti, brother of this nobleman, who had been created duke of Northumberland, being of a violent, tyrannical temper, had acted with such cruelty and injustice, that the inhabitants rose in rebellion, and chased him from his government. Morcar and Edwin, two brothers, who possessed great power in those parts, and who were grandsons of the great duke, Leofric, concurred in the insurrection; and the former, being elected duke, advanced with an army to oppose Harold, who was commissioned by the king to reduce and chastise the Northumbrians. Before the armies came to action, Morcar, well acquainted with the generous disposition of the English commander, endeavored to justify his own conduct. He represented to Harold, that Tosti had behaved in a manner unworthy of the station to which he was advanced, and no one, not even a brother, could support such tyranny, without participating, in some degree, of the infamy attending it; that the Northumbrians, accustomed to a legal administration, and regarding it as their birthright, were willing to submit to the king, but required a governor who would pay regard to their rights and privileges; that they had been taught by their ancestors, that death was preferable to servitude, and had taken the field determined to perish, rather than suffer a renewal of those indignities to which they had so long been exposed; and they trusted that Harold, on reflection, would not defend in another that violent conduct, from which he himself in his own government, had always kept at so great a distance. Thus vigorous remonstrance was accompanied with such a detail of facts, so well supported, that Harold found it prudent to abandon his brother's cause; and returning to Edward, he persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians, and to confirm Morcar in the government. He even married the sister of that nobleman; [1] and by his interest procured Edwin, the younger brother, to be elected into the government of Mercia. Tosti in a rage departed the kingdom, and took shelter in Flanders with Earl Baldwin, his father-in-law.

By this marriage, Harold broke all measures with the duke of Normandy, and William clearly perceived that he could no longer rely on the oaths and promises which he had extorted from him. But the English nobleman was now in such a situation, that he deemed it no longer necessary to dissemble. He had, in his conduct towards the Northumbrians, given such a specimen of his moderation as had gained him the affections of his countrymen. He saw that almost all England was engaged in his interests; while he himself possessed the government of Wessex, Morcar that of Northumberland, and Edwin that of Mercia. He now openly aspired to the succession; and insisted, that since it was necessary, by the confession of all, to set aside the royal family, on account of the imbecility of Edgar, the sole surviving heir, there was no one so capable of filling the throne, as a nobleman of great power of mature age, of long experience, of approved courage and abilities, who, being a native of the kingdom, would effectually secure it against the dominion and tyranny of foreigners. Edward, broken with age and infirmities, saw the difficulties too great for him to encounter; and though his inveterate prepossessions kept him from seconding the pretensions of Harold, he took but feeble and irresolute steps for securing the succession to the duke of Normandy. [2] While he continued in this uncertainty, he was surprised by sickness, which brought him to his grave on the fifth of January, 1066, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his reign.

[1] Order. Vitalis, .

[2] See note F, at the end of the volume.

This prince, to whom the monks gave the title of Saint and Confessor, was the last of the Saxon line that ruled in England. Though his reign was peaceable and fortunate, he owed his prosperity less to his own abilities than to the conjunctures of the times. The Danes, employed in other enterprises, at tempted not those incursions which had been so troublesome to all his predecessors, and fatal to some of them. The facility of his disposition made him acquiesce under the government of Godwin and his son Harold; and the abilities, as well as the power of these noblemen, enabled them, while they were intrusted with authority, to preserve domestic peace and tranquillity. The most commendable circumstance of Edward's government was his attention to the administration of justice, and his compiling, for that purpose, a body of laws which he collected from the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, and Alfred. This compilation, though now lost, (for the laws that pass under Edward's name were composed afterwards, [1]) was long the object of affection to the English nation.

[1] Spelm. in verbo Belliva.

Edward the Confessor was the first that touched for the king's evil: the opinion of his sanctity procured belief to this cure among the people: his successors regarded it as a part of their state and grandeur to uphold the same opinion. It has been continued down to our time; and the practice was first dropped by the present royal family, who observed that it could no longer give amazement even to the populace, and was attended with ridicule in the eyes of all men of understanding.

HAROLD

1066.

Harold had so well prepared matters before the death of Edward, that he immediately stepped into the vacant throne; and his accession was attended with as little opposition and disturbance, as if he had succeeded by the most undoubted hereditary title. The citizens of London were his zealous partisans; the bishops and clergy had adopted his cause; and all the powerful nobility, connected with him by alliance or friendship, willingly seconded his pretensions. The title of Edgar Atheling was scarcely mentioned, much less the claim of the duke of Normandy; and Harold, assembling his partisans, received the crown from their hands, without waiting for the free deliberation of the states, or regularly submitting the question to their determination. [1] If any were averse to this measure, they were obliged to conceal their sentiments; and the new prince, taking a general silence for consent, and founding his title on the supposed suffrages of the people, which appeared unanimous, was, on the day immediately succeeding Edward’s death, crowned and anointed king, by Aldred, archbishop of York. The whole nation seemed joyfully to acquiesce in his elevation.

The first symptoms of danger which the king discovered, came from abroad, and from his own brother, Tosti, who had submitted to a voluntary banishment in Flanders. Enraged at the successful ambition of Harold, to which he himself had fallen a victim, he filled the court of Baldwin with complaints of the injustice which he had suffered; he engaged the interest of that family against his brother; he endeavored to form intrigues with some of the discontented nobles in England he sent his emissaries to Norway, in order to rouse to arms the freebooters of that kingdom, and to excite their hopes of reaping advantage from the unsettled state of affairs on the usurpation of the new king; and, that he might render the combination more formidable, he made a journey to Normandy, in expectation that the duke, who had married Matilda, another daughter of Baldwin, would, in revenge of his own wrongs, as well as those of Tosti, second, by his counsels and forces, the projected invasion of England. [2]

[1] Gul. Pictavensis, . Ypod. Neust. . Order. Vitalis, . M. West. . W. Malms, . Ingulph. . Brompton, . Knyghton, . H. Hunting, . Many of the historians say, that Harold was regularly elected by the states; some that Edward left him his successor by will]

[2] Order. Vitalis, .]

The duke of Normandy, when he first received intelligence of Harold's intrigues and accessions, had been moved to the highest pitch of indignation; but that he might give the better color to his pretensions, he sent an embassy to England, upbraiding that prince with his breach of faith, and summoning him to resign, immediately, possession of the kingdom. Harold replied to the Norman ambassadors, that the oath, with which he was reproached, had been extorted by the well-grounded fear of violence, and could never, for that reason, be regarded as obligatory; that he had had no commission, either from the late king or the states of England, who alone could dispose of the crown, to make any tender of the succession to the duke of Normandy; and if he, a private person, had assumed so much authority, and had even voluntarily sworn to support the duke's pretensions, the oath was unlawful, and It was his duty to seize the first opportunity of breaking it: that he had obtained the crown by the unanimous suffrages of the people, and should prove himself totally unworthy of their favor, did he not strenuously maintain those national liberties, with whose protection they had intrusted him; and that the duke, if he made any attempt by force of arms, should experience the power of a united nation, conducted by a prince who, sensible of the obligations imposed on him by his royal dignity, was determined that the same moment should put a period to his life and to his government. [1]

[1] W. Malms, . Higden, ,5. M. West. p. 222. De Gest Angl., incerto auctore, .]

This answer was no other than William expected; and he had previously fixed his resolution of making an attempt upon England. Consulting only his courage, his resentment, and his ambition, he overlooked all the difficulties inseparable from an attack on a great kingdom by such inferior force, and he saw only the circumstances which would facilitate his enterprise. He considered that England, ever since the accession of Canute, had enjoyed profound tranquillity, during a period of near fifty years; and it would require time for its soldiers, enervated by long peace, to learn discipline, and its generals experience. He knew that it was entirely unprovided with fortified towns, by which it could prolong the war; but must venture its whole fortune in one decisive action, against a veteran enemy, who, being once master of the field, would be in a condition to overrun the kingdom. He saw that Harold, though he had given proofs of vigor and bravery, had newly mounted a throne which he had acquired by faction, from which he had excluded a very ancient royal family, and which was likely to totter under him by its own instability, much more if shaken by any violent external impulse. And he hoped that the very circumstance of his crossing the sea, quitting his own country, and leaving himself no hopes of retreat, as it would astonish the enemy by the boldness of the enterprise, would inspirit his soldiers by despair, and rouse them to sustain the reputation of the Norman arms.

The Normans, as they had long been distinguished by valor among all the European nations, had, at this time, attained to the highest pitch of military glory. Besides acquiring by arms such a noble territory in France, besides defending it against continual attempts of the French monarch and all its neighbors, besides exerting many acts of vigor under their present sovereign, they had, about this very time, revived their ancient fame, by the most hazardous exploits, and the moat wonderful successes, in the other extremity of Europe. A few Norman adventurers in Italy had acquired such an ascendant, not only over the Italians and Greeks, but the Germans and Saracens, that they expelled those foreigners, procured to themselves ample establishments, and laid the foundation of the opulent kingdom of Naples and Sicily. [1] These enterprises of men, who were all of them vassals in Normandy many of them banished for faction and rebellion, excited the ambition of the haughty William, who disdained, after such examples of fortune and valor, to be deterred from making an Attack on a neighboring country, where he could be supported by the whole force of his principality.

[1 Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca.]

The situation also of Europe inspired William with hopes that, besides his brave Normans, he might employ against England the flower of the military force which was dispersed in all the neighboring states. France, Germany, and the Low Countries, by the progress of the feudal institutions, were divided and subdivided into many principalities and baronies; and the possessors, enjoying the civil jurisdiction within them selves, as well as the right of arms, acted, in many respects, as independent sovereigns, and maintained their propertied and privileges, less by the authority of laws, than by their own force and valor. A military spirit had universally diffused itself throughout Europe; and the several leaders, whose minds were elevated by their princely situation, greedily embraced the most hazardous enterprises; and being accustomed to nothing, from their infancy, but recitals of the success attending wars and battles, they were prompted by a natural ambition to imitate those adventures which they heard so much celebrated, and which were so much exaggerated by the credulity of the age. United, however loosely, by their duty to one superior lord, and by their connections with the great body of the community to which they belonged, they desired to spread their fame each beyond his own district and in all assemblies, whether instituted for civil deliberations for military expeditions, or merely for show and entertainment, to outshine each other by the reputation of strength and prowess. Hence their genius for chivalry; hence their impatience of peace and tranquillity; and hence their readiness to embark in any dangerous enterprise, how little soever interested in its failure or success.

William, by his power, his courage, and his abilities, had long maintained a preeminence among those haughty chieftains; and every one who desired to signalize himself by his address in military exercises, or his valor in action, had been ambitious of acquiring a reputation in the court and in the armies of Normandy. Entertained with that hospitality and courtesy which distinguished the age, they had formed attachments with the prince, and greedily attended to the prospects of the signal glory and elevation which he promised them in return for their concurrence in an expedition against England. The more grandeur there appeared in the attempt, the more it suited their romantic spirit; the fame of the intended invasion was already diffused everywhere; multitudes crowded to tender to the duke their service, with that of their vassals and retainers; [1] and William found less difficulty in completing his levies, than in choosing the most veteran forces, and in rejecting the offers of those who were impatient to acquire fame under so renowned a leader.

Besides these advantages, which William owed to his personal valor and good conduct, he was indebted to fortune for procuring him some assistance, and also for removing many obstacles which it was natural for him to expect, in an undertaking in which all his neighbors were so deeply interested. Conan, count of Brittany, was his mortal enemy: in order to throw a damp upon the duke’s enterprise, he chose this conjuncture for reviving his claim to Normandy itself; and he required that, in case of William’s success against England, the possession of that duchy should devolve to him. [2] But Conan died suddenly after making this demand; and Hoel, his successor, instead of adopting the malignity, or, more properly speaking, the prudence of his predecessor, zealously seconded the duke’s views, and sent his eldest son, Alain Fergant, to serve under him with a body of five thousand Bretons. The counts of Anjou and of Flanders encouraged their subjects to engage in the expedition; and even the court of France, though it might justly fear the aggrandizement of so dangerous a vassal, pursued not its interests on this occasion with sufficient vigor and resolution.

[1] Gul Pict. .]

[2] Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca]

Philip I., the reign ing monarch, was a minor; and William, having communicated his project to the council, having desired assistance, and offered to do homage, in case of his success, for the crown of England, was indeed openly ordered to lay aside all thoughts of the enterprise; but the earl of Flanders, his father-in-law, being at the head of the regency, favored underhand his levies, and secretly encouraged the adventurous nobility to enlist under the standard of the duke of Normandy.

The emperor, Henry IV., besides openly giving all his vassals permission to embark in this expedition, which so much engaged the attention of Europe, promised his protection to the duchy of Normandy during the absence of the prince, and thereby enabled him to employ his whole force in the invasion of England. [1]

[1] Gul. Pict. p, 198.]

But the most important ally that William gained by his negotiations, was the pope, who had a mighty influence over the ancient barons, no less devout in their religious principles than valorous in their military enterprises. The Roman pontiff, after an insensible progress during several ages of darkness and ignorance, began now to lift his head openly above all the princes of Europe; to assume the office of a mediator, or even an arbiter, in the quarrels of the greatest monarchs; to interpose in all secular affairs; and lo obtrude his dictates as sovereign laws on his obsequious disciples, It was a sufficient motive to Alexander II., the reigning pope, for embracing William's quarrel, that he alone had made an appeal to his tribunal, and rendered him umpire of the dispute between him and Harold; but there were other advantages which that pontiff foresaw must result from the conquest of England by the Norman arms. That kingdom, though at first converted by Romish missionaries, though it had afterwards advanced some farther steps towards subjection to Rome, maintained still a considerable independence in its ecclesiastical administration; and forming a world within itself, entirely separated from the rest of Europe, it had hitherto proved inaccessible to those exorbitant claims which supported the grandeur of the papacy. Alexander therefore hoped, that the French and Norman barons, if successful in their enterprise, might import into that country a more devoted reverence to the holy see, and bring the English churches to a nearer conformity with those of the continent. He declared immediately in favor of William's claim; pronounced Harold a perjured usurper; denounced excommunication against him and his adherents; and the more to encourage the duke of Normandy in his enterprise, he sent him a consecrated banner, and a ring with one of St. Peter's hairs in it. [1] Thus were all the ambition and violence of that invasion covered over safely with the broad mantle of religion.

The greatest difficulty which William had to encounter in his preparations, arose from his own subjects in Normandy. The states of the duchy were assembled at Lislebonne; and supplies being demanded for the intended enterprise, which promised so much glory and advantage to their country, there appeared a reluctance in many members both to grant sums so much beyond the common measure of taxes in that age, and to set a precedent of performing their military service at a distance from their own country. The duke, finding it dangerous to solicit them in a body, conferred separately with the richest individuals in the province; and beginning with those on whose affections he most relied, he gradually engaged all of them to advance the sums demanded. The count of Longueville seconded him in this negotiation; as did the count of Mortaigne, Odo, bishop of Baieux, and especially William Fitz-Osborne, count of Breteuil, and constable of the duchy. Every person, when he himself was once engaged, endeavored to bring over others; and at last the states themselves, after stipulating that this concession should be no precedent, voted that they would assist their prince to the utmost in his intended enterprise. [2]

William had now assembled a fleet of three thousand vessels, great and small, [3] and had selected an army of sixty thousand men from among those numerous supplies, which from every quarter solicited to be received into his service.

[1] Baker, , edit. 1634.]

[2] Camden. Introd. ad Britann. , 2d edit. Gibs. Verstegan.]

[3] Gul. Gemet. lib. vii. ca.]

The camp bore a splendid, yet a martial appearance, from the discipline of the men, the beauty and vigor of the horses, the lustre of the arms, and the accoutrements of both; but above all, from the high names of nobility who engaged under the banners of the duke of Normandy. The most celebrated were Eustace, count of Boulogne, Aimeri de Thouars, Hugh d'Estaples, William d'Evreux, Geoffrey de Rotrou, Roger de Beaumont, William de Warenne, Roger de Montgomery, Hugh de Grantmesnil, Charles Martel, and Geoffrey Giffard. [1] To these bold chieftains William held up the spoils of England as the prize of their valor; and pointing to the opposite shore, called to them that *there* was the field, on which they must erect trophies to their name, and fix their establishments.

[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

While he was making these mighty preparations, the duke, that he might increase the number of Harold's enemies, excited the inveterate rancor of Tosti, and encouraged him, in concert with Harold Halfager, king of

Norway, to infest the coasts of England. Tosti, having collected about sixty vessels in the ports of Flanders, put to sea; and after committing some depredations on the south and east coasts, he sailed to Northumberland, and was there joined by Halfager, who came over with a great armament of three hundred sail. The combined fleets entered the Humber, and disembarked the troops, who began to extend their depredations on all sides; when Morcar, earl of Northumberland, and Edwin, earl of Mercia, the king's brother-in-law, having hastily collected some forces, ventured to give them battle. The action ended in the defeat and flight of these two noblemen.

Harold, informed of this defeat, hastened with an army to the protection of his people; and expressed the utmost ardor to show himself worthy of the crown, which had been conferred upon him. This prince, though he was not sensible of the full extent of his danger, from the great combination against him, had employed every art of popularity to acquire the affections of the public; and he gave so many proofs of an equitable and prudent administration, that the English found no reason to repent the choice which they had made of a sovereign. They flocked from all quarters to join his standard; and as soon as he reached the enemy at Standford, he found himself in condition to give them battle. The action was bloody; but the victory was decisive on the side of Harold, and ended in the total rout of the Norwegians, together with the death of Tosti and Halfager. Even the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of Harold, who had the generosity to give prince Olave, the son of Halfager, his liberty, and allow him to depart with twenty vessels. But he had scarcely time to rejoice for this victory, when he received itelligence that the duke of Normandy was landed with a great army in the south of England.

The Norman fleet and army had been assembled, early in the summer, at the mouth of the small river Dive, and all the troops had been instantly embarked; but the winds proved long contrary, and detained them in that harbor. The authority, however, of the duke, the good discipline maintained among the seamen and soldiers, and the great care in supplying them with provisions, had prevented any disorder, when at last the wind became favorable, and enabled them to sail along the coast, till they reached St. Valori. There were, however, several vessels lost in this short passage; and as the wind again proved contrary, the army began to imagine that Heaven had declared against them, and that, notwithstanding the pope's benediction, they were destined to certain destruction. These bold warriors, who despised real dangers, were very subject to the dread of imaginary ones; and many of them began to mutiny, some of them even to desert their colors, when the duke, in order to support their drooping hopes, ordered a procession to be made with the relics of St. Valori, [1] and prayers to be said for more favorable weather.

[1 Higden, . Order Vitalis, . M. Paris, edit. Pai anno 1644, .]

The wind instantly changed; and as this incident happened on the eve of the feast of St. Michael, the tutelar saint of Normandy, the soldiers, fancying they saw the hand of Heaven in all these concurring circumstances, set out with the greatest alacrity: they met with no opposition on their passage. A great fleet which Harold had assembled, and which had cruised all summer off the Isle of Wight, had been dismissed on his receiving false intelligence that William, discouraged by contrary winds and other accidents, had laid aside his preparations. The Norman armament, proceeding in great order, arrived, without any material loss, at Pevensey, in Sussex; and the army quietly disembarked. The duke himself, as he leaped on shore, happened to stumble and fall; but had the presence of mind, it is said, to turn the omen to his advantage, by calling aloud that he had taken possession of the country. And a soldier, running to a neighboring cottage, plucked some thatch, which, as if giving him seizin of the kingdom, he presented to his general. The joy and alacrity of William and his whole army was so great, that they were nowise discouraged, evan when they heard of Harold’s great victory over the Norwegians. They seemed rather to wait with impatience the arrival of the enemy.

The victory of Harold, though great and honorable, had proved in the main prejudicial to his interests, and may be regarded as the immediate cause of his ruin. He lost many of his bravest officers and soldiers in the action, and he disgusted the rest by refusing to distribute the Norwegian spoils among them; a conduct which was little agreeable to his usual generosity of temper, but which his desire of sparing the people, in the war that impended over him from the duke of Normandy, had probably occasioned. He hastened by quick marches to reach this new invader; but though he was reènforced at London and other places with fresh troops, he found himself also weakened by the desertion of his old soldiers, who from fatigue and discontent secretly withdrew from their colors. His brother Gurth, a man of bravery and conduct, began to entertain apprehensions of the event; and remonstrated with the king, that it would be better policy to prolong the war; at least, to spare his own person in the action. He urged to him that the desperate situation of the duke of Normandy made it requisite for that prince to bring matters to a speedy decision, and put his whole fortune on the issue of a battle; but that the king of England, in his own country, beloved by his subjects, provided with every supply, had more certain and less dangerous means of insuring to himself the victory; that the Norman troops, elated on the one hand with the highest hopes, and seeing on the other no resource in case of a discomfiture, would fight to the last extremity; and being the flower of all the warriors of the continent, must be regarded as formidable to the English; that if their first fire, which is always the most dangerous, were allowed to languish for want of action, if they were harassed with small skirmishes, straitened in provisions, and fatigued with the bad weather and deep roads during the winter season which was approaching, they must fall an easy and a bloodless prey to their enemy; that if a general action were delayed, the English, sensible of the imminent danger to which their properties, as well as liberties, were exposed from those rapacious invaders, would hasten from all quarters to his assistance, and would render his army invincible; that, at least, if he thought it necessary to hazard a battle, he ought not to expose his own person out reserve, in case of disastrous accidents, some resource to the liberty and independence of the kingdom; and that having once been so unfortunate as to be constrained to swear, and that upon the holy relics, to support the pretensions of the duke of Normandy, it were better that the command of the army should be intrusted to another, who, not being bound by those sacred ties, might give the soldiers more assured hopes of a prosperous issue to the combat.

Harold was deaf to all these remonstrances. Elated with his past prosperity, as well as stimulated by his native courage, he resolved to give battle in person; and for that purpose he drew near to the Normans, who had removed their camp and fleet to Hastings, where they fixed their quarters. He was so confident of success, that he sent a message to the duke, promising him a sum of money if he would depart the kingdom without effusion of blood; but his offer was rejected with disdain; and William, not to be behind with his enemy in vaunting, sent him a message by some monks, requiring him either to resign the kingdom, or to hold it of him in fealty, or to submit their cause to the arbitration of the pope, or to fight him in single combat. Harold replied, that the God of battles would soon be the arbiter of all their differences. [1]

The English and Normans now prepared themselves for this important decision; but the aspect of things, on the night before the battle, was very different in the two camps. The English spent the time in riot, and jollity, and disorder; the Normans, in silence, and in prayer, and in the other functions of their religion. [2]

On the morning, the duke called together the most considerable of his commanders, and made them a speech suitable to the occasion. He represented to them, that the event which they and he had long wished for, was approaching; the whole fortune of the war now depended on their swords, and would be decided in a single action; that never army had greater motives for exerting a vigorous courage, whether they considered the prize which would attend their victory, or the inevitable destruction which must ensue upon their discomfiture; that if their martial and veteran bands could once break those raw soldiers, who had rashly dared to approach them, they conquered a kingdom at one blow, and were justly entitled to all its possessions as the reward of their prosperous valor; that, on the contrary, if they remitted in the least their wonted prowess, an enraged enemy hung upon their rear, the sea met them in their retreat, and an ignominious death was the certain punishment of their imprudent cowardice; that by collecting so numerous and brave a host, he had insured every human means of conquest; and the commander of the enemy, by his criminal conduct, had given him just cause to hope for the favor of the Almighty, in whose hands alone lay the event of wars and battles; and that a perjured usurper, anathematized by the sovereign pontiff, and conscious of his own breach of faith would be struck with terror on their appearance, and would prognosticate to himself that fate which — his multiplied crimes had so justly merited. [1] The duke next divided his army into three lines: the first, led by Montgomery, consisted of archers and light-armed infantry; the second, commanded by Martel, was composed of his bravest battalions, heavy-armed, and ranged in close order; his cavalry, at whose head he placed himself, formed the third line, and were so disposed, that they stretched beyond the infantry, and flanked each wing of the army. [2] He ordered the signal of battle to be given; and the whole army, moving at once, and singing the hymn or song of Roland, the famous peer of Charlemagne, [3] advanced, in order and with alacrity, towards the enemy.

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[1] Higden,]

[2] W. Malms, . De Gest Angl.]

[1] H. Hunting, . Brompton, . Gul. Pict. .]

[2] Gul. Pict. . Order. Vitalis, .]

[3] W. Malms, . Higden, . M. West. p. 223. Dr Cange's Glossary, in verbo Cantilena Rolandi.]

Harold had seized the advantage of a rising ground, and having likewise drawn some trenches to secure his flanks, he resolved to stand upon the defensive, and to avoid all action with the cavalry, in which he was inferior. The Kentish men were placed in the van; a post which they had always claimed as their due: the Londoners guarded the standard; and the king himself, accompanied by his two valiant brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, dismounting, placed himself at the head of his infantry, and expressed his resolution to conquer or to perish in the action. The first attack of the Normans was desperate, but was received with equal valor by the English; and after a furious combat, which remained long undecided, the former, overcome by the difficulty of the ground, and hard pressed by the enemy, began first to relax their vigor, then to retreat; and confusion was spreading among the ranks; when William, who found himself on the brink of destruction, hastened, with a select band, to the relief of his dismayed forces. His presence restored the action; the English were obliged to retire with loss; and the duke, ordering his second line to advance, renewed the attack with fresh forces and with redoubled courage. Finding that the enemy aided by the advantage of ground, and animated by the example of their prince, still made a vigorous resistance, he tried a stratagem which was very delicate in its management, but which seemed advisable in his desperate situation, where, if he gained not a decisive victory, he was totally undone: he commanded his troops to make a hasty retreat, and to allure the enemy from their ground by the appearance of flight. The artifice succeeded against those unexperienced soldiers, who, heated by the action, and sanguine in their hopes, precipitately followed the Normans into the plain. William gave orders, that at once the infantry should face about upon their pursuers, and the cavalry make an assault upon their wings, and both of them pursue the advantage, which the surprise and terror of the enemy must give them in that critical and decisive moment. The English were repulsed with great slaughter, and driven back to the hill; where, being rallied by the bravery of Harold, they were able, notwithstanding their loss, to maintain the post and continue the combat. The duke tried the same stratagem a second time with the same success; but even after this double advantage, he still found a great body of the English, who, maintaining themselves in firm array, seemed determined to dispute the victory to the last extremity. He ordered his heavy-armed infantry to make an assault upon them; while his archers, placed behind, should gall the enemy, who were exposed by the situation of the ground, and who were intent in defending themselves against the swords and spears of the assailants. By this disposition he at last prevailed: Harold was slain by an arrow, while he was combating with great bravery at the head of his men; his two brothers shared the same fate; and the English, discouraged by the fall of those princes, gave ground on all sides, and were pursued with great slaughter by the victorious Normans. A few troops, however, of the vanquished had still the courage to turn upon their pursuers; and attacking them in deep and miry ground, obtained some revenge for the slaughter and dishonor of the day. But the appearance of the duke obliged them to seek their safety by flight; and darkness saved them from any further pursuit by the enemy.

Thus was gained by William, duke of Normandy, the great and decisive victory of Hastings, after a battle which was fought from morning till sunset, and which seemed worthy, by the heroic valor displayed by both armies and by both commanders, to decide the fate of a mighty kingdom. William had three horses killed under him; and there fell near fifteen thousand men on the side of the Normans: the loss was still more considerable on that of the vanquished, besides the death of the king and his two brothers. The dead body of Harold was brought to William, and was generously restored without ransom to his mother. The Norman army left not the field of battle without giving thanks to Heaven, in the most solemn manner, for their victory: and the prince, having refreshed his troops, prepared to push to the utmost his advantage against the divided, dismayed, and discomfited English.

APPENDIX I.

THE ANGLO-SAXON GOVERNMENT AND MANNERS.

The government of the Germans, and that of all the northern nations who established themselves on the ruins of Rome, was always extremely free; and those fierce people, accustomed to independence and inured to arms, were more guided by persuasion than authority in the submission which they paid to their princes. The military despotism which had taken place in the Roman empire, and which, previously to the irruption of those conquerors, had sunk the genius of men, and destroyed every noble principle of science and virtue, was unable to resist the vigorous efforts of a free people; and Europe, as from a new epoch, rekindled her ancient spirit, and shook off the base servitude to arbitrary will and authority under which she had so long labored. The free constitutions then established, however impaired by the encroachments of succeeding princes, still preserve an air of independence and legal administration, which distinguished the European nations; and if that part of the globe maintain sentiments of liberty, honor, equity, and valor superior to the rest of mankind, it owes these advantages chiefly to the seeds implanted by those generous barbarians.

The Saxons who subdued Britain, as they enjoyed great liberty in their own country, obstinately retained that invaluable possession in their new settlement; and they imported into this island the same principles of independence which they had inherited from their ancestors. The chieftains, (for such they were, more properly than kings or princes,) who commanded them in those military expeditions, still possessed a very limited authority; and as the Saxons exterminated, rather than subdued, the ancient inhabitants, they were indeed transplanted into a new territory, but preserved unaltered all their civil and military institutions. The language was pure Saxon; even the names of places, which often remain while the tongue entirely changes, were almost all affixed by the conquerors; the manners and customs were wholly German; and the same picture of a fierce and bold liberty, which is drawn by the masterly pencil of Tacitus, will suit those founders of the English government. The king, so far from being invested with arbitrary power, was only considered as the first among the citizens; his authority depended more on his personal qualities than on his station; he was even so far on a level with the people, that a stated price was fixed for his head, and a legal fine was levied upon his murderer, which, though proportionate to his station, and superior to that paid for the life of a subject, was a sensible mark of his subordination to the community.

It is easy to imagine that an independent people, so little restrained by law and cultivated by science, would not be very strict in maintaining a regular succession of their princes. Though they paid great regard to the royal family, and ascribed to it an undisputed superiority, they either had no rule, or none that was steadily observed, in filling the vacant throne; and present convenience, in that emergency, was more attended to than general principles. We are not, however, to suppose that the crown was considered as altogether elective; and that a regular plan was traced by the constitution for supplying, by the suffrages of the people, every vacancy made by the demise of the first magistrate. If any king left a son of an age and capacity fit for government, the young prince naturally stepped into the throne: if he was a minor, his uncle, or the next prince of the blood, was promoted to the government, and left the sceptre to his posterity: any sovereign, by taking previous measures with the leading men, had it greatly in his power to appoint his successor: all these changes, and indeed the ordinary administration of government, required the express concurrence, or at least the tacit acquiescence of the people; but possession, however obtained, was extremely apt to secure their obedience, and the idea of any right, which was once excluded was but feeble and imperfect. This is so much the case in all barbarous monarchies, and occurs so often in the history of the Anglo-Saxons, that we cannot consistently entertain any other notion of their government. The idea of an hereditary succession in authority is so natural to men, and is so much fortified by the usual rule in transmitting private possessions, that it must retain a great influence on every society, which does not exclude it by the refinements of a republican constitution. But as there is a material difference between gov-* *ernment and private possessions, and every man is not as much qualified for exercising the one as for enjoying the other, a people who are not sensible of the general advantages attending a fixed rule are apt to make great leaps in the succession, and frequently to pass over the person, who, had he possessed the requisite years and abilities, would have been thought entitled to the sovereignty. Thus these monarchies are not, strictly speaking, either elective or hereditary; and though the destination of a prince may often be followed in appointing his successor, they can as little be regarded as wholly testamentary. The states by their suffrage may sometimes establish a sovereign; but they more frequently recognize the person whom they find established: a few great men take the lead; the people, overawed and influenced, acquiesce in the government; and the reigning prince, provided he be of the royal family, passes undisputedly for the legal sovereign.

It is confessed that our knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon history and antiquities is too imperfect to afford us means of determining with certainty all the prerogatives of the crown and privileges of the people, or of giving an exact delineation of that government. It is probable, also, that the constitution might be somewhat different hi the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and that it changed considerably during the course of six centuries, which elapsed from the first invasion of the Saxons till the Norman conquest. [1] But most of these differences and changes, with their causes and effects, are unknown to us; it only appears that, at all times and in all the kingdoms, there was a national council, called a wittenagemot, or assembly of the wise men, (for that is the import of the term,) whose consent was requisite for enacting laws, and for ratifying the chief acts of public administration.

[1 We know of one change, not inconsiderable, in the Saxon constitution. The Saxon Annals () inform us, that it was, in early times, the prerogative of the king to name the dukes, earls, aldermen, and sheriffs of the counties. Asser, a contemporary writer, informs us that Alfred deposed all the ignorant aldermen, and appointed men of more capacity in their place: yet the laws of Edward the Confessor (sect. 35) say expressly that the heretoghs, or dukes, and the sheriffs were chosen by the freeholders in the folk-mote, a county court, which was assembled once a year, and where all the freeholders swore allegiance to the king.]

The preambles to all the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, Alfred, Edward the Elder, Athelstan, Edmond, Edgar, Ethelred, and Edward the Confessor; even those to the laws of Canute though a kind of conqueror, put this matter beyond controversy, and carry proofs every where of a limited and legal government. But who were the constituent members of this wittenagemot has not been determined with certainty by antiquaries. It is agreed that the bishops and abbots [1] were an essential part; and it is also evident, from the tenor of those ancient laws, that the wittenagemot enacted statutes which regulated the ecclesiastical as well as civil government, and that those dangerous principles, by which the church is totally severed from the state, were hitherto unknown to the Anglo-Saxons. [2] It also appears that the aldermen or governors of counties, who, after the Danish times, were often called earls, [3] were admitted into this council, and gave their consent to the public statutes. But besides the prelates and aldermen, there is also mention of the wites, or wisemen, as a component part of the wittenagemot; but who these were is not so clearly ascertained by the laws or the history of that period. The matter would probably be of difficult discussion, even were it examined impartially; but as our modern parties have chosen to divide on this point, the question has been disputed with the greater obstinacy, and the arguments on both sides have become, on that account, the more captious and deceitful. Our monarchical faction maintain that these “wites,” or “sapientes,” were the judges, or men learned in the law: the popular faction assert them to be representatives of the boroughs, or what we now call the commons.

The expressions employed by all ancient historians in mentioning the wittenagemot, seem to contradict the latter supposition. The members are almost always called the “principes, satrapæ, optimates, magnates, proceres;” terms which seem to suppose an aristocracy, and to exclude the commons. The boroughs also, from the low state of commerce, were so small and so poor, and the inhabitants lived in such dependence on the great men, [4] that it seems nowise probable they would be admitted as a part of the national councils. The commons are well known to have had no share in the governments established by the Franks, Burgundians, and other northern nations; and we may conclude that the Saxons, who remained longer barbarous and uncivilized than those tribes, would never think of conferring such an extraordinary privilege on trade and industry.

[1] Sometimes abbesses were admitted; at least they often sign the king’s charters or grants. Spelm. Gloss. in verbo Parliamentum.]

[2] Wilkins, passim.]

[3] See note G, at the end of the volume.]

[4] Brady’s Treatise of English Boroughs, , 4, 5, etc.]

The military profession alone was honorable among all those conquerors: the warriors subsisted by their possessions in land: they became considerable by their influence over their vassals, retainers, tenants, and slaves: and it requires strong proof to convince us that they would admit any of a rank so much inferior as the burgesses, to share with them in the legislative authority. Tacitus indeed affirms that, among the ancient Germans, the consent of all the members of the community was required in every important deliberation; but he speaks not of representatives; and this ancient practice, mentioned by the Roman historian, could only have place in small tribes, where every citizen might without inconvenience be assembled upon any extraordinary emergency. After principalities became extensive, after the difference of property had formed distinctions more important than those which arose from personal strength and valor, we may conclude that the national assemblies must have been more limited in their number, and composed only of the more considerable citizens.

But, though we must exclude the burgesses or commons from the Saxon wittenagemot, there is some necessity for supposing that this assembly consisted of other members than the prelates, abbots, alderman, and the judges or privy council. For as all these, excepting some of the ecclesiastics, [1] were anciently appointed by the king, had there been no other legislative authority, the royal power had been, in a great measure, absolute, contrary to the tenor of all the historians, and to the practice of all the northern nations.

[1] There is some reason to think that the bishops were sometimes chosen by the wittenagemot, and confirmed by the king. Eddius, ca. The abbots in the monasteries of royal foundation were anciently named by the king; though Edgar gave the monks the election, and only reserved to himself the ratification. This destination was afterwards frequently violated, and the abbots as well as bishops were afterwards all appointed by the king, as we learn from Ingulf, a writer contemporary to the conquest.]

We may, therefore, conclude that the more considerable proprietors of land were, without any election, constituent members of the national assembly: there is reason to think that forty hides, or between four and five thousand acres, was the estate requisite for entitling the possessors to this honorable privilege. We find a passage in an ancient author, [1] by which it appears that a person of very noble birth, even one allied to the crown, was not esteemed a “princeps” (the term usually employed by ancient historians, when the wittenagemot is mentioned) till he had acquired a fortune of that amount. Nor need we imagine that the public council would become disorderly or confused by admitting so great a multitude. The landed property of England was probably in few hands during the Saxon times, at least, during the latter part of that period; and, as men had hardly any ambition to attend those public councils, there was no danger of the assembly’s becoming too numerous for the despatch of the little business which was brought before them.

It is certain that, whatever we may determine concerning the constituent members of the wittenagemot, in whom, with the king, the legislature resided, the Anglo-Saxon government, in the period preceding the Norman conquest, was becoming extremely aristocratical: the royal authority was very limited; the people, even if admitted to that assembly, were of little or no weight and consideration. We have hints given us in historians of the great power and riches of particular noblemen; and it could not but happen, after the abolition of the Heptarchy, when the king lived at a distance from the provinces, that those great proprietors, who resided on their estates, would much augment their authority over their vassals and retainers, and over all the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Hence the immeasurable power assumed by Harold, Godwin, Leofric, Siward, Morcar, Edwin, Edric, and Alfric who controlled the authority of the kings, and rendered themselves quite necessary in the government. The two latter, though detested by the people on account of their joining a foreign enemy, still preserved their power and influence; and we may therefore conclude that their authority was founded, not on popularity, but on family rights and possessions. There is one Athelstan, mentioned in the reign of the king of that name, who is called alderman of all England, and is said to be half king; though the monarch himself was a prince of valor and abilities. [2] And we find that in the later Saxon times, and in these alone, the great offices went from father to sun, and became in a manner hereditary in the families.[A]

[1] Hist. Eliensis, lib. ii. cap 40]

[2] Hist. Rames. Beet. iii.]

The circumstances attending the invasions of the Danes would also serve much to increase the power of the principal nobility. Those freebooters made unexpected inroads on all quarters, and there was a necessity that each county should resist them by its own force, and under the conduct of its own nobility and its own magistrates. For the same reason that a general war, managed by the united efforts of the whole state commonly augments the power of the crown, those private wars and inroads turned to the advantage of the aldermen and nobles.

Among that military and turbulent people, so averse to commerce and the arts, and so little inured to industry, justice was commonly very ill administered, and great oppression and violence seem to have prevailed. These disorders would be increased by the exorbitant power of the aristocracy; and would, in their turn, contribute to increase it. Men, not daring to rely on the guardianship of the laws, were obliged to devote themselves to the service of some chieftain, whose orders they followed even to the disturbance of the government, or the injury of their fellow-citizens, and who afforded them, in return, protection from any insult or injustice by strangers. Hence we find, by the extracts which Dr. Brady has given us from Domesday, that almost all the inhabitants, even of towns, had placed themselves under the clientship of some particular nobleman, whose patronage they purchased by annual payments, and whom they were obliged to consider as their sovereign, more than the king himself, or even the legislature.[B]

[A] Roger Hoveden, giving the reason why William the Conqueror made Cospatric earl of Northumberland, says, "Nam ex materno sanguine attinebat ad eum honor illius comitatus. Erat enim ex matre Algitha, filia Uthredi comitis." See also Sim.

Dunelm. . We see in those instances the same tendency towards rendering offices hereditary which took place,
during a more early period, on the continent; and which had already produced there its full effect.

[B] Brady's Treatise of Boroughs, , 4, 5, etc. The case was the same with the freemen in the country. See Pref. to his Hist. , 9, 10, etc.

A client, though a freeman, was supposed so much to belong to his patron, that his murderer was obliged by law to pay a fine to the latter, as a compensation for his loss; in like manner as he paid a fine to the master for the murder of his slave.[A] Men who were of a more considerable rank, but not powerful enough each to support himself by his own independent authority, entered into formal confederacies with each other, and composed a kind of separate community, which rendered itself formidable to all aggressors. Dr. Hickes has preserved a curious Saxon bond of this kind, which he calls a “sodalitium,” and which contains many particulars characteristical of the manners and customs of the times.[B] All the associates are there said to be gentlemen of Cambridgeshire; and they swear before the holy relics to observe their confederacy, and to be faithful to each other: they promise to bury any of the associates who dies, in whatever place he had appointed; to contribute to his funeral charges, and to attend to his interment; and whoever is wanting in this last duty, binds himself to pay a measure of honey. When any of the associates is in danger, and calls for the assistance of his fellows, they promise, besides flying to his succor, to give information to the sheriff; and if he be negligent in protecting the person exposed to danger, they engage to levy a fine of one pound upon him; if the president of the society himself be wanting in this particular, he binds himself to pay one pound; unless he has the reasonable excuse of sickness, or of duty to his superior. When any of the associates is murdered, they are to exact eight pounds from the murderer; and if he refuse to pay it, they are to prosecute him for the sum at their joint expense. If any of the associates, who happens to be poor, kill a man, the society are to contribute, by a certain proportion, to pay his fine, — a mark apiece, if the fine be seven hundred shillings; less if the person killed be a clown or ceorle; the half of that sum, again, if he be a Welshman But where any of the associates kill a man wilfully and without provocation, he must himself pay the fine. If any of the associates kill any of his fellows in a like criminal manner, besides paying the usual fine to the relations of the deceased, he must pay eight pounds to the society, or renounce the benefit of it; in which case they bind themselves, under the penalty of one pound, never to eat or drink with him, except in the presence of the king, bishop, or alderman. There are other regulations to protect themselves and their servants from all injuries, to revenge such as are committed, and to prevent their giving abusive language to each other; and the fine which they engage to pay for this last offence is a measure of honey.

[A] LL. Edw. Conf. Sect. viii. apad Ingulph.

[B] Dissert. Epist. .

It is not to be doubted but a confederacy of this kind must have been a great source of friendship and attachment, when men lived in perpetual danger from enemies, robbers, and oppressors, and received protection chiefly from their personal valor, and from the assistance of their friends and patrons. As animosities were then more violent, connections were also more intimate, whether voluntary or derived from blood: the most remote degree of propinquity was regarded; an indelible memory of benefits was preserved; severe vengeance was taken for injuries, both from a point of honor and as the best means of future security; and the civil union being weak, many private engagements were contracted, in order to supply its place, and to procure men that safety, which the laws and their own innocence were not alone able to insure to them.

On the whole, notwithstanding the seeming liberty, or rather licentiousness, of the Anglo-Saxons, the great body, even of the free citizens, in those ages, really enjoyed much less true liberty than where the execution of the laws is the most severe, and where subjects are reduced to the strictest subordination and dependence on the civil magistrate. The reason is derived from the excess itself of that liberty. Men must guard themselves at any price against insults and injuries; and where they receive not protection from the laws and magistrates, they will seek it by submission to superiors, and by herding in some private confederacy, which acts under the direction of a powerful leader. And thus all anarchy is the immediate cause of tyranny, if not over the state, at least over many of the individuals.

Security was provided by the Saxon laws to all members of the wittenagemot, both in going and returning, “except they were notorious thieves and robbers.”

The German Saxons, as the other nations of that continent, were divided into three ranks of men — the noble, the free, and the slaves.[A] This distinction they brought over with them into Britain.

[A] Nithard. Hist. lib. iv.

The nobles were called thanes; and were of two kinds, the king's thanes and lesser thanes. The latter seem to have been dependent on the former, and to have received lands, for which they paid rent, services, or attendance in peace and war. [1] We know of no title which raised any one to the rank of thane, except noble birth and the possession of land. The former was always much regarded by all the German nations, even in their most barbarous state; and as the Saxon nobility, having little credit, could scarcely burden their estates with much debt, and as the commons had little trade or industry by which they could accumulate riches' these two ranks of men, even though they were not separated by positive laws, might remain long distinct, and the noble families continue many ages in opulence and splendor. There were no middle ranks of men, that could gradually mix with their superiors, and insensibly procure to themselves honor and distinction. If, by any extraordinary accident, a mean person acquired riches, a circumstance so singular made him be known and remarked; he became the object of envy, as well as of indignation, to all the nobles; he would have great difficulty to defend what he had acquired; and he would find it impossible to protect himself from oppression, except by courting the patronage of some great chieftain, and paying a large price for his safety.

There are two statutes among the Saxon laws, which seem calculated to confound those different ranks of men; that of Athelstan, by which a merchant, who had made three long sea voyages on his own account, was entitled to the quality of thane; [2] and that of the same prince, by which a ceorle, or husbandman, who had been able to purchase five hides of land, and had a chapel, a kitchen, a hall, and a bell, was raised to the same distinction. [3] But the opportunities were so few, by which a merchant or ceorle could thus exalt himself above his rank, that the law could never overcome the reigning prejudices; the distinction between noble and base blood would still be indelible; and the well-born thanes would entertain the highest contempt for those legal and factitious ones. Though we are not informed of any of these circumstances by ancient historians, they are so much founded on the nature of things, that we may admit them as a necessary and infallible consequence of the situation of the kingdom during those ages.

[1] Spel. Feus and Tenures, .]

[2] Wilkins, .]

[3] Selden, Titles of Honor, p, 515. Wilkins, p. 7.]

The cities appear by domesday-book to have been, at the conquest little better than villages. [1] York itself, though it was always the second, at least the third [2] city in England, and was the capital of a great province, which never was thoroughly united with the rest, contained then but one thousand four hundred and eighteen families. [3] Malmsbury tells us, [4] that the great distinction between the Anglo-Saxon nobility and the French and Norman, was, that the latter built magnificent and stately castles; whereas the former consumed their immense fortunes in riot and hospitality, and in mean houses. We may thence infer, that the arts in general were much less advanced in England than in France: a greater number of idle servants and retainers lived about the great families; and as these, even in France, were powerful enough to disturb the execution of the laws, we may judge of the authority acquired by the aristocracy in England. When Earl Godwin besieged the Confessor in London, he summoned from all parts his huscarles, or houseceorles and retainers, and thereby constrained his sovereign to accept of the conditions which he was pleased to impose upon him.

The lower rank of freemen were denominated ceorles among the Anglo-Saxons; and where they were industrious they were chiefly employed in husbandry; whence a ceorle and a husbandman became in a manner synonymous terms. They cultivated the farms of the nobility, or thanes, for which they paid rent; and they seem to have been removable at pleasure; for there is little mention of leases among the Anglo-Saxons: the pride of the nobility, together with the general ignorance of writing, must have rendered those contracts very rare, and must have kept the husbandmen in a dependent condition. The rents of farms were then chiefly paid in kind. [5]

[1] Winchester, being the capital of the West Saxon monarchy, was anciently a considerable city. Gul. Pict. p. 210.]

[2] Norwich contained 738 houses; Exeter, 315; Ipswich, 538; Northampton, 60; Hertford, 146; Canterbury, 262; Bath, 61; Southampton 84; Warwick, 225. See Brady, of Boroughs, , 4, 5, 6, etc. These are the most considerable he mentions. The account of these is extracted from domesday-book.]

[3] Brady's Treatise of Boroughs, . There were six wards, besides the archbishop's palace; and five of these wards contained the number of families here mentioned, which at the rate of five persons to a family, makes about seven thousand souls. The sixth ward was laid waste.]

[4] Page 102. See also de Gest. Angl. .]

rents for a hide; but it is difficult to convert it into modern measures.]

But the most numerous rank by far in the community to have been the slaves or villains, who were the property of their lords, and were consequently incapable themselves of possessing any property. Dr. Brady assures us, from a survey of domesday-book, [1] that, in all the counties of England, the far greater part of the land was occupied by them, and that the husbandmen, and still more the socmen, who were tenants that, could not be removed at pleasure, were very few in comparison. This was not the case with the German nations, as far as we can collect from the account given us by Tacitus. The perpetual wars in the Heptarchy, and the depredations of the Danes, seem to have been the cause of this great alteration with the Anglo-Saxons. Prisoners taken in battle, or carried off in the frequent inroads, were then reduced to slavery, and became, by right of war, [2] entirely at the disposal of their lords. Great property in the nobles, especially if joined to an irregular administration of justice, naturally favors the power of the aristocracy; but still more so, if the practice of slavery be admitted, and has become very common. The nobility not only possess the influence which always attends riches, but also the power which the laws give them over their slaves and villains. It then becomes difficult, and almost impossible, for a private man to remain altogether free and independent.

There were two kinds of slaves among the Anglo-Saxons; household slaves, after the manner of the ancients, and praedial, or rustic, after the manner of the Germans. [3] These latter resembled the serfs, which are at present to be met with in Poland, Denmark, and some parts of Germany. The power of a master over his slaves was not unlimited among the Anglo-Saxons, as it was among their ancestors. If a man beat out his slave's eye or teeth, the slave recovered his liberty: [4] if he killed him, he paid a fine to the king, provided the slave died within a day after the wound or blow; otherwise it passed unpunished. [5] The selling of themselves or children to slavery, was always the practice among the German nations, [6] and was continued by the Anglo-Saxons. [7]

[1] General Preface to his Hist. , 8, 9, etc.]

[2] LL. Edg. sect. 14, apud Spel. Concil. vol. i. .]

[3] Spel. Gloss, in verbo Servus.]

[4] LL. Ælf. sect. 20]

[6] Tacit, de Mor. Germ]

[7] LL. Inse, sect. 11. LL. Ælf. sect. 12.]

The great lords and abbots among the Anglo-Saxons possessed a criminal jurisdiction within their territories, and could punish without appeal any thieves or robbers whom they caught there. [1] This institution must have had a very contrary effect to that which was intended, and must have procured robbers a sure protection on the lands of such noblemen as did not sincerely mean to discourage crimes and violence.

But though the general strain of the Anglo-Saxon government seems to have become aristocratical, there were still considerable remains of the ancient democracy, which were not indeed sufficient to protect the lowest of the people, without the patronage of some great lord, but might give security, and even some degree of dignity, to the gentry or inferior nobility. The administration of justice, in particular, by the courts of the decennary, the hundred, and the county, was well calculated to defend general liberty, and to restrain the power of the nobles. In the county courts, or shiremotes, all the freeholders were assembled twice a year, and received appeals from the inferior courts. They there decided all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil; and the bishop, together with the alderman or earl, presided over them. [2] The affair was determined in a summary manner, without much pleading formality, or delay, by a majority of voices; and the bishop and alderman had no further authority than to keep order among the freeholders, and interpose with their opinion. [3] Where justice was denied during three sessions by the hundred, and then by the county court, there lay an appeal to the king’s court; [4] but this was not practised on slight occasions. The aldermen received a third of the fines levied in those courts; [5] and as most of the punishments were then pecuniary, this perquisite formed a considerable part of the profits belonging to his office. The two thirds also, which went to the king, made no contemptible part of the public revenue. Any free-holder was fined who absented himself thrice from these courts. [6]

As the extreme ignorance of the age made deeds and writings very rare, the county or hundred court was the place where the most remarkable civil transactions were finished, in order to preserve the memory of them, and prevent all future disputes. Here testaments were promulgated, slaves manumitted, bargains of sale concluded, and sometimes, for greater security, the most considerable of these deeds were inserted in the blank leaves of the parish Bible, which thus became a kind of register, too sacred to be falsified. It was not unusual to add to the deed an imprecation on all such as should be guilty of that crime. [1]

[1] Higden, lib, i. ca. LL. Edw. Conf. sect. 26. Spel. Concil vol. i. . Gloss, in verbo. Haligemot ot Infangenthefe.]

[2] LL. Edg. sect. 5. Wilkins, . LL. Cantit. sect. 17. Wilkins. .]

[3] Hickes, Dissert, epist. , 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.]

[4] LL. Edg. sect. 2. Wilkins, . LL. Canut. sect. 18, apud Wilkins, .]

[6] LL. Ethelst. sect, 20.]

[1] Hickes, Dissert, epist.]

Among a people who lived in so simple a manner as the Anglo-Saxons, the judicial power is always of greater importance than the legislative. There were few or no taxes imposed by the states; there were few statutes enacted; and the nation was less governed by laws, than by customs, which admitted a great latitude of interpretation. Though it should, therefore, be allowed, that the wittenagemot was altogether composed of the principal nobility, the county courts, where all the freeholders were admitted, and which regulated all the daily occurrences of life, formed a wide basis for the government, and were no contemptible checks on the aristocracy. But there is another power still more important than either the judicial or legislative; to wit, the power of injuring or serving by immediate force and violence, for which it is difficult to obtain redress in courts of justice. In all extensive governments, where the execution of the laws is feeble, this power naturally falls into the hands of the principal nobility; and the degree of it which prevails, cannot be determined so much by the public statutes, as by small incidents in history, by particular customs, and sometimes by the reason and nature of things. The highlands of Scotland have long been entitled by law to every privilege of British subjects; but it was not till very lately that the common people could in fact enjoy these privileges.

The powers of all the members of the Anglo-Saxon government are disputed among historians and antiquaries: the extreme obscurity of the subject, even though faction had never entered into the question, would naturally have begotten those controversies. But the great influence of the lords over their slaves and tenants, the clientship of the burghers, the total want of a middling rank of men, the extent of the mon archy, the loose execution of the laws, the continued disorders and convulsions of the state, — all these circumstances evince that the Anglo-Saxon government became at last extremely aristocratical; and the events, during the period immediately preceding the conquest, confirm this inference or conjecture.

Both the punishments inflicted by the Anglo-Saxon courts of judicature, and the methods of proof employed in all causes, appear somewhat singular, and are very different from those which prevail at present among all civilized nations.

We must conceive that the ancient Germans were little removed from the original state of nature: the social confederacy among them was more martial than civil: they had chiefly in view the means of attack or defence against public enemies, not those of protection against their fellow-citizens: their possessions were so slender and so equal, that they were not exposed to great danger; and the natural bravery of the people made every man trust to himself and to his particular friends for his defence or vengeance. This defect in the political union drew much closer the knot of particular confederacies: an insult upon any man was regarded by all his relations and associates as a common injury: they were bound by honor, as well as by a sense of common interest, to revenge his death, or any violence which he had suffered: they retaliated on the aggressor by like acts of violence; and if he were protected, as was natural and usual, by his own clan, the quarrel was spread still wider, and bred endless disorders in the nation.

The Frisians, a tribe of the Germans, had never advanced beyond this wild and imperfect state of society; and the right of private revenge still remained among them unlimited and uncontrolled. [1] But the other German nations, in the age of Tacitus, had made one step farther towards completing the political or civil union. Though it still continued to be an indispensable point of honor for every clan to revenge the death or injury of a member, the magistrate had acquired a right of interposing in the quarrel, and of accommodating the difference. He obliged the person maimed or injured, and the relations of one killed, to accept of a present from the aggressor and his relations, [2] as a compensation for the injury. [3] and to drop all farther prosecution of revenge. That the accommodation of one quarrel might not be the source of more, this present was fixed and certain according to the rank of the person killed or injured, and was commonly paid in cattle, the chief property of those rude and uncultivated nations.

[1] LL. Fris. tit. 2, apud Lindenbrog. .]

[2] LL. Æthelb, sect. 23. LL. Ælf. sect. 27]

[3] Called by the Saxons “maegbota.”]

A present of this kind gratified the revenge of the injured family by the loss which the aggressor suffered: it satisfied then pride by the submission which it expressed: it diminished their regret for the loss or injury of a kinsman by their acquisition of new property; and thus general peace was for a moment restored to the society. [1]

But when the German nations had been settled some time in the provinces of the Roman empire, they made still another step towards a more cultivated life, and their criminal justice gradually improved and refined itself. The magistrate, whose office it was to guard public peace, and to suppress private animosities, conceived himself to be injured by every injury done to any of his people; and besides the compensation to the person who suffered, or to his family, he thought himself entitled to exact a fine, called the "fridwit," as an atonement for the breach of peace, and as a reward for the pains which he had taken in accommodating the quarrel. When this idea, which is so natural, was once suggested, it was willingly received both by sovereign and people. The numerous fines which were levied, augmented the revenue of the king; and the people were sensible that he would be more vigilant in interposing with his good offices, when he reaped such immediate advantage from them; and that injuries would be less frequent, when, besides compensation to the person injured, that they were exposed to this additional penalty. [2]

This short abstract contains the history of the criminal jurisprudence of the northern nations for several centuries. The state of England in this particular, during the period of the Anglo-Saxons, may be judged of by the collection of ancient laws, published by Lambard and Wilkins. The chief purport of these laws is not to prevent or entirely suppress private quarrels, which the legislators knew to be impossible, but only to regulate and moderate them. The laws of Alfred enjoin, that if any one know that his enemy or aggressor, after doing him an injury, resolves to keep within his own house *and his own lands* [1] he shall not fight him, till he require compensation for the injury. If he be strong enough to besiege him in his house, he may do it for seven days without attacking him; and if the aggressor be a willing, during that time, to surrender himself and his arms, his, adversary may detain him thirty days, but is afterwards obliged to restore him safe to his kindred, “and be content with the compensation.” If the criminal fly to the temple, that sanctuary must not be violated. Where the assailant has not force sufficient to besiege the criminal in his house, he must apply to the alderman for assistance; and if the alderman refuse aid the assailant must have recourse to the king; and he is not allowed to assault the house till after this supreme magistrate has refused assistance. If any one meet with his enemy, and be ignorant that he was resolved to keep within his own lands he must, before he attack him, require him to surrender him self prisoner, and deliver up his arms; in which case he may detain him thirty days; but if he refuse to deliver up his arms it is then lawful to fight him. A slave may fight in his master’s quarrel: a father may fight in his son’s with any one except with his master. [2]

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[1] Tacit, de Mor. Germ. The author says, that the price of the composition was fixed; which must have been by the laws, and the interposition of the magistrates.]

[2] Besides paying money to the relations of the deceased, and to the king, the murderer was also obliged to pay the master of a slave of vassal a sum, as a compensation for his loss. This was called the "manbote" See Spel. Gloss, in verb. Fredum, Manbot.]

It was enacted by King Ina, that no man should take revenge for an injury till he had first demanded compensation, and had been refused it. [3]

[1] The addition of these last words is Italics appears necessary from what follows in the same law.]

[2] IL. Ælf. sect. 28. Wilkins, .]

[3] LL. Inae sect. 9]

King Edmond, in the preamble to his laws, mentions the general misery occasioned by the multiplicity of private feuds and battles; and he establishes several expedients for remedying this grievance. He ordains that if any one commit murder, he may, with the assistance of his kindred, pay within a twelvemonth the fine of his crime; and if they abandon him, he shall alone sustain the deadly feud or quarrel with the kindred of the murdered person: his own kindred are free from the feud, but on condition that they neither converse with the criminal, nor supply him with meat or other necessaries: if any of them, after renouncing him, receive him into their house, or give him assistance, they are finable to the king, and are involved in the feud. If the kindred of the murdered person take revenge on any but the criminal himself, after he is abandoned by his kindred, all their property is forfeited, and they are declared to be enemies to the king and all his friends. [1] It is also ordained that the fine for murder shall never be remitted by the king, [2] and that no criminal shall be killed who flies to the church, or any of the king's towns; [3] and the king himself declares, that his house shall give no protection to murderers, till they have satisfied the church by their penance, and the kindred of the deceased by making compensation. [4] The method appointed for transacting this composition is found in the same law. [5]

These attempts of Edmond, to contract and diminish the feuds, were contrary to the ancient spirit of the northern barbarians, and were a step towards a more regular administration of justice. By the salic law, any man-night, by a public declaration, exempt himself from his family quarrels: but then he was considered by the law as no longer belonging to the family; and he was deprived of all right of succession, as the punishment of his cowardice. [6]

The price of the king's head, or his weregild, as it was then called, was by law thirty thousand thrimsas, near thirteen hundred pounds of present money. The price of the prince's head was fifteen thousand thrimsas; that of a bishop's or alderman's, eight thousand; a sheriff's, four thousand; a thane's or clergyman's, two thousand; a ceorle's, two hundred and sixty-six. These prices were fixed by the laws of the Angles. By the Mercian law, the price of a ceorle's head was two hundred shillings; that of a thane's, six times as much; that of a king's, six times more. [7] By the laws of Kent, the price of the archbishop's head was higher than that of the king's. [8] Such respect was then paid to the ecclesiastics! It must be understood, that where a person was unable or unwilling to pay the fine, he was put out of the protection of law, and the kindred of the deceased had liberty to punish him as they thought proper.

Some antiquaries [9] have thought that these compensations were only given for manslaughter, not for wilful murder.

[1] LL. Edm. sect,. 1. Wilkins, .

[2] LL. Edm. sect. 3.

[3] LL. Edm. sect. 2.

[4 LL. Edm. sect. 4.]

[6 Tit. 63.]

[7 Wilkins, , 72]

[8 LL. Elthredi, apud Wilkins, .]

[9 Tyrrel, Introduct. vol. i. . Carte vol i. .]

But no such distinction appears in the laws; and it is contradicted by the practice of all the other barbarous nations, [1] by that of the ancient Germans, [2] and by that curious monument above mentioned of Saxon antiquity, preserved by Hickes. There is indeed a law of Alfred's which makes wilful murder capital; [3] but this seems only to have been an attempt of that great legislator towards establishing a better police in the kingdom, and it probably remained without execution. By the laws of the same prince, a conspiracy against the life of the king might be redeemed by a fine. [4]

The price of all kinds of wounds was likewise fixed by the Saxon laws: a wound of an inch long under the hair was paid with one shilling: one of a like size in the face, two shillings; thirty shillings for the loss of an ear; and so forth. [5] There seems not to have been any difference made, according to the dignity of the person. By the laws of Ethelbert, any one who committed adultery with his neighbor's wife was obliged to pay him a fine, and buy him another wife. [6]

These institutions are not peculiar to the ancient Germans. They seem to be the necessary progress of criminal jurisprudence among every free people, where the will of the sovereign is not implicitly obeyed. We find them among the ancient Greeks during the time of the Trojan war. Compositions for murder are mentioned in Nestor's speech to Achilles, in the ninth Iliad, and are called [Greek: apoinai]. The Irish, who never had any connections with the German nations, adopted the same practice till very lately; and the price of a man's head was called among them his "eric;"

as we learn from Sir John Davis. The same custom seems also to have prevailed among the Jews. [7]

Theft and robbery were frequent among the Anglo-Saxons In order to impose some check upon these crimes, it was ordained, that no man should sell or buy any thing above twenty pence value, except in open market; [8] and every bargain of sale must be executed before witnesses. [9]

Gangs of robbers much disturbed the peace of the country, and the law determined that a tribe of banditti, consisting of between seven and thirty-five persons, was to be called a “turma,” or troop; any greater company was denominated an army. [1] The punishments for this crime were various, but none of them capital. [2] If any man could track his stolen cattle into another’s ground, the latter was obliged to show the tracks out of it, or pay their value. [3]

[1: Lindenbrogius, passim.]

[2: Tacit, de Mor. Germ.]

[3: LL. Ælf. sect. 12. Wilkins, . It is probable that by wilful murder Alfred means a treacherous murder, committed by one who has no declared feud with another.]

[4: LL. Ælf. sect. 4. Wilkins, .]

[5: LL. Ælf. sect. 40. See also LL. Ethelb. sect. 34, etc.]

[6: LL Ethelb. sect. 32.]

[7: Exod. cap. xxi. 29, 30.]

[8: LL. Æthelst. sect. 12.]

[9: LL. Æthelst. sect. 10, 12. LL.Edg. apud Wilkins, . LL Ethelredi, sect 4, apud Wilkins, . Hloth. et Eadm. sect 16. LL. Canute. sect. 22.]

Rebellion, to whatever excess it was carried, was not capital but might be redeemed by a sum of money. [4] The legislators, knowing it impossible to prevent all disorders, only imposed a higher fine on breaches of the peace committed in the king’s court, or before an alderman or bishop. An ale-house, too, seems to have been considered as a privileged place; and any quarrels that arose there were more severely punished than else where. [5]

[1] LL. Inæ, sect. 12.

[1] LL. Inæ, sect. 37.

[1] LL. Æthelst. sect. 2. Wilkins, .

[1] LL. Ethelredi, apud Wilkins, . LL. Ælf. sect. 4. Wilkins, p35.

[1] LL. Hloth. et Eadm. sect. 12, 13. LL. Ethelr. apud Wilkins, P 117.

If the manner of punishing crimes among the Anglo-Saxons appear singular, the proofs were not less so; and were also the natural result of the situation of those people. Whatever we may imagine concerning the usual truth and sincerity of men who live in a rude and barbarous state, there is much more falsehood, and even perjury, among them, than among civilized nations: virtue, which is nothing but a more enlarged and more cultivated reason, never flourishes to any degree, nor is founded on steady principles of honor, except where a good education becomes general; and where men are taught the pernicious consequences of vice, treachery, and immorality. Even superstition, though more prevalent among ignorant nations, is but a poor supply for the defects in knowledge and education; our European ancestors, who employed every moment the expedient of swearing on extraordinary crosses and relics, were less honorable in all engagements than their posterity, who from experience have omitted those ineffectual securities. This general proneness to assumed perjury was much increased by the usual want of discernment in judges, who could not discuss an intricate evidence, and were obliged to number, not weigh, the testimony of the witnesses, [1] Hence the ridiculous practice of obliging men to bring compurgators, who, as they did not pretend to know any thing of the fact, expressed upon oath, that they believed the person spoke true; and these compurgators were in some cases multiplied to the number of three hundred. [2] The practice also of single combat was employed by most nations on the continent as a remedy against false evidence; [3] and though it was frequently dropped, from the opposition of the clergy, it was continually revived, from experience of the falsehood attending the testimony of witnesses. [4] It became at last a species of jurisprudence: the cases were determined by law, in which the party might challenge his adversary or the witnesses, or the judge himself; [5] and though these customs were absurd, they were rather an improvement on the methods of trial which had formerly been practised among those barbarous nations, and which still prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons.

[1] Præf. Nicol. ad Wilkins, .]

[2] LL. Burgund. ca. LL. Lomb. lib. ii. tit. 55, ca.]

[3] LL. Longob. lib. ii. tit. 55, ca, apud Lindenbrog.]

[4] See Desfontaines and Beaumanoir.]

for weighing the credibility of witnesses. A man whose life was estimated at a hundred and twenty shillings,

counterbalanced six ceorles, each of whose lives was only valued at twenty shillings, and his oath was esteemed equivalent to that of all the six. See Wilkins, .]

When any controversy about a fact became too intricate for those ignorant judges to unravel, they had recourse to what they called the judgment of God, that is, to fortune. Their methods of consulting this oracle were various. One of them was the decision by the cross: it was practised in this manner: When a person was accused of any crime, he first cleared himself by oath, and he was attended by eleven compurgators. He next took two pieces of wood, one of which was marked with the sign of the cross, and wrapping both up in wool, he placed them on the altar, or on some celebrated relic. After solemn prayers for the success of the experiment, a priest, or in his stead some unexperienced youth, took up one of the pieces of wood, and if he happened upon that which was marked with the figure of the cross, the person was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, guilty. [1] This practice, as it arose from superstition, was abolished by it in France.

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[1] LL. Prison, tit. 14, apud Lindenbrog. . trial, not because it was uncertain, but lest that sacred figure says he, of the cross should be prostituted in common disputes and controversies.]

The ordeal was another established method of trial among Saxons. It was practised either by boiling water or red-hot iron. The former was appropriated to the common people; the latter to the nobility. The water or iron was consecrated by many prayers, masses, fastings, and exorcisms, [1] after which, the person accused either took up a stone sunk in the water [2] to a certain depth, or carried the iron to a certain distance; and his hand being wrapped up, and the covering sealed for three days, if there appeared, on examining it, no marks of burning, he was pronounced innocent; if otherwise, guilty. [3] The trial by cold water was different: the person was thrown into consecrated water; if he swam, he was guilty, if he sunk, innocent. [4] It is difficult for us to conceive how any innocent person could ever escape by the one trial, or any criminal be convicted by the other. But there was another usage admirably calculated for allowing every criminal to escape, who had confidence enough to try it. A consecrated cake, called a corsned, was produced, which if the person could swallow and digest, he was pronounced innocent. [6]

The feudal law, if it had place at all among the Anglo-Saxons, which is doubtful, was not certainly extended over all the landed property, and was not attended with those consequences of homage, reliefs, [7] wardship, marriage, and other burdens, which were inseparable from it in the kingdoms of the continent. As the Saxons expelled, or almost entirely destroyed, the ancient Britons, they planted themselves in this island on the same footing with their ancestors in Germany, and found no occasion for the feudal institutions, [8] which were calculated to maintain a kind of standing army, always in readiness to suppress any insurrection among the conquered people.

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[1] Du Cange, in verbo Crux.]

[2] Spel in verbo Ordealium. Parker, . Lindenbrog. p, 1299]

[3] LL. Inæ, sect. 77.]

[4] Sometimes the person accused walked barefoot over a red hot iron]

[6] Spel in verbo Corsned. Parker, . Text. Roffens. .]

[7] On the death of an alderman, a greater or lesser thane, there was a payment made to the king of his best arms; and this was called his heriot; but this was not of the nature of a relief. See Spel. of Tenures, . The value of this heriot was fixed by Canute's laws, sect. 69.]

[8] Bracton de Acqu. Rer. Domin. ii. cap. 16. See more fully Spel of Feus and Tenures, and Q aigius de Jure Feud, lib. i. dieg.]

The trouble and expense of defending the state in England lay equally upon all the land; and it was usual for every five hides to equip a man for the service. The "trinoda necessitas," as it was called, or the burden of military expeditions, of repairing highways, and of building and supporting bridges, was inseparable from landed property, even though it belonged to the church or monasteries, unless exempted by a particular charter. [1] The ceorles, or husbandmen, were provided with arms, and were obliged to take their turn in military duty. [2] There were computed to be two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides in England; [3] consequently the ordinary military force of the kingdom consisted of forty-eight thousand seven hundred and twenty men; though, no doubt, on extraordinary occasions, a greater number might be assembled. The king and nobility had some military tenants, who were called "sithcun-men." [4] And there were some lands annexed to the office of aldermen, and to other offices; but these probably were not of great extent, and were possessed only during pleasure, as in the commencement of the feudal law in other countries of Europe.

The revenue of the king seems to have consisted chiefly in his demesnes, which were large; and in the tolls and imposts which he probably levied at discretion on the boroughs and seaports that lay within his demesnes. He could not alienate any part of the crown lands, even to religious uses, without the consent of the states. [5] Danegelt was a land-tax of a shilling a hide, imposed by the states, [6] either for payment of the sums exacted by the Danes, or for putting the kingdom in a posture of defence against those invaders. [7]

The Saxon pound, as likewise that which was coined for some centuries after the conquest, was near three times the weight of our present money. There were forty-eight shillings in the pound, and five pence in a shilling; [8] consequently a Saxon shilling was near a fifth heavier than ours, and a Saxon penny near three times as heavy. [9]

[1 Spel. Concil. vol. i. .]

[2 Inæ, sect. 51.]

[3 Spel. of Feus and Tenures, .]

[4 Spel. Concil. vol. i. .]

[6 Chron. Sax. .]

[7 LL. Edw. Conf. sect. 12.]

[8 LL. Ælf. sect. 40.]

[9 Fleetwood's Chron. Pretiosum, 28, etc.]

As to the value of money in those times, compared to commodities, there are some though not very certain, means of computation. A sheep, of the laws of Athelstan, was estimated at a shilling; that is, fifteen pence of our money. The fleece was two fifths of the value of the whole sheep, [1] much above its present estimation; and the reason probably was, that the Saxons, like the ancients, were little acquainted with any clothing but what was made of wool. Silk and cotton were quite unknown: linen was not much used. An ox was computed at six times the value of a sheep; a cow at four. [2] If we suppose that the cattle in that age, from the defects in husbandry, were not so large as they are at present in England, we may compute that money was then near ten times of greater value. A horse was valued at about thirty-six shillings of our money, or thirty Saxon shillings; [3] a mare a third less. A man at three pounds. [4] The board-wages of a child the first year was eight shillings, together with a cow's pasture in summer, and an ox's in winter. [5] William of Malmsbury mentions it as a remarkably high price that William Rufus gave fifteen marks for a horse, or about thirty pounds of our present money. [6] Between the years 900 and 1000, Ednoth bought a hide of land for about one hundred and eighteen shillings of present money. [7] This was little more than a shilling an acre, which indeed appears to have been the usual price, as we may learn from other accounts. [8] A palfrey was sold for twelve shillings about the year 966. [9] The value of an ox in King Ethel ed's [2 word?] time was between seven and eight shillings; a cow about six shillings. [9] Gervas of Tilbury says, that in Henry I's time, bread which would suffice a hundred men for a day was rated at three shillings, or a shilling of that age: for it is thought that soon after the conquest a pound sterling was divided into twenty shillings. A sheep was rated at a shilling, and so of other things in proportion. In Athelstan's time, a ram was valued at a shilling, or fourpence Saxon. [10] The tenants of Shireburn were obliged, at their choice, to pay either sixpence or four hens. [11]

[1] LL. Inse, sect. 69.]

[2] Wilkins, .

[3] LL. Inse, sect. 38.]

[4] Hist. Eliens.]

[6] Wilkins, .]

[7] Wilkins, .]

[8] Page 121.]

[9] Hist. Eliens. .]

[10] Wilkins, .]

[11] Monast. Anglie. vol. ii. .]

About 1232, the abbot of St. Alban’s, going on a journey, hired seven handsome, stout horses; and agreed, if any of them died on the road, to pay the owner thirty shillings apiece of our present money. [1] It is to be remarked, that in all ancient times the raising of corn, especially wheat, being a species of manufactory, that commodity always bore a higher price, compared to cattle, than it does in our times. [2] The Saxon Chronicle tells us, [3] that in the reign of Edward the Confessor there was the most terrible famine ever known; insomuch that a quarter of wheat rose to sixty pennies, or fifteen shillings of our present money. Consequently, it was as dear as if it now cost seven pounds ten shillings. This much exceeds the great famine in the end of Queen Elizabeth, when a quarter of wheat was sold for four pounds. Money in this last period was nearly of the same value as in our time. These severe famines are a certain proof of bad husbandry.

[1] M. Paris].

[2] Fleetwood. , 94, 96. 98]

[3] Page 157.]

On the whole, there are three things to be considered, wherever a sum of money is mentioned in ancient times. First, the change of denomination, by which a pound has been reduced to the third part of its ancient weight in silver. Secondly, the change in value by the greater plenty of money, which has reduced the same weight of silver to ten times less value, compared to commodities; and consequently a pound sterling to the thirtieth part of the ancient value. Thirdly, the fewer people and less industry which were then to be found in every European kingdom. This circumstance made even the thirtieth part of the sum more difficult to levy, and caused any sum to have more than thirty times greater weight and influence, both abroad and at home, than in our times; in the same manner that a sum, a hundred thousand pounds, for instance, is at present more difficult to levy in a small state, such as Bavaria, and can produce greater effects on such a small community than on England. This last difference is not easy to be calculated; but, allowing that England has now six times more industry, and three times more people than it had at the conquest, and for some reigns after that period, we are upon that supposition to conceive, taking all circumstances together, every sum of money mentioned by historians, as if it were multiplied more than a hundred fold above a sum of the same denomination at present.

In the Saxon times, land was divided equally among all the male children of the deceased, according to the custom of gavelkind. The practice of entails is to be found in those times. [1] Land was chiefly of two kinds, bockland, or land held by book or charter, which was regarded as full property, and descended to the heirs of the possessor; and folkland, or the land held by the ceorles and common people, who were removable at pleasure, and were, indeed, only tenants during the will of their lords.

The first attempt which we find in England to separate the ecclesiastical from the civil jurisdiction, was that law of Edgar by which all disputes among the clergy were ordered to be carried before the bishop. [2] The penances were then very severe; but as a man could buy them off with money, or might substitute others to perform them, they lay easy upon the rich. [3]

With regard to the manners of the Anglo-Saxons, we can say little, but that they were in general a rude, uncultivated people, ignorant of letters, unskilled in the mechanical arts, untamed to submission under law and government, addicted to intemperance, riot, and disorder. Their best quality was their military courage, which yet was not supported by discipline or conduct. Their want of fidelity to the prince, or to any trust reposed in them, appears strongly in the history of their later period; and their want of humanity in all their history. Even the Norman historians, notwithstanding the low state of the arts in their own country, speak of them as barbarians, when they mention the invasion made upon them by the duke of Normandy.[4] The conquest put the people in a situation of receiving slowly, from abroad, the rudiments of science and cultivation, and of correcting their rough and licentious manners.

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[1] LL. Ælf. sect. 37, apud Wilkins, .]

[2] Wilkins, .]

[3] Wilkins, , 97. Spel. Concil. .]

[4] Gul, Pict. .]

CHAPTER IV.

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR.

Contemporary Monarchs:

EMP. OF GERM. K. OF SCOTLAND K. OF FRANCE. Ks. OF SPAIN.
Henry IV. Malcolm III. 1093 Philip I. Sancho II. 1072
Alphonso VI.
POPES.
Alexander II.1073
Gregory VII. 1085
Victor III. 1087

1066.

Nothing could exceed the consternation which seized the English when they received intelligence of the unfortunate battle of Hastings, the death of their king, the slaughter of their principal nobility and of their bravest warriors, and the rout and dispersion of the remainder. But though the loss which they had sustained in that fatal action was considerable, it might have been repaired by a great nation; where the people were generally armed, and where there resided so many powerful noblemen in every province, who could have assembled their retainers, and have obliged the duke of Normandy to divide his army, and probably to waste it in a variety of actions and rencounters. It was thus that the kingdom had formerly resisted for many years its invaders, and had been gradually subdued by the continued efforts of the Romans, Saxons, and Danes; and equal difficulties might have been apprehended by William in this bold and hazardous enterprise. But there were several vices in the Anglo-Saxon constitution, which rendered it difficult for the English to defend their liberties in so critical an emergency. The people had in a great measure lost all national pride and spirit by their recent and long subjection to the Danes; and as Canute had, in the course of his administration, much abated the rigors of conquest, and had governed them equitably by their own laws, they regarded with the less terror the ignominy of a foreign yoke, and deemed the inconveniences of submission less formidable than those of bloodshed, war, and resistance. Their attachment also to the ancient royal family had been much weakened by their habits of submission to the Danish princes, and by their late election of Harold or their acquiescence in his usurpation. And as they had long been accustomed to regard Edgar Atheling, the only heir of the Saxon line, as unfit to govern them even in times of order and tranquillity, they could entertain small hopes of his being able to repair such great losses as they had sustained, or to withstand the victorious arms of the duke of Normandy.

That they might not, however, be altogether wanting to themselves in this extreme necessity, the English took some steps towards adjusting their disjointed government, and uniting themselves against the common enemy. The two potent earls, Edwin and Morcar, who had fled to London with the remains of the broken army, took the lead on this occasion: in concert with Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, a man possessed of great authority and of ample revenues, they proclaimed Edgar, and endeavored to put the people in a posture of defence, and encourage them to resist the Normans.[1] But the terror of the late defeat, and the near neighborhood of the invaders, increased the confusion inseparable from great revolutions; and every resolution proposed was hasty, fluctuating, tumultuary; disconcerted by fear or faction; ill planned, and worse executed.

William, that his enemies might have no leisure to recover from their consternation or unite their counsels, immediately put himself in motion after his victory, and resolved to prosecute an enterprise which nothing but celerity and vigor could render finally successful. His first attempt was against Rornney, whose inhabitants he severely punished, on account of their cruel treatment of some Norman seamen and soldiers, who had been carried thither by stress of weather, or by a mistake in their course;[2] and foreseeing that his conquest of England might still be attended with many difficulties and with much opposition, he deemed it necessary, before he should advance farther into the country, to make himself master of Dover, which would both secure him a retreat in cast of adverse fortune, and afford him a safe landing-place for such supplies as might be requisite for pushing his advantages.

[1] Gill. Pict. . Order. Vitaas, . Hoveden, Knygnton, .]

[2] Gul. Pict.

The terror diffused by his victory at Hastings was so great that the garrison of Dover, though numerous and well provided, immediately capitulated; and as the Normans, rushing in to take possession of the town, hastily set fire to some of the houses, William, desirous to conciliate the minds of the English by an appearance of lenity and justice, made compensation to the inhabitants for their losses. [1]

The Norman army, being much distressed with a dysentery, was obliged to remain here eight days; but the duke, on their recovery, advanced with quick marches towards London, and by his approach increased the confusions which were already so prevalent in the English counsels. The ecclesiastics in particular, whose influence was great over the people began to declare in his favor; and as most of the bishops and dignified clergymen were even then Frenchmen or Normans, the pope's bull, by which his enterprise was avowed and hallowed, was now openly insisted on as a reason for general submission. The superior learning of those prelates, which, during the Confessor's reign, had raised them above the ignorant Saxons, made their opinions be received with implicit faith; and a young prince; like Edgar, whose capacity was deemed so mean, was but ill qualified to resist the impression which they made on the minds of the people. A repulse which a body of Londoners received from five hundred Norman horse, renewed in the city the terror of the great defeat at Hastings; the easy submission of all the inhabitants of Kent was an additional discouragement to them; the burning of Southwark before their eyes made them dread a like fate to their own city; and no man any longer entertained thoughts but of immediate safety ana of self-preservation. Even the Earls Edwin and Morcar, in despair of making effectual resistance, retired with their troops to their own provinces; and the people thenceforth disposed themselves unanimously to yield to the victor. As soon as he passed the Thames at Wallingford, and reached Berkhamstead, Stigand, the primate, made submissions to him: before he came within sight of the city, all the chief nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, the new elected king, came into his camp, and declared their intention of yielding to his authority. [2] They requested him to mount their throne, which they now considered as vacant; and declare to him, that as they had always been ruled by regal power, they desired to follow, in this particular, the example of their ancestors, and knew of no one more worthy than himself to hold the reins of government. [3]

[1] Gul. Pict. .]

[2] Hoveden, . Flor. Wigorn. p, 634]

[3] Gul. Pict. . Order. Vitalis, .]

Though this was the great object to which the duke's enterprise tended, he feigned to deliberate on the offer; and being desirous, at first, of preserving the appearance of a legal administration, he wished to obtain a more explicit and formal consent of the English nation; [1] but Aimar of Aquitain, a man equally respected for valor in the field and for prudence in council, remonstrating with him on the danger of delay in so critical a conjuncture, he laid aside all further scruples, and accepted of the crown which was tendered him. Orders were immediately issued to prepare every thing for the ceremony of his coronation; but as he was yet afraid to place entire confidence in the Londoners, who were numerous and warlike, he meanwhile commanded fortresses to be erected, in order to curb the inhabitants, and to secure his person and government. [2]

Stigand was not much in the duke's favor, both because he had intruded into the see on the expulsion of Robert the Norman, and because he possessed such influence and authority over the English [3] as might be dangerous to a new-established monarch. William, therefore, pretending that the primate had obtained his pall in an irregular manner from Pope Benedict IX., who was himself a usurper, refused to be consecrated by him, and conferred this honor on Aldred, arch bishop of York. Westminster Abbey was the place appointed for that magnificent ceremony; the most considerable of the nobility, both English and Norman, attended the duke on this occasion; Aldred, in a short speech, asked the former whether they agreed to accept of William as their king; the bishop of Coutance put the same question to the latter; and both being answered with acclamations, [4] Aldred administered to the duke the usual coronation oath, by which he bound himself to protect the church, to administer justice, and to repress violence; he then anointed him, and put the crown upon his head. [5] There appeared nothing but joy in the countenance of the spectators; but in that very moment there burst forth the strongest symptoms of the jealousy and animosity which prevailed between the nations, and which continually increased during the reign of this prince.

[1 Gul. Pict.].

[2 Gul. Pict. .]

[3 Eadmer, .]

[4 Order. Vitalis, .]

> promised to govern the Normans and English by equal laws;
> and this addition to the usual oath seems not improbable,
> considering the circumstances of the time!]

The Norman soldiers, who were placed without in order to guard the church, hearing the shouts within, fancied that the English were offering violence to their duke; and they immediately assaulted the populace, and set fire to the neighboring houses. The alarm was conveyed to the nobility who surrounded the prince; both English and Normans, full of apprehensions, rushed out to secure themselves from the present danger; and it was with difficulty that William himself was able to appease the tumult. [1]

The king, thus possessed of the throne by a pretended descination of King Edward, and by an irregular election of the people, but still more by force of arms, retired from London to Berking, in Essex,

1067.

and there received the submissions of all the nobility who had not attended his coronation. Edric, surnamed the Forester, grand-nephew to that Edric so noted for his repeated acts of perfidy during the reigns of Ethelred and Edmond; Earl Coxo, a man famous for bravery; even Edwin and Morcar, earls of Mercia and Northumberland; with the other principal noblemen of England, came and swore fealty to him; were received into favor; and were confirmed in the possession of their estates and dignities. [2] Every thing bore the appearance of peace and tranquillity; and William had no other occupation than to give contentment to the foreigners who had assisted him to mount the throne, and to his new subjects, who had so readily submitted to him.

He had got possession of the treasure of Harold, which was considerable; and being also supplied with rich presents from the opulent men in all parts of England, who were solicitous to gain the favor of their new sovereign, he distributed great sums among his troops, and by this liberality gave them hopes of obtaining at length those more durable establishments which they had expected from his enterprise. [3] The ecclesiastics, both at home and abroad, had much forwarded his success; and he failed not, in return, to express his gratitude and devotion in the manner which was most acceptable to them; he sent Harold's standard to the pope, accompanied with many valuable presents; all the considerable monasteries and churches in France, where prayers had been put up for his success, now tasted of his bounty; [4] the English monks found him well disposed to favor their order; and he built a new convent near Hastings, which he called Battle Abbey, and which on pretence of supporting monks to pray lor his own soul, and for that of Harold, served as a lasting memorial of his victory. [5]

[1] Gul Pict. . Order. Vitalis, .]

[2] Gul. Pict. . Order. Vitalis, .]

[3] Gul. Pict. .]

[4] Gul. Pict. .]

West. . M. Paris, . Diceto, . This convent was freed by him from all episcopal jurisdiction. Monast.

Anglic, tom. i. , 312.]

He introduced into England that strict execution of justice, for which his administration had been much celebrated in Normandy; and even during this violent revolution, every disorder or oppression met with rigorous punishment. [1]

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[1] Gul. Pict. . Order, Vitalis, .

His army in particular was governed with severe discipline; and notwithstanding the insolence of victory, care was taken to give as little offence as possible to the jealousy of the vanquished. The king appeared solicitous to unite in an amicable manner the Normans and the English, by intermarriages and alliances; and all his new subjects who approached his person were received with affability and regard. No signs of suspicion appeared, not even towards Edgar Atheling, the heir of the ancient royal family, whom William confirmed in the honors of earl of Oxford, conferred on him by Harold, and whom he affected to treat with the highest kindness, as nephew to the Confessor, his great friend and benefactor. Though he confiscated the estates of Harold, and of those who had fought in the battle of Hastings on the side of that prince, whom he represented as a usurper, he seemed willing to admit of every plausible excuse for past opposition to his pretensions, and he received many into favor who had carried arms against him, He confirmed the liberties and immunities of London and the other cities of England; and appeared desirous of replacing every thing on ancient establishments. In his whole administration, he bore the semblance of the lawful prince, not of the conqueror; and the English began to flatter themselves, that they had changed, not the form of their government, but the succession only of their sovereigns; a matter which gave them small concern. The better to reconcile his new subjects to his authority, William made a progress through some parts of England; and besides a splendid court and majestic presence, which overawed the people, already struck with his military fame, the appearance of his clemency and justice gained the approbation of the wise, attentive to the first steps of their new sovereign.

But amidst this confidence and friendship which he expressed for the English, the king took care to place all real power in the hands of his Normans, and still to keep possession of the sword, to which, he was sensible, he had owed his advancement to sovereign authority. He disarmed the city of London and other places, which appeared most warlike and populous; and building citadels in that capital, as well as in Winchester, Hereford, and the cities best situated for commanding the kingdom, he quartered Norman soldiers in all of them, and left nowhere any power able to resist or oppose him. He bestowed the forfeited estates on the most eminent of hia captains, and established funds for the payment of his soldiers. And thus, while his civil administration carried the face of a legal magistrate, his military institutions were those of a master and tyrant; at least of one who reserved to himself, whenever he pleased, the power of assuming that character.

By this mixture, however, of vigor and lenity, he had so soothed the minds of the English, that he thought he might safely revisit his native country, and enjoy the triumph and congratulation of his ancient subjects. He left the administration in the hands of his uterine brother, Odo, bishop of Baieux, and of William Fitz-Osberne. That their authority might be exposed to less danger, he carried over with him all the most considerable nobility of England, who, while they served to grace his court by their presence and magnificent retinues, were in reality hostages for the fidelity of the nation. Among these were Edgar Atheling, Stigand the primate, the earls Edwin and Morcar, Waltheof, the son of the brave Earl Siward, with others, eminent for the greatness of their fortunes and families, or for their ecclesiastical and civil dignities. He was visited at the abbey of Fescamp, where he resided during some time, by Rodulph, uncle to the king of France, and by many powerful princes and nobles, who, having contributed to his enterprise, were desirous of participating in the joy and advantages of its success. His English courtiers, willing to ingratiate themselves with their new sovereign, outvied each other in equipages and entertainments; and made a display of riches which struck the foreigners with astonishment. William of Poictiers, a Norman historian, [1] who was present, speaks with admiration of the beauty of their persons, the size and workmanship of their silver plate, the costliness of their embroideries, an art in which the English then excelled; and he expresses himself in such terms, as tend much to exalt our idea of the opulence and cultivation of the people. [2]

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[1] Page 211, 212.]

[2] As the historian chiefly insists on the siver plate, his panegyric on the English magnificence shows only how incompetent a judge he was of the matter. Silver was then of ten times the value, and was

more than twenty times more rare than at present; and consequently of all species of luxury, plate must have been the rarest.]

But though every thing bure the face of joy and festivity, and William himself treated nia new courtiers with great appearance of kindness, it was impossible altogether to prevent the insolence of the Normans; and the English nobles derived little satisfaction from those entertainments, where they considered themselves as led in triumph by their ostentatious conqueror.

In England affairs took still a worse turn during the absence of the sovereign. Discontents and complaints multiplied every where; secret conspiracies were entered into against the government; hostilities were already begun in many places; and every thing seemed to menace a revolution as rapid as that which had placed William on the throne. The historian above mentioned, who is a panegyrist of his master, throws the blame entirely on the fickle and mutinous disposition of the English, and highly celebrates the justice and lenity of Odo's and Fitz-Osborne's administration. [2] But other historians, with more probability, impute the cause chiefly to the Normans; who, despising a people that had so easily submitted to the yoke, envying their riches, and grudging the restraints imposed upon their own rapine, were desirous of provoking them to a rebellion, by which they expected to acquire new confiscations and forfeitures, and to gratify those unbounded hopes which they had formed in entering on this enterprise. [3]

[2 Page 212.]

[3 Order. Vitalis,]

It is evident that the chief reason of this alteration in the sentiments of the English must be ascribed to the departure of William, who was alone able to curb the violence of his captains, and to overawe the mutinies of the people. Nothing indeed appears more strange than that this prince, in less than three months after the conquest of a great, warlike, and turbulent nation, should absent himself in order to revisit his own country, which remained in profound tranquillity, and was not menaced by any of its neighbors; and should so long leave his jealous subjects at the mercy of an insolent and licentious army. Were we not assured of the solidity of his genius, and the good sense displayed in all other circumstances of his conduct, we might ascribe this measure to a vain ostentation, which rendered him impatient to display his pomp and magnificence among his ancient subjects. It is therefore more natural to believe that, in so extraordinary a step, he was guided by a concealed policy; and that though he had thought proper at first to allure the people to submission by the semblance of a legal administration, he found that he could neither satisfy his rapacious captains, nor secure his unstable government, without farther exerting the rights of conquest, and seizing the possessions of the English. In order to have a pretext for this violence, he endeavored without discovering his intentions, to provoke and allure them into insurrections, which he thought could never prove dangerous, while he detained all the principal nobility in Normandy, while a great and victorious army was quartered in England, and while he himself was so near to suppress any tumult or rebellion. But as no ancient writer has ascribed this tyrannical purpose to William, it scarcely seems allowable, from conjecture alone, to throw such an imputation upon him.

But whether we are to account for that measure from the king’s vanity or from his policy, it was the immediate cause of all the calamities which the English endured during this and the subsequent reigns, and gave rise to those mutual jealousies and animosities between them and the Normans, which were never appeased till a long tract of time had gradually united the two nations, and made them one people. The inhabitants of Kent, who had first submitted to the conqueror, were the first that attempted to throw off the yoke; and in confederacy with Eustace, count of Boulogne, who had also been disgusted by the Normans, they made an attempt, though without success, on the garrison of Dover. [1] Edric the Forester, whose possessions lay on the banks of the Severn, being provoked at the depredations of some Norman captains in his neighborhood, formed an alliance with Blethyn and Rowallan, two Welsh princes; and endeavored, with their assistance, to repel force by force. [2]

[1] Gul. Gemet. . Order. Vitalis, . Anglia Sacra, vol i. p, 245.]

[2] Hoveden, p 450. M. West, p 226. Sim. Dunelm. .]

But though these open hostilities were not very considerable, the disaffection was general among the English, who had become sensible, though too late, of their defenceless condition, and began already to experience those insults and injuries, which a nation must always expect that allows itself to be reduced to that abject situation. A secret conspiracy was entered into, to perpetrate in one day, a general massacre of the Normans, like that which had formerly been executed upon the Danes; and the quarrel was become so general and national, that the vassals of Earl Coxo, having desired him to head them in an insurrection, and finding him resolute in maintaining his fidelity to William, put him to death as a traitor to his country.

The king, informed of these dangerous discontents, hastened over to England; and by his presence, and the vigorous measures which he pursued, disconcerted all the schemes of the conspirators. Such of them as had been more violent in their mutiny, betrayed their guilt by flying or concealing themselves; and the confiscation of their estates, while it increased the number of malecontents, both enabled William to gratify farther the rapacity of his Norman captains, and gave them the prospect of new forfeitures and attainders. The king began to regard all his English subjects as inveterate and irreclaimable enemies; and thenceforth either embraced, or was more fully confirmed in the resolution of seizing their possessions, and of reducing them to the most abject slavery. Though the natural violence and severity of his temper made him incapable of feeling any remorse in the execution of this tyrannical purpose, he had art enough to conceal his intention, and to preserve still some appearance of justice in his oppressions. He ordered all the English who had been arbitrarily expelled by the Normans during his absence, to be restored to their estates; [1] but at the same time he imposed a general tax on the people, that of danegelt, which had been abolished by the Confessor, and which had always been extremely odious to the nation. [2]

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[1] Chron. Sax. . This fact is a full proof that the Normans had committed great injustice, and were the real cause of the insurrections of the English.]

[2] Hoveden, . Sim. Dunelm. . Alured. Beverl.]

1068.

As the vigilance of William overawed the malecontents, their insurrections were more the result of an impatient humor in the people, than of any regular conspiracy which could give them a rational hope of success against the established power of the Normans. The inhabitants of Exeter, instigated by Githa, mother to King Harold, refused to admit a Norman garrison, and, betaking themselves to arms, were strengthened by the accession of the neighboring inhabitants of Devonshire and Cornwall. [1] The king hastened with his forces to chastise the revolt; and on his approach, the wiser and more considerable citizens, sensible of the unequal contest, persuaded the people to submit, and to deliver hostages for their obedience. A sudden mutiny of the populace broke this agreement; and William, appearing before the walls, ordered the eyes of one of the hostages to be put out, as an earnest of that severity which the rebels must expect, if they persevered in their revolt. [2] The inhabitants were anew seized with terror, and surrendering at discretion, threw themselves at the king’s feet, and supplicated his clemency and forgiveness. William was not destitute of generosity, when his temper was not hardened either by policy or passion: he was prevailed on to pardon the rebels, and he set guards on all the gates, in order to prevent the rapacity and insolence of his soldiery. [3]

Githa escaped with her treasures to Flanders. The malecontents of Cornwall imitated the example of Exeter, and met with like treatment; and the king having built a citadel in that city, which he put under the command of Baldwin, son of Earl Gilbert, returned to Winchester, and dispersed his army into their quarters. He was here joined by his wife, Matilda, who had not before visited England, and whom he now ordered to be crowned by Archbishop Aldred. Soon after she brought him an accession to his family, by the birth of a fourth son, whom he named Henry. His three elder sons, Robert, Richard, and William, still resided in Normandy.

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[1] Order. Vitalis, .

[2] Order. Vitalis,

[3] Order. Vitalis, .

But though the king appeared thus fortunate both in public and domestic life, the discontents of his English subjects augmented daily; and the injuries committed and suffered on both sides rendered the quarrel between them and the Normans absolutely incurable. The insolence of victorious masters, dispersed throughout the kingdom, seemed intolerable to the natives; and wherever they found the Normans separate or assembled in small bodies, they secretly set upon them, and gratified their vengeance by the slaughter of their enemies. But an insurrection in the north drew thither the general attention, and seemed to threaten more important consequences. Edwin and Morcar appeared at the head of this rebellion; and these potent noblemen, before they took arms, stipulated for foreign succors from their nephew Blethyn, prince of North Wales, from Malcolm, king of Scotland and from Sweyn, king of Denmark. Besides the general discontent which had seized the English, the two earls were incited to this revolt by private injuries. William, in order to insure them to his interests, had on his accession promised his daughter in marriage to Edwin; but either he had never seriously intended to perform this engagement, or, having changed his plan of administration in England from clemency to rigor, he thought it was to little purpose if he gained one family, while he enraged the whole nation. When Edwin, therefore, renewed his applications, he gave him an absolute denial; [1] and this disappointment, added to so many other reasons of disgust, induced that nobleman and his brother to concur with their incensed countrymen, and to make one general effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. William knew the importance of celerity in quelling an insurrection supported by such powerful leaders, and so agreeable to the wishes of the people; and having his troops always in readiness, he advanced by great journeys to the north. On his march he gave orders to fortify the castle of Warwick, of which he left Henry de Beaumont governor, and that of Nottingham, which he committed to the custody of William Peverell, another Norman captain. [2] He reached York before the rebels were in any condition for resistance, or were joined by any of the foreign succors which they expected, except a small reënforcement from Wales; [3] and the two earls found no means of safety but having recourse to the clemency of the victor. Archil, a potent nobleman in those parts, imitated their example, and delivered his son as a hostage for his fidelity; [4]

nor were the people, thus deserted by their leaders, able to make any farther resistance. But the treatment which William gave the chiefs was very different from that which fell to the share of their followers. He observed religiously the terms which he had granted to the former, and allowed them for the present to keep possession of their estates; but he extended the rigors of his confiscations over the latter, and gave away their lands to his foreign adventurers.

[[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

[[2] Order. Vitalis, .]

[[3] Order. Vitalia, .]

[[3] Order. Vitalis, .]

These, planted throughout the whole country, and in possession of the military power, left Edwin and Morcar, whom he pretended to spare, destitute of all support, and ready to fall whenever he should think proper to command their ruin. A peace which he made with Malcolm, who did him homage for Cumberland, seemed at the same time to deprive them of all prospect of foreign assistance. [[1]]

The English were now sensible that their final destruction was intended; and that instead of a sovereign, whom they had hoped to gain by their submission, they had tamely surrendered themselves, without resistance, to a tyrant and a conqueror. Though the early confiscation of Harold’s followers might seem iniquitous, being inflicted on men who had never sworn fealty to the duke of Normandy, who were ignorant of his pretensions, and who only fought in defence of the government which they themselves had established in their own country, yet were these rigors, however contrary to the ancient Saxon laws, excused on account of the urgent necessities of the prince; and those who were not involved in the present ruin, hoped that they should thenceforth enjoy, without molestation, their possessions and their dignities. But the successive destruction of so many other families convinced them that the king intended to rely entirely on the support and affections of foreigners; and they foresaw new forfeitures, attainders, and acts of violence, as the necessary result of this destructive plan of administration. They observed that no Englishman possessed his confidence, or was intrusted with any command or authority; and that the strangers, whom a rigorous discipline could have but ill restrained, were encouraged in their insolence and tyranny against them. The easy submission of the kingdom on its first invasion had exposed the natives to contempt; the subsequent proofs of their animosity and resentment had made them the object of hatred; and they were now deprived of every expedient by which they could hope to make themselves either regarded or beloved by their sovereign. Impressed with the sense of this dismal situation, many Englishmen fled into foreign countries, with an intention of passing their lives abroad free from oppression, or of returning, on a favorable opportunity, to assist their friends in the recovery of their native liberties. [2] Edgar Atheling himself, dreading the insidious caresses of William, was, persuaded by Cospatric, a powerful Northumbrian, to escape with him into Scotland; and he carried thither his two sisters, Margaret and Christina. They were well received by Malcolm, who soon after espoused Margaret, the elder sister; and partly with a view of strengthening his kingdom by the accession of so many strangers, partly in hopes of employing them against the growing power of William, he gave great countenance to all the English exiles. Many of them settled there, and laid the foundation of families which afterwards made a figure in that country.

While the English suffered under these oppressions, even the foreigners were not much at their ease; but finding themselves surrounded on all hands by engaged enemies, who took every advantage against them, and menaced them with still more bloody effects of the public resentment, they began to wish again for the tranquillity and security of their native country. Hugh de Grentmesnil and Humphry de Teliol, though intrusted with great commands, desired to be dismissed the service; and some others imitated their example; a desertion which was highly resented by the king, and

[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

[2] Order. Vitalis, . M. West. . M. Paris, . Sim Dunehn. .]

which he punished by the confiscation of all their possessions ii England. [1] But William's bounty to his followers could not fail of alluring many new adventurers into his service; and the rage of the vanquished English served only to excite the attention of the king and those warlike chiefs, and keep them in readiness to suppress every commencement of domestic rebellion or foreign invasion.

[1 Order. Vitalis,]

It was not long before they found occupation for their prowess and military conduct. Godwin, Edmond, and Magnus, three sons of Harold, had, immediately after the defeat at Hastings, sought a retreat in Ireland, where, having met with a kind reception from Dermot and other princes of that country, they projected an invasion on England, and they hoped that all the exiles from Denmark, Scotland, and Wales, assisted by forces from these several countries, would at once commence hostilities, and rouse the indignation of the English against their haughty conquerors. They landed in Devonshire; but found Brian, son of the count of Brittany, at the head of some foreign troops, ready to oppose them; and being defeated in several actions, they were obliged to retreat to their ships, and to return with great loss to Ireland. [1] The efforts of the Normans were now directed to the north, where affairs had fallen into the utmost confusion. The more impatient of the Northumbrians had attacked Robert de Comyn, who was appointed governor of Durham; and gaining the advantage over him from his negligence, they put him to death in that city, with seven hundred of his followers. [2] This success animated the inhabitants of York, who, rising in arms, slew Robert Fitz-Richard, their governor, [3] and besieged in the castle William Mallet, on whom the command now devolved. A little after, the Danish troops landed from three hundred vessels: Osberne, brother to King Sweyn, was intrusted with the command of these forces, and he was accompanied by Harold and Canute, two sons of that monarch. Edgar Atheling appeared from Scotland, and brought along with him Cospatric, Waltheof, Siward, Bearne, Merleswain, Adelin, and other leaders, who, partly from the hopes which they gave of Scottish succors, partly from their authority in those parts, easily persuaded the warlike and discontented Northumbrians to join the insurrection. Mallet, that he might better provide for the defence of the citadel of York, set fire to some houses which lay contiguous; but this expedient proved the immediate cause of his destruction. The flames, spreading into the neighboring streets, reduced the whole city to ashes. The enraged inhabitants, aided by the Danes, took advantage of the confusion to attack the castle, which they carried by assault; and the garrison, to the number of three thousand men, was put to the sword without mercy. [4]

This success proved a signal to many other parts of England, and gave the people an opportunity of showing their malevolence to the Normans. Hereward, a nobleman in East Anglia, celebrated for valor, assembled his followers, and taking shelter in the Isle of Ely, made inroads on all the neighboring country. [5] The English in the counties of Somerset and Dorset rose in arms, and assaulted Montacute, the Norman governor; while the inhabitants of Cornwall and Devon invested Exeter, which from the memory of William’s clemency still remained faithful to him.

[1 Gul. Gemet. . Order. Vitalis, . Anglia Sacra, TO! I. .]

[2 Order. Vitalis, . Chron. de Mailr. p. 116. Hoveden, . M. Paris, . Sim. Dunelm. .]

[3 Order. Vitalis, .]

[4 Order. Vitalis, . Hoveden, .]

Burgo, .]

Edric the Forester, calling in the assistance of the Welsh, laid siege to Shrewsbury, and made head against Earl Brient and Fitz-Osberne, who commanded in those quarters. [1] The English, everywhere repenting their former easy submission, seemed determined to make by concert one great effort for the recovery of their liberties, and for the expulsion of their oppressors.

William, undismayed amidst this scene of confusion, assembled. his forces, and animating them with the prospect of new confiscations and forfeitures, he marched against the rebels in the north, whom he regarded as the most formidable, and whose defeat, he knew, would strike a terror into all the other malecontents. Joining policy to force, he tried, before his approach, to weaken the enemy, by detaching the Danes from them; and he engaged Osberne, by large presents, and by offering him the liberty of plundering the sea-coast, to retire without committing farther hostilities into Denmark. [2] Cospatric also, in despair of success, made his peace with the king, and paying a sum of money as an atonement for his insurrection, was received into favor, and even invested with the earldom of Northumberland. Waltheof, who long defended York with great courage, was allured with this appearance of clemency; and as William knew how to esteem valor, even in an enemy, that nobleman had no reason to repent of this confidence. [3] Even Edric, compelled by necessity, submitted to the conqueror, and received forgiveness, which was soon after followed by some degree of trust and favor. Malcolm, coming too late to support his confederates, was constrained to retire; and all the English rebels in other parts, except Hereward, who still kept in his fastnesses, dispersed themselves, and left the Normans undisputed masters of the kingdom. Edgar Atheling, with his followers, sought again a retreat in Scotland from the pursuit of his enemies.

[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

[2] Hoveden, . Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, . Sim Dunelm. .]

[3] W. Malms, . H. Hunting, .]

1070.

But the seeming clemency of William toward the English leaders, proceeded only from artifice, or from his esteem of individuals: his heart, was hardened against all compassion towards the people, and he scrupled no measure, however violent or severe, which seemed requisite to support his plan of tyrannical administration. Sensible of the restless disposition of the Northumbrians, he determined to incapacitate them even after from giving him disturbance; and he issued orders for laying entirely waste that fertile country, which, for the extent of sixty miles, lies between the Humber and the Tees. [1] The houses were reduced to ashes by the merciless

Normans; the cattle seized and driven away; the instruments of husbandry destroyed; and the inhabitants compelled either to seek for a subsistence in the southern parts of Scotland, or if they lingered in England, from a reluctance to abandon their ancient habitations, they perished miserably in the woods from cold and hunger. The lives of a hundred thousand persons are computed to have been sacrificed to this stroke of barbarous policy, [2] which, by seeking a remedy for a temporary evil, thus inflicted a lasting wound on the power and populousness of the nation.

But William, finding himself entirely master of a people who had given him such sensible proofs of their impotent rage and animosity, now resolved to proceed to extremities against all the natives of England; and to reduce them to a condition in which they should no longer be formidable to his government. The insurrections and conspiracies in so many parts of the kingdom had involved the bulk of the landed proprietors, more or less, in the guilt of treason; and the king took advantage of executing against them, with the utmost rigor, the laws of forfeiture and attainder. Their lives were, indeed, commonly spared; but their estates were confiscated, and either annexed to the royal demesnes, or conferred with the most profuse bounty, on the Normans and other foreigners. [3] While the king's declared intention was to depress, or rather entirely extirpate, the English gentry, [4] it is easy to believe that scarcely the form of justice would be observed in those violent proceedings; [5] and that any suspicions served as the most undoubted proofs of guilt against a people thus devoted to destruction.

It was crime sufficient in an Englishman to be opulent, or noble, or powerful; and the policy of the king, concurring with the rapacity of foreign adventurers, produced almost a total revolution in the landed property of the

[1] Chron. Sax. . Ingulph. . W. Malms, . Hoveden, . Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 47. M. Paris, . Sim. Dunelm. . Brompton, . Knyghton, . Anglia Sacra, vol. i. p, 702.]

[2] Order. Vitalis, .]

[3] W. Malms, .]

[4] H. Hunting, .]

kingdom. Ancient and honorable families were reduced to beggary; the nobles themselves were every where treated with ignominy and contempt; they had the mortification of seeing their castles and manors possessed by Normans of the meanest birth and lowest stations; [1] and they found themselves carefully excluded from every road which led either to riches or preferment. [2]

As power naturally follows property, this revolution alone gave great security to the foreigners; but William, by the new institutions which he established, took also care to retain forever the military authority in those hands which had enabled him to subdue the kingdom. He introduced into England the feudal law, which he found established in France and Normandy, and which, during that age, was the foundation both of the stability and of the disorders in most of the monarchical governments of Europe. He divided all the lands of England, with very few exceptions, beside the royal demesnes, into baronies; and he conferred these, with the reservation of stated services and payments, on the most considerable of his adventurers. These great barons, who held immediately of the crown, shared out a great part of their lands to other foreigners, who were denominated knights or vassals, and who paid their lord the same duty and submission, in peace and war, which he himself owed, to his sovereign. The whole kingdom contained about seven hundred chief tenants, and sixty thousand two hundred and fifteen knights’ fees; [3] and as none of the native English were admitted into the first rank, the few who retained their landed property were glad to be received into the second, and, under the protection of some powerful Norman, to load themselves and their posterity with this grievous burden, for estates which they had received free from their ancestors. [4] The small mixture of English which entered into this civil or military fabric, (for it partook of both species,) was so restrained by subordination under the foreigners, that the Norman dominion seemed now to be fixed on the most durable basis, and to defy all the efforts of its enemies.

[1] Order. Vitalis, . M. West, .]

[2] See note I, at the end of the volume.]

[3] Order. Vitalis, . Secretum Abbatis, apud Selden. Title of Honor, . Spel. Gloss, in verbo Feodum. Sir Robert Cotton.]

[4] M. West. . M. Paris, . Bracton, lib. i. ca, num. I, Flets, lib, ca, n. 2]

The better to unite the parts of the government, and to bind them into one system, which might serve both for defence against foreigners and for the support of domestic tranquillity, William reduced the ecclesiastical revenues under the same feudal law; and though he had courted the church on his invasion and accession, he now subjected it to services which the clergy regarded as a grievous slavery, and as totally unbefitting their profession. The bishops and abbots were obliged, when required, to furnish to the king, during war, a number of knights or military tenants, proportioned to the extent of property possessed by each see or abbey; and they were liable, in case of failure, to the same penalties which were exacted from the laity. [1] The pope and the ecclesiastics exclaimed against this tyranny, as they called it; but the king's authority was so well established over the army, who held every thing from his bounty, that superstition itself, even in that age, when it was most prevalent, was constrained to bend under his superior influence.

But as the great body of the clergy were still natives, the king had much reason to dread the effects of their resentment; he therefore used the precaution of expelling the English from all the considerable dignities, and of advancing foreigners in their place. The partiality of the Confessor towards the Normans had been so great, that, aided by their superior learning, it had promoted them to many of the sees in England; and even before the period of the conquest, scarcely more than six or seven of the prelates were natives of the country. But among these was Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, a man who, by his address and vigor, by the greatness of his family and alliances, by the extent of his possessions, as well as by the dignity of his office, and his authority among the English, gave jealousy to the king. [2] Though William had, on his accession, affronted this prelate by employing the archbishop of York to officiate at his consecration, he was careful, on other occasions, to load him with honors and caresses, and to avoid giving him farther offence till the opportunity should offer of effecting his final destruction. [3]

[1] M. Paris, . Anglia Sacra, vol. i. .]

[2] Parker, .]

[3] Parker, .]

The suppression of the late rebellions, and the total subjection of the English, made him hope that an attempt against Stigand, however violent, would be covered by his great successes and be overlooked amidst the other important revolutions, which affected so deeply the property and liberty of the kingdom. Yet, notwithstanding these great advantages, he did not think it safe to violate the reverence usually paid to the primate, but under cover of a new superstition, which he was the great instrument of introducing into England.

The doctrine which exalted the papacy above all human power, had gradually diffused itself from the city and court of Rome; and was, during that age, much more prevalent in the southern than in the northern kingdoms of Europe. Pope Alexander, who had assisted William in his conquests, naturally expected, that the French and Normans would import into England the same reverence for his sacred character with which they were impressed in their own country; and would break the spiritual as well as civil independency of the Saxons who had hitherto conducted their ecclesiastical government, with an acknowledgment indeed of primacy in the see of Rome, but without much idea of its title to dominion or authority. As soon, therefore, as the Norman prince seemed fully established on the throne, the pope despatched Ermenfloy, bishop of Sion, as his legate into England; and this prelate was the first that had ever appeared with that character in any part of the British islands. The king, though he was probably led by principle to pay this submission to Rome, determined, as is usual, to employ the incident as a means of serving his political purposes, and of degrading those English prelates, who were become obnoxious to him. The legate submitted to become the instrument of his tyranny; and thought, that the more violent the exertion of power, the more certainly did it confirm the authority of that court from which he derived his commission. He summoned, therefore, a council of the prelates and abbots at Winchester; and being assisted by two cardinals, Peter and John, he cited before him Stigand, archbishop of Canterbury, to answer for his conduct. The primate was accused of three crimes; the holding of the see of Winchester together with that of Canterbury; the officiating in the pall of Robert, his predecessor; and the having received his own pall from Benedict IX., who was afterwards deposed for simony, and for intrusion into the papacy. [1]

[1] Hoveden, . Diceto, . Knyghton, p. 2345. Anglia Sacra, vol. i. , 6. Ypod. Neust. .]

These crimes of Stigand were mere pretences; since the first had been a practice not unusual in England, and was never any where subjected to a higher penalty than a resignation of one of the sees; the second was a pure ceremonial; and as Benedict was the only pope who then officiated, and his acts were never repealed, all the prelates of the church, especially thope who lay at a distance, were excusable for making their applications to him. Stigand's ruin, however, was resolved on, and was prosecuted with great severity. The legate degraded him from his dignity; the king confiscated his estate, and cast him into prison, where he continued in poverty and want during the remainder of his life. Like rigor was exercised against the other English prelates: Agelric, bishop of Selesey, and Agelmare, of Elmham, were deposed by the legate, and imprisoned by the king. Many considerable abbots shared the same fate: Egelwin, bishop of Durham, fled the kingdom Wulstan, of Worcester, a man of an inoffensive character was the only English prelate that escaped this general proscription, [1] and remained in possession of his dignity. Aldred, archbishop of York, who had set the crown on William's head, had died a little before of grief and vexation, and had left his malediction to that prince, on account of the breach of his coronation oath, and of the extreme tyranny with which he saw he was determined to treat his English subjects. [2]

It was a fixed maxim in this reign, as well as in some of the subsequent, that no native of the island should ever be advanced to any dignity, ecclesiastical, civil, or military [3]

[1] Brompton relates, that Wulstan was also deprived by the synod; out refusing to deliver his pastoral staff and ring to any but the person from whom he first received it, he went immediately to King Edward's tomb, and struck the staff so deeply into the stone, that none but himself was able to pull it out; upon which he was allowed to keep his bishopric. This instance may serve, instead of many, as a specimen of the monkish miracles. See also the Annals of Burton, .]

[2] W. Malmes de Gest. Pont. .]

[3] Ingulph. , 71.

The king, therefore, upon Stigand's deposition, promoted Lanfranc, a Milanese monk, celebrated for his learning and piety, to the vacant see. This prelate was rigid in defending the prerogatives of his station; and after a long process before the pope, he obliged Thomas, a Norman monk, who had been appointed to the see of York, to acknowledge the primacy of the archbishop of Canterbury. Where ambition can be so happy as to cover its enterprises, even to the person himself, under the appearance of principle, it is the most incurable and inflexible of all human passions. Hence Lanfranc's zeal in promoting the interests of the papacy, by which he himself augmented his own authority, was indefatigable, and met with proportionable success. The devoted attachment to Rome continually increased in England and being favored by the sentiments of the conquerors, as well as by the monastic establishments formerly introduced by Edred and by Edgar, it soon reached the same height at which it had, during some time, stood in France and Italy. [1] It afterwards went much farther; being favored by that very remote situation which had at first obstructed its progress; and being less checked by knowledge and a liberal education, which were still somewhat more common in the southern countries.

The prevalence of this superstitious spirit became dangerous to some of William's successors, and incommodious to most of them; but the arbitrary sway of this king over the English, and his extensive authority over the foreigners, kept him from feeling any immediate inconveniences from it. He retained the church in great subjection, as well as his lay subjects; and would allow none, of whatever character, to dispute his sovereign will and pleasure. He prohibited his subjects from acknowledging any one for pope whom he himself had not previously received; he required that all the ecclesiastical canons, voted in any synod, should first be laid before him, and be ratified by his authority; even bulls or letters from Rome could not legally be produced, till they received the same sanction; and none of his ministers or barons, whatever offences they were guilty of, could be subjected to spiritual censures, till he himself had given his consent to their excommunication. [2] These regulations were worthy of a sovereign, and kept united the civil and ecclesiastical powers, which the principles, introduced by this prince himself, had an immediate tendency to separate.

But the English had the cruel mortification to find that their king's authority, however acquired or however extended, was all employed in their oppression; and that the scheme of their subjection, attended with every circumstance of insult and indignity, [3] was deliberately formed by the prince, and wantonly prosecuted by his followers. [4]

[1] M. West, . Lanfranc wrote in defence of the real presence against Berengarius; and in those ages of stupidity and ignorance, he was greatly applauded for that performance.]

[2] Eadmer,]

[3] Order Vitalis, . H. Hunting, .]

[4] Ingulph.]

William had even entertained the difficult project of totally abolishing the English language; and for that purpose he ordered, that in all schools throughout the kingdom, the youth should be instructed in the French tongue; a practice which was continued from custom till after the reign of Edward III., and was never indeed totally discontinued in England. The pleadings in the supreme courts of judicature were in French: [1] the deeds were often drawn in the same language: the laws were composed in that idiom: [2] no other tongue was used at court: it became the language of all fashionable company; and the English themselves, ashamed of their own country, affected to excel in that foreign dialect. From this attention of William, and from the extensive foreign dominions, long annexed to the crown of England, proceeded that mixture of French which is at present to be found in the English tongue, and which composes the greatest and best part of our language. But amidst those endeavors to depress the English nation, the king, moved by the remonstrances of some of his prelates, and by the earnest desires of the people, restored a few of the laws of King Edward; [3] which, though seemingly of no great importance towards the protection of general liberty, gave them extreme satisfaction, as a memorial of their ancient government, and an unusual mark of complaisance in their imperious conquerors. [4]

1071.

The situation of the two great earls, Morcar and Edwin, became now very disagreeable. Though they had retained their allegiance during this general insurrection of their countrymen, they had not gained the king’s confidence, and they found themselves exposed to the malignity of the courtiers, who envied them on account of their opulence and greatness, and at the same time involved them in that general contempt which they entertained for the English. Sensible that they had entirely lost their dignity, and could not even hope to remain long in safety, they determined, though too kite, to share the same fate with their countrymen. While Edwin retired to his estate in the north, with a view of commencing an insurrection, Morcar took shelter in the Isle of Ely, with the brave Hereward, who, secured by the inaccessible situation of the place, still defended himself against the Normans. But this attempt served only to accelerate the ruin of the few English who had hitherto been able to preserve their rank or fortune during the past convulsions. William employed all his endeavors to subdue the Isle of Ely; and having surrounded it with flat-bottomed boats, and made a causeway through the morasses to the extent of two miles, he obliged the rebels to surrender at discretion. Hereward alone forced his way, sword in hand, through the enemy; and still continued his hostilities by sea against the Normans, till at last William, charmed with his bravery, received him into favor, and restored him to his estate. Earl Morcar, and Egelwin, bishop of Durham, who had joined the malecontents, were thrown into prison, and

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[1] 36 Ed. III. ca. Selden. Spicileg. ad Eadm. . Fortesque de Laud. Leg. Angl. ca.

[2] Chron. Rothom. A.D. 1066.

[3] Ingulph. . Brompton, . Knyghton, Hoveden, .

[4] See note K, at the end of the volume.

the latter soon after died in confinement. Edwin, attempting to make his escape into Scotland, was betrayed by some of his followers, and was killed by a party of Normans, to the great affliction of the English, and even to that of William, who paid a tribute of generous tears to the memory of this gallant and beautiful youth. The king of Scotland, in hopes of profiting by these convulsions, had fallen upon the northern counties; but on the approach of William, he retired; and when the king entered his country, he was glad to make peace, and to pay the usual homage to the English crown. To complete the king's prosperity, Edgar Atheling himself, despairing of success, and weary of a fugitive life, submitted to his enemy; and receiving a decent pension for his subsistence, was permitted to live in England unmolested. But these acts of generosity towards the leaders were disgraced, as usual, by William's rigor against the inferior malecontents. He ordered the hands to be lopped off, and the eyes to be put out, of many of the prisoners whom he had taken in the Isle of Ely; and he dispersed them in that miserable condition throughout the country, as monuments of his severity.

1073.

The province of Maine, in France, had, by the will of Herbert, the last count, fallen under the dominion of William some years before his conquest of England; but the inhabitants, dissatisfied with the Norman government, and instigated by Fulk, count of Anjou, who had some pretensions to the succession, now rose in rebellion, and expelled the magistrates whom the king had placed over them. The full settlement of England afforded him leisure to punish this insult on his authority; but being unwilling to remove his Norman forces from this island, he carried over a considerable army, composed almost entirely of English, and joining them to some troops levied in Normandy, he entered the revolted province. The English appeared ambitious of distinguishing themselves on this occasion, and of retrieving that character of valor which had long been national among them, but which their late easy subjection under the Normans had some what degraded and obscured. Perhaps, too, they hoped that, by their zeal and activity, they might recover the confidence of their sovereign, as their ancestors had formerly, by like means, gained the affections of Canute; and might conquer his inveterate prejudices in favor of his own countrymen. The king's military conduct, seconded by these brave troops, soon overcame all opposition in Maine: the inhabitants were obliged to submit, and the count of Anjou relinquished his pretensions.

1074.

But during these transactions, the government of England was greatly disturbed; and that, too, by those very foreigners who owed every thing to the king's bounty, and who were the sole object of his friendship and regard. The Norman barons, who had engaged with their duke in the conquest of England, were men of the most independent spirit; and though they obeyed their leader in the field, they would have regarded with disdain the richest acquisitions, had they been required, in return, to submit, in their civil government, to the arbitrary will of one man. But the imperious character of William, encouraged by his absolute dominion over the English, and often impelled by the necessity of his affairs, had prompted him to stretch his authority over the Normans themselves beyond what the free genius of that victorious people could easily bear. The discontents were become general among those haughty nobles; and even Roger, earl of Hereford, son and heir of Fitz-Osberne, the king's chief favorite, was strongly infected with them. This nobleman, intending to marry his sister to Ralph de Guader, earl of Norfolk, had thought, it his duty to inform the king of his purpose, and to desire the royal consent; but meeting with a refusal, he proceeded nevertheless to complete the nuptials, and assembled all his friends, and those of Guader, to attend the solemnity. The two earls, disgusted by the denial of their request, and dreading William's resentment for their disobedience, here prepared measures for a revolt; and during the gayety of the festival, while the company was heated with wine, they opened the design to their guests. They inveighed against the arbitrary conduct of the king; his tyranny over the English, whom they affected on this occasion to commiserate; his imperious behavior to his barons of the noblest birth; and his apparent intention of reducing the victors and the vanquished to a like ignominious servitude. Amidst their complaints, the indignity of submitting to a bastard [1] was not forgotten; the certain prospect of success in a revolt, by the assistance of the Danes and the discontented English, was insisted on; and the whole company, inflamed with the same sentiments, and warmed by the jollity of the entertainment, entered, by a solemn engagement, into the design of shaking off the royal authority. Even Earl Waltheof, who was present, inconsiderately expressed his approbation of the conspiracy, and promised his concurrence towards its success.

This nobleman, the last of the English who for some generations possessed any power or authority, had, after his capitulation at York, been received into favor by the conqueror; had even married Judith, niece to that prince; and had been promoted to the earldoms of Huntingdon and Northampton. [2] Cospatric, earl of Northumberland, having, on some new disgust from William, retired into Scotland, where he received the earldom of Dunbar from the bounty of Malcolm, Waltheof was appointed his successor in that important command, and seemed still to possess the confidence and friendship of his sovereign. [3]

But as he was a man of generous principles, and loved his country, it is probable that the tyranny exercised over the English lay heavy upon his mind, and destroyed all the satisfaction which he could reap from his own grandeur and advancement. When a prospect, therefore, was opened of retrieving their liberty, he hastily embraced it; while the fumes of the liquor and the ardor of the company prevented him from reflecting on the consequences of that rash attempt. But after his cool judgment returned, he foresaw that the conspiracy of those discontented barons was not likely to prove successful against the established power of William; or, if it did, that the slavery of the English, instead of being alleviated by that event, would become more grievous under a multitude of foreign leaders, factious and ambitious, whose union and whose discord would be equally oppressive to the people. Tormented with these reflections, he opened his mind to his wife Judith, of whose fidelity he entertained no suspicion, but who, having secretly fixed her affections on another, took this opportunity of ruining her

[1] William was so little ashamed of his birth, that he assumed the appellation of Bastard in some of his letters and charters. Spel Gloss. in verbo Bastardus. Camden in Richmondshire.]

[2] Order. Vitalis, Hoveden, .]

[3] Sim, Dunelm. .]

easy and credulous husband. She conveyed intelligence of the conspiracy to the king, and aggravated every circumstance which she believed would tend to incense him against Waltheof, and render him absolutely implacable. [1] Meanwhile the earl, still dubious with regard to the part which he should act, discovered the secret in confession to Lanfranc, on whose probity and judgment he had a great reliance: he was persuaded by the prelate, that he owed no fidelity to those rebellious barons, who had by surprise gained his consent to a crime; that his first duty was to his sovereign and benefactor, his next to himself and his family; and that if he seized not the opportunity of making atonement for his guilt by revealing it, the temerity of the conspirators was so great, that they would give some other person the means of acquiring the merit of the discovery. Waltheof, convinced by these arguments, went over to Normandy; but though he was well received by the king, and thanked for his fidelity, the account previously transmitted by Judith had sunk deep into William’s mind, and had destroyed all the merit of her husband’s repentance.

[1 Order. Vitalis, .]

The conspirators, hearing of Waltheof’s departure, immediately concluded their design to be betrayed; and they flew to arms before their schemes were ripe for execution, and before the arrival of the Danes, in whose aid they placed their chief confidence. The Earl of Hereford was checked by Walter de Lacy, a great baron in those parts, who, supported by the bishop of Worcester and the abbot of Evesham, raised some forces, and prevented the earl from passing the Severn, or advancing into the heart of the kingdom. The earl of Norfolk was defeated at Fagadun, near Cambridge, by Odo the regent, assisted by Richard de Bienfaite and William de Warrenne, the two justiciaries. The prisoners taken in this action had their right foot cut off, as a punishment of their treason the earl himself escaped to Norwich, thence to Denmark where the Danish fleet, which had made an unsuccessful attempt upon the coast of England, [1] soon after arrived, and brought him intelligence, that all his confederates were suppressed, and were either killed, banished, or taken prisoners. [2] Ralph retired in despair to Brittany, where he possessed a large estate and extensive jurisdictions.

[1 Chron. Sax. . M. Paris, .]

[2 Many of the fugitive Normans are supposed to have fled into Scotland, where they were protected, as well as the fugitive English, by Malcolm; whence come the many French and Norman families which are found at present in that country.]

The king, who hastened over to England in order to suppress the insurrection, found that nothing remained but the punishment of the criminals, which he executed with great severity. Many of the rebels were hanged; some had their eyes put out; others their hands cut off. But William, agreeably to his usual maxims, showed more lenity to their leader, the earl of Hereford, who was only condemned to a forfeiture of his estate, and to imprisonment during pleasure. The king seemed even disposed to remit this last part of the punishment; had not Roger, by a fresh insolence, provoked him to render his confinement perpetual.

1075.

But Waltheof, being an Englishman, was not treated with so much humanity; though his guilt, always much inferior to that of the other conspirators, was atoned for by an early repentance and return to his duty. William, instigated by his niece, as well as by his rapacious courtiers, who longed for so rich a forfeiture, ordered him to be tried, condemned, and executed. The English, who considered this nobleman as the last resource of their nation, grievously lamented his fate, and fancied that miracles were wrought by his relics, as a testimony of his innocence and sanctity. The infamous Judith, falling soon after under the king's displeasure, was abandoned by all the world, and passed the rest of her life in contempt, remorse, and misery.

Nothing remained to complete William's satisfaction but the punishment of Ralph de Guader; and he hastened over to Normandy, in order to gratify his vengeance on that criminal. But though the contest seemed very unequal between a private nobleman and the king of England, Ralph was so well supported both by the earl of Brittany and the king of France that William, after besieging him for some time in Dol, was obliged to abandon the enterprise, and make with those powerful princes a peace, in which Ralph himself was included England, during his absence, remained in tranquillity; and nothing remarkable occurred, except two ecclesiastical synods, which were summoned, one at London, another at Winchester. In the former, the precedency among the episcopasees was settled, and the seat of some of them was removed from small villages to the most considerable town within the diocese. In the second was transacted a business of more importance.

1076.

The industry and perseverance are surprising, with which the popes had been treasuring up powers and pretensions during so many ages of ignorance; while each pontiff employed every fraud for advancing purposes of imaginary piety, and cherished all claims which might turn to the advantage of his successors, though he himself could not expect ever to reap any benefit from them. All this immense storm of spiritual and civil authority was now devolved on Gregory VII., of the name of Hildebrand, the most enterprising pontiff that had ever filled that chair, and the least restrained by fear, decency, or moderation. Not content with shaking off the yoke of the emperors, who had hitherto exercised the power of appointing the pope on every vacancy, at least of ratifying his election, he undertook the arduous task of entirely disjoining the ecclesiastical from the civil power, and of excluding profane laymen from the right which they had assumed, of filling the vacancies of bishoprics, abbeys, and other spiritual dignities. [1] The sovereigns, who had long exercised this power, and who had acquired it, not by encroachments on the church, but on the people, to whom it originally belonged, [2] made great opposition to this claim of the court of Rome; and Henry IV., the reigning emperor, defended this prerogative of his crown with a vigor and resolution suitable to its importance.

[1] L'Abbé Conc. tom. x. , 372, com, 2.]

[2] Padre Paolo sopra Benef. Eccles.]

The few offices, either civil or military, which the feudal institutions left the sovereign the power of bestowing, made the prerogative of conferring the pastoral ring and staff the most valuable jewel of the royal diadem: especially as the general ignorance of the age bestowed a consequence on the ecclesiastical offices, even beyond the great extent of power and property which belonged to them. Superstition, the child of ignorance, invested the clergy with an authority almost sacred; and as they engrossed the little learning of the age, their interposition became requisite in all civil business, and a real usefulness in common life was thus superadded to the spiritual sanctity of their character.

When the usurpations, therefore, of the church had come to such maturity as to embolden her to attempt extorting the right of investitures from the temporal power, Europe, especially Italy and Germany, was thrown into the most violent convulsions, and the pope and the emperor waged implacable war on each other. Gregory dared to fulminate the sentence of excommunication against Henry and his adherents, to pronounce him rightfully deposed, to free his subjects from their oath of allegiance; and, instead of shocking mankind by this gross encroachment on the civil authority, he found the stupid people ready to second his most exorbitant pretensions. Every minister, servant, or vassal of the emperor, who received any disgust, covered his rebellion under the pretence of principle; and even the mother of this monarch, forgetting all the ties of nature, was seduced to countenance the insolence of his enemies. Princes themselves, not attentive to the pernicious consequences of those papal claims, employed them for their present purposes; and the controversy, spreading into every city of Italy, engendered the parties of Guelf and Ghibbelin; the most durable and most inveterate factions that ever arose from the mixture of ambition and religious zeal. Besides numberless assassinations, tumults, and convulsions, to which they gave rise, it is computed that the quarrel occasioned no less then sixty battles in the reign of Henry IV., and eighteen in that of his successor, Henry V., when the claims of the sovereign pontiff finally prevailed. [1]

[1 Padre Paolo sopra Eccles. Benef. .]

But the bold spirit of Gregory, not dismayed with the vigorous opposition which he met with from the emperor, extended his usurpations all over Europe; and well knowing the nature of mankind, whose blind astonishment ever inclines them to yield to the most impudent pretensions, he seemed determined to set no bounds to the spiritual, or rather temporal monarchy which he had undertaken to erect. He pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Nicephorus, emperor of the east; Robert Guiscard, the adventurous Norman who had acquired the dominion of Naples, was attacked by the same dangerous weapon: he degraded Boleslas, king of Poland from the rank of king; and even deprived Poland of the title of a kingdom: he attempted to treat Philip, king of France, with the same rigor which he had employed against the emperor; [1] he pretended to the entire property and dominion of Spain; and he parcelled it out amongst adventurers, who undertook to conquer it from the Saracens, and to hold it in vassalage under the see of Rome: [2] even the Christian bishops, on whose aid he relied for subduing the temporal princes, saw that he was determined to reduce them to servitude, and, by assuming the whole legislative and judicial power of the church to centre all authority in the sovereign pontiff. [3]

William the Conqueror, the most potent, the most haughty, and the most vigorous prince in Europe, was not, amidst all his splendid successes, secure from the attacks of this enterprising pontiff. Gregory wrote him a letter, requiring him to fulfil his promise in doing homage for the kingdom of England to the see of Rome, and to sent him over that tribute which all his predecessors had been accustomed to pay to the vicar of Christ. By the tribute, he meant Peter's pence; which, though at first a charitable donation of the Saxon princes, was interpreted, according to the usual practice of the Romish court, to be a badge of subjection acknowledged by the kingdom. William replied, that the money should be remitted as usual; but that neither had he promised to do homage to Rome, nor was it in the least his purpose to impose that servitude on his state. [4] And the better to show Gregory his independence, he ventured, notwithstanding the frequent complaints of the pope, to refuse to the English bishops the liberty of attending a general council, which that pontiff had summoned against his enemies.

[1] Epist. Greg. VII. epist. 32, 35; lib. ii. epist. 5]

[2] Epist. Greg. VII. lib. i. epist. 7.]

[3] Epist. Greg. VII. lib. ii. epist. 55.]

[4] Seldini Spicileg. ad Eadm. .]

But though the king displayed this vigor in supporting the royal dignity, he was infected with the general superstition of the age; and he did not perceive the ambitious scope of those institutions, which under color of strictness in religion, were introduced or promoted by the court of Rome. Gregory, while he was throwing all Europe into combustion by his violence and impostures, affected an anxious care for the purity of manners; and even the chaste pleasures of the marriage bed were inconsistent, in his opinion, with the sanctity of the sacerdotal character. He had issued a decree prohibiting the marriage of priests, excommunicating all clergymen who retained their wives, declaring such unlawful commerce to be fornication, and rendering it criminal in the laity to attend divine worship, when such profane priests officiated at the altar. [1]

[1] Hoveden, , 457. Flor. Wigorn. Spel. Concil fol, 13, A. D. 1078.]

This point was a great object in the politics of the Roman pontiffs; and it cost them infinitely more pains to establish it than the propagation of any speculative absurdity which they had ever attempted to introduce. Many synods were summoned in different parts of Europe before it was finally settled; and it was there constantly remarked, that the younger clergymen complied cheerfully with the pope’s decrees in this particular, and that the chief reluctance appeared in those who were more advanced in years; an event so little consonant to men’s natural expectations, that it could not fail to be glossed on even in that blind and superstitious age. William allowed the pope’s legate to assemble, in his absence a synod at Winchester, in order to establish the celibacy of the clergy; but the church of England could not yet be carried the whole length expected. The synod was content with decreeing, that the bishops should not thenceforth ordain any priests or deacons without exacting from them a promise of celibacy; but they enacted that none, except those who belonged to collegiate or cathedral churches, should be obliged to separate from their wives.

The king passed some years in Normandy; but his long residence there was not entirely owing to his declared preference of that duchy: his presence was also necessary for composing those disturbances which had arisen in that favorite territory, and which had even originally proceeded from his own family. Robert, his eldest son, surnamed Gambaron or

Courthose, from his short legs, was a prince who inherited all the bravery of his family and nation; but without that policy and dissimulation by which his father was so much distinguished, and which, no less than his military valor, had contributed to his great successes. Greedy of fame, impatient of contradiction, without reserve in his friendships, declared in his enmities, this prince could endure no control even from his imperious father, and openly aspired to that independence, to which his temper, as well as some circumstances in his situation, strongly invited him. [1] When William first received the submissions of the province of Maine, he had promised the inhabitants that Robert should be their prince; and before he undertook the expedition against England, he had, on the application of the French court, declared him his successor in Normandy, and had obliged the barons of that duchy to do him homage as their future sovereign. By this artifice, he had endeavored to appease the jealousy of his neighbors, as affording them a prospect of separating England from his dominions on the continent; but when Robert demanded of him the execution of those engagements, he gave him an absolute refusal, and told him, according to the homely saying, that he never intended to throw off his clothes till he went to bed. [2] Robert openly declared his discontent, and was suspected of secretly instigating the king of France and the earl of Brittany to the opposition which they made to William, and which had formerly frustrated his attempts upon the town of Dol. And as the quarrel still augmented, Robert proceeded to entertain a strong jealousy of his two surviving brothers, William and Henry, (for Richard was killed, in hunting, by a stag,) who, by greater submission and complaisance, had acquired the affections of their father. In this disposition, on both sides, the greatest trifle sufficed to produce a rupture between them.

The three princes, residing with their father in the castle of L’Aigle, in Normandy, were one day engaged in sport together, and after some mirth and jollity, the two younger took a fancy of throwing over some water on Robert as he passed through the court on leaving their apartment; [3] a frolic which he would naturally have regarded as innocent, had it not been for the suggestions of Alberic de Grentmesnil, son of that Hugh de Grentmesnil whom William had formerly deprived of his fortunes, when that baron deserted him during his greatest difficulties in England. The young man, mindful of the injury, persuaded the prince that this action was meant as a public affront, which it behoved him in honor to resent; and the choleric

Robert, drawing his sword, ran up stairs, with an intention of taking revenge on his brothers. [4]

[1] Order. Vitalis, . Hoveden, . Flor. Wigorn. .]

[2] Chron. de Mailr. .]

[3] Order. Vitalis, p 545]

[4] Order. Vitalis, p 545]

The whole castle was filled with tumult, which the king himself, who hastened from his apartment, found some difficulty to appease. But he could by no means appease the resentment of his eldest son who, complaining of his partiality, and fancying that no proper atonement had been made him for the insult, left the court that very evening, and hastened to Rouen, with an intention of seizing the citadel of that place. [1] But being disappointed in this view by the precaution and vigilance of Roger de Ivery, the governor, he fled to Hugh de Neufchatel, a powerful Norman baron, who gave him protection in his castles; and he openly levied war against his father. [2] The popular character of the prince, and a similarity of manners, engaged all the young nobility of Normandy and Maine, as well as of Anjou and Brittany, to take part with him: and it was suspected that Matilda, his mother, whose favorite he was, supported him in his rebellion by secret remittances of money; and by the encouragement which she gave his partisans.

[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

[2] Order. Vitalis, . Hoveden, 457, Sim. Dunelm. . Diceto,]

All the hereditary provinces of William, as well as his family, were during several years thrown into convulsions by this war; and he was at last obliged to have recourse to England, where that species of military government, which he had established, gave him greater authority than the ancient feudal institutions permitted him to exercise in Normandy. He called over an army of English under his ancient captains, who soon expelled Robert and his adherents from their retreats, and restored the authority of the sovereign in all his dominions. The young prince was obliged to take shelter in the castle of Gerberoy, in the Beauvoisis, which the king of France, who secretly fermented all these dissensions, had provided for him. In this fortress he was closely besieged by his father, against whom having a strong garrison, he made an obstinate defence. There passed under the walls of this place many rencounters which resembled more the single combats of chivalry than the military actions of armies; but one of them was remarkable for its circumstances and its event. Robert happened to engage the king, who was concealed by his helmet, and, both of them being valiant, a fierce combat ensued, till at last the young prince wounded his father in the arm and unhorsed him. On his calling out for assistance, his voice discovered him to his son, who, struck with remorse for his past guilt, and astonished with the apprehensions of one much greater, which he had so nearly incurred, instantly threw himself at his father’s feet, craved pardon for his offences, and offered to purchase forgiveness by any atonement. [1] The resentment harbored by William was so implacable, that he did not immediately correspond to this dutiful submission of his son with like tenderness; but, giving him his malediction, departed for his own camp, on Robert’s horse, which that prince had assisted him to mount, He soon after raised the siege, and marched with his army to Normandy; where the interposition of the queen and other common friends brought about a reconcilement, which was probably not a little forwarded by the generosity of the son’s behavior in this action, and by the returning sense of his past misconduct. The king seemed so fully appeased that he even took Robert with him into England, where he intrusted him with the command of an army, in order to repel an inroad of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and to retaliate by a like inroad into that country. The Welsh, unable to resist William’s power, were, about the same time, necessitated to pay a compensation for their incursions; and every thing was reduced to full tranquillity in this island.

[1] W. Malms, . H. Hunting, . Hoveden, . Flor Wigorn. . Sim. Dunelm. . Diceto, p. 287. Knyghton, . Alured. Beverl. .]

1081.

This state of affairs gave William leisure to begin and finish an undertaking, which proves his extensive genius and does honor to his memory; it was a general survey of all the lands in the kingdom, their extent in each district, their proprietors, tenures, value; the quantity of meadow, pasture, wood, and arable land, which they contained; and in some counties, the number of tenants, cottagers, and slaves of all denominations, who lived upon them. He appointed commissioners for this purpose, who entered every particular in their register by the verdict of juries; and after a labor of six years, (for the work was so long in finishing,) brought him an exact account of all the landed property of his kingdom. [1]

[1] Chron. Sax. . Ingulph. . Chron. T. Wykes, . H. Hunting, . Hoveden, . M. West. . Flor Wigorn. . Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, . M. Paris . The more northern counties were not comprehended in this survey; I suppose because of their wild, uncultivated state.]

This monument, called domesday-book, the most valuable piece of antiquity possessed by any nation, is still preserved in the exchequer; and though only some extracts of it have hitherto been published, it serves to illustrate to us, in many particulars, the ancient state of England. The great Alfred had finished a like survey of the kingdom in his time, which was long kept at Winchester, and which probably served as a model to William in this undertaking. [1]

The king was naturally a great economist; and though no prince had ever been more bountiful to his officers and servants, it was merely because he had rendered himself universal proprietor of England, and had a whole kingdom to bestow. He reserved an ample revenue for the crown; and in the general distribution of land among his followers, he kept possession of no less than one thousand four hundred and twenty — two manors in different parts of England, [2] which paid him rent either in money, or in corn, cattle, and the usual produce of the soil. An ancient historian computes that his annual fixed income, besides escheats, fines, reliefs, and other casual profits to a great value, amounted to near four hundred thousand pounds a year; [3] a sum which, if all circumstances be attended to, will appear wholly incredible. A pound in that age, as we have already observed, contained three times the weight of silver that it does at present; and the same weight of silver, by the most probable computation, would purchase near ten times more of the necessaries of life, though not in the same proportion of the finer manufactures. This revenue, therefore, of William, would be equal to at least nine or ten millions at present; and as that prince had neither fleet nor army to support, the former being only an occasional expense, and the latter being maintained, without any charge to him, by his military vassals, we must thence conclude that no emperor or prince, in any age or nation, can be compared to the Conqueror for opulence and riches. This leads us to suspect a great mistake in the computation of the historian; though, if we consider that avarice is always imputed to William as one of his vices, and that, having by the sword rendered himself master of all the lands in the kingdom, he would certainly, in the partition, retain a great proportion for his own share, we can scarcely be guilty of any error in asserting, that perhaps no king of England was ever more opulent, was more able to support by his revenue the splendor and magnificence of a court, or could bestow more on his pleasures, or in liberalities to his servants and favorites. [4]

[1 Ingulph. .]

[2 West's Inquiry into the Manner of creating Peers, .]

[3 Order. Vitalis, . He says, one thousand and sixty pounds and some odd shillings and pence a day.]

[4 Fortescue, de Dom. Reg. el Politic, cap. 111.]

There was one pleasure to which William, as well as all the Normans and ancient Saxons, was extremely addicted, and that was hunting; but this pleasure he indulged more at the expense of his unhappy subjects, whose interests he always disregarded, than to the loss or diminution of his own revenue. Not content with those large forests which former kings possessed in all parts of England, he resolved to make a new forest near Winchester, the usual place of his residence; and for that purpose, he laid waste the country in Hampshire for an extent of thirty miles, expelled the inhabitants from their houses, seized their property, even demolished churches and convents, and made the sufferers no compensation for the injury. [1] At the same time, he enacted new laws, by which he prohibited all his subjects from hunting in any of his forests, and rendered the penalties more severe than ever had been inflicted for such offences. The killing of a deer or boar, or even a hare, was punished with the loss of the delinquent’s eyes; and that at a time when the killing of a man could be atoned for by paying a moderate fine or composition.

[[1] W. Malms, . H. Hunting, . Anglia Sacra, vol. i.]

The transactions recorded during the remainder of this reign may be considered more as domestic occurrences, which concern the prince, than as national events, which regard England. Odo, bishop of Baieux, the king’s uterine brother, whom he had created earl of Kent, and intrusted with a great share of power during his whole reign, had amassed immense riches; and agreeably to the usual progress of human wishes, he began to regard his present acquisitions but as a step to further grandeur. He had formed the chimerical project of buying the papacy; and though Gregory, the reigning pope, was not of advanced years, the prelate had confided so much in the predictions of an astrologer, that he reckoned upon the pontiff’s death, and upon attaining, by his own intrigues and money, that envied state of greatness. Resolving, therefore, to remit all his riches to Italy, he had persuaded many considerable barons, and among the rest Hugh, earl of Chester, to take the same course; in hopes that, when he should mount the papal throne, he would bestow on them more considerable establishments in that country. The king, from whom all these projects had been carefully concealed, at last got intelligence of the design, and ordered Odo to be arrested. His officers, from respect to the immunities which the ecclesiastics now assumed, scrupled to execute the command, till the king himself was obliged in person to seize him; and when Odo insisted that he was a prelate, and exempt from all temporal jurisdiction, William replied, that he arrested him, not as bishop of Baieux, but as earl of Kent. He was sent prisoner to Normandy; and notwithstanding the remonstrances and menaces of Gregory, was detained in custody during the remainder of this reign.

1083.

Another domestic event gave the king much more concern: it was the death of Matilda, his consort, whom he tenderly loved, and for whom he had ever preserved the most sincere friendship. Three years afterwards he passed into Normandy, and carried with him Edgar Atheling, to whom he willingly granted permission to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He was detained on the continent by a misunderstanding which broke out between him and the king of France, and which was occasioned by inroads made into Normandy by some French barons on the frontiers.

1087.

It was little in the power of princes at that time to restrain their licentious nobility; but William suspected, that these barons durst not have provoked his indignation, had they not been assured of the countenance and protection of Philip. His displeasure was increased by the account he received of some railleries which that monarch had thrown out against him. William, who was become corpulent, had been detained in bed some time by sickness; upon which Philip expressed his surprise that his brother of England should be so long in being delivered of his big belly. The king sent him word, that, as soon as he was up, he would present so many lights at Notre-dame, as would perhaps give little pleasure to the king of France; alluding to the usual practice at that time of women after childbirth. Immediately on his recovery, he led an army into L’Isle de France, and laid every thing waste with fire and sword. He took the town of Mante, which he reduced to ashes. But the progress of these hostilities was stopped by an accident which soon after put an end to William’s life. His horse starting aside of a sudden, he bruised his belly on the pommel of the saddle; and being in a bad habit of body, as well as somewhat advanced in years, he began to apprehend the consequences, and ordered himself to be carried in a litter to the monastery of St Gervas. Finding his illness increase, and being sensible of the approach of death, he discovered at last the vanity of all human grandeur, and was struck with remorse for those horrible cruelties and acts of violence, which, in the attainment and defence of it, he had committed during the course of his reign over England. He endeavored to make atonement by presents to churches and monasteries; and he issued orders that Earl Morcar, Siward, Bearne, and other English prisoners, should be set at liberty. He was even prevailed on, though not without reluctance, to consent, with his dying breath, to release his brother Odo, against whom he was extremely incensed. He left Normandy and Maine to his eldest son, Robert: he wrote to Lanfranc, desiring him to crown William king of England; he bequeathed to Henry nothing but the possessions of his mother, Matilda; but foretold that he would one day surpass both his brothers in power and opulence. He expired in the sixty-third year of his age, in the twenty-first year of his reign over England, and in the fifty-fourth of that over Normandy.

Few princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to grandeur and prosperity, from the abilities and the vigor of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence; his ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, still less under those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of sound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable, and unacquainted with submission, he was yet able to direct them to his purposes, and, partly from the ascendant of his vehement character, partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited authority. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion; and he seemed equally ostentatious and equally ambitious of show and parade in his clemency and in his severity. The maxims of his administration were austere, but might have been useful, had they been solely employed to preserve order in an established government: [1] they were ill calculated for softening the rigors which, under the most gentle management, are inseparable from conquest.

[[1] M. West. . Anglia Sacra, vol. i. .]

His attempt against England was the last great enterprise of the kind, which, during the course of seven hundred years, has fully succeeded in Europe, and the force of his genius broke through those limits which first the feudal institutions, chen the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the several states of Christendom. Though he rendered himself infinitely odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to his posterity, and the throne is still filled by his descendants; a proof that the foundations which he laid were firm and solid, and that, amidst all his violence, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still an eye towards futurity.

Some writers have been desirous of refusing to this prince the title of conqueror, in the sense which that term commonly bears; and on pretence that the word is sometimes in old books applied to such as make an acquisition of territory by any means, they are willing to reject William’s title, by right of war, to the crown of England. It is needless to enter, into a controversy, which, by the terms of it, must necessarily degenerate into a dispute of words. It suffices to say, that the duke of Normandy’s first invasion of the island was hostile; that his subsequent administration was entirely supported by arms; that in the very frame of his laws he made a distinction between the Normans and English, to the advantage of the former; [1] that he acted in every thing as absolute master over the natives, whose interests and affections he totally disregarded; and that if there was an interval when he assumed the appearance of a legal sovereign, the period was very short, and was nothing but a temporary Sacrifice, which he, as has been the case with most conquerors, was obliged to make, of his inclination to his present policy.

[1] Hoveden, .]

Scarce any of those revolutions, which, both in history and in common language, have always been denominated conquests, appear equally violent, or were attended with so sudden an alteration both of power and property. The Roman state, which spread its dominion over Europe, left the rights of individuals in a great measure untouched; and those civilized conquerors, while they made their own country the seat of empire, found that they could draw most advantage from the subjected provinces, by securing to the natives the free enjoyment cf their own laws and of their private possessions. The barbarians who subdued the Roman empire, though they settled in the conquered countries, yet being accustomed to a rude, uncultivated life, found a part only of the land sufficient to supply all their wants; and they were not tempted to seize extensive possessions, which they knew neither how to cultivate nor enjoy. But the Normans and other foreigners who followed the standard of William while they made the vanquished kingdom the seat of government, were yet so far advanced in arts as to be acquainted with the advantages of a large property; and having totally subdued the natives, they pushed the rights of conquest (very extensive in the eyes of avarice and ambition, however narrow in those of reason) to the utmost extremity against them. Except the former conquest of England by the Saxons themselves, who were induced, by peculiar circumstances, to proceed even to the extermination of the natives, it would be difficult to find in all history a revolution more destructive, or attended with a more complete subjection of the ancient inhabitants. Contumely seems even co have been wantonly added to oppression; [1] and the natives were universally reduced to such a state of meanness and poverty, that the English, name became a term of reproach; and several generations elapsed before one family of Saxon pedigree was raised to any considerable honors, or could so much as attain the rank of baron of the realm. [2] These facts are so apparent from the whole tenor of the English history, that none would have been tempted to deny or elude them, were they no heated by the controversies of faction; while one party was absurdly afraid of those absurd consequences which they saw the other party inclined to draw from this event. But it is evident that the present rights and privileges of the people, who are a mixture of English and Normans, can never be affected by a transaction which passed seven hundred years ago; and as all ancient authors, [3] who lived nearest the time, and best knew the state of the country, unanimously speak of the Norman dominion as a conquest by war and arms, no reasonable man, from the fear of imaginary consequences, will ever be tempted to reject their concurring and undoubted testimony.

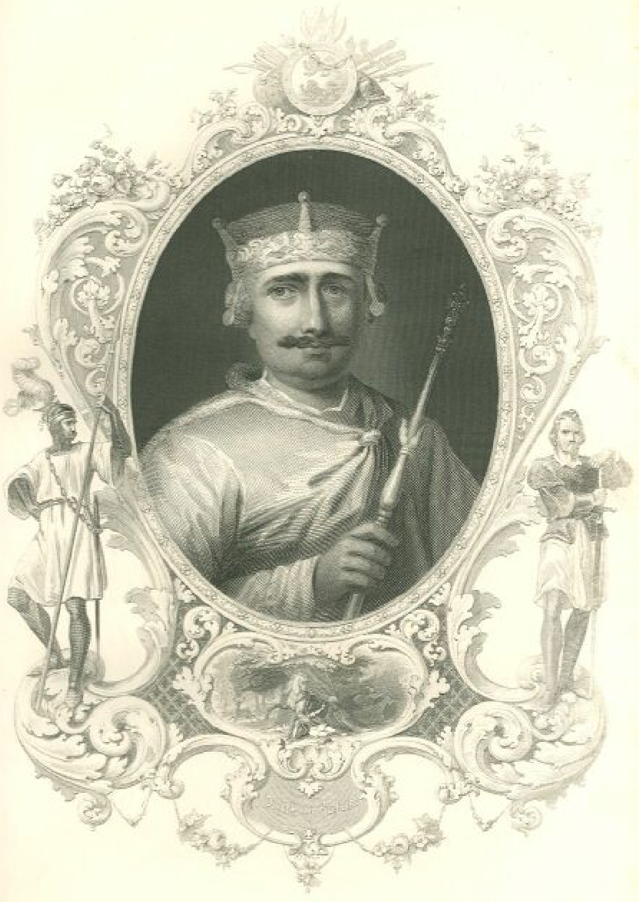
[1] H. Hunting, . Brompton, .]

[2] So late as the reign of King Stephen, the earl of Albemarle, before the battle of the Standard, addressed the officers of his army in these terms: “Proceres Angliae clarissimi, et genere Normanni, etc.” Brompton, . See, further, Abbas Rieval, , etc All the barons and military men of England still called themselves Normans.]

[3] See note L. at the end of the volume.]

King William had issue, besides his three sons who survived him, five daughters, to wit, first, Cicily, a nun in the monastery of Feschamp, afterwards abbess in the Holy Trinity at Caen, where she died in 1127. Second, Constantia, married to Alan Fergant, earl of Brittany: she died without issue. Third Alice, contracted to Harold. Fourth, Adela, married to Stephen, earl of Blois, by whom she had four sons, William, Theobold, Henry, and Stephen; of whom the elder was neglected, on account of the imbecility of his understanding. Fifth, Agatha, who died a virgin; but was betrothed to the king of Gallicia. She died on her journey thither before she joined her bridegroom.

CHAPTER V.



WILLIAM II.,
surnamed Rufus.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE

WILLIAM RUFUS.

Contemporary Monarchs

EMP. OF GERM. KINGS OF SCOTLAND. K. OF FRANCE. K. OF SPAIN.
Henry IV. Malcolm III 1093 Philip I. Alphonso VI.
Donald Bane, dep 1091
Duncan 1094
Donald Bane 1097
Edgar.
POPES.
Urban II. 1099
Paschal II.

1087.

WILLIAM, surnamed Rufus, or the Red, from the color of his hair, had no sooner procured his father’s recommendatory letter to Lanfranc, the primate, than he hastened to take measures for securing to himself the government of England. Sensible that a deed so unformal, and so little prepared, which violated Robert’s right of promigeniture, might meet with great opposition, he trusted entirely for success to his own celerity; and having left St. Gervas while William was breathing his last, he arrived in England before intelligence of his father’s death had reached that kingdom. [1] Pretending orders from the king, he secured the fortresses of Dover, Pevensey, and Hastings, whose situation rendered them of the greatest importance; and he got possession of the royal treasure at Winchester, amounting to the sum of sixty thousand pounds, by which he hoped to encourage and increase his partisans, [2] The primate, whose rank and reputation in the kingdom gave him great authority, had been intrusted with the care of his education, and had conferred on him the honor of knighthood; [3] and being connected with him by these ties, and probably deeming his pretensions just, declared that he would pay a willing obedience to the last will of the Conqueror, his friend and benefactor. Having assembled some bishops and some of the principal nobility, he instantly proceeded to the ceremony of crowning the new king; [4] and by this despatch endeavored to prevent all faction and resistance. At the same time, Robert, who had been already acknowledged successor to Normandy, took peaceable possession of that duchy.

[1 W. Malms, . M. Paris, .]

[2 Chron. Sax. . Brompton, .]

[3 W. Malms, . M. Paris, . Thorn. Rudborne,]

[4 Hoveden, .]

But though this partition appeared to have been made without any violence or opposition, there remained in England many causes of discontent, which seemed to menace that kingdom with a sudden revolution. The barons, who generally possessed large estates both in England and in Normandy, were uneasy at the separation of those territories; and foresaw that, as it would be impossible for them to preserve long their allegiance to two masters, they must necessarily resign either their ancient patrimony or their new acquisitions. [1]

[1 Order. Vitalis, .]

Robert’s title to the duchy they esteemed incontestable; his claim to the kingdom plausible; and they all desired that this prince, who alone had any pretensions to unite these states, should be put in possession of both. A comparison also of the personal qualities of the two brothers led them to give the preference to the elder. The duke was brave, open, sincere, generous: even his predominant faults, his extreme indolence and facility, were not disagreeable to those haughty barons, who affected independence, and submitted with reluctance to a vigorous administration in their sovereign. The king, though equally brave, was violent, haughty, tyrannical; and seemed disposed to govern more by the fear than by the love of his subjects. Odo, bishop of Baieux, and Robert, earl of Mortaigne, maternal brothers of the Conqueror, envying the great credit of Lanfranc, which was increased by his late services enforced all these motives with their partisans, and engaged them in a formal conspiracy to dethrone the king. They communicated their design to Eustace, count of Boulogne Roger, earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel, Robert de Belesme, his eldest son, William, bishop of Durham, Robert de Moubray, Roger Bigod, Hugh de Grentmesnil; and they easily procured the assent of these potent noblemen. The conspirators, retiring to their castles, hastened to put themselves in a military posture; and expecting to be soon supported by a powerful army from Normandy, they had already begun hostilities in many places.

The king, sensible of his perilous situation, endeavored to engage the affections of the native English, As that people were now so thoroughly subdued that they no longer aspired to the recovery of their ancient liberties, and were content with the prospect of some mitigation in ihe tyranny of the Norman princes, they zealously embraced William’s cause, upon receiving general promises of good treatment, and of enjoying the license of hunting in the royal forests. The king was soon in a situation to take the field; and as he knew the danger of delay, he suddenly marched into Kent, where his uncles had already seized the fortresses of Pevensey and Rochester. These places he successively reduced by famine; and though he was prevailed on by the earl of Chester, William de Warrenne, and Robert Fitz-Hammon, who had embraced his cause, to spare the lives of the rebels, he confiscated all their estates, and banished them the kingdom. [1] This success gave authority to his negotiations with Roger, earl of Shewsbury, whom he detached from the confederates; and as his powerful fleet, joined to the indolent conduct of Robert, prevented the arrival of the Norman succors, all the other rebels found no resource but in flight or submission. Some of them received a pardon; but the greater part were attainted; and the king bestowed their estates on the Norman barons who had remained faithful to him.

[1] Chron. Sax. . Order. Vitalis, .

1089.

William, freed from the danger of these insurrections, took little care of fulfilling his promises to the English, who still found themselves exposed to the same oppressions which they had undergone during the reign of the Conqueror, and which were rather augmented by the violent, impetuous temper of the present monarch. The death of Lanfranc, who retained great influence over him, gave soon after a full career to his tyranny; and all orders of men found reason to complain of an arbitrary and illegal administration. Even the privileges of the church, held sacred in those days, were a feeble rampart against his usurpations. He seized the temporalities of all the vacant bishoprics and abbeys; he delayed the appointing of successors to those dignities, that he might the longer enjoy the profits of their revenue; he bestowed some of the church lands in property on his captains and favorites; and he openly set to sale such sees and abbeys as he thought proper to dispose of. Though the murmurs of the ecclesiastics, which were quickly propagated to the nation, rose high against this grievance, the terror of William's authority, confirmed by the suppression of the late insurrections, retained everyone in subjection, and preserved general tranquillity in England.

1090.

The king, even thought himself enabled to disturb his brother in the possession of Normandy. The loose and negligent administration of that prince had imboldened the Norman barons to affect a great independency; and their mutual quarrels and devastations had rendered that whole territory a scene of violence and outrage. Two of them, Walter and Odo, were bribed by William to deliver the fortresses of St. Valori and Albemarle into his hands: others soon after imitated the example of revolt, while Philip, king of France, who ought to have protected his vassal in the possession of his fief, was, after making some efforts in his favor, engaged by large presents to remain neuter. The duke had also reason to apprehend danger from the intrigues of his brother Henry.

This young prince, who had inherited nothing of his father's great possessions but some of his money, has furnished Robert, while he was making his preparations against England, with ihe sum of three thousand marks; and in return for so slender a supply, had been put in possession of the Cotentin, which comprehended near a third of the duchy of Normandy.

Robert afterwards, upon some suspicion, threw him into prison; but finding himself exposed to invasion from the king of England, ind dreading the conjunction of the two brothers against him, he now gave Henry his liberty, and even made use of his assistance in suppressing the insurrections of his rebellious subjects. Conan, a rich burgess of Rouen, had entered into a conspiracy to deliver that city to William; but Henry, on the detection of his guilt, carried the traitor up to a high tower and with his own hands flung him from the battlements.

The king appeared in Normandy at the head of an army and affairs seemed to have come to extremity between the brothers, when the nobility on both sides, strongly connected by interest and alliances, interposed, and meditated an accommodation. The chief advantage of this treaty accrued to William, who obtained possession of the territory of Eu, the towns of Aumule, Fescamp, and other places; but in return he promised, that he would assist his brother in subduing Maine, which had rebelled; and that the Norman barons, attainted in Robert's cause, should be restored to their estates in England. The two brothers also stipulated, that, on the demise of either without issue, the survivor should inherit all his dominions; and twelve of the most powerful barons on each side swore that they would employ their power to insure the effectual execution of the whole treaty, [1] a strong proof of the great independence and authority of the nobles in those ages.

[1] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, . Hoveden, . M Paris, . Annul. Waverl. . W. Heming. p. 463. Sum Dunelm. . Brompton, .]

Prince Henry, disgusted that so little care had been taken of his interests in this accommodation, retired to St. Michael's Mount, a strong fortress on the coast of Normandy, and infested the neighborhood with his incursions. Robert and William, with their joint forces, besieged him in this place, and had nearly reduced him by the scarcity of water, when the elder, hearing of his distress, granted him permission to supply himself, and also sent him some pipes of wine for his own table. Being reproved by William for this ill-timed generosity, he replied, "What, shall I suffer my brother to die of thirst? Where shall we find another when he is gone?" The king also, during this siege, performed an act of generosity which was less suitable to his character. Riding out one day alone, to take a survey of the fortress, he was attacked by two soldiers, and dismounted. One of them drew his sword in order to despatch him, when the king exclaimed, “Hold, knave! I am the king of England.” The soldier suspended his blow and, raising the king from the ground with expressions of respect, received a handsome reward, and was taken into his service. Prince Henry was soon after obliged to capitulate; and being despoiled of all his patrimony, wandered about for some time with very few attendants, and often in great poverty.

1091.

The continued intestine discord among the barons was alone in that age destructive; the public wars were commonly short and feeble, produced little bloodshed, and were attended with no memorable event. To this Norman war, which was so soon concluded, there succeeded hostilities with Scotland, which were not of longer duration. Robert here Commanded his brother’s army, and obliged Malcolm to accept of peace, and do homage to the crown of England. This peace was not more durable.

1093.

Malcolm, two years after, levying an army, invaded England; and after ravaging, Northumberland, he laid siege to Alnwick, where, a party of Earl Moubray’s troops falling upon him by surprise, a sharp action ensued in which Malcolm was slain. This incident interrupted for some years the regular succession to the Scottish crown, Though Malcolm left legitimate sons, his brother Donald, on account of the youth of these princes, was advanced to the throne; but kept not long possession of it. Duncan, natural son of Malcolm, formed a conspiracy against him; and being assisted by William with a small force, made himself master of the kingdom. New broils ensued with Normandy. The frank, open, remiss temper of Robert was ill fitted to withstand the interested, rapacious character of William, who, supported by greater power, was still encroaching on his brother’s possessions, and instigating his turbulent barons to rebellion against him. The king, having gone over to Normandy to support his partisans, ordered an army of twenty thousand men to be levied in England, and to be conducted to the sea-coast, as if they were instantly to be embarked.

1094.

Here Ralph Flambard, the king’s minister, and the chief instrument of his extortions, exacted ten shillings apiece from them, in lieu of their service, and then dismissed them into their several counties. This money was so skilfully employed by William that it rendered him better service than he could have expected from the army. He engaged the French king by new presents to depart from the protection of Robert; and he daily bribed the Norman barons to desert his service; but was prevented from pushing his advantages by an incursion of the Welsh, which obliged him to return to England, tie found no difficulty in repelling the enemy; but was not able to make any considerable impression on a country guarded by its mountainous situation. A conspiracy of his own barons which was detected at this time, appeared a more serious concern, and engrossed all his attention.

1095.

Robert Moubray, earl of Northumberland, was at the head of this combination; and he engaged in it the count d’Eu, Richard de Tunbridge, Roger de Lacy, and many others. The purpose of the conspirators was to dethrone the king, and to advance in his stead Stephen, count of Aumale, nephew to the Conqueror. William’s despatch prevented the design from taking effect, and disconcerted the conspirators. Moubray made some resistance; but being taken prisoner, was attainted and thrown into confinement, where he died about thirty years after.

1096.

The count d’Eu denied his concurrence in the plot, and to justify himself, fought, in the presence of the court at Windsor, a duel with Geoffrey Bainard, who accused him. But being worsted in the combat, he was condemned to be castrated, and to have his eyes put out. William de Alderi, another conspirator, was supposed to be treated with more rigor when he was sentenced to be hanged.

But the noise of these petty wars and commotions was quite sunk in the tumult of the crusades, which now engrossed the attention of Europe, and have ever since engaged the curiosity of mankind, as the most signal and most durable monument of human folly that has yet appeared in any age or nation. After Mahomet had, by means of his pretended revelations, united the dispersed Arabians under one head, they issued forth from their deserts in great multitudes; and being animated with zeal for their new religion, and supported by the vigor of their new government, they made deep impression on the eastern empire, which was far in the decline with regard both to military discipline and to civil policy. Jerusalem, by its situation, became one of their most early conquests; and the Christians had the mortification to see the holy sepulchre, and the other places consecrated by the presence of their religious founder, fallen into the possession of infidels. But the Arabians or Saracens were so employed in military enterprises, by which they spread their empire, in a few years, from the banks of the Ganges to the Straits of Gibraltar, that they had no leisure for theological controversy; and though the Alcoran, the original monument of their faith, seems to contain some violent precepts, they were much less infected with the spirit of bigotry and persecution than the indolent and speculative Greeks, who were continually refining on the several articles of their religious system. They gave little disturbance to those zealous pilgrims who daily flocked to Jerusalem; and they allowed every man, after paying a moderate tribute, to visit the holy sepulchre, to perform his religious duties, and so return in peace. But the Turcomans or Turks, a tribe of Tartars, who had embraced Mahometanism, having wrested Syria from the Saracens, and having in the year 1065 made themselves masters of Jerusalem, rendered the pilgrimage much more difficult and dangerous to the Christians. The barbarity of their manners, and the confusions attending their unsettled government, exposed the pilgrims to many insults, robberies, and extortions; and these zealots, returning from their meritorious fatigues and sufferings, filled all Christendom with indignation against the infidels, who profaned the holy city by their presence, and derided the sacred mysteries in the very place of their completion. Gregory VII., among the other vast ideas which he entertained, had formed the design of uniting all the western Christians against the Mahometans; but the egregious and violent invasions of that pontiff on the civil power of princes had created him so many enemies, and had rendered his schemes so suspicious, that he was not able to make great progress in this undertaking. The work was reserved for a meaner instrument, whose low condition ir life exposed aim to no jealousy, and whose folly was well calculated to coincide with the prevailing principles of the times.

Peter, commonly called the Hermit, a native of Amiens, in Picardy, had made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Being deeply affected with the dangers to which that act of piety now exposed the pilgrims, as well as with the instances of oppression under which the eastern Christians labored, he entertained the bold, and, in all appearance, impracticable project of leading into Asia, from the farthest extremities of the west, armies sufficient to subdue those potent and warlike nations which now held the holy city in subjection. [1] He proposed his views to Martin II., who filled the papal chair, and who, though sensible of the advantages which the head of the Christian religion must reap from a religious war, and though he esteemed the blind zeal of Peter a proper means for effecting the purpose, [2] resolved not to interpose his authority till he saw a greater probability of success. He summoned a council at Placentia, which consisted of four thousand ecclesiastics and thirty thousand seculars; and which was so numerous that no hall could contain the multitude, and it was necessary to hold the assembly in a plain.

[1 Gul. Tyrius, lib. i. ca M. Paria, p, 17.]

[2 Gul. Trrius, lib. i. ca.]

The harangues of the pope, and of Peter himself, representing the dismal situation of their brethren in the East, and the indignity suffered by the Christian name, in allowing the holy city to remain in the hands of infidels, here found the minds of men so well prepared, that the whole multitude suddenly and violently declared for the war, and solemnly devoted themselves to perform this service, so meritorious, as they believed it, to God and religion.

But though Italy seemed thus to have zealously embraced the enterprise, Martin knew that, in order to insure success, it was necessary to enlist the greater and more warlike nations in the same engagement; and having previously exhorted Peter to visit the chief cities and sovereigns of Christendom, he summoned another council at Clermont, in Auvergne. [1] The fame of this great and pious design being now universally diffused, procured the attendance of the greatest prelates, nobles, and princes; and when the pope and the hermit renewed their pathetic exhortations, the whole assembly, as if impelled by an immediate inspiration, not moved by their preceeding impressions, exclaimed with one voice, “It is the will of God, It is the will of God” — words deemed so memorable and so much the result of a divine influence, that they were employed as the signal of rendezvous and battle in all the future exploits of those adventurers. [2] Men of all ranks flew to arms with the utmost ardor; and an exterior symbol too — a circumstance of chief moment, — was here chosen by the devoted combatants. The sign of the cross, which had been hitherto so much revered among Christians, and which, the more it was an object of reproach among the pagan world, was the more passionately cherished by them, became the badge of union, and was affixed to their right shoulder by all who enlisted themselves in this sacred warfare. [3]

Europe was at this time sunk into profound ignorance and superstition. The ecclesiastics had acquired the greatest ascendant over the human mind; the people, who, being little restrained by honor, and less by law, abandoned themselves to the worst crimes and disorders, knew of no other expiation than the observances imposed on them by their spiritual pastors; and it was easy to represent the holy war as an equivalent for all penances, [4] and an atonement for every violation of justice and humanity.

[1] Concil. torn. x. Concil. Clarom. M. Paris, p. 16. M. West, .]

[2] Historia Bell. Sacri, torn. i. Musaei Ital.]

[3] Hist. Bell Sacri, tom. i. Mua. Ital. Order. Vitalis, .]

[4] Order. Vitalis, .]

But amidst the abject superstition which now prevailed, the military spirit also had universally diffused itself; and though not supported by art or discipline, was become the general passion of the nations governed by the feudal law. All the great lords possessed the right of peace and war: they were engaged in perpetual hostilities with each other: the open country was become a scene of outrage and disorder: the cities, still mean and poor, were neither guarded by walls nor protected by privileges, and were exposed to every insult: individuals were obliged to depend for safety on their own force, or their private alliances; and valor was the only excellence which was held in esteem, or gave one man the preeminence above another. When all the particular superstitions, therefore, were here united in one great object, the ardor for military enterprises took the same direction; and Europe, impelled by its two ruling passions, was loosened, as it were, from its foundations, and seemed to precipitate itself in one united body upon the East.

All orders of men, deeming the crusades the only road to heaven, enlisted themselves under these sacred banners, and were impatient to open the way with their sword to the holy city. Nobles, artisans, peasants, even priests, [1] enrolled their names; and to decline this meritorious service was branded with the reproach of impiety, or, what perhaps was esteemed still more disgraceful, of cowardice and pusillanimity. [2] The infirm and aged contributed to the expedition by presents and money; and many of them, not satisfied with the merit of this atonement, attended it in person, and were determined, if possible, to breathe their last in sight of that city where their Savior had died for them. Women themselves, concealing their sex under the disguise of armor, attended the camp; and commonly forgot still more the duty of their sex, by prostituting themselves without reserve to the army. [3] The greatest criminals were forward in a service which they regarded as a propitiation for all crimes; and the most enormous disorders were, during the course of those expeditions, committed by men inured to wickedness, encouraged by example, and impelled by necessity. The multitude of the adventurers soon became so great, that their more sagacious leaders, Hugh, count of Vermandois, brother to the French king, Raymond, count of Toulouse, Godfrey of Bouillon, prince of Brabant, and Stephen, count of Blois, [4] became apprehensive lest the greatness itself of the armament should disappoint its purpose; and they permitted an undisciplined multitude, computed at three hundred thousand men, to go before them, under the command of Peter the Hermit, and Walter the Moneyless. [5]

[1] Order. Vitalis, .]

[2] W. Malms, ,]

[3] Vertot, Hist. de Chev. de Malte, vol. i. p. 46.]

[4] Sim. Dunelm.]

These men took the road towards Constantinople, through Hungary and Bulgaria; and trusting that Heaven, by supernatural assistance, would supply all their necessities, they made no provision for subsistence on their march. They soon found themselves obliged to obtain by plunder what they had vainly expected from miracles; and the enraged inhabitants of the countries through which they passed, gathering together in arms, attacked the disorderly multitude, and put them to slaughter without resistance. The more disciplined armies followed after; and passing the straits at Constantinople, they were mustered in the plains of Asia, and amounted in the whole to the number of seven hundred thousand combatants. [1]

Amidst this universal frenzy, which spread itself by contagion throughout Europe, especially in France and Germany, men were not entirely forgetful of their present interests; and both those who went on this expedition, and those who stain behind, entertained schemes of gratifying by its means their avarice or their ambition. The nobles who enlisted themselves were moved, from the romantic spirit of the age, to hope for opulent establishments in the East, the chief seat of arts and commerce during those ages; and in pursuit of these chimerical projects, they sold at the lowest price their ancient castles and inheritances, which had now lost all value in their eyes. The greater princes, who remained at home, besides establishing peace in their dominions by giving occupation abroad to the inquietude and martial disposition of their subjects, took the opportunity of annexing to their crown many considerable fiefs, either by purchase or by the extinction of heirs. The pope frequently turned the zeal of the crusaders from the infidels against his own enemies, whom he represented as equally criminal with the enemies of Christ. The convents and other religious societies bought the possessions of the adventurers; and as the contributions of the faithful were commonly intrusted to their management, they often diverted to this purpose what was intended to be employed against the infidels. [2] But no one was a more immediate gainer by this epidemic fury than the king of England, who kept aloof from all connections with those fanatical and romantic warriors.

[1] M. Paris, , 21.]

[2] Padre Paolo, Hist. delle Benef. Eccles. p. 128]

Robert, duke of Normandy, impelled by the bravery and mistaken generosity of his spirit, had early enlisted himself in the crusade; but being always unprovided with money, he found that it would be impracticable for him to appear in a manner suitable to his rank and station, at the head of his numerous vassals and subjects, who, transported with the general rage, were determined to follow him into Asia. He resolved, therefore, to mortgage, or rather to sell, his dominions, which he had not talents to govern; and he offered them to his brother William for the very unequal sum of ten thousand marks. [1] The bargain was soon concluded: the king raised the money by violent extortions on his subjects of all ranks, even on the convents, who were obliged to melt their plate in order to furnish the quota demanded of them [2] he was put in possession of Normandy and Maine; and Robert, providing himself with a magnificent train, set out for the Holy Land, in pursuit of glory, and in full confidence of securing his eternal salvation.

The smallness of this sum, with the difficulties which William found in raising it, suffices alone to refute the account which is heedlessly adopted by historians, of the enormous revenue of the Conqueror. Is it credible that Robert would consign to the rapacious hands of his brother such considerable dominions, for a sum which, according to that account, made not a week’s income of his father’s English revenue alone? or that the king of England could not on demand, without oppressing his subjects, have been able to pay him the money? The Conqueror, it is agreed, was frugal as well as rapacious, yet his treasure at his death exceeded not sixty thousand pounds, which hardly amounted to his income for two months; another certain refutation of that exaggerated account.

The fury of the crusades during this age less infected England than the neighboring kingdoms; probably because the Norman conquerors, finding their settlement in that kingdom still somewhat precarious, durst not abandon their homes in quest of distant adventures. The selfish, interested spirit also of the king, which kept him from kindling in the general flame, checked its progress among his subjects; and as he is accused of open profaneness, [3] and was endued with a sharp wit, [4] it is likely that he made the romantic chivalry of the crusaders the object of his perpetual raillery.

[[1] W. Malms, . Chron. T. Wykes, . Annal. Waverl . W. Heming. . Flor. Wigorn. p. 648. Sim. Dunelm, . Knyghton, .]

[[2] Eadmer,. W. Malms, . W. Heming. p. 467.]

[[3] Gul. Newbr. . Gul. Gemet. .]

[[4] W. Malms,].

As an instance of his religion, we are told that he once accepted of sixty marks from a Jew, whose son had been converted to Christianity, and who engaged him by that present to assist him in bringing back the youth to Judaism. William employed both menaces and persuasion for that purpose; but finding the convert obstinate in his new faith, he sent for the father, and told him that as he had not succeeded, it was not just that he should keep the present; but as he had done his utmost, it was but equitable that he should be paid for his pains; and he would therefore retain only thirty marks of the money. [1] At another time, it is said, he sent for some learned Christian theologians and some rabbies, and bade them fairly dispute the question of their religion in his presence. He was perfectly indifferent between them; had his ears open to reason and conviction; and would embrace that doctrine which, upon comparison, should be found supported by the most solid arguments. [2] If this story be true, it is probable that he meant only to amuse himself by turning both into ridicule; but we must be cautious of admitting every thing related by the monkish historians to the disadvantage of this prince. He had the misfortune to be engaged in quarrels with the ecclesiastics, particularly with Anselm, commonly called St. Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury; and it is no wonder his memory should be blackened by the historians of that order.

After the death of Lanfranc, the king for several years retained in his own hands the revenues of Canterbury, as he did those of many other vacant bishoprics: but falling into a dangerous sickness, he was seized with remorse; and the clergy represented to him, that he was in danger of eternal perdition, if before his death he did not make atonement for those multiplied impieties and sacrileges of which he had been guilty. [3] He resolved, therefore, to supply instantly the vacancy of Canterbury; and for that purpose he sent for Anselm, a Piedmontese by birth, abbot of Bee, in Normandy, who was much celebrated for his learning and piety. The abbot earnestly refused the dignity, fell on his knees, wept, and entreated the king to change his purpose, [4] and when he found the prince obstinate in forcing the pastoral staff upon him, he kept his fist so fast clinched, that it required the utmost violence of the bystanders to open it, and force him to receive that ensign of spiritual dignity. [5]

[1] Eadmer, .

[2] W. Malms, .

[3] Eadmer, . Chron. Sax. ,

[4] Eadmer, . Diceto, .

William soon after recovered; and his passions regaining their wonted vigor, he returned to his former violence and rapine. He detained in prison several persons whom he had ordered to be freed during the time of his penitence; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury. [2] But he found in Anselm that persevering opposition which he had reason to expect from the ostentatious humility which that prelate had displayed in refusing his promotion.

The opposition made by Anselm was the more dangerous on account of the character of piety which he soon acquired in England by his great zeal against all abuses, particularly those in dress and ornament. There was a mode which, in that age, prevailed throughout Europe, both among men and women, to give an enormous length to their shoes, to draw the toe to a sharp point, and to affix to it the figure of a bird’s bill, or some such ornament, which was turned upwards, and which was often sustained by gold or silver chains tied to the knee. [3] The ecclesiastics took exception at this ornament, which, they said, was an attempt to bely the Scripture, where it is affirmed, that no man can add a cubit to his stature; and they declaimed against it with great vehemence, nay, assembled some synods, who absolutely condemned it. But — such are the strange contradictions in human nature — though the clergy, at that time, could overturn thrones, and had authority sufficient to send above a million of men on their errand to the deserts of Asia, they could never prevail against these long-pointed shoes: on the contrary, that caprice, contrary to all other modes, maintained its ground during several centuries; and if the clergy had not at last desisted from their persecution of it, it might still have been the prevailing fashion in Europe.

[2] Eadmer, , 43. Chron. Sax. .

[3] Order. Vitalis, . W. Malms, . Knyghton,

But Anselm was more fortunate in decrying the particular mode which was the object of his aversion, and which probably had not taken such fast hold of the affections of the people. He preached zealously against the long hair and curled locks which were then fashionable among the courtiers; he refused the ashes on Ash-Wednesday to those who were so accoutred; and his authority and eloquence had such influence, that the young men universally abandoned that ornament, and appeared in the cropped hair which was recommended to them by the sermons of the primate. The noted historian of Anselm, who was also his companion and secretary, celebrates highly this effort of his zeal and piety. [1]

When William's profaneness therefore returned to him with his health, he was soon engaged in controversies with this austere prelate. There was at that time a schism in the church between Urban and Clement, who both pretended to the papacy; [2] and Anselm, who, as abbot of Bee, had already acknowledged the former, was determined, without the king's consent, to introduce his authority into England. [3] William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognizing any pope whom he had not previously received, was enraged at this attempt, and summoned a synod at Buckingham, with an intention of deposing Anselm; but the prelate's suffragans declared, that, without the papal authority, they knew of no expedient for inflicting that punishment on their primate. [4] The king was at last engaged by other motives to give the preference to Urban's title; Anselm received the pall from that pontiff; and matters seemed to be accommodated between the king and the primate, [5] when the quarrel broke out afresh from a new cause. William had undertaken an expedition against Wales, and required the archbishop to furnish his quota of soldiers for that service, but Anselm, who regarded the demand as an oppression on the church, and yet durst not refuse compliance, sent them so miserably accoutred, that the king was extremely displeased, and threatened him with a prosecution. [6] Anselm, on the other hand, demanded positively that all the revenues of his see should be restored to him; appealed to Borne against the king's injustice; [7] and affairs came to such extremities, that the primate, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, desired and obtained the king's permission to retire beyond sea. All his temporalities were seized; [8] but he was received with great respect by Urban, who considered him as a martyr in the cause of religion, and even menaced the king, on account of his proceedings against the primate and the church with the sentence of excommunication.

[1] Eadmer, .]

[2] Hoveden,]

[3] Eadmer, . M. Paris, . Diceto, p. 494. Spei Concil vol. ii. .]

[4] Eadmer,]

[6] Eadmer, , 43.]

[7] Eadmer, .]

[8] M. Paris, . Parker, .]

Anselm assisted at the council of Bari, where, besides fixing the controversy between the Greek and Latin churches concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, [1] the right of election to church preferments was declared to belong to the clergy alone, and spiritual censures were denounced against all ecclesiastics who did homage to laymen for their sees or benefices, and against all laymen who exacted it. [2] The rite of homage, by the feudal customs, was, that the vassal should throw himself on his knees, should put his joined hands between those of his superior, and should in that posture swear fealty to him. [3] But the council declared & execrable that pure hands, which could create God, and could offer him up as a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind, should be put, after this humiliating manner, between profane hands, which, besides being inured to rapine and bloodshed, were employed day and night in impure purposes and obscene contacts. [4] Such were the reasonings prevalent in that age; reasonings which, though they cannot be passed over in silence, without omitting the most curious and perhaps not the least instructive part of history, can scarcely be delivered with the requisite decency and gravity.

[1] Eadmer, . M. Paris, . Sim. Dunelm,p. 224.]

[2] M. Paris, .]

[3] Spelman. Du Cange, in verbo Hominium.]

[4] W. Hemmg. . Flor. Wigorn. . Sim. Dunelm . Brompton, .]

1097.

The cession of Normandy and Maine by Duke Robert increased the king’s territories; but brought him no great increase of power, because of the unsettled state of those countries the mutinous disposition of the barons, and the vicinity of the French king, who supported them in all their insurrections. Even Helie, lord of La Fleche, a small town in Anjou, was able to give him inquietude; and this great monarch was obliged to make several expeditions abroad, without being able to prevail over so petty a baron, who had acquired the confidence and affections of the inhabitants of Maine. He was, however, so fortunate as at last to take him prisoner in a rencounter, but having released him, at the intercession of the French king and the count of Anjou, he found the province of Maine still exposed to his intrigues and incursions. Helie, being introduced by the citizens into the town of Mans, besieged the garrison in the citadel,

1099.

William, who was hunting in the new forest when he received intelligence of this hostile attempt, was so provoked, that he immediately turned his horse, and galloped to the sea-shore at Dartmouth, declaring that he would not stop a moment till he had taken, vengeance for the offence. He found the weather so cloudy and tempestuous, that the mariners thought it dangerous to put to sea: but the king hurried on board, and ordered them to set sail instantly; telling them that they never yet heard of a king that was drowned. [1] By this vigor and celerity he delivered the citadel of Mans from its present danger, and pursuing Helie into his own territories, he laid siege to Majol, a small castle in those parts:

1100.

but a wound which he received before this place, obliged him to raise the siege; and he returned to England.

The weakness of the greatest monarchs during this age, in their military expeditions against their nearest neighbors, appears the more surprising, when we consider the prodigious numbers, which even petty princes, seconding the enthusiastic rage of the people, were able to assemble, and to conduct in dangerous enterprises to the remote provinces of Asia. William earl of Poitiers and duke of Guienne, inflamed with the glory and not discouraged by the misfortunes, which had attended the former adventurers in the crusades, had put himself at the head of an immense multitude, computed by some historians to amount to sixty thousand horse, and a much greater number of foot, [2] and he purposed to lead them into the Holy Land against the infidels. He wanted money to forward the preparations requisite for this expedition, and he offered to mortgage all his dominions to William, without entertaining any scruple on account of that rapacious and iniquitous hand to which he resolved to consign them. [3]

[1 W. Malms, . H. Hunting, . M. Paris, . Ypod. Neust. .]

[2] W. Malms, . The whole is said, by Order. Vitalie () to amount to three hundred thousand men.]

[3] W. Maims, .]

The king accepted the offer; and had prepared a fleet and an army, in order to escort the money and take possession of the rich provinces of Guienne and Poictou; when an accident put an end to his life, and to all his ambitious projects. He was engaged in hunting, the sole amusement, and indeed the chief occupation of princes in those rude times, when society was little cultivated and the arts afforded few objects worthy of attention. Walter Tyrrel, a French gentleman, remarkable for his address in archery, attended him in this recreation, of which the new forest was the scene: and as William had dismounted after a chase, Tyrrel, impatient to show his dexterity, let fly an arrow at a stag which suddenly started before him. The arrow, glancing from a tree, struck the king in the breast, and instantly slew him; [1] while Tyrrel, without informing any one of the accident, put spurs to his horse, hastened to the sea-shore, embarked for France, and joined the crusade in an expedition to Jerusalem; a penance which he imposed on himself for this involuntary crime. The body of William was found in the forest by the country people, and was buried without any pomp or ceremony at Winchester. His courtiers were negligent in performing the last duties to a master who was so little beloved; and every one was too much occupied in the interesting object of fixing his successor, to attend the funeral of a dead sovereign.

[1] W. Malms, . H. Hunting, . M. Paris, . Petr. Bles.]

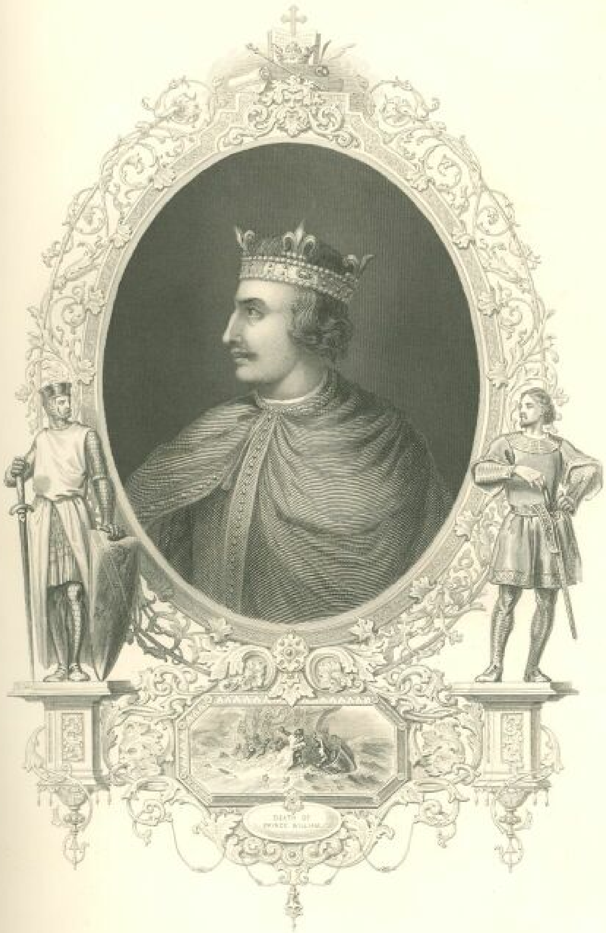
The memory of this monarch is transmitted to us with little advantage by the churchmen, whom he had offended; and though we may suspect in general that their account of his vices is somewhat exaggerated, his conduct affords little reason for contradicting the character which they have assigned him, or for attributing to him any very estimable qualities. He seems to have been a violent and tyrannical prince; a perfidious, encroaching, and dangerous neighbor; an unkind and ungenerous relation. He was equally prodigal and rapacious in the management of his treasury; and if he possessed abilities, he lay so much under the government of impetuous passions, that he made little use of them in his administration;

and he indulged without reserve that domineering policy which suited his temper, and which, if supported, as it was it him, with courage and vigor, proves often more successful in disorderly times, than the deepest foresight and most refined artifice.

The monuments which remain of this prince in England are the Tower, Westminster Hall, and London Bridge, which he built. The most laudable foreign enterprise which he undertook was the sending of Edgar Atheling, three years before his death, into Scotland, with a small army, to restore Prince Edgar, the true heir of that kingdom, son of Malcolm, and of Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling; and the enterprise proved successful. It was remarked in that age, that Richard, an elder brother of William's, perished by an accident in the new forest; Richard, his nephew, natural son of Duke Robert, lost his life in the same place after the same manner; and all men, upon the king's fate, exclaimed that, as the Conqueror had been guilty of extreme violence in expelling all the inhabitants of that large district to make room for his game, the just vengeance of Heaven was signalized in the same place by the slaughter of his posterity. William was killed in the thirteenth year of his reign, and about the fortieth of his age. As he was never married, he left no legitimate issue.

In the eleventh year of this reign, Magnus, king of Norway, made a descent on the Isle of Anglesea; but was repulsed by Hugh, earl of Shrewsbury. This is the last attempt made by the northern nations upon England. That restless people seem about this time to have learned the practice of tillage, which thenceforth kept them at home, and freed the other nations of Europe from the devastations spread over them by those piratical invaders. This proved one great cause of the subsequent settlement and improvement of the southern nations.

CHAPTER VI.


DEATH OF
PRINCE WILLIAM.

HENRY I.

HENRY I.

1100.

After the adventurers in the holy war were assembled on the banks of the Bosphorus, opposite to Constantinople, they proceeded on their enterprise; but immediately experienced those difficulties which their zeal had hitherto concealed from them, and for which, even if they had foreseen them, it would have been almost impossible to provide a remedy. The Greek emperor, Alexis Comnenus, who had applied to the western Christians for succor against the Turks, entertained hopes, and those but feeble ones, of obtaining such a moderate supply as, acting under his command, might enable him to repulse the enemy; but he was extremely astonished to see his dominions overwhelmed on a sudden by such an inundation of licentious barbarians, who, though they pretended friendship, despised his subjects as unwarlike, and detested them as heretical. By all the arts of policy, in which he excelled, he endeavored to divert the torrent; but while he employed professions, caresses, civilities, and seeming services towards the leaders of the crusade, he secretly regarded those imperious allies as more dangerous than the open enemies by whom his empire had been formerly invaded. Having effected that difficult point of disembarking them safely in Asia, he entered into a private correspondence with Soliman, emperor of the Turks; and practised every insidious art which his genius, his power, or his situation enabled him to employ, for disappointing the enterprise, and, discouraging the Latins from making thenceforward any such prodigious migrations. His dangerous policy was seconded by the disorders inseparable from so vast a multitude, who were not united under one head, and were conducted by leaders of the most independent, intractable spirit, unacquainted with military discipline, and determined enemies to civil authority and submission. The scarcity of provisions, the excess of fatigue, the influence of unknown climates, joined to the want of concert in their operations, and to the sword of a warlike enemy, destroyed the adventurers by thousands, and would have abated the ardor of men impelled to war by less powerful motives. Their zeal, however, their bravery, and their irresistible force still carried them forward, and continually advanced them to the great end of their enterprise. After an obstinate siege, they took Nice, the seat of the Turkish empire; they defeated Soliman in two great battles; they made themselves masters of Antioch; and entirely broke the force of the Turks, who had so long retained those countries in subjection. The soldan of Egypt, whose alliance they had hitherto courted, recovered, on the fall of the Turkish power, his former authority in Jerusalem; and he informed them by his ambassadors, that if they came disarmed to that city, they might now perform their religious vows, and that all Christian pilgrims, who should thenceforth visit the holy sepulchre, might expect the same good treatment which they had ever received from his predecessors. The offer was rejected; the soldan was required to yield up the city to the Christians; and on his refusal, the champions of the cross advanced to the siege of Jerusalem, which they regarded as the consummation of their labors. By the detachments which they had made, and the disasters which they had undergone, they were diminished to the number of twenty thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse; but these were still formidable from their valor, their experience, and the obedience which, from past calamities, they had learned to pay to their leaders. After a siege of five weeks, they took Jerusalem by assault; and, impelled by a mixture of military and religious rage, they put the numerous garrison and inhabitants to the sword, without distinction. Neither arms defended the valiant, nor submission the timorous; no age or sex was spared; infants on the breast were pierced by the same blow with their mothers, who implored for mercy; even a multitude, to the number of ten thousand persons, who had surrendered themselves prisoners and were promised quarter, were butchered in cold blood by those ferocious conquerors. [1] The streets of Jerusalem were covered with dead bodies; [2] and the triumphant warriors, after every enemy was subdued and slaughtered, immediately turned themselves, with the sentiments of humiliation and contrition, towards the holy sepulchre.

[1] Vertot, vol. i. .]

[2] M. Paris, . Order.]

They threw aside their arms, still streaming with blood; they advanced with reclined bodies, and naked feet and heads, to that sacred monument; they sung anthems to their Savior, who had there purchased their salvation by his death and agony; and their devotion enlivened by the presence of the place where he had suffered, so overcame their fury, that they dissolved in tears, and bore the appearance of every soft and tender sentiment. So inconsistent is human nature with itself! and so easily does the most effeminate superstition ally, both with the most heroic courage and with the fiercest barbarity!

This great event happened on the fifth of July in the last year of the eleventh century. The Christian princes and nobles, after choosing Godfrey of Bouillon king of Jerusalem, began to settle themselves in their new conquests; while some of them returned to Europe, in order to enjoy at home that glory which their valor had acquired them in this popular and meritorious enterprise. Among these was Robert, duke of Normandy, who, as he had relinquished the greatest dominions of any prince that attended the crusade, had all along distinguished himself by the most intrepid courage, as well as by that affable disposition and unbounded generosity which gain the hearts of soldiers, and qualify a prince to shine in a military life. In passing through Italy, he became acquainted with Sibylla, daughter of the count of Conversana, a young lady of great beauty and merit, whom he espoused: indulging himself in this new passion, as well as fond of enjoying ease and pleasure after the fatigues of so many rough campaigns, he lingered a twelvemonth in that delicious climate; and though his friends in the north looked every moment for his arrival, none of them knew when they could with certainty expect it. By this delay he lost the kingdom of England, which the great fame he had acquired during the crusades, as well as his undoubted title, both by birth and by the preceding agreement with his deceased brother, would, had he been present, have infallibly secured to him.

Prince Henry was hunting with Rufus in the new forest, when intelligence of that monarch’s death was brought him, and being sensible of the advantage attending the conjuncture he hurried to Winchester, in order to secure the royal treasure, which he knew to be a necessary implement for facilitating his designs on the crown. He had scarcely reached the place when William de Breteuil, keeper of the treasure, arrived, and opposed himself to Henry’s pretensions. This nobleman, who had been engaged in the same party of hunting, had no sooner heard of his master's death, than he hastened to take care of his charge; and he told the prince, that this treasure, as well as the crown, belonged to his elder brother, who was now his sovereign; and that he himself, for his part, was determined, in spite of all other pretensions, to maintain his allegiance to him. But Henry, drawing his sword, threatened him with instant death if he dared to disobey him; and as others of the late king's retinue, who came every moment to Winchester, joined the prince's party, Breteuil was obliged to withdraw his opposition, and to acquiesce in this violence. [1]

[1 Order. Vitalis, .]

Henry, without losing a moment, hastened with the money to London; and having assembled some noblemen and prelates, whom his address, or abilities, or presents, gained to his side, he was suddenly elected, or rather saluted king; and immediately proceeded to the exercise of royal authority. In less than three days after his brother's death, the ceremony of his coronation was performed by Maurice, bishop of London, who was persuaded to officiate on that occasion; [2] and thus, by his courage and celerity, he intruded himself into the vacant throne.

[2 Chron. Sax. . Order.]

No one had sufficient spirit or sense of duty to appear in defence of the absent prince; all men were seduced or intimidated; present possession supplied the apparent defects in Henry's title, which was indeed founded on plain usurpation; and the barons, as well as the people, acquiesced in a claim, which, though it could neither be justified nor comprehended, could now, they found, be opposed through the perils alone of civil war and rebellion.

But as Henry foresaw that a crown usurped against all rules of justice would sit unsteady on his head, he resolved, by fair professions at least, to gain the affections of all his subjects. Besides taking the usual coronation oath to maintain the laws and execute justice, he passed a charter, which was calculated to remedy many of the grievous oppressions which had been complained of during the reigns of his father and brother. [1] He there promised, that, at the death of any bishop or abbot, he never would seize the revenues of the see or abbey during the vacancy, but would leave the whole to be reaped by the successor; and that he would never let to farm any ecclesiastical benefice, nor dispose of it for money. After this concession to the church, whose favor was of so great importance, he proceeded to enumerate the civil grievances which he purposed to redress. He promised that, upon the death of any earl, baron, or military tenant, his heir should be admitted to the possession of his estate, on paying a just and lawful relief, without being exposed to such violent exactions as had been usual during the late reigns: he remitted the wardship of minors, and allowed guardians to be appointed, who should be answerable for the trust: he promised not to dispose of any heiress in marriage but by the advice of all the barons; and if any baron intended to give his daughter sister, niece, or kinswoman in marriage, it should only be necessary for him to consult the king, who promised to take no money for his consent, nor ever to refuse permission, unless the person to whom it was purposed to marry her should happen to be his enemy: he granted his barons and military tenants the power of bequeathing by will their money or personal estates; and if they neglected to make a will, he promised that their heirs should succeed to them: he renounced the right of imposing moneyage, and of levying taxes at pleasure on the farms which the barons retained in their own hands: [2] he made some general professions of moderating fines: he offered a pardon for all offences; and he remitted all debts due to the crown: he required that the vassals of the barons should enjoy the same privileges which he granted to his own barons; and he promised a general confirmation and observance of the laws of King Edward. This is the substance of the chief articles contained in that famous charter. [3]

[1] Chron. Sax. . Sim. Dunelm. .]

[2] See Appendix II.]

[3] Mr Paris, . Hoveden, . Brompton, . Haguistadt, .]

To give greater authenticity to these concessions, Henry lodged a copy of his charter in some abbey of each county, as if desirous that it should be exposed to the view of all his subjects, and remain a perpetual rule for the limitation and direction of his government: yet it is certain that, after the present purpose was served, he never once thought, during his reign, of observing one single article of it; and the whole fell so much into neglect and oblivion, that, in the following century, when the barons, who had heard an obscure tradition of it, desired to make it the model of the Great Charter which they exacted from King John, they could with difficulty find a copy of it in the kingdom. But as to the grievances here meant to be redressed, they were still continued in their full extent; and the royal authority, in all those particulars, lay under no manner of restriction. Reliefs of heirs, so capital an article, were never effectually fixed till the time of Magna Charta; [1] and it is evident that the general promise here given, of accepting a just and lawful relief, ought to have been reduced to more precision, in order to give security to the subject. The oppression of wardship and marriage was perpetuated even till the reign of Charles II.; and it appears from Glanville, [2] the famous justiciary of Henry II., that in his time, where any man died intestate — an accident which must have been very frequent when the art of writing was so little known — the king, or the lord of the fief, pretended to seize all the movables, and to exclude every heir, even the children of the deceased; a sure mark of a tyrannical and arbitrary government.

The Normans, indeed, who domineered in England, were, during this age, so licentious a people, that they may be pronounced incapable of any true or regular liberty; which requires such improvement in knowledge and morals, as can only be the result of reflection and experience, and must grow to perfection during several ages of settled and established government. A people so insensible to the rights of their sovereign, as to disjoint, without necessity, the hereditary succession, and permit a younger brother to intrude himself into the place of the elder, whom they esteemed, and who was guilty of no crime but being absent, could not expect that. What is called a relief in the Conqueror’s laws, preserved by Ingulf, seems to have been the heriot; since reliefs, as well as the other burdens of the feudal law, were unknown in the age of the Confessor, whose laws these originally were. This practice was contrary to the laws of King Edward,

[1] Glanv. lib. ii. ca.]

[2] Lib. vii. ca.]

ratified by the Conqueror, as we learn from Ingulf, . But laws had at that time very little influence: power and violence governed every thing. Prince would pay any greater regard to their privileges, or allow his engagements to fetter his power, and debar him from any considerable interest or convenience. They had indeed arms in their hands, which prevented the establishment of a total despotism, and left their posterity sufficient power, whenever they should attain a sufficient degree of reason, to assume true liberty; but their turbulent disposition frequently prompted them to make such use of their arms, that they were more fitted to obstruct the execution of justice, than to stop the career of violence and oppression. The prince, finding that greater opposition was often made to him when he enforced the laws than when he violated them, was apt to render his own will and pleasure the sole rule of government; and on every emergency to consider more the power of the persons whom he might offend, than the rights of those whom he might injure. The very form of this charter of Henry proves, that the Norman barons (for they, rather than the people of England, are chiefly concerned in it,) were totally ignorant of the nature of limited monarchy, and were ill qualified to conduct, in conjunction with their sovereign, the machine of government. It is an act of his sole power, is the result of his free grace, contains some articles which bind others as well as himself, and is therefore unfit to be the deed of any one who possesses not the whole legislative power, and who may not at pleasure revoke all his concessions.

Henry, further to increase his popularity, degraded and committed to prison Ralph Flambard, bishop of Durham, who had been the chief instrument of oppression under his brother. [1] But this act was followed by another, which was a direct violation of his own charter, and was a bad prognostic of his sincere intentions to observe it: he kept the see of Durham vacant for five years, and during that time retained possession of all its revenues. Sensible of the great authority which Anselm had acquired by his character of piety, and by the persecutions which he had undergone from William, he sent repeated messages to him at Lyons, where he resided, and invited him to return and take possession of his dignities. [2] On the arrival of the prelate, he proposed to him the renewal of that homage which he had done his brother, and which had never been refused by any English bishop; but Anslem had acquired other sentiments by his journey to Rome, and gave the king an absolute refusal.

[1 Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, . M. Paris, . Alured. Beverl. .]

[2 Chron. Sax. . Order. Vitalis, . M. Paris, p. 39 C. Judon, p 273.]

He objected the decrees of the council of Bari, at which he himself had assisted; and he declared, that, so far from doing homage for his spiritual dignity, he would not so much as communicate with any ecclesiastic who paid that submission, or who accepted of investitures from laymen. Henry, who expected, in his present delicate situation, to reap great advantages from the authority and popularity of Anselm, durst not insist on his demand; [1] he only desired that the controversy might be suspended, and that messengers might be sent to Rome, in order to accommodate matters with the pope, and obtain his confirmation of the laws and customs of England.

There immediately occurred an important affair, in which the king was obliged to have recourse to the authority of Anselm. Matilda, daughter of Malcolm III., king of Scotland, and niece to Edgar Atheling, had, on her father’s death, and the subsequent revolutions in the Scottish government, been brought to England, and educated under her aunt Christina, in the nunnery of Rumsey. This princess Henry purposed to marry; but as she had worn the veil, though never taken the vows, doubts might arise concerning the lawfulness of the act; and it behoved him to be very careful not to shock, in any particular, the religious prejudges of his subjects. The affair was examined by Anselm, in a council of the prelates and nobles, which was summoned at Lambeth; Matilda there proved, that she had put on the veil, not with a view of entering into a religious life, but merely in consequence of a custom familiar to the English ladies who protected their chastity from the brutal violence of the Normans by taking shelter under that habit, [2] which, amidst the horrible licentiousness of the times, was yet generally revered. The council, sensible that even a princess had otherwise no security for her honor, admitted this reason as valid: they pronounced that Matilda was still free to marry; [3] and her espousals with Henry were celebrated by Anselm with great pomp and solemnity. [4] No act of the king’s reign rendered him equally popular with his English subjects, and tended more to establish him on the throne. Though Matilda, during the life of her uncle and brothers, was not heir of the Saxon line, she was become very dear to the English on account of her connections with it; and that people, who, before the conquest, had fallen into a kind of indifference towards their ancient royal family, had felt so severely the tyranny of the Normans, that they reflected with extreme regret on their former liberty, and hoped for a more equal and mild administration, when the blood of their native princes should be mingled with that of their new sovereigns. [5]

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] Eadmer, .]

[3] Eadmer .]

[4] Hoveden, .]

But the policy and prudence of Henry, which, if time had been allowed for these virtues to produce their full effect, would have secured him possession of the crown, ran great hazard of being frustrated by the sudden appearance of Robert, who returned to Normandy about a month after the death of his brother William.

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He took possession, without opposition, of that duchy; and immediately made preparations for recovering England, of which, during his absence, he had, by Henry's intrigues, been so unjustly defrauded. The great fame which he had acquired in the East forwarded his pretensions, and the Norman barons, sensible of the consequences, expressed the same discontent at the separation of the duchy and kingdom, which had appeared on the accession of William. Robert de Belesme, earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel, William de Warrenne, earl of Surrey, Arnulf de Montgomery, Walter Giffard, Robert de Pontefract, Robert de Mallet, Yvo de Grentmesnil, and many others of the principal nobility, [1] invited Robert to make an attempt upon England, and promised on his landing to join him with all their forces.

[1] Order. Vitalis,]

Even the seamen were affected with the general popularity of his name, and they carried over to him the greater part of a fleet which had been equipped to oppose his passage. Henry, in this extremity, began to be apprehensive for his life, as well as for his crown and had recourse to the superstition of the people, in order to oppose their sentiment of justice. He paid diligent court to Anselm, whose sanctity and wisdom he pretended to revere. He consulted him in all difficult emergencies; seemed to be governed by him in every measure; promised a strict regard to ecclesiastical privileges; professed a great attachment to Rome, and a resolution of persevering in an implicit obedience to the decrees of councils, and to the will of the sovereign pontiff. By these caresses and declarations he entirely gained the confidence of the primate, whose influence over the people, and authority with the barons, were of the utmost service to him in his present situation. Anselm scrupled not to assure the nobles of the king's sincerity in those professions which he made, of avoiding the tyrannical and oppressive government of his father and brother: he even rode through the ranks of the army, recommended to the soldiers the defence of their prince, represented the duty of keeping their oaths of allegiance, and prognosticated to them the greatest happiness from the government of so wise and just a sovereign. By this expedient, joined to the influence of the earls of Warwick and Mellent, of Roger Bigod, Richard de Redvers, and Robert Fitz-Hamon, powerful barons, who still adhered to the present government, the army was retained in the king's interests, and marched, with seeming union and firmness, to oppose Robert, who had landed with his forces at Portsmouth.

The two armies lay in sight of each other for some days without coming to action; and both princes, being apprehensive of the event, which would probably be decisive, hearkened the more willingly to the counsels of Anselm and the other great men, who mediated an accommodation between them. After employing some negotiation, it was agreed, that Robert should resign his pretensions to England, and receive, in lieu of them, an annual pension of three thousand marks; that, if either of the princes died without issue, the other should succeed to his dominions; that the adherents of each should be pardoned, and restored to all their possessions either in Normandy or England; and that neither Robert nor Henry should thenceforth encourage, receive, or protect the enemies of the other. [1]

[1] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, .

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This treaty, though calculated so much for Henry's advantage, he was the first to violate. He restored indeed the estates of all Robert's adherents; but was secretly determined, that noblemen so powerful and so ill affected, who had both inclination and ability to disturb his government, should not long remain unmolested in their present opulence and grandeur. He began with the earl of Shrewsbury, why was watched for some time by spies, and then indicted on a charge, consisting of forty-five articles. This turbulent nobleman, knowing his own guilt, as well as the prejudices of his judges and the power of his prosecutor, had recourse to aims for defence; but being soon suppressed by the activity and address of Henry, he was banished the kingdom, and his great estate was confiscated. His ruin involved that of his two brothers, Arnulf de Montgomery, and Roger, earl of Lancaster. Soon after followed the prosecution and condemnation of Robert de Pontefract and Robert de Mallet, who had distinguished themselves among Robert's adherents. William de Warrenne was the next victim;

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even William, earl of Cornwall, son of the earl of Mortaigne, the king's uncle, having given matter of suspicion against him, lost all the vast acquisitions of his family in England. Though the usual violence and tyranny of the Norman barons afforded a plausible pretence for those prosecutions, and it is probable that none of the sentences pronounced against these noblemen was wholly iniquitous, men easily saw, or conjectured, that the chief part of their guilt was not the injustice or illegality of their conduct Robert, enraged at the fate of his friends, imprudently ventured to come into England; and he remonstrated with his brother, in severe terms, against this breach of treaty; but met with so bad a reception, thai he began to apprehend danger to his own liberty, and was glad to purchase an escape by resigning his pension.

The indiscretion of Robert soon exposed him to more fatal injuries. This prince, whose bravery and candor procured him respect while at a distance, had no sooner attained the possession of power and enjoyment of peace, than all the vigor of his mind relaxed; and he fell into contempt among those who approached his person, or were subjected to his authority. Alternately abandoned to dissolute pleasures and to womanish superstition, he was so remiss, both in the care of his treasure and the exercise of his government, that his servants pillaged his money with impunity, stole from him his very clothes, and proceeded thence to practise every species of extortion on his defenceless subjects. The barons, whom a severe administration alone could have restrained, gave way to their unbounded rapine upon their vassals, and inveterate animosities against each other; and all Normandy, during the reign of this benign prince, was become a scene of violence and depredation. The Normans at last, observing the regular government which Henry, notwithstanding his usurped title, had been able to establish in England, applied to him, that he might use his authority for the suppression of these disorders and they thereby afforded him a pretence for interposing in the affairs of Normandy. Instead of employing his mediation to render his brother's government respectable, or to redress the grievances of the Normans, he was only attentive to support his own partisans, and to increase their number by every art of bribery, intrigue, and insinuation. Having found, in a visit which he made to that duchy, that the nobility were more disposed to pay submission to him than to their legal sovereign, he collected, by arbitrary extortions on England a great army and treasure, and returned next year to Normandy, in a situation to obtain, either by violence or corruption, the dominion of that province.

1105.

He took Baieux by storm, after an obstinate siege; he made himself master of Caen, by the voluntary submission of the inhabitants; but being repulsed at Falaise, and obliged, by the winter season, to raise the siege, he returned into England; after giving assurances to his adherents, that he would persevere in supporting and protecting them.

1106.

Next year he opened the campaign with the siege of Tenchebray; and it became evident, from his preparations and progress, that he intended to usurp the entire possession of Normandy. Robert was at last roused from his lethargy; and being supported by the earl of Mortaigne and Robert de Belesme, the king's inveterate enemies, he raised a considerable army, and approached his brother's camp, with a view of finishing, in one decisive battle, the quarrel between them. He was now entered on that scene of action in which alone he was qualified to excel; and he so animated his troops by his example, that they threw the English into disorder, and had nearly obtained the victory, [1] when the flight of Belesme spread a panic among the Normans, and occasioned their total defeat. Henry, besides doing great execution on the enemy, made near ten thousand prisoners; among whom was Duke Robert himself, and all the most considerable barons, who adhered to his interests. [2]

[1] H. Hunting, . M. Paris, . Brompton, .]

[2] Eadmer, p, 90. Chron. Sax. . Order. Vitalis .]

This victory was followed by the final reduction of Normandy: Rouen immediately submitted to the conqueror: Falaise, after some negotiation, opened its gates; and by this acquisition, besides rendering himself master of an important fortress, he got into his hands Prince William, the only son of Robert: he assembled the states of Normandy; and having received the homage of all the vassals of the duchy, having settled the government, revoked his brother's donations, and dismantled the castles lately built, he returned into England and carried along with him the duke as prisoner. That unfortunate prince was detained in custody during the remainder of his life, which was no less than twenty-eight years, and he died in the castle of Cardiff in Glamorganshire; happy, if, without losing his liberty, he could have relinquished that power which he was not qualified either to hold or exercise. Prince William was committed to the care of Helie de St. Saen, who had married Robert's natural daughter, and who, being a man of probity and honor, beyond what was usual in those ages, executed the trust with great affection and fidelity, Edgar Atheling, who had followed Robert in the expedition to Jerusalem, and who had lived with him ever since in Normandy, was another illustrious prisoner taken in the battle of Tenchebray. [1] Henry gave him his liberty, and settled a small pension on him, with which he retired; and he lived to a good old age in England, totally neglected and forgotten. This prince was distinguished by personal bravery; but nothing can be a stronger proof of his mean talents in every other respect, than that, notwithstanding he possessed the affections of the

English, and enjoyed the only legal title to the throne, he was allowed, during the reigns of so many violent and jealous usurpers, to live unmolested, and go to his grave in peace.

[[1] Chron. Sax. . Annal. Waverl.]

1107.

A little after Henry had completed the conquest of Normandy, and settled the government of that province, he finished a controversy which had been long depending between him and the pope, with regard to the investitures in ecclesiastical benefices; and though he was here obliged to relinquish some of the ancient rights of the crown, he extricated himself from the difficulty on easier terms than most princes, who in that age were so unhappy as to be engaged in disputes with the apostolic see. The king's situation in the beginning of his reign, obliged him to pay great court to Anselm: the advantages which he had reaped from the zealous friendship of that prelate, had made him sensible how prone the minds of his people were to superstition, and what an ascendant the ecclesiastics had been able to assume over them. He had seen, on the accession of his brother Rufus, that though the rights of primogeniture were then violated, and the inclinations of almost all the barons thwarted, yet the authority of Lanfranc, the primate, had prevailed over all other considerations: his own case, which was still more unfavorable, afforded an instance in which the clergy had more evidently shown their influence and authority. These recent examples, while they made him cautious not to offend that powerful body, convinced him, at the same time, that it was extremely his interest to retain the former prerogative of the crown in filling offices of such vast importance, and to check the ecclesiastics in that independence to which they visibly aspired. The choice which his brother, in a fit of penitence, had made of Anselm, was so far unfortunate to the king's pretensions, that this prelate was celebrated for his piety and zeal, and austerity of manners; and though his monkish devotion and narrow principles prognosticated no great knowledge of the world or depth of policy, he was, on that very account, a more dangerous instrument in the hands of politicians, and retained a greater ascendant over the bigoted populace. The prudence and temper of the king appear in nothing more conspicuous than in the management of this delicate affair; where he was always sensible that it had become necessary for him to risk his whole crown, in order to preserve the most invaluable jewel of it. [1]

Anselm had no sooner returned from banishment, than his refusal to do homage to the king raised a dispute, which Henry evaded at that critical juncture, by promising to send a messenger, in order to compound the matter with Pascal II, who then filled the papal throne. The messenger, as was probably foreseen, returned with an absolute refusal of the king's demands; [2] and that fortified by many reasons which were well qualified to operate on the understandings of men in those ages. Pascal quoted the Scriptures to prove that Christ was the door; and he thence inferred that all ecclesiastics must enter into the church through Christ alone, not through the civil magistrate, or any profane laymen. [3]

[1] Eadmer, .

[2] W Malms,

[3] Eadmer, . This topic is further enforced in , 74. See also W. Malms, .

"It is monstrous," added the pontiff, "that a son should pretend to beget his father, or a man to create his God: priests are called gods in Scripture, as being the vicars of God; and will you, by your abominable pretensions to grant them their investiture, assume the right of creating them?" [1]

But how convincing soever these arguments, they could not persuade Henry to resign so important a prerogative; and perhaps, as he was possessed of great reflection and learning, he thought that the absurdity of a man's creating his God, even allowing priests to be gods, was not urged with the best grace by the Roman pontiff. But as he desired still to avoid, at least to delay, the coming to any dangerous extremity with the church, he persuaded Anselm that he should be able, by further negotiation, to attain some composition with Pascal; and for that purpose he despatched three bishops to Rome, while Anselm sent two messengers of his own, to be more fully assured of the pope's intentions. [2] Pascal wrote back letters equally positive and arrogant, both to the king and primate, urging to the former that, by assuming the right of investitures, he committed a kind of spiritual adultery with the church, who was the spouse of Christ, and who must not admit of such a commerce with any other person; [3] and insisting with the latter, that the pretension of kings to confer benefices was the source of all simony; a topic which had but too much foundation in those ages. [4]

Henry had now no other expedient than to suppress the letter addressed to himself, and to persuade the three bishops to prevaricate, and assert, upon their episcopal faith, that Pascal had assured them in private of his good intentions towards Henry, and of his resolution not to resent any future exertion of his prerogative in granting investitures, though he himself scrupled to give this assurance under his hand, lest other princes should copy the example and assume a like privilege. [5]

Anselm's two messengers, who were monks, affirmed to him that it was impossible this story could have any foundation; but their word was not deemed equal to that of three bishops; and the king, as if he had finally gained his cause, proceeded to fill the sees of Hereford and Salisbury, and to invest the new bishops in the usual manner. [1] But Anselm, who, as he had good reason, gave no credit to the asseveration of the king's messengers, refused not only to consecrate them, but even to communicate with them; and the bishops' themselves, finding how odious they were become, returned to Henry the ensigns of their dignity. The quarrel every day increased between the king and the primate. The former, notwithstanding the prudence and moderation of his temper, threw out menaces against such as should pretend to oppose him in exerting the ancient prerogatives of his crown; and Anselm, sensible of his own dangerous situation, desired leave to make a journey to Rome, in order to

[1] Eadmer, . I much suspect that this text of Scripture is a forgery of his holiness; for I have not been able to find it. Yet it passed current in those ages, and was often quoted by the clergy as the foundation of their power. See Epist. St. Thorn, .]

[2] Eadmer, . W. Malms, .]

[3] Eadmer,]

[4] Eadmer, , 66.]

lay the case before the sovereign pontiff. Henry, well pleased to rid himself without violence of so inflexible an antagonist, readily granted him permission. The prelate was attended to the shore by infinite multitudes, not only of monks and clergymen, but people of all ranks, who scrupled not in this manner to declare for their primate against their sovereign, and who regarded his departure as the final abolition of religion and true piety in the kingdom. [2] The king, however, seized all the revenues of his see; and sent William de Warelwast to negotiate with Pascal, and to find some means of accommodation in this delicate affair.

The English minister told Pascal, that his master would rather lose his crown than part with the right of granting investitures. “And I,” replied Pascal, “would rather lose my head than allow him to retain it.” [3] Henry secretly prohibited Anselm from returning, unless he resolved to conform himself to the laws and usages of the kingdom; and the primate took up his residence at Lyons, in expectation that the king would at last be obliged to yield the point which was the present object of controversy between them. Soon after, he was permitted to return to his monastery at Bec, in Normandy; and Henry, besides restoring to him the revenues of his see, treated him with the greatest respect, and held several conferences with him, in order to soften his opposition, and bend him to submission. [4]

[1] Eadmer, . W. Malms, . Hoveden, p. 469. Sim. Dunelm. .

[2] Eadmer, .

[3] Eadmer, W. Malms, . M. Paris, p. 40

[4] Hoveden,

The people of England, who thought all differences now accommodated, were inclined to blame their primate for absenting, himself so long from his charge; and he daily received letters from his partisans representing the necessity of his speedy return. The total extinction, they told him, of religion and Christianity was likely to ensue from the want of his fatherly care: the most shocking customs prevail in England; and the dread of his severity being now removed, sodomy and the practice of wearing long hair gain ground among all ranks of men, and these enormities openly appear every where, without sense of shame or fear of punishment. [1]

[1] Eadmer, .

The policy of the court of Rome has commonly been much admired; and men, judging by success, have bestowed the highest eulogies on that prudence by which a power, from such slender beginnings, could advance, without force of arms, to establish a universal and almost absolute monarchy in Europe. But the wisdom of so long a succession of men who filled the papal throne, and who were of such different ages, tempers, and interests, is not intelligible, and could never have place in nature. The instrument, indeed, with which they wrought, the ignorance and superstition of the people, is so gross an engine, of such universal prevalence, and so little liable to accident or disorder, that it may be successful even in the most unskilful hands; and scarce any indiscretion can frustrate its operations. While the court of Rome was openly abandoned to the most flagrant disorders, even while it was torn with schisms and factions, the power of the church daily made a sensible progress in Europe; and the temerity of Gregory and caution of Pascal were equally fortunate in promoting it. The clergy, feeling the necessity which they lay under of being protected against the violence of princes, or rigor of the laws, were well pleased to adhere to a foreign head, who, being removed from the fear of the civil authority, could freely employ the power of the whole church in defending her ancient or usurped properties and privileges, when invaded in any particular country. The monks, desirous of an independence on their diocesans, professed a still more devoted attachment to the triple crown; and the stupid people possessed no science or reason which they could oppose to the most exorbitant pretensions. Nonsense passed for demonstration: the most criminal means were sanctified by the piety of the end: treaties were not supposed to be binding, where the interests of God were concerned: the ancient laws and customs of states had no authority against a divine right: impudent forgeries were received as authentic monuments of antiquity: and the champions of holy church, if successful, were celebrated as heroes; if unfortunate, were worshipped as martyrs; and all events thus turned out equally to the advantage of clerical usurpations.

Pascal himself, the reigning pope, was, in the course of this very controversy concerning investitures, involved in circumstances, and necessitated to follow a conduct which would have drawn disgrace and ruin on any temporal prince that had been so unfortunate as to fail into a like situation. His person was seized by the emperor Henry V., and he was obliged, by a formal treaty, to resign to that monarch the right of granting investitures, for which they had so long contended. [1] In order to add greater solemnity to this agreement, the emperor and pope communicated together on the same host; one half of which was given to the prince, the other taken by the pontiff. The most tremendous imprecations were publicly denounced on either of them who should violate the treaty; yet no sooner did Pascal recover his liberty, than he revoked all his concessions, and pronounced the sentence of excommunication against the emperor, who, in the end, was obliged to submit to the terms required of him, and to yield up all his pretensions, which he never could resume. [2]

The king of England had very nearly fallen into the same dangerous situation: Pascal had already excommunicated the earl of Mallent, and the other ministers of Henry who were instrumental in supporting his pretensions: [3] he daily menaced the king himself with a like sentence, and he suspended the blow only to give him leisure to prevent it by a timely submission. The malecontents waited impatiently for the opportunity of disturbing his government by conspiracies and insurrections: [4] the king's best friends were anxious at the prospect of an incident which would set their religious and civil duties at variance; and the countess of Blois, his sister, a princess of piety, who had great influence over him, was affrightened with the danger of her brother's eternal damnation. [5]

[1] W. Malms, .

[2] Padre Paolo, sopra Benef. Eccles. . W. Malms, Chron. Abb St. Petri de Burgo, . Sim. Dunelm. .

[3] Eadmer .

[4] Eadmer, .

Henry, on the other hand, seemed determined to run all hazards, rather than resign a prerogative of such importance, which had been enjoyed by all his predecessors; and it seemed probable from his great prudence and abilities, that he might be able co sustain his rights, and finally prevail in the contest. While Pascal and Henry thus stood mutually in awe; of each other, it was the more easy to bring about an accommodation between them, and to find a medium in which they might agree.

Before bishops took possession of their dignities, they had formerly been accustomed to pass through two ceremonies: they received from the hands of the sovereign a ring and crosier, as symbols of their office; and this was called their investiture: they also made those submissions to the prince which were required of vassals by the rites of the feudal law, and which received the name of homage. And as the king might refuse both to grant the investiture and to receive the homage, though the chapter had, by some canons of the middle age, been endowed with the right of election, the sovereign had in reality the sole power of appointing prelates. Urban II. had equally deprived laymen of the rights of granting investiture and of receiving homage: [1] the emperors never were able, by all their wars and negotiations, to make any distinction be admitted between them: the interposition of profane laymen, in any particular, was still represented as impious and abominable; and the church openly aspired to a total independence on the state. But Henry had put England, as well as Normandy, in such a situation as gave greater weight to his negotiations, and Pascal was for the present satisfied with his resigning the right of granting investitures, by which the spiritual dignity was supposed to be conferred; and he allowed the bishops to do homage for their temporal properties and privileges. [2] The pontiff was well pleased to have made this acquisition, which, he hoped, would in time involve the whole; and the king, anxious to procure an escape from a very dangerous situation, was content to retain some, though a more precarious authority, in the election of prelates.

[1] Eadmer, . W. Malms, . Sim. Dunelm. .]

[2] Eadmer, . W Malms, . 227. Hoveden, , M. Paris, . T. Rudborne, . Brompton. p. 1000. Wilkins, , Chron. Dunst. .]

After the principal controversy was accommodated, it was not difficult to adjust the other differences. If the pope allowed Anselm to communicate with the prelates who had already received investitures from the crown; and he only required of them some submissions for their past misconduct. [1] He also granted Anselm a plenary power of remedying every other disorder, which, he said, might arise from the barbarousness of he country. [2] Such was the idea which the popes then entertained of the English; and nothing can be a stronger proof of the miserable ignorance in which that people were then plunged, than that, a man who sat on the papal throne, and who subsisted by absurdities and nonsense, should think himself entitled to treat them as barbarians.

During the course of these controversies, a synod was held at Westminster, where the king, intent only on the mam dispute, allowed some canons of less importance to be enacted, which tended to promote the usurpations of the clergy. The celibacy of priests was enjoined; a point which it was still found very difficult to carry into execution; and even laymen were not allowed to marry within the seventh degree of affinity. [3] By this contrivance, the pope augmented the profits which he reaped from granting dispensations, and likewise those from divorces. For as the art of writing was then rare, and parish registers were not regularly kept, it was not easy to ascertain the degrees of affinity even among people of rank; and any man, who had money sufficient to pay for it, might obtain a divorce, on pretence that his wife was more nearly related to him than was permitted by the canons. The synod also passed a vote, prohibiting the laity from wearing long hair. [4] The aversion of the clergy to this mode was not confined to England. When the king went to Normandy, before he had conquered that province, the bishop of Seeze, in a formal harangue, earnestly exhorted him to redress the manifold disorders under which the government labored, and to oblige the people to poll their hair in a decent form. Henry, though he would not resign his prerogatives to the church willingly parted with his hair: he cut it in the form which they required of him, and obliged all the courtiers to imitate his example. [5]

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[1] Eadmer, .]

[2] Eadmer, .]

[3] Eadmer, p 67, 68. Spel. Concil. vol. ii. p. 22.]

[4] Eadmer, p 68.]

The acquisition of Normandy was a great point of Henry's ambition; being the ancient patrimony of his family, and the only territory winch, while in his possession, gave him any weight or consideration on the continent: but the injustice of his usurpation was the source of great inquietude, involved him in frequent wars, and obliged him to impose on his English subjects those many heavy and arbitrary taxes, of which all the historians of that age unanimously complain. [1] His nephew William was but six years of age when he committed him to the care of Helie de St. Saen; and it is probable that his reason for intrusting that important charge to a man of so unblemished a character, was to prevent all malignant suspicions, in case any accident should befall the life of the young prince,

1110.

He soon repented of his choice; but when he desired to recover possession of William's person, Helie withdrew his pupil, and carried him to the court of Fulk, count of Anjou, who gave him protection. [2]

[1] Eadmer, . Chron. Sax. , 212, 213, 219, 220, 228. H Hunting. . Hoveden, . Aimal. Waverl. .]

[2] Ordei Vitalis, p 837.]

In proportion as the prince grew up to man's estate, he discovered virtues becoming his birth; and wandering through different courts of Europe, he excited the friendly compassion of many princes, and raised a general indignation against his uncle, who had so unjustly bereaved him of his inheritance. Lewis the Gross son of Philip, was at this time king of France, a brave and generous prince, who, having been obliged, during the lifetime of his father, to fly into England, in order to escape the persecutions of his step-mother Gertrude, had been protected by Henry, and had thence conceived a personal friendship for him. But these ties were soon dissolved after the accession of Lewis, who found his interests to be, in so many particulars opposite to those of the English monarch, and who became sensible of the danger attending the annexation of Normandy to England. He joined, therefore, the counts of Anjou and Flanders in giving disquiet to Henry's government; and this monarch, in order to defend his foreign dominions, found himself obliged to go over to Normandy, where he resided two years. The war which ensued among those princes was attended with no memorable event, and produced only slight skirmishes on the frontiers, agreeably to the weak condition of the sovereigns in that age, whenever their subjects were not roused by some great and urgent occasion. Henry, by contracting his eldest son, William, to the daughter of Fulk, detached that prince from the alliance, and obliged the others to come to an accommodation with him. This peace was not of long duration. His nephew William retired to the court of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, who espoused his cause; and the king of France, having soon after, for other reasons, joined the party, a new war was kindled in Normandy, which produced no event more memorable than had attended the former.

1118.

At last the death of Baldwin, who was slain in an action near Eu, gave some respite to Henry, and enabled him to carry on war with more advantage against his enemies.

Lewis, finding himself unable to wrest Normandy from the king by force of arms, had recourse to the dangerous expedient of applying to the spiritual power, and of affording the ecclesiastics a pretence to interpose in the temporal concerns of princes.

1019.

He carried young William to a general council, which was assembled at Rheims, by Pope Calixtus II., presented the Norman prince to them, complained of the manifest usurpation and injustice of Henry, craved the assistance of the church for reinstating the true heir in his dominions, and represented the enormity of detaining in captivity so brave a prince as Robert, one of the most eminent champions of the cross, and who, by that very quality, was placed under the immediate protection of the holy see. Henry knew how to defend the rights of his crown with vigor, and yet with dexterity. He had sent over the English bishops to this synod; but at the same time had warned them, that, if any further claims were started by the pope or the ecclesiastics, he was determined to adhere to the laws and customs of England and maintain the prerogatives transmitted to him by his predecessors. “Go,” said he to them, “salute the pope in my name; hear his apostolical precepts; but take care to bring none of his new inventions into my kingdom.” Finding, however, that it would be easier for him to elude than oppose the efforts of Calixtus, he gave his ambassadors orders to gain the pope and his favorites by liberal presents and promises. The complaints of the Norman prince were thenceforth heard with great coldness by the council; and Calixtus confessed, after a conference which he had the same sunaaier with Henry, and when that prince probably renewed his presents, that, of all men whom he had ever yet been acquainted with, he was, beyond comparison, the most eloquent and persuasive.

The warlike measures of Lewis proved as ineffectual as his intrigues. He had laid a scheme for surprising Noyon; but Henry, having received intelligence of the design, marched to the relief of the place, and suddenly attacked the French at Brenneville, as they were advancing towards it. A sharp conflict ensued, where Prince William behaved with great bravery, and the king himself was in the most imminent danger. He was wounded in the head by Crispin, a gallant Norman officer, who had followed the fortunes of William; [1] but being rather animated than terrified by the blow, he immediately beat his antagonist to the ground, and so encouraged his troops by the example, that they put the French to total rout, and had very nearly taken their king prisoner. The dignity of the persons engaged in this skirmish rendered it the most memorable action of the war; for in other respects it was not of great importance. There were nine hundred horsemen who fought on both sides, yet were there only two persons slain. The rest were defended by that heavy armor worn by the cavalry in those times. [2] An accommodation soon after ensued between the kings of France and England, and the interests of young William were entirely neglected in it.

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[1] H. Hunting, . M. Paris, p 47. Diceto, p. 503.]

[2] Order. Vitalis, .]

1120.

But this public prosperity of Henry was much overbalanced by a domestic calamity, which befell him. His only son, William, had now reached his eighteenth year; and the king, from the facility with which he himself had usurped the crown, dreading that a like revolution might subvert his family, had taken care to have him recognized successor by the states of the kingdom, and had carried him over to Normandy, that he might receive the homage of the barons of that duchy. The king, on his return, set sail from Barfleur, and was soon carried by a fair wind out of sight of land. The prince was detained by some accident; and his sailors, as well as their captain, Thomas Fitz-Stephens, having spent me interval in drinking, were so flustered, that, being in a hurry to follow the king, they heedlessly carried the ship on a rock, where she immediately foundered. William was put into the long boat, and had got clear of the ship, when, hearing the cries of his natural sister, the countess of Perche, he ordered the seamen to row back, in hopes of saving her: but the numbers who then crowded in, soon sunk the boat; and the prince with all his retinue perished. Above a hundred and forty young noblemen, of the principal families of England and Normandy, were lost on this occasion. A butcher of Rouen was the only person on board who escaped: [1] he clung to the mast, and was taken up next morning by fishermen. Fitz-Stephens also took hold of the mast; but being informed by the butcher that Prince William had perished, he said that he would not survive the disaster; and he threw himself headlong into the sea. [2] Henry entertained hopes for three days that his son had put into some distant port of England; but when certain intelligence of the calamity was brought him, he fainted away; and it was remarked, that he never after was seen to smile, nor ever recovered his wonted cheerfulness. [3]

The death of William may be regarded, in one respect, as a misfortune to the English; because it was the immediate source of those civil wars which, after the demise of the king, caused such confusion in the kingdom; but it is remarkable, that the young prince had entertained a violent aversion to the natives; and had been heard to threaten, that when he should be king he would make them draw the plough, and would turn them into beasts of burden. These prepossessions he inherited from his father; who, though he was wont, when it might serve his purpose, to value himself on his birth, as a native of England, [4] showed, in the course of his government, an extreme prejudice against that people. All hopes of preferment to ecclesiastical as well as civil dignities were denied them during this whole reign; and any foreigner, however ignorant or worthless, was sure to have the preference in every competition. [5] As the English had given no disturbance to the government during the course of fifty years, this inveterate antipathy in a prince of so much temper as well as penetration, forms a presumption that the English of that age were still a rude and barbarous people even compared to the Normans, and impresses us with no very favorable idea of the Anglo-Saxon manners.

Prince William left no children; and the king had not now any legitimate issue, except one daughter, Matilda, whom, in 1110, he had betrothed, though only eight years of age, [6] to the emperor Henry V., and whom he had then sent over to be educated in Germany. [7]

But as her absence from the kingdom, and her marriage into a foreign family, might endanger the succession, Henry, who was now a widower, was induced to marry, in hopes of having male heirs; and he made his addresses to Adelais, daughter of Godfrey, duke of Lovainc, and niece of Pope Calixtus, a young princess of an amiable person. [1]

1121.

[1] Sim. Dunelm. . Alured. Beverl. .]

[2] Order. Vitalis, .]

[3] Hoveden, . Order. Vitalis, .]

[4] Gul. Neubr. lib. i. cap, 3.]

[6] Chron, Sax. . W. Malms, . Order. Vitalis, p 83]

[7] See note M, at the end of the volume.]

But Adelais brought him no children; and the prince who was most likely to dispute the succession, and even the immediate possession of the crown, recovered hopes of subverting his rival, who had successively seized all his patrimonial dominions. William, the son of Duke Robert, was still protected in the French court; and as Henry's connections with the count of Anjou were broken off by the death of his son, Fulk joined the party of the unfortunate prince, gave him his daughter in marriage, and aided him in raising disturbances in Normandy. But Henry found the means of drawing off the count of Anjou, by forming anew with him a nearer connection than the former, and one more material to the interests of that count's family.

1127.

The emperor, his son-in-law, dying without issue, he bestowed his daughter on Geoffrey, the eldest son of Fulk, and endeavored to insure her succession, by having her recognized heir to all his dominions, and obliging the barons both of Normandy and England to swear fealty to her. He hoped that the choice of this husband would be more agreeable to all his subjects than that of the emperor; as securing them from the danger of falling under the dominion of a great and distant potentate,

1128.

who might bring them into subjection, and reduce their country to the rank of a province; but the barons were displeased that a step so material to national interests had been taken without consulting them; [2] and Henry had too sensibly experienced the turbulence of their disposition not to dread the effects of their resentment.

[1] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms, .]

[2] W. Malms, . The Annals of (Waverly p. 150) say that the king asked and obtained the consent of all the barons.]

It seemed probable that his nephew's party might gain force from the increase of the malecontents; an accession of power, which that prince acquired a little after, tended to render his pretensions still more dangerous.

Charles, earl of Flanders, being assassinated during the celebration of divine service, King Lewis immediately put the young prince in possession of that county, to which he had pretensions in the right of his grandmother Matilda, wife to the Conqueror. But William survived a very little time this piece of good fortune, which seemed to open the way to still further prosperity. He was killed in a skirmish with the landgrave of Alsace, his competitor for Flanders; and his death put an end, for the present, to the jealousy and inquietude of Henry.

The chief merit of this monarch's government consists in the profound tranquillity which he established and maintained throughout all his dominions during the greater part of his reign. The mutinous barons were retained in subjection; and his neighbors, in every attempt which they made upon him, found him so well prepared that they were discouraged from continuing or renewing their enterprises. In order to repress the incursions of the Welsh, he brought over some Flemings in the year 1111, and settled them in Pembrokeshire, where they long maintained a different language, and customs, and manners, from their neighbors. Though his government seems to have been arbitrary in England, it was judicious and prudent; and was as little oppressive as the necessity of his affairs would permit. He wanted not attention to the redress of grievances; and historians mention in particular the levying of purveyance, which he endeavored to moderate and restrain. The tenants in the king's demesne lands were at that time obliged to supply, gratis, the court with provisions, and to furnish carriages on the same hard terms, when the king made a progress, as he did frequently, into any of the counties. These exactions were so grievous, and levied in so licentious a manner, that the farmers, when they heard of the approach of the court, often deserted their houses, as if an enemy had invaded the country; [1] and sheltered their persons and families in the woods, from the insults of the king's retinue. Henry prohibited those enormities, and punished the persons guilty of them by cutting off their hands, legs, or other members. [2] But the prerogative was perpetual; the remedy applied by Henry was temporary; and the violence itself of this remedy, so far from giving security to the people, was only a proof of the ferocity of the government, and threatened a quick return of like abuses.

[[1] Eadmer, . Chron. Sax., .]

[2] Eadmer, .

One great and difficult object of the king's prudence was the guarding against the encroachments of the court of Rome, and protecting the liberties of the church of England. The pope, in the year 1101, had sent Guy, archbishop of Vienne, as legate into Britain; and though he was the first that for many years had appeared there in that character, and his commission gave general surprise, [1] the king, who was then in the commencement of his reign, and was involved in many difficulties, was obliged to submit to this encroachment on his authority. But in the year 1116, Anselm, abbot of St. Sabas, who was coming over with a like legantine commission, was prohibited from entering the kingdom; [2] and Pope Calixtus, who in his turn was then laboring under many difficulties, by reason of the pretensions of Gregory, an antipope, was obliged to promise that he never would for the future, except when solicited by the king himself, send any legate into England. [3] Notwithstanding this engagement, the pope, as soon as he had suppressed his antagonist, granted the cardinal De Crema a legantine commission over that kingdom; and the king, who, by reason of his nephew's intrigues and invasions, found himself at that time in a dangerous situation, was obliged to submit to the exercise of this commission. [4] A synod was called by the legate at London; where, among other canons, a vote passed enacting severe penalties on the marriages of the clergy. [5] The cardinal, in a public harangue, declared it to be an unpardonable enormity, that a priest should dare to consecrate and touch the body of Christ immediately after he had risen from the side of a strumpet; for that was the decent appellation which he gave to the wives of the clergy. But it happened, that the very next night the officers of justice, breaking into a disorderly house, found the cardinal in bed with a courtesan; [6] an incident which threw such ridicule upon him, that he immediately stole out of the kingdom; the synod broke up; and the canons against the marriage of clergymen were worse executed than ever. [7]

[1] Eadmer, .

[2] Hoveden, .

[3] Eadmer, , 137, 138.]

[4] Chron. Sax. .]

[6] Hoveden, . M. Paris. .]

[7] M. West. ad ann 1125. H. Hunting. .]

It is remarkable that this last writer, who was a clergyman as well as the others, makes an apology for using such freedom with the fathers of the church; but says, that the fact was notorious, and ought not to be concealed.

Henry, in order to prevent this alternate revolution of concessions and encroachments, sent William, then archbishop of Canterbury, to remonstrate with the court of Rome against those abuses, and to assert the liberties of the English church. It was a usual maxim with every pope, when he found that he could not prevail in any pretension, to grant princes or states a power which they had always exercised, to resume at a proper juncture the claim which seemed to be resigned, and to pretend that the civil magistrate had possessed the authority only from a special indulgence of the Roman pontiff. After this manner, the pope, finding that the French nation would not admit his claim of granting investitures, had passed a bull, giving the king that authority; and he now practised a like invention to elude the complaints of the king of England. He made the archbishop of Canterbury his legate, renewed his commission from time to time, and still pretended that the rights which that prelate had ever exercised as metropolitan, were entirely derived from the indulgence of the apostolic see. The English princes, and Henry in particular, who were glad to avoid any immediate contest of so dangerous a nature, commonly acquiesced by their silence in these pretensions of the court of Rome. [1]

[1] See note N, at the end of the volume.]

1131.

As every thing in England remained in tranquillity, Henry took the opportunity of paying a visit to Normandy, to which he was invited, as well by his affection for that country as by his tenderness for his daughter the empress Matilda, who was always his favorite. Some time after, that princess was delivered of a son,

1132.

who received the name of Henry; and the king, further to insure her succession, made all the nobility of England and Normandy renew the oath of fealty,

1135.

which they had already sworn to her. [1] The joy of this event, and the satisfaction which he reaped from his daughter's company, who bore successively two other sons, made his residence in Normandy very agreeable to him; [2] and he seemed determined to pass the remainder of his days in that country, when an incursion of the Welsh obliged him to think of returning into England. He was preparing for the journey, but was seized with a sudden illness at St. Dennis le Forment, from eating too plentifully of lampreys, a food which always agreed better with his palate than his constitution. [3]

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] H. Hunting, .]

[3] H. Hunting, . M. Paris .]

He died in the sixty-seventh year of his age and the thirty-fifth year of his reign, leaving by will his daughter Matilda heir of all his dominions, without making any mention of her husband, Geoffrey, who had given him several causes of displeasure. [1]

[1] W. Malms, .]

This prince was one of the most accomplished that has filled the English throne, and possessed all the great qualities both of body and mind, natural and acquired, which could fit him for the high station to which he attained. His person was manly, his countenance engaging, his eyes clear serene, and penetrating. The affability of his address encouraged those who might be overawed by the sense of his dignity or of his wisdom; and though he often indulged his facetious humor, he knew how to temper it with discretion, and ever kept at a distance from all indecent familiarities with his courtiers. His superior eloquence and judgment would have given him an ascendant, even had he been born in a private station; and his personal bravery would have procured him respect, though it had been less supported by art and policy. By his great progress in literature, he acquired the name of ‘Beauclerk,’ or the scholar; but his application to those sedentary pursuits abated nothing of the activity and vigilance of his government; and though the learning of that age was better fitted to corrupt than improve the understanding, his natural good sense preserved itself untainted both from the pedantry and superstition which were then so prevalent among men of letters. His temper was susceptible of the sentiments as well of friendship as of resentment; and his ambition, though high, might be deemed moderate and reasonable, had not his conduct towards his brother and nephew showed that he was too much disposed to sacrifice to it all the maxims of justice and equity. But the total incapacity of Robert for government afforded his younger brother a reason or pretence for seizing the sceptre both of England and Normandy; and when violence and usurpation are once begun, necessity obliges a prince to continue in the same criminal course, and engages him in measures which his better judgment and sounder principles would otherwise have induced him to reject with warmth and indignation.

King Henry was much addicted to women; and historians mention no less than seven illegitimate sons and six daughters born to him. [1] Hunting was also one of his favorite amusements; and he exercised great rigor against those who encroached on the royal forests, which were augmented during his reign, [2] though their number and extent were already too great. To kill a stag was as criminal as to murder a man: he made all the dogs be mutilated which were kept on the borders of his forests; and he sometimes deprived his subjects of the liberty of hunting on their own lands, or even cutting their own woods. In other respects he executed justice, and that with rigor; the best maxim which a prince in that age could follow. Stealing was first made capital in this reign; [3] false coining, which was then a very common crime, and by which the money had been extremely debased, was severely punished by Henry.* Near fifty criminals of this kind were at one time hanged or mutilated; and though these punishments seem to have been exercised in a manner somewhat arbitrary, they were grateful to the people, more attentive to present advantages than jealous of general laws. There is a code which passes under the name of Henry I.; but the best antiquaries have agreed to think it spurious. It is, however, a very ancient compilation, and may be useful to instruct us in the manners and customs of the times. We learn from it, that a great distinction was then made between the English and Normans, much to the advantage of the latter.* The deadly feuds and the liberty of private revenge, which had been avowed by the Saxon laws, were still continued, and were not yet wholly illegal. [4]

Among the laws granted on the king's accession, it is remarkable that the reunion of the civil and ecclesiastical courts, as in the Saxon times, was enacted. [5] But this law, like the articles of his charter, remained without effect, probably from the opposition of Archbishop Anselm.

Inst. 70.]

Henry, on his accession, granted a charter to London, which seems to have been the first step towards rendering that city a corporation. By this charter, the city was empowered to keep the farm of Middlesex at three hundred pounds a year, to elect its own sheriff and justiciary, and to bold pleas of the crown; and it was exempted from scot, danegelt, trials by combat, and lodging the king's retinue These, with a confirmation of the privileges of their court of hustings, wardmotes, and common halls, and their liberty of hunting in Middlesex and Surrey, are the chief articles of this charter. [1]

[Footnonte * Sim. Dunelm. . Brompton, . Flor. Wigorn. p. 653 Hoveden, .]

[Footnonte * * Sim. Dunelm. . Brompton, . Hoveden, Annal. Waverl. .]

[Footnonte * * * LL. Hen. I. sect. 18, 75.]

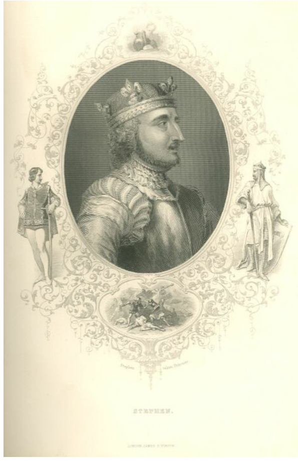
[Footnonte * * * * LL. Hen. I. sect. 82.]

It is said [2] that this prince, from indulgence to his tenants, changed the rents of his demesnes, which were formerly paid in kind, into money, which was more easily remitted to the exchequer. But the great scarcity of coin would render that commutation difficult to be executed, while at the same time provisions could not be sent to a distant quarter of the kingdom. This affords a probable reason why the ancient kings of England so frequently changed their place of abode: they carried their court from one place to another, that they might consume upon the spot the revenue of their several demesnes.

[Footnonte * Lambardi Archaionomia, ex edit. Twisden. Wilkins, .]

[Footnonte * * Dail. de Scaocario, lib. i. ca.]

CHAPTER VII.


Stephen taken Prisoner

STEPHEN.

LONDON, JAMES S. VIRTUE.

STEPHEN.

Contemporary Monarchs.

EMP. OF GERM K. OF SCOTLAND. K. OF FRANCE K. OF SPAIN.
Lothaire II. 1138 David I. 1143 Louis VI. 1137 Alphonse VIII.
Conrad III. 1152 Malcolm IV. Louis VII.
Frederic I. Lucius II.1145
POPES
Innocent II. 1142
Celestin II. 1144
Eugenius III. 1153
Anastasius IV.

1135.

IN the progress and settlement of the feudal law, the male succession to fiefs had taken place some time before the female was admitted; and estates, being considered as military benefices, not as property, were transmitted to such only as could serve in the armies, and perform in person the conditions upon which they were originally granted. But when the continuance of rights, during some generations, in the same family, had, in a great measure, obliterated the primitive idea, the females were gradually admitted to the possession of feudal property; and the same revolution of principles which procured them the inheritance of private estates, naturally introduced their succession to government and authority. The failure, therefore, of male heirs to the kingdom of England and duchy of Normandy, seemed to leave the succession open, without a rival, to the empress Matilda; and as Henry had made all his vassals in both states swear fealty to her, he presumed that they would not easily be induced to depart at once from her hereditary right, and from their own reiterated oaths and engagements. But the irregular manner in which he himself had acquired the crown might have instructed him, that neither his Norman nor English subjects were as yet capable of adhering to a strict rule of government; and as every precedent of this kind seems to give authority to new usurpations, he had reason to dread, even from his own family, some invasion of his daughter's title, which he had taken such pains to establish.

Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror, had been married to Stephen, count of Blois, and had brought him several sons; among whom Stephen and Henry, the two youngest, had been invited over to England by the late king and had received great honors, riches, and preferment, from the zealous friendship which that prince bore to every one that had been so fortunate as to acquire his favor and good opinion. Henry, who had betaken himself to the ecclesiastical profession, was created abbot of Glastonbury and bishop of Winchester; and though these dignities were considerable, Stephen had, from his uncle's liberality, attained establishments still more solid and durable. [1] The king had married him to Matilda, who was daughter and heir of Eustace, count of Boulogne, and who brought him, besides that feudal sovereignty in France, an immense property in England, which, in the distribution of lands, had been conferred by the Conqueror on the family of Boulogne. Stephen also by this marriage acquired a new connection with the royal family of England, as Mary, his wife's mother, was sister to David, the reigning king of Scotland, and to Matilda, the first wife of Henry, and mother of the empress. The king, still imagining that he strengthened the interests of his family by the aggrandizement of Stephen, took pleasure in enriching him by the grant of new possessions; and he conferred on him the great estate forfeited by Robert Mallet in England, and that forfeited by the earl of Mortaigne in Normandy. Stephen, in return, professed great attachment to his uncle, and appeared so zealous for the succession of Matilda, that, when the barons swore fealty to that princess, he contended with Robert, earl of Glocester, the king's natural son, who should first be admitted to give her this testimony of devoted zeal and fidelity. [2] Meanwhile he continued to cultivate, by every art of popularity, the friendship of the English nation; and many virtues with which he seemed to be endowed, favored the success of his intentions. By his bravery, activity, and vigor, he acquired the esteem of the barons; by his generosity, and by an affable and familiar address, unusual in that age among men of his high quality, he obtained the affections of the people, particularly of the Londoners. [3] And though he dared not to take any steps towards his further grandeur, lest he should expose himself to the jealousy of so penetrating a prince as Henry, he still hoped that, by accumulating riches and power, and by acquiring popularity, he might in time be able to open his way to the throne.

[1] Gul. Neubr. . Brompton, .]

[2] W. Malms, .]

[3] W. Malms, . Gest. Steph. .]

No sooner had Henry breathed his last, than Stephen, insensible to all the ties of gratitude and fidelity, and blind to danger, gave full reins to his criminal ambition; and trusted that, even without any previous intrigue, the celerity of his enterprise, and the boldness of his attempt, might overcome the weak attachment which the English and Normans in that age bore to the laws and to the rights of their sovereign. He hastened over to England, and though the citizens of Dover and those of Canterbury, apprised of his purpose, shut their gates against him, he stopped not till he arrived at London, where some of the lower rank, instigated by his emissaries, as well as moved by his general popularity, immediately saluted him king. His next point was to acquire the good will of the clergy; and by performing the ceremony of his coronation, to put himself in possession of the throne, from which he was confident it would not be easy afterwards to expel him. His brother, the bishop of Winchester, was useful to him in these capital articles; having gained Roger, bishop of Salisbury, who, though he owed a great fortune and advancement to the favor of the late king, preserved no sense of gratitude to that prince's family, he applied, in conjunction with that prelate, to William, archbishop of Canterbury, and required him, in virtue of his office, to give the royal unction to Stephen. The primate, who, as all the others, had sworn fealty to Matilda, refused to perform this ceremony; but his opposition was overcome by an expedient equally dishonorable with the other steps by which this revolution was effected. Hugh Bigod, steward of the household, made oath before the primate, that the late king, on his death-bed, had shown a dissatisfaction with his daughter Matilda, and had expressed his intention of leaving the count of Boulogne heir to all his dominions. [1] William, either believing or feigning to believe Bigod's testimony, anointed Stephen, and put the crown upon his head; and from this religious ceremony, that prince, without any shadow, either of hereditary title or consent of the nobility or people, was allowed to proceed to the exercise of sovereign authority. Very few barons attended his coronation; [2] but none opposed his usurpation, however unjust or flagrant.

[1] M. Paris, . Diccto, Chron. Durst. .]

[1] Brompton, .]

The sentiment of religion which, if corrupted into superstition, has often little efficacy in fortifying the duties of civil society, was not affected by the multiplied oaths taken in favor of Matilda, and only rendered the people obedient to a prince who was countenanced by the clergy, and who had received from the primate the rite of royal unction and consecration. [1]

Stephen, that he might further secure his tottering throne passed a charter, in which he made liberal promises to all orders of men; to the clergy, that he would speedily fill all vacant benefices, and would never levy the rents of any of them during the vacancy; to the nobility, that he would reduce the royal forests to their ancient boundaries, and correct all encroachments; and to the people, that he would remit the tax of danegelt, and restore the laws of King Edward. [2] The late king had a great treasure at Winchester, amounting to a hundred thousand pounds; and Stephen, by seizing this money, immediately turned against Henry's family the precaution which that prince had employed for their grandeur and security; an event which naturally attends the policy of amassing treasures. By means of this money, the usurper insured the compliance, though not the attachment, of the principal clergy and nobility; but not trusting to this frail security, he invited over from the continent, particularly from Brittany and Flanders, great numbers of those bravoes, or disorderly soldiers, with whom every country in Europe, by reason of the general ill police and turbulent government, extremely abounded. [3] These mercenary troops guarded his throne by the terrors of the sword; and Stephen, that he might also overawe all malecontents by new and additional terrors of religion, procured a bull from Rome, which ratified his title, and which the pope, seeing this prince in possession of the throne, and pleased with an appeal to his authority in secular controversies, very readily granted him. [4]

[1] Such stress was formerly laid on the right of coronation, that the monkish, writers never give any prince the title of king till he is crowned, though he had for some time been in possession of the crown, and exercised all the powers of sovereignty.]

[2] W. Malms, . Hoveden, .]

[3] W. Malms, .]

[4] Hagulstadt, , 313.]

1136.

Matilda and her husband Geoffrey were as unfortunate in Normandy as they had been in England. The Norman nobility, moved by an hereditary animosity against the Angevins, first applied to Theobold, count of Blois, Stephen's elder brother for protection and assistance; but hearing afterwards that Stephen had got possession of the English crown, and having, many of them, the same reasons as formerly for desiring a continuance of their union with that kingdom, they transferred their allegiance to Stephen, and put him in possession of their government. Lewis the younger, the reigning king of France, accepted the homage of Eustace, Stephen's eldest son, for the duchy; and the more to corroborate his connections with that family, he betrothed his sister Constantia to the young prince. The count of Blois assigned all his pretensions, and received in lieu of them an annual pension of two thousand marks; and Geoffrey himself was obliged to conclude a truce for two years with Stephen, on condition of the king's paying him, during that time, a pension of five thousand. [1] Stephen, who had taken a journey to Normandy, finished all these transactions in person, and soon after returned to England.

Robert, earl of Glocester, natural son of the late king, was a man of honor and abilities; and as he was much attached to the interests of his sister Matilda, and zealous for the lineal succession, it was chiefly from his intrigues and resistance that the king had reason to dread a new revolution of government. This nobleman, who was in Normandy when he received intelligence of Stephen's accession, found himself much embarrassed concerning the measures which he should pursue in that difficult emergency. To swear allegiance to the usurper appeared to him dishonorable, and a breach of his oath to Matilda: to refuse giving this pledge of his fidelity was to banish himself from England, and be totally incapacitated from serving the royal family, or contributing to their restoration. [2] He offered Stephen to do him homage, and to take the oath of fealty; but with an express condition, that the king should maintain all his stipulations, and should never invade any of Robert's rights or dignities; and Stephen, though sensible that this reserve, so unusual in itself, and so unbefitting the duty of a subject, was meant only to afford Robert a pretence for a revolt on the first favorable opportunity, was obliged by the numerous friends and retainers of that nobleman, to receive him on those terms. [3]

The clergy, who could scarcely at this time be deemed subjects to the crown, imitated that dangerous example: they annexed to their oaths of allegiance this condition, that they were only bound so long as the king defended the ecclesiastical liberties, and supported the discipline of the church. [1] The barons, in return for their submission, exacted terms still more destructive of public peace, as well as of royal authority. Many of them required the right of fortifying their castles, and of putting themselves in a posture of defence; and the king found himself totally unable to refuse his consent to this exorbitant demand. [2] All England was immediately filled with those fortresses, which the noblemen garrisoned either with their vassals, or with licentious soldiers, who flocked to them from all quarters. Unbounded rapine was exercised upon the people for the maintenance of these troops; and private animosities, which had with difficulty been restrained by law, now breaking out without control, rendered England a scene of uninterrupted violence and devastation. Wars between the nobles were carried on with the utmost fury in every quarter; the barons even assumed the right of coining money, and of exercising, without appeal, every act of jurisdiction; [3] and the inferior gentry, as well as the people, finding no defence from the laws during this total dissolution of sovereign authority, were obliged, for their immediate safety, to pay court to some neighboring chieftain, and to purchase his protection, both by submitting to his exactions, and by assisting him in his rapine upon others. The erection of one castle proved the immediate cause of building many others; and even those who obtained not the king's permission, thought that they were entitled, by the great principle of self-preservation, to put themselves on an equal footing with their neighbors, who commonly were also their enemies and rivals. The aristocratical power, which is usually so oppressive in the Feudal governments, had now risen to its utmost height, during the reign of a prince who, though endowed with vigor and abilities, had usurped the throne without the pretence of a title, and who was necessitated to tolerate in others the same violence to which he himself had been holden for his sovereignty.

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[1] M. Paris, .

[2] W. Malms, .

[3] W. Malms, . M Paris, .

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] W. Malms, p, 180]

[3] Trivet, p, 19 Gul Neub. . W. Heming. p. 487. Brompton, .]

But Stephen was not of a disposition to submit long to these usurpations, without making some effort for the recovery of royal authority. Finding that the legal prerogatives of the crown were resisted and abridged, he was also tempted to make his power the sole measure of his conduct, and to violate all those concessions which he himself had made on his accession, [1] as well as the ancient privileges of his subjects. The mercenary soldiers, who chiefly supported his authority, having exhausted the royal treasure, subsisted by depredations; and every place was filled with the best grounded complaints against the government. The earl of Glocester, having now settled with his friends the plan of an insurrection, retired beyond sea, sent the king a defiance, solemnly renounced his allegiance, and upbraided him with the breach of those conditions which had been annexed to the oath of fealty sworn by that nobleman. [2]

[1] W. Malms, . M. Paris,]

[2] W. Malms, .]

1137.

David, king of Scotland, appeared at the head of an army in defence of his niece’s title, and penetrating into Yorkshire, committed the most barbarous devastations on that country.

1138.

The fury of his massacres and ravages enraged the northern nobility, who might otherwise have been inclined to join him; and William, earl of Albemarle, Robert de Ferrers, William Piercy, Robert de Brus, Roger Moubray, Ilbert Lacy, Walter l’Espee, powerful barons in those parts, assembled an army, with which they encamped at North Allerton, and awaited the arrival of the enemy. A great battle was here fought, called the battle of the Standard, from a high crucifix, erected by the English on a wagon, and carried along with the army as a military ensign. The king of Scots was defeated; and he himself, as well as his son Henry, narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the English. This success overawed the malecontents in England, and might have given some stability to Stephen’s throne, had he not been so elated with prosperity as to engage in a controversy with the clergy, who were at that time an overmatch for any monarch.

Though the great power of the church, in ancient times, weakened the authority of the crown, and interrupted the course of the laws, it may be doubted whether, in ages of such violence and outrage, it was not rather advantageous that some limits were set to the power of the sword, both in the hands of the prince and nobles, and that men were taught to pay regard to some principles and privileges.

1139.

The chief misfortune was, that the prelates, on some occasions, acted entirely as barons, employed military power against their sovereign or their neighbors, and thereby often increased those disorders which it was their duty to repress. The bishop of Salisbury, in imitation of the nobility, had built two strong castles, one at Sherborne, another at the Devizes, and had laid the foundations of a third at Malmsbury: his nephew; Alexander, bishop of Lincoln, had erected a fortress at Newark; and Stephen, who was now sensible from experience of the mischiefs attending these multiplied; citadels, resolved to begin with destroying those of the clergy, who by their function seemed less entitled than the barons to such military securities. [1] Making pretence of a fray, which had arisen in court between the retinue of the bishop of Salisbury and that of the earl of Brittany, he seized both that prelate and the bishop of Lincoln, threw them into prison, and obliged them by menaces to deliver up those places of strength which they had lately erected. [2]

Henry, bishop of Winchester, the king's brother, being armed with a legantine commission, now conceived himself to be an ecclesiastical sovereign no less powerful than the civil; and forgetting the ties of blood which connected him with the king, he resolved to vindicate the clerical privileges which, he pretended, were here openly violated. He assembled a synod at Westminster, and there complained of the impiety of Stephen's measures, who had employed violence against the dignitaries of the church, and had not awaited the sentence of a spiritual court, by which alone, he affirmed, they could lawfully be tried and condemned, if their conduct had anywise merited censure or punishment. [3] The synod, ventured to send a summons to the king, charging him to appear before them, and to justify his measures; [4] and Stephen, instead of resenting this indignity, sent Aubrey de Vere to plead his cause before that assembly. De Vere accused; the two prelates of treason and sedition; but the synod refused, to try the cause, or examine their conduct, till those castles of which they had been dispossessed, were previously restored to them. [5] The bishop of Salisbury declared, that he would appeal to the pope; and had not Stephen and his partisans employed menaces, and even shown a disposition of executing violence by the hands of the soldiery, affairs had instantly come to extremity between the crown and the mitre. [6]

[1] Gul. Neub. .

[2] Chron. Sax. . W. Malms,]

[3] W. Malms .]

[4] W. Malms, . M. Paris, ,]

[6] W. Malms p 183.]

While this quarrel, joined to so many other grievances, increased the discontents among the people, the empress, invited by the opportunity, and secretly encouraged by the legate himself, landed in England, with Robert, earl of Glocester, and a retinue of a hundred and forty knights. She fixed her residence at Arundel Castle, whose gates were opened to her by Adelais, the queen dowager, now married to William de Albini, earl of Sussex; and she excited, by messengers, her partisans to take arms in every county of England. Adelais, who had expected that her daughter-in-law would have invaded the kingdom with a much greater force, became apprehensive of danger; and Matilda, to ease her of her fears, removed first to Bristol, which belonged to her brother Robert, thence to Glocester, where she remained under the protection of Milo, a gallant nobleman in those parts, who had embraced her cause. Soon after, Geoffrey Talbot, William Mohun, Ralph Lovell, William Fitz-John, William Fitz-Alan, Paganell, and many other barons, declared for her; and her party, which was generally favored in the kingdom, seemed every day to gain ground upon that of her antagonist.

Were we to relate all the military events transmitted to us by contemporary and authentic historians, it would be easy to swell our accounts of this reign into a large volume; but those incidents, so little memorable in themselves, and so confused both in time and place, could afford neither instruction nor entertainment to the reader. It suffices to say, that the war was spread into every quarter; and that those turbulent barons, who had already shaken off, in a great measure, the restraint of government, having now obtained the pretence of a public cause, carried on their devastations with redoubled fury, exercised implacable vengeance on each other, and set no bounds to their oppressions over the people. The castles of the nobility were become receptacles of licensed robbers, who, sallying forth day and night, committed spoil on the open country, on the villages, and even on the cities; put the captives to torture, in order to make them reveal their treasures; sold their persons to slavery; and set fire to their houses, after they had pillaged them of every thing valuable. The fierceness of their disposition, leading them to commit wanton destruction, frustrated their rapacity of its purpose; and the property and persons even of the ecclesiastics, generally so much revered, were at last, from necessity, exposed to the same outrage which had laid waste the rest of the kingdom. The land was left untilled; the instruments of husbandry were destroyed or abandoned; and a grievous famine, the natural result of those disorders, affected equally both parties, and reduced the spoilers, as well as the defenceless people, to the most extreme want and indigence. [1]

[1] Chron. Sax, . W. Malms, . Gest. Steph. .]

1140.

After several fruitless negotiations and treaties of peace, which never interrupted these destructive hostilities, there happened at last an event which seemed to promise some end of the public calamities. Ralph, earl of Chester, and his half-brother, William de Roumara, partisans of Matilda, had surprised the Castle of Lincoln; but the citizens, who were better affected to Stephen, having invited him to their aid, that prince laid close siege to the castle, in hopes of soon rendering himself master of the place, either by assault or by famine. The earl of Glocester hastened with an army to the relief of his friends; and Stephen, informed of his approach, took the field with a resolution of giving him battle.

1141.

After a violent shock, the two wings of the royalists were put to flight; and Stephen himself, surrounded by the enemy, was at last, after exerting great efforts of valor, borne down by numbers and taken prisoner. He was conducted to Glocester; and though at first treated with humanity, was soon after, on some suspicion, thrown into prison, and loaded with irons.

Stephen’s party was entirely broken by the captivity of their leader, and the barons came in daily from all quarters, and did homage to Matilda. The princess, however, amidst all her prosperity, knew that she was not secure of success, unless she could gain the confidence of the clergy; and as the conduct of the legate had been of late very ambiguous, and showed his intentions to have rather aimed at humbling his brother, than totally ruining him, she employed every endeavor to fix him in her interests. She held a conference with him in an open plain near Winchester; where she promised upon oath, that if he would acknowledge her for sovereign, would recognize her title as the sole descendant of the late king, and would again submit to the allegiance which he, as well as the rest of the kingdom, had sworn to her, he should in return be entire master of the administration, and in particular should, at his pleasure, dispose of all vacant bishoprics and abbeys. Earl Robert, her brother, Brian Fitz-Count, Milo of Glocester, and other great men, became guaranties for her observing these engagements; [1] and the prelate was at last induced to promise her allegiance, but that still burdened with the express condition, that she should on her part fulfil her promises. He then conducted her to Winchester, led her in procession to the cathedral, and with great solemnity, in the presence of many bishops and abbots, denounced curses against all those who cursed her, poured out blessings on those who blessed her granted absolution to such as were obedient to her, and excommunicated such as were rebellious. [2] Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, soon after came also to court, and swore allegiance to the empress. [3]

[1] W. Malms, .]

[2] Chron. Sax. p 242. Contin. Flor. Wigorn. p. 676]

[3] W. Malms, .]

Matilda, that she might further insure the attachment of the clergy, was willing to receive the crown from their hands; and instead of assembling the states of the kingdom, the measure which the constitution, had it been either fixed or regarded, seemed necessarily to require, she was content that the legate should summon an ecclesiastical synod, and that her title to the throne should there be acknowledged. The legate, addressing himself to the assembly, told them, that in the absence of the empress, Stephen, his brother, had been permitted to reign, and, previously to his ascending the throne, had seduced them by many fair promises, of honoring and exalting the church, of maintaining the laws, and of reforming all abuses; that it grieved him to observe how much that prince had in every particular been wanting to his engagements; public peace was interrupted, crimes were daily committed with impunity, bishops were thrown into prison and forced to surrender their possessions, abbeys were put to sale, churches were pillaged and the most enormous disorders prevailed in the administration; that he himself, in order to procure a redress of these grievances, had formerly summoned the king before a council of bishops; but instead of inducing him to amend his conduct, had rather offended him by that expedient; that, how much soever misguided, that prince was still his brother, and the object of his affections; but his interests, however, must be regarded as subordinate to those of their heavenly Father, who had now rejected him, and thrown him into the hands of his enemies; that it principally belonged to the clergy to elect and ordain kings; he had summoned them together for that purpose; and having invoked the divine assistance, he now pronounced Matilda, the only descendant of Henry, their late sovereign, queen of England. The whole assembly, by their acclamations or silence, gave or seemed to give, their assent to this declaration. [1]

The only laymen summoned to this council, which decided the fate of the crown, were the Londoners; and even these were required not to give their opinion, but to submit to the decrees of the synod. The deputies of London, however, were not so passive; they insisted that their king should be delivered from prison; but were told by the legate, that it became not the Londoners, who were regarded as noblemen in England, to take part with those barons who had basely forsaken their lord in battle, and who had treated holy church with contumely. It is with reason that the citizens of London assumed so much authority, if it be true, what is related by Fitz-Stephen, a contemporary author, that that city should at this time bring into the field no less than eighty thousand combatants. [2]

[1] W. Malms, . This author, a judicious man, was present, and says that he was very attentive to what passed. This speech therefore, may be regarded as entirely genuine.]

[2 Were this account to be depended on, London must at that time have contained near four hundred thousand inhabitants, which is above double the number it contained at the death of Queen Elizabeth. But these loose calculations, or rather guesses, deserve very little credit. Peter of Blois, a contemporary writer, and a man of sense, says there were then only forty thousand inhabitants in London, which is much more likely. See epist. 151. What Fitz-Stephen says of the prodigious riches, splendor, and commerce of London, proves only the great poverty of the other towns of the kingdoms and indeed of all the northern parts of Europe.]

London, notwithstanding its great power, and its attachment to Stephen, was at length obliged to submit to Matilda; and her authority, by the prudent conduct of Earl Robert, seemed to be established over the whole kingdom; but affairs remained not long in this situation. That princess, besides the disadvantages of her sex, which weakened her influence over a turbulent and martial people, was of a passionate, imperious spirit, and knew not how to temper with affability the harshness of a refusal. Stephen's queen, seconded by many of the nobility, petitioned for the liberty of her husband; and offered, that, on this condition, he should renounce the crown, and retire into a convent. The legate desired that Prince Eustace, his nephew, might inherit Boulogne and the other patrimonial estates of his father. [1] The Londoners applied for the establishment of King Edward's laws, instead of those of King Henry, which, they said, were grievous and oppressive. [2] All these petitions were rejected in the most haughty and peremptory manner.

[1 Brompton, .]

[2 Contin. Flor. Wigorn. . Gervase, p.1855]

The legate, who had probably never been sincere in his compliance with Matilda's government, availed himself of the ill humor excited by this imperious conduct, and secretly instigated the Londoners to a revolt. A conspiracy was entered into to seize the person of the empress, and she saved herself from the danger by a precipitate retreat. She fled to Oxford: soon after she went to Winchester, whither the legate, desirous to save appearances, and watching the opportunity to ruin her cause, had retired. But having assembled all his retainers, he openly joined his force to that of the Londoners, and to Stephen's mercenary troops, who had not yet evacuated the kingdom; and he besieged Matilda in Winchester. The princess, being hard pressed by famine, made her escape; but in the flight, Earl Robert, her brother, fell into the hands of the enemy. This nobleman, though a subject, was as much the life and soul of his own party, as Stephen was of the other: and the empress, sensible of his merit and importance, consented to exchange the prisoners on equal terms. The civil war was again kindled with greater fury than ever.

1142.

Earl Robert, finding the successes on both sides nearly balanced, went over to Normandy, which, during Stephen's captivity, had submitted to the earl of Anjou; and he persuaded Geoffrey to allow his eldest son, Henry, a young prince of great hopes, to take a journey into England, and appear at the head of his partisans.

1143.

This expedient, however, produced nothing decisive. Stephen took Oxford after a long siege: he was defeated by Earl Robert at Wilton; and the empress, though of a masculine spirit, yet being harassed with a variety of good and bad fortune, and alarmed with continual dangers to her person and family, at last retired into Normandy,

1146.

whither she had sent her son some time before. The death of her brother, which happened nearly about the same time, would have proved fatal to her interests, hail not some incidents occurred which checked the course of Stephen's prosperity. This prince, finding that the castles built by the noblemen of his own party encouraged the spirit of independence, and were little less dangerous than those which remained in the hands of the enemy, endeavored to extort from them a surrender of those fortresses and he alienated the affections of many of them by this equitable demand. The artillery, also, of the church, which his brother had brought over to his side, had, after some interval, joined the other party. Eugenius III. had mounted the papal throne; the bishop of Winchester was deprived of the legantine commission, which was conferred on Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, the enemy and rival of the former legate. That pontiff, also, having summoned a general council at Rheims, in Champagne, instead of allowing the church of England, as had been usual, to elect its own deputies, nominated five English bishops to represent that church, and required their attendance in the council. Stephen, who, notwithstanding his present difficulties, was jealous of the rights of his crown, refused them permission to attend; [1] and the pope, sensible of his advantage in contending with a prince who reigned by a disputed title, took revenge by laying all Stephen's party under an interdict. [2]

1147.

The discontents of the royalists at being thrown into this situation, were augmented by a comparison with Matilda's party, who enjoyed all the benefits of the sacred ordinances; and Stephen was at last obliged, by making proper submissions to the see of Rome, to remove the reproach from his party. [3]

1148.

The weakness of both sides, rather than any decrease of mutual animosity, having produced a tacit cessation of arms in England, many of the nobility, Roger de Moubray, William de Warrenne, and others, finding no opportunity to exert their military ardor at home, enlisted themselves in a new crusade, which, with surprising success after former disappointments and misfortunes, was now preached by St. Barnard. [4] But an event soon after happened which threatened a revival of hostilities in England. Prince Henry, who had reached his sixteenth year, was desirous of receiving the honor of knighthood; a ceremony which every gentleman in that age passed through before he was admitted to the use of arms, and which was even deemed requisite for the greatest princes.

[1] Epist. St. Thom, .]

[2] Chron. W. Thom, .]

[3] Epist. St. Thom, .]

[4] Hagulstadt, , 276.]

He intended to receive his admission from his great-uncle, David, king of Scotland; and for that purpose he passed through England with a great retinue, and was attended by the most considerable of his partisans. He remained some time with the king of Scotland, made incursions into England, and by his dexterity and vigor in all manly exercises, by his valor in war, and his prudent conduct in every occurrence, he roused the hopes of his party, and gave symptoms of those great qualities which he afterwards displayed when he mounted the throne of England.

1150.

Soon after his return to Normandy, he was, by Matilda’s consent, invested in that duchy, and upon the death of his father Geoffrey, which happened in the subsequent year, he took possession both of Anjou and Maine, and concluded a marriage which brought him a great accession of power, and rendered him extremely formidable to his rival. Eleanor, the daughter and heir of William, duke of Guienne, and earl of Poictou, had been married sixteen years to Lewis VII., king of France, and had attended him in a crusade which that monarch conducted against the infidels; but having there lost the affections of her husband, and even fallen under some suspicion of gallantry with a handsome Saracen, Lewis, more delicate than politic, procured a divorce from her, and restored her those rich provinces, which, by her marriage, she had annexed to the crown of France. Young Henry, neither discouraged by the inequality of years, nor by the reports of Eleanor’s gallantries, made successful courtship to that princess, and espousing her six weeks after her divorce, got possession of all her dominions as her dowry.

1152.

The lustre which he received from this acquisition, and the prospect of his rising fortune, had such an elect in England, that when Stephen, desirous to insure the crown to his son Eustace, required the archbishop of Canterbury to anoint that prince as his successor, the primate refused compliance, and made his escape beyond sea, to avoid the violence and resentment of Stephen.

1153.

Henry, informed of these dispositions in the people, made an invasion on England: having gained some advantage over Stephen at Malmsbury, and having taken that place, he proceeded thence to throw succors into Wallingford, which the king had advanced with a superior army to besiege. A decisive action was every day expected, when the great men of both sides, terrified at the prospect of further bloodshed and confusion, interposed with their good offices, and set on foot a negotiation between the rival princes, The death of Eustace, during the course of the treaty, facilitated its conclusion: an accommodation was settled, by which it was agreed that Stephen should possess the crown during his lifetime, that justice should be administered in his name, even in the provinces which had submitted to Henry, and that this latter prince should, on Stephen's demise, succeed to the kingdom, and William, Stephen's son, to Boulogne and his patrimonial estate. After all the barons had sworn to the observance of this treaty, and done homage to Henry, as to the heir of the crown, that prince evacuated the kingdom; and the death of Stephen which happened next year, [October 25, 1154,] after a short illness, prevented all those quarrels and jealousies which were likely to have ensued in so delicate a situation.

England suffered great miseries during the reign of this prince: but his personal character, allowing for the temerity and injustice of his usurpation, appears not liable to any great exception; and he seems to have been well qualified, had he succeeded by a just title, to have promoted the happiness and prosperity of his subjects. [1] He was possessed of industry, activity, and courage, to a great degree; though not endowed with a sound judgment, he was not deficient in abilities; he had the talent of gaining men's affections, and notwithstanding his precarious situation, he never indulged himself in the exercise of any cruelty or revenge. His advancement to the throne procured him neither tranquillity nor happiness; and though the situation of England prevented the neighboring states from taking any durable advantage of her confusions, her intestine disorders were to the last degree ruinous and destructive. The court of Rome was also permitted, during those civil wars, to make further advances in her usurpations; and appeals to the pope, which had always been strictly prohibited by the English laws, became now common in every ecclesiastical controversy.

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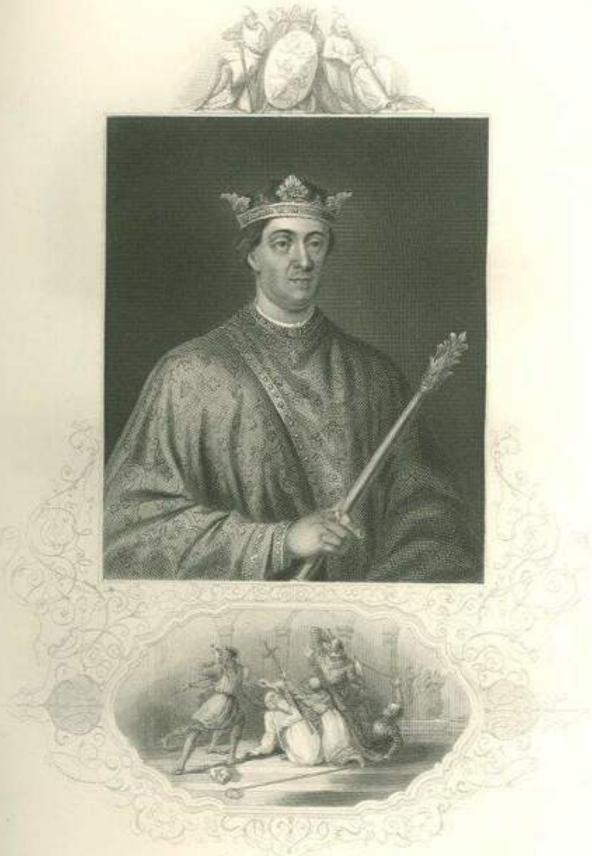
[1] W. Malms, ., M. Paris, Hagul, ., H. Hunting. .]

CHAPTER VIII.



The Murder of Thomas à Becket.

HENRY II.

From the Effigy on his Tomb at Fontevrault.

LONDON, JAMES S. VIRTUE

HENRY II.

1154.

The extensive confederacies, by which the European potentates are now at once united and set in opposition to each other, and which, though they are apt to diffuse the least spark of dissension throughout the whole, are at least attended with this advantage, that they prevent any violent revolutions or conquests in particular states, were totally unknown in ancient ages; and the theory of foreign politics in each kingdom formed a speculation much less complicated and involved than at present. Commerce had not yet bound together the most distant nations in so close a chain: wars, finished in one campaign, and often in one battle, were little affected by the movements of remote states: the imperfect communication among the kingdoms, and their ignorance of each other's situation, made it impracticable for a great number of them to combine in one object or effort: and above all, the turbulent spirit and independent situation of the barons or great vassals in each state, gave so much occupation to the sovereign, that he was obliged to confine his attention chiefly to his own state and his own system of government, and was more indifferent about what passed among his neighbors. Religion alone, not politics, carried abroad the views of princes, while it either fixed their thoughts on the Holy Land, whose conquest and defence was deemed a point of common honor and interest, or engaged them in intrigues with the Roman pontiff, to whom they had yielded the direction of ecclesiastical affairs, and who was every day assuming more authority than they were willing to allow him.

Before the conquest of England by the duke of Normandy, this island was as much separated from the rest of the world in politics as in situation; and except from the inroads of the Danish pirates, the English, happily confined at home, had neither enemies nor allies on the continent. The foreign dominions of William connected them with the king and great vassals of France; and while the opposite pretensions of the pope and emperor in Italy produced a continual intercourse between Germany and that country, the two great monarchs of France and England formed, in another part of Europe, a separate system, and carried on their wars and negotiations, without meeting either with opposition or support from the others.

On the decline of the Carlovingian race, the nobles in every province of France, taking advantage of the weakness of the sovereign, and obliged to provide each for his own defence against the ravages of the Norman freebooters, had assumed, both in civil and military affairs, an authority almost independent, and had reduced within very narrow limits the prerogative of their princes. The accession of Hugh Capet, by annexing a great fief to the crown, had brought some addition to the royal dignity; but this fief, though considerable for a subject, appeared a narrow basis of power for a prince who was placed at the head of so great a community. The royal demesnes consisted only of Paris, Orleans, Estampes, Compiegne, and a few places scattered over the northern provinces: in the rest of the kingdom, the prince's authority was rather nominal than real: the vassals were accustomed, nay, entitled, to make war, without his permission, on each other: they were even entitled, if they conceived themselves injured, to turn their arms against their sovereign: they exercised all civil jurisdiction, without appeal, over their tenants and inferior vassals: their common jealousy of the crown easily united them against any attempt on their exorbitant privileges; and as some of them had attained the power and authority of great princes, even the smallest baron was sure of immediate and effectual protection. Besides six ecclesiastical peerages, which, with the other immunities of the church, cramped extremely the general execution of justice, there were six lay peerages, Burgundy, Normandy Guienne, Flanders, Toulouse, and Champagne, which formed very extensive and puissant sovereignties. And though the combination of all those princes and barons could on urgent occasions, muster a mighty power, yet was it very difficult to set that great machine in movement; it was almost impossible to preserve harmony in its parts; a sense of common interest alone could, for a time, unite them under their sovereign against a common enemy; but if the king attempted to turn the force of the community against any mutinous vassal, the same sense of common interest made the others oppose themselves to the success of his pretensions. Lewis the Gross, the last sovereign, marched, at one time, to his frontiers against the Germans at the head of an army of two hundred thousand men; but a petty lord of Corbeil, of Puiset, of Couci, was able, at another period, to set that prince at defiance, and to maintain open war against him.

The authority of the English monarch was much more extensive within his kingdom, and the disproportion much greater between him and the most powerful of his vassals. His demesnes and revenue were large, compared to the greatness of his state: he was accustomed to levy arbitrary exactions on his subjects: his courts of judicature extended their jurisdiction into every part of the kingdom: he could crush by his power, or by a judicial sentence, well or ill founded, any obnoxious baron: and though the feudal institutions, which prevailed in his kingdom, had the same tendency, as in other states, to exalt the aristocracy and depress the monarchy, it required in England, according to its present constitution, a great combination of the vassals to oppose their sovereign lord, and there had not hitherto arisen any baron so powerful, as of himself to levy war against the prince, and to afford protection to the inferior barons.

While such were the different situations of France and England, and the latter enjoyed so many advantages above the former, the accession of Henry II., a prince of great abilities, possessed of so many rich provinces on the continent, might appear an event dangerous, if not fatal to the French monarchy, and sufficient to break entirely the balance between the states. He was master, in the right of his father, of Anjou and Touraine; in that of his mother, of Normandy and Maine; in that of his wife, of Guienne, Poictou, Xaintonge, Auvergne, Perigord, Angoumois, the Limousin. He soon after annexed Brittany to his other states, and was already possessed of the superiority over that province, which, on the first cession of Normandy to Rollo the Dane, had been granted by Charles the Simple in vassalage to that formidable ravager. These provinces composed above a third of the whole French monarchy, and were much superior, in extent and opulence, to those territories which were subjected to the immediate jurisdiction and government of the king. The vassal was here more powerful than his liege lord: the situation which had enabled Hugh Capet to depose the Carlovingian princes, seemed to be renewed, and that with much greater advantages on the side of the vassal: and when England was added to so many provinces, the French king had reason to apprehend, from this conjuncture, some great disaster to himself and to his family. But, in reality, it was this circumstance, which appeared so formidable, that saved the

Capetian race, and, by its consequences, exalted them to that pitch of grandeur which they at present enjoy.

The limited authority of the prince in the feudal constitutions, prevented the king of England from employing with advantage the force of so many states which were subjected to his government; and these different members, disjoined in situation, and disagreeing in laws, language, and manners, were never thoroughly cemented into one monarchy. He soon became, both from his distant place of residence and from the incompatibility of interests, a kind of foreigner to his French dominions; and his subjects on the continent considered their allegiance as more naturally due to their superior lord, who lived in their neighborhood, and who was acknowledged to be the supreme head of their nation. He was always at hand to invade them; their immediate lord was often at too great a distance to protect them; and any disorder in any part of his dispersed dominions gave advantages against him The other powerful vassals of the French crown were rather pleased to see the expulsion of the English, and were not affected with that jealousy which would have arisen from the oppression of a co-vassal who was of the same rank with themselves. By this means, the king of France found it more easy to conquer those numerous provinces from England than to subdue a duke of Normandy or Guienne, a count of Anjou, Maine, or Poietou. And after reducing such extensive territories, which immediately incorporated with the body of the monarchy, he found greater facility in uniting to the crown the other great fiefs which still remained separate and independent.

But as these important consequences could not be foreseen by human wisdom, the king of France remarked with terror the rising grandeur of the house of Anjou or Plantagenet; and in order to retard its progress, he had ever maintained a strict union with Stephen, and had endeavored to support the tottering fortunes of that bold usurper. But after this prince’s death, it was too late to think of opposing the succession of Henry, or preventing the performance of those stipulations which, with the unanimous consent of the nation, he had made with his predecessor. The English, harassed with civil wars, and disgusted with the bloodshed and depredations which, during the course of so many years, had attended them were little disposed to violate their oaths, by excluding the lawful heir from the succession of their monarchy.* Many of the most considerable fortresses were in the hands of his partisans; the whole nation had had occasion to see the noble qualities with which he was endowed, and to compare them with the mean talents of William, the son of Stephen; and as they were acquainted with his great power, and were rather pleased to see the accession of so many foreign dominions to the crown of England, they never entertained the least thoughts of resisting him. Henry himself, sensible of the advantages attending his present situation, was in no hurry to arrive in England; and being engaged in the siege of a castle on the frontiers of Normandy, when he received intelligence of Stephen’s death, he made it a point of honor not to depart from his enterprise till he had brought it to an issue. He then set out on his journey, and was received in England with the acclamations of all orders of men, who swore with pleasure the oath of fealty and allegiance to him.

1155.

The first act of Henry’s government corresponded to the high idea entertained of his abilities, and prognosticated the reestablishment of justice and tranquillity, of which the kingdom had so long been bereaved. He immediately dismissed all those mercenary soldiers who had committed great disorders in the nation; and he sent them abroad, together with William of Ypres, their leader, the friend and confidant of Stephen. He revoked all the grants made by his predecessor, even those which necessity had extorted from the empress Matilda; and that princess, who had resigned her rights in favor of Henry, made no opposition to a measure so necessary for supporting the dignity of the crown. He repaired the coin, which had been extremely debased during the reign of his predecessor; and he took proper measures against the return of a like abuse. He was rigorous in the execution of justice, and in the suppression of robbery and violence; and that he might restore authority to the laws, he caused all the new erected castles to be demolished, which had proved so many sanctuaries to freebooters and rebels. The earl of Albemarle, Hugh Mortimer, and Roger the son of Milo of Glocester, were inclined to make some resistance to this salutary measure; but the approach of the king with his forces soon obliged them to submit.

1156.

Everything being restored to full tranquillity in England, Henry went abroad in order to oppose the attempts of his brother Geoffrey, who, during his absence, had made an incursion into Anjou and Maine,

1157.

had advanced some pretensions to those provinces, and had got possession of a considerable part of them. On the king's appearance, the people returned to their allegiance; and Geoffrey, resigning his claim for an annual pension of a thousand pounds, departed and took possession of the county of Nantz, which the inhabitants, who had expelled Count Iloel, their prince, had put into his hands. Henry returned to England the following year: the incursions of the Welsh then provoked him to make an invasion upon them; where the natural fastnesses of the country occasioned him great difficulties, and even brought him into danger. His vanguard, being engaged in a narrow pass, was put to rout: Henry de Essex, the hereditary standard-bearer, seized with a panic, threw down the standard, took to flight, and exclaimed that the king was slain; and had not the prince immediately appeared in person, and led on his troops with great gallantry, the consequences might have proved fatal to the whole army. For this misbehavior, Essex was afterwards accused of felony by Robert de Montfort; was vanquished in single combat; his estate was confiscated; and he himself was thrust into a convent. The submissions of the Welsh procured them an accommodation with England.

1158.

The martial disposition of the princes in that age engaged them to head their own armies in every enterprise, even the most frivolous; and their feeble authority made it commonly impracticable for them to delegate, on occasion, the command to their generals. Geoffrey, the king's brother, died soon after he had acquired possession of Nantz; though he had no other title to that county than the voluntary submission or election of the inhabitants two years before, Henry laid claim to the territory as devolved to him by hereditary right, and he went over to support his pretensions by force of arms. Conan, duke or earl of Brittany (for these titles are given indifferently by historians to those princes) pretended that Nantz had been lately separated by rebellion from his principality, to which of right it belonged;

and immediately on Geoffrey’s death, he took possession of the disputed territory. Lest Lewis, the French king, should interpose in the controversy, Henry paid him a visit; and so allured him by caresses and civilities, that an alliance was contracted between them; and they agreed that young Henry, heir to the English monarchy, should be affianced to Margaret of France, though the former was only five years of age; the latter was still in her cradle. Henry, now secure of meeting with no interruption on this side, advanced with his army into Brittany; and Conan, in despair of being able to make resistance, delivered up the county of Nantz to him. The able conduct of the king procured him further and more important advantages from this incident. Conan, harassed with the turbulent disposition of his subjects, was desirous of procuring to himself the support of so great a monarch; and he betrothed his daughter and only child, yet an infant, to Geoffrey, the king’s third son, who was of the same tender years. The duke of Brittany died about seven years after; and Henry, being mesne lord and also natural guardian to his son and daughter-in-law, put himself in possession of that principality, and annexed it for the present to his other great dominions.

1159.

The king had a prospect of making still further acquisitions; and the activity of his temper suffered no opportunity of that kind to escape him. Philippa, duchess of Guienne, mother of Queen Eleanor, was the only issue of William IV., count of Toulouse; and would have inherited his dominions, had not that prince, desirous of preserving the succession in the male line, conveyed the principality to his brother Raymond de St. Gilles, by a contract of sale which was in that age regarded as fictitious and illusory. By this means the title to the county of Toulouse came to be disputed between the male and female heirs; and the one or the other, as opportunities favored them, had obtained possession. Raymond, grandson of Raymond de St. Gilles was the reigning sovereign; and on Henry’s reviving his wife’s claim, this prince had recourse for protection to the king of France, who was so much concerned in policy to prevent the further aggrandizement of the English monarch. Lewis himself, when married to Eleanor, had asserted the justice of her claim, and had demanded possession of Toulouse; but his sentiments changing with his interest, he now determined to defend, by his power and authority, the title of Raymond. Henry found that it would be requisite to support his pretensions against potent antagonists; and that nothing but a formidable army could maintain a claim which he had in vain asserted by arguments and manifestoes.

An army composed of feudal vassals was commonly very intractable and undisciplined, both because of the independent spirit of the persons who served in it, and because the commands were not given either by the choice of the sovereign or from the military capacity and experience of the officers. Each baron conducted his own vassals: his rank was greater or less, proportioned to the extent of his property: even the supreme command under the prince was often attached to birth; and as the military vassals were obliged to serve only forty days at their own charge, though, if the expedition were distant, they were put to great expense, the prince reaped little benefit from their attendance. Henry, sensible of these inconveniences, levied upon his vassals in Normandy and other provinces, which were remote from Toulouse, a sum of money in lieu of their service; and this commutation, by reason of the great distance, was still more advantageous to his English vassals. He imposed, therefore, a scutage of one hundred and eighty thousand pounds on the knights' fees, a commutation to which, though it was unusual, and the first perhaps to be met with in history, [1] the military tenants willingly submitted; and with this money he levied an army which was more under his command, and whose service was more durable and constant.

[1] See note P, at the end of the volume.]

Assisted by Berenger, count of Barcelona, and Trincaval, count of Nismes, whom he had gained to his party, he invaded the county of Toulouse; and after taking Verdun, Castlenau, and other places, he besieged the capital of the province, and was likely to prevail in the enterprise; when Lewis, advancing before the arrival of his main body, threw himself into the place with a small reenforcement. Henry was urged by some of his ministers to prosecute the siege, to take Lewis prisoner, and to impose his own terms in the pacification; but he either thought it so much his interest to maintain the feudal principles, by which his foreign dominions were secured, or bore so much respect to his superior lord, that he declared he would not attack a place defended by him in person; and he immediately raised the siege. He marched into Normandy to protect that province against an incursion which the count of Dreux, instigated by King Lewis, his brother, had made upon it. War was now openly carried on between the two monarchs, but produced no memorable event: it soon ended in a cessation of arms, and that followed by a peace, which was not, however, attended with any confidence or good correspondence between those rival princes.

1160.

The fortress of Gisors, being part of the dowry stipulated to Margaret of France, had been consigned by agreement to the knights templars, on condition that it should be delivered into Henry's hands after the celebration of the nuptials. The king, that he might have a pretence for immediately demanding the place, ordered the marriage to be solemnized between the prince and princess, though both infants; and he engaged the grand master of the templars, by large presents, as was generally suspected, to put him in possession of Gisors. [1]

1161.

Lewis, resenting this fraudulent conduct, banished the templars, and would have made war upon the king of England, had it not been for the mediation and authority of Pope Alexander III., who had been chased from Rome by the antipope, Victor IV., and resided at that time in France.

[1] Since the first publication of this History, Lord Lyttleton has published a copy of the treaty between Henry and Lewis, by which it appears, if there was no secret article, that Henry was not guilty of any fraud in this transaction, observe, that the two kings had the year before, met the pope at the castle of Torci on the Loir; and they gave him such marks of respect, that both dismounted to receive him, and holding each of them one of the reins of his bridle, walked on foot by his side, and conducted him in that submissive manner into the castle: "a spectacle," cries Baronius in an ecstasy, "to God, angels, and men; and such as had never before been exhibited to the world!"]

1162.

Henry, soon after he had accommodated his differences with Lewis by the pope's mediation, returned to England; where he commenced an enterprise, which, though required by sound policy, and even conducted in the main with prudence, bred him great disquietude, involved him in danger, and was not concluded without some loss and dishonor.

The usurpations of the clergy, which had at first been gradual, were now become so rapid, and had mounted to such a height, that the contest between the regale and pontificale was really arrived at a crisis in England; and it became necessary to determine whether the king or the priests, particularly the archbishop of Canterbury, should be sovereign of the kingdom. The aspiring spirit of Henry, which gave inquietude to all his neighbors, was not likely long to pay a tame submission to the encroachments of subjects; and as nothing opens the eyes of men so readily as their interest, he was in no danger of falling, in this respect, into that abject superstition which retained his people in subjection. From the commencement of his reign, in the government of his foreign dominions, as well as of England, he had shown a fixed purpose to repress clerical usurpations, and to maintain those prerogatives which had been transmitted to him by his predecessors. During the schism of the papacy between Alexander and Victor, he had determined, for some time, to remain neuter; and when informed that the archbishop of Rouen and the bishop of Mans had, from their own authority, acknowledged Alexander as legitimate pope, he was so enraged, that, though he spared the archbishop on account of his great age, he immediately issued orders for overthrowing the houses of the bishop of Mans and archdeacon of Rouen; [1] and it was not till he had deliberately examined the matter, by those views which usually enter into the councils of princes, that he allowed that pontiff to exercise authority over any of his dominions.

In England, the mild character and advanced years of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, together with his merits in refusing to put the crown on the head of Eustace, son of Stephen, prevented Henry, during the lifetime of that primate, from taking any measures against the multiplied encroachments of the clergy; but after his death, the king resolved to exert himself with more activity; and that he might be secure against any opposition, he advanced to that dignity Becket, his chancellor, on whose compliance he thought he could entirely depend.

[[1] See note Q, at the end of the volume.]

Thomas à Becket, the first man of English descent who, since the Norman conquest, had, during the course of a whole century, risen to any considerable station, was born of reputable parents in the city of London; and being endowed both with industry and capacity, he early insinuated himself into the favor of Archbishop Theobald, and obtained from that prelate some preferments and offices. By their means he was enabled to travel for improvement to Italy, where he studied the civil and canon law at Bologna; and on his return he appeared to have made such proficiency in knowledge, that he was promoted by his patron to the archdeaconry of Canterbury, an office of considerable trust and profit. He was afterwards employed with success by Theobald in transacting business at Rome; and on Henry’s accession, he was recommended to that monarch as worthy of further preferment Henry, who knew that Becket had been instrumental in supporting that resolution of the archbishop, which had tended so much to facilitate his own advancement to the throne, was already prepossessed in his favor; and finding on further acquaintance, that his spirit and abilities entitled him to any trust he soon promoted him to the dignity of chancellor, one of the first civil offices in the kingdom. The chancellor, in that age, besides the custody of the great seal, had possession of all vacant prelacies and abbeys; he was the guardian of all such minors and pupils as were the king’s tenants; all baronies which escheated to the crown were under his administration; he was entitled to a place in council, even though he were not particularly summoned; and as he exercised also the office of secretary of state, and it belonged to him to countersign all commissions, writs, and letters patent, he was a kind of prime minister and was concerned in the despatch of every business of importance. Besides exercising this high office, Becket by the favor of the king or archbishop, was made provost of Beverley, dean of Hastings, and constable of the Tower: he was put in possession of the honors of Eye and Berkham large baronies that had escheated to the crown; and to complete his grandeur, he was intrusted with the education of Prince Henry, the king’s eldest son, and heir of the monarchy. The pomp of his retinue, the sumptuousness of his furniture, the luxury of his table, the munificence of his presents, corresponded to these great preferments; or rather exceeded any thing that England had ever before seen in any subject. His historian and secretary, Fitz-Stephens, mentions, among other particulars, that his apartments were every day in winter covered with clean straw or hay, and in summer with green rushes or boughs, lest the gentlemen who paid court to him and who could not, by reason of their great number, find a place at table, should soil their fine clothes by sitting on a dirty floor. [1] A great number of knights were retained in his service; the greatest barons were proud of being received at his table; his house was a place of education for the sons of the chief nobility; and the king himself frequently vouchsafed to partake of his entertainments. As his way of life was splendid and opulent, his amusements and occupations were gay, and partook of the cavalier spirit, which, as he had only taken deacon's orders, he did not think unbefitting his character. He employed himself at leisure hours in hunting, hawking, gaming, and horsemanship; he exposed his person in several military actions; he carried over, at his own charge, seven hundred knights to attend the king in his wars at Toulouse; in the subsequent wars on the frontiers of Normandy, he maintained, during forty days, twelve hundred knights, and four thousand of their train; and in an embassy to France, with which he was intrusted, he astonished that court by the number and magnificence of his retinue.

[1] John Baldwin held the manor of Oterarsfee in Aylesbury of the king in soccage, by the service of finding litter for the king's bed, viz., in summer, grass or herbs, and two gray geese, and in winter, straw, and three eels, thrice in the year, if the king should come thrice in the year to Aylesbury. Madox, Bar. Anglica, .]

Henry, besides committing all his more important business to Becket's management, honored him with his friendship and intimacy; and whenever he was disposed to relax himself by sports of any kind, he admitted his chancellor to the party. An instance of their familiarity is mentioned by Fitz-Stephens which, as it shows the manners of the age, it may not be improper to relate. One day, as the king and the chancellor were riding together in the streets of London, they observed a beggar, who was shivering with cold. "Would it not be very praiseworthy," said the king, "to give that poor man a warm coat in this severe season?" "It would, surely," replied the chancellor; "and you do well, sir, in thinking of such good actions." "Then he shall have one presently," cried the king; and seizing the skirt of the chancellor's coat, which was scarlet, and lined with ermine, began to pull it violently. The chancellor defended himself for some time; and they had both of them like to have tumbled off their horses in the street, when Becket, after a vehement struggle, let go his coat; which the king bestowed on the beggar, who, being ignorant of the quality of the persons, was not a little surprised at the present.

Becket, who, by his complaisance and good humor, had rendered himself agreeable, and by his industry and abilities useful, to his master, appeared to him the fittest person for supplying the vacancy made by the death of Theobold. As he was well acquainted with the king's intentions of retrenching, or rather confining within the ancient bounds, all ecclesiastical privileges, and always showed a ready disposition to comply with them, Henry, who never expected any resistance from that quarter, immediately issued orders for electing him archbishop of Canterbury. But this resolution, which was taken contrary to the opinion of Matilda, and many of the ministers, drew after it very unhappy consequences; and never prince of so great penetration appeared, in the issue, to have so little understood the genius and character of his minister.

No sooner was Becket installed in this high dignity, which rendered him for life the second person in the kingdom, with some pretensions of aspiring to be the first, than he totally altered his demeanor and conduct, and endeavored to acquire the character of sanctity, of which his former busy and ostentatious course of life might, in the eyes of the people, have naturally bereaved him. Without consulting the king, he immediately returned into his hands the commission of chancellor; pretending that he must thenceforth detach himself from secular affairs, and be solely employed in the exercise of his spiritual function; but in reality, that he might break off all connections with Henry, and apprise him that Becket, as primate of England, was now become entirely a new personage. He maintained, in his retinue and attendants alone, his ancient pomp and lustre, which was useful to strike the vulgar; in his own person he affected the greatest austerity and most rigid mortification, which he was sensible would have an equal or a greater tendency to the same end. He wore sackcloth next his skin, which, by his affected care to conceal it, was necessarily the more remarked by all the world: he changed it so seldom, that it was filled with dirt and vermin: his usual diet was bread; his drink water, which he even rendered further unpalatable by the mixture of unsavory herbs: he tore his back with the frequent discipline which he inflicted on it: he daily on his knees washed, in imitation of Christ, the feet of thirteen beggars, whom he afterwards dismissed with presents: he gained the affections of the monks by his frequent charities to the convents and hospitals: every one who made profession of sanctity, was admitted to his conversation, and returned full of panegyrics on the humility, as well as on the piety and mortification, of the holy primate: he seemed to be perpetually employed in reciting prayers and pious lectures, or in perusing religious discourses: his aspect wore the appearance of seriousness, and mental recollection, and secret devotion; and all men of penetration plainly saw that he was meditating some great design, and that the ambition and ostentation of his character had turned itself towards a new and a more dangerous object.

1163.

Becket waited not till Henry should commence those projects against the ecclesiastical power, which he knew had been formed by that prince: he was himself the aggressor, and endeavored to overawe the king by the intrepidity and boldness of his enterprises. He summoned the earl of Clare to surrender the barony of Tunbridge, which, ever since the conquest, had remained in the family of that nobleman, but which, as it had formerly belonged to the see of Canterbury, Becket pretended his predecessors were prohibited by the canons to alienate. The earl of Clare, besides the lustre which he derived from the greatness of his own birth and the extent of his possessions, was allied to all the principal families in the kingdom; his sister, who was a celebrated beauty, had further extended his credit among the nobility and was even supposed to have gained the king’s affections; and Becket could not better discover, than by attacking so powerful an interest, his resolution of maintaining with vigor the rights, real or pretended, of his see.

William de Eynsford, a military tenant of the crown, was patron of a living which belonged to a manor that held of the archbishop of Canterbury; but Becket, without regard to William’s right, presented, on a new and illegal pretext, one Laurence to that living, who was violently expelled by Eynsford. The primate, making himself, as was usual in spiritual courts, both judge and party, issued in a summary manner the sentence of excommunication against Eynsford, who complained to the king, that he, who held “in capite” of the crown, should, contrary to the practice established by the Conqueror, and maintained ever since by his successors, be subjected to that terrible sentence without the previous consent of the sovereign. Henry, who had now broken off all personal intercourse with

Becket, sent him, by a messenger, his orders to absolve Eynsford; but received for answer, that it belonged not for the king to inform him whom he should absolve and whom excommunicate; and it was not till after many remonstrances and menaces that Becket, though with the worst grace imaginable, was induced to comply with the royal mandate.

Henry, though he found himself thus grievously mistaken in the character of the person whom he had promoted to the primacy, determined not to desist from his former intention of retrenching clerical usurpations. He was entirely master of his extensive dominions: the prudence and vigor of his administration, attended with perpetual success, had raised his character above that of any of his predecessors: the papacy seemed to be weakened by a schism which divided all Europe; and he rightly judged that, if the present favorable opportunity were neglected, the crown must, from the prevalent superstition of the people, be in danger of falling into entire subordination under the mitre.

The union of the civil and ecclesiastical power serves extremely, in every civilized government, to the maintenance of peace and order; and prevents those mutual encroachments which, as there can be no ultimate judge between them, are often attended with the most dangerous consequences Whether the supreme magistrate who unites these powers receives the appellation of prince or prelate, is not material. The superior weight which temporal interests commonly bear in the apprehensions of men above spiritual, renders the civil part of his character most prevalent; and in time prevents those gross impostures and bigoted persecutions which, in all false religions, are the chief foundation of clerical authority. But during the progress of ecclesiastical usurpations, the state, by the resistance of the civil magistrate, is naturally thrown into convulsions; and it behoves the prince, both for his own interest and for that of the public, to provide in time sufficient barriers against so dangerous and insidious a rival. This precaution had hitherto been much neglected in England, as well as in other Catholic countries; and affairs at last seemed to have come to a dangerous crisis: a sovereign of the greatest abilities was now on the throne: a prelate of the most inflexible and intrepid character was possessed of the primacy: the contending powers appeared to be armed with their full force and it was natural to expect some extraordinary event to result from their conflict.

Among their other inventions to obtain money, the clergy had inculcated the necessity of penance as an atonement for sin; and having again introduced the practice of paying them large sums as a commutation, or species of atonement for the remission of those penances, the sins of the people, by these means, had become a revenue to the priests; and the king computed, that by this invention alone they levied more money upon his subjects than flowed, by all the funds and taxes, into the royal exchequer. That he might ease the people of so heavy and arbitrary an imposition, Henry required that a civil officer of his appointment should be present in all ecclesiastical courts, and should, for the future, give his consent to every composition which was made with sinners for their spiritual offences.

The ecclesiastics in that age had renounced all immediate subordination to the magistrate: they openly pretended to an exemptior, in criminal accusations, from a trial before courts of justice; and were gradually introducing a like exemption in civil causes: spiritual penalties alone could be inflicted on their offences; and as the clergy had extremely multiplied in England, and many of them were consequently of very low characters, crimes of the deepest dye — murders, robberies, adulteries, rapes — were daily committed with impunity by the ecclesiastics. It had been found, for instance, on inquiry, that no less than a hundred murders had, since the king's accession, been perpetrated by men of that profession, who had never been called to account for these offences; and holy orders were become a full protection for all enormities. A clerk in Worcestershire, having debauched a gentleman's daughter, had, at this time, proceeded to murder the father; and the general indignation against this crime moved the king to attempt the remedy of an abuse which was become so palpable, and to require that the clerk should be delivered up, and receive condign punishment from the magistrate. Becket insisted on the privileges of the church; confined the criminal in the bishop's prison, lest he should be seized by the king's officers; maintained that no greater punishment could be inflicted on him than degradation; and when the king demanded that, immediately after he was degraded, he should be tried by the civil power, the primate asserted that it was iniquitous to try a man twice upon the same accusation, and for the same offence.

Henry, laying hold of so plausible a pretence, resolved to push the clergy with regard to all their privileges, which they had raised to an enormous height, and to determine at once those controversies which daily multiplied between the civil and the ecclesiastical jurisdictions. He summoned an assembly of all the prelates in England; and he put to them this concise and decisive question, whether or not they were willing to submit to the ancient laws and customs of the kingdom? The bishops unanimously replied, that they were willing, "saving their own order;" a device by which they thought to elude the present urgency of the king's demand, yet reserve to themselves, on a favorable opportunity, the power of resuming all their pretensions. The king was sensible of the artifice, and was provoked to the highest indignation. He left the assembly with visible marks of his displeasure: he required the primate instantly to surrender the honors and castles of Eye and Berkham: the bishops were terrified, and expected still further effects of his resentment. Becket alone was inflexible; and nothing but the interposition of the pope's legate and almoner, Philip, who dreaded a breach with so powerful a prince at so unseasonable a juncture, could have prevailed on him to retract the saving clause, and give a general and absolute promise of observing the ancient customs.

But Henry was not content with a declaration in these general terms; he resolved, ere it was too late, to define expressly those customs with which he required compliance, and to put a stop to clerical usurpations, before they were fully consolidated, and could plead antiquity, as they already did a sacred authority, in their favor. The claims of the church were open and visible. After a gradual and insensible progress during many centuries, the mask had at last been taken off, and several ecclesiastical councils, by their canons, which were pretended to be irrevocable and infallible, had positively defined those privileges and immunities which gave such general offence, and appeared so dangerous to the civil magistrate. Henry, therefore, deemed it necessary to define with the same precision the limits of the civil power; to oppose his legal customs to their divine ordinances; to determine the exact boundaries of the rival jurisdictions; and for this purpose he summoned a general council of the nobility and prelates at Clarendon, to whom he submitted this great and important question. [15th Jan. 1164.]

The barons were all gained to the king's party, either by the reasons which he urged, or by his superior authority. The bishops were overawed by the general combination against them; and the following laws, commonly called the "Constitutions of Clarendon," were voted without opposition by this assembly. It was enacted, that all suits concerning the advowson and presentation of churches should be determined in the civil courts: that the churches, belonging to the king's fee, should not be granted in perpetuity without his consent; that clerks, accused of any crime, should be tried in the civil courts: that no person, particularly no clergyman of any rank, should depart the kingdom without the king’s license: that excommunicated persons should not be bound to give security for continuing in their present place of abode: that laics should not be accused in spiritual courts, except by legal and reputable promoters and witnesses: that no chief tenant of the crown should be excommunicated, nor his lands be put under an interdict, except with the king’s consent: that all appeals in spiritual causes should be carried from the archdeacon to the bishop, from the bishop to the primate, from him to the king; and should be carried no farther without the king’s consent: that if any lawsuit arose between a layman and a clergyman concerning a tenant, and it be disputed whether the land be a lay or an ecclesiastical fee, it should first be determined by the verdict of twelve lawful men to what class it belonged; and if it be found to be a lay fee, the cause should finally be determined in the civil courts: that no inhabitant in demesne should be excommunicated for non-appearance in a spiritual court, till the chief officer of the place where he resides be consulted, that he may compel him by the civil authority to give satisfaction to the church: that the archbishops, bishops, and other spiritual dignitaries, should be regarded as barons of the realm; should possess the privileges and be subjected to the burdens belonging to that rank; and should be bound to attend the king in his great councils, and assist at all trials, till the sentence, either of death or loss of members, be given against the criminal: that the revenue of vacant sees should belong to the king; the chapter, or such of them as he pleases to summon, should sit in the king’s chapel till they made the new election with his consent, and that the bishop elect should do homage to the crown: that if any baron or tenant “in capite” should refuse to submit to the spiritual courts, the king should employ his authority in obliging him to make such submissions; if any of them throw off his allegiance to the king, the prelates should assist the king with their censures in reducing him: that goods forfeited to the king should not be protected in churches or churchyards: that the clergy should no longer pretend to the right of enforcing payment of debts contracted by oath or promise; but should leave these lawsuits, equally with others, to the determination of the civil courts; and that the sons of villains should not be ordained clerks, without the consent of their lord.

These articles, to the number of sixteen, were calculated to prevent the chief abuses which had prevailed in ecclesiastical affairs, and to put an effectual stop to the usurpations of the church, which, gradually stealing on, had threatened the total destruction of the civil power. Henry, therefore, by reducing those ancient customs of the realm to writing, and by collecting them in a body, endeavored to prevent all future dispute with regard to them; and by passing so many ecclesiastical ordinances in a national and civil assembly, he fully established the superiority of the legislature above all papal decrees or spiritual canons, and gained a signal victory over the ecclesiastics. But as he knew that the bishops, though overawed by the present combination of the crown and the barons, would take the first favorable opportunity of denying the authority which had enacted these constitutions, he resolved that they should all set their seal to them, and give a promise to observe them. None of the prelates dared to oppose his will, except Becket, who, though urged by the earls of Cornwall and Leicester, the barons of principal authority in the kingdom, obstinately withheld his assent. At last, Richard de Hastings, grand prior of the templars in England, threw himself on his knees before him, and with many tears entreated him, if he paid any regard either to his own safety or that of the church, not to provoke, by a fruitless opposition, the indignation of a great monarch, who was resolutely bent on his purpose, and who was determined to take full revenge on every one that should dare to oppose him. Becket, finding himself deserted by all the world, even by his own brethren, was at last obliged to comply; and he promised, “legally, with good faith, and without fraud or reserve,” to observe the constitutions; and he took an oath to that purpose. The king, thinking that he had now finally prevailed in this great enterprise, sent the constitutions to Pope Alexander, who then resided in France; and he required that pontiff’s ratification of them; but Alexander, who, though he had owed the most important obligations to the king, plainly saw that these laws were calculated to establish the independency of England on the papacy, and of the royal power on the clergy, condemned them in the strongest terms; abrogated, annulled, and rejected them. There were only six articles, the least important, which, for the sake of peace, he was willing to ratify.

Becket, when he observed that he might hope for support in an opposition, expressed the deepest sorrow for his compliance; and endeavored to engage all the other bishops in a confederacy to adhere to their common rights, and to the ecclesiastical privileges, in which he represented the interest and honor of God to be so deeply concerned. He redoubled his austerities in order to punish himself for his criminal assent to the constitutions of Clarendon: he proportioned his discipline to the enormity of his supposed offence: and he refused to exercise any part of his archiepiscopal function, till he should receive absolution from the pope, which was readily granted him. Henry, informed of his present dispositions, resolved to take vengeance for this refractory behavior; and he attempted to crush him by means of that very power which Becket made such merit in supporting. He applied to the pope that he should grant the commission of legate in his dominions to the archbishop of York; but Alexander, as politic as he, though he granted the commission, annexed a clause, that it should not empower the legate to execute any act in prejudice of the archbishop of Canterbury: and the king, finding how fruitless such an authority would prove, sent back the commission by the same messenger that brought it.

The primate, however, who found himself still exposed to the king's indignation, endeavored twice to escape secretly from the kingdom; but was as often detained by contrary winds: and Henry hastened to make him feel the effects of an obstinacy which he deemed so criminal. He instigated John, mareschal of the exchequer, to sue Becket in the archiepiscopal court for some lands, part of the manor of Pageham; and to appeal thence to the king's court for justice. On the day appointed for trying the cause, the primate sent four knights to represent certain irregularities in John's appeal; and at the same time to excuse himself, on account of sickness, for not appearing personally that day in the court. This slight offence (if it even deserve the name) was represented as a grievous contempt; the four knights were menaced, and with difficulty escaped being sent to prison, as offering falsehoods to the court; [1] and Henry, being determined to prosecute Becket to the utmost, summoned at Northampton a great council, which he purposed to make the instrument of his vengeance against the inflexible prelate.

The king had raised Becket from a low station to the highest offices, had honored him with his countenance and friendship, had trusted to his assistance in forwarding his favorite project against the clergy; and when he found him become of a sudden his most rigid opponent, while every one beside complied with his will, rage at the disappointment, and indignation

[1 See note R, at the end of the volume.]

against such signal ingratitude, transported him beyond all bounds of moderation; and there seems to have entered more of passion than of justice, or even of policy, in this violent prosecution. The barons, notwithstanding, in the great council voted whatever sentence he was pleased to dictate to them; and the bishops themselves, who undoubtedly bore a secret favor to Becket, and regarded him as the champion of their privileges, concurred with the rest in the design of oppressing their primate. In vain did Becket urge that his court was proceeding with the utmost regularity and justice in trying the mareschal's cause; which, however, he said, would appear, from the sheriff's testimony, to be entirely unjust and iniquitous: that he himself had discovered no contempt of the king's court; but, on the contrary, by sending four knights to excuse his absence, had virtually acknowledged its authority: that he also, in consequence of the king's summons, personally appeared at present in the great council, ready to justify his cause against the mareschal, and to submit his conduct to their inquiry and jurisdiction: that even should it be found that he had been guilty of non-appearance, the laws had affixed a very slight penalty to that offence; and that as he was an inhabitant of Kent, where his archiepiscopal palace was seated, he was by law entitled to some greater indulgence than usual in the rate of his fine. Notwithstanding these pleas, he was condemned as guilty of a contempt of the king's court, and as wanting in the fealty which he had sworn to his sovereign; all his goods and chattels were confiscated; and that this triumph over the church might be carried to the utmost, Henry, bishop of Winchester, the prelate who had been so powerful in the former reign, was in spite of his remonstrances, obliged, by order of the court, to pronounce the sentence against him. The primate submitted to the decree; and all the prelates, except Folliot, bishop of London, who paid court to the king by this singularity, became sureties for him. It is remarkable, that several Norman barons voted in this council; and we may conclude, with some probability, that a like practice had prevailed in many of the great councils summoned since the conquest. For the contemporary historian, who has given us a full account of these transactions, does not mention this circumstance as anywise singular; and Becket, in all his subsequent remonstrances with regard to the severe treatment which he had met with, never founds any objection on an irregularity, which to us appears very palpable and flagrant. So little precision was there at that time in the government and constitution!

The king was not content with this sentence, however violent and oppressive. Next day he demanded of Becket the sum of three hundred pounds, which the primate had levied upon the honors of Eye and Berkham, while in his possession. Becket, after premising that he was not obliged to answer to this suit, because it was not contained in his summons; after remarking that he had expended more than that sum in the repairs of those castles, and of the royal palace at London, expressed, however, his resolution, that money should not be any ground of quarrel between him and his sovereign; he agreed to pay the sum, and immediately gave sureties for it. In the subsequent meeting, the king demanded five hundred marks, which, he affirmed, he had lent Becket during the war at Toulouse; and another sum to the same amount, for which that prince had been surety for him to a Jew. Immediately after these two claims, he preferred a third, of still greater importance; he required him to give in the accounts of his administration while chancellor, and to pay the balance due from the revenues of all the prelacies, abbeys, and baronies, which had, during that time, been subjected to his management. [1] Becket observed that, as this demand was totally unexpected, he had not come prepared to answer it; but he required a delay, and promised in that case to give satisfaction. The king insisted upon sureties; and Becket desired leave to consult his suffragans in a case of such importance. [2]

It is apparent, from the known character of Henry, and from the usual vigilance of his government, that, when he promoted Becket to the see of Canterbury, he was, on good grounds, well pleased with his administration in the former high office with which he had intrusted him; and that, even if that prelate had dissipated money beyond the income of his place, the king was satisfied that his expenses were not blamable, and had in the main been calculated for his service. [3] Two years had since elapsed; no demand had during that time been made upon him; it was not till the quarrel arose concerning ecclesiastical privileges, that the claim was started, and the primate was, of a sudden, required to produce accounts of such intricacy and extent before a tribunal which had shown a determined resolution to ruin and oppress him. To find sureties that he should answer so boundless and uncertain a claim, which in the king’s estimation amounted to forty-four thousand marks, [4] was impracticable; and Becket’s suffragans were extremely at a loss what counsel to give him in such a critical emergency. By the advice of the bishop of Winchester he offered two thousand marks as a general satisfaction for all demands; but this offer was rejected by the king, [5] Some prelates exhorted him to resign his see, on condition of receiving an acquittal; others were of opinion that he ought to submit himself entirely to the king’s mercy; [6] but the primate, thus pushed to the utmost, had too much courage to sink under oppression; he determined to brave all his enemies, to trust to the sacredness of his character for protection, to involve his cause with that of God and religion, and to stand the utmost efforts of royal indignation.

[1 Hoveden, . Diceto, .]

[2 Fitz-Steph.]

[3 Hoveden, .]

[4 Epist. St. Thorn,]

[6 Fitz-Steph. . Gervase, .]

After a few days spent in deliberation Becket went to church, and said mass, where he had previously ordered that the entroit to the communion service should begin with these words, “Princes sat and spake against me;” the passage appointed for the martyrdom of St. Stephen, whom the primate thereby tacitly pretended to resemble in his sufferings for the sake of righteousness. He went thence to court arrayed in his sacred vestments: as soon as he arrived within the palace gate, he took the cross into his own hands, bore it aloft as his protection, and marched in that posture into the royal apartments. [1] The king, who was in an inner room, was astonished at this parade, by which the primate seemed to menace him and his court with the sentence of excommunication; and he sent some of the prelates to remonstrate with him on account of such audacious behavior. These prelates complained to Becket, that, by subscribing himself to the constitutions of Clarendon, he had seduced them to imitate his example; and that now, when it was too late, he pretended to shake off all subordination to the civil power, and appeared desirous of involving them in the guilt which must attend any violation of those laws, established by their consent and ratified by their subscriptions. [2]

[1] Fitz-Steph. . Hist. Quad. Hoveden, . Gul Neubr. . Epist. St. Thom. .

[2] Fitz-Steph

Becket replied, that he had indeed subscribed the constitutions of Clarendon, “legally, with good faith, and without fraud or reserve;” but in these words was virtually implied a salvo for the rights of their order, which, being connected with the cause of God and his church, could never be relinquished by their oaths and engagements: that if he and they had erred in resigning the ecclesiastical privileges, the best atonement they could now make was to retract their consent, which in such a case could never Be obligatory, and to follow the pope’s authority, who had solemnly annulled the constitutions of Clarendon, and had absolved them from all oaths which they had taken to observe them: that a determined resolution was evidently embraced to oppress the church; the storm had first broken upon him; for a slight offence, and which too was falsely imputed to him, he had been tyrannically condemned to a grievous penalty; a new and unheard-of claim was since started, in which he could expect no justice; and he plainly saw that he was the destined victim, who, by his ruin, must prepare the way for the abrogation of all spiritual immunities: that he strictly prohibited them who were his suffragans from assisting at any such trial, or giving their sanction to any sentence against him; he put himself and his see under the protection of the supreme pontiff; and appealed to him against any penalty which his iniquitous judges might think proper to inflict upon him; and that, however terrible the indignation of so great a monarch as Henry, his sword could only kill the body; while that of the church, intrusted into the hands of the primate, could kill the soul, and throw the disobedient into infinite and eternal perdition. [1]

Appeals to the pope, even in ecclesiastical causes, had been abolished by the constitutions of Clarendon, and were become criminal by law but an appeal in a civil cause, such as the king’s demand upon Becket, was a practice altogether new and unprecedented; it tended directly to the subversion of the government, and could receive no color of excuse, except from the determined resolution, which was but too apparent to Henry and the great council, to effectuate, without justice, but under color of law, the total ruin of the inflexible primate. The king, having now obtained a pretext so much more plausible for his violence, would probably have pushed the affair to the utmost extremity against him; but Becket gave him no leisure to conduct the prosecution. He refused so much as to hear the sentence which the barons, sitting apart from the bishops, and joined to some sheriffs and barons of the second rank, [2] had given upon the king's claim; he departed from the palace; asked Henry's immediate permission to leave Northampton; and upon meeting with a refusal, he withdrew secretly, wandered about in disguise for some time, and at last took shipping and arrived safely at Gravelines.

[1] Fitz-Steph. ,44,45,46. Hist. Quad. . Hoveden, , M. Paris, . Epist. St. Thorn, , 195.]

[2] Fitz-Steph. . This historian is supposed to mean the more considerable vassals of the chief barons: these had no title to sit in the great council, and the giving them a place there was a palpable irregularity; which, however, is not insisted on in any of Becket's remonstrances: a further proof how little fixed the constitution was at that time.]

The violent and unjust prosecution of Becket had a natural tendency to turn the public favor on his side, and to make men overlook his former ingratitude towards the king and his departure from all oaths and engagements, as well as the enormity of those ecclesiastical privileges, of which he affected to be the champion. There were many other reasons which procured him countenance and protection in foreign countries. Philip, earl of Flanders, [1] and Lewis, king of France, [2] jealous of the rising greatness of Henry, were well pleased to give him disturbance in his government; and forgetting that this was the common cause of princes, they affected to pity extremely the condition of the exiled primate; and the latter even honored him with a visit at Soissons, in which city he had invited him to fix his residence. [3]

[1] Epist. St Thom. .]

[2] Epist. St. Thom. , 37.]

[3 Hist. Quad. .]

The pope, whose interests were more immediately concerned in supporting him, gave a cold reception to a magnificent embassy which Henry sent to accuse him; while Becket himself, who had come to Sens in order to justify his cause before the sovereign pontiff was received with the greatest marks of distinction. The king in revenge, sequestered the revenues of Canterbury; and by conduct which might be esteemed arbitrary, had there been at that time any regular check on royal authority, he banished all the primate’s relations and domestics, to the number of four hundred, whom he obliged to swear, before their departure, that they would instantly join their patron. But this policy, by which Henry endeavored to reduce Becket sooner to necessity, lost its effect; the pope, when they arrived beyond sea, absolved them from their oath, and distributed them among the convents in Franc? and Flanders; a residence was assigned to Becket himself, in the convent of Pontigny, where he lived for some years in great magnificence, partly from a pension granted him on the revenues of that abbey, partly from remittances made him by the French monarch.

1165.

The more to ingratiate himself with the pope, Becket resigned into his hands the see of Canterbury, to which, he affirmed, he had been uncanonically elected, by the authority of the royal mandate; and Alexander, in his turn, besides investing him anew with that dignity, pretended to abrogate by a bull, the sentence which the great council of England had passed against him. Henry, after attempting in vain to procure a conference with the pope, who departed soon after for Rome, whither the prosperous state of his affairs now invited him, made provisions against the consequences of that breach which impended between his kingdom and the apostolic see. He issued orders to his justiciaries, inhibiting, under severe penalties, all appeals to the pope or archbishop, forbidding any one to receive any mandates from them, or apply in any case to their authority; declaring it treasonable to bring from either of them an interdict upon the kingdom, and punishable in secular clergymen, by the loss of their eyes and by castration, in regulars by amputation of their feet, and in laies with death; and menacing with sequestration and banishment the persons themselves, as well as their kindred, who should pay obedience to any such interdict; and he further obliged all his subjects to swear to the observance of those orders. [1] These were edicts of the utmost importance, affected the lives and properties of all the subjects, and even changed, for the time, the national religion, by breaking off all communication with Rome; yet were they enacted by the sole authority of the king, and were derived entirely from his will and pleasure.

The spiritual powers, which, in the primitive church, were, in a great measure, dependent on the civil, had, by a gradual progress, reached an equality and independence; and though the limits of the two jurisdictions were difficult to ascertain or define, it was not impossible but, by moderation on both sides, government might still have been conducted in that imperfect and irregular manner which attends all human institutions But as the ignorance of the age encouraged the ecclesiastics daily to extend their privileges, and even to advance maxims totally incompatible with civil government, [2] Henry had thought it high time to put an end to their pretensions, and formally, in a public council, to fix those powers which belonged to the magistrate, and which he was for the future determined to maintain. In this attempt he was led to reestablish customs which, though ancient, were beginning to be abolished by a contrary practice, and which were still more strongly opposed by the prevailing opinions and sentiments of the age.

Principle, therefore, stood on the one side, power on the other; and if the English had been actuated by conscience more than by present interest, the controversy must soon, by the general defection of Henry’s subjects, have been decided against him, Becket, in order to forward this event, filled all places with exclamations against the violence which he had suffered. He compared himself to Christ, who had been condemned by a lay tribunal, [1] and who was crucified anew in the present oppressions under which his church labored: he took it for granted, as a point incontestable, that his cause was the cause of God: [2] he assumed the character of champion for the patrimony of the divinity: he pretended to be the spiritual father of the king and all the people of England: [3] he even told Henry that kings reign solely by the authority of the church, [4] and though he had thus torn off the veil more openly on the one side than that prince had on the other, he seemed still, from the general favor borne him by the ecclesiastics, to have all the advantage in the argument. The king, that he might employ the weapons of temporal power remaining in his hands, suspended the payment of Peter’s pence; he made advances towards an alliance with the emperor Frederic Barbarossa, who was at that time engaged in violent wars with Pope Alexander; he discovered some intentions of acknowledging Pascal III., the present antipope, who was protected by that emperor; and by these expedients he endeavored to terrify the enterprising though prudent pontiff from proceeding to extremities against him.

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[1] Hist. Quad. ,167. Hoveden, . M. Paris, ,]

[2] “Quis dubitet,” says Becket to the king, “sacerdotes Christi legum et principum omniumque fidelium patres et magistros censeri,” Epist. St. Thom. 97, 148.]

1166.

But the violence of Becket, still more than the nature of the controversy, kept affairs from remaining long in suspense between the parties. That prelate, instigated by revenge, and animated by the present glory attending his situation, pushed matters to a decision, and issued a censure excommunicating the king’s chief ministers by name, and comprehending in general all those who favored or obeyed the constitutions of Clarendon: these constitutions he abrogated and annulled; he absolved all men from the oaths which they had taken to observe them; and he suspended the spiritual thunder over Henry himself only that the prince might avoid the blow by a timely repentance. [5]

[1 Epist. St. Thom. , 105, 194.]

[2 Epist St. Thom. , 30, 31, 226.]

[3 Fitz-Steph. . Epist. St. Thom. p. 52,148.]

[4 Brady’s Append. No. 56. Epist. St. Thom. p. 94,95, 97, 99,197. Roveden, p, 497.]

Paris, . Beaulieu. Vie de St. Thom. . Erzst. St.
Thom. , 229. Hoveden .]

The situation of Henry was so unhappy, that he could employ no expedient for saving his ministers from this terrible censure, but by appealing to the pope himself, and having recourse to a tribunal whose authority he had himself attempted to abridge in this very article of appeals, and which he knew was so deeply engaged on the side of his adversary. But even this expedient was not likely to be long effectual. Becket had obtained from the pope a legantine commission over England; and in virtue of that authority, which admitted of no appeal, he summoned the bishops of London, Salisbury, and others to attend him, and ordered, under pain of excommunication, the ecclesiastics, sequestered on his account, to be restored in two months to all their benefices. But John of Oxford, the king’s agent with the pope, had the address to procure orders for suspending this sentence; and he gave the pontiff such hopes of a speedy reconcilement between the king and Becket, that two legates, William of Pavia and Otho, were sent to Normandy, where the king then resided, and they endeavored to find expedients for that purpose. But the pretensions of the parties were as yet too opposite to admit of an accommodation: the king required that all the constitutions of Clarendon should be ratified; Becket, that previously to any agreement, he and his adherents should be restored to their possessions; and as the legates had no power to pronounce a definite sentence on either side, the negotiation soon after came to nothing. The cardinal of Pavia also, being much attached to Henry, took care to protract the negotiation; to mitigate the pope by the accounts which he sent of that prince’s conduct, and to procure him every possible indulgence from the see of Rome. About this time, the king had also the address to obtain a dispensation for the marriage of his third son, Geoffrey, with the heiress of Brittany; a concession which, considering Henry’s demerits towards the church, gave great scandal both to Becket, and to his zealous patron, the king of France.

1167.

The intricacies of the feudal law had, in that age, rendered the boundaries of power between the prince and his vassals, and between one prince and another, as uncertain as those between the crown and the mitre; and all wars took their origin from disputes, which, had there been any tribunal possessed of power to enforce their decrees, ought to have been decided only before a court of judicature. Henry, in prosecution of some controversies in which he was involved with the count of Auvergne, a vassal of the duchy of Guienne, bad invaded the territories of that nobleman; who had recourse to the king of France, his superior lord, for protection, and thereby kindled a war between the two monarchs. Bur the war was, as usual, no less feeble in its operations than it wail frivolous in its cause and object; and after occasioning some mutual depredations, [1] and some insurrections among the barons of Poictou and Guienne, was terminated by a peace. The terms of this peace were rather disadvantageous to Henry, and prove that that prince had, by reason of his contest with the church, lost the superiority which he had hitherto maintained over the crown of France; an additional motive to him for accommodating those differences.

The pope and the king began at last to perceive that, in the present situation of affairs, neither of them could expect a final and decisive victory over the other, and that they had more to fear than to hope from the duration of the controversy. Though the vigor of Henry’s government had confirmed his authority in all his dominions, his throne might be shaken by a sentence of excommunication; and if England itself could, by its situation, be more easily guarded against the contagion of superstitious prejudices, his French provinces at least, whose communication was open with the neighboring states, would be much exposed, on that account, to some great revolution or convulsion, He could not, therefore, reasonably imagine that the pope, while he retained such a check upon him, would formally recognize the constitutions of Clarendon, which both put an end to papal pretensions in England, [2] and would give an example to other states of asserting a like independency. [3]

[1] Hoveden, . M. Paris, . Diecto, p. 547 , 1403. Robert de Monte.]

[2] Epist. St. Thom, .]

[3] Epist. St. Thom, .]

Pope Alexander, on the other hand, being still engaged in dangerous wars with the emperor Frederic, might justly apprehend that Henry, rather than relinquish claims of such importance, would join the party of his enemy;

and as the trials hitherto made of the spiritual weapons by Becket had not succeeded to his expectation, and every thing had remained quiet in all the king’s dominions, nothing seemed impossible to the capacity and vigilance of so great a monarch. The disposition of minds on both sides, resulting from these circumstances, produced frequent attempts towards an accommodation; but as both parties knew that the essential articles of the dispute could not then be terminated, they entertained a perpetual jealousy of each other, and were anxious not to lose the least advantage in the negotiation. The nuncios, Gratian and Vivian, having received a commission to endeavor a reconciliation, met with the king in Normandy; and after all differences seemed to be adjusted, Henry offered to sign the treaty, with a salvo to his royal dignity; which gave such umbrage to Becket, that the negotiation in the end became fruitless, and the excommunications were renewed against the king’s ministers. Another negotiation was conducted at Montmirail, in presence of the king of France and the French prelates where Becket also offered to make his submissions, with a salvo to the honor of God and the liberties of the church; which, for a like reason, was extremely offensive to the king, and rendered the treaty abortive,

1169.

A third conference, under the same mediation, was broken off, by Becket’s insisting on a like reserve in his submissions; and even in a fourth treaty, when all the terms were adjusted, and when the primate expected to be introduced to the king, and to receive the kiss of peace, which it was usual for princes to grant in those times, and which was regarded as a sure pledge of forgiveness, Henry refused him that honor, under pretence that, during his anger, he had made a rash vow to that purpose. This formality served, among such jealous spirits, to prevent the conclusion of the treaty; and though the difficulty was attempted to be overcome by a dispensation which the pope granted to Henry from his vow, that prince could not be pre vailed on to depart from the resolution which he had taken.

In one of these conferences, at which the French king was present, Henry said to that monarch, “There have been many kings of England, some of greater, some of less authority than myself: there have also been many archbishops of Canterbury, holy and good men, and entitled to every kind of respect: let Becket but act towards me with the same submission which the greatest of his predecessors have paid to the least of mine, and there shall be no controversy between us.” Lewis was so struck with this state of the case, and with an offer which Henry made to submit his cause to the French clergy, that he could not forbear condemning the primate, and withdrawing his friendship from him during some time; but the bigotry of that prince, and their common animosity against Henry, soon produced a renewal of their former good correspondence.

1170.

All difficulties were at last adjusted between the parties; and the king allowed Becket to return, on conditions which may be esteemed both honorable and advantageous to that prelate. He was not required to give up any rights of the church, or resign any of those pretensions which had been the original ground of the controversy. It was agreed that all these questions should be buried in oblivion; but that Becket and his adherents should, without making further submission, be restored to all their livings, and that even the possessors of such benefices as depended on the see of Canterbury and had been filled during the primate’s absence, should be expelled, and Becket have liberty to supply the vacancies. [1] In return for concessions which intrenched so deeply on the honor and dignity of the crown, Henry reaped only the advantage of seeing his ministers absolved from the sentence of excommunication pronounced against them, and of preventing the interdict, which, if these hard conditions had not been complied with, was ready to be laid on all his dominions. [2] It was easy to see how much he dreaded that event, when a prince of so high a spirit could submit to terms so dishonorable, in order to prevent it. So anxious was Henry to accommodate all differences, and to reconcile himself fully with Becket, that he took the most extraordinary steps to flatter his vanity, and even on one occasion humiliated himself so far as to hold the stirrup of that haughty prelate while he mounted. [3]

[1] Fitz-Steph. , 69. Hoveden, .]

[2] Hist Quad. . Brompton, p, 1062. Gervase, , Epist. St. Thom. 704, 705, 706, 707, 792, 793, 794. Benedict. Abbas .]

[3] Epist. 45, lib. r]

But the king attained not even that temporary tranquillity which he had hoped to reap from these expedients. During the heat of his quarrel with Becket, while he was every day expecting an interdict to be laid on his kingdom, and a sentence of excommunication to be fulminated against his person, he had thought it prudent to have his son. Prince Henry, associated with him in the royalty, and to make him be crowned king, by the hands of Roger, archbishop of York. By this precaution, he both insured the succession of that prince, which, considering the many past irregularities in that point, could not but be esteemed somewhat precarious; and he preserved at least his family on the throne, if the sentence of excommunication should have the effect which he dreaded, and should make his subjects renounce their allegiance to him. Though his design was conducted with expedition and secrecy, Becket, before it was carried into execution, had got intelligence of it, and being desirous of obstructing all Henry’s measures, as well as anxious to prevent this affront to himself, who pretended to the sole right, as archbishop of Canterbury, to officiate in the coronation, he had inhibited all the prelates of England from assisting at this ceremony, had procured from the pope a mandate to the same purpose, and had incited the king of France to protest against the coronation of young Henry, unless the princess, daughter of that monarch, should at the same time receive the royal unction. There prevailed in that age an opinion which was akin to its other superstitions, that the royal unction was essential to the exercise of royal power: it was therefore natural, both for the king of France, careful of his daughter’s establishment and for Becket, jealous of his own dignity, to demand, in the treaty with Henry, some satisfaction in this essential point. Henry, after apologizing to Lewis for the omission with regard to Margaret, and excusing it on account of the secrecy and despatch requisite for conducting that measure, promised that the ceremony should be renewed in the persons both of the prince and princess; and he assured Becket, that besides receiving the acknowledgments of Roger and the other bishops for the seeming affront put on the see of Canterbury, the primate should, as a further satisfaction, recover his rights by officiating in this coronation. But the violent spirit of Becket, elated by the power of the church, and by the victory which he had already obtained over his sovereign, was not content with this voluntary compensation, but resolved to make the injury, which he pretended to have suffered, a handle for taking revenge on all his enemies. On his arrival in England, he met the archbishop of York and the bishops of London and Salisbury, who were on their journey to the king in Normandy. He notified to the archbishop the sentence of suspension, and to the two bishops that of excommunication, which, at his solicitation, the pope had pronounced against them. Reginald de Warrenne and Gervase de Cornhill, two of the king's ministers, who were employed on their duty in Kent, asked him, on hearing of this bold attempt whether he meant to bring fire and sword into the kingdom. But the primate, heedless of the reproof, proceeded in the most ostentatious manner to take possession of his diocese in Rochester and all the towns through which he passed, he was received with the shouts and acclamations of the populace. As he approached Southwark, the clergy, the laity, men of all ranks and ages, came forth to meet him, and celebrated with hymns of joy his triumphant entrance. And though he was obliged, by order of the young prince, who resided at Woodstock, to return to his diocese, he found that he was not mistaken, when he reckoned upon the highest veneration of the public towards his person and his dignity. He proceeded, therefore, with the more courage to dart his spiritual thunders. He issued the sentence of excommunication against Robert de Broc and Nigel de Sackville, with many others, who either had assisted at the coronation of the prince, or been active in the late persecution of the exiled clergy. This violent measure, by which he, in effect, denounced war against the king himself, is commonly ascribed to the vindictive disposition and imperious character of Becket; but as this prelate was also a man of acknowledged abilities, we are not in his passions alone to look for the cause of his conduct, when he proceeded to these extremities against his enemies. His sagacity had led him to discover all Henry's intentions; and he proposed, by this bold and unexpected assault, to prevent the execution of them.

The king, from his experience of the dispositions of his people, was become sensible that his enterprise had been too bold, in establishing the constitutions of Clarendon, in defining all the branches of royal power, and in endeavoring to extort from the church of England, as well as from the pope, an express avowal of these disputed prerogatives. Conscious also of his own violence in attempting to break or subdue the inflexible primate, he was not displeased to undo that measure which had given his enemies such advantage against him, and he was contented that the controversy should terminate in that ambiguous manner, which was the utmost that princes, in those ages, could hope to attain in their disputes with the see of Rome. Though he dropped for the present the prosecution of Becket, he still reserved to himself the right of maintaining, that the constitutions of Clarendon, the original ground of the quarrel, were both the ancient customs and the present law of the realm; and though he knew that the papal clergy asserted them to be impious in themselves, as well as abrogated by the sentence of the sovereign pontiff, he intended, in spite of their clamors, steadily to put those laws in execution, and to trust to his own abilities, and to the course of events, for success in that perilous enterprise. He hoped that Becket’s experience of a six years’ exile would, after his pride was fully gratified by his restoration, be sufficient tc teach him more reserve in his opposition; or if any controversy arose, he expected thenceforth to engage in a more favorable cause, and to maintain with advantage, while the primate was now in his power, the ancient and undoubted customs of the kingdom against the usurpations of the clergy. But Becket, determined not to betray the ecclesiastical privileges by his connivance, and apprehensive lest a prince of such profound policy, if allowed to proceed in his own way, might probably in the end prevail, resolved to take all the advantage which his present victory gave him, and to disconcert the cautious measures of the king, by the vehemence and rigor of his own conduct. Assured of support from Rome, he was little intimidated by dangers which his courage taught him to despise, and which, even if attended with the most fatal consequences, would serve only to gratify his ambition and thirst of glory.

When the suspended and excommunicated prelates arrived at Baieux, where the king then resided, and complained to him of the violent proceedings of Becket, he instantly perceived the consequences; was sensible that his whole plan of operations was overthrown; foresaw that the dangerous contest between the civil and spiritual powers, a contest which he himself had first roused, but which he had endeavored, by all his late negotiations and concessions, to appease, must come to an immediate and decisive issue; and he was thence thrown into the most violent commotion. The archbishop of York remarked to him, that so long as Becket lived, he could never expect to enjoy peace or tranquillity. The king himself, being vehemently agitated, burst forth into an exclamation against his servants, whose want of zeal, he said, had so long left him exposed to the enterprises of that ungrateful and imperious prelate. Four gentlemen of his household, Reginald Fitz-Urse, William de Traci, Hugh de Moreville, and Richard Brito, taking these passionate expressions to be a hint for Becket's death, immediately communicated their thoughts to each other; and swearing to avenge their prince's quarrel secretly withdrew from court. Some menacing expressions which they had dropped, gave a suspicion of their design; and the king despatched a messenger after them, charging them to attempt nothing against the person of the primate; but these orders arrived too late to prevent their fatal purpose. The four assassins, though they took different roads to England, arrived nearly about the same time at Saltwoode, near Canterbury; and being there joined by some assistants, they proceeded in a great haste to the archiepiscopal palace. They found the primate, who trusted entirely to the sacredness of his character, very slenderly attended; and though they threw out many menaces and reproaches against him, he was so incapable of fear, that, without using any precautions against their violence, he immediately went to St. Benedict's church, to hear vespers. They followed him thither, attacked him before the altar, and having cloven his head with many blows, retired without meeting any opposition. This was the tragical end of Thomas à Becket, a prelate of the most lofty, intrepid, and inflexible spirit, who was able to cover to the world, and probably to himself, the enterprises of pride and ambition, under the disguise of sanctity, and of zeal for the interests of religion; an extraordinary personage, surely, had he been allowed to remain in his first station, and had directed the vehemence of his character to the support of law and justice; instead of being engaged, by the prejudices of the times, to sacrifice all private duties and public connections to ties which he imagined, or represented, as superior to every civil and political consideration. But no man, who enters into the genius of that age, can reasonably doubt of this prelate's sincerity. The spirit of superstition was so prevalent, that it infallibly caught every careless reasoner, much more every one whose interest, and honor, and ambition were engaged to support it. All the wretched literature of the times was enlisted on that side. Some faint glimmerings of common sense might sometimes pierce through the thick cloud of ignorance, or, what was worse, the illusions of perverted science, which had blotted out the sun, and enveloped the face of nature; but those who preserved themselves untainted by the general contagion, proceeded on no principles which they could pretend to justify; they were more indebted to their total want of instruction than to their knowledge, if they still retained some share of understanding; folly was possessed of all the schools as well as all the churches; and her votaries assumed the garb of philosophers, together with the ensigns of spiritual dignities. Throughout that large collection of letters which bears the name of St. Thomas, we find, in all the retainers of that aspiring prelate, no less than in himself, a most entire and absolute conviction of the reason and piety of their own party, and a disdain of their antagonists; nor is there less cant and grimace in their style, when they address each other, than when they compose manifestoes for the perusal of the public. The spirit of revenge, violence, and ambition which accompanied their conduct, instead of forming a presumption of hypocrisy, are the surest pledges of their sincere attachment to a cause which so much flattered these domineering passions.

Henry, on the first report of Becket's violent measures, had purposed to have him arrested, and had already taken some steps towards the execution of that design; but the intelligence of his murder threw the prince into great consternation; and he was immediately sensible of the dangerous consequences which he had reason to apprehend from so unexpected an event. An archbishop of reputed sanctity assassinated before the altar, in the exercise of his functions, and on account of his zeal in maintaining ecclesiastical privileges, must attain the highest honors of martyrdom; while his murderer would be ranked among the most bloody tyrants that ever were exposed to the hatred and detestation of mankind. Interdicts and excommunications, weapons in themselves so terrible, would, he foresaw, be armed with double force, when employed in a cause so much calculated to work on the human passions, and so peculiarly adapted to the eloquence of popular preachers and declaimers. In vain would he plead his own innocence, and even his total ignorance of the fact; he was sufficiently guilty, if the church thought proper to esteem him such; and his concurrence in Becket's martyrdom, becoming a religious opinion, would be received with all the implicit credit which belonged to the most established articles of faith. These considerations gave the king the most unaffected concern; and as it was extremely his interest to clear himself from all suspicion, he took no care to conceal the depth of his affliction. He shut himself up from the light of day, and from all commerce with his servants; he even refused, during three days, all food and sustenance; the courtiers, apprehending dangerous effects from his despair were at last obliged to break in upon his solitude; and they employed every topic of consolation, induced him to accept of nourishment, and occupied his leisure in taking precautions against the consequences which he so justly apprehended from the murder of the primate.

1171.

The point of chief importance to Henry was to convince the pope of his innocence; or rather, to persuade him that he would reap greater advantages from the submissions of England than from proceeding to extremities against that kingdom. The archbishop of Rouen, the bishops of Worcester and Evreux, with five persons of inferior quality, were immediately despatched to Rome, and orders were given them to perform their journey with the utmost expedition. Though the name and authority of the court of Rome were so terrible in the remote countries of Europe, which were sunk in profound ignorance, and were entirely unacquainted with its character and conduct, the pope was so little revered at home, that his inveterate enemies surrounded the gates of Rome itself, and even controlled his government in that city; and the ambassadors, who, from a distant extremity of Europe, carried to him the humble, or rather abject submissions of the greatest potentate of the age, found the utmost difficulty to make their way to him and to throw themselves at his feet. It was at length agreed that Richard Barre, one of their number, should leave the rest behind, and run all the hazards of the passage, in order to prevent the fatal consequences which might ensue from any delay in giving satisfaction to his holiness. He found, on his arrival, that Alexander was already wrought up to the greatest rage against the king, that Becket's partisans were daily stimulating him to revenge, that the king of France had exhorted him to fulminate the most dreadful sentence against England, and that the very mention of Henry's name before the sacred college, was received with every expression of horror and execration.

The Thursday before Easter was now approaching, when it is customary for the pope to denounce annual curses against all his enemies; and it was expected that Henry should, with all the preparations peculiar to the discharge of that sacred artillery, be solemnly comprehended in the number. But Barre found means to appease the pontiff, and to deter him from a measure which, if it failed of success, could not afterwards be easily recalled: the anathemas were only levelled in general against all the actors, accomplices and abettors of Becket's murder. The abbot of Valasse, and the archdeacons of Salisbury and Lisieux, with others of Henry's ministers, who soon after arrived, besides asserting their prince's innocence, made oath before the whole consistory, that he would stand to the pope's judgment in the affair, and make every submission that should be required of him. The terrible blow was thus artfully eluded; the cardinals Albert and Theodin were appointed legates to examine the cause, and were ordered to proceed to Normandy for that purpose; and though Henry's foreign dominions were already laid under an interdict by the archbishop of Sens, Becket's great partisan, and the pope's legate in France, the general expectation that the monarch would easily exculpate himself from any concurrence in the guilt, kept every one in suspense, and prevented all the bad consequences which might be dreaded from that sentence.

The clergy, meanwhile, though their rage was happily diverted from falling on the king, were not idle in magnifying the sanctity of Becket, in extolling the merits of his martyrdom, and in exalting him above all that devoted tribe who, in several ages, had, by their blood, cemented the fabric of the temple. Other saints had only borne testimony by their sufferings to the general doctrines of Christianity; but Becket had sacrificed his life to the power and privileges of the clergy; and this peculiar merit challenged, and not in vain, a suitable acknowledgment to his memory. Endless were the panegyrics on his virtues; and the miracles wrought by his relics were more numerous, more nonsensical, and more impudently attested than those which ever filled the legend of any confessor or martyr. Two years after his death, he was canonized by Pope Alexander; a solemn jubilee was established for celebrating his merits; his body was removed to a magnificent shrine, enriched with presents from all parts of Christendom; pilgrimages were performed to obtain his intercession with Heaven, and it was computed, that in one year above a hundred thousand pilgrims arrived in Canterbury, and paid their devotions at his tomb. It is indeed a mortifying reflection to those who are actuated by the love of fame, so justly denominated the last infirmity of noble minds, that the wisest legislator and most exalted genius that ever reformed or enlightened the world, can never expect such tributes of praise an are lavished on the memory of pretended saints, whose whole conduct was probably to the last degree odious or contemptible, and whose industry was entirely directed to the pursuit of objects pernicious to mankind. It is only a conqueror, a personage no less entitled to our hatred, who can pretend to the attainment of equal renown and glory.

It may not be amiss to remark, before we conclude this subject of Thomas à Becket, that the king, during his controversy with that prelate, was on every occasion more anxious than usual to express his zeal for religion, and to avoid all appearance of a profane negligence on that head. He gave his consent to the imposing of a tax on all his dominions, for the delivery of the Holy Land, now threatened by the famous Salad me: this tax amounted to twopence a pound for one year, and a penny a pound for the four subsequent. [1] Almost all the princes of Europe laid a like imposition on their subjects, which received the name of Saladine’s tax. During this period there came over from Germany about thirty heretics of both sexes, under the direction of one Gerard, simple, ignorant people, who could give no account of their faith, but declared themselves ready to suffer for the tenets of their master. They made only one convert in England, a woman as ignorant as themselves; yet they gave such umbrage to the clergy, that they were delivered over to the secular arm, and were punished by being burned on the forehead, and then whipped through the streets. They seemed to exult in their sufferings, and as they went along sung the beatitude, “Blessed are ye, when men hate you and persecute you.” [2]

After they were whipped, they were thrust out almost naked in the midst of winter, and perished through cold and hunger; no one daring, or being willing, to give them the least relief. We are ignorant of the particular tenets of these people; for it would be imprudent to rely on the representations left of them by the clergy, who affirm, that they denied the efficacy of the sacraments and the unity of the church. It is probable that their departure from the standard of orthodoxy was still more subtile and minute. They seem to have been the first that ever suffered for heresy in England.

As soon as Henry found that he was in no immediate danger from the thunders of the Vatican, he undertook an expedition against Ireland; a design which he had long projected, and by which he hoped to recover his credit, somewhat impaired by his late transactions with the hierarchy.

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[1] Gervase, . M. Paris, .

[2] Neubr. . M. Pang, . Heining. p. 494.

CHAPTER IX.

HENRY II.

1172.

As Britain was first peopled from Gaul, so was Ireland probably from Britain; and the inhabitants of all these countries seem to have been so many tribes of the Celtae, who derive their origin from an antiquity that lies far beyond the records of any history or tradition. The Irish, from the beginning of time, had been buried in the most profound barbarism and ignorance; and as they were never conquered or even invaded by the Romans, from whom all the western world derived its civility, they continued still in the most rude state of society, and were distinguished by those vices alone, to which human nature, not tamed by education or restrained by laws, is forever subject. The small principalities into which they were divided, exercised perpetual rapine and violence against each other: the uncertain succession of their princes was a continual source of domestic convulsions; the usual title of each petty sovereign was the murder of his predecessor; courage and force, though exercised in the commission of crimes, were more honored than any pacific virtues; and the most simple arts of life, even tillage and agriculture, were almost wholly unknown among them. They had felt the invasions of the Danes and the other northern tribes; but these inroads, which had spread barbarism in other parts of Europe, tended rather to improve the Irish; and the only towns which were to be found in the island, had been planted along the coast by the freebooters of Norway and Denmark. The other inhabitants exercised pasturage in the open country, sought protection from any danger in their forests and morasses, and being divided by the fiercest animosities against each other, were still more intent on the means of mutual injury than on the expedients for common or even for private interest.

Besides many small tribes, there were in the age of Henry II. five principal sovereignties in the island, Minister, Leinster Meath, Ulster, and Connaught; and as it had been usual for the one or the other of these to take the lead in their wars, there was commonly some prince, who seemed, for the time, to act as monarch of Ireland. Roderic O'Connor, king of Connaught, was then advanced to this dignity; [1] but his government, ill obeyed even within his own territory, could not unite the people in any measures, either for the establishment of order, or for defence against foreigners.

[1 Hoveden,]

The ambition of Henry had, very early in his reign, been moved, by the prospect of these advantages, to attempt the subjecting of Ireland; and a pretence was only wanting to invade a people who, being always confined to their own island, had never given any reason of complaint to any of their neighbors. For this purpose he had recourse to Rome, which assumed a right to dispose of kingdoms and empires; and not foreseeing the dangerous disputes which he was one day to maintain with that see, he helped, for present, or rather for an imaginary convenience, to give sanction to claims which were now become dangerous to all sovereigns. Adrian III., who then filled the papal chair, was by birth an Englishman; and being on that account the more disposed to oblige Henry, he was easily persuaded to act as master of the world, and to make, without any hazard or expense, the acquisition of a great island to his spiritual jurisdiction. The Irish had, by precedent missions from the Britons, been imperfectly converted to Christianity; and, what the pope regarded as the surest mark of their imperfect conversion, they followed the doctrines of their first teachers, and had never acknowledged any subjection to the see of Rome. Adrian, therefore, in the year 1156 issued a bull in favor of Henry; in which, after premising that this prince had ever shown an anxious care to enlarge the church of God on earth, and to increase the number of his saints and elect in heaven, he represents his design of subduing Ireland as derived from the same pious motives: he considers his care of previously applying for the apostolic sanction as a sure earnest of success and victory; and having established it as a point incontestable, that all Christian kingdoms belong to the patrimony of St. Peter, he acknowledges it to be his own duty to sow among them the seeds of the gospel, which might in the last day fructify to their eternal salvation: he exhorts the king to invade Ireland, in order to extirpate the vice and wickedness of the natives, and oblige them to pay yearly, from every house a penny to the see of Rome: he gives him entire right and authority over the island, commands all the inhabitants to obey him as their sovereign, and invests with full power all such godly instruments as he should think proper to employ in an enterprise thus calculated for the glory of God and the salvation of the souls of men. [1] Henry, though armed with this authority, did not immediately put his design in execution; but being detained by more interesting business on the continent, waited for a favorable opportunity of invading Ireland. Dermot Macmorrogh, king of Leinster, had, by his licentious tyranny, rendered himself odious to his subjects, who seized with alacrity the first occasion that offered of throwing off the yoke, which was become grievous and oppressive to them. This prince had formed a design on Dovergilda, wife of Ororic, prince of Breffny; and taking advantage of her husband’s absence, who, being obliged to visit a distant part of his territory, had left his wife secure, as he thought, in an island surrounded by a bog, he suddenly invaded the place, and carried off the princess. [2] This exploit, though usual among the Irish, and rather deemed a proof of gallantry and spirit, [3] provoked the resentment of the husband; who, having collected forces, and being strengthened by the alliance of Roderic, king of Connaught, invaded the dominions of Dermot, and expelled him his kingdom. The exiled prince had recourse to Henry, who was at this time in Guienne, craved his assistance in restoring him to his sovereignty, and offered, on that event, to hold his kingdom in vassalage under the crown of England. Henry, whose views were already turned towards making acquisitions in Ireland, readily accepted the offer; but being at that time embarrassed by the rebellions of his French subjects, as well as by his disputes with the see of Rome, he declined, for the present, embarking in the enterprise, and gave Dermot no further assistance than letters patent, by which he empowered all his subjects to aid the Irish prince in the recovery of his dominions. [4]

[1 M. Paris, . Girali. Camltr. Spel. Concil. vol. ii. . Rymer, vol. i. .]

[2 Girald. Cambr.]

[3 Spencer, vol. vi.]

[4 Girald. Cambr.]

Dermot, supported by this authority, came to Bristol; and after endeavoring, though for some time in vain, to engage adventurers in the enterprise, he at last formed a treaty with Richard, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Strigul. This nobleman, who was of the illustrious house of Clare, had impaired his fortune by expensive pleasures; and being ready for any desperate undertaking, he promised assistance to Dermot, on condition that he should espouse Eva, daughter of that prince, and be declared heir to all his dominions. While Richard was assembling his succors, Dermot went into Wales; and meeting with Robert Fitz-Stephens, constable of Abertivi, and Maurice Fitz-Gerald he also engaged them in his service, and obtained their promise of invading Ireland. Being now assured of succor, he returned privately to his own state; and lurking in the monastery of Fernes, which he had founded, (for this ruffian was also a founder of monasteries,) he prepared every thing for the reception of his English allies.

The troops of Fitz-Stephens were first ready. That gentleman landed in Ireland with thirty knights, sixty esquires, and three hundred archers; but this small body, being brave men, not unacquainted with discipline, and completely armed, — a thing almost unknown in Ireland, — struck a great terror into the barbarous inhabitants, and seemed to menace them with some signal revolution. The conjunction of Maurice de Prendergast, who, about the same time, brought over ten knights and sixty archers, enabled Fitz-Stephens to attempt the siege of Wexford, a town inhabited by the Danes; and after gaining an advantage, he made himself master of the place. Soon after, Fitz-Gerald arrived with ten knights, thirty esquires, and a hundred archers; and being joined by the former adventurers, composed a force which nothing in Ireland was able to withstand. Roderic, the chief monarch of the island, was foiled in different actions: the prince of Ossory was obliged to submit, and give hostages for his peaceable behavior; and Dermot, not content with being restored to his kingdom of Leinster, projected the dethroning of Roderic, and aspired to the sole dominion over the Irish.

In prosecution of these views, he sent over a messenger to the earl of Strigul, challenging the performance of his promise, and displaying the mighty advantages which might now be reaped by a reënforcement of warlike troops from England. Richard, not satisfied with the general allowance given by Henry to all his subjects, went to that prince, then in Normandy, and having obtained a cold or ambiguous permission, prepared himself for the execution of his designs. He first sent over Raymond, one of his retinue, with ten knights and seventy archers, who, landing near Waterford, defeated a body of three thousand Irish that had ventured to attack him, and as Richard himself, who brought over two hundred horse and a body of archers, joined, a few days after, the victorious English, they made themselves masters of Waterford, and proceeded to Dublin, which was taken by assault. Roderic, in revenge, cut off the head of Dermot's natural son, who had been left as a hostage in his hands; and Richard, marrying Eva, became soon after, by the death of Dermot, master of the kingdom of Leinster, and prepared to extend his authority over all Ireland. Roderic, and the other Irish princes, were alarmed at the danger; and combining together, besieged Dublin with an army of thirty thousand men; but Earl Richard, making a sudden sally at the head of ninety knights with their followers, put this numerous army to rout, chased them off the field, and pursued them with great slaughter. None in Ireland now dared to oppose themselves to the English.

Henry, jealous of the progress made by his own subjects, sent orders to recall all the English, and he made preparations to attack Ireland in person; but Richard and the other adventurers found means to appease him, by making him the most humble submissions, and offering to hold all their acquisitions in vassalage to his crown. That monarch landed in Ireland at the head of five hundred knights, besides other soldiers; he found the Irish so dispirited by their late misfortunes, that, in a progress which he made through the island, he had no other occupation than to receive the homage of his new subjects. He left most of the Irish chieftains or princes in possession of their ancient territories; bestowed some lands on the English adventurers; gave Earl Richard the commission of seneschal of Ireland; and after a stay of a few months, returned in triumph to England. By these trivial exploits, scarcely worth relating, except for the importance of the consequences, was Ireland subdued, and annexed to the English crown.

The low state of commerce and industry during those ages made it impracticable for princes to support regular armies, which might retain a conquered country in subjection; and the extreme barbarism and poverty of Ireland could still less afford means of bearing the expense. The only expedient by which a durable conquest could then be made or maintained, was by pouring in a multitude of new inhabitants, dividing among them the lands of the vanquished, establishing them in all offices of trust and authority, and thereby transforming the ancient inhabitants into a new people. By this policy the northern invaders of old, and of late the duke of Normandy, had been able to fix their dominions, and to erect kingdoms which remained stable on their foundations, and were transmitted to the posterity of the first conquerors. But the state of Ireland rendered that island so little inviting to the English, that only a few of desperate fortunes could be persuaded, from time to time, to transport themselves thither; and instead of reclaiming the natives from their uncultivated manners, they were gradually assimilated to the ancient inhabitants, and degenerated from the customs of their own nation. It was also found requisite to bestow great military and arbitrary powers on the leaders, who commanded a handful of men amidst such hostile multitudes; and law and equity, in a little time, became as much unknown in the English settlements, as they had ever been among the Irish tribes. Palatinates were erected in favor of the new adventurers; independent authority conferred; the natives, never fully subdued, still retained their animosity against the conquerors; their hatred was retaliated by like injuries; and from these causes the Irish, during the course of four centuries, remained still savage and untractable: it was not till the latter end of Elizabeth’s reign, that the island was fully subdued; nor till that of her successor, that it gave hopes of becoming a useful conquest to the English nation.

Besides that the easy and peaceable submission of the Irish left Henry no further occupation in that island, he was recalled from it by another incident, which was of the last importance to his interest and safety. The two legates, Albert and Theodin, to whom was committed the trial of his conduct in the murder of Archbishop Becket, were arrived in Normandy; and being impatient of delay, sent him frequent letters, full of menaces, if he protracted any longer making his appearance before them. He hastened therefore to Normandy, and had a conference with them at Savigny, where their demands were so exorbitant, that he broke off the negotiation, threatened to return to Ireland, and bade them do their worst against him. They perceived that the season was now past for taking advantage of that tragical incident; which, had it been hotly pursued by interdicts and excommunications, was capable of throwing the whole kingdom into combustion. But the time which Henry had happily gained, had contributed to appease the minds of men; the event could not now have the same influence as when it was recent; and as the clergy every day looked for an accommodation with the king, they had not opposed the pretensions of his partisans, who had been very industrious in representing to the people his entire innocence in the murder of the primate, and his ignorance of the designs formed by the assassins. The legates, therefore, found themselves obliged to lower their terms; and Henry was so fortunate as to conclude an accommodation with them. He declared upon oath, before the relics of the saints, that so far from commanding or desiring the death of the arch bishop, he was extremely grieved when he received intelligence of it; but as the passion which he had expressed on account of that prelate's conduct, had probably been the occasion of his murder, he stipulated the following conditions as an atonement for the offence. He promised, that he should pardon all such as had been banished for adhering to Becket, and should restore them to their livings; that the see of Canterbury should be reinstated in all its ancient possessions; that he should pay the templars a sum of money sufficient for the subsistence of two hundred knights during a year in the Holy Land; that he should himself take the cross at the Christmas following, and, if the pope required it, serve three years against the infidels, either in Spain or Palestine; that he should not insist on the observance of such customs derogatory to ecclesiastical privileges, as had been introduced in his own time; and that he should not obstruct appeals to the pope in ecclesiastical causes, but should content himself with exacting sufficient security from such clergymen as left his dominions to prosecute an appeal, that they should attempt nothing against the rights of his crown. Upon signing these concessions, Henry received absolution from the legates, and was confirmed in the grant of Ireland made by Pope Adrian; and nothing proves more strongly the great abilities of this monarch than his extricating himself on such easy terms from so difficult a situation. He had always insisted, that the laws established at Clarendon contained not any new claims, but the ancient customs of the kingdom; and he was still at liberty, notwithstanding the articles of this agreement, to maintain his pretensions. Appeals to the pope were indeed permitted by that treaty; but as the king was also permitted to exact reasonable securities from the parties, and might stretch his demands on this head as far as he pleased, he had it virtually in his power to prevent the pope from reaping any advantage by this seeming concession. And on the whole, the constitutions of Clarendon remained still the law of the realm; though the pope and his legates seem so little to have conceived the king’s power to lie under any legal limitations, that they were satisfied with his departing, by treaty, from one of the most momentous articles of these constitutions, without requiring any repeal by the states of the kingdom.

Henry, freed from this dangerous controversy with the ecclesiastics and with the see of Rome, seemed now to have reached the pinnacle of human grandeur and felicity, and to be equally happy in his domestic situation and in his political government. A numerous progeny of sons and daughters gave both lustre and authority to his crown, prevented the danger of a disputed succession, and repressed all pretensions of the ambitious barons. The king’s precaution also, in establishing the several branches of his family, seemed well calculated to prevent all jealousy among the brothers, and to perpetuate the greatness of his family. He had appointed Henry, his eldest son, to be his successor in the kingdom of England, the duchy of Normandy, and the counties of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; territories which lay contiguous, and which, by that means, might easily lend to each other mutual assistance both against intestine commotions and foreign invasions. Richard, his second son, was invested in the duchy of Guienne and county of Poictou; Geoffrey, his third son, inherited, in right of his wife, the duchy of Brittany, and the new conquest of Ireland was destined for the appanage of John, his fourth son. He had also negotiated, in favor of this last prince, a marriage with Adelais, the only daughter of Humbert, count of Savoy and Maurienne; and was to receive as her dowry considerable demesnes in Piedmont, Savoy, Bresse, and Dauphiny. But this exaltation of his family excited the jealousy of all his neighbors, who made those very sons, whose fortunes he had so anxiously established, the means of imbittering his future life, and disturbing his government.

Young Henry, who was rising to man’s estate, began to display his character, and aspire to independence: brave, ambitious, liberal, munificent, affable: he discovered qualities which give great lustre to youth; prognosticate a shining fortune; but, unless tempered in mature age with discretion, are the forerunners of the greatest calamities. It is said that at the time when this prince received the holy unction, his father, in order to give greater dignity to the ceremony, officiated at table as one of the retinue; and observed to his son that never king was more royally served. “It is nothing extraordinary,” said young Henry to one of his courtiers, “if the son of a count should serve the son of a king.” This saying, which might pass only for an innocent pleasantry, or even for an oblique compliment to his father, was, however, regarded as a symptom of his aspiring temper; and his conduct soon after justified the conjecture.

1173.

Henry, agreeable to the promise which he had given both to the pope and French king, permitted his son to be crowned anew by the hands of the archbishop of Rouen, and associated the Princess Margaret, spouse to young Henry, in the ceremony. [1] He afterwards allowed him to pay a visit to his father-in-law at Paris, who took the opportunity of instilling into the young prince those ambitious sentiments to which he was naturally but too much inclined.

[1 Hoveden, . Diceto, . Brompton, p. 1080. Gervase, . Trivet, . It appears from Madox’s History of the Exchequer, that silk garments were then known in England, and that the coronation robes of the young king and queen cost eighty-seven pounds ten shillings and fourpence, money of that age.]

Though it had been the constant practice of France, ever since the accession of the Capetian line, to crown the son during the lifetime of the father without conferring on him any present participation of royalty; Lewis persuaded his son-in-law, that, by this ceremony, which in those ages was deemed so important, he had acquired a title to sovereignty, and that the king could not, without injustice, exclude him from immediate possession of the whole, or at least a part of his dominions. In consequence of these extravagant ideas, young Henry, on his return, desired the king to resign to him either the crown of England or the duchy of Normandy; discovered great discontent on the refusal; spake in the most undutiful terms of his father; and soon after, in concert with Lewis, made his escape to Paris, where he was protected and supported by that monarch.

While Henry was alarmed at this incident, and had the prospect of dangerous intrigues, or even of a war, which, whether successful or not, must be extremely calamitous and disagreeable to him, he received intelligence of new misfortunes, which must have affected him in the most sensible manner. Queen Eleanor, who had disgusted her first husband by her gallantries, was no less offensive to her second by her jealousy; and after this manner carried to extremity, in the different periods of her life, every circumstance of female weakness. She communicated her discontents against Henry to her two younger sons, Geoffrey and Richard; persuaded them that they were also entitled to present possession of the territories assigned to them; engaged them to fly secretly to the court of France; and was meditating herself an escape to the same court, and had even put on man's apparel for that purpose, when she was seized by orders from her husband, and thrown into confinement. Thus Europe saw with astonishment the best and most indulgent of parents at war with his whole family; three boys, scarcely arrived at the age of puberty, require a great monarch, in the full vigor of his age and height of his reputation, to dethrone himself in their favor; and several princes not ashamed to support them in these unnatural and absurd pretensions.

Henry, reduced to this perilous and disagreeable situation, had recourse to the court of Rome. Though sensible of the danger attending the interposition of ecclesiastical authority in temporal disputes, he applied to the pope, as his superior lord, to excommunicate his enemies, and by these censures to reduce to obedience his undutiful children, whom he found such reluctance to punish by the sword of the magistrate. [1] Alexander, well pleased to exert his power in so justifiable a cause, issued the bulls required of him; but it was soon found, that these spiritual weapons had not the same force as when employed in a spiritual controversy; and that the clergy were very negligent in supporting a sentence which was nowise calculated to promote the immediate interests of their order. The king, after taking in vain this humiliating step, was obliged to have recourse to arms, and to enlist such auxiliaries as are the usual resource of tyrants, and have seldom been employed by so wise and just a monarch.

The loose government which prevailed in all the states of Europe, the many private wars carried on among the neighboring nobles, and the impossibility of enforcing any general execution of the laws, had encouraged a tribe of banditti to disturb every where the public peace, to infest the highways, to pillage the open country, and to brave all the efforts of the civil magistrate, and even the excommunications of the church, which were fulminated against them. Troops of them were sometimes enlisted in the service of one prince or baron, sometimes in that of another: they often acted in an independent manner, under leaders of their own; the peaceable and industrious inhabitants, reduced to poverty by their ravages, were frequently obliged for subsistence to betake themselves to a like disorderly course of life; and a continual intestine war, pernicious to industry, as well as to the execution of justice, was thus carried on in the bowels of every kingdom. Those desperate ruffians received the name sometimes of Brabançons, sometimes of Routiers or Cottereaux; but for what reason is not agreed by historians; and they formed a kind of society or government among themselves, which set at defiance the rest of mankind. The greatest monarchs were not ashamed, on occasion, to have recourse to their assistance; and as their habits of war and depredation had given them experience, hardiness, and courage, they generally composed the most formidable part of those armies which decided the political quarrels of princes. Several of them were enlisted among the forces levied by Henry's enemies; but the great treasures amassed by that prince enabled him to engage more numerous troops of them in his service; and the situation of his affairs rendered even such banditti the only forces on whose fidelity he could repose any confidence.

[[1] Epist. Petri Bles. epist. 136, in Biblioth. Patr. tom. xxiv. . His words are, "Vestrae jurisdictionis est regnum Angliæ, et quantum ad feudatorii juris obligationem, vobis duntaxat obnoxius teneor." The same strange paper is in Rymer, vol. i. , and Trivet, vol. i. .]

His licentious barons, disgusted with a vigilant government, were more desirous of being ruled by young princes, ignorant of public affairs, remiss in their conduct, and profuse in their grants; and as the king had insured to his sons the succession to every particular province of his dominions, the nobles dreaded no danger in adhering to those who, they knew, must some time become their sovereigns. Prompted by these motives, many of the Norman nobility had deserted to his son Henry; the Breton and Gascon barons seemed equally disposed to embrace the quarrel of Geoffrey and Richard. Disaffection had crept in among the English; and the earls of Leicester and Chester in particular had openly declared against the king. Twenty thousand Brabançons, therefore, joined to some troops which he brought over from Ireland, and a few barons of approved fidelity, formed the sole force with which he intended to resist his enemies.

Lewis, in order to bind the confederates in a closer union, summoned at Paris an assembly of the chief vassals of the crown, received their approbation of his measures, and engaged them by oath to adhere to the cause of young Henry. This prince, in return, bound himself by a like tie never to desert his French allies; and having made a new great seal, he lavishly distributed among them many considerable parts of those territories which he purposed to conquer from his father. The counts of Flanders, Boulogne, Blois, and Eu, partly moved by the general jealousy arising from Henry's power and ambition, partly allured by the prospect of reaping advantage from the inconsiderate temper and the necessities of the young prince, declared openly in favor of the latter. William, king of Scotland, had also entered into this great confederacy; and a plan was concerted for a general invasion on different parts of the king's extensive and factious dominions.

Hostilities were first commenced by the counts of Flanders and Boulogne on the frontiers of Normandy. Those princes laid siege to Aumale, which was delivered into their hands by the treachery of the count of that name: this nobleman surrendered himself prisoner; and on pretence of thereby paying his ransom, opened the gates of all his other fortresses. The two counts next besieged and made themselves masters of Drincourt; but the count of Boulogne was here mortally wounded in the assault; and this incident put some stop to the progress of the Flemish arms.

In another quarter, the king of France, being strongly assisted by his vassals, assembled a great army of seven thousand knights and their followers on horseback, and a proportionable number of infantry; carrying young Henry along with him he laid siege to Verneuil, which was vigorously defended by Hugh de Lacy and Hugh de Beauchamp, the governors. After he had lain a month before the place, the garrison, being straitened for provisions, were obliged to capitulate; and they engaged, if not relieved within three days, to surrender the town, and to retire into the citadel. On the last of these days, Henry appeared with his army upon the heights above Verneuil. Lewis, dreading an attack, sent the archbishop of Sens and the count of Blois to the English camp, and desired that next day should be appointed for a conference, in order to establish a general peace, and terminate the difference between Henry and his sons. The king, who passionately desired this accommodation, and suspected no fraud, gave his consent; but Lewis, that morning, obliging the garrison to surrender, according to the capitulation, set fire to the place, and began to retire with his army. Henry, provoked at this artifice, attacked the rear with vigor, put them to rout, did some execution, and took several prisoners. The French army, as their time of service was now expired, immediately dispersed themselves into their several provinces, and left Henry free to prosecute his advantages against his other enemies.

The nobles of Brittany, instigated by the earl of Chester and Ralph de Fougeres, were all in arms; but their progress was checked by a body of Brabançons, which the king, after Lewis's retreat, had sent against them. The two armies came to an action near Dol, where the rebels were defeated, fifteen hundred killed on the spot, and the leaders, the earls of Chester and Fougeres, obliged to take shelter in the town of Dol. Henry hastened to form the siege of that place, and carried on the attack with such ardor, that he obliged the governor and garrison to surrender themselves prisoners. By these rigorous measures and happy successes, the insurrections were entirely quelled in Brittany; and the king, thus fortunate in all quarters, willingly agreed to a conference with Lewis, in hopes that his enemies, finding all their mighty efforts entirely frustrated, would terminate hostilities on some moderate and reasonable conditions.

The two monarchs met between Trie and Gisofs; and Henry had here the mortification to see his three sons in the retinue of his mortal enemy. As Lewis had no other pretence for war than supporting the claims of the young princes, the king made them such offers as children might be ashamed to insist on, and could be extorted from him by nothing but his parental affection, or by the present necessity of his affairs. [1] He insisted only on retaining the sovereign authority in all his dominions; but offered young Henry half the revenues of England, with some places of surety in that kingdom; or, if he rather chose to reside in Normandy, half the revenues of that duchy, with all those of Anjou. He made a like offer to Richard in Guienne; he promised to resign Brittany to Geoffrey; and if these concessions were not deemed sufficient, he agreed to add to them whatever the pope's legates, who were present, should require of him. [2] The earl of Leicester was also present at the negotiation; and either from the impetuosity of his temper, or from a view of abruptly breaking off a conference which must cover the allies with confusion, he gave vent to the most violent reproaches against Henry, and he even put his hand to his sword, as if he meant to attempt some violence against him. This furious action threw the whole company into confusion, and put an end to the treaty. [3]

The chief hopes of Henry's enemies seemed now to depend oft the state of affairs in England, where his authority was exposed to the most imminent danger. One article of Prince Henry’s agreement with his foreign confederates was, that he should resign Kent, with Dover, and all its other fortresses, into the hands of ihe earl of Flanders: [4] yet so little national or public spirit prevailed among the independent English nobility, so wholly bent were they on the aggrandizement each of himself and his own family, that, notwithstanding this pernicious concession, which must have produced the ruin of the kingdom, the greater part of them had conspired to make an insurrection, and to support the prince’s pretensions.

[1] Hoveden, .]

[2] Hoveden, . Brompton, .]

[3] Hoveden, .]

[4] Hoveden, . Brompton, . Gal. Neubr. .]

The king’s principal resource lay in the church and the bishops with whom he was now in perfect agreement; whether that the decency of their character made them ashamed of supporting so unnatural a rebellion, or that they were entirely satisfied with Henry’s atonement for the murder of Becket and for his former invasion of ecclesiastical immunities. That prince, however, had resigned none of the essential rights of his crown in the accommodation: he maintained still the same prudent jealousy of the court of Rome; admitted no legate into England, without his swearing to attempt nothing against the royal prerogatives; and he had even obliged the monks of Canterbury, who pretended to a free election on the vacancy made by the death of Becket, to choose Roger, prior of Dover, in the place of that turbulent prelate. [1]

[1] Hoveden, .]

The king of Scotland made an irruption into Northumberland, and committed great devastations; but being opposed by Richard de Lucy, whom Henry had left guardian of the realm, he retreated into his own country, and agreed to a cessation of arms. This truce enabled the guardian to march southwards with his army, in order to oppose an invasion which the earl of Leicester, at the head of a great body of Flemings, had made upon Suffolk. The Flemings had been joined by Hugh Bigod, who made them masters of his castle of Framlingham; and marching into the heart of the kingdom, where they hoped to be supported by Leicester’s vassals, they were met by Lucy, who, assisted by Humphry Bohun, the constable, and the earls of Arundel, Glocester, and Cornwall, had advanced to Farnham with a less numerous, but braver army to oppose them. The Flemings, who were mostly weavers and artificers, (for manufactures were now beginning to be established in Flanders,) were broken in an instant, ten thousand of them were put to the sword, the earl of Leicester was taken prisoner, and the remains of the invaders were glad to compound for a safe retreat into their own country.

1174.

This great defeat did not dishearten the malecontents; who, being supported by the alliance of so many foreign princes, and encouraged by the king’s own sons, determined to persevere in their enterprise. The earl of Ferrars, Roger de Moubray, Archetil de Mallory, Richard de Moreville, Hamo de Mascie, together with many friends of the earls of Leicester and Chester, rose in arms: the fidelity of the earls of Clare and Glocester was suspected; and the guardian, though vigorously supported by Geoffrey, bishop of Lincoln, the king’s natural son by the fair Rosamond, found it difficult to defend himself, on all quarters, from so many open and concealed enemies. The more to augment the confusion, the king of Scotland, on the expiration of the truce, broke into the northern provinces with a great army [1] of eighty thousand men; which, though undisciplined and disorderly, and better fitted for committing devastation, than for executing any military enterprise, was become dangerous from the present factious and turbulent spirit of the kingdom.

[1] W. Heming. .]

Henry, who had baffled all his enemies in France, and had put his frontiers in a posture of defence, now found England the seat of danger; and he determined by his presence to overawe the malecontents, or by his conduct and courage to subdue them. He lauded at Southampton; and knowing the influence of superstition over the minds of the people, he hastened to Canterbury, in order to make atonement to the ashes of Thomas à Becket, and tender his submissions to a dead enemy. As soon as he came within sight of the church of Canterbury, he dismounted walked barefoot towards it, prostrated himself before the shrine of the saint, remained in fasting and prayer during a whole day, and watched all night the holy relics. Not content with this hypocritical devotion towards a man whose violence and ingratitude had so long disquieted his government, and had been the object of his most inveterate animosity, he submitted to a penance still more singular and humiliating. He assembled a chapter of the monks, disrobed himself before them, put a scourge of discipline into the hands of each, and presented his bare shoulders to the lashes which these ecclesiastics successively inflicted upon him. Next day he received absolution; and, departing for London, got soon after the agreeable intelligence of a great victory which his generals had obtained over the Scots, and which, being gained, as was reported, on the very day of his absolution, was regarded as the earnest of his final reconciliation with Heaven and with Thomas a Becket William, king of Scots, though repulsed before the castle of Prudhow, and other fortified places, had committed the most horrible depredations upon the northern provinces; but on the approach of Ralph de Glanville, the famous justiciary, seconded by Bernard de Baliol, Robert de Stuteville, Odonel de Umfreville, William de Vesci, and other northern barons together with the gallant bishop of Lincoln, he thought proper to retreat nearer his own country, and he fixed his camp at Alnwick. He had here weakened his army extremely, by sending out numerous detachments in order to extend his ravages; and he lay absolutely safe, as he imagined, from any attack of the enemy. But Glanville, informed of his situation, made a hasty and fatiguing march to Newcastle; and allowing his soldiers only a small interval for refreshment, he immediately set out towards evening for Alnwick. He marched that night above thirty miles; arrived in the morning, under cover of a mist, near the Scottish camp; and regardless of the great numbers of the enemy, he began the attack with his small but determined body of cavalry. William was living in such supine security that he took the English at first for a body of his own ravagers who were returning to the camp; but the sight of their banners convincing him of his mistake, he entered on the action with no greater body than a hundred horse, in confidence that the numerous army which surrounded him would soon hasten to his relief. He was dismounted on the first shock, and taken prisoner; while his troops, hearing of this disaster, fled on all sides with the utmost precipitation. The dispersed ravagers made the best of their way to their own country; and discord arising among them, they proceeded even to mutual hostilities, and suffered more from each other's sword than from that of the enemy.

This great and important victory proved at last decisive in favor of Henry, and entirely broke the spirit of the English rebels. The bishop of Durham, who was preparing to revolt, made his submissions; Hugh Bigod, though he had received a strong reénforcement of Flemings, was obliged to surrender all his castles, and throw himself on the king's mercy; no better resource was left to the earl of Ferrars and Roger de Moubray; the inferior rebels imitating the example, all England was restored to tranquillity in a few weeks; and as the king appeared to be under the immediate protection of Heaven, it was deemed impious any longer to resist him. The clergy exalted anew the merits and powerful intercession of Becket; and Henry, instead of opposing this superstition, plumed himself on the new friendship of the-saint, and propagated an opinion which was so favorable to his interests. [1]

[1] Hoveden, .

Prince Henry, who was ready to embark at Gravelines with the earl of Flanders and a great army, hearing that his partisans in England were suppressed, abandoned all thoughts of the enterprise, and joined the camp of Lewis, who, during the absence of the king, had made an irruption into Normandy and had laid siege to Rouen. [1] The place was defended with great vigor by the inhabitants; [2] and Lewis, despairing of success by open force, tried to gain the town by a stratagem, which, in that superstitious age, was deemed not very honor able. He proclaimed in his own camp a cessation of arms on pretence of celebrating the festival of St. Laurence; and when the citizens, supposing themselves in safety, were so imprudent as to remit their guard, he purposed to take advantage of their security. Happily, some priests had, from mere curiosity, mounted a steeple, where the alarm bell hung; and observing the French camp in motion, they immediately rang the bell, and gave warning to the inhabitants, who ran to their several stations. The French, who, on hearing the alarm hurried to the assault, had already mounted the walls in several places; but being repulsed by the enraged citizens were obliged to retreat with considerable loss. [3] Next day, Henry, who had hastened to the defence of his Norman dominions, passed over the bridge in triumph; and entered Rouen in sight of the French army. The city was now in absolute safety; and the king, in order to brave the French, monarch, commanded the gates, which had been walled up, to be opened; and he prepared to push his advantages against the enemy. Lewis saved himself from this perilous situation by a new piece of deceit, not so justifiable. He proposed a conference for adjusting the terms of a general peace, which he knew would be greedily embraced by Henry; and while the king of England trusted to the execution of his promise, he made a retreat with his army into France.

There was, however, a necessity on both sides for an accommodation. Henry could no longer bear to see his three sons in the hands of his enemy; and Lewis dreaded lest this great monarch, victorious in all quarters, crowned with glory, and absolute master of his dominions, might take revenge for the many dangers and disquietudes which the arms, and still more the intrigues, of France had, in his disputes both with Becket and his sons, found means to raise him. After making a cessation of arms, a conference was agreed on near Tours; where Henry granted his sons much less advantageous terms than he had formerly offered; and he received their submissions. The most material of his concessions were some pensions which he stipulated to pay them, and some castles which he granted them for the place of their residence; together with an indemnity for all their adherents, who were restored to their estates and honors. [1]

Of all those who had embraced the cause of the young princes, William, king of Scotland, was the only considerable loser by that invidious and unjust enterprise. Henry delivered from confinement, without exacting any ransom, about nine hundred knights, whom he had taken prisoners; but it cost William the ancient independency of his crown as the price of his

[1] Brompton, .]

[2] Diceto, .]

[3] Brompton, Gul. Neubr. . W. Heming. p, 503]

liberty. He stipulated to do homage to Henry for Scotland and all his other possessions; he engaged that all the barons and nobility of his kingdom should also do homage; that the bishops should take an oath of fealty; that both should swear to adhere to the king of England against their native prince, if the latter should break his engagements; and that the fortresses of Edinburgh, Stirling, Berwick, Roxborough, and Jedborough should be delivered into Henry's hands, till the performance of articles. [2]

1175.

This severe and humiliating treaty was executed in its full rigor. William, being released, brought up all his barons, prelates, and abbots; and they did homage to Henry in the cathedral of York, and acknowledged him and his successors for their superior lord. [3]

[1] Rymer, vol. i. . Benedict. Abbas, . Hoveden, Diceto, . Brompton, . W. Heming. . Chron. Dunst. .]

[2] M. Paris, . Chron. Dunst. . Hoveden, . M West. . Diceto, . Brompton, . Rymer, vol i, . Liber Nig. Scac. .]

[3] Benedict Abbas, .]

The English monarch stretched still further the rigor of the conditions which he exacted. He engaged the king and states of Scotland to make a perpetual cession of the fortresses of Berwick and Roxborough, and to allow the castle of Edinburgh to remain in his hands for a limited time This was the first great ascendant which England obtained over Scotland; and indeed the first important transaction which had passed between the kingdoms. Few princes have been so fortunate as to gain considerable advantages over their weaker neighbors with less violence and injustice than was practised by Henry against the king of Scots, whom he had taken prisoner in battle, and who had wantonly engaged in a war, in which all the neighbors of that prince, and even his own family, were, without provocation, combined against him. [1]

Henry having thus, contrary to expectation, extricated himself with honor from a situation in which his throne was exposed to great danger, was employed for several years in the administration of justice, in the execution of the laws, and in guarding against those inconveniencies, which either the past convulsions of his state, or the political institutions of that age, unavoidably occasioned. The provisions which he made, show such largeness of thought as qualified him for being a legislator; and they were commonly calculated as well for the future as the present happiness of his kingdom.

1176.

He enacted severe penalties against robbery, murder, false coining, arson; and ordained that these crimes should be punished by the amputation of the right hand and right foot. [2] The pecuniary commutation for crimes, which has a false appearance of lenity, had been gradually disused; and seems to have been entirely abolished by the rigor of these statutes. The superstitious trial by water ordeal, though condemned by the church, [3] still subsisted; but Henry ordained, that any man accused of murder, or any heinous felony, by the oath of the legal knights of the county, should, even though acquitted by the ordeal, be obliged to abjure the realm. [4]

All advances towards reason and good sense are slow and gradual. Henry, though sensible of the great absurdity attending the trial by duel or battle, did not venture to abolish it: he only admitted either of the parties to challenge a trial by an assize or jury of twelve freeholders. [5]

This latter method of trial seems to have been very ancient in England, and was fixed by the laws of King Alfred: but the barbarous and violent

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[1] Some Scotch historians pretend, that William paid, besides, one hundred thousand pounds of ransom, which is quite incredible. The ransom of Richard I., who, besides England, possessed so many rich territories in France, was only one hundred and fifty thousand marks, and yet was levied with great difficulty. Indeed, two thirds of it only could be paid before his deliverance.]

[2] Benedict. Abbas, . Hoveden, .]

[3] Seldeni Spicileg. ad Eadm. ,]

[4] Benedict. Abbas, .]

genius of the age had of late given more credit to the trial by battle, which had become the general method of deciding all important controversies. It was never abolished by law in England; and there is an instance of it so late as the reign of Elizabeth: but the institution revived by this king, being found more reasonable and more suitable to a civilized people, gradually prevailed over it.

The partition of England into four divisions, and the appointment of itinerant justices to go the circuit in each division, and to decide the causes in the counties, was another important ordinance of this prince, which had a direct tendency to curb the oppressive barons, and to protect the inferior gentry and common people in their property. [1] Those justices were either prelates or considerable noblemen; who, besides carrying the authority of the king's commission, were able, by the dignity of their own character, to give weight and credit to the laws.

That there might be fewer obstacles to the execution of justice, the king was vigilant in demolishing all the new erected castles of the nobility, in England as well as in his foreign dominions; and he permitted no fortress to remain in the custody of those whom he found reason to suspect. [2]

But lest the kingdom should be weakened by this demolition of the fortresses, the king fixed an assize of arms, by which all his subjects were obliged to put themselves in a situation for defending themselves and the realm. Every man possessed of a knight's fee was ordained to have for each fee, a coat of mail, a helmet, a shield, and a lance; every free layman, possessed of goods to the value of sixteen marks, was to be armed in like manner; every one that possessed ten marks was obliged to have an iron gorget, a cap of iron, and a lance; all burgesses were to have a cap of iron, a lance, and a wambais; that is, a coat quilted with wool, tow, or such like materials. [3] It appears that archery, for which the English were afterwards so renowned, had not at this time become very common among them. The spear was the chief weapon employed in battle.

[1] Hoveden,].

[2] Benedict. Abbas, . Diceto .]

[3] Benedict, Abbas, . Annal. Waverl. p. 181.]

The clergy and the laity were, during that age, in a strange situation with regard to each other, and such as may seem totally incompatible with a civilized, and indeed with any species of government. If a clergyman were guilty of murder, he could be punished by degradation only: if he were murdered, the murderer was exposed to nothing but excommunication and ecclesiastical censures; and the crime was atoned for by penances and submission. [1] Hence the assassins of Thomas à Becket himself, though guilty of the most atrocious wickedness, and the most repugnant to the sentiments of that age, lived securely in their own houses, without being called to account by Henry himself, who was so much concerned, both in honor and interest, to punish that crime, and who professed or affected, on all occasions, the most extreme abhorrence of it. It was not till they found their presence shunned by every one as excommunicated persons, that they were induced to take a journey to Rome, to throw themselves at the feet of the pontiff, and to submit to the penances imposed upon them; after which, they continued to possess without molestation their honors and fortunes, and seem even to have recovered the countenance and good opinion of the public. But as the king, by the constitutions of Clarendon, which he endeavored still to maintain, [2] had subjected the clergy to a trial by the civil magistrate, it seemed but just to give them the protection of that power, to which they owed obedience: it was enacted, that the murderers of clergymen should be tried before the justiciary, in the presence of the bishop or his official; and besides the usual punishment for murder, should be subjected to a forfeiture of their estates, and a confiscation of their goods and chattels. [3]

[1 Petri Bles. epist. 73, apud Bibl. Patr. torn. xxiv. .]

[2 Gervase, .]

[3 Diceto, . Gervase,]

The king passed an equitable law, that the goods of a vassal should not be seized for the debt of his lord, unless the vassal be surety for the debt; and that the rents of vassals should be paid to the creditors of the lord, not to the lord himself. It is remarkable, that this law was enacted by the king in a council which he held at Verneuil, and which consisted of some prelates and barons of England, as well as some of Normandy, Poictou, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Brittany and the statute took place in all these last-mentioned territories, [1] though totally unconnected with each other; [2] a certain proof how irregular the ancient feudal government was, and how near the sovereigns, in some instances, approached to despotism, though in others they seemed scarcely to possess any authority. If a prince, much dreaded and revered like Henry, obtained but the appearance of general consent to an ordinance which was equitable and just, it became immediately an established law, and all his subjects acquiesced in it, If the prince was hated or despised; if the nobles, who supported him, had small influence; if the humors of the times disposed the people to question the justice of his ordinance; the fullest and most authentic assembly had no authority. Thus all was confusion and disorder; no regular idea of a constitution; force and violence decided every thing.

The success which had attended Henry in his wars, did not much encourage his neighbors to form any attempt against him; and his transactions with them, during several years, contain little memorable. Scotland remained in that state of feudal subjection to which he had reduced it, and gave him no further inquietude. He sent over his fourth son, John, into Ireland, with a view of making a more complete conquest of the island; but the petulance and incapacity of this prince, by which he enraged the Irish chieftains, obliged the king soon after to recall him. [3]

[1] Benedict. Abbas, . It was usual for the kings of England, after the conquest of Ireland, to summon barons and members of thai country to the English parliament. Molineux's case of Ireland, , 65, 66.]

[2] Spelman even doubts whether the law were not also extended to England. If it were not, it could only be because Henry did not choose it; for his authority was greater in that kingdom than in his transmarine dominions.]

[3] Benedict. Abbas, , etc.]

The king of France had fallen into an abject superstition; and was induced, by a devotion more sincere than that of Henry, to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Becket, in order to obtain his intercession for the cure of Philip, his eldest son. He probably thought himself well entitled to the favor of that saint, on account of their ancient intimacy; and hoped that Becket, whom he had protected while on earth, would not now, when he was so highly exalted in heaven, forget his old friend and benefactor. The monks, sensible that their saint’s honor was concerned in the case, failed not to publish that Lewis’s prayers were answered, and that the young prince was restored to health by Becket’s intercession. That king himself was soon after struck with an apoplexy, which deprived him of his understanding: Philip though a youth of fifteen, took on him the administration, till his father’s death, which happened soon after,

1180.

opened his way to the throne; and he proved the ablest and greatest monarch that had governed that kingdom since the age of Charlemagne. The superior years, however, and experience of Henry, while they moderated his ambition, gave him such an ascendant over this prince, that no dangerous rivalship for a long time arose between them. The English monarch, instead of taking advantage of his own situation, rather employed his good offices in composing the quarrels which arose in the royal family of France; and he was successful in mediating a reconciliation between Philip and his mother and uncles. These services were but ill requited by Philip, who, when he came to man’s estate, fomented all the domestic discords in the royal family of England, and encouraged Henry’s sons in their ungrateful and undutiful behavior towards him. Prince Henry, equally impatient of obtaining power, and incapable of using it, renewed to the king the demand of his resigning Normandy; and on meeting with a refusal, he fled with his consort to the court of France: but not finding Philip at that time disposed to enter into war for his sake, he accepted of his father’s offers of reconciliation, and made him submissions. It was a cruel circumstance in the king’s fortune, that he could hope for no tranquillity from the criminal enterprises of his sons but by their mutual discord and animosities, which disturbed his family and threw his state into convulsions. Richard, whom he had made master of Guienne, and who had displayed his valor and military genius by suppressing the revolts of his mutinous barons refused to obey Henry’s orders, in doing homage to his elder brother for that duchy; and he defended himself against young Henry and Geoffrey, who, uniting their arms, carried war into his territories. [2]

[1] Ypod. Neust. .]

[2] Benedict. Abbas, p 383. Diceto, p.617.]

The king with some difficulty composed this difference; but immediately found his eldest son engaged in conspiracies, and ready to take arms against himself. While the young prince was conducting these criminal intrigues, he was seized with a fever at Martel,

1183.

a castle near Turenne to which he had retired in discontent; and seeing the approaches of death, he was at last struck with remorse for his undutiful behavior towards his father. He sent a message to the king, who was not far distant; expressed his contrition for his faults; and entreated the favor of a visit, that he might at least die with the satisfaction of having obtained his forgiveness. Henry, who had so often experienced the prince's ingratitude and violence, apprehended that his sickness was entirely feigned, and he durst not intrust himself into his son's hands: but when he soon after received intelligence of young Henry's death, and the proofs, of his sincere repentance, this good prince was affected with the deepest sorrow; he thrice fainted away; he accused his own hard hearted ness in refusing the dying request of his son; and he lamented that he had deprived that prince of the last opportunity of making atonement for his offences, and of pouring out his soul in the bosom of his reconciled father. [1] This prince died in the twenty-eighth year of his age.

The behavior of his surviving children did not tend to give the king any consolation for the loss. As Prince Henry had left no posterity, Richard was become heir to all his dominions; and the king intended that John, his third surviving son and favorite, should inherit Guienne as his appanage; but Richard refused his consent, fled into that duchy, and even made preparations for carrying on war, as well against his father as against his brother Geoffrey, who was now put in possession of Brittany. Henry sent for Eleanor, his queen, the heiress of Guienne, and required Richard to deliver up to her the dominion of these territories; which that prince, either dreading an insurrection of the Gascons in her favor, or retaining some sense of duty towards her, readily performed; and he peaceably returned to his father's court. No sooner was this quarrel accommodated, than Geoffrey, the most vicious perhaps of all Henry's unhappy family, broke out into violence; demanded Anjou to be annexed to his dominions of Brittany; and on meeting with a refusal, fled to the court of France, and levied forces against his father. [2]

1185.

Henry was freed from this danger by his son's death who was killed in a tournament at Paris. [3]

[1] Benedict. Abbas, . Hoveden, . Trivet, vol. i. ,]

[2] Gul. Neubr. .]

[3] Benedict. Abbas, . Gervase, .]

The widow of Geoffrey, soon after his decease, was delivered of a son who received the name of Arthur, and was invested in the duchy of Brittany, under the guardianship of his grandfather, who, is duke of Normandy, was also superior lord of that territory. Philip, as lord paramount, disputed some time his title to this wardship; but was obliged to yield to the inclinations of the Bretons, who preferred the government of Henry.

But the rivalship between these potent princes, and all their inferior interests, seemed now to have given place to the general passion for the relief of the Holy Land and the expulsion of the Saracens. Those infidels, though obliged to yield to the immense inundation of Christians in the first crusade, had recovered courage after the torrent was past; and attacking on all quarters the settlements of the Europeans, had Deduced these adventurers to great difficulties, and obliged them to apply again for succors from the west. A second crusade, under the emperor Conrade, and Lewis VII., king of France, in which there perished above two hundred thousand men, brought them but a temporary relief; and those princes, after losing such immense armies, and seeing the flower of their nobility fall by their side, returned with little honor into Europe. But these repeated misfortunes, which drained the western world of its people and treasure, were not yet sufficient to cure men of their passion for those spiritual adventures; and a new incident rekindled with fresh fury the zeal of the ecclesiastics and military adventurers among the Latin Christians. Saladin, a prince of great generosity, bravery, and conduct, having fixed himself on the throne of Egypt, began to extend his conquests over the East; and finding the settlement of the Christians in Palestine an invincible obstacle to the progress of his arms, he bent the whole force of his policy and valor to subdue that small and barren, but important territory. Taking advantage of dissensions which prevailed among the champions of the cross, and having secretly gained the count of Tripoli, who commanded their armies, he invaded the frontiers with a mighty power and, aided by the treachery of that count, gained over them at Tiberiade a complete victory, which utterly annihilated the force of the already languishing kingdom of Jerusalem

1187.

The holy city itself fell into his hands after a feeble resistance; the kingdom of Antioch was almost entirely subdued and except some maritime towns, nothing considerable remained of thope boasted conquests, which, near a century before, it had cost the efforts of all Europe to acquire.

The western Christians were astonished on receiving this dismal intelligence. Pope Urban III., it is pretended, died of grief; and his successor, Gregory VIII., employed the whole time of his short pontificate in rousing to arms all the Christians who acknowledged his authority. The general cry was, that they were unworthy of enjoying any inheritance in heaven, who did not vindicate from the dominion of the infidels the inheritance of God on earth, and deliver from slavery that country which had been consecrated by the foot-steps of their Redeemer.

1188.

William, archbishop of Tyre, having procured a conference between Henry and Philip near Gisors, enforced all these topics; gave a pathetic description of the miserable state of the eastern Christians; and employed every argument to excite the ruling passions of the age, superstition, and jealousy of military honor. The two monarchs immediately took the cross; many of their most considerable vassals imitated the example; and as the emperor Frederic I. entered into the same confederacy, some well-grounded hopes of success were entertained; and men flattered themselves that an enterprise, which had failed under the conduct of many independent leaders, or of imprudent princes, might at last, by the efforts of such potent and able monarchs, be brought to a happy issue.

The kings of France and England imposed a tax, amounting to the tenth of all movable goods, on such as remained at home; but as they exempted from this burden most of the regular clergy, the secular aspired to the same immunity; pretended that their duty obliged them to assist the crusade with their prayers alone; and it was with some difficulty they were constrained to desist from an opposition, which in them who had been the chief promoters of those pious enterprises, appeared with the worst grace imaginable. This backwardness of the clergy is perhaps a symptom that the enthusiastic ardor which had at first seized the people for crusades, was now by time and ill success considerably abated; and that the frenzy was chiefly supported by the military genius and love of glory in the monarchs.

But before this great machine could be put in motion, there were still many obstacles to surmount. Philip, jealous of Henry’s power, entered into a private confederacy with young Richard; and working on his ambitious and impatient temper, persuaded him, instead of supporting and aggrandizing that monarchy which he was one day to inherit, to seek present power and independence by disturbing and dismembering it.

1189.

In order to give a pretence for hostilities between the two kings, Richard broke into the territories of Raymond, count of Toulouse, who immediately carried complaints of this violence before the king of France, as his superior lord. Philip remonstrated with Henry; but received for answer, that Richard had confessed to the archbishop of Dublin, that his enterprise against Raymond had been undertaken by the approbation of Philip himself, and was conducted by his authority. The king of France, who might have been covered with shame and confusion by this detection, still prosecuted his design, and invaded the provinces of Berri and Auvergne, under color of revenging the quarrel of the count of Toulouse. Henry retaliated by making inroads upon the frontiers of France and burning Dreux. As this war, which destroyed all hopes of success in the projected crusade, gave great scandal, the two kings held a conference at the accustomed place between Gisors and Trie, in order to find means of accommodating their differences; they separated on worse terms than before; and Philip, to show his disgust, ordered a great elm, under which the conferences had been usually held, to be cut down; as if he had renounced all desire of accommodation, and was determined to carry the war to extremities against the king of England. But his own vassals refused to serve under him in so invidious a cause; and he was obliged to come anew to a conference with Henry, and to offer terms of peace. These terms were such as entirely opened the eyes of the king of England, and fully convinced him of the perfidy of his son, and his secret alliance with Philip, of which he had before only entertained some suspicion. The king of France required that Richard should be crowned king of England in the lifetime of his father, should be invested in all his transmarine dominions, and should immediately espouse Alice, Philip's sister, to whom he had been formerly affianced, and who had already been conducted into England. Henry had experienced such fatal effects, both from the crowning of his eldest son, and from that prince's alliance with the royal family of France, that he rejected these terms; and Richard, in consequence of his secret agreement with Philip, immediately revolted from him, did homage to the king of France for all the dominions which Henry held of that crown, and received the investitures, as if he had already been the lawful possessor. Several historians assert, that Henry himself had become enamored of young Alice, and mention this as an additional reason for his refusing these conditions; but he had so many other just and equitable motives for his conduct, that it is superfluous to assign a cause, which the great prudence and advanced age of that monarch render somewhat improbable.

Cardinal Albano, the pope's legate, displeased with these increasing obstacles to the crusade, excommunicated Richard, as the chief spring of discord; but the sentence of excommunication, which, when it was properly prepared and was zealously supported by the clergy, had often great influence in that age, proved entirely ineffectual in the present case. The chief barons of Poictou, Guienne, Normandy, and Anjou, being attached to the young prince, and finding that he had now received the investiture from their superior lord, declared for him, and made inroads into the territories of such as still adhered to the king. Henry, disquieted by the daily revolts of his mutinous subjects, and dreading still worse effects from their turbulent disposition, had again recourse to papal authority; and engaged the cardinal Anagni, who had succeeded Albano in the legateship, to threaten Philip with laying an interdict on all his dominions. But Philip, who was a prince of great vigor and capacity, despised the menace, and told Anagni, that it belonged not to the pope to interpose in the temporal disputes of princes, much less in those between him and his rebellious vassal. He even proceeded so far as to reproach him with partiality, and with receiving bribes from the king of England; while Richard, still more outrageous, offered to draw his sword against the legate, and was hindered by the interposition alone of the company, from committing violence upon him.

The king of England was now obliged to defend his dominions by arms, and to engage in a war with France and with his eldest son, a prince of great valor, on such disadvantageous terms. Ferte-Bernard fell first into the hands of the enemy; Mans was next taken by assault; and Henry, who had thrown himself into that place, escaped with some difficulty; Amboise, Chaumont, and Château de Loire, opened their gates on the appearance of Philip and Richard: Tours was menaced; and the king, who had retired to Saumur, and had daily instances of the cowardice or infidelity of his governors, expected the most dismal issue to all his enterprises. While he was in this state of despondency, the duke of Burgundy, the earl of Flanders, and the archbishop of Rheims interposed with their good offices; and the intelligence which he received of the taking of Tours, and which made him fully sensible of the desperate situation of his affairs, so subdued his spirit, that he submitted to all the rigorous terms which, were imposed upon him. He agreed that Richard should marry the princess Alice; that that prince should receive the homage and oath of fealty of all his subjects both in England and his transmarine dominions; that he himself should pay twenty thousand marks to the king of France, as a compensation for the charges of the war; that his own barons should engage to make him observe this treaty by force, and in case of his violating it should promise to join Philip and Richard against him; and that all his vassals, who had entered into confederacy with Richard, should receive an indemnity for the offence.

But the mortification which Henry, who had been accustomed to give the law in most treaties, received from these disadvantageous terms, was the least that he met with on this occasion. When he demanded a list of those barons to whom he was bound to grant a pardon for their connections with Richard, he was astonished to find, at the head of them, the name of his second son, John; who had always been his favorite, whose interests he had ever anxiously at heart, and who had even, on account of his ascendant over him, often excited the jealousy of Richard. The unhappy father, already overloaded with cares and sorrows, finding this last disappointment in his domestic tenderness, broke out into expressions of the utmost despair, cursed the day in which he received his miserable being, and bestowed on his ungrateful and undutiful children a malediction which he never could be prevailed on to retract. The more his heart was disposed to friendship and affection, the more he resented the barbarous return which his four sons had successively made to his parental care; and this finishing blow, by depriving him of every comfort in life, quite broke his spirit, and threw him into a lingering fever, of which he expired, at the castle of Chinon, near Saumur. His natural son, Geoffrey, who alone had behaved dutifully towards him, attended his corpse to the nunnery of Fontervrault; where it lay in state in the abbey church. Next day, Richard, who came to visit the dead body of his father, and who, notwithstanding his criminal conduct, was not wholly destitute of generosity, was struck with horror and remorse at the sight; and as the attendants observed that, at that very instant, blood gushed from the mouth and nostrils of the corpse, he exclaimed, agreeably to a vulgar superstition, that he was his father’s murderer; and he expressed a deep sense, though too late, of that undutiful behavior which had brought his parent to an untimely grave.

Thus died, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and thirty-fifth of his reign, the greatest prince of his time for wisdom, virtue, and abilities, and the most powerful in the extent of dominion of all those that had ever filled the throne of England. His character in private, as well as in public life, is almost without a blemish; and he seems to have possessed every accomplishment, both of body and mind, which makes a man either estimable or amiable. He was of a middle stature, strong and well proportioned; his countenance was lively and engaging; his conversation affable and entertaining; his elocution easy, persuasive, and ever at command. He loved peace, but possessed both bravery and conduct in war; was provident without timidity; severe in the execution of justice without rigor; and temperate without austerity. He preserved health, and kept himself from corpulency, to which he was somewhat inclined, by an abstemious diet, and by frequent exercise, particularly hunting. When he could enjoy leisure, he recreated himself either in learned conversation or in reading; and he cultivated his natural talents by study above any prince of his time. His affections, as well as his enmities, were warm and durable; and his long experience of the ingratitude and infidelity of men never destroyed the natural sensibility of his temper, which disposed him to friendship and society. His character has been transmitted to us by several writers, who were his contemporaries; and it extremely resembles, in its most remarkable features, that of his maternal grandfather, Henry I.; excepting only, that ambition, which was a ruling passion in both, found not in the first Henry such unexceptionable means of exerting itself, and pushed that prince into measures which were both criminal in themselves, and were the cause of further crimes, from which his grandson's conduct was happily exempted.

This prince, like most of his predecessors of the Norman line, except Stephen, passed more of his time on the continent than in this island: he was surrounded with the English gentry and nobility when abroad: the French gentry and nobility attended him when he resided in England: both nations acted in the government as if they were the same people; and, on many occasions, the legislatures seem not to have been distinguished. As the king and all the English barons were of French extraction, the manners of that people acquired the ascendant, and were regarded as the models of imitation. All foreign improvements, therefore, such as they were, in literature and politeness, in laws and arts, seem now to have been, in a good measure, transplanted into England and that kingdom was become little inferior, in all the fashionable accomplishments, to any of its neighbors on the continent. The more homely but more sensible manners and principles of the Saxons, were exchanged for the affectations of chivalry, and the subtilties of school philosophy: the feudal ideas of civil government, the Romish sentiments in religion, had taken entire possession of the people: by the former, the sense of submission towards princes was somewhat diminished in the barons; by the latter, the devoted attachment to papal authority was much augmented among the clergy. The Norman and other foreign families established in England, had now struck deep root; and being entirely incorporated with the people, whom at first they oppressed and despised, they no longer thought that they needed the protection of the crown for the enjoyment of their possessions, or considered their tenure as precarious. They aspired to the same liberty and independence which they saw enjoyed by their brethren on the continent, and desired to restrain those exorbitant prerogatives and arbitrary practices, which the necessities of war and the violence of conquest had at first obliged them to indulge in their monarch. That memory also of a more equal government under the Saxon princes, which remained with the English, diffused still further the spirit of liberty, and made the barons both desirous of more independence to themselves and willing to indulge it to the people. And it was not long ere this secret revolution in the sentiments of men produced, first violent convulsions in the state, then an evident alteration in the maxims of government.

The history of all the preceding kings of England since the conquest, gives evident proofs of the disorders attending the feudal institutions; the licentiousness of the barons, their spirit of rebellion against the prince and laws, and of animosity against each other: the conduct of the barons in the transmarine dominions of those monarchs, afforded perhaps still more flagrant instances of these convulsions; and the history of France, during several ages, consists almost entirely of narrations of this nature. The cities, during the continuance of this violent government, could neither be very numerous nor populous; and there occur instances which seem to evince that, though these are always the first seat of law and liberty, their police was in general loose and irregular, and exposed to the same disorders with those by which the country was generally infested. It was a custom in London for great numbers, to the amount of a hundred or more, the sons and relations of considerable citizens, to form themselves into a licentious confederacy, to break into rich houses and plunder them, to rob and murder the passengers, and to commit with impunity all sorts of disorder. By these crimes it had become so dangerous to walk the streets by night, that the citizens durst no more venture abroad after sunset, than if they had been exposed to the incursions of a public enemy. The brother of the earl of Ferrars had been murdered by some of those nocturnal rioters; and the death of so eminent a person, which was much more regarded than that of many thousands of an inferior station, so provoked the king, that he swore vengeance against the criminals, and became thenceforth more rigorous in the execution of the laws.

There is another instance given by historians, which proves to what a height such riots had proceeded, and how open these criminals were in committing their robberies. A band of them had attacked the house of a rich citizen, with an intention of plundering it; had broken through a stone wall with hammers and wedges; and had already entered the house sword in hand, when the citizen, armed cap-á-pie, and supported by his faithful servants, appeared in the passage to oppose them: he cut off the right hand of the first robber that entered, and made such stout resistance that his neighbors had leisure to assemble and come to his relief. The man who lost his hand was taken; and was tempted by the promise of pardon to reveal his confederates; among whom was one John Senex, esteemed among the richest and best-born citizens in London. He was convicted by the ordeal; and though he offered five hundred marks for his life, the king refused the money, and ordered him to be hanged. It appears, from a statute of Edward I., that these disorders were not remedied even in that reign. It was then made penal to go out at night after the hour of the curfew, to carry a weapon, or to walk without a light or lantern. It is said in the preamble to this law, that both by night and by day there were continual frays in the streets of London.

Henry’s care in administering justice had gained him so great a reputation, that even foreign and distant princes made him arbiter, and submitted their differences to his judgment. Sanchez, king of Navarre, having some controversies with Alphonso, king of Castile, was contented, though Alphonso had married the daughter of Henry, to choose this prince for a referee; and they agreed each of them to consign three castles into neutral hands, as a pledge of their not departing from his award. Henry made the cause be examined before his great council, and gave a sentence, which was submitted to by both parties. These two Spanish kings sent each a stout champion to the court of England, in order to defend his cause by arms, in case the way of duel had been chosen by Henry.

Henry so far abolished the barbarous and absurd practice of confiscating ships which had been wrecked on the coast, that he ordained if one man or animal were alive in the ship that the vessel and goods should be restored to the owners.

The reign of Henry was remarkable also for an innovation which was afterwards carried further by his successors, and was attended with the most important consequences. This prince was disgusted with the species of military force which was established by the feudal institutions, and which, though it was extremely burdensome to the subject, yet rendered very little service to the sovereign. The barons, or military tenants, came late into the field; they were obliged to serve only forty days; they were unskilful and disorderly in all their operations; and they were apt to carry into the camp the same refractory and independent spirit to which they were accustomed in their civil government. Henry, therefore, introduced the practice of making a commutation of their military service for money; and he levied scutages from his baronies and knights’ fees, instead of requiring the personal attendance of his vassals. There is mention made, in the history of the exchequer, of these scutages in his second, fifth, and eighteenth year; and other writers give us an account of three more of them. [1] When the prince had thus obtained money, he made a contract with some of those adventurers in which Europe at that time abounded; they found him soldiers of the same character with themselves, who were bound to serve for a stipulated time: the armies were less numerous, but more useful, than when composed of all the military vassals of the crown: the feudal institutions began to relax: the kings became rapacious for money, on which all their power depended: the barons, seeing no end of exactions, sought to defend their property, and as the same causes had nearly the same effects in the different countries of Europe, the several crowns either lost or acquired authority, according to their different success in the contest.

This prince was also the first that levied a tax on the movables or personal estates of his subjects, nobles as well as commons. Their zeal for the holy wars made them submit to this innovation; and a precedent being once obtained, this taxation became, in following reigns, the usual method of supplying the necessities of the crown. The tax of danegelt, so generally odious to the nation, was remitted in this reign.

[1 Tyrrel, vol. ii. , from the records. It was a usual practice of the kings of England to repeat the ceremony of their coronation thrice every year, on assembling the states at the three great festivals. Henry, after the first years of his reign, never renewed this ceremony, which was found to be very expensive and very useless. None of his successors revived it. It is considered as a great act of grace in this prince, that he mitigated the rigor of the forest laws, and punished any transgressions of them, not capitally, but by fines, imprisonments, and other moderate penalties.]

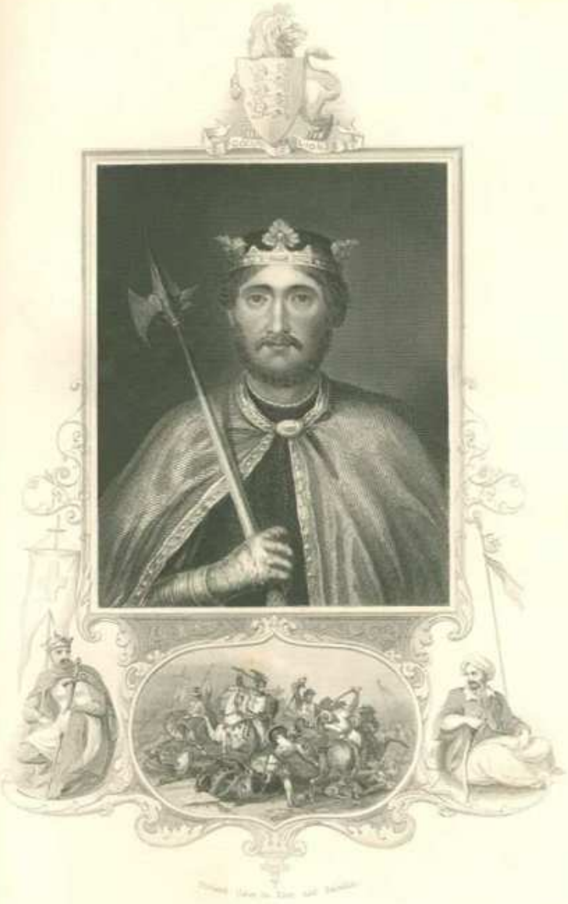
Since we are here collecting some detached incidents, which show the genius of the age, and which could not so well enter into the body of our history, it may not be improper to mention the quarrel between Roger, archbishop of York, and Richard, archbishop of Canterbury. We may judge of the violence of military men and laymen, when ecclesiastics could proceed to such extremities. Cardinal Haguezun, being sent, in 1176, as legate into Britain, summoned an assembly of the clergy at London; and, as both the archbishops pretended to sit on his right hand, this question of precedency begat a controversy between them. The monks and retainers of Archbishop Richard fell upon Roger, in the presence of the cardinal and of the synod, threw him to the ground, trampled him under foot, and so bruised him with blows, that he was taken up half dead, and his life was with difficulty saved from their violence. The archbishop of Canterbury was obliged to pay a large sum of money to the legate, in order to suppress all complaints with regard to this enormity.

We are told by Giraldus Cambrensis, that the monks and prior of St. Swithun threw themselves one day prostrate on the ground and in the mire before Henry, complaining, with many tears and much doleful lamentation, that the bishop of Winchester, who was also their abbot, had cut off three dishes from their table. “How many has he left you?” said the king. “Ten only,” replied the disconsolate monks. “I myself,” exclaimed the king, “never have more than three; and I enjoin your bishop to reduce you to the same number.”

This king left only two legitimate sons, Richard, who succeeded him, and John, who inherited no territory, though his father had often intended to leave him a part of his extensive dominions. He was thence commonly denominated Lackland. Henry left three legitimate daughters; Maud, born in 1156, and married to Henry, duke of Saxony; Eleanor, born in 1162, and married to Alphonso, king of Castile: Joan, born in 1165, and married to William, king of Sicily.

Henry is said by ancient historians to have been of a very amorous disposition; they mention two of his natural sons by Rosamond, daughter of Lord Clifford; namely, Richard Longespée, or Longsword, (so called from the sword he usually wore,) who was afterwards married to Ela, the daughter and heir of the earl of Salisbury; and Geoffrey, first bishop of Lincoln, then archbishop of York. All the other circumstances of the story commonly told of that lady seem to be fabulous.

CHAPTER X.



RICHARD I.

From the Statue on his Monument at Fontevrault.

RICHARD I.

1189.

The compunction of Richard, for his undutiful behavior towards his father, was durable, and influenced him in the choice of his ministers and servants after his accession. Those who had seconded and favored his rebellion, instead of meeting with that trust and honor which they expected, were surprised to find that they lay under disgrace with the new king, and were on all occasions hated and despised by him. The faithful ministers of Henry, who had vigorously opposed all the enterprises of his sons, were received with open arms, and were continued in those offices which they had honorably discharged to their former master. This prudent conduct might be the result of reflection; but in a prince like Richard, so much guided by passion, and so little by policy, it was commonly ascribed to a principle still more virtuous and more honorable.

Richard, that he might make atonement to one parent for his breach of duty to the other, immediately sent orders for releasing the queen dowager from the confinement in which she had long been detained; and he intrusted her with the government of England, till his arrival in that kingdom. His bounty to his brother John was rather profuse and imprudent. Besides bestowing on him the county of Mortaigne, in Normandy, granting him a pension of four thousand marks a year, and marrying him to Avisa, the daughter of the earl of Glocester, by whom he inherited all the possessions of that opulent family, he increased this appanage, which the late king had destined him, by other extensive grants and concessions. He conferred on him the whole estate of William Peverell, which had escheated to the crown: he put him in possession of eight castles, with all the forests and honors annexed to them: he delivered over to him no less than six earldoms, Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Nottingham, Dorset, Lancaster and Derby. And endeavoring, by favors, to fix that vicious prince in his duty, he put it too much in his power, whenever he pleased, to depart from it.

The king, impelled more by the love of military glory than by superstition, acted, from the beginning of his reign, as if the sole purpose of his government had been the relief of the Holy Land, and the recovery of Jerusalem from the Saracens. This zeal against infidels, being communicated to his subjects, broke out in London on the day of his coronation, and made them find a crusade less dangerous and attended with more immediate profit. The prejudices of the age had made the lending of money on interest pass by the invidious name of usury: yet the necessity of the practice had still continued it, and the greater part of that kind of dealing fell every where into the hands of the Jews, who, being already infamous on account of their religion, had no honor to lose, and were apt to exercise a profession, odious in itself, by every kind of rigor, and even sometimes by rapine and extortion. The industry and frugality of this people had put them in possession of all the ready money which the idleness and profusion common to the English with other European nations, enabled them to lend at exorbitant and unequal interest. The monkish writers represent it as a great stain on the wise and equitable government of Henry, that he had carefully protected this infidel race from all injuries and insults; but the zeal of Richard afforded the populace a pretence for venting their animosity against them. The king had issued an edict, prohibiting their appearance at his coronation; but some of them, bringing him large presents from their nation, presumed, in confidence of that merit, to approach the hall in which he dined: being discovered, they were exposed to the insults of the bystanders; they took to flight; the people pursued them; the rumor was spread that the king had issued orders to massacre all the Jews; a command so agreeable was executed in an instant on such as fell into the hands of the populace; those who had kept at home were exposed to equal danger; the people, moved by rapacity and zeal, broke into their houses which they plundered, after having murdered the owners; where the Jews barricadoed their doors, and defended themselves with vigor, the rabble set fire to their houses and made way through the flames to exercise the pillage and violence; the usual licentiousness of London, which the sovereign power with difficulty restrained, broke out with fury, and continued these outrages; the houses of the richest citizens, though Christians, were next attacked and plundered; and weariness and satiety at last put an end to the disorder: yet when the king empowered Glanville, the justiciary, to inquire into the authors of these crimes, the guilt was found to involve so many of the most considerable citizens, that it was deemed more prudent to drop the prosecution; and very few suffered the punishment due to this enormity. But the disorder stopped not at London. The inhabitants of the other cities of England, hearing of this slaughter of the Jews, imitated the example: in York five hundred of that nation, who had retired into the castle for safety, and found themselves unable to defend the place, murdered their own wives and children, threw the dead bodies over the walls upon the populace, and then setting fire to the houses, perished in the flames. The gentry of the neighborhood, who were all indebted to the Jews, ran to the cathedral, where their bonds were kept, and made a solemn bonfire of the papers before the altar. The compiler of the Annals of Waverley, in relating these events, blesses the Almighty for thus delivering over this impious race to destruction.

The ancient situation of England, when the people possessed little riches and the public no credit, made it impossible for sovereigns to bear the expense of a steady or durable war, even on their frontiers; much less could they find regular means for the support of distant expeditions like those into Palestine, which were more the result of popular frenzy than of sober reason or deliberate policy. Richard therefore knew that he must carry with him all the treasure necessary for his enterprise, and that both the remoteness of his own country and its poverty, made it unable to furnish him with those continued supplies, which the exigencies of so perilous a war must necessarily require. His father had left him a treasure of above a hundred thousand marks; and the king, negligent of every consideration but his present object, endeavored to augment his sum by all expedients, how pernicious soever ta the public, or dangerous to royal authority. He put to sale the revenues and manors of the crown; the offices of greatest trust and power, even those of forester and sheriff, which anciently were so important, [1] became venal; the dignity of chief justiciary, in whose hands was lodged the whole execution of the laws, was sold to Hugh de Puzas, bishop of Durham, for a thousand marks; the same prelate bought the earldom of Northumberland for life; [2] many of the champions of the cross, who had repented of their vow, purchased the liberty of violating it; and Richard, who stood less in need of men than of money, dispensed, on these conditions, with their attendance. Elated with the hopes of fame, which in that age attended no wars but those against the infidels, he was blind to every other consideration; and when some of his wiser ministers objected to this dissipation of the revenue and power of the crown, he replied, that he would sell London itself could he find a purchaser. [3] Nothing indeed could be a stronger proof how negligent he was of all future interests in comparison of the crusade, than his selling, for so small a sum as ten thousand marks, the vassalage of Scotland, together with the fortresses of Roxborough and Berwick, the greatest acquisition that had been made by his father during the course of his victorious reign; and his accepting the homage of William in the usual terms, merely for the territories which that prince held in England. [4] The English of all ranks and stations were oppressed by numerous exactions: menaces were employed both against the innocent and the guilty, in order to extort money from them; and where a pretence was wanting against the rich, the king obliged them, by the fear of his displeasure, to lend him sums which he knew it would never be in his power to repay.

[1] The sheriff had anciently both the administration of justice and the management of the king’s revenue committed to him in the county. See Hale, of Sheriffs’ Accounts.]

[2] M. Paris, .]

[3] W. Hemming, . Knyghton, .]

[4] Hoveden, . Rymer, vol. i. . M. West. .]

But Richard, though he sacrificed every interest and consideration to the success of this pious enterprise, carried so little the appearance of sanctity in his conduct, that Fulk curate of Neuilly, a zealous preacher of the crusade, who from that merit had acquired the privilege of speaking the boldest truths, advised him to rid himself of his notorious vices, particularly his pride, avarice, and voluptuousness, which he called the king’s three favorite daughters. “You counsel well,” replied Richard; “and I hereby dispose of the first to the Templars, of the second to the Benedictines, and of the third to my prelates.”

Richard, jealous of attempts which might be made on England during his absence, laid Prince John, as well as his natural brother Geoffrey, archbishop of York, under engagements, confirmed by their oaths, that neither of them should enter the kingdom till his return; though he thought proper, before his departure, to withdraw this prohibition. The administration was left in the hands of Hugh, bishop of Durham, and of Longchamp, bishop of Ely, whom he appointed justiciaries and guardians of the realm. The latter was a Frenchman of mean birth, and of a violent character; who by art and address had insinuated himself into favor, whom Richard had created chancellor, and whom he had engaged the pope also to invest with the legantine authority, that, by centring every kind of power in his person, he might the better insure the public tranquillity. All the military and turbulent spirits flocked about the person of the king, and were impatient to distinguish themselves against the infidels in Asia; whither his inclinations, his engagements, led him, and whither he was impelled by messages from the king of France, ready to embark in this enterprise.

The emperor Frederic, a prince of great spirit and conduct, had already taken the road to Palestine, at the head of one hundred and fifty thousand men, collected from Germany and all the northern states. Having surmounted every obstacle thrown in his way by the artifices of the Greeks and the power of the infidels, he had penetrated to the borders of Syria; when, bathing in the cold river Cydnus, during the greatest heat of the summer season, he was seized with a mortal distemper, which put an end to his life and his rash enterprise. [1]

[1] Benedict. Abbas, .]

His army, under the command of his son Conrade, reached Palestine; but was so diminished by fatigue famine, maladies, and the sword, that it scarcely amounted to eight thousand men, and was unable to make any progress against the great power, valor, and conduct of Saladin. These reiterated calamities attending the crusades, had taught the kings of France and England the necessity of trying another road to the Holy Land and they determined to conduct their armies thither by sea, to carry provisions along with them, and by means of their naval power to maintain an open communication with then own states, and with the western parts of Europe. The place of rendezvous was appointed in the plains of Vezelay, on the borders of Burgundy. [1]

1190.

Philip and Richard, on their arrival there, found their combined army amount to one hundred thousand men; [2] a mighty force, animated with glory and religion, conducted by two warlike monarchs, provided with every thing which their several dominions couid supply, and not to be overcome but by their own misconduct, or by the unsurmountable obstacles of nature.

[1] Hoveden, .]

[2] Vinisnuf,]

The French prince and the English here reiterated their promises of cordial friendship, pledged their faith not to invade each other's dominions during the crusade, mutually exchanged the oaths of all their barons and prelates to the same effect, and subjected themselves to the penalty of interdicts and excommunications, if they should ever violate this public and solemn engagement. They then separated; Philip took the road to Genoa, Richard that to Marseilles, with a view of meeting their fleets, which were severally appointed to rendezvous in these harbors. They put to sea; and nearly about the same time were obliged, by stress of weather, to take shelter in Messina, where they were detained during the whole winter. This incident laid the foundation of animosities which proved fatal to their enterprise.

Richard and Philip were, by the situation and extent of their dominions, rivals in power; by their age and inclinations, competitors for glory; and these causes of emulation, which, had the princes been employed in the field against the common enemy, might have stimulated them to martial enterprises, soon excited, during the present leisure and repose, quarrels between monarchs of such a fiery character. Equally haughty, ambitious, intrepid, and inflexible, they were irritated with the least appearance of injury, and were incapable, by mutual condescensions, to efface those causes of complaint which unavoidably rose between them. Richard, candid, sincere, undesigning, impolitic, violent, laid himself open on every occasion to the designs of his antagonist; who, provident, interested, intriguing, failed not to take all advantages against him: and thus, both the circumstances of their disposition in which they were similar, and those in which they differed, rendered it impossible for them to persevere in that harmony which was so necessary to the success of their undertaking.

The last king of Sicily and Naples was William II., who had married Joan, sister to Richard, and who, dying without issue, had bequeathed his dominions to his paternal aunt Constantia, the only legitimate descendant surviving of Roger the first sovereign of those states who had been honored with the royal title. This princess had, in expectation of that rich inheritance, been married to Henry VI., the reigning emperor; [1] but Tancred, her natural brother, had fixed such an interest among the barons, that, taking advantage of Henry's absence, he had acquired possession of the throne, and maintained his claim, by force of arms, against all the efforts of the Germans. [2] The approach of the crusaders naturally gave him apprehensions for his unstable government; and he was uncertain whether he had most reason to dread the presence of the French or of the English monarch. Philip was engaged in a strict alliance with the emperor, his competitor: Richard was disgusted by his rigors towards the queen dowager, whom the Sicilian prince had confined in Palermo because she had opposed with all her interest his succession to the crown. Tancred, therefore, sensible of the present necessity, resolved to pay court to both these formidable princes; and he was not unsuccessful in his endeavors. He persuaded Philip that it was highly improper for him to interrupt his enterprise against the infidels by any attempt against a Christian state: he restored Queen Joan to her liberty; and even found means to make an alliance with Richard, who stipulated by treaty to marry his nephew Arthur; the young duke of Brittany, to one of the daughters of Tancred. [3]

[1] Benedict. Abbas, .]

[2] Hoveden,]

[3] Hoveden, , 677. Benedict. Abbas, p. 615.]

But before these terms of friendship were settled. Richard, jealous both of Tancred and of the inhabitants of Messina, had taken up his quarters in the suburbs, and had possessed himself of a small fort, which commanded the harbor; and he kept himself extremely on his guard against their enterprises. The citizens took umbrage. Mutual insults and attacks passed between them and the English: Philip, who had quartered his troops in the town, endeavored to accommodate the quarrel, and held a conference with Richard for that purpose. While the two kings, meeting in the open fields, were engaged in discourse on this subject, a body of those Sicilians seemed to be drawing towards them; and Richard pushed forwards in order to inquire into the reason of this extraordinary movement. [1] The English, indolent from their power, and inflamed with former animosities, wanted but a pretence for attacking the Messinese: they soon chased them off the field, drove them into the town, and entered with them at the gates. The king employed his authority to restrain them from pillaging and massacring the defenceless inhabitants; but he gave orders, in token of his victory, that the standard of England should be erected on the walls. Philip, who considered that place as his quarters, exclaimed against the insult, and ordered some of his troops to pull down the standard: but Richard informed him by a messenger, that though he himself would willingly remove that ground of offence, he would not permit it to be done by others; and if the French king attempted such an insult upon him, he should not succeed but by the utmost effusion of blood. Philip, content with this species of haughty submission, recalled his orders: [2] the difference was seemingly accommodated, but still left the remains of rancor and jealousy in the breasts of the two monarchs.

Tancred, who for his own security desired to inflame their mutual hatred, employed an artifice which might have been attended with consequences still more fatal.

1191.

He showed Richard a letter, signed by the French king, and delivered to him, as he pretended, by the duke of Burgundy; in which that monarch desired Tancred to fall upon the quarters of the English, and promised to assist him in putting them to the sword as common enemies. The unwary Richard gave credit to the information; but was too candid not to betray his discontent to Philip, who absolutely denied the letter, and charged the Sicilian prince with forgery and falsehood. Richard either was, or pretended to be, entirely satisfied. [3]

[1] Benedict. Abbas, .]

[2] Hoveden, .]

[3] Hoveden, . Benedict. Abbas, , 643. Brompton,]

Last these jealousies and complaints should multiply between them, it was proposed that they should, by a solemn treaty, obviate all future differences, and adjust every point that couid possibly hereafter become a controversy between them. But this expedient started a new dispute, which might have proved more dangerous than any of the foregoing, and which deeply concerned the honor of Philip’s family. When Richard, in every treaty with the late king, insisted so strenuously on being allowed to marry Alice of France, he had only sought a pretence for quarrelling, and never meant to take to his bed a princess suspected of a criminal amour with his own father. After he became master, he no longer spake of that alliance: he even took measures for espousing Berengaria, daughter of Sanchez, king of Navarre, with whom he had become enamored during his abode in Guienne. [1] Queen Eleanor was daily expected with that princess at Messina; [2] and when Philip renewed to him his applications for espousing his sister Alice, Richard was obliged to give him an absolute refusal. It is pretended by Hoveden and other historians, [3] that he was able to produce such convincing proofs of Alice’s infidelity, and even of her having borne a child to Henry, that her brother desisted from his applications, and chose to wrap up the dishonor of his family in silence and oblivion. It is certain, from the treaty itself which remains, [4] that, whatever were his motives, he permitted Richard to give his hand to Berengaria; and having settled all other controversies with that prince, he immediately set sail for the Holy Land. Richard awaited some time the arrival of his mother and bride, and when they joined him, he separated his fleet into two squadrons, and set forward on his enterprise. Queen Eleanor returned to England; but Berengaria, and the queen dowager of Sicily, his sister, attended him on the expedition. [5]

[1] Vinisauf, .]

[2] M. Paris, . Trivet, . W. Heming. .]

[3] Hoveden, .]

[4] Bymer, vol. i. . Chron. Dunst. .]

The English fleet, on leaving the port of Messina, met with a furious tempest; and the squadron on which the two princesses were embarked was driven on the coast of Cyprus, and some of the vessels were wrecked near Limisso, in that island. Isaac, prince of Cyprus, who assumed the magnificent title of emperor, pillaged the ships that were stranded, brew the seamen and passengers into prison, and even refused to the princesses liberty, in their dangerous situation, of entering the harbor of Limisso. But Richard, who arrived soon after, took ample vengeance on him for the injury. He disembarked his troops; defeated the tyrant, who opposed his landing; entered Limisso by storm; gained next day a second victory; obliged Isaac to surrender at discretion; and established governors over the island. The Greek prince, being thrown into prison and loaded with irons, complained of the little regard with which he was treated; upon which Richard ordered silver fetters to be made for him; and this emperor, pleased with the distinction, expressed a sense of the generosity of his conqueror. [1] The king here espoused Berengaria, who, immediately embarking, carried along with her to Palestine the daughter of the Cypriot prince; a dangerous rival, who was believed to have seduced the affections of her husband. Such were the libertine character and conduct of the heroes engaged in this pious enterprise!

The English army arrived in time to partake in the glory of the siege of Acre or Ptolemais, which had been attacked for above two years by the united force of all the Christians in Palestine, and had been defended by the utmost efforts of Saladin and the Saracens. The remains of the German army, conducted by the emperor Frederic, and the separate bodies of adventurers who continually poured in from the west, had enabled the king of Jerusalem to form this important enterprise; [2] but Saladin having thrown a strong garrison into the place under the command of Caracos, his own master in the art of war, and molesting the besiegers with continual attacks and sallies, had protracted the success of the enterprise, and wasted the force of his enemies.

[1] Benedict. Abbas, Ann. Waverl. . Vinisauf, p 328 W. Heming. .]

[2] Vinisauf. p 269, 271, 279]

The arrival of Philip and Richard inspired new life into the Christians; and these princes acting by concert, and sharing the honor and danger of every action, gave hopes of a final victory over the infidels. They agreed on this plan of operations: when the French monarch attacked the town, the English guarded the trenches: next day, when the English prince conducted the assault, the French succeeded him in providing for the safety of the assailants. The emulation between those rival kings and rival nations produced extraordinary acts of valor: Richard, in particular animated with a more precipitate courage than Philip, and more agreeable to the romantic spirit of that age, drew to himself the general attention, and acquired a great and splendid reputation. But this harmony was of short duration, and occasions of discord soon arose between these jealous and haughty princes.

The family of Bouillon, which had first been placed on the throne of Jerusalem, ending in a female, Fulk, count of Anjou, grandfather to Henry II. of England, married the heiress of that kingdom, and transmitted his title to the younger branches of his family. The Anjevan race ending also in a female, Guy de Lusignan, by espousing Sibylla, the heiress, had succeeded to the title; and though he lost his kingdom by the invasion of Saladin, he was still acknowledged by all the Christians for king of Jerusalem. [1] But as Sibylla died without issue during the siege of Acre, Isabella, her younger sister, put in her claim to that titular kingdom, and required Lusignan to resign his pretensions to her husband, Conrade, marquis of Montferrat. Lusignan, maintaining that the royal title was unalienable and indefeasible, had recourse to the protection of Richard, attended on him before he left Cyprus, and engaged him to embrace his cause. [2] There needed no other reason for throwing Philip into the party of Conrade; and the opposite views of these great monarchs brought faction and dissension into the Christian army, and retarded all its operations. The templars, the Genoese, and the Germans, declared for Philip and Conrade; the Flemings, the Pisans, the knights of the hospital of St. John, adhered to Richard and Lusignan, But notwithstanding these disputes, as the length of the siege had reduced the Saracen garrison to the last extremity, they surrendered themselves prisoners; stipulated, in return for their lives, other advantages to the

Christians, such as restoring of the Christian prisoners, and the delivery of the wood of the true cross; [3] and this great enterprise, which had long engaged the attention of all Europe and Asia, was at last, after the loss of three hundred thousand men, brought to a happy period.

[1] Vinisauf, .]

[2] Trivet, . Vinisauf, . W. Heming. .]

[3] This true cross was lost in the battle of Tiberiade, to which it had been carried by the crusaders for their protection. Rigord, an author of that age, says, that after this dismal event, all the children who were born throughout all Christendom, had only twenty or twenty-two teeth, instead of thirty or thirty-two, which was their former complement (.)]

But Philip, instead of pursuing the hopes of further conquest, and of redeeming the holy city from slavery, being disgusted with the ascendant assumed and acquired by Richard, and having views of many advantages which he might reap by his presence in Europe, declared his resolution of returning to France; and he pleaded his bad state of health as an excuse for his desertion of the common cause. He left however, to Richard ten thousand of his troops, under the command of the duke of Burgundy; and he renewed his oath never to commence hostilities against that prince’s dominions during his absence. But he had no sooner reached Italy than he applied, it is pretended, to Pope Celestine III. for a dispensation from this vow; and when denied that request, he still proceeded, though after a covert manner, in a project which the present situation of England rendered inviting, and which gratified, in an eminent degree, both his resentment and his ambition.

Immediately after Richard had left England, and begun his march to the Holy Land, the two prelates whom he had appointed guardians of the realm, broke out into animosities against each other, and threw the kingdom into combustion. Longchamp, presumptuous in his nature, elated by the favor which he enjoyed with his master, and armed with the legantine commission, could not submit to an equality with the bishop of Durham: he even went so far as to arrest his colleague, and to extort from him a resignation of the earldom of Northumberland, and of his other dignities, as the price of his liberty. [1] The king, informed of these dissensions, ordered, by letters from Marseilles, that the bishop should be reinstated in his offices; but Longchamp had still the boldness to refuse compliance, on pretence that he himself was better acquainted with the king's secret intentions. [2] He proceeded to govern the kingdom by his sole authority; to treat all the nobility with arrogance; and to display his power and riches with an invidious ostentation. He never travelled without a strong guard of fifteen hundred foreign soldiers, collected from that licentious tribe, with which the age was generally infested: nobles and knights were proud of being admitted into his train his retinue wore the aspect of royal magnificence; and when in his progress through the kingdom, he lodged in any monastery, his attendants, it is said, were sufficient to devour in one night the revenue of several years. [3]

[1 Hoveden, . Knyghton, .]

[2 W. Heming. p 528,]

[3 Hoveden, . Benedict. Abbas, , 700. Brompton, .]

The king, who was detained in Europe longer than the haughty prelate expected, hearing of this ostentation, which exceeded even what the habits of that age indulged in ecclesiastics; being also informed of the insolent, tyrannical conduct of his minister, thought proper to restrain his power: he sent new orders, appointing Walter, archbishop of Rouen, William Mareshal, earl of Strigul, Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, William Brie were, and Hugh Bardolf, counsellors to Longchamp, and commanding him to take no measure of importance without their concurrence and approbation. But such general terror had this man impressed by his violent conduct, that even the archbishop of Rouen and the earl of Strigul durst not produce this mandate of the king's: and Longchamp still maintained an uncontrolled authority over the nation. But when he proceeded so far as to throw into prison Geoffrey, archbishop of York, who had opposed his measures, this breach of ecclesiastical privileges excited such a universal ferment, that Prince John, disgusted with the small share he possessed in the government, and personally disobliged by Longchamp, ventured to summon at Reading a general council of the nobility and prelates, and cite him to appear before them. Longchamp thought it dangerous to intrust his person in their hands, and he shut himself, up in the tower of London; but being soon obliged to surrender that fortress, he fled beyond sea, concealed under a female habit, and was deprived of his offices of chancellor and chief justiciary, the last of which was conferred on the archbishop of Rouen, a prelate of prudence and moderation. The commission of legate, however, which had been renewed to Longchamp by Pope Celestine, still gave him, notwithstanding his absence, great authority in the kingdom, enabled him to disturb the government, and forwarded the views of Philip, who watched every opportunity of annoying Richard's dominions.

1192.

That monarch first attempted to carry open war into Normandy: but as the French nobility refused to follow him in an invasion of a state which they had sworn to protect, and as the pope, who was the general guardian of all princes that had taken the cross, threatened him with ecclesiastical censures, he desisted from his enterprise, and employed against England the expedient of secret policy and intrigue. He debauched Prince John from his allegiance; promised him his sister Alice in marriage; offered to give him possession of all Richard's transmarine dominions; and had not the authority of Queen Eleanor, and the menaces of the English council, prevailed over the inclinations of that turbulent prince, he was ready to have crossed the seas, and to have put in execution his criminal enterprises.

The jealousy of Philip was every moment excited by the glory which the great actions of Richard were gaining him in the east, and which, being compared to his own desertion of that popular cause, threw a double lustre on his rival. His envy, therefore, prompted him to obscure that fame which he had not equalled; and he embraced every pretence of throwing the most violent and most improbable calumnies on the king of England. There was a petty prince in Asia, commonly called the Old Man of the Mountain, who had acquired such an ascendant over his fanatical subjects, that they paid the most implicit deference to his commands; esteemed assassination meritorious when sanctified by his mandate; courted danger, and even certain death, in the execution of his orders; and fancied, that when they sacrificed their lives for his sake, the highest joys of paradise were the infallible reward of their devoted obedience. [1] It was the custom of this prince, when he imagined himself injured, to despatch secretly some of his subjects against the aggressor, to charge them with the execution of his revenge, to instruct them in every art of disguising their purpose; and no precaution was sufficient to guard any man, however powerful, against the attempts of these subtle and determined ruffians. The greatest monarchs stood in awe of this prince of the assassins, (for that was the name of his people. whence the word has passed into most European languages,) and it was the highest indiscretion in Conrade, marquis of Montferrat, to offend and affront him. The inhabitants of Tyre, who were governed by that nobleman, had put to death some of this dangerous people: the prince demanded satisfaction; for as he piqued himself on never beginning any offence, [2] he had his regular and established formalities in requiring atonement: Conrade treated his messengers with disdain: the prince issued the fatal orders: two of his subjects, who had insinuated themselves in disguise among Conrade’s guards, openly, in the streets of Sidon, wounded him mortally; and when they were seized and put to the most cruel tortures, they triumphed amidst their agonies, and rejoiced that they had been destined by Heaven to suffer in so just and meritorious a cause.

[1] W. Heming. . Brompton, .]

[2] Rymer vol. i. .]

Every one in Palestine knew from what hand the blow came. Richard was entirely free from suspicion. Though that monarch had formerly maintained the cause of Lusignan against Conrade, he had become sensible of the bad effects attending those dissensions, and had voluntarily conferred on the former the kingdom of Cyprus, on condition that he should resign to his rival all pretensions on the crown of Jerusalem, [1] Conrade himself, with his dying breath, had recommended his widow to the protection of Richard; [2] the prince of the assassins avowed the action in a formal narrative which he sent to Europe; yet, on this foundation, the king of France thought fit to build the most egregious calumnies, and to impute to Richard the murder of the marquis of Montferrat, whose elevation he had once openly opposed. He filled all Europe with exclamations against the crime; appointed a guard for his own person, in order to defend himself against a like attempt; and endeavored, by these shallow artifices, to cover the infamy of attacking the dominions of a prince whom he himself had deserted, and who was engaged with so much glory in a war universally acknowledged to be the common cause of Christendom.

[[1] Vinisauf, .]

[[2] Brompton, .]

But Richard's heroic actions in Palestine were the best apology for his conduct. The Christian adventurers under his command determined, on opening the campaign, to attempt the siege of Ascalon, in order to prepare the way for that of Jerusalem; and they marched along the sea-coast with that intention. Saladin purposed to intercept their passage: and he placed himself on the road with an army, amounting to three hundred thousand combatants. On this occasion was fought one of the greatest battles of that age; and the most celebrated, for the military genius of the commanders, for the number and valor of the troops, and for the great variety of events which attended it. Both the right wing of the Christians, commanded by D'Avesnes, and the left conducted by the duke of Burgundy, were, in the beginning of the day, broken and defeated; when Richard, who led on the main body, restored the battle; attacked the enemy with intrepidity and presence of mind; performed the part both of a consummate general and gallant soldier; and not only gave his two wings leisure to recover from their confusion, but obtained a complete victory over the Saracens, of whom forty thousand are said to have perished in the field. [[1]] Ascalon soon after fell into the hands of the Christians: other sieges were carried on with equal success; Richard was even able to advance within sight of Jerusalem, the object of his enterprise; when he had the mortification to find that he must abandon all hopes of immediate success, and must put a stop to his career of victory. The crusaders, animated with an enthusiastic ardor for the holy wars, broke at first through all regards to safety or interest in the prosecution of their purpose; and trusting to the immediate assistance of Heaven, set nothing before their eyes but fame and victory in this world, and a crown of glory in the next. But long absence from home, fatigue, disease, want, and the variety of incidents which naturally attend war, had gradually abated that fury, which nothing was able directly to withstand; and every one except the king of England, expressed a desire of speedily returning into Europe. The Germans and the Italians declared their resolution of desisting from the enterprise: the French were still more obstinate in this purpose: the duke of Burgundy, in order to pay court to Philip, took all opportunities of mortifying and opposing Richard: [2] and there appeared an absolute necessity of abandoning for the present all hopes of further conquest, and of securing the acquisitions of the Christians by an accommodation with Saladin, Richard, therefore concluded a truce with that monarch; and stipulated that Acre, Joppa, and other seaport towns of Palestine, should remain in the hands of the Christians, and that every one of that religion should have liberty to perform his pilgrimage to Jerusalem unmolested. This truce was concluded for three years, three months, three weeks, three days, and three hours; a magical number, which had probably been devised by the Europeans, and which was suggested by a superstition well suited to the object of the war.

[1] Hovelen, . Benedict. Abbas, . Diceto, Brompton, .]

[2] Vinisauf, .]

The liberty in which Saladin indulged the Christians, to perform their pilgrimages to Jerusalem, was an easy sacrifice on his part; and the furious wars which he waged in defence of the barren territory of Judea, were not with him, as with the European adventurers, the result of superstition, but of policy, The advantage indeed of science, moderation, humanity, was at that time entirely on the side of the Saracens; and this gallant emperor, in particular, displayed, during the course of the war, a spirit and generosity, which even his bigoted enemies were obliged to acknowledge and admire. Richard, equally martial and brave, carried with him more of the barbarian character, and was guilty of acts of ferocity which threw a stain on his celebrated victories. When Saladin refused to ratify the capitulation of Acre, the king of England ordered all his prisoners, to the number of five thousand, to be butchered; and the Saracens found themselves obliged to retaliate upon the Christians by a like cruelty. [1]

[1] Hoveden, . Benedict Abbas, . M. Paris, . Vinisauf, . W. Heming. .]

Saladin died at Damascus soon after concluding this truce with the princes of the crusade; it is memorable that, before he expired, he ordered his winding-sheet to be carried as a standard through every street of the city; while a crier went before, and proclaimed with a loud voice, “This is all that remains to the mighty Saladin, the conqueror of the East.” By his last will, he ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mahometan.

There remained, after the truce, no business of importance to detain Richard in Palestine; and the intelligence which he received, concerning the intrigues of his brother John, and those of the king of France, made him sensible that his presence was necessary in Europe. As he dared not to pass through France, he sailed to the Adriatic; and being ship-wrecked near Aquileia, he put on the disguise of a pilgrim, with a purpose of taking his journey secretly through Germany. Pursued by the governor of Istria, he was forced out of the direct road to England, and was obliged to pass by Vienna, where his expenses and liberalities betrayed the monarch in the habit of the pilgrim; and he was arrested by orders of Leopold, duke of Austria. This prince had served under Richard at the siege of Acre; but being disgusted by some insult of that haughty monarch, he was so ungenerous as to seize the present opportunity of gratifying at once his avarice and revenge; and he threw the king into prison.

1193.

The emperor, Henry VI., who also considered Richard as an enemy, on account of the alliance contracted by him with Tancred, king of Sicily, despatched messengers to the duke of Austria, required the royal captive to be delivered to him, and stipulated a large sum of money as a reward for this service. Thus the king of England, who had filled the whole world with his renown, found himself, during the most critical state of his affairs, confined in a dungeon, and loaded with irons, in the heart of Germany, [1] and entirely at the mercy of his enemies, the basest and most sordid of mankind.

The English council was astonished on receiving this fatal intelligence, and foresaw all the dangerous consequences which might naturally arise from that event. The queen dowager wrote reiterated letters to Pope Celestine; exclaiming against the injury which her son had sustained, representing the impiety of detaining in prison the most illustrious prince that had yet carried the banners of Christ into the Holy Land; claiming the protection of the apostolic see, which was due even to the meanest of those adventurers; and upbraiding the pope, that, in a cause where justice, religion, and the dignity of the church, were so much concerned, a cause which it might well befit his holiness himself to support by taking in person a journey to Germany, the spiritual thunders should so long be suspended over those sacrilegious offenders. [2] The zeal of Celestine corresponded not to the impatience of the queen mother; and the regency of England were, for a long time, left to struggle alone with all their domestic and foreign enemies.

The king of France, quickly informed of Richard's confinement by a message from the emperor, [3] prepared himself to take advantage of the incident; and he employed every means of force and intrigue, of war and negotiation, against the dominions and the person of his unfortunate rival. He revived the calumny of Richard's assassinating the marquis of Montferrat; and by that absurd pretence he induced his barons to violate their oaths, by which they had engaged that, during the crusade, they never would, on any account, attack the dominions of the king of England. He made the emperor the largest offers, if he would deliver into his hands the royal prisoner, or at least detain him in perpetual captivity he even formed an alliance by marriage with the king of Denmark, desired that the ancient Danish claim to the crown of England should be transferred to him, and solicited a supply of shipping to maintain it.

[1] Chron. T. Wykes, .]

[2] Rymer, vol. i. , 73, 74, 75, 76, etc]

[3] Rymer, vol. i. .]

But the most successful of Philip's negotiations was with Prince John, who, forgetting every tie to his brother, his sovereign, and his benefactor, thought of nothing but how to make his own advantage of the public calamities. That traitor, on the first invitation from the court of France, suddenly went abroad, had a conference with Philip, and made a treaty, of which the object was the perpetual ruin of his unhappy brother. He stipulated to deliver into Philip’s hands a great part of Normandy: [1] he received, in return, the investiture of all Richard’s transmarine dominions; and it is reported by several historians, that he even did homage to the French king for the crown of England.

In consequence of this treaty, Philip invaded Normandy; and by the treachery of John’s emissaries, made himself master, without opposition, of many fortresses — Neufchatel, Neaufle, Gisors, Pacey, Ivrée: he subdued the counties of Eu and Aumale; and advancing to form the siege of Rouen, he threatened to put all the inhabitants to the sword if they dared to make resistance. Happily, Robert, earl of Leicester appeared in that critical moment, a gallant nobleman, who had acquired great honor during the crusade, and who, being more fortunate than his master in finding his passage homewards, took on him the command in Rouen, and exerted himself, by his exhortations and example, to infuse courage into the dismayed Normans. Philip was repulsed in every attack; the time of service from his vassals expired; and he consented to a truce with the English regency, received in return the promise of twenty thousand marks, and had four castles put into his hands as security for the payment. [2]

[1] Rymer, vol. i. .]

[2] Hoveden, p, 730, 731. Rymer, vol. i.]

Prince John, who, with a view of increasing the general confusion, went over to England, was still less successful in his enterprises. He was only able to make himself master of the castles of Windsor and Wallingford; but when he arrived in London, and claimed the kingdom as heir to his brother, of whose death he pretended to have received certain intelligence he was rejected by all the barons, and measures were taken to oppose and subdue him. [1] The justiciaries, supported by the general affection of the people, provided so well for the defence of the kingdom, that John was obliged, after some fruitless efforts, to conclude a truce with them; and before its expiration, he thought it prudent to return into France, where he openly avowed his alliance with Philip. [2]

Meanwhile the high spirit of Richard suffered in Germany every kind of insult and indignity. The French ambassadors, in their master’s name, renounced him as a vassal to the crown of France, and declared all his fiefs to be forfeited to his liege lord. The emperor, that he might render him more impatient for the recovery of his liberty, and make him submit to the payment of a larger ransom, treated him with the greatest severity, and reduced him to a condition worse than that of the meanest malefactor. He was even produced before the diet of the empire at Worms, and accused by Henry of many crimes and misdemeanors; of making an alliance with Tancred, the usurper of Sicily; of turning the arms of the crusade against a Christian prince, and subduing Cyprus; of affronting the duke of Austria before Acre; of obstructing the progress of the Christian arms by his quarrels with the king of France; of assassinating Conrade, marquis of Montferrat; and of concluding a truce with Saladin, and leaving Jerusalem in the hands of the Saracen emperor. [3]

[1] Hoveden, .

[2] W Heming. .

[3] M. Paris, . W. Heming. .

Richard, whose spirit was not broken by his misfortunes, and whose genius was rather roused by these frivolous or scandalous imputations, after premising that his dignity exempted him from answering before any jurisdiction, except that of Heaven, yet condescended, for the sake of his reputation, to justify his conduct before that great assembly. He observed, that he had no hand in Tancred’s elevation, and only concluded a treaty with a prince whom he found in possession of the throne: that the king, or rather tyrant, of Cyprus had provoked his indignation by the most ungenerous and unjust proceedings; and though he chastised this aggressor, he had not retarded a moment the progress of his chief enterprise: that if he had at any time been wanting in civility to the duke of Austria, he had already been sufficiently punished for that sally of passion; and it better became men, embarked together in so holy a cause, to forgive each other’s infirmities, than to pursue a slight offence with such unrelenting vengeance: that it had sufficiently appeared by the event, whether the king of France or he were most zealous for the conquest of the Holy Land, and were most likely to sacrifice private passions and animosities to that great object: that if the whole tenor of his life had not shown him incapable of a base assassination, and justified him from that imputation in the eyes of his very enemies, it was in vain for him, at present, to make his apology, or plead the many irrefragable arguments which he could produce in his own favor: and that, however he might regret the necessity, he was so far from being ashamed of his truce with Saladin, that he rather gloried in that event; and thought it extremely honorable that, though abandoned by all the world, supported only by his own courage, and by the small remains of his national troops, he could yet obtain such conditions from the most powerful and most warlike emperor that the East had ever yet produced. Richard, after thus deigning to apologize for his conduct, burst out into indignation at the cruel treatment which he had met with; that he, the champion of the cross, still wearing that honorable badge, should, after expending the blood and treasure of his subjects in the common cause of Christendom, be intercepted by Christian princes in his return to his own country, be thrown into a dungeon, be loaded with irons, be obliged to plead his cause as if he were a subject and a malefactor, and, what he still more regretted, be thereby prevented from making preparations for a new crusade, which he had projected, after the expiration of the truce, and from redeeming the sepulchre of Christ, which had so long been profaned by the dominion of infidels. The spirit and eloquence of Richard made such impression on the German princes, that they exclaimed loudly against the conduct of the emperor; the pope threatened him with excommunication; and Henry, who had hearkened to the proposals of the king of France and Prince John, found that it would be impracticable for him to execute his and their base purposes, or to detain the king of England any longer in captivity. He therefore concluded with him a treaty for his ransom, and agreed to restore him to his freedom for the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand marks about three hundred thousand pounds of our present money of which one hundred thousand marks were to be paid before he received his liberty, and sixty-seven hostages delivered for the remainder. [1] The emperor, as if to gloss over the infamy of this transaction, made at the same time a present to Richard of the kingdom of Arles, comprehending Provence, Dauphiny, Narbonne, and other states, over which the empire had some antiquated claims; a present which the king very wisely neglected.

[1] Rymer, vol. i. .]

The captivity of the superior lord was one of the cases provided for by the feudal tenures; and all the vassals were in that event obliged to give an aid for his ransom. Twenty shillings were therefore levied on each knight's fee in England; but as this money came in slowly, and was not sufficient for the intended purpose, the voluntary zeal of the people readily supplied the deficiency. The churches and monasteries melted down their plate, to the amount of thirty thousand marks; the bishop, abbots, and nobles, paid a fourth of their yearly rent; the parochial clergy contributed a tenth of their tithes; and the requisite sura being thus collected queen Eleanor, and Walter, archbishop of Rouen, set out with it for Germany;

1194.

paid the money to the emperor and the duke of Austria at Mentz; delivered them hostages for the remainder, and freed. Richard from captivity. His escape was very critical. Henry had been detected in the assassination of the bishop of Liege, and in an attempt of a like nature on the duke of Louvaine; and finding himself extremely obnoxious to the German princes on account of these odious practices, he had determined to seek support from an alliance with the king of France; to detain Richard, the enemy of that prince, in perpetual captivity; to keep in his hands the money which he had already received for his ransom; and to extort fresh sums from Philip and prince John, who were very liberal in their offers to him. He therefore gave orders that Richard should be pursued and arrested; but the king, making all imaginable haste, had already embarked at the mouth of the Schelde, and was out of sight of land when the messengers of the emperor reached Antwerp.

The joy of the English was extreme on the appearance of their monarch, who had suffered so many calamities, who had acquired so much glory, and who had spread the reputation of their name into the farthest east, whither their fame had never before been able to extend. He gave them, soon after his arrival, an opportunity of publicly displaying their exultation, by ordering himself to be crowned anew at Winchester; as if he intended, by that ceremony, to reinstate himself in his throne, and to wipe off he ignominity of his captivity. Their satisfaction was not damped, even when he declared his purpose of resuming all those exorbitant grants which he had been necessitated to make before his departure for the Holy Land. The barons also, in a great council, confiscated, on account of his treason, all Prince John's possessions in England and they assisted the king in reducing the fortresses which still remained in the hands of his brother's adherents. [1] Richard, having settled every thing in England, passed over with an army into Normandy; being impatient to make war on Philip, and to revenge himself for the many injuries which he had received from that monarch. [2] As soon as Philip heard of the king's deliverance from captivity, he wrote to his confederate John in these terms: "Take care of yourself: the devil is broken loose." [3]

[1] Hoveden, p, 737. Ann. Waverl. . W. Heming. .]

[2] Hoveden, .]

[3] Hoveden]

When we consider such powerful and martial monarchs, inflamed with personal animosity against each other, enraged by mutual injuries, excited by rivalship, impelled by opposite interests, and instigated by the pride and violence of their own temper, our curiosity is naturally raised, and we expect an obstinate and furious war, distinguished by the greatest events, and concluded by some remarkable catastrophe. Yet are the incidents which attended those hostilities so frivolous, that scarce any historian can entertain such a passion for military descriptions as to venture on a detail of them; a certain proof of the extreme weakness of princes in those ages, and of the little authority they possessed over their refractory vassals The whole amount of the exploits on both sides, is the taking of a castle, the surprise of a straggling party, a rencounter of horse, which resembles more a rout than a battle. Richard obliged Philip to raise the siege of Verneuil; he took Loches, a small town in Anjou; he made himself master of Beaumont, and some other places of little consequence; and after these trivial exploits, the two kings began already to hold conferences for an accommodation. Philip insisted that, if a general peace were concluded, the barons on each side should for the future be prohibited from carrying on private wars against each other; but Richard replied, that this was a right claimed by his vassals, and he could not debar them from it After this fruitless negotiation, there ensued an action between the French and English cavalry at Fretteval, in which the former were routed, and the king of France’s cartulary and records, which commonly at that time attended his person, were taken. But this victory leading to no important advantages, a truce for a year was at last, from mutual weakness, concluded between the two monarchs.

During this war, Prince John deserted from Philip, threw himself at his brother’s feet, craved pardon for his offences, and by the intercession of Queen Eleanor was received into favor. “I forgive him,” said the king, “and hope I shall as easily forget his injuries as he will my pardon.” John was incapable even of returning to his duty without committing a baseness. Before he left Philip’s party, he invited to dinner all the officers of the garrison which that prince had placed in the citadel of Evreux; he massacred them during the entertainment; fell, with the assistance of the townsmen, on the garrison, whom he put to the sword; and then delivered up the place to his brother.

The king of France was the great object of Richard’s resentment and animosity. The conduct of John, as well as that of the emperor and duke of Austria, had been so base, and was exposed to such general odium and reproach, that the king deemed himself sufficiently revenged for their injuries; and he seems never to have entertained any project of vengeance against any of them. The duke of Austria, about this time, having crushed his leg by the fall of his horse at a tournament, was thrown into a fever; and being struck, on the approaches of death, with remorse for his injustice to Richard, he ordered by will all the English hostages in his hands to be set at liberty and the remainder of the debt due to him to be remitted: his son, who seemed inclined to disobey these orders, was constrained by his ecclesiastics to execute them. [1]

1195.

The emperor also made advances for Richard’s friendship, and offered to give him a discharge of all the debt not yet paid to him, provided he would enter into an offensive alliance against the king of France; a proposal which was very acceptable to Richard, and was greedily embraced by him. The treaty with the emperor took no effect; but it served to rekindle the war between France and England before the expiration of the truce.

[1] Rymer, vol. i. , 102.]

This war was not distinguished by any more remarkable incidents than the foregoing. After mutually ravaging the open country, and taking a few insignificant castles, the two kings concluded a peace at Louviers, and made an exchange of some territories with each other. [1]

1196.

Their inability to wage war occasioned the peace; their mutual antipathy engaged them again in war before two months expired. Richard imagined that he had now found an opportunity of gaining great advantages over his rival, by forming an alliance with the counts of Flanders, Toulouse, Boulogne, Champagne, and other considerable vassals of the crown of France. [2] But he soon experienced the insincerity of those princes; and; was not able to make any impression on that kingdom, while governed by a monarch of so much vigor and activity as Philip. The most remarkable incident of this war was the taking prisoner, in battle, the bishop of Beauvais, a martial prelate who was of the family of Dreux, and a near relation of the French king. Richard, who hated that bishop, threw him into prison, and loaded him with irons; and when the pope demanded his liberty, and claimed him as his son, the king sent to his holiness the coat of mail which the prelate had worn in battle, and which was all besmeared with blood; and he replied to him in the terms employed by Jacob's sons to that patriarch: "This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or no." [3] This new war between England and France, though carried on with such animosity that both kings frequently put out the eyes of their prisoners, was soon finished by a truce of five years; and immediately after signing this treaty, the kings were ready, on some new offence, to break out again into hostilities, when the mediation of the cardinal of St. Mary, the pope's legate, accommodated the difference. [4] This prelate even engaged the princes to commence a treaty for a more durable peace; but the death of Richard put an end to the negotiation.

[1] Rymer, vol. i.]

[2] W. Heming, . Brompton, . Rymer, vol i. .]

[3] Genesis, chap, xxxvii. ver. 32. M. Paris, p; 128. Brompton,]

[4] Rymer, vol. i. , 110.]

1199.

Vidomar, viscount of Limoges, a vassal of the king, had found a treasure, of which he sent part to that prince as a present. Richard, as superior lord, claimed the whole; and, at the head of some Brabançons, besieged the viscount in the castle of Chalus, near Limoges, in order to make him comply with his demand. [1] The garrison offered to surrender; but the king replied, that since he had taken the pains to come thither and besiege the place in person, he would take it by force, and would hang every one of them. The same day Richard, accompanied by Marcadée, leader of his Brabançons, approached the castle in order to survey it, when one Bertrand de Gourdon, an archer, took aim at him, and pierced his shoulder with an arrow. The king, however, gave orders for the assault, took the place, and hanged all the garrison, except Gourdon, who had wounded him, and whom he reserved for a more deliberate and more cruel execution. [2]

The wound was not in itself dangerous; but the unskilfulness of the surgeon made it mortal; he so rankled Richard's shoulder in pulling out the arrow, that a gangrene ensued; and that prince was now sensible that his life was drawing towards a period. He sent for Gourdon, and asked him, "Wretch, what have I ever done to you, to oblige you to seek my life?" "What have you done to me?" replied coolly the prisoner: "you killed with your own hands my father, and my two brothers; and you intended to have hanged myself: I am now in your power, and you may take revenge by inflicting on me the most severe torments; but I shall endure them all with pleasure, provided I can think that I have been so happy as to rid the world of such a nuisance," [3] Richard, struck with the reasonableness of this reply, and humbled by the near approach of death, ordered Gourdon to be set at liberty, and a sum of money to be given him; but Marcadée, unknown to him, seized the unhappy man, flayed him alive, and then hanged him.

Richard died in the tenth year of his reign, and the forty-second of his age; and he left no issue behind him.

[1] Hoveden, . Knyghton, .]

[2] Hoveden, . Knyghton, .]

[3] Hoveden, . Brompton, Knyghton, .]

The most shining part of this prince's character are his military talents. No man, even in that romantic age, carried personal courage and intrepidity to a greater height, and this quality gained him the appellation of the Lion-hearted, "Coeur de Lion." He passionately loved glory, chiefly military glory; and as his conduct in the field was not inferior to his valor, he seems to have possessed every talent necessary for acquiring it. His resentments also were high; his pride unconquerable; and his subjects, as well as his neighbors, had therefore reason to apprehend, from the continuance of his reign, a perpetual scene of blood and violence. Of an impetuous and vehement spirit, he was distinguished by all the good, as well as the bad, qualities incident to that character; he was open, frank, generous, sincere, and brave; he was revengeful, domineering, ambitious, haughty, and cruel; and was thus better calculated to dazzle men by the splendor of his enterprises, than either to promote their happiness, or his own grandeur, by a sound and well-regulated policy. As military talents make great impression on the people, he seems to have been much beloved by his English subjects; and he is remarked to have been the first prince of the Norman line that bore any sincere regard to them. He passed, however, only four months of his reign in that kingdom; the crusade employed him near three years; he was detained about fourteen months in captivity; the rest of his reign was spent either in war or preparations for war against France; and he was so pleased with the fame which he had acquired in the East, that he determined, notwithstanding his past misfortunes, to have further exhausted his kingdom, and to have exposed himself to new hazards, by conducting another expedition against the infidels.

Though the English pleased themselves with the glory which the king's martial genius procured them, his reign was very oppressive, and somewhat arbitrary, by the high taxes which he levied on them, and often without consent of the states or great council. In the ninth year of his reign, he levied five shillings on each hide of land; and because the clergy refused to contribute their share, he put them out of the protection of law, and ordered the civil courts to give them no sentence for any debts which they might claim. [1] Twice in his reign he ordered all his charters to be sealed anew, and the parties to pay fees for the renewal. [2]

[1] Hoveden, . Tyrrel, vol. ii. p, 563.

[2] Prynne's Chronol. Vindic. tom. i. .

1133.

It is said that Hubert, his justiciary, sent him over to France, in the space of two years, no less a sum than one million one hundred thousand marks, besides bearing all the charges of the government in England. But this account is quite incredible, unless we suppose that Richard made a thorough dilapidation of the demesnes of the crown, which it is not likely he could do with any advantage after his former resumption of all grants. A king who possessed such a revenue, could never have endured fourteen months' captivity for not paying one hundred and fifty thousand marks to the emperor, and be obliged at last to leave hostages for a third of the sum. The prices of commodities in this reign are also a certain proof that no such enormous sum could be levied on the people. A hide of land, or about a hundred and twenty acres, was commonly let at twenty shillings a year, money of that time. As there were two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides in England, it is easy to compute the amount of all the landed rents of the kingdom. The general and stated price of an ox was four shillings; of a laboring horse, the same; of a sow, one shilling; of a sheep with fine wool, tenpence with coarse wool, sixpence. [1] These commodities seem not to have advanced in their prices since the conquest, [2] and to have still been ten times cheaper than at present.

Richard renewed the severe laws against transgressors in his forests, whom he punished by castration and putting out their eyes, as in the reign of his great-grandfather. He established by law one weight and measure throughout his kingdom; [3] a useful institution, which the mercenary disposition and necessities of his successor engaged him to dispense with for money.

[1] Hoveden, .]

[2] See note S, at the end of the volume.]

[3] M. Paris, , 134. Trivet, . Ann. Waverl. . Hoveden, .]

The disorders in London, derived from its bad police, had risen to a great height during this reign; and in the year 1196, there seemed to be formed so regular a conspiracy among the numerous malefactors, as threatened the city with destruction. There was one William Fitz-Osbert, commonly called Longbeard, a lawyer, who had rendered himself extremely popular among the lower rank of citizens; and by defend ing-them on all occasions, had acquired the appellation of the advocate or savior of the poor. He exerted his authority by injuring and insulting the more substantial citizens, with whom he lived in a state of hostility, and who were every moment exposed to the most outrageous violences from him and his licentious emissaries. Murders were daily committed in the streets; houses were broken open and pillaged in daylight; and it is pretended, that no less than fifty-two thousand persons had entered into an association, by which they bound themselves to obey all the orders of this dangerous ruffian. Archbishop Hubert, who was then chief justiciary, summoned him before the council to answer for his conduct; but he came so well attended, that no one durst accuse him, or give evidence against him; and the primate, finding the impotence of law, contented himself with exacting from the citizens hostages for their good behavior. He kept, however, a watchful eye on Fitz-Osbert, and seizing a favorable opportunity, attempted to commit him to custody; but the criminal, murdering one of the public officers, escaped with his concubine to the church of St. Mary le Bow, where he defended himself by force of arms. He was at last forced from his retreat, condemned, and executed, amidst the regrets of the populace, who were so devoted to his memory, that they stole his gibbet, paid the same veneration to it as to the cross, and were equally zealous in propagating and attesting reports of the miracles wrought by it. [1] But though the sectaries of this superstition were punished by the justiciary, [2] it received so little encouragement from the established clergy whose property was endangered by such seditious practices, that it suddenly sunk and vanished.

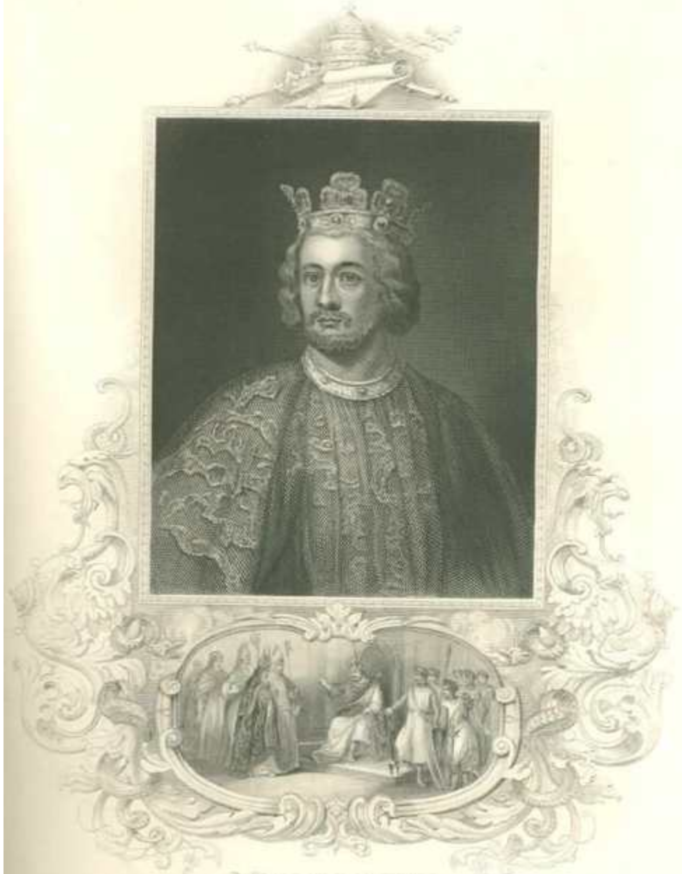
[1] Hoveden, p 765. Diceto, . Neub. p 192, 498]

[2] Gervase, .]

It was during the crusades that the custom of using coats of arms was first introduced into Europe. The knights, cased up in armor, had no way to make themselves be known and distinguished in battle, but by the devices on their shields; and these were gradually adopted by their posterity and families, who were proud of the pious and military enterprises of their ancestors.

King Richard was a passionate lover of poetry: there even remain some poetical works of his composition: and he bears a rank among the Provençal poets or Trobadores, who were the first of the modern Europeans that distinguished themselves by attempts of that nature.

CHAPTER XI.



The Bishops threaten John with an Interdict.

JOHN.

JOHN.

1199.

THE noble and free genius of the ancients, which made the government of a single person be always regarded as a species of tyranny and usurpation, and kept them from forming any conception of a legal and regular monarchy, had rendered them entirely ignorant both of the rights of primogeniture and a representation in succession; inventions so necessary for preserving order in the lines of princes, for obviating the evils of civil discord and of usurpation, and for begetting moderation in that species of government, by giving security to the ruling sovereign. These innovations arose from the feudal law; which, first introducing the right of primogeniture, made such a distinction between the families of he elder and younger brothers, that the son of the former was thought entitled to succeed to his grandfather, preferably to his uncles, though nearer allied to the deceased monarch. But though this progress of ideas was natural, it was gradual. In the age of which we treat, the practice of representation was indeed introduced, but not thoroughly established; and the minds of men fluctuated between opposite principles. Richard, when he entered on the holy war, declared his nephew Arthur, duke of Brittany, his successor; and by a formal deed he set aside, in his favor, the title of his brother John, who was younger than Godfrey, the father of that prince. [1]

[1] Hoveden, .

But John so little acquiesced in that destination that when he gained the ascendant in the English ministry by expelling Longchamp, the chancellor and great justiciary, he engaged all the English barons to swear that they would maintain his right of succession; and Richard, on his return, took no steps towards restoring or securing the order which he had at first established. He was even careful, by his last will, to declare his brother John heir to all his dominions; whether, that he now thought Arthur, who was only twelve years of age, incapable of asserting his claim against

John’s faction, or was influenced by Eleanor, the queen mother, who hated Constantia, mother of the young duke, and who dreaded the credit which that princess would naturally acquire if her son should mount the throne. The authority of a testament was great in that age, even where the succession of a kingdom was concerned; and John had reason to hope, that this title, joined to his plausible right in other respects, would insure him the succession. But the idea of representation seems to have made, at this time, greater progress in France than in England; the barons of the transmarine provinces Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, immediately declared in favor of Arthur’s title, and applied for assistance to the French monarch as their superior lord. Philip, who desired only an occasion to embarrass John, and dismember his dominions, embraced the cause of the young duke of Brittany, took him under his protection, and sent him to Paris to be educated along with his own son Lewis. In this emergency, John hastened to establish his authority in the chief members of the monarchy; and after sending Eleanor into Poictou and Guienne, where her right was incontestable, and was readily acknowledged, he hurried to Rouen, and having secured the duchy of Normandy, he passed over, without loss of time, to England. Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, William Mareschal, earl of Strigul, who also passes by the name of earl of Pembroke, and Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, the justiciary, the three most favored ministers of the late king, were already engaged on his side; and the submission or acquiescence of all the other barons put him, without opposition, in possession of the throne.

The king soon returned to France, in order to conduct the war against Philip, and to recover the revolted provinces from his nephew Arthur. The alliances which Richard had formed with the earl of Flanders, and other potent French princes, though they had not been very effectual, still subsisted, and enabled John to defend himself against all the efforts of his enemy. In an action between the French and Flemings, the elect bishop of Cambray was taken prisoner by the former; and when the cardinal of Capua claimed his liberty, Philip, instead of complying, reproached him with the weak efforts which he had employed in favor of the bishop of Beauvais, who was in a like condition. The legate, to show his impartiality, laid at the same time the kingdom of France and the duchy of Normandy under an interdict; and the two kings found themselves obliged to make an exchange of these military prelates.

1200.

Nothing enabled the king to bring this war to a happy issue so much as the selfish, intriguing character of Philip, who acted, in the provinces that had declared for Arthur, without any regard to the interests of that prince. Constantia, seized with a violent jealousy that he intended to usurp the entire dominion of them, found means to carry off her son secretly from Paris: she put him into the hands of his uncle; restored the provinces which had adhered to the young prince; and made him do homage for the duchy of Brittany, which was regarded as a rere-fief of Normandy. From this incident, Philip saw that he could not hope to make any progress against John; and being threatened with an interdict on account of his irregular divorce from Ingelburga, the Danish princess whom he had espoused, he became desirous of concluding a peace with England. After some fruitless conferences, the terms were at last adjusted; and the two monarchy seemed in this treaty to have an intention, besides ending the present quarrel, of preventing all future causes of discord, and of obviating every controversy which could hereafter arise between them. They adjusted the limits of all their territories; mutually secured the interests of their vassals, and, to render the union more durable, John gave his niece, Blanche of Castile, in marriage to Prince Lewis, Philip’s eldest son, and with her the baronies of Issoudun and Graçai, and other fiefs in Berri. Nine barons of the king of England, and as many of the king of France, were guaranties of this treaty; and all of them swore, that, if their sovereign violated any article of it, they would declare themselves against him, and embrace the cause of the injured monarch. John, now secure, as he imagined, on the side of France indulged his passion for Isabella, the daughter and heir of Aymar Tailleffer, count of Angouleme, a lady with whom he had become much enamored. His queen, the heiress of the family of Glocester, was still alive: Isabella was married to the count de la Marche, and was already consigned to the care of that nobleman; though, by reason of her tender years, the marriage had not been consummated. The passion of John made him overlook all these obstacles: he persuaded the count of Angouleme to carry off his daughter from her husband; and having, on some pretence or other, procured a divorce from his own wife, he espoused Isabella; regardless both of the menaces of the pope, who exclaimed against these irregular proceedings, and of the resentment of the injured count, who soon found means of punishing his powerful and insolent rival.

1201.

John had not the art of attaching his barons either by affection or by fear. The count de la Marche, and his brother, the count d'Eu, taking advantage of the general discontent against him, excited commotions in Poictou and Normandy, and obliged the king to have recourse to arms, in order to suppress the insurrection of his vassals. He summoned together the barons of England, and required them to pass the sea under his standard, and to quell the rebels: he found that he possessed as little authority in that kingdom as in his transmarine provinces. The English barons unanimously replied, that they would not attend him on this expedition, unless he would promise to restore and preserve their privileges; the first symptom of a regular association and plan of liberty among those noblemen. But affairs were not yet fully ripe for the revolution projected. John, by menacing the barons, broke the concert; and both engaged many of them to follow him into Normandy, and obliged the rest, who staid behind, to pay him a scutage of two marks on each knight's fee, as the price of their exemption from the service.

The force which John carried abroad with him, and that which joined him in Normandy, rendered him much superior to his malecontent barons; and so much the more, as Philip did not publicly give them any countenance, and seemed as yet determined to persevere steadily in the alliance which he had contracted with England. But the king, elated with his superiority, advanced claims which gave a universal alarm to his vassals, and diffused still wider the general discontent. As the jurisprudence of those times required that the causes in the lord's court should chiefly be decided by duel, he carried along with him certain bravos, whom he retained as champions, and whom he destined to fight with his barons, in order to determine any controversy which he might raise against them. The count de la Marche and other noblemen regarded this proceeding as an affront, as well as an injury; and declared, that they would never draw their swords against men of such inferior quality. The king menaced them with vengeance; but he had not vigor to employ against them the force in his hands, or to prosecute the injustice, by crushing entirely the nobles who opposed it.

This government, equally feeble and violent, gave the injured barons courage, as well as inclination, to carry further their opposition: they appealed to the king of France; complained of the denial of justice in John's court; demanded redress from him as their superior lord; and entreated him to employ his authority, and prevent their final ruin and oppression. Philip perceived his advantage, opened his mind to great projects, interposed in behalf of the French barons, and began to talk in a high and menacing style to the king of England.

1202.

John, who could not disavow Philip's authority, replied, that it belonged to himself first to grant them a trial by their peers in his own court; it was not till he failed in this duty, that he was answerable to his peers in the supreme court of the French king; and he promised, by a fair and equitable judicature, to give satisfaction to his barons. When the nobles, in consequence of this engagement, demanded a safe conduct, that they might attend his court, he at first refused it: upon the renewal of Philip's menaces, he promised to grant their demand; he violated this promise: fresh menaces extorted from him a promise to surrender to Philip the fortresses of Tillíeres and Boutavant, as a security for performance; he again violated this engagement: his enemies, sensible both of his weakness and want of faith combined still closer in the resolution of pushing him to extremities; and a new and powerful ally soon appeared to encourage them in their invasion of this odious and despicable government.

1203.

The young duke of Brittany, who was now rising to man's estate, sensible of the dangerous character of his uncle, determined to seek both his security and elevation by a union with Philip and the malecontent barons. He joined the French army which had begun hostilities against the king of England: he was received with great marks of distinction by Philip; was knighted by him; espoused his daughter Mary; and was invested not only in the duchy of Brittany, but in the counties of Anjou and Maine, which he had formerly resigned to his uncle. Every attempt succeeded with the allies. Tillieres and

Boutavant were taken by Philip, after making a feeble defence: Mortimar and Lyons fell into his hands almost without resistance. That prince next invested Gournai; and opening the sluices of a lake which lay in the neighborhood, poured such a torrent of water into the place, that the garrison deserted it, and the French monarch, without striking a blow, made himself master of that important fortress. The progress of the French arms was rapid, and promised more considerable success than usually in that age attended military enterprises. In answer to every advance which the king made towards peace, Philip still insisted that he should resign all his transmarine dominions to his nephew and rest contented with the kingdom of England; when an event happened, which seemed to turn the scales in favor of John, and to give him a decisive superiority over his enemies.

Young Arthur, fond of military renown, had broken into Poictou at the head of a small army; and passing near Mirebeau, he heard that his grandmother, Queen Eleanor, who had always opposed his interests, was lodged in that place and was protected by a weak garrison and ruinous fortifications. He immediately determined to lay siege to the fortress, and make himself master of her person; but John, roused from his indolence by so pressing an occasion, collected an army of English and Brabançons, and advanced from Normandy with hasty marches to the relief of the queen mother. He fell on Arthur’s camp, before that prince was aware of the danger; dispersed his army; took him prisoner together with the count de la Marche, Geoffrey de Lusignan, and the most considerable of the revolted barons, and returned in triumph to Normandy. Philip, who was lying before Arques, in that duchy, raised the siege and retired upon his approach. The greater part of the prisoners were sent over to England, but Arthur was shut up in the castle of Falaise.

The king had here a conference with his nephew; represented to him the folly of his pretensions; and required him to renounce the French alliance, which had encouraged him to live in a state of enmity with all his family; but the brave, though imprudent youth, rendered more haughty from misfortunes, maintained the justice of his cause; asserted his claim, not only to the French provinces, but to the crown of England; and, in his turn, required the king to restore the son of his elder brother to the possession of his inheritance; John, sensible, from these symptoms of spirit, that the young prince, though now a prisoner, might hereafter prove a dangerous enemy, determined to prevent all future peril by despatching his nephew;

and Arthur was never more heard of. The circumstances which attended this deed of darkness were, no doubt, carefully concealed by the actors, and are variously related by historians; but the most probable account is as follows: The king, it is said, first proposed to William de la Braye, one of his servants, to despatch Arthur; but William replied that he was a gentleman, not a hangman; and he positively refused compliance. Another instrument of murder was found, and was despatched with proper orders to Falaise; but Huber de Bourg, chamberlain to the king, and constable of the castle, feigning that he himself would execute the king's mandate, sent back the assassin, spread the report that the young prince was dead, and publicly performed all the ceremonies of his interment; but finding that the Bretons vowed revenge for the murder, and that all the revolted barons persevered more obstinately in their rebellion, he thought it prudent to reveal the secret, and to inform the world that the duke of Brittany was still alive, and in his custody. This discovery proved fatal to the young prince: John first removed him to the castle of Rouen; and coming in a boat, during the night time, to that place, commanded Arthur to be brought forth to him. The young prince, aware of his danger, and now more subdued by the continuance of his misfortunes, and by the approach of death, threw himself on his knees before hia uncle, and begged for mercy: but the barbarous tyrant, making no reply, stabbed him with his own hands; and fastening a stone to the dead body, threw it into the Seine.

All men were struck with horror at this inhuman deed; and from that moment the king, detested by his subjects, retained a very precarious authority over both the people and the barons in his dominions. The Bretons, enraged at this disappointment in their fond hopes, waged implacable war against him; and fixing the succession of their government, put themselves in a posture to revenge the murder of their sovereign. John had got into his power his niece, Eleanor, sister to Arthur, commonly called 'the damsel of Brittany,' and carrying her over to England, detained her ever after in captivity: [1] but the Bretons, in despair of recovering this princess, chose Alice for their sovereign; a younger daughter of Constantia, by her second marriage with Gui de Thouars; and they intrusted the government of the duchy to that nobleman. The states of Brittany meanwhile carried their complaints before Philip as their liege lord, and demanded justice for the violence committed by John on the person of Arthur, so near a relation, who, notwithstanding the homage which he did to

Normandy, was always regarded as one of the chief vassals of the crown. Philip received their application with pleasure; summoned John to stand a trial before him; and on his non-appearance, passed sentence, with the concurrence of the peers, upon that prince; declared him guilty of felony and parricide; and adjudged him to forfeit to his superior lord all his seigniories and fiefs in France. [2]

The king of France, whose ambitious and active spirit had been hitherto confined, either by the sound policy of Henry, or the martial genius of Richard, seeing now the opportunity favorable against this base and odious prince, embraced the project of expelling the English, or rather the English king, from France, and of annexing to the crown so many considerable fiefs, which, during several ages, had been dismembered from it. Many of the other great vassals, whose jealousy might have interposed, and have obstructed the execution of this project, were not at present in a situation to oppose it; and the rest either looked on with indifference or gave their assistance to this dangerous aggrandizement of their superior lord. The earls of Flanders and Blois were engaged in the holy war: the count of Champagne was an infant, and under the guardianship of Philip: the duchy of Brittany, enraged at the murder of their prince, vigorously promoted all his measures: and the general defection of John’s vassals made every enterprise easy and successful against him. Philip, after taking several castles and fortresses beyond the Loire, which he either garrisoned or dismantled, received the submissions of the count of Alençon, who deserted John, and delivered up all the places under his command to the French; upon which Philip broke up his camp, in order to give the troops some repose after the fatigues of the campaign. John, suddenly collecting some forces, laid siege to Alençon; and Philip, whose dispersed army could not be brought together in time to succor it, saw himself exposed to the disgrace of suffering the oppression of his friend and confederate. But his active and fertile genius found an expedient against this evil. There was held at that very time a tournament at Moret, in the Gatinois; whither all the chief nobility of France and the neighboring countries had resorted, in order to

[1] Trivet, . T. Wykes, . Ypod. Neust. .

[2] W. Heming. . M. West. . Knyghton,

signalize their prowess and address. Philip presented himself before them; craved their assistance in his distress; and pointed out the plains of Alençon, as the most honorable field in which they could display their generosity and martial spirit. Those valorous knights vowed that they would take vengeance on the base parricide, the stain of arms and of chivalry; and putting themselves, with all their retinue, under the command of Philip, instantly marched to raise the siege of Alençon. John, hearing of their approach, fled from before the place; and in the hurry, abandoned all his tents, machines, and baggage to the enemy.

This feeble effort was the last exploit of that slothful and cowardly prince for the defence of his dominions. He thenceforth remained in total inactivity at Rouen; passing ill his time with his young wife in pastimes and amusements, as if his state had been in the most profound tranquillity, or his affairs in the most prosperous condition. If he ever mentioned war, it was only to give himself vaunting airs, which, in the eyes of all men, rendered him still more despicable and ridiculous. “Let the French go on,” said he; “I will retake in a day what it has cost them years to acquire.” [1] His stupidity and indolence appeared so extraordinary that the people endeavored to account for the infatuation by sorcery, and believed that he was thrown into this lethargy by some magic or witchcraft. The English barons, finding that their time was wasted to no purpose, and that they must suffer the disgrace of seeing, without resistance, the progress of the French arms, withdrew from their colors, and secretly returned to their own country, [2] No one thought of defending a man who seemed to have deserted himself; and his subjects regarded his fate with the same indifference, to which in this pressing exigency, they saw him totally abandoned.

[1] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

[2] M. Paris, . M. West. ,]

John, while he neglected all domestic resources, had the meanness to betake himself to a foreign power, whose protection he claimed: he applied to the pope, Innocent III., and entreated him to interpose his authority between him and the French monarch. Innocent, pleased with any occasion of exerting his superiority, sent Philip orders to stop the progress of his arms, and to make peace with the king of England. But the French barons received the message with indignation; disclaimed the temporal authority assumed by the pontiff; and vowed that they would, to the uttermost, assist their prince against all his enemies; Philip, seconding their ardor, proceeded, instead of obeying the pope’s envoys, to lay siege to Chateau Gaillard, the most considerable fortress which remained to guard the frontiers of Normandy.

1204.

Chateau Gaillard was situated partly on an island in the River Seine, partly on a rock opposite to it; and was secured by every advantage which either art or nature could bestow upon it. The late king, having cast his eye on this favorable situation, had spared no labor or expense in fortifying it; and it was defended by Roger de Laci, constable of Chester, a determined officer, at the head of a numerous garrison. Philip, who despaired of taking the place by force proposed to reduce it by famine; and that he might cut off its communication with the neighboring country, he threw a bridge across the Seine, while he himself, with his army blockaded it by land. The earl of Pembroke, the man of greatest vigor and capacity in the English court, formed a plan for breaking through the French intrenchments, and throwing relief into the place. He carried with him an army of four thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry, and suddenly attacked, with great success, Philip’s camp in the night time; having left orders that a fleet of seventy flat-bottomed vessels should sail up the Seine, and fall at the same instant on the bridge. But the wind and the current of the river, by retarding the vessels, disconcerted this plan of operations; and it was morning before the fleet appeared; when Pembroke, though successful in the beginning of the action, was already repulsed with considerable loss, and the king of France had leisure to defend himself against these new assailants, who also met with a repulse. After this misfortune, John made no further efforts for the relief of Château Gaillard: and Philip had all the leisure requisite for conducting and finishing the siege. Roger de Laci defended himself for a twelvemonth with great obstinacy; and having bravely repelled every attack, and patiently borne all the hardships of famine, he was at last overpowered by a sudden assault in the night time, and made prisoner of war, with his garrison. [1] Philip, who knew how to respect valor, even in an enemy, treated him with civility, and gave him the whole city of Paris for the place of his confinement.

[1 Trivet . Gul. Britto, lib. vii. Ann. Waverl, .]

When this bulwark of Normandy was once subdued, all the province lay open to the inroads of Philip; and the king of England despaired of being any longer able to defend it. He secretly prepared vessels for a scandalous flight; and, that the Normans might no longer doubt of his resolution to abandon them, he ordered the fortifications of Pont de l’Arche, Moulineux, and Monfort l’Amauri to be demolished. Not daring to repose confidence in any of his barons whom he believed to be universally engaged in a conspiracy against him, he intrusted the government of the province to Arenas Martin and Lupicaire, two mercenary Brabançons, whom he had retained in his service. Philip, now secure of his prey, pushed his conquests with vigor and success against the dismayed Normans. Falaise was first besieged; and Lupicare, who commanded in this impregnable fortress, after surrendering the place, enlisted himself with his troops in the service of Philip, and carried on hostilities against his ancient master. Caen, Coutance, Seez, Evreux, Baieux, soon fell into the hands of the French monarch, and all the lower Normandy was reduced under his dominion! To forward his enterprises on the other division of the province, Gui de Thouars, at the head of the Bretons, broke into the territory, and took Mount St. Michael, Avranches, and all the other fortresses in that neighborhood. The Normans, who abhorred the French yoke and who would have defended themselves to the last extremity, if their prince had appeared to conduct them, found no resource but in submission; and every city opened its gates as soon as Philip appeared before it. Rouen alone, Arques, and Verneuil determined to maintain their liberties; and formed a confederacy for mutual defence.

1205.

Philip began with the siege of Rouen: the inhabitants were so inflamed with hatred to France, that on the appearance of his army, they fell on all the natives of that country whom they found within their walls, and put tham to death. But after the French king had begun his operations with success, and had taken some of their outworks, the citizens, seeing no resource, offered to capitulate; and demanded only thirty days to advertise their prince of their danger, and to require succors against the enemy. Upon the expiration of the term, as no supply had arrived, they opened their gates to Philip; [1] and the whole province soon after imitated the example, and submitted to the victor. Thus was this important territory reunited to the crown of France, about three centuries after the cession of it by Charles the Simple to Rollo, the first duke; and the Normans, sensible that this conquest was probably final, demanded the privilege of being governed by French laws; which Philip, making a few alterations on the ancient Norman customs, readily granted them. But the French monarch had too much ambition and genius to stop in his present career of success. He carried his victorious army into the western provinces; soon reduced Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and part of Poictou; [2] and in this manner the French crown, during the reign of one able and active prince, received such an accession of power and grandeur, as, in the ordinary course of things, it would have required several ages to attain.

John, on his arrival in England, that he might cover the disgrace of his own conduct, exclaimed loudly against his barons, who, he pretended, had deserted his standard in Normandy; and he arbitrarily extorted from them a seventh of all their movables, as a punishment for the offence. [3]

Soon after he forced them to grant him a scutage of two marks and a half on each knights' fee for an expedition into Normandy; but he did not attempt to execute the service for which he pretended to exact it. Next year, he summoned all the barons of his realm to attend him on this foreign expedition, and collected ships from all the seaports; but meeting with opposition from some of his ministers, and abandoning his design, he dismissed both fleet and army, and then renewed his exclamations against the barons for deserting him. He next put to sea with a small army, and his subjects believed that he was resolved to expose himself to the utmost hazard for the defence and recovery of his dominions; but they were

[1] Trivet, . Ypod. Neust. .]

[2] Trivet, p 149]

[3] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

surprised, after a few days, to see him return again into harbor, without attempting anything.

1206.

In the subsequent season, he had the courage to carry his hostile measures a step farther. Gui de Thouars, who governed Brittany, jealous of the rapid progress made by his ally, the French king, promised to join the king of England with all his forces; and John ventured abroad with a considerable army, and landed at Rochelle. He marched to Angers, which he took and reduced to ashes. But the approach of Philip with an army threw him into a panic; and he immediately made proposals for peace, and fixed a place of interview with his enemy; but instead of keeping this engagement, he stole off with his army, embarked at Rochelle, and returned, loaded with new shame and disgrace, into England. The mediation of the pope procured him at last a truce for two years with the French monarch; [1] almost all the transmarine provinces were ravished from him; and his English barons, though harassed with arbitrary taxes and fruitless expeditions, saw themselves and their country baffled and affronted in every enterprise.

[1] Rymer, vol. i. .]

In an age when personal valor was regarded as the chief accomplishment, such conduct as that of John, always disgraceful, must be exposed to peculiar contempt; and he must thenceforth have expected to rule his turbulent vassals with a very doubtful authority. But the government exercised by the Norman princes had wound up the royal power to so high a pitch, and so much beyond the usual tenor of the feudal constitutions, that it still behoved him to be debased by new affronts and disgraces, ere his barons could entertain the view of conspiring against him in order to retrench his prerogatives.

The church, which at that time declined not a contest with the most powerful and most vigorous monarchs, took first advantage of John’s imbecility; and, with the most aggravating circumstances of insolence and scorn, fixed her yoke upon him.

1207.

The papal chair was then filled by Innocent III., who, having attained that dignity at the age of thirty-seven years, and being endowed with a lofty and enterprising genius gave full scope to his ambition, and attempted, perhaps more openly than any of his predecessors, to convert that superiority which was yielded him by all the European princes, into a real dominion over them. The hierarchy, protected by the Roman pontiff, had already carried to an enormous height its usurpations upon the civil power; but in order to extend them farther, and render them useful to the court of Rome, it was necessary to reduce the ecclesiastics themselves under an absolute monarchy, and to make them entirely dependent on their spiritual leader. For this purpose, Innocent first attempted to impose taxes at pleasure upon the clergy; and in the first year of this century, taking advantage of the popular frenzy for crusades, he sent collectors over all Europe, who levied by his authority the fortieth of all ecclesiastical revenues for the relief of the Holy Land, and received the voluntary contributions of the laity to a like amount. [1] The same year, Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, attempted another innovation, favorable to ecclesiastical and papal power: in the king's absence, he summoned, by his legantine authority, a synod of all the English clergy, contrary to the inhibition of Geoffrey Fitz-Peter, the chief justiciary; and no proper censure was ever passed on this encroachment, the first of the kind, upon the royal power. But a favorable incident soon after happened, which enabled so aspiring a pontiff as Innocent to extend still farther his usurpations on so contemptible a prince as John.

[[1] Rymer, vol. i. .]

Hubert, the primate, died in 1205; and as the monks or canons of Christ-church, Canterbury, possessed a right of voting in the election of their archbishop, some of the juniors of the order, who lay in wait for that event, met clandestinely the very night of Hubert's death; and without any congé d'élire from the king, chose Reginald, their sub-prior, for the successor; installed him in the archiepiscopal throne before midnight; and having enjoined him the strictest secrecy, sent him immediately to Rome, in order to solicit the confirmation of his election. [1] The vanity of Reginald prevailed over his prudence; and he no sooner arrived in Flanders than he revealed to every one the purpose of his journey, which was immediately known in England. [2] The king was enraged at the novelty and temerity of the attempt, in filling so important an office without his knowledge or consent: the suffragan bishops of Canterbury, who were accustomed to concur in the choice of their primate, were no less displeased at the exclusion given them in this election: the senior monks of Christ-church were injured by the irregular proceedings of their juniors: the juniors themselves, ashamed of their conduct, and disgusted with the levity of Reginald, who had broken his engagements with them, were willing to set aside his election: [3] and all men concurred in the design of remedying the false measures which had been taken. But as John knew that this affair would be canvassed before a superior tribunal, where the interposition of royal authority in bestowing ecclesiastical benefices was very invidious; where even the cause of suffragan bishops was not so favorable as that of monks; he determined to make the new election entirely unexceptionable, he submitted the affair wholly to the canons of Christ-church; and departing from the right claimed by his predecessors, ventured no farther than to inform them, privately, that they would do him an acceptable service if they chose John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, for their primate. [4]

[1] M. Paris, p 148. M. West. .]

[2] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

[3] M. West. .]

[4] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

The election of that prelate was accordingly made without a contradictory vote; and the king, to obviate all contests, endeavored to persuade the suffragan bishops not to insist on their claim of concurring in the election; but those prelates, persevering in their pretensions, sent an agent to maintain their cause before Innocent; while the king, and the convent of Christ-church, despatched twelve monks of that order to support, before the same tribunal, the election of the bishop of Norwich.

Thus there lay three different claims before the pope, whom all parties allowed to be the supreme arbiter in the contest The claim of the suffragans, being so opposite to the usual maxims of the papal court, was soon set aside: the election of Reginald was so obviously fraudulent and irregular, that there was no possibility of defending it: but Innocent maintained, that though this election was null and invalid, it ought previously to have been declared such by the sovereign pontiff, before the monks could proceed to a new election; and that the choice of the bishop of Norwich was of course as uncanonical as that of his competitor. [1] Advantage was, therefore taken of this subtlety for introducing a precedent, by which the see of Canterbury, the most important dignity, in the church after the papal throne, should ever after be at the disposal of the court of Rome.

While the pope maintained so many fierce contests, in order to wrest from princes the right of granting investitures, and to exclude laymen from all authority in conferring ecclesiastical benefices, he was supported by the united influence of the clergy; who, aspiring to independence, fought, with all the ardor of ambition, and all the zeal of superstition, under his sacred banners. But no sooner was this point, after a great effusion of blood, and the convulsions of many states, established in some tolerable degree, than the victorious leader as is usual, turned his arms against his own community, and aspired to centre all power in his person. By the invention of reserves, provisions, commendams, and other devices, the pope gradually assumed the right of filling vacant benefices; and the plenitude of his apostolic power, which was not subject to any limitations, supplied all defects of title in the person on whom he bestowed preferment. The canons which regulated elections were purposely rendered intricate and involved: frequent disputes arose among candidates: appeals were every day carried to Rome: the apostolic see, besides reaping pecuniary advantages from these contests, often exercised the power of setting aside both the litigants, and, on pretence of appeasing faction, nominated a third person, who might be more acceptable to the contending parties.

The present controversy about the election to the see of Canterbury afforded Innocent an opportunity of claiming this right; and he failed not to perceive and avail himself of the advantage. He sent for the twelve monks deputed by the convent to maintain the cause of the bishop of Norwich; and commanded them, under the penalty of excommunication, to choose for their primate, Cardinal Langton, an Englishman by birth, but educated in France, and connected, by his interests and attachments, with the see of Rome. [2]

[1] M. Paris, . Chron. de Mailr..]

[2] M. Paris, p 155. Ann. Waverl. . W. Heming. Knyghton, .]

In vain did the monks represent, that they had received from their convent no authority for this purpose; that an election without a previous writ from the king, would be deemed highly irregular and that they were merely agents for another person, whose right they had no power or pretence to abandon. None of them had the courage to persevere in this opposition, except one, Elias de Brantefield: all the rest, overcome by the menaces and authority of the pope, complied with his orders, and made the election required of them.

Innocent, sensible that this flagrant usurpation would be highly resented by the court of England, wrote John a mollifying letter; sent him four golden rings set with precious stones; and endeavored to enhance the value of the present, by informing him of the many mysteries implied in it. He begged him to consider seriously the form of the rings, their number, their matter, and their color. Their form, he said, being round, shadowed out eternity, which had neither beginning nor end; and he ought thence to learn his duty of aspiring from earthly objects to heavenly, from things temporal to tilings eternal. The number four, being a square, denoted steadiness of mind, not to be subverted either by adversity or prosperity, fixed forever on the firm basis of the four cardinal virtues. Gold, which is the matter, being the most precious of metals, signified wisdom, which is the most valuable of all accomplishments, and justly preferred by Solomon to riches, power, and all exterior attainments. The blue color of the sapphire represented faith; the verdure of the emerald, hope; the redness of the ruby, charity; and the splendor of the topaz, good works. [1] By these conceits, Innocent endeavored to repay John for one of the most important prerogatives of his crown, which he had ravished from him; conceits probably admired by Innocent himself. For it is easily possible for a man, especially in a barbarous age, to unite strong talents for business with an absurd taste for literature and the arts.

John was inflamed with the utmost rage when he heard of this attempt of the court of Rome; [2] and he immediately vented his passion on the monks of Christ-church, whom he found inclined to support the election made by their fellows at Rome.

[1] Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris,]

[2] Rymer, vol. i. .]

He sent Fulk de Cantelupe, and Henry de Cornhulle, two knights of his retinue, men of violent tempers and rude manners, to expel them the convent, and take possession of their revenues. These knights entered the monastery with drawn swords, commanded the prior and the monks to depart the kingdom, and menaced them, that in case of disobedience they would instantly burn them with the convent. [1] Innocent, prognosticating, from the violence and imprudence of these measures, that John would finally sink in the contest, persevered the more vigorously in his pretensions, and exhorted the king not to oppose God and the church any longer, nor to persecute that cause for which the holy martyr St. Thomas had sacrificed his life, and which had exalted him equal to the highest saints in heaven; [2] a clear hint to John to profit by the example of his father, and to remember the prejudices and established principles of his subjects, who bore a profound veneration to that martyr, and regarded his merits as the subject of their chief glory and exultation.

Innocent, finding that John was not sufficiently tamed to submission, sent three prelates, the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to intimate, that, if he persevered in his disobedience, the sovereign pontiff would be obliged to lay the kingdom under an interdict. [3] All the other prelates threw themselves on their knees before him, and entreated him, with tears in their eyes, to prevent the scandal of this sentence, by making a speedy submission to his spiritual father, by receiving from his hands the new elected primate, and by restoring the monks of Christ-church to all their rights and possessions. He burst out into the most indecent invectives against the prelates; swore by God’s teeth, his usual oath, that, if the pope presumed to lay his kingdom under an interdict, he would send to him all the bishops and clergy of England, and would confiscate all their estates; and threatened that, if thenceforth he caught any Romans in his dominions, he would put out their eyes, and cut off their noses, in order to set a mark upon them, which might distinguish them from all other nations. [4]

[1] M. Paris, . Trivet, . Ann. Waverl. .]

[2] M. Paris, .]

[3] M. Paris, .]

[4] M. Paris, .]

Amidst all this idle violence, John stood on such bad terms with his nobility, that he never dared to assemble the states of the kingdom, who, in so, just a cause, would probably have adhered to any other monarch, and have defended with vigor the liberties of the nation against these palpable usurpations of the court of Rome. Innocent, therefore, perceiving the king's weakness, fulminated at last the sentence of interdict which he had for some time held suspended over him. [1]

The sentence of interdict was at that time the great instrument of vengeance and policy employed by the court of Rome; was denounced against sovereigns for the lightest offences; and made the guilt of one person involve the ruin of millions, even in their spiritual and eternal welfare. The execution of it was calculated to strike the senses in the highest degree, and to operate with irresistible force on the superstitious minds of the people. The nation was of a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion: the altars were despoiled of their ornaments: the crosses, the relics, the images, the statues of the saints were laid on the ground; and as if the air itself were profaned, and might pollute them by its contact, the priests carefully covered them up, even from their own approach and veneration. The use of bells entirely ceased in all the churches: the bells themselves were removed from the steeples, and laid on the ground with the other sacred utensils. Mass was celebrated with shut doors; and none but the priests were admitted to that holy institution. The laity partook of no religious rite, except baptism to new-born infants, and the communion to the dying: the dead were not interred in consecrated ground: they were thrown into ditches, or buried in common fields; and their obsequies were not attended with prayers or any hallowed ceremony Marriage was celebrated in the churchyards; [2] and that every action in life might bear the marks of this dreadful situation, the people were prohibited the use of meat, as in Lent, or times of the highest penance; were debarred from all pleasures and entertainments; and were forbidden even to salute each other, or so much as to shave their beards, and give any decent attention to their person and apparel. Every circumstance carried symptoms of the deepest distress, and of the most immediate apprehension of divine vengeance and indignation.

The king, that he might oppose the temporal to their spiritual terrors, immediately, from his own authority, confiscated the estates of all the clergy who obeyed the interdict; [3] banished the prelates, confined the monks in their convents, and gave them only such a small allowance from their own estates, as would suffice to provide them with food and raiment.

[1] M. Paris, . Trivet, . Ann. Waverl. . M. West. .]

[2] Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .]

[3] Ann. Waverl.]

He treated with the utmost rigor all Langton's adherents, and every one that showed any disposition to obey the commands of Rome: and in order to distress the clergy in the tenderest point, and at the same time expose them to reproach and ridicule, he threw into prison all their concubines, and required high fines as the price of their liberty. [1]

After the canons which established the celibacy of the clergy were, by the zealous endeavors of Archbishop Anselrn, more rigorously executed in England, the ecclesiastics gave, almost universally and avowedly, into the use of concubinage and the court of Rome, which had no interest in prohibiting this practice, made very slight opposition to it. The custom was become so prevalent, that, in some cantons of Switzerland, before the reformation, the laws not only permitted, but, to avoid scandal, enjoined the use of concubines to the younger clergy; [2] and it was usual every where for priests to apply to the ordinary, and obtain from him a formal liberty for this indulgence. The bishop commonly took care to prevent the practice from degenerating into licentiousness: he confined the priest to the use of one woman, required him to be constant to her bed, obliged him to provide for her subsistence and that of her children; and, though the offspring was, in the eye of the law, deemed illegitimate, this commerce was really a kind of inferior marriage, such as is still practised in Germany among the nobles;

and may be regarded by the candid, as an appeal from the tyranny of civil and ecclesiastical institutions, to the more virtuous and more unerring laws of nature.

[1] M. Paris, . Ann. Waverl. .]

[2] Padre Paolo, Hist. Cone. Prid. lib. i.]

The quarrel between the king and the see of Rome continued for some years; and though many of the clergy, from the fear of punishment, obeyed the orders of John, and celebrated divine service, they complied with the utmost reluctance, and were regarded, both by themselves and the people, as men who betrayed their principles, and sacrificed their conscience to temporal regards and interests. During this violent situation, the king, in order to give a lustre to his government, attempted military expeditions against Scotland, against Ireland, against the Welsh: [1] and he commonly prevailed, more from the weakness of his enemies than from his own vigor or abilities. Meanwhile, the danger to which hia government stood continually exposed from the discontents of the ecclesiastics, increased his natural propension to tyranny; and he seems to have even wantonly disgusted all orders of men, especially his nobles, from whom alone he could reasonably expect support and assistance. He dishonored their families by his licentious amours; he published edicts, prohibiting them from hunting feathered game, and thereby restrained them from their favorite occupation and amusement; [2] he ordered all the hedges and fences near his forests to be levelled, that his deer might have more ready access into the fields for pasture; and he continually loaded the nation with arbitrary impositions.

[1] W. Heming. . Ypod. Neust . Knyghton, M. West .]

1208.

Conscious of the general hatred which he had incurred, he required his nobility to give him hostages for security of their allegiance; and they were obliged to put in his hands their sons, nephews, or near relations. When his messengers came with like orders to the castle of William de Braouse, a baron of great note, the lady of that nobleman replied, that she would never intrust her son into the hands of one who had murdered his own nephew, while in his custody. Her husband reproved her for the severity of this speech; but, sensible of his danger, he immediately fled with his wife and son into Ireland, where he endeavored to conceal himself. Tha king discovered the unhappy family in their retreat; seized the wife and son, whom he starved to death in prison; and the baron himself narrowly escaped, by flying into France.

1209.

The court of Rome had artfully contrived a gradation of sentences; by which it kept offenders in awe; still afforded them an opportunity of preventing the next anathema by submission; and, in case of their obstinacy, was able to refresh the horror of the people against them, by new denunciations of the wrath and vengeance of Heaven. As the sentence of interdict had not produced the desired effect on John, and as his people, though extremely discontented had hitherto been restrained from rising in open rebellion against him, he was soon to look for the sentence of excommunication; and he had reason to apprehend, that, notwithstanding all his precautions, the most dangerous consequences might ensue from it. He was witness of the other scenes which at that very time were acting in Europe, and which displayed the unbounded and uncontrolled power of the papacy. Innocent, far from being dismayed at his contests with the king of England, had excommunicated the emperor Otho, John’s nephew; [1] and soon brought that powerful and haughty prince to submit to his authority. He published a crusade against the Albigenses, a species of enthusiasts in the south of France, whom he denominated heretics; because, like other enthusiasts, they neglected the rites of the church, and opposed the power and influence of the clergy: the people from all parts of Europe, moved by their superstition and their passion for wars and adventures, flocked to his standard: Simon de Montfort, the general of the crusade, acquired to himself a sovereignty in these provinces: the count of Toulouse, who protected, or perhaps only tolerated, the Albigenses, was stripped of his dominions: and these sectaries themselves, though the most innocent and inoffensive of mankind, were exterminated with all the circumstances of extreme violence and barbarity. Here were therefore both an army and a general, dangerous from their zeal and valor, who might be directed to act against John; and Innocent, after keeping the thunder long suspended, gave at last authority to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to fulminate the sentence of excommunication against him. [2] These prelates obeyed; though their brethren were deterred from publishing, as the pope required of them, the sentence in the several churches of their dioceses.

No sooner was the excommunication known, than the effects of it appeared. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Norwich, who was intrusted with a considerable office in the court of exchequer, being informed of it while sitting on the bench observed to his colleagues the danger of serving under an excommunicated king; and he immediately left his chair, and departed the court. John gave orders to seize him, to throw him into prison, to cover his head with a great leaden cope, and by this and other severe usage, he soon put an end to his life: [3] nor was there any thing wanting to Geoffrey, except the dignity and rank of Becket, to exalt him to an equal station in heaven with that great and celebrated martyr.

[1] M. Paris, . Trivet, . M, West. p. 269.]

[2] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

[3] M. Paris, .]

Hugh de Wells, the chancellor, being elected by the king's appointment bishop of Lincoln, upon a vacancy in that see, desired leave to go abroad, in order to receive consecration from the archbishop of Rouen; but he no sooner reached France, than he hastened to Pontigny, where Langton then resided, and paid submissions to him as his primate. The bishops, finding themselves exposed either to the jealousy of the king or hatred of the people, gradually stole out of the kingdom; and at last there remained only three prelates to perform the functions of the episcopal office. [1] Many of the nobility, terrified by John's tyranny, and obnoxious to him on different accounts, imitated the example of the bishops; and most of the others, who remained, were with reason suspected of having secretly entered into a confederacy against him. [2] John was alarmed at his dangerous situation; a situation which prudence, vigor, and popularity might formerly have prevented, but which no virtues or abilities were now sufficient to retrieve. He desired a conference with Langton at Dover; offered to acknowledge him as primate, to submit to the pope, to restore the exiled clergy, even to pay them a limited sum as a compensation for the rents of their confiscated estates. But Langton, perceiving his advantage, was not satisfied with these concessions: he demanded that full restitution and reparation should be made to all the clergy; a condition so exorbitant, that the king, who probably had not the power of fulfilling it, and who foresaw that this estimation of damages might amount to an immense sum, finally broke off the conference. [3]

1212.

The next gradation of papal sentences was to absolve John’s subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance, and to declare every one excommunicated who had any commerce with him, in public or in private; at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation: [4] and this sentence was accordingly, with all imaginable solemnity, pronounced against him. But as John still persevered in his contumacy, there remained nothing but the sentence of deposition; which, though intimately connected with the former had been distinguished from it by the artifice of the court of Rome; and Innocent determined to dart this last thunderbolt against the refractory monarch.

But as a sentence of this kind required an armed force to execute it, the pontiff, casting his eyes around, fixed at last on Philip, king of France, as the person into whose powerful hand he could most properly intrust that

[1] Ann. Waverl. . Ann. Marg. .]

[2] M. Paris, . M. West , 271.]

[3] Ann. Waverl. .]

[4] M. Paris, . M. West. .]

weapon, the ultimate resource of his ghostly authority. And he offered the monarch, besides the remission of all his sins, and endless spiritual benefits, the property and possession of the kingdom of England, as the reward of his labor. [1]

1213.

It was the common concern of all princes to oppose these exorbitant pretensions of the Roman pontiff, by which they themselves were rendered vassals, and vassals totally dependent, of the papal crown: yet even Philip, the most able monarch of the age, was seduced by present interest, and by the prospect of so tempting a prize, to accept this liberal offer of the pontiff, and thereby to ratify that authority which, if he ever opposed its boundless usurpations, might next day tumble him from the throne. He levied a great army; summoned all the vassals of the crown to attend him at Rouen; collected a fleet of one thousand seven hundred vessels, great and small, in the seaports of Normandy and Picardy; and partly from the zealous spirit of the age, partly from the personal regard universally paid him, prepared a force which seemed equal to the greatness of his enterprise. The king, on the other hand, issued out writs, requiring the attendance of all his military tenants at Dover, and even of all able-bodied men, to defend the kingdom in this dangerous extremity. A great number appeared; and he selected an army of sixty thousand men; a power invincible, had they been united in affection to their prince, and animated with a becoming zeal for the defence of their native country. [2]

But the people were swayed by superstition, and regarded their king with horror, as anathematized by papal censures: the barons, besides lying under the same prejudices, were all disgusted by his tyranny, and were, many of them, suspected of holding a secret correspondence with the enemy: and the incapacity and cowardice of the king himself, ill fitted to contend with those mighty difficulties, made men prognosticate the most fatal effects from the French invasion.

[1] M. Paris, . M. West, .]

[2] M. Paris, . M. West, .]

Pandolf, whom the pope had chosen for his legate, and appointed to head this important expedition, had, before he left Rome, applied for a secret conference with his master, and had asked him, whether, if the king of England, in this desperate situation, were willing to submit to the apostolic see, the church should, without the consent of Philip, grant him any terms of accommodation. [1] Innocent, expecting from his agreement with a prince so abject both in character and fortune, more advantages than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch, who, after such mighty acquisitions, might become too haughty to be bound by spiritual chains, explained to Pandolf the conditions on which he was willing to be reconciled to the king of England. The legate, therefore, as soon as he arrived in the north of France, sent over two knights templars to desire an interview with John at Dover, which was readily granted: he there represented to him in such strong, and probably in such true colors, his lost condition, the disaffection of his subjects, the secret combination of his vassals against him, the mighty armament of France, that John yielded at discretion, [2] and subscribed to all the conditions which Pandolf was pleased to impose upon him. He promised, among other articles, that he would submit himself entirely to the judgment of the pope; that he would acknowledge Langton for primate; that he would restore all the exiled clergy and laity who had been banished on account of the contest; that he would make them full restitution of their goods, and compensation for all damages, and instantly consign eight thousand pounds, in part of payment; and that every one outlawed or imprisoned for his adherence to the pope, should immediately be received into grace and favor. [3] Four barons swore, along with the king, to the observance of this ignominious treaty. [4]

[1] M. Paris, .]

[2] M. West. .]

[3] Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, . Annal Burt. .]

[4] Rymer, vol. i . M. Paris, .]

But the ignominy of the king was not yet carried to its full height. Pandolf required him, as the first trial of obedience, to resign his kingdom to the church; and he persuaded him, that he could nowise so effectually disappoint the French invasion, as by thus putting himself under the immediate protection of the apostolic see. John, lying under the agonies of present terror, made no scruple of submitting to this condition He passed a charter, in which he said, that, not constrained by fear, but of his own free will, and by the common advice and consent of his barons, he had, for remission of hia own sins and those of his family, resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to Pope Innocent and his successors in the apostolic chair: he agreed to hold these dominions as feudatory of the church of Rome, by the annual payment of a thousand marks; seven hundred for England, three hundred for Ireland: and he stipulated, that, if he or his successors should ever presume to revoke or infringe this charter, they should instantly, except upon admonition they repented of their offence, forfeit all right to their dominions. [1]

[1] Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, .

In consequence of this agreement, John did homage to Pandolf as the pope's legate, with all the submissive rites which the feudal law required of vassals before their liege lord and superior. He came disarmed into the legate's presence, who was seated on a throne; he flung himself on his knees before him; he lifted up his joined hands, and put them within those of Pandolf; he swore fealty to the pope; and he paid part of the tribute which he owed for his kingdom as the patrimony of St. Peter. The legate, elated by this supreme triumph of sacerdotal power, could not forbear discovering extravagant symptoms of joy and exultation: he trampled on the money, which was laid at his feet as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom; an insolence of which, however offensive to all the English, no one present, except the archbishop of Dublin, dared to take any notice. But though Pandolf had brought the king to submit to these base conditions, he still refused to free him from the excommunication and interdict, till an estimation should be taken of the losses of the ecclesiastics, and full compensation and restitution should be made them.

John, reduced to this abject situation under a foreign power, still showed the same disposition to tyrannize over his subjects, which had been the chief cause of all his misfortunes. One Peter of Pomfret, a hermit, had foretold that the king, this very year, should lose his crown; and for that rash prophecy, he had been thrown into prison in Corfe castle. Johfi now determined to bring him to punishment as an impostor; and though the man pleaded that his prophecy was fulfilled, and that the king had lost the royal and independent crown which he formerly wore, the defence was supposed to aggravate his guilt: he was dragged at horses' tails to the town of Warham, and there hanged on a gibbet with his son. [1]

When Pandolf, after receiving the homage of John, returned to France, he congratulated Philip on the success of his pious enterprise; and informed him that John, moved by the terror of the French arms, had now come to a just sense of his guilt; had returned to obedience under the apostolic see; had even consented to do homage to the pope for his dominions; and having thus made his kingdom a part of St. Peter's patrimony, had rendered it impossible for any Christian prince, without the most manifest and most flagrant impiety, to attack him. [2] Philip was enraged on receiving this intelligence: he exclaimed, that having, at the pope's instigation, undertaken an expedition which had cost him above sixty thousand pounds sterling, he was frustrated of his purpose, at the time when its success was become infallible: he complained that all the expense had fallen upon him; all the advantages had accrued to Innocent: he threatened to be no longer the dupe of these hypocritical pretences: and assembling his vassals, he laid before them the ill treatment which he had received, exposed the interested and fraudulent conduct of the pope, and required their assistance to execute his enterprise against England, in which he told them, that notwithstanding the inhibitions and menaces of the legate, he was determined to persevere. The French barons were in that age little less ignorant and superstitious than the English: yet, so much does the influence of those religious principles depend on the present dispositions of men! they all vowed to follow their prince on his intended expedition, and were resolute not to be disappointed of that glory and those riches which they had long expected from this enterprise. The earl of Flanders alone, who had previously formed a secret treaty with John, declaring against the injustice and impiety of the undertaking, retired with his forces; [3] and Philip, that he might not leave so dangerous an enemy behind him, first turned his arms against the dominions of that prince.

[1] M. Paris, . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .]

[2] Trivet, .]

[3] M. Paris, .]

Meanwhile the English fleet was assembled under the earl of Saltsbury, the king's natural brother; and, though inferior in number, received orders to attack the French in their harbors. Salisbury performed this service with so much success that he took three hundred ships; destroyed a hundred more; [1] and Philip, finding it impossible to prevent the rest from falling into the hands of the enemy, set fire to them himself, and thereby rendered it impossible for him to proceed any farther in his enterprise.

John, exulting in his present security, insensible to his past disgrace, was so elated with this success, that he thought of no less than invading France in his turn, and recovering all those provinces which the prosperous arms of Philip had formerly ravished from him. He proposed this expedition to the barons, who were already assembled for the defence of the kingdom. But the English nobles both hated and despised their prince: they prognosticated no success to any enterprise conducted by a such a leader: and, pretending that their time of service was elapsed, and all their previsions exhausted, they refused to second his undertaking. [2] The king, however, resolute in his purpose, embarked with a few followers, and sailed to Jersey, in the foolish expectation that the barons would at last be ashamed to stay behind. [3] But finding himself disappointed, he returned to England; and raising some troops, threatened to take vengeance on all his nobles for their desertion and disobedience. The archbishop of Canterbury, who was in a confederacy with the barons here interposed; strictly inhibited the king from thinking of such an attempt; and threatened him with a renewal of the sentence of excommunication if he pretended to levy war upon any of his subjects before the kingdom were freed from the sentence of interdict. [4]

[1] M. Paris, . Chron. Dunst. vci i. . Trivet,]

[2] M. Paris, .]

[3] M. Paris, .]

[4] M. Paris, .]

The church had recalled the several anathemas pronounced against John, by the same gradual progress with which she had at first issued them. By receiving his homage, and admitting him to the rank of a vassal, his deposition had been virtually annulled, and his subjects were again bound by their oaths of allegiance. The exiled prelates had then returned in great triumph, with Langton at their head; and the king, hearing of their approach, went forth to meet them, and throwing himself on the ground before them, he entreated them with tears to have compassion on him and the kingdom of England. [1] The primate, seeing these marks of sincere penitence, led him to the chapter-house of Winchester, and there administered an oath to him, by which he again swore fealty and obedience to Pope Innocent and his successors; promised to love, maintain, and defend holy church and the clergy; engaged that he would reestablish the good laws of his predecessors, particularly those of St. Edward, and would abolish the wicked ones; and expressed his resolution of maintaining justice and right in all his dominions. [2] The primate next gave him absolution in the requisite forms, and admitted him to dine with him, to the great joy of all the people. The sentence of interdict, however, was still upheld against the kingdom. A new legate, Nicholas, bishop of Frescati, came into England in the room of Pandolf; and he declared it to be the pope’s intentions never to loosen that sentence till full restitution were made to the clergy of every thing taken from them, and ample reparation for all damages which they had Sustained. He only permitted mass to be said with a low voice in the churches, till those losses and damages could be estimated to the satisfaction of the parties. Certain barons were appointed to take an account of the claims; and John was astonished at the greatness of the sums to which the clergy made their losses to amount. No less than twenty thousand marks were demanded by the monks of Canterbury alone; twenty-three thousand for the see of Lincoln; and the king, finding these pretensions to be exorbitant and endless, offered the clergy the sum of a hundred thousand marks for a final acquittal, The clergy rejected the offer with disdain; but the pope, willing to favor his new vassal, whom he found zealous in his declarations of fealty, and regular in paying the stipulated tribute to Rome, directed his legate to accept of forty thousand. The issue of the whole was, that the bishops and considerable abbots got reparation beyond what they had any title to demand; the inferior clergy were obliged to sit down contented with their losses: and the king, after the interdict was taken off, renewed, in the most solemn manner, and by a new charter sealed with gold, his professions of homage and obedience to the see of Rome.

[1 M. Paris, . Ann. Waverl. .]

[2 M. Paris, .]

1214.

When this vexatious affair was at last brought to a conclusion, the king, as if he had nothing further to attend but triumphs and victories, went over to Poictou, which still acknowledged his authority; [1] and he carried war into Philip's dominions.

[1 Queen Eleanor died in 1203 or 1204.]

He besieged a castle near Angiers; but the approach of Prince Lewis, Philip's son, obliged him to raise the siege with such precipitation, that he left his tents, machines, and baggage behind him; and he returned to England with disgrace. About the same time, he heard of the great and decisive victory gained by the king of France at Bovines over the emperor Otho, who had entered France at the head of one hundred and fifty thousand Germans; a victory which established forever the glory of Philip, and gave full security to all his dominions. John could, therefore, think henceforth of nothing further than of ruling peaceably his own kingdom; and his close connections with the pope, which he was determined at any price to maintain, insured him, as he imagined the certain attainment of that object. But the last and most grievous scene of this prince's misfortunes still awaited him; and he was destined to pass through a series of more humiliating circumstances than had ever yet fallen to the lot of any other monarch.

The introduction of the feudal law into England by William the Conqueror had much infringed the liberties, however imperfect, enjoyed by the Anglo-Saxons in their ancient government, and had reduced the whole people to a state of vassalage under the king or barons, and even the greater part of them to a state of real slavery, the necessity, also, of intrusting great power in the hands of a prince, who was to maintain military dominion over a vanquished nation, had engaged the Norman barons to submit to a more severe and absolute prerogative than that to which men of their rank, in other feudal governments, were commonly subjected. The power of the crown, once raised to a high pitch, was not easily reduced; and the nation, during the course of a hundred and fifty years, was governed by an authority unknown, in the same degree, to all the kingdoms founded by the northern conquerors. Henry I., that he might allure the people to give an exclusion to his elder brother Robert, had granted them a charter, favorable in many particulars to their liberties; Stephen had renewed the grant; Henry II. had confirmed it: but the concessions of all these princes had still remained without effect; and the same unlimited, at least in regular authority, continued to be exercised both by them and their successors. The only happiness was, that arms were never yet ravished from the hands of the barons and people: the nation, by a great confederacy, might still vindicate its liberties: and nothing was more likely than the character, conduct, and fortunes of the reigning prince, to produce such a general combination against him. Equally odious and contemptible, both in public and private life, he affronted the barons by his insolence, dishonored their families by his gallantries, enraged them by his tyranny, and gave discontent to all ranks of men by his endless exactions and impositions. [1] The effect of these lawless practices had already appeared in the general demand made by the barons of a restoration of their privileges; and after he had reconciled himself to the pope, by abandoning the independence of the kingdom, he appeared to all his subjects in so mean a light, that they universally thought they might with safety and honor insist upon their pretensions.

But nothing forwarded this confederacy so much as the concurrence of Langton, archbishop of Canterbury; a man whose memory, though he was obtruded on the nation by a palpable encroachment of the see of Rome, ought always to be respected by the English. This prelate, whether he was moved by the generosity of his nature and his affection to public good; or had entertained an animosity against John, on account of the long opposition made by that prince to his election; or thought that an acquisition of liberty to the people would serve to increase and secure the privileges of the church; had formed the plan of reforming the government, and had prepared the way for that great innovation, by inserting those singular clauses above mentioned, in the oath which he administered to the king, before he would absolve him from the sentence of excommunication. Soon after, in a private meeting of some principal barons at London, he showed them a copy of Henry I.'s charter, which, he said, he had happily found in a monastery; and he exhorted them to insist on the renewal and observance of it: the barons swore that they would sooner lose their lives than depart from so reasonable a demand. [2]

[1] Chron. Mailr. . T. Wykes, . Ann. Waverl. W. Heming. .]

[2] M. Paris, .]

The confederacy began now to spread wider, and to comprehend almost all the barons in England; and a new and more numerous meeting was summoned by Langton at St. Edmondsbury, under color of devotion. He again produced to the assembly the old charter of Henry; renewed his exhortations of unanimity and vigor in the prosecution of their purpose; and represented in the strongest colors the tyranny to which they had so long been subjected, and from which it now behoved them to free themselves and their posterity. [1] The barons, inflamed by his eloquence, incited by the sense of their own wrongs, and encouraged by the appearance of their power and numbers, solemnly took an oath, before the high altar, to adhere to each other, to insist on their demands, and to make endless war on the king till he should submit to grant them. [2] They agreed that, after the festival of Christmas, they would prefer in a body their common petition; and in the mean time they separated, after mutually engaging that they would put themselves in a posture of defence, would enlist men and purchase arms, and would supply their castles with the necessary provisions.

1215.

The barons appeared in London on the day appointed, and demanded of the king, that, in consequence of his own oath before the primate, as well as in deference to their just rights, he should grant them a renewal of Henry’s charter, and a confirmation of the laws of St. Edward. The king, alarmed with their zeal and unanimity, as well as with their power, required a delay; promised that, at the festival of Easter, he would give them a positive answer to their petition; and offered them the archbishop of Canterbury, the bishop of Ely, and the earl of Pembroke, the mareschal, as sureties for his fulfilling this engagement. [3] The barons accepted of the terms, and peaceably returned to their castles.

During this interval, John, in order to break or subdue the league of his barons, endeavored to avail himself of the ecclesiastical power, of whose influence he had, from his own recent misfortunes, had such fatal experience. He granted to the clergy a charter, relinquishing forever that important prerogative for which his father and all his ancestors had zealously contended; yielding to them the free election on all vacancies; reserving only the power to issue a conge d’élire and to subjoin a confirmation of the election; and declaring that, if either of these were withheld, the choice should nevertheless be deemed just and valid. [1] He made a vow to lead an army into Palestine against the infidels, and he took on him the cross, in hopes that he should receive from the church that protection which she tendered to every one that had entered into this sacred and meritorious engagement. [2] And he sent to Rome his agent, William de Mauclere, in order to appeal to the pope against the violence of his barons, and procure him a favorable sentence from that powerful tribunal. [3] The barons, also, were not negligent on their part in endeavoring to engage the pope in their interests: they despatched Eustace de Vescie to Rome; laid

[1] M. Paris, .]

[2] M. Paris, ,]

[3] M Paris, p 176. M. West.]

their case before Innocent as their feudal lord; and petitioned him to interpose his authority with the king, and oblige him to restore and confirm all their just and undoubted privileges. [4]

Innocent beheld with regret the disturbances which had arisen in England, and was much inclined to favor John in his pretensions. He had no hopes of retaining and extending his newly-acquired superiority over that kingdom, but by supporting so base and degenerate a prince, who was willing to sacrifice every consideration to his present safety: and he foresaw, that if the administration should fall into the hands of those gallant and high-spirited barons, they would vindicate the honor, liberty, and independence of the nation, with the same ardor which they now exerted in defence of their own. He wrote letters, therefore, to the prelates, to the nobility, and to the king himself. He exhorted the first to employ their good offices in conciliating peace between the contending parties, and putting an end to civil discord: to the second he expressed his disapprobation of their conduct in employing force to extort concessions from their reluctant sovereign: the last lie advised to treat his nobles with grace and indulgence, and to grant them such of their demands as should appear just and reasonable.

The barons easily saw, from the tenor of these letters, that they must reckon on having the pope, as well as the king, for their adversary; but they had already advanced too far to recede from their pretensions, and their passions were so deeply engaged, that it exceeded even the power of superstition itself any longer to control them. They also foresaw, that the thunders of Rome, when not seconded by the efforts of the English ecclesiastics, would be of small avail against them and they perceived that

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[1] Rymer, vol. i. .

[2] Rymer, vol. i. . Trivet, . T. Wykes, . M West. .

[3] Rymer, vol i.

[4] Rymer, vol i.

the most considerable of the prelates, as well as all the inferior clergy, professed the highest approbation of their cause. Besides that these men were seized with the national passion for laws and liberty, blessings of which they themselves expected to partake, there concurred very powerful causes to loosen their devoted attachment to the apostolic see. It appeared, from the late usurpations of the Roman pontiff, that he pretended to reap alone all the advantages accruing from that victory, which under his banners, though at their own peril, they had every where obtained over the civil magistrate. The pope assumed a despotic power over all the churches; their particular customs, privileges, and immunities were treated with disdain; even the canons of general councils were set aside by his dispensing power; the whole administration of the church was centred in the court of Rome; all preferments ran, of course, in the same channel; and the provincial clergy saw, at least felt, that there was a necessity for limiting these pretensions. The legate, Nicholas, in filling those numerous vacancies which had fallen in England during an interdict of six years, had proceeded in the most arbitrary manner; and had paid no regard, in conferring dignities, to personal merit, to rank, to the inclination of the electors, or to the customs of the country. The English church was universally disgusted; and Langton himself, though he owed his elevation to an encroachment of the Romish see, was no sooner established in his high office, than he became jealous of the privileges annexed to it, and formed attachments with the country subjected to his jurisdiction. These causes, though they opened slowly the eyes of men, failed not to produce their effect: they set bounds to the usurpations of the papacy; the tide first stopped, and then turned against the sovereign pontiff; and it is otherwise inconceivable, how that age, so prone to superstition, and so sunk in ignorance, or rather so devoted to a spurious erudition, could have escaped falling into an absolute and total slavery under the court of Rome.

About the time that the pope’s letters arrived in England, The malevolent barons, on the approach of the festival of Easter, when they were to expect the king’s answer to their petition, met by agreement at Stamford; and they assembled a force, consisting of above two thousand knights, besides then retainers and inferior persons without number. Elated with their power, they advanced in a body to Brackley, within fifteen miles of Oxford, the place where the court then resided; and they there received a message from the king, by the archbishop of Canterbury and the earl of Pembroke, desiring to know what those liberties were which they so zealously challenged from their sovereign. They delivered to these messengers a schedule, containing the chief articles of their demands; which was no sooner shown to the king, than he burst into a furious passion, and asked why the barons did not also demand of him his kingdom; swearing that he would never grant them such liberties as must reduce himself to slavery. [1]

No sooner were the confederated nobles informed of John’s reply, than they chose Robert Fitz-Walter their general, whom they called “the mareschal of the army of God and of holy church;” and they proceeded without further ceremony to levy war upon the king. They besieged the castle of Northampton during fifteen days, though without success: [2] the gates of Bedford castle were willingly opened to them by William Beauchamp, its owner: they advanced to Ware in their way to London, where they held a correspondence with the principal citizens: they were received without opposition into that capital: and finding now the great superiority of their force, they issued proclamations, requiring the other barons to join them, and menacing them, in case of refusal or delay, with committing devastation on their houses and estates. [3] In order to show what might be expected from their prosperous arms, they made incursions from London, and laid waste the king’s parks and palaces; and all the barons, who had hitherto carried the semblance of supporting the royal party, were glad of this pretence for openly joining a cause which they always had secretly favored. The king was left at Odiham, in Hampshire, with a poor retinue of only seven knights; and after trying several expedients to elude the blow, after offering to refer all differences to the pope alone, or to eight barons, four to be chosen by himself, and four by the confederates, [4] he found himself at last obliged to submit at discretion.

[1] M. Paris, .]

[2] M. Paris, .]

[3] M. Paris, .]

[4] Rymer, vol. i. .]

A conference between the king and the barons was appointed at Runnemede, between Windsor and Staines; a place which has ever since been extremely celebrated on account of this great event. The two parties encamped apart, like open enemies; and after a debate of a few days, the king, with a facility somewhat suspicious, signed and sealed the charter which was required of him. This famous deed, commonly called the *Great Charter*, either granted or secured very important liberties and privileges to every order of men in the kingdom; to the clergy, to the barons, and to the people.

The freedom of elections was secured to the clergy: the former charter of the king was confirmed, by which the necessity of a royal conge d'élire and confirmation was superseded: all check upon appeals to Rome was removed, by the allowance granted every man to depart the kingdom at pleasure: and the fines to be imposed on the clergy, for any offence, were ordained to be proportional to their lay estates, not to their ecclesiastical benefices.

The privileges granted to the barons were either abatements in the rigor of the feudal law, or determinations in points which had been left by that law, or had become, by practice, arbitrary and ambiguous. The reliefs of heirs succeeding to a military fee were ascertained; an earl's and baron's at a hundred marks, a knight's at a hundred shillings. It was ordained by the charter that, if the heir be a minor, he shall, immediately upon his majority, enter upon his estate, without paying any relief: the king shall not sell his wardship; he shall levy only reasonable profits upon the estate, without committing waste, or hurting the property: he shall uphold the castles, houses, mills, parks, and ponds, and if he commit the guardianship of the estate to the sheriff or any other, he shall previously oblige them to find surety to the same purpose. During the minority of a baron, while his lands are in wardship, and are not in his own possession, no debt which he owes to the Jews shall bear any interest. Heirs shall be married without disparagement; and before the marriage be contracted, the nearest relations of the person shall be informed of it. A widow, without paying any relief, shall enter upon her dower, the third part of her husband's rents: she shall not be compelled to marry, so long as she chooses to continue single; she shall only give security never to marry without her lord's consent. The king shall not claim the wardship of any minor who holds lands by military tenure, of a baron, on pretence that he also holds lands of the crown, by soccage or any other tenure. Scutages shall be estimated at the same rate as in the time of Henry I.; and no scutage or aid, except in the three general feudal cases, the king's captivity, the knighting of his eldest son, and the marrying of his eldest daughter, shall be imposed but by the great council of the kingdom; the prelates, earls, and great barons, shall be called to this great council, each by a particular writ; the lesser barons by a general summons of the sheriff. The king shall not seize any baron's land for a debt to the crown if the baron possesses as many goods and chattels as are sufficient to discharge the debt. No man shall be obliged to perform more service for his fee than he is bound to by his tenure. No governor or constable of a castle shall oblige any knight to give money for castle guard, if the knight be willing to perform the service in person, or by another able-bodied man; and if the knight be in the field himself, by the king's command, he shall be exempted from all other service of this nature. No vassal shall be allowed to sell so much of his land as to incapacitate himself from performing his service to his lord.

These were the principal articles, calculated for the interest of the barons; and had the charter contained nothing further, national happiness and liberty had been very little promoted by it, as it would only have tended to increase the power and independence of an order of men who were already too powerful, and whose yoke might have become more heavy on the people than even that of an absolute monarch. But the barons, who alone drew and imposed on the prince this memorable charter, were necessitated to insert in it other claused of a more extensive and more beneficent nature: they could not expect the concurrence of the people without comprehending, together with their own, the interest of inferior ranks of men; and all provisions, which the barons, for their own sake, were obliged to make, in order to insure the free and equitable administration of justice, tended directly to the benefit of the whole community. The following were the principal clauses of this nature.

It was ordained that all the privileges and immunities above mentioned, granted to the barons against the king, should be extended by the barons to their inferior vassals. The king bound himself not to grant any writ, empowering a baron to levy aids from his vassals, except in the three feudal cases. One weight and one measure shall be established throughout the kingdom. Merchants shall be allowed to transact all business without being exposed to any arbitrary tolls and impositions; they and all free men shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom and return to it at pleasure: London, and all cities and burghs, shall preserve their ancient liberties, immunities, and free customs: aids shall not be required of them but by the consent of the great council: no towns or individuals shall be obliged to make or support bridges but by ancient custom: the goods of every freeman shall he disposed of according to his will: if he die intestate, his heirs shall succeed to them. No officer of the crown shall take any horses, carts, or wood, without the consent of the owner. The king's courts of justice shall be stationary, and shall no longer follow his person: they shall be open to every one; and justice shall no longer be sold, refused, or delayed by them. Circuits shall be regularly held every year: the inferior tribunals of justice, the county court, sheriff's turn, and court-leet shall meet at their appointed time and place: the sheriffs shall be incapacitated to hold pleas of the crown; and shall not put any person upon his trial, from rumor or suspicion alone, but upon the evidence of lawful witnesses. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed of his free tenement and liberties, or outlawed, or banished, or anywise hurt or injured, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land; and all who suffered otherwise in this or the two former reigns, shall be restored to their rights and possessions. Every freeman shall be fined in proportion to his fault; and no fine shall be levied on him to his utter ruin; even a villain or rustic shall not by any fine be bereaved of his carts, ploughs, and implements of husbandry. This was the only article calculated for the interests of this body of men, probably at that time the most numerous in the kingdom.

It must be confessed that the former articles of the Great Charter contain such mitigations and explanations of the feudal law as are reasonable and equitable; and that the latter involve all the chief outlines of a legal government, and provide for the equal distribution of justice, and free enjoyment of property; the great objects for which political society was at first founded by men, which the people have a perpetual and unalienable right to recall, and which no time, nor precedent, nor statute, nor positive institution, ought to deter them from keeping ever uppermost in their thoughts and attention. Though the provisions made by this charter might, conformably to the genius of the age, be esteemed too concise, and too bare of circumstances to maintain the execution of its articles, in opposition to the chicanery of lawyers, supported by the violence of power, time gradually ascertained the sense of all the ambiguous expressions; and those generous barons, who first extorted this concession, still held their swords in their hands, and could turn them against those who dared, on any pretence, to depart from the original spirit and meaning of the grant. We may now, from the tenor of this charter, conjecture what those laws were of King Edward which the English nation, during so many generations, still desired, with such an obstinate perseverance, to have recalled and established. They were chiefly these latter articles of Magna Charta; and the barons who, at the beginning of these commotions, demanded the revival of the Saxon laws, undoubtedly thought that they had sufficiently satisfied the people by procuring them this concession, which comprehended the principal objects to which they had so long aspired. But what we are most to admire is, the prudence and moderation of those haughty nobles themselves, who were enraged by injuries, inflamed by opposition, and elated by a total victory over their sovereign. They were content, even in this plenitude of power, to depart from some articles of Henry I.'s charter, which they made the foundation of their demands, particularly from the abolition of wardships, a matter of the greatest importance; and they seem to have been sufficiently careful not to diminish too far the power and revenue of the crown. If they appear, therefore, to have carried other demands to too great a height, it can be ascribed only to the faithless and tyrannical character of the king himself, of which they had long had experience, and which they foresaw would, if they provided no further security, lead him soon to infringe their new liberties, and revoke his own concessions. This alone gave birth to those other articles, seemingly exorbitant, which were added as a rampart for the safeguard of the Great Charter.

The barons obliged the king to agree that London should remain in their hands, and the Tower be consigned to the custody of the primate, till the 15th of August ensuing, or till the execution of the several articles of the Great Charter. The better to insure the same end, he allowed them to choose five-and-twenty members from their own body, as conservators of the public liberties; and no bounds were set to the authority of these men either in extent or duration. If any complaint were made of a violation of the charter, whether attempted by the king, justiciaries, sheriffs, or foresters, any four of these barons might admonish the king to redress the grievance: if satisfaction were not obtained, they could assemble the whole council of twenty-five; who, in conjunction with the great council, were empowered to compel him to observe the charter, and, in case of resistance, might levy war against him, attack his castles, and employ every kind of violence, except against his royal person, and that of his queen and children. All men throughout the kingdom were bound, under the penalty of confiscation, to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons; and the freeholders of each county were to choose twelve knights, who were to make report of such evil customs as required redress, conformably to the tenor of the Great Charter.[1] The names of those conservators were, the earls of Clare, Albemarle, Glocesteer, Winchester, Hereford, Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, William Mareschal the younger, Robert Fitz-Walter, Gilbert de Clare, Eustace de Vescey, Gilbert Delaval, William de Moubray, Geoffrey de Say, Roger de Mombezon, William de Huntingfield, Robert de Ros, the constable of Chester, William de Aubenie, Richard de Perci, William Malet, John Fitz-Robert, William de Lanvalay, Hugh de Bigod, and Roger de Montfichet. These men were, by this convention, really invested with the sovereignty of the kingdom: they were rendered coordinate with the king, or rather superior to him, in the exercise of the executive power; and as there was no circumstance of government which, either directly or indirectly, might not bear a relation to the security or observance of the Great Charter, there could scarcely occur any incident in which they might not lawfully interpose their authority.

[1] This seems a very strong proof that the house of commons was not then in being; otherwise the knights and burgesses from the several counties could have given in to the lords a list of grievances, without so unusual an election.]

John seemed to submit passively to all these regulations, however injurious to majesty: he sent writs to all the sheriffs, ordering them to constrain every one to swear obedience to the twenty-five barons: he dismissed all his foreign force; he pretended, that his government was thenceforth to run in a new tenor, and be more indulgent to the liberty and independence of his people. But he only dissembled till he should find a favorable opportunity for annulling all his concessions. The injuries and indignities which he had formerly suffered from the pope and the king of France, as they came from equals or superiors, seemed to make but small impression on him; but the sense of this perpetual and total subjection under his own rebellious vassals, sunk deep in his mind; and he was determined, at all hazards, to throw off so ignominious a slavery. He grew sullen, silent, and reserved: he shunned the society of his courtiers and nobles: he retired into the Isle of Wight, as if desirous of hiding his shame and confusion; but in this retreat he meditated the most fatal vengeance against all his enemies. He secretly sent abroad his emissaries to enlist foreign soldiers, and to invite the rapacious Brabançons into his service, by the prospect of sharing the spoils of England, and reaping the forfeitures of so many opulent barons, who had incurred the guilt of rebellion, by rising in arms against him. And he despatched a messenger to Rome, in order to lay before the pope the Great Charter, which he had been compelled to sign, and to complain, before that tribunal, of the violence which had been imposed upon him.

Innocent, considering himself as feudal lord of the kingdom, was incensed at the temerity of the barons, who, though they pretended to appeal to his authority, had dared, without waiting for his consent, to impose such terms on a prince, who, by resigning to the Roman pontiff his crown and independence, had placed himself immediately under the papal protection. He issued, therefore, a bull, in which, from the plenitude of his apostolic power, and from the authority which God had committed to him, to build and destroy kingdoms, to plant and overthrow, he annulled and abrogated the whole charter, as unjust in itself, as obtained by compulsion, and as derogatory to the dignity of the apostolic see. He prohibited the barons from exacting the observance of it: he even prohibited the king himself from paying any regard to it: he absolved him and his subjects from all oaths which they had been constrained to take to that purpose; and he pronounced a general sentence of excommunication against every one who should persevere in maintaining such treasonable and iniquitous pretensions.

The king, as his foreign forces arrived along with this bull now ventured to take off the mask; and, under sanction of the pope’s decree, recalled all the liberties which he had granted to his subjects, and which he had solemnly sworn to observe. But the spiritual weapon was found upon trial to carry less force with it than he had reason from his own experience to apprehend. The primate refused to obey the pope in publishing the sentence of excommunication against the barons; and though he was cited to Rome, that he might attend a general council there assembled, and was suspended, on account of his disobedience to the pope, and his secret correspondence with the king’s enemies; though a new and particular sentence of excommunication was pronounced by name against the principal barons; John still found that his nobility and people, and even his clergy, adhered to the defence of their liberties, and to their combination against him: the sword of his foreign mercenaries was all he had to trust to for restoring his authority.

The barons, after obtaining the Great Charter, seem to have been lulled into a fatal security, and to have taken no rational measures, in case of the introduction of a foreign force, for reassembling their armies. The king was, from the first, master of the field; and immediately laid siege to the castle of Rochester, which was obstinately defended by William de Albiney, at the head of a hundred and forty knights with their retainers, but was at last, reduced by famine. John, irritated with the resistance, intended to have hanged the governor and all the garrison; but on the representation of William de Mauleon, who suggested to him the danger of reprisals, he was content to sacrifice, in this barbarous manner, the inferior prisoners only. The captivity of William de Albiney, the best officer among the confederated barons, was an irreparable loss to their cause; and no regular opposition was thenceforth made to the progress of the royal arms. The ravenous and barbarous mercenaries, incited by a cruel and enraged prince were let loose against the estates, tenants, manors, houses, parks of the barons, and spread devastation over the face of the kingdom. Nothing was to be seen but the flames of villages, and castles reduced to ashes, the consternation and misery of the inhabitants, tortures exercised by the soldiery to make them reveal their concealed treasures, and reprisals no less barbarous, committed by the barons and their partisans on the royal demesnes, and on the estates of such as still adhered to the crown. The king, marching through the whole extent of England, from Dover to Berwick, laid the provinces waste on each side of him; and considered every estate, which was not his immediate property, as entirely hostile, and the object of military execution. The nobility of the north in particular, who had shown greatest violence in the recovery of their liberties, and who, acting in a separate body, had expressed their discontent even at the concessions made by the Great Charter, as they could expect no mercy, fled before him with their wives and families, and purchased the friendship of Alexander, the young king of Scots, by doing homage to him.

The barons, reduced to this desperate extremity, and menaced with the total loss of their liberties, their properties, and their lives, employed a remedy no less desperate; and making applications to the court of France, they offered to acknowledge Lewis, the eldest son of Philip, for their sovereign, on condition that he would afford them protection from the violence of their enraged prince. Though the sense of the common rights of mankind, the only rights that are entirely indefeasible, might have justified them in the deposition of their king, they declined insisting before Philip on a pretension which is commonly so disagreeable to sovereigns, and which sounds harshly in their royal ears. They affirmed that John was incapable of succeeding to the crown, by reason of the attainder passed upon him during his brother's reign; though that attainder had been reversed, and Richard had even, by his last will, declared him his successor. They pretended, that he was already legally deposed by sentence of the peers of France, on account of the murder of his nephew; though that sentence could not possibly regard any thing but his transmarine dominions, which alone he held in vassalage to that crown. On more plausible grounds, they affirmed, that he had already deposed himself by doing homage to the pope, changing the nature of his sovereignty, and resigning an independent crown for a fee under a foreign power. And as Blanche of Castile, the wife of Lewis, was descended by her mother from Henry II., they maintained, though many other princes stood before her in the order of succession, that they had not shaken off the royal family, in choosing her husband for their sovereign.

Philip was strongly tempted to lay hold on the rich prize which was offered to him. The legate menaced him with interdicts and excommunications, if he invaded the patrimony of St. Peter, or attacked a prince who was under the immediate protection of the holy see; but as Philip was assured of the obedience of his own vassals, his principles were changed with the times, and he now undervalued as much all papal censures, as he formerly pretended to pay respect to them. His chief scruple was with regard to the fidelity which he might expect from the English barons in their new engagements, and the danger of intrusting his son and heir into the hands of men who might, on any caprice or necessity, make peace with their native sovereign, by sacrificing a pledge of so much value. He therefore exacted from the barons twenty-five hostages of the most noble birth in the kingdom; and having obtained this security, he sent over first a small army to the relief of the confederates; then more numerous forces, which arrived with Lewis himself at their head.

The first effect of the young prince’s appearance in England was the desertion of John’s foreign troops, who, being mostly levied in Flanders, and other provinces of France, refused to serve against the heir of their monarchy. The Gascons and Poictevins alone, who were still John’s subjects, adhered to his cause; but they were too weak to maintain that superiority in the field which they had hitherto supported against the confederated barons. Many considerable noblemen deserted John’s party, the earls of Salisbury, Arundel, Warrenne, Oxford, Albemarle, and William Mareschal the younger: his castles fell daily into the hands of the enemy; Dover was the only place which, from the valor and fidelity of Hubert de Burgh, the governor, made resistance to the progress of Lewis; and the barons had the melancholy prospect of finally succeeding in their purpose, and of escaping the tyranny of their own king, by imposing on themselves and the nation a foreign yoke. But this union was of short duration between the French and English nobles; and the imprudence of Lewis, who on every occasion showed too visible a preference to the former, increased that jealousy which it was so natural for the latter to entertain in their present situation. The viscount of Melun, too, it is said, one of his courtiers, fell sick at London; and finding the approaches of death, he sent for some of his friends among the English barons, and warning them of their danger, revealed Lewis’s secret intentions of exterminating them and their families as traitors to their prince, and of bestowing their estates and dignities on his native subjects, in whose fidelity he could more reasonably place confidence. This story, whether true or false, was universally reported and believed; and, concurring with other circumstances, which rendered it credible, did great prejudice to the cause of Lewis. The earl of Salisbury and other noblemen deserted again to John’s party; and as men easily change sides in a civil war, especially where their power is founded on an hereditary and independent authority, and is not derived from the opinion and favor of the people, the French prince had reason to dread a sudden reverse of fortune. The king was assembling a considerable army, with a view of fighting one great battle for his crown; but passing from Lynne to Lincolnshire, his road lay along the sea-shore, which was overflowed at high water; and not choosing the proper time for his journey, he lost in the inundation all his carriages, treasure, baggage, and regalia. The affliction for this disaster, and vexation from the distracted state of his affairs, increased the sickness under which he then labored; and though he reached the castle of Newark, he was obliged to halt there, and his distemper soon after put an end to his life, in the forty-ninth year of his age, and eighteenth of his reign; and freed the nation from the dangers to which it was equally exposed by his success or by his misfortunes.

The character of this prince is nothing but a complication of vices, equally mean and odious; ruinous to himself and destructive to his people. Cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty all these qualities appear too evidently in the several incidents of his life, to give us room to suspect that the disagreeable picture has been anywise overcharged by the prejudices of the ancient historians. It is hard to say whether his conduct to his father, his brother, his nephew, or his subjects, was most culpable; or whether his crimes, in these respects, were not even exceeded by the baseness which appeared in his transactions with the king of France, the pope, and the barons. His European dominions, when they devolved to him by the death of his brother, were more extensive than have ever, since his time, been ruled by any English monarch: but he first lost by his misconduct the flourishing provinces in France, the ancient patrimony of his family: he subjected his kingdom to a shameful vassalage under the see of Rome: he saw the prerogatives of his crown diminished by law, and still more reduced by faction; and he died at last, when in danger of being totally expelled by a foreign power, and of either ending his life miserably in prison, or seeking shelter as a fugitive from the pursuit of his enemies.

The prejudices against this prince were so violent, that he was believed to have sent an embassy to the Miramoulin, or emperor of Morocco, and to have offered to change his religion and become Mahometan, in order to purchase the protection of that monarch. But though this story is told us, on plausible authority, by Matthew Paris,* it is in itself utterly improbable; except that there is nothing so incredible but may be believed to proceed from the folly and wickedness of John.

The monks throw great reproaches on this prince for his impiety, and even infidelity; and as an instance of it, they tell us that, having one day caught a very fat stag, he exclaimed, “How plump and well fed is this animal! and yet I dare swear he never heard mass.” This sally of wit upon the usual corpulency of the priests, more than all his enormous crimes and iniquities, made him pass with them for an atheist.

John left two legitimate sons behind him, Henry, born on the first of October, 1207, and now nine years of age; and Richard, born on the sixth of January, 1209; and three daughters, Jane, afterwards married to Alexander, king of Scots; Eleanor, married first to William Mareschal the younger, earl of Pembroke, and then to Simon Mountfort earl of Leicester; and Isabella, married to the emperor Frederic II. All these children were born to him by Isabella of Angouleme, his second wife. His illegitimate children were numerous; but none of them were anywise distinguished.

It was this king who, in the ninth year of his reign, first gave by charter to the city of London, the right of electing annually a mayor out of its own body, an office which was till now held for life. He gave the city also power to elect and remove its sheriffs at pleasure, and its common-council men annually. London bridge was finished in this reign: the former bridge was of wood. Maud, the empress, was the first that built a stone bridge in England.

APPENDIX II.

THE FEUDAL AND ANGLO-NORMAN GOVERNMENT AND MANNERS.

The feudal law is the chief foundation both of the political government and of the jurisprudence established by the Normans in England. Our subject therefore requires that we should form a just idea of this law, in order to explain the state, as well of that kingdom, as of all other kingdoms of Europe, which during those ages were governed by similar institutions. And though I am sensible that I must here repeat many observations and reflections which have been communicated by others, yet as every book, agreeably to the observation of a great historian, should be as complete as possible within itself, and should never refer for any thing material to other books, it will be necessary in this place to deliver a short plan of that prodigious fabric, which for several centuries preserved such a mixture of liberty and oppression, order and anarchy, stability and revolution, as was never experienced in any other age or any other part of the world.

After the northern nations had subdued the provinces of the Roman empire, they were obliged to establish a system of government which might secure their conquests, as well against the revolt of their numerous subjects who remained in the provinces, as from the inroads of other tribes, who might be tempted to ravish from them their new acquisitions. The great change of circumstances made them here depart from those institutions which prevailed among them while they remained in the forests of Germany; yet was it still natural for them to retain, in their present settlement, as much of their ancient customs as was compatible with their new situation.

The German governments, being more a confederacy of independent warriors than a civil subjection, derived their principal force from many inferior and voluntary associations which individuals formed under a particular head or chieftain, and which it became the highest point of honor to maintain with inviolable fidelity. The glory of the chief consisted in the number, the bravery, and the zealous attachment of his retainers; the duty of the retainers required that they should accompany their chief in all wars and dangers, that they should fight and perish by his side, and that they should esteem his renown or his favor a sufficient recompense for all their services.[1] The prince himself was nothing but a great chieftain, who was chosen from among the rest on account of his superior valor or nobility; and who derived his power from the voluntary association or attachment of the other chieftains.

[1] Tacit. de Mor. Germ.]

When a tribe, governed by these ideas, and actuated by these principles, subdued a large territory, they found that, though it was necessary to keep themselves in a military posture, they could neither remain united in a body, nor take up their quarters in several garrisons, and that their manners and institutions debarred them from using these expedients the obvious ones, which, in a like situation, would have been employed by a more civilized nation. Their ignorance in the art of finances, and perhaps the devastations inseparable from such violent conquests, rendered it impracticable for them to levy taxes sufficient for the pay of numerous armies; and their repugnance to subordination, with their attachment to rural pleasures, made the life of the camp or garrison, if perpetuated during peaceful times, extremely odious and disgustful to them. They seized, therefore, such a portion of the conquered lands as appeared necessary; they assigned a share for supporting the dignity of their prince and government; they distributed other parts, under the title of fiefs, to the chiefs; these made a new partition among their retainers; the express condition of all these grants was, that they might be resumed at pleasure, and that the possessor, so long as he enjoyed them, should still remain in readiness to take the field for the defence of the nation. And though the conquerors immediately separated, in order to enjoy their new acquisitions, their martial disposition made them readily fulfil the terms of their engagement: they assembled on the first alarm; their habitual attachment to the chieftain made them willingly submit to his command; and thus a regular military force though concealed was always ready to defend, on any emergency, the interest and honor of the community.

We are not to imagine, that all the conquered lands were seized by the northern conquerors, or that the whole of the land thus seized was subjected to those military services. This supposition is confuted by the history of all the nations on the continent. Even the idea given us of the German manners by the Roman historian, may convince us, that that bold people would never have been content with so precarious a subsistence, or have fought to procure establishments which were only to continue during the good pleasure of their sovereign. Though the northern chieftains accepted of lands which, being considered as a kind of military pay, might be resumed at the will of the king or general, they also took possession of estates which, being hereditary and independent, enabled them to maintain their native liberty, and support, without court favor, the honor of their rank and family.

But there is a great difference, in the consequences, between the distribution of a pecuniary subsistence, and the assignment of lands burdened with the condition of military service. The delivery of the former, at the weekly, monthly, or annual terms of payment, still recalls the idea of a voluntary gratuity from the prince, and reminds the soldier of the precarious tenure by which he holds his commission. But the attachment, naturally formed with a fixed portion of land, gradually begets the idea of something like property, and makes the possessor forget his dependent situation, and the condition which was at first annexed to the grant. It seemed equitable, that one who had cultivated and sowed a field, should reap the harvest: hence fiefs, which were at first entirely precarious were soon made annual. A man who had employed his money in building, planting, or other improvements, expected to reap the fruits of his labor or expense: hence they were next granted during a term of years. It would be thought hard to expel a man from his possessions who had always done his duty, and performed the conditions on which he originally received them: hence the chieftains, in a subsequent period, thought themselves entitled to demand the enjoyment of their feudal lands during life. It was found, that a man would more willingly expose himself in battle, if assured that his family should inherit his possessions, and should not be left by his death in want and poverty; hence fiefs were made hereditary in families, and descended, during one age to the son, then to the grandson, next to the brothers, and afterwards to more distant relations. [1] The idea of property stole in gradually upon that of military pay; and each century made some sensible addition to the stability of fiefs and tenures.

[1] Lib. Feud. lib. i. tit. i.

In all these successive acquisitions, the chief was supported by his vassals; who, having originally a strong connection with him, augmented by the constant intercourse of good offices, and by the friendship arising from vicinity and dependence, were inclined to follow their leader against all his enemies, and voluntarily, in his private quarrels, paid him the same obedience to which, by their tenure, they were bound in foreign wars. While he daily advanced new pretensions to secure the possession of his superior fief, they expected to find the same advantage in acquiring stability to their subordinate ones; and they zealously opposed the intrusion of a new lord, who would be inclined, as he was fully entitled, to bestow the possession of their lands on his own favorites and retainers. Thus the authority of the sovereign gradually decayed; and each noble, fortified in his own territory by the attachment of his vassals, became too powerful to be expelled by an order from the throne; and he secured by law what he had at first acquired by usurpation.

During this precarious state of the supreme power, a difference would immediately be experienced between those portions of territory which were subjected to the feudal tenures, and those which were possessed by an allodial or free title. Though the latter possessions had at first been esteemed much preferable, they were soon found, by the progressive changes introduced into public and private law, to be of an inferior condition to the former. The possessors of a feudal territory, united by a regular subordination under one chief, and by the mutual attachments of the vassals, had the same advantages over the proprietors of the other, that a disciplined army enjoys over a dispersed multitude; and were enabled to commit with impunity all injuries on their defenceless neighbors Every one, therefore, hastened to seek that protection which he found so necessary; and each allodial proprietor, resigning his possessions into the hands of the king, or of some nobleman respected for power or valor, received them back with the condition of feudal services, [1] which, though a burden somewhat grievous, brought, him ample compensation, by connecting him with the neighboring proprietors, and placing him under the guardianship of a potent chieftain. The decay of the political government thus necessarily occasioned the extension of the feudal: the kingdoms of Europe were universally divided into baronies, and these into inferior fiefs; and the attachment of vassals to their chief, which was at first an essential part of the German manners, was still supported by the same causes from which it at first arose; the necessity of mutual protection, and the continued intercourse, between the head and the members, of benefits and services.

[1] Marculf. Form. 47, apud lindenbr. ,]

But there was another circumstance, which corroborated these feudal dependencies, and tended to connect the vassals with their superior lord by an indissoluble bond of union. The northern conquerors, as well as the more early Greeks and Romans, embraced a policy, which is unavoidable to all nations that have made slender advances in refinement: they every where united the civil jurisdiction with the military power. Law, in its commencement, was not an intricate science, and was more governed by maxims of equity, which seem obvious to common sense, than by numerous and subtile principles, applied to a variety of cases by profound reasonings from analogy. An officer, though he had passed his life in the field, was able to determine all legal controversies which could occur within the district committed to his charge; and his decisions were the most likely to meet with a prompt and ready obedience, from men who respected his person, and were accustomed to act under his command. The profit arising from punishments, Which were then chiefly pecuniary, was another reason for his desiring to retain the judicial power; and when his fief became hereditary, this authority, which was essential to it, was also transmitted to his posterity. The counts and other magistrates, whose power was merely official, were tempted, in imitation of the feudal lords, whom they resembled in so many particulars, to render their dignity perpetual and hereditary; and in the decline of the regal power, they found no difficulty in making good their pretentions. After this manner the vast fabric of feudal subordination became quite solid and comprehensive; it formed every where an essential part of the political constitution; and the Norman and other barons, who followed the fortunes of William, were so accustomed to it, that they could scarcely form an idea of any other species of civil government. [1]

The Saxons who conquered England, as they exterminated the ancient inhabitants, and thought themselves secured by the sea against new invaders, found it less requisite to maintain themselves in a military posture: the quantity of land which they annexed to offices seems to have been of small value; and for that reason continued the longer in its original situation, and was always possessed during pleasure by those who were intrusted with the command. These conditions were too precarious to satisfy the Norman barons, who enjoyed more independent possessions and jurisdictions in their own country; and William was obliged, in the new distribution of land, to copy the tenures which were now become universal on the continent. England of a sudden became a feudal kingdom, [2] and received all the advantages, and was exposed to all the inconveniences, incident to that species of civil polity.

According to the principles of the feudal law, the king wa the supreme lord of the landed property: all possessors, who enjoyed the fruits or revenue of any part of it, held those privileges, either mediately or immediately, of him; and their property was conceived to be, in some degree, conditional. [3] The land was still apprehended to be a species of benefice, which was the original conception of a feudal property; and the vassal owed, in return for it, stated services to his baron, as the baron himself did for his land to the crown. The vassal was obliged to defend his baron in war; and the baron, at the head of his vassal, was bound to fight in defence of the king and kingdom. But besides these military services, which were casual, there were others imposed of a civil nature, which were more constant and durable.

The northern nations had no idea that any man trained up to honor and inured to arms, was ever to be governed, without his own consent, by the absolute will of another; or that the administration of justice was ever to be exercised by the private opinion of any one magistrate, without the concurrence of some other persons, whose interest might induce them to check his arbitrary and iniquitous decisions. The king, therefore, when he found it necessary to demand any service of his barons or chief tenants, beyond what was due by their tenures, was obliged to assemble them, in

[1] The ideas of the feudal government were so rooted, that even lawyers in those ages could not form a notion of any either constitution. Regnum (says Braeton, lib. ii. ca) quod ex comitatibus et baronibus dicitur esse constitutum.]

[2] Coke, Comm. on Lit. , 2, ad sect. 1.]

[3] Somner of Gavelk. , Smith de Rep. lib. iii. ca.]

order to obtain their consent; and when it was necessary to determine any controversy which might arise among the barons themselves, the question must be discussed in their presence, and be decided according to their opinion or advice. In these two circumstances of consent and advice, consisted chiefly the civil services of the ancient barons; and these implied all the considerable incidents of government. In one view, the barons regarded this attendance as their principal privilege; in another, as a grievous burden. That no momentous affairs could be transacted without their consent and advice, was in general esteemed the great security of their possessions and dignities; but as they reaped no immediate profit from their attendance at court, and were exposed to great inconvenience and charge by an absence from their own estates, every one was glad to exempt himself from each particular exertion of this power; and was pleased both that the call for that duty should seldom return upon him, and that others should undergo the burden in his stead. The king, on the other hand, was usually anxious, for several reasons, that the assembly of the barons should be full at every stated or casual meeting: this attendance was the chief badge of their subordination to his crown, and drew them from that independence which they were apt to affect in their own castles and manors; and where the meeting was thin or ill attended, its determinations had less authority, and commanded not so ready an obedience from the whole community.

The case was the same with the barons in their courts, as with the king in the supreme council of the nation. It was requisite to assemble the vassals, in order to determine by their vote any question which regarded the barony; and they sat along with the chief in all trials, whether civil or criminal, which occurred within the limits of their jurisdiction. They were; bound to pay suit and service at the court of their baron; and as their tenure was military, and consequently honorable, they were admitted into his society, and partook of his friendship. Thus, a kingdom was considered only as a great barony, and a barony as a small kingdom. The barons were peers to each other in the national council, and in some degree companions to the king; the vassals were peers to each other in the court of barony, and companions to their baron. [1]

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[1] Du Cange, Gloss, in verb. Par. Cujac. Commun. in Lib, Feud lib. I, tit i. , Spelm. Gloss, in verb.

But though this resemblance so far took place, the vassals by the natural course of things, universally, in the feudal constitutions, fell into a greater subordination under the baron, than the baron himself under his sovereign; and these governments had a necessary and infallible tendency to augment the power of the nobles. The great chief, residing in his country seat, which he was commonly allowed to fortify, lost, in a great measure, his connection or acquaintance with the prince, and added every day new force to his authority over the vassals of the barony. They received from him education in all military exercises; his hospitality invited them to live and enjoy society in his hall; their leisure, which was great, made them perpetual retainers on his person, and partakers of his country sports and amusements; they had no means of gratifying their ambition but by making a figure in his train; his favor and countenance was their greatest honor; his displeasure exposed them to contempt and ignominy; and they felt every moment the necessity of his protection, both in the controversies which occurred with other vassals, and, what was more material, in the daily inroads and injuries which were committed by the neighboring barons. During the time of general war, the sovereign, who marched at the head of his armies, and was the great protector of the state, always acquired some accession to his authority, which he lost during the intervals of peace and tranquillity; but the loose police incident to the feudal constitutions, maintained a perpetual, though secret hostility, between the several members of the state; and the vassals found no means of securing themselves against the injuries to which they were continually exposed, but by closely adhering to their chief, and falling into a submissive dependence upon him.

If the feudal government was so little favorable to the true liberty even of the military vassal, it was still more destructive of the independence and security of the other members of the state, or what in a proper sense we call the people. A great part of them were serfs, and lived in a state of absolute slavery or villainage; the other inhabitants of the country paid then rent in services, which were in a great measure arbitrary; and they could expect no redress of injuries in a court of barony from men who thought they had a right to oppress and tyrannize over them: the towns were situated either within the demesnes of the king, or the lands of the great barons, and were almost entirely subjected to the absolute will of their master. The languishing state of commerce kept the inhabitants poor and contemptible; and the political institutions were calculated to render that poverty perpetual. The barons and gentry, living in rustic plenty and hospitality, gave no encouragement to the arts, and had no demand for any of the more elaborate manufactures: every profession was held in contempt but that of arms; and if any merchant or manufacturer rose by industry and frugality to a degree of opulence, he found himself but the more exposed to injuries, from the envy and avidity of the military nobles.

These concurring causes gave the feudal governments so strong a bias towards aristocracy, that the royal authority was extremely eclipsed in all the European states; and, instead of dreading the growth of monarchical power, we might rather expect, that the community would every where crumble into so many independent baronies, and lose the political union by which they were cemented. In elective monarchies, the event was commonly answerable to this expectation; and the barons, gaining ground on every vacancy of the throne, raised themselves almost to a state of sovereignty, and sacrificed to their power both the rights of the crown and the liberties of the people. But hereditary monarchies had a principle of authority which was not so easily subverted; and there were several causes which still maintained a degree of influence in the hands of the sovereign.

The greatest baron could never lose view entirely of those principles of the feudal constitution which bound him, as, a vassal, to submission and fealty towards his prince; because he was every moment obliged to have recourse to those principles, in exacting fealty and submission from his own vassals The lesser barons, finding that the annihilation of royal authority left them exposed without protection to the insults and injuries of more potent neighbors, naturally adhered to the crown, and promoted the execution of general and equal laws. The people had still a stronger interest to desire the grandeur of the sovereign; and the king, being the legal magistrate, who suffered by every internal convulsion or oppression, and who regarded the great nobles as his immediate rivals, assumed the salutary office of general guardian or protector of the commons. Besides the prerogatives with which the law invested him, his large demesnes and numerous retainers rendered him, in one sense, the greatest baron in his kingdom; and where he was possessed of personal vigor and abilities, (for his situation required these advantages,) he was commonly able to preserve his authority, and maintain his station as head of the community, and the chief fountain of law and justice.

The first kings of the Norman race were favored by another circumstance, which preserved them from the encroachments of their barons. They were generals of a conquering army, which was obliged to continue in a military posture, and to maintain great subordination under their leader, in order to secure themselves from the revolt of the numerous natives, whom they had bereaved of all their properties and privileges. But though this circumstance supported the authority of William and his immediate successors, and rendered them extremely absolute, it was lost as soon as the Norman barons began to incorporate with the nation, to acquire a security in their possessions, and to fix their influence over their vassals, tenants, and slaves. And the immense fortunes which the Conqueror had bestowed on his chief captains, served to support their independence, and make them formidable to the sovereign.

He gave, for instance, to Hugh de Abrincis, his sister's son, the whole county of Chester, which he erected into a palatinate, and rendered by his grant almost independent of the crown. [1] Robert, earl of Mortaigne, had nine hundred and seventy-three manors and lordships: Allan, earl of Brittany and Richmond, four hundred and forty-two: Odo, bishop of Baieux, four hundred and thirty-nine: [2] Geoffrey, bishop of Coutance, two hundred and eighty: [3] Walter Giffard, earl of Buckingham, one hundred and seven. William, earl Warrenne, two hundred and ninety-eight, besides twenty-eight towns or hamlets in Yorkshire: Todenei, eighty-one: Roger Bigod, one hundred and twenty-three: Robert, earl of Eu, one hundred and nineteen: Roger Mortimer, one hundred and thirty-two, besides several hamlets: Robert de Stafford, one hundred and thirty: Walter de Eurus, earl of Salisbury, forty-six Geoffrey de Mandeville, one hundred and eighteen Richard de Clare, one hundred and seventy-one: Hugh de Beauchamp, forty-seven: Baldwin de Rivers, one hundred and sixty-four: Henry de

[1] Camd. in Chesh. Spel. Gloss, in verb. Comes Palatinus.

[2] Brady's Hist. , 200.

[3] Order Vitalia.

Ferrers, two hundred and twenty? two: William de Percy, one hundred and nineteen: [1] Norman d'Arcy, thirty-three. [2] Sir Henry Spelman computea that, in the large county of Norfolk, there were not, in the Conqueror's time, above sixty-six proprietors of land. [3] Men possessed of such princely revenues and jurisdictions could not long be retained in the rank of subjects. The great Earl Warrenne, in a subsequent reign, when he was questioned concerning his right to the lands which he possessed, drew his sword, which he produced as his title; adding, that William the bastard did not conquer the kingdom himself; but that the barons, and his ancestor among me rest, were joint adventurers in the enterprise. [4]

[1] Dugdale's Baronage, from Domesday-book, vol. i. , 74; iii. 112, 132, 136, 138, 156, 174, 200, 207, 223, 254, 257, 269.]

[2] Ibid. . It is remarkable that this family of D'Arcy seema to be the only male descendants of any of the Conqueror's barons now remaining among the peers. Lord Holdernesse is the heir of that family.]

[3] Spel. Gloss, hi verb. Domesday.]

[4] Dug. Bar. vol. i. . Ibid. Origines Juridicales ,]

before the king had made him restitution of his temporalities; and during the vacancy of a see, the guardian of the spiritualities was summoned to attend along with the bishops.

The supreme legislative power of England was lodged in the king and great council, or what was afterwards called the parliament. It is not doubted but the archbishops, bishops, and most considerable abbots were constituent members of this council. They sat by a double title: by prescription, as having always possessed that privilege, through the whole Saxon period, from the first establishment of Christianity; and by their right of baronage, as holding of the king in capite by military service. These two titles of the prelates were never accurately distinguished. When the usurpations of the church had risen to such a height, as to make the bishops affect a separate dominion, and regard their seat in parliament as a degradation of their episcopal dignity, the king insisted that they were barons, and, on that account, obliged, by the general principles of the feudal law, to attend on him in his great councils. Yet there still remained some practices, which supposed their title to be derived merely from ancient possession.

The barons were another constituent part of the great council of the nation These held immediately of the crown by a military tenure: they were the most honorable members of the state, and had a right to be consulted in all public deliberations: they were the immediate vassals of the crown, and owed as a service their attendance in the court of their supreme lord. A resolution taken without their consent was likely to be but ill executed: and no determination of any cause or controversy among them had any validity, where the vote and advice of the body did not concur. The dignity of earl or count was official and territorial, as well as hereditary; and as ali the earls were also barons, they were considered as military vassals of the crown, were admitted in that capacity into the general council, and formed the most honorable and powerful branch of it.

But there was another class of the immediate military tenants of the crown, no less, or probably more numerous than the barons, the tenants in capite by knights' service and these, however inferior in power or property, held by a tenure which was equally honorable with that of the others. A barony was commonly composed of several knightsr fees: and though the number seems not to have been exactly defined, seldom consisted of less than fifty hides of land: [1] but where a man held of the king only one or two knight's fees, he was still an immediate vassal of the crown, and as such had a title to have a seat in the general councils. But as this attendance was usually esteemed a burden, and one too great for a man of slender fortune to bear constantly, it is probable that, though he had a title, if he pleased, to be admitted, he was not obliged by any penalty, like the barons, to pay a regular attendance.

[1] Four hides made one knight's fee: the relief of a barony was twelve times greater than that of a knight's fee; whence we may conjecture its usual value. Spel. Gloss, in verb. Feodum. There were two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides in England, and sixty thousand two hundred and fifteen knights' fees; whence it is evident that there were a little more than four hides in each knight's fee.]

All the immediate military tenants of the crown amounted not fully to seven hundred, when Domesday-book was framed; and as the membeirs were well pleased, on any pretext, to excuse themselves from attendance, the assembly was never likely to become too numerous for the despatch of public business.

So far the nature of a general council or ancient parliament is determined without any doubt or controversy, The only question seems to be with regard to the commons, or the representatives of counties and boroughs; whether they were also, in more early times, constituent parts of parliament. This question was once disputed in England with great acrimony; but such is the force of time and evidence, that they can sometimes prevail even over faction; and the question seems, by general consent, and even by their own, to be at last determined against the ruling party. It is agreed, that the commons were no part of the great council till some ages after the conquest; and that the military tenants alone of the crown composed that supreme and legislative assembly.

The vassals of a baron were by their tenure immediately dependent on him, owed attendance at his court, and paid all their duty to the king, through that dependence which their lord was obliged by his tenure to acknowledge to his sovereign and superior. Their land, comprehended in the barony, was represented in parliament by the baron himself, who was supposed, according to the fictions of the feudal law, to possess the direct property of it; and it would have been deemed incongruous to give it any other representation. They stood m the same capacity to him, that he and the other barons did to the king: the former were peers of the barony; the latter were peers of the realm: the vassals possessed a subordinate rank within their district: the baron enjoyed a superior dignity in the great assembly: they were in some degree his companions at home; he the king's companion at court: and nothing can be more evidently repugnant to all feudal ideas, and to that gradual subordination which was essential to those ancient institutions, than to imagine that the king would apply either for the advice or consent of men who were of a rank so much inferior, and whose duty was immediately paid to the mesne lord that was interposed between them and the throne. [1]

[1] Spel. Gloss, in verb. Baro.

If it be unreasonable to think that the vassals of a barony, though their tenure was military, and noble, and honorable, were ever summoned to give their opinion in national councils, much less can it be supposed that the tradesmen or inhabitants of boroughs, whose condition was so much inferior, would be admitted to that privilege. It appears from Domesday, that the greatest boroughs were, at the time of the conquest, scarcely more than country villages; and that the inhabitants lived in entire dependence on the king or great lords, and were of a station little better than servile. [1] They were not then so much as incorporated; they formed no community; were not regarded as a body politic; and being really nothing but a number of low, dependent tradesmen, living, without any particular civil tie, in neighborhood together, they were incapable of being represented in the states of the kingdom. Even in France, a country which made more early advances in arts and civility than England, the first corporation is sixty years posterior to the conquest under the duke of Normandy; and the erecting of these communities was an invention of Lewis the Gross, in order to free the people from slavery under the lords, and to give them protection by means of certain privileges and a separate jurisdiction. [2] An ancient French writer calls them a new and wicked device, to procure liberty to slaves, and encourage them in shaking off the dominion of their masters. [3] The famous charter, as it is called, of the Conqueror to the city of London, though granted at a time when he assumed the appearance of gentleness and lenity, is nothing but a letter of protection, and a declaration that the citizens should not be treated as slaves. [4] By the English feudal law, the superior lord was prohibited from marrying his female ward to a burgess or a villain; [5] so near were these two ranks esteemed to each other, and so much inferior to the nobility and gentry. Besides possessing the advantages of birth, riches, civil powers and privileges, the nobles and gentlemen alone were armed a circumstance which gave them a mighty superiority, in an age when nothing but the military profession was honorable, and when the loose execution of laws gave so much encouragement to open violence, and rendered it so decisive in all disputes and controversies. [5]

[1] "Liber homo" anciently signified a gentleman: for scarce any one beside was entirely free. Spel. Gloss, in verbo.]

[2] Du Gauge's Gloss, in verb. Commune, Communitas.]

[3] Guibertus, de vita sua, lib. iii. ca.]

[4] Stat. of Merton, 1235, es.]

[6] Madox, Baron. Angl. .]

The great similarity among the feudal governments of Europe is well known to every man that has any acquaintance with ancient history: and the antiquaries of all foreign countries, where the question was never embarrassed by party disputes, have allowed that the commons came very late to be admitted to a share in the legislative power. In Normandy particularly, whose constitution was most likely to be William's model in raising his new fabric of English government, the states were entirely composed of the clergy and nobility; and the first incorporated boroughs or communities of that duchy were Rouen and Falaise, which enjoyed their privileges by a grant of Philip Augustus in the year 1207. [2] All the ancient English historians, when they mention the great council of the nation, call it an assembly of the baronage, nobility, or great men; and none of their expressions, though several hundred passages might be produced, can, without the utmost violence, be tortured to a meaning which will admit the commons to be constituent members of that body. [3]

[2] Norman, du Chesnil, . Du Cange, Gloss, in verb. Commune.]

[3] Sometimes the historians mention the people, "populus," as a part of the parliament; but they always mean the laity, in opposition to the clergy. Sometimes the word "communitas" is found; but it always means "communitas baronagii." These points are clearly proved by Dr. Brady. There is also mention sometimes made of a crowd or multitude that thronged into the great council on particular interesting occasions; but as deputies from boroughs are never once spoken of, the proof that they had not then any existence becomes the more certain and undeniable. These never could make a crowd, as they must have had a regular place assigned them if they had made a regular part of the legislative body. There were only one hundred and thirty boroughs who received writs of summons from Edward I. It is expressly said in Gesta Reg. Steph. , that it was usual for the populace, "vulgus," to crowd into the great councils; where they were plainly mere spectators, and could only gratify their curiosity.]

If in the long period of two hundred years, which elapsed between the conquest and the latter end of Henry III., and which abounded in factions, revolutions, and convulsions of all kinds, the house of commons never performed one single legislative act so considerable as to be once mentioned by any of the numerous historians of that age, they must have been totally insignificant: and in that case, what reason can be assigned for their ever being assembled? Can it be supposed that men of so little weight or importance possessed a negative voice against the king and the barons? Every page of the subsequent histories discovers their existence; though these histories are not written with greater accuracy than the preceding ones, and indeed scarcely equal them in that particular. The Magna Charta of King John provides that no scutage or aid should be imposed, either on the land or towns, but by consent of the great council; and for more security it enumerates the persons entitled to a seat in that assembly, the prelates and immediate tenants of the crown, without any mention of the commons; an authority so full, certain, and explicit, that nothing but the zeal of party could ever have procured credit to any contrary hypothesis.

It was probably the example of the French barons, which first imboldened the English to require greater independence from their sovereign: it is also probable that the boroughs and corporations of England were established in imitation of those of France. It may, therefore, be proposed as no unlikely conjecture, that both the chief privileges of the peers in England and the liberty of the commons were originally the growth of that foreign country.

In ancient times, men were little solicitous to obtain a place in the legislative assemblies; and rather regarded their attendance as a burden, which was not compensated by any return of profit or honor, proportionate to the trouble and expense. The only reason for instituting those public councils was, on the part of the subject, that they desired some security from the attempts of arbitrary power; and on the part of the sovereign, that he despaired of governing men of such independent spirits without their own consent and concurrence. But the commons, or the inhabitants of boroughs, had not as yet reached such a degree of consideration, as to desire security against their prince, or to imagine that, even if they were assembled in a representative body, they had power or rank sufficient to enforce it. The only protection which they aspired to, was against the immediate violence and injustice of their fellow-citizens; and this advantage each of them looked for from the courts of justice, or from the authority of some great lord, to whom, by law or his own choice, he was attached. On the other hand, the sovereign was sufficiently assured of obedience in the whole community if he procured the concurrence of the nobles; nor had he reason to apprehend that any order of the state could resist his and their united authority. The military sub-vassals could entertain no idea of opposing both their prince and their superiors: the burgesses and tradesmen could much legs aspire to such a thought: and thus, even if history were silent on the head, we have reason to conclude, from the known situation of society during those ages, that the commons were never admitted as members of the legislative body.

The executive power of the Anglo-Norman government was lodged in the king. Besides the stated meetings of the national council at the three great festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, [1] he was accustomed, on any sudden exigence to summon them together. He could at his pleasure command the attendance of his barons and their vassals, in which consisted the military force of the kingdom; and could employ titem, during forty days, either in resisting a foreign enemy, or reducing his rebellious subjects. And what was of great importance, the whole judicial power was ultimately in his bands, and was exercised by officers and ministers of his appointment.

The general plan of the Anglo-Norman government was, that the court of barony was appointed to decide such controversies as arose between the several vassals or subjects of the same barony: the hundred court and county court, which were still continued as during the Saxon times, [2] to judge between the subjects of different baronies; [3] and the curia regis, or king’s court, to give sentence among the barons themselves. [4]

[1] Dugd. Orig. Jurid, .5 Spel. Gloss, in verbo Parliamentum.]

[2] Ang. Sacra, vol. i., , etc. Dugd. Orig. Jurid., , 29. Madox, Hist, of the Exch., , 76. Spel. Gloss, in verbo Hundred:]

[3] None of the feudal governments in Europe had such institutions as the county courts, which the great authority of the Conqueror still retained from the Saxon customs. All the freeholders of the county, even the greatest barons, were obliged to attend the sheriff in these courts, and to assist them in the administration of justice. By this means they received frequent and sensible admonitions of their dependence on the king or supreme magistrate: they formed a kind of community with their fellow-barons and freeholders; they were often drawn from their individual and independent state, peculiar to the feudal system, and were made members of a political body: and perhaps this institution of county courts in England has had greater effects on the government than has yet been

distinctly pointed out by historians, or traced by antiquaries. The barons were never able to free themselves from this attendance on the sheriffs and itinerant justices till the reign of Henry III.]

[4 Brady, Tref. .]

Circumstances which, being derived from a very extensive authority assumed by the conqueror, contributed to increase the royal prerogative; and, as long as the state was not disturbed by arms, reduced every order of the community to some degree of dependence and subordination.

The king himself often sat in his court, which always attended his person: [2] he there heard causes and pronounced judgment; [3] and though he was assisted by the advice of the other members, it is not to be imagined that a decision could easily be obtained, contrary to his inclination or opinion. In his absence the chief justiciary presided, who was the first magistrate in the state, and a kind of viceroy, on whom depended all the civil affairs of the kingdom. [4] The other chief officers of the crown, the constable, mareschal, seneschal chamberlain, treasurer, and chancellor, [5] were members, together with such feudal barons as thought proper to attend, and the barons of the exchequer, who at first were also feudal barons appointed by the king. [6] This court, which was sometimes called the king's court, sometimes the court of exchequer, judged in all causes, civil and criminal, and comprehended the whole business which is now shared out among four courts the chancery, the king's bench, the common pleas, and the exchequer. [7]

Such an accumulation of powers was itself a great source of authority, and rendered the jurisdiction of the court formidable to all the subjects; but the turn which judicial trials took soon after the conquest, served still more to increase its authority, and to augment the royal prerogatives. William, among the other violent changes which he attempted and effected, had introduced the Norman law into England, [8] had ordered all the pleadings to be in that tongue, and had interwoven with the English jurisprudence all the maxims and principles which the Normans, more advanced in cultivation and naturally litigious, were accustomed to observe in the distribution of justice.

[2 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[3] Bracton, lib. iii. ca, sect. 1; ca, sect. 1.]

[4] Spel. Gloss, in verbo Justiciarii.]

54. The Normans introduced the practice of sealing charters; and the chancellor's office was to keep the great seal.

Ingulph. Dugd. , 34.]

[6] Madox, Hist, of the Exch. , 135. Gerv. Dorob. p, 1387,]

[7] Madox. Hist. of the Exch. , 70.]

[8] Dial, de Scac. , apud Madox, Hist, of the Exch.]

Law now became a science, which at first fell entirely into the hands of the Normans; and which, even after it was communicated to the English, required so much study and application, that the laity in those ignorant ages were incapable of attaining it, and it was a mystery almost solely confined to the clergy, and chiefly to the monks [1] The great officers of the crown, and the feudal barons, who were military men, found themselves unfit to penetrate into those obscurities; and though they were entitled to a seat in the supreme judicature, the business of the court was wholly managed by the chief justiciary and the law barons, who were men appointed by the king, and entirely at his disposal. [2] This natural course of things was forwarded by the multiplicity of business which flowed into that court, and which daily augmented by the appeals from all the subordinate judicatures of the kingdom.

In the Saxon times, no appeal was received in the king's court, except upon the denial or delay of justice by the inferior courts; and the same practice was still observed in most of the feudal kingdoms of Europe. But the great power of the Conqueror established at first in England an authority which the monarchs in France were not able to attain till the reign of St. Lewis, who lived near two centuries after: he empowered his court to receive appeals both from the courts of barony and the county courts, and by that means brought the administration of justice ultimately into the hands of the sovereign. [3] And, lest the expense or trouble of a journey to court should discourage suitors, and make them acquiesce in the decision of the inferior judicatures, itinerant judges were afterwards established, who made their circuits throughout the kingdom, and tried all causes that were brought before them. [4]

By this expedient the courts of barony were kept in awe: and if they still preserved some influence, it was only from the apprehensions which the vassals might entertain of disobliging their superior, by appealing from his jurisdiction. But tha county courts were much discredited; and as the freeholders were found ignorant of the intricate principles and forms of the new law, the lawyers gradually brought all business before the king's judges, and abandoned the ancient simple and popular judicature. After this manner the formalities of justice, which, though they appear tedious and cumbersome, are found requisite to the support of liberty in all monarchical governments, proved at first, by a combination of causes, very advantageous to royal authority in England.

The power of the Norman kings was also much supported by a great revenue; and by a revenue that was fixed, perpetual, and independent of the subject. The people, without betaking themselves to arms, had no check upon the king, and no regular security for the due administration of justice. In those days of violence, many instances of oppression passed unheeded; and soon after were openly pleaded as precedents, which it was unlawful to

[1] Malms, lib. iv. .

[2] Dugd. Orig. Jurid. .

[3] Madox, Hist. of the Exch, p.65. Glanv. lib. xii. ca, 7. LL. Hen. I. sect. 31, apud Wilkins, . Fitz-Stephens, . Coke's Comment, on the Statute of Mulbridge, ca.

[4] Madox, Hist, of the Exch. , 84, 100. Gerv. Dorob. What made the Anglo-Norman barons more readily submit to appeals from their court to the king's court of exchequer, was their being accustomed to like appeals in Normandy to the ducal court of exchequer. See Gilbert's History of the Exchequer, , 2; though the author thinks it doubtful whether the Norman court was not rather copied from English. (.)

dispute or control. Princes and ministers were too ignorant to be themselves sensible of the advantages attending an equitable administration; and there was no established council or assembly which could protect the people, and, by withdrawing supplies, regularly and peaceably admonish the king of his duty, and insure the execution of the laws.

The first branch of the king’s stated revenue was the royal demesnes, or crown lands, which were very extensive, and comprehended, beside a great number of manors, most of the chief cities of the kingdom. It was established by law, that the king could alienate no part of his demesne, and that he himself, or his successor, could at any time resume such donations: [1] but this law was never regularly observed; which happily rendered, in time, the crown somewhat more dependent.

The rent of the crown-lands, considered merely as so much riches, was a source of power: the influence of the king over his tenants and the inhabitants of his towns increased this power: but the other numerous branches of his revenue, besides supplying his treasury, gave, by their very nature, a great latitude to arbitrary authority, and were a support of the prerogative; as will appear from an enumeration of them.

The king was never content with the stated rents, but levied heavy talliages at pleasure on the inhabitants both of town and, country who lived within his demesne. All bargains of sale, in order to prevent theft, being prohibited, except in boroughs and public markets, [1] he pretended to exact tolls on all goods whist were there sold. [2] He seized two hogsheads, one before and one behind the mast, from every vessel that imported wine. All goods paid to his customs a proportional part of their value: [3] passage over bridges and on rivers was loaded with tolls at pleasure: [4] and though the boroughs by degrees bought the liberty of farming these impositions, yet the revenue profited by these bargains, new sums were often exacted for the renewal and confirmation of their Charters, [5] and the people were thus held in perpetual dependence.

Such was the situation of the inhabitants within the royal demesnes. But the possessors of land, or the military tenants, though they were better protected, both by law and by the great privilege of carrying arms, were,

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[1 [1Feta], lib. i. ca, sect. 17; lib. iii.

ca, sect. 3. Bracton, lib ii. ca.]

from the nature of their tenures, much exposed to the inroads of power, and possessed not what we should esteem in our age a very durable security. The Conqueror ordained that the barons should be obliged to pay nothing beyond their stated services, [6] except a reasonable aid to ransom his person if he were taken in war, to make his eldest son a knight, and to marry his eldest daughter. What should on these occasions be deemed a reasonable aid, was not determined; and the demands of the crown were so far discretionary.

The king could require in war the personal attendance of his vassals, that is, of almost all the landed proprietors; and if they declined the service, they were obliged to pay him a composition in money, which was called a scutage. The sum was, during some reigns, precarious and uncertain; it was sometimes levied without allowing the vassal the liberty of personal service; [7] and it was a usual artifice of the king's to pretend an expedition, that he might be entitled to levy the scutage from his military tenants.

[1] LL. Will. i. ca.]

[2] Madox, .]

[3] Madox, . This author says a fifteenth. But it is not easy to reconcile this account to other authorities.]

[4] Madox, .]

etc.]

[6] LL. Will. Conq. sect. 55.]

[7] Gervase de Tilbury, .]

Danegelt was another species of land-tax levied by the early Norman kings, arbitrarily, and contrary to the laws of the Conqueror. [1] Moneyage was also a general land-tax of the same nature, levied by the two first Norman kings, and abolished by the charter of Henry I. [2] It was a shilling paid every three years by each hearth, to induce the king not to use his prerogative in debasing the coin. Indeed, it appears from that charter, that though the Conqueror had granted his military tenants an immunity from all taxes and talliages, he and his son William had never thought themselves bound to observe that rule, but had levied impositions at pleasure on all the landed estates of the kingdom. The utmost that Henry grants is, that the land cultivated by the military tenant himself shall not be so burdened; but he reserves the power of taxing the farmers: and as it is known that Henry's charter was never observed in any one article, we may be assured that this prince and his successors retracted even this small indulgence, and levied arbitrary impositions on all the lands of all their subjects. These taxes were sometimes very heavy; since Malmsbury tells us that, in the reign of William Rufus, the farmers, on account of them, abandoned tillage, and a famine ensued. [3]

[1] Madox, Hist, of the Exch. .

[2] M. Paris, .

[3] So also Chron. Abb. St. Petri de Burgo, p. 55. Knyghton, .

The escheats were a great branch both of power and of revenue, especially during the first reigns after the conquest. In default of posterity from the first baron, his land reverted to the crown, and continually augmented the king's possessions. The prince had indeed by law a power of alienating these escheats; but by this means he had an opportunity of establishing the fortunes of his friends and servants, and thereby enlarging his authority. Sometimes he retained them in his own hands; and they were gradually confounded with the royal demesnes, and became difficult to be distinguished from them. This confusion is probably the reason why the king acquired the right of alienating his demesnes.

But besides escheats from default of heirs, those which ensued from crimes or breach of duty towards the superior lord were frequent in ancient times. If the vassal, being thrice summoned to attend his superior's court, and do fealty, neglected or refused obedience, he forfeited all title to his land. [1] If he denied his tenure, or refused his service, he was exposed to the same penalty. [2] If he sold his estate without license from his lord, [3] or if he sold it upon any other tenure or title than that by which he himself held it, [4] he lost all right to it. The adhering to his lord's enemies, [5] deserting him in war, [6] betraying his secrets, [7] debauching his wife or his near relations, [8] or even using indecent freedoms with them, [9] might be punished by forfeiture. The higher crimes, rapes, robbery, murder, arson, etc., were called felony; and being interpreted want of fidelity to his lord, made him lose his fief. [10] Even where the felon was vassal to a baron, though his immediate lord enjoyed the forfeiture, the king might retain possession of his estate during a twelvemonth, and had the right of spoiling and destroying it, unless the baron paid him a reasonable composition. [11] We have not here enumerated all the species of felonies, or of crimes by which forfeiture was incurred: we have said enough to prove that the possession of feudal property was anciently somewhat precarious, and that the primary idea was never lost, of its being a kind of fee or benefice.

[1] Hottom. de Feud. Disp. ca, col. 886.]

[2] Lib. Feud. lib. iii. tit. 1; lib. iv. tit. 21, 39.]

[3] Lib. Feud. lib. i. tit. 21.]

[4] Lib. Feud. lib. iv. tit. 44.]

[6] Lib. Feud. lib. iv. tit. 14, 21]

[7] Lib. Feud. lib. iv. tit. 14.]

[8] Lib. Feud. lib. i. tit. 14, 21.]

[9] Lib. Feud. lib. i. tit. 1.]

[10] Spel. Gloss, in verbo Felonia]

[11] Spel. Glos. Glanville, lib. vii. cap. 17.]

When a baron died, the king immediately took possession of the estate; and the heir, before he recovered his right, was obliged to make application to the crown, and desire that he might be admitted to do homage for his land, and pay a composition to the king. This composition was not at first fixed by law, at least by practice: the king was often exorbitant in his demands, and kept possession of the land till they were complied with.

If the heir were a minor, the king retained the whole profit of the estate till his majority; and might grant what sum he thought proper for the education and maintenance of the young baron. This practice was also founded on the notion that a fief was a benefice, and that, while the heir could not perform his military services, the revenue devolved to the superior, who employed another in his stead. It is obvious that a great proportion of the landed property must, by means of this device, be continually in the hands of the prince, and that all the noble familius were thereby held in perpetual dependence. When the king granted the wardship of a rich heir to any one, he had the opportunity of enriching a favorite or minister: if he sold it, he thereby levied a considerable sum of money. Simon de Mountfort paid Henry III. ten thousand marks, an immense sum in those days, for the wardship of Gilbert de Umfreville. [1] Geoffrey de Mandeville paid to the same prince the sum of twenty thousand marks, that he might marry Isabel, countess of Glocester, and possess all her lands and knights' fees. This sum would be equivalent to three hundred thousand, perhaps four hundred thousand pounds in our time. [2]

If the heir were a female, the king was entitled to offer her any husband of her rank he thought proper; and if she refused him, she forfeited her land. Even a male heir could not marry without the royal consent; and it was usual for men to pay large sums for the liberty of making their own choice in marriage. [2] No man could dispose of his land, either by sale or will, without the consent of his superior. The possessor was never considered as full proprietor; he was still a kind of beneficiary; and could not oblige his superior to accept of any vassal that was not agreeable to him.

Fines, amerciaments, and oblatas, as they were called, were another considerable branch of the royal power and revenue. The ancient records of the exchequer, which are still preserved, give surprising accounts of the numerous fines anc amerciaments levied in those days, [4] and of the strange inventions fallen upon to exact money from the subject.

[1] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[3] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[4] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

It appears that the ancient kings of England put themselves entirely on the footing of the barbarous Eastern princes, whom no man must approach without a present, who sell all their good offices, and who intrude themselves into every business, that they may have a pretence for extorting money. Even justice was avowedly bought and sold; the king's court itself, though the supreme judicature of the kingdom, was open to none that brought not presents to the king; the bribes given for the expedition, delay, [1] suspension, and, doubtless, for the perversion of justice, were entered in the public registers of the royal revenue, and remain as monuments of the perpetual iniquity and tyranny of the times. The barons of the exchequer, for instance, the first nobility of the kingdom, were not ashamed to insert, as an article in their records, that the county of Norfolk paid a sum that they might be fairly dealt with; [2] the borough of Yarmouth, that the king's charters, which they have for their liberties, might not be violated; [3] Richard, son of Gilbert, for the king's helping him to recover his debt from the Jews; [4] Serlo, son of Terlavaston, that he might be permitted to make his defence, in case he were accused of a certain homicide; [5] Waiter de Burton, for free law, if accused of wounding another; [6] Robert de Essart, for having an Liquest to find whether Roger the butcher, and Wace and

Humphrey, accused him of robbery and theft out of envy and ill will, or not; [7] William Buhurst, for having an inquest to find whether he were accused of the death of one Goodwin out of ill will, or for just cause. [8] I have selected these few instances from a great number of a like kind, which Madox had selected from a still greater number, preserved in the ancient rolls of the exchequer. [9]

Sometimes the party litigant offered the king a certain portion, a half, a third, a fourth, payable out of the debts which he, as the executor of justice, should assist him in recovering. [10] Theophania de Westland agreed to pay the half of two hundred and twelve marks, that she might recover that sum against James de Fughleston; [1] Solomon the Jew engaged to pay one mark out of every seven that he should recover against Hugh dè la Hose; [12] Nicholas Morrel promised to pay sixty pounds, that the earl of Flanders might be distrained to pay him three hundred and forty-three pounds, which the earl had taken from him; and these sixty pounds were to be paid out of the first money that Nicholas should recover from the earl. [13]

[1] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. , 309.]

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exch.]

[3] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[4] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. . He paid two hundred marks, a great sum in those days.]

[6] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[7] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. p 298.]

[8] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[9] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. chap. xii.]

[10] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[11] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[12] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. , 312.]

[13] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

As the king assumed the entire power over trade, he was to be paid for a permission to exercise commerce or industry of any kind. [2] Hugh Oisel paid four hundred marks for liberty to trade in England: [3] Nigel de Havene gave fifty marks for the partnership in merchandise which he had with Gervase de Hanton: [4] the men of Worcester paid one hundred shillings, that they might have the liberty of selling and buying dyed cloth, as formerly; [5] several other towns paid for a like liberty. [6] The commerce indeed of the kingdom was so much under the control of the king, that he erected guilds, corporations, and monopolies wherever he pleased; and levied sums for these exclusive privileges. [7]

There were no profits so small as to be below the king's attention. Henry, son of Arthur, gave ten dogs, to have a recognition against the countess of Copland for one knight's fee. [8] Roger, son of Nicholas, gave twenty lampreys and twenty shads for an inquest to find whether Gilbert, son of Alured, gave to Roger two hundred muttons to obtain his confirmation for certain lands, or whether Roger took them from him by violence; [9] Geoffrey Fitz-Pierre, the chief justiciary, gave two good Norway hawks, that Walter le Madine might have leave to export a hundred weight of cheese out ot the king's dominions. [10]

It is really amusing to remark the strange business in which the king sometimes interfered, and never without a present; the wife of Hugh de Nevile gave the king two hundred hens, that she might lie with her husband one night; [11] and she brought with her two sureties, who answered each for a hundred hens.

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

It is probable that her husband was a prisoner, which debarred her from having access to him. The abbot of Rucford paid ten marks for leave to erect houses and place men upon his land near Welhang, in order to secure his wood there from being stolen; Hugh, archdeacon of Wells, gave one tun of wine for leave to carry six hundred summs of corn whither he would; Peter de Perariis gave twenty marks for leave to salt fishes as Peter Chevalier used to do.

It was usual to pay high fines, in order to gain the king’s good will or mitigate his anger. In the reign of Henry II., Gilbert, the son of Fergus, fines in nine hundred and nineteen pounds nine shillings, to obtain that prince’s favor; William de Chataignes, a thousand marks, that he would remit his

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[3 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[4 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[6 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[7 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. , 233, etc.]

[8 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[9 Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[10: Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

[11: Madox, Hist. of the Exch.]

[12: Madox, Hist. of the Exch. p 326]

displeasure. In the reign of Henry III., the city of London fines in no less a sum than twenty thousand pounds on the same account.

The king’s protection and good offices of every kind were bought and sold. Robert Grislet paid twenty marks of silver, that the king would help him against the earl of Mortaigne in a certain plea: Robert de Cundet gave thirty marks of silver, that the king would bring him to an accord with the bishop of Lincoln; Ralph de Bréckham gave a hawk, that the king would protect him; and this is a very frequent reason for payments; John, son of Ordgar, gave a Norway hawk, to have the king’s request to the king of Norway to let him have his brother Godard’s chattels; Richard de Neville gave twenty palfreys to obtain the king’s request to Isolda Bisset, that she should take him for a husband; Roger Fitz-Walter gave three good palfreys to have the king’s letter to Roger Bertram’s mother, that she should marry him; Eling the dean paid one hundred marks, that his whore and his children might be let out upon bail; the bishop of Winchester gave one tun of good wine for his not putting the king in mind to give a girdle to the countess of Albemarle; Robert de Veaux gave five of the best palfreys, that the king would hold his tongue about Henry Pinel’s wife. There are in the records of exchequer many other singular instances of a like nature. [1] It will, however, be just to remark, that the same ridiculous practices and dangerous abuses prevailed in Normandy, and probably in all the other states of Europe. [2] England was not in this respect more barbarous than its neighbors.

These iniquitous practices of the Norman kings were so well known, that, on the death of Hugh Bigod, in the reign of Henry II., the best and most just of these princes, the eldest son and the widow of this nobleman came to court, and strove, by offering large presents to the king, each of them to acquire possession of that rich inheritance. The king was so equitable as to order the cause to be tried by the great council! But, in the mean time, he seized all the money and treasure of the deceased, [3] Peter, of Blois, a judicious, and even an elegant writer, for that age, gives a pathetic description of the reign of Henry; and he scruples not to complain to the king himself of these abuses. [4]

[[1] We shall gratify the reader’s curiosity by subjoining a few more instances from Madox, . Hugh Oisel was to give the king two robes of a good green color, to have the king’s letters patent to the merchants of Flanders with a request to render him one thousand marks, which he lost in Flanders. The abbot of Hyde paid thirty marks, to have the king’s letters of request to the archbishop of

Canterbury, to remove certain monks that were against the abbot. Roger de Trihanton paid twenty marks and a palfrey, to have the king's request to Richard de Umfreville to give him his sister to wife, and to the sister that she would accept of him for a husband; William de Cheveringworth paid five marks, to have the king's letter to the abbot of Perfore, to let him enjoy peaceably his tithes as formerly; Matthew de Hereford, clerk, paid ten marks for a letter of request to the bishop of Llandaff, to let him enjoy peaceably his church of Schenfrith; Andrew Neuhm gave three Flemish caps, for the king's request to the prior of Chikesand, for performance of an agreement made between them; Henry de Fontibus gave a Lombardy horse of value, to have the king's request to Henry Fitz-Hervey, that he would give him his daughter to wife; Roger, son of Nicholas, promised all the lampreys he could get, to have the king's request to Earl William Mareschal, that he would grant him the manor of Langeford at Ferm. The burgesses of Glocester promised three hundred lampreys, that they might not be distrained to find the prisoners of Poictou with necessaries, unless they pleased. Madox, . Jordan, sen of Reginald, paid twenty marks, to have the king's request to William Panier, that he would grant him the land of Mill Nierenuit, and the custody of his heirs; and if Jordan obtained the same, he was to pay the twenty marks, otherwise not. Madox, ,]

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. p, 359.]

[3] Benedict. Abbas, , 181.]

[4] Petri Bless. Epist. 95, apud Bibl. Patrum, tom. 24, .]

We may judge what the case would be under the government of worse princes. The articles of inquiry concerning the conduct of sheriffs, which Henry promulgated in 1170, show the great power as well as the licentiousness of these officers. [2]

Amerciaments or fines for crimes and trespasses were an ether considerable branch of the royal revenue. [3] Most crimes were atoned for by money; the fines imposed were not limited by any rule or statute; and frequently occasioned the total ruin of the person, even for the slightest trespasses. The forest laws, particularly, were a great source of oppression The king possessed sixty-eight forests, thirteen chases, and seven hundred and eighty-one parks, in different parts of England; [4] and, considering the extreme passion of the English and Normans for hunting, these were so many snares laid for the people, by which they were allured into trespasses and brought within the reach of arbitrary and rigorous laws, which the king had thought proper to enact by his own authority.

But the most barefaced acts of tyranny and oppression were practised against the Jews, who were entirely out of the protection of law, were extremely odious from the bigotry of the people, and were abandoned to the immeasurable rapacity of the king and his ministers. Besides many other indignities to which they were continually exposed, it appears that they were once all thrown into prison, and the sum of sixty-six thousand marks exacted for their liberty: [5] at another time, Isaac the Jew paid, alone, five thousand one hundred marks [6] Brim, three thousand marks; [7] Jurnet, two thousand; Bennet, five hundred: at another, Licorica, widow of David the Jew, of Oxford, was required to pay six thousand marks; and she was delivered over to six of the richest and discreetest Jews in England, who were to answer for the sum. [8]

[2 Hoveden, Chron. Gerv. .]

[3 Madox, chap. xiv.]

[4 Spel. Gloss, in verbo Forests.]

[5 happened in the reign of King John.]

[6 Madox, Hist. of the Exch,]

[7 Madox, Hist. of the Exch, .]

[8 Madox, Hist. of the Exch, p, 168.]

Henry III borrowed five thousand marks from the earl of Cornwall; and for his repayment consigned over to him all the Jews in England. The revenue arising from exactions upon this nation was so considerable, that there was a particular court of exchequer set apart for managing it.

We may judge concerning the low state of commerce among the English, when the Jews, notwithstanding these oppressions, could still find their account in trading among them, and lending them money. And as the improvements of agriculture were also much checked by the immense possessions of the nobility, by the disorders of the times, and by the precarious state of feudal property, it appears that industry of no kind could then have place in the kingdom.

It is asserted by Sir Harry Spelman, [1] as an undoubted truth, that, during the reigns of the first Norman princes, every edict of the king, issued with the consent of his privy council, had the full force of law. But the barons surely were not so passive as to intrust a power, entirely arbitrary and despotic, into the hands of the sovereign. It only appears, that the constitution had not fixed any precise boundaries to the royal power; that the right of issuing proclamations on any emergence, and of exacting obedience to them, — a right which was always supposed inherent in the crown, — is very difficult to be distinguished from a legislative authority; that the extreme imperfection of the ancient laws, and the sudden exigencies which often occurred in such turbulent governments, obliged the prince to exert frequently the latent powers of his prerogative; that he naturally proceeded, from the acquiescence of the people, to assume, in many particulars of moment, an authority from which he had excluded himself by express statutes, charters, or concessions, and which was, in the main, repugnant to the general genius of the constitution; and that the lives; the personal liberty, and the properties of all his subjects were less secured by law against the exertion of his arbitrary authority than by the independent power and private connections of each individual.

[1] We learn from the extracts given us of Domesday by Brady in his Treatise of Boroughs, that almost all the boroughs of England had suffered in the shock of the conquest, and had extremely decayed between the death of the Confessor and the time when Domesday was framed. * Gross. in verb. Justicium Dei. The author of the Miroir des Justices complains that ordinances are only made by the king and his clerks, and by aliens and others, who dare not contradict the king, but study to please him. Whence, he concludes, laws are oftener dictated by will than founded on right.]

It appears from the Great Charter itself, that not only John, a tyrannical prince, and Richard, a violent one, but their father, Henry, under whose reign the prevalence of gross abuses is the least to be suspected, were accustomed, from their sole authority, without process of law, to imprison, banish, and attaint the freemen of their kingdom.

A great baron, in ancient times, considered himself as a kind of sovereign within his territory; and was attended by courtiers and dependants more zealously attached to him than the ministers of state and the great officers were commonly o their sovereign. He often maintained in his court the parade of royalty, by establishing a justiciary, constable, mareschal, chamberlain, seneschal, and chancellor, and assigning to each of these officers a separate province and command He was usually very assiduous in exercising his jurisdiction, and took such delight in that image of sovereignty, that it was found necessary to restrain his activity, and prohibit him by law from holding courts too frequently. [1] It is not to be doubted but the example set him by the prince, of a mercenary and sordid extortion, would be faithfully copied; and that all his good and bad offices, his justice and injustice, were equally put to sale. He had the power, with the king’s consent, to exact talliages even from the free citizens who lived within his barony; and as his necessities made him rapacious, his authority was usually found to be more oppressive and tyrannical than that of the sovereign. [2] He was ever engaged in hereditary or personal animosities or confederacies with his neighbors, and often gave protection to all desperate adventurers and criminals, who could be useful in serving his violent purposes. He was able alone, in times of tranquillity, to obstruct the execution of justice within his territories; and by combining with a few malecontent barons of high rank and power, he could throw the state into convulsions. And, on the whole, though the royal authority was confined within bounds, and often within very narrow ones, yet the check was Irregular, and frequently the source of great disorders; nor was it derived from the liberty of the people, but from the military power of many petty tyrants, who were equally dangerous to the prince and oppressive to the subject.

[1] Dugd. Jurid. Orig. .]

[2] Madox, Hist. of the Exch. .]

The power of the church was another rampart against royal authority; but this defence was also the cause of many mischiefs and inconveniencies. The dignified clergy, perhaps, were not so prone to immediate violence as the barons; but as they pretended to a total independence on the state, and could always cover themselves with the appearances of religion, they proved, in one respect, an obstruction to the settlement of the kingdom, and to the regular execution of the laws. The policy of the Conqueror was in this particular liable to some exception. He augmented the superstitious veneration for Rome, to which that age was so much inclined, and he broke those bands of connection which, in the Saxon times, had preserved a union between the lay and the clerical orders. He prohibited the bishops from sitting in the county courts; he allowed ecclesiastical causes to be tried in spiritual courts only; [2] and he so much exalted the power of the clergy, that of sixty thousand two hundred and fifteen knights' fees, into which he divided England, he placed no less than twenty-eight thousand and fifteen under the church. [2]

The right of primogeniture was introduced with the feudal law; an institution which is hurtful by producing and maintaining an unequal division of private propeny; but is advantageous in another respect, by accustoming the people to a preference in favor of the eldest son, and thereby preventing a partition or disputed succession in the monarchy. The Normans introduced the use of surnames, which tend to preserve the knowledge of families and pedigrees. They abolished none of the old, absurd methods of trial by the cross or ordeal; and they added a new absurdity — the trial by single combat — [3] which became a regular part of jurisprudence, and was conducted with all the order, method, devotion, and solemnity imaginable. [4] The ideas of chivalry also seem to have been imported by the Normans: no traces of those fantastic notions are to be found among the plain and rustic Saxons.

[1] Char. Will, apud Wilkms, . Spel. Concil. vol. ii .]

[2] Spel. Gloss, in verb. Manus mortua. We are not to imagine, as some have done, that the church possessed lands in this proportion, but only that they and their vassals enjoyed such a proportionable part of the landed property.]

[3] LL. Will. ca.]

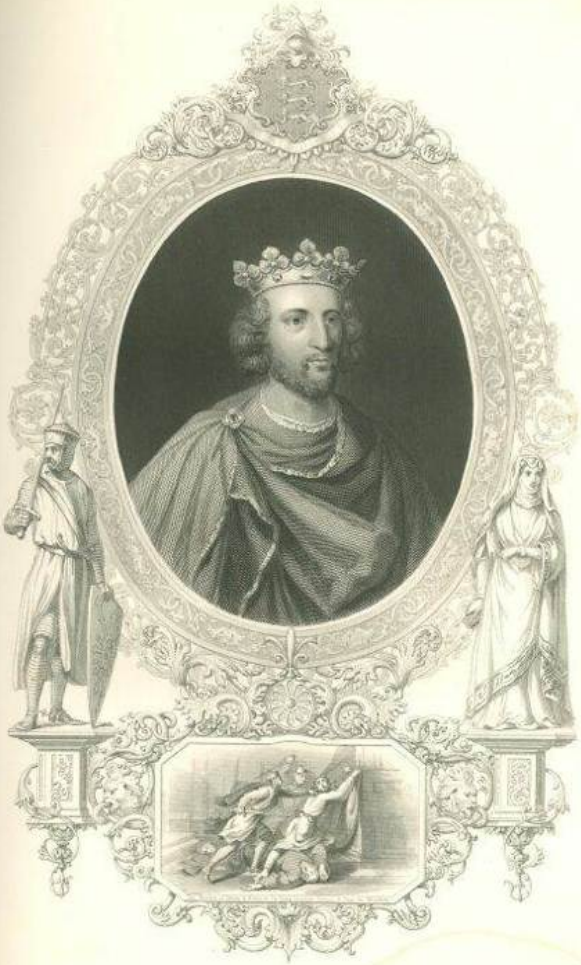
[4] Spel. Gloss, in verbo Campus. The last instance of these duels was in the 16th of Eliz. So long did that absurdity remain.]

The feudal institutions, by raising the military tenants to a kind of sovereign dignity, by rendering personal strength and valor requisite, and by making every knight and baron his own protector and avenger, begat that martial pride and sense of honor which, being cultivated and embellished by the poets and romance writers of the age, ended in chivalry. The virtuous knight fought not only in his own quarrel, but in that of the innocent, of the helpless, and, above all, of the fair, whom he supposed to be forever under the guardianship of his valiant arm. The uncourteous knight who, from his castle, exercised robbery on travellers, and committed violence on virgins, was the object of his perpetual indignation; and he put him to death, without scruple, or trial, or appeal, wherever he met with him. The great independence of men made personal honor and fidelity the chief tie among them, and rendered it the capital virtue of every true knight, or genuine professor of chivalry. The solemnities of single combat, as established by law, banished the notion of every thing unfair or unequal in rencounters, and maintained an appearance of courtesy between the combatants till the moment of their engagement. The credulity of the age grafted on this stock the notion of giants, enchanters, dragons, spells, [1] and a thousand wonders, which still multiplied during the times of the crusades; when men, returning from so great a distance, used the liberty of imposing every fiction on their believing audience. These ideas of chivalry infected the writings, conversation, and behavior of men, during some ages; and even after they were, in a great measure, banished by the revival of learning, they left modern gallantry and the point of honor, which still maintain their influence, and are the genuine off-spring of those ancient affectations.

[1] In all legal single combats, it was part of the champion’s oath, that he carried not about him any herb, spell, or enchantment, by which he might procure victory. Dugd. Orig. Jurid. .]

The concession of the Great Charter, or rather its full establishment, (for there was a considerable interval of time between the one and the other,) gave rise, by degrees, to a new species of government, and introduced some order and justice into the administration. The ensuing scenes of our history are therefore somewhat different from the preceding. Yet the Great Charter contained no establishment of new courts magistrates, or senates, nor abolition of the old. It introduced no new distribution of the powers of the common-wealth, and no innovation in the political or public law of the kingdom. It only guarded, and that merely by verbal clauses, against such tyrannical practices as are incompatible with civilized government, and, if they become very frequent, are incompatible with all government. The barbarous license of the kings, and perhaps of the nobles, was thenceforth somewhat more restrained: men acquired some more security for their properties and their liberties; and government approached a little nearer to that end for which it was originally instituted — the distribution of justice, and the equal protection of the citizens. Acts of violence and iniquity in the crown, which before were only deemed injurious to individuals, and were hazardous chiefly in proportion to the number, power, and dignity of the persons affected by them, were now regarded, in some degree, as public injuries, and as infringements of a charter calculated for general security. And thus the establishment of the Great Charter, without seeming anywise to innovate in the distribution of political power, became a kind of epoch in the constitution.

CHAPTER XII.



HENRY III.

From the Monument at Westminster

HENRY III.

1216.

Most sciences, in proportion as they increase and improve, invent methods by which they facilitate their reasonings, and, employing general theorems, are enabled to comprehend, in a few propositions, a great number of inferences and conclusions. History, also, being a collection of facts which are multiplying without end, is obliged to adopt such arts of abridgment, to retain the more material events, and to drop all the minute circumstances, which are only interesting during the time, or to the persons engaged in the transactions. This truth is nowhere more evident than with regard to the reign upon which we are going to enter. What mortal could have the patience to write or read a long detail of such frivolous events as those with which it is filled, or attend to a tedious narrative which would follow, through a series of fifty-six years, the caprices and weaknesses of so mean a prince as Henry? The chief reason why Protestant writers have been so anxious to spread out the incidents of this reign, is in order to expose the rapacity, ambition, and artifices of the court of Rome, and to prove, that the great dignitaries of the Catholic church, while they pretended to have nothing in view but the salvation of souls, had bent all their attention to the acquisition of riches, and were restrained by no sense of justice or of honor in the pursuit of that great object. [1] But this conclusion would readily be allowed them, though it were not illustrated by such a detail of uninteresting incidents; and follows indeed, by an evident necessity, from the very situation in which that church was placed with regard to the rest of Europe. For, besides that ecclesiastical power, as it can always cover its operations under a cloak of sanctity, and attacks men on the side where they dare not employ their reason, lies less under control than civil government; besides this general cause, I say, the pope and his courtiers were foreigners to most of the churches which they governed; they could not possibly have any other object than to pillage the provinces for present gain; and as they lived at a distance, they would be little awed by shame or remorse in employing every lucrative expedient which was suggested to them. England being one of the most remote provinces attached to the Romish hierarchy, as well as the most prone to superstition, felt severely, during this reign, while its patience was not yet fully exhausted, the influence of these causes, and we shall often have occasion to touch cursorily upon such incidents. But we shall not attempt to comprehend every transaction transmitted to us: and till the end of the reign, when the events become more memorable, we shall not always observe an exact chronological order in our narration.

* M. Paris, .

The earl of Pembroke, who at the time of John’s death, was mareschal of England, was, by his office, at the head of the armies, and consequently, during a state of civil wars and convulsions, at the head of the government; and it happened, fortunately for the young monarch and for the nation, that the power could not have been intrusted into more able and more faithful hands. This nobleman, who had maintained his loyalty unshaken to John during the lowest fortune of that monarch, determined to support the authority of the infant prince; nor was he dismayed at the number and violence of his enemies. Sensible that Henry, agreeably to the prejudices of the times, would not be deemed a sovereign till crowned and anointed by a churchman, he immediately carried the young prince to Glocester, where the ceremony of coronation was performed, in the presence of Gualo, the legate, and of a few noblemen, by the bishops of Winchester and Bath. [1] As the concurrence of the papal authority was requisite to support the tottering throne, Henry was obliged to swear fealty to the pope, and renew that homage to which his father had already subjected the kingdom: [2] and in order to enlarge the authority of Pembroke, and to give him a more regular and legal title to it, a general council of the barons was soon after summoned at Bristol, where that nobleman was chosen protector of the realm.

* M. Paris, . Hist Croyl. Cont. . W. Heming. p. 562. Privet, .

* * M. Paris, .

Pembroke, that he might reconcile all men to the government of his pupil, made him grant a new charter of liberties, which, though mostly copied from the former concessions extorted from John, contains some alterations which may be deemed remarkable. [1] The full privilege of elections in the clergy, granted by the late king, was not confirmed, nor the liberty of going out of the kingdom without the royal consent: whence we may conclude, that Pembroke and the barons, jealous of the ecclesiastical power, both were desirous of renewing the king’s claim to issue a congé d’élire to the monks and chapters, and thought it requisite to put some check to the frequent appeals to Rome. But what may chiefly surprise us is, that the obligation to which John had subjected himself, of obtaining the consent of the great council before he levied any aids or scutages upon the nation, was omitted; and this article was even declared hard and severe, and was expressly left to future deliberation. But we must consider, that, though this limitation may perhaps appear to us the most momentous in the whole charter of John, it was not regarded in that light by the ancient barons, who were more jealous in guarding against particular acts of violence in the crown than against such general impositions which, unless they were evidently reasonable and necessary, could scarcely, without general consent, be levied upon men who had arms in their hands, and who could repel any act of oppression by which they were all immediately affected. We accordingly find, that Henry, in the course of his reign, while he gave frequent occasions for complaint with regard to his violations of the Great Charter, never attempted, by his own will, to levy any aids or scutages, though he was often reduced to great necessities, and was refused supply by his people.

* Rymer, vol. i. .

So much easier was it for him to transgress the law, when individuals alone were affected, than even to exert his acknowledged prerogatives, where the interest of the whole body was concerned.

This charter was again confirmed by the king in the ensuing year, with the addition of some articles to prevent the oppressions by sheriffs; and also with an additional charter of forests, a circumstance of great moment in those ages, when hunting was so much the occupation of the nobility, and when the king comprehended so considerable a part of the kingdom within his forests, which he governed by peculiar and arbitrary laws. All the forests, which had been enclosed since the reign of Henry II., were disafforested, and new perambulations were appointed for that purpose;

offences in the forests were declared to be no longer capital, but punishable by fine, imprisonment, and more gentle penalties; and all the proprietors of land recovered the power of cutting and using their own wood at their pleasure.

Thus these famous charters were brought nearly to the shape in which they have ever since stood; and they were, during many generations, the peculiar favorites of the English nation, and esteemed the most sacred rampart to national liberty and independence. As they secured the rights of all orders of men, they were anxiously defended by all, and became the basis, in a manner, of the English monarchy, and a kind of original contract which both limited the authority of the king and insured the conditional allegiance of his subjects. Though often violated, they were still claimed by the nobility and people; and as no precedents were supposed valid that infringed them, they rather acquired than lost authority, from the frequent attempts made against them in several ages by regal and arbitrary power.

While Pembroke, by renewing and confirming the Great Charter, gave so much satisfaction and security to the nation in general, he also applied himself successfully to individuals; he wrote letters, in the king's name, to all the malcontent barons; in which he represented to them that, whatever jealousy and animosity they might have entertained against the late king, a young prince, the lineal heir of their ancient monarchs, had now succeeded to the throne, without succeeding either to the resentments or principles of his predecessor; that the desperate expedient, which they had employed, of calling in a foreign potentate, had, happily for them as well as for the nation, failed of entire success, and it was still in their power, by a speedy return to their duty, to restore the independence of the kingdom, and to secure that liberty for which they so zealously contended; that as all past offences of the barons were now buried in oblivion, they ought, on their part, to forget their complaints against their late sovereign, who, if he had been anywise blamable in his conduct had left to his son the salutary warning, to avoid the paths which had led to such fatal extremities: and that having now obtained a charter for their liberties, it was their interest to show, by their conduct, that this acquisition was not incompatible with their allegiance, and that the rights of king and people, so far from being hostile and opposite, might mutually support and sustain each other. [1]

These considerations, enforced by the character of honor and constancy which Pembroke had ever maintained, had a mighty influence on the barons; and most of them began secretly to negotiate with him, and many of them openly returned to their duty. The diffidence which Lewis discovered of their fidelity, forwarded this general propension towards the king; and when the French prince refused the government of the castle of Hertford to Robert Fitz-Walter, who had been so active against the late king, and who claimed that fortress as his property, they plainly saw that the English were excluded from every trust, and that foreigners had engrossed all the confidence and affection of their new sovereign. [2] The excommunication, too, denounced by the legate against all the adherents of Lewis, failed not, in the turn which men's dispositions had taken, to produce a mighty effect upon them; and they were easily persuaded to consider a cause as impious, for which they had already entertained an unsurmountable aversion. [3] Though Lewis made a journey to France, and brought over succors from that kingdom [4] he found, on his return, that his party was still more weakened by the desertion of his English confederates, and that the death of John had, contrary to his expectations, given an incurable wound to his cause. The earls of Salisbury Arundel, and Warrenne, together with William Mareschal, eldest son of the protector, had embraced Henry's party; and every English nobleman was plainly watching for an opportunity of returning to his allegiance.

* Rymer, vol. i. . Brady's App. No. 143.

* * M. Paris, , 202.

* * * Ibid. M. West,

* * * * Chron. Dunst vol. i. .

Pembroke was so much strengthened by these accessions, that he ventured to invest Mount Sorel; though, upon the approach of the count of Perche with the French army, he desisted from his enterprise, and raised the siege. [1] The count, elated with this success, marched to Lincoln; and being admitted into the town, he began to attack the castle, which he soon reduced to extremity. The protector summoned all his forces from every quarter, in order to relieve a place of such importance; and he appeared so much superior to the French, that they shut themselves up within the city, and resolved to act upon the defensive. [2] But the garrison of the castle, having received a strong reënforcement, made a vigorous sally upon the besiegers; while the English army, by concert, assaulted them in the same instant from without, mounted the walls by scalade, and bearing down all resistance, entered the city sword in hand. Lincoln was delivered over to be pillaged; the French army was totally routed; the count de Perche, with only two persons more, was killed, but many of the chief commanders, and about four hundred knights, were made prisoners by the English. [3] So little blood was shed in this important action, which decided the fate of one of the most powerful kingdoms in Europe; and such wretched soldiers were those ancient barons, who yet were unacquainted with every thing but arms!

* M. Paris,

* * Chron. Dunst vol. i. .

* * * M. Paris, , 205.

* * * * Chron. de Mailr. .

Prince Lewis was informed of this fatal event while employed in the siege of Dover, which was still valiantly defended against him by Hubert de Burgh. He immediately retreated to London, the centre and life of his party; and he there received intelligence of a new disaster, which put an end to all his hopes. A French fleet, bringing over a strong, reënforcement, had appeared on the coast of Kent; where they were attacked by the English under the command of Philip d’Albiney, and were routed with considerable loss. D’Albiney employed a stratagem against them, which is said to have contributed to the victory: having gained the wind of the French, he came down upon them with violence; and throwing in their faces a great quantity of quick lime, which he purposely carried on board, he so blinded them, that they were disabled from defending themselves. [1]

After this second misfortune of the French, the English barons hastened every where to make peace with the protector, and, by an early submission, to prevent those attainders to which they were exposed on account of their rebellion. Lewis, whose cause was now totally desperate, began to be anxious for the safety of his person, and was glad, on any honorable conditions, to make his escape from a country where he found every thing was now become hostile to him. He concluded a peace with Pembroke, promised to evacuate the kingdom, and only stipulated in return an indemnity to his adherents, and a restitution of their honors and fortunes, together with the free and equal enjoyment of those liberties which had been granted to the rest of the nation. [2] Thus was happily ended a civil war which seemed to be founded on the most incurable hatred and jealousy, and had threatened the kingdom with the most fatal consequences.

The precautions which the king of France used in the conduct of this whole affair are remarkable. He pretended that his son had accepted of the offer from the English barons without his advice, and contrary to his inclination: the armies sent to England were levied in Lewis's name: when that prince came over to France for aid, his father publicly refused to grant him any assistance, and would not so much as admit him to his presence: even after Henry's party acquired the ascendant, and Lewis was in danger of falling into the hands of his enemies, it was Blanche of Castile his wife, not the king his father, who raised armies and equipped fleets for his succor. [3]

*. M. Paris, . Ann. Waverl. . W. Heming. . Trivet, . M. West. . Knyghton, .

* *. Rhymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. . M. West. . Knyghton, .

* * * M, Paris, . Chron. Dunst, vol. i. .

All these artifices were employed, not to satisfy the pope; for he had too much penetration to be so easily imposed on: nor yet to deceive the people; for they were too gross even for that purpose: they only served for a coloring to Philip's cause; and in public affairs men are often better pleased that the truth, though known to every body, should be wrapped up under a decent cover, than if it were exposed in open daylight to the eyes of all the world.

After the expulsion of the French, the prudence and equity of the protector's subsequent conduct contributed to cure entirely those wounds which had been made by intestine discord. He received the rebellious barons into favor; observed strictly the terms of peace which he had granted them; restored them to their possessions; and endeavored, by an equal behavior, to bury all past animosities in perpetual oblivion. The clergy alone, who had adhered to Lewis, were sufferers in this revolution. As they had rebelled against their spiritual sovereign, by disregarding the interdict and excommunication, it was not in Pembroke's power to make any stipulations in their favor; and Gualo, the legate, prepared to take vengeance on them for their disobedience. [1] Many of them were deposed; many suspended; some banished; and all who escaped punishment made atonement for their offence, by paying large sums to the legate, who amassed an immense treasure by this expedient.

The earl of Pembroke did not long survive the pacification, which had been chiefly owing to his wisdom and valor; [1] and he was succeeded in the government by Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, and Hubert de Burgh, the justiciary. The counsels of the latter were chiefly followed; and had he possessed equal authority in the kingdom with Pembroke, he seemed to be every way worthy of filling the place of that virtuous nobleman. But the licentious and powerful barons, who had once broken the reins of subjection to their prince, and had obtained by violence an enlargement of their liberties and independence, could ill be restrained by laws under a minority; and the people, no less than the king, suffered from their outrages and disorders. They retained by force the royal castles, which they had seized during the past convulsions, or which had been committed to their custody by the protector; [2] they usurped the king's demesnes; [3] they oppressed their vassals; they infested their weaker neighbors; they invited all disorderly people to enter in their retinue, and to live upon their lands; and they gave them protection in all their robberies and extortions.

* Brady's App. No. 144. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * M. Paris, . * Trivet,

* * * Rymer, vol. i. .

No one was more infamous for these violent and illegal practices than the earl of Albemarle; who, though he had early returned to his duty, and had been serviceable in expelling the French, augmented to the utmost the general disorder, and committed outrages in all the counties of the north. In order to reduce him to obedience, Hubert seized an opportunity of getting possession of Rockingham Castle, which Albemarle had garrisoned with his licentious retinue: but this nobleman, instead of submitting, entered into a secret confederacy with Fawkes de Breauté, Peter de Mauleon, and other barons, and both fortified the Gastle of Biham for his defence, and made himself master by surprise of that of Fotheringay. Pandulf, who was restored to his legateship, was active in suppressing this rebellion; and with the concurrence of eleven bishops, he pronounced the sentence of excommunication against Albemarle and his adherents: [1] an army was levied: a scutage of ten shillings a knight's fee was imposed on all the military tenants. Albemarle's associates gradually deserted him; and he himself was obliged at last to sue for mercy. He received a pardon, and was restored to his whole estate.

This impolitic lenity, too frequent in those times, was probably the result of a secret combination among the barons, who never could endure to see the total ruin of one of their own order: but it encouraged Fawkes de Breauté, a man whom King John had raised from a low origin, to persevere in the course of violence to which he had owed his fortune and to set at nought all law and justice. When thirty-five verdicts were at one time found against him, on account of his violent expulsion of so many freeholders from their possessions, he came to the court of justice with an armed force, seized the judge who had pronounced the verdicts, and imprisoned him in Bedford Castle. He then levied open war against the king; but being subdued and taken prisoner, his life was granted him; but his estate was confiscated, and he was banished the kingdom. [2]

* Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, , 224. Ann. Waverl , Chron. Dunst vol. i. , 146. M. West, .

1222.

Justice was executed with greater severity against disorders less premeditated, which broke out in London. A frivolous emulation in a match of wrestling, between the Londoners on the one hand, and the inhabitants of

Westminster and those of the neighboring villages on the other, occasioned this commotion. The former rose in a body, and pulled down some houses belonging to the abbot of Westminster: but this riot, which, considering the tumultuous disposition familiar to that capital, would have been little regarded, seemed to become more serious by the symptoms which then appeared of the former attachment of the citizens to the French interest. The populace, in the tumult, made use of the cry of war commonly employed by the French troops: “Mountjoy, Mountjoy, God help us and our lord Lewis.” The justiciary made inquiry into the disorder; and finding one Constantine Fitz-Arnulf to have been the ring-*leader, an insolent man, who justified his crime in Hubert’s presence, he proceeded against him by martial law, and ordered him immediately to be hanged, without trial or form of process. He also cut off the feet of some of Constantine’s accomplices. [1]

This act of power was complained of as an infringement of the Great Charter: yet the justiciary, in a parliament summoned at Oxford, (for the great councils about this time began to receive that appellation,) made no scruple to grant in the king’s name a renewal and confirmation of that charter. When the assembly made application to the crown for this favor, — as a law in those times seemed to lose its validity if not frequently renewed, — William de Briewere, one of the council of regency, was so bold as to say openly, that those liberties were extorted by force, and ought not to be observed: but he was reprimanded by the archbishop of Canterbury, and was not countenanced by the king or his chief ministers. [2] A new confirmation was demanded and granted two years after; and an aid, amounting to a fifteenth of all movables, was given by the parliament, in return for this indulgence. The king issued writs anew to the sheriffs, enjoining the observance of the charter; but he inserted a remarkable clause in the writs, that those who paid not the fifteenth should not for the future be entitled to the benefit of those liberties. [3]

* M. Paris, , 218, 259. Ann. Waverl. . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * M. West. .

* * * Clause ix. H. 3, m. 9, and m. 6, d.

The low state into which the crown was fallen, made it requisite for a good minister to be attentive to the preservation of the royal prerogatives, as well as to the security of public liberty. Hubert applied to the pope, who had always great authority in the kingdom, and was now considered as its superior lord, and desired him to issue a bull, declaring the king to be of full age, and entitled to exercise in person all the acts of royalty. [1] In consequence of this declaration, the justiciary resigned into Henry's hands the two important fortresses of the Tower and Dover Castle, which had been intrusted to his custody; and he required the other barons to imitate his example. They refused compliance: the earls of Chester and Albemarle, John Constable of Chester, John de Lacy, Brian de l'Isle, and William de Cantel, with some others, even formed a conspiracy to surprise London, and met in arms at Waltham with that intention: but finding the king prepared for defence, they desisted from their enterprise. When summoned to court in order to answer for their conduct, they scrupled not to appear, and to confess the design: but they told the king that they had no bad intentions against his person, but only against Hubert de Burgh, whom they were determined to remove from his office. [2] They appeared too formidable to be chastised; and they were so little discouraged by the failure of their first enterprise, that they again met in arms at Leicester, in order to seize the king, who then resided at Northampton: but Henry, informed of their purpose, took care to be so well armed and attended, that the barons found it dangerous to make the attempt; and they sat down and kept Christmas in his neighborhood. [3] The archbishop and the prelates, finding every thing tend towards a civil war, interposed with their authority, and threatened the barons with the sentence of excommunication, if they persisted in detaining the king's castles. This menace at last prevailed: most of the fortresses were surrendered; though the barons complained that Hubert's castles were soon after restored to him, while the king still kept theirs in his own custody. There are said to have been one thousand one hundred and fifteen castles at that time in England. [4]

* M. Paris, .

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * M. Paris, . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * * Coke's Comment on Magna Charta, cha.

It must be acknowledged that the influence of the prelates and the clergy was often of great service to the public.

Though the religion of that age can merit no better name than that of superstition, it served to unite together a body of men who had great sway over the people, and who kept the community from falling to pieces, by the factions and independent power of the nobles. And what was of great importance, it threw a mighty authority into the hands of men, who by their profession were averse to arms and violence, who tempered by their mediation the general disposition towards military enterprises; and who still maintained, even amidst the shock of arms, those secret links, without which it is impossible for human society to subsist.

Notwithstanding these intestine commotions in England, and the precarious authority of the crown, Henry was obliged to carry on war in France; and he employed to that purpose the fifteenth which had been granted him by parliament. Lewis VIII., who had succeeded to his father Philip, instead of complying with Henry's claim, who demanded the restitution of Normandy and the other provinces wrested from England, made an irruption into Poictou, took Rochelle [1] after a long siege, and seemed determined to expel the English from the few provinces which still remained to them. Henry sent over his uncle, the earl of Salisbury, together with his brother, Prince Richard, to whom he had granted the earldom of Cornwall, which had escheated to the crown. Salisbury stopped the progress of Lewis's arms, and retained the Poictevin and Gascon vassals in their allegiance: but no military action of any moment was performed on either side. The earl of Cornwall, after two years' stay in Guienne, returned to England.

* Rymer, vol i. . Trivet, .

1227.

This prince was nowise turbulent or factious in his disposition: his ruling passion was to amass money, in which he succeeded so well as to become the richest subject in Christendom: yet his attention to gain threw him sometimes into acts of violence, and gave disturbance to the government. There was a manor, which had formerly belonged to the earldom of Cornwall but had been granted to Waleran de Ties, before Richard had been invested with that dignity, and while the earldom remained in the crown. Richard claimed this manor, and expelled the proprietor by force: Waleran complained: the king ordered his brother to do justice to the man, and restore him to his rights: the earl said that he would not submit to these orders, till the cause should be decided against him by the judgment of his peers: Henry replied, that it was first necessary to reinstate Waleran in possession, before the cause could be tried; and he reiterated his orders to the earl. [1] We may judge of the state of the government, when this affair had nearly produced a civil war The earl of Cornwall, finding Henry peremptory in his commands, associated himself with the young earl of Pembroke who had married his sister, and who was displeased on account of the king's requiring him to deliver up some royal castles which were in his custody. These two malecontents took into the confederacy the earls of Chester, Warrenne, Glocester, Hereford, Warwick, and Ferrers, who were all disgusted on a like account. [2] They assembled an army, which the king had not the power or courage to resist; and he was obliged to give his brother satisfaction, by grants of much greater importance than the manor, which had been the first ground of the quarrel. [3]

The character of the king, as he grew to man's estate, became every day better known; and he was found in every respect unqualified for maintaining a proper sway among those turbulent barons, whom the feudal constitution subjected to his authority. Gentle, humane, and merciful even to a fault, he seems to have been steady in no other circumstance of his character; but to have received every impression from those who surrounded him, and whom he loved, for the time, with the most imprudent and most unreserved affection. Without activity or vigor, he was unfit to conduct war; without policy or art, he was ill fitted to maintain peace: his resentments, though hasty and violent, were not dreaded, while he was found to drop them with such facility; his friendships were little valued, because they were neither derived from choice, nor maintained with constancy: a proper pageant of state in a regular monarchy, where his ministers could have conducted all affairs in his name and by his authority; but too feeble in those disorderly times to sway a sceptre, whose weight depended entirely on the firmness and dexterity of the hand which held it.

* M. Paris, .

* * M. Paris, .

* * * M. Paris, .

The ablest and most virtuous minister that Henry ever possessed was Hubert de Burgh; [1] a man who had been steady to the crown in the most difficult and dangerous times, and who yet showed no disposition, in the height of his power, to enslave or oppress the people. The only exceptionable part of his conduct is that which is mentioned by Matthew Paris, [2] if the fact be really true, and proceeded from Hubert's advice, namely, the recalling publicly and the annulling of the charter of forests, a concession so reasonable in itself, and so passionately claimed both by the nobility and people: but it must be confessed that this measure is so unlikely, both from the circumstances of the times and character of the minister, that there is reason to doubt of its reality, especially as it is mentioned by no other historian. Hubert, while he enjoyed his authority, had an entire ascendant over Henry, and was loaded with honors and favors beyond any other subject.

1231.

Besides acquiring the property of many castles and manors, he married the eldest sister of the king of Scots, was created earl of Kent, and, by an unusual concession, was made chief justiciary of England for life; yet Henry, in a sudden caprice, threw off his faithful minister, and exposed him to the violent persecutions of his enemies. Among other frivolous crimes objected to him, he was accused of gaining the king's affections by enchantment, and of purloining from the royal treasury a gem which had the virtue to render the wearer invulnerable, and of sending this valuable curiosity to the prince of Wales. [3] The nobility, who hated Hubert on account of his zeal in resuming the rights and possessions of the crown, no sooner saw the opportunity favorable, than they inflamed the king's animosity against him, and pushed him to seek the total ruin of his minister. Hubert took sanctuary in a church: the king ordered him to be dragged from thence: he recalled those orders: he afterwards renewed them: he was obliged by the clergy to restore him to the sanctuary: he constrained him soon after to surrender himself prisoner, and he confined him in the castle of the Devizes. Hubert made his escape, was expelled the kingdom, was again received into favor, recovered a great share of the king’s confidence, but never showed any inclination to reinstate himself in power and authority. [4]

* Ypod. Neust. .

* * Page 232. M. West () ascribes this counsel to Peter, bishop of Winchester.

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * * M. Paris, , 260, 261, 266. Chron. T. Wykes, p. 41, 47 Chron. Dunst. vol. i. , 221. M. West, , 301.

The man who succeeded him in the government of the king and kingdom, was Peter, bishop of Winchester, a Poictevin by birth, who had been raised by the late king, and who was no less distinguished by his arbitrary principles and violent conduct, than by his courage and abilities. This prelate had been left by King John justiciary and regent of the kingdom during an expedition which that prince made into France; and his illegal administration was one chief cause of that great combination among the barons, which finally extorted from the crown the charter of liberties, and laid the foundation of the English constitution. Henry, though incapable, from his character, of pursuing the same violent maxims which had governed his father, had imbibed the same arbitrary principles; and in prosecution of Peter’s advice, he invited over a great number of Poictevins and other foreigners, who, he believed, could more safely be trusted than the English, and who seemed useful to counterbalance the great and independent power of the nobility. [1] Every office and command was bestowed on these strangers; they exhausted the revenues of the crown, already too much impoverished; [2] they invaded the rights of the people; and their insolence, still more provoking than their power, drew on them the hatred and envy of all orders of men in the kingdom. [3]

1233.

The barons formed a combination against this odious ministry, and withdrew from parliament, on pretence of the danger to which they were exposed from the machinations of the Poictevins. When again summoned to attend, they gave for answer, that the king should dismiss his foreigners, otherwise they would drive both him and them out of the kingdom, and put the crown on another head, more worthy to wear it: [4] such was the style they used to their sovereign. They at last came to parliament, but so well attended, that they seemed in a condition to prescribe laws to the king and ministry.

* M. Paris,

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * M. Paris,

* * * * M. Paris, p 265.

Peter des Roches, however, had in the interval found means of sowing dissension among them, and of bringing over to his party the earl of Cornwall, as well as the earls of Lincoln and Chester. The confederates were disconcerted in their measures: Richard, earl Mareschal, who had succeeded to that dignity on the death of his brother William, was chased into Wales; he thence withdrew into Ireland, where he was treacherously murdered by the contrivance of the bishop of Winchester. [1] The estates of the more obnoxious barons were confiscated, without legal sentence or trial by their peers; [2] and were bestowed with a profuse liberality on the Poictevins. Peter even carried his insolence so far as to declare publicly, that the barons of England must not pretend to put themselves on the same foot with those of France, or assume the same liberties and privileges: the monarch in the former country had a more absolute power than in the latter. It had been more justifiable for him to have said, that men so unwilling to submit to the authority of laws, could with the worst grace claim any shelter or protection from them.

When the king at any time was checked in his illegal practices, and when the authority of the Great Charter was objected to him, he was wont to reply, “Why should I observe this charter, which is neglected by all my grandees, both prelates and nobility?” It was very reasonably said to him, “You ought, sir, to set them the example.” [3]

So violent a ministry as that of the bishop of Winchester could not be of long duration; but its fall proceeded at last from the influence of the church, not from the efforts of the nobles. Edmond, the primate, came to court, attended by many of the other prelates, and represented to the king the pernicious measures embraced by Peter des Roches, the discontents of his people, the ruin of his affairs; and after requiring the dismission of the minister and his associates, threatened him with excommunication in case of his refusal. Henry, who knew that an excommunication so agreeable to the sense of the people could not fail of producing the most dangerous effects, was obliged to submit: foreigners were banished; the natives were restored to their place in council; [4] the primate, who was a man of prudence, and who took care to execute the laws and observe the charter of liberties, bore the chief sway in the government.

1236.

But the English in vain flattered themselves that they should be long free from the dominion of foreigners. The king, having married Eleanor, daughter of the count of Provence, [5] was surrounded by a great number of strangers from that country, whom he caressed with the fondest affection, and enriched by an imprudent generosity. [6]

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* Chron. Dunst. vol. i .

* * M. Paris, .

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * * M. Paris, , 272

* * * * * * M. Paris, .

The bishop of Valence, a prelate of the house of Savoy, and maternal uncle to the queen, was his chief minister, and employed every art to amass wealth for himself and his relations. Peter of Savoy, a brother of the same family, was invested in the honor of Richmond, and received the rich wardship of Earl Warrenne; Boniface of Savoy was promoted to the see of Canterbury: many young ladies were invited over to Provence, and married to the chief noblemen of England, who were the king's wards. [1] And, as the source of Henry's bounty began to fail, his Savoyard ministry applied to Rome, and obtained a bull, permitting him to resume all past grants; absolving him from the oath which he had taken to maintain them; even enjoining him to make such a resumption, and representing those grants as invalid, on account of the prejudice which ensued from them to the Roman pontiff, in whom the superiority of the kingdom was vested. [2] The opposition made to the intended resumption prevented it from taking place; but the nation saw the indignities to which the king was willing to submit, in order to gratify the avidity of his foreign favorites. About the same time he published in England the sentence of excommunication, pronounced against the emperor Frederic, his brother-in-law; [3] and said in excuse, that, being the pope's vassal, he was obliged by his allegiance to obey all the commands of his holiness. In this weak reign, when any neighboring potentate insulted the king's dominions, instead of taking revenge for the injury, he complained to the pope as his superior lord, and begged him to give protection to his vassal. [4]

* M. Paris, , 301, 305, 316, 541.

* *M. West. , 304.

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * *M. West..

1247.

The resentment of the English barons rose high at the preference given to foreigners; but no remonstrance or complaint could ever prevail on the king to abandon them, or even to moderate his attachment towards them. After the Provencals and Savoyards might have been supposed pretty well satiated with the dignities and riches which they had acquired, a new set of hungry foreigners were invited over, and shared among them those favors which the king ought in policy to have conferred on the English nobility, by whom his government could have been supported and defended. His mother Isabella, who had been unjustly taken by the late king from the count de la Marche, to whom she was betrothed, was no mistress of herself by the death of her husband, than she married that nobleman; [1] and she had born him four sons, Guy, William, Geoffrey, and Aymer, whom she sent over to England, in order to pay a visit to their brother. The good-natured and affectionate disposition of Henry was moved at the sight of such near relations; and he considered neither his own circumstances, nor the inclinations of his people, in the honors and riches which he conferred upon them. [2] Complaints rose as high against the credit of the Gascon, as ever they had done against that of the Poictevin and of the Savoyard favorites; and to a nation prejudiced against them, all their measures appeared exceptionable and criminal. Violations of the Great Charter were frequently mentioned; and it is indeed more than probable, that foreigners, ignorant of the laws, and relying on the boundless affections of a weak prince, would, in an age when a regular administration was not any where known, pay more attention to their present interest than to the liberties of the people. It is reported that the Poictevins and other strangers, when the laws were at any time appealed to in opposition to their oppressions, scrupled not to reply, “What did the English laws signify to them? They minded them not.” And as words are often more offensive than actions, this open contempt of the English tended much to aggravate the general discontent, and made every act of violence committed by the foreigners appear not only an injury, but an affront to them. [3]

I reckon not among the violations of the Great Charter some arbitrary exertions of prerogative to which Henry’s necessities pushed him, and which, without producing any discontent, were uniformly continued by all his successors, till the last century. As the parliament often refused him supplies, and that in a manner somewhat rude and indecent, [4] he obliged his opulent subjects, particularly the citizens of London, to grant him loans of money; and it is natural to imagine that the same want of economy which reduced him to the necessity of borrowing, would prevent him from being very punctual in the repayment. [5] He demanded benevolences, or pretended voluntary contributions, from his nobility and prelates. [6]

* Trivet, .

* * M. Paris, . M. West. . Knyghton, .

* * * M. Paris, , 666. Ann. Waverl. . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * * M. Paris,

* * * * * * M. Paris,

He was the first king of England, since the conquest, that could fairly be said to lie under the restraint of law; and he was also the first that practised the dispensing power, and he employed the clause of “non obstante” in his grants and patents. When objections were made to this novelty, he replied that the pope exercised that authority, and why might not he imitate the example? But the abuse which the pope made of his dispensing power, in violating the canons of general councils, in invading the privileges and customs of all particular churches, and in usurping on the rights of patrons, was more likely to excite the jealousy of the people than to reconcile them to a similar practice in their civil government. Roger de Thurkesby, one of the king’s justices, was so displeased with the precedent, that he exclaimed, “Alas! what times are we fallen into? Behold, the civil court is corrupted in imitation of the ecclesiastical, and the river is poisoned from that fountain.”

The king’s partiality and profuse bounty to his foreign relations, and to their friends and favorites, would have appeared more tolerable to the English, had any thing been done meanwhile for the honor of the nation, or had Henry’s enterprises in foreign countries been attended with any success or glory to himself or to the public; at least, such military talents in the king would have served to keep his barons in awe, and have given weight and authority to his government. But though he declared war against Lewis IX. in 1242, and made an expedition into Guienne, upon the invitation of his father-in-law, the count de la Marche, who promised to join him with all his forces, he was unsuccessful in his attempts against that great monarch, was worsted at Taillebourg, was deserted by his allies, lost what remained to him of Poictou, and was obliged to return with loss of honor into England. [1]

1253.

The Gascon nobility were attached to the English government, because the distance of their sovereign allowed them to remain in a state of almost total independence; and they claimed, some time after, Henry's protection against an invasion which the king of Castile made upon that territory. Henry returned into Guienne, and was more successful in this expedition; but he thereby involved himself and his nobility in an enormous debt, which both increased their discontents, and exposed him to greater danger from their enterprises. [2]

* M. Paris, , 394, 398, 399, 405. W. Heming. . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * M. Paris, .

Want of economy and an ill-judged liberality were Henry's great defects; and his debts, even before this expedition, had become so troublesome, that he sold all his plate and jewels, in order to discharge them. When this expedient was first proposed to him, he asked where he should find purchasers. It was replied, the citizens of London. "On my word," said he, "if the treasury of Augustus were brought to sale, the citizens are able to be the purchasers: these clowns, who assume to themselves the name of barons, abound in every thing, while we are reduced to necessities." [1] And he was thenceforth observed to be more forward and greedy in his exactions upon the citizens. [2]

But the grievances which the English during this reign had reason to complain of in the civil government, seem to have been still less burdensome than those which they suffered from the usurpations and exactions of the court of Rome. On the death of Langton, in 1228, the monks of Christ-church elected Walter de Hemesham, one of their own body, for his successor: but as Henry refused to confirm the election, the pope, at his desire, annulled it; [3] and immediately appointed Richard, chancellor of Lincoln, for archbishop, without waiting for a new election. On the death of Richard, in 1231, the monks elected Ralph de Neville, bishop of Chichester; and though Henry was much pleased with the election, the pope, who thought that prelate too much attached to the crown, assumed the power of annulling his election. [4] He rejected two clergymen more, whom the monks had successively chosen; and he at last told them that, if they would elect Edmond, treasurer of the church of Salisbury, he would confirm their choice; and his nomination was complied with. The pope had the prudence to appoint both times very worthy primates; but men could not forbear observing his intention of thus drawing gradually to himself the right of bestowing that important dignity.

* M. Paris, .

* * M. Paris, , 507, 518, 578, 606, 625, 548.

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * * M. Paris, .

The avarice, however, more than the ambition of the see of Rome, seems to have been in this age the ground of general complaint. The papal ministers, finding a vast stock of power amassed by their predecessors, were desirous of turning it to immediate profit, which they enjoyed at home, rather than of enlarging their authority in distant countries, where they never intended to reside. Every thing was become venal in the Romish tribunals: simony was openly practised; no favors, and even no justice, could be obtained without a bribe; the highest bidder was sure to have the preference, without regard either to the merits of the person or of the cause; and besides the usual perversions of right in the decision of controversies, the pope openly assumed an absolute and uncontrolled authority of setting aside, by the plenitude of his apostolic power, all particular rules, and all privileges of patrons, churches, and convents. On pretence of remedying these abuses, Pope Honorius, in 1226, complaining of the poverty of his see as the source of all grievances, demanded from every cathedral two of the best prebends, and from every convent two monks’ portions, to be set apart as a perpetual and settled revenue of the papal crown; but all men being sensible that the revenue would continue forever, and the abuses immediately return, his demand was unanimously rejected. About three years after, the pope demanded and obtained the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues, which he levied in a very oppressive manner; requiring payment before the clergy had drawn their rents or tithes, and sending about usurers, who advanced them the money at exorbitant interest. In the year 1240, Otho the legate, having in vain attempted the clergy in a body, obtained separately, by intrigues and menaces, large sums from the prelates and convents, and on his departure is said to have carried more money out of the kingdom than he left in it This experiment was renewed four years after with success by Martin the nuncio, who brought from Rome powers of suspending and excommunicating all clergymen that refused to comply with his demands. The king, who relied on the pope for the support of his tottering authority, never failed to countenance those exactions.

Meanwhile all the chief benefices of the kingdom were conferred on Italians; great numbers of that nation were sent over at one time to be provided for; non-residence and pluralities were carried to an enormous height; Mansel, the king’s chaplain, is computed to have held at once seven hundred ecclesiastical livings; and the abuses became so evident, as to be palpable to the blindness of superstition itself. The people, entering into associations, rose against the Italian clergy; pillaged their barns; wasted their lands; insulted the persons of such of them as they found in the kingdom; [1] and when the justices made inquiry into the authors of this disorder, the guilt was found to involve so many, and those of such high rank, that it passed unpunished.

* Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, , 257.

At last, when Innocent IV., in 1245, called a general council at Lyons, in order to excommunicate the emperor Frederic, the king and nobility sent over agents to complain, before the council, of the rapacity of the Romish church. They represented, among many other grievances, that the benefices of the Italian clergy in England had been estimated, and were found to amount to sixty thousand marks [1] a year, a sum which exceeded the annual revenue of the crown itself. [2] They obtained only an evasive answer from the pope; but as mention had been made, before the council, of the feudal subjection of England to the see of Rome, the English agents, at whose head was Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, exclaimed against the pretension, and insisted that King John had no right, without the consent of his barons, to subject the kingdom to so ignominious a servitude. [3] The popes, indeed, afraid of carrying matters too far against England, seem thenceforth to have little insisted on that pretension.

This check, received at the council of Lyons, was not able to stop the court of Rome in its rapacity: Innocent exacted the revenues of all vacant benefices, the twentieth of all ecclesiastical revenues without exception; the third of such as were exceeded a hundred marks a year; the half of such as were possessed by non-residents. [4] He claimed the goods of all intestate clergymen; [5] he pretended a title to inherit all money gotten by usury: he levied benevolences upon the people; and when the king, contrary to his usual practice, prohibited these exactions, he threatened to pronounce against him the same censures which he had emitted against the emperor Frederic. [6]

* Innocent’s bull in Rymer, vol. i. , says only fifty thousand marks a year.

* * M. Paris, . The customs were part of Henry’s revenue, and amounted to six thousand pounds a year: they were at first email sums paid by the merchants for the use of the king’s warehouses, measures, weights, etc. See Gilbert’s History of the Exch .

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * * M. Paris, . Ann. Burt. , 573.

* * * * * * M. Paris, .

1255.

But the most oppressive expedient employed by the pope, was the embarking of Henry in a project for the conquest of Naples, or Sicily on this side the Fare, as it was called; an enterprise which threw much dishonor on the king, and involved him, during some years, in great trouble and expense. The Romish church, taking advantage of favorable incidents, had reduced the kingdom of Sicily to the same state of feudal vassalage which she pretended to extend over England; and which, by reason of the distance, as well as high spirit of this latter kingdom, she was not able to maintain. After the death of the emperor Frederic II., the succession of Sicily devolved to Conradine, grandson of that monarch; and Mainfroy, his natural son, under pretence of governing the kingdom during the minority of the prince, had formed a scheme of establishing his own authority. Pope Innocent, who had carried on violent war against the emperor Frederic, and had endeavored to dispossess him of his Italian dominions, still continued hostilities against his grandson; but being disappointed in all his schemes by the activity and artifices of Mainfroy, he found that his own force alone was not sufficient to bring to a happy issue so great an enterprise. He pretended to dispose of the Sicilian crown, both as superior lord of that particular kingdom, and as vicar of Christ, to whom all kingdoms of the earth were subjected; and he made a tender of it to Richard, earl of Cornwall, whose immense riches, he flattered himself, would be able to support the military operations against Mainfroy. As Richard had the prudence to refuse the present, [1] he applied to the king, whose levity and thoughtless disposition gave Innocent more hopes of success; and he offered him the crown of Sicily for his second son, Edmond. [2] Henry, allured by so magnificent a present, without reflecting on the consequences, without consulting either with his brother or the parliament, accepted of the insidious proposal, and gave the pope unlimited credit to expend whatever sums he thought necessary for completing the conquest of Sicily. Innocent, who was engaged by his own interests to wage war with Mainfroy, was glad to carry on his enterprises at the expense of his ally: Alexander IV., who succeeded him in the papal throne, continued the same policy, and Henry was surprised to find himself on a sudden involved in an immense debt, which he had never been consulted in contracting. The sum already amounted to a hundred and thirty-five thousand five hundred and forty-one marks, beside interest; [3] and he had the prospect, if he answered this demand, of being soon loaded with more exorbitant expenses if he refused it, of both incurring the pope's displeasure, and losing the crown of Sicily, which he hoped soon to have the glory of fixing on the head of his son.

* M. Paris, p.650.

* * Rymer, vol. i. , 512, 530. M. Paris, , 613

* * * Rymer, vol i. . Chron. Dunst vol. i. .

He applied to the parliament for supplies; and that he might be sure not to meet with opposition, he sent no writs to the more refractory barons: but even those who were summoned, sensible of the ridiculous cheat imposed by the pope, determined not to lavish their money on such chimerical projects; and making a pretext of the absence of their brethren, they refused to take the king's demands into consideration. [1] In this extremity the clergy were his only resource; and as both their temporal and spiritual sovereign concurred in loading them, they were ill able to defend themselves against this united authority.

The pope published a crusade for the conquest of Sicily; and required every one who had taken the cross against the infidels, or had vowed to advance money for that service, to support the war against Mainfroy, a more terrible enemy, as he pretended, to the Christian faith than any Saracen. [2] He levied a tenth on all ecclesiastical benefices in England for three years; and gave orders to excommunicate all bishops who made not punctual payment. He granted to the king the goods of intestate clergymen; the revenues of vacant benefices, the revenues of all non-residents. [3] But these taxations, being levied by some rule, were deemed less grievous than another imposition, which arose from the suggestion of the bishop of Hereford, and which might have opened the door to endless and intolerable abuses.

This prelate, who resided at the court of Rome by a deputation from the English church, drew bills of different values but amounting on the whole to a hundred and fifty thousand five hundred and forty marks on all the bishops and abbots of the kingdom; and granted these bills to Italian merchants, who, it was pretended, had advanced money for the service of the war against Mainfroy. [4] As there was no likelihood of the English prelates' submitting, without compulsion, to such an extraordinary demand, Rustand the legate was charged with the commission of employing authority to that purpose, and he summoned an assembly of the bishops and abbots whom he acquainted with the pleasure of the pope and of the king.

* M. Paris,

* * Rymer, vol. i. , 548, etc.

* * * Rymer, vol. i. , 598.

* * * * M. Paris, , 628. Chron. T. Wykes, .

Great were the surprise and indignation of the assembly: the bishop of Worcester exclaimed, that he would lose his life rather than comply: the bishop of London said, that the pope and king were more powerful than he; but if his mitre were taken off his head, he would clap on a helmet in its place. [1] The legate was no less violent on the other hand; and he told the assembly, in plain terms, that all ecclesiastical benefices were the property of the pope, and he might dispose of them, either in whole or in part, as he saw proper. [2] In the end, the bishops and abbots, being threatened with excommunication, which made all their revenues fall into the king's hands, were obliged to submit to the exaction; and the only mitigation which the legate allowed them was, that the tenths already granted should be accepted as a partial payment of the bills. But the money was still insufficient for the pope's purpose: the conquest of Sicily was as remote as ever: the demands which came from Rome were endless: Pope Alexander became so urgent a creditor, that he sent over a legate to England, threatening the kingdom with an interdict, and the king with excommunication, if the arrears, which he pretended to be due to him, were not instantly remitted; [3] and at last Henry, sensible of the cheat, began to think of breaking off the agreement, and of resigning into the pope's hands that crown which it was not intended by Alexander that he or his family should ever enjoy. [4]

* M. Paris, .

* * M. Paris,

* * * Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, .

* * * * Rymer, vol. i. .

The earl of Cornwall had now reason to value himself on his foresight, in refusing the fraudulent bargain with Rome, and in preferring the solid honors of an opulent and powerful prince of the blood of England, to the empty and precarious glory of a foreign dignity. But he had not always firmness sufficient to adhere to this resolution: his vanity and ambition prevailed at last over his prudence and his avarice; and he was engaged in an enterprise no less expensive and vexatious than that of his brother, and not attended with much greater probability of success. The immense opulence of Richard having made the German princes cast their eye on him as a candidate for the empire, he was tempted to expend vast sums of money on his election; and he succeeded so far as to be chosen king of the Romans, which seemed to render his succession infallible to the imperial throne. He went over to Germany, and carried out of the kingdom no less a sum than seven hundred thousand marks, if we may credit the account given by some ancient authors, [1] which is probably much exaggerated. [2] His money, while it lasted, procured him friends and partisans; but it was soon drained from him by the avidity of the German princes; and, having no personal or family connections in that country, and no solid foundation of power, he found, at last, that he had lavished away the frugality of a whole life in order to procure a splendid title; and that his absence from England, joined to the weakness of his brother's government, gave reins to the factious and turbulent dispositions of the English barons, and involved his own country and family in great calamities.

* M. Paris, . The same author, a few pages before, makes Richard's treasures amount to little more than half the sum, (.) The king's dissipations and expenses,

throughout this whole reign, according to the same author,
had amounted only to about nine hundred and forty thousand marks, (.)

* * The sums mentioned by ancient authors, who were almost all monks, are often improbable, and never consistent. But we know from an infallible authority, the public remonstrance to the council of Lyons, that the king's revenues were below sixty thousand marks a year: his brother, therefore, could never have been master of seven hundred thousand marks;

especially as he did not sell his estates in England, as we learn from the same author; and we hear afterwards of his ordering all his woods to be cut, in order to satisfy the rapacity of the German princes: his son succeeded to the earldom of Cornwall and his other revenues.

The successful revolt of the nobility from King John, and their imposing on him and his successors limitations of their royal power, had made them feel their own weight and importance, had set a dangerous precedent of resistance, and being followed by a long minority, had impoverished as well as weakened that crown which they were at last induced, from the fear of worse consequences, to replace on the head of young Henry. In the king’s situation, either great abilities and vigor were requisite to overawe the barons, or great caution and reserve to give them no pretence for complaints; and it must be confessed, that this prince was possessed of neither of these talents. He had not prudence to choose right measures; he wanted even that constancy which sometimes gives weight to wrong ones; he was entirely devoted to his favorites, who were always foreigners; he lavished on them, without discretion, his diminished revenue; and finding that his barons indulged their disposition towards tyranny, and observed not to their own vassals the same rules which they had imposed on the crown, he was apt, in his administration, to neglect all the salutary articles of the Great Charter; which he remarked to be so little regarded by his nobility. This conduct had extremely lessened his authority in the kingdom; had multiplied complaints against him; and had frequently exposed him to affronts, and even to dangerous attempts upon his prerogative. In the year 1244, when he desired a supply from parliament, the barons, complaining of the frequent breaches of the Great Charter, and of the many fruitless applications which they had formerly made for the redress of this and other grievances, demanded in return, that he should give them the nomination of the great justiciary and of the chancellor, to whose hands chiefly the administration of justice was committed: and, if we may credit the historian,[1] they had formed the plan of other limitations, as well as of associations to maintain them, which would have reduced the king to be an absolute cipher, and have held the crown in perpetual pupillage and dependence. The king, to satisfy them, would agree to nothing but a renewal of the charter, and a general permission to excommunicate all the violators of it; and he received no supply, except a scutage of twenty shillings on each knight’s fee for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the king of Scotland; a burden which was expressly annexed to their feudal tenures.

* M. Paris, .

Four years after, in a full parliament, when Henry demanded a new supply, he was openly reproached with the breach of his word, and the frequent violations of the charter. He was asked whether he did not blush to desire any aid from his people, whom he professedly hated and despised; to whom on all occasions he preferred aliens and foreigners, and who groaned under the oppressions which he either permitted or exercised over them. He was told that, besides disparaging his nobility by forcing them to contract unequal and mean marriages with strangers, no rank of men was so low as to escape vexations from him or his ministers; that even the victuals consumed in his household, the clothes which himself and his servants wore, still more the wine which they used, were all taken by violence from the lawful owners, and no compensation was ever made them for the injury; that foreign merchants, to the great prejudice and infamy of the kingdom shunned the English harbors as if they were possessed by pirates, and the commerce with all nations was thus cut off by these acts of violence; that loss was added to loss, and injury to injury, while the merchants, who had been despoiled of their goods, were also obliged to carry them at their own charge to whatever place the king was pleased to appoint them; that even the poor fishermen on the coast could not escape his oppressions and those of his courtiers; and finding that they had not full liberty to dispose of their commodities in the English market, were frequently constrained to carry them to foreign ports, and to hazard all the perils of the ocean, rather than those which awaited them from his oppressive emissaries; and that his very religion was a ground of complaint to his subjects, while they observed, that the waxen tapers and splendid silks, employed in so many useless processions, were the spoils which he had forcibly ravished from the true owners. [1] Throughout this remonstrance, in which the complaints derived from an abuse of the ancient right of purveyance may be supposed to be somewhat exaggerated, there appears a strange mixture of regal tyranny in the practices which gave rise to it, and of aristocratical liberty, or rather licentiousness, in the expressions employed by the parliament. But a mixture of this kind is observable in all the ancient feudal governments, and both of them proved equally hurtful to the people.

As the king, in answer to their remonstrance, gave the parliament only good words and fair promises, attended with the most humble submissions, which they had often found deceitful, he obtained at that time no supply; and therefore, in the year 1253, when he found himself again under the necessity of applying to parliament, he had provided a new pretence, which he deemed infallible, and taking the vow of a crusade, he demanded their assistance in that pious enterprise. [2] The parliament, however, for some time hesitated to comply, and the ecclesiastical order sent a deputation consisting of four prelates, the primate and the bishops of Winchester Salisbury, and Carlisle, in order to remonstrate with him on his frequent violations of their privileges, the oppressions with which he had loaded them and all his subjects, [3] and the uncanonical and forced elections which were made to vacant dignities.

* M. Paris, . See further, . M. West. .

* * M. Paris, , 558, 568. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * M. Paris, .

"It is true," replied the king, "I have been somewhat faulty in this particular: I obtruded you, my lord of Canterbury, upon your see; I was obliged to employ both entreaties and menaces, my lord of Winchester, to have, you elected; my proceedings, I confess, were very irregular, my lords of Salisbury and Carlisle, when I raised you from the lowest stations to your present dignities; I am determined henceforth to correct these abuses; and it will also become you, in order to make a thorough reformation, to resign your present benefices; and try to enter again in a more regular and canonical manner." [1] The bishops, surprised at these unexpected sarcasms, replied, that the question was not at present how to correct past errors, but to avoid them for the future. The king promised redress both of ecclesiastical and civil grievances; and the parliament in return agreed to grant him a supply, a tenth of the ecclesiastical benefices, and a scutage of three marks on each knight's fee: but as they had experienced his frequent breach of promise, they required that he should ratify the Great Charter in a manner still more authentic and more solemn than any which he had hitherto employed. All the prelates and abbots were assembled: they held burning tapers in their hands: the Great Charter was read before them: they denounced the sentence of excommunication against every one who should thenceforth violate that fundamental law: they threw their tapers on the ground, and exclaimed, "May the soul of every one who incurs this sentence so stink and corrupt in hell!” The king bore a part in this ceremony, and subjoined, “So help me God, I will keep all these articles inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed.” [2] Yet was the tremendous ceremony no sooner finished, than his favorites, abusing his weakness, made him return to the same arbitrary and irregular administration; and the reasonable expectations of his people were thus perpetually eluded and disappointed. [3]

* M. Paris, .

* * Ibid. . Ann. Burt. . Ann. Waverl. . W Heming. . M. West. .

* * * M. Paris, , 608.

1258.

All these imprudent and illegal measures afforded a pretence to Simon de Mountfort, earl of Leicester, to attempt an innovation in the government, and to wrest the sceptre from the feeble and irresolute hand which held it. This nobleman was a younger son of that Simon de Mountfort who had conducted with such valor and renown the crusade against the Albigenses, and who, though he tarnished his famous exploits by cruelty and ambition, had left a name very precious to all the bigots of that age, particularly to the ecclesiastics. A large inheritance in England fell by succession to this family; but as the elder brother enjoyed still more opulent possessions in France, and could not perform fealty to two masters, he transferred his right to Simon, his younger brother, who came over to England, did homage for his lands, and was raised to the dignity of earl of Leicester. In the year 1238, he espoused Eleanor, dowager of William, earl of Pembroke, and sister to the king; [1] but the marriage of this princess with a subject and a foreigner, though contracted with Henry’s consent, was loudly complained of by the earl of Cornwall and all the barons of England; and Leicester was supported against their violence by the king’s favor and authority alone. [2] But he had no sooner established himself in his possessions and dignities, than he acquired, by insinuation and address, a strong interest with the nation, and gained equally the affections of all orders of men. He lost, however, the friendship of Henry from the usual levity and fickleness of that prince; he was banished the court; he was recalled; he was intrusted with the command of Guienne, [3] where he did good service and acquired honor; he was again disgraced by the king, and his banishment from court seemed now final and irrevocable. Henry called him traiter to his face; Leicester gave him the lie, and told him that, if he were not his sovereign, he would soon make him repent of that insult. Yet was this quarrel accommodated, either from the good nature or timidity of the king, and Leicester was again admitted into some degree of favor and authority. But as this nobleman was become too great to preserve an entire complaisance to Henry's humors, and to act in subserviency to his other minions, he found more advantage in cultivating his interest with the public, and in inflaming the general discontents which prevailed against the administration. He filled every place with complaints against the infringement of the Great Charter, the acts of violence committed on the people, the combination between the pope and the king in their tyranny and extortions, Henry's neglect of his native subjects and barons; and though himself a foreigner, he was more loud than any in representing the indignity of submitting to the dominion of foreigners.

* M. Paris, .

* * Ibid, .

* * * Rymer, vol. i. , 513.

By his hypocritical pretensions to devotion he gained the favor of the zealots and clergy: by his seeming concern for public good he acquired the affections of the public: and besides the private friendships which he had cultivated with the barons, his animosity against the favorites created a union of interests between him and that powerful order.

A recent quarrel which broke out between Leicester and William de Valence, Henry's half brother and chief favorite, brought matters to extremity, [1] and determined the former to give full scope to his bold and unbounded ambition, which the laws and the king's authority had hitherto with difficulty restrained. He secretly called a meeting of the most considerable barons, particularly Humphrey de Bohun, high constable, Roger Bigod, earl mareschal, and the earls of Warwick and Glocester; men who by their family and possessions stood in the first rank of the English nobility. He represented to this company the necessity of reforming the state, and of putting the execution of the laws into other hands than those which had hitherto appeared, from repeated experience, so unfit for the charge with which they were intrusted. He exaggerated the oppressions exercised against the lower orders of the state, the violations of the barons' privileges, the continued depredations made on the clergy; and in order to aggravate the enormity of this conduct, he appealed to the Great Charter, which Henry had so often ratified, and which was calculated to prevent forever the return of those intolerable grievances. He magnified the generosity of their ancestors, who, at a great expense of blood, had extorted that famous concession from the crown; but lamented their own degeneracy, who allowed so important an advantage, once obtained, to be wrested from them by a weak prince and by insolent strangers. And he insisted that the king's word, after so many submissions and fruitless promises on his part, could no longer be relied on; and that nothing but his absolute inability to violate national privileges could henceforth insure the regular observance of them.

* M. Paris, .

These topics, which were founded in truth, and suited so well the sentiments of the company, had the desired effect, and the barons embraced a resolution of redressing the public grievances, by taking into their own hands the administration of government. Henry having summoned a parliament, in expectation of receiving supplies for his Sicilian project, the barons appeared in the hall, clad in complete armor, and with their swords by their side: the king, on his entry, struck with the unusual appearance, asked them what was their purpose, and whether they pretended to make him their prisoner. [1] Roger Bigod replied in the name of the rest, that he was not their prisoner, but their sovereign; that they even intended to grant him large supplies, in order to fix his son on the throne of Sicily; that they only expected some return for this expense and service; and that, as he had frequently made submissions to the parliament, had acknowledged his past errors, and had still allowed himself to be carried into the same path, which gave them such just reason of complaint, he must now yield to more strict regulations, and confer authority on those who were able and willing to redress the national grievances. Henry, partly allured by the hopes of supply, partly intimidated by the union and martial appearance of the barons, agreed to their demand, and promised to summon another parliament at Oxford, in order to digest the new plan of government, and to elect the persons who were to be intrusted with the chief authority.

This parliament, which the royalists, and even the nation, from experience of the confusions that attended its measures, afterwards denominated the “mad parliament,” met on the day appointed; and as all the barons brought along with them their military vassals, and appeared with an armed force, the king, who had taken no precautions against them, was in reality a prisoner in their hands, and was obliged to submit to all the terms which they were pleased to impose upon him. Twelve barons were selected from among the king’s ministers; twelve more were chosen by parliament: to these twenty-four unlimited authority was granted to reform the state; and the king himself took an oath, that he would maintain whatever ordinances they should think proper to enact for that purpose. [2] Leicester was at the head of this supreme council, to which the legislative power was thus in reality transferred; and all their measures were taken by his secret influence and direction.

Their first step bore a specious appearance, and seemed well calculated for the end which they professed to be the object of all these innovations; they ordered that four knights should be chosen by each county; that they should make inquiry into the grievances of which their neighborhood had reason to complain, and should attend the ensuing parliament, in order to give information to that assembly of the state of their particular counties; [1] a nearer approach to our present constitution than had been made by the barons in the reign of King John, when the knights were only appointed to meet in their several counties, and there to draw up a detail of their grievances. Meanwhile the twenty-four barons proceeded to enact some regulations, as a redress of such grievances as were supposed to be sufficiently notorious. They ordered, that three sessions of parliament

* Annal. Theokesoury.

* * Rymer, vol. i. . Chron. Dunst. vol.i. . Knyghton .

should be regularly held every year, in the months of February, June, and October; “that a new sheriff should be annually elected by the votes of the freeholders in each county; [2] that the sheriffs should have no power of fining the barons who did not attend their courts, or the circuits of the justiciaries; that no heirs should be committed to the wardship of foreigners, and no castles intrusted to their custody; and that no new warrens or forests should be created, nor the revenues of any counties or hundreds be let to farm.” Such were the regulations which the twenty-four barons established at Oxford, for the redress of public grievances.

* M. Paris, . Addit. . Ann. Burt, p, 412.

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

But the earl of Leicester and his associates, having advanced so far to satisfy the nation, instead of continuing in this popular course, or granting the king that supply which they had promised him, immediately provided for the extension and continuance of their own authority. They roused anew the popular clamor which had long prevailed against foreigners; and they fell with the utmost violence on the king’s half brothers, who were supposed to be the authors of, all national grievances, and whom Henry had no longer any power to protect. The four brothers, sensible of their danger, took to flight, with an intention of making their escape out of the kingdom; they were eagerly pursued by the barons; Aymer, one of the brothers, who had been elected to the see of Winchester took shelter in his episcopal palace, and carried the others along with him; they were surrounded in that place, and threatened to be dragged out by force, and to be punished for their crimes and misdemeanors; and the king, pleading the sacredness of an ecclesiastical sanctuary, was glad to extricate them from this danger by banishing them the kingdom. In this act of violence, as well as in the former usurpations of the barons, the queen and her uncles were thought to have secretly concurred; being jealous of the credit acquired by the brothers, which, they found, had eclipsed and annihilated their own.

But the subsequent proceedings of the twenty-four barons were sufficient to open the eyes of the nation, and to prove their intention of reducing forever both the king and the people under the arbitrary power of a very narrow aristocracy., which must at last have terminated either in anarchy, or in a violent usurpation and tyranny. They pretended that they had not yet digested all the regulations necessary for the reformation of the state, and for the redress of grievances; and that they must still retain their power, till that great purpose were thoroughly effected: in other words, that they must be perpetual governors, and must continue to reform, till they were pleased to abdicate their authority. They formed an association among themselves, and swore that they would stand by each other with their lives and fortunes; they displaced all the chief officers of the crown, the justiciary, the chancellor, the treasurer; and advanced either themselves or their own creatures in their place: even the offices of the king’s household were disposed of at their pleasure: the government of all the castles was put into hands in whom they found reason to confide: and the whole power of the state being thus transferred to them, they ventured to impose an oath, by which all the subjects were obliged to swear, under the penalty of being declared public enemies, that they would obey and execute all the regulations, both known and unknown, of the twenty-four barons: and all this, for the greater glory of God, the honor of the church, the service of the king, and the advantage of the kingdom. [1]

* Chron. T. Wykes, .

No one dared to withstand this tyrannical authority: Prince Edward himself, the king’s eldest son, a youth of eighteen, who began to give indications of that great and manly spirit which appeared throughout the whole course of his life, was, after making some opposition, constrained to take that oath, which really deposed his father and his family from sovereign authority. [1] Earl Warrenne was the last person in the kingdom that could be brought to give the confederated barons this mark of submission.

But the twenty-four barons, not content with the usurpation of the royal power, introduced an innovation in the constitution of parliament, which was of the utmost importance. They ordained, that this assembly should choose a committee of twelve persons, who should, in the intervals of the sessions, possess the authority of the whole parliament, and should attend, on a summons, the person of the king, in all his motions. But so powerful were these barons, that this regulation was also submitted to; the whole government was overthrown or fixed on new foundations; and the monarchy was totally subverted, without its being possible for the king to strike a single stroke in defence of the constitution against the newly-erected oligarchy.

1259.

The report that the king of the Romans intended to pay a visit to England, gave alarm to the ruling barons, who dreaded lest the extensive influence and established authority of that prince would be employed to restore the prerogatives of his family, and overturn their plan of government. [2] They sent over the bishop of Worcester, who met him at St. Omars; asked him, in the name of the barons, the reason of his journey, and how long he intended to stay in England; and insisted that, before he entered the kingdom he should swear to observe the regulations established at Oxford. On Richard's refusal to take this oath, they prepared to resist him as a public enemy; they fitted out a fleet, assembled an army, and exciting the inveterate prejudices of the people against foreigners, from whom they had suffered so many oppressions, spread the report that Richard, attended by a number of strangers, meant to restore by force the authority of his exiled brothers, and to violate all the securities provided for public liberty. The king of the Romans was at last obliged to submit to the terms required of him. [3]

* Ann. Burt. .

* * M. Paris, .

* * * Ibid , 662. Chron. T. Wykes, .

But the barons, in proportion to their continuance in power, began gradually to lose that popularity which had assisted them in obtaining it; and men repined, that regulations, which were occasionally established for the reformation of the state, were likely to become perpetual, and to subvert entirely the ancient constitution. They were apprehensive lest the power of the nobles, always oppressive, should now exert itself without control, by removing the counterpoise of the crown; and their fears were increased by some new edicts of the barons, which were plainly calculated to procure to themselves an impunity in all their violences. They appointed that the circuits of the itinerant justices, the sole check on their arbitrary conduct, should be held only once in seven years, and men easily saw that a remedy which returned after such long intervals, against an oppressive power which was perpetual, would prove totally insignificant and useless. [1] The cry became loud in the nation, that the barons should finish their intended regulations. The knights of the shires, who seem now to have been pretty regularly assembled, and sometimes in a separate house, made remonstrances against the slowness of their proceedings. They represented that, though the king had performed all the conditions required of him, the barons had hitherto done nothing for the public good, and had only been careful to promote their own private advantage, and to make inroads on royal authority; and they even appealed to Prince Edward, and claimed his interposition for the interests of the nation, and the reformation of the government. [2] The prince replied that, though it was from constraint, and contrary to his private sentiments, he had sworn to maintain the provisions of Oxford, he was determined to observe his oath: but he sent a message to the barons, requiring them to bring their undertaking to a speedy conclusion, and fulfil their engagements to the public: otherwise, he menaced them, that at the expense of his life, he would oblige them to do their duty, and would shed the last drop of his blood in promoting the interests and satisfying the just wishes of the nation. [3]

The barons, urged by so pressing a necessity, published at last a new code of ordinances for the reformation of the state: [4] but the expectations of the people were extremely disappointed when they found that these consisted only of some trivial alterations in the municipal law; and still more, when the barons pretended that the task was not yet finished and that they must further prolong their authority, in order to bring the work of reformation to the desired period.

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* M. Paris, . Trivet, .

* * Ann. Burt. .

* * * Ann Burt. .

* * * * Ann. Burt. , 439

The current of popularity was now much turned to the side of the crown; and the barons had little, to rely on for their support besides the private influence and power of their families, which, though exorbitant, was likely to prove inferior to the combination of king and people. Even this basis of power was daily weakened by their intestine jealousies and animosities; their ancient and inveterate quarrels broke out when they came to share the spoils of the crown; and the rivalship between the earls of Leicester and Glocester, the chief leaders among them, began to disjoint the whole confederacy. The latter, more moderate in his pretensions, was desirous of stopping or retarding the career of the barons' usurpations; but the former, enraged at the opposition which, he met with in his own party, pretended to throw up all concern in English affairs; and he retired into France. [1]

The kingdom of France, the only state with which England had any considerable intercourse, was at this time governed by Lewis IX., a prince of the most singular character that is to be met with in all the records of history. This monarch united to the mean and abject superstition of a monk all the courage and magnanimity of the greatest hero; and, what may be deemed more extraordinary, the justice and integrity of a disinterested patriot, the mildness and humanity of an accomplished philosopher. So far from taking advantage of the divisions among the English, or attempting to expel those dangerous rivals from the provinces which they still possessed in France, he had entertained many scruples with regard to the sentence of attainder pronounced against the king's father, had even expressed some intention of restoring the other provinces, and was only prevented from taking that imprudent resolution by the united remonstrances of his own barons, who represented the extreme danger of such a measure, [2] and, what had a greater influence on Lewis, the justice of punishing by a legal sentence the barbarity and felony of John. Whenever this prince interposed in English affairs, it was always with an intention of composing the differences between the king and his nobility: he recommended to both parties every peaceable and reconciling measure; and he used all his authority with the earl of Leicester, his native subject, to bend him to a compliance with Henry.

* Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * M. Paris, .

He made a treaty with England at a time when the distractions of that kingdom were at the greatest height, and when the king’s authority was totally annihilated; and the terms which he granted might, even in a more prosperous state of their affairs, be deemed reasonable and advantageous to the English. He yielded up some territories which had been conquered from Poictou and Guienne; he insured the peaceable possession of the latter province to Henry; he agreed to pay that prince a large sum of money; and he only required that the king should, in return, make a final cession of Normandy and the other provinces, which he could never entertain any hopes of recovering by force of arms. [1] This cession was ratified by Henry, by his two sons and two daughters, and by the king of the Romans and his three sons: Leicester alone, either moved by a vain arrogance, or desirous to ingratiate himself with the English populace, protested against the deed, and insisted on the right, however distant, which might accrue to his consort. [2] Lewis saw in his obstinacy the unbounded ambition of the man; and as the barons insisted that the money due by treaty should be at their disposal, not at Henry’s, he also saw, and probably with regret, the low condition to which this monarch, who had more erred from weakness than from any bad intentions, was reduced by the turbulence of his own subjects.

1261.

But the situation of Henry soon after wore a more favorable aspect. The twenty-four barons had now enjoyed the sovereign power near three years; and had visibly employed it, not for the reformation of the state, which was their first pretence, but for the aggrandizement of themselves and of their families. The breach of trust was apparent to all the world: every order of men felt it, and murmured against it: the dissensions among the barons themselves, which increased the evil, made also the remedy more obvious and easy: and the secret desertion in particular of the earl of Glocester to the crown, seemed to promise Henry certain success in any attempt to resume his authority. Yet durst he not take that step, so reconcilable both to justice and policy, without making a previous application to Rome, and desiring an absolution from his oaths and engagements. [3]

* Rymer, vol. i. p 675. M. Paris, . Chron. T. Wykes, p, 53. Trivet, M. West. .

* * Chron. T. Wykes, .

* * * Ann. Burt. .

The pope was at this time much dissatisfied with the conduct of the barons; who, in order to gain the favor of the people and clergy of England, had expelled all the Italian ecclesiastics, had confiscated their benefices, and seemed determined to maintain the liberties and privileges of the English church, in which the rights of patronage belonging to their own families were included. The extreme animosity of the English clergy against the Italians was also a source of his disgust to the order; and an attempt which had been made by them for further liberty and greater independence on the civil power, was therefore less acceptable to the court of Rome. [1] About the same time that the barons at Oxford had annihilated the prerogatives of the monarchy, the clergy met in a synod at Merton, and passed several ordinances, which were no less calculated to promote their own grandeur at the expense of the crown. They decreed, that it was unlawful to try ecclesiastics by secular judges; that the clergy were not to regard any prohibitions from civil courts; that lay patrons had no right to confer spiritual benefices; that the magistrate was obliged, without further inquiry, to imprison all excommunicated persons; and that ancient usage, without any particular grant or charter, was a sufficient authority for any clerical possessions or privileges. [2] About a century before, these claims would have been supported by the court of Rome beyond the most fundamental articles of faith: they were the chief points maintained by the great martyr Becket; and his resolution in defending them had exalted him to the high station which he held in the catalogue of Romish saints. But principles were changed with the times: the pope was become somewhat jealous of the great independence of the English clergy, which made them stand less in need of his protection, and even imboldened them to resist his authority, and to complain of the preference given to the Italian courtiers, whose interests, it is natural to imagine, were the chief object of his concern. He was ready, therefore, on the king’s application, to annul these new constitutions of the church of England. [3] And, at the same time, he absolved the king and all his subjects from the oath which they had taken to observe the provisions of Oxford. [4]

* Rymer, vol. i. .

* * Ann. Burt. .

* * * Rymer, vol. i. .

* * * * Rymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, . W. Heming. p, 580. Ypod. Neust. p; 468. Knyghton, .

Prince Edward, whose liberal mind, though in such early youth, had taught him the great prejudice which his father had incurred by his levity, inconstancy, and frequent breach of promise, refused for a long time to take advantage of thus absolution; and declared that the provisions of Oxford, how unreasonable soever in themselves, and how much soever abused by the barons, ought still to be adhered to by those who had sworn to observe them: [1] he himself had been constrained by violence to take that oath; yet was he determined to keep it. By this scrupulous fidelity the prince acquired the confidence of all parties, and was afterwards enabled to recover fully the royal authority, and to perform such great actions both during his own reign and that of his father.

The situation of England, during this period, as well as that of most European kingdoms, was somewhat peculiar. There was no regular military force maintained in the nation: the sword, however, was not, properly speaking, in the hands of the people; the barons were alone intrusted with the defence of the community; and after any effort which they made, either against their own prince or against foreigners, as the military retainers departed home, the armies were disbanded, and could not speedily be reassembled at pleasure. It was easy, therefore, for a few barons, by a combination, to get the start of the other party, to collect suddenly their troops, and to appear unexpectedly in the field with an army, which their antagonists, though equal or even superior in power and interest, would not dare to encounter. Hence the sudden revolutions which often took place in those governments; hence the frequent victories obtained without a blow by one faction over the other; and hence it happened, that the seeming prevalence of a party was seldom a prognostic of its long continuance in power and authority.

1262.

The king, as soon as he received the pope’s absolution from his oath, accompanied with menaces of excommunication against all opponents, trusting to the countenance of the church, to the support promised him by many considerable barons, and to the returning favor of the people, immediately took off the mask. After justifying his conduct by a proclamation, in which he set forth the private ambition and the breach of trust conspicuous in Leicester and his associates, be declared that he had resumed the government, and was determined thenceforth to exert the royal authority for the protection of his subjects.

* M. Paris. D. 667.

He removed Hugh le Despenser and Nicholas de Ely, the justiciary and chancellor appointed by the barons; and put Philip Basset and Walter de Merton in their place. He substituted new sheriffs in all the counties, men of character and honor; he placed new governors in most of the castles; he changed all the officers of his household; he summoned a parliament, in which the resumption of his authority was ratified, with only five dissenting voices; and the barons, after making one fruitless effort to take the king by surprise at Winchester, were obliged to acquiesce in those new regulations. [1]

The king, in order to cut off every objection to his conduct, offered to refer all the differences between him and the earl of Leicester to Margaret, queen of France. [2] The celebrated integrity of Lewis gave a mighty influence to any decision which issued from his court; and Henry probably hoped, that the gallantry on which all barons, as true knights, valued themselves, would make them ashamed not to submit to the award of that princess. Lewis merited the confidence reposed in him. By an admirable conduct, probably as political as just, he continually interposed his good offices to allay the civil discords ol the English: he forwarded all healing measures which might give security to both parties: and he still endeavored, though in vain, to soothe by persuasion the fierce ambition of the earl of Leicester, and to convince him how much it was his duty to submit peaceably to the authority of his sovereign.

* M. Paris, . Chron. T. Wykes, .

* * Rymer, vol. i. .

1263.

That bold and artful conspirator was nowise discouraged by the bad success of his past enterprises. The death of Richard, earl of Glocester, who was his chief rival in power, and who, before his decease, had joined the royal party seemed to open a new field to his violence, and to expose the throne to fresh insults and injuries. It was in vain that the king professed his intentions of observing strictly the great charter, even of maintaining all the regulations made by the reforming barons at Oxford or afterwards, except those with entirely annihilated the royal authority; these powerful chieftains, now obnoxious to the court, could not peaceably resign the hopes of entire independence and uncontrolled power with which they had flattered themselves, and which they had so long enjoyed. Many of them engaged in Leicester’s views, and among the rest, Gilbert, the young earl of Glocester, who brought him a mighty accession of power, from the extensive authority possessed by that opulent family. Even Henry, son of the king of the Romans, commonly called Henry d’Allmaine, though a prince of the blood, joined the party of the barons against the king, the head of his own family Leicester himself, who still resided in France, secretly formed the links of this great conspiracy, and planned the whole scheme of operations.

The princes of Wales, notwithstanding the great power of the monarchs both of the Saxon and Norman line, still preserved authority in their own country. Though they had often been constrained to pay tribute to the crown of England, they were with difficulty retained in subordination or even in peace; and almost through every reign since the conquest, they had infested the English frontiers with such petty incursions and sudden inroads, as seldom merit to have place in a general history. The English, still content with repelling their invasions, and chasing them back into their mountains, had never pursued the advantages obtained over them, nor been able, even under their greatest and most active princes, to fix a total, or so much as a feudal subjection on the country. This advantage was reserved to the present king, the weakest and most indolent. In the year 1237, Lewellyn, prince of

Wales, declining in years and broken with infirmities, but still more harassed with the rebellion and undutiful behavior of his youngest son Griffin, had recourse to the protection of Henry; and consenting to subject his principality, which had so long maintained, or soon recovered, its independence to vassalage under the crown of England, had purchased security and tranquillity on these dishonorable terms. His eldest son and heir, David, renewed the homage to England; and having taken his brother prisoner, delivered him into Henry's hands, who committed him to custody in the Tower. That prince, endeavoring to make his escape, lost his life in the attempt; and the prince of Wales, freed from the apprehensions of so dangerous a rival, paid thenceforth less regard to the English monarch, and even renewed those incursions by which the Welsh, during so many ages, had been accustomed to infest the English borders. Lewellyn, however, the foil of Griffin, who succeeded to his uncle, had been obliged to renew the homage which was now claimed by England as an established right; but he was well pleased to inflame those civil discords, on which he rested his present security and founded his hopes of future independence. He entered into a confederacy with the earl of Leicester, and collecting all the force of his principality, invaded England with an army of thirty thousand men. He ravaged the lands of Roger de Mortimer, and of all the barons who adhered to the crown; [1] he marched into Cheshire, and committed like depredations on Prince Edward's territories; every place where his disorderly troops appeared was laid waste with fire and sword; and though Mortimer, a gallant and expert soldier, made stout resistance, it was found necessary that the prince himself should head the army against this invader. Edward repulsed Prince Lewellyn, and obliged him to take shelter in the mountains of North Wales: but he was prevented from making further progress against the enemy by the disorders which soon after broke out in England.

The Welsh invasion was the appointed signal for the malecontent barons to rise in arms; and Leicester, coming over secretly from France, collected all the forces of his party, and commenced an open rebellion. He seized the person of the bishop of Hereford, a prelate obnoxious to all the inferior clergy, on account of his devoted attachment to the court of Rome. [2] Simon, bishop of Norwich, and John Mansel, because they had published the pope's bull, absolving the king and kingdom from their oaths to observe the provisions of Oxford, were made prisoners, and exposed to the rage of the party. The king's demesnes were ravaged with unbounded fury, [3] and as it was Leicester’s interest to allure to his side, by the hopes of plunder, all the disorderly ruffians in England he gave them a general license to pillage the barons of the opposite party, and even all neutral persons.

* Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * Trivet, . M. West. , 392.

* * * Trivet, . M. West. .

But one of the principal resources of his faction was the populace of the cities, particularly of London; and as he had, by his hypocritical pretensions to sanctity, and his zeal against Rome, engaged the monks and lower ecclesiastics in his party, his dominion over the inferior ranks of men became uncontrollable. Thomas Fitz-Richard, mayor of London, a furious and licentious man, gave the countenance of authority to these disorders in the capital; and having declared war against the substantial citizens, he loosened all the bands of government, by which that turbulent city was commonly but ill restrained. On the approach of Easter, the zeal of superstition, the appetite for plunder, or what is often as prevalent with the populace as either of these motives, the pleasure of committing havoc and destruction, prompted them to attack the unhappy Jews, who were first pillaged without resistance, then massacred, to the number of five hundred persons. [1] The Lombard bankers were next exposed to the rage of the people; and though, by taking sanctuary in the churches, they escaped with their lives, all their money and goods became a prey to the licentious multitude. Even the houses of the rich citizens, though English, were attacked by night; and way was made by sword and by fire to the pillage of their goods, and often to the destruction of their persons. The queen, who, though defended by the Tower, was terrified by the neighborhood of such dangerous commotions, resolved to go by water to the Castle of Windsor; but as she approached the bridge, the populace assembled against her: the cry ran, “Drown the witch;” and besides abusing her with the most opprobrious language, and pelting her with rotten eggs and dirt, they had prepared large stones to sink her barge, when she should attempt to shoot the bridge; and she was so frightened, that she returned to the Tower [2]

The violence and fury of Leicester’s faction had risen to such a height in all parts of England, that the king, unable to resist their power, was obliged to set on foot a treaty of peace, and to make an accommodation with the barons on the most disadvantageous terms. [3]

* Chron T. Wykes, .

* * Chron. T. Wykes, .

* * * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. . Trivet, .

He agreed to confirm anew the provisions of Oxford, even those which entirely annihilated the royal authority; and the barons were again reinstated in the sovereignty of the kingdom. They restored Hugh le Despenser to the office of chief justiciary: they appointed their own creatures sheriffs in every county of England; they took possession of all the royal castles and fortresses; they even named all the officers of the king’s household; and they summoned a parliament to meet at Westminster, in order to settle more fully their plan of government. They here produced a new list of twenty-four barons, to whom they proposed that the administration should be entirely committed; and they insisted that the authority of this junto should continue not only during the reign of the king, but also during that of Prince Edward.

This prince, the life and soul of the royal party, had unhappily, before the king’s accommodation with the barons, been taken prisoner by Leicester in a parley at Windsor; [1] and that misfortune, more than any other incident, had determined Henry to submit to the ignominious conditions imposed upon him. But Edward, having recovered his liberty by the treaty, employed his activity in defending the prerogatives of his family; and he gained a great party even among-those who had at first adhered to the cause of the barons. His cousin, Henry d’Allmaine, Roger Bigod, earl mareschal, Earl Warrenne, Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, John Lord Basset, Ralph Basset, Hammond l’Estrange, Roger Mortimer, Henry de Piercy, Robert de Brus, Roger de Leybourne, with almost all the lords marchers, as they were called, on the borders of Wales and of Scotland, the most warlike parts of the kingdom, declared in favor of the royal cause; and hostilities, which were scarcely well composed, were again renewed in every part of England.

But the near balance of the parties, joined to the universal clamor of the people, obliged the king and barons to open anew the negotiations for peace; and it was agreed by both sides to submit their differences to the arbitration of the king of France. [2]

* M. Paris, . Trivet, .

* * M. Paris, , Chron. T. Wykes, . W. Heming, p. 580. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

1264.

This virtuous prince, the only man, who, in like circumstances, could safely have been intrusted with such an authority by a neighboring nation, had never ceased to interpose his good, offices between the English factions, and had, even, during the short interval of peace, invited over to Paris both the king and the earl of Leicester, in order to accommodate the differences between them, but found that the fears and animosities on both sides, as well as the ambition of Leicester, were so violent, as to render all his endeavors ineffectual. But when this solemn appeal, ratified by the oaths and subscriptions of the leaders in both factions, was made to his judgment, he was not discouraged from pursuing his honorable purpose: he summoned the states of France at Amiens; and there, in the presence of that assembly, as well as in that of the king of England and Peter de Mountfort, Leicester’s son, he brought this great cause to a trial and examination. It appeared to him, that the provisions of Oxford, even had they not been extorted by force, had they not been so exorbitant in their nature and subversive of the ancient constitution, were expressly established as a temporary expedient, and could not, without breach of trust, be rendered perpetual by the barons. He therefore annulled these provisions; restored to the king the possession of his castles, and the power of nomination to the great offices; allowed him to retain what foreigners he pleased in his kingdom, and even to confer on them places of trust and dignity; and, in a word, reestablished the royal power in the same condition on which it stood before the meeting of the parliament at Oxford. But while he thus suppressed dangerous innovations, and preserved unimpaired the prerogatives of the English crown, he was not negligent of the rights of the people; and besides ordering that a general amnesty should be granted for all past offences, he declared, that his award was not anywise meant to derogate from the privileges and liberties which the nation enjoyed by any former concessions or charters of the crown. [1]

This equitable sentence was no sooner known in England, than Leicester and his confederates determined to reject it and to have recourse to arms, in order to procure to themselves more safe and advantageous conditions. [2]

* Rymer, vol. i. , 777, etc. Chron. T. Wykes, . Knyghton, .

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

Without regard to his oaths and subscriptions, that enterprising conspirator directed his two sons, richard and Peter de Mountfort, in conjunction with Robert de Ferrers, earl of Derby, to attack the city of Worcester; while Henry and Simon de Mountfort, two others of his sons, assisted by the prince of Wales, were ordered to lay waste the estate of Roger de Mortimer. He himself resided at London; and employing as his instrument Fitz-Richard, the seditious mayor, who had violently and illegally prolonged his authority, he wrought up that city to the highest ferment and agitation. The populace formed themselves into bands and companies; chose leaders; practised all military exercises; committed violence on the royalists; and to give them greater countenance in their disorders, an association was entered into between the city and eighteen great barons, never to make peace with the king but by common consent and approbation. At the head of those who swore to maintain this association, were the earls of Leicester, Glocester, and Derby, with Le Despenser, the chief justiciary; men who had all previously sworn to submit to the award of the French monarch. Their only pretence for this breach of faith was, that the latter part of Lewis’s sentence was, as they affirmed, a contradiction to the former. He ratified the charter of liberties, yet annulled the provisions of Oxford, which were only calculated, as they maintained, to preserve that charter; and without which, in their estimation, they had no security for its observance.

The king and prince, finding a civil war inevitable, prepared themselves for defence; and summoning the military vassals from all quarters, and being reinforced by Baliol, lord of Galloway, Brus, lord of Annandale, Henry Piercy, John Comyn, [1] and other barons of the north, they composed an army, formidable as well from its numbers as its military prowess and experience. The first enterprise of the royalists was the attack of Northampton, which was defended by Simon de Mountfort, with many of the principal barons of that party: and a breach being; made in the walls by Philip Basset, the place was carried by assault, and both the governor and the garrison were made prisoners. The royalists marched thence to Leicester and Nottingham; both which places having opened their gates to them, Prince Edward proceeded with a detachment into the county of Derby, in order to ravage with fire and sword the lands of the earl of that name, and take revenge on, him for his disloyalty. Like maxims of war prevailed with both parties throughout England; and the kingdom was thus exposed in a moment to greater devastation, from the animosities of the rival barons, than it would have suffered from many years of foreign or even domestic hostilities, conducted by more humane and more generous principles.

* Rymer, vol. i. . M. West. . Ypod. Neust. p. 469.

The earl of Leicester, master of London, and of the counties in the south-east of England, formed the siege of Rochester, which alone declared for the king in those parts, and which, besides Earl Warrenne, the governor, was garrisoned by many noble and powerful barons of the royal party. The king and prince hastened from Nottingham, where they were then quartered, to the relief of the place; and on their approach, Leicester raised the siege and retreated to London, which, being the centre of his power, he was afraid might, in his absence, fall into the king’s hands, either by force or by a correspondence with the principal citizens, who were all secretly inclined to the royal cause. Reënforced [2unusual spelling but that is what it looks like] by a great body of Londoners, and having summoned his partisans from all quarters, he thought himself strong enough to hazard a general battle with the royalists, and to determine the fate of the nation in one great engagement, which, if it proved successful, must be decisive against the king, who had no retreat for his broken troops in those parts, while Leicester himself, in case of any sinister accident, could easily take shelter in the city. To give the better coloring to his cause, he previously sent a message with conditions of peace to Henry, submissive in the language, but exorbitant in the demands; [1] and when the messenger returned with the lie and defiance from the king, the prince, and the king of the Romans, he sent a new message, renouncing, in the name of himself and of the associated barons, all fealty and allegiance to Henry. He then marched out of the city with his army, divided into four bodies: the first commanded by his two sons, Henry and Guy de Mountfort, together with Humphrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, who had deserted to the barons; the second led by the earl of Glocester, with William de Montchesney and John Fitz-John; the third, composed of Londoners, under the command of Nicholas de Segrave; the fourth headed by himself in person. The bishop of Chichester gave a general absolution to the army, accompanied with assurances, that, if any of them fell in the ensuing action, they would infallibly be received into heaven, as the reward of their suffering in so meritorious a cause.

* M. Paris, . W. Heming. .

Leicester, who possessed great talents for war, conducted his march with such skill and secrecy, that he had well nigh surprised the royalists in their quarters at Lewes, in Sussex, but the vigilance and activity of Prince Edward soon repaired this negligence; and he led out the king's army to the field in three bodies. He himself conducted the van, attended by Earl Warrenne and William de Valence; the main body was commanded by the king of the Romans and his son Henry; the king himself was placed in the rear at the head of his principal nobility. Prince Edward rushed upon the Londoners who had demanded the post of honor in leading the rebel army, but who, from their ignorance of discipline and want of experience, were ill fitted to resist the gentry and military men, of whom the prince's body was composed. They were broken in an instant; were chased off the field; and Edward, transported by his martial ardor, and eager to revenge the insolence of the Londoners against his mother, [1] put them to the sword for the length of four miles, without giving them any quarter, and without reflecting on the fate which in the mean time attended the rest of the army. The earl of Leicester, seeing the royalists thrown into confusion by their eagerness in the pursuit, led on his remaining troops against the bodies commanded by the two royal brothers: he defeated with great slaughter the forces headed by the king of the Romans; and that prince was obliged to yield himself prisoner to the earl of Glocester: he penetrated to the body where the king himself was placed, threw it into disorder, pursued his advantage, chased it into the town of Lewes, and obliged Henry to surrender himself prisoner. [2]

Prince Edward, returning to the field of battle from his precipitate pursuit of the Londoners, was astonished to find it covered with the dead bodies of his friends, and still more to hear that his father and uncle were defeated and taken prisoners, and that Arundel, Comyn, Brus, Hamond l’Estrange, Roger Leybourne, and many considerable barons of his party were in the hands of the victorious enemy. Earl Warrenne, Hugh Bigod, and William de Valence, struck with despair at this event, immediately took to flight, hurried to Pevencey, and made their escape beyond sea: [3] but the prince, intrepid amidst the greatest disasters, exhorted his troops to revenge the death of their friends, to relieve the royal captives, and to snatch an easy conquest from an enemy disordered by their own victory. [4] He found his followers intimidated by their situation, while Leicester, afraid of a sudden and violent blow from the prince, amused him by a feigned negotiation, till he was able to recall his troops from the pursuit, and to bring them into order. [5]

* M. Paris, . Chron. T. Wykes, P 62

* * W. Heming. M. West . Ypod. Neust. .

* * * Kynghton, .

* * * * M. Paris, .

* * * * * * Chron. T. Wyke, . W. Heming. .

* * * * * * * W. Heming. .

There now appeared no further resource to the royal party, surrounded by the armies and garrisons of the enemy, destitute of forage and provisions, and deprived of their sovereign, as well as of their principal leaders, who could alone inspirit them to an obstinate resistance. The prince, therefore, was obliged to submit to Leicester’s terms, which were short and severe, agreeably to the suddenness and necessity of the situation. He stipulated that he and Henry d’Allmaine should surrender themselves prisoners as pledges in lieu of the two kings; that all other prisoners on both sides should be released; [1] and that in order to settle fully the terms of agreement, application should be made to the king of France, that he should name six Frenchmen, three prelates and three noblemen; these six to choose two others of their own country, and these two to choose one Englishman, who, in conjunction with themselves, were to be invested by both parties with full powers to make what regulations they thought proper for the settlement of the kingdom. The prince and young Henry accordingly delivered themselves into Leicester's hands, who sent them under a guard to Dover Castle. Such are the terms of agreement, commonly called the Mise of Lewes, from an obsolete French term of that meaning; for it appears that all the gentry and nobility of England, who valued themselves on their Norman extraction, and who disdained the language of their native country, made familiar use of the French tongue till this period, and for some time after.

Leicester had no sooner obtained this great advantage and gotten the whole royal family in his power, than he openly violated every article of the treaty, and acted as sole master, and even tyrant of the kingdom. He still detained the king in effect a prisoner, and made use of that prince's authority to purposes the most prejudicial to his interests, and the most oppressive of his people. [2] He every where disarmed the royalists, and kept all his own partisans in, a military posture: [3] he observed the same partial conduct in the deliverance of the captives, and even threw many of the royalists into prison, besides those who were taken in the battle of Lewes; he carried the king from place to place, and obliged all the royal castles, on pretence of Henry's commands, to receive a governor and garrison of his own appointment.

* M. Paris, . Knyghton, .

* * Rymer, vol. i. , 791, etc.

* * * Rymer, vol. i. . Brady's Appeals, No. 211, 212. Chron. T. Wykes, .

All the officers of the crown and of the household were named by him, and the whole authority, as well as arms of the state, was lodged in his hands: he instituted in the counties a new kind of magistracy, endowed with new and arbitrary powers, that of conservators of the peace; [1] his avarice appeared bare-faced, and might induce us to question the greatness of his ambition, at least the largeness of his mind, if we had not reason to think that he intended to employ his acquisitions as the instruments for attaining further power and grandeur. He seized the estates of no less than eighteen barons as his share of the spoil gained in the battle of Lewes: he engrossed to himself the ransom of all the prisoners; and told his barons, with a wanton insolence, that it was sufficient for them that he had saved them by that victory from the forfeitures and attainders which hung over them: [2] he even treated the earl of Glocester in the same injurious manner, and applied to his own use the ransom of the king of the Romans, who in the field of battle had yielded himself prisoner to that nobleman. Henry, his eldest son, made a monopoly of all the wool in the kingdom, the only valuable commodity for foreign markets which it at that time produced. [3] The inhabitants of the cinque ports, during the present dissolution of government, betook themselves to the most licentious piracy, preyed on the ships of all nations, threw the mariners into the sea, and by these practices, soon banished all merchants from the English coasts and harbors. Every foreign commodity rose to an exorbitant price, and woollen cloth, which the English had not then the art of dyeing, was worn by them white, and without receiving the last hand of the manufacturer. In answer to the complaints which arose on this occasion, Leicester replied that the kingdom could well enough subsist within itself, and needed no intercourse with foreigners. And it was found that he even combined with the pirates of the cinque ports, and received as his share the third of their prizes. [4]

* Rymer, vol. i. .

* * Knyghton, .

* * * Chron. T. Wykes, .

* * * * Chron. T. Wykes, .

No further mention was made of the reference to the king of France, so essential an article in the agreement of Lewes; and Leicester summoned a parliament, composed altogether of his own partisans, in order to rivet, by their authority, that power which he had acquired by so much violence, and which he used with so much tyranny and injustice. An ordinance was there passed, to which the king's consent had been previously extorted, that every act of royal power should be exercised by a council of nine persons, who were to be chosen and removed by the majority of three, Leicester himself, the earl of Glocester, and the bishop of Chichester. [1] By this intricate plan of government, the sceptre was really put into Leicester's hands; as he had the entire direction of the bishop of Chichester, and thereby commanded all the resolutions of the council of three, who could appoint or discard at pleasure every member of the supreme council.

But it was impossible that things could long remain in this strange situation. It behoved Leicester either to descend with some peril into the rank of a subject, or to mount up with no less into that of a sovereign; and his ambition, unrestrained either by fear or by principle, gave too much reason to suspect him of the latter intention. Meanwhile he was exposed to anxiety from every quarter; and felt that the smallest incident was capable of overturning that immense and ill-cemented fabric which he had reared. The queen, whom her husband had left abroad, had collected in foreign parts an army of desperate adventurers, and had assembled a great number of ships, with a view of invading the kingdom, and of bringing relief to her unfortunate family. Lewis, detesting Leicester's usurpations and perjuries, and disgusted at the English barons, who had refused to submit to his award, secretly favored all her enterprises, and was generally believed to be making preparations for the same purpose. An English army, by the pretended authority of the captive king, was assembled on the sea-coast, to oppose this projected invasion; [2] but Leicester owed his safety more to cross winds, which long detained and at last dispersed and ruined the queen's fleet, than to any resistance which, in their present situation, could have been expected from the English.

* Rymer, vol. i. . Brady's Appeals, No. 213.

* * Brady's Appeals, No. 216, 217. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. p 373 M. West, .

Leicester found himself better able to resist the spiritual thunders which were levelled against him. The pope, still adhering to the king's cause against the barons, despatched Cardinal Guido as his legate into England, with orders to excommunicate by name the three earls, Leicester, Glocester, and Norfolk, and all others in general, who concurred in the oppression and captivity of their sovereign. [1] Leicester menaced the legate with death if he set foot within the kingdom; but Guido, meeting in France the bishops of Winchester, London, and Worcester, who had been sent thither on a negotiation, commanded them, under the penalty of ecclesiastical censures, to carry his bull into England, and to publish it against the barons. When the prelates arrived off the coast, they were boarded by the piratical mariners of the cinque ports, to whom probably they gave a hint of the cargo which they brought along with them: the bull was torn and thrown into the sea; which furnished the artful prelates with a plausible excuse for not obeying the orders of the legate. Leicester appealed from Guido to the pope in person; but before the ambassadors appointed to defend his cause could reach Rome, the pope was dead; and they found the legate himself, from whom they had appealed, seated on the papal throne, by the name of Urban IV. That daring leader was nowise dismayed with this incident; and as he found that a great part of his popularity in England was founded on his opposition to the court of Rome, which was now become odious, he persisted with the more obstinacy in the prosecution of his measures.

1265.

That he might both increase and turn to advantage his popularity, Leicester summoned a new parliament in London, where he knew his power was uncontrollable; and he fixed this assembly on a more democratical basis than any which had ever been summoned since the foundation of the monarchy. Besides the barons of his own party, and several ecclesiastics, who were not immediate tenants of the crown, he ordered returns to be made of two knights from each shire, and, what is more remarkable, of deputies from the boroughs, an order of men which, in former ages, had always been regarded as too mean to enjoy a place in the national councils. [2] This period is commonly esteemed the epoch of the house of commons in England; and it is certainly the first time that historians speak of any representatives sent to parliament by the boroughs and even in the most particular narratives delivered of parliamentary transactions, as in the trial of Thomas à Becket, where the events of each day, and almost of each hour, are carefully recorded by contemporary authors, [3] there is not, throughout the whole, the least appearance of a house of commons.

* Rymer, vol. i. . Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * Rymer, vol. i. .

* * * Fitz-Stephen, Hist. Quadrip. Hoveden, etc.

In all the general accounts given in preceding times of those assemblies, the prelates and barons only are mentioned as the constituent members. But though that house derived its existence from so precarious and even so invidious an origin as Leicester’s usurpation, it soon proved, when summoned by the legal princes, one of the most useful, and, in process of time, one of the most powerful members of the national constitution; and gradually rescued the kingdom from aristocratical as well as from regal tyranny. But Leicester’s policy, if we must ascribe to him so great a blessing, only forwarded by some years an institution, for which the general state of things had already prepared the nation; and it is otherwise inconceivable, that a plant, set by so inauspicious a hand, could have attained to so vigorous a growth, and have flourished in the midst of such tempests and convulsions. The feudal system, with which the liberty, much more the power of the commons, was totally incompatible, began gradually to decline; and both the king and the commonalty, who felt its inconveniencies, contributed to favor this new power, which was more submissive than the barons to the regular authority of the crown, and at the same time afforded protection to the inferior orders of the state.

Leicester, having thus assembled a parliament of his own model, and trusting to the attachment of the populace of London, seized the opportunity of crushing his rivals among the powerful barons. Robert de Ferrers, earl of Derby, was accused in the king’s name, seized, and committed to custody, without being brought to any legal trial. [1] John Gifford, menaced with the same fate, fled from London, and took shelter in the borders of Wales. Even the earl of Glocester, whose power and influence had so much contributed to the success of the barons, but who of late was extremely disgusted with Leicester’s arbitrary conduct, found himself in danger from the prevailing authority of his ancient confederate; and he retired from parliament. [2] This known dissension gave courage to all Leicester’s enemies and to the king’s friends; who were now sure of protection from so potent a leader.

* Chron. T. Wykes, . Ann. Waverl. .

* * M. Paris, . Ann. Waverl. .

Though Roger Mortimer, Hamond l’Estrange, and other powerful marchers of Wales, had been obliged to leave the kingdom, their authority still remained over the territories subjected to their jurisdiction; and there were many others who were disposed to give disturbance to the new government. The animosities inseparable from the feudal aristocracy, broke out with fresh violence, and threatened the kingdom with new convulsions and disorders.

The earl of Leicester, surrounded with these difficulties, embraced a measure, from which he hoped to reap some present advantages, but which proved in the end the source of all his future calamities. The active and intrepid Prince Edward had anguished in prison ever since the fatal battle of Lewes; and as he was extremely popular in the kingdom there arose a general desire of seeing him again restored to liberty. [1] Leicester, finding that he could with difficulty oppose the concurring wishes of the nation, stipulated with the prince, that, in return, he should order his adherents to deliver up to the barons all their castles, particularly those on the borders of Wales; and should swear neither to depart the kingdom during three years, nor introduce into it any foreign forces. [2] The king took an oath to the same effect, and he also passed a charter in which he confirmed the agreement or Mise of Lewes; and even permitted his subjects to rise in arms against him, if he should ever attempt to infringe it. [3] So little care did Leicester take, though he constantly made use of the authority of this captive prince, to preserve to him any appearance of royalty or kingly prerogatives.

* Knyghton, .

* * Ann. Waverl. .

* * * Blackstone’s Mag. Chart. Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

In consequence of this treaty, Prince Edward was brought into Westminster Hall, and was declared free by the barons: but instead of really recovering his liberty, as he had vainly expected, he found that the whole transaction was a fraud on the part of Leicester; that he himself still continued a prisoner at large, and was guarded by the emissaries of that nobleman; and that, while the faction reaped all the benefit from the performance of his part of the treaty, care was taken that he should enjoy no advantage by it. As Glocester, on his rupture with the barons, had retired for safety to his estates on the borders of Wales, Leicester followed him with an army to Hereford, [1] continued still to menace ana negotiate, and that he might add authority to his cause, he carried both the king and prince along with him. The earl of Glocester here concerted with young Edward the manner of that prince's escape. He found means to convey to him a horse of extraordinary swiftness; and appointed Roger Mortimer who had returned into the kingdom, to be ready at hand with a small party to receive the prince, and to guard him to a place of safety. Edward pretended to take the air with some of Leicester's retinue, who were his guards; and making matches between their horses, after he thought he had tired and blown them sufficiently, he suddenly mounted Glocester's horse, and called to his attendants that he had long enough enjoyed the pleasure of their company, and now bade them adieu. They followed him for some time without being able to overtake him; and the appearance of Mortimer with his company put an end to their pursuit.

* Chron. T. Wykes, . Ann. Waverl. . W. Heming, p. 585. Chron Durst. vil. i i. , 384.

The royalists, secretly prepared for this event, immediately flew to arms; and the joy of this gallant prince's deliverance, the oppressions under which the nation labored, the expectation of a new scene of affairs, and the countenance of the earl of Glocester, procured Edward an army which Leicester was utterly unable to withstand. This nobleman found himself in a remote quarter of the kingdom; surrounded by his enemies; barred from all communication with his friends by the Severn, whose bridges Edward had broken down; and obliged to fight the cause of his party under these multiplied disadvantages. In this extremity he wrote to his son, Simon de Mountfort, to hasten from London with an army for his relief; and Simon had advanced to Kenilworth with that view, where, fancying that all

Edward’s force and attention were directed against his father, he lay secure and unguarded. But the prince, making a sudden and forced march, surprised him in his camp, dispersed his army, and took the earl of Oxford and many other noblemen prisoners, almost without resistance. Leicester, ignorant of his son’s fate, passed the Severn in boats during Edward’s absence, and lay at Evesham, in expectation of being every hour joined by his friends from London; when the prince, who availed himself of every favorable moment, appeared in the field before him. Edward made a body of his troops advance from the road which led to Kenilworth, and ordered them to carry the banners taken from Simon’s army; while he himself, making a circuit with the rest of his forces, purposed to attack the enemy on the other quarter. Leicester was long deceived by this stratagem, and took one division of Edward’s army for his friends; but at last, perceiving his mistake, and observing the great superiority and excellent disposition of the royalists, he exclaimed, that they had learned from him the art of war; adding, “The Lord have mercy on our souls, for I see our bodies are the prince’s!” The battle immediately began, though on very unequal terms. Leicester’s army, by living in the mountains of Wales without bread, which was not then much used among the inhabitants, had been extremely weakened by sickness and desertion, and was soon broken by the victorious royalists; while his Welsh allies, accustomed only to a desultory kind of war, immediately took to flight, and were pursued with great slaughter. Leicester himself, asking for quarter, was slain in the heat of the action, with his eldest son Henry, Hugh le Despenser, and about one hundred and sixty knights, and many other gentlemen of his party. The old king had been purposely placed by the rebels in the front of the battle, and being clad in armor, and thereby not known by his friends, he received a wound, and was in danger of his life; but crying out, “I am Henry of Winchester, your king,” he was saved, and put in a place of safety by his son, who flew to his rescue.

The violence, ingratitude, tyranny, rapacity, and treachery of the earl of Leicester, give a very bad idea of his moral character, and make us regard his death as the most fortunate event which, in this conjuncture, could have happened to the English nation: yet must we allow the man to have possessed great abilities, and the appearance of great virtues, who, though a stranger, could, at a time when strangers were the most odious and the most universally decried, have acquired so extensive an interest in the kingdom, and have so nearly paved his way to the throne itself. His military capacity, and his political craft, were equally eminent: he possessed the talents both of governing men and conducting business; and though his ambition was boundless, it seems neither to have exceeded his courage nor his genius; and he had the happiness of making the low populace, as well as the haughty barons, coöperate towards the success of his selfish and dangerous purposes. A prince of greater abilities and vigor than Henry might have directed the talents of this nobleman either to the exaltation of his throne or to the good of his people but the advantages given to Leicester, by the weak and variable administration of the king, brought on the ruin of royal authority, and produced great confusions in the kingdom which, however, in the end, preserved and extremely improved national liberty and the constitution. His popularity, even after his death, continued so great, that, though he was excommunicated by Rome, the people believed him to be a saint; and many miracles were said to be wrought upon his tomb. [1]

1266.

The victory of Evesham, with the death of Leicester, proved decisive in favor of the royalists, and made an equal though an opposite impression on friends and enemies, in every part of England. The king of the Romans recovered his liberty: the other prisoners of the royal party were not only freed, but courted by their keepers; Fitz-Richard, the seditious mayor of London, who had marked out forty of the most wealthy citizens for slaughter, immediately stopped his hand on receiving intelligence of this great event; and almost all the castles, garrisoned by the barons, hastened to make their submissions, and to open their gates to the king. The Isle of Axholme alone, and that of Ely, trusting to the strength of their situation, ventured to make resistance; but were at last reduced, as well as the Castle of Dover, by the valor and activity of Prince Edward. [2] Adam de Gourdon, a courageous baron, maintained himself during some time in the forests of Hampshire, committed depredations in the neighborhood, and obliged the prince to lead a body of troops into that country against him. Edward attacked the camp of the rebels; and being transported by the ardor of battle, leaped over the trench with a few followers, and encountered Gourdon in single combat. The victory was long disputed between these valiant combatants; but ended at last in the prince's favor, who wounded his antagonist, threw him from his horse, and took him prisoner. He not only gave him his life; but introduced him that very night to the queen at Guildford, procured him his pardon, restored him to his estate, received him into favor, and was ever after faithfully served by him. [3]

* Chron. de Mailr. .

* * M. Paris . W. Heming. .

* * * M. Paris, p 575

A total victory of the sovereign over so extensive a rebellion commonly produces a revolution of government, and strengthens, as well as enlarges, for some time, the prerogatives of the crown; yet no sacrifices of national liberty were made on this occasion; the Great Charter remained still inviolate; and the king, sensible that his own barons, by whose assistance alone he had prevailed, were no less jealous of their independence than the other party, seems thenceforth to have more carefully abstained from all those exertions of power which had afforded so plausible a pretence to the rebels. The clemency of this victory is also remarkable; no blood was shed on the scaffold; no attainders, except of the Mountfort family, were carried into execution; and though a parliament, assembled at Winchester, attainted all those who had borne arms against the king, easy compositions were made with them for their lands; [1] and the highest sum levied on the most obnoxious offenders exceeded not five years' rent of their estate. Even the earl of Derby, who again rebelled, after having been pardoned and restored to his fortune, was obliged to pay only seven years' rent, and was a second time restored. The mild disposition of the king, and the prudence of the prince, tempered the insolence of victory and gradually restored order to the several members of the state, disjointed by so long a continuance of civil wars and commotions.

The city of London, which had carried farthest the rage and animosity against the king, and which seemed determined to stand upon its defence after almost all the kingdom had submitted, was, after some interval, restored to most of its liberties and privileges; and Fitz-Richard, the mayor, who had been guilty of so much illegal violence, was only punished by fine and imprisonment. The countess of Leicester, the king's sister, who had been extremely forward in all attacks on the royal family, was dismissed the kingdom with her two sons, Simon and Guy, who proved very ungrateful for this lenity. Five years afterwards, they assassinated, at Viterbo in Italy, their cousin Henry d'Allmaine, who at that very time was endeavoring to make their peace with the king; and by taking sanctuary in the church of the Franciscans, they escaped the punishment due to so great an enormity. [2]

* M. Paris, .

* * Rymer, vol. i. ; vol. ii. , 6. Chron. T. Wykes, W. Heming. . Trivet, .

1267.

The merits of the earl of Glocester, after he returned to his allegiance, had been so great, in restoring the prince to his liberty, and assisting him in his victories against the rebellious barons, that it was almost impossible to content him in his demands; and his youth and temerity as well as his great power, tempted him, on some new disgust, to raise again the flames of rebellion in the kingdom. The mutinous populace of London at his instigation took to arms; and the prince was obliged to levy an army of thirty thousand men in order to suppress them. Even this second rebellion did not provoke the king to any act of cruelty; and the earl of Glocester himself escaped with total impunity. He was only obliged to enter into a bond of twenty thousand marks, that he should never again be guilty of rebellion; a strange method of enforcing the laws, and a proof of the dangerous independence of the barons in those ages! These potent nobles were, from the danger of the precedent, averse to the execution of the laws of forfeiture and felony against any of their fellows; though they could not, with a good grace, refuse to concur in obliging them to fulfil any voluntary contract and engagement into which they had entered.

1270.

The prince, finding the state of the kingdom tolerably composed, was seduced by his avidity for glory, and by the prejudices of the age, as well as by the earnest solicitations of the king of France, to undertake an expedition against the infidels in the Holy Land; [1] and he endeavored previously to settle the state in such a manner, as to dread no bad effects from his absence. As the formidable power and turbulent disposition of the earl of Glocester gave him apprehensions, he insisted on carrying him along with him, in consequence of a vow which that nobleman had made to undertake the same voyage: in the mean time, he obliged him to resign some of his castles, and to enter into a new bond not to disturb the peace of the kingdom. [2]

* M. Paris,

* * Chron. T. Wykes, .

He sailed from England with an army; and arrived in Lewis's camp before Tunis in Africa, where he found that monarch already dead, from the intemperance of the climate and the fatigues of his enterprise. The great, if not only weakness of this prince, in his government, was the imprudent passion for crusades; but it was this zeal chiefly that procured him from the clergy the title of St. Lewis, by which he is known in the French history and if that appellation had not been so extremely prostituted as to become rather a term of reproach, he seems, by his uniform probity and goodness, as well as his piety, to have fully merited the title. He was succeeded by his son Philip, denominated the Hardy; a prince of some merit, though much inferior to that of his father.

1271.

Prince Edward, not discouraged by this event, continued his voyage to the Holy Land, where he signalized himself by acts of valor; revived the glory of the English name in those parts; and struck such terror into the Saracens, that they employed an assassin to murder him, who wounded him in the arm, but perished in the attempt. [1] Meanwhile his absence from England was attended with many of those pernicious consequences which had been dreaded from it. The laws were not executed: the barons oppressed the common people with impunity: they gave shelter on their estates to bands of robbers, whom they employed in committing ravages on the estates of their enemies: the populace of London returned to their usual licentiousness: and the old king, unequal to the burden of public affairs, called aloud for his gallant son to return, [2] and to assist him in swaying that sceptre which was ready to drop from his feeble and irresolute hands. At last, overcome by the cares of government and the infirmities of age, he visibly declined, and he expired at St. Edmondsbury in the sixty-fourth year of his age, and fifty-sixth of his reign; [3] the longest reign that is to be met with in the English annals.

* M. Paris, , 679. W. Heming, .

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. i. .

* * * Kymer, vol. i. . M. Paris, .

1272.

His brother, the king of the Romans, (for he never attained the title of emperor,) died about seven months before him.

The most obvious circumstance of Henry’s character is his incapacity for government, which rendered him as much a prisoner in the hands of his own ministers and favorites, and as little at his own disposal, as when detained a captive in the hands of his enemies. From this source, rather than from insincerity or treachery, arose his negligence in observing his promises; and he was too easily induced, for the sake of present convenience, to sacrifice the lasting advantages arising from the trust and confidence of his people. Hence too were derived his profusion to favorites, his attachment to strangers, the variableness of his conduct, his hasty resentments, and his sudden forgiveness and return of affection.

Instead of reducing the dangerous power of his nobles, by obliging them to observe the laws towards their inferiors, and setting them the salutary example in his own government, he was seduced to imitate their conduct, and to make his arbitrary will, or rather that of his ministers, the rule of his actions. Instead of accommodating himself, by a strict frugality, to the embarrassed situation in which his revenue had been left by the military expeditions of his uncle, the dissipations of his father, and the usurpations of the barons, he was tempted to levy money by irregular exactions, which, without enriching himself, impoverished, at least disgusted, his people. Of all men, nature seemed least to have fitted him for being a tyrant, yet are there instances of oppression in his reign, which, though derived from the precedents left him by his predecessors, had been carefully guarded against by the Great Charter, and are inconsistent with all rules of good government. And on the whole, we may say, that greater abilities, with his good dispositions, would have prevented him from falling into his faults, or with worse dispositions, would have enabled him to maintain and defend them.

This prince was noted for his piety and devotion, and his regular attendance on public worship; and a saying of his on that head is much celebrated by ancient writers. He was engaged in a dispute with Lewis IX. of France, concerning the preference between sermons and masses: he maintained the superiority of the latter, and affirmed, that he would rather have one hour's conversation with a friend, than hear twenty of the most elaborate discourses pronounced in his praise. [1]

* Walsing. Edw. I. .

Henry left two sons, Edward, his successor, and Edmond earl of Lancaster; and two daughters, Margaret, queen of Scotland, and Beatrix, duchess of Brittany. He had five other children, who died in their infancy.

The following are the most remarkable laws enacted during this reign. There had been great disputes between the civil and ecclesiastical courts concerning bastardy. The common law had deemed all those to be bastards who were born before wedlock; by the canon law they were legitimate: and when any dispute of inheritance arose, it had formerly been usual for the civil courts to issue writs to the spiritual, directing them to inquire into the legitimacy of the person. The bishop always returned an answer agreeable to the canon law, though contrary to the municipal law of the kingdom. For this reason, the civil courts had changed the terms of their writ; and instead of requiring the spiritual courts to make inquisition concerning the legitimacy of the person, they only proposed the simple question of fact, whether he were born before or after wedlock. The prelates complained of this practice to the parliament assembled at Merton in the twentieth of this king, and desired that the municipal law might be rendered conformable to the canon; but received from all the nobility the memorable reply, “Nolumus leges Angliae mutare.” We will not change the laws of England. [1]

After the civil wars, the parliament summoned at Marlebridge gave their approbation to most of the ordinances which had been established by the reforming barons, and which though advantageous to the security of the people, had not received the sanction of a legal authority. Among other laws, it was there enacted, that all appeals from the courts of inferior lords should be carried directly to the king's courts, without passing through the courts of the lords immediately superior. [2] It was ordained, that money should bear no interest during the minority of the debtor. [3] This law was reasonable, as the estates of minors were always in the hands of their lords, and the debtors could not pay interest where they had no revenue. The charter of King John had granted this indulgence: it was omitted in that of Henry III., for what reason is not known; but it was renewed by the statute of Marlebridge. Most of the other articles of this statute are calculated to restrain the oppressions of sheriffs, and the violence and iniquities committed in distraining cattle and other goods. Cattle and the instruments of husbandry formed at that time the chief riches of the people.

In the thirty-fifth year of this king, an assize was fixed of bread, the price of which was settled according to the different prices of corn, from one shilling a quarter to seven shillings and sixpence, [4] money of that age. These great variations are alone a proof of bad tillage: [5] yet did the prices often rise much higher than any taken notice of by the statute.

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* Statute of Merton, cha.

* * Statute of Marlb. cha.

* * * Ibid. cha.

* * * * Statutes at large, .

iii. ca, 92,) that the price of corn in Sicily was,

during the preetorship of Sacerdos five denarii amodius;

during that of Verres, which immediately succeeded, only two sesterces; that is, ten times lower; a presumption, or rather a proof, of the very bad state of tillage in ancient times.

The Chronicle of Dunstable tells us, that in this reign wheat was once sold for a mark, nay, for a pound a quarter; that is, three pounds of our present money. [1] The same law affords us a proof of the little communication between the parts of the kingdom, from the very different prices which the same commodity bore at the same time. A brewer, says the statute, may sell two gallons of ale for a penny in cities, and three or four gallons for the same price in the country. At present, such commodities, by the great consumption of the people, and the great stocks of the brewers, are rather cheapest in cities. The Chronicle above mentioned observes, that wheat one year was sold in many places for eight shillings a quarter, but never rose in Dunstable above a crown.

* So also Knyghton, .

Though commerce was still very low, it seems rather to have increased since the conquest; at least, if we may judge of the increase of money by the price of corn. The medium between the highest and lowest prices of wheat, assigned by the statute, is four shillings and threepence a quarter; that is, twelve shillings and ninepence of our present money. This is near half of the middling price in our time. Yet the middling price of cattle, so late as the reign of King Richard, we find to be above eight, near ten times lower than the present. Is not this the true inference, from comparing these facts, that, in all uncivilized nations, cattle, which propagate of themselves, bear always a lower price than corn, which requires more art and stock to render it plentiful than those nations are possessed of? It is to be remarked, that Henry's assize of corn was copied from a preceding assize established by King John; consequently, the prices which we have here compared of corn and cattle may be looked on as contemporary; and they were drawn, not from one particular year, but from an estimation of the middling prices for a series of years. It is true, the prices assigned by the assize of Richard were meant as a standard for the accompts of sheriffs and escheators and as considerable profits were allowed to these ministers, we may naturally suppose that the common value of cattle was somewhat higher: yet still, so great a difference between the prices of corn and cattle as that of four to one, compared to the present rates, affords important reflections concerning the very different state of industry and tillage in the two periods.

Interest had in that age mounted to an enormous height, as might be expected from the barbarism of the times and men's ignorance of commerce. Instances occur of fifty per cent. paid for money. [1] There is an edict of Philip Augustus, near this period, limiting the Jews in France to forty-eight per cent. [2] Such profits tempted the Jews to remain in the kingdom, notwithstanding the grievous oppressions to which, from the prevalent bigotry and rapine of the age, they were continually exposed. It is easy to imagine how precarious their state must have been under an indigent prince, somewhat restrained in his tyranny over his native subjects, but who possessed an unlimited authority over the Jews, the sole proprietors of money in the kingdom, and hated on account of their riches, their religion, and their usury; yet will our ideas scarcely come up to the extortions which in fact we find to have been practised upon them. In the year 1241, twenty thousand marks were exacted from them; [3] two years after money was again extorted; and one Jew alone, Aaron of York, was obliged to pay above four thousand marks; [4] in 1250, Henry renewed his oppressions; and the same Aaron was condemned to pay him thirty thousand marks upon an accusation of forgery; [5] the high penalty imposed upon him, and which, it seems, he was thought able to pay, is rather a presumption of his innocence than of his guilt.

* M. Paris, .

* * Brussel, Traité des Fiefs, vol. i, .

* * * M. Paris, .

* * * * M. Paris, .

In 1255, the king demanded eight thousand marks from the Jews, and threatened to hang them if they refused compliance. They now lost all patience, and desired leave to retire with their effects out of the kingdom. But the king replied, “How can I remedy the oppressions you complain of? I am myself a beggar. I am spoiled, I am stripped of all my revenues; I owe above two hundred thousand marks; and if I had said three hundred thousand, I should not exceed the truth; I am obliged to pay my son, Prince Edward, fifteen thousand marks a year; I have not a farthing; and I must have money from any hand, from any quarter, or by any means.” He then delivered over the Jews to the earl of Cornwall, that those whom the one brother had flayed, the other might embowel, to make use of the words of the historian. [1] King John, his father, once demanded ten thousand marks from a Jew of Bristol; and on his refusal, ordered one of his teeth to be drawn every day till he should comply. The Jew lost seven teeth, and then paid the sum required of him. [2] One talliage laid upon the Jews, in 1243, amounted to sixty thousand marks; [3] a sum equal to the whole yearly revenue of the crown.

To give a better pretence for extortions, the improbable and absurd accusation, which has been at different times advanced against that nation, was revived in England, that they had crucified a child in derision of the sufferings of Christ. Eighteen of them were hanged at once for this crime; [4] though it is nowise credible that even the antipathy borne them by the Christians, and the oppressions under which they labored, would ever have pushed them to be guilty of that dangerous enormity. But it is natural to imagine, that a race exposed to such insults and indignities, both from king and people, and who had so uncertain an enjoyment of their riches, would carry usury to the utmost extremity, and by their great profits make themselves some compensation for their continual perils.

Though these acts of violence against the Jews proceeded much from bigotry, they were still more derived from avidity and rapine. So far from desiring in that age to convert them, it was enacted by law in France, that if any Jew embraced Christianity, he forfeited all his goods, without exception, to the king or his superior lord. These plunderers were careful lest the profits accruing from their dominion over that unhappy race should be diminished by their conversion. [5]

Commerce must be in a wretched condition where interest was so high, and where the sole proprietors of money employed it in usury only, and were exposed to such extortion and injustice. But the bad police of the country was another obstacle to improvements, and rendered all communication dangerous, and all property precarious. The Chronicle of Dunstable says, [6] that men were never secure in their houses, and that whole villages were often plundered by bands of robbers, though no civil wars at that time prevailed in the kingdom.

*M. Paris, .

* *M. Paris, .

* * *Madox, .

* * * *M. Paris, .

* * * * * *Vol. i. .

In 1249, some years before the insurrection of the barons, two merchants of Brabant came to the king at Winchester, and told him that they had been spoiled of all their goods by certain robbers, whom they knew, because they saw their faces every day in his court; that like practices prevailed all over England, and travellers were continually exposed to the danger of being robbed, bound, wounded, and murdered; that these crimes escaped with impunity, because the ministers of justice themselves were in a confederacy with the robbers; and that they, for their part, instead of bringing matters to a fruitless trial by law, were willing, though merchants, to decide their cause with the robbers by arms and a duel. The king, provoked at these abuses, ordered a jury to be enclosed, and to try the robbers: the jury, though consisting of twelve men of property in Hampshire, were found to be also in a confederacy with the felons, and acquitted them. Henry, in a rage, committed the jury to prison, threatened them with severe punishment, and ordered a new jury to be enclosed, who, dreading the fate of their fellows, at last found a verdict against the criminals. Many of the king's own household were discovered to have participated in the guilt; and they said for their excuse, that they received no wages from him, and were obliged to rob for a maintenance. [1] "Knights and esquires," says the Dictum of Kenilworth, "Who were robbers, if they have no land, shall pay the half of their goods, and find sufficient security to keep henceforth the peace of the kingdom." Such were the manners of the times!

One can the less repine, during the prevalence of such manners, at the frauds and forgeries of the clergy; as it gives less disturbance to society to take men's money from them with their own consent, though by deceits and lies, than to ravish it by open force and violence. During this reign the papal power was at its summit, and was even beginning insensibly to decline, by reason of the immeasurable avarice and extortions of the court of Rome, which disgusted the clergy as well as laity in every kingdom of Europe. England itself, though sunk in the deepest abyss of ignorance and superstition, had seriously entertained thoughts of shaking off the papal yoke; [2] and the Roman pontiff was obliged to think of new expedients for rivetting it faster upon the Christian world.

* M. Paris, .

* * M. Paris, .

For this purpose, Gregory IX. published his decretals, [1] which are a collection of forgeries favorable to the court of Rome, and consist of the supposed decrees of popes in the first centuries. But these forgeries are so gross, and confound so palpably all language, history, chronology, and antiquities, — matters more stubborn than any speculative truths whatsoever, — that even that church, which is not startled at the most monstrous contradictions and absurdities, has been obliged to abandon them to the critics. But in the dark period of the thirteenth century, they parsed for undisputed and authentic; and men, entangled in the mazes of this false literature, joined to the philosophy, equally false, of the times, had nothing wherewithal to defend themselves, but some small remains of common sense, which passed for profaneness and impiety, and the indelible regard to self-interest, which, as it was the sole motive in the priests for framing these impostures, served also, in some degree, to protect the laity against them.

* Trivet, .

Another expedient, devised by the church of Rome, in this period, for securing her power, was the institution of new religious orders, chiefly the Dominicans and Franciscans, who proceeded with all the zeal and success that attend novelties; were better qualified to gain the populace than the old orders, now become rich and indolent; maintained a perpetual rivalship with each other in promoting their gainful superstitions; and acquired a great dominion over the minds, and consequently over the purses, of men, by pretending a desire of poverty and a contempt for riches. The quarrels which arose between these orders, lying still under the control of the sovereign pontiff, never disturbed the peace of the church, and served only as a spur to their industry in promoting the common cause; and though the

Dominicans lost some popularity by their denial of the immaculate conception, — a point in which they unwarily engaged too far to be able to recede with honor, — they counterbalanced this disadvantage by acquiring more solid establishments, by gaining the confidence of kings and princes, and by exercising the jurisdiction assigned them of ultimate judges and punishers of heresy. Thus the several orders of monks became a kind of regular troops or garrisons of the Romish church; and though the temporal interests of society, still more the cause of true piety, were hurt, by their various devices to captivate the populace, they proved the chief supports of that mighty fabric of superstition, and, till the revival of true learning, secured it from any dangerous invasion.

The trial by ordeal was abolished in this reign by order of council; a faint mark of improvement in the age. [1]

Henry granted a charter to the town of Newcastle, in which he gave the inhabitants a license to dig coal. This is the first mention of coal in England.

We learn from Madox, [2] that this king gave at one time one hundred shillings to Master Henry, his poet; also the same year he orders this poet ten pounds.

It appears from Selden, that in the forty-seventh of this reign, a hundred and fifty temporal and fifty spiritual barons were summoned to perform the service, due by their tenures. [3] In the thirty-fifth of the subsequent reign, eighty-six temporal barons, twenty bishops, and forty-eight abbots, were summoned to a parliament convened at Carlisle. [4]

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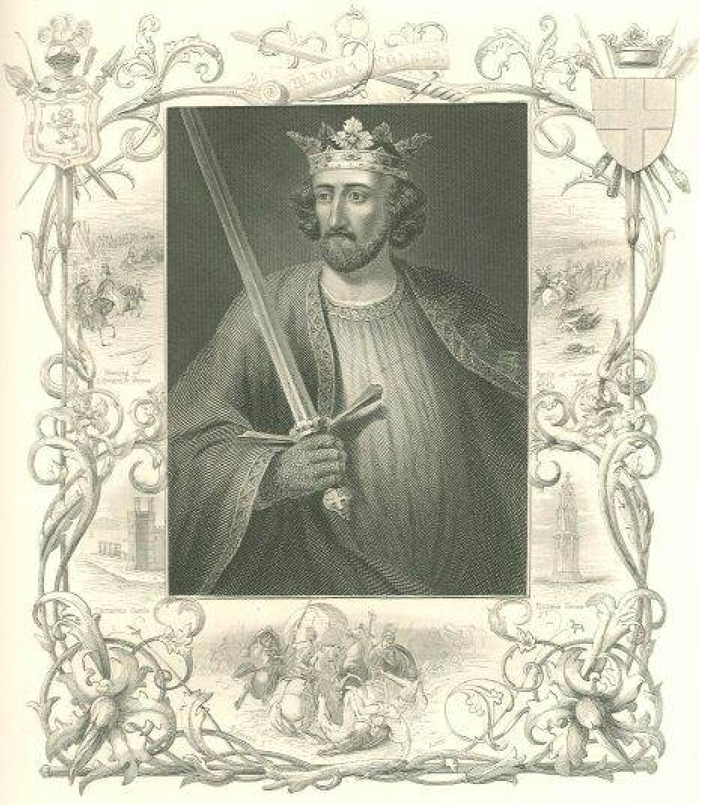
* Rymer, vol. i. . Spelman, .

* * Page 208.

* * * Titles of Honor, part ii. cha.

* * * * Parliamentary Hist. vol. i. .

CHAPTER XIII.



MAGNA CARTA

EDWARD I.

From an ancient Statue at Carnarvon Castle.

EDWARD I.

1272.

The English were as yet so little inured to obedience under a regular government, that the death of almost every king, since the conquest, had been attended with disorders, and the council, reflecting on the recent civil wars, and on the animosities which naturally remain after these great convulsions, had reason to apprehend dangerous consequences from the absence of the son and successor of Henry. They therefore hastened to proclaim Prince Edward, to swear allegiance to him, and to summon the states of the kingdom, in order to provide for the public peace in this important conjuncture. [1]

* Rymer, vol. ii. Walsing, . Trivet, .

Walter Giffard, archbishop of York, the earl of Cornwall, son of Richard, king of the Romans, and the earl of Glocester, were appointed guardians of the realm, and proceeded peaceably to the exercise of their authority, without either meeting with opposition from any of the people, or being disturbed with emulation and faction among themselves. The high character acquired by Edward during the late commotions, his military genius, his success in subduing the rebels, his moderation in settling the kingdom, had procured him great esteem, mixed with affection, among all orders of men; and no one could reasonably entertain hopes of making any advantage of his absence, or of raising disturbance in the nation. The earl of Glocester himself, whose great power and turbulent spirit had excited most jealousy, was forward to give proofs of his allegiance; and the other malecontents, being destitute of a leader, were obliged to remain in submission to the government.

Prince Edward had reached Sicily in his return from the Holy Land, when he received intelligence of the death of his father; and he discovered a deep concern on the occasion. At the same time, he learned the death of an infant son, John whom his princess, Eleanor of Castile, had born him at Acre, in

Palestine; and as he appeared much less affected with that misfortune, the king of Sicily expressed a surprise at this difference of sentiment; but was told by Edward, that the death of a son was a loss which he might hope to repair; the death of a father was a loss irreparable. [1]

Edward proceeded homeward; but as he soon learned the quiet settlement of the kingdom, he was in no hurry to take possession of the throne, but spent near a year in France, before he made his appearance in England.

1273.

In his passage by Chalons, in Burgundy, he was challenged by the prince of the country to a tournament which he was preparing; and as Edward excelled in those martial and dangerous exercises, the true image of war, he declined not the opportunity of acquiring honor in that great assembly of the neighboring nobles. But the image of war was here unfortunately turned into the thing itself. Edward and his retinue were so successful in the jousts, that the French knights, provoked at their superiority, made a serious attack upon them, which was repulsed, and much blood was idly shed in the quarrel. [2] This rencounter received the name of the petty battle of Chalons.

1274.

Edward went from Chalons to Paris, and did homage to Philip for the dominions which he held in France. [3] He thence returned to Guienne, and settled that province, which was in some confusion. He made his journey to London through France; in his passage, he accommodated at Montreuil a difference with Margaret, countess of Flanders, heiress of that territory; [4] he was received with joyful acclamations by his people, and was solemnly crowned at Westminster by Robert, archbishop of Canterbury.

* Walsing. . Trivet. .

* * Walsing. . Trivet. . M. West. .

* * * Walsing .

* * * * Rymer. vol. ii. , 33.

The king immediately applied himself to the reestablishment of his kingdom, and to the correcting of those disorders which the civil commotions and the loose administration of his father had introduced into every part of government. The plan of his policy was equally generous and prudent. He considered the great barons both as the immediate rivals of the crown and oppressors of the people; and he purposed, by an exact distribution of justice, and a rigid execution of the laws, to give at once protection to the inferior orders of the state, and to diminish the arbitrary power of the great, on which their dangerous authority was chiefly founded. Making it a rule in his own conduct to observe, except on extraordinary occasions, the privileges secured to them by the Great Charter, he acquired a right to insist upon their observance of the same charter towards their vassals and inferiors; and he made the crown be regarded by all the gentry and commonalty of the kingdom, as the fountain of justice, and the general asylum against oppression.

1275.

Besides enacting several useful statutes, in a parliament which he summoned at Westminster, he took care to inspect the conduct of all his magistrates and judges, to displace such as were either negligent or corrupt, to provide them with sufficient force for the execution of justice, to extirpate all bands and confederacies of robbers, and to repress those more silent robberies which were committed either by the power of the nobles or under the countenance of public authority. By this rigid administration, the face of the kingdom was soon changed; and order and justice took place of violence and oppression: but amidst the excellent institutions and public-spirited plans of Edward, there still appears somewhat both of the severity of his personal character and of the prejudices of the times.

As the various kinds of malefactors, the murderers, robbers, incendiaries, ravishers, and plunderers, had become so numerous and powerful, that the ordinary ministers of justice, especially in the western counties, were afraid to execute the laws against them, the king found it necessary to provide an extraordinary remedy for the evil; and he erected a new tribunal, which, however useful, would have been deemed in times of more regular liberty, a great stretch of illegal and arbitrary power. It consisted of commissioners, who were empowered to inquire into disorders and crimes of all kinds, and to inflict the proper punishments upon them. The officers charged with this unusual commission, made their circuits throughout the counties of England most infested with this evil, and carried terror into all those parts of the kingdom. In their zeal to punish crimes, they did not sufficiently distinguish between the innocent and guilty; the smallest suspicion became a ground of accusation and trial; the slightest evidence was received against criminals; prisons were crowded with malefactors, real or pretended; severe fines were levied for small offences; and the king, though his exhausted exchequer was supplied by this expedient, found it necessary to stop the course of so great rigor, and after terrifying and dissipating by this tribunal the gangs of disorderly people in England, he prudently annulled the commission; [1] and never afterwards renewed it.

Among the various disorders to which the kingdom was subject, no one was more universally complained of than the adulteration of the coin; and as this crime required more art than the English of that age, who chiefly employed force and violence in their iniquities, were possessed of, the imputation fell upon the Jews. [2] Edward also seems to have indulged a strong prepossession against that nation; and this ill-judged zeal for Christianity being naturally augmented by an expedition to the Holy Land, he let loose the whole rigor of his justice against that unhappy people. Two hundred and eighty of them were hanged at once for this crime in London alone, besides those who suffered in other parts of the kingdom. [3]

The houses and lands, (for the Jews had of late ventured to make purchases of that kind,) as well as the goods of great multitudes, were sold and confiscated; and the king, lest it should be suspected that the riches of the sufferers were the chief part of their guilt, ordered a moiety of the money raised by these confiscations to be set apart, and bestowed upon

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* Spel. Gloss, in verbo Trailbaston. But Spelman was either mistaken in placing this commission in the fifth year of the king, or it was renewed in 1305. See Rymer, vol. ii. .

Trivet, ., M. West. .

* * Walsing. Heming. vol. i. .

* * * T. Wykes, .

such as were willing to be converted to Christianity. But resentment was more prevalent with them than any temptation from their poverty; and very few of them could be induced by interest to embrace the religion of their persecutors. The miseries of this people did not here terminate. Though the arbitrary talliages and exactions levied upon them had yielded a constant and a considerable revenue to the crown, Edward prompted by his zeal and his rapacity, resolved some time after [1] to purge the kingdom entirely of that hated race, and to seize to himself at once their whole property as the reward of his labor. [2] He left them only money sufficient to bear their charges into foreign countries, where new persecutions and extortions awaited them: but the inhabitants of the cinque ports, imitating the bigotry and avidity of their sovereign, despoiled most of them of this small pittance, and even threw many of them into the sea; a crime for which the king, who was determined to be the sole plunderer in his dominions, inflicted a capital punishment upon them. No less than fifteen thousand Jews were at this time robbed of their effects, and banished the kingdom: very few of that nation have since lived in England: and as it is impossible for a nation to subsist without lenders of money, and none will lend without a compensation, the practice of usury, as it was then called, was thenceforth exercised by the English themselves upon their fellow-citizens, or by Lombards and other foreigners. It is very much to be questioned, whether the dealings of these new usurers were equally open and unexceptionable with those of the old. By a law of Richard, it was enacted, that three copies should be made of every bond given to a Jew; one to be put into the hands of a public magistrate, another into those of a man of credit, and a third to remain with the Jew himself. [3] But as the canon law, seconded by the municipal, permitted no Christian to take interest, all transactions of this kind must, after the banishment of the Jews, have become more secret and clandestine, and the lender, of consequence, be paid both for the use of his money, and for the infamy and danger which he incurred by lending it.

* In the year 1290.

* * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, p 266.

* * * Trivet, .

The great poverty of the crown, though no excuse, was probably the cause of this egregious tyranny exercised against the Jews; but Edward also practised other more honorable means of remedying that evil. He employed a strict frugality in the management and distribution of his revenue: he engaged the parliament to vote him a fifteenth of all movables; the pope to grant him the tenth of all ecclesiastical revenues for three years; and the merchants to consent to a perpetual imposition of half a mark on every sack of wool exported, and a mark on three hundred skins. He also issued commissions to inquire into all encroachments on the royal demesne; into the value of escheats, forfeitures, and Wardships; and into the means of repairing or improving every branch of the revenue. [1] The commissioners, in the execution of their office, began to carry matters too far against the nobility, and to question titles to estates which had been transmitted from father to son for several generations. Earl Warrenne, who had done such eminent service in the late reign, being required to show his titles, drew his sword; and subjoined, that William the bastard had not conquered the kingdom for himself alone: his ancestor was a joint adventurer in the enterprise; and he himself was determined to maintain what had from that period remained unquestioned in his family. The king, sensible of the danger, desisted from making further inquiries of this nature.

1276.

But the active spirit of Edward could not long remain without employment. He soon after undertook an enterprise more prudent for himself, and more advantageous to his people. Lewellyn, prince of Wales, had been deeply engaged with the Mountfort faction; had entered into all their conspiracies against the crown; had frequently fought on their side; and, till the battle of Evesham, so fatal to that party, had employed every expedient to depress the royal cause, and to promote the success of the barons. In the general accommodation made with the vanquished, Lewellyn had also obtained his pardon; but as he was the most powerful, and therefore the most obnoxious vassal of the crown, he had reason to entertain anxiety about his situation, and to dread the future effects of resentment and jealousy in the English monarch. For this reason he determined to provide for his security by maintaining a secret correspondence with his former associates; and he even made his addresses to a daughter of the earl of Leicester, who was sent to him from beyond sea, but being intercepted in her passage near the Isles of Scilly, was detained in the court of England. [2]

* Ann. Waverl..

* * Walsing. , 47. Heming. vol. i. . Trivet,

This incident increasing the mutual jealousy between Edward and Lewellyn, the latter, when required to come to England, and do homage to the new king, scrupled to put himself in the hands of an enemy, desired a safe-conduct from Edward, insisted upon having the king's son and other noblemen delivered to him as hostages, and demanded that his consort should previously be set at liberty. [1] The king, having now brought the state to a full settlement, was not displeased with this occasion of exercising his authority, and subduing entirely the principality of Wales. He refused all Lewellyn's demands, except that of a safe-conduct; sent him repeated summons to perform the duty of a vassal; levied an army to reduce him to obedience; obtained a new aid of a fifteenth from parliament; and marched out with certain assurance of success against the enemy.

1277.

Besides the great disproportion of force between the kingdom and the principality, the circumstances of the two states were entirely reversed; and the same intestine dissensions which had formerly weakened England, now prevailed in Wales, and had even taken place in the reigning family. David and Roderic, brothers to Lewellyn, dispossessed of their inheritance by that prince, had been obliged to have recourse to the protection of Edward, and they seconded with all their interest, which was extensive, his attempts to enslave their native country. The Welsh prince had no resource but in the inaccessible situation of his mountains, which had hitherto, through many ages, defended his forefathers against all attempts of the Saxon and Norman conquerors; and he retired among the hills of Snowdun, resolute to defend himself to the last extremity. But Edward, equally vigorous and cautious, entering by the north with a formidable army, pierced into the heart of the country; and having carefully explored every road before him, and secured every pass behind him, approached the Welsh army in its last retreat. He here avoided the putting to trial the valor of a nation proud of its ancient independence, and inflamed with animosity against its hereditary enemies; and he trusted to the slow, but sure effects of famine, for reducing that people to subjection. The rude and simple manners of the natives, as well as the mountainous situation of their country, had made them entirely neglect tillage, and trust to pasturage alone for their subsistence; a method of life which had hitherto [1] secured them against the irregular attempts of the English, out exposed them to certain ruin, when the conquest of the country was steadily pursued, and prudently planned by Edward. Destitute of magazines, cooped up in a narrow corner, they, as well as their cattle, suffered all the rigors of famine; and Lewellyn, without being able to strike a stroke for his independence, was at last obliged to submit at discretion, and receive the terms imposed upon him by the victor. [2] He bound himself to pay to Edward fifty thousand pounds, as a reparation of damages; to do homage to the crown of England; to permit all the other barons of Wales, except four near Snowdun, to swear fealty to the same crown; to relinquish the country between Cheshire and the River Conway; to settle on his brother Roderic a thousand marks a year, and on David five hundred; and to deliver ten hostages as security for his future submission. [3]

Edward, on the performance of the other articles, remitted to the prince of Wales the payment of the fifty thousand pounds; [4] which were stipulated by treaty, and which, it is probable, the poverty of the country made it absolutely impossible for him to levy. But, notwithstanding this indulgence, complaints of iniquities soon arose on the side of the vanquished: the English, insolent on their easy and bloodless victory, oppressed the inhabitants of the districts which were yielded to them: the lords marchers committed with impunity all kinds of violence on their Welsh neighbors: new and more severe terms were imposed on Lewellyn himself; and Edward, when the prince attended him at Worcester, exacted a promise that he would retain no person in his principality who should be obnoxious to the English monarch. [4]

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing, Trivet,

* * T. Wykes, .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. . Trivet, . T. Wykes .

* * * * Rymer, .

There were other personal insults which raised the indignation of the Welsh, and made them determine rather to encounter a force which they had already experienced to be so much superior, than to bear oppression from the haughty victors. Prince David, seized with the national spirit, made peace with his brother, and promised to concur in the defence of public liberty. The Welsh flew to arms; and Edward, not displeased with the occasion of making his conquest final and absolute, assembled all his military tenants, and advanced into Wales with an army which the inhabitants could not reasonably hope to resist. The situation of the country gave the Welsh at first some advantage over Luke de Tany, one of Edward's captains, who had passed the Menau with a detachment; [1] but Lewelly, being surprised by Mortimer, was defeated and slain in an action, and two thousand of his followers were put to the sword. [2] David, who succeeded him in the principality, could never collect an army sufficient to face the English; and being chased from hill to hill, and hunted from one retreat to another, was obliged to conceal himself under various disguises, and was at last betrayed in his lurking-place to the enemy.

1283.

Edward sent him in chains to Shrewsbury; and bringing him to a formal trial before all the peers of England, ordered this sovereign prince to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, as a traitor, for defending by arms the liberties of his native country, together with his own hereditary authority. [3] All the Welsh nobility submitted to the conqueror; the laws of England, with the sheriffs and other ministers of justice, were established in that principality; and though it was long before national antipathies were extinguished, and a thorough union attained between the people, yet this important conquest, which it had required eight hundred years fully to effect, was at last, through the abilities of Edward, completed by the English.

1284

The king, sensible that nothing kept alive the ideas of military valor and of ancient glory so much as the traditional poetry of the people, which, assisted by the power of music and the jollity of festivals, made deep impression on the minds of the youth, gathered together all the Welsh bards, and from a barbarous, though not absurd policy, ordered them to be put to death. [4]

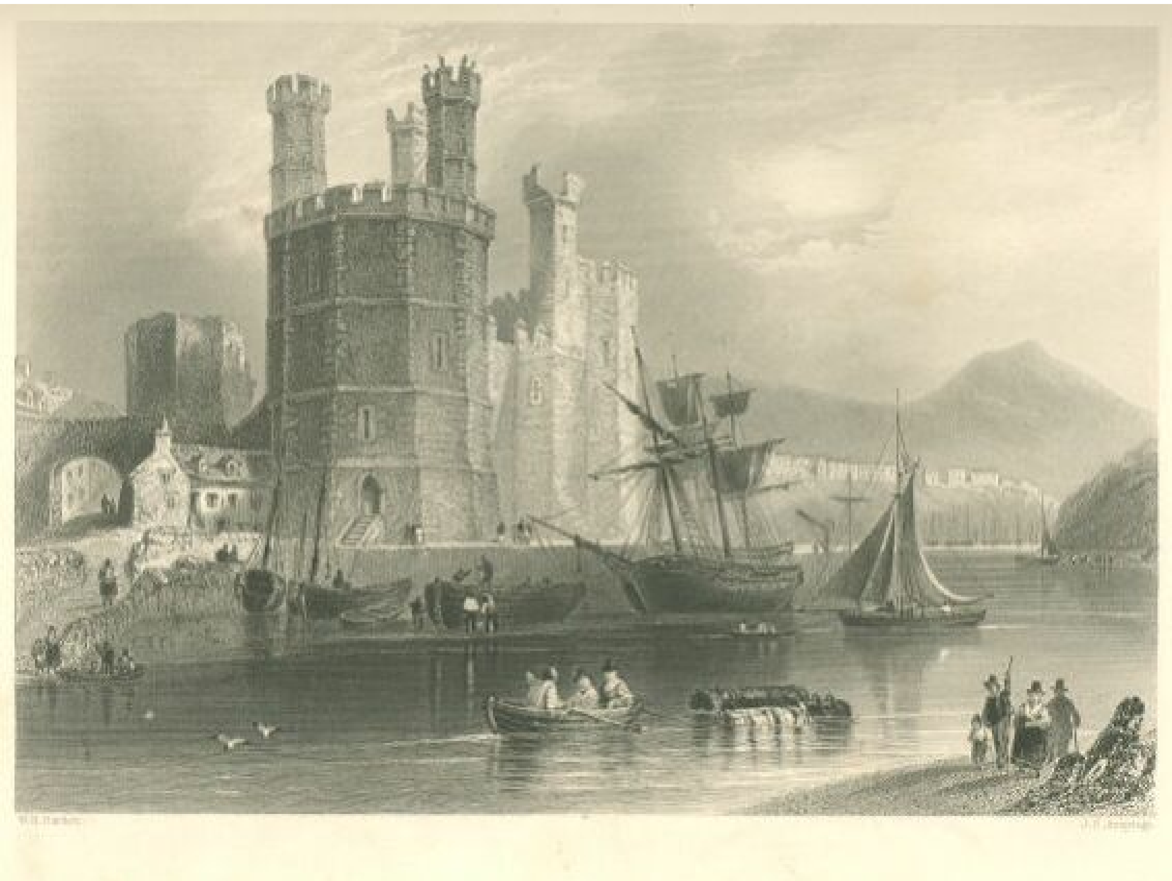
* Walsing. . Heming. vol. i . Trivet, . T Wykes, .

* * Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, . Ann. Waverl. p. 235.

* * * Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, . Ann Waverl. p. 288 T Wykes, . M. West. .

* * * * Sir J. Wynne, . crown; and henceforth gives a title to the eldest son of the kings of England.

There prevails a vulgar story, which, as it well suits the capacity of the monkish writers, is carefully recorded by them; that Edward, assembling the Welsh, promised to give them a prince of unexceptionable manners, a Welshman by birth, and one who could speak no other language. On their acclamations of joy, and promise of obedience, he invested in the principality his second son, Edward, then an infant, who had been born at Carnarvon. The death of his eldest son Alphonso, soon after, made young Edward heir of the monarchy; the principality of Wales was fully annexed.



THE EAGLE TOWER, CAERNARVON CASTLE.

1286.

The settlement of Wales appeared so complete to Edward, that in less than two years after, he went abroad, in order to make peace between Alphonso, king of Arragon, and Philip the Fair, who had lately succeeded his father, Philip the Hardy, on the throne of France. [1] The difference between these two princes had arisen about the kingdom of Sicily, which the pope, after his hopes from England failed him, had bestowed on Charles, brother to St. Lewis, and which was claimed upon other titles by Peter, king of Arragon, father to Alphonso. Edward had powers from both princes to settle the terms of peace, and he succeeded in his endeavors; but as the controversy nowise regards England, we shall not enter into a detail of it. He staid abroad above three years; and on his return found many disorders to have prevailed, both from open violence and from the corruption of justice.

Thomas Chamberlain, a gentleman of some note, had assembled several of his associates at Boston, in Lincolnshire, under pretence of holding a tournament, an exercise practised by the gentry only; but in reality with a view of plundering the rich fair of Boston, and robbing the merchants. To facilitate his purpose, he privately set fire to the town; and while the inhabitants were employed in quenching the flames, the conspirators broke into the booths, and carried off the goods. Chamberlain himself was detected and hanged; but maintained so steadily the point of honor to his accomplices, that he could not be prevailed on, by offers or promises, to discover any of them. Many other instances of robbery and violence broke out in all parts of England; though the singular circumstances attending this conspiracy have made it alone be particularly recorded by historians. [2]

* Rymer, vol. ii. ,150, 174.

* * Heming vol. i. , 17.

1289.

But the corruption of the judges, by which the fountains of justice were poisoned, seemed of still more dangerous consequence. Edward, in order to remedy this prevailing abuse, summoned a parliament, and brought the judges to a trial; where all of them, except two, who were clergymen, were convicted of this flagrant iniquity, were fined, and deposed. The amount of the fines levied upon them is alone a sufficient proof of their guilt; being above one hundred thousand marks, an immense sum in those days, and sufficient to defray the charges of an expensive war between two great kingdoms. The king afterwards made all the new judges swear that they would take no bribes; but his expedient of deposing and fining the old ones, was the more effectual remedy.

We now come to give an account of the state of affairs in Scotland, which gave rise to the most interesting transactions of this reign, and of some of the subsequent; though the intercourse of that kingdom with England, either in peace or war, had hitherto produced so few events of moment, that, to avoid tediousness, we have omitted many of them, and have been very concise in relating the rest. If the Scots had, before this period, any real history worthy of the name, except what they glean from scattered passages in the English historians, those events, however minute, yet being the only foreign transactions of the nation, might deserve a place in it.

Though the government of Scotland had been continually exposed to those factions and convulsions which are incident to all barbarous and to many civilized nations; and though the successions of their kings, the only part of their history which deserves any credit had often been disordered by irregularities and usurpations; the true heir of the royal family had still in the end prevailed, and Alexander III., who had espoused the sister of Edward, probably inherited, after a period of about eight hundred years, and through a succession of males, the sceptre of all the Scottish princes who had governed the nation since its first establishment in the island. This prince died in 1286, by a fall from his horse at Kinghorn, [1] without leaving any male issue, and without any descendant, except Margaret, born of Eric, king of Norway, and of Margaret, daughter of the Scottish monarch. This princess, commonly called the Maid of Norway, though a female, and an infant, and a foreigner, yet being the lawful heir of the kingdom, had, through her grandfather's care, been recognized successor by the states of Scotland; [2] and on Alexander's death, the dispositions which had been previously made against that event, appeared so just and prudent, that no disorders, as might naturally be apprehended, ensued in the kingdom.

Margaret was acknowledged queen of Scotland; five guardians, the bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, the earls of Fife and Buchan, and James, steward of Scotland, entered peaceably upon the administration; and the infant princess, under the protection of Edward, her great uncle, and Eric, her father, who exerted themselves on this occasion, seemed firmly seated on the throne of Scotland. The English monarch was naturally led to build mighty projects on this incident; and having lately, by force of arms, brought Wales under subjection, he attempted, by the marriage of Margaret with his eldest son, Edward, to unite the whole island into one monarchy, and thereby to give it security both against domestic convulsions and foreign invasions.

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* Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. .

1290.

The amity which had of late prevailed between the two nations, and which, even in former times, had never been interrupted by any violent wars or injuries, facilitated extremely the execution of this project, so favorable to the happiness and grandeur of both kingdoms; and the states of Scotland readily gave their assent to the English proposals, and even agreed that their young sovereign should be educated in the court of Edward. Anxious, however, for the liberty and independency of their country, they took care to stipulate very equitable conditions, ere they intrusted themselves into the hands of so great and so ambitious a monarch. It was agreed that they should enjoy all their ancient laws, liberties, and customs; that in case young Edward and Margaret should die without issue, the crown of Scotland should revert to the next heir, and should be inherited by him free and independent; that the military tenants of the crown should never be obliged to go out of Scotland, in order to do homage to the sovereign of the united kingdoms, nor the chapters of cathedral, collegiate, or conventual churches, in order to make elections; that the parliaments summoned for Scottish affairs should always be held within the bounds of that kingdom; and that Edward should bind himself, under the penalty of one hundred thousand marks, payable to the pope for the use of the holy wars to observe all these articles. [1]

* Rymer, vol. ii. .

It is not easy to conceive that two nations could have treated more on a footing of equality than Scotland and England maintained during the whole course of this transaction; and though Edward gave his assent to the article concerning the future independency of the Scottish crown, with a “saving of his former rights,” this reserve gave no alarm to the nobility of Scotland, both because these rights, having hitherto been little heard of had occasioned no disturbance, and because the Scots had so near a prospect of seeing them entirely absorbed in the rights of their sovereignty.

1291.

But this project, so happily formed and so amicably conducted, failed of success, by the sudden death of the Norwegian princess, who expired on her passage to Scotland, [1] and left a very dismal prospect to the kingdom. Though disorders were for the present obviated by the authority of the regency formerly established, the succession itself of the crown was now become an object of dispute; and the regents could not expect that a controversy, which is not usually decided by reason and argument alone, would be peaceably settled by them, or even by the states of the kingdom, amidst so many powerful pretenders. The posterity of William, king of Scotland, the prince taken prisoner by Henry II., being all extinct by the death of Margaret of Norway, the right to the crown devolved on the issue of David, earl of Huntingdon brother to William, whose male line being also extinct, left the succession open to the posterity of his daughters. The earl of Huntingdon had three daughters; Margaret, married to Alan, lord of Galloway, Isabella, wife of Robert Brus or Bruce lord of Annandale, and Adama, who espoused Henry, Lord Hastings. Margaret, the eldest of the sisters, left one daughter, Devergilda, married to John Baliol, by whom she had a son of the same name, one of the present competitors for the crown: Isabella II. bore a son, Robert Bruce, who was now alive, and who also insisted on his claim: Adama III. left a son, John Hastings, who pretended that the kingdom of Scotland, like many other inheritances, was divisible among the three daughters of the earl of Huntingdon, and that he, in right of his mother, had a title to a third of it. Baliol and Bruce united against Hastings, in maintaining that, the kingdom was indivisible; but each of them, supported by plausible reasons, asserted the preference of his own title. Baliol was sprung from the elder branch: Bruce was one degree nearer the common stock: if the principle of representation was regarded, the former had the better claim: if propinquity was considered, the latter was entitled to the preference. [2]

* Heming. vol. i. . Trivet,

* * Heming. vol. i. .

The sentiments of men were divided: all the nobility had taken part on one side or the other: the people followed implicitly their leaders: the two claimants themselves had great power and numerous retainers in Scotland: and it is no wonder that, among a rude people, more accustomed to arms than inured to laws, a controversy of this nature, which could not be decided by any former precedent among them, and which is capable of exciting commotions in the most legal and best established governments, should threaten the state with the most fatal convulsions.

Each century has its peculiar mode in conducting business; and men, guided more by custom than by reason, follow, without inquiry, the manners which are prevalent in their own time. The practice of that age in controversies between states and princes, seems to have been to choose a foreign prince as an equal arbiter, by whom the question was decided, and whose sentence prevented those dismal confusions and disorders, inseparable at all times from war, but which were multiplied a hundred fold, and dispersed into every corner, by the nature of the feudal governments. It was thus that the English king and barons, in the preceding reign, had endeavored to compose their dissensions by a reference to the king of France; and the celebrated integrity of that monarch had prevented all the bad effects which might naturally have been dreaded from so perilous an expedient. It was thus that the kings of France and Arragon, and afterwards other princes, had submitted their controversies to Edward's judgment; and the remoteness of their states, the great power of the princes, and the little interest which he had on either side, had induced him to acquit himself with honor in his decisions. The parliament of Scotland, therefore, threatened with a furious civil war, and allured by the great reputation of the English monarch, as well as by the present amicable correspondence between the kingdoms, agreed in making a reference to Edward; and Fraser, bishop of St. Andrews, with other deputies, was sent to notify to him their resolution, and to claim his good offices in the present dangers to which they were exposed. [1]

* Heming, vol. i. .

His inclination, they flattered themselves, led him to prevent their dissensions, and to interpose with a power which none of the competitors would dare to withstand: when this expedient was proposed by one party, the other deemed it dangerous to object to it: indifferent persons thought that the imminent perils of a civil war would thereby be prevented; and no one reflected on the ambitious character of Edward, and the almost certain ruin which must attend a small state divided by faction, when it thus implicitly submits itself to the will of so powerful and encroaching a neighbor.

The temptation was too strong for the virtue of the English monarch to resist. He purposed to lay hold of the present favorable opportunity, and if not to create, at least to revive, his claim of a feudal superiority over Scotland; a claim which had hitherto lain in the deepest obscurity, and which, if ever it had been an object of attention, or had been so much as suspected, would have effectually prevented the Scottish barons from choosing him for an umpire. He well knew that, if this pretension were once submitted to, as it seemed difficult in the present situation of Scotland to oppose it, the absolute sovereignty of that kingdom (which had been the case with Wales) would soon follow; and that one great vassal, cooped up in an island with his liege lord, without resource from foreign powers, without aid from any fellow-vassals, could not long maintain his dominions against the efforts of a mighty kingdom, assisted by all the cavils which the feudal law afforded his superior against him. In pursuit of this great object, very advantageous to England, perhaps in the end no less beneficial to Scotland, but extremely unjust and iniquitous in itself, Edward busied himself in searching for proofs of his pretended superiority; and, instead of looking into his own archives, which, if his claim had been real, must have afforded him numerous records of the homages done by the Scottish princes, and could alone yield him any authentic testimony, he made all the monasteries be ransacked for old chronicles and histories written by Englishmen, and he collected all the passages which seemed anywise to favor his pretensions. [1] Yet even in this method of proceeding, which must have discovered to himself the injustice of his claim, he was far from being fortunate. He began his proofs from the time of Edward the Elder, and continued them through all the subsequent Saxon and Norman times; but produced nothing to his purpose. [2]

* Walsing. .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. p, 559.

The whole amount of his authorities during the Saxon period, when stripped of the bombast and inaccurate style of the monkish historians, is, that the Scots had sometimes been defeated by the English, had received peace on disadvantageous terms, had made submissions to the English monarch, and had even perhaps fallen into some dependence on a power which was so much superior, and which they had not at that time sufficient force to resist. His authorities from the Norman period were, if possible, still less conclusive: the historians indeed make frequent mention of homage done by the northern potentate; but no one of them says that it was done for his kingdom; and several of them declare, in express terms that it was relative only to the fiefs which he enjoyed south of the Tweed; [1] in the same manner, as the king of England himself swore fealty to the French monarch, for the fiefs which he inherited in France. And to such scandalous shifts was Edward reduced, that he quotes a passage from Hoveden [2] where it is asserted that a Scottish king had done homage to England; but he purposely omits the latter part of the sentence, which expresses that this prince did homage for the lands which he held in England.

When William, king of Scotland, was taken prisoner in the battle of Alnwick, he was obliged, for the recovery of his liberty, to swear fealty to the victor for his crown itself. The deed was performed according to all the rites of the feudal law: the record was preserved in the English archives, and is mentioned by all the historians: but as it is the only one of the kind, and as historians speak of this superiority as a great acquisition gained by the fortunate arms of Henry II., [3] there can remain no doubt that the kingdom of Scotland was, in all former periods, entirely free and independent. Its subjection continued a very few years: King Richard, desirous, before his departure for the Holy Land, to conciliate the friendship of William, renounced that homage, which, he says in express terms, had been extorted by his father; and he only retained the usual homage which had been done by the Scottish princes for the lands which they held in England.

* Hoveden, , 662. M. Paris, . M. West. .

* * Page 662.

* * * Neubr. lib. ii. ca. Knyghton, .

But though this transaction rendered the independence of Scotland still more unquestionable, than if no fealty had ever been sworn to the English crown, the Scottish kings, apprised of the point aimed at by their powerful neighbors, seem for a long time to have retained some jealousy on that head, and, in doing homage, to have anxiously obviated all such pretensions. When William, in 1200, did homage to John at Lincoln, he was careful to insert a salvo for his royal dignity; [1] when Alexander III. sent assistance to his father-in-law, Henry III., during the wars of the barons, he previously procured an acknowledgment, that this aid was granted only from friendship, not from any right claimed by the English monarch; [2] and when that same prince was invited to assist at the coronation of this very Edward, he declined attendance till he received a like acknowledgment. [3]

But as all these reasons (and stronger could not be produced) were but a feeble rampart against the power of the sword, Edward, carrying with him a great army, which was to enforce his proofs, advanced to the frontiers, and invited the Scottish parliament, and all the competitors, to attend him in the Castle of Norham, a place situated on the southern banks of the Tweed, in order to determine the cause which had been referred to his arbitration. But though this deference seemed due to so great a monarch, and was no more than what his father and the English barons had, in similar circumstances, paid to Lewis IX., the king, careful not to give umbrage, and determined never to produce his claim till it should be too late to think of opposition, sent the Scottish barons an acknowledgment, that, though at that time they passed the frontiers, this step should never be drawn into precedent, or afford the English kings a pretence for exacting a like submission in any future transaction. [4] When the whole Scottish nation had thus unwarily put themselves in his power, Edward opened the conferences at Norham: he informed the parliament, by the mouth of Roger le Brabançon, his chief justiciary, that he was come thither to determine the right among the competitors to their crown; that he was determined to do strict justice to all parties; and that he was entitled to this authority, not in virtue of the reference made to him, but in quality of superior and liege lord of the kingdom. [5]

* Hoveden, .

* * Rymer, vol. ii p 844.

* * * See note A. at the end of the volume.

* * * * Rymer, vol. ii. , 845. Walsing. .

He then produced his proofs of this superiority, which he pretended to be unquestionable, and he required of them an acknowledgment of it; a demand which was superfluous if the fact were already known and avowed, and which plainly betrays Edward’s consciousness of his lame and defective title. The Scottish parliament was astonished at so new a pretension, and answered only by their silence. But the king, in order to maintain the appearance of free and regular proceedings, desired them to remove into their own country, to deliberate upon his claim, to examine his proofs, to propose all their objections, and to inform him of their resolution; and he appointed a plain at Upsettleton, on the northern banks of the Tweed, for that purpose.

When the Scottish barons assembled in this place, though moved with indignation at the injustice of this unexpected claim, and at the fraud with which it had been conducted, they found themselves betrayed into a situation in which it was impossible for them to make any defence for the ancient liberty and independence of their country. The king of England, a martial and politic prince, at the head of a powerful army, lay at a very small distance, and was only separated from them by a river fordable in many places. Though, by a sudden flight, some of them might themselves be, able to make their escape, what hopes could they entertain of securing the kingdom against his future enterprises? Without a head, without union among themselves, attached all of them to different competitors, whose title they had rashly submitted to the decision of this foreign usurper, and who were thereby reduced to an absolute dependence upon him, they could only expect by resistance to entail on themselves and their posterity a more grievous and more destructive servitude. Yet even in this desperate state of their affairs the Scottish barons, as we learn from Walsingham, [1] one of the best historians of that period, had the courage to reply that, till they had a king, they could take no resolution on so momentous a point: the journal of King Edward says, that they made no answer at all; [2] that is, perhaps, no particular answer or objection to Edward’s claim: and by this solution it is possible to reconcile the journal with the historian. The king, therefore, interpreting their silence as consent, addressed himself to the several competitors.

* Page 56. M. West. . It is said by Hemingford, vol. i, , that the king menaced violently the Scotch barons, and forced them to compliance, at least to silence.

* * Rymer, vol. ii. . previously to his pronouncing sentence, required their acknowledgment of his superiority.

It is evident from the genealogy of the royal family of Scotland, that there could only be two questions about the succession — that between Baliol and Bruce on the one hand, and Lord Hastings on the other, concerning the partition of the crown: and that between Baliol and Bruce themselves concerning the preference of their respective titles, supposing the kingdom indivisible: yet there appeared on this occasion no less than nine claimants besides; John Comyn or Cummin, lord of Badenoch, Florence, earl of Holland, Patric Dunbar, earl of March, William de Vescey, Robert de Pynkeni, Nicholas de Soules, Patric Galythly, Roger de Mandeville, Robert de Ross; not to mention the king of Norway, who claimed as heir to his daughter Margaret. [1] Some of these competitors were descended from more remote branches of the royal family; others were even sprung from illegitimate children; and as none of them had the least pretence of right, it is natural to conjecture that Edward had secretly encouraged them to appear in the list of claimants, that he might sow the more division among the Scottish nobility, make the cause appear the more intricate, and be able to choose, among a great number, the most obsequious candidate.

But he found them all equally obsequious on this occasion. [2] Robert Bruce was the first that acknowledged Edward’s right of superiority over Scotland; and he had so far foreseen the king’s pretensions, that even in his petition, where he set forth his claim to the crown, he had previously applied to him as liege lord of the kingdom; a step which was not taken by any of the other competitors. [3] They all, however, with seeming willingness, made a like acknowledgment when required; though Baliol, lest he should give offence to the Scottish nation, had taken care to be absent during the first days; and he was the last that recognized the king’s title. [4]

* Walsing. .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. , 545. Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. 33, 34. Trivet, . M. West. .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. , 578, 579.

* * * * Rymer, vol. ii. .

Edward next deliberated concerning the method of proceeding in the discussion of this great controversy. He gave orders that Baliol, and such of the competitors as adhered to him should choose forty commissioners; Bruce and his adherents forty more: to these the king added twenty-four Englishmen: he ordered these hundred and four commissioners to examine the cause deliberately among themselves, and make their report to him: [1] and he promised in the ensuing year to give his determination. Meanwhile he pretended that it was requisite to have all the fortresses of Scotland delivered into his hands, in order to enable him, without opposition, to put the true heir in possession of the crown; and this exorbitant demand was complied with, both by the states and by the claimants. [2] The governors also of all the castles immediately resigned their command; except Umfreville, earl of Angus, who refused, without a formal and particular acquittal from the parliament and the several claimants, to surrender his fortresses to so domineering an arbiter, who had given to Scotland so many just reasons of suspicion. [3] Before this assembly broke up, which had fixed such a mark of dishonor on the nation, all the prelates and barons there present swore fealty to Edward; and that prince appointed commissioners to receive a like oath from all the other barons and persons of distinction in Scotland. [4]

* Rymer, vol. ii. , 556.

* * Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. , 57.

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. .

* * * * Rymer, vol. ii .

The king, having finally made, as he imagined, this important acquisition, left the commissioners to sit at Berwick, and examine the titles of the several competitors who claimed the precarious crown, which Edward was willing for some time to allow the lawful heir to enjoy. He went southwards, both in order to assist at the funeral of his mother, Queen Eleanor, who died about this time, and to compose some differences which had arisen among his principal nobility. Gilbert, earl of Glocester, the greatest baron of the kingdom, had espoused the king’s daughter; and being elated by that alliance, and still more by his own power, which, he thought, set him above the laws, he permitted his bailiffs and vassals to commit violence on the lands of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, who retaliated the injury by like violence. But this was not a reign in which such illegal proceedings could pass with impunity. Edward procured a sentence against the two earls, committed them both to prison, and would not restore them to their liberty, till he had exacted a fine of one thousand marks from Hereford, and one of ten thousand from his son-in-law.

1292.

During this interval, the titles of John Baliol and of Robert Bruce, whose claims appeared to be the best founded among the competitors for the crown of Scotland, were the subject of general disquisition, as well as of debate among the commissioners. Edward, in order to give greater authority to his intended decision, proposed this general question both to the commissioners and to all the celebrated lawyers in Europe, “Whether a person descended from the elder sister, but farther removed by one degree, were preferable, in the succession of kingdoms, fiefs, and other indivisible inheritances, to one descended from the younger sister, but one degree nearer to the common stock?” This was the true state of the case; and the principle of representation had now gained such ground every where, that a uniform answer was returned to the king in the affirmative. He therefore pronounced sentence in favor of Balioi; and when Bruce, upon this disappointment, joined afterwards Lord Hastings, and claimed a third of the kingdom, which he now pretended to be divisible, Edward, though his interests seemed more to require the partition of Scotland, again pronounced sentence in favor of Baliol. That competitor, upon renewing his oath of fealty to England, was put in possession of the kingdom; [1] all his fortresses were restored to him; [2] and the conduct of Edward, both in the deliberate solemnity of the proceedings, and in the justice of the award, was so far unexceptionable.

1293.

Had the king entertained no other view than that of establishing his superiority over Scotland, though the iniquity of that claim was apparent, and was aggravated by the most egregious breach of trust, he might have fixed his pretensions, and have left that important acquisition to his posterity: but he immediately proceeded in such a manner as made it evident that, not content with this usurpation, he aimed also at the absolute sovereignty and dominion of the kingdom. Instead of gradually inuring the Scots to the yoke, and exerting his rights of superiority with moderation, he encouraged all appeals to England; required King John himself, by six different summons on trivial occasions, to come to London; [3] refused him the privilege of defending his cause by a procurator; and obliged him to appear at the bar of his parliament as a private person. [4]

These humiliating demands were hitherto quite unknown to a king of Scotland: they are, however, the necessary consequence of vassalage by the feudal law; and as there was no preceding instance of such treatment submitted to by a prince of that country, Edward must, from that circumstance alone, had there remained any doubt, have been himself convinced that his claim was altogether a usurpation. [1] But his intention plainly was to enrage Baliol by these indignities, to engage him in rebellion, and to assume the dominion of the state as the punishment of his treason and felony. Accordingly Baliol, though a prince of a soft and gentle spirit,

* Rymer vol. ii. , 591, 593, 600.

* * Rymer, voL ii .

* * * Rymer, , 605, 606, 608, 615, 616.

* * * * Ryley’s Placit. Parl. , 153.

returned into Scotland highly provoked at this usage, and determined at all hazards to vindicate his liberty; and the war which soon after broke out between France and England, gave him a favorable opportunity of executing his purpose.

The violence, robberies, and disorders, to which that age was so subject, were not confined to the licentious barons and their retainers at land: the sea was equally infested with piracy: the feeble execution of the laws had given license to all orders of men: and a general appetite for rapine and revenge, supported by a false point of honor, had also infected the merchants and mariners; and it pushed them, on any provocation, to seek redress by immediate retaliation upon the aggressors. A Norman and an English vessel met off the coast near Bayonne; and both of them having occasion for water, they sent their boats to land, and the several crews came at the same time to the same spring: there ensued a quarrel for the preference: a Norman, drawing his dagger, attempted to stab an Englishman; who, grappling with him, threw his adversary on the ground; and the Norman, as was pretended, falling on his own dagger, was slain. [2] This scuffle between two seamen about water, soon kindled a bloody war between the two nations, and involved a great part of Europe in the quarrel. The mariners of the Norman ship carried their complaints to the French king: Philip, without inquiring into the fact, without demanding redress, bade them take revenge, and trouble him no more about the matter. [3]

* See note C, at the end of the volume.

* * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. .

* * * Walsing. .

The Normans, who had been more regular than usual in applying to the crown, needed but this hint to proceed to immediate violence. They seized an English ship in the channel; and hanging, along with some dogs, several of the crew on the yard-arm, in presence of their companions, dismissed the vessel; [1] and bade the mariners inform their countrymen that vengeance was now taken for the blood of the Norman killed at Bayonne. This injury, accompanied with so general and deliberate an insult, was resented by the mariners of the cinque ports, who, without carrying any complaint to the king, or waiting for redress, retaliated by committing like barbarities on all French vessels without distinction. The French, provoked by their losses, preyed on the ships of all Edward’s subjects, whether English or Gascon: the sea became a scene of piracy between the nations: the sovereigns, without either seconding or repressing the violence of their subjects, seemed to remain indifferent spectators: the English made private associations with the Irish and Dutch seamen; the French with the Flemish and Genoese; [2] and the animosities of the people on both sides became every day more violent and barbarous. A fleet of two hundred Norman vessels set sail to the south for wine and other commodities; and in their passage seized all the English ships which they met with, hanged the seamen, and seized the goods. The inhabitants of the English seaports, informed of this incident, fitted out a fleet of sixty sail, stronger and better manned than the others, and awaited the enemy on their return. After an obstinate battle, they put them to rout, and sunk, destroyed, or took the greater part of them. [3] No quarter was given; and it is pretended that the loss of the French amounted to fifteen thousand men; which is accounted for by this circumstance, that the Norman fleet was employed in transporting a considerable body of soldiers from the south.

The affair was now become too important to be any longer overlooked by the sovereigns. On Philip’s sending an envoy to demand reparation and restitution, the king despatched the bishop of London to the French court, in order to accommodate the quarrel. He first said, that the English courts of justice were open to all men; and if any Frenchman were injured, he might seek reparation by course of law. [4]

He next offered to adjust the matter by private arbiters, or by a personal interview with the king of France, or by a reference either to the pope, or

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* Heming. vol. i. . M. West. .

* * Heming. vol. i. .

* * * Walsing. . Trivet, p 274. Chron. Dunst vol. ii. p 609.

* * * * Trivet, .

the college of cardinals, or any particular cardinals, agreed on by both parties. [1] The French, probably the more disgusted, as they were hitherto losers in the quarrel, refused all these expedients: the vessels and the goods of merchants were confiscated on both sides: depredations were continued by the Gascons on the western coast of France, as well as by the English in the Channel: Philip cited the king, as duke of Guienne, to appear in his court at Paris, and answer for these offences; and Edward, apprehensive of danger to that province, sent John St. John, an experienced soldier, to Bordeaux, and gave him directions to put Guienne in a posture of defence. [2]

1294.

That he might, however, prevent a final rupture between the nations, the king despatched his brother, Edmond, earl of Lancaster, to Paris; and as this prince had espoused the queen of Navarre, mother to Jane, queen of France, he seemed, on account of that alliance, the most proper person for finding expedients to accommodate the difference. Jane pretended to interpose with her good offices: Mary, the queen dowager, feigned the same amicable disposition: and these two princesses told Edmond, that the circumstance the most difficult to adjust was the point of honor with Philip, who thought himself affronted by the injuries committed against him by his sub-vassals in Guienne; but if Edward would once consent to give him seizin and possession of that province, he would think his honor fully repaired, would engage to restore Guienne immediately, and would accept of a very easy satisfaction for all the other injuries. The king was consulted on the occasion; and as he then found himself in immediate danger of war with the Scots, which he regarded as the more important concern, this politic prince, blinded by his favorite passion for subduing that nation, allowed himself to be deceived by so gross an artifice. [3] He sent his brother orders to sign and execute the treaty with the two queens; Philip solemnly promised to execute his part of it; and the king's citation to appear in the court of France, was accordingly recalled; but the French monarch was no sooner put in possession of Guienne, than the citation was renewed; Edward was condemned for non-appearance; and Guienne, by a formal sentence, was declared to be forfeited and annexed to the crown. [4]

* Trivet, .

* * Trivet, .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. , 620. Walsing. . Heming. vol. i , 43. Trivet, .

* * * * Rymer vol. ii , 622. Walsing. . Trivet, .

Edward, fallen into a like snare with that which he himself had spread for the Scots, was enraged; and the more so, as he was justly ashamed of his own conduct, in being so egregiously overreached by the court of France. Sensible of the extreme difficulties which he should encounter in the recovery of Gascony, where he had not retained a single place in his hands, he endeavored to compensate that loss by forming alliances with several princes, who, he projected, should attack France on all quarters, and make a diversion of her forces. Adolphus de Nassau, king of the Romans, entered into a treaty with him for that purpose; [1] as did also Amadæus, count of Savoy, the archbishop of Cologne, the counts of Gueldre and Luxembourg; the duke of Brabant and count of Barre, who had married his two daughters, Margaret and Eleanor: but these alliances were extremely burdensome to his narrow revenues, and proved in the issue entirely ineffectual. More impression was made on Guienne by an English army, which he completed by emptying the jails of many thousand thieves and robbers, who had been confined there for their crimes. So low had the profession of arms fallen, and so much had it degenerated from the estimation in which it stood during the vigor of the feudal system!

1295.

The king himself was detained in England, first by contrary winds, [2] then by his apprehensions of a Scottish invasion, and by a rebellion of the Welsh, whom he repressed and brought again under subjection. [3] The army which he sent to Guienne, was commanded by his nephew, John de Bretagne, earl of Richmond, and under him by St. John, Tibetot, De Vere, and other officers of reputation; [4] who made themselves masters of the town of Bayonne, as well as of Bourg, Blaye, Reole, St. Severe, and other places, which straitened Bordeaux, and cut off its communication both by sea and land.

* Heming. vol, i. .

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. .

* * * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, . Chron Dunst. vol. ii. .

* * * * Trivet, .

The favor which the Gascon nobility bore to the English government facilitated these conquests, and seemed to promise still greater successes; but this advantage was soon lost by the misconduct of some of the officers. Philip’s brother, Charles de Valois, who commanded the French armies, having laid siege to Podensac, a small fortress near Reole, obliged Giffard, the governor, to capitulate; and the articles though favorable to the English, left all the Gascons prisoners at discretion, of whom about fifty were hanged by Charles as rebels; a policy by which he both intimidated that people, and produced an irreparable breach between them and the English. [1] That prince immediately attacked Reole, where the earl of Richmond himself commanded; and as the place seemed not tenable, the English general drew his troops to the water side, with an intention of embarking with the greater part of the army. The enraged Gascons fell upon his rear, and at the same time opened their gates to the French, who, besides making themselves masters of the place, took many prisoners of distinction. St. Severe was more vigorously defended by Hugh de Vere, son of the earl of Oxford; but was at last obliged to capitulate. The French king, not content with these successes in Gascony, threatened England with an invasion; and, by a sudden attempt, his troops took and burnt Dover, [2] but were obliged soon after to retire. And in order to make a greater diversion of the English force, and engage Edward in dangerous and important wars, he formed a secret alliance with John Baliol, king of Scotland; the commencement of that strict union which, during so many centuries, was maintained, by mutual interests and necessities, between the French and Scottish nations.

John confirmed this alliance by stipulating a marriage between his eldest son and the daughter of Charles de Valois. [3]

* Heming. vol. i. .

* * Trivet, . Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. , 681, 695, 697. Heming. vol. i. p. 76. Trivet, i, 285.

The expenses attending these multiplied wars of Edward, and his preparations for war, joined to alterations which had insensibly taken place in the general state of affairs, obliged him to have frequent recourse to parliamentary supplies, introduced the lower orders of the state into the public councils, and laid the foundations of great and important changes in the government.

Though nothing could be worse calculated for cultivating the arts of peace, or maintaining peace itself, than the long subordination of vassalage from the king to the meanest gentleman, and the consequent slavery of the lower people, evils inseparable from the feudal system, that system was never able to fix the state in a proper warlike posture, or give it the full exertion of its power for defence, and still less for offence, against a public enemy. The military tenants, unacquainted with obedience, unexperienced in war, held a rank in the troops by their birth, not by their merits or services; composed a disorderly and consequently a feeble army; and during the few days which they were obliged by their tenures to remain in the field, were often more formidable to their own prince than to foreign powers, against whom they were assembled. The sovereigns came gradually to disuse this cumbersome and dangerous machine, so apt to recoil upon the hand which held it; and exchanging the military service for pecuniary supplies, enlisted forces by means of a contract with particular officers, (such as those the Italians denominate “condottieri,”) whom they dismissed at the end of the war. [1] The barons and knights themselves often entered into these engagements with the prince; and were enabled to fill their bands, both by the authority which they possessed over their vassals and tenants, and from the great numbers of loose, disorderly people whom they found on their estates, and who willingly embraced an opportunity of gratifying their appetite for war and rapine.

Meanwhile the old Gothic fabric, being neglected, went gradually to decay. Though the Conqueror had divided all the lands of England into sixty thousand knights' fees, the number of these was insensibly diminished by various artifices; and the king at last found that, by putting the law in execution, he could assemble a small part only of the ancient force of the kingdom. It was a usual expedient for men who held of the king or great barons by military tenure, to transfer their land to the church, and receive it back by another tenure, called frankalmoigne, by which they were not bound to per form any service. [2] A law was made against this practice; but the abuse had probably gone far before it was attended to, and probably was not entirely corrected by the new statute, which, like most laws of that age, we may conjecture to have been but feebly executed by the magistrate against the perpetual interest of so many individuals. The constable and mareschal, when they mustered the armies, often in a hurry, and for want of better information, received the service of a baron for fewer knights' fees than were due by him; and one precedent of this kind was held good against the king, and became ever after a reason for diminishing the service. [3]

* Cotton's Abr. .

* * Madox, Baronia Anglica, .

* * * Madox, Bar. Ang. p 115.

The rolls of knights' fees were inaccurately kept; no care was taken to correct them before the armies were summoned into the field, [1] it was then too late to think of examining records and charters; and the service was accepted on the footing which the vassal himself was pleased to acknowledge, after all the various subdivisions and conjunctions of property had thrown an obscurity on the nature and extent of his tenure. [2] It is easy to judge of the intricacies which would attend disputes of this kind with individuals; when even the number of military fees belonging to the church, whose property way fixed and unalienable, became the subject of controversy; and we find in particular, that when the bishop of Durham was charged with seventy knights' fees for the aid levied on occasion of the marriage of Henry II.'s daughter to the duke of Saxony, the prelate acknowledged ten, and disowned the other sixty. [3] It is not known in what mariner this difference was terminated; but had the question been concerning an armament to defend the kingdom, the bishop’s service would probably have been received without opposition for ten fees; and this rate must also have fixed all his future payments. Pecuniary scutages, therefore, diminished as much as military services; [4] other methods of filling the exchequer, as well as the armies, must be devised: new situations produced new laws and institutions; and the great alterations in the finances and military power of the crown, as well as in private property, were the source of equal innovations in every part of the legislature or civil government.

* We hear only of one king, Henry II., who took this pains; and the record, called Liber Niger Scaccarii, was the result of it.

* * Madox, Bar. Ang. .

* * * Madox, . Hist. of the Exch. .

* * * * In order to pay the sum of one hundred thousand marks, as King Richard’s ransom, twenty shillings were imposed on each knight’s fee. Had the fees remained on the original footing,

as settled by the Conqueror, this scutage would have amounted to ninety thousand marks, which was nearly the sum required; but we find that other grievous taxes were imposed to complete it; a certain proof that many frauds and abuses had prevailed in the roll of knights fees.

The exorbitant estates conferred by the Norman on his barons and chieftains, remained not long entire and unimpaired. The landed property was gradually shared out into more hands; and those immense baronies were divided, either by provisions to younger children, by partitions among co-heirs, by sale, or by escheating to the king, who gratified a great number of his courtiers by dealing them out among them in smaller portions. Such moderate estates, as they required economy, and confined the proprietors to live at home, were better calculated for duration; and the order of knights and small barons grew daily more numerous, and began to form a very respectable rank or order in the state. As they were all immediate vassals of the crown by military tenure, they were, by the principles of the feudal law, equally entitled with the greatest barons to a seat in the national or general councils; and this right, though regarded as a privilege which the owners would not entirely relinquish, was also considered as a burden which they desired to be subjected to on extraordinary occasions only. Hence it was provided in the charter of King John, that, while the great barons were summoned to the national council by a particular writ, the small barons, under which appellation the knights were also comprehended, should only be called by a general summons of the sheriff. The distinction between great and small barons, like that between rich and poor, was not exactly defined; but, agreeably to the inaccurate genius of that age, and to the simplicity of ancient government, was left very much to be determined by the discretion of the king and his ministers. It was usual for the prince to require, by a particular summons, the attendance of a baron in one parliament, and to neglect him in future parliaments; [1] nor was this uncertainty ever complained of as an injury. He attended when required: he was better pleased on other occasions to be exempted from the burden: and as he was acknowledged to be of the same order with the greatest barons, it gave them no surprise to see him take his seat in the great council, whether he appeared of his own accord, or by a particular summons from the king. The barons by writ, therefore, began gradually to intermix themselves with the barons by tenure; and, as Camden tells us, [2] from an ancient manuscript now lost, that after the battle of Evesham, a positive law was enacted, prohibiting every baron from appearing in parliament, who was not invited thither by a particular summons, the whole baronage of England held thenceforward their seat by writ, and this important privilege of their tenures was in effect abolished. Only where writs had been regularly continued for some time in one great family, the omission of them would have been regarded as an affront, and even as an injury.

* Chancellor West’s Inquiry into the Manner of creating Peers , 46, 47, 55.

* * In Britain. p 122.

A like alteration gradually took place in the order of earls who were the highest rank of barons. The dignity of an earl, like that of a baron, was anciently territorial and official: [1] he exercised jurisdiction within his county: he levied the third of the fines to his own profit: he was at once a civil and a military magistrate: and though his authority, from the time of the Norman conquest, was hereditary in England, the title was so much connected with the office, that where the king intended to create a new earl, he had no other expedient than to erect a certain territory into a county or earldom, and to bestow it upon the person and his family. [2] But as the sheriffs, who were the vicegerents of the earls, were named by the king, and removable at pleasure, he found them more dependent upon him; and endeavored to throw the whole authority and jurisdiction of the office into their hands. This magistrate was at the head of the finances, and levied all the king's rents within the county: he assessed at pleasure the talliages of the inhabitants in royal demesne: he had usually committed to him the management of wards, and often of escheats: he presided in the lower courts of judicature: and thus, though inferior to the earl in dignity, he was soon considered, by this union of the judicial and fiscal powers, and by the confidence reposed in him by the king, as much superior to him in authority, and undermined his influence within his own jurisdiction. [3] It became usual, in creating an earl, to give him a fixed salary, commonly about twenty pounds a year, in lieu of his third of the fines: the diminution of his power kept pace with the retrenchment of his profit: and the dignity of earl, instead of being territorial and official, dwindled into personal and titular. Such were the mighty alterations which already had fully taken place, or were gradually advancing, in the house of peers; that is, in the parliament: for there seems anciently to have been no other house.

* Spel. Gloss, in voce Comes.

* * Essays on British Antiquities. This practice, however, seems to have been more familiar in Scotland and the kingdoms on the continent, than in England.

* * * There are instances of princes of the blood who accepted of the office of sheriff. Spel. in voce Vicecomes.

But though the introduction of barons by writ, and of titular earls, had given some increase to royal authority, there were other causes which counterbalanced those innovations, and tended in a higher degree to diminish the power of the sovereign. The disuse into which the feudal militia had in a great measure fallen made the barons almost entirely forget their dependence on the crown: by the diminution of the number of knights' fees the king had no reasonable compensation when he levied scutages, and exchanged their service for money: the alienations of the crown lands had reduced him to poverty: and above all, the concession of the Great Charter had set bounds to royal power, and had rendered it more difficult and dangerous for the prince to exert any extraordinary act of arbitrary authority. In this situation it was natural for the king to court the friendship of the lesser barons and knights, whose influence was no ways dangerous to him, and who, being exposed to oppression from their powerful neighbors, sought a legal protection under the shadow of the throne. He desired, therefore, to have their presence in parliament, where they served to control the turbulent resolutions of the great. To exact a regular attendance of the whole body would have produced confusion, and would have imposed too heavy a burden upon them. To summon only a few by writ, though it was practised and had a good effect, served not entirely the king's purpose; because these members had no further authority than attended their personal character, and were eclipsed by the appearance of the more powerful nobility, He therefore dispensed with the attendance of most of the lesser barons in parliament; and in return for this indulgence (for such it was then esteemed) required them to choose in each county a certain number of their own body, whose charges they bore, and who, having gained the confidence, carried with them, of course, the authority of the whole order. This expedient had been practised at different times in the reign of Henry III., [1] and regularly during that of the present king. The numbers sent up by each county varied at the will of the prince: [2] they took their seat among the other peers; because by their tenure they belonged to that order: [3] the introducing of them into that house scarcely appeared an innovation: and though it was easily in the king's power, by varying their number, to command the resolutions of the whole parliament this circumstance was little attended to in an age when force was more prevalent than laws, and when a resolution, though taken by the majority of a legal assembly, could not be executed, if it opposed the will of the more powerful minority.

*Rot. Glaus. 38. Hen. III. p. and 12. d.; as also Ret. Claus 12 Hen. III. m. 1. d. Prynne's Pref. to Cotton's Abridgment.

* * Brady's Answer to Petyt, from the records, p 151.

* * * Brady's Treatise of Boroughs, App. No. 13.

But there were other important consequences, which followed the diminution and consequent disuse of the ancient feudal militia. The king’s expense in levying and maintaining a military force for every enterprise, was increased beyond what his narrow revenues were able to bear: as the scutages of his military tenants, which were accepted in lieu of their personal service, had fallen to nothing, there were no means of supply but from voluntary aids granted him by the parliament and clergy, or from the talliages which he might levy upon the towns and inhabitants in royal demesne. In the preceding year, Edward had been obliged to exact no less than the sixth of all movables from the laity, and a moiety of all ecclesiastical benefices [1] for his expedition into Poictou, and the suppression of the Welsh: and this distressful situation which was likely often to return upon him and his successors, made him think of a new device, and summon the representatives of all the boroughs to parliament. This period, which is the twenty-third of his reign, seems to be the real and true epoch of the house of commons, and the faint dawn of popular government in England. For the representatives of the counties were only deputies from the smaller barons and lesser nobility; and the former precedent of representatives from the boroughs, who were summoned by the earl of Leicester, was regarded as the act of a violent usurpation, had beer, discontinued in all the subsequent parliaments; and if such a measure had not become necessary on other accounts, that precedent was more likely to blast than give credit to it.

* Brady’s Treatise of Boroughs, , from the records. Heming vol. i. . M. West. . Ryley,

During the course of several years, the kings of England, in imitation of other European princes, had embraced the salutary policy of encouraging and protecting the lower and more industrious orders of the state; whom they found well disposed to obey the laws and civil magistrate, and whose ingenuity and labor furnish commodities requisite for the ornament of peace and support of war. Though the inhabitants of the country were still left at the disposal of their imperious lords, many attempts were made to give more security and liberty to citizens, and make them enjoy unmolested the fruits of their industry. Boroughs were erected by royal patent within the demesne lands; liberty of trade was conferred upon them; the inhabitants were allowed to farm, at a fixed rent, their own tolls and customs, [1] they were permitted to elect their own magistrates; justice was administered to them by these magistrates, without obliging them to attend the sheriff or county court: and some shadow of independence, by means of these equitable privileges, was gradually acquired by the people. [2] The king, however, retained still the power of levying talliage or taxes upon them at pleasure; [3] and though their poverty and the customs of the age made these demands neither frequent or exorbitant, such unlimited authority in the sovereign was a sensible check upon commerce, and was utterly incompatible with all the principles of a free government. But when the multiplied necessities of the crown produced a greater avidity for supply, the king, whose prerogative entitled him to exact it, found that he had not power sufficient to enforce his edicts, and that it was necessary, before he imposed taxes, to smooth the way for his demand, and to obtain the previous consent of the boroughs, by solicitations, remonstrances, and authority. The inconvenience of transacting this business with every particular borough was soon felt; and Edward became sensible, that the most expeditious way of obtaining supply, was to assemble the deputies of all the boroughs, to lay before them the necessities of the state, to discuss the matter in their presence, and to require their consent to the demands of their sovereign, For this reason, he issued writs to the sheriffs, enjoining them to send to parliament, along with two knights of the shire two deputies from each borough within their county, [4] and these provided with sufficient powers from their community to consent, in their name, to what he and his council should require of them.

* Madox, Firma Burgi, .

* * Brady of Boroughs, App. No. I, 2, 3.

* * * The king had not only the power of talliating the inhabitants within his own demosnes, but that of granting to particular barons the power of talliating the inhabitants within theirs. See Brady's Answer to Petyt, . Madox,
Hist, of the Exch. .

* * * Writs were issued to about one hundred and twenty cities and boroughs.

"As it is a most equitable rule," says he, in his preamble to this writ, "that what concerns all should be approved of by all; and common dangers be repelled by united efforts;” [1] a noble principle, which may seem to indicate a liberal mind in the king, and which laid the foundation of a free and an equitable government.

After the election of these deputies by the aldermen and common council, they gave sureties for their attendance before the king and parliament: their charges were respectively borne by the borough which sent them; and they had so little idea of appearing as legislators, — a character extremely wide of their low rank and condition, [2] — that no intelligence could be more disagreeable to any borough, than to find that they must elect, or to any individual than that he was elected, to a trust from which no profit or honor could possibly be derived. [3] They composed not, properly speaking, any essential part of the parliament: they sat apart both from the barons and knights, [4] who disdained to mix with such mean personages: after they had given their consent to the taxes required of them, their business being then finished, they separated, even though the parliament still continued to sit, and to canvass the national business. [5] And as they all consisted of men who were real burgesses of the place from which they were sent, the sheriff, when he found no person of abilities or wealth sufficient for the office, often used the freedom of omitting particular boroughs in his returns; and as he received the thanks of the people for this indulgence, he gave no displeasure to the court, who levied on all the boroughs, without distinction, the tax agreed to by the majority of deputies. [6]

* Brady of Boroughs, , 33, from the records. The writs of the parliament immediately preceding, remain: and the return of knights is there required, but not a word of the boroughs: a demonstration that this was the very year in which they commenced. In the year immediately preceding, the taxes were levied by a seeming free consent of each particular borough, beginning with London. Brady of Boroughs, , 32, 33, from the records. Also his Answer to Petyt, , 41.

* * Reiiquia Spel. . Prynne’s Pref. to Cotton’s Abridg. and the Abridg. passim.

* * * Brady of Boroughs, , 60.

* * * * Brady of Boroughs, , 38, from the records, and Append. . Also his Append, to his Answer to Petyt, Record. And his gloss. in verb. Communitas regn. .

Abridg. .

* * * * * * Bradv of Boroughs, , from the records. There is even an instance in the reign of Edward III., when the king named all the deputies. Brady's Answer to Petyt, . If he fairly named the most considerable and creditable burgesses, little exception would be taken; as their business was not to check the king, but to reason with him,

and consent to his demands. It was not till the reign of Richard II. that the sheriffs were deprived of the power of omitting boroughs at pleasure. See Stat. at large, 5th Richard II. cap. iv.

The union, however, of the representatives from the boroughs gave gradually more weight to the whole order; and it became customary for them, in return for the supplies which they granted, to prefer petitions to the crown for the redress of any particular grievance, of which they found reason to complain. The more the king's demands multiplied, the faster these petitions increased both in number and authority; and the prince found it difficult to refuse men whose grants had supported his throne, and to whose assistance he might so soon be again obliged to have recourse. The commons, however, were still much below the rank of legislators. [1] Their petitions, though they received a verbal assent from the throne, were only the rudiments of laws: the judges were afterwards intrusted with the power of putting them into form. and the king, by adding to them the sanction of his authority, and that sometimes without the assent of the nobles, bestowed validity upon them. The age did not refine so much as to perceive the danger of these irregularities. No man was displeased that the sovereign, at the desire of any class of men, should issue an order which appeared only to concern that class; and his predecessors were so near possessing the whole legislative power, that he gave no disgust by assuming it in this seemingly inoffensive manner. But time and further experience gradually opened men's eyes, and corrected these abuses. It was found that no laws could be fixed for one order of men without affecting the whole; and that the force and efficacy of laws depended entirely on the terms employed in wording them. The house of peers, therefore, the most powerful order in the state, with reason, expected that their assent should be expressly granted to all public ordinances: [2]

* See note D, at the end of the volume.

* * In those instances found in Cotton's Abridgment, where the king appears to answer of himself the petitions of the commons, he probably exerted no more than that power, which was long

inherent in the crown, of regulating matters by royal edicts or proclamations.

But no durable or general statute seems ever to have been made by the king from the petition of the commons alone, without the assent of the peers. It is more likely that the peers alone without the commons, would enact statutes, and in the reign of Henry V., the commons required, that no laws should be framed merely upon their petitions, unless the statutes were worded by themselves, and had passed their house in the form of a bill. [1]

But as the same causes which had produced a partition of property continued still to operate, the number of knights and lesser barons, or what the English call the gentry, perpetually increased, and they sunk into a rank still more inferior to the great nobility. The equality of tenure was lost in the great inferiority of power and property; and the house of representatives from the counties was gradually separated from that of the peers, and formed a distinct order in the state. [2] The growth of commerce, meanwhile, augmented the private wealth and consideration of the burgesses; the frequent demands of the crown increased their public importance; and as they resembled the knights of shires in one material circumstance, that of representing particular bodies of men, it no longer appeared unsuitable to unite them together in the same house, and to confound their rights and privileges. [3] Thus the third estate that of the commons, reached at last its present form; and as the country gentlemen made thenceforwards no scruple of appearing as deputies from the boroughs, the distinction between the members was entirely lost, and the lower house acquired thence a great accession of weight and importance in the kingdom. Still, however, the office of this estate was very different from that which it has since exercised with so much advantage to the public. Instead of checking and controlling the authority of the king, they were naturally induced to adhere to him, as the great fountain of law and justice, and to support him against the power of the aristocracy, which at once was the source of oppression to themselves, and disturbed him in the execution of the laws. The king, in his turn, gave countenance to an order of men so useful and so little dangerous: the peers also were obliged to pay them some consideration: and by this means the third estate, formerly so abject in England, as well as in all other European nations, rose by slow degrees to their present importance; and in their progress made arts and commerce, the necessary attendants of liberty and equality, flourish in the kingdom. [4]

* Brady’s Answer to Petyt, , from the records.

* * Cotton’s Abridgment, .

* * * See note E, at the end of the volume.

* * * * See note F, at the end of the volume.

What sufficiently proves that the commencement of the house of burgesses, who are the true commons, was not an affair of chance, but arose from the necessities of the present situation, is, that Edward, at the very same time, summoned deputies from the inferior clergy, the first that ever met in England, [1] and he required them to impose taxes on their constituents for the public service. Formerly the ecclesiastical benefices bore no part of the burdens of the state: the pope indeed of late had often levied impositions upon them: he had sometimes granted this power to the sovereign: [2] the king himself had in the preceding year exacted, by menaces and violence, a very grievous tax of half the revenues of the clergy: but as this precedent was dangerous, and could not easily be repeated in a government which required the consent of the subject to any extraordinary resolution, Edward found it more prudent to assemble a lower house of convocation, to lay before them his necessities, and to ask some supply. But on this occasion he met with difficulties. Whether that the clergy thought themselves the most independent body in the kingdom, or were disgusted by the former exorbitant impositions, they absolutely refused their assent to the king’s demand of a fifth of their movables; and it was not till a second meeting that, on their persisting in this refusal, he was willing to accept of a tenth. The barons and knights granted him, without hesitation, an eleventh; the burgesses, a seventh. But the clergy still scrupled to meet on the king’s writ, lest by such an instance of obedience they should seem to acknowledge the authority of the temporal power: and this compromise was at last fallen upon, that the king should issue his writ to the archbishop; and that the archbishop should, in consequence of it, summon the clergy, who, as they then appeared to obey their spiritual superior, no longer hesitated to meet in convocation. This expedient, however, was the cause why the ecclesiastics were separated into two houses of convocation, under their several archbishops, and formed not one estate, as in other countries of Europe; which was at first the king’s intention. [3] We now return to the course of our narration.

* Archbishop Wake’s State of the Church of England, Brady of Burroughs, . Gilbert’s Hist, of the Buch. p 46.

* * Ann. Waverl. , 228. T. Wykes, , 120.

* * * Gilbert’s Hist, of the Buch. p 51, 54.

Edward, conscious of the reasons of disgust which he had given to the king of Scots, informed of thu dispositions of that people, and expecting the most violent effects of their resentment, which he knew he had so well merited, employed the supplies granted him by his people in making preparations against the hostilities of his northern neighbor. When in this situation, he received intelligence of the treaty secretly concluded between John and Philip; and though uneasy at this concurrence of a French and Scottish war he resolved not to encourage his enemies by a pusillanimous behavior, or by yielding to their united efforts.

1296.

He summoned John to perform the duty of a vassal, and to send him a supply of forces against an invasion from France, with which he was then threatened: he next required that the fortresses of Berwick, Jedburgh, and Roxburgh should be put into his hands as a security during the war; he cited John to appear in an English parliament to be held at Newcastle; and when none of these successive demands were complied with, he marched northward with numerous forces, thirty thousand foot and four thousand horse, to chastise his rebellious vassal. The Scottish nation, who had little reliance on the vigor and abilities of their prince, assigned him a council of twelve noblemen, in whose hands the sovereignty was really lodged, and who put the country in the best posture of which the present distractions would admit. A great army, composed of forty thousand infantry, though supported only by five hundred cavalry advanced to the frontiers; and after a fruitless attempt upon Carlisle, marched eastwards to defend those provinces which Edward was preparing to attack. But some of the most considerable of the Scottish nobles, Robert Bruce, the father and son, the earls of March and Angus, prognosticating the ruin of their country from the concurrence of intestine divisions and a foreign invasion, endeavored here to ingratiate themselves with Edward by an early submission; and the king, encouraged by this favorable incident, led his army into the enemy's country, and crossed the Tweed without opposition at Coldstream. He then received a message from John, by which that prince, having now procured for himself and his nation Pope Celestine's dispensation from former oaths, renounced the homage which had been done to England, and set Edward at defiance. This bravado was but ill supported by the military operations of the Scots.

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. p. 84 Trivet, . t Heming. vol i. .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. .

Berwick was already taken by assault: Sir William Douglas, the governor, was made prisoner: above seven thousand of the garrison were put to the sword: and Edward, elated by this great advantage, despatched Earl Warrenne with twelve thousand men to lay siege to Dunbar, which was defended by the flower of the Scottish nobility.

The Scots, sensible of the importance of this place, which, if taken, laid their whole country open to the enemy, advanced with their main army, under the command of the earls of Buchan, Lenox, and Marre, in order to relieve it. Warrenne, not dismayed at the great superiority of their number, marched out to give them battle. He attacked them with great vigor; and as undisciplined troops, when numerous, are but the more exposed to a panic upon any alarm, he soon threw them into confusion, and chased them off the field with great slaughter. The loss of the Scots is said to have amounted to twenty thousand men: the Castle of Dunbar, with all its garrison, surrendered next day to Edward, who, after the battle, had brought up the main body of the English, and who now proceeded with an assured confidence of success. The Castle of Roxburgh was yielded by James, steward of Scotland; and that nobleman, from whom is descended the royal family of Stuart, was again obliged to swear fealty to Edward. After a feeble resistance, the Castles of Edinburgh and Stirling opened their gates to the enemy. All the southern parts were instantly subdued by the English; and to enable them the better to reduce the northern, whose inaccessible situation seemed to give them some more security, Edward sent for a strong reënforcement of Welsh and Irish, who, being accustomed to a desultory kind of war, were the best fitted to pursue the fugitive Scots into the recesses of their lakes and mountains. But the spirit of the nation was already broken by their misfortunes and the feeble and timid Baliol, discontented with his own subjects, and overawed by the English, abandoned all those resources which his people might yet have possessed in this extremity. He hastened to make his submissions to Edward, he expressed the deepest penitence for his disloyalty to his liege lord; and he made a solemn and irrevocable resignation of his crown into the hands of that monarch. [1]

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. . Heming. vo. i p. 99 Trivet, .

Edward marched northwards to Aberdeen and Elgin, without meeting an enemy: no Scotchman approached him but to pay him submission and do him homage: even the turbulent Highlanders, ever refractory to their own princes, and averse to the restraint of laws, endeavored to prevent the devastation of their country, by giving him early proofs of obedience: and Edward, having brought the whole kingdom to a seeming state of tranquillity, returned to the south with his army. There was a stone to which the popular superstition of the Scots paid the highest veneration: all their kings were seated on it when they received the rite of inauguration: an ancient tradition assured them that, wherever this stone was placed, their nation should always govern: and it was carefully preserved at Scone, as the true, palladium of their monarchy, and their ultimate resource amidst all their misfortunes. Edward got possession of it, and carried it with him to England. [1] He gave orders to destroy the records, and all those monuments of antiquity which might preserve the memory of the independence of the kingdom, and refute the English claims of superiority. The Scots pretend that he also destroyed all the annals preserved in their convents: but it is not probable that a nation, so rude and unpolished, should be possessed of any history which deserves much to be regretted. The great seal of Bailol was broken; and that prince himself was carried prisoner to London, and committed to custody in the Tower. Two years after he was restored to liberty, and submitted to a voluntary banishment in France; where, without making any further attempts for the recovery of his royalty, he died in a private station. Earl Warrenne was left governor of Scotland: [2] Englishmen were intrusted with the chief offices: and Edward, flattering himself that he had attained the end of all his wishes, and that the numerous acts of fraud and violence, which he had practised against Scotland, had terminated in the final reduction of that kingdom, returned with his victorious army into England.

* Walsing. . Trivet, .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. . Trivet, .

An attempt, which he made about the same time, for the recovery of Guienne, was not equally successful. He sent thither an army of seven thousand men, under the command of his brother, the earl of Lancaster. That prince gained at first some advantages over the French at Bordeaux: but he was soon after seized with a distemper, of which he died at Bayonne. The command devolved on the earl of Lincoln, who was not able to perform any thing considerable during the rest of the campaign. [1]

But the active and ambitious spirit of Edward, while his conquests brought such considerable accessions to the English monarchy, could not be satisfied, so long as Guienne, the ancient patrimony of his family, was wrested from him by the dishonest artifices of the French monarch. Finding that the distance of that province rendered all his efforts against it feeble and uncertain, he purposed to attack France in a quarter where she appeared more vulnerable; and with this view he married his daughter Elizabeth to John, earl of Holland, and at the same time contracted an alliance with Guy, earl of Flanders, stipulated to pay him the sum of seventy-five thousand pounds, and projected an invasion with their united forces upon Philip, their common enemy. [2] He hoped that, when he himself, at the head of the English, Flemish, and Dutch armies, reënforced by his German allies, to whom he had promised or remitted considerable sums, should enter die frontiers of France, and threaten the capital itself, Philip would at last be obliged to relinquish his acquisitions, and purchase peace by the restitution of Guienne. But in order to set this great machine in movement, considerable supplies were requisite from the parliament; and Edward, without much difficulty, obtained from the barons and knights a new grant of a twelfth of all their movables, and from the boroughs that of an eighth. The great and almost unlimited power of the king over the latter, enabled him to throw the heavier part of the burden on them; and the prejudices which he seems always to have entertained against the church, on account of the former zeal of the clergy for the Mountfort faction, made him resolve to load them with still more considerable impositions, and he required of them a fifth of their movables. But he here met with an opposition, which for some time disconcerted all his measures, and engaged him in enterprises that were somewhat dangerous to him; and would have proved fatal to any of his predecessors.

* Homing, vol. i. , 73, 74.

* * Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing, .

Boniface VIII., who had succeeded Celestine in the papal throne, was a man of the most lofty and enterprising spirit; and though not endowed with that severity of manners which commonly accompanies ambition in men of his order, he was determined to carry the authority of the tiara, and his dominion over the temporal power, to as great a height as it had ever attained in any former period. Sensible that his immediate predecessors, by oppressing the church in every province of Christendom, had extremely alienated the affections of the clergy, and had afforded the civil magistrate a pretence for laying like impositions on ecclesiastical revenues, he attempted to resume the former station of the sovereign pontiff, and to establish himself as the common protector of the spiritual order against all invaders. For this purpose he issued very early in his pontificate a general bull, prohibiting all princes from levying without his consent any taxes upon the clergy, and all clergymen from submitting to such impositions; and he threatened both of them with the penalties of excommunication in case of disobedience. [1] This important edict is said to have been procured by the solicitation of Robert de Win chelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, who intended to employ it as a rampart against the violent extortions which the church had felt from Edward, and the still greater, which that prince’s multiplied necessities gave them reason to apprehend. When a demand, therefore, was made on the clergy of a fifth of their movables, a tax which was probably much more grievous than a fifth of their revenue, as their lands were mostly stocked with their cattle, and cultivated by their villains, the clergy took shelter under the bull of Pope Boniface and pleaded conscience in refusing compliance. [2] The king came not immediately to extremities on this repulse; but after locking up all their granaries and barns, and prohibiting all rent to be paid them, he appointed a new synod, to confer with him upon his demand. The primate, not dismayed by these proofs of Edward's resolution, here plainly told him that the clergy owed obedience to two sovereigns, their spiritual and their temporal; but their duty bound them to a much stricter attachment to the former than to the latter: they could not comply with his commands, (for such, in some measure, the requests of the crown were then deemed,) in contradiction to the express prohibition of the sovereign pontiff. [3]

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Heming. vol. i. .

* * Heming, vol., i. . Trivet, . Chron. Dunst. vol. ii

* * * Hemming. vol. i. .

1297.

The clergy had seen, in many instances, that Edward paid little regard to those numerous privileges on which they set so high a value. He had formerly seized, in an arbitrary manner, all the money and plate belonging to the churches and convents, and had applied them to the public service; [1] and they could not but expect more violent treatment on this sharp refusal, grounded on such dangerous principles. Instead of applying to the pope for a relaxation of his bull, he resolved immediately to employ the power in his hands; and he told the ecclesiastics that, since they refused to support the civil government, they were unworthy to receive any benefit from it; and he would accordingly put them out of the protection of the laws. This vigorous measure was immediately carried into execution. [2] Orders were issued to the judges to receive no cause brought before them by the clergy; to hear and decide all causes in which they were defendants; to do every man justice against them; to do them justice against nobody. [3] The ecclesiastics soon found themselves in the most miserable situation imaginable. They could not remain in their own houses or convents for want of subsistence; if they went abroad in quest of maintenance, they were dismounted, robbed of their horses and clothes, abused by every ruffian, and no redress could be obtained by them for the most violent injury. The primate himself was attacked on the highway, was stripped of his equipage and furniture, and was at last reduced to board himself with a single servant in the house of a country clergyman. [4] The king, meanwhile, remained an indifferent spectator of all these violences: and without employing his officers in committing any immediate injury on the priests, which might have appeared invidious and oppressive, he took ample vengeance on them for their obstinate refusal of his demands. Though the archbishop issued a general sentence of excommunication against all who attacked the persons or property of ecclesiastics, it was not regarded; while Edward enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing the people become the voluntary instruments of his justice against them, and inure themselves to throw off that respect for the sacred order by which they had so long been overawed and governed.

* Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. .

* * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. .

* * * M. West. .

* * * * Heming. vol. i. .

The spirits of the clergy were at last broken by this harsh treatment. Besides that the whole province of York, which lay nearest the danger that still hung over them from the Scots, voluntarily, from the first, voted a fifth of their movables, the bishops of Salisbury, Ely, and some others, made a composition for the secular clergy within their dioceses; and they agreed not to pay the fifth, which would have been an act of disobedience to Boniface’s bull, but to deposit a sum equivalent in some church appointed them, whence it was taken by the king’s officers. [1] Many particular convents and clergymen made payment of a like sum, and received the king’s protection. [2] Those who had not ready money, entered into recognizances for the payment. And there was scarcely found one ecclesiastic in the kingdom who seemed willing to suffer, for the sake of religious privileges, this new species of martyrdom, the most tedious and languishing of any, the most mortifying to spiritual pride, and not rewarded by that crown of glory which the church holds up with such ostentation to her devoted adherents.

But as the money granted by parliament, though considerable, was not sufficient to supply the king's necessities, and that levied by compositions with the clergy came in slowly, Edward was obliged, for the obtaining of further supply, to exert his arbitrary power, and to lay an oppressive hand on all orders of men in the kingdom. He limited the merchants in the quantity of wool allowed to be exported; and at the same time forced them to pay him a duty of forty shillings a sack, which was computed to be above the third of the value. [3] He seized all the rest of the wool, as well as all the leather of the kingdom, into his hands, and disposed of these commodities for his own benefit; [4] he required the sheriffs of each county to supply him with two thousand quarters of wheat, and as many of oats, which he permitted them to seize wherever they could find them: the cattle and other commodities necessary for supplying his army, were laid hold of without the consent of the owners; [5] and though he promised to pay afterwards the equivalent of all these goods, men saw but little probability that a prince, who submitted so little to the limitations of law, could ever, amidst his multiplied necessities, be reduced to a strict observance of his engagements.

* Heming. vol. i. , 109. Chron. Dunst. .

* * Chron. Dunst. vol. ii. .

* * * Walsing. . Trivet, .

* * * * Heming, vol. i. , 110.

He showed at the same time an equal disregard to the principles of the feudal law, by which all the lands of his kingdom were held: in order to increase his army, and enable him to support that great effort which he intended to make against France, he required the attendance of every proprietor of land possessed of twenty pounds a year, even though he held not of the crown, and was not obliged by his tenure to perform any such service. [1]

These acts of violence and of arbitrary power, notwithstanding the great personal regard generally borne to the king, bred murmurs in every order of men; and it was not long ere some of the great nobility, jealous of their own privileges, as well as of national liberty, gave countenance and authority to these complaints. Edward assembled on the sea-coast an army which he purposed to send over to Gascony, while he himself should in person make an impression on the side of Flanders; and he intended to put these forces under the command of Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, the constable, and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, the mareschal of England. But these two powerful earls refused to execute his commands, and affirmed that they were only obliged by their office to attend his person in the wars. A violent altercation ensued: and the king, in the height of his passion, addressing himself to the constable, exclaimed, “Sir Earl, by God, you shall either go or hang.” “By God, Sir King,” replied Hereford, “I will neither go nor hang.” [2] And he immediately departed with the mareschal and above thirty other considerable barons.

Upon this opposition, the king laid aside the project of an expedition against Guienne, and assembled the forces which he himself purposed to transport into Flanders. But the two earls, irritated in the contest and elated by impunity, pretending that none of their ancestors had ever served in that country, refused to perform the duty of their office in mustering the army. [3] The king, now finding it advisable to proceed with moderation, instead of attainting the earls, who possessed their dignities by hereditary right, appointed Thomas de Berkeley and Geoffrey de Geyneville to act in that emergence as constable and mareschal. [4]

* Walsing. .

* * Heming. voL i. .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. .

* * * * M. West, .

He endeavored to reconcile himself with the church; took the primate again into favor, [1] made him, in conjunction with Reginald de Grey, tutor to the prince, whom he intended to appoint guardian of the kingdom during his absence; and he even assembled a great number of the nobility in Westminster Hall, to whom he deigned to make an apology for his past conduct. He pleaded the urgent necessities of the crown; his extreme want of money; his engagements from honor as well as interest to support his foreign allies; and he promised, if ever he returned in safety, to redress all their grievances, to restore the execution of the laws, and to make all his subjects compensation for the losses which they had sustained. Meanwhile, he begged them to suspend their animosities; to judge of him by his future conduct, of which, he hoped, he should be more master; to remain faithful to his government, or, if he perished in the present war, to preserve their allegiance to his son and successor. [2]

There were, certainly, from the concurrence of discontents among the great, and grievances of the people, materials sufficient in any other period to have kindled a civil war in England: but the vigor and abilities of Edward kept every one in awe; and his dexterity in stopping on the brink of danger, and retracting the measures to which he had been pushed by his violent temper and arbitrary principles, saved the nation from so great a calamity. The two great earls dared not to break out into open violence: they proceeded no further than framing a remonstrance, which was delivered to the king at Winchelsea, when he was ready to embark for Flanders. They there complained of the violations of the Great Charter, and that of forests; the violent seizure of corn, leather, cattle, and, above all, of wool, a commodity which they affirmed to be equal in value to half the lands of the kingdom; the arbitrary imposition of forty shillings a sack on the small quantity of wool allowed to be exported by the merchants; and they claimed an immediate redress of all these grievances. [3] The king told them that the greater part of his council were now at a distance, and without their advice he could not deliberate on measures of so great importance. [4]

* Heming. vol. i. .

* * Heming. vol. i. . M. West. .

* * * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, .

* * * * Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. . Trivet, .

But the constable and mareschal, with the barons of their party resolved to take advantage of Edward’s absence and to obtain an explicit assent to their demands. When summoned to attend the parliament at London, they came with a great body of cavalry and infantry; and before they would enter the city, required that the gates should be put into their custody. [1] The primate, who secretly favored all their pretensions, advised the council to comply; and thus they became masters both of the young prince and of the resolutions of parliament. Their demands, however, were moderate, and such as sufficiently justify the purity of their intentions in all their past measures: they only required that the two charters should receive a solemn confirmation; that a clause should be added to secure the nation forever against all impositions and taxes without consent of parliament; and that they themselves, and their adherents, who had refused to attend the king into Flanders, should be pardoned for the offence, and should be again received into favor. [2] The prince of Wales and his council assented to these terms, and the charters were sent over to the king in Flanders, to be there confirmed by him. Edward felt the utmost reluctance to this measure, which, he apprehended, would for the future impose fetters on his conduct, and set limits to his lawless authority. On various pretences he delayed three days giving any answer to the deputies; and when the pernicious consequences of his refusal were represented to him, he was at last obliged, after many internal struggles, to affix his seal to the charters, as also to the clause that bereaved him of the power which he had hitherto assumed, of imposing arbitrary taxes upon the people.

That we may finish at once this interesting transaction concerning the settlement of the charters, we shall briefly mention the subsequent events which relate to it. The constable and mareschal, informed of the king’s compliance, were satisfied, and not only ceased from disturbing the government, but assisted the regency with their power against the Scots, who had risen in arms, and had thrown off the yoke of England. [3]

* Heming. vol. i. .

* * Walsing, . Heming. vol. i. , 139 140, 141. Trivet, .

* * * Walsing, . Heming. vol. i. .

But being sensible that the smallest pretence would suffice to make Edward retract these detested laws, which, though they had often received the sanction both of king and parliament, and had been acknowledged during three reigns, were never yet deemed to have sufficient validity, they insisted that he should again confirm them on his return to England, and should thereby renounce all plea which he might derive from his residing in a foreign country when he formerly affixed his seal to them. [1] It appeared that they judged aright of Edward's character and intentions: he delayed this confirmation as long as possible; and, when the fear of worse consequences obliged him again to comply, he expressly added a salvo for his royal dignity or prerogative, which in effect enervated the whole force of the charters. [2] The two earls and their adherents left the parliament in disgust; and the king was constrained on a future occasion to grant to the people, without any subterfuge, a pure and absolute confirmation of those laws [3] which were so much the object of their passionate affection. Even further securities were then provided for the establishment of national privileges. Three knights were appointed to be chosen in each county, and were invested with the power of punishing, by fine and imprisonment, every transgression or violation of the charters; [4] a precaution which, though it was soon disused, as encroaching too much on royal prerogative, proves the attachment which the English in that age bore to liberty, and their well-grounded jealousy of the arbitrary disposition of Edward.

The work, however, was not yet entirely finished and complete. In order to execute the lesser charter, it was requisite, by new perambulations, to set bounds to the royal forests, and to disafforest all land which former encroachments had comprehended within their limits. Edward discovered the same reluctance to comply with this equitable demand; and it was not till after many delays on his part, and many solicitations and requests, and even menaces of war and violence, [5] on the part of the barons, that the perambulations were made, and exact boundaries fixed by a jury in each county to the extent of his forests. [6] Had not his ambitious and active temper raised him so many foreign enemies, and obliged him to have recourse so often to the assistance of his subjects, it is not likely that those concessions could ever have been extorted from him.

* Heming. vol. i. .

* * Heming. vol. i. , 168.

* * * Heming. vol. i. .

* * * * Heming. vol. i. . from the Chronicle of St. Albans, that the barons, not content with the execution of the charter of forests,

demanded of Edward as high terms as had been imposed on his father by the earl of Leicester; but no other historian mentions this particular.

* * * * * * Heming. vol. i. . M. West. , 433.

But while the people, after so many successful struggles, deemed themselves happy in the secure possession of their privileges, they were surprised in 1305 to find that Edward had secretly applied to Rome, and had procured from that mercenary court an absolution from all the oaths and engagements, which he had so often reiterated, to observe both the charters. There are some historians, [1] so credulous as to imagine, that this perilous step was taken by him for no other purpose than to acquire the merit of granting a new confirmation of the charters, as he did soon after; and a confirmation so much the more unquestionable, as it could never after be invalidated by his successors, on pretence of any force or violence which had been imposed upon him. But, besides that this might have been done with a better grace if he had never applied for any such absolution, the whole tenor of his conduct proves him to be little susceptible of such refinements in patriotism; and this very deed itself, in which he anew confirmed the charters, carries on the face of it a very opposite presumption. Though he ratified the charters in general, he still took advantage of the papal bull so far as to invalidate the late perambulations of the forests, which had been made with such care and attention, and to reserve to himself the power, in case of favorable incidents, to extend as much as formerly those arbitrary jurisdictions. If the power was not in fact made use of, we can only conclude that the favorable incidents did not offer.

Thus, after the contests of near a whole century, and these ever accompanied with violent jealousies, often with public convulsions, the Great Charter was finally established; and the English nation have the honor of extorting, by their perseverance, this concession from the ablest, the most warlike, and the most ambitious of all their princes. [2] It is computed that above thirty confirmations of the charter were done at different times.

* Brady, vol. ii. . Carte, vol. ii. .

* * It must, however, be remarked, that the king never forgave the chief actors in this transaction; and he found means afterwards to oblige both the constable and mareschal to resign their offices into his hands. The former received a new grant of it; but the office of mareschal given to Thomas of Brotherton, the king’s second son times required of several kings, and granted by them in full parliament; a precaution which, while it discovers some ignorance of the true nature of law and government, proves a laudable jealousy of national privileges in the people, and an extreme anxiety lest contrary precedents should ever be pleaded as an authority for infringing them. Accordingly we find that, though arbitrary practices often prevailed, and were even able to establish themselves into settled customs, the validity of the Great Charter was never afterwards formally disputed; and that grant was still regarded as the basis of English government, and the sure rule by which the authority of every custom was to be tried and canvassed. The jurisdiction of the star-chamber, martial law, imprisonment by warrants from the privy-council, and other practices of a like nature, though established for several centuries, were scarcely ever allowed by the English to be parts of their constitution: the affection of the nation for liberty still prevailed over all precedent, and even all political reasoning; the exercise of these powers, after being long the source of secret murmurs among the people, was, in fulness of time, solemnly abolished as illegal, at least as oppressive, by the whole legislative authority.

To return to the period from which this account of the charters has led us: though the king’s impatience to appear at the head of his armies in Flanders made him overlook all considerations, either of domestic discontents or of commotions among the Scots, his embarkation had been so long retarded by the various obstructions thrown in his way, that he lost the proper season for action, and after his arrival made no progress against the enemy. The king of France, taking advantage of his absence, had broken into the Low

Countries; had defeated the Flemings in the battle of Furnes; had made himself master of Lisle, St. Omer, Courtrai, and Ypres; and seemed in a situation to take full vengeance on the earl of Flanders, his rebellious vassal. But Edward, seconded by an English army of fifty thousand men, (for this is the number assigned by historians, [1]) was able to stop the career of his victories; and Philip, finding all the weak resources of his kingdom already exhausted, began to dread a reverse of fortune, and to apprehend an invasion on France itself.

* Helming, vol i. p 146.

The king of England, on the other hand, disappointed of assistance from Adolph, king of the Romans, which he had purchased at a very high price, and finding many urgent calls for his presence in England, was desirous of ending, on any honorable terms, a war which served only to divert his force from the execution of more important projects. This disposition in both monarchs soon produced a cessation of hostilities for two years; and engaged them to submit their differences to the arbitration of Pope Boniface.

1298.

Boniface was among the last of the sovereign pontiffs that exercised an authority over the temporal jurisdiction of princes; and these exorbitant pretensions, which he had been tempted to assume from the successful example of his predecessors, but of which the season was now past, involved him in so many calamities, and were attended with so unfortunate a catastrophe, that they have been secretly abandoned, though never openly relinquished, by his successors in the apostolic chair. Edward and Philip, equally jealous of papal claims, took care to insert in their reference, that Boniface was made judge of the difference by their consent, as a private person, not by any right of his pontificate; and the pope, without seeming to be offended at this mortifying clause, proceeded to give a sentence between them, in which they both acquiesced. [1] He brought them to agree, that their union should be cemented by a double marriage; that of Edward himself, who was now a widower, with Margaret, Philip’s sister, and that of the prince of Wales with Isabella, daughter of that monarch. [2]

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Heining. vol. i. . Trivet,

* * Rymer, vol. ii.

Philip was likewise willing to restore Guienne to the English, which he had indeed no good pretence to detain; but he insisted that the Scots, and their king, John Baliol, should, as his allies, be comprehended in the treaty, and should be restored to their liberty. The difference., after several disputes, was compromised, by their making mutual sacrifices to each other. Edward agreed to abandon his ally the earl of Flanders, on condition that Philip should treat in like manner his ally the king of Scots. The prospect of conquering these two countries, whose situation made them so commodious an acquisition to the respective kingdoms, prevailed over all other considerations; and though they were both finally disappointed in their hopes, their conduct was very reconcilable to the principles of an interested policy. This was the first specimen which the Scots had of the French alliance, and which was exactly conformable to what a smaller power must always expect, when it blindly attaches itself to the will and fortunes of a greater. That unhappy people now engaged in a brave though unequal contest for their liberties, were totally abandoned, by the ally in whom they reposed their final confidence, to the will of an imperious conqueror.

Though England, as well as other European countries, was, in its ancient state, very ill qualified for making, and still worse for maintaining conquests, Scotland was so much inferior in its internal force, and was so ill situated for receiving foreign succors, that it is no wonder Edward, an ambitious monarch, should have cast his eye on so tempting an acquisition, which brought both security and greatness to his native country. But the instruments whom he employed to maintain his dominion over the northern kingdom were not happily chosen, and acted not with the requisite prudence and moderation, in reconciling the Scottish nation to a yoke which they bore with such extreme reluctance. Warrenne, retiring into England on account of his bad state of health, left the administration entirely in the hands of Ormesby, who was appointed justiciary of Scotland, and Cressingham, who bore the office of treasurer; and a small military force remained, to secure the precarious authority of those ministers. The latter had no other object than the amassing of money by rapine and injustice: the former distinguished himself by the rigor and severity of his temper: and both of them, treating the Scots as a conquered people, made them sensible, too early, of the grievous servitude into which they had fallen. As Edward required that all the proprietors of land should swear fealty to him, every one who refused or delayed giving this testimony of submission, was outlawed and imprisoned, and punished without mercy; and the bravest and most generous spirits of the nation were thus exasperated to the highest degree against the English government. [1]

* Walsing. . Heming, vol. i. . Trivet, .

There was one William Wallace, of a small fortune, but descended of an ancient family in the west of Scotland, whose courage prompted him to undertake, and enabled him finally to accomplish, the desperate attempt of delivering his native country from the dominion of foreigners. This man, whose valorous exploits are the object of just admiration, but have been much exaggerated by the traditions of his countrymen, had been provoked by the insolence of an English officer to put him to death; and finding himself obnoxious on that account to the severity of the administration, he fled into the woods, and offered himself as a leader to all those whom their crimes, or bad fortune, or avowed hatred of the English, had reduced to a like necessity. He was endowed with gigantic force of body, with heroic courage of mind, with disinterested magnanimity, with incredible patience, and ability to bear hunger, fatigue, and all the severities of the seasons; and he soon acquired, among those desperate fugitives, that authority to which his virtues so justly entitled him. Beginning with small attempts, in which he was always successful, he gradually proceeded to more momentous enterprises; and he discovered equal caution in securing his followers, and valor in annoying the enemy. By his knowledge of the country he was enabled, when pursued, to insure a retreat among the morasses, or forests, or mountains; and again collecting his dispersed associates, he unexpectedly appeared in another quarter, and surprised, and routed, and put to the sword the unwary English. Every day brought accounts of his great actions, which were received with no less favor by his countrymen than terror by the enemy: all those who thirsted after military fame were desirous to partake of his renown: his successful valor seemed to vindicate the nation from the ignominy into which it had fallen, by its tame submission to the English; and though no nobleman of note ventured as yet to join his party, he had gained a general confidence and attachment, which birth and fortune are not alone able to confer.

Wallace, having, by many fortunate enterprises, brought the valor of his followers to correspond to his own, resolved to strike a decisive blow against the English government; and he concerted the plan of attacking Ormesby at Scone; and of taking vengeance on him for all the violence and tyranny of which he had been guilty. The justiciary, apprised of his intentions, fled hastily into England: all the other officers of that nation imitated his example: their terror added alacrity and courage to the Scots, who betook themselves to arms in every quarter; many of the principal barons, and among the rest Sir William Douglas, [1] openly countenanced Wallace’s party: Robert Bruce secretly favored and promoted the same cause: and the Scots, shaking off their fetters, prepared themselves to defend, by a united effort, that liberty which they had so unexpectedly recovered from the hands of their oppressors.

* Walsing. . vol. i. .

But Warrenne, collecting an army of forty thousand men in the north of England, determined to reëstablish his authority; and he endeavored, by the celerity of his armament and of his march, to compensate for his past negligence, which had enabled the Scots to throw off the English government. He suddenly entered Annandale, and came up with the enemy at Irvine, before their forces were fully collected, and before they had put themselves in a posture of defence. Many of the Scottish nobles, alarmed with their dangerous situation, here submitted to the English, renewed their oaths of fealty, promised to deliver hostages for their good behavior, and received a pardon for past offences. [1] Others, who had not yet declared themselves, such as the steward of Scotland and the earl of Lenox, joined, though with reluctance, the English army, and waited a favorable opportunity for embracing the cause of their distressed countrymen. But Wallace, whose authority over his retainers was more fully confirmed by the absence of the great nobles, persevered obstinately in his purpose; and finding himself unable to give battle to the enemy, he marched northwards, with an intention of prolonging the war, and of turning to his advantage the situation of that mountainous and barren country. When Warrenne advanced to Stirling, he found Wallace encamped at Cambuskenneth, on the opposite banks of the Forth; and being continually urged by the impatient

Cressingham, who was actuated both by personal and national animosities against the Scots, [2] he prepared to attack them in that position, which Wallace, no less prudent than courageous, had chosen for his army. [3]

* Heming. vol. i. , 22.

* * Heming. vol. i. .

* * * On the 11th of September, 1297.

In spite of the remonstrances of Sir Richard Lundy, a Scotchman of birth and family, who sincerely adhered to the English, he ordered his army to pass a bridge which lay over the Forth; but he was soon convinced, by fatal experience, of the error of his conduct. Wallace, allowing such numbers of the English to pass as he thought proper, attacked them before they were fully formed, put them to rout, pushed part of them into the river, destroyed the rest by the edge of the sword, and gained a complete victory over them. [1] Among the slain was Cressingham himself, whose memory was so extremely odious to the Scots, that they flayed his dead body, and made saddles and girths of his skin. [2] Warrenne, finding the remainder of his army much dismayed by this misfortune, was obliged again to evacuate the kingdom, and retire into England. The Castles of Roxburgh and Berwick, ill fortified and feebly defended, fell soon after into the hands of the Scots.

Wallace, universally revered as the deliverer of his country, now received, from the hands of his followers, the dignity of regent or guardian under the captive Baliol; and finding that the disorders of war, as well as the unfavorable seasons, had produced a famine in Scotland, he urged his army to march into England, to subsist at the expense of the enemy, and to revenge all past injuries, by retaliating on that hostile nation. The Scots, who deemed everything possible under such a leader, joyfully attended his call. Wallace, breaking into the northern counties during the winter season, laid every place waste with fire and sword; and after extending on all sides, without opposition, the fury of his ravages as far as the bishopric of Durham, he returned, loaded with spoils and crowned with glory, into his own country. [3] The disorders which at that time prevailed in England, from the refractory behavior of the constable and mareschal, made it impossible to collect an army sufficient to resist the enemy, and exposed the nation to this loss and dishonor.

* Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. , 128, 129. Trivet, .

* * Heming. vol. i. .

* * * Heming. vol. i. , 132, 136.

But Edward, who received in Flanders intelligence of these events, and had already concluded a truce with France, now hastened over to England, in certain hopes, by his activity and valor, not only of wiping off this disgrace, but of recovering the important conquest of Scotland, which he always regarded as the chief glory and advantage of his reign. He appeased the murmurs of his people by concessions and promises: he restored to the citizens of London the election of their own magistrates, of which they had been bereaved in the latter part of his father's reign: he ordered strict inquiry to be made concerning the corn and other goods which had been violently seized before his departure, as if he intended to pay the value to the owners: [1] and making public professions of confirming and observing the charters he regained the confidence of the discontented nobles. Having by all these popular arts rendered himself entirely master of his people, he collected the whole military force of England, Wales, and Ireland, and marched with an army of near a hundred thousand combatants to the northern frontiers.

Nothing could have enabled the Scots to resist, but for one season, so mighty a power, except an entire union among themselves; but as they were deprived of their king, whose personal qualities, even when he was present, appeared so contemptible, and had left among his subjects no principle of attachment to him or his family, factions, jealousies, and animosities unavoidably arose among the great, and distracted all their councils. The elevation of Wallace, though purchased by so great merit, and such eminent services, was the object of envy to the nobility, who repined to see a private gentleman raised above them by his rank, and still more by his glory and reputation. Wallace himself, sensible of their jealousy and dreading the ruin of his country from those intestine discords, voluntarily resigned his authority, and retained only the command over that body of his followers who, being accustomed to victory under his standard, refused to follow into the field any other leader. The chief power devolved on the steward of Scotland, and Cummin of Badenoch; men of eminent birth, under whom the great chieftains were more willing to serve in defence of their country. The two Scottish commanders, collecting their several forces from every quarter, fixed their station at Falkirk, and purposed there to abide the assault of the English. Wallace was at the head of a third body, which acted under his command. The Scottish army placed their pikemen along their front; lined the intervals between the three bodies with archers; and dreading the great superiority of the English in cavalry, endeavored to secure their front by palisadoes, tied together by ropes. [2] In this disposition they expected the approach of the enemy.

* Rymer, vol. ii. .

* * Walsing. . Heming, vol. i. .

The king, when he arrived in sight of the Scots, was pleased with the prospect of being able, by one decisive stroke, to determine the fortune of the war; and dividing his army also into three bodies, he led them to the attack. The English archers, who began about this time to surpass those of other nations, first chased the Scottish bowmen off the field; then pouring in their arrows among the pikemen, who were cooped up within their intrenchments, threw them into disorder, and rendered the assault of the English pikemen and cavalry more easy and successful. The whole Scottish army was broken, and chased off the field with great slaughter; which the historians, attending more to the exaggerated relations of the populace than to the probability of things, make amount to fifty or sixty thousand men. [1] It is only certain, that the Scots never suffered a greater loss in any action, nor one which seemed to threaten more inevitable ruin to their country.

* Walsing. . T. Wykes, . Heming vol. i. , 164, 165. Trivet () says only twenty thousand. M. West. () says forty thousand.

In this general rout of the army, Wallace's military skill and presence of mind enabled him to keep his troops entire and retiring behind the Carron, he marched leisurely along the banks of that small river, which protected him from the enemy. Young Bruce, who had already given many proofs of his aspiring genius, but who served hitherto in the English army, appeared on the opposite banks, and distinguishing the Scottish chief, as well by his majestic port as by the intrepid activity of his behavior, called out to him, and desired a short conference. He here represented to Wallace the fruitless and ruinous enterprise in which he was engaged; and endeavored to bend his inflexible spirit to submission under superior power and superior fortune: he insisted on the unequal contest between a weak state, deprived of its head and agitated by intestine discord, and a mighty nation, conducted by the ablest and most martial monarch of the age, and possessed of every resource either for protracting the war, or for pushing it with vigor and activity; if the love of his country were his motive for perseverence, his obstinacy tended only to prolong her misery; if he carried his views to private grandeur and ambition, he might reflect that, even if Edward should withdraw his armies, it appeared from past experience, that so many haughty nobles, proud of the preeminence of their families, would never submit to personal merit, whose superiority they were less inclined to regard as an object of admiration than as a reproach and injury to themselves. To these exhortations Wallace replied that, if he had hitherto acted alone, as the champion of his country, it was solely because no second or competitor, or what he rather wished, no leader, had yet appeared to place himself in that honorable station: that the blame lay entirely on the nobility, and chiefly on Bruce himself, who, uniting personal merit to dignity of family, had deserted the post which both nature and fortune, by such powerful calls, invited him to assume: that the Scots, possessed of such a head, would, by their unanimity and concord, have surmounted the chief difficulty under which they now labored, and might hope, notwithstanding their present losses, to oppose successfully all the power and abilities of Edward: that heaven itself could not set a more glorious prize before the eyes either of virtue or ambition, than to join in one object, the acquisition of royalty with the defence of national independence: and that as the interests of his country, no more than those of a brave man, could never be sincerely cultivated by a sacrifice of liberty, he himself was determined, as far as possible, to prolong, not her misery, but her freedom, and was desirous that his own life, as well as the existence of the nation, might terminate when they could no otherwise be preserved than by receiving the chains of a haughty victor. The gallantry of these sentiments, though delivered by an armed enemy, struck the generous mind of Bruce:

the flame was conveyed from the breast of one hero to that of another: he repented of his engagements with Edward; and opening his eyes to the honorable path pointed out to him by Wallace, secretly determined to seize the first opportunity of embracing the cause, however desperate, of his oppressed country. [1]

* This story is told by all the Scotch writers; though it must be owned that Trivet and Hemingford, authors of good credit, both agree that Bruce was not at that time in Edward's army.

1299.

The subjection of Scotland, notwithstanding this great victory of Edward, was not yet entirely completed. The English army, after reducing the southern provinces, was obliged to retire for want of provisions; and left the northern counties in the hands of the natives. The Scots, no less enraged at their present defeat than elated by their past victories, still maintained the contest for liberty; but being fully sensible of the great inferiority of their force, they endeavored, by applications to foreign courts, to procure to themselves some assistance. The supplications of the Scottish ministers were rejected by Philip; but were more successful with the court of Rome.

1300.

Boniface, pleased with an occasion of exerting his authority, wrote a letter to Edward, exhorting him to put a stop to his oppressions in Scotland, and displaying all the proofs, such as they had probably been furnished him by the Scots themselves, for the ancient independence of that kingdom. [1] Among other arguments hinted at above, he mentioned the treaty conducted and finished by Edward himself, for the marriage of his son with the heiress of Scotland; a treaty which would have been absurd, had he been superior lord of the kingdom, and had possessed by the feudal law the right of disposing of his ward in marriage. He mentioned several other striking facts, which fell within the compass of Edward's own knowledge particularly that Alexander, when he did homage to the king, openly and expressly declared in his presence, that he swore fealty not for his crown, but for the lands which he held in England: and the pope's letter might have passed for a reasonable one, had he not subjoined his own claim to be liege lord of Scotland; a claim which had not once been heard of, but which, with a singular confidence, he asserted to be full, entire, and derived from the most remote antiquity. The affirmative style, which had been so successful with him and his predecessors in spiritual contests, was never before abused after a more egregious manner in any civil controversy.

1301.

The reply which Edward made to Boniface’s letter, contains particulars no less singular and remarkable. [2] He there proves the superiority of England by historical facts, deduced from the period of Brutus, the Trojan, who, he said, founded the British monarchy in the age of Eli and Samuel: he supports his position by all the events which passed in the island before the arrival of the Romans: and after laying great stress on the extensive dominions and heroic victories of King Arthur, he vouchsafes at last to descend to the time of Edward the Elder, with which, in his speech to the states of Scotland, he had chosen to begin his claim of superiority. He asserts it to be a fact, “notorious and confirmed by the records of antiquity,” that the English monarchs had often conferred the kingdom of Scotland on their own subjects, had dethroned these vassal kings when unfaithful to them; and had substituted others in their stead.

He displays with great pomp the full and complete homage which William had done to Henry II.; without mentioning the formal abolition of that extorted deed by King Richard, and the renunciation of all future claims of the same nature. Yet this paper he begins with a solemn appeal to the Almighty, the searcher of hearts for his own firm persuasion of the justice of his claim; and no less than a hundred and four barons, assembled in parliament at Lincoln, concur in maintaining before the pope, under their seals, the validity of these pretensions. [1] At the same time, however, they take care to inform Boniface, that, though they had justified their cause before him, they did not acknowledge him for their judge: the crown of England was free and sovereign: they had sworn to maintain all its royal prerogatives, and would never permit the king himself, were he willing, to relinquish its independency.

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* Rymer, vol. ii. .

* * Rymer, vol. ii. .

* Rymer, vol. ii. . Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. p. 186. Trivet, , M. West, p 443.

1302.

That neglect, almost total, of truth and justice, which sovereign states discover in their transactions with each other, is an evil universal and inveterate; is one great source of the misery to which the human race is continually exposed; and it may be doubted whether, in many instances, it be found in the end to contribute to the interests of those princes themselves, who thus sacrifice their integrity to their politics. As few monarchs have lain under stronger temptations to violate the principles of equity than Edward in his transactions with Scotland, so never were they violated with less scruple and reserve: yet his advantages were hitherto precarious and uncertain, and the Scots, once roused to arms and inured to war, began to appear a formidable enemy, even to this military and ambitious monarch. They chose John Cummin for their regent; and, not content with maintaining their independence in the northern parts, they made incursions into the southern counties, which Edward imagined he had totally subdued. John de Segrave, whom he had left guardian of Scotland, led an army to oppose them; and lying at Roslin, near Edinburgh, sent out his forces in three divisions, to provide themselves with forage and subsistence from the neighborhood.

1303.

One party was suddenly attacked by the regent and Sir Simon Fraser; and being unprepared, was immediately routed and pursued with great slaughter. The few that escaped, flying to the second division, gave warning of the approach of the enemy: the soldiers ran to their arms; and were immediately led on to take revenge for the death of their countrymen. The Scots, elated with the advantage already obtained made a vigorous impression upon them: the English, animated with a thirst of vengeance, maintained a stout resistance: the victory was long undecided between them; but at last declared itself entirely in favor of the former, who broke the English, and chased them to the third division, now advancing with a hasty march to support their distressed companions. Many of the Scots had fallen in the two first actions; most of them were wounded, and all of them extremely fatigued by the long continuance of the combat: yet were they so transported with success and military rage, that, having suddenly recovered their order, and arming the followers of their camp with the spoils of the slaughtered enemy, they drove with fury upon the ranks of the dismayed English. The favorable moment decided the battle; which the Scots, had they met with a steady resistance, were not long able to maintain: the English were chased off the field: three victories were thus gained in one day; [1] and the renown of these great exploits, seconded by the favorable dispositions of the people, soon made the regent master of all the fortresses in the south; and it became necessary for Edward to begin anew the conquest of the kingdom.

The king prepared himself for this enterprise with his usual vigor and abilities. He assembled both a great fleet and a great army; and entering the frontiers of Scotland, appeared with a force which the enemy could not think of resisting in the open field: the English navy, which sailed along the coast, secured the army from any danger of famine: Edward’s vigilance preserved it from surprises: and by this prudent disposition they marched victorious from one extremity of the kingdom to the other, ravaging the open country, reducing all the castles, [2] and receiving the submissions of all the nobility, even those of Cummin, the regent.

* Heming. vol. i. .

* * Heming. vol. i. . the kingdom. Wallace, though he attended the English army in their march, found but few opportunities of signalizing that valor which had formerly made him so terrible to his enemies.

The most obstinate resistance was made by the Castle of Brechin, defended by Sir Thomas Maule; and the place opened not its gates, till the death of the governor, by discouraging the garrison, obliged them to submit to the fate which had overwhelmed the rest.

1304.

Edward, having completed his conquest, which employed him during the space of near two years, now undertook the more difficult work of settling the country, of establishing a new form of government, and of making his acquisition durable to the crown of England. He seems to have carried matters to extremity against the natives: he abrogated all the Scottish laws and customs: [1] he endeavored to substitute the English in their place: he entirely razed or destroyed all the monuments of antiquity: such records or histories as had escaped his former search were now burnt or dispersed: and he hastened, by too precipitate steps, to abolish entirely the Scottish name, and to sink it finally in the English.

* Ryley, .

1305.

Edward, however, still deemed his favorite conquest exposed to some danger so long as Wallace was alive; and being prompted both by revenge and policy, he employed every art to discover his retreat, and become master of his person. At last that hardy warrior, who was determined, amidst the universal slavery of his countrymen, still to maintain his independency, was betrayed into Edward’s hands by Sir John Monteith, his friend, whom he had made acquainted with the place of his concealment. The king, whose natural bravery and magnanimity should have induced him to respect like qualities in an enemy, enraged at some acts of violence committed by Wallace during the fury of war, resolved to overawe the Scots by an example of severity: he ordered Wallace to be carried in chains to London; to be tried as a rebel and traitor, though he had never made submissions or sworn fealty to England; and to be executed on Tower Hill. This was the unworthy fate of a hero, who, through a course of many years, had, with signal conduct, intrepidity, and perseverance, defended, against a public and oppressive enemy, the liberties of his native country.

But the barbarous policy of Edward failed of the purpose to which it was directed. The Scots, already disgusted at the great innovations introduced by the sword of a conqueror into their laws and government, were further enraged at the injustice and cruelty exercised upon Wallace; and all the envy which, during his lifetime, had attended that gallant chief, being now buried in his grave, he was universally regarded as the champion of Scotland and the patron of her expiring independency. The people, inflamed with resentment, were every where disposed to rise against the English government; and it was not long ere a new and more fortunate leader presented himself, who conducted them to liberty, to victory, and to vengeance.

1306.

Robert Bruce, grandson of that Robert who had been one of the competitors for the crown, had succeeded, by his grandfather’s and father’s death, to all their rights; and the demise of John Baliol, together with the captivity of Edward, eldest son of that prince, seemed to open a full career to the genius and ambition of this young nobleman. He saw that the Scots, when the title to their crown had expired in the males of their ancient royal family, had been divided into parties nearly equal between the houses of Bruce and Baliol; and that every incident which had since happened, had tended to wean them from any attachment to the latter. The slender capacity of John had proved unable to defend them against their enemies: he had meanly resigned his crown into the hands of the conqueror: he had, before his deliverance from captivity, reiterated that resignation in a manner seemingly voluntary; and had in that deed thrown out many reflections extremely dishonorable to his ancient subjects, whom he publicly called traitors, ruffians, and rebels, and with whom, he declared, he was determined to maintain no further correspondence; [1] he had, during the time of his exile, adhered strictly to that resolution; and his son, being a prisoner, seemed ill qualified to revive the rights, now fully abandoned, of his family.

Bruce therefore hoped that the Scots, so long exposed, from the want of a leader, to the oppressions of their enemies, would unanimously fly to his standard, and would seat him on the vacant throne, to which he brought such plausible pretensions. His aspiring spirit, inflamed by the fervor of youth, and buoyed up by his natural courage, saw the glory alone of the enterprise, or regarded the prodigious difficulties which attended it as the source only of further glory. The miseries and oppressions which he had beheld his countrymen suffer in their unequal contest, the repeated defeats and misfortunes which they had undergone, proved to him so many incentives to bring them relief, and conduct them to vengeance against the haughty victor. The circumstances which attended Bruce’s first declaration are variously related; but we shall rather follow the account given by the Scottish historians; not that their authority is in general anywise comparable to that of the English, but because they may be supposed sometimes better informed concerning facts which so nearly interested their own nation.

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* Brady’s Hist. vol. ii. App. No. 27.

Bruce, who had long harbored in his breast the design of freeing his enslaved country, ventured at last to open his mind to John Cummin, a powerful nobleman, with whom he lived in strict intimacy. He found his friend, as he imagined, fully possessed with the same sentiments; and he needed to employ no arts of persuasion to make him embrace the resolution of throwing off, on the first favorable opportunity, the usurped dominion of the English. But on the departure of Bruce, who attended Edward to London, Cummin, who either had all along dissembled with him, or began to reflect more coolly in his absence on the desperate nature of the undertaking, resolved to atone for his crime in assenting to this rebellion, by the merit of revealing the secret to the king of England. Edward did not immediately commit Bruce to custody; because he intended at the same time to seize his three brothers, who resided in Scotland; and he contented himself with secretly setting spies upon him, and ordering all his motions to be strictly watched. A nobleman of Edward's court, Bruce's intimate friend, was apprised of his danger; but not daring, amidst so many jealous eyes, to hold any conversation with him, he fell on an expedient to give him warning, that it was full time he should make his escape. He sent him by his servant a pair of gilt spurs and a purse of gold, which he pretended to have borrowed from him; and left it to the sagacity of his friend to discover the meaning of the present. Bruce immediately contrived the means of his escape; and as the ground was at that time covered with snow, he had the precaution, it is said, to order his horses to be shod with their shoes inverted, that he might deceive those who should track his path over the open fields or cross roads, through which he purposed to travel. He arrived in a few days at Dumfries, in Annandale, the chief seat of his family interest; and he happily found a great number of the Scottish nobility there assembled, and among the rest, John Cummin, his former associate.

The noblemen were astonished at the appearance of Bruce among them; and still more when he discovered to them the object of his journey. He told them that he was come to live or die with them in defence of the liberties of his country, and hoped, with their assistance, to redeem the Scottish name from all the indignities which it had so long suffered from the tyranny of their imperious masters: that the sacrifice of the rights of his family was the first injury which had prepared the way for their ensuing slavery; and by resuming them, which was his firm purpose, he opened to them the joyful prospect of recovering from the fraudulent usurper their ancient and hereditary independence: that all past misfortunes had proceeded from their disunion; and they would soon appear no less formidable than of old to their enemies, if they now deigned to follow into the field their rightful prince, who knew no medium between death and victory, that their mountains and their valor, which had, during so many ages, protected their liberty from all the efforts of the Roman empire, would still be sufficient, were they worthy of their generous ancestors, to defend them against the utmost violence of the English tyrant: that it was unbecoming men, born to the most ancient independence known in Europe, to submit to the will of any masters; but fatal to receive those who, being irritated by such persevering resistance, and inflamed with the highest animosity, would never deem themselves secure in their usurped dominion but by exterminating all the ancient nobility, and even all the ancient inhabitants: and that, being reduced to this desperate extremity, it were better for them at once to perish like brave men, with swords in their hands, than to dread long, and at last undergo, the fate of the unfortunate Wallace, whose merits, in the brave and obstinate defence of his country, were finally rewarded by the hands of an English executioner.

The spirit with which this discourse was delivered, the bold sentiments which it conveyed, the novelty of Bruce's declaration, assisted by the graces of his youth and manly deportment, made deep impression on the minds of his audience, and roused all those principles of indignation and revenge, with which they had so long been secretly actuated. The Scottish nobles declared their unanimous resolution to use the utmost efforts in delivering their country from bondage, and to second the courage of Bruce, in asserting his and their undoubted rights against their common oppressors. Cummin alone who had secretly taken his measures with the king, opposed this general determination; and by representing the great power of England, governed by a prince of such uncommon vigor and abilities, he endeavored to set before them the certain destruction which they must expect, if they again violated their oaths of fealty, and shook off their allegiance to the victorious Edward. [1] Bruce, already apprised of his treachery, and foreseeing the certain failure of all his own schemes of ambition and glory from the opposition of so potent a leader, took immediately his resolution; and moved partly by resentment, partly by policy, followed Cummin on the dissolution of the assembly, attacked him in the cloisters of the Gray Friars, through which he passed, and running him through the body, left him for dead. Sir Thomas Kirkpatric, one of Bruce’s friends, asking him soon after if the traitor were slain, “I believe so,” replied Bruce. “And is that a matter,” cried Kirkpatric, “to be left to conjecture? I will secure him.” Upon which he drew his dagger, ran to Cummin, and stabbed him to the heart. This deed of Bruce and his associates, which contains circumstances justly condemned by our present manners, was regarded in that age as an effort of manly vigor and just policy. The family of Kirkpatric took for the crest of their arms, which they still wear, a hand with a bloody dagger; and chose for their motto these words, “I will secure him;” the expression employed by their ancestor when he executed that violent action.

* M. West. .

The murder of Cummin affixed the seal to the conspiracy of the Scottish nobles: they had now no resource left but to shake off the yoke of England, or to perish in the attempt: the genius of the nation roused itself from its present dejection: and Bruce, flying to different quarters, excited his partisans to arms, attacked with success the dispersed bodies of the English, got possession of many of the castles, and having made his authority be acknowledged in most parts of the kingdom, was solemnly crowned and inaugurated in the abbey of Scone by the bishop of St. Andrews, who had zealously embraced his cause. The English were again chased out of the kingdom, except such as took shelter in the fortresses that still remained in their hands; and Edward found that the Scots, twice conquered in his reign, and often defeated, must yet be anew subdued. Not discouraged with these unexpected difficulties, he sent Aymer de Valence with a considerable force into Scotland, to check the progress of the malecontents; and that nobleman, falling unexpectedly upon Bruce, at Methven, in Perthshire, threw his army into such disorder as ended in a total defeat. [1] Bruce fought with the most heroic courage, was thrice dismounted in the action, and as often recovered himself; but was at last obliged to yield to superior fortune, and take shelter, with a few followers, in the Western Isles. The earl of Athole, Sir Simon Fraser, and Sir Christopher Seton, who had been taken prisoners, were ordered by Edward to be executed as rebels and traitors. [2]

* Walsing. . Heming. vol. i. , 223. Trivet, p. 344.

* * Heming. vol. i. . M. West. .

Many other acts of rigor were exercised by him; and that prince, vowing revenge against the whole Scottish nation, whom he deemed incorrigible in their aversion to his government, assembled a great army, and was preparing to enter the frontiers, secure of success, and determined to make the defenceless Scots the victims of his severity, when he unexpectedly sickened and died near Carlisle; enjoining with his last breath his son and successor to prosecute the enterprise, and never to desist till he had finally subdued the kingdom of Scotland. He expired in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the thirty-fifth of his reign, hated by his neighbors, but extremely respected and revered by his own subjects.

The enterprises finished by this prince, and the projects which he formed and brought near to a conclusion, were more prudent, more regularly conducted, and more advantageous to the solid interests of his kingdom, than those which were undertaken in any reign, either of his ancestors or his successors. He restored authority to the government, disordered by the weakness of his father; he maintained the laws against all the efforts of his turbulent barons; he fully annexed to his crown the principality of Wales; he took many wise and vigorous measures for reducing Scotland to a like condition; and though the equity of this latter enterprise may reasonably be questioned, the circumstances of the two kingdoms promised such certain success, and the advantage was so visible of uniting the whole island under one head, that those who give great indulgence to reasons of state in the measures of princes, will not be apt to regard this part of his conduct with much severity. But Edward, however exceptionable his character may appear on the head of justice, is the model of a politic and warlike king: he possessed industry, penetration, courage, vigilance, and enterprise: he was frugal in all expenses that were not necessary; he knew how to open the public treasures on a proper occasion; he punished criminals with severity; he was gracious and affable to his servants and courtiers; and being of a majestic figure, expert in all military exercises, and in the main well proportioned in his limbs, notwithstanding the great length and the smallness of his legs, he was as well qualified to captivate the populace by his exterior appearance, as to gain the approbation of men of sense by his more solid virtues.

But the chief advantage which the people of England reaped, and still continue to reap, from the reign of this great prince, was the correction, extension, amendment, and establishment of the laws which Edward maintained in great vigor, and left much improved to posterity; for the acts of a wise legislator commonly remain, while the acquisition of a conqueror often perish with him. This merit has justly gained to Edward the appellation of the English Justinian. Not only the numerous statutes passed in his reign touch the chief points of jurisprudence, and, according to Sir Edward Coke, [1] truly deserve the name of establishments, because they were more constant, standing, and durable laws than any made since; but the regular order maintained in his administration gave an opportunity to the common law to refine itself, and brought the judges to a certainty in their determinations, and the lawyers to a precision in their pleadings. Sir Matthew Hale has remarked the sudden improvement of English law during this reign; and ventures to assert, that till his own time it had never received any considerable increase. [2] Edward settled the jurisdiction of the several courts; first established the office of justice of peace; abstained from the practice, too common before him, of interrupting justice by mandates from the privy-council; [3] repressed robberies and Edward enacted a law to this purpose; but it is doubtful whether he ever observed it. We are sure that scarcely any of his successors did.

* Institute, .

* * History of the English Law, , 163.

* * * Articuli super Cart. ca., Letters of protection were the ground of a complaint by the commons in 3, Edward (See Ryley, .) This practice is declared illegal.

The multitude of these disorders [1] encouraged trade, by giving merchants an easy method of recovering their debts; [2] and, in short, introduced a new face of things by the vigor and wisdom of his administration. As law began now to be well established, the abuse of that blessing began also to be remarked. Instead of their former associations for robbery and violence, men entered into formal combinations to support each other in lawsuits, and it was found requisite to check this iniquity by act of parliament. [3]

There happened in this reign a considerable alteration in the execution of the laws: the king abolished the office of chief justiciary, which, he thought, possessed too much power, and was dangerous to the crown; [4] he completed the division of the court of exchequer into four distinct courts, which managed each its several branch, without dependence on any one magistrate; and as the lawyers afterwards invented a method, by means of their fictions, of carrying business from one court to another, the several courts became rivals and checks to each other; a circumstance which tended much to improve the practice of the law in England.

* Statute of Winton.

* * Statute of Acton Burnel

* * * Statute of Conspirators.

* * * * Spel. Gloss, in verbo Justiciarius.

Gilbert's History of the Exchequer, : not bound to it by his tenure; his visible reluctance to confirm the Great Charter, as if that concession had no validity from the deeds of his predecessors; the captious clause which he at last annexed to his confirmation; his procuring of the pope's dispensation from the oaths which he had taken to observe that charter; and his levying of talliages at discretion even after the statute, or rather charter, by which he had renounced that prerogative; these are so many demonstrations of his arbitrary disposition, and prove with what exception and reserve we ought to celebrate his love of justice. He took care that his subjects should do justice to each other; but he desired always to have his own hands free in all his transactions, both with them and with his neighbors.

But though Edward appeared thus, throughout his whole reign, a friend to law and justice, it cannot be said that he was an enemy to arbitrary power; and in a government more regular and legal than was that of England in his age, such practices as those which may be remarked in his administration, would have given sufficient ground of complaint, and sometimes were even in his age the object of general displeasure. The violent plunder and banishment of the Jews; the putting of the whole clergy at once, and by an arbitrary edict, out of the protection of law; the seizing of all the wool and leather of the kingdom; the heightening of the impositions on the former valuable commodity; the new and illegal commission of Trailbaston; the taking of all the money and plate of monasteries and churches, even before he had any quarrel with the clergy; the subjecting of every man possessed of twenty pounds a year to military service, though by the statute of Northampton, passed in the second of Edward III.; but it still continued, like many other abuses. There are instances of it so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

The chief obstacle to the execution of justice in those times was the power of the great barons; and Edward was perfectly qualified, by his character and abilities, for keeping these tyrants in awe, and restraining their illegal practices. This salutary purpose was accordingly the great object of his attention; yet was he imprudently led into a measure which tended to increase and confirm their dangerous authority. He passed a statute which, by allowing them to entail their estates, made it impracticable to diminish the property of the great families, and left them every means of increase and acquisition. [1]

* Brady of Boroughs, , from the records

Edward observed a contrary policy with regard to the church: he seems to have been the first Christian prince that passed a statute of mortmain; and prevented by law the clergy from making new acquisitions of lands, which by the ecclesiastical canons they were forever prohibited from alienating. The opposition between his maxims with regard to the nobility and to the ecclesiastics, leads us to conjecture, that it was only by chance he passed the beneficial statute of mortmain, and that his sole object was to maintain the number of knights’ fees, and to prevent the superiors from being defrauded of the profits of wardship, marriage, livery, and other emoluments arising from the feudal tenures. This is indeed, the reason assigned in the statute itself, and appears to have been his real object in enacting it. The author of the Annals of Waverley ascribes this act chiefly to the king’s anxiety for maintaining the military force of the kingdom but adds, that he was mistaken in his purpose; for that the Amalekites were overcome more by the prayers of Moses than by the sword of the Israelites.

[1] The statute of mortmain was often evaded afterwards by the invention of “uses.”

Edward was active in restraining the usurpations of the church; and excepting his ardor for crusades, which adhered to him during his whole life, seems in other respects to have been little infected with superstition, the vice chiefly of weak minds. But the passion for crusades was really in that age the passion for glory. As the pope now felt himself somewhat more restrained in his former practice of pillaging the several churches in Europe by laying impositions upon them, he permitted the generals of particular orders, who resided at Rome, to levy taxes on the convents subjected to their jurisdiction; and Edward was obliged to enact a law against this new abuse. It was also become a practice of the court of Rome to provide successors to benefices before they became vacant: Edward found it likewise necessary to prevent by law this species of injustice.

The tribute of one thousand marks a year, to which King John, in doing homage to the pope, had subjected the kingdom, had been pretty regularly paid since his time, though the vassalage was constantly denied, and indeed, for fear of giving offence, had been but little insisted on. The payment was called by a new name of “census,” not by that of tribute. King Edward seems to have always paid this money with great reluctance; and he suffered the arrears at one time to run on for six years, [2] at another for eleven: [3] but as princes in that age stood continually in need of the pope’s good offices, for dispensations of marriage and for other concessions, the court of Rome always found means, sooner or later, to catch the money. The levying of first-fruits was also a new device begun in this reign, by which his holiness thrust his fingers very frequently into the purses of the faithful; and the king seems to have unwarily given way to it.

In the former reign, the taxes had been partly scutages, partly such a proportional part of the movables as was granted by parliament; in this, scutages were entirely dropped, and the assessment on movables was the

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* Page 234. See also M. West. .

* * Rymer, vol. ii , 107.

* * * Rymer, vol. ii .

chief method of taxation. Edward, in his fourth year, had a fifteenth granted him; in his fifth year, a twelfth; in his eleventh year, a thirtieth from the laity, a twentieth from the clergy; in his eighteenth year, a fifteenth; in his twenty-second year, a tenth from the laity, a sixth from London and other corporate towns, half of their benefices from the clergy; in his twenty-third year, an eleventh from the barons and others, a tenth from the clergy, a seventh from the burgesses; in his twenty fourth year, a twelfth from the barons and others, an eighth from the burgesses, from the clergy nothing, because of the pope's inhibition; in his twenty-fifth year, an eighth from the laity, a tenth from the clergy of Canterbury, a fifth from those of York; in his twenty-ninth year, a fifteenth from the laity, on account of his confirming the perambulations of the forests; the clergy granted nothing; in his thirty-third year, first, a thirtieth from the barons and others, and a twentieth from the burgesses, then a fifteenth from all his subjects; in his thirty fourth year, a thirtieth from all his subjects, for knighting his eldest son.

These taxes were moderate; but the king had also duties upon exportation and importation granted him from time to time: the heaviest were commonly upon wool. Poundage, or a shilling a pound, was not regularly granted the kings for life till the reign of Henry V.

In 1296, the famous mercantile society, called the "merchant adventurers," had its first origin: it was instituted for the improvement of the woollen manufacture, and the vending of the cloth abroad, particularly at Antwerp: [1] for the English at this time scarcely thought of any more distant commerce.

This king granted a charter or declaration of protection and privileges to foreign merchants, and also ascertained the customs or duties which those merchants were in return to pay on merchandise imported and exported. He promised them security; allowed them a jury on trials, consisting half of natives, half of foreigners; and appointed them a justiciary in London for their protection. But notwithstanding this seeming attention to foreign merchants, Edward did not free them from the cruel hardship of making one answerable for the debts, and even for the crimes of another, that came from the same country. [2]

* Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. i. .

* * Anderson's History of Commerce, vol. i. .

We read of such practices among the present barbarous nations. The king also imposed on them a duty of two shillings on each tun of wine imported, over and above the old duty; and forty pence on each sack of wool exported besides half a mark, the former duty. [1]

In the year 1303, the exchequer was robbed, and of no less a sum than one hundred thousand pounds, as is pretended. [2] The abbot and monks of Westminster were indicted for this robbery, but acquitted. It does not appear that the king ever discovered the criminals with certainty, though his indignation fell on the society of Lombard merchants, particularly the Frescobaldi, very opulent Florentines.

The pope having in 1307 collected much money in England, the king enjoined the nuncio not to export it in specie but in bills of exchange; [3] a proof that commerce was but ill understood at that time.

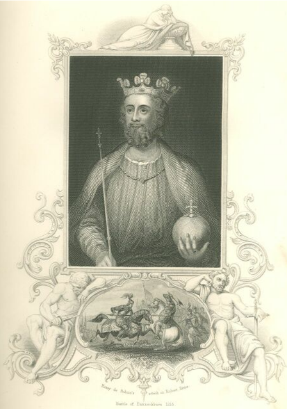
* Rymer, vol. iv. . It is the charter of Edward I. which is there confirmed by Edward III.

* * Rymer, vol. ii. .

* * * Rymer, vol. ii. .

Edward had by his first wife, Eleanor of Castile, four sons; but Edward, his heir and successor, was the only one that survived him. She also bore him eleven daughters, most of whom died in their infancy: of the surviving, Joan was married first to the earl of Glocester, and after his death to Ralph de Monthermer: Margaret espoused John, duke of Brabant: Elizabeth espoused first John, earl of Holland, and afterwards the earl of Hereford: Mary was a nun at Ambresbury. He had by his second wife, Margaret of France, two sons and a daughter; Thomas, created earl of Norfolk and mareschal of England; and Edmund, who was created earl of Kent by his brother when king. The princess died in her infancy.

CHAPTER XIV.



Henry de Bohun's attack on Robert Bruce.

Battle of Bannockburn 1314.

EDWARD II.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE.

EDWARD II.

1307.

The prepossessions entertained in favor of young Edward, kept the English from being fully sensible of the extreme loss which they had sustained by the death of the great monarch who filled the throne; and all men hastened with alacrity to take the oath of allegiance to his son and successor. This prince was in the twenty-third year of his age, was of an agreeable figure, of a mild and gentle disposition, and having never discovered a propensity to any dangerous vice, it was natural to prognosticate tranquillity and happiness from his government. But the first act of his reign blasted all these hopes, and showed him to be totally unqualified for that perilous situation in which every English monarch during those ages had, from the unstable form of the constitution, and the turbulent dispositions of the people derived from it, the misfortune to be placed. The indefatigable Robert Bruce, though his army had been dispersed, and he himself had been obliged to take shelter in the Western Isles, remained not long inactive; but before the death of the late king, had sallied from his retreat, had again collected his followers, had appeared in the field, and had obtained by surprise an important advantage over Aymer de Valence, who commanded the English forces. [1]

* Trivet, .

He was now become so considerable as to have afforded the king of England sufficient glory in subduing him, without incurring any danger of seeing all those mighty preparations, made by his father, fail in the enterprise. But Edward, instead of pursuing his advantages, marched but a little way into Scotland; and having an utter incapacity, and equal aversion, for all application or serious business, he immediately returned upon his footsteps, and disbanded his army. His grandees perceived, from this conduct, that the authority of the crown, fallen into such feeble hands, was no longer to be dreaded, and that every insolence might be practised by them with impunity.

The next measure taken by Edward gave them an inclination to attack those prerogatives which no longer kept them in awe. There was one Piers Gavaston, son of a Gascon knight of some distinction, who had honorably served the late king and who, in reward of his merits, had obtained an establishment for his son in the family of the prince of Wales. This young man soon insinuated himself into the affections of his master, by his agreeable behavior, and by supplying him with all those innocent though frivolous amusements which suited his capacity and his inclinations. He was endowed with the utmost elegance of shape and person, was noted for a fine mien and easy carriage, distinguished himself in all warlike and genteel exercises, and was celebrated for those quick sallies of wit in which his countrymen usually excel. By all these accomplishments, he gained so entire an ascendant over young Edward, whose heart was strongly disposed to friendship and confidence, that the late king, apprehensive of the consequences, had banished him the kingdom, and had, before he died, made his son promise never to recall him. But no sooner did he find himself master, as he vainly imagined, than he sent for Gavaston; and even before his arrival at court, endowed him with the whole earldom of Cornwall, which had escheated to the crown by the death of Edmond, son of Richard, king of the Romans. [1] Not content with conferring on him those possessions, which had sufficed as an appanage for a prince of the blood, he daily loaded him with new honors and riches; married him to his own niece, sister of the earl of Glocester; and seemed to enjoy no pleasure in his royal dignity, but as it enabled him to exalt to the highest splendor this object of his fond affections.

* Rymer, vol. iii. . Heming. vol. i. . Walsing, p. 96.

The haughty barons, offended at the superiority of a minion, whose birth, though reputable, they despised as much inferior to their own, concealed not their discontent; and soon found reasons to justify their animosity in the character and conduct of the man they hated. Instead of disarming envy by the moderation and modesty of his behavior, Gavaston displayed his power and influence with the utmost ostentation; and deemed no circumstance of his good fortune so agreeable as its enabling him to eclipse and mortify all his rivals. He was vain-glorious, profuse, rapacious; fond of exterior pomp and appearance, giddy with prosperity; and as he imagined that his fortune was now as strongly rooted in the kingdom as his ascendant was uncontrolled over the weak monarch, he was negligent in engaging partisans, who might support his sudden and ill-established grandeur. At all tournaments he took delight in foiling the English nobility by his superior address: in every conversation he made them the object of his wit and raillery: every day his enemies multiplied upon him; and nought was wanting but a little time to cement their union, and render it fatal both to him and to his master. [1]

It behoved the king to take a journey to France, both in order to do homage for the duchy of Guienne, and to espouse the Princess Isabella, to whom he had long been affianced, though unexpected accidents had hitherto retarded the completion of the marriage. [2] Edward left Gavaston guardian of the realm, [3] with more ample powers than had usually been conferred; [4] and, on his return with his young queen, renewed all the proofs of that fond attachment to the favorite of which every one so loudly complained. This princess was of an imperious and intriguing spirit; and finding that her husband's capacity required, as his temper inclined, him to be governed, she thought herself best entitled, on every account, to perform the office, and she contracted a mortal hatred against the person who had disappointed her in these expectations. She was well pleased, therefore, to see a combination of the nobility forming against Gavaston, who, sensible of her hatred, had wantonly provoked her by new insults and injuries.

* T. de la More, ; Walsing. .

* * T. de la More, . Trivet, Cont. .

* * * Rymer vol. iii. . Ypod. Neust. .

* * * * Brady's App. No. 49.

1308.

Thomas, earl of Lancaster, cousin-german to the king, and first prince of the blood, was by far the most opulent and powerful subject in England, and possessed in his own right, and soon after in that of his wife, heiress of the family of Lincoln, no less than six earldoms, with a proportionable estate in land, attended with all the jurisdictions and power which commonly in that age were annexed to landed property. He was turbulent and factious in his disposition; mortally hated the favorite, whose influence over the king exceeded his own; and he soon became the head of that party among the barons who desired the depression of this insolent stranger. The confederated nobles bound themselves by oath to expel Gavaston: both sides began already to put themselves in a warlike posture: the licentiousness of the age broke out in robberies and other disorders, the usual prelude of civil war, and the royal authority, despised in the king's own hands, and hated in those of Gavaston, became insufficient for the execution of the laws and the maintenance of peace in the kingdom. A parliament being summoned at Westminster, Lancaster and his party came thither with an armed retinue; and were there enabled to impose their own terms on the sovereign. They required the banishment of Gavaston, imposed an oath on him never to return, and engaged the bishops, who never failed to interpose in all civil concerns, to pronounce him excommunicated if he remained any longer in the kingdom. [1] Edward was obliged to submit; [2] but even in his compliance gave proofs of his fond attachment to his favorite. Instead of removing all umbrage by sending him to his own country, as was expected, he appointed him lord lieutenant of Ireland [3], attended him to Bristol on his journey thither, and before his departure conferred on him new lands and riches both in Gascony and England. [4] Gavaston, who did not want bravery, and possessed talents for war, [5] acted, during his government, with vigor against some Irish rebels, whom he subdued.

* Trivet, Cont. .

* * Rymer, vol. iii. .

* * * Rymer, vol. iii. . Murimuth, .

* * * * Rymer, vol. iii. .

Meanwhile, the king, less shocked with the illegal violence which had been imposed upon him, than unhappy in the absence of his minion, employed every expedient to soften the opposition of the barons to his return; as if success in that point were the chief object of his government. The high office of hereditary steward was conferred on Lancaster: his father-in-law, the earl of Lincoln, was bought off by other concessions: Earl Warrenne was also mollified by civilities, grants, or promises: the insolence of Gavaston, being no longer before men’s eyes, was less the object of general indignation; and Edward, deeming matters sufficiently prepared for his purpose, applied to the court of Rome, and obtained for Gavaston a dispensation from that oath which the barons had compelled him to take, that he would forever abjure the realm. [1] He went down to Chester to receive him on his first landing from Ireland; flew into his arms with transports of joy; and having obtained the formal consent of the barons in parliament to his reëstablishment, set no longer any bounds to his extravagant fondness and affection. Gavaston himself, forgetting his past misfortunes, and blind to their causes, resumed the same ostentation and insolence, and became more than ever the object of general detestation among the nobility.

The barons first discovered their animosity by absenting themselves from parliament; and finding that this expedient had not been successful, they began to think of employing sharper and more effectual remedies. Though there had scarcely been any national ground of complaint, except some dissipation of the public treasure: though all the acts of mal-administration objected to the king and his favorite, seemed of a nature more proper to excite heart-burnings in a ball or assembly, than commotions in a great kingdom: yet such was the situation of the times, that the barons were determined, and were able, to make them the reasons of a total alteration in the constitution and civil government. Having come to parliament, in defiance of the laws and the king’s prohibition, with a numerous retinue of armed followers, they found themselves entirely masters; and they presented a petition which was equivalent to a command, requiring Edward to devolve on a chosen junto the whole authority, both of the crown and of the parliament. The king was obliged to sign a commission, empowering the prelates and barons to elect twelve persons, who should, till the term of

Michaelmas in the year following, have authority to enact ordinances for the government of the kingdom, and regulation of the king’s household; consenting that these ordinances should, thenceforth and forever have the force of laws; allowing the ordainers to form associations among themselves and their friends, for their strict and regular observance; and all this for the greater glory of God, the security of the church, and the honor and advantage of the king and kingdom. [2]

* Rymer, vol. iii. p., 167.

* * Brady’s App. No. 50. Heming. vol. i. ., Walsing. p. 97.,Ryley, .

The barons, in return signed a declaration, in which they acknowledged that they owed these concessions merely to the king’s free grace; promised that this commission should never be drawn into precedent; and engaged that the power of the ordainers should expire at the time appointed. [1]

1311.

The chosen junto accordingly framed their ordinances, and presented them to the king and parliament, for their confirmation in the ensuing year. Some of these ordinances were laudable, and tended to the regular execution of justice; such as those requiring sheriffs to be men of property, abolishing the practice of issuing privy seals for the suspension of justice, restraining the practice of purveyance, prohibiting the adulteration and alteration of the coin, excluding foreigners from the farms of the revenue, ordering all payments to be regularly made into the exchequer, revoking all late grants of the crown, and giving the parties damages in the case of vexatious prosecutions. But what chiefly grieved the king was the ordinance for the removal of evil counsellors, by which a great number of persons were by name excluded from every office of power and profit; and Piers Gavaston himself was forever banished the king’s dominions, under the penalty, in case of disobedience, of being declared a public enemy. Other persons, more agreeable to the barons, were substituted in all the offices. And it was ordained that, for the future, all the considerable dignities in the household, as well as by the law, revenue, and military governments, should be appointed by the baronage in parliament; and the power of making war, or assembling his military tenants, should no longer be vested solely in the king, nor be exercised without the consent of the nobility.

Edward, from the same weakness both in his temper and situation which had engaged him to grant this unlimited commission to the barons, was led to give a parliamentary sanction to their ordinances; but as a consequence of the same character, he secretly made a protest against them, and declared that, since the commission was granted only for the making of ordinances to the advantage of king and kingdom, such articles as should be found prejudicial to both, were to be held as not ratified and confirmed. [2]

* Brady's App. No. 51.

* * Ryley's Placit. Parl. , 541.

It is no wonder, indeed, that he retained a firm purpose to revoke ordinances which had been imposed on him by violence, which entirely annihilated the royal authority, and above all, which deprived him of the company and society of a person whom, by an unusual infatuation, he valued above all the world, and above every consideration of interest or tranquillity.

As soon, therefore, as Edward, removing to York, had freed himself from the immediate terror of the barons' power, he invited back Gavaston from Flanders, which that favorite had made the place of his retreat; and declaring his banishment to be illegal, and contrary to the laws and customs of the kingdom, [1] openly reinstated him in his former credit and authority.

1312.

The barons, highly provoked at this disappointment, and apprehensive of danger to themselves from the declared animosity of so powerful a minion, saw that either his or their ruin was now inevitable; and they renewed with redoubled zeal their former confederacies against him. The earl of Lancaster was a dangerous head of this alliance; Guy, earl of Warwick, entered into it with a furious and precipitate passion; Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, the constable, and Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke, brought to it a great accession of power and interest; even Earl Warrenne deserted the royal cause, which he had hitherto supported, and was induced to embrace the side of the confederates; [2] and as Robert de Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, professed himself of the same party, he determined the body of the clergy, and consequently the people, to declare against the king and his minion. So predominant at that time was the power of the great nobility, that the combination of a few of them was always able to shake the throne; and such a universal concurrence became irresistible. The earl of Lancaster suddenly raised an army, and marched to York, where he found the king already removed to Newcastle: [3] he flew thither in pursuit of him, and Edward had just time to escape to Tinmouth, where he embarked, and sailed with Gavaston to Scarborough. He left his favorite in that fortress, which, had it been properly supplied with provisions, was deemed impregnable, and he marched forward to York, in hopes of raising an army which might be able to support him against his enemies.

* Brady’s App. No. 53. Walsing. .

* * Trivet, Cont. .

* * * Walsing. .

Pembroke was sent by the confederates to besiege the Castle of Scarborough, and Gavaston, sensible of the bad condition of his garrison, was obliged to capitulate, and to surrender himself prisoner. [1] He stipulated that he should remain in Pembroke’s hands for two months; that endeavors should, during that time, be mutually used for a general accommodation; that if the terms proposed by the barons were not accepted, the castle should be restored to him in the same condition as when he surrendered it; and that the earl of Pembroke and Henry Piercy should, by contract, pledge all their lands for the fulfilling of these conditions. [2] Pembroke, now master of the person of this public enemy, conducted him to the Castle of Dedington, near Banbury, where, on pretence of other business, he left him, protected by a feeble guard. [3] Warwick, probably in concert with Pembroke, attacked the castle: the garrison refused to make any resistance; Gavaston was yielded up to him, and conducted to Warwick Castle; the earls of Lancaster, Hereford, and Arundel immediately repaired thither; [4] and, without any regard either to the laws or the military capitulation, they ordered the head of the obnoxious favorite to be struck off by the hands of the executioner. [5]

The king had retired northward to Berwick, when he heard of Gavaston’s murder; and his resentment was proportioned to the affection which he had ever borne him while living. He threatened vengeance on all the nobility who had been active in that bloody scene; and he made preparations for war in all parts of England. But being less constant in his enmities than in his friendships, he soon after hearkened to terms of accommodation; granted the barons a pardon of all offences; and as they stipulated to ask him publicly pardon on their knees, [6] he was so pleased with these vain appearances of submission, that he seemed to have sincerely forgiven them all past injuries. But as they still pretended, notwithstanding their lawless conduct, a great anxiety for the maintenance of law, and required the establishment of their former ordinances, as a necessary security for that purpose, Edward told them that he was willing to grant them a free and legal confirmation of such of those ordinances as were not entirely derogatory to the prerogative of the crown. This answer was received for the present as satisfactory. The king’s person, after the death of Gavaston, was now become less obnoxious to the public; and as the ordinances insisted on appeared to be nearly the same with those which had formerly been extorted from Henry III. by Mountfort, and which had been attended with so many fatal consequences, they were, on that account, demanded with less vehemence by the nobility and people. The minds of all men seemed to be much appeased; the animosities of faction no longer prevailed; and England, now united under its head, would henceforth be able, it was hoped, to take vengeance on all its enemies, particularly on the Scots, whose progress was the object of general resentment and indignation.

* Walsing, .

* * Rymer, vol ii. .

* * * T de la More, .

* * * * Dugd. Baron, vol. ii. .

* * * * * * Ryley, . Rymer, vol. iii. .

Immediately after Edward’s retreat from Scotland, Robert Bruce left his fastnesses, in which he intended to have sheltered his feeble army; and supplying his defect of strength by superior vigor and abilities, he made deep impression on all his enemies, foreign and domestic. He chased Lord Argyle and the chieftain of the Macdowals from their hills, and made himself entirely master of the high country; he thence invaded with success the Cummins in the low countries of the north: he took the castles of Inverness, Forfar, and Brechin; he daily gained some new accession of territory; and what was a more important acquisition, he daily reconciled the minds of the nobility to his dominion, and enlisted under his standard every bold leader, whom he enriched by the spoils of his enemies. Sir James Douglas, in whom commenced the greatness and renown of that warlike family, seconded him in all his enterprises: Edward Bruce, Robert’s own brother, distinguished himself by acts of valor; and the terror of the English power being now abated by the feeble conduct of the king, even the least sanguine of the Scots began to entertain hopes of recovering their independence; and the whole kingdom, except a few fortresses which he had not the means to attack, had acknowledged the authority of Robert.

In this situation, Edward had found it necessary to grant a truce to Scotland; and Robert successfully employed the interval in consolidating his power, and introducing order into the civil government, disjointed by a long continuance of wars and factions. The interval was very short; the truce, ill observed on both sides, was at last openly violated, and war recommenced with greater fury than ever. Robert, not content with defending himself, had made successful inroads into England, subsisted his needy followers by the plunder of that country, and taught them to despise the military genius of a people who had long been the object of their terror. Edward at last, roused from his lethargy, had marched an army into Scotland, and Robert, determined not to risk too much against an enemy so much superior, retired again into the mountains. The king advanced beyond Edinburgh; but being destitute of provisions, and being ill supported by the English nobility, who were then employed in framing their ordinances, he was soon obliged to retreat, without gaining any advantage over the enemy. But the appearing union of all the parties in England, after the death of Gavaston, seemed to restore that kingdom to its native force, opened again the prospect of reducing Scotland, and promised a happy conclusion to a war, in which both the interests and passions of the nation were so deeply engaged.

1314.

Edward assembled forces from all quarters, with a view of finishing at one blow this important enterprise. He summoned the most warlike of his vassals from Gascony; he enlisted troops from Flanders and other foreign countries; he invited over great numbers of the disorderly Irish as to a certain prey; he joined to them a body of the Welsh, who were actuated by like motives; and, assembling the whole military force of England, he marched to the frontiers with an army which, according to the Scotch writers, amounted to a hundred thousand men.

The army collected by Robert exceeded not thirty thousand combatants; but being composed of men who had distinguished themselves by many acts of valor, who were rendered desperate by their situation, and who were inured to all the varieties of fortune, they might justly, under such a leader, be deemed formidable to the most numerous and best appointed armies. The Castle of Stirling, which, with Berwick, was the only fortress in Scotland that remained in the hands of the English, had long been besieged by Edward Bruce: Philip de Mowbray, the governor, after an obstinate defence, was at last obliged to capitulate, and to promise, that if, before a certain day, which was now approaching, he were not relieved, he should open his gates to the enemy. [1]

* Rymer, vol. iii. .

Robert, therefore, sensible that here was the ground on which he must expect the English, chose the field of battle with all the skill and prudence imaginable, and made the necessary preparations for their reception. He posted himself at Bannockburn, about two miles from Stirling, where he had a hill on his right flank, and a morass on his left; and not content with having taken these precautions to prevent his being surrounded by the more numerous army of the English, he foresaw the superior strength of the enemy in cavalry, and made provision against it. Having a rivulet in front, he commanded deep pits to be dug along its banks, and sharp stakes to be planted in them; and he ordered the whole to be carefully covered over with turf. [1] The English arrived in sight on the evening, and a bloody conflict immediately ensued between two bodies of cavalry; where Robert, who was at the head of the Scots, engaged in single combat with Henry de Bohun, a gentleman of the family of Hereford; and at one stroke cleft his adversary to the chin with a battle-axe, in sight of the two armies. The English horse fled with precipitation to their main body.

The Scots, encouraged by this favorable event, and glorying in the valor of their prince, prognosticated a happy issue to the combat on the ensuing day: the English, confident in their numbers, and elated with former successes, longed for an opportunity of revenge; and the night, though extremely short in that season and in that climate, appeared tedious to the impatience of the several combatants. Early in the morning, Edward drew out his army, and advanced towards the Scots. The earl of Glocester, his nephew, who commanded the left wing of the cavalry, impelled by the ardor of youth, rushed on to the attack without precaution, and fell among the covered pits, which had been prepared by Bruce for the reception of the enemy. [2] This body of horse was disordered; Glocester himself was overthrown and slain: Sir James Douglas, who commanded the Scottish cavalry, gave the enemy no leisure to rally, but pushed them off the field with considerable loss, and pursued them in sight of their whole line of infantry. While the English army were alarmed with this unfortunate beginning of the action, which commonly proves decisive, they observed an army on the heights towards the left, which seemed to be marching leisurely in order to surround them; and they were distracted by their multiplied fears. This was a number of wagoners and sumpter boys, whom Robert had collected; and having supplied them with military standards, gave them the appearance at a distance of a formidable body.

* T. de la More, .

* * T. de la More, .

The stratagem took effect: a panic seized the English: they threw down their arms and fled: they were pursued with great slaughter for the space of ninety miles, till they reached Berwick: and the Scots, besides an inestimable booty, took many persons of quality prisoners, and above four hundred gentlemen, whom Robert treated with great humanity, [1] and whose ransom was a new accession of wealth to the victorious army. The king himself narrowly escaped by taking shelter in Dunbar, whose gates were opened to him by the earl of March; and he thence passed by sea to Berwick.

* Ypod. Neust. .

Such was the great and decisive battle of Bannockburn, which secured the independence of Scotland, fixed Bruce on the throne of that kingdom, and may be deemed the greatest overthrow that the English nation, since the conquest, has ever received. The number of slain on those occasions is always uncertain, and is commonly much magnified by the victors: but this defeat made a deep impression on the mind of the English; and it was remarked that, for some years, the superiority of numbers could encourage them to keep the field against the Scots. Robert, in order to avail himself of his present success, entered England, and ravaged all the northern counties without opposition: he besieged Carlisle; but that place was saved by the valor of Sir Andrew Harcla, the governor: he was more successful against Berwick, which he took by assault: and this prince, elated by his continued prosperity, now entertained hopes of making the most important conquests on the English.

1315.

He sent over his brother Edward, with an army of six thousand men, into Ireland; and that nobleman assumed the title of king of that island; he himself followed soon after with more numerous forces: the horrible and absurd oppressions which the Irish suffered under the English government, made them, at first, fly to the standard of the Scots, whom they regarded as their deliverers: but a grievous famine, which at that time desolated both Ireland and Britain, reduced the Scottish army to the greatest extremities; and Robert was obliged to return, with his forces much diminished, into his own country. His brother, after having experienced a variety or fortune, was defeated and slain near Dundalk by the English, commanded by Lord Bermingham: and these projects, too extensive for the force of the Scottish nation, thus vanished into smoke.

Edward, besides suffering those disasters from the invasion of the Scots and the insurrection of the Irish, was also infested with a rebellion in Wales;

and above all, by the factions of his own nobility, who took advantage of the public calamities, insulted his fallen fortunes, and endeavored to establish their own independence on the ruins of the throne. Lancaster and the barons of his party, who had declined attending him on his Scottish expedition, no sooner saw him return with disgrace, than they insisted on the renewal of their ordinances, which, they still pretended, had validity; and the king's unhappy situation obliged him to submit to their demands. The ministry was new-modelled by the direction of Lancaster: [1] that prince was placed at the head of the council: it was declared, that all the offices should be filled, from time to time, by the votes of parliament, or rather by the will of the great barons: [2] and the nation, under this new model of government, endeavored to put itself in a better posture of defence against the Scots. But the factious nobles were far from being terrified with the progress of these public enemies: on the contrary, they founded the hopes of their own future grandeur on the weakness and distresses of the crown: Lancaster himself was suspected, with great appearance of reason, of holding a secret correspondence with the king of Scots: and though he was intrusted with the command of the English armies, he took care that every enterprise should be disappointed, and every plan of operations prove unsuccessful.

* Ryley, p, 560. Rymer, vol. iii. .

* * Brady vol. ii. , from the records, App. No. 61. Ryley .

All the European kingdoms, especially that of England, were at this time unacquainted with the office of a prime minister, so well understood at present in all regular monarchies; and the people could form no conception of a man who, though still in the rank of a subject, possessed all the power of a sovereign, eased the prince of the burden of affairs, supplied his want of experience or capacity, and maintained all the rights of the crown, without degrading the greatest nobles by their submission to his temporary authority. Edward was plainly by nature unfit to hold himself the reins of government: he had no vices, but was unhappy in a total incapacity for serious business: he was sensible of his own defects, and necessarily sought to be governed: yet every favorite whom he successively chose, was regarded as a fellow-subject exalted above his rank and station: he was the object of envy to the great nobility: his character and conduct were decried with the people: his authority over the king and kingdom was considered as a usurpation: and unless the prince had embraced the dangerous expedient of devolving his power on the earl of Lancaster, or some mighty baron, whose family interest was so extensive as to be able alone to maintain his influence, he could expect no peace or tranquillity upon the throne.

The king's chief favorite, after the death of Gavaston, was Hugh le Despenser, or Spenser, a young man of English birth, of high rank, and of a noble family. [1] He possessed all the exterior accomplishments of person and address which were fitted to engage the weak mind of Edward; but was destitute of that moderation and prudence which might have qualified him to mitigate the envy of the great, and conduct him through all the perils of that dangerous station to which he was advanced. His father, who was of the same name, and who, by means of his son, had also attained great influence over the king, was a nobleman venerable from his years, respected through all his past life for wisdom, valor, and integrity, and well fitted by his talents and experience, could affairs have admitted of any temperament, to have supplied the defects both of the king and of his minion. [2] But no sooner was Edward's attachment declared for young Spenser, than the turbulent Lancaster, and most of the great barons, regarded him as their rival, made him the object of their animosity, and formed violent plans for his ruin. [3] They first declared their discontent by withdrawing from parliament; and it was not long ere they found a pretence for proceeding to greater extremities against him.

1321.

The king, who set no limits to his bounty toward his minions, had married the younger Spenser to his niece one of the coheirs of the earl of Glocester, slain at Bannockburn. The favorite, by his succession to that opulent family, had inherited great possessions in the marches of Wales, [4] and being desirous of extending still farther his influence in those quarters, he is accused of having committed injustice on the barons of Audley and Ammori, who had also married two sisters of the same family.

* Dugd. Baron, vol. i. .

* * T. de la More, .

* * * Walsing. . T. de la More, . Murimuth, .

* * * * Trivet, Cont. .

There was likewise a baron in that neighborhood, called William de Braouse, lord of Gower, who had made a settlement of his estate on John de Mowbray, his son-in-law; and in case of failure of that nobleman and his issue, had substituted the earl of Hereford in the succession to the barony of Gower. Mowbray, on the decease of his father-in-law, entered immediately in possession of the estate, without the formality of taking livery and seizin from the crown; but Spenser, who coveted that barony, persuaded the king to put in execution the rigor of the feudal law, to seize Gower as escheated to the crown, and to confer it upon him. [1] This transaction, which was the proper subject of a lawsuit, immediately excited a civil war in the kingdom. The earls of Lancaster and Hereford flew to arms: Audle and Ammori joined them with all their forces: the two Rogers de Mortimer and Roger de Clifford, with many others, disgusted for private reasons at the Spensers, brought a considerable accession to the party; and their army being now formidable, they sent a message to the king, requiring him immediately to dismiss or confine the younger Spenser; and menacing him, in case of refusal, with renouncing their allegiance to him, and taking revenge on that minister by their own authority. They scarcely waited for an answer; but immediately fell upon the lands of young Spenser, which they pillaged and destroyed; murdered his servants, drove off his cattle, and burned his houses. [2] They thence proceeded to commit like devastations on the estates of Spenser the father, whose character they had hitherto seemed to respect. And having drawn and signed a formal association among themselves, [3] they marched to London with all their forces, stationed themselves in the neighborhood of that city, and demanded of the king the banishment of both the Spensers.

* Monach. Malms.

* * Murimuth, .

* * * Tyrrel, vol. ii , from the register of C. C. Canterbury.

These noblemen were then absent; the father abroad, the son at sea; and both of them employed in different commissions: the king therefore replied, that his coronation oath, by which he was bound to observe the laws, restrained him from giving his assent to so illegal a demand, or condemning noblemen who were accused of no crime, nor had any opportunity afforded them of making answer. [1] Equity and reason were but a feeble opposition to men who had arms in their hands, and who, being already involved in guilt, saw no safety but in success and victory. They entered London with their troops; and giving in to the parliament, which was then sitting, a charge against the Spensers, of which they attempted not to prove one article, they procured, by menaces and violence, a sentence of attainder and perpetual exile against these ministers. [2] This sentence was voted by the lay barons alone; for the commons, though now an estate in parliament, were yet of so little consideration, that their assent was not demanded; and even the votes of the prelates were neglected amidst the present disorders. The only symptom which these turbulent barons gave of their regard to law, was their requiring from the king an indemnity for their illegal proceedings; [3] after which they disbanded their army, and separated, in security, as they imagined, to their several castles.

This act of violence, in which the king was obliged to acquiesce, rendered his person and his authority so contemptible, that every one thought himself entitled to treat him with neglect. The queen, having occasion soon after to pass by the castle of Leeds in Kent, which belonged to the lord Badlesmere, desired a night’s lodging, but was refused admittance; and some of her attendants, who presented themselves at the gate, were killed. [4] The insult upon this princess, who had always endeavored to live on good terms with the barons, and who joined them heartily in their hatred of the young Spenser, was an action which nobody pretended to justify; and the king thought that he might, without giving general umbrage, assemble an army, and take vengeance on the offender. No one came to the assistance of Badlesmere; and Edward prevailed. [5]

* Walsing. .

* * Tottle’s Collect, part ii . Walsing. .

* * * Tottle’s Collect, part ii. . Rymer, vol. iii. .

* * * * Rymer, vol. iii. . Walsing. , 115. T. de la Mare, . Murimuth, .

But having now some forces on foot, and having concerted measures with his friends throughout England, he ventured to take off the mask, to attack all his enemies, and to recall the two Spensers, whose sentence he declared illegal, unjust, contrary to the tenor of the Great Charter, passed without the assent of the prelates, and extorted by violence from him and the estate of barons. [1] Still the commons were not mentioned by either party.

1322.

The king had now got the start of the barons, an advantage which, in those times, was commonly decisive, and he hastened with his army to the marches of Wales, the chief seat of the power of his enemies, whom he found totally unprepared for resistance. Many of the barons in those parts endeavored to appease him by submission: [2] their castles were seized, and their persons committed to custody. But Lancaster, in order to prevent the total ruin of his party, summoned together his vassals and retainers; declared his alliance with Scotland, which had long been suspected; received the promise of a reënforcement from that country, under the command of Randolf, earl of Murray, and Sir James Douglas; [3] and being joined by the earl of Hereford, advanced with all his forces against the king, who had collected an army of thirty thousand men, and was superior to his enemies. Lancaster posted himself at Burton upon Trent, and endeavored to defend the passages of the river: [4] but being disappointed in that plan of operations, this prince, who had no military genius, and whose personal courage was even suspected, fled with his army to the north, in expectation of being there joined by his Scottish allies. [5] He was pursued by the king, and his army diminished daily, till he came to Boroughbridge, where he found Sir Andrew Harcla posted with some forces on the opposite side of the river, and ready to dispute the passage with him. He was repulsed in an attempt which he made to force his way: the earl of Hereford was killed; the whole army of the rebels was disconcerted: Lancaster himself was become incapable of taking any measures either for flight or defence; and he was seized without resistance by Harcla, and conducted to the king. [6]

* Rymer, vol. iii. . T. de la More, .

* * Walsing. . Murimuth, .

* * * Rymer, vol. iii. .

* * * * Walsing. .

* * * * * * T. de la More, . Walsing. .

In those violent times, the laws were so much neglected on both sides, that, even where they might, without any sensible inconvenience, have been observed, the conquerors deemed it unnecessary to pay any regard to them. Lancaster, who was guilty of open rebellion, and was taken in arms against his sovereign, instead of being tried by the laws of his country, which pronounced the sentence of death against him, was condemned by a court-martial, [1] and led to execution. Edward, however, little vindictive in his natural temper, here indulged his revenge, and employed against the prisoner the same indignities which had been exercised by his orders against Gavaston. He was clothed in a mean attire, placed on a lean jade without a bridle, a hood was put on his head, and in this posture, attended by the acclamations of the people, this prince was conducted to an eminence near Pomfret, one of his own castles, and there beheaded. [2]

* Tyrrel, vol. 11. .

* * Leland’s Coll. vol. i. .

Thus perished Thomas, earl of Lancaster, prince of the blood, and one of the most potent barons that had ever been in England. His public conduct sufficiently discovers the violence and turbulence of his character: his private deportment appears not to have been more innocent: and his hypocritical devotion, by which he gained the favor of the monks and populace, will rather be regarded as an aggravation than an alleviation of his guilt. Badlesmere, Giffard, Barret, Cheyney, Fleming, and about eighteen of the most notorious offenders, were afterwards condemned by a legal trial, and were executed. Many were thrown into prison: others made their escape beyond sea: some of the king's servants were rewarded from the forfeitures: Harcla received for his services the earldom of Carlisle, and a large estate, which he soon after forfeited with his life, for a treasonable correspondence with the king of Scotland. But the greater part of those vast escheats were seized by young Spenser, whose rapacity was insatiable. Many of the barons of the king's party were disgusted with this partial division of the spoils: the envy against Spenser rose higher than ever: the usual insolence of his temper, inflamed by success, impelled him to commit many acts of violence: the people, who always hated him, made him still more the object of aversion: all the relations of the attainted barons and gentlemen secretly vowed revenge: and though tranquillity was in appearance restored to the kingdom, the general contempt of the king, and odium against Spenser, bred dangerous humors, the source of future revolutions and convulsions.

In this situation, no success could be expected from foreign wars; and Edward, after making one more fruitless attempt against Scotland, whence he retreated with dishonor, found it necessary to terminate hostilities with that kingdom, by a truce of thirteen years. [1] Robert, though his title to the crown was not acknowledged in the treaty, was satisfied with insuring his possession of it during so long a time. He had repelled with gallantry all the attacks of England: he had carried war both into that kingdom and into Ireland: he had rejected with disdain the pope's authority, who pretended to impose his commands upon him, and oblige him to make peace with his enemies: his throne was firmly established, as well in the affections of his subjects, as by force of arms: yet there naturally remained some inquietude in his mind, while at war with a state which, however at present disordered by faction, was of itself so much an overmatch for him both in riches and in numbers of people. And this truce was, at the same time, the more seasonable for England, because the nation was at that juncture threatened with hostilities from France.

1324.

Philip the Fair, king of France, who died in 1315, had left the crown to his son Lewis Hutin, who, after a short reign, dying without male issue, was succeeded by Philip the Long, his brother, whose death soon after made way for Charles the Fair, the youngest brother of that family. This monarch had some grounds of complaint against the king's ministers in Guienne; and as there was no common or equitable judge in that strange species of sovereignty established by the feudal law, he seemed desirous to take advantage of Edward's weakness, and under that pretence to confiscate all his foreign dominions. [2]

After an embassy by the earl of Kent, the king's brother, had been tried in vain, Queen Isabella obtained permission to go over to Paris, and endeavor to adjust, in an amicable manner, the difference with her brother: but while she was making some progress in this negotiation, Charles started a new pretension, the justice of which could not be disputed, that Edward himself should appear in his court, and do homage for the fees which he held in France. But there occurred many difficulties in complying with this demand. Young Spenser, by whom the king was implicitly governed, had unavoidably been engaged in many quarrels with the queen, who aspired to the same influence, and though that artful princess, on her leaving England, had dissembled her animosity, Spenser, well acquainted with her secret sentiments, was unwilling to attend his master to Paris, and appear in a court where her credit might expose him to insults, if not to danger. He hesitated no less on allowing the king to make the journey alone; both fearing lest that easy prince should in his absence fall under other influence, and foreseeing the perils to which he himself should be exposed if, without the protection of royal authority, he remained in England where he was so generally hated.

1325.

While these doubts occasioned delays and difficulties, Isabella proposed that Edward should resign the dominion of Guienne to his son, now thirteen

* Rymer, vol. iii. . Murimuth, .

* * Rymer, vol. iv. , 98.

years of age; and that the prince should come to Paris, and do the homage which every vassal owed to his superior lord. This expedient, which seemed so happily to remove all difficulties, was immediately embraced: Spenser was charmed with the contrivance: young Edward was sent to Paris: and the ruin covered under this fatal snare, was never perceived or suspected by any of the English council.

The queen, on her arrival in France, had there found a great number of English fugitives, the remains of the Lancastrian faction; and their common hatred of Spenser soon begat a secret friendship and correspondence between them and that princess. Among the rest was young Roger Mortimer, a potent baron in the Welsh marches, who had been obliged, with others, to make his submissions to the king, had been condemned for high treason; but having received a pardon for his life, was afterwards detained in the Tower, with an intention of rendering his confinement perpetual, He was so fortunate as to make his escape into France; [1] and being one of the most considerable persons now remaining of the party, as well as distinguished by his violent animosity against Spenser, he was easily admitted to pay his court to Queen Isabella. The graces of his person and address advanced him quickly in her affections: he became her confident and counsellor in all her measures; and gaining ground daily upon her heart, he engaged her to sacrifice at last, to her passion, all the sentiments of honor and of fidelity to her husband. [2]

Hating now the man whom she had injured, and whom she never valued, she entered ardently into all Mortimer’s conspiracies; and having artfully gotten into her hands the young prince, and heir of the monarchy, she resolved on the utter ruin of the king, as well as of his favorite. She engaged her brother to take part in the same criminal purpose: her court was daily filled with the exiled barons: Mortimer lived in the most declared intimacy with her: a correspondence was secretly carried on with the malecontent party in England: and when Edward, informed of those alarming circumstances, required her speedily to return with the prince, she publicly replied, that she would never set foot in the kingdom till Spenser was

* Rymer, vol. iv. , 8, 20. T. de la More, . Walsing. [2 unclear] . Ypoa. Neust. .

* * T. de la More, . Murimuth, .

forever removed from his presence and councils; a declaration which procured her great popularity in England, and threw a decent veil over all her treasonable enterprises.

Edward endeavored to put himself in a posture of defence; [1] but, besides the difficulties arising from his own indolence and slender abilities, and the want of authority, which of consequence attended all his resolutions, it was not easy for him, in the present state of the kingdom and revenue, to maintain a constant force ready to repel an invasion, which he knew not at what time or place he had reason to expect.

* Rymer, vol. iv. , 188, 225.

All his efforts were unequal to the traitorous and hostile conspiracies which, both at home and abroad, were forming against his authority, and which were daily penetrating farther even into his own family. His brother, the earl of Kent, a virtuous but weak prince, who was then at Paris, was engaged by his sister-in-law, and by the king of France, who was also his cousin-german, to give countenance to the invasion, whose sole object, he believed, was the expulsion of the Spensers: he prevailed on his elder brother, the earl of Norfolk, to enter secretly into the same design: the earl of Leicester, brother and heir of the earl of Lancaster, had too many reasons for his hatred of these ministers to refuse his concurrence. Walter de Reynel, archbishop of Canterbury, and many of the prelates, expressed their approbation of the queen’s measures: several of the most potent barons, envying the authority of the favorite, were ready to fly to arms: the minds of the people, by means of some truths and many calumnies, were strongly disposed to the same party: and there needed but the appearance of the queen and prince, with such a body of foreign troops as might protect her against immediate violence, to turn all this tempest, so artfully prepared, against the unhappy Edward.

1326.

Charles, though he gave countenance and assistance to the faction, was ashamed openly to support the queen and prince against the authority of a husband and father; and Isabella was obliged to court the alliance of some other foreign potentate, from whose dominions she might set out on her intended enterprise. For this purpose, she affianced young Edward, whose tender age made him incapable to judge of the consequences, with Philippa, daughter of the count of Holland and Hainault; [1] and having, by the open assistance of this prince, and the secret protection of her brother, enlisted in her service near three thousand men, she set sail from the harbor of Dort, and landed safely, and without opposition, on the coast of Suffolk. The earl of Kent was in her company: two other princes of the blood, the earl of Norfolk and the earl of Leicester, joined her soon after her landing with all their followers: three prelates, the bishops of Ely, Lincoln, and Hereford, brought her both the force of their vassals and the authority of their character: [2] even Robert de Watteville, who had been sent by the king to oppose her progress in Suffolk, deserted to her with all his forces. To render her cause more favorable, she renewed her declaration, that the solo purpose of her enterprise was to free the king and kingdom from the tyranny of the Spensers, and of Chancellor Baldoc, their creature. [1] The populace were allured by her specious pretences: the barons thought themselves secure against forfeitures by the appearance of the prince in her army: and a weak, irresolute king, supported by ministers generally odious, was unable to stem this torrent, which bore with such irresistible violence against him.

Edward, after trying in vain to rouse the citizens of London to some sense of duty, [4] departed for the west, where he hoped to meet with a better reception; and he had no sooner discovered his weakness by leaving the city, than the rage of the populace broke out without control against him and his ministers.

* T. de la More, .

* * Walsing. . Ypod. Neust, . T. de la More, p. 598., Murimuth, .

* * * Ypod, Neust. .

* * * * Walsing. .

They first plundered, then murdered all those who were obnoxious to them: they seized the bishop of Exeter, a virtuous and loyal prelate, as he was passing through the streets; and having beheaded him, they threw his body into the river. [1] They made themselves masters of the Tower by surprise; then entered into a formal association to put to death, without mercy, every one who should dare to oppose the enterprise of Queen Isabella, and of the prince. [2] A like spirit was soon communicated to all other parts of England; and threw the few servants of the king, who still entertained thoughts of performing their duty, into terror and astonishment.

Edward was hotly pursued to Bristol by the earl of Kent, seconded by the foreign forces under John de Hainault. He found himself disappointed in his expectations with regard to the loyalty of those parts; and he passed over to Wales, where, he flattered himself, his name was more popular, and which he hoped to find uninfected with the contagion of general rage which had seized the English. [3] The elder Spenser, created earl of Winchester, was left governor of the castle of Bristol; but the garrison mutinied against him, and he was delivered into the hands of his enemies. This venerable noble, who had nearly reached his ninetieth year, was instantly without trial, or witness, or accusation, or answer, condemned to death by the rebellious barons: he was hanged on a gibbet; his body was cut in pieces, and thrown to the dogs; [4] and his head was sent to Winchester, the place whose title he bore, and was there set on a pole and exposed to the insults of the populace.

The king, disappointed anew in his expectations of succor from the Welsh, took shipping for Ireland; but being driven back by contrary winds, he endeavored to conceal himself in the mountains of Wales: he was soon discovered, was put under the custody of the earl of Leicester, and was confined in the castle of Kenilworth. The younger Spenser, his favorite, who also fell into the hands of his enemies, was executed, like his father, without any appearance of a legal trial. [5]

* Walsing. . T. de la More, . Murimuth, .

* * Walsing. .

* * * Murimuth, .

* * * * Leland’s Coll. vol. ii. . T. de la More, . Walsing. . M. Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The earl of Arundel, almost the only man of his rank in England who had maintained his loyalty, was, without any trial, put to death at the instigation of Mortimer: Baldoc, the chancellor, being a priest, could not with safety be so suddenly despatched; but being sent to the bishop of Hereford's palace in London, he was there, as his enemies probably foresaw, seized by the populace, was thrown into Newgate, and soon after expired, from the cruel usage which he had received. [1] Even the usual reverence paid to the sacerdotal character gave way, with every other consideration, to the present rage of the people.

1327.

The queen, to avail herself of the prevailing delusion, summoned, in the king's name, a parliament at Westminster; where, together with the power of her army, and the authority of her partisans among the barons, who were concerned to secure their past treasons by committing new acts of violence against their sovereign, she expected to be seconded by the fury of the populace, the most dangerous of all instruments, and the least answerable for their excesses. A charge was drawn up against the king, in which, even though it was framed by his inveterate enemies, nothing but his narrow genius, or his misfortunes, were objected to him; for the greatest malice found no particular crime with which it could reproach this unhappy prince. He was accused of incapacity for government, of wasting his time in idle amusements, of neglecting public business, of being swayed by evil counsellors, of having lost, by his misconduct, the kingdom of Scotland, and part of Guienne; and to swell the charge, even the death of some barons, and the imprisonment of some prelates, convicted of treason, were laid to his account. [2] It was in vain, amidst the violence of arms and tumult of the people, to appeal either to law or to reason: the deposition of the king, without any appearing opposition, was voted by parliament: the prince, already declared regent by his party, [3] was placed on the throne: and a deputation was sent to Edward at Kenilworth, to require his resignation, which menaces and terror soon extorted from him.

* Walsing. . Murimuth, .

* * Knyghton, , 2766. Brady's App. No. 72.

* * * Rymer, vol. iv. . Walsing, .

But it was impossible that the people, however corrupted by the barbarity of the times, still further inflamed by faction, could forever remain insensible to the voice of nature. Here a wife had first deserted, next invaded, and then dethroned her husband; had made her minor son an instrument in this unnatural treatment of his father; had, by lying pretences, seduced the nation into a rebellion against their sovereign had pushed them into violence and cruelties that had dishonored them: all those circumstances were so odious in themselves, and formed such a complicated scene of guilt, that the least reflection sufficed to open men's eyes, and make them detest this flagrant infringement of every public and private duty. The suspicions which soon arose of Isabella's criminal commerce with Mortimer, the proofs which daily broke out of this part of her guilt, increased the general abhorrence against her; and her hypocrisy, in publicly bewailing with tears the king's unhappy fate, [1] was not able to deceive even the most stupid and most prejudiced of her adherents. In proportion as the queen became the object of public hatred the dethroned monarch, who had been the victim of her crimes and her ambition, was regarded with pity, with friendship, with veneration: and men became sensible, that all his misconduct, which faction had so much exaggerated, had been owing to the unavoidable weakness, not to any voluntary depravity, of his character. The earl of Leicester, now earl of Lancaster, to whose custody he had been committed, was soon touched with those generous sentiments; and besides using his prisoner with gentleness and humanity, he was suspected to have entertained still more honorable intentions in his favor. The king, therefore, was taken from his hands, and delivered over to Lord Berkeley, and Mautravers, and Gournay, who were intrusted alternately, each for a month, with the charge of guarding him. While he was in the custody of Berkeley, he was still treated with the gentleness due to his rank and his misfortunes; but when the turn of Mautravers and Gournay came, every species of indignity was practised against him, as if their intention had been to break entirely the prince's spirit, and to employ his sorrows and afflictions, instead of more violent and more dangerous expedients, for the instruments of his murder. [2] It is reported, that one day, when Edward was to be shaved, they ordered cold and dirty water to be brought from the ditch for that purpose; and when he desired it to be changed, and was still denied his request, he burst into tears which bedewed his cheeks; and he exclaimed, that in spite of their insolence, he should be shaved with clean and warm water. [3]

* Walsing.

* * Anonymi Hist. .

* * * T. de la Mo’e, .

But as this method of laying Edward, in his grave appeared still too slow to the impatient Mortimer, he secretly sent orders to the two keepers, who were at his devotion instantly to despatch him: and these ruffians contrived to make the manner of his death as cruel and barbarous as possible. Taking advantage of Berkeley’s sickness, in whose custody he then was, and who was thereby incapacitated from attending his charge, [1] they came to Berkeley Castle, and put themselves in possession of the king’s person. They threw him on a bed; held him down violently with a table, which they flung over him; thrust into his fundament a red-hot iron, which they inserted through a horn; and though the outward marks of violence upon his person were prevented by this expedient, the horrid deed was discovered to all the guards and attendants by the screams with which the agonizing king filled the castle while his bowels were consuming.

Gournay and Mautravers were held in general detestation, and when the ensuing revolution in England threw their protectors from power, they found it necessary to provide for their safety by flying the kingdom. Gournay was afterwards seized at Marseilles, delivered over to the seneschal of Guienne, put on board a ship with a view of carrying him to England; but he was beheaded at sea, by secret orders, as was supposed, from some nobles and prelates in England, anxious to prevent any discovery which he might make of his accomplices. Mautravers concealed himself for several years in Germany; but having found means of rendering some service to Edward III., he ventured to approach his person, threw himself on his knees before him, submitted to mercy, and received a pardon. [2]

* Cotton’s Abridg. .

* * Cotton’s Abridg. , 81. Rymer, vol. v.

It is not easy to imagine a man more innocent and inoffensive than the unhappy king whose tragical death we have related; nor a prince less fitted for governing that fierce and turbulent people subjected to his authority. He was obliged to devolve on others the weight of government, which he had neither ability nor inclination to bear: the same indolence and want of penetration led him to make choice of ministers and favorites who were not always the best qualified for the trust committed to them: the seditious grandees, pleased with his weakness, yet complaining of it, under pretence of attacking his ministers, insulted his person and invaded his authority: and the impatient populace, mistaking the source of their grievances, threw all the blame upon the king, and increased the public disorders by their faction and violence. It was in vain to look for protection from the laws, whose voice, always feeble in those times, was not heard amidst the din of arms — what could not defend the king, was less able to give shelter to any of the people: the whole machine of government was torn in pieces with fury and violence; and men, instead of regretting the manners of their age, and the form of their constitution, which required the most steady and most skilful hand to conduct them, imputed all errors to the person who had the misfortune to be intrusted with the reins of empire.

But though such mistakes are natural and almost unavoidable while the events are recent, it is a shameful delusion in modern historians, to imagine that all the ancient princes who were unfortunate in their government, were also tyrannical in their conduct; and that the seditions of the people always proceeded from some invasion of their privileges by the monarch. Even a great and a good king was not in that age secure against faction and rebellion, as appears in the case of Henry II.; but a great king had the best chance, as we learn from the history of the same period, for quelling and subduing them. Compare the reigns and characters of Edward I. and II. The father made several violent attempts against the liberties of the people: his barons opposed him: he was obliged, at least found it prudent, to submit: but as they dreaded his valor and abilities, they were content with reasonable satisfaction, and pushed no farther their advantages against him. The facility and weakness of the son, not his violence, threw every thing into confusion: the laws and government were overturned: an attempt to reinstate them was an unpardonable crime: and no atonement but the deposition and tragical death of the king himself could give those barons contentment. It is easy to see, that a constitution which depended so much on the personal character of the prince, must necessarily, in many of its parts, be a government of will, not of laws. But always to throw, without distinction, the blame of all disorders upon the sovereign would introduce a fatal error in politics, and serve as a perpetual apology for treason and rebellion: as if the turbulence of the great, and madness of the people, were not, equally with the tyranny of princes, evils incident to human society, and no less carefully to be guarded against in every well-regulated constitution.

While these abominable scenes passed in England, the theatre of France was stained with a wickedness equally barbarous, and still more public and deliberate. The order of knights templars had arisen during the first fervor of the crusades; and uniting the two qualities the most popular in that age, devotion and valor, and exercising both in the most popular of all enterprises, the defence of the Holy Land, they had made rapid advances in credit and authority, and had acquired, from the piety of the faithful, ample possessions in every country of Europe, especially in France. Their great riches, joined to the course of time, had, by degrees, relaxed the severity of these virtues; and the templars had, in a great measure, lost that popularity which first raised them to honor and distinction. Acquainted from experience with the fatigues and dangers of those fruitless expeditions to the East, they rather chose to enjoy in ease their opulent revenues in Europe: and being all men of birth, educated, according to the custom of that age, without any tincture of letters, they scorned the ignoble occupations of a monastic life, and passed their time wholly in the fashionable amusements of hunting, gallantry, and the pleasures of the table. Then rival order, that of St. John of Jerusalem, whose poverty had as yet preserved them from like corruptions, still distinguished themselves by their enterprises against the infidels, and succeeded to all the popularity which was lost by the indolence and luxury of the templars. But though these reasons had weakened the foundations of this order, once so celebrated and revered, the immediate cause of their destruction proceeded from the cruel and vindictive spirit of Philip the Fair, who, having entertained a private disgust against some eminent templars, determined to gratify at once his avidity and revenge, by involving the whole order in an undistinguished ruin. On no better information than that of two knights, condemned by their superiors to perpetual imprisonment for their vices and profligacy, he ordered on one day all the templars in France to be committed to prison, and imputed to them such enormous and absurd crimes as are sufficient of themselves to destroy all the credit of the accusation. Besides their being universally charged with murder, robbery, and vices the most shocking to nature, every one, it was pretended, whom they received into their order, was obliged to renounce his Savior, to spit upon the cross, [1] and to join to this impiety the superstition of worshipping a gilded head, which was secretly kept in one of their houses at Marseilles.

* Rymer, vol. iii. , 101.

They also initiated, it was said, every candidate by such infamous rites as could serve to no other purpose than to degrade the order in his eyes, and destroy forever the authority of all his superiors over him. [1] Above a hundred of these unhappy gentlemen were put to the question, in order to extort from them a confession of their guilt: the more obstinate perished in the hands of their tormentors: several, to procure immediate ease in the violence of their agonies, acknowledged whatever was required of them: forged confessions were imputed to others: and Philip, as if their guilt were now certain, proceeded to a confiscation of all their treasures. But no sooner were the templars relieved from their tortures, than, preferring the most cruel execution to a life with infamy, they disavowed their confessions, exclaimed against the forgeries, justified the innocence of their order, and appealed to all the gallant actions performed by them in ancient or later times, as a full apology for their conduct. The tyrant, enraged at this disappointment, and thinking himself now engaged in honor to proceed to extremities, ordered fifty-four of them, whom he branded as relapsed heretics, to perish by the punishment of fire in his capital: great numbers expired, after a like manner, in other parts of the kingdom: and when he found that the perseverance of these unhappy victims, in justifying to the last their innocence, had made deep impression on the spectators, he endeavored to overcome the constancy of the templars by new inhumanities. The grand master of the order, John de Molay, and another great officer, brother to the sovereign of Dauphiny, were conducted to a scaffold erected before the church of Notredame, at Paris: a full pardon was offered them on the one hand; the fire destined for their execution was shown them on the other: these gallant nobles still persisted in the protestations of their own innocence and that of their order; and were instantly hurried into the flames by the executioner. [2]

* It was pretended that he kissed the knights who received him on the mouth, navel, and breech. Dupuy, , 6. Walsing, .

* * Vertot, vol. ii. .

In all this barbarous injustice, Clement V., who was the creature of Philip, and then resided in France, fully concurred; and without examining a witness, or making any inquiry into the truth of facts, he summarily, by the plenitude of his apostolic power, abolished the whole order. The templars all over Europe were thrown into prison; their conduct underwent a strict scrutiny; the power of their enemies still pursued and oppressed them; but nowhere, except in France, were the smallest traces of their guilt pretended to be found. England sent an ample testimony of their piety and morals; but as the order was now annihilated, the knights were distributed into several convents, and their possessions were, by command of the pope, transferred to the order of St. John. [1] We now proceed to relate some other detached transactions of the present period.

The kingdom of England was afflicted with a grievous famine during several years of this reign. Perpetual rains and cold weather not only destroyed the harvest, but bred a mortality among the cattle, and raised every kind of food to an enormous price. [2] The parliament in 1315 endeavored to fix more moderate rates to commodities! not sensible that such an attempt was impracticable, and that, were it possible to reduce the price of provisions by any other expedient than by introducing plenty, nothing could be more pernicious and destructive to the public. Where the produce of a year, for instance, falls so far short as to afford full subsistence only for nine months, the only expedient for making it last all the twelve, is to raise the prices, to put the people by that means on short allowance, and oblige them to save their food till a more plentiful season. But in reality the increase of prices is a necessary consequence of scarcity; and laws, instead of preventing it, only aggravate the evil, by cramping and restraining commerce. The parliament accordingly, in the ensuing year, repealed their ordinance, which they had found useless and burdensome. [3]

The prices affixed by the parliament are somewhat remarkable: three pounds twelve shillings of our present money for the best stalled ox; for other oxen, two pounds eight shillings; a fat hog of two years old, ten shillings; a fat wether unshorn, a crown; if shorn, three shillings and sixpence; a fat goose, sevenpence halfpenny; a fat capon, sixpence; a fat hen, threepence; two chickens, threepence; four pigeons, threepence; two dozen of eggs, threepence. [4]

If we consider these prices, we shall find that butcher’s meat, in this time of great scarcity, must still have been sold, by the parliamentary ordinance, three times cheaper than our middling prices at present; poultry somewhat lower, because, being now considered as a delicacy, it has risen beyond its proportion. In the country places of Ireland and Scotland, where delicacies bear no price, poultry is at present as cheap, if not cheaper than butcher’s meat. But the inference I would draw from the comparison of prices is still more considerable: I suppose that the rates affixed by parliament were inferior to the usual market prices in those years of famine and mortality of cattle; and that these commodities, instead of a third, had really risen to a half of the present value. But the famine at that time was so consuming, that wheat was sometimes sold for above four pounds ten shillings a quarter, [1] usually for three pounds; [2] that is, twice our middling prices: a certain proof of the wretched state of tillage in those ages. We formerly found, that the middling price of corn in that period was half of the present price; while the middling price of cattle was only an eighth part: we here find the same immense disproportion in years of scarcity. It may thence be inferred with certainty, that the raising of corn was a species of manufactory, which few

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* Rymer, vol. iii. , 956; vol. iv. . Ypod. Neust.

* * Trivet, Cont. , 18.

* * * Walsing .

* * * * Rot. Parl. 7 Edw. II. n. 35, 36. Ypod. Neust. .

in that age could practise with advantage: and there is reason to think, that other manufactures, more refined, were sold even beyond their present prices; at least, there is a demonstration for it in the reign of Henry VII., from the rates affixed to scarlet and other broadcloth by act of parliament. During all those times it was usual for the princes and great nobility to make settlements of their velvet beds and silken robes, in the same manner as of their estates and manors. [3] In the list of jewels and plate which had belonged to the ostentatious Gavaston, and which the king recovered from the earl of Lancaster after the murder of that favorite, we find some embroidered girdles, flowered shirts, and silk waistcoats. [4]

* Murimuth, . Walsingham () says it rose to six pounds.

* * Ypod. Neust. . Trivet Cont. .

* * * Dugdale, passim.

* * * * Rymer, vol. iii.

It was afterwards one article of accusation against that potent and opulent earl, when he was put to death, that he had purloined some of that finery of Gavaston's. The ignorance of those ages in manufactures, and still more their unskilful husbandry, seem a clear proof that the country was then far from being populous.

All trade and manufactures, indeed, were then at a very low ebb. The only country in the northern parts of Europe, where they seem to have risen to any tolerable degree of improvement, was Flanders. When Robert, earl of that country, was applied to by the king, and was desired to break off commerce with the Scots, whom Edward called his rebels, and represented as excommunicated on that account by the church, the earl replied, that Flanders was always considered as common, and free and open to all nations. [1]

The petition of the elder Spenser to parliament, complaining of the devastation committed on his lands by the barons, contains several particulars which are curious, and discover the manners of the age. [2]

* Rymer, vol. iii. .

* * Brady's Hist. vol. ii. , from Claus. 15 Edw-II. M, 14 Dors. in cedula.

He affirms, that they had ravaged sixty-three manors belonging to him, and he makes his losses amount to forty-six thousand pounds; that is, to one hundred and thirty-eight thousand of our present money. Among other particulars, he enumerates twenty-eight thousand sheep, one thousand oxen and heifers, twelve hundred cows with their breed for two years, five hundred and sixty cart-horses, two thousand hogs, together with six hundred bacons, eighty carcasses of beef, and six hundred muttons in the larder; ten tuns of cider, arms for two hundred men, and other warlike engines and provisions. The plain inference is, that the greater part of Spenser's vast estate, as well as the estates of the other nobility, was farmed by the landlord himself, managed by his stewards or bailiffs, and cultivated by his villains. Little or none of it was let on lease to husbandmen: its produce was consumed in rustic hospitality by the baron or his officers: a great number of idle retainers, ready for any disorder or mischief, were maintained by him: all who lived upon his estate were absolutely at his disposal: instead of applying to courts of justice, he usually sought redress by open force and violence: the great nobility were a kind of independent potentates, who, if they submitted to any regulations at all, were less governed by the municipal law than by a rude species of the law of nations. The method in which we find they treated the king's favorites and ministers, is a proof of their usual way of dealing with each other. A party which complains of the arbitrary conduct of ministers, ought naturally to affect a great regard for the laws and constitution, and maintain at least the appearance of justice in their proceedings; yet those barons, when discontented, came to parliament with an armed force, constrained the king to assent to their measures, and without any trial, or witness, or conviction, passed, from the pretended notoriety of facts, an act of banishment or attainder against the minister, which, on the first revolution of fortune, was reversed by like expedients. The parliament during factious times was nothing but the organ of present power. Though the persons of whom it was chiefly composed seemed to enjoy great independence, they really possessed no true liberty; and the security of each individual among them was not so much derived from the general protection of law, as from his own private power and that of his confederates. The authority of the monarch, though far from absolute, was irregular, and might often reach him: the current of a faction might overwhelm him: a hundred considerations of benefits and injuries, friendships and animosities, hopes and fears, were able to influence his conduct; and amidst these motives, a regard to equity, and law, and justice was commonly, in those rude ages, of little moment. Nor did any man entertain thoughts of opposing present power, who did not deem himself strong enough to dispute the field with it by force, and was not prepared to give battle to the sovereign or the ruling party.

Before I conclude this reign, I cannot forbear making another remark, drawn from the detail of losses given in by the elder Spenser; particularly the great quantity of salted meat which he had in his larder, six hundred bacons, eighty carcasses of beef, six hundred muttons. We may observe, that the outrage of which he complained began after the third of May, or the eleventh, new style, as we learn from the same paper. It is easy, therefore, to conjecture what a vast store of the same kind he must have laid up at the beginning of winter; and we may draw a new conclusion with regard to the wretched state of ancient husbandry, which could not provide subsistence for the cattle during winter, even in such a temperate climate as the south of England; for Spenser had but one manor so far north as Yorkshire. There being few or no enclosures, except perhaps for deer, no sown grass, little hay, and no other resource for feeding cattle, the barons, as well as the people, were obliged to kill and salt their oxen and sheep in the beginning of winter, before they became lean upon the common pasture; a precaution still practised with regard to oxen in the least cultivated parts of this island. The salting of mutton is a miserable expedient, which has every where been long disused. From this circumstance, however trivial in appearance, may be drawn important inferences with regard to the domestic economy and manner of life in those ages.

The disorders of the times, from foreign wars and intestine dissensions, but above all, the cruel famine, which obliged the nobility to dismiss many of their retainers, increased the number of robbers in the kingdom; and no place was secure from their incursions. [1] They met in troops like armies, and over-ran the country. Two cardinals themselves, the pope’s legates, notwithstanding the numerous train which attended them, were robbed and despoiled of their goods and equipage, when they travelled on the highway. [2]

Among the other wild fancies of the age, it was imagined, that the persons affected with leprosy (a disease at that time very common, probably from bad diet) had conspired with the Saracens to poison all the springs and fountains; and men, being glad of any pretence to get rid of those who were a burden to them, many of those unhappy people were burnt alive on this chimerical imputation. Several Jews, also, were punished in their persons, and their goods were confiscated on the same account. [3]

* Ypod. Neust. . Walsing. .

* * Ypod Neust. . T. de la More, . Trivet, Cont. p, 22. Murimuth, .

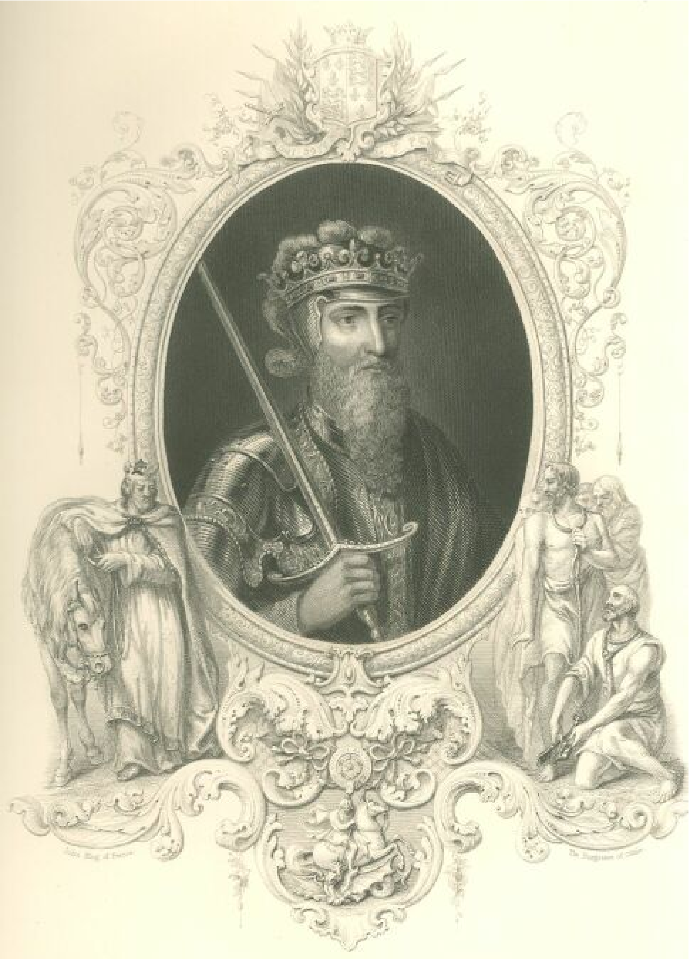
* * * Ypod. Neust. .

Stowe, in his Survey of London, gives us a curious instance of the hospitality of the ancient nobility in this period; it is taken from the accounts of the cofferer or steward of Thomas earl of Lancaster, and contains the expenses of that earl during the year 1313, which was not a year of famine. For the pantry, buttery, and kitchen, three thousand four hundred and five pounds. For three hundred and sixty-nine pipes of red wine, and two of white, one hundred and four pounds, etc. The whole, seven thousand three hundred and nine pounds; that is, near twenty-two thousand pounds of our present money; and making allowance for the cheapness of commodities, near a hundred thousand pounds.

I have seen a French manuscript, containing accounts of some private disbursements of this king. There is an article, among others, of a crown paid to one for making the king laugh. To judge by the events of the reign, this ought not to have been an easy undertaking.

This king left four children, two sons and two daughters: Edward, his eldest son and successor; John, created afterwards earl of Cornwall, who died young at Perth; Jane, afterwards married to David Bruce, king of Scotland; and Eleanor, married to Reginald, count of Gueldres.

CHAPTER XV.


John King of France
The Burgesses of Calais

EDWARD III.

From a Painting in Windsor Castle.

EDWARD III.

1327.

The violent party which had taken arms against Edward II., and finally deposed that unfortunate monarch, deemed it requisite for their future security to pay so far an exterior obeisance to the law, as to desire a parliamentary indemnity for all their illegal proceedings; on account of the necessity which, it was pretended, they lay under, of employing force against the Spensers and other evil counsellors, enemies of the kingdom. All the attainders, also, which had passed against the earl of Lancaster and his adherents, when the chance of war turned against them, were easily reversed during the triumph of their party; [1] and the Spensers, whose former attainder had been reversed by parliament, were now again, in this change of fortune, condemned by the votes of their enemies.

* Rymer, vol. iv. , 267, 258, etc.

A council of regency was likewise appointed by parliament, consisting of twelve persons; five prelates, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops of Winchester, Worcester, and Hereford; and seven lay peers, the earls of Norfolk, Kent, and Surrey, and the lords Wake, Ingham, Piercy, and Ross. The earl of Lancaster was appointed guardian and protector of the king’s person. But though it was reasonable to expect that, as the weakness of the former king had given reins to the licentiousness of the barons, great domestic tranquillity would not prevail during the present minority; the first disturbance arose from an invasion by foreign enemies.

The king of Scots, declining in years and health, but retaining still that martial spirit which had raised his nation from the lowest ebb of fortune, deemed the present opportunity favorable for infesting England. He first made an attempt on the Castle of Norham, in which he was disappointed; he then collected an army of twenty-five thousand men on the frontiers, and having given the command to the earl of Murray and Lord Douglas, threatened an incursion into the northern counties. The English regency, after trying in vain every expedient to restore peace with Scotland, made vigorous preparations for war; and besides assembling an English army of near sixty thousand men, they invited back John of Hainault, and some foreign cavalry whom they had dismissed, and whose discipline and arms had appeared superior to those of their own country. Young Edward himself, burning with a passion for military fame, appeared at the head of these numerous forces; and marched from Durham, the appointed place of rendezvous, in quest of the enemy, who had already broken into the frontiers, and were laying every thing waste around them.

Murray and Douglas were the two most celebrated warriors, bred in the long hostilities between the Scots and English; and their forces, trained in the same school, and inured to hardships, fatigues, and dangers, were perfectly qualified, by their habits and manner of life, for that desultory and destructive war which they carried into England. Except a body of about four thousand cavalry, well armed, and fit to make a steady impression in battle, the rest of the army were light-armed troops, mounted on small horses, which found subsistence every where, and carried them with rapid and unexpected marches, whether they meant to commit depredations on the peaceable inhabitants, or to attack an armed enemy, or to retreat into their own country. Their whole equipage consisted of a bag of oatmeal, which, as a supply in case of necessity, each soldier carried behind him; together with a light plate of iron, on which he instantly baked the meal into a cake in the open fields. But his chief subsistence was the cattle which he seized; and his cookery was as expeditious as all his other operations. After flaying the animal, he placed the skin, loose and hanging in the form of a bag, upon some stakes; he poured water into it, kindled a fire below, and thus made it serve as a caldron for the boiling of his victuals. [1]

* Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

The chief difficulty which Edward met with, after composing some dangerous frays which broke out between his foreign forces and the English, [1] was to come up with an army so rapid in its marches, and so little encumbered in its motions. Though the flame and smoke of burning villages directed him sufficiently to the place of their encampment, he found, upon hurrying thither, that they had already dislodged; and he soon discovered, by new marks of devastation, that they had removed to some distant quarter. After harassing his army during some time in this fruitless chase, he advanced northwards, and crossed the Tyne, with a resolution of awaiting them on their return homewards, and taking vengeance for all their depredations. [2] But that whole country was already so much wasted by their frequent incursions, that it could not afford subsistence to his army; and he was obliged again to return southwards, and change his plan of operations. He had now lost all track of the enemy; and though he promised the reward of a hundred pounds a year to any one who should bring him an account of their motions, he remained inactive some days before he received any intelligence of them. [3] He found at last that they had fixed their camp on the southern banks of the Were, as if they intended to await a battle; but their prudent leaders had chosen the ground with such judgment, that the English, on their approach, saw it impracticable, without temerity, to cross the river in their front, and attack them in their present situation. Edward, impatient for revenge and glory, here sent them a defiance, and challenged them, if they dared, to meet him in an equal field, and try the fortune of arms. The bold spirit of Douglas could ill brook this bravado, and he advised the acceptance of the challenge; but he was overruled by Murray, who replied to Edward that he never took the counsel of an enemy in any of his operations. The king, therefore, kept still his position opposite to the Scots; and daily expected that necessity would oblige them to change their quarters, and give him an opportunity of overwhelming them with superior forces. After a few days, they suddenly decamped, and marched farther up the river; but still posted themselves in such a manner as to preserve the advantage of the ground if the enemy should venture to attack them. [4]

* Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

* * * Rymer, vol. iv. . Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

* * * * Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

Edward insisted that all hazards should be run, rather than allow these ravagers to escape with impunity; but Mortimer’s authority prevented the attack, and opposed itself to the valor of the young monarch. While the armies lay in this position, an incident happened which had well nigh proved fatal to the English. Douglas, having gotten the word, and surveyed exactly the situation of the English camp, entered it secretly in the night-time, with a body of two hundred determined soldiers, and advanced to the royal tent, with a view of killing or carrying off the king in the midst of his army. But some of Edward's attendants, awaking in that critical moment, made resistance; his chaplain and chamberlain sacrificed their lives for his safety; the king himself, after making a valorous defence, escaped in the dark; and Douglas, having lost the greater part of his followers, was glad to make a hasty retreat with the remainder. [1] Soon after, the Scottish army decamped without noise in the dead of night; and having thus gotten the start of the English, arrived without further loss in their own country. Edward, on entering the place of the Scottish encampment, found only six Englishmen, whom the enemy, after breaking their legs, had tied to trees, in order to prevent their carrying any intelligence to their countrymen. [2]

The king was highly incensed at the disappointment which he had met with in his first enterprise, and at the head of so gallant an army. The symptoms which he had discovered of bravery and spirit gave extreme satisfaction, and were regarded as sure prognostics of an illustrious reign: but the general displeasure fell violently on Mortimer, who was already the object of public odium; and every measure which he pursued tended to aggravate, beyond all bounds, the hatred of the nation both against him and Queen Isabella.

When the council of regency was formed, Mortimer, though in the plenitude of his power, had taken no care to insure a place in it; but this semblance of moderation was only a cover to the most iniquitous and most ambitious projects. He rendered that council entirely useless, by usurping to himself the whole sovereign authority; he settled on the queen dowager the greater part of the royal revenues; he never consulted either the princes of the blood or the nobility in any public measure; the king himself was so besieged by his creatures, that no access could be procured to him; and all

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* Froissard, liv. iv. cha. Heming. . Ypod. Neust. . Knyghton, p 2552.

* * Froissard, liv. iv. cha.

the envy which had attended Gavaston and Spenser fell much more deservedly on the new favorite.

1328.

Mortimer, sensible of the growing hatred of the people, thought it requisite on any terms to secure peace abroad; and he entered into a negotiation with Robert Bruce for that purpose. As the claim of superiority in England, more than any other cause, had tended to inflame the animosities between the two nations, Mortimer, besides stipulating a marriage between Jane, sister of Edward, and David, the son and heir of Robert, consented to resign absolutely this claim, to give up all the homages done by the Scottish parliament and nobility, and to acknowledge Robert as independent sovereign of Scotland. [1] In return for these advantages, Robert stipulated the payment of thirty thousand marks to England. This treaty was ratified by parliament; [2] but was nevertheless the source of great discontent among the people, who, having entered zealously into the pretensions of Edward I., and deeming themselves disgraced by the successful resistance made by so inferior a nation, were disappointed, by this treaty, in all future hopes both of conquest and of vengeance.

The princes of the blood, Kent, Norfolk, and Lancaster, were much united in their councils; and Mortimer entertained great suspicions of their designs against him. In summoning them to parliament, he strictly prohibited them, in the king's name, from coming attended by an armed force; an illegal but usual practice in that age. The three earls, as they approached to Salisbury, the place appointed for the meeting of parliament, found, that though they themselves, in obedience to the king's command, had brought only their usual retinue with them, Mortimer and his party were attended by all their followers in arms; and they began with some reason to apprehend a dangerous design against their persons. They retreated, assembled their retainers, and were returning with an army to take vengeance on Mortimer; when the weakness of Kent and Norfolk, who deserted the common cause, obliged Lancaster also to make his submissions. [3]

* Rymer, . Heming. . Anon. Hist .

* * Ypod, Neust. .

* * * Knyghton, .

The quarrel by the interposition of the prelates, seemed for the present to be appeased.

1329.

But Mortimer, in order to intimidate the princes, determined to have a victim; and the simplicity, with the good intentions of the earl of Kent, afforded him soon after an opportunity of practising upon him. By himself and his emissaries he endeavored to persuade that prince that his brother, King Edward, was still alive, and detained in some secret prison in England. The earl, whose remorses for the part which he had acted against the late king probably inclined him to give credit to this intelligence, entered into a design of restoring him to liberty, of reinstating him on the throne, and of making thereby some atonement for the injuries which he himself had unwarily done him. [1]

1330.

After this harmless contrivance had been allowed to proceed a certain length, the earl was seized by Mortimer, was accused before the parliament, and condemned, by those slavish though turbulent barons, to lose his life and fortune. The queen and Mortimer, apprehensive of young Edward’s lenity towards his uncle, hurried on the execution, and the prisoner was beheaded next day: but so general was the affection borne him, and such pity prevailed for his unhappy fate, that, though peers had been easily found to condemn him, it was evening before his enemies could find an executioner to perform the office. [2]

* Avesbury, . Anon. Hist. .

* * Heming. . Ypod. Neust. . Knyghton, .

The earl of Lancaster, on pretence of his having assented to this conspiracy, was soon after thrown into prison: many of the prelates and nobility were prosecuted: Mortimer employed this engine to crush all his enemies, and to enrich himself and his family by the forfeitures. The estate of the earl of Kent was seized for his younger son, Geoffrey: the immense fortunes of the Spensers and their adherents were mostly converted to his own use: he affected a state and dignity equal or superior to the royal: his power became formidable to every one: his illegal practices were daily complained of: and all parties, forgetting past animosities, conspired in their hatred of Mortimer.

It was impossible that these abuses could long escape the observation of a prince endowed with so much spirit and judgment as young Edward, who, being now in his eighteenth year, and feeling himself capable of governing, repined at being held in fetters by this insolent minister. But so much was he surrounded by the emissaries of Mortimer, that it behoved him to conduct the project for subverting him with the same secrecy and precaution as if he had been forming a conspiracy against his sovereign. He communicated his intentions to Lord Mountacute, who engaged the Lords Molins and Clifford, Sir John Nevil of Hornby, Sir Edward Bohun, Ufford, and others, to enter into their views; and the Castle of Nottingham was chosen for the scene of the enterprise. The queen dowager and Mortimer lodged in that fortress: the king also was admitted, though with a few only of his attendants: and as the castle was strictly guarded, the gates locked every evening, and the keys carried to the queen, it became necessary to communicate the design to Sir William Eland, the governor, who zealously took part in it. By his direction, the king's associates were admitted through a subterraneous passage, which had formerly been contrived for a secret outlet from the castle, but was now buried in rubbish; and Mortimer, without having it in his power to make resistance, was suddenly seized in an apartment adjoining to the queen's. [1] A parliament was immediately summoned for his condemnation. He was accused before that assembly of having usurped regal power from the council of regency appointed by parliament; of having procured the death of the late king; of having deceived the earl of Kent into a conspiracy to restore that prince; of having solicited and obtained exorbitant grants of the royal demesnes; of having dissipated the public treasure; of secreting twenty thousand marks of the money paid by the king of Scotland; and of other crimes and misdemeanors. [2] The parliament condemned him from the supposed notoriety of the facts, without trial, or hearing his answer, or examining a witness; and he was hanged on a gibbet at the Elmes, in the neighborhood of London. It is remarkable, that this sentence was near twenty years after reversed by parliament, in favor of Mortimer’s son; and the reason assigned was, the illegal manner of proceeding. [3] The principles of law and justice were established in England, not in such a degree as to prevent any iniquitous sentence against a person obnoxious to the ruling party; but sufficient, on the return of his credit, or that of his friends, to serve as a reason or pretence for its reversal.

* Avesbury, .

* * Brady’s App. No. 83. Anon. Hist. , 398. Knyghton, .

* * * Cotton’s Abridg. , 86.

1331.

Justice was also executed by a sentence of the house of peers on some of the inferior criminals, particularly on Simon de Bereford: but the barons, in that act of jurisdiction, entered a protest, that though they had tried Bereford, who was none of their peers, they should not for the future be obliged to receive any such indictment. The queen was confined to her own house at Risings, near London: her revenue was reduced to four thousand pounds a year: [1] and though the king, during the remainder of her life, paid her a decent visit once or twice a year, she never was able to reinstate herself in any credit or authority.

Edward, having now taken the reins of government into his own hands, applied himself, with industry and judgment, to redress all those grievances which had proceeded either from want of authority in the crown, or from the late abuses of it. He issued writs to the judges, enjoining them to administer justice, without paying any regard to arbitrary orders from the ministers: and as the robbers, thieves, murderers, and criminals of all kinds, had, during the course of public convulsions, multiplied to an enormous degree, and were openly protected by the great barons, who made use of them against their enemies, the king, after exacting from the peers a solemn promise in parliament, that they would break off all connections with such malefactors, [2] set himself in earnest to remedy the evil. Many of these gangs had become so numerous as to require his own presence to disperse them; and he exerted both courage and industry in executing this salutary office. The ministers of justice, from his example, employed the utmost diligence in discovering, pursuing, and punishing the criminals; and this disorder was by degrees corrected, at least palliated; the utmost that could be expected with regard to a disease hitherto inherent in the constitution.

* Cotton’s Abridg.

* * Cotton’s Abridg. .

In proportion as the government acquired authority at home, it became formidable to the neighboring nations; and the ambitious spirit of Edward sought, and soon found, an opportunity of exerting itself. The wise and valiant Robert Bruce, who had recovered by arms the independence of his country, and had fixed it by the last treaty of peace with England, soon after died, and left David his son, a minor, under the guardianship of Randolph, earl of Murray, the companion of all his victories. It had been stipulated in this treaty, that both the Scottish nobility who, before the commencement of the wars enjoyed lands in England, and the English who inherited estates in Scotland, should be restored to their respective possessions: [1] but though this article had been executed pretty regularly on the part of Edward, Robert, who observed that the estates claimed by Englishmen were much more numerous and valuable than the others, either thought it dangerous to admit so many secret enemies into the kingdom, or found it difficult to wrest from his own followers the possessions bestowed on them as the reward of former services; and he had protracted the performance of his part of the stipulation. The English nobles, disappointed in their expectations, began to think of a remedy; and as their influence was great in the north, their enmity alone, even though unsupported by the King of England, became dangerous to the minor prince who succeeded to the Scottish throne.

1332.

Edward Baliol, the son of that John who was crowned king of Scotland, had been detained some time a prisoner in England after his father was released; but having also obtained his liberty, he went over to France, and resided in Normandy, on his patrimonial estate in that country, without any thoughts of reviving the claims of his family to the crown of Scotland. His pretensions, however plausible, had been so strenuously abjured by the Scots and rejected by the English, that he was universally regarded as a private person; and he had been thrown into prison on account of some private offence of which he was accused. Lord Beaumont, a great English baron, who, in the right of his wife, claimed the earldom of Buchan in Scotland, [2] found him in this situation; and deeming him a proper instrument for his purpose, made such interest with the king of France, who was not aware of the consequences, that he recovered him his liberty, and brought him over with him to England.

* Rymer, vol. iv. .

* * Rymer, vol. iv. .

The injured nobles, possessed of such a head, began to think of vindicating their rights by force of arms; and they applied to Edward for his concurrence and assistance. But there were several reasons which deterred the king from openly avowing their enterprise. In his treaty with Scotland he had entered into a bond of twenty thousand pounds, payable to the pope, if within four years he violated the peace; and as the term was not yet elapsed, he dreaded the exacting of that penalty by the sovereign pontiff, who possessed so many means of forcing princes to make payment. He was also afraid that violence and injustice would every where be imputed to him, if he attacked with superior force a minor king, and a brother-in-law, whose independent title had so lately been acknowledged by a solemn treaty. And as the regent of Scotland, on every demand which had been made of restitution to the English barons, had always confessed the justice of their claim, and had only given an evasive answer, grounded on plausible pretences, Edward resolved not to proceed by open violence, but to employ like artifices against him. He secretly encouraged Baliol in his enterprise; connived at his assembling forces in the north; and gave countenance to the nobles who were disposed to join in the attempt. A force of near two thousand five hundred men was enlisted under Baliol, by Umfreville, earl of Angus, the lords Beaumont, Ferrars, Fitz-warin, Wake, Stafford, Talbot, and Moubray. As these adventurers apprehended that the frontiers would be strongly armed and guarded, they resolved to make their attack by sea; and having embarked at Ravenspur, they reached in a few days the coast of Fife.

Scotland was at that time in a very different situation from that in which it had appeared under the victorious Robert. Besides the loss of that great monarch, whose genius and authority preserved entire the whole political fabric, and maintained a union among the unruly barons, Lord Douglas, impatient of rest, had gone over to Spain in a crusade against the Moors, and had there perished in battle: [1] the earl of Murray, who had long been declining through age and infirmities, had lately died, and had been succeeded in the regency by Donald, earl of Marre, a man of much inferior talents: the military spirit of the Scots, though still unbroken, was left without a proper guidance and direction: and a minor king seemed ill qualified to defend an inheritance, which it had required all the consummate valor and abilities of his father to acquire and maintain.

But as the Scots were apprised of the intended invasion, great numbers, on the appearance of the English fleet, immediately ran to the shore, in order to prevent the landing of the enemy. Baliol had valor and activity, and he drove back the Scots with considerable loss. [1] He marched westward into the heart of the country; flattering himself that the ancient partisans of his family would declare for him. But the fierce animosities which had been kindled between the two nations, inspiring the Scots with a strong prejudice against a prince supported by the English, he was regarded as a common enemy; and the regent found no difficulty in assembling a great army to oppose him. It is pretended that Marre had no less than forty thousand men under his banners; but the same hurry and impatience that made him collect a force, which, from its greatness, was so disproportioned to the occasion, rendered all his motions unskilful and imprudent. The River Erne ran between the two armies; and the Scots, confiding in that security, as well as in their great superiority of numbers, kept no order in their encampment. Baliol passed the river in the night-time; attacked the unguarded and undisciplined Scots; threw them into confusion, which was increased by the darkness, and by their very numbers, to which they trusted; and he beat

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* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

them off the field with great slaughter. [2] But in the morning, when the Scots were at some distance, they were ashamed of having yielded the victory to so weak a foe, and they hurried back to recover the honor of the day. Their eager passions urged them precipitately to battle, without regard to some broken ground which lay between them and the enemy, and which disordered and confounded their ranks. Baliol seized the favorable opportunity, advanced his troops upon them, prevented them from rallying, and anew chased them off the field with redoubled slaughter. There fell above twelve thousand Scots in this action; and among these the flower of their nobility; the regent himself, the earl of Carrick, a natural son of their late king, the earls of Athole and Monteith, lord Hay of Errol, constable, and the lords Keith and Lindsey. The loss of the English scarcely exceeded thirty men; a strong proof, among many others, of the miserable state of military discipline in those ages. [3]

* Heming. . Walsing. . Knyghton, .

* * Knyghton, .

* * * Heming. . Walsing. . Knyghton, .

Baliol soon after made himself master of Perth; but still was not able to bring over any of the Scots to his party. Patric Dunbar, earl of Marche, and Sir Archibald Douglas, brother to the lord of that name, appeared at the head of the Scottish armies, which amounted still to near forty thousand men; and they purposed to reduce Baliol and the English by famine. They blockaded Perth by land; they collected some vessels with which they invested it by water; but Baliol's ships, attacking the Scottish fleet, gained a complete victory, and opened the communication between Perth and the sea. [1] The Scotch armies were then obliged to disband for want of pay and subsistence: the nation was in effect subdued by a handful of men: each nobleman who found himself most exposed to danger, successively submitted to Baliol: that prince was crowned at Scone: David, his competitor, was sent over to France with his betrothed wife Jane, sister to Edward: and the heads of his party sued to Baliol for a truce, which he granted them, in order to assemble a parliament in tranquillity, and have his title recognized by the whole Scottish nation.

* Heming . Knyghton, .

1333.

But Baliol’s imprudence, or his necessities, making him dismiss the greater part of his English followers, he was, notwithstanding the truce, attacked of a sudden near Annan, by Sir Archibald Douglas and other chieftains of that party; he was routed; his brother, John Baliol, was slain; he himself was chased into England in a miserable condition; and thus lost his kingdom by a revolution as sudden as that by which he had acquired it.

While Baliol enjoyed his short-lived and precarious royalty, he had been sensible that, without the protection of England, it would be impossible for him to maintain possession of the throne; and he had secretly sent a message to Edward, offering to acknowledge his superiority, to renew the homage for his crown, and to espouse the princess Jane, if the pope’s consent could be obtained for dissolving her former marriage, which was not yet consummated. Edward, ambitious of recovering that important concession, made by Mortimer during his minority, threw off all scruples, and willingly accepted the offer; but as the dethroning of Baliol had rendered this stipulation of no effect, the king prepared to reinstate him in possession of the crown; an enterprise which appeared from late experience so easy and so little hazardous. As he possessed many popular arts, he consulted his parliament on the occasion; but that assembly, finding the resolution already taken, declined giving any opinion, and only granted him, in order to support the enterprise, an aid of a fifteenth from the personal estates of the nobility and gentry, and a tenth of the movables of boroughs. And they added a petition, that the king would thenceforth live on his own revenue, without grieving his subjects by illegal taxes, or by the outrageous seizure of their goods in the shape of purveyance. [1]

As the Scots expected that the chief brunt of the war would fall upon Berwick, Douglas, the regent, threw a strong garrison into that place, under the command of Sir William Keith, and he himself assembled a great army on the frontiers, ready to penetrate into England as soon as Edward should have invested that place. The English army was less numerous, but better supplied with arms and provisions, and retained in stricter discipline; and the king, notwithstanding the valiant defence made by Keith, had in two months reduced the garrison to extremities, and had obliged them to capitulate: they engaged to surrender, if they were not relieved within a few days by their countrymen. [2] This intelligence being conveyed to the Scottish army, which was preparing to invade Northumberland, changed their plan of operations, and engaged them to advance towards Berwick, and attempt the relief of that important fortress. Douglas, who had ever purposed to decline a pitched battle, in which he was sensible of the enemy's superiority, and who intended to have drawn out the war by small skirmishes, and by mutually ravaging each other's country, was forced, by the impatience of his troops, to put the fate of the kingdom upon the event of one day. He attacked the English at Halidown Hill, a little north of Berwick; and though his heavy-armed cavalry dismounted, in order to render the action more steady and desperate, they were received with such valor by Edward, and were so galled by the English archers, that they were soon thrown into disorder and on the fall of Douglas, their general, were totally routed. The whole army fled in confusion, and the English, but much more the Irish, gave little quarter in the pursuit: all the nobles of chief distinction were either slain or taken prisoners: near thirty thousand of the Scots fell in the action; while the loss of the English amounted only to one knight, one esquire, and thirteen private soldiers; an inequality almost incredible. [3]

* Cotton's Abridg.

* * Rymer, vol. iv. , 565, 566

* * * Heming. , 276, 277. Knyghton, . Otterborne, p 115.

After this fatal blow, the Scottish nobles had no other resource than instant submission; and Edward, leaving a considerable body with Baliol to complete the conquest of the kingdom, returned with the remainder of his army to England. Baliol was acknowledged king by a parliament assembled at Edinburgh; [1] the superiority of England was again recognized; many of the Scottish nobility swore fealty to Edward; and to complete the misfortunes of that nation, Baliol ceded Berwick, Dunbar, Roxburgh, Edinburgh, and all the south-east counties of Scotland, which were declared to be forever annexed to the English monarchy. [2]

* Rymer vol. v. .

* * Rymer, vol. iv. .

1334.

If Baliol on his first appearance was dreaded by the Scots, as an instrument employed by England for the subjection of the kingdom, this deed confirmed all their suspicions, and rendered him the object of universal hatred. Whatever submissions they might be obliged to make, they considered him not as their prince, but as the delegate and confederate of their determined enemy: and neither the manners of the age, nor the state of Edward’s revenue, permitting him to maintain a standing army in Scotland, the English forces were no sooner withdrawn, than the Scots revolted from Baliol, and returned to their former allegiance under Bruce. Sir Andrew Murray, appointed regent by the party of this latter prince, employed with success his valor and activity in many small but decisive actions against Baliol; and in a short time had almost wholly expelled him the kingdom.

1335.

Edward was obliged again to assemble an army, and to march into Scotland: the Scots, taught by experience, withdrew into their hills and fastnesses: he destroyed the houses and ravaged the estates of those whom he called rebels: but this confirmed them still further in their obstinate antipathy to England and to Baliol; and being now rendered desperate, they were ready to take advantage, on the first opportunity, of the retreat of their enemy, and they soon reconquered their country from the English.

1336.

Edward made anew his appearance in Scotland with like success: he found every thing hostile in the kingdom, except the spot on which he was encamped: and though he marched uncontrolled over the low countries, the nation itself was farther than ever from being broken and subdued. Besides being supported by their pride and anger, passions difficult to tame, they were encouraged, amidst all their calamities, by daily promises of relief from France; and as war was now likely to break out between that kingdom and England, they had reason to expect, from this incident, a great diversion of that force which had so long oppressed and overwhelmed them.

1337.

We now come to a transaction on which depended the most memorable events, not only of this long and active reign, but of the whole English and French history during more than a century; and it will therefore be necessary to give a particular account of the springs and causes of it.

It had long been a prevailing opinion, that the crown of France could never descend to a female; and in order to give more authority to this maxim, and assign it a determinate origin, it had been usual to derive it from a clause in the Salian code, the law of an ancient tribe among the Franks; though that clause, when strictly examined, carries only the appearance of favoring this principle, and does not really, by the confession of the best antiquaries, bear the sense commonly imposed upon it. But though positive law seems wanting among the French for the exclusion of females, the practice had taken place; and the rule was established beyond controversy on some ancient as well as some modern precedents. During the first race of the monarchy, the Franks were so rude and barbarous a people, that they were incapable of submitting to a female reign; and in that period of their history there were frequent instances of kings advanced to royalty, in prejudice of females who were related to the crown by nearer degrees of consanguinity. These precedents, joined to like causes, had also established the male succession in the second race; and though the instances were neither so frequent nor so certain during that period, the principle of excluding the female line seems still to have prevailed, and to have directed the conduct of the nation. During the third race, the crown had descended from father to son for eleven generations, from Hugh Capet to Lewis Hutin; and thus, in fact, during the course of nine hundred years, the French monarchy had always been governed by males, and no female, and none who founded his title on a female, had ever mounted the throne. Philip the Fair, father of Lewis Hutin, left three sons, this Lewis, Philip the Long, and Charles the Fair, and one daughter, Isabella, queen of England. Lewis Hutin, the eldest, left at his death one daughter, by Margaret, sister to Eudes, duke of Burgundy; and as his queen was then pregnant, Philip, his younger brother, was appointed regent, till it should appear whether the child proved a son or a daughter. The queen bore a male, who lived only a few days: Philip was proclaimed king: and as the duke of Burgundy made some opposition, and asserted the rights of his niece, the states of the kingdom, by a solemn and deliberate decree, gave her an exclusion, and declared all females forever incapable of succeeding to the crown of France. Philip died after a short reign, leaving three daughters; and his brother Charles, without dispute or controversy, then succeeded to the crown. The reign of Charles was also short; he left one daughter; but as his queen was pregnant, the next male heir was appointed regent, with a declared right of succession if the issue should prove female. This prince was Philip de Valois, cousin-german to the deceased king; being the son of Charles de Valois, brother of Philip the Fair. The queen of France was delivered of a daughter: the regency ended; and Philip de Valois was unanimously placed on the throne of France.

The king of England, who was at that time a youth of fifteen years of age, embraced a notion that he was entitled, in right of his mother, to the succession of the kingdom, and that the claim of the nephew was preferable to that of the cousin-german. There could not well be imagined a notion weaker or worse grounded. The principle of excluding females was of old an established opinion in France, and had acquired equal authority with the most express and positive law: it was supported by ancient precedents: it was confirmed by recent instances, solemnly and deliberately decided: and what placed it still farther beyond controversy, if Edward was disposed to question its validity, he thereby cut off his own pretensions; since the three last kings had all left daughters, who were still alive, and who stood before him in the order of succession. He was therefore reduced to assert that, though his mother Isabella was, on account of her sex, incapable of succeeding, he himself, who inherited through her, was liable to no such objection, and might claim by the right of propinquity. But, besides that this pretension was more favorable to Charles, king of Navarre, descended from the daughter of Lewis Hutin, it was so contrary to the established principles of succession in every country of Europe, [1] was so repugnant to the practice both in private and public inheritances, that nobody in France thought of Edward's claim.

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* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

Philip’s title was universally recognized; [1] and he never imagined that he had a competitor, much less so formidable a one as the king of England.

But though the youthful and ambitious mind of Edward had rashly entertained this notion, he did not think proper to insist on his pretensions, which must have immediately involved him, on very unequal terms, in a dangerous and implacable war with so powerful a monarch. Philip was a prince of mature years, of great experience, and at that time of an established character both for prudence and valor; and by these circumstances, as well as by the internal union of his people, and their acquiescence in his undoubted right, he possessed every advantage above a raw youth, newly raised, by injustice and violence, to the government of the most intractable and most turbulent subjects in Europe. But there immediately occurred an incident which required that Edward should either openly declare his pretensions, or forever renounce and abjure them. He was summoned to do homage for Guienne: Philip was preparing to compel him by force of arms: that country was in a very bad state of defence: and the forfeiture of so rich an inheritance was, by the feudal law, the immediate consequence of his refusing or declining to perform the duty of a vassal. Edward therefore thought it prudent to submit to present necessity: he went over to Amiens, did homage to Philip, and as there had arisen some controversy concerning the terms of this submission, he afterwards sent over a formal deed, in which he acknowledged that he owed liege homage to France; [2] which was in effect ratifying, and that in the strongest terms, Philip’s title to the crown of that kingdom. His own claim indeed was so unreasonable, and so thoroughly disavowed by the whole French nation, that to insist on it was no better than pretending to the violent conquest of the kingdom; and it is probable that he would never have further thought of it, had it not been for some incidents which excited an animosity between the monarchs.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. iv. , 481. Froissard, liv. i. cha. Anon, Hist. . Walsing. . Murimuth, . 195

Robert of Artois was descended from the blood royal of France, was a man of great character and authority, had espoused Philip’s sister, and by his birth, talents, and credit was entitled to make the highest figure, and fill the most important offices in the monarchy. This prince had lost the county of Artois, which he claimed as his birthright, by a sentence, commonly deemed iniquitous, of Philip the Fair; and he was seduced to attempt recovering possession by an action so unworthy of his rank and character as a forgery. [1] The detection of this crime covered him with shame and confusion: his brother-in-law not only abandoned him, but prosecuted him with violence: Robert, incapable of bearing disgrace, left the kingdom, and hid himself in the Low Countries: chased from that retreat by the authority of Philip, he came over to England; in spite of the French king's menaces and remonstrances, he was favorably received by Edward; [2] and was soon admitted into the councils and shared the confidence of that monarch. Abandoning himself to all the movements of rage and despair, he endeavored to revive the prepossession entertained by Edward in favor of his title to the crown of France, and even flattered him that it was not impossible for a prince of his valor and abilities to render his claim effectual.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. iv. . Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The king was the more disposed to hearken to suggestions of this nature, because he had, in several particulars, found reason to complain of Philip's conduct with regard to Guienne, and because that prince had both given protection to the exiled David Bruce, and supported, at least encouraged, the Scots in their struggles for independence. Thus resentment gradually filled the breasts of both monarchs, and made them incapable of hearkening to any terms of accommodation proposed by the pope, who never ceased interposing his good offices between them. Philip thought that he should be wanting to the first principles of policy if he abandoned Scotland: Edward affirmed that he must relinquish all pretensions to generosity if he withdrew his protection from Robert. The former, informed of some preparations for hostilities which had been made by his rival, issued a sentence of felony and attainder against Robert, and declared that every vassal of the crown, whether within or without the kingdom, who gave countenance to that traitor, would be involved in the same sentence; a menace easy to be understood: the latter, resolute not to yield, endeavored to form alliances in the Low Countries and on the frontiers of Germany, the only places from which he either could make an effectual attack upon France, or produce such a diversion as might save the province of Guienne, which lay so much exposed to the power of Philip.

The king began with opening his intentions to the count of Hainault, his father-in-law; and having engaged him in his interests, he employed the good offices and councils of that prince in drawing into his alliance the other sovereigns of that neighborhood. The duke of Brabant was induced, by his mediation, and by large remittances of money from England, to promise his concurrence; [1] the archbishop of Cologne, the duke of Gueldres, the marquis of Juliers, the count of Namur, the lords of Fauquemont and Baquen, were engaged by like motives to embrace the English alliance. [2] These sovereign princes could supply, either from their own states or from the bordering countries, great numbers of warlike troops; and nought was wanting to make the force on that quarter very formidable but the accession of Flanders; which Edward procured by means somewhat extraordinary and unusual.

As the Flemings were the first people in the northern parts of Europe that cultivated arts and manufactures, the lower ranks of men among them had risen to a degree of opulence unknown elsewhere to those of their station in that barbarous age; had acquired privileges and independence, and began to emerge from that state of vassalage, or rather of slavery, into which the common people had been universally thrown by the feudal institutions. It was probably difficult for them to bring their sovereign and their nobility to conform themselves to the principles of law and civil government, so much neglected in every other country: it was impossible for them to confine themselves within the proper bounds in their opposition and resentment against any instance of tyranny: they had risen in tumults: had insulted the nobles: had chased their earl into France; and delivering themselves over to the guidance of a seditious leader, had been guilty of all that insolence and disorder to which the thoughtless and enraged populace are so much inclined, wherever they are unfortunate enough to be their own masters. [3]

* Rymer, vol. iv. .

* * Froissard, liv. iv. cha, 33, 36.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Meyerus.

Their present leader was James d’Arteville, a brewer in Ghent, who governed them with a more absolute sway than had ever been assumed by any of their lawful sovereigns: he placed and displaced the magistrates at pleasure: he was accompanied by a guard, who, on the least signal from him, instantly assassinated any man that happened to fall under his displeasure: all the cities of Flanders were full of his spies: and it was immediate death to give him the smallest umbrage: the few nobles who remained in the country, lived in continual terror from his violence: he seized the estates of all those whom he had either banished or murdered; and bestowing part on their wives and children, converted the remainder to his own use.* Such were the first effects that Europe saw of popular violence, after having groaned, during so many ages, under monarchical and aristocratical tyranny.

James d’Arteville was the man to whom Edward addressed himself for bringing over the Flemings to his interests; and that prince, the most haughty and most aspiring of the age, never courted any ally with so much assiduity and so many submissions as he employed towards this seditious and criminal tradesman. D’Arteville, proud of these advances from the king of England, and sensible that the Flemings were naturally inclined to maintain connections with the English who furnished them the materials of their woollen manufactures, the chief source of their opulence, readily embraced the interests of Edward, and invited him over into the Low Countries. Edward, before he entered on this great enterprise, affected to consult his parliament, asked their advice, and obtained their consent. [1] And the more to strengthen his hands, he procured from them a grant of twenty thousand sacks of wool; which might amount to about a hundred thousand pounds: this commodity was a good instrument to employ with the Flemings; and the price of it with his German allies. He completed the other necessary sums by loans, by pawning the crown jewels, by confiscating or rather robbing at once all the Lombards, who now exercised the invidious trade formerly monopolized by the Jews, of lending on interest; [2] and being attended by a body of English forces, and by several of his nobility, he sailed over to Flanders.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha. * Cotton's Abridg.

* * Dugd. Baron, vol. ii. .

1338.

The German princes, in order to justify their unprovoked hostilities against France, had required the sanction of some legal authority; and Edward, that he might give them satisfaction on this head, had applied to Lewis of Bavaria, then emperor, and had been created by him "vicar of the empire;" an empty title, but which seemed to give him a right of commanding the service of the princes of Germany. [1] The Flemings, who were vassals of France, pretending like scruples with regard to the invasion of their liege lord; Edward, by the advice of d'Arteville, assumed, in his commissions, the title of king of France; and, in virtue of this right, claimed their assistance for dethroning Philip de Valois, the usurper of his kingdom. [2]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Heming. . Walsing. .

This step, which he feared would destroy all future amity between the kingdoms, and beget endless and implacable jealousies in France, was not taken by him without much reluctance and hesitation: and not being in itself very justifiable, it has in the issue been attended with many miseries to both kingdoms. From this period we may date the commencement of that great animosity which the English nation have ever since borne to the French, which has so visible an influence on all future transactions, and which has been, and continues to be, the spring of many rash and precipitate resolutions among them. In all the preceding reigns since the conquest, the hostilities between the two crowns had been only casual and temporary; and as they had never been attended with any bloody or dangerous event, the traces of them were easily obliterated by the first treaty of pacification. The English nobility and gentry valued themselves on their French or Norman extraction: they affected to employ the language of that country in all public transactions, and even in familiar conversation; and both the English court and camp being always full of nobles who came from different provinces of France, the two people were, during some centuries, more intermingled together than any two distinct nations whom we meet with in history. But the fatal pretensions of Edward III. dissolved all these connections, and left the seeds of great animosity in both countries, especially among the English. For it is remarkable, that this latter nation, though they were commonly the aggressors, and by their success and situation were enabled to commit the most cruel injuries on the other, have always retained a stronger tincture of national antipathy; nor is their hatred retaliated on them to an equal degree by the French. That country lies in the middle of Europe, has been successively engaged in hostilities with all its neighbors, the popular prejudices have been diverted into many channels, and, among a people of softer manners, they never rose to a great height against any particular nation.

Philip made great preparations against the attack from the English, and such as seemed more than sufficient to secure him from the danger. Besides the concurrence of all the nobility in his own populous and warlike kingdom, his foreign alliances were both more cordial and more powerful than those which were formed by his antagonist. The pope, who, at this time, lived in Avignon, was dependent on France; and being disgusted at the connections between Edward and Lewis of Bavaria, whom he had excommunicated, he embraced with zeal and sincerity the cause of the French monarch. The king of Navarre, the duke of Brittany, the count of Bar, were in the same interests; and on the side of Germany, the king of Bohemia, the Palatine, the dukes of Lorraine and Austria, the bishop of Liege, the counts of Deuxpont, Vaudemont, and Geneva. The allies of Edward were in themselves weaker; and having no object but his money, which began to be exhausted, they were slow in their motions and irresolute in their measures.

1339.

The duke of Brabant, the most powerful among them, seemed even inclined to withdraw himself wholly from the alliance; and the king was necessitated both to give the Brabanters new privileges in trade, and to contract his son Edward with the daughter of that prince, ere he could bring him to fulfil his engagements. The summer was wasted in conferences and negotiations before Edward could take the field; and he was obliged, in order to allure his German allies into his measures, to pretend that the first attack should be made upon Cambray, a city of the empire which had been garrisoned by Philip. [1] But finding, upon trial, the difficulty of the enterprise, he conducted them towards the frontiers of France; and he there saw, by a sensible proof, the vanity of his expectations: the count of Namur, and even the count of Hainault, his brother-in-law (for the old count was dead,) refused to commence hostilities against their liege lord, and retired with their troops. [2] So little account did they make of Edward's pretensions to the crown of France!

* Froissard, liv. i. cha. Heming. .

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The king, however, entered the enemy's country, and encamped on the fields of Vironfosse, near Capeile, with an army of near fifty thousand men, composed almost entirely of foreigners: Philip approached him with an army of near double the force, composed chiefly of native subjects; and it was daily expected that a battle would ensue. But the English monarch was averse to engage against so great a superiority: the French thought it sufficient if he eluded the attacks of his enemy, without running any unnecessary hazard. The two armies faced each other for some days: mutual defiances were sent: and Edward, at last, retired into Flanders, and disbanded his army. [1]

Such was the fruitless and almost ridiculous conclusion of Edward's mighty preparations; and as his measures were the most prudent that could be embraced in his situation, he might learn from experience in what a hopeless enterprise he was engaged. His expenses, though they had led to no end, had been consuming and destructive; he had contracted near three hundred thousand pounds of debt; [2] he had anticipated all his revenue; he had pawned every thing of value which belonged either to himself or his queen; he was obliged in some measure even to pawn himself to his creditors, by not sailing to England till he obtained their permission, and by promising on his word of honor to return in person, if he did not remit their money.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 42, 43. Heming, . Walsing .

* * Cotton’s Abridg. .

But he was a prince of too much spirit to be discouraged by the first difficulties of an undertaking; and he was anxious to retrieve his honor by more successful and more gallant enterprises. For this purpose he had, during the course of the campaign, sent orders to summon a parliament by his son Edward, whom he had left with the title of guardian, and to demand some supply in his urgent necessities. The barons seemed inclined to grant his request; but the knights, who often, at this time, acted as a separate body from the burgesses, made some scruple of taxing their constituents without their consent; and they desired the guardian to summon a new parliament, which might be properly empowered for that purpose. The situation of the king and parliament was for the time, nearly similar to that which they constantly fell into about the beginning of the last century; and similar consequences began visibly to appear. The king, sensible of the frequent demands which he should be obliged to make on his people, had been anxious to insure to his friends a seat in the house of commons, and at his instigation the sheriffs and other placemen had made interest to be elected into that assembly; an abuse which the knights desired the king to correct by the tenor of his writ of summons, and which was accordingly remedied. On the other hand, the knights had professedly annexed conditions to their intended grant, and required a considerable retrenchment of the royal prerogatives, particularly with regard to purveyance, and the levying of the ancient feudal aids for knighting the king’s eldest son, and marrying his eldest daughter. The new parliament, called by the guardian, retained the same free spirit; and though they offered a large supply of thirty thousand sacks of wool, no business was concluded; because the conditions which they annexed appeared too high to be compensated by a temporary concession. But when Edward himself came over to England, he summoned another parliament, and he had the interest to procure a supply on more moderate terms. A confirmation of the two charters, and of the privileges of boroughs, a pardon for old debts and trespasses, and a remedy for some abuses in the execution of common law, were the chief conditions insisted on; and the king, in return for his concessions on these heads, obtained from the barons and knights an unusual grant for two years, of the ninth sheaf, lamb, and fleece on their estates, and from the burgesses a ninth of their movables at their true value. The whole parliament also granted a duty of forty shillings on each sack of wool exported, on each three hundred woolfells, and on each last of leather for the same term of years, but dreading the arbitrary spirit of the crown, they expressly declared, that this grant was to continue no longer, and was not to be drawn into precedent. Being soon after sensible that this supply, though considerable, and very unusual in that age, would come in slowly, and would not answer the king's urgent necessities, proceeding both from his debts and his preparations for war, they agreed that twenty thousand sacks of wool should immediately be granted him, and their value be deducted from the ninths which were afterwards to be levied.

But there appeared at this time another jealousy in the parliament, which was very reasonable, and was founded on a sentiment that ought to have engaged them rather to check than support the king in all those ambitious projects, so little likely to prove successful, and so dangerous to the nation if they did. Edward, who, before the commencement of the former campaign, had, in several commissions, assumed the title of king of France, now more openly, in all public deeds, gave himself that appellation, and always quartered the arms of France with those of England in his seals and ensigns. The parliament thought proper to obviate the consequences of this measure, and to declare that they owed him no obedience as king of France, and that the two kingdoms must forever remain distinct and independent. [1] They undoubtedly foresaw that France, if subdued, would in the end prove the seat of government; and they deemed this previous protestation necessary, in order to prevent their becoming a province to that monarchy: a frail security if the event had really taken place!

* 14 Edward III.

1340.

As Philip was apprised, from the preparations which were making both in England and the Low Countries, that he must expect another invasion from Edward, he fitted out a great fleet of four hundred vessels, manned with forty thousand men: and he stationed them off Sluise, with a view of intercepting the king in his passage. The English navy was much inferior in number, consisting only of two hundred and forty sail; but whether it were by the superior abilities of Edward, or the greater dexterity of his seamen, they gained the wind of the enemy, and had the sun in their backs: and with these advantages began the action. The battle was fierce and bloody: the English archers, whose force and address were now much celebrated, galled the French on their approach: and when the ships grappled together, and the contest became more steady and furious, the example of the king, and of so many gallant nobles who accompanied him, animated to such a degree the seamen and soldiery, that they maintained every where a superiority over the enemy. The French also had been guilty of some imprudence in taking their station so near the coast of Flanders, and choosing that place for the scene of action. The Flemings, descrying the battle, hurried out of their harbors, and brought a reënforcement to the English; which, coming unexpectedly, had a greater effect than in proportion to its power and numbers. Two hundred and thirty French ships were taken: thirty thousand Frenchmen were killed, with two of their admirals: the loss of the English was inconsiderable, compared to the greatness and importance of the victory. [1] None of Philip's courtiers, it is said, dared to inform him of the event; till his fool or jester gave him a hint, by which he discovered the loss that he had sustained. [2]

The lustre of this great success increased the king's authority among his allies, who assembled their forces with expedition, and joined the English army. Edward marched to the frontiers of France at the head of above one hundred thousand men, consisting chiefly of foreigners, a more numerous army than either before or since has ever been commanded by any king of England. [3] At the same time the Flemings, to the number of fifty thousand men, marched out under the command of Robert of Artois, and laid siege to St. Omer; but this tumultuary army, composed entirely of tradesmen unexperienced in war, was routed by a sally of the garrison, and notwithstanding the abilities of their leader, was thrown into such a panic, that they were instantly dispersed, and never more appeared in the field. The enterprises of Edward, though not attended with so inglorious an issue, proved equally vain and fruitless. The king of France had assembled an army more numerous than the English; was accompanied by all the chief nobility of his kingdom; was attended by many foreign princes, and even by three monarchs, the kings of Bohemia, Scotland, and Navarre: [4] yet he still adhered to the prudent resolution of putting nothing to hazard; and after throwing strong garrisons into all the frontier towns, he retired backwards, persuaded that the enemy, having wasted their force in some tedious and unsuccessful enterprise, would afford him an easy victory.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha. Avesbury, . Heming. p. 321.

* * Walsing. .

* * * Rymer, vol. v.

* * * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

Tournay was at that time one of the most considerable cities of Flanders, containing above sixty thousand inhabitants of all ages, who were affectionate to the French government: and as the secret of Edward’s designs had not been strictly kept, Philip learned that the English, in order to gratify their Flemish allies, had intended to open the campaign with the siege of this place: he took care therefore to supply it with a garrison of fourteen thousand men, commanded by the bravest nobility of France; and he reasonably expected that these forces, joined to the inhabitants, would be able to defend the city against all the efforts of the enemy. Accordingly Edward, when he commenced the siege about the end of July found every where an obstinate resistance: the valor of one side was encountered with equal valor by the other: every assault was repulsed, and proved unsuccessful: and the king was at last obliged to turn the siege into a blockade, in hopes that the great numbers of the garrison and citizens, which had enabled them to defend themselves against his attacks, would but expose them to be the more easily reduced by famine. [1] The count of Eu, who commanded in Tournay, as soon as he perceived that the English had formed this plan of operations endeavored to save his provisions by expelling all the useless mouths; and the duke of Brabant, who wished no success to Edward’s enterprises, gave every one a free passage through his quarters.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

After the siege had continued ten weeks, the city was reduced to distress; and Philip, recalling all his scattered garrisons, advanced towards the

English camp at the head of a mighty army, with an intention of still avoiding any decisive action, but of seeking some opportunity for throwing relief into the place. Here Edward, irritated with the small progress he had hitherto made, and with the disagreeable prospect that lay before him, sent Philip a defiance by a herald and challenged him to decide their claims for the crown of France either by single combat, or by an action of a hundred against a hundred, or by a general engagement. But Philip replied, that Edward having done homage to him for the duchy of Guienne, and having solemnly acknowledged him for his superior, it by no means became him to send a defiance to his liege lord and sovereign: that he was confident, notwithstanding all Edward's preparations, and his conjunction with the rebellious Flemings, he himself should soon be able to chase him from the frontiers of France: that as the hostilities from England had prevented him from executing his purposed crusade against the infidels, he trusted in the assistance of the Almighty, who would reward his pious intentions, and punish the aggressor, whose ill-grounded claims had rendered them abortive: that Edward proposed a duel on very unequal terms, and offered to hazard only his own person against both the kingdom of France and the person of the king: but that, if he would increase the stake, and put also the kingdom of England on the issue of the duel, he would, notwithstanding that the terms would still be unequal, very willingly accept of the challenge.[1] It was easy to see that these mutual bravadoes were intended only to dazzle the populace, and that the two kings were too wise to think of executing their pretended purpose.

* Du Tillet, Recueil de Traités, etc. Heming. , 326. Walsing, .

While the French and English armies lay in this situation, and a general action was every day expected, Jane, countess dowager of Hainault, interposed with her good offices, and endeavored to conciliate peace between the contending monarchs, and to prevent any further effusion of blood. This princess was mother-in-law to Edward, and sister to Philip; and though she had taken the vows in a convent, and had renounced the world, she left her retreat on this occasion, and employed all her pious efforts to allay those animosities which had taken place between persons so nearly related to her and to each other. As Philip had no material claims on his antagonist, she found that he hearkened willingly to the proposals; and even the haughty and ambitious Edward, convinced of his fruitless attempt, was not averse to her negotiation. He was sensible, from experience, that he had engaged in an enterprise which far exceeded his force; and that the power of England was never likely to prevail over that of a superior kingdom, firmly united under an able and prudent monarch. He discovered that all the allies whom he could gain by negotiation were at bottom averse to his enterprise; and though they might second it to a certain length, would immediately detach themselves, and oppose its final accomplishment, if ever they could be brought to think that there was seriously any danger of it. He even saw that their chief purpose was to obtain money from him; and as his supplies from England came in very slowly, and had much disappointed his expectations, he perceived their growing indifference in his cause, and their desire of embracing all plausible terms of accommodation. Convinced at last that an undertaking must be imprudent which could only be supported by means so unequal to the end, he concluded a truce, which left both parties in possession of their present acquisitions, and stopped all further hostilities on the side of the Low Countries, Guienne, and Scotland, till midsummer next. [1] A negotiation was soon after opened at Arras, under the mediation of the pope's legates; and the truce was attempted to be converted into a solid peace. Edward here required that Philip should free Guienne from all claims of superiority, and entirely withdraw his protection from Scotland: but as he seemed not anywise entitled to make such high demands, either from his past successes or future prospects, they were totally rejected by Philip, who agreed only to a prolongation of the truce.

The king of France soon after detached the emperor Lewis from the alliance of England, and engaged him to revoke the title of imperial vicar, which he had conferred on Edward. [2] The king's other allies on the frontiers of France, disappointed in their hopes, gradually withdrew from the confederacy. And Edward himself, harassed by his numerous and importunate creditors, was obliged to make his escape by stealth into England.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha. Avesbury, .

* * Heming, . Ypod. Neust. . Knyghton, .

The unusual tax of a ninth sheaf, lamb, and fleece, imposed by parliament, together with the great want of money, and still more, of credit in England, had rendered the remittances to Flanders extremely backward; nor could it be expected, that any expeditious method of collecting an imposition, which was so new in itself, and which yielded only a gradual produce, could possibly be contrived by the king or his ministers. And though the parliament, foreseeing the inconvenience, had granted, as a present resource, twenty thousand sacks of wool, the only English goods that bore a sure price in foreign markets, and were the next to ready money, it was impossible but the getting possession of such a bulky commodity, the gathering of it from different parts of the kingdom, and the disposing of it abroad, must take up more time than the urgency of the king's affairs would permit, and must occasion all the disappointments complained of during the course of the campaign. But though nothing had happened which Edward might not reasonably have foreseen, he was so irritated with the unfortunate issue of his military operations, and so much vexed and affronted by his foreign creditors, that he was determined to throw the blame somewhere off himself and he came in very bad humor into England. He discovered his peevish disposition by the first act which he performed after his arrival: as he landed unexpectedly, he found the Tower negligently guarded; and he immediately committed to prison the constable and all others who had the charge of that fortress, and he treated them with unusual rigor. [1] His vengeance fell next on the officers of the revenue, the sheriffs, the collectors of the taxes, the undertakers of all kinds; and besides dismissing all of them from their employments, he appointed commissioners to inquire into their conduct; and these men, in order to gratify the king's humor, were sure not to find any person innocent who came before them. [2] Sir John St. Paul, keeper of the privy seal, Sir John Stonore, chief justice, Andrew Aubrey, mayor of London, were displaced and imprisoned; as were also the bishop of Chichester, chancellor, and the bishop of Lichfield, treasurer; Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury, to whom the charge of collecting the new taxes had been chiefly intrusted, fell likewise under the king's displeasure; but being absent at the time of Edward's arrival, he escaped feeling the immediate effects of it.

* Ypod. Neust. .

* * Avesbury, , Heming . Walsing. .

There were strong reasons, which might discourage the kings of England, in those ages, from bestowing the chief offices of the crown on prelates and other ecclesiastical persons. These men had so intrenched themselves in privileges and immunities, and so openly challenged an exemption from all secular jurisdiction, that no civil penalty could be inflicted on them for any malversation in office; and as even treason itself was declared to be no canonical offence, nor was allowed to be a sufficient reason for deprivation or other spiritual censures, that order of men had insured to themselves an almost total impunity, and were not bound by any political law or statute. But, on the other hand, there were many peculiar causes which favored their promotion. Besides that they possessed almost all the learning of the age, and were best qualified for civil employments, the prelates enjoyed equal dignity with the greatest barons, and gave weight by their personal authority, to the powers intrusted with them; while, at the same time, they did not endanger the crown by accumulating wealth or influence in their families, and were restrained, by the decency of their character, from that open rapine and violence so often practised by the nobles. These motives had induced Edward, as well as many of his predecessors, to intrust the chief departments of government in the hands of ecclesiastics; at the hazard of seeing them disown his authority as soon as it was turned against them.

1341.

This was the case with Archbishop Stratford. That prelate, informed of Edward's indignation against him prepared himself for the storm; and not content with standing upon the defensive, he resolved, by beginning the attack, to show the king that he knew the privileges of his character, and had courage to maintain them. He issued a general sentence of excommunication against all who, on any pretext, exercised violence on the person or goods of clergymen; who infringed those privileges secured by the Great Charter, and by ecclesiastical canons; or who accused a prelate of treason or any other crime, in order to bring him under the king's displeasure. [1]

* Heming* . Ang* Sacra, vol. i. , 22. Walsing. p. 153.

Even Edward had reason to think himself struck at by this sentence; both on account of the imprisonment of the two bishops and that of other clergymen concerned in levying the taxes, and on account of his seizing their lands and movables, that he might make them answerable for any balance which remained in their hands. The clergy, with the primate at their head, were now formed into a regular combination against the king; and many calumnies were spread against him, in order to deprive him of the confidence and affections of his people. It was pretended that he meant to recall the general pardon, and the remission which he had granted of old debts, and to impose new and arbitrary taxes without consent of parliament. The archbishop went so far, in a letter to the king himself, as to tell him, that there were two powers by which the world was governed, the holy pontifical apostolic dignity, and the royal subordinate authority: that of these two powers, the clerical was evidently the supreme; since the priests were to answer, at the tribunal of the divine judgment, for the conduct of kings themselves: that the clergy were the spiritual fathers of all the faithful, and amongst others of kings and princes; and were entitled, by a heavenly charter, to direct their wills and actions, and to censure their transgressions: and that prelates had hitherto cited emperors before their tribunal, had sitten in judgment on their life and behavior, and had anathematized them for their obstinate offences. [1] These topics were not well calculated to appease Edward’s indignation; and when he called a parliament, he sent not to the primate, as to the other peers, a summons to attend it. Stratford was not discouraged at this mark of neglect or anger: he appeared before the gates, arrayed in his pontifical robes, holding the crosier in his hand and accompanied by a pompous train of priests and prelates; and he required admittance as the first and highest peer in the realm. During two days the king rejected his application: but sensible, either that this affair might be attended with dangerous consequences, or that in his impatience he had groundlessly accused the primate of malversation in his office, which seems really to have been the case, he at last permitted him to take his seat, and was reconciled to him. [2]

* Ang. Sacra, vol i. .

* * Ang. Sacra, , 39, 40, 41.

Edward now found himself in a bad situation, both with his own people and with foreign states; and it required all his genius and capacity to extricate himself from such multiplied difficulties and embarrassments. His unjust and exorbitant claims on France and Scotland had engaged him in an implacable war with those two kingdoms, his nearest neighbors: he had lost almost all his foreign alliances by his irregular payments: he was deeply involved in debts, for which he owed a consuming interest: his military operations had vanished into smoke; and, except his naval victory, none of them had been attended even with glory or renown, either to himself or to the nation: the animosity between him and the clergy was open and declared: the people were discontented on account of many arbitrary measures, in which he had been engaged, and what was more dangerous, the nobility, taking advantage of his present necessities, were determined to retrench his power, and by encroaching on the ancient prerogatives of the crown, to acquire to themselves independence and authority. But the aspiring genius of Edward, which had so far transported him beyond the bounds of discretion, proved at last sufficient to reinstate him in his former authority, and finally to render his reign the most triumphant that is to be met with in English story; though for the present he was obliged, with some loss of honor, to yield to the current which bore so strongly against him.

The parliament framed an act which was likely to produce considerable innovations in the government. They premised, that, whereas the Great Charter had, to the manifest peril and slander of the king and damage of his people, been violated in many points, particularly by the imprisonment of freemen and the seizure of their goods, without suit, indictment, or trial, it was necessary to confirm it anew, and to oblige all the chief officers of the law, together with the steward and chamberlain of the household, the keeper of the privy seal, the controller and treasurer of the wardrobe, and those who were intrusted with the education of the young prince, to swear to the regular observance of it. They also remarked, that the peers of the realm had formerly been arrested and imprisoned, and dispossessed of their temporalities and lands, and even some of them put to death, without judgment or trial; and they therefore enacted that such violences should henceforth cease, and no peer be punished but by the award of his peers “in parliament.” They required, that, whenever any of the great offices above mentioned became vacant, the king should fill it by the advice of his council, and the consent of such barons as should at that time be found to reside in the neighborhood of the court. And they enacted, that, on the third day of every session, the king should resume into his own hand all these offices, except those of justices of the two benches and the barons of exchequer; that the ministers should for the time be reduced to private persons; that they should in that condition answer before parliament to any accusation brought against them; and that if they were found anywise guilty, they should finally be dispossessed of their offices, and more able persons be substituted in their place. [1] By these last regulations, the barons approached as near as they durst to those restrictions which had formerly been imposed on Henry III. and Edward II., and which, from the dangerous consequences attending them, had become so generally odious, that they did not expect to have either the concurrence of the people in demanding the*n, or the assent of the present king in granting them.

* 15 Edward III.

In return for these important concessions, the parliament offered the king a grant of twenty thousand sacks of wool; and his wants were so urgent from the clamors of his creditors and the demands of his foreign allies, that he was obliged to accept of the supply on these hard conditions. He ratified this statute in full parliament: but he secretly entered a protest of such a nature as was sufficient, one should imagine to destroy all future trust and confidence with his people; he declared that, as soon as his convenience permitted, he would, from his own authority, revoke what had been extorted from him. [1] Accordingly he was no sooner possessed of the parliamentary supply, than he issued an edict, which contains many extraordinary positions and pretensions. He first asserts, that that statute had been enacted contrary to law, as if a free legislative body could ever do any thing illegal. He next affirms, that as it was hurtful to the prerogatives of the crown, which he had sworn to defend, he had only dissembled when he seemed to ratify it, but that he had never in his own breast given his assent to it. He does not pretend that either he or the parliament lay under force; but only that some inconvenience would have ensued, had he not seemingly affixed his sanction to that pretended statute. He therefore, with the advice of his council and of some earls and barons, abrogates and annuls it; and though he professes himself willing and determined to observe such articles of it as were formerly law, he declares it to have thenceforth no force or authority. [2] The parliaments that were afterwards assembled took no notice of this arbitrary exertion of royal power, which, by a parity of reason, left all their laws at the mercy of the king; and, during the course of two years, Edward had so far reëstablished his influence, and freed himself from his present necessities, that he then obtained from his parliament a legal repeal of the obnoxious statute. [3] This transaction certainly contains remarkable circumstances, which discover the manners and sentiments of the age; and may prove what inaccurate work might be expected from such rude hands, when employed in legislation, and in rearing the delicate fabric of laws and a constitution.

* Statutes at large, 15 Edward III. That this protest of the king's was secret appears evidently, since otherwise it would have been ridiculous in the parliament to have accepted of his assent: besides, the king owns that he dissembled, which would not have been the ease had his protest been public.

* * Statutes at large, 15 Edward III.

* * * Cotton's Abridg. , 39. and saw so little prospect of success, that he would probably have dropped his claim, had not a revolution in Brittany opened to him more promising views, and given his enterprising genius a full opportunity of displaying itself.

But though Edward had happily recovered his authority at home, which had been impaired by the events of the French war, he had undergone so many mortifications from that attempt.

John III., duke of Brittany, had, during some years, found himself declining through age and infirmities; and having no issue, he was solicitous to prevent those disorders to which, on the event of his demise, a disputed succession might expose his subjects. His younger brother, the count of Penthiev had left only one daughter, whom the duke deemed his heir; and as his family had inherited the duchy by a female succession, he thought her title preferable to that of the count of Mountfort, who, being his brother by a second marriage, was the male heir of that principality. [1] He accordingly purposed to bestow his niece in marriage on some person who might be able to defend her rights; and he cast his eye on Charles of Blois, nephew of the king of France, by his mother, Margaret of Valois, sister to that monarch. But as he both loved his subjects and was beloved by them, he determined not to take this important step without their approbation; and having assembled the states of Brittany, he represented to them the advantages of that alliance, and the prospect which it gave of an entire settlement of the succession. The Bretons willingly concurred in his choice: the marriage was concluded: all his vassals, and among the rest the count of Mountfort, swore fealty to Charles and to his consort, as to their future sovereigns; and every danger of civil commotions seemed to be obviated, as far as human prudence could provide a remedy against them.

But on the death of this good prince, the ambition of the count of Mountfort broke through all these regulations, and kindled a war, not only dangerous to Brittany, but to a great part of Europe. While Charles of Blois was soliciting at the court of France the investiture of the duchy, Mountfort was active in acquiring immediate possession of it; and by force or intrigue he made himself master of Rennes, Nantz, Brest Hennebonne, and all the most important fortresses, and engaged many considerable barons to acknowledge his authority. [2] Sensible that he could expect no favor from Philip, he made a voyage to England, on pretence of soliciting his claim to the earldom of Richmond, which had devolved to him by his brother's death; and there, offering to do homage to Edward, as king of France, for the duchy of Brittany, he proposed a strict alliance for the support of their mutual pretensions.

Edward saw immediately the advantages attending this treaty: Mountfort, an active and valiant prince, closely united to him by interest, opened at once an entrance into the heart of France, and afforded him much more flattering views than his allies on the side of Germany and the Low Countries, who had no sincere attachment to his cause, and whose progress was also obstructed by those numerous fortifications which had been raised on that frontier. Robert of Artois was zealous in enforcing these considerations: the ambitious spirit of Edward was little disposed to sit down under those repulses which he had received, and which he thought had so much impaired his reputation; and it required a very short negotiation to conclude a treaty of alliance between two men, who, though their pleas with regard to the preference of male or female succession were directly opposite, were intimately connected by their immediate interests. [1]

As this treaty was still a secret, Mountfort, on his return, ventured to appear at Paris, in order to defend his cause before the court of peers; but observing Philip and his judges to be prepossessed against his title, and dreading their intentions of arresting him, till he should restore what he had

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* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha, 66, 67, 68.

seized by violence, he suddenly made his escape; and war immediately commenced between him and Charles of Blois. [2] Philip sent his eldest son, the duke of Normandy, with a powerful army, to the assistance of the latter; and Mountfort, unable to keep the field against his rival, remained in the city of Nantz, where he was besieged. The city was taken by the treachery of the inhabitants; Mountfort fell into the hands of his enemies, was conducted as a prisoner to Paris, and was shut up in the tower of the Louvre. [3]

* Froissard, liv. i. chap, 69.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha, 71.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. chap 73.

1342.

This event seemed to put an end to the pretensions of the count of Mountfort; but his affairs were immediately retrieved by an unexpected incident, which inspired new life and vigor into his party. Jane of Flanders, countess of Mountfort, the most extraordinary woman of the age, was roused, by the captivity of her husband, from those domestic cares to which she had hitherto limited her genius; and she courageously undertook to support the falling fortunes of her family No sooner did she receive the fatal intelligence, than she assembled the inhabitants of Rennes, where she then resided; and carrying her infant son in her arms, deplored to them the calamity of their sovereign. She recommended to their care the illustrious orphan, the sole male remaining of their ancient princes, who had governed them with such indulgence and lenity, and to whom they had ever professed the most zealous attachment. She declared herself willing to run all hazards with them in so just a cause; discovered the resources which still remained in the alliance of England; and entreated them to make one effort against a usurper, who, being imposed on them by the arms of France, would in return make a sacrifice to his protector of the ancient liberties of Brittany. The audience, moved by the affecting appearance, and inspirited by the noble conduct of the princess, vowed to live and die with her in defending the rights of her family: all the other fortresses of Brittany embraced the same resolution: the countess went from place to place encouraging the garrisons, providing them with every thing necessary for subsistence, and concerting the proper plans of defence; and after she had put the whole province in a good posture, she shut herself up in Hennebonne, where she waited with impatience the arrival of those succors which Edward had promised her. Meanwhile she sent over her son to England, that she might both put him in a place of safety, and engage the king more strongly, by such a pledge, to embrace with zeal the interests of her family.

Charles of Blois, anxious to make himself master of so important a fortress as Hennebonne, and still more to take the countess prisoner, from whose vigor and capacity all the difficulties to his succession in Brittany now proceeded, sat down before the place with a great army, composed of French, Spaniards, Genoese, and some Bretons; and he conducted the attack with indefatigable industry. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The defence was no less vigorous: the besiegers were repulsed in every assault: frequent sallies were made with success by the garrison; and the countess herself being the most forward in all military operations, every one was ashamed not to exert himself to the utmost in this desperate situation. One day, she perceived that the besiegers, entirely occupied in an attack, had neglected a distant quarter of their camp; and she immediately sallied forth at the head of a body of two hundred cavalry, threw them into confusion, did great execution upon them, and set fire to their tents, baggage, and magazines; but when she was preparing to return, she found that she was intercepted, and that a considerable body of the enemy had thrown themselves between her and the gates. She instantly took her resolution; she ordered her men to disband, and to make the best of their way by flight to Brest; she met them at the appointed place of rendezvous, collected another body of five hundred horse, returned to Hennebonne, broke unexpectedly through the enemy’s camp, and was received with shouts and acclamations by the garrison, who, encouraged by this reënforcement, and by so rare an example of female valor, determined to defend themselves to the last extremity.

The reiterated attacks, however, of the besiegers had at length made several breaches in the walls; and it was apprehended that a general assault, which was every hour expected would overpower the garrison, diminished in numbers, and extremely weakened with watching and fatigue. It became necessary to treat of a capitulation; and the bishop of Leon was already engaged, for that purpose, in a conference with Charles of Blois, when the countess, who had mounted to a high tower, and was looking towards the sea with great impatience, descried some sails at a distance. She immediately exclaimed, “Behold the succors! the English succors! No capitulation!” [1] This fleet had on board a body of heavy-armed cavalry, and six thousand archers, whom Edward had prepared for the relief of Hennebonne, but who had been long detained by contrary winds. They entered the harbor under the command of Sir Walter Manny, one of the bravest captains of England: and having inspired fresh courage into the garrison, immediately sallied forth, beat the besiegers from all their posts, and obliged them to decamp.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

But notwithstanding this success, the countess of Mountfort found that her party, overpowered by numbers, was declining in every quarter; and she went over to solicit more effectual succors from the king of England. Edward granted her a considerable reënforcement under Robert of Artois, who embarked on board a fleet of forty-five ships, and sailed to Brittany. He was met in his passage by the enemy; an action ensued, where the countess behaved with her wonted valor, and charged the enemy sword in hand; but the hostile fleets, after a sharp action, were separated by a storm, and the English arrived safely in Brittany. The first exploit of Robert was the taking of Vannes, which he mastered by conduct and address; [1] but he survived a very little time this prosperity. The Breton noblemen of the party of Charles assembled secretly in arms, attacked Vannes of a sudden, and carried the place; chiefly by reason of a wound received by Robert, of which he soon after died at sea, on his return to England. [2]

After the death of this unfortunate prince, the chief author of all the calamities with which his country was overwhelmed for more than a century, Edward undertook in person the defence of the countess of Mountfort; and as the last truce with France was now expired, the war, which the English and French had hitherto carried on as allies to the competitors for Brittany, was thenceforth conducted in the name and under the standard of the two monarchs. The king landed at Morbian, near

Vannes, with an army of twelve thousand men; and being master of the field, he endeavored to give a lustre to his arms, by commencing at once three important sieges, that of Vannes, of Rennes, and of Nantz. But by undertaking too much, he failed of success in all his enterprises. Even the siege of Vannes, which Edward in person conducted with vigor, advanced but slowly; [3] and the French had all the leisure requisite for making preparations against him.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The duke of Normandy, eldest son of Philip, appeared in Brittany at the head of an army of thirty thousand infantry and four thousand cavalry; and Edward was now obliged to draw together all his forces, and to intrench himself strongly before Vannes, where the duke of Normandy soon after arrived, and in a manner invested the besiegers. The garrison and the French camp were plentifully supplied with provisions; while the English, who durst not make any attempt upon the place in the presence of a superior army, drew all their subsistence from England, exposed to the hazards of the sea, and sometimes to those which arose from the fleet of the enemy.

1243.

In this dangerous situation, Edward willingly hearkened to the mediation of the pope’s legates, the cardinals of Palestrine and Frescati, who endeavored to negotiate, if not a peace, at east a truce, between the two kingdoms. A treaty was concluded for a cessation of arms during three years; [1] and Edward had the abilities, notwithstanding his present dangerous situation, to procure to himself very equal and honorable terms, It was agreed that Vannes should be sequestered, during the truce, in the hands of the legates, to be disposed of afterwards as they pleased; and though Edward knew the partiality of the court of Rome towards his antagonists, he saved himself by this device from the dishonor of having undertaken a fruitless enterprise. It was also stipulated, that all prisoners should be released, that the places in

Brittany should remain in the hands of the present possessors, and that the allies on both sides should be comprehended in the truce. [2] Edward, soon after concluding this treaty, embarked with his army for England.

The truce, though calculated for a long time, was of very short duration; and each monarch endeavored to throw on the other the blame of its infraction. Of course the historians of the two countries differ in their account of the matter. It seems probable, however, as is affirmed by the French writers, that Edward, in consenting to the truce, had no other view than to extricate himself from a perilous situation into which he had fallen, and was afterwards very careless in observing it. In all the memorials which remain on this subject, he complains chiefly of the punishment inflicted on Oliver de Clisson, John de Montauban, and other Breton noblemen, who, he says, were partisans of the family of Mountfort, and consequently under the protection of England. [3] But it appears that, at the conclusion of the truce, those noblemen had openly, by their declarations and actions, embraced the cause of Charles of Blois; [4] and if they had entered into any secret correspondence and engagements with Edward, they were traitors to their party, and were justly punishable by Philip and Charles for their breach of faith; nor had Edward any ground of complaint against France for such severities.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha. Avesbury, .

* * Heming. .

* * * Rymer. vol. v. , 454, 459, 466, 496. Heming. 376.

* * * * Froissard, liv. i. cha, .

1344.

But when he laid these pretended injuries before the parliament, whom he affected to consult on all occasions, that assembly entered into the quarrel, advised the king not to be amused by a fraudulent truce, and granted him supplies for the renewal of the war: the counties were charged with a fifteenth for two years, and the boroughs with a tenth. The clergy consented to give a tenth for three years.

These supplies enabled the king to complete his military preparations; and he sent his cousin, Henry, earl of Derby, son of the earl of Lancaster, into Guienne, for the defence of that province. [1] This prince, the most accomplished in the English court, possessed to a high degree the virtues of justice and humanity, as well as those of valor and conduct; [2] and not content with protecting and cherishing the province committed to his care, he made a successful invasion on the enemy. He attacked the count of Lisle, the French general, at Bergerac, beat him from his intrenchments, and took the place. He reduced a great part of Perigord, and continually advanced in his conquests, till the count of Lisle, having collected an army of ten or twelve thousand men, sat down before Auberoche, in hopes of recovering that place, which had fallen into the hands of the English.

1345.

The earl of Derby came upon him by surprise with only a thousand cavalry, threw the French into disorder, pushed his advantage, and obtained a complete victory. Lisle himself, with many considerable nobles, was taken prisoner. [3] After this important success, Derby made a rapid progress in subduing the French provinces. He took Monsegur, Monpesat, Villefranche, Miremont, and Tonnins, with the fortress of Damassen. Aiguillon, a fortress deemed impregnable, fell into his hands from the cowardice of the governor. Angouleme was surrendered after a short siege. The only place where he met with considerable resistance, was Reole, which, however, was at last reduced, after a siege of above nine weeks. [4] He made an attempt on Blaye, but thought it more prudent to raise the siege than waste his time before a place of small importance. [5]

* Froissart, liv. i. cha. Avesbury, .

* * It is reported of this prince, that having once, before the attack of a town, promised the soldiers the plunder, one private man happened to fall upon a great chest full of money, which he immediately brought to the earl as thinking it too great for himself to keep possession of it. But Derby told him, that his promise did not depend on the greatness or smallness of the sum; and ordered him to keep it all for his own use.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

1346.

The reason why Derby was permitted to make, without opposition, such progress on the side of Guienne, was the difficulties under which the French finances then labored, and which had obliged Philip to lay on new impositions, particularly the duty on salt, to the great discontent, and almost mutiny, of his subjects. But after the court of France was supplied with money, great preparations were made: and the duke of Normandy, attended by the duke of Burgundy and other great nobility, led towards Guienne a powerful army, which the English could not think of resisting in the open field. The earl of Derby stood on the defensive, and allowed the French to carry on at leisure the siege of Angouleme, which was their first enterprise. John Lord Norwich, the governor, after a brave and vigorous defence, found himself reduced to such extremities as obliged him to employ a stratagem, in order to save his garrison, and to prevent his being reduced to surrender at discretion. He appeared on the walls, and desired a parley with the duke of Normandy. The prince there told Norwich, that he supposed he intended to capitulate. “Not at all,” replied the governor: “but as to-morrow is the feast of the Virgin, to whom I know that you, sir, as well as myself, bear a great devotion, I desire a cessation of arms for that day.” The proposal was agreed to; and Norwich, having ordered his forces to prepare all their baggage, marched out next day, and advanced towards the French camp. The besiegers, imagining they were to be attacked, ran to their arms; but Norwich sent a messenger to the duke, reminding him of his engagement. The duke, who piqued himself on faithfully keeping his word exclaimed, “I see the governor has outwitted me: but let us be content with gaining the place.” And the English were allowed to pass through the camp unmolested. [1] After some other successes, the duke of Normandy laid siege to Aiguillon; and as the natural strength of the fortress, together with a brave garrison under the command of the earl of Pembroke and Sir Walter Manny, rendered it impossible to take the place by assault, he purposed, after making several fruitless attacks, [2] to reduce it by famine: but before he could finish this enterprise, he was called to another quarter of the kingdom by one of the greatest disasters that ever befell the French monarchy. [3]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

Edward, informed by the earl of Derby of the great danger to which Guienne was exposed, had prepared a force with which he intended in person to bring it relief. He embarked at Southampton on board a fleet of near a thousand sail of all dimensions; and carried with him, besides all the chief nobility of England, his eldest son, the prince of Wales, now fifteen years of age. The winds proved long contrary; [1] and the king, in despair of arriving in time at Guienne, was at last persuaded, by Geoffrey d’Harcourt, to change the destination of his enterprise. This nobleman was a Norman by birth, had long made a considerable figure in the court of France, and was generally esteemed for his personal merit and his valor; but being disobliged and persecuted by Philip, he had fled into England; had recommended himself to Edward, who was an excellent judge of men; and had succeeded to Robert of Artois in the invidious office of exciting and assisting the king in every enterprise against his native country. He had long insisted, that an expedition to Normandy promised, in the present circumstances, more favorable success than one to Guienne; that Edward would find the northern provinces almost destitute of military force, which had been drawn to the south; that they were full of flourishing cities, whose plunder would enrich the English; that their cultivated fields, as yet unspoiled by war, would supply them with plenty of provisions; and that the neighborhood of the capital rendered every event of importance in those quarters. [2] These reasons, which had not before been duly weighed by Edward, began to make more impression after the disappointments which he had met with in his voyage to Guienne: he ordered his fleet to sail to Normandy, and safely disembarked his army at La Hogue.

* Avesbury, .

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

This army, which, during the course of the ensuing campaign, was crowned with the most splendid success, consisted of four thousand men at arms, ten thousand archers, ten thousand Welsh infantry, and six thousand Irish. The Welsh and the Irish were light, disorderly troops, fitter for doing execution in a pursuit, or scouring the country, than for any stable action. The bow was always esteemed a frivolous weapon, where true military discipline was known, and regular bodies of well-armed foot maintained. The only solid force in this army were the men at arms; and even these, being cavalry, were on that account much inferior in the shock of battle to good infantry: and as the whole were new-levied troops, we are led to entertain a very mean idea of the military force of those ages, which, being ignorant of every other art, had not properly cultivated the art of war itself, the sole object of general attention.

The king created the earl of Arundel constable of his army and the earls of Warwick and Harcourt mareschals: he bestowed the honor of knighthood on the prince of Wales and several of the young nobility, immediately upon his landing. After destroying all the ships in La Hogue, Barfleur, and Cherbourg, he spread his army over the whole country, and gave them an unbounded license of burning, spoiling, and plundering every place of which they became masters. The loose discipline then prevalent could not be much hurt by these disorderly practices; and Edward took care to prevent any surprise, by giving orders to his troops, however they might disperse themselves in the day-time, always to quarter themselves at night near the main body. In this manner, Montebourg, Carentan, St. Lo, Valognes, and other places in the Cotentin, were pillaged without resistance; and a universal consternation was spread over the province. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The intelligence of this unexpected invasion soon reached Paris, and threw Philip into great perplexity. He issued orders, however, for levying forces in all quarters, and despatched the count of Eu, constable of France, and the count of Tancarville, with a body of troops, to the defence of Caen, a populous and commercial but open city, which lay in the neighborhood of the English army. The temptation of so rich a prize soon allured Edward to approach it; and the inhabitants, encouraged by their numbers, and by the reënforcements which they daily received from the country, ventured to meet him in the field. But their courage failed them on the first shock: they fled with precipitation: the counts of Eu and Tancarville were taken prisoners: the victors entered the city along with the vanquished, and a furious massacre commenced, without distinction of age, sex, or condition. The citizens, in despair, barricaded their and assaulted the English with stones, bricks, and every missile weapon: the English made way by fire to the destruction of the citizens; till Edward, anxious to save both his spoil and his soldiers, stopped the massacre; and having obliged the inhabitants to lay down their arms, gave his troops license to begin a more regular and less hazardous plunder of the city. The pillage continued for three days: the king reserved for his own share the jewels, plate, silks, fine cloth, and fine linen; and he bestowed all the remainder of the spoil on his army. The whole was embarked on board the ships, and sent over to England, together with three hundred of the richest citizens of Caen, whose ransom was an additional profit, which he expected afterwards to levy. [1] This dismal scene passed in the presence of two cardinal legates, who had come to negotiate a peace between the kingdoms.

The king moved next to Rouen, in hopes of treating that city in the same manner; but found that the bridge over the Seine was already broken down, and that the king of France himself was arrived there with his army. He marched along the banks of that river towards Paris, destroying the whole country, and every town and village which he met with on his road. [2] Some of his light troops carried their ravages even to the gates of Paris; and the royal palace of St. Germains, together with Nanterre, Ruelle, and other villages, was reduced to ashes within sight of the capital.

The English intended to pass the river at Poissy, but found the French army encamped on the opposite banks, and the bridge at that place, as well as all others over the Seine, broken down by orders from Philip. Edward now saw that the French meant to enclose him in their country, in hopes of attacking him with advantage on all sides: but he saved himself by a stratagem from this perilous situation. He gave his army orders to dislodge,

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* Froissord, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

and to advance farther up the Seine; but immediately returning by the same road, he arrived at Poissy, which the enemy had already quitted, in order to attend his motions. He repaired the bridge with incredible celerity, passed over his army, and having thus disengaged himself from the enemy, advanced by quick marches towards Flanders. His vanguard, commanded by Harcourt, met with the townsmen of Amiens, who were hastening to reënforce their king, and defeated them with great slaughter; [1] he passed by Beauvais, and burned the suburbs of that city: but as he approached the Somme, he found himself in the same difficulty as before; all the bridges on that river were either broken down or strongly guarded: an army, under the command of Godemar de Faye, was stationed on the opposite banks: Philip was advancing on him from the other quarter, with an army of a hundred thousand men; and he was thus exposed to the danger of being enclosed, and of starving in an enemy’s country. In this extremity, he published a reward to any one that should bring him intelligence of a passage over the Somme. A peasant, called Gobin Agace, whose name has been preserved by the share which he had in these important transactions, was tempted on this occasion to betray the interests of his country; and he informed Edward of a ford below Abbeville, which had a sound bottom, and might be passed without difficulty at low water. [2] The king hastened thither, but found Godemar de Faye on the opposite banks. Being urged by necessity, he deliberated not a moment; but threw himself into the river, sword in hand, at the head of his troops; drove the enemy from their station; and pursued them to a distance on the plain. [3] The French army under Philip arrived at the ford, when the rearguard of the English were passing: so narrow was the escape which Edward, by his prudence and celerity, made from this danger! The rising of the tide prevented the French king from following him over the ford, and obliged that prince to take his route over the bridge at Abbeville; by which some time was lost.

* Froissard, liv, i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha,127

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

It is natural to think that Philip, at the head of so vast an army, was impatient to take revenge on the English, and to prevent the disgrace to which he must be exposed if an inferior enemy should be allowed, after ravaging so great a part of his kingdom, to escape with impunity. Edward also was sensible that such must be the object of the French monarch; and as he had advanced but a little way before his enemy, he saw the danger of precipitating his march over the plains of Picardy, and of exposing his rear to the insults of the numerous cavalry in which the French camp abounded. He took, therefore, a prudent resolution: he chose his ground with advantage near the village of Crecy; he disposed his army in excellent older; he determined to await in tranquillity the arrival of the enemy; and he hoped that their eagerness to engage, and to prevent his retreat, after all their past disappointments would hurry them on to some rash and ill-concerted action. He drew up his army on a gentle ascent, and divided them into three lines: the first was commanded by the prince of Wales, and under him by the earls of Warwick and Oxford, by Harcourt, and by the lords Chandos, Holland, and other noblemen: the earls of Arundel and Northampton, with the lords Willoughby, Basset, Roos, and Sir Lewis Tufton, were at the head of the second line: he took to himself the command of the third division, by which he purposed either to bring succor to the two first lines, or to secure a retreat in case of any misfortune, or to push his advantages against the enemy. He had likewise the precaution to throw up trenches on his flanks, in order to secure himself from the numerous bodies of the French who might assail him from that quarter; and he placed all his baggage behind him in a wood, which he also secured by an intrenchment. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The skill and order of this disposition, with the tranquillity in which it was made, served extremely to compose the minds of the soldiers; and the king, that he might further inspirit them, rode through the ranks with such an air of cheerfulness and alacrity, as conveyed the highest confidence into every beholder. He pointed out to them the necessity to which they were reduced, and the certain and inevitable destruction which awaited them, if, in their present situation, enclosed on all hands in an enemy’s country, they trusted to any thing but their own valor, or gave that enemy an opportunity of taking revenge for the many insults and indignities which they had of late put upon him. He reminded them of the visible ascendant which they had hitherto maintained over all the bodies of French troops that had fallen in their way; and assured them, that the superior numbers of the army which at present hovered over them, gave them not greater force, but was an advantage easily compensated by the order in which he had placed his own army, and the resolution which he expected from them. He demanded nothing, he said, but that they would imitate his own example, and that of the prince of Wales: and as the honor, the lives, the liberties of all, were now exposed to the same danger, he was confident that they would make one common effort to extricate themselves from the present difficulties, and that their united courage would give them the victory over all their enemies.

It is related by some historians, [1] that Edward, besides the resources which he found in his own genius and presence of mind, employed also a new invention against the enemy, and placed in his front some pieces of artillery, the first that had yet been made use of on any remarkable occasion in Europe. This is the epoch of one of the most singular discoveries that has been made among men; a discovery which changed by degrees the whole art of war, and by consequence many circumstances in the political government of Europe. But the ignorance of that age in the mechanical arts, rendered the progress of this new invention very slow. The artillery first framed were so clumsy, and of such difficult management, that men were not immediately sensible of their use and efficacy and even to the present times improvements have been continually making on this furious engine, which, though it seemed contrived for the destruction of mankind, and the overthrow of empires, has in the issue rendered battles less bloody, and has given greater stability to civil societies. Nations, by its means, have been brought more to a level: conquests have become less frequent and rapid: success in war has been reduced nearly to be a matter of calculation: and any nation, overmatched by its enemies, either yields to their demands or secures itself by alliances against their violence and invasion.

The invention of artillery was at this time known in France as well as in England; [2] but Philip, in his hurry to overtake the enemy, had probably left his cannon behind him, which he regarded as a useless encumbrance. All his other movements discovered the same imprudence and precipitation. Impelled by anger, a dangerous counsellor, and trusting to the great superiority of his numbers, he thought that all depended on forcing an engagement with the English; and that if he could once reach the enemy in their retreat, the victory on his side was certain and inevitable. He made a hasty march, in some confusion, from Abbeville; but after he had advanced above two leagues, some gentlemen, whom he had sent before to take a view of the enemy, returned to him, and brought him intelligence that they had seen the English drawn up in Bombarda great order, and awaiting his arrival.

* Jean Villani, lib. xii. ca.

* * Du Cange, Glass, in verb.

They therefore devised him to defer the combat till the ensuing day, when his army would have recovered from their fatigue, and might be disposed into better order than their present hurry had permitted them to observe. Philip assented to this counsel; but the former precipitation of his march, and the impatience of the French nobility, made it impracticable for him to put it in execution. One division pressed upon another: orders to stop were not seasonably conveyed to all of them: this immense body was not governed by sufficient discipline to be manageable; and the French army, imperfectly formed into three lines, arrived, already fatigued and disordered, in presence of the enemy. The first line, consisting of fifteen thousand Genoese cross-bow men, was commanded by Anthony Doria and Charles Grimaldi: the second was led by the count of Alençon, brother to the king: the king himself was at the head of the third. Besides the French monarch, there were no less than three crowned heads in this engagement; the king of Bohemia, the king of the Romans, his son, and the king of Majorca; with all the nobility and great vassals of the crown of France. The army now consisted of above one hundred and twenty thousand men, more than three times the number of the enemy. But the prudence of one man was superior to the advantage of all this force and splendor.

The English, on the approach of the enemy, kept their ranks firm and immovable; and the Genoese first began the attack. There had happened, a little before the engagement, a thunder shower, which had moistened and relaxed the strings of the Genoese cross-bows; their arrows for this reason fell short of the enemy. The English archers, taking their bows out of their cases, poured in a shower of arrows upon this multitude who were opposed to them, and soon threw them into disorder. The Genoese fell back upon the heavy-armed cavalry of the count of Alençon; [1] who, enraged at their cowardice, ordered his troops to put them to the sword.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The artillery fired amidst the crowd; the English archers continued to send in their arrows among them; and nothing was to be seen in that vast body but hurry and confusion, terror and dismay. The young prince of Wales had the presence of mind to take advantage of this situation, and to lead on his line to the charge. The French cavalry, however, recovering somewhat their order, and encouraged by the example of their leader, made a stout resistance; and having at last cleared themselves of the Genoese runaways, advanced upon their enemies, and by their superior numbers began to hem them round. The earls of Arundel and Northampton now advanced their line to sustain the prince, who, ardent in his first feats of arms, set an example of valor which was imitated by all his followers. The battle became for some time hot and dangerous, and the earl of Warwick, apprehensive of the event, from the superior numbers of the French, despatched a messenger to the king, and entreated him to send succors to the relief of the prince. Edward had chosen his station on the top of the hill; and he surveyed in tranquillity the scene of action. When the messenger accosted him, his first question was, whether the prince were slain or wounded. On receiving an answer in the negative, “Return,” said he, “to my son, and tell him that I reserve the honor of the day to him: I am confident that he will show himself worthy of the honor of knighthood which I so lately conferred upon him: he will be able, without my assistance, to repel the enemy.” [1] This speech, being reported to the prince and his attendants, inspired them with fresh courage: they made an attack with redoubled vigor on the French, in which the count of Alençon was slain: that whole line of cavalry was thrown into disorder: the riders were killed or dismounted: the Welsh infantry rushed into the throng, and with their long knives cut the throats of all who had fallen; nor was any quarter given that day by the victors. [2]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The king of France advanced in vain with the rear to sustain the line commanded by his brother: he found them already discomfited; and the example of their rout increased the confusion which was before but too prevalent in his own body. He had himself a horse killed under him: he was remounted; and, though left almost alone, he seemed still determined to maintain the combat; when John of Hainault seized the reins of his bridle, turned about his horse, and carried him off the field of battle. The whole French army took to flight, and was followed and put to the sword without mercy by the enemy, till the darkness of the night put an end to the pursuit. The king, on his return to the camp, flew into the arms of the prince of Wales, and exclaimed, “My brave son persevere in your honorable course: you are my son! for valiantly have you acquitted yourself to-day: you have shown yourself worthy of empire.” [1]

This battle, which is known by the name of the battle of Crecy, began after three o’clock in the afternoon, and continued till evening. The next morning was foggy; and as the English observed that many of the enemy had lost their way in the night and in the mist, they employed a stratagem to bring them into their power: they erected on the eminences some French standards which they had taken in the battle, and all who were allured by this false signal were put to the sword, and no quarter given them. In excuse for this inhumanity, it was alleged that the French king had given like orders to his troops; but the real reason probably was, that the English, in their present situation, did not choose to be encumbered with prisoners. On the day of battle, and on the ensuing, there fell, by a moderate computation, one thousand two hundred French knights, one thousand four hundred gentlemen, four thousand men at arms, besides about thirty thousand of inferior rank: [2] many of the principal nobility of France, the dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon, the earls of Flanders, Blois, Vaudemont, Aumale, were left on the field of battle. The kings also of Bohemia and Majorca were slain: the fate of the former was remarkable: he was blind from age; but being resolved to hazard his person, and set an example to others, he ordered the reins of his bridle to be tied on each side to the horses of two gentlemen of his train; and his dead body, and those of his attendants, were afterwards found among the slain, with their horses standing by them in that situation. [3] His crest was three ostrich feathers; and his motto these German words, Ich dien,— “I serve;” which the prince of Wales and his successors adopted in memorial of this great victory. The action may seem no less remarkable for the small loss sustained by the English, than for the great slaughter of the French: there were killed in it only one esquire and three knights, [4] and very few of inferior rank; a demonstration that the prudent disposition planned by Edward, and the disorderly attack made by the French, had rendered the whole rather a rout than a battle, which was indeed the common case with engagements in those times.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Knyghton, .

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing. .

* * * * Knyghton, .

The great prudence of Edward appeared not only in obtaining this memorable victory, but in the measures which he pursued after it. Not elated by his present prosperity so far as to expect the total conquest of France, or even that of any considerable provinces, he purposed only to secure such an easy entrance into that kingdom, as might afterwards open the way to more moderate advantages. He knew the extreme distance of Guienne: he had experienced the difficulty and uncertainty of penetrating on the side of the Low Countries, and had already lost much of his authority over Flanders by the death of D'Arteville, who had been murdered by the populace themselves, his former partisans, on his attempting to transfer the sovereignty of that province to the prince of Wales. [1] The king, therefore, limited his ambition to the conquest of Calais; and after the interval of a few days, which he employed in interring the slain, he marched with his victorious army, and presented himself before the place.

John of Vienne, a valiant knight of Burgundy, was governor of Calais, and being supplied with every thing necessary for defence, he encouraged the townsmen to perform to the utmost their duty to their king and country. Edward, therefore, sensible from the beginning that it was in vain to attempt the place by force, purposed only to reduce it by famine; he chose a secure station for his camp; drew intrenchments around the whole city; raised huts for his soldiers, which he covered with straw or broom; and provided his army with all the conveniences necessary to make them endure the winter season, which was approaching. As the governor soon perceived his intentions, he expelled all the useless mouths; and the king had the generosity to allow these unhappy people to pass through his camp, and he even supplied them with money for their journey. [2]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

While Edward was engaged in this siege, which employed him near a twelvemonth, there passed in different places many other events: and all to the honor of the English arms.

The retreat of the duke of Normandy from Guienne left the earl of Derby master of the field; and he was not negligent in making his advantage of the superiority. He took Mirebeau by assault: he made himself master of Lusignan in the same manner: Taillebourg and St. Jean d’Angeli fell into his hands: Poictiers opened its gates to him; and Derby, having thus broken into the frontiers on that quarter, carried his incursions to the banks of the Loire, and filled all the southern provinces of France with horror and devastation. [1]

The flames of war were at the same time kindled in Brittany. Charles of Blois invaded that province with a considerable army, and invested the fortress of Roche de Rien; but the countess of Mountfort, reënforced by some English troops under Sir Thomas Dagworth, attacked him during the night in his intrenchments, dispersed his army, and took Charles himself prisoner. [2] His wife, by whom he enjoyed his pretensions to Brittany, compelled by the present necessity, took on her the government of the party, and proved herself a rival in every shape, and an antagonist to the countess of Mountfort, both in the field and in the cabinet. And while these heroic dames presented this extraordinary scene to the world, another princess in England, of still higher rank, showed herself no less capable of exerting every manly virtue.

The Scottish nation, after long defending, with incredible perseverance, their liberties against the superior force of the English, recalled their king, David Bruce, in 1342. Though that prince, neither by his age nor capacity, could bring them great assistance, he gave them the countenance of sovereign authority; and as Edward’s wars on the continent proved a great diversion to the force of England, they rendered the balance more equal between the kingdoms. In every truce which Edward concluded with Philip, the king of Scotland was comprehended; and when Edward made his last invasion upon France, David was strongly solicited by his ally to begin also hostilities, and to invade the northern counties of England. The nobility of his nation being always forward in such incursions, David soon mustered a great army, entered Northumberland at the head of above fifty thousand men, and carried his ravages and devastations to the gates of Durham. [3] But Queen Philippa, assembling a body of little more than twelve thousand men, [4] which she intrusted to the command of Lord Piercy, ventured to approach him at Neville’s Cross near that city; and riding through the ranks of her army, exhorted every man to do his duty, and to take revenge on these barbarous ravagers. [5]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

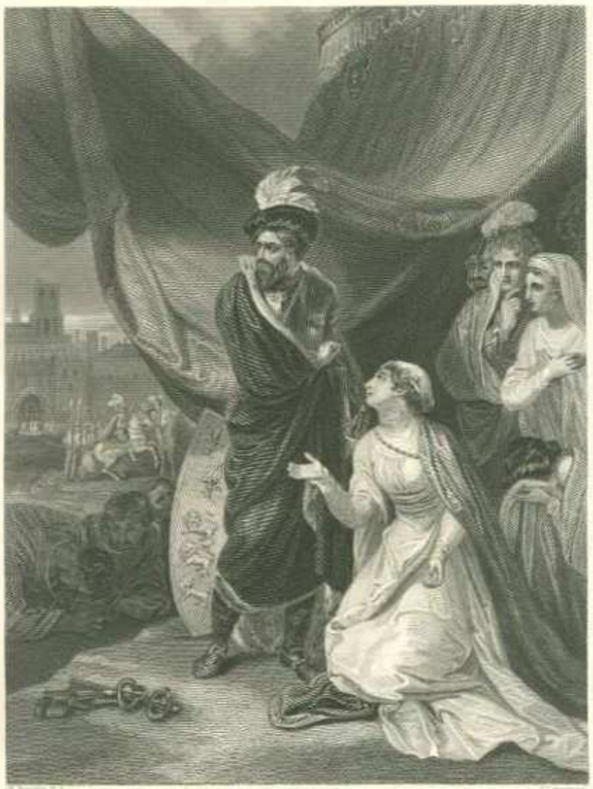
* * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing, . Ypod. Neust , 518.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

Nor could she be persuaded to leave the field, till the armies were on the point of engaging. The Scots have often been unfortunate in the great pitched battles which they fought with the English; even though they commonly declined such engagements where the superiority of numbers was not on their side: but never did they receive a more fatal blow than the present. They were broken and chased off the field: fifteen thousand of them (some historians say twenty thousand) were slain; among whom were Edward Keith, earl mareschal, and Sir Thomas Charteris, chancellor: and the king himself was taken prisoner, with the earls of Sutherland, Fife, Monteith, Carrick, Lord Douglas, and many other noblemen. [1]

Philippa, having secured her royal prisoner in the Tower, [2] crossed the sea at Dover; and was received in the English camp before Calais with all the triumph due to her rank, her merit, and her success. This age was the reign of chivalry and gallantry: Edward’s court excelled in these accomplishments as much as in policy and arms: and if any thing could justify the obsequious devotion then professed to the fair sex, it must be the appearance of such extraordinary women as shone forth during that period.



THE SURRENDER OF CALAIS.

1347.

The town of Calais had been defended with remarkable vigilance, constancy, and bravery by the townsmen, during a siege of unusual length: but Philip, informed of their distressed condition, determined at last to attempt their relief; and he approached the English with an immense army, which the writers of that age make amount to two hundred thousand men. But he found Edward so surrounded with morasses, and secured by intrenchments, that, without running on inevitable destruction, he concluded it impossible to make an attempt on the English camp. He had no other resource than to send his rival a vain challenge to meet him in the open field; which being refused, he was obliged to decamp with his army, and disperse them into their several provinces. [3]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. v. .

* * * Froissard, liv. i cha, 145.

John of Vienne, governor of Calais, now saw the necessity of surrendering his fortress, which was reduced to the last extremity by famine and the fatigue of the inhabitants. He appeared on the walls, and made a signal to the English sentinels that he desired a parley. Sir Walter Manny was sent to him by Edward. “Brave knight,” cried the governor “I have been intrusted by my sovereign with the command of this town: it is almost a year since you besieged me; and I have endeavored, as well as those under me, to do our duty. But you are acquainted with our present condition: we have no hopes of relief; we are perishing with hunger; I am willing therefore to surrender, and desire, as the sole condition, to insure the lives and liberties of these brave men, who have so long shared with me every danger and fatigue.” [1]

Manny replied, that he was well acquainted with the intentions of the king of England; that that prince was incensed against the townsmen of Calais for their pertinacious resistance, and for the evils which they had made him and his subjects suffer; that he was determined to take exemplary vengeance on them; and would not receive the town on any condition which should confine him in the punishment of these offenders. “Consider,” replied Vienne, “that this is not the treatment to which brave men are entitled: if any English knight had been in my situation, your king would have expected the same conduct from him. The inhabitants of Calais have done for their sovereign what merits the esteem of every prince; much more of so gallant a prince as Edward. But I inform you, that, if we must perish, we shall not perish unrevenged; and that we are not yet so reduced but we can sell our lives at a high price to the victors. It is the interest of both sides to prevent these desperate extremities; and I expect that you yourself, brave knight, will interpose your good offices with your prince in our behalf."

Manny was struck with the justness of these sentiments, and represented to the king the danger of reprisals, if he should give such treatment to the inhabitants of Calais. Edward was at last persuaded to mitigate the rigor of the conditions demanded: he only insisted, that six of the most considerable citizens should be sent to him to be disposed of as he thought proper; that they should come to his camp carrying the keys of the city in their hands, bareheaded and barefooted, with ropes about their necks: and on these conditions he promised to spare the lives of all the remainder. [2]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

When this intelligence was conveyed to Calais, it struck the inhabitants with new consternation. To sacrifice six of their fellow-citizens to certain destruction for signalizing their valor in a common cause, appeared to them even more severe than that general punishment with which they were before threatened; and they found themselves incapable of coming to any resolution in so cruel and distressful a situation. At last, one of the principal inhabitants, called Eustace de St. Pierre, whose name deserves to be recorded, stepped forth, and declared himself willing to encounter death for the safety of his friends and companions: another, animated by his example, made a like generous offer: a third and a fourth presented themselves to the same fate; and the whole number was soon completed. These six heroic burgesses appeared before Edward in the guise of malefactors, laid at his feet the keys of their city, and were ordered to be led to execution. It is surprising that so generous a prince should ever have entertained such a barbarous purpose against such men; and still more that he should seriously persist in the resolution of executing it. [1] But the entreaties of his queen saved his memory from that infamy: she threw herself on her knees before him, and with tears in her eyes begged the lives of these citizens. Having obtained her request, she carried them into her tent, ordered a repast to be set before them, and, after making them a present of money and clothes, dismissed them in safety. [2]

* See note G, at the end of the volume.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The king took possession of Calais; and immediately executed an act of rigor, more justifiable, because more necessary, than that which he had before resolved on. He knew that notwithstanding his pretended title to the crown of France, every Frenchman regarded him as a mortal enemy: he therefore ordered all the inhabitants of Calais to evacuate the town, and he peopled it anew with English; a policy which probably preserved so long to his successors the dominion of that important fortress. He made it the staple of wool, leather, tin, and lead; the four chief, if not the sole commodities of the kingdom, for which there was any considerable demand in foreign markets. All the English were obliged to bring thither these goods: foreign merchants came to the same place in order to purchase them: and at a period when posts were not established, and when the communication between states was so imperfect, this institution, though it hurt the navigation of England, was probably of advantage to the kingdom.

1348.

Through the mediation of the pope’s legates, Edward concluded a truce with France; but even during this cessation of arms, he had very nearly lost Calais, the sole fruit of all his boasted victories. The king had intrusted that place to Aimery de Pavie, an Italian, who had discovered bravery and conduct in the wars, but was utterly destitute of every principle of honor and fidelity. This man agreed to deliver up Calais for the sum of twenty thousand crowns; and Geoffrey de Charni, who commanded the French forces in those quarters, and who knew that, if he succeeded in this service, he should not be disavowed, ventured, without consulting his master, to conclude the bargain with him. Edward, informed of this treachery, by means of Aimery’s secretary, summoned the governor to London on other pretences; and having charged him with the guilt, promised him his life, but on condition that he would turn the contrivance to the destruction of the enemy. The Italian easily agreed to this double treachery. A day was appointed for the admission of the French; and Edward having prepared a force of about a thousand men, under Sir Walter Manny, secretly departed from London, carrying with him the prince of Wales; and, without being suspected, arrived the evening before at Calais. He made a proper disposition for the reception of the enemy, and kept all his forces and the garrison under arms. On the appearance of Charni, a chosen band of French soldiers was admitted at the postern, and Aimery, receiving the stipulated sum, promised that, with their assistance, he would immediately open the great gate to the troops, who were waiting with impatience for the fulfilling of his engagement.

1349.

All the French who entered were immediately slain or taken prisoners: the great gate opened: Edward rushed forth with cries of battle and of victory: the French, though astonished at the event, behaved with valor: a fierce and bloody engagement ensued. As the morning broke, the king, who was not distinguished by his arms, and who fought as a private man under the standard of Sir Walter Manny, remarked a French gentleman, called Eustace de Ribaumont, who exerted himself with singular vigor and bravery; and he was seized with a desire of trying a single combat with him. He stepped forth from his troop and challenging Ribaumont by name, (for he was known to him,) began a sharp and dangerous encounter. He was twice beaten to the ground by the valor of the Frenchman: he twice recovered himself: blows were redoubled with equal force on both sides: the victory was long undecided; till Ribaumont, perceiving himself to be left almost alone, called out to his antagonist, “Sir Knight, I yield myself your prisoner;” and at the same time delivered his sword to the king. Most of the French, being overpowered by numbers, and intercepted in their retreat, lost either their lives or their liberty. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 141, 142.

The French officers who had fallen into the hands of the English, were conducted into Calais; where Edward discovered to them the antagonist with whom they had had the honor to be engaged, and treated them with great regard and courtesy. They were admitted to sup with the prince of Wales and the English nobility; and after supper, the king himself came into the apartment, and went about, conversing familiarly with one or other of his prisoners. He even addressed himself to Charni, and avoided reproaching him, in too severe terms, with the treacherous attempt which he had made upon Calais during the truce: but he openly bestowed the highest encomiums on Ribaumont; called him the most valorous knight that he had ever been acquainted with; and confessed that he himself had at no time been in so great danger as when engaged in combat with him. He then took a string of pearls, which he wore about his own head, and throwing it over the head of Ribaumont, he said to him, “Sir Eustace, I bestow this present upon you as a testimony of my esteem for your bravery; and I desire you to wear it a year for my sake. I know you to be gay and amorous; and to take delight in the company of ladies and damsels: let them all know from what hand you had the present. You are no longer a prisoner; I acquit you of your ransom; and you are at liberty to-morrow to dispose of yourself as you think proper.”

Nothing proves more evidently the vast superiority assumed by the nobility and gentry above all the other orders of men, during those ages, than the extreme difference which Edward made in his treatment of these French knights, and that of the six citizens of Calais, who had exerted more signal bravery in a cause more justifiable and more honorable.

CHAPTER XVI.

EDWARD III.

1349.

THE prudent conduct and great success of Edward in his foreign wars had excited a strong emulation and a military genius among the English nobility; and these turbulent barons, overawed by the crown, gave now a more useful direction to their ambition, and attached themselves to a prince who led them to the acquisition of riches and of glory. That he might further promote the spirit of emulation and obedience, the king instituted the order of the garter, in imitation of some orders of a like nature, religious as well as military, which had been established in different parts of Europe. The number received into this order consisted of twenty-five persons, besides the sovereign; and as it has never been enlarged, this badge of distinction continues as honorable as at its first institution, and is still a valuable though a cheap present, which the prince can confer on his greatest subjects. A vulgar story prevails, but is not supported by any ancient authority, that at a court ball, Edward's mistress, commonly supposed to be the countess of Salisbury, dropped her garter; and the king, taking it up, observed some of the courtiers to smile, as if they thought that he had not obtained this favor merely by accident: upon which he called out, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," — Evil to him that evil thinks; and as every incident of gallantry among those ancient warriors was magnified into a matter of great importance, [1] he instituted the order of the garter in memorial of this event, and gave these words as the motto of the order. This origin, though frivolous, is not unsuitable to the manners of the times; and it is indeed difficult by any other means to account either for the seemingly unmeaning terms of the motto, or for the peculiar badge of the garter, which seems to have no reference to any purpose either of military use or ornament.

* See note H, at the end of the volume.

But a sudden damp was thrown over this festivity and triumph of the court of England, by a destructive pestilence, which invaded that kingdom as well as the rest of Europe; and is computed to have swept away near a third of the inhabitants in every country which it attacked. It was probably more fatal in great cities than in the country; and above fifty thousand souls are said to have perished by it in London alone. [1] This malady first discovered itself in the north of Asia, was spread over all that country, made its progress from one end of Europe to the other, and sensibly depopulated every state through which it passed. So grievous a calamity, more than the pacific disposition of the princes, served to maintain and prolong the truce between France and England.

* Stowe's Survey, . There were buried fifty thousand bodied in one churchyard, which Sir Walter Manny had bought for the use of the poor. The same author says, that there died above fifty thousand persons of the plague in Norwich,

which is quite incredible.

1350.

During this truce, Philip de Valois died, without being able to reestablish the affairs of France, which his bad success against England had thrown into extreme disorder. This monarch, during the first years of his reign, had obtained the appellation of Fortunate, and acquired the character of prudent; but he ill maintained either the one or the other; less from his own fault, than because he was overmatched by the superior fortune and superior genius of Edward. But the incidents in the reign of his son John gave the French nation cause to regret even the calamitous times of his predecessor. John was distinguished by many virtues, particularly a scrupulous honor and fidelity: he was not deficient in personal courage: but as he wanted that masterly prudence and foresight, which his difficult situation required his kingdom was at the same time disturbed by intestine commotions, and oppressed with foreign wars.

1354.

The chief source of its calamities, was Charles, king of Navarre who received the epithet of the Bad, or Wicked, and whose conduct fully entitled him to that appellation. This prince was descended from males of the blood royal of France; his mother was daughter of Lewis Hutin; he had himself espoused a daughter of King John: but all these ties, which ought to have connected him with the throne, gave him only greater power to shake and overthrow it. With regard to his personal qualities, he was courteous, affable, engaging eloquent; full of insinuation and address; inexhaustible in his resources; active and enterprising. But these splendid accomplishments were attended with such defects as rendered them pernicious to his country, and even ruinous to himself: he was volatile, inconstant, faithless, revengeful, malicious; restrained by no principle or duty; insatiable in his pretensions: and whether successful or unfortunate in one enterprise he immediately undertook another, in which he was never deterred from employing the most criminal and most dishonorable expedients.

The constable of Eu, who had been taken prisoner by Edward at Caen, recovered his liberty, on the promise of delivering, as his ransom, the town of Guisnes, near Calais of which he was superior lord: but as John was offended at this stipulation, which, if fulfilled, opened still farther that frontier to the enemy, and as he suspected the constable of more dangerous connections with the king of England, he ordered him to be seized, and without any legal or formal trial, put him to death, in prison. Charles de la Cerda was appointed constable in his place; and had a like fatal end: the king of Navarre ordered him to be assassinated; and such was the weakness of the crown, that this prince, instead of dreading punishment, would not even agree to ask pardon for his offence, but on condition that he should receive an accession of territory: and he had also John's second son put into his hands, as a security for his person, when he came to court, and performed this act of mock penitence and humiliation before his sovereign.[1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

1355.

The two French princes seemed entirely reconciled; but this dissimulation, to which John submitted from necessity, and Charles from habit, did not long continue; and the king of Navarre knew that he had reason to apprehend the most severe vengeance for the many crimes and treasons which he had already committed, and the still greater, which he was meditating. To insure himself of protection, he entered into a secret correspondence with England, by means of Henry, earl of Derby, now earl of Lancaster, who at that time was employed in fruitless negotiations for peace at Avignon, under the mediation of the pope. John detected this correspondence; and to prevent the dangerous effects of it, he sent forces into Normandy, the chief seat of the king of Navarre’s power, and attacked his castles and fortresses. But hearing that Edward had prepared an army to support his ally, he had the weakness to propose an accommodation with Charles, and even to give this traitorous subject the sum of a hundred thousand crowns, as the purchase of a feigned reconcilement, which rendered him still more dangerous. The king of Navarre, insolent from past impunity, and desperate from the dangers which he apprehended, continued his intrigues; and associating himself with Geoffrey d’Harcourt, who had received his pardon from Philip de Valois, but persevered still in his factious disposition, he increased the number of his partisans in every part of the kingdom. He even seduced, by his address, Charles, the king of France’s eldest son, a youth of seventeen years of age, who was the first that bore the appellation of “dauphin,” by the reunion of the province of Dauphiny to the crown. But this prince, being made sensible of the danger and folly of these connections, promised to make atonement for the offence by the sacrifice of his associates; and in concert with his father, he invited the king of Navarre, and other noblemen of the party, to a feast at Rouen, where they were betrayed into the hands of John. Some of the most obnoxious were immediately led to execution: the king of Navarre was thrown into prison; [1] but this stroke of severity in the king, and of treachery in the dauphin, was far from proving decisive in maintaining the royal authority. Philip of Navarre, brother to Charles, and Geoffrey d’Harcourt, put all the towns and castles belonging to that prince in a posture of defence; and had immediate recourse to the protection of England in this desperate extremity.

* Froissard. liv. i. cha.

The truce between the two kingdoms, which had always been ill observed on both sides, was now expired; and Edward was entirely free to support the French malecontents. Well pleased that the factions in France had at length gained him some partisans in that kingdom, which his pretensions to the crown had never been able to accomplish, he purposed to attack his enemy both on the side of Guienne, under the command of the prince of Wales, and on that of Calais, in his own person.

Young Edward arrived in the Garronne with his army, on board a fleet of three hundred sail, attended by the earls of Avesbury, . Warwick, Salisbury, Oxford, Suffolk, and other English noblemen. Being joined by the vassals of Gascony, he took the field; and as the present disorders in France prevented every proper plan of defence, he carried on with impunity his ravages and devastations, according to the mode of war in that age. He reduced all the villages and several towns in Languedoc to ashes: he presented himself before Toulouse; passed the Garronne, and burned the suburbs of Carcassonne; advanced even to Narbonne, laying every place waste around him; and after an incursion of six weeks, returned with a vast booty and many prisoners to the Guienne, where he took up his winter quarters. [1] The constable of Bourbon, who commanded in those provinces, received orders, though at the head of a superior army, on no account to run the hazard of a battle.

The king of England's incursion from Calais was of the samme nature, and attended with the same issue. He broke into France at the head of a numerous army; to which he gave a full license of plundering and ravaging the open country. He advanced to St. Omer, where the king of France was posted; and on the retreat of that prince, followed him to Hesdin. [2] John still kept at a distance, and declined an engagement: but in order to save his reputation, he sent Edward a challenge to fight a pitched battle with him; a usual bravado in that age, derived from the practice of single combat, and ridiculous in the art of war. The king, finding no sincerity in this defiance, retired to Calais, and thence went over to England, in order to defend that kingdom against a threatened invasion of the Scots.

The Scots, taking advantage of the king's absence, and that of the military power of England, had surprised Berwick; and had collected an army with a view of committing ravages upon the northern provinces: but on the approach of Edward, they abandoned that place, which was not tenable, while the castle was in the hands of the English; and retiring to their mountains, gave the enemy full liberty of burning and destroying the whole country from Berwick to Edinburgh. [3]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 146.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Avesbury, . Walsing. .

* * * Walsing. .

Baliol attended Edward on this expedition; but finding that his constant adherence to the English had given his countrymen an unconquerable aversion to his title, and that he himself was declining through age and infirmities, he finally resigned into the king’s hands his pretensions to the crown of Scotland, [1] and received in lieu of them an annual pension of two thousand pounds, with which he passed the remainder of his life in privacy and retirement.

During these military operations, Edward received information of the increasing disorders in France, arising from the imprisonment of the king of Navarre; and he sent Lancaster at the head of a small army, to support the partisans of that prince in Normandy. The war was conducted with various success, but chiefly to the disadvantage of the French malecontents; till an important event happened in the other quarter of the kingdom, which had well nigh proved fatal to the monarchy of France, and threw every thing into the utmost confusion.

1356.

The prince of Wales, encouraged by the success of the preceding campaign, took the field with an army, which no historian makes amount to above twelve thousand men, and of which not a third were English; and with this small body, he ventured to penetrate into the heart of France. After ravaging the Agenois, Quercy, and the Limousin, he entered the province of Berry; and made some attacks, though without success, on the towns of Bourges and Issoudun. It appeared that his intentions were to march into Normandy, and to join his forces with those of the earl of Lancaster, and the partisans of the king of Navarre; but finding all the bridges on the Loire broken down, and every pass carefully guarded, he was obliged to think of making his retreat into Guienne. [2] He found this resolution the more necessary, from the intelligence which he received of the king of France’s motions. That monarch, provoked at the insult offered him by this incursion, and entertaining hopes of success from the young prince’s temerity, collected a great army of above sixty thousand men, and advanced by hasty marches to intercept his enemy. The prince, not aware of John’s near approach, lost some days, on his retreat, before the castle of Remorantin; [3] and thereby gave the French an opportunity of overtaking him. They came within sight at Maupertuis, near Poiotiers; and Edward, sensible that his retreat was now become impracticable, prepared for battle with all the courage of a young hero, and with all the prudence of the oldest and most experienced commander.

* Rymer, vol. v. . [2 My copy has 823] Ypod. Neust. .

* * Walsing. .

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing.

But the utmost prudence and courage would have proved insufficient to save him in this extremity, had the king of France known how to make use of his present advantages. His great superiority in numbers enabled him to surround the enemy; and by intercepting all provisions, which were already become scarce in the English camp, to reduce this small army, without a blow, to the necessity of surrendering at discretion. But such was the impatient ardor of the French nobility, and so much had their thoughts been bent on overtaking the English as their sole object, that this idea never struck any of the commanders; and they immediately took measures for the assault, as for a certain victory. While the French army was drawn up in order of battle, they were stopped by the appearance of the cardinal of Perigord; who, having learned the approach of the two armies to each other, had hastened, by interposing his good offices, to prevent any further effusion of Christian blood. By John’s permission, he carried proposals to the prince of Wales; and found him so sensible of the bad posture of his affairs, that an accommodation seemed not impracticable. Edward told him, that he would agree to any terms consistent with his own honor and that of England; and he offered to purchase a retreat, by ceding all the conquests which he had made during this and the former campaign, and by stipulating not to serve against France during the course of seven years. But John, imagining that he had now got into his hands a sufficient pledge for the restitution of Calais, required that Edward should surrender himself prisoner with a hundred of his attendants; and offered, on these terms, a safe retreat to the English army. The prince rejected the proposal with disdain; and declared that, whatever fortune might attend him, England should never be obliged to pay the price of his ransom. This resolute answer cut off all hopes of accommodation; but as the day was already spent in negotiating, the battle was delayed till the next morning. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The cardinal of Perigord, as did all the prelates of the court of Rome, bore a great attachment to the French interest; but the most determined enemy could not, by any expedient, have done a greater prejudice to John's affairs, than he did them by this delay. The prince of Wales had leisure, daring the night, to strengthen, by new intrenchments, the post which he had before so judiciously chosen; and he contrived an ambush of three hundred men at arms, and as many archers, whom he put under the command of the Captal de Buche, and ordered to make a circuit, that they might fall on the flank or rear of the French army during the engagement. The van of his army was commanded by the earl of Warwick, the rear by the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, the main body by the prince himself. The Lords Chandos, Audeley, and many other brave and experienced commanders, were at the head of different corps of his army.

John also arranged his forces in three divisions, nearly equal: the first was commanded by the duke of Orleans, the king's brother; the second by the dauphin, attended by his two younger brothers; the third by the king himself, who had by his side Philip, his fourth son and favorite, then about fourteen years of age. There was no reaching the English army but through a narrow lane, covered on each side by hedges and in order to open this passage, the mareschals, Andrehen and Clermont, were ordered to advance with a separate detachment of men at arms. While they marched along the lane, a body of English archers, who lined the hedges, plied them on each side with their arrows; and being very near them, yet placed in perfect safety, they coolly took their aim against the enemy, and slaughtered them with impunity. The French detachment, much discouraged by the unequal combat, and diminished in their number, arrived at the end of the lane, where they met on the open ground the prince of Wales himself, at the head of a chosen body, ready for their reception. They were discomfited and overthrown: one of the mareschals was slain; the other taken prisoner: and the remainder of the detachment, who were still in the lane, and exposed to the shot of the enemy, without being able to make resistance, recoiled upon their own army, and put every thing into disorder. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

In that critical moment the Captal de Buche unexpectedly appeared, and attacked in flank the dauphin’s line, which fell into some confusion. Landas, Bodenai, and St. Venant, to whom the care of that young prince and his brothers had been committed, too anxious for their charge, or for their own safety, carried them off the field, and set the example of flight, which was followed by that whole division. The duke of Orleans, seized with alike panic, and imagining all was lost, thought no longer of fighting, but carried off his division by a retreat, which soon turned into a flight. Lord Chandos called out to the prince, that the day was won; and encouraged him to attack the division under King John, which, though more numerous than the whole English army, were somewhat dismayed with the precipitate flight of their companions. John here made the utmost efforts to retrieve by his valor what his imprudence had betrayed; and the only resistance made that day was by his line of battle. The prince of Wales fell with impetuosity on some German cavalry placed in the front, and commanded by the counts of Sallebruche, Nydo, and Nosto; a fierce battle ensued: one side were encouraged by the near prospect of so great a victory; the other were stimulated by the shame of quitting the field to an enemy so much inferior: but the three German generals, together with the duke of Athens, constable of France, falling in battle, that body of cavalry gave way, and left the king himself exposed to the whole fury of the enemy. The ranks were every moment thinned around him: the nobles fell by his side one after another: his son, scarce fourteen years of age, received a wound, while he was fighting valiantly in defence of his father: the king himself, spent with fatigue and overwhelmed by numbers, might easily have been slain; but every English gentleman, ambitious of taking alive the royal prisoner, spared him in the action, exhorted him to surrender, and offered him quarter: several, who attempted to seize him, suffered for their temerity. He still cried out, “Where is my cousin, the prince of Wales?” and seemed unwilling to become prisoner to any person of inferior rank. But being told that the prince was at a distance on the field, he threw down his gauntlet, and yielded himself to Dennis de Morbec, a knight of Arras, who had been obliged to fly his country for murder. His son was taken with him. [1]

* Rymer, vol vi. , 154. Froissard, liv. i. cha.

The prince of Wales, who had been carried away in pursuit of the flying enemy, finding the field entirely clear, had ordered a tent to be pitched, and was reposing himself after the toils of battle; inquiring still with great anxiety concerning the fate of the French monarch. He despatched the earl of Warwick to bring him intelligence; and that nobleman came happily in time to save the life of the captive prince which was exposed to greater danger than it had been during the heat of the action. The English had taken him by violence from Morbec: the Gascons claimed the honor of detaining the royal prisoner; and some brutal soldiers, rather than yield the prize to their rivals, had threatened to put him to death. [1] Warwick overawed both parties, and approaching the king with great demonstrations of respect, offered to conduct him to the prince's tent.

Here commences the real and truly admirable heroism of Edward; for victories are vulgar things in comparison of that moderation and humanity displayed by a young prince of twenty-seven years of age, not yet cooled from the fury of battle, and elated by as extraordinary and as unexpected success as had ever crowned the arms of any commander. He came forth to meet the captive king with all the marks of regard and sympathy; administered comfort to him amidst his misfortunes; paid him the tribute of praise due to his valor; and ascribed his own victory merely to the blind chance of war, or to a superior providence, which controls all the efforts of human force and prudence. [2] The behavior of John showed him not unworthy of this courteous treatment; his present abject fortune never made him forget a moment that he was a king: more touched by Edward's generosity than by his own calamities, he confessed that, notwithstanding his defeat and captivity, his honor was still unimpaired; and that if he yielded the victory, it was at least gained by a prince of such consummate valor and humanity.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Poul. Cemil, .

Edward ordered a repast to be prepared in his tent for the prisoner; and he himself served at the royal captive's table, as if he had been one of his retinue: he stood at the king's back during the meal; constantly refused to take a place at table; and declared that, being a subject, he was too well acquainted with the distance between his own rank and that of royal majesty, to assume such freedom. All his father’s pretensions to the crown of France were now buried in oblivion: John in captivity received the honors of a king, which were refused him when seated on the throne: his misfortunes, not his title, were respected; and the French prisoners, conquered by this elevation of mind, more than by their late discomfiture, burst into tears of admiration; which were only checked by the reflection, that such genuine and unaltered heroism in an enemy must certainly in the issue prove but the more dangerous to their native country. [1]

All the English and Gascon knights imitated the generous example set them by their prince. The captives were every where treated with humanity, and were soon after dismissed, on paying moderate ransoms to the persons into whose hands they had fallen. The extent of their fortunes was considered; and an attention was given that they should still have sufficient means left to perform their military service in a manner suitable to their rank and quality. Yet so numerous were the noble prisoners, that these ransoms, added to the spoils gained in the field, were sufficient to enrich the prince’s army; and as they had suffered very little in the action, their joy and exultation were complete.

The prince of Wales conducted his prisoner to Bordeaux; and not being provided with forces so numerous as might enable him to push his present advantages, he concluded a two years’ truce with France, [2] which was also become requisite, that he might conduct the captive king with safety into England. He landed at Southwark, and was met by a great concourse of people, of all ranks and stations. {1357.

The prisoner was clad in royal apparel, and mounted on a white steed, distinguished by its size and beauty, and by the richness of its furniture. The conqueror rode by his side in a meaner attire, and carried by a black palfrey. In this situation, more glorious than all the insolent parade of a Roman triumph, he passed through the streets of London, and presented the king of France to his father, who advanced to meet him, and received him with the same courtesy as if he had been a neighboring potentate that had voluntarily come to pay him a friendly visit. [3] It is impossible, in reflecting on this noble conduct, not to perceive the advantages which resulted from the otherwise whimsical principles of chivalry, and which gave men in those rude times some superiority even over people of a more cultivated age and nation.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. vi .

* * * Froissard, liv i. cha.

The king of France, besides the generous treatment which he met with in England, had the melancholy consolation of the wretched, to see companions in affliction. The king of Scots had been eleven years a captive in Edward's hands; and the good fortune of this latter monarch had reduced at once the two neighboring potentates, with whom he was engaged in war, to be prisoners in his capital.

1357.

But Edward finding that the conquest of Scotland was nowise advanced by the captivity of its sovereign, and that the government conducted by Robert Stuart, his nephew and heir, was still able to defend itself, consented to restore David Bruce to his liberty, for the ransom of one hundred thousand marks sterling; and that prince delivered the sons of all his principal nobility, as hostages for the payment. [1]

* Rymer, vol. vi. , 46, 52, 56. Froissard, liv. i. chap, 154 Walsing, .

1358.

Meanwhile, the captivity of John, joined to the preceding disorders of the French government, had produced in that country a dissolution, almost total, of civil authority, and had occasioned confusions the most horrible and destructive that had ever been experienced in any age or in any nation. The dauphin, now about eighteen years of age, naturally assumed the royal power during his father's captivity; but though endowed with an excellent capacity, even in such early years, he possessed neither experience nor authority sufficient to defend a state, assailed at once by foreign power and shaken by intestine faction. In order to obtain supply, he assembled the states of the kingdom: that assembly, instead of supporting his administration, were themselves seized with the spirit of confusion; and laid hold of the present opportunity to demand limitations of the prince’s power, the punishment of past malversations, and the liberty of the king of Navarre. Marcel, provost of the merchants and first magistrate of Paris, put himself at the head of the unruly populace; and from the violence and temerity of his character, pushed them to commit the most criminal outrages against the royal authority. They detained the dauphin in a sort of captivity; they murdered in his presence Robert de Clermont and John de Conflans, mareschals, the one of Normandy, the other of Burgundy; they threatened all the other ministers with a like fate; and when Charles, who was obliged to temporize and dissemble, made his escape from their hands, they levied war against him, and openly erected the standard of rebellion, The other cities of the kingdom, in imitation of the capital, shook off the dauphin’s authority, took the government into their own hands, and spread the disorder into every province. The nobles, whose inclinations led them to adhere to the crown, and were naturally disposed to check these tumults, had lost all their influence; and being reproached with cowardice on account of the base desertion of their sovereign in the battle of Poiotiers, were treated with universal contempt by the inferior orders. The troops, who, from the deficiency of pay, were no longer retained in discipline, threw off all regard to their officers, sought the means of subsistence by plunder and robbery, and associating to them all the disorderly people with whom that age abounded, formed numerous bands, which infested all parts of the kingdom. They desolated the open country; burned and plundered the villages; and by cutting off all means of communication or subsistence, reduced even the inhabitants of the walled towns to the most extreme necessity. The peasants, formerly oppressed, and now left unprotected by their masters, became desperate from their present misery; and rising every where in arms, carried to the last extremity those disorders which were derived from the sedition of the citizens and disbanded soldiers. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha,183, 184.

The gentry, hated for their tyranny, were every where exposed to the violence of popular rage; and instead of meeting with the regard due to their past dignity, became only, on that account, the object of more wanton insult to the mutinous peasants. They were hunted like wild beasts, and put to the sword without mercy: their castles were consumed with fire, and levelled to the ground: their wives and daughters were first ravished, then murdered:

the savages proceeded so far as to impale some gentlemen, and roast them alive before a slow fire: a body of nine thousand of them broke into Meaux, where the wife of the dauphin, with above three hundred ladies, had taken shelter: the most brutal treatment and most atrocious cruelty were justly dreaded by this helpless company: but the Captal de Buche, though in the service of Edward, yet moved by generosity and by the gallantry of a true knight, flew to their rescue, and beat off the peasants with great slaughter. In other civil wars, the opposite factions, falling under the government of their several leaders, commonly preserve still the vestige of some rule and order: but here the wild state of nature seemed to be renewed: every man was thrown loose and independent of his fellows: and the populousness of the country, derived from the preceding police of civil society, served only to increase the horror and confusion of the scene.

Amidst these disorders, the king of Navarre made his escape from prison, and presented a dangerous leader to the furious malecontents. [1] But the splendid talents of this prince qualified him only to do mischief, and to increase the public distractions: he wanted the steadiness and prudence requisite for making his intrigues subservient to his ambition, and forming his numerous partisans into a regular faction. He revived his pretensions, somewhat obsolete, to the crown of France: but while he advanced this claim, he relied entirely on his alliance with the English, who were concerned in interest to disappoint his pretensions; and who, being public and inveterate enemies to the state, served only, by the friendship which they seemingly bore him, to render his cause the more odious. And in all his operations, he acted more like a leader of banditti, than one who aspired to be the head of a regular government, and who was engaged by his station to endeavor the reëstablishment of order in the community.

The eyes, therefore, of all the French, who wished to restore peace to their miserable and desolated country, were turned towards the dauphin; and that young prince, though not remarkable for his military talents, possessed so much prudence and spirit, that he daily gained the ascendant over all his enemies. Marcel, the seditious provost of Paris, was slain, while he was attempting to deliver the city to the king of Navarre and the English; and the capital immediately returned to its duty. [2] The most considerable bodies of the mutinous peasants were dispersed, and put to the sword: some bands of military robbers underwent the same fate: and though many grievous disorders still remained, France began gradually to assume the face of a regular civil government, and to form some plan for its defence and security.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha

During the confusion in the dauphin’s affairs, Edward seemed to have a favorable opportunity for pushing his conquests: but besides that his hands were tied by the truce, and he could only assist underhand the faction of Navarre, the state of the English finances and military power, during those ages, rendered the kingdom incapable of making any regular or steady effort, and obliged it to exert its force at very distant intervals, by which all the projected ends were commonly disappointed. Edward employed himself, during a conjuncture so inviting, chiefly in negotiations with his prisoner; and John had the weakness to sign terms of peace, which, had they taken effect, must have totally ruined and dismembered his kingdom. He agreed to restore all the provinces which had been possessed by Henry II. and his two sons, and to annex them forever to England, without any obligation of homage or fealty on the part of the English monarch. But the dauphin and the states of France rejected this treaty, so dishonorable and pernicious to the kingdom; [1] and Edward on the expiration of the truce, having now, by subsidies and frugality, collected some treasure, prepared himself for a new invasion of France.

The great authority and renown of the king and the prince of Wales, the splendid success of their former enterprises, and the certain prospect of plunder from the defenceless provinces of France, soon brought together the whole military power of England; and the same motives invited to Edward’s standard all the hardy adventurers of the different countries of Europe. [2] He passed over to Calais, where he assembled an army of near a hundred thousand men; a force which the dauphin could not pretend to withstand in the open field: that prince, therefore, prepared himself to elude a blow, which it was impossible for him to resist. He put all the considerable towns in a posture of defence; ordered them to be supplied with magazines and provisions; distributed proper garrisons in all places; secured every thing valuable in the fortified cities; and chose his own station at Paris, with a view of allowing the enemy to vent their fury on the open country.

1359.

The king, aware of this plan of defence, was obliged to carry along with him six thousand wagons, loaded with the provisions necessary for the subsistence of his army. After ravaging the province of Picardy, he advanced into Champagne; and having a strong desire of being crowned king of France at Rheims, the usual place in which this ceremony is performed, he laid siege to that city, and carried on his attacks, though without success, for the space of seven weeks. [3]

* Froissard. liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing. .

1360.

The place was bravely defended by the inhabitants, encouraged by the exhortations of the archbishop, John de Craon; till the advanced season (for this expedition was entered upon in the beginning of winter) obliged the king to raise the siege. The province of Champagne, meanwhile, was desolated by his incursions; and he thence conducted his army, with a like intent, into Burgundy. He took and pillaged Tonnerre, Gaillon, Avalon, and other small places; but the duke of Burgundy, that he might preserve his country from further ravages, consented to pay him the sum of one hundred thousand nobles. [1] Edward then bent his march towards the Nivernois, which saved itself by a like composition: he laid waste Brie and the Gatinois; and after a long march, very destructive to France, and somewhat ruinous to his own troops, he appeared before the gates of Paris, and taking up his quarters at Bourg-la-Reine, extended his army to Longjumeau, Montrouge, and Vaugirard. He tried to provoke the dauphin to hazard a battle, by sending him a defiance; but could not make that prudent prince change his plan of operations. Paris was safe from the danger of an assault by its numerous garrison; from that of a blockade by its well-supplied magazines: and as Edward himself could not subsist his army in a country wasted by foreign and domestic enemies, and left also empty by the precaution of the dauphin, he was obliged to remove his quarters; and he spread his troops into the provinces of Maine, Beausse, and the Chartraine, which were abandoned to the fury of their devastations. [2] The only repose which France experienced was during the festival of Easter, when the king stopped the course of his ravages. For superstition can sometimes restrain the rage of men, which neither justice nor humanity is able to control.

* Rymer, vol. vi. . Walsing. .

* * Walsing. .

While the war was carried on in this ruinous manner, the negotiations for peace were never interrupted: but as the king still insisted on the full execution of the treaty which he had made with his prisoner at London, and which was strenuously rejected by the dauphin, there appeared no likelihood of an accommodation. The earl, now duke of Lancaster, (for this, title was introduced into England during the present reign,) endeavored to soften the rigor of these terms, and to finish the war on more equal and reasonable conditions. He insisted with Edward, that, notwithstanding his great and surprising successes, the object of the war, if such were to be esteemed the acquisition of the crown of France, was not become any nearer than at the commencement of it; or rather, was set at a greater distance by those very victories and advantages which seemed to lead to it. That his claim of succession had not from the first procured him one partisan in the kingdom; and the continuance of these destructive hostilities had united every Frenchman in the most implacable animosity against him. That though intestine faction had crept into the government of France, it was abating every moment; and no party, even during the greatest heat of the contest, when subjection under a foreign enemy usually appears preferable to the dominion of fellow-citizens, had ever adopted the pretensions of the king of England. That the king of Navarre himself, who alone was allied with the English, instead of being a cordial friend, was Edward’s most dangerous rival, and, in the opinion of his partisans, possessed a much preferable title to the crown of France. That the prolongation of the war, however it might enrich the English soldiers, was ruinous to the king himself, who bore all the charges of the armament, without reaping any solid or durable advantage from it. That if the present disorders of France continued, that kingdom would soon be reduced to such a state of desolation, that it would afford no spoils to its ravagers, if it could establish a more steady government, it might turn the chance of war in its favor, and by its superior force and advantages be able to repel the present victors. That the dauphin, even during his greatest distresses, had yet conducted himself with so much prudence, as to prevent the English from acquiring one foot of land in the kingdom; and it were better for the king to accept by a peace what he had in vain attempted to acquire by hostilities, which, however hitherto successful, had been extremely expensive, and might prove very dangerous. And that Edward having acquired so much glory by his arms, the praise of moderation was the only honor to which he could now aspire; an honor so much the greater, as it was durable, was united with that of prudence, and might be attended with the most real advantages. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

These reasons induced Edward to accept of more moderate terms of peace; and it is probable that, in order to palliate this change of resolution, he ascribed it to a vow made during a dreadful tempest, which attacked his army on their march, and which ancient historians represent as the cause of this sudden accommodation. [1] The conferences between the English and French commissioners were carried on during a few days at Bretigni, in the Chartraine, and the peace was at last concluded on the following conditions: [2] it was stipulated that King John should be restored to his liberty, and should pay as his ransom three millions of crowns of gold, about one million five hundred thousand pounds of our present money; [3] which was to be discharged at different payments: that Edward should forever renounce all claim to the crown of France, and to the provinces of Normandy, Maine, Touraine, and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors; and should receive in exchange the provinces of Poictou, Xaintonge, l’Agenois, Perigord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rovergue, l’Angoumois, and other districts in that quarter, together with Calais, Guisnes, Montreuil, and the county of Ponthieu, on the other side of France: that the full sovereignty of all these provinces, as well as that of Guienne, should be vested in the crown of England, and that France should renounce all title to feudal jurisdiction, homage, or appeal from them: that the king of Navarre should be restored to all his honors and possessions: that Edward should renounce his confederacy with the Flemings, John his connections with the Scots: that the disputes concerning the succession of Brittany, between the families of Blois and Mountfort, should be decided by arbiters appointed by the two kings; and if the competitors refused to submit to the award, the dispute should no longer be a ground of war between the kingdoms; and that forty hostages, such as should be agreed on, should be sent to England as a security for the execution of all these conditions. [4]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. vi. . Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * See note I, at the end of the volume.

* * * * The hostages were the two sons of the French king, John and Lewis; his brother Philip, duke of Orleans, the duke of Bourbon, James de Bourbon count de Ponthieu, the counts d'Eu, de Longueville, de St. Pol, de Harcourt, de Vendome,

de Couci, de Craon, de Montmorenci, and many of the chief nobility of France. The princes were mostly released on the fulfilling of certain articles: others of the hostages, and the duke of Berry among the rest, were permitted to return upon their parole, which they did not keep. Rymer, vol. vi.

, 285, 287.

In consequence of this treaty, the king of France was brought over to Calais; whither Edward also soon after repaired; and there both princes solemnly ratified the treaty.

John was sent to Boulogne; the king accompanied him a mile on his journey; and the two monarchs parted with many professions, probably cordial and sincere, of mutual amity. [1] The good disposition of John made him fully sensible of the generous treatment which he had received in England, and obliterated all memory of the ascendant gained over him by his rival. There seldom has been a treaty of so great importance so faithfully executed by both parties. Edward had scarcely from the beginning entertained any hopes of acquiring the crown of France: by restoring John to his liberty, and making peace at a juncture so favorable to his arms, he had now plainly renounced all pretensions of this nature; he had sold at a very high price that chimerical claim; and had at present no other interest than to retain those acquisitions which he had made with such singular prudence and good fortune. John, on the other hand, though the terms were severe, possessed such fidelity and honor, that he was determined at all hazards to execute them, and to use every expedient for satisfying a monarch who had indeed been his greatest political enemy, but had treated him personally with singular humanity and regard. But, notwithstanding his endeavors, there occurred many difficulties in fulfilling his purpose; chiefly from the extreme reluctance which many towns and vassals in the neighborhood of Guienne expressed against submitting to the English dominion; [2] and John, in order to adjust these differences, took a resolution of coming over himself to England.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

1363.

His council endeavored to dissuade him from this rash design; and probably would have been pleased to see him employ more chicanes for eluding the execution of so disadvantageous a treaty: but John replied to them, that though good faith were banished from the rest of the earth, she ought still to retain her habitation in the breasts of princes. Some historians would detract from the merit of this honorable conduct, by representing John as enamored of an English lady, to whom he was glad on this pretence to pay a visit; but besides that this surmise is not founded on any good authority, it appears somewhat unlikely on account of the advanced age of that prince, who was now in his fifty-sixth year.

1364.

He was lodged in the Savoy; the palace where he had resided during his captivity, and where he soon after sickened and died. Nothing can be a stronger proof of the great dominion of fortune over men, than the calamities which pursued a monarch of such eminent valor, goodness, and honor, and which he incurred merely by reason of some slight imprudences, which, in other situations, would have been of no importance. But though both his reign and that of his father proved extremely unfortunate to their kingdom, the French crown acquired, during their time, very considerable accessions — those of Dauphiny and Burgundy. This latter province, however, John had the imprudence again to dismember by bestowing it on Philip, his fourth son, the object of his most tender affections; [1] a deed which was afterwards the source of many calamities to the kingdom.

John was succeeded in the throne by Charles the dauphin, a prince educated in the school of adversity, and well qualified, by his consummate prudence and experience, to repair all the losses which the kingdom had sustained from the errors of his two predecessors. Contrary to the practice of all the great princes of those times, which held nothing in estimation but military courage, he seems to have fixed it as a maxim never to appear at the head of his armies; and he was the first king in Europe that showed the advantage of policy, foresight, and judgment, above a rash and precipitate valor. The events of his reign, compared with those of the preceding, are a proof how little reason kingdoms have to value themselves on their victories, or to be humbled by their defeats; which in reality ought to be ascribed chiefly to the good or bad conduct of their rulers, and are of little moment towards determining national characters and manners.

Before Charles could think of counterbalancing so great a power as England, it was necessary for him to remedy the many disorders to which his own kingdom was exposed. He turned his arms against the king of Navarre, the great disturber of France during that age; he defeated this prince by the conduct of Bertrand du Guesclin, a gentleman of Brittany, one of the most accomplished characters of the age, whom he had the discernment to choose as the instrument of all his victories: [2] and he obliged his enemy to accept of moderate terms of peace.

* Rymer, vol. vi. .

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha, 120.

Du Guesclin was less fortunate in the wars of Brittany, which still continued, notwithstanding the mediation of France and England: he was defeated and taken prisoner at Auray by Chandos: Charles of Blois was there slain, and the young count of Mountfort soon after got entire possession of that duchy. [1] But the prudence of Charles broke the force of this blow: he submitted to the decision of fortune: he acknowledged the title of Mountfort, though a zealous partisan of England; and received the proffered homage for his dominions. But the chief obstacle which the French king met with in the settlement of the state, proceeded from obscure enemies, whom their crimes alone rendered eminent, and their number dangerous.

On the conclusion of the treaty of Bretigni, the many military adventurers who had followed the standard of Edward being dispersed into the several provinces, and possessed of strongholds, refused to lay down their arms, or relinquish a course of life to which they were now accustomed, and by which alone they could gain a subsistence. [2] They associated themselves with the banditti, who were already inured to the habits of rapine and violence; and under the name of the “companies” and “companions,” became a terror to all the peaceable inhabitants. Some English and Gascon gentlemen of character, particularly Sir Matthew Gournay, Sir Hugh Calverly, the chevalier Verte, and others, were not ashamed to take the command of these ruffians, whose numbers amounted on the whole to near forty thousand, and who bore the appearance of regular armies, rather than bands of robbers. These leaders fought pitched battles with the troops of France, and gained victories; in one of which Jaques de Bourbon, a prince of the blood, was slain: [3] and they proceeded to such a height, that they wanted little but regular establishments to become princes, and thereby sanctify, by the maxims of the world, their infamous profession. The greater spoil they committed on the country, the more easy they found it to recruit their number: all those who were reduced to misery and despair, flocked to their standard: the evil was every day increasing; and though the pope declared them excommunicated, these military plunderers, however deeply affected with the sentence, to which they paid a much greater regard than to any principles of morality, could not be induced by it to betake themselves to peaceable or lawful professions.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 228, etc. Walsing, .

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * * Froissard, liv. i. chap, 214, 215.

1366.

As Charles was not able by power to redress so enormous a grievance, he was led by necessity, and by the turn of his character, to correct it by policy, and to contrive some method of discharging into foreign countries this dangerous and intestine evil.

Peter, king of Castile, stigmatized by his contemporaries and by posterity with the epithet of Cruel, had filled with blood and murder his kingdom and his own family; and having incurred the universal hatred of his subjects, he kept from present terror alone, an anxious and precarious possession of the throne. His nobles fell every day the victims of his severity: he put to death several of his natural brothers, from groundless jealousy: each murder, by multiplying his enemies, became the occasion of fresh barbarities; and as he was not destitute of talents, his neighbors, no less than his own subjects, were alarmed at the progress of his violence and injustice. The ferocity of his temper, instead of being softened by his strong propensity to love, was rather inflamed by that passion, and took thence new occasion to exert itself. Instigated by Mary de Padilla, who had acquired the ascendant over him, he threw into prison Blanche de Bourbon, his wife, Bister to the queen of France; and soon after made way by poison for the espousing of his mistress.

Henry, count of Transtamare, his natural brother, seeing the fate of every one who had become obnoxious to this tyrant, took arms against him; but being foiled in the attempt, he sought for refuge in France, where he found the minds of men extremely inflamed against Peter, on account of his murder of the French princess. He asked permission of Charles to enlist the “companies” in his service, and to lead them into Castile; where, from the concurrence of his own friends, and the enemies of his brother, he had the prospect of certain and immediate success. The French king, charmed with the project, employed Du Guesclin in negotiating with the leaders of these banditti. The treaty was soon concluded. The high character of honor which that general possessed, made every one trust to his promises: though the intended expedition was kept a secret, the “companies” implicitly enlisted under his standard; and they required no other condition before their engagement, than an assurance that they were not to be led against the prince of Wales in Guienne. But that prince was so little averse to the enterprise, that he allowed some gentlemen of his retinue to enter into the service under Du Guesclin.

Du Guesclin, having completed his levies, led the army first to Avignon, where the pope then resided, and demanded, sword in hand, an absolution for his soldiers, and the sum of two hundred thousand livres. The first was readily promised him; some more difficulty was made with regard to the second. “I believe that my fellows,” replied Du Guesclin, “may make a shift to do without your absolution; but the money is absolutely necessary.” The pope then extorted from the inhabitants in the city and neighborhood the sum of a hundred thousand livres, and offered it to Du Guesclin. “It is not my purpose,” cried that generous warrior, “to oppress the innocent people. The pope and his cardinals themselves can well spare me that sum from their own coffers. This money, I insist, must be restored to the owners. And should they be defrauded of it, I shall myself return from the other side of the Pyrenees, and oblige you to make them restitution.” The pope found the necessity of submitting, and paid him from his treasury the sum demanded. [1] The army, hallowed by the blessings, and enriched by the spoils, of the church, proceeded on their expedition.

These experienced and hardy soldiers, conducted by so able a general, easily prevailed over the king of Castile, whose subjects, instead of supporting their oppressor, were ready to join the enemy against him. [2] Peter fled from his dominions took shelter in Guienne, and craved the protection of the prince of Wales, whom his father had invested with the sovereignty of these conquered provinces, by the title of the principality of Aquitaine. [3]

* Hist. du Guesclin.

* * Froissard, liv. i. chap 230.

* * * Rymer, vol. vi. . Froissard, liv. i. cha.

1367.

The prince seemed now to have entirely changed his sentiments with regard to the Spanish transactions: whether that he was moved by the generosity of supporting a distressed prince, and thought, as is but too usual among sovereigns, that the rights of the people were a matter of much less consideration; or dreaded the acquisition of so powerful a confederate to France as the new king of Castile; or, what is most probable, was impatient of rest and ease, and sought only an opportunity for exerting his military talents, by which he had already acquired so much renown. He promised his assistance to the dethroned monarch; and having obtained the consent of his father, he levied a great army, and set out upon his enterprise. He was accompanied by his younger brother, John of Gaunt, created duke of Lancaster, in the room of the good prince of that name, who had died without any male issue, and whose daughter he had espoused. Chandos, also, who bore among the English the same character which Du Guesclin had acquired among the French, commanded under him in this expedition.

The first blow which the prince of Wales gave to Henry of Transtamare, was the recalling of all the “companies” from his service; and so much reverence did they bear to the name of Edward, that great numbers of them immediately withdrew from Spain, and enlisted under his banners. Henry, however, beloved by his new subjects, and supported by the king of Arragon and others of his neighbors, was able to meet the enemy with an army of one hundred thousand men; forces three times more numerous than those which were commanded by Edward. Du Guesclin, and all his experienced officers, advised him to delay any decisive action, to cut off the prince of Wales’s provisions, and to avoid every engagement with a general, whose enterprises had hitherto been always conducted with prudence, and crowned with success. Henry trusted too much to his numbers; and ventured to encounter the English prince at Najara. [1]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

Historians of that age are commonly very copious in describing the shock of armies in battle, the valor of the combatants, the slaughter and various successes of the day: but though small rencounters in those times were often well disputed, military discipline was always too imperfect to preserve order in great armies; and such actions deserve more the name of routs than of battles. Henry was chased off the field, with the loss of above twenty thousand men: there perished only four knights and forty private men on the side of the English.

Peter, who so well merited the infamous epithet which he bore, purposed to murder all his prisoners in cold blood; but was restrained from this barbarity by the remonstrance, of the prince of Wales. All Castile now submitted to the victor: Peter was restored to the throne; and Edward finished his perilous enterprise with his usual glory. But he had soon reason to repent his connections with a man like Peter, abandoned to all sense of virtue and honor. The ungrateful tyrant refused the stipulated pay to the English forces; and Edward finding his soldiers daily perish by sickness, and even his own health impaired by the climate, was obliged, without receiving any satisfaction on this head, to return into Guienne. [1]

The barbarities exercised by Peter over his helpless subjects, whom he now regarded as vanquished rebels, revived all the animosity of the Castilians against him; and on the return of Henry of Transtamare, together with Du Guesclin, and some forces levied anew in France, the tyrant was again dethroned, and was taken prisoner. His brother, in resentment of his cruelties, murdered him with his own hand: and was placed on the throne of Castile, which he transmitted to his posterity. The duke of Lancaster, who espoused in second marriage the eldest daughter of Peter, inherited only the empty title of that sovereignty, and, by claiming the succession, increased the animosity of the new king of Castile against England.

1368.

But the prejudice which the affairs of Prince Edward received from this splendid though imprudent expedition, ended not with it. He had involved himself in so much debt by his preparations and the pay of his troops, that he found it necessary, on his return, to impose on his principality a new tax, to which some of the nobility consented with extreme reluctance, and to which others absolutely refused to submit. [2]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 243. Walsing. .

* * This tax was a livre upon a hearth; and it was imagined that the imposition would have yielded one million two hundred thousand livres a year, which supposes so many hearths in the provinces possessed by the English. But such loose conjectures have commonly no manner of authority, much less in such ignorant times. There

is a strong instance of it in the present reign. The house of commons granted the king a tax of twenty-two shillings on each parish, supposing that the amount of the whole would be fifty thousand pounds.

But they were found to be in a mistake of near five to one.

Cotton, . And the council assumed the power of augmenting the tax upon each parish.

This incident revived the animosity which the inhabitants bore to the English, and which all the amiable qualities of the prince of Wales were not able to mitigate or assuage. They complained that they were considered as a conquered people, that their privileges were disregarded, that all trust was given to the English alone, that every office of honor and profit was conferred on these foreigners, and that the extreme reluctance, which most of them had expressed, to receive the new yoke, was likely to be long remembered against them. They cast, therefore, their eyes towards their ancient sovereign, whose prudence they found had now brought the affairs of his kingdom into excellent order; and the counts of Armagnac, Comminge, and Perigord, the lord d'Albret, with other nobles, went to Paris, and were encouraged to carry their complaints to Charles, as to their lord paramount, against these oppressions of the English government. [1]

In the treaty of Bretigm it had been stipulated, that the two kings should make renunciations; Edward, of his claim to the crown of France, and to the provinces of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou; John, of the homage and fealty due for Guienne and the other provinces ceded to the English. But when that treaty was confirmed and renewed at Calais, it was found necessary, as Edward was not yet in possession of all the territories, that the mutual renunciations should for some time be deferred; and it was agreed, that the parties, meanwhile, should make no use of their respective claims against each other. [2] Though the failure in exchanging these renunciations had still proceeded from France, [3] Edward appears to have taken no umbrage at it; both because this clause seemed to give him entire security, and because some reasonable apology had probably been made to him for each delay. It was, however, on this pretence, though directly contrary to treaty, that Charles resolved to ground his claim of still considering himself as superior lord of those provinces, and of receiving the appeals of his sub-vassals. [4]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. vi. , 230, 234, 237, 243.

* * * Rot. Franc. 35, Edward III. from Tyrrel, vol. iii .

* * * * Froissard. liv. i. cha.

1369.

But as views of policy, more than those of justice, enter into the deliberations of princes; and as the mortal injuries received from the English, the pride of their triumphs, the severe terms imposed by the treaty of peace, seemed to render every prudent means of revenge honorable against them; Charles was determined to take this measure, less by the reasonings of his civilians and lawyers, than by the present situation of the two monarchies. He considered the declining years of Edward, the languishing state of the prince of Wales's health, the affection which the inhabitants of all these provinces bore to their ancient master, their distance from England, their vicinity to France, the extreme animosity expressed by his own subjects against these invaders, and their ardent thirst of vengeance; and having silently made all the necessary preparations, he sent to the prince of Wales a summons to appear in his court at Paris, and there to justify his conduct towards his vassals. The prince replied, that he would come to Paris, but it should be at the head of sixty thousand men. [1] The unwarlike character of Charles kept Prince Edward, even yet, from thinking that that monarch was in earnest in this bold and hazardous attempt.

It soon appeared what a poor return the king had received by his distant conquests for all the blood and treasure expended in the quarrel, and how impossible it was to retain acquisitions, in an age when no regular force could be maintained sufficient to defend them against the revolt of the inhabitants, especially if that danger was joined with the invasion of a foreign enemy.

1370.

Charles fell first upon Ponthieu, which gave the English an inlet into the heart of France: the citizens of Abbeville opened their gates to him: [2] those of St. Valori, Rue, and Crotoy imitated the example, and the whole country was, in a little time, reduced to submission. The dukes of Berri and Anjou, brothers to Charles, being assisted by Du Guesclin, who was recalled from Spain, invaded the southern provinces; and by means of their good conduct, the favorable dispositions of the people, and the ardor of the French nobility, they made every day considerable progress against the English. The state of the prince of Wales's health did not permit him to mount on horseback, or exert his usual activity: Chandos, the constable of Guienne, was slain in one action; [3] the Captal de Buche, who succeeded him in that office, was taken prisoner in another: [4] and when young Edward himself was obliged by his increasing infirmities to throw up the command, and return to his native country, the affairs of the English in the south of France seemed to be menaced with total ruin.

The king, incensed at these injuries, threatened to put to death all the French hostages who remained in his hands; but on reflection abstained from that ungenerous revenge. After resuming, by advice of parliament, the vain title of king of France, [5] he endeavored to send succors into Gascony, but all his attempts, both by sea and land, proved unsuccessful.

The earl of Pembroke was intercepted at sea, and taken prisoner with his whole army, near Rochelle, by a fleet which the king of Castile had fitted out for that purpose: [1] Edward himself embarked for Bordeaux with another army; but was so long detained by contrary winds, that he was obliged to lay aside the enterprise. [2] Sir Robert Knolles, at the head of thirty thousand men, marched out of Calais, and continued his ravages to the gates of Paris, without being able to provoke the enemy to an engagement: he proceeded in his march to the provinces of Maine and Anjou, which he laid waste; but part of his army being there defeated by the

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* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 248.

* * Walsing. .

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing, .

* * * * Froissard, liv. i. cha.

conduct of Du Guesclin, who was now created constable of France, and who seems to have been the first consummate general that had yet appeared in Europe, the rest were scattered and dispersed, and the small remains of the English forces, instead of reaching Guienne, took shelter in Brittany, whose sovereign had embraced the alliance of England. [3] The duke of Lancaster, some time after, made a like attempt with an army of twenty-five thousand men; and marched the whole length of France from Calais to Bordeaux: but was so much harassed by the flying parties which attended him, that he brought not the half of his army to the place of their destination. Edward, from the necessity of his affairs was at last obliged to conclude a truce with the enemy; [4] after almost all his ancient possessions in France had been ravished from him, except Bordeaux and Bayonne, and all his conquests, except Calais.

The decline of the king's life was exposed to many mortifications, and corresponded not to the splendid and noisy scenes which had filled the beginning and the middle of it. Besides seeing the loss of his foreign dominions, and being baffled in every attempt to defend them, he felt the decay of his authority at home; and experienced, from the sharpness of some parliamentary remonstrances, the great inconstancy of the people, and the influence of present fortune over all their judgments. [5]

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 303, 304. Walsing. .

* * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing. .

* * * Froissard, liv. i. cha. Walsing. .

* * * * Froissard, liv, i. cha. Walsing. .

This prince, who, during the vigor of his age, had been chiefly occupied in the pursuits of war and ambition, began, at an unseasonable period, to indulge himself in pleasure; and being now a widower, he attached himself to a lady of sense and spirit, one Alice Pierce, who acquired a great ascendant over him, and by her influence gave such general disgust that, in order to satisfy the parliament, he was obliged to remove her from court. [1]

* Walsing, .

The indolence also, naturally attending old age and infirmities, had made him in a great measure resign the administration into the hands of his son, the duke of Lancaster, who, as he was far from being popular, weakened extremely the affection which the English bore to the person and government of the king. Men carried their jealousies very far against the duke; and as they saw, with much regret, the death of the prince of Wales every day approaching, they apprehended lest the succession of his son Richard, now a minor, should be defeated by the intrigues of Lancaster, and by the weak indulgence of the old king. But Edward, in order to satisfy both the people and the prince on this head, declared in parliament his grandson heir and successor to the crown; and thereby cut off all the hopes of the duke of Lancaster, if he ever had the temerity to entertain any.

1376.

The prince of Wales, after a lingering illness, died in the forty-sixth year of his age; and left a character illustrious for every eminent virtue, and, from his earliest youth till the hour he expired, unstained by any blemish. His valor and military talents formed the smallest part of his merit: his generosity, humanity, affability, moderation, gained him the affections of all men; and he was qualified to throw a lustre, not only on that rude age in which he lived, and which nowise infected him with its vices, but on the most shining period of ancient or modern history.

1377.

The king survived about a year this melancholy incident: England was deprived at once of both these princes, its chief ornament and support: he expired in the sixty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-first of his reign; and the people were then sensible, though too late, of the irreparable loss which they had sustained.

The English are apt to consider with peculiar fondness the history of Edward III., and to esteem his reign, as it was one of the longest, the most glorious also, that occurs in the annals of their nation. The ascendant which they then began to acquire over France, their rival and supposed national enemy, makes them cast their eyes on this period with great complacency, and sanctifies every measure which Edward embraced for that end. But the domestic government of this prince is really more admirable than his foreign victories; and England enjoyed, by the prudence and vigor of his administration, a longer interval of domestic peace and tranquillity than she had been blessed with in any former period, or than she experienced for many ages after. He gained the affections of the great, yet curbed their licentiousness: he made them feel his power, without their daring, or even being inclined, to murmur at it: his affable and obliging behavior, his munificence and generosity, made them submit with pleasure to his dominion; his valor and conduct made them successful in most of their enterprises; and their unquiet spirits, directed against a public enemy, had no leisure to breed those disturbances to which they were naturally so much inclined, and which the frame of the government seemed so much to authorize. This was the chief benefit which resulted from Edward's victories and conquests. His foreign wars were, in other respects, neither founded in justice, nor directed to any salutary purpose. His attempt against the king of Scotland, a minor and a brother-in-law, and the revival of his grandfather's claim of superiority over that kingdom, were both unreasonable and ungenerous; and he allowed himself to be too easily seduced, by the glaring prospect of French conquests, from the acquisition of a point which was practicable, and which, if attained, might really have been of lasting utility to his country and his successors. The success which he met with in France, though chiefly owing to his eminent talents, was unexpected; and yet, from the very nature of things, not from any unforeseen accidents, was found, even during his lifetime, to have procured him no solid advantages. But the glory of a conqueror is so dazzling to the vulgar, the animosity of nations is so violent, that the fruitless desolation of so fine a part of Europe as France, is totally disregarded by us, and is never considered as a blemish in the character or conduct of this prince. And indeed, from the unfortunate state of human nature, it will commonly happen, that a sovereign of genius, such as Edward, who usually finds every thing easy in his domestic government, will turn himself towards military enterprises, where alone he meets with opposition, and where he has full exercise for his industry and capacity.

Edward had a numerous posterity by his queen, Philippa of Hainault. His eldest son was the heroic Edward, usually denominated the Black Prince from the color of his armor. This prince espoused his cousin Joan, commonly called the “fair maid of Kent,” daughter and heir of his uncle, the earl of Kent, who was beheaded in the beginning of this reign. She was first married to Sir Thomas Holland, by whom she had children. By the prince of Wales she had a son, Richard, who alone survived his father.

The second son of King Edward (for we pass over such as died in their childhood) was Lionel, duke of Clarence, who was first married to Elizabeth de Burgh, daughter and heir of the earl of Ulster, by whom he left only one daughter, married to Edmund Mortimer, earl of Marche. Lionel espoused in second marriage Violante, the daughter of the duke of Milan, [1] and died in Italy soon after the consummation of his nuptials, without leaving any posterity by that princess. Of all the family, he resembled most his father and elder brother in his noble qualities.

Edward’s third son was John of Gaunt, so called from the place of his birth: he was created duke of Lancaster; and from him sprang that branch which afterwards possessed the the crown. The fourth son of this royal family was Edmund created earl of Cambridge by his father, and duke of York by his nephew. The fifth son was Thomas, who received the title of earl of Buckingham from his father, and that of duke of Glocester from his nephew. In order to prevent confusion, we shall always distinguish these two princes by the titles of York and Glocester, even before they were advanced to them.

There were also several princesses born to Edward by Philippa; to wit, Isabella, Joan, Mary, and Margaret, who espoused, in the order of their names, Ingelram de Coucy, earl of Bedford, Alphonso, king of Castile, John of Mountfort, duke of Brittany, and John Hastings, earl of Pembroke. The princess Joan died at Bordeaux before the consummation of her marriage.

It is remarked by an elegant historian, [2] that conquerors though usually the bane of bunian kind, proved often, in those feudal limes, the most indulgent of sovereigns: they stood most in need of supplies from their people; and not being able to compel them by force to submit to the necessary impositions, they were obliged to make them some compensation, by equitable laws and popular concessions.

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* Rymer, vol. vi. .

* * Dr. Robertson’s Hist. of Scot. book i.

This remark is, in some measure, though imperfectly, justified by the conduct of Edward III. He took no steps of moment without consulting his parliament, and obtaining their approbation, which he afterwards pleaded as a reason for their supporting his measures. [1] The parliament, therefore, rose into greater consideration during his reign, and acquired more regular authority, than in any former time; and even the house of commons, which, during turbulent and factious periods, was naturally depressed by the greater power of the crown and barons, began to appear of some weight in the constitution. In the latter years of Edward, the king's ministers were impeached in parliament, particularly Lord Latimer, who fell a sacrifice to the Authority of the commons; [2] and they even obliged the king to banish his mistress by their remonstrances. Some attention was also paid to the election of their members; and lawyers in particular, who were at that time men of a character somewhat inferior, were totally excluded the house during several parliaments. [3]

One of the most popular laws enacted by any prince, was the statute which passed in the twenty-fifth of this reign, [4] and which limited the cases of high treason, before vague and uncertain, to three principal heads — conspiring the death of the king, levying war against him, and adhering to his enemies and the judges were prohibited, if any other cases should occur, from inflicting the penalty of treason without an application to parliament. The bounds of treason were indeed so much limited by this statute, which still remains in force without any alteration, that the lawyers were obliged to enlarge them, and to explain a conspiracy for levying war against the king, to be equivalent to a conspiracy against his life; and this interpretation, seemingly forced, has, from the necessity of the case, been tacitly acquiesced in.

* Cotton's Abridg. , 120.

* * Cotton's Abridg. .

* * * Cotton's Abridg. .

* * * * Cha.

It was also ordained that a parliament should be held once a year, or oftener, if need be; a law which, like many others, was never observed and lost its authority by disuse. [1]

Edward granted above twenty parliamentary confirmations of the Great Charter; and these concessions are commonly appealed to as proofs of his great indulgence to the people, and his tender regard for their liberties. But the contrary presumption is more natural. If the maxims of Edward's reign had not been in general somewhat arbitrary, and if the Great Charter had not been frequently violated, the parliament would never have applied for these frequent confirmations, which could add no force to a deed regularly observed, and which could serve to no other purpose, than to prevent the contrary precedents from turning into a rule, and acquiring authority. It was indeed the effect of the irregular government during those ages, that a statute which had been enacted some years, instead of acquiring, was imagined to lose, force by time, and needed to be often renewed by recent statutes of the same sense and tenor. Hence likewise that general clause, so frequent in old acts of parliament, that the statutes, enacted by the king's progenitors, should be observed; [2] a precaution which, if we do not consider the circumstances of the times, might appear absurd and ridiculous. The frequent confirmations in general terms of the privileges of the church proceeded from the same cause.

It is a clause in one of Edward's statutes, "that no man, of what estate or condition soever, shall be put out of land or tenement, nor taken, nor imprisoned, nor disherited, nor put to death, without being brought in answer by due process of the law." [3] This privilege was sufficiently secured by a clause of the Great Charter, which had received a general confirmation in the first chapter of the same statute. Why then is the clause so anxiously, and, as we may think, so superfluously repeated? Plainly, because there had been some late infringements of it, which gave umbrage to the commons. [4]

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* 4 Edward III. ca.

* * 36 Edward III. ca. 37 Edward III. ca, etc.

* * * 28 Edward III. ca.

* * * * They assert, in the fifteenth of this reign, that there had been such instances. Cotton's Abridg. . They repeat the same in the twenty-first year. See .

But there is no article in which the laws are more frequently repeated during this reign, almost in the same terms, than that of purveyance which the parliament always calls an outrageous and intolerable grievance, and the source of infinite damage to the people. [1] The parliament tried to abolish this prerogative altogether, by prohibiting any one from taking goods without the consent of the owners, [2] and by changing the heinous name of purveyors, as they term it, into that of buyers; [3] but the arbitrary conduct of Edward still brought back the grievance upon them, though contrary both to the Great Charter and to many statutes. This disorder was in a great measure derived from the state of the public finances, and of the kingdom; and could therefore the less admit of remedy. The prince frequently wanted ready money; yet his family must be subsisted: he was therefore obliged to employ force and violence for that purpose, and to give tallies, at what rate he pleased, to the owners of the goods which he laid hold of. The kingdom also abounded so little in commodities, and the interior communication was so imperfect, that had the owners been strictly protected by law, they could easily have exacted any price from the king; especially in his frequent progresses, when he came to distant and poor places, where the court did not usually reside, and where a regular plan for supplying it could not be easily established. Not only the king, but several great lords, insisted upon this right of purveyance within certain districts. [4]

The magnificent Castle of Windsor was built by Edward III., and his method of conducting the work may serve as a specimen of the condition of the people in that age. Instead of engaging workmen by contracts and wages, he assessed every county in England to send him a certain number of masons, tilers, and carpenters, as if he had been levying an army. [5]

They mistake, indeed, very much the genius of this reign, who imagine that it was not extremely arbitrary. All the high prerogatives of the crown were to the full exerted in it; but what gave some consolation, and promised in time some relief to the people, they were always complained of by the commons: such as the dispensing power; [6] the extension of the forests; [7] erecting monopolies; [8] exacting loans — [9]

* 36 Edward III. etc.

* * 14 Edward III. ca.

* * * 36 Edward III. ca.

* * * * 7 Richard II. ca.

* * * * * * Cotton's Abridg. .

* * * * * * * Cotton's Abridg. , 61, 122.

* * * * * * * * Rymer, vol. v. , 574. Cotton's Abridg. .

— stopping justice by particular warrants; [1] the renewal of the commission of "trailbaton;" [2] pressing men and ships into the public service; [3] levying arbitrary and exorbitant fines; [4] extending the authority of the privy council or star-chamber to the decision of private causes; [5] enlarging the power of the mareschal's and other arbitrary courts; [6] imprisoning members for freedom of speech in parliament; [7] obliging people without any rule to send recruits of men at arms, archers, and hoblers to the army. [8]

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, .

* * * Cotton, , 79, 113.

* * * * Cotton, .

* * * * * * Cotton, .

* * * * * * * Walsing. , 190.

But there was no act of arbitrary power more frequently repeated in this reign, than that of imposing taxes without consent of parliament. Though that assembly granted the king greater supplies than had ever been obtained by any of his predecessors, his great undertakings, and the necessity of his affairs, obliged him to levy still more; and after his splendid success against France had added weight to his authority, these arbitrary impositions became almost annual and perpetual. Cotton’s Abridgment of the records affords numerous instances of this kind, in the first [1] year of his reign, in the thirteenth year, [2] in the fourteenth, [3] in the twentieth, [4] in the twenty-first, [5] in the twenty-second, [6] in the twenty fifth, [7] in the thirty-eighth, [8] in the fiftieth, [9] and in the fifty-first, [10]

* Tyrrel’s Hist. vol. iii. , from the records.

* * Rymer, vol. iv. .

* * * Page 17, 18.

* * * * Page 39.

* * * * * * Page 52, 53, 57, 58.

* * * * * * * Page 69.

* * * * * * * * Page 76.

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The king openly avowed and maintained this power of levying taxes at pleasure. At one time, he replied to the remonstrance made by the commons against it, that the impositions had been exacted from great necessity, and had been assented to by the prelates, earls, barons, and some of the commons; [1] at another, that he would advise with his council. [2] When the parliament desired that a law might be enacted for the punishment of such as levied these arbitrary impositions he refused compliance. [3]

* Page 152.

* * Cotton, . He repeats the same answer in . “Some of the commons” were such as he should be pleased to consult with.

* * * Cotton, .

In the subsequent year, they desired that the king might renounce this pretended prerogative; but his answer was, that he would levy no taxes without necessity for the defence of the realm, and where he reasonably might use that authority. [1] This incident passed a few days before his death; and these were, in a manner, his last words to his people. It would seem that the famous charter or statute of Edward I., “de tallagio non concedendo,” though never repealed, was supposed to have already lost by age all its authority.

These facts can only show the practice of the times: for as to the right, the continual remonstrances of the commons may seem to prove that it rather lay on their side: at least, these remonstrances served to prevent the arbitrary practices of the court from becoming an established part of the constitution. In so much a better condition were the privileges of the people even during the arbitrary reign of Edward III., than during some subsequent ones, particularly those of the Tudors, where no tyranny or abuse of power ever met with any check or opposition, or so much as a remonstrance, from parliament.

In this reign, we find, according to the sentiments of an ingenious and learned author, the first strongly marked and probably contested distinction between a proclamation by the king and his privy council, and a law which had received the assent of the lords and commons. [2]

It is easy to imagine, that a prince of so much sense and spirit as Edward, would be no slave to the court of Rome. Though the old tribute was paid during some years of his minority, [3] he afterwards withheld it; and when the pope, in 1367, threatened to cite him to the court of Rome for default of payment, he laid the matter before his parliament. That assembly unanimously declared, that King John could not, without a national consent, subject his kingdom to a foreign power; and that they were therefore determined to support their sovereign against this unjust pretension. [4]

* Cotton, .

* * Observations on the Statutes, .

* * * Rymer, vol. iv. .

* * * * Cotton's Abridg. .

During this reign, the statute of provisors was enacted, rendering it penal to procure any presentations to benefices from the court of Rome, and securing the rights of all patrons and electors, which had been extremely encroached on by the pope. [1] By a subsequent statute, every person was outlawed who carried any cause by appeal to the court of Rome. [2]

The laity at this time seem to have been extremely prejudiced against the papal power, and even somewhat against their own clergy, because of their connections with the Roman pontiff. The parliament pretended, that the usurpations of the pope were the cause of all the plagues, injuries, famine, anc poverty of the realm; were more destructive to it than al the wars; and were the reason why it contained not a third of the inhabitants and commodities which it formerly possessed: that the taxes levied by him exceeded five times those which were paid to the king; that every thing was venal in that sinful city of Rome; and that even the patrons in England had thence learned to practise simony without shame or remorse. [3] At another time, they petition the king to employ no churchman in any office of state; [4] and they even speak in plain terms of expelling by force the papal authority, and thereby providing a remedy against oppressions, which they neither could, nor would, any longer endure. [5] Men who talked in this strain, were not far from the reformation: but Edward did not think proper to second all this zeal. Though he passed the statute of provisors, he took little care of its execution; and the parliament made frequent complaints of his negligence on this head. [6] He was content with having reduced such of the Romish ecclesiastics as possessed revenues in England, to depend entirely upon him by means of that statute.

As to the police of the kingdom during this period, it was certainly better than during times of faction, civil war, and disorder, to which England was so often exposed: yet were there several vices in the constitution, the bad consequences of which all the power and vigilance of the king could not prevent. The barons, by their confederacies with those of their own order, and by supporting and defending their retainers in every iniquity, [7] were the chief abettors of robbers, murderers, and ruffians of all kinds; and no law could be executed against those criminals.

* 25 Edward III. 27 Edward III.

* * 27 Edward III. 38 Edward III.

* * * Cotton, , 128, 129.

* * * * Cotton, .

* * * * * * Cotton, , 128 129, 130, 143.

* * * * * * * 11 Edward III. ca.

* * * * * * * * 4 Edward III. cap.

* * * * * * * * * 15 Edward III ca.

The nobility were brought to give their promise in parliament, that they would not avow retain, or support any felon or breaker of the law; [1] yet this, engagement, which we may wonder to see exacted from men of their rank, was never regarded by them. The commons make continual complaints of the multitude of robberies, murders, rapes, and other disorders, which, they say, were become numberless in every part of the kingdom, and which they always ascribe to the protection that the criminals received from the great. [2]The king of Cyprus, who paid a visit to England in this reign, was robbed and stripped on the highway with his whole retinue. [3] Edward himself contributed to this dissolution of law, by his facility in granting pardons to felons, from the solicitation of the courtiers. Laws were made to retrench this prerogative, [4] and remonstrances of the commons were presented against the abuse of it; [5] but to no purpose. The gratifying of a powerful nobleman continued still to be of more importance than the protection of the people. The king also granted many franchises, which interrupted the course of justice and the execution of the laws. [6]

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, , 62, 64, 70, 160.

* * * Walsing. .

* * * * 10 Edward III. ca. 27 Edward III. ca.

* * * * * * Cotton, .

Commerce and industry were certainly at a very low ebb during this period. The bad police of the country alone affords a sufficient reason. The only exports were wool, skins, hides leather, butter, tin, lead, and such unmanufactured goods, of which wool was by far the most considerable. Knyghton has asserted, that one hundred thousand sacks of wool were annually exported, and sold at twenty pounds a sack, money of that age. But he is widely mistaken both in the quantity exported and in the value. In 1349, the parliament remonstrate, that the king, by an illegal imposition of forty shillings on each sack exported, had levied sixty thousand pounds a year: [1] which reduces the annual exports to thirty thousand sacks. A sack contained twenty-six stone, and each stone fourteen pounds; [2] and at a medium was not valued at above five pounds a sack, [3] that is, fourteen or fifteen pounds of our present money. Knyghton's computation raises it to sixty pounds, which is near four times the present price of wool in England.

* Cotton, , 69.

* * 34 Edward III. ca.

* * * Cotton, .

According to this reduced computation, the export of wool brought into the kingdom about four hundred and thousand pounds of our present money, instead of six millions, which is an extravagant sum. Even the former sum is so high, as to afford a suspicion of some mistake in the computation of the parliament with regard to the number of sacks exported. Such mistakes were very usual in those ages.

Edward endeavored to introduce and promote the woolen manufacture, by giving protection and encouragement to foreign weavers, [1] and by enacting a law, which prohibited every one from wearing any cloth but of English fabric. [1] The parliament prohibited the exportation of woollen goods, which was not so well judged, especially while the exportation of unwrought wool was so much allowed and encouraged. A like injudicious law was made against the exportation of manufactured iron. [2]

It appears from a record in the exchequer, that in 1354 the exports of England amounted to two hundred and ninety-four thousand one hundred and eighty-four pounds seventeen shillings and twopence; the imports to thirty-eight thousand nine hundred and seventy pounds three shillings and sixpence, money of that time. This is a great balance, considering that it arose wholly from the exportation of raw wool and other rough materials. The import was chiefly linen and fine cloth, and some wine. England seems to have been extremely drained at this time by Edward’s foreign expeditions and foreign subsidies, which probably was the reason why the exports so much exceed the imports.

The first toll we read of in England for mending the highways, was imposed in this reign: it was that for repairing the road between St. Giles’s and Temple Bar. [3]

In the first of Richard II., the parliament complain extremely of the decay of shipping during the preceding reign, and assert that one seaport formerly contained more vessels than were then to be found in the whole kingdom. This calamity they ascribe to the arbitrary seizure of ships by Edward for the service of his frequent expeditions. [4] The parliament in the fifth of

Richard renew the same complaint; [5] and we likewise find it made in the forty-sixth of Edward III.

* 11 Edward III. ca. Rymer, vol. iv. . Murimuth p. 88.

* * 11 Edward III. ca.

* * * 28 Edward III. ca.

* * * * Rymer, vol. v. .

So false is the common opinion that this reign was favorable to commerce.

There is an order of this king, directed to the mayor and sheriffs of London, to take up all ships of forty ton and upwards, to be converted into ships of war. [1]

The parliament attempted the impracticable scheme of reducing the price of labor after the pestilence, and also that of poultry, [2] A reaper, in the first week of August, was not allowed above twopence a day, or near sixpence of our present money; in the second week, a third more. A master carpenter was limited through the whole year to threepence a day, a common carpenter to twopence, money of that age. [3] It is remarkable that, in the same reign, the pay of a common soldier, an archer, was sixpence a day; which, by the change both in denomination and value, would be equivalent to near five shillings of our present money. [4] Soldiers were then enlisted only for a very short time; they lived idle all the rest of the year, and commonly all the rest of their lives: one successful campaign, by pay and plunder, and the ransom of prisoners, was supposed to be a small fortune to a man; which was a great allurement to enter into the service. [5]

* Rymer, vol. iv. .

* * 37 Edward III. ca.

* * * * 25 Edward III, cap. I. 3.

* * * * * * Brady's Hist. vol. ii. App No. 92.

The staple of wool, wool-fells, leather, and lead, was fixed by act of parliament in particular towns of England. [1] Afterwards it was removed by law to Calais: but Edward, who commonly deemed his prerogative above law, paid little regard to these statutes; and when the parliament remonstrated with him on account of those acts of power, he plainly told them, that he would proceed in that matter as he thought proper. [2] It is not easy to assign the reason of this great anxiety for fixing a staple; unless, perhaps, it invited foreigners to a market, when they knew beforehand, that they should there meet with great choice of any particular species of commodity. This policy of inviting foreigners to Calais was carried so far, that all English merchants were prohibited by law from exporting any English goods from the staple; which was in a manner the total abandoning of all foreign navigation, except that to Calais; [3] a contrivance seemingly extraordinary.

*Brady, ibid.

* * Commodities seem to have risen since the conquest. Instead of being ten times cheaper than at present, they were, in the age of Edward III., only three or four times.

This change seems to have taken place in a great measure since Edward I. The allowance granted by Edward III. to the earl of Murray, then a prisoner in Nottingham Castle, is one pound a week; whereas the bishop of St. Andrews, the primate of Scotland, had only sixpence a day allowed him by Edward I.

* * * 27 Edward III.

The pay of a man at arms was quadruple. We may therefore conclude, that the numerous armies mentioned by historians in those times, consisted chiefly of ragamuffins who followed the camp, and lived by plunder. Edward's army before Calais consisted of thirty-one thousand and ninety-four men; yet its pay for sixteen months was only one hundred and twenty-seven thousand two hundred and one pounds.

It was not till the middle of this century that the English began to extend their navigation even to the Baltic; [1] nor till the middle of the subsequent, that they sailed to the Mediterranean. [2]

Luxury was complained of in that age, as well as in others of more refinement; and attempts were made by parliament to restrain it, particularly on the head of apparel, where surely it is the most obviously innocent and inoffensive. No man under a hundred a year was allowed to wear gold, silver, or silk in his clothes; servants, also, were prohibited from eating flesh meat, or fish, above once a day. [3] By another law it was ordained, that no one should be allowed, either for dinner or supper, above three dishes in each course, and not above two courses; and it is likewise expressly declared that “soused” meat is to count as one of these dishes. [4] It was easy to foresee that such ridiculous laws must prove ineffectual, and could never be executed.

The use of the French language, in pleadings and public deeds, was abolished. [5] It may appear strange, that the nation should so long have worn this badge of conquest: but the king and nobility seem never to have become thoroughly English, or to have forgotten their French extraction, till Edward’s wars with France gave them an antipathy to that nation. Yet still it was long before the use of the English tongue came into fashion. The first English paper which we meet with in Rymer is in the year 1386, during the reign of Richard II. [6]

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* Cotton, .

* * 27 Edward III. ca.

* * * Anderson, vol. i. .

* * * * Anderson, vol. i. .

* * * * * * 10 Edward III., 36 Edward III. ca.

* * * * * * * Rymer, vol. vii. . This paper, by the style, seems to have been drawn by the Scots, and was signed by the wardens of the marches only.

There are Spanish papers in that collection of more ancient date: [1] and the use of the Latin and French still continued. We may judge of the ignorance of this age in geography, from a story told by Robert of Avesbury. Pope Clement VI having, in 1344, created Lewis of Spain prince of the Fortunate Islands, meaning the Canaries, then newly discovered, the English ambassador at Rome and his retinue were seized with an alarm, that Lewis had been created king of England; and they immediately hurried home, in order to convey this important intelligence. Yet such was the ardor for study at this time, that Speed in his Chronicle informs us, there were then thirty thousand students in the university of Oxford alone. What was the occupation of all these young men? To learn very bad Latin, and still worse logic.

In 1364, the commons petitioned, that, in consideration of the preceding pestilence, such persons as possessed manors holding of the king in chief, and had let different leases without obtaining licenses, might continue to exercise the same power, till the country were become more populous. [2] The commons were sensible, that this security of possession was a good means for rendering the kingdom prosperous and flourishing; yet durst not apply, all at once, for a greater relaxation of their chains.

* Rymer, vol. vi. .

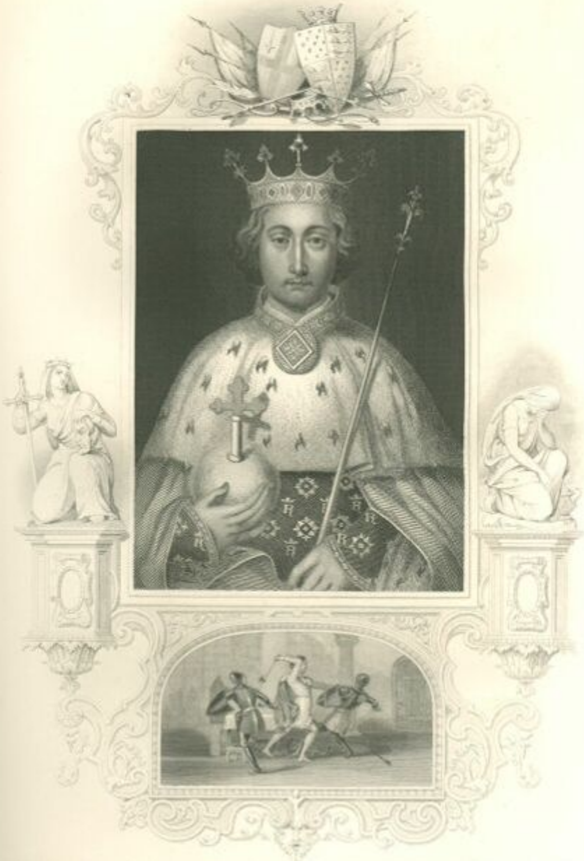
* * Cotton, .

There is not a reign among those of the ancient English monarchs, which deserves more to be studied than that of Edward III., nor one where the domestic transactions will better discover the true genius of that kind of mixed government, which was then established in England. The struggles with regard to the validity and authority of the Great Charter were now over: the king was acknowledged to lie under some limitations: Edward himself was a prince of great capacity, not governed by favorites, nor led astray by any unruly passion, sensible that nothing could be more essential to his interests than to keep on good terms with his people: yet, on the whole, it appears that the government at best was only a barbarous monarchy, not regulated by any fixed maxims, or bounded by any certain undisputed rights, which in practice were regularly observed. The king conducted himself by one set of principles, the barons by another, the commons by a third, the clergy by a fourth. All these systems of government were opposite and incompatible: each of them prevailed in its turn, as incidents were favorable to it: a great prince rendered the monarchical power predominant; the weakness of a king gave reins to the aristocracy; a superstitious age saw the clergy triumphant; the people, for whom chiefly government was instituted, and who chiefly deserve consideration, were the weakest of the whole. But the commons, little obnoxious to any other order, though they sunk under the violence of tempests, silently reared their head in more peaceable times; and while the storm was brewing, were courted by all sides, and thus received still some accession to their privileges, or, at worst, some confirmation of them.

It has been an established opinion that gold coin was not struck till this reign; but there has lately been found proof that it is as ancient as Henry III.[1]

* See Observations on the more ancient Statutes, , 3d edit.

CHAPTER XVII.



Richard defending himself against assassins in Pomfret Castle.

RICHARD II.

From an Original Painting in Westminster Abbey.

RICHARD II.

1377.

THE parliament which was summoned soon after the king’s accession, was both elected and assembled in tranquillity; and the great change, from a sovereign of consummate wisdom and experience to a boy of eleven years of age, was not immediately felt by the people. The habits of order and obedience which the barons had been taught, during the long reign of Edward, still influenced them; and the authority of the king’s three uncles, the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Glocester, sufficed to repress, for a time, the turbulent spirit to which that order, in a weak reign, was so often subject. The dangerous ambition, too, of these princes themselves was checked, by the plain and undeniable title of Richard, by the declaration of it made in parliament, and by the affectionate regard which the people bore to the memory of his father, and which was naturally transferred to the young sovereign upon the throne. The different characters, also, of these three princes rendered them a counterpoise to each other; and it was natural to expect, that any dangerous designs which might be formed by one brother, would meet with opposition from the others. Lancaster, whose age and experience, and authority under the late king, gave him the ascendant among them, though his integrity seemed not proof against great temptations, was neither of an enterprising spirit, nor of a popular and engaging temper. York was indolent, inactive, and of slender capacity. Glocester was turbulent, bold, and popular; but being the youngest of the family, was restrained by the power and authority of his elder brothers. There appeared, therefore, no circumstance in the domestic situation of England which might endanger the public peace, or give any immediate apprehensions to the lovers of their country.

But as Edward, though he had fixed the succession to the crown, had taken no care to establish a plan of government during the minority of his grandson, it behoved the parliament to supply this defect; and the house of commons distinguished themselves by taking the lead on the occasion. This house, which had been rising to consideration during the whole course of the late reign, naturally received an accession of power during the minority; and as it was now becoming a scene of business, the members chose for the first time a speaker, who might preserve order in their debates, and maintain those forms which are requisite in all numerous assembles. Peter de la Mare was the man pitched on; the same person that had been imprisoned and detained in custody by the late king for his freedom of speech, in attacking the mistress and the ministers of that prince. But though this election discovered a spirit of liberty in the commons, and was followed by further attacks, both on these ministers and on Alice Pearce, [1] they were still too sensible of their great inferiority to assume at first any immediate share in the administration of government, or the care of the king's person. They were content to apply by petition to the lords for that purpose, and desire them both to appoint a council of nine, who might direct the public business, and to choose men of virtuous life and conversation, who might inspect the conduct and education of the young prince. The lords complied with the first part of this request, and elected the bishops of London, Carlisle, and Salisbury, the earls of Marche and Stafford, Sir Richard de Stafford, Sir Henry le Scrope, Sir John Devereux, and Sir Hugh Segrave, to whom they gave authority for a year to conduct the ordinary course of business. [2] But as to the regulation of the king's household, they declined interposing in an office which, they said, both was invidious in itself, and might prove disagreeable to his majesty.

* Walsing. .

* * Rymer, vol. vii. .

The commons, as they acquired more courage, ventured to proceed a step farther in their applications. They presented a petition, in which they prayed the king to check the prevailing custom among the barons of forming illegal confederacies, and supporting each other, as well as men of inferior rank, in the violations of law and justice. They received from the throne a general and an obliging answer to this petition: but another part of their application, that all the great officers should, during the king's minority, be appointed by parliament, which seemed to require the concurrence of the commons, as well as that of the upper house, in the nomination, was not complied with:

the lords alone assumed the power of appointing these officers. The commons tacitly acquiesced in the choice; and thought that, for, the present, they themselves had proceeded a sufficient length, if they but advanced their pretensions, though rejected, of interposing in these more important matters of state.

On this footing then the government stood. The administration was conducted entirely in the king's name: no regency was expressly appointed: the nine counsellors and the great officers named by the peers, did their duty each in his respective department; and the whole system was for some years kept together, by the secret authority of the king's uncles, especially of the duke of Lancaster, who was in reality the regent.

The parliament was dissolved, after the commons had represented the necessity of their being reassembled once every year, as appointed by law; and after having elected two citizens as their treasurers, to receive and disburse the produce of two fifteenths and tenths, which they had voted to the crown. In the other parliaments called during the minority, the commons still discover a strong spirit of freedom, and a sense of their own authority, which, without breeding any disturbance, tended to secure their independence and that of the people. [1]

* See note K, at the end of the volume.

Edward had left his grandson involved in many dangerous wars. The pretensions of the duke of Lancaster to the crown of Castile, made that kingdom still persevere in hostilities against England. Scotland, whose throne was now filled by Robert Stuart, nephew to David Bruce, and the first prince of that family, maintained such close connections with France, that war with one crown almost inevitably produced hostilities with the other. The French monarch, whose prudent conduct had acquired him the surname of Wise, as he had already baffled all the experience and valor of the two Edwards, was likely to prove a dangerous enemy to a minor king: but his genius, which was not naturally enterprising, led him not at present to give any disturbance to his neighbors; and he labored, besides, under many difficulties at home, which it was necessary for him to surmount, before he could think of making conquests in a foreign country. England was master of Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne; had lately acquired possession of Cherbourg from the cession of the king of Navarre, and of Brest from that of the duke of Brittany; [1] and having thus an easy entrance into France from every quarter, was able, even in its present situation, to give disturbance to his government. Before Charles could remove the English from these important posts, he died in the flower of his age, and left his kingdom to a minor son who bore the name of Charles VI.

1378.

Meanwhile the war with France was carried on in a manner somewhat languid, and produced no enterprise of great lustre or renown. Sir Hugh Calverly, governor of Calais, making an inroad into Picardy with a detachment of the garrison, set fire to Boulogne. [2] The duke of Lancaster conducted an army into Brittany, but returned without being able to perform any thing memorable.

1380.

In a subsequent year, the duke of Glocester marched out of Calais with a body of two thousand cavalry and eight thousand infantry, and scrupled not, with his small army, to enter into the heart of France, and to continue his ravages through Picardy, Champaigne, the Brie, the Beausse, the Gatinois, the Orleanois, till he reached his allies in the province of Brittany. [3] The duke of Burgundy, at the head of a more considerable army, came within sight of him; but the French were so overawed by the former successes of the English, that no superiority of numbers could tempt them to venture a pitched battle with the troops of that nation. As the duke of Brittany, soon after the arrival of these succors, formed an accommodation with the court of France, this enterprise also proved in the issue unsuccessful, and made no durable impression upon the enemy.

* Rymer, vol. vii. .

* * Walsing, .

* * * Froissard, liv. ii. cha, 51. Walsing. .

The expenses of these armaments, and the usual want of economy attending a minority, much exhausted the English treasury, and obliged the parliament, besides making some alterations in the council, to impose a new and unusual tax of three groats on every person, male and female, above fifteen years of age; and they ordained that, in levying that tax, the opulent should relieve the poor by an equitable compensation. This imposition produced a mutiny, which was singular in its circumstances. All history abounds with examples where the great tyrannize over the meaner sort; but here the lowest populace rose against their rulers, committed the most cruel ravages upon them, and took vengeance for all former oppressions.

1381.

The faint dawn of the arts and of good government in that age, had excited the minds of the populace, in different states of Europe, to wish for a better condition, and to murmur against those chains which the laws enacted by the haughty nobility and gentry, had so long imposed upon them. The commotions of the people in Flanders, the mutiny of the peasants in France, were the natural effects of this growing spirit of independence; and the report of these events being brought into England, where personal slavery, as we learn from Froissard, [1] was more general than in any other country in Europe, had prepared the minds of the multitude for an insurrection. One John Ball, also, a seditious preacher, who affected low popularity, went about the country and inculcated on his audience the principles of the first origin of mankind from one common stock, their equal right to liberty and to all the goods of nature, the tyranny of artificial distinctions, and the abuses which had arisen from the degradation of the more considerable part of the species, and the aggrandizement of a few insolent rulers. [2] These doctrines, so agreeable to the populace, and so conformable to the ideas of primitive equality which are engraven in the hearts of all men, were greedily received by the multitude, and scattered the sparks of that sedition which the present tax raised into a conflagration. [3]

* Liv. ii. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. ii. cha. Walsing. .

* * * There were two verses at that time in the mouths of all the common people, which, in spite of prejudice, one cannot but regard with some degree of approbation: —

When Adam delv’d and Eve span,
Where was then the gentleman?

The imposition of three groats a head had been farmed out to tax-gatherers in each county, who levied the money on the people with rigor; and the clause, of making the rich ease their poorer neighbors of some share of the burden, being so vague and undeterminate, had doubtless occasioned many partialities, and made the people more sensible of the unequal lot which Fortune had assigned them in the distribution of her favors. The first disorder was raised by a blacksmith in a village of Essex. The tax-gatherers came to this man’s shop while he was at work, and they demanded payment for his daughter, whom he asserted to be below the age assigned by the statute. One of these fellows offered to produce a very indecent proof to the contrary, and at the same time laid hold of the maid; which the father resenting, immediately knocked out the ruffian’s brains with his hammer. The bystanders applauded the action, and exclaimed, that it was full time for the people to take vengeance on their tyrants, and to vindicate their native liberty. They immediately flew to arms: the whole neighborhood joined in the sedition: the flame spread in an instant over the county: it soon propagated itself into that of Kent, of Hertford, Surrey, Sussex, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge, and Lincoln. Before the government had the least warning of the danger, the disorder had grown beyond control or opposition: the populace had shaken off all regard to their former masters; and being headed by the most audacious and criminal of their associates, who assumed the feigned names of Wat Tyler, Jack Straw, Hob Carter, and Tom Miller, by which they were fond of denoting their mean origin, they committed every where the most outrageous violence on such of the gentry or nobility as had the misfortune to fall into their hands.

The mutinous populace, amounting to a hundred thousand men, assembled on Blackheath under their leaders, Tyler and Straw; and as the princess of Wales, the king’s mother, returning from a pilgrimage to Canterbury, passed through the midst of them, they insulted her attendants, and some of the most insolent among them, to show their purpose of levelling all mankind, forced kisses from her; but they allowed her to continue her journey, without attempting any further injury. [1] They sent a message to the king, who had taken shelter in the Tower; and they desired a conference with him. Richard sailed down the river in a barge for that purpose; but on his approaching the shore, he saw such symptoms of tumult and insolence, that he put back and returned to that fortress. [2]

* Froissard, liv. ii. cha.

* * Froissard, liv. ii. chap 75.

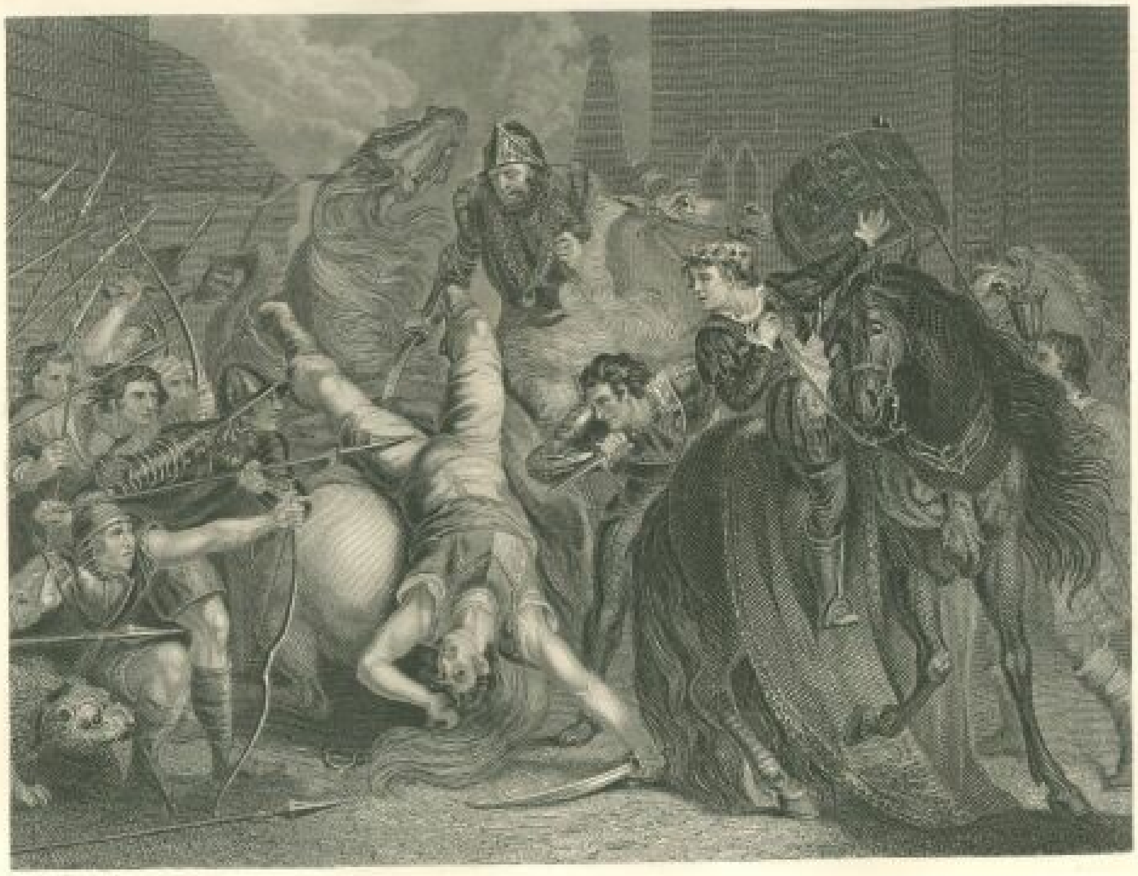
The seditious peasants, meanwhile, favored by the populace of London, had broken into the city; had burned the duke of Lancaster’s palace of the Savoy; cut off the heads of all the gentlemen whom they laid hold of; expressed a particular animosity against the lawyers and attorneys; and pillaged the warehouses of the rich merchants. [1] A great body of them quartered themselves at Mile End; and the king, finding no defence in the Tower, which was weakly garrisoned and ill supplied with provisions, was obliged to go out to them and ask their demands. They required a general pardon, the abolition of slavery, freedom of commerce in market towns without toll or impost, and a fixed rent on lands, instead of the services due by villainage. These requests, which, though extremely reasonable in themselves, the nation was not sufficiently prepared to receive, and which it was dangerous to have extorted by violence, were, however, complied with; charters to that purpose were granted them; and this body immediately dispersed, and returned to their several homes. [2]

During this transaction, another body of the rebels had broken into the Tower; had murdered Simon Sudbury, the primate and chancellor, with Sir Robert Hales, the treasurer, and some other persons of distinction; and continued their ravages in the city. [3]

* Froissard, liv. ii, cha. Walsing. , 249.

* * Froissard, liv. ii cha.

* * * Walsing, , 251.



THE DEATH OF WAT TYLER.

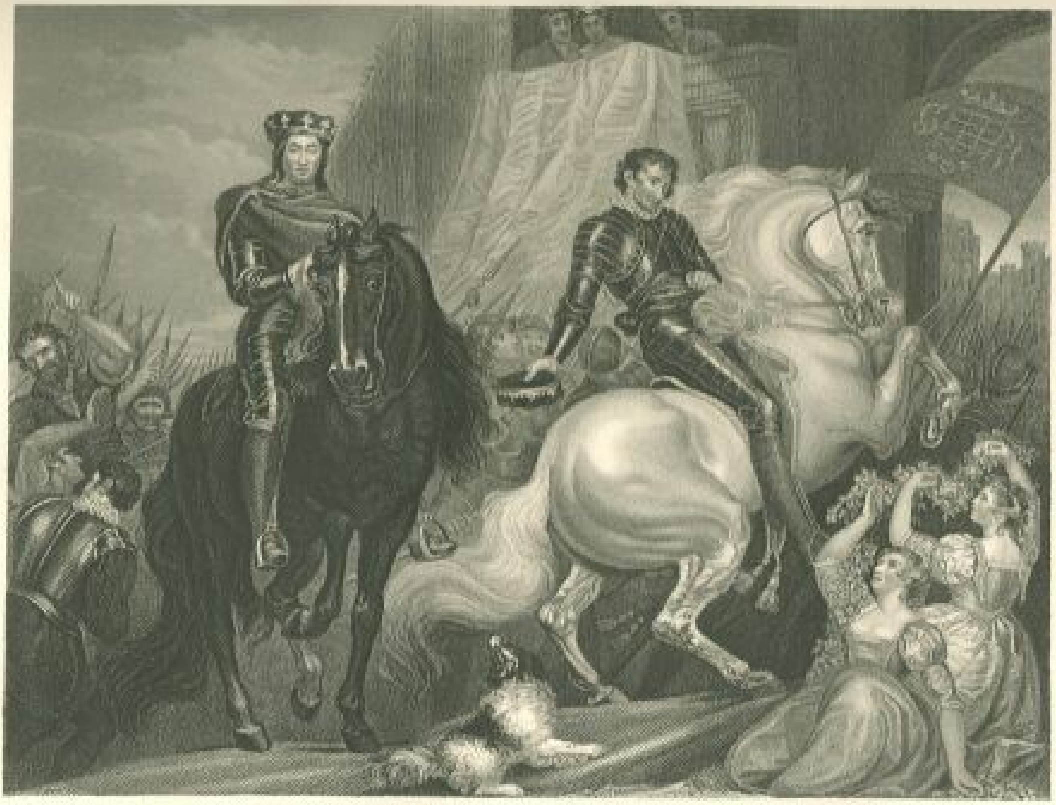
The king, passing along Smithfield, very slenderly guarded, met with Wat Tyler at the head of these rioters, and entered into a conference with him. Tyler, having ordered his companions to retire till he should give them a signal, after which they were to murder all the company except the king himself, whom they were to detain prisoner, feared not to come into the midst of the royal retinue. He there behaved himself in such a manner, that Walworth, the mayor of London, not able to bear his insolence, drew his sword, and struck him so violent a blow as brought him to the ground, where he was instantly despatched by others of the king’s attendants. The mutineers, seeing their leader fall, prepared themselves for revenge; and this whole company, with the king himself, had undoubtedly perished on the spot, had it not been for an extraordinary presence of mind which Richard discovered on the occasion. He ordered his company to stop; he advanced alone towards the enraged multitude, and accosting them with an affable and intrepid countenance, he asked them, “What is the meaning of this disorder my good people? Are ye angry that ye have lost your leader? I am your king: I will be your leader.” The populace, overawed by his presence, implicitly followed him. He led them into the fields, to prevent any disorder which might have arisen by their continuing in the city. Being there joined by Sir Robert Knolles, and a body of well-armed veteran soldiers, who had been secretly drawn together, he strictly prohibited that officer from falling on the rioters, and committing an undistinguished slaughter upon them; and he peaceably dismissed them with the same charters which had been granted to their fellows. [1] Soon after, the nobility and gentry, hearing of the king’s danger, in which they were all involved, flocked to London, with their adherents and retainers; and Richard took the field at the head of an army forty thousand strong. [2] It then behoved all the rebels to submit: the charters of enfranchisement and pardon were revoked by parliament; the low people were reduced to the same slavish condition as before; and several of the ringleaders were severely punished for the late disorders. Some were even executed without process or form of law. [3] It was pretended, that the intentions of the mutineers had been to seize the king’s person, to carry him through England at their head; to murder all the nobility, gentry, and lawyers, and even all the bishops and priests, except the mendicant friars; to despatch afterwards the king himself, and, having thus reduced all to a level, to order the kingdom at their pleasure. [4] It is not impossible but many of them, in the delirium of their first success, might have formed such projects: but of all the evils incident to human society, the insurrections of the populace, when not raised and supported by persons of higher quality, are the least to be dreaded: the mischiefs consequent to an abolition of all rank and distinction become so great, that they are immediately felt, and soon bring affairs back to their former order and arrangement.

* Froissard, liv. ii. cha. Walsing. . Knyghton, .

* * Walsing. .

* * * 5 Rich. II. cap. ult., as quoted in the Observations on Ancient Statutes, .

* * * * Walsing. .



KING RICHARD THE SECOND'S ENTRY INTO LONDON.

LONDON, JAMES S. VIRTUE

A youth of sixteen, (which was at this time the king’s age) who had discovered so much courage, presence of mind, and address, and had so dexterously eluded the violence of this tumult, raised great expectations in the nation; and it was natural to hope that he would, in the course of his life, equal the glories which had so uniformly attended his father and his grandfather in all their undertakings. {1385.

But in proportion as Richard advanced in years, these hopes vanished; and his want of capacity, at least of solid judgment, appeared in every enterprise which he attempted. The Scots, sensible of their own deficiency in cavalry, had applied to the regency of Charles VI.; and John de Vienne, admiral of France, had been sent over with a body of one thousand five hundred men at arms, to support them in their incursions against the English. The danger was now deemed by the king’s uncles somewhat serious; and a numerous army of sixty thousand men was levied, and they marched into Scotland with Richard himself at their head. The Scots did not pretend to make resistance against so great a force: they abandoned without scruple their country to be pillaged and destroyed by the enemy: and when De Vienne expressed his surprise at this plan of operations, they told him, that all their cattle was driven into the forests and fastnesses; that their houses and other goods were of small value; and that they well knew how to compensate any losses which they might sustain in that respect, by making an incursion into England. Accordingly, when Richard entered Scotland by Berwick and the east coast, the Scots, to the number of thirty thousand men, attended by the French, entered the borders of England by the west, and carrying their ravages through Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire, collected a rich booty, and then returned in tranquillity to their own country. Richard, meanwhile, advanced towards Edinburgh, and destroyed in his way all the towns and villages on each side of him: he reduced that city to ashes: he treated in the same manner Perth, Dundee, and other places in the low countries; but when he was advised to march towards the west coast, to await there the return of the enemy, and to take revenge on them for their devastations, his impatience to return to England, and enjoy his usual pleasures and amusements, outweighed every consideration; and he led back his army without effecting any thing by all these mighty preparations. The Scots, soon after, finding the heavy bodies of French cavalry very useless in that desultory kind of war to which they confined themselves, treated their allies so ill, that the French returned home, much disgusted with the country and with the manners of its inhabitants. [1] And the English, though they regretted the indolence and levity of their king, saw themselves for the future secured against any dangerous invasion from that quarter.

1386.

But it was so material an interest of the French court to wrest the seaport towns from the hands of their enemy, that they resolved to attempt it by some other expedient, and found no means so likely as an invasion of England itself. They collected a great fleet and army at Sluise; for the Flemings were now in alliance with them: all the nobility of France were engaged in this enterprise: the English were kept in alarm: great preparations were made for the reception of the invaders: and though the dispersion of the French ships by a storm, and the taking of many of them by the English, before the embarkation of the troops, freed the kingdom from the present danger, the king and council were fully sensible that this perilous situation might every moment return upon them. [2]

There were two circumstances, chiefly, which engaged the French at this time to think of such attempts. The one was the absence of the duke of Lancaster, who had carried into Spain the flower of the English military force, in prosecution of his vain claim to the crown of Castile; an enterprise in which, after some promising success, he was finally disappointed: the other was, the violent dissensions and disorders which had taken place in the English government.

The subjection in which Richard was held by his uncles, particularly by the duke of Glocester, a prince of ambition and genius, though it was not unsuitable to his years and slender capacity, was extremely disagreeable to his violent temper; and he soon attempted to shake off the yoke imposed upon him. Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, a young man of a noble family, of an agreeable figure, but of dissolute manners, had acquired an entire ascendant over him, and governed him with an absolute authority. The king set so little bounds to his affection, that he first created his favorite marquis of Dublin, a title before unknown in England, then duke of Ireland; and transferred to him by patent, which was confirmed in parliament, the entire sovereignty for life of that island. [3]

He gave him in marriage his cousin-german, the daughter of Ingelram de Couci, earl of Bedford; but soon after he permitted him to repudiate that lady, though of an unexceptionable character, and to marry a foreigner, a Bohemian, with whom he had become enamored. [1] These public declarations of attachment turned the attention of the whole court towards the minion: all favors passed through his hands: access to the king could only be obtained by his mediation: and Richard seemed to take no pleasure

* Froissard, liv. ii. cha, 150, etc., liv. iii. chap. 52. Walsing , 317.

* * Froissard, liv. iii. cha, 53. Walsing. , 323.

* * * Cotton, , 311. Cox, Hist. of Ireland, . Walsing, .

in royal authority, but so far as it enabled him to load with favors, and titles, and dignities, this object of his affections.

* Walsing. .

The jealousy of power immediately produced an animosity Between the minion and his creatures on the one hand, and the princes of the blood and chief nobility on the other; and the usual complaints against the insolence of favorites were loudly echoed, and greedily received, in every part of the kingdom. Moubray, earl of Nottingham, the mareschal, Fitz-Alan, earl of Arundel, Piercy, earl of Northumberland, Montacute, earl of Salisbury, Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, were all connected with each other, and with the princes, by friendship or alliance, and still more by their common antipathy to those who had eclipsed them in the king's favor and confidence. No longer kept in awe by the personal character of the prince, they scorned to submit to his ministers; and the method which they took to redress the grievance complained of well suited the violence of the age, and proves the desperate extremities to which every opposition was sure to be instantly carried.

Michael de la Pole, the present chancellor, and lately created earl of Suffolk, was the son of an eminent merchant; but had risen by his abilities and valor during the wars of Edward III., had acquired the friendship of that monarch, and was esteemed the person of greatest experience and capacity among those who were attached to the duke of Ireland and the king's secret council. The duke of Glocester, who had the house of commons at his devotion, impelled them to exercise that power which they seem first to have assumed against Lord Latimer during the declining years of the late king; and an impeachment against the chancellor was carried up by them to the house of peers, which was no less at his devotion. The king foresaw the tempest preparing against him and his ministers. After attempting in vain to rouse the Londoners to his defence, he withdrew from parliament, and retired with his court to Eltham. The parliament sent a deputation, inviting him to return, and threatening that, if he persisted in absenting himself, they would immediately dissolve, and leave the nation, though at that time in imminent danger of a French invasion, without any support or supply for its defence. At the same time, a member was encouraged to call for the record containing the parliamentary deposition of Edward II.; a plain intimation of the fate which Richard, if he continued refractory, had reason to expect from them. The king, finding himself unable to resist, was content to stipulate that, except finishing the present impeachment against Suffolk, no attack should be made upon any other of his ministers; and on that condition he returned to the parliament. [1]

Nothing can prove more fully the innocence of Suffolk, than the frivolousness of the crimes which his enemies, in the present plenitude of their power, thought proper to object against him. [2] It was alleged, that being chancellor, and obliged by his oath to consult the king's profit, he had purchased lands of the crown below their true value; that he had exchanged with the king a perpetual annuity of four hundred marks a year, which he inherited from his father, and which was assigned upon the customs of the port of Hull, for lands of an equal income; that having obtained for his son the priory of St. Anthony, which was formerly possessed by a Frenchman, an enemy and a schismatic, and a new prior being at the same time named by the pope, he had refused to admit this person, whose title was not legal, till he made a composition with his son, and agreed to pay him a hundred pounds a year from the income of the benefice; that he had purchased, from one Tydeman, of Limborch, an old and forfeited annuity of fifty pounds a year upon the crown, and had engaged the king to admit that bad debt; and that, when created earl of Suffolk, he had obtained a grant of five hundred pounds a year to support the dignity of that title. [3]

* See note L, at the end of the volume.

* * Cotton, . Knyghton, .

* * * It is probable that the earl of Suffolk was not rich, nor able to support the dignity without the bounty of the crown; for his father, Michael de la Pole, though a great merchant,

had been ruined by lending money to the late king. See Cotton, .

We may even the proof of these articles, frivolous as they are, was found very deficient upon the trial: it appeared that Suffolk had made no purchase from the crown while he was chancellor, and that all his bargains of that kind were made before he was advanced to that dignity. [1] It is almost needless to add, that he was condemned, notwithstanding his defence; and that he was deprived of his office.

Glocester and his associates observed their stipulation with the king, and attacked no more of his ministers: but they immediately attacked himself and his royal dignity, and framed a commission after the model of those which had been attempted almost in every reign since that of Richard I., and which had always been attended with extreme confusion. [2] By this commission, which was ratified by parliament, a council of fourteen persons was appointed, all of Glocester's faction, except Nevil, archbishop of York: the sovereign power was transferred to these men for a twelvemonth: the king, who had now reached the twenty-first year of his age, was in reality dethroned: the aristocracy was rendered supreme: and though the term of the commission was limited, it was easy to foresee that the intentions of the party were to render it perpetual, and that power would with great difficulty be wrested from those grasping hands to which it was once committed. Richard, however, was obliged to submit: he signed the commission which violence had extorted from him; he took an oath never to infringe it; and though at the end of the session he publicly entered a protest, that the prerogatives of the crown, notwithstanding his late concession, should still be deemed entire and unimpaired, [3] the new commissioners, without regarding this declaration, proceeded to the exercise of their authority.

* Rymer, vol. vii. . Cotton, .

* * Cotton, .

* * * Knyghton, . Statutes at large, 10 Rich. II. chap. I.

1887.

The king, thus dispossessed of royal power, was soon sensible of the contempt into which he was fallen. His favorites and ministers, who were as yet allowed to remain about his person, failed not to aggravate the injury which without any demerit on his part, had been offered to him. And his eager temper was of itself sufficiently inclined to remark that the dukes of Glocester and York, though vastly rich received at the same time each of them a thousand pounds a year top support their dignity and to seek the means, both of recovering his authority, and of revenging himself on those who had invaded it. As the house of commons appeared now of weight in the constitution, he secretly tried some expedients for procuring a favorable election: he sounded some of the sheriffs, who, being at that time both the returning officers, and magistrates of great power in the counties, had naturally considerable influence in elections. [1] But as most of them had been appointed by his uncles, either during his minority or during the course of the present commission, he found them in general averse to his enterprise. The sentiments and inclinations of the judges were more favorable to him. He met at Nottingham Sir Robert Tresilian, chief justice of the king's bench, Sir Robert Belknappe, chief justice of the common pleas, Sir John Gary, chief baron of the exchequer, Holt, Fulthorpe, and Bourg, inferior justices, and Lockton, serjeant at law; and he proposed to them some queries, which these lawyers, either from the influence of his authority or of reason, made no scruple of answering in the way he desired. They declared that the late commission was derogatory to the royalty and prerogative of the king; that those who procured it, or advised the king to consent to it, were punishable with death; that those who necessitated and compelled him were guilty of treason; that those were equally criminal who should persevere in maintaining it; that the king has the right of dissolving parliaments at pleasure; that the parliament, while it sits, must first proceed upon the king's business; and that this assembly cannot without his consent impeach any of his ministers and judges. [2] Even according to our present strict maxims with regard to law and the royal prerogative, all these determinations, except the two last, appear justifiable: and as the great privileges of the commons, particularly that of impeachment, were hitherto new and supported by few precedents, there want not plausible reasons to justify these opinions of the judges. [3]

* In the preamble to 5 Henry IV. cap. vii. it is implied, that the sheriffs in a manner appointed the members of the house of commons, not only in this parliament, but in many others.

* * Knyghton, . Ypod. Neust. .

* * * The parliament, in 1341, exacted of Edward III., that on the third day of every session, the king should resume all the great offices; and that the ministers should then answer to any accusation that should be brought against them; which plainly implies, that, while ministers they could not be accused or impeached in parliament, therefore, their answer to the king's queries before the archhishops of York

and Dublin, the bishops of Durham, Chichester, and Bangor, the duke of Ireland, the earl of Suffolk, and two other counsellors of inferior quality. Henry IV. told the commons that the usage of parliament required them to go first through the king’s business In granting supplies;

which order the king intended not to alter. Parl. Hist. vol.

ii. . Upon the whole, it must be allowed that,

according to ancient practice and principles, there are at least plausible grounds for all these opinions of the judges. It must be remarked, that this affirmation of Henry IV. was given deliberately, after consulting the house of peers, who were much better acquainted with the usage of parliament than the ignorant commons. And it has the greater authority, because Henry IV. had made this very principle a considerable article of charge against his predecessor; and that a very few years before. So ill grounded were most of the imputations thrown on the unhappy Richard.

They obliged the king to summon a parliament, which was entirely at their devotion, they had full power, by observing a few legal forms, to take vengeance on all their enemies. Five great peers, men whose combined power was able at any time to shake the throne, — the duke of Glocester, the king’s uncle; the earl of Derby, son of the duke of Lancaster; the earl of Arundel; the earl of Warwick; and the earl of Nottingham, mareschal of England, — entered before the parliament an accusation, or appeal, as it was called, against the five counsellors whom they had already accused before the king. The parliament, who ought to have been judges, were not ashamed to impose an oath on all their members, by which they bound themselves to live and die with the lords appellants, and to defend them against all opposition with their lives and fortunes. [1]

* Cotton, .

The duke of Glocester and his adherents soon got intelligence of this secret consultation, and were naturally very much alarmed at it. They saw the king’s intentions; and they determined to prevent the execution of them. As soon as he came to London, which they knew was well disposed to their party, they secretly assembled their forces, and appeared in arms at Haringay Park, near Highgate, with a power which Richard and his ministers were not able to resist. They sent him a message by the archbishop of Canterbury, and the lords Lovel Cobham, and Devereux, and demanded that the persons who had seduced him by their pernicious counsel, and were traitors both to him and to the kingdom, should be delivered up to them. A few days after, they appeared in his presence, armed, and attended with armed followers; and they accused by name the archbishop of York, the duke of Ireland, the earl of Suffolk, Sir Robert Tresilian, and Sir Nicholas Brembre, as public and dangerous enemies to the state. They threw down their gauntlets before the king, and fiercely offered to maintain the truth of their charge by duel. The persons accused, and all the other obnoxious ministers, had withdrawn or had concealed themselves.

The duke of Ireland fled to Cheshire, and levied some forces, with which he advanced to relieve the king from the violence of the nobles. Glocester encountered him in Oxfordshire with much superior forces; routed him, dispersed his followers, and obliged him to fly into the Low Countries, where he died in exile a few years after.

The other proceedings were well suited to the violence and iniquity of the times. A charge consisting of thirty-nine articles, was delivered in by the appellants; and as none of the accused counsellors, except Sir Nicholas Brembre, was in custody, the rest were cited to appear; and upon their absenting themselves, the house of peers, after a very short interval, without hearing a witness, without examining a fact, or deliberating on one point of law, declared them guilty of high treason. Sir Nicholas Brembre, who was produced in court, had the appearance, and but the appearance, of a trial: the peers, though they were not by law his proper judges, pronounced, in a very summary manner, sentence of death upon him; and he was executed, together with Sir Robert Tresilian, who had been discovered and taken in the interval.

It would be tedious to recite the whole charge delivered in against the five counsellors; which is to be met with in several collections. [1]

It is sufficient to observe in general, that if we reason upon the supposition, which is the true one, that the royal prerogative was invaded by the commission extorted by the duke of Glocester and his associates, and that the king’s person was afterwards detained in custody by rebels, many of the articles will appear not only to imply no crime in the duke of Ireland and the ministers, but to ascribe to them actions which were laudable, and which they were bound by their allegiance to perform. The few articles

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* Knyghton, . Tyrrel, vol iii. part ii , from the records. Parl. Hist. vol. i.

impeaching the conduct of these ministers before that commission, which subverted the constitution, and annihilated all justice and legal authority, are vague and general; such as their engrossing the king’s favor, keeping his barons at a distance from him, obtaining unreasonable grants for themselves or their creatures, and dissipating the public treasure by useless expenses. No violence is objected to them; no particular illegal act; [1] no breach of any statute; and their administration may therefore be concluded to have been so far innocent and inoffensive. All the disorders indeed seem to have proceeded not from any violation of the laws, or any ministerial tyranny, but merely from a rivalship of power, which the duke of Glocester and the great nobility, agreeably to the genius of the times, carried to the utmost extremity against their opponents, without any regard to reason, justice, or humanity.

But these were not the only deeds of violence committed during the triumph of the party. All the other judges who had signed the extrajudicial opinions at Nottingham, were condemned to death, and were, as a grace or favor, banished to Ireland; though they pleaded the fear of their lives, and the menaces of the king’s ministers as their excuse. Lord Beauchamp of Holt, Sir James Berners, and John Salisbury, were also tried and condemned for high treason, merely because they had attempted to defeat the late commission: but the life of the latter was spared. The fate of Sir Simon Burley was more severe: this gentleman was much beloved for his personal merit, had distinguished himself by many honorable actions, [1] was created knight of the garter, and had been appointed governor to Richard, by the choice of the late king and of the Black Prince: he had attended his master from the earliest infancy of that prince, and had ever remained extremely attached to him: yet all these considerations could not save him from falling a victim to Glocester’s vengeance.

* See note M, at the end of the volume.

This execution, more than all the others, made a deep impression on the mind of Richard; his queen too (for he was already married to the sister of the emperor Winceslaus, King of Bohemia) interested herself in behalf of Burley: she remained three hours on her knees before the duke of Glocester, pleading for that gentleman’s life; but though she was become extremely popular by her amiable qualities, which had acquired her the appellation of “the good Queen Anne,” her petition was sternly rejected by the inexorable tyrant. [1]

* At least this is the character given of him by Froissard, (liv. ii.) who knew him personally. Walsingham () gives a very different character of him; but he is a writer somewhat passionate and partial; and the choice made of this gentleman, by Edward III. and the Black Prince, for the education of Richard, makes the character given him by Froissard much more probable.

The parliament concluded this violent scene by a declaration, that none of the articles decided on these trials to be treason, should ever afterwards be drawn into precedent by the judges, who were still to consider the statute of the twenty-fifth of Edward as the rule of their decisions. The house of lords seem not at that time to have known or acknowledged the principle, that they themselves were bound, in their judicial capacity, to follow the rules which they, in conjunction with the king and commons, had established in their legislature. [1] It was also enacted, that every one should swear to the perpetual maintenance and support of the forfeitures and attainders, and of all the other acts passed during this parliament. The archbishop of Canterbury added the penalty of excommunication, as a further security to these violent transactions.

* See note N, at the end of the volume.

1389.

It might naturally be expected, that the king, being reduced to such slavery by the combination of the princes and chief nobility, and having appeared so unable to defend his servants from the cruel effects of their resentment, would long remain in subjection to them; and never would recover the royal power, without the most violent struggles and convulsions: but the event proved contrary. In less than a twelvemonth, Richard, who was in his twenty-third year, declared in council, that, as he had now attained the full age which entitled him to govern by his own authority his kingdom and household, he resolved to exercise his right of sovereignty; and when no one ventured to contradict so reasonable an intention, he deprived Fitz-Alan, archbishop of Canterbury, of the dignity of chancellor, and bestowed that high office on William of Wickham, bishop of Winchester; the bishop of Hereford was displaced from the office of treasurer; the earl of Arundel from that of admiral; even the duke of Glocester and the earl of Warwick were removed for a time from the council: and no opposition was made to these great changes. The history of this reign is imperfect, and little to be depended on, except where it is supported by public records; and it is not easy for us to assign the reason of this unexpected event. Perhaps some secret animosities, naturally to be expected in that situation, had crept in among the great men, and had enabled the king to recover his authority. Perhaps the violence of their former proceedings had lost them the affections of the people, who soon repent of any cruel extremities to which they are carried by their leaders. However this may be, Richard exercised with moderation the authority which he had resumed. He seemed to be entirely reconciled to his uncles [1] and the other great men, of whom he had so much reason to complain: he never attempted to recall from banishment the duke of Ireland, whom he found so obnoxious to them: he confirmed by proclamation the general pardon which the parliament had passed for all offences; and he courted the affections of the people, by voluntarily remitting some subsidies which had been granted him: a remarkable, and almost singular instance of such generosity.

After this composure of domestic differences, and this restoration of the government to its natural state, there passes an interval of eight years which affords not many remarkable events. The duke of Lancaster returned from Spain; having resigned to his rival all pretensions to the crown of Castile upon payment of a large sum of money, [2] and having married his daughter, Philippa, to the king of Portugal. The authority of this prince served to counterbalance that of the duke of Glocester, and secured the power of Richard, who paid great court to his eldest uncle, by whom he had never been offended, and whom he found more moderate in his temper than the younger. He made a cession to him for life of the duchy of Guienne, [3] which the inclinations and changeable humor of the Gascons had restored to the English government; but as they remonstrated loudly against this deed, it was finally, with the duke’s consent, revoked by Richard. [4]

* Dugdale, vol. ii. .

* * Knyghton, p 2677. Walsing .

* * * Rymer, vol. vii. .

There happened an incident which produced a dissension between Lancaster and his two brothers. After the death of the Spanish princess, he espoused Catharine Swineford, daughter of a private knight of Hainault, by whose alliance York and Glocester thought the dignity of their family much injured; but the king gratified his uncle by passing in parliament a charter of legitimation to the children whom that lady had borne him before marriage, and by creating the eldest earl of Somerset. [1]

The wars, meanwhile, which Richard had inherited with his crown, still continued; though interrupted by frequent truces, according to the practice of that age, and conducted with little vigor, by reason of the weakness of all parties. The French war was scarcely heard of; the tranquillity of the northern borders was only interrupted by one inroad of the Scots, which proceeded more from a rivalship between the two martial families of Piercy and Douglas, than from any national quarrel: a fierce battle or skirmish was fought at Otterborne, [2] in which young Piercy, surnamed Hotspur, from his impetuous valor, was taken prisoner, and Douglas slain; and the victory remained undecided. [3] Some insurrections of the Irish obliged the king to make an expedition into that country, which he reduced to obedience; and he recovered, in some degree, by this enterprise, his character of courage, which had suffered a little by the inactivity of his reign.

1396.

At last, the English and French courts began to think in earnest of a lasting peace; but found it so difficult to adjust their opposite pretensions, that they were content to establish a truce of twenty-five years: Brest and Cherbourg were restored, the former to the duke of Brittany, the latter to the king of Navarre: both parties were left in possession of all the other places which they held at the time of concluding the truce; and to render the amity between the two crowns more durable, Richard, [4] who was now a widower, was affianced to Isabella, the daughter of Charles. This princess was only seven years of age; but the king agreed to so unequal a match, chiefly that he might fortify himself by this alliance against the enterprises of his uncles, and the incurable turbulence, as well as inconstancy, of his barons.

The administration of the king, though it was not in this interval sullied by any unpopular act, except the seizing of the charter of London, [6] which was soon after restored, tended not much to corroborate his authority; and his personal character brought him into contempt, even while his public government appeared in a good measure unexceptionable.

* Cotton, . Walsing, .

* * 15th August, 1388.

* * * Froissard, liv. iii. cha, 125, 126. Walsing, p. 355.

* * * * Rymer, vol. vii. .

* * * * * * Rymer, vol. vii. . Walsing. .

Indolent, profuse, addicted to low pleasures, he spent his whole time in feasting and jollity, and dissipated, in idle show, or in bounties to favorites of no reputation, that revenue which the people expected to see him employ in enterprises directed to public honor and advantage. He forgot his rank by admitting all men to his familiarity; and he was not sensible, that their acquaintance with the qualities of his mind was not able to impress them with the respect which he neglected to preserve from his birth and station. The earls of Kent and Huntingdon, his half brothers, were his chief confidants and favorites; and though he never devoted himself to them with so profuse an affection as that with which he had formerly been attached to the duke of Ireland, it was easy for men to see, that every grace passed through their hands, and that the king had rendered himself a mere cipher in the government. The small regard which the public bore to his person, disposed them to murmur against his administration, and to receive with greedy ears every complaint which the discontented or ambitious grandees suggested to them.

1397.

Glocester soon perceived the advantages which this dissolute conduct gave him; and finding that both resentment and jealousy on the part of his nephew still prevented him from acquiring any ascendant over that prince, he determined to cultivate his popularity with the nation, and to revenge himself on those who eclipsed him in favor and authority. He seldom appeared at court or in council; he never declared his opinion but in order to disapprove of the measures embraced by the king and his favorites; and he courted the friendship of every man whom disappointment or private resentment had rendered an enemy to the administration. The long truce with France was unpopular with the English, who breathed nothing but war against that hostile nation; and Glocester took care to encourage all the vulgar prejudices which prevailed on this subject. Forgetting the misfortunes which attended the English arms during the later years of Edward, he made an invidious comparison between the glories of that reign and the inactivity of the present; and he lamented that Richard should have degenerated so much from the heroic virtues by which his father and his grandfather were distinguished. The military men were inflamed with a desire of war when they heard him talk of the signal victories formerly obtained, and of the easy prey which might be made of French riches by the superior valor of the English; the populace readily embraced the same sentiments; and all men exclaimed, that this prince, whose counsels were so much neglected, was the true support of English honor and alone able to raise the nation to its former power and splendor. His great abilities, his popular manners, his princely extraction, his immense riches, his high office of constable; [1] all these advantages, not a little assisted by his want of court favor, gave him a mighty authority in the kingdom, and rendered him formidable to Richard and his ministers.

Froissard, [2] a contemporary writer, and very impartial, but whose credit is somewhat impaired by his want of exactness in material facts, ascribes to the duke of Glocester more desperate views, and such as were totally incompatible with the government and domestic tranquillity of the nation. According to that historian, he proposed to his nephew, Roger Mortimer, earl of Marche, whom Richard had declared his successor, to give him immediate possession of the throne, by the deposition of a prince so unworthy of power and authority: and when Mortimer declined the project, he resolved to make a partition of the kingdom between himself, his two brothers, and the earl of Arundel; and entirely to dispossess Richard of the crown. The king, it is said, being informed of these designs, saw that either his own ruin, or that of Glocester, was inevitable; and he resolved by a hasty blow to prevent the execution of such destructive projects. This is certain, that Glocester, by his own confession, had often affected to speak contemptuously of the king’s person and government; had deliberated concerning the lawfulness of throwing off allegiance to him; and had even borne part in a secret conference, where his deposition was proposed, and talked of, and determined: [3] but it is reasonable to think, that his schemes were not so far advanced.

* Rymer, vol. vii. .

* * Liv. iv. cha.

* * * Cotton, . Tyrrel, vol. iii. part ii. , from the records. Par. Hist. vol. i. . That this confession was genuine, and obtained without violence, may be entirely depended on. Judge Rickhill, who brought it over from Calais, was tried on that account, and acquitted in the first parliament of Henry IV., when Glocester’s party was prevalent. His acquittal, notwithstanding his innocence, may even appear marvellous, considering the times. See Cotton,

. putting them immediately in execution. The danger probably was still too distant to render a desperate remedy entirely necessary for the security of government.

But whatever opinion we may form of the danger arising from Glocester’s conspiracies, his aversion to the French truce and alliance was public and avowed; and that court which had now a great influence over the king, pushed him to provide for his own safety, by punishing the traitorous designs of his uncle. The resentment against his former acts of violence revived; the sense of his refractory and uncompliant behavior was still recent; and a man whose ambition had once usurped royal authority, and who had murdered all the faithful servants of the king, was thought capable, on a favorable opportunity, of renewing the same criminal enterprises. The king’s precipitate temper admitted of no deliberation: he ordered Glocester to be unexpectedly arrested; to be hurried on board a ship which was lying in the river; and to be carried over to Calais, where alone, by reason of his numerous partisans, he could safely be detained in custody. [1] The earls of

Arundel and Warwick were seized at the same time: the malecontents so suddenly deprived of their leaders, were astonished and overawed; and the concurrence of the dukes of Lancaster and York in those measures, together with the earls of Derby and Rutland, the eldest sons of these princes, [2] bereaved them of all possibility of resistance.

A parliament was immediately summoned at Westminster; and the king doubted not to find the peers, and still more the commons, very compliant with his will. This house had in a former parliament given him very sensible proofs of their attachment; [3] and the present suppression of Glocester's party made him still more assured of a favorable election. As a further expedient for that purpose, he is also said to have employed the influence of the sheriffs; a practice which, though not unusual, gave umbrage, but which the established authority of that assembly rendered afterwards still more familiar to the nation. Accordingly, the parliament passed whatever acts the king was pleased to dictate to them: [4] they annulled forever the commission which usurped upon the royal authority, and they declared it treasonable to attempt, in any future period, the revival of any similar commission: they abrogated all the acts which attainted the king's ministers, and which that parliament who passed them, and the whole nation had sworn inviolably to maintain: and they declared the general pardon then granted to be invalid, as extorted by force, and never ratified by the free consent of the king.

* Froissard, liv. iv. cha. Walsing. .

* * Rymer, vol. viii. .

* * * See note O, at the end of the volume.

* * * * The nobles brought numerous retainers with them to give them*

Though Richard, after he resumed the government, and lay no longer under constraint, had voluntarily, by proclamation, confirmed that general indemnity, this circumstance seemed not, in their eyes, to merit any consideration. Even a particular pardon, granted six years after to the earl of Arundel, was annulled by parliament, on pretence that it had been procured by surprise, and that the king was not then fully apprized of the degree of guilt incurred by that nobleman.

The commons then preferred an impeachment against Fitz-Alan, archbishop of Canterbury, and brother to Arundel, and accused him for his concurrence in procuring the illegal commission, and in attainting the king’s ministers. The primate pleaded guilty; but as he was protected by the ecclesiastical privileges, the king was satisfied with a sentence which banished him the kingdom, and sequestered his temporalities. [1] An appeal or accusation was presented against the duke of Glocester, and the earls of Arundel and Warwick, by the earls of Rutland, Kent, Huntingdon, Somerset, Salisbury, and Nottingham, together with the lords Spenser and Scrope, and they were accused of the same crimes which had been imputed to the archbishop, as well as of their appearance against the king in a hostile manner at Haringay Park. The earl of Arundel, who was brought to the bar, wisely confined all his defence to the pleading of both the general and particular pardon of the king; but his plea being overruled, he was condemned and executed. [2]

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, p 377. Froissard, liv. iv. cha. Walsing. p. 354.

The earl of Warwick, who was also convicted of high treason, was, on account of his submissive behavior, pardoned as to his life, but doomed to perpetual banishment in the Isle of Man. No new acts of treason were imputed to either of these noblemen. The only crimes for which they were condemned, were the old attempts against the crown, which seemed to be obliterated both by the distance of time and by repeated pardons. [1] The reasons of this method of proceeding it is difficult to conjecture. The recent conspiracies of Glocester seem certain from his own confession; but perhaps the king and ministry had not at that time in their hands any satisfactory proof of their reality; perhaps it was difficult to convict Arundel and Warwick of any participation in them; perhaps an inquiry into these conspiracies would have involved in the guilt some of those great noblemen who now concurred with the crown, and whom it was necessary to cover from all imputation; or perhaps the king, according to the genius of the age, was indifferent about maintaining even the appearance of law and equity, and was only solicitous by any means to insure success in these prosecutions. This point, like many others in ancient history, we are obliged to leave altogether undetermined.

A warrant was issued to the earl mareschal, governor of Calais, to bring over the duke of Glocester, in order to his trial; but the governor returned for answer, that the duke had died suddenly of an apoplexy in that fortress. Nothing could be more suspicious, from the time, than the circumstances of that prince's death: it became immediately the general opinion, that he was murdered by orders from his nephew: in the subsequent reign, undoubted proofs were produced in parliament, that he had been suffocated with pillows by his keepers: [2] and it appeared that the king, apprehensive lest the public trial and execution of so popular a prince, and so near a relation, might prove both dangerous and invidious, had taken this base method of gratifying, and, as he fancied, concealing, his revenge upon him. Both parties, in their successive triumphs, seem to have had no further concern than that of retaliating upon their adversaries; and neither of them were aware that, by imitating, they indirectly justified, as far as it lay in their power, all the illegal violence of the opposite party.

* Tyrrel, vol. iii. part ii. , from the records.

* * Cotton, , 400. Dugdale, vol. ii. .

This session concluded with the creation or advancement of several peers: the earl of Derby was made duke of Hereford; the earl of Rutland, duke of Albemarle; the earl of Kent, duke of Surrey; the earl of Huntingdon, duke of Exeter; the earl of Nottingham, duke of Norfolk; the earl of Somerset, marquis of Dorset; Lord Spenser, earl of Glocester; Rulph Nevil, earl of Westmoreland; Thomas Piercy, earl of Worcester; William Scrope, earl of Wiltshire. [1] The parliament, after a session of twelve days, was adjourned to Shrewsbury. The king, before the departure of the members, exacted from them an oath for the perpetual maintenance and establishment of all their acts; an oath similar to that which had formerly been required by the duke of Glocester and his party, and which had already proved so vain and fruitless.

1398.

Both king and parliament met in the same dispositions at Shrewsbury. So anxious was Richard for the security of these acts, that he obliged the lords and commons to swear anew to them on the cross of Canterbury; [2] and he soon after procured a bull from the pope, by which they were, as he imagined, perpetually secured and established. [3] The parliament, on the other hand, conferred on him for life the duties on wool, wool-fells, and leather, and granted him, besides, a subsidy of one tenth and a half, and one fifteenth and a half. They also reversed the attainder of Tresilian and the other judges; and, with the approbation of the present judges, declared the answers for which these magistrates had been impeached to be just and legal: [4] and they carried so far their retrospect as to reverse, on the petition of Lord Spenser, earl of Glocester, the attainder pronounced against the two Spensers in the reign of Edward II. [5] The ancient history of England is nothing but a catalogue of reversals: every thing is in fluctuation and movement: one faction is continually undoing what was established by another: and the multiplied oaths which each party exacted for the security of the present acts, betray a perpetual consciousness of their instability.

The parliament, before they were dissolved, elected a committee of twelve lords and six commoners, [6] whom they invested with the whole power both of lords and commons, and endowed with full authority to finish all business which had been laid before the houses, and which they had not had leisure to bring to a conclusion. [7]

* Cotton, , 371

* * Cotton, .

* * Walsing. .

* * * * Statutes at large, 21 Rich. II.

* * * * * * The names of the commissioners were, the dukes of Lancaster, York, Albemarle, Surrey, and Exeter, the marquis of Dorset, the earls of Marche, Salisbury, Northumberland,

Glocester, Winchester, and Wiltshire; John Bussey, Henry Green, John Russel, Robert Teyne, Henry Chelmeswicke, and John Golofre. It is to be remarked, that the duke of Lancaster always concurred with the rest in all their proceedings, even in the banishment of his son, which was afterwards so much complained of.

* * * * * * * Cotton, . Walsing. .

This was an unusual concession; and though it was limited in the object, might, either immediately or as a precedent, have proved dangerous to the constitution; but the cause of that extraordinary measure was an event singular and unexpected, which engaged the attention of the parliament.

After the destruction of the duke of Glocester and the heads of that party, a misunderstanding broke out among those noblemen who had joined in the prosecution; and the king wanted either authority sufficient to appease it, or foresight to prevent it. The duke of Hereford appeared in parliament, and accused the duke of Norfolk of having spoken to him, in private, many slanderous words of the king, and of having imputed to that prince an intention of subverting and destroying many of his principal nobility. [2] Norfolk.. denied the charge, gave Hereford the lie, and offered to prove his own innocence by duel. The challenge was accepted: the time and place of combat were appointed: and as the event of this important trial by arms might require the interposition of legislative authority, the parliament thought it more suitable to delegate their power to a committee, than to prolong the session beyond the usual time which custom and general convenience had prescribed to it. [3]

The duke of Hereford was certainly very little delicate in the point of honor, when he revealed a private conversation to the ruin of the person who had intrusted him; and we may thence be more inclined to believe the duke of Norfolk's denial, than the other's asseveration. But Norfolk had in these transactions betrayed an equal neglect of honor, which brings him entirely on a level with his antagonist. Though he had publicly joined with the duke of Glocester and his party in all the former acts of violence against the king.

* * Cotton, . Parl. Hist. vol. i. .

* * * In the first year of Henry VI., when the authority of parliament was great, and when that assembly could least be suspected of lying under violence, a like concession was made to the privy council from like motives of convenience.

See Cotton, . his name stands among the appellants who accused the duke of Ireland and the other ministers, yet was he not ashamed publicly to impeach his former associates for the very crimes which he had concurred with them in committing; and his name increases the list of those appellants who brought them to a trial. Such were the principles and practices of those ancient knights and barons, during the prevalence of the aristocratical government, and the reign of chivalry.

The lists for this decision of truth and right were appointed at Coventry before the king: all the nobility of England banded into parties, and adhered either to the one duke or the other: the whole nation was held in suspense with regard to the event; but when the two champions appeared in the field accoutred for the combat, the king interposed, to prevent both the present effusion of such noble blood, and the future consequences of the quarrel. By the advice and authority of the parliamentary commissioners, he stopped the duel; and to show his impartiality, he ordered, by the same authority both the combatants to leave the kingdom; [1] assigning one country for the place of Norfolk’s exile, which he declared perpetual, another for that of Hereford, which he limited to ten years.

* Cotton, . Walsing. .

Hereford was a man of great prudence and command of temper; and he behaved himself with so much submission in these delicate circumstances, that the king, before his departure, promised to shorten the term of his exile four years; and he also granted him letters patent, by which he was empowered, in case any inheritance should in the interval accrue to him, to enter immediately in possession, and to postpone the doing of homage till his return.

The weakness and fluctuation of Richard’s counsels appear nowhere more evident than in the conduct of this affair. No sooner had Hereford left the kingdom, than the king’s jealousy of the power and riches of that prince’s family revived; and he was sensible that by Glocester’s death he had only removed a counterpoise to the Lancastrian interest which was now become formidable to his crown and kingdom. Being informed that Hereford had entered into a treaty of marriage with the daughter of the duke of Berry, uncle to the French king, he determined to prevent the finishing of an alliance which would so much extend the interest of his cousin in foreign countries; and he sent over the earl of Salisbury to Paris with a commission for that purpose.

1399.

The death of the duke of Lancaster, which happened soon after, called upon him to take new resolutions with regard to that opulent succession. The present duke, in consequence of the king's patent, desired to be put in possession of the estate and jurisdictions of his father; but Richard, afraid of strengthening the hands of a man whom he had already so much offended, applied to the parliamentary commissioners, and persuaded them that this affair was but an appendage to that business which the parliament had delegated to them. By their authority he revoked his letters patent, and retained possession of the estate of Lancaster; and by the same authority he seized and tried the duke's attorney, who had procured and insisted on the letters, and he had him condemned as a traitor for faithfully executing that trust to his master; [1] an extravagant act of power! even though the king changed, in favor of the attorney, the penalty of death into that of banishment.

Henry, the new duke of Lancaster, had acquired by his conduct and abilities the esteem of the public; and having served with distinction against the infidels in Lithuania, he had joined to his other praises those of piety and valor, virtues which have at all times a great influence over mankind, and were, during those ages, the qualities chiefly held in estimation. [2] He was connected with most of the principal nobility by blood, alliance, or friendship; and as the injury done him by the king might in its consequences affect all of them, he easily brought them, by a sense of common interest, to take part in his resentment. The people, who must have an object of affection, who found nothing in the king's person which they could love or revere, and who were even disgusted with many parts of his conduct [3] easily transferred to Henry that attachment which the death of the duke of Glocester had left.

* Tyrrel, vol. iii. part ii. , from the records.

* * Walsing. .

* * * He levied fines upon those who had ten years before joined the duke of Glocester and his party: they were obliged to pay him money, before he would allow them to enjoy the benefit of the indemnity; and in the articles of charge against him it is asserted that the payment of one fine did not suffice. It is indeed likely that his ministers would abuse the power put into their hands; and this grievance extended to very many people. Historians agree in representing this practice as a great oppression. See Otterborne, . without any fixed direction. His misfortunes were lamented the injustice which he had suffered was complained of; and all men turned their eyes towards him as the only person that could retrieve the lost honor of the nation, or redress the supposed abuses in the government.

While such were the dispositions of the people, Richard had the imprudence to embark for Ireland, in order to revenge the death of his cousin, Roger, earl of Marche, the presumptive heir of the crown, who had lately been slain in a skirmish by the natives; and he thereby left the kingdom of England open to the attempts of his provoked and ambitious enemy. Henry, embarking at Nantz with a retinue of sixty persons, among whom were the archbishop of Canterbury and the young earl of Arundel, nephew to that prelate, landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire; and was immediately joined by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, two of the most potent barons in England. He here took a solemn oath, that he had no other purpose hi this invasion than to recover the duchy of Lancaster, unjustly detained from him; and he invited all his friends in England, and all lovers of their country, to second him in this reasonable and moderate pretension. Every place was in commotion: the malecontents in all quarters flew to arms: London discovered the strongest symptoms of its disposition to mutiny and rebellion: and Henry's army, increasing on every day's march, soon amounted to the number of sixty thousand combatants.

The duke of York was left guardian of the realm; a place to which his birth entitled him, but which both his slender abilities, and his natural connections with the duke of Lancaster, rendered him utterly incapable of filling in such a dangerous emergency. Such of the chief nobility as were attached to the crown, and could either have seconded the guardian's good intentions, or have overawed his infidelity, had attended the king into Ireland; and the efforts of Richard's friends were every where more feeble than those of his enemies. The duke of York, however, appointed the rendezvous of his forces at St. Albans, and soon assembled an army of forty thousand men; but found them entirely destitute of zeal and attachment to the royal cause, and more inclined to join the party of the rebels. He hearkened therefore very readily to a message from Henry, who entreated him not to oppose a loyal and humble supplicant in the recovery of his legal patrimony; and the guardian even declared publicly that he would second his nephew in so reasonable a request. His army embraced with acclamations the same measures; and the duke of Lancaster, reenforced by them, was now entirely master of the kingdom. He hastened to Bristol, into which some of the king's ministers had thrown themselves; and soon obliging that place to surrender, he yielded to the popular wishes, and without giving them a trial, ordered the earl of Wiltshire, Sir John Bussy, and Sir Henry Green, whom he there took prisoners, to be led to immediate execution.

The king, receiving intelligence of this invasion and insurrection, hastened over from Ireland, and landed in Milford Haven with a body of twenty thousand men: but even this army, so much inferior to the enemy, was either overawed oy the general combination of the kingdom, or seized with the same spirit of disaffection; and they gradually deserted him, till he found that he had not above six thousand men who followed his standard. It appeared, therefore, necessary to retire secretly from this small body, which served only to expose him to danger; and he fled to the Isle of Anglesea, where he purposed to embark either for Ireland or France, and there await the favorable opportunities which the return of his subjects to a sense of duty, or their future discontents against the duke of Lancaster, would probably afford him. Henry, sensible of the danger, sent to him the earl of Northumberland, with the strongest professions of loyalty and submission; and that nobleman, by treachery and false oaths, made himself master of the king's person, and carried him to his enemy at Flint Castle. Richard was conducted to London by the duke of Lancaster, who was there received with the acclamations of the mutinous populace. It is pretended that the recorder met him on the road, and in the name of the city entreated him, for the public safety, to put Richard to death, with all his adherents who were prisoners; but the duke prudently determined to make many others participate in his guilt, before he would proceed to these extremities. For this purpose he issued writs of election in the king’s name, and appointed the immediate meeting of a parliament at Westminster.

Such of the peers as were most devoted to the king, were either fled or imprisoned; and no opponents, even among the barons, dared to appear against Henry, amidst that scene of outrage and violence which commonly attends revolutions, especially in England during those turbulent ages, It is also easy to imagine, that a house of commons, elected during this universal ferment, and this triumph of the Lancastrian party, would be extremely attached to that cause, and ready to second every suggestion of their leaders. That order, being an yet of too little weight to stem the torrent, was always carried along with it, and served only to increase the violence which the public interest required it should endeavor to control. The duke of Lancaster, therefore, sensible that he should be entirely master, began to carry his views to the crown itself; and he deliberated with his partisans concerning the most proper means of effecting his daring purpose. He first extorted a resignation from Richard; [1] but as he knew that this deed would plainly appear the result of force and fear, he also purposed, notwithstanding the danger of the precedent to himself and his posterity, to have him solemnly deposed in parliament for his pretended tyranny and misconduct. A charge, consisting of thirty-three articles, was accordingly drawn up against him, and presented to that assembly. [2]

If we examine these articles, which are expressed with extreme acrimony against Richard, we shall find that, except some rash speeches, which are imputed to him, [3] and of whose reality, as they are said to have passed in private conversation, we may reasonably entertain some doubt, — the chief amount of the charge is contained in his violent conduct during the two last years of his reign, and naturally divides itself into two principal heads. The first and most considerable is the revenge which he took on the princes and great barons who had formerly usurped, and still persevered in controlling and threatening his authority; the second is the violation of the laws and general privileges of his people. But the former, however irregular in many of its circumstances, was fully supported by authority of parliament, and was but a copy of the violence which the princes and barons themselves, during their former triumph, had exercised against him and his party. The detention of Lancaster’s estate was, properly speaking a revocation, by parliamentary authority, of a grace which the King himself had formerly granted him. The murder of Glocester (for the secret execution, however merited, of that prince certainly deserves this appellation) was a private deed formed not any precedent, and implied not any usurped or arbitrary power of the crown which could justly give umbrage to the people. It really proceeded from a defect of power in the king, rather than from his ambition; and proves that, instead of being dangerous to the constitution, he possessed not even the authority necessary for the execution of the laws.

* Knyghton, . Otterborne, .

* * Tyrrel, vol. iii. part ii. , from the records, Knyghton, p, 2746. Otterborne, .

* * * Art 16, 26.

Concerning the second head of accusation, as it mostly consists of general facts, was framed by Richard’s inveterate enemies, and was never allowed to be answered by him or his friends, it is more difficult to form a judgment. The greatest part of these grievances imputed to Richard, seems to be the exertion of arbitrary prerogatives; such as the dispensing power, [1] levying purveyance, [2] employing the mareschal’s court, [3] extorting loans, [4] granting protections from lawsuits; [5] prerogatives, which, though often complained of, had often been exercised by his predecessors, and still continued to be so by his successors. But whether his irregular acts of this kind were more frequent, and injudicious and violent than usual, or were only laid hold of and exaggerated by the factions to which the weakness of his reign had given birth, we are not able at this distance to determine with certainty. There is, however, one circumstance in which his conduct is visibly different from that of his grandfather: he is not accused of having imposed one arbitrary tax, without consent of parliament, during his whole reign; [6] scarcely a year passed during the reign of Edward, which was free from complaints with regard to this dangerous exertion of authority. But, perhaps, the ascendant which Edward had acquired over the people, together with his great prudence, enabled him to make a use very advantageous to his subjects of this and other arbitrary prerogatives, and rendered them a smaller grievance in his hands, than a less absolute authority in those of his grand son.

* Art 13,17,18.

* * Art. 22.

* * * Art 27.

* * * * Art, 14.

* * * * * * We learn from Cotton () that the king, by his chancellor, told the commons, “that they were sunderly bound to him, and namely, in forbearing to charge them with dismes and fifteens, the which he meant *no more* to charge them in his own person,” These words “no more” allude to the practice of his predecessors; he had not himself imposed any arbitrary taxes: even the parliament, in the articles of his deposition, though they complain of heavy taxes, affirm not that they were imposed illegally or by arbitrary will.

This is a point which it would be rash for us to decide positively on either side; but it is certain, that a charge drawn up by the duke of Lancaster, and assented to by a parliament, situated in those circumstances, forms no manner of presumption with regard to the unusual irregularity or violence of the king’s conduct in this particular. [1]

* See note P, at the end of the volume.

When the charge against Richard was presented to the parliament, though it was liable, almost in every article, to objections, it was not canvassed, nor examined, nor disputed in either house, and seemed to be received with universal approbation. One man alone, the bishop of Carlisle, had the courage, amidst this general disloyalty and violence, to appear in defence of his unhappy master, and to plead his cause against all the power of the prevailing party. Though some topics employed by that virtuous prelate may seem to favor too much the doctrine of passive obedience, and to make too large a sacrifice of the rights of mankind, he was naturally pushed into that extreme by his abhorrence of the present licentious factions; and such intrepidity, as well as disinterestedness of behavior, proves that, whatever his speculative principles were his heart was elevated far above the meanness and abject submission of a slave. He represented to the parliament, that all the abuses of government which could justly be imputed to Richard, instead of amounting to tyranny, were merely the result of error, youth, or misguided counsel, and admitted of a remedy more easy and salutary than a total subversion of the constitution. That even had they been much more violent and dangerous than they really were, they had chiefly proceeded from former examples of resistance, which, making the prince sensible of his precarious situation, had obliged him to establish his throne by irregular and arbitrary expedients. That a rebellious disposition in subjects was the principal cause of tyranny in kings; laws could never secure the subject, which did not give security to the sovereign; and if the maxim of inviolable loyalty, which formed the basis of the English government, were once rejected, the privileges belonging to the several orders of the state, instead of being fortified by that licentiousness, would thereby lose the surest foundation of their force and stability. That the parliamentary deposition of Edward II., far from making a precedent which could control this maxim, was only an example of successful violence; and it was sufficiently to be lamented, that crimes were so often committed in the world, without establishing principles which might justify and authorize them.

That even that precedent, false and dangerous as it was, could never warrant the present excesses; which were so much greater, and which would entail distraction and misery on the nation, to the latest posterity. That the succession, at least, of the crown, was then preserved inviolate: the lineal heir was placed on the throne; and the people had an opportunity, by their legal obedience to him, of making atonement for the violence which they had committed against his predecessor. That a descendant of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the elder brother of the late duke of Lancaster, had been declared in parliament successor to the crown; he had left posterity; and their title, however it might be overpowered by present force and faction, could never be obliterated from the minds of the people. That if the turbulent disposition alone of the nation had overturned the well-established throne of so good a prince as Richard, what bloody commotions must ensue, when the same cause was united to the motive of restoring the legal and undoubted heir to his authority? That the new government intended to be established, would stand on no principle; and would scarcely retain any pretence by which it could challenge the obedience of men of sense and virtue. That the claim of lineal descent was so gross, as scarcely to deceive the most ignorant of the populace: conquest could never be pleaded by a rebel against his sovereign; the consent of the people had no authority in a monarchy not derived from consent, but established by hereditary right; and however the nation might be justified in deposing the misguided Richard, it could never have any reason for setting aside his lawful heir and successor, who was plainly innocent. And that the duke of Lancaster would give them but a bad specimen of the legal moderation which might be expected from his future government, if he added, [2typo?] to the crime of his past rebellion, the guilt of excluding the family, which, both by right of blood and by declaration of parliament, would, in case of Richard's demise or voluntary resignation, have been received as the undoubted heirs of the monarchy. [1]

* Sir John Heywarde, .

All the circumstances of this event, compared to those which attended the late revolution in 1688, show the difference between a great and civilized nation, deliberately vindicating its established privileges, and a turbulent and barbarous aristocracy, plunging headlong from the extremes of one faction into those of another. This noble freedom of the bishop of Carlisle, instead of being applauded, was not so much as tolerated: he was immediately arrested by order of the duke of Lancaster, and sent a prisoner to the abbey of St. Albans. No further debate was attempted: thirty-three long articles of charge were, in one meeting, voted against Richard; and voted unanimously by the same peers and prelates who, a little before, had voluntarily and unanimously authorized those very acts of violence of which they now complained. That prince was deposed by the suffrages of both houses; and the throne being now vacant, the duke of Lancaster stepped forth, and having crossed himself on the forehead and on the breast, and called upon the name of Christ, [1] he pronounced these words, which we shall give in the original language, because of their singularity.

"In the name of Fadher, Son, and Holy Ghost, I Henry of Lancaster, challenge this rewme of Ynglande, and the croun with all the membres, and the appurtenances; als I that am descendit by right line of the blode, coming fro the gude king Henry therde, and throge that right that God of his grace hath sent me, with helpe of kyn, and of my frendes to recover it; the which rewme was in poynt to be ondone by defaut of governance, and ondoying of the gude lawes." [2]

In order to understand this speech, it must be observed, that there was a silly story, received among some of the lowest vulgar, that Edmond, earl of Lancaster, son of Henry III., was really the elder brother of Edward I.; but that, by reason of some deformity in his person, he had been postponed in the succession, and his younger brother imposed on the nation in his stead. As the present duke of Lancaster inherited from Edmond by his mother, this genealogy made him the true heir of the monarchy, and it is therefore insinuated in Henry's speech: but the absurdity was too gross to be openly avowed either by him or by the parliament. The case is the same with regard to his right of conquest: he was a subject who rebelled against his sovereign: he entered the kingdom with a retinue of no more than sixty persons.

* Cotton, .

* * Knyghton, . could not therefore be the conqueror of England; and this right is accordingly insinuated, not avowed. Still there is a third claim, derived from his merits in saving the nation from tyranny and oppression; and this claim is also insinuated: but as it seemed, by its nature, better calculated as a reason for his being elected king by a free choice, than for giving him an immediate right of possession, he durst not speak openly even on this head; and to obviate any notion of election, he challenges the crown as his due, either by acquisition or inheritance.

The whole forms such a piece of jargon and nonsense, as is almost without example: no objection, however, was made to it in parliament: the unanimous voice of lords and commons placed Henry on the throne: he became king, nobody could tell how or wherefore: the title of the house of Marche,

formerly recognized by parliament, was neither invalidated nor repealed, but passed over in total silence: and as a concern for the liberties of the people seems to have had no hand in this revolution, their right to dispose of the government, as well as all their other privileges, was left precisely on the same footing as before. But Henry having,

when he claimed the crown, dropped some obscure hint concerning conquest, which, it was thought, might endanger these privileges, he soon after made a public declaration,

that he did not thereby intend to deprive any other of his franchises or liberties; which was the only circumstances where we shall find meaning or common sense in all these transactions.

The subsequent events discover the same headlong violence of conduct, and the same rude notions of civil government. The deposition of Richard dissolved the parliament: it was necessary to summon a new one: and Henry, in six days after, called together, without any new election, the same members; and this assembly he denominated a new parliament. They were employed in the usual task of reversing every deed of the opposite party. All the acts o£ the last parliament of Richard, which had been confirmed by their oaths, and by a papal bull, were abrogated: all the acts which had passed in the parliament where Glocester prevailed: which had also been confirmed by their oaths, but which had been abrogated by Richard, were anew established: [2] the answers of Tresifian and the other judges, which a parliament had annulled, but which a new parliament and new judges had approved, here received a second condemnation.

* Knyghton, . Otterborne, .

* * Cotton, .

The peers who had accused Glocester, Arundel, and Warwick, and who had received higher titles for that piece of service, were all of them degraded from their new dignities; even the practice of prosecuting appeals in parliament, which bore the air of a violent confederacy against an individual, rather than of a legal indictment, was wholly abolished, and trials were restored to the course of common law.* The natural effect of this conduct was, to render the people giddy with such rapid and perpetual changes, and to make them lose all notions of right and wrong in the measures of government.

The earl of Northumberland made a motion, in the house of peers, with regard to the unhappy prince whom they had deposed. He asked them, what advice they would give the king for the future treatment of him; since Henry was resolved to spare his life. They unanimously replied, that he should be imprisoned under a secure guard, in some secret place, and should be deprived of all commerce with any of his friends or partisans. It was easy to foresee, that he would not long remain alive in the hands of such barbarous and sanguinary enemies. Historians differ with regard to the manner in which he was murdered. It was long the prevailing opinion, that Sir Piers Exton, and others of his guards, fell upon him in the Castle of Pomfret, where he was confined, and despatched him with their halberts. But it is more probable that he was starved to death in prison; and after all sustenance was denied him, he prolonged his unhappy life, it is said, for a fortnight, before he reached the end of his miseries. This account is more consistent with the story, that his body was exposed in public, and that no marks of violence were observed upon it. He died in the thirty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign. He left no posterity, either legitimate or illegitimate.

All the writers who have transmitted to us the history of Richard, lived during the reigns of the Lancastrian princes, and candor requires, that we should not give entire credit to the reproaches which they have thrown upon his memory. But after making all proper allowances, he still appears to have been a weak prince, and unfit for government, less for want of natural parts and capacity, than of solid judgment and a good education. He was violent in his temper, profuse in his expenses, fond of idle show and magnificence, devoted to favorites, and addicted to pleasure; passions, all of them the most inconsistent with a prudent economy, and consequently dangerous in a limited and mixed government. Had he possessed the talents of gaining, and still more those of overawing, his great barons, he might have escaped all the misfortunes of his reign, and been allowed to carry much further his oppressions over the people, if he really was guilty of any, without their daring to rebel, or even to murmur against him. But when the grandees were tempted, by his want of prudence and of vigor, to resist his authority, and execute the most violent enterprises upon him, he was naturally led to seek an opportunity of retaliation: justice was neglected; the lives of the chief nobility were sacrificed; and all these enormities seem to have proceeded less from a settled design of establishing arbitrary power, than from the insolence of victory, and the necessities of the king’s situation. The manners indeed of the age were the chief source of such violence: laws, which were feebly executed in peaceable times, lost all their authority during public convulsions: both parties were alike guilty: or, if any difference may be remarked between them, we shall find, that the authority of the crown, being more legal, was commonly carried, when it prevailed, to less desperate extremities, than was that of the aristocracy.

On comparing the conduct and events of this reign with those of the preceding, we shall find equal reason to admire Edward and to blame Richard; but the circumstance of opposition, surely, will not lie in the strict regard paid by the former to national privileges, and the neglect of them by the latter. On the contrary, the prince of small abilities, as he felt his want of power, seems to have been more moderate in this respect than the other. Every parliament assembled during the reign of Edward, remonstrates against the exertion of some arbitrary prerogative or other: we hear not any complaints of that kind during the reign of Richard, till the assembling of his last parliament, which was summoned by his inveterate enemies, which dethroned him, which framed their complaints during the time of the most furious convultions, and whose testimony must therefore have, on that account, much less authority with every equitable judge. [1] Both these princes experienced the encroachments of the great upon their authority. Edward, reduced to necessities, was obliged to make an express bargain with his parliament and to sell some of his prerogatives for present supply; but as they were acquainted with his genius and capacity, they ventured not to demand any exorbitant concessions, or such as were incompatible with regal and sovereign power: the weakness of Richard tempted the parliament to extort a commission, which, in a manner, dethroned the prince, and transferred the sceptre into the hands of the nobility. The events of these encroachments were also suitable to the character of each. Edward had no sooner gotten the supply, than he departed from the engagements which had induced the parliament to grant it; he openly told his people, that he had but dissembled with them when he seemed to make them these concessions; and he resumed and retained all his prerogatives. But Richard, because he was detected in consulting and deliberating with the judges on the lawfulness of restoring the constitution, found his barons immediately in arms against him; was deprived of his liberty; saw his favorites, his ministers, his tutor, butchered before his face, or banished and attainted; and was obliged to give way to all this violence. There cannot be a more remarkable contrast between the fortunes of two princes: it were happy for society, did this contrast always depend on the justice or injustice of the measures which men embrace; and not rather on the different degrees of prudence and vigor with which those measures are supported.

There was a sensible decay of ecclesiastical authority during this period. The disgust which the laity had received from the numerous usurpations both of the court of Rome and of their own clergy, had very much weaned the kingdom from superstition; and strong symptoms appeared, from time to time, of a general desire to shake off the bondage of the Romish church. In the committee of eighteen, to whom Richard’s last parliament delegated their whole power, there is not the name of one ecclesiastic to be found; a neglect which is almost without example, while the Catholic religion subsisted in England. [2]

* Peruse, in this view, the Abridgment of the Records, by Sir Robert Cotton, during these two reigns.

* * See note Q, at the end of the volume.

The aversion entertained against the established church soon found principles, and tenets, and reasonings, by which it could justify and support itself. John Wickliffe, a secular priest, educated at Oxford, began in the latter end of Edward III. to spread the doctrine of reformation by his discourses, sermons, and writings; and he made many disciples among men of all ranks and stations. He seems to have been a man of parts and learning; and has the honor of being the first person in Europe that publicly called in question those principles which had universally passed for certain and undisputed during so many ages. Wickliffe himself, as well as his disciples, who received the name of Wickliffites, or Lollards, was distinguished by a great austerity of life and manners; a circumstance common to almost all those who dogmatize in any new way; both because men who draw to them the attention of the public, and expose themselves to the odium of great multitudes, are obliged to be very guarded in their conduct, and because few who have a strong propensity to pleasure or business, will enter upon so difficult and laborious an undertaking. The doctrines of Wickliffe being derived from his search into the Scriptures and into ecclesiastical antiquity, were nearly the same with those which were propagated by the reformers in the sixteenth century: he only carried some of them farther than was done by the more sober part of these reformers. He denied the doctrine of the real presence, the supremacy of the church of Rome, the merit of monastic vows: he maintained, that the Scriptures were the sole rule of faith; that the church was dependent on the state, and should be reformed by it; that the clergy ought to possess no estates; that the begging friars were a nuisance, and ought not to be supported; [1] that the numerous ceremonies of the church were hurtful to true piety: he asserted that oaths were unlawful, that dominion was founded in grace, that everything was subject to fate and destiny, and that all men were preordained either to eternal salvation or reprobation, [2] From the whole of his doctrines, Wickliffe appears to have been strongly tinctured with enthusiasm, and to have been thereby the better qualified to oppose a church whose chief characteristic is superstition.

* Walsing. , 208, 283, 284. Spel. Concil. vol. ii. p. 680.

* * Harpsfield, , 673, 674. Waldens. lib. iii. art. i. ca.

The propagation of these principles gave great alarm to the clergy; and a bull was issued by Pope Gregory XI. for taking Wickliffe into custody, and examining into the scope of his opinions. [1] Courteney, bishop of London, cited him before his tribunal; but the reformer had now acquired powerful protectors, who screened him from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The duke of Lancaster, who then governed the kingdom, encouraged the principles of Wickliffe; and he made no scruple, as well as Lord Piercy, the mareschal, to appear openly in court with him, in order to give him countenance upon his trial: he even insisted, that Wickliffe should sit in the bishop’s presence while his principles were examined: Courteney exclaimed against the insult: the Londoners, thinking their prelate affronted, attacked the duke and mareschal, who escaped from their hands with some difficulty. [2] And the populace, soon after, broke into the houses of both these noblemen, threatened their persons, and plundered their goods. The bishop of London had the merit of appeasing their fury and resentment.

The duke of Lancaster, however, still continued his protection to Wickliffe, during the minority of Richard; and the principles of that reformer had so far propagated themselves, that when the pope sent to Oxford a new bull against these doctrines, the university deliberated for some time whether they should receive the bull; and they never took any vigorous measures in consequence of the papal orders. [3] Even the populace of London were at length brought to entertain favorable sentiments of this reformer: when he was cited before a synod at Lambeth, they broke into the assembly, and so overawed the prelates, who found both the people and the court against them, that they dismissed him without any further censure.

* Spel. Concil. vol. ii. . Walsing. , 202, 203.

* * Harpsfield in Hist. Wickl. .

* * * Wood’s Ant. Oxon. lib. i. , etc. Walsing, p 201.

The clergy, we may well believe, were more wanting in power than in inclination to punish this new heresy which struck at all their credit, possessions, and authority. But there was hitherto no law in England by which the secular arm was authorized to support orthodoxy; and the ecclesiastics endeavored to supply the defect by an extraordinary and unwarrantable artifice. In the year 1381, there was an act passed, requiring sheriffs to apprehend the preachers of heresy and their abettors; but this statute had been surreptitiously obtained by the clergy, and had the formality of an enrolment without the consent of the commons. In the subsequent session, the lower house complained of the fraud; affirmed, that they had no intention to bind themselves to the prelates further than their ancestors had done before them; and required that the pretended statute should be repealed, which was done accordingly.* But it is remarkable, that notwithstanding this vigilance of the commons, the clergy had so much art and influence, that the repeal was suppressed, and the act, which never had any legal authority, remains to this day upon the statute book; [1] though the clergy still thought proper to keep it in reserve and not proceed to the immediate execution of it.

But besides this defect of power in the church, which saved Wickliffe, that reformer himself, notwithstanding his enthusiasm, seems not to have been actuated by the spirit of martyrdom; and in all subsequent trials before the prelates, he so explained away his doctrine by tortured meanings, as to render it quite innocent and inoffensive. [2] Most of his followers imitated his cautious disposition, and saved themselves either by recantations or explanations. He died of a palsy, in the year 1385, at his rectory of Lutterworth, in the county of Leicester; and the clergy, mortified that he should have escaped their vengeance, took care, besides assuring the people of his eternal damnation, to represent his last distemper as a visible judgment of Heaven upon him for his multiplied heresies and impieties. [3]

The proselytes, however, of Wickliffe’s opinions still increased in England: [4] some monkish writers represent one half of the kingdom as infected by those principles: they were carried over to Bohemia by some youth of that nation, who studied at Oxford: but though the age seemed strongly disposed to receive them, affairs were not yet fully ripe for this great revolution; and the finishing blow to ecclesiastical power was reserved to a period of more curiosity, literature, and inclination for novelties.

* Cotton's Abridg. .

* * 5 Richard II. cha.

* * * Walsing. . Knyghton, , 2656.

* * * * Knyghton, .

Meanwhile the English parliament continued to check the clergy and the court of Rome, by more sober and more legal expedients. They enacted anew the statute of "provisors," and affixed higher penalties to the transgression of it, which, in some instances, was even made capital. [1] The court of Rome had fallen upon a new device, which increased their authority over the prelates: the pope, who found that the expedient of arbitrarily depriving them was violent, and liable to opposition, attained the same end by transferring such of them as were obnoxious to poorer sees, and even to nominal sees, "in partibus infidelium." It was thus that the archbishop of York, and the bishops of Durham and Chichester, the king's ministers, had been treated after the prevalence of Glocester's faction: the bishop of Carlisle met with the same fate after the accession of Henry IV. For the pope always joined with the prevailing powers, when they did not thwart his pretensions. The parliament, in the reign of Richard, enacted a law against this abuse: and the king made a general remonstrance to the court of Rome against all those usurpations, which he calls "horrible excesses" of that court. [2]

It was usual for the church, that they might elude the mortmain act, to make their votaries leave lands in trust to certain persons, under whose name the clergy enjoyed the benefit of the bequest: the parliament also stopped the progress of this abuse. [3] In the seventeenth of the king, the commons prayed, "that remedy might be had against such religious persons as cause their villains to marry free women inheritable, whereby the estate comes to those religious hands by collusion.” [4] This was a new device of the clergy.

* 13 Richard II. ca. 16 Richard II. ca.

* * Rymer, vol. vii. .

* * * * Knyghton, , 38. Cotton, .

* * * * Cotton, .

The papacy was at this time somewhat weakened by a schism, which lasted during forty years, and gave great scandal to the devoted partisans of the holy see. After the pope had resided many years at Avignon, Gregory XI. was persuaded to return to Rome; and upon his death, which happened in 1380, the Romans, resolute to fix, for the future, the seat of the papacy in Italy, besieged the cardinals in the conclave, and compelled them, though they were mostly Frenchmen, to elect Urban VI., an Italian, into that high dignity. The French cardinals, as soon as they recovered their liberty, fled from Rome, and protesting against the forced election, chose Robert, son of the count of Geneva, who took the name of Clement VII., and resided at Avignon. All the Kingdoms of Christendom, according to their several interests and inclinations, were divided between these two pontiffs. The court of France adhered to Clement, and was followed by its allies, the king of Castile and the king of Scotland: England of course was thrown into the other party, and declared for Urban. Thus the appellation of Clementines and Urbanists distracted Europe for several years; and each party damned the other as schismatics, and as rebels to the true vicar of Christ. But this circumstance, though it weakened the papal authority, had not so great an effect as might naturally be imagined. Though any king could easily, at first, make his kingdom embrace the party of one pope or the other, or even keep it some time in suspense between them, he could not so easily transfer his obedience at pleasure: the people attached themselves to their own party, as to a religious opinion; and conceived an extreme abhorrence to the opposite party, whom they regarded as little better than Saracens, or infidels. Crusades were even undertaken in this quarrel; and the zealous bishop of Norwich, in particular, led over, in 1382 near sixty thousand bigots into Flanders against the Clementines; but after losing a great part of his followers, he returned with disgrace into England. [1] Each pope, sensible, from this prevailing spirit among the people, that the kingdom which once embraced his cause would always adhere to him, boldly maintained all the pretensions of his see, and stood not much more in awe of the temporal sovereigns, than if his authority had not been endangered by a rival.

We meet with this preamble to a law enacted at the very beginning of this reign: “Whereas divers persons of small garrison of land or other possessions do make great retinue of people, as well of esquires as of others, in many parts of the realm, giving to them hats and other livery of one suit by year taking again towards them the value of the same livery, or percase the double value, by such covenant and assurance, that every of them shall maintain other in all quarrels, be they reasonable or unreasonable, to the great mischief and oppression of the people, etc.” [2]

This preamble contains a true picture of the state of the kingdom. The laws had been so feebly executed, even during the long, active, and vigilant reign of Edward III., that no subject could trust to their protection. Men openly associated themselves, under the patronage of some great baron, for their mutual defence. They wore public badges, by which their confederacy was distinguished. They supported each other in all quarrels, iniquities, extortions, murders, robberies, and other crimes. Their chief was more their sovereign than the king himself; and their own band was more connected with them than their country. Hence the perpetual turbulence, disorders, factions, and civil wars of those times: hence the small regard paid to a character, or the opinion of the public: hence the large discretionary prerogatives of the crown, and the danger which might have ensued from the too great limitation of them. If the king had possessed no arbitrary powers, while all the nobles assumed and exercised them, there must have ensued an absolute anarchy in the state.

* Froissard, liv. i. cha, 134. Walsing. , 299, 300. etc. Knyghtor., .

* * I Richard, II. cha

One great mischief attending these confederacies was, the extorting from the king pardons for the most enormous crimes. The parliament often endeavored, in the last reign, to deprive the prince of this prerogative; but, in the present, they were content with an abridgment of it. They enacted, that no pardon for rapes, or for murder from malice prepense, should be valid, unless the crime were particularly specified in it. [1] There were also some other circumstances required for passing any pardon of this kind: an excellent law, but ill observed, like most laws that thwart the manners of the people, and the prevailing customs of the times.

* 13 Richard II. cha

It is easy to observe, from these voluntary associations among the people, that the whole force of the feudal system was in a manner dissolved, and that the English had nearly returned, in that particular, to the same situation in which they stood before the Norman conquest. It was, indeed, impossible that that system could long subsist under the perpetual revolutions to winch landed property is every where subject. When the great feudal baronies were first erected, the lord lived in opulence in the midst of his vassals: he was in a situation to protect, and cherish and defend them: the quality of patron naturally united itself to that of superior: and these two principles of authority mutually supported each other. But when by the various divisions and mixtures of property, a man’s superior came to live at a distance from him, and could no longer give him shelter or countenance, the tie gradually became more fictitious than real: new connections from vicinity or other causes were formed: protection was sought by voluntary services and attachment: the appearance of valor spirit, abilities in any great man, extended his interest very far, and if the sovereign were deficient in these qualities, he was no less, if not more exposed to the usurpations of the aristocracy, than even during the vigor of the feudal system.

The greatest novelty introduced into the civil government during this reign was the creation of peers by patent. Lord Beauchamp, of Holt, was the first peer that was advanced to the house of lords in this manner. The practice of levying benevolences is also first mentioned in the present reign. This prince lived in a more magnificent manner than perhaps any of his predecessors or successors. His household consisted of ten thousand persons: he had three hundred in his kitchen; and all the other offices were furnished in proportion. [1] It must be remarked, that this enormous train had tables supplied them at the king’s expense, according to the mode of that age. Such prodigality was probably the source of many exactions by purveyors, and was one chief reason of the public discontents.

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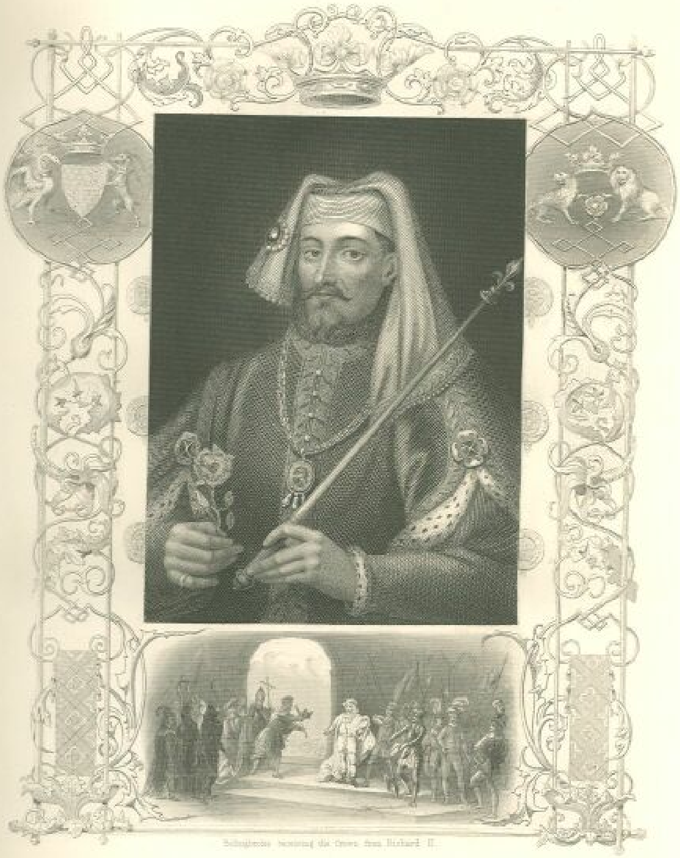
* Harding: this poet says, that he speaks from the authority of a clerk of the green cloth.

CHAPTER XVIII.



Bolingbroke receiving the Crown from Richard II.

HENRY IV.

From a Picture at Hampton Court, Herefordshire.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE.

HENRY IV

1399.

The English had so long been familiarized to the hereditary succession of their monarchs, the instances of departure from it had always borne such strong symptoms of injustice and violence, and so little of a national choice or election, and the returns to the true line had ever been deemed such fortunate incidents in their history, that Henry was afraid, lest, in resting his title on the consent of the people, he should build on a foundation to which the people themselves were not accustomed, and whose solidity they would with difficulty be brought to recognize. The idea too of choice seemed always to imply that of conditions, and a right of recalling the consent upon any supposed violation of them; an idea which was not naturally agreeable to a sovereign, and might in England be dangerous to the subjects, who, lying so much under the influence of turbulent nobles, had ever paid but an imperfect obedience even to their hereditary princes. For these reasons Henry was determined never to have recourse to this claim; the only one on which his authority could consistently stand: he rather chose to patch up his title, in the best manner he could, from other pretensions: and in the end, he left himself, in the eyes of men of sense, no ground of right but his present possession; a very precarious foundation, which, by its very nature, was liable to be overthrown by every faction of the great, or prejudice of the people. He had indeed a present advantage over his competitor: the heir of the house of Mortimer, who had been declared in parliament heir to the crown, was a boy of seven years of age: [1] his friends consulted his safety by keeping silence with regard to his title: Henry detained him and his younger brother in an honorable custody at Windsor Castle.

* Dugdale, vol. i. .

But he had reason to dread that, in proportion as that nobleman grew to man’s estate, he would draw to him the attachment of the people, and make them reflect on the fraud, violence, and injustice by which he had been excluded from the throne. Many favorable topics would occur in his behalf: he was a native of England; possessed an extensive interest from the greatness and alliances of his family; however criminal the deposed monarch, this youth was entirely innocent; he was of the same religion, and educated in the same manners with the people, and could not be governed by any separate interest: these views would all concur to favor his claim; and though the abilities of the present prince might ward off any dangerous revolution, it was justly to be apprehended, that his authority could with difficulty be brought to equal that of his predecessors.

Henry, in his very first parliament, had reason to see the danger attending that station which he had assumed, and the obstacles which he would meet with in governing an unruly aristocracy, always divided by faction, and at present inflamed with the resentments consequent on such recent convulsions. The peers, on their assembling, broke out into violent animosities against each other; forty gauntlets, the pledges of furious battle, were thrown on the floor of the house by noblemen who gave mutual challenges; and “liar” and “traitor” resounded from all quarters. The king had so much authority with these doughty champions, as to prevent all the combats which they threatened; but he was not able to bring them to a proper composure, or to an amicable disposition towards each other.

1400.

It was not long before these passions broke into action. The earls of Rutland, Kent, and Huntingdon, and Lord Spenser, who were now degraded from the respective titles of Albemarle, Surrey, Exeter, and Glocester, conferred on them by Richard, entered into a conspiracy, together with the earl of Salisbury and Lord Lumley, for raising an insurrection, and for seizing the king’s person at Windsor; [1] but the treachery of Rutland gave him warning of the danger. He suddenly withdrew to London; and the conspirators, who came to Windsor with a body of five hundred horse, found that they had missed this blow, on which all the success of their enterprise depended.

* Walsing. . Otterborne. .

Henry appeared, next day, at Kingston upon Thames, at the head of twenty thousand men, mostly drawn from the city; and his enemies, unable to resist his power, dispersed themselves, with a view of raising their followers in the several counties which were the seat of their interest. But the adherents of the king were hot in the pursuit, and every where opposed themselves to their progress. The earls of Kent and Salisbury were seized at Cirencester by the citizens, and were next day beheaded without further ceremony, according to the custom of the times. [1] The citizens of Bristol treated Spenser and Lumley in the same manner. The earl of Huntingdon, Sir Thomas Blount, and Sir Benedict Sely, who were also taken prisoners, suffered death, with many others of the conspirators, by orders from Henry. And when the quarters of these unhappy men were brought to London, no less than eighteen bishops and thirty-two mitred abbots joined the populace, and met them with the most indecent marks of joy and exultation.

But the spectacle the most shocking to every one, who retained any sentiment either of honor or humanity, still remained. The earl of Rutland appeared, carrying on a pole the head of Lord Spenser, his brother-in-law, which he presented in triumph to Henry as a testimony of his loyalty. This infamous man, who was soon after duke of York by the death of his father, and first prince of the blood, had been instrumental in the murder of his uncle, the duke of Glocester; [2] had then deserted Richard, by whom he was trusted; had conspired against the life of Henry, to whom he had sworn allegiance; had betrayed his associates, whom he had seduced into this enterprise; and now displayed, in the face of the world, these badges of his multiplied dishonor.

* Walsing. . Ypod. Neust. .

* * Dugdale, vol. ii. .

1401.

Henry was sensible that, though the execution of these conspirators might seem to give security to his throne, the animosities which remain after such bloody scenes, are always dangerous to royal authority; and he therefore determined not to increase, by any hazardous enterprise, those numerous enemies with whom he was every where environed. While a subject, he was believed to have strongly imbibed all the principles of his father, the duke of Lancaster, and to have adopted the prejudices which the Lollards inspired against the abuses of the established church: but finding, himself possessed of the throne by so precarious a title, he thought superstition a necessary implement of public authority; and he resolved, by every expedient, to pay court to the clergy. There were hitherto no penal laws enacted against heresy; an indulgence which had proceeded, not from a spirit of toleration in the Romish church, but from the ignorance and simplicity of the people, which had rendered them unfit either for starting or receiving any new or curious doctrines, and which needed not to be restrained by rigorous penalties. But when the learning and genius of Wickliffe had once broken, in some measure, the fetters of prejudice, the ecclesiastics called aloud for the punishment of his disciples; and the king, who was very little scrupulous in his conduct, was easily induced to sacrifice his principles to his interest, and to acquire the favor of the church by that most effectual method, the gratifying of their vengeance against opponents. He engaged the parliament to pass a law for that purpose: it was enacted, that when any heretic, who relapsed, or refused to abjure his opinions, was delivered over to the secular arm by the bishop or his commissaries, he should be committed to the flames by the civil magistrate before the whole people. [1] This weapon did not long remain unemployed in the hands of the clergy: William Sautré, rector of St. Osithes in London, had been condemned by the convocation of Canterbury; his sentence was ratified by the house of peers; the king issued his writ for the execution; [2] and the unhappy man atoned for his erroneous opinions by the penalty of fire. This is the first instance of that kind in England; and thus one horror more was added to those dismal scenes which at that time were already but too familiar to the people.

But the utmost precaution and prudence of Henry could not shield him from those numerous inquietudes which assailed him from every quarter. The connections of Richard with the royal family of France, made that court exert its activity to recover his authority, or revenge his death. [3]

* 2 Henry IV. chap. vii.

* * Rymer, vol. viii. .

* * * Rymer, vol. viii. .

But though the confusions in England tempted the French to engage in some enterprise by which they might distress their ancient enemy, the greater confusions which they experienced at home, obliged them quickly to accommodate matters; and Charles, content with recovering his daughter from Henry's hands, laid aside his preparations, and renewed the truce between the kingdoms. [1] The attack of Guienne was also an inviting attempt, which the present factions that prevailed among the French obliged them to neglect. The Gascons, affectionate to the memory of Richard, who was born among them, refused to swear allegiance to a prince that had dethroned and murdered him; and the appearance of a French army on their frontiers would probably have tempted them to change masters. [2] But the earl of Worcester, arriving with some English troops, gave countenance to the partisans of Henry, and overawed their opponents. Religion too was here found a cement to their union with England. The Gascons had been engaged by Richard's authority to acknowledge the pope of Rome; and they were sensible that, if they submitted to France, it would be necessary for them to pay obedience to the pope of Avignon, whom they had been taught to detest as a schismatic. Their principles on this head were too fast rooted to admit of any sudden or violent alteration.

The revolution in England proved likewise the occasion of an insurrection in Wales. Owen Glendour, or Glendourduy, descended from the ancient princes of that country, had become obnoxious on account of his attachment to Richard: and Reginald, Lord Gray of Ruthyn, who was closely connected with the new king, and who enjoyed a great fortune in the marches of Wales, thought the opportunity favorable for oppressing his neighbor, and taking possession of his estate. [3] Glendour, provoked at the injustice, and still more at the indignity, recovered possession by the sword; [4] Henry sent assistance to Gray; [5] the Welsh took part with Glendour: a troublesome and tedious war was kindled, which Glendour long sustained by his valor and activity, aided by the natural strength of the country, and the untamed spirit of its inhabitants.

* Rymer, vol. viii. , 152, 219.

* * Rymer, vol. viii. , 111.

* * * Vita Ric. Sec. , 172

* * * * Walsing, .

As Glendour committed devastations promiscuously on all the English, he infested the estate of the earl of Marche; and Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to that nobleman, led out the retainers of the family, and gave battle to the Welsh chieftain: his troops were routed, and he was taken prisoner: [1] at the same time, the earl himself, who had been allowed to retire to his castle of Wigmore, and who, though a mere boy, took the field with his followers, fell also into Glendour's hands, and was carried by him into Wales. [2] As Henry dreaded and hated all the family of Marche, he allowed the earl to remain in captivity; and though that young nobleman was nearly allied to the Piercies, to whose assistance he himself had owed his crown, he refused to the earl of Northumberland permission to treat of his ransom with Glendour.

The uncertainty in which Henry's affairs stood during a long time with France, as well as the confusions incident to all great changes in government, tempted the Scots to make incursions into England; and Henry, desirous of taking revenge upon them, but afraid of rendering his new government unpopular by requiring great supplies from his subjects, summoned at Westminster a council of the peers, without the commons, and laid before them the state of his affairs. [3] The military part of the feudal constitution was now much decayed: there remained only so much of that fabric as affected the civil rights and properties of men: and the peers here undertook, but voluntarily, to attend the king in an expedition against Scotland, each of them at the head of a certain number of his retainers. [4] Henry conducted this army to Edinburgh, of which he easily made himself master; and he there summoned Robert III. to do homage to him for his crown. [5] But finding that the Scots would neither submit nor give him battle, he returned in three weeks, after making this useless bravado; and he disbanded his army.

1402.

In the subsequent season, Archibald, earl of Douglas, at the head of twelve thousand men, and attended by many of the principal nobility of Scotland, made an irruption into England, and committed devastations on the northern counties. On his return home, he was overtaken by the Piercies, at Homeldom, on the borders of England, and a fierce battle ensued, where the Scots were totally routed. Douglas himself was taken prisoner; as was Mordác, earl of Fife, son of the duke of Albany, and nephew of the Scottish king, with the earls of Angus, Murray, and Orkney, and many others of the gentry and nobility. [6] | When Henry received intelligence of this victory, he sent the earl of Northumberland orders not to ransom his prisoners, which that nobleman regarded as his right by the laws of war received in that age. The king intended to detain them, that he might be able by their means to make an advantageous peace with Scotland; but by this policy he gave a fresh disgust to the family of Piercy.

* Dugdale, vol. i. .

* * Dugdale, vol. i. .

* * * Rymer, vol. viii. , 126.

* * * * Rymer, Vol. viii. p.. 125.

* * * * * * Walsing . Vita Ric. Sec . Chron. Otterborne. .

1403.

The obligations which Henry had owed to Northumberland, were of a kind the most likely to produce ingratitude on the one side, and discontent on the other. The sovereign naturally became jealous of that power which had advanced him to the throne; and the subject was not easily satisfied in the returns which he thought so great a favor had merited. Though Henry, on his accession, had bestowed the office of constable on Northumberland for life, [1] and conferred other gifts on that family, these favors were regarded as their due; the refusal of any other request was deemed an injury.

* Rymer, vol. viii. .

The impatient spirit of Harry Piercy, and the factious disposition of the earl of Worcester, younger brother of Northumberland, inflamed the discontents of that nobleman; and the precarious title of Henry tempted him to seek revenge, by overturning that throne which he had at first established. He entered into a correspondence with Glendour: he gave liberty to the earl of Douglas, and made an alliance with that martial chief: he roused up all his partisans to arms; and such unlimited authority at that time belonged to the great families, that the same men, whom, a few years before, he had conducted against Richard, now followed his standard in opposition to Henry. When war was ready to break out, Northumberland was seized with a sudden illness at Berwick: and young Piercy, taking the command of the troops, marched towards Shrewsbury, in order to join his forces with those of Glendour, The king had happily a small army on foot, with which he had intended to act against the Scots; and knowing the importance of celerity in all civil wars, he instantly hurried down, that he might give battle to the rebels. He approached Piercy near Shrewsbury, before that nobleman was joined by Glendour; and the policy of one leader, and impatience of the other, made them hasten to a general engagement.

The evening before the battle, Piercy sent a manifesto to Henry, in which he renounced his allegiance, set that prince at defiance, and, in the name of his father and uncle, as well as his own, enumerated all the grievances of which, he pretended, the nation had reason to complain; He upbraided him with the perjury of which he had been guilty, when, on landing at Ravenspur, he had sworn upon the Gospels, before the earl of Northumberland, that he had no other intension than to recover the duchy of Lancaster, and that he would ever remain a faithful subject to King Richard. He aggravated his guilt in first dethroning, then murdering that prince, and in usurping on the title of the house of Mortimer, to whom, both by lineal succession, and by declarations of parliament, the throne, when vacant by Richard’s demise, did of right belong. He complained of his cruel policy in allowing the young earl of Marche, whom he ought to regard as his sovereign, to remain a captive in the hands of his enemies, and in even refusing to all his friends permission to treat of his ransom; He charged him again with perjury in loading the nation with heavy taxes, after having sworn that, without the utmost necessity, he would never levy any impositions upon them. And he reproached him with the arts employed in procuring favorable elections into parliament; arts which he himself had before imputed as a crime to Richard, and which he had made one chief reason of that prince's arraignment and deposition. [1] This manifesto was well calculated to inflame the quarrel between the parties: the bravery of the two leaders promised an obstinate engagement; and the equality of the armies, being each about twelve thousand men, a number which was not unmanageable by the commanders, gave reason to expect a great effusion of blood on both sides, and a very doubtful issue to the combat.

We shall scarcely find any battle in those ages where the shock was more terrible and more constant. Henry exposed his person in the thickest of the fight: his gallant son, whose military achievements were afterwards so renowned, and who here performed his novitiate in arms, signalized himself on his father's footsteps; and even a wound, which he received in the face with tin arrow, could not oblige him to quit the field. [2]

* Hall, fol. 21, 22, etc.

* * T. Livii,

Piercy supported that fame which he had acquired in many a bloody combat. And Douglas, his ancient enemy, and now his friend, still appeared his rival amidst the horror and confusion of the day. This nobleman performed feats of valor which are almost incredible: he seemed determined that the king of England should that day fall by his arm: he sought him all over the field of battle: and as Henry, either to elude the attacks of the enemy upon his person, or to encourage his own men by the belief of his presence every where, had accoutred several captains in the royal garb, the sword of Douglas rendered this honor fatal to many. [1] But while the armies were contending in this furious manner, the death of Piercy, by an unknown hand, decided the victory, and the royalists prevailed. There are said to have fallen that day on both sides near two thousand three hundred gentlemen; but the persons of greatest distinction were on the king's; the earl of Stafford, Sir Hugh Shirley, Sir Nicholas Gausel, Sir Hugh Mortimer, Sir John Massey, Sir John Calverly. About six thousand private men perished, of whom two thirds were of Piercy's army. [2] The earls of Worcester and Douglas were taken prisoners: the former was beheaded at Shrewsbury; the latter was treated with the courtesy due to his rank and merit.

The earl of Northumberland, having recovered from his sickness, had levied a fresh army, and was on his march to join his son; but being opposed by the earl of Westmoreland, and hearing of the defeat at Shrewsbury, he dismissed his forces, and came with a small retinue to the king at York. [3] He pretended that his sole intention in arming was to mediate between the parties: Henry thought proper to accept of the apology, and even granted him a pardon for his offence: all the other rebels were treated with equal lenity; and, except the earl of Worcester and Sir Richard Vernon, who were regarded as the chief authors of the insurrection, no person engaged in this dangerous enterprise seems to have perished by the hands of the executioner. [4]

* Walsing. , 367. Hall, fol. 22.

* * Chron. Otterborne, . Ypod. Neust. .

* * * Chron. Otterborne, .

* * * * Rymer, vol. viii. .

1405.

But Northumberland, though he had been pardoned, knew that he never should be trusted, and that he was too powerful to be cordially forgiven by a prince whose situation gave him such reasonable grounds of jealousy. It was the effect either of Henry’s vigilance or good fortune, or of the narrow genius of his enemies, that no proper concert was ever formed among them: they rose in rebellion one after another; and thereby afforded him an opportunity of suppressing singly those insurrections which, had they been united, might have proved fatal to his authority. The earl of Nottingham, son of the duke of Norfolk, and the archbishop of York, brother to the earl of Wiltshire, whom Henry, then duke of Lancaster, had beheaded at Bristol, though they had remained quiet while Piercy was in the field, still harbored in their breast a violent hatred against the enemy of their families; and they determined, in conjunction with the earl of Northumberland, to seek revenge against him. They betook themselves to arms before that powerful nobleman was prepared to join them; and publishing a manifesto, in which they reproached Henry with his usurpation of the crown and the murder of the late king, they required that the right line should be restored, and all public grievances be redressed. The earl of Westmoreland, whose power lay in the neighborhood, approached them with an inferior force at Shipton, near York; and being afraid to hazard an action, he attempted to subdue them by a stratagem, which nothing but the greatest folly and simplicity on their part could have rendered successful. He desired a conference with the archbishop and earl between the armies: he heard their grievances with great patience: he begged them to propose the remedies: he approved of every expedient which they suggested: he granted them all their demands: he also engaged that Henry should give them entire satisfaction: and when he saw them pleased with the facility of his concessions, he observed to them, that, since amity was now in effect restored between them, it were better on both sides to dismiss their forces, which otherwise would prove an insupportable burden to the country. The archbishop and the earl of Nottingham immediately gave directions to that purpose: their troops disbanded upon the field: but Westmoreland, who had secretly issued contrary orders to his army, seized the two rebels without resistance, and carried them to the king, who was advancing with hasty marches to suppress the insurrection. [1]

* Walsing. . Otterborne, p 255.

The trial and punishment of an archbishop might have proved a troublesome and dangerous undertaking, had Henry proceeded regularly, and allowed time for an opposition to form itself against that unusual measure: the celerity of the execution alone could here render it safe and prudent. Finding that Sir William Gascoigne, the chief justice, made some scruple of acting on this occasion, he appointed Sir William Fulthorpe for judge; who, without any indictment, trial, or defence pronounced sentence of death upon the prelate which was presently executed. This was the first instance in England of a capital punishment inflicted on a bishop; whence the clergy of that rank might learn that their crimes, more than those of laies, were not to pass with impunity. The earl of Nottingham was condemned and executed in the same summary manner: but though many other persons of condition, such as Lord Falconberg, Sir Ralph Hastings, Sir

John Colville, were engaged in this rebellion, no others seem to have fallen victims to Henry’s severity.

The earl of Northumberland, on receiving this intelligence, fled into Scotland, together with Lord Bardolf; [1] and the king, without opposition, reduced all the castles and fortresses belonging to these noblemen. He thence turned his arms against Glendour, over whom his son, the prince of Wales, had attained some advantages; but that enemy, more troublesome than dangerous, still found means of defending himself in his fastnesses, and of eluding, though not resisting, all the force of England.

1407.

In a subsequent season, the earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolf, impatient of their exile, entered the north, in hopes of raising the people to arms; but found the country in such a posture as rendered all their attempts unsuccessful. Sir Thomas Rokesby, sheriff of Yorkshire, levied some forces, attacked the invaders at Bramham, and gained a victory, in which both Northumberland and Bardolf were slain.* * This prosperous event, joined to the death of Glendour, which happened soon after, freed Henry from all his domestic enemies; and this prince, who had mounted the throne by such unjustifiable means, and held it by such an exceptionable title, had yet, by his valor, prudence, and address, accustomed the people to the yoke, and had obtained a greater ascendant over his haughty barons, than the law alone, not supported by these active qualities, was ever able to confer.

* Walsing. .

* * Walsing, . Chron. Otterb. .

About the same time, fortune gave Henry an advantage over that neighbor, who, by his situation, was most enabled to disturb his government. Robert III., king of Scots, was a prince, though of slender capacity, extremely innocent and inoffensive in his conduct: but Scotland, at that time, was still less fitted than England for cherishing, or even enduring sovereigns of that character. The duke of Albany, Robert’s brother, a prince of more abilities, at least of a more boisterous and violent disposition, had assumed the government of the state; and, not satisfied with present authority, he entertained the criminal purpose of extirpating his brother’s children, and of acquiring the crown to his own family. He threw in prison David, his eldest nephew; who there perished by hunger: James alone, the younger brother of David, stood between that tyrant and the throne; and King Robert, sensible of his son’s danger, embarked him on board a ship, with a view of sending him to France, and intrusting him to the protection of that friendly power. Unfortunately, the vessel was taken by the English; Prince James, a boy about nine years of age, was carried to London; and though there subsisted at that time a truce between the kingdoms, Henry refused to restore the young prince to his liberty. Robert, worn out with cares and infirmities, was unable to bear the shock of this last misfortune; and he soon after died, leaving the government in the hands of the duke of Albany. [1] Henry was now more sensible than ever of the importance of the acquisition which he had made: while he retained such a pledge, he was sure of keeping the duke of Albany in dependence; or, if offended, he could easily, by restoring the true heir, take ample revenge upon the usurper. But though the king, by detaining James in the English court, had shown himself somewhat deficient in generosity, he made ample amends by giving that prince an excellent education, which afterwards qualified him, when he mounted the throne, to reform in some measure the rude and barbarous manners of his native country.

* Buchanan, lib. x.

The hostile dispositions which of late had prevailed between France and England, were restrained, during the greater part of this reign, from appearing in action. The jealousies and civil commotions with which both nations were disturbed, kept each of them from taking advantage of the unhappy situation of its neighbor. But as the abilities and good fortune of Henry had sooner been able to compose the English factions, this prince began, in the latter part of his reign, to look abroad, and to foment the animosities between the families of Burgundy and Orleans, by which the government of France was, during that period, so much distracted. He knew that one great source of the national discontent against his predecessor was the inactivity of his reign; and he hoped, by giving a new direction to the restless and unquiet spirits of his people, to prevent their breaking out in domestic wars and disorders.

1411.

That he might unite policy with force, he first entered into treaty with the duke of Burgundy, and sent that prince a small body of troops, which supported him against his enemies. [1] Soon after, he hearkened to more advantageous proposals made him by the duke of Orleans, and despatched a greater body to support that party.

1412.

But the leaders of the opposite factions having made a temporary accommodation, the interests of the English were sacrificed; and this effort of Henry proved, in the issue, entirely vain and fruitless. The declining state of his health, and the shortness of his reign, prevented him from renewing the attempt, which his more fortunate son carried to so great a length against the French monarchy.

Such were the military and foreign transactions of this reign: the civil and parliamentary are somewhat more memorable, and more worthy of our attention. During the two last reigns, the elections of the commons had appeared a circumstance of government not to be neglected; and Richard was even accused of using unwarrantable methods for procuring to his partisans a seat in that house. This practice formed one considerable article of charge against him in his deposition; yet Henry scrupled not to tread in his footsteps, and to encourage the same abuses in elections. Laws were enacted against such undue influence; and even a sheriff was punished for an iniquitous return which he had made: [2] but laws were commonly at that time very ill executed; and the liberties of the people, such as they were, stood on a surer basis than on laws and parliamentary elections.

* Walsing. .

* * Cotton, .

Though the house of commons was little able to withstand the violent currents which perpetually ran between the monarchy and the aristocracy, and though that house might easily be brought, at a particular time, to make the most unwarrantable concessions to either, the general institutions of the state still remained invariable; the interests of the several members continued on the same footing; the sword was in the hands af the subject; and the government, though thrown into temporary disorder, soon settled itself on its ancient foundations.

During the greater part of this reign, the king was obliged to court popularity; and the house of commons, sensible of their own importance, began to assume powers which had not usually been exercised by their predecessors. In the first year of Henry, they procured a law, that no judge, in concurring with any iniquitous measure, should be excused by pleading the orders of the king, or even the danger of his* own life from the menaces of the sovereign. [1] In the second year, they insisted on maintaining the practice of not granting any supply before they received an answer to their petitions, which was a tacit manner of bargaining with the prince. [2] In the fifth year, they desired the king to remove from his household four persons who had displeased them, among whom was his own confessor, and Henry, though he told them that he knew of no offence which these men had committed, yet, in order to gratify them, complied with their request. [3] In the sixth year, they voted the king supplies, but appointed treasurers of their own, to see the money disbursed for the purposes intended, and required them to deliver in their accounts to the house. [4] In the eighth year, they proposed, for the regulation of the government and household, thirty important articles, which were all agreed to; and they even obliged all the members of council, all the judges, and all the officers of the household, to swear to the observance of them. [5] The abridger of the records remarks the unusual liberties taken by the speaker and the house during this period. [6] But the great authority of the commons was but a temporary advantage, arising from the present situation. In a subsequent parliament, when the speaker made his customary application to the throne for liberty of speech, the king, having now overcome all his domestic difficulties, plainly told him that he would have no novelties introduced, and would enjoy his prerogatives. But on the whole, the limitations of the government seem to have been more sensibly felt, and more carefully maintained, by Henry than by any of his predecessors.

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, .

* * * Cotton, .

* * * * Cotton, .

* * * * * * Cotton, p 462.

During this reign, when the house of commons were at any time brought to make unwary concessions to the crown they also showed their freedom by a speedy retractation of them. Henry, though he entertained a perpetual and well grounded jealousy of the family of Mortimer, allowed not their name to be once mentioned in parliament; and as none of the rebels had ventured to declare the earl of Marche king, he never attempted to procure, what would not have been refused him, an express declaration against the claim of that nobleman; because he knew that such a declaration, in the present circumstances, would have no authority, and would only serve to revive the memory of Mortimer’s title in the minds of the people. He proceeded in his purpose after a more artful and covert manner. He procured a settlement of the crown on himself and his heirs male, [1] thereby tacitly excluding the females, and transferring the Salic law into the English government. He thought that, though the house of Plantagenet had at first derived their title from a female, this was a remote event, unknown to the generality of the people; and if he could once accustom them to the practice of excluding women, the title of the earl of Marche would gradually be forgotten and neglected by them. But he was very unfortunate in this attempt. During the long contests with France, the injustice of the Salic law had been so much exclaimed against by the nation, that a contrary principle had taken deep root in the minds of men; and it was now become impossible to eradicate it. The same house of commons, therefore, in a subsequent session, apprehensive that they had overturned the foundations of the English government, and that they had opened the door to more civil wars than might ensue even from the irregular elevation of the house of Lancaster, applied with such earnestness for a new settlement of the crown, that Henry yielded to their request, and agreed to the succession of the princesses of his family; [2] a certain proof that nobody was, in his heart, satisfied with the king’s title to the crown, or knew on what principle to rest it.

But though the commons, during this reign, showed a laudable zeal for liberty in their transactions with the crown, their efforts against the church were still more extraordinary, and seemed to anticipate very much the spirit which became so general in little more than a century afterwards. I know that the credit of these passages rests entirely on one ancient historian; [3] but that historian was contemporary, was a clergyman, and it was contrary to the interests of his order to preserve the memory of such transactions, much more to forge precedents which posterity might some time be tempted to imitate.

* Cotton, .

* * Rymer, vol. viii. .

* * * Walsingham.

This is a truth so evident, that the most likely way of accounting for the silence of the records on this head, is by supposing that the authority of some churchmen was so great as to procure a razure, with regard to these circumstances, which the indiscretion of one of that order has happily preserved to us.

In the sixth of Henry, the commons, who had been required to grant supplies, proposed in plain terms to the king, that he should seize all the temporalities of the church, and employ them as a perpetual fund to serve the exigencies of the state. They insisted that the clergy possessed a third of the lands of the kingdom; that they contributed nothing to the public burdens; and that their riches tended only to disqualify them from performing their ministerial functions with proper zeal and attention. When this address was presented, the archbishop of Canterbury, who then attended the king, objected that the clergy, though they went not in person to the wars, sent their vassals and tenants in all cases of necessity; while at the same time they themselves, who staid at home, were employed night and day in offering up their prayers for the happiness and prosperity of the state. The speaker smiled, and answered without reserve, that he thought the prayers of the church but a very slender supply. The archbishop, however, prevailed in the dispute; the king discouraged the application of the commons; and the lords rejected the bill which the lower house had framed for stripping the church of her revenues. [1]

* Walsing. . Ypod. Neust. .

The commons were not discouraged by this repulse: in the eleventh of the king, they returned to the charge with more zeal than before: they made a calculation of all the ecclesiastical revenues, which, by their account, amounted to four hundred and eighty-five thousand marks a year, and contained eighteen thousand four hundred ploughs of land. They proposed to divide this property among fifteen new earls, one thousand five hundred knights, six thousand esquires, and a hundred hospitals, besides twenty thousand pounds a year, which the king might take for his own use; and they insisted, that the clerical functions would be better performed than at present by fifteen thousand parish priests, paid at the rate of seven marks apiece of yearly stipend. [1] This application was accompanied with an address for mitigating the statutes enacted against the Lollards, which shows from what source the address came. The king gave the commons a severe reply and further to satisfy the church, and to prove that he was quite in earnest, he ordered a Lollard to be burned before the dissolution of the parliament. [2]

* Walsing. . Tit. Livius.

* * Rymer, vol. viii. . Otterborne> .

1413.

We have now related almost all the memorable transactions of this reign, which was busy and active, but produced few events that deserve to be transmitted to posterity. The king was so much employed in defending his crown, which he had obtained by unwarrantable means, and possessed by a bad title, that he had little leisure to look abroad, or perform any action which might redound to the honor and advantage of the nation. His health declined some months before his death; he was subject to fits, which bereaved him, for the time, of his senses; and though he was yet in the flower of his age, his end was visibly approaching. He expired at

Westminster, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the thirteenth of his reign.

The great popularity which Henry enjoyed before he attained the crown, and which had so much aided him in the acquisition of it, was entirely lost many years before the end of his reign; and he governed his people more by terror than by affection, more by his own policy than by their sense of duty or allegiance. When men came to reflect, in cool blood, on the crimes which had led him to the throne; the rebellion against his prince; the deposition of a lawful king, guilty sometimes, perhaps, of oppression, but more frequently of indiscretion; the exclusion of the true heir; the murder of his sovereign and near relation; these were such enormities as drew on him the hatred of his subjects, sanctified all the rebellions against him, and made the executions, though not remarkably severe, which he found necessary for the maintenance of his authority, appear cruel as well as iniquitous to the people. Yet, without pretending to apologize for these crimes, which must ever be held in detestation, it may be remarked, that he was insensibly led into this blamable conduct by a train of incidents which few men possess virtue enough to withstand. The injustice with which his predecessor had treated him, in first condemning him to banishment, then despoiling him of his patrimony, made him naturally think of revenge, and of recovering his lost rights; the headlong zeal of the people hurried him into the throne; the care of his own security, as well as his ambition, made him a usurper; and the steps have always been so few between the prisons of princes and their graves, that we need not wonder that Richard’s fate was no exception to the general rule. All these considerations make Henry’s situation, if he retained any sense of virtue, much to be lamented; and the inquietude with which he possessed his envied greatness, and the remorses by which, it is said, he was continually haunted, render him an object of our pity, even when seated upon the throne. But it must be owned, that his prudence, and vigilance, and foresight, in maintaining his power, were admirable; his command of temper remarkable; his courage, both military and political, without blemish; and he possessed many qualities which fitted him for his high station, and which rendered his usurpation of it, though pernicious in after times, rather salutary, during his own reign, to the English nation.

Henry was twice married: by his first wife, Mary deBohun, daughter and coheir of the earl of Hereford, he had four sons, Henry, his successor in the throne, Thomas, duke of Clarence, John, duke of Bedford, and Humphrey, duke of Glocester: and two daughters, Blanche and Philippa; the former married to the duke of Bavaria, the latter to the king of Denmark. His second wife, Jane, whom he married after he was king, and who was daughter of the king of Navarre, and widow of the duke of Brittany, brought him no issue.

By an act of the fifth of this reign, it is made felony to cut out any person’s tongue, or put out his eyes; crimes which, the act says, were very frequent. This savage spirit of revenge denotes a barbarous people; though, perhaps, it was increased by the prevailing factions and civil commotions.

Commerce was very little understood in this reign, as in all the preceding. In particular, a great jealousy prevailed against merchant strangers; and many restraints were by law imposed upon them; namely, that they should lay out in English manufactures or commodities all the money acquired by the sale of their goods; that they should not buy or sell with one another; and that all their goods should be disposed of three months after importation. [1]

* 4 Henry IV. ca, and 5 Henry IV. ca.

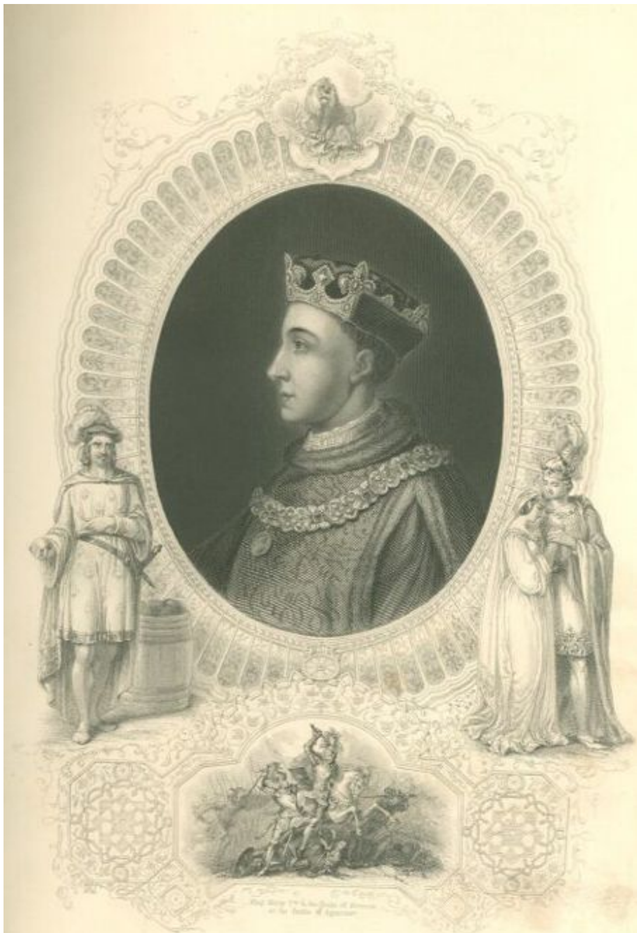
This last clause was found so inconvenient, that it was soon after repealed by parliament.

It appears that the expense of this king’s household amounted to the yearly sum of nineteen thousand five hundred pounds, money of that age. [1]

* Rymer, tom. viii. .

Guicciardin tells us, that the Flemings in this century learned from Italy all the refinements in arts, which they taught the rest of Europe. The progress, however, of the arts was still very slow and backward in England.

CHAPTER XIX.



HENRY V.

From a Picture in Kensington Palace

HENRY V.

1413.

THE many jealousies to which Henry IV.’s situation naturally exposed him, had so infected his temper, that he had entertained unreasonable suspicions with regard to the fidelity of his eldest son; and during the latter years of his life, he had excluded that prince from all share in public business, and was even displeased to see him at the head of armies, where his martial talents, though useful to the support of government, acquired him a renown, which he thought might prove dangerous to his own authority. The active spirit of young Henry, restrained from its proper exercise, broke out into extravagances of every kind; and the riot of pleasure, the frolic of debauchery, the outrage of wine, filled the vacancies of a mind better adapted to the pursuits of ambition and the cares of government. This course of life threw him among companions, whose disorders, if accompanied with spirit and humor, he indulged and seconded; and he was detected in many sallies, which, to severer eyes, appeared totally unworthy of his rank and station. There even remains a tradition that, when heated with liquor and jollity, he scrupled not to accompany his riotous associates in attacking the passengers on the streets and highways, and despoiling them of their goods; and he found an amusement in the incidents which the terror and regret of these defenceless people produced on such occasions. This extreme of dissoluteness proved equally disagreeable to his father, as that eager application to business which had at first given him occasion of jealousy; and he saw in his son’s behavior the same neglect of decency, the same attachment to low company, which had degraded the personal character of Richard, and which, more than all his errors in government, had tended to overturn his throne. But the nation in general considered the young prince with more indulgence; and observed so many gleams of generosity, spirit, and magnanimity, breaking continually through the cloud which a wild conduct threw over his character, that they never ceased hoping for his amendment; and they ascribed all the weeds, which shot up in that rich soil, to the want of proper culture and attention in the king and his ministers. There happened an incident which encouraged these agreeable views, and gave much occasion for favorable reflections to all men of sense and candor. A riotous companion of the prince’s had been indicted before Gascoigne, the chief justice, for some disorders; and Henry was not ashamed to appear at the bar with the criminal, in order to give him countenance and protection. Finding that his presence had not overawed the chief justice, he proceeded to insult that magistrate on his tribunal; but Gascoigne, mindful of the character which he then bore, and the majesty of the sovereign and of the laws which he sustained, ordered the prince to be carried to prison for his rude behavior. [1] The spectators were agreeably disappointed, when they saw the heir of the crown submit peaceably to this sentence, make reparation for his error by acknowledging it, and check his impetuous nature in the midst of its extravagant career.

The memory of this incident, and of many others of a like nature, rendered the prospect of the future reign nowise disagreeable to the nation, and increased the joy which the death of so unpopular a prince as the late king naturally occasioned. The first steps taken by the young prince confirmed all those prepossessions entertained in his favor. [2] He called together his former companions, acquainted them with his intended reformation, exhorted them to imitate his example, but strictly inhibited them, till they had given proofs of their sincerity in this particular, from appearing any more in his presence; and he thus dismissed them with liberal presents. [3]

The wise ministers of his father, who had checked his riots, found that they had unknowingly been paying the highest court to him; and were received with all the marks of favor and confidence. The chief justice himself, who trembled to approach the royal presence, met with praises instead of reproaches for his past conduct, and was exhorted to persevere in the same rigorous and impartial execution of the laws. The surprise of those

* Hall, fol, 33.

* * Walsing, .

* * * Hall, fol. 33. Holingshed, . Godwin’s Life of Henry V,

who expected an opposite behavior, augmented their satisfaction; and the character of the young king appeared brighter than if it had never been shaded by any errors.

But Henry was anxious not only to repair his own misconduct, but also to make amends for those iniquities into which policy or the necessity of affairs had betrayed his father. He expressed the deepest sorrow for the fate of the unhappy Richard, did justice to the memory of that unfortunate prince, even performed his funeral obsequies with pomp and solemnity, and cherished all those who had distinguished themselves by their loyalty and attachment towards him. [1] Instead of continuing the restraints which the jealousy of his father had imposed on the earl of Marche, he received that young nobleman with singular courtesy and favor; and by this magnanimity so gained on the gentle and unambitious nature of his competitor, that he remained ever after sincerely attached to him, and gave him no disturbance in his future government. The family of Piercy was restored to its fortune and honors. [2] The king seemed ambitious to bury all party distinctions in oblivion: the instruments of the preceding reign, who had been advanced from their blind zeal for the Lancastrian interests, more than from their merits, gave place every where to men of more honorable characters; virtue seemed now to have an open career, in which it might exert itself: the exhortations, as well as example of the prince, gave it encouragement: all men were unanimous in their attachment to Henry; and the defects of his title were forgotten, amidst the personal regard which was universally paid to him.

There remained among the people only one party distinction, which was derived from religious differences, and which, as it is of a peculiar and commonly a very obstinate nature, the popularity of Henry was not able to overcome. The Lollards were every day increasing in the kingdom, and were become a formed party, which appeared extremely dangerous to the church, and even formidable to the civil authority. [3] The enthusiasm by which these sectaries were generally actuated the great alterations which they pretended to introduce, the hatred which they expressed against the established hierarchy, gave an alarm to Henry; who, either from a sincere attachment to the ancient religion, or from a dread of the unknown consequences which attend all important changes, was determined to execute the laws against such bold innovators.

* Hist. Croyland. Contin. Hall, fol. 34. Holing, .

* * Holing, .

* * * Walsing. .

The head of this sect was Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a nobleman who had distinguished himself by his valor and his military talents, and had, on many occasions, acquired the esteem both of the late and of the present king. [1] His high character and his zeal for the new sect pointed him out to Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, as the proper victim of ecclesiastical severity, whose punishment would strike a terror into the whole party, and teach them that they must expect no mercy under the present administration. He applied to Henry for a permission to indict Lord Cobham; [2] but the generous nature of the prince was averse to such sanguinary methods of conversion. He represented to the primate, that reason and conviction were the best expedients for supporting truth; that all gentle means ought first to be tried, in order to reclaim men from error; and that he himself would endeavor, by a conversation with Cobham, to reconcile him to the Catholic faith. But he found that nobleman obstinate in his opinions, and determined not to sacrifice truths of such infinite moment to his complaisance for sovereigns. [3]

* Walsing. p 382.

* * Fox’s Acts and Monuments, .

* * * Rymer, vol ix. . Walsing. .

Henry’s principles of toleration, or rather his love of the practice, could carry him no farther; and he then gave full reins to ecclesiastical severity against the inflexible heresiarch. The primate indicted Cobham, and with the assistance of his three suffragans, the bishops of London, Winchester, and St. David’s, condemned him to the flames for his erroneous opinions. Cobham, who was confined in the Tower, made his escape before the day appointed for his execution. The bold spirit of the man, provoked by persecution and stimulated by zeal, was urged to attempt the most criminal enterprises; and his unlimited authority over the new sect proved that he well merited the attention of the civil magistrate. He formed in his retreat very violent designs against his enemies; and despatching his emissaries to all quarters, appointed a general rendezvous of the party, in order to seize the person of the king at Eltham, and put their persecutors to the sword. [1]

1414.

Henry, apprised of their intention, removed to Westminster: Cobham was not discouraged by this disappointment; but changed the place of rendezvous to the field near St. Giles; the king, having shut the gates of the city, to prevent any reënforcement to the Lollards from that quarter, came into the field in the night-time, seized such of the conspirators as appeared, and afterwards laid hold of the several parties who were hastening to the place appointed. It appeared, that a few only were in the secret of the conspiracy; the rest implicitly followed their leaders: but upon the trial of the prisoners, the treasonable designs of the sect were rendered certain, both from evidence and from the confession of the criminals themselves. [2] Some were executed; the greater number pardoned. [3] Cobham himself, who made his escape by flight, was not brought to justice till four years after; when he was hanged as a traitor; and his body was burnt on the gibbet, in execution of the sentence pronounced against him as a heretic. [4] This criminal design, which was perhaps somewhat aggravated by the clergy, brought discredit upon the party, and checked the progress of that sect, which had embraced the speculative doctrines of Wickliffe, and at the same time aspired to a reformation of ecclesiastical abuses.

* Walsing. .

* * Cotton, . Hall, fol. 35. Holing, .

* * * Rymer, vol. ix. , 129, 193.

* * * * Walsing. . Otterborne, . Holing, .

These two points were the great objects of the Lollards; but the bulk of the nation was not affected in the same degree by both of them. Common sense and obvious reflection had discovered to the people the advantages of a reformation in discipline; but the age was not yet so far advanced as to be seized with the spirit of controversy, or to enter into those abstruse doctrines which the Lollards endeavored to propagate throughout the kingdom. The very notion of heresy alarmed the generality of the people: innovation in fundamental principles was suspicious: curiosity was not, as yet, a sufficient counterpoise to authority; and even many, who were the greatest friends to the reformation of abuses, were anxious to express their detestation of the speculative tenants of the Wickliffites, which, they feared, threw disgrace on so good a cause. This turn of thought appears evidently in the proceedings of the parliament which was summoned immediately after the detection of Cobham’s conspiracy. That assembly passed severe laws against the new heretics: they enacted, that whoever was convicted of Lollardy before the ordinary besides suffering capital punishment according to the laws formerly established, should also forfeit his lands and goods to the king; and that the chancellor, treasurer, justices of the two benches, sheriffs, justices of the peace, and all the chief magistrates in every city and borough, should take an oath to use their utmost endeavors for the extirpation of heresy. [1] Yet this very parliament, when the king demanded supply, renewed the offer formerly pressed upon his father, and entreated him to seize all the ecclesiastical revenues, and convert them to the use of the crown. [2] The clergy were alarmed: they could offer the king no bribe which was equivalent: they only agreed to confer on him all the priories alien, which depended on capital abbeys in Normandy, and had been bequeathed to these abbeys, when that province remained united to England: and Chicheley, now archbishop of Canterbury, endeavored to divert the blow by giving occupation to the king, and by persuading him to undertake a war against France, in order to recover his lost rights to that kingdom. [3]

* 2 Henry V. cha.

* * Hall, fol. 35.

* * * Hall, fol. 35. 36.

It was the dying injunction of the late king to his son, not to allow the English to remain long in peace, which was apt to breed intestine commotions; but to employ them in foreign expeditions, by which the prince might acquire honor; the nobility, in sharing his dangers, might attach themselves to his person; and all the restless spirits find occupation for their inquietude. The natural disposition of Henry sufficiently inclined him to follow this advice, and the civil disorders of France, which had been prolonged beyond those of England, opened a full career to his ambition.

1415.

The death of Charles V., which followed soon after that of Edward III., and the youth of his son, Charles VI., put the two kingdoms for some time in a similar situation; and it was not to be apprehended, that either of them, during a minority, would be able to make much advantage of the weakness of the other. The jealousies also between Charles’s three uncles, the dukes of Anjou, Bern, and Burgundy, had distracted the affairs of France rather more than those between the dukes of Lancaster, York, and Gloucester. Richard’s three uncles, disordered those of England; and had carried off the attention of the French nation from any vigorous enterprise against foreign states. But in proportion as Charles advanced in years, the factions were composed; his two uncles, the dukes of Anjou and Burgundy, died; and the king himself, assuming the reins of government, discovered symptoms of genius and spirit, which revived the drooping hopes of his country. This promising state of affairs was not of long duration: the unhappy prince fell suddenly into a fit of frenzy, which rendered him incapable of exercising his authority; and though he recovered from this disorder, he was so subject to relapses, that his judgment was gradually but sensibly impaired, and no steady plan of government could be pursued by him. The administration of affairs was disputed between his brother, Lewis, duke of Orleans, and his cousin-german, John, duke of Burgundy: the propinquity to the crown pleaded in favor of the former: the latter, who, in right of his mother, had inherited the county of Flanders, which he annexed to his father’s extensive dominions, derived a lustre from his superior power: the people were divided between these contending princes; and the king, now resuming, now dropping his authority, kept the victory undecided, and prevented any regular settlement of the state by the final prevalence of either party.

At length, the dukes of Orleans and Burgundy, seeming to be moved by the cries of the nation, and by the interposition of common friends, agreed to bury all past quarrels in oblivion, and to enter into strict amity: they swore before the altar the sincerity of their friendship; the priest administered the sacrament to both of them; they gave to each other every pledge which could be deemed sacred among men: but all this solemn preparation was only a cover for the basest treachery, which was deliberately premeditated by the duke of Burgundy. He procured his rival to be assassinated in the streets of Paris: he endeavored for some time to conceal the part which he took in the crime; but being detected, he embraced a resolution still more criminal and more dangerous to society, by openly avowing and justifying it. [1]

* Le Laboureur, liv. xxvii. cha, 24.

The parliament itself of Paris, the tribunal of justice, heard the harangues of the duke’s advocate in defence of assassination, which he termed tyrannicide; and that assembly, partly influenced by faction, partly overawed by power, pronounced no sentence of condemnation against this detestable doctrine. [1]

* Le Laboureur, liv. xxvii. cha. Monstrelet. cha.

The same question was afterwards agitated before the council of Constance; and it was with difficulty that a feeble decision in favor of the contrary opinion, was procured from these fathers of the church, the ministers of peace and of religion. But the mischievous effects of that tenet, had they been before anywise doubtful, appeared sufficiently from the present incidents. The commission of this crime, which destroyed all trust and security, rendered the war implacable between the French parties, and cut off every means of peace and accommodation. The princes of the blood, combining with the young duke of Orleans and his brothers, made violent war on the duke of Burgundy; and the unhappy king, seized sometimes by one party, sometimes by the other, transferred alternately to each of them the appearance of legal authority. The provinces were laid waste by mutual depredations: assassinations were every where committed, from the animosity of the several leaders; or, what was equally terrible, executions were ordered, without any legal or free trial, by pretended courts of judicature. The whole kingdom was distinguished into two parties, the Burgundians and the Armagnacs; so the adherents of the young duke of Orleans were called, from the count of Armagnac, father-in-law to that prince. The city of Paris, distracted between them, but inclining more to the Burgundians, was a perpetual scene of blood and violence; the king and royal family were often detained captives in the hands of the populace; their faithful ministers were butchered or imprisoned before their face; and it was dangerous for any man, amidst these enraged factions, to be distinguished by a strict adherence to the principles of probity and honor.

During this scene of general violence, there rose into some consideration a body of men, which usually makes no figure in public transactions, even during the most peaceful times; and that was the university of Paris, whose opinion was sometimes demanded, and more frequently offered, in the multiplied disputes between the parties. The schism by which the church was at that time divided, and which occasioned frequent controversies in the university, had raised the professors to an unusual degree of importance; and this connection between literature and superstition had bestowed on the former a weight to which reason and knowledge are not of themselves anywise entitled among men. But there was another society, whose sentiments were much more decisive, at Paris, — the fraternity of butchers, who, under the direction of their ringleaders, had declared for the duke of Burgundy, and committed the most violent outrages against the opposite party. To counterbalance their power, the Armagnacs made interest with the fraternity of carpenters; the populace ranged themselves on one side or the other; and the fate of the capital depended on the prevalence of either party.

The advantage which might be made of these confusions was easily perceived in England; and, according to the maxims which usually prevail among nations, it was determined to lay hold of the favorable opportunity. The late king, who was courted by both the French parties, fomented the quarrel, by alternately sending assistance to each; but the present sovereign, impelled by the vigor of youth and the ardor of ambition, determined to push his advantages to a greater length, and to carry violent war into that distracted kingdom. But while he was making preparations for this end, he tried to effect his purpose by negotiation; and he sent over ambassadors to Paris, offering a perpetual peace and alliance; but demanding Catharine, the

French king's daughter, in marriage, two millions of crowns as her portion, one million six hundred thousand as the arrears of King John's ransom, and the immediate possession and full sovereignty of Normandy, and of all the other provinces which had been ravished from England by the arms of Philip Augustus; together with the superiority of Brittany and Flanders. [1] Such exorbitant demands show that he was sensible of the present miserable condition of France; and the terms offered by the French court, though much inferior, discover their consciousness of the same melancholy truth. They were willing to give him the princess in marriage, to pay him eight hundred thousand crowns, to resign the entire sovereignty of Guienne, and to annex to that province the country of Perigord, Rovergue Xaintonge, the Angoumois, and other territories. [2]

* Rymer, vol. ix. .

* * Rymer, vol. ix. .

It is reported by some historians, (see Hist. Croyl. Cont. ,) that the dauphin, in derision of Henry's claims and dissolute character, sent him a box of tennis balls; intimating, that these implements of play were better adapted to him than the instruments of war. But this story is by no means credible; rejected these conditions, and scarcely hoped that his own demands would be complied with, he never intermitted a moment his preparations for war; and having assembled a great fleet and army at Southampton, having invited all the nobility and military men of the kingdom to attend him by the hopes of glory and of conquest, he came to the sea-side with a purpose of embarking on his expedition.

But while Henry was meditating conquests upon his neighbors, he unexpectedly found himself in danger from a conspiracy at home, which was happily detected in its infancy. The earl of Cambridge, second son of the late duke of York, having espoused the sister of the earl of Marche, had zealously embraced the interests of that family; and had held some conferences with Lord Scrope of Masham, and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton, about the means of recovering to that nobleman his right to the crown of England. The conspirators, as soon as detected, acknowledged their guilt to the king; [1] and Henry proceeded without delay to their trial and condemnation. The utmost that could be expected of the best king in those ages, was, that he would so far observe the essentials of justice, as not to make an innocent person a victim to his severity; but as to the formalities of law, which are often as material as the essentials themselves, they were sacrificed without scruple to the least interest or convenience. A jury of commoners was summoned: the three conspirators were indicted before them: the constable of Southampton Castle swore that they had separately confessed their guilt to him: without other evidence, Sir Thomas Grey was condemned and executed; but as the earl of Cambridge and Lord Scrope pleaded the privilege of their peerage, Henry thought proper to summon a court of eighteen barons, in which the duke of Clarence presided: the evidence given before the jury was read to them: the prisoners, though one of them was a prince of the blood, were not examined, nor produced in court, nor heard in their own defence; but received sentence of death upon this proof, which was every way irregular and unsatisfactory; and the sentence was soon after executed. The earl of Marche was accused of having given his approbation to the conspiracy, and received a general pardon from the great offers made by the court of France show that they had already entertained a just idea of Henry's character, as well as of their own situation.

The successes which the arms of England have, in different ages, obtained over those of France, have been much owing to the favorable situation of the former kingdom. The English, happily seated in an island, could make advantage of every misfortune which attended their neighbors, and were little exposed to the danger of reprisals. They never left their own country but when they were conducted by a king of extraordinary genius, or found their enemy divided by intestine factions, or were supported by a powerful alliance on the continent; and as all these circumstances concurred at present to favor their enterprise, they had reason to expect from it proportionable success. The duke of Burgundy, expelled France by a combination of the princes, had been secretly soliciting the alliance of England; [2] and Henry knew that this prince, though he scrupled at first to join the inveterate enemy of his country, would willingly, if he saw any probability of success, both assist him with his Flemish subjects, and draw over to the same side all his numerous partisans in France. Trusting, therefore, to this circumstance, but without establishing any concert with the duke, he put to sea, and landed near Harfleur, at the head of an army of six thousand men at arms, and twenty-four thousand foot, mostly archers.

He immediately began the siege of that place, which was valiantly defended by D’Estouteville, and under him by De Guitri, De Gaucourt, and others of the French nobility; but as the garrison was weak, and the fortifications in bad repair, the governor was at last obliged to capitulate; and he promised to surrender the place, if he received no succor before the eighteenth of September. The day came, and there was no appearance of a French army to relieve him. Henry, taking possession of the town, placed a garrison in it, and expelled all the French inhabitants, with an intention of peopling it anew with English.

The fatigues of this siege, and the unusual heat of the season, had so wasted the English army, that Henry could enter on no further enterprise; and was obliged to think of returning into England. He had dismissed his transports, which could not anchor in an open road upon the enemy’s coasts; and he lay under a necessity of marching by land to Calais, before he could reach a place of safety. A numerous French army of fourteen thousand men at arms and forty thousand foot, was by this time assembled in Normandy under the constable D’Albret; a force which, if prudently conducted, was sufficient either to trample down the English in the open field, or to harass and reduce to nothing their small army, before they could finish so long and difficult a march. Henry, therefore, cautiously offered to sacrifice his conquest of Harfleur for a safe passage to Calais; but his proposal being rejected, he determined to make his way by valor and conduct through all the opposition of the enemy. [1] That he might not discourage his army by the appearance of flight, or expose them to those hazards which naturally attend precipitate marches, he made slow and deliberate journeys, [1] till he reached the Somme, which he purposed to pass at the ford of Blanquetague, the same place where Edward, in a like situation, had before escaped from Philip de Valois. But he found the ford rendered impassable by the precaution of the French general, and guarded by a strong body on the opposite bank; [1] and he was obliged to march higher up the river, in order to seek for a safe passage. He was continually harassed on his march by flying parties of the enemy; saw bodies of troops

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* Rymer, vol. ix. .

* * St. Remi, chap. lv. Godwin,

on the other side ready to oppose every attempt; his provisions were cut off; his soldiers languished with sickness and fatigue; and his affairs seemed to be reduced to a desperate situation; when he was so dexterous or so fortunate as to seize, by surprise, a passage near St. Quintin, which had not been sufficiently guarded; and he safely carried over his army. [2]

* Le Laboureur, liv. xxxv. cha. * T. Livii,

* * St. Remi, chap, 58. * T. Livii,

Henry then bent his march northwards to Calais; but he was still exposed to great and imminent danger from the enemy, who had also passed the Somme, and threw themselves full in his way, with a purpose of intercepting his retreat. After he had passed the small river of Ternois at Blangi, he was surprised to observe from the heights the whole French army drawn up in the plains of Azincour, and so posted that it was impossible for him to proceed on his march without coming to an engagement. Nothing in appearance could be more unequal than the battle upon which his safety and all his fortunes now depended. The English army was little, more than half the number which had disembarked at Harfleur; and they labored under every discouragement and necessity. The enemy was four times more numerous; was headed by the dauphin and all the princes of the blood; and was plentifully supplied with provisions of every kind. Henry’s situation was exactly similar to that of Edward at Crecy, and that of the Black Prince at Poietiers; and the memory of these great events, inspiring the English with courage, made them hope for a like deliverance from their present difficulties. The king likewise observed the same prudent conduct which had been followed by these great commanders: he drew up his army on a narrow ground between two woods, which guarded each flank; and he patiently expected in that posture the attack of the enemy. [1] Had the French constable been able either to reason justly upon the present circumstances of the two armies, or to profit by past experience, he had declined a combat, and had waited till necessity, obliging the English to advance, had made them relinquish the advantages of their situation. But the impetuous valor of the nobility, and a vain confidence in superior numbers, brought on this fatal action, which proved the source of infinite calamities to their country. The French archers on horseback and their men at arms, crowded in their ranks, advanced upon the English archers, who had fixed palisadoes in their front to break the impression of the enemy, and who safely plied them, from behind that defence, with a shower of arrows, which nothing could resist. [2]

* St. Remi, cha.

* * Walsing. . T. Livii, . Le Laboureur, liv. xxxv chap, 7. Monstrelet, cha.

The clay soil, moistened by some rain which had lately fallen, proved another obstacle to the force of the French cavalry: the wounded men and horses discomposed their ranks: the narrow compass in which they were pent hindered them from recovering any order: the whole army was a scene of confusion, terror, and dismay: and Henry, perceiving his advantage, ordered the English archers, who were light and unencumbered, to advance upon the enemy, and seize the moment of victory. They fell with their battle-axes upon the French, who, in their present posture, were incapable either of flying or of making defence: they hewed them in pieces without resistance: [1] and being seconded by the men at arms who also pushed on against the enemy, they covered the field with the killed, wounded, dismounted, and overthrown.

* Walsing. . Ypod. Neust. .

After all appearance of opposition was over, the English had leisure to make prisoners; and having advanced with uninterrupted success to the open plain, they there saw the remains of the French rear guard, which still maintained the appearance of a line of battle. At the same time, they heard an alarm from behind: some gentlemen of Picardy, having collected about six hundred peasants, had fallen upon the English baggage, and were doing execution on the unarmed followers of the camp, who fled before them, Henry, seeing the enemy on all sides of him, began to entertain apprehensions from his prisoners; and he thought it necessary to issue general orders for putting them to death: but on discovering the truth, he stopped the slaughter, and was still able to save a great number.

No battle was ever more fatal to France, by the number of princes and nobility slain or taken prisoners. Among the former were the constable himself, the count of Nevers and the duke of Brabant, brothers to the duke of Burgundy; the count of Vaudemont, brother to the duke of Lorraine, the duke of Alençon, the duke of Barre, the count of Marle. The most eminent prisoners were the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the Counts d’Eu, Vendôme, and Richemont, and the mareschal of Boucicaut. An archbishop of Sens also was slain in this battle. The killed are computed on the whole to have amounted to ten thousand men; and as the slaughter fell chiefly upon the cavalry, it is pretended that, of these, eight thousand were gentlemen. Henry was master of fourteen thousand prisoners. The person of chief note who fell among the English, was the duke of York, who perished fighting by the king’s side, and had an end more honorable than his life. He was succeeded in his honors and fortune by his nephew, son of the earl of Cambridge, executed in the beginning of the year. All the English who were slain exceeded not forty; though some writers, with greater probability, make the number more considerable.

The three great battles of Crecy, Poictiers, and Azincour bear a singular resemblance to each other in their most considerable circumstances. In all of them there appears the same temerity in the English princes, who, without any object of moment, merely for the sake of plunder, had ventured so far into the enemy’s country as to leave themselves no retreat; and unless saved by the utmost imprudence in the French commanders, were, from their very situation, exposed to inevitable destruction. But allowance being made for this temerity, which, according to the irregular plans of war followed in those ages, seems to have been, in some measure, unavoidable there appears, in the day of action, the same presence of mind, dexterity, courage, firmness, and precaution on the part of the English; the same precipitation, confusion, and vain confidence on the part of the French: and the events were such as might have been expected from such opposite conduct. The immediate consequences too of these three great victories were similar: instead of pushing the French with vigor, and taking advantage of their consternation, the English princes, after their victory, seem rather to have relaxed their efforts, and to have allowed the enemy leisure to recover from his losses. Henry interrupted not his march a moment after the battle of Azincour; he carried his prisoners to Calais, thence to England; he even concluded a truce with the enemy; and it was not till after an interval of two years that any body of English troops appeared in France.

The poverty of all the European princes, and the small resources of their kingdoms, were the cause of these continual interruptions in their hostilities; and though the maxims of war were in general destructive, their military operations were mere incursions, which, without any settled plan, they carried on against each other. The lustre, however, attending the victory of Azincour, procured some supplies from the English parliament; though still unequal to the expenses of a campaign. They granted Henry an entire fifteenth of movables; and they conferred on him for life the duties of tonnage and poundage, and the subsidies on the exportation of wool and leather. This concession is more considerable than that which had been granted to Richard II. by his last parliament and which was afterwards, on his deposition, made so great an article of charge against him.

But during this interruption of hostilities from England, France was exposed to all the furies of civil war, and the several parties became every day more enraged against each other. The duke of Burgundy, confident that the French ministers and generals were entirely discredited by the misfortune at Azincour, advanced with a great army to Paris, and attempted to reinstate himself in possession of the government, as well as of the person of the king. But his partisans in that city were overawed by the court, and kept in subjection: the duke despaired of success; and he retired with his forces, which he immediately disbanded in the Low Countries. [1]

1417.

He was soon after invited to make a new attempt, by some violent quarrels which broke out in the royal family. The queen, Isabella, daughter of the duke of Bavaria, who had been hitherto an inveterate enemy to the Burgundian faction, had received a great injury from the other party, which the implacable spirit of that princess was never able to forgive. The public necessities obliged the count of Armagnac, created constable of France in the place of D’Albret, to seize the great treasures which Isabella had amassed: and when she expressed her displeasure at this injury, he inspired into the weak mind of the king some jealousies concerning her conduct, and pushed him to seize, and put to the torture, and afterwards throw into the Seine, Boisbourdon, her favorite, whom he accused of a commerce of gallantry with that princess. The queen herself was sent to Tours, and confined under a guard; [2] and after suffering these multiplied insults, she no longer scrupled to enter into a correspondence with the duke of Burgundy. As her son, the dauphin Charles, a youth of sixteen, was entirely governed by the faction of Armagnac, she extended her animosity to him, and sought his destruction with the most unrelenting hatred. She had soon an opportunity of rendering her unnatural purpose effectual. The duke of Burgundy, in concert with her, entered France at the head of a great army: he made himself master of Amiens, Abbeville, Dourlens, Montreuil, and other towns in Picardy; Senlis, Rheims, Chalons, Troye, and Auxerre, declared themselves of his party. [3] He got possession of Beaumont, Pontoise, Vernon, Meulant, Montlheri, towns in the neighborhood of Paris; and carrying further his progress towards the west, he seized Etampes, Chartres, and other fortresses; and was at last able to deliver the queen, who fled to Troye, and openly declared against those ministers who, she said, detained her husband in captivity. [4]

* Le Laboureur, liv. xxxv. cha.

* * St. Remi, cha. Monstrelet, cha.

* * * St. Remi, cha.

* * * * St. Remi, cha. Monstrelet, cha, 179.

Meanwhile the partisans of Burgundy raised a commotion in Paris, which always inclined to that faction. Lile-Adam, one of the duke’s captains, was received into the city in the night-time, and headed the insurrection of the people, which in a moment became so impetuous that nothing could oppose it. The person of the king was seized: the dauphin made his escape with difficulty; great numbers of the faction of Armagnac were immediately butchered: the count himself, and many persons of note, were thrown into prison: murders were daily committed from private animosity, under pretence of faction: and the populace, not satiated with their fury, and deeming the course of public justice too dilatory, broke into the prisons, and put to death the count of Armagnac, and all the other nobility who were there confined. [1]

1418.

While France was in such furious combustion, and was so ill prepared to resist a foreign enemy, Henry, having collected some treasure and levied an army, landed in Normandy at the head of twenty-five thousand men; and met with no considerable opposition from any quarter. He made himself master of Falaise; Evreux and Caen submitted to him; Pont de l'Arche opened its gates; and Henry, having subdued all the lower Normandy, and having received a reënforcement of fifteen thousand men from England, [2] formed the siege of Rouen, which was defended by a garrison of four thousand men, seconded by the inhabitants, to the number of fifteen thousand. [3] The cardinal des Ursins here attempted to incline him towards peace, and to moderate his pretensions; but the king replied to him in such terms as showed that he was fully sensible of all his present advantages: "Do you not see," said he, "that God has led me hither as by the hand? France has no sovereign: I have just pretensions to that kingdom: every thing is here in the utmost confusion: no one thinks of resisting me. Can I have a more sensible proof, that the Being who disposes of empires has determined to put the crown of France upon my head?" [4]

* St. Remi, cha, 86. Monstrelet, cha.

* * Walsing. .

* * * St. Remi, cha

* * * * Juvenal des Ursins.

But though Henry had opened his mind to this scheme of ambition, he still continued to negotiate with his enemies, and endeavored to obtain more secure, though less considerable advantages. He made, at the same time, offers of peace to both parties; to the queen and duke of Burgundy on the one hand, who, having possession of the king's person, carried the appearance of legal authority; [1] and to the dauphin on the other, who, being the undoubted heir of the monarchy, was adhered to by every one that paid any regard to the true interests of their country. [4] These two parties also carried on a continual negotiation with each other. The terms proposed on all sides were perpetually varying: the events of the war and the intrigues of the cabinet intermingled with each other: and the fate of France remained long in this uncertainty. After many negotiations, Henry offered the queen and the duke of Burgundy to make peace with them, to espouse the Princess Catharine, and to accept of all the provinces ceded to Edward III. by the treaty of Bretigni, with the addition of Normandy, which he was to receive in full and entire sovereignty. [1]

1419.

These terms were submitted to: there remained only some circumstances to adjust, in order to the entire completion of the treaty; but in this interval the duke of Burgundy secretly finished his treaty with the dauphin; and these two princes agreed to share the royal authority during King Charles’s lifetime, and to unite their arms in order to expel foreign enemies. [4]

* Rymer, vol. ix. , 749.

* * Rymer, vol. ix. , etc.

* * * Rymer, vol. ix. .

* * * * Rymer, vol. ix. . St. Remi, cha.

This alliance which seemed to cut off from Henry all hopes of further success, proved in the issue the most favorable event that could have happened for his pretensions. Whether the dauphin and the duke of Burgundy were ever sincere in their mutual engagements, is uncertain; but very fatal effects resulted from their momentary and seeming union. The two princes agreed to an interview, in order to concert the means of rendering effectual their common attack on the English; but how both or either of them could with safety venture upon this conference, it seemed somewhat difficult to contrive. The assassination perpetrated by the duke of Burgundy, and still more his open avowal of the deed, and defence of the doctrine, tended to dissolve all the bands of civil society; and even men of honor, who detested the example, might deem it just, on a favorable opportunity, to retaliate upon the author. The duke, therefore, who neither dared to give, nor could pretend to expect, any trust, agreed to all the contrivances for mutual security which were proposed by the ministers of the dauphin. The two princes came to Montereau: the duke lodged in the Castle; the dauphin in the town, which was divided from the castle by the River Yonne: the bridge between them was chosen for the place of interview: two high rails were drawn across the bridge: the gates on each side were guarded, one by the officers of the dauphin, the other by those of the duke: the princes were to enter into the intermediate space by the opposite gates, accompanied each by ten persons; and with all these marks of diffidence, to conciliate their mutual friendship. But it appeared that no precautions are sufficient where laws have no place, and where all principles of honor are utterly abandoned. Tannegui de Chatel, and others of the dauphin's retainers, had been zealous partisans of the late duke of Orleans; and they determined to seize the opportunity of revenging on the assassin the murder of that prince; they no sooner entered the rails, than they drew their swords and attacked the duke of Burgundy; his friends were astonished and thought not of making any defence; and all of them either shared his fate, or were taken prisoners by the retinue of the dauphin. [1]

* St. Remi, cha. Monstrelet, cha.

The extreme youth of this prince made it doubtful whether he had been admitted into the secret of the conspiracy; but as the deed was committed under his eye, by his most intimate friends, who still retained their connections with him, the blame of the action, which was certainly more imprudent than criminal, fell entirely upon him. The whole state of affairs was every where changed by this unexpected incident. The city of Paris, passionately devoted to the family of Burgundy, broke out into the highest fury against the dauphin. The court of King Charles entered from interest into the same views; and as all the ministers of that monarch had owed their preferment to the late duke, and foresaw their downfall if the dauphin should recover possession of his father's person, they were concerned to prevent by any means the success of his enterprise. The queen, persevering in her unnatural animosity against her son, increased the general flame, and inspired into the king, as far as he was susceptible of any sentiment the same prejudices by which she herself had long been actuated. But above all, Philip, count of Charolois, now duke of Burgundy, thought himself bound by every tie of honor and of duty to revenge the murder of his father, and to prosecute the assassin to the utmost extremity. And in this general transport of rage, every consideration of national and family interest was buried in oblivion by all parties: the subjection to a foreign enemy, the expulsion of the lawful heir, the slavery of the kingdom, appeared but small evils, if they led to the gratification of the present passion.

The king of England had, before the death of the duke of Burgundy, profited extremely by the distractions of France and was daily making a considerable progress in Normandy. He had taken Rouen after an obstinate siege: [1] he had made himself master of Pontoise and Gisors: he even threatened Paris, and by the terror of his arms had obliged the court to remove to Troye: and in the midst of his successes, he was agreeably surprised to find his enemies, instead of combining against him for their mutual defence, disposed to rush into his arms, and to make him the instrument of their vengeance upon each other. A league was immediately concluded at Arras between him and the duke of Burgundy. This prince, without stipulating any thing for himself, except the prosecution of his father's murder, and the marriage of the duke of Bedford with his sister, was willing to sacrifice the kingdom to Henry's ambition; and he agreed to every demand made by that monarch.

1420.

In order to finish this astonishing treaty, which was to transfer the crown of France to a stranger, Henry went to Troye, accompanied by his brothers, the dukes of Clarence and Glocester; and was there met by the duke of Burgundy. The imbecility into which Charles had fallen, made him incapable of seeing any thing but through the eyes of those who attended him; as they, on their part, saw every thing through the medium of their passions. The treaty, being already concerted among the parties, was immediately drawn, and signed, and ratified: Henry's will seemed to be a law throughout the whole negotiation: nothing was attended to but his advantages.

* T. Livii, . Monstrelet, cha.

The principal articles of the treaty were, that Henry should espouse the Princess Catharine: that King Charles, during his lifetime, should enjoy the title and dignity of king of France: that Henry should be declared and acknowledged heir of the monarchy, and be intrusted with the present administration of the government: that that kingdom should pass to his heirs general: that France and England should forever be united under one king; but should still retain their several usages, customs, and privileges: that all the princes, peers, vassals, and communities of France should swear, that they would both adhere to the future succession of Henry, and pay him present obedience as regent: that this prince should unite his arms to those of King Charles and the duke of Burgundy, in order to subdue the adherents of Charles, the pretended dauphin: and that these three princes should make no peace or truce with him but by common consent and agreement. [1]

* Rymer, vol. ix. . St. Remi, chap 101. Monstrelet, cha.

Such was the tenor of this famous treaty; a treaty which, as nothing but the most violent animosity could dictate it, so nothing but the power of the sword could carry into execution. It is hard to say whether its consequences, had it taken effect, would have proved more pernicious to England or to France. It must have reduced the former kingdom to the rank of a province: it would have entirely disjointed the succession of the latter, and have brought on the destruction of every descendant of the royal family; as the houses of Orleans, Anjou, Alençon, Brittany, Bourbon, and of Burgundy itself, whose titles were preferable to that of the English princes, would on that account have been exposed to perpetual jealousy and persecution from the sovereign. There was even a palpable deficiency in Henry's claim, which no art could palliate. For, besides the insuperable objections to which Edward III.'s pretensions were exposed, he was not heir to that monarch: if female succession were admitted, the right had devolved on the house of Mortimer: allowing that Richard II. was a tyrant, and that Henry IV.'s merits in deposing him were so great towards the English, as to justify that nation in placing him on the throne, Richard had nowise offended France, and his rival had merited nothing of that kingdom: it could not possibly be pretended, that the crown of France was become an appendage to that of England; and that a prince, who by any means got possession of the latter, was, without further question, entitled to the former. So that, on the whole, it must be allowed that Henry's claim to France was, if possible, still more unintelligible than the title by which his father had mounted the throne of England.

But though all these considerations were overlooked, amidst the hurry of passion by which the courts of France and Burgundy were actuated, they would necessarily revive during times of more tranquillity; and it behoved Henry to push his present advantages, and allow men no leisure for reason or reflection. In a few days after, he espoused the Princess Catharine: he carried his father-in-law to Paris, and put himself in possession of that capital: he obtained from the parliament and the three estates a ratification of the treaty of Troye: he supported the duke of Burgundy in procuring a sentence against the murderers of his father: and he immediately turned his arms with success against the adherents of the dauphin, who, as soon as he heard of the treaty of Troye, took on him the style and authority of regent, and appealed to God and his sword for the maintenance of his title.

The first place that Henry subdued was Sens, which opened its gates after a slight resistance. With the same facility he made himself master of Montereau. The defence of Melun was more obstinate: Barbasan, the governor, held out for the space of four months against the besiegers; and it was famine alone which obliged him to capitulate. Henry stipulated to spare the lives of all the garrison, except such as were accomplices in the murder of the duke of Burgundy; and as Barbasan himself was suspected to be of the number, his punishment was demanded by Philip: but the king had the generosity to intercede for him, and to prevent his execution. [1]

1421.

The necessity of providing supplies both of men and money, obliged Henry to go over to England; and he left the duke of Exeter, his uncle, governor of Paris during his absence. The authority which naturally attends success, procured from the English parliament a subsidy of a fifteenth; but, if we may judge by the scantiness of the supply, the nation was nowise sanguine on their king’s victories; and in proportion as the prospect of their union with France became nearer, they began to open their eyes, and to see the dangerous consequences with which that event must necessarily be attended. It was fortunate for Henry that he had other resources, besides pecuniary supplies from his native subjects. The provinces which he had already conquered maintained his troops; and the hopes of further advantages allured to his standard all men of ambitious spirits in England, who desired to signalize themselves by arms. He levied a new army of twenty-four thousand archers and four thousand horsemen, [2] and marched them to Dover, the place of rendezvous.

* Holingshed, .

* * Monstrelet, cha.

Every thing had remained in tranquillity at Paris under the duke of Exeter but there had happened, in another quarter of the kingdom, a misfortune which hastened the king’s embarkation.

The detention of the young king of Scots in England had hitherto proved advantageous to Henry; and by keeping the regent in awe, had preserved, during the whole course of the French war, the northern frontier in tranquillity. But when intelligence arrived in Scotland of the progress made by Henry, and the near prospect of his succession to the crown of France, the nation was alarmed, and foresaw their own inevitable ruin, if the subjection of their ally left them to combat alone a victorious enemy, who was already so much superior in power and riches. The regent entered into the same views; and though he declined an open rupture with England, he permitted a body of seven thousand Scots, under the command of the earl of Buchan, his second son, to be transported into France for the service of the dauphin. To render this aid ineffectual, Henry had, in his former expedition, carried over the king of Scots, whom he obliged to send orders to his countrymen to leave the French service; but the Scottish general replied, that he would obey no commands which came from a king in captivity, and that a prince, while in the hands of his enemy, was nowise entitled to authority. These troops, therefore, continued still to act under the earl of Buchan: and were employed by the dauphin to oppose the progress of the duke of Clarence in Anjou. The two armies encountered at Baugé: the English were defeated: the duke himself was slain by Sir Allan Swinton, a Scotch knight, who commanded a company of men at arms: and the earls of Somerset, [1] Dorset, and Huntingdon were taken prisoners. [2] This was the first action that turned the tide of success against the English; and the dauphin, that he might both attach the Scotch to his service, and reward the valor and conduct of the earl of Buchan, honored that nobleman with the office of constable.

* His name was John, and he was afterwards created duke of Somerset. He was grandson of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster. The earl of Dorset was brother to Somerset, and succeeded him in that title.

* * St. Remi, cha. Monstrelet, cha. Hall, fol. 76.

But the arrival of the king of England with so considerable an army, was more than sufficient to repair this loss. Henry was received at Paris with great expressions of joy, so obstinate were the prejudices of the people; and he immediately conducted his army to Chartres, which had long been besieged by the dauphin. That prince raised the siege on the approach of the English; and being resolved to decline a battle, he retired with his army. [1] Henry made himself master of Dreux without a blow: he laid siege to Meaux, at the Solicitation of the Parisians, who were much incommoded by the garrison of that place. This enterprise employed the English arms during the space of eight months: the bastard of Vaurus, governor of Meaux, distinguished himself by an obstinate defence; but was at last obliged to surrender at discretion. The cruelty of this officer was equal to his bravery: he was accustomed to hang, without distinction, all the English and Burgundians who fell into his hands: and Henry, in revenge of his barbarity, ordered him immediately to be hanged on the same tree which he had made the instrument of his inhuman executions. [2]

* St. Remi, cha.

* * Rymer, vol. x. T. Livii, , 93. St. Remi, chap 116 Monstrelet, cha.

This success was followed by the surrender of many other places in the neighborhood of Paris, which held for the dauphin: that prince was chased beyond the Loire, and he almost totally abandoned all the northern provinces: he was even pursued into the south by the united arms of the English and Burgundians, and threatened with total destruction. Notwithstanding the bravery and fidelity of his captains, he saw himself unequal to his enemies in the field; and found it necessary to temporize, and to avoid all hazardous actions with a rival who had gained so much the ascendant over him. And to crown all the other prosperities of Henry, his queen was delivered of a son, who was called by his father’s name, and whose birth was celebrated by rejoicings no less pompous, and no less sincere, at Paris than at London. The infant prince seemed to be universally regarded as the future heir of both monarchies.

1422.

But the glory of Henry, when it had nearly reached the summit, was stopped short by the hand of nature; and all his mighty projects vanished into smoke. He was seized with a fistula, a malady which the surgeons at that time had not skill enough to cure; and he was at last sensible that his distemper was mortal, and that his end was approaching He sent for his brother the duke of Bedford, the earl of Warwick, and a few noblemen more, whom he had honored with his friendship; and he delivered to them, in great tranquillity, his last will with regard to the government of his kingdom and family. He entreated them to continue towards his infant son the same fidelity and attachment which they had always professed to himself during his lifetime, and which had been cemented by so many mutual good offices. He expressed his indifference on the approach of death; and though he regretted that he must leave unfinished a work so happily begun, he declared himself confident that the final acquisition of France would be the effect of their prudence and valor. He left the regency of that kingdom to his elder brother, the duke of Bedford; that of England to his younger, the duke of Glocester; and the care of his son’s person to the earl of Warwick. He recommended to all of them a great attention to maintain the friendship of the duke of Burgundy; and advised them never to give liberty to the French princes taken at Azincour, till his son were of age, and could himself hold the reins of government. And he conjured them, if the success of their arms should not enable them to place young Henry on the throne of France, never at least to make peace with that kingdom, unless the enemy, by the cession of Normandy, and its annexation to the crown of England, made compensation for all the hazard and expense of his enterprise. [1]

He next applied himself to his devotions, and ordered his chaplain to recite the seven penitential psalms. When that passage of the fifty-first psalm was read, “build thou the walls of Jerusalem,” he interrupted the chaplain, and declared his serious intention, after he should have fully subdued France, to conduct a crusade against the infidels, and recover possession of the Holy Land. [2] So ingenious are men in deceiving themselves, that Henry forgot, in those moments, all the blood spilt by his ambition; and received comfort from this late and feeble resolve, which, as the mode of these enterprises was now passed, he certainly would never have carried into execution. He expired in the thirty-fourth year of his age and the tenth of his reign.

* Monstrelet, cha. Hall, fol. 80.

* * St. Remi, cha, Monstrelet, el a.

This prince possessed many eminent virtues; and if we give indulgence to ambition in a monarch, or rank it, as the vulgar are inclined to do, among his virtues, they were unstained by any considerable blemish. His abilities appeared equally in the cabinet and in the field: the boldness of his enterprises was no less remarkable than his personal valor in conducting them. He had the talent of attaching his friends by affability, and of gaining his enemies by address and clemency. The English, dazzled by the lustre of his character, still more than by that of his victories, were reconciled to the defects in his title: the French almost forgot that he was an enemy: and his care in maintaining justice in his civil administration, and preserving discipline in his armies, made some amends to both nations for the calamities inseparable from those wars in which his short reign was almost entirely occupied, That he could forgive the earl of Marche, who had a better title to the crown than himself, is a sure indication of his magnanimity; and that the earl relied so entirely on his friendship, is no less a proof of his established character for candor and sincerity. There remain in history few instances of such mutual trust; and still fewer where neither party found reason to repent it.

The exterior figure of this great prince, as well as his deportment, was engaging. His stature was somewhat above the middle size; his countenance beautiful; his limbs genteel and slender, but full of vigor; and he excelled in all warlike and manly exercises. [1] He left by his queen, Catharine of France, only one son, not full nine months old; whose misfortunes, in the course of his life, surpassed all the glories and successes of his father.

* T. Livii, .

In less than two months after Henry’s death, Charles VI. of France, his father-in-law, terminated his unhappy life. He had for several years possessed only the appearance of royal authority: yet was this mere appearance of considerable advantage to the English; and divided the duty and affections of the French between them and the dauphin. This prince was proclaimed and crowned king of France at Poictiers, by the name of Charles VII. Rheims, the place where this ceremony is usually performed, was at that time in the hands of his enemies.

Catharine of France, Henry’s widow, married, soon after his death, a Welsh gentleman, Sir Owen Tudor, said to be descended from the ancient princes of that country: she bore him two sons, Edmund and Jasper, of whom the eldest was created earl of Richmond; the second earl of Pembroke The family of Tudor, first raised to distinction by this alliance, mounted afterwards the throne of England.

The long schism, which had divided the Latin church for near forty years, was finally terminated in this reign by the council of Constance; which deposed the pope, John XXIII., for his crimes, and elected Martin V. in his place, who was acknowledged by almost all the kingdoms of Europe. This great and unusual act of authority in the council, gave the Roman pontiffs ever after a mortal antipathy to those assemblies. The same jealousy which had long prevailed in most European countries, between the civil aristocracy and monarchy, now also took place between these powers in the ecclesiastical body. But the great separation of the bishops in the several states, and the difficulty of assembling them, gave the pope a mighty advantage, and made it more easy for him to centre all the powers of the hierarchy in his own person. The cruelty and treachery which attended the punishment of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, the unhappy disciples of Wickliffe, who, in violation of a safe-conduct were burned alive for their errors by the council of Constance prove this melancholy truth, that toleration is none of the virtues of priests in any form of ecclesiastical government But as the English nation had little or no concern in these great transactions, we are here the more concise in relating them.

The first commission of array which we meet with, was issued in this reign. [1] The military part of the feudal system, which was the most essential circumstance of it, was entirely dissolved, and could no longer serve for the defence of the kingdom. Henry, therefore, when he went to

France, in 1415, empowered certain commissioners to take in each county a review of all the freemen able to bear arms, to divide them into companies, and to keep them in readiness for resisting an enemy. This was the era when the feudal militia in England gave place to one which was perhaps still less orderly and regular.

* Rymer, vol, ix. , 255.

We have an authentic and exact account of the ordinary revenue of the crown during this reign; and it amounts only to fifty-five thousand seven hundred and fourteen pounds ten shillings and tenpence a year. [1] This is nearly the same with the revenue of Henry III.; and the kings of England had neither become much richer nor poorer in the course of so many years. The ordinary expense of the government amounted to forty-two thousand five hundred and seven pounds sixteen shillings and tenpence; so that the king had a surplus only of thirteen thousand two hundred and six pounds fourteen shillings for the support of his household; for his wardrobe; for the expense of embassies; and other articles. This sum was nowise sufficient: he was therefore obliged to have frequent recourse to parliamentary supplies, and was thus, even in time of peace, not altogether independent of his people. But wars were attended with a great expense, which neither the prince’s ordinary revenue, nor the extraordinary supplies, were able to bear; and the sovereign was always reduced to many miserable shifts, in order to make any tolerable figure in them. He commonly borrowed money from all quarters; he pawned his jewels, and sometimes the crown itself; [2] he ran in arrears to his army; and he was often obliged, notwithstanding all these expedients, to stop in the midst of his career of victory, and to grant truces to the enemy. The high pay which was given to soldiers agreed very ill with this low income. All the extraordinary supplies, granted by parliament to Henry during the course of his reign, were only seven tenths and fifteenths, about two hundred and three thousand pounds. [3] It is easy to compute how soon this money must be exhausted by armies of twenty-four thousand archers and six thousand horse; when each archer had sixpence a day, [4] and each horseman two shillings. The most splendid successes proved commonly fruitless when supported by so poor a revenue; and the debts and difficulties which the king thereby incurred, made him pay dear for his victories. The civil administration, likewise, even in time of peace, could never be very regular, where the government was so ill enabled to support itself.

* Rymer, vol. x. .

* * Rymer, vol. x. .

* * * Parliamentary History, vol. ii. .

* * * * It appears from many passages of Rymer, particularly vol. ix , that the king paid twenty marks a year for an archer, which is a good deal above sixpence a day. The price had risen, as it is natural, by raising the denomination of money.

Henry, till within a year of his death, owed debts which he had contracted when prince of Wales. [1] It was in vain that the parliament pretended to restrain him from arbitrary practices, when he was reduced to such necessities. Though the right of levying purveyance for instance, had been expressly guarded against by the Great Charter itself, and was frequently complained of by the commons, it was found absolutely impracticable to abolish it; and the parliament at length, submitting to it as a legal prerogative, contented themselves with enacting laws to limit and confine it. The duke of Glocester, in the reign of Richard II., possessed a revenue of sixty thousand crowns, (about thirty thousand pounds a year of our present money,) as we learn from Froissard, [2] and was consequently richer than the king himself, if all circumstances be duly considered.

It is remarkable, that the city of Calais alone was an annual expense to the crown of nineteen thousand one hundred and nineteen pounds; [3] that is, above a third of the common charge of the government in time of peace. This fortress was of no use to the defence of England, and only gave that kingdom an inlet to annoy France. Ireland cost two thousand pounds a year, over and above its own revenue; which was certainly very low. Every thing conspires to give us a very mean idea of the state of Europe in those ages.

From the most early times till the reign of Edward III., the denomination of money had never been altered; a pound sterling was still a pound troy; that is, about three pounds of our present money. That conqueror was the first that innovated in this important article. In the twentieth of his reign, he coined twenty-two shillings from a pound troy; in his twenty-seventh year, he coined twenty-five shillings. But Henry V., who was also a conqueror, raised still farther the denomination, and counted thirty shillings from a pound troy: [4] his revenue therefore must have been about one hundred and ten thousand pounds of our present money; and by the cheapness of provisions, was equivalent to above three hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

* Rymer, vol. x. .

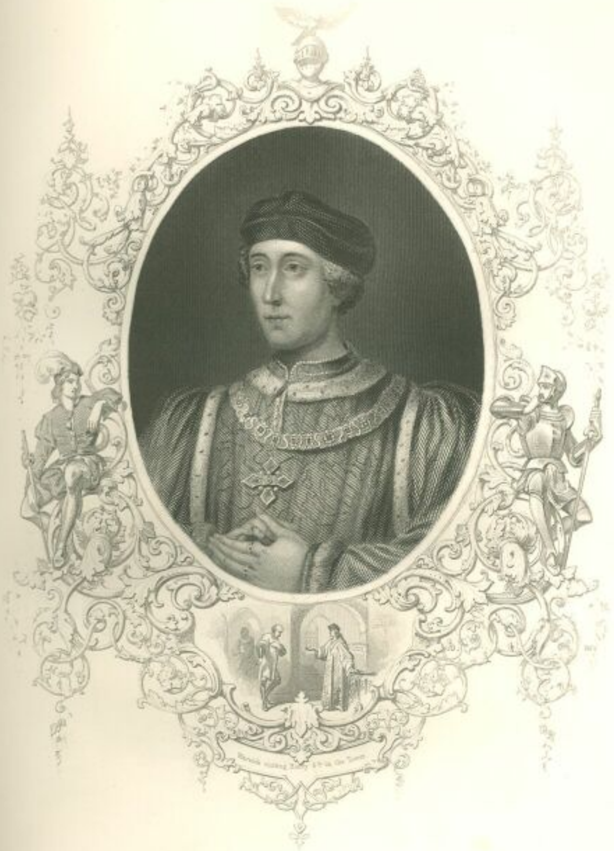
* * Liv. iv. cha.

* * * Rymer, vol. x. .

* * * * Fleetwood’s Chronicon Preciosum,

None of the princes of the house of Lancaster ventured to impose taxes without consent of parliament: their doubtful or bad title became so far of advantage to the constitution. The rule was then fixed, and could not safely be broken afterwards, even by more absolute princes.

CHAPTER XX.


Warwick visiting Henry 6th in the Tower

HENRY VI.

From a Painting on Board at Kensington Palace.

LONDON: JAMES S. VIRTUE.

HENRY VI.

1422.

During the reigns of the Lancastrian princes, the authority of parliament seems to have been more confirmed, and the privileges of the people more regarded, than during any former period; and the two preceding kings, though men of great spirit and abilities, abstained from such exertions of prerogative, as even weak princes, whose title was undisputed, were tempted to think they might venture upon with impunity. The long minority, of which there was now the prospect, encouraged still further the lords and commons to extend their influence; and without paying much regard to the verbal destination of Henry V., they assumed the power of giving a new arrangement to the whole administration. They declined altogether the name of “Regent” with regard to England: they appointed the duke of Bedford “protector” or “guardian” of that kingdom, a title which they supposed to imply less authority: they invested the duke of Glocester with the same dignity during the absence of his elder brother; [1] and in order to limit the power of both these princes, they appointed a council, without whose advice and approbation no measure of importance could be determined. [2] The person and education of the infant prince were committed to Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, his great uncle, and the legitimated son of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster; a prelate who, as his family could never have any pretensions to the crown, might safely, they thought, be intrusted with that important charge. [3]

* Rymer, vol. x. . Cotton, .

* * Cotton, .

* * * Hall, fol. 83. Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

The two princes, the dukes of Bedford and Glocester, who seemed injured by this plan of government, yet, being persons of great integrity and honor, acquiesced in any appointment which tended to give security to the public; and as the wars in France appeared to be the object of greatest moment, they avoided every dispute which might throw an obstacle in the way of foreign conquests.

When the state of affairs between the English and French kings was considered with a superficial eye, every advantage seemed to be on the side of the former; and the total expulsion of Charles appeared to be an event which might naturally be expected from the superior power of his competitor. Though Henry was yet in his infancy, the administration was devolved on the duke of Bedford, the most accomplished prince of his age; whose experience, prudence, valor, and generosity qualified him for his high office, and enabled him both to maintain union among his friends, and to gain the confidence of his enemies. The whole power of England was at his command; he was at the head of armies inured to victory; he was seconded by the most renowned generals of the age, the earls of Somerset, Warwick, Salisbury, Suffolk, and Arundel, Sir John Talbot, and Sir John Fastolffe: and besides Guienne, the ancient inheritance of England, he was master of the capital, and of almost all the northern provinces, which were well enabled to furnish him with supplies both of men and money, and to assist and support his English forces.

But Charles, notwithstanding the present inferiority of his power, possessed some advantages, derived partly from his situation, partly from his personal character, which promised him success, and served, first to control, then to overbalance, the superior force and opulence of his enemies. He was the true and undoubted heir of the monarchy: all Frenchmen, who knew the interests, or desired the independence, of their country, turned their eyes towards him as its sole resource; the exclusion given him by the imbecility of his father, and the forced or precipitate consent of the states, had plainly no validity: that spirit of faction which had blinded the people, could not long hold them in so gross a delusion: their national and inveterate hatred against the English, the authors of all their calamities, must soon revive, and inspire them with indignation at bending their necks under the yoke of that hostile people: great nobles and princes, accustomed to maintain an independence against their native sovereigns, would never endure a subjection to strangers; and though most of the princes of the blood were, since the fatal battle of Azincour detained prisoners in England, the inhabitants of their de mesnes, their friends their vassals, all declared a zealous attachment to the king and exerted themselves in resisting the violence of foreign invaders.

Charles himself, though only in his twentieth year, was of a character well calculated to become the object of these benevolent sentiments; and perhaps from the favor which naturally attends youth, was the more likely, on account of his tender age, to acquire the good-will of his native subjects. He was a prince of the most friendly and benign disposition, of easy and familiar manners, and of a just and sound, though not a very vigorous understanding. Sincere, generous, affable, he engaged from affection the services of his followers, even while his low fortunes might make it their interest to desert him; and the lenity of his temper could pardon in them those sallies of discontent, to which princes in his situation are so frequently exposed. The love of pleasure often seduced him into indolence; but amidst all his irregularities, the goodness of his heart still shone forth; and by exerting at intervals his courage and activity, he proved that his general remissness proceeded not from the want either of a just spirit of ambition, or of personal valor.

Though the virtues of this amiable prince lay some time in obscurity, the duke of Bedford knew that his title alone made him formidable, and that every foreign assistance would be requisite, ere an English regent could hope to complete the conquest of France; an enterprise which, however it might seem to be much advanced, was still exposed to many and great difficulties. The chief circumstance which had procured to the English all their present advantages, was the resentment of the duke of Burgundy against Charles; and as that prince seemed intent rather on gratifying his passion than consulting his interests, it was the more easy for the regent, by demonstrations of respect and confidence, to retain him in the alliance of England. He bent, therefore, all his endeavors to that purpose: he gave the duke every proof of friendship and regard: he even offered him the regency of France, which Philip declined: and that he might corroborate national connections by private ties, he concluded his own marriage with the princess of Burgundy, which had been stipulated by the treaty of Arras.

1423.

Being sensible that, next to the alliance of Burgundy, the friendship of the duke of Brittany was of the greatest importance towards forwarding the English conquests; and that, as the provinces of France, already subdued, lay between the dominions of these two princes, he could never hope for any security without preserving his connections with them; he was very intent on strengthening himself also from that quarter. The duke of Brittany, having received many just reasons of displeasure from the ministers of Charles, had already acceded to the treaty of Troye, and had, with other vassals of the crown, done homage to Henry V. in quality of heir to the kingdom: but as the regent knew that the duke was much governed by his brother, the count of Richemont, he endeavored to fix his friendship, by paying court and doing services to this haughty and ambitious prince.

Arthur, count of Richemont, had been taken prisoner at the battle of Azincour, had been treated with great indulgence by the late king, and had even been permitted on his parole to take a journey into Brittany, where the state of affairs required his presence. The death of that victorious monarch happened before Richemont's return; and this prince pretended that, as his word was given personally to Henry V., he was not bound to fulfil it towards his son and successor; a chicane which the regent, as he could not force him to compliance, deemed it prudent to overlook. An interview was settled at Amiens between the dukes of Bedford, Burgundy, and Brittany, at which the count of Richemont was also present: [1] the alliance was renewed between these princes: and the regent persuaded Philip to give in marriage to Richemont his eldest sister, widow of the deceased dauphin, Lewis, the elder brother of Charles. Thus Arthur was connected both with the regent and the duke of Burgundy, and seemed engaged by interest to prosecute the same object, in forwarding the success of the English arms.

* Hall. fol. 84. Monstrelet, vol. i. p 4. Stowe, .

While the vigilance of the duke of Bedford was employed in gaining or confirming these allies, whose vicinity rendered them so important, he did not overlook the state of more remote countries. The duke of Albany, regent of Scotland, had died: and his power had devolved on Murdac, his son, a prince of a weak understanding and indolent disposition; who, far from possessing the talents requisite for the government of that fierce people, was not even able to maintain authority in his own family, or restrain the petulance and insolence of his sons. The ardor of the Scots to serve in

France, where Charles treated them with great honor and distinction, and where the regent’s brother enjoyed the dignity of constable, broke out afresh under this feeble administration: new succors daily came over, and filled the armies of the French king: the earl of Douglas conducted a reënforcement of five thousand men to his assistance: and it was justly to be dreaded that the Scots, by commencing open hostilities in the north, would occasion a diversion still more considerable of the English power, and would ease Charles, in part, of that load by which he was at present so grievously oppressed. The duke of Bedford, therefore, persuaded the English council to form an alliance with James, their prisoner; to free that prince from his long captivity; and to connect him with England by marrying him to a daughter of the earl of Somerset, and cousin of the young king. [1] As the Scottish regent, tired of his present dignity, which he was not able to support, was now become entirely sincere in his applications for James’s liberty, the treaty was soon concluded; a ransom of forty thousand pounds was stipulated; [2] and the king of Scots was restored to the throne of his ancestors, and proved, in his short reign, one of the most illustrious princes that had ever governed that kingdom. He was murdered, in 1437, by his traitorous kinsman the earl of Athole. His affections inclined to the side of France; but the English had never reason during his lifetime to complain of any breach of the neutrality by Scotland.

* Hall, fol. 86. Stowe, . Grafton, .

* Rymer, vol. x. , 300, 326.

But the regent was not so much employed in these political negotiations as to neglect the operations of war, from which alone he could hope to succeed in expelling the French monarch. Though the chief seat of Charles’s power lay in the southern provinces beyond the Loire, his partisans were possessed of some fortresses in the northern, and even in the neighborhood of Paris; and it behoved the duke of Bedford first to clear these countries from the enemy, before he could think of attempting more distant conquests. The Castle of Dorsoy was taken after a siege of six weeks: that of Noyelle and the town of Rue, in Picardy, underwent the same fate: Pont sur Seine, Vertus, Montaigu, were subjected by the English arms: and a more considerable advantage was soon after gained by the united forces of England and Burgundy. John Stuart, constable of Scotland, and the lord of Estissac had formed the siege of Crevant, in Burgundy: the earls of Salisbury and Suffolk, with the count of Toulongeon, were sent to its relief: a fierce and well-disputed action ensued; the Scots and French were defeated: the constable of Scotland and the count of Ventadour were taken prisoners; and above a thousand men, among whom was Sir William Hamilton, were left on the field of battle. [1] The taking of Gaillon upon the Seine, and of La Charité upon the Loire, was the fruit of this victory: and as this latter place opened an entrance into the southern provinces, the acquisition of it appeared on that account of the greater importance to the duke of Bedford, and seemed to promise a successful issue to the war.

* Hall, fol. 86. Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Holingshed, p. 586., Grafton, .

1424.

The more Charles was threatened with an invasion in those provinces which adhered to him, the more necessary it became that he should retain possession of every fortress which he still held within the quarters of the enemy. The duke of Bedford had besieged in person, during the space of three months, the town of Yvri, in Normandy: and the brave governor, unable to make any longer defence, was obliged to capitulate; and he agreed to surrender the town, if, before a certain term, no relief arrived. Charles, informed of these conditions, determined to make an attempt for saving the place. He collected, with some difficulty, an army of fourteen thousand men, of whom one half were Scots; and he sent them thither under the command of the earl of Buchan, constable of France; who was attended by the earl of Douglas, his countryman, the duke of Alençon, the mareschal de la Fayette, the count of Aumale, and the viscount of Narbonne. When the constable arrived within a few leagues of Yvri, he found that he was come too late, and that the place was already surrendered. He immediately turned to the left, and sat down before Verneuil, which the inhabitants, in spite of the garrison, delivered up to him. [1] Buchan might now have returned in safety, and with the glory of making an acquisition no less important than the place which he was sent to relieve: but hearing of Bedford’s approach, he called a council of war, in order to deliberate concerning the conduct which he should hold in this emergence.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Grafton, .

The wiser part of the council declared for a retreat; and represented, that all the past misfortunes of the French had proceeded from their rashness in giving battle when no necessity obliged them; that this army was the last resource of the king, and the only defence of the few provinces which remained to him; and that every reason invited him to embrace cautious measures, which might leave time for his subjects to return to a sense of their duty, and give leisure for discord to arise among his enemies, who, being united by no common bond of interest or motive of alliance, could not long persevere in their animosity against him. All these prudential considerations were overborne by a vain point of honor, not to turn their backs to the enemy; and they resolved to await the arrival of the duke of Bedford.

The numbers were nearly equal in this action; and as the long continuance of war had introduced discipline, which, however imperfect, sufficed to maintain some appearance of order in such small armies, the battle was fierce, and well disputed, and attended with bloodshed on both sides. The constable drew up his forces under the walls of Verneuil, and resolved to abide the attack of the enemy: but the impatience of the viscount of Narbonne, who advanced precipitately, and obliged the whole line to follow him in some hurry and confusion, was the cause of the misfortune which ensued. The English archers, fixing their palisadoes before them, according to their usual custom, sent a volley of arrows amidst the thickest of the French army; and though beaten from their ground, and obliged to take shelter among the baggage, they soon rallied, and continued to do great execution upon the enemy. The duke of Bedford, meanwhile, at the head of the men at arms, made impression on the French, broke their ranks, chased them off the field, and rendered the victory entirely complete and decisive.[1]

* Hall, fol. 83, 89, 90. Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Stowe, p 365., Holingshed, .

The constable himself perished in battle as well as the earl of Douglas and his son, the counts of Aumale, Tonnerre, and Ventadour, with many other considerable nobility. The duke of Alençon, the mareschal de la Fayette, the lords of Gaucour and Mortemar, were taken prisoners. There fell about four thousand of the French, and sixteen hundred of the English;

a loss esteemed, at that time, so unusual on the side of the victors, that the duke of Bedford forbade all rejoicings for his success, Verneuil was surrendered next day by capitulation. [1]

* Monstrelet. vol. ii. .

The condition of the king of France now appeared very terrible, and almost desperate. He had lost the flower of his army and the bravest of his nobles in this fatal action: he had no resource either for recruiting or subsisting his troops; he wanted money even for his personal subsistence; and though all parade of a court was banished, it was with difficulty he could keep a table, supplied with the plainest necessaries, for himself and his few followers: every day brought him intelligence of some loss or misfortune: towns which were bravely defended, were obliged at last to surrender for want of relief or supply: he saw his partisans entirely chased from all the provinces which lay north of the Loire: and he expected soon to lose, by the united efforts of his enemies, all the territories of which he had hitherto continued master; when an incident happened which saved him on the brink of ruin, and lost the English such an opportunity for completing their conquests, as they never afterwards were able to recall.

Jacqueline, countess of Hainault and Holland, and heir of these provinces, had espoused John, duke of Brabant cousin-german to the duke of Burgundy; but having made this choice from the usual motives of princes, she soon found reason to repent of the unequal alliance. She was a princess of a masculine spirit and uncommon understanding: the duke of Brabant was of a sickly complexion and weak mind: she was in the vigor of her age; he had only reached his fifteenth year: these causes had inspired her with such contempt for her husband, which soon proceeded to antipathy that she determined to dissolve a marriage, where, it is probable, nothing but the ceremony had as yet intervened. The court of Rome was commonly very open to applications of this nature, when seconded by power and money; but as the princess foresaw great opposition from her husband’s relations, and was impatient to effect her purpose, she made her escape into England, and threw herself under the protection of the duke of Glocester. That prince, with many noble qualities had the defect of being governed by an impetuous temper and vehement passions; and he was rashly induced, as well by the charms of the countess herself, as by the prospect of possessing her rich inheritance, to offer himself to her as a husband. Without waiting for a papal dispensation; without endeavoring to reconcile the duke of Burgundy to the measure; he entered into a contract of marriage with Jaqueline, and immediately attempted to put himself in possession of her dominions. Philip was disgusted with so precipitate a conduct: he resented the injury done to the duke of Brabant, his near relation: he dreaded to have the English established on all sides of him: and he foresaw the consequences which must attend the extensive and uncontrolled dominion of that nation, if, before the full settlement of their power, they insulted and injured an ally to whom they had already been so much indebted, and who was still so necessary for supporting them in their further progress. He encouraged, therefore, the duke of Brabant to make resistance: he engaged many of Jaqueline’s subjects to adhere to that prince: he himself marched troops to his support: and as the duke of Glocester still persevered in his purpose, a sharp war was suddenly kindled in the Low Countries. The quarrel soon became personal as well as political. The English prince wrote to the duke of Burgundy, complaining of the opposition made to his pretensions; and though, in the main, he employed amicable terms in his letter, he took notice of some falsehoods into which, he said, Philip had been betrayed during the course of these transactions. This unguarded expression was highly resented: the duke of Burgundy insisted that he should retract it; and mutual challenges and defiances passed between them on this occasion. [1]

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. , 20, 21.

The duke of Bedford could easily foresee the bad effects of so ill-timed and imprudent a quarrel. All the succors which he expected from England, and which were so necessary in this critical emergence, were intercepted by his brother, and employed in Holland and Hainault: the forces of the duke of Burgundy, which he also depended on, were diverted by the same wars: and besides this double loss, he was in imminent danger of alienating forever that confederate whose friendship was of the utmost importance, and whom the late king had enjoined him, with his dying breath, to gratify by every mark of regard and attachment. He represented all these topics to the duke of Glocester: he endeavored to mitigate the resentment of the duke of Burgundy: he interposed with his good offices between these princes, but was not successful in any of his endeavors; and he found that the impetuosity of his brother’s temper was still the chief obstacle to all accommodation. [1] For this reason, instead of pushing the victory gained at Verneuil, he found himself obliged to take a journey into England, and to try, by his counsels and authority, to moderate the measures of the duke of Glocester.

There had likewise broken out some differences among the English ministry, which had proceeded to great extremities, and which required the regent's presence to compose them. [2] The bishop of Winchester, to whom the care of the king's person and education had been intrusted, was a prelate of great capacity and experience, but of an intriguing and dangerous character; and as he aspired to the government of affairs, he had continual disputes with his nephew the protector; and he gained frequent advantages over the vehement and impolitic temper of that prince.

1425.

The duke of Bedford employed the authority of parliament to reconcile them; and these rivals were obliged to promise, before that assembly, that they would bury all quarrels in oblivion. [3] Time also seemed to open expedients for composing the difference with the duke of Burgundy. The credit of that prince had procured a bull from the pope; by which not only Jaqueline's contract with the duke of Glocester was annulled, but it was also declared that, even in case of the duke of Brabant's death, it should never be lawful for her to espouse the English prince. Humphrey, despairing of success, married another lady of inferior rank, who had lived some time with him as his mistress. [4]

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

* * Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * * Hall, fol. 98, 99. Hollingshed, , 594. Polydore Virgil, . Grafton, , 519.

* * * * Stowe, p 367.

The duke of Brabant died; and his widow, before she could recover possession of her dominions, was obliged to declare the duke of Burgundy her heir, in case she should die without issue, and to promise never to marry without his consent. But though the affair was thus terminated to the satisfaction of Philip, it left a disagreeable impression on his mind: it excited an extreme jealousy of the English, and opened his eyes to his true interests: and as nothing but his animosity against Charles had engaged him in alliance with them, it counterbalanced that passion by another of the same kind, which in the end became prevalent, and brought him back, by degrees, to his natural connections with his family and his native country.

About the same time, the duke of Brittany began to withdraw himself from the English alliance. His brother, the count of Richemont, though connected by marriage with the dukes of Burgundy and Bedford, was extremely attached by inclination to the French interest; and he willingly hearkened to all the advances which Charles made him for obtaining his friendship. The staff of constable, vacant by the earl of Buchan's death, was offered him; and as his martial and ambitious temper aspired to the command of armies, which he had in vain attempted to obtain from the duke of Bedford, he not only accepted that office, but brought over his brother to an alliance with the French monarch. The new constable, having made this one change in his measures, firmly adhered ever after to his engagements with France. Though his pride and violence, which would admit of no rival in his master's confidence, and even prompted him to assassinate the other favorites, had so much disgusted Charles, that he once banished him the court, and refused to admit him to his presence, he still acted with vigor for the service of that monarch, and obtained at last, by his perseverance, the pardon of all past offences.

1426.

In this situation, the duke of Bedford, on his return, found the affairs of France, after passing eight months in England. The duke of Burgundy was much disgusted. The duke of Brittany had entered into engagements with Charles, and had done homage to that prince for his duchy. The French had been allowed to recover from the astonishment into which their frequent disasters had thrown them. An incident too had happened, which served extremely to raise their courage. The earl of Warwick had besieged Montargis with a small army of three thousand men, and the place was reduced to extremity, when the bastard of Orleans undertook to throw relief into it. This general, who was natural son to the prince assassinated by the duke of Burgundy, and who was afterwards created count of Dunois, conducted a body of one thousand six hundred men to Montargis, and made an attack on the enemy's trenches with so much valor, prudence, and good fortune, that he not only penetrated into the place, but gave a severe blow to the English, and obliged Warwick to raise the siege. [1] This was the first signal action that raised the fame of Dunois, and opened him the road to those great honors which he afterwards attained.

But the regent, soon after his arrival, revived the reputation of the English arms by an important enterprise which he happily achieved. He secretly brought together, in separate detachments, a considerable army to the frontiers of Brittany; and fell so unexpectedly upon that province, that the duke, unable to make resistance, yielded to all the terms required of him. he renounced the French alliance; he engaged to maintain the treaty of Troye; he acknowledged the duke of Bedford for regent of France; and promised to do homage for his duchy to King Henry. [2] And the English prince, having thus freed himself from a dangerous enemy who lay behind him, resolved on an undertaking, which, if successful, would, he hoped, cast the balance between the two nations, and prepare the way for the final conquest of France.

1428.

The city of Orleans was so situated between the provinces commanded by Henry, and those possessed by Charles, that it opened an easy entrance to either; and as the duke of Bedford intended to make a great effort for penetrating into the south of France, it behoved him to begin with this place, which, in the present circumstances, was become the most important in the kingdom. He committed the conduct of the enterprise to the earl of Salisbury, who had newly brought him a reënforcement of six thousand men from England, and who had much distinguished himself by his abilities during the course of the present war. Salisbury, passing the Loire, made himself master of several small places, which surrounded Orleans on that side; [3] and as his intentions were thereby known, the French king used every expedient to supply the city with a garrison and provisions, and enable it to maintain a long and obstinate siege.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. , 33. Holingshed, .

* * Monstrelet, vol. ii. , 36.

* * * Monstrelet, vol. ii. , 39. Polyd. Virg. .

The lord of Gaucour, a brave and experienced captain, was appointed governor: many officers of distinction threw themselves into the place: the troops which they conducted were inured to war, and were determined to make the most obstinate resistance: and even the inhabitants, disciplined by the long continuance of hostilities, were well qualified, in their own defence, to second the efforts of the most veteran forces. The eyes of all Europe were turned towards this scene; where, it was reasonably supposed, the French were to make their last stand for maintaining the independence of their monarchy, and the rights of their sovereign.

The earl of Salisbury at last approached the place with an army, which consisted only of ten thousand men; and not being able, with so small a force, to invest so great a city, that commanded a bridge over the Loire, he stationed himself on the southern side towards Sologne, leaving the other, towards the Beausse, still open to the enemy. He there attacked the fortifications which guarded the entrance to the bridge; and, after an obstinate resistance, he carried several of them; but was himself killed by a cannon ball as he was taking a view of the enemy. [1]

* Hall, fol. 105. Monstrelet, vol. ii. ., Stowe, p. 369. Hoingshed, . Grafton, .

The earl of Suffolk succeeded to the command; and being reënforced with great numbers of English and Burgundians, he passed the river with the main body of his army, and invested Orleans on the other side. As it was now the depth of winter, Suffolk, who found it difficult, in that season, to throw up intrenchments all around, contented himself, for the present, with erecting redoubts at different distances, where his men were lodged in safety, and were ready to intercept the supplies which the enemy might attempt to throw into the place. Though he had several pieces of artillery in his camp, (and this is among the first sieges in Europe where cannon were found to be of importance,) the art of engineering was hitherto so imperfect, that Suffolk trusted more to famine than to force for subduing the city; and he purposed in the spring to render the circumvallation more complete, by drawing intrenchments from one redoubt to another. Numberless feats of valor were performed both by the besiegers and besieged during the winter: bold sallies were made, and repulsed with equal boldness: convoys were sometimes introduced, and often intercepted: the supplies were still unequal to the consumption of the place: and the English seemed daily, though slowly, to be advancing towards the completion of their enterprise.

1429.

But while Suffolk lay in this situation, the French parties ravaged all the country around; and the besiegers, who were obliged to draw their provisions from a distance were themselves exposed to the danger of want and famine. Sir John Fastolffe was bringing up a large convoy of even kind of stores, which he escorted with a detachment of two thousand five hundred men; when he was attacked by a body of four thousand French, under the command of the counts of Clermont and Dunois. Fastolffe drew up his troops behind the wagons; but the French generals, afraid of attacking him in that posture, planted a battery of cannon against him; which threw every thing into confusion, and would have insured them the victory, had not the impatience of some Scottish troops, who broke the line of battle, brought on an engagement, in which Fastolffe was victorious. The count of Dunois was wounded; and about five hundred French were left on the field of battle. This action, which was of great importance in the present conjuncture, was commonly called the battle of Herrings; because the convoy brought a great quantity of that kind of provisions, for the use of the English army during the Lent season. [1]

Charles seemed now to have but one expedient for saving this city, which had been so long invested. The duke of Orleans, who was still prisoner in England, prevailed on the protector and the council to consent that all his demesnes should be allowed to preserve a neutrality during the war, and should be sequestered, for greater security, into the hands of the duke of Burgundy. This prince, who was much less cordial in the English interests than formerly, went to Paris, and made the proposal to the duke of Bedford; but the regent coldly replied, that he was not of a humor to beat the bushes while others ran away with the game; an answer which so disgusted the duke, that he recalled all the troops of Burgundy that acted in the siege. [2]

* Hall, fol. 100. Monstrelet, vol. ii. , 42. Stowe, p. 369. Holingshed, . Polyd. Virg. . Grafton, p. 532.

* * Hall, fol. 106. Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Stowe, . Grafton,

This place, however, was every day more and more closely invested by the English: great scarcity began already to be felt by the garrison and inhabitants: Charles, in despair of collecting an army which should dare to approach the enemy’s intrenchments, not only gave the city for lost, but began to entertain a very dismal prospect with regard to the general state of his affairs. He saw that the country in which he had hitherto with great difficulty subsisted, would be laid entirely open to the invasion of a powerful and victorious enemy; and he already entertained thoughts of retiring with the remains of his forces into Languedoc and Dauphiny, and defending himself as long as possible in those remote provinces. But it was fortunate for this good prince that, as he lay under the dominion of the fair, the women whom he consulted had the spirit to support his sinking resolution in this desperate extremity. Mary of Anjou, his queen, a princess of great merit and prudence, vehemently opposed this measure, which, she foresaw, would discourage all his partisans, and serve as a general signal for deserting a prince who seemed himself to despair of success. His mistress too, the fair Agnes Sorel, who lived in entire amity with the queen, seconded all her remonstrances, and threatened that, if he thus pusillanimously threw away the sceptre of France, she would seek in the court of England a fortune more correspondent to her wishes. Love was able to rouse in the breast of Charles that courage which ambition had failed to excite: he resolved to dispute every inch of ground with an imperious enemy, and rather to perish with honor in the midst of his friends, than yield ingloriously to his bad fortune; when relief was unexpectedly brought him by another female of a very different character, who gave rise to one of the most singular revolutions that is to be met with in history.

In the village of Domremi, near Vaucouleurs, on the borders of Lorraine, there lived a country girl of twenty-seven years of age, called Joan d’Arc, who was servant in a small inn, and who in that station had been accustomed to tend the horses of the guests, to ride them without a saddle to the watering-place, and to perform other offices which, in well frequented inns, commonly fall to the share of the men servants. [1]

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* Hall, fol. 107. Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Grafton, p. 534.

This girl was of an irreproachable life, and had not hitherto been remarked for any singularity; whether that she had met with no occasion to excite her genius, or that the unskilful eyes of those who conversed with her had not been able to discern her uncommon merit. It is easy to imagine, that the present situation of France was an interesting object even to persons of the lowest rank, and would become the frequent subject of conversation: a young prince, expelled his throne by the sedition of native subjects, and by the arms of strangers, could not fail to move the compassion of all his people whose hearts were uncorrupted by faction; and the peculiar character of Charles, so strongly inclined to friendship and the tender passions, naturally rendered him the hero of that sex whose generous minds know no bounds in their affections. The siege of Orleans, the progress of the English before that place, the great distress of the garrison and inhabitants, the importance of saving this city and its brave defenders, had turned thither the public eye; and Joan, inflamed by the general sentiment, was seized with a wild desire of bringing relief to her sovereign in his present distresses. Her unexperienced mind, working day and night on this favorite object, mistook the impulses of passion for heavenly inspirations; and she fancied that she saw visions, and heard voices, exhorting her to reëstablish the throne of France, and to expel the foreign invaders. An uncommon intrepidity of temper made her overlook all the dangers which might attend her in such a path; and thinking herself destined by Heaven to this office, she threw aside all that bashfulness and timidity so natural to her sex, her years, and her low station. She went to Vaucouleurs; procured admission to Baudricourt, the governor; informed him of her inspirations and intentions; and conjured him not to neglect the voice of God, who spoke through her, but to second those heavenly revelations which impelled her to this glorious enterprise. Baudricourt treated her at first with some neglect; but on her frequent returns to him, and importunate solicitations, he began to remark something extraordinary in the maid, and was inclined, at all hazards, to make so easy an experiment. It is uncertain whether this gentleman had discernment enough to perceive, that great use might be made with the vulgar of so uncommon an engine; or, what is more likely in that credulous age, was himself a convert to this visionary; but he adopted at last the schemes of Joan; and he gave her some attendants, who conducted her to the French court, which at that time resided at Chinon.

It is the business of history to distinguish between the miraculous and the marvellous; to reject the first in all narrations merely profane and human; to doubt the second; and when obliged by unquestionable testimony, as in the present case, to admit of something extraordinary, to receive as little of it as is consistent with the known facts and circumstances. It is pretended, that Joan, immediately on her admission, knew the king, though she had never seen his face before, and though he purposely kept himself in the crowd of courtiers, and had laid aside every thing in his dress and apparel which might distinguish him: that she offered him, in the name of the supreme Creator, to raise the siege of Orleans, and conduct him to Rheims to be there crowned and anointed; and on his expressing doubts of her mission, revealed to him, before some sworn confidants, a secret which was unknown to all the world beside himself, and which nothing but a heavenly inspiration could have discovered to her: and that she demanded, as the instrument of her future victories, a particular sword, which was kept in the church of St. Catharine of Fierbois, and which, though she had never seen it, she described by all its marks, and by the place in which it had long lain neglected. [1] This is certain, that all these miraculous stories were spread abroad, in order to captivate the vulgar. The more the king and his ministers were determined to give into the illusion, the more scruples they pretended. An assembly of grave doctors and theologians cautiously examined Joan's mission, and pronounced it undoubted and supernatural. She was sent to the parliament, then residing at Poictiers; and was interrogated before that assembly: the presidents, the counsellors, who came persuaded of her imposture, went away convinced of her inspiration. A ray of hope began to break through that despair in which the minds of all men were before enveloped. Heaven had now declared itself in favor of France, and had laid bare its outstretched arm to take vengeance on her invaders. Few could distinguish between the impulse of inclination and the force of conviction; and none would submit to the trouble of so disagreeable a scrutiny.

* Hall, fol. 107. Holingshed, .

After these artificial precautions and preparations had been for some time employed, Joan's requests were at last complied with: she was armed cap-à-pie, mounted on horseback, and shown in that martial habiliment before the whole people. Her dexterity in managing her steed, though acquired in her former occupation, was regarded as a fresh proof of her mission; and she was received with the loudest acclamations by the spectators. Her former occupation was even denied: she was no longer the servant of an inn. She was converted into a shepherdess, an employment much more agreeable to the imagination. To render her still more interesting, near ten years were subtracted from her age; and all the sentiments of love and of chivalry were thus united to those of enthusiasm, in order to inflame the fond fancy of the people with prepossessions in her favor.

When the engine was thus dressed up in full splendor, it was determined to essay its force against the enemy. Joan was sent to Blois, where a large convoy was prepared for the supply of Orleans, and an army of ten thousand men, under the command of St. Severe, assembled to escort it. She ordered all the soldiers to confess themselves before they set out on the enterprise: she banished from the camp all women of bad fame: she displayed in her hands a consecrated banner, where the Supreme Being was represented, grasping the globe or earth, and surrounded with flower de luces. And she insisted, in right of her prophetic mission, that the convoy should enter Orleans by the direct road from the side of Beausse: but the count of Dunois, unwilling to submit the rules of the military art to her inspirations, ordered it to approach by the other side of the river, where he knew the weakest part of the English army was stationed.

Previous to this attempt, the maid had written to the regent, and to the English generals before Orleans, commanding them, in the name of the omnipotent Creator, by whom she was commissioned, immediately to raise the siege; and to evacuate France; and menacing them with divine vengeance in case of their disobedience. All the English affected to speak with derision of the maid, and of her heavenly commission; and said, that the French king was now indeed reduced to a sorry pass, when he had recourse to such ridiculous expedients: but they felt their imagination secretly struck with the vehement persuasion which prevailed in all around them; and they waited with an anxious expectation, not unmixed with horror, for the issue of these extraordinary preparations.

As the convoy approached the river, a sally was made by the garrison on the side of Beausse, to prevent the English general from sending any detachment to the other side: the provisions were peaceably embarked in boats, which the inhabitants of Orleans had sent to receive them: the maid covered with her troops the embarkation: Suffolk did not venture to attack her: and the French general carried back the army in safety to Blois; an alteration of affairs which was already visible to all the world, and which had a proportional effect on the minds of both parties.

The maid entered the city of Orleans, arrayed in her military garb, and displaying her consecrated standard; and was received as a celestial deliverer by all the inhabitants. They now believed themselves invincible under her influence; and Dunois himself, perceiving such a mighty alteration both in friends and foes, consented, that the next convoy, which was expected in a few days, should enter by the side of Beausse. The convoy approached: no sign of resistance appeared in the besiegers: the wagons and troops passed without interruption between the redoubts of the English: a dead silence and astonishment reigned among those troops, formerly so elated with victory, and so fierce for the combat.

The earl of Suffolk was in a situation very unusual and extraordinary, and which might well confound the man of the greatest capacity and firmest temper. He saw his troops overawed, and strongly impressed with the idea of a divine influence accompanying the maid. Instead of banishing these vain terrors by hurry, and action, and war, he waited till the soldiers should recover from the panic; and he thereby gave leisure for those prepossessions to sink still deeper into their minds. The military maxims which are prudent in common cases, deceived him in these unaccountable events. The English felt their courage daunted and overwhelmed; and thence inferred a divine vengeance hanging over them. The French drew the same inference from an inactivity so new and unexpected. Every circumstance was now reversed in the opinions of men, on which all depends: the spirit resulting from a long course of uninterrupted success, was on a sudden transferred from the victors to the vanquished.

The maid called aloud, that the garrison should remain no longer on the defensive; and she promised her followers the assistance of Heaven in attacking those redoubts of the enemy which had so long kept them in awe, and which they had never hitherto dared to insult. The generals seconded her ardor: an attack was made on one redoubt, and it proved successful: [1] all the English who defended the intrenchments were put to the sword or taken prisoners: and Sir John Talbot himself, who had drawn together, from the other redoubts, some troops to bring them relief, durst not appear in the open field against so formidable an enemy.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

Nothing, after this success, seemed impossible to the maid and her enthusiastic votaries. She urged the generals to attack the main body of the English in their intrenchments, but Dunois, still unwilling to hazard the fate of France by too great temerity, and sensible that the least reverse of fortune would make all the present visions evaporate, and restore every thing to its former condition, checked her vehemence and proposed to her first to expel the enemy from their forts on the other side of the river, and thus lay the communication with the country entirely open, before she attempted any more hazardous enterprise. Joan was persuaded, and these forts were vigorously assailed. In one attack the French were repulsed; the maid was left almost alone; she was obliged to retreat, and join the runaways; but, displaying her sacred standard, and animating them with her countenance, her gestures, her exhortations, she led them back to the charge, and overpowered the English in their intrenchments. In the attack of another fort, she was wounded in the neck with an arrow; she retreated a moment behind the assailants; she pulled out the arrow with her own hands; she had the wound quickly dressed; and she hastened back to head the troops, and to plant her victorious banner on the ramparts of the enemy.

By all these successes, the English were entirely chased from their fortifications on that side: they had lost above six thousand men in these different actions; and, what was still more important, their wonted courage and confidence were wholly gone, and had given place to amazement and despair. The maid returned triumphant over the bridge, and was again received as the guardian angel of the city. After performing such miracles, she convinced the most obdurate incredulity of her divine mission: men felt themselves animated as by a superior energy, and thought nothing impossible to that divine hand which so visibly conducted them. It was in vain even for the English generals to oppose with their soldiers the prevailing opinion of supernatural influence: they themselves were probably moved by the same belief: the utmost they dared to advance was, that Joan was not an instrument of God; she was only the implement of the devil: but as the English had felt, to their sad experience, that the devil might be allowed sometimes to prevail, they derived not much consolation from the enforcing of this opinion.

It might prove extremely dangerous for Suffolk, with such intimidated troops, to remain any longer in the presence of so courageous and victorious an enemy; he therefore raised the siege, and retreated with all the precaution imaginable. The French resolved to push their conquests, and to allow the English no leisure to recover from their consternation. Charles formed a body of six thousand men, and sent them to attack Jergeau, whither Suffolk had retired with a detachment of his army. The siege lasted ten days; and the place was obstinately defended. Joan displayed her wonted intrepidity on the occasion. She descended into the fosse, in leading the attack: and she there received a blow on the head with a stone, by which she was confounded and beaten to the ground: but she soon recovered herself, and in the end rendered the assault successful: Suffolk was obliged to yield himself prisoner to a Frenchman called Renaud; but before he submitted, he asked his adversary whether he were a gentleman. On receiving a satisfactory answer, he demanded whether he were a knight. Renaud replied, that he had not yet attained that honor. “Then I make you one,” replied Suffolk; upon which he gave him the blow with his sword which dubbed him into that fraternity; and he immediately surrendered himself his prisoner.

The remainder of the English army was commanded by Fastolffe, Scales, and Talbot, who thought of nothing but of making their retreat, as soon as possible, into a place of safety; while the French esteemed the overtaking them equivalent to a victory; so much had the events which passed before Orleans altered every thing between the two nations! The vanguard of the French under Richemont and Xaintrailles attacked the rear of the enemy at the village of Patay. The battle lasted not a moment: the English were discomfited and fled: the brave Fastolffe himself showed the example of flight to his troops; and the order of the garter was taken from him, as a punishment for this instance of cowardice. [1] Two thousand men were killed in this action, and both Talbot and Scales taken prisoners.

In the account of all these successes, the French writers, to magnify the wonder, represent the maid (who was now known by the appellation of “the Maid of Orleans”) as not only active in combat, but as performing the office of general; directing the troops, conducting the military operations, and swaying the deliberations in all councils of war. It is certain that the policy of the French court endeavored to maintain this appearance with the public: but it is much more probable, that Dunois and the wiser commanders

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

prompted her in all her measures, than that a country girl, without experience of education, could on a sudden become expert in a profession which requires more genius and capacity than any other active scene of life. It is sufficient praise, that she could distinguish the persons on whose judgment she might rely; that she could seize their hints and suggestions, and on a sudden, deliver their opinions as her own; and that she could curb, on occasion, that visionary and enthusiastic spirit with which she was actuated, and could temper it with prudence and discretion.

The raising of the siege of Orleans was one part of the maid's promise to Charles: the crowning of him at Rheims was the other: and she now vehemently insisted that he should forthwith set out on that enterprise. A few weeks before, such a proposal would have appeared the most extravagant in the world. Rheims lay in a distant quarter of the kingdom; was then in the hands of a victorious enemy; the whole road which led to it was occupied by their garrisons; and no man could be so sanguine as to imagine that such an attempt could so soon come within the bounds of possibility. But as it was extremely the interest of Charles to maintain the belief of something extraordinary and divine in these events, and to avail himself of the present consternation of the English, he resolved to follow the exhortations of his warlike prophetess, and to lead his army upon this promising adventure. Hitherto he had kept remote from the scene of war: as the safety of the state depended upon his person, he had been persuaded to restrain his military ardor: but observing this prosperous turn of affairs, he now determined to appear at the head of his armies, and to set the example of valor to all his soldiers, And the French nobility saw at once their young sovereign assuming a new and more brilliant character, seconded by fortune, and conducted by the hand of Heaven, and they caught fresh zeal to exert themselves in replacing him on the throne of his ancestors.

Charles set out for Rheims at the head of twelve thousand men: he passed by Troye, which opened its gates to him; Chalons imitated the example: Rheims sent him a deputation with its keys, before his approach to it: and he scarcely perceived, as he passed along, that he was marching through an enemy's country. The ceremony of his coronation was here performed [1] with the holy oil, which a pigeon had brought to King Clovis from heaven, on the first establishment of the French monarchy: the maid of Orleans stood by his side in complete armor, and displayed her sacred banner, which had so often dissipated and confounded his fiercest enemies: and the people shouted with the most unfeigned joy, on viewing such a complication of wonders. After the completion of the ceremony, the maid threw herself at the king’s feet, embraced his knees, and with a flood of tears, which pleasure and tenderness extorted from her, she congratulated him on this singular and marvellous event.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

Charles, thus crowned and anointed, became more respectable in the eyes of all his subjects, and seemed, in a manner, to receive anew, from a heavenly commission, his title to their allegiance. The inclinations of men swaying their belief, no one doubted of the inspirations and prophetic spirit of the maid: so many incidents which passed all human comprehension, left little room to question a superior influence: and the real and undoubted facts brought credit to every exaggeration, which could scarcely be rendered more wonderful. Laon, Soissons, Chateau-Thierri, Provins, and many other towns and fortresses in that neighborhood, immediately after Charles’s coronation, submitted to him on the first summons; and the whole nation was disposed to give him the most zealous testimonies of their duty and affection.

Nothing can impress us with a higher idea of the wisdom, address, and resolution of the duke of Bedford, than his being able to maintain himself in so perilous a situation, and to preserve some footing in France, after the defection of so many places, and amidst the universal inclination of the rest to imitate that contagious example. This prince seemed present every where by his vigilance and foresight: he employed every resource which fortune had yet left him: he put all the English garrisons in a posture of defence: he kept a watchful eye over every attempt among the French towards an insurrection: he retained the Parisians in obedience, by alternately employing caresses and severity: and knowing that the duke of Burgundy was already wavering in his fidelity, he acted with so much skill and prudence, as to renew, in this dangerous crisis, his alliance with that prince; an alliance of the utmost importance to the credit and support of the English government.

The small supplies which he received from England set the talents of this great man in a still stronger light. The ardor of the English for foreign conquests was now extremely abated by time and reflection: the parliament seems even to have become sensible of the danger which might attend their further progress: no supply of money could be obtained by the regent during his greatest distresses: and men enlisted slowly under his standard, or soon deserted, by reason of the wonderful accounts which had reached England, of the magic and sorcery, and diabolical power of the maid of Orleans. [1] It happened fortunately, in this emergency, that the bishop of Winchester, now created a cardinal, landed at Calais with a body of five thousand men, which he was conducting into Bohemia, on a crusade against the Hussites. He was persuaded to lend these troops to his nephew during the present difficulties; [2] and the regent was thereby enabled to take the field, and to oppose the French king, who was advancing with his army to the gates of Paris.

The extraordinary capacity of the duke of Bedford appeared also in his military operations. He attempted to restore the courage of his troops by boldly advancing to the face of the enemy; but he chose his posts with so much caution, as always to decline a combat, and to render it impossible for Charles to attack him. He still attended that prince in all his movements; covered his own towns and garrisons; and kept himself in a posture to reap advantage from every imprudence or false step of the enemy. The French army, which consisted mostly of volunteers, who served at their own expense, soon after retired and was disbanded: Charles went to Bourges, the ordinary place of his residence; but not till he made himself master of Compiegne, Beauvais, Senlis, Sens, Laval, Lagni, St. Denis, and of many places in the neighborhood of Paris, which the affections of the people had put into his hands.

1430.

The regent endeavored to revive the declining state of his affairs, by bringing over the young king of England, and having him crowned and anointed at Paris, [3] All the vassals of the crown who lived within the provinces possessed by the English, swore anew allegiance, and did homage to him.

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* Rymer, vol. x. , 472.

* * Rymer, vol. x. .

* * * Rymer, vol. x. p 432.

But this ceremony was cold and insipid, compared with the lustre which had attended the coronation of Charles at Rheims; and the duke of Bedford expected more effect from an accident, which put into his hands the person that had been the author of all his calamities.

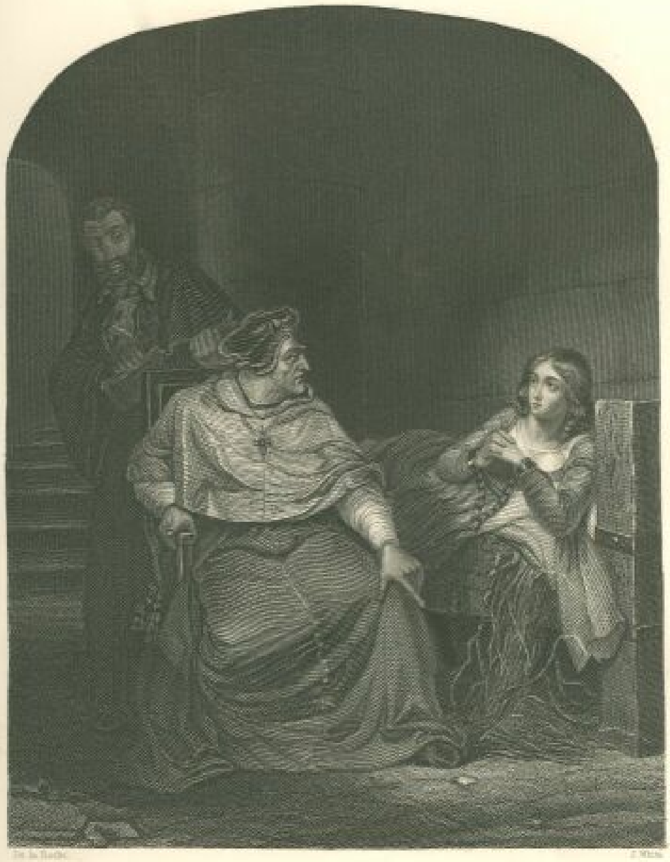
The maid of Orleans, after the coronation of Charles, declared to the count of Dunois that her wishes were now fully gratified, and that she had no further desire than to return to her former condition, and to the occupation and course of life which became her sex: but that nobleman, sensible of the great advantages which might still be reaped from her presence in the army, exhorted her to persevere, till, by the final expulsion of the English, she had brought all her prophecies to their full completion. In pursuance of this advice, she threw herself into the town of Compiegne, which was at that time besieged by the duke of Burgundy, assisted by the earls of Arundel and Suffolk; and the garrison, on her appearance, believed themselves thenceforth invincible. But their joy was of short duration. The maid, next day after her arrival, headed a sally upon the quarters of John of Luxembourg; she twice drove the enemy from their intrenchments; finding their numbers to increase every moment, she ordered a retreat; when hard pressed by the pursuers, she turned upon them, and made them again recoil; but being here deserted by her friends, and surrounded by the enemy, she was at last, after exerting the utmost valor, taken prisoner by the Burgundians. [1] The common opinion was, that the French officers, finding the merit of every victory ascribed to her, had, in envy to her renown, by which they were themselves so much eclipsed, willingly exposed her to this fatal accident.

* Stowe, .

The envy of her friends, on this occasion, was not a greater proof of her merit than the triumph of her enemies. A complete victory would not have given more joy to the English and their partisans. The service of Te Deum, which has so often been profaned by princes, was publicly celebrated on this fortunate event at Paris. The duke of Bedford fancied that, by the captivity of that extraordinary woman, who had blasted all his successes, he should again recover his former ascendant over France; and to push farther the present advantage, he purchased the captive from John of Luxembourg, and formed a prosecution against her, which, whether it proceeded from vengeance or policy, was equally barbarous and dishonorable.

1431.

There was no possible reason why Joan should not be regarded as a prisoner of war, and be entitled to all the courtesy and good usage which civilized nations practise towards enemies on these occasions. She had never, in her military capacity, forfeited, by any act of treachery or cruelty, her claim to that treatment: she was unstained by any civil crime: even the virtues and the very decorums of her sex had ever been rigidly observed by her: and though her appearing in war, and leading armies to battle, may seem an exception, she had thereby performed such signal service to her prince, that she had abundantly compensated for this irregularity; and was, on that very account, the more an object of praise and admiration. It was necessary, therefore, for the duke of Bedford to interest religion some way in the prosecution, and to cover under that cloak his violation of justice and humanity.



JOAN OF ARC EXAMINED BY THE BISHOP OF WINCHESTER.

The bishop of Beauvais, a man wholly devoted to the English interests, presented a petition against Joan, on pretence that she was taken within the bounds of his diocese; and he desired to have her tried by an ecclesiastical court for sorcery, impiety, idolatry, and magic: the university of Paris was so mean as to join in the same request: several prelates, among whom the cardinal of Winchester was the only Englishman, were appointed her judges: they held their court in Rouen, where the young king of England then resided: and the maid, clothed in her former military apparel, but loaded with irons, was produced before this tribunal.

She first desired to be eased of her chains: her judges answered, that she had once already attempted an escape by throwing herself from a tower: she confessed the fact, maintained the justice of her intention, and owned that, if she could, she would still execute that purpose. All her other speeches showed the same firmness and intrepidity: though harassed with interrogatories during the course of near four months, she never betrayed any weakness or womanish submission; and no advantage was gained over her. The point which her judges pushed most vehemently, was her visions and revelations, and intercourse with departed saints; and they asked her, whether she would submit to the church the truth of these inspirations: she replied, that she would submit them to God, the fountain of truth. They then exclaimed, that she was a heretic, and denied the authority of the church. She appealed to the pope: they rejected her appeal.

They asked her, why she put trust in her standard, which had been consecrated by magical incantations: she replied that she put trust in the Supreme Being alone, whose image was impressed upon it. They demanded, why she carried in her hand that standard at the anointment and coronation of Charles at Rheims: she answered, that the person who had shared the danger was entitled to share the glory. When accused of going to war, contrary to the decorums of her sex, and of assuming government and command over men, she scrupled not to reply, that her sole purpose was to defeat the English, and to expel them the kingdom. In the issue, she was condemned for all the crimes of which she had been accused, aggravated by heresy; her revelations were declared to be inventions of the devil to delude the people; and she was sentenced to be delivered over to the secular arm.

Joan, so long surrounded by inveterate enemies, who treated her with every mark of contumely; browbeaten and overawed by men of superior rank, and men invested with the ensigns of a sacred character, which she had been accustomed to revere, felt her spirit at last subdued; and those visionary dreams of inspiration, in which she had been buoyed up by the triumphs of success and the applauses of her own party, gave way to the terrors of that punishment to which she was sentenced. She publicly declared herself willing to recant: she acknowledged the illusion of those revelations which the church had rejected; and she promised never more to maintain them. Her sentence was then mitigated: she was condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and to be fed during life on bread and water.

Enough was now done to fulfil all political views, and to convince both the French and the English, that the opinion of divine influence, which had so much encouraged the one and daunted the other, was entirely without foundation. But the barbarous vengeance of Joan’s enemies was not satisfied with this victory. Suspecting that the female dress, which she had now consented to wear, was disagreeable to her, they purposely placed in her apartment a suit of men’s apparel; and watched for the effects of that temptation upon her. On the sight of a dress in which she had acquired so much renown, and which, she once believed, she wore by the particular appointment of Heaven, all her former ideas and passions revived; and she ventured in her solitude to clothe herself again in the forbidden garment. Her insidious enemies caught her in that situation: her fault was interpreted to be no less than a relapse into heresy: no recantation would now suffice; and no pardon could be granted her. She was condemned to be burned in the market-place of Rouen; and the infamous sentence was accordingly executed. This admirable heroine, to whom the more generous superstition of the ancients would have erected altars, was, on pretence of heresy and magic, delivered over alive to the flames, and expiated, by that dreadful punishment, the signal services which she had rendered to her prince and to her native country.

1432.

The affairs of the English, far from being advanced by this execution, went every day more and more to decay: the great abilities of the regent were unable to resist the strong inclination which had seized the French to return under the obedience of their rightful sovereign, and which that act of cruelty was ill fitted to remove. Chartres was surprised, by a stratagem of the count of Dunois: a body of the English, under Lord Willoughby, was defeated at St. Celerin upon the Sarte: [1] the fair in the suburbs of Caen, seated in the midst of the English territories, was pillaged by De Lore, a French officer: the duke of Bedford himself was obliged by Dunois to raise the siege of Lagni with some loss of reputation: and all these misfortunes, though light, yet being continued and uninterrupted, brought discredit on the English, and menaced them with an approaching revolution. But the chief detriment which the regent sustained, was by the death of his duchess, who had hitherto preserved some appearance of friendship between him and her brother, the duke of Burgundy: [2] and his marriage, soon afterwards, with Jaqueline of Luxembourg, was the beginning of a breach between them. [3] Philip complained, that the regent had never had the civility to inform him of his intentions, and that so sudden a marriage was a slight on his sister’s memory.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. .

* * Monstrolet, vol. ii. .

* * * Stowe, . Grafton, .

The cardinal of Winchester meditated a reconciliation between these princes, and brought both of them to St. Omers for that purpose. The duke of Bedford here expected the first visit, both as he was son, brother, and uncle to a king, and because he had already made such advances as to come into the duke of Burgundy's territories, in order to have an interview with him: but Philip, proud of his great power and independent dominions, refused to pay this compliment to the regent; and the two princes, unable to adjust the ceremonial, parted without seeing each other. [1] A bad prognostic of their cordial intentions to renew past amity!

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Grafton, .

Nothing could be more repugnant to the interests of the house of Burgundy, than to unite the crowns of France and England on the same head; an event which, had it taken place, would have reduced the duke to the rank of a petty prince, and have rendered his situation entirely dependent and precarious. The title also to the crown of France, which, after the failure of the elder branches, might accrue to the duke or his posterity, had been sacrificed by the treaty of Troye; and strangers and enemies were thereby irrevocably fixed upon the throne. Revenge alone had carried Philip into these impolitic measures; and a point of honor had hitherto induced him to maintain them. But as it is the nature of passion gradually to decay, while the sense of interest maintains a permanent influence and authority, the duke had, for some years, appeared sensibly to relent in his animosity against Charles, and to hearken willingly to the apologies made by that prince for the murder of the late duke of Burgundy. His extreme youth was pleaded in his favor; his incapacity to judge for himself; the ascendant gained over him by his ministers; and his inability to resent a deed which, without his knowledge, had been perpetrated by those under whose guidance he was then placed. The more to flatter the pride of Philip, the king of France had banished from his court and presence Tanegui de Chatel, and all those who were concerned in that assassination; and had offered to make every other atonement which could be required of him. The distress which Charles had already suffered, had tended to gratify the duke’s revenge; the miseries to which France had been so long exposed, had begun to move his compassion; and the cries of all Europe admonished him, that his resentment, which might hitherto be deemed pious, would, if carried further, be universally condemned as barbarous and unrelenting. While the duke was in this disposition, every disgust which he received from England made a double impression upon him; the entreaties of the count of Richemont and the duke of Bourbon, who had married his two sisters, had weight; and he finally determined to unite himself to the royal family of France, from which his own was descended.

1435.

For this purpose, a congress was appointed at Arras under the mediation of deputies from the pope and the council of Basle: the duke of Burgundy came thither in person: the duke of Bourbon, the count of Richemont, and other persons of high rank, appeared as ambassadors from France: and the English having also been invited to attend, the cardinal of Winchester, the bishops of Norwich and St. David’s, the earls of Huntingdon and Suffolk, with others, received from the protector and council a commission for that purpose. [1]

The conferences were held in the abbey of St. Vaast, and began with discussing the proposals of the two crowns which were so wide of each other as to admit of no hopes of accommodation. France offered to cede Normandy with Guienne, but both of them loaded with the usual homage and vassalage to the crown. As the claims of England upon France were universally unpopular in Europe, the mediators declared the offers of Charles very reasonable, and the cardinal of Winchester, with the other English ambassadors, without giving a particular detail of their demands, immediately left the congress. There remained nothing but to discuss the mutual pretensions of Charles and Philip. These were easily adjusted: the vassal was in a situation to give law to his superior; and he exacted conditions which, had it not been for the present necessity, would have been deemed, to the last degree, dishonorable and disadvantageous to the crown of France. Besides making repeated atonements and acknowledgments for the murder of the duke of Burgundy, Charles was obliged to cede all the towns of Picardy which lay between the Somme and the Low Countries; he yielded several other territories; he agreed that these and all the other dominions of Philip should be held by him, during his life, without doing any homage, or swearing fealty to the present king; and he freed his subjects from all obligations to allegiance, if ever he infringed this treaty. [2] Such were the conditions upon which France purchased the friendship of the duke of Burgundy.

* Rymer, vol. x. , 612.

* * Monstrelet, vol ii. . Grafton, .

The duke sent a herald to England with a letter, in which he notified the conclusion of the treaty of Arras, and apologized for his departure from that of Troye. The council received the herald with great coldness: they even assigned him his lodgings in a shoemaker's house, by way of insult; and the populace were so incensed, that if the duke of Glocester had not given him guards, his life had been exposed to danger when he appeared in the streets. The Flemings, and other subjects of Philip, were insulted, and some of them murdered by the Londoners; and every thing seemed to tend towards a rupture between the two nations. [1] These violences were not disagreeable to the duke of Burgundy; as they afforded him a pretence for the further measures which he intended to take against the English, whom he now regarded as implacable and dangerous enemies.

A few days after the duke of Bedford received intelligence of this treaty, so fatal to the interests of England, he died at Rouen; a prince of great abilities, and of many virtues; and whose memory, except from the barbarous execution of the maid of Orleans, was unsullied by any considerable blemish. Isabella, queen of France, died a little before him, despised by the English, detested by the French, and reduced, in her latter years, to regard with an unnatural horror the progress and success of her own son, in recovering possession of his kingdom. This period was also signalized by the death of the earl of Arundel, [2] a great English general, who, though he commanded three thousand men, was foiled by Xaintrailles at the head of six hundred, and soon after expired of the wounds which he received in the action.

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Holing. .

* * Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Holing, .

1436

The violent factions which prevailed between the duke of Glocester and the cardinal of Winchester, prevented the English from taking the proper measures for repairing these multiplied losses, and threw all their affairs into confusion. The popularity of the duke, and his near relation to the crown, gave him advantages in the contest, which he often lost by his open and unguarded temper, unfit to struggle with the politic and interested spirit of his rival. The balance, meanwhile, of these parties, kept every thing in suspense; foreign affairs were much neglected; and though the duke of York, son to that earl of Cambridge who was executed in the beginning of the last reign, was appointed successor to the duke of Bedford, it was seven months before his commission passed the seals; and the English remained so long in an enemy's country, without a proper head or governor.

The new governor, on his arrival, found the capital already lost. The Parisians had always been more attached to the Burgundian than to the English interest; and after the conclusion of the treaty of Arras, their affections, without any further control, universally led them to return to their allegiance under their native sovereign. The constable, together with Lile-Adam, the same person who had before put Paris into the hands of the duke of Burgundy, was introduced in the night-time by intelligence with the citizens: Lord Willoughby, who commanded only a small garrison of fifteen hundred men, was expelled: this nobleman discovered valor and presence of mind on the occasion; but unable to guard so large a place against such multitudes, he retired into the Bastile, and being there invested, he delivered up that fortress, and was contented to stipulate for the safe retreat of his troops into Normandy. [1]

In the same season, the duke of Burgundy openly took part against England, and commenced hostilities by the siege of Calais, the only place which now gave the English any sure hold of France, and still rendered them dangerous. As he was beloved among his own subjects, and had acquired the epithet of Good, from his popular qualities, he was able to interest all the inhabitants of the Low Countries in the success of this enterprise; and he invested that place with an army formidable from its numbers, but without experience, discipline, or military spirit. [2] On the first alarm of this siege, the duke of Glocester assembled some forces, sent a defiance to Philip, and challenged him to wait the event of a battle, which he promised to give, as soon as the wind would permit him to reach Calais. The warlike genius of the English had at that time rendered them terrible to all the northern parts of Europe; especially to the Flemings, who were more expert in manufactures than in arms; and the duke of Burgundy, being already foiled in some attempts before Calais, and observing the discontent and terror of his own army, thought proper to raise the siege, and to retreat before the arrival of the enemy. [3]

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Grafton, .

* * Monstrelet, vol. ii, , 130, 132. Holing. . Grafton, p 571.

* * * Monstrelet, vol. ii. . Holing. .

The English were still masters of many fine provinces in France; but retained possession more by the extreme weakness of Charles, than by the strength of their own garrisons or the force of their armies. Nothing, indeed, can be more surprising than the feeble efforts made, during the course of several years, by these two potent nations against each other while the one struggled for independence, and the other aspired to a total conquest of its rival. The general want of industry, commerce, and police in that age, had rendered all the European nations, and France and England no less than the others, unfit for bearing the burdens of war, when it was prolonged beyond one season; and the continuance of hostilities had, long ere this time, exhausted the force and patience of both kingdoms. Scarcely could the appearance of an army be brought into the field on either side; and all the operations consisted in the surprisal of places, in the rencounter of detached parties, and in incursions upon the open country; which were performed by small bodies, assembled on a sudden from the neighboring garrisons. In this method of conducting the war, the French king had much the advantage: the affections of the people were entirely on his side: intelligence was early brought him of the state and motions of the enemy: the inhabitants were ready to join in any attempts against the garrisons: and thus ground was continually, though slowly, gained upon the English. The duke of York, who was a prince of abilities, struggled against these difficulties during the course of five years; and being assisted by the valor of Lord Talbot, soon after created earl of Shrewsbury, he performed actions which acquired him honor, but merit not the attention of posterity. It would have been well, had this feeble war, in sparing the blood of the people, prevented likewise all other oppressions; and had the fury of men, which reason and justice cannot restrain, thus happily received a check from their impotence and inability. But the French and English, though they exerted such small force, were, however, stretching beyond their resources, which were still smaller; and the troops, destitute of pay, were obliged to subsist by plundering and oppressing the country, both of friends and enemies. The fields in all the north of France, which was the seat of war, were laid waste and left uncultivated. [1]

* Grafton, p 562.

1440.

The cities were gradually depopulated, not by the blood spilt in battle, but by the more destructive pillage of the garrisons; [1] and both parties, weary of hostilities which decided nothing, seemed at last desirous of peace, and they set on foot negotiations for that purpose. But the proposals of France, and the demands of England, were still so wide of each other, that all hope of accommodation immediately vanished. The English ambassadors demanded restitution of all the provinces which had once been annexed to England, together with the final cession of Calais and its district; and required the possession of these extensive territories without the burden of any fealty or homage on the part of their prince: the French offered only part of Guienne, part of Normandy, and Calais, loaded with the usual burdens. It appeared in vain to continue the negotiation while there was so little prospect of agreement. The English were still too haughty to stoop from the vast hopes which they had formerly entertained, and to accept of terms more suitable to the present condition of the two kingdoms.

The duke of York soon after resigned his government to the earl of Warwick, a nobleman of reputation, whom death prevented from long enjoying this dignity. The duke, upon the demise of that nobleman, returned to his charge; and during his administration, a truce was concluded between the king of England and the duke of Burgundy, which had become necessary for the commercial interests of their subjects. [2] The war with France continued in the same languid and feeble state as before.

The captivity of five princes of the blood, taken prisoners in the battle of Azincour, was a considerable advantage, which England long enjoyed over its enemy; but this superiority was now entirely lost. Some of these princes had died; some had been ransomed; and the duke of Orleans, the most powerful among them, was the last that remained in the hands of the English. He offered the sum of fifty-four thousand nobles [3] for his liberty; and when this proposal was laid before the council of England, as every question was there an object of faction, the party of the duke of Glocester, and that of the cardinal of Winchester, were divided in their sentiments with regard to it.

* Fortescue, who soon after this period visited France, in the train of Prince Henry, speaks of that kingdom as a desert, in comparison of England. See his treatise De Laudibus Legum Angliæ. Though we make allowance for the partialities of Fortescue, there must have been some foundation for his account; and these destructive wars are the most likely reason to be assigned for the difference remarked by this author.

* * Grafton, .

* * * Rymer, vol. x. , 776, 782, 795, 796. This sum was equal to thirty-six thousand pounds sterling of our present money. A subsidy of a tenth and fifteenth was fixed by Edward III. at twenty-nine thousand pounds, which, in the reign of Henry VI., made only fifty-eight thousand pounds of our present money. The parliament granted only one subsidy during the course of seven years, from 1437 to 1444.

The duke reminded the council of the dying advice of the late king, that none of these prisoners should on any account be released, till his son should be of sufficient age to hold himself the reins of government. The cardinal insisted on the greatness of the sum offered, which, in reality, was nearly equal to two thirds of all the extraordinary supplies that the parliament, during the course of seven years, granted for the support of the war. And he added, that the release of this prince was more likely to be advantageous than prejudicial to the English interests; by filling the court of France with faction, and giving a head to those numerous malecontents whom Charles was at present able with great difficulty to restrain. The cardinal’s party, as usual, prevailed: the duke of Orleans was released, after a melancholy captivity of twenty-five years: [1] and the duke of Burgundy, as a pledge of his entire reconciliation with the family of Orleans, facilitated to that prince the payment of his ransom. It must be confessed, that the princes and nobility, in those ages, went to war on very disadvantageous terms. If they were taken prisoners, they either remained in captivity during life, or purchased their liberty at the price which the victors were pleased to impose, and which often reduced their families to want and beggary.

* Grafton, .

1443.

The sentiments of the cardinal, some time after, prevailed in another point of still greater moment. That prelate had always encouraged every proposal of accommodation with France; and had represented the utter impossibility, in the present circumstances, of pushing farther the conquests in that kingdom, and the great difficulty of even maintaining those which were already made. He insisted on the extreme reluctance of the parliament to grant supplies; the disorders in which the English affairs in Normandy were involved; the daily progress made by the French king; and the advantage of stopping his hand by a temporary accommodation which might leave room for time and accidents to operate in favor of the English. The duke of Glocester, high-spirited and haughty, and educated in the lofty pretensions which the first successes of his two brothers had rendered familiar to him, could not yet be induced to relinquish all hopes of prevailing over France; much less could he see with patience his own opinion thwarted and rejected by the influence of his rival in the English council. But, notwithstanding his opposition, the earl of Suffolk, a nobleman who adhered to the cardinal’s party, was despatched to Tours, in order to negotiate with the French ministers. It was found impossible to adjust the terms of a lasting peace; but a truce for twenty-two months was concluded, which left every thing on the present footing between the parties. The numerous disorders under which the French government labored, and which time alone could remedy, induced Charles to assent to this truce; and the same motives engaged him afterwards to prolong it. [1] But Suffolk, not content with executing this object of his commission, proceeded also to finish another business, which seems rather to have been implied than expressed in the powers that had been granted him. [2]

* Rymer, vol. xi. , 108, 206, 214.

* * Rymer, vol. xi. .

In proportion as Henry advanced in years, his character became fully known in the court, and was no longer ambiguous to either faction. Of the most harmless, inoffensive, simple manners, but of the most slender capacity, he was fitted, both by the softness of his temper and the weakness of his understanding, to be perpetually governed by those who surrounded him; and it was easy to foresee that his reign would prove a perpetual minority. As he had now reached the twenty-third year of his age, it was natural to think of choosing him a queen; and each party was ambitious of having him receive one from their hand, as it was probable that this circumstance would decide forever the victory between them. The duke of Glocester proposed a daughter of the count of Armagnac; but had not credit to effect his purpose. The cardinal and his friends had cast their eye on Margaret of Anjou, daughter of Regnier, titular king of Sicily, Naples, and Jerusalem, descended from the count of Anjou, brother of Charles V., who had left these magnificent titles, but without any real power or possessions, to his posterity. This princess herself was the most accomplished of her age, both in body and mind; and seemed to possess those qualities which would equally qualify her to acquire the ascendant over Henry, and to supply all his defects and weaknesses. Of a masculine, courageous spirit, of an enterprising temper, endowed with solidity as well as vivacity of understanding, she had not been able to conceal these great talents even in the privacy of her father’s family; and it was reasonable to expect, that when she should mount the throne, they would break out with still superior lustre. The earl of Suffolk, therefore, in concert with his associates of the English council, made proposals of marriage to Margaret, which were accepted. But this nobleman, besides preoccupying the princess’s favor by being the chief means of her advancement, endeavored to ingratiate himself with her and her family, by very extraordinary concessions: though Margaret brought no dowry with her, he ventured of himself, without any direct authority from the council, but probably with the approbation of the cardinal and the ruling members, to engage, by a secret article, that the province of Maine, which was at that time in the hands of the English, should be ceded to Charles of Anjou, her uncle, [1] who was prime minister and favorite of the French king, and who had already received from his master the grant of that province as his appanage.

The treaty of marriage was ratified in England: Suffolk obtained first the title of marquis, then that of duke; and even received the thanks of parliament for his services in concluding it. [2] The princess fell immediately into close connections with the cardinal and his party, the dukes of Somerset, Suffolk, and Buckingham; [3] who, fortified by her powerful patronage, resolved on the final ruin of the duke of Glocester.

* Grafton, .

* * Cotton, .

* * * Holingshed, .

1447.

This generous prince, worsted in all court intrigues, for which his temper was not suited, but possessing in a high degree the favor of the public, had already received from his rivals a cruel mortification, which he had hitherto borne without violating public peace, but which it was impossible that a person of his spirit and humanity could ever forgive. His duchess, the daughter of Reginald Lord Cobham, had been accused of the crime of witchcraft; and it was pretended, that there was found in her possession a waxen figure of the king, which she and her associates, Sir Roger Bolingbroke, a priest, and one Margery Jordan, of Eye, melted in a magical manner before a slow fire, with an intention of making Henry’s force and vigor waste away by like insensible degrees. The accusation was well calculated to affect the weak and credulous mind of the king, and to gain belief in an ignorant age; and the duchess was brought to trial with her confederates. The nature of this crime, so opposite to all common sense, seems always to exempt the accusers from observing the rules of common sense in their evidence: the prisoners were pronounced guilty; the duchess was condemned to do public penance, and to suffer perpetual imprisonment; the others were executed. [1] But as these violent proceedings were ascribed solely to the malice of the duke's enemies, the people, contrary to their usual practice in such marvellous trials, acquitted the unhappy sufferers; and increased their esteem and affection towards a prince who was thus exposed, without protection, to those mortal injuries.

These sentiments of the public made the cardinal of Winchester and his party sensible that it was necessary to destroy a man whose popularity might become dangerous, and whose resentment they had so much cause to apprehend. In order to effect their purpose, a parliament was summoned to meet, not at London, which was supposed to be too well affected to the duke, but at St. Edmondsbury, where they expected that he would lie entirely at their mercy. As soon as he appeared, he was accused of treason, and thrown into prison. He was soon after found dead in his bed; [2] and though it was pretended that his death was natural, and though his body, which was exposed to public view, bore no marks of outward violence, no one doubted but he had fallen a victim to the vengeance of his enemies.

* Stowe, . Holingshed, . Grafton, .

* * Grafton, .

An artifice, formerly practised in the case of Edward II., Richard II., and Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Glocester, could deceive nobody. The reason of this assassination of the duke seems, not that the ruling party apprehended his acquittal in parliament on account of his innocence, which, in such times, was seldom much regarded, but that they imagined his public trial and execution would have been more invidious than his private murder which they pretended to deny. Some gentlemen of his retinue were afterwards tried as accomplices in his treasons, and were condemned to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, They were hanged and cut down; but just as the executioner was proceeding to quarter them, their pardon was produced, and they were recovered to life; [1] the most barbarous kind of mercy that can possibly be imagined!

This prince is said to have received a better education than was usual in his age, to have founded one of the first public libraries in England, and to have been a great patron of learned men. Among other advantages which he reaped from this turn of mind, it tended much to cure him of credulity of which the following instance is given by Sir Thomas More. There was a man who pretended that, though he was born blind, he had recovered his sight by touching the shrine of St. Albans. The duke, happening soon after to pass that way, questioned the man, and seeming to doubt of his sight, asked him the colors of several cloaks, worn by persons of his retinue. The man told them very readily. “You are a knave,” cried the prince; “had you been born blind, you could not so soon have learned to distinguish colors;” and immediately ordered him to be set in the stocks as an impostor. [2]

The cardinal of Winchester died six weeks after his nephew whose murder was universally ascribed to him as well as to the duke of Suffolk, and which, it is said, gave him more remorse in his last moments than could naturally be expected from a man hardened, during the course of a long life, in falsehood and in politics. What share the queen had in this guilt is uncertain; her usual activity and spirit made the public conclude, with some reason, that the duke’s enemies durst not have ventured on such a deed without her privity. But there happened, soon after, an event of which she and her favorite, the duke of Suffolk, bore incontestably the whole odium.

That article of the marriage treaty by which the province of Maine was to be ceded to Charles of Anjou, the queen’s uncle, had probably been hitherto kept secret; and during the lifetime of the duke of Glocester, it might have been dangerous to venture on the execution of it. But as the court of France strenuously insisted on performance, orders were now despatched, under Henry’s hand, to Sir Francis Surienne, governor of Mans, commanding him to surrender that place to Charles of Anjou. Surienne, either questioning the authenticity of the order, or regarding his government as his sole fortune, refused compliance; and it became necessary for a French army, under the count of Dunois, to lay siege to the city. The governor made as good a defence as his situation could permit; but receiving no relief from Edmund, duke of Somerset, who was at that time governor of Normandy, he was at last obliged to capitulate, and to surrender not only Mans, but all the other

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* Fabian, Chron. anno 1447.

* * Grafton, .

fortresses of that province, which was thus entirely alienated from the crown of England.

1448.

The bad effects of this measure stopped not here. Surienne, at the head of all his garrisons, amounting to two thousand five hundred men, retired into Normandy, in expectation of being taken into pay, and of being quartered in some towns of that province. But Somerset, who had no means of subsisting such a multitude, and who was probably incensed at Surienne’s disobedience, refused to admit him; and this adventurer, not daring to commit depredations on the territories either of the king of France or of England, marched into Brittany, seized the town of Fougeres, repaired the fortifications of Pontorson and St. James de Beuvron, and subsisted his troops by the ravages which he exercised on that whole province. [1] The duke of Brittany complained of this violence to the king of France, his liege lord: Charles remonstrated with the duke of Somerset: that nobleman replied, that the injury was done without his privity, and that he had no authority over Surienne and his companions. [2] Though this answer ought to have appeared satisfactory to Charles, who had often felt severely the licentious independent spirit of such mercenary soldiers, he never would admit of the apology. He still insisted that these plunderers should be recalled, and that reparation should be made to the duke of Brittany for all the damages which he had sustained: and in order to render an accommodation absolutely impracticable, he made the estimation of damages amount to no less a sum than one million six hundred thousand crowns. He was sensible of the superiority which the present state of his affairs gave him over England; and he determined to take advantage of it.

* Monstrelet, vol. iii. .

* * Monstrelet vol. iii. . Holingshed, .

No sooner was the truce concluded between the two kingdoms, than Charles employed himself, with great industry and judgment, in repairing those numberless ills to which France, from the continuance of wars both foreign and domestic, had so long been exposed. He restored the course of public justice; he introduced order into the finances; he established discipline in his troops; he repressed faction in his court; he revived the languid state of agriculture and the arts; and, in the course of a few years, he rendered his kingdom flourishing within itself, and formidable to its neighbors. Meanwhile, affairs in England had taken a very different turn. The court was divided into parties, which were enraged against each other: the people were discontented with the government: conquests in France, which were an object more of glory than of interest, were overlooked amidst domestic incidents, which engrossed the attention of all men: the governor of Normandy, ill supplied with money, was obliged to dismiss the greater part of his troops, and to allow the fortifications of the towns and castles to become ruinous; and the nobility and people of that province had, during the late open communication with France, enjoyed frequent opportunities of renewing connections with their ancient master, and of concerting the means for expelling the English. The occasion, therefore, seemed favorable to Charles for breaking the truce.

1449.

Normandy was at once invaded by four powerful armies: one commanded by the king himself; a second by the duke of Brittany; a third by the duke of Alençon; and a fourth by the count of Dunois. The places opened their gates almost as soon as the French appeared before them; Verneuil, Nogent, Chateau Gaillard, Ponteau de Mer, Gisors, Mante, Vernon, Argentan Lisieux, Fecamp, Coutances, Belesme, Pont de l’Arche, fell in an instant into the hands of the enemy. The duke of Somerset, so far from having an army which could take the field and relieve these places, was not able to supply them with the necessary garrisons and provisions. He retired, with the few troops of which he was master, into Rouen; and thought it sufficient, if, till the arrival of succors from England, he could save that capital from the general fate of the province. The king of France, at the head of a formidable army, fifty thousand strong, presented himself before the gates: the dangerous example of revolt had infected the inhabitants; and they called aloud for a capitulation. Somerset, unable to resist at once both the enemies within one from without, retired with his garrison into the palace and castle; which, being places not tenable he was obliged to surrender: he purchased a retreat to Harfleur by the payment of fifty-six thousand crowns, by engaging to surrender Arques, Tancarville, Caudebec, Honfleur, and other places in the higher Normandy, and by delivering. hostages for the performance of articles. [1]

1450.

The governor of Honfleur refused to obey his orders; upon which the earl of Shrewsbury, who was one of the hostages, was detained prisoner; and the English were thus deprived of the only general capable of recovering them from their present distressed; situation. Harfleur made a better defence under Sir Thomas Curson, the governor; but was finally obliged to open its gates to Dunois. Succors at last appeared from England, under Sir Thomas Kyriel, and landed at Cherbourg: but these came very late, amounted only to four thousand men, and were soon after put to rout at Fourmigni by the count of Clermont. [2] This battle, or rather skirmish, was the only action fought by the English for the defence of their dominions in France, which they had purchased at such an expense of blood and treasure. Somerset, shut up in Caen, without any prospect of relief, found it necessary to capitulate: Falaise opened its gates, on condition that the earl of Shrewsbury should be restored to liberty: and Cherbourg, the last place of Normandy which remained in the hands of the English, being delivered up, the conquest of that important province was finished in a twelvemonth by Charles, to the great joy of the inhabitants, and of his whole kingdom. [3]

* Monstrelet, vol. iii. . Grafton, .

* * Holing, .

* * * Grafton, .

A like rapid success attended the French arms in Guienne; though the inhabitants of that province were, from long custom, better inclined to the English government. Dunois was despatched thither, and met with no resistance in the field, and very little from the towns. Great improvements had been made during this age in the structure and management of artillery, and none in fortification; and the art of defence was by that means more unequal, than either before or since, to the art of attack. After all the small places about Bordeaux were reduced, that city agreed to submit, if not relieved by a certain time; and as no one in England thought Seriously of these distant concerns, no relief appeared; the place surrendered; and Bayonne being taken soon after, this whole province, which had remained united to England since the accession of Henry II., was, after a period of three centuries, finally swallowed up in the French monarchy.

Though no peace or truce was concluded between France and England, the war was in a manner at an end. The English, torn in pieces by the civil dissensions which ensued, made but one feeble effort more for the recovery of Guienne, and Charles, occupied at home in regulating the government, and fencing against the intrigues of his factious son, Lewis the dauphin, scarcely ever attempted to invade them in their island, or to retaliate upon them, by availing himself of their intestine confusions.

CHAPTER XXI.

HENRY VI.

1450.

A WEAK prince, seated on the throne of England, had never failed, how gentle soever and innocent, to be infested with faction, discontent, rebellion, and evil commotions; and as the incapacity of Henry appeared every day in a fuller light, these dangerous consequences began, from past experience, to be universally and justly apprehended Men also of unquiet spirits, no longer employed in foreign wars, whence they were now excluded by the situation of the neighboring states, were the more likely to excite intestine, disorders, and by their emulation, rivalship, and animosities, to tear the bowels of their native country. But though these causes alone were sufficient to breed confusion, there concurred another circumstance of the most dangerous, nature: a pretender to the crown appeared: the tie itself of the weak prince who enjoyed the name of sovereignty, was disputed; and the English were now to pay the severe though late penalty of their turbulence under Richard II., and of their levity in violating, without any necessity or just reason, the lineal succession of their monarchs.

All the males of the house of Mortimer were extinct; but Anne, the sister of the last earl of Marche, having espoused the earl of Cambridge, beheaded in the reign of Henry V. had transmitted her latent, but not yet forgotten claim to be; on Richard, duke of York. This prince, thus descended by his mother from Philippa, only daughter of the duke of Clarence, second son of Edward III., stood plainly in the order of succession before the king, who derived his descent from the duke of Lancaster, third son of that monarch; and that claim could not, in many respects, have fallen into more dangerous hands man those of the duke of York. Richard was a man of valor and abilities, of a prudent conduct and mild disposition: he had enjoyed an opportunity of displaying these virtues in his government of France; and though recalled from that command by the intrigues and superior interest of the duke of Somerset, he had been sent to suppress a rebellion in Ireland;

had succeeded much better in that enterprise than his rival in the defence of Normandy, and had even been able to attach to his person and family the whole Irish nation, whom he was sent to subdue. [1] In the right of his father, he bore the rank of first prince of the blood; and by this station he gave a lustre to his title derived from the family of Mortimer, which, though of great nobility, was equalled by other families in the kingdom, and had been eclipsed by the royal descent of the house of Lancaster. He possessed an immense fortune from the union of so many successions, those of Cambridge and York on the one hand, with those of Mortimer on the other; which last inheritance had before been augmented by a union of the estates of Clarence and Ulster with the patrimonial possessions of the family of Marche. The alliances too of Richard, by his marrying the daughter of Ralph Nevil, earl of Westmoreland, had widely extended his interest among the nobility, and had procured him many connections in that formidable order.

* Stowe, .

The family of Nevil was perhaps at this time the most potent, both from their opulent possessions and from the characters of the men, that has ever appealed in England. For, besides the earl of Westmoreland, and the lords Latimer, Fauconberg, and Abergavenny, the earls of Salisbury and Warwick were of that family, and were of themselves, on many accounts, the greatest noblemen in the kingdom. The earl of Salisbury, brother-in-law to the duke of York, was the eldest son by a second marriage of the earl of Westmoreland; and inherited by his wife, daughter and heir of Montacute, earl of Salisbury, killed before Orleans, the possessions and title of that great family. His eldest son, Richard, had married Anne, the daughter and heir of Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, who died governor of France; and by this alliance he enjoyed the possessions, and had acquired the title, of that other family, one of the most opulent, most ancient, and most illustrious in England. The personal qualities also of these two earls, especially of Warwick enhanced the splendor of their nobility, and increased then influence over the people. This latter nobleman commonly known, from the subsequent events, by the appellation of the “king-maker,” had distinguished himself by his gallantry in the field, by the hospitality of his table, by Ore magnificence, and still more by the generosity, of his expense, and by the spirited and bold manner which attended him in all his actions.

The undesigning frankness and openness of his character rendered his conquest over men’s affections the more certain and infallible: his presents were regarded as sure testimonials of esteem and friendship; and his professions as the over-flowings of his genuine sentiments. No less than thirty thousand persons are said to have daily lived at his board In the different manors and castles which he possessed in England: the military men, allured by his munificence and hospitality, as well as by his bravery, were zealously attached to his interests: the people in general bore him an unlimited affection: his numerous retainers were more devoted to his will than to the prince or to the laws: and he was the greatest, as well as the last, of those mighty barons who formerly overawed the crown, and rendered the people incapable of any regular system of civil government.

But the duke of York, besides the family of Nevil, had many other partisans among the great nobility. Courtney, earl of Devonshire, descended from a very noble family of that name in France, was attached to his interests: Moubray, duke of Norfolk, had, from his hereditary hatred to the family of Lancaster, embraced the same party: and the discontents which universally prevailed among the people, rendered every combination of the great the more dangerous to the established government.

Though the people were never willing to grant the supplies necessary for keeping possession of the conquered provinces in France, they repined extremely at the loss of these boasted acquisitions; and fancied, because a sudden irruption could make conquests, that, without steady counsels and a uniform expense, it was possible to maintain them. The voluntary cession of Maine to the queen’s uncle, had made them suspect treachery in the loss of Normandy and Guienne. They still considered Margaret as a French woman, and a latent enemy of the kingdom. And when they saw her father and all her relations active in promoting the success of the French, they could not be persuaded that she, who was all-powerful in the English council, would very zealously oppose them in their enterprises.

But the most fatal blow given to the popularity of the crown and to the interests of the house of Lancaster, was by the assassination of the virtuous duke of Glocester; whose character, had he been alive, would have intimidated the partisans of York; but whose memory, being extremely cherished by the people, served to throw an odium on all his murderers. By this crime the reigning family suffered a double prejudice it was deprived of its firmest support; and it was loaded with all the infamy of that imprudent and barbarous assassination.

As the duke of Suffolk was known to have had an active hand in the crime, he partook deeply of the hatred attending it; and the clamors which necessarily rose against him, as prime minister and declared favorite of the queen, were thereby augmented to a tenfold pitch, and became absolutely uncontrollable. The great nobility could ill brook to see a subject exalted above them; much more one who was only great-grandson to a merchant, and who was of a birth so much inferior to theirs. The people complained of his arbitrary measures; which were, in some degree, a necessary consequence of the irregular power then possessed by the prince, but which the least disaffection easily magnified into tyranny. The great acquisitions which he daily made were the object of envy; and as they were gained at the expense of the crown, which was itself reduced to poverty, they appeared on that account, to all indifferent persons, the more exceptionable and invidious.

The revenues of the crown, which had long been disproportioned to its power and dignity, had been extremely dilapidated during the minority of Henry; [1] both by the rapacity of the courtiers, which the king's uncles could not control, and by the necessary expenses of the French war, which had always been very ill supplied by the grants of parliament.

*: Cotton, .

The royal demesnes were dissipated; and at the same time the king was loaded with a debt of three hundred and seventy-two thousand pounds, a sum so great, that the parliament could never think of discharging it. This unhappy situation forced the ministers upon many arbitrary measures: the household itself could not be supported without stretching to the utmost the right of purveyance, and rendering it a kind of universal robbery upon the people: the public clamor rose high upon this occasion, and no one had the equity to make allowance for the necessity of the king's situation. Suffolk, once become odious, bore the blame of the whole; and every grievance, in every part of the administration, was universally imputed to his tyranny and injustice.

This nobleman, sensible of the public hatred under which he labored, and foreseeing an attack from the commons endeavored to overawe his enemies, by boldly presenting himself to the charge, and by insisting upon his own innocence and even upon his merits, and those of his family, in the public service. He rose in the house of peers; took notice of the clamors propagated against him; and complained that after serving the crown in thirty-four campaigns; after living abroad seventeen years, without once returning to his native country; after losing a father and three brothers in the wars with France; after being himself a prisoner, and purchasing his liberty by a great ransom; it should yet be suspected, that he had been debauched from his allegiance by that enemy whom he had ever opposed with such zeal and fortitude, and that he had betrayed his prince, who had rewarded his services by the highest honors and greatest offices that it was in his power to confer. [1] This speech did not answer the purpose intended. The commons, rather provoked at his challenge, opened their charge against him, and sent up to the peers an accusation of high treason, divided into several articles. They insisted, that he had persuaded the French king to invade England with an armed force, in order to depose the king, and to place on the throne his own son, John de la Pole, whom he intended to marry to Margaret, the only daughter of the late John, duke of Somerset, and to whom, he imagined, he would by that means acquire a title to the crown: that he had contributed to the release of the duke of Orleans, in hopes that that prince would assist King Charles in expelling the English from France, and recovering full possession of his kingdom: that he had afterwards encouraged that monarch to make open war on Normandy and Guienne, and had promoted his conquests by betraying the secrets of England, and obstructing the succors intended to be sent to those provinces; and that he had, without any powers or commission, promised by treaty to cede the province of Maine to Charles of Anjou, and had accordingly ceded it; which proved in the issue the chief cause of the loss of Normandy. [2]

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, . Hall, fol. 157. Holing, . Grafton,

It is evident, from a review of these articles, that the commons adopted without inquiry all the popular clamors against the duke of Suffolk, and charged him with crimes of which none but the vulgar could seriously believe him guilty. Nothing can be more incredible, than that a nobleman, so little eminent by his birth and character, could think of acquiring the crown to his family, and of deposing Henry by foreign force, and, together with him, Margaret, his patron, a princess of so much spirit and penetration. Suffolk appealed to many noblemen in the house, who knew that he had intended to marry his son to one of the coheirs of the earl of Warwick, and was disappointed in his views only by the death of that lady: and he observed, that Margaret of Somerset could bring to her husband no title to the crown; because she herself was not so much as comprehended in the entail settled by act of parliament. It is easy to account for the loss of Normandy and Guienne, from the situation of affairs in the two kingdoms, without supposing any treachery in the English ministers; and it may safely be affirmed, that greater vigor was requisite to defend these provinces from the arms of Charles VII., than to conquer them at first from his predecessor. It could never be the interest of any English minister to betray and abandon such acquisitions; much less of one who was so well established in his master's favor, who enjoyed such high honors and ample possessions in his own country, who had nothing to dread but the effects of popular hatred and who could never think, without the most extreme reluctance, of becoming a fugitive and exile in a foreign land. The only article which carries any face of probability, is his engagement for the delivery of Maine to the queen's uncle: but Suffolk maintained, with great appearance of truth, that this measure was approved of by several at the council table; [1] and it seems hard to ascribe to it, as is done by the commons, the subsequent loss of Normandy and expulsion of the English. Normandy lay open on every side to the invasion of the French: Maine, an inland province, must soon after have fallen without any attack; and as the English possessed in other parts more fortresses than they could garrison or provide for, it seemed no bad policy to contract their force, and to render the defence practicable, by reducing it within a narrower compass.

* Cotton, p.643.

The commons were probably sensible, that this charge of treason against Suffolk would not bear a strict scrutiny; and they therefore, soon after, sent up against him a new charge of misdemeanors, which they also divided into several articles. They affirmed, among other imputations, that he had procured exorbitant grants from the crown, had embezzled the public money, had conferred offices on improper persons, had perverted justice by maintaining iniquitous causes, and had procured pardons for notorious offenders. [1] The articles are mostly general, but are not improbable; and as Suffolk seems to have been a bad man and a bad minister, it will not be rash in us to think that he was guilty, and that many of these articles could have been proved against him. The court was alarmed at the prosecution of a favorite minister, who lay under such a load of popular prejudices; and an expedient was fallen upon to save him from present ruin. The king summoned all the lords, spiritual and temporal, to his apartment: the prisoner was produced before them, and asked what he could say in his own defence: he denied the charge; but submitted to the king's mercy: Henry expressed himself not satisfied with regard to the first impeachment for treason; but in consideration of the second for misdemeanors, he declared that, by virtue of Suffolk's own submission, not by any judicial authority, he banished him the kingdom during five years. The lords remained silent; but as soon as they returned to their own house, they entered a protest, that this sentence should nowise infringe their privileges, and that, if Suffolk had insisted upon his right, and had not voluntarily submitted to the king's commands, he was entitled to a trial by his peers in parliament.

It was easy to see, that these irregular proceedings were meant to favor Suffolk, and that, as he still possessed the queen's confidence, he would, on the first favorable opportunity, be restored to his country, and be reinstated in his former power and credit. A captain of a vessel was therefore employed by his enemies to intercept him in his passage to France: he was seized near Dover; his head struck off on the side of a long-boat; and his body thrown into the sea, [2] No inquiry was made after the actors and accomplices in this atrocious deed of violence.

* Cotton, .

* * Hall, fol. 158. Hist. Croyland, Contin. . Stowe, p. 388. Grafton, .

The duke of Somerset succeeded to Suffolk's power in the ministry, and credit with the queen; and as he was the person under whose government the French provinces had been lost, the public, who always judge by the event, soon made him equally the object of their animosity and hatred. The duke of York was absent in Ireland during all these transactions and however it might be suspected that his partisans had excited and supported the prosecution against Suffolk, no immediate ground of complaint could, on that account, lie against him. But there happened, soon after, an incident which roused the jealousy of the court, and discovered to them the extreme danger to which they were exposed from the pretensions of that popular prince.

The humors of the people, set afloat by the parliamentary impeachment, and by the fall of so great a favorite as Suffolk, broke out in various commotions, which were soon suppressed, but there arose one in Kent which was attended with more dangerous consequences. A man of low condition, one John Cade, a native of Ireland, who had been obliged to fly into France for crimes, observed, on his return to England, the discontents of the people; and he laid on them the foundation of projects which were at first crowned with surprising success. He took the name of John Mortimer; intending, as is supposed, to pass himself for a son of that Sir John Mortimer who had been sentenced to death by parliament, and executed, in the beginning of this reign, without any trial or evidence, merely upon an indictment of high treason given in against him. [1] On the first mention of that popular name, the common people of Kent, to the number of twenty thousand, flocked to Cade's standard; and he excited their zeal by publishing complaints against the numerous abuses in government, and demanding a redress of grievances. The court, not yet fully sensible of the danger, sent a small force against the rioters, under the command of Sir Humphrey Stafford, who was defeated and slain in an action near Sevenoke; [2] and Cade, advancing with his followers towards London, encamped on Blackheath.

* Stowe, . Cotton, . This author admires that such a piece of injustice should have been committed in peaceable times: he might have added, and by such virtuous princes as Bedford and Glocester. But it is to be presumed that Mortimer was guilty; though his condemnation was highly irregular and illegal. The people had at this time a very feeble sense of law and a constitution; and power was very imperfectly restrained by these limits. When the proceedings of a parliament were so irregular it is easy to imagine that those of a king would be more so.

* * Hall, fol. 159. Holing. p, 634.

Though elated by his victory, he still maintained the appearance of moderation; and sending to the court a plausible list of grievances, [1] he promised that, when these should be redressed, and when Lord Say, the treasurer, and Cromer, sheriff of Kent, should be punished for their malversations, he would immediately lay down his arms. The council, who observed that nobody was willing to fight against men so reasonable in their pretensions, carried the king, for present safety, to Kenilworth; and the city immediately opened its gates to Cade, who maintained, during some time, great order and discipline among his followers. He always led them into the fields during the night-time; and published severe edicts against plunder and violence of every kind: but being obliged, in order to gratify their malevolence against Say and Cromer, to put these men to death without a legal trial, [2] he found that, after the commission of this crime, he was no longer master of their riotous disposition, and that all his orders were neglected. [3] They broke into a rich house, which they plundered; and the citizens, alarmed at this act of violence, shut their gates against them; and being seconded by a detachment of soldiers, sent them by Lord Scales, governor of the Tower, they repulsed the rebels with great slaughter. [4] The Kentish men were so discouraged by the blow, that upon receiving a general pardon from the primate, then chancellor, they retreated towards Rochester, and there dispersed. The pardon was soon after annulled, as extorted by violence: a price was set on Cade's head, [5] who was killed by one Iden, a gentleman of Sussex; and many of his followers were capitally punished for their rebellion.

It was imagined by the court, that the duke of York had secretly instigated Cade to this attempt, in order to try, by that experiment, the dispositions of the people towards his title and family: [1] and as the event had so far succeeded to his wish, the ruling party had greater reason than ever to apprehend the future consequences of his pretensions.

* Stowe, , 389. Holing, .

* * Grafton, .

* * * Hall, fol. 160.

* * * * Hist. Croyland, Contin..

* * * * * * Cotton, .

At the same time they heard that he intended to return from Ireland; and fearing that he meant to bring an armed force along with him, they issued orders, in the king's name, for opposing him, and for debarring him entrance into England. [1] But the duke refuted his enemies by coming attended with no more than his ordinary retinue: the precautions of the ministers served only to show him their jealousy and malignity against him: he was sensible that his title, by being dangerous to the king, was also become dangerous to himself: he now saw the impossibility of remaining in his present situation, and the necessity of proceeding forward in support of his claim. His partisans, therefore, were instructed to maintain, in all companies, his right by succession, and by the established laws and constitution of the kingdom: these questions became every day more and more the subject of conversation: the minds of men were insensibly sharpened against each other by disputes, before they came to more dangerous extremities: and various topics were pleaded in support of the pretensions of each party.

* Stowe, p, 394.

The partisans of the house of Lancaster maintained that, though the elevation of Henry IV. might at first be deemed somewhat irregular, and could not be justified by any of those principles on which that prince chose to rest his title, it was yet founded on general consent, was a national act, and was derived from the voluntary approbation of a free people, who, being loosened from their allegiance by the tyranny of the preceding government, were moved by gratitude, as well as by a sense of public interest, to intrust the sceptre into the hands of their deliverer: that, even if that establishment were allowed to be at first invalid, it had acquired solidity by time; the only principle which ultimately gives authority to government, and removes those scruples which the irregular steps attending almost all revolutions, naturally excite in the minds of the people: that the right of succession was a rule admitted only for general good, and for the maintenance of public order; and could never be pleaded to the overthrow of national tranquillity, and the subversion of regular establishments; that the principles of liberty, no less than the maxims of internal peace, were injured by these pretensions of the house of York; and if so many reiterated acts of the legislature, by which the crown was entailed on the present family, were now invalidated, the English must be considered not as a free people, who could dispose of their own government, but as a troop of slaves, who were implicitly transmitted by succession from one master to another that the nation was bound to allegiance under the house of Lancaster by moral no less than by political duty; and were they to infringe those numerous oaths of fealty which they had sworn to Henry and his predecessors, they would thenceforth be thrown loose from all principles, and it would be found difficult ever after to fix and restrain them: that the duke of York himself had frequently done homage to the king as his lawful sovereign, and had thereby, in the most solemn manner, made an indirect renunciation of those claims with which he now dared to disturb the tranquillity of the public: that even though the violation of the rights of blood, made on the deposition of Richard, was perhaps rash and imprudent, it was too late to remedy the mischief; the danger of a disputed succession could no longer be obviated; the people, accustomed to a government which, in the hands of the late king, had been so glorious, and in that of his predecessor, so prudent and salutary, would still ascribe a right to it; by causing multiplied disorders, and by shedding an inundation of blood, the advantage would only be obtained of exchanging one pretender for another; and the house of York itself, if established on the throne, would, on the first opportunity, be exposed to those revolutions, which the giddy spirit excited in the people gave so much reason to apprehend: and that, though the present king enjoyed not the shining talents which had appeared in his father and grandfather, he might still have a son who should be endowed with them; he is himself eminent for the most harmless and inoffensive manners; and if active princes were dethroned on pretence of tyranny, and indolent ones on the plea of incapacity, there would thenceforth remain in the constitution no established rule of obedience to any sovereign.

Those strong topics in favor of the house of Lancaster, were opposed by arguments no less convincing on the side of the house of York. The partisans of this latter family asserted, that the maintenance of order in the succession of princes, far from doing injury to the people, or invalidating their fundamental title to good government, was established only for the purposes of government, and served to prevent those numberless confusions which must ensue, if no rule were followed but the uncertain and disputed views of present convenience and advantage: that the same maxims which insured public peace, were also salutary to national liberty the privileges of the people could only be maintained by the observance of laws; and if no account were made of the rights of the sovereign, it could less be expected that any regard would be paid to the property and freedom of the subject: that it was never too late to correct any pernicious precedent; an unjust establishment, the longer it stood, acquired the greater sanction and validity; it could, with more appearance of reason, be pleaded as an authority for a like injustice; and the maintenance of it, instead of favoring public tranquillity, tended to disjoint every principle by which human society was supported: that usurpers would be happy, if their present possession of power, or their continuance for a few years, could convert them into legal princes; but nothing would be more miserable than the people, if all restraints on violence and ambition were thus removed, and a full scope given to the attempts of every turbulent innovator: that time indeed might bestow solidity on a government whose first foundations were the most infirm; but it required both a long course of time to produce this effect, and the total extinction of those claimants whose title was built on the original principles of the constitution: that the deposition of Richard II., and the advancement of Henry IV., were not deliberate national acts, but the result of the levity and violence of the people, and proceeded from those very defects in human nature which the establishment of political society, and of an order in succession, was calculated to prevent: that the subsequent entails of the crown were a continuance of the same violence and usurpation; they were not ratified by the legislature, since the consent of the rightful king was still wanting; and the acquiescence, first of the family of Mortimer, then of the family of York, proceeded from present necessity, and implied no renunciation of their pretensions that the restoration of the true order of succession could not be considered as a change which familiarized the people to devolutions; but as the correction of a former abuse, which had itself encouraged the giddy spirit of innovation, rebellion, and disobedience: and that, as the original title of Lancaster stood only, in the person of Henry IV., on present convenience, even this principle, unjustifiable as it was when not supported by laws and warranted by the constitution, had now entirely gone over to the other side; nor was there any comparison between a prince utterly unable to sway the sceptre, and blindly governed by corrupt ministers, or by an imperious queen, engaged in foreign and hostile interests and a prince of mature years, of approved wisdom and experience, a native of England, the lineal heir of the crown, who, by his restoration, would replace every thing on ancient foundations.

So many plausible arguments could be urged on both sides of this interesting question, that the people were extremely divided in their sentiments; and though the noblemen of greatest power and influence seem to have espoused the party of York, the opposite cause had the advantage of being supported by the present laws, and by the immediate possession of royal authority. There were also many great noblemen in the Lancastrian party, who balanced the power of their antagonists, and kept the nation in suspense between them. The earl of Northumberland adhered to the present government: the earl of Westmoreland, in spite of his connections with the duke of York, and with the family of Nevil, of which he was the head, was brought over to the same party; and the whole north of England, the most warlike part of the kingdom, was, by means of these two potent noblemen, warmly engaged in the interests of Lancaster. Edmund Beaufort, duke of Somerset, and his brother Henry, were great supports of that cause; as were also Henry Holland duke of Exeter, Stafford, duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, the Lords Clifford, Dudley, Scales, Audley, and other noblemen.

While the kingdom was in this situation, it might naturally be expected that so many turbulent barons, possessed of so much independent authority, would immediately have flown to arms, and have decided the quarrel, after their usual manner, by war and battle, under the standards of the contending princes. But there still were many causes which retarded these desperate extremities, and made a long train of faction, intrigue, and cabal, precede the military operations. By the gradual progress of arts in England, as well as in other parts of Europe, the people were now become of some importance; laws were beginning to be respected by them; and it was requisite, by various pretences, previously to reconcile their minds to the overthrow of such an ancient establishment as that of the house of Lancaster, ere their concurrence could reasonably be expected. The duke of York himself, the new claimant, was of a moderate and cautious character, an enemy to violence and disposed to trust rather to time and policy, than to sanguinary measures, for the success of his pretensions. The very imbecility itself of Henry tended to keep the factions in suspense, and make them stand long in awe of each other: it rendered the Lancastrian party unable to strike any violent blow against their enemies; it encouraged the Yorkists to hope that, after banishing the king's ministers, and getting possession of his person, they might gradually undermine his authority, and be able, without the perilous experiment of a civil war, to change the succession by parliamentary and legal authority.

1451.

The dispositions which appeared in a parliament assembled soon after the arrival of the duke of York from Ireland, favored these expectations of his partisans, and both discovered an unusual boldness in the commons, and were a proof of the general discontents which prevailed against the administration. The lower house, without any previous inquiry or examination, without alleging any other ground of complaint than common fame, ventured to present a petition against the duke of Somerset, the duchess of Suffolk, the bishop of Chester, Sir John Sutton, Lord Dudley, and several others of inferior rank; and they prayed the king to remove them forever from his person and councils, and to prohibit them from approaching within twelve miles of the court. [1] This was a violent attack, somewhat arbitrary, and supported but by few precedents, against the ministry; yet the king durst not openly oppose it: he replied that, except the lords, he would banish all the others from court during a year, unless he should have occasion for their service in suppressing any rebellion. At the same time he rejected a bill, which had passed both houses, for attainting the late duke of Suffolk, and which, in several of its clauses, discovered a very general prejudice against the measures of the court.

1452.

The duke of York, trusting to these symptoms, raised an army of ten thousand men, with which he marched towards London, demanding a reformation of the government, and the removal of the duke of Somerset from all power and authority. [2] He unexpectedly found the gates of the city shut against him; and on his retreating into Kent, he was followed by the king at the head of a superior army; in which several of Richard’s friends, particularly Salisbury and Warwick appeared; probably with a view of mediating between the parties, and of seconding, on occasion, the duke of York’s pretensions.

* Parl. Hist. vol. ii. .

* * Stowe, .

A parley ensued; Richard still insisted upon the removal of Somerset, and his submitting to a trial in parliament: the court pretended to comply with his demand; and that nobleman was put in arrest: the duke of York was then persuaded to pay his respects to the king in his tent; and, on repeating his charge against the duke of Somerset, he was surprised to see that minister step from behind the curtain, and offer to maintain his innocence. Richard now found that he had been betrayed; that he was in the hands of his enemies; and that it was become necessary, for his own safety, to lower his pretensions. No violence, however, was attempted against him: the nation was not in a disposition to bear the destruction of so popular a prince: he had many friends in Henry's camp; and his son, who was not in the power of the court, might still be able to revenge his death on all his enemies: he was therefore dismissed; and he retired to his seat of Wigmore, on the borders of Wales. [1]

While the duke of York lived in this retreat, there happened an incident which, by increasing the public discontents, proved favorable to his pretensions. Several Gascon lords, affectionate to the English government, and disgusted at the new dominion of the French, came to London, and offered to return to their allegiance under Henry. [2]

1453.

The earl of Shrewsbury, with a body of eight thousand men, was sent over to support them. Bordeaux opened its gates to him: he made himself master of Fronsac, Castillon, and some other places: affairs began to wear a favorable aspect; but as Charles hastened to resist this dangerous invasion, the fortunes of the English were soon reversed: Shrewsbury, a venerable warrior, above fourscore years of age, fell in battle; his conquests were lost; Bordeaux was again obliged to submit to the French king; [3] and all hopes of recovering the province of Gascony were forever extinguished.

* Grafton, .

* * Holing. .

* * * Polyd. Virg. . Grafton, .

Though the English might deem themselves happy to be fairly rid of distant dominions, which were of no use to them, and which they never could defend against the growing power of France, they expressed great discontent on the occasion: and they threw all the blame on the ministry, who had not been able to effect impossibilities. While they were in this disposition, the queen's delivery of a son, who received the name of Edward, was deemed no joyful incident; and as it removed all hopes of the peaceable succession of the duke of York, who was otherwise, in the right of his father, and by the laws enacted since the accession of the house of Lancaster, next heir to the crown, it had rather a tendency to inflame the quarrel between the parties. But the duke was incapable of violent counsels; and even when no visible obstacle lay between him and the throne, he was prevented by his own scruples from mounting it.

1454.

Henry, always unfit to exercise the government, fell at this time into a distemper, which so far increased his natural imbecility, that it rendered him incapable of maintaining even the appearance of royalty. The queen and the council, destitute of this support, found themselves unable to resist the York party; and they were obliged to yield to the torrent. They sent Somerset to the Tower, and appointed Richard lieutenant of the kingdom, with powers to open and hold a session of parliament. [1]

* Rymer, vol. xi. .

That assembly, also, taking into consideration the state of the kingdom, created him protector during pleasure. Men who thus intrusted sovereign authority to one that had such evident and strong pretensions to the crown, were not surely averse to his taking immediate and full possession of it; yet the duke, instead of pushing them to make further concessions, appeared somewhat timid and irresolute even in receiving the power which was tendered to him. He desired that it might be recorded in parliament, that this authority was conferred on him from their own free motion, without any application on his part: he expressed his hopes that they would assist him in the exercise of it: he made it a condition of his acceptance, that the other lords who were appointed to be of his council, should also accept of the trust, and should exercise it; and he required, that all the powers of his office should be specified and defined by act of parliament. This moderation of Richard was certainly very unusual and very amiable; yet was it attended with bad consequences in the present juncture; and by giving time to the animosities of faction to rise and ferment, it proved the source of all those furious wars and commotions which ensued.

The enemies of the duke of York soon found it in their power to make advantage of his excessive caution. Henry being so far recovered from his distemper, as to carry the appearance of exercising the royal power, they moved him to resume his authority, to annul the protectorship of the duke to release Somerset from the Tower, [1] and to commit the administration into the hands of that nobleman.

1455.

Richard, sensible of the dangers which might attend his former acceptance of the parliamentary commission, should he submit to the annulling of it, levied an army; but still without advancing any pretensions to the crown. He complained only of the king’s ministers, and demanded a reformation of the government. A battle was fought at St. Albans, in which the Yorkists were superior, and, without suffering any material loss, slew about five thousand of their enemies; among whom were the duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, the earl of Stafford, eldest son of the duke of Buckingham, Lord Clifford, and many other persons of distinction. [2] The king himself fell into the hands of the duke of York, who treated him with great respect and tenderness: he was only obliged (which he regarded as no hardship) to commit the whole authority of the crown into the hands of his rival.

This was the first blood spilt in that fatal quarrel which was not finished in less than a course of thirty years, which was signalized by twelve pitched battles, which opened a scene of extraordinary fierceness and cruelty, is

* Rymer, vol. xi. . Holing, . Grafton, .

* * Stowe, . Holing, .

computed to have cost the lives of eighty princes of the blood, and almost entirely annihilated the ancient nobility of England. The strong attachments, which, at that time, men of the same kindred bore to each other, and the vindictive spirit, which was considered as a point of honor, rendered the great families implacable in their resentments, and every moment widened the breach between the parties. Yet affairs did not immediately proceed to the last extremities; the nation was kept some time in suspense; the vigor and spirit of Queen Margaret, supporting her small power, still proved a balance to the great authority of Richard, which was checked by his irresolute temper. A parliament, which was soon after assembled, plainly discovered, by the contrariety of their proceedings, the contrariety of the motives by which they were actuated. They granted the Yorkists a general indemnity, and they restored the protectorship to the duke, who, in accepting it, still persevered in all his former precautions; but at the same time they renewed their oaths of fealty to Henry, and fixed the continuance of the protectorship to the majority of his son Edward, who was vested with the usual dignities of prince of Wales, duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester. The only decisive act passed in this parliament, was a full resumption of all the grants which had been made since the death of Henry V., and which had reduced the crown to great poverty.

1456.

It was not found difficult to wrest power from hands so little tenacious as those of the duke of York. Margaret, availing herself of that prince’s absence, produced her husband before the house of lords; and as his state of health permitted him at that time to act his part with some tolerable decency, he declared his intentions of resuming the government, and of putting an end to Richard’s authority. This measure, being unexpected, was not opposed by the contrary party; the house of lords, who were many of them disgusted with the late act of resumption, assented to Henry’s proposal; and the king was declared to be reinstated in sovereign authority. Even the duke of York acquiesced in this irregular act of the peers, and no disturbance ensued. But that prince’s claim to the crown was too well known, and the steps which he had taken to promote it were too evident ever to allow sincere trust and confidence to have place between the parties.

1457.

The court retired to Coventry, and invited the duke of York and the earls of Salisbury and Warwick to attend the king’s person. When they were on the road, they received intelligence that designs were formed against their liberties and lives. They immediately separated themselves; Richard withdrew to his castle of Wigmore; Salisbury to Middleham, in Yorkshire, and Warwick to his government of Calais, which had been committed to him after the battle of St. Albans, and which, as it gave him the command of the only regular military force maintained by England, was of the utmost importance in the present juncture. Still, men of peaceable dispositions, and among the rest Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury, thought it not too late to interpose with their good offices, in order to prevent that effusion of blood, with which the kingdom was threatened; and the awe in which each party stood of the other, rendered the mediation for some time successful. It was agreed that all the great leaders on both sides should meet in London, and be solemnly reconciled.

1458.

The duke of York and his partisans came thither with numerous retinues, and took up their quarters near each other for mutual security. The leaders of the Lancastrian party used the same precaution. The mayor, at the head of five thousand men, kept a strict watch, night and day; and was extremely vigilant in maintaining peace between them. [1]

Terms were adjusted, which removed not the ground of difference. An outward reconciliation only was procured; and in order to notify this accord to the whole people, a solemn procession to St. Paul’s was appointed, where the duke of York led Queen Margaret, and a leader of one party marched hand in hand with a leader of the opposite. The less real cordiality prevailed, the more were the exterior demonstrations of amity redoubled. But it was evident, that a contest for a crown could not thus be peaceably accommodated; that each party watched only for an opportunity of subverting the other; and that much blood must yet be spilt, ere the nation

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* Fabian Chron. anno 1458. The author says that some lords brought nine hundred retainers, some six hundred, none less than four hundred. See also Grafton, .

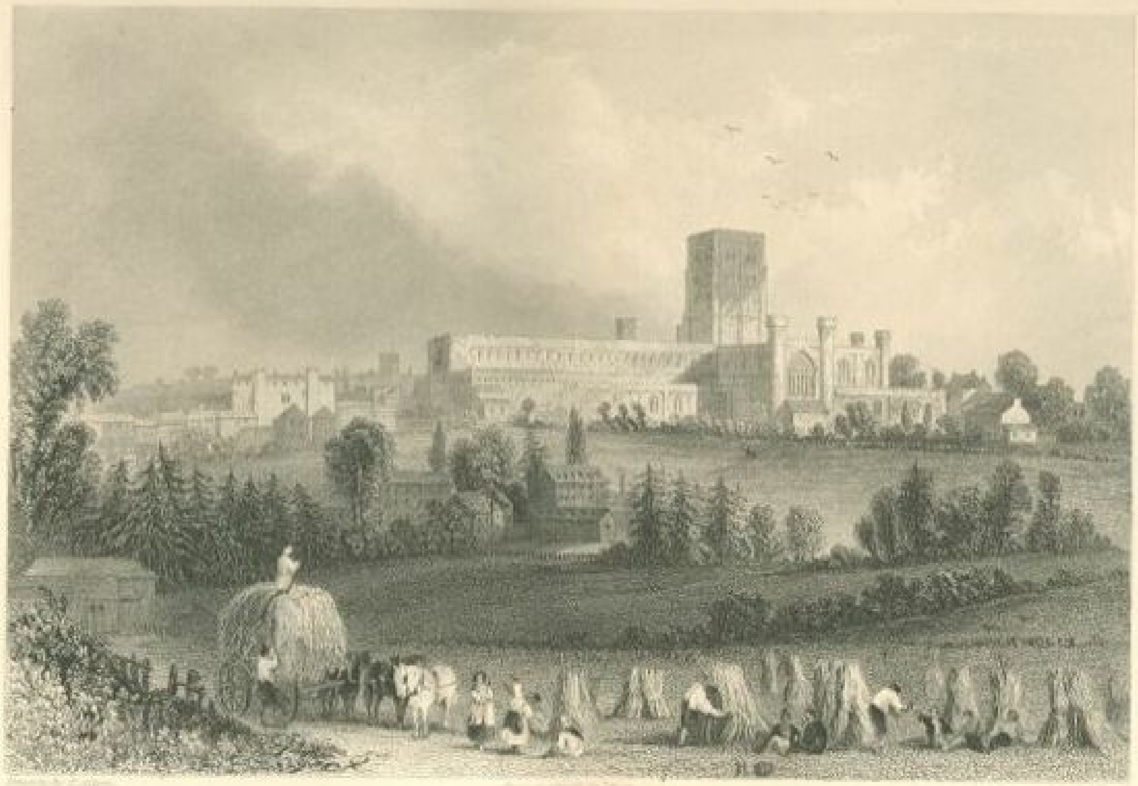
could be restored to perfect tranquillity, or enjoy a settled and established government.

1459.

Even the smallest accident, without any formed design, was sufficient, in the present disposition of men’s minds, to dissolve the seeming harmony between the parties; and had the intentions of the leaders been ever so amicable they would have found it difficult to restrain the animosity of their followers. One of the king’s retinue insulted one of the earl of Warwick’s: their companions on both sides took part in the quarrel: a fierce combat ensued: the earl apprehended his life to be aimed at: he fled to his government of Calais; and both parties, in every county of England, openly made preparations for deciding the contest by war and arms.

The earl of Salisbury, marching to join the duke of York, was overtaken at Blore Heath, on the borders of Staffordshire, by Lord Audley, who commanded much superior forces; and a small rivulet with steep banks ran between the armies. Salisbury here supplied his defect in numbers by stratagem, a refinement of which there occur few instances in the English civil wars, where a headlong courage, more than military conduct, is commonly to be remarked. He feigned a retreat, and allured Audley to follow him with precipitation; but when the van of the royal army had passed the brook, Salisbury suddenly turned upon them; and partly by the surprise, partly by the division, of the enemies’ forces, put this body to rout: the example of flight was followed by the rest of the army: and Salisbury, obtaining a complete victory, reached the general rendezvous of the Yorkists at Ludlow. [1]

The earl of Warwick brought over to this rendezvous a choice body of veterans from Calais, on whom, it was thought the fortune of the war would much depend; but this reënforcement occasioned, in the issue, the immediate ruin of the duke of York’s party. When the royal army approached, and a general action was every hour expected, Sir Andrew Trollop, who commanded the veterans, deserted to the king in the night-time; and the Yorkists were so dismayed at this instance of treachery, which made every man suspicious of his fellow, that they separated next day without striking a stroke: [2] the duke fled to Ireland: the earl of Warwick, attended by many of the other leaders, escaped to Calais; where his great popularity among all orders of men, particularly among the military, soon drew to him partisans, and rendered his power very formidable. The friends of the house of York in England kept themselves every where in readiness to rise on the first summons from their leaders.



ST ALBAN'S ABBEY.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE

1460.

After meeting with some successes at sea, Warwick landed in Kent, with the earl of Salisbury, and the earl of Marche, eldest son of the duke of York; and being met by the primate, by Lord Cobham, and other persons of distinction, he marched, amidst the acclamations of the people, to London. The city immediately opened its gates to him; and his troops increasing on every day’s march, he soon found himself in a condition to face the royal army, which hastened from Coventry to attack him. The battle was fought at Northampton; and was soon decided against the royalists by the infidelity of

Lord Grey of Ruthin, who, commanding Henry’s van, deserted to the enemy during the heat of action, and spread a consternation through the troops. The duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, the Lords Beaumont and Egremont, and Sir William Lucie were killed in the action or pursuit: the slaughter fell chiefly on the gentry and nobility; the common people were spared by orders of the earls of Warwick and Marche. [3]

* Holingshed, . Grafton, .

* * Holingshed, . Grafton,

* * * Stowe, .

Henry himself, that empty shadow of a king, was again taken prisoner; and as the innocence and simplicity of his manners, which bore the appearance of sanctity, had procured him the tender regard of the people, [1] the earl of Warwick and the other leaders took care to distinguish themselves by their respectful demeanor towards him.

A parliament was summoned in the king’s name, and met at Westminster; where the duke soon after appeared from Ireland. This prince had never hitherto advanced openly any claim to the crown: he had only complained of ill ministers, and demanded a redress of grievances; and even in the present crisis, when the parliament was surrounded by his victorious army, he showed such a regard to law and liberty, as is unusual during the prevalence of a party in any civil dissensions; and was still less to be expected in those violent and licentious times. He advanced towards the throne; and being met by the archbishop of Canterbury, who asked him, whether he had yet paid his respects to the king, he replied, that he knew of none to whom he owed that title. He then stood near the throne, [2] and addressing himself to the house of peers, he gave them a deduction of his title by descent, mentioned the cruelties by which the house of Lancaster had paved their way to sovereign power, insisted on the calamities which had attended the government of Henry, exhorted them to return into the right path, by doing justice to the lineal successor, and thus pleaded his cause before them as his natural and legal judges. [3] This cool and moderate manner of demanding a crown intimidated his friends and encouraged his enemies: the lords remained in suspense; [4] and no one ventured to utter a word on the occasion.

* Hall, fol. 169. Grafton, .

* * Holingshed,

* * * Cotton, . Grafton, .

* * * * Holingshed, . Grafton, .

Richard, who had probably expected that the peers would have invited him to place himself on the throne, was much disappointed at their silence; but desiring them to reflect on what he had proposed to them, he departed the house. The peers took the matter into consideration, with as much tranquillity as if it had been a common subject of debate: they desired the assistance of some considerable members among the commons in their deliberations: they heard in several successive days, the reasons alleged for the duke of York: they even ventured to propose objections to his claim founded on former entails of the crown, and on the oaths of fealty sworn to the house of Lancaster: [1] they also observed that as Richard had all along borne the arms of York, not those of Clarence, he could not claim as successor to the latter family: and after receiving answers to these objections, derived from the violence and power by which the house of Lancaster supported their present possession of the crown, they proceeded to give a decision. Their sentence was calculated, as far as possible, to please both parties: they declared the title of the duke of York to be certain and indefeasible; but in consideration that Henry had enjoyed the crown, without dispute or controversy, during the course of thirty-eight years, they determined that he should continue to possess the title and dignity during the remainder of his life; that the administration of the government, meanwhile, should remain with Richard; that he should be acknowledged the true and lawful heir of the monarchy; that every one should swear to maintain his succession, and it should be treason to attempt his life; and that all former settlements of the crown, in this and the two last reigns, should be abrogated and rescinded. [2] The duke acquiesced in this decision: Henry himself, being a prisoner, could not oppose it: even if he had enjoyed his liberty, he would not probably have felt any violent reluctance against it: and the act thus passed with the unanimous consent of the whole legislative body. Though the mildness of this compromise is chiefly to be ascribed to the moderation of the duke of York, it is impossible not to observe in those transactions visible marks of a higher regard to law, and of a more fixed authority enjoyed by parliament, than has appeared in any former period of English history.

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, . Grafton, .

It is probable that the duke, without employing either menaces or violence, could have obtained from the commons a settlement more consistent and uniform: but as many, if not all the members of the upper house, had received grants, concession, or dignities, during the last sixty years, when the house of Lancaster was possessed of the government, they were afraid of invalidating their own titles by too sudden and violent an overthrow of that family; and in thus temporizing between the parties, they fixed the throne on a basis upon which it could not possibly stand. The duke, apprehending his chief danger to arise from the genius and spirit of Queen Margaret sought a pretence for banishing her the kingdom: he sent her, in the king’s name, a summons to come immediately to London; intending, in case of her disobedience, to proceed to extremities against her. But the queen needed not this menace to excite her activity in defending the rights of her family. After the defeat at Northampton, she had fled with her infant son to Durham, thence to Scotland; but soon returning, she applied to the northern barons, and employed every motive to procure their assistance. Her affability, insinuation, and address, — qualities in which she excelled, — her caresses, her promises, wrought a powerful effect on every one who approached her: the admiration of her great qualities was succeeded by compassion towards her helpless condition: the nobility of that quarter, who regarded themselves as the most warlike in the kingdom, were moved by indignation to find the southern barons pretend to dispose of the crown and settle the government. And that they might allure the people to their standard, they promised them the spoils of all the provinces on the other side of the Trent. By these means, the queen had collected an army twenty thousand strong, with a celerity which was neither expected by her friends nor apprehended by her enemies.

The duke of York, informed of her appearance in the north, hastened thither with a body of five thousand men, to suppress, as he imagined, the beginnings of an insurrection; when, on his arrival at Wakefield, he found himself so much outnumbered by the enemy. He threw himself into Sandal Castle, which was situated in the neighborhood; and he was advised by the earl of Salisbury, and other prudent counsellors, to remain in that fortress till his son, the earl of Marche, who was levying forces in the borders of Wales, could advance to his assistance. [1] But the duke, though deficient in political courage, possessed personal bravery in an eminent degree; and notwithstanding his wisdom and experience, he thought that he should be forever disgraced, if, by taking shelter behind walls, he should for a moment resign the victory to a woman.

* Stowe, .

He descended into the plain, and offered battle to the enemy, which was instantly accepted. The great inequality of numbers was sufficient alone to decide the victory; but the queen, by sending a detachment, who fell on the back of the duke’s army, rendered her advantage still more certain and undisputed. The duke himself was killed in the action; and as his body was found among the slain, the head was cut off by Margaret’s orders, and fixed on the gates of York, with a paper crown upon it, in derision of his pretended title. His son, the earl of Rutland, a youth of seventeen, was brought to Lord Clifford; and that barbarian, in revenge of his father’s death, who had perished in the battle of St. Albans, murdered in cool blood, and with his own hands, this innocent prince, whose exterior figure, as well as other accomplishments, are represented by historians as extremely amiable. The earl of Salisbury was wounded and taken prisoner, and immediately beheaded, with several other persons of distinction, by martial law at Pomfret. [1] There fell near three thousand Yorkists in this battle: the duke himself was greatly and justly lamented by his own party; a prince who merited a better fate, and whose errors in conduct proceeded entirely from such qualities as render him the more an object of esteem and affection. He perished in the fiftieth year of his age, and left three sons, Edward, George, and Richard, with three daughters, Anne, Elizabeth, and Margaret.

1461.

The queen, after this important victory, divided her army. She sent the smaller division, under Jasper Tudor, earl of Pembroke, half brother to the king, against Edward the new duke of York. She herself marched with the larger division towards London, where the earl of Warwick had been left with the command of the Yorkists. Pembroke was defeated by Edward at Mortimer’s Cross, in Herefordshire, with the loss of near four thousand men: his army was dispersed; he himself escaped by flight; but his father, Sir Owen Tudor, was taken prisoner, and immediately beheaded by Edward’s orders. This barbarous practice, being once begun, was continued by both parties, from a spirit of revenge, which covered itself under the pretence of retaliation. [2]

* Poivd. Virg. p 510.

* * Holingshed, . Grafton, .

Margaret compensated this defeat by a victory which she obtained over the earl of Warwick. That nobleman on the approach of the Lancastrians, led out his army, reënforced by a strong body of the Londoners, who were affectionate to his cause; and he gave battle to the queen at St. Albans. While the armies were warmly engaged, Lovelace, who commanded a considerable body of the Yorkists, withdrew from the combat; and this treacherous conduct, of which there are many instances in those civil wars, decided the victory in favor of the queen. About two thousand three hundred of the vanquished perished in the battle and pursuit; and the person of the king fell again into the hands of his own party. This weak prince was sure to be almost equally a prisoner whichever faction had the keeping of him; and scarce any more decorum was observed by one than by the other, in their method of treating him. Lord Bonville, to whose care he had been intrusted by the Yorkists, remained with him after the defeat, on assurances of pardon given him by Henry: but Margaret, regardless of her husband’s promise, immediately ordered the head of that nobleman to be struck off by the executioner. [1] Sir Thomas Kiriel, a brave warrior, who had signalized himself in the French wars, was treated in the same manner.

The queen made no great advantage of this victory: young Edward advanced upon her from the other side; and collecting the remains of Warwick’s army, was soon in a condition of giving her battle with superior forces. She was sensible of her danger, while she lay between the enemy and the city of London; and she found it necessary to retreat with her army to the north. [2]

* Holingshed, .

* * Grafton, .

Edward entered the capital amidst the acclamations of the citizens, and immediately opened a new scene to his party. This prince, in the bloom of youth, remarkable for the beauty of this person, for his bravery, his activity, his affability, and every popular quality, found himself so much possessed of public favor, that, elated with the spirit natural to his age, he resolved no longer to confine himself within those narrow limits which his father had prescribed to himself, and which had been found by experience so prejudicial to his cause. He determined to assume the name and dignity of king; to insist openly on his claim; and thenceforth to treat the opposite party as traitors and rebels to his lawful authority. But as a national consent, or the appearance of it, still seemed, notwithstanding his plausible title, requisite to precede this bold measure, and as the assembling of a parliament might occasion too many delays, and be attended with other inconveniences, he ventured to proceed in a less regular manner, and to put it out of the power of his enemies to throw obstacles in the way of his elevation. His army was ordered to assemble in St. John’s Fields; great numbers of people surrounded them; an harangue was pronounced to this mixed multitude, setting forth the title of Edward, and inveighing against the tyranny and usurpation of the rival family; and the people were then asked whether they would have Henry of Lancaster for king. They unanimously exclaimed against the proposal. It was then demanded whether they would accept of Edward, eldest son of the late duke of York. They expressed their assent by loud and joyful acclamations. [1] A great number of bishops, lords, magistrates, and other persons of distinction were next assembled at Baynard’s Castle, who ratified the popular election; and the new king was on the subsequent day proclaimed in London, by the title of Edward IV. [2]

In this manner ended the reign of Henry VI., a monarch, who, while in his cradle, had been proclaimed king both of France and England, and who began his life with the most splendid prospects that any prince in Europe had ever enjoyed. The revolution was unhappy for his people, as it was the source of civil wars; but was almost entirely indifferent to Henry himself, who was utterly incapable of exercising his authority, and who, provided he personally met with good usage, was equally easy, as he was equally enslaved, in the hands of his enemies and of his friends. His weakness and his disputed title were the chief causes of the public calamities: but whether his queen and his ministers were not also guilty of some great abuses of power, it is not easy for us at this distance of time to determine: there remain no proofs on record of any considerable violation of the laws, except in the assassination of the duke of Glocester, which was a private crime, formed no precedent, and was but too much of a piece with the usual ferocity and cruelty of the times.

The most remarkable law which passed in this reign, was that for the due election of members of parliament in counties. After the fall of the feudal system, the distinction of tenures was in some measure lost; and every freeholder, as well those who held of mesne lords, as the immediate tenants of the crown, were by degrees admitted to give their votes at elections. This innovation (for such it may probably be esteemed) was indirectly confirmed by a law of Henry IV. [3] which gave right to such a multitude of electors, as was the occasion of great disorder.

* Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * Grafton, .

* * * Statutes at large, 7 Henry IV. ca. 15.

In the eighth and tenth of this king, therefore, laws were enacted, limiting the electors to such as possessed forty shillings a year in land, free from all burdens within the county. [1] This sum was equivalent to near twenty pounds a year of our present money, and it were to be wished, that the spirit, as well as letter, of this law had been maintained.

The preamble of the statute is remarkable: “Whereas the elections of knights have of late, in many counties of England, been made by outrageous and excessive numbers of people, many of them of small substance and value, yet pretending to a right equal to the best knights and esquires; whereby manslaughters, riots, batteries, and divisions among the gentlemen and other people of the same counties, shall very likely rise and be, unless due remedy be provided in this behalf, etc.” We may learn from these expressions, what an important matter the election of a member of parliament was now become in England: that assembly was beginning in this period to assume great authority: the commons had it much in their power to enforce the execution of the laws; and if they failed of success in this particular, it proceeded less from any exorbitant power of the crown, than from the licentious spirit of the aristocracy, and perhaps from the rude education of the age, and their own ignorance of the advantages resulting from a regular administration of justice.

When the duke of York, the earls of Salisbury and Warwick, fled the kingdom upon the desertion of their troops, a parliament was summoned at Coventry in 1460, by which they were all attainted. This parliament seems to have been very irregularly constituted, and scarcely deserves the name; insomuch, that an act passed in it, “that all such knights of any county, as were returned by virtue of the king’s letters, without any other election, should be valid; and that no sheriff should, for returning them, incur the penalty of the statute of Henry IV.” [2] All the acts of that parliament were afterwards reversed; “because it was unlawfully summoned, and the knights and barons not duly chosen.” [3]

* Statutes at large, 8 Henry VI. ca. 10 Henry VI. cap. 2.

* * Cotton, .

* * * Statutes at large, 39 Henry VI. ca

The parliaments in this reign, instead of relaxing their vigilance against the usurpations of the court of Rome, endeavored to enforce the former statutes enacted for that purpose. The commons petitioned, that no foreigner should be capable of any church preferment, and that the patron might be allowed to present anew upon the non-residence of any incumbent: [1] but the king eluded these petitions. Pope Martin wrote him a severe letter against the statute of provisors; which he calls an abominable law, that would infallibly damn every one who observed it. [2] The cardinal of Winchester was legate; and as he was also a kind of prime minister, and immensely rich from the profits of his clerical dignities, the parliament became jealous lest he should extend the papal power; and they protested, that the cardinal should absent himself in all affairs and councils of the king, whenever the pope or see of Rome was touched upon. [3]

Permission was given by parliament to export corn when it was at low prices; wheat at six shillings and eightpence a quarter, money of that age; barley at three shillings and fourpence. [4] It appears from these prices, that corn still remained at near half its present value; though other commodities were much cheaper. The inland commerce of corn was also opened in the eighteenth of the king, by allowing any collector of the customs to grant a license of carrying it from one county to another. [5] The same year a kind of navigation act was proposed with regard to all places within the Straits; but the king rejected it. [6]

The first instance of debt contracted upon parliamentary security occurs in this reign. [7] The commencement of this pernicious practice deserves to be noted; a practice the more likely to become pernicious, the more a nation advances in opulence and credit. The ruinous effects of it are now become apparent, and threaten the very existence of the nation.

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* Cotton, .

* * Burnet’s Collection of Records, vol. i. .

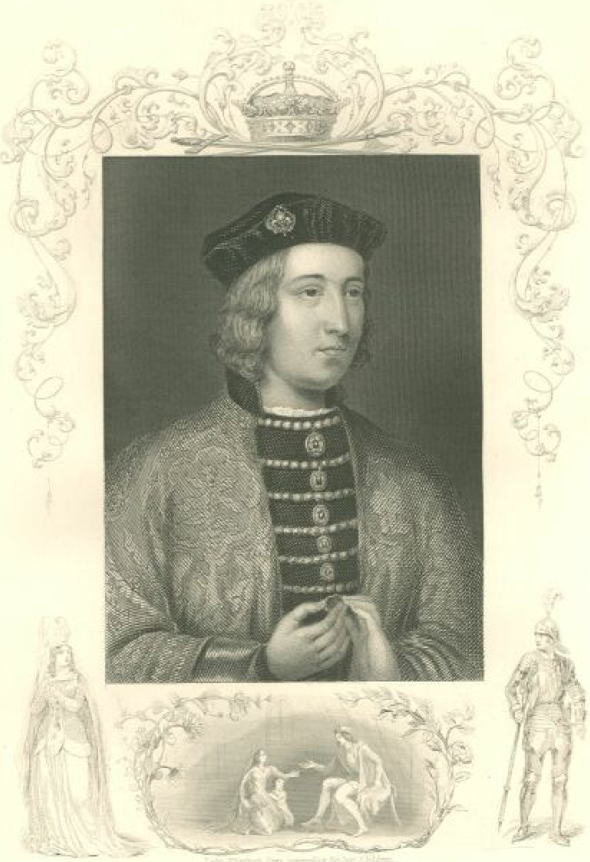
* * * Cotton, .

* * * * Statutes at large, 15 Henry VI. ca. 23 Henry VI. cap. 6.

* * * * * * Cotton, .

* * * * * * * Cotton, , 614, 638.

CHAPTER XXII.



Lady Elizabeth Grey interceding for her Children.

EDWARD IV.

From an ancient Painting in the Royal Collection.

EDWARD IV.

1461.

Young Edward, now in his twentieth year, was of a temper well fitted to make his way through such a scene of war, havoc, and devastation, as must conduct him to the full possession of that crown, which he claimed from hereditary right, but which he had assumed from the tumultuary election alone of his own party. He was bold, active, enterprising; and his hardness of heart and severity of character rendered him impregnable to all those movements of compassion which might relax his vigor in the prosecution of the most bloody revenges upon his enemies. The very commencement of his reign gave symptoms of his sanguinary disposition. A tradesman of London, who kept shop at the sign of the Crown, having said that he would make his son heir to the crown; this harmless pleasantry was interpreted to be spoken in derision of Edward's assumed title; and he was condemned and executed for the offence. [1] Such an act of tyranny was a proper prelude to the events which ensued. The scaffold, as well as the field, incessantly streamed with the noblest blood of England, spilt in the quarrel between the two contending families, whose animosity was now become implacable. The people, divided in their affections, took different symbols of party: the partisans of the house of Lancaster chose the red rose as their mark of distinction; [2] those of York were denominated from the white; and these civil wars were thus known over Europe by the name of the quarrel between the two roses.

* Habington in Kennet, .

* * Grafton, .

The license in which Queen Margaret had been obliged to indulge her troops, infused great terror and aversion into the city of London, and all the southern parts of the kingdom; and as she there expected an obstinate resistance, she had prudently retired northwards among her own partisans. The same license, joined to the zeal of faction, soon brought great multitudes to her standard; and she was able, in a few days, to assemble an army sixty thousand strong in Yorkshire. The king and the earl of Warwick hastened, with an army of forty thousand men, to check her progress; and when they reached Pomfret, they despatched a body of troops, under the command of Lord Fitzwalter, to secure the passage of Ferrybridge over the River Are, which lay between them and the enemy. Fitzwalter took possession of the post assigned him; but was not able to maintain it against Lord Clifford, who attacked him with superior numbers. The Yorkists were chased back with great slaughter; and Lord Fitzwalter himself was slain in the action. [1] The earl of Warwick, dreading the consequences of this disaster, at a time when a decisive action was every hour expected, immediately ordered his horse to be brought him, which he stabbed before the whole army; and kissing the hilt of his sword, swore that he was determined to share the fate of the meanest soldier. [2] And to show the greater security, a proclamation was at the same time issued, giving to every one full liberty to retire, but menacing the severest punishment to those who should discover any symptoms of cowardice in the ensuing battle. [3] Lord Falconberg was sent to recover the post which had been lost: he passed the river some miles above Ferrybridge, and falling unexpectedly on Lord Clifford, revenged the former disaster by the defeat of the party and the death of their leader. [4]

* W. Wyrcester, . Hall, fol. 186. Holingshed, .

* * Habington, .

* * * Holingshed, .

* * * * Hist. Croyl. Contin. .

The hostile armies met at Touton; and a fierce and bloody battle ensued. While the Yorkists were advancing to the charge, there happened a great fall of snow, which, driving full in the faces of their enemies, blinded them; and this advantage was improved by a stratagem of Lord Falconberg's. That nobleman ordered some infantry to advance before the line, and, after having sent a volley of flight-arrows, as they were called, amidst the enemy, immediately to retire. The Lancastrians, imagining that they were gotten within reach of the opposite army, discharged all their arrows, which thus fell short of the Yorkists. [1] After the quivers of the enemy were emptied, Edward advanced his line, and did execution with impunity on the dismayed Lancastrians: the bow, however, was soon laid aside, and the sword decided the combat, which ended in a total victory on the side of the Yorkists. Edward issued orders to give no quarter. [2] The routed army was pursued to Tadcaster with great bloodshed and confusion; and above thirty-six thousand men are computed to have fallen in the battle and pursuit: [3] among these were the earl of Westmoreland, and his brother Sir John Nevil, the earl of Northumberland, the Lords Dacres and Welles, and Sir Andrew Trollop. [4] The earl of Devonshire, who was now engaged in Henry’s party, was brought a prisoner to Edward; and was soon after beheaded by martial law at York. His head was fixed on a pole erected over a gate of that city; and the head of Duke Richard and that of the earl of Salisbury were taken down, and buried with their bodies. Henry and Margaret had remained at York during the action, but learning the defeat of their army, and being sensible that no place in England could now afford them shelter, they fled with great precipitation into Scotland. They were accompanied by the duke of Exeter, who, though he had married Edward’s sister, had taken part with the Lancastrians; and by Henry, duke of Somerset, who had commanded in the unfortunate battle of Touton, and who was the son of that nobleman killed in the first battle of St. Albans.

* Hall, fol. 186.

* * Habington, .

* * * Holingshed, . Grafton, . Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * * * Hall, fol. 187. Habington, .

Notwithstanding the great animosity which prevailed between the kingdoms, Scotland had never exerted itself with vigor, to take advantage either of the wars which England carried on with France, or of the civil commotions which arose between the contending families. James I., more laudably employed in civilizing his subjects, and taming them to the salutary yoke of law and justice, avoided all hostilities with foreign nations; and though he seemed interested to maintain a balance between France and England, he gave no further assistance to the former kingdom in its greatest distresses, than permitting, and perhaps encouraging, his subjects to enlist in the French service. After the murder of that excellent prince, the minority of his son and successor, James II., and the distractions incident to it, retained the Scots in the same state of neutrality; and the superiority visibly acquired by France, rendered it then unnecessary for her ally to interpose in her defence. But when the quarrel commenced between the houses of York and Lancaster, and became absolutely incurable but by the total extinction of one party, James, who had now risen to man’s estate, was tempted to seize the opportunity, and he endeavored to recover those places which the English had formerly conquered from his ancestors. He laid siege to the Castle of Roxburgh in 1460, and had provided himself with a small train of artillery for that enterprise: but his cannon were so ill framed, that one of them burst as he was firing it, and put an end to his life in the flower of his age. His son and successor, James III., was also a minor on his accession: the usual distractions ensued in the government: the queen dowager, Anne of Gueldres, aspired to the regency: the family of Douglas opposed her pretensions: and Queen Margaret, when she fled into Scotland, found there a people little less divided by faction, than those by whom she had been expelled. Though she pleaded the connections between the royal family of Scotland and the house of Lancaster, by the young king’s grandmother, a daughter of the earl of Somerset, she could engage the Scottish council to go no further than to express their good wishes in her favor; but on her offer to deliver to them immediately the important fortress of Berwick, and to contract her son in marriage with a sister of King James, she found a better reception; and the Scots promised the assistance of their arms to reinstate her family upon the throne. [1] But as the danger from that quarter seemed not very urgent to Edward, he did not pursue the fugitive king and queen into their retreat; but returned to London, where a parliament was summoned for settling the government.

On the meeting of this assembly, Edward found the good effects of his vigorous measure in assuming the crown, as well as of his victory at

Touton, by which he had secured it; [2] the parliament no longer hesitated between the two families or proposed any of those ambiguous decisions which could only serve to perpetuate and inflame the animosities of party.

* Hall, fol. 137.

* * Habington, .

They recognized the title of Edward, by hereditary descent, through the family of Mortimer; and declared that he was king by right, from the death of his father, who had also the same lawful title; and that he was in possession of the crown from the day that he assumed the government, tendered to him by the acclamations of the people. [1] They expressed their abhorrence of the usurpation and intrusion of the house of Lancaster, particularly that of the earl of Derby, otherwise called Henry IV.; which, they said, had been attended with every kind of disorder, the murder of the sovereign, and the oppression of the subject. They annulled every grant which had passed in those reigns; they reinstated the king in all the possessions which had belonged to the crown at the pretended deposition of Richard II.; and though they confirmed judicial deeds and the decrees of inferior courts, they reversed all attainders passed in any pretended parliament; particularly the attainder of the earl of Cambridge, the king’s grandfather; as well as that of the earls of Salisbury and Glocester, and of Lord Lumley, who had been forfeited for adhering to Richard II. [2]

Many of these votes were the result of the usual violence of party: the common sense of mankind, in more peaceable times, repealed them: and the statutes of the house of Lancaster, being the deeds of an established government, and enacted by princes long possessed of authority, have always been held as valid and obligatory. The parliament, however, in subverting such deep foundations, had still the pretence of replacing the government on its ancient and natural basis: but in their subsequent measures, they were more guided by revenge, at least by the views of convenience, than by the maxims of equity and justice. They passed an act of forfeiture and attainder against Henry VI. and Queen Margaret and their infant son Prince Edward: the same act was extended to the dukes of Somerset and Exeter; to the earls of Northumberland, Devonshire, Pembroke, Wilts; to the Viscount Beaumont; the Lords Roos, Nevil, Clifford, Welles, Dacre, Gray of Rugemont, Hungerford; to Alexander Hedie, Nicholas Latimer, Edmond Mountfort, John Heron, and many other persons of distinction. [3]

* Cotton, .

* * Cotton, . Statutes at large, 1 Edward IV cap. i.

* * * Cotton, . W. Wyrcester, .

The parliament vested the estates of all these attainted persons in the crown, though their sole crime was the adhering to a prince whom every individual of the parliament had long recognized, and whom that very king himself, who was now seated on the throne, had acknowledged and obeyed as his lawful sovereign.

The necessity of supporting the government established will more fully justify some other acts of violence, though the method of conducting them may still appear exceptionable. John, earl of Oxford, and his son Aubrey de Vere were detected in a correspondence with Margaret, were tried by martial law before the constable, were condemned and executed. [1] Sir William Tyrrel, Sir Thomas Tudenham, and John Montgomery were convicted in the same arbitrary court; were executed, and their estates forfeited. This introduction of martial law into civil government was a high strain of prerogative; which, were it not for the violence of the times, would probably have appeared exceptionable to a nation so jealous of their liberties as the English were now become. [2] It was impossible but such a great and sudden revolution must leave the roots of discontent and dissatisfaction in the subject, which would require great art, or, in lieu of it, great violence, to extirpate them. The latter was more suitable to the genius of the nation in that uncultivated age.

But the new establishment still seemed precarious and uncertain; not only from the domestic discontents of the people, but from the efforts of foreign powers. Lewis, the eleventh of the name, had succeeded to his father, Charles, in 1460; and was led, from the obvious motives of national interest, to feed the flames of civil discord among such dangerous neighbors, by giving support to the weaker party. But the intriguing and politic genius of this prince was here checked by itself: having attempted to subdue the independent spirit of his own vassals, he had excited such an opposition at home, as prevented him from making all the advantage, which the opportunity afforded, of the dissensions among the English.

1462.

He sent, however, a small body to Henry’s assistance under Varenne, seneschal of Normandy; [3] who landed in Northumberland, and got possession of the Castle of Alnwick; but as the indefatigable Margaret went in person to France, where she solicited larger supplies and promised Lewis to deliver up Calais, if her family should by his means be restored to the throne of England; he was induced to send along with her a body of two thousand men at arms, which enabled her to take the field, and to make an inroad into England.

* W. Wyrcester, . Hall, fol. 189 Grafton, . Fabian fol. 215. Fragm. ad finem T. Sproti.

* * See note R, at the end of the volume.

* * * * Monstrelet, vol. iii. p 95.

1464.

Though reënforced by a numerous train of adventurers from Scotland, and by many partisans of the family of Lancaster she received a check at Hedgley-more from Lord Montacute, or Montague, brother to the earl of Warwick, and warden of the east marches between Scotland and England. Montague was so encouraged with this success, that, while a numerous reënforcement was on their march to join him by orders from Edward, he yet ventured, with his own troops alone, to attack the Lancastrians at Hexham; and he obtained a complete victory over them. The duke of Somerset, the Lords Roos and Hungerford, were taken in the pursuit, and immediately beheaded by martial law at Hexham. Summary justice was in like manner executed at Newcastle on Sir Humphrey Nevil, and several other gentlemen. All those who were spared in the field, suffered on the scaffold; and the utter extermination of their adversaries was now become the plain object of the York party; a conduct which received but too plausible an apology from the preceding practice of the Lancastrians.

The fate of the unfortunate royal family, after this defeat, was singular. Margaret, flying with her son into a forest, where she endeavored to conceal herself, was beset, during the darkness of the night, by robbers, who, either ignorant or regardless of her quality, despoiled her of her rings and jewels, and treated her with the utmost indignity. The partition of this rich booty raised a quarrel among them; and while their attention was thus engaged, she took the opportunity of making her escape with her son into the thickest of the forest where she wandered for some time, overspent with hunger and fatigue, and sunk with terror and affliction. While in this wretched condition, she saw a robber approach with his naked sword; and finding that she had no means of escape, she suddenly embraced the resolution of trusting entirely for protection to his faith and generosity. She advanced towards him; and presenting to him the young prince, called out to him, “Here, my friend, I commit to your care the safety of your king’s son.” The man, whose humanity and generous spirit had been obscured, not entirely lost, by his vicious course of life, was struck with the singularity of the event, was charmed with the confidence reposed in him, and vowed, not only to abstain from all injury against the princess, but to devote himself entirely to her service. [1] By his means she dwelt some time concealed in the forest, and was at last conducted to the sea-coast, whence she made her escape into Flanders. She passed thence into her father’s court, where she lived several years in privacy and retirement. Her husband was not so fortunate or so dexterous in finding the means of escape. Some of his friends took him under their protection, and conveyed him into Lancashire, where he remained concealed during a twelvemonth; but he was at last detected, delivered up to Edward, and thrown into the Tower. [2] The safety of his person was owing less to the generosity of his enemies, than to the contempt which they had entertained of his courage and his understanding.

The imprisonment of Henry, the expulsion of Margaret, the execution and confiscation of all the most eminent Lancastrians, seemed to give full security to Edward’s government; whose title by blood, being now recognized by parliament, and universally submitted to by the people, was no longer in danger of being impeached by any antagonist. In this prosperous situation, the king delivered himself up, without control, to those pleasures which his youth, his high fortune, and his natural temper invited him to enjoy; and the cares of royalty were less attended to than the dissipation of amusement, or the allurements of passion. The cruel and unrelenting spirit of Edward, though inured to the ferocity of civil wars, was at the same time extremely devoted to the softer passions, which, without mitigating his severe temper, maintained a great influence over him, and shared his attachment with the pursuits of ambition and the thirst of military glory. During the present interval of peace, he lived in the most familiar and sociable manner with his subjects, [3] particularly with the Londoners; and the beauty of his person, as well as the gallantry of his address, which, even unassisted by his royal dignity, would have rendered him acceptable to the fair, facilitated all his applications for their favor.

* Monstrelet, vol. iii. .

* * Hall, fol. 191. Fragm. ad finem Sproti.

* * * Polyd. Virg. . Biondi.

This easy and pleasurable course of life augmented every day his popularity among all ranks of men: he was the peculiar favorite of the young and gay of both sexes. The disposition of the English little addicted to jealousy, kept them from taking umbrage at these liberties: and his indulgence in amusements, while it gratified his inclination, was thus become, without design, a means of supporting and securing his government. But as it is difficult to confine the ruling passion within strict rules of prudence, the amorous temper of Edward led him into a snare, which proved fatal to his repose, and to the stability of his throne.

Jaqueline of Luxembourg, duchess of Bedford, had, after her husband’s death, so far sacrificed her ambition to love, that she espoused, in second marriage, Sir Richard Woodeville a private gentleman, to whom she bore several children; and among the rest, Elizabeth, who was remarkable for the grace and beauty of her person, as well as for other amiable accomplishments. This young lady had married Sir John Gray of Groby, by whom she had children; and her husband being slain in the second battle of St. Albans, fighting on the side of Lancaster, and his estate being for that reason confiscated, his widow retired to live with her father, at his seat of Grafton, in Northamptonshire. The king came accidentally to the house after a hunting party, in order to pay a visit to the duchess of Bedford; and as the occasion seemed favorable for obtaining some grace from this gallant monarch, the young widow flung herself at his feet, and with many tears entreated him to take pity on her impoverished and distressed children. The sight of so much beauty in affliction strongly affected the amorous Edward; love stole sensibly into his heart under the guise of compassion; and her sorrow, so becoming a virtuous matron, made his esteem and regard quickly correspond to his affection. He raised her from the ground with assurances of favor; he found his passion increase every moment, by the conversation of the amiable object; and he was soon reduced, in his turn, to the posture and style of a supplicant at the feet of Elizabeth. But the lady, either averse to dishonorable love from a sense of duty, or perceiving that the impression which she had made was so deep as to give her hopes of obtaining the highest elevation, obstinately refused to gratify his passion; and all the endearments, caresses, and importunities of the young and amiable Edward proved fruitless against her rigid and inflexible virtue. His passion, irritated by opposition, and increased by his veneration for such honorable sentiments carried him at last beyond all bounds of reason and he offered to share his throne, as well as his heart, with the woman whose beauty of person and dignity of character seemed so well to entitle her to both. The marriage was privately celebrated at Grafton: [2] the secret was carefully kept for some time: no one suspected that so libertine a prince could sacrifice so much to a romantic passion; and there were, in particular, strong reasons, which, at that time, rendered this step, to the highest degree, dangerous and imprudent.

The king, desirous to secure his throne, as well by the prospect of issue as by foreign alliances, had, a little before, determined to make application to some neighboring princess, and he had cast his eye on Bona of Savoy, sister to the queen of France, who, he hoped, would by her marriage insure him the friendship of that power, which was alone both able and inclined to give support and assistance to his rival. To render the negotiation more successful, the earl of Warwick had been despatched to Paris, where the princess then resided; he had demanded Bona in marriage for the king; his proposals had been accepted; the treaty was fully concluded; and nothing remained but the ratification of the terms agreed on, and the bringing over the princess to England. [2] But when the secret of Edward’s marriage broke out, the haughty earl, deeming himself affronted, both by being employed in this fruitless negotiation, and by being kept a stranger to the king's intentions, who had owed every thing to his friendship, immediately returned to England, inflamed with rage and indignation. The influence of passion over so young a man as Edward, might have served as an excuse for his imprudent conduct, had he deigned to acknowledge his error, or had pleaded his weakness as an apology; but his faulty shame or pride prevented him from so much as mentioning the matter to Warwick; and that nobleman was allowed to depart the court, full of the same ill humor and discontent which he brought to it.

* Hall, fol. 193. Fabian, fol. 216.

* * Hall, fol. 193. Habington, . Holingshed, . Grafton, . Polyd. Virg. .

1466.

Every incident now tended to widen the breach between the king and this powerful subject. The queen, who lost not her influence by marriage, was equally solicitous to draw every grace and favor to her own friends and kindred, and to exclude those of the earl, whom she regarded as her mmortal enemy. Her father was created earl of Rivers: he was made treasurer in the room of Lord Mountjoy: [1] he was invested in the office of constable for life; and his son received the survivance of that high dignity. [2] The same young nobleman was married to the only daughter of Lord Scales, enjoyed the great estate of that family, and had the title of Scales conferred upon him. Catharine, the queen's sister, was married to the young duke of Buckingham, who was a ward of the crown: [3] Mary, another of her sisters espoused William Herbert, created earl of Huntingdon: Anne, a third sister, was given in marriage to the son and heir of Gray, Lord Ruthyn, created earl of Kent. [4] The daughter and heir of the duke of Exeter, who was also the king's niece, was contracted to Sir Thomas Gray, one of the queen's sons by her former husband; and as Lord Montague was treating of a marriage between his son and this lady, the preference given to young Gray was deemed an injury and affront to the whole family of Nevil.

The earl of Warwick could not suffer with patience the least diminution of that credit which he had long enjoyed, and which he thought he had merited by such important services. Though he had received so many grants from the crown, that the revenue arising from them amounted, besides his patrimonial estate, to eighty thousand crowns a year, according to the computation of Philip de Comines, [5] his ambitious spirit was still dissatisfied, so long as he saw others surpass him in authority and influence with the king. [6] Edward also, jealous of that power which had supported him and which he himself had contributed still higher to exalt, was well pleased to raise up rivals in credit to the earl of Warwick; and he justified, by this political view, his extreme partiality to the queen's kindred. But the nobility of England, envying the sudden growth of the Woodevilles, [7] were more inclined to take part with Warwick's discontent, to whose grandeur they were already accustomed, and who had reconciled them to his superiority by his gracious and popular manners.

* W. Wyrcester, .

* * W. Wyrcester, .

* * * Liv. iii. cha.

* * * * Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * * * * * Polyd. Virg. .

* * * * * * * Rymer, vol. xi. .

And as Edward obtained from parliament a general resumption of all grants, which he had made since his accession, and which had extremely impoverished the crown, [1] this act, though it passed with some exceptions, particularly one in favor of the earl of Warwick, gave a general alarm to the nobility, and disgusted many, even zealous partisans of the family of York.

But the most considerable associate that Warwick acquired to his party, was George, duke of Clarence, the king's second brother. This prince deemed himself no less injured than the other grandees, by the uncontrolled influence of the queen and her relations; and as his fortunes were still left upon a precarious footing, while theirs were fully established, this neglect, joined to his unquiet and restless spirit, inclined him to give countenance to all the malecontents. [2] The favorable opportunity of gaining him was espied by the earl of Warwick, who offered him in marriage his elder daughter, and coheir of his immense fortunes; a settlement which, as it was superior to any that the king himself could confer upon him, immediately attached him to the party of the earl. [3] Thus an extensive and dangerous combination was insensibly formed against Edward and his ministry. Though the immediate object of the malecontents was not to overturn the throne, it was difficult to foresee the extremities to which they might be carried: and as opposition to government was usually in those ages prosecuted by force of arms, civil convulsions and disorders were likely to be soon the result of these intrigues and confederacies.

* W. Wyrcester, .

* * W. Wyrcester, . Hall, fol. 200. Habington, . Holingshed, . Polyd. Virg. .

* * * Grafton. .

While this cloud was gathering at home, Edward carried his views abroad, and endeavored to secure himself against his factious nobility, by entering into foreign alliances. The dark and dangerous ambition of Lewis XI., the more it was known, the greater alarm it excited among his neighbors and vassals; and as it was supported by great abilities, and unrestrained by any principle of faith or humanity, they found no security to themselves but by a jealous combination against him. Philip, duke of Burgundy, was now dead: his rich and extensive dominions were devolved to Charles, his only son, whose martial disposition acquired him the surname of Bold, and whose ambition, more outrageous than that of Lewis, but seconded by less power and policy, was regarded with a more favorable eye by the other potentates of Europe.

The opposition of interests, and still more a natural antipathy of character, produced a declared animosity between these bad princes; and Edward was thus secure of the sincere attachment of either of them, for whom he should choose to declare himself. The duke of Burgundy, being descended by his mother, a daughter of Portugal, from John of Gaunt, was naturally inclined to favor the house of Lancaster: [1] but this consideration was easily overbalanced by political motives; and Charles, perceiving the interests of that house to be extremely decayed in England, sent over his natural brother, commonly called the Bastard of Burgundy, to carry in his name proposals of marriage to Margaret, the king’s sister.

1468.

The alliance of Burgundy was more popular among the English than that of France; the commercial interests of the two nations invited the princes to a close union; their common jealousy of Lewis was a natural cement between them; and Edward, pleased with strengthening himself by so potent a confederate, soon concluded the alliance, and bestowed his sister upon Charles. [2] A league, which Edward at the same time concluded with the duke of Brittany, seemed both to increase his security, and to open to him the prospect of rivalling his predecessors in those foreign conquests, which, however short-lived and unprofitable, had rendered their reigns so popular and illustrious. [3]

* Comine’s, liv. iii. cha, 6.

* * W. Wyrcester, . Parl. Hist. vol. ii. .

* * * Hall, fol. 169, 197.

1469.

But whatever ambitious schemes the king might have built on these alliances, they were soon frustrated by intestine commotions, which engrossed all his attention. These disorders probably arose not immediately from the intrigues of the earl of Warwick, but from accident, aided by the turbulent spirit of the age, by the general humor of discontent which that popular nobleman had instilled into the nation, and perhaps by some remains of attachment to the house of Lancaster. The hospital of St. Leonard’s, near York, had received, from an ancient grant of King Athelstane, a right of levying a thrave of corn upon every plough-land in the county; and as these charitable establishments are liable to abuse, the country people complained, that the revenue of the hospital was no longer expended for the relief of the poor, but was secreted by the managers, and employed to their private purposes.

After long repining at the contribution, they refused payment: ecclesiastical and civil censures were issued against them, their goods were distrained, and their persons thrown into jail: till, as their ill humor daily increased, they rose in arms; fell upon the officers of the hospital, whom they put to the sword; and proceeded in a body, fifteen thousand strong, to the gates of York. Lord Montague, who commanded in those parts, opposed himself to their progress; and having been so fortunate in a skirmish as to seize Robert Hulderne, their leader, he ordered him immediately to be led to execution, according to the practice of the times. The rebels, however, still continued in arms; and being soon headed by men of greater distinction: Sir Henry Nevil, son of Lord Latimer, and Sir John Coniers, they advanced southwards, and began to appear formidable to government. Herbert, earl of Pembroke, who had received that title on the forfeiture of Jasper Tudor, was ordered by Edward to march against them at the head of a body of Welshmen; and he was joined by five thousand archers, under the command of Stafford, earl of Devonshire, who had succeeded in that title to the family of Courtney, which had also been attainted. But a trivial difference about quarters having begotten an animosity between these two noblemen, the earl of Devonshire retired with his archers, and left Pembroke alone to encounter the rebels. The two armies approached each other near Banbury; and Pembroke, having prevailed in a skirmish, and having taken Sir John Nevil prisoner, ordered him immediately to be put to death, without any form of process. This execution enraged without terrifying the rebels: they attacked the Welsh army, routed them, put them to the sword without mercy; and having seized Pembroke, they took immediate revenge upon him for the death of their leader. The king, imputing this misfortune to the earl of Devonshire, who had deserted Pembroke, ordered him to be executed in a like summary manner. But these speedy executions, or rather open murders, did not stop there: the northern rebels, sending a party to Grafton, seized the earl of Rivers and his son John; men who had become obnoxious by their near relation to the king, and his partiality towards them: and they were immediately executed by orders from Sir John Coniers. [1]

* Fabian, fol. 217.

There is no part of English history since the conquest so obscure, so uncertain, so little authentic or consistent, as that of the wars between the two “roses:” historians differ about many material circumstances; some events of the utmost consequence, in which they almost all agree, are incredible, and contradicted by records; [1] and it is remarkable, that this profound darkness falls upon us just on the eve of the restoration of letters, and when the art of printing was already known in Europe. All we can distinguish with certainty through the deep cloud which covers that period, is a scene of horror and bloodshed: savage manners, arbitrary executions, and treacherous, dishonorable conduct in all parties. There is no possibility, for instance, of accounting for the views and intentions of the earl of Warwick at this time. It is agreed that he resided, together with his son-in-law, the duke of Clarence, in his government of Calais during the commencement of this rebellion; and that his brother Montague acted with vigor against the northern rebels. We may thence presume, that the insurrection had not proceeded from the secret counsels and instigation of Warwick; though the murder committed by the rebels on the earl of Rivers, his capital enemy, forms, on the other hand, a violent presumption against him. He and Clarence came over to England, offered their service to Edward, were received without any suspicion, were intrusted by him in the highest commands, [2] and still persevered in their fidelity. Soon after, we find the rebels quieted and dispersed by a general pardon granted by Edward from the advice of the earl of Warwick: but why so courageous a prince, if secure of Warwick’s fidelity, should have granted a general pardon to men who had been guilty of such violent and personal outrages against him, is not intelligible; nor why that nobleman, if unfaithful, should have endeavored to appease a rebellion of which he was able to make such advantages. But it appears, that after this insurrection, there was an interval of peace, during which the king loaded the family of Nevil with honors and favors of the highest nature: he made Lord Montague a marquis, by the same name: he created his son George duke of Bedford; [3] he publicly declared his intention of marrying that young nobleman to his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, who, as he had yet no sons, was presumptive heir of the crown: yet we find that soon after, being invited to a feast by the archbishop of York, a younger brother of Warwick and Montague, he entertained a sudden suspicion that they intended to seize his person or to murder him: and he abruptly left the entertainment. [4]

* See note S, at the end of the volume.

* * Rymer, vol. xi. , 649, 650.

* * * Cotton, .

* * * * Fragm. Edward IV. ad fin. Sproti.

1470.

Soon after, there broke out another rebellion, which is as unaccountable as all the preceding events; chiefly because no sufficient reason is assigned for it, and because, so far as appears, the family of Nevil had no hand in exciting and fomenting it. It arose in Lincolnshire, and was headed by Sir Robert Welles, son to the lord of that name. The army of the rebels amounted to thirty thousand men; but Lord Welles himself, far from giving countenance to them, fled into a sanctuary, in order to secure his person against the king's anger or suspicions. He was allured from this retreat by a promise of safety; and was soon after, notwithstanding this assurance, beheaded, along with Sir Thomas Dymoc, by orders from Edward. [1] The king fought a battle with the rebels, defeated them, took Sir Robert Welles and Sir Thomas Launde prisoners, and ordered them immediately to be beheaded.

Edward, during these transactions, had entertained so little jealousy of the earl of Warwick or duke of Clarence, that he sent them with commissions of array to levy forces against the rebels: [2] but these malecontents, as soon as they left the court, raised troops in their own name, issued declarations against the government, and complained of grievances, oppressions, and bad ministers. The unexpected defeat of Welles disconcerted all their measures; and they retired northwards into Lancashire, where they expected to be joined by Lord Stanley, who had married the earl of Warwick's sister. But as that nobleman refused all concurrence with them, and as Lord Montague also remained quiet in Yorkshire, they were obliged to disband their army, and to fly into Devonshire, where they embarked and made sail towards Calais. [3]

* Hall, fol. 204. Fabian, fol. 218. Habington, . Holingshed, .

* * Rymer, vol. xi. .

* * * The king offered, by proclamation, a reward of one thousand pounds, or one hundred pounds a year in land, to any that would seize them. Whence we may learn that land was at that time sold for about ten years' purchase. See Rymer, vol. xi. .

The deputy governor, whom Warwick had left at Calais, was one Vaucler, a Gascon, who, seeing the earl return in this miserable condition, refused him admittance; and would not so much as permit the duchess of Clarence to land, though, a few days before, she had been delivered on shipboard of a son, and was at that time extremely disordered by sickness. With difficulty he would allow a few flagons of wine to be carried to the ship for the use of the ladies: but as he was a man of sagacity, and well acquainted with the revolutions to which England was subject, he secretly apologized to Warwick for this appearance of infidelity, and represented it as proceeding entirely from zeal for his service. He said that the fortress was ill supplied with provisions; that he could not depend on the attachment of the garrison; that the inhabitants, who lived by the English commerce, would certainly declare for the established government; that the place was at present unable to resist the power of England on the one hand, and that of the duke of Burgundy on the other; and that, by seeming to declare for Edward, he would acquire the confidence of that prince, and still keep it in his power, when it should become safe and prudent, to restore Calais to its ancient master. [1] It is uncertain whether Warwick was satisfied with this apology, or suspected a double infidelity in Vaucler; but he feigned to be entirely convinced by him; and having seized some Flemish vessels which he found lying off Calais, he immediately made sail towards France.

The king of France, uneasy at the close conjunction between Edward and the duke of Burgundy, received with the greatest demonstrations of regard the unfortunate Warwick, [2] with whom he had formerly maintained a secret correspondence, and whom he hoped still to make his instrument in overturning the government of England, and reëstablishing the house of Lancaster.

* Comines, liv. iii. cha. Hall, fol. 205.

* * Polyd. Virg. .

No animosity was ever greater than that which had long prevailed between that house and the earl of Warwick. His father had been executed by orders from Margaret: he himself had twice reduced Henry to captivity, had banished the queen, had put to death all their most zealous partisans either in the field or on the scaffold, and had occasioned innumerable ills to that unhappy family. For this reason, believing that such inveterate rancor could never admit of any cordial reconciliation, he had not mentioned Henry's name when he took arms against Edward; and he rather endeavored to prevail by means of his own adherents, than revive a party which he sincerely hated. But his present distresses and the entreaties of Lewis made him hearken to terms of accommodation; and Margaret being sent for from Angers, where she then resided, an agreement was, from common interest, soon concluded between them. It was stipulated, that Warwick should espouse the cause of Henry, and endeavor to restore him to liberty, and to reëstablish him on the throne; that the administration of the government, during the minority of young Edward, Henry's son, should be intrusted conjointly to the earl of Warwick and the duke of Clarence; that Prince Edward should marry the Lady Anne, second daughter of that nobleman; and that the crown, in case of the failure of male issue in that prince, should descend to the duke of Clarence, to the entire exclusion of King Edward and his posterity. Never was confederacy, on all sides, less natural, or more evidently the work of necessity: but Warwick hoped, that all former passions of the Lancastrians might be lost in present political views; and that, at worst, the independent power of his family, and the affections of the people, would suffice to give him security, and enable him to exact the full performance of all the conditions agreed on. The marriage of Prince Edward with the Lady Anne was immediately celebrated in France.

Edward foresaw that it would be easy to dissolve an alliance composed of such discordant parts. For this purpose, he sent over a lady of great sagacity and address, who belonged to the train of the duchess of Clarence, and who, under color of attending her mistress, was empowered to negotiate with the duke, and to renew the connections of that prince with his own family. [1] She represented to Clarence, that he had unwarily, to his own ruin, become the instrument of Warwick’s vengeance, and had thrown himself entirely in the power of his most inveterate enemies; that the mortal injuries which the one royal family had suffered from the other, were now past all forgiveness, and no imaginary union of interests could ever suffice to obliterate them; that even if the leaders were willing to forget past offences, the animosity of their adherents would prevent a sincere coalition of parties, and would, in spite of all temporary and verbal agreements, preserve an eternal opposition of measures between them; and that a prince who deserted his own kindred, and joined the murderers of his father, left himself single, without friends, without protection, and would not, when misfortunes inevitably fell upon him, be so much as entitled to any pity or regard from the rest of mankind.

* Comines, liv. iii. cha. Hall, fol. 20*7. Holingshed, .

Clarence was only one and twenty years of age, and seems to have possessed but a slender capacity; yet could he easily see the force of these reasons; and, upon the promise of forgiveness from his brother, he secretly engaged, on a favorable opportunity, to desert the earl of Warwick, and abandon the Lancastrian party.

During this negotiation, Warwick was secretly carrying on a correspondence of the same nature with his brother, the marquis of Montague, who was entirely trusted by Edward; and like motives produced a like resolution in that nobleman. The marquis, also, that he might render the projected blow the more deadly and incurable, resolved, on his side, to watch a favorable opportunity for committing his perfidy, and still to maintain the appearance of being a zealous adherent to the house of York.

After these mutual snares were thus carefully laid, the decision of the quarrel advanced apace. Lewis prepared a fleet to escort the earl of Warwick, and granted him a supply of men and money. [1] The duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, enraged at that nobleman for his seizure of the Flemish vessels before Calais, and anxious to support the reigning family in England, with whom his own interests were now connected, fitted out a larger fleet, with which he guarded the Channel: and he incessantly warned his brother-in-law of the imminent perils to which he was exposed. But

Edward, though always brave and often active, had little foresight or penetration. He was not sensible of his danger; he made no suitable preparations against the earl of Warwick; [2] he even said that the duke might spare himself the trouble of guarding the seas, and that he wished for nothing more than to see Warwick set foot on English ground. [3] A vain confidence in his own prowess, joined to the immoderate love of pleasure, had made him incapable of all sound reason and reflection.

The event soon happened, of which Edward seemed so desirous. A storm dispersed the Flemish navy, and left the sea open to Warwick. [4] That nobleman seized the opportunity, and setting sail, quickly landed at Dartmouth with the duke of Clarence, the earls of Oxford and Pembroke, and a small body of troops, while the king was in the north, engaged in suppressing an insurrection which had been raised by Lord Fitz-Hugh, brother-in-law to Warwick.

* Comines, liv. iii. cha. Hall, fol. 207.

* * Grafton, .

* * * Comines, liv. iii. cha. Hall, fol. 208.

* * * * Comines, liv. iii. cha.

The scene which ensues resembles more the fiction of a poem or romance than an event in true history. The prodigious popularity of Warwick, [1] the zeal of the Lancastrian party, the spirit of discontent with which many were infected, and the general instability of the English nation, occasioned by the late frequent revolutions, drew such multitudes to his standard, that in a very few days his army amounted to sixty thousand men and was continually increasing. Edward hastened southwards to encounter him; and the two armies approached each other near Nottingham, where a decisive action was every hour expected. The rapidity of Warwick’s progress had incapacitated the duke of Clarence from executing his plan of treachery; and the marquis of Montague had here the opportunity of striking the first blow. He communicated the design to his adherents, who promised him their concurrence: they took to arms in the night-time, and hastened with loud acclamations to Edward’s quarters; the king was alarmed at the noise, and starting from bed, heard the cry of war usually employed by the Lancastrian party. Lord Hastings, his chamberlain, informed him of the danger, and urged him to make his escape by speedy flight from an army where he had so many concealed enemies, and where few seemed zealously attached to his service. He had just time to get on horseback, and to hurry with a small retinue to Lynne, in Norfolk, where he luckily found some ships ready, on board of which he instantly embarked. [2] And after this manner the earl of Warwick, in no longer space than eleven days after his first landing, was left entire master of the kingdom.

* Hall, fol. 205.

* * Comines, liv. iii. cha. Hall, fol. 208.

But Edward’s danger did not end with his embarkation. The Easterlings or Hanse Towns were then at war both with France and England; and some ships of these people, hovering on the English coast, espied the king’s vessels, and gave chase to them; nor was it without extreme difficulty that he made his escape into the port of Alcmaer, in Holland. He had fled from England with such precipitation, that he had carried nothing of value along with him; and the only reward which he could bestow on the captain of the vessel that brought him over, was a robe lined with sables; promising him an ample recompense if fortune should ever become more propitious to him. [1]

* Comines, liv, iii. cha.

It is not likely that Edward could be very fond of presenting himself in this lamentable plight before the duke of Burgundy; and that having so suddenly, after his mighty vaunts, lost all footing in his own kingdom, he could be insensible to the ridicule which must attend him in the eyes of that prince. The duke, on his part, was no less embarrassed how he should receive the dethroned monarch. As he had ever borne a greater affection to the house of Lancaster than to that of York, nothing but political views had engaged him to contract an alliance with the latter; and he foresaw, that probably the revolution in England would now turn this alliance against him, and render the reigning family his implacable and jealous enemy. For this reason, when the first rumor of that event reached him, attended with the circumstance of Edward's death, he seemed rather pleased with the catastrophe; and it was no agreeable disappointment to find, that he must either undergo the burden of supporting an exiled prince, or the dishonor of abandoning so near a relation. He began already to say, that his connections were with the kingdom of England, not with the king; and it was indifferent to him whether the name of Edward or that of Henry were employed in the articles of treaty. These sentiments were continually strengthened by the subsequent events. Vaucler, the deputy-governor of Calais, though he had been confirmed in his command by Edward, and had even received a pension from the duke of Burgundy on account of his fidelity to the crown, no sooner saw his old master, Warwick, reinstated in authority, than he declared for him, and with great demonstrations of zeal and attachment, put the whole garrison in his livery. And the intelligence which the duke received every day from England, seemed to promise an entire and full settlement in the family of Lancaster.

Immediately after Edward's flight had left the kingdom at Warwick's disposal, that nobleman hastened to London; and taking Henry from his confinement in the Tower, into which he himself had been the chief cause of throwing him, he proclaimed him king with great solemnity. A parliament was summoned in the name of that prince, to meet at Westminster, and as this assembly could pretend to no liberty while surrounded by such enraged and insolent victors, governed by such an impetuous spirit as Warwick, their votes were entirely dictated by the ruling faction. The treaty with Margaret was here fully executed: Henry was recognized as lawful king; but his incapacity for government being avowed, the regency was intrusted to Warwick and Clarence till the majority of Prince Edward; and in default of that prince's issue, Clarence was declared successor to the crown. The usual business also of reversals went on without opposition: every statute made during the reign of Edward was repealed; that prince was declared to be a usurper; he and his adherents were attainted; and in particular Richard, duke of Glocester, his younger brother: all the attainders of the Lancastrians, the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, the earls of Richmond, Pembroke, Oxford, and Ormond, were reversed; and every one was restored who had lost either honors or fortunes by his former adherence to the cause of Henry.

The ruling party were more sparing in their executions than was usual after any revolution during those violent times. The only victim of distinction was John Tibetot, earl of Worcester. This accomplished person, born in an age and nation where the nobility valued themselves on ignorance as their privilege, and left learning to monks and schoolmasters, for whom indeed the spurious erudition that prevailed was best fitted, had been struck with the first rays of true science, which began to penetrate from the south, and had been zealous, by his exhortation and example, to propagate the love of letters among his unpolished countrymen. It is pretended, that knowledge had not produced on this nobleman himself the effect which naturally attends it, of humanizing the temper and softening the heart; [1] and that he had enraged the Lancastrians against him by the severities which he exercised upon them during the prevalence of his own party.

* Hall, fol. 210. Stowe, .

He endeavored to conceal himself after the flight of Edward, but was caught on the top of a tree in the forest of Weybridge, was conducted to London, tried before the earl of Oxford, condemned, and executed. All the other considerable Yorkists either fled beyond sea, or took shelter in sanctuaries, where the ecclesiastical privileges afforded them protection. In London alone it is computed that no less than two thousand persons saved themselves in this manner; [1] and among the rest, Edward’s queen, who was there delivered of a son, called by his father’s name. [2]

Queen Margaret, the other rival queen, had not yet appeared in England, but on receiving intelligence of Warwick’s success, was preparing with Prince Edward for her journey. All the banished Lancastrians flocked to her; and, among the rest, the duke of Somerset, son of the duke beheaded after the battle of Hexham. This nobleman, who had long been regarded as the head of the party, had fled into the Low Countries on the discomfiture of his friends; and as he concealed his name and quality, he had there languished in extreme indigence. Philip de Comines tells us, [3] that he himself saw him, as well as the duke of Exeter, in a condition no better than that of a common beggar; till being discovered by Philip, duke of Burgundy, they had small pensions allotted them, and were living in silence and obscurity when the success of their party called them from their retreat. But both Somerset and Margaret were detained by contrary winds from reaching

England, [4] till a new revolution in that kingdom, no less sudden and surprising than the former, threw them into greater misery than that from which they had just emerged.

Though the duke of Burgundy, by neglecting Edward, and paying court to the established government, had endeavored to conciliate the friendship of the Lancastrians, he found that he had not succeeded to his wish; and the connections between the king of France and the earl of Warwick still held him in great anxiety. [5] This nobleman, too hastily regarding Charles as a determined enemy, had sent over to Calais a body of four thousand men, who made inroads into the Low Countries; [6] and the duke of Burgundy saw himself in danger of being overwhelmed by the united arms of England and of France. He resolved therefore to grant some assistance to his brother-in-law; but in such a covert manner as should give the least offence possible to the English government.

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* Comines, liv. iii. cha.

* * Hall, fol. 210. Stowe, . Holingshed, . Grafton, .

* * * Liv. iii. cha.

* * * * Grafton, . Polyd. Virg. p 522.

* * * * * * Comines, liv, iii. cha.

1471.

He equipped four large vessels, in the name of some private merchants, at Terveer, in Zealand; and causing fourteen ships to be secretly hired from the Easterlings, he delivered this small squadron to Edward, who, receiving also a sum of money from the duke, immediately set sail for England. No sooner was Charles informed of his departure than he issued a proclamation inhibiting all his subjects from giving him countenance or assistance; [1] an artifice which could not deceive the earl of Warwick, but which might serve as a decent pretence, if that nobleman were so disposed, for maintaining friendship with the duke of Burgundy.

Edward, impatient to take revenge on his enemies, and to recover his lost authority, made an attempt to land with his forces, which exceeded not two thousand men, on the coast of Norfolk; but being there repulsed, he sailed northwards, and disembarked at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire. Finding that the new magistrates, who had been appointed by the earl of Warwick, kept the people every where from joining him, he pretended, and even made oath, that he came not to challenge the crown, but only the inheritance of the house of York, which of right belonged to him; and that he did not intend to disturb the peace of the kingdom. His partisans every moment flocked to his standard: he was admitted into the city of York: and he was soon in such a situation as gave him hopes of succeeding in all his claims and pretensions. The marquis of Montague commanded in the northern counties; but from some mysterious reasons, which, as well as many other important transactions in that age, no historian has cleared up, he totally neglected the beginnings of an insurrection which he ought to have esteemed so formidable. Warwick assembled an army at Leicester, with an intention of meeting and of giving battle to the enemy; but Edward, by taking another road, passed him unmolested, and presented himself before the gates of London. Had he here been refused admittance, he was totally undone: but there were many reasons which inclined the citizens to favor him. His numerous friends, issuing from their sanctuaries, were active in his cause; many rich merchants, who had formerly lent him money, saw no other chance for their payment but his restoration; the city dames who had been liberal of their favors to him, and who still retained an affection for this young and gallant prince, swayed their husbands and friends in his favor; [2] and above all, the archbishop of York, Warwick's brother, to whom the care of the city was committed, had secretly, from unknown reasons, entered into a correspondence with him; and he facilitated Edward's admission into London.

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* Comines, liv. iii. cha.

* * Comines, liv. iii. cha.

The most likely cause which can be assigned for those multiplied infidelities, even in the family of Nevil itself, is the spirit of faction, which, when it becomes inveterate, it is very difficult for any man entirely to shake off. The persons who had long distinguished themselves in the York party, were unable to act with zeal and cordiality for the support of the Lancastrians; and they were inclined, by any prospect of favor or accommodation offered them by Edward, to return to their ancient connections. However this may be, Edward’s entrance into London made him master not only of that rich and powerful city, but also of the person of Henry, who, destined to be the perpetual sport of fortune, thus fell again into the hands of his enemies. [1]

It appears not that Warwick, during his short administration, which had continued only six months, had been guilty of any unpopular act, or had anywise deserved to lose that general favor with which he had so lately overwhelmed Edward. But this prince, who was formerly on the defensive, was now the aggressor; and having overcome the difficulties which always attend the beginnings of an insurrection, possessed many advantages above his enemy: his partisans were actuated by that zeal and courage which the notion of an attack inspires his opponents were intimidated for a like reason; every one who had been disappointed in the hopes which he had entertained from Warwick’s elevation, either became a cool friend or an open enemy to that nobleman; and each malecontent, from whatever cause, proved an accession to Edward’s army. The king, therefore, found himself in a condition to face the earl of Warwick; who, being reënforced by his son-in-law the duke of Clarence, and his brother the marquis of Montague, took post at Barnet, in the neighborhood of London. The arrival of Queen Margaret was every day expected, who would have drawn together all the genuine Lancastrians, and have brought a great accession to Warwick’s forces: but this very consideration proved a motive to the earl rather to hurry on a decisive action than to share the victory with rivals and ancient enemies, who, he foresaw, would, in case of success, claim the chief merit in the enterprise. [2]

* Grafton, .

* * Comines, liv. iii. cha.

But while his jealousy was always directed towards that side, he overlooked the dangerous infidelity of friends, who lay the nearest to his bosom. His brother Montague, who had lately temporized, seems now to have remained sincerely attached to the interests of his family: but his son-in-law, though bound to him by every tie of honor and gratitude, though he shared the power of the regency, though he had been invested by Warwick in all the honors and patrimony of the house of York, resolved to fulfil the secret engagements which he had formerly taken with his brother, and to support the interests of his own family: he deserted to the king in the night-time, and carried over a body of twelve thousand men along with him. [1] Warwick was now too far advanced to retreat; and as he rejected with disdain all terms of peace offered him by Edward and Clarence, he was obliged to hazard a general engagement. The battle was fought with obstinacy on both sides: the two armies, in imitation of their leaders displayed uncommon valor; and the victory remained long undecided between them. But an accident threw the balance to the side of the Yorkists. Edward’s cognizance was a sun; that of Warwick a star with rays; and the mistiness of the morning rendering it difficult to distinguish them, the earl of Oxford, who fought on the side of the Lancastrians, was by mistake attacked by his friends, and chased off the field of battle. [2] Warwick, contrary to his more usual practice, engaged that day on foot, resolving to show his army that he meant to share every fortune with them; and he was slain in the thickest of the engagement; [3] his brother underwent the same fate; and as Edward had issued orders not to give any quarter, a great and undistinguished slaughter was made in the pursuit. There fell about one thousand five hundred on the side of the victors.

The same day on which this decisive battle was fought, [4] Queen Margaret and her son, now about eighteen years of age, and a young prince of great hopes, landed at Weymouth, supported by a small body of French forces.

* Grafton, p 700. Comines, liv. iii. cha. Leland’s Collect. vol. ii. .

* * Habington, .

* * * Comines, liv. iii. cha.

* * * * Leland’s Collect, vol. ii. .

When this princess received intelligence of her husband’s captivity, and of the defeat and death of the earl of Warwick, her courage which had supported her under so many disastrous events, here quite left her; and she immediately foresaw all the dismal consequences of this calamity. At first she took sanctuary in the abbey of Beaulieu; [1] but being encouraged by the appearance of Tudor, earl of Pembroke, and Courtney, earl of Devonshire, of the Lords Wenlock and St. John, with other men of rank, who exhorted her still to hope for success, she resumed her former spirit, and determined to defend to the utmost the ruins of her fallen fortunes. She advanced through the counties of Devon, Somerset, and Glocester, increasing her army on each day’s march; but was at last overtaken by the rapid and expeditious Edward, at Tewkesbury, on the banks of the Severn. The Lancastrians were here totally defeated: the earl of Devonshire and Lord Wenlock were killed in the field: the duke of Somerset, and about twenty other persons of distinction, having taken shelter in a church, were surrounded, dragged out, and immediately beheaded: about three thousand of their side fell in battle: and the army was entirely dispersed.

Queen Margaret and her son were taken prisoners, and brought to the king, who asked the prince, after an insulting manner, how he dared to invade his dominions. The young prince, more mindful of his high birth than of his present fortune, replied, that he came thither to claim his just inheritance. The ungenerous Edward, insensible to pity, struck him on the face with his gauntlet; and the dukes of Clarence and Glocester, Lord Hastings, and Sir Thomas Gray, taking the blow as a signal for further violence, hurried the prince into the next apartment, and there despatched him with their daggers. [2] Margaret was thrown into the Tower: King Henry expired in that confinement a few days after the battle of Tewkesbury; but whether he died a natural or violent death is uncertain. It is pretended, and was generally believed, that the duke of Glocester killed him with his own hands: [3] but the universal odium which that prince had incurred, inclined perhaps the nation to aggravate his crimes without any sufficient authority.

* Hall, fol. 219. Habington, . Grafton, . Polyd. Virg. .

* * Hall, fol. 221. Habington, . Holingshed, p 688. Polyd. Virg. .

* * * Comines. Hall, fol. 228. Grafton, .

It is certain, however, that Henry's death was sudden; and though he labored under an ill state of health, this circumstance, joined to the general manners of the age, gave a natural ground, of suspicion; which was rather increased than diminished by the exposing of his body to public view. That precaution served only to recall many similar instances in the English history, and to suggest the comparison.

All the hopes of the house of Lancaster seemed now to be utterly extinguished. Every legitimate prince of that family was dead: almost every great leader of the party had perished in battle or on the scaffold: the earl of Pembroke, who was levying forces in Wales, disbanded his army when he received intelligence of the battle of Tewkesbury; and he fled into Brittany with his nephew, the young earl of Richmond. [1] The bastard of Falconberg, who had levied some forces, and had advanced to London during Edward's absence, was repulsed; his men deserted him; he was taken prisoner and immediately executed: [2] and peace being now fully restored to the nation, a parliament was summoned, which ratified as usual, all the acts of the victor, and recognized his legal authority.

* Habington, . Polyd. Virg. .

* * Holingshed, , 690, 693. Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

But this prince, who had been so firm, and active, and intrepid during the course of adversity, was still unable to resist the allurements of a prosperous fortune; and he wholly devoted himself, as before, to pleasure and amusement, after he became entirely master of his kingdom, and had no longer any enemy who could give him anxiety or alarm. He recovered, however, by this gay and inoffensive course of life, and by his easy, familiar manners, that popularity which, it is natural to imagine, he had lost by the repeated cruelties exercised upon his enemies; and the example also of his jovial festivity served to abate the former acrimony of faction among his subjects, and to restore the social disposition which had been so long interrupted between the opposite parties. All men seemed to be fully satisfied with the present government; and the memory of past calamities served only to impress the people more strongly with a sense of their allegiance, and with the resolution of never incurring any more the hazard of renewing such direful scenes.

1474.

But while the king was thus indulging himself in pleasure, he was roused from his lethargy by a prospect of foreign conquests, which, it is probable, his desire of popularity, more than the spirit of ambition, had made him covet. Though he deemed himself little beholden to the duke of Burgundy for the reception which that prince had given him during his exile, [1] the political interests of their states maintained still a close connection between them; and they agreed to unite their arms in making a powerful invasion on France. A league was formed, in which Edward stipulated to pass the seas with an army exceeding ten thousand men, and to invade the French territories: Charles promised to join him with all his forces: the king was to challenge the crown of France, and to obtain at least the provinces of Normandy and Guienne; the duke was to acquire Champaigne and some other territories, and to free all his dominions from the burden of homage to the crown of France: and neither party was to make peace without the consent of the other. [2] They were the more encouraged to hope for success from this league, as the count of St. Pol, constable of France, who was master of St. Quintin and other towns on the Somme, had secretly promised to join them; and there were also hopes of engaging the duke of Brittany to enter into the confederacy.

The prospect of a French war was always a sure means of making the parliament open their purses, as far as the habits of that age would permit. They voted the king a tenth of rents, or two shillings in the pound; which must have been very inaccurately levied, since it produced only thirty-one thousand four hundred and sixty pounds; and they added to this supply a whole fifteenth, and three quarters of another; [3] but as the king deemed these sums still unequal to the undertaking, he attempted to levy money by way of benevolence, a kind of exaction which, except during the reigns of Henry III. and Richard II., had not been much practised in former times, and which, though the consent of the parties was pretended to be gained, could not be deemed entirely voluntary. [4]

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* Comines, liv. iii. cha.

* * Rymer, vol. xi , 807, 808, etc.

* * * Cotton, , 700. Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * * * Hall, fol. 226. Habington, . Grafton, . Fabian, fol. 221.

The clauses annexed to the parliamentary grant show sufficiently the spirit of the nation in this respect. The money levied by the fifteenth was not to be put into the king's hands but to be kept in religious houses; and if the expedition into France should not take place, it was immediately to be refunded to the people. After these grants, the parliament was dissolved, which had sitten near two years and a half, and had undergone several prorogations; a practice not very usual at that time in England.

1475.

The king passed over to Calais with an army of one thousand five hundred men at arms and fifteen thousand archers, attended by all the chief nobility of England, who, prognosticating future successes from the past, were eager to appear on this great theatre of honor. [1] But all their sanguine hopes were damped when they found, on entering the French territories, that neither did the constable open his gates to them, nor the duke of Burgundy bring them the smallest assistance. That prince, transported by his ardent temper, had carried all his armies to a great distance, and had employed them in wars on the frontiers of Germany, and against the duke of Lorraine: and though he came in person to Edward, and endeavored to apologize for this breach of treaty, there was no prospect that they would be able this campaign to make a conjunction with the English. This circumstance gave great disgust to the king, and inclined him to hearken to those advances which Lewis continually made him for an accommodation.

That monarch, more swayed by political views than by the point of honor, deemed no submissions too mean which might free him from enemies who had proved so formidable to his predecessors, and who, united to so many other enemies, might still shake the well-established government of France. It appears from Comines, that discipline was at this time very imperfect among the English; and that their civil wars, though long continued, yet, being always decided by hasty battles, had still left them ignorant of the improvements which the military art was beginning to receive upon the continent. [2]

* Comines, liv. iv. cha. This author says, (cha,) that the king artfully brought over some of the richest of his subjects who, he knew, would be soon tired of the war,

and would promote all proposals of peace, which he foresaw would be soon necessary.

* * Comines, liv. iv. cha.

But as Lewis was sensible that the warlike genius of the people would soon render them excellent soldiers, he was far from despising them for their present want of experience; and he employed all his art to detach them from the alliance of Burgundy. When Edward sent him a herald to claim the crown of France, and to carry him a defiance in case of refusal, so far from answering to [1] this bravado in like haughty terms, he replied with great temper, and even made the herald a considerable present: [2] he took afterwards an opportunity of sending a herald to the English camp; and having given him directions to apply to the Lords Stanley and Howard, who, he heard, were friends to peace, he desired the good offices of these noblemen in promoting an accommodation with their master. [3] As Edward was now fallen into like dispositions, a truce was soon concluded on terms more advantageous than honorable to Lewis. He stipulated to pay Edward immediately seventy-five thousand crowns, on condition that he should withdraw his army from France, and promised to pay him fifty thousand crowns a year during their joint lives: it was added, that the dauphin, when of age, should marry Edward’s eldest daughter. [4] In order to ratify this treaty, the two monarchs agreed to have a personal interview; and for that purpose suitable preparations were made at Pecquigni, near Amiens. A close rail was drawn across a bridge in that place, with no larger intervals than would allow the arm to pass; a precaution against a similar accident to that which befell the duke of Burgundy in his conference with the dauphin at Montereau. Edward and Lewis came to the opposite sides; conferred privately together; and having confirmed their friendship, and interchanged many mutual civilities, they soon after parted. [5]

* Comines, liv. iv. cha. Hall, fol. 227.

* * Comines, liv. iv. cha.

* * * Rymer, vol. xii. .

* * * * Comines, liv, iv, cha.

Lewis was anxious not only to gain the king’s friendship but also that of the nation, and of all the considerable persons in the English court. He bestowed pensions, to the amount of sixteen thousand crowns a year, on several of the kings, favorites; on Lord Hastings two thousand crowns; on Lora Howard and others in proportion; and these great ministers were not ashamed thus to receive wages from a foreign prince. As the two armies, after the conclusion of the truce remained some time in the neighborhood of each other, the English were not only admitted freely into Amiens, where Lewis resided, but had also their charges defrayed, and had wine and victuals furnished them in every inn, without any payment being demanded. They flocked thither in such multitude that once above nine thousand of them were in the town, and they might have made themselves masters of the king’s person; but Lewis, concluding from their jovial and dissolute manner of living, that they had no bad intentions, was careful not to betray the least sign of fear or jealousy. And when Edward, informed of this disorder, desired him to shut the gates against them, he replied, that he would never agree to exclude the English from the place where he resided; but that Edward, if he pleased, might recall them, and place his own officers at the gates of Amiens to prevent their returning. [1]

Lewis’s desire of confirming a mutual amity with England, engaged him even to make imprudent advances, which it cost him afterwards some pains to evade. In the conference at Pecquigni he had said to Edward, that he wished to have a visit from him at Paris; that he would there endeavor to amuse him with the ladies; and that, in case any offences were then committed, he would assign him the cardinal of Bourbon for confessor, who, from fellow-feeling, would not be over and above severe in the penances which he would enjoin. This hint made deeper impression than Lewis intended. Lord Howard, who accompanied him back to Amiens, told him in confidence that, if he were so disposed it would not be impossible to persuade Edward to take a journey with him to Paris, where they might make merry together. Lewis pretended at first not to hear the offer; but on Howard's repeating it, he expressed his concern that his wars with the duke of Burgundy would not permit him to attend his royal guest, and do him the honors he intended "Edward," said he privately to Comines, "is a very handsome and a very amorous prince: some lady at Paris may like him as well as he shall do her; and may invite him to return in another manner. It is better that the sea be between us." [2]

* Comines, liv. iv. cha. Hall, fol. 233.

* * Comines, liv. iv. cha. Habington, .

This treaty did very little honor to either of these monarchs: it discovered the imprudence of Edward, who had taken his measures so ill with his allies, as to be obliged, after such an expensive armament, to return without making any acquisitions adequate to it: it showed the want of dignity in Lewis who, rather than run the hazard of a battle, agreed to subject his kingdom to a tribute, and thus acknowledge the superiority of a neighboring prince possessed of less power and territory than himself. But as Lewis made interest the sole test of honor, he thought that all the advantages of the treaty were on his side, and that he had overreached Edward, by sending him out of France on such easy terms. For this reason he was very solicitous to conceal his triumph; and he strictly enjoined his courtiers never to show the English the least sign of mockery or derision. But he did not himself very carefully observe so prudent a rule: he could not forbear, one day, in the joy of his heart, throwing out some raillery on the easy simplicity of Edward and his council; when he perceived that he was overheard by a Gascon, who had settled in England. He was immediately sensible of his indiscretion; sent a message to the gentleman; and offered him some advantages in his own country, as engaged him to remain in France. "It is but just," said he, "that I pay the penalty of my talkativeness." [1]

* Comines, liv. iii. cha.

The most honorable part of Lewis's treaty with Edward was the stipulation for the liberty of Queen Margaret, who, though after the death of her husband and son she could no longer be formidable to government, was still detained in custody by Edward. Lewis paid fifty thousand crowns for her ransom; and that princess, who had been so active on the stage of the world, and who had experienced such a variety of fortune, passed the remainder of her days in tranquility and privacy, till the year 1482, when she died; an admirable princess, but more illustrious by her undaunted spirit in adversity, than by her moderation in prosperity. She seems neither to have enjoyed the virtues, nor been subject to the weaknesses, of her sex; and was as much tainted with the ferocity as endowed with the courage of that barbarous age in which she lived.

Though Edward had so little reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the duke of Burgundy, he reserved to that prince a power of acceding to the treaty of Pecquigni: but Charles, when the offer was made him, haughtily replied, that he was able to support himself without the assistance of England, and that he would make no peace with Lewis till three months after Edward’s return into his own country. This prince possessed all the ambition and courage of a conqueror; but being defective in policy and prudence, qualities no less essential, he was unfortunate in all his enterprises; and perished at last in battle against the Swiss; [1] a people whom he despised, and who, though brave and free, had hitherto been in a manner overlooked in the general system of Europe. This event, which happened in the year 1477, produced a great alteration in the views of all the princes, and was attended with consequences which were felt for many generations. Charles left only one daughter, Mary, by his first wife; and this princess, being heir of his opulent and extensive dominions, was courted by all the potentates of Christendom, who contended for the possession of so rich a prize. Lewis, the head of her family, might, by a proper application, have obtained this match for the dauphin, and have thereby united to the crown of France all the provinces of the Low Countries, together with Burgundy, Artois, and Picardy; which would at once have rendered his kingdom an overmate for all its neighbors. But a man wholly interested is as rare as one entirely endowed with the opposite quality; and Lewis, though impregnable to all the sentiments of generosity and friendship, was, on this occasion, carried from the road of true policy by the passions of animosity and revenge. He had imbibed so deep a hatred to the house of Burgundy, that he rather chose to subdue the princess by arms, than unite her to his family by marriage: he conquered the duchy of Burgundy and that part of Picardy which had been ceded to Philip the Good by the treaty of Arras: but he thereby forced the states of the Netherlands to bestow their sovereign in marriage on Maximilian of Austria, son of the emperor Frederick, from whom they looked for protection in their present distresses: and by these means, France lost the opportunity, which she never could recall, of making that important acquisition of power and territory.

During this interesting crisis, Edward was no less defective in policy, and was no less actuated by private passions, unworthy of a sovereign and a statesman. Jealousy of his brother Clarence had caused him to neglect the advances which were made of marrying that prince, now a widower, to the heiress of Burgundy; [2] and he sent her proposals of espousing Anthony, earl of Rivers, brother to his queen, who still retained an entire ascendant over him.

* Comines, liv. v. cha.

* * Polyd. Virg. Hall, fol. 240. Holingshed, . Habington . Grafton, .

But the match was rejected with disdain; [1] and Edward, resenting this treatment of his brother-in-law, permitted France to proceed without interruption in her conquests over his defenceless ally. Any pretence sufficed him for abandoning himself entirely to indolence and pleasure, which were now become his ruling passions. The only object which divided his attention was the improving of the public revenue, which had been dilapidated by the necessities or negligence of his predecessors; and some of his expedients for that purpose, though unknown to us, were deemed, during the time, oppressive to the people. [2] The detail of private wrongs naturally escapes the notice of history; but an act of tyranny of which Edward was guilty in his own family, has been taken notice of by all writers, and has met with general and deserved censure.

* Hall, fol. 240.

* * Hall, . Hist. Croyl. Cont. p, 559.

The duke of Clarence, by all his services in deserting Warwick, had never been able to regain the king’s friendship, which he had forfeited by his former confederacy with that nobleman. He was still regarded at court as a man of a dangerous and a fickle character; and the imprudent openness and violence of his temper, though it rendered him much less dangerous, tended extremely to multiply his enemies, and to incense them against him. Among others, he had had the misfortune to give displeasure to the queen herself, as well as to his brother, the duke of Glocester, a prince of the deepest policy, of the most unrelenting ambition, and the least scrupulous in the means which he employed for the attainment or his ends. A combination between these potent adversaries being secretly formed against Clarence, it was determined to begin by attacking his friends; in hopes that, if he patiently endured this injury, his pusillanimity would dishonor him in the eyes of the public; if he made resistance, and expressed resentment, his passion would betray him into measures which might give them advantages against him. The king, hunting one day in the park of Thomas Burdet, of Arrow, in Warwickshire, had killed a white buck, which was a great favorite of the owner; and Burdet, vexed at the loss, broke into a passion, and wished the horns of the deer in the belly of the person who had advised the king to commit that insult upon him. This natural expression of resentment, which would have been overlooked or forgotten had it fallen from any other person, was rendered criminal and capital in that gentleman, by the friendship in which he had the misfortune to live with the duke of Clarence; he was tried for his life; the judges and jury were found servile enough to condemn him and he was publicly beheaded at Tyburn for this pretended offence. [1] About the same time, one John Stacey, an ecclesiastic, much connected with the duke as well as with Burdet, was exposed to a like iniquitous and barbarous prosecution. This clergyman, being more learned in mathematics and astronomy than was usual in that age, lay under the imputation of necromancy with the ignorant vulgar; and the court laid hold of this popular rumor to effect his destruction. He was brought to his trial for that imaginary crime; many of the greatest peers countenanced the prosecution by their presence; he was condemned, put to the torture, and executed. [2]

The duke of Clarence was alarmed when he found these acts of tyranny exercised on all around him: he reflected on the fate of the good duke of Glocester, in the last reign, who, after seeing the most infamous pretences employed for the destruction of his nearest connections, at last fell himself a victim to the vengeance of his enemies. But Clarence, instead of securing his own life against the present danger by silence and reserve, was open and loud in justifying the innocence of his friends, and in exclaiming against the iniquity of their prosecutors.

1478.

The king, highly offended with his freedom, or using that pretence against him, committed him to the Tower, [3] summoned a parliament, and tried him for his life before the house of peers, the supreme tribunal of the nation.

The duke was accused of arraigning public justice, by maintaining the innocence of men who had been condemned in courts of judicature, and or inveighing against the iniquity of the king, who had given orders for their prosecution. [4]

* Habington, . Holingshed, . Sir Thomas More in Kennet, .

* * Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * * Hist Croyl. Cont. .

* * * * Stowe, .

Many rash expressions were imputed to him, and some, too, reflecting on Edward’s legitimacy; but he was not accused of any overt act of treason; and even the truth of these speeches may be doubted of, since the liberty of judgment was taken from the court, by the king’s appearing personally as his brother’s accuser, [1] and pleading the cause against him. But a sentence of condemnation, even when this extraordinary circumstance had not place, was a necessary consequence, in those times, of any prosecution by the court or the prevailing party; and the duke of Clarence was pronounced guilty by the peers. The house of commons were no less slavish and unjust: they both petitioned for the execution of the duke, and afterwards passed a bill of attainder against him. [2] The measures of the parliament, during that age, furnish us with examples of a strange contrast of freedom and servility: they scruple to grant, and sometimes refuse, to the king the smallest supplies, the most necessary for the support of government, even the most necessary for the maintenance of wars, for which the nation, as well as the parliament itself, expressed great fondness: but they never scruple to concur in the most flagrant act of injustice or tyranny which falls on any individual, however distinguished by birth or merit. These maxims, so ungenerous, so opposite to all principles of good government, so contrary to the practice of present parliaments, are very remarkable in all the transactions of the English history for more than a century after the period in which we are now engaged.

The only favor which the king granted his brother after his condemnation, was to leave him the choice of his death; and he was privately drowned in a butt of malmsey in the Tower; a whimsical choice, which implies that he had an extraordinary passion for that liquor. The duke left two children by the elder daughter of the earl of Warwick; a son, created an earl by his grandfather's title, and a daughter, afterwards countess of Salisbury. Both this prince and princess were also unfortunate in their end, and died a violent death; a fate which, for many years, attended almost all the descendants of the royal blood in England. There prevails a report, that a chief source of the violent prosecution of the duke of Clarence, whose name was George, was a current prophecy, that the king's son should be murdered by one, the initial letter of whose name was G. [3] It is not impossible but, in those ignorant times, such a silly reason might have some influence; but it is more probable that the whole story is the invention of a subsequent period, and founded on the murder of these children by the duke of Glocester. Comines remarks, that at that time the English never were without some superstitious prophecy or other, by which they accounted for every event.

* Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * Stowe, . Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

* * * Hall, fol. 239. Holingshed, . Grafton, . Polyd. Virg. . Sir Thomas More in Kennet, .

All the glories of Edward's reign terminated with the civil wars, where his laurels, too, were extremely sullied with blood, violence, and cruelty. His spirit seems afterwards to have been sunk in indolence and pleasure, or his measures were frustrated by imprudence and the want of foresight.

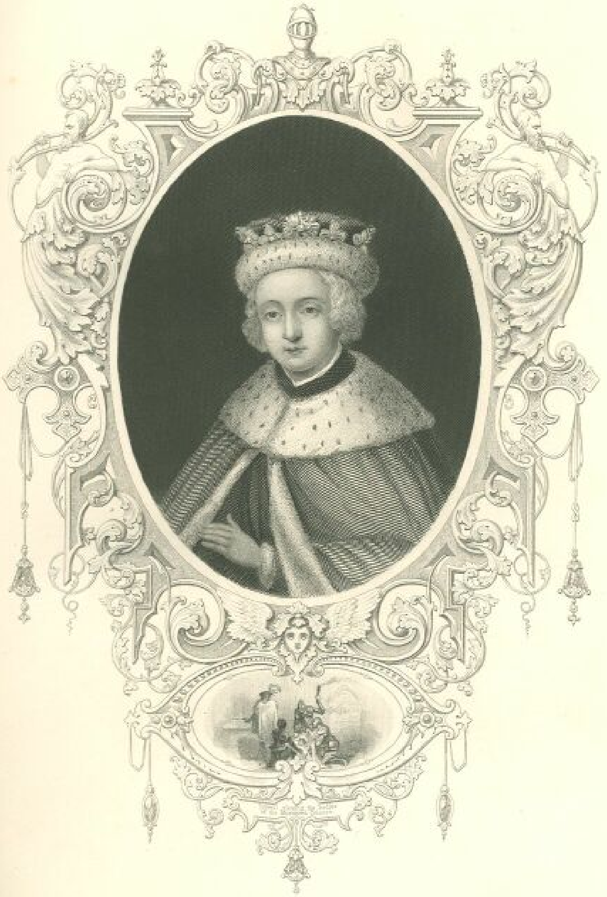
There was no object on which he was more intent than to have all his daughters settled by splendid marriages, though most of these princesses were yet in their infancy, and though the completion of his views, it was obvious, must depend on numberless accidents, which were impossible to be foreseen or prevented. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was contracted to the dauphin; his second, Cicely, to the eldest son of James III., king of Scotland; his third, Anne, to Philip, only son of Maximilian and the duchess of Burgundy; his fourth, Catharine, to John, son and heir to Ferdinand, king of Arragon, and Isabella, queen of Castile. [1] None of these projected marriages took place; and the king himself saw in his lifetime the rupture of the first, that with the dauphin, for which he had always discovered a peculiar fondness. Lewis, who paid no regard to treaties or engagements, found his advantage in contracting the dauphin to the princess Margaret, daughter of Maximilian, and the king, notwithstanding his indolence, prepared to revenge the indignity.

* Rymer, vol. xi. .

1482.

The French monarch, eminent for prudence as well as perfidy, endeavored to guard against the blow; and by a proper distribution of presents in the court of Scotland, he incited James to make war upon England. This prince, who lived on bad terms with his own nobility, and whose force was very unequal to the enterprise, levied an army; but when he was ready to enter England, the barons, conspiring against his favorites, put them to death without trial; and the army presently disbanded. The duke of Glocester, attended by the duke of Albany, James’s brother, who had been banished his country, entered Scotland at the head of an army, took Berwick, and obliged the Scots to accept of a peace, by which they resigned that fortress to Edward. This success imboldened the king to think more seriously of a French war; but while he was making preparations for that enterprise, he was seized with a distemper, of which he expired in the forty-second year of his age, and the twenty-third of his reign; a prince more splendid and showy than either prudent or virtuous; brave, though cruel; addicted to pleasure, though capable of activity in great emergencies; and less fitted to prevent ills by wise precautions, than to remedy them, after they took place, by his vigor and enterprise. Besides five daughters, this king left two sons; Edward, prince of Wales, his successor, then in his thirteenth year and Richard, duke of York, in his ninth.

CHAPTER XXIII.



EDWARD V.

From a Manuscript Book in the Library at Lambeth

LONDON: JAMES S. VIRTUE.

EDWARD V. AND RICHARD III.

1483.

During the latter years of Edward IV., the nation having in a great measure forgotten the bloody feuds between the two roses, and peaceably acquiescing in the established government, was agitated only by some court intrigues, which, being restrained by the authority of the king, seemed nowise to endanger the public tranquillity. These intrigues arose from the perpetual rivalship between two parties; one consisting of the queen and her relations, particularly the earl of Rivers, her brother, and the marquis of Dorset, her son; the other composed of the ancient nobility, who envied the sudden growth and unlimited credit of that aspiring family. [1]

* Sir Thomas More. .

At the head of this latter party was the duke of Buckingham, a man of very noble birth, of ample possessions, of great alliances, of shining parts; who, though he had married the queen’s sister, was too haughty to act in subserviency to her inclinations, and aimed rather at maintaining an independent influence and authority. Lord Hastings, the chamberlain, was another leader of the same party; and as this nobleman had, by his bravery and activity, as well as by his approved fidelity, acquired the confidence and favor of his master, he had been able, though with some difficulty, to support himself against the credit of the queen. The lords Howard and Stanley maintained a connection with these two noblemen, and brought a considerable accession of influence and reputation to their party. All the other barons, who had no particular dependence on the queen, adhered to the same interest; and the people in general, from their natural envy against the prevailing power, bore great favor to the cause of these noblemen.

But Edward knew that, though he himself had been able to overawe those rival factions, many disorders might arise from their contests during the minority of his son; and he therefore took care, in his last illness, to summon together several of the leaders on both sides, and by composing their ancient quarrels, to provide, as far as possible, for the future tranquillity of the government. After expressing his intentions, that his brother, the duke of Glocester, then absent in the north, should be intrusted with the regency, he recommended to them peace and unanimity during the tender years of his son; represented to them the dangers which must attend the continuance of their animosities; and engaged them to embrace each other with all the appearance of the most cordial reconciliation. But this temporary or feigned agreement lasted no longer than the king's life; he had no sooner expired, than the jealousies of the parties broke out afresh; and each of them applied, by separate messages, to the duke of Glocester, and endeavored to acquire his favor and friendship.

This prince, during his brother's reign, had endeavored to live on good terms with both parties; and his high birth, his extensive abilities, and his great services, had enabled him to support himself without falling into a dependence on either. But the new situation of affairs, when the supreme power was devolved upon him, immediately changed his measures; and he secretly determined to preserve no longer that neutrality which he had hitherto maintained. His exorbitant ambition, unrestrained by any principle either of justice or humanity; made him carry his views to the possession of the crown itself; and as this object could not be attained without the ruin of the queen and her family, he fell, without hesitation, into concert with the opposite party. But being sensible that the most profound dissimulation was requisite for effecting his criminal purposes, he redoubled his professions of zeal and attachment to that princess; and he gained such credit with her as to influence her conduct in a point which, as it was of the utmost importance, was violently disputed between the opposite factions.

The young king, at the time of his father's death, resided in the Castle of Ludlow, on the borders of Wales; whither he had been sent, that the influence of his presence might overawe the Welsh, and restore the tranquillity of that country, which had been disturbed by some late commotions. His person was committed to the care of his uncle, the earl of Rivers, the most accomplished nobleman in England, who, having united an uncommon taste for literature [1] to great abilities in business and valor in the field was entitled by his talents, still more than by nearness of blood, to direct the education of the young monarch. The queen, anxious to preserve that ascendant over her son which she had long maintained over her husband, wrote to the earl of Rivers, that he should levy a body of forces, in order to escort the king to London, to protect him during his coronation, and to keep him from falling into the hands of their enemies. [2] The opposite faction, sensible that Edward was now of an age when great advantages could be made of his name and countenance, and was approaching to the age when he would be legally entitled to exert in person his authority, foresaw that the tendency of this measure was to perpetuate their subjection under their rivals; and they vehemently opposed a resolution which they represented as the signal for renewing a civil war in the kingdom. Lord Hastings threatened to depart instantly to his government of Calais: [2] the other nobles seemed resolute to oppose force by force: and as the duke of Glocester, on pretence of pacifying the quarrel, had declared against all appearance of an armed power, which might be dangerous, and was nowise necessary; the queen, trusting to the sincerity of his friendship, and overawed by so violent an opposition, recalled her orders to her brother, and desired him to bring up no greater retinue than should be necessary to support the state and dignity of the young sovereign. [3]

* This nobleman first introduced the noble art of printing into England. Caxton was recommended by him to the patronage of Edward IV. See Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors.

* * Hist. Croyl. Cont. , 565.

* * * Sir Thomas More, .

The duke of Glocester, meanwhile, set out from York, attended by a numerous train of the northern gentry. When he reached Northampton, he was joined by the duke of Buckingham, who was also attended by a splendid retinue; and as he heard that the king was hourly expected on that road, he resolved to await his arrival, under color of conducting him thence in person to London. The earl of Rivers, apprehensive that the place would be too narrow to contain so many attendants, sent his pupil forward by another road to Stony Stratford; and came himself to Northampton, in order to apologize for this measure, and to pay his respects to the duke of Glocester. He was received with the greatest appearance of cordiality: he passed the evening an an amicable manner with Glocester and Buckingham: he proceeded on the road with them next day to join the king: but as he was entering Stony Stratford, he was arrested by orders from the duke of

Glocester: [1] Sir Richard Gray, one of the queen's sons, was at the same time put under a guard, together with Sir Thomas Vaughan, who possessed a considerable office in the king's household; and all the prisoners were instantly conducted to Pomfret. Glocester approached the young prince with the greatest demonstrations of respect; and endeavored to satisfy him with regard to the violence committed on his uncle and brother: but Edward, much attached to these near relations, by whom he had been tenderly educated, was not such a master of dissimulation as to conceal his displeasure. [2]

The people, however, were extremely rejoiced at this revolution; and the duke was received in London with the loudest acclamations: but the queen no sooner received intelligence of her brother's imprisonment, than she foresaw that Glocester's violence would not stop there, and that her own ruin, if not that of all her children, was finally determined. She therefore fled into the sanctuary of Westminster, attended by the marquis of Dorset; and she carried thither the five princesses, together with the duke of York. [3]

She trusted that the ecclesiastical privileges, which had formerly, during the total ruin of her husband and family, given her protection against the fury of the Lancastrian faction, would not now be violated by her brother-in-law, while her son was on the throne; and she resolved to await there the return of better fortune. But Glocester, anxious to have the duke of York in his power, proposed to take him by force from the sanctuary; and he represented to the privy council both the indignity put upon the government by the queen's ill-grounded apprehensions, and the necessity of the young prince's appearance at the ensuing coronation of his brother. It was further urged, that ecclesiastical privileges were originally intended only to give protection to unhappy men persecuted for their debts or crimes; and were entirely useless to a person who, by reason of his tender age, could lie under the burden of neither, and who, for the same reason, was utterly incapable

* Hist. Croyl. Cont. , 565.

* * Sir Thomas More.

* * * Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

of claiming security from any sanctuary. But the two archbishops, Cardinal Bourchier, the primate, and Rotherhand, archbishop of York, protesting against the sacrilege of this measure, it was agreed that they should first endeavor to bring the queen to compliance by persuasion, before any violence should be employed against her. These prelates were persons of known integrity and honor; and being themselves entirely persuaded of the duke’s good intentions, they employed every argument, accompanied with earnest entreaties, exhortations, and assurances, to bring her over to the same opinion. She long continued obstinate, and insisted that the duke of York, by living in the sanctuary, was not only secure himself, but gave security to the king, whose life no one would dare to attempt while his successor and avenger remained in safety. But finding that none supported her in these sentiments, and that force, in case of refusal, was threatened by the council, she at last complied, and produced her son to the two prelates. She was here on a sudden struck with a kind of presage of his future fate: she tenderly embraced him; she bedewed him with her tears; and bidding him an eternal adieu, delivered him, with many expressions of regret and reluctance, into their custody. [1]

The duke of Glocester, being the nearest male of the royal family capable of exercising the government, seemed entitled, by the customs of the realm, to the office of protector; and the council, not waiting for the consent of parliament, made no scruple of investing him with that high dignity. [2]

* Sir Thomas More, .

* * Hist. Croyl. Cont, .

The general prejudice entertained by the nobility against the queen and her kindred, occasioned this precipitation and irregularity; and no one foresaw any danger to the succession, much less to the lives of the young princes, from a measure so obvious and so natural. Besides that the duke had hitherto been able to cover, by the most profound dissimulation, his fierce and savage nature, the numerous issue of Edward, together with the two children of Clarence, seemed to be an eternal obstacle to his ambition; and it appeared equally impracticable for him to destroy so many persons possessed of a preferable title, and imprudent to exclude them. But a man who had abandoned all principles of honor and humanity, was soon carried by his predominant passion beyond the reach of fear or precaution; and Glocester, having so far succeeded in his views, no longer hesitated in removing the other obstructions which lay between him and the throne. The death of the earl of Rivers, and of the other prisoners detained in Pomfret, was first determined; and he easily obtained the consent of the duke of Buckingham, as well as of Lord Hastings, to this violent and sanguinary measure. However easy it was, in those times, to procure a sentence against the most innocent person, it appeared still more easy to despatch an enemy without any trial or form of process; and orders were accordingly issued to Sir Richard Ratcliffe, a proper instrument in the hands of this tyrant, to cut off the heads of the prisoners. The protector then assailed the fidelity of Buckingham by all the arguments capable of swaying a vicious mind, which knew no motive of action but interest and ambition. He represented that the execution of persons so nearly related to the king, whom that prince so openly professed to love, and whose fate he so much resented, would never pass unpunished; and all the actors in that scene were bound in prudence to prevent the effects of his future vengeance: that it would be impossible to keep the queen forever at a distance from her son, and equally impossible to prevent her from instilling into his tender mind the thoughts of retaliating, by like executions, the sanguinary insults committed on her family: that the only method of obviating these mischiefs was to put the sceptre in the hands of a man of whose friendship the duke might be assured, and whose years and experience taught him to pay respect to merit and to the rights of ancient nobility: and that the same necessity which had carried them so far in resisting the usurpation of these intruders, must justify them in attempting further innovations, and in making, by national consent, a new settlement of the succession. To these reasons he added the offers of great private advantages to the duke of Buckingham; and he easily obtained from him a promise of supporting him in all his enterprises.

The duke of Glocester, knowing the importance of gaining Lord Hastings, sounded at a distance his sentiments, by means of Catesby, a lawyer, who lived in great intimacy with that nobleman; but found him impregnable in his allegiance and fidelity to the children of Edward, who had ever honored him with his friendship. [1] He saw, therefore, that there were no longer any measures to be kept with him; and he determined to ruin utterly the man whom he despaired of engaging to concur in his usurpation. On the very day when Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan were executed, or rather murdered, at Poinfret by the advice of Hastings, the protector summoned a council in the Tower; whither that nobleman, suspecting no design against him, repaired without hesitation.

* Sir Thomas More. .

The duke of Glocester was capable of committing the most bloody and treacherous murders with the utmost coolness and indifference. On taking his place at the council-table, he appeared in the easiest and most jovial humor imaginable. He seemed to indulge himself in familiar conversation with the counsellors, before they should enter on business, and having paid some compliments to Morton, bishop of Ely, on the good and early strawberries which he raised in his garden at Holborn, he begged the favor of having a dish of them, which that prelate immediately despatched a servant to bring to him. The protector then left the council, as if called away by some other business; but soon after returning with an angry and inflamed countenance, he asked them, what punishment those deserved that had plotted against his life, who was so nearly related to the king, and was intrusted with the administration of government. Hastings replied, that they merited the punishment of traitors. “These traitors,” cried the protector, “are the sorceress, my brother’s wife, and Jane Shore, his mistress, with others their associates: see to what a condition they have reduced me by their incantations and witchcraft:” upon which he laid bare his arm, all shrivelled and decayed. But the counsellors, who knew that this infirmity had attended him from his birth, looked on each other with amazement; and, above all, Lord Hastings, who, as he had since Edward’s death engaged in an intrigue with Jane Shore, [1] was naturally anxious concerning the issue of these extraordinary proceedings.

* See note T, at the end of the volume.

“Certainly, my lord,” said he, “if they be guilty of these crimes, they deserve the severest punishment.” “And do you reply to me,” exclaimed the protector, “with your ifs and your ands? You are the chief abettor of that witch, Shore: you are yourself a traitor; and I swear by St. Paul, that I will not dine before your head be brought me,” He struck the table with his hand: armed men rushed in at the signal: the counsellors were thrown into the utmost consternation: and one of the guards, as if by accident or mistake, aimed a blow with a pole-axe at Lord Stanley, who, aware of the danger, slunk under the table; and though he saved his life, he received a severe wound in the head, in the protector's presence. Hastings was seized, was hurried away, and instantly beheaded on a timber-log, which lay in the court of the Tower. [1] Two hours after, a proclamation, well penned, and fairly written, was read to the citizens of London, enumerating his offenses, and apologizing to them, from the suddenness of the discovery, for the sudden execution of that nobleman, who was very popular among them; but the saying of a merchant was much talked of on the occasion, who remarked, that the proclamation was certainly drawn by the spirit of prophecy. [2]

* Hist Croyl. Cont. .

* * Sir Thomas More, .

Lord Stanley, the archbishop of York, the bishop of Ely, and other counsellors, were committed prisoners in different chambers of the Tower; and the protector, in order to carry on the farce of his accusations, ordered the goods of Jane Shore to be seized; and he summoned her to answer before the council for sorcery and witchcraft. But as no proofs, which could be received even in that ignorant age, were produced against her, he directed her to be tried in the spiritual court for her adulteries and lewdness; and she did penance in a white sheet in St. Paul's, before the whole people. This lady was born of reputable parents in London, was well educated, and married to a substantial citizen; but unhappily views of interest, more than the maid's inclinations, had been consulted in the match, and her mind, though framed for virtue, had proved unable to resist the allurements of Edward, who solicited her favors. But while seduced from her duty by this gay and amorous monarch, she still made herself respectable by her other virtues; and the ascendant which her charms and vivacity long maintained over him, was all employed in acts of beneficence and humanity. She was still forward to oppose calumny, to protect the oppressed, to relieve the indigent; and her good offices, the genuine dictates of her heart, never waited the solicitation of presents, or the hopes of reciprocal services. But she lived not only to feel the bitterness of shame imposed on her by this tyrant, but to experience, in old age and poverty, the ingratitude of those courtiers who had long solicited her friendship, and been protected by her credit. No one, among the great multitudes whom she had obliged, had the humanity to bring her consolation or relief; she languished out her life in solitude and indigence; and amidst a court inured to the most atrocious crimes, the frail ties of this woman justified all violations of friendship towards her, and all neglect of former obligations.

These acts of violence, exercised against all the nearest connections of the late king, prognosticated the severest fate to his defenceless children; and after the murder of Hastings, the protector no longer made a secret of his intentions to usurp the crown. The licentious life of Edward, who was not restrained in his pleasures either by honor or prudence, afforded a pretence for declaring his marriage with the queen invalid, and all his posterity illegitimate. It was asserted that, before espousing the lady Elizabeth Gray, he had paid court to the lady Eleanor Talbot, daughter of the earl of Shrewsbury; and being repulsed by the virtue of that lady, he was obliged, ere he could gratify his desires, to consent to a private marriage, without any witnesses, by Stillington, bishop of Bath, who afterwards divulged the secret. [1]

It was also maintained that the act of attainder passed against the duke of Clarence, had virtually incapacitated his children from succeeding to the crown; and these two families being set aside, the protector remained the only true and legitimate heir of the house of York. But as it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove the preceding marriage of the late king, and as the rule which excludes the heirs of an attainted blood from private successions was never extended to the crown, the protector resolved to make use of another plea, still more shameful and scandalous. His partisans were taught to maintain, that both Edward IV. and the duke of Clarence were illegitimate; that the duchess of York had received different lovers into her bed, who were the fathers of these children, that, their resemblance to those gallants was a sufficient proof of their spurious birth; and that the duke of Glocester alone, of all her sons, appeared by his features and countenance to be the true offspring of the duke of York. Nothing can be imagined more impudent than this assertion, which threw so foul an imputation on his own mother, a princess of irreproachable virtue, and then alive; yet the place chosen for first promulgating it was the pulpit, before a

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* Hist. Croyl. Cont. . Comines. Sir Thomas More, p. 482.

large congregation, and in the protector's presence. Dr. Shaw was appointed to preach in St. Paul's; and having chosen this passage for his text "Bastards lips shall not thrive," he enlarged on all the topics which could discredit the birth of Edward IV., the duke of Clarence, and of all their children. He then broke out in a panegyric on the duke of Glocester; and exclaimed, "Behold this excellent prince, the express image of his noble father, the genuine descendant of the house of York; bearing no less in the virtues of his mind than in the features of his countenance the character of the gallant Richard, once your hero and favorite: he alone is entitled to your allegiance: he must deliver you from the dominion of all intruders: he alone can restore the lost glory and honor of the nation." It was previously concerted, that as the doctor should pronounce these words, the duke of Glocester should enter the church; and it was expected that the audience would cry out, "God save King Richard;" which would immediately have been laid hold of as a popular consent, and interpreted to be the voice of the nation; but by a ridiculous mistake, worthy of the whole scene, the duke did not appear till after this exclamation was already recited by the preacher. The doctor was therefore obliged to repeat his rhetorical figure out of its proper place: the audience, less from the absurd conduct of the discourse than from their detestation of these proceedings, kept a profound silence: and the protector and his preacher were equally abashed at the ill success of their stratagem.

But the duke was too far advanced to recede from his criminal and ambitious purpose. A new expedient was tried to work on the people. The mayor, who was brother to Dr. Shaw, and entirely in the protector's interests, called an assembly of the citizens; where the duke of Buckingham, who possessed some talents for eloquence, harangued them on the protector's title to the crown, and displayed those numerous virtues of which he pretended that prince was possessed. He next asked them whether they would have the duke for king; and then stopped, in expectation of hearing the cry, "God save King Richard." He was surprised to observe them silent; and turning about to the mayor, asked him the reason. The mayor replied, that perhaps they did not understand him. Buckingham then repeated his discourse with some variation. enforced the same topics, asked the same question, and was received with the same silence. "I now see the cause," said the mayor; "the citizens are not accustomed to be harangued by any but their recorder; and know not how to answer a person of your grace's quality." The recorder, Fitz-Williams, was then commanded to repeat the substance of the duke’s speech; but the man, who was averse to the office, took care, throughout his whole discourse, to have it understood that he spoke nothing of himself, and that he only conveyed to them the sense of the duke of Buckingham. Still the audience kept a profound silence. “This is wonderful obstinacy,” cried the duke: “express your meaning, my friends, one way or other: when we apply to you on this occasion, it is merely from the regard which we bear to you. The lords and commons have sufficient authority, without your consent, to appoint a king: but I require you here to declare, in plain terms, whether or not you will have the duke of Glocester for your sovereign.” After all these efforts, some of the meanest apprentices, incited by the protector’s and Buckingham’s servants, raised a feeble cry, “God save King Richard:” [1] the sentiments of the nation were now sufficiently declared: the voice of the people was the voice of God: and Buckingham, with the mayor, hastened to Baynard’s Castle, where the protector then resided, that they might make him a tender of the crown.

* Sir Thomas More, .

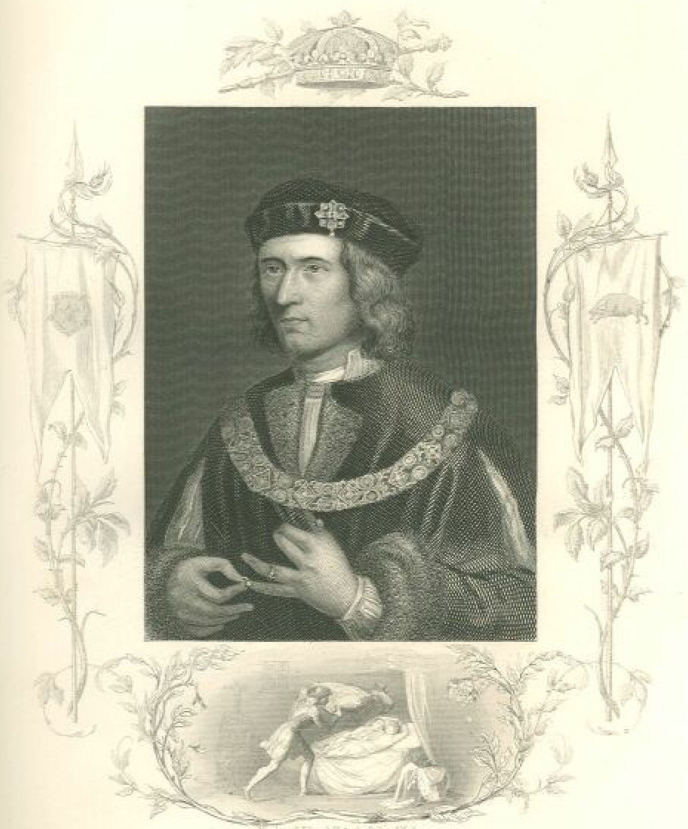
When Richard was told that a great multitude was in the court, he refused to appear to them, and pretended to be apprehensive for his personal safety; a circumstance taken notice of by Buckingham, who observed to the citizens that the prince was ignorant of the whole design. At last he was persuaded to step forth, but he still kept at some distance; and he asked the meaning of their intrusion and importunity. Buckingham told him that the nation was resolved to have him for king: the protector declared his purpose of maintaining his loyalty to the present sovereign, and exhorted them to adhere to the same resolution. He was told that the people had determined to have another prince; and if he rejected their unanimous voice, they must look out for one who would be more compliant. This argument was too powerful to be resisted: he was prevailed on to accept of the crown: and he thenceforth acted as legitimate and rightful sovereign.

This ridiculous force was soon after followed by a scene truly tragical; the murder of the two young princes. Richard gave orders to Sir Robert Brakenbury, constable of the Tower, to put his nephews to death; but this gentleman, who had sentiments of honor, refused to have any hand in the infamous office. The tyrant then sent for Sir James Tyrrel, who promised obedience: and he ordered Brakenbury to resign to this gentleman the keys and government of the Tower for one night. Tyrre, choosing three associates, Slater, Dighton, and Forest, came in the night-time to the door of the chamber where the princes were lodged; and sending in the assassins he bade them execute their commission, while he himself staid without. They found the young princes in bed, and fallen into a profound sleep. After suffocating them with the bolster and pillows, they showed their naked bodies to Tyrrel, who ordered them to be buried at the foot of the stairs, deep in the ground, under a heap of stones. [1] These circumstances were all confessed by the actors in the following reign; and they were never punished for the crime; probably because Henry, whose maxims of government were extremely arbitrary, desired to establish it as a principle, that the commands of the reigning sovereign ought to justify every enormity in those who paid obedience to them. But there is one circumstance not so easy to be accounted for: it is pretended that Richard, displeased with the indecent manner of burying his nephews, whom he had murdered, gave his chaplain orders to dig up the bodies, and to inter them in consecrated ground; and as the man died soon after, the place of their burial remained unknown, and the bodies could never be found by any search which Henry could make for them. Yet in the reign of Charles II., when there was occasion to remove some stones and to dig in the very spot which was mentioned as the place of their first interment, the bones of two persons were there found, which by their size exactly corresponded to the age of Edward and his brother: they were concluded with certainty to be the remains of those princes, and were interred under a marble monument by orders of King Charles. [2] Perhaps Richard's chaplain had died before he found an opportunity of executing his master's commands; and the bodies being supposed to be already removed, a diligent search was not made for them by Henry in the place where they had been buried.

* Sir Thomas More, .

* * Kennet, .

CHAPTER XXIII.



Murder of Edward V. & the Duke of York.

RICHARD III.

From an ancient Original Painting.

LONDON, JAMES S. VIRTUE.

RICHARD III.

1483.

The first acts of Richard’s administration were to bestow rewards on those who had assisted him in usurping the crown, and to gain by favors those who, he thought, were best able to support his future government. Thomas Lord Howard was created duke of Norfolk; Sir Thomas Howard, his son, earl of Surrey; Lord Lovel, a viscount by the same name; even Lord Stanley was set at liberty, and made steward of the household. This nobleman had become obnoxious by his first opposition to Richard’s views, and also by his marrying the countess dowager of Richmond, heir of the Somerset family; but sensible of the necessity of submitting to the present government, he feigned such zeal for Richard’s service, that he was received into favor, and even found means to be intrusted with the most important commands by that politic and jealous tyrant.

But the person who, both from the greatness of his services and the power and splendor of his family, was best entitled to favors under the new government, was the duke of Buckingham; and Richard seemed determined to spare no pains or bounty in securing him to his interests. Buckingham was descended from a daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Glocester, uncle to Richard II.; and by this pedigree he not only was allied to the royal family, but had claims for dignities as well as estates of a very extensive nature. The duke of Glocester, and Henry, earl of Derby, afterwards Henry IV. had married the two daughters and coheirs of Bohun, earl of Hereford, one of the greatest of the ancient barons, whose immense property came thus to be divided into two shares. One was inherited by the family of Buckingham; the other was united to the crown by the house of Lancaster, and, after the attainder of that royal line, was seized, as legally devolved to them, by the sovereigns of the house of York. The duke of Buckingham laid hold of the present opportunity, and claimed the restitution of that portion of the Hereford estate which had escheated to the crown, as well as of the great office of constable, which had long continued by inheritance in his ancestors of that family. Richard readily complied with these demands, which were probably the price stipulated to Buckingham for his assistance in promoting the usurpation. That nobleman was invested with the office of constable; he received a grant of the estate of Hereford; [1] many other dignities and honors were conferred upon him; and the king thought himself sure of preserving the fidelity of a man whose interests seemed so closely connected with those of the present government.

* Dugdale's Baron. vol. i. , 169.

But it was impossible that friendship could long remain inviolate between two men of such corrupt minds as Richard and the duke of Buckingham. Historians ascribe their first rupture to the king's refusal of making restitution of the Hereford estate; but it is certain from records, that he passed a grant for that purpose, and that the full demands of Buckingham were satisfied in this particular. Perhaps Richard was soon sensible of the danger which might ensue from conferring such an immense property on a man of so turbulent a disposition, and afterwards raised difficulties about the execution of his own grant: perhaps he refused some other demands of Buckingham, whom he found it impossible to gratify for his past services: perhaps he resolved, according to the usual maxim of politicians, to seize the first opportunity of ruining this powerful subject, who had been the principal instrument of his own elevation; and the discovery of this intention begat the first discontent in the duke of Buckingham. However this may be, it is certain that the duke, soon after Richard's accession, began to form a conspiracy against the government, and attempted to overthrow that usurpation which he himself had so zealously contributed to establish.

Never was there in any country a usurpation more flagrant than that of Richard, or more repugnant to every principle of justice and public interest. His claim was entirely founded on impudent allegations, never attempted to be proved; some of them incapable of proof, and all of their implying scandalous reflections on his own family, and on the persons with whom he was the most nearly connected. His title was never acknowledged by any national assembly, scarcely even by the lowest populace to whom he appealed; and it had become prevalent merely for want of some person of distinction, who might stand forth against him, and give a voice to those sentiments of general detestation which arose in every bosom. Were men disposed to pardon these violations of public right, the sense of private and domestic duty, which is not to be effaced in the most barbarous times, must have, begotten an abhorrence against him; and have represented the murder of the young and innocent princes, his nephews, with whose protection he had been intrusted, in the most odious colors imaginable. To endure such a bloody usurper seemed to draw disgrace upon the nation, and to be attended with immediate danger to every individual who was distinguished by birth, merit, or services. Such was become the general voice of the people; all parties were united in the same sentiments; and the Lancastrians, so long oppressed, and of late so much discredited, felt their blasted hopes again revive, and anxiously expected the consequences of these extraordinary events. The duke of Buckingham, whose family had been devoted to that interest, and who, by his mother, a daughter of Edmund, duke of Somerset, was allied to the house of Lancaster, was easily induced to espouse the cause of this party, and to endeavor the restoring of it to its ancient superiority. Morton, bishop of Ely, a zealous Lancastrian, whom the king had imprisoned, and had afterwards committed to the custody of Buckingham, encouraged these sentiments; and by his exhortations the duke cast his eye towards the young earl of Richmond, as the only person who could free the nation from the tyranny of the present usurper. [1]

* Hist. Croyl. Cont. .

Henry, earl of Richmond, was at this time detained in a kind of honorable custody by the duke of Brittany; and his descent, which seemed to give him some pretensions to the crown, had been a great object of jealousy both in the late and in the present reign. John, the first duke of Somerset who was grandson of John of Gaunt, by a spurious branch but legitimated by act of parliament, had left only one daughter, Margaret; and his younger brother, Edmund, had succeeded him in his titles, and in a considerable part of his fortune. Margaret had espoused Edmund, earl of Richmond, half brother of Henry VI., and son of Sir Owen Tudor and Catharine of France, relict of Henry V., and she bore him only one son, who received the name of Henry, and who, after his father’s death, inherited the honors and fortune of Richmond. His mother, being a widow, had espoused in second marriage Sir Henry Stafford, uncle to Buckingham, and after the death of that gentleman, had married Lord Stanley; but had no children by either of these husbands; and her son Henry was thus, in the event of her death, the sole heir of all her fortunes. But this was not the most considerable advantage which he had reason to expect from her succession: he would represent the elder branch of the house of Somerset; he would inherit all the title of that family to the crown; and though its claim, while any legitimate branch subsisted of the house of Lancaster, had always been much disregarded, the zeal of faction, after the death of Henry VI., and the murder of Prince Edward, immediately conferred a weight and consideration upon it.

Edward IV., finding that all the Lancastrians had turned their attention towards the young earl of Richmond as the object of their hopes, thought him also worthy of his attention; and pursued him into his retreat in Brittany, whither his uncle, the earl of Pembroke, had carried him, after the battle of Tewkesbury, so fatal to his party. He applied to Francis II., duke of Brittany, who was his ally; a weak, but a good prince; and urged him to deliver up this fugitive, who might be the source of future disturbances in England; but the duke, averse to so dishonorable a proposal, would only consent that, for the security of Edward, the young nobleman should be detained in custody; and he received an annual pension from England for the safe keeping or the subsistence of his prisoner. But towards the end of Edward's reign, when the kingdom was menaced with a war both from France and Scotland, the anxieties of the English court with regard to Henry were much increased; and Edward made a new proposal to the duke, which covered, under the fairest appearances, the most bloody and treacherous intentions. He pretended that he was desirous of gaining his enemy, and of uniting him to his own family by a marriage with his daughter Elizabeth; and he solicited to have him sent over to England, in order to execute a scheme which would redound so much to his advantage. These pretences, seconded, as is supposed, by bribes to Peter Landais, a corrupt minister, by whom the duke was entirely governed, gained credit with the court of Brittany: Henry was delivered into the hands of the English agents, he was ready to embark; when a suspicion of Edward's real design was suggested to the duke, who recalled his orders, and thus saved the unhappy youth from the imminent danger which hung over him.

These symptoms of continued jealousy in the reigning family of England, both seemed to give some authority to Henry's pretensions, and made him the object of general favor and compassion, on account of the dangers and persecutions to which he was exposed. The universal detestation of Richard's conduct turned still more the attention of the nation towards Henry; and as all the descendants of the house of York were either women or minors, he seemed to be the only person from whom the nation could expect the expulsion of the odious and bloody tyrant. But notwithstanding these circumstances, which were so favorable to him, Buckingham and the bishop of Ely well knew that there would still be many obstacles in his way to the throne; and that, though the nation had been much divided between Henry VI. and the duke of York, while present possession and hereditary right stood in opposition to each other, yet as soon as these titles were united in Edward IV., the bulk of the people had come over to the reigning family; and the Lancastrians had extremely decayed, both in numbers and in authority. It was therefore suggested by Morton, and readily assented to by the duke, that the only means of overturning the present usurpation, was to unite the opposite factions, by contracting a marriage between the earl of Richmond and the princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of King Edward, and thereby blending together the opposite pretensions of their families, which had so long been the source of public disorders and convulsions. They were sensible, that the people were extremely desirous of repose after so many bloody and destructive commotions; that both Yorkists and Lancastrians, who now lay equally under oppression, would embrace this scheme with ardor; and that the prospect of reconciling the two parties, which was in itself so desirable an end, would, when added to the general hatred against the present government, render their cause absolutely invincible. In consequence of these views, the prelate, by means of Reginald Bray, steward to the countess of Rich-* *mond, first opened the project of such a union to that lady; and the plan appeared so advantageous for her son, and at the same time so likely to succeed, that it admitted not of the least hesitation. Dr. Lewis, a Welsh physician, who had access to the queen dowager in her sanctuary, carried the proposals to her, and found that revenge for the murder of her brother and of her three sons, apprehensions for her surviving family, and indignation against her confinement, easily overcame all her prejudices against the house of Lancaster, and procured her approbation of a marriage, to which the age and birth, as well as the present situation of the parties, seemed so naturally to invite them. She secretly borrowed a sum of money in the city, sent it over to the earl of Richmond, required his oath to celebrate the marriage as soon as he should arrive in England, advised him to levy as many foreign forces as possible, and promised to join him on his first appearance, with all the friends and partisans of her family.

The plan being thus laid upon the solid foundations of good sense and sound policy, it was secretly communicated to the principal persons of both parties in all the counties of England; and a wonderful alacrity appeared in every order of men to forward its success and completion. But it was impossible that so extensive a conspiracy could be conducted in so secret a manner, as entirely to escape the jealous and vigilant eye of Richard; and he soon received intelligence, that his enemies, headed by the duke of Buckingham, were forming some design against his authority. He immediately put himself in a posture of defence, by levying troops in the north; and he summoned the duke to appear at court, in such terms as seemed to promise him a renewal of their former amity. But that nobleman, well acquainted with the barbarity and treachery of Richard, replied only by taking arms in Wales, and giving the signal to his accomplices for a general insurrection in all parts of England. But at that very time there happened to fall such heavy rains, so incessant and continued, as exceeded any known in the memory of man; and the Severn, with the other rivers in that neighborhood, swelled to a height which rendered them impassable, and prevented Buckingham from marching into the heart of England to join his associates. The Welshmen, partly moved by superstition at this extraordinary event, partly distressed by famine in their camp, fell off from him; and Buckingham, finding himself deserted by his followers, put on a disguise, and took shelter in the house of Banister, an old servant of his family. But being detected in his retreat, he was brought to the king at Salisbury; and was instantly executed, according to the summary method practised in that age. [1] The other conspirators, who took arms in four different places, at Exeter, at Salisbury, it Newbury, and at Maidstone, hearing of the duke of Buckingham’s misfortunes, despaired of success, and immediately dispersed themselves.

The marquis of Dorset and the bishop of Ely made their escape beyond sea; many others were equally fortunate; several fell into Richard’s hands, of whom he made some examples. His executions seem not to have been remarkably severe; though we are told of one gentleman, William Colingbourne, who suffered under color of this rebellion, but in reality for a distich of quibbling verses which he had composed against Richard and his ministers. [1]

* Hist. Croyl. Cont. .   The lines were —

“The Rat, the Cat, and Lovel that Dog,
Rule all England under the Hog;”

The earl of Richmond, in concert with his friends, had set sail from St. Malo’s, carrying on board a body of five thousand men, levied in foreign parts; but his fleet being at first driven back by a storm, he appeared not on the coast of England till after the dispersion of all his friends; and he found himself obliged to return to the court of Brittany.

1484.

The king, every where triumphant, and fortified by this unsuccessful attempt to dethrone him, ventured at last to summon a parliament; a measure which his crimes and flagrant usurpation had induced him hitherto to decline. Though it was natural that the parliament, in a contest of national parties, should always adhere to the victor, he seems to have apprehended, lest his title, founded on no principle, and supported by no party, might be rejected by that assembly. But his enemies being now at his feet, the parliament had no choice left but to recognize his authority, and acknowledge his right to the crown. His only son, Edward, then a youth of twelve years of age, was created prince of Wales: the duties of tonnage and poundage were granted to the king for life; and Richard, in order to reconcile the nation to his government, passed some popular laws, particularly one alluding to the names of Ratcliffe and Catesby; and to Richard’s arms, which were a boar, against the late practice of extorting money on pretence of benevolence.

All the other measures of the king tended to the same object. Sensible that the only circumstance which could give him security, was to gain the confidence of the Yorkists, he paid court to the queen dowager with such art and address, made such earnest protestations of his sincere good-will and friendship, that this princess, tired of confinement, and despairing of any success from her former projects, ventured to leave her sanctuary, and to put herself and her daughters into the hands of the tyrant. But he soon carried further his views for the establishment of his throne. He had married Anne, the second daughter of the earl of Warwick, and widow of Edward, prince of Wales, whom Richard himself had murdered; but this princess having born him but one son, who died about this time, he considered her as an invincible obstacle to the settlement of his fortune, and he was believed to have carried her off by poison; a crime for which the public could not be supposed to have any solid proof, but which the usual tenor of his conduct made it reasonable to suspect. He now thought it in his power to remove the chief perils which threatened his government. The earl of Richmond, he knew, could never be formidable but from his projected marriage with the princess Elizabeth, the true heir of the crown; and he therefore intended, by means of a papal dispensation, to espouse, himself, this princess, and thus to unite in his own family their contending titles. The queen dowager, eager to recover her lost authority, neither scrupled this alliance, which was very unusual in England, and was regarded as incestuous, nor felt any horror at marrying her daughter to the murderer of her three sons and of her brother: she even joined so farther interests with those of the usurper, that she wrote to all her partisans, and among the rest to her son, the marquis of Dorset, desiring them to withdraw from the earl of Richmond; an injury which the earl could never afterwards forgive: the court of Rome was applied to for a dispensation: Richard thought that he could easily defend himself during the interval, till it arrived; and he had afterwards the agreeable prospect of a full and secure settlement. He flattered himself that the English nation, seeing all danger removed of a disputed succession, would then acquiesce under the dominion of a prince who was of mature years, of great abilities, and of a genius qualified for government; and that they would forgive him all the crimes which he had committed in paving his way to the throne.

But the crimes of Richard were so horrid and so shocking to humanity, that the natural sentiments of men, without any political or public views, were sufficient to render his government unstable; and every person of probity and honor was earnest to prevent the sceptre from being any longer polluted by that bloody and faithless hand which held it. All the exiles flocked to the earl of Richmond in Brittany, and exhorted him to hasten his attempt for a new invasion, and to prevent the marriage of the princess Elizabeth, which must prove fatal to all his hopes. The earl, sensible of the urgent necessity, but dreading the treachery of Peter Landais, who had entered into a negotiation with Richard for betraying him, was obliged to attend only to his present safety; and he made his escape to the court of France. The ministers of Charles VIII., who had now succeeded to the throne after the death of his father, Lewis, gave him countenance and protection; and being desirous of raising disturbance to Richard, they secretly encouraged the earl in the levies which he made for the support of his enterprise upon England. The earl of Oxford, whom Richard’s suspicions had thrown into confinement, having made his escape, here joined Henry; and inflamed his ardor for the attempt, by a favorable account which he brought of the dispositions of the English nation, and their universal hatred of Richard’s crimes and usurpation.

1485.

The earl of Richmond set sail from Harfleur, in Normandy, with a small army of about two thousand men; and after a navigation of six days, he arrived at Milford Haven, in Wales, where he landed without opposition. He directed his course to that part of the kingdom, in hopes that the Welsh, who regarded him as their countryman, and who had been already prepossessed in favor of his cause by means of the duke of Buckingham, would join his standard, and enable him to make head against the established government. Richard, who knew not in what quarter he might expect the invader, had taken post at Nottingham, in the centre of the kingdom; and having given commissions to different persons in the several counties, whom he empowered to oppose his enemy, he purposed in person to fly, on the first alarm, to the place exposed to danger. Sir Rice ap Thomas and Sir Walter Herbert were intrusted with his authority in Wales; but the former immediately deserted to Henry; the second made but feeble opposition to him; and the earl, advancing towards Shrewsbury, received every day some reënforcement from his partisans. Sir Gilbert Talbot joined him with all the vassals and retainers of the family of Shrewsbury: Sir Thomas Bourchier and Sir Walter Hungerford brought their friends to share his fortunes; and the appearance of men of distinction in his camp made already his cause wear a favorable aspect.

But the danger to which Richard was chiefly exposed, proceeded not so much from the zeal of his open enemies, as from the infidelity of his pretended friends. Scarce any nobleman of distinction was sincerely attached to his cause, except the duke of Norfolk; and all those who feigned the most loyalty were only watching for an opportunity to betray and desert him. But the persons of whom he entertained the greatest suspicion, were Lord Stanley and his brother Sir William, whose connections with the family of Richmond, notwithstanding their professions of attachment to his person, were never entirely forgotten or overlooked by him. When he empowered Lord Stanley to levy forces, he still retained his eldest son, Lord Strange, as a pledge for his fidelity; and that nobleman was, on this account, obliged to employ great caution and reserve in his proceedings. He raised a powerful body of his friends and retainers in Cheshire and Lancashire, but without openly declaring himself: and though Henry had received secret assurances of his friendly intentions, the armies on both sides knew not what to infer from his equivocal behavior. The two rivals at last approached each other, at Bosworth near Leicester; Henry at the head of six thousand men, Richard with an army of above double the number; and a decisive action was every hour expected between them. Stanley, who commanded above seven thousand men, took care to post himself at Atherstone, not far from the hostile camps; and he made such a disposition as enabled him on occasion to join either party. Richard had too much sagacity not to discover his intentions from these movements; but he kept the secret from his own men for fear of discouraging them: he took not immediate revenge on Stanley's son, as some of his courtiers advised him; because he hoped that so valuable a pledge would induce the father to prolong still further his ambiguous conduct: and he hastened to decide by arms the quarrel with his competitor; being certain that a victory over the earl of Richmond would enable him to take simple revenge on all his enemies, open and concealed.

The van of Richmond's army, consisting of archers, was commanded by the earl of Oxford: Sir Gilbert Talbot led the right wing; Sir John Savage the left: the earl himself, accompanied by his uncle the earl of Pembroke, placed himself in the main body. Richard also took post in his main body, and intrusted the command of his van to the duke of Norfolk: as his wings were never engaged, we have not learned the names of the several commanders. Soon after the battle began, Lord Stanley, whose conduct in this whole affair discovers great precaution and abilities, appeared in the field, and declared for the earl of Richmond. This measure, which was unexpected to the men, though not to their leaders, had a proportional effect on both armies: it inspired unusual courage into Henry's soldiers; it threw Richard's into dismay and confusion. The intrepid tyrant, sensible of his desperate situation, cast his eye around the field, and descrying his rival at no great distance, he drove against him with fury, in hopes that either Henry's death or his own would decide the victory between them. He killed with his own hands Sir William Brandon, standard-bearer to the earl: he dismounted Sir John Cheyney: he was now within reach of Richmond himself, who declined not the combat, when Sir William Stanley, breaking in with his troops, surrounded Richard, who, fighting bravely to the last moment, was overwhelmed by numbers, and perished by a fate too mild and honorable for his multiplied and detestable enormities. His men every where sought for safety by flight.

There fell in this battle about four thousand of the vanquished; and among these the duke of Norfolk, Lord Ferrars of Chartley, Sir Richard Ratcliffe, Sir Robert Piercy, and Sir Robert Brackenbury. The loss was inconsiderable on the side of the victors. Sir William Catesby, a great instrument of Richard's crimes, was taken, and soon after beheaded, with some others, at Leicester. The body of Richard was found in the field, covered with dead enemies, and all besmeared with blood: it was thrown carelessly across a horse; was carried to Leicester amidst the shouts of the insulting spectators; and was interred in the Gray Friars' church of that place.

The historians who favor Richard (for even this tyrant has met with partisans among the later writers) maintain, that he was well qualified for government, had he legally obtained it; and that he committed no crimes but such as were necessary to procure him possession of the crown: but this is a poor apology, when it is confessed, that he was ready to commit the most horrid crimes which appeared necessary for that purpose; and it is certain, that all his courage and capacity, qualities in which he really seems not to have been deficient, would never have made compensation to the people for the danger of the precedent, and for the contagious example of vice and murder exalted upon the throne. This prince was of a small stature, humpbacked, and had a harsh, disagreeable countenance; so that his body was in every particular no less deformed than his mind.

Thus have we pursued the history of England through a series of many barbarous ages, till we have at last reached the dawn of civility and science, and have the prospect, both of greater certainty in our historical narrations, and of being able to present to the reader a spectacle more worthy of his attention. The want of certainty, however, and of circumstances, is not unlike to be complained of throughout every period of this long narration. This island possesses many ancient historians of good credit, as well as many historical monuments; and it is rare, that the annals of so uncultivated a people as were the English, as well as the other European nations after the decline of Roman learning, have been transmitted to posterity so complete, and with so little mixture of falsehood and of fable. This advantage we owe entirely to the clergy of the church of Rome; who, founding their authority on their superior knowledge, preserved the precious literature of antiquity from a total extinction; [1] and, under shelter of their numerous privileges and immunities, acquired a security by means of the superstition, which they would in vain have claimed from the justice and humanity of those turbulent and licentious ages.

* See note U, at the end of the volume

Nor is the spectacle altogether unentertaining and uninstructive, which the history of those times presents to us. The view of human manners, in all their variety of appearances, is both profitable and agreeable; and if the aspect in some periods seem horrid and deformed, we may thence learn to cherish with the greater anxiety that science and civility, which has so close a connection with virtue and humanity, and which, as it is a sovereign antidote against superstition, is also the most effectual remedy against vice and disorders of every kind.

The rise, progress, perfection, and decline of art and science, are curious objects of contemplation, and intimately connected with a narration of civil transactions. The events of no particular period can be fully accounted for, but by considering the degrees of advancement which men have reached in those particulars.

Those who cast their eye on the general revolutions of society, will find that, as almost all improvements of the human mind had reached nearly to their state of perfection about the age of Augustus, there was a sensible decline from that point or period; and men thenceforth relapsed gradually into ignorance and barbarism. The unlimited extent of the Roman empire, and the consequent despotism of its monarchs, extinguished all emulation, debased the generous spirits of men, and depressed that noble flame by which all the refined arts must be cherished and enlivened. The military government, which soon succeeded, rendered even the lives and properties of men insecure and precarious; and proved destructive to those vulgar and more necessary arts of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; and, in the end, to the military art and genius itself, by which alone the immense fabric of the empire could be supported. The irruption of the barbarous nations which soon followed, overwhelmed all human knowledge, which was already far in its decline; and men sunk every age deeper into ignorance, stupidity, and superstition; till the light of ancient science and history had very nearly suffered a total extinction in all the European nations.

But there is a point of depression, as well as of exaltation, from which human affairs naturally return in a contrary direction, and beyond which they seldom pass either in their advancement or decline. The period in which the people of Christendom were the lowest sunk in ignorance, and consequently in disorders of every kind, may justly be fixed at the eleventh century, about the age of William the Conqueror; and from that era the sun of science, beginning to reascend, threw out many gleams of light, which preceded the full morning when letters were revived in the fifteenth century. The Danes and other northern people, who had so long infested all the coasts, and even the island parts of Europe, by their depredations, having now learned the arts of tillage and agriculture, found a certain subsistence at home, and were no longer tempted to desert their industry, in order to seek a precarious livelihood by rapine and by the plunder of their neighbors. The feudal governments also, among the more southern nations, were reduced to a kind of system; and though that strange species of civil polity was ill fitted to insure either liberty or tranquillity, it was preferable to the universal license and disorder which had every where preceded it. But perhaps there was no event which tended further to the improvement of the age, than one which has not been much remarked, the accidental finding of a copy of Justinian's Pandects, about the year 1130, in the town of Amalfi, in Italy.

The ecclesiastics, who had leisure, and some inclination to study, immediately adopted with zeal this excellent system of jurisprudence, and spread the knowledge of it throughout every part of Europe. Besides the intrinsic merit of the performance, it was recommended to them by its original connection with the imperial city of Rome, which, being the seat of their religion, seemed to acquire a new lustre and authority by the diffusion of its laws over the western world. In less than ten years after the discovery of the Pandects, Vacarius, under the protection of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, read public lectures of civil law in the university of Oxford; and the clergy every where, by their example as well as exhortation, were the means of diffusing the highest esteem for this new science. That order of men, having large possessions to defend, was in a manner necessitated to turn their studies towards the law; and their properties being often endangered by the violence of the princes and barons, it became their interest to enforce the observance of general and equitable rules, from which alone they could receive protection. As they possessed all the knowledge of the age, and were alone acquainted with the habits of thinking, the practice as well as science of the law fell mostly into their hands: and though the close connection which, without any necessity, they formed between the canon and civil law, begat a jealousy in the laity of England, and prevented the Roman jurisprudence from becoming the municipal law of the country, as was the case in many states of Europe, a great part of it was secretly transferred into the practice of the courts of justice, and the imitation of their neighbors made the English gradually endeavor to raise their own law from its original state of rudeness and imperfection.

It is easy to see what advantages Europe must have reaped by its inheriting at once from the ancients so complete an art, which was also so necessary for giving security to all other arts, and which by refining, and still more by bestowing solidity on the judgment, served as a model to further improvements. The sensible utility of the Roman law, both to public and private interest, recommended the study of it, at a time when the more exalted and speculative sciences carried no charms with them; and thus the last branch of ancient literature which remained uncorrupted, was happily the first transmitted to the modern world. For it is remarkable, that in the decline of Roman learning, when the philosophers were universally infected with superstition and sophistry, and the poets and historians with barbarism, the lawyers, who in other countries are seldom models of science or politeness, were yet able, by the constant study and close imitation of their predecessors, to maintain the same good sense in their decisions and reasonings, and the same purity in their language and expression.

What bestowed an additional merit on the civil law, was the extreme imperfection of that jurisprudence which preceded it among all the European nations, especially among the Saxons or ancient English. The absurdities which prevailed at that time in the administration of justice, may be conceived from the authentic monuments which remain of the ancient Saxon laws; where a pecuniary commutation was received for every crime, where stated prices were fixed for men’s lives and members, where private revenges were authorized for all injuries, where the use of the ordeal, corsnet, and afterwards of the duel, was the received method of proof, and where the judges were rustic freeholders, assembled of a sudden, and deciding a cause from one debate or altercation of the parties. Such a state of society was very little advanced beyond the rude state of nature: violence universally prevailed, instead of general and equitable maxims: the pretended liberty of the times was only an incapacity of submitting to government: and men, not protected by law in their lives and properties, sought shelter, by their personal servitude and attachments, under some powerful chieftain, or by voluntary combinations.

The gradual progress of improvement raised the Europeans somewhat above this uncultivated state; and affairs, in this island particularly, took early a turn which was more favorable to justice and to liberty. Civil employments and occupations soon became honorable among the English: the situation of that people rendered not the perpetual attention to wars so necessary as among their neighbors, and all regard was not confined to the military profession: the gentry, and even the nobility, began to deem an acquaintance with the law a necessary part of education: they were less diverted than afterwards from studies of this kind by other sciences; and in the age of Henry VI., as we are told by Fortescue, there were in the inns of court about two thousand students, most of them men of honorable birth, who gave application to this branch of civil knowledge: a circumstance which proves, that a considerable progress was already made in the science of government, and which prognosticated a still greater.

One chief advantage which resulted from the introduction and progress of the arts, was the introduction and progress of freedom; and this consequence affected men both in their personal and civil capacities.

If we consider the ancient state of Europe, we shall find, that the far greater part of the society were every where bereaved of their personal liberty, and lived entirely at the will of their masters. Every one that was not noble, was a slave: the peasants were sold along with the land: the few inhabitants of cities were not in a better condition: even the gentry themselves were subjected to a long train of subordination under the greater barons or chief vassals of the crown; who, though seemingly placed in a high state of splendor, yet, having but a slender protection from law, were exposed to every tempest of the state, and, by the precarious condition in which they lived, paid dearly for the power of oppressing and tyrannizing over their inferiors. The first incident which broke in upon this violent system of government, was the practice, begun in Italy, and imitated in

France, of erecting communities and corporations, endowed with privileges and a separate municipal government, which gave them protection against the tyranny of the barons, and which the prince himself deemed it prudent to respect. [1]

* There appear early symptoms of the jealousy entertained by the barons against the progress of the arts, as destructive of their licentious power. A law was enacted, 7 Kenry IV.

cha, prohibiting any one who did not possess twenty shillings a year in land from binding his sons apprentices to any trade. They found already that the cities began to drain the country of the laborers and husbandmen: and did not foresee how much the increase of commerce would increase the value of their estates. See further, Cotton, . The kings, to encourage the boroughs, granted them this privilege, that any villein who had lived a twelvemonth in any corporation, and had been of the guild, should be thenceforth regarded as free.

The relaxation of the feudal tenures, and an execution somewhat stricter of the public law, bestowed an independence on vassals which was unknown to their forefathers. And even the peasants themselves, though later than other orders of the state, made their escape from those bonds of villenage or slavery in which they had formerly been retained.

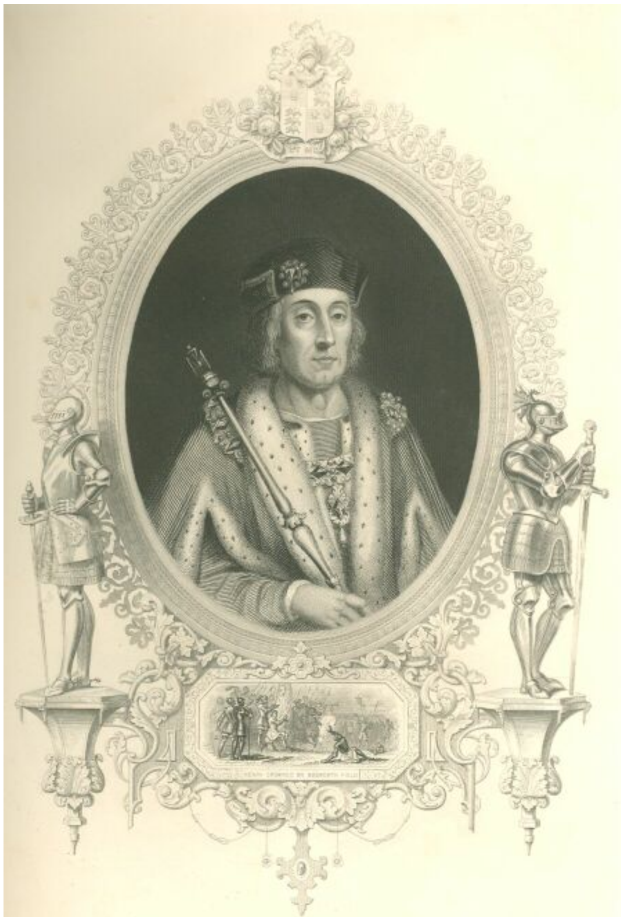
It may appear strange that the progress of the arts, which seems, among the Greeks and Romans, to have daily increased the number of slaves, should, in later times, have proved so general a source of liberty; but this difference in the events proceeded from a great difference in the circumstances which attended those institutions. The ancient barons, obliged to maintain themselves continually in a military posture, and little emulous of elegance or splendor, employed not their villains as domestic servants, much less as manufacturers; but composed their retinue of freemen, whose military spirit rendered the chieftain formidable to his neighbors, and who were ready to attend him in every warlike enterprise. The villains were entirely occupied in the cultivation of their master’s land, and paid their rents either in corn and cattle, and other produce of the farm, or in servile offices, which they performed about the baron’s family, and upon the farms which he retained in his own possession. In proportion as agriculture improved and money increased, it was found that these services, though extremely burdensome to the villain, were of little advantage to the master; and that the produce of a large estate could be much more conveniently disposed of by the peasants themselves, who raised it, than by the landlord or his bailiff, who were formerly accustomed to receive it. A commutation was therefore made of rents for services, and of money-rents for those in kind; and as men, in a subsequent age, discovered that farms were better cultivated where the farmer enjoyed a security in his possession, the practice of granting leases to the peasant began to prevail, which entirely broke the bonds of servitude, already much relaxed from the former practices. After this manner villenage went gradually into disuse throughout the more civilized parts of Europe: the interest of the master, as well as that of the slave, concurred in this alteration. The latest laws which we find in England for enforcing or regulating this species of servitude, were enacted in the reign of Henry VII. And though the ancient statutes on this subject remain still unrepealed by parliament, it appears that before the end of Elizabeth, the distinction of villain and freeman was totally, though insensibly abolished, and that no person remained in the state, to whom the former laws could be applied.

Thus personal freedom became almost general in Europe; an advantage which paved the way for the increase of political or civil liberty, and which, even where it was not attended with this salutary effect, served to give the members of the community some of the most considerable advantages of it.

The constitution of the English government, ever since the invasion of this island by the Saxons, may boast of this pre-eminence, that in no age the will of the monarch was ever entirely absolute and uncontrolled; but in other respects the balance of power has extremely shifted among the several orders of the state; and this fabric has experienced the same mutability that has attended all human institutions.

The ancient Saxons, like the other German nations, where each individual was inured to arms, and where the independence of men was secured by a great equality of possessions, seem to have admitted a considerable mixture of democracy into their form of government, and to have been one of the freest nations of which there remains any account in the records of history. After this tribe was settled in England, especially after the dissolution of the heptarchy, the great extent of the kingdom produced a great inequality in property; and the balance seems to have inclined to the side of aristocracy. The Norman conquest threw more authority into the hands of the sovereign, which, however, admitted of great control; though derived less from the general forms of the constitution, which were inaccurate and irregular, than from the independent power enjoyed by each baron in his particular district or province. The establishment of the Great Charter exalted still higher the aristocracy, imposed regular limits on royal power, and gradually introduced some mixture of democracy into the constitution. But even during this period, from the accession of Edward I. to the death of Richard III., the condition of the commons was nowise eligible: a kind of Polish aristocracy prevailed; and though the kings were limited, the people were as yet far from being free. It required the authority almost absolute of the sovereigns, which took place in the subsequent period, to pull down those disorderly and licentious tyrants, who were equally averse from peace and from freedom, and to establish that regular execution of the laws, which, in a following age, enabled the people to erect a regular and equitable plan of liberty. In each of these successive alterations, the only rule of government which is intelligible, or carries any authority with it, is the established practice of the age, and the maxims of administration which are at that time prevalent and universally assented to. Those who, from a pretended respect to antiquity, appeal at every turn to an original plan of the constitution, only cover their turbulent spirit and their private ambition under the appearance of venerable forms; and whatever period they pitch on for their model, they may still be carried back to a more ancient period, where they will find the measures of power entirely different, and where every circumstance, by reason of the greater barbarity of the times, will appear still less worthy of imitation. Above all, a civilized nation like the English, who have happily established the most perfect and most accurate system of liberty that was ever found compatible with government, ought to be cautious in appealing to the practice of their ancestors, or regarding the maxims of uncultivated ages as certain rules for their present conduct. An acquaintance with the ancient periods of their government is chiefly *useful,* by instructing them to cherish their present constitution, from a comparison or contrast with the condition of those distant times. And it is also *curious*, by showing them the remote, and commonly faint and disfigured originals of the most finished and most noble institutions, and by instructing them in the great mixture of accident, which commonly concurs with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight, in erecting the complicated fabric of the most perfect government.

CHAPTER XXIV.


HENRY CROWNED ON BOSWORTH FIELD

HENRY VII.

From a Painting in the Royal Collection.

HENRY VII.

1485.

The victory which the earl of Richmond gained at Bosworth was entirely decisive; being attended, as well with the total rout and dispersion of the royal army, as with the death of the king himself. Joy for this great success suddenly prompted the soldiers, in the field of battle, to bestow on their victorious general the appellation of king, which he had not hitherto assumed; and the acclamations of “Long live Henry VII.,” by a natural and unpremeditated movement, resounded from all quarters. To bestow some appearance of formality on this species of military election, Sir William Stanley brought a crown of ornament, which Richard wore in battle, and which had been found among the spoils; and he put it on the head of the victor. Henry himself remained not in suspense; but immediately, without hesitation, accepted of the magnificent present which was tendered him. He was come to the crisis of his fortune; and being obliged suddenly to determine himself, amidst great difficulties which he must have frequently revolved in his mind, he chose that part which his ambition suggested to him, and to which he seemed to be invited by his present success.

There were many titles on which Henry could found his right to the crown; but no one of them free from great objections, if considered with respect either to justice or to policy.

During some years, Henry had been regarded as heir to the house of Lancaster by the party attached to that family; but the title of the house of Lancaster itself was generally thought to be very ill founded. Henry IV., who had first raised it to royal dignity, had never clearly defined the foundation of his claim; and while he plainly invaded the order of succession, he had not acknowledged the election of the people. The parliament, it is true, had often recognized the title of the Lancastrian princes; but these votes had little authority, being considered as instances of complaisance towards a family in possession of present power; and they had accordingly been often reversed during the late prevalence of the house of York. Prudent men also, who had been willing for the sake of peace to submit to any established authority, desired not to see the claims of that family revived; claims which must produce many convulsions at present, and which disjointed for the future the whole system of hereditary right. Besides, allowing the title of the house of Lancaster to be legal, Henry himself was not the true heir of that family; and nothing but the obstinacy natural to faction, which never without reluctance will submit to an antagonist, could have engaged the Lancastrians to adopt the earl of Richmond as their head. His mother indeed, Margaret, countess of Richmond, was sole daughter and heir of the duke of Somerset, sprung from John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster: but the descent of the Somerset line was itself illegitimate, and even adulterous. And though the duke of Lancaster had obtained the legitimation of his natural children by a patent from Richard II., confirmed in parliament, it might justly be doubted whether this deed could bestow any title to the crown: since in the patent itself all the privileges conferred by it are fully enumerated, and the succession to the kingdom is expressly excluded. [1] In all settlements of the crown made during the reigns of the Lancastrian princes, the line of Somerset had been entirely overlooked; and it was not till the failure of the legitimate branch, that men had paid any attention to their claim. And to add to the general dissatisfaction against Henry's title, his mother, from whom he derived all his right was still alive; and evidently preceded him in the order of succession.

* Rymer, tom. vii. . Coke's Inst. iv. Inst. part i. p. 37.

His title of the house of York, both from the plain reason of the case, and from the late popular government of Edward IV., had universally obtained the preference in the sentiments of the people; and Henry might ingraft his claim on the rights of that family, by his intended marriage with the princess Elizabeth, the heir of it; a marriage which he had solemnly promised to celebrate, and to the expectation of which he had chiefly owed all his past successes. But many reasons dissuaded Henry from adopting this expedient. Were he to receive the crown only in right of his consort, his power, he knew, would be very limited; and he must expect rather to enjoy the bare title of king by a sort of courtesy, than possess the real authority which belongs to it. Should the princess die before him without issue, he must descend from the throne, and give place to the next in succession; and even if his bed should be blest with offspring, it seemed dangerous to expect that filial piety in his children would prevail over the ambition of obtaining present possession of regal power. An act of parliament, indeed, might easily be procured to settle the crown on him during life; but Henry knew how much superior the claim of succession by blood was to the authority of an assembly, [1] which had always been overborne by violence in the shock of contending titles, and which had ever been more governed by the conjunctures of the times, than by any consideration derived from reason or public interest.

There was yet a third foundation on which Henry might rest his claim, the right of conquest, by his victory over Richard, the present possessor of the crown. But besides that Richard himself was deemed no better than a usurper, the army which fought against him consisted chiefly of Englishmen; and a right of conquest over England could never be established by such a victory. Nothing also would give greater umbrage to the nation than a claim of this nature; which might be construed as an abolition of all their rights and privileges, and the establishment of absolute authority in the sovereign. [2]

*Bacon in Kennet’s Complete History, .

* *Bacon, .

William himself, the Norman, though at the head of a powerful and victorious army of foreigners, had at first declined the invidious title of Conqueror; and it was not till the full establishment of his authority, that he had ventured to advance so violent and destructive a pretension.

But Henry was sensible that there remained another foundation of power, somewhat resembling the right of conquest, namely, present possession; and that this title, guarded by vigor and abilities, would be sufficient to secure perpetual possession of the throne. He had before him the example of Henry IV., who, supported by no better pretension, had subdued many insurrections, and had been able to transmit the crown peaceably to his posterity. He could perceive that this claim, which had been perpetuated through three generations of the family of Lancaster, might still have subsisted, notwithstanding the preferable title of the house of York, had not the sceptre devolved into the hands of Henry VI., which were too feeble to sustain it. Instructed by this recent experience, Henry was determined to put himself in possession of regal authority, and to show all opponents, that nothing but force of arms and a successful war should be able to expel him. His claim as heir to the house of Lancaster he was resolved to advance, and never allow it to be discussed; and he hoped that this right, favored by the partisans of that family, and seconded by present power, would secure him a perpetual and an independent authority.

These views of Henry are not exposed to much blame; because founded on good policy, and even on a species of necessity; but there entered into all his measures and counsels another motive, which admits not of the same apology. The violent contentions which, during so long a period, had been maintained between the rival families, and the many sanguinary revenges which they had alternately taken on each other, had inflamed the opposite factions to a high pitch of animosity, Henry himself, who had seen most of his near friends and relations perish in battle or by the executioner, and who had been exposed in his own person to many hardships and dangers, had imbibed a violent antipathy to the York party, which no time or experience were ever able to efface. Instead of embracing the present happy opportunity of abolishing these fatal distinctions, of uniting his title with that of his consort, and of bestowing favor indiscriminately on the friends of both families, he carried to the throne all the partialities which belong to the head of a faction, and even the passions which are carefully guarded against by every true politician in that situation. To exalt the Lancastrian party, to depress the adherents of the house of York, were still the favorite objects of his pursuit; and through the whole course of his reign, he never forgot these early prepossessions. Incapable from his natural temper of a more enlarged and more benevolent system of policy, he exposed himself to many present inconveniences, by too anxiously guarding against that future possible event, which might disjoin his title from that of the princess whom he espoused. And while he treated the Yorkists as enemies, he soon rendered them such, and taught them to discuss that right to the crown, which he so carefully kept separate, and to perceive its weakness and invalidity.

To these passions of Henry, as well as to his suspicious politics, we are to ascribe the measures which he embraced two days after the battle of Bosworth. Edward Plantagenet, earl of Warwick, son of the duke of Clarence, was detained in a kind of confinement at Sherif-Hutton, in Yorkshire, by the jealousy of his uncle Richard, whose title to the throne was inferior to that of the young prince. Warwick had now reason to expect better treatment, as he was no obstacle to the succession either of Henry or Elizabeth; and from a youth of such tender years no danger could reasonably be apprehended. But Sir Robert Willoughby was despatched by Henry with orders to take him from Sherif-Hutton, to convey him to the Tower, and to detain him in close custody. [1] The same messenger carried directions, that the princess Elizabeth, who had been confined to the same place, should be conducted to London, in order to meet Henry, and there celebrate her nuptials.

Henry himself set out for the capital, and advanced by slow journeys. Not to rouse the jealousy of the people, he took care to avoid all appearance of military triumph; and so to restrain the insolence of victory, that every thing about him bore the appearance of an established monarch, making a peaceable progress through his dominions, rather than of a prince who had opened his way to the throne by force of arms. The acclamations of the people were every where loud, and no less sincere and hearty. Besides that a young and victorious prince, on his accession, was naturally the object of popularity, the nation promised themselves great felicity from the new scene which opened before them.

* Bacon, . Polyd. Virg. .

During the course of near a whole century, the kingdom had been laid waste by domestic wars and convulsions; and if at any time the noise of arms had ceased, the sound of faction and discontent still threatened new disorders. Henry, by his marriage with Elizabeth, seemed to insure a union of the contending titles of the two families; and having prevailed over a hated tyrant, who had anew disjointed the succession even of the house of York, and had filled his own family with blood and murder, he was every where attended with the unfeigned favor of the people. Numerous and splendid troops of gentry and nobility accompanied his progress. The mayor and companies of London received him as he approached the city; the crowds of people and citizens were zealous in their expressions of satisfaction. But Henry, amidst this general effusion of joy, discovered still the stateliness and reserve of his temper, which made him scorn to court popularity: he entered London in a close chariot, and would not gratify the people with a sight of their new sovereign.

But the king did not so much neglect the favor of the people, as to delay giving them assurances of his marriage with the princess Elizabeth, which he knew to be so passionately desired by the nation. On his leaving Brittany, he had artfully dropped some hints that, if he should succeed in his enterprise, and obtain the crown of England, he would espouse Anne, the heir of that duchy; and the report of this engagement had already reached England, and had begotten anxiety in the people, and even in Elizabeth herself. Henry took care to dissipate these apprehensions, by solemnly renewing, before the council and principal nobility, the promise which he had already given to celebrate his nuptials with the English princess. But though bound by honor, as well as by interest, to complete this alliance, he was resolved to postpone it till the ceremony of his own coronation should be finished, and till his title should be recognized by parliament. Still anxious to support his personal and hereditary right to the throne, he dreaded lest a preceding marriage with the princess should imply a participation of sovereignty in her, and raise doubts of his own title by the house of Lancaster.

There raged at that time in London, and other parts of the kingdom, a species of malady unknown to any other age or nation, the sweating sickness, which occasioned the sudden death of great multitudes; though it seemed not to be propagated by any contagious infection, but arose from the general disposition of the air and of the human body. In less than twenty-four hours the patient commonly died or recovered, but when the pestilence had exerted its fury for a few weeks, it was observed, either from alterations in the air, or from a more proper regimen which had been discovered, to be considerably abated. [1] Preparations were then made for the ceremony of Henry's coronation. In order to heighten the splendor of that spectacle, he bestowed the rank of knight banneret on twelve persons; and he conferred peerages on three. Jasper, earl of Pembroke, his uncle, was created duke of Bedford; Thomas Lord Stanley, his father-in-law, earl of Derby; and Edward Courtney, earl of Devonshire. At the coronation, likewise, there appeared a new institution, which the king had established for security as well as pomp, a band of fifty archers, who were termed yeomen of the guard. But lest the people should take umbrage at this unusual symptom of jealousy in the prince, as if it implied a personal diffidence of his subjects, he declared the institution to be perpetual. The ceremony of coronation was performed by Cardinal Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury.

The parliament being assembled at Westminster, the majority immediately appeared to be devoted partisans of Henry; all persons of another disposition either declining to stand in those dangerous times, or being obliged to dissemble their principles and inclinations. The Lancastrian party had every where been successful in the elections; and even many had been returned who, during the prevalence of the house of York, had been exposed to the rigor of law, and had been condemned by sentence of attainder and outlawry. Their right to take seats in the house being questioned, the case was referred to all the judges, who assembled in the exchequer chamber, in order to deliberate on so delicate a subject. The opinion delivered was prudent, and contained a just temperament between law and expediency. [2] The judges determined, that the members attainted should forbear taking their seat till an act were passed for the reversal of their attainder. There was no difficulty in obtaining this act; and in it were comprehended a hundred and seven persons of the king's party. [3]

* Polyd. Virg. .

* * Bacon, .

* * * Rot. Parl. 1 Henry VII. n. 2, 3, 4-15, 17, 26-65.

But a scruple was started of a nature still more important. The king himself had been attainted; and his right of succession to the crown might thence be exposed to some doubt The judges extricated themselves from this dangerous question by asserting it as a maxim, "That the crown takes away all defects and stops in blood; and that from the time the king assumed royal authority, the fountain was cleared, and all attainders and corruptions of blood discharged." [1] Besides that the case, from its urgent necessity, admitted of no deliberation, the judges probably thought that no sentence of a court of judicature had authority sufficient to bar the right of succession; that the heir of the crown was commonly exposed to such jealousy as might often occasion stretches of law and justice against him; and that a prince might even be engaged in unjustifiable measures during his predecessor’s reign, without meriting on that account to be excluded from the throne, which was his birthright.

With a parliament so obsequious, the king could not fail of obtaining whatever act of settlement he was pleased to require. He seems only to have entertained some doubt within himself on what claim he should found his pretensions. In his speech to the parliament, he mentioned his just title by hereditary right: but lest that title should not be esteemed sufficient, he subjoined his claim by the judgment of God, who had given him victory over his enemies. And again, lest this pretension should be interpreted as assuming a right of conquest, he insured to his subjects the full enjoyment of their former properties and possessions.

The entail of the crown was drawn according to the sense of the king, and probably in words dictated by him. He made no mention in it of the princess Elizabeth, nor of any branch of her family: but in other respects the act was compiled with sufficient reserve and moderation. He did not insist that it should contain a declaration or recognition of his preceding right; as, on the other hand, he avoided the appearance of a new law or ordinance. He chose a middle course which, as is generally unavoidable in such cases, was not entirely free from uncertainty and obscurity. It was voted, “That the inheritance of the crown should rest, remain, and abide in the king:” [2] but whether as rightful heir, or only as present possessor, was not determined.

* Bacon, .

* * Bacon, .

In like manner, Henry was contented that the succession should be secured to the heirs of his body; but he pretended not, in case of their failure, to exclude the house of York or to give the preference to that of Lancaster: he left that great point ambiguous for the present, and trusted that, if it should ever become requisite to determine it, future incidents would open the way for the decision.

But even after all these precautions, the king was so little satisfied with his own title, that in the following year, he applied to papal authority for a confirmation of it; and as the court of Rome gladly laid hold of all opportunities which the imprudence, weakness, or necessities of princes afforded it to extend its influence, Innocent VIII., the reigning pope, readily granted a bull, in whatever terms the king was pleased to desire. All Henry's titles, by succession, marriage, parliamentary choice, even conquest, are there enumerated; and to the whole the sanction of religion is added; excommunication is denounced against every one who should either disturb him in the present possession, or the heirs of his body in the future succession of the crown; and from this penalty no criminal, except in the article of death, could be absolved but by the pope himself, or his special commissioners. It is difficult to imagine that the security derived from this bull could be a compensation for the defect which it betrayed in Henry's title, and for the danger of thus inviting the pope to interpose in these concerns.

It was natural, and even laudable in Henry to reverse the attainders which had passed against the partisans of the house of Lancaster: but the revenges which he exercised against the adherents of the York family, to which he was so soon to be allied, cannot be considered in the same light. Yet the parliament, at his instigation, passed an act of attainder against the late king himself, against the duke of Norfolk, the earl of Surrey, Viscount Lovel, the lords Zouche and Ferrars of Chartley, Sir Walter and Sir James Harrington, Sir William Berkeley, Sir Humphrey Stafford, Catesby, and about twenty other gentlemen who had fought on Richard's side in the battle of Bosworth. How men could be guilty of treason by supporting the king in possession against the earl of Richmond, who assumed not the title of king, it is not easy to conceive; and nothing but a servile complaisance in the parliament could have engaged them to make this stretch of justice. Nor was it a small mortification to the people in general, to find that the king, prompted either by avarice or resentment could, in the very beginning of his reign, so far violate the cordial union which had previously been concerted between the parties, and to the expectation of which he had plainly owed his succession to the throne.

The king, having gained so many points of consequence from the parliament, thought it not expedient to demand any supply from them, which the profound peace enjoyed by the nation, and the late forfeiture of Richard's adherents, seemed to render somewhat superfluous. The parliament, however, conferred on him during life the duty of tonnage and poundage, which had been enjoyed in the same manner by some of his immediate predecessors; and they added, before they broke up, other money bills of no great moment. The king, on his part, made returns of grace and favor to his people. He published his royal proclamation, offering pardon to all such as had taken arms, or formed any attempts against him, provided they submitted themselves to mercy by a certain day, and took the usual oath of fealty and allegiance. Upon this proclamation many came out of their sanctuaries; and the minds of men were every where much quieted. Henry chose to take wholly to himself the merit of an act of grace so agreeable to the nation, rather than communicate it with the parliament, (as was his first intention,) by passing a bill to that purpose. The earl of Surrey, however, though he had submitted, and delivered himself into the king's hands, was sent prisoner to the Tower.

During this parliament, the king also bestowed favors and honors on some particular persons who were attached to him. Edward Stafford, eldest son of the duke of Buckingham attainted in the late reign, was restored to the honors of his family, as well as to his fortune, which was very ample. This generosity, so unusual in Henry, was the effect of his gratitude to the memory of Buckingham, who had first concerted the plan of his elevation, and who by his own ruin had made way for that great event. Chandos of Brittany was created earl of Bath, Sir Giles Daubeny, Lord Daubeny, and Sir Robert Willoughby, Lord Broke. These were all the titles of nobility conferred by the king during this session of parliament. [1]

* Polyd. Virg.

But the ministers whom Henry most trusted and favored were not chosen from among the nobility, or even from among the laity. John Morton and Richard Fox, two clergymen persons of industry, vigilance, and capacity, were the men to whom he chiefly confided his affairs and secret counsels. They had shared with him all his former dangers and distresses; and he now took care to make them participate in his good fortune. They were both called to the privy council; Morton was restored to the bishopric of Ely, Fox was created bishop of Exeter. The former, soon after, upon the death of Bourchier, was raised to the see of Canterbury. The latter was made privy seal; and successively bishop of Bath and Wells, Durham, and Winchester. For Henry, as Lord Bacon observes, loved to employ and advance prelates; because, having rich bishoprics to bestow, it was easy for him to reward their services: and it was his maxim to raise them by slow steps, and make them first pass through the interior sees. [1] He probably expected that, as they were naturally more dependent on him than the nobility, who during that age enjoyed possessions and jurisdictions dangerous to royal authority, so the prospect of further elevation would render them still more active in his service, and more obsequious to his commands.

* Bacon, .

1486.

In presenting the bill of tonnage and poundage, the parliament, anxious to preserve the legal, undisputed succession to the crown, had petitioned Henry, with demonstrations of the greatest zeal, to espouse the princess Elizabeth; but they covered their true reason under the dutiful pretence of their desire to have heirs of his body. He now thought in earnest of satisfying the minds of his people in that particular. His marriage was celebrated at London; and that with greater appearance of universal joy than either his first entry or his coronation. Henry remarked with much displeasure this general favor borne to the house of York. The suspicions which arose from it not only disturbed his tranquillity during his whole reign, but bred disgust towards his consort herself, and poisoned all his domestic enjoyments. Though virtuous, amiable, and obsequious to the last degree, she never met with a proper return of affection, or even of complaisance, from her husband; and the malignant ideas of faction still, in his sullen mind, prevailed over all the sentiments of conjugal tenderness.

The king had been carried along with such a tide of success ever since his arrival in England, that he thought nothing could withstand the fortune and authority which attended him.

He now resolved to make a progress into the north, where the friends of the house of York, and even the partisans of Richard, were numerous, in hopes of curing, by his presence and conversation, the prejudices of the malecontents. When he arrived at Nottingham, he heard that Viscount Lovel, with Sir Humphrey Stafford, and Thomas his brother, had secretly withdrawn themselves from their sanctuary at Colchester: but this news appeared not to him of such importance as to stop his journey; and he proceeded forward to York. He there heard that the Staffords had levied an army, and were marching to besiege the city of Worcester; and that Lovel, at the head of three or four thousand men, was approaching to attack him in York. Henry was not dismayed with this intelligence. His active courage, full of resources, immediately prompted him to find the proper remedy. Though surrounded with enemies in these disaffected counties, he assembled a small body of troops, in whom he could confide; and he put them under the command of the duke of Bedford. He joined to them all his own attendants; but he found that this hasty armament was more formidable by their spirit and their zealous attachment to him, than by the arms or military stores with which they were provided. He therefore gave Bedford orders not to approach the enemy; but previously to try every proper expedient to disperse them. Bedford published a general promise of pardon to the rebels, which had a greater effect on their leader than on his followers. Lovel, who had undertaken an enterprise that exceeded his courage and capacity, was so terrified with the fear of desertion among his troops, that he suddenly withdrew himself; and after lurking some time in Lancashire, he made his escape into Flanders, where he was protected by the duchess of Burgundy. His army submitted to the king’s clemency; and the other rebels, hearing of this success, raised the siege of Worcester, and dispersed themselves. The Staffords took sanctuary in the church of Colnham, a village near Abingdon; but as it was found that this church had not the privilege of giving protection to rebels, they were taken thence; the elder was executed at Tyburn; the younger, pleading that he had been misled by his brother, obtained a pardon. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

Henry’s joy for this success was followed, some time after, by the birth of a prince, to whom he gave the name of Arthur in memory of the famous British king of that name, from whom it was pretended the family of Tudor derived its descent.

Though Henry had been able to defeat this hasty rebellion raised by the relics of Richard’s partisans, his government was become in general unpopular: the source of public discontent arose chiefly from his prejudices against the house of York which was generally beloved by the nation, and which, for that very reason, became every day more the object of his hatred and jealousy. Not only a preference on all occasions, it was observed, was given to the Lancastrians, but many of the opposite party had been exposed to great severity, and had been bereaved of their fortunes by acts of attainder. A general resumption likewise had passed of all grants made by the princes of the house of York; and though this rigor had been covered under the pretence that the revenue was become insufficient to support the dignity of the crown, and though the grants during the later years of Henry VI. were resumed by the same law, yet the York party, as they were the principal sufferers by the resumption, thought it chiefly levelled against them. The severity exercised against the earl of Warwick begat compassion for youth and innocence exposed to such oppression; and his confinement in the Tower, the very place where Edward's children had been murdered by their uncle, made the public expect a like catastrophe for him, and led them to make a comparison between Henry and that detested tyrant. And when it was remarked that the queen herself met with harsh treatment, and even after the birth of a son, was not admitted to the honor of a public coronation, Henry's prepossessions were then concluded to be inveterate, and men became equally obstinate in their disgust to his government. Nor was the manner and address of the king calculated to cure these prejudices contracted against his administration; but had in every thing a tendency to promote fear, or at best reverence, rather than good will and affection. [1] While the high idea entertained of his policy and vigor retained the nobility and men of character in obedience, the effects of his unpopular government soon appeared, by incidents of an extraordinary nature.

* Bacon, .

There lived in Oxford one Richard Simon, a priest, who possessed some subtlety, and still more enterprise and temerity. This man had entertained the design of disturbing Henry's government, by raising a pretender to his crown, and for that purpose he cast his eyes on Lambert Simnel, a youth of fifteen years of age, who was son of a baker, and who, being endowed with understanding above his years, and address above his condition, seemed well fitted to personate a prince of royal extraction. A report had been spread among the people, and received, with great avidity, that Richard, duke of York, second son of Edward IV., had, by a secret escape, saved himself from the cruelty of his uncle, and lay somewhere concealed in England. Simon, taking advantage of this rumor, had at first instructed his pupil to assume that name, which he found to be so fondly cherished by the public: but hearing afterwards a new report, that Warwick had made his escape from the Tower, and observing that this news was attended with no less general satisfaction, he changed the plan of his imposture, and made Simnel personate that unfortunate prince. [1] Though the youth was qualified by nature for the part which he was instructed to act, yet was it remarked, that he was better informed in circumstances relating to the royal family, particularly in the adventures of the earl of Warwick, than he could be supposed to have learned from one of Simon's condition: and it was thence conjectured, that persons of higher rank, partisans of the house of York, had laid the plan of this conspiracy, and had conveyed proper instructions to the actors. The queen dowager herself was exposed to suspicion; and it was indeed the general opinion, however unlikely it might seem, that she had secretly given her consent to the imposture. This woman was of a very restless disposition. Finding that, instead of receiving the reward of her services in contributing to Henry's elevation, she herself was fallen into absolute insignificance, her daughter treated with severity, and all her friends brought under subjection, she had conceived the most violent animosity against him, and had resolved to make him feel the effects of her resentment. She knew that the impostor, however successful, might easily at last be set aside; and if a way could be found at his risk to subvert the government, she hoped that a scene might be opened, which, though difficult at present exactly to foresee, would gratify her revenge, and be on the whole less irksome to her than that slavery and contempt to which she was now reduced. [2]

* Polyd. Virg. . 570.

* * Polyd. Virg. .

But whatever care Simon might take to convey instruction to his pupil Simnel, he was sensible that the imposture would not bear a close inspection; and he was therefore determined to open the first public scene of it in Ireland. That island, which was zealously attached to the house of York, and bore an affectionate regard to the memory of Clarence, Warwick's father, who had been their lieutenant, was improvidently allowed by Henry to remain in the same condition in which he found it; and all the counsellors and officers, who had been appointed by his predecessor, still retained their authority. No sooner did Simnel present himself to Thomas Fitzgerald, earl of Kildare, the deputy, and claim his protection as the unfortunate Warwick, than that credulous nobleman, not suspecting so bold an imposture, gave attention to him, and began to consult some persons of rank with regard to this extraordinary incident. These he found even more sanguine in their zeal and belief than himself: and in proportion as the story diffused itself among those of lower condition, it became the object of still greater passion and credulity, till the people in Dublin with one consent tendered their allegiance to Simnel, as to the true Plantagenet. Fond of a novelty which flattered their natural propension, they overlooked the daughters of Edward IV., who stood before Warwick in the order of succession; they paid the pretended prince attendance as their sovereign, lodged him in the Castle of Dublin, crowned him with a diadem taken from a statue of the Virgin, and publicly proclaimed him king, by the appellation of Edward VI. The whole island followed the example of the capital; and not a sword was any where drawn in Henry's quarrel.

When this intelligence was conveyed to the king, it reduced him to some perplexity. Determined always to face his enemies in person, he yet scrupled at present to leave England, where he suspected the conspiracy was first framed, and where he knew many persons of condition, and the people in general, were much disposed to give it countenance. In order to dis cover the secret source of the contrivance, and take measures against this open revolt, he held frequent consultations with his ministers and counsellors, and laid plans for a vigorous defence of his authority, and the suppression of his enemies.

The first event which followed these deliberations gave surprise to the public; it was the seizure of the queen dowager the forfeiture of all her lands and revenue, and the close confinement of her person in the nunnery of Bermondsey. The act of authority was covered with a very thin pretence. It was alleged that, notwithstanding the secret agreement to marry her daughter to Henry, she had yet yielded to the solicitations and menaces of Richard, and had delivered that princess and her sisters into the hands of the tyrant. This crime, which was now become obsolete, and might admit of alleviations, was therefore suspected not to be the real cause of the severity with which she was treated; and men believed that the king, unwilling to accuse so near a relation of a conspiracy against him, had cloaked his vengeance or precaution under color of an offence known to the whole world. [1] They were afterwards the more confirmed in this suspicion, when they found that the unfortunate queen, though she survived this disgrace several years, was never treated with any more lenity, but was allowed to end her life in poverty, solitude, and confinement.

* Bacon, , Polyd. Virg. .

The next measure of the king's was of a less exceptionable nature. He ordered that Warwick should be taken from the Tower, be led in procession through the streets of London, be conducted to St. Paul's, and there exposed to the view of the whole people. He even gave directions, that some men of rank, attached to the house of York, and best acquainted with the person of this prince, should approach him and converse with him: and he trusted that these, being convinced of the absurd imposture of Simnel, would put a stop to the credulity of the populace. The expedient had its effect in England: but in Ireland the people still persisted in their revolt, and zealously retorted on the king the reproach of propagating an imposture, and of having shown a counterfeit Warwick to the public.

Henry had soon reason to apprehend, that the design against him was not laid on such slight foundations as the absurdity of the contrivance seemed to indicate. John, earl of Lincoln, son of John de la Pole, duke of Suffolk, and of Elizabeth, eldest sister to Edward IV., was engaged to take part in the conspiracy. This nobleman, who possessed capacity and courage, had entertained very aspiring views; and his ambition was encouraged by the known intentions of his uncle Richard, who had formed a design, in case he himself should die without issue, of declaring Lincoln successor to the crown. The king's jealousy against all eminent persons of the York party, and his rigor towards Warwick, had further struck Lincoln with apprehensions, and made him resolve to seek for safety in the most dangerous counsels. Having fixed a secret correspondence with Sir Thomas Broughton, a man of great interest in Lancashire, he retired to Flanders, where Lovel had arrived a little before him; and he lived during some time in the court of his aunt the duchess of Burgundy, by whom he had been invited over.

Margaret, widow of Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, not having any children of her own, attached herself with an entire friendship to her daughter-in-law, married to Maximilian, archduke of Austria; and after the death of that princess, she persevered in her affection to Philip and Margaret, her children, and occupied herself in the care of their education and of their persons. By her virtuous conduct and demeanor she had acquired great authority among the Flemings and lived with much dignity, as well as economy, upon that ample dowry which she inherited from her husband. The resentments of this princess were no less warm than her friendships; and that spirit of faction, which it is so difficult for a social and sanguine temper to guard against, had taken strong possession of her heart, and intrenched somewhat on the probity which shone forth in the other parts of her character. Hearing of the malignant jealousy entertained by Henry against her family, and his oppression of all its partisans, she was moved with the highest indignation; and she determined to make him repent of that enmity to which so many of her friends, without any reason or necessity, had fallen victims.

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After consulting with Lincoln and Lovel she hired a body of two thousand veteran Germans, under the command of Martin Swart, a brave and experienced officer; [1] and sent them over, together with these two noblemen, to join Simnel in Ireland. The countenance given by persons of such high rank, and the accession of this military force, much raised the courage of the Irish, and made them entertain the resolution of invading England, where they believed the spirit of disaffection as prevalent as it appeared to be in Ireland. The poverty also under which they labored, made it impossible for them to support any longer their new court and army, and inspired them with a strong desire of enriching themselves by plunder and preferment in England.

* Polyd. Virg. , 573.

Henry was not ignorant of these intentions of his enemies, and he prepared himself for defence. He ordered troops to be levied in different parts of the kingdom, and put them under the command of the duke of Bedford and earl of Oxford. He confined the marquis of Dorset, who, he suspected, would resent the injuries suffered by his mother, the queen dowager; and, to gratify the people by an appearance of devotion, he made a pilgrimage to our lady of Walsingham, famous for miracles; and there offered up prayers for success, and for deliverance from his enemies.

Being informed that Simnel was landed at Foudrey in Lancashire, he drew together his forces, and advanced towards the enemy as far as Coventry. The rebels had entertained hopes that the disaffected counties in the north would rise in their favor; but the people in general, averse to join

Irish and German invaders, convinced of Lambert’s imposture, and kept in awe by the king’s reputation for success and conduct, either remained in tranquillity, or gave assistance to the royal army. The earl of Lincoln, therefore, who commanded the rebels, finding no hopes but in victory, was determined to bring the matter to a speedy decision; and the king, supported by the native courage of his temper, and emboldened by a great accession of volunteers, who had joined him under the earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Strange, declined not the combat. The hostile armies met at Stoke, in the county of Nottingham, and fought a battle, which was bloody, and more obstinately disputed than could have been expected from the inequality of their force. All the leaders of the rebels were resolved to conquer or to perish; and they inspired their troops with like resolution. The Germans also, being veteran and experienced soldiers, kept the event long doubtful; and even the Irish, though ill-armed and almost defenceless, showed themselves not defective in spirit and bravery. The king’s victory was purchased with loss, but was entirely decisive. Lincoln, Broughton, and Swart perished in the field of battle, with four thousand of their followers. As Lovel was never more heard of, he was believed to have undergone the same fate; Simnel, with his tutor, Simon, was taken prisoner. Simon, being a priest, was not tried at law, and was only committed to close custody: Simnel was too contemptible to be an object either of apprehension or resentment to Henry. He was pardoned, and made a scullion in the king’s kitchen whence he was afterwards advanced to the rank of a falconer. [1]

* Bacon, . Polyd. Virg. p; 574.

Henry had now leisure to revenge himself on his enemies. He made a progress into the northern parts, where he gave many proofs of his rigorous disposition. A strict inquiry was made after those who had assisted or favored the rebels. The punishments were not all sanguinary: the king made his revenge subservient to his avarice. Heavy fines were levied upon the delinquents. The proceedings of the courts, and even the courts themselves, were arbitrary. Either the criminals were tried by commissioners appointed for the purpose, or they suffered punishment by sentence of a court-martial. And as a rumor had prevailed before the battle of Stoke, that the rebels had gained the victory, that the royal army was cut in pieces, and that the king himself had escaped by flight, Henry was resolved to interpret the belief or propagation of this report as a mark of disaffection; and he punished many for that pretended crime. But such in this age was the situation of the English government, that the royal prerogative, which was but imperfectly restrained during the most peaceable periods, was sure, in tumultuous or even suspicious times, which frequently recurred, to break all bounds of law, and to violate public liberty.

After the king had gratified his rigor by the punishment of his enemies, he determined to give contentment to the people in a point which, though a mere ceremony, was passionately desired by them. The queen had been married near two years, but had not yet been crowned; and this affectation of delay had given great discontent to the public, and had been one principal source of the disaffection which prevailed. The king, instructed by experience, now finished the ceremony of her coronation; and to show a disposition still more gracious, he restored to liberty the marquis of Dorset, who had been able to clear himself of all the suspicions entertained against him.

* Bacon, . Polyd. Virg. p; 574.

CHAPTER XXV.

HENRY VII.

1488.

The king acquired great reputation throughout Europe by the vigorous and prosperous conduct of his domestic affairs; but as some incidents about this time invited him to look abroad, and exert himself in behalf of his allies, it will be necessary, in order to give a just account of his foreign measures, to explain the situation of the neighboring kingdoms, beginning with Scotland, which lies most contiguous.

The kingdom of Scotland had not yet attained that state which distinguishes a civilized monarchy, and which enables the government, by the force of its laws and institutions alone, without any extraordinary capacity in the sovereign, to maintain itself in order and tranquillity. James III., who now filled the throne, was a prince of little industry and of a narrow genius; and though it behoved him to yield the reins of government to his ministers, he had never been able to make any choice which could give contentment both to himself and to his people. When he bestowed his confidence on any of the principal nobility, he found that they exalted their own family to such a height as was dangerous to the prince, and gave umbrage to the state: when he conferred favor on any person of meaner birth, on whose submission he could more depend, the barons of his kingdom, enraged at the power of an upstart minion, proceeded to the utmost extremities against their sovereign. Had Henry entertained the ambition of conquests, a tempting opportunity now offered of reducing that kingdom to subjection; but as he was probably sensible that a warlike people, though they might be overrun by reason of their domestic divisions, could not be retained in obedience without a regular military force, which was then unknown in England, he rather intended the renewal of the peace with Scotland, and sent an embassy to James for that purpose. But the Scots, who never desired a durable peace with England, and who deemed their security to consist in constantly preserving themselves in a warlike posture, would not agree to more than a seven years' truce, which was accordingly concluded. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

The European states on the continent were then hastening fast to the situation in which they have remained, without any material alteration, for near three centuries; and began to unite themselves into one extensive system of policy, which comprehended the chief powers of Christendom. Spain, which had hitherto been almost entirely occupied within herself, now became formidable by the union of Arragon and Castile in the persons of Ferdinand and Isabella, who, being princes of great capacity, employed their force in enterprises the most advantageous to their combined monarchy. The conquest of Granada from the Moors was then undertaken, and brought near to a happy conclusion. And in that expedition the military genius of Spain was revived; honor and security were attained; and her princes, no longer kept in awe by a domestic enemy so dangerous, began to enter into all the transactions of Europe, and make a great figure in every war and negotiation.

Maximilian, king of the Romans, son of the emperor Frederick, had, by his marriage with the heiress of Burgundy, acquired an interest in the Netherlands; and though the death of his consort had weakened his connections with that country, he still pretended to the government as tutor to his son Philip, and his authority had been acknowledged by Brabant, Holland, and several of the provinces. But as Flanders and Hainault still refused to submit to his regency, and even appointed other tutors to Philip, he had been engaged in long wars against that obstinate people, and never was able thoroughly to subdue their spirit. That he might free himself from the opposition of France, he had concluded a peace with Lewis XI., and had given his daughter Margaret, then an infant, in marriage to the dauphin; together with Artois, Franche Compte, and Charolois, as her dowry. But this alliance had not produced the desired effect. The dauphin succeeded to the crown of France by the appellation of Charles VIII.; but Maximilian still found the mutinies of the Flemings fomented by the intrigues of the court of France.

France, during the two preceding reigns, had made a mighty increase in power and greatness; and had not other states of Europe at the same time received an accession of force, it had been impossible to have retained her within her ancient boundaries. Most of the great fiefs, Normandy, Champagne, Anjou, Dauphny, Guienne, Provence, and Burgundy, had been united to the crown; the English had been expelled from all their conquests; the authority of the prince had been raised to such a height as enabled him to maintain law and order; a considerable military force was kept on foot, and the finances were able to support it. Lewis XI, indeed, from whom many of these advantages were derived, was dead, and had left his son, in early youth and ill educated, to sustain the weight of the monarchy: but having intrusted the government to his daughter Anne, lady of Beaujeu, a woman of spirit and capacity, the French power suffered no check or decline. On the contrary, this princess formed the great project, which at last she happily effected, of uniting to the crown Brittany, the last and most independent fief of the monarchy.

Francis II., duke of Brittany, conscious of his own incapacity for government, had resigned himself to the direction of Peter Landais, a man of mean birth, more remarkable for abilities than for virtue or integrity. The nobles of Brittany, displeased with the great advancement of this favorite, had even proceeded to disaffection against their sovereign; and after many tumults and disorders, they at last united among themselves, and in a violent manner seized, tried, and put to death the obnoxious minister. Dreading the resentment of the prince for this invasion of his authority, many of them retired to France; others, for protection and safety, maintained a secret correspondence with the French ministry, who, observing the great dissensions among the Bretons, thought the opportunity favorable for invading the duchy; and so much the rather as they could cover their ambition under the specious pretence of providing for domestic security.

Lewis, duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, and presumptive heir of the monarchy, had disputed the administration with the lady of Beaujeu; and though his pretensions had been rejected by the states, he still maintained cabals with many of the grandees, and laid schemes for subverting the authority of that princess. Finding his conspiracies detected, he took to arms, and fortified himself in Beaugeune; but as his revolt was precipitate, before his confederates were ready to join him, he had been obliged to submit, and to receive such conditions as the French ministry were pleased to impose upon him. Actuated, however, by his ambition, and even by his fears, he soon retired out of France, and took shelter with the duke of Brittany, who was desirous of strengthening himself against the designs of the lady of Beaujeu by the friendship and credit of the duke of Orleans. This latter prince also, perceiving the ascendant which he soon acquired over the duke of Brittany, had engaged many of his partisans to join him at that court, and had formed the design of aggrandizing himself by a marriage with Anne, the heir of that opulent duchy.

The barons of Brittany, who saw all favor engrossed by the duke of Orleans and his train, renewed a stricter correspondence with France, and even invited the French king to make an invasion on their country. Desirous, however, of preserving its independency, they had regulated the number of succors which France was to send them, and had stipulated that no fortified place in Brittany should remain in the possession of that monarchy; a vain precaution, where revolted subjects treat with a power so much superior! The French invaded Brittany with forces three times more numerous than those which they had promised to the barons; and advancing into the heart of the country, laid siege to Ploerrnel. To oppose them, the duke raised a numerous but ill-disciplined army, which he put under the command of the duke of Orleans, the count of Dunois, and others of the French nobility. The army, discontented with this choice, and jealous of their confederates, soon disbanded, and left their prince with too small a force to keep the field against his invaders. He retired to Vannes; but being hotly pursued by the French, who had now made themselves masters of Ploermel, he escaped to Nantz; and the enemy, having previously taken and garrisoned Vannes, Dinant, and other places, laid close siege to that city. The barons of Brittany, finding their country menaced with total subjection, began gradually to withdraw from the French army, and to make peace with their sovereign.

This desertion, however, of the Bretons discouraged not the court of France from pursuing her favorite project of reducing Brittany to subjection The situation of Europe appeared favorable to the execution of this design. Maximilian was indeed engaged in close alliance with the duke of Brittany and had even opened a treaty for marrying his daughter; but he was on all occasions so indigent, and at that time so disquieted by the mutinies of the Flemings, that little effectual assistance could be expected from him. Ferdinand was entirely occupied in the conquest of Granada; and it was also known, that if France would resign to him Roussillon and Cerdagne, to which he had pretensions, she could at any time engage him to abandon the interests of Brittany. England, alone, was both enabled by her power, and engaged by her interests, to support the independency of that duchy; and the most dangerous opposition was therefore, by Anne of Beaujeu, expected from that quarter. In order to cover her real designs, no sooner was she informed of Henry's success against Simnel and his partisans, than she despatched ambassadors to the court of London, and made professions of the greatest trust and confidence in that monarch.

The ambassadors, after congratulating Henry on his late victory, and communicating to him, in the most cordial manner, as to an intimate friend, some successes of their master against Maximilian, came in the progress of their discourse to mention the late transactions in Brittany. They told him that the duke having given protection to French fugitives and rebels, the king had been necessitated, contrary to his intention and inclination, to carry war into that duchy; that the honor of the crown was interested not to suffer a vassal so far to forget his duty to his liege lord; nor was the security of the government less concerned to prevent the consequences of this dangerous temerity: that the fugitives were no mean or obscure persons; but among others, the duke of Orleans, first prince of the blood, who, finding himself obnoxious to justice for treasonable practices in France, had fled into Brittany; where he still persevered in laying schemes of rebellion against his sovereign: that the war being thus, on the part of the French monarch, entirely defensive, it would immediately cease, when the duke of Brittany, by returning to his duty, should remove the causes of it: that their master was sensible of the obligations which the duke, in very critical times, had conferred on Henry; but it was known also, that, in times still more critical, he or his mercenary counsellors had deserted him, and put his life in the utmost hazard: that his sole refuge in these desperate extremities had been the court of France, which not only protected his person, but supplied him with men and money, with which, aided by his own valor and conduct, he had been enabled to mount the throne of England; that France in this transaction had, from friendship to Henry acted contrary to what, in a narrow view, might be esteemed her own interest; since, instead of an odious tyrant, she had contributed to establish on a rival throne a prince endowed with such virtue and abilities; and that, as both the justice of the cause and the obligations conferred on Henry thus preponderated on the side of France, she reasonably expected that, if the situation of his affairs did not permit him to give her assistance, he would at least preserve a neutrality between the contending parties. [1]

* Bacon, .

This discourse of the French ambassadors was plausible; and to give it greater weight, they communicated to Henry, as in confidence, their master's intention, after he should have settled the differences with Brittany to lead an army into Italy, and make good his pretensions to the kingdom of Naples; a project which, they knew, would give no umbrage to the court of England. But all these artifices were in vain employed against the penetration of the king. He clearly saw that France had entertained the view of subduing Brittany; but he also perceived, that she would meet with great, and, as he thought, insuperable difficulties in the execution of her project. The native force of that duchy, he knew, had always been considerable, and had often, without any foreign assistance, resisted the power of France; the natural temper of the French nation, he imagined, would make them easily abandon any enterprise which required perseverance; and as the heir of the crown was confederated with the duke of Brittany, the ministers would be still more remiss in prosecuting a scheme which must draw on them his resentment and displeasure. Should even these internal obstructions be removed, Maximilian, whose enmity to France was well known, and who now paid his addresses to the heiress of Brittany, would be able to make a diversion on the side of Flanders; nor could it be expected that France, if she prosecuted such ambitious projects, would be allowed to remain in tranquillity by Ferdinand and Isabella. Above all, he thought the French court could never expect that England, so deeply interested to preserve the independency of Brittany, so able by her power and situation to give effectual and prompt assistance, would permit such an accession of force to her rival. He imagined, therefore, that the ministers of France, convinced of the impracticability of their scheme, would at last embrace pacific views, and would abandon an enterprise so obnoxious to all the potentates of Europe.

This reasoning of Henry was solid, and might justly engage him in dilatory and cautious measures: but there entered into his conduct another motive, which was apt to draw him beyond the just bounds, because founded on a ruling passion. His frugality, which by degrees degenerated into avarice, made him averse to all warlike enterprises and distant expeditions, and engaged him previously to try the expedient of negotiation. He despatched Urswic, his almoner, a man of address and abilities, to make offer of his mediation to the contending parties; an offer which, he thought, if accepted by France, would soon lead to a composure of all differences; if refused or eluded, would at least discover the perseverance of that court in her ambitious projects. Urswic found the lady of Beaujeu, now duchess of Bourbon, engaged in the siege of Nantz, and had the satisfaction to find that his master's offer of mediation was readily embraced and with many expressions of confidence and moderation. That able princess concluded, that the duke of Orleans, who governed the court of Brittany, foreseeing that every accommodation must be made at his expense, would use all his interest to have Henry's proposal rejected; and would by that means make an apology for the French measures, and draw on the Bretons the reproach of obstinacy and injustice. The event justified her prudence. When the English ambassador made the same offer to the duke of Brittany, he received for answer, in the name of that prince, that having so long acted the part of protector and guardian to Henry during his youth and adverse fortune, he had expected from a monarch of such virtue more effectual assistance in his present distresses than a barren offer of mediation, which suspended not the progress of the French arms: that if Henry's gratitude were not sufficient to engage him in such a measure, his prudence, as king of England, should discover to him the pernicious consequences attending the conquest of Brittany, and its annexation to the crown of France: that that kingdom, already too powerful, would be enabled, by so great an accession of force, to display, to the ruin of England, that hostile disposition which had always subsisted between those rival nations: that Brittany, so useful an ally, which, by its situation, gave the English an entrance into the heart of France, being annexed to that kingdom, would be equally enabled from its situation to disturb, either by piracies or naval armaments, the commerce and peace cf England: and that if the duke rejected Henry's mediation, it proceeded neither from an inclination to a war, which he experienced to be ruinous to him, nor from a confidence in his own force, which he knew to be much inferior to that of the enemy; but, on the contrary, from a sense of his present necessities, which must engage the king to act the part of his confederate, not that of a mediator.

When this answer was reported to the king, he abandoned not the plan which he had formed; he only concluded that some more time was requisite to quell the obstinacy of the Bretons, and make them submit to reason. And when he learned that the people of Brittany, anxious for their duke’s safety, had formed a tumultuary army of sixty thousand men, and had obliged the French to raise the siege of Nantz, he fortified himself the more in his opinion, that the court of France would at last be reduced, by multiplied obstacles and difficulties, to abandon the project of reducing Brittany to subjection. He continued, therefore, his scheme of negotiation, and thereby exposed himself to be deceived by the artifices of the French ministry; who, still pretending pacific intentions, sent Lord Bernard Daubigni, a Scotchman of quality, to London, and pressed Henry not to be discouraged in offering his mediation to the court of Brittany. The king, on his part, despatched another embassy, consisting of Urswic, the abbot of Abingdon, and Sir Richard Tonstal, who carried new proposals for an amicable treaty. No effectual succors, meanwhile, were provided for the distressed Bretons. Lord Woodville, brother to the queen dowager, having asked leave to raise underhand a body of volunteers, and to transport them into Brittany, met with a refusal from the king, who was desirous of preserving the appearance of a strict neutrality. That nobleman, however, still persisted in his purpose. He went over to the Isle of Wight, of which he was governor, levied a body of four hundred men; and having at last obtained, as is supposed, the secret permission of Henry, sailed with them to Brittany. This enterprise proved fatal to the leader, and brought small relief to the unhappy duke. The Bretons rashly engaged in a general action with the French at St. Aubin, and were discomfited. Woodville and all the English were put to the sword, together with a body of Bretons, who had been accoutred in the garb of Englishmen in order to strike a greater terror into the French, to whom the martial prowess of that nation was always formidable. [1] The duke of Orleans the prince of Orange, and many other persons of rank were taken prisoners; and the military force of Brittany was totally broken. The death of the duke, which followed soon after, threw affairs into still greater confusion, and seemed to threaten the state with a final subjection.

Though the king did not prepare against these events, so hurtful to the interests of England, with sufficient vigor and precaution, he had not altogether overlooked them. Determined to maintain a pacific conduct, as far as the situation of affairs would permit, he yet knew the warlike temper of his subjects, and observed that their ancient and inveterate animosity to France was now revived by the prospect of this great accession to her power and grandeur. He resolved, therefore to make advantage of this disposition, and draw some supplies from the people, on pretence of giving assistance to the duke of Brittany. He had summoned a parliament at Westminster; [2] and he soon persuaded them to grant him a considerable subsidy. [3] But this supply, though voted by parliament, involved the king in unexpected difficulties. The counties of Durham and York, always discontented with Henry’s government, and further provoked by the late oppressions under which they had labored, after the suppression of Simnel’s rebellion, resisted the commissioners who were appointed to levy the tax. The commissioners, terrified with this appearance of sedition, made application to the earl of Northumberland, and desired of him advice and assistance in the execution of their office. That nobleman thought the matter of importance enough to consult the king; who, unwilling to yield to the humors of a discontented populace, and foreseeing the pernicious consequence of such a precedent, renewed his orders for strictly levying the imposition. Northumberland summoned together the justices and chief freeholders, and delivered the king’s commands in the most imperious terms which, he thought, would enforce obedience, but which tended only to provoke the people, and make them believe him the adviser of those orders which he delivered to them. [4]

* Argentré Hist, de Bretagne, liv. xii.

* * 9th November, 1487.

* * * Polyd. Virg. (p 579) says, that this imposition was a capitation tax; the other historians say, it was a tax of two shillings in the pound.

* * * * Bacon, .

They flew to arms, attacked Northumberland in his house, and put him to death. Having incurred such deep guilt, their mutinous humor prompted them to declare against the king himself; and being instigated by John Achamber, a seditious fellow of low birth, they chose Sir John Egremond their leader, and prepared themselves for a vigorous resistance. Henry was not dismayed with an insurrection so precipitate and ill supported. He immediately levied a force, which he put under the command of the earl of

Surrey, whom he had freed from confinement and received into favor. His intention was to send down these troops, in order to check the progress of the rebels; while he himself should follow with a greater body, which would absolutely insure success. But Surrey thought himself strong enough to encounter alone a raw and unarmed multitude; and he succeeded in the attempt. The rebels were dissipated; John Achamber was taken prisoner, and afterwards executed with some of his accomplices; Sir John Egremond fled to the duchess of Burgundy, who gave him protection; the greater number of the rebels received a pardon.

Henry had probably expected, when he obtained this grant from parliament, that he should be able to terminate the affair of Brittany by negotiation, and that he might thereby fill his coffers with the money levied by the imposition. But as the distresses of the Bretons still multiplied, and became every day more urgent, he found himself under the necessity of taking more vigorous measures, in order to support them. On the death of the duke, the French had revived some antiquated claims to the dominion of the duchy; and as the duke of Orleans was now captive in France, their former pretence for hostilities could no longer serve as a cover to their ambition. The king resolved therefore to engage as auxiliary to Brittany; and to consult the interests, as well as desires of his people, by opposing himself to the progress of the French power. Besides entering into a league with Maximilian, and another with Ferdinand, which were distant resources, he levied a body of troops, to the number of six thousand men, with an intention of transporting them into Brittany.

1489.

Still anxious, however, for the repayment of his expenses, he concluded a treaty with the young duchess, by which she engaged to deliver into his hands two seaport towns, there to remain till she should entirely refund the charges of the armament. [1]

* Du Tillet, Recueil des Traités.

Though he engaged for the service of these troops during the space of ten months only, yet was the duchess obliged, by the necessity of her affairs, to submit to such rigid conditions, imposed by any ally so much concerned in interest to protect her. The forces arrived under the command of Lord

Willoughby of Broke; and made the Bretons, during some time, masters of the field. The French retired into their garrisons; and expected by dilatory measures to waste the fire of the English, and disgust them with the enterprise. The scheme was well laid, and met with success. Lord Broke found such discord and confusion in the counsels of Brittany, that no measures could be concerted for any undertaking; no supply obtained; no provisions, carriages, artillery, or military stores procured. The whole court was rent into factions: no one minister had acquired the ascendant: and whatever project was formed by one, was sure to be traversed by another. The English, disconcerted in every enterprise by these animosities and uncertain counsels, returned home as soon as the time of their service was elapsed, leaving only a small garrison in those towns which had been consigned into their hands. During their stay in Brittany, they had only contributed still further to waste the country; and by their departure, they left it entirely at the mercy of the enemy. So feeble was the succor which Henry in this important conjuncture afforded his ally, whom the invasion of a foreign enemy, concurring with domestic dissensions, had reduced to the utmost distress.

The great object of the domestic dissensions in Brittany was the disposal of the young duchess in marriage. The mareschal Rieux, favored by Henry, seconded the suit of the lord D’Albret, who led some forces to her assistance. The chancellor Montauban, observing the aversion of the duchess to this suitor, insisted that a petty prince, such as D’Albret, was unable to support Anne in her present extremities; and he recommended some more powerful alliance, particularly that of Maximilian, king of the Romans.

1490.

This party at last prevailed; the marriage with Maximilian was celebrated by proxy; and the duchess thenceforth assumed the title of queen of the Romans. But this magnificent appellation was all she gained by her marriage. Maximilian, destitute of troops and money, and embarrassed with the continual revolts of the Flemings, could send no succor to his distressed consort; while D’Albret, enraged at the preference given to his rival, deserted her cause, and received the French into Nantz, the most important place in the duchy both for strength and riches.

The French court now began to change their scheme with regard to the subjection of Brittany. Charles had formerly been affianced to Margaret, daughter of Maximilian; who, though too young for the consummation of her marriage, had been sent to Paris to be educated, and at this time bore the title of queen of France. Besides the rich dowry which she brought the king, she was, after her brother Philip, then in early youth, heir to all the dominions of the house of Burgundy; and seemed in many respects the most proper match that could be chosen for the young monarch. These circumstances had so blinded both Maximilian and Henry, that they never suspected any other intentions in the French court; nor were they able to discover that engagements, seemingly so advantageous and so solemnly entered into, could be infringed and set aside. But Charles began to perceive that the conquest of Brittany, in opposition to the natives, and to all the great powers of Christendom, would prove a difficult enterprise; and that even if he should overrun the country and make himself master of the fortresses, it would be impossible for him long to retain possession of them. The marriage alone of the duchess could fully reannex that fief to the crown; and the present and certain enjoyment of so considerable a territory, seemed preferable to the prospect of inheriting the dominions of the house of Burgundy; a prospect which became every day more distant and precarious. Above all, the marriage of Maximilian and Anne appeared destructive to the grandeur and even security of the French monarchy; while that prince, possessing Flanders on the one hand, and Brittany on the other, might thus, from both quarters, make inroads into the heart of the country. The only remedy for these evils was therefore concluded to be the dissolution of the two marriages, which had been celebrated, but not consummated; and the espousal of the duchess of Brittany by the king of France.

It was necessary that this expedient, which had not been foreseen by any court in Europe, and which they were all so much interested to oppose, should be kept a profound secret, and should be discovered to the world only by the full execution of it. The measures of the French ministry in the conduct of this delicate enterprise were wise and political. While they pressed Brittany with all the rigors of war, they secretly gained the count of Dunois, who possessed great authority with the Bretons; and having also engaged in their interests the prince of Orange, cousin-german to the duchess, they gave him his liberty, and sent him into Brittany. These partisans, supported by other emissaries of France, prepared the minds of men for the great revolution projected, and displayed, though still with many precautions, all the advantages of a union with the French monarchy. They represented to the barons of Brittany, that their country, harassed during so many years with perpetual war, had need of some repose, and of a solid and lasting peace with the only power that was formidable to them: that their alliance with Maximilian was not able to afford them even present protection; and, by closely uniting them to a power which was rival to the greatness of France, fixed them in perpetual enmity with that potent monarchy: that their vicinity exposed them first to the inroads of the enemy; and the happiest event which, in such a situation, could befall them, would be to attain a peace, though by a final subjection to France, and by the loss of that liberty transmitted to them from their ancestors: and that any other expedient, compatible with the honor of the state and their duty to their sovereign, was preferable to a scene of such disorder and devastation.

These suggestions had influence with the Bretons: but the chief difficulty lay in surmounting the prejudices of the young duchess herself. That princess had imbibed a strong prepossession against the French nation, particularly against Charles, the author of all the calamities which, from her earliest infancy, had befallen her family. She had also fixed her affections on Maximilian; and as she now deemed him her husband, she could not, she thought, without incurring the greatest guilt, and violating the most solemn engagements, contract a marriage with any other person.

1491.

In order to overcome her obstinacy, Charles gave the duke of Orleans his liberty; who, though formerly a suitor to the duchess, was now contented to ingratiate himself with the king, by employing in his favor all the interest which he still possessed in Brittany. Mareschal Rieux and Chancellor Montauban were reconciled by his mediation; and these rival ministers now concurred with the prince of Orange and the count of Dunois, in pressing the conclusion of a marriage with Charles. By their suggestion, Charles advanced with a powerful army, and invested Rennes, at that time the residence of the duchess; who, assailed on all hands, and finding none to support her in her inflexibility, at last opened the gates of the city, and agreed to espouse the king of France, She was married at Langey, in

Touraine; conducted to St. Denis, where she was crowned; thence made her entry into Paris, amidst the joyful acclamations of the people, who regarded this marriage as the most prosperous event that could have befallen the monarchy.

The triumph and success of Charles was the most sensible mortification to the king of the Romans. He had lost a considerable territory, which he thought he had acquired, and an accomplished princess, whom he had espoused; he was affronted in the person of his daughter Margaret, who was sent back to him, after she had been treated during some years as queen of France; he had reason to reproach himself with his own supine security, in neglecting the consummation of his marriage, which was easily practicable for him, and which would have rendered the tie indissoluble: these considerations threw him into the most violent rage, which he vented in very indecent expressions; and he threatened France with an invasion from the united arms of Austria, Spain, and England.

The king of England had also just reason to reproach himself with misconduct in this important transaction; and though the affair had terminated in a manner which he could not precisely foresee, his negligence, in leaving his most useful ally so long exposed to the invasion of superior power, could not but appear on reflection the result of timid caution and narrow politics. As he valued himself on his extensive foresight and profound judgment, the ascendant acquired over him by a raw youth, such as Charles, could not but give him the highest displeasure, and prompt him to seek vengeance, after all remedy for his miscarriage was become absolutely impracticable. But he was further actuated by avarice, a motive still more predominant with him than either pride or revenge; and he sought, even from his present disappointments, the gratification of this ruling passion. On pretence of a French war, he issued a commission for levying a "benevolence" on his people; [1] a species of taxation which had been abolished by a recent law of Richard III.

This violence (for such it really was) fell chiefly on the commercial part of the nation, who were possessed of the ready money. London alone contributed to the amount of near ten thousand pounds. Archbishop Morton, the chancellor, instructed the commissioners to employ a dilemma, in which

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* Rymer, vol. xii. . Bacon says that the benevolence was levied with consent of parliament, which is a mistake.

every one might be comprehended: if the persons applied to lived frugally, they were told that their parsimony must necessarily have enriched them; if their method of living were splendid and hospitable, they were concluded to be opulent on account of their expenses. This device was by some called Chancellor Morton's fork, by others his crutch.

So little apprehensive was the king of a parliament on account of his levying this arbitrary imposition, that he soon after summoned that assembly to meet at Westminster; and he even expected to enrich himself further by working on their passions and prejudices. He knew the displeasure which the English had conceived against France on account of the acquisition of Brittany; and he took care to insist on that topic, in the speech which he himself pronounced to the parliament. He told them, that France, elated with her late successes, had even proceeded to a contempt of England, and had refused to pay the tribute which Lewis XI had stipulated to Edward IV.: that it became so warlike a nation as the English to be roused by this indignity, and not to limit their pretensions merely to repelling the present injury: that, for his part, he was determined to lay claim to the crown itself of France, and to maintain by force of arms so just a title, transmitted to him by his gallant ancestors: that Crecy, Poictiers, and Azincour were sufficient to instruct them in their superiority over the enemy; nor did he despair of adding new names to the glorious catalogue; that a king of France had been prisoner in London, and a king of England had been crowned at Paris; events which should animate them to an emulation of like glory with that which had been enjoyed by their forefathers: that the domestic dissensions of England had been the sole cause of her losing these foreign dominions; and her present internal union would be the effectual means of recovering them: that where such lasting honor was in view, and such an important acquisition, it became not brave men to repine at the advance of a little treasure: and that, for his part, he was determined to make the war maintain itself; and hoped by the invasion of so opulent a kingdom as France, to increase rather than diminish the riches of the nation. [1]

* Bacon, .

Notwithstanding these magnificent vaunts of the king, all men of penetration concluded, from the personal character of the man, and still more from the situation of affairs, that he had no serious intention of pushing the war to such extremities as he pretended. France was not now in the same condition as when such successful inroads had been made upon her by former kings of England. The great fiefs were united to the crown; the princes of the blood were desirous of tranquillity; the nation abounded with able captains and veteran soldiers; and the general aspect of her affairs seemed rather to threaten her neighbors, than to promise them any considerable advantages against her. The levity and vain-glory of Maximilian were supported by his pompous titles; but were ill seconded by military power, and still less by any revenue proportioned to them. The politic Ferdinand, while he made a show of war, was actually negotiating for peace; and rather than expose himself to any hazard, would accept of very moderate concessions from France. Even England was not free from domestic discontents; and in Scotland, the death of Henry's friend and ally, James III., who had been murdered by his rebellious subjects, had made way for the succession of his son, James IV., who was devoted to the French interest, and would surely be alarmed at any important progress of the English arms. But all these obvious considerations had no influence on the parliament. Inflamed by the ideas of subduing France, and of enriching themselves by the spoils of that kingdom, they gave into the snare prepared for them, and voted the supply which the king demanded. Two fifteenths were granted him; and the better to enable his vassals and nobility to attend him, an act was passed, empowering them to sell their estates, without paying any fines for alienation.

1492.

The nobility were universally seized with a desire of military glory; and having credulously swallowed all the boasts of the king, they dreamed of no less than carrying their triumphant banners to the gates of Paris, and putting the crown of France on the head of their sovereign. Many of them borrowed large sums, or sold off manors, that they might appear in the field with greater splendor, and lead out their followers in more complete order. The king crossed the sea, and arrived at Calais on the sixth of October, with an army of twenty-five thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse, which he put under the command of the duke of Bedford and the earl of Oxford: but as some inferred, from his opening the campaign in so late a season, that peace would soon be concluded between the crowns, he was desirous of suggesting a contrary inference. “He had come over,” he said, “to make an entire conquest of France, which was not the work of one summer. It was therefore of no consequence at what season he began the invasion; especially as he had Calais ready for winter quarters.” As if he had seriously intended this enterprise, he instantly marched into the enemy’s country, and laid siege to Boulogne: but notwithstanding this appearance of hostility, there had been secret advances made towards peace above three months before; and commissioners had been appointed to treat of the terms. The better to reconcile the minds of men to this unexpected measure, the king’s ambassadors arrived in the camp from the Low Countries, and informed him, that Maximilian was in no readiness to join him; nor was any assistance to be expected from that quarter. Soon after, messengers came from Spain, and brought news of a peace concluded between that kingdom and France, in which Charles had made a cession of the counties of Roussillon and Cerdagne to Ferdinand. Though these articles of intelligence were carefully dispersed throughout the army, the king was still apprehensive lest a sudden peace, after such magnificent promises and high expectations, might expose him to reproach. In order the more effectually to cover the intended measures, he secretly engaged the marquis of Dorset, together with twenty-three persons of distinction, to present him a petition for agreeing to a treaty with France. The pretence was founded on the late season of the year, the difficulty of supplying the army at Calais during winter, the obstacles which arose in the siege of Boulogne, the desertion of those allies whose assistance had been most relied on: events which might, all of them, have been foreseen before the embarkation of the forces.

In consequence of these preparatory steps, the bishop of Exeter and Lord Daubeney were sent to confer at Estaples with the mareschal de Cordes, and to put the last hand to the treaty. A few days sufficed for that purpose: the demands of Henry were wholly pecuniary; and the king of Franco, who deemed the peaceable possession of Brittany an equivalent for any sum, and who was all on fire for his projected expedition into Italy, readily agreed to the proposals made him. He engaged to pay Henry seven hundred and forty-five thousand crowns, near four hundred thousand pounds sterling of our present money; partly as a reimbursement of the sums advanced to Brittany, partly as arrears of the pension due to Edward IV. And he stipulated a yearly pension to Henry and his heirs of twenty-five thousand crowns. Thus the king, as remarked by his historian, made profit upon his subjects for the war, and upon his enemies for the peace. [1] And the people agreed that he had fulfilled his promise, when he said to the parliament that he would make the war maintain itself. Maximilian was, if he pleased, comprehended in Henry’s treaty; but he disdained to be in any respect beholden to an ally, of whom, he thought, he had reason to complain: he made a separate peace with France, and obtained restitution of Artois, Franche Compte, and Charolois, which had been ceded as the dowry of his daughter when she was affianced to the king of France.

* Bacon, . Polyd Virg. .

The peace concluded between England and France was the more likely to continue, because Charles, full of ambition and youthful hopes, bent all his attention to the side of Italy, and soon after undertook the conquest of Naples; an enterprise which Henry regarded with the greater indifference, as Naples lay remote from him, and France had never, in any age, been successful in that quarter. The king’s authority was fully established at home; and every rebellion which had been attempted against him, had hitherto tended only to confound his enemies, and consolidate his power and influence. His reputation for policy and conduct was daily augmenting; his treasures had increased even from the most unfavorable events; the hopes of all pretenders to his throne were cut off, as well by his marriage as by the issue which it had brought him. In this prosperous situation, the king had reason to flatter himself with the prospect of durable peace and tranquillity; but his inveterate and indefatigable enemies, whom he had wantonly provoked, raised him an adversary, who long kept him in inquietude, and sometimes even brought him into danger.

The duchess of Burgundy, full of resentment for the depression of her family and its partisans, rather irritated than discouraged by the ill success of her past enterprises, was determined at least to disturb that government which she found it so difficult to subvert. By means of her emissaries, she propagated a report that her nephew, Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, had escaped from the Tower when his elder brother was murdered, and that he still lay somewhere concealed: and finding this rumor, however improbable, to be greedily received by the people, she had been looking out for some young man proper to personate that unfortunate prince.

There was one Osbec, or Warbec, a renegade Jew of Tournay, who had been carried by some business to London in the reign of Edward IV., and had there a son born to him. Having had opportunities of being known to the king, and obtaining his favor, he prevailed with that prince, whose manners were very affable, to stand godfather to his son, to whom he gave the name of Peter, corrupted, after the Flemish manner, into Peterkin, or Perkin. It was by some believed that Edward, among his amorous adventures, had a secret commerce with Warbec's wife; and people thence accounted for that resemblance which was afterwards remarked between young Perkin and that monarch. [1]

* Bacon, .

Some years after the birth of this child, Warbec returned to Tournay; where Perkin, his son, did not long remain, but by different accidents, was carried from place to place, and his birth and fortunes became thereby unknown, and difficult to be traced by the most diligent inquiry. The variety of his adventures had happily favored the natural versatility and sagacity of his genius; and he seemed to be a youth perfectly fitted to act any part, or assume any character. In this light he had been represented to the duchess of Burgundy, who, struck with the concurrence of so many circumstances suited to her purpose, desired to be made acquainted with the man, on whom she already began to ground her hopes of success. She found him to exceed her most sanguine expectations; so comely did he appear in his person, so graceful in his air, so courtly in his address, so full of docility and good sense in his behavior and conversation. The lessons necessary to be taught him, in order to his personating the duke of York, were soon learned by a youth of such quick apprehension; but as the season seemed not then favorable for their enterprise, Margaret, in order the better to conceal him, sent him, under the care of Lady Brampton into Portugal, where he remained a year unknown to all the world.

The war, which was then ready to break out between France and England, seemed to afford a proper opportunity for the discovery of this new phenomenon; and Ireland, which still retained its attachments to the house of York, was chosen as the proper place for his first appearance. [1] He landed at Cork; and immediately assuming the name of Richard Plantagenet, drew to him partisans among that credulous people. He wrote letters to the earls of Desmond and Kildare, inviting them to join his party: he dispersed every where the strange intelligence of his escape from the cruelty of his uncle Richard: and men, fond of every thing new and wonderful, began to make him the general subject of their discourse, and even the object of their favor.

The news soon reached France; and Charles, prompted by the secret solicitations of the duchess of Burgundy, and the intrigues of one Frion, a secretary of Henry’s, who had deserted his service, sent Perkin an invitation to repair to him at Paris. He received him with all the marks of regard due to the duke of York; settled on him a handsome pension, assigned him magnificent lodgings, and in order to provide at once for his dignity and security, gave him a guard for his person, of which Lord Congresal accepted the office of captain. The French courtiers readily embraced a fiction which their sovereign thought it his interest to adopt: Perkin, both by his deportment and personal qualities, supported the prepossession which was spread abroad of his royal pedigree: and the whole kingdom was full of the accomplishments, as well as the singular adventures and misfortunes, of the young Plantagenet. Wonders of this nature are commonly augmented at a distance. From France the admiration and credulity diffused themselves into England: Sir George Nevil, [1] Sir John Taylor, and above a hundred gentlemen more, came to Paris, in order to offer their services to the supposed duke of York, and to share his fortunes: and the impostor had now the appearance of a court attending him, and began to entertain hopes of final success in his undertakings.

* Polyd Virg. .

When peace was concluded between France and England at Estaples, Henry applied to have Perkin put into his hands; but Charles, resolute not to betray a young man, of whatever birth, whom he had invited into his kingdom, would agree only to dismiss him. The pretended Richard retired to the duchess of Burgundy, and craving her protection and assistance, offered to lay before her all the proofs of that birth to which he laid claim. The princess affected ignorance of his pretensions; even put on the appearance of distrust: and having, as she said, been already deceived by Simnel, she was determined never again to be seduced by any impostor. She desired before all the world to be instructed in his reasons for assuming the name which he bore; seemed to examine every circumstance with the most scrupulous nicety; put many particular questions to him; affected astonishment at his answers; and at last, after long and severe scrutiny, burst out into joy and admiration at his wonderful deliverance, embraced him as her nephew, the true image of Edward, the sole heir of the Plantagenets, and the legitimate successor to the English throne.

1493.

She immediately assigned him an equipage suited to his pretended birth; appointed him a guard of thirty halberdiers; engaged every one to pay court to him; and on all occasions honored him with the appellation of the White Rose of England. The Flemings, moved by the authority which Margaret, both from her rank and personal character, enjoyed among them, readily adopted the fiction of Perkin's royal descent: no surmise of his true birth was as yet heard of little contradiction was made to the prevailing opinion: and the English, from their great communication with the Low Countries, were every day more and more prepossessed in favor of the impostor.

It was not the populace alone of England that gave credit to Perkin's pretensions. Men of the highest birth and quality, disgusted at Henry's government, by which they found the nobility depressed, began to turn their eyes towards the new claimant; and some of them even entered into a correspondence with him. Lord Fitzwater, Sir Simon Mountfort, Sir Thomas Thwaites, betrayed their inclination towards him: Sir William Stanley himself, lord chamberlain, who had been so active in raising Henry to the throne, moved either by blind credulity or a restless ambition, entertained the project of a revolt in favor of his enemy. [1]

* Bacon, .

Sir Robert Clifford and William Barley were still more open in their measures: they went over to Flanders, were introduced by the duchess of Burgundy to the acquaintance of Perkin, and made him a tender of their services. Clifford wrote back to England, that he knew perfectly the person of Richard, duke of York, that this young man was undoubtedly that prince himself, and that no circumstance of his story was exposed to the least difficulty. Such positive intelligence, conveyed by a person of rank and character, was sufficient with many to put the matter beyond question, and excited the attention and wonder even of the most indifferent. The whole nation was held in suspense; a regular conspiracy was formed against the king's authority, and a correspondence settled between the malecontents in Flanders and those in England.

The king was informed of all these particulars; but agreeably to his character, which was both cautious and resolute, he proceeded deliberately, though steadily, in counterworking the projects of his enemies. His first object was to ascertain the death of the real duke of York, and to confirm the opinion that had always prevailed with regard to that event. Five persons had been employed by Richard in the murder of his nephews, or could give evidence with regard to it; Sir James Tyrrel, to whom he had committed the government of the Tower for that purpose, and who had seen the dead princes; Forrest, Dighton, and Slater, who perpetrated the crime; and the priest who buried the bodies. Tyrrel and Dighton alone were alive, and they agreed in the same story; but as the priest was dead, and as the bodies were supposed to have been removed by Richard's orders from the place where they were first interred, and could not now be found, it was not in Henry's power to put the fact, so much as he wished, beyond all doubt and controversy.

He met at first with more difficulty, but was in the end more successful, in detecting who this wonderful person was that thus boldly advanced pretensions to his crown. He dispersed his spies all over Flanders and England; he engaged many to pretend that they had embraced Perkin's party; he directed them to insinuate themselves into the confidence of the young man's friends; in proportion as they conveyed intelligence of any conspirator, he bribed his retainers, his domestic servants, nay, sometimes his confessor, and by these means traced up some other confederate; Clifford himself he engaged, by the hope of rewards and pardon, to betray the secrets committed to him; the more trust he gave to any of his spies, the higher resentment did he feign against them, some of them he even caused to be publicly anathematized, in order the better to procure them the confidence of his enemies: and in the issue, the whole plan of the conspiracy was clearly laid before him; and the pedigree, adventures, life, and conversation of the pretended duke of York. This latter part of the story was immediately published for the satisfaction of the nation: the conspirators he reserved for a slower and surer vengeance.

1494.

Meanwhile he remonstrated with the archduke Philip, on account of the countenance and protection which was afforded in his dominions to so infamous an impostor; contrary to treaties subsisting between the sovereigns, and to the mutual amity which had so long been maintained by the subjects of both states. Margaret had interest enough to get his application rejected; on pretence that Philip had no authority over the demesnes of the duchess dowager. And the king, in resentment of this injury, cut off all commerce with the Low Countries, banished the Flemings, and recalled his own subjects from these provinces. Philip retaliated by like edicts; but Henry knew, that so mutinous a people as the Flemings would not long bear, in compliance with the humors of their prince, to be deprived of the beneficial branch of commerce which they carried on with England.

He had it in his power to inflict more effectual punishment on his domestic enemies; and when his projects were sufficiently matured, he failed not to make them feel the effects of his resentment. Almost in the same instant he arrested Fitzwater, Mountfort, and Thwaites, together with William Daubeney, Robert Rateliff, Thomas Cressenor, and Thomas Astwood. All these were arraigned, convicted, and condemned for high treason, in adhering and promising aid to Perkin. Mountfort, Ratcliff, and Daubeney were immediately executed: Fitzwater was sent over to Calais, and detained in custody; but being detected in practising on his keeper for an escape, he soon after underwent the same fate. The rest were pardoned, together with William Worseley, dean of St. Paul’s, and some others, who had been accused and examined, but not brought to public trial. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

Greater and more solemn preparations were deemed requisite for the trial of Stanley, lord chamberlain, whose authority in the nation, whose domestic connections with the king, as well as his former services, seemed to secure him against any accusation or punishment. Clifford was directed to come over privately to England, and to throw himself at the king’s feet while he sat in council; craving pardon for past offences and offering to atone for them by any services which should be required of him. Henry then told him, that the best proof he could give of penitence, and the only service he could now render him, was the full confession of his guilt, and the discovery of all his accomplices, however distinguished by rank or character. Encouraged by this exhortation, Clifford accused Stanley, then present, as his chief abettor; and offered to lay before the council the full proof of his guilt.

Stanley himself could not discover more surprise than was affected by Henry on the occasion. He received the intelligence as absolutely false and incredible; that a man, to whom he was in a great measure beholden for his crown, and even for his life; a man, to, whom, by every honor and favor, he had endeavored to express his gratitude; whose brother, the earl of Derby, was his own father-in-law; to whom he had even committed the trust of his person, by creating him lord chamberlain: that this man, enjoying his full confidence and affection, not actuated by any motive of discontent or apprehension, should engage in a conspiracy against him. Clifford was therefore exhorted to weigh well the consequences of his accusation; but as he persisted in the same positive asseverations, Stanley was committed to custody, and was soon after examined before the council. [1] He denied not the guilt imputed to him by Clifford; he did not even endeavor much to extenuate it; whether he thought that a frank and open confession would serve as an atonement, or trusted to his present connections and his former services for pardon and security. But princes are often apt to regard great services as a ground of jealousy, especially if accompanied with a craving and restless disposition in the person who has performed them. The general discontent also, and mutinous humor of the people, seemed to require some great example of severity. And as Stanley was one of the most opulent subjects in the kingdom, being possessed of above three thousand pounds a year in land, and forty thousand marks in plate and money, besides other property of great value, the prospect of so rich a forfeiture was deemed no small motive for Henry's proceeding to extremities against him.

* Bacon, Polyd. Virg. .

1495.

After six weeks' delay, which was interposed in order to show that the king was restrained by doubts and scruples, the prisoner was brought to his trial, condemned, and presently after beheaded. Historians are not agreed with regard to the crime which was proved against him. The general report is, that he should have said in confidence to Clifford, that if he were sure the young man who appeared in Flanders was really son to King Edward, he never would bear arms against him. The sentiment might disgust Henry, as implying a preference of the house of York to that of Lancaster; but could scarcely be the ground, even in those arbitrary times, of a sentence of high treason against Stanley. It is more probable, therefore, as is asserted by some historians, that he had expressly engaged to assist Perkin, and had actually sent him some supply of money.

The fate of Stanley made great impression on the kingdom, and struck all the partisans of Perkin with the deepest dismay. From Clifford's desertion, they found that all their secrets were betrayed; and as it appeared that Stanley, while he seemed to live in the greatest confidence with the king, had been continually surrounded by spies, who reported and registered every action in which he was engaged, nay, every word which fell from him, a general distrust took place, and all mutual confidence was destroyed, even among intimate friends and acquaintance. The jealous and severe temper of the king, together with his great reputation for sagacity and penetration, kept men in awe, and quelled not only the movements of sedition, but the very murmurs of faction. Libels, however, crept out against Henry's person and administration; and being greedily propagated by every secret art, showed that there still remained among the people a considerable root of discontent, which wanted only a proper opportunity to discover itself.

But Henry continued more intent on increasing the terrors of his people, than on gaining their affections. Trusting to the great success which attended him in all his enterprises, he gave every day more and more a loose to his rapacious temper, and employed the arts of perverted law and justice, in order to exact fines and compositions from his people. Sir William Capel, alderman of London, was condemned on some penal statutes to pay the sum of two thousand seven hundred and forty-three pounds, and was obliged to compound for sixteen hundred and fifteen. This was the first noted case of the kind; but it became a precedent, which prepared the may for many others. The management, indeed, of these arts of chicanery, was the great secret of the king's administration. While he depressed the nobility, he exalted, and honored, and caressed the lawyers; and by that means both bestowed authority on the laws, and was enabled, whenever he pleased, to pervert them to his own advantage. His government was oppressive; but it was so much the less burdensome, as, by his extending royal authority, and curbing the nobles, he became in reality the sole oppressor in his kingdom.

As Perkin found that the king’s authority daily gained ground among the people, and that his own pretensions were becoming obsolete, he resolved to attempt something which might revive the hopes and expectations of his partisans. Having collected a band of outlaws, pirates, robbers, and necessitous persons of all nations, to the number of six hundred men, he put to sea, with a resolution of making a descent in England, and of exciting the common people to arms, since all his correspondence with the nobility was cut off by Henry vigilance and severity. Information being brought him that the king had made a progress to the north, he cast anchor on the coast of Kent, and sent some of his retainers ashore, who invited the country to join him. The gentlemen of Kent assembled some troops to oppose him; but they purposed to do more essential service than by repelling the invasion: they carried the semblance of friendship to Perkin, and invited him to come himself ashore, in order to take the command over them. But the wary youth, observing that they had more order and regularity in their movements than could be supposed in new levied forces who had taken arms against established authority, refused to intrust himself into their hands; and the Kentish troops, despairing of success in their stratagem, fell upon such of his retainers as were already landed; and besides some whom they slew, they took a hundred and fifty prisoners. These were tried and condemned and all of them executed, by orders from the king, who was resolved to use no lenity towards men of such desperate fortunes. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

This year a parliament was summoned in England, and another in Ireland; and some remarkable laws were passed in both countries. The English parliament enacted, that no person who should by arms, or otherwise assist the king for the time being, should ever afterwards, either by course of law or act of parliament, be attainted for such an instance of obedience. This statute might be exposed to some censure, as favorable to usurpers; were there any precise rule, which always, even during the most factious times, could determine the true successor, and render every one inexcusable who did not submit to him. But as the titles of princes are then the great subject of dispute, and each party pleads topics in its own favor, it seems but equitable to secure those who act in support of public tranquillity, an object at all times of undoubted benefit and importance. Henry, conscious of his disputed title, promoted this law, in order to secure his partisans against all events; but as he had himself observed a contrary practice with regard to Richard’s adherents, he had reason to apprehend that, during the violence which usually ensues on public convulsions, his example, rather than his law, would, in case of a new revolution, be followed by his enemies. And the attempt to bind the legislature itself, by prescribing rules to future parliaments, was contradictory to the plainest principles of political government.

This parliament also passed an act, empowering the king to levy, by course of law, all the sums which any person had agreed to pay by way of benevolence; a statute by which that arbitrary method of taxation was indirectly authorized and justified.

The king’s authority appeared equally prevalent and uncontrolled in Ireland. Sir Edward Poynings had been sent over to that country, with an intention of quelling the partisans of the house of York, and of reducing the natives to subjection. He was not supported by forces sufficient for that enterprise: the Irish, by flying into their woods, and morasses, and mountains, for some time eluded his efforts; but Poynings summoned a parliament at Dublin, where he was more successful. He passed that memorable statute, which still bears his name, and which establishes the authority of the English government in Ireland. By this statute, all the former laws of England were made to be of force in Ireland; and no bill can be introduced into the Irish parliament, unless it previously receive the sanction of the council of England. This latter clause seems calculated for insuring the dominion of the English; but was really granted at the desire of the Irish commons who intended, by that means, to secure themselves from the tyranny of their lords, particularly of such lieutenants or deputies as were of Irish birth. [1]

* Sir John Davis, .

While Henry’s authority was thus established throughout his dominions, and general tranquillity prevailed, the whole continent was thrown into combustion by the French invasion of Italy, and by the rapid success which attended Charles in that rash and ill-concerted enterprise. The Italians, who had entirely lost the use of arms, and who, in the midst of continual wars, had become every day more unwarlike, were astonished to meet an enemy that made the field of battle, not a pompous tournament, but a scene of blood, and sought, at the hazard of their own lives, the death of their enemy.

Their effeminate troops were dispersed every where on the approach of the French army: their best fortified cities opened their gates: kingdoms and states were in an instant overturned; and through the whole length of Italy, which the French penetrated without resistance, they seemed rather to be taking quarters in their own country, than making conquests over an enemy. The maxims which the Italians during that age followed in negotiations, were as ill calculated to support their states, as the habits to which they were addicted in war: a treacherous, deceitful, and inconsistent system of politics prevailed; and even those small remains of fidelity and honor, which were preserved in the councils of the other European princes, were ridiculed in Italy, as proofs of ignorance and rusticity. Ludovico, duke of Milan, who invited the French to invade Naples, had never desired or expected their success; and was the first that felt terror from the prosperous issue of those projects which he himself had concerted. By his intrigues, a league was formed among several potentates, to oppose the progress of Charles’s conquests, and secure their own independency. This league was composed of Ludovico himself, the pope, Maximilian, king of the Romans, Ferdinand of Spain, and the republic of Venice. Henry too entered into the confederacy; but was not put to any expense or trouble in consequence of his engagements. The king of France, terrified by so powerful a combination, retired from Naples with the greater part of his army, and returned to France. The forces which he left in his new conquest were, partly by the revolt of the inhabitants, partly by the invasion of the Spaniards, soon after subdued; and the whole kingdom of Naples suddenly returned to its allegiance under Ferdinand, son to Alphonso, who had been suddenly expelled by the irruption of the French. Ferdinand died soon after, and left his uncle Frederick in full possession of the throne.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HENRY VII.

1495.

After Perkin was repulsed from the coast of Kent, he retired into Flanders; but as he found it impossible to procure subsistence for himself and his followers while he remained in tranquillity, he soon after made an attempt upon Ireland, which had always appeared forward to join every invader of Henry's authority. But Poynings had now put the affairs of that island in so good a posture, that Perkin met with little success; and being tired of the savage life which he was obliged to lead, while skulking among the wild Irish, he bent his course towards Scotland, and presented himself to James IV., who then governed that kingdom. He had been previously recommended to this prince by the king of France, who was disgusted at Henry for entering into the general league against him; and this recommendation was even seconded by Maximilian, who, though one of the confederates, was also displeased with the king, on account of his prohibiting in England all commerce with the Low Countries. The countenance given to Perkin by these princes procured him a favorable reception with the king of Scotland, who assured him, that, whatever he were, he never should repent putting himself in his hands: [1] the insinuating address and plausible behavior of the youth himself, seem to have gained him credit and authority. James, whom years had not yet taught distrust or caution, was seduced to believe the story of Perkin's birth and adventures; and he carried his confidence so far as to give him in marriage the lady Catharine Gordon, daughter of the earl of Huntley, and related to himself; a young lady too, eminent for virtue as well as beauty.

* Bacon, . Polyd. Virg. , 597.

1496.

There subsisted at that time a great jealousy between the courts of England and Scotland; and James was probably the more forward on that account to adopt any fiction which he thought might reduce his enemy to distress or difficulty. He suddenly resolved to make an inroad into England, attended by some of the borderers; and he carried Perkin along with him, in hopes that the appearance of the pretended prince might raise an insurrection in the northern counties. Perkin himself dispersed a manifesto, in which he set forth his own story, and craved the assistance of all his subjects in expelling the usurper, whose tyranny and maladministration, whose depression of the nobility by the elevation of mean persons, whose oppression of the people by multiplied impositions and vexations, had justly, he said, rendered him odious to all men. But Perkin's pretensions, attended with repeated disappointments, were now become stale in the eyes even of the populace; and the hostile dispositions which subsisted between the kingdoms, rendered a prince supported by the Scots but an unwelcome present to the English nation. The ravages also committed by the borderers, accustomed to license and disorder, struck a terror into all men, and made the people prepare rather for repelling the invaders than for joining them. Perkin, that he might support his pretensions to royal birth, feigned great compassion for the misery of his plundered subjects, and publicly remonstrated with his ally against the depredations exercised by the Scottish army; [1] but James told him, that he doubted his concern was employed only in behalf of an enemy, and that he was anxious to preserve what never should belong to him. That prince now began to perceive that his attempt would be fruitless; and hearing of an army which was on its march to attack him, he thought proper to retreat into his own country.

* Polyd. Virg. .

The king discovered little anxiety to procure either reparation or vengeance for this insult committed on him by the Scottish nation: his chief concern was to draw advantage from it, by the pretence which it might afford him to levy impositions on his own subjects. He summoned a parliament, to whom he made bitter complaints against the irruption of the Scots, the absurd imposture countenanced by that nation, the cruel devastations committed in the northern counties, and the multiplied insults thus offered both to the king and kingdom of England. The parliament made the expected return to this discourse, by granting a subsidy to the amount of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, together with two fifteenths. After making this grant, they were dismissed.

1497.

The vote of parliament for imposing the tax was without much difficulty procured by the authority of Henry but he found it not so easy to levy the money upon his subjects. The people, who were acquainted with the immense treasures which he had amassed, could ill brook the new impositions raised on every slight occasion; and it is probable that the flaw which was universally known to be in his title, made his reign the more subject to insurrections and rebellions. When the subsidy began to be levied in Cornwall, the inhabitants, numerous and poor, robust and courageous, murmured against a tax occasioned by a sudden inroad of the Scots, from which they esteemed themselves entirely secure, and which had usually been repelled by the force of the northern counties. Their ill humor was further incited by one Michael Joseph, a farrier of Bodmin, a notable prating fellow, who, by thrusting himself forward on every occasion, and being loudest in every complaint against the government, had acquired an authority among those rude people. Thomas Flammoc, too, a lawyer, who had become the oracle of the neighborhood, encouraged the sedition, by informing them that the tax, though imposed by parliament, was entirely illegal; that the northern nobility were bound by their tenures to defend the nation against the Scots; and that if these new impositions were tamely submitted to, the avarice of Henry and of his ministers would soon render the burden intolerable to the nation. The Cornish, he said, must deliver to the king a petition, seconded by such a force as would give it authority; and in order to procure the concurrence of the rest of the kingdom, care must be taken, by their orderly deportment, to show that they had nothing in view but the public good, and the redress of all those grievances under which the people had so long labored.

Encouraged by these speeches, the multitude flocked together, and armed themselves with axes, bills, bows, and such weapons as country people are usually possessed of. Flammoc and Joseph were chosen their leaders. They soon conducted the Cornish through the county of Devon, and reached that of Somerset. At Taunton, the rebels killed, in their fury, an officious and eager commissioner of the subsidy, whom they called the provost of Perin.

When they reached Wells, they were joined by Lord Audley, a nobleman of an ancient family, popular in his deportment, but vain, ambitious and restless in his temper. He had from the beginning maintained a secret correspondence with the first movers of the insurrection, and was now joyfully received by them as their leader. Proud of the countenance given them by so considerable a nobleman, they continued their march, breathing destruction to the king's ministers and favorites, particularly to Morton, now a cardinal, and Sir Reginald Bray, who were deemed the most active instruments in all his oppressions. Notwithstanding their rage against the administration, they carefully followed the directions given them by their leaders; and as they met with no resistance, they committed, during their march, no violence or disorder.

The rebels had been told by Flammoc that the inhabitants of Kent, as they had ever, during all ages, remained unsubdued, and had even maintained their independence during the Norman conquest, would surely embrace their party, and declare themselves for a cause which was no other than that of public good and general liberty. But the Kentish people had very lately distinguished themselves by repelling Perkin's invasion; and as they had received from the king many gracious acknowledgments for this service, their affections were by that means much conciliated to his government. It was easy, therefore, for the earl of Kent, Lord Abergavenny, and Lord Cobham, who possessed great authority in those parts, to retain the people in obedience; and the Cornish rebels, though they pitched their camp near Eltham, at the very gates of London, and invited all the people to join them, got reënforcement from no quarter. There wanted not discontents every where, but no one would take part in so rash and ill-concerted an enterprise; and besides, the situation in which the king's affairs then stood discouraged even the boldest and most daring.

Henry, in order to oppose the Scots, had already levied an army, which he put under the command of Lord Daubeney, the chamberlain; and as soon as he heard of the Cornish insurrection, he ordered it to march southwards and suppress the rebels. Not to leave the northern frontier defenceless, he despatched thither the earl of Surrey, who assembled the forces on the borders, and made head against the enemy. Henry found here the concurrence of the three most fatal incidents that can befall a monarchy; a foreign enemy, a domestic rebellion, and a pretender to his crown; but he enjoyed great resources in his army and treasure, and still more in the intrepidity and courage of his own temper. He did not, however, immediately give full scope to his military spirit. On other occasions, he had always hastened to a decision; and it was a usual saying with him, “that he desired but to see his rebels:” but as the Cornish mutineers behaved in an inoffensive manner, and committed no spoil on the country; as they received no accession of force on their march or in their encampment, and as such hasty and popular tumults might be expected to diminish every moment by delay; he took post in London, and assiduously prepared the means of insuring victory.

After all his forces were collected, he divided them into three bodies, and marched out to assail the enemy. The first body, commanded by the earl of Oxford, and under him by the earls of Essex and Suffolk, were appointed to place themselves behind the hill on which the rebels were encamped: the second, and most considerable, Henry put under the command of Lord Daubeney, and ordered him to attack the enemy in front, and bring on the action. The third he kept as a body of reserve about his own person, and took post in St. George’s Fields; where he secured the city, and could easily, as occasion served, either restore the fight or finish the victory. To put the enemy off their guard, he had spread a report that he was not to attack them till some days after; and the better to confirm them in this opinion, he began not the action till near the evening. Daubeney beat a detachment of the rebels from Deptford bridge; and before their main body could be in order to receive him, he had gained the ascent of the hill, and placed himself in array before them. They were formidable from their numbers, being sixteen thousand strong, and were not defective in valor; but being tumultuary troops, ill armed, and not provided with cavalry or artillery, they were but an unequal match for the king’s forces. Daubeney began the attack with courage, and even with a contempt of the enemy which had almost proved fatal to him. He rushed into the midst of them, and was taken prisoner; but soon after was released by his own troops. After some resistance, the rebels were broken and put to flight. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

Lord Audley, Flammoc, and Joseph, their leaders, were taken, and all three executed. The latter seemed even to exult in his end, and boasted, with a preposterous ambition, that he should make a figure in his tory. The rebels, being surrounded on every side by the king’s troops, were almost all made prisoners; and immediately dismissed without further punishment: whether, that Henry was satisfied with the victims who had fallen in the field, and who amounted to near two thousand, or that he pitied the ignorance and simplicity of the multitude, or favored them on account of their inoffensive behavior; or was pleased that they had never, during their insurrection, disputed his title, and had shown no attachment to the house of York, the highest crime of which, in his eyes, they could have been guilty.

The Scottish king was not idle during these commotions in England. He levied a considerable army, and sat down before the Castle of Norham, in Northumberland; but found that place, by the precaution of Fox, bishop of Durham, so well provided both with men and ammunition, that he made little or no progress in the siege. Hearing that the earl of Surrey had collected some forces, and was advancing upon him, he retreated into his own country, and left the frontiers exposed to the inroads of the English general, who besieged and took Aiton, a small castle lying a few miles beyond Berwick. These unsuccessful or frivolous attempts on both sides prognosticated a speedy end to the war; and Henry, notwithstanding his superior force, was no less desirous than James of terminating the differences between the nations. Not to depart, however, from his dignity, by making the first advances, he employed in this friendly office Peter Hialas, a man of address and learning, who had come to him as ambassador from Ferdinand and Isabella, and who was charged with a commission of negotiating the marriage of the Infanta Catharine, their daughter, with Arthur, prince of Wales. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. .

Hialas took a journey northwards, and offered his mediation between James and Henry, as minister of a prince who was in alliance with both potentates. Commissioners were soon appointed to meet and confer on terms of accommodation. The first demand of the English was, that Perkin should be put into their hands: James replied, that he himself was no judge of the young man’s pretensions; but having received him as a supplicant, and promised him protection, he was determined not to betray a man who had trusted to his good faith and his generosity. The next demand of the English met with no better reception: they required reparation for the ravages committed by the late inroads into England: the Scottish commissioners replied, that the spoils were like water spilt upon the ground, which could never be recovered; and that Henry's subjects were better able to bear the loss, than their master to repair it. Henry's commissioners next proposed, that the two kings should have an interview at Newcastle, in order to adjust all differences; but James said, that he meant to treat of a peace, not to go a begging for it. Lest the conferences should break off altogether without effect, a truce was concluded for some months; and James, perceiving that while Perkin remained in Scotland he himself never should enjoy a solid peace with Henry, privately desired him to depart the kingdom.

Access was now barred Perkin into the Low Countries, his usual retreat in all his disappointments. The Flemish merchants, who severely felt the loss resulting from the interruption of commerce with England, had made such interest in the archduke's council, that commissioners were sent to London, in order to treat of an accommodation. The Flemish court agreed, that all English rebels should be excluded the Low Countries; and in this prohibition the demesnes of the duchess dowager were expressly comprehended. When this principal article was agreed to, all the other terms were easily adjusted. A treaty of commerce was finished, which was favorable to the Flemings, and to which they long gave the appellation of "intercursus magnus," the great treaty. And when the English merchants returned to their usual abode at Antwerp, they were publicly received, as in procession, with joy and festivity.

Perkin was a Fleming by descent, though born in England; and it might therefore be doubted whether he were included in the treaty between the two nations: but as he must dismiss all his English retainers if he took shelter in the Low Countries, and as he was sure of a cold reception, if not bad usage, among people who were determined to keep on terms of friendship with the court of England, he thought fit rather to hide himself during some time in the wilds and fastnesses of Ireland. Impatient, however, of a retreat which was both disagreeable and dangerous, he held consultations with his followers, Herne, Skelton, and Astley, three broken tradesmen: by their advice he resolved to try the affections of the Cornish, whose mutinous disposition, notwithstanding the king's lenity, still subsisted after the suppression of their rebellion. No sooner did he appear at Bodmin, in Cornwall, than the populace, to the number of three thousand, flocked to his standard, and Perkin, elated with this appearance of success, took on him, for the first time, the appellation of Richard IV., king of

England. Not to suffer the expectations of his followers to languish, he presented himself before Exeter; and by many fair promises invited that city to join him. Finding that the inhabitants shut their gates against him, he laid siege to the place; but being unprovided with artillery, ammunition, and every thing requisite for the attempt, he made no progress in his undertaking. Messengers were sent to the king, informing him of this insurrection: the citizens of Exeter meanwhile were determined to hold out to the last extremity, in expectation of receiving succor from the well-known vigilance of that monarch.

When Henry was informed that Perkin was landed in England, he expressed great joy, and prepared himself with alacrity to attack him, in hopes of being able, at length, to put a period to pretensions which had so long given him vexation and inquietude. All the courtiers, sensible that their activity on this occasion would be the most acceptable service which they could render the king, displayed their zeal for the enterprise, and forwarded his preparations. The lords Daubeney and Broke, with Sir Rice ap Thomas, hastened forward with a small body of troops to the relief of Exeter. The earl of Devonshire, and the most considerable gentlemen in the county of that name, took arms of their own accord, and marched to join the king's generals. The duke of Buckingham put himself at the head of a troop, consisting of young nobility and gentry, who served as volunteers, and who longed for an opportunity of displaying their courage and their loyalty. The king himself prepared to follow with a considerable army; and thus all England seemed united against a pretender who had at first engaged their attention and divided their affections.

Perkin, informed of these great preparations, immediately raised the siege of Exeter, and retired to Taunton. Though his followers now amounted to the number of near seven thousand, and seemed still resolute to maintain his cause, he himself despaired of success, and secretly withdrew to the sanctuary of Beaulieu, in the new forest. The Cornish rebels submitted to the king's mercy, and found that it was not yet exhausted in their behalf. Except a few persons of desperate fortunes, who were executed, and some others who were severely fined, all the rest were dismissed with impunity Lady Catharine Gordon, wife to Perkin fell into the hands of the victor, and was treated with a generosity which does him honor. He soothed her mind with many marks of regard, placed her in a reputable station about the queen and assigned her a pension, which she enjoyed even under his successor.

1498.

Henry deliberated what course to take with Perkin himself. Some counselled him to make the privileges of the church yield to reasons of state, to take him by violence from the sanctuary, to inflict on him the punishment due to his temerity, and thus at once to put an end to an imposture which had long disturbed the government, and which the credulity of the people and the artifices of malcontents were still capable of reviving. But the king deemed not the matter of such importance as to merit so violent a remedy, He employed some persons to deal with Perkin, and persuade him, under promise of pardon, to deliver himself into the king's hands. [1] The king conducted him in a species of mock triumph to London. As Perkin passed along the road and through the streets of the city, men of all ranks flocked about him, and the populace treated with the highest derision his fallen fortunes. They seemed desirous of revenging themselves, by their insults, for the shame which their former belief of his impostures had thrown upon them. Though the eyes of the nation were generally opened with regard to Perkin's real parentage, Henry required of him a confession of his life and adventures; and he ordered the account of the whole to be dispersed soon after, for the satisfaction of the public. But as his regard to decency made him entirely suppress the share which the duchess of Burgundy had had in contriving and conducting the imposture, the people, who knew that she had been the chief instrument in the whole affair, were inclined, on account of the silence on that head, to pay the less credit to the authenticity of the narrative.

* Polyd. Virg. .

1499.

But Perkin, though his life was granted him, was still detained in custody; and keepers were appointed to guard him. Impatient of confinement, he broke from his keepers, and flying to the sanctuary of Shyne, put himself into the hands of the prior of that monastery. The prior had obtained great credit by his character of sanctity; and he prevailed on the king again to grant a pardon to Perkin. But in order to reduce him to still greater contempt, he was set in the stocks at Westminster and Cheapside, and obliged in both places to read aloud to the people the confession which had formerly been published in his name. He was then confined to the Tower, where his habits of restless intrigue and enterprise followed him. He insinuated himself into the intimacy of four servants of Sir John Digby, lieutenant of the Tower; and by their means opened a correspondence with the earl of Warwick, who was confined in the same prison. This unfortunate prince, who had from his earliest youth been shut up from the commerce of men, and who was ignorant even of the most common Affairs of life, had fallen into a simplicity which made him susceptible of any impression. The continued dread also of the more violent effects of Henry's tyranny, joined to the natural love of liberty, engaged him to embrace a project for his escape, by the murder of the lieutenant; and Perkin offered to conduct the whole enterprise. The conspiracy escaped not the king's vigilance: it was even very generally believed, that the scheme had been laid by himself, in order to draw Warwick and Perkin into the snare; but the subsequent execution of two of Digby's servants for the contrivance seems to clear the king of that imputation, which was indeed founded more on the general idea entertained of his character than on any positive evidence.

Perkin, by this new attempt, after so many enormities, had rendered himself totally unworthy of mercy; and he was accordingly arraigned, condemned, and soon after hanged at Tyburn, persisting still in the confession of his imposture. [1] It happened about that very time that one Wilford, a cordwainer's son, encouraged by the surprising credit given to other impostures, had undertaken to personate the earl of Warwick; and a priest had even ventured from the pulpit to recommend his cause to the people, who seemed still to retain a propensity to adopt it. This incident served Henry as a pretence for his severity towards that prince. He was brought to trial, and accused, not of contriving his escape, (for as he was committed for no crime, the desire of liberty must have been regarded as natural and innocent,) but of forming designs to disturb the government, and raise an insurrection among the people. Warwick confessed the indictment was condemned, and the sentence was executed upon him.

* See note A, at the end of the volume.

This violent act of tyranny, the great blemish of Henry’s reign, by which he destroyed the last remaining male of the line of Plantagenet, begat great discontent among the people, who saw an unhappy prince, that had long been denied all the privileges of his high birth, even been cut off from the common benefits of nature, now at last deprived of life itself, merely for attempting to shake off that oppression under which he labored. In vain did Henry endeavor to alleviate the odium of this guilt, by sharing it with his ally, Ferdinand of Arragon, who, he said, had scrupled to give his daughter Catharine in marriage to Arthur while any male descendant of the house of York remained. Men, on the contrary, felt higher indignation at seeing a young prince sacrificed, not to law and justice, but to the jealous politics of two subtle and crafty tyrants.

But though these discontents festered in the minds of men, they were so checked by Henry’s watchful policy and steady severity, that they seemed not to weaken his government; and foreign princes, deeming his throne now entirely secure, paid him rather the greater deference and attention. The archduke Philip, in particular, desired an interview with him; and Henry, who had passed over to Calais, agreed to meet him in St. Peter’s church, near that city. The archduke, on his approaching the king, made haste to alight, and offered to hold Henry’s stirrup; a mark of condescension which that prince would not admit of. He called the king “father,” “patron,” “protector;” and by his whole behavior expressed a strong desire of conciliating the friendship of England. The duke of Orleans had succeeded to the crown of France by the appellation of Lewis XII.; and having carried his arms into Italy, and subdued the duchy of Milan, his progress begat jealousy in Maximilian, Philip’s father, as well as in Ferdinand, his father-in-law. By the counsel, therefore, of these monarchs, the young prince endeavored by every art to acquire the amity of Henry, whom they regarded as the chief counterpoise to the greatness of France. No particular plan, however, of alliance seems to have been concerted between these two princes in their interview: all passed in general professions of affection and regard; at least, in remote projects of a closer union, by the future intermarriages of their children, who were then in a state of infancy.

1500.

The Pope, too, Alexander VI., neglected not the friendship of a monarch whose reputation was spread over Europe. He sent a nuncio into England, who exhorted the king to take part in the great alliance projected for the recovery of the Holy Land, and to lead in person his forces against the infidels. The general frenzy for crusades was now entirely exhausted in Europe; but it was still thought a necessary piece of decency to pretend zeal for those pious enterprises. Henry regretted to the nuncio the distance of his situation, which rendered it inconvenient for him to expose his person in defence of the Christian cause. He promised, however, his utmost assistance by aids and contributions; and rather than the pope should go alone to the holy wars, unaccompanied by any monarch, he even promised to overlook all other considerations, and to attend him in person. He only required, as a necessary condition, that all differences should previously be adjusted among Christian princes, and that some seaport towns in Italy should be consigned to him for his retreat and security. It was easy to conclude that Henry had determined not to intermeddle in any war against the Turk; but as a great name, without any real assistance, is sometimes of service, the knights of Rhodes, who were at that time esteemed the bulwark of Christendom, chose the king protector of their order.

But the prince whose alliance Henry valued the most was Ferdinand of Arragon, whose vigorous and steady policy, always attended with success, had rendered him in many respects the most considerable monarch in Europe. There was also a remarkable similarity of character between these two princes; both were full of craft, intrigue, and design: and though a resemblance of this nature be a slender foundation for confidence and amity, where the interests of the parties in the least interfere, such was the situation of Henry and Ferdinand, that no jealousy ever on any occasion arose between them. The king had now the satisfaction of completing a marriage, which had been projected and negotiated during the course of seven years, between Arthur, prince of Wales, and the infanta Catharine, fourth daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella; he near sixteen years of age, she eighteen. But this marriage proved in the issue unprosperous. The young prince, a few months after, sickened and died, much regretted by the nation.

1502.

Henry, desirous to continue his alliance with Spain, and also unwilling to restore Catharine’s dowry, which was two hundred thousand ducats, obliged his second son, Henry, whom he created prince of Wales, to be contracted to the infanta. The prince made all the opposition of which a youth of twelve years of age was capable; but as the king persisted in his resolution, the espousals were at length, by means of the pope’s dispensation, contracted between the parties; an event which was afterwards attended with the most important consequences.

The same year another marriage was celebrated, which was also, in the next age, productive of great events; the marriage of Margaret, the king’s eldest daughter, with James, king of Scotland. This alliance had been negotiated during three years, though interrupted by several broils; and Henry hoped, from the completion of it, to remove all source of discord with that neighboring kingdom, by whose animosity England had so often been infested. When this marriage was deliberated on in the English council, some objected, that England might, by means of that alliance, fall under the dominion of Scotland. “No,” replied Henry, “Scotland, in that event, will only become an accession to England.”

1503.

Amidst these prosperous incidents, the king met with a domestic calamity, which made not such impression on him as it merited: his queen died in childbed; and the infant did not long survive her. This princess was deservedly a favorite of the nation; and the general affection for her increased, on account of the harsh treatment which it was thought she met with from her consort.

The situation of the king’s affairs, both at home and abroad, was now in every respect very fortunate. All the efforts of the European princes, both in war and negotiation, were turned to the side of Italy; and the various events which there arose, made Henry’s alliance be courted by every party, yet interested him so little as never to touch him with concern or anxiety. His close connections with-Spain and Scotland insured his tranquillity; and his continued successes over domestic enemies, owing to the prudence and vigor of his conduct, had reduced the people to entire submission and obedience. Uncontrolled, therefore, by apprehension or opposition of any kind, he gave full scope to his natural propensity; and avarice, which had ever been his ruling passion being increased by age and encouraged by absolute authority broke all restraints of shame or justice. He had found two ministers Empson and Dudley, perfectly qualified to second his rapacious and tyrannical inclinations, and to prey upon his defenceless people. These instruments of oppression were both lawyers; the first of mean birth, of brutal manners, of an unrelenting temper; the second better born, better educated, and better bred, but equally unjust, severe, and inflexible. By their knowledge in law, these men were qualified to pervert the forms of justice to the oppression of the innocent; and the formidable authority of the king supported them in all their iniquities.

It was their usual practice, at first, to observe so far the appearance of law as to give indictments to those whom they intended to oppress; upon which the persons were committed to prison, but never brought to trial; and were at length obliged, in order to recover their liberty, to pay heavy fines and ransoms, which were called mitigations and compositions. By degrees, the very appearance of law was neglected: the two ministers sent forth their precepts to attach men, and summon them before themselves and some others, at their private houses, in a court of commission, where, in a summary manner, without trial or jury, arbitrary decrees were issued, both in pleas of the crown and controversies between private parties. Juries themselves, when summoned, proved but small security to the subject; being browbeaten by these oppressors; nay, fined, imprisoned, and punished, if they gave sentence against the inclination of the ministers The whole system of the feudal law, which still prevailed, was turned into a scheme of oppression. Even the king’s wards, after they came of age, were not suffered to enter into possession of their lands without paying exorbitant fines. Men were also harassed with informations of intrusion upon scarce colorable titles. When an outlawry in a personal action was issued against any man, he was not allowed to purchase his charter of pardon, except on the payment of a great sum; and if he refused the composition required of him, the strict law, which in such cases allows forfeiture of goods, was rigorously insisted on. Nay, without any color of law, the half of men’s lands and rents were seized during two years, as a penalty in case of outlawry. But the chief means of oppression employed by these ministers were the penal statutes, which, without consideration of rank, quality, or services, were rigidly put in execution against all men: spies, informers, and inquisitors were rewarded and encouraged in every quarter of the kingdom:

and no difference was made, whether the statute were beneficial or hurtful, recent or obsolete, possible or impossible to be executed. The sole end of the king and his ministers was to amass money, and bring every one under the lash of their authority. [1]

Through the prevalence of such an arbitrary and iniquitous administration, the English, it may safely be affirmed, were considerable losers by their ancient privileges, which secured them from all taxations, except such as were imposed by their own consent in parliament. Had the king been empowered to levy general taxes at pleasure, he would naturally have abstained from these oppressive expedients, which destroyed all security in private property, and begat a universal diffidence throughout the nation. In vain did the people look for protection from the parliament, which was pretty frequently summoned during this reign.

1504.

That assembly was so overawed, that at this very time, during the greatest rage of Henry's oppressions, the commons chose Dudley their speaker, the very man who was the chief instrument of his iniquities. And though the king was known to be immensely opulent, and had no pretence of wars or expensive enterprises of any kind, they granted him the subsidy which he demanded. But so insatiable was his avarice, that next year he levied a new benevolence, and renewed that arbitrary and oppressive method of taxation.

1505.

By all these arts of accumulation, joined to a rigid frugality in his expense, he so filled his coffers, that he is said to have possessed in ready money the sum of one million eight hundred thousand pounds; a treasure almost incredible, if we consider the scarcity of money in those times. [2]

* Bacon, , 630. Holingshed, . Polyd. Virg. p. 613, 615.

* * Silver was during this reign at thirty-seven shillings and six pence a pound, which makes Henry's treasure near three millions of our present money. Besides, many commodities have become above thrice as dear by the increase of gold and silver in Europe. And what is a circumstance of still greater weight, all other states were then very poor,

in comparison of what they are at present. These circumstances make Henry’s treasure appear very great, and may lead us to conceive the oppressions of his government.

But while Henry was enriching himself by the spoils of his oppressed people, there happened an event abroad which engaged his attention, and was even the object of his anxiety and concern: Isabella, queen of Castile, died about this time and it was foreseen that by this incident the fortunes of Ferdinand, her husband, would be much affected. The king was not only attentive to the fate of his ally, and watchful lest the general system of Europe should be affected by so important an event; he also considered the similarity of his own situation with that of Ferdinand, and regarded the issue of these transactions as a precedent for himself. Joan, the daughter of Ferdinand by Isabella, was married to the archduke Philip, and being, in right of her mother, heir of Castile, seemed entitled to dispute with Ferdinand the present possession of that kingdom. Henry knew that, notwithstanding his own pretensions by the house of Lancaster, the greater part of the nation was convinced of the superiority of his wife’s title; and he dreaded lest the prince of Wales, who was daily advancing towards manhood, might be tempted by ambition to lay immediate claim to the crown. By his perpetual attention to depress the partisans of the York family, he had more closely united them into one party, and increased their desire of shaking off that yoke under which they had so long labored, and of taking every advantage which his oppressive government should give his enemies against him. And as he possessed no independent force like Ferdinand, and governed a kingdom more turbulent and unruly, which he himself by his narrow politics had confirmed in factious prejudices, he apprehended that his situation would prove in the issue still more precarious.

Nothing at first could turn out more contrary to the king’s wishes than the transactions in Spain. Ferdinand, as well as Henry, had become very unpopular, and from a like cause, his former exactions and impositions; and the states of Castile discovered an evident resolution of preferring the title of Philip and Joan.

1506.

In order, to take advantage of these favorable dispositions, the archduke, now king of Castile, attended by his consort, embarked for Spain during the winter season; but meeting with a violent tempest in the Channel, was obliged to take shelter in the harbor of Weymouth. Sir John Trenchard, a gentleman of authority in the county of Dorset, hearing of a fleet upon the coast, had assembled some forces; and being joined by Sir John Cary, who was also at the head of an armed body, he came to that town. Finding that Philip, in order to relieve his sickness and fatigue, was already come ashore, he invited him to his house; and immediately despatched a messenger to inform the court of this important incident. The king sent in all haste the earl of Arundel to compliment Philip on his arrival in England, and to inform him that he intended to pay him a visit in person, and to give him a suitable reception in his dominions. Philip knew that he could not now depart without the king's consent; and therefore, for the sake of despatch, he resolved to anticipate his visit, and to have an interview with him at Windsor. Henry received him with all the magnificence possible, and with all the seeming cordiality; but he resolved, notwithstanding, to draw some advantage from this involuntary visit paid him by his royal guest.

Edmond de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, nephew to Edward IV. and brother to the earl of Lincoln, slain in the battle of Stoke, had some years before killed a man in a sudden fit of passion, and had been obliged to apply to the king for a remission of the crime. The king had granted his request; but, being little indulgent to all persons connected with the house of York, he obliged him to appear openly in court and plead his pardon. Suffolk, more resenting the affront than grateful for the favor, had fled into Flanders, and taken shelter with his aunt, the duchess of Burgundy; but being promised forgiveness by the king, he returned to England, and obtained a new pardon. Actuated, however, by the natural inquietude of his temper and uneasy from debts which he had contracted by his great expense at Prince Arthur's wedding, he again made an elopement into Flanders. The king, well acquainted with the general discontent which prevailed against his administration neglected not this incident, which might become of importance, and he employed his usual artifices to elude the efforts of his enemies. He directed Sir Robert Curson, governor of the castle of Hammes, to desert his charge, and to insinuate himself into the confidence of Suffolk, by making him a tender of his services. Upon information secretly conveyed by Curson, the king seized William Courtney, eldest son to the earl of Devonshire, and married to the lady Catharine, sister of the queen; William de la Pole, brother to the earl of Suffolk; Sir James Tyrrel, and Sir James Windham, with some persons of inferior quality; and he committed them to custody. Lord Abergavenny and Sir Thomas Green were also apprehended; but were soon after released from their confinement. William de la Pole was long detained in prison: Courtney was attainted, and, though not executed, he recovered not his liberty during the king's lifetime. But Henry's chief severity fell upon Sir James Windham and Sir James Tyrrel, who were brought to their trial, condemned, and executed: the fate of the latter gave general satisfaction, on account of his participation in the murder of the young princes, sons of Edward IV. Notwithstanding these discoveries and executions, Curson was still able to maintain his credit with the earl of Suffolk: Henry, in order to remove all suspicion, had ordered him to be excommunicated, together with Suffolk himself, for his pretended rebellion. But after that traitor had performed all the services expected from him, he suddenly deserted the earl, and came over to England, where the king received him with unusual marks of favor and confidence. Suffolk, astonished at this instance of perfidy, finding that even the duchess of Burgundy, tired with so many fruitless attempts, had become indifferent to his cause, fled secretly into France, thence into Germany, and returned at last into the Low Countries; where he was protected, though not countenanced, by Philip, then in close alliance with the king.

Henry neglected not the present opportunity of complaining to his guest of the reception which Suffolk had met with in his dominions. "I really thought," replied the king of Castile, "that your greatness and felicity had set you far above apprehensions from any person of so little consequence: but, to give you satisfaction, I shall banish him my state." "I expect that you will carry your complaisance further," said the king; "I desire to have Suffolk put into my hands, where alone I can depend upon his submission and obedience." "That measure," said Philip, "will reflect dishonor upon you as well as myself. You will be thought to have treated me as a prisoner." "Then the matter is at an end," replied the king; "for I will take that dishonor upon me; and so your honor is saved." [1] The king of Castile found himself under a necessity of complying; but he first exacted Henry's promise that he would spare Suffolk's life. That nobleman was invited over to England by Philip; as if the king would grant him a pardon, on the intercession of his friend and ally. Upon his appearance, he was committed to the Tower; and the king of Castile, having fully satisfied Henry, as well by this concession as by signing a treaty of commerce between England and Castile, which was advantageous to the former kingdom, [1] was at last allowed to depart, after a stay of three months.

* Bacon, .

* * Rymer, vol. xiii. .

He landed in Spain, was joyfully received by the Castilians, and pit in possession of the throne.

1507.

He died soon after; and Joan, his widow, falling into deep melancholy Ferdinand was again enabled to reinstate himself in authority, and to govern, till the day of his death, the whole Spanish monarchy.

The king survived these transactions two years; but nothing memorable occurs in the remaining part of his reign, except his affiancing his second daughter, Mary, to the young archduke Charles, son of Philip of Castile.

1508.

He entertained also some intentions of marriage for himself, first with the queen dowager of Naples, relict of Ferdinand; afterwards with the duchess dowager of Savoy, daughter of Maximilian, and sister of Philip. But the decline of his health put an end to all such thoughts; and he began to cast his eye towards that future existence which the iniquities and severities of his reign rendered a very dismal prospect to him. To allay the terrors under which he labored, he endeavored, by distributing alms and founding religious houses, to make atonement for his crimes, and to purchase, by the sacrifice of part of his ill-gotten treasures, a reconciliation with his offended Maker. Remorse even seized him at intervals for the abuse of his authority by Empson and Dudley; but not sufficient to make him stop the rapacious hand of those oppressors. Sir William Capel was again fined two thousand pounds under some frivolous pretence, and was committed to the Tower for daring to murmur against the iniquity. Harris, an alderman of London, was indicted, and died of vexation before his trial came to an issue. Sir Laurence

Ailmer, who had been mayor, and his two sheriffs, were condemned in heavy fines, and sent to prison till they made payment. The king gave countenance to all these oppressions; till death, by its nearer approaches, impressed new terrors upon him; and he then ordered, by a general clause in his will, that restitution should be made to all those whom he had injured.

1509.

He died of a consumption at his favorite palace of Richmond, after a reign of twenty-three years and eight months, and in the fifty-second year of his age. [1]

* Dagd. Baronage, ii. .

The reign of Henry VII. was, in the main, fortunate for his people at home, and honorable abroad. He put an end to the civil wars with which the nation had long been harassed, he maintained peace and order in the state, he depressed the former exorbitant power of the nobility, and, together with the friendship of some foreign princes, he acquired the consideration and regard of all. He loved peace without fearing war though agitated with continual suspicions of his servants and ministers, he discovered no timidity, either in the conduct of his affairs, or in the day of battle; and though often severe in his punishments, he was commonly less actuated by revenge than by maxims of policy. The services which he rendered the people were derived from his views of private advantage, rather than the motives of public spirit; and where he deviated from interested regards, it was unknown to himself, and ever from the malignant prejudices of faction, or the mean projects of avarice; not from the sallies of passion, or allurements of pleasure; still less from the benign motives of friendship and generosity. His capacity was excellent, but somewhat contracted by the narrowness of his heart; he possessed insinuation and address, but never employed these talents, except where some great point of interest was to be gained; and while he neglected to conciliate the affections of his people, he often felt the danger of resting his authority on their fear and reverence alone. He was always extremely attentive to his affairs; but possessed not the faculty of seeing far into futurity; and was more expert at providing a remedy for his mistakes than judicious in avoiding them. Avarice was, on the whole, his ruling passion; [1] and he remains an instance, almost singular, of a man placed hi a high station, and possessed of talents for great affairs, in whom that passion pre-dominated above ambition. Even among private persons, avarice is commonly nothing but a species of ambition, and is chiefly incited by the prospect of that regard, distinction, and consideration, which attend on riches.

* As a proof of Henry's attention to the smallest profits, Bacon tells us, that he had seen a book of accounts kept by Empson, and subscribed in almost every leaf by the king's own hand. Among other articles was the following: "Item.

Received of such a one five marks for a pardon, which if it do not pass, the money to be repaid, or the party otherwise satisfied." Opposite to the memorandum, the king had writ with his own hand, "Otherwise satisfied." Bacon, .

The power of the kings of England had always been somewhat irregular or discretionary; but was scarcely ever so absolute during any former reign, at least after the establishment of the Great Charter, as during that of Henry Besides the advantages derived from the personal character of the man, full of vigor, industry, and severity, deliberate in all projects, steady in every purpose, and attended with caution as well as good fortune in every enterprise; he came to the throne after long and bloody civil wars, which had destroyed all the great nobility, who alone could resist the encroachments of his authority; the people were tired with discord and intestine convulsions, and willing to submit to usurpations, and even to injuries, rather than plunge themselves anew into like miseries: the fruitless efforts made against him served always, as is usual, to confirm his authority: as he ruled by a faction, and the lesser faction, all those on whom he conferred offices, sensible that they owed every thing to his protection, were willing to support his power, though at the expense of justice and national privileges. These seem the chief causes which at this time bestowed on the crown so considerable an addition of prerogative, and rendered the present reign a kind of epoch in the English constitution.

This prince, though he exalted his prerogative above law is celebrated by his historian for many good laws, which he made be enacted for the government of his subjects. Several considerable regulations, indeed, are found among the statutes of this reign, both with regard to the police of the kingdom, and its commerce: but the former are generally contrived with much better judgment than the latter. The more simple ideas of order and equity are sufficient to guide a legislator in every thing that regards the internal administration of justice: but the principles of commerce are much more complicated, and require long experience and deep reflection to be well understood in any state. The real consequence of a law or practice is there often contrary to first appearances. No wonder that during the reign of Henry VII. [1,] these matters were frequently mistaken; and it may safely be affirmed, that even in the age of Lord Bacon, very imperfect and erroneous ideas were formed on that subject.

Early in Henry's reign, the authority of the star chamber, which was before founded on common law and ancient practice, was in some cases confirmed by act of parliament: [1] Lord Bacon extols the utility of this court; but men began even during the age of that historian, to feel that so arbitrary a jurisdiction was incompatible with liberty; and in proportion as the spirit of independence still rose higher in the nation, the aversion to it increased, till it was entirely abolished by act of parliament in the reign of Charles I., a little before the commencement of the civil wars.

* See note B, at the end of the volume.

Laws were passed in this reign, ordaining the king's suit for murder to be carried on within a year and a day. [1] Formerly it did not usually commence till after; and as the friends of the person murdered often in the interval compounded matters with the criminal, the crime frequently passed unpunished. Suits were given to the poor "in forma pauperis," as it is called; that is, without paying dues for the writs, or any fees to the council: [2] a good law at all times, especially in that age, when the people labored under the oppression of the great; but a law difficult to be carried into execution. A law was made against carrying off any woman by force. [3] The benefit of clergy was abridged; [4] and the criminal, on the first offence, was ordered to be burned in the hand with a letter denoting his crime; after which he was punished capitally for any new offence. Sheriffs were no longer allowed to fine any person, without previously summoning him before their court. It is strange that such a practice should ever have prevailed. Attaint of juries was granted in cases which exceeded forty pounds' value; [v*] a law which has an appearance of equity, but which was afterwards found inconvenient. Actions popular were not allowed to be eluded by fraud or covin. If any servant of the king's conspired against the life of the steward, treasurer, or comptroller of the king's household, this design, though not followed by any overt act, was made liable to the punishment of felony.[v* *] This statute was enacted for the security of Archbishop Morton, who found himself exposed to the enmity of great numbers.

There scarcely passed any session during this reign without some statute against engaging retainers, and giving them badges or liveries; [v* * *] a practice by which they were in a manner enlisted under some great lord and were kept in readiness to assist him in all wars, insurrections, riots, violences, and even in bearing evidence for him in courts of justice.[v* * * *]

* 3 Henry VII. ca.

* * 11 Henry VII. ca.

* * * 3 Henry VII. ca.

* * * * 4 Henry VII. ca.

v 11 Henry VII. ca.

v* 11 Henry VII. ca.

v* * 19 Henry VII. ca.

v* * * 3 Henry VII. cap 13.

v* * * * 3 Henry VII. cap 1 and 12.

This disorder, which had prevailed during many reigns, when the law could give little protection to the subject, was then deeply rooted in England; and it required all the vigilance and rigor of Henry to extirpate it. There is a story of his severity against this abuse; and it seems to merit praise, though it is commonly cited as an instance of his avarice and rapacity. The earl of Oxford, his favorite general, in whom he always placed great and deserved confidence, having splendidly entertained him at his castle of Heningham, was desirous of making a parade of his magnificence at the departure of his royal guest, and ordered all his retainers, with their liveries and badges, to be drawn up in two lines, that their appearance might be the more gallant and splendid. “My lord,” said the king, “I have heard much of your hospitality, but the truth far exceeds the report. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen, whom I see on both sides of me, are no doubt your menial servants.” The earl smiled, and confessed that his fortune was too narrow for such magnificence. “They are most of them,” subjoined he, “my retainers, who are come to do me service at this time, when they know I am honored with your majesty’s presence.” The king started a little, and said, “By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer, but I must not allow my laws to be broken in my sight. My attorney must speak with you.” Oxford is said to have paid no less than fifteen thousand marks, as a composition for his offence.

The increase of the arts, more effectually than all the severities of law, put an end to this pernicious practice. The nobility, instead of vying with each other in the number and boldness of their retainers, acquired by degrees a more civilized species of emulation, and endeavored to excel in the splendor and elegance of their equipage, houses, and tables. The common people, no longer maintained in vicious idleness by their superiors, were obliged to learn some calling or industry, and became useful both to themselves and to others. And it must be acknowledged, in spite of those who declaim so violently against refinement in the arts, or what they are pleased to call luxury, that, as much as an industrious tradesman is both a better man and a better citizen than one of those idle retainers who formerly depended on the great families, so much is the life of a modern nobleman more laudable than that of an ancient baron. [1]

But the most important law, in its consequences, which was enacted during the reign of Henry, was that by which the nobility and gentry acquired a power of breaking the ancient entails, and of alienating their estates. [1] By means of this law, joined to the beginning luxury and refinements of the age, the great fortunes of the barons were gradually dissipated, and the property of the commons increased in England. It is probable that Henry foresaw and intended this consequence; because the constant scheme of his policy consisted in depressing the great, and exalting churchmen, lawyers, and men of new families, who were more dependent on him.

This king’s love of money naturally led him to encourage commerce, which increased his customs; but, if we may judge by most of the laws enacted during his reign, trade and industry were rather hurt than promoted by the care and attention given to them. Severe laws were made against taking interest for money, which was then denominated usury. [1] Even the profits of exchange were prohibited, as savoring of usury, [2] which the superstition of the age zealously proscribed. All evasive contracts, by which profits could be made from the loan of money, were also carefully guarded against. [3] It is needless to observe how unreasonable and iniquitous these laws, how impossible to be executed, and how hurtful to trade, if they could take place. We may observe, however, to the praise of this king, that sometimes, in order to promote commerce, he lent to merchants sums of money without interest, when he knew that their stock was not sufficient for those enterprises which they had in view. [4]

Laws were made against the exportation of money, plate, or bullion: a precaution which serves to no other purpose than to make more be exported.

* See note C, at the end of the volume.

* * 4 Henry VII. ca. The practice of breaking entails by means of a fine and recovery was introduced in the reign of Edward IV.: but it was not, properly speaking, law, till the statute of Henry VII.; which, by correcting some abuses that attended that practice, gave indirectly a sanction to it.

* * * 3 Henry VII. ca.

* * * * 3 Henry VII. ca.

v 7 Henry VII. ca.

But so far was the anxiety on this head carried, that merchants alien, who imported commodities into the kingdom, were obliged to invest in English commodities all the money acquired by their sales, in order to prevent their conveying it away in a clandestine manner. [1]

It was prohibited to export horses; as if that exportation did not encourage the breed, and render them more plentiful in the kingdom. [2] In order to promote archery, no bows were to be sold at a higher price than six shillings and fourpence, [3] reducing money to the denomination of our time. The only effect of this regulation must be, either that the people would be supplied with bad bows, or none at all. Prices were also affixed to woollen cloth, [4] to caps and hats: and the wages of laborers were regulated by law.[v*] It is evident, that these matters ought always to be left free, and be intrusted to the common course of business and commerce. To some it may appear surprising, that the price of a yard of scarlet cloth should be limited to six and twenty shillings, money of our age; that of a yard of colored cloth to eighteen; higher prices than these commodities bear at present; and that the wages of a tradesman, such as a mason, bricklayer, tiler, etc., should be regulated at near tenpence a day; which is not much inferior to the present wages given in some parts of England. Labor and commodities have certainly risen since the discovery of the West Indies; but not so much in every particular as is generally imagined. The greater industry of the present times has increased the number of tradesmen and laborers, so as to keep wages nearer a par than could be expected from the great increase of gold and silver. And the additional art employed in the finer manufactures has even made some of these commodities fall below their former value. Not to mention, that merchants and dealers, being contented with less profit than formerly, afford the goods cheaper to their customers. It appears by a statute of this reign,[v* *] that goods bought for sixteenpence would sometimes be sold by the merchants for three shillings.

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* 3 Henry VII ca.

* * 11 Henry VII. ca.

* * * 3 Henry VII. ca.

* * * * 4 Henry VII. ca.

v 4 Henry VII. ca.

v* 11 Henry VII. ca.

v* * 4 Henry VII. ca.

The commodities whose price has chiefly risen, are butcher’s meat, fowl, and fish, (especially the latter,) which cannot be much augmented in quantity by the increase of art and industry. The profession which then abounded most, and was sometimes embraced by persons of the lowest rank, was the church: by a clause of a statute, all clerks or students of the university were forbidden to beg, without a permission from the vice-chancellor. [1]

One great cause of the low state of industry during this period, was the restraints put upon it; and the parliament, or rather the king, (for he was the prime mover in every thing,) enlarged a little some of these limitations; but not to the degree that was requisite. A law had been enacted during the reign of Henry IV., [2] that no man could bind his son or daughter to an apprenticeship, unless he were possessed of twenty shillings a year in land; and Henry VII., because the decay of manufactures was complained of in Norwich from the want of hands, exempted that city from the penalties of the law. [3] Afterwards the whole county of Norfolk obtained a like exemption with regard to some branches of the woollen manufacture. [4] These absurd limitations proceeded from a desire of promoting husbandry, which, however, is never more effectually encouraged than by the increase of manufactures. For a like reason, the law enacted against enclosures, and for the keeping up of farm houses, scarcely deserves the high praises bestowed on it by Lord Bacon. If husbandmen understand agriculture, and have a ready vent for their commodities, we need not dread a diminution of the people employed in the country. All methods of supporting populousness, except by the interest of the proprietors, are violent and ineffectual. During a century and a half after this period, there was a frequent renewal of laws and edicts against depopulation; whence we may infer, that none of them were ever executed. The natural course of improvement at last provided a remedy.

* 11 Henry VII. ca.

* * 11 Henry VII. ca.

* * * 4 Henry VII. ca.

* * * * 4 Henry VII. ca.

v 12 Henry VII. ca.

One check to industry in England was the erecting of corporations; an abuse which is not yet entirely corrected. A law was enacted, that corporations should not pass any by-laws without the consent of three of the chief officers of state. [1] They were prohibited from imposing tolls at their [2] The cities of Glocester and Worcester had even imposed tolls on the Severn, which were abolished. [3]

There is a law of this reign, [4] containing a preamble, by which it appears, that the company of merchant adventurers in London had, by their own authority, debarred all the other merchants of the kingdom from trading to the great marts in the Low Countries, unless each trader previously paid them the sum of near seventy pounds. It is surprising that such a by-law (if it deserve the name) could ever be carried into execution, and that the authority of parliament should be requisite to abrogate it.

It was during this reign, on the second of August, 1492, a little before sunset, that Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, set out from Spain on his memorable voyage for the discovery of the western world; and a few years after, Vasquez de Gama, a Portuguese, passed the Cape of Good Hope, and opened a new passage to the East Indies. These great events were attended with important consequences to all the nations of Europe, even to such as were not immediately concerned in those naval enterprises. The enlargement of commerce and navigation increased industry and the arts every where; the nobles dissipated their fortunes in expensive pleasures: men of an inferior rank both acquired a share in the landed property, and created to themselves a considerable property of a new kind, in stock, commodities, art, credit, and correspondence. In some nations, the privileges of the commons increased by this increase of property: in most nations, the kings, finding arms to be dropped by the barons, who could no longer endure their former rude manner of life, established standing armies, and subdued the liberties of their kingdoms: but in all places, the condition of the people, from the depression of the petty tyrants by whom they had formerly been oppressed rather than governed, received great improvement, and they acquired, if not entire liberty, at least the most considerable advantages of it. And as the general course of events thus tended to depress the nobles and exalt the people, Henry VII., who also embraced that system of policy, has acquired more praise than his institutions, strictly speaking, seem of themselves to deserve on account of any profound wisdom attending them.

* 19 Henry VII. ca gates.

* * 19 Henry VII. ca.

* * * 10 Henry VII. ca.

* * * * 12 Henry VII. ca.

It was by accident only that the king had not a considerable share in those great naval discoveries, by which the present age was so much distinguished. Columbus, after meeting with many repulses from the courts of Portugal and Spain sent his brother Bartholomew to London, in order to explain his projects to Henry, and crave his protection for the execution of them. The king invited him over to England; but his brother, being taken by pirates, was detained in his voyage; and Columbus, meanwhile, having obtained the countenance of Isabella, was supplied with a small fleet, and happily executed his enterprise. Henry was not discouraged by this disappointment: he fitted out Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian, settled in Bristol, and sent him westwards in 1498, in search of new countries. Cabot discovered the main land of America towards the sixtieth degree of northern latitude: he sailed southwards along the coast, and discovered Newfoundland and other countries; but returned to England without making any conquest or settlement. Elliot and other merchants in Bristol made a like attempt in 1502. [1] The king expended fourteen thousand pounds in building one ship, called the Great Harry. [2] She was, properly speaking, the first ship in the English navy. Before this period, when the prince wanted a fleet, he had no other expedient than hiring or pressing ships from the merchants.

* Rymer, vol. xiii. .

* * Stowe, .

But though this improvement of navigation, and the discovery of both the Indies, was the most memorable incident that happened during this or any other period, it was not the only great event by which the age was distinguished. In 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turks; and the Greeks, among whom some remains of learning were still preserved, being scattered by these barbarians, took shelter in Italy, and imported, together with their admirable language, a tincture of their science, and of their refined taste in poetry and eloquence About the same time, the purity of the Latin tongue was revived, the study of antiquity became fashionable, and the esteem for literature gradually propagated itself throughout every nation in Europe. The art of printing, invented about that time, extremely facilitated the progress of all these improvements: the invention of gunpowder changed me whole art of war: mighty innovations were soon after made in religion, such as not only affected those states that embraced them, but even those that adhered to the ancient faith and worship; and thus a general revolution was made in human affairs throughout this part of the world; and men gradually attained that situation, with regard to commerce, arts, science, government, police, and cultivation, in which they have ever since persevered. Here, therefore, commences the useful, as well as the more agreeable part of modern annals; certainty has place in all the considerable, and even most of the minute parts of historical narration; a great variety of events, preserved by printing, give the author the power of selecting, as well as adorning, the facts which he relates; and as each incident has a reference to our present manners and situation, instructive lessons occur every moment during the course of the narration. Whoever carries his anxious researches into preceding periods, is moved by a curiosity, liberal indeed and commendable; not by any necessity for acquiring knowledge of public affairs, or the arts of civil government.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HENRY VIII.

1509.

THE death of Henry VII. had been attended with as open and visible a joy among the people as decency would permit; and the accession and coronation of his son, Henry VIII., spread universally a declared and unfeigned satisfaction. Instead of a monarch jealous, severe, and avaricious, who, in proportion as he advanced in years, was sinking still deeper in those unpopular vices, a young prince of eighteen had succeeded to the throne, who, even in the eyes of men of sense, gave promising hopes of his future conduct, much more in those of the people, always enchanted with novelty, youth, and royal dignity. The beauty and vigor of his person, accompanied with dexterity in every manly exercise, was further adorned with a blooming and ruddy countenance, with a lively air, with the appearance of spirit and activity in all his demeanor. [1] His father, in order to remove him from the knowledge of public business, had hitherto occupied him entirely in the pursuits of literature; and the proficiency which he made gave no bad prognostic of his parts and capacity. [2] Even the vices of vehemence, ardor, and impatience, to which he was subject, and which afterwards degenerated into tyranny, were considered only as faults incident to unguarded youth, which would be corrected when time had brought him to greater moderation and maturity. And as the contending titles of York and Lancaster were now at last fully united in his person, men justly expected, from a prince obnoxious to no party, that impartiality of administration which had long been unknown in England.

* T. Mori. Lucubr. .

* * Father Paul, lib. i.

These favorable prepossessions of the public were encouraged by the measures which Henry embraced in the commencement of his reign. His grandmother, the countess of Richmond and Derby, was still alive; and as she was a woman much celebrated for prudence and virtue, he wisely showed great deference to her opinion in the establishment of his new council. The members were, Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor; the earl of Shrewsbury, steward; Lord Herbert, chamberlain; Sir Thomas Lovel, master of the wards and constable of the Tower; Sir Edward Poynings, comptroller; Sir Henry Marney, afterwards Lord Marney; Sir Thomas Darcy, afterwards Lord Darcy; Thomas Ruthal, doctor of laws; and Sir Henry Wyat. [1] These men had long been accustomed to business under the late king, and were the least unpopular of all the ministers employed by that monarch. But the chief competitors for favor and authority, under the new king, were the earl of Surrey, treasurer, and Fox, bishop of Winchester, secretary and privy seal. This prelate, who enjoyed great credit during all the former reign, had acquired such habits of caution and frugality as he could not easily lay aside; and he still opposed, by his remonstrances, those schemes of dissipation and expense, which the youth and passions of Henry rendered agreeable to him. But Surrey was a more dexterous courtier; and though few had borne a greater share in the frugal politics of the late king, he knew how to conform himself to the humor of his new master; and no one was so forward in promoting that liberality, pleasure, and magnificence, which began to prevail under the young monarch. [2] By this policy, he ingratiated himself with Henry; he made advantage, as well as the other courtiers, of the lavish disposition of his master; and he engaged him in such a course of play and idleness as rendered him negligent of affairs, and willing to intrust the government of the state entirely into the hands of his ministers. The great treasures amassed by the late king were gradually dissipated in the giddy expenses of Henry. One party of pleasure succeeded to another: tilts, tournaments, and carousals were exhibited with all the magnificence of the age; and as the present tranquillity of the public permitted the court to indulge itself in every amusement, serious business was but little attended to. Or, if the king intermitted the course of his festivity, he chiefly employed himself in an application to music and literature, which were his favorite pursuits, and which were well adapted to his genius.

* Herbert, Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * Lord Herbert.

He had made such proficiency in the former art, as even to compose some pieces of church music, which were sung in his chapel. [1] He was initiated in the elegant learning of the ancients. And though he was so unfortunate as to be seduced into a study of the barren controversies of the schools, which were then fashionable, and had chosen Thomas Aquinas for his favorite author, he still discovered a capacity fitted for more useful and entertaining knowledge.

The frank and careless humor of the king, as it led him to dissipate the treasures amassed by his father, rendered him negligent in protecting the instruments whom that prince had employed in his extortions. A proclamation being issued to encourage complaints, the rage of the people was let loose on all informers, who had so long exercised an unbounded tyranny over the nation: [2] they were thrown into prison, condemned to the pillory, and most of them lost their lives by the violence of the populace. Empson and Dudley, who were most exposed to public hatred, were immediately summoned before the council, in order to answer for their conduct, which had rendered them so obnoxious.

* Lord Herbert.

* * Herbert, Stowe, . Holingshed, . Polyd. Virg. lib, xxvii.

Empson made a shrewd apology for himself, as well as for his associate. He told the council, that so far from his being justly exposed to censure for his past conduct, his enemies themselves grounded their clamor on actions which seemed rather to merit reward and approbation: that a strict execution of law was the crime of which he and Dudley were accused; though that law had been established by general consent, and though they had acted in obedience to the king, to whom the administration of justice was intrusted by the constitution: that it belonged not to them, who were instruments in the hands of supreme power, to determine what laws were recent or obsolete, expedient or hurtful; since they were all alike valid, so long as they remained unrepealed by the legislature: that it was natural for a licentious populace to murmur against the restraints of authority; but all wise states had ever made their glory consist in the just distribution of rewards and punishments, and had annexed the former to the observance and enforcement of the laws, the latter to their violation and infraction; and that a sudden overthrow of all government might be expected where the judges were committed to the mercy of the criminals, the rulers to that of the subjects. [1]

Notwithstanding this defence, Empson and Dudley were sent to the Tower, and soon after brought to their trial. The strict execution of laws, however obsolete, could never be imputed to them as a crime in a court of judicature; and it is likely that, even where they had exercised arbitrary power, the king, as they had acted by the secret commands of his father, was not willing that their conduct should undergo too severe a scrutiny. In order, therefore, to gratify the people with the punishment of these obnoxious ministers crimes very improbable, or indeed absolutely impossible, were charged upon them: that they had entered into a conspiracy against the sovereign, and had intended, on the death of the late king, to have seized by force the administration of government. The jury were so far moved by popular prejudices, joined to court influence, as to give a verdict against them; which was afterwards confirmed by a bill of attainder in parliament, [2] and, at the earnest desire of the people, was executed by warrant from the king, Thus, in those arbitrary times, justice was equally violated, whether the king sought power and riches, or courted popularity.

* Herbert, Holingshed, .

* * This parliament met on the 21st January, 1510. A law was there enacted, in order to prevent some abuses which had prevailed during the late reign. The forfeiture upon the penal statutes was reduced to the term of three years. Costs and damages were given against informers upon acquittal of the accused: more severe punishments were enacted against perjury: the false inquisitions procured by Empson and Dudley were declared null and invalid. Traverses were allowed; and the time of tendering them enlarged. 1 Henry VIII. c. 8, 10, 11, 12.

Henry, while he punished the instruments of past tyranny, had yet such a deference to former engagements as to deliberate, immediately after his accession, concerning the celebration of his marriage with the infanta Catharine, to whom he had been affianced during his father’s lifetime. Her former marriage with his brother, and the inequality of their years were the chief objections urged; against his espousing her but, on the other hand, the advantages of her known virtue, modesty, and sweetness of disposition were insisted on; the affection which she bore to the king; the large dowry to which she was entitled as princess of Wales; the interest of cementing a close alliance with Spain; the necessity of finding some confederate to counterbalance the power of France; the expediency of fulfilling the engagements of the late king When these considerations were weighed, they determined the council, though contrary to the opinion of the primate, to give Henry their advice for celebrating the marriage. The countess of Richmond, who had concurred in the same sentiments with the council, died soon after the marriage of her grandson.

The popularity of Henry's government, his undisputed title, his extensive authority, his large treasures, the tranquillity of his subjects, were circumstances which rendered his domestic administration easy and prosperous: the situation of foreign affairs was no less happy and desirable. Italy continued still, as during the late reign, to be the centre of all the wars and negotiations of the European princes; and Henry's alliance was courted by all parties; at the same time that he was not engaged by any immediate interest or necessity to take part with any. Lewis XII. of France, after his conquest of Milan, was the only great prince that possessed any territory in Italy; and could he have remained in tranquillity, he was enabled by his situation to prescribe laws to all the Italian princes and republics, and to hold the balance among them. But the desire of making a conquest of Naples, to which he had the same title or pretensions with his predecessor, still engaged him in new enterprises: and· as he foresaw opposition from Ferdinand, who was connected both by treaties and affinity with Frederick of Naples, he endeavored by the offers of interest, to which the ears of that monarch were ever open, to engage him in an opposite confederacy. He settled with him a plan for the partition of the kingdom of Naples, and the expulsion of Frederick; a plan which the politicians of that, age regarded as the most egregious imprudence in the French monarch, and the greatest perfidy in the Spanish. Frederick, supported only by subjects who were either discontented with his government or indifferent about his fortunes, was unable to resist so powerful a confederacy, and was deprived of his dominions: but he had the satisfaction to see Naples immediately prove the source of contention among his enemies. Ferdinand gave secret orders to his general, Gonsalvo, whom the Spaniards honor with the appellation of the "great captain," to attack the armies of France, and make himself master of all the dominions of Naples. Gonsalvo prevailed in every enterprise, defeated the French in two pitched battles, and insured to his prince the entire possession of that kingdom. Lewis, unable to procure redress by force of arms, was obliged to enter into a fruitless negotiation with Ferdinand for the recovery of his share of the partition; and all Italy, during some time, was held in suspense between these two powerful monarchs.

There has scarcely been any period when the balance of power was better secured in Europe, and seemed more able to maintain itself without any anxious concern or attention of the princes. Several great monarchies were established; and no one so far surpassed the rest as to give any foundation or even pretence for jealousy. England was united in domestic peace, and by its situation happily secured from the invasion of foreigners. The coalition of the several kingdoms of Spain had formed one powerful monarchy, which Ferdinand administered with arts, fraudulent indeed and deceitful, but full of vigor and ability. Lewis XII., a gallant and generous prince, had, by espousing Anne of Brittany, widow to his predecessor, preserved the union with that principality, on which the safety of his kingdom so much depended. Maximilian, the emperor, besides the hereditary dominions of the Austrian family, maintained authority in the empire, and, notwithstanding the levity of his character, was able to unite the German princes in any great plan of interest, at least of defence. Charles, prince of Castile, grandson to Maximilian and Ferdinand, had already succeeded to the rich dominions of the house of Burgundy; and being as yet in early youth, the government was intrusted to Margaret of Savoy, his aunt, a princess endowed with signal prudence and virtue. The internal force of these several powerful states, by balancing each other, might long have maintained general tranquillity, had not the active and enterprising genius of Julius II., an ambitious pontiff, first excited the flames of war and discord among them. By his intrigues, a league had been formed at Cambray, [1] between himself, Maximilian, Lewis, and Ferdinand; and the object of this great confederacy was to overwhelm, by their united arms, the commonwealth of Venice.

Henry, without any motive from interest or passion, allowed his name to be inserted in the confederacy. This oppressive and iniquitous league was but too successful against the republic.

The great force and secure situation of the considerable monarchies prevented any one from aspiring to any conquest of moment; and though

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* In 1508.

this consideration could not maintain general peace, or remedy the natural inquietude of men, it rendered the princes of this age more disposed to desert engagements, and change their alliances, in which they were retained by humor and caprice, rather than by any natural or durable interest.

1510.

Julius had no sooner humbled the Venetian republic, than he was inspired with a nobler ambition, that of expelling all foreigners from Italy, or, to speak in the style affected by the Italians of that age, the freeing of that country entirely from the dominion of barbarians. [1] He was determined to make the tempest fall first upon Lewis; and in order to pave the way for this great enterprise, he at once sought for a ground of quarrel with that monarch, and courted the alliance of other princes. He declared war against the duke of Ferrara, the confederate of Lewis. He solicited the favor of England, by sending Henry a sacred rose, perfumed with musk and anointed with chrism. [2] He engaged in his interests Bambridge, archbishop of York, and Henry’s ambassador at Rome, whom he soon after created a cardinal. He drew over Ferdinand to his party, though that monarch at first made no declaration of his intentions. And what he chiefly valued, he formed a treaty with the Swiss cantons, who, enraged by some neglects put upon them by Lewis, accompanied with contumelious expressions, had quitted the alliance of France, and waited for an opportunity of revenging themselves on that nation.

* Guicciard. lib. viii.

* * Spel. Concil. vol. ii. .

1511.

While the French monarch repelled the attacks of his enemies, he thought it also requisite to make an attempt on the pope himself, and to despoil him as much as possible of that sacred character which chiefly rendered him formidable. He engaged some cardinals, disgusted with the violence of Julius, to desert him; and by their authority he was determined, in conjunction with Maximilian, who still adhered to his alliance, to call a general council, which might reform the church, and check the exorbitances of the Roman pontiff. A council was summoned at Pisa, which from the beginning bore a very inauspicious aspect, and promised little success to had adherents. Except a few French bishops, who unwillingly obeyed the king's commands in attending the council, all the other prelates kept aloof from an assembly which they regarded as the offspring of faction, intrigue, and worldly politics. Even Pisa, the place of their residence, showed them signs of contempt; which engaged them to transfer their session to Milan, a city under the dominion of the French monarch; Notwithstanding this advantage, they did not experience much more respectful treatment from the inhabitants of Milan; and found it necessary to make another remove to Lyons. [1] Lewis himself fortified these violent prejudices in favor of papal authority, by the symptoms which he discovered of regard, deference, and submission to Julius, whom he always spared, even when fortune had thrown into his hands the most inviting opportunities of humbling him. And as it was known that his consort, who had great influence over him, was extremely disquieted in mind on account of his dissensions with the holy father, all men prognosticated to Julius final success in this unequal contest.

The enterprising pontiff knew his advantages, and availed himself of them with the utmost temerity and insolence. So much had he neglected his sacerdotal character, that he acted in person at the siege of Mirandola, visited the trenches, saw some of his attendants killed by his side, and, like a young soldier, cheerfully bore all the rigors of winter and a severe season, in pursuit of military glory: [2] yet was he still able to throw, even on his most moderate opponents, the charge of impiety and profaneness. He summoned, a council at the Lateran: he put Pisa under an interdict, and all the places which gave shelter to the schismatical council: he excommunicated the cardinals and prelates who attended it: he even pointed his spiritual thunder against the princes who adhered to it: he freed their subjects from all oaths of allegiance, and gave their dominions to every one who could take possession of them.

* Guicciard. lib. x.

* * Guicciard. lib. ix.

Ferdinand of Arragon, who had acquired the surname of Catholic, regarded the cause of the pope and of religion only as a cover to his ambition and selfish politics: Henry, naturally sincere and sanguine in his temper, and the more èo on account of his youth and inexperience, was moved with a hearty desire of protecting the pope from the oppression to which he believed him exposed from the ambitious enterprises of Lewis.

1512.

Hopes had been given him by Julius, that the title of “most Christian king,” which had hitherto been annexed to the crown of France, and which was regarded as its most precious ornament, should, in reward of his services, be transferred to that of England. [1] Impatient also of acquiring that distinction in Europe, to which his power and opulence entitled him, he could not long remain neuter amidst the noise of arms; and the natural enmity of the English against France, as well as their ancient claims upon that kingdom, led Henry to join that alliance which the pope, Spain, and Venice had formed against the French monarch. A herald was sent to Paris, to exhort Lewis not to wage impious war against the sovereign pontiff; and when he returned without success, another was sent to demand the ancient patrimonial provinces, Anjou, Maine, Guienne, and Normandy. This message was understood to be a declaration of war; and a parliament, being summoned, readily granted supplies for a purpose so much favored by the English nation. [2]

Buonaviso, an agent of the pope’s at London, had been corrupted by the court of France, and had previously revealed to Lewis all the measures which Henry was concerting against him. But this infidelity did the king inconsiderable prejudice, in comparison of the treachery which he experienced from the selfish purposes of the ally on whom he chiefly relied for assistance. Ferdinand, his father-in-law, had so long persevered in a course of crooked politics, that he began even to value himself on his dexterity in fraud and artifice; and he made a boast of those shameful

* Guicciard. lib. xi. P. Daniel, vol ii. . Herbert. Holingshed, .

* * Herbert. Holingshed, .

successes. Being told one day, that Lewis, a prince of a very different character, had complained of his having once cheated him: “He lies, the drunkard!” said he; “I have cheated him above twenty times.” This prince considered his close connections with Henry only as the means which enabled him the better to take advantage of his want of experience. He advised him not to invade France by the way of Calais, where he himself should not have it in his power to assist him: he exhorted him rather to send forces to Fontarabia, whence he could easily make a conquest of Guienne, a province in which it was imagined the English had still some adherents. He promised to assist this conquest by the junction of a Spanish army. And so forward did he seem to promote the interests of his son-in-law, that he even sent vessels to England, in order to transport over the forces which Henry had levied for that purpose. The marquis of Dorset commanded this armament, which consisted of ten thousand men, mostly infantry; Lord Howard, son of the earl of Surrey, Lord Broke, Lord Ferrars, and many others of the young gentry and nobility, accompanied him in this service. All were on fire to distinguish themselves by military achievements, and to make a conquest of importance for their master. The secret purpose of Ferdinand, in this unexampled generosity, was suspected by nobody.

The small kingdom of Navarre lies on the frontiers between France and Spain; and as John d’Albert, the sovereign, was connected by friendship and alliance with Lewis, the opportunity seemed favorable to Ferdinand, while the English forces were conjoined with his own, and while all adherents to the council of Pisa lay under the sentence of excommunication, to put himself in possession of these dominions. No sooner, therefore, was Dorset landed in Guipiscoa, than the Spanish monarch declared his readiness to join him with his forces, to make with united arms an invasion of France, and to form the siege of Bayonne, which opened the way into Guienne: [1] but he remarked to the English general how dangerous it might prove to leave behind them the kingdom of Navarre, which, being in close alliance with France, could easily give admittance to the enemy, and cut off all communication between Spain and the combined armies. To provide against so dangerous an event, he required that John should stipulate a neutrality in the present war; and when that prince expressed his willingness to enter into any engagement for that purpose, he also required that security should be given for the strict observance of it.

* Herbert, Holingshed, .

John having likewise agreed to this condition, Ferdinand demanded that he should deliver into his hands six of the most considerable places of his dominions, together with his eldest son as a hostage. These were not terms to be proposed to a sovereign; and as the Spanish monarch expected a refusal, he gave immediate orders to the duke of Alva, his general, to make an invasion on Navarre, and to reduce that kingdom.

Alva soon made himself master of all the smaller towns; and being ready to form the siege of Pampeluna, the capital, he summoned the marquis of Dorset to join him with the English army, and concert together all their operations.

Dorset began to suspect that the interests of his master were very little regarded in all these transactions; and having no orders to invade the kingdom of Navarre, or make war any where but in France, he refused to take any part in the enterprise. He remained therefore in his quarters at Fontarabia; but so subtle was the contrivance of Ferdinand, that even while the English army lay in that situation, it was almost equally serviceable to his purpose, as if it had acted in conjunction with his own. It kept the French army in awe, and prevented it from advancing to succor the kingdom of Navarre; so that Alva, having full leisure to conduct the siege, made himself master of Pampeluna, and obliged John to seek for shelter in France. The Spanish general applied again to Dorset, and proposed to conduct with united counsels the operations of the “holy league,” (so it was called,) against Lewis: but as he still declined forming the siege of Bayonne, and rather insisted on the invasion of the principality of Bearne, a part of the king of Navarre’s dominions which lies on the French side of the Pyrenees, Dorset, justly suspicious of his sinister intentions, represented that, without new orders from his master, he could not concur in such an undertaking. In order to procure these orders, Ferdinand despatched Martin de Ampios to London; and persuaded Henry that, by the refractory and scrupulous humor of the English general, the most favorable opportunities were lost; and that it was necessary he should on all occasions act in concert with the Spanish commander, who was best acquainted with the situation of the country, and the reasons of every operation. But before orders to this purpose reached Spain, Dorset had become extremely impatient; and observing that his further stay served not to promote the main undertaking, and that his army was daily perishing by want and sickness, he demanded shipping from Ferdinand to transport them back into England. Ferdinand, who was bound by treaty to furnish him with this supply whenever demanded, was at length, after many delays, obliged to yield to his importunity; and Dorset, embarking his troops, prepared himself for the voyage. Meanwhile the messenger arrived with orders from Henry, that the troops should remain in Spain; but the soldiers were so discontented with the treatment which they had met with, that they mutinied, and obliged their commanders to set sail for England. Henry was much displeased with the ill success of this enterprise; and it was with difficulty that Dorset, by explaining the fraudulent conduct of Ferdinand, was at last able to appease him.

There happened this summer an action at sea, which brought not any more decisive advantage to the English. Sir Thomas Knevet, master of horse, was sent to the coast of Brittany with a fleet of forty-five sail; and he carried with him Sir Charles Brandon, Sir John Carew, and many other young courtiers, who longed for an opportunity of displaying their valor. After they had committed some depredations, a French fleet of thirty-nine sail issued from Brest, under the command of Primauget, and began an engagement with the English. Fire seized the ship of Primauget; who, finding his destruction inevitable, bore down upon the vessel of the English admiral, and grappling with her, resolved to make her share his fate. Both fleets stood some time in suspense, as spectators of this dreadful engagement; and all men saw with horror the flames which consumed both vessels, and heard the cries of fury and despair which came from the miserable combatants. At last the French vessel blew up; and at the same time destroyed the English. [1] The rest of the French fleet made their escape into different harbors.

The war which England waged against France, though it brought no advantage to the former kingdom, was of great prejudice to the latter; and by obliging Lewis to withdraw his forces for the defence of his own dominions, lost him that superiority which his arms in the beginning of the campaign had attained in Italy. Gaston de Foix, his nephew, a young hero, had been intrusted with the command of the French forces; and in a few months performed such feats of military art and prowess, as were sufficient to render illustrious the life of the oldest captain. [2] His career finished with the great battle of Ravenna, which, after the most obstinate conflict, he gained over the Spanish and papal armies. He perished the very moment his victory was complete; and with him perished the fortune of the French arms in Italy.

The Swiss, who had rendered themselves extremely formidable by their bands of disciplined infantry, invaded the Milanese with a numerous army, and raised up that inconstant people to a revolt against the dominion of France. Genoa followed the example of the duchy; and thus Lewis in a few weeks entirely lost his Italian conquests, except some garrisons; and Maximilian Sforza, the son of Ludovic, was reinstated in possession of Milan.

1513.

Julius discovered extreme joy on the discomfiture of the French; and the more so as he had been beholden for it to the Swiss, a people whose councils he hoped he should always be able to influence and govern. The pontiff survived this success a very little time; and in his place was chosen John de Medicis, who took the appellation of Leo X., and proved one of the most illustrious princes that ever sat on the papal throne. Humane, beneficent, generous, affable; the patron of every art, and friend of every virtue; [1] he had a soul no less capable of forming great designs than his predecessor, but was more gentle, pliant, and artful in employing means for the execution of them. The sole defect, indeed, of his character was too great finesse and artifice; a fault which, both as a priest and an Italian, it was difficult for him to avoid. By the negotiations of Leo, the emperor Maximilian was detached from the French interest; and Henry, notwithstanding his disappointments in the former campaign, was still encouraged to prosecute his warlike measures against Lewis.

Henry had summoned a new session of parliament, [2] and obtained a supply for his enterprise. It was a poll-tax, and imposed different sums, according to the station and riches of the person. A duke paid ten marks, an earl five pounds, a baron four pounds, a knight four marks; every man

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* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii. Stowe, . Lanquet's Epitome of Chronicles, fol. 273.

* * Guicciard. lib. x.

valued at eight hundred pounds in goods, four marks. An imposition was also granted of two fifteenths and four tenths. [3] By these supplies, joined to the treasure which had been left by his father, and which was not yet entirely dissipated, he was enabled to levy a great army, and render himself formidable to his enemy. The English are said to have been much encouraged, in this enterprise, by the arrival of a vessel in the Thames under the papal banner. It carried presents of wine and hams to the king and the more eminent courtiers; and such fond devotion was at that time entertained towards the court of Rome, that these trivial presents were every where received with the greatest triumph and exultation.

* Father Paul, lib. i.

* * November 4, 1512.

* * * Stowe.

In order to prevent all disturbances from Scotland while Henry’s arms should be employed on the continent, Dr. West, dean of Windsor, was despatched on an embassy to James, the king’s brother-in-law; and instructions were given him to accommodate all differences between the kingdoms, as well as to discover the intentions of the court of Scotland. [1] Some complaints had already been made on both sides. One Barton, a Scotchman, having suffered injuries from the Portuguese, for which he could obtain no redress, had procured letters of marque against that nation; but he had no sooner put to sea than he was guilty of the grossest abuses, committed depredations upon the English, and much infested the narrow seas. [2] Lord Howard and Sir Edward Howard, admirals, and sons of the earl of Surrey, sailing out against him, fought him in a desperate action, where the pirate was killed; and they brought his ships into the Thames. As Henry refused all satisfaction for this act of justice, some of the borderers, who wanted but a pretence for depredations, entered England under the command of Lord Hume, warden of the marches, and committed great ravages on that kingdom. Notwithstanding these mutual grounds of dissatisfaction, matters might easily have been accommodated, had it not been for Henry’s intended invasion of France, which roused the jealousy of the Scottish nation. [3]

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

* * Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * * Buchanan, lib. xii. Drummond in the Life of James IV.

The ancient league which subsisted between France and Scotland was conceived to be the strongest band of connection; and the Scots universally believed, that were it not for the countenance which they received from this foreign alliance, they had never been able so long to maintain their independence against a people so much superior. James was further incited to take part in the quarrel by the invitations of Anne, queen of France, whose knight he had ever in all tournaments professed himself, and who summoned him, according to the ideas of romantic gallantry prevalent in that age, to take the field in her defence, and prove himself her true and valorous champion. The remonstrances of his consort and of his wisest counsellors were in vain opposed to the martial ardor of this prince. He first sent a squadron of ships to the assistance of France; the only fleet which Scotland seems ever to have possessed. And though he still made professions of maintaining a neutrality, the English ambassador easily foresaw that a war would in the end prove inevitable; and he gave warning of the danger to his master, who sent the earl of Surrey to put the borders in a posture of defence, and to resist the expected invasion of the enemy.

Henry, all on fire for military fame, was little discouraged by this appearance of a diversion from the north; and so much the less, as he flattered himself with the assistance of all the considerable potentates of Europe in his invasion of France. The pope still continued to thunder out his excommunications against Lewis and all the adherents of the schismatical council: the Swiss cantons made professions of violent animosity against France: the ambassadors of Ferdinand and Maximilian had signed with those of Henry a treaty of alliance against that power, and had stipulated the time and place of their intended invasion: and though Ferdinand disavowed his ambassador, and even signed a truce for a twelvemonth with the common enemy, Henry was not yet fully convinced of his selfish and sinister intentions, and still hoped for his concurrence after the expiration of that term. He had now got a minister who complied with all his inclinations, and flattered him in every scheme to which his sanguine and impetuous temper was inclined.

Thomas Wolsey, dean of Lincoln, and almoner to the king, surpassed in favor all his ministers, and was fast advancing towards that unrivalled grandeur which he afterwards attained. This man was son of a butcher at Ipswich; but having got a learned education, and being endowed with an excellent capacity, he was admitted into the marquis of Dorset's family as tutor to that nobleman's children, and soon gained the friendship and countenance of his patron. [1] He was recommended to be chaplain to Henry VII.; and being employed by that monarch in a secret negotiation, which regarded his intended marriage with Margaret of Savoy, Maximilian's daughter, he acquitted himself to the king's satisfaction, and obtained the praise both of diligence and dexterity in his conduct. [2]

That prince, having given him a commission to Maximilian, who at that time resided in Brussels, was surprised, in less than three days after, to see Wolsey present himself before him, and supposing that he had protracted his departure, he began to reprove him for the dilatory execution of his orders. Wolsey informed him that he had just returned from Brussels, and had successfully fulfilled all his majesty's commands. "But on second thoughts," said the king, "I found that somewhat was omitted in your orders; and have sent a messenger after you with fuller instructions." "I met the messenger," replied Wolsey, "on my return: but as I had reflected on that omission, I ventured of myself to execute what I knew must be your majesty's intentions." The death of Henry soon after this incident retarded the advancement of Wolsey, and prevented his reaping any advantage from the good opinion which that monarch had entertained of him: but thence forwards he was looked on at court as a rising man; and Fox, bishop of Winchester, cast his eye upon him as one who might be serviceable to him in his present situation. [1] This prelate, observing that the earl of Surrey had totally eclipsed him in favor, resolved to introduce Wolsey to the young prince's familiarity; and hoped that he might rival Surrey in his insinuating

* Stowe, .

* * Cavendish. Fiddes's Life of Wolsey. Stowe.

arts, and yet be contented to act in the cabinet a part subordinate to Fox himself, who had promoted him.

* Antiq. Brit. Eccles. . Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

In a little time, Wolsey gained so much on the king, that he supplanted both Surrey in his favor, and Fox in his trust and confidence. Being admitted to Henry’s parties of pleasure, he took the lead in every jovial conversation, and promoted all that frolic and entertainment which he found suitable to the age and inclination of the young monarch. Neither his own years, which were near forty, nor his character of a clergyman, were any restraint upon him, or engaged him to check, by any useless severity, the gayety in which Henry, who had small propension to debauchery, passed his careless hours. During the intervals of amusement, he introduced business, and insinuated those maxims of conduct which he was desirous his master should adopt. He observed to him that while he intrusted his affairs into the hands of his father’s counsellors, he had the advantage indeed of employing men of wisdom and experience, but men who owed not their promotion to his favor, and who scarcely thought themselves accountable to him for the exercise of their authority: that by the factions, and cabals, and jealousies which had long prevailed among them, they more obstructed the advancement of his affairs, than they promoted it by the knowledge which age and practice had conferred upon them: that while he thought proper to pass his time in those pleasures to which his age and royal fortune invited him, and in those studies which would in time enable him to sway the sceptre with absolute authority, his best system of government would be, to intrust his authority into the hands of some one person who was the creature of his will, and who could entertain no view but that of promoting his service: and that if this minister had also the same relish for pleasure with himself, and the same taste for science, he could more easily, at intervals, account to him for his whole conduct, and introduce his master gradually into the knowledge of public business; and thus, without tedious constraint or application, initiate him in the science of government. [1]

* Cavendish, . Stowe, .

Henry entered into all the views of Wolsey; and finding no one so capable of executing this plan of administration as the person who proposed it, he soon advanced his favorite, from being the companion of his pleasures, to be a member of his council; and from being a member of his council, to be his sole and absolute minister. By this rapid advancement and uncontrolled authority, the character and genius of Wolsey had full opportunity to display itself. Insatiable in his acquisitions, but still more magnificent in his expense: of extensive capacity, but still more unbounded enterprise: ambitious of power, but still more desirous of glory: insinuating engaging, persuasive; and, by turns, lofty, elevated, commanding: haughty to his equals, but affable to his dependants: oppressive to the people, but liberal to his friends; more generous than grateful; less moved by injuries than by contempt; he was framed to take the ascendant in every intercourse with others, but exerted this superiority of nature with such ostentation as exposed him to envy, and made every one willing to recall the original inferiority, or rather meanness, of his fortune.

The branch of administration in which Henry most exerted himself, while he gave his entire confidence to Wolsey, was the military; which, as it suited the natural gallantry and bravery of his temper, as well as the ardor of his youth, was the principal object of his attention. Finding that Lewis had made great preparations both by sea and land to resist him, he was no less careful to levy a formidable army and equip a considerable fleet for the invasion of France. The command of the fleet was intrusted to Sir Edward Howard; who, after scouring the Channel for some time, presented himself before Brest, where the French navy then lay; and he challenged them to a combat. The French admiral, who expected from the Mediterranean a reënforcement of some galleys under the command of Prejeant de Bidoux, kept within the harbor, and saw with patience the English burn and destroy the country in the neighborhood. At last Prejeant arrived with six galleys, and put into Conquet, a place within a few leagues of Brest; where he secured himself behind some batteries, which he had planted on rocks that lay on each side of him. Howard was, notwithstanding, determined to make an attack upon him; and as he had but two galleys, he took himself the command of one, and gave the other to Lord Ferrars. He was followed by some row-barges and some crayers under the command of Sir Thomas Cheyney, Sir William Sidney, and other officers of distinction. He immediately fastened on Prejeant's ship, and leaped on board of her, attended by one Carroz, a Spanish cavalier, and seventeen Englishmen. The cable, meanwhile, which fastened his ship to that of the enemy, being cut, the admiral was thus left in the hands of the French; and as he still continued the combat with great gallantry, he was pushed overboard by their pikes. [1] Lord Ferrars, seeing the admiral’s galley fall off, followed with the other small vessels; and the whole fleet was so discouraged by the loss of their commander, that they retired from before Brest. [2] The French navy came out of harbor, and even ventured to invade the coast of Sussex. They were repulsed, and Prejeant, their commander, lost an eye by the shot of an arrow. Lord Howard, brother to the deceased admiral, succeeded to the command of the English fleet; and little memorable passed at sea during this summer.

* It was a maxim of Howard’s, that no admiral was good for any thing that was not brave even to a degree of madness. As the sea service requires much less plan and contrivance, and capacity, than the land, this maxim has great plausibility and appearance of truth; though the fate of Howard himself may serve as a proof, that even there courage ought to be tempered with discretion.

* * Stowe, . Herbert.

* * * Holingshed, .

Great preparations had been making at land, during the whole winter, for an invasion on France by the way of Calais; but the summer was well advanced before every thing was in sufficient readiness for the intended enterprise. The long peace which the kingdom had enjoyed had somewhat unfitted the English for military expeditions; and the great change which had lately been introduced in the art of war, had rendered it still more difficult to inure them to the use of the weapons now employed in action. The Swiss, and after them the Spaniards, had shown the advantage of a stable infantry, who fought with pike and sword, and were able to repulse even the heavy-armed cavalry, in which the great force of the armies formerly consisted. The practice of firearms was become common; though the caliver, which was the weapon now in use, was so inconvenient, and attended with so many disadvantages, that it had not entirely discredited the bow, a weapon in which the English excelled all European nations. A considerable part of the forces which Henry levied for the invasion of France consisted of archers; and as soon as affairs were in readiness, the vanguard of the army, amounting to eight thousand men, under the command of the earl of Shrewsbury, sailed over to Calais. Shrewsbury was accompanied by the earl of Derby, the lords Fitzwater, Hastings, Cobham, and Sir Rice ap Thomas, captain of the light horse. Another body of six thousand men soon after followed under the command of Lord Herbert the chamberlain, attended by the earls of Northumberland and Kent, the lords Audley and Delawar, together with Carew, Curson, and other gentlemen.

The king himself prepared to follow with the main body and rear of the army; and he appointed the queen regent of the kingdom during his absence. That he might secure her administration from all disturbance, he ordered Edmond de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, to be beheaded in the Tower, the nobleman who had been attainted and imprisoned during the late reign. Henry was led to commit this act of violence by the dying commands, as is imagined, of his father, who told him that he never would be free from danger while a man of so turbulent a disposition as Suffolk was alive. And as Richard de la Pole, brother of Suffolk, had accepted of a command in the French service, and foolishly attempted to revive the York faction, and to instigate them against the present government, he probably by that means drew more suddenly the King’s vengeance on this unhappy nobleman.

At last, Henry, attended by the duke of Buckingham and many others of the nobility, arrived at Calais, and entered upon his French expedition, from which he fondly expected so much success and glory. [1] Of all those allies on whose assistance he relied, the Swiss alone fully performed their engagements. Being put in motion by a sum of money sent them by Henry, and incited by their victories obtained in Italy and by their animosity against France, they were preparing to enter that kingdom with an army of twenty-five thousand men; and no equal force could be opposed to their incursion. Maximilian had received an advance of one hundred and twenty thousand crowns from Henry, and had promised to reënforce the Swiss with eight thousand men, but failed in his engagements. That he might make atonement to the king, he himself appeared in the Low Countries, and joined the English army with some German and Flemish soldiers, who were useful in giving an example of discipline to Henry’s new-levied forces. Observing the disposition of the English monarch to be more bent on glory than on interest, he enlisted himself in his service, wore the cross of St. George, and received pay, a hundred crowns a day, as one of his subjects and captains. But while he exhibited this extraordinary spectacle, of an emperor of Germany serving under a king of England, he was treated with the highest respect by Henry, and really directed all the operations of the English army.

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii. Bellarius, lib. xiv.

Before the arrival of Henry and Maximilian in the camp, the earl of Shrewsbury and Lord Herbert had formed the siege of Terouane, a town situated on the frontiers of Picardy; and they began to attack the place with vigor. Teligni and Crequi commanded in the town, and had a garrison not exceeding two thousand men; yet made they such stout resistance as protracted the siege a month; and they at last found themselves more in danger from want of provisions and ammunition than from the assaults of the besiegers. Having conveyed intelligence of their situation to Lewis, who had advanced to Amiens with his army, that prince gave orders to throw relief into the place. Fontrailles appeared at the head of eight hundred horsemen, each of whom carried a sack of gunpowder behind him, and two quarters of bacon. With this small force he made a sudden and unexpected irruption into the English camp, and, surmounting all resistance, advanced to the fosse of the town, where each horseman threw down his burden. They immediately returned at the gallop, and were so fortunate as again to break through the English and to suffer little or no loss in this dangerous attempt. [1]

But the English had, soon after, full revenge for the insult. Henry had received intelligence of the approach of the French horse, who had advanced to protect another incursion of Fontrailles; and he ordered some troops to pass the Lis, in order to oppose them. The cavalry of France, though they consisted chiefly of gentlemen, who had behaved with great gallantry in many desperate actions in Italy, were, on sight of the enemy, seized with so unaccountable a panic, that they immediately took to flight, and were pursued by the English. The duke of Longueville, who commanded the French, Bussi d’Amboise, Clermont, Imbercourt, the chevalier Bayard, and many other officers of distinction were made prisoners. [2] This action, or rather rout, is sometimes called the battle of Guinegate, from the place where it was fought; but more commonly the “battle of spurs,” because the French that day made more use of their spurs than of their swords or military weapons.

* Hist. de Chev. Bayard, cha. Mémoires de Bellai.

* * Mémoires de Bellai, liv. i. Polyd. Virg. liv. xxvii. Holingshed, . Herbert.

After so considerable an advantage, the king, who was at the head of a complete army of above fifty thousand men, might have made incursions to the gates of Paris, and spread confusion and desolation every where. It gave Lewis great joy when he heard that the English, instead of pushing their victory, and attacking the dismayed troops of France, returned to the siege of so inconsiderable a place as Terouane. The governors were obliged soon after to capitulate; and Henry found his acquisition of so little moment, though gained at the expense of some blood, and what, in his present circumstances, was more important, of much valuable time, that he immediately demolished the fortifications. The anxieties of the French were again revived with regard to the motions of the English. The Swiss at the same time had entered Burgundy with a formidable army, and laid siege to Dijon, which was in no condition to resist them. Ferdinand himself, though he had made a truce with Lewis, seemed disposed to lay hold of every advantage which fortune should present to him. Scarcely ever was the French monarchy in greater danger, or less in a condition to defend itself against those powerful armies which on every side assailed or threatened it. Even many of the inhabitants of Paris, who believed themselves exposed to the rapacity and violence of the enemy, began to dislodge, without knowing what place could afford them greater security.

But Lewis was extricated from his present difficulties by the manifold blunders of his enemies. The Swiss allowed themselves to be seduced into a negotiation by Tremoille, governor of Burgundy; and without making inquiry whether that nobleman had any powers to treat, they accepted of the conditions which he offered them. Tremoille, who knew that he should be disavowed by his master, stipulated whatever they were pleased to demand; and thought himself happy, at the expense of some payments and very large promises, to get rid of so formidable an enemy. [1]

The measures of Henry showed equal ignorance in the art of war with that of the Swiss in negotiation. Tournay was a great and rich city, which, though it lay within the frontiers of Flanders, belonged to France, and afforded the troops of that kingdom a passage into the heart of the Netherlands. Maximilian, who was desirous of freeing his grandson from so troublesome a neighbor, advised Henry to lay siege to the place; and the

English monarch, not considering that such an acquisition nowise advanced his conquests in France, was so imprudent as to follow this interested counsel. The city of Tournay, by its ancient charters, being exempted from the burden of a garrison, the burghers, against the remonstrance of their sovereign, strenuously insisted on maintaining this dangerous privilege; and they engaged, by themselves, to make a vigorous defence against the enemy. [2] Their courage failed them when matters came to trial; and after a few days' siege, the place was surrendered to the English. The bishop of Tournay was lately dead; and as a new bishop was already elected by the chapter, but not installed in his office, the king bestowed the administration of the see on his favorite Wolsey, and put him in immediate possession of the revenues, which were considerable. [3]

* Mémoires du Mareschal de Fleuranges. Bellarius, lib. xiv.

* * Mémoires de Fleuranges.

* * * Strype's Memorials, vol. i. , 6.

Hearing of the retreat of the Swiss, and observing the season to be far advanced, he thought proper to return to England; and he carried the greater part of his army with him. Success had attended him in every enterprise; and his youthful mind was much elated with this seeming prosperity, but all men of judgment, comparing the advantages of his situation with his progress, his expense with his acquisitions, were convinced that this campaign, so much vaunted, was, in reality, both ruinous and inglorious to him. [1]

* Guicciardini.

The success which, during this summer, had attended Henry's arms in the north, was much more decisive. The king of Scotland had assembled the whole force of his kingdom; and having passed the Tweed with a brave, though a tumultuary army of above fifty thousand men, he ravaged those parts of Northumberland which lay nearest that river, and he employed himself in taking the Castles of Norham, Etal, Werke, Ford, and other places of small importance. Lady Ford, being taken prisoner in her castle, was presented to James, and so gained on the affections of that prince, that he wasted in pleasure the critical time which, during the absence of his enemy, he should have employed in pushing his conquests. His troops, lying in a barren country, where they soon consumed all the provisions, began to be pinched with hunger; and as the authority of the prince was feeble, and military discipline during that age extremely relaxed, many of them had stolen from the camp, and retired homewards. Meanwhile, the earl of Surrey, having collected a force of twenty-six thousand men, of which five thousand had been sent over from the king's army in France, marched to the defence of the country, and approached the Scots, who lay on some high ground near the hills of Cheviot. The River Till ran between the armies, and prevented an engagement: Surrey therefore sent a herald to the Scottish camp, challenging the enemy to descend into the plain of Milfield, which lay towards the south; and there, appointing a day for the combat, to try their valor on equal ground. As he received no satisfactory answer, he made a feint of marching towards Berwick; as if he intended to enter Scotland, to lay waste the borders, and cut off the provisions of the enemy. The Scottish army, in order to prevent his purpose, put themselves in motion; and having set fire to the huts in which they had quartered, they descended from the hills. Surrey, taking advantage of the smoke, which was blown towards him, and which concealed his movements, passed the Till with his artillery and vanguard at the bridge of Twisel, and sent the rest of his army to seek a ford higher up the river.

An engagement was now become inevitable, and both sides prepared for it with tranquillity and order. [1] The English divided their army into two lines: Lord Howard led the main body of the first line, Sir Edmond Howard the right wing, Sir Marmaduke Constable the left. The earl of Surrey himself commanded the main body of the second line, Lord Dacres the right wing, Sir Edward Stanley the left. The front of the Scots presented three divisions to the enemy: the middle was led by the king himself; the right by the earl of Huntley, assisted by Lord Hume; the left by the earls of Lenox and Argyle. A fourth division under the earl of Bothwell made a body of reserve. Huntley began the battle, and, after a sharp conflict, put to flight the left wing of the English, and chased them off the field: but on returning from the pursuit, he found the whole Scottish army in great disorder. The division under Lenox and Argyle, elated with the success of the other wing, had broken their ranks, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances and entreaties of La Motte, the French ambassador, had rushed headlong upon the enemy. Not only Sir Edmond Howard, at the head of his division, received them with great valor, but Dacres, who commanded in the second line, wheeling about during the action, fell upon their rear, and put them to the sword without resistance. The division under James and that under Bothwell, animated by the valor of their leaders, still made head against the English, and throwing themselves into a circle, protracted the action, till night separated the combatants. The victory seemed yet undecided, and the numbers that fell on each side were nearly equal, amounting to above five thousand men: but the morning discovered where the advantage lay. The English had lost only persons of small note; but the flower of the Scottish nobility had fallen in battle, and their king himself, after the most diligent inquiry, could nowhere be found. In searching the field, the English met with a dead body which resembled him, and was arrayed in a similar habit; and they put it in a leaden coffin, and sent it to London. During some time it was kept unburied; because James died under sentence of excommunication, on account of his confederacy with France, and his opposition to the holy see: [2] but upon Henry's application, who pretended that this prince had, in the instant before his death, discovered signs of repentance, absolution was given him, and his body was interred.

* Buchanan, lib. xiii. Drummond. Herbert. Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii. Stowe, . Paulus Jovius.

* * Buchanan, lib. xiii. Herbert.

The Scots, however, still asserted that it was not James's body which was found on the field of battle, but that of one Elphinston, who had been arrayed in arms resembling their king's, in order to divide the attention of the English, and share the danger with his master. It was believed that James had been seen crossing the Tweed at Kelso;* and some imagined that he had been killed by the vassals of Lord Hume, whom that nobleman had instigated to commit so enormous a crime. But the populace entertained the opinion that he was still alive, and having secretly gone in pilgrimage to the Holy Land, would soon return and take possession of the throne. This fond conceit was long entertained among the Scots.

The king of Scotland and most of his chief nobles being slain in the field of Flouden, (so this battle was called,) an inviting opportunity was offered to Henry of gaining advantages over that kingdom, perhaps of reducing it to subjection. But he discovered on this occasion a mind truly great and generous. When the queen of Scotland, Margaret, who was created regent during the infancy of her son, applied for peace, he readily granted it; and took compassion of the helpless condition of his sister and nephew. The earl of Surrey, who had gained him so great a victory, was restored to the title of duke of Norfolk, which had been forfeited by his father for engaging on the side of Richard III.

1514.

Lord Howard was honored with the title of earl of Surrey. Sir Charles Brandon, the king’s favorite, whom he had before created Viscount Lisle, was now raised to the dignity of duke of Suffolk. Wolsey, who was both his favorite and his minister, was created bishop of Lincoln. Lord Herbert obtained the title of earl of Worcester; Sir Edward Stanley, that of Lord Monteagle.

Though peace with Scotland gave Henry security on that side, and enabled him to prosecute in tranquillity his enterprise against France, some other incidents had happened, which more than counterbalanced this fortunate event, and served to open his eyes with regard to the rashness of an undertaking, into which his youth and high fortune had betrayed him.

Lewis, fully sensible of the dangerous situation to which his kingdom had been reduced during the former campaign, was resolved, by every expedient, to prevent the return of like perils, and to break the confederacy of his enemies. The pope was nowise disposed to push the French to extremity; and provided they did not return to take possession of Milan, his interests rather led him to preserve the balance among the contending parties. He accepted, therefore, of Lewis’s offer to renounce the council of Lyons; and he took off the excommunication which his predecessor and himself had fulminated against that king and his kingdom. Ferdinand was now fast declining in years, and as he entertained no further ambition than that of keeping possession of Navarre, which he had subdued by his arms and policy, he readily hearkened to the proposals of Lewis for prolonging the truce another year; and he even showed an inclination of forming a more intimate connection with that monarch. Lewis had dropped hints of his intention to marry his second daughter, Renée, either to Charles, prince of Spain, or his brother Ferdinand, both of them grandsons of the Spanish monarch; and he declared his resolution of bestowing on her, as her portion, his claim to the duchy of Milan. Ferdinand not only embraced these proposals with joy, but also engaged the emperor Maximilian in the same views, and procured his accession to a treaty which opened so inviting a prospect of aggrandizing their common grandchildren.

When Henry was informed of Ferdinand's renewal of the truce with Lewis, he fell into a violent rage, and loudly complained, that his father-in-law had first, by high promises and professions, engaged him in enmity with France, and afterwards, without giving him the least warning, had now again sacrificed his interests to his own selfish purposes, and had left him exposed alone to all the danger and expense of the war. In proportion to his easy credulity, and his unsuspecting reliance on Ferdinand, was the vehemence with which he exclaimed against the treatment which he met with; and he threatened revenge for this egregious treachery and breach of faith. [1] But he lost all patience when informed of the other negotiation, by which Maximilian was also seduced from his alliance, and in which proposals had been agreed to for the marriage of the prince of Spain with the daughter of France. Charles, during the lifetime of the late king, had been affianced to Mary, Henry's younger sister; and as the prince now approached the age of puberty, the king had expected the immediate completion of the marriage, and the honorable settlement of a sister for whom he had entertained a tender affection. Such a complication, therefore, of injuries gave him the highest displeasure, and inspired him with a desire of expressing his disdain towards those who had imposed on his youth and inexperience, and had abused his too great facility.

* Petrus de Angleria, Epist. 545, 646.

The duke of Longueville, who had been made prisoner at the battle of Gumegate, and who was still detained in England, was ready to take advantage of all these dispositions of Henry, in order to procure a peace, and even an alliance, which he knew to be passionately desired by his master. He represented to the king, that Anne, queen of France, being lately dead, a door was thereby opened for an affinity, which might tend to the advantage of both kingdoms, and which would serve to terminate honorably all the differences between them: that she had left Lewis no male children; and as he had ever entertained a strong desire of having heirs to the crown, no marriage seemed more suitable to him than that with the princess of England, whose youth and beauty afforded the most flattering hopes in that particular: that though the marriage of a princess of sixteen with a king of fifty-three might seem unsuitable, yet the other advantages attending the alliance were more than a sufficient compensation for this inequality; and that Henry, in loosening his connections with Spain, from which he had never reaped any advantage, would contract a close affinity with Lewis, a prince who, through his whole life, had invariably maintained the character of probity and honor.

As Henry seemed to hearken to this discourse with willing ears, Longueville informed his master of the probability which he discovered of bringing the matter to a happy conclusion; and he received full powers for negotiating the treaty. The articles were easily adjusted between the monarchs. Louis agreed that Tournay should remain in the hands of the English; that Richard de la Pole should be banished to Metz, there to live on a pension assigned him by Lewis; that Henry should receive payment of a million of crowns, being the arrears due by treaty to his father and himself; and that the princess Mary should bring four hundred thousand crowns as her portion, and enjoy as large a jointure as any queen of France, even the former, who was heiress of Brittany. The two princes also agreed on the succors with which they should mutually supply each other, in case either of them was attacked by an enemy. [1]

In consequence of this treaty, Mary was sent over to France with a splendid retinue; and Lewis met her at Abbeville, where the espousals were celebrated. He was enchanted with the beauty, grace, and numerous accomplishments of the young princess; and being naturally of an amorous disposition, which his advanced age had not entirely cooled, he was seduced into such a course of gayety and pleasure, as proved very unsuitable to his declining state of health. [2]

* Du Tillet.

* * Brantome, Eloge de Louis XII.

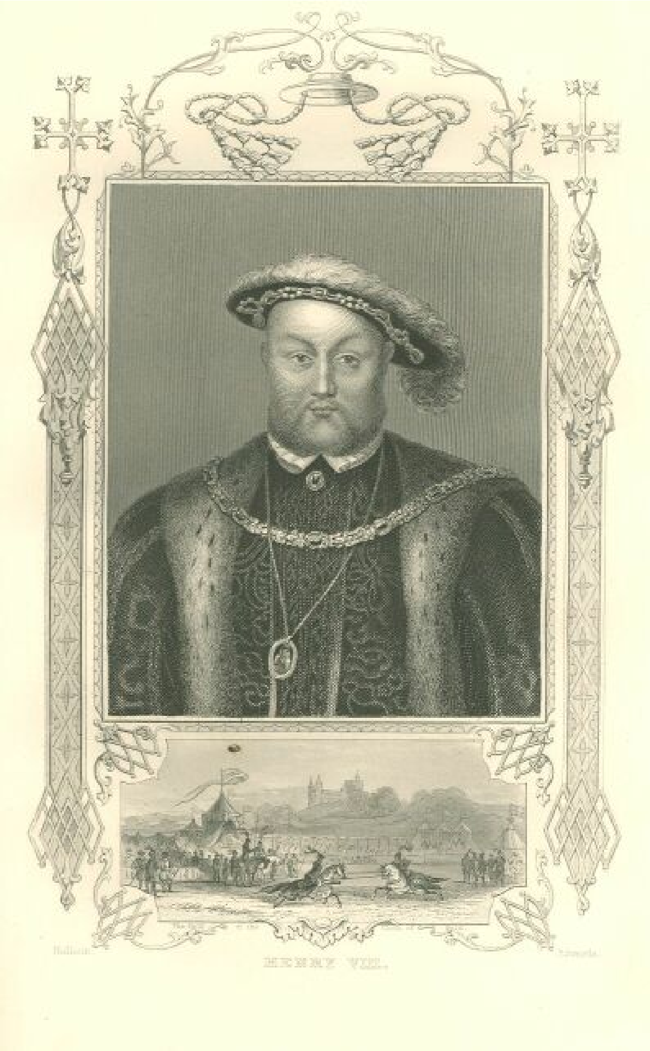
1515.

He died in less than three months after the marriage, to the extreme regret of the French nation, who, sensible of his tender concern for their welfare, gave him with one voice the honorable appellation of “father of his people.”

Francis, duke of Angoulême, a youth of one and twenty, who had married Lewis’s eldest daughter, succeeded him on the throne; and, by his activity, valor, generosity, and other virtues, gave prognostics of a happy and glorious reign. This young monarch had been extremely struck with the charms of the English princess; and even during his predecessor’s lifetime, had paid her such assiduous court, as made some of his friends apprehend that he had entertained views of gallantry towards her. But being warned that, by indulging this passion, he might probably exclude himself from the throne he forbore all further addresses; and even watched the young dowager with a very careful eye during the first months of her widowhood. Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, was at that time in the court of France, the most comely personage of his time, and the most accomplished in all the exercises which were then thought to befit a courtier and a soldier. He was Henry’s chief favorite; and that monarch had even once entertained thoughts of marrying him to his sister, and had given indulgence to the mutual passion which took place between them. The queen asked Suffolk, whether he had now the courage, without further reflection, to espouse her; and she told him that her brother would more easily forgive him for not asking his consent, than for acting contrary to his orders. Suffolk declined not so inviting an offer; and their nuptials were secretly celebrated at Paris. Francis, who was pleased with this marriage, as it prevented Henry from forming any powerful alliance by means of his sister, [1] interposed his good offices in appeasing him: and even Wolsey, having entertained no jealousy of Suffolk, who was content to participate in the king’s pleasures, and had no ambition to engage in public business, was active in reconciling the king to his sister and brother-in-law; and he obtained them permission to return to England.

* Petrus de Angleria, Epist. 544.

CHAPTER XXVIII.



HENRY VIII.

HENRY VIII.

1515.

The numerous enemies whom Wolsey’s sudden elevation, his aspiring character, and his haughty deportment had raised him, served only to rivet him faster in Henry’s confidence; who valued himself on supporting the choice which he had made, and who was incapable of yielding either to the murmurs of the people or to the discontents of the great. That artful prelate, likewise, well acquainted with the king’s imperious temper, concealed from him the absolute ascendant which he had acquired; and while he secretly directed all public councils, he ever pretended a blind submission to the will and authority of his master. By entering into the king’s pleasures, he preserved his affection; by conducting his business, he gratified his indolence; and by his unlimited complaisance in both capacities, he prevented all that jealousy to which his exorbitant acquisitions and his splendid ostentatious train of life should naturally have given birth. The archbishopric of York falling vacant by the death of Bambridge, Wolsey was promoted to that see, and resigned the bishopric of Lincoln. Besides enjoying the administration of Tournay, he got possession, on easy leases, of the revenues of Bath, Worcester, and Hereford, bishoprics filled by Italians, who were allowed to reside abroad, and who were glad to compound for this indulgence, by yielding a considerable share of their income. He held “in commendam” the abbey of St. Albans, and many other church preferments. He was even allowed to unite with the see of York, first that of Durham, next that of Winchester; and there seemed to be no end of his acquisitions. His further advancement in ecclesiastical dignity served him as a pretence for engrossing still more revenues: the pope, observing his great influence over the king, was desirous of engaging him in his interests, and created him a cardinal. No churchman, under color of exacting respect to religion, ever carried to a greater height the state and dignity of that character. His train consisted of eight hundred servants, of whom many were knights and gentlemen; some even of the nobility put their children into his family as a place of education; and in order to gain them favor with their patron, allowed them to bear offices as his servants. Whoever was distinguished by any art or science paid court to the cardinal; and none paid court in vain. Literature, which was then in its infancy, found in him a generous patron; and both by his public institutions and private bounty, he gave encouragement to every branch of erudition. [1] Not content with this munificence, which gained him the approbation of the wise, he strove to dazzle the eyes of the populace by the splendor of his equipage and furniture, the costly embroidery of his liveries, the lustre of his apparel. He was the first clergyman in England that wore silk and gold, not only on his habit, but also on his saddles and the trappings of his horses. [2] He caused his cardinal's hat to be borne aloft by a person of rank; and when he came to the king's chapel, would permit it to be laid on no place but the altar. A priest, the tallest and most comely he could find, carried before him a pillar of silver, on whose top was placed a cross: but not satisfied with this parade, to which he thought himself entitled as cardinal, he provided another priest of equal stature and beauty, who marched along, bearing the cross of York, even in the diocese of Canterbury; contrary to the ancient rule and the agreement between the prelates of these rival sees. [3] The people made merry with the cardinal's ostentation; and said, they were now sensible that one crucifix alone was not sufficient for the expiation of his sins and offences.

* Erasm. Epist. lib. ii. epist. i.; lib. xvi. epist. 3.

* * Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii. Stowe, p, 501. Hollingshed, p. 847.

* * * Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

Warham, chancellor and archbishop of Canterbury, a man of a moderate temper, averse to all disputes, chose rather to retire from public employment, than maintain an unequal contest with the haughty cardinal. He resigned his office of chancellor; and the great seal was immediately delivered to Wolsey. If this new accumulation of dignity increased his enemies, it also served to exalt his personal character, and prove the extent of his capacity. A strict administration of justice took place during his enjoyment of this high office and no chancellor ever discovered greater impartiality in his decisions, deeper penetration of judgment, or more enlarged knowledge of law and equity. [1]

The duke of Norfolk, finding the king’s money almost entirely exhausted by projects and pleasures, while his inclination for expense still continued, was glad to resign his office of treasurer and retire from court. His rival, Fox, bishop of Winchester reaped no advantage from his absence; but partly overcome by years and infirmities, partly disgusted at the ascendant acquired by Wolsey, withdrew himself wholly to the care of his diocese. The duke of Suffolk had also taken offence, that the king, by the cardinal’s persuasion, had refused to pay a debt which he had contracted during his residence in France; and he thenceforth affected to live in privacy. These incidents left Wolsey to enjoy without a rival the whole power and favor of the king; and they put into his hands every kind of authority. In vain did Fox, before his retirement, warn the king “not to suffer the servant to be greater than his master.” Henry replied, “that he well knew how to retain all his subjects in obedience;” but he continued still an unlimited deference in every thing to the directions and counsels of the cardinal.

The public tranquillity was so well established in England, the obedience of the people so entire, the general administration of justice, by the cardinal’s means, [2] so exact, that no domestic occurrence happened considerable enough to disturb the repose of the king and his minister: they might even have dispensed with giving any strict attention to foreign affairs, were it possible for men to enjoy any situation in absolute tranquillity, or abstain from projects and enterprises however fruitless and unnecessary.

The will of the late king of Scotland, who left his widow regent of the kingdom, and the vote of the convention of states, which confirmed that destination, had expressly limited her authority to the condition of her remaining unmarried; [3] but, notwithstanding this limitation, a few months after her husband’s death, she espoused the earl of Angus, of the name of Douglas, a young nobleman of great family and promising hopes. Some of the nobility now proposed the electing of Angus to the regency, and recommended this choice as the most likely means of preserving peace with England; but the jealousy of the great families, and the fear of exalting the Douglases, begat opposition to this measure.

* Sir Thomas More. Stowe, .

* * Erasm. lib. ii. epist. i. Cavendish. Hall.

* * * Buchanar, lib. xiv. Drummond. Herbert.

Lord Hume in particular, the most powerful chieftain in the kingdom, insisted on recalling the duke of Albany, son to a brother of James III. who had been banished into France, and who, having there married, had left posterity that were the next heirs to the crown, and the nearest relations to their young sovereign. Albany, though first prince of the blood, had never been in Scotland, was totally unacquainted with the manners of the people, ignorant of their situation, unpractised in their language; yet such was the favor attending the French alliance, and so great the authority of Hume, that this prince was invited to accept the reins of government. Francis, careful not to give offence to the king of England, detained Albany some time in France; but at length, sensible how important it was to keep Scotland in his interests, he permitted him to go over and take possession of the regency: he even renewed the ancient league with that kingdom, though it implied such a close connection as might be thought somewhat to intrench on his alliance with England.

When the regent arrived in Scotland, he made inquiries concerning the state of the country, and character of the people; and he discovered a scene with which he was hitherto but little acquainted. That turbulent kingdom, he found, was rather to be considered as a Confederacy, and that not a close one, of petty princes, than a regular system of civil polity; and even the king, much more a regent, possessed an authority very uncertain and precarious. Arms, more than laws, prevailed; and courage, preferably to equity or justice, was the virtue most valued and respected. The nobility, in whom the whole power resided, were so connected by hereditary alliances, or so divided by inveterate enmities, that it was impossible, without employing an armed force, either to punish the most flagrant guilt, or give security to the most entire innocence. Rapine and violence, when exercised on a hostile tribe, instead of making a person odious among his own clan, rather recommended him to their esteem and approbation; and by rendering him useful to the chieftain, entitled him to a preference above his fellows. And though the necessity of mutual support served as a close cement of amity among those of the same kindred, the spirit of revenge against enemies, and the desire of prosecuting the deadly feuds, (so they were called,) still appeared to be passions the most predominant among that uncultivated people.

The persons to whom Albany, on his arrival, first Applied for information with regard to the state of the country, happened to be inveterate enemies of Hume; [1] and they represented that powerful nobleman as the chief source of public disorders, and the great obstacle to the execution of the law; and the administration of justice. Before the authority of the magistrate could be established, it was necessary, they said, to make an example of this great offender; and, by the terror of his punishment, teach all lesser criminals to pay respect to the power of their sovereign. Albany, moved by these reasons, was induced to forget Hume's past services, to which he had in a great measure been indebted for the regency; and he no longer bore towards him that favorable countenance with which he was wont to receive him. Hume perceived the alteration, and was incited, both by regard to his own safety and from motives of revenge, to take measures in opposition to the regent. He applied himself to Angus and the queen dowager, and represented to them the danger to which the infant prince was exposed from the ambition of Albany, next heir to the crown, to whom the states had imprudently intrusted the whole authority of government. By his persuasion Margaret formed the design of carrying off the young king, and putting him under the protection of her brother; and when that conspiracy was detected, she herself, attended by Hume and Angus, withdrew into England, where she was soon after delivered of a daughter.

* Buchanan, lib. xiv. Drummond.

Henry, in order to check the authority of Albany and the French party, gave encouragement to these malecontents, and assured them of his support. Matters being afterwards in appearance accommodated between Hume and the regent, that nobleman returned into his own country; but mutual suspicions and jealousies still prevailed. He was committed to custody, under the care of the earl of Arran, his brother-in-law; and was for some time detained prisoner in his castle. But having persuaded Arran to enter into the conspiracy with him, he was allowed to make his escape; and he openly levied war upon the regent. A new accommodation ensued, not more sincere than the foregoing; and Hume was so imprudent as to intrust himself, together with his brother, into the hands of that prince. They were immediately seized, committed to custody, brought to trial, condemned and executed. No legal crime was proved against these brothers: it was only alleged, that at the battle of Flouder they had not done their duty in supporting the king; and as this backwardness could not, from the course of their past life, be ascribed to cowardice, it was commonly imputed to a more criminal motive. The evidence, however, of guilt produced against them was far from being valid or convincing; and the people, who hated them while living, were much dissatisfied with their execution.

Such violent remedies often produce for some time a deceitful tranquillity; but as they destroy mutual confidence, and beget the most inveterate animosities, their consequences are commonly fatal, both to the public and to those who have recourse to them. The regent, however, took advantage of the present calm which prevailed; and being invited over by the French king, who was at that time willing to gratify Henry he went into France, and was engaged to remain there for some years. During the absence of the regent, such confusions prevailed in Scotland, and such mutual enmity, rapine, and violence among the great families, that that kingdom was for a long time utterly disabled both from offending its enemies and assisting its friends. We have carried on the Scottish history some years beyond the present period; that, as that country had little connection with the general system of Europe, we might be the less interrupted in the narration of those more memorable events which were transacted in the other kingdoms.

It was foreseen, that a young, active prince, like Francis, and of so martial a disposition, would soon employ the great preparations which his predecessor before his death had made for the conquest of Milan. He had been observed even to weep at the recital of the military exploits of Gaston de Foix; and these tears of emulation were held to be sure presages of his future valor. He renewed the treaty which Lewis had made with Henry; and having left every thing secure behind him, he marched his armies towards the south of France; pretending that his sole purpose was to defend his kingdom against the incursions of the Swiss. This formidable people still retained their animosity against France; and having taken Maximilian, duke of Milan, under their protection, and in reality reduced him to absolute dependence, — they were determined, from views both of honor and of interest, to defend him against the invader. [1] They fortified themselves in all those valleys of the Alps through which they thought the French must necessarily pass; and when Francis, with great secrecy, industry, and perseverance, made his entrance into Piedmont by another passage, they were not dismayed, but descended into the plain, though unprovided with cavalry, and opposed themselves to the progress of the French arms. At Marignan, near Milan, they fought with Francis one of the most furious and best contested battles that is to be met with in the history of these later ages; and it required all the heroic valor of this prince to inspire his troops with courage sufficient to resist the desperate assault of those mountaineers. After a bloody action in the evening, night and darkness parted the combatants; but next morning the Swiss renewed the attack with unabated ardor; and it was not till they had lost all their bravest troops that they could be prevailed on to retire. The field was strewed with twenty thousand slain on both sides; and the mareschal Trivulzio, who had been present at eighteen pitched battles, declared that every engagement which he had yet seen was only the play of children; the action of Marignan was a combat of heroes. [2] After this great victory, the conquest of the Milanese was easy and open to Francis.

The success and glory of the French monarch began to excite jealousy in Henry; and his rapid progress, though in so distant a country, was not regarded without apprehensions by the English ministry. Italy was, during that age, the seat of religion, of literature, and of commerce; and as it possessed alone that lustre which has since been shared out among other nations, it attracted the attention of all Europe, and every acquisition which was made there appeared more important than its weight in the balance of power was, strictly speaking, entitled to. Henry also thought that he had reason to complain of Francis for sending the duke of Albany into Scotland, and undermining the power and credit of his sister the queen dowager. [3] The repairing of the fortifications of Terouenne was likewise regarded as a breach of treaty. But, above all, what tended to alienate the court of England, was the disgust which Wolsey had entertained against the French monarch.

* Mémoires du Bellai, lib. i. Guicciard. lib. xii.

* * Histoire de la Ligue de Cambray.

* * * Père Daniel, vol. iii. .

Henry, on the conquest of Tournay had refused to admit Lewis Gaillart, the bishop elect, to the possession of the temporalities, because that prelate declined taking the oath of allegiance to his new sovereign; and Wolsey was appointed as above related, administrator of the bishopric. As the cardinal wished to obtain the free and undisturbed enjoyment of this revenue, he applied to Francis, and desired him to bestow on Gaillart some see of equal value in France, and to obtain his resignation of Tournay. Francis, who still hoped to recover possession of that city, and who feared that the full establishment of Wolsey in the bishopric would prove an obstacle to his purpose, had hitherto neglected to gratify the haughty prelate; and the bishop of Tournay, by applying to the court of Rome, had obtained a bull for his settlement in the see. Wolsey, who expected to be indulged in every request, and who exacted respect from the greatest princes, resented the slight put upon him by Francis and he pushed his master to seek an occasion of quarrel with that monarch. [1]

Maximilian, the emperor, was ready to embrace every overture for a new enterprise; especially if attended with an offer of money, of which he was very greedy, very prodigal, and very indigent. Richard Pace, formerly secretary to Cardinal Bambridge, and now secretary of state, was despatched to the court of Vienna, and had a commission to propose some considerable payments to Maximilian: [2] he thence made a journey into Switzerland; and by like motives engaged some of the cantons to furnish troops to the emperor. That prince invaded Italy with a considerable army; but being repulsed from before Milan, he retreated with his army into Germany, made peace with France and Venice, ceded Verona to that republic for a sum of money, and thus excluded himself in some measure from all future access into Italy. And Henry found, that after expending five or six hundred thousand ducats, in order to gratify his own and the cardinal's humor, he had only weakened his alliance with Francis, without diminishing the power of that prince.

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

* * Petrus de Angleria, epist. 568.

There were many reasons which engaged the king not to proceed further at present in his enmity against France: he could hope for assistance from no power in Europe. Ferdinand, his father-in-law, who had often deceived him, was declining through age and infirmities; and a speedy period was looked for to the long and prosperous reign of that great monarch. Charles, prince of Spain, sovereign of the Low Countries, desired nothing but peace with Francis, who had it so much in his power, if provoked, to obstruct his peaceable accession to that rich inheritance which was awaiting him. The pope was overawed by the power of France, and Venice was engaged in a close alliance with that monarchy. [1] Henry, therefore, was constrained to remain in tranquillity during some time; and seemed to give himself no concern with regard to the affairs of the continent. In vain did Maximilian endeavor to allure him into some expense, by offering to make a resignation of the imperial crown in his favor. The artifice was too gross to succeed, even with a prince so little politic as Henry; and Pace, his envoy, who was perfectly well acquainted with the emperor's motives and character, gave him warning that the sole view of that prince, in making him so liberal an offer, was to draw money from him.

* Guicciard. lib. xii.

1516.

While a universal peace prevailed in Europe, that event happened which had so long been looked for, and from which such important consequences were expected — the death of Ferdinand the Catholic, and the succession of his grandson Charles to his extensive dominions. The more Charles advanced in power and authority, the more was Francis sensible of the necessity he himself lay under of gaining the confidence and friendship of Henry; and he took at last the only method by which he could obtain success, the paying of court, by presents and flattery, to the haughty cardinal.

1518.

Bonnivet, admiral of France, was despatched to London, and he was directed to employ all his insinuation and address, (qualities in which he excelled,) to procure himself a place in Wolsey's good graces. After the ambassador had succeeded in his purpose, he took an opportunity of expressing his master’s regret that, by mistakes and misapprehensions, he had been so unfortunate as to lose a friendship which he so much valued as that of his eminence. Wolsey was not deaf to these honorable advances from so great a monarch and he was thenceforth observed to express himself, on all occasions, in favor of the French alliance. The more to engage him in his interests, Francis entered into such confidence with him, that he asked his advice even in his most secret affairs; and had recourse to him in all difficult emergencies, as to an oracle of wisdom and profound policy. The cardinal made no secret to the king of this private correspondence; and Henry was so prepossessed in favor of the great capacity of his minister, that he said he verily believed he would govern Francis as well as himself. [1]

When matters seemed sufficiently prepared, Bonnivet opened to the cardinal his master’s desire of recovering Tournay; and Wolsey immediately, without hesitation, engaged to effect his purpose. He took an opportunity of representing to the king and council, that Tournay lay so remote from Calais, that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, in case of war, to keep the communication open between these two places; that as it was situated on the frontiers both of France and the Netherlands, it was exposed to attacks from both these countries, and must necessarily, either by force or famine, fall into the hands of the first assailant; that even in time of peace it could not be preserved without a large garrison, to restrain the numerous and mutinous inhabitants, ever discontented with the English government; and that the possession of Tournay, as it was thus precarious and expensive, so was it entirely useless, and afforded little or no means of annoying, on occasion, the dominions either of Charles or of Francis.

These reasons were of themselves convincing, and were sure of meeting with no opposition when they came from the mouth of the cardinal. A treaty therefore was catered into for the ceding of Tournay; and in order to give to that measure a more graceful appearance, it was agreed, that the dauphin and the princess Mary, both of them infants, should be betrothed, and that this city should be considered as the dowry of the princess. Such kinds of agreement were then common among sovereigns; though it was very rare that the interests and views of the parties continued so steady as to render the intended marriages effectual. But as Henry had been at considerable expense in building a citadel at Tournay, Francis agreed to pay him six hundred thousand crowns at twelve annual payments, and to put into his hands eight hostages, all of them men of quality, for the performance of the article. [2] And lest the cardinal should think himself neglected in these stipulations, Francis promised him a yearly pension of twelve thousand livres, as an equivalent for his administration of the bishopric of Tournay.

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

* * Mémoires du Bellal, lib. i.

The French monarch, having succeeded so well in this negotiation, began to enlarge his views, and to hope for more considerable advantages by practising on the vanity and self-conceit of the favorite. He redoubled his flatteries to the cardinal, consulted him more frequently in every doubt or difficulty, called him in each letter “father,” “tutor,” “governor,” and professed the most unbounded deference to his advice and opinion. All these caresses were preparatives to a negotiation for the delivery of Calais, in consideration of a sum of money to be paid for it; and if we may credit Polydore Virgil, who bears a particular ill-will to Wolsey, on account of his being dispossessed of his employment and thrown into prison by that minister, so extraordinary a proposal met with a favorable reception from the cardinal. He ventured not, however, to lay the matter before the council: he was content to sound privately the opinion of the other ministers, by dropping hints in conversation, as if he thought Calais a useless burden to the kingdom: [1] but when he found that all men were strongly riveted in a contrary persuasion, he thought it dangerous to proceed any further in his purpose; and as he fell soon after into new connections with the king of Spain, the great friendship between Francis and him began gradually to decline.

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

The pride of Wolsey was now further increased by a great accession of power and dignity. Cardinal Campeggio had been sent as legate into England, in order to procure a lithe from the clergy, for enabling the pope to oppose the progress of the Turks; a danger which was become real, and was formidable to all Christendom, but on which the politics of the court of Rome had built so many interested projects that it had lost all influence on the minds of men. The clergy refused to comply with Leo’s demands:

Campeggio was recalled; and the king desired of the pope that Wolsey, who had been joined in this commission, might alone be invested with the legatine power, together with the right of visiting all the clergy and monasteries, and even with suspending all the laws of the church during a twelvemonth. Wolsey, having obtained this new dignity, made a new display of that state and parade to which he was so much addicted. On solemn feast-days, he was not content without saying mass after the manner of the pope himself: not only he had bishops and abbots to serve him; he even engaged the first nobility to give him water and the towel. He affected a rank superior to what had ever been claimed by any churchman in England. Warham, the primate, having written him a letter in which he subscribed himself "your loving brother," Wolsey complained of his presumption in thus challenging an equality with him. When Warham was told what offence he had given, he made light of the matter. "Know ye not," said he, "that this man is drunk with too much prosperity?"

But Wolsey carried the matter much further than vain pomp and ostentation. He erected an office which he called the legatine court; and as he was now, by means of the pope's commission and the king's favor, invested with all power, both ecclesiastical and civil, no man knew what bounds were to be set to the authority of his new tribunal. He conferred on it a kind of inquisitorial and censorial powers even over the laity, and directed it to inquire into all matters of conscience; into all conduct which had given scandal; into all actions which, though they escaped the law, might appear contrary to good morals. Offence was taken at this commission, which was really unbounded; and the people were the more disgusted, when they saw a man who indulged himself in pomp and pleasure, so severe in repressing the least appearance of licentiousness in others. But to render his court more obnoxious, Wolsey made one John Allen judge in it, a person of scandalous life, [1] whom he himself, as chancellor, had, it is said, condemned for perjury: and as it is pretended, that this man either extorted fines from every one whom he was pleased to find guilty, or took bribes to drop prosecutions, men concluded, and with some appearance of reason, that he shared with the cardinal those wages of iniquity.

* Strype's Memorials, vol. i. .

The clergy, and in particular the monks, were exposed to this tyranny; and as the libertinism of their lives often gave a just handle against them, they were obliged to purchase an indemnity by paying large sums of money to the legate or his judge. Not content with this authority, Wolsey pretended, by virtue of his commission, to assume the jurisdiction of all the bishops' courts, particularly that of judging of wills and testaments; and his decisions in those important points were deemed not a little arbitrary. As if he himself were pope, and as if the pope could absolutely dispose of every ecclesiastical preferment, he presented to whatever priories or benefices he pleased, without regard to the right of election in the monks, or of patronage in the nobility and gentry. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

No one durst carry to the king any complaint against these usurpations of Wolsey, till Warham ventured to inform him of the discontents of his people. Henry professed his ignorance of the whole matter. "A man," said he, "is not so blind any where as in his own house: but do you, father," added he to the primate, "go to Wolsey, and tell him, if any thing be amiss, that he amend it." A reproof of this kind was not likely to be effectual: it only served to augment Wolsey's enmity to Warham: but one London having prosecuted Allen, the legate's judge, in a court of law, and having convicted him of malversation and iniquity, the clamor at last reached the king's ears; and he expressed such displeasure to the cardinal, as made him ever after more cautious in exerting his authority.

1519.

While Henry, indulging himself in pleasure and amusement, intrusted the government of his kingdom to this imperious minister, an incident happened abroad which excited his attention. Maximilian, the emperor, died; a man who, of himself, was indeed of little consequence; but as his death left vacant the first station among Christian princes, it set the passions of men in agitation, and proved a kind of era in the general system of Europe. The kings of France and Spain immediately declared themselves candidates for the imperial crown, and employed every expedient of money or intrigue, which promised them success in so great a point of ambition. Henry also was encouraged to advance his pretensions; but his minister

Pace, who was despatched to the electors, found that he began to solicit too late, and that the votes of all these princes were already preëngaged either on one side or the other.

Francis and Charlea made profession from the beginning of carrying on this rivalship with emulation, but without enmity.

This whole narrative has been copied by all the historians from the author here cited: there are many circumstances, however, very suspicious, both because of the obvious partiality of the historian, and because the parliament, when they afterwards examined Wolsey's conduct, could find no proof of any material offence he had ever committed, and Francis in particular declared, that his brother Charles and he were, fairly and openly, suitors to the same mistress; the more fortunate, added he, will carry her; the other must rest contented. [1]

* Belcario, lib. xvi. Guicciard. lib. xiii.

But all men apprehended that this extreme moderation, however reasonable, would not be of long duration; and that incidents would certainly occur to sharpen the minds of the candidates against each other. It was Charles who at length prevailed, to the great disgust of the French monarch, who still continued to the last in the belief that the majority of the electoral college was engaged in his favor. And as he was some years superior in age to his rival, and, after his victory at Marignan and conquest of the Milanese, much superior in renown, he could not suppress his indignation at being thus, in the face of the world, after long and anxious expectation, disappointed in so important a pretension. From this competition, as much as from opposition of interests, arose that emulation between those two great monarchs, which, while it kept their whole age in movement, sets them in so remarkable a contrast to each other: both of them princes endowed with talents and abilities; brave, aspiring, active warlike; beloved by their servants and subjects, dreaded by their enemies, and respected by all the world: Francis, open, frank, liberal, munificent, carrying these virtues to an excess which prejudiced his affairs: Charles, political, close, artful, frugal; better qualified to obtain success in wars and in negotiations, especially the latter. The one the more amiable man; the other the greater monarch. The king, from his oversights and indiscretions, naturally exposed to misfortunes; but qualified, by his spirit and magnanimity, to extricate himself from them with honor: the emperor, by his designing, interested character, fitted, in his greatest successes, to excite jealousy and opposition even among his allies, and to rouse up a multitude of enemies in the place of one whom he had subdued. And as the personal qualities of these princes thus counterpoised each other, so did the advantages and disadvantages of their dominions. Fortune alone, without the concurrence of prudence or valor, never reared up of a sudden so great a power as that which centred in the emperor Charles. He reaped the succession of Castile, of Arragon, of Austria, of the Netherlands: he inherited the conquest of Naples, of Grenada: election entitled him to the empire: even the bounds of the globe seemed to be enlarged a little before his time, that he might possess the whole treasure, as yet entire and unrifled, of the new world. But though the concurrence of all these advantages formed an empire greater and more extensive than any known in Europe since that of the Romans, the kingdom of France alone, being close, compact, united, rich, populous, and being interposed between the provinces of the emperor's dominions, was able to make a vigorous opposition to his progress, and maintain the contest against him.

Henry possessed the felicity of being able, both by the native force of his kingdom and its situation, to hold the balance between those two powers; and had he known to improve by policy and prudence this singular and inestimable advantage, he was really, by means of it, a greater potentate than either of those mighty monarchs, who seemed to strive for the dominion of Europe. But this prince was in his character heedless, inconsiderate, capricious, impolitic; guided by his passions or his favorite; vain, imperious, haughty; sometimes actuated by friendship for foreign powers, oftener by resentment, seldom by his true interest. And thus, though he exulted in that superiority which his situation in Europe gave him, he never employed it to his own essential and durable advantage, or to that of his kingdom.

1520.

Francis was well acquainted with Henry's character, and endeavored to accommodate his conduct to it. He solicited an interview near Calais; in expectation of being able by familiar conversation to gain upon his friendship and confidence. Wolsey earnestly seconded this proposal; and hoped, in the presence of both courts, to make parade of his riches, his splendor, and his influence over both monarchs. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. lib. xxvii.

And as Henry himself loved show and magnificence, and had entertained a curiosity of being personally acquainted with the French king, he cheerfully adjusted all the preliminaries of this interview. The nobility of both nations vied with each other in pomp and expense: many of them involved themselves in great debts, and were not able, by the penury of their whole lives, to repair the vain splendor of a few days. The duke of Buckingham, who, though very rich, was somewhat addicted to frugality, finding his preparations for this festival amount to immense sums, threw out some expressions of displeasure against the cardinal, whom he believed the author of that measure; [1] an imprudence which was not forgotten by this minister.

* Polyd. Vii·g. lib. xxvii. Herbert. Holingshed, .

While Henry was preparing to depart for Calais, he heard that the emperor was arrived at Dover; and he immediately hastened thither with the queen, in order to give a suitable reception to his royal guest. That great prince, politic though young, being informed of the intended interview between Francis and Henry, was apprehensive of the consequences; and was resolved to take the opportunity, in his passage from Spain to the Low Countries, to make the king still a higher compliment, by paying him a visit in his own dominions. Besides the marks of regard and attachment which he gave to Henry, he strove by every testimony of friendship, by flattery, protestations, promises, and presents, to gain on the vanity, the avarice, and the ambition of the cardinal. He here instilled into this aspiring prelate the hope of attaining the papacy; and as that was the sole point of elevation beyond his present greatness, it was sure to attract his wishes with the same ardor as if Fortune had never yet favored him with any of her presents. In confidence of reaching this dignity by the emperor’s assistance, he secretly devoted himself to that monarch’s interests; and Charles was perhaps the more liberal of his promises, because Leo was a very young man; and it was not likely that for many years he should be called upon to fulfil his engagements. Henry easily observed this courtship paid to his minister; but instead of taking umbrage at it, he only made it a subject of vanity; and believed that, as his favor was Wolsey’s sole support, the obeisance of such mighty monarchs to his servant was, in reality, a more conspicuous homage to his own grandeur.

The day of Charles’s departure, Henry went over to Calais with the queen and his whole court; and thence proceeded to Guisnes, a small town near the frontiers. Francis, attended in like manner, came to Ardres, a few miles distant; and the two monarchs met, for the first time, in the fields, at a place situated between these two towns, but still within the English pale; for Francis agreed to pay this compliment to Henry, in consideration of that prince’s passing the sea that he might be present at the interview. Wolsey, to whom both kings had intrusted the regulation of the ceremonial, contrived this circumstance, in order to do honor to his master. The nobility both of France and England here displayed their magnificence with such emulation and profuse expense, as procured to the place of interview the name of “the field of the cloth of gold.”

The two monarchs, after saluting each other in the most cordial manner, retired into a tent which had been erected on purpose, and they held a secret conference together. Henry here proposed to make some amendments on the articles of their former alliance; and he began to read the treaty, “I Henry, king:” these were the first words; and he stopped a moment. He subjoined only the words “of England,” without adding “France,” the usual style of the English monarchs. [1] Francis remarked this delicacy, and expressed by a smile his approbation of it.

He took an opportunity soon after of paying a compliment to Henry of a more flattering nature. That generous prince, full of honor himself, and incapable of distrusting others, was shocked at all the precautions which were observed whenever he had an interview with the English monarch: the number of their guards and attendants was carefully reckoned on both sides: every step was scrupulously measured and adjusted: and if the two kings intended to pay a visit to the queens, they departed from their respective quarters at the same instant, which was marked by the firing of a culverin; they passed each other in the middle point between the places; and the moment that Henry entered Ardres, Francis put himself into the hands of the English at Guisnes. In order to break off this tedious ceremonial, which contained so many dishonorable implications, Francis one day took with him two gentlemen and a page, and rode directly into Guisnes. The guards were surprised at the presence of the monarch, who called aloud to them, “You are all my prisoners: carry me to your master.” Henry was equally astonished at the appearance of Francis; and taking him in his arms, “My brother,” said he, “you have here played me the most agreeable trick in the world, and have showed me the full confidence I may place in you: I surrender myself your prisoner from this moment.” He took from his neck a collar of pearls, worth fifteen thousand angels; [2] and putting it about Francis’s, begged him to wear it for the sake of his prisoner.

* Mémoires de Fleuranges.

* * An angel was then estimated at seven shillings,* or near twelve of our present money.

Francis agreed, but on condition that Henry should wear a bracelet of which he made him a present, and which was double in value to the collar. [1] The king went next day to Ardres without guards or attendants; and confidence being now fully established between the monarchs, they employed the rest of the time entirely in tournaments and festivals.

A defiance had been sent by the two kings to each other’s court, and through all the chief cities in Europe, importing, that Henry and Francis, with fourteen aids, would be ready, in the plains of Picardy, to answer all comers that were gentlemen, at tilt, tournament, and barriers. The monarchs, in order to fulfil this challenge, advanced into the field on horseback, Francis surrounded with Henry’s guards, and Henry with those of Francis. They were gorgeously apparelled; and were both of them the most comely personages of their age, as well as the most expert in every military exercise. They carried away the prize at all trials in those rough and dangerous pastimes; and several horses and riders were overthrown by their vigor and dexterity. The ladies were the judges in these feats of chivalry, and put an end to the rencounter whenever they judged it expedient. Henry erected a spacious house of wood and canvas, which had been framed in London; and he there feasted the French monarch. He had placed a motto on this fabric, under the figure of an English archer embroidered on it, “Cui adhæreo præest,” He prevails whom I favor; [2] expressing his own situation, as holding in his hands the balance of power among the potentates of Europe. In these entertainments, more than in any serious business, did the two kings pass their time, till their departure.

* Mémoires de Fleuranges.

* * Mezeray.

Henry paid then a visit to the emperor and Margaret of Savoy at Gravelines, and engaged them to go along with him to Calais, and pass some days in that fortress. The artful and politic Charles here completed the impression which he had begun to make on Henry and his favorite, and effaced all the friendship to which the frank and generous nature of Francis had given birth. As the house of Austria began sensibly to take the ascendant over the French monarchy, the interests of England required that some support should be given to the latter, and, above all, that any important wars should be prevented which might bestow on either of them a decisive superiority over the other. But the jealousy of the English against France has usually prevented a cordial union between those nations; and Charles, sensible of this hereditary animosity, and desirous further to flatter Henry's vanity, had made him an offer, (an offer in which Francis was afterwards obliged to concur,) that he should be entirely arbiter in any dispute or difference that might arise between the monarchs. But the masterpiece of Charles's politics was the securing of Wolsey in his interests, by very important services, and still higher promises. He renewed assurances of assisting him in obtaining the papacy; and he put him in present possession of the revenues belonging to the sees of Badajoz and Paleneia in Castile. The acquisitions of Wolsey were now become so exorbitant, that, joined to the pensions from foreign powers which Henry allowed him to possess, his revenues were computed nearly to equal those which belonged to the crown itself; and he spent them with a magnificence; or rather an ostentation, which gave general offence to the people; and even lessened his master in the eyes of all foreign nations. [1]

* Polyd. Virg. Hall.

The violent personal emulation and political jealousy which had taken place between the emperor and the French king, soon broke out in hostilities. But while these ambitious and warlike princes were acting against each other in almost every part of Europe, they still made professions of the strongest desire of peace; and both of them incessantly carried their complaints to Henry, as to the umpire between them. The king, who pretended to be neutral, engaged them to send their ambassadors to Calais, there to negotiate a peace under the mediation of Wolsey and the pope’s nuncio. The emperor was well apprised of the partiality of these mediators; and his demands in the conference were so unreasonable as plainly proved him conscious of the advantage. He required the restitution of Burgundy, a province which many years before had been ceded to France by treaty, and which, if in his possession, would have given him entrance into the heart of that kingdom: and he demanded to be freed from the homage which his ancestors had always done for Flanders and Artois, and which he himself had by the treaty of Noyon engaged to renew.

1521.

On Francis’s rejecting these terms, the congress of Calais broke up; and Wolsey soon after took a journey to Bruges, where he met with the emperor. He was received with the same state, magnificence, and respect, as if he had been the king of England himself; and he concluded, in his master’s name, an offensive alliance with the pope and the emperor against France. He stipulated that England should next summer invade that kingdom with forty thousand men; and he betrothed to Charles the princess Mary, the king’s only child, who had now some prospect of inheriting the crown. This extravagant alliance, which was prejudicial to the interests, and might have proved fatal to the liberty and independence, of the kingdom, was the result of the humors and prejudices of the king, and the private views and expectations of the cardinal.

The people saw every day new instances of the uncontrolled authority of this minister. The duke of Buckingham, constable of England, the first nobleman both for family and fortune in the kingdom, had imprudently given disgust to the cardinal; and it was not long before he found reason to repent of his indiscretion. He seems to have been a man full of levity and rash projects; and being infatuated with judicial astrology, he entertained a commerce with one Hopkins, a Carthusian friar, who encouraged him in the notion of his mounting one day the throne of England. He was descended by a female from the duke of Glocester, youngest son of Edward III.; and though his claim to the crown was thereby very remote, he had been so unguarded as to let fall some expressions, as if he thought himself best entitled, in case the king should die without issue, to possess the royal dignity. He had not even abstained from threats against the king’s life; and had provided himself with arms, which he intended to employ, in case a favorable opportunity should offer. He was brought to a trial; and the duke of Norfolk, whose son, the earl of Surrey, had married Buckingham’s daughter, was created lord steward, in order to preside at this solemn procedure. The jury consisted of a duke, a marquis, seven earls, and twelve barons; and they gave their verdict against Buckingham, which was soon after carried into execution. There is no reason to think the sentence unjust;[1] but as Buckingham’s crimes seemed to proceed more from indiscretion than deliberate malice, the people, who loved him, expected that the king would grant him a pardon, and imputed their disappointment to the animosity and revenge of the cardinal.

* Herbert. Hall. Stowe, . Holingshed, .

The king’s own jealousy, however, of all persons allied to the crown, was, notwithstanding his undoubted title, very remarkable during the whole course of his reign; and was alone sufficient to render him implacable against Buckingham. The office of constable, which this nobleman inherited from the Bohuns, earls of Hereford, was forfeited, and was never after revived in England.

CHAPTER XXIX

HENRY VIII.

1521.

During some years, many parts of Europe had been agitated with those religious controversies which produced the reformation, one of the greatest events in history: but as it was not till this time that the king of England publicly took part in the quarrel, we had no occasion to give any account of its rise and progress. It will now be necessary to explain these theological disputes; or, what is more material, to trace from their origin those abuses which so generally diffused the opinion, that a reformation of the church or ecclesiastial order was become highly expedient, if not absolutely necessary. We shall be better enabled to comprehend the subject if we take the matter a little higher, and reflect a moment on the reasons why there must be an ecclesiastical order and a public establishment of religion in every civilized community. The importance of the present occasion will, I hope, excuse this short digression.

Most of the arts and professions in a state are of such a nature, that, while they promote the interests of the society, they are also useful or agreeable to some individuals; and, in that case, the constant rule of the magistrate, except, perhaps, on the first introduction of any art, is to leave the profession to itself, and trust its encouragement to those who reap the benefit of it. The artisans, finding their profits to rise by the favor of their customers, increase as much as possible their skill and industry; and as matters are not disturbed by any injudicious tampering, the commodity is always sure to be at all times nearly proportioned to the demand.

But there are also some callings which, though useful and even necessary in a state, bring no particular advantage or pleasure to any individual; and the supreme power is obliged to alter its conduct with regard to the retainers of those professions. It must give them public encouragement in order to their subsistence; and it must provide against that negligence to which they will naturally be subject, either by annexing peculiar honors to the profession, by establishing a long subordination of ranks and a strict dependence, or by some other expedient. The persons employed in the finances, armies, fleets, and magistracy, are instances of this order of men.

It may naturally be thought, at first sight, that the ecclesiastics belong to the first class, and that their encouragement, as well as that of lawyers and physicians, may safely be intrusted to the liberality of individuals, who are attached to their doctrines, and who find benefit or consolation from their spiritual ministry and assistance. Their industry and vigilance will no doubt, be whetted by such an additional motive; and their skill in their profession, as well as their address in governing the minds of the people, must receive daily increase from their increasing practice, study, and attention.

But if we consider the matter more closely, we shall find, that this interested diligence of the clergy is what every wise legislator will study to prevent; because in every religion, except the true, it is highly pernicious, and it has even a natural tendency to pervert the true, by infusing into it a strong mixture of superstition, folly, and delusion. Each ghostly practitioner, in order to render himself more precious and sacred in the eyes of his retainers, will inspire them with the most violent abhorrence of all other sects, and continually endeavor, by some novelty, to excite the languid devotion of his audience. No regard will be paid to truth, morals, or decency, in the doctrines inculcated. Every tenet will be adopted that best suits the disorderly affections of the human frame. Customers will be drawn to each conventicle by new industry and address, in practising on the passions and credulity of the populace. And, in the end, the civil magistrate will find, that he has dearly paid for his pretended frugality, in saving a fixed establishment for the priests; and that in reality the most decent and advantageous composition which he can make with the spiritual guides is to bribe their indolence, by assigning stated salaries to their profession, and rendering it superfluous for them to be further active than merely to prevent their flock from straying in quest of new pastures. And in this manner ecclesiastical establishments, though commonly they arose at first from religious views, prove in the end advantageous to the political interests of society.

But we may observe, that few ecclesiastical establishments have been fixed upon a worse foundation than that of the church of Rome, or have been attended with circumstances more hurtful to the peace and happiness of mankind. The large revenues, privileges, immunities, and powers of the clergy, rendered them formidable to the civil magistrate; and armed with too extensive authority an order of men who always adhere closely together, and who never want a plausible pretence for their encroachments and usurpations. The higher dignities of the church served, indeed, to the support of gentry and nobility; but by the establishment of monasteries, many of the lowest vulgar were taken from the useful arts, and maintained in those receptacles of sloth and ignorance. The supreme head of the church was a foreign potentate, guided by interests always different from those of the community, sometimes contrary to them. And as the hierarchy was necessarily solicitous to preserve a unity of faith, rites, and ceremonies, all liberty of thought ran a manifest risk of being extinguished; and violent persecutions, or, what was worse, a stupid and abject credulity, took place every where.

To increase these evils, the Church, though she possessed large revenues, was not contented with her acquisitions, but retained a power of practising further on the ignorance of mankind. She even bestowed on each individual priest a power of enriching himself by the voluntary oblations of the faithful, and left him still an urgent motive for diligence and industry in his calling. And thus that church, though an expensive and burdensome establishment, was liable to many of the inconveniences which belong to an order of priests, trusting entirely to their own art and invention for obtaining a subsistence.

The advantages attending the Romish hierarchy were but a small compensation for its inconveniences. The ecclesiastical privileges, during barbarous times, had served as a check on the despotism of kings. The union of all the western churches under the supreme pontiff facilitated the intercourse of nations, and tended to bind all the parts of Europe into a close connection with each other. And the pomp and splendor of worship which belonged to so opulent an establishment, contributed in some respect to the encouragement of the fine arts, and began to diffuse a general elegance of taste by uniting it with religion.

It will easily be conceived that, though the balance of evil prevailed in the Romish church, this was not the chief reason which produced the reformation. A concurrence of incidents must have contributed to forward that great revolution.

Leo X., by his generous and enterprising temper, had much exhausted his treasury, and was obliged to employ every invention which might yield money, in order to support his projects, pleasures, and liberalities. The scheme of selling indulgences was suggested to him, as an expedient which had often served in former times to draw money from the Christian world, and make devout people willing contributors to the grandeur and riches of the court of Rome. The church, it was supposed, was possessed of a great stock of merit, as being entitled to all the good works of all the saints, beyond what were employed in their own justification; and even to the merits of Christ himself, which were infinite and unbounded; and from this unexhausted treasury the pope might retail particular portions, and by that traffic acquire money to be employed in pious purposes, in resisting the infidels, or subduing schismatics. When the money came into his exchequer, the greater part of it was usually diverted to other purposes. [1]

It is commonly believed that Leo, from the penetration of his genius, and his familiarity with ancient literature, was fully acquainted with the ridicule and falsity of the doctrines which, as supreme pontiff, he was obliged by his interest to promote: it is the less wonder, therefore, that he employed for his profit those pious frauds which his predecessors, the most ignorant and credulous, had always, under plausible pretences, made use of for their selfish purposes. He published the sale of a general indulgence; [2] and as his expenses had not only exhausted his usual revenue, but even anticipated the money expected from this extraordinary expedient, the several branches of it were openly given away to particular persons, who were entitled to levy the imposition. The produce, particularly of Saxony and the countries bordering on the Baltic, was assigned to his sister Magdalene, married to Cibo, natural son of Innocent VIII.; and she, in order to enhance her profit, had farmed out the revenue to one Arcemboldi, a Genoese, once a merchant, now a bishop, who still retained all the lucrative arts of his former profession. [3] The Austin friars had usually been employed in Saxony to preach the indulgences, and from this trust had derived both profit and consideration: but Arcemboldi, fearing lest practice might have taught them means to secrete the money, [4] and expecting no extraordinary success from the ordinary methods of collection, gave this occupation to the Dominicans.

* Father Paul and Sleidan.

* * In 1517.

* * * Father Paul. Sleidan.

* * * * Father Paul, lib. 1

These monks, in order to prove themselves worthy of the distinction conferred on them, exaggerated the benefits of indulgences by the most unbounded panegyrics; and advanced doctrines on that head, which, though not more ridiculous than those already received, were not as yet entirely familiar to the ears of the people. [1] To add to the scandal, the collectors of this revenue are said to have lived very licentious lives, and to have spent in taverns, gaming-houses, and places still more infamous, the money which devout persons had saved from their usual expenses, in order to purchase a remission of their sins. [2]

All these circumstances might have given offence, but would have been attended with no event of any importance, had there not arisen a man qualified to take advantage of the incident. Martin Luther, an Austin friar, professor in the university of Wittemberg, resenting the affront put upon his order, began to preach against these abuses in the sale of indulgences; and being naturally of a fiery temper, and provoked by opposition, he proceeded even to decry indulgences themselves; and was thence carried, by the heat of dispute, to question the authority of the pope, from which his adversaries derived their chief arguments against him. [3] Still, as he enlarged his reading, in order to support these tenets, he discovered some new abuse or error in the church of Rome; and finding his opinions greedily hearkened to, he promulgated them by writing, discourse, sermon, conference; and daily increased the number of his disciples. All Saxony, all Germany, all Europe, were in a very little time filled with the voice of this daring innovator; and men, roused from that lethargy in which they had so long slept, began to call in question the most ancient and most received opinions. The elector of Saxony, favorable to Luther’s doctrine, protected him from the violence of the papal jurisdiction: the republic of Zurich even reformed their church according to the new model: many sovereigns of the empire, and the imperial diet itself, showed a favorable disposition towards it: and Luther, a man naturally inflexible, vehement, opinionative, was become incapable, either from promises of advancement or terrors of severity, to relinquish a sect of which he was himself the founder, and which brought him a glory superior to all others — the glory of dictating the religious faith and principles of multitudes.

* See note D, at the end of the volume.

* * Father Paul, lib. i.

* * * Father Paul. Sleidan

The rumor of these innovations soon reached England and as there still subsisted in that kingdom great remains of the Lollards, whose principles resembled those of Luther, the new doctrines secretly gained many partisans among the laity of all ranks and denominations. But Henry had been educated in a strict attachment to the church of Rome; and he bore a particular prejudice against Luther, who, in his writings, spoke with contempt of Thomas Aquinas, the king’s favorite author: he opposed himself, therefore, to the progress of the Lutheran tenets, by all the influence which his extensive and almost absolute authority conferred upon him: he even under took to combat them with weapons not usually employed by monarchs, especially those in the flower of their age and force of their passions. He wrote a book in Latin against the principles of Luther; a performance which, if allowance be made for the subject and the age, does no discredit to his capacity. He sent a copy of it to Leo, who received so magnificent a present with great testimony of regard; and conferred on him the title of “defender of the faith;” an appellation still retained by the kings of England. Luther, who was in the heat of controversy, soon published an answer to Henry; and, without regard to the dignity of his antagonist, treated him with all the acrimony of style to which, in the course of his polemics, he had so long been accustomed. The king, by this ill usage, was still more prejudiced against the new doctrines; but the public, who naturally favor the weaker party, were inclined to attribute to Luther the victory in the dispute. [1] And as the controversy became more illustrious by Henry’s entering the lists, it drew still more the attention of mankind; and the Lutheran doctrine daily acquired new converts in every part of Europe.

* Father Paul, lib. i.

The quick and surprising progress of this bold sect may justly in part be ascribed to the late invention of printing, and revival of learning: not that reason bore any considerable share in opening men’s eyes with regard to the impostures of the Romish church; for of all branches of literature, philosophy had, as yet, and till long afterwards, made the most inconsiderable progress; neither is there any instance, that argument has ever been able to free the people from that enormous load of absurdity with which superstition has every where overwhelmed them; not to mention, that the rapid advance of the Lutheran doctrine and the violence with which it was embraced, prove sufficiently, that it owed not its success to reason and reflection. The art of printing and the revival of learning forwarded its progress in another manner. By means of that art, the books of Luther and his sectaries full of vehemence, declamation, and a rude eloquence, were propagated more quickly, and in greater numbers. The minds of men, somewhat awakened from a profound sleep of so many centuries, were prepared for every novelty, and scrupled less to tread in any unusual path which was opened to them. And as copies of the Scriptures and other ancient monuments of the Christian faith became more common, men perceived the innovations which were introduced after the first centuries; and though argument and reasoning could not give conviction, an historical fact, well supported, was able to make impression on their understandings. Many of the powers, indeed, assumed by the church of Rome, were very ancient, and were prior to almost every political government established in Europe: but as the ecclesiastics would not agree to possess their privileges as matters of civil right, which time might render valid, but appealed still to a divine origin, men were tempted to look into their primitive charter, and they could, without much difficulty, perceive its defect in truth and authenticity.

In order to bestow on this topic the greater influence, Luther and his followers, not satisfied with opposing the pretended divinity of the Romish church, and displaying the temporal inconveniences of that establishment, carried matters much further, and treated the religion of their ancestors as abominable, detestable, damnable; foretold by sacred writ itself as the source of all wickedness and pollution. They denominated the pope Antichrist, called his communion the scarlet whore, and gave to Rome the appellation of Babylon; expressions which, however applied, were to be found in Scripture, and which were better calculated to operate on the multitude than the most solid arguments. Excited by contest and persecution on the one hand, by success and applause on the other, many of the reformers carried to the greatest extremities their opposition to the church of Rome; and in contradiction to the multiplied superstitions with which that communion was loaded, they adopted an enthusiastic strain of devotion, which admitted of no observances, rites, or ceremonies, but placed all merit in a mysterious species of faith in inward vision, rapture, and ecstasy. The new sectaries seized with this spirit, were indefatigable in the propagation of their doctrine, and set at defiance all the anathemas and punishments with which the Roman pontiff endeavored to overwhelm them.

That the civil power, however, might afford them protection against the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the Lutherans advanced doctrines favorable in some respect to the temporal authority of sovereigns. They inveighed against the abuses of the court of Rome, with which men were at that time generally discontented; and they exhorted princes to reinstate themselves in those powers, of which the encroaching spirit of the ecclesiastics, especially of the sovereign pontiff, had so long bereaved them. They condemned celibacy and monastic vows, and thereby opened the doors of the convents to those who were either tired of the obedience and chastity, or disgusted with the license, in which they had hitherto lived. They blamed the excessive riches, the idleness, the libertinism of the clergy; and pointed out their treasures and revenues as lawful spoil to the first invader. And as the ecclesiastics had hitherto conducted a willing and a stupid audience, and were totally unacquainted with controversy, much more with every species of true literature, they were unable to defend themselves against men armed with authorities, quotations, and popular topics, and qualified to triumph in every altercation or debate. Such were the advantages with which the reformers began their attack on the Romish hierarchy; and such were the causes of their rapid and astonishing success.

Leo X., whose oversights and too supine trust in the profound ignorance of the people had given rise to this sect, but whose sound judgment, moderation, and temper, were well qualified to retard its progress, died in the flower of his age, a little after he received the king’s book against Luther, and he was succeeded in the papal chair by Adrian, a Fleming, who had been tutor to the emperor Charles. This man was fitted to gain on the reformers by the integrity, candor, and simplicity of manners which distinguished his character but, so violent were their prejudices against the church, he rather hurt the cause by his imprudent exercise of those virtues. He frankly confessed, that many abominable and detestable practices prevailed in the court of Rome; and by this sincere avowal, he gave occasion of much triumph to the Lutherans. This pontiff also, whose penetration was not equal to his good intentions, was seduced to concur in that league which Charles and Henry had formed against France; [1] and he thereby augmented the scandal occasioned by the practice of so many preceding popes, who still made their spiritual arms subservient to political purposes.

1522.

The emperor, who knew that Wolsey had received a disappointment in his ambitious hopes by the election of Adrian, and who dreaded the resentment of that haughty minister, was solicitous to repair the breach made in their friendship by this incident. He paid another visit to England; and besides flattering the vanity of the king and the cardinal, he renewed to Wolsey all the promises which he had made him of seconding his pretensions to the papal throne. Wolsey, sensible that Adrian's great age and infirmities promised a speedy vacancy, dissembled his resentment, and was willing to hope for a more prosperous issue to the next election. The emperor renewed the treaty made at Bruges, to which some articles were added; and he agreed to indemnify both the king and Wolsey for the revenue which they should lose by a breach with France. The more to ingratiate himself with Henry and the English nation, he gave to Surrey, admiral of England, a commission for being admiral of his dominions; and he himself was installed knight of the garter at London. After a stay of six weeks in England, he embarked at Southampton, and in ten days arrived in Spain, where he soon pacified the tumults which had arisen in his absence. [2]

* Guicciard. lib. xiv.

* * Petrus de Angleria, epist. 765.

The king declared war against France; and this measure was founded on so little reason, that he could allege nothing as a ground of quarrel, but

Francis’s refusal to submit to his arbitration, and his sending Albany into Scotland. This last step had not been taken by the French king, till he was quite assured of Henry’s resolution to attack him. Surrey landed some troops at Cherbourg, in Normandy; and after laying waste the country, he sailed to Morlaix, a rich town in Brittany, which he took and plundered. The English merchants had great property in that place, which was no more spared by the soldiers than the goods of the French. Surrey then left the charge of the fleet to the vice-admiral; and sailed to Calais, where he took the command of the English army destined for the invasion of France. This army, when joined by forces from the Low Countries, under the command of the count de Buren, amounted in the whole to eighteen thousand men.

The French had made it a maxim, in almost all their wars with the English since the reign of Charles V., never, without great necessity, to hazard a general engagement; and the duke of Vendôme, who commanded the French army, now embraced this wise policy. He supplied the towns most exposed, especially Boulogne, Montreuil, Terouenne, Hedin with strong garrisons and plenty of provisions: he himself took post at Abbeville, with some Swiss and French infantry, and a body of cavalry: the count of Guise encamped under Montreuil with six thousand men. These two bodies were in a situation to join upon occasion; to throw supply into any town that was threatened; and to harass the English in every movement. Surrey, who was not provided with magazines, first divided his troops for the convenience of subsisting them; but finding that his quarters were every moment beaten up by the activity of the French generals, he drew together his forces, and laid siege to Hedin. But neither did he succeed in this enterprise. The garrison made vigorous sallies upon his army: the French forces assaulted him from without: great rains fell: fatigue and bad weather threw the soldiers into dysenteries: and Surrey was obliged to raise the siege, and put his troops into winter quarters about the end of October. His rear guard was attacked at Pas, in Artois, and five or six hundred men were cut off; nor could all his efforts make him master of one place within the French frontier.

The allies were more successful in Italy. Lautrec, who commanded the French, lost a great battle at Bicocca, near Milan; and was obliged to retire with the remains of his army. This misfortune, which proceeded from Francis’s negligence in not supplying Lautrec with money, [1] was followed by the loss of Genoa. The castle of Cremona was the sole fortress in Italy which remained in the hands of the French.

* Guicciard. lib. xiv.

Europe was now in such a situation, and so connected by different alliances and interests, that it was almost impossible for war to be kindled in one part, and not diffuse itself throughout the whole; but of all the leagues among kingdoms the closest was that which had so long subsisted between France and Scotland; and the English, while at war with the former nation, could not hope to remain long unmolested on the northern frontier. No sooner had Albany arrived in Scotland, than he took measures for kindling a war with England; and he summoned the whole force of the kingdom to meet in the fields of Rosline. [1] He thence conducted the army southwards into Annandale, and prepared to pass the borders at Solway Frith. But many of the nobility were disgusted with the regent's administration; and observing that his connections with Scotland were feeble in comparison of those which he maintained with France, they murmured that for the sake of foreign interests, their peace should so often be disturbed and war, during their king's minority, be wantonly entered into with a neighboring nation, so much superior in force and riches. The Gordons, in particular, refused to advance any farther; and Albany, observing a general discontent to prevail was obliged to conclude a truce with Lord Dacres, warden of the English west marches. Soon after he departed for France; and lest the opposite faction should gather force in his absence, he sent thither before him the earl of Angus, husband to the queen dowager.

1523.

Next year, Henry, that he might take advantage of the regent's absence, marched an army into Scotland under the command of Surrey, who ravaged the Merse and Teviotdale without opposition, and burned the town of Jedburgh. The Scots had neither king nor regent to conduct them: the two Humes had been put to death: Angus was in a manner banished: no nobleman of vigor or authority remained, who was qualified to assume the government: and the English monarch, who knew the distressed situation of the country, determined to push them to extremity, in hopes of engaging them, by the sense of their present weakness, to make a solemn renunciation of the French alliance, and to embrace that of England. [1] He even gave them hopes of contracting a marriage between the lady Mary, heiress of England, and their young monarch; an expedient which would forever unite the two kingdoms: [2] and the queen dowager, with her whole party, recommended every where the advantages of this alliance, and of a confederacy with Henry.

* Buchanan, lib. xiv. Drummond. Pitscottie.

* * Buchanan, lib. xiv. Herbert.

* * * Le Grand, vol. iii. .

They said that the interests of Scotland had too long been sacrificed to those of the French nation, who, whenever they found themselves reduced to difficulties, called for the assistance of their allies; but were ready to abandon them as soon as they found their advantage in making peace with England: that where a small state entered into so close a confederacy with a greater, it must always expect this treatment, as a consequence of the unequal alliance; but there were peculiar circumstances in the situation of the kingdoms, which, in the present case, rendered it inevitable: that France was so distant, and so divided from them by sea, that she scarcely could, by any means, and never could in time, send succors to the Scots, sufficient to protect them against ravages from the neighboring kingdom: that nature had, in a manner, formed an alliance between the two British nations; having enclosed them in the same island; given them the same manners, language, laws, and form of government; and prepared every thing for an intimate union between them: and that, if national antipathies were abolished, which would soon be the effect of peace, these two kingdoms, secured by the ocean and by their domestic force, could set at defiance all foreign enemies, and remain forever safe and unmolested.

The partisans of the French alliance, on the other hand, said, that the very reasons which were urged in favor of a league with England, the vicinity of the kingdom and its superior force, were the real causes why a sincere and durable confederacy could never be formed with that hostile nation: that among neighboring states occasions of quarrel were frequent, and the more powerful would be sure to seize every frivolous pretence for oppressing the weaker, and reducing it to subjection: that as the near neighborhood of France and England had kindled a war almost perpetual between them, it was the interest of the Scots, if they wished to maintain their independence, to preserve their league with the former kingdom, which balanced the force of the latter: that if they deserted that old and salutary alliance on which their importance in Europe chiefly depended, their ancient enemies, stimulated both by interest and by passion, would soon invade them with superior force, and bereave them of all their liberties: or if they delayed the attack, the insidious peace, by making the Scots forget the use of arms, would only prepare the way for a slavery more certain and more irretrievable. [1]

* Buchanan, lib. xiv.

The arguments employed by the French party, being seconded by the natural prejudices of the people, seemed most prevalent: and when the regent himself, who had been long detained beyond his appointed time by the danger from the English fleet, at last appeared among them, he was able to throw the balance entirely on that side. By authority of the convention of states, he assembled an army, with a view of avenging the ravages committed by the English in the beginning of the campaign; and he led them southwards towards the borders. But when they were passing the Tweed at the bridge of Melross, the English party raised again such opposition, that Albany thought proper to make a retreat. He marched downwards, along the banks of the Tweed, keeping that river on his right; and fixed his camp opposite to Werkcastle, which Surrey had lately repaired. He sent over some troops to besiege this fortress, who made a breach in it, and stormed some of the outworks: but the regent, hearing of the approach of an English army, and discouraged by the advanced season, thought proper to disband his forces and retire to Edinburgh. Soon after, he went over to France, and never again returned to Scotland. The Scottish nation, agitated by their domestic factions, were not, during several years, in a condition to give any more disturbance to England; and Henry had full leisure to prosecute his designs on the continent.

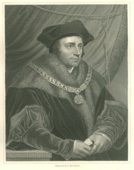
The reason why the war against France proceeded so slowly on the part of England, was the want of money. All the treasures of Henry VII. were long ago dissipated; the king's habits of expense still remained; and his revenues were unequal even to the ordinary charge of government, much more to his military enterprises. He had last year caused a general survey to be made of the kingdom; the numbers of men, their years, profession, stock, revenue; [1] and expressed great satisfaction on finding the nation so opulent. He then issued privy seals to the most wealthy, demanding loans of particular sums: this act of power, though somewhat irregular and tyrannical, had been formerly practised by kings of England; and the people were now familiarized to it. But Henry, this year, carried his authority much further. He published an edict for a general tax upon his subjects, which he still called a loan; and he levied five shillings in the pound upon the clergy, two shillings upon the laity. This pretended loan, as being more regular, was really more dangerous to the liberties of the people, and was a precedent for the king's imposing taxes without consent of parliament.

* Herbert. Stowe, .

Henry soon after summoned a parliament, together with a convocation; and found neither of them in a disposition to complain of the infringement of their privileges. It was only doubted how far they would carry their liberality to the king. Wolsey, who had undertaken the management of the affair, began with the convocation, in hopes that their example would influence the parliament to grant a large supply. He demanded a moiety of the ecclesiastical revenues to be levied in five years, or two shillings in the pound during that time; and though he met with opposition, he reprimanded the refractory members in such severe terms, that his request was at last complied with. The cardinal afterwards, attended by several of the nobility and prelates, came to the house of commons; and in a long and elaborate speech laid before them the public necessities, the danger of an invasion from Scotland, the affronts received from France, the league in which the king was engaged with the pope and the emperor; and he demanded a grant of eight hundred thousand pounds, divided into four yearly payments; a sum computed, from the late survey or valuation, to be equal to four shillings in the pound of one year's revenue, or one shilling in the pound yearly, according to the division proposed. [1] So large a grant was unusual from the commons; and though the cardinal's demand was seconded by Sir Thomas More the speaker, and several other members attached to the court, the house could not be prevailed with to comply. [2]

* This survey or valuation is liable to much suspicion, as fixing the rents a great deal too high; unless the sum comprehend the revenues of all kinds, industry as well as land and money.

* * Herbert. Stowe, . Parl. Hist. Strype, vol. i. p. 49, 59.



SIR THOMAS MORE.

From an Enamel after Holbein, in the possession of Thomas Clarke Esq.

They only voted two shillings in the pound on all who enjoyed twenty pounds a year and upwards; one shilling on all who possessed between twenty pounds and forty shillings a year; and on the other subjects above sixteen years of age, a groat a head. This last sum was divided into two yearly payments; the former into four, and was not therefore at the utmost above sixpence in the pound. The grant of the commons was but the moiety of the sum demanded; and the cardinal, therefore, much mortified with the disappointment, came again to the house, and desired to reason with such as refused to comply with the king’s request. He was told that it was a rule of the house never to reason but among themselves; and his desire was rejected. The commons, however, enlarged a little their former grant, and voted an imposition of three shillings in the pound on all possessed of fifty pounds a year and upwards. [1] The proceedings of this house of commons evidently discover the humor of the times: they were extremely tenacious of their money, and refused a demand of the crown which was far from being unreasonable; but they allowed an encroachment on national privileges to pass uncensured, though its direct tendency was to subvert entirely the liberties of the people. The king was so dissatisfied with this saving disposition of the commons, that, as he had not called a parliament during seven years before, he allowed seven more to elapse before he summoned another. And on pretence of necessity, he levied in one year, from all who were worth forty pounds, what the parliament had granted him payable in four years; [2] a new invasion of national privileges. These irregularities were commonly ascribed to the cardinal’s counsels, who, trusting to the protection afforded him by his ecclesiastical character, was the less scrupulous in his encroachment on the civil rights of the nation.

* See note E, at the end of the volume.

* * Speed. Hall. Herbert.

That ambitious prelate received this year a new disappointment in his aspiring views. The pope, Adrian VI., died; and Clement VII., of the family of Medicis, was elected in his place, by the concurrence of the imperial party. Wolsey could not perceive the insincerity of the emperor, and he concluded that that prince would never second his pretensions to the papal chair. As he highly resented this injury, he began thenceforth to estrange himself from the imperial court, and to pave the way for a union between his master and the French king. Meanwhile he concealed his disgust; and after congratulating the new pope on his promotion, applied for a continuation of the legatine powers which the two former popes had conferred upon him. Clement, knowing the importance of gaining his friendship, granted him a commission for life; and, by this unusual concession, he in a manner transferred to him the whole papal authority in England. In some particulars Wolsey made a good use of this extensive power. He erected two colleges, one at Oxford, another at Ipswich, the place of his nativity: he sought all over Europe for learned men to supply the chairs of these colleges; and in order to bestow endowments on them, he suppressed some smaller monasteries, and distributed the monks into other convents. The execution of this project became the less difficult for him, because the Romish church began to perceive, that she overabounded in monks, and that she wanted some supply of learning, in order to oppose the inquisitive, or rather disputative humor of the reformers.

The confederacy against France seemed more formidable than ever, on the opening of the campaign. [1] Adrian before his death had renewed the league with Charles and Henry. The Venetians had been induced to desert the French alliance, and to form engagements for securing Francis Sforza, brother to Maximilian, in possession of the Milanese. The Florentines, the dukes of Ferrara and Mantua, and all the powers of Italy, combined in the same measure. The emperor in person menaced France with a powerful invasion on the side of Guienne: the forces of England and the Netherlands hovered over Picardy: a numerous body of Germans were preparing to ravage Burgundy: but all these perils from foreign enemies were less threatening than a domestic conspiracy, which had been formed, and which was now come to full maturity, against the French monarch.

* Guicciard. lib. xiv.

Charles, duke of Bourbon, constable of France, was a prince of the most shining merit; and, besides distinguishing himself in many military enterprises, he was adorned with every accomplishment which became a person of his high station. His virtues, embellished with the graces of youth, had made such impression on Louise of Savoy, Francis's mother, that, without regard to the inequality of their years, she made him proposals of marriage; and meeting with a repulse, she formed schemes of unrelenting vengeance against him. She was a woman false, deceitful, vindictive, malicious; but, unhappily for France, had, by her capacity, which was considerable, acquired an absolute ascendant over her son. By her instigation, Francis put many affronts on the constable, which it was difficult for a gallant spirit to endure; and at last he permitted Louise to prosecute a lawsuit against him, by which, on the most frivolous pretences, he was deprived of his ample possessions; and inevitable ruin was brought upon him.

Bourbon, provoked at all these indignities, and thinking that, if any injuries could justify a man in rebelling against his prince and country, he must stand acquitted, had entered into a secret correspondence with the emperor and the king of England. [1] Francis, pertinacious in his purpose of recovering the Milanese, had intended to lead his army in person into Italy; and Bourbon, who feigned sickness in order to have a pretence for staying behind, purposed, as soon as the king should have passed the Alps, to raise an insurrection among his numerous vassals, by whom he was extremely beloved, and to introduce foreign enemies into the heart of the kingdom. Francis got intimation of his design; but as he was not expeditious enough in securing so dangerous a foe, the constable made his escape; [2] and entering into the emperor's service, employed all the force of his enterprising spirit, and his great talents for war, to the prejudice of his native country.

The king of England, desirous that Francis should undertake his Italian expedition, did not openly threaten Picardy this year with an invasion; and it was late before the duke of Suffolk, who commanded the English forces, passed over to Calais. He was attended by the lords Montacute, Herbert, Ferrars, Morney, Sandys, Berkeley, Powis, and many other noblemen and gentlemen. [3]

* Mémoires du Bellai, liv. ii.

* * Belcarius, lib. xvii.

* * * Herbert.

The English army, reënforced by some troops drawn from the garrison of Calais, amounted to about twelve thousand men; and having joined an equal number of Flemings under the count de Buren, they prepared for an invasion of France. The siege of Boulogne was first proposed; but that enterprise appearing difficult, it was thought more advisable to leave this town behind them. The frontier of Picardy was very ill provided with troops; and the only defence of that province was the activity of the French officers, who infested the allied army in their march, and threw garrisons, with great expedition, into every town which was threatened by them. After coasting the Somme, and passing Hedin, Montreuil, Dourlens, the English and Flemings presented themselves before Bray, a place of small force, which commanded a bridge over that river. Here they were resolved to pass, and, if possible, to take up winter quarters in France; but Crequi threw himself into the town and seemed resolute to defend it. The allies attacked him with vigor and success; and when he retreated over the bridge, they pursued him so hotly, that they allowed him not time to break it down, but passed it along with him, and totally routed his army. They next advanced to Montdidier, which they besieged, and took by capitulation. Meeting with no opposition, they proceeded to the River Oise, within eleven leagues of Paris, and threw that city into great consternation; till the duke of Vendôme hastened with some forces to its relief. The confederates, afraid of being surrounded, and of being reduced to extremities during so advanced a season, thought proper to retreat. Montdidier was abandoned; and the English and Flemings, without effecting any thing, retired into their respective countries.

France defended herself from the other invasions with equal facility and equal good fortune. Twelve thousand Lansquenets broke into Burgundy under the command of the count of Furstenberg. The count of Guise, who defended that frontier, had nothing to oppose to them but some militia, and about nine hundred heavy-armed cavalry. He threw the militia into the garrison towns; and with his cavalry he kept the field, and so harassed the

Germans, that they were glad to make their retreat into Lorraine. Guise attacked them as they passed the Meuse, put them into disorder, and cut off the greater part of their rear.

The emperor made great preparations on the side of Navarre; and though that frontier was well guarded by nature, it seemed now exposed to danger from the powerful invasion which threatened it. Charles besieged Fontarabia, which a few years before had fallen into Francis's hands; and when he had drawn thither Lautrec, the French general, he of a sudden raised the siege, and sat down before Bayonne. Lautrec, aware of that stratagem, made a sudden march, and threw himself into Bayonne, which he defended with such vigor and courage, that the Spaniards were constrained to raise the siege. The emperor would have been totally unfortunate on this side, had he not turned back upon Fontarabia, and, contrary to the advice of all his generals, sitten down in the winter season before that city, well fortified and strongly garrisoned. The cowardice or misconduct of the governor saved him from the shame of a new disappointment. The place was surrendered in a few days; and the emperor, having finished this enterprise, put his troops into winter quarters.

So obstinate was Francis in prosecuting his Italian expedition, that, notwithstanding these numerous invasions with which his kingdom was menaced on every side, he had determined to lead in person a powerful army to the conquest of Milan. The intelligence of Bourbon's conspiracy and escape stopped him at Lyons; and fearing some insurrection in the kingdom from the intrigues of a man so powerful and so much beloved, he thought it prudent to remain in France and to send forward his army under the command of Admiral Bonnivet. The duchy of Milan had been purposely left in a condition somewhat defenceless, with a view of alluring Francis to attack it, and thereby facilitating the enterprises of Bourbon; and no sooner had Bonnivet passed the Tesin, than the army of the league, and even Prosper Colonna, who commanded it, a prudent general, were in the utmost confusion. It is agreed, that if Bonnivet had immediately advanced to Milan, that great city, on which the whole duchy depends, would have opened its gates without resistance: but as he wasted his time in frivolous enterprises, Colonna had opportunity to reënforce the garrison, and to put the place in a posture of defence. Bonnivet was now obliged to attempt reducing the city by blockade and famine; and he took possession of all the posts which commanded the passages to it. But the army of the league, meanwhile, was not inactive; and they so straitened and harassed the quarters of the French, that it seemed more likely the latter should themselves perish by famine, than reduce the city to that extremity.

1524.

Sickness, and fatigue, and want had wasted them to such a degree, that they were ready to raise the blockade; and their only hopes consisted in a great body of Swiss, which was levied for the service of the French king, and whose arrival was every day expected. But these mountaineers no sooner came within sight of the French camp, than they stopped, from a sudden caprice and resentment; and instead of joining Bonnivet, they sent orders to a great body of their countrymen, who then served under him, immediately to begin their march, and to return home in their company. [1] After this desertion of the Swiss, Bonnivet had no other choice but that of making his retreat as fast as possible into France.

* Guicciard. lib. xv. Mémoires de Bellai, liv. ii.

The French being thus expelled Italy, the pope, the Venetians, the Florentines, were satisfied with the advantage obtained over them, and were resolved to prosecute their victory no further. All these powers, especially Clement, had entertained a violent jealousy of the emperor’s ambition; and their suspicions were extremely augmented when they saw him refuse the investiture of Milan, a fief of the empire, to Francis Sforza, whose title he had acknowledged, and whose defence he had embraced. [1] They all concluded, that he intended to put himself in possession of that important duchy, and reduce Italy to subjection: Clement in particular, actuated by this jealousy, proceeded so far in opposition to the emperor, that he sent orders to his nuncio at London to mediate a reconciliation between France and England. But affairs were not yet fully ripe for this change. Wolsey, disgusted with the emperor, but still more actuated by vain-glory, was determined that he himself should have the renown of bringing about that great alteration; and he engaged the king to reject the pope’s mediation.

* Guicciard. lib. xv.

A new treaty was even concluded between Henry and Charles for the invasion of France. Charles stipulated to supply the Duke of Bourbon with a powerful army, in order to conquer Provence and Dauphiny: Henry agreed to pay him a hundred thousand crowns for the first month; after which he might either choose to continue the same monthly payments, or invade Picardy with a powerful army. Bourbon was to possess these provinces with the title of king; but to hold them in fee of Henry as king of France. The duchy of Burgundy was to be given to Charles; the rest of the kingdom to Henry. This chimerical partition immediately failed of execution in the article which was most easily performed: Bourbon refused to acknowledge Henry as king of France. His enterprise, however, against Provence still took place. A numerous army of imperialists invaded that country, under his command and that of the marquis of Pescara. They laid siege to Marseilles, which, being weakly garrisoned, they expected to reduce in a little time; but the citizens defended themselves with such valor and obstinacy, that Bourbon and Pescara, who heard of the French king's approach with a numerous army, found themselves under the necessity of raising the siege; and they led their forces, weakened, baffled, and disheartened, into Italy.

Francis might now have enjoyed in safety the glory of repulsing all his enemies, in every attempt which they had hitherto made for invading his kingdom; but as he received intelligence that the king of England, discouraged by his former fruitless enterprises, and disgusted with the emperor, was making no preparations for any attempt on Picardy, his ancient ardor seized him for the conquest of Milan; and notwithstanding the advanced season, he was immediately determined, contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, to lead his army into Italy.

He passed the Alps at Mount Cenis, and no sooner appeared in Piedmont than he threw the whole Milanese into consternation. The forces of the emperor and Sforza retired to Lodi; and had Francis been so fortunate as to pursue them, they had abandoned that place, and had been totally dispersed;[1] but his ill fate led him to besiege Pavia, a town of considerable strength, well garrisoned, and defended by Leyva, one of the bravest officers in the Spanish service. Every attempt which the French king made to gain this important place proved fruitless. He battered the walls and made breaches; but, by the vigilance of Leyva, new retrenchments were instantly thrown up behind the breaches: he attempted to divert the course of the Tesin, which ran by one side of the city and defended it; but an inundation of the river destroyed in one night all the mounds which the soldiers during a long time, and with infinite labor, had been erecting.

1525.

Fatigue and the bad season (for it was the depth of winter) had wasted the French army. The imperial generals meanwhile were not inactive. Pescara, and Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, assembled forces from all quarters. Bourbon, having pawned his jewels, went into Germany, and with the money, aided by his personal interest, levied a body of twelve thousand Lansquenets, with which he joined the imperialists. This whole army advanced to raise the siege of Pavia; and the danger to the French became every day more imminent.

The state of Europe was such during that age, that, partly from the want of commerce and industry every where, except in Italy and the Low Countries, partly from the extensive privileges still possessed by the people in all the great monarchies and their frugal maxims in granting money, the revenues of the princes were extremely narrow, and even the small armies which they kept on foot could not be regularly paid by them* [2missing period] The imperial forces, commanded by Bourbon, Pescara, and Lannoy, exceeded not twenty thousand men; they were the only body of troops maintained by the emperor, (for he had not been able to levy any army for the invasion of France, either on the side of Spain or Flanders.) Yet so poor was that mighty monarch, that he could transmit no money for the payment of this army; and it was chiefly the hopes of sharing the plunder of the French camp which had made them advance and kept them to their standards. Had Francis raised the siege before their approach, and retired to Milan, they must immediately have disbanded; and he had obtained a complete victory without danger or bloodshed. But it was the character of this monarch to become obstinate in proportion to the difficulties which he encountered; and having once said, that he would take Pavia or perish before it, he was resolved rather to endure the utmost extremities than depart from this resolution.

The imperial generals, after cannonading the French camp for several days, at last made a general assault, and broke into the intrenchments.

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* Guicciard. lib. xv. Du Bellai, lib. ii.

Leyva sallied from the town, and increased the confusion among the besiegers. The Swiss infantry, contrary to their usual practice, behaved in a dastardly manner, and deserted their post. Francis’s forces were put to rout; and he himself, surrounded by his enemies, after fighting with heroic valor, and killing seven men with his own hand, was at last obliged to surrender himself prisoner. All most the whole army, full of nobility and brave officers, either perished by the sword or were drowned in the river. The few who escaped with their lives fell into the hands of the enemy.

The emperor received this news by Pennalosa, who passed through France by means of a safe-conduct granted him by the captive king. The moderation which he displayed on this occasion, had it been sincere, would have done him honor. Instead of rejoicing, he expressed sympathy with Francis’s ill fortune, and discovered his sense of those calamities to which the greatest monarchs are exposed. [1] He refused the city of Madrid permission to make any public expressions of triumph; and said that he reserved all his exultation till he should he able to obtain some victory over the infidels. He sent orders to his frontier garrisons to commit no hostilities upon France.

He spoke of concluding immediately a peace on reasonable terms. But all this seeming moderation was only hypocrisy, so much the more dangerous as it was profound. And he was wholly occupied in forming schemes how, from this great incident, he might draw the utmost advantage, and gratify that exorbitant ambition by which, in all his actions, he was ever governed.

The same Pennalosa, in passing through France, carried also a letter from Francis to his mother, whom he had left regent, and who then resided at Lyons. It contained only these few words: “Madam, all is lost, except our honor.” The princess was struck with the greatness of the calamity. She saw the kingdom without a sovereign, without an army, without generals, without money; surrounded on every side by implacable and victorious enemies; and her chief resource, in her present distresses, were the hopes which she entertained of peace and even of assistance from the king of England.

Had the king entered into the war against France from any concerted political views, it is evident that the victory of Pavia and the captivity of Francis were the most fortunate incidents that could have befallen him, and

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* Vera. Hist. de Carl. V.

the only ones that could render his schemes effectual. While the war was carried on in the former feeble manner, without any decisive advantage, he might have been able to possess himself of some frontier town, or perhaps of a small territory, of which he could not. have kept possession without expending much more than its value. By some signal calamity alone, which annihilated the power of France, could he hope to acquire the dominion of considerable provinces, or dismember that great monarchy, so affectionate to its own government and its own sovereigns. But as it is probable that Henry had never before carried his reflections so far, he was startled at this important event, and became sensible of his own danger, as well as that of all Europe, from the loss of a proper counterpoise to the power of Charles. Instead of taking advantage, therefore, of the distressed condition of Francis, he was determined to lend him assistance in his present calamities; and as the glory of generosity in raising a fallen enemy concurred with his political interests, he hesitated the less in embracing these new measures.

Some disgusts also had previously taken place between Charles and Henry, and still more between Charles and Wolsey; and that powerful minister waited only for a favorable opportunity of revenging the disappointments which he had met with. The behavior of Charles, immediately after the victory of Pavia, gave him occasion to revive the king's jealousy and suspicions. The emperor so ill supported the appearance of moderation which he at first assumed, that he had already changed his usual style to Henry; and instead of writing to him with his own hand, and subscribing himself "Your affectionate son and cousin," he dictated his letters to a secretary, and simply subscribed himself "Charles." [1] Wolsey also perceived a diminution in the caresses and professions with which the emperor's letters to him were formerly loaded; and this last imprudence, proceeding from the intoxication of success, was probably more dangerous to Charles's interests than the other.

Henry, though immediately determined to embrace new measures, was careful to save appearances in the change; and he caused rejoicings to be every where made on account of the victory of Pavia and the captivity of Francis. He publicly dismissed a French envoy, whom he had formerly allowed, notwithstanding the war, to reside at London; [2] but upon the regent of France's submissive applications to him, he again opened a correspondence with her; and besides assuring her of his friendship and protection, he exacted a promise that she never would consent to the dismembering of any province from the monarchy for her son’s ransom. With the emperor, however, he put on the appearance of vigor and enterprise; and in order to have a pretence for breaking with him, he despatched Tonstal, bishop of London, to Madrid with proposals for a powerful invasion of France. He required that Charles should immediately enter Guienne at the head of a great army, in order to put him in possession of that province; and he demanded the payments of large sums of money which that prince had borrowed from him in his last visit at London. He knew that the emperor was in no condition of fulfilling either of these demands; and that he had as little inclination to make him master of such considerable territories upon the frontiers of Spain.

* Guicciard. lib. xvi.

* * Du Bellai, liv. iii Stowe, . Baker, .

Tonstal, likewise, after his arrival at Madrid, informed his master that Charles, on his part, urged several complaints against England; and in particular was displeased with Henry, because last year he had neither continued his monthly payments to Bourbon nor invaded Picardy, according to his stipulations. Tonstal added, that instead of expressing an intention to espouse Mary when she should be of age, the emperor had hearkened to proposals for marrying his niece Isabella, princess of Portugal; and that he had entered into a separate treaty with Francis, and seemed determined to reap alone all the advantages of the success with which fortune had crowned his arms.

The king, influenced by all these motives, concluded at Moore his alliance with the regent of France, and engaged to procure her son his liberty on reasonable conditions: [1] the regent also, in another treaty, acknowledged the kingdom Henry’s debtor for one million eight hundred thousand crowns to be discharged in half-yearly payments of fifty thousand crowns; after which Henry was to receive, during life, a yearly pension of a hundred thousand. A large present of a hundred thousand crowns was also made to Wolsey for his good offices, but covered under the pretence of arrears due on the pension granted him for relinquishing the administration of Tournay.

* Du Tillet, Recueil des Traités de Leonard, tom. ii. Herbert.

Meanwhile Henry, foreseeing that this treaty with France might involve him in a war with the emperor, was also determined to fill his treasury by impositions upon his own subjects; and as the parliament had discovered some reluctance in complying with his demands, he followed, as is believed, the counsel of Wolsey, and resolved to make use of his prerogative alone for that purpose. He issued commissions to all the counties of England, for levying four shillings in the pound upon the clergy, three shillings and fourpence upon the laity; and so uncontrollable did he deem his authority, that he took no care to cover, as formerly, this arbitrary exaction, even under the slender pretence of a loan. But he soon found that he had presumed too far on the passive submission of his subjects. The people, displeased with an exaction beyond what was usually levied in those days, and further disgusted with the illegal method of imposing it, broke out in murmurs, complaints, opposition to the commissioners; and their refractory disposition threatened a general insurrection. Henry had the prudence to stop short in that dangerous path into which he had entered. He sent letters to all the counties, declaring that he meant no force by this last imposition, and that he would take nothing from his subjects but by way of “benevolence.” He flattered himself, that his condescension in employing that disguise would satisfy the people, and that no one would dare to render himself obnoxious to royal authority, by refusing any payment required of him in this manner. But the spirit of opposition, once roused, could not so easily be quieted at pleasure. A lawyer in the city objecting the statute of Richard III., by which benevolences were forever abolished, it was replied by the court, that Richard being a usurper, and his parliament a factious assembly, his statutes could not bind a lawful and absolute monarch, who held his crown by hereditary right, and needed not to court the favor of a licentious populace. [1]

* Herbert Hall.

The judges even went so far as to affirm positively, that the king might exact by commission any sum he pleased; and the privy council gave a ready assent to this decree, which annihilated the most valuable privilege of the people, and rendered all their other privileges precarious. Armed with such formidable authority of royal prerogative and a pretence of law, Wolsey sent for the mayor of London, and desired to know what he was willing to give for the supply of his majesty's necessities. The mayor seemed desirous, before he should declare himself, to consult the common council; but the cardinal required that he and all the aldermen should separately confer with himself about the benevolence; and he eluded by that means the danger of a formed opposition. Matters, however, went not so smoothly in the country. An insurrection was begun in some places; but as the people were not headed by any considerable person, it was easy for the duke of Suffolk, and the earl of Surrey, now duke of Norfolk, by employing persuasion and authority, to induce the ringleaders to lay down their arms and surrender themselves prisoners. The king, finding it dangerous to punish criminals engaged in so popular a cause, was determined, notwithstanding his violent, imperious temper, to grant them a general pardon; and he prudently imputed their guilt, not to their want of loyalty or affection, but to their poverty. The offenders were carried before the star chamber; where, after a severe charge brought against them by the king's council, the cardinal said, "that notwithstanding their grievous, offence, the king, in, consideration of their necessities, had granted them his gracious pardon, upon condition that they would find sureties for their future good behavior." But they, replying that they had no sureties, the cardinal first, and after him the duke of Norfolk, said that they would be bound for them. Upon which they were dismissed. [1]

* Herbert. Hall. Stowe, . Holingshed, .

These arbitrary impositions being imputed, though on what grounds is unknown, to the counsels of the cardinal, increased the general odium under which he labored: and the clemency of the pardon, being ascribed to the king, was considered as an atonement on his part for the illegality of the measure. But Wolsey, supported both by royal and papal authority, proceeded without scruple to violate all ecclesiastical privileges, which, during that age, were much more sacred than civil; and having once prevailed in that unusual attempt of suppressing some monasteries, he kept all the rest in awe, and exercised over them an arbitrary jurisdiction. By his commission as legate he was empowered to visit them, and reform them, and chastise their irregularities; and he employed his usual agent, Allen, in the exercise of this authority. The religious houses were obliged to compound for their guilt, real or pretended, by paying large sums to the cardinal or his deputy; and this oppression was carried so far, that it reached at last the king's ears, which were not commonly open to complaints against his favorite. Wolsey had built a splendid palace at Hampton Court, which he probably intended, as well as that of York Place, in Westminster, for his own residence; but fearing the increase of envy on account of this magnificence, and desirous to appease the king, he made him a present of the building, and told him that, from the first, he had erected it for his use.

The absolute authority possessed by the king rendered his domestic government, both over his people and his ministers, easy and expeditious: the conduct of foreign affairs alone required effort and application; and they were now brought to such a situation, that it was no longer safe for England to remain entirely neutral. The feigned moderation of the emperor was of short duration; and it was soon obvious to all the world, that his great dominions, far from gratifying his ambition, were only regarded as the means of acquiring an more extensive. The terms which he demanded of his prisoner were such as must forever have annihilated the power of France, and destroyed the balance of Europe. These terms were proposed to Francis soon after the battle of Pavia, while he was detained in Pizzichitone; and as he had hitherto trusted somewhat to the emperor's generosity, the disappointment excited in his breast the most lively indignation. He said, that he would rather live and die a prisoner than agree to dismember his kingdom; and that even were he so base as to submit to such conditions, his subjects would never permit him to carry them into execution.

Francis was encouraged to persist in demanding more moderate terms by the favorable accounts which he heard of Henry's disposition towards him, and of the alarm which had seized all the chief powers in Italy upon his defeat and captivity. He was uneasy, however, to be so far distant from the emperor, with whom he must treat; and he expressed his desire (which was complied with) to be removed to Madrid, in hopes that a personal interview would operate in his favor, and that Charles, if not influenced by his ministers, might be found possessed of the same frankness of disposition by which he himself was distinguished. He was soon convinced of his mistake. Partly from want of exercise, partly from reflections on his present melancholy situation, he fell into a languishing illness; which begat apprehensions in Charles, lest the death of his captive should bereave him of all those advantages which he purposed to extort from him. He then paid him a visit in the castle of Madrid; and as he approached the bed in which Francis lay, the sick monarch called to him, "You come, sir, to visit your prisoner.” “No,” replied the emperor, “I come to visit my brother and my friend, who shall soon obtain his liberty.” He soothed his afflictions with many speeches of a like nature, which had so good an effect that the king daily recovered; [1] and thenceforth employed himself in concerting with the ministers of the emperor the terms of his treaty.

* Herbert. Le Vera. Sandoval.

1526.

At last, the emperor, dreading a general combination against him, was willing to abate somewhat of his rigor: and the treaty of Madrid was signed, by which, it was hoped an end would be finally put to the differences between these great monarchs. The principal condition was the restoring of Francis’s liberty, and the delivery of his two eldest sons as hostages to the emperor for the cession of Burgundy. If any difficulty should afterwards occur in the execution of this last article, from the opposition of the states either of France or of that province, Francis stipulated, that in six weeks’ time, he should return to his prison, and remain there till the full performance of the treaty. There were many other articles in this famous convention, all of them extremely severe upon the captive monarch; and Charles discovered evidently his intention of reducing Italy, as well as France, to subjection and dependence.

Many of Charles’s ministers foresaw that Francis, how solemn soever the oaths, promises, and protestations exacted of him, never would execute a treaty so disadvantageous, or rather ruinous and destructive, to himself, his posterity, and his country. By putting Burgundy, they thought, into the emperor’s hands, he gave his powerful enemy an entrance into the heart of the kingdom: by sacrificing his allies in Italy, he deprived himself of foreign assistance; and, arming his oppressor with the whole force and wealth of that opulent country, rendered him absolutely irresistible. To these great views of interest were added the motives, no less cogent, of passion and resentment; while Francis, a prince who piqued himself on generosity, reflected on the rigor with which he had been treated during his captivity, and the severe terms which had been exacted of him for the recovery of his liberty. It was also foreseen, that the emulation and rivalship, which had so long subsisted between these two monarchs, would make him feel the strongest reluctance on yielding the superiority to an antagonist who, by the whole tenor of his conduct, he would be apt to think, had shown himself so little worthy of that advantage which fortune, and fortune alone, had put into his hands. His ministers, his friends, his subjects, his allies, would be sure with one voice to inculcate on him, that the first object of a prince was the preservation of his people; and that the laws of honor, which, with a private man, ought to be absolutely supreme, and superior to all interests, were, with a sovereign, subordinate to the great duty of insuring the safety of his country. Nor could it be imagined that Francis would be so romantic in his principles, as not to hearken to a casuistry which was so plausible in itself, and which so much flattered all the passions by which, either as a prince or a man, he was strongly actuated.

Francis, on entering his own dominions, delivered his two eldest sons as hostages into the hands of the Spaniards. He mounted a Turkish horse, and immediately putting him to the gallop, he waved his hand, and cried aloud several times, “I am yet a king.” He soon reached Bayonne, where he was joyfully received by the regent and his whole court. He immediately wrote to Henry; acknowledging that to his good offices alone he owed his liberty, and protesting that he should be entirely governed by his counsels in all transactions with the emperor. When the Spanish envoy demanded his ratification of the treaty of Madrid, now that he had fully recovered his liberty, he declined the proposal; under color that it was previously necessary to assemble the states both of France and of Burgundy, and to obtain their consent. The states of Burgundy soon met; and declaring against the clause which contained an engagement for alienating their province, they expressed their resolution of opposing, even by force of arms, the execution of so ruinous and unjust an article. The imperial minister then required that Francis, in conformity to the treaty of Madrid, should now return to his prison; but the French monarch, instead of complying, made public the treaty which a little before he had secretly concluded at Cognac, against the ambitious schemes and usurpations of the emperor. [1]

* Guicciard. lib. xvii.

The pope, the Venetians, and other Italian states, who were deeply interested in these events, had been held in the most anxious suspense with regard to the resolutions which Francis should take after the recovery of his liberty; and Clement, in particular, who suspected that this prince would never execute a treaty so hurtful to his interests, and even destructive of his independency, had very frankly offered him a dispensation from all his oaths and engagements. Francis remained not in suspense; but entered immediately into the confederacy proposed to him. It was stipulated by that king, the pope, the Venetians, the Swiss, the Florentines, and the duke of Milan, among other articles, that they would oblige the emperor to deliver up the two young princes of France on receiving a reasonable sum of money; and to restore Milan to Sforza, without further condition or encumbrance.

The king of England was invited to accede, not only as a contracting party, but as protector of the “holy league,” — so it was called; and if Naples should be conquered from the emperor, in prosecution of this confederacy, it was agreed that Henry should enjoy a principality in that kingdom of the yearly revenue of thirty thousand ducats; and that cardinal Wolsey, in consideration of the services which he had rendered to Christendom, should also, in such an event, be put in possession of a revenue of ten thousand ducats.

Francis was desirous that the appearance of this great confederacy should engage the emperor to relax somewhat in the extreme rigor of the treaty of Madrid; and while he entertained these hopes, he was the more remiss in his warlike preparations; nor did he send in due time reënforcements to his allies in Italy.

1527.

The duke of Bourbon had got possession of the whole Milanese, of which the emperor intended to grant him the investiture; and having levied a considerable army in Germany, he became formidable to all the Italian potentates; and not the less so because Charles, destitute, as usual, of money, had not been able to remit any pay to the forces. The general was extremely beloved by his troops; and in order to prevent those mutinies which were ready to break out every moment, and which their affection alone for him had hitherto restrained, he led them to Rome, and promised to enrich them by the plunder of that opulent city. He was himself killed, as he was planting a scaling ladder against the walls; but his soldiers, rather enraged than discouraged by his death, mounted to the assault with the utmost valor, and entering the city sword in hand, exercised all those brutalities which may be expected from ferocity excited by resistance, and from insolence which takes place when that resistance is no more. This renowned city, exposed by her renown alone to so many calamities, never endured, in any age, even from the barbarians by whom she was often subdued, such indignities as she was now compelled to suffer. The unrestrained massacre and pillage, which continued for several days, were the least ills to which the unhappy Romans were exposed. [1] Whatever was respectable in modesty or sacred in religion, seemed but the more to provoke the insults of the soldiery. Virgins suffered violation in the arms of their parents, and upon those very altars to which they had fled for protection.

* Guicciard. lib. xviii. Bellai. Stowe, .

Aged prelates, after enduring every indignity, and even every torture, were thrown into dungeons, and menaced with the most cruel death, in order to make them reveal their secret treasures, or purchase liberty by exorbitant ransoms. Clement himself, who had trusted for protection to the sacredness of his character, and neglected to make his escape in time, was taken captive; and found that his dignity, which procured him no regard from the Spanish soldiers, did but draw on him the insolent mockery of the German, who, being generally attached to the Lutheran principles, were pleased to gratify their animosity by the abasement of the sovereign pontiff.

When intelligence of this great event was conveyed to the emperor, that young prince, habituated to hypocrisy, expressed the most profound sorrow for the success of his arms: he put himself and all his court in mourning: he stopped the rejoicings for the birth of his son Philip: and knowing that every artifice, however gross, is able, when seconded by authority, to impose upon the people, he ordered prayers during several months to be put up in the churches for the pope's liberty; which all men knew a letter under his hand could in a moment have procured.

The concern expressed by Henry and Francis for the calamity of their ally was more sincere. These two monarchs, a few days before the sack of Rome, had concluded a treaty [1] at Westminster, in which, besides renewing former alliances, they agreed to send ambassadors to Charles, requiring him to accept of two millions of crowns as the ransom of the French princes, and to repay the money borrowed from Henry; and in case of refusal, the ambassadors, attended by heralds, were ordered to denounce war against him.

* 30th April.

This war it was agreed to prosecute in the Low Countries, with an army of thirty thousand infantry and fifteen hundred men at arms, two thirds to be supplied by Francis, the rest by Henry. And in order to strengthen the alliance between the princes, it was stipulated, that either Francis, or his son, the duke of Orleans, as should afterwards be agreed on, should espouse the princess Mary, Henry’s daughter. No sooner did the monarchs receive intelligence of Bourbon’s enterprise than they changed, by a new treaty, the scene of the projected war from the Netherlands to Italy; and hearing of the pope’s captivity, they were further stimulated to undertake the war with vigor for restoring him to liberty. Wolsey himself crossed the sea, in order to have an interview with Francis and to concert measures for that purpose; and he displayed all that grandeur and magnificence with which he was so much intoxicated. He was attended by a train of a thousand horse. The cardinal of Lorraine, and the chancellor Alençon, met him at Boulogne; Francis himself, besides granting to that haughty prelate the power of giving, in every place where he came, liberty to all prisoners, made a journey as far as Amiens to meet him, and even advanced some miles from the town, the more to honor his reception. It was here stipulated, that the duke of Orleans should espouse the princess Mary; and as the emperor seemed to be taking some steps towards assembling a general council, the two monarchs agreed not to acknowledge it, but, during the interval of the pope’s captivity, to govern the churches in their respective dominions by their own authority. Wolsey made some attempts to get his legatine power extended over France, and even over Germany; but finding his efforts fruitless, he was obliged, though with great reluctance, to desist from these ambitious enterprises. [1]

* Burnet, book iii. coll. 12, 13.

The more to cement the union between these princes, a new treaty was some time after concluded at London; in which Henry agreed finally to renounce all claims to the crown of France; claims which might now indeed be deemed chimerical, but which often served as a pretence for exciting the unwary English to wage war upon the French nation. As a return for this concession, Francis bound himself and his successors to pay forever fifty thousand crowns a year to Henry and his successors; and that greater solemnity might be given to this treaty, it was agreed that the parliaments and great nobility of both kingdoms should give their assent to it. The mareschal Montmorency, accompanied by many persons of distinction, and attended by a pompous equipage, was sent over to ratify the treaty; and was received at London with all the parade which suited the solemnity of the occasion. The terror of the emperor’s greatness had extinguished the ancient animosity between the nations; and Spain, during more than a century, became, though a more distant power, the chief object of jealousy to the English.

This cordial union between France and England, though it added influence to the joint embassy which they sent to the emperor, was not able to bend that monarch to submit entirely to the conditions insisted on by the allies. He departed, indeed, from his demand of Burgundy as the ransom of the French princes; but he required, previously to their liberty, that Francis should evacuate Genoa, and all the fortresses held by him in Italy; and he declared his intention of bringing Sforza to a trial, and confiscating the duchy of Milan, on account of his pretended treason. The English and French heralds, therefore, according to agreement, declared war against him, and set him at defiance. Charles answered the English herald with moderation; but to the French he reproached his master with breach of faith, reminded him of the private conversation which had passed between them at Madrid before their separation, and offered to prove by single combat that he had acted dishonorably. Francis retaliated this challenge, by giving Charles the lie; and, after demanding security of the field, he offered to maintain his cause by single combat. Many messages passed to and fro between them; but though both princes were undoubtedly brave, the intended duel never took place. The French and Spaniards, during that age, zealously disputed which of the monarchs incurred the blame of this failure; but all men of moderation every where lamented the power of fortune, that the prince the more candid, generous, and sincere, should, by unhappy incidents, have been reduced to so cruel a situation, that nothing but his violation of treaty could preserve his people, and that he must ever after, without being able to make a proper reply, bear to be reproached with breach of promise, by a rival inferior to him both in honor and virtue.

But though this famous challenge between Charles and Francis had no immediate consequence with regard to these monarchs themselves, it produced a considerable alteration on the manners of the age. The practice of challenges and duels, which had been part of the ancient barbarous jurisprudence, which was still preserved on very solemn occasions, and which was sometimes countenanced by the civil magistrate, began thenceforth to prevail in the most trivial incidents; and men, on any affront or injury, thought themselves entitled, or even required in honor, to take revenge on their enemies, by openly vindicating their right in single combat. These absurd, though generous maxims, shed much of thee best blood in Christendom, during more than two centuries; and notwithstanding the severity of law and authority of reason, such is the prevailing force of custom, they are far from being as yet entirely exploded.

CHAPTER XXX.

HENRY VIII

1527.

Notwithstanding the submissive deference paid to papal authority before the reformation, the marriage of Henry with Catharine of Arragon, his brother’s widow, had not passed without much scruple and difficulty. The prejudices of the people were in general bent against a conjugal union between such near relations; and the late king, though he had betrothed his son when that prince was but twelve years of age, gave evident proofs of his intention to take afterwards a proper opportunity of annulling the contract. [1] He ordered the young prince, as soon as he came of age, to enter a protestation against the marriage; [2] and on his death-bed he charged him, as his last injunction, not to finish an alliance so unusual, and exposed to such insuperable objections. After the king’s accession, some members of the privy council, particularly Warham, the primate, openly declared against the resolution of completing the marriage; and though Henry’s youth and dissipation kept him, during some time, from entertaining any scruples with regard to the measure which he had embraced, there happened incidents sufficient to rouse his attention, and to inform him of the sentiments generally entertained on that subject. The states of Castile had opposed the emperor Charles’s espousals with Mary, Henry’s daughter; and among other objections, had insisted on the illegitimate birth of the young princess. [3] And when the negotiations were afterwards opened with France, and mention was made of betrothing her to Francis or the duke of Orleans, the bishop of Tarbe, the French ambassador, revived the same objection. [4] But though these events naturally raised some doubts in Henry’s mind, there concurred other causes, which tended much to increase his remorse, and render his conscience more scrupulous.

* Morison’s Apomaxis, .

* * Morison’s Apomaxis, . Heylin’s Queen Mary, .

* * * Lord Herbert, Fiddes’s Life of Wolsey.

* * * * Rymer vol. xiv. , 203. Heylin, .

The queen was older than the king by no less than six years; and the decay of her beauty, together with particular infirmities and diseases, had contributed, notwithstanding her blameless character and deportment, to render her person unacceptable to him. Though she had born him several children, they all died in early infancy, except one daughter, and he was the more struck with this misfortune, because the curse of being childless is the very threatening contained in the Mosaical law against those who espouse their brother’s widow. The succession, too, of the crown was a consideration that occurred to every one, whenever the lawfulness of Henry’s marriage was called in question; and it was apprehended, that if doubts of Mary’s legitimacy concurred with the weakness of her sex, the king of Scots, the next heir, would advance his pretensions, and might throw the kingdom into confusion. The evils, as yet recent, of civil wars and convulsions arising from a disputed title, made great impression on the minds of men, and rendered the people universally desirous of any event which might obviate so irreparable a calamity. And the king was thus impelled, both by his private passions and by motives of public interest, to seek the dissolution of his inauspicious, and, as it was esteemed, unlawful marriage with Catharine.

Henry afterwards affirmed that his scruples arose entirely from private reflection; and that on consulting his confessor, the bishop of Lincoln, he found the prelate possessed with the same doubts and difficulties. The king himself, being so great a casuist and divine, next proceeded to examine the question more carefully by his own learning and study; and having had recourse to Thomas of Aquine, he observed that this celebrated doctor, whose authority was great in the church, and absolute with him, had treated of that very case, and had expressly declared against the lawfulness of such marriages. [1]

* Burnet. Fiddes.

The prohibitions, said Thomas, contained in Leviticus, and among the rest that of marrying a brother's widow, are moral, eternal, and founded on a divine sanction; and though the pope may dispense with the rules of the church, the laws of God cannot be set aside by any authority less than that which enacted them. The archbishop of Canterbury was then applied to; and he was required to consult his brethren: all the prelates of England, except Fisher, bishop of Rochester unanimously declared, under their hand and seal, that they deemed the king's marriage unlawful. [1] Wolsey also fortified the king's scruples; [2] partly with a view of promoting a total breach with the emperor, Catharine's nephew; partly desirous of connecting the king more closely with Francis, by marrying him to the duchess of Alençon, sister to that monarch; and perhaps, too, somewhat disgusted with the queen herself, who had reproved him for certain freedoms, unbefitting his character and station, [3] But Henry was carried forward, though perhaps not at first excited, by a motive more forcible than even the suggestions of that powerful favorite.

Anne Boleyn, who lately appeared at court, had been appointed maid of honor to the queen; and having had frequent opportunities of being seen by Henry, and of conversing with him, she had acquired an entire ascendant over his affections. This young lady, whose grandeur and misfortunes have rendered her so celebrated, was daughter of Sir Thomas Boleyn, who had been employed by the king in several embassies, and who was allied to all the principal nobility in the kingdom. His wife, mother to Anne, was daughter of the duke of Norfolk; his own mother was daughter of the earl of Ormond; his grandfather, Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, who had been mayor of London, had espoused one of the daughters and coheirs of Lord Hastings. [4]

* Burnet, vol. i. . Stowe, .

* * Le Grand, vol. iii. , 166, 168. Saunders. Heylin, p. 4.

* * *Burnet, vol. i. . Strype, vol. i. .

* * * * Camden's Preface to the Life of Elizabeth. Burnet, vol. i .

Anne herself, though then in very early youth, had been carried over to Paris by the king’s sister, when the princess espoused Lewis XII. of France; and upon the demise of that monarch, and the return of his dowager into England, this damsel, whose accomplishments even in her tender years were always much admired, was retained in the service of Claude, queen of France, spouse to Francis; and after the death of that princess, she passed into the family of the duchess of Alençon, a woman of singular merit. The exact time when she returned to England is not certainly known; but it was after the king had entertained doubts with regard to the lawfulness of his marriage with Catharine, if the account is to be credited which he himself afterwards gave of that transaction. Henry’s scruples had made him break off all conjugal commerce with the queen; but as he still supported an intercourse of civility and friendship with her, he had occasion, in the frequent visits which he paid her, to observe the beauty, the youth, the charms of Anne Boleyn. Finding the accomplishments of her mind nowise inferior to her exterior graces, he even entertained the design of raising her to the throne; and was the more confirmed in this resolution, when he found that her virtue and modesty prevented all hopes of gratifying his passion in any other manner. As every motive, therefore, of inclination and policy seemed thus to concur in making the king desirous of a divorce from Catharine, and as his prospect of success was inviting, he resolved to make application to Clement; and he sent Knight, his secretary, to Rome for that purpose.

That he might not shock the haughty claims of the pontiff, he resolved not to found the application on any general doubts concerning the papal power to permit marriage in the nearer degrees of consanguinity; but only to insist on particular grounds of nullity in the bull which Julius had granted for the marriage of Henry and Catharine. It was a maxim in the court of Rome, that if the pope be surprised into any concession, or grant any indulgence upon false suggestions, the bull may afterwards be annulled; and this pretence had usually been employed wherever one pope had recalled any deed executed by any of his predecessors. But Julius’s bull, when examined, afforded abundant matter of this kind; and any tribunal favorable to Henry needed not want a specious color for gratifying him in his applications for a divorce. It was said in the preamble, that the bull had been granted upon his solicitation; though it was known that, at that time, he was under twelve years of age; it was also affirmed, as another motive for the bull, that the marriage was requisite, in order to preserve peace between the two crowns; though it is certain that there was not then any ground or appearance of quarrel between them. These false premises in Julius's bull seemed to afford Clement a sufficient reason or pretence for annulling it, and granting Henry a dispensation for a second marriage. [1]

* Collier, Eccles. Hist. vol. ii , from the Cott. Lib. Vitel.

But though the pretext for this indulgence had been less plausible, the pope was in such a situation that he had the strongest motives to embrace every opportunity of gratifying the English monarch. He was then a prisoner in the hands of the emperor; and had no hopes of recovering his liberty on any reasonable terms, except by the efforts of the league which Henry had formed with Francis and the Italian powers, in order to oppose the ambition of Charles. When the English secretary, therefore, solicited him in private, he received a very favorable answer: and a dispensation was forthwith promised to be granted to his master. [1] Soon after, the march of a French army into Italy, under the command of Lautrec, obliged the imperialists to restore Clement to his liberty; and he retired to Orvietto, where the secretary, with Sir Gregory Cassali, the king's resident at Rome, renewed their applications to him. They still found him full of high professions of friendship, gratitude, and attachment to the king; but not so prompt in granting his request as they expected. The emperor, who had got intelligence of Henry's application to Rome, had exacted a promise from the pope, to take no steps in the affair before he communicated them to the imperial ministers; and Clement, embarrassed by this promise, and still more overawed by the emperor's forces in Italy, seemed willing to postpone those concessions desired of him by Henry. Importuned, however, by the English ministers, he at last put into their hands a commission to Wolsey, as legate, in conjunction with the archbishop of Canterbury, or any other English prelate, to examine the validity of the king's marriage, and of Julius's dispensation: [2] he also granted them a provisional dispensation for the king's marriage with any other person; and promised to issue a decretal bull, annulling the marriage with Catharine. But he represented to them the dangerous consequences which must ensue to him, if these concessions should come to the emperor's knowledge; and he conjured them not to publish those papers, or make any further use of them, till his affairs were in such a situation as to secure his liberty and independence. And his secret advice was, whenever they should find the proper time for opening the scene, that they should prevent all opposition, by proceeding immediately to a conclusion, by declaring the marriage with Catharine invalid, and by Henry's instantly espousing some other person. Nor would it be so difficult, he said for himself to confirm these proceedings, after they were passed, as previously to render them valid by his consent and authority. [3]

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Rymer, vol. xiv. .

* * * Collier, from Cott. Lib. Vitel. b. 10.

1528.

When Henry received the commission and dispensation from his ambassadors, and was informed of the pope's advice, he laid the whole before his ministers, and asked their opinion in so delicate a situation. The English counsellors considered the danger of proceeding in the manner pointed out to them. Should the pope refuse to ratify a deed which he might justly call precipitate and irregular, and should he disavow the advice which he gave in so clandestine a manner, the king would find his second marriage totally invalidated; the children which it might bring him declared illegitimate; and his marriage with Catharine more firmly riveted than ever. [1] And Henry's apprehensions of the possibility, or even probability, of such an event, were much confirmed when he reflected on the character and situation of the sovereign pontiff.

Clement was a prince of excellent judgment, whenever his timidity, to which he was extremely subject, allowed him to make full use of those talents and that penetration with which he was endowed. [2] The captivity and other misfortunes which he had undergone by entering into a league against Charles, had so affected his imagination, that he never afterwards exerted himself with vigor in any public measure; especially if the interest or inclinations of that potentate stood in opposition to him. The imperial forces were at that time powerful in Italy, and might return to the attack of Rome, which was still defenceless, and exposed to the same calamities with which it had already been overwhelmed. And besides these dangers, Clement fancied himself exposed to perils which threatened still more immediately his person and his dignity.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Father Paul, lib. i. Guicciard.

Charles, apprised of the timid disposition of the holy father, threw out perpetual menaces of summoning a general council; which he represented as necessary to reform the church, and correct those enormous abuses which the ambition and avarice of the court of Rome had introduced into every branch of ecclesiastical administration. The power of the sovereign pontiff himself, he said, required limitation; his conduct called aloud for amendment; and even his title to the throne which he filled might justly be called in question. That pope had always passed for the natural son of Julian of Medicis, who was of the sovereign family of Florence; and though Leo X., his kinsman, had declared him legitimate, upon a pretended promise of marriage between his father and mother, few believed that declaration to be founded on any just reason or authority. [1] The canon law, indeed, had been entirely silent with regard to the promotion of bastards to the papal throne; but, what was still dangerous, the people had entertained a violent prepossession, that this stain in the birth of any person was incompatible with so holy an office. And in another point the canon law was express and positive, that no man guilty of simony could attain that dignity. A severe bull of Julius II. had added new sanctions to this law, by declaring that a simoniacal election could not be rendered valid, even by a posterior consent of the cardinals. But unfortunately Clement had given to Cardinal Colonna a billet, containing promises of advancing that cardinal, in case he himself should attain the papal dignity by his concurrence; and this billet Colonna, who was in entire dependence on the emperor, threatened every moment to expose to public view. [2]

While Charles terrified the pope with these menaces, he also allured him by hopes, which were no less prevalent over his affections. At the time when the emperor’s forces sacked Rome, and reduced Clement to captivity, the Florentines, passionate for their ancient liberty, had taken advantage of his distresses, and revolting against the family of Medicis, had entirely abolished their authority in Florence, and reëstablished the democracy. The better to protect themselves in their freedom, they had entered into the alliance with France, England, and Venice, against the emperor; and Clement found that by this interest, the hands of his confederates were tied from assisting him in the restoration of his family; the event which, of all others, he most passionately desired. The emperor alone, he knew, was able to effect this purpose; and therefore, whatever professions he made of fidelity to his allies, he was always, on the least glimpse of hope, ready to embrace every proposal of a cordial reconciliation with that monarch. [3]

* Father Paul lib. i.

* * Father Paul, lib. i.

* * * Father Paul.

These views and interests of the pope were well known in England; and as the opposition of the emperor to Henry’s divorce was foreseen, both on account of the honor and interests of Catharine, his aunt, and the obvious motive of distressing an enemy, it was esteemed dangerous to take any measure of consequence, in expectation of the subsequent concurrence of a man of Clement’s character, whose behavior always contained so much duplicity, and who was at present so little at his own disposal. The safest measure seemed to consist in previously engaging him so far, that he could not afterwards recede, and in making use of his present ambiguity and uncertainty, to extort the most important concessions from him. For this purpose, Stephen Gardiner, the cardinal’s secretary, and Edward Fox, the king’s almoner, were despatched to Rome, and were ordered to solicit a commission from the pope, of such a nature as would oblige him to confirm the sentence of the commissioners, whatever it should be, and disable him on any account to recall the commission, or evoke the cause to Rome. [1]

But the same reasons which made the king so desirous of obtaining this concession, confirmed the pope in the resolution of refusing it: he was still determined to keep the door open for an agreement with the emperor; and he made no scruple of sacrificing all other considerations to a point, which he deemed the most essential and important to his own security, and to the greatness of his family. He granted, therefore, a new commission, in which

Cardinal Campeggio was joined to Wolsey, for the trial of the king’s marriage; but he could not be prevailed on to insert the clause desired of him. And though he put into Gardiner’s hand a letter, promising not to recall the present commission, this promise was found, on examination, to be couched in such ambiguous terms, as left him still the power, whenever he pleased, of departing from it. [2]

* Lord Herbert. Burnet, vol. i. , in the Collect. Le Grand, vol iii. . Strype, vol. i. , with App. No. 23-24, etc.

* * Lord Herbert, Burnet, .

Campeggio lay under some obligations to the king; but his dependence on the pope was so much greater, that he conformed himself entirely to the views of the latter; and though he received his commission in April, he delayed his departure under so many pretences, that it was October before he arrived in England. The first step which he took was to exhort the king to desist from the prosecution of his divorce; and finding that this counsel gave offence, he said, that his intention was also to exhort the queen to take the vows in a convent, and that he thought it his duty previously to attempt an amicable composure of all differences. [1] The more to pacify the king, he showed to him, as also to the cardinal the decretal bull, annulling the former marriage with Catharine; but no entreaties could prevail on him to make any other of the king’s council privy to the secret. [2] In order to atone in some degree for this obstinacy, he expressed to the king and the cardinal the pope’s great desire of satisfying them in every reasonable demand; and in particular, he showed that their request for suppressing some more monasteries, and converting them into cathedrals and episcopal sees, had obtained the consent of his holiness. [3]

These ambiguous circumstances in the behavior of the pope and the legate, kept the court of England in suspense, and determined the king to wait with patience the issue of such uncertain councils.

1529.

Fortune, meanwhile, seemed to promise him a more sure and expeditious way of extricating himself from his present difficulties. Clement was seized with a dangerous illness; and the intrigues, for electing his successor, began already to take place among the cardinals. Wolsey, in particular, supported by the interest of England and of France, entertained hopes of mounting the throne of St. Peter; [4] and it appears, that if a vacancy had then happened, there was a probability of his reaching that summit of his ambition. But the pope recovered, though after several relapses; and he returned to the same train of false and deceitful politics, by which he had hitherto amused the court of England. Be still flattered Henry with professions of the most cordial attachment, and promised him a sudden and favorable issue to his process: he still continued his secret negotiations with Charles, and persevered in the resolution of sacrificing all his promises, and all the interests of the Romish religion, to the elevation of his family. Campeggio, who was perfectly acquainted with his views and intentions, protracted the decision by the most artful delays; and gave Clement full leisure to adjust all the terms of his treaty with the emperor.

* Herbert, p 225.

* * Burnet, .

* * * Rymer, vol xiv. . Strype, vol.i. , 111. App. No 28

* * * * Burnet, vol. i. .

The emperor, acquainted with the king’s extreme earnestness in this affair, was determined that he should obtain success by no other means than by an application to him and by deserting his alliance with Francis, which had hitherto supported, against the superior force of Spain, the tottering state of the French monarchy. He willingly hearkened, therefore, to the applications of Catharine, his aunt; and promising her his utmost protection, exhorted her never to yield to the malice and persecutions of her enemies. The queen herself was naturally of a firm and resolute temper; and was engaged by every motive to persevere in protesting against the injustice to which she thought herself exposed. The imputation of incest, which was thrown upon her marriage with Henry, struck her with the highest indignation: the illegitimacy of her daughter, which seemed a necessary consequence, gave her the most just concern: the reluctance of yielding to a rival, who, she believed, had supplanted her in the king’s affections, was a very natural motive. Actuated by all these considerations, she never ceased soliciting her nephew’s assistance, and earnestly entreating an evocation of the cause to Rome, where alone, she thought, she could expect justice. And the emperor, in all his negotiations with the pope, made the recall of the commission which Campeggio and Wolsey exercised in England a fundamental article. [1]

* Herbert, . Burnet, vol i. .

The two legates, meanwhile, opened their court at London, and cited the king and queen to appear before it. They both presented themselves; and the king answered to his name, when called: but the queen, instead of answering to hers rose from her seat, and throwing herself at the king’s feet, made a very pathetic harangue, which her virtue, her dignity, and her misfortunes rendered the more affecting. She told him, that she was a stranger in his dominions, without protection, without council, without assistance; exposed to all the injustice which her enemies were pleased to impose upon her: that she had quitted her native country without other resource than her connections with him and his family, and had expected that, instead of suffering thence any violence or iniquity, she was assured in them of a safeguard against every misfortune: that she had been his wife during twenty years, and would here appeal to himself, whether her affectionate submission to his will had not merited better treatment, than to be thus, after so long a time, thrown from him with so much indignity: that she was conscious — he himself was assured — that her virgin honor was yet unstained when he received her into his bed and that her connections with his brother had been carried no further than the ceremony of marriage: that their parents, the kings of England and Spain, were esteemed the wisest princes of their time, and had undoubtedly acted by the best advice, when they formed the agreement for that marriage, which was now represented as so criminal and unnatural: and that she acquiesced in their judgment, and would not submit her cause to be tried by a court, whose dependence on her enemies was too visible, ever to allow her any hopes of obtaining from them an equitable or impartial decision. [1] Having spoken these words, she rose, and making the king a low reverence, she departed from the court, and never would again appear in it.

After her departure, the king did her the justice to acknowledge, that she had ever been a dutiful and affectionate wife, and that the whole tenor of her behavior had been conformable to the strictest rules of probity and honor. He only insisted on his own scruples with regard to the lawfulness of their marriage; and he explained the origin, the progress, and the foundation of those doubts, by which he had been so long and so violently agitated. He acquitted Cardinal Wolsey from having any hand in encouraging his scruples; and he craved a sentence of the court agreeable to the justice of his cause.

The legates, after citing the queen anew, declared her contumacious, notwithstanding her appeal to Rome; and then proceeded to the examination of the cause. The first point which came before them was, the proof of Prince Arthur's consummation of his marriage with Catharine; and it must be confessed, that no stronger arguments could reasonably be expected of such a fact after so long an interval. The age of the prince, who had passed his fifteenth year, the good state of his health, the long time that he had cohabited with his consort, many of his expressions to that very purpose; all these circumstances form a violent presumption in favor of the king's assertion. [2] Henry himself, after his brother's death was not allowed for some time to bear the title of prince of Wales, in expectation of her pregnancy: the Spanish ambassador, in order the better to insure possession of her jointure, had sent over to Spain proofs of the consummation of her marriage: [3] Julius's bull itself was founded on the supposition that Arthur had perhaps had knowledge of the princess: in the very treaty, fixing Henry's marriage, the consummation of the former marriage with Prince Arthur is acknowledged on both sides. [4]

* Burnet, vol. i. . Hall. Stowe, .

* * Herbert.

* * * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * * Rymer, vol. xiii. .

These particulars were all laid before the court; accompanied with many reasonings concerning the extent of the pope's authority, and against his power of granting a dispensation to marry within the prohibited degrees. Campeggio heard these doctrines with great impatience; and notwithstanding his resolution to protract the cause, he was often tempted to interrupt and silence the king's counsel, when they insisted on such disagreeable topics. The trial was spun out till the twenty-third of July; and Campeggio chiefly took on him the part of conducting it. Wolsey, though the elder cardinal, permitted him to act as president of the court; because it was thought, that a trial managed by an Italian cardinal would carry the appearance of greater candor and impartiality, than if the king's own minister and favorite had presided in it. The business now seemed to be drawing near to a period; and the king was every day in expectation of a sentence in his favor; when, to his great surprise, Campeggio, on a sudden, without any warning, and upon very frivolous pretences, [1] prorogued the court till the first of October. The evocation, which came a few days after from Rome, put an end to all the hopes of success which the king had so long and so anxiously cherished. [2]

During the time that the trial was carried on before the legates at London, the emperor had by his ministers earnestly solicited Clement to evoke the cause; and had employed every topic of hope or terror which could operate either on the ambition or timidity of the pontiff. The English ambassadors, on the other hand, in conjunction with the French, had been no less earnest in their applications, that the legates should be allowed to finish the trial; but though they employed the same engines of promises and menaces, the motives which they could set before the pope were not so urgent or immediate as those which were held up to him by the emperor. [3] The dread of losing England, and of fortifying the Lutherans by so considerable an accession, made small impression on Clement's mind, in comparison of the anxiety for his personal safety, and the fond desire of restoring the Medici to their dominion in Florence. As soon, therefore, as he had adjusted all terms with the emperor he laid hold of the pretence of justice, which required him, as he asserted, to pay regard to the queen's appeal; and suspending the commission of the legates, he adjourned the cause to his own personal judgment at Rome. Campeggio had beforehand received private orders, delivered by Campana, to burn the decretal bull with which he was intrusted.

* Burnet, vol. i. , 77.

* * Herbert, .

* * * * Burnet, vol. i. .

Wolsey had long foreseen this measure as the sure forerunner of his ruin. Though he had at first desired that the king should rather marry a French princess than Anne Boleyn, he had employed himself with the utmost assiduity and earnestness to bring the affair to a happy issue: [1] he was not, therefore, to be blamed for the unprosperous event which Clement's partiality had produced. But he had sufficient experience of the extreme ardor and impatience of Henry's temper, who could bear no contradiction, and was wont, without examination or distinction, to make his ministers answerable for the success of those transactions with which they were intrusted. Anne Boleyn also, who was prepossessed against him, had imputed to him the failure of her hopes; and as she was newly returned to court, whence she had been removed, from a regard to decency, during the trial before the legates, she had naturally acquired an additional influence on Henry, and she served much to fortify his prejudices against the cardinal. [2] Even the queen and her partisans, judging of Wolsey by the part which he had openly acted, had expressed great animosity against him; and the most opposite factions seemed now to combine in the ruin of this haughty minister. The high opinion itself, which Henry had entertained of the cardinal's capacity, tended to hasten his downfall; while he imputed the bad success of that minister's undertakings, not to ill fortune or to mistake, but to the malignity or infidelity of his intentions. The blow, however, fell not instantly on his head. The king, who probably could not justify by any good reason his alienation from his ancient favorite, seems to have remained some time in suspense; and he received him, if not with all his former kindness, at least with the appearance of trust and regard.

* Collier, vol. ii. . Burnet, vol, i. .

* * Cavendish, .

But constant experience evinces how rarely a high confidence and affection receives the least diminution, without sinking into absolute indifference, or even running into the opposite extreme. The king now determined to bring on the ruin of the cardinal with a motion almost as precipitate as he had formerly employed in his elevation. The dukes of Norfolk and Suffolk were sent to require the great seal from him; and on his scrupling to deliver it [1] without a more express warrant, Henry wrote him a letter, upon which it was surrendered; and it was delivered by the king to Sir Thomas More, a man who, besides the ornaments of an elegant literature, possessed the highest virtue, integrity, and capacity.

Wolsey was ordered to depart from York Place, a palace which he had built in London, and which, though it really belonged to the see of York, was seized by Henry, and became afterwards the residence of the kings of England, by the title of Whitehall. All his furniture and plate were also seized: their riches and splendor befitted rather a royal than a private fortune. The walls of his palace were covered with cloth of gold or cloth of silver: he had a cupboard of plate of massy gold: there were found a thousand pieces of fine holland belonging to him. The rest of his riches and furniture was in proportion; and his opulence was probably no small inducement to this violent persecution against him.

The cardinal was ordered to retire to Asher, a country seat which he possessed near Hampton Court. The world, that had paid him such abject court during his prosperity, now entirely deserted him on this fatal reverse of all his fortunes. He himself was much dejected with the change; and from the same turn of mind which had made him be so vainly elated with his grandeur, he felt the stroke of adversity with double rigor. [2] The smallest appearance of his return to favor threw him into transports of joy unbecoming a man. The king had seemed willing, during some time, to intermit the blows which overwhelmed him. He granted him his protection, and left him in possession of the sees of York and Winchester. He even sent him a gracious message, accompanied with a ring, as a testimony of his affection. Wolsey, who was on horseback when the messenger met him, immediately alighted; and, throwing himself on his knees in the mire, received in that humble attitude these marks of his majesty’s gracious disposition towards him.

* Cavendish, .

* * Strype, vol. i. , 115. App. No. 31, etc.

* * * Stowe, .

But his enemies, who dreaded his return to court, never ceased plying the king with accounts of his several offences; and Anne Boleyn, in particular, contributed her endeavors, in conjunction with her uncle, the duke of Norfolk, to exclude him from all hopes of ever being reinstated in his former authority. He dismissed, therefore, his numerous retinue and as he was a kind and beneficent master, the separation passed not without a plentiful effusion of tears on both sides. [1] The king's heart, notwithstanding some gleams of kindness, seemed now totally hardened against his old favorite. He ordered him to be indicted in the star chamber, where a sentence was passed against him. And, not content with this severity, he abandoned him to all the rigor of the parliament, which now after a long interval, was again assembled. The house of lords voted a long charge against Wolsey, consisting of forty-four articles; and accompanied it with an application to the king for his punishment, and his removal from all authority. Little opposition was made to this charge in the upper house: no evidence of any part of it was so much as called for; and as it chiefly consists of general accusations, it was scarcely susceptible of any. [2] The articles were sent down to the house of commons; where Thomas Cromwell, formerly a servant of the cardinal's, and who had been raised by him from a very low station, defended his unfortunate patron with such spirit, generosity, and courage, as acquired him great honor, and laid the foundation of that favor which he afterwards enjoyed with the king.

* Cavendish. Stowe, .

* * See note F, at the end of the volume.

Wolsey's enemies, finding that either his innocence or his caution prevented them from having any just ground of accusing him, had recourse to a very extraordinary expedient. An indictment was laid against him, that, contrary to a statute of Richard II., commonly called the statute of provisors, he had procured bulls from Rome, particularly one investing him with the legatine power, which he had exercised with very extensive authority. He confessed the indictment, pleaded ignorance of the statute, and threw himself on the king's mercy. He was perhaps within reach of the law but besides that this statute had fallen into disuse, nothing could be more rigorous and severe than to impute to him as a crime what he had openly, during the course of so many years, practised with the consent and approbation of the and the acquiescence of the parliament and kingdom. Not to mention what he always asserted, [1] and what we can scarcely doubt of, that he had obtained the royal license in the most formal manner, which, had he not been apprehensive of the dangers attending any opposition to Henry's lawless will, he might have pleaded in his own defence before the judges. Sentence, however, was pronounced against him, "That he was out of the king's protection; his lands and goods forfeited; and that his person might be committed to custody." But this prosecution of Wolsey was carried no further. Henry even granted him a pardon for all offences; restored him part of his plate and furniture; and still continued, from time to time, to drop expressions of favor and compassion towards him.

The complaints against the usurpations of the ecclesiastics had been very ancient in England, as well as in most other European kingdoms; and as this topic was now become popular every where, it had paved the way for the Lutheran tenets, and reconciled the people, in some measure, to the frightful idea of heresy and innovation. The commons, finding the occasion favorable, passed several bills restraining the impositions of the clergy; one for the regulating of mortuaries; another against the exactions for the probates of wills; [2] a third against non-residence and pluralities, and against church-men's being farmers of land. But what appeared chiefly dangerous to the ecclesiastical order, were the severe invectives thrown out, almost without opposition, in the house, against the dissolute lives of the priests, their ambition, their avarice, and their endless encroachments on the laity. Lord Herbert [3] has even preserved the speech of a gentleman of Gray's Inn, which is of a singular nature, and contains such topics as we should little expect to meet with during that period. The member insists upon the vast variety of theological opinions which prevailed in different nations and ages; the endless inextricable controversies maintained by the several sects; the impossibility that any man, much less the people, could ever know, much less examine, the tenets and principles of every sect; the necessity of ignorance and a suspense of judgment with regard to all those objects of dispute: and, upon the whole, he infers, that the only religion obligatory on mankind is the belief of one Supreme Being, the author of nature; and the necessity of good morals, in order to obtain his favor and protection. Such sentiments would be deemed latitudinarian, even in our time; and would not be advanced, without some precaution, in a public assembly.

* Cavendish, .

* * These exactions were quite arbitrary, and had risen to a great height. A member said in the house, that a thousand marks had been exacted from him on that account. Hall, fol.

188 Strype, vol. i. .

* * * Page 293.

But though the first broaching of religious controversy might encourage the sceptical turn in a few persons of a studious disposition, the zeal with which men soon after attached themselves to their several parties, served effectually to banish for a long time all such obnoxious liberties.

The bills for regulating the clergy met with some opposition in the house of lords. Bishop Fisher, in particular, imputed these measures of the commons to their want of faith; and to a formed design, derived from heretical and Lutheran principles, of robbing the church of her patrimony, and over-turning the national religion. The duke of Norfolk reproved the prelate in severe, and even somewhat indecent terms. He told him, that the greatest clerks were not always the wisest men. But Fisher replied, that he did not remember any fools in his time who had proved great clerks. The exceptions taken at the bishop of Rochester’s speech stopped not there. The commons, by the mouth of Sir Thomas Audley, their speaker, made complaints to the king of the reflections thrown upon them; and the bishop was obliged to put a more favorable construction on his words. [1]

Henry was not displeased that the court of Rome and the clergy should be sensible that they were entirely dependent on him, and that his parliament, if he were willing to second their inclinations, was sufficiently disposed to reduce the power and privileges of the ecclesiastics. The commons gratified the king in another particular of moment: they granted him a discharge of all those debts which he had contracted since the beginning of his reign, [2] and they grounded this bill, which occasioned many complaints, on a pretence of the king’s great care of the nation, and of his regularly employing all the money which he had borrowed in the public service.

* Parl. Hist. vol. iii. .

* *Burnet, vol. ii. .

Most of the king’s creditors consisted of friends to the cardinal who had been engaged by their patron to contribute to the supply of Henry’s necessities; and the present courtiers were well pleased to take the opportunity of mulcting them. [1] Several also approved of an expedient which, they hoped, would ever after discredit a method of supply so irregular and so unparliamentary.

* Burnet, vol. ii. .

The domestic transactions of England were at present so interesting to the king, that they chiefly engaged his attention; and he regarded foreign affairs only in subordination to them. He had declared war against the emperor; but the mutual advantages reaped by the commerce between England and the Netherlands, had engaged him to stipulate a neutrality with those provinces; and, except by money contributed to the Italian wars, he had in effect exercised no hostility against any of the imperial dominions. A general peace was this summer established in Europe. Margaret of Austria and Louisa of Savoy met at Cambray, and settled the terms of pacification between the French king and the emperor. Charles accepted of two millions of crowns in lieu of Burgundy; and he delivered up the two princes of France, whom he had retained as hostages. Henry was, on this occasion, so generous to his friend and ally Francis, that he sent him an acquittal of near six hundred thousand crowns, which that prince owed him. Francis’s Italian confederates were not so well satisfied as the king with the peace of Cambray: they were almost wholly abandoned to the will of the emperor, and seemed to have no means of security left but his equity and moderation. Florence, after a brave resistance, was subdued by the imperial arms, and finally delivered over to the dominion of the family of Medici. The Venetians were better treated: they were only obliged to relinquish some acquisitions which they had made on the coast of Naples. Even Francis Sforza obtained the investiture of Milan, and was pardoned for all past offences. The emperor in person passed into Italy with a magnificent train, and received the imperial crown from the hands of the pope at Bologna. He was but twenty-nine years of age; and having already, by his vigor and capacity, succeeded in every enterprise, and reduced to captivity the two greatest potentates in Europe, the one spiritual, the other temporal, he attracted the eyes of all men; and many prognostications were formed of his growing empire.

But though Charles seemed to be prosperous on every side, and though the conquest of Mexico and Peru now began to prevent that scarcity of money under which he had hitherto labored, he found himself threatened with difficulties in Germany; and his desire of surmounting them was the chief cause of his granting such moderate conditions to the Italian powers. Sultan Solyman, the greatest and most accomplished prince that ever sat on the Ottoman throne, had almost entirely subdued Hungary, had besieged Vienna, and, though repulsed, still menaced the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria with conquest and subjection. The Lutheran princes of the empire, finding that liberty of conscience was denied them, had combined in a league for their own defence at Smalcalde, and because they protested against the votes passed in the imperial diet, they thenceforth received the appellation, of “protestants.” Charles had undertaken to reduce them to obedience; and on pretence of securing the purity of religion, he had laid a scheme for aggrandizing his own family, by extending its dominion over all Germany.

The friendship of Henry was one material circumstance yet wanting to Charles, in order to insure success in his ambitious enterprises; and the king was sufficiently apprised that the concurrence of that prince would at once remove all the difficulties which lay in the way of his divorce; that point which had long been the object of his most earnest wishes. But besides that the interests of his kingdom seemed to require an alliance with France, his haughty spirit could not submit to a friendship imposed on him by constraint; and as he had ever been accustomed to receive courtship, deference, and solicitation from the greatest potentates, he could ill brook that dependence to which this unhappy affair seemed to have reduced him. Amidst the anxieties with which he was agitated, he was often tempted to break off all connections with the court of Rome; and though he had been educated in a superstitious reverence to papal authority, it is likely that his personal experience of the duplicity and selfish politics of Clement had served much to open his eyes in that particular. He found his prerogative firmly established at home: lie observed that his people were in general much disgusted with clerical usurpations, and disposed to reduce the powers find privileges of the ecclesiastical order: he knew that they had cordially taken part with him in his prosecution of the divorce, and highly resented the unworthy treatment which after so many services and such devoted attachment, he had received from the court of Rome. Anne Boleyn also could not fail to use all her efforts, and employ every insinuation, in order to make him proceed to extremities against the pope; both as it was the readiest way to her attaining royal dignity, and as her education in the court of the duchess of Alençon, a princess inclined to the reformers, had already disposed her to a belief of the new doctrines. But notwithstanding these inducements, Henry had strong motives still to desire a good agreement with the sovereign pontiff. He apprehended the danger of such great innovations: he dreaded the reproach of heresy: he abhorred all connections with the Lutherans, the chief opponents of the papal power; and having once exerted himself with such applause, as he imagined, in defence of the Romish communion, he was ashamed to retract his former opinions, and betray from passion such a palpable inconsistency. While he was agitated by these contrary motives, an expedient was proposed, which, as it promised a solution of all difficulties, was embraced by him with the greatest joy and satisfaction.

Dr. Thomas Cranmer, fellow of Jesus College in Cambridge, was a man remarkable in that university for his learning, and still more for the candor and disinterestedness of his temper. He fell one evening by accident into company with Gardiner, now secretary of state, and Fox, the king’s almoner; and as the business of the divorce became the subject of conversation, he observed that the readiest way either to quiet Henry’s conscience, or extort the pope’s consent, would be to consult all the universities of Europe with regard to this controverted point: if they agreed to approve of the king’s marriage with Catharine, his remorses would naturally cease; if they condemned it, the pope would find it difficult to resist the solicitations of so great a monarch, seconded by the opinion of all the learned men in Christendom. [1] When the king was informed of the proposal, he was delighted with it; and swore, with more alacrity than delicacy that Cranmer had got the right sow by the ear: he sent for that divine; entered into conversation with him; conceived a high opinion of his virtue and understanding; engaged him to write in defence of the divorce; and immediately, in prosecution of the scheme proposed, employed his agents to collect the judgments of all the universities in Europe.

* Fox, 2d edit. Burnet, vol. i. . Speed, p. 769. Heylin,

Had the question of Henry's marriage with Catharine been examined by the principles of sound philosophy, exempt from superstition, it seemed not liable to much difficulty. The natural reason why marriage in certain degrees is prohibited by the civil laws, and condemned by the moral sentiments of all nations, is derived from men's care to preserve purity of manners; while they reflect, that if a commerce of love were authorized between near relations, the frequent opportunities of intimate conversation, especially during early youth, would introduce a universal dissoluteness and corruption. But as the customs of countries vary considerably, and open an intercourse, more or less restrained, between different families, or between the several members of the same family, we find that the moral precept, varying with its cause, is susceptible, without any inconvenience, of very different latitude in the several ages and nations of the world. The extreme delicacy of the Greeks permitted no communication between persons of different sexes, except where they lived under the same roof; and even the apartments of a step-mother and her daughters were almost as much shut up against visits from the husband's sons, as against those from any stranger or more distant relation: hence, in that nation, it was lawful for a man to marry not only his niece, but his half-sister by the father; a liberty unknown to the Romans, and other nations, where a more open intercourse was authorized between the sexes. Reasoning from this principle, it would appear, that the ordinary commerce of life among great princes is so obstructed by ceremony and numerous attendants, that no ill consequence would result among them from marrying a brother's widow; especially if the dispensation of the supreme priest be previously required, in order to justify what may in common cases be condemned, and to hinder the precedent from becoming too common and familiar. And as strong motives of public interest and tranquillity may frequently require such alliances between the foreign families, there is the less reason for extending towards them the full rigor of the rule which has place among individuals. [1]

* See note G, at the end of the volume.

But in opposition to these reasons, and many more which might be collected, Henry had custom and precedent on his side, the principle by which men are almost wholly governed in their actions and opinions. The marrying of a brother’s widow was so unusual, that no other instance of it could be found in any history or record of any Christian nation; and though the popes were accustomed to dispense with more essential precepts of morality, and even permitted marriages within other prohibited degrees, such as those of uncle and niece, the imaginations of men were not yet reconciled to this particular exercise of his authority.

1530.

Several universities of Europe, therefore, without hesitation, as well as without interest or reward, [1] gave verdict in the king’s favor; not only those of France, Paris, Orleans, Bourges, Toulouse, Angiers, which might be supposed to lie under the influence of their prince, ally to Henry; but also those of Italy, Venice, Ferrara, Padua; even Bologna itself, though under the immediate jurisdiction of Clement. Oxford alone [2] and Cambridge* made some difficulty; because these universities, alarmed at the progress of Lutheranism, and dreading a defection from the holy see, scrupled to give their sanction to measures whose consequences they feared would prove fatal to the ancient religion. Their opinion, however, conformable to that of the other universities of Europe, was at last obtained; and the king, in order to give more weight to all these authorities, engaged his nobility to write a letter to the pope, recommending his cause to the holy father, and threatening him with the most dangerous consequences in case of a denial of justice. [3] The convocations, too, both of Canterbury and York, pronounced the king’s marriage invalid, irregular, and contrary to the law of God, with which no human power had authority to dispense. [4]

* Herbert. Burnet.

* * Wood, Hist. and Ant. Ox. lib. i. .

* * * Burnet, vol. i, .

* * * * Rymer, vol. xiv. . Burnet, vol. i. .

But Clement, lying still under the influence of the emperor, continued to summon the king to appear, either by himself or proxy, before his tribunal at Rome; and the king, who knew that he could expect no fair trial there, refused to submit to such a condition, and would not even admit of any citation, which he regarded as a high insult, and a violation of his royal prerogative. The father of Anne Boleyn, created earl of Wiltshire, carried to the pope the king’s reasons for not appearing by proxy; and, as the first instance of disrespect from England, refused to kiss his holiness’s foot which he very graciously held out to him for that purpose. [1]

The extremities to which Henry was pushed, both against the pope and the ecclesiastical order, were naturally disagreeable to Cardinal Wolsey; and as Henry foresaw his opposition, it is the most probable reason that can be assigned for his renewing the prosecution against his ancient favorite. After Wolsey had remained some time at Asher, he was allowed to remove to Richmond, a palace which he had received as a present from Henry, in return for Hampton Court; but the courtiers, dreading still his vicinity to the king, procured an order for him to remove to his see of York. The cardinal knew it was in vain to resist: he took up his residence at Cawood, in Yorkshire, where he rendered himself extremely popular in the neighborhood by his affability and hospitality; [2] but he was not allowed to remain long unmolested in this retreat.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Cavendish. Stowe, .

The earl of Northumberland received, orders, without regard to Wolsey’s ecclesiastical character, to arrest him for high treason, and to conduct him to London, in order to his trial. The cardinal, partly from the fatigues of his journey, partly from the agitation of his anxious mind, was seized with a disorder which turned into a dysentery; and he was able, with some difficulty, to reach Leicester Abbey. When the abbot and the monks advanced to receive him with much respect and reverence, he told them that he was come to lay his bones among them; and he immediately took to his bed, whence he never rose more. A little before he expired, he addressed himself in the following words to Sir William Kingston, constable of the Tower, who had him in custody. “I pray you have me heartily recommended unto his royal majesty, and beseech him on my behalf to call to his remembrance all matters that have passed between us from the beginning, especially with regard to his business with the queen; and then will he know in his conscience whether I have offended him.

“He is a prince of a most royal carriage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will miss or want any part of his will, he will endanger the one half of his kingdom.

“I do assure you, that I have often kneeled before him, sometimes three hours together, to persuade him from his will and appetite; but could not prevail: had I but served God as diligently as I have served the king, he would not have given me over in my gray hairs. But this is the just reward that I must receive for my indulgent pains and study, not regarding my service to God, but only to my prince. Therefore, let me advise you, if you be one of the privy council, as by your wisdom you are fit, take care what you put into the king’s head; for you can never put it out again.” [1]

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* Cavendish.

THE TOWER OF LONDON.

Thus died this famous cardinal, whose character seems to have contained as singular a variety as the fortune to which he was exposed. The obstinacy and violence of the king’s temper may alleviate much of the blame which some of his favorite’s measures have undergone; and when we consider, that the subsequent part of Henry’s reign was much more criminal than that which had been directed by Wolsey’s counsels, we shall be inclined to suspect those historians of partiality, who have endeavored to load the memory of this minister with such violent reproaches. If, in foreign politics, he sometimes employed his influence over the king for his private purposes, rather than his master’s service, which, he boasted, he had solely at heart, we must remember, that he had in view the papal throne; a dignity which, had he attained it, would have enabled him to make Henry a suitable return for all his favors. The cardinal of Amboise, whose memory is respected in France, always made this apology for his own conduct, which was, in some respect, similar to Wolsey’s; and we have reason to think, that Henry was well acquainted with the views by which his minister was influenced, and took a pride in promoting them. He much regretted his death, when informed of it, and always spoke favorably of his memory; a proof that humor, more than reason, or any discovery of treachery, had occasioned the last persecutions against him.

1531.

A new session of parliament was held, together with a convocation; and the king here gave strong proofs of his extensive authority, as well as of his intention to turn it to the depression of the clergy. As an ancient statute, now almost obsolete, had been employed to ruin Wolsey, and render his exercise of the legatine power criminal, notwithstanding the king's permission, the same law was now turned against the ecclesiastics. It was pretended, that every one who had submitted to the legatine court, that is, the whole church, had violated the statute of provisors; and the attorney-general accordingly brought an indictment against them. [1] The convocation knew, that it would be in vain to oppose reason or equity to the king's arbitrary will, or plead that their ruin would have been the certain consequence of not submitting to Wolsey's commission, which was procured by Henry's consent, and supported by his authority. They chose, therefore, to throw themselves on the mercy of their sovereign; and they agreed to pay a hundred and eighteen thousand eight hundred and forty pounds for a pardon. [2] A confession was likewise extorted from them, that the king was the protector and the supreme head of the church and clergy of England; though some of them had the dexterity to get a clause inserted, which invalidated the whole submission, and which ran in these terms: "in so far as is permitted by the law of Christ."

The commons, finding that a pardon was granted the clergy, began to be apprehensive for themselves, lest either they should afterwards be brought into trouble on account of their submission to the legatine court, or a supply, in like manner, be extorted from them, in return for their pardon. They therefore petitioned the king to grant a remission to his lay subjects; but they met with a repulse. He told them, that if he ever chose to forgive their offence, it would be from his own goodness, not from their application, lest he should seem to be compelled to it. Some time after, when they despaired of obtaining this concession, he was pleased to issue a pardon to the laity; and the commons expressed great gratitude for that act of clemency. [3]

1532.

By this strict execution of the statute of provisors, a great part of the profit, and still more of the power of the court of Rome was cut off; and the connections between the pope and the English clergy were in some measure dissolved. The next session found both king and parliament in the same dispositions. An act was passed against levying the annates or first-fruits, [4] being a year’s rent of all the bishoprics that fell vacant; a tax which was imposed by the court of Rome for granting bulls to the new prelates, and which was found to amount to considerable sums.

Since the second of Henry VII., no less than one hundred and sixty thousand pounds had been transmitted to Rome on account of this claim; which the parliament, therefore, reduced to five per cent. on all the episcopal benefices. The better to keep the pope in awe, the king was intrusted with a power of regulating these payments, and of confirming or infringing this act at his pleasure; and it was voted, that any censures which should be passed by the court of Rome on account of that law, should be entirely disregarded, and that mass should be said, and the sacraments administered, as if no such censures had been issued.

This session, the commons preferred to the king a long complaint against the abuses and oppressions of the ecclesiastical courts; and they were proceeding to enact laws for remedying them, when a difference arose, which put an end to the session before the parliament had finished all their business. It was become a custom for men to make such settlements, or trust deeds, of their lands by will, that they defrauded not only the king, but all other lords, of their wards, marriages, and reliefs; and by the same artifice the king was deprived of his premier seizin, and the profits of the livery,

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* Antiq. Brit. Eccles. . Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Holingshed, .

* * * Hall’s Chronicle. Holingshed, . Baker, .

* * * * Burnet, vol. i. Collect. No. 41. Strype, vol. i. p. 144.

which were no inconsiderable branches of his revenue. Henry made a bill be drawn to moderate, not remedy altogether, this abuse; he was contented, that every man should have the liberty of disposing in this manner of the half of his land; and he told the parliament in plain terms, “if they would not take a reasonable thing when it was offered, he would search out the extremity of the law; and then would not offer them so much again.” The lords came willingly into his terms; but the commons rejected the bill; a singular instance, where Henry might see that his power and authority, though extensive, had yet some boundaries. The commons, however, found reason to repent of their victory. The king made good his threats: he called together the judges and ablest lawyers, who argued the question in chancery; and it was decided that a man could not by law bequeath any part of his lands in prejudice of his heir. [1]

* Burnet, vol. i. . Hall. Parl. Hist.

The parliament being again assembled after a short prorogation, the king caused the two oaths to be read to them, that which the bishops took to the pope, and that to the king, on their installation; and as a contradiction might be suspected between them, while the prelates seemed to swear allegiance to two sovereigns; [1] the parliament showed their intention of abolishing the oath to the pope, when their proceedings were suddenly stopped by the breaking out of the plague at Westminster, which occasioned a prorogation. It is remarkable, that one Temse ventured this session to move, that the house should address the king, to take back the queen, and stop the prosecution of his divorce. This motion made the king send for Audley, the speaker, and explain to him the scruples with which his conscience had long been burdened; scruples, he said, which had proceeded from no wanton appetite, which had arisen after the fervors of youth were past, and which were confirmed by the concurring sentiments of all the learned societies in Europe. Except in Spain and Portugal, he added, it was never heard of, that any man had espoused two sisters; but he himself had the misfortune, he believed, to be the first Christian man that had ever married his brother’s widow. [2]

* Burnet, vol. i. , 124.

* * Herbert. Hall, fol. 205.

After the prorogation, Sir Thomas More, the chancellor, foreseeing that all the measures of the king and parliament led to a breach with the church of Rome, and to an alteration of religion, with which his principles would not permit him to concur, desired leave to resign the great seal; and he descended from his high station with more joy and alacrity than he had mounted up to it. The austerity of this man's virtue, and the sanctity of his manners, had nowise encroached on the gentleness of his temper, or even diminished that frolic and gayety to which he was naturally inclined. He sported with all the varieties of fortune into which he was thrown; and neither the pride naturally attending a high station, nor the melancholy incident to poverty and retreat, could ever lay hold of his serene and equal spirit. While his family discovered symptoms of sorrow on laying down the grandeur and magnificence to which they had been accustomed, he drew a subject of mirth from their distresses; and made them ashamed of losing even a moment's cheerfulness on account of such trivial misfortunes. The king, who had entertained a high opinion of his virtue, received his resignation with some difficulty; and he delivered the great seal soon after to Sir Thomas Audley.

During these transactions in England, and these invasions of the papal and ecclesiastical authority, the court of Rome was not without solicitude; and she entertained just apprehensions of losing entirely her authority in England; the kingdom which, of all others, had long been the most devoted to the holy see and which had yielded it the most ample revenue. While the imperial cardinals pushed Clement to proceed to extremities against the king, his more moderate and impartial counsellors represented to him the indignity of his proceedings; that a great monarch, who had signalized himself, both by his pen and his sword, in the cause of the pope, should be denied a favor which he demanded on such just grounds, and which had scarcely ever before been refused to any person of his rank and station. Notwithstanding these remonstrances, the queen's appeal was received at Rome; the king was cited to appear; and several consistories were held, to examine the validity of their marriage. Henry was determined not to send any proxy to plead his cause before this court: he only despatched Sir Edward Karne and Dr. Bonner, in quality of excusators, (so they were called,) to carry his apology, for not paying that deference to the papal authority. The prerogatives of his crown, he said, must be sacrificed, if he allowed appeals from his own kingdom; and as the question regarded conscience, not power or interest, no proxy could supply his place, or convey that satisfaction which the dictates of his own mind alone could confer. In order to support himself in this measure, and add greater security to his intended defection from Rome, he procured an interview with Francis it Boulogne and Calais, where he renewed his personal friendship as well as public alliance with that monarch, and concerted all measures for their mutual defence. He even employed arguments, by which he believed he had persuaded Francis to imitate his example in withdrawing his obedience from the bishop of Rome, and administering ecclesiastical affairs without having further recourse to that see. And being now fully determined in his own mind, as well as resolute to stand all consequences, he privately celebrated his marriage with Anne Boleyn, whom he had previously created marchioness of Pembroke. Rouland Lee, soon after raised to the bishopric of Coventry, officiated at the marriage. The duke of Norfolk, uncle to the new queen, her father, mother, and brother, together with Dr. Cranmer, were present at the ceremony. [1]

* Herbert, , 341.

Anne became pregnant soon after her marriage, and this event both gave great satisfaction to the king, and was regarded by the people as a strong proof of the queen's former modesty and virtue.

1533.

The parliament was again assembled; and Henry, in conjunction with the great council of the nation, proceeded still in those gradual and secure steps, by which they loosened their connections with the see of Rome, and repressed the usurpations of the Roman pontiff. An act was made against all appeals to Rome in causes of matrimony, divorces, wills, and other suits cognizable in ecclesiastical courts; appeals esteemed dishonorable to the kingdom, by subjecting it to a foreign jurisdiction; and found to be very vexatious by the expense and the delay of justice which necessarily attended them. [1] The more to show his disregard to the pope, Henry, finding the new queen's pregnancy to advance, publicly owned his marriage; and in order to remove all doubts with regard to its lawfulness, he prepared measures for declaring, by a formal sentence, the invalidity of his marriage with Catharine; a sentence which ought naturally to have preceded his espousing of Anne. [2]

The king, even amidst his scruples and remorses on account of his first marriage, had always treated Catharine with respect and distinction; and he endeavored, by every soft and persuasive art, to engage her to depart from her appeal to Rome, and her opposition to his divorce. Finding her obstinate in maintaining the justice of her cause, he had totally forborne all visits and intercourse with her; and had desired her to make choice of any one of his palaces, in which she should please to reside. She had fixed her abode for some time at Amphill, near Dunstable; and it was in this latter town that Cranmer, now created archbishop of Canterbury, on the death of Warham, [2] was appointed to open his court for examining the validity of her marriage. The near neighborhood of the place was chosen, in order to deprive her of all plea of ignorance; and as she made no answer to the citation, either by herself or proxy, she was declared “contumacious;” and the primate proceeded to the examination of the cause.

* 24 Henry VIII. c. 12.

* * Collier, vol. ii. , and Records, No. 8.

* * * See note H, at the end of the volume.

The evidences of Arthur’s consummation of his marriage were anew produced; the opinions of the universities were read, together with the judgment pronounced two years before by the convocations both of Canterbury and York, and after these preliminary steps, Cranmer proceeded to a sentence, and annulled the king’s marriage with Catharine as unlawful and invalid. By a subsequent sentence, he ratified the marriage with Anne Boleyn, who soon after was publicly crowned queen, with all the pomp and dignity suited to that ceremony. [1] To complete the king’s satisfaction on the conclusion of this intricate and vexatious affair, she was safely delivered of a daughter, who received the name of Elizabeth, and who afterwards swayed the sceptre with such renown and felicity. Henry was so much delighted with the birth of this child, that soon after he conferred on her the title of princess of Wales, [2] a step somewhat irregular, as she could only be presumptive, not apparent heir of the crown. But he had, during his former marriage, thought proper to honor his daughter Mary with that title; and he was determined to bestow on the offspring of his present marriage the same mark of distinction, as well as to exclude the elder princess from all hopes of the succession. His regard for the new queen seemed rather to increase than diminish by his marriage; and all men expected to see the entire ascendant of one who had mounted a throne from which her birth had set her at so great a distance, and who, by a proper mixture of severity and indulgence, had long managed so intractable a spirit as that of Henry. In order to efface as much as possible all marks of his first marriage, Lord Mountjoy was sent to the unfortunate and divorced queen, to inform her, that she was thenceforth to be treated only as princess dowager of Wales; and all means were employed to make her acquiesce in that determination. But she continued obstinate in maintaining the validity of her marriage; and she would admit no person to her presence who did not approach her with the accustomed ceremonial. Henry, forgetting his wonted generosity towards her, employed menaces against such of her servants as complied with her commands in this particular; but was never able to make her relinquish her title and pretensions. [3]

* Heylin, .

* * Burnet, vol. i, .

* * * Herbert, . Burnet, vol. i. .

When intelligence was conveyed to Rome of these transactions, so injurious to the authority and reputation of the holy see, the conclave was in a rage, and all the cardinals of the imperial faction urged the pope to proceed to a definitive sentence, and to dart his spiritual thunders against Henry. But Clement proceeded no further than to declare the nullity of Cranmer’s sentence, as well as that of Henry’s second marriage; threatening him with excommunication, if before the first of November ensuing he did not replace every thing in the condition in which it formerly stood. [1] An event had happened from which the pontiff expected a more amicable conclusion of the difference, and which hindered him from carrying matters to extremity against the king.

The pope had claims upon the duchy of Ferrara for the sovereignty of Reggio and Modena; [2] and having submitted his pretensions to the arbitration of the emperor, he was surprised to find a sentence pronounced against him. Enraged at this disappointment, he hearkened to proposals of amity from Francis; and when that monarch made overtures of marrying the duke of Orleans, his second son, to Catharine of Medicis, niece of the pope, Clement gladly embraced an alliance by which his family was so much honored. An interview was even appointed between the pope and French king at Marseilles; and Francis, as a common friend, there employed his good offices in mediating an accommodation between his new ally and the king of England.

* Le Grand, vol. iii. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Guicciard.

Had this connection of France with the court of Rome taken place a few years sooner, there had been little difficulty in adjusting the quarrel with Henry. The king’s request was an ordinary one; and the same plenary power of the pope which had granted a dispensation for his espousing of Catharine, could easily have annulled the marriage. But, in the progress of the quarrel, the state of affairs was much changed on both sides. Henry had shaken off much of that reverence which he had early imbibed for the apostolic see; and finding that his subjects of all ranks had taken part with him, and willingly complied with his measures for breaking off foreign dependence, he had begun to relish his spiritual authority, and would scarcely, it was apprehended, be induced to renew his submissions to the Roman pontiff. The pope, on the other hand, now ran a manifest risk of infringing his authority by a compliance with the king; and as a sentence of divorce could no longer be rested on nullities in Julius’s bull, but would be construed as an acknowledgment of papal usurpations, it was foreseen that the Lutherans would thence take occasion of triumph, and would persevere more obstinately in their present principles. But notwithstanding these obstacles, Francis did not despair of mediating an agreement. He observed that the king had still some remains of prejudice in favor of the Catholic church, and was apprehensive of the consequences which might ensue from too violent innovations. He saw the interest that Clement had in preserving the obedience of England, which was one of the richest jewels in the papal crown. And he hoped that these motives on both sides would facilitate a mutual agreement, and would forward the effects of his good offices.

1534.

Francis first prevailed on the pope to promise, that if the king would send a proxy to Rome, and thereby submit his cause to the holy see, he should appoint commissioners to meet at Cambray, and form the process; and he should immediately afterwards pronounce the sentence of divorce required of him. Bellay, bishop of Paris, was next despatched to London, and obtained a promise from the king that he would submit his cause to the Roman consistory, provided the cardinals of the imperial faction were excluded from it. The prelate carried this verbal promise to Rome; and the pope agreed that, if the king would sign a written agreement to the same purpose, his demands should be fully complied with. A day was appointed for the return of the messengers; and all Europe regarded this affair, which had threatened a violent rupture between England and the Romish church, as drawing towards an amicable conclusion. [1] But the greatest affairs often depend on the most frivolous incidents. The courier who carried the king's written promise was detained beyond the day appointed: news was brought to Rome that a libel had been published in England against the court of Rome, and a farce acted before the king in derision of the pope and cardinals. [2]

* Father Paul, lib. i.

* * Father Paul, lib, i.

The pope and cardinals entered into the consistory inflamed with anger; and by a precipitate sentence the marriage of Henry and Catharine was pronounced valid, and Henry declared to be excommunicated if he refused to adhere to it. Two days after, the courier arrived; and Clement, who had been hurried from his usual prudence, found that though he heartily repented of this hasty measure, it would be difficult for him to retract it, or replace affairs on the same footing as before.

It is not probable that the pope, had he conducted himself with ever so great moderation and temper, could hope, during the lifetime of Henry, to have regained much authority or influence in England. That monarch was of a temper both impetuous and obstinate; and having proceeded so far in throwing off the papal yoke, he never could again have been brought tamely to bend his neck to it. Even at the time when he was negotiating a reconciliation with Rome, he either entertained so little hopes of success, or was so indifferent about the event, that he had assembled a parliament, and continued to enact laws totally destructive of the papal authority. The people had been prepared by degrees for this great innovation. Each preceding session had retrenched somewhat from the power and profits of the pontiff. Care had been taken, during some years, to teach the nation that a general council was much superior to a pope. But now a bishop preached every Sunday at Paul's Cross, in order to inculcate the doctrine that the pope was entitled to no authority at all beyond the bounds of his own diocese. [1] The proceedings of the parliament showed that they had entirely adopted this opinion; and there is reason to believe that the king, after having procured a favorable sentence from Rome, which would have removed all doubts with regard to his second marriage and the succession, might indeed have lived on terms of civility with the Roman pontiff, but never would have surrendered to him any considerable share of his assumed prerogative. The importance of the laws passed this session, even before intelligence arrived of the violent resolutions taken at Rome, is sufficient to justify this opinion.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

All payments made to the apostolic chamber, all provisions, bulls, dispensations, were abolished: monasteries were subjected to the visitation and government of the king alone: the law for punishing heretics was moderated: the ordinary was prohibited from imprisoning or trying any person upon suspicion alone, without presentment by two lawful witnesses; and it was declared, that to speak against the pope's authority was no heresy: bishops were to be appointed, by a congé d'élire from the crown, or, in case of the dean and chapter's refusal, by letters patent; and no recourse was to be had to Rome for pails, bulls, or provisions; Campeggio and Ghinucci, two Italians, were deprived of the bishoprics of Salisbury and Worcester, which they had hitherto enjoyed: [1] the law which had been formerly made against paying annates or first-fruits, but which had been left in the king’s power to suspend or enforce, was finally established: and a submission which was exacted two years before from the clergy, and which had been obtained with great difficulty, received this session the sanction of parliament. [2] In this submission, the clergy acknowledged that convocations ought to be assembled by the king’s authority only; they promised to enact no new canons without his consent; and they agreed that he should appoint thirty-two commissioners, in order to examine the old canons, and abrogate such as should be found prejudicial to his royal prerogative. [3] An appeal was also allowed from the bishop’s court to the king in chancery.

* Le Neve’s Fasti Eccles. Angl.

* * 25 Henry VIII. cap, 19.

* * * Collier, vol. ii. , 70.

But the most important law passed this session was that which regulated the succession to the crown: the marriage of the king with Catharine was declared unlawful, void, and of no effect: the primate’s sentence annulling it was ratified: and the marriage with Queen Anne was established and confirmed. The crown was appointed to descend to the issue of this marriage, and failing them, to the king’s heirs forever. An oath likewise was enjoined to be taken in favor of this order of succession, under the penalty of imprisonment during the king’s pleasure, and forfeiture of goods and chattels. And all slander against the king, queen, or their issue, was subjected to the penalty of misprision of treason. After these compliances, the parliament was prorogued; and those acts, so contemptuous towards the pope, and so destructive of his authority, were passed at the very time that Clement pronounced his hasty sentence against the king. Henry’s resentment against Queen Catharine, on account of her obstinacy, was the reason why he excluded her daughter from all hopes of succeeding to the crown; contrary to his first intentions, when he began the process of divorce, and of dispensation for a second marriage.

The king found his ecclesiastical subjects as compliant as the laity. The convocation ordered that the act against appeals to Rome, together with the king’s appeal from the pope to a general council should be affixed to the doors of all the churches in the kingdom: and they voted that the bishop of Rome had, by the law of God, no more jurisdiction in England than any other foreign bishop; and that the authority which he and his predecessors had there exercised, was only by usurpation, and by the sufferance of English princes. Four persons alone opposed this vote in the lower house, and one doubted. It passed unanimously in the upper. The bishops went so far in their complaisance, that they took out new commissions from the crown, in which all their spiritual and episcopal authority was expressly affirmed to be derived ultimately from the civil magistrate, and to be entirely dependent on his good pleasure. [1]

The oath regarding the succession was generally taken throughout the kingdom. Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More, were the only persons of note that entertained scruples with regard to its legality. Fisher was obnoxious on account of some practices into which his credulity, rather than any bad intentions, seems to have betrayed him. But More was the person of greatest reputation in the kingdom for virtue and integrity; and as it was believed that his authority would have influence on the sentiments of others, great pains were taken to convince him of the lawfulness of the oath. He declared that he had no scruple with regard to the succession, and thought that the parliament had full power to settle it: he offered to draw an oath himself which would insure his allegiance to the heir appointed; but he refused the oath prescribed by law; because the preamble of that oath asserted the legality of the king’s marriage with Anne, and thereby implied that his former marriage with Catharine was unlawful and invalid. Cramner, the primate, and Cromwell, now secretary of state, who highly loved and esteemed More, entreated him to lay aside his scruples; and their friendly importunity seemed to weigh more with him than all the penalties attending his refusal. [2] He persisted, however, in a mild though firm manner, to maintain his resolution; and the king, irritated against him as well as Fisher, ordered both to be indicted upon the statute, and committed prisoners to the Tower.

* Collier’s Eccles. Hist. vol. ii.

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

The parliament, being again assembled, conferred on the king the title of the only supreme "head" on earth of the church of England; as they had already invested him with all the real power belonging to it. In this memorable act, the parliament granted him power, or rather acknowledged his inherent power, "to visit, and repress, redress, reform, order, correct, restrain, or amend all errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, which fell under any spiritual authority or jurisdiction." [1] They also declared it treason to attempt, imagine, or speak evil against the king, queen, or his heirs; or to endeavor depriving them of their dignities or titles. They gave him a right to all the annates and tithes of benefices which had formerly been paid to the court of Rome. They granted him a subsidy and a fifteenth. They attainted More and Fisher for misprision of treason. And they completed the union of England and Wales, by giving to that principality all the benefit of the English laws.

* 26 Henry VIII. ca.

Thus the authority of the popes, like all exorbitant power, was ruined by the excess of its acquisitions, and by stretching its pretensions beyond what it was possible for any human principles or prepossessions to sustain. Indulgences had in former ages tended extremely to enrich the holy see; but being openly abused, they served to excite the first commotions and opposition in Germany. The prerogative of granting dispensations had also contributed much to attach all the sovereign princes and great families in Europe to the papal authority; but meeting with an unlucky concurrence of circumstances, was now the cause why England separated herself from the Romish communion. The acknowledgment of the king's supremacy introduced there a greater simplicity in the government, by uniting the spiritual with the civil power, and preventing disputes about limits, which never could be exactly determined between the contending jurisdictions. A way was also prepared for checking the exorbitances of superstition, and breaking those shackles by which all human reason, policy, and industry had so long been encumbered. The prince, it may be supposed, being head of the religion, as well as of the temporal jurisdiction of the kingdom, though he might sometimes employ the former as an engine of government, had no interest, like the Roman pontiff, in nourishing its excessive growth; and, except when blinded by his own ignorance or bigotry, would be sure to retain it within tolerable limits, and prevent its abuses. And on the whole, there followed from this revolution many beneficial consequences; though perhaps neither foreseen nor intended by the persons who had the chief hand in conducting it.

While Henry proceeded with so much order and tranquillity in changing the national religion, and while his authority seemed entirely secure in England, he was held in some inquietude by the state of affairs in Ireland and in Scotland.

The earl of Kildare was deputy of Ireland, under the duke of Richmond, the king’s natural son, who bore the title of lieutenant; and as Kildare was accused of some violences against the family of Ossory, his hereditary enemies, he was summoned to answer for his conduct. He left his authority in the hands of his son, who, hearing that his father was thrown into prison, and was in danger of his life, immediately took up arms, and joining himself to Oneale, Ocarrol, and other Irish nobility, committed many ravages, murdered Allen, archbishop of Dublin, and laid siege to that city. Kildare meanwhile died in prison; and his son, persevering in his revolt, made applications to the emperor, who promised him assistance. The king was obliged to send over some forces to Ireland, which so harassed the rebels, that this young nobleman, finding the emperor backward in fulfilling his promises, was reduced to the necessity of surrendering himself prisoner to Lord Leonard Gray, the new deputy, brother to the marquis of Dorset. He was carried over to England, together with his five uncles; and after trial and conviction, they were all brought to public justice; though two of the uncles, in order to save the family, had pretended to join the king’s party.

The earl of Angus had acquired the entire ascendant in Scotland; and having gotten possession of the king’s person then in early youth, he was able, by means of that advantage, and by employing the power of his own family, to retain the reins of government. The queen dowager, however, his consort, bred him great disturbance. For having separated herself from him on account of some jealousies and disgusts, and having procured a divorce, she had married another man of quality, of the name of Stuart; and she joined all the discontented nobility who opposed Angus’s authority. James himself was dissatisfied with the slavery to which he was reduced, and by secret correspondence he incited first Walter Scot, then the earl of Lenox, to attempt by force of arms the freeing him from the hands of Angus. Both enterprises failed of success: but James, impatient of restraint, found means at last of escape *ing to Stirling, where his mother then resided; and having summoned all the nobility to attend him, he overturned the authority of the Douglases, and obliged Angus and his brother to fly into England, where they were protected by Henry. The king of Scotland, being now arrived at years of majority, took the government into his own hands; and employed him self with great spirit and valor in repressing those feuds, ravages, and disorders, which, though they disturbed the course of public justice, served to support the martial spirit of the Scots, and contributed by that means to maintain national independency. He was desirous of renewing the ancient league with the French nation; but finding Francis in close union with England, and on that account somewhat cold in hearkening to his proposals, he received the more favorably the advances of the emperor, who hoped, by means of such an ally, to breed disturbance to England, He offered the Scottish king the choice of three princesses, his own near relations, and all of the name of Mary; his sister, the dowager of Hungary; his niece, a daughter of Portugal; or his cousin, the daughter of Henry, whom he pretended to dispose of unknown to her father. James was more inclined to the latter proposal, had it not, upon reflection, been found impracticable; and his natural propensity to France at last prevailed over all other considerations. The alliance with Francis necessarily engaged James to maintain peace with England. But though invited by his uncle Henry to confer with him at Newcastle, and concert common measures for repressing the ecclesiastics in both kingdoms, and shaking off the yoke of Rome, he could not be prevailed on, by entering England, to put himself in the king's power. In order to have a pretext for refusing the conference, he applied to the pope, and obtained a brief, forbidding him to engage in any personal negotiations with an enemy of the holy see. From these measures Henry easily concluded that he could very little depend on the friendship of his nephew. But those events took not place till some time after our present period.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HENRY VIII.

1534.

The ancient and almost uninterrupted opposition of interests between the laity and clergy in England, and between the English clergy and the court of Rome, had sufficiently prepared the nation for a breach with the sovereign pontiff; and men had penetration enough to discover abuses which were plainly calculated for the temporal advantages of the hierarchy, and which they found destructive of their own. These subjects seemed proportioned to human understanding; and even the people, who felt the power of interest in their own breasts, could perceive the purpose of those numerous inventions which the interested spirit of the Roman pontiff had introduced into religion. But when the reformers proceeded thence to dispute concerning the nature of the sacraments, the operations of grace, the terms of acceptance with the Deity, men were thrown into amazement, and were, during some time, at a loss how to choose their party. The profound ignorance in which both the clergy and laity formerly lived, and their freedom from theological altercations, had produced a sincere but indolent acquiescence in received opinions; and the multitude were neither attached to them by topics of reasoning, nor by those prejudices and antipathies against opponents, which have ever a more natural and powerful influence over them. As soon, therefore, as a new opinion was advanced, supported by such an authority as to call up their attention, they felt their capacity totally unfitted for such disquisitions; and they perpetually fluctuated between the contending parties. Hence the quick and violent movements by which the people were agitated, even in the most opposite directions: hence their seeming prostitution, in sacrificing to present power the most sacred principles: and hence the rapid progress during some time, and the sudden as well as entire check soon after, of the new doctrines. When men were once settled in their particular sects, and had fortified themselves in an habitual detestation of those who were denominated heretics, they adhered with more obstinacy to the principles of their education; and the limits of the two religions thenceforth remained fixed and unchangeable.

Nothing more forwarded the first progress of the reformers, than the offer which they made of submitting all religious doctrines to private judgment, and the summons given every one to examine the principles formerly imposed upon him. Though the multitude were totally unqualified for this undertaking, they yet were highly pleased with it. They fancied that they were exercising their judgment, while they opposed to the prejudices of ancient authority more powerful prejudices of another kind. The novelty itself of the doctrines; the pleasure of an imaginary triumph in dispute; the fervent zeal of the reformed preachers; their patience, and even alacrity, in suffering persecution, death, and torments; a disgust at the restraints of the old religion; an indignation against the tyranny and interested spirit of the ecclesiastics; these motives were prevalent with the people, and by such considerations were men so generally induced, during that age, to throw off the religion of their ancestors.

But in proportion as the practice of submitting religion to private judgment was acceptable to the people, it appeared in some respects dangerous to the rights of sovereigns, and seemed to destroy that implicit obedience on which the authority of the civil magistrate is chiefly founded. The very precedent of shaking so ancient and deep-founded an establishment as that of the Romish hierarchy, might, it was apprehended, prepare the way for other innovations. The republican spirit which naturally took place among the reformers, increased this jealousy. The furious insurrections of the populace, excited by Muncer and other Anabaptists in Germany, [1] furnished a new pretence for decrying the reformation. Nor ought we to conclude, because Protestants in our time prove as dutiful subjects as those of any other communion, that therefore such apprehensions were altogether without any shadow of plausibility. Though the liberty of private judgment be tendered to the disciples of the reformation, it is not in reality accepted of; and men are generally contented to acquiesce implicitly in those establishments, however new, into which their early education has thrown them.

* Sleidan, lib. iv. and v.

No prince in Europe was possessed of such absolute authority as Henry, not even the pope himself, in his own capital, where he united both the civil and ecclesiastical powers; [1] and there was small likelihood, that any doctrine which lay under the imputation of encouraging sedition could ever pretend to his favor and countenance.

* See note I, at the end of the volume.

But besides this political jealousy, there was another reason which inspired this imperious monarch with an aversion to the reformers. He had early declared his sentiments against Luther; and having entered the lists in those scholastic quarrels, he had received from his courtiers and theologians infinite applause for his performance. Elated by this imaginary success, and blinded by a natural arrogance and obstinacy of temper, he had entertained the most lofty opinion of his own erudition; and he received with impatience, mixed with contempt, any contradiction to his sentiments. Luther also had been so imprudent as to treat in a very indecent manner his royal antagonist; and though he afterwards made the most humble submissions to Henry, and apologized for the vehemence of his former expressions, he never could efface the hatred which the king had conceived against him and his doctrines. The idea of heresy still appeared detestable as well as formidable to that prince; and whilst his resentment against the see of Rome had corrected one considerable part of his early prejudices, he had made it a point of honor never to relinquish the remainder. Separate as he stood from the Catholic church, and from the Roman pontiff, the head of it, he still valued himself on maintaining the Catholic doctrine, and or guarding, by fire and sword, the imagined purity of his speculative principles.

Henry’s ministers and courtiers were of as motley a character as his conduct; and seemed to waver, during this whole reign, between the ancient and the new religion. The queen, engaged by interest as well as inclination, favored the cause of the reformers: Cromwell, who was created secretary of state, and who was daily advancing in the king’s confidence, had embraced the same views; and as he was a man of prudence and abilities, he was able, very effectually, though in a covert manner, to promote the late innovations: Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, had secretly adopted the Protestant tenets; and he had gained Henry’s friendship by his candor and sincerity; virtues which he possessed in as eminent a degree as those times, equally distracted with faction and oppressed by tyranny, could easily permit. On the other hand, the duke of Norfolk adhered to the ancient faith, and by his high rank, as well as by his talents, both for peace and war, he had great authority in the king’s council: Gardiner, lately created bishop of Winchester, had enlisted himself in the same party; and the suppleness of his character, and dexterity of his conduct, had rendered him extremely useful to it.

All these ministers, while they stood in the most irreconcilable opposition of principles to each other, were obliged to disguise their particular opinions, and to pretend an entire agreement with the sentiments of their master. Cromwell and Cranmer still carried the appearance of a conformity to the ancient speculative tenets; but they artfully made use of Henry’s resentment to widen the breach with the see of Rome. Norfolk and Gardiner feigned an assent to the king’s supremacy, and to his renunciation of the sovereign pontiff; but they encouraged his passion for the Catholic faith, and instigated him to punish those daring heretics who had presumed to reject his theological principles. Both sides hoped, by their unlimited compliance, to bring him over to their party: the king, meanwhile, who held the balance between the factions, was enabled, by the courtship paid him both by Protestants and Catholics, to assume an unbounded authority: and though in all his measures he was really driven by his ungoverned humor, he casually steered a course which led more certainly to arbitrary power, than any which the most profound politics could have traced out to him. Artifice, refinement, and hypocrisy, in his situation, would have put both parties on their guard against him, and would have taught them reserve in complying with a monarch whom they could never hope thoroughly to have gained;* but while the frankness, sincerity, and openness of Henry’s temper were generally known, as well as the dominion of his furious passions, each side dreaded to lose him by the smallest opposition, and flattered themselves that a blind compliance with his will would throw him cordially and fully into their interests.

The ambiguity of the king’s conduct, though it kept the courtiers in awe, served, in the main, to encourage the Protestant doctrine among his subjects, and promoted that spirit of innovation with which the age was generally seized, and which nothing but an entire uniformity, as will as a steady severity in the administration, could be able to repress. There were some Englishmen, Tindal, Joye, Constantine, and others, who, dreading the exertion of the king’s authority had fled to Antwerp; [1] where the great privileges possessed by the Low Country provinces served, during some time, to give them protection. These men employed themselves in writing English books against the corruptions of the church of Rome; against images, relics, pilgrimages; and they excited the curiosity of men with regard to that question, the most important in theology, the terms of acceptance with the Supreme Being, In conformity to the Lutherans and other Protestants, they asserted that salvation was obtained by faith alone; and that the most infallible road to perdition [2] was a reliance on “good works;” by which terms they understood as well the moral duties as the ceremonial and monastic observances.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Sacrilegium est et impietas velle placere Deo per opera et non per solam fidem. Luther adversus regem. Ita vides quam dives sit homo Christianus sive baptizatus, qui etiam volens non protest perdere salutem suam quantiscunque peccatis. Nulla enim peccata possunt eum damnare nisi incredulitas. Id. de Captivitate Bábyloniea.

The defenders of the ancient religion, on the other hand, maintained the efficacy of good works; but though they did not exclude from this appellation the social virtues, it was still the superstitions gainful to the church which they chiefly extolled and recommended. The books composed by these fugitives, having stolen over to England, began to make converts every where; but it was a translation of the Scriptures by Tindal that was esteemed the most dangerous to the established faith. The first edition of this work, composed with little accuracy, was found liable to considerable objections; and Tindal, who was poor, and could not afford to lose a great part of the impression, was longing for an opportunity of correcting his errors, of which he had been made sensible. Tonstal, then bishop of London, soon after of Durham, a man of great moderation, being desirous to discourage, in the gentlest manner, these innovations, gave private orders for buying up all the copies that could be found at Antwerp; and he burned them publicly in Cheapside. By this measure he supplied Tindal with money, enabled him to print a new and correct edition of his work, and gave great scandal to the people, in thus committing to the flames the word of God. [1]

The disciples of the reformation met with little severity during the ministry of Wolsey, who, though himself a clergyman, bore too small a regard to the ecclesiastical order to serve as an instrument of their tyranny: it was even an article of impeachment against him, [2] that by his connivance he had encouraged the growth of heresy, and that he had protected and acquitted some notorious offenders. Sir Thomas More, who succeeded Wolsey as chancellor, is at once an object deserving our compassion, and an instance of the usual progress of men's sentiments during that age. This man, whose elegant genius and familiar acquaintance with the noble spirit of antiquity had given him very enlarged sentiments, and who had in his early years advanced principles which even at present would be deemed somewhat too free, had, in the course of events, been so irritated by polemics, and thrown into such a superstitious attachment to the ancient faith, that few inquisitors have been guilty of greater violence in their prosecution of heresy. Though adorned with the gentlest manners, as well as the purest integrity, he carried to the utmost height his aversion to heterodoxy; and James Bainham, in particular, a gentleman of the Temple, experienced from him the greatest severity. Bainham, accused of favoring the new opinions, was carried to More's house; and having refused to discover his accomplices, the chancellor ordered him to be whipped in his presence, and afterwards sent him to the Tower, where he himself saw him put to the torture. The unhappy gentleman, overcome by all these severities, abjured his opinions; but feeling afterwards the deepest compunction for his apostasy, he openly returned to his former tenets, and even courted the crown of martyrdom. He was condemned as an obstinate and relapsed heretic, and was burned in Smithfîeld. [3]

* Hall. fol. 186. Fox, vol. i. . Burnet, vol. i p. 159.

* * Articles of impeachment in Herbert. Burnet.

* * * Fox. Burnet, vol i. .

Many were brought into the bishops' courts for offences which appear trivial, but which were regarded as symbols of the party: some for teaching their children the Lord's prayer in English; others for reading the New Testament in that language, or for speaking against pilgrimages. To harbor the persecuted preachers, to neglect the fasts of the church, to declaim against the vices of the clergy, were capital offences. One Thomas Bilney, a priest, who had embraced the new doctrine, had been terrified into an abjuration; but was so haunted by remorse, that his friends dreaded some fatal effects of his despair. At last, his mind seemed to be more relieved; but this appearing calm proceeded only from the resolution which he had taken of expiating his past offence by an open confession of the truth, and by dying a martyr to it. He went through Norfolk, teaching the people to beware of idolatry, and of trusting for their salvation either to pilgrimages, or to the cowl of St. Francis, to the prayers of the saints, or to images. He was soon seized, tried in the bishop's court, and condemned as a relapsed heretic; and the writ was sent down to burn him. When brought to the stake, he discovered such patience, fortitude, and devotion, that the spectators were much affected with the horrors of his punishment; and some mendicant friars who were present, fearing that his martyrdom would be imputed to them, and make them lose those alms which they received from the charity of the people, desired him publicly to acquit them [1] of having any hand in his death. He willingly complied; and by this meekness gained the more on the sympathy of the people.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

Another person, still more heroic, being brought to the stake for denying the real presence, seemed almost in a transport of joy; and he tenderly embraced the fagots which were to be the instruments of his punishment, as the means of procuring him eternal rest. In short, the tide turning towards the new doctrine, those severe executions, which, in another disposition of men's minds, would have sufficed to suppress it, now served only to diffuse it the more among the people, and to inspire them with horror against the unrelenting persecutors.

But though Henry neglected not to punish the Protestant doctrine, which he deemed heresy, his most formidable enemies, he knew, were the zealous adherents to the ancient religion, chiefly the monks, who, having their immediate dependence on the Roman pontiff, apprehended their own ruin to be the certain consequence of abolishing his authority in England. Peyto, a friar, preaching before the king, had the assurance to tell him, "that many lying prophets had deceived him; but he, as a true Micajah, warned him, that the dogs would lick his blood, as they had done Ahab's." [1] The king took no notice of the insult; but allowed the preacher to depart in peace. Next Sunday he employed Dr. Corren to preach before him; who justified the king's proceedings, and gave Peyto the appellations of a rebel, a slanderer, a dog, and a traitor. Elston, another friar of the same house, interrupted the preacher, and told him that he was one of the lying prophets, who sought to establish by adultery the succession of the crown; but that he himself would justify all that Peyto had said. Henry silenced the petulant friar; but showed no other mark of resentment than ordering Peyto and him to be summoned before the council, and to be rebuked for their offence. [2] He even here bore patiently some new instances of their obstinacy and arrogance: when the earl of Essex, a privy councillor, told them that they deserved for their offence to be thrown into the Thames, Elston replied that the road to heaven lay as near by water as by land. [3]

* Strype, vol. i. .

* * Collier, vol. ii. . Burnet, vol. i. .

* * * Stowe,

But several monks were detected in a conspiracy, which, as it might have proved more dangerous to the king, was on its discovery attended with more fatal consequences to themselves. Elizabeth Barton, of Aldington, in Kent, commonly called the “holy maid of Kent,” had been subject to hysterical fits, which threw her body into unusual convulsions; and having produced an equal disorder in her mind, made her utter strange sayings, which, as she was scarcely conscious of them during the time, had soon after entirely escaped her memory. The silly people in the neighborhood were struck with these appearances, which they imagined to be supernatural; and Richard Masters, vicar of the parish, a designing fellow, founded on them a project, from which he hoped to acquire both profit and consideration. He went to Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, then alive; and having given him an account of Elizabeth’s revelations, he so far wrought on that prudent but superstitious prelate, as to receive orders from him to watch her in her trances, and carefully to note down all her future sayings. The regard paid her by a person of so high a rank, soon rendered her still more the object of attention to the neighborhood; and it was easy for Masters to persuade them, as well as the maid herself, that her ravings were inspirations of the Holy Ghost. Knavery, as is usual, soon after succeeding to delusion, she learned to counterfeit trances and she then uttered, in an extraordinary tone, such speeches as were dictated to her by her spiritual director. Masters associated with him Dr. Bocking, a canon of Canterbury; and their design was to raise the credit of an image of the Virgin which stood in a chapel belonging to Masters, and to draw to it such pilgrimages as usually frequented the more famous images and relics. In prosecution of this design, Elizabeth pretended revelations which directed her to have recourse to that image for a cure; and being brought before it, in the presence of a great multitude, she fell anew into convulsions: and after distorting her limbs and countenance during a competent time, she affected to have obtained a perfect recovery by the intercession of the Virgin. [1] This miracle was soon bruited abroad; and the two priests, finding the imposture to succeed beyond their own expectations, began to extend their views, and to lay the foundation of more important enterprises. They taught their penitent to declaim against the new doctrines, which she denominated heresy; against innovations in ecclesiastical government; and against the king's intended divorce from Catharine. She went so far as to assert, that if he prosecuted that design, and married another, he should not be a king a month longer, and should not an hour longer enjoy the favor of the Almighty, but should die the death of a villain. Many monks throughout England, either from folly or roguery, or from faction, which is often a complication of both, entered into the delusion; and one Deering, a friar, wrote a book of the revelations and prophecies of Elizabeth. [2] Miracles were daily added to increase the wonder; and the pulpit every where resounded with accounts of the sanctity and inspirations of the new prophetess. Messages were carried from her to Queen Catharine, by which that princess was exhorted to persist in her opposition to the divorce; the pope's ambassadors gave encouragement to the popular credulity; and even Fisher, bishop of Rochester, though a man of sense and learning, was carried away by an opinion so favorable to the party which he had espoused. [3]

* Stowe, . Blanquet's Epitome of Chronicler.

* * Strype, vol. i. .

* * * Collier, vol. ii.

The king at last began to think the matter worthy of his attention; and having ordered Elizabeth and her accomplices to be arrested, he brought them before the star chamber, where they freely, without being put to the torture made confession of their guilt. The parliament, in the session held the beginning of this year, passed an act of attainder against some who were engaged in this treasonable imposture, [1] and Elizabeth herself, Masters, Bocking, Deering, Rich, Risby, Gold, suffered for their crime. The bishop of Rochester, Abel, Addison, Lawrence, and others were condemned for misprision of treason; because they had not discovered some criminal speeches which they heard from Elizabeth; [2] and they were thrown into prison. The better to undeceive the multitude, the forgery of many of the prophetess's miracles was detected; and even the scandalous prostitution of her manners was laid open to the public. Those passions which so naturally insinuate themselves amidst the warm intimacies maintained by the devotees of different sexes, had taken place between Elizabeth and her confederates; and it was found that a door to her dormitory, which was said to have been miraculously opened, in order to give her access to the chapel, for the sake of frequent converse with Heaven, had been contrived by Bocking and Masters for less refined purposes.

* 25 Henry VIII. ca. Burnet, vol. i. . Hall, fol. 220.

* * Godwin's Annals, .

1535.

The detection of this imposture, attended with so many odious circumstances, both hurt the credit of the ecclesiastics, particularly the monks, and instigated the king to take vengeance on them. He suppressed three monasteries of the Observantine friars; and finding that little clamor was excited by this act of power, he was the more encouraged to lay his rapacious hands on the remainder. Meanwhile he exercised punishment on individuals who were obnoxious to him. The parliament had made it treason to endeavor depriving the king of his dignity or titles: they had lately added to his other titles, that of supreme head of the church: it was inferred, that to deny his supremacy was treason; and many priors and ecclesiastics lost their lives for this new species of guilt. It was certainly a high instance of tyranny to punish the mere delivery of a political opinion, especially one that nowise affected the king’s temporal right, as a capital offence, though attended with no overt act; and the parliament, in passing this law, had overlooked all the principles by which a civilized, much more a free people, should be governed: but the violence of changing so suddenly the whole system of government, and making it treason to deny what during many ages it had been heresy to assert, is an event which may appear somewhat extraordinary. Even the stern, unrelenting mind of Henry was at first shocked with these sanguinary measures; and he went so far as to change his garb and dress; pretending sorrow for the necessity by which he was pushed to such extremities. Still impelled, however, by his violent temper, and desirous of striking a terror into the whole nation, he proceeded, by making examples of Fisher and More, to consummate his lawless tyranny.

John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, was a prelate eminent for learning and morals, still more than for his ecclesiastical dignities, and for the high favor which he had long enjoyed with the king; When he was thrown into prison, on account of his refusing the oath which regarded the succession, and his concealment of Elizabeth Barton’s treasonable speeches, he had not only been deprived of all his revenues, but stripped of his very clothes, and, without consideration of his extreme age, he was allowed nothing but rags, which scarcely sufficed to cover his nakedness. [1] In this condition he lay in prison above a twelvemonth; when the pope, willing to recompense the sufferings of so faithful an adherent, created him a cardinal though Fisher was so indifferent about that dignity, that, even if the purple were lying at his feet, he declared that he would not stoop to take it. This promotion of a man merely for his opposition to royal authority, roused the indignation of the king; and he resolved to make the innocent person feel the effects of his resentment. Fisher was indicted for denying the king’s supremacy, was tried, condemned, and beheaded.

* Fuller’s Church Hist. book v. .

The execution of this prelate was intended as a warning to More, whose compliance, on account of his great authority both abroad and at home, and his high reputation for learning and virtue, was anxiously desired by the king. That prince also bore as great personal affection and regard to More, as his imperious mind, the sport of passions, was susceptible of towards a man who in any particular opposed his violent inclinations. But More could never be prevailed on to acknowledge any opinion so contrary to his principles as that of the king’s supremacy; and though Henry exacted that compliance from the whole nation, there was as yet no law obliging any one to take an oath to that purpose. Rich, the solicitor-general, was sent to confer with More, then a prisoner, who kept a cautious silence with regard to the supremacy: he was only inveigled to say, that any question with regard to the law which established that prerogative was a two-edged sword; if a person answer one way, it will confound his soul; if another, it will destroy his body. No more was wanted to found an indictment of high treason against the prisoner. His silence was called malicious, and made a part of his crime; and these words, which had casually dropped from him, were interpreted as a denial of the supremacy. [1] Trials were mere formalities during this reign: the jury gave sentence against More, who had long expected this fate, and who needed no preparation to fortify him against the terrors of death. Not only his constancy, but even his cheerfulness, nay, his usual facetiousness, never forsook him; and he made a sacrifice of his life to his integrity, with the same indifference that he maintained in any ordinary occurrence. When he was mounting the scaffold, he said to one, “Friend, help me up; and when I come down again, let me shift for myself.” The executioner asking him forgiveness, he granted the request, but told him, “You will never get credit by beheading me, my neck is so short.” Then laying his head on the block, he bade the executioner stay till he put aside his beard: “For,” said he, “it never committed treason.” Nothing was wanting to the glory of this end, except a better cause, more free from weakness and superstition. But as the man followed his principles and sense of duty, however misguided, his constancy and integrity are not the less objects of our admiration. He was beheaded in the fifty-third year of his age.

* More’s Life of Sir Thomas More. Herbert,

When the execution of Fisher and More was reported at Rome, especially that of the former, who was invested with the dignity of cardinal, every one discovered the most violent rage against the king; and numerous libels were published by the wits and orators of Italy, comparing him to Caligula, Nero, Domitian, and all the most unrelenting tyrants of antiquity. Clement VII. had died about six months after he pronounced sentence against the king;

and Paul III., of the name of Farnese, had succeeded to the papal throne. This pontiff, who while cardinal, had always favored Henry’s cause, had hoped that personal animosities being buried with his predecessor, might not be impossible to form an agreement with England: and the king himself was so desirous of accommodating matters, that in a negotiation which he entered into with Francis a little before this time, he required that that monarch should conciliate a friendship between him and the court of Rome. But Henry was accustomed to prescribe, not to receive terms; and even while he was negotiating for peace, his usual violence often carried him to commit offences which rendered the quarrel totally incurable. The execution of Fisher was regarded by Paul as so capital an injury, that he immediately passed censures against the king, citing him and all his adherents to appear in Rome within ninety days, in order to answer for their crimes: if they failed, he excommunicated them; deprived the king of his crown; laid the kingdom under an interdict; declared his issue by Anne Boleyn illegitimate; dissolved all leagues which any Catholic princes had made with him; gave his kingdom to any invader; commanded the nobility to take arms against him; freed his subjects from all oaths of allegiance; cut off their commerce with foreign states; and declared it lawful for any one to seize them, to make slaves of their persons, and to convert their effects to his own use. [1] But though these censures were passed, they were not at that time openly denounced; the pope delayed the publication till he should find an agreement with England entirely desperate; and till the emperor, who was at that time hard pressed by the Turks and the Protestant princes in Germany, should be in a condition to carry the sentence into execution.

The king knew that he might expect any injury which it should be in Charles’s power to inflict; and he therefore made it the chief object of his policy to incapacitate that monarch from wreaking his resentment upon him. [2]

* Sanders, .

* * Herbert, , 351.

He renewed his friendship with Francis, and opened negotiations for marrying his infant daughter, Elizabeth, with the duke of Angoulême, third son of Francis. These two monarchs also made advances to the princes of the Protestant league in Germany, ever jealous of the emperor’s ambition; and Henry, besides remitting them some money, sent Fox, bishop of Hereford, as Francis did Bellay, lord of Langley, to treat with them. But during the first fervors of the reformation, an agreement in theological tenets was held, as well as a union of interests, to be essential to a good correspondence among states; and though both Francis and Henry flattered the German princes with hopes of their embracing the confession of Augsbourg, it was looked upon as a bad symptom of their sincerity, that they exercised such extreme rigor against all preachers of the reformation in their respective dominions. [1] Henry carried the feint so far, that, while he thought himself the first theologian in the world, he yet invited over Melaricthon, Bucer, Sturmius, Draco, and other German divines, that they might confer with him, and instruct him in the foundation of their tenets. These theologians were now of great importance in the world; and no poet or philosopher, even in ancient Greece, where they were treated with most respect, had ever reached equal applause and admiration with those wretched composers of metaphysical polemics. The German princes told the king, that they could not spare their divines; and as Henry had no hopes of agreement with such zealous disputants, and knew that in Germany the followers of Luther would not associate with the disciples of Zuinglius, because, though they agreed in every thing else, they differed in some minute particulars with regard to the eucharist, he was the more indifferent on account of this refusal. He could also foresee, that even while the league of Smalcalde did not act in concert with him, they would always be carried by their interests to oppose the emperor: and the hatred between Francis and that monarch was so inveterate, that he deemed himself sure of a sincere ally in one or other of these potentates.

* Sleidan, lib. 10.

1536.

During these negotiations, an incident happened in England, which promised a more amicable conclusion of those disputes, and seemed even to open the way for a reconciliation between Henry and Charles. Queen Catharine was seized with a lingering illness, which at last brought her to her grave; she died at Kimbolton, in the county of Huntingdon, in the fiftieth year of her age. A little before she expired, she wrote a very tender letter to the king, in which she gave him the appellation of “her most dear lord, king, and husband.” She told him that as the hour of her death was now approaching, she laid hold of this last opportunity to inculcate on him the importance of his religious duty, and the comparative emptiness of all human grandeur and enjoyment; that though his fondness towards these perishable advantages had thrown her into many calamities, as well as created to himself much trouble, she yet forgave him all past injuries, and hoped that his pardon would be ratified in Heaven; and that she had no other request to make, than to recommend to him his daughter, the sole pledge of their loves; and to crave his protection for her maids and servants. She concluded with these words: “I make this vow, that mine eyes desire you above all things.” [1] The king was touched, even to the shedding of tears, by this last tender proof of Catharine’s affection; but Queen Anne is said to have expressed her joy for the death of a rival beyond what decency or humanity could permit. [2]

The emperor thought that, as the demise of his aunt had removed all foundation of personal animosity between him and Henry, it might not now be impossible to detach him from the alliance of France, and to renew his own confederacy with England, from which he had formerly reaped so much advantage. He sent Henry proposals for a return to ancient amity, upon these conditions: [3] that he should be reconciled to the see of Rome, that he should assist him in his war with the Turk, and that he should take part with him against Francis, who now threatened the duchy of Milan. The king replied, that he was willing to be on good terms with the emperor, provided that prince would acknowledge that the former breach of friendship came entirely from himself: as to the conditions proposed, the proceedings against the bishop of Rome were so just, and so fully ratified by the parliament of England, that they could not now be revoked; when Christian princes should have settled peace among themselves, he would not fail to exert that vigor which became him, against the enemies of the faith; and after amity with the emperor was once fully restored, he should then be in a situation, as a common friend both to him and Francis, either to mediate an agreement between them, or to assist the injured party.

* Herbert, .

* * Burnet, vol. i.

* * * Du Bellai, liv. v. Herbert. Burnet, vol. iii. in Coll. No· 60.

What rendered Henry more indifferent to the advances made by the emperor was, both his experience of the usual duplicity and insincerity of that monarch, and the intelligence which he received of the present transactions in Europe. Francis Sforza, duke of Milan, had died without issue; and the emperor maintained that the duchy, being a fief of the empire, was devolved to him, as head of the Germanic body: not to give umbrage, however, to the states of Italy, he professed his intention of bestowing that principality on some prince who should be obnoxious to no party, and he even made offer of it to the duke of Angoulême, third son of Francis. The French monarch, who pretended that his own right to Milan was now revived upon Sforza's death, was content to substitute his second son, the duke of Orleans, in his place; and the emperor pretended to close with this proposal. But his sole intention in that liberal concession was to gain time till he should put himself in a warlike posture, and be able to carry an invasion into Francis's dominions. The ancient enmity between these, princes broke out anew in bravadoes, and in personal insults on each other, ill becoming persons of their rank, and still less suitable to men of such unquestioned bravery. Charles soon after invaded Provence in person, with an army of fifty thousand men; but met with no success. His army perished with sickness, fatigue, famine, and other disasters; and he was obliged to raise the siege of Marseilles, and retire into Italy with the broken remains of his forces. An army of imperialists, near thirty thousand strong, which invaded France on the side of the Netherlands, and laid siege to Peronne, made no greater progress, but retired upon the approach of a French army. And Henry had thus the satisfaction to find, both that his ally Francis was likely to support himself without foreign assistance, and that his own tranquillity was fully insured by these violent wars and animosities on the continent.

If any inquietude remained with the English court, it was solely occasioned by the state of affairs in Scotland. James, hearing of the dangerous situation of his ally Francis, generously levied some forces; and embarking them on board vessels which he had hired for that purpose, landed them safely in France. He even went over in person; and making haste to join the camp of the French king, which then lay in Provence, and to partake of his danger, he met that prince at Lyons, who, having repulsed the emperor, was now returning to his capital. Recommended by so agreeable and seasonable an instance of friendship, the king of Scots paid his addresses to Magdalen, daughter of the French monarch; and this prince had no other objection to the match than what arose from the infirm state of his daughter's health, which seemed to threaten her with an approaching end. But James having gained the affections of the princess, and obtained her consent, the father would no longer oppose the united desires of his daughter and his friend: they were accordingly married, and soon after set sail for Scotland, where the young queen, as was foreseen, died in a little time after her arrival. Francis, however, was afraid lest his ally Henry, whom he likewise looked on as his friend, and who lived with him on a more cordial footing than is usual among great princes, should be displeased that this close confederacy between France and Scotland was concluded without his participation. He therefore despatched Pommeraye to London, in order to apologize for this measure; but Henry, with his usual openness and freedom, expressed such displeasure, that he refused even to confer with the ambassador; and Francis was apprehensive of a rupture with a prince who regulated his measures more by humor and passion than by the rules of political prudence. But the king was so fettered by the opposition in which he was engaged against the pope and the emperor, that he pursued no further this disgust against Francis; and in the end, every thing remained in tranquillity both on the side of France and of Scotland.

The domestic peace of England seemed to be exposed to more hazard by the violent innovations in religion; and it may be affirmed that, in this dangerous conjuncture, nothing insured public tranquillity so much as the decisive authority acquired by the king, and his great ascendant over all his subjects. Not only the devotion paid to the crown was profound during that age: the personal respect inspired by Henry was considerable; and even the terrors with which he overawed every one, were not attended with any considerable degree of hatred. His frankness, his sincerity, his magnificence, his generosity, were virtues which counterbalanced his violence, cruelty, and impetuosity. And the important rank which his vigor, more than his address, acquired him in all foreign negotiations, flattered the vanity of Englishmen, and made them the more willingly endure those domestic hardships to which they were exposed. The king, conscious of his advantages, was now proceeding to the most dangerous exercise of his authority; and after paving the way for that measure by several preparatory expedients, he was at last determined to suppress the monasteries, and to put himself in possession of their ample revenues.

The great increase of monasteries, if matters be considered merely in a political light, will appear the radical inconvenience of the Catholic religion; and every other disadvantage attending that communion seems to have an inseparable connection with these religious institutions. Papal usurpations, the tyranny of the inquisition, the multiplicity of holidays; all these fetters on liberty and industry were ultimately derived from the authority and insinuation of monks, whose habitations, being established every where, proved so many seminaries of superstition and of folly. This order of men was extremely enraged against Henry, and regarded the abolition of the papal authority in England as the removal of the sole protection which they enjoyed against the rapacity of the crown and of the courtiers. They were now subjected to the king's visitation; the supposed sacredness of their bulls from Rome was rejected; the progress of the reformation abroad, which had every where been attended with the abolition of the monastic orders, gave them reason to apprehend like consequences in England; and though the king still maintained the doctrine of purgatory, to which most of the convents owed their origin and support, it was foreseen, that, in the progress of the contest, he would every day be led to depart wider from ancient institutions, and be drawn nearer the tenets of the reformers, with whom his political interests naturally induced him to unite. Moved by these considerations, the friars employed all their influence to inflame the people against the king's government; and Henry, finding their safety irreconcilable with his own, was determined to seize the present opportunity, and utterly destroy his declared enemies.

Cromwell, secretary of state, had been appointed vicar-general, or vicegerent, a new office, by which the king's supremacy, or the absolute uncontrollable power assumed over the church, was delegated to him. He employed Layton, London, Price, Gage, Petre, Bellasis, and others, as commissioners who carried on every where a rigorous inquiry with regard to the conduct and deportment of all the friars. During times of faction, especially of the religious kind, no equity is to be expected from adversaries; and as it was known, that the king's intention in this visitation was to find a pretence for abolishing monasteries, we may naturally conclude, that the reports of the commissioners are very little to be relied on. Friars were encouraged to bring in informations against their brethren; the slightest evidence was credited; and even the calumnies spread abroad by the friends of the reformation, were regarded as grounds of proof. Monstrous disorders are therefore said to have been found in many of the religious houses; whole convents of women abandoned to lewdness; signs of abortions procured, of infants murdered, of unnatural lusts between persons of the same sex. It is indeed probable, that the blind submission of the people, during those ages, would render the friars and nuns more unguarded and more dissolute than they are in any Roman Catholic country at present; but still the reproaches, which it is safest to credit, are such as point at vices naturally connected with the very institution of convents, and with the monastic life. The cruel and inveterate factions and quarrels, therefore, which the commissioners mentioned, are very credible among men, who, being confined together within the same walls, never can forget their mutual animosities, and who, being cut off from all the most endearing connections of nature, are commonly cursed with hearts more selfish, and tempers more unrelenting, than fall to the share of other men. The pious frauds practised to increase the devotion and liberality of the people, may be regarded as certain, in an order founded on illusions, lies, and superstition. The supine idleness also, and its attendant, profound ignorance, with which the convents were reproached, admit of no question; and though monks were the true preservers, as well as inventors, of the dreaming and captious philosophy of the schools, no manly or elegant knowledge could be expected among men, whose lives, condemned to a tedious uniformity, and deprived of all emulation, afforded nothing to raise the mind or cultivate the genius.

Some few monasteries, terrified with this rigorous inquisition carried on by Cromwell and his commissioners, surrendered their revenues into the king’s hands; and the monks received small pensions as the reward of their obsequiousness. Orders were given to dismiss such nuns and friars as were below four and twenty, whose vows were, on that account, supposed not to be binding. The doors of the convents were opened, even to such as were above that age; and every one recovered his liberty who desired it. But as all these expedients did not fully answer the king’s purpose, he had recourse to his usual instrument of power, the parliament; and in order to prepare men for the innovations projected, the report of the visitors was published, and a general horror was endeavored to be excited n the nation against institutions, which, to their ancestors had been the objects of the most profound veneration.

The king, though determined utterly to abolish the monastic order, resolved to proceed gradually in this great work; and he gave directions to the parliament to go no further, at present, than to suppress the lesser monasteries, which possessed revenues below two hundred pounds a year. [1] These were found to be the most corrupted, as lying less under the restraint of shame, and being exposed to less scrutiny; [2] and it was deemed safest to begin with them, and thereby prepare the way for the greater innovations projected. By this act three hundred and seventy-six monasteries were suppressed, and their revenues, amounting to thirty-two thousand pounds a year, were granted to the king; besides their goods, chattels, and plate, computed at a hundred thousand pounds more. [3] It does not appear that any opposition was made to this important law: so absolute was Henry’s authority [4] A court, called the court of augmentation of the king’s revenue, was erected for the management of these funds. The people naturally concluded from this circumstance, that Henry intended to proceed in despoiling the church of her patrimony.

The act formerly passed, empowering the king to name thirty-two commissioners for framing a body of canon law, was renewed; but the project was never carried into execution. Henry thought, that the present perplexity of that law increased his authority, and kept the clergy in still greater dependence.

Further progress was made in completing the union of Wales with England: the separate jurisdictions of several great lords, or marchers, as they were called, which obstructed the course of justice in Wales, and encouraged robbery and pillaging, were abolished; and the authority of the king’s courts was extended every where. Some jurisdictions of a like nature in England were also abolished this session.

* 27 Henry VIII. c. 28.

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

* * * It is pretended, (see Holingshed, ,) that ten thousand monks wore turned out on the dissolution of the lesser monasteries. If so, most of them must have been mendicants; for the

revenue could not have supported near that number. The mendicants, no doubt, still continued their former profession.

* * * * 27 Henry VIII. c. 27.

v 27 Henry VIII. c. 4

The commons, sensible that they had gained nothing by opposing the king’s will when he formerly endeavored to secure the profits of wardships and liveries, were now contented to frame a law, [1] such as he dictated to them. It was enacted, that the possession of land shall be adjudged to be in those who have the use of it, not in those to whom it is transferred in trust.

* 27 Henry VIII. c. 10.

After all these laws were passed, the king dissolved the parliament; a parliament memorable, not only for the great and important innovations which it introduced, but also for the long time it had sitten, and the frequent prorogations which it had undergone. Henry had found it so obsequious to his will, that he did not choose, during those religious ferments, to hazard a new election; and he continued the same parliament above six years: a practice at that time unusual in England.

The convocation which sat during this session was engaged in a very important work, the deliberating on the new translation which was projected of the Scriptures. The translation given by Tindal, though corrected by himself in a new edition, was still complained of by the clergy as inaccurate and unfaithful; and it was now proposed to them, that they should themselves publish a translation which would not be liable to those objections.

The friends of the reformation asserted, that nothing could be more absurd than to conceal, in an unknown tongue, the word of God itself, and thus to counteract the will of Heaven, which, for the purpose of universal salvation, had published that salutary doctrine to all nations: that if this practice were not very absurd, the artifice at least was very gross, and proved a consciousness, that the glosses and traditions of the clergy stood in direct opposition to the original text, dictated by supreme intelligence: that it was now necessary for the people, so long abused by interested pretensions, to see with their own eyes, and to examine whether the claims of the ecclesiastics were founded on that charter which was on all hands acknowledged to be derived from Heaven: and that, as a spirit of research and curiosity was happily revived, and men were now obliged to make a choice among the contending doctrines of different sects, the proper materials for decision, and above all, the Holy Scriptures, should be set before them; and the revealed will of God, which the change of language had somewhat obscured, be again, by their means, revealed to mankind.

The favorers of the ancient religion maintained, on the other hand, that the pretence of making the people see with their own eyes was a mere cheat, and was itself a very gross artifice, by which the new preachers hoped to obtain the guidance of them, and to seduce them from those pastors whom the laws, whom ancient establishments, whom Heaven itself, had appointed for their spiritual direction: that the people were by their ignorance, their stupidity, their necessary avocations, totally unqualified to choose their own principles; and it was a mockery to set materials before them, of which they could not possibly make any proper use: that even in the affairs of common life, and in their temporal concerns, which lay more within the compass of human reason, the laws had in a great measure deprived them of the right of private judgment, and had, happily for their own and the public interest, regulated their conduct and behavior: that theological questions were placed far beyond the sphere of vulgar comprehension; and ecclesiastics themselves, though assisted by all the advantages of education, erudition, and an assiduous study of the science, could not be fully assured of a just decision, except by the promise made them in Scripture, that God would be ever present with his church, and that the gates of hell should not prevail against her: that the gross errors adopted by the wisest heathens, proved how unfit men were to grope their own way through this profound darkness; nor would the Scriptures, if trusted to every man’s judgment, be able to remedy; on the contrary, they would much augment, those fatal illusions: that sacred writ itself was involved in so much obscurity, gave rise to so many difficulties, contained so many appearing contradictions, that it was the most dangerous weapon that could be intrusted into the hands of the ignorant and giddy multitude: that the poetical style in which a great part of it was composed, at the same time that it occasioned uncertainty in the sense, by its multiplied tropes and figures, was sufficient to kindle the zeal of fanaticism, and thereby throw civil society into the most furious combustion: that a thousand sects must arise, which would pretend, each of them, to derive its tenets from the

Scripture; and would be able, by specious arguments, or even without specious arguments, to seduce silly women and ignorant mechanics into a belief of the most monstrous principles: and that if ever this disorder, dangerous to the magistrate himself, received a remedy, it must be from the tacit acquiescence of the people in some new authority; and it was evidently better, without further contest or inquiry, to adhere peaceably to ancient, and therefore the more secure establishments.

These latter arguments, being more agreeable to ecclesiastical governments, would probably have prevailed in the convocation, had it not been for the authority of Cranmer, Latimer, and some other bishops, who were supposed to speak the king's sense of the matter. A vote was passed for publishing a new translation of the Scriptures; and in three years' time the work was finished, and printed at Paris. This was deemed a great point gained by the reformers, and a considerable advancement of their cause. Further progress was soon expected, after such important successes.

But while the retainers to the new religion were exulting in their prosperity, they met with a mortification which seemed to blast all their hopes: their patroness, Anne Boleyn, possessed no longer the king's favor; and soon after lost her life by the rage of that furious monarch. Henry had persevered in his love to this lady during six years that his prosecution of the divorce lasted; and the more obstacles he met with to the gratification of his passion, the more determined zeal did he exert in pursuing his purpose. But the affection which had subsisted, and still increased under difficulties, had not long attained secure possession of its object, when it languished from satiety; and the king's heart was apparently estranged from his consort. Anne's enemies soon perceived the fatal change; and they were forward to widen the breach, when they found that they incurred no danger by interposing in those delicate concerns. She had been delivered of a dead son; and Henry's extreme fondness for male issue being thus for the present disappointed, his temper, equally violent and superstitious, was disposed to make the innocent mother answerable for the misfortune. [1] But the chief means which Anne's enemies employed to inflame the king against her, was his jealousy.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

Anne, though she appears to have been entirely innocent, and even virtuous in her conduct, had a certain gayety, if not levity of character which threw her off her guard, and made her less circumspect than her situation required. Her education in France rendered her the more prone to those freedoms; and it was with difficulty she conformed herself to that strict ceremonial practised in the court of England. More vain than haughty, she was pleased to see the influence of her beauty on all around her; and she indulged herself in an easy familiarity with persons who were formerly her equals, and who might then have pretended to her friendship and good graces. Henry's dignity was offended with these popular manners; and though the lover had been entirely blind, the husband possessed but too quick discernment and penetration. III instruments interposed, and put a malignant interpretation on the harmless liberties of the queen: the viscountess of Rocheford, in particular, who was married to the queen's brother, but who lived on bad terms with her sister-in-law, insinuated the most cruel suspicions into the king's mind; and as she was a woman of a profligate character, she paid no regard either to truth or humanity in those calumnies which she suggested. She pretended that her own husband was engaged in a criminal correspondence with his sister; and not content with this imputation, she poisoned every action of the queen's, and represented each instance of favor, which she conferred on any one, as a token of affection. Henry Norris, groom of the stole, Weston and Brereton, gentlemen of the king's chamber, together with Mark Smeton, groom of the chamber, were observed to possess much of the queen's friendship; and they served her with a zeal and attachment, which, though chiefly derived from gratitude, might not improbably be seasoned with some mixture of tenderness for so amiable a princess. The king's jealousy laid hold of the slightest circumstance; and finding no particular object on which it could fasten, it vented itself equally on every one that came within the verge of its fury.

Had Henry's jealousy been derived from love, though it might on a sudden have proceeded to the most violent extremities, it would have been subject to many remorses and contrarieties; and might at last have served only to augment that affection on which it was founded. But it was a more stern jealousy, fostered entirely by pride: his love was transferred to another object. Jane, daughter of Sir John Seymour, and maid of honor to the queen, a young lady of singular beauty and merit, had obtained an entire ascendant over him; and he was determined to sacrifice every thing to the gratification of this new appetite. Unlike to most monarchs, who judge lightly of the crime of gallantry, and who deem the young damsels of their court rather honored than disgraced by their passion, he seldom thought of any other attachment than that of marriage; and in order to attain this end, he underwent more difficulties, and committed greater crimes, than those which he sought to avoid by forming that legal connection And having thus entertained the design of raising his new mistress to his bed and throne, he more willingly hearkened to every suggestion which threw any imputation of guilt on the unfortunate Anne Boleyn.

The king’s jealousy first appeared openly in a tilting at Greenwich, where the queen happened to drop her handkerchief, an incident probably casual, but interpreted by him as an instance of gallantry to some of her paramours.[1] He immediately retired from the place; sent orders to confine her to her chamber; arrested Norris, Brereton, Weston, and Smeton, together with her brother Rocheford; and threw them into prison. The queen, astonished at these instances of his fury, thought that he meant only to try her; but finding him in earnest, she reflected on his obstinate, unrelenting spirit, and she prepared herself for that melancholy doom which was awaiting her. Next day, she was sent to the Tower; and on her way thither, she was informed of her supposed offences, of which she had hitherto been ignorant: she made earnest protestations of her innocence; and when she entered the prison, she fell on her knees, and prayed God so to help her, as she was not guilty of the crime imputed to her. Her surprise and confusion threw her into hysterical disorders; and in that situation she thought that the best proof of her innocence was to make an entire confession; and she revealed some indiscretions and levities, which her simplicity had equally betrayed her to commit and to avow. She owned that she had once rallied Norris on his delaying his marriage, and had told him that he probably expected her when she should be a widow: she had reproved Weston, she said, for his affection to a kinswoman of hers, and his indifference towards his wife; but he told her that she had mistaken the object of his affection, for it was herself; upon which she defied him.[1] She affirmed that Smeton had never been in her chamber but twice, when he played on the harpsichord; but she acknowledged that he had once had the boldness to tell her that a look sufficed him. The king, instead of being satisfied with the candor and sincerity of her confession, regarded these indiscretions only as preludes to greater and more criminal intimacies.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Strype, vol. i. .

Of all those multitudes whom the beneficence of the queen’s tamper had obliged during her prosperous fortune, no one durst interpose between her and the king’s fury; and the person whose advancement every breath had favored, and every countenance had smiled upon, was now left neglected and abandoned. Even her uncle, the duke of Norfolk, preferring the connections of party to the ties of blood, was become her most dangerous enemy; and all the retainers to the Catholic religion hoped that her death would terminate the king’s quarrel with Rome, and leave him again to his natural and early bent, which had inclined him to maintain the most intimate union with the apostolic see. Cranmer alone, of all the queen’s adherents, still retained his friendship for her; and, as far as the king’s impetuosity permitted him, he endeavored to moderate the violent prejudices entertained against her.

The queen herself wrote Henry a letter from the Tower, full of the most tender expostulations and of the warmest protestations of innocence. This letter had no influence on the unrelenting mind of Henry, who was determined to pave the way for his new marriage by the death of Anne Boleyn. Morris, Weston, Brereton, and Smeton, were tried; but no legal evidence was produced against them. The chief proof of their guilt consisted in a hearsay from one Lady Wingfield, who was dead. Smeton was prevailed on, by the vain hopes of life, to confess a criminal correspondence with the queen; [2] but even her enemies expected little advantage from this confession; for they never dared to confront him with her; and he was immediately executed; as were also Brereton and Weston. Norris had been much in the king’s favor, and an offer of life was made him, if he would confess his crime and accuse the queen; but he generously rejected the proposal, and said that in his conscience he believed her entirely guiltless: but for his part, he could accuse her of nothing, and he would rather die a thousand deaths than calumniate an innocent person.

* See note K, at the end of the volume.

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

The queen and her brother were tried by a jury of peers consisting of the duke of Suffolk, the marquis of Exeter, the earl of Arundel, and twenty-three more: their uncle, the duke of Norfolk, presided as high steward. Upon what proof or pretence the crime of incest was imputed to them, is unknown: the chief evidence, it is said, amounted to no more than that Rocheford had been seen to lean on her bed before some company. Part of the charge against her was that she had affirmed to her minions, that the king never had her heart; and had said to each of them apart, that she loved him better than any person whatsoever; “which was to the slander of the issue begotten between the king and her.” By this strained interpretation, her guilt was brought under the statute of the twenty-fifth of this reign; in which it was declared criminal to throw any slander upon the king, queen, or their issue. Such palpable absurdities were at that time admitted; and they were regarded by the peers of England as a sufficient reason for sacrificing an innocent queen to the cruelty of their tyrant. Though unassisted by counsel, she defended herself with presence of mind; and the spectators could not forbear pronouncing her entirely innocent. Judgment, however, was given by the court, both against the queen and Lord Rocheford; and her verdict contained, that she should be burned or beheaded at the king’s pleasure. When this dreadful sentence was pronounced, she was not terrified, but lifting up her hands to heaven, said, “O Father! O Creator! thou who art the way, the truth, and the life, thou knowest that I have not deserved this fate;” and then turning to the judges, made the most pathetic declarations of her innocence.

Henry, not satisfied with this cruel vengeance, was resolved entirely to annul his marriage with Anne Boleyn, and to declare her issue illegitimate: he recalled to his memory, that a little after her appearance in the English court, some attachment had been acknowledged between her and the earl of Northumberland, then Lord Piercy; and he now questioned that nobleman with regard to these engagements. Northumberland took an oath before the two archbishops, that no contract or promise of marriage had ever passed between them: he received the sacrament upon it, before the duke of Norfolk and others of the privy council; and this solemn act he accompanied with the most solemn protestations of veracity. [1] The queen, however, was shaken by menaces of executing the sentence against her in its greatest rigor, and was prevailed on to confess in court some lawful impediment to her marriage with the king. [2] The afflicted primate, who sat as judge, thought himself obliged by this confession to pronounce the marriage null and invalid. Henry, in the transports of his fury, did not perceive that his proceedings were totally inconsistent, and that if her marriage were from the beginning invalid, she could not possibly be guilty of adultery.

* Herbert, * [2missing period]

* * Heylin, .

The queen now prepared for suffering the death to which she was sentenced. She sent her last message to the king, and acknowledged the obligations which she owed him, in thus uniformly continuing his endeavors for her advancement: from a private gentlewoman, she said, he had first made her a marchioness, then a queen, and now, since he could raise her no higher in this world, he was sending her to be a saint in heaven. She then renewed the protestations of her innocence, and recommended her daughter to his care. Before the lieutenant of the Tower, and all who approached her, she made the like declarations; and continued to behave herself with her usual serenity, and even with cheerfulness. “The executioner,” she said to the lieutenant, “is, I hear, very expert; and my neck is very slender:” upon which she grasped it in her hand, and smiled. When brought, however, to the scaffold, she softened her tone a little with regard to her protestations of innocence. She probably reflected, that the obstinacy of Queen Catharine, and her opposition to the king’s will, had much alienated him from the lady Mary: her own maternal concern, therefore, for Elizabeth prevailed in these last moments over that indignation which the unjust sentence by which she suffered naturally excited in her. She said that she was come to die, as she was sentenced, by the law: she would accuse none, nor say any thing of the ground upon which she was judged. She prayed heartily for the king; called him a most merciful and gentle prince; and acknowledged that he had always been to her a good and gracious sovereign; and if any one should think proper to canvass her cause, she desired him to judge the best. [1] She was beheaded by the executioner of Calais, who was sent for as more expert than any in England. Her body was negligently thrown into a common chest of elm-tree, made to hold arrows, and was buried in the Tower.

* Burnet. vol. i. .

The innocence of this unfortunate queen cannot reasonably be called in question. Henry himself, in the violence of his rage, knew not whom to accuse as her lover; and though he imputed guilt to her brother, and four persons more, he was able to bring proof against none of them. The whole tenor of her conduct forbids us to ascribe to her an abandoned character, such as is implied in the king's accusation: had she been so lost to all prudence and sense of shame, she must have exposed herself to detection, and afforded her enemies some evidence against her. But the king made the most effectual apology for her, by marrying Jane Seymour the very day after her execution. [1] His impatience to gratify this new passion caused him to forgot all regard to decency; and his cruel heart was not softened a moment by the bloody catastrophe of a person who had so long been the object of his most tender affections.

The lady Mary thought the death of her step-mother a proper opportunity for reconciling herself to the king, who, besides other causes of disgust, had been offended with her on account of the part which she had taken in her mother's quarrel. Her advances were not at first received; and Henry exacted from her some further proofs of submission and obedience: he required this young princess, then about twenty years of age, to adopt his theological tenets; to acknowledge his supremacy; to renounce the pope; and to own her mother's marriage to be unlawful and incestuous. These points were of hard digestion with the princess; but after some delays, and even refusals, she was at last prevailed on to write a letter to her father, [2] containing her assent to the articles required of her; upon which she was received into favor. But notwithstanding the return of the king's affection to the issue of his first marriage, he divested not himself of kindness towards the lady Elizabeth; and the new queen, who was blessed with a singular sweetness of disposition, discovered strong proofs of attachment towards her.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Burnet, vol. i. . Strype, vol. i. .

The trial and conviction of Queen Anne, and the subsequent events, made it necessary for the king to summon a new parliament; and he here, in his speech, made a merit to his people, that, notwithstanding the misfortunes attending his two former marriages, he had been induced for their good to venture on a third. The speaker received this profession with suitable gratitude; and he took thence occasion to praise the king for his wonderful gifts of grace and nature: he compared him, for justice and prudence, to Solomon; for strength and fortitude, to Samson; and for beauty and comeliness, to Absalom. The king very humbly replied, by the mouth cf the chancellor, that he disavowed these praises; since, if he were really possessed of such endowments, they were the gift of Almighty God only. Henry found that the parliament was no less submissive in deeds than complaisant in their expressions, and that they would go the same lengths as the former in gratifying even his most lawless passions. His divorce from Anne Boleyn was ratified; [1] that queen and all her accomplices were attainted; the issue of both his former marriages were declared illegitimate, and it was even made treason to assert the legitimacy of either of them; to throw any slander upon the present king, queen, or their issue, was subjected to the same penalty; the crown was settled on the king’s issue by Jane Seymour, or any subsequent wife; and in case he should die without children, he was empowered, by his will or letters patent, to dispose of the crown; an enormous authority, especially when intrusted to a prince so violent and capricious in his humor. Whoever, being required, refused to answer upon oath to any article of this act of settlement, was declared to be guilty of treason; and by this clause a species of political inquisition was established in the kingdom, as well as the accusations of treason multiplied to an unreasonable degree. The king was also empowered to confer on any one, by his will or letters patent, any castles, honors, liberties, or franchises; words which might have been extended to the dismembering of the kingdom, by the erection of principalities and independent jurisdictions. It was also, by another act, made treason to marry, without the king’s consent, any princess related in the first degree to the crown. This act was occasioned by the discovery of a design formed by Thomas Howard, brother of the duke of Norfolk, to espouse the lady Margaret Douglas, niece to the king, by his sister the queen of Scots and the earl of Angus. Howard, as well as the young lady, was committed to the Tower. She recovered her liberty soon after; but he died in confinement. An act of attainder passed against him this session of parliament.

* The parliament, in annulling the king's marriage with Anne Boleyn, gives this as a reason, "For that his highness had chosen to wife the excellent and virtuous Lady Jane, who,

for her convenient years, excellent beauty, and pureness of flesh and blood, would be apt, God willing, to conceive issue by his highness."

Another accession was likewise gained to the authority of the crown; the king or any of his successors was empowered to repeal or annul, by letters patent, whatever act of parliament had been passed before he was four and twenty years of age. Whoever maintained the authority of the bishop of Rome by word or writ, or endeavored in any manner to restore it in England, was subjected to the penalty of a premunire that is, his goods were forfeited, and he was put out of the protection of law. And any person who possessed any office, ecclesiastical or civil, or received any grant or charter from the crown, and yet refused to renounce the pope by oath, was declared to be guilty of treason. The renunciation prescribed runs in the style of, "So help me God, all saints, and the holy evangelists." [1] The pope, hearing of Anne Boleyn's disgrace and death, had hoped that the door was opened to a reconciliation, and had been making some advances to Henry: but this was the reception he met with. Henry was now become indifferent with regard to papal censures; and finding a great increase of authority, as well as of revenue, to accrue from his quarrel with Rome, he was determined to persevere in his present measures. This parliament also, even more than any foregoing, convinced him how much he commanded the respect of his subjects, and what confidence he might repose in them. Though the elections had been made on a sudden, without any preparation or intrigue, the members discovered an unlimited attachment to his person and government. [2]

* 28 Henry VIII. c. 10.

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

The extreme complaisance of the convocation, which sat at the same time with the parliament, encouraged him in his resolution of breaking entirely with the court of Rome. There was secretly a great division of sentiments in the minds of this assembly; and as the zeal of the reformers had been augmented by some late successes, the resentment of the Catholics was no less excited by their fears and losses: but the authority of the king kept every one submissive and silent; and the new assumed prerogative, the supremacy, with whose limits no one was fully acquainted, restrained even the most furious movements of theological rancor. Cromwell presided as vicar-general; and though the Catholic party expected, that on the fall of Queen Anne, his authority would receive a great shock, they were surprised to find him still maintain the same credit as before. With the vicar-general concurred Cranmer the primate, Latimer, bishop of Worcester, Shaxton of Salisbury, Hilsey of Rochester, Fox of Hereford, Barlow of St. David's. The opposite faction was headed by Lee, archbishop of York, Stokesley, bishop of London, Tonstal of Durham, Gardner of Winchester, Longland of Lincoln, Sherborne of Chichester, Nix of Norwich, and Kite of Carlisle. The former party, by their opposition to the pope, seconded the king's ambition and love of power: the latter party, by maintaining the ancient theological tenets, were more conformable to his speculative principles: and both of them had alternately the advantage of gaining on his humor, by which he was more governed than by either of these motives.

The church in general was averse to the reformation; and the lower house of convocation framed a list of opinions, in the whole sixty-seven, which they pronounced erroneous, and which was a collection of principles, some held by the ancient Lollards, others by the modern Protestants, or Gospellers, as they were sometimes called. These opinions they sent to the upper house to be censured; but in the preamble of their representation, they discovered the servile spirit by which they were governed. They said, "that they intended not to do or speak any thing which might be unpleasant to the king, whom they acknowledged their supreme head, and whose commands they were resolved to obey; renouncing the pope's usurped authority, with all his laws and inventions, now extinguished and abolished; and addicting themselves to Almighty God and his laws, and unto the king and the laws made within this kingdom." [1]

* Collier, vol. ii. .

The convocation came at last, after some debate, to decide articles of faith; and their tenets were of as motley a kind as the assembly itself, or rather as the king's system of theology, by which they were resolved entirely to square their principles. They determined the standard of faith to consist in the Scriptures and the three creeds, the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian; and this article was a signal victory to the reformers: auricular confession and penance were admitted, a doctrine agreeable to the Catholics: no mention was made of marriage, extreme unction, confirmation, or holy orders, as sacraments; and in this omission the influence of the Protestants appeared: the real presence was asserted conformably to the ancient doctrine: the terms of acceptance were established to be the merits of Christ, and the mercy and good pleasure of God, suitably to the new principles.

So far the two sects seem to have made a fair partition by alternately sharing the several clauses. In framing the subsequent articles, each of them seems to have thrown in its ingredient. The Catholics prevailed in asserting, that the use of images was warranted by Scripture; the Protestants, in warning the people against idolatry, and the abuse of these sensible representations. The ancient faith was adopted in maintaining the expedience of praying to saints; the late innovations in rejecting the peculiar patronage of saints to any trade, profession, or course of action. The former rites of worship, the use of holy water, and the ceremonies practised on Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and other festivals, were still maintained; but the new refinements, which made light of these institutions, were also adopted, by the convocation's denying that they had any immediate power of remitting sin, and by its asserting that their sole merit consisted in promoting pious and devout dispositions in the mind.

But the article with regard to purgatory contains the most curious jargon, ambiguity, and hesitation, arising from the mixture of opposite tenets. It was to this purpose: "Since, according to due order of charity, and the book of Maccabees, and divers ancient authors, it is a very good and charitable deed to pray for souls departed, and since such a practice has been maintained in the church from the beginning, all bishops and teachers should instruct the people not to be grieved for the continuance of the same. But since the place where departed souls are retained before they reach paradise, as well as the nature of their pains, is left uncertain by Scripture, all such questions are to be submitted to God, to whose mercy it is meet and convenient to commend the deceased, trusting that he accepteth our prayers for them." [1]

* Collier, vol. ii. , et seq. Fuller. Burnet, vol. i. .

These articles, when framed by the convocation, and corrected by the king, were subscribed by every member of that assembly; while, perhaps, neither there nor throughout the whole kingdom, could one man be found, except Henry himself, who had adopted precisely these very doctrines and opinions. For though there be not any contradiction in the tenets above mentioned, it had happened in England, as in all countries where factious divisions have place; a certain creed was embraced by each party; few neuters were to be found; and these consisted only of speculative or whimsical people, of whom two persons could scarcely be brought to an agreement in the same dogmas. The Protestants, all of them, carried their opposition to Rome further than those articles; none of the Catholics went so far: and the king, by being able to retain the nation in such a delicate medium, displayed the utmost power of an imperious despotism of which any history furnishes an example. To change the religion of a country, even when seconded by a party, is one of the most perilous enterprises which any sovereign can attempt, and often proves the most destructive to royal authority. But Henry was able to set the political machine in that furious movement, and yet regulate and even stop its career: he could say to it, Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther: and he made every vote of his parliament and convocation subservient, not only to his interests and passions, but even to his greatest caprices; nay, to his most refined and most scholastic subtilties.

The concurrence of these two national assemblies served, no doubt, to increase the king’s power over the people, and raised him to an authority more absolute than any prince in a simple monarchy, even by means of military force, is ever able to attain. But there are certain bounds, beyond which the most slavish submission cannot be extended. All the late innovations, particularly the dissolution of the smaller monasteries, and the imminent danger to which all the rest were exposed, [1] had bred discontent among the people, and had disposed them to revolt. The expelled monks, wandering about the country, excited both the piety and compassion of men; and as the ancient religion took hold of the populace by powerful motives, suited to vulgar capacity, it was able, now that it was brought into apparent hazard, to raise the strongest zeal in its favor. [2] Discontents had even reached some of the nobility and gentry, whose ancestors had founded the monasteries, and who placed a vanity in those institutions, as well as reaped some benefit from them, by the provisions which they afforded them for their younger children.

* See note L, at the end of the volume.

* * Strype, vol. i. .

The more superstitious were interested for the souls of their fore-fathers, which, they believed, must now lie during many ages in the torments of purgatory, for want of masses to relieve them. It seemed unjust to abolish pious institutions for the faults, real or pretended, of individuals. Even the most moderate and reasonable deemed it somewhat iniquitous, that men who had been invited into a course of life by all the laws, human and divine, which prevailed in their country, should be turned out of their possessions, and so little care be taken of their future subsistence. And when it was observed, that the rapacity and bribery of the commissioners and others, employed in visiting the monasteries, intercepted much of the profits resulting from these confiscations, it tended much to increase the general discontent. [1]

But the people did not break into open sedition till the complaints of the secular clergy concurred with those of the regular. As Cromwell’s person was little acceptable to the ecclesiastics, the authority which he exercised, being so new, so absolute, so unlimited, inspired them with disgust and terror. He published, in the king’s name, without the consent either of parliament or convocation, an ordinance by which he retrenched many of the ancient holy days; prohibited several superstitions gainful to the clergy, such as pilgrimages, images, relics; and even ordered the incumbents in the parishes to set apart a considerable portion of their revenue for repairs and for the support of exhibitioners and the poor of their parish. The secular priests, finding themselves thus reduced to a grievous servitude, instilled into the people those discontents which they had long harbored in their own bosoms.

The first rising was in Lincolnshire. It was headed by Dr. Mackrel, prior of Barlings, who was disguised like a mean mechanic, and who bore the name of Captain Cobler. This tumultuary army amounted to above twenty thousand men; [2] but notwithstanding their number, they showed little disposition of proceeding to extremities against the king, and seemed still overawed by his authority.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Burnet, vol. i. . Herbert.

They acknowledged him to be supreme head of the church of England; but they complained of suppressing the monasteries, of evil counsellors, of persons meanly born raised to dignity, of the danger to which the jewels and plate of their parochial churches were exposed; and they prayed the king to consult the nobility of the realm concerning the redress of these grievances.[1] Henry was little disposed to entertain apprehensions of danger, especially from a low multitude whom he despised. He sent forces against the rebels, under the command of the duke of Suffolk; and he returned them a very sharp answer to their petition. There were some gentry whom the populace had constrained to take part with them, and who kept a secret correspondence with Suffolk. They informed him, that resentment against the king's reply was the chief cause which retained the malecontents in arms, and that a milder answer would probably suppress the rebellion. Henry had levied a great force at London, with which he was preparing to march against the rebels; and being so well supported by power, he thought that, without losing his dignity, he might now show them some greater condescension. He sent a new proclamation, requiring them to return to their obedience, with secret assurances of pardon. This expedient had its effect: the populace was dispersed: Mackrel and some of their leaders fell into the king's hands, and were executed: the greater part of the multitude retired peaceably to their usual occupations: a few of the more obstinate fled to the north, where they joined the insurrection that was raised in those parts.

The northern rebels, as they were more numerous, were also on other accounts more formidable than those of Lincolnshire; because the people were there more accustomed to arms, and because of their vicinity to the Scots, who might make advantage of these disorders. One Aske, a gentleman, had taken the command of them, and he possessed the art of governing the populace. Their enterprise they called the "pilgrimage of grace:" some priests marched before in the habits of their order, carrying crosses in their hands: in their banners was woven a crucifix, with the representation of a chalice, and of the five wounds of Christ: [2] they wore on their sleeve an emblem of the five wounds, with the name of Jesus wrought in the middle: they all took an oath, that they had entered into the pilgrimage of grace from no other motive than their love to God, their care of the king's person and issue, their desire of purifying the nobility, of driving base-born persons from about the king, of restoring the church, and of suppressing heresy. Allured by these fair pretences, about forty thousand men from the counties of York, Durham, Lancaster, and those northern provinces, flocked to their standard; and their zeal, no less than their numbers, inspired the court with apprehensions.

* Herbert, .

* * Fox, vol. ii. .

The earl of Shrewsbury, moved by his regard for the king's service, raised forces, though at first without any commission, in order to oppose the rebels. The earl of Cumberland repulsed them from his castle of Skipton: Sir Ralph Evers defended Scarborough Castle against them: [1] Courtney, marquis of Exeter, the king's cousin-german, obeyed orders from court, and levied troops. The earls of Huntingdon, Derby, and Rutland imitated his example. The rebels, however, prevailed in taking both Hull and York: they had laid siege to Pomfret Castle, into which the archbishop of York and Lord Darsy had thrown themselves. It was soon surrendered to them; and the prelate and nobleman, who secretly wished success to the insurrection, seemed to yield to the force imposed on them, and joined the rebels.

* Stowe, . Baker, .

The duke of Norfolk was appointed general of the king's forces against the northern rebels; and as he headed the party at court which supported the ancient religion, he was also suspected of bearing some favor to the cause which he was sent to oppose. His prudent conduct, however, seems to acquit him of this imputation. He encamped near Doncaster, together with the earl of Shrewsbury; and as his army was small, scarcely exceeding five thousand men, he made choice of a post where he had a river in front, the ford of which he purposed to defend against the rebels. They had intended to attack him in the morning; but during the night there fell such violent rains as rendered the river utterly unpassable; and Norfolk wisely laid hold of the opportunity to enter into treaty with them. In order to open the door for negotiation, he sent them a herald; whom Aske, their leader, received with great ceremony; he himself sitting in a chair of state, with the archbishop of York on one hand, and Lord Darcy on the other. It was agreed that two gentlemen should be despatched to the king with proposals from the rebels; and Henry purposely delayed giving an answer, and allured them with hopes of entire satisfaction, in expectation that necessity would soon oblige them to disperse themselves. Being informed that his artifice had in a great measure succeeded, he required them instantly to lay down their arms, and submit to mercy; promising a pardon to all, except six whom he named, and four whom he reserved to himself the power of naming. But though the greater part of the rebels had gone home for want of subsistence, they had entered into the most solemn engagements to return to their standards in case the king’s answer should not prove satisfactory. Norfolk, therefore, soon found himself in the same difficulty as before; and he opened again a negotiation with the leaders of the multitude. He engaged them to send three hundred persons to Doncaster with proposals for an accommodation; and he hoped, by intrigue and separate interests, to throw dissension among so great a number. Aske himself had intended to be one of the deputies, and he required a hostage for his security: but the king, when consulted, replied, that he knew no gentleman, or other, whom he esteemed so little as to put him in pledge for such a villain. The demands of the rebels were so exorbitant, that Norfolk rejected them; and they prepared again to decide the contest by arms. They were as formidable as ever, both by their numbers and spirit; and notwithstanding the small river which lay between them and the royal army, Norfolk had great reason to dread the effects of their fury. But while they were preparing to pass the ford, rain fell a second time in such abundance, as made it impracticable for them to execute their design; and the populace, partly reduced to necessity by want of provisions, partly struck with superstition at being thus again disappointed by the same accident, suddenly dispersed themselves. The duke of Norfolk, who had received powers for that end, forwarded the dispersion by the promise of a general amnesty; and the king ratified this act of clemency. He published, however, a manifesto against the rebels, and an answer to their complaints; in which he employed a very lofty style, suited to so haughty a monarch. He told them, that they ought no more to pretend giving a judgment with regard to government, that a blind man with regard to colors. “And we,” he added, “with our whole council, think it right strange that ye, who be but brutes and inexpert folk, do take upon you to appoint us who be meet or not for our council.”

1537.

As this pacification was not likely to be of long continuance, Norfolk was ordered to keep his army together, and to march into the northern parts, in order to exact a general submission. Lord Darcy, as well as Aske, was sent for to court; and the former, upon his refusal or delay to appear, was thrown into prison. Every place was full of jealousy and complaints. A new insurrection broke out, headed by Musgrave and Tilby; and the rebels besieged Carlisle with thousand men. Being repulsed by that city, they were encountered in their retreat by Norfolk, who put them to flight; and having made prisoners of all their officers, except Musgrave, who escaped, he instantly put them to death by martial law, to the number of seventy persons. An attempt made by Sir Francis Bigot and Halam to surprise Hull, met with no better success; and several other risings were suppressed by the vigilance of Norfolk. The king, enraged by these multiplied revolts, was determined not to adhere to the general pardon which he had granted; and from a movement of his usual violence he made the innocent suffer for the guilty. Norfolk, by command from his master, spread the royal banner, and, wherever he thought proper, executed martial law in the punishment of offenders. Besides Aske, leader of the first insurrection, Sir Robert Constable, Sir John Bulmer, Sir Thomas Piercy, Sir Stephen Hamilton, Nicholas Tempest, William Lumley, and many others, were thrown into prison; and most of them were condemned and executed. Lord Hussey was found guilty, as an accomplice in the insurrection of Lincolnshire, and was executed at Lincoln. Lord Darcy, though he pleaded compulsion, and appealed for his justification to a long life spent in the service of the crown, was beheaded on Tower Hill. Before his execution, he accused Norfolk of having secretly encouraged the rebels; but Henry, either sensible of that nobleman’s services, and convinced of his fidelity or afraid to offend one of such extensive power and great capacity, rejected the information. Being now satiated with punishing the rebels, he published anew a general pardon, to which he faithfully adhered; [1] and he erected, by patent, a court of justice at York, for deciding lawsuits in the northern counties; a demand which had been made by the rebels.

Soon after this prosperous success, an event happened which crowned Henry’s joy — the birth of a son, who was baptized by the name of Edward. Yet was not his happiness without alloy: the queen died two days after.* *

* Herbert, .

* * Strype, vol. ii. .

But a son had so long been ardently wished for by Henry, and was now become so necessary, in order to prevent disputes with regard to the succession, after the acts declaring the two princesses illegitimate, that the king’s affliction was drowned in his joy, and he expressed great satisfaction on the occasion. The prince, not six days old, was created prince of Wales, duke of Cornwall, and earl of Chester. Sir Edward Seymour, the queen’s brother, formerly made Lord Beauchamp, was raised to the dignity of earl of Hertford. Sir William Fitz-Williams, high admiral, was created earl of Southampton; Sir William Paulet, Lord St. John; Sir John Russel, Lord Russel.

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The suppression of the rebellion and the birth of a son, as they confirmed Henry’s authority at home, increased his consideration among foreign princes, and made his alliance be courted by all parties. He maintained, however, a neutrality in the wars which were carried on with various success, and without any decisive event, between Charles and Francis; and though inclined more to favor the latter, he determined not to incur, without necessity, either hazard or expense on his account. A truce concluded about this time between these potentates, and afterwards prolonged for ten years, freed him from all anxiety on account of his ally, and reestablished the tranquillity of Europe.

Henry continued desirous of cementing a union with the German Protestants; and for that purpose he sent Christopher Mount to a congress which they held at Brunswick; but that minister made no great progress in his negotiation. The princes wished to know what were the articles in their confession which Henry disliked; and they sent new ambassadors to him, who had orders both to negotiate and to dispute. They endeavored to convince the king, that he was guilty of a mistake in administering the eucharist in one kind only, in allowing private masses, and in requiring the celibacy of the clergy. [1]

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* Collier, vol. ii. , from the Cott. Lib. Cleopatra, E. 5, fol 173.

Henry would by no means acknowledge any error in these particulars; and was displeased that they should pretend to prescribe rules to so great a monarch and theologian. He found arguments and syllogisms enough to defend his cause; and he dismissed the ambassadors without coming to any conclusion. Jealous, also, lest his own subjects should become such theologians as to question his tenets, he used great precaution in publishing that translation of the Scripture which was finished this year. He would only allow a copy of it to be deposited in some parish churches, where it was fixed by a chain: and he took care to inform the people by proclamation, “that this indulgence was not the effect of his duty, but of his goodness and his liberality to them: who therefore should use it moderately, for the increase of virtue, not of strife: and he ordered that no man should read the Bible aloud, so as to disturb the priest while he sang mass, nor presume to expound doubtful places without advice from the learned.” In this measure, as in the rest, he still halted half way between the Catholics and the Protestants.

There was only one particular in which Henry was quite decisive; because he was there impelled by his avarice, or, more properly-speaking, his rapacity, the consequence of his profusion: this measure was the entire destruction of the monasteries. The present opportunity seemed favorable for that great enterprise, while the suppression of the late rebellion fortified and increased the royal authority; and as some of the abbots were suspected of having encouraged the insurrection, and of corresponding with the rebels, the king’s resentment was further incited by that motive. Anew visitation was appointed of all the monasteries in England; and a pretence only being wanted for their suppression, it was easy for a prince, possessed of such unlimited power, and seconding the present humor of a great part of the nation, to find or feign one. The abbots and monks knew the danger to which they were exposed; and having learned by the example of the lesser monasteries that nothing could withstand the king’s will, they were most of them induced, in expectation of better treatment, to make a voluntary resignation of their houses. Where promises failed of effect, menaces and even extreme violence were employed; and as several of the abbots, since the breach with Rome, had been named by the court with a view to this event, the king’s intentions were the more easily effected. Some, also, having secretly embraced the doctrine of the reformation, were glad to be freed from their vows; and on the whole, the design was conducted with such success, than in less than two years the king had got possession of all the monastic revenues.

In several places, particularly the county of Oxford, great interest was made to preserve some convents of women, who, as they lived in the most irreproachable manner, justly merited, it was thought, that their houses should be saved from the general destruction. [1]

* Burnet, vol. i. .

There appeared, also, great difference between the case of nuns and that of friars; and the one institution might be laudable, while the other was exposed to much blame. The males of all ranks, if endowed with industry might be of service to the public; and none of them could want employment suited to his station and capacity. But a woman of family who failed of a settlement in the married state, — an accident to which such persons were more liable than women of lower station, — had really no rank which she properly filled; and a convent was a retreat both honorable and agreeable, from the inutility, and often want, which attended her situation. But the king was determined to abolish monasteries of every denomination; and probably thought that these ancient establishments would be the sooner forgotten, if no remains of them of any kind were allowed to subsist in the kingdom.

The better to reconcile the people to this great innovation, stories were propagated of the detestable lives of the friars in many of the convents; and great care was taken to defame those whom the court had determined to ruin. The relics also and other superstitions, which had so long been the object of the people’s veneration, were exposed to their ridicule; and the religious spirit, now less bent on exterior observances and sensible objects, was encouraged in this new direction. It is needless to be prolix in an enumeration of particulars: Protestant historians mention on this occasion, with great triumph, the sacred repositories of convents; the parings of St. Edmond's toes; some of the coals that roasted St. Laurence; the girdle of the Virgin shown in eleven several places; two or three heads of St. Ursula; the felt of St Thomas of Lancaster, an infallible cure for the headache; part of St. Thomas of Canterbury's shirt, much reverenced by big-bellied women; some relics, an excellent preventive against rain; others, a remedy to weeds in corn. But such fooleries, as they are to be found in all ages and nations, and even took place during the most refined periods of antiquity, form no particular or violent reproach to the Catholic religion.

There were also discovered, or said to be discovered, in the monasteries some impostures of a more artificial nature. At Hales, in the county of Glocester, there had been shown, during several ages, the blood of Christ, brought from Jerusalem; and it is easy to imagine the veneration with which such a relic was regarded. A miraculous circumstance also attended this miraculous relic; the sacred blood was not visible to any one in mortal sin, even when set before him; and till he had performed good works sufficient for his absolution, it would not deign to discover itself to him. At the dissolution of the monastery, the whole contrivance was detected. Two of the monks, who were let into the secret, had taken the blood of a duck, which they renewed every week: they put it in a phial, one side of which consisted of thin and transparent crystal, the other of thick and opaque. When any rich pilgrim arrived, they were sure to show him the dark side of the phial, till masses and offerings had expiated his offences and then, finding his money, or patience, or faith, nearly exhausted, they made him happy by turning the phial. [1]

A miraculous crucifix had been kept at Boxley, in Kent, and bore the appellation of the "rood of grace." The lips, and eyes, and head of the image moved on the approach of its votaries. Hilsey, bishop of Rochester, broke the crucifix at St. Paul's Cross, and showed to the whole people the springs and wheels by which it had been secretly moved. A great wooden idol, revered in Wales, called Darvel Gatherin, was also brought to London, and cut in pieces; and by a cruel refinement in vengeance, it was employed as fuel to burn friar Forest, [2] who was punished for denying the supremacy, and for some pretended heresies. A finger of St. Andrew, covered with a thin plate of silver, had been pawned by a convent for a debt of forty pounds; but as the king's commissioners refused to pay the debt, people made themselves merry with the poor creditor on account of his pledge.

* Herbert, , 432. Stowe, .

* * Goodwin’s Annals. Stowe, . Herbert. Baker, .

But of all the instruments of ancient superstition, no one was so zealously destroyed as the shrine of Thomas à Becket, commonly called St. Thomas of Canterbury. This saint owed his canonization to the zealous defence which he had made for clerical privileges; and on that account also the monks had extremely encouraged the devotion of pilgrimages towards his tomb, and numberless were the miracles which they pretended his relics wrought in favor of his devout votaries. They raised his body once a year; and the day on which this ceremony was performed, which was called the day of his translation, was a general holiday: every fiftieth year there was celebrated a jubilee to his honor, which lasted fifteen days: plenary indulgences were then granted to all that visited his tomb; and a hundred thousand pilgrims have been registered at a time in Canterbury. The devotion towards him had quite effaced in that place the adoration of the Deity; nay, even that of the Virgin. At God’s altar, for instance, there were offered in one year three pounds two shillings and sixpence; at the Virgin’s, sixty-three pounds five shillings and sixpence; at St. Thomas’s, eight hundred and thirty-two pounds twelve shillings and threepence. But next year the disproportion was still greater; there was not a penny offered at God’s altar; the Virgin’s gained only four pounds one shilling and eight pence; but St. Thomas had got for his share nine hundred and fifty-four pounds six shillings and threepence. [1] Lewis VII. of France had made a pilgrimage to this miraculous tomb, and had bestowed on the shrine a jewel, esteemed the richest in Christendom. It is evident how obnoxious to Henry a saint of this character must appear, and how contrary to all his projects for degrading the authority of the court of Rome. He not only pillaged the rich shrine dedicated to St. Thomas; he made the saint himself be cited to appear in court, and be tried and condemned as a traitor: he ordered his name to be struck out of the calendar; the office for his festival to be expunged from all breviaries; his bones to be burned, and the ashes to be thrown in the air.

On the whole, the king at different times suppressed six hundred and forty-five monasteries; of which twenty-eight had abbots that enjoyed a seat in parliament. Ninety colleges were demolished in several counties; two thousand three hundred and seventy-four chantries and free chapels; a hundred and ten hospitals. The whole revenue of these establishments amounted to one hundred and sixty-one thousand one hundred pounds. [2] It is worthy of observation, that all the lands and possessions and revenue of England had, a little before this period, been rated at four millions a year; so that the revenues of the monks, even comprehending the lesser monasteries, did not exceed the twentieth part of the national income; a sum vastly inferior to what is commonly apprehended. The lands belonging to the convents were usually let at very low rent; and the farmers, who regarded themselves as a species of proprietors, took always care to renew their leases before they expired. [3]

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Lord Herbert. Camden. Speed.

* * * See note M, at the end of the volume.

Great murmurs were every where excited on account of these violences; and men much questioned whether priors and monks, who were only trustees or tenants for life, could, by any deed, however voluntary, transfer to the king the entire property of their estates, In order to reconcile the people to such mighty innovations, they were told that the king would never thenceforth have occasion to levy taxes, but would be able, from the abbey lands alone, to bear, during war as well as peace, the whole charges of government. [1] While such topics were employed to appease the populace, Henry took an effectual method of interesting the nobility and gentry in the success of his measures: [2] he either made a gift of the revenues of convents to his favorites and courtiers, or sold them at low prices, or exchanged them for other lands on very disadvantageous terms. He was so profuse in these liberalities, that he is said to have given a woman the whole revenue of a convent, as a reward for making a pudding which happened to gratify his palate. [3] He also settled pensions on the abbots and priors, proportioned to their former revenues or to their merits; and gave each monk a yearly pension of eight marks: he erected six new bishoprics, Westminster, Oxford, Peterborough, Bristol, Chester, and Glocester; of which five subsist at this day: and by all these means of expense and dissipation, the profit which the king reaped by the seizure of church lands fell much short of vulgar opinion. As the ruin of convents had been foreseen some years before it happened, the monks had taken care to secrete most of their stock, furniture, and plate; so that the spoils of the great monasteries bore not, in these respects, any proportion to those of the lesser.

* Coke’s 4th Inst. fol. 44.

* * Dugdale’s Warwickshire, .

* * * Fuller.

Besides the lands possessed by the monasteries, the regular clergy enjoyed a considerable part of the benefices of England, and of the tithes annexed to them; and these were also at this time transferred to the crown, and by that means passed into the hands of laymen; an abuse which many zealous churchmen regarded as the most criminal sacrilege. The monks were formerly much at their ease in England, and enjoyed revenues which exceeded the regular and stated expense of the house. We read of the abbey of Chertsey, in Surrey, which possessed seven hundred and forty-four pounds a year, though it contained only fourteen monks: that of Furnese, in the county of Lincoln, was valued at nine hundred and sixty pounds a year, and contained but thirty. [1] In order to dissipate their revenues, and support popularity, the monks lived in a hospitable manner; and besides the poor maintained from their offals, there were many decayed gentlemen who passed their lives in travelling from convent to convent, and were entirely subsisted at the tables of the friars. By this hospitality, as much as by their own inactivity, did the convents prove nurseries of idleness; but the king, not to give offence by too sudden an innovation, bound the new proprietors of abbey lands to support the ancient hospitality. But this engagement was fulfilled in very few places, and for a very short time.

* Burnet, vol. i .

It is easy to imagine the indignation with which the intelligence of all these acts of violence was received at Rome; and how much the ecclesiastics of that court, who had so long kept the world in subjection by high-sounding epithets and by holy execrations, would now vent their rhetoric against the character and conduct of Henry. The pope was at last incited to publish the bull which had been passed against that monarch; and in a public manner he delivered over his soul to the devil, and his dominions to the first invader. Libels were dispersed, in which he was anew compared to the most furious persecutors in antiquity; and the preference was now given to their side: he had declared war with the dead, whom the pagans themselves respected; was at open hostility with Heaven; and had engaged in professed enmity with the whole host of saints and angels. Above all, he was often reproached with his resemblance to the emperor Julian, whom, it was said, he imitated in his apostasy and learning, though he fell short of him in morals. Henry could distinguish in some of these libels the style and animosity of his kinsman Pole; and he was thence incited to vent his rage, by every possible expedient, on that famous cardinal.

Reginald de la Pole, or Reginald Pole, was descended from the royal family, being fourth son of the countess of Salisbury, daughter of the duke of Clarence. He gave in early youth indications of that fine genius and generous disposition by which, during his whole life, he was so much distinguished and Henry, having conceived great friendship for him, intended to raise him to the highest ecclesiastical dignities; and, as a pledge of future favors, he conferred on him the deanery of Exeter, [1] the better to support him in his education. Pole was carrying on his studies in the university of Paris at the time when the king solicited the suffrages of that learned body in favor of his divorce; but though applied to by the English agent, he declined taking any part in the affair. Henry bore this neglect with more temper than was natural to him; and he appeared unwilling, on that account, to renounce all friendship with a person whose virtues and talents, he hoped, would prove useful as well as ornamental to his court and kingdom. He allowed him still to possess his deanery, and gave him permission to finish his studies at Padua: he even paid him some court, in order to bring him into his measures; and wrote to him, while in that university, desiring him to give his opinion freely with regard to the late measures taken in England for abolishing the papal authority. Pole had now contracted an intimate friendship with all persons eminent for dignity or merit in Italy — Sadolet, Bembo, and other revivers of true taste and learning; and he was moved by these connections, as well as by religious zeal, to forget, in some respect, the duty which he owed to Henry, his benefactor and his sovereign. He replied by writing a treatise of the Unity of the Church, in which he inveighed against the king’s supremacy, his divorce, his second marriage; and he even exhorted the emperor to revenge on him the injury done to the imperial family and to the Catholic cause. Henry, though provoked beyond measure at this outrage, dissembled his resentment; and he sent a message to Pole, desiring him to return to England, in order to explain certain passages in his book which he found somewhat obscure and difficult. Pole was on his guard against this insidious invitation; and was determined to remain in Italy, where he was universally beloved.

The pope and emperor thought themselves obliged to provide for a man of Pole’s eminence and dignity, who, in support of their cause, had sacrificed all his pretensions to fortune in his own country. He was created a cardinal; and though he took not higher orders than those of a deacon, he was sent legate into Flanders about the year 1536. [2]

Henry was sensible that Pole’s chief intention in choosing that employment, was to foment the mutinous disposition of the English Catholics; and he therefore remonstrated in so vigorous a manner with the queen of Hungary, regent of the Low Countries, that she dismissed the legate, without allowing him to exercise his functions. The enmity which he bore to Pole was now as open as it was violent; and the cardinal, on his part, kept no further measures in his intrigues against Henry. He is even suspected of having aspired to the crown, by means of a marriage with the lady Mary; and the king was every day more alarmed by informations which he received of the correspondence maintained in England by that fugitive. Courtney, marquis of Exeter, had entered into a conspiracy with him; Sir Edward Nevil, brother to the lord Abergavenny; Sir Nicholas Carew, master of horse, and knight of the garter; Henry de la Pole, Lord Montacute, and Sir Geoffrey de la Pole, brothers to the cardinal. These persons were indicted, and tried, and convicted, before Lord Audley, who presided in the trial as high steward; they were all executed, except Sir Geoffrey de la Pole, who was pardoned; and he owed this grace to his

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* Goodwin’s Annals

* * Herbert.

having first carried to the king secret intelligence of the conspiracy. We know little concerning the justice or iniquity of the sentence pronounced against these men: we only know, that the condemnation of a man who was at that time prosecuted by the court, forms no presumption of his guilt; though, as no historian of credit mentions in the present case any complaint occasioned by these trials, we may presume that sufficient evidence was produced against the marquis of Exeter and his associates. [1]

* Herbert in Kennet, .

CHAPTER XXXII.

HENRY VIII.

1538.

THE rough hand of Henry seemed well adapted for rending asunder those bands by which the ancient superstition had fastened itself on the kingdom; and though, after renouncing the pope’s supremacy and suppressing monasteries, most of the political ends of reformation were already attained, few people expected that he would stop at those innovations. The spirit of opposition, it was thought, would carry him to the utmost extremities against the church of Rome; and lead him to declare war against the whole doctrine and worship, as well as discipline, of that mighty hierarchy. He had formerly appealed from the pope to a general council; but now, when a general council was summoned to meet at Mantua, he previously renounced all submission to it, as summoned by the pope, and lying entirely under subjection to that spiritual usurper. He engaged his clergy to make a declaration to the like purpose; and he had prescribed to them many other deviations from ancient tenets and practices. Cranmner took advantage of every opportunity to carry him on in this course; and while Queen Jane lived, who favored the reformers, he had, by means of her insinuation and address, been successful in his endeavors. After her death, Gardiner, who was returned from his embassy to France, kept the king more in suspense; and by feigning an unlimited submission to his will, was frequently able to guide him to his own purposes. Fox, bishop of Hereford, had supported Cranmer in his schemes for a more thorough reformation; but his death had made way for the promotion of Bonner, who, though he had hitherto seemed a furious enemy to the court of Rome, was determined to sacrifice every thing to present interest, and had joined the confederacy of Gardiner and the partisans of the old religion. Gardiner himself, it was believed, had secretly entered into measures with the pope, and even with the emperor; and in concert with these powers, he endeavored to preserve, as much as possible, the ancient faith and worship.

Henry was so much governed by passion, that nothing could have retarded his animosity and opposition against Rome, but some other passion, which stopped his career, and raised him new objects of animosity. Though he had gradually, since the commencement of his scruples with regard to his first marriage, been changing the tenets of that theological system in which he had been educated, he was no less positive and dogmatical in the few articles which remained to him, than if the whole fabric had continued entire and unshaken. And though he stood alone in his opinion, the flattery of courtiers had so inflamed his tyrannical arrogance, that he thought himself entitled to regulate, by his own particular standard, the religious faith of the whole nation. The point on which he chiefly rested his orthodoxy happened to be the real presence; that very doctrine, in which, among the numberless victories of superstition over common sense, her triumph is the most signal and egregious. All departure from this principle he held to be heretical and detestable; and nothing, he thought, would be more honorable for him, than, while he broke off all connections with the Roman pontiff, to maintain, in this essential article, the purity of the Catholic faith.

There was one Lambert, [1] a schoolmaster in London, who had been questioned and confined for unsound opinions by Archbishop Warham; but upon the death of that prelate, and the change of counsels at court, he had been released. Not terrified with the danger which he had incurred, he still continued to promulgate his tenets; and having heard Dr. Taylor afterwards bishop of Lincoln, defend in a sermon the corporal presence, he could not forbear expressing to Taylor his dissent from that doctrine; and he drew up his objections under ten several heads. Taylor communicated the paper to Dr. Barnes, who happened to be a Lutheran, and who maintained that though the substance of bread and wine remained, in the sacrament, yet the real body and blood of Christ were there also, and were, in a certain mysterious manner, incorporated with the material elements.

* Fox, vol. ii. .

By the present laws and practice Barnes was no less exposed to the stake than Lambert; yet such was the persecuting rage which prevailed, that he determined to bring this man to condign punishment; because of their common departure from the ancient faith, he had dared to go one step farther than himself. He engaged Taylor to accuse Lambert before Cranmer and Latimer, who, whatever their private opinion might be on these points, were obliged to conform themselves to the standard of orthodoxy established by Henry. When Lambert was cited before these prelates, they endeavored to bend him to a recantation; and they were surprised when, instead of complying, he ventured to appeal to the king.

The king, not displeased with an opportunity where he could at once exert his supremacy and display his learning, accepted the appeal; and resolved to mix, in a very unfair manner, the magistrate with the disputant. Public notice was given that he intended to enter the lists with the schoolmaster: scaffolds were erected in Westminster Hall, for the accommodation of the audience: Henry appeared on his throne accompanied with all the ensigns of majesty: the prelates were placed on his right hand: the temporal peers on his left. The judges and most eminent lawyers had a place assigned them behind the bishops; the courtiers of greatest distinction behind the peers; and in the midst of this splendid assembly was produced the unhappy Lambert, who was required to defend his opinions against his royal antagonist. [1]

The bishop of Chichester opened the conference, by saying, that Lambert, being charged with heretical pravity, had appealed from his bishop to the king; as if he expected more favor from this application, and as if the king could ever be induced to protect a heretic: that though his majesty had thrown off the usurpations of the see of Rome; had disincorporated some idle monks, who lived like drones in a beehive, had abolished the idolatrous worship of images; had published the Bible in English, for the instruction of all his subjects; and had made some lesser alterations, which every one must approve of; yet was he determined to maintain the purity of the Catholic faith, and to punish with the utmost severity all departure from it; and that he had taken the present opportunity, before so learned and grave an audience, of convincing Lambert of his errors; but if he still continued obstinate in them, he must expect the most condign punishment, [2]

* Fox, vol. ii.

* * Goodwin’s Annals

After this preamble, which was not very encouraging, the king asked Lambert, with a stern countenance, what his opinion was of Christ’s corporal presence in the sacrament of the altar; and when Lambert began his reply with some compliment to his majesty, he rejected the praise with disdain and indignation. He afterwards pressed Lambert with arguments drawn from Scripture and the schoolmen: the audience applauded the force of his reasoning, and the extent of his erudition: Cranmer seconded his proofs by some new topics. Gardiner entered the lists as a support to Cranmner: Tonstal took up the argument after Gardiner: Stokesley brought fresh aid to Tonstal; six bishops more appeared successively in the field after Stokesley. And the disputation, if it deserve the name, was prolonged for five hours; till Lambert, fatigued, confounded, browbeaten, and abashed, was at last reduced to silence. The king, then returning to the charge, asked him whether he were convinced; and he proposed, as a concluding argument, this interesting question: Whether he were resolved to live or to die? Lambert, who possessed that courage which consists in obstinacy, replied, that he cast himself wholly on his majesty's clemency: the king told him that he would be no protector of heretics; and, therefore, if that were his final answer, he must expect to be committed to the flames Cromwell, as vicegerent, pronounced the sentence against him. [1]

Lambert, whose vanity had probably incited him the more to persevere on account of the greatness of this public appearance, was not daunted by the terrors of the punishment to which he was condemned. His executioners took care to make the sufferings of a man who had personally opposed the king as cruel as possible: he was burned at a slow fire; his legs and thighs were consumed to the stumps; and when there appeared no end of his torments, some of the guards, more merciful than the rest, lifted him on their halberts and threw him into the flames, where he was consumed. While they were employed in this friendly office, he cried aloud several times, "None but Christ, none but Christ!" and these words were in his mouth when he expired. [2]

Some few days before this execution, four Dutch Anabaptists, three men and a woman, had fagots tied to their backs at Paul's Cross, and were burned in that manner. Andaman and a woman of the same sect and country were burned in Smithfield. [3]

* See note N, at the end of the volume.

* * Fox's Acts and Monuments, . Burnet.

* * * Stow, .

1539.

It was the unhappy fate of the English during this age, that, when they labored under any grievance, they had not the satisfaction of expecting redress from parliament on the contrary, they had reason to dread each meeting of that assembly, and were then sure of having tyranny converted into law, and aggravated, perhaps, with some circumstance which the arbitrary prince and his ministers had not hitherto devised, or did not think proper of themselves to carry into execution. This abject servility never appeared more conspicuously than in a new parliament which the king now assembled, and which, if he had been so pleased, might have been the last that ever sat in England. But he found them too useful instruments of dominion ever to entertain thoughts of giving them a total exclusion.

The chancellor opened the parliament by informing the house of lords, that it was his majesty's earnest desire to extirpate from his kingdom all diversity of opinion in matters of religion; and as this undertaking was, he owned, important and arduous, he desired them to choose a committee from among themselves, who might draw up certain articles of faith; and communicate them afterwards to the parliament. The lords named the vicar-general, Cromwell, now created peer, the archbishops of Canterbury and York, the bishops of Durham, Carlisle, Worcester, Bath and Wells, Bangor, and Ely. The house might have seen what a hopeful task they had undertaken: this small committee itself was agitated with such diversity of opinion, that it could come to no conclusion. The duke of Norfolk then moved in the house, that, since there were no hopes of having a report from the committee, the articles of faith intended to be established should be reduced to six; and a new committee be appointed to draw an act with regard to them. As this peer was understood to speak the sense of the king, his motion was immediately complied with; and, after a short prorogation, the bill of the "six articles," or the bloody bill, as the Protestants justly termed it, was introduced, and having passed the two houses, received the royal assent.

In this law the doctrine of the real presence was established, the communion in one kind, the perpetual obligation of vows of chastity, the utility of private masses, the celibacy of the clergy, and the necessity of auricular confession. The denial of the first article, with regard to the real presence, subjected the person to death by fire, and to the same forfeiture as in cases of treason; and admitted not the privilege of abjuring: an unheard-of severity, and unknown to the inquisition itself The denial of any of the other five articles, even though recanted, was punishable by the forfeiture of goods and chattels, and imprisonment during the king's pleasure: an obstinate adherence to error, or a relapse, was adjudged to be felony, and punishable with death. The marriage of priests was subjected to the same punishment. Their commerce with women was, on the first offence, forfeiture and imprisonment; on the second, death. The abstaining from confession, and from receiving the eucharist at the accustomed times, subjected the person to fine, and to imprisonment during the king's pleasure; and if the criminal persevered after conviction, he was punishable by death and forfeiture, as in cases of felony. [1] Commissioners were to be appointed by the king for inquiring into these heresies and irregular practices; and the criminals were to be tried by a jury.

The king in framing this law laid his oppressive hand on both parties; and even the Catholics had reason to complain, that the friars and nuns, though dismissed their convent, should be capriciously restrained to the practice of celibacy: [2] but as the Protestants were chiefly exposed to the severity of the statute, the misery of adversaries, according to the usual maxims of party, was regarded by the adherents to the ancient religion as their own prosperity and triumph. Cranmer had the courage to oppose this bill in the house; and though the king desired him to absent himself, he could not be prevailed on to give this proof of compliance. [3] Henry was accustomed to Cranmer's freedom and sincerity; and being convinced of the general rectitude of his intentions, gave him an unusual indulgence in this particular, and never allowed even a whisper against him. That prelate, however, was now obliged, in obedience to the statute, to dismiss his wife, the niece of Osiander, a famous divine of Nuremburg, [4] and Henry, satisfied with this proof of submission, showed him his former countenance and favor. Latimer and Shaxton threw up their bishoprics on account of the law, and were committed to prison.

* 31 Henry VIII. c. 14. Herbert in Kenuet, .

* * See note O, at the 3 end of the volume.

* * * Burnet, vol. i. , 270. Fox, vol. ii. .

* * * * Herbert in Kennet, .

The parliament, having thus resigned all their religious liberties, proceeded to an entire surrender of their civil; and without scruple or deliberation they made, by one act, a total subversion of the English constitution. They gave to the king’s proclamation the same force as to a statute enacted by parliament; and to render the matter worse, if possible, they framed this law, as if it were only declaratory, and were intended to explain the natural extent of royal authority. The preamble contains, that the king had formerly set forth several proclamations which froward persons had wilfully contemned, not considering what a king, by his royal power, may do; that this license might encourage offenders not only to disobey the laws of Almighty God, but also to dishonor the king’s most royal majesty, “who may full ill bear it;” that sudden emergencies often occur, which require speedy remedies, and cannot await the slow assembling and deliberations of parliament; and that, though the king was empowered by his authority, derived from God, to consult the public good on these occasions, yet the opposition of refractory subjects might push him to extremity and violence: for these reasons the parliament, that they might remove all occasion of doubt, ascertained by a statute this prerogative of the crown and enabled his majesty, with the advice of his council, to set forth proclamations enjoining obedience under whatever pains and penalties he should think proper; and these proclamations were to have the force of perpetual laws. [1]

* 31 Henry VIII. c. 8.

What proves either a stupid or a wilful blindness in the parliament, is, that they pretended, even after this statute, to maintain some limitations in the government; and they enacted, that no proclamation should deprive any person of his lawful possessions, liberties, inheritances, privileges, franchises; nor yet infringe any common law or laudable custom of the realm. They did not consider, that no penalty could be inflicted on the disobeying of proclamations, without invading some liberty or property of the subject; and that the power of enacting new laws, joined to the dispensing power then exercised by the crown, amounted to a full legislative authority. It is true, the kings of England had always been accustomed from their own authority to issue proclamations, and to exact obedience to them; and this prerogative was, no doubt, a strong symptom of absolute government: but still there was a difference between a power which was exercised on a particular emergence, and which must be justified by the present expedience or necessity, and an authority conferred by a positive statute, which could no longer admit of control or limitation.

Could any act be more opposite to the spirit of liberty than this law, it would have been another of the same parliament. They passed an act of attainder, not only against the marquis of Exeter, the lords Montacute, Darcy, Hussey, and others, who had been legally tried and condemned, but also against some persons of the highest quality, who had never been accused, or examined, or convicted. The violent hatred which Henry bore to Cardinal Pole had extended itself to all his friends and relations; and his mother in particular, the countess of Salisbury, had on that account become extremely obnoxious to him. She was also accused of having employed her authority with her tenants, to hinder them from reading the new translation of the Bible; of having procured bulls from Rome, which, it is said, had been seen at Coudray, her country seat; and of having kept a correspondence with her son, the cardinal; but Henry found, either that these offences could not be proved, or that they would not by law be subjected to such severe punishments as he desired to inflict upon her. He resolved, therefore, to proceed in a more summary and more tyrannical manner; and for that purpose he sent Cromwell, who was but too obsequious to his will, to ask the judges, whether the parliament could attaint a person who was forthcoming, without giving him any trial, or citing him to appear before them? [1] The judges replied, that it was a dangerous question; and that the high court of parliament ought to give the example to inferior courts, of proceeding according to justice; no inferior court could act in that arbitrary manner, and they thought that the parliament never would. Being pressed to give a more explicit answer, they replied, that if a person were attainted in that manner, the attainder could never afterwards be brought in question, but must remain good in law. Henry learned by this decision, that such a method of proceeding, though directly contrary to all the principles of equity, was yet practicable; and this being all he was anxious to know, he resolved to employ it against the countess of Salisbury.

* Coke’s 4th Inst. , 38.

Cromwell showed to the house of peers a banner, on which were embroidered the five wounds of Christ, the symbol chosen by the northern rebels; and this banner he affirmed, was found in the countess’s house. [1] No other proof seems to have been produced in order to ascertain her guilt: the parliament, without further inquiry, passed a bill of attainder against her; and they involved in the same bill, without any better proof, as far as appears, Gertrude marchioness of Exeter, Sir Adrian Fortescue, and Sir Thomas Dingley. These two gentlemen were executed; the marchioness was pardoned and survived the king; the countess received a reprieve.

The only beneficial act passed this session, was that by which the parliament confirmed the surrender of the monasteries; yet even this act contains much falsehood, much tyranny, and, were it not that all private rights must submit to public interest, much injustice and iniquity. The scheme of engaging the abbots to surrender their monasteries had been conducted, as may easily be imagined, with many invidious circumstances: arts of all kinds had been employed; every motive that could work on the frailty of human nature had been set before them; and it was with great difficulty that these dignified conventuals were brought to make a concession, which most of them regarded as destructive of their interests, as well as sacrilegious and criminal in itself. [2] Three abbots had shown more constancy than the rest, the abbots of Colchester, Reading, and Glastenbury; and in order to punish them for their opposition, and make them an example to others, means had been found to convict them of treason, they had perished by the hands of the executioner, and the revenue of the convents had been forfeited. [3] Besides, though none of these violences had taken place, the king knew that a surrender made by men who were only tenants for life, would not bear examination; and he was therefore resolved to make all sure by his usual expedient, an act of parliament. In the preamble to this act, the parliament asserts, that all the surrenders made by the abbots had been “without constraint, of their own accord, and according to due course of common law.” And in consequence, the two houses confirm the surrenders, and secure the property of the abbey lands to the king and his successors forever. [4] It is remarkable, that all the mitred abbots still sat in the house of peers, and that none of them made any protests against this injurious statute.

* Rymer, vol. xiv. .

* * Collier, vol. ii. et see

* * * 31 Henry VIII. c. 10.

* * * * 31 Henry VIII. c. 13.

In this session, the rank of all the great officers of state was fixed: Cromwell, as vicegerent, had the precedency assigned him above all of them. It was thought singular, that a blacksmith’s son, for he was no other, should have place next the royal family; and that a man possessed of no manner of literature should be set at the head of the church.

As soon as the act of the six articles had passed, the Catholics were extremely vigilant in informing against offenders; and no less than five hundred persons were in a little time thrown into prison. But Cromwell, who had not had interest enough to prevent that act, was able for the present to elude its execution. Seconded by the duke of Suffolk and Chancellor Audley, as well as by Cranmer, he remonstrated against the cruelty of punishing so many delinquents; and he obtained permission to set them at liberty. The uncertainty of the king’s humor gave each party an opportunity of triumphing in its turn. No sooner had Henry passed this law, which seemed to inflict so deep a wound on the reformers, than he granted a general permission for every one to have the new translation of the Bible in his family; a concession regarded by that party as an important victory.

But as Henry was observed to be much governed by his wives while he retained his fondness for them, the final prevalence of either party seemed much to depend on the choice of the future queen. Immediately after the death of Jane Seymour, the most beloved of all his wives, he began to think of a new marriage. He first cast his eye towards the duchess dowager of

Milan, niece to the emperor; and he made proposals for that alliance. But meeting with difficulties, he was carried by his friendship for Francis rather to think of a French princess. He demanded the duchess dowager of Longueville, daughter of the duke of Guise, a prince of the house of Lorraine; but Francis told him, that the lady was already betrothed to the king of Scotland. The king, however, would not take a refusal: he had set his heart extremely on the match: the information which he had received of the duchess's accomplishments and beauty, had prepossessed him in her favor; and having privately sent over Meautys to examine her person, and get certain intelligence of her conduct, the accounts which that agent brought him served further to inflame his desires. He learned that she was big made; and he thought her on that account the more proper match for him who was now become somewhat corpulent. The pleasure, too, of mortifying his nephew, whom he did not love, was a further incitement to his prosecution of this match; and he insisted that Francis should give him the preference to the king of Scots. But Francis, though sensible that the alliance of England was of much greater importance to his interests, would not affront his friend and ally; and to prevent further solicitation, he immediately sent the princess to Scotland. Not to shock, however, Henry's humor, Francis made him an offer of Mary of Bourbon, daughter of the duke of Vendôme; but as the king was informed that James had formerly rejected this princess he would not hear any further of such a proposal. The French monarch then offered him the choice of the two younger sisters of the queen of Scots; and he assured him, that they were nowise inferior either in merit or size to their elder sister, and that one of them was even superior in beauty. The king was as scrupulous with regard to the person of his wives, as if his heart had been really susceptible of a delicate passion; and he was unwilling to trust any relations, or even pictures, with regard to this important particular. He proposed to Francis, that they should have a conference at Calais on pretence of business; and that this monarch should bring along with him the two princesses of Guise, together with the finest ladies of quality in France, that he might make a choice among them. But the gallant spirit of Francis was shocked with the proposal: he was impressed with too much regard, he said, for the fair sex, to carry ladies of the first quality like geldings to a market, there to be chosen or rejected by the humor of the purchaser. [1] Henry would hearken to none of these niceties, but still insisted on his proposal; which, however, notwithstanding Francis's earnest desire of obliging him, was finally rejected.

* Le Grand, vol. iii.

The king then began to turn his thoughts towards a German alliance; and as the princes of the Smalcaldic league were extremely disgusted with the emperor on account of his persecuting their religion, he hoped, by matching himself into one of their families, to renew a connection which he regarded as so advantageous to him. Cromwell joyfully seconded this intention; and proposed to him Anne of Cleves, whose father, the duke of that name, had great interest among the Lutheran princes, and whose sister, Sibylla, was married to the elector of Saxony, the head of the Protestant league. A flattering picture of the princess, by Hans Holben, determined Henry to apply to her father; and after some negotiation, the marriage, notwithstanding the opposition of the elector of Saxony was at last concluded; and Anne was sent over to England. The king, impatient to be satisfied with regard to the person of his bride, came privately to Rochester and got a sight of her. He found her big, indeed, and tall as he could wish; but utterly destitute both of beauty and grace; very unlike the pictures and representations which he had received: he swore she was a great Flanders mare; and declared that he never could possibly bear her any affection. The matter was worse when he found that she could speak no language but Dutch, of which he was entirely ignorant; and that the charms of her conversation were not likely to compensate for the homeliness of her person. He returned to Greenwich very melancholy; and he much lamented his hard fate to Cromwell, as well as to Lord Russel, Sir Anthony Brown, and Sir Anthony Denny. This last gentleman, in order to give him comfort, told him, that his misfortune was common to him with all kings, who could not, like private persons, choose for themselves, but must receive their wives from the judgment and fancy of others.

It was the subject of debate among the king's counsellors, whether the marriage could not yet be dissolved, and the princess be sent back to her own country. Henry's situation seemed at that time very critical. After the ten years' truce concluded between the emperor and the king of France, a good understanding was thought to have taken place between these rival monarchs; and such marks of union appeared, as gave great jealousy to the court of England. The emperor, who knew the generous nature of Francis, even put a confidence in him which is rare to that degree among great princes. An insurrection had been raised in the Low Countries by the inhabitants of Ghent, and seemed to threaten the most dangerous consequences. Charles, who resided at that time in Spain, resolved to go in person to Flanders, in order to appease those disorders; but he found great difficulties in choosing the manner of his passing thither. The road by Italy and Germany was tedious: the voyage through the channel dangerous, by reason of the English naval power: he asked Francis's permission to pass through his dominions; and he entrusted himself into the hands of a rival, whom he had so mortally offended. The French monarch received him at Paris with great magnificence and courtesy; and though prompted both by revenge and interest, as well as by the advice of his mistress and favorites, to make advantage of the present opportunity, he conducted the emperor safely out of his dominions and would not so much as speak to him of business during his abode in France, lest his demands should bear the air of violence upon his royal guest.

Henry, who was informed of all these particulars, believed that an entire and cordial union had taken place between these princes; and that their religious zeal might prompt them to fall with combined arms upon England.[1] An alliance with the German princes seemed now more than ever requisite for his interest and safety; and he knew that if he sent back the princess of Cleves, such an affront would be highly resented by her friends and family.

* Stowe, .

1540.

He was therefore resolved, notwithstanding his aversion to her, to complete the marriage; and he told Cromwell, that, since matters had gone so far, he must put his neck into the yoke. Cromwell, who knew how much his own interests were concerned in this affair, was very anxious to learn from the king, next morning after the marriage, whether he now liked his spouse any better. The king told him, that he hated her worse than ever; and that her person was more disgusting on a near approach; he was resolved never to meddle with her: and even suspected her not to be a true maid: a point about which he entertained an extreme delicacy. He continued, however, to be civil to Anne; he even seemed to repose his usual confidence in Cromwell; but though he exerted this command over himself, a discontent lay lurking in his breast, and was ready to burst out on the first opportunity.

A session of parliament was held; and none of the abbots were now allowed a place in the house of peers. The king, by the mouth of the chancellor, complained to the parliament of the great diversity of religions which still prevailed among his subjects; a grievance, he affirmed, which ought the less to be endured, because the Scriptures were now published in English, and ought universally to be the standard of belief to all mankind. But he had appointed, he said, some bishops and divines to draw up a list of tenets to which his people were to assent; and he was determined, that Christ, the doctrine of Christ, and the truth, should have the victory. The king seems to have expected more effect in ascertaining truth from this new book of his doctors, than had ensued from the publication of the Scriptures. Cromwell, as vicar-general, made also in the king's name a speech to the upper house; and the peers, in return, bestowed great flattery on him, and in particular said, that he was worthy, by his desert, to be vicar-general of the universe. That minister seemed to be no less in his master's good graces: he received, soon after the sitting of the parliament, the title of earl of Essex, and was installed knight of the garter.

There remained only one religious order in England; the knights of St. John of Jerusalem, or the knights of Malta, as they are commonly called. This order, partly ecclesiastical, partly military, had by their valor done great service to Christendom; and had very much retarded, at Jerusalem, Rhodes, and Malta, the rapid progress of the barbarians. During the general surrender of the religious houses in England, they had exerted their spirit, and had obstinately refused to yield up their revenues to the king; and Henry, who would endure no society that professed obedience to the pope, was obliged to have recourse to parliament for the dissolution of this order. Their revenues were large; and formed an addition nowise contemptible to the many acquisitions which the king had already made. But he had very ill husbanded the great revenue acquired by the plunder of the church: his profuse generosity dissipated faster than his rapacity could supply; and the parliament was surprised this session to find a demand made upon them of four tenths, and a subsidy of one shilling in the pound during two years: so ill were the public expectations answered, that the crown was never more to require any supply from the people. The commons, though lavish of their liberty, and of the blood of their fellow-subjects, were extremely frugal of their money; and it was not without difficulty so small a grant could be obtained by this absolute and dreaded monarch. The convocation gave the king four shillings in the pound to be levied in two years. The pretext for these grants was, the great expense which Henry had undergone for the defence of the realm, in building forts along the seacoast, and in equipping a navy. As he had at present no ally on the continent in whom he reposed much confidence, he relied only on his domestic strength, and was on that account obliged to be more expensive in his preparations against the danger of an invasion.

The king's favor to Cromwell and his acquiescence in the marriage with Anne of Cleves, were both of them deceitful appearances: his aversion to the queen secretly increased every day; and having at last broken all restraint, it prompted him at once to seek the dissolution of a marriage so odious to him, and to involve his minister in ruin, who had been the innocent author of it. The fall of Cromwell was hastened by other causes. All the nobility hated a man who, being of such low extraction, had not only mounted above them by his station of vicar-general, but had engrossed many of the other considerable offices of the crown: besides enjoying that commission, which gave him a high and almost absolute authority over the clergy, and even over the laity, he was privy seal, chamberlain, and master of the wards: he had also obtained the order of the garter, a dignity which had ever been conferred only on men of illustrious families, and which seemed to be profaned by its being communicated to so mean a person. The people were averse to him, as the supposed author of the violence on the monasteries; establishments which were still revered and beloved by the commonalty. The Catholics regarded him as the concealed enemy of their religion: the Protestants, observing his exterior concurrence with all the persecutions exercised against them, were inclined to bear him as little favor; and reproached him with the timidity, if not treachery, of his conduct. And the king, who found that great clamors had on all hands arisen against the administration, was not displeased to throw on Cromwell the load of public hatred; and he hoped, by making so easy a sacrifice, to regain the affections of his subjects.

But there was another cause which suddenly set all these motives in action, and brought about an unexpected revolution in the ministry. The king had fixed his affection on Catharine Howard, niece to the duke of

Norfolk; and being determined to gratify this new passion, he could find no expedient, but by procuring a divorce from his present consort, to raise Catharine to his bed and throne. The duke, who had long been engaged in enmity with Cromwell, made the same use of her insinuations to ruin this minister, that he had formerly done of Anne Boleyn's against Wolsey; and when all engines were prepared, he obtained a commission from the king to arrest Cromwell at the council table, on an accusation of high treason, and to commit him to the Tower. Immediately after a bill of attainder was framed against him; and the house of peers thought proper, without trial, examination, or evidence, to condemn to death a man, whom a few days before they had declared worthy to be vicar-general of the universe. The house of commons passed the bill, though not without some opposition. Cromwell was accused of heresy and treason: but the proofs of his treasonable practices are utterly improbable, and even absolutely ridiculous. [1] The only circumstance of his conduct by which he seems to have merited this fate, was his being the instrument of the king's tyranny in conducting like iniquitous bills, in the preceding session, against the countess of Salisbury and others.

Cromwell endeavored to soften the king by the most humble supplications; but all to no purpose: it was not the practice of that prince to ruin his ministers and favorites by halves; and though the unhappy prisoner once wrote to him in so moving a strain as even to draw tears from his eyes, he hardened himself against all movements of pity, and refused his pardon. The conclusion of Cromwell's letter ran in these words: "I, a most woful prisoner, am ready to submit to death when it shall please God and your majesty; and yet the frail flesh incites me to call to your grace for mercy and pardon of mine offences. Written at the Tower, with the heavy heart and trembling hand of your highness's most miserable prisoner and poor slave, Thomas Cromwell." And a little below, "Most gracious prince, I cry for mercy, mercy, mercy." [2]

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * Burnet, vol. i. , 282.

When brought to the place of execution, he avoided all earnest protestations of his innocence, and all complaints against the sentence pronounced upon him. He knew that Henry would resent on his son those symptoms of opposition to his will, and that his death alone would not terminate that monarch’s vengeance. He was a man of prudence, industry, and abilities; worthy of a better master and of a better fate. Though raised to the summit of power from a low origin, he betrayed no insolence or contempt towards his inferiors; and was careful to remember all the obligations which, during his more humble fortune, he had owed to any one. He had served as a private sentinel in the Italian wars; when he received some good offices from a Lucquese merchant, who had entirely forgotten his person, as well as the service which he had rendered him. Cromwell, in his grandeur, happened at London to cast his eye on his benefactor, now reduced to poverty by misfortunes. He immediately sent for him, reminded him of their ancient friendship, and by his grateful assistance reinstated him in his former prosperity and opulence. [1]

The measures for divorcing Henry from Anne of Cleves were carried on at the same time with the bill of attainder against Cromwell. The house of peers, in conjunction with the commons, applied to the king by petition, desiring that he would allow his marriage to be examined; and orders were immediately given to lay the matter before the convocation. Anne had formerly been contracted by her father to the duke of Lorraine, but she, as well as the duke, were at that time under age, and the contract had been afterwards annulled by consent of both parties.

The king, however, pleaded this precontract as a ground of divorce; and he added two reasons more, which may seem a little extraordinary; that, when he espoused Anne he had not inwardly given his consent, and that he had not thought proper to consummate the marriage. The convocation was satisfied with these reasons, and solemnly annulled the marriage between the king and queen: the parliament ratified the decision of the clergy; [2] and the sentence was soon after notified to the princess.

Anne was blest with a happy insensibility of temper, ever in the points which the most nearly affect her sex; and the king’s aversion towards her, as well as his prosecution of the divorce, had never given her the least uneasiness. She willingly hearkened to terms of accommodation with him; and when he offered to adopt her as his sister, to give her place next the queen and his own daughter, and to make a settlement of three thousand pounds a year upon her; she accepted of the conditions, and gave her consent to the divorce. [3] She even wrote to her brother, (for her father was now dead,) that she had been very well used in England, and desired him to live on good terms with the king. The only instance of pride which she betrayed was, that she refused to return to her own country after the affront which she had received; and she lived and died in England.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * See note P, at the end of the volume.

* * * Herbert, 459.

Notwithstanding Anne’s moderation, this incident produced a great coldness between the king and the German princes; but as the situation of Europe was now much altered, Henry was the more indifferent about their resentment. The close intimacy which had taken place between Francis and Charles had subsisted during a very short time: the dissimilarity of their characters soon renewed, with greater violence than ever, their former jealousy and hatred. While Charles remained at Paris, Francis had been imprudently engaged, by his open temper, and by that satisfaction which a noble mind naturally feels in performing generous actions, to make in confidence some dangerous discoveries to that interested monarch; and having now lost all suspicion of his rival, he hoped that the emperor and he, supporting each other, might neglect every other alliance. He not only communicated to his guest the state of his negotiations with Sultan Solyman and the Venetians; he also laid open the solicitations which he had received from the court of England to enter into a confederacy against him. [1] Charles had no sooner reached his own dominions, than he showed himself unworthy of the friendly reception which he had met with. He absolutely refused to fulfil his promise, and put the duke of Orleans in possession of the Milanese; he informed Solyman and the senate of Venice of the treatment which they had received from their ally; and he took care that Henry should not be ignorant how readily Francis had abandoned his ancient friend, to whom he owed such important obligations, and had sacrificed him to a new confederate: he even poisoned and misrepresented many things which the unsuspecting heart of the French monarch had disclosed to him. Had Henry possessed true judgment and generosity, this incident alone had been sufficient to guide him in the choice of his ally. But his domineering pride carried him immediately to renounce the friendship of Francis, who had so unexpectedly given the preference to the emperor; and as Charles invited him to a renewal of ancient amity, he willingly accepted of the offer; and thinking himself secure in this alliance, he neglected the friendship both of France and of the German princes.

* Père Daniel. Du Tillet.

The new turn which Henry had taken with regard to foreign affairs was extremely agreeable to his Catholic subjects; and as it had perhaps contributed, among other reasons, to the ruin of Cromwell, it made them entertain hopes of a final prevalence over their antagonists. The marriage of the king with Catharine Howard, which followed soon after his divorce from Anne of Cleves, was also regarded as a favorable incident to their party; and the subsequent events corresponded to their expectations. The king's councils being now directed by Norfolk and Gardiner, a furious persecution commenced against the Protestants; and the law of the six articles was executed with rigor. Dr. Barnes, who had been the cause of Lambert's execution, felt, in his turn, the severity of the persecuting spirit; and, by a bill which passed in parliament, he was, without trial, condemned to the flames, together with Jerome and Gerrard. He discussed theological questions even at the stake; and as the dispute between him and the sheriff turned upon the invocation of saints, he said, that he doubted whether the saints could pray for us; but if they could, he hoped in half an hour to be praying for the sheriff and all the spectators. He next entreated the sheriff to carry to the king his dying request, which he fondly imagined would have authority with that monarch who had sent him to the stake. The purport of his request was, that Henry, besides repressing superstitious ceremonies, should be extremely vigilant in preventing fornication and common swearing. [1]

While Henry was exerting this violence against the Protestants, he spared not the Catholics who denied his supremacy; and a foreigner, at that time in England, had reason to say, that those who were against the pope were burned, and those who were for him were hanged. [2] The king even displayed in an ostentatious manner this tyrannical impartiality, which reduced both parties to subjection, and infused terror into every breast. Barnes, Gerrard, and Jerome had been carried to the place of execution on three hurdles; and along with them there was placed on each hurdle a

Catholic, who was also executed for his religion. These Catholics were Abel, Fetherstone, and Powel, who declared, that the most grievous part of their punishment was the being coupled to such heretical miscreants as suffered with them. [3]

* Burnet, vol. i. . Fox.

* * Fox, vol. ii, .

* * * Saunders, de Schism. Angl.

Though the spirit of the English seemed to be totally sunk under the despotic power of Henry, there appeared some symptoms of discontent. An inconsiderable rebellion broke out in Yorkshire, headed by Sir John Nevil; but it was soon suppressed, and Nevil, with other ringleaders, was executed.

The rebels were supposed to have been instigated by the intrigues of Cardinal Pole; and the king was instantly determined to make the countess of Salisbury, who already lay under sentence of death, suffer for her son's offences. He ordered her to be carried to execution; and this venerable matron maintained still, in these distressful circumstances, the spirit of that long race of monarchs from whom she was descended. [1] She refused to lay her head on the block, or submit to a sentence where she had received no trial. She told the executioner, that if he would have her head, he must win it the best way he could: and thus, shaking her venerable gray locks, she ran about the scaffold: and the executioner followed with his axe, aiming many fruitless blows at her neck, before he was able to give the fatal stroke. Thus perished the last of the line of Plantagenet, which, with great glory, but still greater crimes and misfortunes, had governed England for the space of three hundred years. Lord Leonard Grey, a man who had formerly rendered service to the crown, was also beheaded for treason, soon after the countess of Salisbury. We know little concerning the grounds of his prosecution.

* Hertert, .

1541.

The insurrection in the north engaged Henry to make a progress thither, in order to quiet the minds of his people, to reconcile them to his government, and to abolish the ancient superstitions, to which those parts were much addicted. He had also another motive for this journey: he purposed to have a conference at York with his nephew the king of Scotland, and, if possible, to cement a close and indissoluble union with that kingdom.

The same spirit of religious innovation which had seized other parts of Europe had made its way into Scotland, and had begun, before this period, to excite the same jealousies fears, and persecutions. About the year 1527, Patrick Hamilton, a young man of a noble family, having been created abbot of Fene, was sent abroad for his education, but had fallen into company with some reformers; and he returned into his own country very ill disposed towards that church, on which his birth and his merit entitled him to attain the highest dignities, The fervor of youth and his zeal for novelty made it impossible for him to conceal his sentiments and Campbell, prior of the Dominicans, who, under color of friendship, and a sympathy in opinion, had insinuated himself into his confidence, accused him before Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews. Hamilton was invited to St. Andrews, in order to maintain with some of the clergy a dispute concerning the controverted points; and after much reasoning with regard to justification, free will, original sin, and other topics of that nature, the conference ended with their condemning Hamilton to be burned for his errors. The young man, who had been deaf to the insinuations of ambition, was less likely to be shaken with the fears of death; while he proposed to himself, both the glory of bearing testimony to the truth, and the immediate reward attending his martyrdom. The people, who compassionated his youth, his virtue, and his noble birth, were much moved at the constancy of his end; and an incident which soon followed still more confirmed them in their favorable sentiments towards him. He had cited Campbell, who still insulted him at the stake, to answer before the judgment seat of Christ; and as that persecutor, either astonished with these events, or overcome with remorse, or perhaps seized casually with a distemper, soon after lost his senses, and fell into a fever, of which he died; the people regarded Hamilton as a prophet as well as a martyr. [1]

Among the disciples converted by Hamilton, was one friar Forrest, who became a zealous preacher; and who, though he did not openly discover his sentiments, was suspected to lean towards the new opinions. His diocesan, the bishop of Dunkel, enjoined him, when he met with a good epistle or good gospel, which favored the liberties of holy church, to preach on it, and let the rest alone. Forrest replied, that he had read both Old and New Testament, and had not found an ill epistle or ill gospel in any part of them. The extreme attachment to the Scriptures was regarded, in those days, as a sure characteristic of heresy; and Forrest was soon after brought to trial, and condemned to the flames. While the priests were deliberating on the place of his execution, a bystander advised them to burn him in a cellar; for that the smoke of Mr. Patrick Hamilton had infected all those on whom it blew.[2]

* Spotswood's Hist. of the Church of Scotland, .

* * Spotswood's Hist. of the Church of Scotland, .

The clergy were at that time reduced to great difficulties, not only in Scotland, but all over Europe. As the reformers aimed at a total subversion of ancient establishments, which they represented as idolatrous, impious, detestable; the priests, who found both their honors and properties at stake, thought that they had a right to resist, by every expedient, these dangerous invaders, and that the same simple principles of equity which justified a man in killing a pirate or a robber, would acquit them for the execution of such heretics. A toleration, though it is never acceptable to ecclesiastics, might, they said, be admitted in other cases; but seemed an absurdity where fundamentals were shaken, and where the possessions and even the existence of the established clergy were brought in danger. But though the church was thus carried by policy, as well as inclination, to kindle the fires of persecution, they found the success of this remedy very precarious; and observed, that the enthusiastic zeal of the reformers, inflamed by punishment, was apt to prove contagious on the compassionate minds of the spectators. The new doctrine, amidst all the dangers to which it was exposed, secretly spread itself every where; and the minds of men were gradually disposed to a revolution in religion.

But the most dangerous symptom for the clergy in Scotland was, that the nobility, from the example of England, had cast a wishful eye on the church revenues, and hoped, if a reformation took place, to enrich themselves by the plunder of the ecclesiastics. James himself, who was very poor, and was somewhat inclined to magnificence, particularly in building, had been swayed by like motives; and began to threaten the clergy with the same fate that had attended them in the neighboring country. Henry also never ceased exhorting his nephew to imitate his example; and being moved, both by the pride of making proselytes, and the prospect of security, should Scotland embrace a close union with him, he solicited the king of Scots to meet him at York; and he obtained a promise to that purpose.

The ecclesiastics were alarmed at this resolution of James, and they employed every expedient in order to prevent the execution of it. They represented the danger of innovation; the pernicious consequences of aggrandizing the nobility, already too powerful; the hazard of putting himself into the hands of the English, his hereditary enemies; the dependence on them which must ensue upon his losing the friendship of France, and of all foreign powers. To those considerations they added the prospect of immediate interest, by which they found the king to be much governed: they offered him a present gratuity of fifty thousand pounds: they promised him that the church should always be ready to contribute to his supply: and they pointed out to him the confiscation of heretics, as the means of filling his exchequer, and of adding a hundred thousand pounds a year to the crown revenues. [1] The insinuations of his new queen, to whom youth, beauty, and address had given a powerful influence over him, seconded all these reasons; and James was at last engaged, first to delay his journey, then to send excuses to the king of England, who had already come to York in order to be present at the interview. [2]

Henry, vexed with the disappointment, and enraged at the affront, vowed vengeance against his nephew; and he began, by permitting piracies at sea and incursions at land, to put his threats in execution. But he received soon after, in his own family, an affront to which he was much more sensible, and which touched him in a point where he always showed an extreme delicacy. He had thought himself very happy in his new marriage: the

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* Buchanan, lib. xiv. Drummond in Ja. V. Pitscotie, ibid. Knox.

* * Henry had sent some books, richly ornamented, to his nephew, who, as soon as he saw by the titles, that they had a tendency to defend the new doctrines, threw them into the fire, in the presence of the person who brought them;
adding, it was better he should destroy them, than they him.
See Epist. Reginald Pole, part i. .

agreeable person and disposition of Catharine had entirely captivated his affections; and he made no secret of his devoted attachment to her. He had even publicly, in his chapel, returned solemn thanks to Heaven for the felicity which the conjugal state afforded him; and he directed the bishop of Lincoln to compose a form of prayer for that purpose. But the queen's conduct very little merited this tenderness: one Lascelles brought intelligence of her dissolute life to Cranmer; and told him that his sister, formerly a servant in the family of the old duchess of Norfolk, with whom Catharine was educated, had given him a particular account of her licentious manners. Derham and Mannoc, both of them servants to the duchess, had been admitted to her bed; and she had even taken little care to conceal her shame from the other servants of the family. The primate, struck with this intelligence, which it was equally dangerous to conceal or to discover, communicated the matter to the earl of Hertford and to the chancellor. They agreed, that the matter should by no means be buried in silence; and the archbishop himself seemed the most proper person to disclose it to the king. Cranmer, unwilling to speak on so delicate a subject, wrote a narrative of the whole, and conveyed it to Henry, who was infinitely astonished at the intelligence. So confident was he of the fidelity of his consort, that at first he gave no credit to the information; and he said to the privy-seal, to Lord Russel, high admiral, Sir Anthony Brown, and Wriothesley, that he regarded the whole as a falsehood. Cranmer was now in a very perilous situation; and had not full proof been found, certain and inevitable destruction hung over him. The king's impatience, however, and jealousy prompted him to search the matter to the bottom; the privy-seal was ordered to examine Lascelles, who persisted in the information he had given; and still appealed to his sister's testimony. That nobleman next made a journey, under pretence of hunting, and went to Sussex, where the woman at that time resided: he found her both constant in her former intelligence, and particular as to the facts; and the whole bore but too much the face of probability. Mannoc and Derham, who were arrested at the same time, and examined by the chancellor, made the queen's guilt entirely certain by their confession; and discovered other particulars, which redounded still more to her dishonor. Three maids of the family were admitted into her secrets; and some of them had even passed the night in bed with her and her lovers. All the examinations were laid before the king, who was so deeply affected, that he remained a long time speechless, and at last burst into tears. He found to his surprise, that his great skill in distinguishing a true maid, of which he boasted in the case of Anne of Cleves, had failed him in that of his present consort. The queen, being next questioned, denied her guilt; but when informed that a full discovery was made, she confessed that she had been criminal before marriage; and only insisted that she had never been false to the king’s bed. But as there was evidence that one Colepepper had passed the night with her alone since her marriage; and as it appeared that she had taken Derham, her old paramour, into her service, she seemed to deserve little credit in this asseveration; and the king, besides, was not of a humor to make any difference between these degrees of guilt.

1542.

Henry found that he could not by any means so fully or expeditiously satiate his vengeance on all these criminals as by assembling a parliament, the usual instrument of his tyranny. The two houses, having received the queen’s confession, made an address to the king. They entreated him not to be vexed with this untoward accident, to which all men were subject; but to consider the frailty of human nature, and the mutability of human affairs; and from these views to derive a subject of consolation. They desired leave to pass a bill of attainder against the queen and her accomplices; and they begged him to give his assent to this bill, not in person, which would renew his vexation, and might endanger his health, but by commissioners appointed for that purpose. And as there was a law in force making it treason to speak ill of the queen as well as of the king, they craved his royal pardon if any of them should, on the present occasion, have transgressed any part of the statute.

Having obtained a gracious answer to these requests, the parliament proceeded to vote a bill of attainder for treason against the queen, and the viscountess of Rocheford, who had conducted her secret amours; and in this bill Colepepper and Derham were also comprehended. At the same time they passed a bill of attainder for misprision of treason against the old duchess of Norfolk, Catharine’s grandmother; her uncle, Lord William Howard, and his lady, together with the countess of Bridgewater, and nine persons more; because they knew the queen’s vicious course of life before her marriage, and had concealed it. This was an effect of Henry’s usual extravagance, to expect that parents should so far forget the ties of natural affection, and the sentiments of shame and decency, as to reveal to him the most secret disorders of their family. He himself seems to have been sensible of the cruelty of this proceeding; for he pardoned the duchess of Norfolk and most of the others condemned for misprision of treason.

However, to secure himself for the future, as well as his successors, from this fatal accident, he engaged the parliament to pass a law somewhat extraordinary. It was enacted, that any one who knew, or vehemently suspected, any guilt in the queen, might, within twenty days, disclose it to the king or council, without incurring the penalty of any former law against defaming the queen; but prohibiting every one at the same time, from spreading the matter abroad, or even privately whispering it to others. It was also enacted, that if the king married any woman who had been incontinent, taking her for a true maid, she should be guilty of treason, if she did not previously reveal her guilt to him. The people made merry with this singular clause, and said that the king must henceforth look out for a widow; for no reputed maid would ever be persuaded to incur the penalty of the statute. [1] After all these laws were passed, the queen was beheaded on Tower Hill, together with Lady Rocheford. They behaved in a manner suitable to their dissolute life; and as Lady Rocheford was known to be the chief instrument in bringing Anne Boleyn to her end, she died unpitied; and men were further confirmed, by the discovery of this woman’s guilt, in the favorable sentiments which they had entertained of that unfortunate queen.

The king made no demand of any subsidy from this parliament; but he found means of enriching his exchequer from another quarter: he took further steps towards the dissolution of colleges, hospitals, and other foundations of that nature. The courtiers had been practising on the presidents and governors to make a surrender of their revenues to the king, and they had been successful with eight of them. But there was an obstacle to their further progress: it had been provided by the local statutes of most of these foundations, that no president, or any number of fellows, could consent to such a deed without the unanimous vote of all the fellows; and this vote was not easily obtained. All such statutes were annulled by parliament; and the revenues of these houses were now exposed to the rapacity of the king and his favorites. [2] The Church had been so long their prey, that nobody was surprised at any new inroads made upon her. From the regular, Henry now proceeded to make devastations on the secular clergy. He extorted from many of the bishops a surrender of chapter lands;

and by this device he pillaged the sees of Canterbury, York, and London, and enriched his greedy parasites and flatterers with their spoils.

* Burnet, vol. i. .

* * See note Q, at the end of the volume.

The clergy have been commonly so fortunate as to make a concern for their temporal interests go hand in hand with a jealousy for orthodoxy; and both these passions be regarded by the people, ignorant and superstitious, as proofs of zeal for religion: but the violent and headstrong character of Henry now disjoined these objects. His rapacity was gratified by plundering the church, his bigotry and arrogance by persecuting heretics. Though he engaged the parliament to mitigate the penalties of the six articles, so far as regards the marriage of priests, which was now only subjected to a forfeiture of goods, chattels, and lands during life, he was still equally bent on maintaining a rigid purity in speculative principles. He had appointed a commission, consisting of the two archbishops and several bishops of both provinces, together with a considerable number of doctors of divinity; and by virtue of his ecclesiastical supremacy, he had given them in charge to choose a religion for his people. Before the commissioners had made any progress in this arduous undertaking, the parliament, in 1541, had passed a law by which they ratified all the tenets which these divines should thereafter establish with the king's consent: and they were not ashamed of thus expressly declaring that they took their religion upon trust, and had no other rule, in spiritual as well as temporal concerns, than the arbitrary will of their master. There is only one clause of the statute which may seem at first sight to savor somewhat of the spirit of liberty: it was enacted, that the ecclesiastical commissioners should establish nothing repugnant to the laws and statutes of the realm. But in reality this proviso was inserted by the king to serve his own purposes. By introducing a confusion and contradiction into the laws, he became more master of every one's life and property. And as the ancient independence of the church still gave him jealousy, he was well pleased, undercover of such a clause, to introduce appeals from the spiritual to the civil courts. It was for a like reason that he would never promulgate a body of canon law; and he encouraged the judges on all occasions to interpose in ecclesiastical causes, wherever they thought the law of royal prerogative concerned; a happy innovation, though at first invented for arbitrary purposes.

The king, armed by the authority of parliament, or rather by their acknowledgment of that spiritual supremacy which he believed inherent in him, employed his commissioners to select a system of tenets for the assent and belief of the nation. A small volume was soon after published, called the Institution of a Christian Man, which was received by the convocation, and voted to be the standard of orthodoxy. All the delicate points of justification, faith, free will, good works, and grace, are there defined, with a leaning towards the opinion of the reformers: the sacraments, which a few years before were only allowed to be three, were now increased to the number of seven, conformable to the sentiments of the Catholics. The king's caprice is discernible throughout the whole; and the book is in reality to be regarded as his composition. For Henry while he made his opinion a rule for the nation, would tie his own hands by no canon or authority, not even by any which he himself had formerly established.

The people had occasion soon after to see a further instance of the king's inconstancy. He was not long satisfied with his Institution of a Christian Man: he ordered a new book to be composed, called the Erudition of a Christian Man; and without asking the assent of the convocation, he published, by his own authority and that of the parliament, this new model of orthodoxy. It differs from the Institution; [1] but the king was no less positive in his new creed than he had been in the old; and he required the belief of the nation to veer about at his signal. In both these compositions, he was particularly careful to inculcate the doctrine of passive obedience; and he was equally careful to retain the nation in the practice.

While the king was spreading his own books among the people, he seems to have been extremely perplexed, as were also the clergy, what course to take with the Scriptures. A review had been made by the synod of the new translation of the Bible; and Gardiner had proposed that, instead of employing English expressions throughout, several Latin words should still be preserved; because they contained, as he pretended, such peculiar energy and significance, that they had no correspondent terms in the vulgar tongue. [2] Among these were "ecclesia, poenitentia, pontifex, contritus, holocausta, sacramentum, elementa, ceremonia, mysterium, presbyter, sacrificium, humilitas, satisfactio, peccatum, gratia, hostia, charitos," etc. But as this mixture would have appeared extremely barbarous, and was plainly calculated for no other purpose than to retain the people in their ancient ignorance, the proposal was rejected. The knowledge of the people, however, at least their disputative turn, seemed to be an inconvenience still more dangerous; and the king and parliament, [3] soon after the publication of the Scriptures retracted the concession which they had formerly made; and prohibited all but gentlemen and merchants from perusing them [4].

* Collier, vol. ii. .

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

* * * Which met on the 22d of January, 1543.

* * * * 33 Henry VIII. c 1. The reading of the Bible, however, could not at that time have much effect in England, where so few persons had learned to read. There were but five hundred copies printed of this first authorized edition of the Bible; a book of which there are now several millions of copies in the kingdom.

Even that liberty was not granted without an apparent hesitation, and a dread of the consequences: these persons were allowed to read, “so it be done quietly and with good order.” And the preamble to the act sets forth “that many seditious and ignorant persons had abused the liberty granted them of reading the Bible, and that great diversity of opinion, animosities, tumults, and schisms had been occasioned by perverting the sense of the Scriptures.” It seemed very difficult to reconcile the king’s model for uniformity with the permission of free inquiry.

The mass book also passed under the king’s revisal; and little alteration was as yet made in it: some doubtful or fictious saints only were struck out; and the name of the pope was erased. This latter precaution was likewise used with regard to every new book that was printed, or even old book that was sold. The word “pope” was carefully omitted or blotted out; [1] as if that precaution could abolish the term from the language, or as if such a persecution of it did not rather imprint it more strongly in the memory of the people.

The king took care about this time to clear the churches from another abuse which had crept into them. Plays, interludes, and farces were there often acted in derision of the former superstitions; and the reverence of the multitude for ancient principles and modes of worship was thereby gradually effaced. [2] We do not hear that the Catholics attempted to retaliate by employing this powerful engine against their adversaries, or endeavored by like arts to expose that fanatical spirit by which it appears the reformers were frequently actuated. Perhaps the people were not disposed to relish a jest on that side: perhaps the greater simplicity and the more spiritual abstract worship of the Protestants gave less hold to ridicule, which is commonly founded on sensible representations. It was, therefore, a very agreeable concession which the king made to the Catholic party, to suppress entirely these religious comedies.

* Parl. Hist. vol. iii. .

* * Burnet, vol. i .

Thus Henry labored incessantly by arguments, creeds, and penal statutes, to bring his subjects to a uniformity in their religious sentiments: but as he entered himself with the greatest earnestness into all those scholastic disputes, he encouraged the people by his example to apply themselves to the study of theology; and it was in vain afterwards to expect, however present fear might restrain their tongues or pens, that they would cordially agree in any set of tenets or opinions prescribed to them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HENRY VIII.

1542.

Henry, being determined to avenge himself on the king of Scots for slighting the advances which he had made him, would gladly have obtained a supply from parliament, in order to prosecute that enterprise; but as he did not think it prudent to discover his intentions, that assembly, conformably to their frugal maxims, would understand no hints; and the king was disappointed in his expectations. He continued, however, to make preparations for war; and as soon as he thought himself in a condition to invade Scotland, he published a manifesto, by which he endeavored to justify hostilities. He complained of James's breach of word in declining the promised interview, which was the real ground of the quarrel; [1] but in order to give a more specious coloring to the enterprise, he mentioned other injuries; namely, that his nephew had granted protection to some English rebels and fugitives, and had detained some territory which, Henry pretended, belonged to England. He even revived the old claim to the vassalage of Scotland, and he summoned James to do homage to him as his liege lord and superior. He employed the duke of Norfolk, whom he called the scourge of the Scots, to command in the war: and though James sent the bishop of Aberdeen, and Sir James Learmont of Darsay, to appease his uncle, he would hearken to no terms of accommodation.

* Buchanan lib xiv. Drummond in Ja. V.

While Norfolk was assembling his army at Newcastle, Sir Robert Bowes, attended by Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Ralph Evers, Sir Brian Latoun, and others, made an incursion into Scotland, and advanced towards Jedburgh, with an intention of pillaging and destroying that town. The earl of Angus, and George Douglas, his brother, who had been many years banished their country, and had subsisted by Henry's bounty, joined the English army in this incursion, and the forces commanded by Bowes exceeded four thousand men. James had not been negligent in his preparations for defence, and had posted a considerable body, under the command of the earl of Huntley, for the protection of the borders. Lord Hume, at the head of his vassals, was hastening to join Huntley, when he met with the English army; and an action immediately ensued. During the engagement, the forces under Huntley began to appear; and the English, afraid of being surrounded and overpowered, took to flight, and were pursued by the enemy. Evers, Latoun, and some other persons of distinction, were taken prisoners. A few only of small note fell in the skirmish. [1]

The duke of Norfolk, meanwhile, began to move from his camp at Newcastle; and being attended by the earls of Shrewsbury, Derby, Cumberland, Surrey, Hertford, Rutland, with many others of the nobility, he advanced to the borders. His forces amounted to above twenty thousand men; and it required the utmost efforts of Scotland to resist such a formidable armament. James had assembled his whole military force at Fala and Sautrey, and was ready to advance as soon as he should be informed of Norfolk's invading his kingdom. The English passed the Tweed at Berwick, and marched along the banks of the river as far as Kelso; but hearing that James had collected near thirty thousand men, they repassed the river at that village, and retreated into their own country. [2] The king of Scots, inflamed with a desire of military glory, and of revenge on his invaders, gave the signal for pursuing them, and carrying the war into England. He was surprised to find that his nobility, who were in general disaffected on account of the preference which he had given to the clergy, opposed this resolution, and refused to attend him in his projected enterprise. Enraged at this mutiny, he reproached them with cowardice, and threatened vengeance; but still resolved, with the forces which adhered to him, to make an impression on the enemy. He sent ten thousand men to the western borders, who entered England at Solway Frith; and he himself followed them at a small distance, ready to join them upon occasion. Disgusted, however, at the refractory disposition of his nobles, he sent a message to the army depriving Lord Maxwel, their general, of his commission, and conferring the command on Oliver Sinclair, a private gentleman, who was his favorite. The army was extremely disgusted with this alteration, and was ready to disband, when a small body of English appeared, not exceeding five hundred men, under the command of Dacres and Musgrave. A panic seized the Scots, who immediately took to flight, and were pursued by the enemy. Few were killed in this rout; for it was no action; but a great many were taken prisoners, and some of the principal nobility: among these, the earls of Cassilis and Glencairn, the lords Maxwel, Fleming, Somerville, Oliphant, Grey, who were all sent to London, and given in custody to different noblemen.

* Buchanan, lib. xiv.

* * Buchanan, lib. xiv.

The king of Scots, hearing of this disaster, was astonished; and being naturally of a melancholic disposition, as well as endowed with a high spirit, he lost all command of his temper on this dismal occasion. Rage against his nobility, who, he believed, had betrayed him; shame for a defeat by such unequal numbers; regret for the past, fear of the future; all these passions so wrought upon him, that he would admit of no consolation, but abandoned himself wholly to despair. His body was wasted by sympathy with his anxious mind; and even his life began to be thought in danger. He had no issue living; and hearing that his queen was safely delivered, he asked whether she had brought him a male or a female child. Being told the latter, he turned himself in his bed: “The crown came with a woman,” said he, “and it will go with one: many miseries await this poor kingdom: Henry will make it his own either by force of arms or by marriage.” A few days after, he expired, in the flower of his age: a prince of considerable virtues and talents; well fitted, by his vigilance and personal courage, for repressing those disorders to which his kingdom, during that age, was so much exposed. He executed justice with impartiality and rigor; but as he supported the commonalty and the church against the rapine of the nobility, he escaped not the hatred of that order. The Protestants also, whom he opposed, have endeavored to throw many stains on his memory; but have not been able to fix any considerable imputation upon him. [1]

1543.

Henry was no sooner informed of his victory and of the death of his nephew, than he projected, as James had foreseen, the scheme of uniting Scotland to his own dominions by marrying his son Edward to the heiress of that kingdom. [2]

* See note R, at the end of the volume.

* * Stowe, . Herbert. Burnet. Buchanan.

He called together the Scottish nobles who were his prisoners and after reproaching them, in severe terms, for their pretended breach of treaty, he began to soften his tone, and proposed to them this expedient, by which, he hoped, those disorders so prejudicial to both states, would for the future be prevented. He offered to bestow on them their liberty without ransom; and only required of them engagements to favor the marriage of the prince of Wales with their young mistress. They were easily prevailed on to give their assent to a proposal which seemed so natural and so advantageous to both kingdoms; and being conducted to Newcastle, they delivered to the duke of Norfolk hostages for their return, in case the intended nuptials were not completed; and they thence proceeded to Scotland, where they found affairs in some confusion.

The pope, observing his authority in Scotland to be in danger from the spreading of the new opinions, had bestowed on Beaton, the primate, the dignity of cardinal, in order to confer more influence upon him; and that prelate had long been regarded as prime minister to James, and as the head of that party which defended the ancient privileges and property of the ecclesiastics. Upon the death of his master, this man, apprehensive of the consequences both to his party and to himself, endeavored to keep possession of power; and for that purpose he is accused of executing a deed which required a high degree of temerity. He forged, it is said, a will for the king, appointing himself and three noblemen more regents of the kingdom during the minority of the infant princess: [1] at least, — for historians are not well agreed in the circumstances of the fact, — he had read to James a paper of that import, to which that monarch, during the delirium which preceded his death, had given an imperfect assent and approbation. [2] By virtue of this will, Beaton had put himself in possession of the government; and having united his interests with those of the queen dowager, he obtained the consent of the convention of states, and excluded the pretensions of the earl of Arran.

* Sadler’s Letters, . Spotswood, . Buchanan, lib. xv.

* * John Knox, Hist. of the Reformation.

James, earl of Arran, of the name of Hamilton, was next heir to the crown by his grandmother, daughter of James III.; and on that account seemed best entitled to possess that high office into which the cardinal had intruded himself. The prospect also of his succession after a princess who was in such tender infancy, procured him many partisans; and though his character indicated little spirit, activity, or ambition, a propensity which he had discovered for the new opinions had attached to him all the zealous promoters of those innovations. By means of these adherents, joined to the vassals of his own family, he had been able to make opposition to the cardinal's administration; and the suspicion of Beaton's forgery, with the accession of the noblemen who had been prisoners in England, assisted too by some money sent from London, was able to turn the balance in his favor. The earl of Angus and his brother, having taken the present opportunity of returning into their native country, opposed the cardinal with all the credit of that powerful family; and the majority of the convention had now embraced opposite interests to those which formerly prevailed. Arran was declared governor; the cardinal was committed to custody under the care of Lord Seton; and a negotiation was commenced with Sir Ralph Sadler, the English ambassador, for the marriage of the infant queen with the prince of Wales. The following conditions were quickly agreed on: that the queen should remain in Scotland till she should be ten years of age; that she should then be sent to England to be educated; that six Scottish noblemen should immediately be delivered as hostages to Henry; and that the kingdom, notwithstanding its union with England, should still retain its laws and privileges. [1] By means of these equitable conditions, the war between the nations, which had threatened Scotland with such dismal calamities, seemed to be fully composed, and to be changed into perpetual concord and amity.

But the cardinal primate, having prevailed on Seton to restore him to his liberty, was able, by his intrigues, to confound all these measures, which appeared so well concerted. He assembled the most considerable ecclesiastics; and having represented to them the imminent danger to which their revenues and privileges were exposed, he persuaded them to collect privately from the clergy a large sum of money, by which, if intrusted to his management, he engaged to overturn the schemes of their enemies. [2]

Besides the partisans whom he acquired by pecuniary motives, he roused up the zeal of those who were attached to the Catholic worship; and he represented the union with England as the sure forerunner of ruin to the church and to the ancient religion.

* Sir Ralph Sadler's Letters.

* * Buchanan, lib. xv.

The nations antipathy of the Scots to their southern neighbors was also an infallible engine by which the cardinal wrought upon the people; and though the terror of Henry's arms, and their own inability to make resistance, had procured a temporary assent to the alliance and marriage proposed, the settled habits of the nation produced an extreme aversion to those measures. The English ambassador and his retinue received many insults from persons whom the cardinal had instigated to commit those violences, in hopes of bringing on a rupture; but Sadler prudently dissembled the matter, and waited patiently till the day appointed for the delivery of the hostages. He then demanded of the regent the performance of that important article; but received for answer, that his authority was very precarious, that the nation had now taken a different impression, and that it was not in his power to compel any of the nobility to deliver themselves as hostages to the English. Sadler, foreseeing the consequence of this refusal, sent a summons to all those who had been prisoners in England, and required them to fulfil the promise which they had given of returning into custody. None of them showed so much sentiment of honor as to fulfil their engagements, except Gilbert Kennedy, earl of Cassilis. Henry was so well pleased with the behavior of this nobleman, that he not only received him graciously, but honored him with presents, gave him his liberty, and sent him back to Scotland, with his two brothers, whom he had left as hostages. [1]

* Buchanan, lib. xv.

This behavior of the Scottish nobles, though it reflected dishonor on the nation, was not disagreeable to the cardinal, who foresaw that all these persons would now be deeply interested to maintain their enmity and opposition to England. And as a war was soon expected with that kingdom, he found it necessary immediately to apply to France, and to crave the assistance of that ancient ally, during the present distresses of the Scottish nation. Though the French king was fully sensible of his interest in supporting Scotland, a demand of aid could not have been made on him at a more unseasonable juncture. His pretensions on the Milanese, and his resentment against Charles, had engaged him in a war with that potentate; and having made great, though fruitless efforts during the preceding campaign, he was the more disabled at present from defending his own dominions, much more from granting any succor to the Scots. Matthew Stewart, earl of Lenox, a young nobleman of a great family, was at that time in the French court; and Francis, being informed that he was engaged in ancient and hereditary enmity with the Hamiltons, who had murdered his father, sent him over to his native country, as a support to the cardinal and the queen mother: and he promised that a supply of money, and, if necessary, even military succors, should soon be despatched after him. Arran, the governor, seeing all these preparations against him, assembled his friends, and made an attempt to get the person of the infant queen into his custody; but being repulsed, he was obliged to come to an accommodation with his enemies, and to intrust that precious charge to four neutral persons, the heads of potent families, the Grahams, Areskines, Lindseys, and Levingstones. The arrival of Lenox, in the midst of these transactions, served to render the victory of the French party over the English still more undisputable. [1]

The opposition which Henry met with in Scotland from the French intrigues, excited his resentment, and further confirmed the resolution which he had already taken of breaking with France, and of uniting his arms with those of the emperor. He had other grounds of complaint against the French king; which, though not of great importance, yet being recent, were able to overbalance those great injuries which he had formerly received from Charles. He pretended that Francis had engaged to imitate his example in separating himself entirely from the see of Rome, and that he had broken his promise in that particular. He was dissatisfied that James, his nephew, had been allowed to marry, first Magdalene of France, then a princess of the house of Guise; and he considered these alliances as pledges which Francis gave of his intentions to support the Scots against the power of England. [2] He had been informed of some railleries which the French king had thrown out against his conduct with regard to his wives. He was disgusted that

Francis, after so many obligations which he owed him, had sacrificed him to the emperor; and, in the confidence of friendship, had rashly revealed his secrets to that subtle and interested monarch. And he complained that regular payments were never made of the sums due to him by France, and of the pension which had been stipulated. Impelled by all these motives, he alienated himself from his ancient friend and confederate, and formed a league with the emperor, who earnestly courted his alliance.

* Buchanan, lib. xv. Drummond.

* * Pere Daniel.

This league, besides stipulations for mutual defence, contained a plan for invading France; and the two monarchs agreed to enter Francis's dominions with an army, each of twenty-five thousand men; and to require that prince to pay Henry all the sums which he owed him, and to consign Boulogne, Montreuil, Terouenne, and Ardres, as a security for the regular payment of his pension for the future: in case these conditions were rejected, the confederate princes agreed to challenge, for Henry, the crown of France, or, in default of it, the duchies of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Guienne; for Charles the duchy of Burgundy, and some other territories. [1] That they might have a pretence for enforcing these claims, they sent a message to Francis, requiring him to renounce his alliance with Sultan Solyman, and to make reparation for all the prejudice which Christendom had sustained from that unnatural confederacy. Upon the French king's refusal, war was declared against him by the allies. It may be proper to remark, that the partisans of France objected to Charles's alliance with the heretical king of England, as no less obnoxious than that which Francis had contracted with Solyman: and they observed, that this league was a breach of the solemn promise which he had given to Clement VII., never to make peace or alliance with England.

While the treaty with the emperor was negotiating, the king summoned a new session of parliament, in order to obtain supplies for his projected war with France. The parliament granted him a subsidy, to be paid in three years; it was levied in a peculiar manner; but exceeded not three shillings in the pound upon any individual. [2]

* Rymer, vol. xiv. ; vol. xv. .

* * They who were worth, in goods, twenty shillings and upwards to five pounds, paid fourpence of every pound; from five pounds to ten pounds, eightpence; from ten pounds to twenty pounds, sixteen pence; from twenty and upwards, two shillings. Lands, fees, and annuities, from twenty shillings to five pounds, paid eightpence in the pound; from five pounds to ten pounds, sixteen pence; from ten pounds to twenty pounds, two shillings; from twenty pounds and upwards, three shillings.

The convocation gave the king six shillings in the pound, to be levied in three years. Greater sums were always, even during the establishment of the Catholic religion, exacted from the clergy than from the laity; which made the emperor Charles say, when Henry dissolved the monasteries, and sold their revenues, or bestowed them on his nobility and courtiers, that he had killed the hen which brought him the golden eggs. [1]

The parliament also facilitated the execution of the former law by which the king's proclamations were made equal to statutes: they appointed that any nine counsellors should form a legal court for punishing all disobedience to proclamations. The total abolition of juries in criminal causes, as well as on all parliaments, seemed, if the king had so pleased, the necessary consequence of this enormous law. He might issue a proclamation enjoining the execution of any penal statute, and afterwards try the criminals, not for breach of the statute, but for disobedience to his proclamation. It is remarkable, that Lord Mountjoy entered a protest against this law; and it is equally remarkable that that protest is the only one entered against any public bill during this whole reign. [2]

It was enacted [3] this session, that any spiritual person who preached or taught contrary to the doctrine contained in the king's book, the Erudition of a Christian Man, or contrary to any doctrine which he should thereafter promulgate, was to be admitted on the first conviction to renounce his error; on the second, he was required to carry a fagot; which if he refused to do, or fell into a third offence, he was to be burnt. But the laity, for the third offence, were only to forfeit their goods and chattels, and be liable to perpetual imprisonment. Indictments must be laid within a year after the offence, and the prisoner was allowed to bring witnesses for his exculpation. These penalties were lighter than those which were formerly imposed on a denial of the real presence: it was, however, subjoined in this statute, that the act of the six articles was still in force. But in order to make the king more entirely master of his people, it was enacted, that he might hereafter, at his pleasure, change this act, or any provision in it. By this clause, both parties were retained in subjection: so far as regarded religion, the king was invested, in the fullest manner, with the sole legislative authority in his kingdom; and all his subjects were, under the severest penalties, expressly bound to receive implicitly whatever doctrine he should please to recommend to them.

* Collier, vol. ii. .

* * Burnet, vol. i. .

* * * 34 and 35 Henry VIII. c. 1.

The reformers began to entertain hopes that this great power of the crown might still be employed in their favor. The king married Catharine Par, widow of Nevil, Lord Latimer; a woman of virtue, and somewhat inclined to the new doctrine. By this marriage Henry confirmed what had formerly been foretold in jest, that he would be obliged to espouse a widow. The king's league with the emperor seemed a circumstance no less favorable to the Catholic party; and thus matters remained still nearly balanced between the factions.

The advantages gained by this powerful confederacy between Henry and Charles, were inconsiderable during the present year. The campaign was opened with a victory gained by the duke of Cleves, Francis's ally, over the forces of the emperor: [1] Francis, in person, took the field early; and made himself master, without resistance, of the whole duchy of Luxembourg: he afterwards took Landrecy, and added some fortifications to it. Charles, having at last assembled a powerful army, appeared in the Low Countries; and after taking almost every fortress in the duchy of Cleves, he reduced the duke to accept of the terms which he was pleased to prescribe to him. Being then joined by a body of six thousand English, he sat down before Landrecy, and covered the siege with an army of above forty thousand men. Francis advanced at the head of an army not much inferior; as if he intended to give the emperor battle, or oblige him to raise the siege: but while these two rival monarchs were facing each other, and all men were in expectation of some great event, the French king found means of throwing succor into

Landrecy; and having thus effected his purpose, he skilfully made a retreat. Charles, finding the season far advanced, despaired of success in his enterprise, and found it necessary to go into winter quarters.

* Mém. du Bellai, lib. x.

The vanity of Henry was flattered by the figure which he made in the great transactions on the continent; but the interests of his kingdom were more deeply concerned in the event of affairs in Scotland. Arran, the governor, was of so indolent and unambitious a character, that, had he not been stimulated by his friends and dependants, he never had aspired to any share in the administration; and when he found himself overpowered by the party of the queen dowager, the cardinal, and the earl of Lenox, he was glad to accept of any terms of accommodation, however dishonorable. He even gave them a sure pledge of his sincerity, by renouncing the principles of the reformers, and reconciling himself to the Romish communion in the Franciscan church at Stirling. By this weakness and levity, he lost his credit with the whole nation, and rendered the Protestants, who were hitherto the chief support of his power, his mortal enemies. The cardinal acquired an entire ascendant in the kingdom: the queen dowager placed implicit confidence in him: the governor was obliged to yield to him in every pretension: Lenox alone was become an obstacle to his measures, and reduced him to some difficulty.

The inveterate enmity which had taken place between the families of Lenox and Arran, made the interests of these two noblemen entirely incompatible; and as the cardinal and the French party, in order to engage Lenox the more in their cause, had flattered him with the hopes of succeeding to the crown after their infant sovereign, this rivalship had tended still further to rouse the animosity of the Hamiltons. Lenox, too, had been encouraged to aspire to the marriage of the queen dowager, which would have given him some pretensions to the regency; and as he was become assuming, on account of the services which he had rendered the party, the cardinal found that, since he must choose between the friendship of Lenox and that of Arran, the latter nobleman, who was more easily governed, and who was invested with present authority, was in every respect preferable. Lenox, finding that he was not likely to succeed in his pretensions to the queen dowager, and that Arran, favored by the cardinal, had acquired the ascendant, retired to Dunbarton, the governor of which was entirely at his devotion; he entered into a secret correspondence with the English court; and he summoned his vassals and partisans to attend him. All those who were inclined to the Protestant religion, or were on any account discontented with the cardinal’s administration, now regarded Lenox as the head of their party, and they readily made him a tender of their services. In a little time he had collected an army of ten thousand men, and he threatened his enemies with immediate destruction. The cardinal had no equal force to oppose to him; but as he was a prudent man, he foresaw that Lenox could not long subsist so great an army, and he endeavored to gain time by opening a negotiation with him. He seduced his followers by various artifices; he prevailed on the Douglases to change party; he represented to the whole nation the danger of civil wars and commotions; and Lenox, observing the unequal contest in which he was engaged, was at last obliged to lay down his arms, and to accept of an accommodation with the governor and the cardinal. Present peace was restored; but no confidence took place between the parties. Lenox, fortifying his castles, and putting himself in a posture of defence, waited the arrival of English succors, from whose assistance alone he expected to obtain the superiority over his enemies.

1544.

While the winter season restrained Henry from military operations, he summoned a new parliament, in which a law was passed, such as he was pleased to dictate, with regard to the succession of the crown. After declaring that the prince of Wales, or any of the king’s male issue, were first and immediate heirs to the crown, the parliament restored the two princesses, Mary and Elizabeth, to their right of succession. This seemed a reasonable piece of justice, and corrected what the king’s former violence had thrown into confusion; but it was impossible for Henry to do any thing, how laudable soever, without betraying, in some circumstance, his usual extravagance and caprice: though he opened the way for these two princesses to mount the throne, he would not allow the acts to be reversed which had declared them illegitimate; he made the parliament confer on him a power of still excluding them, if they refused to submit to any conditions which he should be pleased to impose; and he required them to enact, that, in default of his own issue, he might dispose of the crown as he pleased, by will or letters-patent. He did not probably foresee that, in proportion as he degraded the parliament, by rendering it the passive instrument of his variable and violent inclinations, he taught the people to regard all its acts as invalid, and thereby defeated even the purposes which he was so bent to attain.

An act passed, declaring that the king’s usual style should be “king of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, and on earth the supreme head of the church of England and Ireland.” It seemed a palpable inconsistency to retain the title of defender of the faith, which the court of Rome had conferred on him for maintaining its cause against Luther; and yet subjoin his ecclesiastical supremacy, in opposition to the claims of that court.

An act also passed for the remission of the debt which the king had lately contracted by a general loan levied upon the people. It will easily be believed, that after the former act of this kind, the loan was not entirely voluntary. [1] But there was a peculiar circumstance attending the present statute, which none but Henry would have thought of; namely, that those who had already gotten payment, either in whole or in part, should refund the money to the exchequer.

The oaths which Henry imposed for the security of his ecclesiastical model, were not more reasonable than his other measures. All his subjects of any distinction had already been obliged to renounce the pope’s supremacy; but as the clauses to which they swore had not been deemed entirely satisfactory, another oath was imposed; and it was added, that all those who had taken the former oaths should be understood to have taken the new one; [2] a strange supposition to represent men as bound by an oath which they had never taken.

The most commendable law to which the parliament gave their sanction, was that by which they mitigated the law of the six articles, and enacted, that no person should be put to his trial upon an accusation concerning any of the offences comprised in that sanguinary statute, except on the oath of twelve persons before commissioners authorized for the purpose; and that

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* 35 Henry VII. c. 12.

* * 35 Henry VII c. 1.

no person should be arrested or committed to ward for any such offence before he was indicted. Any preacher accused of speaking in his sermon contrary to these articles, must be indicted within forty days.

The king always experienced the limits of his authority whenever he demanded subsidies, however moderate, from the parliament; and therefore, not to hazard a refusal, he made no mention this session of a supply: but as his wars both in France and Scotland, as well as his usual prodigality, had involved him in great expense, he had resource to other methods of filling his exchequer. Notwithstanding the former abolition of his debts, he yet required new loans from his subjects; and he enhanced gold from forty-five shillings to forty-eight an ounce, and silver from three shillings and nine-pence to four shillings. His pretence for this innovation was, to prevent the money from being exported; as if that expedient could anywise serve the purpose. He even coined some base money, and ordered it to be current by proclamation. He named commissioners for levying a benevolence, and he extorted about seventy thousand pounds by this expedient. Read, alderman of London, [1] a man somewhat advanced in years, having refused to contribute, or not coming up to the expectation of the commissioners, was enrolled as a foot soldier in the Scottish wars, and was there taken prisoner. Roach, who had been equally refractory, was thrown into prison, and obtained not his liberty but by paying a large composition. [2] These powers of the prerogative, (which at that time passed unquestioned,) the compelling of any man to serve in any office, and the imprisoning of any man during pleasure, not to mention the practice of extorting loans, rendered the sovereign in a manner absolute master of the person and property of every individual.

Early this year the king sent a fleet and army to invade Scotland. The fleet consisted of near two hundred vessels, and carried on board ten thousand men. Dudley, Lord Lisle, commanded the sea forces; the earl of Hertford the land. The troops were disembarked near Leith; and after dispersing a small body which opposed them, they took that town without resistance, and then marched to Edinburgh. The gates were soon beaten down, (for little or no resistance was made,) and the English first pillaged, and then set fire to the city. The regent and cardinal were not prepared to oppose so great a force, and they fled to Stirling. Hertford marched eastward; and being joined by a new body under Evers, warden of the east marches, he laid waste the whole country, burned and destroyed

Haddington and Dunbar, then retreated into England; having lost only forty men in the whole expedition. The earl of Arran collected some forces; but finding that the English were already departed, he turned them against Lenox, who was justly suspected of a correspondence with the enemy. That nobleman, after making some resistance, was obliged to fly into England, where Henry settled a pension on him, and even gave him his niece, lady Margaret Douglas, in marriage. In return, Lenox stipulated conditions, by which, had he been able to execute them, he must have reduced his country to total servitude. [3]

* Herbert. Stowe, . Baker, .

* * Goodwin's Annals. Stowe, .

* * * Rymer, vol. xv. , 29.

Henry's policy was blamed in this sudden and violent incursion, by which he inflamed the passions of the Scots, without subduing their spirit; and it was commonly said, that he did too much, if he intended to solicit an alliance, and too little, if he meant a conquest. [1] But the reason of his recalling the troops so soon, was his eagerness to carry on a projected enterprise against France, in which he intended to employ the whole force of his kingdom. He had concerted a plan with the emperor, which threatened the total ruin of that monarchy, and must, as a necessary consequence, have involved the ruin of England. These two princes had agreed to invade France with forces amounting to above a hundred thousand men: Henry engaged to set out from Calais; Charles from the Low Countries: they were to enter on no siege; but leaving all the frontier towns behind them, to march directly to Paris, where they were to join their forces, and thence to proceed to the entire conquest of the kingdom. Francis could not oppose to these formidable preparations much above forty thousand men.

* Herbert. Burnet.

Henry, having appointed the queen regent during his absence, passed over to Calais with thirty thousand men, accompanied by the dukes of

Norfolk and Suffolk, Fitzalan earl of Arundel, Vere earl of Oxford, the earl of Surrey, Paulet Lord St. John, Lord Ferrers of Chartley, Lord Mountjoy, Lord Grey of Wilton, Sir Anthony Brown, Sir Francis Bryan, and the most flourishing nobility and gentry of his kingdom. The English army was soon joined by the count de Buren, admiral of Flanders, with ten thousand foot and four thousand horse; and the whole composed an army which nothing on that frontier was able to resist. The chief force of the French armies was drawn to the side of Champagne, in order to oppose the imperialists.

The emperor, with an army of near sixty thousand men, had taken the field much earlier than Henry; and not to lose time while he waited for the arrival of his confederate, he sat down before Luxembourg, which was surrendered to him: he thence proceeded to Commercy, on the Meuse, which he took: Ligny met with the same fate: he next laid siege to St. Disier, on the Marne, which, though a weak place, made a brave resistance under the count of Sancerre, the governor, and the siege was protracted beyond expectation.

The emperor was employed before this town at the time the English forces were assembled in Picardy. Henry either tempted by the defenceless condition of the French frontier, or thinking that the emperor had first broken his engagement by forming sieges, or, perhaps, foreseeing at last the dangerous consequences of entirely subduing the French power, instead of marching forward to Paris, sat down before Montreuil and Boulogne. The duke of Norfolk commanded the army before Montreuil; the king himself that before Boulogne. Vervin was governor of the latter place, and under him Philip Corse, a brave old soldier, who encouraged the garrison to defend themselves to the last extremity against the English. He was killed during the course of the siege, and the town was immediately surrendered to Henry by the cowardice of Vervin, who was afterwards beheaded for this dishonorable capitulation.

During the course of this siege, Charles had taken St. Disier; and finding the season much advanced, he began to hearken to a treaty of peace with France, since all his schemes for subduing that kingdom were likely to prove abortive. In order to have a pretence for deserting his ally, he sent a messenger to the English camp, requiring Henry immediately to fulfil his engagements, and to meet him with his army before Paris. Henry replied, that he was too far engaged in the siege of Boulogne to raise it with honor, and that the emperor himself had first broken the concert by besieging St.

Disier. This answer served Charles as a sufficient reason for concluding a peace with Francis at Crepy, where no mention was made of England. He stipulated to give Flanders as a dowry to his daughter, whom he agreed to marry to the duke of Orleans, Francis's second son; and Francis, in return, withdrew his troops from Piedmont and Savoy, and renounced all claim to Milan, Naples, and other territories in Italy. This peace, so advantageous to Francis, was procured partly by the decisive victory obtained in the beginning of the campaign by the count of Anguyen over the imperialists at Cerisolles in Piedmont, partly by the emperor's great desire to turn his arms against the Protestant princes in Germany. Charles ordered his troops to separate from the English in Picardy; and Henry, finding himself obliged to raise the siege of Montreuil, returned into England. This campaign served to the populace as matter of great triumph; but all men of sense concluded, that the king had, as in all his former military enterprises, made, at a great expense, an acquisition which was of no importance.

The war with Scotland, meanwhile, was conducted feebly and with various success. Sir Ralph Evers, now Lord Evers and Sir Bryan Latoun, made an inroad into that kingdom; and having laid waste the counties of Tiviotdale and the Merse, they proceeded to the abbey of Coldingham, which they took possession of, and fortified. The governor assembled an army of eight thousand men, in order to dislodge them from this post; but he had no sooner opened his batteries before the place, than a sudden panic seized him; he left the army, and fled to Dunbar. He complained of the mutiny of his troops, and pretended apprehensions lest they should deliver him into the hands of the English; but his own unwarlike spirit was generally believed to have been the motive of this dishonorable flight. The Scottish army, upon the departure of their general, fell into confusion; and had not Angus, with a few of his retainers, brought off the cannon, and protected their rear, the English might have gained great advantages over them. Evers, elated with this success, boasted to Henry, that he had conquered all Scotland to the Forth; and he claimed a reward for this important service. The duke of Norfolk, who knew with what difficulty such acquisitions would be maintained against a warlike enemy, advised the king to grant him, as his reward, the conquests of which he boasted so highly. The next inroad made by the English showed the vanity of Evers's hopes.

This general led about five thousand men into Tiviotdale, and was employed in ravaging that country; when intelligence was brought him that some Scottish forces appeared near the abbey of Melross. Angus had roused the governor to more activity; and a proclamation being issued for assembling the troops of the neighboring counties, a considerable body had repaired thither to oppose the enemy. Norman Lesly, son of the earl of Rothes, had also joined the army with some volunteers from Fife; and he inspired courage into the whole, as well by this accession of force, as by his personal bravery and intrepidity. In order to bring their troops to the necessity of a steady defence, the Scottish leaders ordered all their cavalry to dismount, and they resolved to wait, on some high grounds near Ancram, the assault of the English. The English, whose past successes had taught them too much to despise the enemy, thought, when they saw the Scottish horses led off the field, that the whole army was retiring; and they hastened to attack them. The Scots received them in good order; and being favored by the advantage of the ground, as well as by the surprise of the English, who expected no resistance, they soon put them to flight, and pursued them with considerable slaughter. Evers and Latoun were both killed, and above a thousand men were made prisoners. In order to support the Scots in this war, Francis some time after sent over a body of auxiliaries, to the number of three thousand five hundred men, under the command of Montgomery, lord of Lorges. [1] Reënforced by these succors, the governor assembled an army of fifteen thousand men at Haddington, and marched thence to ravage the east borders of England. He laid all waste wherever he came; and having met with no considerable resistance, he retired into his own country, and disbanded his army. The earl of Hertford, in revenge, committed ravages on the middle and west marches; and the war on both sides was signalized rather by the ills inflicted on the enemy, than by any considerable advantage gained by either party.

The war likewise between France and England was not distinguished this year by any memorable event. Francis had equipped a fleet of above two hundred sail, besides galleys; and having embarked some land forces on board, he sent them to make a descent in England. [2] They sailed to the Isle of Wight, where they found the English fleet lying at anchor in St. Helen’s. It consisted not of above a hundred sail; and the admiral thought it most advisable to remain in that road, in hopes of drawing the French into the narrow channels and the rocks, which were unknown to them. The two fleets cannonaded each other for two days; and except the sinking of the Mary Rose, one of the largest ships of the English fleet, the damage on both sides was inconsiderable.

* Buchanan, lib. xv. Drummond.

* * Beleair. Mém. du Bellai.

Francis's chief intention in equipping so great a fleet, was to prevent the English from throwing succors into Boulogne, which he resolved to besiege; and for that purpose he ordered a fort to be built, by which he intended to block up the harbor. After a considerable loss of time and money, the fort was found so ill constructed, that he was obliged to abandon it; and though he had assembled on that frontier an army of near forty thousand men, he was not able to effect any considerable enterprise. Henry, in order to defend his possessions in France, had levied fourteen thousand Germans who, having marched to Fleurines, in the bishopric of Liege, found that they could advance no farther. The emperor would not allow them a passage through his dominions: they received intelligence of a superior army on the side of France ready to intercept them: want of occupation and of pay soon produced a mutiny among them; and having seized the English commissaries as a security for arrears, they retreated into their own country. There seems to have been some want of foresight in this expensive armament.

The great expense of these two wars maintained by Henry, obliged him to summon a new parliament. The commons granted him a subsidy, payable in two years, of two shillings a pound on land. [1] The spirituality voted him six shillings a pound. But the parliament, apprehensive lest more demands should be made upon them, endeavored to save themselves by a very extraordinary liberality of other people's property; by one vote they bestowed on the king all the revenues of the universities, as well as of the chauntries, free chapels, [2] and hospitals. Henry was pleased with this concession, as it increased his power; but he had no intention to rob learning of all her endowments; and he soon took care to inform the universities that he meant not to touch their revenues. Thus these ancient and celebrated establishments owe their existence to the generosity of the king, not to the protection of this servile and prostitute parliament.

The prostitute spirit of the parliament further appeared in the preamble of a statute; [3] in which they recognize the king to have always been, by the word of God, supreme head of the church of England; and acknowledge that archbishops, bishops, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction but by his royal mandate; to him alone, say they, and such persons as he shall appoint, full power and authority is given from above to hear and determine all manner of causes ecclesiastical, and to correct all manner of heresies, errors, vices, and sins whatsoever. No mention is here made of the concurrence of a convocation, or even of a parliament. His proclamations are in effect acknowledged to have not only the force of law, but the authority of revelation; and by his royal power he might regulate the actions of men, control their words, and even direct their inward sentiments and opinions.

The king made in person a speech to the parliament on proroguing them; in which, after thanking them for their loving attachment to him, which, he said, equalled what was ever paid by their ancestors to any king of England, he complained of their dissensions, disputes, and animosities in religion. He told them, that the several pulpits were become a kind of batteries against each other; and that one preacher called another heretic and Anabaptist, which was retaliated by the opprobrious appellations of Papist and hypocrite: that he had permitted his people the use of the Scriptures, not in order to furnish them with materials for disputing and railing, but that he might enable them to inform their consciences and instruct their children and families: that it grieved his heart to find how that precious jewel was prostituted, by being introduced into the conversation of every alehouse and

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* Those who possessed goods or money above five pounds, and below ten, were to pay eightpence a pound; those above ten pounds, a shilling.

* * A chauntry was a little church, chapel, or particular altar in some cathedral church, etc., endowed with lands or other revenues for the maintenance of one or more priests daily to say mass or perform divine service, for the use of the founders, or such others as they appointed: free chapels were independent on any church, and endowed for much the same purpose as the former. Jacob’s Law Dict.

* * * 37 Henry VIII. c. 17.

tavern, and employed as a pretence for decrying the spiritual and legal pastors: and that he was sorry to observe, that the word of God, while it was the object of so much anxious speculation, had very little influence on their practice; and that, though an imaginary knowledge so much abounded, charity was daily going to decay. [1] The king gave good advice; but his own example, by encouraging speculation and dispute, was ill fitted to promote that peaceable submission of opinion which he recommended.

* Hall, fol. 261. Herbert, .

1546.

Henry employed in military preparations the money granted by parliament; and he sent over the earl of Hertford and Lord Lisle, the admiral, to Calais, with a body of nine thousand men, two thirds of which consisted of foreigners. Some skirmishes of small moment ensued with the French; and no hopes of any considerable progress could be entertained by either party. Henry, whose animosity against Francis was not violent, had given sufficient vent to his humor by this short war; and finding that, from his great increase in corpulence and decay in strength, he could not hope for much longer life, he was desirous of ending a quarrel which might prove dangerous to his kingdom during a minority. Francis likewise, on his part, was not averse to peace with England; because, having lately lost his son, the duke of Orleans, he revived his ancient claim upon Milan, and foresaw that hostilities must soon, on that account, break out between him and the emperor. Commissioners, therefore, having met at Campe, a small place between Ardres and Guisnes, the articles were soon agreed on, and the peace signed by them. The chief conditions were, that Henry should retain Boulogne during eight years, or till the former debt due by Francis should be paid. This debt was settled at two millions of livres, besides a claim of five hundred thousand livres, which was afterwards to be adjusted. Francis took care to comprehend Scotland in the treaty. Thus all that Henry obtained by a war which cost him above one million three hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling, [1] was a bad and a chargeable security for a debt, which was not a third of the value.

* Herbert. Stowe.

The king, now freed from all foreign wars, had leisure to give his attention to domestic affairs; particularly to the establishment of uniformity in opinion, on which he was so intent. Though he allowed an English translation of the Bible, he had hitherto been very careful to keep the mass in Latin; but he was at last prevailed on to permit that the litany, a considerable part of the service, should be celebrated in the vulgar tongue; and by this innovation he excited anew the hopes of the reformers, who had been somewhat discouraged by the severe law of the six articles. One petition of the new litany was a prayer to save us "from the tyranny of the bishop of Rome, and from all his detestable enormities." Cranmer employed his credit to draw Henry into further innovations; and he took advantage of Gardiner's absence, who was sent on an embassy to the emperor: but Gardiner having written to the king, that, if he carried his opposition against the Catholic religion to greater extremities, Charles threatened to break off all commerce with him, the success of Cranmer's projects was for some time retarded. Cranmer lost this year the most sincere and powerful friend that he possessed at court, Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk; the queen dowager of France, consort to Suffolk, had died some years before. This nobleman is one instance that Henry was not altogether incapable of a cordial and steady friendship; and Suffolk seems to have been worthy of the favor which, from his earliest youth, he had enjoyed with his master. The king was sitting in council when informed of Suffolk's death; and he took the opportunity both to express his own sorrow for the loss, and to celebrate the merits of the deceased. He declared, that during the whole course of their friendship, his brother-in-law had never made one attempt to injure an adversary, and had never whispered a word to the disadvantage of any person. "Is there any of you, my lords, who can say as much?" When the king subjoined these words, he looked round in all their faces, and saw that confusion which the consciousness of secret guilt naturally threw upon them. [1]

* Coke's Inst. ca.

Cranmer himself, when bereaved of this support, was the more exposed to those cabals of the courtiers, which the opposition in party and religion, joined to the usual motives of interest, rendered so frequent among Henry's ministers and counsellors. The Catholics took hold of the king by his passion for orthodoxy; and they represented to him, that, if his laudable zeal for enforcing the truth met with no better success, it was altogether owing to the primate, whose example and encouragement were, in reality, the secret supports of heresy. Henry, seeing the point at which they aimed, feigned a compliance, and desired the council to make inquiry into Cranmer's conduct; promising that, if he were found guilty, he should be committed to prison, and brought to condign punishment. Every body now considered the primate as lost; and his old friends, from interested views, as well as the opposite party from animosity, began to show him marks of neglect and disregard. He was obliged to stand several hours among the lackeys at the door of the council chamber before he could be admitted; and when he was at last called in, he was told that they had determined to send him to the Tower. Cranmer said, that he appealed to the king himself; and finding his appeal disregarded, he produced a ring, which Henry had given him as a pledge of favor and protection. The council were confounded; and when they came before the king, he reproved them in the severest terms; and told them, that he was well acquainted with Cranmer's merit, as well as with their malignity and envy; but he was determined to crush all their cabals, and to teach them by the severest discipline, since gentle methods were ineffectual, a more dutiful concurrence in promoting his service. Norfolk, who was Cranmer's capital enemy, apologized for their conduct and said, that their only intention was to set the primate's innocence in a full light, by bringing him to an open trial, and Henry obliged them all to embrace him, as a sign of their cordial reconciliation. The mild temper of Cranmer rendered this agreement more sincere on his part than is usual in such forced compliances. [1]

But though Henry's favor for Cranmer rendered fruitless all accusations against him, his pride and peevishness, irritated by his declining state of health, impelled him to punish with fresh severity all others who presumed to entertain a different opinion from himself, particularly in the capital point of the real presence. Anne Ascue, a young woman of merit as well as beauty, [2] who had great connections with the chief ladies at court, and with the queen herself, was accused of dogmatizing on that delicate article; and Henry, instead of showing indulgence to the weakness of her sex and age, was but the more provoked, that a woman should dare to oppose his theological sentiments.

* Burnet, vol. i. , 344. Antiq. Brit. in vita Cranm.

* * Bale. Speed, .

She was prevailed on by Bonner’s menaces to make a seeming recantation; but she qualified it with some reserves, which did not satisfy that zealous prelate. She was thrown into prison, and she there employed herself in composing prayers and discourses, by which she fortified her resolution to endure the utmost extremity rather than relinquish her religious principles. She even wrote to the king, and told him, that as to the Lord’s supper, she believed as much as Christ himself had said of it, and as much of his divine doctrine as the Catholic church had required: but while she could not be brought to acknowledge an assent to the king’s explications, this declaration availed her nothing, and was rather regarded as a fresh insult. The chancellor, Wriothesely, who had succeeded Audley, and who was much attached to the Catholic party, was sent to examine her with regard to her patrons at court, and the great ladies who were in correspondence with her: but she maintained a laudable fidelity to her friends, and would confess nothing. She was put to the torture in the most barbarous manner, and continued still resolute in preserving secrecy. Some authors [1] add an extraordinary circumstance; that the chancellor, who stood by, ordered the lieutenant of the Tower to stretch the rack still farther; but that officer refused compliance the chancellor menaced him, but met with a new refusal; upon which that magistrate, who was otherwise a person of merit, but intoxicated with religious zeal, put his own hand to the rack, and drew it so violently that he almost tore her body asunder. Her constancy still surpassed the barbarity of her persecutors, and they found all their efforts to be baffled. She was then condemned to be burned alive; and being so dislocated by the rack that she could not stand, she was carried to the stake in a chair. Together with her were conducted Nicholas Belenian, a priest, John Lassels, of the king’s household, and John Adams, a tailor, who had been condemned for the same crime to the same punishment. They were all tied to the stake; and in that dreadful situation the chancellor sent to inform them, that their pardon was ready drawn and signed, and should instantly be given them if they would merit it by a recantation. They only regarded this offer as a new ornament to their crown of martyrdom; and they saw with tranquillity the executioner kindle the flames which consumed them. Wriothesely did not consider, that this public and noted situation interested their honor the more to maintain a steady perseverance.

* Fox, ii. . Speed, . Baker, . But Burnet questions the truth of this circumstance; Fox, however, transcribes her own papers, where she relates it. I

must add, in justice to the king, that he disapproved of Wriothesely’s conduct, and commended the lieutenant.

Though the secrecy and fidelity of Anne Ascue saved the queen from this peril, that princess soon after fell into a new danger, from which she narrowly escaped. An ulcer had broken out in the king’s leg, which, added to his extreme corpulency and his bad habit of body, began both to threaten his life and to render him even more than usually peevish and passionate. The queen attended him with the most tender and dutiful care, and endeavored, by every soothing art and compliance, to allay those gusts of humor to which he was become so subject. His favorite topic of conversation was theology; and Catharine, whose good sense enabled her to discourse on any subject, was frequently engaged in the argument, and being secretly inclined to the principles of the reformers, she unwarily betrayed too much of her mind on these occasions. Henry, highly provoked that she should presume to differ from him, complained of her obstinacy to Gardiner, who gladly laid hold of the opportunity to inflame the quarrel. He praised the king’s anxious concern for preserving the orthodoxy of his subjects; and represented, that the more elevated the person was who was chastised, and the more near to his person, the greater terror would the example strike into every one, and the more glorious would the sacrifice appear to posterity. The chancellor, being consulted, was engaged by religious zeal to second these topics; and Henry, hurried on by his own impetuous temper, and encouraged by his counsellors, went so far as to order articles of impeachment to be drawn up against his consort. Wriothesely executed his commands; and soon after brought the paper to him to be signed; for, as it was high treason to throw slander upon the queen, he might otherwise have been questioned for his temerity. By some means this important paper fell into the hands of one of the queen’s friends, who immediately carried the intelligence to her. She was sensible of the extreme danger to which she was exposed; but did not despair of being able, by her prudence and address, still to elude the efforts of her enemies. She paid her usual visit to the king, and found him in a more serene disposition than she had reason to expect. He entered on the subject which was so familiar to him; and he seemed to challenge her to an argument in divinity. She gently declined the conversation, and remarked, that such profound speculations were ill suited to the natural imbecility of her sex. Women, she said, by their first creation, were made subject to men: the male was created after the image of God, the female after the image of the male: it belonged to the husband to choose principles for his wife; the wife's duty was, in all cases, to adopt implicitly the sentiments of her husband: and as to herself, it was doubly her duty, being blest with a husband who was qualified by his judgment and learning not only to choose principles for his own family, but for the most wise and knowing of every nation. "Not so! by St. Mary," replied the king; "you are now become a doctor, Kate, and better fitted to give than receive instruction." She meekly replied, that she was sensible how little she was entitled to these praises; that though she usually declined not any conversation, however sublime, when proposed by his majesty, she well knew that her conceptions could serve to no other purpose than to give him a little momentary amusement, that she found the conversation apt to languish when not revived by some opposition, and she had ventured sometimes to feign a contrariety of sentiments, in order to give him the pleasure of refuting her; and that she also purposed, by this innocent artifice, to engage him into topics, whence she had observed, by frequent experience, that she reaped profit and instruction. "And is it so, sweetheart?" replied the king, "then are we perfect friends again." He embraced her with great affection, and sent her away with assurances of his protection and kindness. Her enemies, who knew nothing of this sudden change, prepared next day to convey her to the Tower, pursuant to the king's warrant. Henry and Catharine were conversing amicably in the garden, when the chancellor appeared with forty of the pursuivants. The king spoke to him at some distance from her; and seemed to expostulate with him in the severest manner: she even overheard the appellations of "knave," "fool," and "beast," which he liberally bestowed upon that magistrate; and then ordered him to depart his presence. She afterwards interposed to mitigate his anger: he said to her, "Poor soul! you know not how ill entitled this man is to your good offices." Thenceforth the queen, having narrowly escaped so great a danger, was careful not to offend Henry's humor by any contradiction; and Gardiner, whose malice had endeavored to widen the breach, could never afterwards regain his favor and good opinion. [1]

* Burnet, vol. i. . Herbert, . Speed . Fox’s Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. .

But Henry’s tyrannical disposition, soured by ill health, burst out soon after to the destruction of a man who possessed a much superior rank to that of Gardiner. The duke of Norfolk and his father, during this whole reign, and even a part of the foregoing, had been regarded as the greatest subjects in the kingdom, and had rendered considerable service to the crown. The duke himself had in his youth acquired reputation by naval enterprises: he had much contributed to the victory gained over the Scots at Flouden: he had suppressed a dangerous rebellion in the north; and he had always done his part with honor in all the expeditions against France. Fortune seemed to conspire with his own industry in raising him to the greatest elevation. From the favors heaped on him by the crown he had acquired an immense estate: the king had successively been married to two of his nieces; and the king’s natural son, the duke of Richmond, had married his daughter; besides his descent, from the ancient family of the Moubrays, by which he was allied to the throne, he had espoused a daughter of the duke of Buckingham, who was descended by a female from Edward III.; and as he was believed still to adhere secretly to the ancient religion, he was regarded, both abroad and at home, as the head of the Catholic party. But all these circumstances, in proportion as they exalted the duke, provoked the jealousy of Henry; and he foresaw danger, during his son’s minority, both to the public tranquillity, and to the new ecclesiastical system, from the attempts of so potent a subject. But nothing tended more to expose Norfolk to the king’s displeasure, than the prejudices which Henry had entertained against the earl of Surrey, son of that nobleman.

Surrey was a young man of the most promising hopes, and had distinguished himself by every accomplishment which became a scholar, a courtier, and a soldier. He excelled in all the military exercises which were then in request: he encouraged the fine arts by his patronage and example: he had made some successful attempts in poetry; and being smitten with the romantic gallantry of the age, he celebrated the praises of his mistress by his pen and his lance, in every masque and tournament. His spirit and ambition were equal to his talents and his quality; and he did not always regulate his conduct by the caution and reserve which his situation required.

He had been left governor of Boulogne when that town was taken by Henry; but though his personal bravery was unquestioned, he had been unfortunate in some rencounters [2misspelling] with the French. The king, somewhat displeased with his conduct, had sent over Hertford to command in his place; and Surrey was so imprudent as to drop some menacing expressions against the ministers, on account of this affront which was put upon him. And as he had refused to marry Hertford's daughter, and even waived every other proposal of marriage, Henry imagined that he had entertained views of espousing the lady Mary; and he was instantly determined to repress, by the most severe expedients, so dangerous an ambition.

Actuated by all these motives, and perhaps influenced by that old disgust with which the ill conduct of Catharine Howard had inspired him against her whole family, he gave private orders to arrest Norfolk and Surrey; and they were on the same day confined in the Tower. Surrey being a commoner, his trial was the more expeditious; and as to proofs, neither parliaments nor juries seem ever to have given the least attention to them in any cause of the crown during this whole reign.

1547.

He was accused of entertaining in his family some Italians who were suspected to be spies; a servant of his had paid a visit to Cardinal Pole in Italy, whence he was suspected of holding a correspondence with that obnoxious prelate; he had quartered the arms of Edward the Confessor on his scutcheon, which made him be suspected of aspiring to the crown, though both he and his ancestors had openly, during the course of many years, maintained that practice, and the heralds had even justified it by their authority. These were the crimes for which a jury, notwithstanding his eloquent and spirited defence, condemned the earl of Surrey for high treason; and their sentence was soon after executed upon him.

The innocence of the duke of Norfolk was still, if possible, more apparent than that of his son; and his services to the crown had been greater. His duchess, with whom he lived on bad terms, had been so base as to carry intelligence to his enemies of all she knew against him: Elizabeth Holland, a mistress of his, had been equally subservient to the designs of the court; yet with all these advantages, his accusers discovered no greater crime than his once saying, that the king was sickly, and could not hold out long; and the kingdom was likely to fall into disorders, through the diversity of religious opinions. He wrote a pathetic letter to the king, pleading his past services and protesting his innocence: soon after, he embraced a more proper expedient for appeasing Henry, by making a submission and confession, such as his enemies required; but nothing could mollify the unrelenting temper of the king. He assembled a parliament, as the surest and most expeditious instrument of his tyranny; and the house of peers, without examining the prisoner, without trial or evidence, passed a bill of attainder against him, and sent it down to the commons. Cranmer, though engaged for many years in an opposite party to Norfolk, and though he had received many and great injuries from him, would have no hand in so unjust a prosecution; and he retired to his seat at Croydon. [1] The king was now approaching fast towards his end; and fearing lest Norfolk should escape him, he sent a message to the commons, by which he desired them to hasten the bill, on pretence that Norfolk enjoyed the dignity of earl marshal, and it was necessary to appoint another, who might officiate at the ensuing ceremony of installing his son prince of Wales. The obsequious commons obeyed his directions, though founded on so frivolous a pretence; and the king having affixed the royal assent to the bill by commissioners, issued orders for the execution of Norfolk on the morning of the twenty-ninth of January. But news being carried to the Tower that the king himself had expired that night, the lieutenant deferred obeying the warrant; and it was not thought advisable by the council to begin a new reign by the death of the greatest nobleman in the kingdom, who had been condemned by a sentence so unjust and tyrannical.

The king’s health had long been in a declining state; but for several days all those near him plainly saw his end approaching. He was become so froward, that no one durst inform him of his condition; and as some persons during this reign had suffered as traitors for foretelling the king’s death, [2] every one was afraid lest, in the transports of his fury, he might on this pretence punish capitally the author of such friendly intelligence. At last, Sir Anthony Denny ventured to disclose to him the fatal secret, and exhorted him to prepare for the fate which was awaiting him. He expressed his resignation, and desired that Cranmer might be sent for; but before the prelate arrived, he was speechless, though he still seemed to retain his senses. Cranmer desired him to give some sign of his dying in the faith of

Christ. He squeezed the prelate’s hand, and immediately expired, after a reign of thirty-seven years and nine months; and in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

* Burnet, vol. i. . Fox.

* * Lanquet’s Epitome of Chronicles in the year 1541.

The king had made his will near a month before his demise; in which he confirmed the destination of parliament, by leaving the crown first to Prince Edward, then to the lady Mary, next to the lady Elizabeth: the two princesses he obliged, under the penalty of forfeiting their title to the crown, not to marry without consent of the council which he appointed for the government of his minor son. After his own children, he settled the succession on Frances Brandon, marchioness of Dorset, eldest daughter of his sister, the French queen; then on Eleanor, countess of Cumberland, the second daughter In passing over the posterity of the queen of Scots, his eldest sister, he made use of the power obtained from parliament, but as he subjoined that, after the failure of the French queen’s posterity, the crown should descend to the next lawful heir, it afterwards became a question, whether these words could be applied to the Scottish line. It was thought that these princes were not the next heirs after the house of Suffolk, but before that house; and that Henry, by expressing himself in this manner, meant entirely to exclude them. The late injuries which he had received from the Scots, had irritated him extremely against that nation; and he maintained to the last that character of violence and caprice by which his life had been so much distinguished. Another circumstance of his will may suggest the same reflection with regard to the strange contrarieties of his temper and conduct: he left money for masses to be said for delivering his soul from purgatory; and though he destroyed all those institutions established by his ancestors and others for the benefit of their souls, and had even left the doctrine of purgatory doubtful in all the articles of faith which he promulgated during his later years, he was yet determined, when the hour of death was approaching, to take care at least of his own future repose, and to adhere to the safer side of the question. [1]

* See his will in Fuller, Heylin, and Rymer, . There is no reasonable ground to suspect its authenticity.

It is difficult to give a just summary of this prince's qualities: he was so different from himself in different parts of his reign, that, as is well remarked by Lord Herbert, his history is his best character and description. The absolute, uncontrolled authority which he maintained at home, and the regard which he acquired among foreign nations, are circumstances which entitle him, in some degree, to the appellation of a great prince; while his tyranny and barbarity exclude him from the character of a good one. He possessed, indeed, great vigor of mind, which qualified him for exercising dominion over men; courage, intrepidity, vigilance, inflexibility; and though these qualities lay not always under the guidance of a regular and solid judgment, they were accompanied with good parts and an extensive capacity; and every one dreaded a contest with a man who was known never to yield or to forgive, and who, in every controversy, was determined either to ruin himself or his antagonist. A catalogue of his vices would comprehend many of the worst qualities incident to human nature, violence, cruelty, profusion, rapacity, injustice, obstinacy, arrogance, bigotry, presumption, caprice: but neither was he subject to all these vices in the most extreme degree, nor was he, at intervals, altogether destitute of virtues: he was sincere, open, gallant, liberal, and capable at least of a temporary friendship and attachment. In this respect he was unfortunate, that the incidents of his reign served to display his faults in their full light: the treatment which he met with from the court of Rome provoked him to violence; the danger of a revolt from his superstitious subjects seemed to require the most extreme severity. But it must at the same time be acknowledged, that his situation tended to throw an additional lustre on what was great and magnanimous in his character; the emulation between the emperor and the French king rendered his alliance, notwithstanding his impolitic conduct, of great importance in Europe; the extensive powers of his prerogative, and the submissive, not to say slavish, disposition of his parliaments, made it the more easy for him to assume and maintain that entire dominion by which his reign is so much distinguished in the English history.

It may seem a little extraordinary, that, notwithstanding his cruelty, his extortion, his violence, his arbitrary administration, this prince not only acquired the regard of his subjects, but never was the object of their hatred: he seems even, in some degree, to have possessed to the last their love and affection. [1] His exterior qualities were advantageous, and fit to captivate the multitude: his magnificence and personal bravery rendered him illustrious in vulgar eyes; and it may be said with truth, that the English in that age were so thoroughly subdued, that, like Eastern slaves, they were inclined to admire those acts of violence and tyranny which were exercised over themselves, and at their own expense.

* Strype, vol. i. .

With regard to foreign states, Henry appears long to have supported an intercourse of friendship with Francis, more sincere and disinterested than usually takes place between neighboring princes. Their common jealousy of the emperor Charles, and some resemblance in their characters, (though the comparison sets the French monarch in a very superior and advantageous light,) served as the cement of their mutual amity. Francis is said to have been affected with the king's death, and to have expressed much regret for the loss. His own health began to decline: he foretold that he should not long survive his friend; [1] and he died in about two months after him.

There were ten parliaments summoned by Henry VIII., and twenty-three sessions held. The whole time in which these parliaments sat during this long reign, exceeded not three years and a half. It amounted not to a twelvemonth during the first twenty years. The innovations in religion obliged the king afterwards to call these assemblies more frequently; but though these were the most important transactions that ever fell under the cognizance of parliament, their devoted submission to Henry's will, added to their earnest desire of soon returning to their country seats, produced a quick despatch of the bills, and made the sessions of short duration. All the king's caprices were indeed blindly complied with, and no regard was paid to the safety or liberty of the subject. Besides the violent prosecution of whatever he was pleased to term heresy, the laws of treason were multiplied beyond all former precedent. Even words to the disparagement of the king, queen, or royal issue, were subjected to that penalty; and so little care was taken in framing these rigorous statutes, that they contain obvious contradictions; insomuch that, had they been strictly executed, every man, without exception, must have fallen under the penalty of treason. By one statute, [2] for instance, it was declared treason to assert the validity of the king's marriage, either with Catharine of Arragon or Anne Boleyn; by another, [3] it was treason to say any thing to the disparagement or slander of the princesses Mary and Elizabeth; and to call them spurious would, no doubt, have been construed to their slander. Nor would even a profound silence with regard to these delicate points be able to save a person from such penalties. For by the former statute, whoever refused to answer upon oath to any point contained in that act, was subjected to the pains of treason. The king, therefore, needed only propose to any one a question with regard to the legality of either of his first marriages: if the person were silent, he was a traitor by law: if he answered either in the negative or in the affirmative, he was no less a traitor. So monstrous were the inconsistencies which arose from the furious passions of the king and the slavish submission of his parliaments. It is hard to say whether these contradictions were owing to Henry’s precipitancy, or to a formed design of tyranny.

* Le Thou.

* * 28 Henry VIII. c. 7.

* * * 34, 35 Henry VIII. c. 1.

It may not be improper to recapitulate whatever is memorable in the statutes of this reign, whether with regard to government or commerce: nothing can better show the genius of the age than such a review of the laws.

The abolition of the ancient religion much contributed to the regular execution of justice. While the Catholic superstition subsisted, there was no possibility of punishing any crime in the clergy: the church would not permit the magistrate to try the offences of her members, and she could not herself inflict any civil penalties upon them. But Henry restrained these pernicious immunities: the privilege of clergy was abolished for the crimes of petty treason, murder, and felony, to all under the degree of a subdeacon. [1] But the former superstition not only protected crimes in the clergy; it exempted also the laity from punishment, by affording them shelter in the churches and sanctuaries. The parliament abridged these privileges. It was first declared, that no sanctuaries were allowed in cases of high treason; [2] next, in those of murder, felony, rapes, burglary, and petty treason: [3] and it limited them in other particulars. [4] The further progress of the reformation removed all distinction between the clergy and other subjects, and also abolished entirely the privileges of sanctuaries. These consequences were implied in the neglect of the canon law.

The only expedient employed to support the military spirit during this age, was the reviving and extending of some old laws enacted for the encouragement of archery, on which the defence of the kingdom was supposed much to depend. Every man was ordered to have a bow; butts were ordered to be erected in every parish;[v*] and every bowyer was ordered, for each bow of yew which he made, to make two of elm or witch, for the service of the common people.[v* *] The use of crossbows and handguns was also prohibited.[v* * *]

*   23 Henry VIII. c. 1.

* *   26 Henry VIII. c. 13.

* * * 32 Henry VIII. c. 12.

* * * * 22 Henry VIII. c. 14.

v   3 Henry VIII. c. 3.
V*   3 Henry VIII. c. 3.
V* * 3 Henry VIII c. 3.
V* * * 3 Henry VIII. c. 13.

What rendered the English bowmen more formidable was, that they carried halberts with them, by which they were enabled, upon occasion, to engage in close fight with the enemy. [1] Frequent musters or arrays were also made of the people, even during time of peace; and all men of substance were obliged to have a complete suit of armor or harness, as it was called. [2] The martial spirit of the English, during that age, rendered this precaution, it was thought, sufficient for the defence of the nation; and as the king had then an absolute power of commanding the service of all his subjects, he could instantly, in case of danger, appoint new officers, and levy regiments, and collect an army as numerous as he pleased. When no faction or division prevailed among the people, there was no foreign power that ever thought of invading England. The city of London alone, could muster fifteen thousand men. [3] Discipline, however, was an advantage wanting to those troops; though the garrison of Calais was a nursery of officers, and Tournay first, [4] Boulogne afterwards, served to increase the number. Every one who served abroad was allowed to alienate his lands without paying any fees. A general permission was granted to dispose of land by will.[v*] The parliament was so little jealous of its privileges, (which indeed were, at that time, scarcely worth preserving,) that there is an instance of one Strode, who, because he had introduced into the lower house some bill regarding tin, was severely treated by the stannery courts in Cornwall: heavy fines were imposed on him; and upon his refusal to pay, he was thrown into a dungeon, loaded with irons, and used in such a manner as brought his life in danger: yet all the notice which the parliament took of this enormity, even in such a paltry court, was to enact, that no man could afterwards be questioned for his conduct in parliament.[v* *] This prohibition, however, must be supposed to extend only to the inferior courts: for as to the king, and privy council, and star chamber, they were scarcely bound by any law.

There is a bill of tonnage and poundage, which shows what uncertain ideas the parliament had formed both of their own privileges and of the rights of the sovereign.[v* * *] This duty had been voted to every king since Henry IV., during the term of his own life only: yet Henry VIII. had been allowed to levy it six years, without any law; and though there had been four parliaments assembled during that time, no attention had been given either to grant it to him regularly, or restrain him from levying it. At last the parliament resolved to give him that supply; but even in this concession, they plainly show themselves at a loss to determine whether they grant it, or whether he has a right of himself to levy it. They say, that the imposition was made to endure during the natural life of the late king, and no longer: they yet blame the merchants who had not paid it to the present king: they observe, that the law for tonnage and poundage was expired; yet make no scruple to call that imposition the king’s due: they affirm, that he had sustained great and manifold losses by those who had defrauded him of it; and to provide a remedy, they vote him that supply during his lifetime, and no longer. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding this last clause, all his successors for more than a century persevered in the like irregular practice; if a practice may deserve that epithet, in which the whole nation acquiesced, and which gave no offence. But when Charles I. attempted to continue in the same course which had now received the sanction of many generations, so much were the opinions of men altered, that a furious tempest was excited by it; and historians, partial or ignorant, still represent this measure as a most violent and unprecedented enormity in that unhappy prince.

* Herbert.

* * Hall, fol. 234. Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * * Hall, fol. 235. Holingshed, . Stowe, .

* * * * Hall, fol. 68.

v 14 and 15 Henry VIII. c. 15.
v* 34 and 35 Henry VIII. c. 5.
v* * 4 Henry VIII. c. 8.
v* * * 6 Henry VIII. c. 14.

The king was allowed to make laws for Wales without consent of parliament. [1] It was forgotten that, with regard both to Wales and England, the limitation was abolished by the statute which gave to the royal proclamations the force of laws.

* 34 Henry VIII.

The foreign commerce of England during this age was mostly confined to the Netherlands. The inhabitants of the Low Countries bought the English commodities, and distributed them into other parts of Europe. Hence the mutual dependence of those countries on each other; and the great loss sustained by both in case of a rupture. During all the variations of politics, the sovereigns endeavored to avoid coming to this extremity; and though the king usually bore a greater friendship to Francis, the nation always leaned towards the emperor.

In 1528, hostilities commenced between England and the Low Countries; and the inconvenience was soon felt on both sides. While the Flemings were not allowed to purchase cloth in England, the English merchants could not buy it from the clothiers, and the clothiers were obliged to dismiss their workmen, who began to be tumultuous for want of bread. The cardinal, to appease them, sent for the merchants, and ordered them to buy cloth as usual: they told him that they could not dispose of it as usual; and, notwithstanding his menaces, he could get no other answer from them. [1] An agreement was at last made to continue the commerce between the states, even during war.

It was not till the end of this reign that any salads, carrots, turnips, or other edible roots were produced in England. The little of these vegetables that was used, was formerly imported from Holland and Flanders. [2] Queen Catharine, when she wanted a salad, was obliged to despatch a messenger thither on purpose. The use of hops, and the planting of them, was introduced from Flanders about the beginning of this reign, or end of the preceding.

Foreign artificers, in general, much surpassed the English in dexterity, industry, and frugality: hence the violent animosity which the latter on many occasions expressed against any of the former who were settled in England. They had the assurance to complain, that all their customers went to foreign tradesmen; and in the year 1517, being moved by the seditious sermons of one Dr. Bele, and the intrigues of Lincoln, a broker, they raised an insurrection. The apprentices, and others of the poorer sort, in London, began by breaking open the prisons, where some persons were confined for insulting foreigners. They next proceeded to the house of Meutas, a Frenchman, much hated by them; where they committed great disorders; killed some of his servants; and plundered his goods. The mayor could not appease them; nor Sir Thomas More, late under sheriff, though much respected in the city. They also threatened Cardinal Wolsey with some insult; and he thought it necessary to fortify his house, and put himself on his guard. Tired at last with these disorders, they dispersed themselves; and the earls of Shrewsbury and Surrey seized some of them. A proclamation was issued, that women should not meet together to babble and talk, and that all men should keep their wives in their houses. Next day the duke of Norfolk came into the city, at the head of thirteen hundred armed men, and made inquiry into the tumult. Bele and Lincoln, and several others, were

* Hall, fol. 174.

* * Anderson, vol. i. .

sent to the Tower, and condemned for treason. Lincoln and thirteen more were executed. The other criminals, to the number of four hundred, were brought before the king with ropes about their necks, fell upon their knees, and cried for mercy. Henry knew at that time how to pardon; he dismissed them without further punishment. [1]

So great was the number of foreign artisans in the city, that at least fifteen thousand Flemings alone were at one time obliged to leave it, by an order of council, when Henry became jealous of their favor for Queen Catharine. [2] Henry himself confesses, in an edict of the star chamber, printed among the statutes, that the foreigners starved the natives, and obliged them from idleness to have recourse to theft, murder, and other enormities. [3] He also asserts, that the vast multitude of foreigners raised the price of grain and bread. [4] And to prevent an increase of the evil, all foreign artificers were prohibited from having above two foreigners in their house, either journeymen or apprentices. A like jealousy arose against the foreign merchants; and to appease it, a law was enacted obliging all denizens to pay the duties imposed upon aliens. The parliament had done better to have encouraged foreign merchants and artisans to come over in greater numbers to England; which might have excited the emulation of the natives, and have improved their skill. The prisoners in the kingdom for debts and crimes are asserted, in an act of parliament, to be sixty thousand persons and above; which is scarcely credible. Harrison asserts, that seventy-two thousand criminals were executed during this reign for theft and robbery, which would amount nearly to two thousand a year. He adds, that, in the latter end of Elizabeth's reign, there were not punished capitally four hundred in a year; it appears that, in all England, there are not at present fifty executed for those crimes. If these facts be just, there has been a great improvement in morals since the reign of Henry VIII. And this improvement has been chiefly owing to the increase of industry and of the arts, which have given maintenance, and what is almost of equal importance, occupation to the lower classes.

* Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * Le Grand, vol. iii. .

* * * 21 Henry VIII.

* * * * 21 Henry VIII., 22 Henry VIII. C 8., 3 Henry VIII. c.

There is a remarkable clause in a statute passed near the beginning of this reign, [1] by which we might be induced to believe that England was extremely decayed from the flourishing condition which it had attained in preceding times. It had been enacted in the reign of Edward II., that no magistrate in town or borough, who by his office ought to keep assize, should, during the continuance of his magistracy, sell, either in wholesale or retail, any wine or victuals. This law seemed equitable, in order to prevent fraud or private views in fixing the assize: yet the law is repealed in this reign. The reason assigned is, that “since the making of that statute and ordinance, many and the most part of all the cities, boroughs, and towns corporate, within the realm of England, are fallen in ruin and decay, and are not inhabited by merchants, and men of such substance as at the time of making that statute: for at this day the dwellers and inhabitants of the same cities and boroughs are commonly bakers, vintners, fishmongers, and other victuallers, and there remain few others to bear the offices.” Men have such a propensity to exalt past times above the present, that it seems dangerous to credit this reasoning of the parliament without further evidence to support it. So different are the views in which the same object appears, that some may be inclined to draw an opposite inference from this fact. A more regular police was established in the reign of Henry VIII. than in any former period, and a stricter administration of justice; an advantage which induced the men of landed property to leave the provincial towns, and to retire into the country. Cardinal Wolsey, in a speech to parliament, represented it as a proof of the increase of riches, that the customs had increased beyond what they were formerly. [2]

But if there were really a decay of commerce, and industry, and populousness in England, the statutes of this reign, except by abolishing monasteries and retrenching holydays — circumstances of considerable moment — were not in other respects well calculated to remedy the evil. The fixing of the wages of artificers was attempted: [3] luxury in apparel was prohibited by repeated statutes; [4] and probably without effect.

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* Henry VIII. c. 8.

* * Hall, fol. 110.

* * * 6 Henry VIII. c. 3.

* * * * 1 Henry VIII. c. 14. 6 Henry VIII. c. I 7 Henry VIII. c. 7

The chancellor and other ministers were empowered to fix the price of poultry, cheese, and butter. [1] A statute was even passed to fix the price of beef, pork, mutton, and veal. [2] Beef and pork were ordered to be sold at a halfpenny a pound; mutton and veal at a halfpenny half a farthing, money of that age. The preamble of the statute says, that these four species of butcher's meat were the food of the poorer sort. This ace was afterwards repealed. [3]

The practice of depopulating the country by abandoning tillage, and throwing the lands into pasturage, still continued; [4] as appears by the new laws which were from time to time enacted against that practice. The king was entitled to half the rents of the land, where any farm houses were allowed to fall to decay. The unskilful husbandry was probably the cause why the proprietors found no profit in tillage. The number of sheep allowed to be kept in one flock, was restrained to two thousand.[v*] Sometimes, says the statute, one proprietor or farmer would keep a flock of twenty-four thousand. It is remarkable, that the parliament ascribes the increasing price of mutton to this increase of sheep: because, say they, the commodity being gotten into few hands, the price of it is raised at pleasure.[v* *] It is more probable, that the effect proceeded from the daily increase of money; for it seems almost impossible that such a commodity could be engrossed.

In the year 1544, it appears that an acre of good land in Cambridgeshire was let at a shilling, or about fifteen pence of our present money.[v* * *] This is ten times cheaper than the usual rent at present. But commodities were not above four times cheaper; a presumption of the bad husbandry in that age.

Some laws were made with regard to beggars and vagrants;[v* * * *] one of the circumstances in government, which humanity would most powerfully recommend to a benevolent legislator; which seems, at first sight, the most easily adjusted; and which is yet the most difficult to settle in such a manner as to attain the end without destroying industry. The convents formerly were a support to the poor; but at the same time tended to encourage idleness and beggary.

* 25 Henry VIII. c. 2.

* * 24 Henry VIII. c. 3.

* * * 33 Henry VIII. c. 11.

* * * * Strype, vol. i. .

v 6 Henry VIII. c. 5. 7 Henry VIII. c. 1.
v* 25 Henry VIII. c. 13.
v* * 25 Henry VIII. c. 13.
v* * * Anderson, vol. i. .
v* * * * 22 Henry VIII. c. 12. 22 Henry VIII. c. 5.

In 1546, a law was made for fixing the interest of money at ten per cent.; the first legal interest known in England. Formerly all loans of that nature were regarded as usurious. The preamble of this very law treats the interest of money as illegal and criminal; and the prejudices still remained so strong, that the law permitting interest was repealed in the following reign.

This reign, as well as many of the foregoing and even subsequent reigns, abounds with monopolizing laws, confining particular manufactures to particular towns, or excluding the open country in general. [1] There remain still too many traces of similar absurdities. In the subsequent reign, the corporations which had been opened by a former law, and obliged to admit tradesmen of different kinds, were again shut up by act of parliament; and every one was prohibited from exercising any trade who was not of the corporation. [2]

Henry, as he possessed himself some talent for letters, was an encourager of them in others. He founded Trinity College in Cambridge, and gave it ample endowments. Wolsey founded Christ Church in Oxford, and intended to call it Cardinal College: but upon his fall, which happened before he had entirely finished his scheme, the king seized all the revenues; and this violence, above all the other misfortunes of that minister, is said to have given him the greatest concern. [3] But Henry afterwards restored the revenues of the college, and only changed the name. The cardinal founded in Oxford the first chair for teaching Greek; and this novelty rent that university into violent factions, which frequently came to blows. The students divided themselves into parties, which bore the names of Greeks and Trojans, and sometimes fought with as great animosity as was formerly exercised by those hostile nations. A new and more correct method of pronouncing Greek being introduced, it also divided the Grecians themselves into parties; and it was remarked that the Catholics favored the former pronunciation, the Protestants gave countenance to the new. Gardiner employed the authority of the king and council to suppress innovations in this particular, and to preserve the corrupt sound of the Greek alphabet. So little liberty was then allowed of any kind!

* 21 Henry VIII. c. 12. 25 Henry VIII. c. 18. 3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 20. 5 and 6 Edward VI. c. 24.

* * 3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 20.

* * * Strype, vol. i. .

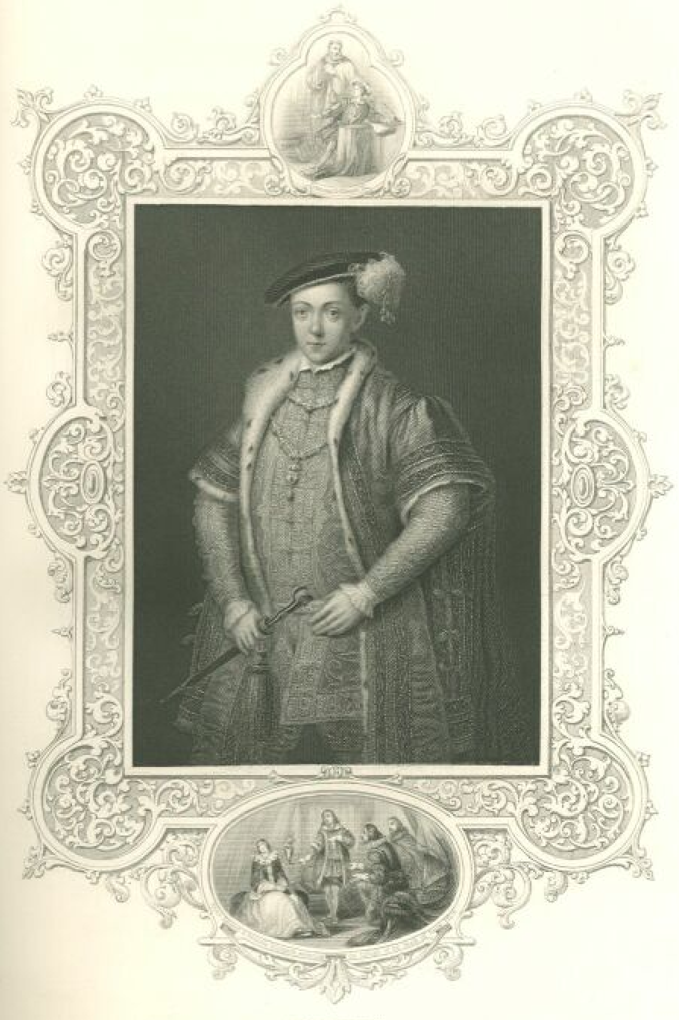
The penalties inflicted upon the new pronunciation were no less than whipping, degradation, and expulsion; and the bishop declared, that rather than permit the liberty of innovating in the pronunciation of the Greek alphabet, it were better that the language itself were totally banished the universities. The introduction of the Greek language into Oxford excited the emulation of Cambridge. [1] Wolsey intended to have enriched the library of his college at Oxford with copies of all the manuscripts that were in the Vatican. [2] The countenance given to letters by this king and his ministers contributed to render learning fashionable in England: Erasmus speaks with great satisfaction of the general regard paid by the nobility and gentry to men of knowledge. [3] It is needless to be particular in mentioning the writers of this reign or of the preceding. There is no man of that age who has the least pretension to be ranked among our classics. Sir Thomas More, though he wrote in Latin, seems to come the nearest to the character of a classical author.

* Wood’s Hist. and Antiq. Oxon. lib. I .

* * Wood’s Hist. and Antiq. Oxon. lib. I .

* * * Epist. ad Banisium. Also Epist. .

CHAPTER XXXIV.



EDWARD VI.

EDWARD VI.

1547.

THE late king, by the regulations which he imposed on the government of his infant son, as well as by the limitations of the succession, had projected to reign even after his decease; and he imagined that his ministers, who had always been so obsequious to him during his lifetime, would never afterwards depart from the plan which he had traced out to them. He fixed the majority of the prince at the completion of his eighteenth year; and as Edward was then only a few months past nine, he appointed sixteen executors; to whom, during the minority, he intrusted the government of the king and kingdom. Their names were, Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury; Lord Wriothesely, chancellor; Lord St. John, great master; Lord Russel, privy seal; the earl of Hertford, chamberlain: Viscount Lisle, admiral; Tonstal, bishop of Durham; Sir Anthony Brown, master of horse; Sir William Paget, secretary of state; Sir Edward North, chancellor of the court of augmentations; Sir Edward Montague, chief justice of the common pleas; Judge Bromley, Sir Anthony Denny, and Sir William Herbert, chief gentlemen of the privy chamber; Sir Edward Wotton, treasurer of Calais; Dr. Wotton, dean of Canterbury. To these executors, with whom was intrusted the whole regal authority, were appointed twelve counsellors, who possessed no immediate power, and could only assist with their advice when any affair was laid before them. The council was composed of the earls of Arundel and Essex; Sir Thomas Cheney, treasurer of the household; Sir John Gage, comptroller; Sir Anthony Wingfield, vice-chamberlain; Sir William Petre, secretary of state; Sir Richard Rich, Sir John Baker, Sir Ralph Sadler Sir Thomas Seymour, Sir Richard Southwell, and Sir Edmund Peckham. [1] The usual caprice of Henry appears somewhat in this nomination; while he appointed several persons of inferior station among his executors, and gave only the place of counsellor to a person of such high rank as the earl of Arundel, and to Sir Thomas Seymour, the king’s uncle.

But the first act of the executors and counsellors was to depart from the destination of the late king in a material article. No sooner were they met, than it was suggested that the government would lose its dignity for want of some head who might represent the royal majesty, who might receive addresses from foreign ambassadors, to whom despatches from English ministers abroad might be carried, and whose name might be employed in all orders and proclamations: and as the king’s will seemed to labor under a defect in this particular, it was deemed necessary to supply it by choosing a protector; who, though he should possess all the exterior symbols of royal dignity, should yet be bound, in every act of power, to follow the opinion of the executors. [2]

* Strype’s Memor. vol. ii. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

This proposal was very disagreeable to Chancellor Wriothesely. That magistrate, a man of an active spirit and high ambition, found himself by his office entitled to the first rank in the regency after the primate; and as he knew that this prelate had no talent or inclination for state affairs, he hoped that the direction of public business would, of course, devolve in a great measure upon himself. He opposed, therefore, the proposal of choosing a protector; and represented that innovation as an infringement of the late king’s will, which, being corroborated by act of parliament, ought in every thing to be a law to them, and could not be altered but by the same authority which had established it. But he seems to have stood alone in the opposition. The executors and counsellors were mostly courtiers who had been raised by Henry’s favor, not men of high birth or great hereditary influence; and as they had been sufficiently accustomed to submission during the reign of the late monarch, and had no pretensions to govern the nation by their own authority, they acquiesced the more willingly in a proposal which seemed calculated for preserving public peace and tranquillity. It being therefore agreed to name a protector, the choice fell, of course, on the earl of Hertford, who, as he was the king’s maternal uncle, was strongly interested in his safety; and possessing no claims to inherit the crown, could never have any separate interest which might lead him to endanger Edward’s person or his authority. [1] The public was informed by proclamation of this change in the administration; and despatches were sent to all foreign courts to give them intimation of it. All those who were possessed of any office resigned their former commissions, and accepted new ones in the name of the young king. The bishops themselves were constrained to make a like submission. Care was taken to insert in their new commissions, that they held their office during pleasure: [2] and it is there expressly affirmed, that all manner of authority and jurisdiction, as well ecclesiastical as civil, is originally derived from the crown. [3]

The executors, in their next measure, showed a more submissive deference to Henry's will, because many of them found their account in it. The late king had intended, before his death, to make a new creation of nobility, in order to supply the place of those peerages which had fallen by former attainders, or the failure of issue; and that he might enable the new peers to support their dignity, he had resolved either to bestow estates on them, or advance them to higher offices. He had even gone so far as to inform them of this resolution; and in his will he charged his executors to make good all his promises. [4] That they might ascertain his intentions in the most authentic manner Sir William Paget, Sir Anthony Denny, and Sir William Herbert, with whom Henry had always conversed in a familiar manner, were called before the board of regency; and having given evidence of what they knew concerning the king's promises, their testimony was relied on, and the executors proceeded to the fulfilling of these engagements. Hertford was created duke of Somerset, mareschal, and lord treasurer; Wriothesely, earl of Southampton; the earl of Essex, marquis of Northampton; Viscount Lisle, earl of Warwick; Sir Thomas Seymour, Lord Seymour of Sudley, and admiral; Sir Richard Rich, Sir William Willoughby, Sir Edward Sheffield accepted the title of baron.

* Heylin, Hist. Ref. Edward VI.

* * Collier, vol. ii. . Burnet, vol. ii. . Strype's Mem. of Cranm. .

* * * Strype's Mem. of Cranm. .

* * * * Fuller, Heylin, and Rymer.

v Stowe’s Annals,

Several, to whom the same dignity was offered, refused it; because the other part of the king’s promise, the bestowing of estates on these new noblemen, was deferred till a more convenient opportunity. Some of them, however, as also Somerset, the protector, were, in the mean time, endowed with spiritual preferments, deaneries, and prebends. For, among many other invasions of ecclesiastical privileges and property, this irregular practice of bestowing spiritual benefices on laymen began now to prevail.

The earl of Southampton had always been engaged in an opposite party to Somerset; and it was not likely that factions which had secretly prevailed even during the arbitrary reign of Henry, should be suppressed in the weak administration that usually attends a minority. The former nobleman, that he might have the greater leisure for attending to public business, had, of himself and from his own authority, put the great seal in commission, and had empowered four lawyers Southwell, Tregonel, Oliver, and Bellasis, to execute in his absence the office of chancellor. This measure seemed very exceptionable; and the more so, as, two of the commissioners being canonists, the lawyers suspected that, by this nomination, the chancellor had intended to discredit the common law. Complaints were made to the council, who, influenced by the protector, gladly laid hold of the opportunity to depress Southampton. They consulted the judges with regard to so unusual a case; and received for answer, that the commission was illegal, and that the chancellor, by his presumption in granting it, had justly forfeited the great seal, and was even liable to punishment. The council summoned him to appear before them. He maintained that he held his office by the late king’s will, founded on an act of parliament, and could not lose it without a trial in parliament; that if the commission which he had granted were found illegal, it might be cancelled, and all the ill consequences of it be easily remedied; and that the depriving him of his office for an error of this nature, was a precedent by which any other innovation might be authorized. But the council, notwithstanding these topics of defence, declared that he had forfeited the great seal; that a fine should be imposed upon him; and that he should be confined to his own house during pleasure. [1]

* Holingshed,

The removal of Southampton increased the protectors’ authority, as well as tended to suppress faction in the regency yet was not Somerset contented with this advantage; his ambition carried him to seek still further acquisitions. On pretence that the vote of the executors choosing his protector, was not a sufficient foundation for his authority, he procured a patent from the young king, by which he entirely overturned the will of Henry VIII., produced a total revolution in the government, and may seem even to have subverted all the laws of the kingdom. He named himself protector with full regal power, and appointed a council, consisting of all the former counsellors, and all the executors, except Southampton; he reserved a power of naming any other counsellors at pleasure; and he was bound to consult with such only as he thought proper. The protector and his council were likewise empowered to act at discretion, and to execute whatever they deemed for the public service, without incurring any penalty or forfeiture from any law, statute, proclamation, or ordinance whatsoever.[1] Even had this patent been more moderate in its concessions, and had it been drawn by directions from the executors appointed by Henry, its legality might justly be questioned; since it seems essential to a trust of this nature to be exercised by the persons intrusted, and not to admit of a delegation to others: but as the patent, by its very tenor, where the executors are not so much as mentioned, appears to have been surreptitiously obtained from a minor king, the protectorship of Somerset was a plain usurpation, which it is impossible by any arguments to justify. The connivance, however, of the executors, and their present acquiescence in the new establishment, made it be universally submitted to; and as the young king discovered an extreme attachment to his uncle, who was also, in the main, a man of moderation and probity, no objections were made to his power and title. All men of sense, likewise, who saw the nation divided by the religious zeal of the opposite sects, deemed it the more necessary to intrust the government to one person, who might check the exorbitancies of faction, and insure the public tranquillity. And though some clauses of the patent seemed to imply a formal subversion of all limited government, so little jealousy was then usually entertained on that head, that no exception was ever taken at bare claims or pretensions of this nature, advanced by any person possessed of sovereign power. The actual exercise alone of arbitrary administration, and that in many, and great, and flagrant, and unpopular instances, was able sometimes to give some umbrage to the nation.

* Burnet, vol. ii. Records, No. 6.

The extensive authority and imperious character of Henry had retained the partisans of both religions in subjection; but upon his demise, the hopes of the Protestants and the fears of the Catholics began to revive, and the zeal of these parties produced every where disputes and animosities, the usual preludes to more fatal divisions. The protector had long been regarded as a secret partisan of the reformers; and being now freed from restraint, he scrupled not to discover his intention of correcting all abuses in the ancient religion, and of adopting still more of the Protestant innovations. He took care that all persons intrusted with the king's education should be attached to the same principles; and as the young prince discovered a zeal for every kind of literature, especially the theological, far beyond his tender years, all men foresaw, in the course of his reign, the total abolition of the Catholic faith in England; and they early began to declare themselves in favor of those tenets, which were likely to become in the end entirely prevalent. After Southampton's fall, few members of the council seemed to retain any attachment to the Romish communion; and most of the counsellors appeared even sanguine in forwarding the progress of the reformation. The riches which most of them had acquired from the spoils of the clergy, induced them to widen the breach between England and Rome; and by establishing a contrariety of speculative tenets, as well as of discipline and worship, to render a coalition with the mother church altogether impracticable. [1] Their rapacity also, the chief source of their reforming spirit, was excited by the prospect of pillaging the secular, as they had already done the regular clergy; and they knew that while any share of the old principles remained, or any regard to the ecclesiastics, they could never hope to succeed in that enterprise.

* Goodwin's Annals. Heylin.

The numerous and burdensome superstitions with which the Romish church was loaded had thrown many of the reformers by the spirit of opposition, into an enthusiastic strain of devotion; and all rites, ceremonies, pomp, order, and exterior observances were zealously proscribed by them, as hinderances to their spiritual contemplations, and obstructions to their immediate converse with Heaven. Many circumstances concurred to inflame this daring spirit; the novelty itself of their doctrines, the triumph of making proselytes, the furious persecutions to which they were exposed, their animosity against the ancient tenets and practices, and the necessity of procuring the concurrence of the laity by depressing the hierarchy, and by tendering to them the plunder of the ecclesiastics. Wherever the reformation prevailed over the opposition of civil authority, this genius of religion appeared in its full extent, and was attended with consequences, which, though less durable, were, for some time, not less dangerous than those which were connected with the ancient superstition. But as the magistrate took the lead in England, the transition was more gradual; much of the ancient religion was still preserved, and a reasonable degree of subordination was retained in discipline, as well as some pomp, order, and ceremony in public worship.

The protector, in his schemes for advancing the reformation, had always recourse to the counsels of Cranmer, who, being a man of moderation and prudence, was averse to all violent changes, and determined to bring over the people, by insensible innovations, to that system of doctrine and discipline which he deemed the most pure and perfect. He probably also foresaw, that a system which carefully avoided the extremes of reformation, was likely to be most lasting; and that a devotion, merely spiritual, was fitted only for the first fervors of a new sect, and upon the relaxation of these naturally gave place to the inroads of superstition. He seems therefore to have intended the establishment of a hierarchy, which, being suited to a great and settled government, might stand as a perpetual barrier against Rome, and might retain the reverence of the people, even after their enthusiastic zeal was diminished, or entirely evaporated.

The person who opposed with greatest authority any further advances towards reformation, was Gardiner, bishop of Winchester; who, though he had not obtained a place in the council of regency, on account of late disgusts which he had given to Henry, was entitled, by his age, experience, and capacity, to the highest trust and confidence of his party. This prelate still continued to magnify the great wisdom and learning of the late king, which, indeed, were generally and sincerely revered by the nation; and he insisted on the prudence, of persevering, at least till the young king’s majority, in the ecclesiastical model established by that great monarch. He defended the use of images, which were now openly attacked by the Protestants; and he represented them as serviceable in maintaining a sense of religion among the illiterate multitude. [1] He even deigned to write an apology for “holy water,” which Bishop Ridley had decried in a sermon; and he maintained that, by the power of the Almighty, it might be rendered an instrument of doing good, as much as the shadow of St. Peter, the hem of Christ’s garment, or the spittle and clay laid upon the eyes of the blind. [2] Above all, he insisted that the laws ought to be observed, that the constitution ought to be preserved inviolate, and that it was dangerous to follow the will of the sovereign, in opposition to an act of parliament. [3]

But though there remained at that time in England an idea of laws and a constitution, sufficient at least to furnish a topic of argument to such as were discontented with any immediate exercise of authority; this plea could scarcely, in the present case, be maintained with any plausibility by Gardiner. An act of parliament had invested the crown with a legislative power; and royal proclamations, even during a minority, were armed with the force of laws. The protector, finding himself supported by this statute, was determined to employ his authority in favor of the reformers; and having suspended, during the interval, the jurisdiction of the bishops, he appointed a general visitation to be made in all the dioceses of England. [4] The visitors consisted of a mixture of clergy and laity, and had six circuits assigned them. The chief purport of their instructions was, besides correcting immoralities and irregularities in the clergy, to abolish the ancient superstitions, and to bring the discipline and worship somewhat nearer the practice of the reformed churches. The moderation of Somerset and Cranmer is apparent in the conduct of this delicate affair. The visitors were enjoined to retain for the present all images which had not been abused to idolatry; and to instruct the people not to despise such ceremonies as were not yet abrogated, but only to beware of some particular superstitions, such as the sprinkling of their beds with holy water, and the ringing of bells, or using of consecrated candles, in order to drive away the devil.

* Fox, vol. ii. .

* * Fox, vol. ii.

* * * Collier, vol. ii. . Fox, vol. ii.

* * * * Mem. Cranm. , 147, etc.

v Burnet, vol. ii. .

But nothing required more the correcting hand of authority than the abuse of preaching, which was now generally employed throughout England in defending the ancient practices and superstitions. The court of augmentation, in order to ease the exchequer of the annuities paid to monks, had commonly placed them in the vacant churches; and these men were led by interest, as well as by inclination, to support those principles which had been invented for the profit of the clergy. Orders therefore were given to restrain the topics of theft sermons: twelve homilies were published, which they were enjoined to read to the people: and all of them were prohibited, without express permission, from preaching any where but in their parish churches. The purpose of this injunction was to throw a restraint on the Catholic divines; while the Protestant, by the grant of particular licenses, should he allowed unbounded liberty. Bonner made some opposition to these measures; but soon after retracted and acquiesced. Gardiner was more high-spirited and more steady. He represented the peril of perpetual innovations, and the necessity of adhering to some system. "'Tis a dangerous thing," said he, "to use too much freedom in researches of this kind. If you cut the old canal, the water is apt to run farther than you have a mind to. If you indulge the humor of novelty, you cannot put a stop to people's demands, nor govern their indiscretions at pleasure." "For my part," said he, on another occasion "my sole concern is, to manage the third and last act of my life with decency, and to make a handsome exit off the stage. Provided this point is secured, I am not solicitous about the rest. I am already by nature condemned to death: no man can give me a pardon from this sentence; nor so much as procure me a reprieve. To speak my mind, and to act as my conscience directs, are two branches of liberty which I can never part with. Sincerity in speech, and integrity in action, are entertaining qualities: they will stick by a man when every thing else takes its leave; and I must not resign them upon any consideration. The best on it is, if I do not throw them away myself, no man can force them from me: but if I give them up, then am I ruined by myself, and deserve to lose all my preferments." [1] This opposition of Gardiner drew on him the indignation of the council; and he was sent to the Fleet, where he was used with some severity.

* Collier, vol. ii. , ex MS. Col. C. C. Cantab. Bibliotheca Britannica, article Gardiner.

One of the chief objections urged by Gardiner against the new homilies was, that they defined with the most metaphysical precision the doctrines of grace, and of justification by faith; points, he thought, which it was superfluous for any man to know exactly, and which certainly much exceeded the comprehension of the vulgar. A famous martyrologist calls Gardiner, on account of this opinion, "an insensible ass, and one that had no feeling of God's spirit in the matter of justification." [1] The meanest Protestant imagined, at that time, that he had a full comprehension of all those mysterious doctrines; and he heartily despised the most learned and knowing person of the ancient religion, who acknowledged his ignorance with regard to them. It is indeed certain, that the reformers were very fortunate in their doctrine of justification; and might venture to foretell its success, in opposition to all the ceremonies, shows, and superstitions of Popery. By exalting Christ and his sufferings, and renouncing all claim to independent merit in ourselves, it was calculated to become popular, and coincided with those principles of panegyric and of self-abasement which generally have place in religion.

* Fox. vol. ii.

Tonstal, bishop of Durham, having, as well as Gardiner, made some opposition to the new regulations, was dismissed by the council; but no further severity was for the present exercised against him. He was a man of great moderation, and of the most unexceptionable character in the kingdom.

The same religious zeal which engaged Somerset to promote the reformation at home, led him to carry his attention to foreign countries; where the interests of the Protestants were now exposed to the most imminent danger. The Roman pontiff, with much reluctance, and after long delays, had at last summoned a general council, which was assembled at Trent, and was employed both in correcting the abuses of the church, and in ascertaining her doctrines. The emperor, who desired to repress the power of the court of Rome, as well as gain over the Protestants, promoted the former object of the council; the pope, who found his own greatness so deeply interested, desired rather to employ them in the latter. He gave instructions to his legates, who presided in the council, to protract the debates, and to engage the theologians in argument, and altercation, and dispute concerning the nice points of faith canvassed before them; a policy so easy to be executed, that the legates soon found it rather necessary to interpose, in order to appease the animosity of the divines, and bring them at last to some decision. [1] The more difficult task for the legates was, to moderate or divert the zeal of the council for reformation, and to repress the ambition of the prelates, who desired to exalt the episcopal authority on the ruins of the sovereign pontiff. Finding this humor become prevalent, the legates, on pretence that the plague had broken out at Trent, transferred of a sudden the council to Bologna, where they hoped it would be more under the direction of his holiness.

The emperor, no less than the pope, had learned to make religion subservient to his ambition and policy. He was resolved to employ the imputation of heresy as a pretence for subduing the Protestant princes, and oppressing the liberties of Germany; but found it necessary to cover his intentions under deep artifice, and to prevent the combination of his adversaries. He separated the Palatine and the elector of Brandenburgh from the Protestant confederacy: he took arms against the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse: by the fortune of war he made the former prisoner: he employed treachery and prevarication against the latter, and detained him captive, by breaking a safe-conduct which he had granted him. He seemed to have reached the summit of his ambition; and the German princes, who were astonished with his success, were further discouraged by the intelligence which they had received of the death, first of Henry VIII., then of Francis I., their usual resources in every calamity. [2]

Henry II., who succeeded to the crown of France, was a prince of vigor and abilities; but less hasty in his resolutions than Francis, and less inflamed with rivalship and animosity against the emperor Charles. Though he sent ambassadors to the princes of the Smalcaldic league, and promised them protection, he was unwilling, in the commencement of his reign, to hurry into a war with so great a power as that of the emperor; and he thought that the alliance of those princes was a sure resource, which he could at any time lay hold of. [3] He was much governed by the duke of Guise and the cardinal of Lorraine; and he hearkened to their counsel, in choosing rather to give immediate assistance to Scotland, his ancient ally, which, even before the death of Henry VIII. had loudly claimed the protection of the French monarchy.

* Father Paul, lib. ii.

* * Sleidan.

* * * Père Daniel

The hatred between the two factions, the partisans of the ancient and those of the new religion, became every day more violent in Scotland; and the resolution which the cardinal primate had taken, to employ the most rigorous punishments against the reformers, brought matters to a quick decision. There was one Wishart, a gentleman by birth, who employed himself with great zeal in preaching against the ancient superstitions, and began to give alarm to the clergy, who were justly terrified with the danger of some fatal revolution in religion. This man was celebrated for the purity of his morals, and for his extensive learning; but these praises cannot be much depended on; because we know that, among the reformers, severity of manners supplied the place of many virtues; and the age was in general so ignorant, that most of the priests in Scotland imagined the New Testament to be a composition of Luther's, and asserted that the Old alone was the Word of God. [1] But however the case may have stood with regard to those estimable qualities ascribed to Wishart, he was strongly possessed with the desire of innovation; and he enjoyed those talents which qualified him for becoming a popular preacher, and for seizing the attention and affections of the multitude. The magistrates of Dundee, where he exercised his mission, were alarmed with his progress; and being unable or unwilling to treat him with rigor, they contented themselves with denying him the liberty of preaching, and with dismissing him the bounds of their jurisdiction. Wishart, moved with indignation that they had dared to reject him, together with the word of God, menaced them, in imitation of the ancient prophets, with some imminent calamity; and he withdrew to the west country, where he daily increased the number of his proselytes.

* See note S, at the end of the volume.

Meanwhile, a plague broke out in Dundee; and all men exclaimed, that the town had drawn down the vengeance of Heaven by banishing the pious preacher, and that the pestilence would never cease, till they bed made him atonement for their offence against him. No sooner did Wishart hear of this change in their disposition, than he returned to them, and made them a new tender of his doctrine: but lest he should spread the contagion by bringing them together, he erected his pulpit on the top of a gate; the infected stood within, the others without. And the preacher failed not, in such a situation, to take advantage of the immediate terrors of the people, and to enforce his evangelical mission. [1]

The assiduity and success of Wishart became an object of attention to Cardinal Beatoun; and he resolved, by the punishment of so celebrated a preacher, to strike a terror into all other innovators. He engaged the earl of Bothwell to arrest him, and to deliver him into his hands, contrary to a promise given by Bothwell to that unhappy man; and being possessed of his prey, he conducted him to St. Andrews, where, after a trial, he condemned him to the flames for heresy. Arran, the governor, was irresolute in his temper; and the cardinal, though he had gained him over to his party, found that he would not concur in the condemnation and execution of Wishart. He determined, therefore, without the assistance of the secular arm, to bring that heretic to punishment; and he himself beheld from his window the dismal spectacle. Wishart suffered with the usual patience, but could not forbear remarking the triumph of his insulting enemy. He foretold that, in a few days, he should, in the very same place, lie as low as now he was exalted aloft in opposition to true piety and religion. [2]

* Knox’s Hist. of Ref. . Spotswood.

* * Spotswood. Buchanan.

This prophecy was probably the immediate cause of the event which it foretold. The disciples of this martyr, enraged at the cruel execution, formed a conspiracy against the cardinal; and having associated to them Norman Lesly, who was disgusted on account of some private quarrel, they conducted their enterprise with great secrecy and success. Early in the morning, they entered the cardinal’s palace, which he had strongly fortified, and though they were not above sixteen persons, they thrust out a hundred tradesmen and fifty servants, whom they seized separately, before any suspicion arose of their intentions; and having shut the gates, they proceeded very deliberately to execute their purpose on the cardinal. That prelate had been alarmed with the noise which he heard in the castle, and had barricadoed the door of his chamber; but finding that they had brought fire in order to force their way, and having obtained, as is believed, a promise of life, he opened the door, and reminding them that he was a priest, he conjured them to spare him. Two of the assassins rushed upon him with drawn swords; but a third, James Melvil, more calm and more considerate in villany, stopped their career, and bade them reflect, that this sacrifice was the work and judgment of God, and ought to be executed with becoming deliberation and gravity. Then turning the point of his sword towards Beatoun, he called to him, "Repent thee, thou wicked cardinal, of all thy sins and iniquities, especially of the murder of Wishart, that instrument of God for the conversion of these lands: it is his death which now cries vengeance upon thee: we are sent by God to inflict the deserved punishment. For here, before the Almighty, I protest that it is neither hatred of thy person, nor love of thy riches, nor fear of thy power, which moves me to seek thy death; but only because thou hast been, and still remainest, an obstinate enemy to Christ Jesus and his holy gospel." Having spoken these words, without giving Beatoun time to finish that repentance to which he exhorted him, he thrust him through the body; and the cardinal fell dead at his feet. [1] This murder was executed on the twenty-eighth of May, 1546. The assassins, being reenforced by their friends to the number of a hundred and forty persons, prepared themselves for the defence of the castle, and sent a messenger to London craving assistance from Henry. That prince, though Scotland was comprehended in his peace with France, would not forego the opportunity of disturbing the government of a rival kingdom; and he promised to take them under his protection.

* The famous Scotch reformer, John Knox, calls James Melvil () a man most gentle and most modest. It is very horrid, but at the same time somewhat amusing, to consider the joy, and alacrity, and pleasure which that historian discovers in his narrative of this assassination; and it is remarkable, that in the first edition of his work, these words were printed in the margin of the page: "The godly Fact and Words of James Melvil." But the following editors retrenched them. Knox himself had no hand in the murder of Beatoun; but he afterwards joined the assassins, and assisted them in holding out the castle. See Keith's Hist.

of the Rcf. of Scotland, .

It was the peculiar misfortune of Scotland, that five short reigns had been followed successively by as many long minorities; and the execution of justice, which the prince was beginning to introduce, had been continually interrupted by the cabals, factions, and animosities of the great. But besides these inveterate and ancient evils, a new source of disorder had arisen, the disputes and contentions of theology which were sufficient to disturb the most settled government; and the death of the cardinal, who was possessed of abilities and vigor, seemed much to weaken the hands of the administration. But the queen dowager was a woman of uncommon talents and virtue; and she did as much to support the government, and supply the weakness of Arran, the governor, as could be expected in her situation.

The protector of England, as soon as the state was brought to some composure, made preparations for war with Scotland; and he was determined to execute, if possible, that project of uniting the two kingdoms by marriage, on which the late king had been so intent, and which he had recommended with his dying breath to his executors. He levied an army of eighteen thousand men, and equipped a fleet of sixty sail, one half of which were ships of war, the other laden with provisions and ammunition. He gave the command of the fleet to Lord Clinton; he himself marched at the head of the army, attended by the earl of Warwick. These hostile measures were covered with a pretence of revenging some depredations committed by the borderers: but besides that Somerset revived the ancient claim of the superiority of the English crown over that of Scotland, he refused to enter into negotiation on any other condition than the marriage of the young queen with Edward.

The protector, before he opened the campaign, published a manifesto, in which he enforced all the arguments for that measure. He said, that nature seemed originally to have intended this island for one empire, and having cut it off from all communication with foreign states, and guarded it by the ocean, she had pointed out to the inhabitants the road to happiness and to security; that the education and customs of the people concurred with nature; and, by giving them the same language, and laws, and manners, had invited them to a thorough union and coalition: that fortune had at last removed all obstacles, and had prepared an expedient by which they might become one people, without leaving any place for that jealousy either of honor or of interest, to which rival nations are naturally exposed: that the crown of Scotland had devolved on a female; that of England on a male; and happily the two sovereigns, as of a rank, were also of an age the most suitable to each other: that the hostile dispositions which prevailed between the nations, and which arose from past injuries, would soon be extinguished, after a long and secure peace had established confidence between them: that the memory of former miseries, which at present inflamed their mutual animosity, would then serve only to make them cherish with more passion a state of happiness and tranquillity so long unknown to their ancestors: that when hostilities had ceased between the kingdoms, the Scottish nobility, who were at present obliged to remain perpetually in a warlike posture, would learn to cultivate the arts of peace, and would soften their minds to a love of domestic order and obedience: that as this situation was desirable to both kingdoms, so particularly to Scotland, which had been exposed to the greatest miseries from intestine and foreign wars, and saw herself every moment in danger of losing her independency by the efforts of a richer and more powerful people: that though England had claims of superiority, she was willing to resign every pretension for the sake of future peace; and desired a union which would be the more secure, as it would be concluded on terms entirely equal; and that, besides all these motives, positive engagements had been taken for completing this alliance; and the honor and good faith of the nation were pledged to fulfil what her interest and safety so loudly demanded. [1]

Somerset soon perceived that these remonstrances would have no influence; and that the queen dowager’s attachment to France and to the Catholic religion would render ineffectual all negotiations for the intended marriage. He found himself, therefore, obliged to try the force of arms, and to constrain the Scots by necessity to submit to a measure for which they seemed to have entertained the most incurable aversion. He passed the borders at Berwick, and advanced towards Edinburgh, without meeting any resistance for some days, except from some small castles, which he obliged to surrender at discretion. The protector intended to have punished the governor and garrison of one of these castles for their temerity in resisting such unequal force: but they eluded his anger by asking only a few hours’ respite, till they should prepare themselves for death; after which they found his ears more open to their applications for mercy. [2]

* Sir John Haywood in Kennet, . Heylin, .

* * Haywood. Patten.

The governor of Scotland had summoned together the whole force of the kingdom; and his army, double in number to that of the English, had taken post on advantageous ground, guarded by the banks of the Eske, about four miles from Edinburgh. The English came within sight of them at Faside; and after a skirmish between the horse, where the Scots were worsted, and Lord Hume dangerously wounded, Somerset prepared himself for a more decisive action. But having taken a view of the Scottish camp with the earl of Warwick, he found it difficult to make an attempt upon it with any probability of success. He wrote, therefore, another letter to Arran; and offered to evacuate the kingdom, as well as to repair all the damages which he had committed, provided the Scots would stipulate not to contract the queen to any foreign prince, but to detain her at home till she reached the age of choosing a husband for herself. So moderate a demand was rejected by the Scots merely on account of its moderation; and it made them imagine that the protector must either be reduced to great distress, or be influenced by fear, that he was now contented to abate so much of his former pretensions. Inflamed also by their priests, who had come to the camp in great numbers, they believed that the English were detestable heretics, abhorred of God, and exposed to divine vengeance; and that no success could ever crown their arms. They were confirmed in this fond conceit when they saw the protector change his ground, and move towards the sea; nor did they any longer doubt that he intended to embark his army, and make his escape on board the ships which at that very time moved into the bay opposite to him. [1] Determined therefore to cut off his retreat, they quitted their camp; and passing the River Eske, advanced into the plain. They were divided into three bodies: Angus commanded the vanguard; Arran the main body; Huntley the rear: their cavalry consisted only of light horse, which were placed on their left flank, strengthened by some Irish archers whom Argyle had brought over for this service.

* Holingshed, .

Somerset was much pleased when he saw this movement of the Scottish army; and as the English had usually been superior in pitched battles, he conceived great hopes of success. He ranged his van on the left, farthest from the sea; and ordered them to remain on the high grounds on which he placed them, till the enemy should approach: he placed his main battle and his rear towards the right; and beyond the van he posted Lord Grey at the head of the men at arms, and ordered him to take the Scottish van in flank, but not till they should be engaged in close fight with the van of the English.

While the Scots were advancing on the plain, they were galled with the artillery from the English ships: the eldest son of Lord Graham was killed: the Irish archers were thrown into disorder; and even the other troops began to stagger; when Lord Grey, perceiving their situation, neglected his orders, left his ground, and at the head of his heavy-armed horse made an attack on the Scottish infantry,’in hopes of gaining all the honor of the victory. On advancing, he found a slough and ditch in his way; and behind were ranged the enemy armed with spears, and the field on which they stood was fallow ground, broken with ridges which lay across their front, and disordered the movements of the English cavalry. From all these accidents, the shock of this body of horse was feeble and irregular; and as they were received on the points of the Scottish spears, which were longer than the lances of the English horsemen, they were in a moment pierced, over-thrown, and discomfited. Grey himself was dangerously wounded: Lord Edward Seymour, son of the protector, had his horse killed under him: the standard was near being taken: and had the Scots possessed any good body of cavalry, who could have pursued the advantage, the whole English army had been exposed to great danger. [1]

* Patter. Holingshed, .

The protector, meanwhile, assisted by Sir Ralph Sadler and Sir Ralph Vane, employed himself with diligence and success in rallying the cavalry. Warwick showed great presence of mind in maintaining the ranks of the foot, on which the horse had recoiled: he made Sir Peter Meutas advance, captain of the foot harquebusiers, and Sir Peter Gamboa, captain of some Italian and Spanish harquebusiers on horseback; and ordered them to ply the Scottish infantry with their shot. They marched to the slough, and discharged their pieces full in the face of the enemy: the ships galled them from the flank: the artillery, planted on a height, infested them from the front: the English archers poured in a shower of arrows upon them: and the vanguard, descending from the hill, advanced leisurely and in good order towards them. Dismayed with all these circumstances, the Scottish van began to retreat: the retreat soon changed into a flight, which was begun by the Irish archers. The panic of the van communicated itself to the main body, and passing thence to the rear, rendered the whole field a scene of confusion, terror, flight, and consternation. The English army perceived from the heights the condition of the Scots, and began the pursuit with loud shouts and acclamations, which added still more to the dismay of the vanquished. The horse in particular, eager to revenge the affront which they had received in the beginning of the day, did the most bloody execution on the flying enemy; and from the field of battle to Edinburgh, for the space of five miles, the whole ground was strowed with dead bodies. The priests, above all, and the monks, received no quarter; and the English made sport of slaughtering men who, from their extreme zeal and animosity, had engaged in an enterprise so ill befitting their profession. Few victories have been more decisive, or gained with smaller loss to the conquerors. There fell not two hundred of the English; and according to the most moderate computation, there perished above ten thousand of the Scots. About fifteen hundred were taken prisoners. This action was called the battle of Pinkey, from a nobleman's seat of that name in the neighborhood.

The queen dowager and Arran fled to Stirling, and were scarcely able to collect such a body of forces as could check the incursions of small parties of the English. About the same time, the earl of Lenox and Lord Wharton entered the west marches, at the head of five thousand men; and after taking and plundering Annan, they spread devastation over all the neighboring counties. [1] Had Somerset prosecuted his advantages, he might have imposed what terms he pleased on the Scottish nation: but he was impatient to return to England, where, he heard, some counsellors, and even his own brother, the admiral, were carrying on cabals against his authority. Having taking the castles of Hume, Dunglass, Eymouth, Fastcastle, Roxborough, and some other small places, and having received the submission of some counties on the borders, he retired from Scotland. The fleet, besides destroying all the shipping along the coast, took Broughty, in the Frith of Tay; and having fortified it, they there left a garrison. Arran desired leave to send commissioners in order to treat of a peace; and Somerset, having appointed Berwick for the place of conference, left Warwick with full powers to negotiate: but no commissioners from Scotland ever appeared. The overture of the Scots was an artifice, to gain time till succors should arrive from France.

* Holingshed, .

The protector, on his arrival in England, summoned a parliament: and being somewhat elated with his success against the Scots, he procured from his nephew a patent, appointing him to sit on the throne, upon a stool or bench at the right hand of the king, and to enjoy the same honors and privileges that had usually been possessed by any prince of the blood, or uncle of the kings of England. In this patent the king employed his dispensing power, by setting aside the statute of precedency enacted during the former reign. [1] But if Somerset gave offence by assuming too much state, he deserves great praise on account of the laws passed this session, by which the rigor of former statutes was much mitigated, and some security given to the freedom of the constitution. All laws were repealed which extended the crime of treason beyond the statute of the twenty-fifth of Edward III.; [2] all laws enacted during the late reign extending the crime of felony; all the former laws against Lollardy or heresy, together with the statute of the six articles. None were to be accused for words, but within a month after they were spoken. By these repeals several of the most rigorous laws that ever had passed in England were annulled; and some dawn, both of civil and religious liberty, began to appear to the people. Heresy, however, was still a capital crime by the common law, and was subjected to the penalty of burning. Only there remained no precise standard by which that crime could be defined or determined; a circumstance which might either be advantageous or hurtful to public security, according to the disposition of the judges.

A repeal also passed of that law, the destruction of all laws, by which the king’s proclamation was made of equal force with a statute. [3] That other law, likewise, was mitigated, by which the king was empowered to annul every statute passed before the four-and-twentieth year of his age: he could prevent their future execution; but could not recall any past effects which had ensued from them. [4]

* Rymer, vol. xv. .

* * 1 Edward VI. c. 12.

* * * 1 Edward VI. c. 2.

* * * * 1 Edward VI. c. 2.

It was also enacted, that all who denied the king’s supremacy, or asserted the pope’s, should, for the first offence, forfeit their goods and chattels, and suffer imprisonment during pleasure; for the second offence, should incur the penalty of a “præmunire;” and for the third, be attainted of treason. But if any, after the first of March ensuing, endeavored, by writing, printing, or any overt act or deed, to deprive the king of his estate or titles, particularly of his supremacy, or to confer them on any other, he was to be adjudged guilty of treason. If any of the heirs of the crown should usurp upon another, or endeavor to break the order of succession, it was declared treason in them, their aiders and abettors. These were the most considerable acts passed during this session. The members in general discovered a very passive disposition with regard to religion: some few appeared zealous for the reformation: others secretly harbored a strong propensity to the Catholic faith: but the greater part appeared willing to take any impression which they should receive from interest authority, or the reigning fashion. [1]

The convocation met at the same time with the parliament and as it was found that their debates were at first cramped by the rigorous statute of the six articles, the king granted them a dispensation from that law, before it was repealed by parliament. [2] The lower house of convocation applied to have liberty of sitting with the commons in parliament; or if this privilege were refused them, which they claimed as their ancient right, they desired that no law regarding religion might pass in parliament without their consent and approbation. But the principles which now prevailed were more favorable to the civil than to the ecclesiastical power; and this demand of the convocation was rejected.

1548.

The protector had assented to the repeal of that law which gave to the king’s proclamations the authority of statutes; but he did not intend to renounce that arbitrary or discretionary exercise of power, in issuing proclamations, which had ever been assumed by the crown, and which it is difficult to distinguish exactly from a full legislative power. He even continued to exert this authority in some particulars, which were then regarded as the most momentous. Orders were issued by council, that candles should no longer be carried about on Candlemas day, ashes on Ash Wednesday, palms on Palm Sunday. [3]

* Heylin, .

* * Ant. Brit. .

* * * Burnet, vol. ii . Collier, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

These were ancient religious practices, now termed superstitions; though it is fortunate for mankind, when superstition happens to take a direction so innocent and inoffensive. The severe disposition which naturally attends all reformers prompted likewise the council to abolish some gay and showy ceremonies which belonged to the ancient religion. [1]

An order was also issued by council for the removal of all images from the churches; an innovation which was much desired by the reformers, and which alone, with regard to the populace, amounted almost to a total change of the established religion. [2] An attempt had been made to separate the use of images from their abuse, the reverence from the worship of them; but the execution of this design was found, upon trial, very difficult, if not wholly impracticable.

As private masses were abolished by law, it became necessary to compose a new communion service; and the council went so far, in the preface which they prefixed to this work, as to leave the practice of auricular confession wholly indifferent. [3] This was a prelude to the entire abolition of that invention, one of the most powerful engines that ever was contrived for degrading the laity, and giving their spiritual guides an entire ascendant over them. And it may justly be said, that, though the priest's absolution, which attends confession, serves somewhat to ease weak minds from the immediate agonies of superstitious terror, it operates only by enforcing superstition itself, and thereby preparing the mind for a more violent relapse into the same disorders.

The people were at that time extremely distracted by the opposite opinions of their preachers; and as they were totally unable to judge of the reasons advanced on either side, and naturally regarded every thing which they heard at church as of equal authority, a great confusion and fluctuation resulted from this uncertainty. The council had first endeavored to remedy the inconvenience by laying some restraints on preaching; but finding this expedient ineffectual, they imposed a total silence on the preachers, and thereby put an end at once to all the polemics of the pulpit. [4] By the nature of things, this restraint could only be temporary. For in proportion as the ceremonies of public worship, its shows and exterior observances, were retrenched by the reformers, the people were inclined to contract a stronger attachment to sermons, whence alone they received any occupation or amusement. The ancient religion, by giving its votaries something to do, freed them from the trouble of thinking: sermons were delivered only in the principal churches, and at some particular fasts and festivals: and the practice of haranguing the populace, which, if abused, is so powerful an incitement to faction and sedition, had much less scope and influence during those ages.

* Burnet, vol. ii.

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Collier, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

* * * Burnet, vol. ii.

* * * * Fuller. Heylin. Burnet.

The greater progress was made towards a reformation in England, the farther did the protector find himself from all prospect of completing the union with Scotland; and the queen dowager, as well as the clergy, became the more averse to all alliance with a nation which had so far departed from all ancient principles. Somerset, having taken the town of Haddington, had ordered it to be strongly garrisoned and fortified by Lord Grey: he also erected some fortifications at Lauder; and he hoped that these two places, together with Broughty and some smaller fortresses which were in the hands of the English, would serve as a curb on Scotland, and would give him access into the heart of the country.

Arran, being disappointed in some attempts on Broughty, relied chiefly on the succors expected from France for the recovery of these places; and they arrived at last in the frith, to the number of six thousand men; half of them Germans. They were commanded by Dessé, and under him by

Andelot, Strozzi, Meilleraye, and Count Rhingrave. The Scots were at that time so sunk by their misfortunes, that five hundred English horse were able to ravage the whole country without resistance, and make inroads to the gates of the capital: [1] but on the appearance of the French succors, they collected more courage; and having joined Dessé with a considerable reënforcement, they laid siege to Haddington. [2] This was an undertaking for which they were by themselves totally unfit; and even with the assistance of the French, they placed their chief hopes of success in starving the garrison. After some vain attempts to take the place by a regular siege, the blockade was formed, and the garrison was repulsed with loss in several sallies which they made upon the besiegers.

* Beagué, Hist. of the Campaigns, 1548 and 1549. .

* * Holingshed, .

The hostile attempts which the late king and the protector had made against Scotland, not being steady, regular, nor pushed to the last extremity, had served only to imitate the nation, and to inspire them with the strongest aversion to that union which was courted in so violent a manner. Even those who were inclined to the English alliance were displeased to have it imposed on them by force of arms; and the earl of Huntley in particular said, pleasantly, that he disliked not the match, but he hated the manner of wooing. [1] The queen dowager, finding these sentiments to prevail, called a parliament in an abbey near Haddington; and it was there proposed that the young queen, for her greater security, should be sent to France, and be committed to the custody of that ancient ally. Some objected that this measure was desperate, allowed no resource in case of miscarriage, exposed the Scots to be subjected by foreigners, involved them in perpetual war with England, and left them no expedient by which they could conciliate the friendship of that powerful nation. It was answered, on the other hand, that the queen's presence was the very cause of war with England; that that nation would desist when they found that their views of forcing a marriage had become altogether impracticable; and that Henry, being engaged by so high a mark of confidence, would take their sovereign under his protection, and use his utmost efforts to defend the kingdom. These arguments were aided by French gold, which was plentifully distributed among the nobles.

The governor had a pension conferred on him of twelve thousand livres a year, received the title of duke of Chatelrault, and obtained for his son the command of a hundred men at arms. [2] And as the clergy dreaded the consequences of the English alliance, they seconded this measure with all the zeal and industry which either principle or interest could inspire. It was accordingly determined to send the queen to France; and, what was understood to be the necessary consequence, to marry her to the dauphin. Villegaignon, commander of four French galleys lying in the Frith of Forth, set sail as if he intended to return home; but when he reached the open sea he turned northwards, passed by the Orkneys, and came in on the west coast at Dunbarton; an extraordinary voyage for ships of that fabric. [3] The young queen was there committed to him; and, being attended by the lords Ereskine and Livingstone, she put to sea, and, after meeting with some tempestuous weather, arrived safely at Brest, whence she was conducted to Paris, and soon after she was betrothed to the dauphin.

* Heylin, . Patten.

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Buchanan, lib. xv. Keith, . Thuanus, lib. v. c. 15.

* * * Thuanus, lib. v. c. 15.

Somerset, pressed by many difficulties at home and despairing of success in his enterprise against Scotland, was desirous of composing the differences with that kingdom, and he offered the Scots a ten years’ truce; but as they insisted on his restoring all the places which he had taken, the proposal came to nothing. The Scots recovered the fortresses of Hume and Fastcastle by surprise, and put the garrisons to the sword: they repulsed with loss the English, who, under the command of Lord Seymour, made a descent, first in Fife, then at Montrose: in the former action, James Stuart, natural brother to the queen, acquired honor; in the latter, Ereskine of Dun. An attempt was made by Sir Robert Bowes and Sir Thomas Palmer, at the head of a considerable body, to throw relief into Haddington; but these troops, falling into an ambuscade, were almost wholly cut in pieces. [1] And though a small body of two hundred men escaped all the vigilance of the French, and arrived safely in Haddington with some ammunition and provisions, the garrison was reduced to such difficulties, that the protector found it necessary to provide more effectually for their relief. He raised an army of eighteen thousand men, and adding three thousand Germans, who, on the dissolution of the Protestant alliance, had offered their service to England, he gave the command of the whole to the earl of Shrewsbury. [2] Dessé raised the blockade on the approach of the English; and with great difficulty made good his retreat to Edinburgh, where he posted himself advantageously. Shrewsbury, who had lost the opportunity of attacking him on his march, durst not give him battle in his present situation; and contenting himself with the advantage already gained of supplying Haddington, he retired into England.

* Stowe, . Holingshed, p, 994.

* * Hayward, .

Though the protection of France was of great consequence to the Scots in supporting them against the invasions of England, they reaped still more benefit from the distractions and divisions which have crept into the councils of this latter kingdom. Even the two brothers, the protector and admiral, not content with the high stations which they severally enjoyed, and the great eminence to which they had risen, had entertained the most violent jealousy of each other; and they divided the whole court and kingdom by their opposite cabals and pretensions. Lord Seymour was a man of insatiable ambition; arrogant, assuming, implacable; and though esteemed of superior capacity to the protector, he possessed not to the same degree the confidence and regard of the people. By his flattery and address, he had so insinuated himself into the good graces of the queen dowager, that, forgetting her usual prudence and decency, she married him immediately upon the demise of the late king; insomuch that, had she soon proved pregnant, it might have been doubtful to which husband the child belonged. The credit and riches of this alliance supported the ambition of the admiral, but gave umbrage to the duchess of Somerset, who, uneasy that the younger brother's wife should have the precedency, employed all her credit with her husband, which was too great, first to create, then to widen the breach between the two brothers. [1]

* Hayward, . Heylin, . Camden. Thuanus, lib. vi. . Haynes, .

The first symptoms of this misunderstanding appeared when the protector commanded the army in Scotland. Secretary Paget, a man devoted to Somerset, remarked that Seymour was forming separate intrigues among the counsellors; was corrupting by presents the king's servants; and even endeavoring, by improper indulgences and liberalities, to captivate the affections of the young monarch. Paget represented to him the danger of this conduct; desired him to reflect on the numerous enemies whom the sudden elevation of their family had created; and warned him, that any dissension between him and the protector would be greedily laid hold of to effect the ruin of both. Finding his remonstrances neglected, he conveyed intelligence of the danger to Somerset, and engaged him to leave the enterprise upon Scotland unfinished, in order to guard against the attempts of his domestic enemies. In the ensuing parliament, the admiral's projects appeared still more dangerous to public tranquillity; and as he had acquired many partisans, he made a direct attack upon his brother's authority. He represented to his friends, that formerly, during a minority, the office of protector of the kingdom had been kept separate from that of governor of the king's person; and that the present union of these two important trusts conferred on Somerset an authority which could not safely be lodged in any subject. [1] The young king was even prevailed on to write a letter to the parliament desiring that Seymour might be appointed his governor; and that nobleman had formed a party in the two houses, by which he hoped to effect his purpose. The design was discovered before its execution; and some common friends were sent to remonstrate with him, but had so little influence, that he threw out many menacing expressions, and rashly threatened that, if he were thwarted in his attempt, he would make this parliament the blackest that ever sat in England. [2] The council sent for him to answer for his conduct; but he refused to attend: they then began to threaten in their turn, and informed him that the king's letter, instead of availing him any thing to the execution of his views, would be imputed to him as a criminal enterprise, and be construed as a design to disturb the government, by forming a separate interest with a child and minor. They even let fall some menaces of sending him to the Tower for his temerity; and the admiral, finding himself prevented in his design, was obliged to submit, and to desire a reconciliation with his brother.

The mild and moderate temper of Somerset made him willing to forget these enterprises of the admiral; but the ambition of that turbulent spirit could not be so easily appeased. His spouse, the queen dowager, died in childbed; but so far from regarding this event as a check to his aspiring views, he founded on it the scheme of a more extraordinary elevation. He made his addresses to the lady Elizabeth, then in the sixteenth year of her age; and that princess, whom even the hurry of business and the pursuits of ambition could not, in her more advanced years, disengage entirely from the tender passions, seems to have listened to the insinuations of a man who possessed every talent proper to captivate the affections of the fair. [3]

* Haynes, , 90.

* * Haynes, .

* * * Haynes, , 96, 102, 108.

But as Henry VIII. had excluded his daughters from all hopes of succession if they married without the consent of his executors, which Seymour could never hope to obtain, it was concluded that he meant to effect his purpose by expedients still more rash and more criminal. All the other measures of the admiral tended to confirm this suspicion. He continued to attack, by presents, the fidelity of those who had more immediate access to the king's person: he endeavored to seduce the young prince into his interest, he found means of holding a private correspondence with him; he openly decried his brother's administration; and asserted that, by enlisting Germans and other foreigners he intended to form a mercenary army, which might endanger the king's authority, and the liberty of the people: by promises and persuasion he brought over to his party many of the principal nobility; and had extended his interest all over England: he neglected not even the most popular persons of inferior rank; and had computed that he could, on occasion, muster an army of ten thousand men, composed of his servants, tenants, and retainers: [1] he had already provided arms for their use; and having engaged in his interests Sir John Sharington, a corrupt man, master of the mint at Bristol, he flattered himself that money would not be wanting. Somerset was well apprised of all these alarming circumstances, and endeavored, by the most friendly expedients, by entreaty, reason, and even by heaping new favors upon the admiral, to make him desist from his dangerous counsels: but finding all endeavors ineffectual, he began to think of more severe remedies. The earl of Warwick was an ill instrument between the brothers; and had formed the design, by inflaming the quarrel, to raise his own fortune on the ruins of both.

* Hayne, , 106.

Dudley, earl of Warwick, was the son of that Dudley, minister to Henry VII., who, having, by rapine, extortion, and perversion of law, incurred the hatred of the public, had been sacrificed to popular animosity in the beginning of the subsequent reign. The late king, sensible of the iniquity, at least illegality, of the sentence, had afterwards restored young Dudley's blood by act of parliament; and finding him endowed with abilities, industry, and activity, he had intrusted him with many important commands, and had ever found him successful in his undertakings. He raised him to the dignity of Viscount Lisle, conferred on him the office of admiral, and gave him by his will a place among his executors. Dudley made still further progress during the minority; and having obtained the title of earl of Warwick, and undermined the credit of Southampton, he bore the chief rank among the protector's counsellors. The victory gained at Pinkey was much ascribed to his courage and conduct; and he was universally regarded as a man equally endowed with the talents of peace and of war. But all these virtues were obscured by still greater vices; an exorbitant ambition, an insatiable avarice, a neglect of decency, a contempt of justice: and as he found that Lord Seymour, whose abilities and enterprising spirit he chiefly dreaded, was involving himself in ruin by his rash counsels, he was determined to push him on the precipice, and thereby remove the chief obstacle to his own projected greatness.

When Somerset found that the public peace was endangered by his brother's seditious, not to say rebellious schemes, he was the more easily persuaded by Warwick to employ the extent of royal authority against him; and after depriving him of the office of admiral, he signed a warrant for committing him to the Tower. Some of his accomplices were also taker into custody; and three privy counsellors, being sent to examine them, made a report, that they had met with very full and important discoveries. Yet still the protector suspended the blow, and showed a reluctance to ruin his brother. He offered to desist from the prosecution, if Seymour would promise him a cordial reconciliation, and, renouncing all ambitious hopes, be contented with a private life, and retire into the country. But as Seymour made no other answer to these friendly offers than menaces and defiances, he ordered a charge to be drawn up against him, consisting of thirty-three articles; [1] and the whole to be laid before the privy council. It is pretended, that every particular was so incontestably proved, both by witnesses and his own handwriting, that there was no room for doubt; yet did the council think proper to go in a body to the Tower, in order more fully to examine the prisoner. He was not daunted by the appearance: he boldly demanded a fair trial; required to be confronted with the witnesses; desired that the charge might be left with him, in order to be considered; and refused to answer any interrogatories by which he might accuse himself.

* Buruet, Tol. ii. coll. 31. 2 and 3 Edward VI. c. 18.

It is apparent that, notwithstanding what is pretended, there must have been some deficiency in the evidence against Seymour, when such demands, founded on the plainest principles of law and equity, were absolutely rejected. We shall indeed conclude, if we carefully examine the charge, that many of the articles were general, and scarcely capable of any proof many of them, if true, susceptible of a more favorable interpretation; and that though, on the whole, Seymour appears to have been a dangerous subject, he had not advanced far in those treasonable projects imputed to him. The chief part of his actual guilt seems to have consisted in some unwarrantable practices in the admiralty, by which pirates were protected and illegal impositions laid upon the merchants.

But the administration had at that time an easy instrument of vengeance, to wit, the parliament; and needed not to give themselves any concern with regard either to the guilt of the persons whom they prosecuted, or the evidence which could be produced against them. A session of parliament being held, it was resolved to proceed against Seymour by bill of attainder; and the young king being induced, after much solicitation, to give his consent to it, a considerable weight was put on his approbation. The matter was first laid before the upper house; and several peers, rising up in their places, gave an account of what they knew concerning Lord Seymour's conduct, and his criminal words or actions.

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These narratives were received as undoubted evidence; and though the prisoner had formerly engaged many friends and partisans among the nobility, no one had either the courage or equity to move, that he might be heard in his defence, that the testimony against him should be delivered in a legal manner, and that he should be confronted with the witnesses. A little more scruple was made in the house of commons: there were even some members who objected against the whole method of proceeding by bill of attainder passed in absence; and insisted, that a formal trial should be given to every man before his condemnation. But when a message was sent by the king, enjoining the house to proceed, and offering that the same narratives should be laid before them which had satisfied the peers, they were easily prevailed on to acquiesce. [1] The bill passed in a full house. Near four hundred voted for it; not above nine or ten against it. [2] The sentence was soon after executed, and the prisoner was beheaded on Tower Hill. The warrant was signed by Somerset, who was exposed to much blame, on account of the violence of these proceedings. The attempts of the admiral seem chiefly to have been levelled against his brother's usurped authority; and though his ambitious, enterprising character, encouraged by a marriage with the lady Elizabeth, might have endangered the public tranquillity, the prudence of foreseeing evils at such a distance was deemed too great, and the remedy was plainly illegal. It could only be said, that this bill of attainder was somewhat more tolerable than the preceding ones, to which the nation had been inured; for here, at least, some shadow of evidence was produced.

* 2 and 3 Edward VI. c. 18.

* * Burnet vol. ii. .

All the considerable business transacted this session, besides the attainder of Lord Seymour, regarded ecclesiastical affairs, which were now the chief object of attention throughout the nation. A committee of bishops and divines had been appointed by the council to compose a liturgy; and they had executed the work committed to them. They proceeded with moderation in this delicate undertaking; they retained as much of the ancient mass as the principles of the reformers would permit: they indulged nothing to the spirit of contradiction, which so naturally takes place in all great innovations: and they flattered themselves, that they had established a service in which every denomination of Christians might without scruple concur. The mass had always been celebrated in Latin; a practice which might have been deemed absurd, had it not been found useful to the clergy, by impressing the people with an idea of some mysterious unknown virtue in those rites, and by checking all their pretensions to be familiarly acquainted with their religion. But as the reformers pretended in some few particulars to encourage private judgment in the laity, the translation of the liturgy, as well as of the Scriptures, into the vulgar tongue, seemed more conformable to the genius of their sect; and this innovation, with the retrenching of prayers to saints, and of some superstitious ceremonies, was the chief difference between the old mass and the new liturgy. The parliament established this form of worship in all the churches, and ordained a uniformity to be observed in all the rites and ceremonies. [1]

* 2 and 3 Edward VI. c. 1.

There was another material act which passed this session. The former canons had established the celibacy of the clergy; and though this practice is usually ascribed to the policy of the court of Rome, who thought that the ecclesiastics would be more devoted to their spiritual head, and less dependent on the civil magistrate, when freed from the powerful tie of wives and children, yet was this institution much forwarded by the principles of superstition inherent in human nature. These principles had rendered the panegyrics on an inviolate chastity so frequent among the ancient fathers, long before the establishment of celibacy. And even this parliament, though they enacted a law permitting the marriage of priests, yet confess in the preamble, “that it were better for priests and the ministers of the church to live chaste and without marriage, and it were much to be wished they would of themselves abstain.” The inconveniences which had arisen from the compelling of chastity and the prohibiting of marriage, are the reasons assigned for indulging a liberty in this particular. [1] The ideas of penance also were so much retained in other particulars, that an act of parliament passed, forbidding the use of flesh meat during Lent and other times of abstinence. [2]

The principal tenets and practices of the Catholic religion were now abolished, and the reformation, such as it is enjoyed at present, was almost entirely completed in England. But the doctrine of the real presence, though tacitly condemned by the new communion service, and by the abolition of many ancient rites, still retained some hold on the minds of men: and it was the last doctrine of Popery that was wholly abandoned by the people. [3] The great attachment of the late king to that tenet might, in part, be the ground of this obstinacy: but the chief cause was really the extreme absurdity of the principle itself, and the profound veneration, which, of course, it impressed on the imagination. The priests, likewise, were much inclined to favor an opinion which attributed to them so miraculous a power; and the people, who believed that they participated of the very body and blood of their Savior, were loath to renounce so extraordinary, and, as they imagined, so salutary a privilege. The general attachment to this dogma was so violent, that the Lutherans, notwithstanding their separation from Rome, had thought proper, under another name, still to retain it; and the Catholic preachers in England, when restrained in all other particulars, could not forbear, on every occasion, inculcating that tenet. Bonner, for this offence among others, had been tried by the council, had been deprived of his see, and had been committed to custody. Gardiner, also, who had recovered his liberty, appeared anew refractory to the authority which established the late innovations; and he seemed willing to countenance that opinion, much favored by all the English Catholics, that the king was indeed supreme head of the church, but not the council during a minority. Having declined to give full satisfaction on this head, he was sent to the Tower, and threatened with further effects of the council's displeasure.

* 2 and 3 Edward VI. ca.

* * 2 and 3 Edward VI. ca. See note T. at the end of the volume.

* * * Burnet, vol. ii, p 104.

These severities, being exercised on men possessed of office and authority, seemed in that age a necessary policy, in order to enforce a uniformity in public worship and discipline; but there were other instances of persecution, derived from no origin but the bigotry of theologians; a malady which seems almost incurable. Though the Protestant divines had ventured to renounce opinions deemed certain during many ages, they regarded, in their turn, the new system as so certain, that they would suffer no contradiction with regard to it; and they were ready to burn in the same flames from which they themselves had so narrowly escaped, every one that had the assurance to differ from them. A commission, by act of council, was granted to the primate and some others, to examine and search after all Anabaptists, heretics, or contemners of the Book of Common Prayer. [1]

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Rymer, tom. xv. .

The commissioners were enjoined to reclaim them, if possible; to impose penance on them, and to give them absolution; or, if these criminals were obstinate, to excommunicate and imprison them, and to deliver them over to the secular arm: and in the execution of this charge, they were not bound to observe the ordinary methods of trial; the forms of law were dispensed with; and if any statutes happened to interfere with the powers in the commission, they were overruled and abrogated by the council. Some tradesmen in London were brought before these commissioners, and were accused of maintaining, among other opinions, that a man regenerate could not sin, and that, though the outward man might offend, the inward was incapable of all guilt. They were prevailed on to abjure, and were dismissed. But there was a woman accused of heretical pravity, called Joan Bocher, or Joan of Kent, who was so pertinacious, that the commissioners could make no impression upon her Her doctrine was, "that Christ was not truly incarnate of the Virgin, whose flesh, being the outward man, was sinfully begotten, and born in sin, and, consequently, he could take none of it; but the Word, by the consent of the inward man of the Virgin, was made flesh." [1] This opinion, it would seem, is not orthodox; and there was a necessity for delivering the woman to the flames for maintaining it. But the young king, though in such tender years, had more sense than all his counsellors and preceptors; and he long refused to sign the warrant for her execution. Cranmer was employed to persuade him to compliance; and he said, that there was a great difference between errors in other points of divinity, and those which were in direct contradiction to the apostles' creed: these latter were impieties against God, which the prince, being God's deputy, ought to repress, in like manner, as inferior magistrates were bound to punish offences against the king's person. Edward, overcome by importunity, at last submitted, though with tears in his eyes; and he told Cranmer, that if any wrong were done, the guilt should lie entirely on his head. The primate, after making a new effort to reclaim the woman from her errors, and finding her obstinate against all his arguments, at last committed her to the flames. Some time after, a Dutchman, called Van Paris, accused of the heresy which has received the name of Arianism, was condemned to the same punishment. He suffered with so much satisfaction, that he hugged and caressed the fagots that were consuming him; a species of frenzy of which there is more than one instance among the martyrs of that age. [2]

These rigorous methods of proceeding soon brought the whole nation to a conformity, seeming or real, with the new doctrine and the new liturgy. The lady Mary alone continued to adhere to the mass, and refused to admit the established modes of worship. When pressed and menaced on this head, she applied to the emperor, who, using his interest with Sir Philip Hobby, the English ambassador, procured her a temporary connivance from the council. [3]

* Burnet, vol. ii. coll. 35 Strype’s Mem. Cranm. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Strype’s Mem. Cranm. .

* * * Heylin,

CHAPTER XXXV

EDWARD VI.

1549.

There is no abuse so great in civil society, as not to be attended with a variety of beneficial consequence; and in the beginnings of reformation, the loss of these advantages is always felt very sensibly, while the benefit, resulting from the change is the slow effect of time, and is seldom perceived by the bulk of a nation. Scarce any institution can be imagined less favorable, in the main, to the interests of mankind than that of monks and friars; yet was it followed by many good effects, which, having ceased by the suppression of monasteries, were much regretted by the people of England. The monks, always residing in their convents, in the centre of their estates, spent their money in the provinces and among their tenants, afforded a ready market for commodities, were a sure resource to the poor and indigent; and though their hospitality and charity gave but too much encouragement to idleness, and prevented the increase of public riches, yet did it provide to many a relief from the extreme pressures of want and necessity. It is also observable, that as the friars were limited by the rules of their institution to a certain mode of living, they had not equal motives for extortion with other men, and they were acknowledged to have been in England, as they still are in Roman Catholic countries, the best and most indulgent landlords. The abbots and priors were permitted to give leases at an under-value, and to receive in return a large present from the tenant, in the same manner as is still practised by the bishops and colleges. But when the abbey lands were distributed among the principal nobility and courtiers, they fell under a different management: the rents of farms were raised, while the tenants found not the same facility in disposing of the produce; the money was often spent in the capital, and the farmers, living at a distance, were exposed to oppression from their new masters, or to the still greater rapacity of the stewards.

These grievances of the common people were at that time heightened by other causes. The arts of manufacture were much more advanced in other

European countries than in England; and even in England these arts had made greater progress than the knowledge of agriculture; a profession which of all mechanical employments, requires the most reflection and experience. A great demand arose for wool both abroad and at home: pasturage was found more profitable than unskilful tillage: whole estates were laid waste by enclosures; the tenants, regarded as a useless burden, were expelled their habitations; even the cottagers, deprived of the commons on which they formerly fed their cattle, were reduced to misery; and a decay of people, as well as a diminution of the former plenty, was remarked in the kingdom. [1] This grievance was now of an old date, and Sir Thomas More, alluding to it, observes in his Utopia, that a sheep had become in England a more ravenous animal than a lion or wolf, and devoured whole villages, cities, and provinces.

* Strype, vol. ii. Repository, Q.

The general increase, also, of gold and silver in Europe, after the discovery of the West Indies, had a tendency to inflame these complaints. The growing demand in the more commercial countries had heightened every where the price of commodities, which could easily be transported thither; but in England, the labor of men, who could not so easily change their habitation, still remained nearly at the ancient rates, and the poor complained that they could no longer gain a subsistence by their industry. It was by an addition alone of toil and application they were enabled to procure a maintenance; and though this increase of industry was at last the effect of the present situation, and an effect beneficial to society, yet was it difficult for the people to shake off their former habits of indolence; and nothing but necessity could compel them to such an exertion of their faculties.

It must also be remarked, that the profusion of Henry VIII. had reduced him, notwithstanding his rapacity, to such difficulties, that he had been obliged to remedy a present necessity by the pernicious expedient of debasing the coin; and the wars in which the protector had been involved, had induced him to carry still further the same abuse. The usual consequences ensued: the good specie was hoarded or exported; base metal was coined at home, or imported from abroad in great abundance; the common people, who received their wages in it, could not purchase commodities at the usual rates: a universal diffidence and stagnation of commerce took place; and loud complaints were heard in every part of England.

The protector, who loved popularity, and pitied the condition of the people, encouraged these complaints by his endeavors to redress them. He appointed a commission for making inquiry concerning enclosures; and issued a proclamation, ordering all late enclosures to be laid open by a day appointed. The populace, meeting with such countenance from government, began to rise in several places, and to commit disorders; but were quieted by remonstrances and persuasion. In order to give them greater satisfaction, Somerset appointed new commissioners, whom he sent every where, with an unlimited power to hear and determine all causes about enclosures, highways, and cottages. [1] As this commission was disagreeable to the gentry and nobility, they stigmatized it as arbitrary and illegal; and the common people, fearing it would be eluded, and being impatient for immediate redress, could no longer contain their fury, but sought for a remedy by force of arms. The rising began at once in several parts of England, as if a universal conspiracy had been formed by the commonalty. The rebels in Wiltshire were dispersed by Sir William Herbert: those in’ the neighboring counties, Oxford and Glocester, by Lord Gray, of Wilton. Many of the rioters were killed in the field: others were executed by martial law. The commotions in Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, and other counties, were quieted by gentler expedients; but the disorders in Devonshire and Norfolk threatened more dangerous consequences.

The commonalty in Devonshire began with the usual complaints against enclosures and against oppressions from the gentry; but the parish priest of Sampford Courtenay had the address to give their discontent a direction towards religion; and the delicacy of the subject, in the present emergency, made the insurrection immediately appear formidable. In other counties, the gentry had kept closely united with government; but here many of them took part with the populace among others, Humphrey Arundel, governor of St. Michael’s Mount. The rioters were brought into the form of a regular army, which amounted to the number of ten thousand. Lord Russel had been sent against them at the head of a small force; but finding himself too weak to encounter them in the field, he kept at a distance, and began to negotiate with them; in hopes of eluding their fury by delay, and of

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Strype, vol. ii. .

dispersing them by the difficulty of their subsisting in a body. Their demands were, that the mass should be restored, half of the abbey lands resumed, the law of the six articles executed, holy water and holy bread respected, and all other particular grievances redressed. [1] The council, to whom Russet transmitted these demands, sent a haughty answer; commanded the rebels to disperse, and promised them pardon upon their immediate submission. Enraged at this disappointment, they marched to Exeter, carrying before them crosses, banners, holy water, candlesticks, and other implements of ancient superstition; together with the host, which they covered with a canopy. [2] The citizens of Exeter shut their gates; and the rebels, as they had no cannon, endeavored to take the place, first by scalade, then by mining; but were repulsed in every attempt. Russel meanwhile lay at Honiton, till reënforced by Sir William Herbert and Lord Gray with some German horse, and some Italian arquebusiers under Battista Spinola. He then resolved to attempt the relief of Exeter, which was now reduced to extremities. He attacked the rebels, drove them from all their posts, did great execution upon them, both in the action and pursuit, [3] and took many prisoners. Arundel and the other leaders were sent to London, tried, and executed. Many of the inferior sort were put to death by martial law: [4] the vicar of St. Thomas, one of the principal incendiaries, was hanged on the top of his own steeple, arrayed in his Popish weeds, with his beads at his girdle.

* Hayward, . Holingshed, . Fox, vol. ii, p. 861Mem. Cranm. .

* * Heylin, .

* * * Stowe’s Annals. . Hayward, .

* * * * Hayward, , 296.

v Heylin, . Holingshed, p 1026.

The insurrection in Norfolk rose to a still greater height, and was attended with greater acts of violence. The populace were at first excited, as in other places, by complaints against enclosures; but finding their numbers amount to twenty thousand, they grew insolent, and proceeded to more exorbitant pretensions. They required the suppression of the gentry, the placing of new counsellors about the king, and the reëstablishment of the ancient rites. One Ket, a tanner, had assumed the government over them; and he exercised his authority with the utmost arrogance and outrage. Having taken possession of Moushold Hill near Norwich, he erected his tribunal under an old oak, thence called the oak of reformation; and summoning the gentry to appear before him, he gave such decrees as might be expected from his character and situation. The marquis of Northampton was first ordered against him; but met with a repulse in an action, where Lord Sheffield was killed. [1] The protector affected popularity, and cared not to appear in person against the rebels; he therefore sent the earl of Warwick at the head of six thousand men, levied for the wars against Scotland; and he thereby afforded his mortal enemy an opportunity of increasing his reputation and character. Warwick, having tried some skirmishes with the rebels, at last made a general attack upon them, and put them to flight. Two thousand fell in the action and pursuit: Ket was hanged at Norwich Castle, nine of his followers on the boughs of the oak of reformation; and the insurrection was entirely suppressed. Some rebels in Yorkshire, learning the fate of their companions, accepted the offers of pardon, and threw down their arms. A general indemnity was soon after published by the protector. [2]

* Stowe, . Holingshed, -34. Strype, vol. ii. p. 174.

* * Hayward, , 298, 299.

But though the insurrections were thus quickly subdued in England, and no traces of them seemed to remain, they were attended with bad consequences to the foreign interests of the nation. The forces of the earl of Warwick, which might have made a great impression on Scotland, were diverted from that enterprise; and the French general had leisure to reduce that country to some settlement and composure. He took the fortress of Broughty, and put the garrison to the sword. He straitened the English at Haddington; and though Lord Dacres was enabled to throw relief into the place, and to reenforce the garrison, it was found at last very chargeable, and even impracticable, to keep possession of that fortress. The whole country in the neighborhood was laid waste by the inroads both of the Scots and English, and could afford no supply to the garrison: the place lay above thirty miles from the borders; so that a regular army was necessary to escort any provisions thither: and as the plague had broken out among the troops, they perished daily, and were reduced to a state of great weakness. For these reasons, orders were given to dismantle Haddington, and to convey the artillery and garrison to Berwick; and the earl of Rutland, now created warden of the east marches, executed the orders.

The king of France also took advantage of the distractions among the English, and made an attempt to recover Boulogne and that territory which Henry VIII. had conquered from France, On other pretences, he assembled an army, and falling suddenly upon the Boulonnois, took the castles of Sellaque, Blackness, and Ambleteuse, though well supplied with garrisons, ammunition, and provisions. [1] He endeavored to surprise Boulenberg, and was repulsed; but the garrison, not thinking the place tenable after the loss of the other fortresses, destroyed the works, and retired to Boulogne. The rains, which fell in great abundance during the autumn, and a pestilential distemper which broke out in the French camp, deprived Henry of all hopes of success against Boulogne itself; and he retired to Paris. [2] He left the command of the army to Gaspar de Coligny, lord of Chatillon, so famous afterwards by the name of Admiral Coligny; and he gave him orders to form the siege early in the spring. The active disposition of this general engaged him to make, during the winter, several attempts against the place; but they all proved unsuccessful.

Strozzi, who commanded the French fleet and galleys, endeavored to make a descent on Jersey; but meeting there with an English fleet, he commenced an action, which seems not to have been decisive, since the historians of the two nations differ in their account of the event. [3]

As soon as the French war broke out, the protector endeavored to fortify himself with the alliance of the emperor; and he sent over Secretary Paget to Brussels, where Charles then kept court, in order to assist Sir Philip

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* Thuanus, lib. vi. c. 6.

* * Hayward, .

* * * Thuan. King Edward’s Journal. Stowe, .

Hobby, the resident ambassador, in this negotiation. But that prince had formed a design of extending his dominions by acting the part of champion for the Catholic religion; and though extremely desirous of accepting the English alliance against France, his capital enemy, he thought it unsuitable to his other pretensions to enter into strict confederacy with a nation which had broken off all connections with the church of Rome. He therefore declined the advances of friendship from England, and eluded the applications of the ambassadors. An exact account is preserved of this negotiation in a letter of Hobby's; and it is remarkable, that the emperor, in a conversation with the English ministers, asserted, that the prerogatives of a king of England were more extensive than those of a king of France. [1] Burnet, who preserves this letter, subjoins, as a parallel instance, that one objection which the Scots made to marrying their queen with Edward was, that all their privileges would be swallowed up by the great prerogative of the kings of England. [2]

Somerset, despairing of assistance from the emperor, was inclined to conclude a peace with France and Scotland; and besides that he was not in a condition to maintain such ruinous wars, he thought that there no longer remained any object of hostility. The Scots had sent away their queen; and could not, if ever so much inclined, complete the marriage contracted with Edward; and as Henry VIII. had stipulated to restore Boulogne in 1554, it seemed a matter of small moment to anticipate a few years the execution of the treaty. But when he proposed these reasons to the council, he met with strong opposition from his enemies; who, seeing him unable to support the war, were determined, for that very reason, to oppose all proposals for a pacification. The factions ran high in the court of England; and matters were drawing to an issue fatal to the authority of the protector.

After Somerset obtained the patent investing him with regal authority, he no longer paid any attention to the opinion of the other executors and counsellors; and being elated with his high dignity, as well as with his victory at Pinkey, he thought that every one ought, in every thing, to yield to his sentiments. All those who were not entirely devoted to him were sure to be neglected; whoever opposed his will received marks of anger or contempt; [3] and while he showed a resolution to govern every thing, his capacity appeared not in any respect proportioned to his ambition. Warwick, more subtle and artful, covered more exorbitant views under fairer appearances, and having associated himself with Southampton, who had been readmitted into the council, he formed a strong party who were determined to free themselves from the slavery imposed on them by the protector.

* Burnet, vol. ii. , 175.

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Strype, vol ii. .

The malecontent counsellors found the disposition of the nation favorable to their designs. The nobility and gentry were in general displeased with the preference which Somerset seemed to have given to the people; and as they ascribed all the insults to which they had been lately exposed to his procrastination, and to the countenance shown to the multitude, they apprehended a renewal of the same disorders from his present affectation of popularity. He had erected a court of requests in his own house for the relief of the people, [1] and he interposed with the judges in their behalf; a measure which might be deemed illegal, if any exertion of prerogative at that time could with certainty deserve that appellation. And this attempt, which was a stretch of power, seemed the more impolitic, because it disgusted the nobles, the surest support of monarchical authority.

* Strype, vol. ii. .

But though Somerset courted the people, the interest which he had formed with them was in no degree answerable to his expectations. The Catholic party who retained influence with the lower ranks, were his declared enemies, and took advantage of every opportunity to decry his conduct. The attainder and execution of his brother bore an odious aspect: the introduction of foreign troops into the kingdom was represented in invidious colors: the great estate which he had suddenly acquired at the expense of the church and of the crown, rendered him obnoxious; and the palace which he was building in the Strand, served by its magnificence, and still more by other circumstances which attended it, to expose him to the censure of the public. The parish church of St. Mary, with three bishops' houses, was pulled down, in order to furnish ground and materials for this structure: not content with that sacrilege, an attempt was made to demolish St. Margaret’s Westminster, and to employ the stones to the same purpose but the parishioners rose in a tumult, and chased away the protector’s tradesmen. He then laid his hands on a chapel in St. Paul’s churchyard, with a cloister and charnel-house belonging to it; and these edifices, together with a church of St. John of Jerusalem, were made use of to raise his palace. What rendered the matter more odious to the people was, that the tombs and other monuments of the dead wore defaced; and the bones, being carried away, were buried in unconsecrated ground. [1]

All these imprudences were remarked by Somerset’s enemies, who resolved to take advantage of them. Lord St. John president of the council, the earls of Warwick, Southampton and Arundel, with five members more, met at Ely House and, assuming to themselves the whole power of the council, began to act independently of the protector, whom they represented as the author of every public grievance and misfortune. They wrote letters to the chief nobility and gentry in England, informing them of the present measures, and requiring their assistance: they sent for the mayor and aldermen of London, and enjoined them to obey their orders, without regard to any contrary orders which they might receive from the duke of Somerset. They laid the same injunctions on the lieutenant of the Tower, who expressed his resolution to comply with them. Next day, Rich, lord chancellor, the marquis of Northampton, the earl of Shrewsbury, Sir Thomas Cheney, Sir John Gage, Sir Ralph Sadler, and Chief Justice Montague, joined the malecontent counsellors; and every thing bore a bad aspect for the protector’s authority. Secretary Petre, whom he had sent to treat with the council, rather chose to remain with them: the common council of the city, being applied to, declared with one voice their approbation of the new measures, and their resolution of supporting them. [2]

As soon as the protector heard of the defection of the counsellors, he removed the king from Hampton Court, where he then resided, to the Castle of Windsor; and arming his friends and servants, seemed resolute to defend

* Heylin, , 73. Stowe’s Survey of London. Hayward, p.308.

* * Stowe, , 598. Holingshed, .

himself against all his enemies. But finding that no man of rank, except Cranmer and Paget, adhered to him, that the people did not rise at his summons, that the city and Tower had declared against him, that even his best friends had deserted him, he lost all hopes of success, and began to apply to his enemies for pardon and forgiveness. No sooner was this despondency known, than Lord Russell, Sir John Baker, speaker of the house of commons, and three counsellors more, who had hitherto remained neuters, joined the party of Warwick, whom every one now regarded as master. The council informed the public, by proclamation, of their actions and intentions; they wrote to the princesses Mary and Elizabeth to the same purpose; and they made addresses to the king, in which, after the humblest protestations of duty and submission, they informed him that they were the council appointed by his father for the government of the kingdom during his minority; that they had chosen the duke of Somerset protector, under the express condition that he should guide himself by their advice and direction; that he had usurped the whole authority, and had neglected, and even in every thing opposed, their counsel; that he had proceeded to that height of presumption, as to levy forces against them and place these forces about his majesty's person: they therefore begged that they might be admitted to his royal presence, that he would be pleased to restore them to his confidence, and that Somerset's servants might be dismissed. Their request was complied with: Somerset capitulated only for gentle treatment, which was promised him. He was, however, sent to the Tower, [1] with some of his friends and partisans, among whom was Cecil, afterwards so much distinguished. Articles of indictment were exhibited against him; [2] of which the chief, at least the best founded, is his usurpation of the government, and his taking into his own hands the whole administration of affairs. The clause of his patent, which invested him with absolute power, unlimited by any law, was never objected to him; plainly because, according to the sentiments of those times, that power was in some degree involved in the very idea of regal authority.

* Stowe, .

* * Burner, vol. ii. book i. coll. 46. Hayward, . Stowe, Holingshed, .

The Catholics were extremely elated with this revolution; and as they had ascribed all the late innovations to Somerset's authority, they hoped that his fall would prepare the way for the return of the ancient religion. But Warwick, who now bore chief sway in the council, was entirely indifferent with regard to all these points of controversy; and finding that the principles of the reformation had sunk deeper into Edward's mind than to be easily eradicated, he was determined to comply with the young prince's inclinations, and not to hazard his new-acquired power by any dangerous enterprise. He took care very early to express his intentions of supporting the reformation; and he threw such discouragements on Southampton, who stood at the head of the Romanists, and whom he considered as a dangerous rival, that that high-spirited nobleman retired from the council, and soon after died from vexation and disappointment. The other counsellors, who had concurred in the revolution, received their reward by promotions and new honors. Russel was created earl of Bedford: the marquis of Northampton obtained the office of great chamberlain; and Lord Wentworth, besides the office of chamberlain of the household, got two large manors, Stepney and Hackney, which were torn from the see of London. [1] A council of regency was formed; not that which Henry's will had appointed for the government of the kingdom, and which, being founded on an act of parliament, was the only legal one, but composed chiefly of members who had formerly been appointed by Somerset, and who derived their seat from an authority which was now declared usurped and illegal. But such niceties were, during that age, little understood, and still less regarded, in England.

A session of parliament was held; and as it was the usual maxim of that assembly to acquiesce in every administration which was established, the council dreaded no opposition from that quarter, and had more reason to look for a corroboration of their authority. Somerset had been prevailed on to confess, on his knees, before the council, all the articles of charge against him; and he imputed these misdemeanors to his own rashness, folly, and indiscretion, not to any malignity of intention. [2] He even subscribed this confession; and the paper was given in to parliament, who, after sending a committee to examine him, and hear him acknowledge it to be genuine, passed a vote, by which they deprived him of all his offices, and fined him two thousand pounds a year in land. Lord St. John was created treasurer in his place, and Warwick earl marshal. The prosecution against him was carried no further. His fine was remitted by the king: he recovered his liberty: and Warwick, thinking that he was now sufficiently humbled, and that his authority was much lessened by his late tame and abject behavior, readmitted him into the council, and even agreed to an alliance between their families, by the marriage of his own son, Lord Dudley, with the Lady Jane Seymour, daughter of Somerset. [3]

* Heylin, . Rymer, tom. xv. .

* * Heylin, . Hayward, . Stowe, .

* * * Hayward, * 3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 5.

During this session, a severe law was passed against riots. [1] It was enacted, that if any, to the number of twelve persons, should meet together for any matter of state, and being required by a lawful magistrate, should not disperse, it should be treason; and if any broke hedges, or violently pulled up pales about enclosures, without lawful authority, it should be felony: any attempt to kill a privy counsellor was subjected to the same penalty. The bishops had made an application, complaining that they were deprived of all their power by the encroachments of the civil courts, and the present suspension of the canon law; that they could summon no offender before them, punish no vice, or exert the discipline of the church; from which diminution of their authority, they pretended, immorality had every where received great encouragement and increase. The design of some was to revive the penitentiary rules of the primitive church; but others thought, that such an authority committed to the bishops would prove more oppressive than confession, penance, and all the clerical inventions of the Romish superstition. The parliament, for the present, contented themselves with empowering the king to appoint thirty-two commissioners to compile a body of canon laws, which were to be valid, though never ratified by parliament. Such implicit trust did they repose in the crown, without reflecting that all their liberties and properties might be affected by these canons. [2] The king did not live to affix the royal sanction to the new canons. Sir John Sharington, whose crimes and malversations had appeared so egregious at the condemnation of Lord Seymour, obtained from parliament a reversal of his attainder. This man sought favor with the more zealous reformers; and Bishop Latimer affirmed that, though formerly he had been a most notorious knave, he was now so penitent that he had become a very honest man.

* 3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 2.

* * 3 and 4 Edward VI. c. 13.

1550.

When Warwick and the council of regency began to exercise their power, they found themselves involved in the same difficulties that had embarrassed the protector. The wars with France and Scotland could not be supported by an exhausted exchequer; seemed dangerous to a divided nation; and were now acknowledged not to have any object which even the greatest and most uninterrupted success could attain. The project of peace entertained by Somerset had served them as a pretence for clamor against his administration; yet, after sending Sir Thomas Cheney to the emperor, and making again a fruitless effort to engage him in the protection of Boulogne, they found themselves obliged to listen to the advances which Henry made them, by the canal of Guidotti, a Florentine merchant. The earl of Bedford, Sir John Mason, Paget, and Petre, were sent over to Boulogne, with full powers to negotiate. The French king absolutely refused to pay the two millions of crowns, which his predecessor had acknowledged to be due to the crown of England as arrears of pensions; and said, that he never would consent to render himself tributary to any prince: but he offered a sum for the immediate restitution of Boulogne; and four hundred thousand crowns were at last agreed on, one half to be paid immediately, the other in August following. Six hostages were given for the performance of this article. Scotland was comprehended in the treaty: the English stipulated to restore Lauder and Dunglas, and to demolish the fortresses of Roxburgh and Eymouth. [1] No sooner was peace concluded with France, than a project was entertained of a close alliance with that kingdom; and Henry willingly embraced a proposal so suitable both to his interests and his inclinations. An agreement some time after was formed for a marriage between Edward and Elizabeth, a daughter of France; and all the articles were, after a little negotiation, fully settled: [2] but this project never took effect.

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Hayward, , 811, 312. Rymer, vol. xv. .

* * Hayward, . Heylin, . Rymer, tom. xv. .

The intention of marrying the king to a daughter of Henry, a violent persecutor of the Protestants, was nowise acceptable to that party in England: but in all other respects the council was steady in promoting the reformation, and in enforcing the laws against the Romanists. Several prelates were still addicted to that communion; and though they made some compliances, in order to save their bishoprics, they retarded, as much as they safely could, the execution of the new laws, and gave countenance to such incumbents as were negligent or refractory. A resolution was therefore taken to seek pretences for depriving those prelates; and the execution of this intention was the more easy, as they had all of them been obliged to take commissions, in which it was declared, that they held their sees during the king's pleasure only. It was thought proper to begin with Gardiner, in order to strike a terror into the rest. The method of proceeding against him was violent, and had scarcely any color of law or justice. Injunctions had been given him to inculcate in a sermon the duty of obedience to a king, even during his minority; and because he had neglected this topic, he had been thrown into prison, and had been there detained during two years, without being accused of any crime except disobedience to this arbitrary command. The duke of Somerset, Secretary Petre, and some others of the council, were now sent, in order to try his temper, and endeavor to find some grounds for depriving him: he professed to them his intention of conforming to the government, of supporting the king's laws, and of officiating by the new liturgy. This was not the disposition which they expected or desired. [1] A new deputation was therefore sent, who carried him several articles to subscribe. He was required to acknowledge his former misbehavior, and to confess the justice of his confinement: he was likewise to own, that the king was supreme head of the church; that the power of making and dispensing with holydays was part of the prerogative; that the book of common prayer was a godly and commendable form; that the king was a complete sovereign in his minority; that the law of the six articles was justly repealed; and that the king had full authority to correct and reform what was amiss in ecclesiastical discipline, government, or doctrine. The bishop was willing to set his hand to all the articles except the first: he maintained his conduct to have been inoffensive; and declared, that he would not own himself guilty of faults which he had never committed. [2]

* Heylin, .

* * Collier, vol. ii. p, 305., from the council books. Heylin, .

The council, finding that he had gone such lengths, were determined to prevent his full compliance by multiplying the difficulties upon him, and sending him new articles to subscribe. A list was selected of such points as they thought would be the hardest of digestion; and, not content with this rigor, they also insisted on his submission, and his acknowledgment of past errors. To make this subscription more mortifying, they demanded a promise, that he would recommend and publish all these articles from the pulpit: but Gardiner, who saw that they intended either to ruin or dishonor him, or perhaps both, determined not to gratify his enemies by any further compliance: he still maintained his innocence; desired a fair trial; and refused to subscribe more articles till he should recover his liberty. For this pretended offence his bishopric was put under sequestration for three months; and as he then appeared no more compliant than before, a commission was appointed to try, or, more properly speaking, to condemn him.

1551.

The commissioners were, the primate, the bishops of London, Ely, and Lincoln, Secretary Petre, Sir James Hales, and some other lawyers. Gardiner objected to the legality of the commission, which was not founded on any statute or precedent; and he appealed from the commissioners to the king. His appeal was not regarded: sentence was pronounced against him; he was deprived of his bishopric, and committed to close custody; his books and papers were seized; he was secluded from all company; and it was not allowed him either to send or receive any letters or messages. [1]

Gardiner, as well as the other prelates, had agreed to hold his office during the king’s pleasure: but the council, unwilling to make use of a concession which had been so illegally and arbitrarily extorted, chose rather to employ some forms of justice; a resolution which led them to commit still greater iniquities and severities. But the violence of the reformers did not stop here. Day, bishop of Chichester, Heathe of Worcester, and Voisey of Exeter, were deprived of their bishoprics, on pretence of disobedience. Even Kitchen of Landaff, Capon of Salisbury, and Samson of Coventry, though they had complied in every thing, yet, not being supposed cordial in their obedience, were obliged to seek protection, by sacrificing the most considerable revenues of their see to the rapacious courtiers. [2]

These plunderers neglected not even smaller profits. An order was issued by council for purging the library at Westminster of all missals, legends, and other superstitious volumes, and delivering their garniture to Sir Anthony Aucher. [3]

* Fox, vol. ii.., et seq. Burnet. Heylin. Collier.

* * Goodwin de Præsul. Angl Heylin. .

* * * Collier, vol. ii. .

Many of these books were plated with gold and silver, and curiously embossed; and this finery was probably the superstition that condemned them. Great havoc was likewise made on the libraries at Oxford. Books and manuscripts were destroyed without distinction: the volumes of divinity from the council books, suffered for their rich binding: those of literature were condemned as useless: those of geometry and astronomy were supposed to contain nothing but necromancy. [1] The university had not power to oppose these barbarous violences: they were in danger of losing their own revenues; and expected every moment to be swallowed up by the earl of Warwick and his associates.

Though every one besides yielded to the authority of the council, the lady Mary could never be brought to compliance; and she still continued to adhere to the mass, and to reject the new liturgy. Her behavior was, during some time, connived at; but at last her two chaplains, Mallet and Berkeley, were thrown into prison; [2] and remonstrances were made to the princess herself on account of her disobedience. The council wrote her a letter, by which they endeavored to make her change her sentiments, and to persuade her that her religious faith was very ill grounded. They asked her what warrant there was in Scripture for prayers in an unknown tongue, the use of images, or offering up the sacrament for the dead; and they desired her to peruse St. Austin, and the other ancient doctors, who would convince her of the errors of the Romish superstition, and prove that it was founded merely on false miracles and lying stories. [3] The lady Mary remained obstinate against all this advice, and declared herself willing to endure death rather than relinquish her religion; she only feared, she said, that she was not worthy to suffer martyrdom in so holy a cause: and as for Protestant books, she thanked God, that as she never had, so she hoped never to read any of them. Dreading further violence, she endeavored to make an escape to her kinsman Charles; but her design was discovered and prevented. [4] The emperor remonstrated in her behalf, and even threatened hostilities if liberty of conscience were refused her: but though the council, sensible that the kingdom was in no condition to support with honor such a war, was desirous to comply, they found great difficulty to overcome the scruples of the young king. He had been educated in such a violent abhorrence of the mass and other popish rites, which he regarded as impious and idolatrous, that he should participate, he thought, in the sin, if he allowed its commission: and when at last the importunity of Cranmer, Ridley, and Poinet prevailed somewhat over his opposition, he burst into tears; lamenting his sister's obstinacy, and bewailing his own hard fate, that he must suffer her to continue in such an abominable mode of worship.

* Wood, Hist. and Antiq. Oxon. lib. i. , 272.

* * Strype, vol. ii. .

* * * Fox, vol. ii. Collier, Burnet.

* * * * Hayward, .

The great object, at this time, of antipathy among the Protestant sects was Popery, or, more properly, speaking, the Papists. These they regarded as the common enemy, who threatened every moment to overwhelm the evangelical faith, and destroy its partisans by fire and sword: they had not as yet had leisure to attend to the other minute differences among themselves, which afterwards became the object of such furious quarrels and animosities, and threw the whole kingdom into combustion. Several Lutheran divines, who had reputation in those days, Bucer, Peter Martyr, and others, were induced to take shelter in England, from the persecutions which the emperor exercised in Germany; and they received protection and encouragement. John Alasco, a Polish nobleman, being expelled his country by the rigors of the Catholics, settled during some time at Embden in East Friezland, where he became preacher to a congregation of the reformed. Foreseeing the persecutions which ensued, he removed to England, and brought his congregation along with him. The council, who regard them as industrious, useful people, and desired to invite over others of the same character, not only gave them the church of Augustine Friars for the exercise of their religion, but granted them a charter, by which they were erected into a corporation, consisting of a superintendent and four assisting ministers. This ecclesiastical establishment was quite independent of the church of England, and differed from it in some rites and ceremonies. [1]

These differences among the Protestants were matter of triumph to the Catholics; who insisted, that the moment men departed from the authority of the church, they lost all criterion of truth and falsehood in matters of religion, and must be carried away by every wind of doctrine. The continual variations of every sect of Protestants afforded them the same topic of reasoning. The book of common prayer suffered in England a new revisal, and some rites and ceremonies which had given offence were omitted. [2] * Mem. Cranm. .

* * Mem. Cieum. p, 289.

The speculative doctrines, or the metaphysics of religion, were also reduced to forty-two articles. These were intended to obviate further divisions and variations; and the compiling of them had been postponed till the establishment of the liturgy, which was justly regarded as a more material object to the people. The eternity of hell torments is asserted in this confession of faith; and care is also taken to inculcate, not only that no heathen, how virtuous soever, can escape an endless state of the most exquisite misery, but also that every one who presumes to maintain that any pagan can possibly be saved, is himself exposed to the penalty of eternal perdition. [1]

* Article xviii.

The theological zeal of the council, though seemingly fervent, went not so far as to make them neglect their own temporal concerns, which seem to have ever been uppermost in their thoughts: they even found leisure to attend to the public interest; nay, to the commerce of the nation, which was at that time very little the object of general study or attention. The trade of England had anciently been carried on altogether by foreigners, chiefly the inhabitants of the Hanse Towns, or Easterlings, as they were called; and in order to encourage these merchants to settle in England, they had been erected into a corporation by Henry III., had obtained a patent, were endowed with privileges, and were exempted from several heavy duties paid by other aliens. So ignorant were the English of commerce, that this company, usually denominated the merchants of the “stil-yard,” engrossed, even down to the reign of Edward, almost the whole foreign trade of the kingdom; and as they naturally employed the shipping of their own country, the navigation of England was also in a very languishing condition. It was therefore thought proper by the council to seek pretences for annulling the privileges of this corporation, privileges which put them nearly on an equal footing with Englishmen in the duties which they paid; and as such patents were, during that age, granted by the absolute power of the king, men were the less surprised to find them revoked by the same authority. Several remonstrances were made against this innovation by Lubec, Hamburgh, and other Hanse Towns; but the council persevered in their resolution, and the good effects of it soon became visible to the nation. The English merchants, by their very situation as natives, had advantages above foreigners in the purchase of cloth, wool, and other commodities; though these advantages had not hitherto been sufficient to rouse then industry, or engage them to become rivals to this opulent company: but when aliens’ duty was also imposed upon all foreigners indiscriminately, the English were tempted to enter into commerce; and a spirit of industry began to appear in the kingdom. [1]

About the same time a treaty was made with Gustavus Ericson, king of Sweden, by which it was stipulated, that if he sent bullion into England, he might export English commodities without paying custom; that he should carry bullion to no other prince; that if he sent ozimus, steel, copper, etc., he should pay custom for English commodities as an Englishman; and that if he sent other merchandise, he should have free intercourse, paying custom as a stranger. [2] The bullion sent over by Sweden, though it could not be in great quantity, set the mint to work: good specie was coined, and much of the base metal formerly issued was recalled: a circumstance which tended extremely to the encouragement of commerce.

* Hayward, Heylin, . Strype's Mem. vol. ii. p 295.

* * Heylin p 109.

But all these schemes for promoting industry were likely to prove abortive by the fear of domestic convulsions, arising from the ambition of Warwick. That nobleman, not contented with the station which he had attained, carried further his pretensions, and had gained partisans who were disposed to second him in every enterprise. The last earl of Northumberland died without issue; and as Sir Thomas Piercy, his brother, had been attainted on account of the share which he had in the Yorkshire insurrection during the late reign, the title was at present extinct, and the estate was vested in the crown. Warwick now procured to himself a grant of those ample possessions, which lay chiefly in the north, the most warlike part of the kingdom; and was dignified with the title of duke of Northumberland. His friend Paulet, Lord St. John, the treasurer, was created, first, earl of Wiltshire, then marquis of Winchester: Sir William Herbert obtained the title of earl of Pembroke.

But the ambition of Northumberland made him regard all increase of possessions and titles, either to himself or his artisans, as steps only to further acquisitions. Finding that Somerset, though degraded from his dignity, and even lessened in the public opinion by his spiritless conduct, still enjoyed a considerable share of popularity, he determined to ruin the man whom he regarded as the chief obstacle to the attainment of his hopes. The alliance which had been contracted between the families had produced no cordial union, and only enabled Northumberland to compass with more certainty the destruction of his rival. He secretly gained many of the friends and servants of that unhappy nobleman: he sometimes terrified him by the appearance of danger; sometimes provoked him by ill usage. The unguarded Somerset often broke out into menacing expressions against Northumberland: at other times he formed rash projects, which he immediately abandoned his treacherous confidants carried to his enemy every passionate word which dropped from him: they revealed the schemes which they themselves had first suggested: and Northumberland, thinking that the proper season was now come, began to act in an open manner against him.

In one night, the duke of Somerset, Lord Grey, David and John Seymour, Hammond, and Neudigate, two of the duke’s servants, Sir Ralph Vane, and Sir Thomas Palmer, were arrested and committed to custody. Next day, the duchess of Somerset, with her favorites Crane and his wife, Sir Miles Partridge, Sir Michael Stanhope, Bannister, and others, was thrown into prison. Sir Thomas Palmer, who had all along acted as a spy upon Somerset, accused him of having formed a design to raise an insurrection in the north, to attack the gens d’armes on a muster day, to secure the Tower, and to raise a rebellion in London: but, what was the only probable accusation, he asserted, that Somerset had once laid a project for murdering Northumberland, Northampton, and Pembroke at a banquet which was to be given them by Lord Paget Crane and his wife confirmed Palmer’s testimony with regard to this last design; and it appears that some rash scheme of that nature had really been mentioned, though no regular conspiracy had been formed, or means prepared for its execution Hammond confessed that the duke had armed men to guard him one night in his house at Greenwich.

Somerset was brought to his trial before the marquis of Winchester, created high steward. Twenty-seven peers composed the jury, among whom were Northumberland, Pembroke, and Northampton, whom decency should have hindered from acting as judges in the trial of a man that appeared to be their capital enemy. Somerset was accused of high treason, on account of the projected insurrections, and of felony in laying a design to murder privy counsellors.

We have a very imperfect account of all state trials during that ago, which is a sensible defect in our history; but it appears that some more regularity was observed in the management of this prosecution than had usually been employed in like cases. The witnesses were at least examined by the privy council; and though they were neither produced in court, nor confronted with the prisoner, (circumstances required by the strict principles of equity,) their depositions were given in to the jury. The proof seems to have been lame with regard to the treasonable part of the charge; and Somerset's defence was so satisfactory, that the peers gave verdict in his favor: the intention alone of assaulting the privy counsellors was supported by tolerable evidence; and the jury brought him in guilty of felony. The prisoner himself confessed that he had expressed his intention of murdering Northumberland and the other lords; but had not formed any resolution on that head: and when he received sentence, he asked pardon of those peers for the designs which he had hearkened to against them. The people, by whom Somerset was beloved, hearing the first part of his sentence, by which he was acquitted from treason, expressed their joy by loud acclamations: but their satisfaction was suddenly damped on finding that he was condemned to death for felony. [1]

1552.

Care had been taken by Northumberland's emissaries to prepossess the young king against his uncle; and lest he should relent, no access was given to any of Somerset's friends, and the prince was kept from reflection by a continued series of occupations and amusements. At last the prisoner was brought to the scaffold on Tower Hill, amidst great crowds of spectators, who bore him such sincere kindness, that they entertained to the last moment the fond hopes of his pardon. [2] Many of them rushed in to dip their hand-kerchiefs in his blood, which they long preserved as a precious relic; and some of them soon after, when Northumberland met with a like doom, upbraided him with this cruelty, and displayed to him these symbols of his crime. Somerset indeed, though many actions of his life were exceptionable, seems in general to have merited a better fate; and the faults which he committed were owing to weakness, not to any bad intention. His virtues were better calculated for private than for public life; and by his want of penetration and firmness, he was ill fitted to extricate himself from those cabals and violences to which that age was so much addicted. Sir Thomas Arundel, Sir Michael Stanhope, Sir Miles Partridge, and Sir Ralph Vane, all of them Somerset's friends, were brought to their trial, condemned, and executed: great injustice seems to have been used in their prosecution.

* Hayward, , 321, 322. Stowe, . Holingshed, p. 1067.

* * Hayward , 325.

Lord Paget, chancellor of the duchy, was on some pretence tried in the star chamber, and condemned in a fine of six thousand pounds, with the loss of his office. To mortify him the more, he was degraded from the order of the garter; as unworthy, on account of his mean birth, to share that honor. [1] Lord Rich, chancellor, was also compelled to resign his office, on the discovery of some marks of friendship which he had shown to Somerset.

The day after the execution of Somerset, a session of parliament was held, in which further advances were made towards the establishment of the reformation. The new liturgy was authorized; and penalties were enacted against all those who absented themselves from public worship. [2] To use the mass had already been prohibited under severe penalties; so that the reformers, it appears, whatever scope they had given to their own private judgment, in disputing the tenets of the ancient religion, were resolved not to allow the same privilege to others, and the practice, nay the very doctrine of toleration, was at that time equally unknown to all sects and parties. To dissent from the religion of the magistrate, was universally conceived to be as criminal as to question his title, or rebel against his authority.

A law was enacted against usury; that is, against taking any interest for money. [3] This act was the remains of ancient superstition; but being found extremely iniquitous in itself, as well as prejudicial to commerce, it was afterwards repealed in the twelfth of Elizabeth. The common rate of interest, notwithstanding the law, was at this time fourteen per cent. [4]

* Stowe, .

* * 5 and 6 Edward VI. ca

* * * 5 and 6 Edward VI. ca.

* * * * Hayward, .

A bill was introduced by the ministry into the house of lords, renewing those rigorous statutes of treason which had been abrogated in the beginning of this reign; and though the peers, by their high station, stood most exposed to these tempests of state, yet had they so little regard to public security, or even to their own true interest, that they passed the bill with only one dissenting voice. [1] But the commons rejected it, and prepared a new bill, that passed into a law, by which it was enacted, that whoever should call the king, or any of his heirs named in the statute of the thirty-fifth of the last reign, heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel, or usurper of the crown, should forfeit, for the first offence, their goods and chattels, and be imprisoned during pleasure; for the second, should incur a "præmunire;" for the third, should be attainted for treason. But if any should unadvisedly utter such a slander in writing, printing, painting, carving, or graving, he was, for the first offence, to be held a traitor. [2] It may be worthy of notice, that the king and his next heir, the lady Mary, were professedly of different religions; and religions which threw on each other the imputation of heresy, schism, idolatry, profaneness, blasphemy, wickedness, and all the opprobrious epithets that religious zeal has invented. It was almost impossible, therefore, for the people, if they spoke at all on these subjects, not to fall into the crime so severely punished by the statute; and the jealousy of the commons for liberty, though it led them to reject the bill of treasons sent to them by the lords, appears not to have been very active, vigilant, or clearsighted.

* Parl. Hist. vol. iii. . Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * 5 and 6 Edward VI. ca.

The commons annexed to this bill a clause, which was of more importance than the bill itself, that no one should be convicted of any kind of treason, unless the crime were proved by the oaths of two witnesses, confronted with the prisoner. The lords for some time scrupled to pass this clause, though conformable to the most obvious principles of equity. But the members of that house trusted for protection to their present personal interest and power, and neglected the noblest and most permanent security, that of laws.

The house of peers passed a bill, whose object was, making a provision for the poor; but the commons, not choosing that a money bill should begin in the upper house, framed a new act to the same purpose. By this act the churchwardens were empowered to collect charitable contributions; and if any refused to give, or dissuaded others from that charity the bishop of the diocese was empowered to proceed against them. Such large discretionary powers intrusted to the prelates seem as proper an object of jealousy as the authority assumed by the peers. [1]

There was another occasion in which the parliament reposed an unusual confidence in the bishops. They empowered them to proceed against such as neglected the Sundays and holy-day. [2] But these were unguarded concessions granted to the church: the general humor of the age rather led men to bereave the ecclesiastics of all power, and even to pillage them of their property: many clergymen, about this time, were obliged for a subsistence to turn carpenters or tailors, and some kept alehouses. [3] The bishops themselves were generally reduced to poverty, and held both their revenues and spiritual office by a very precarious and uncertain tenure.

* 5 and 6 Edward VI. ca.

* * 5 and 6 Edward VI. cap, 3.

* * * Burnet, vol ii. .

Tonstal, bishop of Durham, was one of the most eminent prelates of that age, still less for the dignity of his see, than for his own personal merit, his learning, moderation, humanity, and beneficence. He had opposed, by his vote and authority, all innovations in religion; but as soon as they were enacted, he had always submitted, and had conformed to every theological system which had been established. His known probity had made this compliance be ascribed, not to an interested or time-serving spirit, but to a sense of duty, which led him to think that all private opinion ought to be sacrificed to the great concern of public peace and tranquillity. The general regard paid to his character had protected him from any severe treatment during the administration of Somerset; but when Northumberland gained the ascendant, he was thrown into prison; and as that rapacious nobleman had formed a design of seizing the revenues of the see of Durham, and of acquiring to himself a principality in the northern counties, he was resolved, in order to effect his purpose, to deprive Tonstal of his bishopric. A bill of attainder, therefore, on pretence of misprision of treason, was introduced into the house of peers against the prelate; and it passed with the opposition only of Lord Stourton, a zealous Catholic, and of Cranmer, who always bore a cordial and sincere friendship to the bishop of Durham. But when the bill was sent down to the commons, they required that witnesses should be examined, that Tonstal should be allowed to defend himself, and that he should be confronted with his accusers; and when these demands were refused, they rejected the bill.

This equity, so unusual in the parliament during that age, was ascribed, by Northumberland and his partisans, not to any regard for liberty and justice, but to the prevalence of Somerset's faction in a house of commons which, being chosen during the administration of that nobleman, had been almost entirely filled with his creatures. They were confirmed in this opinion, when they found that a bill, ratifying the attainder of Somerset and his accomplices, was also rejected by the commons, though it had passed the upper house. A resolution was therefore taken to dissolve the parliament, which had sitten during this whole reign; and soon after to summon a new one.

Northumberland, in order to insure to himself a house of commons entirely obsequious to his will, ventured on an expedient which could not have been practised, or even imagined, in an age when there was any idea or comprehension of liberty. He engaged the king to write circular letters to all the sheriffs, in which he enjoined them to inform the freeholders, that they were required to choose men of knowledge and experience for their representatives. After this general exhortation, the king continued in these words: "And yet, nevertheless, our pleasure is, that where our privy council, or any of them, shall, in our behalf, recommend within their jurisdiction men of learning and wisdom; in such cases their directions shall be regarded and followed, as tending to the same end which we desire; that is, to have this assembly composed of the persons in our realm the best fitted to give advice and good counsel." [1] Several letters were sent from the king, recommending members to particular counties; Sir Richard Cotton to Hampshire; Sir William Fitzwilliams and Sir Henry Nevil to Berkshire; Sir William Drury and Sir Henry Benningfield to Suffolk, etc. But though some counties only received this species of congé d'élire from the king; the recommendations from the privy council and the counsellors, we may fairly presume, would extend to the greater part, if not the whole, of the kingdom.

* Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. ii. .

It is remarkable, that this attempt was made during the reign of a minor king, when the royal authority is usually weakest that it was patiently submitted to; and that it gave so little umbrage as scarcely to be taken notice of by any historian. The painful and laborious collector above cited, who never omits the most trivial matter, is the only person that has thought this memorable letter worthy of being transmitted to posterity.

1553.

The parliament answered Northumberland’s expectations. As Tonstal had been in the interval deprived of his bishopric in an arbitrary manner, by the sentence of lay commissioners appointed to try him, the see of Durham was, by act of parliament, divided into two bishoprics, which had certain portions of the revenue assigned them. The regalities of the see, which included the jurisdiction of a count palatine, were given by the king to Northumberland; nor is it to be doubted but that noblemen had also purposed to make rich plunder of the revenue, as was then usual with the courtiers whenever a bishopric became vacant.

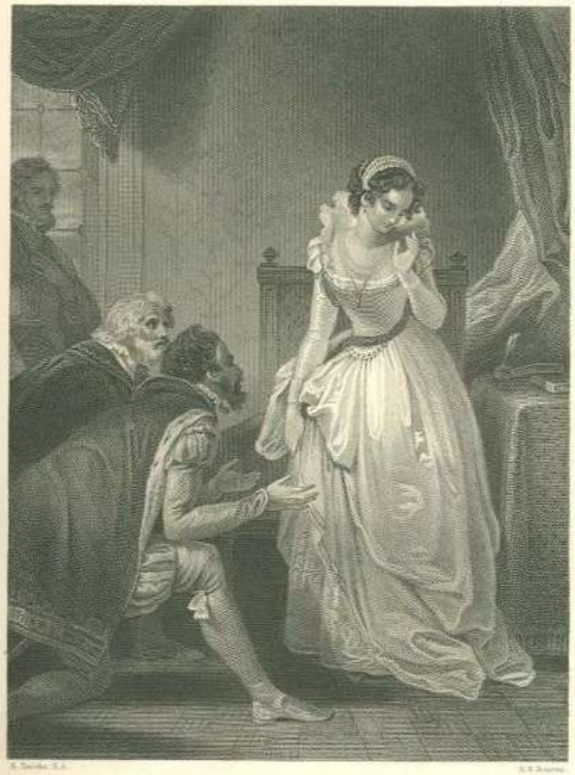
The commons gave the ministry another mark of attachment, which was at that time the most sincere of any, the most cordial, and the most difficult to be obtained: they granted a supply of two subsidies and two fifteenths. To render this present the more acceptable, they voted a preamble, containing a long accusation of Somerset, “for involving the king in wars, wasting his treasure, engaging him in much debt, embasing the coin, and giving occasion for a most terrible rebellion.” [1]

The debts of the crown were at this time considerable. The king had received from France four hundred thousand crowns on delivering Boulogne; he had reaped profit from the sale of some chantry lands; the churches had been spoiled of all their plate and rich ornaments, which, by a decree of council, without any pretence of law or equity, had been converted to the king’s use: [2] yet such had been the rapacity of the courtiers, that the crown owed about three hundred thousand pounds: and great dilapidations were at the same time made of the royal demesnes. The young prince showed, among other virtues, a disposition to frugality, which, had he lived, would soon have retrieved these losses; but as his health was declining very fast, the present emptiness of the exchequer was a sensible obstacle to the execution of those projects which the ambition of Northumberland had founded on the prospect of Edward's approaching end.

* 7 Edward VI. ca., Heylin, , 132.

* * Strype's Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol. ii. .

That nobleman represented to the prince, whom youth and an infirm state of health made susceptible of any impression, that his two sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, had both of them been declared illegitimate by act of parliament; and though Henry by his will had restored them to a place in the succession, the nation would never submit to see the throne of England filled by a bastard: that they were the king's sisters by the half blood only; and even if they were legitimate, could not enjoy the crown as his heirs and successors: that the queen of Scots stood excluded by the late king's will; and being an alien, had lost by law all right of inheriting; not to mention that, as she was betrothed to the dauphin, she would, by her succession, render England, as she had already done Scotland, a province to France: that the certain consequence of his sister Mary's succession, or that of the queen of Scots was the abolition of the Protestant religion, and the repeal of the laws enacted in favor of the reformation, and the reëstabishment of the usurpation and idolatry of the church of Rome, that, fortunately for England, the same order of succession which justice required, was also the most conformable to public interest; and there was not on any side any just ground for doubt or deliberation: that when these three princesses were excluded by such solid reasons, the succession devolved on the marchioness of Dorset, elder daughter of the French queen and the duke of Suffolk: that the next heir of the marchioness was the lady Jane Gray, a lady of the most amiable character, accomplished by the best education, both in literature and religion, and every way worthy of a crown; and that even if her title by blood were doubtful, which there was no just reason to pretend, the king was possessed of the same power that his father enjoyed, and might leave her the crown by letters patent. These reasonings made impression on the young prince; and above all, his zealous attachment to the Protestant religion made him apprehend the consequences if so bigoted a Catholic as his sister Mary should succeed to the throne. And though he bore a tender affection to the lady Elizabeth, who was liable to no such objection means were found to persuade him that he could not exclude the one sister, on account of illegitimacy, without giving also an exclusion to the other.



LADY JANE GREY DECLINING THE CROWN.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE.

Northumberland, finding that his arguments were likely to operate on the king, began to prepare the other parts of his scheme. Two sons of the duke of Suffolk by a second venter having died this season of the sweating sickness, that title was extinct; and Northumberland engaged the king to bestow it on the marquis of Dorset. By means of this favor, and of others which he conferred upon him, he persuaded the new duke of Suffolk and the duchess, to give their daughter, the lady Jane, in marriage to his fourth son, the Lord Guildford Dudley. In order to fortify himself by further alliances, he negotiated a marriage between the lady Catharine Gray, second daughter of Suffolk, and Lord Herbert, eldest son of the earl of Pembroke. He also married his own daughter to Lord Hastings, eldest son of the earl of Huntingdon. [1] These marriages were solemnized with great pomp and festivity; and the people, who hated Northumberland, could not forbear expressing their indignation at seeing such public demonstrations of joy during the languishing state of the young prince's health.

* Heylin, . Stowe, .

Edward had been seized in the foregoing year, first with the measles, then with the small-pox; but having perfectly recovered from both these distempers, the nation entertained hopes that they would only serve to confirm his health; and he had afterwards made a progress through some parts of the kingdom. It was suspected that he had there overheated himself in exercise; he was seized with a cough, which proved obstinate, and gave way neither to regimen nor medicines: several fatal symptoms of consumption appeared; and though it was hoped that, as the season advanced, his youth and temperance might get the better of the malady, men saw with great concern his bloom and vigor insensibly decay. The general attachment to the young prince, joined to the hatred borne the Dudleys, made it be remarked, that Edward had every moment declined in health, from the time that Lord Robert Dudley had been put about him in quality of gentleman of the bedchamber.

The languishing state of Edward's health made Northumberland the more intent on the execution of his project. He removed all, except his own emissaries, from about the king; he himself attended him with the greatest assiduity: he pretended the most anxious concern for his health and welfare; and by all these artifices he prevailed on the young prince to give his final consent to the settlement projected. Sir Edward Montague, chief justice of the common pleas, Sir John Baker and Sir Thomas Bromley, two judges, with the attorney and solicitor-general, were summoned to the council, where, after the minutes of the intended deed were read to them, the king required them to draw them up in the form of letters patent. They hesitated to obey, and desired time to consider of it. The more they reflected the greater danger they found in compliance. The settlement of the crown by Henry VIII. had been made in consequence of an act of parliament; and by another act, passed in the beginning of this reign, it was declared treason in any of the heirs, their aiders or abettors, to attempt on the right of another, or change the order of succession. The judges pleaded these reasons before the council. They urged, that such a patent as was intended would be entirely invalid; that it would subject, not only the judges who drew it, but every counsellor who signed it, to the pains of treason; and that the only proper expedient, both for giving sanction to the new settlement, and freeing its partisans from danger, was to summon a parliament, and to obtain the consent of that assembly. The king said, that he intended afterwards to follow that method, and would call a parliament in which he purposed to have his settlement ratified; but in the mean time he required the judges, on their allegiance, to draw the patent in the form required. The council told the judges, that their refusal would subject all of them to the pains of treason. Northumberland gave to Montague the appellation of traitor; and said that he would in his shirt fight any man in so just a cause as that of Lady Jane's succession. The judges were reduced to great difficulties between the dangers from the law, and those which arose from the violence of present power and authority. [1]

* Fuller, book viii. .

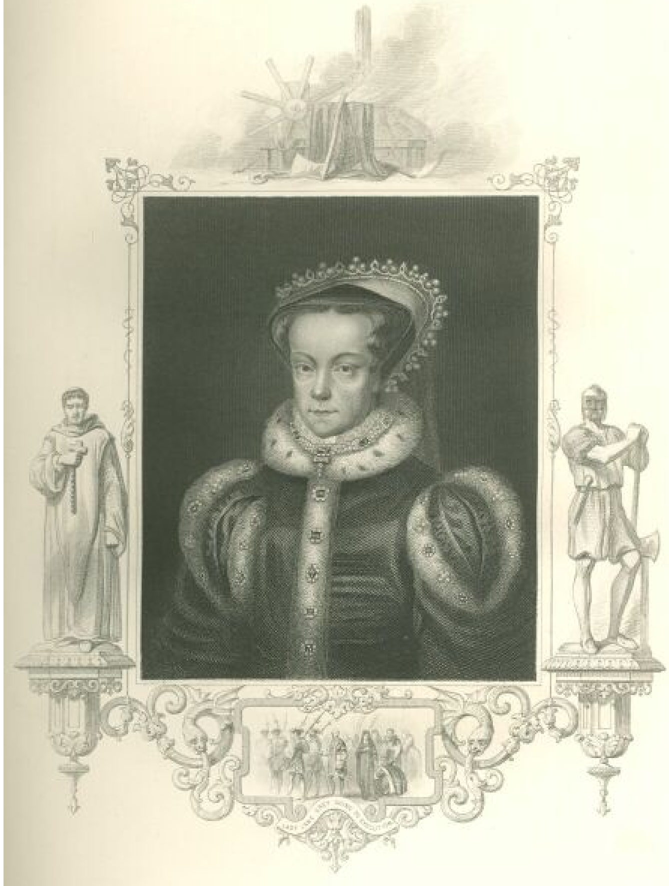
The arguments were canvassed in several different meetings between the council and the judges, and no solution could be found of the difficulties. At last, Montague proposed an expedient, which satisfied both his brethren and the counsellors. He desired that a special commission should be passed by the king and council, requiring the judges to draw a patent for the new settlement of the crown; and that a pardon should immediately after be granted them for any offence which they might have incurred by their compliance. When the patent was drawn, and brought to the bishop of Ely, Chancellor, in order to have the great seal affixed to it, this prelate required that all the judges should previously sign it. Gosnald at first refused; and it was with much difficulty that he was prevailed on, by the violent menaces of Northumberland to comply; but the constancy of Sir James Hales, who, though a zealous Protestant, preferred justice on this occasion to the prejudices of his party, could not be shaken by any expedient. The chancellor next required, for his greater security, that all the privy counsellors should set their hands to the patent: the intrigues of Northumberland, or the fears of his violence, were so prevalent that the counsellors complied with this demand. Cranmer alone hesitated during some time, but at last yielded to the earnest and pathetic entreaties of the king. [1] Cecil, at that time secretary of state, pretended afterwards that he only signed as witness to the king's subscription. And thus, by the king's letters patent, the two princesses, Mary and Elizabeth, were set aside; and the crown was settled on the heirs of the duchess of Suffolk; for the duchess herself was content to give place to her daughters.

* Cranm. Mem.

After this settlement was made, with so many inauspicious circumstances, Edward visibly declined every day, and small hopes were entertained of his recovery. To make matters worse, his physicians were dismissed by Northumberland’s advice, and by an order of council; and he was put into the hands of an ignorant woman, who undertook in a little time to restore him to his former state of health. After the use of her medicines, all the bad symptoms increased to the most violent degree: he felt a difficulty of speech and breathing; his pulse failed, his legs swelled, his color became livid, and many other symptoms appeared of his approaching end. He expired at Greenwich, in the sixteenth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign.

All the English historians dwell with pleasure on the excellent qualities of this young prince; whom the flattering promises of hope, joined to many real virtues, had made an object of tender affection to the public. He possessed mildness of disposition, application to study and business, a capacity to learn and judge, and an attachment to equity and justice. He seems only to have contracted, from his education, and from the genius of the age in which he lived, too much of a narrow prepossession in matters of religion, which made him incline somewhat to bigotry and persecution: but as the bigotry of Protestants, less governed by priests, lies under more restraints than that of Catholics, the effects of this malignant quality were the less to be apprehended if a longer life had been granted to young Edward.

CHAPTER XXXVI.


LADY JANE GREY GOING TO EXECUTION

QUEEN MARY.

LONDON JAMES S. VIRTUE

MARY.

1553.

The title of the princess Mary, after the demise of her brother, was not exposed to any considerable difficulty; and the objections started by the lady Jane’s partisans were new and unheard of by the nation. Though all the Protestants, and even many of the Catholics, believed the marriage of Henry VIII. with Catharine of Arragon to be unlawful and invalid; yet, as it had been contracted by the parties without any criminal intention, had been avowed by their parents, recognized by the nation, and seemingly founded on those principles of law and religion which then prevailed, few imagined that their issue ought on that account to be regarded as illegitimate. A declaration to that purpose had indeed been extorted from parliament by the usual violence and caprice of Henry; but as that monarch had afterwards been induced to restore his daughter to the right of succession, her title was now become as legal and parliamentary as it was ever esteemed just and natural. The public had long been familiarized to these sentiments: during all the reign of Edward, the princess was regarded as his lawful successor; and though the Protestants dreaded the effects of her prejudices, the extreme hatred universally entertained against the Dudleys, [1] who, men foresaw, would, under the name of Jane, be the real sovereigns, was more than sufficient to counterbalance, even with that party, the attachment to religion.

* Sleidan, lib. xxv.

This last attempt to violate the order of succession had displayed Northumberland’s ambition and injustice in a full light; and when the people reflected on the long train of fraud, iniquity, and cruelty, by which that project had been conducted; that the lives of the two Seymours, as well as the title of the princesses, had been sacrificed to it; they were moved by indignation to exert themselves in opposition to such criminal enterprises. The general veneration also paid to the memory of Henry VIII. prompted the nation to defend the rights of his posterity; and the miseries of the ancient civil wars were not so entirely forgotten, that men were willing, by a departure from the lawful heir, to incur the danger of like bloodshed and confusion.

Northumberland, sensible of the opposition which he must expect, had carefully concealed the destination made by the king; and in order to bring the two princesses into his power, he had had the precaution to engage the council, before Edward's death, to write to them in that prince's name, desiring their attendance, on pretence that his infirm state of health required the assistance of their counsel and the consolation of their company. [1] Edward expired before their arrival; but Northumberland, in order to make the princesses fall into the snare, kept the king's death still secret; and the lady Mary had already reached Hoddesden, within half a day's journey of the court. Happily, the earl of Arundel sent her private intelligence, both of her brother's death, and of the conspiracy formed against her; [2] she immediately made haste to retire; and she arrived, by quick journeys, first at Kenning Hall in Norfolk, then at Framlingham in Suffolk; where she purposed to embark and escape to Flanders, in case she should find it impossible to defend her right of succession. She wrote letters to the nobility and most considerable gentry in every county in England; commanding them to assist her in the defence of her crown and person. And she despatched a message to the council; by which she notified to them, that her brother's death was no longer a secret to her, promised them pardon for past offences, and required them immediately to give orders for proclaiming her in London. [3]

* Heylin, .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Fox, vol. iii, .

Northumberland found that further dissimulation was fruitless: he went to Sion House, [1] accompanied by the duke of Suffolk, the earl of Pembroke, and others of the nobility; and he approached the lady Jane, who resided there, with all the respect usually paid to the sovereign. Jane was in a great measure ignorant of these transactions; and it was with equal grief and surprise that she received intelligence of them. [2] She was a lady of an amiable person, an engaging disposition, accomplished parts; and being of an equal age with the late king, she had received all her education with him, and seemed even to possess greater facility in acquiring every part of manly and polite literature. She had attained a familiar knowledge of the Roman and Greek languages, besides modern tongues; had passed most of her time in an application to learning; and expressed a great indifference for other occupations and amusements usual with her sex and station. Roger Ascham, tutor to the lady Elizabeth, having one day paid her a visit, found her employed in reading Plato, while the rest of the family were engaged in a party of hunting in the park; and on his admiring the singularity of her choice, she told him, that she received more pleasure from that author than the others could reap from all their sport and gayety. [3] Her heart, full of this passion for literature and the elegant arts, and of tenderness towards her husband, who was deserving of her affections, had never opened itself to the flattering allurements of ambition; and the intelligence of her elevation to the throne was nowise agreeable to her. She even refused to accept of the present; pleaded the preferable title of the two princesses; expressed her dread of the consequences attending an enterprise so dangerous, not to say so criminal; and desired to remain in the private station in which she was born.

* Thuanus, lib. xiii. c. 10.

* * Godwin in Kennet, . Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Ascham's Works, , 223.

Overcome at last by the entreaties, rather than the reasons, of her father and father-in-law, and above all of her husband, she submitted to their will, and was prevailed on to relinquish her own judgment. It was then usual for the kings of England, after their accession, to pass the first days in the Tower; and Northumberland immediately conveyed thither the new sovereign. All the counsellors were obliged to attend her to that fortress; and by this means became, in reality, prisoners in the hands of Northumberland, whose will they were necessitated to obey. Orders were given by the council to proclaim Jane throughout the kingdom; but these orders were executed only in London and the neighborhood. No applause ensued: the people heard the proclamation with silence and concern: some even expressed their scorn and contempt; and one Pot, a vintner’s apprentice, was severely punished for this offence. The Protestant teachers themselves, who were employed to convince the people of Jane’s title, found their eloquence fruitless; and Ridley, bishop of London, who preached a sermon to that purpose, wrought no effect upon his audience.

The people of Suffolk, meanwhile, paid their attendance on Mary. As they were much attached to the reformed communion, they could not forbear, amidst their tenders of duty, expressing apprehensions for their religion; but when she assured them that she never meant to change the laws of Edward, they enlisted themselves in her cause with zeal and affection. The nobility and gentry daily flocked to her, and brought her reënforcement. The earls of Bath and Sussex, the eldest sons of Lord Wharton and Lord Mordaunt, Sir William Drury, Sir Henry Benningfield, Sir Henry Jernegan, persons whose interest lay in the neighborhood, appeared at the head of their tenants and retainers. [1] Sir Edward Hastings, brother to the earl of Huntingdon, having received a commission from the council to make levies for the lady Jane in Buckinghamshire, carried over his troops, which amounted to four thousand men, and joined Mary. Even a fleet which had been sent by Northumberland to lie off the coast of Suffolk, being forced into Yarmouth by a storm, was engaged to declare for that princess.

Northumberland, hitherto blinded by ambition, saw at last the danger gather round him, and knew not to what hand to turn himself. He had levied forces, which were assembled at London; but dreading the cabals of the courtiers and counsellors, whose compliance, he knew, had been entirely the result of fear or artifice, he was resolved to keep near the person of the lady Jane, and send Suffolk to command the army. But the counsellors, who wished to remove him, [2] working on the filial tenderness of Jane, magnified to her the danger to which her father would be exposed; and represented that Northumberland, who had gained reputation by formerly suppressing a rebellion in those parts, was more proper to command in that enterprise.

* Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * Godwin, . Heylin, . Burnet vol. ii. . Fox, vol. iii. p 15.

The duke himself, who knew the slender capacity of Suffolk, began to think that none but himself was able to encounter the present danger; and he agreed to take on him the command of the troops. The counsellors attended on him at his departure with the highest protestations of attachment, and none more than Arundel, his mortal enemy. [1] As he went along, he remarked the disaffection of the people, which foreboded a fatal issue to his ambitious hopes. “Many,” said he to Lord Gray, “come out to look at us, but I find not one who cries, God speed you!” [2]

The duke had no sooner reached St. Edmondsbury, than he found his army, which did not exceed six thousand men, too weak to encounter the queen’s, [3] which amounted to double the number. He wrote to the council, desiring them to send him a reënforcement; and the counsellors immediately laid hold of the opportunity to free themselves from confinement. They left the Tower, as if they meant to execute Northumberland’s commands; but being assembled in Baynard’s castle, a house belonging to Pembroke, they deliberated concerning the method of shaking off his usurped tyranny. Arundel began the conference, by representing the injustice and cruelty of Northumberland, the exorbitancy of his ambition, the criminal enterprise which he had projected, and the guilt in which he had involved the whole council; and he affirmed, that the only method of making atonement for their past offences, was by a speedy return to the duty which they owed to their lawful sovereign. [4] This motion was seconded by Pembroke, who, clapping his hand to his sword, swore he was ready to fight any man that expressed himself of a contrary sentiment. The mayor and aldermen of London were immediately sent for, who discovered great alacrity in obeying the orders they received to proclaim Mary. The people expressed their approbation by shouts of applause. Even Suffolk, who commanded in the Tower, finding resistance fruitless, opened the gates, and declared for the queen. The lady Jane, after the vain pageantry of wearing a crown during ten days, returned to a private life with more satisfaction than she felt when the royalty was tendered to her: and the messengers who were sent to Northumberland with orders to lay down his arms, found that he had despaired of success, was deserted by all his followers, and had already proclaimed the queen, with exterior marks of joy and satisfaction.[v*] The people every where, on the queen’s approach to London, gave sensible expressions of their loyalty and attachment; and the lady Elizabeth met her at the head of a thousand horse, which that princess had levied in order to support their joint title against the usurper.[v* *]

* Heylin, . Baker, . Holingshed, .

* * Speed, .

* * * Godwin, .

* * * * Godwin, , 332. Thuanus, lib. xiii.

v Godwin, . Thuanus, lib. xiii. c. 2

v* Stowe, .

v* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, . Stowe, .

The queen gave orders for taking into custody the duke of Northumberland, who fell on his knees to the earl of Arundel, that arrested him, and abjectly begged his life. [1] At the same time were committed the earl of Warwick, his eldest son, Lord Ambrose and Lord Henry Dudley, two of his younger sons, Sir Andrew Dudley, his brother, the marquis of Northampton, the earl of Huntingdon, Sir Thomas Palmer, and Sir John Gates. The queen afterwards confined the duke of Suffolk, Lady Jane Gray, and Lord Guildford Dudley. But Mary was desirous, in the beginning of her reign, to acquire popularity by the appearance of clemency; and because the counsellors pleaded constraint as an excuse for their treason, she extended her pardon to most of them. Suffolk himself recovered his liberty; and he owed this indulgence, in a great measure, to the contempt entertained of his capacity. But the guilt of Northumberland was too great, as well as his ambition and courage too dangerous, to permit him to entertain any reasonable hopes of life. When brought to his trial, he only desired permission to ask two questions of the peers appointed to sit on his jury; whether a man could be guilty of treason that obeyed orders given him by the council under the great seal; and whether those who were involved in the same guilt with himself could sit as his judges. Being told that the great seal of a usurper was no authority, and that persons not lying under any sentence of attainder were still innocent in the eye of the law, and might be admitted on any jury, [2] he acquiesced, and pleaded guilty. At his execution, he made profession of the Catholic religion, and told the people that they never would enjoy tranquillity till they returned to the faith of their ancestors: whether that such were his real sentiments, which he had formerly disguised from interest and ambition, or that he hoped by this declaration to render the queen more favorable to his family. [3] Sir Thomas Palmer and Sir John Gates suffered with him; and this was all the blood spilled on account of so dangerous and criminal an enterprise against the rights of the sovereign. Sentence was pronounced against the lady Jane and Lord Guildford, but without any present intention of putting it in execution. The youth and innocence of the persons, neither of whom had reached their seventeenth year, pleaded sufficiently in their favor.

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Stowe, . Baker, . Holingshed, .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, . Baker, . Holingshed, .

* * * Heylin, . Burnet. vol. iii. . Stowe, .

When Mary first arrived in the Tower, the duke of Norfolk, who had been detained prisoner during all the last reign, Courtney, son of the marquis of Exeter, who, without being charged with any crime, had been subjected to the same punishment ever since his father's attainder; Gardiner, Tonstal, and Bonner, who had been confined for their adhering to the Catholic cause, appeared before her, and implored her clemency and protection. [1] They were all of them restored to their liberty, and immediately admitted to her confidence and favor. Norfolk's attainder, notwithstanding that it had passed in parliament, was represented as null and invalid; because, among other informalities, no special matter had been alleged against him, except wearing a coat of arms which he and his ancestors, without giving any offence, had always made use of, in the face of the court and of the whole nation. Courtney soon after received the title of earl of Devonshire; and though educated in such close confinement that he was altogether unacquainted with the world, he soon acquired all the accomplishments of a courtier and a gentleman, and made a considerable figure during the few years which he lived after he recovered his liberty. [2] Besides performing all those popular acts, which, though they only affected individuals, were very acceptable to the nation, the queen endeavored to ingratiate herself with the public by granting a general pardon, though with some exceptions, and by remitting the subsidy voted to her brother by the last parliament. [3]

* Heylin, . Stowe, . Holingshed, .

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol ii. p 246, 247.

* * * Stowe, .

The joy arising from the succession of the lawful heir, and from the gracious demeanor of the sovereign, hindered not the people from being agitated with great anxiety concerning the state of religion; and as the bulk of the nation inclined to the Protestant communion, the apprehensions entertained concerning the principles and prejudices of the new queen were pretty general. The legitimacy of Mary's birth had appeared to be somewhat connected with the papal authority; and that princess being educated with her mother, had imbibed the strongest attachment to the Catholic communion, and the highest aversion to those new tenets, whence, she believed, all the misfortunes of her family had originally sprung. The discouragements which she lay under from her father, though at last they brought her to comply with his will, tended still more to increase her disgust to the reformers; and the vexations which the protector and the council gave her during Edward's reign, had no other effect than to confirm her further in her prejudices. Naturally of a sour and obstinate temper, and irritated by contradiction and misfortunes, she possessed all the qualities fitted to compose a bigot; and her extreme ignorance rendered her utterly incapable of doubt in her own belief, or of indulgence to the opinions of others. The nation, therefore, had great reason to dread, not only the abolition, but the persecution of the established religion from the zeal of Mary; and it was not long ere she discovered her intentions.

Gardiner, Bonner, Tonstal, Day, Heath, and Vesey, were reinstated in their sees, either by a direct act of power, or, what is nearly the same, by the sentence of commissioners appointed to review their trial and condemnation. Though the bishopric of Durham had been dissolved by authority of parliament, the queen erected it anew by letters patent, and replaced Tonstal in his regalities as well as in his revenue. On pretence of discouraging controversy, she silenced, by an act of prerogative, all the preachers throughout England, except such as should obtain a particular license; and it was easy to foresee, that none but Catholics would be favored with this privilege. Holgate, archbishop of York, Coverdale, bishop of Exeter, Ridley of London, and Hooper of Glocester, were thrown into prison; whither old Latimer also was sent soon after. The zealous bishops and priests were encouraged in their forwardness to revive the mass, though contrary to the present laws. Judge Hales, who had discovered such constancy in defending the queen’s title, lost all his merit by an opposition to those illegal practices; and being committed to custody, was treated with such severity, that he fell into frenzy, and killed himself. The men of Suffolk were browbeaten because they presumed to plead the promise which the queen, when they enlisted themselves in her service, had given them of maintaining the reformed religion: one in particular was set in the pillory, because he had been too peremptory in recalling to her memory the engagements which she had taken on that occasion. And though the queen still promised in a public declaration before the council, to tolerate those who differed from her; men foresaw that this engagement, like the former, would prove but a feeble security when set in opposition to religious prejudices.

The merits of Cranmer towards the queen during the reign of Henry had been considerable; and he had successfully employed his good offices in mitigating the severe prejudices which that monarch had entertained against her. But the active part which he had borne in promoting her mother’s divorce, as well as in conducting the reformation, had made him the object of her hatred; and though Gardiner had been equally forward in soliciting and defending the divorce, he had afterwards made sufficient atonement, by his sufferings in defence of the Catholic cause. The primate, therefore, had reason to expect little favor during the present reign; but it was by his own indiscreet zeal, that he brought on himself the first violence and persecution. A report being spread that Cranmer, in order to pay court to the queen, had promised to officiate in the Latin service, the archbishop, to wipe off this aspersion, published a manifesto in his own defence. Among other expressions, he there said, that as the devil was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies, he had at this time stirred up his servants to persecute Christ and his true religion: that this infernal spirit now endeavored to restore the Latin satisfactory masses, a thing of his own invention and device; and in order to effect his purpose, had falsely made use of Cranmer’s name and authority: and that the mass is not only without foundation, either in the Scriptures or in the practice of the primitive church, but likewise discovers a plain contradiction to antiquity and the inspired writings, and is besides replete with many horrid blasphemies. [1]

* Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Godwin, . Burnet Vol. ii. Coll. No. 8. Cranm. Mem. . Thuanus, lib xiii. c. 8.

On the publication of this inflammatory paper Cranmer was thrown into prison, and was tried for the part which he had acted in concurring with the lady Jane, and opposing the queen’s accession. Sentence of high treason was pronounced against him, and though his guilt was shared with the whole privy council and was even less than that of the greater part of them, this sentence, however severe, must be allowed entirely legal. The execution of it, however, did not follow; and Cranmer was reserved for a more cruel punishment.

Peter Martyr, seeing a persecution gathering against the reformers desired leave to withdraw; [1] and while some zealous Catholics moved for his commitment, Gardiner both pleaded that he had come over by an invitation from the government, and generously furnished him with supplies for his journey: but as bigoted zeal still increased, his wife’s body, which had been interred at Oxford, was afterwards dug up by public orders, and buried in a dunghill. [2] The bones of Bucer and Fagius, two foreign reformers, were about the same time committed to the flames at Cambridge. [3] John Alasco was first silenced, then ordered to depart the kingdom with his congregation. The greater part of the foreign Protestants followed him; and the nation thereby lost many useful hands for arts and manufactures. Several English Protestants also took shelter in foreign parts; and every thing bore a dismal aspect for the reformation.

During this revolution of the court, no protection was expected by Protestants from the Parliament which was summoned to assemble. A zealous reformer [4] pretends, that great violence and iniquity were used in the elections; but, besides that the authority of this writer is inconsiderable, that practice, as the necessities of government seldom required it, had not hitherto been often employed in England. There still remained such numbers devoted by opinion or affection to many principles of the ancient religion, that the authority of the crown was able to give such candidates the preference in most elections; and all those who hesitated to comply with the court religion, rather declined taking a seat, which, while it rendered them obnoxious to the queen, could afterwards afford them no protection against the violence of prerogative. It soon appeared, therefore, that a majority of the commons would be obsequious to Mary's designs; and as the peers were mostly attached to the court from interest or expectations, little opposition was expected from that quarter.

* Heylin, . Godwin, . Cranm. Mem. .

* * Heylin, .

* * * Saunders de Schism. Anglie.

* * * * Beale. But Fox, who lived at the time, and is very minute in his narratives, says nothing of the matter. See vol. iii. .

In opening the parliament, the court showed a contempt of the laws, by celebrating, before the two houses, a mass of the Holy Ghost in the Latin tongue, attended with all the ancient rites and ceremonies, though abolished by act of parliament. [1] Taylor, bishop of Lincoln, having refused to kneel at this service, was severely handled, and was violently thrust out of the house. [2] The queen, however, still retained the title of supreme head of the church of England; and it was generally pretended, that the intention of the court was only to restore religion to the same condition in which it had been left by Henry; but that the other abuses of popery, which were the most grievous to the nation, would never be revived.

The first bill passed by the parliament was of a popular nature, and abolished every species of treason not contained in the statute of Edward III., and every species of felony that did not subsist before the first of Henry VIII. [3] The parliament next declared the queen to be legitimate, ratified the marriage of Henry with Catharine of Arragon, and annulled the divorce pronounced by Cranmer, [4] whom they greatly blamed on that account. No mention, however, is made of the pope's authority, as any ground of the marriage. All the statutes of King Edward with regard to religion were repealed by one vote. The attainder of the duke of Norfolk was reversed; and this act of justice was more reasonable than the declaring of that attainder invalid without further authority. Many clauses of the riot act, passed in the late reign, were revived: a step which eluded in a great measure the popular statute enacted at the first meeting of parliament.

* Fox, vol. iii. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Mariæ, sess. i. ca. By this repeal, though it was in general popular, the clause of 5 and 6 Edward VI. ca, was lost, which required the confronting of two witnesses in order to prove any treason.

* * * * Mariæ, sess. ii. ca.

v Mariæ, sess. ii. ca.

Notwithstanding the compliance of the two houses with the queen's inclinations, they had still a reserve in certain articles; and her choice of a husband, in particular, was of such importance to national interest, that they were determined not to submit tamely, in that respect, to her will and pleasure. There were three marriages [1] concerning which it was supposed that Mary had deliberated after her accession. The first person proposed to her was Courtney, earl of Devonshire, who, being an Englishman nearly allied to the crown, could not fail of being acceptable to the nation; and as he was of an engaging person and address, he had visibly gained on the queen's affections, [2] and hints were dropped him of her favorable dispositions towards him. [3] But that nobleman neglected these overtures; and seemed rather to attach himself to the lady Elizabeth, whose youth and agreeable conversation he preferred to all the power and grandeur of her sister. This choice occasioned a great coldness in Mary towards Devonshire; and made her break out in a declared animosity against Elizabeth. The ancient quarrel between their mothers had sunk deep into the malignant heart of the queen; and after the declaration made by parliament in favor of Catharine's marriage, she wanted not a pretence for representing the birth of her sister as illegitimate. The attachment of Elizabeth to the reformed religion offended Mary's bigotry; and as the young princess had made some difficulty in disguising her sentiments, violent menaces had been employed to bring her to compliance. [4] But when the queen found that Elizabeth had obstructed her views in a point which, perhaps, touched her still more nearly, her resentment, excited by pride, no longer knew any bounds, and the princess was visibly exposed to the greatest danger.

Cardinal Pole, who had never taken priest's orders, was another party proposed to the queen; and there appeared many reasons to induce her to make choice of this prelate. The high character of Pole for virtue and humanity; the great regard paid him by the Catholic church, of which he had nearly reached the highest dignity on the death of Paul III.;[v*] the queen's affection for the countess of Salisbury, his mother, who had once been her governess; the violent animosity to which he had been exposed on account of his attachment to the Romish communion; all these considerations had a powerful influence on Mary. But the cardinal was now in the decline of life; and having contracted habits of study and retirement, he was represented to her as unqualified for the bustle of a court and the hurry of business.[v* *]

* Thuan. lib. ii. ca.

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. ii. , 163, 214, 215; vol. iii. .

* * * Godwin, .

* * * * Dep. de Noailles, vol. ii. passim.

v Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. p, 255.

v* Father Paul, book iii.

v* * Heylin, .

The queen, therefore, dropped all thoughts of that alliance: but as she entertained a great regard for Pole's wisdom and virtue, she still intended to reap the benefit of his counsel in the administration of her government. She secretly entered into a negotiation with Commendone, an agent of Cardinal Dandino, legate at Brussels; she sent assurances to the pope, then Julius III, of her earnest desire to reconcile herself and her kingdoms to the holy see; and she desired that Pole might be appointed legate for the performance of that pious office. [1]

These two marriages being rejected, the queen cast her eye towards the emperor's family, from which her mother was descended, and which, during her own distresses, had always afforded her countenance and protection. Charles V., who a few years before was almost absolute master of Germany, had exercised his power in such an arbitrary manner, that he gave extreme disgust to the nation, who apprehended the total extinction of their liberties from the encroachments of that monarch. [2] Religion had served him as a pretence for his usurpations; and from the same principle he met with that opposition which overthrew his grandeur, and dashed all his ambitious hopes. Maurice, elector of Saxony, enraged that the landgrave of Hesse, who, by his advice, and on his assurances, had put himself into the emperor's hands, should be unjustly detained a prisoner, formed a secret conspiracy among the Protestant princes; and, covering his intentions with the most artful disguises, he suddenly marched his forces against Charles, and narrowly missed becoming master of his person.

The Protestants flew to arms in every quarter; and their insurrection, aided by an invasion from France, reduced the emperor to such difficulties, that he was obliged to submit to terms of peace which insured the independency of Germany. To retrieve his honor, he made an attack on France; and laying siege to Metz with an army of a hundred thousand men, he conducted the enterprise in person, and seemed determined, at all hazards, to succeed in an undertaking which had fixed the attention of Europe. But the duke of Guise, who defended Metz with a garrison composed of the bravest nobility of France, exerted such vigilance, conduct, and valor, that the siege was protracted to the depth of winter; and the emperor found it dangerous to persevere any longer. He retired with the remains of his army into the Low Countries, much dejected with that reverse of fortune which in his declining years, had so fatally overtaken him.

No sooner did Charles hear of the death of Edward, and the accession of his kinswoman Mary to the crown of England, than he formed the scheme of acquiring that kingdom to his family; and he hoped by this incident to balance all the losses which he had sustained in Germany. His son Philip was a widower; and though he was only twenty-seven years of age, eleven

* Burnet, vol ii. .

* * Thuanus. lib. iv. c. 17.

years younger than the queen, this objection, it was thought, would be overlooked, and there was no reason to despair of her still having a numerous issue. The emperor, therefore, immediately sent over an agent to signify his intentions to Mary; who, pleased with the support of so powerful an alliance, and glad to unite herself more closely with her mother's family, to which she was ever strongly attached, readily embraced the proposal. Norfolk, Arundel, and Paget, gave their advice for the match: and Gardiner, who was become prime minister, and who had been promoted to the office of chancellor, finding how Mary's inclinations lay, seconded the project of the Spanish alliance. At the same time he represented, both to her and the emperor, the necessity of stopping all further innovations in religion, till the completion of the marriage. He observed, that the parliament amidst all their compliances had discovered evident symptoms of jealousy, and seemed at present determined to grant no further concessions in favor of the Catholic religion: that though they might make a sacrifice to their sovereign of some speculative principles which they did not well comprehend, or of some rites which seemed not of any great moment, they had imbibed such strong prejudices against the pretended usurpations and exactions of the court of Rome, that they would with great difficulty be again brought to submit to its authority: that the danger of resuming the abbey lands would alarm the nobility and gentry, and induce them to encourage the prepossessions, which were but too general among the people, against the doctrine and worship of the Catholic church: that much pains had been taken to prejudice the nation against the Spanish alliance; and if that point were urged at the same time with further changes in religion, it would hazard a general revolt and insurrection: that the marriage being once completed would give authority to the queen's measures, and enable her afterwards to forward the pious work in which she was engaged: and that it was even necessary previously to reconcile the people to the marriage, by rendering the conditions extremely favorable to the English, and such as would seem to insure to them their independency, and the entire possession of their ancient laws and privileges. [1]

The emperor, well acquainted with the prudence and experience of Gardiner, assented to all these reasons, and he endeavored to temper the zeal of Mary, by representing the necessity of proceeding gradually in the great work of converting the nation. Hearing that Cardinal Pole, more sincere in his religious opinions, and less guided by the maxims of human policy, after having sent contrary advice to the queen, had set out on his journey to England, where he was to exercise his legatine commission, he thought proper to stop him at Dillinghen, a town on the Danube; and he afterwards obtained Mary's consent for this detention. The negotiation for the marriage meanwhile proceeded apace; and Mary's intentions of espousing Philip became generally known to the nation. The commons, who hoped that they had gained the queen by the concessions which they had already made, were alarmed to hear that she was resolved to contract a foreign alliance; and they sent a committee to remonstrate in strong terms against that dangerous measure. To prevent further applications of the same kind, she thought proper to dissolve the parliament.

A convocation had been summoned at the same time with the parliament; and the majority here also appeared to be of the court religion. An offer was very frankly made by the Romanists, to dispute concerning the points controverted between the two communions; and as transubstantiation was the article which of all others they deemed the clearest, and founded on the most irresistible arguments, they chose to try their strength by defending it. The Protestants pushed the dispute as far as the clamor and noise of their antagonists would permit; and they fondly imagined that they had obtained some advantage, when, in the course of the debate, they obliged the Catholics to avow that, according to their doctrine, Christ had in his last supper held himself in his hand, and had swallowed and eaten himself. [2]

* Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * Collier, vol. ii. .

This triumph, however, was confined only to their own party: the Romanists maintained, that their champions had clearly the better of the day, that their adversaries were blind and obstinate heretics; that nothing but the most extreme depravity of heart could induce men to contest such self-evident principles; and that the severest punishments were due to their perverse wickedness. So pleased were they with their superiority in this favorite point, that they soon after renewed the dispute at Oxford; and, to show that they feared no force of learning or abilities, where reason was so evident on their side, they sent thither Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, under a guard, to try whether these renowned controversialists could find any appearance of argument to defend their baffled principles. [1] The issue of the debate was very different from what it appeared to be a few years before, in a famous conference held at the same place during the reign of Edward.

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After the parliament and convocation were dismissed, the new laws with regard to religion, though they had been anticipated in most places by the zeal of the Catholics, countenanced by government, were still more openly put in execution: the mass was every where reëstablished; and marriage was declared to be incompatible with any spiritual office. It has been asserted by some writers, that three fourths of the clergy were at this time deprived of their livings; though other historians, more accurate, [2] have estimated the number of sufferers to be far short of this proportion. A visitation was appointed, in order to restore more perfectly the mass and the ancient rites. Among other articles, the commissioners were enjoined to forbid the oath of supremacy to be taken by the clergy on their receiving any benefice. [3] It is to be observed, that this oath had been established by the laws of Henry VIII., which were still in force.

* Mem. Cranm. . Heylin, .

* * Harmer, .

* * * Collier, vol. ii. . Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Sleiden, lib. xxv.

This violent and sudden change of religion inspired the Protestants with great discontent; and even affected indifferent spectators with concern, by the hardships to which so many individuals were on that account exposed. But the Spanish match was a point of more general concern, and diffused universal apprehension for the liberty and independence of the nation. To obviate all clamor, the articles of marriage were drawn as favorable as possible for the interests and security, and even grandeur of England. It was agreed, that though Philip should have the title of king, the administration should be entirely in the queen; that no foreigner should be capable of enjoying any office in the kingdom; that no innovation should be made in the English laws, customs, and privileges; that Philip should not carry the queen abroad without her consent, nor any of her children without the consent of the nobility; that sixty thousand pounds a year should be settled as her jointure; that the male issue of this marriage should inherit, together with England, both Burgundy and the Low Countries; and that if Don Carlos, Philip’s son by his former marriage, should die, and his line be extinct, the queen’s issue, whether male or female, should inherit Spain, Sicily, Milan, and all the other dominions of Philip. [1] Such was the treaty of marriage signed by Count Egmont and three other ambassadors, sent over to England by the emperor. [2]

These articles, when published, gave no satisfaction to the nation. It was universally said, that the emperor, in order to get possession of England, would verbally agree to any terms and the greater advantage there appeared in the conditions which he granted, the more certainly might it be concluded that he had no serious intention of observing them: that the usual fraud and ambition of that monarch might assure the nation of such a conduct: and his son Philip, while he inherited these vices from his father, added to them tyranny, sullenness, pride, and barbarity, more dangerous vices of his own: that England would become a province, and a province to a kingdom which usually exercised the most violent authority over all her dependent dominions: that the Netherlands, Milan, Sicily, Naples, groaned under the burden of Spanish tyranny; and throughout all the new conquests in America there had been displayed scenes of unrelenting cruelty, hitherto unknown in the history of mankind: that the inquisition was a tribunal invented by that tyrannical nation, and would infallibly, with all their other laws and institutions, be introduced into England; and that the divided sentiments of the people with regard to religion would subject multitudes to this iniquitous tribunal, and would reduce the whole nation to the most abject servitude. [3]

* Rymer, vol. xv. .

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. ii. .

* * * Heylin . Burnet, vol. ii. . Godwin, .

These complaints being diffused every where, prepared the people for a rebellion; and had any foreign power given them encouragement, or any great man appeared to head them, the consequence might have proved fatal to the queen’s authority. But the king of France, though engaged in hostilities with the emperor, refused to concur in any proposal for an insurrection, lest he should afford Mary a pretence for declaring war against him. [1] And the more prudent part of the nobility thought that, as the evils of the Spanish alliance were only dreaded at a distance, matters were not yet fully prepared for a general revolt. Some persons, however, more turbulent than the rest, believed that it would be safer to prevent than to redress grievances; and they formed a conspiracy to rise in arms, and declare against the queen’s marriage with Philip. Sir Thomas Wiat purposed to raise Kent; Sir Peter Carew, Devonshire; and they engaged the duke of Suffolk, by the hopes of recovering the crown for the lady Jane, to attempt raising the midland counties. [2] Carew’s impatience or apprehensions engaged him to break the concert, and to rise in arms before the day appointed. He was soon suppressed by the earl of Bedford, and constrained to fly into France. On this intelligence, Suffolk, dreading an arrest, suddenly left the town with his brothers, Lord Thomas and Lord Leonard Gray, and endeavored to raise the people in the counties of Warwick and Leicester, where his interest lay; but he was so closely pursued by the earl of Huntingdon, at the head of three hundred horse, that he was obliged to disperse his followers, and being discovered in his concealment, he was carried prisoner to London. [3]

* Dépêches de Noailles, vol. ii. ; vol. iii. , 58.

* * Heylin, . Godwin, .

* * * Fox, vol. iii. .

Wiat was at first more successful in his attempt; and having published a declaration, at Maidstone in Kent, against the queen’s evil counsellors, and against the Spanish match, without any mention of religion, the people began to flock to his standard. The duke of Norfolk, with Sir Henry Jernegan, was sent against him, at the head of the guards and some other troops, reënforced with five hundred Londoners commanded by Bret: and he came within sight of the rebels at Rochester, where they had fixed their head-quarters. Sir George Harper here pretended to desert from them; but having secretly gained Bret, these two malecontents so wrought on the Londoners, that the whole body deserted to Wiat, and declared that they would not contribute to enslave their native country. Norfolk, dreading the contagion of the example, immediately retreated with his troops, and took shelter in the city. [1]

After this proof of the disposition of the people, especially of the Londoners, who were mostly Protestants, Wiat was encouraged to proceed; he led his forces to Southwark, where he required of the queen that she should put the Tower into his hands, should deliver four counsellors as hostages, and in order to insure the liberty of the nation, should immediately marry an Englishman. Finding that the bridge was secured against him, and that the city was overawed, he marched up to Kingston, where he passed the river with four thousand men; and returning towards London, hoped to encourage his partisans who had engaged to declare for him. He had imprudently wasted so much time at Southwark, and in his march from Kingston, that the critical season, on which all popular commotions depend, was entirely lost: though he entered Westminster without resistance, his followers, finding that no person of note joined him, insensibly fell off, and he was at last seized near Temple Bar by Sir Maurice Berkeley. [2] Four hundred persons are said to have suffered for this rebellion: [3] four hundred more were conducted before the queen with ropes about their necks: and falling on their knees, received a pardon, and were dismissed. Wiat was condemned and executed: as it had been reported that, on his examination, he had accused the lady Elizabeth and the earl of Devonshire as accomplices, he took care, on the scaffold, before the whole people, fully to acquit them of having any share in his rebellion.

* Heylin, . Godwin, . Stowe, . Baker, p. 318. Holingshed, .

* * Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. p. 270. Stowe, .

* * * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. .

The lady Elizabeth had been, during some time, treated with great harshness by her sister; and many studied instances of discouragement and disrespect had been practised against her. She was ordered to take place at court after the countess of Lenox and the duchess of Suffolk, as if she were not legitimate: [1] her friends were discountenanced on every occasion: and while her virtues, which were now become eminent, drew to her the attendance of all the young nobility, and rendered her the favorite of the nation; [2] the malevolence of the queen still discovered itself every day by fresh symptoms, and obliged the princess to retire into the country. Mary seized the opportunity of this rebellion; and hoping to involve her sister in some appearance of guilt, sent for her under a strong guard, committed her to the Tower, and ordered her to be strictly examined by the council. But the public declaration made by Wiat rendered it impracticable to employ against her any false evidence which might have offered; and the princess made so good a defence, that the queen found herself under a necessity of releasing her. [3] In order to send her out of the kingdom, a marriage was offered her with the duke of Savoy; and when she declined the proposal, she was committed to custody under a strong guard at Wodestoke. [4] The earl of Devonshire, though equally innocent, was confined in Fotheringay Castle.

But this rebellion proved still more fatal to the lady Jane Gray, as well as to her husband: the duke of Suffolk’s guilt was imputed to her; and though the rebels and malecontents seemed chiefly to rest their hopes on the lady Elizabeth and the earl of Devonshire, the queen, incapable of generosity or clemency, determined to remove every person from whom the least danger could be apprehended. Warning was given the lady Jane to prepare for death; a doom which she had long expected, and which the innocence of her life, as well as the misfortunes to which she had been exposed, rendered nowise unwelcome to her. The queen’s zeal, under color of tender mercy to the prisoner’s soul, induced her to send divines, who harassed her with perpetual disputation; and even a reprieve for three days was granted her, in hopes that she would be persuaded during that time to pay, by a timely conversion, some regard to her eternal welfare. The lady Jane had presence of mind, in those melancholy circumstances, not only to defend her religion by all the topics then in use, but also to write a letter to her sister in the Greek language; in which, besides sending her a copy of the Scriptures in that tongue, she exhorted her to maintain, in every fortune, a like steady perseverance.

* Dépêches de Noailles, vol. ii. , 288.

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. .

* * * Godwin, . Burnet, vol. ii. . Fox, vol. ii. , 105. Strype's Mem. vol. iii. .

* * * * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. .

v Fox vol. iii. . Heylin, .

On the day of her execution, her husband, Lord Guildford, desired permission to see her; but she refused her consent, and informed him by a message, that the tenderness of their parting would overcome the fortitude of both, and would too much unbend their minds from that constancy which their approaching end required of them: their separation, she said, would be only for a moment; and they would soon rejoin each other in a scene where their affections would be forever united, and where death, disappointment, and misfortunes, could no longer have access to them, or disturb their eternal felicity. [1]

It had been intended to execute the lady Jane and Lord Guildford together on the same scaffold at Tower Hill; but the council, dreading the compassion of the people for their youth, beauty, innocence, and noble birth, changed their orders, and gave directions that she should be beheaded within the verge of the Tower. She saw her husband led to execution; and having given him from the window some token of her remembrance, she waited with tranquillity till her own appointed hour should bring her to a like fate. She even saw his headless body carried back in a cart; and found herself more confirmed by the reports which she heard of the constancy of his end, than shaken by so tender and melancholy a spectacle. Sir John Gage, constable of the Tower, when he led her to execution, desired her to bestow on him some small present, which he might keep as a perpetual memorial of her: she gave him her table-book, on which she had just written three sentences on seeing her husband's dead body; one in Greek, another in Latin, a third in English. [2] The purport of them was, that human justice was against his body, but divine mercy would be favorable to his soul; that if her fault deserved punishment, her youth at least, and her imprudence, were worthy of excuse; and that God and posterity, she trusted, would show her favor.

* Heylin, . Baker .

* * Heylin, .

On the scaffold she made a speech to the bystanders; in which the mildness of her disposition led her to take the blame wholly on herself, without uttering one complaint against the severity with which she had been treated. She said, that her offence was not the having laid her hand upon the crown, but the not rejecting it with sufficient constancy; that she had less erred through ambition than through reverence to her parents, whom she had been taught to respect and obey: that she willingly received death, as the only satisfaction which she could now make to the injured state; and though her infringement of the laws had been constrained, she would show, by her voluntary submission to their sentence, that she was desirous to atone for that disobedience into which too much filial piety had betrayed her: that she had justly deserved this punishment for being made the instrument, though the unwilling instrument, of the ambition of others; and that the story of her life, she hoped, might at least be useful, by proving that innocence excuses not great misdeeds, if they tend anywise to the destruction of the commonwealth. After uttering these words, she caused herself to be disrobed by her women; and with a steady serene countenance submitted herself to the executioner. [1]

The duke of Suffolk was tried, condemned, and executed soon after; and would have met with more compassion, had not his temerity been the cause of his daughter’s untimely end. Lord Thomas Gray lost his life for the same crime. Sir Nicholas Throgmorton was tried in Guildhall; but there appearing no satisfactory evidence against him, he was able, by making an admirable defence, to obtain a verdict of the jury in his favor. The queen was so enraged at this disappointment, that, instead of releasing him as the law required, she recommitted him to the Tower, and kept him in close confinement during some time. But her resentment stopped not here: the jury, being summoned before the council, were all sent to prison, and afterwards fined, some of them a thousand pounds, others two thousand apiece. [2] This violence proved fatal to several; among others to Sir John

Throgmorton, brother to Sir Nicholas, who was condemned on no better evidence, than had formerly been rejected. The queen filled the Tower and all the prisons with nobility and gentry, whom their interest with the nation, rather than any appearance of guilt, had made the objects of her suspicion; and finding that she was universally hated, she determined to disable the people from resistance, by ordering general musters, and directing the commissioners to seize their arms, and lay them up in forts and castles. [3]

* Heylin, . Fox, vol iii. , 37. Holingshed, p. 1099.

* * Fox, vol. iii. . Stowe, . Baker, . Holingshed, , 1121. Strype, vol. iii. . Dép. de Noailles, vol. iii. .

* * * Dép. de Noailles, vol. iii .

Though the government labored under so general an odium, the queen's authority had received such an increase from the suppression of Wiat's rebellion, that the ministry hoped to find a compliant disposition in the new parliament which was summoned to assemble. The emperor also, in order to facilitate the same end, had borrowed no less a sum than four hundred thousand crowns, which he had sent over to England to be distributed in bribes and pensions among the members: a pernicious practice, of which there had not hitherto been any instance in England. And not to give the public any alarm with regard to the church lands, the queen, notwithstanding her bigotry, resumed her title of supreme head of the church, which she had dropped three months before. Gardiner, the chancellor, opened the session by a speech; in which he asserted the queen's hereditary title to the crown; maintained her right of choosing a husband for herself; observed how proper a use she had made of that right, by giving the preference to an old ally, descended from the house of Burgundy; and remarked the failure of Henry VIII.'s posterity, of whom there now remained none but the queen and the lady Elizabeth. He added, that, in order to obviate the inconveniencies which might arise from different pretenders, it was necessary to invest the queen, by law, with a power of disposing of the crown, and of appointing her successor: a power, he said, which was not to be thought unprecedented in England, since it had formerly been conferred on Henry VIII. [1]

* Dépêches de Noailles.

The parliament was much disposed to gratify the queen in all her desires; but when the liberty, independency, and very being of the nation were in such visible danger, they could not by any means be brought to compliance. They knew both the inveterate hatred which she bore to the lady Elizabeth, and her devoted attachment to the house of Austria: they were acquainted with her extreme bigotry, which would lead her to postpone all considerations of justice or national interest to the establishment of the Catholic religion: they remarked, that Gardiner had carefully avoided in his speech the giving to Elizabeth the appellation of the queen's sister; and they thence concluded that a design was formed of excluding her as illegitimate: they expected that Mary, if invested with such a power as she required, would make a will in her husband's favor, and thereby render England forever a province to the Spanish monarchy; and they were the more alarmed with these projects, as they heard that Philip's descent from the house of Lancaster was carefully insisted on, and that he was publicly represented as the true and only heir by right of inheritance.

The parliament, therefore, aware of their danger, were determined to keep at a distance from the precipice which lay before them. They could not avoid ratifying the articles of marriage, [1] which were drawn very favorable for England; but they declined the passing of any such law as the chancellor pointed out to them: they would not so much as declare it treason to imagine or attempt the death of the queen's husband while she was alive; and a bill introduced for that purpose was laid aside after the first reading. The more effectually to cut off Philip's hopes of possessing any authority in England, they passed a law in which they declared, "that her majesty, as their only queen, should solely, and as a sole queen, enjoy the crown and sovereignty of her realms, with all the preëminences, dignities, and rights thereto belonging, in as large and ample a manner after her marriage as before, without any title or claim accruing to the prince of Spain, either as tenant by courtesy of the realm, or by any other means." [2]

A law passed in this parliament for reëerecting the bishopric of Durham, which had been dissolved by the last parliament of Edward. [3] The queen had already, by an exertion of her power, put Tonstal in possession of that see: but though it was usual at that time for the crown to assume authority which might seem entirely legislative, it was always deemed more safe and satisfactory to procure the sanction of parliament. Bills were introduced for suppressing heterodox opinions contained in books, and for reviving the law of the six articles, together with those against the Lollards, and against heresy and erroneous preaching; but none of these laws could pass the two houses: a proof that the parliament had reserves even in their concessions with regard to religion; about which they seem to have been less scrupulous. The queen, therefore, finding that they would not serve all her purposes, finished the session by dissolving them.

* I Mar. Parl. 2, ca.

* * I Mar. Parl. 2. ca.

* * * I Mar. Parl. 2, ca.

Mary’s thoughts were now entirely employed about receiving Don Philip, whose arrival she hourly expected. This princess, who had lived so many years in a very reserved and private manner, without any prospect or hopes of a husband, was so smitten with affection for her young consort, whom she had never seen, that she waited with the utmost impatience for the completion of the marriage; and every obstacle was to her a source of anxiety and discontent. [1] She complained of Philip’s delays as affected; and she could not conceal her vexation, that, though she brought him a kingdom as her dowry, he treated her with such neglect that he had never yet favored her with a single letter. [2] Her fondness was but the more increased by this supercilious treatment; and when she found that her subjects had entertained the greatest aversion for the event to which she directed her fondest wishes, she made the whole English nation the object of her resentment. A squadron, under the command of Lord Effingham, had been fitted out to convoy Philip from Spain, where he then resided; but the admiral informing her that the discontents ran very high among the seamen, and that it was not safe for Philip to intrust himself in their hands, she gave orders to dismiss them. [3] She then dreaded lest the French fleet, being masters of the sea, might intercept her husband; and every rumor of danger, every blast of wind, threw her into panics and convulsions. Her health, and even her understanding, were visibly hurt by this extreme impatience; and she was struck with a new apprehension lest her person, impaired by time and blasted by sickness, should prove disagreeable to her future consort. Her glass discovered to her how haggard she was become; and when she remarked the decay of her beauty, she knew not whether she ought more to desire or apprehend the arrival of Philip. [4]

* Strype, vol. iii. .

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. .

* * * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. .

* * * * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iii. , 252, 253.

At last came the moment so impatiently expected; and news was brought the queen of Philip’s arrival at Southampton. [1] A few days after they were married in Westminster; and having made a pompous entry into London, where Philip displayed his wealth with great ostentation, she carried him to Windsor, the palace in which they afterwards resided. The prince’s behavior was ill calculated to remove the prejudices which the English nation had entertained against him. He was distant and reserved in his address; took no notice of the salutes even of the most considerable noblemen; and so intrenched himself in form and ceremony that he was in a manner inaccessible: [2] but this circumstance rendered him the more acceptable to the queen, who desired to have no company but her husband’s, and who was impatient when she met with any interruption to her fondness. The shortest absence gave her vexation; and, when he showed civilities to any other woman, she could not conceal her jealousy and resentment.

Mary soon found that Philip’s ruling passion was ambition, and that the only method of gratifying him and securing his affections was to render him master of England. The interest and liberty of her people were considerations of small moment in comparison of her obtaining this favorite point. She summoned a new parliament, in hopes of finding them entirely compliant; and, that she might acquire the greater authority over them, she imitated the precedent of the former reign, and wrote circular letters, directing a proper choice of members. [3] The zeal of the Catholics, the influence of Spanish gold, the powers of prerogative, the discouragement of the gentry, particularly of the Protestants; all these causes, seconding the intrigues of Gardiner, had procured her a house of commons which was in a great measure to her satisfaction; and it was thought, from the disposition of the nation, that she might now safely omit, on her assembling the parliament, the title of "supreme head of the church," though inseparably annexed by law to the crown of England. [4] Cardinal Pole had arrived in Flanders, invested with legatine powers from the pope: in order to prepare the way for his arrival in England, the parliament passed an act reversing his attainder and restoring his blood; and the queen, dispensing with the old statute of provisors, granted him permission to act as legate. The cardinal came over, and, after being introduced to the king and queen, he invited the parliament to reconcile themselves and the kingdom to the apostolic see, from which they had been so long and so unhappily divided.

* Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Burnet, vol. iii. p. 392. Godwin, . We are told by Sir William Monson, p. 225, that the admiral of England fired at the Spanish navy when Philip was on board, because they had not lowered their topsails, as a mark of deference, to the English navy in the narrow seas: a very spirited behavior, and very unlike those times.

* * Baker, .

* * * Mem. of Cranm. . Strype's Eccl. Mem., vol. iii. p. 154, 155* [2missing period]

* * * * Burnet, vol. ii. . Strype, vol. iii. .

This message was taken in good part; and both houses voted an address to Philip and Mary, acknowledging that they had been guilty of a most horrible defection from the true church; professing a sincere repentance of their past transgressions; declaring their resolution to repeal all laws enacted in prejudice of the church of Rome; and praying their majesties, that, since they were happily uninfected with that criminal schism, they would intercede with the holy father for the absolution and forgiveness of their penitent subjects. [1] The request was easily granted. The legate, in the name of his holiness, gave the parliament and kingdom absolution, freed them from all censures, and received them again into the bosom of the church. The pope, then Julius III., being informed of these transactions, said that it was an unexampled instance of his felicity to receive thanks from the

English for allowing them to do what he ought to give them thanks for performing. [2]

Notwithstanding the extreme zeal of those times for and against popery, the object always uppermost with the nobility and gentry was their money and estates: they were not brought to make these concessions in favor of Rome till they had received repeated assurances, from the pope as well as the queen, that the plunder which they had made on the ecclesiastics should never be inquired into; and that the abbey and church lands should remain with the present possessors. [3] But not trusting altogether to these promises, the parliament took care, in the law itself [4] by which they repealed the former statutes enacted against the pope’s authority, to insert a clause, in which, besides bestowing validity on all marriages celebrated during the schism, and fixing the right of incumbents to their benefices, they gave security to the possessors of church lands, and freed them from all danger of ecclesiastical censures. The convocation also, in order to remove apprehensions on that head, were induced to present a petition to the same purpose; and the legate, in his master’s name, ratified all these transactions. It now appeared that, notwithstanding the efforts of the queen and king, the power of the papacy was effectually suppressed in England, and invincible barriers fixed against its reëstablishment. For though the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastics was for the present restored, their property, on which their power much depended, was irretrievably lost, and no hopes remained of recovering it.

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* Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. p. 293. Godwin, .

* * Father Paul, lib. iv.

* * * Heylin, .

* * * * I and 2 Phil. and Mar. c. 8.

v Heylin, . I and 2 Phil, and Mar. c. 8. Strype, vol. iii. .

Even these arbitrary, powerful, and bigoted princes, while the transactions were yet recent, could not regain to the church her possessions so lately ravished from her; and no expedients were left to the clergy for enriching themselves but those which they had at first practised, and which had required many ages of ignorance, barbarism, and superstition to produce their effect on mankind. [1]

The parliament, having secured their own possessions, were more indifferent with regard to religion, or even to the lives of their fellow-citizens: they revived the old sanguinary laws against heretics, [2] which had been rejected in the former parliament: they also enacted several statutes against seditious words and rumors; [3] and they made it treason to imagine or attempt the death of Philip during his marriage with the queen. [4] Each parliament hitherto had been induced to go a step farther than their predecessors; but none of them had entirely lost all regard to national interests. Their hatred against the Spaniards, as well as their suspicion of Philip's pretensions, still prevailed; and though the queen attempted to get her husband declared presumptive heir of the crown, and to have the administration put into his hands, she failed in all her endeavors, and could not so much as procure the parliament's consent to his coronation. All attempts likewise to obtain subsidies from the commons, in order to support the emperor in his war against France, proved fruitless: the usual animosity and jealousy of the English against that kingdom seemed to have given place, for the present, to like passions against Spain. Philip, sensible of the prepossessions entertained against him, endeavored to acquire popularity by procuring the release of several prisoners of distinction; Lord Henry Dudley, Sir George Harper, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, Sir Edmond Warner, Sir William St. Lo, Sir Nicholas Arnold, Harrington, Tremaine, who had been confined from the suspicions or resentment of the court.[v*] But nothing was more agreeable to the nation than his protecting the lady Elizabeth from the spite and malice of the queen, and restoring her to liberty. This measure was not the effect of any generosity in Philip, a sentiment of which he was wholly destitute; but of a refined policy, which made him foresee that, if that princess were put to death, the next lawful heir was the queen of Scots, whose succession would forever annex England to the crown of France. The earl of Devonshire also reaped some benefit from Philip's affectation of popularity, and recovered his liberty: but that nobleman, finding himself exposed to suspicion, begged permission to travel;[v* *] and he soon after died at Padua, from poison, as is pretended, given him by the imperialists. He was the eleventh and last earl of Devonshire of that noble family, one of the most illustrious in Europe.

* See note U, at the end of the volume.

* * 1 and 2 Phil. and Mar. c. 6.

* * * 1 and 2 Phil. and Mar. c. 3, 9.

* * * * 1 and 2 Phil. and Mar. c. 10.

v Godwin, . Baker, .
v* Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. . Stowe, .
Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iv. , 147.
v* * Heylin, . Godwin, .

The queen’s extreme desire of having issue had made her fondly give credit to any appearance of pregnancy; and when the legate was introduced to her, she fancied that she felt the embryo stir in her womb. [1] Her flatterers compared this motion of the infant to that of John the Baptist, who, leaped in his mother’s belly at the salutation of the Virgin. [2] Despatches were immediately sent to inform foreign courts of this event: orders were issued to give public thanks: great rejoicings were made: the family of the young prince was already settled; [3] for the Catholics held themselves assured that the child was to be a male: and Bonner, bishop of London, made public prayers be said, that Heaven would please to render him beautiful, vigorous, and witty. But the nation still remained somewhat incredulous; and men were persuaded that the queen labored under infirmities which rendered her incapable of having children. Her infant proved only the commencement of a dropsy, which the disordered state of her health had brought upon her. The belief, however, of her pregnancy was upheld with all possible care; and was one artifice by which Philip endeavored to support his authority in the kingdom.

* Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iv. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Godwin, .

* * * Heylin, .

1555.

The parliament passed a law, which, in case of the queen’s demise, appointed him protector during the minority; and the king and queen, finding they could obtain no further concessions, came unexpectedly to Westminster and dissolved them.

There happened an incident this session which must not be passed over in silence. Several members of the lower house, dissatisfied with the measures of the parliament, but finding themselves unable to prevent them, made a secession, in order to show their disapprobation, and refused any longer to attend the house. [1] For this instance of contumacy they were indicted in the king’s bench, after the dissolution of parliament: six of them submitted to the mercy of the court, and paid their fines: the rest traversed; and the queen died before the affair was brought to an issue. Judging of the matter by the subsequent claims of the house of commons, and, indeed, by the true principles of free government, this attempt of the queen’s ministers must be regarded as a breach of privilege; but it gave little umbrage at the time, and was never called in question by any house of commons which afterwards sat during this reign. The count of Noailles, the French ambassador, says that the queen threw several members into prison for their freedom of speech. [2]

* Coke’s Institutes, part iii. . Strype’s Memor. vol. i.p.165

* * Vol. v. .

CHAPTER XXXVII

MARY.

1555.

THE success which Gardiner, from his cautious and prudent conduct, had met with in governing the parliament, and engaging them to concur both in the Spanish match and in the reëstablishment of the ancient religion, — two points to which, it was believed, they bore an extreme aversion, — had so raised his character for wisdom and policy that his opinion was received as an oracle in the council; and his authority, as it was always great in his own party, no longer suffered any opposition or control. Cardinal Pole himself, though more beloved on account of his virtue and candor, and though superior in birth and station, had not equal weight in public deliberations; and while his learning, piety, and humanity were extremely respected, he was represented more as a good man than a great minister. A very important question was frequently debated before the queen and council by these two ecclesiastics; whether the laws lately revived against heretics should be put in execution, or should only be employed to restrain by terror the bold attempts of these zealots. Pole was very sincere in his religious principles; and though his moderation had made him be suspected at Rome of a tendency towards Lutheranism, he was seriously persuaded of the Catholic doctrines, and thought that no consideration of human policy ought ever to come in competition with such important interests. Gardiner, on the contrary, had always made his religion subservient to his schemes of safety or advancement; and by his unlimited complaisance to Henry, he had shown that, had he not been pushed to extremity under the late minority, he was sufficiently disposed to make a sacrifice of his principles to the established theology. This was the well-known character of these two great counsellors; yet such is the prevalence of temper above system, that the benevolent disposition of Pole led him to advise a toleration of the heretical tenets which he highly blamed; while the severe manners of Gardiner inclined him to support by persecution that religion which, at the bottom, he regarded with great indifference. [1] This circumstance of public conduct was of the highest importance; and from being the object of deliberation in the council, it soon became the subject of discourse throughout the nation. We shall relate, in a few words, the topics by which each side supported, or might have supported, their scheme of policy; and shall display the opposite reasons which have been employed, with regard to an argument that ever has been, and ever will be, so much canvassed.

* Heylin, .

The practice of persecution, said the defenders of Pole’s opinion, is the scandal of all religion; and the theological animosity, so fierce and violent, far from being an argument of men’s conviction in their opposite sects, is a certain proof that they have never reached any serious persuasion with regard to these remote and sublime subjects. Even those who are the most impatient of contradiction in other controversies, are mild and moderate in comparison of polemical divines; and wherever a man’s knowledge and experience give him a perfect assurance in his own opinion, he regards with contempt, rather than anger, the opposition and mistakes of others. But while men zealously maintain what they neither clearly comprehend nor entirely believe, they are shaken in their imagined faith by the opposite persuasion, or even doubts, of other men; and vent on their antagonists that impatience which is the natural result of so disagreeable a state of the understanding. They then easily embrace any pretense for representing opponents as impious and profane; and if they can also find a color for connecting this violence with the interests of civil government, they can no longer be restrained from giving uncontrolled scope to vengeance and resentment. But surely never enterprise was more unfortunate than that of founding persecution upon policy, or endeavoring, for the sake of peace, to settle an entire uniformity of opinion in questions which, of all others, are least subjected to the criterion of human reason. The universal and uncontradicted prevalence of one opinion in religious subjects can be owing, at first, to the stupid ignorance alone and barbarism of the people, who never indulge themselves in any speculation or inquiry; and there is no expedient for maintaining that uniformity so fondly sought after, but by banishing forever all curiosity, and all improvement in science and cultivation. It may not indeed appear difficult to check, by a steady severity, the first beginnings of controversy; but besides that this policy exposes forever the people to all the abject terrors of superstition, and the magistrate to the endless encroachments of ecclesiastics, it also renders men so delicate that they can never endure to hear of opposition; and they will some time pay dearly for that false tranquillity in which they have been so long indulged. As healthful bodies are ruined by too nice a regimen, and are thereby rendered incapable of bearing the unavoidable incidents of human life, a people who never were allowed to imagine that their principles could be contested fly out into the most outrageous violence when any event (and such events are common) produces a faction among their clergy, and gives rise to any difference in tenet or opinion. But whatever may be said in favor of suppressing, by persecution, the first beginnings of heresy, no solid argument can be alleged for extending severity towards multitudes, or endeavoring, by capital punishments, to extirpate an opinion which has diffused itself among men of every rank and station. Besides the extreme barbarity of such an attempt, it commonly proves ineffectual to the purpose intended, and serves only to make men more obstinate in their persuasion, and to increase the number of their proselytes. The melancholy with which the fear of death, torture, and persecution inspires the sectaries, is the proper disposition for fostering religious zeal: the prospect of eternal rewards, when brought near, overpowers the dread of temporal punishments: the glory of martyrdom stimulates all the more furious zealots, especially the leaders and preachers: where a violent animosity is excited by oppression, men naturally pass from hating the persons of their tyrants to a more violent abhorrence of their doctrines: and the spectators, moved with pity towards the supposed martyrs, are easily seduced to embrace those principles which can inspire men with a constancy that appears almost supernatural. Open the door to toleration, mutual hatred relaxes among the sectaries, their attachment to their particular modes of religion decays; the common occupations and pleasures of life succeed to the acrimony of disputation; and the same man who, in other circumstances, would have braved flames and tortures, is induced to change his sect from the smallest prospect of favor and advancement, or even from the frivolous hope of becoming more fashionable in his principles. If any exception can be admitted to this maxim of toleration, it will only be where a theology altogether new, nowise connected with the ancient religion of the state, is imported from foreign countries, and may easily, at one blow, be eradicated, without leaving the seeds of future innovation. But as this exception would imply some apology for the ancient pagan persecutions, or for the extirpation of

Christianity in China and Japan, it ought surely, on account of this detested consequence, to be rather buried in eternal silence and oblivion.

Though these arguments appear entirely satisfactory, yet such is the subtlety of human wit, that Gardiner and the other enemies to toleration were not reduced to silence; and they still found topics on which to maintain the controversy. The doctrine, said they, of liberty of conscience, is founded on the most flagrant impiety, and supposes such an indifference among all religions, such an obscurity in theological doctrines, as to render the church and magistrate incapable of distinguishing with certainty the dictates of Heaven from the mere fictions of human imagination. If the Divinity reveals principles to mankind, he will surely give a criterion by which they may be ascertained; and a prince who knowingly allows these principles to be perverted or adulterated, is infinitely more criminal than if he gave permission for the vending of poison, under the shape of food, to all his subjects. Persecution may, indeed, seem better calculated to make hypocrites than converts; but experience teaches us, that the habits of hypocrisy often turn into reality; and the children, at least, ignorant of the dissimulation of their parents, may happily be educated in more orthodox tenets. It is absurd, in opposition to considerations of such unspeakable importance, to plead the temporal and frivolous interests of civil society; and if matters be thoroughly examined, even that topic will not appear so universally certain in favor of toleration as by some it is represented. Where sects arise whose fundamental principle on all sides is to execrate, and abhor, and damn, and extirpate each other, what choice has the magistrate left but to take part, and by rendering one sect entirely prevalent, restore, at least for a time, the public tranquillity? The political body, being here sickly, must not be treated as if it were in a state of sound health; and an affected neutrality in the prince, or even a cool preference, may serve only to encourage the hopes of all the sects, and keep alive their animosity. The Protestants, far from tolerating the religion of their ancestors, regard it as an impious and detestable idolatry; and during the late minority, when they were entirely masters, they enacted very severe, though not capital, punishments against all exercise of the Catholic worship, and even against such as barely abstained from their profane rites and sacraments. Nor are instances wanting of their endeavors to secure an imagined orthodoxy by the most rigorous executions: Calvin has burned Servetus at Geneva; Cranmer brought Arians and Anabaptists to the stake; and if persecution of any kind be admitted, the most bloody and violent will surely be allowed the most justifiable, as the most effectual. Imprisonments, fines, confiscations, whippings, serve only to irritate the sects, without disabling them from resistance: but the stake, the wheel, and the gibbet, must soon terminate in the extirpation or banishment of all the heretics inclined to give disturbance, and in the entire silence and submission of the rest.

The arguments of Gardiner, being more agreeable to the cruel bigotry of Mary and Philip, were better received; and though Pole pleaded, as is affirmed, [1] the advice of the emperor, who recommended it to his daughter-in-law not to exercise violence against the Protestants, and desired her to consider his own example, who, after endeavoring through his whole life to extirpate heresy, had in the end reaped nothing but confusion and disappointment, the scheme of toleration was entirely rejected. It was determined to let loose the laws in their full vigor against the reformed religion; and England was soon filled with scenes of horror, which have ever since rendered the Catholic religion the object of general detestation and which prove, that no human depravity can equal revenge and cruelty covered with the mantle of religion.

* Burnet, vol. ii. Heylin, . It is not likely, however, that Charles gave any such advice; for he himself was, at this very time, proceeding with great violence in persecuting the reformed in Flanders. Bentivoglio, part i,

lib. i.

The persecutors began with Rogers, prebendary of St. Paul’s, a man eminent in his party for virtue as well as for learning. Gardiner’s plan was first to attack men of that character, whom, he hoped, terror would bend to submission, and whose example, either of punishment or recantation, would naturally have influence on the multitude: but he found a perseverance and courage in Rogers, which it may seem strange to find in human nature, and of which all ages and all sects do nevertheless furnish many examples. Rogers, beside the care of his own preservation, lay under other powerful temptations to compliance: he had a wife whom he tenderly loved, and ten children; yet such was his serenity after his condemnation, that the jailers, it is said, waked him from a sound sleep when the hour of his execution approached. He had desired to see his wife before he died; but Gardiner told him that he was a priest, and could not possibly have a wife; thus joining insult to cruelty. Rogers was burned in Smithfield. [1]

Hooper, bishop of Glocester, had been tried at the same time with Rogers; but was sent to his own diocese to be executed. This circumstance was contrived to strike the greater terror into his flock; but it was a source of consolation to Hooper, who rejoiced in giving testimony, by his death, to that doctrine which he had formerly preached among them. When he was tied to the stake, a stool was set before him, and the queen's pardon laid upon it, which it was still in his power to merit by a recantation; but he ordered it to be removed, and cheerfully prepared himself for that dreadful punishment to which he was sentenced. He suffered it in its full severity: the wind, which was violent, blew the flame of the reeds from his body: the fagots were green, and did not kindle easily: all his lower parts were consumed before his vitals were attacked: one of his hands dropped off: with the other he continued to beat his breast: he was heard to pray, and to exhort the people; till his tongue, swollen with the violence of his agony, could no longer permit him utterance. He was three quarters of an hour in torture, which he bore with inflexible constancy. [2]

* Fox, vol. iii. . Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * Fox, vol. iii. , etc. Burnet, vol. ii , Heylin, , 49. Godwin, .

Sanders was burned at Coventry: a pardon was also offered him; but he rejected it, and embraced the stake, saying, "Welcome the cross of Christ; welcome everlasting life." Taylor, parson of Hadley, was punished by fire in that place, surrounded by his ancient friends and parishioners. When tied to the stake, he rehearsed a psalm in English: one of his guards struck him on the mouth, and bade him speak Latin: another, in a rage, gave him a blow on the head with his halbert, which happily put an end to his torments.

There was one Philpot, archdeacon of Winchester, inflamed with such zeal for orthodoxy, that having been engaged in dispute with an Arian, he spit in his adversary's face, to show the great detestation which he had entertained against that heresy. He afterwards wrote a treatise to justify this unmannerly expression of zeal: he said, that he was led to it in order to relieve the sorrow conceived from such horrid blasphemy, and to signify how unworthy such a miscreant was of being admitted into the society of any Christian. [1] Philpot was a Protestant; and falling now into the hands of people as zealous as himself, but more powerful, he was condemned to the flames, and suffered at Smithfield. It seems to be almost a general rule, that in all religions, except the true, no man will suffer martyrdom who would not also inflict it willingly on all that differ from him. The same zeal for speculative opinions is the cause of both.

The crime for which almost all the Protestants were condemned, was their refusal to acknowledge the real presence. Gardiner, who had vainly expected that a few examples would strike a terror into the reformers, finding the work daily multiply upon him, devolved the invidious office on others, chiefly on Bonner, a man of profligate manners, and of a brutal character, who seemed to rejoice in the torments of the unhappy sufferers. [2] He sometimes whipped the prisoners with his own hands, till he was tired with the violence of the exercise: he tore out the beard of a weaver who refused to relinquish his religion; and that he might give him a specimen of burning, he held his hand to the candle till the sinews and veins shrunk and burst. [3]

* Strype, vol iii. , and Coll. No. 58.

* * Heylin, , 48.

* * * Fox, vol. iii. .

It is needless to be particular in enumerating all the cruelties practised in England during the course of three years that these persecutions lasted: the savage barbarity on the one hand, and the patient constancy on the other, are so similar in all those martyrdoms, that the narrative, little agreeable in itself, would never be relieved by any variety. Human nature appears not on any occasion so detestable, and at the same time so absurd, as in these religious persecutions, which sink men below infernal spirits in wickedness, and below the beasts in folly. A few instances only may be worth preserving, in order, if possible, to warn zealous bigots forever to avoid such odious and such fruitless barbarity.

Ferrar, bishop of St. David’s, was burned in his own diocese and his appeal to Cardinal Pole was not attended to. [1] Ridley, bishop of London, and Latimer, formerly bishop of Worcester, two prelates celebrated for learning and virtue, perished together in the same flames at Oxford, and supported each other’s constancy by their mutual exhortations. Latimer, when tied to the stake, called to his companion, “Be of good cheer, brother; we shall this day kindle such a torch in England, as, I trust in God, shall never be extinguished.” The executioners had been so merciful (for that clemency may more naturally be ascribed to them than to the religious zealots) as to tie bags of gunpowder about these prelates, in order to put a speedy period to their tortures: the explosion immediately killed Latimer, who was in extreme old age; Ridley continued alive during some time in the midst of the flames. [2]

One Hunter, a young man of nineteen, an apprentice, having been seduced by a priest into a dispute, had unwarily denied the real presence. Sensible of his danger, he immediately absconded; but Bonner, laying hold of his father, threatened him with the greatest severities if he did not produce the young man to stand his trial. Hunter, hearing of the vexations to which his father was exposed, voluntarily surrendered himself to Bonner, and was condemned to the flames by that barbarous prelate.

Thomas Haukes, when conducted to the stake, agreed with his friends, that, if he found the torture tolerable, he would make them a signal to that purpose in the midst of the flames. His zeal for the cause in which he suffered so supported him that he stretched out his arms, the signal agreed on; and in that posture he expired. [3] This example, with many others of like constancy, encouraged multitudes not only to suffer, but even to court and aspire to martyrdom.

* Fox, vol. iii. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

* * * Fox, vol. iii. .

The tender sex itself, as they have commonly greater propensity to religion, produced many examples of the most inflexible courage in supporting the profession of it against all the fury of the persecutors. One execution in particular was attended with circumstances which, even at that time, excited astonishment by reason of their unusual barbarity. A woman in Guernsey, being near the time of her labor when brought to the stake, was thrown into such agitation by the torture, that her belly burst, and she was delivered in the midst of the flames. One of the guards immediately snatched the infant from the fire, and attempted to save it; but a magistrate who stood by ordered it to be thrown back: being determined, he said, that nothing should survive which-sprang from so obstinate and heretical a parent. [1]

The persons condemned to these punishments were not convicted of teaching, or dogmatizing, contrary to the established religion: they were seized merely on suspicion; and articles being offered them to subscribe, they were immediately, upon their refusal, condemned to the flames. [2] These instances of barbarity, so unusual in the nation, excited horror; the constancy of the martyrs was the object of admiration; and as men have a principle of equity engraven in their minds, which even false religion is not able totally to obliterate, they were shocked to see persons of probity, of honor, of pious dispositions, exposed to punishments more severe than were inflicted on the greatest ruffians for crimes subversive of civil society. To exterminate the whole Protestant party was known to be impossible; and nothing could appear more iniquitous, than to subject to torture the most conscientious and courageous among them, and allow the cowards and hypocrites to escape. Each martyrdom, therefore, was equivalent to a hundred sermons against Popery; and men either avoided such horrid spectacles, or returned from them full of a violent, though secret, indignation against the persecutors. Repeated orders were sent from the council to quicken the diligence of the magistrates in searching out heretics; and in some places the gentry were constrained to countenance by their presence those barbarous executions. These acts of violence tended only to render the Spanish government daily more odious; and Philip, sensible of the hatred which he incurred, endeavored to remove the reproach from himself by a very gross artifice: he ordered his confessor to deliver, in his presence, a sermon in favor of toleration; a doctrine somewhat extraordinary in the mouth of a Spanish friar. [3] But the court, finding that Bonner, however shameless and savage, would not bear alone the whole infamy, soon threw off the mask; and the unrelenting temper of the queen, as well as of the king, appeared without control. A bold step was even taken towards introducing the inquisition into England. As the bishops’ courts, though extremely arbitrary, and not confined by any ordinary forms of law, appeared not to be invested with sufficient power, a commission was appointed, by authority of the queen’s prerogative, more effectually to extirpate heresy.

* Fox, vol. iii. . Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. p. 337.

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Heylin, .

Twenty-one persons were named; but any three were armed with the powers of the whole. The commission runs in these terms: “That since many false rumors were published among the subjects, and many heretical opinions were also spread among them, the commissioners were to inquire into those, either by presentments, by witnesses, or any other political way they could devise, and to search after all heresies; the bringers in, the sellers, the readers of all heretical books: they were to examine and punish all misbehaviors or negligences in any church or chapel; and to try all priests that did not preach the sacrament of the altar; all persons that did not hear mass, or come to their parish church to service, that would not go in processions, or did not take holy bread or holy water; and if they found any that did obstinately persist in such heresies, they were to put them into the hands of their ordinaries, to be punished according to the spiritual laws; giving the commissioners full power to proceed as their discretions and consciences should direct them, and to use all such means as they would invent for the searching of the premises; empowering them also to call before them such witnesses as they pleased, and to force them to make oath of such things as might discover what they sought after.” [1] Some civil powers were also given the commissioners to punish vagabonds and quarrelsome persons.

To bring the methods of proceeding in England still nearer to the practice of the inquisition, letters were written to Lord North and others, enjoining them “to put to the torture such obstinate persons as would not confess, and there to order them at their discretion.” [2]

* Burnet, vol. ii. Coll. 32.

* * Burnet, vol. iii. .

Secret spies, also, and informers were employed, according to the practice of that iniquitous tribunal. Instructions were given to the justices of peace — that they should call secretly before them one or two honest persons within their limits, or more, at their discretion, and command them by oath, or otherwise, that they shall secretly learn and search out such persons as shall evil behave themselves in church, or idly, or shall despise openly by words the king's or queen's proceedings, or go about to make any commotion, or tell any seditious tales or news. And also that the same persons, so to be appointed, shall declare to the same justices of peace the ill behavior of lewd disordered persons, whether it shall be for using unlawful games, and such other light behavior of such suspected persons; and that the same information shall be given secretly to the justices; and the same justices shall call such accused persons before them, and examine them, without declaring by whom they were accused. And that the same justices shall, upon their examination, punish the offenders according as their offences shall appear, upon the accusement and examination, by their discretion, either by open punishment or "by good abearing." [1] In some respects this tyrannical edict even exceeded the oppression of the inquisition, by introducing into every part of government the same iniquities which that tribunal practises for the extirpation of heresy only, and which are in some measure necessary, wherever that end is earnestly pursued.

But the court had devised a more expeditious and summary method of supporting orthodoxy than even the inquisition itself. They issued a proclamation against books of heresy treason, and sedition, and declared, "that whosoever had any of these books, and did not presently burn them, without reading them or showing them to any other person, should be esteemed rebels, and without any further delay be executed by martial law." [2] From the state of the English government during that period, it is not so much the illegality of these proceedings, as their violence and their pernicious tendency, which ought to be the object of our censure.

* Burnet, vol. iii. , 247.

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

We have thrown together almost all the proceedings against heretics, though carried on during a course of three years, that we may be obliged as little as possible to return to such shocking violences and barbarities. It is computed that in that time two hundred and seventy-seven persons were brought to the stake, besides those who were punished by imprisonment, fines, and confiscations. Among those who suffered by fire were five bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, eighty-four tradesmen, one hundred husbandmen, servants, and laborers, fifty-five women, and four children. This persevering cruelty appears astonishing; yet is it much inferior to what has been practised in other countries. A great author [1] computes that, in the Netherlands alone, from the time that the edict of Charles V. was promulgated against the reformers, there had been fifty thousand persons hanged, beheaded, buried alive, or burnt, on account of religion; and that in France the number had also been considerable. Yet in both countries, as the same author subjoins, the progress of the new opinions instead of being checked, was rather forwarded by these persecutions.

The burning of heretics was a very natural method of reconciling the kingdom to the Romish communion; and little solicitation was requisite to engage the pope to receive the strayed flock, from which he reaped such considerable profit; yet was there a solemn embassy sent to Rome, consisting of Sir Anthony Brown, created Viscount Montacute, the bishop of Ely, and Sir Edward Carne, in order to carry the submissions of England, and beg to be readmitted into the bosom of the Catholic church. [2] Paul IV., after a short interval, now filled the papal chair; the most haughty pontiff that during several ages had been elevated to that dignity. He was offended that Mary still retained among her titles that of queen of Ireland; and he affirmed that it belonged to him alone, as he saw cause, either to erect new kingdoms or abolish the old; but to avoid all dispute with the new converts, he thought proper to erect Ireland into a kingdom, and he then admitted the title, as if it had been assumed from his concession. This was a usual artifice of the popes, to give allowance to what they could not prevent, [3] and afterwards pretend that princes, while they exercised their own powers, were only acting by authority from the papacy. And though Paul had at first intended to oblige Mary formally to recede from this title before he would bestow it upon her, he found it prudent to proceed in a less haughty manner. [4]

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* Father Paul, lib. v.

* * Heylin, .

* * * Heylin, . Father Paul, lib, v.

* * * * Father Paul, lib. v.

Another point in discussion between the pope and the English ambassadors was not so easily terminated. Paul insisted that the property and possessions of the church should be restored to the uttermost farthing; that whatever belonged to God could never, by any law, be converted to profane uses; and every person who detained such possessions was in a state of eternal damnation; that he would willingly, in consideration of the humble submissions of the English, make them a present of these ecclesiastical revenues; but such a concession exceeded his power, and the people might be certain that so great a profanation of holy things would be a perpetual anathema upon them, and would blast all their future felicity; that if they would truly show their filial piety, they must restore all the privileges and emoluments of the Romish church, and Peter's pence among the rest; nor could they expect that this apostle would open to them the gates of paradise, while they detained from him his patrimony on earth. [1] These earnest remonstrances being transmitted to England, though they had little influence on the nation, operated powerfully on the queen, who was determined, in order to ease her conscience, to restore all the church lands which were still in the possession of the crown; and the more to display her zeal, she erected anew some convents and monasteries, notwithstanding the low condition of the exchequer. [2] When this measure was debated in council, some members objected, that if such a considerable part of the revenue were dismembered, the dignity of the crown would fall to decay; but the queen replied, that she preferred the salvation of her soul to ten such kingdoms as England. [3] These imprudent measures would not probably have taken place so easily, had it not been for the death of Gardiner, which happened about this time; the great seal was given to Heathe, archbishop of York, that an ecclesiastic might still be possessed of that high office, and be better enabled by his authority to forward the persecutions against the reformed.

These persecutions were now become extremely odious to the nation; and the effects of the public discontent appeared in the new parliament, summoned to meet at Westminster. [4] A bill was passed restoring to the church the tenths and first-fruits, and all the impropriations which remained in the hands of the crown; but though this matter directly concerned none but the queen herself, great opposition was made to the bill in the house of commons.

* Father Paul, lib. v. Heylin, .

* * Dépêches de Noailles, vol. iv. .

* * * Heylin, , 65. Holingshed, . Speed, .

* * * * Burnet, vol. ii. .

v 2 and 3. Phil, and Mar. ca.

An application being made for a subsidy during two years, and for two fifteenths, the latter was refused by the commons; and many members said, that while the crown was thus despoiling itself of its revenue, it was in vain to bestow riches upon it. The parliament rejected a bill for obliging the exiles to return under certain penalties, and another for incapacitating such as were remiss in the prosecution of heresy from being justices of peace. The queen, finding the intractable humor of the commons, thought proper to dissolve the parliament.

The spirit of opposition which began to prevail in parliament was the more likely to be vexatious to Mary, as she was otherwise in very bad humor on account of her husband’s absence, who, tired of her importunate love and jealousy, and finding his authority extremely limited in England, had laid hold of the first opportunity to leave her, and had gone over last summer to the emperor in Flanders. The indifference and neglect of Philip, added to the disappointment in her imagined pregnancy, threw her into deep melancholy; and she gave vent to her spleen by daily enforcing the persecutions against the Protestants, and even by expressions of rage against all her subjects; by whom she knew herself to be hated, and whose opposition, in refusing an entire compliance with Philip was the cause, she believed, why he had alienated his affections from her, and afforded her so little of his company. [1]

* Dépêches de Noailles, vol. v. , 562.

The less return her love met with, the more it increased; and she passed most of her time in solitude, where she gave vent to her passion, either in tears, or in writing fond epistles to Philip, who seldom returned her any answer, and scarcely deigned to pretend any sentiment of love or even of gratitude towards her. The chief part of government to which she attended, was the extorting of money from her people, in order to satisfy his demands; and as the parliament had granted her but a scanty supply, she had recourse to expedients very violent and irregular. She levied a loan of sixty thousand pounds upon a thousand persons, of whose compliance, either on account of their riches or their affections to her, she held herself best assured: but that sum not sufficing, she exacted a general loan on every one who possessed twenty pounds a year. This imposition lay heavy on the gentry, who were obliged, many of them, to retrench their expenses and dismiss their servants, in order to enable them to comply with her demands: and as these servants, accustomed to idleness, and having no means of subsistence, commonly betook themselves to theft and robbery, the queen published a proclamation, by which she obliged their former masters to take them back to their service. She levied sixty thousand marks on seven thousand yeomen who had not contributed to the former loan; and she exacted thirty-six thousand pounds more from the merchants. In order to engage some Londoners to comply more willingly with her multiplied extortions, she passed an edict prohibiting for four months the exporting of any English cloths or kerseys to the Netherlands; an expedient which procured a good market for such as had already sent any quantity of cloth thither. Her rapaciousness engaged her to give endless disturbance and interruption to commerce. The English company settled in Antwerp having refused her a loan of forty thousand pounds, she dissembled her resentment till she found that they had bought and shipped great quantities of cloth for Antwerp fair, which was approaching: she then laid an embargo on the ships, and obliged the merchants to grant her a loan of the forty thousand pounds at first demanded, to engage for the payment of twenty thousand pounds more at a limited time, and to submit to an arbitrary imposition of twenty shillings on each piece. Some time after, she was informed that the Italian merchants had shipped above forty thousand pieces of cloth for the Levant, for which they were to pay her a crown a piece, the usual imposition: she struck a bargain with the merchant adventurers in London; prohibited the foreigners from making any exportation; and received from the English merchants, in consideration of this iniquity, the sum of fifty thousand pounds, and an imposition of four crowns on each piece of cloth which they should export. She attempted to borrow great sums abroad; but her credit was so low, that though she offered fourteen per cent to the city of Antwerp for a loan of thirty thousand pounds, she could not obtain it till she compelled the city of London to be surety for her. [1] All these violent expedients were employed while she herself was in profound peace with all the world, and had visibly no occasion for money but to supply the demands of a husband who gave attention only to his own convenience, and showed himself entirely indifferent about her interests.

* Godwin, . Cowper’s Chronicle. Burnet, vol. ii. p. 359. Carte, , 333, 337, 341. Strype’s Memor vol. iii. , 558. Annals vol. i. .

Philip was now become master of all the wealth of the new world, and of the richest and most extensive dominions in Europe, by the voluntary resignation of the emperor Charles V.; who, though still in the vigor of his age, had taken a disgust to the world, and was determined to seek, in the tranquillity of retreat, for that happiness which he had in vain pursued amidst the tumults of war and the restless projects of ambition. He summoned the states of the Low Countries and seating himself on the throne for the last time, explained to his subjects the reasons of his resignation, absolved them from all oaths of allegiance, and, devolving his authority on Philip, told him, that his paternal tenderness made him weep when he reflected on the burden which he imposed upon him. [1] He inculcated on him the great and only duty of a prince, the study of his people’s happiness; and represented how much preferable it was to govern by affection, rather than by fear, the nations subjected to his dominion. The cool reflections of age now discovered to him the emptiness of his former pursuits; and he found that the vain schemes of extending his empire had been the source of endless opposition and disappointment, and kept himself, his neighbors, and his subjects, in perpetual inquietude, and had frustrated the sole end of government, the felicity of the nations committed to his care; an object which meets with less opposition, and which, if steadily pursued, can alone convey a lasting and solid satisfaction.

* Thuan. lib. xvi. c. 20.

1556.

A few months after, he resigned to Philip his other dominions; and embarking on board a fleet, sailed to Spain, and took his journey to St. Just, a monastery in Estremadura, which, being situated in a happy climate, and amidst the greatest beauties of nature, he had chosen for the place of his retreat. When he arrived at Burgos, he found, by the thinness of his court, and the negligent attendance of the Spanish grandees, that he was no longer emperor; and though this observation might convince him still more of the vanity of the world, and make him more heartily despise what he had renounced, he sighed to find that all former adulation and obeisance had been paid to his fortune, not to his person. With better reason was he struck with the ingratitude of his son Philip, who obliged him to wait a long time for the payment of the small pension which he had reserved, and this disappointment in his domestic enjoyments gave him a sensible concern. He pursued, however, his resolution with inflexible constancy; and shutting himself up in his retreat, he exerted such self-command, that he restrained even his curiosity from any inquiry concerning the transactions of the world which he had entirely abandoned. The fencing against the pains and infirmities under which he labored occupied a great part of his time; and during the intervals he employed his leisure, either in examining the controversies of theology, with which his age had been so much agitated, and which he had hitherto considered only in a political light, or in imitating the works of renowned artists, particularly in mechanics, of which he had always been a great admirer and encourager. He is said to have here discovered a propensity to the new doctrines, and to have frequently dropped hints of this unexpected alteration in his sentiments. Having amused himself with the construction of clocks and watches, he thence remarked, how impracticable the object was in which he had so much employed himself during his grandeur; and how impossible that he, who never could frame two machines that would go exactly alike, could ever be able to make all mankind concur in the same belief and opinion. He survived his retreat two years.

The emperor Charles had very early in the beginning of his reign found the difficulty of governing such distant dominions; and he had made his brother Ferdinand be elected king of the Romans, with a view to his inheriting the imperial dignity, as well as his German dominions. But having afterwards enlarged his schemes, and formed plans of aggrandizing his family, he regretted that he must dismember such considerable states and he endeavored to engage Ferdinand, by the most tempting offers, and most earnest solicitations, to yield up his pretensions in favor of Philip. Finding his attempts fruitless, he had resigned the imperial crown with his other dignities; and Ferdinand, according to common form, applied to the pope for his coronation. The arrogant pontiff refused the demand; and pretended that, though on the death of an emperor he was obliged to crown the prince elected, yet, in the case of a resignation, the right devolved to the holy see, and it belonged to the pope alone to appoint an emperor. The conduct of Paul was in every thing conformable to these lofty pretensions. He thundered always in the ears of all ambassadors, that he stood in no need of the assistance of any prince; that he was above all potentates on the earth; that he would not accustom monarchs to pretend to a familiarity or equality with him; that it belonged to him to alter and regulate kingdoms; that he was successor of those who had deposed kings and emperors; and that, rather than submit to anything below his dignity, he would set fire to the four corners of the world. He went so far as, at table, in the presence of many persons, and even openly, in a public consistory, to say, that he would not admit any kings for his companions; they were all his subjects, and he would hold them under these feet: so saying, he stamped on the ground with his old and infirm limbs: for he was now past fourscore years of age. [1]

* Father Paul, lib. v.

The world could not forbear making a comparison between Charles V., a prince who, though educated amidst wars and intrigues of state, had prevented the decline of age, and had descended from the throne, in order to set apart an interval for thought and reflection; and a priest who, in the extremity of old age, exulted in his dominion, and from restless ambition and revenge was throwing all nations into combustion. Paul had entertained the most inveterate animosity against the house of Austria; and though a truce of five years had been concluded between France and Spain, he excited Henry by his solicitations to break it, and promised to assist him in recovering Naples, and the dominions to which he laid claim in Italy; a project which had ever proved hurtful to the predecessors of that monarch.

He himself engaged in hostilities with the duke of Alva, viceroy of Naples; and Guise being sent with forces to support him, the renewal of war between the two crowns seemed almost inevitable. Philip, though less warlike than his father, was no less ambitious; and he trusted that, by the intrigues of the cabinet, where, he believed, his caution, and secrecy, and prudence gave him the superiority, he should be able to subdue all his enemies, and extend his authority and dominion. For this reason, as well as from the desire of settling his new empire, he wished to maintain peace with France; but when he found that, without sacrificing his honor, it was impossible for him to overlook the hostile attempts of Henry, he prepared for war with great industry. In order to give himself the more advantage, he was desirous of embarking England in the quarrel; and though the queen was of herself extremely averse to that measure, he hoped that the devoted fondness which, notwithstanding repeated instances of his indifference, she still bore to him, would effectually second his applications. Had the matter indeed depended solely on her, she was incapable of resisting her husband's commands; but she had little weight with her council, still less with her people; and her government, which was every day becoming more odious, seemed unable to maintain itself, even during the most profound tranquillity, much more if a war were kindled with France, and, what seemed an inevitable consequence, with Scotland, supported by that powerful kingdom.

An act of barbarity was this year exercised in England, which, added to many other instances of the same kind, tended to render the government extremely unpopular. Cranmer had long been detained prisoner; but the queen now determined to bring him to punishment; and in order the more fully to satiate her vengeance, she resolved to punish him for heresy, rather than for treason. He was cited by the pope to stand his trial at Rome; and though he was known to be kept in close custody at Oxford, he was, upon his not appearing, condemned as contumacious. Bonner, bishop of London, and Thirleby of Ely, were sent to degrade him; and the former executed the melancholy ceremony with all the joy and exultation which suited his savage nature. [1] The implacable spirit of the queen, not satisfied with the eternal damnation of Cranmer, which she believed inevitable, and with the execution of that dreadful sentence to which he was condemned, prompted her also to seek the ruin of his honor and the infamy of his name. Persons were employed to attack him, not in the way of disputation, against which he was sufficiently armed, but by flattery, insinuation, and address, by representing the dignities to which his character still entitled him, if he would merit them by a recantation; by giving hopes of long enjoying those powerful friends, whom his beneficent disposition had attached to him during the course of his prosperity. [1]

* Mem. of Cranm. .

* * Heylin, . Mem. .

Overcome by the fond love of life, terrified by the prospect of those tortures which awaited him, he allowed, in an unguarded hour, the sentiments of nature to prevail over his resolution, and he agreed to subscribe the doctrines of the papal supremacy and of the real presence. The court, equally perfidious and cruel, were determined that this recantation should avail him nothing; and they sent orders that he should be required to acknowledge his errors in church before the whole people, and that he should thence be immediately carried to execution. Cranmer, whether that he had received a secret intimation of their design, or had repented of his weakness, surprised the audience by a contrary declaration. He said, that he was well apprised of the obedience which he owed to his sovereign and the laws; but this duly extended no further than to submit patiently to their commands, and to bear without resistance whatever hardships they should impose upon him: that a superior duty, the duty which he owed to his Maker, obliged him to speak truth on all occasions, and not to relinquish, by a base denial, the holy doctrine which the Supreme Being had revealed to mankind: that there was one miscarriage in his life, of which, above all others, he severely repented; the insincere declaration of faith, to which he had the weakness to consent, and which the fear of death alone had extorted from him: that he took this opportunity of atoning for his error, by a sincere and open recantation; and was willing to seal with his blood that doctrine which he firmly believed to be communicated from Heaven; and that as his hand had erred by betraying his heart, it should first be punished by a severe but just doom, and should first pay the forfeit of its offences. He was thence led to the stake amidst the insults of the Catholics; and having now summoned up all the force of his mind, he bore their scorn, as well as the torture of his punishment, with singular fortitude. He stretched out his hand,

and without betraying, either by his countenance or motions, the least sign of weakness, or even of feeling, he held it in the flames till it was entirely consumed. His thoughts seemed wholly occupied with reflections on his former fault; and he called aloud several times, “This hand has offended.” Satisfied with that atonement, he then discovered a serenity in his countenance, and when the fire attacked his body, he seemed to be quite insensible of his outward sufferings, and by the force of hope and resolution to have collected his mind altogether within itself, and to repel the fury of the flames. It is pretended, that after his body was consumed, his heart was found entire and untouched amidst the ashes; an event which, as it was the emblem of his constancy, was fondly believed by the zealous Protestants.

He was undoubtedly a man of merit; possessed of learning and capacity, and adorned with candor, sincerity, and beneficence, and all those virtues which were fitted to render him useful and amiable in society. His moral qualities procured him universal respect; and the courage of his martyrdom, though he fell short of the rigid inflexibility observed in many, made him the hero of the Protestant party. [1]

After Cranmer’s death, Cardinal Pole, who had now taken priest’s orders, was installed in the see of Canterbury; and was thus, by this office, as well as by his commission of legate, placed at the head of the church of England. But though he was averse to all sanguinary methods of converting heretics, and deemed the reformation of the clergy the more effectual, as the more laudable expedient for that purpose, [2] he found his authority too weak to oppose the barbarous and bigoted disposition of the queen and of her counsellors. He himself, he knew, had been suspected of Lutheranism; and as Paul, the reigning pope, was a furious persecutor, and his personal enemy, he was prompted, by the modesty of his disposition, to reserve his credit for other occasions, in which he had a greater probability of success. [3]

* Burnet, vol. ii. , 332, etc. Godwin, .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. , 325.

* * * Heylin, , 69. Burnet, vol. ii.

The great object of the queen was to engage the nation in the war which was kindled between France and Spain; and Cardinal Pole, with many other counsellors, openly and zealously opposed this measure. Besides insisting on the marriage articles, which provided against such an attempt, they represented the violence of the domestic factions in England, and the disordered state of the finances; and they foreboded, that the tendency of all these measures was to reduce the kingdom to a total dependence on Spanish counsels. Philip had come to London, in order to support his partisans; and he told the queen that, if he were not gratified in so reasonable a request, he never more would set foot in England. This declaration extremely heightened her zeal for promoting his interests, and overcoming the inflexibility of her council. After employing other menaces of a more violent nature, she threatened to dismiss all of them, and to appoint counsellors more obsequious; yet could she not procure a vote for declaring war with France. At length, one Stafford, and some other conspirators, were detected in a design of surprising Scarborough; [1] and a confession being extorted from them, that they had been encouraged by Henry in the attempt, the queen's importunity prevailed; and it was determined to make this act of hostility, with others of a like secret and doubtful nature, the ground of the quarrel. War was accordingly declared against France; and preparations were every where made for attacking that kingdom.

The revenue of England at that time little exceeded three hundred thousand pounds. [2] Any considerable supplies could scarcely be expected from parliament, considering the present disposition of the nation; and as the war would sensibly diminish that branch arising from the customs, the finances, it was foreseen, would fall short even of the ordinary charges of government, and must still more prove unequal to the expenses of war. But though the queen owed great arrears to all her servants, besides the loans extorted from her subjects, these considerations had no influence with her; and in order to support her warlike preparations, she continued to levy money in the same arbitrary and violent manner which she had formerly practised. She obliged the city of London to supply her with sixty thousand pounds on her husband's entry; she levied before the legal time the second year's subsidy voted by parliament; she issued anew many privy seals, by which she procured loans from her people; and having equipped a fleet, which she could not victual by reason of the dearness of provisions, she seized all the corn she could find in Suffolk and Norfolk, without paying any price to the owners. By all these expedients, assisted by the power of pressing, she levied an army of ten thousand men, which she sent over to the Low Countries, under the command of the earl of Pembroke. Meanwhile, in order to prevent any disturbance at home, many of the most considerable gentry were thrown into the Tower; and lest they should be known, the Spanish practice was followed: they either were carried thither in the night-time, or were hoodwinked and muffled by the guards who conducted them. [3]

* Heylin, . Burnet, vol. ii. . Sir James Melvil’s Memoirs.

* * Rossi, Successi d’Inghilterra.

* * * Strype’s Eccles. Memorials, vol. iii. 377

The king of Spain had assembled an army, which, after the junction of the English, amounted to above sixty thousand men, conducted by Philibert, duke of Savoy, one of the greatest captains of the age. The constable Montmorency, who commanded the French army, had not half the number to oppose to him. The duke of Savoy, after menacing Mariembourgh and Rocroy, suddenly sat down before St. Quintin: and as the place was weak, and ill provided with a garrison, he expected in a few days to become master of it. But Admiral Coligny, governor of the province, thinking his honor interested to save so important a fortress, threw himself into St. Quintin, with some troops of French and Scottish gensdarmery; and by his exhortations and example animated the soldiers to a vigorous defence. He despatched a messenger to his uncle Montmorency, desiring a supply of men; and the constable approached the place with his whole army, in order to facilitate the entry of these succors. But the duke of Savoy, falling on the reënforcement, did such execution upon them, that not above five hundred got into the place. He next made an attack on the French army, and put them to total rout, killing four thousand men, and dispersing the remainder. In this unfortunate action many of the chief nobility of France were either slain or taken prisoners: among the latter was the old constable himself, who, fighting valiantly, and resolute to die rather than survive his defeat, was surrounded by the enemy, and thus fell alive into their hands. The whole kingdom of France was thrown into consternation: Paris was attempted to be fortified in a hurry: and had the Spaniards presently marched thither, it could not have failed to fall into their hands. But Philip was of a cautious temper; and he determined first to take St. Quintin, in order to secure a communication with his own dominions. A very little time, it was expected, would finish this enterprise; but the bravery of Coligny still prolonged the siege seventeen days, which proved the safety of France. Some troops were levied and assembled. Couriers were sent to recall the duke of Guise and his army from Italy: and the French, having recovered from their first panic, put themselves in a posture of defence. Philip, after taking Ham and Catelet, found the season so far advanced, that he could attempt no other enterprise: he broke up his camp, and retired to winter quarters.

But the vigilant activity of Guise, not satisfied with securing the frontiers, prompted him, in the depth of winter, to plan an enterprise which France, during her greatest successes, had always regarded as impracticable, and had never thought of undertaking. Calais was in that age deemed an impregnable fortress; and as it was known to be the favorite of the English nation, by whom it could easily be succored, the recovery of that place by France was considered as totally desperate. But Coligny had remarked, that as the town of Calais was surrounded with marshes, which during the winter were impassable, except over a dike guarded by two castles, St. Agatha and Newnam Bridge, the English were of late accustomed, on account of the lowness of their finances, to dismiss a great part of the garrison at the end of autumn, and to recall them in the spring, at which time alone they judged their attendance necessary. On this circumstance he had founded the design of making a sudden attack on Calais; he had caused the place to be secretly viewed by some engineers; and a plan of the whole enterprise being found among his papers, it served, though he himself was made prisoner on the taking of St. Quintin, to suggest the project of that undertaking, and to direct the measures of the duke of Guise.

Several bodies of troops defiled towards the frontiers on various pretences; and the whole, being suddenly assembled, formed an army, with which Guise made an unexpected march towards Calais. At the same time, a great number of French ships, being ordered into the Channel, under color of cruising on the English, composed a fleet which made an attack by sea on the fortifications. The French assaulted St. Agatha with three thousand arquebusiers; and the garrison, though they made a vigorous defence, were soon obliged to abandon the place, and retreat to Newnam Bridge. The siege of this latter place was immediately undertaken, and at the same time the fleet battered the risbank, which guarded the entrance of the harbor; and both these castles seemed exposed to imminent danger. The governor, Lord Wentworth, was a brave officer; but finding that the greater part of his weak garrison was enclosed in the castle of Newnam Bridge and the risbank, he ordered them to capitulate, and to join him in Calais, which, without their assistance, he was utterly unable to defend. The garrison of Newnam Bridge was so happy as to effect this purpose; but that of the risbank could not obtain such favorable conditions, and were obliged to surrender at discretion.

1558.

The duke of Guise, now holding Calais blockaded by sea and land, thought himself secure of succeeding in his enterprise; but in order to prevent all accident, be delayed not a moment the attack of the place. He planted his batteries against the castle, where he made a large breach; and having ordered Andelot, Coligny’s brother, to drain the fossée, he commanded an assault, which succeeded; and the French made a lodgement in the castle. On the night following, Wentworth attempted to recover this post; but having lost two hundred men in a furious attack which he made upon it, [1] he found his garrison so weak, that he was obliged to capitulate. Ham and Guisnes fell soon after; and thus the duke of Guise, in eight days, during the depth of winter, made himself master of this strong fortress, that had cost Edward III. a siege of eleven months, at the head of a numerous army, which had that very year been victorious in the battle of Crecy. The English had held it above two hundred years; and as it gave them an easy entrance into France, it was regarded as the most important possession belonging to the crown. The joy of the French was extreme, as well as the glory acquired by Guise; who, at the time when all Europe imagined France to be sunk by the unfortunate battle of St. Quintin, had, in opposition to the English, and their allies the Spaniards, acquired possession of a place which no former king of France, even during the distractions of the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, had ever ventured to attempt. The English, on the other hand, bereaved of this valuable fortress, murmured loudly against the improvidence of the queen and her council; who, after engaging in a fruitless war for the sake of foreign interests, had thus exposed the nation to so severe a disgrace. A treasury exhausted by expenses, and burdened with debts; a people divided and dejected; a sovereign negligent of her people’s welfare; were circumstances which, notwithstanding the fair offers and promises of Philip, gave them small hopes of recovering Calais. And as the Scots, instigated by French counsels, began to move on the borders, they were now necessitated rather to look to their defence at home, than to think of foreign conquests.

* Thuan. lib. xx. ca.

After the peace which, in consequence of King Edward’s treaty with Henry, took place between Scotland and England, the queen dowager, on pretence of visiting her daughter and her relations, made a journey to France; and she carried along with her the earls of Huntley, Sutherland, Marischal, and many of the principal nobility. Her secret design was, to take measures for engaging the earl of Arran to resign to her the government of the kingdom; and as her brothers, the duke of Guise, the cardinal of Lorraine, and the duke of Aumale, had uncontrolled influence in the court of France, she easily persuaded Henry, and by his authority the Scottish nobles, to enter into her measures. Having also gained Carnegy of Kinnaird, Panter, bishop of Ross, and Gavin Hamilton, commendator of Kilwinning, three creatures of the governor’s, she persuaded him, by their means, to consent to this resignation; [1] and when every thing was thus prepared for her purpose, she took a journey to Scotland, and passed through England in her way thither. Edward received her with great respect and civility; though he could not forbear attempting to renew the old treaty for his marriage with her daughter; a marriage, he said, so happily calculated for the tranquillity, interest, and security of both kingdoms, and the only means of insuring a durable peace between them. For his part, he added, he never could entertain a cordial amity for any other husband whom she should choose; nor was it easy for him to forgive a man who, at the same time that he disappointed so natural an alliance, had bereaved him of a bride to whom his affections, from his earliest infancy, had been entirely engaged. The queen dowager eluded these applications, by telling him, that if any measures had been taken disagreeable to him, they were entirely owing to the imprudence of the duke of Somerset, who, instead of employing courtesy, caresses, and gentle offices, the proper means of gaining a young princess, had had recourse to arms and violence, and had constrained the Scottish nobility to send their sovereign into France, in order to interest that kingdom in protecting their liberty and independence. [2]

* Buchanan, lib. xiv. Keith, . Spotswood, .

* * Keith, .

When the queen dowager arrived in Scotland, she found the governor very unwilling to fulfil his engagements; and it was not till after many delays that he could be persuaded to resign his authority. But finding that the majority of the young princess was approaching, and that the queen dowager had gained the affections of all the principal nobility, he thought it more prudent to submit; and having stipulated that he should be declared next heir to the crown, and should be freed from giving any account of his past administration, he placed her in possession of the power, and she thenceforth assumed the name of regent. [1] It was a usual saying of this princess, that, provided she could render her friends happy, and could insure to herself a good reputation, she was entirely indifferent what befell her; and though this sentiment is greatly censured by the zealous reformers, [2] as being founded wholly on secular motives, it discovers a mind well calculated for the government of kingdoms. D’Oisel, a Frenchman, celebrated for capacity, had attended her as ambassador from Henry, but in reality to assist her with his counsels in so delicate an undertaking as the administration of Scotland; and this man had formed a scheme for laying a general tax on the kingdom, in order to support a standing military force, which might at once repel the inroads of foreign enemies, and check the turbulence of the Scottish nobles. But though some of the courtiers were gained over to this project, it gave great and general discontent to the nation; and the queen regent, after ingenuously confessing that it would prove pernicious to the kingdom, had the prudence to desist from it, and to trust entirely for her security to the good will and affections of her subjects. [3]

This laudable purpose seemed to be the chief object of her administration; yet was she sometimes drawn from it by her connections with France, and by the influence which her brothers had acquired over her. When Mary commenced hostilities against that kingdom, Henry required the queen regent to take part in the quarrel; and she summoned a convention of states at Newbottle, and requested them to concur in a declaration of war against England. The Scottish nobles, who were become as jealous of French as the English were of Spanish influence, refused their assent; and the queen was obliged to have recourse to stratagem in order to effect her purpose. She ordered D'Oisel to begin some fortifications at Eyemouth, a place which had been dismantled by the last treaty with Edward; and when the garrison of Berwick, as she foresaw, made an inroad to prevent the undertaking, she effectually employed this pretence to inflame the Scottish nation, and to engage them in hostilities against England. [4]

* 12th April, 1554.

* * Knox, .

* * * Keith, . Buchanan, lib. xvi.

* * * * Buchanan, lib. xvi. Thuan. lib. xix. c. 7.

The enterprises however, of the Scots proceeded no farther than some inroads on the borders: when D'Oisel of himself conducted artillery and troops to besiege the Castle of Werke, he was recalled, and sharply rebuked by the council. [1]

* Knox. .

In order to connect Scotland more closely with France, and to increase the influence of the latter kingdom, it was thought proper by Henry to celebrate the marriage between the young queen and the dauphin; and a deputation was sent by the Scottish parliament to assist at the ceremony, and to settle the terms of the contract.

The close alliance between France and Scotland threatened very nearly the repose and security of Mary; and it was foreseen, that though the factions and disorders which might naturally be expected in the Scottish government during the absence of the sovereign, would make its power less formidable, that kingdom would at least afford to the French a means of invading England. The queen, therefore, found it necessary to summon a parliament, and to demand of them some supplies to her exhausted exchequer. As such an emergency usually gives great advantage to the people; and as the parliaments during this reign had shown that, where the liberty and independency of the kingdom were menaced with imminent danger, they were not entirely overawed by the court; we shall naturally expect that the late arbitrary methods of extorting money should at least be censured, and perhaps some remedy be for the future provided against them. The commons, however, without making any reflections on the past, voted, besides a fifteenth, a subsidy of four shillings in the pound on land, and two shillings and eightpence on goods. The clergy granted eight shillings in the pound, payable, as was also the subsidy of the laity, in four years by equal portions.

The parliament also passed an act, confirming all the sales and grants of crown lands, which either were already made by the queen, or should be made during the seven ensuing years. It was easy to foresee that, in Mary’s present disposition and situation, this power would be followed by a great alienation of the royal demesnes; and nothing could be more contrary to the principles of good government, than to establish a prince with very extensive authority, yet permit him to be reduced to beggary. This act met with opposition in the house of commons. One Copely expressed his fears lest the queen, under color of the power there granted, might alter the succession, and alienate the crown from the lawful heir; but his words were thought “irreverent” to her majesty: he was committed to the custody of the serjeant at arms, and though he expressed sorrow for his offence, he was not released till the queen was applied to for his pardon.

The English nation, during this whole reign, were under great apprehensions with regard not only to the succession, but the life of the lady Elizabeth. The violent hatred which the queen bore to her broke out on every occasion; and it required all the authority of Philip, as well as her own great prudence, to prevent the fatal effects of it. The princess retired into the country, and knowing that she was surrounded with spies, she passed her time wholly in reading and study, intermeddled in no business, and saw very little company. While she remained in this situation, which for the present was melancholy, but which prepared her mind for those great actions by which her life was afterwards so much distinguished, proposals of marriage were made to her by the Swedish Ambassador, in his master’s name. As her first question was, whether the queen had been informed of these proposals, the ambassador told her, that his master thought, as he was a gentleman, it was his duty first to make his addresses to herself, and having obtained her consent, he would next, as a king, apply to her sister. But the princess would allow him to proceed no further; and the queen, after thanking her for this instance of duty, desired to know how she stood affected to the Swedish proposals. Elizabeth, though exposed to many present dangers and mortifications, had the magnanimity to reserve herself for better fortune; and she covered her refusal with professions of a passionate attachment to a single life, which, she said, she infinitely preferred before any other. [1] The princess showed like prudence in concealing her sentiments of religion, in complying with the present modes of worship, and in eluding all questions with regard to that delicate subject. [2]

* Burnet, vol. ii. Coll. No. 37.

* * The common net at that time, says Sir Richard Baker, for catching of Protestants, was the real presence; and this net was used to catch the lady Elizabeth; for being asked, one time, what she thought of the words of Christ. “This is my body,” whether she thought it the true body of Christ that was in the sacrament, it is said that, after some pausing,

she thus answered: —
“Christ was the word that spake it;
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the word did make it,
That I believe, and take it.”

Which, though it may seem but a slight expression, yet hath it more solidness than at first sight appears; at least, it served her turn, at that time, to escape the net, which, by a direct answer, she could not have done. Baker’s Chronicle,

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The money granted by parliament enabled the queen to fit out a fleet of a hundred and forty sail, which, being joined by thirty Flemish ships, and carrying six thousand land forces on board, was sent to make an attempt on the coast of Brittany. The fleet was commanded by Lord Clinton; the land forces by the earls of Huntingdon and Rutland. But the equipment of the fleet and army was so dilatory that the French got intelligence of the design, and were prepared to receive them. The English found Brest so well guarded as to render an attempt on that place impracticable; but, landing at Conquet, they plundered and burnt the town, with some adjacent villages, and were proceeding to commit greater disorders, when Kersimon, a Breton gentleman, at the head of some militia, fell upon them, put them to rout, and drove them to their ships with considerable loss. But a small squadron of ten English ships had an opportunity of amply revenging this disgrace upon the French. The mareschal de Thermes, governor of Calais, had made an irruption into Flanders, with an army of fourteen thousand men, and, having forced a passage over the River Aa, had taken Dunkirk and Berg St. Winoc, and had advanced as far as Newport; but Count Egmont coming suddenly upon him with superior forces, he was obliged to retreat; and being overtaken by the Spaniards near Gravelines, and finding a battle inevitable, he chose very skilfully his ground for the engagement. He fortified his left wing with all the precautions possible, and posted his right along the River Aa, which, he reasonably thought, gave him full security from that quarter. But the English ships, which were accidently on the coast, being drawn by the noise of the firing, sailed up the river, and, flanking the French, did such execution by their artillery that they put them to flight, and the Spaniards gained a complete victory. [1]

* Holigshed, .

Meanwhile the principal army of France under the duke of Guise, and that of Spain under the duke of Savoy, approached each other on the frontiers of Picardy; and as the two kings had come into their respective camps, attended by the flower of their nobility, men expected that some great and important event would follow from the emulation of these warlike nations. But Philip, though actuated by the ambition, possessed not the enterprising genius of a conqueror; and he was willing, notwithstanding the superiority of his numbers, and the two great victories which he had gained at St. Quintin and Gravelines, to put a period to the war by treaty. Negotiations were entered into for that purpose; and as the terms offered by the two monarchs were somewhat wide of each other, the armies were put into winter quarters till the princes could come to better agreement. Among other conditions, Henry demanded the restitution of Navarre to its lawful owner; Philip, that of Calais and its territory to England; but in the midst of these negotiations, news arrived of the death of Mary; and Philip, no longer connected with England, began to relax in his firmness on that capital article. This was the only circumstance that could have made the death of that princess be regretted by the nation.

Mary had long been in a declining state of health; and having mistaken her dropsy for a pregnancy, she had made use of an improper regimen, and her malady daily augmented. Every reflection now tormented her. The consciousness of being hated by her subjects, the prospect of Elizabeth’s succession, apprehensions of the danger to which the Catholic religion stood exposed, dejection for the loss of Calais, concern for the ill state of her affairs, and, above all, anxiety for the absence of her husband, who, she knew, intended soon to depart for Spain, and to settle there during the remainder of his life, — all these melancholy reflections preyed upon her mind, and threw her into a lingering fever, of which she died, after a short and unfortunate reign of five years four months and eleven days.

It is not necessary to employ many words in drawing the character of this princess. She possessed few qualities either estimable or amiable; and her person was as little engaging as her behavior and address. Obstinacy, bigotry, violence, cruelty, malignity, revenge, tyranny; every circumstance of her character took a tincture from her bad temper and narrow understanding. And amidst that complication of vices which entered into her composition, we shall scarcely find any virtue but sincerity; a quality which she seems to have maintained throughout her whole life; except in the beginning of her reign, when the necessity of her affairs obliged her to make some promises to the Protestants, which she certainly never intended to perform. But in these cases a weak, bigoted woman, under the government of priests, easily finds casuistry sufficient to justify to herself the violation of a promise. She appears, also, as well as her father, to have been susceptible of some attachments of friendship; and that without the caprice and inconstancy which were so remarkable in the conduct of that monarch. To which we may add, that in many circumstances of her life she gave indications of resolution and vigor of mind, a quality which seems to have been inherent in her family.

Cardinal Pole had long been sickly from an intermitting fever; and he died the same day with the queen, about sixteen hours after her. The benign character of this prelate, the modesty and humanity of his deportment, made him be universally beloved; insomuch that in a nation where the most furious persecution was carried on, and where the most violent religious factions prevailed, entire justice, even by most of the reformers, has been done to his merit. The haughty pontiff, Paul IV., had entertained some prejudices against him; and when England declared war against Henry, the ally of that pope, he seized the opportunity of revenge; and revoking Pole's legatine commission, appointed in his room Cardinal Peyto, an Observantine friar, and confessor to the queen. But Mary would never permit the new legate to act upon the commission; and Paul was afterwards obliged to restore Cardinal Pole to his authority.

There occur few general remarks, besides what have already been made in the course of our narration, with regard to the general state of the kingdom during this reign. The naval power of England was then so inconsiderable, that fourteen thousand pounds being ordered to be applied to the fleet, both for repairing and victualling it, it was computed that ten thousand pounds a year would afterwards answer all necessary charges. [1]

* Burnet, vol. iii. .

The arbitrary proceedings of the queen above mentioned, joined to many monopolies granted by this princess, as well as by her father, checked the growth of commerce; and so much the more, as all other princes in Europe either were not permitted, or did not find it necessary, to proceed in so tyrannical a manner. Acts of parliament, both in the last reign and in the beginning of the present, had laid the same impositions on the merchants of the still-yard as on other aliens; yet the queen, immediately after her marriage, complied with the solicitations of the emperor, and by her prerogative suspended those laws. [1] Nobody in that age pretended to question this exercise of prerogative. The historians are entirely silent with regard to it; and it is only by the collection of public papers that it is handed down to us.

An absurd law had been made in the preceding reign, by which every one was prohibited from making cloth unless he had served an apprenticeship of seven years. The law was repealed in the first year of the queen; and this plain reason given, that it had occasioned the decay of the woollen manufacture, and had ruined several towns. [2] It is strange that Edward's law should have been revived during the reign of Elizabeth; and still more strange that it should still subsist.

A passage to Archangel had been discovered by the English during the last reign; and a beneficial trade with Muscovy had been established. A solemn embassy was sent by the czar to Queen Mary. The ambassadors were shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland; but being hospitably entertained there, they proceeded on the journey, and were received at London with great pomp and solemnity. [3] This seems to have been the first intercourse which that empire had with any of the western potentates of Europe.

A law was passed in this reign, [4] by which the number of horses, arms and furniture, was fixed which each person, according to the extent of his property, should be provided with for the defence of the kingdom. A man of a thousand pounds a year, for instance, was obliged to maintain at his own charge six horses fit for demi-lances, of which three at least to be furnished with sufficient harness, steel saddles, and weapons proper for the demi-lances; and ten horses fit for light horsemen, with furniture and weapons proper for them: he was obliged to have forty corselets furnished; fifty almain revets, or, instead of them, forty coats of plate, corse, etc. or brigandines furnished; forty pikes, thirty long bows, thirty sheafs of arrows, thirty steel caps or skulls, twenty black bills or halberts, twenty harquebuts, and twenty morions or sallets. We may remark that a man of a thousand marks of stock was rated equal to one of two hundred pounds a year; a proof that few or none at that time lived on their stock in money, and that great profits were made by the merchants in the course of trade. There is no class above a thousand pounds a year.

* Rymer, vol. xv. .

* * 1 Mar. Parl. 2, cap, 7.

* * * Holingshed, . Heylin, .

* * * * 4 and 5 Phil. and Mar. ca.

We pay form a notion of the little progress made in arts and refinement about this time, from one circumstance; a man of no less rank than the comptroller of Edward VI.’s household paid only thirty shillings a year of our present money for his house in Channel Row; [1] yet labor and provisons, and consequently houses, were only about a third of the present price. Erasmus ascribes the frequent plagues in England to the nastiness, and dirt, and slovenly habits among the people. “The floors,” says he, “are commonly of clay, strewed with rushes, under which lies unmolested an ancient collection of beer, grease, fragments, bones, spittle, excrements of dogs and cats, and every thing that is nasty.” [2]

Holingshed, who lived in Queen Elizabeth’s reign, gives a very curious account of the plain, or rather rude way of living of the preceding generation. There scarcely was a chimney to the houses, even in considerable towns; the fire was kindled by the wall, and the smoke sought its way out at the roof, or door, or windows: the houses were nothing but watling plastered over with clay; the people slept on straw pallets, and had a good round log under their head for a pillow; and almost all the furniture and utensils were of wood. [3]

In this reign we find the first general law with regard to highways, which were appointed to be repaired by parish duty all over England. [4]

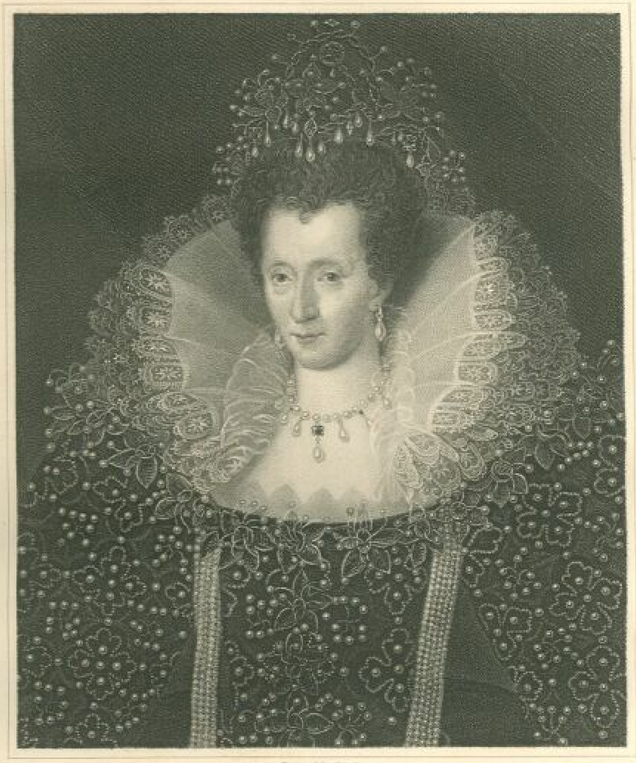
* Nicholson’s Historical Library.

* * Erasm. Epist. 482.

* * * See note V, at the end of the volume.

* * * * 2 and 3 Phil. and Mar. ca.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.



Engraved by W. Holl.

ELIZABETH.

From the Picture in Her Majesty's Collection
at St. James's Palace.

ELIZABETH.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.
EMP. OP GERM.   K. OF SCOTLAND.   K. OF FRANCE.   K. OF SPAIN.
Ferdinand..1564 Mary abdicates.1567 Henry II....1559 Philip II.1598
Maximilian.1576 James VI. Francis II..1560 Philip III.
Rodolph II. Charles IX..1574
Henry III.. 1589
Henry IV.
POPES.
Paul IV.... 1558
Pius IV.... 1565
Pius V..... 1572
Gregory XIII.1585
Sixtus V... 1590
Urban VII.. 1590
Gregory XIV. 1591
Innocent IX. 1591
Clement VII.

1558.

In a nation so divided as the English, it could scarcely be expected that the death of one sovereign, and the accession of another, who was generally believed to have embraced opposite principles to those which prevailed, could be the object of universal satisfaction: yet so much were men displeased with the present conduct of affairs, and such apprehensions were entertained of futurity, that the people, overlooking their theological disputes, expressed a general and unfeigned joy that the sceptre had passed into the hand of Elizabeth. That princess had discovered great prudence in her conduct during the reign of her sister; and as men were sensible of the imminent danger to which she was every moment exposed, compassion towards her situation, and concern for her safety, had rendered her, to an uncommon degree, the favorite of the nation. A parliament had been assembled a few days before Mary’s death; and when Heathe, archbishop of York, then chancellor, notified to them that event, scarcely an interval of regret appeared; and the two houses immediately resounded with the joyful acclamations of “God save Queen Elizabeth: long and happily may she reign.” The people, less actuated by faction, and less influenced by private views, expressed a joy still more general and hearty on her proclamation; and the auspicious commencement of this reign prognosticated that felicity and glory which, during its whole course, so uniformly attended it. [1]

Elizabeth was at Hatfield when she heard of her sister’s death; and after a few days she went thence to London, through crowds of people, who strove with each other in giving her the strongest testimony of their affection. On her entrance into the Tower, she could not forbear reflecting on the great difference between her present fortune and that which a few years before had attended her, when she was conducted to that place as a prisoner, and lay there exposed to all the bigoted malignity of her enemies. She fell on her knees, and expressed her thanks to Heaven for the deliverance which the Almighty had granted her from her bloody persecutors; a deliverance, she said, no less miraculous than that which Daniel had received from the den of lions. This act of pious gratitude seems to have been the last circumstance in which she remembered any past hardships and injuries. With a prudence and magnanimity truly laudable, she buried all offences in oblivion, and received with affability even those who had acted with the greatest malevolence against her. Sir Henry Benningfield himself, to whose custody she had been committed, and who had treated her with severity, never felt, during the whole course of her reign, any effects of her resentment. [2] Yet was not the gracious reception which she gave, prostitute and undistinguishing. When the bishops came in a body to make their obeisance to her, she expressed to all of them sentiments of regard; except to Bonner, from whom she turned aside, as from a man polluted with blood, who was a just object of horror to every heart susceptible of humanity. [3]

* Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. .

* * * Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

After employing a few days in ordering her domestic affairs, Elizabeth notified to foreign courts her sister’s death, and her own accession. She sent Lord Cobham to the Low Countries, where Philip then resided; and she took care to express to that monarch her gratitude for the protection which he had afforded her, and her desire of persevering in that friendship which had so happily commenced between them. Philip, who had long foreseen this event, and who still hoped, by means of Elizabeth, to obtain that dominion over England, of which he had failed in espousing Mary, immediately despatched orders to the duke of Feria, his ambassador at London, to make proposals of marriage to the queen; and he offered to procure from Rome a dispensation for that purpose. But Elizabeth soon came to the resolution of declining the proposal. She saw that the nation had entertained an extreme aversion to the Spanish alliance during her sister’s reign; and that one great cause of the popularity which she herself enjoyed, was the prospect of being freed by her means from the danger of foreign subjection. She was sensible that her affinity with Philip was exactly similar to that of her father with Catharine of Arragon; and that her marrying that monarch was, in effect, declaring herself illegitimate, and incapable of succeeding to the throne. And though the power of the Spanish monarchy might still be sufficient, in opposition to all pretenders, to support her title, her masculine spirit disdained such precarious dominion, which, as it would depend solely on the power of another, must be exercised according to his inclinations. [1] But while these views prevented her from entertaining any thoughts of a marriage with Philip, she gave him an obliging, though evasive answer; and he still retained such hopes of success, that he sent a messenger to Rome, with orders to solicit the dispensation.

* Camden in Kennet, . Burnet, vol. ii. .

The queen too, on her sister’s death, had written to Sir Edward Carne, the English ambassador at Rome, to notify her accession to the pope; but the precipitate nature of Paul broke through all the cautious measures concerted by this young princess. He told Carne, that England was a fief of the holy see; and it was great temerity in Elizabeth to have assumed, without his participation, the title and authority of queen: that being illegitimate, she could not possibly inherit that kingdom; nor could he annul the sentence, pronounced by Clement VII. and Paul III., with regard to Henry's marriage: that were he to proceed with rigor, he should punish this criminal invasion of his rights, by rejecting all her applications but being willing to treat her with paternal indulgence, he would still keep the door of grace open to her, and that if she would renounce all pretensions to the crown, and submit entirely to his will, she should experience the utmost lenity compatible with the dignity of the apostolic see. [1] When this answer was reported to Elizabeth, she was astonished at the character of that aged pontiff; and having recalled her ambassador, she continued with more determined resolution to pursue those measures which already she had secretly embraced.

The queen, not to alarm the partisans of the Catholic religion, had retained eleven of her sister's counsellors; but in order to balance their authority, she added eight more, who were known to be inclined to the Protestant communion: the marquis of Northampton, the earl of Bedford, Sir Thomas Parry, Sir Edward Rogers, Sir Ambrose Cave, Sir Francis Knolles, Sir Nicholas Bacon, whom she created lord keeper, and Sir William Cecil, secretary of state. [2]

With these counsellors, particularly Cecil, she frequently deliberated concerning the expediency of restoring the Protestant religion, and the means of executing that great enterprise. Cecil told her, that the greater part of the nation had, ever since her father's reign, inclined to the reformation, and though her sister had constrained them to profess the ancient faith, the cruelties exercised by her ministers had still more alienated their affections from it: that happily the interests of the sovereign here concurred with the inclinations of the people; nor was her title to the crown compatible with the authority of the Roman pontiff: that a sentence, so solemnly pronounced by two popes against her mother's marriage, could not possibly be recalled without inflicting a mortal wound on the credit of the see of Rome; and even if she were allowed to retain the crown, it would only be on an uncertain and dependent footing: that this circumstance alone counterbalanced all dangers whatsoever; and these dangers themselves, if

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* Father Paul, lib. v.

* * Strype's Ann. vol. i. .

narrowly examined, would be found very little formidable: that the curses and execrations of the Romish church, when not seconded by military force, were, in the present age, more an object of ridicule than of terror, and had now as little influence in this world as in the next: that though the bigotry or ambition of Henry or Philip might incline them to execute a sentence of excommunication against her, their interests were so incompatible, that they never could concur in any plan of operations; and the enmity of the one would always insure to her the friendship of the other: that if they encouraged the discontents of her Catholic subjects, their dominions also abounded with Protestants, and it would be easy to retaliate upon them: that even such of the English as seemed at present zealously attached to the Catholic faith, would, most of them, embrace the religion of their new sovereign; and the nation had of late been so much accustomed to these revolutions, that men had lost all idea of truth and falsehood in such subjects: that the authority of Henry VIII., so highly raised by many concurring circumstances, first inured the people to this submissive deference; and it was the less difficult for succeeding princes to continue the nation in a track to which it had so long been accustomed; and that it would be easy for her, by bestowing on Protestants all preferment in civil offices and the militia, the church and the universities, both to insure her own authority, and to render her religion entirely predominant. [1]

The education of Elizabeth, as well as her interest, led her to favor the reformation; and she remained not long in suspense with regard to the party which she should embrace. But though determined in her own mind, she resolved to proceed by gradual and secure steps, and not to imitate the example of Mary in encouraging the bigots of her party to make immediately a violent invasion on the established religion. [2] She thought it requisite, however, to discover such symptoms of her intentions as might give encouragement to the Protestants so much depressed by the late violent persecutions. She immediately recalled all the exiles, and gave liberty to the prisoners who were confined on account of religion. We are told of a pleasantry of one Rainsford on this occasion, who said to the queen, that he had a petition to present her in behalf of other prisoners called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John: she readily replied, that it behoved her first to consult the prisoners themselves, and to learn of them whether they desired that liberty which he demanded for them. [3]

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Camden, .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. . Camden, .

* * * Heylin, .

Elizabeth also proceeded to exert in favor of the reformers some acts of power which were authorized by the extent of royal prerogative during that age. Finding that the Protestant teachers, irritated by persecution, broke out in a furious attack on the ancient superstition, and that the Romanists replied with no less zeal and acrimony, she published a proclamation, by which she inhibited all preaching without a special license; [1] and though she dispensed with these orders in favor of some preachers of her own sect, she took care that they should be the most calm and moderate of the party. She also suspended the laws so far as to order a great part of the service; the litany, the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the gospels; to be read in English. And having first published injunctions, that all the churches should conform themselves to the practice of her own chapel, she forbade the host to be any more elevated in her presence; an innovation which, however frivolous it may appear, implied the most material consequences. [2]

These declarations of her intention, concurring with preceding suspicions, made the bishops foresee with certainty a revolution in religion. They therefore refused to officiate at her coronation; and it was with some difficulty that the bishop of Carlisle was at last prevailed on to perform the ceremony. When she was conducted through London, amidst the joyful acclamations of her subjects, a boy, who personated truth, was let down from one of the triumphal arches, and presented to her a copy of the Bible. She received the book with the most gracious deportment; placed it next her bosom; and declared that, amidst all the costly testimonies which the city had that day given her of their attachment, this present was by far the most precious and most acceptable. [1] Such were the innocent artifices by which Elizabeth insinuated herself into the affections of her subjects. Open in her address, gracious and affable in all public appearances, she rejoiced in the concourse of her subjects, entered into all their pleasures and amusements; and without departing from her dignity, which she knew well how to preserve, she acquired a popularity beyond what any of her predecessors or successors ever could attain. Her own sex exulted to see a woman hold the reins of empire with such prudence and fortitude: and while a young princess of twenty-five years, (for that was her age at her accession,) who possessed all the graces and insinuation, though not all the beauty of her sex, courted the affections of individuals by her civilities, of the public by her services; her authority though corroborated by the strictest bands of law and religion, appeared to be derived entirely from the choice and inclination of the people.

* Heylin, . Strype, vol. i. .

* * Camden, . Heylin, . Strype, vol. i. p 54. Stowe, .

* * * Burnet, vol. ii. . Strype, vol. i. .

A sovereign of this disposition was not likely to offend her subjects by any useless or violent exertions of power; and Elizabeth, though she threw out such hints as encouraged the Protestants delayed the entire change of religion till the meeting of the parliament, which was summoned to assemble. The elections had gone entirely against the Catholics, who seem not indeed to have made any great struggle for the superiority; [1] and the houses met in a disposition of gratifying the queen in every particular which she could desire of them. They began the session with a unanimous declaration, "that Queen Elizabeth was, and ought to be, as well by the word of God, as the common and statute laws of the realm, the lawful, undoubted, and true heir to the crown, lawfully descended from the blood royal, according to the order of succession settled in the thirty-fifth of Henry VIII." [2]

* Notwithstanding the bias of the nation towards the Protestant sect, it appears that some violence, at least according to our present ideas, was used in these elections:

five candidates were nominated by the court to each borough,

and three to each county; and by the sheriff's authority the members were chosen from among these candidates. See state papers collected by Edward, earl of Clarendon, .

* I Eliz. ca.

This act of recognition was probably dictated by the queen herself and her ministers; and she showed her magnanimity, as well as moderation, in the terms which she employed on that occasion. She followed not Mary's practice in declaring the validity of her mother's marriage, or in expressly repealing the act formerly made against her own legitimacy: she knew that this attempt must be attended with reflections on her father's memory, and on the birth of her deceased sister; and as all the world was sensible, that Henry's divorce from Anne Boleyn was merely the effect of his usual violence and caprice, she scorned to found her title on any act of an assembly which had too much prostituted its authority by its former variable, servile, and iniquitous decisions. Satisfied, therefore, in the general opinion entertained with regard to this fact, which appeared the more undoubted, the less anxiety she discovered in fortifying it by votes and inquiries; she took possession of the throne both as her birthright, and as insured to her by former acts of parliament; and she never appeared anxious to distinguish these titles. [1]

The first bill brought into parliament with a view of trying their disposition on the head of religion, was that for suppressing the monasteries lately erected, and for restoring the tenths and first-fruits to the queen. This point being gained without much difficulty, a bill was next introduced, annexing the supremacy to the crown; and though the queen was there denominated "governess," not "head," of the church, it conveyed the same extensive power which under the latter title had been exercised by her father and brother. All the bishops who were present in the upper house strenuously opposed this law; and as they possessed more learning than the temporal peers, they triumphed in the debate; but the majority of voices in that house, as well as among the commons, was against them. By this act, the crown, without the concurrence either of the parliament, or even of the convocation, was vested with the whole spiritual power; might repress all heresies, might establish or repeal all canons, might alter every point of discipline, and might ordain or abolish any religious rite or ceremony, [2]

* Camden, . Heylin, , 108

* * I Eliz. ca. This last power was anew recognized in the bill of uniformity I Eliz. cap 2.

In determining heresy, the sovereign was only limited (if that could be called a limitation) to such doctrines as had been adjudged heresy by the authority of the Scripture, by the first four general councils, or by any general council which followed the Scripture as their rule, or to such other doctrines as should hereafter be denominated heresy by the parliament and convocation. In order to exercise this authority, the queen, by a clause of the act, was empowered to name commissioners, either laymen or clergymen, as she should think proper; and on this clause was afterwards founded the court of ecclesiastical commission; which assumed large discretionary, not to say arbitrary powers, totally incompatible with any exact boundaries in the constitution. Their proceedings, indeed, were only consistent with absolute monarchy; but were entirely suitable to the genius of the act on which they were established; an act that at once gave the crown alone all the power which had formerly been claimed by the popes, but which even these usurping prelates had never been able fully to exercise without some concurrence of the national clergy.

Whoever refused to take an oath acknowledging the queen's supremacy, was incapacitated from holding any office; whoever denied the supremacy, or attempted to deprive the queen of that prerogative, forfeited, for the first offence, all his goods and chattels; for the second, was subjected to the penalty of a præmunire; but the third offence was declared treason. These punishments, however severe, were less rigorous than those which were formerly, during the reigns of her father and brother, inflicted in like cases.

A law was passed confirming all the statutes enacted in King Edward's time with regard to religion: [1] the nomination of bishops was given to the crown, without any election of the chapters: the queen was empowered, on the vacancy of any see, to seize all the temporalities, and to bestow on the bishop elect an equivalent in the impropriations belonging to the crown. This pretended equivalent was commonly much inferior in value; and thus the queen, amidst all her concern for religion, followed the example of the preceding reformers in committing depredations on the ecclesiastical revenues.

The bishops and all incumbents were prohibited from alienating their revenues, and from letting leases longer than twenty-one years or three lives. This law seemed to be meant for securing the property of the church; but as an exception was left in favor of the crown, great abuses still prevailed. It was usual for the courtiers, during this reign, to make an agreement with a bishop or incumbent; and to procure a fictitious alienation to the queen, who afterwards transferred the lands to the person agreed on. [2] This method of pillaging the church was not remedied till the beginning of James I. The present depression of the clergy exposed them to all injuries; and the laity never stopped till they had reduced the church to such poverty, that her plunder was no longer a compensation for the odium incurred by it.

A solemn and public disputation was held during this session in presence of Lord Keeper Bacon, between the divines of the Protestant and those of the Catholic communion. The champions appointed to defend the religion of the sovereign were, as in all former instances, entirely triumphant; and the Popish disputants, being pronounced refractory and obstinate, were even punished by imprisonment. [3]

Emboldened by this victory, the Protestants ventured on the last and most important step, and brought into parliament a bill [1] for abolishing the mass and reestablishing the liturgy of King Edward. Penalties were enacted, as well against those who departed from this mode of worship, as against those who absented themselves from the church and the sacraments. And thus in one session, without any violence, tumult, or clamor, was the whole system of religion altered, on the very commencement of a reign, and by the will of a young woman, whose title to the crown was by many thought liable to objections; an event which, though it may appear surprising to men in the present age, was every where expected on the first intelligence of Elizabeth’s accession.

The commons also made a sacrifice to the queen, more difficult to obtain than that of any articles of faith: they voted a subsidy of four shillings in the pound on land, and two shillings and eightpence on movables, together with two fifteenths. [2] The house in no instance departed from the most respectful deference and complaisance towards the queen. Even the importune address which they made her on the conclusion of the session, to

* I Eliz. ca.

* * Strype, vol. i. .

* * * Strype, vol. i. .

fix her choice of a husband, could not, they supposed, be very disagreeable to one of her sex and age. The address was couched in the most respectful expressions, yet met with a refusal from the queen.

* 1 Eliz. ca.

* * See note A, at the end of the volume.

1559.

She told the speaker, that, as the application from the house was conceived in general terms, only recommending marriage, without pretending to direct her choice of a husband, she could not take offence at the address, or regard it otherwise than as a new instance of their affectionate attachment to her: that any further interposition on their part, would have ill become either them to make as subjects, or her to bear as an independent princess: that even while she was a private person, and exposed to much danger, she had always declined that engagement, which she regarded as an encumbrance; much more, at present, would she persevere in this sentiment, when the charge of a great kingdom was committed to her, and her life ought to be entirely devoted to promoting the interests of religion and the happiness of her subjects: that as England was her husband, wedded to her by this pledge, (and here she showed her finger with the same gold ring upon it with which she had solemnly betrothed herself to the kingdom at her inauguration,) so all Englishmen were her children, and while she was employed in rearing or governing such a family, she could not deem herself barren, or her life useless and unprofitable: that if she ever entertained thoughts of changing her condition, the care of her subjects' welfare would still be uppermost in her thoughts; but should she live and die a virgin, she doubted not but divine Providence, seconded by their counsels and her own measures, would be able to prevent all dispute with regard to the succession, and secure them a sovereign who, perhaps better than her own issue, would imitate her example in loving and cherishing her people; and that for her part, she desired that no higher character, or fairer remembrance of her should be transmitted to posterity, than to have this inscription engraved on her tombstone, when she should pay the last debt to nature: “Here lies Elizabeth, who lived and died a maiden queen.” [1]

After the prorogation of the parliament, [2] the laws enacted with regard to religion were put in execution, and met with little opposition from any quarter. The liturgy was again introduced in the vulgar tongue, and the oath of supremacy was tendered to the clergy. The number of bishops had been reduced to fourteen by a sickly season which preceded: and all these, except the bishop of Landaff, having refused compliance, were degraded from their sees: but of the inferior clergy throughout all England, where there are near ten thousand parishes, only eighty rectors and vicars, fifty prebendaries fifteen heads of colleges, twelve archdeacons, and as many deans, sacrificed their livings to their religious principles. [3]

* Camden, . Sir Simon d’Ewes.

* * It is thought remarkable by Camden, that though this session was the first of the reign, no person was attainted; but on the contrary, some restored in blood by the parliament; a good symptom of the lenity, at least of the prudence, of the queen’s government; and that it should appear remarkable, is a proof of the rigor of preceding reigns.

* * * Camden, . Heylin, . Strype, vol. i. , with some small variations.

Those in high ecclesiastic stations, being exposed to the eyes of the public, seem chiefly to have placed a point of honor in their perseverance; but on the whole, the Protestants, in the former change introduced by Mary, appear to have been much more rigid and conscientious. Though the Catholic religion, adapting itself to the senses, and enjoining observances which enter into the common train of life, does at present lay faster hold on the mind than the reformed, which, being chiefly spiritual, resembles more a system of metaphysics, yet was the proportion of zeal, as well as of knowledge, during the first ages after the reformation, much greater on the side of the Protestants. The Catholics continued, ignorantly and supinely, in their ancient belief, or rather their ancient practices: but the reformers, obliged to dispute on every occasion, and inflamed to a degree of enthusiasm by novelty and persecution had strongly attached themselves to their tenets; and were ready to sacrifice their fortunes, and even their lives, in support of their speculative and abstract principles.

The forms and ceremonies still preserved in the English liturgy, as they bore some resemblance to the ancient service, tended further to reconcile the Catholics to the established religion; and as the queen permitted no other mode of worship, and at the same time struck out every thing that could be offensive to them in the new liturgy, [1] even those who were addicted to the Romish communion made no scruple of attending the established church. Had Elizabeth gratified her own inclinations, the exterior appearance, which is the chief circumstance with the people, would have been still more similar between the new and the ancient form of worship. Her love of state and magnificence, which she affected in every thing, inspired her with an inclination towards the pomp of the Catholic religion; and it was merely in compliance with the prejudices of her party, that she gave up either images, or the addresses to saints, or prayers for the dead. [2] Some foreign princes interposed to procure the Romanists the privilege of separate assemblies in particular cities, but the queen would not comply with their request; and she represented the manifest danger of disturbing the national peace by a toleration of different religions. [3]

* Heylin, .

* * Burnet, vol. ii. , 397. Camden, .

* * * Camden, . Strype, vol. i. , 370.

While the queen and parliament were employed in settling the public religion, the negotiations for a peace were still conducted, first at Cercamp, then at Chateau-Cambresis, between the ministers of France, Spain, and England; and Elizabeth, though equally prudent, was not equally successful in this transaction. Philip employed his utmost efforts to procure the restitution of Calais, both as bound in honor to indemnify England which merely on his account had been drawn into the war; and as engaged in interest to remove France to a distance from his frontiers in the Low Countries. So long as he entertained hopes of espousing the queen, he delayed concluding a peace with Henry; and even after the change of religion in England deprived him of all such views, his ministers hinted to her a proposal which may be regarded as reasonable and honorable. Though all his own terms with France were settled, he seemed willing to continue the war till she should obtain satisfaction; provided she would stipulate to adhere to the Spanish alliance, and continue hostilities against Henry during the course of six years: [1]* but Elizabeth, after consulting with her ministers, wisely rejected this proposal. She was sensible of the low state of her finances; the great debts contracted by her father, brother, and sister; the disorders introduced into every part of the administration; the divisions by which her people were agitated; and she was convinced that nothing but tranquillity during some years could bring the kingdom again into a flourishing condition, or enable her to act with dignity and vigor in her transactions with foreign nations. Well acquainted with the value which Henry put upon Calais, and the impossibility, during the present emergence, of recovering it by treaty, she was willing rather to suffer that loss, than submit to such a dependence on Spain, as she must expect to fall into, if she continued pertinaciously in her present demand. She ordered, therefore, her ambassadors, Lord Effingham, the bishop of Ely, and Dr. Wotton, to conclude the negotiation, and to settle a peace with Henry on any reasonable terms. Henry offered to stipulate a marriage between the eldest daughter of the dauphin, and the eldest son of Elizabeth; and to engage for the restitution of Calais as the dowry of that princess; [2] but as the queen was sensible that this treaty would appear to the world a palpable evasion, she insisted upon more equitable, at least more plausible conditions.

* Forbes’s Full View, vol. i. .

* * Forbes’s Full View, vol. i. .

It was at last agreed, that Henry should restore Calais at the expiration of eight years; that in case of failure, he should pay five hundred thousand crowns, and the queen’s title to Calais still remain; that he should find the security of seven or eight foreign merchants, not natives of France, for the payment of this sum; that he should deliver five hostages till that security were provided; that if Elizabeth broke the peace with France or Scotland during the interval, she should forfeit all title to Calais; but if Henry made war on Elizabeth, he should be obliged immediately to restore that fortress. [1] All men of penetration easily saw that these stipulations were but a colorable pretence for abandoning Calais; but they excused the queen on account of the necessity of her affairs; and they even extolled her prudence in submitting without further struggle to that necessity. A peace with Scotland was a necessary consequence of that with France.

* Forbes, vol. i. . Rymer, tom. xv. p 505.

Philip and Henry terminated hostilities by a mutual restitution of all places taken during the course of the war; and Philip espoused the princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of France, formerly betrothed to his son Don Carlos. The duke of Savoy married Margaret, Henry’s sister, and obtained a restitution of all his dominions of Savoy and Piedmont, except a few towns retained by France. And thus general tranquillity seemed to be restored to Europe.

But though peace was concluded between France and England, there soon appeared a ground of quarrel of the most serious nature, and which was afterwards attended with the most important consequences. The two marriages of Henry VIII., that with Catharine of Arragon, and that with Anne Boleyn, were incompatible with each other; and it seemed impossible that both of them could be regarded as valid and legal: but still the birth of Elizabeth lay under some disadvantages to which that of her sister Mary was not exposed. Henry’s first marriage had obtained the sanction of all the powers, both civil and ecclesiastical, which were then acknowledged in England; and it was natural for Protestants as well as Romanists to allow, on account of the sincere intention of the parties, that their issue ought to be regarded as legitimate, But his divorce and second marriage had been concluded in direct opposition to the see of Rome; and though they had been ratified by the authority both of the English parliament and convocation, those who were strongly attached to the Catholic communion, and who reasoned with great strictness were led to regard them as entirely invalid, and to deny altogether the queen’s right of succession. The next heir of blood was the queen of Scots, now married to the dauphin; and the great power of that princess, joined to her plausible title rendered her a formidable rival to Elizabeth. The king of France had secretly been soliciting at Rome a bull of excommunication against the queen; and she had here been beholden to the good offices of Philip, who, from interest more than either friendship or generosity, had negotiated in her favor, and had successfully opposed the pretensions of Henry. But the court of France was not discouraged with this repulse; the duke of Guise and his brothers, thinking that it would much augment their credit if their niece should bring an accession of England, as she had already done of Scotland, to the crown of France, engaged the king not to neglect the claim; and, by their persuasion, he ordered his son and daughter-in-law to assume openly the arms as well as title of England, and to quarter these arms on all their equipages, furniture, and liveries. When the English ambassador complained of this injury he could obtain nothing but an evasive answer; that as the queen of Scots was descended from the blood royal of England, she was entitled, by the example of many princes, to assume the arms of that kingdom. But besides that this practice had never prevailed without permission being first obtained, and without making a visible difference between the arms, Elizabeth plainly saw that this pretension had not been advanced during the reign of her sister Mary; and that, therefore, the king of France intended, on the first opportunity, to dispute her legitimacy, and her title to the crown. Alarmed at the danger, she thenceforth conceived a violent jealousy against the queen of Scots; and was determined, as far as possible, to incapacitate Henry from the execution of his project. The sudden death of that monarch, who was killed in a tournament at Paris, while celebrating the espousals of his sister with the duke of Savoy, altered not her views. Being informed that his successor, Francis II., still continued to assume, without reserve, the title of King of England, she began to consider him and his queen as her mortal enemies; and the present situation of affairs in Scotland afforded her a favorable opportunity, both of revenging the injury, and providing for her own safety.

The murder of the cardinal-primate at St. Andrew’s had deprived the Scottish Catholics of a head whose severity, courage, and capacity had rendered him extremely formidable to the innovators in religion; and the execution of the laws against heresy began thenceforth to be more remiss. The queen regent governed the kingdom by prudent and moderate counsels; and as she was not disposed to sacrifice the civil interests of the state to the bigotry or interests of the clergy, she deemed it more expedient to temporize, and to connive at the progress of a doctrine which she had not power entirely to repress. When informed of the death of Edward, and the accession of Mary to the crown of England, she entertained hopes that the Scottish reformers, deprived of the countenance which they received from that powerful kingdom, would lose their ardor with their prospect of success, and would gradually return to the faith of their ancestors. But the progress and revolutions of religion are little governed by the usual maxims of civil policy; and the event much disappointed the expectations of the regent. Many of the English preachers, terrified with the severity of Mary’s government, took shelter in Scotland, where they found more protection, and a milder administration; and while they propagated their theological tenets, they filled the whole kingdom with a just horror against the cruelties of the bigoted Catholics, and showed their disciples the fate which they must expect, if ever their adversaries should attain an uncontrolled authority over them.

A hierarchy, moderate in its acquisitions of power and riches, may safely grant a toleration to sectaries; and the more it softens the zeal of innovators by lenity and liberty, the more securely will it possess those advantages which the legal establishments bestow upon it. But where superstition has raised a church to such an exorbitant height as that of Rome, persecution is less the result of bigotry in the priests, than of a necessary policy; and the rigor of law is the only method of repelling the attacks of men who, besides religious zeal, have so many other motives, derived both from public and private interest, to engage them on the side of innovation. But though such overgrown hierarchies may long support themselves by these violent expedients, the time comes when severities tend only to enrage the new sectaries, and make them break through all bounds of reason and moderation. This crisis was now visibly approaching in Scotland; and whoever considers merely the transactions resulting from it, will be inclined to throw the blame equally on both parties; whoever enlarges his view, and reflects on the situations, will remark the necessary progress of human affairs, and the operation of those principles which are inherent in human nature.

Some heads of the reformers in Scotland, such as the earl of Argyle, his son Lord Lorne, the earls of Morton and Glencarne, Erskine of Dun, and others, observing the danger to which they were exposed, and desirous to propagate their principles, entered privately into a bond or association; and called themselves the “congregation” of the Lord, in contradistinction to the established church, which they denominated the congregation of Satan. The tenor of the bond was as follows: “We, perceiving how Satan, in his members, the Antichrist of our time, do cruelly rage, seeking to overthrow and to destroy the gospel of Christ and his congregation, ought, according to our bounden duty, to strive in our master’s cause, even unto the death, being certain of the victory in him. We do therefore promise, before the majesty of God and his congregation, that we, by his grace, shall with all diligence continually apply our whole power, substance, and our very lives, to maintain, set forward, and establish the most blessed word of God and his congregation; and shall labor, by all possible means, to have faithful ministers, truly and purely to minister Christ's gospel and sacraments to his people: we shall maintain them, nourish them, and defend them, the whole congregation of Christ, and every member thereof, by our whole power, and at the hazard of our lives, against Satan, and all wicked power who may intend tyranny and trouble against the said congregation; unto which holy word and congregation we do join ourselves; and we forsake and renounce the congregation of Satan, with all the superstitious abomination and idolatry thereof; and moreover shall declare ourselves manifestly enemies thereto, by this faithful promise before God, testified to this congregation by our subscriptions. At Edinburgh, the third of December, 1557." [1]

* Keith, . Knox, .

Had the subscribers of this zealous league been content only to demand a toleration of the new opinions, however incompatible their pretensions might have been with the policy of the church of Rome, they would have had the praise of opposing tyrannical laws, enacted to support an establishment prejudicial to civil society: but it is plain that they carried their views much further; and their practice immediately discovered the spirit by which they were actuated. Supported by the authority which they thought belonged to them as the congregation of the Lord, they ordained that prayers in the vulgar tongue [1] should be used in all the parish churches of the kingdom; and that preaching and the interpretation of the Scriptures should be practised in private houses, til God should move the prince to grant public preaching by faithful and true ministers. [2] Such bonds of association are always the fore-runners of rebellion; and this violent invasion of the established religion was the actual commencement of it.

Before this league was publicly known or avowed, the clergy, alarmed with the progress of the reformation, attempted to recover their lost authority by a violent exercise of power, which tended still further to augment the zeal and number of their enemies. Hamilton, the primate, seized Walter Mill, a priest of an irreproachable life, who had embraced the new doctrines; and having tried him at St. Andrew's, condemned him to the flames for heresy. Such general aversion was entertained against this barbarity, that it was some time before the bishops could prevail on any one to act the part of a civil judge, and pronounce sentence upon Mill; and even after the time of his execution was fixed, all the shops of St. Andrew's being shut, no one would sell a rope to tie him to the stake and the primate himself was obliged to furnish this implement. The man bore the torture with that courage which, though usual on these occasions, always appears supernatural and astonishing to the multitude. The people, to express their abhorrence against the cruelty of the priests, raised a monument of stones on the place of his execution; and as fast as the stones were removed by order of the clergy, they were again supplied from the voluntary zeal of the populace. [3] It is in vain for men to oppose the severest punishment to the united motives of religion and public applause; and this was the last barbarity of the kind which the Catholics had the power to exercise in Scotland.

* The reformers used at that time King Edward's liturgy in Scotland. Forbes, .

* Keith, . Knox, .

* Knox, .

Some time after, the people discovered their sentiments in such a manner as was sufficient to prognosticate to the priests the fate which was awaiting them. It was usual on the festival of St. Giles, the tutelar saint of Edinburgh, to carry in procession the image of that saint; but the Protestants, in order to prevent the ceremony, found means, on the eve of the festival, to purloin the statue from the church; and they pleased themselves with imagining the surprise and disappointment of his votaries. The clergy, however, framed hastily a new image, which in derision was called by the people young St. Giles; and they carried it through the streets, attended by all the ecclesiastics in the town and neighborhood. The multitude abstained from violence so long as the queen regent continued a spectator; but the moment she retired, they invaded the idol, threw it in the mire, and broke it in pieces. The flight and terror of the priests and friars, who, it was remarked, deserted, in his greatest distress, the object of their worship, was the source of universal mockery and laughter.

Encouraged by all these appearances, the congregation proceeded with alacrity in openly soliciting subscriptions to their league; and the death of Mary of England, with the accession of Elizabeth, which happened about this time, contributed to increase their hopes of final success in their undertaking. They ventured to present a petition to the regent, craving a reformation of the church, and of the "wicked, scandalous, and detestable" lives of the prelates and ecclesiastics. [1] They framed a petition which they intended to present to parliament, and in which, after premising that they could not communicate with the damnable idolatry and intolerable abuses of the Papistical church, they desired that the laws against heretics should be executed by the civil magistrate alone, and that the Scripture should be the sole rule in judging of heresy. [2] They even petitioned the convocation, and insisted that prayers should be said in the vulgar tongue, and that bishops should be chosen with the consent of the gentry of the diocese, and priests with the consent of the parishioners. [3] The regent prudently temporized between these parties; and as she aimed at procuring a matrimonial crown for her son-in-law the dauphin, she was, on that as well as other accounts, unwilling to come to extremities with either of them.

* Knox, .

* * Knox, .

* * * Keith, , 81, 82.

But after this concession was obtained, she received orders from France, probably dictated by the violent spirit of her brothers, to proceed with rigor against the reformers, and to restore the royal authority by some signal act of power. [1] She made the more eminent of the Protestant teachers be cited to appear before the council at Stirling; but when their followers were marching thither in great multitudes, in order to protect and countenance them, she entertained apprehensions of an insurrection, and, it is said, dissipated the people by a promise [2] that nothing should be done to the prejudice of the ministers. Sentence, however, was passed, by which all the ministers were pronounced rebels, on account of their not appearing; a measure which enraged the people, and made them resolve to oppose the regent’s authority by force of arms, and to proceed to extremities against the clergy of the established religion.

In this critical time, John Knox arrived from Geneva, where he had passed some years in banishment, and where he had imbibed, from his commerce with Calvin, the highest fanaticism of his sect, augmented by the native ferocity of his own character. He had been invited back to Scotland by the leaders of the reformation; and mounting the pulpit at Perth, during the present ferment of men’s minds, he declaimed with his usual vehemence against the idolatry and other abominations of the church of Rome, and incited his audience to exert their utmost zeal for its subversion. A priest was so imprudent, after this sermon, as to open his repository of images and relics, and prepare himself to say mass. The audience, exalted to a disposition for any furious enterprise, were as much enraged as if the spectacle had not been quite familiar to them: they attacked the priest with fury, broke the images in pieces, tore the pictures, overthrew the altars, scattered about the sacred vases; and left no implement of idolatrous worship, as they termed it, entire or undefaced. They thence proceeded, with additional numbers and augmented rage, to the monasteries of the Gray and Black friars, which they pillaged in an instant: the Carthusians underwent the same fate: and the populace, not content with robbing and expelling the monks, vented their fury on the buildings which had been the receptacles of such abomination; and in a little time nothing but the walls of these edifices were left standing. The inhabitants of Coupar, in Fife, soon after imitated the example. [3]

* Melvil’s Memoirs, . Jebb. vol. ii. .

* * See note B, at the end of the volume.

* * * Spotswood, . Knox, .

The queen regent, provoked at these violences, assembled an army, and prepared to chastise the rebels. She had about two thousand French under her command, with a few Scottish troops; and being assisted by such of the nobility as were well affected to her, she pitched her camp within ten miles of Perth. Even the earl of Argyle, and Lord James Stuart, prior of St. Andrew’s, the queen’s natural brother, though deeply engaged with the reformers, attended the regent in this enterprise, either because they blamed the fury of the populace, or hoped by their own influence and authority to mediate some agreement between the parties. The congregation, on the other hand, made preparations for defence; and being joined by the earl of Glencarne from the west, and being countenanced by many of the nobility and gentry, they appeared formidable from their numbers, as well as from the zeal by which they were animated. They sent an address to the regent, where they plainly insinuated, that if they were pursued to extremities by the "cruel beasts" the churchmen, they would have recourse to foreign powers for assistance; and they subscribed themselves her faithful subjects in all things not repugnant to God, assuming, at the same time, the name of the faithful congregation of Christ Jesus. [1] They applied to the nobility attending her, and maintained, that their own past violences were justified by the word of God, which commands the godly to destroy idolatry, and all the monuments of it; and though all civil authority was sacred, yet was there a great difference between the authority and the persons who exercised it; [2] and that it ought to be considered, whether or not those abominations, called by the pestilent Papists religion, and which they defend by fire and sword, be the true religion of Christ Jesus. They remonstrated with such of the queen's army as had formerly embraced their party, and told them, "that as they were already reputed traitors by God, they should likewise be excommunicated from their society, and from the participation of the sacraments of the church which God by his mighty power had erected among them; whose ministers have the same authority which Christ granted to his apostles in these words, 'Whose sins ye shall forgive shall be forgiven, and whose sins ye shall retain shall be retained.'" [3]

* Knox, .

* * Knox, .

* * * Knox, .

We may here see, that these new saints were no less lofty in their pretensions than the ancient hierarchy: no wonder they were enraged against the latter as their rivals in dominion. They joined to all these declarations an address to the established church; and they affixed this title to it: “To the generation of Antichrist, the pestilent prelates and their ‘shavelings’ [1] in Scotland, the congregation of Christ Jesus within the same sayeth.” The tenor of the manifesto was suitable to the title. They told the ecclesiastics, “As ye by tyranny intend not only to destroy our bodies, but also by the same to hold our souls in bondage of the devil, subject to idolatry, so shall we, with all the force and power which God shall grant unto us, execute just vengeance and punishment upon you: yea, we shall begin that same war which God commanded Israel to execute against the Canaanites; that is, contract of peace shall never be made till you desist from your open idolatry, and cruel persecution of God’s children. And this, in the name of the eternal God, and of his Son Christ Jesus, whose verity we profess, and gospel we have preached, and holy sacraments rightly administered, we signify unto you to be our intent, so far as God will assist us to withstand your idolatry. Take this for warning, and be not deceived.” [2] With these outrageous symptoms commenced in Scotland that cant, hypocrisy, and fanaticism which long infested that kingdom, and which, though now mollified by the lenity of the civil power, is still ready to break out on all occasions.

The queen regent, finding such obstinate zeal in the rebels, was content to embrace the counsels of Argyle and the prior of St. Andrew’s, and to form an accommodation with them. She was received into Perth, which submitted, on her promising an indemnity for past offences, and engaging not to leave any French garrison in the place. Complaints, very ill founded, immediately arose concerning the infraction of this capitulation. Some of the inhabitants, it was pretended, were molested on account of the late violences; and some companies of Scotch soldiers, supposed to be in French pay, were quartered in the town; which step, though taken on very plausible grounds, was loudly exclaimed against by the congregation. [3]

* A contemptuous term for a priest.

* Keith, , 86, 87. Knox, .

* Knox, .

It is asserted that the regent, to justify these measures, declared, that princes ought not to have their promises too strictly urged upon them; nor was any faith to be kept with heretics: and that for her part, could she find as good a color, she would willingly bereave all these men of their lives and fortunes. [1] But it is nowise likely that such expressions ever dropped from this prudent and virtuous princess. On the contrary, it appears that all these violences were disagreeable to her; that she was in this particular overruled by the authority of the French counsellors placed about her; and that she often thought, if the management of those affairs had been intrusted wholly to herself, she could easily, without force, have accommodated all differences. [2]

The congregation, inflamed with their own zeal, and enraged by these disappointments, remained not long in tranquillity. Even before they left Perth, and while as yet they had no color to complain of any violation of treaty, they had signed a new covenant, in which, besides their engagements to mutual defence, they vowed, in the name of God, to employ their whole power in destroying every thing that dishonored his holy name; and this covenant was subscribed, among others, by Argyle and the prior of St. Andrew’s. [3]

These two leaders now desired no better pretence for deserting the regent and openly joining their associates, than the complaints, however doubtful, or rather false, of her breach of promise. The congregation also, encouraged by this accession of force, gave themselves up entirely to the furious zeal of Knox, and renewed at Crail, Anstruther, and other places in Fife, like depredations on the churches and monasteries with those formerly committed at Perth and Coupar. The regent, who marched against them with her army, finding their power so much increased, was glad to conclude a truce for a few days, and to pass over with her forces to the Lothians. The reformers besieged and took Perth; proceeded thence to Stirling, where they exercised their usual fury; and finding nothing able to resist them, they bent

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* Knox, . Spotswood, .

* * See note C, at the end of the volume.

* * * Keith, p 89. Knox, .

their march to Edinburgh, the inhabitants of which, as they had already anticipated the zeal of the congregation against the churches and monasteries, gladly opened their gates to them. The regent, with the few forces which remained with her, took shelter in Dunbar, where she fortified herself, in expectation of a reënforcement from France.

Meanwhile, she employed her partisans in representing to the people the dangerous consequences of this open rebellion; and she endeavored to convince them, that the Lord James, under pretence of religion, had formed the scheme of wresting the sceptre from the hands of the sovereign. By these considerations many were engaged to desert the army of the congregation; but much more by the want of pay, or any means of subsistence; and the regent, observing the malecontents to be much weakened, ventured to march to Edinburgh, with a design of suppressing them. On the interposition of the duke of Chatelrault, who still adhered to her, she agreed to a capitulation, in which she granted them a toleration of their religion, and they engaged to commit no further depredations on the churches. Soon after, they evacuated the city; and before they left it, they proclaimed the articles of agreement; but they took care to publish only the articles favorable to themselves, and they were guilty of an imposture, in adding one to the number, namely, that idolatry should not again be erected in any place where it was at that time suppressed. [1]

An agreement concluded while men were in this disposition, could not be durable; and both sides endeavored to strengthen themselves as much as possible against the ensuing rupture, which appeared inevitable. The regent, having got a reënforcement of one thousand men from France, began to fortify Leith; and the congregation seduced to their party the duke of Chatelrault, who had long appeared inclined to join them, and who was at last determined by the arrival of his son, the earl of Arran, from France, where he had escaped many dangers from the jealousy, as well as bigotry, of Henry and the duke of Guise. More French troops soon after disembarked under the command of La Brosse, who was followed by the bishop of Amiens, and three doctors of the Sorbonne. These last were supplied with store of syllogisms, authorities, citations, and scholastic arguments, which they intended to oppose to the Scottish preachers, and which, they justly presumed, would acquire force, and produce conviction, by the influence of the French arms and artillery. [2]

* See note D, at the end of the volume.

* * Spotswood, . Thuan. lib. xxiv. c. 10.

The constable Montmorency had always opposed the marriage of the dauphin with the queen of Scots, and had foretold that, by forming such close connections with Scotland, the ancient league would be dissolved; and the natives of that kingdom, jealous of a foreign yoke, would soon become, instead of allies, attached by interest and inclination, the most inveterate enemies to the French government. But though the event seemed now to have justified the prudence of that aged minister, it is not improbable, considering the violent counsels by which France was governed, that the insurrection was deemed a favorable event; as affording a pretence for sending over armies, for entirely subduing the country, for attainting the rebels, [1] and for preparing means thence to invade England, and support Mary's title to the crown of that kingdom. The leaders of the congregation, well acquainted with these views, were not insensible of their danger, and saw that their only safety consisted in the vigor and success of their measures. They were encouraged by the intelligence received of the sudden death of Henry II.; and having passed an act from their own authority, depriving the queen dowager of the regency, and ordering all the French troops to evacuate the kingdom, they collected forces to put their edict in execution against them. They again became masters of Edinburgh; but found themselves unable to keep long possession of that city. Their tumultuary armies, assembled in haste, and supported by no pay, soon separated upon the least disaster, or even any delay of success; and were incapable of resisting such veteran troops as the French, who were also seconded by some of the Scottish nobility, among whom the earl of Bothwell distinguished himself., Hearing that the marquis of Elbeuf, brother to the regent, was levying an army against them in Germany, they thought themselves excusable for applying, in this extremity, to the assistance of England; and as the sympathy of religion, as well as regard to national liberty, had now counterbalanced the ancient animosity against that kingdom, this measure was the result of inclination no less than of interest. [2] Maitland of Lidington, therefore, and Robert Melvil, were secretly despatched by the congregation to solicit succors from Elizabeth.

* Forbes, vol. i. . Thuan. lib. xxiv. c. 13.

* * See note E, at the end of the volume.

The wise council of Elizabeth did not long deliberate in agreeing to this request, which concurred so well with the views and interests of their mistress. Cecil in particular represented to the queen, that the union of the crowns of Scotland and France, both of them the hereditary enemies of England, was ever regarded as a pernicious event; and her father, as well as Protector Somerset, had employed every expedient both of war and negotiation to prevent it: that the claim which Mary advanced to the crown rendered the present situation of England still more dangerous, and demanded on the part of the queen the greatest vigilance and precaution; that the capacity, ambition, and exorbitant views of the family of Guise, who now governed the French counsels, were sufficiently known; and they themselves made no secret of their design to place their niece on the throne of England: that deeming themselves secure of success, they had already, somewhat imprudently and prematurely, taken off the mask; and Throgmorton, the English ambassador at Paris, sent over, by every courier, incontestable proofs of their hostile intentions: [1] that they only waited till Scotland should be entirely subdued; and having thus deprived the English of the advantages resulting from their situation and naval power, they prepared means for subverting the queen’s authority: that the zealous Catholics in England, discontented with the present government, and satisfied in the legality of Mary’s title, would bring them considerable reënforcement, and would disturb every measure of defence against that formidable power: that the only expedient for preventing these designs, was to seize the present opportunity, and take advantage of a like zeal in the Protestants of Scotland; nor could any doubt be entertained with regard to the justice of a measure founded on such evident necessity, and directed only to the ends of self-preservation: that though a French war, attended with great expense, seemed the necessary consequence of supporting the malecontents in Scotland, that power, if removed to the continent, would be much less formidable; and a small disbursement at present would, in the end, be found the greatest frugality: and that the domestic dissensions of France, which every day augmented, together with the alliance of Philip, who, notwithstanding his bigotry and hypocrisy, would never permit the entire conquest of England, were sufficient to secure the queen against the dangerous ambition and resentment of the house of Guise. [2]

* Forbes, vol. i. , 136, 149, 150, 159, 165, 181, 194, 229, 231, 235 — 241, 253.

* * Forbes, vol. i. p 387 Jebb, vol. i. . Keith, Append. 24.

Elizabeth’s propensity to caution and economy was, though with some difficulty, [1] overcome by these powerful motives and she prepared herself to support by arms and money the declining affairs of the congregation in Scotland. She equipped a fleet, which consisted of thirteen ships of war; and giving the command of it to Winter, she sent it to the Frith of Forth: she appointed the young duke of Norfolk her lieutenant in the northern counties; and she assembled, at Berwick, an army of eight thousand men under the command of Lord Gray, warden of the east and middle marches. Though the court of France, sensible of the danger, offered her to make immediate restitution of Calais, provided she would not interpose in the affairs of Scotland, she resolutely replied, that she never would put an inconsiderable fishing-town in competition with the safety of her dominions; [2] and she still continued her preparations. She concluded a treaty of mutual defence with the congregation, which was to last during the marriage of the queen of Scots with Francis, and a year after; and she promised never to desist till the French had entirely evacuated Scotland. [3] And having thus taken all proper measures for success, and received from the Scots six hostages for the performance of articles, she ordered her fleet and army to begin their operations.

* Forbes, vol. i. , 460.

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Knox, . Haynes’s State Papers, vol. i. . Rymer, tom. xv. .

1560.

The appearance of Elizabeth’s fleet in the frith disconcerted the French army, who were at that time ravaging the county of Fife; and obliged them to make a circuit by Stirling, in order to reach Leith, where they prepared themselves for defence. The English army, reënforced by five thousand Scots, [1] sat down before the place; and after two skirmishes, in the former of which the English had the advantage, in the latter the French, they began to batter the town; and, though repulsed with considerable loss in a rash and ill-conducted assault, they reduced the garrison to great difficulties. Their distress was augmented by two events; the dispersion by a storm of D’Elbeuf’s fleet, which carried a considerable army on board, [2] and the death of the queen, regent, who expired about this time in the Castle of Edinburgh; a woman endowed with all the capacity which shone forth in her family, but possessed of much more virtue and moderation than appeared in the conduct of the other branches of it. The French, who found it impossible to subsist for want of provisions, and who saw that the English were continually reënforced by fresh numbers, were obliged to capitulate; and the bishop of Valence and Count Randan, plenipotentiaries from France, signed a treaty at Edinburgh with Cecil and Dr. Wotton, whom Elizabeth had sent thither for that purpose. It was there stipulated, that the French should instantly evacuate Scotland; that the king and queen of France and Scotland should thenceforth abstain from bearing the arms of England, or assuming the title of that kingdom; that further satisfaction for the injury already done in that particular should be granted Elizabeth; and that commissioners should meet to settle this point, or, if they could not agree, that the king of Spain should be umpire between the crowns. Besides these stipulations, which regarded England, some concessions were granted to the Scots; namely, that an amnesty should be published for all past offences; that none but natives should enjoy any office in Scotland; that the states should name twenty-four persons, of whom the queen of Scots should choose seven, and the states five, and in the hands of these twelve should the whole administration be placed during their queen’s absence; and that Mary should neither make peace nor war without consent of the states. [3] In order to hasten the execution of this important treaty, Elizabeth sent ships, by which the French forces were transported into their own country.

* Haynes, vol i. , 259.

* * Haynes. vol. i. .

* * * Rymer, tom. xv. . Keith, . Spotswood, p. 147. Knox, .

Thus Europe saw, in the first transaction of this reign, the genius and capacity of the queen and her ministers. She discerned at a distance the danger which threatened her; and instantly took vigorous measures to prevent it. Making all possible advantages of her situation, she proceeded with celerity to a decision; and was not diverted by any offers, negotiations, or remonstrances of the French court. She stopped not till she had brought the matter to a final issue; and had converted that very power, to which her enemies trusted for her destruction, into her firmest support and security. By exacting no improper conditions from the Scottish malecontents, even during their greatest distresses, she established an entire confidence with them; and having cemented the union by all the ties of gratitude, interest, and religion, she now possessed an influence over them beyond what remained even with their native sovereign. The regard which she acquired by this dexterous and spirited conduct, gave her every where, abroad as well as at home, more authority than had attended her sister, though supported by all the power of the Spanish monarchy. [1]

The subsequent measures of the Scottish reformers tended still more to cement their union with England. Being now entirely masters of the kingdom, they made no further ceremony or scruple in fully effecting their purpose. In the treaty of Edinburgh, it had been agreed, that a parliament or convention should soon be assembled; and the leaders of the congregation, not waiting till the queen of Scots should ratify that treaty, thought themselves fully entitled, without the sovereign’s authority, immediately to summon a parliament. The reformers presented a petition to this assembly, in which they were not contented with desiring the establishment of their doctrine, they also applied for the punishment of the Catholics, whom they called vassals to the Roman harlot; and they asserted, that among all the rabble of the clergy — such is their expression — there was not one lawful minister; but that they were all of them thieves and murderers; yea, rebels and traitors to civil authority, and therefore unworthy to be suffered in any reformed commonwealth. [2] The parliament seem to have been actuated by the same spirit of rage and persecution. After ratifying a confession of faith agreeable to the new doctrines, they passed a statute against the mass, and not only abolished it in all the churches, but enacted, that whoever any where either officiated in it, or was present at it, should be chastised, for the first offence, with confiscation of goods and corporal punishment, at the discretion of the magistrate; for the second, with banishment; and for the third, with loss of life. [3]

* Forbes, vol. i. , 372. Jebb, vol. ii. .

* * Knox, . 238.

* * * Knox, .

A law was also voted for abolishing the papal jurisdiction in Scotland: the Presbyterian form of discipline was settled, leaving only at first some shadow of authority to certain ecclesiastics, whom they called superintendents. The prelates of the ancient faith appeared, in order to complain of great injustice committed on them by the invasion of their property, but the parliament took no notice of them; till at last these ecclesiastics, tired with fruitless attendance, departed the town. They were then cited to appear; and as nobody presented himself, it was voted by the parliament, that the ecclesiastics were entirely satisfied, and found no reason of complaint.

Sir James Sandilands, prior of St. John, was sent over to France to obtain the ratification of these acts; but was very ill received by Mary, who denied the validity of a parliament summoned without the royal consent; and she refused her sanction to those statutes. But the Protestants gave themselves little concern about their queen’s refusal. They immediately put the statutes in execution; they abolished the mass; they settled their ministers; they committed every where furious devastations on the monasteries, and even on the churches, which they thought profaned by idolatry; and deeming the property of the clergy lawful prize, they took possession, without ceremony, of the far greater part of the ecclesiastical revenues. Their new preachers, who had authority sufficient to incite them to war and insurrection, could not restrain their rapacity; and fanaticism concurring with avarice, an incurable wound was given to the papal authority in that country. The Protestant nobility and gentry, united by the consciousness of such unpardonable guilt, alarmed for their new possessions, well acquainted with the imperious character of the house of Guise, saw no safety for themselves but in the protection of England; and they despatched Morton, Glencarne, and Lidington, to express their sincere gratitude to the queen for her past favors, and represent to her the necessity of continuing them.

Elizabeth, on her part, had equal reason to maintain a union with the Scottish Protestants; and soon found that the house of Guise, notwithstanding their former disappointments, had not laid aside the design of contesting her title, and subverting her authority. Francis and Mary, whose counsels were wholly directed by them, refused to ratify the treaty of Edinburgh and showed no disposition to give her any satisfaction for that mortal affront which they had put upon her, by their openly assuming the title and arms of England. She was sensible of the danger attending such pretensions; and it was with pleasure she heard of the violent factions which prevailed in the French government, and of the opposition which had arisen against the measures of the duke of Guise. That ambitious prince, supported by his four brothers, the cardinal of Lorraine, the duke of Aumale, the marquis of Elbeuf, and the grand prior, men no less ambitious than himself, had engrossed all the authority of the crown; and as he was possessed of every quality which could command the esteem or seduce the affections of men, there appeared no end of his acquisitions and pretensions. The constable, Montmorency, who had long balanced his credit, was deprived of all power: the princes of the blood, the king of Navarre, and his brother, the prince of Condé, were entirely excluded from offices and favor: the queen mother herself, Catharine de Medicis, found her influence every day declining; and as Francis, a young prince, infirm both in mind and body, was wholly governed by his consort, who knew no law but the pleasure of her uncles, men despaired of ever obtaining freedom from the dominion of that aspiring family. It was the contests of religion which first inspired the French with courage openly to oppose their unlimited authority.

The theological disputes, first started in the north of Germany, next in Switzerland, countries at that time wholly illiterate, had long ago penetrated into France; and as they were assisted by the general discontent against the court and church of Rome, and by the zealous spirit of the age, the proselytes to the new religion were secretly increasing in every province. Henry II., in imitation of his father, Francis, had opposed the progress of the reformers; and though a prince addicted to pleasure and society, he was transported by a vehemence, as well as bigotry, which had little place in the conduct of his predecessor. Rigorous punishments had been inflicted on the most eminent of the Protestant party; and a point of honor seemed to have arisen, whether the one sect could exercise, or the other suffer, most barbarity. The death of Henry put some stop to the persecutions; and the people, who had admired the constancy of the new preachers, now heard with favor their doctrines and arguments. But the cardinal of Lorraine, as well as his brothers, who were possessed of the legal authority, thought it their interest to support the established religion; and when they revived the execution of the penal statutes, they necessarily drove the malecontent princes and nobles to embrace the protection of the new religion. The king of Navarre, a man of mild dispositions, but of a weak character, and the prince of Condé, who possessed many great qualities, having declared themselves in favor of the Protestants, that sect acquired new force from their countenance; and the admiral, Coligny, with his brother Andelot, no longer scrupled to make open profession of their communion. The integrity of the admiral, who was believed sincere in his attachment to the new doctrine, and his great reputation both for valor and conduct, for the arts of peace as well as of war brought credit to the reformers; and after a frustrated attempt of the malecontents to seize the king's person at Amboise of which Elizabeth had probably some intelligence, [1] every place was full of distraction, and matters hastened to an open rupture between the parties. But the house of Guise, though these factions had obliged them to remit their efforts in Scotland, and had been one chief cause of Elizabeth's success, were determined not to relinquish their authority in France, or yield to the violence of their enemies. They found an opportunity of seizing the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé; they threw the former into prison; they obtained a sentence of death against the latter; and they were proceeding to put the sentence in execution, when the king's sudden death saved the noble prisoner, and interrupted the prosperity of the duke of Guise. The queen mother was appointed regent to her son Charles IX., now in his minority: the king of Navarre was named lieutenant-general of the kingdom: the sentence against Condé was annulled: the constable was recalled to court: and the family of Guise, though they still enjoyed great offices and great power, found a counterpoise to their authority.

* Forbes, vol. i. . Throgmorton, about this time, unwilling to intrust to letters the great secrets committed to him, obtained leave, under some pretext, to come over to London.

Elizabeth was determined to make advantage of these events against the queen of Scots, whom she still regarded as a dangerous rival. She saw herself freed from the perils attending a union of Scotland with France, and from the pretensions of so powerful a prince as Francis; but she considered, at the same time, that the English Catholics, who were numerous, and who were generally prejudiced in favor of Mary's title, would now adhere to that princess with more zealous attachment, when they saw that her succession no longer endangered the liberties of the kingdom, and was rather attended with the advantage of effecting an entire union with Scotland. She gave orders, therefore, to her ambassador, Throgmorton, a vigilant and able minister, to renew his applications to the queen of Scots, and to require her ratification of the treaty of Edinburgh. But though Mary had desisted, after her husband's death, from bearing the arms and title of Queen of England, she still declined gratifying Elizabeth in this momentous article; and being swayed by the ambitious suggestions of her uncles, she refused to make any formal renunciation of her pretensions.

Meanwhile the queen mother of France, who imputed to Mary all the mortifications which she had met with during Francis's lifetime, took care to retaliate on her by like injuries; and the queen of Scots, finding her abode in France disagreeable, began to think of returning to her native country. Lord James, who had been sent in deputation from the states to invite her over, seconded these intentions; and she applied to Elizabeth, by D'Oisel, for a safe-conduct, in case she should be obliged to pass through England; [1] but she received for answer, that, till she had given satisfaction, by ratifying the treaty of Edinburgh, she could expect no favor from a person whom she had so much injured.

* Goodall, vol. i. .

This denial excited her indignation; and she made no scruple of expressing her sentiments to Throgmorton, when he reiterated his applications to gratify his mistress in a demand which he represented as so reasonable. Having cleared the room of her attendants, she said to him, "How weak I may prove, or how far a woman's frailty may transport me, I cannot tell: however, I am resolved not to have so many witnesses of my infirmity as your mistress had at her audience of my ambassador D'Oisel.

There is nothing disturbs me so much, as the having asked, with so much impunity, a favor which it was of no consequence for me to obtain. I can, with God’s leave, return to my own country without *her* leave; as I came to France, in spite of all the opposition of her brother, King Edward: neither do I want friends both able and willing to conduct me home, as they have brought me hither; though I was desirous rather to make an experiment of your mistress’s friendship, than of the assistance of any other person. I have often heard you say, that a good correspondence between her and myself would conduce much to the security and happiness of both our kingdoms: were she well convinced of this truth, she would hardly have denied me so small a request. But perhaps she bears a better inclination to my rebellious subjects than to me, their sovereign, her equal in royal dignity, her near relation, and the undoubted heir of her kingdoms. Besides her friendship, I ask nothing at her hands: I neither trouble her, nor concern myself in the affairs of her state: not that I am ignorant, that there are now in England a great many malecontents, who are no friends to the present establishment. She is pleased to upbraid me as a person little experienced in the world: I freely own it; but age will cure that defect. However, I am already old enough to acquit myself honestly and courteously to my friends and relations, and to encourage no reports of your mistress which would misbecome a queen and her kinswoman. I would also say, by her leave, that I am a queen as well as she, and not altogether friendless: and, perhaps, I have as great a soul too; so that methinks we should be upon a level in our treatment of each other. As soon as I have consulted the states of my kingdom, I shall be ready to give her a seasonable answer; and I am the more intent on my journey, in order to make the quicker despatch in this affair. But she, it seems, intends to stop my journey; so that either she will not let me give her satisfaction, or is resolved not to be satisfied; perhaps on purpose to keep up the disagreement between us. She has often reproached me with my being young; and I must be very young indeed, and as ill advised, to treat of matters of such great concern and importance without the advice of my parliament. I have not been wanting in all friendly offices to her; but she disbelieves or overlooks them. I could heartily wish that I were as nearly allied to her in affection as in blood; for that indeed would be a most valuable alliance.” [1]

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* Caballa, . Spotswood, .

Such a spirited reply, notwithstanding the obliging terms interspersed in it, was but ill fitted to conciliate friendship between these rival princesses, or cure those mutual jealousies which had already taken place. Elizabeth equipped a fleet on pretence of pursuing pirates, but probably with an intention of intercepting the queen of Scots in her return homewards. Mary embarked at Calais; and passing the English fleet in a fog, arrived safely at Leith, attended by her three uncles, the duke of Aumale, the grand prior, and the marquis of Elbeuf, together with the marquis of Damville and other French courtiers. This change of abode and situation was very little agreeable to that princess. Besides her natural prepossessions in favor of a country in which she had been educated from her earliest infancy, and where she had borne so high a rank, she could not forbear both regretting the society of that people, so celebrated for their humane disposition and their respectful attachment to their sovereign, and reflecting on the disparity of the scene which lay before her. It is said, that after she was embarked at Calais, she kept her eyes fixed on the coast of France, and never turned them from that beloved object till darkness fell, and intercepted it from her view. She then ordered a couch to be spread for her in the open air; and charged the pilot, that, if in the morning the land were still in sight, he should awake her, and afford her one parting view of that country in which all her affections were centred. The weather proved calm, so that the ship made little way in the night-time; and Mary had once more an opportunity of seeing the French coast. She sat up on her couch, and still looking towards the land, often repeated these words: “Farewell, France, farewell, I shall never see thee more.” [1] The first aspect, however, of things in Scotland was more favorable, if not to her pleasure and happiness, at least to her repose and security, than she had reason to apprehend. No sooner did the French galleys appear off Leith, than people of all ranks, who had long expected their arrival, flocked towards the shore with an earnest impatience to behold and receive their young sovereign. Some were led by duty, some by interest, some by curiosity; and all combined to express their attachment to her, and to insinuate themselves into her confidence on the commencement of her administration. She had now reached her nineteenth year; and the bloom of her youth and amiable beauty of her person were further recommended by the affability of her address, the politeness of her manners, and the elegance of her genius. Well accomplished in all the superficial but engaging graces of a court, she afforded, when better known, still more promising indications of her character; and men prognosticated both humanity from her soft and obliging deportment, and penetration from her taste in all the refined arts of music, eloquence, and poetry. [2] And as the Scots had long been deprived of the presence of their sovereign, whom they once despaired ever more to behold among them, her arrival seemed to give universal satisfaction; and nothing appeared about the court but symptoms of affection, joy, and festivity.

* Keith, . Jebb, vol. ii. .

* * Buchan. lib. xvii. c. 9. Spotswood, , 179. Keith, . Thuan. lib xxix. c. 2.

The first measures which Mary embraced confirmed all the prepossessions entertained in her favor. She followed the advice given her in France by D’Oisel and the bishop of Amiens, as well as her uncles; and she bestowed her confidence entirely on the leaders of the reformed party, who had greatest influence over the people, and who, she found, were alone able to support her government. Her brother, Lord James, whom she soon after created earl of Murray, obtained the chief authority; and after him Lidington, secretary of state, a man of great sagacity, had a principal share in her confidence. By the vigor of these men’s measures, she endeavored to establish order and justice in a country divided by public factions and private feuds; and that fierce, intractable people, unacquainted with laws and obedience, seemed, for a time, to submit peaceably to her gentle and prudent administration.

But there was one circumstance which blasted all these promising appearances, and bereaved Mary of that general favor which her agreeable manners and judicious deportment gave her just reason to expect. She was still a Papist, and though she published, soon after her arrival, a proclamation enjoining every one to submit to the established religion, the preachers and their adherents could neither be reconciled to a person polluted with so great an abomination, nor lay aside their jealousies of her future conduct. It was with great difficulty she could obtain permission for saying mass in her own chapel; and had not the people apprehended, that if she had here met with a refusal, she would instantly have returned to France, the zealots never would have granted her even that small indulgence. The cry was, “Shall we suffer that idol to be again erected within the realm?” It was asserted in the pulpit, that one mass was more terrible than ten thousand armed men landed to invade the kingdom: [1] Lord Lindesey, and the gentlemen of Fife, exclaimed, “that the idolater should die the death;” such was their expression. One that carried tapers for the ceremony of that worship was attacked and insulted in the court of the palace. And if Lord James and some popular leaders had not interposed, the most dangerous uproar was justly apprehended from the ungoverned fury of the multitude. [2]

* Knox, .

* * Knox, , 285, 287. Spotswood, .

The usual prayers in the churches were to this purpose: that God would turn the queen’s heart, which was obstinate against him and his truth; or if his holy will be otherwise, that he would strengthen the hearts and hands of the elect, stoutly to oppose the rage of all tyrants. [1] Nay, it was openly called in question, whether that princess, being an idolatress, was entitled to any authority, even in civil matters. [2]

The helpless queen was every moment exposed to contumely, which she bore with benignity and patience. Soon after her arrival, she dined in the Castle of Edinburgh; and it was there contrived, that a boy, six years of age, should be let down from the roof, and should present her with a Bible, a Psalter, and the keys of the castle. Lest she should be at a loss to understand this insult on her as a Papist, all the decorations expressed the burning of Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and other punishments inflicted by God upon idolatry. [3] The town council of Edinburgh had the assurance, from their own authority, to issue a proclamation banishing from their district “all the wicked rabble of Antichrist the pope, such as priests, monks, friars, together with adulterers and fornicators.” [4] And because the privy council suspended the magistrates for their insolence, the passionate historians of that age have inferred that the queen was engaged, by a sympathy of manners, to take adulterers and fornicators under her protection. It appears probable, that the magistrates were afterwards reinstated in their office, and that their proclamation was confirmed.[v*]

* Keith, .

* * Keith, .

* * * Keith, .

* * * Keith, .

v Knox, . Buchan. lib. xvii. c. 20. Haynes, vol. i.
.
v* Keith, .

But all the insolence of the people was inconsiderable in comparison of that which was exercised by the clergy and the preachers, who took a pride in vilifying, even to her face, this amiable princess. The assembly of the church framed an address, in which, after telling her that her mass was a bastard service of God, the fountain of all impiety, and the source of every evil which abounded in the realm, they expressed their hopes, that she would ere this time have preferred truth to her own preconceived opinion, and have renounced her religion, which, they assured her, was nothing but abomination and vanity. They said, that the present abuses of government were so enormous, that if a speedy remedy were not provided, God would not fail in his anger to strike the head and the tail, the disobedient prince and sinful people. They required, that severe punishment should be inflicted on adulterers and fornicators. And they concluded with demanding for themselves some addition both of power and property. [1]

The ringleader in all these insults on majesty was John Knox; who possessed an uncontrolled authority in the church and even in the civil affairs of the nation, and who triumphed in the contumelious usage of his sovereign. His usual appellation for the queen was Jezebel; and though she endeavored by the most gracious condescension to win his favor, all her insinuations could gain nothing on his obdurate heart. She promised him access to her whenever he demanded it; and she even desired him, if he found her blamable in any thing, to reprehend her freely in private, rather than vilify her in the pulpit before the whole people: but he plainly told her, that he had a public ministry intrusted to him; that if she would come to church, she should there hear the gospel of truth, and that it was not his business to apply to every individual, nor had he leisure for that occupation.

[2] The political principles of the man, which he communicated to his brethren, were as full of sedition, as his theological were of rage and bigotry. Though he once condescended so far as to tell the queen that he would submit to her, in the same manner as Paul did to Nero, [3] he remained not long in this dutiful strain. He said to her, that “Samuel feared not to slay Agag the fat and delicate king of Amalek, whom King Saul had saved; neither spared Elias Jezebel’s false prophets, and Baal’s priests, though King Ahab was present. Phineas,” added he, “was no magistrate; yet feared he not to strike Cosbi and Zimri in the very act of filthy fornication. And so, madam, your grace may see that others than chief magistrates may lawfully inflict punishment on such crimes as are condemned by the law of God.” [4] Knox had formerly, during the reign of Mary of England, written a book against female succession to the crown: the title of it is, “The first blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regimen of women.” He was too proud either to recant the tenets of this book, or even to apologize for them; and his conduct showed that he thought no more civility than loyalty due to any of the female sex.

* Knox, , 312.

* * Knox, .

* * * Knox, .

* * * * Knox, .

The whole life of Mary was, from the demeanor of these men, filled with bitterness and sorrow. This rustic apostle scruples not, in his history, to inform us, that he once treated her with such severity, that she lost all command of temper, and dissolved in tears before him: yet so far from being moved with youth, and beauty, and royal dignity reduced to that condition, he persevered in his insolent reproofs; and when he relates this incident, he discovers a visible pride and satisfaction in his own conduct. [1] The pulpits had become mere scenes of railing against the vices of the court; among which were always noted as the principal, feasting, finery, dancing, balls, and whoredom, their necessary attendant. [2] Some ornaments, which the ladies at that time wore upon their petticoats, excited mightily the indignation of the preachers; and they affirmed, that such vanity would provoke God's vengeance not only against these foolish women, but against the whole realm. [3]

Mary, whose age, condition, and education, invited her to liberty and cheerfulness, was curbed in all amusements by the absurd severity of these reformers; and she found every moment reason to regret her leaving that country, from whose manners she had in her early youth received the first impressions. [4] Her two uncles, the duke of Aumale and the grand prior, with the other French nobility, soon took leave of her: the marquis of Elbeuf remained some time longer; but after his departure, she was left to the society of her own subjects; men unacquainted with the pleasures of conversation, ignorant of arts and civility, and corrupted, beyond their usual rusticity, by a dismal fanaticism, which rendered them incapable of all humanity or improvement. Though Mary had made no attempt to restore the ancient religion, her Popery was a sufficient crime: though her behavior was hitherto irreproachable, and her manners sweet and engaging, her gayety and ease were interpreted as signs of dissolute vanity. And to the harsh and preposterous usage which this princess met with may, in part, be ascribed those errors of her subsequent conduct which seemed so little of a piece with the general tenor of her character.

* Knox, , 333.

* * Knox, .

* * * Knox, .

* * * * Knox,

There happened to the marquis of Elbeuf, before his departure, an adventure which, though frivolous, might enable him to give Mary's friends in France a melancholy idea of her situation. This nobleman, with the earl of Bothwell and some other young courtiers, had been engaged, after a debauch, to pay a visit to a woman called Alison Craig, who was known to be liberal of her favors; and because they were denied admittance, they broke the windows, thrust open the door, and committed some disorders in searching for the damsel. It happened that the assembly of the church was sitting at that time, and they immediately took the matter under their cognizance. In conjunction with several of the nobility, they presented an address to the queen, which was introduced with this awful prelude: “To the queen’s majesty, and to her secret and great council, her grace’s faithful and obedient subjects, the professors of Christ Jesus’s holy evangil, wish the spirit of righteous judgment.” The tenor of the petition was that the fear of God, the duty which they owed her grace, and the terrible threatenings denounced by God against every city or country where horrible crimes were openly committed, compelled them to demand the severe punishment of such as had done what in them lay to kindle the wrath of God against the whole realm; that the iniquity of which they complained was so heinous and so horrible that they should esteem themselves accomplices in it, if they had been engaged by worldly fear, or servile complaisance, to pass it over in silence, or bury it in oblivion: that as they owed her grace obedience, in the administration of justice, so were they entitled to require of her, in return, the sharp and condign punishment of this enormity, which, they repeated it, might draw down the vengeance of God on the whole kingdom: and that they maintained it to be her duty to lay aside all private affections towards the actors in so heinous a crime, and so enormous a villany, and without delay bring them to a trial, and inflict the severest penalty upon them. The queen gave a gracious reception to his peremptory address, but because she probably thought that breaking the windows of a brothel merited not such severe reprehension, she only replied, that her uncle was a stranger, and that he was attended by a young company; but she would put such order to him and to all others that her subjects should henceforth have no reason to complain. Her passing over this incident so slightly was the source of great discontent, and was regarded as a proof of the most profligate manners. [1]

* Knox, , 303, 304. Keith, .

It is not to be omitted, that Alison Craig, the cause of all the uproar was known to entertain a commerce with the earl of Arran, who, on account of his great zeal for the reformation, was, without scruple, indulged in that enormity. [1]

Some of the populace of Edinburgh broke into the queen’s chapel during her absence, and committed outrages; for which two of them were indicted, and it was intended to bring them to a trial. Knox wrote circular letters to the most considerable zealots of the party, and charged them to appear in town and protect their brethren. The holy sacraments, he there said, are abused by profane Papists; the mass has been said; and in worshipping that idol, the priests have omitted no ceremony, not even the conjuring of their accursed water, that had ever been practised in the time of the greatest blindness. These violent measures for opposing justice were little short of rebellion; and Knox was summoned before the council to answer for his offence. The courage of the man was equal to his insolence. He scrupled not to tell the queen that the pestilent Papists who had inflamed her against these holy men were the sons of the devil; and must therefore obey the directions of their father, who had been a liar and a manslayer from the beginning. The matter ended with the full acquittal of Knox. [2] Randolph, the English ambassador in Scotland, had reason to write to Cecil, speaking of the Scottish nation, “I think marvellously of the wisdom of God, that gave this unruly, inconstant, and cumbersome people no more power nor substance; for they would otherwise run wild.” [3]

* Knox.

* * Knox, , 342.

* * * Keith, .

We have related these incidents at greater length than the necessity of our subject may seem to require; but even trivial circumstances, which show the manners of the age, are often more instructive, as well as entertaining, than the great transactions of wars and negotiations, which are nearly similar in all periods and in all countries of the world.

The reformed clergy in Scotland had at that time a very natural reason for their ill humor; namely, the poverty, or rather beggary, to which they were reduced. The nobility and gentry had at first laid their hands on all the property of the regular clergy, without making any provision for the friars and nuns, whom they turned out of their possessions. The secular clergy of the Catholic communion, though they lost all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, still held some of the temporalities of their benefices; and either became laymen themselves and converted them into private property, or made conveyance of them at low prices to the nobility, who thus enriched themselves by the plunder of the church. The new teachers had hitherto subsisted chiefly by the voluntary oblations of the faithful; and in a poor country, divided in religious sentiments, this establishment was regarded as very scanty and very precarious. Repeated applications were made for a legal settlement to the preachers; and though almost every thing in the kingdom was governed by their zeal and caprice, it was with difficulty that their request was at last complied with. The fanatical spirit which they indulged, and their industry in decrying the principles and practices of the Romish communion, which placed such merit in enriching the clergy, proved now a very sensible obstacle to their acquisitions. The convention, however, passed a vote, [1] by which they divided all the ecclesiastical benefices into twenty-one shares: they assigned fourteen to the ancient possessors: of the remaining seven they granted three to the crown; and if that were found to answer the public expenses, they bestowed the overplus on the reformed ministers. The queen was empowered to levy all the seven; and it was ordained that she should afterwards pay to the clergy what should be judged to suffice for their maintenance. The necessities of the crown, the rapacity of the courtiers, and the small affection which Mary bore to the Protestant ecclesiastics, rendered their revenues contemptible as well as uncertain; and the preachers, finding that they could not rival the gentry, or even the middling rank of men, in opulence and plenty, were necessitated to betake themselves to other expedients for supporting their authority. They affected a furious zeal for religion, morose manners, a vulgar and familiar, yet mysterious cant; and though the liberality of subsequent princes put them afterwards on a better footing with regard to revenue, and thereby corrected in some degree those bad habits, it must be confessed that, while many other advantages attend Presbyterian government, these inconveniences are not easily separated from the genius of that ecclesiastical polity.

* Knox, . Keith, .

The queen of Scots, destitute of all force, possessing a narrow revenue, surrounded with a factious, turbulent nobility, a bigoted people, and insolent ecclesiastics, soon found that her only expedient for maintaining tranquillity was to preserve a good correspondence with Elizabeth, [1] who, by former connections and services, had acquired such authority over all these ranks of men.

* Jebb, vol. ii. .

Soon after her arrival in Scotland, Secretary Lidington was sent to London, in order to pay her compliments to the queen, and express her desire of friendship and a good correspondence; and he received a commission from her, as well as from the nobility of Scotland, to demand, as a means of cementing this friendship, that Mary should, by act of parliament or by proclamation, (for the difference between these securities was not then deemed very considerable,) be declared successor to the crown. No request could be more unreasonable, or made at a more improper juncture. The queen replied, that Mary had once discovered her intention not to wait for the succession, but had openly, without ceremony or reserve, assumed the title of Queen of England, and had pretended a superior right to her throne and kingdom: that though her ambassadors and those of her husband, the French king, had signed a treaty, in which they renounced that claim, and promised satisfaction for so great an indignity, she was so intoxicated with this imaginary right, that she had rejected the most earnest solicitations, and even, as some endeavored to persuade her, had incurred some danger, in crossing the seas, rather than ratify that equitable treaty: that her partisans every where had still the assurance to insist on her title, and had presumed to talk of her own birth as illegitimate: that while affairs were on this footing; while a claim thus openly made, so far from being openly renounced, was only suspended till a more favorable opportunity; it would in her be the most egregious imprudence to fortify the hands of a pretender to her crown by declaring her the successor: that no expedient could be worse imagined for cementing friendship than such a declaration; and kings were often found to bear no good will to their successors, even though their own children; much more when the connection was less intimate, and when such cause of disgust and jealousy had already been given, and indeed was still continued, on the part of Mary: that though she was willing, from the amity which she bore her kinswoman, to ascribe her former pretensions to the advice of others, by whose direction she was then governed, her present refusal to relinquish them could proceed only from her own prepossessions, and was a proof that she still harbored some dangerous designs against her: that it was the nature of all men to be disgusted with the present, to entertain flattering views of futurity, to think their services ill rewarded, to expect a better recompense from the successor; and she should esteem herself scarcely half a sovereign over the English, if they saw her declare her heir, and arm her rival with authority against her own repose and safety: that she knew the inconstant nature of the people; she was acquainted with the present divisions in religion; she was not ignorant that the same party, which expected greater favor during the reign of Mary, did also imagine that the title of that princess was superior to her own: that for her part, whatever claims were advanced, she was determined to live and die queen of England; and after her death it was the business of others to examine who had the best pretensions, either by the laws or by right of blood, to the succession: that she hoped the claim of the queen of Scots would then be found solid; and, considering the injury which she herself had received, it was sufficient indulgence if she promised, in the mean time, to do nothing which might in any respect weaken or invalidate it: and that Mary, if her title were really preferable — a point which, for her own part, she had never inquired into — possessed all advantages above her rivals; who, destitute both of present power and of all support by friends, would only expose themselves to inevitable ruin, by advancing any weak, or even doubtful pretensions. [1]

These views of the queen were so prudent and judicious, that there was no likelihood of her ever departing from them: but that she might put the matter to a fuller proof, she offered to explain the words of the treaty of Edinburgh, so as to leave no suspicion of their excluding Mary’s right of succession; [2] and in this form she again required her to ratify that treaty. Matters at last came to this issue, that Mary agreed to the proposal, and offered to renounce all present pretensions to the crown of England, provided Elizabeth would agree to declare her the successor. [3] But such was the jealous character of this latter princess, that she never would consent to strengthen the interest and authority of any claimant by fixing the succession; much less would she make this concession in favor of a rival queen, who possessed such plausible pretensions for the present, and who, though she might verbally renounce them, could easily resume her claim on the first opportunity.

* Buchanan, lib. xvii. c. 14-17. Camden, . Spotswood, , 181.

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Haynes, vol. i. .

Mary’s proposal, however, bore so specious an appearance of equity and justice, that Elizabeth, sensible that reason would, by superficial thinkers, be deemed to lie entirely on that side, made no more mention of the matter; and though further concessions were never made by either princess, they put on all the appearances of a cordial reconciliation and friendship with each other.

The queen observed that, even without her interposition, Mary was sufficiently depressed by the mutinous spirit of her own subjects; and instead of giving Scotland for the present any inquietude or disturbance, she employed herself, more usefully and laudably, in regulating the affairs of her own kingdom, and promoting the happiness of her people. She made some progress in paying those great debts which lay upon the crown; she regulated the coin, which had been much debased by her predecessors; she furnished her arsenals with great quantities of arms from Germany and other places; engaged her nobility and gentry to imitate her example in this particular; introduced into the kingdom the art of making gunpowder and brass cannon; fortified her frontiers on the side of Scotland; made frequent reviews of the militia; encouraged agriculture, by allowing a free exportation of corn; promoted trade and navigation; and so much increased the shipping of her kingdom, both by building vessels of force herself, and suggesting like undertakings to the merchants, that she was justly styled the restorer of naval glory, and the queen of the northern seas. [1] The natural frugality of her temper, so far from incapacitating her for these great enterprises, only enabled her to execute them with greater certainty and success; and all the world, saw in her conduct the happy effects of a vigorous perseverance in judicious and well-concerted projects.

* Camden, . Strype, vol. i. , 336, 337.

It is easy to imagine that so great a princess, who enjoyed such singular felicity and renown, would receive proposals of marriage from every one that had any likelihood of succeeding; and though she had made some public declarations in favor of a single life, few believed that she would persevere forever in that resolution. The archduke Charles, second son of the emperor, [1] as well as Casimir, son of the elector palatine, made applications to her; and as this latter prince professed the reformed religion, he thought himself, on that account, better entitled to succeed in his addresses. Eric, king of Sweden, and Adolph, duke of Holstein, were encouraged by the same views to become suitors: and the earl of Arran, heir to the crown of Scotland, was, by the states of that kingdom, recommended to her as a suitable marriage.

* Haynes, vol. i. .

Even some of her own subjects, though they did not openly declare their pretensions, entertained hopes of success. The earl of Arundel, a person declining in years, but descended from an ancient and noble family, as well as possessed of great riches, flattered himself with this prospect; as did also Sir William Pickering, a man much esteemed for his personal merit. But the person most likely to succeed, was a younger son of the late duke of Northumberland, Lord Robert Dudley, who, by means of his exterior qualities, joined to address and flattery, had become in a manner her declared favorite, and had great influence in all her counsels. The less worthy he appeared of this distinction, the more was his great favor ascribed to some violent affection, which could thus seduce the judgment of this penetrating princess; and men long expected that he would obtain the preference above so many princes and monarchs. But the queen gave all these suitors a gentle refusal, which still encouraged their pursuit; and thought that she should the better attach them to her interest, if they were still allowed to entertain hopes of succeeding in their pretensions. It is also probable that this policy was not entirely free from a mixture of female coquetry; and that, though she was determined in her own mind never to share her power with any man, she was not displeased with the courtship, solicitation, and professions of love, which the desire of acquiring so valuable a prize procured her from all quarters.

What is most singular in the conduct and character of Elizabeth is, that though she determined never to have any heir of her own body, she was not only very averse to fix any successor to the crown, but seems, also, to have resolved, as far as it lay in her power, that no one who had pretensions to the succession should ever have any heirs or successors. If the exclusion given by the will of Henry VIII. to the posterity of Margaret, queen of Scotland, was allowed to be valid, the right to the crown devolved on the house of Suffolk; and the lady Catharine Gray, younger sister to the lady Jane, was now the heir of that family. This lady had been married to Lord

Herbert, son of the earl of Pembroke; but having been divorced from that nobleman, she had made a private marriage with the earl of Hertford, son of the protector; and her husband, soon after consummation, travelled into France. In a little time she appeared to be pregnant, which so enraged Elizabeth, that she threw her into the Tower, and summoned Hertford to appear, in order to answer for his misdemeanor. He made no scruple of acknowledging the marriage, which, though concluded without the queen's consent, was entirely suitable to both parties; and for this offence he was also committed to the Tower. Elizabeth's severity stopped not here: she issued a commission to inquire into the matter; and as Hertford could not, within the time limited, prove the nuptials by witnesses, the commerce between him and his consort was declared unlawful, and their posterity illegitimate. They were still detained in custody, but by bribing their keepers, they found means to have further intercourse; and another child appeared to be the fruit of their commerce. This was a fresh source of vexation to the queen; who made a fine of fifteen thousand pounds be set on Hertford by the star chamber and ordered his confinement to be thenceforth more rigid and severe. He lay in this condition for nine years, till the death of his wife, by freeing Elizabeth from all fears, procured him his liberty. [1] This extreme severity must be accounted for, either by the unrelenting jealousy of the queen, who was afraid lest a pretender to the succession should acquire credit by having issue; or by her malignity, which, with all her great qualities, made one ingredient in her character, and which led her to envy in others those natural pleasures of love and posterity, of which her own ambition and desire of dominion made her renounce all prospect for herself.

* Haynes, vol. i. , 378, 396. Camden, . Heylin, .

There happened, about this time, some other events in the royal family where the queen's conduct was more laudable. Arthur Pole and his brother, nephews to the late cardinal, and descended from the duke of Clarence, together with Anthony Fortescue, who had married a sister of these gentlemen, and some other persons, were brought to their trial for intending to withdraw into France, with a view of soliciting succors from the duke of Guise, of returning thence into Wales, and of proclaiming Mary queen of England, and Arthur Pole duke of Clarence. They confessed the indictment, but asserted that they never meant to execute these projects during the queen’s lifetime: they had only deemed such precautions requisite in case of her demise, which some pretenders to judicial astrology had assured them they might with certainty look for before the year expired. They were condemned by the jury; but received a pardon from the queen’s clemency.[1]

* Strype, vol. i. . Heylin, .

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ELIZABETH.

1562.

After the commencement of the religious wars in France, which rendered that flourishing kingdom, during the course of near forty years, a scene of horror and devastation, the great rival powers in Europe were Spain and England; and it was not long before an animosity, first political, then personal, broke out between the sovereigns of these countries.

Philip II. of Spain, though he reached not any enlarged views of policy, was endowed with great industry and sagacity, a remarkable caution in his enterprises, an unusual foresight in all his measures; and as he was ever cool, and seemingly unmoved by passion, and possessed neither talents nor inclination for war, both his subjects and his neighbors had reason to expect justice, happiness, and tranquillity from his administration. But prejudices had on him as pernicious effects as ever passion had on any other monarch; and the spirit of bigotry and tyranny by which he was actuated, with the fraudulent maxims which governed his counsels, excited the most violent agitation among his own people, engaged him in acts of the most enormous cruelty, and threw all Europe into combustion.

After Philip had concluded peace at Chateau-Cambresis and had remained some time in the Netherlands, in order to settle the affairs of that country, he embarked for Spain; and as the gravity of that nation, with their respectful obedience to their prince, had appeared more agreeable to his humor than the homely, familiar manners and the pertinacious liberty of the Flemings, it was expected that he would for the future reside altogether at Madrid, and would govern all his extensive dominions by Spanish ministers and Spanish counsels. Having met with a violent tempest on his voyage, he no sooner arrived in harbor than he fell on his knees; and after giving thanks for his deliverance, he vowed that his life, which was thus providentially saved, should thenceforth be entirely devoted to the extirpation of heresy. [1] His subsequent conduct corresponded to these professions. Finding that the new doctrines had penetrated into Spain, he let loose the rage of persecution against all who professed them, or were suspected of adhering to them; and by his violence he gave new edge even to the usual cruelty of priests and inquisitors. He threw into prison Constantine Ponce, who had been confessor to his father, the emperor Charles; who had attended him during his retreat; and in whose arms that great monarch had terminated his life: and after this ecclesiastic died in confinement, he still ordered him to be tried and condemned for heresy, and his statue to be committed to the flames. He even deliberated whether he should not exercise like severity against the memory of his father, who was suspected, during his later years, to have indulged a propensity towards the Lutheran principles: in his unrelenting zeal for orthodoxy, he spared neither age, sex, nor condition: he was present, with an inflexible countenance, at the most barbarous executions: he issued rigorous orders for the prosecution of heretics in Spain, Italy, the Indies, and the Low Countries: and having founded his determined tyranny on maxims of civil policy, as well as on principles of religion, he made it apparent to all his subjects, that there was no method, except the most entire compliance or most obstinate resistance, to escape or elude the severity of his vengeance.

* Thuanns, lib. xxiii. ca.

During that extreme animosity which prevailed between the adherents of the opposite religions, the civil magistrate, who found it difficult, if not impossible, for the same laws to govern such enraged adversaries, was naturally led, by specious rules of prudence, in embracing one party, to declare war against the other, and to exterminate by fire and sword those bigots who, from abhorrence of his religion, had proceeded to an opposition of his power and to a hatred of his person. If any prince possessed such enlarged views as to foresee, that a mutual toleration would in time abate the fury of religious prejudices, he yet met with difficulties in reducing this principle to practice; and might deem the malady too violent to await a remedy, which, though certain, must necessarily be slow in its operation. But Philip, though a profound hypocrite, and extremely governed by self-interest seems also to have been himself actuated by an imperious bigotry; and as he employed great reflection in all his conduct, he could easily palliate the gratification of his natural temper under the color of wisdom, and find in this system no less advantage to his foreign than his domestic politics. By placing himself at the head of the Catholic party, he converted the zealots of the ancient faith into partisans of Spanish greatness; and by employing the powerful allurement of religion, he seduced every where the subjects from that allegiance which they owed to their native sovereign.

The course of events, guiding and concurring with choice, had placed Elizabeth in a situation diametrically opposite; and had raised her to be the glory, the bulwark, and the support of the numerous, though still persecuted Protestants, throughout Europe. More moderate in her temper than Philip, she found, with pleasure, that the principles of her sect required not such extreme severity in her domestic government as was exercised by that monarch; and having no object but self-preservation, she united her interests in all foreign negotiations with those who were every where struggling under oppression, and guarding themselves against ruin and extermination. The more virtuous sovereign was thus happily thrown into the more favorable cause; and fortune, in this instance, concurred with policy and nature.

During the lifetime of Henry II. of France, and of his successor, the force of these principles was somewhat restrained, though not altogether overcome, by motives of a superior interest; and the dread of uniting England with the French monarchy engaged Philip to maintain a good correspondence with Elizabeth. Yet even during this period he rejected the garter which she sent him; he refused to ratify the ancient league between the house of Burgundy and England; [1] he furnished ships to transport French forces into Scotland; he endeavored to intercept the earl of Arran, who was hastening to join the malecontents in that country; and the queen's wisest ministers still regarded his friendship as hollow and precarious. [2]

* Digges's Complete Ambassador, . Haynes, . Strype vol. iv. No. 246.

* * Haynes, vol. i. , 281, 283, 284.

But no sooner did the death of Francis II. put an end to Philip's apprehensions with regard to Mary's succession, than his animosity against Elizabeth began more openly to appear; and the interests of Spain and those of England were found opposite in every negotiation and transaction.

The two great monarchies of the continent, France and Spain, being possessed of nearly equal force, were naturally antagonists; and England, from its power and situation, was entitled to support its own dignity, as well as tranquillity, by holding the balance between them. Whatever incident, therefore, tended too much to depress one of these rival powers, as it left the other without control, might be deemed contrary to the interests of England; yet so much were these great maxims of policy overruled, during that age, by the disputes of theology, that Philip found an advantage in supporting the established government and religion of France, and Elizabeth in protecting faction and innovation.

The queen regent of France, when reinstated in authority by the death of her son Francis, had formed a plan of administration more subtle than judicious; and balancing the Catholics with the Hugonots, the duke of Guise with the prince of Condé, she endeavored to render herself necessary to both, and to establish her own dominion on their constrained obedience. [1] But the equal counterpoise of power, which, among foreign nations, is the source of tranquillity, proves always the ground of quarrel between domestic factions; and if the animosity of religion concur with the frequent occasions which present themselves of mutual injury, it is impossible during any time, to preserve a firm concord in so delicate a situation. The constable Montmorency, moved by zeal for the ancient faith, joined himself to the duke of Guise: the king of Navarre, from his inconstant temper, and his jealousy of the superior genius of his brother, embraced the same party: and Catharine, finding herself depressed by this combination, had recourse to Condé and the Hugonots, who gladly embraced the opportunity of fortifying themselves by her countenance and protection. [2]

* Davila, lib. ii.

* * Davila, lib. iii

An edict had been published, granting a toleration to the Protestants; but the interested violence of the duke of Guise, covered with the pretence of religious zeal, broke through this agreement; and the two parties, after the fallacious tranquillity of a moment, renewed their mutual insults and injuries. Condé, Coligny, Andelot assembled their friends and flew to arms: Guise and Montmorency got possession of the king’s person, and constrained the queen regent to embrace their party: fourteen armies were levied and put in motion in different parts of France; [1] each province, each city, each family, was agitated with intestine rage and animosity. The father was divided against the son; brother against brother; and women themselves, sacrificing their humanity as well as their timidity to the religious fury, distinguished themselves by acts of ferocity and valor. [2] Wherever the Hugonots prevailed, the images were broken, the altars pillaged, the churches demolished, the monasteries consumed with fire: where success attended the Catholics, they burned the Bibles, rebaptized the infants, constrained married persons to pass anew through the nuptial ceremony: and plunder, desolation, and bloodshed attended equally the triumph of both parties. The parliament of Paris itself, the seat of law and justice, instead of employing its authority to compose these fatal quarrels, published an edict by which it put the sword into the hands of the enraged multitude, and empowered the Catholics every where to massacre the Hugonots: [3] and it was during this period, when men began to be somewhat enlightened, and in this nation, renowned for polished manners, that the theological rage, which had long been boiling in men's veins, seems to have attained its last stage of virulence and ferocity.

* Father Paul, lib. vii.

* * Father Paul, lib. vii.

* * * Father Paul, lib. vii. Haynes, .

Philip, jealous of the progress which the Hugonots made in France, and dreading that the contagion would spread into the Low Country provinces, had formed a secret alliance with the princes of Guise, and had entered into a mutual concert for the protection of the ancient faith and the suppression of heresy. He now sent six thousand men, with some supply of money, to reënforce the Catholic party; and the prince of Condé, finding himself unequal to so great a combination, countenanced by the royal authority, was obliged to despatch the Vidame of Chartres and Briguemaut to London, in order to crave the assistance and protection of Elizabeth. Most of the province of Normandy was possessed by the Hugonots: and Condé offered to put Havre de Grace into the hands of the English; on condition that, together with three thousand man for the garrison of that place, the queen should likewise send over three thousand to defend Dieppe and Rouen, and should furnish the prince with a supply of a hundred thousand crowns. [1]

Elizabeth, besides the general and essential interest of supporting the Protestants, and opposing the rapid progress of her enemy the duke of Guise, had other motives which engaged her to accept of this proposal. When she concluded the peace at Chateau-Cambresis, she had good reason to foresee that France never would voluntarily fulfil the article which regarded the restitution of Calais; and many subsequent incidents had tended to confirm this suspicion. Considerable sums of money had been expended on the fortifications; long leases had been granted of the lands; and many inhabitants had been encouraged to build and settle there, by assurances that Calais should never be restored to the English. [2] The queen therefore wisely concluded, that, could she get possession of Havre, a place which commanded the mouth of the Seine, and was of greater importance than Calais, she should easily constrain the French to execute the treaty, and should have the glory of restoring to the crown that ancient possession, so much the favorite of the nation.

No measure could be more generally odious in France than the conclusion of this treaty with Elizabeth. Men were naturally led to compare the conduct of Guise, who had finally expelled the English, and had debarred these dangerous and destructive enemies from all access into France, with the treasonable politics of Condé, who had again granted them an entrance into the heart of the kingdom. The prince had the more reason to repent of this measure, as he reaped not from it all the advantage which he expected. Three thousand English immediately took possession of Havre and Dieppe, under the command of Sir Edward Poinings; but the latter place was found so little capable of defence, that it was immediately abandoned. [3] The siege of Rouen was already formed by the Catholics, under the command of the king of Navarre and Montmorency; and it was with difficulty that Poinings could throw a small reënforcement into the place. Though these English troops behaved with gallantry, [4] and though the king of Navarre was mortally wounded during the siege, the Catholics still continued the attack of the place, and carrying it at last by assault, put the whole garrison to the sword.

* Forbes, vol. ii. .

* * Forbes, vol. ii. , 257.

* * * Forbes, vol. ii. .

* * * * Forbes, vol. ii. .

The earl of Warwick, eldest son of the late duke of Northumberland, arrived soon after at Havre with another body of three thousand English, and took on him the command of the place.

It was expected that the French Catholics, flushed with their success at Rouen, would immediately have formed the siege of Havre, which was not as yet in any condition of defence; but the intestine disorders of the kingdom soon diverted their attention to another enterprise. Andelot, seconded by the negotiations of Elizabeth, had levied a considerable body of Protestants in Germany; and having arrived at Orleans, the seat of the Hugonots' power, he enabled the prince of Condé and the admiral to take the field, and oppose the progress of their enemies. After threatening Paris during some time, they took their march towards Normandy, with a view of engaging the English to act in conjunction with them, and of fortifying themselves by the further assistance which they expected from the zeal and vigor of Elizabeth. [1] The Catholics, commanded by the constable, and under him by the duke of Guise, followed on their rear; and overtaking them at Dreux, obliged them to give battle. The field was fought with great obstinacy on both sides; and the action was distinguished by this singular event, that Condé and Montmorency, the commanders of the opposite armies, fell both of them prisoners into the hands of their enemies. The appearances of victory remained with Guise, but the admiral, whose fate it ever was to be defeated, and still to rise more terrible after his misfortunes, collected the remains of the army; and inspiring his own unconquerable courage and constancy into every breast, kept them in a body, and subdued some considerable places in Normandy. Elizabeth, the better to support his cause, sent him a new supply of a hundred thousand crowns; and offered, if he could find merchants to lend him the money, to give her bond for another sum of equal amount. [2]

* Forbes, vol. ii. . Davila, lib. iii.

* * Forbes, vol. ii. , 347.

1563.

The expenses incurred by assisting the French Hugonots had emptied the queen’s exchequer; and in order to obtain supply, she found herself under a necessity of summoning a parliament: an expedient to which she never willingly had recourse. A little before the meeting of this assembly, she had fallen into a dangerous illness, the small-pox; and as her life, during some time, was despaired of, the people became the more sensible of their perilous situation, derived from the uncertainty, which, in case of her demise, attended the succession of the crown. The partisans of the queen of Scots, and those of the house of Suffolk, already divided the nation into factions; and every one foresaw, that, though it might be possible at present to determine the controversy by law, yet, if the throne were vacant, nothing but the sword would be able to fix a successor. The commons, therefore, on the opening of the session, voted an address to the queen; in which, after enumerating the dangers attending a broken and doubtful succession, and mentioning the evils which their fathers had experienced from the contending titles of York and Lancaster, they entreated the queen to put an end to their apprehensions, by choosing some husband, whom they promised, whoever he were, gratefully to receive, and faithfully to serve, honor, and obey: or if she had entertained any reluctance to the married state, they desired that the lawful successor might be named, at least appointed by act of parliament. They remarked, that, during all the reigns which had passed since the conquest, the nation had never before been so unhappy as not to know the person who, in case of the sovereign’s death, was legally entitled to fill the vacant throne. And they observed, that the fixed order which took place in inheriting the French monarchy, was one chief source of the usual tranquillity, as well as of the happiness, of that kingdom. [1]

* Sir Simon d’Ewes’s Journ. .

This subject, though extremely interesting to the nation, was very little agreeable to the queen; and she was sensible that great difficulties would attend every decision. A declaration in favor of the queen of Scots would form a settlement perfectly legal; because that princess was commonly allowed to possess the right of blood; and the exclusion given by Henry’s will, deriving its weight chiefly from an act of parliament, would lose all authority whenever the queen and parliament had made a new settlement, and restored the Scottish line to its place in the succession. But she dreaded giving encouragement to the Catholics, her secret enemies, by this declaration. She was sensible that every heir was, in some degree, a rival; much more one who enjoyed a claim for the present possession of the crown, and who had already advanced, in a very open manner, these dangerous pretensions. The great power of Mary, both from the favor of the Catholic princes, and her connections with the house of Guise, not to mention the force and situation of Scotland, was well known to her; and she saw no security, that this princess, if fortified by a sure prospect of succession, would not revive claims which she could never yet be prevailed on formally to relinquish. On the other hand, the title of the house of Suffolk was supported by the more zealous Protestants only; and it was very doubtful whether even a parliamentary declaration in its favor would bestow on it such validity as to give satisfaction to the people. The republican part of the constitution had not yet acquired such an ascendant as to control, in any degree, the ideas of hereditary right, and as the legality of Henry's will was still disputed, though founded on the utmost authority which a parliament could confer, who could be assured that a more recent act would be acknowledged to have greater validity? In the frequent revolutions which had of late taken place, the right of blood had still prevailed over religious prejudices; and the nation had ever shown itself disposed rather to change its faith than the order of succession. Even many Protestants declared themselves in favor of Mary's claim of inheritance; [1] and nothing would occasion more general disgust, than to see the queen, openly and without reserve, take part against it.

* Keith, .

The Scottish princess also, finding herself injured in so sensible a point, would thenceforth act as a declared enemy; and uniting together her foreign and domestic friends, the partisans of her present title and of her eventual succession, would soon bring matters to extremities against the present establishment. The queen, weighing all these inconveniences, which were great and urgent, was determined to keep both parties in awe, by maintaining still an ambiguous conduct; and she rather chose that the people should run the hazard of contingent events, than that she herself should visibly endanger her throne, by employing expedients, which, at best, would not bestow entire security on the nation. She gave, therefore, an evasive answer to the applications of the commons; and when the house, at the end of the session, desired, by the mouth of their speaker, further satisfaction on that head, she could not be prevailed on to make her reply more explicit. She only told them, contrary to her declarations in the beginning of her reign, that she had fixed no absolute resolution against marriage; and she added, that the difficulties attending the question of the succession were so great that she would be contented, for the sake of her people, to remain some time longer in this vale of misery; and never should depart life with satisfaction, till she had laid some solid foundation for their future security. [1]

The most remarkable law passed this session, was that which bore the title of "Assurance of the queen's royal power over all states and subjects within her dominions." [2] By this act, the asserting twice, by writing, word, or deed, the pope's authority, was subjected to the penalties of treason. All persons in holy orders were bound to take the oath of supremacy; as also all who were advanced to any degree, either in the universities or in common law; all schoolmasters, officers in court, or members of parliament: and the penalty of their second refusal was treason. The first offence, in both cases, was punished by banishment and forfeiture. This rigorous statute was not extended to any of the degree of a baron; because it was not supposed that the queen could entertain any doubt with regard to the fidelity of persons possessed of such high dignity. Lord Montacute made opposition to the bill; and asserted, in favor of the Catholics, that they disputed not, they preached not, they disobeyed not the queen, they caused no trouble, no tumults among the people. [3] It is, however, probable, that some suspicions of their secret conspiracies had made the queen and parliament increase their rigor against them; though it is also more than probable, that they were mistaken in the remedy.

There was likewise another point, in which the parliament, this session, showed more the goodness of their intention than the soundness of their judgment. They passed a law against fond and fantastical prophecies, which had been observed to seduce the people into rebellion and disorder: [4] but at the same time they enacted a statute, which was most likely to increase these and such like superstitions: it was levelled against conjurations, enchantments, and witchcraft.

* Sir Simon D’Ewes’s Journal, .

* * 5 Eliz. c. 1.

* * * Strype, vol. i. p 260.

* * * * 5 Eliz. c. I

v 5 Eliz. c. 16.

Witchcraft and heresy are two crimes which commonly increase by punishment, and never are so effectually suppressed as by being totally neglected. After the parliament had granted the queen a supply of one subsidy and two fifteenths, the session was finished by a prorogation. The convocation likewise voted the queen a subsidy of six shillings in the pound, payable in three years.

While the English parties exerted these calm efforts against each other in parliamentary votes and debates, the French factions, inflamed to the highest degree of animosity, continued that cruel war which their intemperate zeal, actuated by the ambition of their leaders, had kindled in the kingdom. The admiral was successful in reducing the towns of Normandy which held for the king; but he frequently complained that the numerous garrison of Havre remained totally inactive, and was not employed in any military operation against the common enemy. The queen, in taking possession of that place, had published a manifesto, [1] in which she pretended that her concern for the interests of the French king had engaged her in that measure, and that her sole intention was to oppose her enemies of the house of Guise, who held their prince in captivity, and employed his power to the destruction of his best and most faithful subjects. It was chiefly her desire to preserve appearances, joined to the great frugality of her temper, which made her at this critical juncture keep her soldiers in garrison, and restrain them from committing further hostilities upon the enemy. [2]

* Forbes, vol. ii.

* * Forbes, vol. ii. , 277.

The duke of Guise, meanwhile, was aiming a mortal blow at the power of the Hugonots; and had commenced the siege of Orleans, of which Andelot was governor, and where the constable was detained prisoner. He had the prospect of speedy success in this undertaking; when he was assassinated by Poltrot, a young gentleman whose zeal, instigated (as is pretended, though without any certain foundation) by the admiral, and Beza, a famous preacher, led him to attempt that criminal enterprise. The death of this gallant prince was a sensible loss to the Catholic party; and though the cardinal of Lorraine, his brother, still supported the interests of the family, the danger of their progress appeared not so imminent either to Elizabeth or to the French Protestants. The union, therefore, between these allies, which had been cemented by their common fears, began thenceforth to be less intimate; and the leaders of the Hugonots were persuaded to hearken to terms of a separate accommodation. Condé and Montmorency held conferences for settling the peace; and as they were both of them impatient to relieve themselves from captivity, they soon came to an agreement with regard to the conditions. The character of the queen regent, whose ends were always violent, but who endeavored by subtlety and policy, rather than force, to attain them, led her to embrace any plausible terms; and in spite of the protestations of the admiral, whose sagacity could easily discover the treachery of the court, the articles of agreement were finally settled between the parties. A toleration under some restrictions was anew granted to the Protestants; a general amnesty was published; Condé was reinstated in his offices and governments; and after money was advanced for the payment of arrears due to the German troops, they were dismissed the kingdom.

By the agreement between Elizabeth and the prince of Condé, it had been stipulated, [1] that neither party should conclude peace without the consent of the other; but this article was at present but little regarded by the leaders of the French Protestants. They only comprehended her so far in the treaty, as to obtain a promise that, on her relinquishing Havre, her charges, and the money which she had advanced them, should be repaid her by the king of France, and that Calais, on the expiration of the term, should be restored to her. But she disdained to accept of these conditions; and thinking the possession of Havre a much better pledge for effecting her purpose, she sent Warwick orders to prepare himself against an attack from the now united power of the French monarchy.

The earl of Warwick, who commanded a garrison of six thousand men, besides seven hundred pioneers, had no sooner got possession of Havre, than he employed every means for putting it in a posture of defence; [2] and after expelling the French from the town, he encouraged his soldiers to make the most desperate defence against the enemy. The constable commanded the French army; the queen regent herself and the king were present in the camp; even the prince of Condé joined the king's forces, and gave countenance to this enterprise; the admiral and Andelot alone, anxious still to preserve the friendship of Elizabeth, kept at a distance, and prudently refused to join their ancient enemies in an attack upon their allies.

* Forbes, vol. ii. .

* * Forbes, vol. ii. .

From the force, and dispositions, and situation of both sides it was expected that the siege would be attended with some memorable event; yet did France make a much easier acquisition of this important place than was at first apprehended. The plague crept in among the English soldiers; and being increased by their fatigue and bad diet, (for they were but ill supplied with provisions, [1]) it made such ravages, that sometimes a hundred men a day died of it; and there remained not, at last, fifteen hundred in a condition to do duty. [2] The French, meeting with such feeble resistance, carried on their attacks successfully; and having made two breaches, each of them sixty feet wide, they prepared for a general assault, which must have terminated in the slaughter of the whole garrison. [3] Warwick, who had frequently warned the English council of the danger, and who had loudly demanded a supply of men and provisions, found himself obliged to capitulate, and to content himself with the liberty of withdrawing his garrison. The articles were no sooner signed, than Lord Clinton, the admiral, who had been detained by contrary winds, appeared off the harbor with a reënforcement of three thousand men; and found the place surrendered to the enemy. To increase the misfortune, the infected army brought the plague with them into England, where it swept off great multitudes, particularly in the city of London. Above twenty thousand persons there died of it in one year. [4]

* Forbes, vol. ii. , 498.

* * Forbes, vol. ii. , 458.

* * * Forbes, vol. ii. .

* * * * See note F, at the end of the volume.

Elizabeth, whose usual vigor and foresight had not appeared in this transaction, was now glad to compound matters; and as the queen regent desired to obtain leisure, in order to prepare measures for the extermination of the Hugonots, she readily hearkened to any reasonable terms of accommodation with England. [1]

* Davila, lib. iii.

1564.

It was agreed, that the hostages which the French had given for the restitution of Calais, should be restored for two hundred and twenty thousand crowns; and that both sides should retain all their claims and pretensions.

The peace still continued with Scotland and even a cordial friendship seemed to have been cemented between Elizabeth and Mary. These princesses made profession of the most entire affection; wrote amicable letters every week to each other; and had adopted, in all appearance, the sentiments as well as style of sisters. Elizabeth punished one Hales, who had published a book against Mary's title; [1] and as the lord keeper Bacon was thought to have encouraged Hales in this undertaking, he fell under her displeasure, and it was with some difficulty he was able to give her satisfaction, and recover her favor. [2] The two queens had agreed in the foregoing summer to an interview at York, [3] in order to remove all difficulties with regard to Mary's ratification of the treaty of Edinburgh, and to consider of the proper method for settling the succession of England; but as Elizabeth carefully avoided touching on this delicate subject, she employed a pretence of the wars in France, which, she said, would detain her in London; and she delayed till next year the intended interview. It is also probable, that being well acquainted with the beauty, and address, and accomplishments of Mary, she did not choose to stand the comparison with regard to those exterior qualities, in which she was eclipsed by her rival; and was unwilling that a princess, who had already made great progress in the esteem and affections of the English, should have a further opportunity of increasing the number of her partisans.

* Keith, .

* * Keith, .

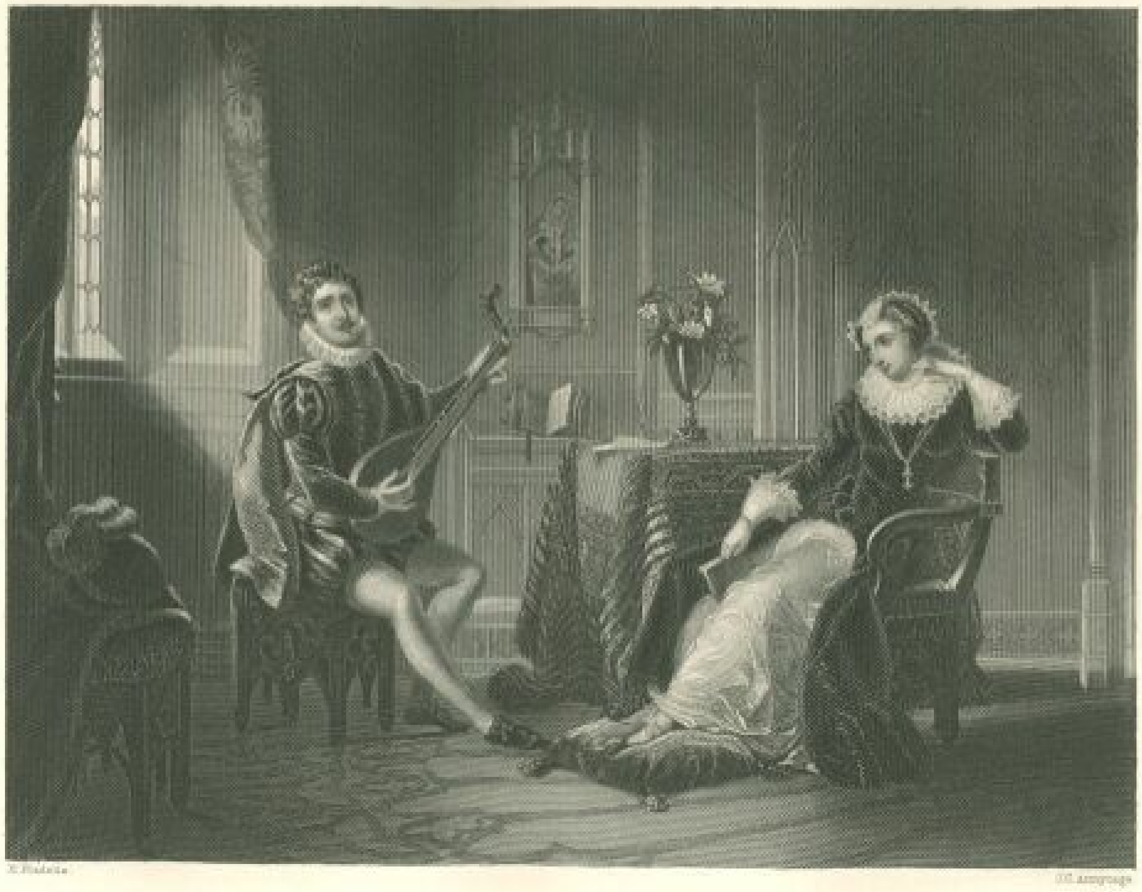
* * * Haynes, .

Mary’s close connections with the house of Guise, and her devoted attachment to her uncles, by whom she had been early educated and constantly protected, was the ground of just and insurmountable jealousy to Elizabeth, who regarded them as her mortal and declared enemies, and was well acquainted with their dangerous character and ambitious projects. They had made offer of their niece to Don Carlos, Philip’s son; to the king of Sweden, the king of Navarre, the archduke Charles, the duke of Ferrara, the cardinal of Bourbon, who had only taken deacon’s orders, from which he might easily be freed by a dispensation; and they were ready to marry her to any one who could strengthen their interests, or give inquietude and disturbance to Elizabeth. [1]

* Forbes, vol. ii. . Strype, vol. i. .

Elizabeth, on her part, was equally vigilant to prevent the execution of their schemes, and was particularly anxious lest Mary should form any powerful foreign alliance, which might tempt her to revive her pretensions to the crown, and to invade the kingdom on the side where it was weakest and lay most exposed. [1] As she believed that the marriage with the archduke Charles was the one most likely to have place, she used every expedient to prevent it; and besides remonstrating against it to Mary herself, she endeavored to draw off the archduke from that pursuit, by giving him some hopes of success in his pretensions to herself, and by inviting him to a renewal of the former treaty of marriage. [2] She always told the queen of

Scots, that nothing would satisfy her but her espousing some English nobleman, who would remove all grounds of jealousy, and cement the union between the kingdoms; and she offered on this condition to have her title examined, and to declare her successor to the crown. [3] After keeping the matter in these general terms during a twelvemonth, she at last named Lord Robert Dudley, now created earl of Leicester, as the person on whom she desired that Mary's choice should fall.



MARY STUART AND CHATELAR.

The earl of Leicester, the great and powerful favorite of Elizabeth, possessed all those exterior qualities which are naturally alluring to the fair sex; a handsome person, a polite address, an insinuating behavior; and by means of these accomplishments he had been able to blind even the penetration of Elizabeth, and conceal from her the great defects, or rather odious vices, which attended his character. He was proud, insolent, interested, ambitious; without honor, without generosity, without humanity; and atoned not for these bad qualities by such abilities or courage as could fit him for that high trust and confidence with which she always honored him. Her constant and declared attachment to him had naturally emboldened him to aspire to her bed; and in order to make way for these nuptials, he was universally believed to have murdered, in a barbarous manner, his wife, the heiress of one Robesart. The proposal of espousing Mary was by no means agreeable to him; and he always ascribed it to the contrivance of Cecil, his enemy; who, he thought, intended by that artifice to make him lose the friendship of Mary from the temerity of his pretensions, and that of Elizabeth from jealousy of his attachments to another woman. [4]

* Keith, p 247, 284.

* * Melvil, .

* * * Keith, , 249, 259. 265.

* * * * Camden,

The queen herself had not any serious intention of effecting this marriage, but as she was desirous that the queen of Scots should never have any husband, she named a man who, she believed, was not likely to be accepted of; and she hoped by that means to gain time, and elude the project of any other alliance. The earl of Leicester was too great a favorite to be parted with; and when Mary, allured by the prospect of being declared successor to the crown, seemed at last to hearken to Elizabeth's proposal, this princess receded from her offers, and withdrew the bait which she had thrown out to her rival. [1] This duplicity of conduct, joined to some appearance of an imperious superiority assumed by her, had drawn a peevish letter from Mary; and the seemingly amicable correspondence between the two queens was, during some time, interrupted. In order to make up the breach, the queen of Scots despatched Sir James Melvil to London; who has given us in his memoirs a particular account of his negotiation.

Melvil was an agreeable courtier, a man of address and conversation; and it was recommended to him by his mistress, that, besides grave reasonings concerning politics and state affairs, he should introduce more entertaining topics of conversation, suitable to the sprightly character of Elizabeth, and should endeavor by that means to insinuate himself into her confidence. He succeeded so well, that he threw that artful princess entirely off her guard, [2] and made her discover the bottom of her heart, full of all those levities, and follies, and ideas of rivalship which possess the youngest and most frivolous of her sex.

* Keith, , 270. Appendix, p, 158. Strype, vol. i. p. 414.

* * Haynes, .

He talked to her of his travels, and forgot not to mention the different dresses of the ladies in different countries, and the particular advantages of each in setting off the beauties of the shape and person. The queen said, that she had dresses of all countries; and she took care thenceforth to meet the ambassador every day apparelled in a different habit: sometimes she was dressed in the English garb, sometimes in the French, sometimes in the Italian; and she asked him which of them became her most. He answered, the Italian; a reply that he knew would be agreeable to her, because that mode showed to advantage her flowing locks, which, he remarked, though they were more red than yellow, she fancied to be the finest in the world. She desired to know of him what was reputed the best color of hair: she asked whether his queen or she had the finest hair: she even inquired which of them he esteemed the fairest person; a very delicate question, and which he prudently eluded, by saying that her majesty was the fairest person in England and his mistress in Scotland. She next demanded which of them was tallest: he replied, his queen. “Then is she too tall,” said Elizabeth; “for I myself am of a just stature.” Having learned from him that his mistress sometimes recreated herself by playing on the harpsichord, an instrument on which she herself excelled, she gave orders to Lord Hunsdon, that he should lead the ambassador, as it were casually, into an apartment where he might hear her perform; and when Melvil, as if ravished with the harmony, broke into the queen’s apartment, she pretended to be displeased with his intrusion; but still took care to ask him whether he thought Mary or her the best performer on that instrument. [1] From the whole of her behavior, Melvil thought he might, on his return, assure his mistress, that she had no reason ever to expect any cordial friendship from Elizabeth, and that all her professions of amity were full of falsehood and dissimulation.

* Melvil, p, 49, 50., Keith, p 264.

After two years had been spent in evasions and artifices, Mary’s subjects and counsellors, and probably herself, began to think it full time that some marriage were concluded; and Lord Darnley, son of the earl of Lenox, was the person in whom most men’s opinions and wishes centred. He was Mary’s cousin-german, by the lady Margaret Douglas, niece to Henry VIII., and daughter of the earl of Angus, by Margaret, queen of Scotland. He had been born and educated in England, where the earl of Lenox had constantly resided, since he had been banished by the prevailing power of the house of Hamilton; and as Darnley was now in his twentieth year, and was a very comely person, tall and delicately shaped, it was hoped that he might soon render himself agreeable to the queen of Scots. He was also by his father a branch of the same family with herself; and would, in espousing her, preserve the royal dignity in the house of Stuart: he was, after her, next heir to the crown of England; and those who pretended to exclude her on account of her being a foreigner, had endeavored to recommend his title, and give it the preference. It seemed no inconsiderable advantage, that she could, by marrying him, unite both their claims; and as he was by birth an Englishman, and could not by his power or alliances give any ground of suspicion to Elizabeth, it was hoped that the proposal of this marriage would not be unacceptable to that jealous princess.

Elizabeth was well informed of these intentions; [1] and was secretly not displeased with the projected marriage between Darnley and the queen of Scots. [2] She would rather have wished that Mary had continued forever in a single life; but finding little probability of rendering this scheme effectual, she was satisfied with a choice which freed her at once from the dread of a foreign alliance, and from the necessity of parting with Leicester, her favorite. In order to pave the way to Darnley’s marriage, she secretly desired Mary to invite Lenox into Scotland, to reverse his attainder, and to restore him to his honors and fortune. [3] And when her request was complied with, she took care, in order to preserve the friendship of the Hamiltons and her other partisans in Scotland, to blame openly this conduct of Mary. [4]

* Keith, .

* * Keith, , 282. Jebb, vol. ii. .

* * * Keith, , 259, 272.

* * * * Melvil, .

1565.

Hearing that the negotiation for Darnley's marriage advanced apace, she gave that nobleman permission, on his first application, to follow his father into Scotland: but no sooner did she learn that the queen of Scots was taken with his figure and person, and that all measures were fixed for espousing him, than she exclaimed against the marriage; sent Throgmorton to order Darnley immediately, upon his allegiance, to return to England; threw the countess of Lenox and her second son into the Tower, where they suffered a rigorous confinement; seized all Lenox's English estate; and, though it was impossible for her to assign one single reason for her displeasure, [1] she menaced, and, protested, and complained, as if she had suffered the most grievous injury in the world.

* Keith, , 275.

The politics of Elizabeth, though judicious, were usually full of duplicity and artifice; but never more so than in her transactions with the queen of Scots, where there entered so many little passions and narrow jealousies, that she durst not avow to the world the reasons of her conduct, scarcely to her ministers, and scarcely even to herself. But besides a womanish rivalship and envy against the marriage of this princess, she had some motives of interest for feigning a displeasure on the present occasion. It served her as a pretence for refusing to acknowledge Mary's title to the succession of England; a point to which, for good reasons, she was determined never to consent. And it was useful to her for a purpose still more unfriendly and dangerous, for encouraging the discontents and rebellion of the Scottish nobility and ecclesiastics. [1]

Nothing can be more unhappy for a people than to be governed by a sovereign attached to a religion different from the established; and it is scarcely possible that mutual confidence can ever, in such a situation, have place between the prince and his subjects. Mary's conduct had been hitherto in every respect unexceptionable, and even laudable; yet had she not made such progress in acquiring popularity, as might have been expected from her gracious deportment and agreeable accomplishments. Suspicions every moment prevailed on account of her attachment to the Catholic faith, and especially to her uncles, the open and avowed promoters of the scheme for exterminating the professors of the reformed religion throughout all Europe. She still refused to ratify the acts of parliament which had established the reformation; she made attempts for restoring to the Catholic bishops some part of their civil jurisdiction; [2] and she wrote a letter to the council of Trent, in which, besides professing her attachment to the Catholic faith, she took notice of her title to succeed to the crown of England, and expressed her hopes of being able, in some period, to bring back all her dominions to the bosom of the church. [3] The zealots among the Protestants were not wanting, in their turn, to exercise their insolence against her, which tended still more to alienate her from their faith. A law was enacted, making it capital, on the very first offence, to say mass any where, except in the queen's chapel; [4] and it was with difficulty that even this small indulgence was granted her: the general assembly importuned her anew to change her religion; to renounce the blasphemous idolatry of the mass, with the tyranny of the Roman Antichrist; and to embrace the true religion of Christ Jesus.

* Keith, .

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Father Paul, lib. vii.

* * * * Keith, .

v Keith, p, 545. Knox. .

As she answered in temper, that she was not yet convinced of the falsity of her religion or the impiety of the mass, and that her apostasy would lose her the friendship of her allies on the continent, they replied by assuring her, that their religion was undoubtedly the same which had been revealed by Jesus Christ, which had been preached by the apostles, and which had been embraced by the faithful in the primitive ages; that neither the religion of Turks, Jews, nor Papists was built on so solid a foundation as theirs; that they alone, of all the various species of religionists spread over the face of the earth, were so happy as to be possessed of the truth; that those who hear, or rather who gaze on the mass, allow sacrilege, pronounce blasphemy, and commit most abominable idolatry; and that the friendship of the King of kings was preferable to all the alliances in the world. [1]

The marriage of the queen of Scots had kindled afresh the zeal of the reformers, because the family of Lenox was believed to adhere to the Catholic faith; and though Darnley, who now bore the name of King Henry, went often to the established church, he could not, by this exterior compliance, gain the confidence and regard of the ecclesiastics. They rather laid hold of the opportunity to insult him to his face; and Knox scrupled not to tell him from the pulpit, that God, for punishment of the offences and ingratitude of the people, was wont to commit the rule over them to boys and women. [2] The populace of Edinburgh, instigated by such doctrines, began to meet and to associate themselves against the government. [3] But what threatened more immediate danger to Mary's authority, were the discontents which prevailed among some of the principal nobility.

The duke of Chatelrault was displeased with the restoration, and still more with the aggrandizement of the family of Lenox, his hereditary enemies; and entertained fears lest his own eventual succession to the crown of Scotland should be excluded by his rival, who had formerly advanced some pretensions to it. The earl of Murray found his credit at court much diminished by the interest of Lenox and his son; and began to apprehend the revocation of some considerable grants which he had obtained from Mary's bounty. The earls of Argyle, Rothes, and Glencairne,

* Keith, , 551.

* * Keith, . Knox, .

* * * Knox, .

the lords Boyde and Ochiltry, Kirkaldy of Grange, Pittarow, were instigated by like motives; and as these were the persons who had most zealously promoted the reformation, they were disgusted to find that the queen's favor was entirely engrossed by a new cabal, the earls of Bothwell, Athole, Sutherland, and Huntley; men who were esteemed either lukewarm in religious controversy, or inclined to the Catholic party. The same ground of discontent which in other courts is the source of intrigue, faction, and opposition, commonly produced in Scotland either projects of assassination or of rebellion; and besides mutual accusations of the former kind, which it is difficult to clear up, [1] the malecontent lords, as soon as they saw the queen's marriage entirely resolved on, entered into a confederacy for taking arms against their sovereign. They met at Stirling; pretended an anxious concern for the security of religion; framed engagements for mutual defence; and made applications to Elizabeth for assistance and protection. [2] That princess, after publishing the expressions of her displeasure against the marriage, had secretly ordered her ambassadors, Randolf and Throgmorton, to give in her name some promises of support to the malecontents; and had even sent them a supply of ten thousand pounds, to enable them to begin an insurrection. [3]

Mary was no sooner informed of the meeting at Stirling, and the movements of the lords, than she summoned them to appear at court, in order to answer for their conduct; and having levied some forces to execute the laws, she obliged the rebels to leave the low countries, and take shelter in Argyleshire. That she might more effectually cut off their resources, she proceeded with the king to Glasgow, and forced them from their retreat. They appeared at Paisley, in the neighborhood, with about a thousand horse, and passing the queen's army, proceeded to Hamilton, thence to Edinburgh, which they entered without resistance. They expected great reënforcements in this place, from the efforts of Knox and the seditious preachers; and they beat their drums, desiring all men to enlist, and receive wages for the defence of God's glory. [4]

* See note G, at the end of the volume.

* * Keith, , 294, 300, 301.

* * * Knox, . Keith, Append, . Anderson, vol. iii. .

* * * * Knox, .

But the nation was in no disposition for rebellion: Mary was esteemed and beloved: her marriage was not generally disagreeable to the people: and the interested views of the malecontent lords were so well known, that their pretence of zeal for religion had little influence even on the ignorant populace. [1] The king and queen advanced to Edinburgh at the head of their army: the rebels were obliged to retire into the south; and being pursued by a force which now amounted to eighteen thousand men, [2] they found themselves under a necessity of abandoning their country, and of taking shelter in England.

Elizabeth, when she found the event so much to disappoint her expectations, thought proper to disavow all connections with the Scottish malecontents, and to declare every where, that she had never given them any encouragement, nor any promise of countenance or assistance. She even carried further her dissimulation and hypocrisy. Murray had come to London, with the abbot of Kilwinning, agent for Chatelrault; and she seduced them, by secret assurances of protection, to declare before the ambassadors of France and Spain that she had nowise contributed to their insurrection. No sooner had she extorted this confession from them, than she chased them from her presence, called them unworthy traitors, declared that their detestable rebellion was of bad example to all princes; and assured them, that as she had hitherto given them no encouragement, so should they never thenceforth receive from her any assistance or protection. [3] Throgmorton alone, whose honor was equal to his abilities, could not be prevailed on to conceal the part which he had acted in the enterprise of the Scottish rebels; and being well apprised of the usual character and conduct of Elizabeth, he had had the precaution to obtain an order of council to authorize the engagements which he had been obliged to make with them. [4]

* Knox, , 385.

* * Knox, .

* * * Melvil, . Knox, . Keith, . Crawford, p, 62, 63.

* * * * Melvil, .

The banished lords, finding themselves so harshly treated by Elizabeth, had recourse to the clemency of their own sovereign; and after some solicitation and some professions of sincere repentance, the duke of Chatelrault obtained his pardon, on condition that he should retire into France. Mary was more implacable against the ungrateful earl of Murray and the other confederates, on whom she threw the chief blame of the enterprise; but as she was continually plied with applications from their friends, and as some of her most judicious partisans in England thought, that nothing would more promote her interests in that kingdom, than the gentle treatment of men so celebrated for their zeal against the Catholic religion, she agreed to give way to her natural temper, which inclined not to severity, and she seemed determined to restore them to favor. [1] In this interval, Rambouillet arrived as ambassador from France, and brought her advice from her uncle, the cardinal of Lorraine, to whose opinion she always paid an extreme deference, by no means to pardon these Protestant leaders, who had been engaged in a rebellion against her. [2]

The two religions, in France, as well as in other parts of Europe, were rather irritated than tired with their acts of mutual violence; and the peace granted to the Hugonots, as had been foreseen by Coligny, was intended only to lull them asleep and prepare the way for their final and absolute destruction. The queen regent made a pretence of travelling through the kingdom, in order to visit the provinces, and correct all the abuses arising from the late civil war; and after having held some conferences on the frontiers with the duke of Lorraine and the duke of Savoy, she came to Bayonne, where she was met by her daughter, the queen of Spain, and the duke of Alva. Nothing appeared in the congress of these two splendid courts, but gayety, festivity, love, and joy; but amidst these smiling appearances were secretly fabricated schemes the most bloody, and the most destructive to the repose of mankind, that had ever been thought of in any age or nation. No less than a total and universal extermination of the Protestants by fire and sword was concerted by Philip and Catharine of Medicis; and Alva, agreeably to his fierce and sanguinary disposition, advised the queen regent to commence the execution of this project, by the immediate massacre of all the leaders of the Hugonots. [3]

* Melvil, , 60, 61, 62, 63. Keith, .

* * Keith . Melvil, .

* * * Davila, lib iii.

But that princess, though equally hardened against every humane sentiment, would not forego this opportunity of displaying her wit and refined politics; and she purposed rather by treachery and dissimulation, which she called address, to lead the Protestants into the snare, and never to draw the sword till they were totally disabled from resistance. The cardinal of Lorraine, whose character bore a greater affinity to that of Alva, was a chief author of this barbarous association against the reformers; and having connected his hopes of success with the aggrandizement of his niece, the queen of Scots, he took care that her measures should correspond to those violent counsels which were embraced by the other Catholic princes. In consequence of this scheme, he turned her from the road of clemency, which she intended to have followed, and made her resolve on the total ruin of the banished lords. [1]

1565.

A parliament was summoned at Edinburgh for attainting them; and as their guilt was palpable and avowed, no doubt was entertained but sentence would be pronounced against them. It was by a sudden and violent incident, which, in the issue, brought on the ruin of Mary herself, that they were saved from the rigor of the law.

The marriage of the queen of Scots with Lord Darnley was so natural, and so inviting in all its circumstances, that it had been precipitately agreed to by that princess and her council; and while she was allured by his youth, and beauty, and exterior accomplishments, she had at first overlooked the qualities of his mind, which nowise corresponded to the excellence of his outward figure. Violent, yet variable in his resolutions; insolent, yet credulous and easily governed by flatterers; he was destitute of all gratitude, because he thought no favors equal to his merit; and being addicted to low pleasures, he was equally incapable of all true sentiments of love and tenderness. [1] The queen of Scots, in the first effusions of her fondness, had taken a pleasure in exalting him beyond measure; she had granted him the title of king; she had joined his name with her own in all public acts; she intended to have procured him from the parliament a matrimonial crown; but having leisure afterwards to remark his weakness and vices, she began to see the danger of her profuse liberality, and was resolved thenceforth to proceed with more reserve in the trust which she should confer upon him. His resentment against this prudent conduct served but the more to increase her disgust: and the young prince, enraged at her imagined neglects, pointed his vengeance against every one whom he deemed the cause of this change in her measures and behavior.

* Melvil, . Keith’s Append. .

There was in the court one David Rizzio, who had of late obtained a very extraordinary degree of confidence and favor with the queen of Scots. He was a Piedmontese, of mean birth, son of a teacher of music, himself a musician; and finding it difficult to subsist by his art in his own country, he had followed into Scotland an ambassador, whom the duke of Savoy sent thither to pay his compliments to Mary, some time after her first arrival. He possessed a good ear, and a tolerable voice; and as that princess found him useful to complete her band of music, she retained him in her service after the departure of his master. Her secretary for French despatches having some time after incurred her displeasure, she promoted Rizzio to that office, which gave him frequent opportunities of approaching her person, and insinuating himself into her favor. He was shrewd and sensible, as well as aspiring, much beyond his rank and education; and he made so good use of the access which fortune had procured him, that he was soon regarded as the chief confidant, and even minister of the queen. He was consulted on all occasions; no favors could be obtained but by his intercession; all suitors were obliged to gain him by presents and flattery; and the man, insolent from his new exaltation, as well as rapacious in his acquisitions, soon drew on himself the hatred of the nobility and of the whole kingdom. [1] He had at first employed his credit to promote Darnley’s marriage; and a firm friendship seemed to be established between them; but on the subsequent change of the queen’s sentiments, it was easy for Henry’s friends to persuade him that Rizzio was the real author of her indifference, and even to rouse in his mind jealousies of a more dangerous nature. The favorite was of a disagreeable figure, but was not past his youth; [2] and though the opinion of his criminal correspondence with Mary might seem of itself unreasonable, if not absurd, a suspicious husband could find no other means of accounting for that lavish and imprudent kindness with which she honored him.

* Keith, , 302, Crawford’s Memoirs, . Spotswood, .

* * See note H, at the end of the volume.

The rigid austerity of the ecclesiastics, who could admit of no freedoms, contributed to spread this opinion among the people; and as Rizzio was universally believed to be a pensionary of the pope’s, and to be deeply engaged in all schemes against the Protestants, any story to his and Mary’s disadvantage received an easy credit among the zealots of that communion. Rizzio, who had connected his interests with the Roman Catholics, was the declared enemy of the banished lords; and by promoting the violent prosecutions against them, he had exposed himself to the animosity of their numerous friends and retainers. A scheme was also thought to be formed for revoking some exorbitant grants made during the queen’s minority, and even the nobility, who had seized the ecclesiastical benefices, began to think themselves less secure in the possession of them. [1] The earl of Morton, chancellor, was affected by all these considerations, and still more by a rumor spread abroad, that Mary intended to appoint Rizzio chancellor in his place, and to bestow that dignity on a mean and upstart foreigner, ignorant of the laws and language of the country. [2] So indiscreet had this princess been in her kindness to Rizzio, that even that strange report met with credit, and proved a great means of accelerating the ruin of the favorite. Morton, insinuating himself into Henry’s confidence, employed all his art to inflame the discontent and jealousy of that prince; and he persuaded him, that the only means of freeing himself from the indignities under which he labored, was to bring the base stranger to the fate which he had so well merited, and which was so passionately desired by the whole nation. George Douglas, natural brother to the countess of Lenox, concurred in the same advice; and the Lords Ruthven and Lindesey, being consulted, offered their assistance in the enterprise; nor was even the earl of Lenox, the king's father, averse to the design. [3] But as these conspirators were well acquainted with Henry's levity, they engaged him to sign a paper, in which he avowed the undertaking, as tending to the glory of God and advancement of religion, and promised to protect them against every consequence which might ensue upon the assassination of Rizzio. [4] All these measures being concerted, a messenger was despatched to the banished lords, who were hovering near the borders; and they were invited by the king to return to their native country.

This design, so atrocious in itself, was rendered still more so by the circumstances which attended its execution. Mary, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy, was supping in private, and had at table the countess of Argyle, her natural sister, with Rizzio, and others of her servants. The king entered the room by a private passage, and stood at the back of Mary's chair: Lord Ruthven, George Douglas, and other conspirators, being all armed, rushed in after him; and the queen of Scots, terrified with the appearance, demanded of them the reason of this rude intrusion. They told her, that they intended no violence against her person; but meant only to bring that villain, pointing to Rizzio, to his deserved punishment. Rizzio, aware of the danger, ran behind his mistress, and seizing her by the waist, called aloud to her for protection; while she interposed in his behalf, with cries, and menaces, and entreaties. The impatient assassins, regardless of her efforts, rushed upon their prey, and by overturning every thing which stood in their way, increased the horror and confusion of the scene. Douglas, seizing Henry's dagger, stuck it in the body of Rizzio, who, screaming with fear and agony, was torn from Mary

* Keith, . Melvil, .

* * Buchanan, lib. xvii. c. 60. Crawford, . Spotswood, p. 194. Knox, . Jebb, vol. i. .

* * * Crawford, .

* * * * Goodall, vol. i. . Crawford, .

by the other conspirators, and pushed into the ante-chamber, where he was despatched with fifty-six wounds. [1]

* Melvil, . Keith, , 331. Crawford, .

The unhappy princess, informed of his fate, immediately dried her tears, and said, she would weep no more; she would now think of revenge. The insult, indeed, upon her person; the stain attempted to be fixed on her honor; the danger to which her life was exposed, on account of her pregnancy; were injuries so atrocious and so complicated, that they scarcely left room for pardon, even from the greatest lenity and mercy.

The assassins, apprehensive of Mary's resentment, detained her prisoner in the palace; and the king dismissed all who seemed willing to attempt her rescue, by telling them, that nothing was done without his orders, and that he would be careful of the queen's safety. Murray and the banished lords appeared two days after; and Mary, whose anger was now engrossed by injuries more recent and violent, was willingly reconciled to them; and she even received her brother with tenderness and affection. They obtained an acquittal from parliament, and were reinstated in their honors and fortunes. The accomplices also in Rizzio's murder applied to her for a pardon; but she artfully delayed compliance, and persuaded them, that so long as she was detained in custody, and was surrounded by guards, any deed which she should sign would have no validity. Meanwhile she had gained the confidence of her husband by her persuasion and caresses and no sooner were the guards withdrawn, than she engaged him to escape with her in the night-time, and take shelter in Dunbar. Many of her subjects here offered her their services; and Mary, having collected an army, which the conspirators had no power to resist, advanced to Edinburgh, and obliged them to fly into England, where they lived in great poverty and distress. They made applications, however, to the earl of Bothwell, a new favorite of Mary's; and that nobleman, desirous of strengthening his party by the accession of their interest, was able to pacify her resentment; and he soon after procured them liberty to return into their own country. [1]

The vengeance of the queen of Scots was implacable against her husband alone, whose person was before disagreeable to her, and who, by his violation of every tie of gratitude and duty, had now drawn on him her highest resentment. She engaged him to disown all connections with the assassins, to deny any concurrence in their crime, even to publish a proclamation containing a falsehood so notorious to the whole world; [2] and having thus made him expose himself to universal contempt, and rendered it impracticable for him ever to acquire the confidence of any party, she threw him off with disdain and indignation. [3]

* Melvil, , 76. Keith, . Knox, p, 398.

* * Goodall, vol. i. . Keith, Append. .

* * * Melvil, , 67.

As if she had been making an escape from him, she suddenly withdrew to Allca, a seat of the earl of Marre’s; and when Henry followed her thither, she suddenly returned to Edinburgh and give him every where the strongest proofs of displeasure, and even of antipathy. She encouraged her courtiers in their neglect of him; and she was pleased that his mean equipage and small train of attendants should draw on him the contempt of the very populace. He was permitted, however, to have apartments in the Castle of Edinburgh, which Mary had chosen for the place of her delivery. She there brought forth a son; and as this was very important news to England, as well as to Scotland, she immediately despatched Sir James Melvil to carry intelligence of the happy event to Elizabeth. Melvil tells us, that this princess, the evening of his arrival in London, had given a ball to her court at Greenwich, and was displaying all that spirit and alacrity which usually attended her on these occasions: but when news arrived of the prince of Scotland’s birth, all her joy was damped: she sunk into melancholy; she reclined her head upon her arm; and complained to some of her attendants, that the queen of Scots was mother of a fair son, while she herself was but a barren stock. Next day, however, at the reception of the ambassador, she resumed her former dissimulation, put on a joyful countenance, gave Melvil thanks for the haste he had made in conveying to her the agreeable intelligence, and expressed the utmost cordiality and friendship to her sister. [1] Some time after, she despatched the earl of Bedford, with her kinsman George Gary, son of Lord Hunsdon, in order to officiate at the baptism of the young prince; and she sent by them some magnificent presents to the queen of Scots.

The birth of a son gave additional zeal to Mary's partisans in England; [2] and even men of the most opposite parties began to cry aloud for some settlement of the succession. These humors broke out with great vehemence in a new session of parliament, held after six prorogations. The house of peers, which had hitherto forborne to touch on this delicate point, here took the lead; and the house of commons soon after imitated the zeal of the lords. Molineux opened the matter in the lower house, and proposed, that the question of the succession and that of supply should go hand in hand; as if it were intended to constrain the queen to a compliance with the request of her parliament. [3] The courtiers endeavored to elude the debate: Sir Ralph Sadler told the house, that he had heard the queen positively affirm, that for the good of her people she was determined to marry. Secretary Cecil and Sir Francis Knollys gave their testimony to the same purpose; as did also Sir Ambrose Cave, chancellor of the duchy, and Sir Edward Rogers, comptroller of the household. [4]

Elizabeth's ambitious and masculine character was so well known, that few members gave any credit to this intelligence; and it was considered merely as an artifice, by which she endeavored to retract that positive declaration which she had made in the beginning of her reign, that she meant to live and die a virgin. The ministers, therefore, gained nothing further by this piece of policy, than only to engage the house, for the sake of decency, to join the question of the queen's marriage with that of a settlement of the crown; and the commons were proceeding with great earnestness in the debate, and had even appointed a committee to confer with the lords, when express orders were brought them from Elizabeth not to proceed further in the matter. Cecil told them, that she pledged to the house the word of a queen for her sincerity in her intentions to marry; that

* Melvil, , 70.

* * Camden, .

* * * D'Ewes, .

* * * * D'Ewes, .

the appointment of a successor would be attended with great danger to her person; that she herself had had experience, during the reign of her sister, how much court was usually paid to the next heir, and what dangerous sacrifices men were commonly disposed to make of their present duty to their future prospects; and that she was therefore determined to delay, till a more proper opportunity, the decision of that important question. [1] The house was not satisfied with these reasons, and still less with the command prohibiting them all debate on the subject. Paul Wentworth, a spirited member, went so far as to question whether such a prohibition were not an infringement of the liberties and privileges of the house. [2] Some even ventured to violate that profound respect which had hitherto been preserved to the queen; and they affirmed, that she was bound in duty, not only to provide for the happiness of her subjects during her own life, but also to pay regard to their future security, by fixing a successor; that by an opposite conduct she showed herself the step-mother, not the natural parent of her people, and would seem desirous that England should no longer subsist than she should enjoy the glory and satisfaction of governing it; that none but timorous princes, or tyrants, or faint-hearted women, ever stood in fear of their successors; and that the affections of the people were a firm and impregnable rampart to every sovereign, who, laying aside all artifice or by-ends, had courage and magnanimity to put his sole trust in that honorable and sure defence. [3] The queen, hearing of these debates, sent for the speaker; and after reiterating her former prohibition, she bade him inform the house, that if any member remained still unsatisfied, he might appear before the privy council, and there give his reasons. [4]

* D'Ewes, , 128.

* * D'Ewes, .

* * * Camden, .

* * * * D'Ewes, .

As the members showed a disposition, notwithstanding these peremptory orders, still to proceed upon the question, Elizabeth thought proper, by a message, to revoke them, and to allow the house liberty of debate. [1] They were so mollified by this gracious condescension, that they thenceforth conducted the matter with more calmness and temper, and they even voted her a supply, to be levied at three payments, of a subsidy and a fifteenth, without annexing any condition to it.

1567.

The queen soon after dissolved the parliament, and told them, with some sharpness in the conclusion, that their proceedings had contained much dissimulation and artifice; that, under the plausible pretences of marriage and succession, many of them covered very malevolent intentions towards her; but that, however, she reaped this advantage from the attempts of these men, that she could now distinguish her friends from her enemies. “But do you think,” added she, “that I am unmindful of your future security, or will be negligent in settling the succession? That is the chief object of my concern; as I know myself to be liable to mortality. Or do you apprehend that I meant to encroach on your liberties? No: it was never my meaning; I only intended to stop you before you approached the precipice. All things have their time; and though you maybe blessed with a sovereign more wise or more learned than I, yet I assure you that no one will ever rule over you who shall be more careful of your safety. And therefore, henceforward, whether I live to see the like assembly or no, or whoever holds the reins of government, let me warn you to beware of provoking your sovereign’s patience, so far as you have done mine. But I shall now conclude, that, notwithstanding the disgusts I have received, (for I mean not to part with you in anger), the greater part of you may assure themselves that they go home in their prince’s good graces.” [2]

Elizabeth carried further her dignity on this occasion. She had received the subsidy without any condition; but as it was believed that the commons had given her that gratuity with a view of engaging her to yield to their requests, she thought proper, on her refusal, voluntarily to remit the third payment; and she said, that money in her subjects’ purses was as good to her as in her own exchequer. [3]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes, , 117.

* * * J Camden, .

But though the queen was able to elude, for the present, the applications of parliament, the friends of the queen of Scots multiplied every day in England; and besides the Catholics, many of whom kept a treasonable correspondence with her, and were ready to rise at her command, [1] the court itself of Elizabeth was full of her avowed partisans. The duke of Norfolk, the earls of Leicester, Pembroke, Bedford, Northumberland, Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, and most of the considerable men in England, except Cecil, seemed convinced of the necessity of declaring her the successor. None but the more zealous Protestants adhered either to the countess of Hertford, or to her aunt, Eleanor, countess of Cumberland; and as the marriage of the former seemed liable to some objections, and had been declared invalid, men were alarmed, even on that side, with the prospect of new disputes concerning the succession. Mary's behavior, also, so moderate towards the Protestants, and so gracious towards all men, had procured her universal respect; [2] and the public was willing to ascribe any imprudences into which she had fallen to her youth and inexperience. But all these flattering prospects were blasted by the subsequent incidents; where her egregious indiscretions, shall I say, or atrocious crimes, threw her from the height of her prosperity and involved her in infamy and in ruin.

The earl of Bothwell was of a considerable family and power in Scotland; and though not distinguished by any talents either of a civil or military nature, he had made a figure in that party which opposed the greatness of the earl of Murray and the more rigid reformers. He was a man of profligate manners; had involved his opulent fortune in great debts, and even reduced himself to beggary by his profuse expenses; [3] and seemed to have no resource but in desperate counsels and enterprises.

* Haynes, , 448.

* * Melvil, , 61, 74.

* * * Keith, .

He had been accused more than once of an attempt to assassinate Murray; and though the frequency of these accusations on all sides diminish somewhat the credit due to any particular imputation, they prove sufficiently the prevalence of that detestable practice in Scotland, and may in that view serve to render such rumors the more credible. This man had of late acquired the favor and entire confidence of Mary; and all her measures were directed by his advice and authority. Reports were spread of more particular intimacies between them; and these reports gained ground from the continuance, or rather increase, of her hatred towards her husband. [1] That young prince was reduced to such a state of desperation by the neglects which he underwent from his queen and the courtiers, that he had once resolved to fly secretly into France or Spain, and had even provided a vessel for that purpose. [2] Some of the most considerable nobility, on the other hand, observing her rooted aversion to him, had proposed some expedients for a divorce, and though Mary is said to have spoken honorably on the occasion, and to have embraced the proposal no further than it should be found consistent with her own honor and her son's legitimacy, [3] men were inclined to believe, that the difficulty of finding proper means for effecting that purpose, was the real cause of laying aside all further thoughts of it. So far were the suspicions against her carried, that when Henry, discouraged with the continual proofs of her hatred, left the court and retired to Glasgow, an illness of an extraordinary nature, with which he was seized immediately on his arrival in that place, was universally ascribed by her enemies to a dose of poison, which, it was pretended, she had administered to him.

* Melvil, , 77.

* * Keith, -348.

* * * Camden, . Goodall's Queen Mary, vol. ii. .

While affairs were in this situation, all those who wished well to her character, or to public tranquillity, were extremely pleased, and somewhat surprised, to hear that a friendship was again conciliated between them, that she had taken a journey to Glasgow on purpose to visit him during his sickness, that she behaved towards him with great tenderness, that she had brought him along with her, and that she appeared thenceforth determined to live with him on a footing more suitable to the connections between them. Henry, naturally uxorious, and not distrusting this sudden reconciliation, put himself implicitly into her hands, and attended her to Edinburgh. She lived in the palace of Holyrood House; but as the situation of the palace was low, and the concourse of people about the court was necessarily attended with noise, which might disturb him in his present infirm state of health, these reasons were assigned for fitting up an apartment for him in a solitary house at some distance, called the Kirk of Field. Mary here gave him marks of kindness and attachment; she conversed cordially with him; and she lay some nights in a room below his; but on the ninth of February, she told him that she would pass that night in the palace, because the marriage of one of her servants was there to be celebrated in her presence. About two o'clock in the morning, the whole town was much alarmed at hearing a great noise; and was still more astonished, when it was discovered that the noise came from the king's house, which was blown up by gunpowder; that his dead body was found at some distance in a neighboring field; and that no marks, either of fire, contusion, or violence appeared upon it. [1]

No doubt could be entertained but Henry was murdered; and general conjecture soon pointed towards the earl of Bothwell as the author of the crime. [2] But as his favor with Mary was visible, and his power great, no one ventured to declare openly his sentiments; and all men remained in silence and mute astonishment. Voices, however, were heard in the streets, during the darkness of the night, proclaiming Bothwell, and even Mary herself, to be murderers of the king; bills were secretly affixed on the walls to the same purpose; offers were made, that, upon giving proper securities, his guilt should be openly proved; but after one proclamation from the court, offering a reward and indemnity to any one that would discover the author of that villany, greater vigilance was employed in searching out the spreaders of the libels and reports against Bothwell and the queen, than in tracing the contrivers of the king's assassination, or detecting the regicides. [3]

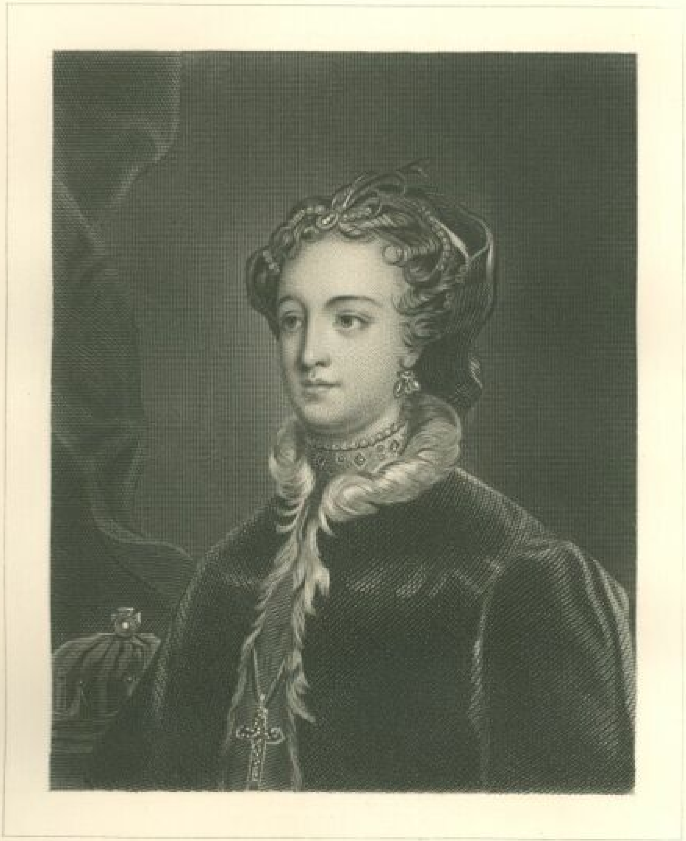
The earl of Lenox, who lived at a distance from court in poverty and contempt, was roused by the report of his son's murder, and wrote to the queen, imploring speedy justice against the assassins; among whom he named the earl of Bothwell, Sir James Balfour, and Gilbert Balfour his brother, David Chalmers, and four others of the queen’s household; all of them persons who had been mentioned in the bills affixed to the walls at Edinburgh. [4]

* It was imagined that Henry had been strangled before the house was blown up. But this supposition is contradicted by the confession of the criminals; and there is no necessity to admit it in order to account for the condition of his body. There are many instances that men’s lives have been saved who had been blown up in ships. Had Henry fallen on water, he had not probably been killed.

* * Melvil, . Cabbala, .

* * * Anderson’s Collections, vol. ii. ; vol. iv. , 168. Spotswood, . Keith, .

* * * * Keith, . Anderson, vol. ii. .



MARY STUART.

Mary took his demand of speedy justice in a very literal sense, and allowing only fifteen days for the examination of this important affair, she sent a citation to Lenox, requiring him to appear in court, and prove his charge against Bothwell. [1] This nobleman, meanwhile, and all the other persons accused by Lenox, enjoyed their full liberty; [2] Bothwell himself was continually surrounded with armed men; [3] took his place in council; [4] lived during some time in the house with Mary; and seemed to possess all his wonted confidence and familiarity with her. Even the Castle of Edinburgh, a place of great consequence in this critical time, was intrusted to him, and under him, to his creature, Sir James Balfour, who had himself been publicly charged as an accomplice in the king's murder.[v*] Lenox, who had come as far as Stirling with a view of appearing at the trial, was informed of all these circumstances; and reflecting on the small train which attended him, he began to entertain very just apprehensions from the power, insolence, and temerity of his enemy. He wrote to Mary, desiring that the day of trial might be prorogued; and conjured her, by all the regard which she bore to her own honor, to employ more leisure and deliberation in determining a question of such extreme moment.[v* *] No regard was paid to his application: the jury was enclosed, of which the earl of Caithness was chancellor; and though Lenox, foreseeing this precipitation, had ordered Cunningham, one of his retinue, to appear in court, and protest in his name against the acquittal of the criminal, the jury proceeded to a verdict.[v* * *] The verdict was such as it behoved them to give, where neither accuser nor witness appeared; and Bothwell was absolved from the king's murder. The jury, however, apprehensive that their verdict would give great scandal, and perhaps expose them afterwards to some danger, entered a protest, in which they represented the necessity of their proceedings.[v* * * *]

* Keith, .

* * Keith, , 375.

* * * Keith, .

* * * * Anderson, vol. i. , 40, 50, 52.

v Anderson, vol. ii. .
v* Spotswood, .
v* * Keith, . Anderson, vol. i. .
v* * * Keith, . Anderson, vol. ii. . Spotswood, p. 201.
v* * * * Spotswood, . Anderson, vol. i .

It is remarkable, that the indictment was laid against Bothwell for committing the crime on the ninth of February, not the tenth, the real day on which Henry was assassinated. [1] The interpretation generally put upon this error, too gross, it was thought, to have proceeded from mistake, was, that the secret council by whom Mary was governed, not trusting entirely to precipitation, violence, and authority, had provided this plea, by which they insured, at all adventures, a plausible pretence for acquitting Bothwell.

Two days after this extraordinary transaction, a parliament was held; and though the verdict in favor of Bothwell was attended with such circumstances as strongly confirmed, rather than diminished, the general opinion of his guilt, he was the person chosen to carry the royal sceptre on the first meeting of that national assembly. [2] In this parliament a rigorous act was made against those who set up defamatory bills; but no notice was taken of the king's murder. [3] The favor which Mary openly bore to Bothwell kept every one in awe; and the effects of this terror appeared more plainly in another transaction, which ensued immediately upon the dissolution of the parliament. A bond or association was framed; in which the subscribers, after relating the acquittal of Bothwell by a legal trial, and mentioning a further offer which he had made, to prove his innocence by single combat, oblige themselves, in case any person should afterwards impute to him the king's murder, to defend him with their whole power against such calumniators. After this promise, which implied no great assurance in Bothwell of his own innocence, the subscribers mentioned the necessity of their queen's marriage, in order to support the government; and they recommended Bothwell to her as a husband. [4] This paper was subscribed by all the considerable nobility there present. In a country divided by violent factions, such a concurrence in favor of one nobleman, nowise distinguished above the rest, except by his flagitious conduct, could never have been obtained, had not every one been certain, at least firmly persuaded, that Mary was fully determined on this measure. Nor would such a motive have sufficed to influence men, commonly so stubborn and untractable, had they not been taken by surprise, been ignorant of each other's sentiments, and overawed by the present power of the court, and by the apprehensions of further violence from persons so little governed by any principles of honor and humanity. Even with all these circumstances, the subscription to this paper may justly be regarded as a reproach to the nation.

* Keith, . Anderson, vol. ii. . Spotswood, p. 201.

* * Keith, . Crawford, .

* * * Keith, .

* * * * Keith, .

v See note I, at the end of the volume.

The subsequent measures of Bothwell were equally precipitate and audacious. Mary having gone to Stirling to pay a visit to her son, he assembled a body of eight hundred horse, on pretence of pursuing some robbers on the borders; and having waylaid her on her return, he seized her person near Edinburgh, and carried her to Dunbar, with an avowed design of forcing her to yield to his purpose. Sir James Melvil, one of her retinue, was carried along with her, and says not that he saw any signs of reluctance or constraint; he was even informed, as he tells us, by Bothwell's officers, that the whole transaction was managed in concert with her. [1] A woman, indeed, of that spirit and resolution which is acknowledged to belong to Mary, does not usually, on these occasions, give such marks of opposition to real violence as can appear any wise doubtful or ambiguous. Some of the nobility, however, in order to put matters to further trial, sent her a private message, in which they told her, that if in reality she lay under force, they would use all their efforts to rescue her. Her answer was, that she had indeed been carried to Dunbar by violence, but ever since her arrival had been so well treated that she willingly remained with Bothwell. [2] No one gave himself thenceforth any concern to relieve her from a captivity which was believed to proceed entirely from her own approbation and connivance.

This unusual conduct was at first ascribed to Mary's sense of the infamy attending her purposed marriage, and her desire of finding some color to gloss over the irregularity of her conduct. But a pardon, given to Bothwell a few days after, made the public carry their conjectures somewhat further. In this deed, Bothwell received a pardon for the violence committed on the queen's person, and for "all other crimes;" a clause by which the murder of the king was indirectly forgiven. The rape was then conjectured to have been only a contrivance, in order to afford a pretence for indirectly remitting a crime, of which it would have appeared scandalous to make openly any mention. [3]

* Melvil, .

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. .

These events passed with such rapidity, that men had no leisure to admire sufficiently one incident, when they were surprised with a new one equally rare and uncommon. There still, however, remained one difficulty which it was not easy to foresee how the queen and Bothwell, determined as they were to execute their shameful purpose, could find expedients to overcome. The man who had procured the subscription of the nobility, recommending him as a husband to the queen, and who had acted this seeming violence on her person, in order to force her consent, had been married two years before to another woman; to a woman of merit, of a noble family, sister to the earl of Huntley. But persons blinded by passion, and infatuated with crime, soon shake off all appearance of decency. A suit was commenced for a divorce between Bothwell and his wife; and this suit was opened at the same instant in two different, or rather opposite courts; in the court of the archbishop of St. Andrew's, which was Popish, and governed itself by the canon law; and in the new consistorial or commissariot court, which was Protestant, and was regulated by the principles of the reformed teachers. The plea advanced in each court was so calculated as to suit the principles which there prevailed; in the archbishop's court, the pretence of consanguinity was employed, because Bothwell was related to his wife in the fourth degree; in the commissariot court, the accusation of adultery was made use of against him. The parties, too, who applied for the divorce, were different in the different courts: Bothwell was the person who sued in the former; his wife in the latter. And the suit in both courts was opened, pleaded, examined, and decided, with the utmost precipitation; and a sentence of divorce was pronounced in four days. [1]

* Anderson, vol. ii. .

The divorce being thus obtained, it was thought proper that Mary should be conducted to Edinburgh, and should there appear before the courts of judicature, and should acknowledge herself restored to entire freedom. This was understood to be contrived in a view of obviating all doubts with regard to the validity of her marriage. Orders were then given to publish in the church the banns between the queen and the duke of Orkney; for that was the title which he now bore; and Craig, a minister of Edinburgh, was applied to for that purpose. This clergyman, not content with having refused compliance, publicly in his sermons condemned the marriage, and exhorted all who had access to the queen, to give her their advice against so scandalous an alliance. Being called before the council to answer for this liberty, he showed a courage which might cover all the nobles with shame, on account of their tameness and servility. He said that, by the rules of the church, the earl of Bothwell, being convicted of adultery, could not be permitted to marry; that the divorce between him and his former wife was plainly procured by collusion, as appeared by the precipitation of the sentence, and the sudden conclusion of his marriage with the queen; and that all the suspicions which prevailed with regard to the king's murder, and the queen's concurrence in the former rape, would thence receive undoubted confirmation. He therefore exhorted Bothwell, who was present, no longer to persevere in his present criminal enterprises; and turning his discourse to the other counsellors, he charged them to employ all their influence with the queen, in order to divert her from a measure which would load her with eternal infamy and dishonor. Not satisfied even with this admonition, he took the first opportunity of informing the public, from the pulpit, of the whole transaction; and expressed to them his fears that, notwithstanding all remonstrances, their sovereign was still obstinately bent on her fatal purpose. "For himself," he said, "he had already discharged his conscience; and yet again would take heaven and earth to witness that he abhorred and detested that marriage as scandalous and hateful in the sight of mankind; but since the great, as he perceived, either by their flattery or silence, gave countenance to the measure, he besought the faithful to pray fervently to the Almighty that a resolution, taken contrary to all law, reason, and good conscience, might, by the divine blessing, be turned to the comfort and benefit of the church and kingdom." These speeches offended the court extremely; and Craig was anew summoned before the council, to answer for his temerity in thus passing the bounds of his commission. But he told them, that the bounds of his commission were the word of God, good laws, and natural reason; and were the Queen's marriage tried by any of these standards, it would appear infamous and dishonorable, and would so be esteemed by the whole world. The council were so overawed by this heroic behavior in a private clergyman, that they dismissed him without further censure or punishment. [1]

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* Spotswood, . Anderson, vol. ii. .

But though this transaction might have recalled Bothwell and the queen of Scots from their infatuation, and might have instructed them in the dispositions of the people, as well as in their own inability to oppose them, they were still resolute to rush forward to their own manifest destruction. The marriage was solemnized by the bishop of Orkney, a Protestant, who was afterwards deposed by the church for this scandalous compliance. Few of the nobility appeared at the ceremony: they had most of them, either from shame or fear, retired to their own houses. The French ambassador, Le Croc, an aged gentleman of honor and character, could not be prevailed on, though a dependent of the house of Guise, to countenance the marriage by his presence. [1] Elizabeth remonstrated, by friendly letters and messages, against the marriage. [2] The court of France made like opposition; but Mary, though on all other occasions she was extremely obsequious to the advice of her relations in that country, was here determined to pay no regard to their opinion.

The news of these transactions, being carried to foreign countries, filled Europe with amazement, and threw infamy, not only on the principal actors in them, but also on the whole nation, who seemed, by their submission and silence, and even by their declared approbation, to give their sanction to these scandalous practices. [3] The Scots who resided abroad met with such reproaches, that they durst nowhere appear in public; and they earnestly exhorted their countrymen at home to free them from the public odium, by bringing to condign punishment the authors of such atrocious crimes. This intelligence, with a little more leisure for reflection, roused men from their lethargy; and the rumors which, from the very beginning, [4] had been spread against Mary, as if she had concurred in the king’s murder, seemed now, by the subsequent transactions, to have received a strong confirmation and authority.

* Spotswood, . Melvil, .

* * Keith, .

* * * Digges, .

* * * * Melvil, . Keith, . Anderson, voL i. , 134, Crawford, . Keith, Pref. .

It was every where said, that even though no particular and direct proofs had as yet been produced of the queen’s guilt, the whole tenor of her late conduct was sufficient, not only to beget suspicion, but to produce entire conviction against her: that her sudden resolution of being reconciled to her husband, whom before she had long and justly hated; her bringing him to court, from which she had banished him by neglects and rigors; her fitting up separate apartments for him; were all of them circumstances which, though trivial in themselves, yet, being compared with the subsequent events, bore a very unfavorable aspect for her: that the least which, after the king’s murder, might have been expected in her situation, was a more than usual caution in her measures, and an extreme anxiety to punish the real assassins, in order to free herself from all reproach and suspicion: that no woman who had any regard to her character, would allow a man, publicly accused of her husband’s murder, so much as to approach her presence, far less give him a share in her councils, and endow him with favor and authority that an acquittal, merely in the absence of accusers, was very ill fitted to satisfy the public; especially if that absence proceeded from a designed precipitation of the sentence, and from the terror which her known friendship for the criminal had infused into every one: that the very mention of her marriage to such a person, in such circumstances, was horrible; and the contrivances of extorting a consent from the nobility, and of concerting a rape, were gross artifices, more proper to discover her guilt than prove her innocence: that where a woman thus shows a consciousness of merited reproach, and instead of correcting, provides only thin glosses to cover her exceptionable conduct, she betrays a neglect of fame, which must either be the effect or the cause of the most shameful enormities: that to espouse a man who had, a few days before, been so scandalously divorced from his wife, who, to say the least, was believed to have a few months before assassinated her husband, was so contrary to the plainest rules of behavior, that no pretence of indiscretion or imprudence could account for such a conduct: that a woman who, so soon after her husband’s death, though not attended with any extraordinary circumstances, contracts a marriage which might in itself be the most blameless, cannot escape severe censure; but one who overlooks for her pleasure so many other weighty considerations, was equally capable, in gratifying her appetites, to neglect every regard to honor and humanity: that Mary was not ignorant of the prevailing opinion of the public with regard to her own guilt, and of the inferences which would every where be drawn from her conduct; and therefore, if she still continued to pursue measures which gave such just offence, she ratified by her actions, as much as she could by the most formal confession, all the surmises and imputations of her enemies: that a prince was here murdered in the face of the world; Bothwell alone was suspected and accused; if he were innocent, nothing could absolve him, either in Mary's eyes or those of the public, but the detection and conviction of the real assassin: yet no inquiry was made to that purpose, though a parliament had been assembled; the sovereign and wife was here plainly silent from guilt, the people from terror: that the only circumstance which opposed all these presumptions, or rather proofs, was the benignity and goodness of her preceding behavior, which seemed to remove her from all suspicions of such atrocious inhumanity; but that the characters of men were extremely variable, and persons guilty of the worst actions were not always naturally of the worst and most criminal dispositions; that a woman who, in a critical and dangerous moment, had sacrificed her honor to a man of abandoned principles, might thenceforth be led blindfold by him to the commission of the most enormous crimes, and was in reality no longer at her own disposal: and that, though one supposition was still left to alleviate her blame; namely, that Bothwell, presuming on her affection towards him, had of himself committed the crime, and had never communicated it to her; yet such a sudden and passionate love to a man whom she had long known, could not easily be accounted for, without supposing some degree of preceding guilt; and as it appeared that she was not afterwards restrained, either by shame or prudence, from incurring the highest reproach and danger, it was not likely that a sense of duty or humanity would have a more powerful influence over her.

These were the sentiments which prevailed throughout Scotland: and as the Protestant teachers, who had great authority, had long borne an animosity to Mary, the opinion of her guilt was by that means the more widely diffused, and made the deeper impression on the people. Some attempts made by Bothwell, and, as is pretended, with her consent, to get the young prince into his power, excited the most serious attention; and the principal nobility, even many of those who had formerly been constrained to sign the application in favor of Bothwells marriage, met at Stirling, and formed an association for protecting the prince, and punishing the king’s murderers. [1]

* Keith, .

The earl of Athole himself, a known Catholic, was the first author of this confederacy, the earls of Argyle, Morton, Marre, Glencairne, the lords Boyd, Lindesey, Hume, Semple, Kirkaldy of Grange, Tulibardine, and Secretary Lidington, entered zealously into it. The earl of Murray, foreseeing such turbulent times, and being desirous to keep free of these dangerous factions, had some time before desired and obtained Mary’s permission to retire into France.

Lord Hume was first in arms; and leading a body of eight hundred horse, suddenly environed the queen of Scots and Bothwell, in the Castle of Borthwick. They found means of making their escape to Dunbar; while the confederate lords were assembling their troops at Edinburgh, and taking measures to effect their purpose. Had Bothwell been so prudent as to keep within the fortress of Dunbar, his enemies must have dispersed for want of pay and subsistence; but hearing that the associated lords were fallen into distress, he was so rash as to take the field, and advance towards them. The armies met at Carberry Hill, about six miles from Edinburgh; and Mary soon became sensible that her own troops disapproved of her cause, and were averse to spill their blood in the quarrel. [1] After some bravadoes of Bothwell, where he discovered very little courage, she saw no resource but that of holding a conference with Kirkaldy of Grange, and of putting herself, upon some general promises, into the hands of the confederates. She was conducted to Edinburgh, amidst the insults of the populace; who reproached her with her crimes, and even held before her eyes, which way soever she turned, a banner, on which were painted the murder of her husband and the distress of her infant son. [2] Mary, overwhelmed with her calamities, had recourse to tears and lamentations. Meanwhile Bothwell, during her conference with Grange, fled unattended to Dunbar; and fitting out a few small ships, set sail for the Orkneys, where he subsisted during some time by piracy. He was pursued thither by Grange, and his ship was taken, with several of his servants; who afterwards discovered all the circumstances of the king’s murder, and were punished for the crime. [3] Bothwell himself escaped in a boat, and found means to get a passage to Denmark, where he was thrown into prison, lost his senses, and died miserably about ten years after; an end worthy of his flagitious conduct and behavior.

* Keith, . Spotswood, .

* * Melvil, , 84.

* * * Anderson, vol. ii. , 166, etc.

The queen of Scots, now in the hands of an enraged faction met with such treatment as a sovereign may naturally expect from subjects, who have their future security to provide for, as well as their present animosity to gratify. It is pretended that she behaved with a spirit very little suitable to her condition, avowed her inviolable attachment to Bothwell, [1] and even wrote him a letter, which the lords intercepted, wherein she declared, that she would endure any extremity, nay, resign her dignity and crown itself, rather than relinquish his affections. [2] The malecontents, finding the danger to which they were exposed in case Mary should finally prevail, thought themselves obliged to proceed with rigor against her; and they sent her next day under a guard to the Castle of Lochlevin, situated in a lake of that name. The mistress of the house was mother to the earl of Murray; and as she pretended to have been lawfully married to the late king of Scots, she naturally bore an animosity to Mary, and treated her with the utmost harshness and severity.

* Keith, .

* * Melvil, .

Elizabeth, who was fully informed of all those incidents, seemed touched with compassion towards the unfortunate queen; and all her fears and jealousies being now laid asleep, by the consideration of that ruin and infamy in which Mary's conduct had involved her, she began to reflect on the instability of human affairs, the precarious state of royal grandeur, the danger of encouraging rebellious subjects; and she resolved to employ her authority for alleviating the calamities of her unhappy kinswoman. She sent Sir Nicholas Throgmorton ambassador to Scotland, in order to remonstrate both with Mary and the associated lords; and she gave him instructions, which, though mixed with some lofty pretensions, were full of that good sense which was so natural to her, and of that generosity which the present interesting conjuncture had called forth. She empowered him to declare [1] in her name to Mary, that the late conduct of that princess, so enormous, and in every respect so unjustifiable, had given her the highest offence; and though she felt the movements of pity towards her, she had once determined never to interpose in her affairs, either by advice or assistance, but to abandon her entirely, as a person whose condition was totally desperate, and honor irretrievable.

* The reality of this letter appears somewhat disputable; chiefly because Murray and his associates never mentioned it in their accusation of her before Queen Elizabeth's commissioners.

That she was well assured that other foreign princes, Mary's near relations, had embraced the same resolution; but, for her part, the late events had touched her heart with more tender sympathy, and had made her adopt measures more favorable to the liberty and interests of the unhappy queen: that she was determined not to see her oppressed by her rebellious subjects, but would employ all her good offices, and even her power, to redeem her from captivity, and place her in such a condition as would at once be compatible with her dignity and the safety of her subjects: that she conjured her to lay aside all thoughts of revenge, except against the murderers of her husband; and as she herself was his near relation, she was better entitled than the subjects of Mary to interpose her authority on that head; and she therefore besought that princess, if she had any regard to her own honor and safety, not to oppose so just and reasonable a demand: that after those two points were provided for, her own liberty and the punishment of her husband's assassins, the safety of her infant son was next to be considered; and there seemed no expedient more proper for that purpose, than sending him to be educated in England: and that, besides the security which would attend his removal from a scene of faction and convulsions, there were many other beneficial consequences, which it was easy to foresee as the result of his education in that country. [1]

* Keith, , 412, etc

The remonstrances which Throgmorton was instructed to make to the associated lords, were entirely conformable to these sentiments which

Elizabeth entertained in Mary's favor. She empowered him to tell them, that whatever blame she might throw on Mary's conduct, any opposition to their sovereign was totally unjustifiable, and incompatible with all order and good government: that it belonged not to them to reform, much less to punish, the maleadministration of their prince; and the only arms which subjects could in any case lawfully employ against the supreme authority, were entreaties, counsels, and representations: that if these expedients failed, they were next to appeal by their prayers to Heaven, and to wait with patience till the Almighty, in whose hands are the hearts of princes, should be pleased to turn them to justice and to mercy. That she inculcated not this doctrine because she herself was interested in its observance, but because it was universally received in all well-governed states, and was essential to the preservation of civil society: that she required them to restore their queen to liberty; and promised, in that case, to concur with them in all proper expedients for regulating the government, for punishing the king's murderers, and for guarding the life and liberty of the infant prince: and that, if the services which she had lately rendered the Scottish nation, in protecting them from foreign usurpation, were duly considered by them, they would repose confidence in her good offices, and would esteem themselves blameworthy in having hitherto made no application to her. [1]

Elizabeth, besides these remonstrances, sent by Throgmorton some articles of accommodation, which he was to propose to both parties, as expedients for the settlement of public affairs; and though these articles contained some important restraints on the sovereign power, they were in the main calculated for Mary's advantage, and were sufficiently indulgent to her. [2] The associated lords, who determined to proceed with greater severity, were apprehensive of Elizabeth's partiality; and being sensible that Mary would take courage from the protection of that powerful princess, [3] they thought proper, after several affected delays, to refuse the English ambassador all access to her. There were four different schemes proposed in Scotland for the treatment of the captive queen: one, that she should be restored to her authority under very strict limitations: the second, that she should be obliged to resign her crown to the prince, be banished the kingdom, and be confined either to France or England; with assurances from the sovereign in whose dominions she should reside, that she should make no attempts to the disturbance of the established government: the third, that she should be publicly tried for her crimes, of which her enemies pretended to have undoubted proof, and be sentenced to perpetual imprisonment: the fourth was still more severe, and required that, after her trial and condemnation, capital punishment should be inflicted upon her. [4] Throgmorton supported the mildest proposal; but though he promised his mistress's guaranty for the performance of articles, threatened the ruling party with immediate vengeance in case of refusal, and warned them not to draw on themselves, by their violence, the public reproach which now lay upon their queen, he found that, excepting Secretary Lidington, he had not the good fortune to convince any of the leaders.

* Keith, , 415, 429.

* * Keith, .

* * * Keith, .

* * * * Keith, .

v Keith, .

All counsels seemed to tend towards the more severe expedients; and the preachers, in particular, drawing their examples from the rigorous maxims of the Old Testament, which can only be warranted by particular revelations, inflamed the minds of the people against their unhappy sovereign. [1]

There were several pretenders to the regency of the young prince after the intended deposition of Mary. The earl of Lenox claimed that authority as grandfather to the prince: the duke of Chatelrault, who was absent in France, had pretensions as next heir to the crown: but the greatest number of the associated lords inclined to the earl of Murray, in whose capacity they had entire trust, and who possessed the confidence of the preachers and more zealous reformers. All measures being therefore concerted, three instruments were sent to Mary, by the hands of Lord Lindesey and Sir Robert Melvil; by one of which she was to resign the crown in favor of her son, by another to appoint Murray regent, by the third to name a council, which should administer the government till his arrival in Scotland. The queen of Scots, seeing no prospect of relief, lying justly under apprehensions for her life, and believing that no deed which she executed during her captivity could be valid, was prevailed on, after a plentiful effusion of tears, to sign these three instruments; and she took not the trouble of inspecting any one of them. [2] In consequence of this forced resignation, the young prince was proclaimed king, by the name of James VI. He was soon after crowned at Stirling, and the earl of Morton took in his name the coronation oath; in which a promise to extirpate heresy was not forgotten. Some republican pretensions, in favor of the people's power, were countenanced in this ceremony; [3] and a coin was soon after struck, on which the famous saying of Trajan was inscribed, Pro me; si merear, in me; "For me; if I deserve it, against me." [4] Throgmorton had orders from his mistress not to assist at the coronation of the king of Scots.

* Keith, , 426.

* * Melvil, . Spotswood, . Anderson, vol. iii. p. 19.

* * * Keith, , 440.

* * * * Keith, . Append, .

v Keith,

The council of regency had not long occasion to exercise their authority. The earl of Murray arrived from France, and took possession of his high office. He paid a visit to the captive queen, and spoke to her in a manner which better suited her past conduct than her present condition. This harsh treatment quite extinguished in her breast any remains of affection towards him. [1] Murray proceeded afterwards to break, in a more public manner, all terms of decency with her. He summoned a parliament; and that assembly, after voting that she was undoubtedly an accomplice in her husband's murder, condemned her to imprisonment, ratified her demission of the crown, and acknowledged her son for king, and Murray for regent. [2] The regent, a man of vigor and abilities, employed himself successfully in reducing the kingdom. He bribed Sir James Balfour to surrender the Castle of Edinburgh: he constrained the garrison of Dunbar to open their gates; and he demolished that fortress.

But though every thing thus bore a favorable aspect to the new government, and all men seemed to acquiesce in Murray’s authority, a violent revolution, however necessary, can never be effected without great discontents; and it was not likely that, in a country where the government, in its most settled state, possessed a very disjointed authority, a new establishment should meet with no interruption or disturbance. Few considerable men of the nation seemed willing to support Mary, so long as Bothwell was present; but the removal of that obnoxious nobleman had altered the sentiments of many. The duke of Chatelrault, being disappointed of the regency, bore no good will to Murray; and the same sentiments were embraced by all his numerous retainers. Several of the nobility, finding that others had taken the lead among the associators, formed a faction apart, and opposed the prevailing power; and besides their being moved by some remains of duty and affection towards Mary, the malecontent lords, observing every thing carried to extremity against her, were naturally led to embrace her cause, and shelter themselves under her authority. All who retained any propensity to the Catholic religion were induced to join this party; and even the people in general, though they had formerly either detested Mary’s crimes or blamed her imprudence, were now inclined to compassionate her present situation, and lamented that a person possessed of so many amiable accomplishments, joined to such high dignity, should be treated with such extreme severity. [3]

* Melvil, . Keith, .

* * Anderson, vol. ii. , et seq.

* * * Buchanan, lib. xviii. c. 53.

Animated by all these motives, many of the principal nobility now adherents to the queen of Scots, met at Hamilton, and concerted measures for supporting the cause of that princess.

1568.

While these humors were in fermentation, Mary was employed in contrivances for effecting her escape; and she engaged, by her charms and caresses, a young gentleman, George Douglas, brother to the laird of Lochlevin, to assist her in that enterprise. She even went so far as to give him hopes of espousing her, after her marriage with Bothwell should be dissolved on the plea of force; and she proposed this expedient to the regent, who rejected it. Douglas, however, persevered in his endeavors to free her from captivity; and having all opportunities of access to the house, he was at last successful in the undertaking. He conveyed her in disguise into a small boat, and himself rowed her ashore. She hastened to Hamilton; and the news of her arrival in that place being immediately spread abroad, many of the nobility flocked to her with their forces. A bond of association for her defence was signed by the earls of Argyle, Huntley, Eglington, Crawford, Cassilis, Rothes, Montrose, Sutherland, Erroi, nine bishops, and nine barons, besides many of the most considerable gentry. [1] And in a few days, an army, to the number of six thousand men, was assembled under her standard.

Elizabeth was no sooner informed of Mary’s escape, than she discovered her resolution of persevering in the same generous and friendly measures which she had hitherto pursued. If she had not employed force against the regent during the imprisonment of that princess, she had been chiefly withheld by the fear of pushing him to greater extremities against her; [2] but she had proposed to the court of France an expedient, which, though less violent, would have been no less effectual for her service: she desired that France and England should by concert cut off all commerce with the Scots, till they should do justice to their injured sovereign. [3]

She now despatched Leighton into Scotland to offer both her good offices, and the assistance of her forces, to Mary; but as she apprehended the entrance of French troops into the kingdom, she desired that the controversy between the queen of Scots and her subjects might by that princess be referred entirely to her arbitration, and that no foreign succors should be introduced into Scotland. [1]

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* Keith, .

* * Keith, . Cabala, .

* * * Keith, .

But Elizabeth had not leisure to exert fully her efforts in favor of Mary. The regent made haste to assemble forces; and notwithstanding that his army was inferior in number to that of the queen of Scots, he took the field against her. A battle was fought at Langside, near Glasgow, which was entirely decisive in favor of the regent; and though Murray, after his victory, stopped the bloodshed, yet was the action followed by a total dispersion of the queen's party. That unhappy princess fled southwards from the field of battle with great precipitation, and came with a few attendants to the borders of England. She here deliberated concerning her next measures, which would probably prove so important to her future happiness or misery. She found it impossible to remain in her own kingdom: she had an aversion, in her present wretched condition, to return into France, where she had formerly appeared with so much splendor; and she was not, besides, provided with a vessel which could safely convey her thither: the late generous behavior of Elizabeth made her hope for protection, and even assistance, from that quarter; [2] and as the present fears from her domestic enemies were the most urgent, she overlooked all other considerations, and embraced the resolution of taking shelter in England. She embarked on board a fishing-boat in Galloway, and landed the same day at Workington, in Cumberland, about thirty miles from Carlisle, whence she immediately despatched a messenger to London, notifying her arrival, desiring leave to visit Elizabeth, and craving her protection, in consequence of former professions of friendship made her by that princess.

Elizabeth now found herself in a situation when it was become necessary to take some decisive resolution with regard to her treatment of the queen of Scots; and as she had hitherto, contrary to the opinion of Cecil, attended more to the motives of generosity than of policy, [3] she was engaged by that prudent minister to weigh anew all the considerations which occurred in this critical conjuncture.

* Keith, , in the notes. Anderson, vol. iv. p, 26.

* * Jebb's Collection, vol. i. .

* * * Cabala, .

He represented, that the party which had dethroned Mary, and had at present assumed the government of Scotland, were always attached to the English alliance, and were engaged, by all the motives of religion and of interest, to persevere in their connection with Elizabeth: that though Murray and his friends might complain of some unkind usage during their banishment in England, they would easily forget these grounds of quarrel, when they reflected, that Elizabeth was the only ally on whom they could safely rely, and that their own queen, by her attachment to the Catholic faith, and by her other connections, excluded them entirely from the friendship of France, and even from that of Spain: that Mary, on the other hand, even before her violent breach with her Protestant subjects, was in secret entirely governed by the counsels of the house of Guise, much more would she implicitly comply with their views, when, by her own ill conduct, the power of that family and of the zealous Catholics was become her sole resource and security: that her pretensions to the English crown would render her a dangerous instrument in their hands; and, were she once able to suppress the Protestants in her own kingdom, she would unite the Scottish and English Catholics, with those of all foreign states, in a confederacy against the religion and government of England; that it behoved Elizabeth, therefore, to proceed with caution in the design of restoring her rival to the throne; and to take care, both that this enterprise, if undertaken, should be effected by English forces alone, and that full securities should beforehand be provided for the reformers and the reformation in Scotland: that, above all, it was necessary to guard carefully the person of that princess; lest, finding this unexpected reserve in the English friendship, she should suddenly take the resolution of flying into France, and should attempt by foreign force to recover possession of her authority: that her desperate fortunes and broken reputation fitted her for any attempt; and her resentment, when she should find herself thus deserted by the queen, would concur with her ambition and her bigotry, and render her an unrelenting, as well as powerful enemy to the English government: that if she were once abroad, in the hands of enterprising Catholics, the attack on England would appear to her as easy as that on Scotland; and the only method, she must imagine of recovering her native kingdom, would be to acquire that crown to which she would deem herself equally entitled: that a neutrality in such interesting situations, though it might be pretended, could never, without the most extreme danger, be upheld by the queen; and the detention of Mary was equally requisite whether the power of England were to be employed in her favor, or against her: that nothing, indeed, was more becoming a great prince than generosity; yet the suggestions of this noble principle could never, without imprudence, be consulted in such delicate circumstances as those in which the queen was at present placed; where her own safety and the interests of her people were intimately concerned in every resolution which she embraced: that though the example of successful rebellion, especially in a neighboring country, could nowise be agreeable to any sovereign, yet Mary's imprudence had been so great, perhaps her crimes so enormous, that the insurrection of subjects, after such provocation, could no longer be regarded as a precedent against other princes: that it was first necessary for Elizabeth to ascertain, in a regular and satisfactory manner, the extent of Mary's guilt, and thence to determine the degree of protection which she ought to afford her against her discontented subjects: that as no glory could surpass that of defending oppressed innocence, it was equally infamous to patronize vice and murder on the throne; and the contagion of such dishonor would extend itself to all who countenanced or supported it: and that if the crimes of the Scottish princess should, on inquiry, appear as great and certain as was affirmed and believed, every measure against her, which policy should dictate, would thence be justified; or if she should be found innocent, every enterprise which friendship should inspire would be acknowledged laudable and glorious.

Agreeably to these views, Elizabeth resolved to proceed in a seemingly generous, but really cautious manner with the queen of Scots; and she immediately sent orders to Lady Scrope, sister to the duke of Norfolk, a lady who lived in the neighborhood, to attend on that princess. Soon after, she despatched to her Lord Scrope himself, warden of the marches, and Sir Francis Knolles, vice-chamberlain. They found Mary already lodged in the Castle of Carlisle; and after expressing the queen's sympathy with her in her late misfortunes, they told her, that her request of being allowed to visit their sovereign, and of being admitted to her presence, could not at present be complied with: till she had cleared herself of her husband's murder, of which she was so strongly accused, Elizabeth could not without dishonor show her any countenance, or appear indifferent to the assassination of so near a kinsman. [1]

* Anderson, vol. iv. , 66, 82, 83, 86.

So unexpected a check threw Mary into tears: and the necessity of her situation extorted from her a declaration, that she would willingly justify herself to her sister from all imputations, and would submit her cause to the arbitration of so good a friend. [1] Two days after, she sent Lord Herreis to London with a letter to the same purpose.

This concession, which Mary could scarcely avoid without an acknowledgment of guilt, was the point expected and desired by Elizabeth: she immediately despatched Midlemore to the regent of Scotland; requiring him both to desist from the further prosecution of his queen's party, and to send some persons to London to justify his conduct with regard to her. Murray might justly be startled at receiving a message so violent and imperious; but as his domestic enemies were numerous and powerful, and England was the sole ally which he could expect among foreign nations, he was resolved rather to digest the affront, than provoke Elizabeth by a refusal. He also considered, that though that queen had hitherto appeared partial to Mary, many political motives evidently engaged her to support the king's cause in Scotland; and it was not to be doubted but so penetrating a princess would in the end discover this interest, and would at least afford him a patient and equitable hearing. He therefore replied, that he would himself take a journey to England, attended by other commissioners, and would willingly submit the determination of his cause to Elizabeth. [2]

Lord Herreis now perceived that his mistress had advanced too far in her concessions: he endeavored to maintain, that Mary could not, without diminution of her royal dignity, submit to a contest with her rebellious subjects before a foreign prince: and he required either present aid from England, or liberty for his queen to pass over into France. Being pressed, however, with the former agreement before the English council, he again renewed his consent; but in a few days he began anew to recoil; and it was with some difficulty that he was brought to acquiesce in the first determination. [3] These fluctuations, which were incessantly renewed, showed his visible reluctance to the measures pursued by the court of England.

* Anderson, vol. iv. , 55, 87.

* * Anderson, vol. iv. -16.

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. -20.

The queen of Scots discovered no less aversion to the trial proposed; and it required all the artifice and prudence of Elizabeth to make her persevere in the agreement to which she had at first consented. This latter princess still said to her, that she desired not without Mary’s consent and approbation to enter into the question, and pretended only as a friend to hear her justification: that she was confident there would be found no difficulty in refuting all the calumnies of her enemies; and even if her apology should fall short of full conviction, Elizabeth was determined to support her cause, and procure her some reasonable terms of accommodation; and that it was never meant, that she should be cited to a trial on the accusation of her rebellious subjects; but, on the contrary, that they should be summoned to appear, and to justify themselves for their conduct towards her. [1] Allured by these plausible professions, the queen of Scots agreed to vindicate herself by her own commissioners, before commissioners appointed by Elizabeth.

During these transactions, Lord Scrope and Sir Francis Knolles, who resided with Mary at Carlisle, had leisure to study her character, and to make report of it to Elizabeth. Unbroken by her misfortunes, resolute in her purpose, active in her enterprises, she aspired to nothing but victory; and was determined to endure any extremity, to undergo any difficulty, and to try every fortune, rather than abandon her cause, or yield the superiority to her enemies. Eloquent, insinuating, affable, she had already convinced all those who approached her, of the innocence of her past conduct; and as she declared her fixed purpose to require aid of her friends all over Europe, and even to have recourse to infidels and barbarians, rather than fail of vengeance against her persecutors, it was easy to foresee the danger to which her charms, her spirit, her address, if allowed to operate with their full force, would expose them. [2] The court of England, therefore, who, under pretence of guarding her, had already in effect detained her prisoner, were determined to watch her with still greater vigilance. As Carlisle, by its situation on the borders, afforded her great opportunities of contriving her escape, they removed her to Bolton, a seat of Lord Scrope’s in Yorkshire; and the issue of the controversy between her and the Scottish nation was regarded as a subject more momentous to Elizabeth's security and interests than it had hitherto been apprehended.

* Anderson, vol. iv. , 12, 13, 109, 110.

* * Anderson, vol. iv. , 71, 72, 74, 78, 92.

The Commissioners appointed by the English court for the examination of this great cause, were the duke of Norfolk, the earl of Sussex, and Sir Ralph Sadler; and York was named as the place of conference. Lesley, bishop of Ross, the lords Herreis, Levingstone, and Boyde, with three persons more, appeared as commissioners from the queen of Scots. The earl of Murray, regent, the earl of Morton, the bishop of Orkney, Lord Lindesey, and the abbot of Dunfermling were appointed commissioners from the king and kingdom of Scotland. Secretary Lidington, George Buchanan, the famous poet and historian, with some others, were named as their assistants.

It was a great circumstance in Elizabeth's glory, that she was thus chosen umpire between the factions of a neighboring kingdom, which had during many centuries entertained the most violent jealousy and animosity against England; and her felicity was equally rare, in having the fortunes and fame of so dangerous a rival, who had long given her the greatest inquietude, now entirely at her disposal. Some circumstances of her late conduct had discovered a bias towards the side of Mary: her prevailing interests led her to favor the enemies of that princess: the professions of impartiality which she had made were open and frequent; and she had so far succeeded, that each side accused her commissioners of partiality towards their adversaries. [1] She herself appears, by the instructions given them, to have fixed no plan for the decision; but she knew that the advantages which she should reap must be great, whatever issue the cause might take. If Mary's crimes could be ascertained by undoubted proof, she could forever blast the reputation of that princess, and might justifiably detain her forever a prisoner in England: if the evidence fell short of conviction, it was intended to restore her to the throne, but with such strict limitations, as would leave Elizabeth perpetual arbiter of all differences between the parties in Scotland, and render her in effect absolute mistress of the kingdom. [2]

* Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , 15, etc. Goodall, vol. ii .

Mary’s commissioners, before they gave in their complaint, against her enemies in Scotland, entered a protest, that their appearance in the cause should nowise affect the independence of her crown, or be construed as a mark of subordination to England: the English commissioners received this protest, but with a reserve to the claim of England. The complaint of that princess was next read, and contained a detail of the injuries which she had suffered since her marriage with Bothwell: that her subjects had taken arms against her, on pretence of freeing her from captivity; that when she put herself into their hands, they had committed her to close custody in Lochlevin; had placed her son, an infant, on her throne; had again taken arms against her after her deliverance from prison; had rejected all her proposals for accommodation, had given battle to her troops; and had obliged her, for the safety of her person, to take shelter in England. [1] The earl of Murray, in answer to this complaint, gave a summary and imperfect account of the late transactions: that the earl of Bothwell, the known murderer of the late king, had, a little after committing that crime, seized the person of the queen and led her to Dunbar; that he acquired such influence over her as to gain her consent to marry him, and he had accordingly procured a divorce from his former wife, and had pretended to celebrate his nuptials with the queen; that the scandal of this transaction, the dishonor which it brought on the nation, the danger to which the infant prince was exposed from the attempts of that audacious man, had obliged the nobility to take arms, and oppose his criminal enterprises; that after Mary, in order to save him, had thrown herself into their hands, she still discovered such a violent attachment to him, that they found it necessary, for their own and the public safety, to confine her person during a season, till Bothwell and the other murderers of her husband could be tried and punished for their crimes; and that during this confinement she had voluntarily, without compulsion or violence, merely from disgust at the inquietude and vexations attending power, resigned her crown to her only son, and had appointed the earl of Murray regent during the minority. [2]

* Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 128. Haynes, .

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , et seq. Goodall, vol. ii. .

The queen’s answer to this apology was obvious: that she did not know, and never could suspect, that Bothwell, who had been acquitted by a jury, and recommended to her by all the nobility for her husband, was the murderer of the king; that she ever was, and still continues desirous, that, if he be guilty, he may be brought to condign punishment; that her resignation of the crown was extorted from her by the well-grounded fears of her life, and even by direct menaces of violence; and that Throgmorton, the English ambassador, as well as others of her friends, had advised her to sign that paper, as the only means of saving herself from the last extremity, and had assured her, that a consent, given under these circumstances, could never have any validity. [1]

So far the queen of Scots seemed plainly to have the advantage in the contest; and the English commissioners might have been surprised that Murray had made so weak a defence, and had suppressed all the material imputations against that princess, on which his party had ever so strenuously insisted, had not some private conferences previously informed them of the secret. Mary’s commissioners had boasted that Elizabeth, from regard to her kinswoman, and from her desire of maintaining the rights of sovereigns, was determined, how criminal soever the conduct of that princess might appear, to restore her to the throne; [2] and Murray, reflecting on some past measures of the English court, began to apprehend that there were but too just grounds for these expectations. He believed that Mary, if he would agree to conceal the most violent part of the accusation against her, would submit to any reasonable terms of accommodation; but if he once proceeded so far as to charge her with the whole of her guilt, no composition could afterwards take place; and should she ever be restored, either by the power of Elizabeth or the assistance of her other friends, he and his party must be exposed to her severe and implacable vengeance. [3] He resolved, therefore, not to venture rashly on a measure which it would be impossible for him ever to recall; and he privately paid a visit to Norfolk and the other English commissioners, confessed his scruples, laid before them the evidence of the queen’s guilt, and desired to have some security for Elizabeth’s protection, in case that evidence should, upon examination, appear entirely satisfactory. Norfolk was not secretly displeased with these scruples of the regent. [4]

* Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , et seq. Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 127.

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , 48. Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * * * Crawford, . Melvil, , 95. Haynes, .

He had ever been a partisan of the queen of Scots. Secretary Lidington, who began also to incline to that party, and was a man of singular address and capacity, had engaged him to embrace further views in her favor, and even to think of espousing her: and though that duke confessed [1] that the proofs against Mary seemed to him unquestionable, he encouraged Murray in his present resolution, not to produce them publicly in the conferences before the English commissioners. [2]

Norfolk, however, was obliged to transmit to court the queries proposed by the regent. These queries consisted of four particulars: Whether the English commissioners had authority from their sovereign to pronounce sentence against Mary, in case her guilt should be fully proved before them? Whether they would promise to exercise that authority, and proceed to an actual sentence? Whether the queen of Scots, if she were found guilty, should be delivered into the hands of the regent, or, at least, be so secured in England, that she never should be able to disturb the tranquillity of Scotland? and, Whether Elizabeth would also, in that case, promise to acknowledge the young king, and protect the regent in his authority? [3]

Elizabeth, when these queries, with the other transactions, were laid before her, began to think that they pointed towards a conclusion more decisive and more advantageous than she had hitherto expected. She determined therefore to bring the matter into full light; and, under pretext that the distance from her person retarded the proceedings of her commissioners, she ordered them to come to London, and there continue the conferences. On their appearance, she immediately joined in commission with them some of the most considerable of her council; Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord keeper, the earls of Arundel and Leicester, Lord Clinton, admiral, and Sir William Cecil, secretary. [4] The queen of Scots, who knew nothing of these secret motives, and who expected that fear or decency would still restrain Murray from proceeding to any violent accusation against her, expressed an entire satisfaction in this adjournment; and declared that the affair, being under the immediate inspection of Elizabeth, was now in the hands where she most desired to rest it..

* Anderson, vol., iv. part ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , 77. State Trials, vol. i.

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 130.

* * * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. .

v Anderson, vol iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p 177, 179.

The conferences were accordingly continued at Hampton Court; and Mary's commissioners, as before, made no scruple to be present at them.

The queen, meanwhile, gave a satisfactory answer to all Murray's demands; and declared that, though she wished and hoped from the present inquiry to be entirely convinced of Mary's innocence, yet if the event should prove contrary, and if that princess should appear guilty of her husband's murder, she should, for her own part, deem her ever after unworthy of a throne. [1] The regent, encouraged by this declaration, opened more fully his charge against the queen of Scots; and after expressing his reluctance to proceed to that extremity, and protesting that nothing but the necessity of self-defence, which must not be abandoned for any delicacy, could have engaged him in such a measure, he proceeded to accuse her in plain terms of participation and consent in the assassination of the king. [2] The earl of Lenox too appeared before the English commissioners, and, imploring vengeance for the murder of his son, accused Mary as an accomplice with Bothwell in that enormity. [3]

When this charge was so unexpectedly given in, and copies of it were transmitted to the bishop of Ross, Lord Herreis, and the other commissioners of Mary, they absolutely refused to return an answer; and they grounded their silence on very extraordinary reasons: they had orders, they said, from their mistress, if any thing were advanced that might touch her honor, not to make any defence, as she was a sovereign princess, and could not be subject to any tribunal; and they required that she should previously be admitted to Elizabeth’s presence, to whom, and to whom alone, she was determined to justify her innocence. [4]

* Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , et seq. Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 208.

* * * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , et seq. Goodall, vol. ii. , 211, 217.

They forgot that the conferences were at first begun, and were still continued, with no other view than to clear her from the accusations of her enemies; that Elizabeth had ever pretended to enter into them only as her friend, by her own consent and approbation, not as assuming any jurisdiction over her; that this princess had from the beginning refused to admit her to her presence, till she should vindicate herself from the crimes imputed to her; that she had therefore discovered no new signs of partiality by her perseverance in that resolution; and that though she had granted an audience to the earl of Murray and his colleagues, she had previously conferred the same honor on Mary’s commissioners; [1] and her conduct was so far entirely equal to both parties. [2]

As the commissioners of the queen of Scots refused to give in any answer to Murray’s charge, the necessary consequence seemed to be, that there could be no further proceedings in the conference. But though this silence might be interpreted as a presumption against her, it did not fully answer the purpose of those English ministers who were enemies to that princess. They still desired to have in their hands the proofs of her guilt; and in order to draw them with decency from the regent, a judicious artifice was employed by Elizabeth. Murray was called before the English commissioners, and reproved by them, in the queen’s name, for the atrocious imputations which he had the temerity to throw upon his sovereign; but though the earl of Murray, they added, and the other commissioners, had so far forgotten the duty of allegiance to their prince, the queen never would overlook what she owed to her friend, her neighbor, and her kinswoman; and she therefore desired to know what they could say in their own justification. [3] Murray, thus urged, made no difficulty in producing the proofs of his charge against the queen of Scots; and among the rest, some love-letters and sonnets of hers to Bothwell, written all in her own hand, and two other papers, one written in her own hand, another subscribed by her, and written by the earl of Huntley; each of which contained a promise of marriage with Bothwell, made before the pretended trial and acquittal of that nobleman.

* Lesley's Negotiations in Anderson, vol. iii. . Haynes, .

* * See note K, at the end of the volume.

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 233.

All these important papers had been kept by Bothwell in a silver box or casket, which had been given him by Mary, and which had belonged to her first husband, Francis; and though the princess had enjoined him to burn the letters as soon as he had read them, he had thought proper carefully to preserve them, as pledges of her fidelity, and had committed them to the custody of Sir James Balfour, deputy governor of the Castle of Edinburgh. When that fortress was besieged by the associated lords, Bothwell sent a servant to receive the casket from the hands of the deputy governor. Balfour delivered it to the messenger; but as he had at that time received some disgust from Bothwell, and was secretly negotiating an agreement with the ruling party, he took care, by conveying private intelligence to the earl of Morton, to make the papers be intercepted by him, They contained incontestable proofs of Mary's criminal correspondence with Bothwell, of her consent to the king's murder, and of her concurrence in the violence which Bothwell pretended to commit upon her. [1] Murray fortified this evidence by some testimonies of corresponding facts; [2] and he added, some time after, the dying confession of one Hubert, or French Paris, as he was called, a servant of Bothwell's, who had been executed for the king's murder, and who directly charged the queen with her being accessory to that criminal enterprise. [3]

Mary's commissioners had used every expedient to ward this blow, which they saw coming upon them, and against which, it appears, they were not provided with any proper defence. As soon as Murray opened his charge, they endeavored to turn the conferences from an inquiry into a negotiation; and though informed by the English commissioners, that nothing could be more dishonorable for their mistress, than to enter into a treaty with such undutiful subjects, before she had justified herself from those enormous imputations which had been thrown upon her, they still insisted that Elizabeth should settle terms of accommodation between Mary and her enemies in Scotland. [4] They maintained, that till their mistress had given in her answer to Murray’s charge, his proofs could neither be called for nor produced: and finding that the English commissioners were still determined to proceed in the method which had been projected, they finally broke off the conferences, and never would make any reply.

* Anderson, vol. ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. ii. part ii. , etc. Goodall, vol. ii.

* * * Anderson, vol. ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , 139. Goodall, vol. ii.

v Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , 145. Goodall, vol. ii.

These papers, at least translations of them, have since been published. The objections made to their authenticity are in general of small force: but were they ever so specious, they cannot now be hearkened to; since Mary, at the time when the truth could have been fully cleared, did in effect ratify the evidence against her, by recoiling from the inquiry at the very critical moment, and refusing to give an answer to the accusation of her enemies. [1]

But Elizabeth, though she had seen enough for her own satisfaction, was determined that the most eminent persons of her court should also be acquainted with these transactions, and should be convinced of the equity of her proceedings. She ordered her privy council to be assembled; and, that she might render the matter more solemn and authentic, she summoned along with them the earls of Northumberland, Westmoreland, Shrewsbury, Worcester, Huntingdon, and Warwick. All the proceedings of the English commissioners were read to them: the evidences produced by Murray were perused: a great number of letters written by Mary to Elizabeth were laid before them, and the handwriting compared with that of the letters delivered in by the regent: the refusal of the queen of Scots' commissioners to make any reply was related: and on the whole, Elizabeth told them, that as she had from the first thought it improper that Mary, after such horrid crimes were imputed to her, should be admitted to her presence, before she had in some measure justified herself from the charge, so now, when her guilt was confirmed by so many evidences, and all answer refused, she must, for her part, persevere more steadily in that resolution. [2] Elizabeth next called in the queen of Scots' commissioners; and after observing, that she deemed it much more decent for their mistress to continue the conferences, than to require the liberty of justifying herself in person, she told them, that Mary might either send her reply by a person whom she trusted, or deliver it herself to some English nobleman, whom Elizabeth should appoint to wait upon her: but as to her resolution of making no reply at all, she must regard it as the strongest confession of guilt, nor could they ever be deemed her friends who advised her to that method of proceeding. [3] These topics she enforced still more strongly in a letter which she wrote to Mary herself. [4]

* See note L, at the end of the volume.

* * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , etc. Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * * Anderson, vol. iv. part ii. , etc. Goodall, vol. ii .

* * * * Anderson, vol. iv part ii. . Goodall, vol. ii. p. 269.

The queen of Scots had no other subterfuge from these pressing remonstrances, than still to demand a personal interview with Elizabeth: a concession which, she was sensible, would never be granted; [1] because Elizabeth knew that this expedient could decide nothing; because it brought matters to extremity, which that princess desired to avoid; and because it had been refused from the beginning, even before the commencement of the conferences. In order to keep herself better in countenance, Mary thought of another device. Though the conferences were broken off, she ordered her commissioners to accuse the earl of Murray and his associates as the murderers of the king: [2] but this accusation, coming so late, being extorted merely by a complaint of Murray's, and being unsupported by any proof, could only be regarded as an angry recrimination upon her enemy. [3] She also desired to have copies of the papers given in by the regent; but as she still persisted in her resolution to make no reply before the English commissioners, this demand was finally refused her. [4]

* Cabala, .

* * Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * * See note M, at the end of the volume.

* * * * Goodall, vol. ii. , 283, 289, 310, 311. Haynes, vol. i. . See note N, at the end of the volume.

As Mary had thus put an end to the conferences, the regent expressed great impatience to return into Scotland; and he complained, that his enemies had taken advantage of his absence, and had thrown the whole government into confusion. Elizabeth therefore dismissed him; and granted him a loan of five thousand pounds, to bear the charges of his journey. [1] During the conferences at York, the duke of Chatelrault arrived at London, in passing from France; and as the queen knew that he was engaged in Mary's party, and had very plausible pretensions to the regency of the king of Scots, she thought proper to detain him till after Murray's departure. But notwithstanding these marks of favor, and some other assistance which she secretly gave this latter nobleman, [2] she still declined acknowledging the young king, or treating with Murray as regent of Scotland.

* Rymer, tom. xv. .

* MS. in the Advocates' library. A. 3, 29, , 129, 130, from Cott. lab. Cal. c. 1.

Orders were given for removing the queen of Scots from Bolton, a place surrounded with Catholics, to Tutbury, in the county of Stafford, where she was put under the custody of the earl of Shrewsbury. Elizabeth entertained hopes that this princess, discouraged by her misfortunes, and confounded by the late transactions, would be glad to secure a safe retreat from all the tempests with which she had been agitated; and she promised to bury every thing in oblivion, provided Mary would agree, either voluntary to resign her crown, or to associate her son with her in the government; and the administration to remain, during his minority, in the hands of the earl of Murray. [1] But that high-spirited princess refused all treaty upon such terms, and declared that her last words should be those of a queen of Scotland. Besides many other reasons, she said, which fixed her in that resolution, she knew, that if in the present emergence she made such concessions, her submission would be universally deemed an acknowledgment of guilt, and would ratify all the calumnies of her enemies. [2]

Mary still insisted upon this alternative; either that Elizabeth should assist her in recovering her authority, or should give her liberty to retire into France, and make trial of the friendship of other princes: and as she asserted, that she had come voluntarily into England, invited by many former professions of amity, she thought that one or other of these requests could not, without the most extreme injustice, be refused her. But Elizabeth, sensible of the danger which attended both these proposals, was secretly resolved to detain her still a captive; and as her retreat into England had been little voluntary, her claim upon the queen’s generosity appeared much less urgent than she was willing to pretend. Necessity, it was thought, would to the prudent justify her detention: her past misconduct would apologize for it to the equitable: and though it was foreseen, that compassion for Mary’s situation, joined to her intrigues and insinuating behavior, would, while she remained in England, excite the zeal of her friends, especially of the Catholics, these inconveniences were deemed much inferior to those which attended any other expedient. Elizabeth trusted also to her own address, for eluding all these difficulties: she purposed to avoid breaking absolutely with the queen of Scots, to keep her always in hopes of an accommodation, to negotiate perpetually with her, and still to throw the blame of not coming to any conclusion, either on unforeseen accidents, or on the obstinacy and perverseness of others.

* Goodall, vol. ii. .

* * Goodall. vol. ii. .

We come now to mention some English affairs which we left behind us, that we might not interrupt our narrative of the events in Scotland, which formed so material a part of the present reign. The term fixed by the treaty of Chateau-Cambresis for the restitution of Calais, expired in 1567; and Elizabeth, after making her demand at the gates of that city, sent Sir Thomas Smith to Paris; and that minister, in conjunction with Sir Henry Norris, her resident ambassador, enforced her pretensions. Conferences were held on that head, without coming to any conclusion satisfactory to the English. The chancellor, De L'Hospital, told the English ambassadors, that though France by an article of the treaty was obliged to restore Calais on the expiration of eight years, there was another article of the same treaty, which now deprived Elizabeth of any right that could accrue to her by that engagement; that it was agreed, if the English should, during the interval, commit hostilities upon France, they should instantly forfeit all claim to Calais; and the taking possession of Havre and Dieppe, with whatever pretences that measure might be covered, was a plain violation of the peace between the nations: that though these places were not entered by force, but put into Elizabeth's hands by the governors, these governors were rebels; and a correspondence with such traitors was the most flagrant injury that could be committed on any sovereign: that in the treaty which ensued upon the expulsion of the English from Normandy, the French ministers had absolutely refused to make any mention of Calais, and had thereby declared their intention to take advantage of the title which had accrued to the crown of France: and that though a general clause had been inserted, implying a reservation of all claims, this concession could not avail the English, who at that time possessed no just claim to Calais, and had previously forfeited all right to that fortress. [1] The queen was nowise surprised at hearing these allegations; and as she knew that the French court intended not from the first to make restitution, much less after they could justify their refusal by such plausible reasons, she thought it better for the present to acquiesce in the loss, than to pursue a doubtful title by a war both dangerous and expensive, as well as unseasonable. [2]

* Haynes, .

* * Camden, .

Elizabeth entered anew into negotiations for espousing the archduke Charles; and she seems, at this time, to have had no great motive of policy which might induce her to make this fallacious offer: but as she was very rigorous in the terms insisted on, and would not agree that the archduke, if he espoused her, should enjoy any power or title in England, and even refused him the exercise of his religion, the treaty came to nothing; and that prince, despairing of success in his addresses, married the daughter of Albert, duke of Bavaria. [1]

* Camden, , 408.

CHAPTER XL

ELIZABETH.

1568.

Of all the European churches which shook off the yoke of papal authority, no one proceeded with so much reason and moderation as the church of England; an advantage which had been derived partly from the interposition of the civil magistrate in this innovation, partly from the gradual and slow steps by which the reformation was conducted in that kingdom. Rage and animosity against the Catholic religion was as little indulged as could be supposed in such a revolution: the fabric of the secular hierarchy was maintained entire: the ancient liturgy was preserved, so far as was thought consistent with the new principles: many ceremonies, become venerable from age and preceding use were retained: the splendor of the Romish worship, though removed, had at least given place to order and decency: the distinctive habits of the clergy, according to their different ranks, were continued: no innovation was admitted merely from spite and opposition to former usage: and the new religion, by mitigating the genius of the ancient superstition, and rendering it more compatible with the peace and interests of society, had preserved itself in that happy medium which wise men have always sought, and which the people have so seldom been able to maintain.

But though such in general was the spirit of the reformation in that country, many of the English reformers, being men of more warm complexions and more obstinate tempers, endeavored to push matters to extremities against the church of Rome, and indulged themselves in the most violent contrariety and antipathy to all former practices. Among these, Hooper, who afterwards suffered for his religion with such extraordinary constancy, was chiefly distinguished. This man was appointed, during the reign of Edward, to the see of Glocester, and made no scruple of accepting the episcopal office; but he refused to be consecrated in the episcopal habit, the cymar and rochet, which had formerly, he said, been abused to superstition, and which were thereby rendered unbecoming a true Christian. Cranmer and Ridley were surprised at this objection, which opposed the received practice, and even the established laws; and though young Edward, desirous of promoting a man so celebrated for his eloquence, his zeal, and his morals, enjoined them to dispense with this ceremony, they were still determined to retain it. Hooper then embraced the resolution, rather to refuse the bishopric than clothe himself in those hated garments; but it was deemed requisite that, for the sake of the example, he should not escape so easily. He was first confined to Cranmer's house, then thrown into prison, till he should consent to be a bishop on the terms proposed: he was plied with conferences, and reprimands, and arguments: Bucer and Peter Martyr, and the most celebrated foreign reformers, were consulted on this important question: and a compromise, with great difficulty, was at last made, that Hooper should not be obliged to wear commonly the obnoxious robes, but should agree to be consecrated in them, and to use them during cathedral service; [1] a condescension not a little extraordinary in a man of so inflexible a spirit as this reformer.

The same objection which had arisen with regard to the episcopal habit, had been moved against the raiment of the inferior clergy; and the surplice in particular, with the tippet and corner cap, was a great object of abhorrence to many of the popular zealots. [2]

* Burnet, vol. ii. . Heylin, .

* * Strype, vol. i. .

In vain was it urged, that particular habits, as well as postures and ceremonies, having been constantly used by the clergy, and employed in religious service, acquire a veneration in the eyes of the people, appear sacred in their apprehensions, excite their devotion, and contract a kind of mysterious virtue, which attaches the affections of men to the national and established worship: that in order to produce this effect, a uniformity in these particulars is requisite, and even a perseverance, as far as possible, in the former practice: and that the nation would be happy, if, by retaining these inoffensive observances, the reformers could engage the people to renounce willingly what was absurd or pernicious in the ancient superstition. These arguments, which had influence with wise men, were the very reasons which engaged the violent Protestants to reject the habits. They pushed matters to a total opposition with the church of Rome; every compliance, they said, was a symbolizing with Antichrist. [1] And this spirit was carried so far by some reformers, that, in a national remonstrance, made afterwards by the church of Scotland against these habits, it was asked, “What has Christ Jesus to do with Belial? What has darkness to do with light? If surplices, corner caps, and tippets have been badges cf idolaters in the very act of their idolatry, why should the preacher of Christian liberty, and the open rebuker of all superstition, partake with the dregs of the Romish beast? Yea, who is there that ought not rather to be afraid of taking in his hand, or on his forehead, the print and mark of that odious beast?” [2] But this application was rejected by the English church.

There was only one instance in which the spirit of contradiction to the Romanists took place universally in England: the altar was removed from the wall, was placed in the middle of the church, and was thenceforth denominated the communion table. The reason why this innovation met with such general reception was, that the nobility and gentry got thereby a pretence for making spoil of the plate, vestures, and rich ornaments which belonged to the altars. [3]

These disputes, which had been started during the reign of Edward, were carried abroad by the Protestants who fled from the persecutions of Mary; and as the zeal of these men had received an increase from the furious cruelty of their enemies, they were generally inclined to carry their opposition to the utmost extremity against the practices of the church of Rome. Their communication with Calvin, and the other reformers who followed the discipline and worship of Geneva, confirmed them in this obstinate reluctance; and though some of the refugees, particularly those who were established at Frankfort, still adhered to King Edward’s liturgy, the prevailing spirit carried these confessors to seek a still further reformation. On the accession of Elizabeth, they returned to their native country; and being regarded with general veneration, on account of their zeal and past sufferings, they ventured to insist on the establishment of their

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* Strype, vol. i. .

* * Keith, . Knox, .

* * * Heylin, Preface, . Hist. .

projected model; nor did they want countenance from many considerable persona in the queen’s council. But the princess herself, so far from being willing to despoil religion of the few ornaments and ceremonies which remained in it, was rather inclined to bring the public worship still nearer to the Romish ritual; [1] and she thought that the reformation had already gone too far in shaking off those forms and observances, which, without distracting men of more refined apprehensions, tend, in a very innocent manner, to allure, and amuse, and engage the vulgar.

* “When Nowel, one of her chaplains, had spoken less reverently, in a sermon preached before her, of the sign of the cross, she called aloud to him from her closet window,

commanding him to retire from the ungodly digression, and to return unto his text. And on the other side, when one of her divines had preached a sermon in defence of the real presence, she openly gave him thanks for his pains and piety.” Heylin, . She would have absolutely forbidden the marriage of the clergy, if Cecil had not interposed.

Strype’s Life of Parker, , 108, 109. She was an enemy to sermons; and usually said, that she thought two or three preachers were sufficient for a whole county. It was probably for these reasons that one Doring told her to her face from the pulpit, that she was like an untamed heifer,

that would not be ruled by God’s people, but obstructed his discipline See Life of Hooker, prefixed to his works.

She took care to have a law for uniformity strictly enacted: she was empowered by the parliament to add any new ceremonies which she thought proper: and though she was sparing in the exercise of this prerogative, she continued rigid in exacting an observance of the established laws, and in punishing all nonconformity. The zealots, therefore, who harbored a secret antipathy to the Episcopal order, and to the whole liturgy, were obliged, in a great measure, to conceal these sentiments, which would have been regarded as highly audacious and criminal; and they confined their avowed objections to the surplice, the confirmation of children, the sign of the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, kneeling at the sacrament, and bowing at the name of Jesus. So fruitless is it for sovereigns to watch with a rigid care over orthodoxy, and to employ the sword in religious controversy, that the work, perpetually renewed, is perpetually to begin; and a garb, a gesture, nay, a metaphysical or grammatical distinction, when rendered important by the disputes of theologians and the zeal of the magistrate, is sufficient to destroy the unity of the church, and even the peace of society. These controversies had already excited such ferment among the people, that in some places, they refused to frequent the churches where the habits and ceremonies were used; would not salute the conforming clergy; and proceeded so far as to revile them in the streets, to spit in their faces, and to use them with all manner of contumely. [1] And while the sovereign authority checked these excesses, the flame was confined, not extinguished; and burning fiercer from confinement, it burst out in the succeeding reigns to the destruction of the church and monarchy.

* Strype’s Life of Whitgift,

All enthusiasts, indulging themselves in rapturous flights ecstasies, visions, inspirations, have a natural aversion to episcopal authority, to ceremonies, rites, and forms which they denominate superstition, or beggarly elements, and which seem to restrain the liberal effusions of their zeal and devotion: but there was another set of opinions adopted by these innovators, which rendered them in a peculiar manner the object of Elizabeth’s aversion. The same bold and daring spirit which accompanied them in their addresses to the Divinity, appeared in their political speculations; and the principles of civil liberty, which during some reigns had been little avowed in the nation, and which were totally incompatible with the present exorbitant prerogative, had been strongly adopted by this new sect. Scarcely any sovereign before Elizabeth, and none after her, carried higher, both in speculation and practice, the authority of the crown; and the Puritans (so these sectaries were called, on account of their pretending to a superior purity of worship and discipline) could not recommend themselves worse to her favor, than by inculcating the doctrine of resisting or restraining princes. From all these motives, the queen neglected no opportunity of depressing those zealous innovators; and while they were secretly countenanced by some of her most favored ministers, Cecil, Leicester, Knolles, Bedford, Walsingham, she never was, to the end of her life, reconciled to their principles and practices.

We have thought proper to insert in this place an account of the rise and the genius of the Puritans; because Camden marks the present year as the period when they began to make themselves considerable in England. We now return to our narration.

The duke of Norfolk was the only peer that enjoyed the highest title of nobility; and as there were at present no princes of the blood, the splendor of his family, the opulence of his fortune, and the extent of his influence, had rendered him, without comparison, the first subject in England. The qualities of his mind corresponded to his high station: — beneficent, affable, generous, he had acquired the affections of the people; prudent, moderate, obsequious, he possessed, without giving her any jealousy, the good graces of his sovereign. His grandfather and father had long been regarded as the leaders of the Catholics; and this hereditary attachment, joined to the alliance of blood, had procured him the friendship of the most considerable men of that party; but as he had been educated among the reformers, was sincerely devoted to their principles, and maintained that strict decorum and regularity of life by which the Protestants were at that time distinguished, he thereby enjoyed the rare felicity of being popular even with the most opposite factions. The height of his prosperity alone was the source of his misfortunes, and engaged him in attempts from which his virtue and prudence would naturally have forever kept him at a distance.

Norfolk was at this time a widower; and being of a suitable age, his marriage with the queen of Scots had appeared so natural, that it occurred to several of his friends and those of that princess: but the first person who, after Secretary Lidington, opened the scheme to the duke, is said to have been the earl of Murray, before his departure for Scotland. [1] That nobleman set before Norfolk, both the advantage of composing the dissensions in Scotland by an alliance which would be so generally acceptable, and the prospect of reaping the succession of England; and in order to bind Norfolk's interest the faster with Mary's, he proposed that the duke's daughter should also espouse the young king of Scotland. The previously obtaining of Elizabeth's consent was regarded, both by Murray and Norfolk, as a circumstance essential to the success of their project; and all terms being adjusted between them, Murray took care, by means of Sir Robert Melvil, to have the design communicated to the queen of Scots. This princess replied, that the vexations which she had met with in her two last marriages, had made her more inclined to lead a single life; but she was determined to sacrifice her own inclinations to the public welfare: and therefore, as soon as she should be legally divorced from Bothwell, she would be determined by the opinion of her nobility and people in the choice of another husband. [2]

* Lesley, , 87.

* * Lesley, , 41.

It is probable that Murray was not sincere in this proposal. He had two motives to engage him to dissimulation. Heknew the danger which he must run in his return through the north of England, from the power of the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, Mary’s partisans in that country; and he dreaded an insurrection in Scotland from the duke of Chatelrault and the earls of Argyle and Huntley, whom she had appointed her lieutenants during her absence. By these feigned appearances of friendship, he both engaged Norfolk to write in his favor to the northern noblemen, [1] and he persuaded the queen of Scots to give her lieutenants permission, and even advice, to conclude a cessation of hostilities with the regent’s party. [2]

The duke of Norfolk, though he had agreed that Elizabeth’s consent should be previously obtained before the completion of his marriage, had reason to apprehend that he never should prevail with her voluntarily to make that concession. He knew her perpetual and unrelenting jealousy against her heir and rival; he was acquainted with her former reluctance to all proposals of marriage with the queen of Scots; he foresaw that this princess’s espousing a person of his power, and character, and interest, would give the greatest umbrage; and as it would then become necessary to reinstate her in possession of her throne on some tolerable terms, and even to endeavor the reëstablishing of her character, he dreaded lest Elizabeth, whose politics had now taken a different turn, would never agree to such indulgent and generous conditions. He therefore attempted previously to gain the consent and approbation of several of the most considerable nobility; and he was successful with the earls of Pembroke, Arundel, Derby, Bedford, Shrewsbury, Southampton, Northumberland, Westmoreland, Sussex. [3] Lord Lumley and Sir Nicholas Throgmorton cordially embraced the proposal: even the earl of Leicester, Elizabeth’s declared favorite, who had formerly entertained some views of espousing Mary, willingly resigned all his pretensions, and seemed to enter zealously into Norfolk’s interests.

[4] There were other motives, besides affection to the duke, which produced this general combination of the nobility.

* State Trials, , 78.

* * Lesley, .

* * * Lesley, . Camden, . Spotswood, .

* * * * Haynes, .

Sir William Cecil, secretary of state, was the most vigilant, active, and prudent minister ever known in England; and as he was governed by no views but the interests of his sovereign which he had inflexibly pursued, his authority over her became every day more predominant. Ever cool himself, and uninfluenced by prejudice or affection, he checked those sallies of passion, and sometimes of caprice, to which she was subject; and if he failed of persuading her in the first movement, his perseverance, and remonstrances, and arguments were sure at last to recommend themselves to her sound discernment. The more credit he gained with his mistress, the more was he exposed to the envy of her other counsellors; and as he had been supposed to adopt the interests of the house of Suffolk, whose claim seemed to carry with it no danger to the present establishment, his enemies, in opposition to him, were naturally led to attach themselves to the queen of Scots. Elizabeth saw without uneasiness this emulation among her courtiers, which served to augment her own authority: and though she supported Cecil whenever matters came to extremities, and dissipated every conspiracy against him, particularly one laid about this time for having him thrown into the Tower on some pretence or other, [1] she never gave him such unlimited confidence as might enable him entirely to crush his adversaries.

Norfolk, sensible of the difficulty which he must meet with in controlling Cecil’s counsels, especially where they concurred with the inclination as well as interest of the queen, durst not open to her his intentions of marrying the queen of Scots, but proceeded still in the same course of increasing his interest in the kingdom, and engaging more of the nobility to take part in his measures. A letter was written to Mary by Leicester, and signed by several of the first rank, recommending Norfolk for her husband, and stipulating conditions for the advantage of both kingdoms; particularly, that she should give sufficient surety to Elizabeth, and the heirs of her body, for the free enjoyment of the crown of England, that a perpetual league, offensive and defensive, should be made between their realms and subjects; that the Protestant religion should be established by law in Scotland; and that she should grant an amnesty to her rebels in that kingdom. [2]

* Camden, .

* * Lesley, . Camden, . Haynes, , 539

When Mary returned a favorable answer to this application, Norfolk employed himself with new ardor in the execution of his project; and besides securing the interests of many of the considerable gentry and nobility who resided at court, he wrote letters to such as lived at their country seats, and possessed the greatest authority in the several counties. [1] The kings of France and Spain, who interested themselves extremely in Mary's cause, were secretly consulted, and expressed their approbation of these measures. [2] And though Elizabeth's consent was always supposed as a previous condition to the finishing of this alliance, it was apparently Norfolk's intention, when he proceeded such lengths without consulting her, to render his party so strong, that it should no longer be in her power to refuse it. [3]

It was impossible that so extensive a conspiracy could entirely escape the queen's vigilance and that of Cecil. She dropped several intimations to the duke, by which he might learn that she was acquainted with his designs; and she frequently warned him to beware on what pillow he reposed his head: [4] but he never had the prudence or the courage to open to her his full intentions. Certain intelligence of this dangerous combination was given her first by Leicester, then by Murray, who, if ever he was sincere in promoting Norfolk's marriage, which is much to be doubted, had at least intended for his own safety and that of his party, that Elizabeth should in reality, as well as in appearance, be entire arbiter of the conditions, and should not have her consent extorted by any confederacy of her own subjects. This information gave great alarm to the court of England; and the more so, as those intrigues were attended with other circumstances, of which, it is probable, Elizabeth was not wholly ignorant.

* Lesley, .

* * Lesley, .

* * * State Trials, vol. i. .

* * * * Camden, . Spotswood, .

v Lesley, . It appears by Haynes, (, 525,) that Elizabeth had heard rumors of Norfolk's dealing with Murray;

and charged the latter to inform her of the whole truth,

which he accordingly did. See also the earl of Murray's letter produced on Norfolk's trial.

Among the nobility and gentry that seemed to enter into Norfolk's views, there were many who were zealously attached to the Catholic religion, who had no other design than that of restoring Mary to her liberty, and who would gladly, by a combination with foreign powers, or even at the expense of a civil war, have placed her on the throne or England. The earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who possessed great power in the north, were leaders of this party; and the former nobleman made offer to the queen of Scots, by Leonard Dacres, brother to Lord Dacres, that he would free her from confinement, and convey her to Scotland, or any other place to which she should think proper to retire. [1] Sir Thomas and Sir Edward Stanley, sons of the earl of Derby, Sir Thomas Gerrard, Rolstone, and other gentlemen whose interest lay in the neighborhood of the place where Mary resided, concurred in the same views; and required that, in order to facilitate the execution of the scheme, a diversion should in the mean time be made from the side of Flanders. [2] Norfolk discouraged, and even, in appearance, suppressed these conspiracies; both because his duty to Elizabeth would not allow him to think of effecting his purpose by rebellion, and because he foresaw that, if the queen of Scots came into the possession of these men, they would rather choose for her husband the king of Spain, or some foreign prince, who had power, as well as inclination, to reestablish the Catholic religion. [3]

* Lesley, .

* * Lesley, .

* * * Lesley, .

When men of honor and good principles, like the duke of Norfolk, engage in dangerous enterprises, they are commonly so unfortunate as to be criminal by halves; and while they balance between the execution of their designs and their remorses, their fear of punishment and their hope of pardon, they render themselves an easy prey to their enemies. The duke, in order to repress the surmises spread against him, spoke contemptuously to Elizabeth of the Scottish alliance; affirmed that his estate in England was more valuable than the revenue of a kingdom wasted by civil wars and factions; and declared, that when he amused himself in his own tennis-court at Norwich amidst his friends and vassals, he deemed himself at least a petty prince, and was fully satisfied with his condition. [1] Finding that he did not convince her by these asseverations, and that he was looked on with a jealous eye by the ministers, he retired to his country seat without taking leave. [2] He soon after repented of this measure, and set out on his return to court, with a view of using every expedient to regain the queen's good graces; but he was met at St. Albans by Fitz-Garret, lieutenant of the band of pensioners by whom he was conveyed to Burnham, three miles from Windsor, where the court then resided. [3]

* Camden,

* * Haynes, .

* * * Haynes, .

He was soon after committed to the Tower, under the custody of Sir Henry Nevil. [1] Lesley, bishop of Ross, the queen of Scots' ambassador, was examined, and confronted with Norfolk before the council. [2] The earl of Pembroke was confined to his own house: Arundel, Lumley, and Throgmorton were taken into custody. The queen of Scots herself was removed to Coventry; all access to her was, during some time, more strictly prohibited; and Viscount Hereford was joined to the earls of Shrewsbury and Huntingdon in the office of guarding her.

A rumor had been diffused in the north of an intended rebellion; and the earl of Sussex, president of York, alarmed with the danger, sent for Northumberland and Westmoreland, in order to examine them: but not finding any proof against them, he allowed them to depart. The report, meanwhile, gained ground daily; and many appearances of its reality being discovered, orders were despatched by Elizabeth to these two noblemen, to appear at court, and answer for their conduct. [3] They had already proceeded so far in their criminal designs, that they dared not to trust themselves in her hands: they had prepared measures for a rebellion; had communicated their design to Mary and her ministers; [4] had entered into a correspondence with the duke of Alva, governor of the Low Countries; had obtained his promise of a reënforcement of troops, and of a supply of arms and ammunition; and had prevailed on him to send over to London Chiapino Vitelii, one of his most famous captains, on pretence of adjusting some differences with the queen, but in reality with a view of putting him at the head of the northern rebels.

* Camden, . Haynes, .

* * Lesley, .

* * * Haynes, .

* * * * Haynes, 595. Strype, vol. ii. Append, . MS. in the Ad socates' Library from Cott. Lib. Cal. c. 9.

The summons sent to the two earls precipitated the rising before they were fully prepared; and Northumberland remained in suspense between opposite dangers, when he was informed that some of his enemies were on the way with a commission to arrest him. He took horse instantly, and hastened to his associate Westmoreland, whom he found surrounded with his friends and vassals, and deliberating with regard to the measures which he should follow in the present emergence. They determined to begin the insurrection without delay; and the great credit of these two noblemen, with that zeal for the catholic religion which still prevailed in the neighborhood, soon drew together multitudes of the common people. They published a manifesto, in which they declared that they intended to attempt nothing against the queen, to whom they vowed unshaken allegiance: and that their sole aim was to reëstablish the religion of their ancestors, to remove evil counsellors, and to restore the duke of Norfolk and other faithful peers to their liberty and to the queen's favor. [1] The number of the malecontents amounted to four thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse; and they expected the concurrence of all the Catholics in England. [2]

The queen was not negligent in her own defence, and she had beforehand, from her prudent and wise conduct, acquired the general good will of her people, the best security of a sovereign; insomuch that even the Catholics in most counties expressed an affection for her service; [3] and the duke of Norfolk himself, though he had lost her favor, and lay in confinement, was not wanting, as far as his situation permitted, to promote the levies among his friends and retainers. Sussex, attended by the earls of Rutland, the lords Hunsdon, Evers, and Willoughby of Parham, marched against the rebels at the head of seven thousand men, and found them already advanced to the bishopric of Durham, of which they had taken possession. They retired before him to Hexham; and hearing that the earl of Warwick and Lord Clinton were advancing against them with a greater body, they found no other resource than to disperse themselves without striking a blow. The common people retired to their houses: the leaders fled into Scotland. Northumberland was found skulking in that country, and was confined by Murray in the Castle of Lochlevin. Westmoreland received shelter from the chieftains of the Kers and Scots, partisans of Mary; and persuaded them to make an inroad into England, with a view of exciting a quarrel between the two kingdoms. After they had committed great ravages, they retreated to their own country. This sudden and precipitate rebellion was followed soon after by another still more imprudent, raised by Leonard Uacres. Lord Hunsdon, at the head of the garrison of Berwick, was able, without any other assistance, to quell these rebels. Great severity was exercised against such as had taken part in these rash enterprises. Sixty-six petty constables were hanged; [4] and no less than eight hundred persons are said, on the whole, to have suffered by the hands of the executioner.

* Cabala, . Strype, vol. i. .

* * Stowe, .

* * * Cabala, p, 170. Digges, .

* * * * Camden, p, 423.

v Lesley, .

But the queen was so well pleased with Norfolk’s behavior, that she released him from the Tower; allowed him to live, though under some show of confinement, in his own house; and only exacted a promise from him not to proceed any further in his negotiations with the queen of Scots. [1]

Elizabeth now found that the detention of Mary was attended with all the ill consequences which she had foreseen when she first embraced that measure. This latter princess recovering, by means of her misfortunes and her own natural good sense, from that delirium into which she seems to have been thrown during her attachment to Bothwell, had behaved with such modesty and judgment, and even dignity, that every one who approached her was charmed with her demeanor; and her friends were enabled, on some plausible grounds, to deny the reality of all those crimes which had been imputed to her. [2]

* Lesley, . Camden, . Haynes, .

* * Lesley, . Haynes, , 548.

Compassion for her situation, and the necessity of procuring her liberty, proved an incitement among all her partisans to be active in promoting her cause; and as her deliverance from captivity, it was thought, could nowise be effected but by attempts dangerous to the established government, Elizabeth had reason to expect little tranquillity so long as the Scottish queen remained a prisoner in her hands. But as this inconvenience had been preferred to the danger of allowing that princess to enjoy her liberty, and to seek relief in all the Catholic courts of Europe, it behoved the queen to support the measure which she had adopted, and to guard, by every prudent expedient, against the mischiefs to which it was exposed. She still flattered Mary with hopes of her protection, maintained an ambiguous conduct between that queen and her enemies in Scotland, negotiated perpetually concerning the terms of her restoration, made constant professions of friendship to her; and by these artifices endeavored, both to prevent her from making any desperate efforts for her deliverance, and to satisfy the French and Spanish ambassadors, who never intermitted their solicitations, sometimes accompanied with menaces, in her behalf. This deceit was received with the same deceit by the queen of Scots: professions of confidence were returned by professions equally insincere: and while an appearance of friendship was maintained on both sides, the animosity and jealousy, which had long prevailed between them, became every day more inveterate and incurable. These two princesses, in address, capacity, activity, and spirit, were nearly a match for each other; but unhappily, Mary, besides her present forlorn condition, was always inferior in personal conduct and discretion, as well as in power, to her illustrious rival.

Elizabeth and Mary wrote at the same time letters to the regent. The queen of Scots desired, that her marriage with Bothwell might be examined, and a divorce be legally pronounced between them. The queen of England gave Murray the choice of three conditions; that Mary should be restored to her dignity on certain terms; that she should be associated with her son, and the administration remain in the regent’s hands, till the young prince should come to years of discretion; or that she should be allowed to live at liberty as a private person in Scotland, and have an honorable settlement made in her favor. [1] Murray summoned a convention of states, in order to deliberate on these proposals of the two queens. No answer was made by them to Mary’s letter, on pretence that she had there employed the style of a sovereign, addressing herself to her subjects; but in reality, because they saw that her request was calculated to prepare the way for a marriage with Norfolk, or some powerful prince, who could support her cause, and restore her to the throne. They replied to Elizabeth that the two former conditions were so derogatory to the royal authority of their prince, that they could not so much as deliberate concerning them: the third alone could be the subject of treaty. It was evident that Elizabeth, in proposing conditions so unequal in their importance, invited the Scots to a refusal of those which were most advantageous to Mary; and as it was difficult, if not impossible, to adjust all the terms of the third, so as to render it secure and eligible to all parties, it was concluded that she was not sincere in any of them. [2]

* MSS. in the Advocates’ Library. A. 329, , from Cott. Lib. Catal. c. 1.

* * Spotswood, , 231. Lesley, .

1570.

It is pretended, that Murray had entered into a private negotiation with the queen, to get Mary delivered into his hands; [1] and as Elizabeth found the detention of her in England so dangerous, it is probable that she would have been pleased, on any honorable or safe terms, to rid herself of a prisoner who gave her so much inquietude. [2] But all these projects vanished by the sudden death of the regent, who was assassinated in revenge of a private injury, by a gentleman of the name of Hamilton. Murray was a person of considerable vigor, abilities, and constancy; but though he was not unsuccessful, during his regency, in composing the dissensions in Scotland, his talents shone out more eminently in the beginning than in the end of his life. His manners were rough and austere; and he possessed not that perfect integrity which frequently accompanies, and can alone atone for, that unamiable character.

By the death of the regent, Scotland relapsed into anarchy. Mary’s party assembled together, and made themselves masters of Edinburgh. The castle, commanded by Kirkaldy of Grange, seemed to favor her cause; and as many of the principal nobility had embraced that party, it became probable, though the people were in general averse to her, that her authority might again acquire the ascendant. To check its progress, Elizabeth despatched Sussex with an army to the north, under color of chastising the ravages committed by the borderers. He entered Scotland, and laid waste the lands of the Kers and Scots, seized the Castle of Hume, and committed hostilities on all Mary’s partisans, who, he said, had offended his mistress by harboring the English rebels. Sir William Drury was afterwards sent with a body of troops, and he threw down the houses of the Hamiltons, who were engaged in the same faction. The English armies were afterwards recalled by agreement with the queen of Scots, who promised, in return, that no French troops should be introduced into Scotland, and that the English rebels should be delivered up to the queen by her partisans. [3]

But though the queen, covering herself with the pretence of revenging her own quarrel, so far contributed to support the party of the young king of Scots, she was cautious not to declare openly against Mary; and she even sent a request, which was equivalent to a command, to the enemies of that princess, not to elect, during some time, a regent in the place of Murray. [4] Lenox, the king's grandfather, was therefore chosen temporary governor, under the title of lieutenant.

Hearing afterwards that Mary's partisans, instead of delivering up Westmoreland and the other fugitives, as they had promised, had allowed them to escape into Flanders, she permitted the king's party to give Lenox the title of regent, [1] and she sent Randolph, as her resident, to maintain a correspondence with him. But notwithstanding this step, taken in favor of Mary's enemies, she never laid aside her ambiguous conduct, nor quitted the appearance of amity to that princess. Being importuned by the bishop of Ross and her other agents, as well as by foreign ambassadors, she twice procured a suspension of arms between the Scottish factions, and by that means stopped the hands of the regent, who was likely to obtain advantages over the opposite party. [2] By these seeming contrarieties she kept alive the factions in Scotland, increased their mutual animosity, and rendered the whole country a scene of devastation and of misery. [3] She had no intention to conquer the kingdom, and consequently no interest or design to instigate the parties against each other; but this consequence was an accidental effect of her cautious politics, by which she was engaged, as far as possible, to

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* Camden, . Lesley, .

* * See note O, at the end of the volume.

* * * Lesley, .

* * * * Spotswood, .

keep on good terms with the queen of Scots, and never to violate the appearances of friendship with her, at least those of neutrality. [4]

* Spotswood, .

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Crawford, .

* * * * See note P, at the end of the volume.

The better to amuse Mary with the prospect of an accommodation, Cecil and Sir Walter Mildmay were sent to her with proposals from Elizabeth. The terms were somewhat rigorous, such as a captive queen might expect from a jealous rival; and they thereby bore the greater appearance of sincerity on the part of the English court. It was required that the queen of Scots, besides renouncing all title to the crown of England during the lifetime of Elizabeth, should make a perpetual league, offensive and defensive, between the kingdoms; that she should marry no Englishman without Elizabeth's consent, nor any other person without the consent of the states of Scotland; that compensation should be made for the late ravages committed in England; that justice should be executed on the murderers of King Henry; that the young prince should be sent into England, to be educated there; and that six hostages, all of them noblemen, should be delivered to the queen of England, with the Castle of Hume, and some other fortress, for the security of performance. [1] Such were the conditions upon which Elizabeth promised to contribute her endeavors towards the restoration of the deposed queen. The necessity of Mary's affairs obliged her to consent to them; and the kings of France and Spain, as well as the pope, when consulted by her, approved of her conduct chiefly on account of the civil wars, by which all Europe was at that time agitated, and which incapacitated the Catholic princes from giving her any assistance. [2]

Elizabeth's commissioners proposed also to Mary a plan of accommodation with her subjects in Scotland; and after some reasoning on that head, it was agreed that the queen should require Lenox, the regent, to send commissioners, in order to treat of conditions under her mediation.

The partisans of Mary boasted, that all terms were fully settled with the court of England, and that the Scottish rebels would soon be constrained to submit to the authority of their sovereign; but Elizabeth took care that these rumors should meet with no credit, and that the king’s party should not be discouraged, nor sink too low in their demands. Cecil wrote to inform the regent, that all the queen of England’s proposals, so far from being fixed and irrevocable, were to be discussed anew in the conference; and desired him to send commissioners who should be constant in the king’s cause, and cautious not to make concessions which might be prejudicial to their party.[3] Sussex, also, in his letters, dropped hints to the same purpose; and Elizabeth herself said to the abbot of Dunfermling, whom Lenox had sent to the court of England, that she would not insist on Mary’s restoration, provided the Scots could make the justice of their cause appear to her satisfaction; and that, even if their reasons should fall short of full conviction, she would take effectual care to provide for their future security.[4]

* Spotswood, . Lesley .

* * Lesley, , etc.

* * * Spotswood, p, 246.

* * * * Spotswood, , 248.

1571.

The parliament of Scotland appointed the earl of Morton and Sir James Macgill, together with the abbot of Dunfermling, to manage the treaty. These commissioners presented memorials, containing reasons for the deposition of their queen; and they seconded their arguments with examples drawn from the Scottish history, with the authority of laws, and with the sentiments of many famous divines. The lofty ideas which Elizabeth had entertained of the absolute, indefensible right of sovereigns, made her be shocked with these republican topics; and she told the Scottish commissioners, that she was no wise satisfied with their reasons for justifying the conduct of their countrymen; and that they might therefore, without attempting any apology, proceed to open the conditions which they required for their security. [1] They replied that their commission did not empower them to treat of any terms which might infringe the title and sovereignty of their young king; but they would gladly hear whatever proposals should be made them by her majesty. The conditions recommended by the queen were not disadvantageous to Mary; but as the commissioners still insisted that they were not authorized to treat in any manner concerning the restoration of that princess, [2] the conferences were necessarily at an end; and Elizabeth dismissed the Scottish commissioners, with injunctions that they should return, after having procured more ample powers from their parliament. [3] The bishop of Ross openly complained to the English council that they had abused his mistress by fair promises and professions; and Mary herself was no longer at a loss to judge of Elizabeth's insincerity. By reason of these disappointments, matters came still nearer to extremities between the two princesses; and the queen of Scots, finding all her hopes eluded, was more strongly incited to make, at all hazards, every possible attempt for her liberty and security.

An incident also happened about this time, which tended to widen the breach between Mary and Elizabeth, and to increase the vigilance and jealousy of the latter princess. Pope Pius V., who had succeeded Paul, after having endeavored in vain to conciliate by gentle means the friendship of Elizabeth, whom his predecessor's violence had irritated, issued at last a bull of excommunication against her, deprived her of all title to the crown, and absolved her subjects from their oaths of allegiance. [4]

* Spotswood, , 249.

* * Haynes, .

* * * Spotswood. , 250, etc. Lesley, , 136. Camden, p, 431, 432.

* * * * Camden, .

It seems probable that this attack on the queen’s authority was made in concert with Mary, who intended by that means to forward the northern rebellion; a measure which was at that time in agitation. [1] John Felton affixed this bull to the gates of the bishop of London’s palace; and scorning either to fly or to deny the fact, he was seized and condemned and received the crown of martyrdom, for which he seems to have entertained so violent an ambition. [2]

A new parliament, after five years’ interval, was assembled at Westminster; and as the queen, by the rage of the pope against her, was become still more the head of the ruling party, it might be expected, both from this incident and from her own prudent and vigorous conduct, that her authority over the two houses would be absolutely uncontrollable. It was so in fact; yet is it remarkable, that it prevailed not without some small opposition; and that too arising chiefly from the height of zeal for Protestantism; a disposition of the English which, in general, contributed extremely to increase the queen’s popularity. We shall be somewhat particular in relating the transactions of this session, because they show, as well the extent of the royal power during that age, as the character of Elizabeth, and the genius of her government. It will be curious also to observe the faint dawn of the spirit of liberty among the English, the jealousy with which that spirit was repressed by the sovereign, the imperious conduct which was maintained in opposition to it, and the ease with which it was subdued by this arbitrary princess.

The lord keeper Bacon, after the speaker of the commons was elected, told the parliament, in the queen’s name, that she enjoined them not to meddle with any matters of state: [3] such was his expression; by which he probably meant, the questions of the queen’s marriage, and the succession, about which they had before given her some uneasiness; for as to the other great points of government, alliances, peace and war, or foreign negotiations, no parliament in that age ever presumed to take them under consideration, or question, in these particulars, the conduct of their sovereign, or of his ministers.

In the former parliament, the Puritans had introduced seven bills for a further reformation in religion; but they had not been able to prevail in any one of them. [4] This house of commons had sitten a very few days, when Stricland, a member, revived one of the bills — that for the amendment of the liturgy.

* Camden, , from Cajetanus’s Life of Pius V.

* * Camden, .

* * * D’Ewes, .

* * * * D’Ewes, .

v D’Ewes , 157.

The chief objection which he mentioned, was the sign of the cross in baptism. Another member added the kneeling at the sacrament; and remarked, that if a posture of humiliation were requisite in that act of devotion, it were better that the communicants should throw themselves prostrate on the ground, in order to keep at the widest distance from former superstition. [1]

Religion was a point of which Elizabeth was, if possible, still more jealous than of matters of state. She pretended, that in quality of supreme head or governor of the church, she was fully empowered, by her prerogative alone, to decide all questions which might arise with regard to doctrine, discipline, or worship; and she never would allow her parliaments so much as to take these points into consideration. [2] The courtiers did not forget to insist on this topic: the treasurer of the household, though he allowed that any heresy might be repressed by parliament, (a concession which seems to have been rash and unguarded, since the act investing the crown with the supremacy, or rather recognizing that prerogative, gave the sovereign full power to reform all heresies,) yet he affirmed, that it belonged to the queen alone, as head of the church, to regulate every question of ceremony in worship. [3] The comptroller seconded this argument; insisted on the extent of the queen’s prerogative; and said that the house might, from former examples, have taken warning not to meddle with such matters. One Pistor opposed these remonstrances of the courtiers. He was scandalized, he said, that affairs of such infinite consequence (namely, kneeling, and making the sign of the cross) should be passed over so lightly. These questions, he added, concern the salvation of souls, and interest every one more deeply than the monarchy of the whole world. This cause he showed to be the cause of God; the rest were all but terrene, yea, trifles in comparison, call them ever so great: subsidies, crowns, kingdoms, he knew not what weight they had, when laid in the balance with subjects of such unspeakable importance. [4] Though the zeal of this member seems to have been approved of, the house, overawed by the prerogative, voted upon the question, that a petition should be presented to her majesty for her license to proceed further in this bill; and in the mean time that they should stop all debate or reasoning concerning it.

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * D’Ewes, .

* * * * D’Ewes, .

v D’Ewes, .

Matters would probably have rested here, had not the queen been so highly offended with Stricland’s presumption in moving the bill for reformation of the liturgy, that she summoned him before the council, and prohibited him thenceforth from appearing in the house of commons. [1] This act of power was too violent even for the submissive parliament to endure. Carleton took notice of the matter; complained that the liberties of the house were invaded; observed that Stricland was not a private man, but represented a multitude: and moved that he might be sent for, and if he were guilty of any offence, might answer for it at the bar of the house, which he insinuated to be the only competent tribunal. [2] Yelverton enforced the principles of liberty with still greater boldness. He said, that the precedent was dangerous; and though, in this happy time of lenity, among so many good and honorable personages as were at present invested with authority, nothing of extremity or injury was to be apprehended, yet the times might alter; what now is permitted, might hereafter be construed as duty, and might be enforced even on the ground of the present permission. He added, that all matters not treasonable, or which implied not “too much” derogation of the imperial crown, might, without offence, be introduced into parliament; where every question that concerned the community must be considered, and where even the right of the crown itself must finally be determined. He remarked, that men sat not in that house in their private capacities, but as elected by their country; and though it was proper that the prince should retain his prerogative, yet was that prerogative limited by law: as the sovereign could not of himself make laws, neither could he break them merely from his own authority. [3]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * D’Ewes, , 176.

These principles were popular, and noble, and generous; but the open assertion of them was, at this time, somewhat new in England; and the courtiers were more warranted by present practice, when they advanced a contrary doctrine. The treasurer warned the house to be cautious in their proceedings; neither to venture further than their assured warrant might extend, nor hazard their good opinion with her majesty in any doubtful cause. The member, he said, whose attendance they required, was not restrained on account of any liberty of speech, but for his exhibiting a bill in the house against the prerogative of the queen; a temerity which was not to be tolerated. And he concluded with observing, that even speeches made in that house had been questioned and examined by the sovereign. [1] Cleere, another member, remarked, that the sovereign’s prerogative is not so much as disputable, and that the safety of the queen is the safety of the subject. He added, that in questions of divinity, every man was for his instruction to repair to his ordinary; and he seems to insinuate, that the bishops themselves, for their instruction, must repair to the queen. [2] Fleetwood observed, that in his memory, he knew a man who, in the fifth of the present queen, had been called to account for a speech in the house. But lest this example should be deemed too recent, he would inform them, from the parliament rolls, that, in the reign of Henry V., a bishop was committed to prison by the king’s command, on account of his freedom of speech; and the parliament presumed not to go further than to be humble suitors for him: in the subsequent reign, the speaker himself was committed, with another member; and the house found no other remedy than a like submissive application. He advised the house to have recourse to the same expedient, and not to presume either to send for their member, or demand him as of right. [3] During this speech, those members of the privy council who sat in the house whispered together; upon which the speaker moved that the house should make stay of all further proceedings: a motion which was immediately complied with. The queen, finding that the experiment which she had made was likely to excite a great ferment, saved her honor by this silence of the house; and lest the question might be resumed, she sent next day to Stricland her permission to give his attendance in parliament. [4]

Notwithstanding this rebuke from the throne, the zeal of the commons still engaged them to continue the discussion of those other bills which regarded religion; but they were interrupted by a still more arbitrary proceeding of the queen, in which the lords condescended to be her instruments. This house sent a message to the commons, desiring that a committee might attend them. Some members were appointed for that purpose; and the upper house informed them, that the queen's majesty, being informed of the articles of reformation which they had canvassed, approved of them, intended to publish them, and to make the bishops execute them by virtue of her royal authority, as supreme head of the church of England; but that she would not permit them to be treated of in parliament. [1] The house, though they did not entirely stop proceedings on account of this injunction, seem to have been nowise offended at such haughty treatment; and in the issue, all the bills came to nothing.

A motion made by Robert Bell, a Puritan, against an exclusive patent granted to a company of merchants in Bristol, [2] gave also occasion to several remarkable incidents. The queen, some days after the motion was made, sent orders, by the mouth of the speaker, commanding the house to

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* D'Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes, .

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* * * * D'Ewes, .

spend little time in motions, and to avoid long speeches. All the members understood that she had been offended, because a matter had been moved which seemed to touch her prerogative. [3] Fleetwood accordingly spoke of this delicate subject. He observed, that the queen had a prerogative of granting patents; that to question the validity of any patent was to invade the royal prerogative; that all foreign trade was entirely subjected to the pleasure of the sovereign; that even the statute which gave liberty of commerce, admitted of all prohibitions from the crown; and that the prince, when he granted an exclusive patent, only employed the power vested in him, and prohibited all others from dealing in any particular branch of commerce. He quoted the clerk of the parliament's book to prove, that no man might speak in parliament of the statute of wills, unless the king first gave license; because the royal prerogative in the wards was thereby touched. He showed, likewise, the statutes of Edward I., Edward III., and Henry IV., with a saving of the prerogative. And in Edward VI.'s time, the protector was applied to for his allowance to mention matters of prerogative. [4]

* D'Ewes, , 185.

* * D'Ewes, .

* * * D'Ewes, .

* * * * D'Ewes, .

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, the gallant and renowned sea adventurer, carried these topics still further. He endeavored to prove the motion made by Bell to be a vain device, and perilous to be treated of; since it tended to the derogation of the prerogative imperial, which whoever should attempt so much as in fancy, could not, he said, be otherwise accounted than an open enemy. For what difference is there between saying, that the queen is not to use the privilege of the crown and saying, that she is not queen? And though experience has shown so much clemency in her majesty, as might, perhaps, make subjects forget their duty, it is not good to sport or venture too much with princes. He reminded them of the fable of the hare, who, upon the proclamation that all horned beasts should depart the court, immediately fled, lest his ears should be construed to be horns; and by this apologue he seems to insinuate, that even those who heard or permitted such dangerous speeches, would not themselves be entirely free from danger. He desired them to beware, lest if they meddled further with these matters, the queen might look to her own power; and finding herself able to suppress their challenged liberty, and to exert an arbitrary authority, might imitate the example of Lewis XI. of France, who, as he termed it, delivered the crown from wardship. [1]

Though this speech gave some disgust, nobody, at the time, replied any thing, but that Sir Humphrey mistook the meaning of the house, and of the member who made the motion: they never had any other purpose, than to represent their grievances, in due and seemly form, unto her majesty. But in a subsequent debate, Peter Wentworth, a man of a superior free spirit, called that speech an insult on the house; noted Sir Humphrey's disposition to flatter and fawn on the prince; compared him to the chameleon, which can change itself into all colors, except white; and recommended to the house a due care of liberty of speech, and of the privileges of parliament. [2]

It appears, on the whole, that the motion against the exclusive patent had no effect. Bell, the member who first introduced it, was sent for by the council, and was severely reprimanded for his temerity. He returned to the house with such an amazed countenance, that all the members, well informed of the reason, were struck with terror; and during some time no one durst rise to speak of any matter of importance, for fear of giving offence to the queen and council. Even after the fears of the commons were somewhat abated, the members spoke with extreme precaution; and by employing most of their discourse in preambles and apologies, they showed their conscious terror of the rod which hung over them. Wherever any delicate point was touched, though ever so gently; nay, seemed to be approached, though at ever so great a distance; the whisper ran about the house, "The queen will be offended; the council will be extremely displeased:" and by these surmises men were warned of the danger to which

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* D'Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes, .

they exposed themselves. It is remarkable that the patent, which the queen defended with such imperious violence, was contrived for the profit of four courtiers, and was attended with the utter ruin of seven or eight thousand of her industrious subjects. [1]

Thus every thing which passed the two houses was extremely respectful and submissive; yet did the queen think it incumbent on her, at the conclusion of the session, to check and that with great severity, those feeble efforts of liberty which had appeared in the motions and speeches of some members. The lord keeper told the commons, in her majesty's name, that though the majority of the lower house had shown themselves in their proceedings discreet and dutiful, yet a few of them had discovered a contrary character, and had justly merited the reproach of audacious, arrogant, and presumptuous: contrary to their duty, both as subjects and parliament men; nay, contrary to the express injunctions given them from the throne at the beginning of the session; injunctions which it might well become them to have better attended to; they had presumed to call in question her majesty's grants and prerogatives. But her majesty warns them, that since they thus wilfully forget themselves, they are otherwise to be admonished: some other species of correction must be found for them; since neither the commands of her majesty, nor the example of their wiser brethren, can reclaim their audacious, arrogant, and presumptuous folly, by which they are thus led to meddle with what nowise belongs to them, and what lies beyond the compass of their understanding. [2]

* D'Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes,

In all these transactions appears clearly the opinion which Elizabeth had entertained of the duty and authority of parliaments. They were not to canvass any matters of state; still less were they to meddle with the church. Questions of either kind were far above their reach, and were appropriated to the prince alone, or to those councils and ministers with whom he was pleased to intrust them. What then was the office of parliaments? They might give directions for the due tanning of leather, or milling of cloth; for the preservation of pheasants and partridges; for the reparation of bridges and highways; for the punishment of vagabonds or common beggars.

Regulations concerning the police of the country came properly under their inspection; and the laws of this kind which they prescribed, had, if not a greater, yet a more durable authority, than those which were derived solely from the proclamations of the sovereign. Precedents or reports could fix a rule for decisions in private property, or the punishment of crimes; but no alteration or innovation in the municipal law could proceed from any other source than the parliament; nor would the courts of justice be induced to change their established practice by an order of council. But the most acceptable part of parliamentary proceedings was the granting of subsidies; the attainting and punishing of the obnoxious nobility, or any minister of state after his fall; the countenancing of such great efforts of power, as might be deemed somewhat exceptionable, when they proceeded entirely from the sovereign. The redress of grievances were sometimes promised to the people; but seldom could have place, while it was an established rule, that the prerogatives of the crown must not be abridged, or so much as questioned and examined in parliament. Even though monopolies and exclusive companies had already reached an enormous height, and were every day increasing to the destruction of all liberty, and extinction of all industry, it was criminal in a member to propose, in the most dutiful and regular manner, a parliamentary application against any of them.

These maxims of government were not kept secret by Elizabeth, nor smoothed over by any fair appearances or plausible pretences. They were openly avowed in her speeches and messages to parliament; and were accompanied with all the haughtiness, nay, sometimes bitterness of expression, which the meanest servant could look for from his offended master. Yet, notwithstanding this conduct, Elizabeth continued to be the most popular sovereign that ever swayed the sceptre of England; because the maxims of her reign were conformable to the principles of the times, and to the opinion generally entertained with regard to the constitution. The continued encroachments of popular assemblies on Elizabeth’s successors have so changed our ideas in these matters, that the passages above mentioned appear to us extremely curious, and even, at first, surprising; but they were so little remarked, during the time, that neither Camden, though a contemporary writer, nor any other historian, has taken any notice of them. So absolute, indeed, was the authority of the crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, by the Puritans alone; and it was to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous, and habits so ridiculous, that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution. Actuated by that zeal which belongs to innovators, and by the courage which enthusiasm inspires, they hazarded the utmost indignation of their sovereign, and employing all their industry to be elected into parliament, — a matter not difficult while a seat was rather regarded as a burden than an advantage — they first acquired a majority in that assembly, and then obtained an ascendent over the church and monarchy.

The following were the principal laws enacted this session. It was declared treason, during the lifetime of the queen, to affirm that she was not the lawful sovereign, or that any other possessed a preferable title, or that she was a heretic, schismatic, or infidel, or that the laws and statutes cannot limit and determine the right of the crown and the successor thereof: to maintain, in writing or printing, that any person, except the "natural issue" of her body, is, or ought to be, the queen's heir or successor, subjected the person and all his abettors, for the first offence, to imprisonment during a year, and to the forfeiture of half their goods: the second offence subjected them to the penalty of a præmunire. [1] This law was plainly levelled against the queen of Scots and her partisans; and implied an avowal, that Elizabeth never intended to declare her successor. It may be noted, that the usual phrase of "lawful issue," which the parliament thought indecent towards the queen, as if she could be supposed to have any other, was changed into that of "natural issue." But this alteration was the source of pleasantry during the time; and some suspected a deeper design, as if Leicester intended, in case of the queen's demise, to produce some bastard of his own, and affirm that he was her offspring. [2]

* 13 Eliz. c. I.

* * Camden, .

It appeared this session, that a bribe of four pounds had been given to a mayor for a seat in parliament. D'Ewes, p.

181. It is probable that the member had no other view than the privilege of being free from arrests.

It was also enacted, that whosoever by bulls should publish absolutions or other rescripts of the pope, or should, by means of them, reconcile any man to the church of Rome, such offenders, as well as those who were so reconciled, should be guilty of treason. The penalty of a præmunire was imposed on every one who imported any Agnus Dei, crucifix, or such other implement of superstition, consecrated by the pope. [1] The former laws against usury were enforced by a new statute. [2] A supply of one subsidy and two fifteenths was granted by parliament. The queen, as she was determined to yield to them none of her power, was very cautious in asking them for any supply. She endeavored, either by a rigid frugality to make her ordinary revenues suffice for the necessities of the crown, or she employed her prerogative, and procured money by the granting of patents, monopolies, or by some such ruinous expedient.

* 13 Eliz. c. 2.

* * 13 Eliz. c. 8.

Though Elizabeth possessed such uncontrolled authority over her parliaments, and such extensive influence over her people; though, during a course of thirteen years, she had maintained the public tranquillity, which was only interrupted by the hasty and ill-concerted insurrection in the north; she was still kept in great anxiety, and felt her throne perpetually totter under her. The violent commotions excited in France and the Low Countries, as well as in Scotland, seemed in one view to secure her against any disturbance; but they served, on more reflection, to instruct her in the danger of her situation, when she remarked that England, no less than these neighboring countries, contained the seeds of intestine discord; the differences of religious opinion, and the furious intolerance and animosity of the opposite sectaries.

The league, formed at Bayonne in 1566, for the extermination of the Protestants, had not been concluded so secretly but intelligence of it had reached Condé, Coligny, and the other leaders of the Hugonots; and finding that the measures of the court agreed with their suspicions, they determined to prevent the cruel perfidy of their enemies, and to strike a blow before the Catholics were aware of the danger. The Hugonots, though dispersed over the whole kingdom, formed a kind of separate empire; and being closely united, as well by their religious zeal as by the dangers to which they were perpetually exposed, they obeyed with entire submission the orders of their leaders, and were ready on every signal to fly to arms. The king and queen mother were living in great security at Monceaux, in Brie, when they found themselves surrounded by Protestant troops, which had secretly marched thither from all quarters; and had not a body of Swiss come speedily to their relief, and conducted them with great intrepidity to Paris, they must have fallen, without resistance, into the hands of the malecontents. A battle was afterwards fought in the plains of St. Denis; where, though the old constable, Montmorency, the general of the Catholics, was killed combating bravely at the head of his troops, the Hugonots were finally defeated. Condé, collecting his broken forces and receiving a strong reënforcement from the German Protestants, appeared again in the field; and laying siege to Chartres, a place of great importance, obliged the court to agree to a new accommodation.

So great was the mutual animosity of those religionists, that even had the leaders on both sides been ever so sincere in their intentions for peace, and reposed ever so much confidence in each other, it would have been difficult to retain the people in tranquillity; much more where such extreme jealousy prevailed, and where the court employed every pacification as a snare for their enemies. A plan was laid for seizing the person of the prince and admiral; who narrowly escaped to Rochelle, and summoned their partisans to their assistance. [1]

* Davila, lib. iv.

The civil wars were renewed with greater fury than ever, and the parties became still more exasperated against each other. The young duke of Anjou, brother to the king, commanded the forces of the Catholics; and fought in 1569, a great battle at Jarnac with the Hugonots, where the prince of Condé was killed, and his army defeated. This discomfiture, with the loss of so great a leader, reduced not the Hugonots to despair. The admiral still supported the cause; and having placed at the head of the Protestants the prince of Navarre, then sixteen years of age, and the young prince of Condé, he encouraged the party rather to perish bravely in the field, than ignominiously by the hands of the executioner. He collected such numbers, so determined to endure every extremity, that he was enabled to make head against the duke of Anjou; and being strengthened by a new reënforcement of Germans, he obliged that prince to retreat and to divide his forces.

Coligny then laid siege to Poietiers; and as the eyes of all France were fixed on this enterprise, the duke of Guise, emulous of the renown which his father had acquired by the defence of Metz, threw himself into the place, and so animated the garrison by his valor and conduct, that the admiral was obliged to raise the siege. Such was the commencement of that unrivalled fame and grandeur afterwards attained by this duke of Guise. The attachment which all the Catholics had borne to his father, was immediately transferred to the son; and men pleased themselves in comparing all the great and shining qualities which seemed, in a manner, hereditary in that family. Equal in affability, in munificence, in address, in eloquence, and in every quality which engages the affections of men; equal also in valor, in conduct, in enterprise, in capacity; there seemed only this difference between them, that the son, educated in more turbulent times, and finding a greater dissolution of all law and order, exceeded the father in ambition and temerity, and was engaged in enterprises still more destructive to the authority of his sovereign, and to the repose of his native country.

Elizabeth, who kept her attention fixed on the civil commotions of France, was nowise pleased with this new rise of her enemies, the Guises; and being anxious for the fate of the Protestants, whose interests were connected with her own, [1] she was engaged, notwithstanding her aversion from all rebellion, and from all opposition to the will of the sovereign, to give them secretly some assistance. Besides employing her authority with the German princes, she lent money to the queen of Navarre, and received some jewels as pledges for the loan. And she permitted Henry Champernon to levy, and transport over into France, a regiment of a hundred gentlemen volunteers; among whom Walter Raleigh, then a young man, began to distinguish himself, in that great school of military valor. [2]

* Haynes, .

* * Camden, .

The admiral, constrained by the impatience of his troops, and by the difficulty of subsisting them, fought with the duke of Anjou the battle of Moncontour in Poictou, where he was wounded and defeated. The court of France, notwithstanding their frequent experience of the obstinacy of the Hugonots, and the vigor of Coligny, vainly flattered themselves that the force of the rebels was at last finally annihilated; and they neglected further preparations against a foe, who, they thought, could never more become dangerous. They were surprised to hear, that this leader had appeared, without dismay, in another quarter of the kingdom; had encouraged the young princes, whom he governed to like constancy; had assembled an army; had taken the field; and was even strong enough to threaten Paris. The public finances, diminished by the continued disorders of the kingdom, and wasted by so many fruitless military enterprises, could no longer bear the charge of a new armament, and the king, notwithstanding his extreme animosity against the Hugonots, was obliged, in 1570, to conclude an accommodation with them, to grant them a pardon for all past offences, and to renew the edicts for liberty of conscience.

Though a pacification was seemingly concluded, the mind of Charles was nowise reconciled to his rebellious subjects, and this accommodation, like all the foregoing, was nothing but a snare, by which the perfidious court had projected to destroy at once, without danger, all its formidable enemies. As the two young princes, the admiral, and the other leaders of the Hugonots, instructed by past experience, discovered an extreme distrust of the king’s intentions, and kept themselves in security at a distance, all possible artifices were employed to remove their apprehensions, and to convince them of the sincerity of the new counsels which seemed to be embraced. The terms of the peace were religiously observed to them; the toleration was strictly maintained; all attempts made by the zealous Catholics to infringe it were punished with severity; offices, and favors, and honors were bestowed on the principal nobility among the Protestants; and the king and council every where declared that, tired of civil disorders, and convinced of the impossibility of forcing men’s consciences, they were thenceforth determined to allow every one the free exercise of his religion.

Among the other artifices employed to lull the Protestants into a fatal security, Charles affected to enter into close connections with Elizabeth; and as it seemed not the interest of France to forward the union of the two kingdoms of Great Britain, that princess the more easily flattered herself that the French monarch would prefer her friendship to that of the queen of Scots. The better to deceive her, proposals of marriage were made her with the duke of Anjou; a prince whose youth, beauty, and reputation for valor might naturally be supposed to recommend him to a woman who had appeared not altogether insensible to these endowments. The queen immediately founded on this offer the project of deceiving the court of France; and being intent on that artifice, she laid herself the more open to be deceived. Negotiations were entered into with regard to the marriage; terms of the contract were proposed; difficulties started and removed; and the two courts, equally insincere, though not equally culpable, seemed to approach every day nearer to each other in their demands and concessions. The great obstacle seemed to lie in adjusting the difference of religion; because Elizabeth, who recommended toleration to Charles, was determined not to grant it in her own dominions, not even to her husband; and the duke of Anjou seemed unwilling to submit, for the sake of interest, to the dishonor of an apostasy. [1]

* Camden, . Davila, lib. v. Digger’s Complete Ambassador , 110, 111

The artificial politics of Elizabeth never triumphed so much in any contrivances as in those which were conjoined with her coquetry; and as her character in this particular was generally known, the court of France thought that they might, without danger of forming any final conclusion, venture the further in their concessions and offers to her. The queen also had other motives for dissimulation. Besides the advantage of discouraging Mary’s partisans by the prospect of an alliance between France and England, her situation with Philip demanded her utmost vigilance and attention; and the violent authority established in the Low Countries made her desirous of fortifying herself even with the bare appearance of a new confederacy.

The theological controversies which had long agitated Europe, had from the beginning penetrated into the Low Countries; and as these provinces maintained an extensive commerce, they had early received, from every kingdom with which they corresponded, a tincture of religious innovation. An opinion at that time prevailed, which had been zealously propagated by priests, and implicitly received by sovereigns, that heresy was closely connected with rebellion, and that every great or violent alteration in the church involved a like revolution in the civil government. The forward zeal of the reformers would seldom allow them to wait the consent of the magistrate to their innovations: they became less dutiful when opposed and punished; and though their pretended spirit of reasoning and inquiry was in reality nothing but a new species of implicit faith, the prince took the alarm, as if so institutions could be secure from the temerity of their researches. The emperor Charles, who proposed to augment his authority under pretence of defending the Catholic faith, easily adopted these political principles; and notwithstanding the limited prerogative which he possessed in the Netherlands, he published the most arbitrary, severe, and tyrannical edicts against the Protestants; and he took care that the execution of them should be no less violent and sanguinary. He was neither cruel nor bigoted in his natural disposition; yet an historian, celebrated for moderation and caution, has computed, that in the several persecutions promoted by that monarch, no less than a hundred thousand persons perished by the hands of the executioner. [1] But these severe remedies; far from answering the purposes intended, had rather served to augment the numbers as well as zeal of the reformers; and the magistrates of the several towns, seeing no end of those barbarous executions, felt their humanity rebel against their principles, and declined any further persecution of the new doctrines.

* Grotii Annal. lib. i. Father Paul, another great authority, computes, in a passage above cited, that fifty thousand persons were put to death in the Low Countries alone.

When Philip succeeded to his father's dominions, the Flemings were justly alarmed with new apprehensions, lest their prince, observing the lenity of the magistrates, should take the execution of the edicts from such remiss hands, and should establish the inquisition in the Low Countries, accompanied with all the iniquities and barbarities which attended it in Spain. The severe and unrelenting character of the man, his professed attachment to Spanish manners, the inflexible bigotry of his principles; all these circumstances increased their terror; and when he departed the Netherlands, with a known intention never to return, the disgust of the inhabitants was extremely augmented, and their dread of those tyrannical orders which their sovereign, surrounded with Spanish ministers, would issue from his cabinet at Madrid. He left the duchess of Parma governess of the Low Countries, and the plain good sense and good temper of that princess, had she been intrusted with the sole power, would have preserved the submission of those opulent provinces, which were lost from that refinement of treacherous and barbarous politics on which Philip so highly valued himself. The Flemings found, that the name alone of regent remained with the duchess; that Cardinal Granville entirely possessed the king's confidence; that attempts were every day made on their liberties; that a resolution was taken never more to assemble the states; that new bishoprics were arbitrarily erected, in order to enforce the execution of the persecuting edicts; and that, on the whole, they must expect to be reduced to the condition of a province under the Spanish monarchy. The discontents of the nobility gave countenance to the complaints of the gentry, which encouraged the mutiny of the populace; and all orders of men showed a strong disposition to revolt. Associations were formed, tumultuary petitions presented, names of distinction assumed, badges of party displayed; and the current of the people, impelled by religious zeal, and irritated by feeble resistance, rose to such a height, that in several towns, particularly in Antwerp, they made an open invasion on the established worship, pillaged the churches and monasteries, broke the images, and committed the most unwarrantable disorders.

The wiser part of the nobility, particularly the prince of Orange, and the counts Egmont and Horn, were alarmed at these excesses, to which their own discontents had at first given countenance; and seconding the wisdom of the governess, they suppressed the dangerous insurrections, punished the ringleaders, and reduced all the provinces to a state of order and submission. But Philip was not contented with the reëstablishment of his ancient authority: he considered that provinces so remote from the seat of government could not be ruled by a limited prerogative; and that a prince who must entreat rather than command, would necessarily, when he resided not among the people, feel every day a diminution of his power and influence. He determined, therefore, to lay hold of the late popular disorders as a pretence for entirely abolishing the privileges of the Low Country provinces, and for ruling them thenceforth with a military and arbitrary authority.

In the execution of this violent design, he employed a man who was a proper instrument in the hands of such a tyrant. Ferdinand of Toledo, duke of Alva, had been educated amidst arms; and having attained a consummate knowledge in the military art, his habits led him to transfer into all government the severe discipline of a camp, and to conceive no measures between prince and subject but those of rigid command and implicit obedience. This general, in 1568, conducted from Italy to the Low Countries a powerful body of veteran Spaniards; and his avowed animosity to the Flemings, with his known character, struck that whole people with terror and consternation. It belongs not to our subject to relate at length those violences which Alva’s natural barbarity, steeled by reflection and aggravated by insolence, exercised on those flourishing provinces. It suffices to say, that all their privileges, the gift of so many princes, and the inheritance of so many ages, were openly and expressly abolished by edict;

arbitrary and sanguinary tribunals erected; the counts Egmont and Horn, in spite of their great merits and past services, brought to the scaffold; multitudes of all ranks thrown into confinement, and thence delivered over to the executioner; and notwithstanding the peaceable submission of all men, nothing was heard of but confiscation, imprisonment, exile, torture, and death.

Elizabeth was equally displeased to see the progress of that scheme laid for the extermination of the Protestants, and to observe the erection of so great a military power in a state situated in so near a neighborhood. She gave protection to all the Flemish exiles who took shelter in her dominions; and as many of these were the most industrious inhabitants of the Netherlands, and had rendered that country celebrated for its arts, she reaped the advantage of introducing into England some useful manufactures, which were formerly unknown in that kingdom. Foreseeing that the violent government of Alva could not long subsist without exciting some commotion, she ventured to commit an insult upon him, which she would have been cautious not to hazard against a more established authority. Some Genoese merchants had engaged, by contract with Philip, to transport into Flanders the sum of four hundred thousand crowns; and the vessels on which this money was embarked, had been attacked in the Channel by some privateers equipped by the French Hugonots, and had taken shelter in Plymouth and Southampton. The commanders of the ships pretended that the money belonged to the king of Spain; but the queen, finding upon inquiry that it was the property of Genoese merchants, took possession of it as a loan; and by that means deprived the duke of Alva of this resource in the time of his greatest necessity. Alva, in revenge, seized all the English merchants in the Low Countries, threw them into prison, and confiscated their effects. The queen retaliated by a like violence on the Flemish and Spanish merchants; and gave all the English liberty to make reprisals on the subjects of Philip.

These differences were afterwards accommodated by treaty, and mutual reparations were made to the merchants; but nothing could repair the loss which so well-timed a blow inflicted on the Spanish government in the Low Countries. Alva, in want of money, and dreading the immediate mutiny of his troops, to whom great arrears were due, imposed, by his arbitrary will, the most ruinous taxes on the people. He not only required the hundredth penny, and the twentieth of all immovable goods; he also demanded the tenth of all movable goods on every sale; an absurd tyranny, which would not only have destroyed all arts and commerce, but even have restrained the common intercourse of life. The people refused compliance; the duke had recourse to his usual expedient of the gibbet; and thus matters came still nearer the last, extremities between the Flemings and the Spaniards. [1]

All the enemies of Elizabeth, in order to revenge themselves for her insults, had naturally recourse to one policy, the supporting of the cause and pretensions of the queen of Scots; and Alva, whose measures were ever violent, soon opened a secret intercourse with that princess. There was one Rodolphi, a Florentine merchant, who had resided about fifteen years in London, and who, while he conducted his commerce in England, had managed all the correspondence of the court of Rome with the Catholic nobility and gentry. [2]

He had been thrown into prison at the time when the duke of Norfolk's intrigues with Mary had been discovered; but either no proof, was found against him, or the part which he had acted was not very criminal; and he soon after recovered his liberty. This man, zealous for the Catholic faith, had formed a scheme, in concert with the Spanish ambassador, for subverting the government, by a foreign invasion and a domestic insurrection; and when he communicated his project by letter to Mary, he found, that as she was now fully convinced of Elizabeth's artifices, and despaired of ever recovering her authority, or even her liberty, by pacific measures, she willingly gave her concurrence. The great number of discontented Catholics were the chief source of their hopes on the side of England and they also observed that the kingdom was at that time full of indigent gentry, chiefly younger brothers, who, having at present, by the late decay of the church, and the yet languishing state of commerce, no prospect of a livelihood suitable to their birth, were ready to throw themselves into any desperate enterprise. [1] But in order to inspire life and courage into all these malecontents, it was requisite that some great nobleman should put himself at their head; and no one appeared to Rodolphi, and to the bishop of Ross, who entered into all these intrigues, so

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* Bentivoglio, part. i. lib. v. Camden, .

* * Lesley, . State Trials, vol. i. .

proper, both on account of his power and his popularity, as the duke of Norfolk.

This nobleman, when released from confinement in the Tower, had given his promise, that he would drop all intercourse with the queen of Scots; [2] but finding that he had lost, and, as he feared, beyond recovery, the confidence and favor of Elizabeth, and being still in some degree restrained from his liberty, he was tempted, by impatience and despair, to violate his word, and to open anew his correspondence with the captive princess. [3] A promise of marriage was renewed between them; the duke engaged to enter into all her interests; and as his remorses gradually diminished in the course of these transactions, he was pushed to give his consent to enterprises still more criminal. Rodolphi's plan was, that the duke of Alva should, on some other pretence, assemble a great quantity of shipping in the Low Countries; should transport a body of six thousand foot and four thousand horse into England; should land them at Harwich, where the duke of Norfolk was to join them with all his friends; should thence march directly to London, and oblige the queen to submit to whatever terms the conspirators should please to impose upon her. [4] Norfolk expressed his assent to this plan; and three letters, in consequence of it, were written in his name by Rodolphi; one to Alva, another to the pope, and a third to the king of Spain; but the duke, apprehensive of the danger, refused to sign them.

* Lesley, .

* * Haynes, .

* * * State Trials, vol. i. .

* * * * Lesley, ., State Trials, vol. i. , 87.

v Lesley, ., 161. Camden, .

He only sent to the Spanish ambassador a servant and confidant, named Barker, as well to notify his concurrence in the plan, as to vouch for the authenticity of these letters; and Rodolphi, having obtained a letter of credence from the ambassador, proceeded on his journey to Brussels and to Rome. The duke of Alva and the pope embraced the scheme with alacrity:

Rodolphi informed Norfolk of their intentions; [1] and every thing seemed to concur in forwarding the undertaking.

Norfolk, notwithstanding these criminal enterprises, had never entirely forgotten his duty to his sovereign, his country, and his religion: and though he had laid the plan both of an invasion and an insurrection, he still flattered himself, that the innocence of his intentions would justify the violence of his measures, and that, as he aimed at nothing but the liberty of the queen of Scots, and the obtaining of Elizabeth’s consent to his marriage, he could not justly reproach himself as a rebel and a traitor. [2] It is certain, however, that, considering the queen’s vigor and spirit, the scheme, if successful, must finally have ended in dethroning her; and her authority was here exposed to the utmost danger.

The conspiracy hitherto had entirely escaped the vigilance of Elizabeth, and that of Secretary Cecil, who now bore the title of Lord Burleigh. It was from another attempt of Norfolk’s that they first obtained a hint, which, being diligently traced, led at last to a full discovery. Mary had intended to send a sum of money to Lord Herreis and her partisans in Scotland; and Norfolk undertook to have it delivered to Bannister, a servant of his, at that time in the north, who was to find some expedient for conveying it to Lord Herreis. [3] He intrusted the money to a servant who was not in the secret, and told him, that the bag contained a sum of money in silver, which he was to deliver to Bannister with a letter: but the servant, conjecturing from the weight and size of the bag that it was full of gold, carried the letter to Burleigh; who immediately ordered Bannister, Barker, and Hicford, the duke’s secretary, to be put under arrest, and to undergo a severe examination. Torture made them confess the whole truth; and as Hicford, though ordered to burn all papers, had carefully kept them concealed under the mats of the duke’s chamber, and under the tiles of the house, full evidence now appeared against his master. [4]

* State Trials, vol. i. .

* * Lesley, .

* * * Lesley, . State Trials, vol. i. . Camden, p. 434. Digges, , 137, 140. Strype, vol. ii. .

* * * * Lesley, .

Norfolk himself, who was entirely ignorant of the discoveries made by his servants, was brought before the council; and though exhorted to atone for his guilt by a full confession, he persisted in denying every crime with which he was charged. The queen always declared, that if he had given her this proof of his sincere repentance, she would have pardoned all his former offences; [1] but finding him obstinate, she committed him to the Tower, and ordered him to be brought to his trial. The bishop of Ross had, on some suspicion, been committed to custody before the discovery of Norfolk's guilt; and every expedient was employed to make him reveal his share in the conspiracy. He at first insisted on his privilege: but he was told, that as his mistress was no longer a sovereign, he would not be regarded as an ambassador, and that, even if that character were allowed, it did not warrant him in conspiring against the sovereign at whose court he resided. [2] As he still refused to answer interrogatories, he was informed of the confession made by Norfolk's servants; after which he no longer scrupled to make a full discovery; and his evidence put the guilt of that nobleman beyond all question.

1572.

A jury of twenty-five peers unanimously passed sentence upon him. The trial was quite regular, even according to the strict rules observed at present in these matters; except that the witnesses gave not their evidence in court, and were not confronted with the prisoner; a laudable practice, which was not at that time observed in trials for high treason.

The queen still hesitated concerning Norfolk's execution; whether that she was really moved by friendship and compassion towards a peer of that rank and merit, or that, affecting the praise of clemency, she only put on the appearance of these sentiments. Twice she signed a warrant for his execution, and twice revoked the fatal sentence; [3] and though her ministers and counsellors pushed her to rigor, she still appeared irresolute and undetermined.

* Lesley, .

* * Lesley, . Spotswood.

* * * Carte, , from Fenelon’s Despatches. Digges, p. 166. Strype, vol. ii. .

After four months’ hesitation, a parliament was assembled; and the commons addressed her in strong terms for the execution of the duke; a sanction which, when added to the greatness and certainty of his guilt, would, she thought, justify, in the eyes of all mankind, her severity against that nobleman. Norfolk died with calmness and constancy; and though he cleared himself of any disloyal intentions against the queen’s authority, he acknowledged the justice of the sentence by which he suffered. [1] That we may relate together affairs of a similar nature, we shall mention, that the earl of Northumberland, being delivered up to the queen by the regent of Scotland, was also, a few months after, brought to the scaffold for his rebellion.

The queen of Scots was either the occasion or the cause of all these disturbances; but as she was a sovereign princess and might reasonably, from the harsh treatment which she had met with, think herself entitled to use any expedient for her relief, Elizabeth durst not, as yet, form any resolution of proceeding to extremities against her. She only sent Lord Delawar, Sir Ralph Sadler, Sir Thomas Bromley, and Dr. Wilson, to expostulate with her, and to demand satisfaction for all those parts of her conduct, which, from the beginning of her life, had given displeasure to Elizabeth: her assuming the arms of England, refusing to ratify the treaty of Edinburgh, intending to marry Norfolk without the queen’s consent, concurring in the northern rebellion, [2] practising with Rodolphi to engage the king of Spain in an invasion of England, [3] procuring the pope’s bull of excommunication, and allowing her friends abroad to give her the title of queen of England. Mary justified herself from the several articles of the charge, either by denying the facts imputed to her, or by throwing the blame on others. [4] But the queen was little satisfied with her apology; and the parliament was so enraged against her, that the commons made a direct application for her immediate trial and execution. They employed some topics derived from practice, and reason, and the laws of nations; but the chief stress was laid on passages and examples from the Old Testament, which, if considered as a general rule of conduct, (an intention which it is unreasonable to suppose,) would lead to consequences destructive of all principles of humanity and morality. Matters were here carried further than

Elizabeth intended; and that princess, satisfied with showing Mary the disposition of the nation, sent to the house her express commands not to deal any further at present with the affair of the Scottish queen.[v*]

* Camden, . Strype, vol. ii. App. .

* * Digges, , 107. Strype, vol. ii. , 52.

* * * Digges, , 208, 209. Strype, vol. ii. , 51.

* * * * Camden, .

v D’Ewes, , 208, etc.

v* D’Ewes, , 241.

Nothing could be a stronger proof that the puritanical interest prevailed in the house, than the intemperate use of authorities derived from Scripture, especially from the Old Testament; and the queen was so little a lover of that sect, that she was not likely to make any concession merely in deference to their solicitation. She showed, this session, her disapprobation of their schemes in another remarkable instance. The commons had passed two bills for regulating ecclesiastical ceremonies; but she sent them a like imperious message with her former ones; and by the terror of her prerogative, she stopped all further proceeding in those matters [1]

But though Elizabeth would not carry matters to such extremities against Mary as were recommended by the parliament, she was alarmed at the great interest and the restless spirit of that princess, as well as her close connections with Spain; and she thought it necessary both to increase the rigor and strictness of her confinement, and to follow maxims different from those which she had hitherto pursued in her management of Scotland.[2] That kingdom remained still in a state of anarchy. The Castle of Edinburgh, commanded by Kirkaldy of Grange, had declared for Mary; and the lords of that party, encouraged by his countenance, had taken possession of the capital, and carried on a vigorous war against the regent. By a sudden and unexpected inroad, they seized that nobleman at Stirling; but finding that his friends, sallying from the castle, were likely to rescue him, they instantly put him to death. The earl of Marre was chosen regent in his room, and found the same difficulties in the government of that divided country. He was therefore glad to accept of the mediation offered by the French and English ambassadors; and to conclude, on equal terms, a truce with the queen's party. [3] He was a man of free and generous spirit, and scorned to submit to any dependence on England; and for this reason Elizabeth, who had then formed intimate connections with France, yielded with less reluctance to the solicitations of that court, still maintained the appearance of neutrality between the parties, and allowed matters to remain on a balance in Scotland. [4]

* D'Ewes, , 238.

* * Digges, .

* * * Spotswood, .

* * * * Digges, , 165, 169.

But affairs soon after took a new turn: Marre died of melancholy, with which the distracted state of the country affected him: Morton was chosen regent; and as this nobleman had secretly taken all his measures with Elizabeth, who no longer relied on the friendship of the French court, she resolved to exert herself more effectually for the support of the party which she had always favored. She sent Sir Henry Killegrew ambassador to Scotland, who found Mary's partisans so discouraged by the discovery and punishment of Norfolk's conspiracy, that they were glad to submit to the king's authority, and accept of an indemnity for all past offences. [1] The duke of Chatelrault and the earl of Huntley, with the most considerable of Mary's friends, laid down their arms on these conditions. The garrison alone of the Castle of Edinburgh continued refractory. Kirkaldy's fortunes were desperate; and he flattered himself with the hopes of receiving assistance from the kings of France and Spain, who encouraged his obstinacy, in the view of being able, from that quarter, to give disturbance to England. Elizabeth was alarmed with the danger; she no more apprehended making an entire breach with the queen of Scots, who, she found, would not any longer be amused by her artifices; she had an implicit reliance on Morton; and she saw, that by the submission of all the considerable nobility, the pacification of Scotland would be an easy, as well as a most important undertaking. She ordered, therefore, Sir William Drury, governor of Berwick, to march with some troops and artillery to Edinburgh, and to besiege the castle. [2]

* Spotswood, .

* * Camden, p, 443.

The garrison surrendered at discretion: Kirkaldy was delivered into the hands of his countrymen, by whom he was tried, condemned, and executed; Secretary Lidington, who had taken part with him, died, soon after, a voluntary death, as is supposed; and Scotland submitting entirely to the regent, gave not, during a long time, any further inquietude to Elizabeth.

The events which happened in France were not so agreeable to the queen's interests and inclinations. The fallacious pacifications, which had been so often made with the Hugonots, gave them reason to suspect the present intentions of the court; and after all the other leaders of that party were deceived into a dangerous credulity, the sagacious admiral still remained doubtful and uncertain. But his suspicions were at last overcome, partly by the profound dissimulation of Charles, partly by his own earnest desire to end the miseries of France, and return again to the performance of his duty towards his prince and country. He considered, besides, that as the former violent conduct of the court had ever met with such fatal success, it was not unlikely that a prince, who had newly come to years of discretion, and appeared not to be rivetted in any dangerous animosities or prejudices, would be induced to govern himself by more moderate maxims. And as Charles was young, was of a passionate, hasty temper, and addicted to pleasure, [1] such deep perfidy seemed either remote from his character, or difficult and almost impossible to be so uniformly supported by him. Moved by these considerations, the admiral, the queen of Navarre, and all the Hugonots, began to repose themselves in full security, and gave credit to the treacherous caresses and professions of the French court. Elizabeth herself, notwithstanding her great experience and penetration, entertained not the least distrust of Charles's sincerity; and being pleased to find her enemies of the house of Guise removed from all authority, and to observe an animosity every day growing between the French and Spanish monarchs, she concluded a defensive league with the former, [2] and regarded this alliance as an invincible barrier to her throne. Walsingham, her ambassador, sent her over, by every courier, the most satisfactory accounts of the honor, and plain dealing, and fidelity of that perfidious prince.

* Digges, , 39.

* * Camden, .

The better to blind the jealous Hugonots, and draw their leaders into the snare prepared for them, Charles offered his sister, Margaret, in marriage to the prince of Navarre; and the admiral, with all the considerable nobility of the party, had come to Paris, in order to assist at the celebration of these nuptials, which, it was hoped, would finally, if not compose the differences, at least appease the bloody animosity of the two religions. The queen of Navarre was poisoned by orders from the court; the admiral was dangerously wounded by an assassin: yet Charles, redoubling his dissimulation, was still able to retain the Hugonots in their security; till, on the evening of St. Bartholomew, a few days after the marriage, the signal was given for a general massacre of those religionists, and the king himself in person led the way to these assassinations. The hatred long entertained by the Parisians against the Protestants, made them second, without any preparation, the fury of the court; and persons of every condition, age, and sex, suspected of any propensity to that religion, were involved in an undistinguished ruin. The admiral, his son-in-law Teligni, Soubize, Rochefoucault, Pardaillon, Piles, Lavardin, men who, during the late wars, had signalized themselves by the most heroic actions, were miserably butchered without resistance; the streets of Paris flowed with blood; and the people, more enraged than satiated with their cruelty, as if repining that death had saved their victims from further insult, exercised on their dead bodies all the rage of the most licentious brutality. About five hundred gentlemen and men of rank perished in this massacre; and near ten thousand of inferior condition. [1] Orders were instantly despatched to all the provinces for a like general execution of the Protestants; and in Rouen, Lyons, and many other cities, the people emulated the fury of the capital. Even the murder of the king of Navarre, and prince of Condé, had been proposed by the duke of Guise; but Charles, softened by the amiable manners of the king of Navarre, and hoping that these young princes might easily be converted to the Catholic faith, determined to spare their lives, though he obliged them to purchase their safety by a seeming change of their religion.

Charles, in order to cover this barbarous perfidy, pretended that a conspiracy of the Hugonots to seize his person had been suddenly detected; and that he had been necessitated, for his own defence, to proceed to this severity against them. He sent orders to Fenelon, his ambassador in England, to ask an audience, and to give Elizabeth this account of the late transaction. That minister, a man of probity, abhorred the treachery and cruelty of his court, and even scrupled not to declare that he was now ashamed to bear the name of Frenchman; [2] yet he was obliged to obey his orders, and make use of the apology which had been prescribed to him. He met with that reception from all the courtiers which he knew the conduct of his master had so well merited. Nothing could be more awful and affecting than the solemnity of his audience. A melancholy sorrow sat on every face: silence, as in the dead of night, reigned through all the chambers of the royal apartment: the courtiers and ladies, clad in deep mourning, were ranged on each side, and allowed him to pass without affording him one salute or favorable look, till he was admitted to the queen herself. [3]

* Davila, lib. v.

* * Digges, [2?]

* * * Carte, vol. iii. ,

That princess received him with a more easy, if not a more gracious countenance; and heard from Fenelon’s Despatches, his apology, without discovering any visible symptoms of indignation. She then told him, that though, on the first rumor of this dreadful intelligence, she had been astonished that so many brave men and loyal subjects, who rested secure on the faith of their sovereign, should have been suddenly butchered in so barbarous a manner, she had hitherto suspended her judgment, till further and more certain information should be brought her: that the account which he had given, even if founded on no mistake or bad information, though it might alleviate, would by no means remove the blame of the king’s counsellors, or justify the strange irregularity of their proceedings: that the same force which, without resistance, had massacred so many defenceless men, could easily have secured their persons, and have reserved them for a trial, and for punishment by a legal sentence, which would have distinguished the innocent from the guilty: that the admiral in particular, being dangerously wounded, and environed by the guards of the king, on whose protection he seemed entirely to rely, had no means of escape, and might surely, before his death, have been convicted of the crimes imputed to him: that it was more worthy of a sovereign to reserve in his own hands the sword of justice, than to commit it to bloody murderers, who, being the declared and mortal enemies of the persons accused, employed it without mercy and without distinction: that if these sentiments were just, even supposing the conspiracy of the Protestants to be real, how much more so if that crime was a calumny of their enemies, invented for their destruction? that if, upon inquiry, the innocence of these unhappy victims should afterwards appear, it was the king’s duty to turn his vengeance on their defamers, who had thus cruelly abused his confidence, had murdered so many of his brave subjects, and had done what in them lay to cover him with everlasting dishonor: and that for her part, she should form her judgment of his intentions by his subsequent conduct; and in the mean time should act as desired by the ambassador and rather pity than blame his master for the extremities to which he had been carried. [1]

* Digges, , 248.

Elizabeth was fully sensible of the dangerous situation in which she now stood. In the massacre of Paris, she saw the result of that general conspiracy formed for the extermination of the Protestants; and she knew that she herself, as the head and protectress of the new religion, was exposed to the fury and resentment of the Catholics. The violence and cruelty of the Spaniards in the Low Countries was another branch of the same conspiracy; and as Charles and Philip, two princes nearly allied in perfidy and barbarity, as well as in bigotry, had now laid aside their pretended quarrel, and had avowed the most entire friendship, [1] she had reason, as soon as they had appeased their domestic commotions, to dread the effects of their united counsels. The duke of Guise also, and his family, whom Charles, in order to deceive the admiral, had hitherto kept at a distance, had now acquired an open and entire ascendant in the court of France; and she was sensible that these princes, from personal as well as political reasons, were her declared and implacable enemies. The queen of Scots, their near relation and close confederate, was the pretender to her throne; and though detained in custody, was actuated by a restless spirit, and, besides her foreign allies, possessed numerous and zealous partisans in the heart of the kingdom. For these reasons Elizabeth thought it more prudent not to reject all commerce with the French monarch, but still to listen to the professions of friendship which he made her. She allowed even the negotiations to be renewed for her marriage with the duke of Alençon, Charles's third brother: [2] those with the duke of Anjou had already been broken off. She sent the earl of Worcester to assist in her name at the baptism of a young princess, born to Charles; but before she agreed to give him this last mark of condescension, she thought it becoming her dignity to renew her expressions of blame, and even of detestation, against the cruelties exercised on his Protestant subjects. [3] Meanwhile, she prepared herself for that attack which seemed to threaten her from the combined power and violence of the Romanists: she fortified Portsmouth, put her fleet in order, exercised her militia, cultivated popularity with her subjects, acted with vigor for the further reduction of Scotland under obedience to the young king, and renewed her alliance with the German princes, who were no less alarmed than herself at these treacherous and sanguinary measures, so universally embraced by the Catholics.

* Digges, , 282.

* * Digges, passim. Camden, .

* * * Digges, , 298. Camden, .

But though Elizabeth cautiously avoided coming to extremities with Charles, the greatest security that she possessed against his violence was derived from the difficulties which the obstinate resistance of the Hugonots still created to him.

1573.

Such of that sect as lived near the frontiers, immediately, on the first news of the massacres, fled into England, Germany, or Switzerland; where they excited the compassion and indignation of the Protestants, and prepared themselves, with increased forces and redoubled zeal, to return into France, and avenge the treacherous slaughter of their brethren. Those who lived in the middle of the kingdom took shelter in the nearest garrisons occupied by the Hugonots; and finding that they could repose no faith in capitulations, and expect no clemency, were determined to defend themselves to the last extremity. The sect which Charles had hoped at one blow to exterminate, had now an army of eighteen thousand men on foot, and possessed, in different parts of the kingdom, above a hundred cities, castles, or fortresses; [1] nor could that prince deem himself secure from the invasion threatened him by all the other Protestants in Europe. The nobility and gentry of England were roused to such a pitch of resentment, that they offered to levy an army of twenty-two thousand foot and four thousand horse, to transport them into France, and to maintain them six months at their own charge: but Elizabeth, who was cautious in her measures, and who feared to inflame further the quarrel between the two religions by these dangerous crusades, refused her consent, and moderated the zeal of her subjects. [2] The German princes, less political, or more secure from the resentment of France, forwarded the levies made by the Protestants; and the young prince of Condé, having escaped from court, put himself at the head of these troops, and prepared to invade the kingdom. The duke of Alençon, the king of Navarre, the family of Montmorency, and many considerable men even among the Catholics, displeased, either on a private or public account, with the measures of the court, favored the progress of the Hugonots; and every thing relapsed into confusion.

1574.

The king, instead of repenting his violent counsels, which had brought matters to such extremities, called aloud for new violences; [3] nor could even the mortal distemper, under which he labored, moderate the rage and animosity by which he was actuated. He died without male issue, at the age of twenty-five years; a prince, whose character, containing that unusual mixture of dissimulation and ferocity, of quick resentment and unrelenting vengeance, executed the greatest mischiefs, and threatened still worse, both to his native country and to all Europe.

* Digges, .

* * Digges, , 341.

* * * Davila, lib.

Henry, duke of Anjou, who had some time before been elected king of Poland, no sooner heard of his brother’s death, than he hastened to take possession of the throne of France; and found the kingdom not only involved in the greatest present disorders, but exposed to infirmities for which it was extremely difficult to provide any suitable remedy.

1575.

The people were divided into two theological factions, furious from their zeal, and mutually enraged from the injuries which they had committed or suffered; and as all faith had been violated and moderation banished, it seemed impracticable to find any terms of composition between them. Each party had devoted itself to leaders whose commands had more authority than the will of the sovereign; and even the Catholics, to whom the king was attached, were entirely conducted by the counsels of Guise and his family. The religious connections had, on both sides, superseded the civil; or rather, (for men will always be guided by present interest,) two empires being secretly formed in the kingdom, every individual was engaged by new views of interest to follow those leaders to whom, during the course of past convulsions, he had been indebted for his honors and preferment.

Henry, observing the low condition of the crown, had laid a scheme for restoring his own authority, by acting as umpire between the parties, by moderating their differences, and by reducing both to a dependence upon himself. He possessed all the talents of dissimulation requisite for the execution of this delicate plan; but being deficient in vigor, application, and sound judgment, instead of acquiring a superiority over both factions, he lost the confidence of both, and taught the partisans of each to adhere still more closely to their particular leaders, whom they found more cordial and sincere in the cause which they espoused.

1576.

The Hugonots were strengthened by the accession of a German army under the prince of Condé and Prince Casimir; but much more by the credit and personal virtues of the king of Navarre, who, having fled from court, had placed himself at the head of that formidable party. Henry, in prosecution of his plan, entered into a composition with them; and being desirous of preserving a balance between the sects, he granted them peace on the most advantageous conditions. This was the fifth general peace made with the Hugonots, but though it was no more sincere on the part of the court than any of the former, it gave the highest disgust to the Catholics; and afforded the duke of Guise the desired pretence of declaiming against the measures, and maxims, and conduct of the king.

That artful and bold leader took thence an occasion of reducing his party into a more formed and regular body; and he laid the first foundations of the famous "league," which, without paying any regard to the royal authority, aimed at the entire suppression of the Hugonots. Such was the unhappy condition of France, from the past severities and violent conduct of its princes, that toleration could no longer be admitted; and a concession for liberty of conscience, which would probably have appeased the reformers, excited the greatest resentment in the Catholics.

1577.

Henry, in order to divert the force of the league from himself, and even to elude its efforts against the Hugonots, declared himself the head of that seditious confederacy, and took the field as leader of the Romanists. But his dilatory and feeble measures betrayed his reluctance to the undertaking; and after some unsuccessful attempts, he concluded a new peace, which, though less favorable than the former to the Protestants, gave no contentment to the Catholics. Mutual diffidence still prevailed between the parties; the king's moderation was suspicious to both; each faction continued to fortify itself against that breach, which, they foresaw, must speedily ensue; theological controversy daily whetted the animosity of the sects; and every private injury became the ground of a public quarrel.

1578.

The king, hoping by his artifice and subtlety to allure the nation into a love of pleasure and repose, was himself caught in the snare; and sinking into a dissolute indolence, wholly lost the esteem, and, in a great measure, the affections, of his people. Instead of advancing such men of character and abilities as were neuters between these dangerous factions, he gave all his confidence to young, agreeable favorites, who, unable to prop his falling authority, leaned entirely upon it, and inflamed the general odium against his administration. The public burdens, increased by his profuse liberality, and felt more heavy on a disordered kingdom, became another ground of complaint: and the uncontrolled animosity of parties, joined to the multiplicity of taxes, rendered peace more calamitous than any open state of foreign or even domestic hostility.

1579.

The artifices of the king too refined to succeed, and too frequent to be concealed; and the plain, direct, and avowed conduct of the duke of Guise on one side, and that of the king of Navarre on the other, drew by degrees the generality of the nation to devote themselves without reserve to one or the other of those great leaders.

The civil commotions of France were of too general importance to be overlooked by the other princes of Europe; and Elizabeth's foresight and vigilance, though somewhat restrained by her frugality, led her to take secretly some part in them. Besides employing on all occasions her good offices in favor of the Hugonots, she had expended no inconsiderable sums in levying that army of Germans which the prince of Condé and Prince Casimir conducted into France; [1] and notwithstanding her negotiations with the court, and her professions of amity, she always considered her own interests as connected with the prosperity of the French Protestants, and the depression of the house of Guise. Philip, on the other hand, had declared himself protector of the league; had entered into the closest correspondence with Guise; and had employed all his authority in supporting the credit of that factious leader. This sympathy of religion, which of itself begat a connection of interests, was one considerable inducement; but that monarch had also in view the subduing of his rebellious subjects in the Netherlands;

who, as they received great encouragement from the French Protestants, would, he hoped, finally despair of success, after the entire suppression of their friends and confederates.

* Camden, p 452.

The same political views which engaged Elizabeth to support the Hugonots would have led her to assist the distressed Protestants in the Low Countries; but the mighty power of Philip, the tranquillity of all his other dominions, and the great force which he maintained in these mutinous provinces, kept her in awe, and obliged her, notwithstanding all temptations and all provocations, to preserve some terms of amity with that monarch. The Spanish ambassador represented to her, that many of the Flemish exiles, who infested the seas, and preyed on his master’s subjects, were received into the harbors of England, and were there allowed to dispose of their prizes; and by these remonstrances the queen found herself under a necessity of denying them all entrance into her dominions.

But this measure proved in the issue extremely prejudicial to the interests of Philip. These desperate exiles, finding no longer any possibility of subsistence, were forced to attempt the most perilous enterprises; and they made an assault on the Brille, a seaport town in Holland, where they met with success, and after a short resistance became masters of the place. [1]

* Camden, .

The duke of Alva was alarmed at the danger; and stopping those bloody executions which he was making on the defenceless Flemings, he hastened with his army to extinguish the flame, which, falling on materials so well prepared for combustion, seemed to menace a general conflagration. His fears soon appeared to be well grounded. The people in the neighborhood of the Brille, enraged by that complication of cruelty, oppression, insolence, usurpation, and persecution, under which they and all their countrymen labored, flew to arms; and in a few days almost all the whole province of Holland and that of Zealand had revolted from the Spaniards, and had openly declared against the tyranny of Alva. This event happened in the year 1572.

William, prince of Orange, descended from a sovereign family of great lustre and antiquity in Germany, inheriting the possessions of a sovereign family in France, had fixed his residence in the Low Countries; and on account of his noble birth and immense riches, as well as of his personal merit, was universally regarded as the greatest subject that lived in those provinces. He had opposed, by all regular and dutiful means, the progress of the Spanish usurpations; and when Alva conducted his army into the Netherlands, and assumed the government, this prince, well acquainted with the violent character of the man, and the tyrannical spirit of the court of Madrid, wisely fled from the danger which threatened him, and retired to his paternal estate and dominions in Germany. He was cited to appear before Alva's tribunal, was condemned in absence, was declared a rebel, and his ample possessions in the Low Countries were confiscated. In revenge, he had levied an army of Protestants in the empire, and had made some attempts to restore the Flemings to liberty; but was still repulsed with loss by the vigilance and military conduct of Alva, and by the great bravery as well as discipline of those veteran Spaniards who served under that general.

The revolt of Holland and Zealand, provinces which the prince of Orange had formerly commanded, and where he was much beloved, called him anew from his retreat; and he added conduct, no less than spirit, to that obstinate resistance which was here made to the Spanish dominion. By uniting the revolted cities in a league, he laid the foundation of that illustrious commonwealth, the offspring of industry and liberty, whose arms and policy have long made so signal a figure in every transaction of Europe. He inflamed the inhabitants by every motive which religious zeal, resentment, or love of freedom could inspire. Though the present greatness of the Spanish monarchy might deprive them of all courage, he still flattered them with the concurrence of the other provinces, and with assistance from neighboring states; and he exhorted them, in defence of their religion, their liberties, their lives, to endure the utmost extremities of war. From this spirit proceeded the desperate defence of Harlem; a defence which nothing but the most consuming famine could overcome, and which the Spaniards revenged by the execution of more than two thousand of the inhabitants. [1] This extreme severity, instead of striking terror into the Hollanders, animated them by despair; and the vigorous resistance made at Alemaer, where Alva was finally repulsed, showed them that their insolent enemies were not invincible. The duke, finding at last the pernicious effects of his violent counsels, solicited to be recalled; Medinaceli, who was appointed his successor, refused to accept the government: Requesens, commendator of Castile, was sent from Italy to replace Alva; and this tyrant departed from the Netherlands in 1574; leaving his name in execration to the inhabitants; and boasting in his turn, that, during the course of five years, he had delivered above eighteen thousand of these rebellious heretics into the hands of the executioner. [2]

* Bentivoglio, lib. vol.1.*

* * Grotius, lib. ii.

Requesens, though a man of milder dispositions, could not appease the violent hatred which the revolted Hollanders had conceived against the Spanish government; and the war continued as obstinate as ever. In the siege of Leyden, under taken by the Spaniards, the Dutch opened the dikes and sluices, in order to drive them from the enterprise: and the very peasants were active in ruining their fields by an inundation, rather than fall again under the hated tyranny of Spain. But notwithstanding this repulse, the governor still pursued the war; and the contest seemed too unequal between so mighty a monarchy and two small provinces, however fortified by nature, and however defended by the desperate resolution of the inhabitants. The prince of Orange, therefore, in 1575, was resolved to sue for foreign succor, and to make applications to one or other of his great neighbors, Henry or Elizabeth. The court of France was not exempt from the same spirit of tyranny and persecution which prevailed among the Spaniards; and that kingdom, torn by domestic dissensions, seemed not to enjoy, at present, either leisure or ability to pay regard to foreign interests. But England, long connected both by commerce and alliance with the Netherlands, and now more concerned in the fate of the revolted provinces by sympathy in religion, seemed naturally interested in their defence; and as Elizabeth had justly entertained great jealousy of Philip, and governed her kingdom in perfect tranquillity, hopes were entertained that her policy, her ambition, or her generosity, would engage her to, support them under their present calamities. They sent, therefore, a solemn embassy to London, consisting of St. Aldegonde, Douza, Nivelle, Buys, and Melsen; and after employing the most humble supplications to the queen, they offered her the possession and sovereignty of their provinces, if she would exert her power in their defence.

There were many strong motives which might impel Elizabeth to accept of so liberal an offer. She was apprised of the injuries which Philip had done her, by his intrigues with the malecontents in England and Ireland: [1] she foresaw the danger which she must incur from a total prevalence of the Catholics in the Low Countries: and the maritime situation of those provinces, as well as their command over the great rivers, was an inviting circumstance to a nation like the English, who were beginning to cultivate commerce and naval power.

* Digges, .

But this princess, though magnanimous, had never entertained the ambition of making conquests, or gaining new acquisitions; and the whole purpose of her vigilant and active politics was to maintain, by the most frugal and cautious expedients, the tranquillity of her own dominions. An open war with the Spanish monarchy was the apparent consequence of her accepting the dominion of these provinces; and after taking the inhabitants under her protection, she could never afterwards in honor abandon them, but, however desperate their defence might become, she must embrace it, even further than her convenience or interests would permit. For these reasons, she refused, in positive terms, the sovereignty proffered her; but told the ambassadors, that, in return for the good will which the prince of Orange and the states had shown her, she would endeavor to mediate an agreement for them, on the most reasonable terms that could be obtained. [1]

* Camden, , 454.

She sent accordingly Sir Henry Cobham to Philip; and represented to him the danger which he would incur of losing entirely the Low Countries, if France could obtain the least interval from her intestine disorders, and find leisure to offer her protection to those mutinous and discontented provinces. Philip seemed to take this remonstrance in good part; but no accord ensued, and war in the Netherlands continued with the same rage and violence as before.

It was an accident that delivered the Hollanders from their present desperate situation. Requesens, the governor, dying suddenly, the Spanish troops, discontented for want of pay, and licentious for want of a proper authority to command them, broke into a furious mutiny, and threw every thing into confusion. They sacked and pillaged the cities of Maestricht and Antwerp, and executed great slaughter on the inhabitants: they threatened the other cities with a like fate: and all the provinces, excepting Luxembourg, united for mutual defence against their violence, and called in the prince of Orange and the Hollanders as their protectors. A treaty, commonly called the Pacification of Ghent, was formed by common agreement; and the removal of foreign troops, with the restoration of their ancient liberties, was the object which the provinces mutually stipulated to pursue. Don John of Austria, natural brother to Philip, being appointed governor, found, on his arrival at Luxembourg, that the states had so fortified themselves, and that the Spanish troops were so divided by their situation, that there was no possibility of resistance; and he agreed to the terms required of him. The Spaniards evacuated the country; and these provinces seemed at last to breathe a little from their calamities.

But it was not easy to settle entire peace, while the thirst of revenge and dominion governed the king of Spain, and while the Flemings were so strongly agitated with resentment of past, and fear of future injuries. The ambition of Don John, who coveted this great theatre for his military talents engaged him rather to inflame than appease the quarrel; and as he found the states determined to impose very strict limitations on his authority, he broke all articles, seized Namur, and procured the recall of the Spanish army from Italy. This prince, endowed with a lofty genius, and elated by the prosperous successes of his youth, had opened his mind to vast undertakings; and looking much beyond the conquest of the revolted provinces, had projected to espouse the queen of Scots, and to acquire in her right the dominion of the British kingdoms. [1] Elizabeth was aware of his intentions; and seeing now, from the union of all the provinces, a fair prospect of their making a long and vigorous defence against Spain, she no longer scrupled to embrace the protection of their liberties, which seemed so intimately connected with her own safety. After sending them a sum of money, about twenty thousand pounds, for the immediate pay of their troops, she concluded a treaty with them; in which she stipulated to assist them with five thousand foot and a thousand horse, at the charge of the Flemings; and to lend them a hundred thousand pounds, on receiving the bonds of some of the most considerable towns of the Netherlands, for her repayment within the year. It was further agreed, that the commander of the English army should be admitted into the council of the states; and nothing be determined concerning war or peace, without previously informing the queen or him of it; that they should enter into no league without her consent; that if any discord arose among themselves, it should be referred to her arbitration; and that, if any prince, on any pretext, should attempt hostilities against her, they should send to her assistance an army equal to that which she had employed in their defence. This alliance was signed on the seventh of January, 1578. [2]

* Camden, . Grotius, lib. iii.

* * Camden, .

One considerable inducement to the queen for entering into treaty with the states, was to prevent their throwing themselves into the arms of France; and she was desirous to make the king of Spain believe that it was her sole motive. She represented to him, by her ambassador, Thomas Wilkes, that hitherto she had religiously acted the part of a good neighbor and ally; had refused the sovereignty of Holland and Zealand when offered her, had advised the prince of Orange to submit to the king; and had even accompanied her counsel with menaces, in case of his refusal. She persevered, she said, in the same friendly intentions; and, as a proof of it, would venture to interpose with her advice for the composure of the present differences: let Don John, whom she could not but regard as her mortal enemy, be recalled; let some other prince more popular be substituted in his room; let the Spanish armies be withdrawn; let the Flemings be restored to their ancient liberties and privileges; and if, after these concessions, they were still obstinate not to return to their duty, she promised to join her arms with those of the king of Spain, and force them to compliance. Philip dissembled his resentment against the queen, and still continued to supply Don John with money and troops. That prince, though once repulsed at Rimenant by the valor of the English, under Norris, and though opposed, as well by the army of the states as by Prince Casimir, who had conducted to the Low Countries a great body of Germans paid by the queen, gained a great advantage over the Flemings at Gemblours; but was cut off in the midst of his prosperity by poison, given him secretly, as was suspected, by orders from Philip, who dreaded his ambition. The prince of Parma succeeded to the command; who, uniting valor and clemency, negotiation and military exploits, made great progress against the revolted Flemings, and advanced the progress of the Spaniards by his arts as well as by his arms.

During these years, while Europe was almost every where in great commotion, England enjoyed a profound tranquillity; owing chiefly to the prudence and vigor of the queen's administration, and to the wise precautions which she employed in all her measures. By supporting the zealous Protestants in Scotland, she had twice given them the superiority over their antagonists, had closely connected their interests with her own, and had procured herself entire security from that quarter whence the most dangerous invasions could be made upon her. She saw in France her enemies, the Guises, though extremely powerful, yet counterbalanced by the Hugo*nots, her zealous partisans, and even hated by the king, who was jealous of their restless and exorbitant ambition. The bigotry of Philip gave her just ground of anxiety; but the same bigotry had happily excited the most obstinate opposition among his own subjects, and had created him enemies whom his arms and policy were not likely soon to subdue. The queen of Scots, her antagonist and rival, and the pretender to her throne, was a prisoner in her hands; and, by her impatience and high spirit, had been engaged in practices which afforded the queen a pretence for rendering her confinement more rigorous, and for cutting off her communication with her partisans in England.

Religion was the capital point on which depended all the political transactions of that age; and the queen's conduct in this particular, making allowance for the prevailing prejudices of the times, could scarcely be accused of severity or imprudence. She established no inquisition into men's bosoms; she imposed no oath of supremacy, except on those who received trust or emolument from the public; and though the exercise of every religion but the established was prohibited by statute, the violation of this law, by saying mass, and receiving the sacrament, in private houses, was in many instances connived at; [1] while, on the other hand, the Catholics, in the beginning of her reign, showed little reluctance against going to church, or frequenting the ordinary duties of public worship. The pope, sensible that this practice would by degrees reconcile all his partisans to the reformed religion, hastened the publication of the bull which excommunicated the queen, and freed her subjects from their oaths of allegiance; and great pains were taken by the emissaries of Rome, to render the breach between the two religions as wide as possible, and to make the frequenting of Protestant churches appear highly criminal in the Catholics.[2] These practices, with the rebellion which ensued, increased the vigilance and severity of the government; but the Romanists, if their condition were compared with that of the nonconformists in other countries, and with their own maxims where they domineered, could not justly complain of violence or persecution.

* Camden, .

* * Walsingham's Letter in Burnet, vol. ii. . Cabala, .

The queen appeared rather more anxious to keep a strict hand over the Puritans; who, though their pretensions were not so immediately dangerous to her authority, seemed to be actuated by a more unreasonable obstinacy, and to retain claims, of which, both in civil and ecclesiastical matters, it was as yet difficult to discern the full scope and intention. Some secret attempts of that sect to establish a separate congregation and discipline, had been carefully repressed in the beginning of this reign;[1] and when any of the established clergy discovered a tendency to their principles, by omitting the legal habits or ceremonies, the queen had shown a determined resolution to punish them by fines and deprivation;[2] though her orders to that purpose had been frequently eluded, by the secret protection which these sectaries received from some of her most considerable courtiers.

But what chiefly tended to gain Elizabeth the hearts of her subjects, was her frugality, which, though carried sometimes to an extreme, led her not to amass treasures, but only to prevent impositions upon her people, who were at that time very little accustomed to bear the burdens of government. By means of her rigid economy, she paid all the debts which she found on the crown, with their full interest; though some of these debts had been contracted even during the reign of her father.[3] Some loans, which she had exacted at the commencement of her reign, were repaid by her; a practice in that age somewhat unusual;[4] and she established her credit on such a footing, that no sovereign in Europe could more readily command any sum which the public exigencies might at any time require. During this peaceable and uniform government, England furnishes few materials for history; and except the small part which Elizabeth took in foreign transactions, there scarcely passed any occurrence which requires a particular detail.

* Strype's Life of Parker, . Strype's Life of Grindal, .

* * Heylin, , 166.

* * * D'Ewes, . Camden, .

* * * * D'Ewes, .

v D'Ewes, .

The most memorable event in this period was a session of parliament, held on the eighth of February, 1576; where debates were started which may appear somewhat curious and singular. Peter Wentworth, a Puritan, who had signalized himself in former parliaments by his free and undaunted spirit, opened this session with a premeditated harangue, which drew on him the indignation of the house, and gave great offence to the queen and the ministers. As it seems to contain a rude sketch of those principles of liberty which happily gained afterwards the ascendant in England, it may not be improper to give, in a few words, the substance of it. He premised, that the very name of liberty is sweet; but the thing itself is precious beyond the most inestimable treasures and that it behoved them to be careful, lest, contenting themselves with the sweetness of the name, they forego the substance, and abandon what of all earthly possessions was of the highest value to the kingdom. He then proceeded to observe, that freedom of speech in that house, — a privilege so useful both to sovereign and subject, — had been formerly infringed in many essential articles, and was at present exposed to the most imminent danger: that it was usual, when any subject of importance was handled, especially if it regarded religion, to surmise, that these topics were disagreeable to the queen, and that the further proceeding in them would draw down her indignation upon their temerity: that Solomon had justly affirmed the king's displeasure to be a messenger of death; and it was no wonder if men, even though urged by motives of conscience and duty, should be inclined to stop short when they found themselves exposed to so severe a penalty: that by the employing of this argument, the house was incapacitated from serving their country, and even from serving the queen herself, whose ears, besieged by pernicious flatterers, were thereby rendered inaccessible to the most salutary truths: that it was a mockery to call an assembly a parliament, yet deny it that privilege which was so essential to its being, and without which it must degenerate into an abject school of servility and dissimulation: that as the parliament was the great guardian of the laws, they ought to have liberty to discharge their trust, and to maintain that authority whence even kings themselves derive their being: that a king was constituted such by law, and though he was not dependent on man, yet was he subordinate to God and the law, and was obliged to make their prescriptions, not his own will, the rule of his conduct: that even his commission, as God's vicegerent, enforced, instead of loosening this obligation; since he was thereby invested with authority to execute on earth the will of God, which is nothing but law and justice: that though these surmises of displeasing the queen by their proceedings, had impeached, in a very essential point, all freedom of speech, — a privilege granted them by a special law, — yet was there a more express and more dangerous invasion made on their liberties, by frequent messages from the throne: that it had become a practice, when the house was entering on any question, either ecclesiastical or civil, to bring an order from the queen, inhibiting them absolutely from treating of such matters, and debarring them from all further discussion of these momentous articles: that the prelates, emboldened by her royal protection, had assumed a decisive power in all questions of religion, and required that every one should implicitly submit his faith to their arbitrary determinations: that the love which he bore his sovereign forbade him to be silent under such abuses, or to sacrifice, on this important occasion, his duty to servile flattery and complaisance; and that, as no earthly creature was exempt from fault, so neither was the queen herself; but, in imposing this servitude on her faithful commons, had committed a great and even dangerous fault against herself and the whole commonwealth. [1]

It is easy to observe from this speech, that, in this dawn of liberty, the parliamentary style was still crude and unformed; and that the proper decorum of attacking ministers and counsellors, without interesting the honor of the crown, or mentioning the person of the sovereign, was not yet entirely established. The commons expressed great displeasure at this unusual license; they sequestered Wentworth from the house, and committed him prisoner to the serjeant at arms. They even ordered him to be examined by a committee, consisting of all those members who were also members of the privy council; and a report to be next day made to the house. This committee met in the star chamber, and, wearing the aspect of that arbitrary court, summoned Wentworth to appear before them, and answer for his behavior. But though the commons had discovered so little delicacy or precaution in thus confounding their own authority with that of the star chamber, Wentworth better understood the principles of liberty, and refused to give these counsellors any account of his conduct in parliament, till he were satisfied that they acted, not as members of the privy council, but as a committee of the house. [2] He justified his liberty of speech by pleading the rigor and hardship of the queen's messages; and notwithstanding that the committee showed him, by instances in other reigns, that the practice of sending such messages was not unprecedented, he would not agree to express any sorrow or repentance. The issue of the affair was, that after a month's confinement, the queen sent to the commons, informing them, that, from her special grace and favor, she had restored him to his liberty and to his place in the house. [3]

* D'Ewes, , 237, etc.

* * D'Ewes, .

* * * D'Ewes, .

By this seeming lenity, she indirectly retained the power which she had assumed, of imprisoning the members and obliging them to answer before her for their conduct in parliament. And Sir Walter Mildmay endeavored to make the house sensible of her majesty's goodness, in so gently remitting the indignation which she might justly conceive at the temerity of their member; but he informed them, that they had not the liberty of speaking what and of whom they pleased; and that indiscreet freedoms used in that house, had, both in the present and foregoing ages, met with a proper chastisement. He warned them, therefore, not to abuse further the queen's clemency, lest she be constrained, contrary to her inclination, to turn an unsuccessful lenity into a necessary severity. [1]

The behavior of the two houses was, in every other respect, equally tame and submissive. Instead of a bill, which was at first introduced, [2] for the reformation of the church, they were contented to present a petition to her majesty for that purpose; and when she told them, that she would give orders to her bishops to amend all abuses, and, if they were negligent, she would herself, by her supreme power and authority over the church, give such redress as would entirely satisfy the nation, the parliament willingly acquiesced in this sovereign and peremptory decision. [3]

Though the commons showed so little spirit in opposing the authority of the crown, they maintained, this session, their dignity against an encroachment of the peers, and would not agree to a conference which, they thought, was demanded of them in an irregular manner. They acknowledged, however, with all humbleness, (such is their expression,) the superiority of the lords: they only refused to give that house any reason for their proceedings; and asserted, that where they altered a bill sent them by the peers, it belonged to them to desire a conference, not to the upper house to require it. [4]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * D’Ewes, .

* * * * D’Ewes, .

The commons granted an aid of one subsidy and two fifteenths. Mildmay, in order to satisfy the house concerning the reasonableness of this grant, entered into a detail of the queen’s past expenses in supporting the government, and of the increasing charges of the crown, from the daily increase in the price of all commodities. He did not, however, forge to admonish them, that they were to regard this detail as the pure effect of the queen’s condescension, since she was not bound to give them any account how she employed her treasure. [1]

* D’Ewes, .

CHAPTER XLI.

ELIZABETH.

1580.

The greatest and most absolute security that Elizabeth enjoyed during her whole reign, never exempted her from vigilance and attention; but the scene began now to be more overcast, and dangers gradually multiplied on her from more than one quarter.

The earl of Morton had hitherto retained Scotland in strict alliance with the queen, and had also restored domestic tranquility to that kingdom; but it was not to be expected, that the factitious and legal authority of a regent would long maintain itself in a country unacquainted with law and order; where even the natural dominion of hereditary princes so often met with opposition and control. The nobility began anew to break into factions; the people were disgusted with some instances of Morton’s avarice; and the clergy, who complained of further encroachments on their narrow revenue, joined and increased the discontent of the other orders. The regent was sensible of his dangerous situation; and having dropped some peevish expressions, as if he were willing or desirous to resign, the noblemen of the opposite party, favorites of the young king, laid hold of this concession, and required that demission which he seemed so frankly to offer them. James was at this time but eleven years of age; yet Morton, having secured himself, as he imagined, by a general pardon, resigned his authority into the hands of the king, who pretended to conduct in his own name the administration of the kingdom. The regent retired from the government, and seemed to employ himself entirely in the care of his domestic affairs; but either tired with this tranquillity, which appeared insipid after the agitations of ambition, or thinking it time to throw off dissimulation, he came again to court, acquired an ascendant in the council, and though he resumed not the title of regent, governed with the same authority as before. The opposite party, after holding separate conventions, took to arms, on pretence of delivering their prince from captivity, and restoring him to the free exercise of his government: Queen Elizabeth interposed by her ambassador, Sir

Robert Bowes, and mediated an agreement between the factions: Morton kept possession of the government; but his enemies were numerous and vigilant, and his authority seemed to become every day more precarious.

The count d’Aubigney, of the house of Lenox, cousin-german to the king’s father, had been born and educated in France; and being a young man of good address and a sweet disposition, he appeared to the duke of Guise a proper instrument for detaching James from the English interest, and connecting him with his mother and her relations. He no sooner appeared at Stirling, where James resided, than he acquired the affections of the young monarch; and joining his interests with those of James Stuart, of the house of Ochiltree, a man of profligate manners, who had acquired the king’s favor, he employed himself, under the appearance of play and amusement, in instilling into the tender mind of the prince new sentiments of politics and government. He represented to him the injustice which had been done to Mary in her deposition, and made him entertain thoughts either of resigning the crown into her hands, or of associating her with him in the administration. [1] Elizabeth, alarmed at the danger which might ensue from the prevalence of this interest in Scotland, sent anew Sir Robert Bowes to Stirling; and accusing D’Aubigney, now created earl of Lenox, of an attachment to the French, warned James against entertaining such suspicious and dangerous connections. [2]

The king excused himself by Sir Alexander Hume, his ambassador; and Lenox, finding that the queen had openly declared against him, was further confirmed in his intention of overturning the English interest, and particularly of ruining Morton, who was regarded as the head of it. That nobleman was arrested in council, accused as an accomplice in the late king’s murder, committed to prison, brought to trial, and condemned to suffer as a traitor. He confessed that Bothwell had communicated to him the design, had pleaded Mary’s consent, and had desired his concurrence; but he denied that he himself had ever expressed any approbation of the crime; and in excuse for his concealing it, he alleged the danger of revealing the

* Digges, , 428. Melvil, .

* * Spotswood, .

secret, either to Henry, who had no resolution nor constancy, or Morton, who appeared to be an accomplice in the murder. [1]

* Spotswood, , Crawford, . Moyse’s Memoirs, Spotswood, . t Digge, . 373.

Sir Thomas Randolph was sent by the queen to intercede in favor of Morton; and that ambassador, not content with discharging this duty of his function, engaged, by his persuasion, the earls of Argyle, Montrose, Angus, Marre, and Glencairne, to enter into a confederacy for protecting, even by force of arms, the life of the prisoner. The more to overawe that nobleman’s enemies, Elizabeth ordered forces to be assembled on the borders of England; but this expedient served only to hasten his sentence and execution. Morton died with that constancy and resolution which had attended him through all the various events of his life; and left a reputation which was less disputed with regard to abilities than probity and virtue. But this conclusion of the scene happened not till the subsequent year.

Elizabeth was, during this period, extremely anxious on account of every revolution in Scotland; both because that country alone, not being separated from England by sea, and bordering on all the Catholic and malecontent counties, afforded her enemies a safe and easy method of attacking her; and because she was sensible that Mary, thinking herself abandoned by the French monarch, had been engaged by the Guises to have recourse to the powerful protection of Philip, who, though he had not yet come to an open rupture with the queen, was every day, both by the injuries which he committed and suffered, more exasperated against her. That he might retaliate the assistance which she gave to his rebels in the Low Countries, he had sent, under the name of the pope; a body of seven hundred Spaniards and Italians into Ireland; where the inhabitants, always turbulent, and discontented with the English government, were now more alienated by religious prejudices, and were ready to join every invader. The Spanish general, San Josepho, built a fort in Kerry; and being there besieged by the earl of Ormond, president of Munster, who was soon after joined by Lord Gray, the deputy, he made a weak and cowardly defence. After some assaults, feebly sustained, he surrendered at discretion; and Gray, who commanded but a small force, finding himself encumbered with so many prisoners, put all the Spaniards and Italians to the sword without mercy, and hanged about fifteen hundred of the Irish; a cruelty which gave great displeasure to Elizabeth. [1]

When the English ambassador made complaints of this invasion, he was answered by like complaints of the piracies committed by Francis Drake, a bold seaman, who had assaulted the Spaniards in the place where they deemed themselves most secure — in the new world. This man, sprung from mean parents in the county of Devon, having acquired considerable riches by depredations made in the Isthmus of Panama, and having there gotten a sight of the Pacific Ocean, was so stimulated by ambition and avarice, that he scrupled not to employ his whole fortune in a new adventure through those seas, so much unknown at that time to all the European nations. [2] By means of Sir Christopher Hatton, then vice-chamberlain, a great favorite of the queen's, he obtained her consent and approbation; and he set sail from Plymouth in 1577, with four ships and a pinnace, on board of which were one hundred and sixty-four able sailors. [3] He passed into the South Sea by the Straits of Magellan; and attacking the Spaniards, who expected no enemy in those quarters, he took many rich prizes, and prepared to return with the booty which he had acquired. Apprehensive of being intercepted by the enemy, if he took the same way homewards by which he had reached the Pacific Ocean, he attempted to find a passage by the north of California; and failing in that enterprise, he set sail for the East Indies, and returned safely this year, by the Cape of Good Hope. He was the first Englishman who sailed round the globe; and the first commander-in-chief; for Magellan, whose ship executed the same adventure, died in his passage. His name became celebrated on account of so bold and fortunate an attempt; but many, apprehending the resentment of the Spaniards, endeavored to persuade the queen, that it would be more prudent to disavow the enterprise, to punish Drake, and to restore the treasure. But Elizabeth, who admired valor, and who was allured by the prospect of sharing in the booty, determined to countenance that gallant sailor: she conferred on him the honor of knighthood, and accepted of a banquet from him at Deptford, on board the ship which had achieved so memorable a voyage.

* Camden, . Cox's Hist, of Ireland, .

* * Camden, . Stowe, .

* * Camden, . Hakluyt's Voyages, vol. iii. Purchas's Pilgrim, vol. i. .

When Philip’s ambassador, Mendoza, exclaimed against Drake’s piracies, she told him, that the Spaniards, by arrogating a right to the whole new world, and excluding thence all other European nations who should sail thither, even with a view of exercising the most lawful commerce, naturally tempted others to make a violent irruption into those countries. [1] To pacify, however, the Catholic monarch, she caused part of the booty to be restored to Pedro Sebura, a Spaniard, who pretended to be agent for the merchants whom Drake had spoiled. Having learned afterwards that Philip had seized the money, and had employed part of it against herself in Ireland, part of it in the pay of the prince of Parma’s troops she determined to make no more restitutions.

1581.

There was another cause which induced the queen to take this resolution: she was in such want of money, that she was obliged to assemble a parliament; a measure which, as she herself openly declared, she never embraced except when constrained by the necessity of her affairs. The parliament, besides granting her a supply of one subsidy and two fifteenths, enacted some statutes for the security of her government, chiefly against the attempts of the Catholics. Whoever in any way reconciled any one to the church of Rome, or was himself reconciled, was declared to be guilty of treason; to say mass was subjected to the penalty of a year’s imprisonment and a fine of two hundred marks; the being present was punishable by a year’s imprisonment and a fine of a hundred marks: a fine of twenty pounds a month was imposed on every one who continued, during that time, absent from church. [2] To utter slanderous or seditious words against the queen was punishable, for the first offence, with the pillory and loss of ears; the second offence was declared felony; the writing or printing of such words was felony, even on the first offence. [3] The Puritans prevailed so far as to have further applications made for reformation in religion: [4] and Paul Wentworth, brother to the member of that name who had distinguished himself in the preceding session, moved, that the commons, from their own authority, should appoint a general fast and prayers; a motion to which the house unwarily assented. For this presumption they were severely reprimanded by a message from the queen, as encroaching on the royal prerogative and supremacy; and they were obliged to submit, and ask forgiveness.

* Camden, .

* * 23 Eliz. ca.

* * * 23 Eliz. ca.

* * * * D’Ewes, .

v Camden, .

The queen and parliament were engaged to pass these severe laws against the Catholics, by some late discoveries of the treasonable practices of their priests. When the ancient worship was suppressed, and the reformation introduced into the universities, the king of Spain reflected, that as some species of literature was necessary for supporting these doctrines and controversies, the Romish communion must decay in England, if no means were found to give erudition to the ecclesiastics; and for this reason he founded a seminary at Douay, where the Catholics sent their children, chiefly such as were intended for the priesthood, in order to receive the rudiments of their education. The cardinal of Lorraine imitated this example, by erecting a like seminary in his diocese of Rheims; and though Rome was somewhat distant, the pope would not neglect to adorn, by a foundation of the same nature, that capital of orthodoxy. These seminaries, founded with so hostile an intention, sent over, every year, a colony of priests, who maintained the Catholic superstition in its full height of bigotry; and being educated with a view to the crown of martyrdom, were not deterred, either by danger or fatigue, from maintaining and propagating their principles. They infused into all their votaries an extreme hatred against the queen, whom they treated as a usurper, a schismatic, a heretic, a persecutor of the orthodox, and one solemnly and publicly anathematized by the holy father. Sedition, rebellion, sometimes assassination, were the expedients by which they intended to effect their purposes against her; and the severe restraint, not to say persecution, under which the Catholics labored, made them the more willingly receive from their ghostly fathers such violent doctrines.

These seminaries were all of them under the direction of the Jesuits, a new order of regular priests erected in Europe, when the court of Rome perceived that the lazy monks and beggarly friars, who sufficed in times of ignorance, were no longer able to defend the ramparts of the church, assailed on every side, and that the inquisitive spirit of the age required a society more active and more learned to oppose its dangerous progress. These men as they stood foremost in the contest against the Protestants, drew on them the extreme animosity of that whole sect; and, by assuming a superiority over the other more numerous and more ancient orders of their own communion, were even exposed to the envy of their brethren: so that it is no wonder, if the blame to which their principles and conduct might be exposed, has, in many instances, been much exaggerated. This reproach, however, they must bear from posterity, that, by the very nature of their institution, they were engaged to pervert learning, the only effectual remedy against superstition, into a nourishment of that infirmity: and as their erudition was chiefly of the ecclesiastical and scholastic kind, (though a few members have cultivated polite literature,) they were only the more enabled by that acquisition to refine away the plainest dictates of morality, and to erect a regular system of casuistry, by which prevarication, perjury, and every crime, when it served their ghostly purposes, might be justified and defended.

The Jesuits, as devoted servants to the court of Rome, exalted the prerogative of the sovereign pontiff above all earthly power; and by maintaining his authority of deposing kings, set no bounds either to his spiritual or temporal jurisdiction. This doctrine became so prevalent among the zealous Catholics in England, that the excommunication fulminated against Elizabeth excited many scruples of a singular kind, to which it behoved the holy father to provide a remedy. The bull of Pius, in absolving the subjects from their oaths of allegiance, commanded them to resist the queen’s usurpation; and many Romanists were apprehensive, that by this clause they were obliged in conscience, even though no favorable opportunity offered, to rebel against her, and that no dangers or difficulties could free them from this indispensable duty. But Parsons and Campion, two Jesuits, were sent over with a mitigation and explanation of the doctrine; and they taught their disciples, that though the bull was forever binding on Elizabeth and her partisans, it did not oblige the Catholics to obedience except when the sovereign pontiff should think proper, by a new summons, to require it. Campion was afterwards detected in treasonable practices; and being put to the rack, and confessing his guilt, he was publicly executed. His execution was ordered at the very time when the duke of Anjou was in England, and prosecuted, with the greatest appearance of success, his marriage with the queen; and this severity was probably intended to appease her Protestant subjects, and to satisfy them, that whatever measures she might pursue, she never would depart from the principles of the reformation.

The duke of Alençon, now created duke of Anjou, had never entirely dropped his pretensions to Elizabeth; and that princess, though her suitor was near twenty-five years younger than herself, and had no knowledge of her person but by pictures or descriptions, was still pleased with the image, which his addresses afforded her, of love and tenderness. The duke, in order to forward his suit, besides employing his brother’s ambassador, sent over Simier, an agent of his own; an artful man, of an agreeable conversation, who soon remarking the queen’s humor, amused her with gay discourse, and instead of serious political reasonings, which he found only awakened her ambition, and hurt his master’s interests, he introduced every moment all the topics of passion and of gallantry. The pleasure which she found in this man’s company soon produced a familiarity between them; and amidst the greatest hurry of business, her most confidential ministers had not such ready access to her as had Simier, who, on pretence of negotiation, entertained her with accounts of the tender attachment borne her by the duke of Anjou. The earl of Leicester, who had never before been alarmed with any courtship paid her, and who always trusted that her love of dominion would prevail over her inclination to marriage, began to apprehend that she was at last caught in her own snare, and that the artful encouragement which she had given to this young suitor had unawares engaged her affections. To render Simier odious, he availed himself of the credulity of the times, and spread reports, that that minister had gained an ascendant over the Queen, not by any natural principles of her constitution, but by incantations and love potions. Simier, in revenge, endeavored to discredit Leicester with the queen; and he revealed to her a secret, which none of her courtiers dared to disclose, that this nobleman was secretly, without her consent, married to the widow of the earl of Essex; an action which the queen interpreted either to proceed from want of respect to her, or as a violation of their mutual attachment; and which so provoked her, that she threatened to send him to the Tower. [1]

* Camden, .

The quarrel went so far between Leicester and the French agent, that the former was suspected of having employed one Tudor, a bravo, to take away the life of his enemy and the queen thought it necessary, by proclamation, to take Simier under her immediate protection. It happened, that while Elizabeth was rowed in her barge on the Thames, attended by Simier and some of her courtiers, a shot was fired, which wounded one of the bargemen; but the queen, finding, upon inquiry, that the piece had been discharged by accident, gave the person his liberty without further punishment. So far was she from entertaining any suspicion against her people, that she was often heard to say, “that she would lend credit to nothing against them, which parents would not believe of their own children.” [1]

The duke of Anjou, encouraged by the accounts sent him of the queen’s prepossessions in his favor, paid her secretly a visit at Greenwich; and after some conference with her, the purport of which is not known, he departed. It appeared that, though his figure; was not advantageous, he had lost no ground by being personally known to her; and soon after, she commanded Burleigh, now treasurer, Sussex, Leicester, Bedford, Lincoln, Hatton, and Secretary Walsingham, to concert with the French ambassadors the terms of the intended contract of marriage. Henry had sent over, on this occasion, a splendid embassy, consisting of Francis de Bourbon, prince of Dauphiny, and many considerable noblemen; and as the queen had in a manner the power of prescribing what terms she pleased, the articles were soon settled with the English commissioners. It was agreed, that the marriage should be celebrated within six weeks after the ratification of the articles; that the duke and his retinue should have the exercise of their religion; that after the marriage he should bear the title of king, but the administration remain solely in the queen; that their children, male or female, should succeed to the crown of England; that if there be two males, the elder, in case of Henry’s death without issue, should be king of France, the younger of England; that if there be but one male, and he succeed to the crown of France, he should be obliged to reside in England eight months every two years; that the laws and customs of England should be preserved inviolate; and that no foreigner should be promoted by the duke to any office in England. [2]

* Camden. .

* * Camden, .

These articles, providing for the security of England in case of its annexation to the crown of France, opened but a dismal prospect to the English, had not the age of Elizabeth, who was now in her forty-ninth year, contributed very much to allay their apprehensions of this nature. The queen also, as a proof of her still remaining uncertainty, added a clause, that she was not bound to complete the marriage, till further articles, which were not specified, should be agreed on between the parties, and till the king of France be certified of this agreement. Soon after, the queen sent over Walsingham as ambassador to France, in order to form closer connections with Henry, and enter into a league offensive and defensive against the increasing power and dangerous usurpations of Spain. The French king, who had been extremely disturbed with the unquiet spirit, the restless ambition, the enterprising, yet timid and inconstant disposition of Anjou, had already sought to free the kingdom from his intrigues, by opening a scene for his activity in Flanders; and having allowed him to embrace the protection of the states, had secretly supplied him with men and money for the undertaking. The prospect of settling him in England was for a like reason very agreeable to that monarch; and he was desirous to cultivate, by every expedient, the favorable sentiments which Elizabeth seemed to entertain towards him. But this princess, though she had gone further in her amorous dalliance [1] than could be justified or accounted for by any principles of policy, was not yet determined to carry matters to a final conclusion; and she confined Walsingham, in his instructions, to negotiating conditions of a mutual alliance between France and England. [2] Henry with reluctance submitted to hold conferences on that subject; but no sooner had Walsingham begun to settle the terms of alliance, than he was informed, that the queen, foreseeing hostility with Spain to be the result of this confederacy, had declared that she would prefer the marriage with the war, before the war without the marriage. [3] The French court, pleased with this change of resolution, broke off the conferences concerning the league, and opened a negotiation for the marriage. [4] But matters had not long proceeded in this train, before the queen again declared for the league in preference to the marriage, and ordered Walsingham to renew the conferences for that purpose. Before he had leisure to bring this point to maturity, he was interrupted by a new change of resolution; and not only the court of France, but Walsingham himself, Burleigh, and all the wisest ministers of Elizabeth, were in amazement doubtful where this contest between inclination and reason love and ambition, would at last terminate. [v*]

* Digges, , 396, 408, 426.

* * Digges, .

* * * Digges, , 391.

* * * * Digges, .

v Digges, .

v* See note Q, at the end of the volume.

In the course of this affair, Elizabeth felt another variety of intentions, from a new contest between her reason and her ruling passions. The duke of Anjou expected from her some money, by which he might be enabled to open the campaign in Flanders; and the queen herself, though her frugality made her long reluctant, was sensible that this supply was necessary, and she was at last induced, after much hesitation, to comply with his request. [1] She sent him a present of a hundred thousand crowns; by which, joined to his own demesnes, and the assistance of his brother and the queen dowager, he levied an army, and took the field against the prince of Parma. He was successful in raising the siege of Cambray; and being chosen by the states governor of the Netherlands, he put his army into winter quarters, and came over to England, in order to prosecute his suit to the queen. The reception which he met with made him expect entire success, and gave him hopes that Elizabeth had surmounted all scruples, and was finally determined to make choice of him for her husband. In the midst of the pomp which attended the anniversary of her coronation, she was seen, after long and intimate discourse with him, to take a ring from her own finger, and to put it upon his; and all the spectators concluded, that in this ceremony she had given him a promise of marriage, and was even desirous of signifying her intentions to all the world. St. Aldegonde, ambassador from the states, despatched immediately a letter to his masters, informing them of this great event; and the inhabitants of Antwerp, who, as well as the other Flemings, regarded the queen as a kind of titular divinity, testified their joy by bonfires and the discharge of their great ordnance. [2]

* Digges, , 387, 388, 409, 426, 439. Rymer. xv. p. 793.

* * Camden, . Thuan. lib. lxxiv.

A Puritan of Lincoln’s Inn had written a passionate book, which he entitled, “The Gulph in which England will be swallowed by the French Marriage.” He was apprehended and prosecuted by order of the queen, and was condemned to lose his right hand as a libeller. Such was the constancy and loyalty of the man, that immediately after the sentence was executed, he took off his hat with his other hand, and waving it over his head, cried, God save the queen.

But notwithstanding this attachment which Elizabeth so openly discovered to the duke of Anjou, the combat of her sentiments was not entirely over; and her ambition, as well as prudence, rousing itself by intervals, still filled her breast with doubt and hesitation. Almost all the courtiers whom she trusted and favored — Leicester, Hatton, and Walsingham — discovered an extreme aversion to the marriage; and the ladies of her bed-chamber made no scruple of opposing her resolution with the most zealous remonstrances. [1]

* Camden, .

Among other enemies to the match, Sir Philip, son of Sir Henry Sidney, deputy of Ireland, and nephew to Leicester, a young man the most accomplished of the age, declared himself: and he used the freedom to write her a letter, in which he dissuaded her from her present resolution, with an unusual elegance of expression, as well as force of reasoning. He told her, that the security of her government depended entirely on the affections of her Protestant subjects; and she could not, by any measure, more effectually disgust them, than by espousing a prince who was son of the perfidious Catharine, brother to the cruel and perfidious Charles, and who had himself imbrued his hands in the blood of the innocent and defenceless Protestants: that the Catholics were her mortal enemies, and believed, either that she had originally usurped the crown, or was now lawfully deposed by the pope's bull of excommunication; and nothing had ever so much elevated their hopes as the prospect of her marriage with the duke of Anjou: that her chief security at present against the efforts of so numerous, rich, and united a faction, was, that they possessed no head who could conduct their dangerous enterprises; and she herself was rashly supplying that defect, by giving an interest in the kingdom to a prince whose education had zealously attached him to that communion: that though he was a stranger to the blood royal of England, the dispositions of men were now such, that they preferred the religious to the civil connections; and were more influenced by sympathy in theological opinions, than by the principles of legal and hereditary government: that the duke himself had discovered a very restless and turbulent spirit; and having often violated his loyalty to his elder brother and his sovereign, there remained no hopes that he would passively submit to a woman, whom he might, in quality of husband, think himself entitled to command: that the French nation, so populous, so much abounding in soldiers, so full of nobility who were devoted to arms, and for some time accustomed to serve for plunder, would supply him with partisans, dangerous to a people unwarlike and defenceless like the generality of her subjects: that the plain and honorable path which she had followed, of cultivating the affections of her people, had hitherto rendered her reign secure and happy; and however her enemies might seem to multiply upon her, the same invincible rampart was still able to protect and defend her: that so long as the throne of France was filled by Henry or his posterity, it was in vain to hope that the ties of blood would insure the amity of that kingdom, preferably to the maxims of policy or the prejudices of religion: and if ever the crown devolved on the duke of Anjou, the conjunction of France and England would prove a burden, rather than a protection, to the latter kingdom: that the example of her sister Mary was sufficient to instruct her in the danger of such connections; and to prove, that the affection and confidence of the English could never be maintained, where they had such reason to apprehend that their interests would every moment be sacrificed to those of a foreign and hostile nation: that notwithstanding these great inconveniences, discovered by past experience, the house of Burgundy, it must be confessed, was more popular in the nation than the family of France; and, what was of chief moment, Philip was of the same communion with Mary, and was connected with her by this great band of interest and affection: and that however the queen might remain childless, even though old age should grow upon her, the singular felicity and glory of her reign would preserve her from contempt; the affections of her subjects, and those of all the Protestants in Europe, would defend her from danger; and her own prudence, without other aid or assistance, would baffle all the efforts of her most malignant enemies. [1]

* Letters of the Sidneys, vol i. , et seq. Cabala, p. 363

1582.

These reflections kept the queen in great anxiety and irresolution; and she was observed to pass several nights without any sleep or repose. At last her settled habits of prudence and ambition prevailed over her temporary inclination; and having sent for the duke of Anjou, she had a long conference with him in private, where she was supposed to have made him apologies for breaking her former engagements. He expressed great disgust on his leaving her; threw away the ring which she had given him; and uttered many curses on the mutability of women and of islanders. [1] Soon after, he went over to his government of the Netherlands; lost the confidence of the states by a rash and violent attempt on their liberties; was expelled that country; retired into France; and there died. The queen, by timely reflection, saved herself from the numerous mischiefs which must have attended so imprudent a marriage: and the distracted state of the French monarchy prevented her from feeling any effects of that resentment which she had reason to dread from the affront so wantonly put upon that royal family.

The anxiety of the queen from the attempts of the English Catholics never ceased during the whole course of her reign; but the variety of revolutions which happened in all the neighboring kingdoms, were the source, sometimes of her hopes, sometimes of her apprehensions. This year the affairs of Scotland strongly engaged her attention. The influence which the earl of Lenox, and James Stuart, who now assumed the title of earl of Arran, had acquired over the young king, was but a slender foundation of authority; while the generality of the nobles, and all the preachers, were so much discontented with their administration. The assembly of the church appointed a solemn fast; of which one of the avowed reasons was, the danger to which the king was exposed from the company of wicked persons: [2] and on that day the pulpits resounded with declamations against Lenox, Arran, and all the present counsellors. When the minds of the people were sufficiently prepared by these lectures, a conspiracy of the nobility was formed, probably with the concurrence of Elizabeth, for seizing the person of James at Ruthven, a seat of the earl of Gowry's; and the design, being kept secret, succeeded without any opposition.

* Camden, .

* * Spotswood, ., Spotswood, .

The leaders in this enterprise were the earl of Gowry himself, the earl of Marre, the lords Lindesey and Boyd, the masters of Glamis and Oliphant, the abbots of Dunfermling, Paisley, and Cambuskenneth. The king wept when he found himself detained a prisoner but the master of Glamis said, "No matter for his tears, better that boys weep than bearded men;" an expression which James could never afterwards forgive. But notwithstanding his resentment, he found it necessary to submit to the present necessity. He pretended an entire acquiescence in the conduct of the associators; acknowledged the detention of his person to be acceptable service; and agreed to summon both an assembly of the church and a convention of estates, in order to ratify that enterprise.

The assembly, though they had established it as an inviolable rule, that the king on no account, and under no pretence, should ever intermeddle in ecclesiastical matters, made no scruple of taking civil affairs under their cognizance, and of deciding, on this occasion, that the attempt of the conspirators was acceptable to all that feared God, or tendered the preservation of the king's person, and prosperous state of the realm. They even enjoined all the clergy to recommend these sentiments from the pulpit; and they threatened with ecclesiastical censures every man who should oppose the authority of the confederated lords. [1] The convention, being composed chiefly of these lords themselves, added their sanction to these proceedings. Arran was confined a prisoner in his own house: Lenox, though he had power to resist, yet, rather than raise a civil war, or be the cause of bloodshed, [2] chose to retire into France, where he soon after died. He persevered to the last in the Protestant religion, to which James had converted him, but which the Scottish clergy could never be persuaded that he had sincerely embraced. The king sent for his family, restored his son to his paternal honors and estate, took care to establish the fortunes of all his other children, and to his last moments never forgot the early friendship which he had borne their father; a strong proof of the good dispositions of that prince. [3]

* Spotswood, .

* * Heylin's Hist. Presbyter, . Spotswood.

* * * Spotswood, .

No sooner was this revolution known in England, than the queen sent Sir Henry Gary and Sir Robert Bowes to James in order to congratulate him on his deliverance from the pernicious counsels of Lenox and Arran; to exhort him not to resent the seeming violence committed on him by the confederated lords; and to procure from him permission for the return of the earl of Angus, who ever since Morton's fall had lived in England. They easily prevailed in procuring the recall of Angus; and as James suspected, that Elizabeth had not been entirely unacquainted with the project of his detention, he thought proper, before the English ambassadors, to dissemble his resentment against the authors of it.

1583.

Soon after, La Mothe-Fenelon and Menneville appeared as ambassadors from France: their errand was to inquire concerning the situation of the king, make professions of their master's friendship, confirm the ancient league with France, and procure an accommodation between James and the queen of Scots. This last proposal gave great umbrage to the clergy; and the assembly voted the settling of terms between the mother and son to be a most wicked undertaking. The pulpits resounded with declamations against the French ambassadors; particularly Fenelon, whom they called the messenger of the bloody murderer, meaning the duke of Guise: and as that minister, being knight of the Holy Ghost, wore a white cross on his shoulder, they commonly denominated it, in contempt, the badge of Antichrist. The king endeavored, though in vain, to repress these insolent reflections; but in order to make the ambassadors some compensation, he desired the magistrates of Edinburgh to give them a splendid dinner before their departure. To prevent this entertainment, the clergy appointed that very day for a public fast; and finding that their orders were not regarded, they employed their sermons in thundering curses on the magistrates, who, by the king's direction, had put this mark of respect on the ambassadors. They even pursued them afterwards with the censures of the church; and it was with difficulty they were prevented from issuing the sentence of excommunication against them, on account of their submission to royal, preferably to clerical authority. [1]

* Spotswood, .

What increased their alarm with regard to an accommodation between James and Mary was, that the English ambassadors seemed to concur with the French in this proposal; and the clergy were so ignorant as to believe the sincerity of the professions made by the former. The queen of Scots had often made overtures to Elizabeth, which had been entirely neglected; but hearing of James's detention, she wrote a letter in a more pathetic and more spirited strain than usual; craving the assistance of that princess, both for her own and her son's liberty. She said, that the account of the prince's captivity had excited her most tender concern; and the experience which she herself, during so many years, had of the extreme infelicity attending that situation, had made her the more apprehensive lest a like fate should pursue her unhappy offspring: that the long train of injustice which she had undergone, the calumnies to which she had been exposed, were so grievous, that finding no place for right or truth among men she was reduced to make her last appeal to Heaven, the only competent tribunal between princes of equal jurisdiction degree, and dignity: that after her rebellious subjects, secretly instigated by Elizabeth's ministers, had expelled her the throne, had confined her in prison, had pursued her with arms, she had voluntarily thrown herself under the protection of England; fatally allured by those reiterated professions of amity which had been made her, and by her confidence in the generosity of a friend, an ally, and a kinswoman; that not content with excluding her from her presence, with supporting the usurpers of her throne, with contributing to the destruction of her faithful subjects, Elizabeth had reduced her to a worse captivity than that from which she had escaped, and had made her this cruel return for the unlimited confidence which she had reposed in her: that though her resentment of such severe usage had never carried her further than to use some disappointed efforts for her deliverance, unhappy for herself, and fatal to others, she found the rigors of confinement daily multiplied upon her; and at length carried to such a height, that it surpassed the bounds of all human patience any longer to endure them; that she was cut off from all communication, not only with the rest of mankind, but with her only son, and her maternal fondness, which was now more enlivened by their unhappy sympathy in situation, and was her sole remaining attachment to this world, deprived even of that melancholy solace which letters or messages could give: that the bitterness of her sorrows, still more than her close confinement, had preyed upon her health, and had added the insufferable weight of bodily infirmity to all those other calamities under which she labored: that while the daily experience of her maladies opened to her the comfortable prospect of an approaching deliverance into a region where pain and sorrow are no more, her enemies envied her that last consolation, and having secluded her from every joy on earth, had done what in them lay to debar her from all hopes in her future and eternal existence: that the exercise of her religion was refused her; the use of those sacred rites in which she had been educated, the commerce with those holy ministers, whom Heaven had appointed to receive the acknowledgment of our transgressions, and to seal our penitence by a solemn readmission into heavenly favor and forgiveness: that it was in vain to complain of the rigors of persecution exercised in other kingdoms; when a queen and an innocent woman was excluded from an indulgence which never yet, in the most barbarous countries, had been denied to the meanest and most obnoxious malefactor: that could she ever be induced to descend from that royal dignity in which Providence had placed her, or depart from her appeal to Heaven, there was only one other tribunal to which she would appeal from all her enemies; to the justice and humanity of Elizabeth’s own breast, and to that lenity which, uninfluenced by malignant counsel, she would naturally be induced to exercise towards her: and that she finally entreated her to resume her natural disposition, and to reflect on the support, as well as comfort, which she might receive from her son and herself, if, joining the obligations of gratitude to the ties of blood, she would deign to raise them from their present melancholy situation, and reinstate them in that liberty and authority to which they were entitled. [1]

* Camden, ,

Elizabeth was engaged to obstruct Mary’s restoration, chiefly because she foresaw an unhappy alternative attending that event. If this princess recovered any considerable share of authority in Scotland, her resentment, ambition, zeal, and connections both domestic and foreign, might render her a dangerous neighbor to England, and enable her, after suppressing the Protestant party among her subjects, to revive those pretensions which she had formerly advanced to the crown, and which her partisans in both kingdoms still supported with great industry and assurance. If she were reinstated in power with such strict limitations as could not be broken, she might be disgusted with her situation; and flying abroad, form more desperate attempts than any sovereign, who had a crown to hazard, would willingly undertake. Mary herself, sensible of these difficulties, and convinced by experience that Elizabeth would forever debar her the throne, was now become more humble in her wishes; and as age and infirmities had repressed those sentiments of ambition by which she had formerly been so much actuated, she was willing to sacrifice all her hopes of grandeur, in order to obtain a liberty; a blessing to which she naturally aspired with the fondest impatience. She proposed, therefore, that she should be associated with her son in the title to the crown of Scotland, but that the administration should remain solely in him: and she was content to live in England in a private station, and even under a kind of restraint; but with some more liberty, both for exercise and company, than she had enjoyed since the first discovery of her intrigues with the duke of Norfolk. But Elizabeth, afraid lest such a loose method of guarding her would facilitate her escape into France or Spain, or, at least, would encourage and increase her partisans, and enable her to conduct those intrigues to which she had already discovered so strong a propensity, was secretly determined to deny her requests; and though she feigned to assent to them, she well knew how to disappoint the expectations of the unhappy princess. While Lenox maintained his authority in Scotland, she never gave any reply to all the application made to her by the Scottish queen: at present, when her own creatures had acquired possession of the government, she was resolved to throw the odium of refusal upon them; and pretending that nothing further was required to a perfect accommodation than the concurrence of the council of state in Scotland, she ordered her ambassador, Bowes, to open the negotiation for Mary's liberty, and her association with her son in the title to the crown. Though she seemed to make this concession to Mary she refused her the liberty of sending any ambassador of her own; and that princess could easily conjecture, from this circumstance, what would be the result of the pretended negotiation. The privy council of Scotland, instigated by the clergy, rejected all treaty; and James, who was now a captive in their hands, affirmed, that he had never agreed to an association with his mother, and that the matter had never gone further than some loose proposals for that purpose. [1]

* * MS. in the Advocates' Library, A. 3, 28, , from the Cott Lib. Calig. c. 9.

The affairs of Scotland remained not long in the present situation. James, impatient of restraint, made his escape from his keepers; and flying to St. Andrews, summoned his friends and partisans to attend him. The earls of Argyle, Marshal, Montrose, and Rothes, hastened to pay their duty to their sovereign; and the opposite party found themselves unable to resist so powerful a combination. They were offered a pardon, upon their submission, and an acknowledgment of their fault in seizing the king's person and restraining him from his liberty. Some of them accepted of the terms; the greater number, particularly Angus, Hamilton, Marre, Glamis, left the country, and took shelter in Ireland or England, where they were protected by Elizabeth. The earl of Arran was recalled to court; and the malecontents, who could not brook the authority of Lenox, a man of virtue and moderation, found, that by their resistance, they had thrown all power into the hands of a person whose counsels were as violent as his manners were profligate. [1]

Elizabeth wrote a letter to James, in which she quoted a moral sentence from Isocrates, and indirectly reproached him with inconstancy, and a breach of his engagements. James, in his reply, justified his measures; and retaliated, by turning two passages of Isocrates against her. [2] She next sent Walsingham on an embassy to him; and her chief purpose in employing that aged minister in an errand where so little business was to be transacted, was to learn, from a man of so much penetration and experience, the real character of James. This young prince possessed good parts, though not accompanied with that vigor and industry which his station required; and as he excelled in general discourse and conversation, Walsingham entertained a higher idea of his talents than he was afterwards found, when real business was transacted, to have fully merited. [3] The account which he gave his mistress induced her to treat James thenceforth with some more regard than she had hitherto been inclined to pay him.

* Spotswood, , 326, et seq.

* * Melvil, , 141. Strype, vol. iii. .

* * * Melvil, . Jebb, vol. ii. .

1584.

The king of Scots, persevering in his present views, summoned a parliament; where it was enacted, that no clergyman should presume in his sermons to utter false, untrue, or scandalous speeches against the king, the council, or the public measures; or to meddle, in an improper manner, with the affairs of his majesty and the states, [1] The clergy, finding that the pulpit would be no longer a sanctuary for them, were extremely offended; they said that the king was become Popish in his heart; and they gave their adversaries the epithets of gross libertines, belly-gods, and infamous persons. [2]

* Spotswood.

* * Spotswood. .

The violent conduct of Arran soon brought over the popularity to their side. The earl of Gowry, though pardoned for the late attempt, was committed to prison, was tried on some new accusations, condemned, and executed. Many innocent persons suffered from the tyranny of this favorite; and the banished lords, being assisted by Elizabeth, now found the time favorable for the recovery of their estates and authority. After they had been foiled in one attempt upon Stirling, they prevailed in another; and being admitted to the king's presence, were pardoned, and restored to his favor.

Arran was degraded from authority, deprived of that estate and title which he had usurped, and the whole country seemed to be composed to tranquillity. Elizabeth, after opposing during some time the credit of the favorite, had found it more expedient, before his fall, to compound all differences with him, by means of Davison, a minister whom she sent to Scot land; but having more confidence in the lords whom she had helped to restore, she was pleased with this alteration of affairs; and maintained a good correspondence with the new court and ministry of James.

These revolutions in Scotland would have been regarded as of small importance to the repose and security of Elizabeth, had her own subjects been entirely united, and had not the zeal of the Catholics, excited by constraint more properly than persecution, daily threatened her with some dangerous insurrection. The vigilance of the ministers, particularly of Burleigh and Walsingham, was raised in proportion to the activity of the malecontents; and many arts, which had been blamable in a more peaceful government, were employed in detecting conspiracies, and even discovering the secret inclinations of men. Counterfeit letters were written in the name of the queen of Scots, or of the English exiles, and privately conveyed to the houses of the Catholics: spies were hired to observe the actions and discourse of suspected persons: informers were countenanced; and though the sagacity of these two great ministers helped them to distinguish the true from the false intelligence, many calumnies were no doubt hearkened to, and all the subjects, particularly the Catholics, kept in the utmost anxiety and inquietude. Henry Piercy, earl of Northumberland, brother to the earl beheaded some years before, and Philip Howard, earl of Arundel, son of the unfortunate duke of Norfolk, fell under suspicion; and the latter was, by order of council, confined to his own house. Francis Throgmorton, a private gentleman, was committed to custody, on account of a letter which he had written to the queen of Scots, and which was intercepted. Lord Paget and Charles Arundel, who had been engaged with him in treasonable designs, immediately withdrew beyond sea. Throgmorton confessed that a plan for an invasion and insurrection had been laid; and though, on his trial, he was desirous of retracting this confession, and imputing it to the fear of torture, he was found guilty and executed. Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador, having promoted this conspiracy, was ordered to depart the kingdom; and Wade was sent into Spain, to excuse his dismission, and to desire the king to send another ambassador in his place; but Philip would not so much as admit the English ambassador to his presence. Creighton, a Scottish Jesuit, coming over on board a vessel which was seized, tore some papers with an intention of throwing them into the sea; but the wind blowing them back upon the ship, they were pieced together, and discovered some dangerous secrets. [1]

Many of these conspiracies were, with great appearance of reason, imputed to the intrigues of the queen of Scots; [2] and as her name was employed in all of them, the council thought that they could not use too many precautions against the danger of her claims, and the restless activity of her temper. She was removed from under the care of the earl of Shrewsbury, who, though vigilant and faithful in that trust, had also been indulgent to his prisoner, particularly with regard to air and exercise; and she was committed to the custody of Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drue Drury; men of honor, but inflexible in their care and attention. An association was also set on foot by the earl of Leicester and other courtiers; and as Elizabeth was beloved by the whole nation, except the more zealous Catholics, men of all ranks willingly flocked to the subscription of it. The purport of this association was to defend the queen, to revenge her death, or any injury committed against her, and to exclude from the throne all claimants, what title soever they might possess, by whose suggestion or for whose behoof any violence should be offered to her majesty, [3] The queen of Scots was sensible that this association was levelled against her; and to remove all suspicion from herself, she also desired leave to subscribe it.

* Camden, .

* * Strype, vol. lii. .

* * * State Trials, vol i. , 123.

Elizabeth, that she might the more discourage malecontents, by showing them the concurrence of the nation in her favor, summoned a new parliament; and she met with that dutiful attachment which she expected. The association was confirmed by parliament; and a clause was added by which the queen was empowered to name commissioners for the trial of any pretender to the crown, who should attempt or imagine any invasion, insurrection, or assassination against her: upon condemnation pronounced by these commissioners, the guilty person was excluded from all claim to the succession, and was further punishable as her majesty should direct. And for greater security, a council of regency, in case of the queen's violent death, was appointed to govern the kingdom, to settle the succession, and to take vengeance for that act of treason. [1]

A severe law was also enacted against Jesuits and Popish priests: it was ordained, that they should depart the kingdom within forty days; that those who should remain beyond that time, or should afterwards return, should be guilty of treason; that those who harbored or relieved them should be guilty of felony; that those who were educated in seminaries, if they returned not in six months after notice given, and submitted not themselves to the queen, before a bishop or two justices, should be guilty of treason; and that if any, so submitting themselves, should, within ten years, approach the court, or come within ten miles of it, their submission should be void. [2] By this law, the exercise of the Catholic religion, which had formerly been prohibited under lighter penalties, and which was in many instances connived at, was totally suppressed. In the subsequent part of the queen's reign, the law was sometimes executed by the capital punishment of priests; and though the partisans of that princess asserted that they were punished for their treason, not their religion, the apology must only be understood in this sense, that the law was enacted on account of the treasonable views and attempts of the sect, not that every individual who suffered the penalty of the law was convicted of treason. [3] The Catholics, therefore, might now with justice complain of a violent persecution; which we may safety affirm, in spite of the rigid and bigoted maxims of that age, not to be the best method of converting them, or of reconciling them to the established government and religion.

* 27 Eliz. ca.

* 27 Eliz. ca.

* Some even of those who defend the queen's measures, allow that in ten years fifty priests were executed, and fifty- five banished Camden, .

The parliament, besides arming the queen with these powers, granted her a supply of one subsidy and two fifteenths. The only circumstance in which their proceedings were disagreeable to her, was an application, made by the commons, for a further reformation in ecclesiastical matters. Yet even in this attempt, which affected her, as well as them, in a delicate point, they discovered how much they were overawed by her authority. The majority of the house were Puritans, or inclined to that sect; [1] but the severe reprimands which they had already, in former sessions, met with from the throne deterred them from introducing any bill concerning religion; a proceeding which would have been interpreted as an encroachment on the prerogative: they were content to proceed by way of humble petition, and that not addressed to her majesty, which would have given offence, but to the house of lords, or rather the bishops, who had a seat in that house, and from whom alone they were willing to receive all advances towards reformation; [2] a strange departure from what we now apprehend to be the dignity of the commons!

* Besides the petition after mentioned, another proof of the prevalency of the Puritans among the commons was, their passing a bill for the reverent observance of Sunday, which they termed the Sabbath, and the depriving the people of those amusements which they were accustomed to take on that day. D’Ewes, . It was a strong symptom of a contrary spirit in the upper house, that they proposed to add Wednesday to the fast days, and to prohibit entirely the eating of flesh on that day. D’Ewes, .

* D’Ewes,

The commons desired, in their humble petition, that no bishop should exercise his function of ordination but with the consent and concurrence of six presbyters: but this demand, as it really introduced a change of ecclesiastical government, was firmly rejected by the prelates. They desired, that no clergyman should be instituted into any benefice without previous notice being given to the parish, that they might examine whether there lay any objection to his life or doctrine; an attempt towards a popular model, which naturally met with the same fate. In another article of the petition, they prayed that the bishops should not insist upon every ceremony, or deprive incumbents for omitting part of the service; as if uniformity in public worship had not been established by law; or as if the prelates had been endowed with a dispensing power. They complained of abuses which prevailed in pronouncing the sentence of excommunication, and they entreated the reverend fathers to think of some law for the remedy of these abuses: implying that those matters were too high for the commons of themselves to attempt.

But the most material article which the commons touched upon in their petition, was the court of ecclesiastical commission, and the oath “ex officio,” as it was called, exacted by that court. This is a subject of such importance as to merit some explanation.

The first primate after the queen’s accession, was Parker; a man rigid in exacting conformity to the established worship, and in punishing, by fine or deprivation, all the Puritanical clergymen who attempted to innovate any thing in the habits, ceremonies, or liturgy of the church. He died in 1575; and was succeeded by Grindal, who, as he himself was inclined to the new sect, was with great difficulty brought to execute the laws against them, or to punish the nonconforming clergy. He declined obeying the queen’s orders for the suppression of “prophesyings,” or the assemblies of the zealots in private houses, which, she apprehended, had become so many academies of fanaticism; and for this offence she had, by an order of the star chamber, sequestered him from his archiepiscopal function, and confined him to his own house. Upon his death, which happened in 1583, she determined not to fall into the same error in her next choice; and she named Whitgift, a zealous Churchman, who had already signalized his pen in controversy, and who, having in vain attempted to convince the Puritans by argument, was now resolved to open their eyes by power, and by the execution of penal statutes. He informed the queen, that all the spiritual authority lodged in the prelates was insignificant without the sanction of the crown; and as there was no ecclesiastical commission at that time in force, he engaged her to issue a new one, more arbitrary than any of the former, and conveying more unlimited authority. [1]

She appointed forty-four commissioners, twelve of whom were ecclesiastics; three commissioners made a quorum; the jurisdiction of the court extended over the whole kingdom and over all orders of men; and every circumstance of its authority, and all its methods of proceeding, were contrary to the clearest principles of law and natural equity. The

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* Neal’s History of the Puritans, vol. i. .

commissioners were empowered to visit and reform all errors, heresies, schisms, in a word, to regulate all opinions, as well as to punish all breach of uniformity in the exercise of public worship. They were directed to make inquiry, not only by the legal methods of juries and witnesses, but by all other means and ways which they could devise; that is, by the rack, by torture, by inquisition, by imprisonment Where they found reason to suspect any person, they might administer to him an oath, called "ex officio," by which he was bound to answer all questions, and might thereby be obliged to accuse himself or his most intimate friend. The fines which they levied were discretionary, and often occasioned the total ruin of the offender, contrary to the established laws of the kingdom. The imprisonment to which they condemned any delinquent, was limited by no rule but their own pleasure. They assumed a power of imposing on the clergy what new articles of subscription, and consequently of faith, they thought proper. Though all other spiritual courts were subject, since the reformation, to inhibitions from the supreme courts of law, the ecclesiastical commissioners were exempted from that legal jurisdiction, and were liable to no control. And the more to enlarge their authority, they were empowered to punish all incests, adulteries, fornications; all outrages, misbehaviors, and disorders in marriage: and the punishments which they might inflict, were according to their wisdom, conscience, and discretion. In a word, this court was a real inquisition; attended with all the iniquities, as well as cruelties, inseparable from that tribunal. And as the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court was destructive of all law, so its erection was deemed by many a mere usurpation of this imperious princess; and had no other foundation than a clause of a statute, restoring the supremacy to the crown, and empowering the sovereign to appoint commissioners for exercising that prerogative. But prerogative in general, especially the supremacy, was supposed in that age to involve powers which no law, precedent, or reason could limit and determine.

But though the commons, in their humble petition to the prelates, had touched so gently and submissively on the ecclesiastical grievances, the queen, in a speech from the throne at the end of the session, could not forbear taking notice of their presumption, and reproving them for those murmurs which, for fear of offending her, they had pronounced so low as not directly to reach her royal ears. After giving them some general thanks for their attachment to her, and making professions of affection to her subjects, she told them, that whoever found fault with the church threw a slander upon her, since she was appointed by God supreme ruler over it; and no heresies or schisms could prevail in the kingdom but by her permission and negligence: that some abuses must necessarily have place in every thing; but she warned the prelates to be watchful; for if she found them careless of their charge, she was fully determined to depose them: that she was commonly supposed to have employed herself in many studies, particularly philosophical, (by which, I suppose, she meant theological,) and she would confess, that few whose leisure had not allowed them to make profession of science, had read or reflected more: that as she could discern the presumption of many, in curiously canvassing the Scriptures, and starting innovations, she would no longer endure this licentiousness; but meant to guide her people by God's rule in the just mean between the corruptions of Rome and the errors of modern sectaries: and that as the Romanists were the inveterate enemies of her person, so the other innovators were dangerous to all kingly government; and, under color of preaching the word of God, presumed to exercise their private judgment, and to censure the actions of the prince. [1]

From the whole of this transaction we may observe, that the commons, in making their general application to the prelates, as well as in some particular articles of their petition, showed themselves wholly ignorant, no less than the queen, of the principles of liberty and a legal constitution. And it may not be unworthy of remark, that Elizabeth, so far from yielding to the displeasure of the parliament against the ecclesiastical commission, granted, before the end of her reign, a new commission; in which she enlarged, rather than restrained, the powers of the commissioners. [2]

* See note R, at the end of the volume.

* * Rymer, vol. xvi , 386, 400.

During this session of parliament, there was discovered a conspiracy, which much increased the general animosity against the Catholics, and still further widened the breach between the religious parties. William Parry, a Catholic gentleman, had received the queen's pardon for a crime by which he was exposed to capital punishment; and having obtained permission to travel, he retired to Milan, and made open profession of his religion, which he had concealed while he remained in England. He was here persuaded by Palmio, a Jesuit, that he could not perform a more meritorious action than to take away the life of his sovereign and his benefactress; the nuncio Campeggio, when consulted, approved extremely of this pious undertaking; and Parry, though still agitated with doubts, came to Paris with an intention of passing over to England and executing his bloody purpose. He was here encouraged in the design by Thomas Morgan, a gentleman of great credit in the party; and though Watts and some other Catholic priests told him that the enterprise was criminal and impious, he preferred the authority of Raggazzoni, the nuncio at Paris, and determined to persist in his resolution. He here wrote a letter to the pope, which was conveyed to Cardinal Como; he communicated his intention to the holy father, and craved his absolution and paternal benediction. He received an answer from the cardinal, by which he found that his purpose was extremely applauded; and he came over to England with a full design of carrying it into execution. So deeply are the sentiments of morality engraved in the human breast, that it is difficult even for the prejudices of false religion totally to efface them; and this bigoted assassin resolved, before he came to extremities, to try every other expedient for alleviating the persecutions under which the Catholics at that time labored. He found means of being introduced to the queen; assured her that many conspiracies were formed against her; and exhorted her, as she tendered her life, to give the Romanists some more indulgence in the exercise of their religion: but, lest he should be tempted by the opportunity to assassinate her, he always came to court unprovided with every offensive weapon. He even found means to be elected member of parliament: and having made a vehement harangue against the severe laws enacted this last session, was committed to custody for his freedom, and sequestered from the house. His failure in these attempts confirmed him the more in his former resolution; and he communicated his intentions to Nevil, who entered zealously into the design, and was determined to have a share in the merits of its execution. A book newly published by Dr. Allen, afterwards created a cardinal, served further to efface all their scruples with regard to the murder of an heretical prince; and having agreed to shoot the queen while she should be taking the air on horseback, they resolved, if they could not make their escape, to sacrifice their lives in fulfilling a duty so agreeable, as they imagined, to the will of God and to true religion. But while they were watching an opportunity for the execution of their purpose, the earl of Westmoreland happened to die in exile; and as Nevil was next heir to that family, he began to entertain hopes that, by doing some acceptable service to the queen, he might recover the estate and honors which had been forfeited by the rebellion of the last earl. He betrayed the whole conspiracy to the ministers; and Parry, being thrown into prison, confessed the guilt both to them and to the jury who tried him. The letter from Cardinal Como, being produced in court, put Parry's narrative beyond all question; and that criminal, having received sentence of death, [1] suffered the punishment which the law appointed for his treasonable conspiracy. [2]

These bloody designs now appeared every where, as the result of that bigoted spirit by which the two religions, especially the Catholic, were at this time actuated. Somerville, a gentleman of the county of Warwick, somewhat disordered in his understanding, had heard so much of the merit attending the assassination of heretics and persecutors, that he came to London with a view of murdering the queen; but having betrayed his design by some extravagances, he was thrown into prison, and there perished by a voluntary death. [3]

About the same time, Baltazar Gerard, a Burgundian, undertook and executed the same design against the prince of Orange; and that great man perished at Delft, by the hands of a desperate assassin, who, with a resolution worthy of a better cause, sacrificed his own life, in order to destroy the famous restorer and protector of religious liberty. The Flemings, who regarded that prince as their father, were filled with great sorrow, as well when they considered the miserable end of so brave a patriot, as their own forlorn condition, from the loss of so powerful and prudent a leader, and from the rapid progress of the Spanish arms. The prince of Parma had made, every year great advances upon them, had reduced several of the provinces to obedience, and had laid close siege to Antwerp, the richest and most populous city of the Netherlands, whose subjection, it was foreseen,

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* State Trials, vol. i. , et seq. Strype, vol. iii. p. 255, et seq.

* * See note S, at the end of the volume.

* * * Camden, .

would give a mortal blow to the already declining affairs of the revolted provinces. The only hopes which remained to them arose from the prospect of foreign succor. Being well acquainted with the cautious and frugal maxims of Elizabeth, they expected better success in France; and in the view of engaging Henry to embrace their defence, they tendered him the sovereignty of their provinces.

1585.

But the present condition of that monarchy obliged the king to reject so advantageous an offer. The duke of Anjou’s death, which, he thought would have tended to restore public tranquillity in delivering him from the intrigues of that prince, plunged him into the deepest distress; and the king of Navarre, a professed Hugonot, being next heir to the crown, the duke of Guise took thence occasion to revive the Catholic league, and to urge Henry, by the most violent expedients, to seek the exclusion of that brave and virtuous prince. Henry himself, though a zealous Catholic, yet, because he declined complying with their precipitate measures, became an object of aversion to the league; and as his zeal in practising all the superstitious observances of the Romish church, was accompanied with a very licentious conduct in private life, the Catholic faction, in contradiction to universal experience, embraced thence the pretext of representing his devotion as mere deceit and hypocrisy. Finding his authority to decline, he was obliged to declare war against the Hugonots, and to put arms into the hands of the league, whom, both on account of their dangerous pretensions at home and their close alliance with Philip, he secretly regarded as his more dangerous enemies. Constrained by the same policy, he dreaded the danger of associating himself with the revolted Protestants in the Low Countries, and was obliged to renounce that inviting opportunity of revenging himself for all the hostile intrigues and enterprises of Philip.

The states, reduced to this extremity, sent over a solemn embassy to London, and made anew an offer to the queen of acknowledging her for their sovereign, on condition of obtaining her protection and assistance. Elizabeth’s wisest counsellors were divided in opinion with regard to the conduct which she should hold in this critical and important emergence. Some advised her to reject the offer of the states, and represented the imminent dangers, as well as injustice, attending the acceptance of it. They said, that the suppression of rebellious subjects was the common cause of all sovereigns; and any encouragement given to the revolt of the Flemings, might prove the example of a like pernicious license to the English; that though princes were bound by the laws of the Supreme Being not to oppress their subjects, the people never were entitled to forget all duty to their sovereign, or transfer, from every fancy or disgust, or even from the justest ground of complaint, their obedience to any other master: that the queen, in the succors hitherto afforded the Flemings, had considered them as laboring under oppression, not as entitled to freedom; and had intended only to admonish Philip not to persevere in his tyranny, without any view of ravishing from him those provinces, which he enjoyed by hereditary right from his ancestors: that her situation in Ireland, and even in England, would afford that powerful monarch sufficient opportunity of retaliating upon her; and she must thenceforth expect that, instead of secretly fomenting faction, he would openly employ his whole force in the protection and defence of the Catholics: that the pope would undoubtedly unite his spiritual arms to the temporal ones of Spain: and that the queen would soon repent her making so precarious an acquisition in foreign countries, by exposing her own dominions to the most imminent danger. [1]

* Camden, ., Bentivoglio, part ii. lib iv.

Other counsellors of Elizabeth maintained a contrary opinion. They asserted, that the queen had not even from the beginning of her reign, but certainly had not at present, the choice whether she would embrace friendship or hostility with Philip: that by the whole tenor of that prince’s conduct it appeared, that his sole aims were the extending of his empire, and the entire subjection of the Protestants, under the specious pretence of maintaining the Catholic faith: that the provocations which she had already given him, joined to his general scheme of policy, would forever render him her implacable enemy; and as soon as he had subdued his revolted subjects, he would undoubtedly fall, with the whole force of his united empire, on her defenceless state: that the only question was, whether she would maintain a war abroad, and supported by allies, or wait till the subjection of all the confederates of England should give her enemies leisure to begin their hostilities in the bowels of the kingdom: that the revolted provinces, though in a declining condition, possessed still considerable force; and by the assistance of England, by the advantages of their situation, and by their inveterate antipathy to Philip, might still be enabled to maintain the contest against the Spanish monarchy that their maritime power, united to the queen's, would give her entire security on the side from which alone she could be assaulted; and would even enable her to make inroads on Philip's dominions, both in Europe and the Indies: that a war which was necessary could never be unjust; and self-defence was concerned as well in preventing certain dangers at a distance, as in repelling any immediate invasion: and that, since hostility with Spain was the unavoidable consequence of the present interests and situations of the two monarchies, it were better to compensate that danger and loss by the acquisition of such important provinces to the English empire. [1]

* Camden, . Bentivoglio, part ii. lib iv.

Amidst these opposite counsels, the queen, apprehensive of the consequences attending each extreme, was inclined to steer a middle course; and though such conduct is seldom prudent, she was not, in this resolution, guided by any prejudice or mistaken affection. She was determined not to permit, without opposition, the total subjection of the revolted provinces, whose interests she deemed so closely connected with her own: but foreseeing that the acceptance of their sovereignty would oblige her to employ her whole force in their defence, would give umbrage to her neighbors, and would expose her to the reproach of ambition and usurpation, — imputations which hitherto she had carefully avoided, — she immediately rejected this offer. She concluded a league with the states on the following conditions: that she should send over an army to their assistance, of five thousand foot and a thousand horse, and pay them during the war; that the general, and two others whom she should appoint, should be admitted into the council of the states; that neither party should make peace without the consent of the other; that her expenses should be refunded after the conclusion of the war; and that the towns of Flushing and the Brille, with the Castle of Rammekins, should, in the mean time, be consigned into her hands by way of security.

The queen knew that this measure would immediately engage her in open hostilities with Philip; yet was not she terrified with the view of the present greatness of that monarch. The continent of Spain was at that time rich and populous; and the late addition of Portugal, besides securing internal tranquillity, had annexed an opulent kingdom to Philip's dominions, had made him master of many settlements in the East Indies, and of the whole commerce of those regions, and had much increased his naval power, in which he was before chiefly deficient. All the princes of Italy, even the pope and the court of Rome, were reduced to a kind of subjection under him, and seemed to possess their sovereignty on terms somewhat precarious. The Austrian branch in Germany, with their dependent principalities, was closely connected with him, and was ready to supply him with troops for every enterprise. All the treasures of the West Indies were in his possession; and the present scarcity of the precious metals in every country of Europe, rendered the influence of his riches the more forcible and extensive. The Netherlands seemed on the point of relapsing into servitude; and small hopes were entertained of their withstanding those numerous and veteran armies, which, under the command of the most experienced generals, he employed against them. Even France, which was wont to counterbalance the Austrian greatness, had lost all her force from intestine commotions; and as the Catholics, the ruling party, were closely connected with him, he rather expected thence an augmentation than a diminution of his power. Upon the whole, such prepossessions were every where entertained concerning the force of the Spanish monarchy, that the king of Sweden, when he heard that Elizabeth had openly embraced the defence of the revolted Flemings, scrupled not to say, that she had now taken the diadem from her head, and had adventured it upon the doubtful chance of war. [1]

* Camden, p 508.

Yet was this princess rather cautious than enterprising in her natural temper: she ever needed more to be impelled by the vigor, than restrained by the prudence, of her ministers: but when she saw an evident necessity, she braved danger with magnanimous courage; and trusting to her own consummate wisdom, and to the affections, however divided, of her people, she prepared herself to resist, and even to assault, the whole force of the Catholic monarch.

The earl of Leicester was sent over to Holland at the head of the English auxiliary forces. He carried with him a splendid retinue; being accompanied by the young earl of Essex, his son-in-law, the lords Audley and North, Sir William Russel, Sir Thomas Shirley, Sir Arthur Basset, Sir Walter Waller, Sir Gervase Clifton, and a select troop of five hundred gentlemen. He was received on his arrival at Flushing by his nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, the governor; and every town through which he passed expressed their joy by acclamations and triumphal arches, as if his presence and the queen’s protection had brought them the most certain deliverance. The states, desirous of engaging Elizabeth still further in their defence, and knowing the interest which Leicester possessed with her, conferred on him the title of governor and captain-general of the united provinces, appointed a guard to attend him, and treated him in some respects as their sovereign. But this step had a contrary effect to what they expected. The queen was displeased with the artifice of the states, and the ambition of Leicester. She severely reprimanded both; and it was with some difficulty that, after many humble admissions, they were able to appease her.

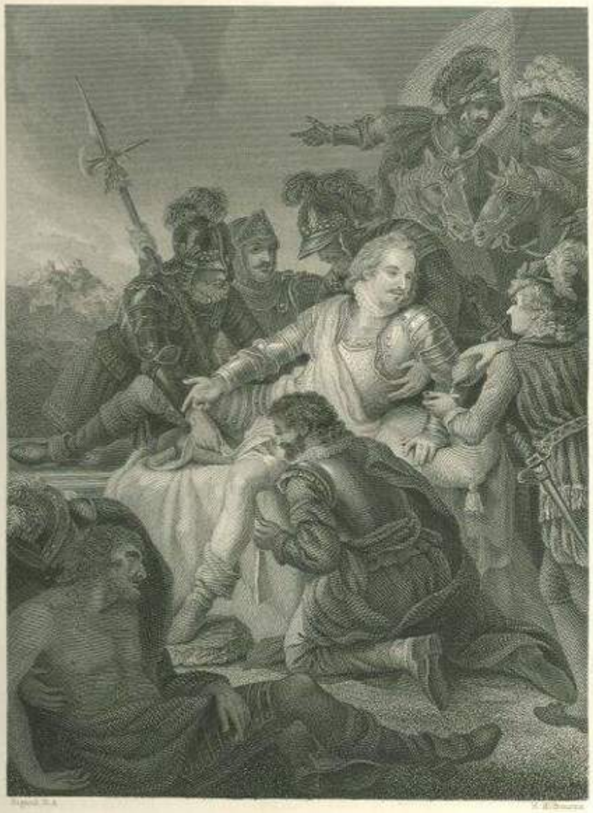
America was regarded as the chief source of Philip’s power, as well as the most defenceless part of his dominions, and Elizabeth, finding that an open breach with that monarch was unavoidable, resolved not to leave him unmolested in that quarter. The great success of the Spaniards and Portuguese in both Indies had excited a spirit of emulation in England; and as the progress of commerce, still more that of colonies, is slow and gradual, it was happy that a war in this critical period had opened a more flattering prospect to the avarice and ambition of the English, and had tempted them, by the view of sudden and exorbitant profit, to engage in naval enterprises. A fleet of twenty sail was equipped to attack the Spaniards in the West Indies: two thousand three hundred volunteers, besides seamen, engaged on board of it; Sir Francis Drake was appointed admiral; Christopher Carlisle, commander of the land forces.

1586.

They took St. Jago, near Cape Verde, by surprise; and found in it plenty of provisions, but no riches. They sailed to Hispaniola; and easily making themselves masters of St. Domingo by assault, obliged the inhabitants to ransom their houses by a sum of money. Carthagena fell next into their hands, after some more resistance, and was treated in the same manner. They burnt St. Anthony and St. Helens, two towns on the coast of Florida. Sailing along the coast of Virginia, they found the small remains of a colony which had been planted there by Sir Walter Raleigh, and which had gone extremely to decay. This was the first attempt of the English to form such settlements; and though they have since surpassed all European nations, both in the situation of their colonies, and in the noble principles of liberty and industry on which they are founded, they had here been so unsuccessful, that the miserable planters abandoned their settlements, and prevailed on Drake to carry them with him to England. He returned with so much riches as encouraged the volunteers, and with such accounts of the Spanish weakness in those countries, as served extremely to inflame the spirits of the nation to future enterprises. The great mortality which the climate had produced in his fleet was, as is usual, but a feeble restraint on the avidity and sanguine hopes of young adventurers. [1] It is thought that Drake’s fleet first introduced the use of tobacco into England.

* Camden, .

The enterprises of Leicester were much less successful than those of Drake. This man possessed neither courage nor capacity equal to the trust reposed in him by the queen; and as he was the only bad choice she made for any considerable employment, men naturally believed that she had here been influenced by an affection still more partial than that of friendship. He gained, at first, some advantage in an action against the Spaniards; and threw succors into Grave, by which that place was enabled to make a vigorous defence: but the cowardice of the governor, Van Hemert, rendered all these efforts useless. He capitulated after a feeble resistance; and being tried for his conduct, suffered a capital punishment from the sentence of a court martial. The prince of Parma next undertook the siege of Venlo, which was surrendered to him after some resistance. The fate of Nuys was more dismal; being taken by assault, while the garrison was treating of a capitulation. Rhimberg, which was garrisoned by twelve hundred English, under the command of Colonel Morgan, was afterwards besieged by the Spaniards; and Leicester, thinking himself too weak to attempt raising the siege, endeavored to draw off the prince of Parma by forming another enterprise. He first attacked Doesberg, and succeeded: he then sat down before Zutphen, which the Spanish general thought so important a fortress, that he hastened to its relief. He made the marquis of Guasto advance with a convoy, which he intended to throw into the place. They were favored by a fog; but falling by accident on a body of English cavalry, a furious action ensued, in which the Spaniards were worsted, and the marquis of Gonzaga, an Italian nobleman of great reputation and family was slain. The pursuit was stopped by the advance of the prince of Parma with the main body of the Spanish army; and the English cavalry, on their return from the field, found their advantage more than compensated by the loss of Sir Philip Sidney, who, being mortally wounded in the action, was carried off by the soldiers, and soon after died. This person is described by the writers of that age, as the most perfect model of an accomplished gentleman that could be formed even by the wanton imagination of poetry or fiction. Virtuous conduct, polite conversation, heroic valor, and elegant erudition, all concurred to render him the ornament and delight of the English court; and as the credit which he possessed with the queen and the earl of Leicester was wholly employed in the encouragement of genius and literature, his praises have been transmitted with advantage to posterity. No person was so low as not to become an object of his humanity. After this last action, while he was lying on the field mangled with wounds, a bottle of water was brought him to relieve his thirst; but observing a soldier near him in a like miserable condition, he said, “This man’s necessity is still greater than mine;” and resigned to him the bottle of water. The king of Scots, struck with admiration of Sidney’s virtue, celebrated his memory in a copy of Latin verses, which he composed on the death of that young hero.



DEATH OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

LONDON: JAMES S. VIRTUE.

The English, though a long peace had deprived them of all experience, were strongly possessed of military genius; and the advantages gained by the prince of Parma were not attributed to the superior bravery and discipline of the Spaniards, but solely to the want of military abilities in Leicester. The states were much discontented with his management of the war; still more with his arbitrary and imperious conduct; and at the end of the campaign, they applied to him for a redress of all their grievances. But Leicester, without giving them any satisfaction, departed soon after for England. [1]

* Camden, . Bentivoglio, part ii. lib. iv.

The queen, while she provoked so powerful an enemy as the king of Spain, was not forgetful to secure herself on the side of Scotland; and she endeavored both to cultivate the friendship and alliance of her kinsman

James, and to remove all grounds of quarrel between them. An attempt which she had made some time before was not well calculated to gain Ihe confidence of that prince. She had despatched Wotton as her ambassador to Scotland; but though she gave him private instructions with regard to her affairs, she informed James, that when she had any political business to discuss with him, she would employ another minister; that this man was not fitted for serious negotiations; and that her chief purpose in sending him, was to entertain the king with witty and facetious conversation, and to partake without reserve of his pleasures and amusements. Wotton was master of profound dissimulation, and knew how to cover, under the appearance of a careless gayety, the deepest designs and most dangerous artifices. When but a youth of twenty, he had been employed by his uncle, Dr. Wotton, ambassador in France during the reign of Mary, to insnare the constable Montmorency; and had not his purpose been frustrated by pure accident, his cunning had prevailed over all the caution and experience of that aged minister. It is no wonder that, after years had improved him in all the arts of deceit, he should gain an ascendant over a young prince of so open and unguarded a temper as James; especially when the queen's recommendation prepared the way for his reception. He was admitted into all the pleasures of the king; made himself master of his secrets; and had so much the more authority with him in political transactions, as he did not seem to pay the least attention to these matters. The Scottish ministers, who observed the growing interest of this man, endeavored to acquire his friendship; and scrupled not to sacrifice to his intrigues the most essential interests of their master. Elizabeth's usual jealousies with regard to her heirs began now to be levelled against James; and as that prince had attained the years proper for marriage, she was apprehensive lest, by being strengthened by children and alliances, he should acquire the greater interest and authority with her English subjects. She directed Wotton to form a secret concert with some Scottish noblemen, and to procure their promise, that James, during three years, should not on any account be permitted to marry. In consequence of this view, they endeavored to embroil him with the king of Denmark, who had sent ambassadors to Scotland on pretence of demanding restitution of the Orkneys, but really with a view of opening a proposal of marriage between James and his daughter. Wotton is said to have employed his intrigues to purposes still more dangerous. He formed, it is pretended, a conspiracy with some malecontents, to seize the person of the king, and to deliver him into the hands of Elizabeth, who would probably have denied all concurrence in the design, but would have been sure to retain him in perpetual thraldom, if not captivity. The conspiracy was detected; and Wotton fled hastily from Scotland, without taking leave of the king. [1]

James's situation obliged him to dissemble his resentment of this traitorous attempt, and his natural temper inclined him soon to forgive and forget it. The queen, found no difficulty in renewing the negotiations for a strict alliance between Scotland and England; and the more effectually to gain the prince's friendship, she granted him a pension, equivalent to his claim on the inheritance of his grand mother, the countess of Lenox, lately deceased. [2] A league was formed between Elizabeth and James for the mutual defence of their dominions and of their religion, now menaced by the open combination of all the Catholic powers of Europe. It was stipulated, that if Elizabeth were invaded, James should aid her with a body of two thousand horse and five thousand foot; that Elizabeth, in a like case, should send to his assistance three thousand horse and six thousand foot; that the charge of these armies should be defrayed by the prince who demanded assistance; that if the invasion should be made upon England, within sixty miles of the frontiers of Scotland, this latter kingdom should march its whole force to the assistance of the former; and that the present league should supersede all former alliances of either state with any foreign kingdom, so far as religion was concerned. [3]

* Melvil.

* * Spotswood, .

* * * Spotswood, . Camden, . Rymer, tom. xv. p. 803.

By this league, James secured himself against all attempts from abroad, opened a way for acquiring the confidence and affections of the English, and might entertain some prospect of domestic tranquillity, which, while he lived on bad terms with Elizabeth, he could never expect long to enjoy. Besides the turbulent disposition and inveterate feuds of the nobility, — ancient maladies of the Scottish government, — the spirit of fanaticism had introduced a new disorder; so much the more dangerous, as religion, when corrupted by false opinion, is not restrained by any rules of morality, and is even scarcely to be accounted for in its operations by any principles of ordinary conduct and policy. The insolence of the preachers, who triumphed in their dominion over the populace, had at this time reached an extreme height; and they carried their arrogance so far, not only against the king, but against the whole civil power, that they excommunicated the archbishop of St. Andrews, because he had been active in parliament for promoting a law which restrained their seditious sermons; [1] nor could that prelate save himself by any expedient from this terrible sentence, but by renouncing all pretensions to ecclesiastical authority. One Gibson said in the pulpit that Captain James Stuart (meaning the late earl of Arran) and his wife, Jezebel, had been deemed the chief persecutors of the church; but it was now seen that the king himself was the great offender; and for this crime the preacher denounced against him the curse which fell on Jeroboam, that he should die childless, and be the last of his race. [2]

The secretary, Thirlstone, perceiving the king so much molested with ecclesiastical affairs, and with the refractory disposition of the clergy, advised him to leave them to their own courses; for that in a short time they would become so intolerable, that the people would rise against them, and drive them out of the country. “True,” replied the king; “if I purposed to undo the church and religion, your counsel were good; but my intention is to maintain both; therefore cannot I suffer the clergy to follow such a conduct, as will in the end bring religion into contempt and derision.” [3]

* Spotswood, , 346.

* Spotswood, [2?].

* Spotswood, .

CHAPTER XLII.

ELIZABETH.

1586.

The dangers which arose from the character, principles, and pretensions of the queen of Scots, had very early engaged Elizabeth to consult, in her treatment of that unfortunate princess, the dictates of jealousy and politics, rather than of friendship or generosity: resentment of this usage had pushed Mary into enterprises which had nearly threatened the repose and authority of Elizabeth: the rigor and restraint thence redoubled upon the captive queen, [1] still impelled her to attempt greater extremities; and while her impatience of confinement, her revenge, [2] and her high spirit concurred with religious zeal, and the suggestions of desperate bigots, she was at last engaged in designs which afforded her enemies, who watched the opportunity, a pretence or reason for effecting her final ruin.

* Digges, . Haynes, .

* * See note T. at the end of the volume.

The English seminary at Rheims had wrought themselves up to a high pitch of rage and animosity against the queen. The recent persecutions from which they had escaped; the new rigors which they knew awaited them in the course of their missions; the liberty which for the present they enjoyed of declaiming against that princess; and the contagion of that religious fury which every where surrounded them in France; all these causes had obliterated with them every maxim of common sense, and every principle of morals or humanity. Intoxicated with admiration of the divine power and infallibility of the pope, they revered his bull by which he excommunicated and deposed the queen; and some of them had gone to that height of extravagance as to assert, that that performance had been immediately dictated by the Holy Ghost. The assassination of heretical sovereigns, and of that princess in particular, was represented as the most meritorious of all enterprises; and they taught, that whoever perished in such pious attempts, enjoyed, without dispute, the glorious and never-fading crown of martyrdom. By such doctrines, they instigated John Savage, a man of desperate courage, who had served some years in the Low Countries under the prince of Parma, to attempt the life of Elizabeth; and this assassin, having made a vow to persevere in his design, was sent over to England, and recommended to the confidence of the more zealous Catholics.

About the same time, John Ballard, a priest of that seminary, had returned to Paris from his mission in England and Scotland; and as he had observed a spirit of mutiny and rebellion to be very prevalent among the Catholic devotees in these countries, he had founded on that disposition the project of dethroning Elizabeth, and of restoring by force of arms the exercise of the ancient religion. [1] The situation of affairs abroad seemed favorable to this enterprise; the pope, the Spaniard, the duke of Guise, concurring in interests, had formed a resolution to make some attempt against England: and Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador at Paris, strongly encouraged Ballard to hope for succors from these princes. Charles Paget alone, a zealous Catholic and a devoted partisan of the queen of Scots, being well acquainted with the prudence, vigor, and general popularity of Elizabeth, always maintained that, so long as that princess was allowed to live, it was in vain to expect any success from an enterprise upon England. Ballard, persuaded of this truth, saw more clearly the necessity of executing the design formed at Rheims; he came over to England in the disguise of a soldier, and assumed the name of Captain Fortescue; and he bent his endeavors to effect at once the project of an assassination, an insurrection, and an invasion. [2]

* Murden’s State Papers, .

* Camden,

The first person to whom he addressed himself was Anthony Babington, of Dethic, in the county of Derby. This young gentleman was of a good family, possessed a plentiful fortune, had discovered an excellent capacity, and was accomplished in literature beyond most of his years or station. Being zealously devoted to the Catholic communion, he had secretly made a journey to Paris some time before, and had fallen into intimacy with

Thomas Morgan, a bigoted fugitive from England, and with the bishop of Glasgow, Mary’s ambassador at the court of France. By continually extolling the amiable accomplishments and heroical virtues of that princess, they impelled the sanguine and unguarded mind of young Babington to make some attempt for her service; and they employed every principle of ambition, gallantry, and religious zeal, to give him a contempt of those dangers which attended any enterprise against the vigilant government of Elizabeth. Finding him well disposed for their purpose, they sent him back to England, and secretly, unknown to himself, recommended him to the queen of Scots, as a person worth engaging in her service. She wrote him a letter, full of friendship and confidence; and Babington, ardent in his temper and zealous in his principles, thought that these advances now bound him in honor to devote himself entirely to the service of that unfortunate princess. During some time, he had found means of conveying to her all her foreign correspondence; but after she was put under the custody of Sir Amias Paulet, and reduced to a more rigorous confinement, he experienced so much difficulty and danger in rendering her this service, that he had desisted from every attempt of that nature.

When Ballard began to open his intentions to Babington, he found his zeal suspended, not extinguished: his former ardor revived on the mention of any enterprise which seemed to promise success in the cause of Mary and of the Catholic religion. He had entertained sentiments conformable to those of Paget, and represented the folly of all attempts which, during the lifetime of Elizabeth, could be formed against the established religion and government of England. Ballard, encouraged by this hint, proceeded to discover to him the design undertaken by Savage; [1] and was well pleased to observe that, instead of being shocked with the project, Babington only thought it not secure enough, when intrusted to one single hand, and proposed to join five others with Savage in this desperate enterprise.

In prosecution of these views, Babington employed himself in increasing the number of his associates; and he secretly drew into the conspiracy many Catholic gentlemen, discontented with the present government. Barnwell, of a noble family in Ireland, Charnoc, a gentleman of Lancashire, and Abington, whose father had been cofferer to the household readily undertook the assassination of the queen. Charles Tilney, the heir of an

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* Camden, . State Trials, .

ancient family, and Titchborne of Southampton, when the design was proposed to them, expressed some scruples, which were removed by the arguments of Babington and Ballard. Savage alone refused, during some time, to share the glory of the enterprise with any others; [1] he challenged the whole to himself; and it was with some difficulty he was induced to depart from this preposterous ambition.

* State Trials, vol. i. .

The deliverance of the queen of Scots, at the very same instant when Elizabeth should be assassinated, was requisite for effecting the purpose of the conspirators; and Babington undertook, with a party of a hundred horse, to attack her guards while she should be taking the air on horseback. In this enterprise, he engaged Edward Windsor, brother to the lord of that name, Thomas Salisbury, Robert Gage, John Travers, John Jones, and Henry Donne; most of them men of family and interest. The conspirators much wanted, but could not find, any nobleman of note whom they might place at the head of the enterprise; but they trusted that the great events, of the queen's death and Mary's deliverance, would rouse all the zealous Catholics to arms; and that foreign forces, taking advantage of the general confusion, would easily fix the queen of Scots on the throne, and reestablish the ancient religion.

These desperate projects had not escaped the vigilance of Elizabeth's council, particularly of Walsingham, secretary of state. That artful minister had engaged Maud, a Catholic priest, whom he retained in pay, to attend Ballard in his journey to France, and had thereby got a hint of the designs entertained by the fugitives. Polly, another of his spies, had found means to insinuate himself among the conspirators in England; and, though not entirely trusted, had obtained some insight into their dangerous secrets. But the bottom of the conspiracy was never fully known, till Gifford, a seminary priest, came over and made a tender of his services to Walsingham. By his means, the discovery became of the utmost importance, and involved the fate of Mary, as well as of those zealous partisans of that princess.

Babington and his associates, having laid such a plan as, they thought, promised infallible success, were impatient to communicate the design to the queen of Scots, and to obtain her approbation and concurrence. For this service they employed Gifford, who immediately applied to Walsingham, that the interest of that minister might forward his secret correspondence with Mary. Walsingham proposed the matter to Paulet, and desired him to connive at Gifford’s corrupting one of his servants; but Paulet, averse to the introducing of such a pernicious precedent into his family, desired that they would rather think of some other expedient. Gifford found a brewer, who supplied the family with ale; and bribed him to convey letters to the captive queen. The letters, by Paulet’s connivance, were thrust through a chink in the wall; and answers were returned by the same conveyance.

Ballard and Babington were at first diffident of Gifford’s fidelity; and to make trial of him, they gave him only blank papers made up like letters; but finding by the answers that these had been faithfully delivered, they laid aside all further scruple, and conveyed by his hands the most criminal and dangerous parts of their conspiracy. Babington informed Mary of the design laid for a foreign invasion, the plan of an insurrection at home, the scheme for her deliverance, and the conspiracy for assassinating the usurper, by six noble gentlemen, as he termed them, all of them his private friends; who, from the zeal which they bore to the Catholic cause and her majesty’s service, would undertake the “tragical execution.” Mary replied, that she approved highly of the design; that the gentlemen might expect all the rewards which it should ever be in her power to confer; and that the death of Elizabeth was a necessary circumstance, before any attempts were made, either for her own deliverance or an insurrection. [1]

* State Trials, vol. i. p 135. Camden, .

These letters, with others to Mendoza, Charles Paget, the archbishop of Glasgow, and Sir Francis Inglefield, were carried by Gifford to Secretary Walsingham; were deciphered by the art of Philips, his clerk; and copies taken of them. Walsingham employed another artifice, in order to obtain full insight into the plot: he subjoined to a letter of Mary’s a postscript in the same cipher; in which he made her desire Babington to inform her of the names of the conspirators. The indiscretion of Babington furnished Walsingham with still another means of detection, as well as of defence. That gentlemen had caused a picture to be drawn, where he himself was represented standing amidst the six assassins; and a motto was subjoined, expressing that their common perils were the band of their confederacy. A copy of this picture was brought to Elizabeth, that she might know the assassins, and guard herself against their approach to her person.

Meanwhile Babington, anxious to insure and hasten the foreign succors, resolved to despatch Ballard into France; and he procured for him, under a feigned name, a license to travel. In order to remove from himself all suspicion, he applied to Walsingharn, pretended great zeal for the queen’s service, offered to go abroad, and professed his intentions of employing the confidence which he had gained among the Catholics, to the detection and disappointment of their conspiracies. Walsingham commended his loyal purposes; and promising his own counsel and assistance in the execution of them, still fed him with hopes, and maintained a close correspondence with him. A warrant, meanwhile, was issued for seizing Ballard; and this incident, joined to the consciousness of guilt, begat in all the conspirators the utmost anxiety and concern. Some advised that they should immediately make their escape; others proposed that Savage and Charnoc should without delay execute their purpose against Elizabeth; and Babington, in prosecution of this scheme, furnished Savage with money, that he might buy good clothes, and thereby have more easy access to the queen’s person. Next day, they began to apprehend that they had taken the alarm too hastily; and Babington, having renewed his correspondence with Walsingham, was persuaded by that subtle minister, that the seizure of Ballard had proceeded entirely from the usual diligence of informers in the detection of popish and seminary priests. He even consented to take lodgings secretly in Walsingham’s house, that they might have more frequent conferences together before his intended departure for France; but observing that he was watched and guarded, he made his escape, and gave the alarm to the other conspirators. They all took to flight, covered themselves with several disguises, and lay concealed in woods or barns; but were soon discovered and thrown into prison. In their examinations they contradicted each other, and the leaders were obliged to make a full confession of the truth. Fourteen were condemned and executed, of whom seven, acknowledged the crime on their trial; the rest were convicted by evidence.

The lesser conspirators being despatched, measures were taken for the trial and conviction of the queen of Scots; on whose account, and with whose concurrence, these attempts had been made against the life of the queen, and the tranquillity of the kingdom. Some of Elizabeth’s counsellors were averse to this procedure, and thought that the close confinement of a woman who was become very sickly, and who would probably put a speedy period to their anxiety by her natural death, might give sufficient security to the government without attempting a measure of which there scarcely remains any example in history. Leicester advised that Mary should be secretly despatched by poison; and he sent a divine to convince Walsingham of the lawfulness of that action: but Walsingham declared his abhorrence of it; and still insisted, in conjunction with the majority of the counsellors, for the open trial of the queen of Scots. The situation of England, and of the English ministers, had, indeed, been hitherto not a little dangerous. No successor of the crown was declared; but the heir of blood, to whom the people in general were likely to adhere, was, by education, an enemy to the national religion; was, from multiplied provocations, an enemy to the ministers and principal nobility; and their personal safety, as well as the safety of the public, seemed to depend alone on the queen's life, who was now somewhat advanced in years. No wonder, therefore, that Elizabeth's counsellors, knowing themselves to be so obnoxious to the queen of Scots, endeavored to push every measure to extremities against her; and were even more anxious than the queen herself, to prevent her from ever mounting the throne of England.

Though all England was acquainted with the detection of Babington's conspiracy, every avenue to the queen of Scots had been so strictly guarded, that she remained in utter ignorance of the matter; and it was a great surprise to her, when Sir Thomas Gorges, by Elizabeth's orders, informed her, that all her accomplices were discovered and arrested. He chose the time for giving her this intelligence when she was mounted on horseback to go a hunting; and she was not permitted to return to her former place of abode, but war conducted from one gentleman's house to another, till she was lodged in Fotheringay Castle, in the County of Northampton, which it was determined to make the last stage of her trial and sufferings. Her two secretaries, Nau, a Frenchman, and Curle, a Scot, were immediately arrested: all her papers were seized, and sent up to the council: above sixty different keys to ciphers were discovered: there were also found many letters from persons beyond sea, and several too from English noblemen containing expressions of respect and attachment. The queen took no notice of this latter discovery; but the persons themselves, knowing their correspondence to be detected, though that they had no other means of making atonement for their imprudence, than by declaring themselves thenceforth the most inveterate enemies of the queen of Scots. [1]

* Camden, .

It was resolved to try Mary, not by the common statute of treasons, but by the act which had passed the former year with a view to this very event; and the queen, in terms of that act, appointed a commission, consisting of forty noblemen and privy counsellors, and empowered them to examine and pass sentence on Mary, whom she denominated the late queen of Scots, and heir to James V. of Scotland. The commissioners came to Fotheringay Castle, and sent to her Sir Walter Mildmay, Sir Amias Paulet, and Edward Barker, who delivered her a letter from Elizabeth, informing her of the commission, and of the approaching trial. Mary received the intelligence without emotion or astonishment. She said, however, that it seemed strange to her, that the queen should command her, as a subject, to submit to a trial and examination before subjects; that she was an absolute, independent princess, and would yield to nothing which might derogate either from her royal majesty, from the state of sovereign princes, or from the dignity and rank of her son: that, however oppressed by misfortunes, she was not yet so much broken in spirit as her enemies flattered themselves; nor would she, on any account, be accessary to her own degradation and dishonor: that she was ignorant of the laws and statutes of England; was utterly destitute of counsel; and could not conceive who were entitled to be called her peers, or could legally sit as judges on her trial: that though she had lived in England for many years, she had lived in captivity; and not having received the protection of the laws, she could not, merely by her involuntary residence in the country, be supposed to have subjected herself to their jurisdiction: that, notwithstanding the superiority of her rank, she was willing to give an account of her conduct before an English parliament; but could not view these commissioners in any other light than as men appointed to justify, by some color of legal proceeding, her condemnation and execution: and that she warned them to look to their conscience and their character in trying an innocent person; and to reflect, that these transactions would somewhere be subject to revisal, and that the theatre of the whole world was much wider than the kingdom of England.

In return, the commissioners sent a new deputation, informing her, that her plea, either from her royal dignity or from her imprisonment, could not be admitted; and that they were empowered to proceed to her trial, even though she should refuse to answer before them. Burleigh, the treasurer, and

Bromley, the chancellor, employed much reasoning to make her submit; but the person whose arguments had the chief influence, was Sir Christopher Hatton, vice-chamberlain. His speech was to this purpose: “You are accused, madam,” said he, “but not condemned, of having conspired the destruction of our lady and queen anointed. You say you are a queen; but, in such a crime as this, and such a situation as yours, the royal dignity itself, neither by the civil or canon law, nor by the law of nature or of nations, is exempt from judgment. If you be innocent, you wrong your reputation in avoiding a trial. We have been present at your protestations of innocence; but Queen Elizabeth thinks otherwise, and is heartily sorry for the appearances which lie against you. To examine, therefore, your cause, she has appointed commissioners; honorable persons, prudent and upright men, who are ready to hear you with equity, and even with favor, and will rejoice if you can clear yourself of the imputations which have been thrown upon you. Believe me, madam, the queen herself will rejoice, who affirmed to me, at my departure, that nothing which ever befell her had given her so much uneasiness, as that you should be suspected of a concurrence in these criminal enterprises. Laying aside, therefore, the fruitless claim of privilege from your royal dignity, which can now avail you nothing, trust to the better defence of your innocence, make it appear in open trial, and leave not upon your memory that stain of infamy which must attend your obstinate silence on this occasion.” [1]

* Camden, .

By this artful speech, Mary was persuaded to answer before the court; and thereby gave an appearance of legal procedure to the trial, and prevented those difficulties which the commissioners must have fallen into, had she persevered in maintaining so specious a plea as that of her sovereign and independent character. Her conduct in this particular must be regarded as the more imprudent; because formerly, when Elizabeth’s commissioners pretended not to exercise any jurisdiction over her, and only entered into her cause by her own consent and approbation, she declined justifying herself, when her honor, which ought to have been dearer to her than life, seemed absolutely to require it.

On her first appearance before the commissioners, Mary, either sensible of her imprudence, or still unwilling to degrade herself by submitting to a trial, renewed her protestation against the authority of her judges: the chancellor answered her, by pleading the supreme authority of the English laws over every one who resided in England; and the commissioners accommodated matters, by ordering both her protestation and his answer to be recorded.

The lawyers of the crown then opened the charge against the queen of Scots. They proved, by intercepted letters, that she had allowed Cardinal Allen and others to treat her as queen of England; and that she had kept a correspondence with Lord Paget and Charles Paget, in view of engaging the Spaniards to invade the kingdom. Mary seemed not anxious to clear herself from either of these imputations. She only said that she could not hinder others from using what style they pleased in writing to her; and that she might lawfully try every expedient for the recovery of her liberty.

An intercepted letter of hers to Mendoza was next produced; in which she promised to transfer to Philip her right to the kingdom of England, if her son should refuse to be converted to the Catholic faith; an event, she there said, of which there was no expectation while he remained in the hands of his Scottish subjects. [1]

* State Trials, vol. i. p 138.

Even this part of the charge she took no pains to deny, or rather she seemed to acknowledge it. She said that she had no kingdoms to dispose of; yet was it lawful for her to give at her pleasure what was her own, and she was not accountable to any for her actions. She added, that she had formerly rejected that proposal from Spain; but now, since all her hopes in England were gone, she was fully determined not to refuse foreign assistance. There was also produced evidence to prove, that Allen and Parsons were at that very time negotiating, by her orders, at Rome, the conditions of transferring her English crown to the king of Spain, and of disinheriting her heretical son. [1]

It is remarkable, that Mary's prejudices against her son were at this time carried so far, that she had even entered into a conspiracy against him, had appointed Lord Claud Hamilton regent of Scotland, and had instigated her adherents to seize James's person, and deliver him into the hands of the pope, or the king of Spain; whence he was never to be delivered, but on condition of his becoming Catholic. [2]

The only part of the charge which Mary positively denied, was her concurrence in the design of assassinating Elizabeth. This article, indeed, was the most heavy, and the only one that could fully justify the queen in proceeding to extremities against her. In order to prove the accusation, there were produced the following evidence: copies taken in Secretary Walsingham’s office of the intercepted letters between her and Babington, in which her approbation of the murder was clearly expressed; the evidence of her two secretaries, Nau and Curle, who had confessed, without being put to any torture, both that she received these letters from Babington, and that they had written the answers by her order; the confession of Babington, that he had written the letters and received the answers, [3] and the confession of Ballard and Savage, that Babington had showed them these letters of Mary, written in the cipher which had been settled between them.

* See note U, at the end of the volume.

* * See note X, at the end of the volume.

* * * State Trials, vol. i. .

It is evident, that this complication of evidence, though every circumstance corroborates the general conclusion, resolves itself finally into the testimony of the two secretaries, who alone were certainly acquainted with their mistress’s concurrence in Babington’s conspiracy, but who knew themselves exposed to all the rigors of imprisonment, torture, and death, if they refused to give any evidence which might be required of them. In the case of an ordinary criminal, this proof, with all its disadvantages, would be esteemed legal, and even satisfactory, if not opposed by some other circumstances which shake the credit of the witnesses: but on the present trial, where the absolute power of the prosecutor concurred with such important interests, and such a violent inclination to have the princess condemned, the testimony of two witnesses, even though men of character, ought to be supported by strong probabilities, in order to remove all suspicion of tyranny and injustice. The proof against Mary, it must be confessed, is not destitute of this advantage; and it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for Babington’s receiving an answer written in her name, and in the cipher concerted between them, without allowing that the matter had been communicated to that princess. Such is the light in which this matter appears, even after time has discovered every thing which could guide our judgment with regard to it: no wonder, therefore, that the queen of Scots, unassisted by counsel, and confounded by so extraordinary a trial, found herself incapable of making a satisfactory defence before the commissioners. Her reply consisted chiefly in her own denial: whatever force may be in that denial was much weakened by her positively affirming, that she never had had any correspondence of any kind with Babington; a fact, however, of which there remains not the least question. [1] She asserted, that as Nau and Curle had taken an oath of secrecy and fidelity to her, their evidence against her ought not to be credited. She confessed, however, that Nau had been in the service of her uncle, the cardinal of Lorraine, and had been recommended to her by the king of France, as a man in whom she might safely confide. She also acknowledged Curle to be a very honest man, but simple and easily imposed on by Nau. If these two men had received any letters, or had written any answers, without her knowledge, the imputation, she said, could never lie on her. And she was the more inclined, she added, to entertain this suspicion against them, because Nau had, in other instances, been guilty of a like temerity, and had ventured to transact business in her name, without communicating the matter to her. [2]

* See note Y, at the end of the volume.

* * See note Z, at the end cf the volume.

The sole circumstance of her defence which to us may appear to have some force, was her requiring that Nau and Cure should be confronted with her, and her affirming that they never would to her face persist in their evidence. But that demand, however equitable, was not then supported by law in trials of high treason, and was often refused, even in other trials where the crown was prosecutor. The clause contained in an act of the thirteenth of the queen, was a novelty; that the species of treason there enumerated must be proved by two witnesses, confronted with the criminal. But Mary was not tried upon that act; and the ministers and crown lawyers of this reign were always sure to refuse every indulgence beyond what the strict letter of the law, and the settled practice of the courts of justice, required of them. Not to mention, that these secretaries were not probably at

Fotheringay Castle during the time of the trial, and could not, upon Mary’s demand, be produced before the commissioners. [1]

* Queen Elizabeth was willing to have allowed Curle and Nau to be produced in the trial, and writes to that purpose to Burleigh and Walsingham, in her letter of the seventh of October, in Forbes’s MS collections. She only says, that she thinks it needless, though she was willing to agree to it.

The not confronting of the witnesses was not the result of design, but the practice of the age.

There passed two incidents in this trial which may be worth observing. A letter between Mary and Babington was read, in which mention was made of the earl of Arundel and his brothers: on hearing their names, she broke into a sigh. “Alas,” said she, “what has the noble house of the Howards suffered for my sake!” She affirmed, with regard to the same letter, that it was easy to forge the handwriting and cipher of another; she was afraid that this was too familiar a practice with Walsingham, who, she also heard, had frequently practised both against her life and her son’s. Walsingham, who was one of the commissioners, rose up. He protested that, in his private capacity, he had never acted any thing against the queen of Scots: in his public capacity, he owned, that his concern for his sovereign’s safety had made him very diligent in searching out, by every expedient, all designs against her sacred person or her authority. For attaining that end, he would not only make use of the assistance of Ballard or any other conspirator; he would also reward them for betraying their companions. But if he had tampered in any manner unbefitting his character and office, why did none of the late criminals, either at their trial or execution accuse him of such practices? Mary endeavored to pacify him, by saying that she spoke from information; and she begged him to give thenceforth no more credit to such as slandered her, than she should to such as accused him. The great character, indeed, which Sir Francis Walsingham bears for probity and honor, should remove from him all suspicion of such base arts as forgery and subornation; arts which even the most corrupt ministers, in the most corrupt times, would scruple to employ.

Having finished the trial, the commissioners, adjourned from Fotheringay Castle, and met in the star chamber at London, where, after taking the oaths of Mary’s two secretaries, who voluntarily, without hope or reward, vouched the authenticity of those letters before produced, they pronounced sentence of death upon the queen of Scots, and confirmed it by their seals and subscriptions. The same day, a declaration was published by the commissioners and the judges “that the sentence did nowise derogate from the title and honor of James, king of Scotland; but that he was in the same place, degree, and right, as if the sentence had never been pronounced.” [1]

* Camden, .

The queen had now brought affairs with Mary to that situation which she had long ardently desired; and had found a plausible reason for executing vengeance on a competitor, whom, from the beginning of her reign, she had ever equally dreaded and hated. But she was restrained from instantly gratifying her resentment, by several important considerations. She foresaw the invidious colors in which this example of uncommon jurisdiction would be represented by the numerous partisans of Mary, and the reproach to which she herself might be exposed with all foreign princes, perhaps with all posterity. The rights of hospitality, of kindred, and of royal majesty, seemed in one signal instance to be all violated; and this sacrifice of generosity to interest, of clemency to revenge, might appear equally unbecoming a sovereign and a woman. Elizabeth, therefore, who was an excellent hypocrite, pretended the utmost reluctance to proceed to the execution of the sentence; affected the most tender sympathy with her prisoner; displayed all her scruples and difficulties; rejected the solicitation of her courtiers and ministers; and affirmed that, were she not moved by the deepest concern for her people’s safety, she would not hesitate a moment in pardoning all the injuries which she herself had received from the queen of Scots.

That the voice of her people might be more audibly heard in the demand of justice upon Mary, she summoned a new parliament; and she knew, both from the usual dispositions of that assembly, and from the influence of her ministers over them, that she should not want the most earnest solicitation to consent to that measure which was so agreeable to her secret inclinations. She did not open this assembly in person, but appointed for that purpose three commissioners, Bromley, the chancellor, Burleigh, the treasurer, and the earl of Derby. The reason assigned for this measure was, that the queen, foreseeing that the affair of the queen of Scots would be canvassed in parliament, found her tenderness and delicacy so much hurt by that melancholy incident, that she had not the courage to be present while it was under deliberation, but withdrew her eyes from what she could not behold without the utmost reluctance and uneasiness. She was also willing, that, by this unusual precaution, the people should see the danger to which her person was hourly exposed; and should thence be more strongly incited to take vengeance on the criminal, whose restless intrigues and bloody conspiracies had so long exposed her to the most imminent perils. [1]

The parliament answered the queen's expectations: the sentence against Mary was unanimously ratified by both houses, and an application was voted to obtain Elizabeth's consent to its publication and execution. [2] She gave an answer ambiguous, embarrassed; full of real artifice, and seeming irresolution. She mentioned the extreme danger to which her life was continually exposed; she declared her willingness to die, did she not foresee the great calamities which would thence fall upon the nation; she made professions of the greatest tenderness to her people; she displayed the clemency of her temper, and expressed her violent reluctance to execute the sentence against her unhappy kinswoman; she affirmed, that the late law, by which that princess was tried, so far from being made to insnare her, was only intended to give her warning beforehand, not to engage in such attempts as might expose her to the penalties with which she was thus openly menaced; and she begged them to think once again, whether it were possible to find any expedient, besides the death of the queen of Scots, for securing the public tranquility. [3]

* D'Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes, .

* * * D'Ewes, , 403.

The parliament, in obedience to her commands, took the affair again under consideration; but could find no other possible expedient. They reiterated their solicitations, and entreaties, and arguments: they even remonstrated, that mercy to the queen of Scots was cruelty to them, her subjects and children: and they affirmed, that it were injustice to deny execution of the law to any individual; much more to the whole body of the people, now unanimously and earnestly suing for this pledge of her parental care and tenderness. This second address set the pretended doubts and scruples of Elizabeth anew in agitation; she complained of her now unfortunate situation; expressed her uneasiness from their importunity; renewed the professions of affection to her people; and dismissed the committee of parliament in an uncertainty what, after all this deliberation, might be her final resolution. [1]

But though the queen affected reluctance to execute the sentence against Mary, she complied with the request of parliament in publishing it by proclamation; and this act seemed to be attended with the unanimous and hearty rejoicings of the people. Lord Buckhurst, and Beale, clerk of the council, were sent to the queen of Scots, and notified to her the sentence pronounced against her, its ratification by parliament, and the earnest applications made for its execution by that assembly, who thought that their religion could never, while she was alive, attain a full settlement and security. Mary was nowise dismayed at this intelligence: on the contrary, she joyfully laid hold of the last circumstance mentioned to her; and insisted, that since her death was demanded by the Protestants for the establishment of their faith, she was really a martyr to her religion, and was entitled to all the merits attending that glorious character. She added, that the English had often imbrued their hands in the blood of their sovereigns: no wonder they exercised cruelty against her, who derived her descent from these monarchs. [2] Paulet, her keeper, received orders to take down her canopy, and to serve her no longer with the respect due to sovereign princes. He told her, that she was now to be considered as a dead person, and incapable of any dignity. [3] This harsh treatment produced not in her any seeming emotion. She only replied, that she received her royal character from the hands of the Almighty, and no earthly power was ever able to bereave her of it.

* See note AA, at the end of the volume.

* * Camden, .

* * * Jebb, vol. ii. .

The queen of Scots wrote her last letter to Elizabeth; full of dignity, without departing from that spirit of meekness and of charity which appeared suitable to this concluding scene of her unfortunate life. She preferred no petition for averting the fatal sentence: on the contrary she expressed her gratitude to Heaven for thus bringing to a speedy period her sad and lamentable pilgrimage. She requested some favors of Elizabeth; and entreated her that she might be beholden for them to her own goodness alone, without making applications to those ministers who had discovered such an extreme malignity against her person and her religion. She desired, that after her enemies should be satiated with her innocent blood, her body, which it was determined should never enjoy rest while her soul was united to it, might be consigned to her servants, and be conveyed by them into France, there to repose in a Catholic land, with the sacred relics of her mother. In Scotland, she said, the sepulchres of her ancestors were violated, and the churches either demolished or profaned; and in England, where she might be interred among the ancient kings, her own and Elizabeth's progenitors, she could entertain no hopes of being accompanied to the grave with those rites and ceremonies which her religion required. She requested, that no one might have the power of inflicting a private death upon her, without Elizabeth's knowledge; but that her execution should be public, and attended by her ancient servants, who might bear testimony of her perseverance in the faith, and of her submission to the will of Heaven. She begged that these servants might afterwards be allowed to depart whithersoever they pleased, and might enjoy those legacies which she should bequeath them. And she conjured her to grant these favors by their near kindred; by the soul and memory of Henry VII., the common ancestor of both; and by the royal dignity of which they equally participated. [1] Elizabeth made no answer to this letter; being unwilling to give Mary a refusal in her present situation, and foreseeing inconveniencies from granting some of her requests.

* Camden . Jebb, vol. ii. .

While the queen of Scots thus prepared herself to meet her fate, great efforts were made by foreign powers with Elizabeth to prevent the execution of the sentence pronounced against her. Besides employing L'Aubespine, the French resident at London, a creature of the house of Guise, Henry sent over Bellièvre, with a professed intention of interceding for the life of Mary. The duke of Guise and the league at that time threatened very nearly the king's authority; and Elizabeth knew, that though that monarch might, from decency and policy, think himself obliged to interpose publicly in behalf of the queen of Scots, he could not secretly be much displeased with the death of a princess, on whose fortune and elevation his mortal enemies had always founded so many daring and ambitious projects. [1] It is even pretended, that Bellievre had orders, after making public and vehement remonstrances against the execution of Mary, to exhort privately the queen, in his master's name, not to defer an act of justice so necessary for their common safety. [2] But whether the French king's intercession were sincere or not, it had no weight with the queen; and she still persisted in her former resolution.

* Camden, .

* * Du Maurier.

The interposition of the young king of Scots, though not able to change Elizabeth's determination, seemed on every account to merit more regard. As soon as James heard of the trial and condemnation of his mother, he sent Sir William Keith, a gentleman of his bed-chamber, to London; and wrote a letter to the queen, in which he remonstrated in very severe terms against the indignity of the procedure. He said, that he was astonished to hear of the presumption of English noblemen and counsellors, who had dared to sit in judgment and pass sentence upon a queen of Scotland, descended from the blood royal of England; but he was still more astonished to hear, that thoughts were seriously entertained of putting that sentence in execution: that he entreated Elizabeth to reflect on the dishonor which she would draw on her name by imbruing her hands in the blood of her near kinswoman, a person of the same royal dignity and of the same sex with herself: that, in this unparalleled attempt, she offered an affront to all diadems, and even to her own; and by reducing sovereigns to a level with other men, taught the people to neglect all duty towards those whom Providence had appointed to rule over them: that for his part, he must deem the injury and insult so enormous, as to be incapable of all atonement; nor was it possible for him thenceforward to remain in any terms of correspondence with a person who, without any pretence of legal authority, had deliberately inflicted an ignominious death upon his parent: and that, even if the sentiments of nature and duty did not inspire him with this purpose of vengeance, his honor required it of him; nor could he ever acquit himself in the eyes of the world, if he did not use every effort, and endure every hazard, to revenge so great an indignity. [1]

Soon after, James sent the master of Gray and Sir Robert Melvil to enforce the remonstrances of Keith, and to employ with the queen every expedient of argument and menaces. Elizabeth was at first offended with the sharpness of these applications; and she replied in a like strain to the Scottish ambassadors. When she afterwards reflected, that this earnestness was no more than what duty required of James, she was pacified; but still retained her resolution of executing the sentence against Mary. [2] It is believed, that the master of Gray, gained by the enemies of that princess, secretly gave his advice not to spare her, and undertook, in all events, to pacify his master.

* Spotswood, .

* * Spotswood, .

The queen also, from many considerations, was induced to pay small attention to the applications of James, and to disregard all the efforts which he could employ in behalf of his mother. She was well acquainted with his character and interests, the factions which prevailed among his people, and the inveterate hatred which the zealous Protestants, particularly the preachers, bore to the queen of Scots. The present incidents set these dispositions of the clergy in a full light. James, observing the fixed purpose of Elizabeth, ordered prayers to be offered up for Mary in all the churches; and knowing the captious humor of the ecclesiastics, he took care that the form of the petition should be most cautious, as well as humane and charitable: “That it might please God to illuminate Mary with the light of his truth, and save her from the apparent danger with which she was threatened.” But, excepting the king’s own chaplains, and one clergyman more, all the preachers refused to pollute their churches by prayers for a Papist, and would not so much as prefer a petition for her conversion. James, unwilling or unable to punish this disobedience, and desirous of giving the preachers an opportunity of amending their fault, appointed a new day when prayers should be said for his mother; and that he might at least secure himself from any insult in his own presence, he desired the archbishop of St. Andrews to officiate before him.

In order to disappoint this purpose, the clergy instigated one Couper, a young man who had not yet received holy orders, to take possession of the pulpit early in the morning, and to exclude the prelate. When the king came to church, and saw the pulpit occupied by Couper, he called to him from his seat, and told him, that the place was destined for another; yet since he was there, if he would obey the charge given, and remember the queen in his prayers, he might proceed to divine service. The preacher replied, that he would do as the Spirit of God should direct him. This answer sufficiently instructed James in his purpose; and he commanded him to leave the pulpit. As Couper seemed not disposed to obey, the captain of the guard went to pull him from his place; upon which the young man cried aloud, that this day would be a witness against the king in the great day of the Lord; and he denounced a woe upon the inhabitants of Edinburgh for permitting him to be treated in that manner. [1] The audience at first appeared desirous to take part with him; but the sermon of the prelate brought them over to a more dutiful and more humane disposition.

* Spotswood, .

Elizabeth, when solicited, either by James or by foreign princes, to pardon the queen of Scots, seemed always determined to execute the sentence against her: but when her ministers urged her to interpose no more delays, her scruples and her hesitation returned; her humanity could not allow her to embrace such violent and sanguinary measures; and she was touched with compassion for the misfortunes, and with respect for the dignity, of the unhappy prisoner. The courtiers, sensible that they could do nothing more acceptable to her than to employ persuasion on this head, failed not to enforce every motive for the punishment of Mary, and to combat all the objections urged against this act of justice. They said, that the treatment of that princess in England had been, on her first reception, such as sound reason and policy required; and if she had been governed by principles of equity, she would not have refused willingly to acquiesce in it: that the obvious inconveniencies, either of allowing her to retire into France, or of restoring her by force to her throne, in opposition to the reformers and the English party in Scotland, had obliged the queen to detain her in England, till time should offer some opportunity of serving her, without danger to the kingdom, or to the Protestant religion that her usage there had been such as became her rank; her own servants, in considerable numbers, had been permitted to attend her, exercise had been allowed her for health, and all access of company for amusement; and these indulgences would, in time, have been carried further, if by her subsequent conduct she had appeared worthy of them: that after she had instigated the rebellion of Northumberland, the conspiracy of Norfolk, the bull of excommunication of Pope Pius, an invasion from Flanders; after she had seduced the queen's friends, and incited every enemy, foreign and domestic, against her; it became necessary to treat her as a most dangerous rival, and to render her confinement more strict and rigorous: that the queen, notwithstanding these repeated provocations, had, in her favor, rejected the importunity of her parliaments, and the advice of her sagest ministers; [1] and was still, in hopes of her amendment, determined to delay coming to the last extremities against her: that Mary, even in this forlorn condition, retained so high and unconquerable a spirit, that she acted as competitor to the crown, and allowed her partisans every where, and in their very letters addressed to herself, to treat her as queen of England: that she had carried her animosity so far as to encourage, in repeated instances, the atrocious design of assassinating the queen; and this crime was unquestionably proved upon her by her own letters, by the evidence of her secretaries, and by the dying confession of her accomplices; that she was but a titular queen, and at present possessed nowhere any right of sovereignty; much less in England, where, the moment she set foot in the kingdom, she voluntarily became subject to the laws, and to Elizabeth, the only true sovereign; that even allowing her to be still the queen's equal in rank and dignity, self-defence was permitted by a law of nature which could never be abrogated: and every one, still more a queen, had sufficient jurisdiction over an enemy, who, by open violence, and still more, who, by secret treachery, threatened the utmost danger against her life; that the general combination of the Catholics to exterminate the Protestants was no longer a secret; and as the sole resource of the latter persecuted sect lay in Elizabeth, so the chief hope which the former entertained of final success consisted in the person and in the title of the queen of Scots; that this very circumstance brought matters to extremity between these princesses; and rendering the life of one the death of the other, pointed out to Elizabeth the path which either regard to self-preservation, or to the happiness of her people, should direct her to pursue: and that necessity, more powerful than policy, thus demanded of the queen that resolution which equity would authorize, and which duty prescribed. [2]

* Digges, . Strype, vol. ii. , 135, 136, 139.

* * Camden, .

1587.

When Elizabeth thought that as many importunities had been used, and as much delay interposed, as decency required, she at last determined to carry the sentence into execution: but even in this final resolution she could not proceed without displaying a new scene of duplicity and artifice. In order to alarm the vulgar, rumors were previously dispersed, that the Spanish fleet was arrived in Milford Haven; that the Scots had made an irruption into England; that the duke of Guise was landed in Sussex with a strong army; that the queen of Scots was escaped from prison, and had raised an army; that the northern counties had begun an insurrection; that there was a new conspiracy on foot to assassinate the queen, and set the city of London on fire; nay, that the queen was actually assassinated. [1] An attempt of this nature was even imputed to L'Aubespine, the French ambassador; and that minister was obliged to leave the kingdom. The queen, affecting to be in terror and perplexity, was observed to sit much alone, pensive and silent; and sometimes to mutter to herself half sentences, importing the difficulty and distress to which she was reduced. [2]

* Camden, .

* * Camden, .

She at last called Davison, a man of parts, but easy to be imposed on, and who had lately for that very reason been made secretary, and she ordered him privately to draw a warrant for the execution of the queen of Scots; which, she afterwards said, she intended to keep by her, in case any attempt should be made for the deliverance of that princess. She signed the warrant; and then commanded Davison to carry it to the chancellor, in order to have the great seal appended to it. Next day she sent Killigrew to Davison, enjoining him to forbear, some time, executing her former orders; and when Davison came and told her that the warrant had already passed the great seal, she seemed to be somewhat moved, and blamed him for his precipitation. Davison, being in perplexity, acquainted the council with this whole transaction; and they endeavored to persuade him to send off Beale with the warrant: if the queen should be displeased, they promised to justify his conduct, and to take on themselves the whole blame of this measure. [1] The secretary, not sufficiently aware of their intention, complied with the advice; and the warrant was despatched to the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, and some others, ordering them to see the sentence executed upon the queen of Scots.

The two earls came to Fotheringay Castle, and being introduced to Mary, informed her of their commission, and desired her to prepare for death next morning at eight o’clock. She seemed nowise terrified, though somewhat surprised, with the intelligence. She said with a cheerful, and even a smiling countenance, that she did not think the queen, her sister, would have consented to her death, or have executed the sentence against a person not subject to the laws and jurisdiction of England. “But as such is her will,” said she, “death, which puts an end to all my miseries, shall be to me most welcome; nor can I esteem that soul worthy the felicities of heaven, which cannot support the body under the horrors of the last passage to these blissful mansions.” [2] She then requested the two noblemen, that they would permit some of her servants, and particularly her confessor, to attend her; but they told her, that compliance with this last demand was contrary to their conscience; [3] and that Dr. Fletcher, dean of Peterborough, a man of great learning, should be present to instruct her in the principles of true religion. Her refusal to have any conference with this divine inflamed the zeal of the earl of Kent; and he bluntly told her, that her death would be the life of their religion; as, on the contrary, her life would have been the death of it. Mention being made of Babington, she constantly denied his conspiracy to have been at all known to her; and the revenge of her wrongs she resigned into the hands of the Almighty.

* It appears, by some letters published by Strype, vol. iii. book ii c., that Elizabeth had not expressly communicated her intention to any of her ministers, not even to Burleigh:

they were such experienced courtiers, that they knew they could not gratify her more than by serving her without waiting till she desired them.

* * Camden, . Jebb, vol. ii. . MS. in the Advocates Library, , from the Cott. Lib. Cal. c. 9.

* * * Jebb, vol. ii. .

When the earls had left her, she ordered supper to be hastened, that she might have the more leisure after it to finish the few affairs which remained to her in this world, and to prepare for her passage to another. It was necessary for her, she said, to take some sustenance, lest a failure of her bodily strength should depress her spirits on the morrow, and lest her behavior should thereby betray a weakness unworthy of herself. [1] She supped sparingly, as her manner usually was; and her wonted cheerfulness did not even desert her on this occasion. She comforted her servants under the affliction which overwhelmed them, and which was too violent for them to conceal it from her. Turning to Burgoin, her physician, she asked him, whether he did not remark the great and invincible force of truth. “They pretend,” said she, “that I must die, because I conspired against their queen’s life: but the earl of Kent avowed, that there was no other cause of my death, than the apprehensions which, if I should live, they entertain for their religion. My constancy in the faith is my real crime: the rest is only a color, invented by interested and designing men.” Towards the end of supper, she called in all her servants, and drank to them: they pledged her, in order, on their knees; and craved her pardon for any past neglect of their duty: she deigned, in return, to ask their pardon for her offences towards them; and a plentiful effusion of tears attended this last solemn farewell, and exchange of mutual forgiveness. [2]

* Jebb, vol. ii. .

* * Jebb, vol. ii. , 626. Camden, .

Mary’s care of her servants was the sole remaining affair which employed her concern. She perused her will, in which she had provided for them by legacies: she ordered the inventory of her goods, clothes, and jewels to be brought her: and she wrote down the names of those to whom she bequeathed each particular: to some she distributed money with her own hands; and she adapted the recompense to their different degrees of rank and merit. She wrote also letters of recommendation for her servants to the French king, and to her cousin the duke of Guise, whom she made the chief executor of her testament. At her wonted time, she went to bed; slept some hours; and, then rising, spent the rest of the night in prayer. Having foreseen the difficulty of exercising the rites of her religion, she had had the precaution to obtain a consecrated host from the hands of Pope Pius; and she had reserved the use of it for this last period of her life. By this expedient she supplied, as much as she could, the want of a priest and confessor, who was refused her. [1]

Towards the morning, she dressed herself in a rich habit of silk and velvet, the only one which she had reserved to herself. She told her maids, that she would willingly have left them this dress, rather than the plain garb which she wore the day before: but it was necessary for her to appear at the ensuing solemnity in a decent habit.

Thomas Andrews, sheriff of the county, entered the room, and informed her that the hour was come, and that he must attend her to the place of execution. She replied, that she was ready; and bidding adieu to her servants, she leaned on two of Sir Amias Paulet’s guards, because of an infirmity in her limbs; and she followed the sheriff with a serene and composed countenance. In passing through a hall adjoining to her chamber, she was met by the earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, Sir Amias Paulet, Sir Drue Drury, and many other gentlemen of distinction. Here she also found Sir Andrew Melvil, her steward, who flung himself on his knees before her; and wringing his hands, cried aloud, “Ah, madam! unhappy me! what man was ever before the messenger of such heavy tidings as I must carry, when I shall return to my native country, and shall report, that I saw my gracious queen and mistress beheaded in England?” His tears prevented further speech; and Mary too felt herself moved, more from sympathy than affliction. “Cease, my good servant,” said she, “cease to lament: thou hast cause rather to rejoice than to mourn: for now shalt thou see the troubles of Mary Stuart receive their long-expected period and completion. Know,” continued she, “good servant, that all the world at best is vanity, and subject still to more sorrow than a whole ocean of tears is able to bewail. But I pray

* Jebb, vol. ii. p, 489.

thee carry this message from me, that I die a true woman to my religion, and unalterable in my affections to Scotland and to France. Heaven forgive them that have long desired my end, and have thirsted for my blood as the hart panteth after the water brooks!” “O God,” added she, “thou art the author of truth, and truth itself; thou knowest the inmost recesses of my heart: thou knowest that I was ever desirous to preserve an entire union between Scotland and England, and to obviate the source of all these fatal discords. But recommend me, Melvil, to my son; and tell him, that notwithstanding all my distresses, I have done nothing prejudicial to the state and kingdom of Scotland.” After these words, reclining herself, with weeping eyes, and face bedewed with tears, she kissed him. “And so,” said she, “good Melvil, farewell: once again, farewell, good Melvil; and grant the assistance of thy prayers to thy queen and mistress.” [1]

* MS. . Jebb, vol. ii. . Strype, vol iii. .

She next turned to the noblemen, who attended her, and made a petition in behalf of her servants, that they might be well treated, be allowed to enjoy the presents which she had made them, and be sent safely into their own country. Having received a favorable answer, she preferred another request, that they might be permitted to attend her at her death; “in order,” said she, “that their eyes may behold, and their hearts bear witness, how patiently their queen and mistress can submit to her execution, and how constantly she perseveres in her attachment to her religion.” The earl of Kent opposed this desire, and told her that they would be apt, by their speeches and cries, to disturb both herself and the spectators: he was also apprehensive lest they should practise some superstition, not meet for him to suffer; such as dipping their handkerchiefs in her blood: for that was the instance which he made use of. “My lord,” said the queen of Scots, “I will give my word (although it be but dead) that they shall not incur any blame in any of the actions which you have named. But alas! poor souls! it would be a great consolation to them to bid their mistress farewell. And I hope,” added she, “that your mistress, being a maiden queen, would vouchsafe, in regard of womanhood, that I should have some of my own people about me at my death. I know that her majesty hath not given you any such strict command, but that you might grant me a request of far greater courtesy, even though I were a woman of inferior rank to that which I bear.” Finding that the earl of Kent persisted still in his refusal, her mind, which had fortified itself against the terrors of death, was affected by this indignity, for which she was not prepared. “I am cousin to your queen,” cried she, “and descended from the blood royal of Henry VII., and a married queen of France, and an anointed queen of Scotland.” The commissioners, perceiving how invidious their obstinacy would appear, conferred a little together, and agreed that she might carry a few of her servants along with her. She made choice of four men and two maid servants for that purpose.

She then passed into another hall, where was erected the scaffold, covered with black; and she saw, with an undismayed countenance, the executioners and all the preparations of death. The room was crowded with spectators; and no one was so steeled against all sentiments of humanity, as not to be moved, when he reflected on her royal dignity, considered the surprising train of her misfortunes, beheld her mild but inflexible constancy, recalled her amiable accomplishments, or surveyed her beauties, which, though faded by years, and yet more by her afflictions, still discovered themselves in this fatal moment. Here the warrant for her execution was read to her; and during this ceremony she was silent, but showed, in her behavior, an indifference and unconcern, as if the business had nowise regarded her. Before the executioners performed their office, the dean of Peterborough stepped forth; and though the queen frequently told him that he needed not concern himself about her, that she was settled in the ancient Catholic and Roman religion, and that she meant to lay down her life in defence of that faith, he still thought it his duty to persist in his lectures and exhortations, and to endeavor her conversion. The terms which he employed were, under color of pious instructions, cruel insults on her unfortunate situation; and besides their own absurdity, may be regarded as the most mortifying indignities to which she had ever yet been exposed. He told her, that the queen of England had on this occasion shown a tender care of her; and notwithstanding the punishment justly to be inflicted on her, for her manifold trespasses, was determined to use every expedient for saving her soul from that destruction with which it was so nearly threatened: that she was now standing upon the brink of eternity, and had no other means of escaping endless perdition, than by repenting her former wickedness, by justifying the sentence pronounced against her, by acknowledging the queen’s favors, and by exerting a true and lively faith in Christ Jesus: that the Scriptures were the only rule of doctrine, the merits of Christ the only means of salvation; and if she trusted in the inventions or devices of men, she must expect in an instant to fall into utter darkness, into a place where shall be weeping howling, and gnashing of teeth: that the and of death was upon her, the axe was laid to the root of the tree, the throne of the great Judge of heaven was erected, the book of her life was spread wide, and the particular sentence and judgment was ready to be pronounced upon her: and that it was now, during this important moment, in her choice, either to rise to the resurrection of life, and hear that joyful salutation, “Come, ye blessed of my Father,” or to share the resurrection of condemnation, replete with sorrow and anguish; and to suffer that dreadful denunciation, “Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” [1]

During this discourse, Mary could not sometimes forbear betraying her impatience, by interrupting the preacher; and the dean, finding that he had profited nothing by his lecture, at last bade her change her opinion, repent her of her former wickedness, and settle her faith upon this ground, that only in Christ Jesus could she hope to be saved. She answered, again and again, with great earnestness, “Trouble not yourself any more about the matter; for I was born in this religion, I have lived in this religion, and in this religion I am resolved to die.” Even the two earls perceived that it was fruitless to harass her any further with theological disputes; and they ordered the dean to desist from his unseasonable exhortations, and to pray for her conversion. During the dean’s prayer, she employed herself in private devotion from the office of the Virgin; and after he had finished, she pronounced aloud some petitions in English, for the afflicted church, for an end of her own troubles, for her son, and for Queen Elizabeth; and prayed God, that that princess might long prosper, and be employed in his service. The earl of Kent, observing that in her devotions she made frequent use of the crucifix, could not forbear reproving her for her attachment to that Popish trumpery, as he termed it; and he exhorted her to have Christ in her heart, not in her hand. [2] She replied, with presence of mind, that it was difficult to hold such an object in her hand without feeling her heart touched with some compunction. [3]

* MS. p 8, 9, 10, 11. Strype vol. iii. .

* * MS. . Jebb, vol. ii. p 307, 191, 637.

* * * Jebb, vol. ii. , 491, 637.

She now began, with the aid of her two women, to disrobe herself; and the executioner also lent his hand to assist them. She smiled, and said that she was not accustomed to undress herself before so large a company, nor to be served by such valets. Her servants, seeing her in this condition, ready to lay her head upon the block, burst into tears and lamentations: she turned about to them; put her finger upon her lips, as a sign of imposing silence upon them; [1] and having given them her blessing, desired them to pray for her.

* Jebb, , 492.

One of her maids, whom she had appointed for that purpose, covered her eyes with a handkerchief; she laid herself down without any sign of fear or trepidation, and her head was severed from her body at two strokes by the executioner. He instantly held it up to the spectators, streaming with blood, and agitated with the convulsions of death: the dean of Peterborough alone exclaimed, “So perish all Queen Elizabeth’s enemies:” the earl of Kent alone replied, “Amen:” the attention of all the other spectators was fixed on the melancholy scene before them; and zeal and flattery alike gave place to present pity and admiration of the expiring princess.

Thus perished, in the forty-fifth year of her age, and nineteenth of her captivity in England, Mary, queen of Scots; a woman of great accomplishments both of body and mind, natural as well as acquired; but unfortunate in her life, and during one period very unhappy in her conduct. The beauties of her person and graces of her air combined to make her the most amiable of women; and the charms of her address and conversation aided the impression which her lovely figure made on the hearts of all beholders. Ambitious and active in her temper, yet inclined to cheerfulness and society; of a lofty spirit, constant and even vehement in her purpose, yet polite, and gentle, and affable in her demeanor; she seemed to partake only so much of the male virtues as to render her estimable, without relinquishing those soft graces which compose the proper ornament of her sex. In order to form a just idea of her character, we must set aside one part of her conduct, while she abandoned herself to the guidance of a profligate man; and must consider these faults, whether we admit them to be imprudences or crimes, as the result of an inexplicable, though not uncommon inconstancy in the human mind of the frailty of our nature, of the violence of passion, and of the influence which situations, and sometimes momentary incidents, have on persons whose principles are not thoroughly confirmed by experience and reflection. Enraged by the ungrateful conduct of her husband, seduced by the treacherous counsels of one in whom she reposed confidence, transported by the violence of her own temper, which never lay sufficiently under the guidance of discretion; she was betrayed into actions which may with some difficulty be accounted for, but which admit of no apology, nor even of alleviation. An enumeration of her qualities might carry the appearance of a panegyric; an account of her conduct must, in some parts, wear the aspect of severe satire and invective.

* Jebb, , 492.

Her numerous misfortunes, the solitude of her long and tedious captivity, and the persecutions to which she had been exposed on account of her religion, had wrought her up to a degree of bigotry during her later years; and such were the prevalent spirit and principles of the age, that it is the less wonder, if her zeal, her resentment, and her interest uniting, induced her to give consent to a design which conspirators, actuated only by the first of these motives, had formed against the life of Elizabeth.

When the queen was informed of Mary’s execution, she affected the utmost surprise and indignation. Her countenance changed; her speech faltered and failed her; for a long time, her sorrow was so deep that she could not express it, but stood fixed, like a statue, in silence and mute astonishment. After her grief was able to find vent, it burst out in loud wailings and lamentations; she put herself in deep mourning for this deplorable event; and she was seen perpetually bathed in tears, and surrounded only by her maids and women. None of her ministers or counsellors dared to approach her; or if any had such temerity, she chased them from her, with the most violent expressions of rage and resentment; they had all of them been guilty of an unpardonable crime, in putting to death her dear sister and kinswoman, contrary to her fixed purpose, [1] of which they were sufficiently apprised and acquainted.

* Camden, . Strype, vol. iii. Append. . Jebb. vol. ii

No sooner was her sorrow so much abated as to leave room for reflection, than she wrote a letter of apology to the king of Scots, and sent it by Sir Robert Cary, son of Lord Hunsdon. She there told him, that she wished he knew but not felt, the unutterable grief which she experienced on account of that lamentable accident which, without her knowledge, much less concurrence, had happened in England: that as her pen trembled when she attempted to write it, she found herself obliged to commit the relation of it to the messenger her kinsman; who would likewise inform his majesty of every circumstance attending this dismal and unlooked-for misfortune: that she appealed to the supreme Judge of heaven and earth for her innocence; and was also so happy amidst her other afflictions, as to find, that many persons in her court could bear witness to her veracity in this protestation: that she abhorred dissimulation; deemed nothing more worthy of a prince than a sincere and open conduct; and could never surely be esteemed so base and poor-spirited as that, if she had really given orders for this fatal execution, she could on any consideration be induced to deny them: that, though sensible of the justice of the sentence pronounced against the unhappy prisoner, she determined from clemency never to carry it into execution; and could not but resent the temerity of those who on this occasion had disappointed her intention: and that as no one loved him more dearly than herself, or bore a more anxious concern for his welfare, she hoped that he would consider every one as his enemy who endeavored, on account of the present incident, to excite any animosity between them. [1]

In order the better to appease James, she committed Davison to prison, and ordered him to be tried in the star chamber for his misdemeanor. The secretary was confounded; and being sensible of the danger which must attend his entering into a contest with the queen, he expressed penitence for his error, and submitted very patiently to be railed at by those very counsellors whose persuasion had induced him to incur the guilt, and who had promised to countenance and protect him. He was condemned to imprisonment during the queen’s pleasure, and to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds. He remained a long time in custody; and the fine, though it reduced him to beggary, was rigorously levied upon him. All the favor which he could obtain from the queen, was sending him small supplies from time to time, to keep him from perishing in necessity. [2]

* Camden, . Spotswood, .

* * Camden, .

He privately wrote an apology to his friend Walsingham, which contains many curious particulars. The French and Scotch ambassadors, he said, had been remonstrating with the queen in Mary's behalf; and immediately after their departure, she commanded him, of her own accord to deliver her the warrant for the execution of that princess. She signed it readily, and ordered it to be sealed with the great seal of England. She appeared in such good humour on the occasion, that she said to him in a jocular manner, "Go, tell all this to Walsingham, who is now sick; though I fear he will die of sorrow when he hears of it." She added, that though she had so long delayed the execution, lest she should seem to be actuated by malice or cruelty, she was all along sensible of the necessity of it. In the same conversation, she blamed Drury and Paulet that they had not before eased her of this trouble; and she expressed her desire that Walsingham would bring them to compliance in that particular. She was so bent on this purpose, that some time after she asked Davison whether any letter had come from Paulet with regard to the service expected of him. Davison showed her Paulet's letter, in which that gentleman positively refused to act any thing inconsistent with the principles of honor and justice. The queen fell into a passion, and accused Paulet as well as Drury of perjury; because, having taken the oath of association, in which they had bound themselves to avenge her wrongs, they had yet refused to lend their hand on this occasion. "But others," she said, "will be found less scrupulous." Davison adds, that nothing but the consent and exhortations of the whole council could have engaged him to send off the warrant: he was well aware of his danger; and remembered that the queen, after having ordered the execution of the duke of Norfolk, had endeavored, in a like manner, to throw the whole blame and odium of that action upon Lord Burleigh. [1]

* Camden, . Strype, vol. iii. , 376. MS. in the Advocates' Library, A. 3. 28, , from the Cott. Lib. Calig. c. 9. Biog. Brit. , 1627.

Elizabeth's dissimulation was so gross, that it could deceive nobody who was not previously resolved to be blinded; but as James's concern for his mother was certainly more sincere and cordial, he discovered the highest resentment, and refused to admit Cary into his presence. He recalled his ambassadors from England, and seemed to breathe nothing but war and vengeance. The states of Scotland, being assembled, took part in his anger;

and professed that they were ready to spend their lives and fortunes in revenge of his mother's death, and in defence of his title to the crown of England. Many of his nobility instigated him to take arms: Lord Sinclair, when the courtiers appeared in deep mourning, presented himself to the king arrayed in complete armor and said, that this was the proper mourning for the queen. The Catholics took the opportunity of exhorting James to make an alliance with the king of Spain, to lay immediate claim to the crown of England, and to prevent the ruin which, from his mother's example, he might conclude would certainly, if Elizabeth's power prevailed, overwhelm his person and his kingdom. The queen was sensible of the danger attending these counsels; and after allowing James some decent interval to vent his grief and anger, she employed her emissaries to pacify him, and to set before him every motive of hope or fear which might induce him to live in amity with her.

Walsingham wrote to Lord Thirlstone, James's secretary, a judicious letter to the same purpose. He said that he was much surprised to hear of the violent resolutions taken in Scotland, and of the passion discovered by a prince of so much judgment and temper as James: that a war, founded merely on the principle of revenge, and that, too, on account of an act of justice which necessity had extorted, would for ever be exposed to censure, and could not be excused by any principles of equity or reason: that if these views were deemed less momentous among princes, policy and interest ought certainly to be attended to; and these motives did still more evidently oppose all thoughts of a rupture with Elizabeth, and all revival of exploded claims to the English throne: that the inequality between the two kingdoms deprived James of any hopes of success, if he trusted merely to the force of his own state, and had no recourse to foreign powers for assistance: that the objections attending the introduction of succors from a more potent monarch, appeared so evident from all the transactions of history, that they could not escape a person of the king's extensive knowledge; but there were in the present case several peculiar circumstances, which ought forever to deter him from having recourse to so dangerous an expedient: that the French monarch, the ancient ally of Scotland, might willingly use the assistance of that kingdom against England, but would be displeased to see the union of these two kingdoms in the person of James; a union which would ever after exclude him from practising that policy, formerly so useful to the French, and so pernicious to the Scottish nation: that Henry, besides, infested with faction and domestic war, was not in a condition of supporting distant allies, much less would he expose himself to any hazard or expense, in order to aggrandize a near kinsman of the house of Guise, the most determined enemies of his repose and authority: that the extensive power and exorbitant ambition of the Spanish monarch rendered him a still more dangerous ally to Scotland; and as he evidently aspired to a universal monarchy in the west, and had in particular advanced some claims to England as if he were descended from the house of Lancaster, he was at the same time the common enemy of all princes who wished to maintain their independence, and the immediate rival and competitor of the king of Scots: that the queen by her own naval power and her alliance with the Hollanders, would probably intercept all succors which might be sent to James from abroad, and be enabled to decide the controversy in this island, with the superior forces of her own kingdom, opposed to those of Scotland: that if the king revived his mother's pretensions to the crown of England, he must also embrace her religion, by which alone they could be justified; and must thereby undergo the infamy of abandoning those principles in which he had been strictly educated; and to which he had hitherto religiously adhered: that as he would, by such an apostasy, totally alienate all the Protestants in Scotland and England, he could never gain the confidence of the Catholics, who would still entertain reasonable doubts of his sincerity: that by advancing a present claim to the crown, he forfeited the certain prospect of his succession; and revived that national animosity which the late peace and alliance between the kingdoms had happily extinguished: that the whole gentry and nobility of England had openly declared themselves for the execution of the queen of Scots; and if James showed such violent resentment against that act of justice, they would be obliged, for their own security, to prevent forever so implacable a prince from ruling over them: and that, however some persons might represent his honor as engaged to seek vengeance for the present affront and injury, the true honor of a prince consisted in wisdom, and moderation, and justice, not in following the dictates of blind passion, or in pursuing revenge at the expense of every motive and every interest. [1]

* Strype, vol. iii. . Spotswood.

These considerations, joined to the peaceable, unambitious temper of the young prince, prevailed over his resentment, and he fell gradually into a good correspondence with the court of England. It is probable that the queen’s chief object in her dissimulation with regard to the execution of Mary, was, that she might thereby afford James a decent pretence for renewing his amity with her, on which their mutual interests so much depended.

While Elizabeth insured tranquillity from the attempts of her nearest neighbor, she was not negligent of more distant dangers. Hearing that Philip, though he seemed to dissemble the daily insults and injuries which he received from the English, was secretly preparing a great navy to attack her, she sent Sir Francis Drake with a fleet to intercept his supplies, to pillage his coast, and to destroy his shipping. Drake carried out four capital ships of the queen’s, and twenty-six, great and small, with which the London merchants, in hopes of sharing in the plunder, had supplied him. Having learned from two Dutch ships which he met with in his passage, that a Spanish fleet, richly laden, was lying at Cadiz, ready to sail for Lisbon, the rendezvous of the intended armada, he bent his course to the former harbor, and boldly, as well as fortunately, made an attack on the enemy. He obliged six galleys, which made head against him, to take shelter under the forts: he burned about a hundred vessels laden with ammunition and naval stores; and he destroyed a great ship of the marquis of Santa Croce. Thence he set sail for Cape St. Vincent, and took by assault the castle situated on that promontory, with three other fortresses. He next insulted Lisbon; and finding that the merchants, who had engaged entirely in expectation of profit, were discontented at these military enterprises, he set sail for the Terceras, with an intention of lying in wait for a rich carrack, which was expected in those parts. He was so fortunate as to meet with his prize; and by this short expedition, in which the public bore so small a share, the adventurers were encouraged to attempt further enterprises, the English seamen learned to despise the great unwieldy ships of the enemy, the naval preparations of Spain were destroyed, the intended expedition against England was retarded a twelvemonth, and the queen thereby had leisure to take more secure measures against that formidable invasion. [1]

* Camden, . Sir William Monson’s Naval Tracts in Churchill’s Voyages, vol. iii. .

This year, Thomas Cavendish, a gentleman of Devonshire, who had dissipated a good estate by living at court, being resolved to repair his fortune at the expense of the Spaniards fitted out three ships at Plymouth one of a hundred and twenty tons, another of sixty, and a third of forty; and with these small vessels he ventured into the South Sea, and committed great depredations on the Spaniards. He took nineteen vessels, some of which were richly laden; and returning by the Cape of Good Hope, he came to London, and entered the river in a kind of triumph. His mariners and soldiers were clothed in silk, his sails were of damask, his topsail cloth of gold; and his prizes were esteemed the richest that ever had been brought into England. [1]

* Birch's Memoirs, vol. i. .

The land enterprises of the English were not, during this campaign, so advantageous or honorable to the nation. The important place of Deventer was intrusted by Leicester to William Stanley, with a garrison of twelve hundred English; and this gentleman, being a Catholic, was alarmed at the discovery of Babington's conspiracy, and became apprehensive lest every one of his religion should thenceforth be treated with distrust in England. He entered into a correspondence with the Spaniards, betrayed the city to them for a sum of money, and engaged the whole garrison to desert with him to the Spanish service. Roland York, who commanded a fort near Zutphen, imitated his example; and the Hollanders, formerly disgusted with Leicester, and suspicious of the English, broke out into loud complaints against the improvidence, if not the treachery, of his administration. Soon after, he himself arrived in the Low Countries; but his conduct was nowise calculated to give them satisfaction, or to remove the suspicions which they had entertained against him. The prince of Parma having besieged Sluys, Leicester attempted to relieve the place, first by sea, then by land; but failed in both enterprises; and as he ascribed his bad success to the ill behavior of the Hollanders, they were equally free in reflections upon his conduct. The breach between them became wider every day: they slighted his authority, opposed his measures, and neglected his counsels; while he endeavored by an imperious behavior, and by violence, to recover that influence which he had lost by his imprudent and ill-concerted measures. He was even suspected by the Dutch of a design to usurp upon their liberties; and the jealousy entertained against him began to extend towards the queen herself. That princess had made some advances towards a peace with Spain: a congress had been opened at Bourbourg, a village near Graveline: and though the two courts, especially that of Spain, had no other intention than to amuse each of them its enemy by negotiation, and mutually relax the preparations for defence or attack, the Dutch, who were determined on no terms to return under the Spanish yoke, became apprehensive lest their liberty should be sacrificed to the political interests of England. [1] But the queen, who knew the importance of her alliance with the states during the present conjuncture, was resolved to give them entire satisfaction, by recalling Leicester, and commanding him to resign his government. Maurice son of the late prince of Orange, a youth of twenty years of age, was elected by the states governor in his place; and Peregrine Lord Willoughby was appointed by the queen commander of the English forces. The measures of these two generals were much embarrassed by the malignity of Leicester, who had left a faction behind him, and who still attempted, by means of his emissaries, to disturb all the operations of the states. As soon as Elizabeth received intelligence of these disorders, she took care to redress them; and she obliged all the partisans of England to fall into unanimity with Prince Maurice. [2] But though her good sense so far prevailed over her partiality to Leicester, she never could be made fully sensible of his vices and incapacity: the submissions which he made her restored him to her wonted favor; and Lord Buckhurst, who had accused him of misconduct in Holland, lost her confidence for some time, and was even committed to custody.

* Bentivoglio, part ii. lib. iv. Strype, vol. iv. No. 246.

* Rymer, tom. xv. .

Sir Christopher Hatton was another favorite who at this time received some marks of her partiality. Though he had never followed the profession of the law, he was made chancellor, in the place of Bromley, deceased; but, notwithstanding all the expectations, and perhaps wishes of the lawyers, he behaved in a manner not unworthy of that high station: his good natural capacity supplied the place of experience and study; and his decisions were not found deficient, either in point of equity or judgment. His enemies had contributed to this promotion, in hopes that his absence from court, while he attended the business of chancery, would gradually estrange the queen from him, and give them an opportunity of undermining him in her favor.

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These little intrigues and cabals of the court were silenced by the account which came from all quarters, of the vast preparations made by the Spaniards for the invasion of England, and for the entire conquest of that kingdom. Philip, though he had not yet declared war on account of the hostilities which Elizabeth every where committed upon him, had long harbored a secret and violent desire of revenge against her. His ambition also, and the hopes of extending his empire, were much encouraged by the present prosperous state of his affairs; by the conquest of Portugal, the acquisition of the East Indian commerce and settlements, and the yearly importation of vast treasures from America. The point on which he rested, his highest glory, the perpetual object of his policy, was to support orthodoxy and exterminate heresy; and as the power and credit of Elizabeth were the chief bulwark of the Protestants, he hoped, if he could subdue that princess, to acquire the eternal renown of reuniting the whole Christian world in the Catholic communion. Above all, his indignation against his revolted subjects in the Netherlands instigated him to attack the English, who had encouraged that insurrection; and who, by their vicinity, were so well enabled to support the Hollanders, that he could never hope to reduce these rebels, while the power of that kingdom remained entire and unbroken. To subdue England seemed a necessary preparative to the reestablishment of his authority in the Netherlands; and notwithstanding appearances, the former was in itself, as a more important, so a more easy undertaking than the latter. That kingdom lay nearer Spain than the Low Countries, and was more exposed to invasions from that quarter; after an enemy had once obtained entrance, the difficulty seemed to be over, as it was neither fortified by an or nature; a long peace had deprived it of all military discipline and experience; and the Catholics, in which it still abounded, would be ready, it was hoped, to join any invader who should free them from those persecutions under which they labored, and should revenge the death of the queen of Scots, on whom they had fixed all their affections. The fate of England must be decided in one battle at sea, and another at land; and what comparison between the English and Spaniards, either in point of naval force, or in the numbers, reputation, and veteran bravery of their armies? Besides the acquisition of so great a kingdom, success against England insured the immediate subjection of the

Hollanders, who, attacked on every hand, and deprived of all support, must yield their stubborn necks to that yoke which they had so long resisted. Happily, this conquest, as it was of the utmost importance to the grandeur of Spain, would not at present be opposed by the jealousy of other powers, naturally so much interested to prevent the success of the enterprise. A truce was lately concluded with the Turks; the empire was in the hands of a friend and near ally; and France, the perpetual rival of Spain, was so torn with intestine commotions, that she had no leisure to pay attention to her foreign interests. This favorable opportunity, therefore, which might never again present itself, must be seized; and one bold effort made for acquiring that ascendant in Europe, to which the present greatness and prosperity of the Spaniards seemed so fully to entitle them. [1]

These hopes and motives engaged Philip, notwithstanding his cautious temper, to undertake this hazardous enterprise; and though the prince, now created by the pope duke of Parma, when consulted, opposed the attempt, at least represented the necessity of previously getting possession of some seaport town in the Netherlands, which might afford a retreat to the Spanish navy, [2] it was determined by the Catholic monarch to proceed immediately to the execution of his ambitious project.

* Camden. Strype, vol. iii. .

* * Bentivoglio, part ii. lib. iv.

During some time, he had been secretly making preparations, out as soon as the resolution was fully taken, every part of his vast empire resounded with the noise of armaments, and all his ministers, generals, and admirals were employed in forwarding the design. The marquis of Santa Croce, a sea officer of great reputation and experience, was destined to command the fleet; and by his counsels were the naval equipments conducted. In all the ports of Sicily, Naples, Spain, and Portugal, artisans were employed in building vessels of uncommon size and force; naval stores were bought at a great expense; provisions amassed; armies levied and quartered in the maritime towns of Spain; and plans laid for fitting out such a fleet and embarkation as had never before had its equal in Europe. The military preparations in Flanders were no less formidable. Troops from all quarters were every moment assembling to reënforce the duke of Parma. Capizuchi and Spinelli conducted forces from Italy: the marquis of Borgaut, a prince of the house of Austria, levied troops in Germany; the Walloon and Burgundian regiments were completed or augmented: the Spanish infantry was supplied with recruits and an army of thirty-four thousand men was assembled in the Netherlands, and kept in readiness to be transported into England. The duke of Parma employed all the carpenters whom he could procure, either in Flanders or in Lower Germany and the coasts of the Baltic; and he built at Dunkirk and Newport, but especially at Antwerp, a great number of boats and flat-bottomed vessels, for the transporting of his infantry and cavalry. The most renowned nobility and princes of Italy and Spain were ambitious of sharing in the honor of this great enterprise. Don Amadseus of Savoy, Don John of Medicis, Vespasian Gonzaga, duke of Sabionetta, and the duke of Pastrana, hastened to join the army under the duke of Parma. About two thousand volunteers in Spain, many of them men of family, had enlisted in the service. No doubts were entertained but such vast preparations, conducted by officers of such consummate skill, must finally be successful. And the Spaniards, ostentatious of their power, and elated with vain hopes, had already denominated their navy the Invincible Armada.

News of these extraordinary preparations soon reached the court of London; and notwithstanding the secrecy of the Spanish council, and their pretending to employ this force in the Indies, it was easily concluded that they meant to make some effort against England. The queen had foreseen the invasion; and finding that she must now contend for her crown with the whole force of Spain, she made preparations for resistance; nor was she dismayed with that power, by which all Europe apprehended she must of necessity be overwhelmed. Her force, indeed, seemed very unequal to resist so potent an enemy. All the sailors in England amounted at that time to about fourteen thousand men. [1] The size of the English shipping was in general so small, that except a few of the queen's ships of war, there were not four vessels belonging to the merchants which exceeded four hundred tons. [2] The royal navy consisted of only twenty-eight sail, [3] many of which were of small size; none of them exceeded the bulk of our largest frigates, and most of them deserved rather the name of pinnaces than of ships.

* Monson, .

* * Monson, .

* * * Monson

The only advantage of the English fleet consisted in the dexterity and courage of the seamen, who, being accustomed to sail in tempestuous seas and expose themselves to all dangers, as much exceeded in this particular the Spanish mariners, as their vessels were inferior in size and force to those of that nation. [1] All the commercial towns of England were required to furnish ships for reenforcing this small navy; and they discovered, on the present occasion, great alacrity in defending their liberty and religion against those imminent perils with which they were menaced. The citizens of London, in order to show their zeal in the common cause, instead of fifteen vessels, which they were commanded to equip, voluntarily fitted out double the number. [2] The gentry and nobility hired, and armed, and manned forty-three ships at their own charge; [3] and all the loans of money which the queen demanded were frankly granted by the persons applied to. Lord Howard of Effingham, a man of courage and capacity, was admiral, and took on him the command of the navy: Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, the most renowned seamen in Europe, served under him. The principal fleet was stationed at Plymouth. A smaller squadron, consisting of forty vessels, English and Flemish, was commanded by Lord Seymour, second son of Protector Somerset; and lay off Dunkirk, in order to intercept the duke of Parma.

* Monson, .

* * Monsm,

* * * Lives of the Admirals, vol. i. .

The land forces of England, compared to those of Spain, possessed contrary qualities to its naval power: they were more numerous than the enemy, but much inferior in discipline, reputation, and experience. An army of twenty thousand men was disposed in different bodies along the south coast; and orders were given them, if they could not prevent the landing of the Spaniards, to retire backwards, to waste the country around, and to wait for reenforcement from the neighboring counties, before they approached the enemy. A body of twenty-two thousand foot and a thousand horse, under the command of the earl of Leicester, was stationed at Tilbury in order to defend the capital. The principal army consisted of thirty-four thousand foot and two thousand horse, and was commanded by Lord Hunsdon. These forces were reserved for guarding the queen's person, and were appointed to march whithersoever the enemy should appear. The fate of England, if all the Spanish armies should be able to land, seemed to depend on the issue of a single battle; and men of reflection entertained the most dismal apprehensions, when they considered the force of fifty thousand veteran Spaniards, commanded by experienced officers, under the duke of Parma, the most consummate general of the age; and compared this formidable armament with the military power which England, not enervated by peace, but long disused to war, could muster up against it.

The chief support of the kingdom seemed to consist in the vigor and prudence of the queen's conduct; who, undismayed by the present dangers, issued all her orders with tranquillity, animated her people to a steady resistance, and employed every resource which either her domestic situation or her foreign alliances could afford her. She sent Sir Robert Sidney into Scotland; and exhorted the king to remain attached to her, and to consider the danger which at present menaced his sovereignty no less than her own, from the ambition of the Spanish tyrant: [1] the ambassador found James well disposed to cultivate a union with England; and that prince even kept himself prepared to march with the force of his whole kingdom to the assistance of Elizabeth. Her authority with the king of Denmark, and the tie of their common religion, engaged this monarch, upon her application, to seize a squadron of ships which Philip had bought or hired in the Danish harbors: [2] the Hanse Towns, though not at that time on good terms with Elizabeth, were induced, by the same motives, to retard so long the equipment of some vessels in their ports, that they became useless to the purpose of invading England. All the Protestants throughout Europe regarded this enterprise as the critical event which was to decide forever the fate of their religion; and though unable, by reason of their distance, to join their force to that of Elizabeth, they kept their eyes fixed on her conduct and fortune, and beheld with anxiety, mixed with admiration, the intrepid countenance with which she encountered that dreadful tempest which was every moment advancing towards her.

* She made him some promises which she never fulfilled, to give him a dukedom in England, with suitable lands and revenue, to settle five thousand pounds a year on him, and pay him a guard, for the safety of his person. From a MS. of Lord Hoyston’s.

* * Strype, vol. iii. .

The queen also was sensible that, next to the general popularity which she enjoyed, and the confidence which her subjects reposed in her prudent government, the firmest support of her throne consisted in the general zeal of the people for the Protestant religion, and the strong prejudices which they had imbibed against Popery. She took care, on the present occasion, to revive in the nation this attachment to their own sect, and this abhorrence of the opposite. The English were reminded of their former danger from the tyranny of Spain: all the barbarities exercised by Mary against the Protestants were ascribed to the counsels of that bigoted and imperious nation: the bloody massacres in the Indies, the unrelenting executions in the Low Countries, the horrid cruelties and iniquities of the inquisition, were set before men’s eyes: a list and description was published, and pictures dispersed, of the several instruments of torture with which, it was pretended, the Spanish armada was loaded: and every artifice, as well as reason, was employed, to animate the people to a vigorous defence of their religion, their laws, and their liberties.

But while the queen, in this critical emergence, roused the animosity of the nation against Popery, she treated the partisans of that sect with moderation, and gave not way to an undistinguishing fury against them. Though she knew that Sixtus Quintus, the present pope, famous for his capacity and his tyranny, had fulminated a new bull of excommunication against her, had deposed her, had absolved her subjects from their oaths of allegiance, had published a crusade against England, and had granted plenary indulgences to every one engaged in the present invasion, she would not believe that all her Catholic subjects could be so blinded as to sacrifice to bigotry their duty to their sovereign, and the liberty and independence of their native country. She rejected all violent counsels, by which she was urged to seek pretences for despatching the leaders of that party: she would not even confine any considerable number of them: and the Catholics, sensible of this good usage, generally expressed great zeal for the public service. Some gentlemen of that sect, conscious that they could not justly expect any trust or authority, entered themselves as volunteers in the fleet or army: [1] some equipped ships at their own charge, and gave the command of them to Protestants: others were active in animating their tenants, and vassals, and neighbors, to the defence of their country: and every rank of men, burying for the present all party distinctions, seemed to prepare themselves, with order as well as vigor, to resist the violence of these invaders.

* Stowe, .

The more to excite the martial spirit of the nation, the queen appeared on horseback in the camp at Tilbury; and riding through the lines, discovered a cheerful and animated countenance, exhorted the soldiers to remember their duty to their country and their religion, and professed her intention, though a woman, to lead them herself into the field against the enemy, and rather to perish in battle than survive the ruin and slavery of her people. [1]

* See note BB, at the end of the volume.

By this spirited behavior she revived the tenderness and admiration of the soldiery: an attachment to her person became a kind of enthusiasm among them: and they asked one another, whether it were possible that Englishmen could abandon this glorious cause, could display less fortitude than appeared in the female sex, or could ever, by any dangers, be induced to relinquish the defence of their heroic princess.

The Spanish armada was ready in the beginning of May; but the moment it was preparing to sail, the marquis of Santa Croce, the admiral, was seized with a fever, of which he soon after died. The vice-admiral, the duke of Paliano, by a strange concurrence of accidents, at the very same time suffered the same fate; and the king appointed for admiral the duke of Medina Sidonia, a nobleman of great family, but unexperienced in action, and entirely unacquainted with sea affairs. Alcarede was appointed vice-admiral. This misfortune, besides the loss of so great an officer as Santa Croce, retarded the sailing of the armada, and gave the English more time for their preparations to oppose them. At last the Spanish fleet, full of hopes and alacrity, set sail from Lisbon; but next day met with a violent tempest, which scattered the ships, sunk some of the smallest, and forced the rest to take shelter in the Groine, where they waited till they could be refitted. When news of this event was carried to England, the queen concluded that the design of an invasion was disappointed for this summer; and being always ready to lay hold on every pretence for saving money, she made Walsingham write to the admiral, directing him to lay up some of the larger ships, and to discharge the seamen: but Lord Effingham, who was not so sanguine in his hopes, used the freedom to disobey these orders; and he begged leave to retain all the ships in service, though it should be at his own expense. [1] He took advantage of a north wind, and sailed towards the coast of Spain, with an intention of attacking the enemy in their harbors; but the wind changing to the south, he became apprehensive lest they might have set sail, and by passing him at sea, invade England, now exposed by the absence of the fleet. He returned, therefore, with the utmost expedition to Plymouth, and lay at anchor in that harbor.

Meanwhile all the damages of the armada were repaired; and the Spaniards with fresh hopes set out again to sea, in prosecution of their enterprise. The fleet consisted of a hundred and thirty vessels, of which near a hundred were galleons, and were of greater size than any ever before used in Europe. It carried on board nineteen thousand two hundred and ninety-five soldiers, eight thousand four hundred and fifty-six mariners, two thousand and eighty-eight galley slaves, and two thousand six hundred and thirty great pieces of brass ordnance. It was victualled for six months; and was attended by twenty lesser ships, called caravals, and ten salves with six oars apiece. [2]

The plan formed by the king of Spain was, that the armada should sail to the coast opposite to Dunkirk and Newport; and having chased away all English or Flemish vessels which might obstruct the passage, (for it was never supposed they could make opposition,) should join themselves with the duke of Parma, should thence make sail to the Thames, and having landed the whole Spanish army, thus complete at one blow the entire conquest of England. In prosecution of this scheme, Philip gave orders to the duke of Medina, that in passing along the Channel, he should sail as near the coast of France as he could with safety; that he should by this policy avoid meeting with the English fleet; and, keeping in view the main enterprise, should neglect all smaller successes which might prove an obstacle, or even interpose a delay, to the acquisition of a kingdom. [3]

* Camden, .

* * Strype, vol. iii. Append. .

* * * Monson, .

After the armada was under sail, they took a fisherman, who informed them that the English admiral had been lately at sea, had heard of the tempest which scattered the armada, had retired back into Plymouth and no longer expecting an invasion this season, had laid up his ships, and discharged most of the seamen. From this false intelligence the duke of Medina conceived the great facility of attacking and destroying the English ships in harbor; and he was tempted, by the prospect of so decisive an advantage, to break his orders, and make sail directly for Plymouth; a resolution which proved the safety of England. The Lizard was the first land made by the armada, about sunset; and as the Spaniards took it for the Ram Head near Plymouth, they bore out to sea with an intention of returning next day, and attacking the English navy. They were descried by Fleming, a Scottish pirate, who was roving in those seas, and who immediately set sail, to inform the English admiral of their approach; [1] another fortunate event, which contributed extremely to the safety of the fleet. Effingham had just time to get out of port, when he saw the Spanish armada coming full sail towards him, disposed in the form of a crescent, and stretching the distance of seven miles from the extremity of one division to that of the other.

The writers of that age raise their style by a pompous description of this spectacle; the most magnificent that had ever appeared upon the ocean, infusing equal terror and admiration into the minds of all beholders. The lofty masts, the swelling sails, and the towering prows of the Spanish galleons, seem impossible to be justly painted, but by assuming the colors of poetry; and an eloquent historian of Italy, in imitation of Camden, has asserted, that the armada, though the ships bore every sail, yet advanced with a slow motion; as if the ocean groaned with supporting, and the winds were tired with impelling, so enormous a weight. [2] The truth, however, is, that the largest of the Spanish vessels would scarcely pass for third-rates in the present navy of England; yet were they so ill framed, or so ill governed, that they were quite unwieldy, and could not sail upon a wind, nor tack on occasion, nor be managed in stormy weather by the seamen. Neither the mechanics of ship-building, nor the experience of mariners, had attained so great perfection as could serve for the security and government of such bulky vessels; and the English, who had already had experience how unserviceable they commonly were, beheld without dismay their tremendous appearance.

* Monson, .

* * Bentivoglio, part ii. lib. iv.

Effingham gave orders not to come to close fight with the Spaniards; where the size of the ships, he suspected, and the numbers of the soldiers, would be a disadvantage to the English; but to cannonade them at a distance, and to wait the opportunity which winds, currents, or various accidents must afford him of intercepting some scattered vessels of the enemy. Nor was it long before the event answered expectation A great ship of Biscay, on board of which was a considerable part of the Spanish money, took fire by accident; and while all hands were employed in extinguishing the flames, she fell behind the rest of the armada: the great galleon of Andalusia was detained by the springing of her mast: and both these vessels were taken, after some resistance, by Sir Francis Drake. As the armada advanced up the Channel, the English hung upon its rear, and still infested it with skirmishes. Each trial abated the confidence of the Spaniards, and added courage to the English; and the latter soon found, that even in close fight the size of the Spanish ships was no advantage to them. Their bulk exposed them the more to the fire of the enemy; while their cannon, placed too high, shot over the heads of the English. The alarm having now reached, the coast of England, the nobility and gentry hastened out, with their vessels from every harbor, and reënforced the admiral. The earls of Oxford, Northumberland, and Cumberland, Sir Thomas Cecil, Sir Robert Cecil, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Thomas Vavasor, Sir Thomas Gerrard, Sir Charles Blount, with many others, distinguished themselves by this generous and disinterested service of their country. The English fleet, after the conjunction of those ships, amounted to a hundred and forty sail.

The armada had now reached Calais, and cast anchor before that place, in expectation that the duke of Parma, who had gotten intelligence of their approach, would put to sea and join his forces to them. The English admiral practised here a successful stratagem upon the Spaniards. He took eight of his smaller ships, and filling them with all combustible materials, sent them, one after another, into the midst of the enemy. The Spaniards fancied that they were fireships of the same contrivance with a famous vessel which had lately done so much execution in the Schelde near Antwerp; and they immediately cut their cables, and took to flight with the greatest disorder and precipitation. The English fell upon them next morning while in confusion; and besides doing great damage to other ships, they took or destroyed about twelve of the enemy.

By this time, it was become apparent, that the intention for which these preparations were made by the Spaniards was entirely frustrated. The vessels provided by the duke of Parma were made for transporting soldiers, not for fighting; and that general, when urged to leave the harbor, positively refused to expose his flourishing army to such apparent hazard; while the English not only were able to keep the sea, but seemed even to triumph over their enemy. The Spanish admiral found, in many rencounters, that while he lost so considerable a part of his own navy, he had destroyed only one small vessel of the English; and he foresaw, that by continuing so unequal a combat, he must draw inevitable destruction on all the remainder. He prepared, therefore, to return homewards; but as the wind was contrary to his passage through the Channel, he resolved to sail northwards, and making the tour of the island, reach the Spanish harbors by the ocean. The English fleet followed him during some time; and had not their ammunition fallen short, by the negligence of the offices in supplying them, they had obliged the whole armada to surrender at discretion. The duke of Medina had once taken that resolution, but was diverted from it by the advice of his confessor. This conclusion of the enterprise would have been more glorious to the English; but the event proved almost equally fatal to the Spaniards. A violent tempest overtook the armada after it passed the Orkneys; the ships had already lost their anchors, and were obliged to keep to sea: the mariners, unaccustomed to such hardships, and not able to govern such unwieldy vessels, yielded to the fury of the storm, and allowed their ships to drive either on the western isles of Scotland, or on the coast of Ireland, where they were miserably wrecked. Not a half of the navy returned to Spain; and the seamen as well as soldiers who remained, were so overcome with hardships and fatigue, and so dispirited by their discomfiture, that they filled all Spain with accounts of the desperate valor of the English and of the tempestuous violence of that ocean which surrounds them.

Such was the miserable and dishonorable conclusion of an enterprise which had been preparing for three years, which had exhausted the revenue and force of Spain, and which had long filled all Europe with anxiety or expectation. Philip, who was a slave to his ambition, but had an entire command over his countenance, no sooner heard of the mortifying event which blasted all his hopes, than he fell on his knees, and rendering thanks for that gracious dispensation of Providence expressed his joy that the calamity was not greater. The Spanish priests, who had so often blessed this holy crusade and foretold its infallible success, were somewhat at a loss to account for the victory gained over the Catholic monarch by excommunicated heretics and an execrable usurper: but they at last discovered, that all the calamities of the Spaniards had proceeded from their allowing the infidel Moors to live among them. [1]

1589.

Soon after the defeat and dispersion of the Spanish armada, the queen summoned a new parliament, and received from them a supply of two subsidies and four fifteenths, payable in four years. This is the first instance that subsidies were doubled in one supply; and so unusual a concession was probably obtained from the joy of the present success, and from the general sense of the queen’s necessities. Some members objected to this heavy charge, on account of the great burden of loans which had lately been imposed upon the nation. [2]

Elizabeth foresaw that this house of commons, like all the foregoing, would be governed by the Puritans; and therefore, to obviate their enterprises, she renewed, at the beginning of the session, her usual injunction, that the parliament should not on any account presume to treat of matters ecclesiastical. Notwithstanding this strict inhibition, the zeal of one Damport moved him to present a bill to the commons for remedying spiritual grievances, and for restraining the tyranny of the ecclesiastical commission, which were certainly great: but when Mr. Secretary Woley reminded the house of her majesty’s commands, no one durst second the motion; the bill was not so much as read; and the speaker returned it to Damport without taking the least notice of it. [3] Some members of the house, notwithstanding the general submission were even committed to custody on account of this attempt. [4]

* See note CC, at the end of the volume.

* * See note DD, at the end of the volume.

* * * D’Ewes, .

* * * * Strype’s Life of Whitgift, . Neal, vol. i. p. 500.

The imperious conduct of Elizabeth appeared still more clearly in another parliamentary transaction. The right of purveyance was an ancient prerogative, by which the officers of the crown could at pleasure take provisions for the household from all the neighboring counties, and could make use of the carts and carriages of the farmers; and the price of these commodities and services was fixed and stated. The payment of the money was often distant and uncertain; and the rates, being fixed before the discovery of the West Indies, were much inferior to the present market price; so that purveyance, besides the slavery of it, was always regarded as a great burden, and being arbitrary and casual, was liable to great abuses. We may fairly presume, that the hungry courtiers of Elizabeth, supported by her unlimited power, would be sure to render this prerogative very oppressive to the people; and the commons had, last session, found it necessary to pass a bill for regulating these exactions: but the bill was lost in the house of peers. [1] The continuance of the abuses begat a new attempt for redress; and the same bill was now revived, and again sent up to the house of peers, together with a bill for some new regulations in the court of exchequer. Soon after, the commons received a message from the upper house, desiring them to appoint a committee for a conference. At this conference, the peers informed them, that the queen, by a message delivered by Lord Burleigh, had expressed her displeasure that the commons should presume to touch on her prerogative. If there were any abuses, she said, either in imposing purveyance, or in the practice of the court of exchequer, her majesty was both able and willing to provide due reformation; but would not permit the parliament to intermeddle in these matters. [2]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

The commons, alarmed at this intelligence, appointed another committee to attend the queen, and endeavor to satisfy her of their humble and dutiful intentions. Elizabeth gave a gracious reception to the committee: she expressed her great “inestimable loving care” towards her loving subjects; which, she said, was greater than of her own self, or even than any of them could have of themselves. She told them, that she had already given orders for an inquiry into the abuses attending purveyance, but the dangers of the Spanish invasion had retarded the progress of the design; that she had as much skill, will, and power to rule her household as any subjects whatsoever to govern theirs, and needed as little the assistance of her neighbors; that the exchequer was her chamber, consequently more near to her than even her house’ bold, and therefore the less proper for them to intermeddle with; and that she would of herself, with advice of her council and the judges, redress every grievance in these matters, but would not permit the commons, by laws moved without her privity, to bereave her of the honor attending these regulations. [1] The issue of this matter was the same that attended all contests between Elizabeth and her parliaments. [2] She seems even to have been more imperious, in this particular, than her predecessors; at least her more remote ones: for they often permitted the abuses of purveyance [3] to be redressed by law. [4] Edward III., a very arbitrary prince, allowed ten several statutes to be enacted for that purpose.

* D’Ewes, .

* * Si rixa est, ubi tu pulsus, ego vapulo tantum. Juv.

* * * See note EE, at the end of the volume.

* * * * See the statutes under the head of Purveyance.

In so great awe did the commons stand of every courtier, as well as of the crown, that they durst use no freedom of speech which they thought would give the least offence to any of them. Sir Edward Hobby showed in the house his extreme grief, that by some great personage, not a member of the house, he had been sharply rebuked for speeches delivered in parliament: he craved the favor of the house, and desired that some of the members might inform that great personage of his true meaning and intention in these speeches. [1] The commons, to obviate these inconveniencies, passed a vote that no one should reveal the secrets of the house. [2]

* D'Ewes, , 433.

* * An act was passed this session, enforcing the former statute, which imposed twenty pounds a month on everyone absent from public worship: but the penalty was restricted to two thirds of the income of the recusant. 29 Eliz. c. 6.

The discomfiture of the armada had begotten in the nation a kind of enthusiastic passion for enterprises against Spain; and nothing seemed now impossible to be achieved by the valor and fortune of the English. Don Antonio, prior of Crato, a natural son of the royal family of Portugal, trusting to the aversion of his countrymen against the Castilians, had advanced a claim to the crown; and flying first to France, thence to England, had been encouraged both by Henry and Elizabeth in his pretensions. A design was formed by the people, not the court of England, to conquer the kingdom for Don Antonio: Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Norris were the leaders in this romantic enterprise: near twenty thousand volunteers [1] enlisted themselves in the service: and ships were hired, as well as arms provided, at the charge of the adventurers. The queen's frugality kept her from contributing more than sixty thousand pounds to the expense; and she only allowed six of her ships of war to attend the expedition. [2] There was more spirit and bravery than foresight or prudence in the conduct of this enterprise. The small stock of the adventurers did not enable them to buy either provisions or ammunition sufficient for such an undertaking; they even wanted vessels to stow the numerous volunteers who crowded to them; and they were obliged to seize by force some ships of the Hanse Towns, which they met with at sea; an expedient which set them somewhat at ease in point of room for their men, but remedied not the deficiency of their provisions. [3]

* Birch's Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. . Monson () says that there were only fourteen thousand soldiers and four thousand seamen in the whole on this expedition: but the account contained in Dr. Birch is given by one of the most considerable of the adventurers.

* * Monson, .

* * * Monson, .

Had they sailed directly to Portugal, it is believed that the good will of the people, joined to the defenceless state of the country, might have insured them of success: but hearing that great preparations were making at the Groine for the invasion of England, they were induced to go thither, and destroy this new armament of Spain. They broke into the harbor; burned some ships of war, particularly one commanded by Recalde, vice-admiral of Spain; they defeated an army of four or five thousand men, which was assembled to oppose them; they assaulted the Groine, and took the lower town, which they pillaged; and they would have taken the higher, though well fortified, had they not found their ammunition and provisions beginning to fail them. The young earl of Essex, a nobleman of promising hopes, who, fired with the thirst of military honor, had secretly, unknown to the queen, stolen from England, here joined the adventurers; and it was then agreed by common consent to make sail for Portugal, the main object of their enterprise.

The English landed at Paniche, a seaport town twelve leagues from Lisbon, and Norris led the army to that capital, while Drake undertook to sail up the river, and attack the city with united forces. By this time, the court of Spain had gotten leisure to prepare against the invasion. Forces were thrown into Lisbon: the Portuguese were disarmed: all suspected persons were taken into custody: and thus, though the inhabitants bore great affection to Don Antonio, none of them durst declare in favor of the invaders. The English army, however, made themselves masters of the suburbs, which abounded with riches of all kinds; but as they desired to conciliate the affections of the Portuguese, and were more intent on honor than profit, they observed a strict discipline, and abstained from all plunder. Meanwhile they found their ammunition and provisions much exhausted; they had not a single cannon to make a breach in the walls; the admiral had not been able to pass some fortresses which guarded the river; there was no appearance of an insurrection in their favor; sickness, from fatigue, hunger, and intemperance in wine and fruits, had seized the army; so that it was found necessary to make all possible haste to reëmbark. They were not pursued by the enemy, and finding at the mouth of the river sixty ships laden with naval stores, they seized them as lawful prize; though they belonged to the Hanse Towns, a neutral power. They sailed thence to Vigo, which they took and burned; and having ravaged the country around, they set sail and arrived in England. Above half of these gallant adventurers perished by sickness, famine, fatigue, and the sword; [1] and England reaped more honor than profit from this extraordinary enterprise. It is computed, that eleven hundred gentlemen embarked on board the fleet, and that only three hundred and fifty survived those multiplied disasters. [2]

* Birch’s Memoirs, vol. i. .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. i. .

When these ships were on their voyage homewards, they met with the earl of Cumberland, who was outward bound, with a fleet of seven sail, all equipped at his own charge, except one ship of war which the queen had lent him. That nobleman supplied Sir Francis Drake with some provisions; a generosity which saved the lives of many of Drake’s men, but for which the others afterwards suffered severely. Cumberland sailed towards the Terceras, and took several prizes from the enemy; but the richest, valued at a hundred thousand pounds, perished in her return, with all her cargo, near St. Michael’s Mount, in Cornwall. Many of these adventurers were killed in a rash attempt at the Terceras: a great mortality seized the rest; and it was with difficulty that the few hands which remained were able to steer the ships back into harbor. [1]

Though the signal advantages gained over the Spaniards, and the spirit thence infused into the English, gave Elizabeth great security during the rest of her reign, she could not forbear keeping an anxious eye on Scotland, whose situation rendered its revolutions always of importance to her. It might have been expected that this high-spirited princess, who knew so well to brave danger, would not have retained that malignant jealousy towards her heir, with which, during the lifetime of Mary, she had been so much agitated. James had indeed succeeded to all the claims of his mother; but he had not succeeded to the favor of the Catholics, which could alone render these claims dangerous: [2] and as the queen was now well advanced in years, and enjoyed an uncontrolled authority over her subjects, it was not likely that the king of Scots, who was of an indolent, unambitious temper, would ever give her any disturbance in her possession of the throne. Yet all these circumstances could not remove her timorous suspicions; and so far from satisfying the nation by a settlement of the succession, or a declaration of James's title, she was as anxious to prevent every incident which might anywise raise his credit, or procure him the regard of the English, as if he had been her immediate rival and competitor. Most of his ministers and favorites were her pensioners; and as she was desirous to hinder him from marrying and having children, she obliged them to throw obstacles in the way of every alliance, even the most reasonable which could be offered him; and during some years she succeeded in this malignant policy. [3]

* Monson, .

* * Winwood, vol. i. .

* * * Melvil, , 177.

He had fixed on the elder daughter of the king of Denmark, who, being a remote prince and not powerful, could give her no umbrage; yet did she so artfully cross this negotiation, that the Danish monarch, impatient of delay, married his daughter to the duke of Brunswick. James then renewed his suit to the younger princess, and still found obstacles from the intrigues of Elizabeth, who, merely with a view of interposing delay, proposed to him the sister of the king of Navarre, a princess much older than himself, and entirely destitute of fortune. The young king, besides the desire of securing himself, by the prospect of issue, from those traitorous attempts too frequent among his subjects had been so watched by the rigid austerity of the ecclesiastics, that he had another inducement to marry, which is not so usual with monarchs. His impatience, therefore, broke through all the politics of Elizabeth: the articles of marriage were settled; the ceremony was performed by proxy; and the princess embarked for Scotland; but was driven by a storm into a port of Norway. This tempest, and some others which happened near the same time, were universally believed in Scotland and Denmark to have proceeded from a combination of the Scottish and Danish witches; and the dying confession of the criminals was supposed to put the accusation beyond all controversy. [1] James, however, though a great believer in sorcery, was not deterred by this incident from taking a voyage in order to conduct his bride home: he arrived in Norway; carried the queen thence to Copenhagen: and having passed the winter in that city, he brought her next spring to Scotland, where they were joyfully received by the people. The clergy alone, who never neglected an opportunity of vexing their prince, made opposition to the queen's coronation, on account of the ceremony of anointing her, which, they alleged, was either a Jewish or a Popish rite, and therefore utterly antichristian and unlawful. But James was as much bent on the ceremony as they were averse to it: and after much controversy and many intrigues, his authority, which had not often happened, at last prevailed over their opposition. [2]

* Melvil, .

* * Spotswood, .

CHAPTER XLIII.

ELIZABETH.

1590.

After a state of great anxiety and many difficulties, Elizabeth had at length reached a situation where, though her affairs still required attention, and found employment for her active spirit, she was removed from all danger of any immediate revolution, and might regard the efforts of her enemies with some degree of confidence and security. Her successful and prudent administration had gained her, together with the admiration of foreigners, the affections of her own subjects; and, after the death of the queen of Scots, even the Catholics, however discontented, pretended not to dispute her title, or adhere to any other person as her competitor. James, curbed by his factious nobility and ecclesiastics, possessed at home very little authority; and was solicitous to remain on good terms with Elizabeth and the English nation, in hopes that time, aided by his patient tranquillity, would secure him that rich succession to which his birth entitled him. The Hollanders, though overmatched in their contest with Spain, still made an obstinate resistance; and such was their unconquerable antipathy to their old masters, and such the prudent conduct of young Maurice, their governor, that the subduing of that small territory, if at all possible, must be the work of years, and the result of many and great successes. Philip, who, in his powerful effort against England, had been transported by resentment and ambition beyond his usual cautious maxims, was now disabled, and still more discouraged, from adventuring again on such hazardous enterprises. The situation also of affairs in France began chiefly to employ his attention; but notwithstanding all his artifice, and force, and expense, the events in that kingdom proved every day more contrary to his expectations, and more favorable to the friends and confederates of England.

The violence of the league having constrained Henry to declare war against the Hugonots, these religionists seemed exposed to the utmost danger; and Elizabeth sensible of the intimate connection between her own interests and those of that party, had supported the king of Navarre by her negotiations in Germany, and by large sums of money, which she remitted for levying forces in that country. This great prince, not discouraged by the superiority of his enemies, took the field; and in the year 1587 gained at Coutras a complete victory over the army of the French king; but as his allies, the Germans were at the same time discomfited by the army of the league, under the duke of Guise, his situation, notwithstanding his victory, seemed still as desperate as ever. The chief advantage which he reaped by this diversity of success, arose from the dissensions which by that means took place among his enemies. The inhabitants of Paris, intoxicated with admiration of Guise, and strongly prejudiced against their king, whose intentions had become suspicious to them, took to arms and obliged Henry to fly for his safety. That prince, dissembling his resentment, entered into a negotiation with the league; and having conferred many high offices on Guise and his partisans, summoned an assembly of the states at Blois, on pretence of finding expedients to support the intended war against the Hugonots. The various scenes of perfidy and cruelty which had been exhibited in France, had justly begotten a mutual diffidence among all parties; yet Guise, trusting more to the timidity than honor of the king, rashly put himself into the hands of that monarch, and expected, by the ascendant of his own genius, to make him submit to all his exorbitant pretensions. Henry, though of an easy disposition, not steady to his resolutions, or even to his promises, wanted neither courage nor capacity; and finding all his subtleties eluded by the vigor of Guise, and even his throne exposed to the most imminent danger, he embraced more violent counsels than were natural to him, and ordered that prince and his brother, the cardinal of Guise, to be assassinated in his palace.

This cruel execution, which the necessity of it alone could excuse, had nearly proved fatal to the author, and seemed at first to plunge him into greater dangers than those which he sought to avoid by taking vengeance on his enemy. The partisans of the league were inflamed with the utmost rage against him: the populace every where, particularly at Paris, renounced allegiance to him: the ecclesiastics and the preachers filled all places with execrations against his name: and the most powerful cities and most opulent provinces appeared to combine in a resolution, either of renouncing monarchy, or of changing their monarch. Henry, finding slender resource among his Catholic subjects, was constrained to enter into a confederacy with the Hugonots and the king of Navarre: he enlisted large bodies of

Swiss infantry and German cavalry: and being still supported by his chief nobility, he assembled, by all these means, an army of near forty thousand men, and advanced to the gates of Paris, ready to crush the league, and subdue all his enemies. The desperate resolution of one man diverted the course of these great events. Jaques Clement, a Dominican friar, inflamed by that bloody spirit of bigotry which distinguishes this century and a great part of the following beyond all ages of the world, embraced the resolution of sacrificing his own life, in order to save the church from the persecutions of an heretical tyrant; and being admitted, under some pretext, to the king's presence, he gave that prince a mortal wound, and was immediately put to death by the courtiers, who hastily revenged the murder of their sovereign. This memorable incident happened on the first of August, 1589.

The king of Navarre, next heir to the crown, assumed the government, by the title of Henry IV.; but succeeded to much greater difficulties than those which surrounded his predecessor. The prejudices entertained against his religion, made a great part of the nobility immediately desert him; and it was only by his promise of hearkening to conferences and instruction, that he could engage any of the Catholics to adhere to his undoubted title. The league, governed by the duke of Mayenne, brother to Guise, gathered new force; and the king of Spain entertained views, either of dismembering the French monarchy, or of annexing the whole to his own dominions, In these distressful circumstances, Henry addressed himself to Elizabeth, and found her well disposed to contribute to his assistance, and to oppose the progress of the Catholic league, and of Philip, her inveterate and dangerous enemies. To prevent the desertion of his Swiss and German auxiliaries she made him a present of twenty-two thousand pounds: a greater sum than, as he declared, he had ever seen before: and she sent him a reënforcement of four thousand men, under Lord Willoughby, an officer of reputation, who joined the French at Dieppe. Strengthened by these supplies, Henry marched directly to Paris; and having taken the suburbs sword in hand, he abandoned them to be pillaged by his soldiers. He employed this body of English in many other enterprises; and still found reason to praise their courage and fidelity. The time of their service being elapsed, he dismissed them with many high commendations. Sir William Drury, Sir Thomas Baskerville, and Sir John Boroughs acquired reputation this campaign, and revived in France the ancient fame of English valor.

The army which Henry, next campaign, led into the field, was much inferior to that of the league; but as it was composed of the chief nobility of France, he feared not to encounter his enemies in a pitched battle at Yvrée, and he gained a complete victory over them. This success enabled him to blockade Paris, and he reduced that capital to the last extremity of famine; when the duke of Parma, in consequence of orders from Philip, marched to the relief of the league, and obliged Henry to raise the blockade. Having performed this important service, he retreated to the Low Countries; and, by his consummate skill in the art of war, performed these long marches in the face of the enemy, without affording the French monarch that opportunity which he sought, of giving him battle, or so much as once putting his army in disorder. The only loss which he sustained was in the Low Countries, where Prince Maurice took advantage of his absence, and recovered some places which the duke of Parma had formerly conquered from the states. [1]

* See note FF, at the end of the volume.

1591.

The situation of Henry’s affairs, though promising, was not so well advanced or established as to make the queen discontinue her succors; and she was still more confirmed in the resolution of supporting him, by some advantages gained by the king of Spain. The duke of Mercoeur, governor of Brittany, a prince of the house of Lorraine, had declared for the league; and finding himself hard pressed by Henry’s forces, he had been obliged, in order to secure himself, to introduce some Spanish troops into the seaport towns of that province. Elizabeth was alarmed at the danger; and foresaw that the Spaniards, besides infesting the English commerce by privateers, might employ these harbors as the seat of their naval preparations, and might more easily, from that vicinity, than from Spain or Portugal, project an invasion of England. She concluded, therefore, a new treaty with Henry, in which she engaged to send over three thousand men to be employed in the reduction of Brittany; and she stipulated that her charges should, in a twelvemonth, or as soon as the enemy was expelled, be refunded her. [1] These forces were commanded by Sir John Norris, and under him by his brother Henry, and by Anthony Shirley. Sir Roger Williams was at the head of a small body which garrisoned Dieppe: and a squadron of ships, under the command of Sir Henry Palmer, lay upon the coast of France, and intercepted all the vessels belonging to the Spaniards or the leaguers.

The operations of war can very little be regulated beforehand by any treaty or agreement; and Henry, who found it necessary to lay aside the projected enterprise against Brittany, persuaded the English commanders to join his army, and to take a share in the hostilities which he carried into Picardy. [2] Notwithstanding the disgust which Elizabeth received from this disappointment, he laid before her a plan for expelling the leaguers from Normandy, and persuaded her to send over a new body of four thousand men, to assist him in that enterprise. The earl of Essex was appointed general of these forces; a young nobleman, who, by many exterior accomplishments, and still more real merit, was daily advancing in favor with Elizabeth, and seemed to occupy that place in her affections, which Leicester, now deceased, had so long enjoyed. Essex, impatient for military fame, was extremely uneasy to lie some time at Dieppe unemployed; and had not the orders which he received from his mistress been so positive, he would gladly have accepted of Henry's invitation, and have marched to join the French army now in Champagne. This plan of operations was also proposed to Elizabeth by the French ambassador, but she rejected it with great displeasure; and she threatened immediately to recall her troops, if Henry should persevere any longer in his present practice of breaking all concert with her, and attending to nothing but his own interests. [3]

* Camden, .

* * Rymer, vol. xiv. .

* * * Birch's Negotiations, . Rymer, tom. xiv. , 140.

Urged by these motives, the French king at last led his army into Normandy, and laid siege to Rouen, which he reduced to great difficulties. But the league, unable of themselves to take the field against him, had again recourse to the duke of Parma, who received orders to march to their relief. He executed this enterprise with his usual abilities and success; and for the present frustrated all the projects of Henry and Elizabeth. This princess, who kept still in view the interests of her own kingdom in all her foreign transactions, was impatient under these disappointments, blamed Henry for his negligence in the execution of treaties, and complained that the English forces were thrust foremost in every hazardous enterprise. [1] It is probable, however, that their own ardent courage, and their desire of distinguishing themselves in so celebrated a theatre of war, were the causes why they so often enjoyed this perilous honor.

Notwithstanding the indifferent success of former enterprises, the queen was sensible how necessary it was to support Henry against the league and the Spaniards; and she formed a new treaty with him, in which they agreed never to make peace with Philip but by common consent; she promised to send him a new supply of four thousand men; and he stipulated to repay her charges in a twelvemonth, to employ these forces, joined to a body of French troops, in an expedition against Brittany, and to consign into her hands a seaport town of that province, for a retreat to the English. [2] Henry knew the impossibility of executing some of these articles, and the imprudence of fulfilling others; but finding them rigidly insisted on by Elizabeth, he accepted of her succors, and trusted that he might easily, on some pretence, be able to excuse his failure in executing his part of the treaty. This campaign was the least successful of all those which he had yet carried on against the league.

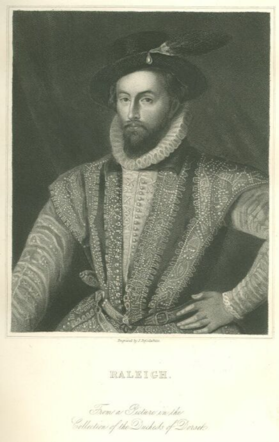
During these military operations in France, Elizabeth employed her naval power against Philip, and endeavored to intercept his West Indian treasures, the source of that greatness which rendered him so formidable to all his neighbors. She sent a squadron of seven ships, under the command of Lord Thomas Howard, for this service; but the king of Spain, informed of her purpose, fitted out a great force of fifty-five sail, and despatched them to escort the Indian fleet. They fell in with the English squadron; and, by the courageous obstinacy of Sir Richard Greenville, the vice-admiral, who refused to make his escape by flight, they took one vessel, the first English ship of war that had yet fallen into the hands of the Spaniards. [3] The rest of the squadron returned safely into England frustrated of their expectations, but pleasing themselves with the idea that their attempt had not been altogether fruitless in hurting the enemy.

* Camden, .

* * Rymer, vol. xvi. , 168, 171, 173

* * * See note GG, at the end of the volume.

The Indian fleet had been so long detained in the Havana from the fear of the English, that they were obliged at last to set sail in an improper season, and most of them perished by shipwreck ere they reached the Spanish harbors. [1] The earl of Cumberland made a like unsuccessful enterprise against the Spanish trade. He carried out one ship of the queen's, and seven others equipped at his own expense; but the prizes which he made did not compensate the charges. [2]



RALEIGH.

From a Picture in the Collection of the Duchess of Dorset

The spirit of these expensive and hazardous adventures was very prevalent in England. Sir Walter Raleigh, who had enjoyed great favor with the queen, finding his interest to decline, determined to recover her good graces by some important undertaking; and as his reputation was high among his countrymen, he persuaded great numbers to engage with him as volunteers in an attempt on the West Indies.

1592.

The fleet was detained so long in the Channel by contrary winds, that the season was lost: Raleigh was recalled by the queen: Sir Martin Frobisher succeeded to the command, and made a privateering voyage against the Spaniards. He took one rich carrack near the Island of Flores, and destroyed another. [3] About the same time, Thomas White, a Londoner, took two Spanish ships, which, besides fourteen hundred chests of quicksilver, contained above two millions of bulls for indulgences; a commodity useless to the English, but which had cost the king of Spain three hundred thousand florins, and would have been sold by him in the Indies for five millions.

This war did great damage to Spain; but it was attended with considerable expense to England; and Elizabeth’s ministers computed, that since the commencement of it, she had spent in Flanders and France, and on her naval expeditions, above one million two hundred thousand pounds; [4] a charge which, notwithstanding her extreme frugality, was too burthensome for her narrow revenues to support.

* Monson, .

* * Monson, .

* * * Monson, . Camden, p 569.

* * * * Strype, vol. iii.

She summoned, therefore, a parliament, in order to obtain supply: but she either thought her authority so established that she needed to make them no concessions in return, or she rated her power and prerogative above money: for there never was any parliament whom she treated in a more haughty manner, whom she made more sensible of their own weakness, or whose privileges she more openly violated. When the speaker, Sir Edward Coke, made the three usual requests, of freedom from arrests, of access to her person, and of liberty of speech, she replied to him by the mouth of Puckering, lord keeper, that liberty of speech was granted to the commons, but they must know what liberty they were entitled to; not a liberty for every one to speak what he listeth, or what cometh in his brain to utter; their privilege extended no further than a liberty of “aye” or “no:” that she enjoined the speaker, if he perceived any idle heads so negligent of their own safety as to attempt reforming the church, or innovating in the commonwealth, that he should refuse the bills exhibited for that purpose, till they were examined by such as were fitter to consider of these things, and could better judge of them: that she would not impeach the freedom of their persons; but they must beware lest, under color of this privilege, they imagined that any neglect of their duty could be covered or protected: and that she would not refuse them access to her person, provided it were upon urgent and weighty causes, and at times convenient, and when she might have leisure from other important affairs of the realm. [1]

Notwithstanding the menacing and contemptuous air of this speech, the intrepid and indefatigable Peter Wentworth, not discouraged by his former ill success, ventured to transgress the imperial orders of Elizabeth. He presented to the lord keeper a petition, in which he desired the upper house to join with the lower in a supplication to her majesty for entailing the succession of the crown; and he declared that he had a bill ready prepared for that purpose. This method of proceeding was sufficiently respectful and cautious; but the subject was always extremely disagreeable to the queen, and what she had expressly prohibited any one from meddling with: she sent Wentworth immediately to the Tower; committed Sir Thomas Bromley, who had seconded him, to the Fleet prison, together with Stevens and Welsh, two members, to whom Sir Thomas had communicated his intention. [2]

About a fortnight after, a motion was made in the house to petition the queen for the release of these members; but it was answered by all the privy counsellors there present, that her majesty had committed them for causes best known to herself, and that to press her on that head would only tend to the prejudice of the gentlemen whom they meant to serve: she would release them whenever she thought proper, and would be better pleased to do it of her own proper motion, than from their suggestion. [1] The house willingly acquiesced in this reasoning.

So arbitrary an act, at the commencement of the session, might well repress all further attempts for freedom: but the religious zeal of the puritans was not so easily restrained; and it inspired a courage which no human motive was able to surmount. Morrice, chancellor of the duchy, and attorney, of the court of wards, made a motion for redressing the abuses in the bishops' courts, but above all, in the high commission; where subscriptions, he said, were exacted to articles at the pleasure of the prelates; where oaths were imposed, obliging persons to answer to all

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* D'Ewes, , 469. Townsend, p.37.

* * D'Ewes, . Townsend, .

questions without distinction, even though they should tend to their own condemnation; and where every one who refused entire satisfaction to the commissioners was imprisoned, without relief or remedy. [2]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, . Townsend, .

This motion was seconded by some members; but the ministers and privy counsellors opposed it, and foretold the consequences which ensued. The queen sent for the speaker, and after requiring him to deliver to her Morrice’s bill, she told him, that it was in her power to call parliaments, in her power to dissolve them, in her power to give assent or dissent to any determination which they should form: that her purpose in summoning this parliament was twofold, to have laws enacted for the further enforcement of uniformity in religion, and to provide for the defence of the nation against the exorbitant power of Spain: that these two points ought, therefore, to be the object of their deliberations: she had enjoined them already, by the mouth of the lord keeper, to meddle neither with matters of state nor of religion; and she wondered how any one could be so assuming, as to attempt a subject so expressly contrary to her prohibition: that she was highly offended with this presumption; and took the present opportunity to reiterate the commands given by the keeper, and to require that no bill, regarding either state affairs or reformation in causes ecclesiastical, be exhibited in the house: and that in particular she charged the speaker upon his allegiance, if any such bills were offered, absolutely to refuse them a reading, and not so much as permit them to be debated by the members. [1] This command from the queen was submitted to without further question. Morrice was seized in the house itself by a serjeant-at-arms, discharged from his office of chancellor of the duchy, incapacitated from any practice in his profession as a common lawyer, and kept some years prisoner in Tilbury Castle. [2]

The queen having thus expressly pointed out both what the house should and should not do, the commons were as obsequious to the one as to the other of her injunctions. They passed a law against recusants; such a law as was suited to the severe character of Elizabeth, and to the persecuting spirit of the age. It was entitled, “An act to retain her majesty’s subjects in their due obedience;" and was meant, as the preamble declares, to obviate such inconveniencies and perils as might grow from the wicked practices of seditious sectaries and disloyal persons: for these two species of criminals were always, at that time, confounded together, as equally dangerous to the peace of society. It was enacted, that any person, above sixteen years of age, who obstinately refused during the space of a month to attend public worship, should be committed to prison; that if, after being condemned for this offence, he persist three months in his refusal, he must abjure the realm; and that, if he either refuse this condition, or return after banishment, he should suffer capitally as a felon, without benefit of clergy. [3] This law bore equally hard upon the Puritans and upon the Catholics; and had it not been imposed by the queen's authority, was certainly, in that respect, much contrary to the private sentiments and inclinations of the majority in the house of commons. Very little opposition, however, appears there to have been openly made to it. [4]

* D'Ewes, , 478. Townsend, .

* * Heylin's History of the Presbyterians, .

* * * 35 Eliz. c. 1.

* * * * After enacting this statute, the clergy, in order to remove the odium from themselves, often took care that recusants should be tried by the civil judges at the assizes, rather than by the ecclesiastical commissioners.

Strype's Ann. vol. iv .

The expenses of the war with Spain having reduced the queen to great difficulties, the grant of subsidies seems to have been the most important business of this parliament; and it was a signal proof of the high spirit of Elizabeth, that, while conscious of a present dependence on the commons, she opened the session with the most haughty treatment of them and covered her weakness under such a lofty appearance of superiority. The commons readily voted two subsidies and four fifteenths; but this sum not appearing sufficient to the court, an unusual expedient was fallen upon to induce them to make an enlargement in their concessions. The peers informed the commons in a conference, that they could not give their assent to the supply voted, thinking it too small for the queen's occasions: they therefore proposed a grant of three subsidies and six fifteenths; and desired a further conference, in order to persuade the commons to agree to this measure. The commons, who had acquired the privilege of beginning bills of subsidy, took offence at this procedure of the lords, and at first absolutely rejected the proposal: but being afraid, on reflection, that they had by this refusal given offence to their superiors, they both agreed to the conference, and afterwards voted the additional subsidy. [1]

The queen, notwithstanding this unusual concession of the commons, ended the session with a speech, containing some reprimands to them, and full of the same high pretensions which she had assumed at the opening of the parliament. She took notice, by the mouth of the keeper, that certain members spent more time than was necessary by indulging themselves in harangues and reasonings: and she expressed her displeasure on account of their not paying due reverence to privy counsellors, "who," she told them, "were not to be accounted as common knights and burgesses of the house, who are counsellors but during the parliament; whereas the others are standing counsellors, and for their wisdom and great service are called to the council of the state." [2]

* D'Ewes, , 487, 488. Townsend, .

* * D'Ewes, . Townsend,

The queen also, in her own person, made the parliament a spirited harangue; in which she spoke of the justice and moderation of her government, expressed the small ambition she had ever entertained of making conquests, displayed the just grounds of her quarrel with the king of Spain, and discovered how little she apprehended the power of that monarch, even though he should make a greater effort against her than that of his Invincible Armada. "But I am informed," added she, "that when he attempted this last invasion, some upon the sea-coast forsook their towns, fled up higher into the country, and left all naked and exposed to his entrance: but I swear unto you by God, if I knew those persons, or may know of any that shall do so hereafter, I will make them feel what it is to be so fearful in so urgent a cause." [1] By this menace, she probably gave the people to understand, that she would execute martial law upon such cowards; for there was no statute by which a man could be punished for changing his place of abode.

* D’Ewes, . Townsend, .

The king of France, though he had hitherto made war on the league with great bravery and reputation, though he had this campaign gained considerable advantages over them, and though he was assisted by a considerable body of English under Norris, who carried hostilities into the heart of Brittany, was become sensible that he never could, by force of arms alone, render himself master of his kingdom. The nearer he seemed by his military successes to approach to a full possession of the throne, the more discontent and jealousy arose among those Romanists who adhered to him; and a party was formed in his own court to elect some Catholic monarch of the royal blood, if Henry should any longer refuse to satisfy them by declaring his conversion. This excellent prince was far from being a bigot to his sect; and as he deemed these theological disputes entirely subordinate to the public good, he had secretly determined, from the beginning, to come some time or other to the resolution required of him. He had found, on the death of his predecessor, that the Hugonots, who formed the bravest and most faithful part of his army, were such determined zealots, that if he had at that time abjured their faith, they would instantly have abandoned him to the pretensions and usurpations of the Catholics. The more bigoted Catholics, he knew, particularly those of the league, had entertained such an unsurmountable prejudice against his person, and diffidence of his sincerity, that even his abjuration would not reconcile them to his title; and he must either expect to be entirely excluded from the throne, or be admitted to it on such terms as would leave him little more than the mere shadow of royalty. In this delicate situation, he had resolved to temporize; to retain the Hugonots by continuing in the profession of their religion; to gain the moderate Catholics by giving them hopes of his conversion; to attach both to his person by conduct and success; and he hoped, either that the animosity arising from war against the league would make them drop gradually the question of religion, or that he might in time, after some victories over his enemies, and some conferences with divines, make finally, with more decency and dignity, that abjuration which must have appeared at first mean, as well as suspicious, to both parties.

When the people are attached to any theological tenets merely from a general persuasion or prepossession, they are easily induced, by any motive or authority, to change their faith in these mysterious subjects; as appears from the example of the English, who, during some reigns, usually embraced, without scruple, the still varying religion of their sovereigns. But the French nation, where principles had so long been displayed as the badges of faction, and where each party had fortified its belief by an animosity against the other, were not found so pliable or inconstant; and Henry was at last convinced that the Catholics of his party would entirely abandon him, if he gave them not immediate satisfaction in this particular. The Hugonots also, taught by experience, clearly saw that his desertion of them was become absolutely necessary for the public settlement; and so general was this persuasion among them, that, as the duke of Sully pretends, even the divines of that party purposely allowed themselves to be worsted in the disputes and conferences, that the king might more readily be convinced of the weakness of their cause, and might more cordially and sincerely, at least more decently, embrace the religion which it was so much his interest to believe. If this self-denial, in so tender a point, should appear incredible and supernatural in theologians, it will, at least, be thought very natural, that a prince so little instructed in these matters as Henry, and desirous to preserve his sincerity, should insensibly bend his opinion to the necessity of his affairs, and should believe that party to have the best arguments, who could alone put him in possession of a kingdom. All circumstances, therefore, being prepared for this great event, that monarch renounced the Protestant religion, and was solemnly received by the French prelates of his party into the bosom of the church.

Elizabeth, who was herself attached to the Protestants chiefly by her interests and the circumstances of her birth, and who seems to have entertained some propensity during her whole life to the Catholic superstition, at least to the ancient ceremonies, yet pretended to be extremely displeased with this abjuration of Henry; and she wrote him an angry letter, reproaching him with this interested change of his religion. Sensible however, that the league and the king of Spain were still their common enemies, she hearkened to his apologies; continued her succors both of men and money; and formed a new treaty, in which they mutually stipulated never to make peace but by common agreement.

The intrigues of Spain were not limited to France and England: by means of the never-failing pretence of religion, joined to the influence of money, Philip excited new disorders in Scotland, and gave fresh alarms to Elizabeth. George Ker, brother to Lord Newbottle, had been taken while he was passing secretly into Spain; and papers were found about him, by which a dangerous conspiracy of some Catholic noblemen with Philip was discovered. The earls of Angus, Errol, and Huntley, the heads of three potent families, had entered into a confederacy with the Spanish monarch; and had stipulated to raise all their forces; to join them to a body of Spanish troops which Philip promised to send into Scotland; and after reëstablishing the Catholic religion in that kingdom, to march with their united power in order to effect the same purpose in England. [1] Graham of Fintry, who had also entered into this conspiracy, was taken, and arraigned, and executed. Elizabeth sent Lord Borough ambassador into Scotland, and exhorted the king to exercise the same severity on the three earls, to confiscate their estates, and by annexing them to the crown, both increase his own demesnes, and set an example to all his subjects of the dangers attending treason and rebellion. The advice was certainly rational, but not easy to be executed by the small revenue and limited authority of James. He desired, therefore, some supply from her of men and money; but though she had reason to deem the prosecution of the three Popish earls a common cause, she never could be prevailed on to grant him the least assistance. The tenth part of the expense which she bestowed in supporting the French king and the states, would have sufficed to execute this purpose, more immediately essential to her security; [2] but she seems ever to have borne some degree of malignity to James, whom she hated, both as her heir, and as the son of Mary, her hated rival and competitor.

* Spotswood, . Rymer, tom. xvi. .

* * Spotswood, . Rymer, tom. xvi.

So far from giving James assistance to prosecute the Catholic conspirators, the queen rather contributed to increase his inquietude, by countenancing the turbulent disposition of the earl of Bothwell, [1] a nobleman descended from a natural son of James V. Both well more than once attempted to render himself master of the king’s person; and being expelled the kingdom for these traitorous enterprises, he took shelter in England, was secretly protected, by the queen, and lurked near the borders, where his power lay, with a view of still committing some new violence. He succeeded at last in an attempt on the king; and by the mediation of the English ambassador, imposed dishonorable terms upon that prince: but James, by the authority of the convention of states, annulled this agreement as extorted by violence, again expelled Bothwell, and obliged him to take shelter in England. Elizabeth, pretending ignorance of the place of his retreat, never executed the treaties, by which she was bound to deliver up all rebels and fugitives to the king of Scotland.

* Spotswood, , 258.

1594.

During these disorders, increased by the refractory disposition of the ecclesiastics, the prosecution of the Catholic earls remained in suspense; but at last the parliament passed an act of attainder against them, and the king prepared himself to execute it by force of arms. The noblemen, though they obtained a victory over the earl of Argyle, who acted by the king’s commission found themselves hard pressed by James himself, and agreed on certain terms to leave the kingdom. Bothwell, being defected in a confederacy with them, forfeited the favor of Elizabeth, and was obliged to take shelter, first in France, then in Italy, where he died some years after in great poverty.

The established authority of the queen secured her from all such attempts as James was exposed to from the mutinous disposition of his subjects; and her enemies found no other means of giving her domestic disturbance, than by such traitorous and perfidious machinations as ended in their own disgrace, and in the ruin of their criminal instruments. Roderigo Lopez, a Jew, domestic physician to the queen, being imprisoned on suspicion, confessed that he had received a bribe to poison her from Fuentes and Ibarra, who had succeeded Parma, lately deceased, in the government of the Netherlands; but he maintained, that he had no other intention than to cheat Philip of his money, and never meant to fulfil his engagement. He was, however, executed for the conspiracy; and the queen complained to Philip of these dishonorable attempts of his ministers, but could obtain no satisfaction. [1] York and Williams, two English traitors, were afterwards executed for a conspiracy with Ibarra, equally atrocious. [2]

Instead of avenging herself by retaliating in a like manner, Elizabeth sought a more honorable vengeance, by supporting the king of France, and assisting him in finally breaking the force of the league, which, after the conversion of that monarch, went daily to decay, and was threatened with speedy ruin and dissolution. Norris commanded the English forces in Brittany, and assisted at the taking of Morlaix, Quimpercorentin, and Brest, towns garrisoned by Spanish forces. In every action, the English, though they had so long enjoyed domestic peace, discovered a strong military disposition; and the queen, though herself a heroine, found more frequent occasion to reprove her generals for encouraging their temerity, than for countenancing their fear or caution: [3] Sir Martin Frobisher, her brave admiral, perished, with many others, before Brest. Morlaix had been promised to the English for a place of retreat; but the duke d'Aumont, the French general, eluded this promise, by making it be inserted in the capitulation that none but Catholics should be admitted into that city.

* Camden, . Birch's Negot. . Bacon, vol. iv. p. 381.

* * Camden, .

* * * Camden, .

Next campaign, the French king, who had long carried on hostilities with Philip, was at last provoked, by the taking of Chatelet and Dourlens, and the attack of Cambray, to declare war against that monarch. Elizabeth, being threatened with a new invasion in England, and with an insurrection in Ireland, recalled most of her forces, and sent Norris to command in this latter kingdom. Finding also that the French league was almost entirely dissolved, and that the most considerable leaders had made an accommodation with their prince, she thought that he could well support himself by his own force and valor; and she began to be more sparing in his cause of the blood and treasure of her subjects.

Some disgusts which she had received from the states, joined to the remonstrances of her frugal minister, Burleigh, made her also inclined to diminish her charges on that side, and she even demanded by her ambassador, Sir Thomas Bodley, to be reimbursed all the money which she had expended in supporting them. The states, besides alleging the conditions of the treaty, by which they were not bound to repay her till the conclusion of a peace, pleaded their present poverty and distress, the great superiority of the Spaniards, and the difficulty in supporting the war; much more in saving money to discharge their encumbrances. {1595.

After much negotiation, a new treaty was formed, by which the states engaged to free the queen immediately from the charge of the English auxiliaries, computed at forty thousand pounds a year; to pay her annually twenty thousand pounds for some years; to assist her with a certain number of ships; and to conclude no peace or treaty without her consent. They also bound themselves, on finishing a peace with Spain, to pay her annually the sum of a hundred thousand pounds for four years; but on this condition, that the payment should be in lieu of all demands, and that they should be supplied, though at their own charge, with a body of four thousand auxiliaries from England. [1]

Camden, .

1596.

The queen still retained in her hands the cautionary towns, which were a great check on the rising power of the states; and she committed the important trust of Flushing to Sir Francis Vere, a brave officer, who had distinguished himself by his valor in the Low Countries. She gave him the preference to Essex, who expected so honorable a command; and though this nobleman was daily rising, both in reputation with the people, and favor with herself, the queen, who was commonly reserved in the advancement of her courtiers, thought proper on this occasion to give him a refusal. Sir Thomas Baskerville was sent over to France at the head of two thousand English, with which Elizabeth, by a new treaty concluded with Henry, engaged to supply that prince. Some stipulations for mutual assistance were formed by the treaty; and all former engagements were renewed.

1597.

This body of English were maintained at the expense of the French king; yet did Henry esteem the supply of considerable advantage, on account of the great reputation acquired by the English, in so many fortunate enterprises undertaken against the common enemy. In the great battle of Tournholt, gained this campaign by Prince Maurice, the English auxiliaries under Sir Francis Vere and Sir Robert Sidney had acquired honor; and the success of that day was universally ascribed to their discipline and valor.

Though Elizabeth, at a considerable expense of blood and treasure, made war against Philip in France and the Low Countries, the most severe blows which she gave him, were by those naval enterprises which either she or her subjects scarcely ever intermitted during one season. In 1594, Richard Hawkins, son of Sir John, the famous navigator, procured the queen’s commission, and sailed with three ships to the South Sea by the Straits of Magellan; but his voyage proved unfortunate, and he himself was taken prisoner on the coast of Chili. James Lancaster was supplied the same year with three ships and a pinnace by the merchants of London, and was more fortunate in his adventure. He took thirty-nine ships of the enemy; and not content with this success, he made an attack on Fernambouc, in Brazil, where he knew great treasures were at that time lodged. As he approached the shore, he saw it lined with great numbers of the enemy; but nowise daunted at this appearance, he placed the stoutest of his men in boats, and ordered them to row with such violence on the landing-place as to split them in pieces. By this bold action he both deprived his men of all resource but in victory, and terrified the enemy, who fled after a short resistance. He returned home with the treasure which he had so bravely acquired. In 1595, Sir Walter Raleigh, who had anew forfeited the queen’s friendship by an intrigue with a maid of honor, and who had been thrown into prison for this misdemeanor, no sooner recovered his liberty, than he was pushed by his active and enterprising genius to attempt some great action. The success of the first Spanish adventurers against Mexico and Peru had begotten an extreme avidity in Europe; and a prepossession universally took place, that in the inland parts of South America, called Guiana, a country as yet undiscovered, there were mines and treasures far exceeding any which Cortes or Pizarro had met with. Raleigh, whose turn of mind was somewhat romantic and extravagant, undertook at his own charge the discovery of this wonderful country. Having taken the small town of St. Joseph, in the Isle of Trinidado, where he found no riches, he left his ship, and sailed up the River Oroonoko in pinnaces, but without meeting any thing to answer his expectations. On his return, he published an account of the country, full of the grossest and most palpable lies that were ever attempted to be imposed on the credulity of mankind. [1]

The same year, Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins undertook a more important expedition against the Spanish settlements in America; and they carried with them six ships of the queen’s and twenty more, which either were fitted out at their own charge, or were furnished them by private adventurers. Sir Thomas Baskerville was appointed commander of the land forces which they carried on board. Their first design was to attempt Porto Rico, where, they knew, a rich carrack was at that time stationed; but as they had not preserved the requisite secrecy, a pinnace, having strayed from the fleet, was taken by the Spaniards, and betrayed the intentions of the English. Preparations were made in that island for their reception; and the English fleet, notwithstanding the brave assault which they made on the enemy, was repulsed with loss. Hawkins soon after died, and Drake pursued his voyage to Nombre di Dios, on the Isthmus of Darien; where, having landed his men, he attempted to pass forward to Panama, with a view of plundering that place, or, if he found such a scheme practicable, of keeping and fortifying it. But he met not with the same facility which had attended his first enterprises in those parts. The Spaniards, taught by experience, had every where fortified the passes, and had stationed troops in the woods, who so infested the English by continual alarms and skirmishes, that they were obliged to return, without being able to effect any thing. Drake himself, from the intemperance of the climate, the fatigues of his journey, and the vexation of his disappointment, was seized with a distemper of which he soon after died. Sir Thomas Baskerville took the command of the fleet, which was in a weak condition; and after having fought a battle near Cuba with a Spanish fleet, of which the event was not decisive, he returned to England. The Spaniards suffered some loss from this enterprise but the English reaped no profit. [2]

* Camden,

* * Monson, p, 167.

The bad success of this enterprise in the Indies made the English rather attempt the Spanish dominions in Europe, where they heard Philip was making great preparations for a new invasion of England. A powerful fleet was equipped at Plymouth, consisting of a hundred and seventy vessels, seventeen of which were capital ships of war, the rest tenders and small vessels: twenty ships were added by the Hollanders. In this fleet there were computed to be embarked six thousand three hundred and sixty soldiers, a thousand volunteers, and six thousand seven hundred and seventy-two seamen besides the Dutch. The land forces were commanded by the earl of Essex; the navy by Lord Effingham, high admiral. Both these commanders had expended great sums of their own in the armament; for such was the spirit of Elizabeth's reign. Lord Thomas Howard, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Vere, Sir George Carew, and Sir Coniers Clifford had commands in this expedition, and were appointed council to the general and admiral. [1]

The fleet set sail on the first of June, 1596; and meeting with a fair wind, bent its course to Cadiz, at which place, by sealed orders delivered to all the captains, the general rendezvous was appointed. They sent before them some armed tenders, which intercepted every ship that could carry intelligence to the enemy; and they themselves were so fortunate, when they came near Cadiz, as to take an Irish vessel, by which they learned that that port was full of merchant ships of great value, and that the Spaniards lived in perfect security without any apprehensions of an enemy. This intelligence much encouraged the English fleet, and gave them the prospect of a fortunate issue to the enterprise.

After a fruitless attempt to land at St. Sebastian's, on the western side of the Island of Cadiz, it was, upon deliberation, resolved by the council of war to attack the ships and galleys in the bay. This attempt was deemed rash; and the admiral himself, who was cautious in his temper, had entertained great scruples with regard to it: but Essex strenuously recommended the enterprise; and when he found the resolution at last taken, he threw his hat into the sea, and gave symptoms of the most extravagant joy. He felt, however, a great mortification, when Effingham informed him, that the queen, anxious for his safety, and dreading the effects of his youthful ardor, had secretly given orders that he should not be permitted to command the van in the attack. [2]

* Camden, .

* * Monson,

That duty was performed by Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Thomas Howard; but Essex no sooner came within reach of the enemy, than he forgot the promise which the admiral had exacted from him, to keep in the midst of the fleet; he broke through and pressed forward into the thickest of the fire. Emulation for glory, avidity of plunder, animosity against the Spaniards, proved incentives to every one; and the enemy was soon obliged to slip anchor, and retreat farther into the bay, where they ran many of their ships aground. Essex then landed his men at the fort of Puntal, and immediately marched to the attack of Cadiz, which the impetuous valor of the English soon carried sword in hand. The generosity of Essex, not inferior to his valor, made him stop the slaughter, and treat his prisoners with the greatest humanity, and even affability and kindness. The English made rich plunder in the city; but missed of a much richer by the resolution which the duke of Medina, the Spanish admiral, took of setting fire to the ships, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy. It was computed, that the loss which the Spaniards sustained in this enterprise amounted to twenty millions of ducats; [1] besides the indignity which that proud and ambitious people suffered from the sacking of one of their chief cities, and destroying in their harbor a fleet of such force and value.

Essex, all on fire for glory, regarded this great success only as a step to future achievements: he insisted on keeping possession of Cadiz; and he undertook, with four hundred men and three months' provisions, to defend the place, till succors should arrive from England; but all the other seamen and soldiers were satisfied with the honor which they had acquired; and were impatient to return home, in order to secure their plunder. Every other proposal of Essex to annoy the enemy met with a like reception; his scheme for intercepting the carracks at the Azores, for assaulting the Groine, for taking St. Andero and St. Sebastian; and the English, finding it so difficult to drag this impatient warrior from the enemy, at last left him on the Spanish coast, attended by very few ships [2] He complained much to the queen of their want of spirit in this enterprise; nor was she pleased, that they had returned without attempting to intercept the Indian fleet; [2] but the great success, in the enterprise on Cadiz, had covered all their miscarriages: and that princess, though she admired the lofty genius of Essex, could not forbear expressing an esteem for the other officers. [3] The admiral was created earl of Nottingham; and his promotion gave great disgust to Essex. [4]

* Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * * Camden, .

* * * * Sidney Papers, vol. ii. .

In the preamble of the patent it was said, that the new dignity was conferred on him on account of his good services in taking Cadiz, and destroying the Spanish ships; a merit which Essex pretended to belong solely to himself: and he offered to maintain this plea by single combat against the earl of Nottingham, or his sons, or any of his kindred.

The achievements in the subsequent year proved not so fortunate; but as the Indian fleet very narrowly escaped the English, Philip had still reason to see the great hazard and disadvantage of that war in which he was engaged, and the superiority which the English, by their naval power and their situation, had acquired over him. The queen, having received intelligence that the Spaniards, though their fleets were so much shattered and destroyed by the expedition to Cadiz, were preparing a squadron at Ferrol and the Groine, and were marching troops thither, with a view of making a descent in Ireland, was resolved to prevent their enterprise, and to destroy the shipping in these harbors. She prepared a large fleet of a hundred and twenty sail, of which seventeen were her own ships, forty-three were smaller vessels, and the rest tenders and victuallers: she embarked on board this fleet five thousand new-levied soldiers, and added a thousand veteran troops, whom Sir Francis Vere brought from the Netherlands. The earl of Essex, commander-in-chief both of the land and sea forces, was at the head of one squadron; Lord Thomas Howard was appointed vice-admiral of another; Sir Walter Raleigh of the third: Lord Mouatjoy commanded the land forces under Essex: Vere was appointed marshal: Sir George Carew lieutenant of the ordnance, and Sir Christopher Blount first colonel. The earls of Rutland and Southampton, the Lords Grey, Cromwell, and Rich, with several other persona of distinction, embarked as volunteers. Essex declared his resolution either to destroy the new armada which threatened England, or to perish in the attempt.

This powerful fleet set sail from Plymouth; but were no sooner out of harbor than they met with a furious storm, which shattered and dispersed them; and before they could be refitted, Essex found that their provisions were so far spent, that it would not be safe to carry so numerous an army along with him. He dismissed, therefore, all the soldiers, except the thousand veterans under Vere; and laying aside all thoughts of attacking Ferrol or the Groine, he confined the object of his expedition to the intercepting of the Indian fleet which had at first been considered only as the second enterprise which he was to attempt.

The Indian fleet in that age, by reason of the imperfection of navigation, had a stated course, as well as season, both in their going out and in their return; and there were certain islands at which, as at fixed stages, they always touched, and where they took in water and provisions. The Azores being one of these places where about this time the fleet was expected, Essex bent his course thither; and he informed Raleigh, that he, on his arrival, intended to attack Fayal, one of these islands. By some accident, the squadrons were separated; and Raleigh, arriving first before Fayal, thought it more prudent, after waiting some time for the general, to begin the attack alone, lest the inhabitants should, by further delay, have leisure to make preparations for their defence. He succeeded in the enterprise; but Essex, jealous of Raleigh, expressed great displeasure at his conduct, and construed it as an intention of robbing the general of the glory which attended that action: he cashiered, therefore, Sidney, Bret, Berry, and others, who had concurred in the attempt: and would have proceeded to inflict the same punishment on Raleigh himself, had not Lord Thomas Howard interposed with his good offices, and persuaded Raleigh, though high-spirited, to make submissions to the general. Essex, who was placable, as well as hasty and passionate, was soon appeased, and both received Raleigh into favor, and restored the other officers to then commands. [1] This incident, however, though the quarrel was seemingly accommodated, laid the first foundation of that violent animosity which afterwards took place between these two gallant commanders.

Essex made next a disposition proper for intercepting the Indian galleons; and Sir William Monson, whose station was the most remote of the fleet, having fallen in with them, made the signals which had been agreed on. That able officer, in his Memoirs, ascribes Essex's failure, when he was so near attaining so mighty an advantage, to his want of experience in seamanship; and the account which he gives of the errors committed by that nobleman, appears very reasonable as well as candid. [2]

* Monson, .

* * Monson, .

The Spanish fleet, finding that the enemy was upon them, made all the sail possible to the Terceras, and got into the safe and well-fortified harbor of Angra, before the English fleet could overtake them. Essex intercepted only three ships; which, however, were so rich, as to repay all the charges of the expedition.

The causes of the miscarriage in this enterprise were much canvassed in England, upon the return of the fleet; and though the courtiers took part differently, as they affected either Essex or Raleigh, the people in general, who bore an extreme regard to the gallantry, spirit, and generosity of ihe former, were inclined to justify every circumstance of his conduct. The queen, who loved the one as much as she esteemed the other, maintained a kind of neutrality, and endeavored to share her favors with an impartial hand between the parties. Sir Robert Cecil, second son of Lord Burleigh, was a courtier of promising hopes, much connected with Raleigh; and she made him secretary of state, preferably to Sir Thomas Bodley, whom Essex recommended for that office. But not to disgust Essex, she promoted him to the dignity of earl marshal of England; an office which had been vacant since the death of the earl of Shrewsbury. Essex might perceive from this conduct, that she never intended to give him the entire ascendant over his rivals, and might thence learn the necessity of moderation and caution. But his temper was too high for submission; his behavior too open and candid to practise the arts of a court; and his free sallies, while they rendered him but more amiable in the eyes of good judges, gave his enemies many advantages against him.

The war with Spain, though successful, having exhausted the queen’s exchequer, she was obliged to assemble a parliament; where Yelverton, a lawyer, was chosen speaker of the house of commons. [1]

* See note HH, at the end of the volume.

Elizabeth took care, by the mouth of Sir Thomas Egerton, lord keeper, to inform this assembly of the necessity of a supply. She said, that the wars formerly waged in Europe had commonly been conducted by the parties without further view than to gain a few towns, or at most a province, from each other; but the object of the present hostilities, on the part of Spain, was no other than utterly to bereave England of her religion, her liberty, and her independence: that these blessings, however, she herself had hitherto been able to preserve, in spite of the devil, the pope, and the Spanish tyrant, and all the mischievous designs of all her enemies; that in this contest she had disbursed a sum triple to all the parliamentary supplies granted her; and, besides expending her ordinary revenues, had been obliged to sell many of the crown lands: and that she could not doubt but her subjects, in a cause where their own honor and interests were so deeply concerned, would willingly contribute to such moderate taxations as should be found necessary for the common defence. [1] The parliament granted her three subsidies and six fifteenths; the same supply which had been given four years before, but which had then appeared so unusual, that they had voted it should never afterwards be regarded as a precedent.

The commons, this session, ventured to engage in two controversies about forms with the house of peers; a prelude to those encroachments which, as they assumed more courage, they afterwards made upon the prerogatives of the crown. They complained, that the lords failed in civility to them, by receiving their messages sitting with their hats on; and that the keeper returned an answer in the same negligent posture: but the upper house proved, to their full satisfaction, that they were not entitled, by custom and the usage of parliament, to any more respect. [2] Some amendments had been made by the lords to a bill sent up by the commons; and these amendments were written on parchment, and returned with the bill to the commons. The lower house took umbrage at the novelty: they pretended that these amendments ought to have been written on paper, not on parchment; and they complained of this innovation to the peers. The peers replied that they expected not such a frivolous objection from the gravity of the house; and that it was not material, whether the amendments were written on parchment or on paper, nor whether the paper were white, black, or brown. The commons were offended at this reply, which seemed to contain a mockery of them; and they complained of it, though without obtaining any satisfaction. [3]

An application was made, by way of petition, to the queen from the lower house, against monopolies; an abuse which had risen to an enormous height; and they received a gracious though a general answer; for which they returned their thankful acknowledgments. [4]

* D'Ewes, , 527. Townsend, .

* * D'Ewes, , 540, 580, 585. Townsend, , 94, 95.

* * * D'Ewes. p, 576, 577.

* * * * D'Ewes, p, 570, 573.

But not to give them too much encouragement in such applications, she told them, in the speech which she delivered at their dissolution, "that with regard to these patents, she hoped that her dutiful and loving subjects would not take away her prerogative, which is the chief flower in her garden, and the principal and head pearl in her crown and diadem; but that they would rather leave these matters to her disposal." [1] The commons also took notice, this session, of some transactions in the court of high commission; but not till they had previously obtained permission from her majesty to that purpose. [2]

* D'Ewes, .

* * D'Ewes, , 558.

1598.

Elizabeth had reason to foresee, that parliamentary supplies would now become more necessary to her than ever; and that the chief burden of the war with Spain would thenceforth lie upon England. Henry had received an overture for peace with Philip; but before he would proceed to a negotiation, he gave intelligence of it to his allies, the queen and the states; that, if possible, a general pacification might be made by common agreement. These two powers sent ambassadors to France, in order to remonstrate against peace; the queen, Sir Robert Cecil and Henry Herbert; the states, Justin Nassau and John Barnevelt. Henry said to these ministers, that his early education had been amidst war and danger, and he had passed the whole course of his life either in arms or in military preparations: that after the proofs which he had given of his alacrity in the field, no one could doubt but he would willingly, for his part, have continued in a course of life to which he was now habituated, till the common enemy were reduced to such a condition as no longer to give umbrage either to him or to his allies: that no private interests of his own, not even those of his people, nothing but the most invincible necessity, could ever induce him to think of a separate peace with Philip, or make him embrace measures not entirely conformable to the wishes of all his confederates: that his kingdom, torn with the convulsions and civil wars of near half a century, required some interval of repose, ere it could reach a condition in which it might sustain itself, much more support its allies: that after the minds of his subjects were composed to tranquillity and accustomed to obedience, after his finances were brought into order, and after agriculture and the arts were restored, France, instead of being a burden, as at present, to her confederates, would be able to lend them effectual succor, and amply to repay them all the assistance which she had received during her calamities: and that, if the ambition of Spain would not at present grant them such terms as they should think reasonable, he hoped that, in a little time, he should attain such a situation as would enable him to mediate more effectually, and with more decisive authority, in their behalf.

The ambassadors were sensible that these reasons were no feigned; and they therefore remonstrated with the less vehemence against the measures which, they saw, Henry was determined to pursue. The states knew that that monarch was interested never to permit their final ruin; and having received private assurances that he would still, notwithstanding the peace, give them assistance both of men and money, they were well pleased to remain on terms of amity with him. His greatest concern was to give satisfaction to Elizabeth for this breach of treaty. He had a cordial esteem for that princess, a sympathy of manners, and a gratitude for the extraordinary favors which he had received from her during his greatest difficulties: and he used every expedient to apologize and atone for that measure which necessity extorted from him. But as Spain refused to treat with the Dutch as a free state, and

Elizabeth would not negotiate without her ally, Henry found himself obliged to conclude at Vervins a separate peace, by which he recovered possession of all the places seized by Spain during the course of the civil wars, and procured to himself leisure to pursue the domestic settlement of his kingdom. His capacity for the arts of peace was not inferior to his military talents; and in a little time, by his frugality, order, and wise government, he raised France from the desolation and misery in which she was involved, to a more flourishing condition than she had ever before enjoyed.

The queen knew that she could also, whenever she pleased, finish the war on equitable terms; and that Philip, having no claims upon her, would be glad to free himself from an enemy who had foiled him in every contest, and who still had it so much in her power to make him feel the weight of her arms. Some of her wisest counsellors, particularly the treasurer, advised her to embrace pacific measures; and set before her the advantages of tranquillity, security, and frugality, as more considerable than any success which could attend the greatest victories. But this high-spirited princess, though at first averse to war, seemed now to have attained such an ascendant over the enemy, that she was unwilling to stop the course of her prosperous fortune. She considered, that her situation and her past victories had given her entire security against any dangerous invasion; and the war must thenceforth be conducted by sudden enterprises and naval expeditions, in which she possessed an undoubted superiority: that the weak condition of Philip in the Indies opened to her the view of the most durable advantages; and the yearly return of his treasure by sea afforded a continual prospect of important, though more temporary successes: that after his peace with France, if she also should consent to an accommodation, he would be able to turn his whole force against the revolted provinces of the Netherlands, which, though they had surprisingly increased their power by commerce and good government, were still unable, if not supported by their confederates, to maintain war against so potent a monarch: and that as her defence of that commonwealth was the original ground of the quarrel, it was unsafe, as well as dishonorable, to abandon its cause till she had placed it in a state of greater security.

These reasons were frequently inculcated on her by the earl of Essex, whose passion for glory, as well as his military talents, made him earnestly desire the continuance of war, from which he expected to reap so much advantage and distinction. The rivalship between this nobleman and Lord Burleigh made each of them insist the more strenuously on his own counsel; but as Essex's person was agreeable to the queen, as well as his advice conformable to her inclinations, the favorite seemed daily to acquire an ascendant over the minister. Had he beer endowed with caution and self-command equal to his shining qualities, he would have so rivetted himself in the queen's confidence, that none of his enemies had ever been able to impeach his credit: but his lofty spirit could ill submit to that implicit deference which her temper required, and which she had ever been accustomed to receive from all her subjects. Being once engaged in a dispute with her about the choice of a governor for Ireland, he was so heated in the argument, that he entirely forgot the rules both of duty and civility, and turned his back upon her in a contemptuous manner. Her anger, naturally prompt and violent, rose at this provocation; and she instantly gave him a box on the ear, adding a passionate expression suited to his impertinence. Instead of recollecting himself, and making the submissions due to her sex and station, he clapped his hand to his sword, and swore, that he would not bear such usage, were it from Henry VIII. himself, and he immediately withdrew from court. Egerton, the chancellor, who loved Essex, exhorted him to repair his indiscretion by proper acknowledgments; and entreated him not to give that triumph to his enemies, that affliction to his friends, which must ensue from his supporting a contest with his sovereign, and deserting the service of his country: but Essex was deeply stung with the dishonor which he had received; and seemed to think, that an insult which might be pardoned in a woman was become a mortal affront when it came from his sovereign. "If the vilest of all indignities," said he, "is done me, does religion enforce me to sue for pardon? Doth God require it? Is it impiety not to do it? Why? Cannot princes err? Cannot subjects receive wrong? Is an earthly power infinite? Pardon me, my lord; I can never subscribe to these principles. Let Solomon's fool laugh when he is stricken; let those that mean to make their profit of princes, show no sense of princes' injuries: let them acknowledge an infinite absoluteness on earth, that do not believe an absolute infiniteness in heaven:" (alluding, probably, to the character and conduct of Sir Walter Raleigh, who lay under the reproach of impiety.) "As for me," continued he, "I have received wrong, I feel it: my cause is good, I know it; and whatsoever happens, all the powers on earth can never exert more strength and constancy in oppressing, than I can show in suffering every thing that can or shall be imposed upon me. Your lordship, in the beginning of your letter, makes me a player, and yourself a looker on: and me a player of my own game, so you may see more than I: but give me leave to tell you, that since you do but see, and I do suffer, I must of necessity feel more than you." [1]

* See note II, at the end of the volume.

This spirited letter was shown by Essex to his friends, and they were so imprudent as to disperse copies of it; yet, notwithstanding this additional provocation, the queen's partiality was so prevalent, that she reinstated him in his former favor; and her kindness to him appeared rather to have acquired new force from this short interval of anger and resentment, The death of Burleigh, his antagonist, which happened about the same time, seemed to insure him constant possession of the queen's confidence; and nothing indeed but his own indiscretion could thenceforth have shaken his well-established credit. Lord Burleigh died in an advanced age; and, by a rare fortune was equally regretted by his sovereign and the people. He rad risen gradually from small beginnings by the mere force of merit; and though his authority was never entirely absolute or uncontrolled with the queen, he was still, during the course of near forty years, regarded as her principal minister. None of her other inclinations or affections could ever overcome her confidence in so useful a counsellor; and as he had had the generosity or good sense to pay assiduous court to her during her sister's reign, when it was dangerous to appear her friend, she thought herself bound in gratitude, when she mounted the throne, to persevere in her attachments to him. He seems not to have possessed any shining talents of address, eloquence, or imagination; and was chiefly distinguished by solidity of understanding, probity of manners, and indefatigable application in business; virtues which, if they do not always enable a man to attain high stations, do certainly qualify him best for filling them. Of all the queen's ministers he alone left a considerable fortune to his posterity; a fortune not acquired by rapine or oppression, but gained by the regular profits of his offices, and preserved by frugality.

The last act of this able minister was the concluding of a new treaty with the Dutch; who, after being in some measure deserted by the king of France, were glad to preserve the queen's alliance, by submitting to any terms which she pleased to require of them. The debt which they owed her was now settled at eight hundred thousand pounds: of this sum they agreed to pay, during the war, thirty thousand pounds a year; and these payments were to continue till four hundred thousand pounds of the debt should be extinguished. They engaged also, during the time that England should continue the war with Spain, to pay the garrisons of the cautionary towns. They stipulated, that if Spain should invade England, or the Isle of Wight, or Jersey, or Scilly, they should assist her with a body of five thousand foot and five hundred horse; and that in case she undertook any naval armament against Spain, they should join an equal number of ships to hers. [1] By this treaty, the queen was eased of an annual charge of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds.

* Rymer, vol. xvi. .

Soon after the death of Burleigh, the queen, who regretted extremely the loss of so wise and faithful a minister, was informed of the death of her capital enemy, Philip II., who, after languishing under many infirmities, expired in an advanced age at Madrid. This haughty prince, desirous of an accommodation with his revolted subjects in the Netherlands, but disdaining to make in his own name the concessions necessary for that purpose, had transferred to his daughter, married to Archduke Albert, the title to the Low Country provinces; but as it was not expected that this princess could have posterity, and as the reversion, on failure of her issue, was still reserved to the crown of Spain, the states considered this deed only as the change of a name, and they persisted with equal obstinacy in their resistance to the Spanish arms. The other powers also of Europe made no distinction between the courts of Brussels and Madrid; and the secret opposition of France, as well as the avowed efforts of England, continued to operate against the progress of Albert, as it had done against that of Philip.

CHAPTER XLIV.

ELIZABETH.

1599.

Though the dominion of the English over Ireland had been seemingly established above four centuries, it may safely be affirmed, that their authority had hitherto been little more than nominal. The Irish princes and nobles, divided among themselves, readily paid the exterior marks of obeisance to a power which they were not able to resist; but, as no durable force was ever kept on foot to retain them in their duty, they relapsed still into their former state of independence. Too weak to introduce order and obedience among the rude inhabitants, the English authority was yet sufficient to check the growth of any enterprising genius among the natives: and though it could bestow no true form of civil government, it was able to prevent the rise of any such form from the internal combination or policy of the Irish. [1]

* Sir J. Davies, , 6, 7, etc.

Most of the English institutions, likewise, by which that island was governed, were to the last degree absurd, and such as no state before had ever thought of, for preserving dominion over its conquered provinces.

The English nation, all on fire for the project of subduing France, — a project whose success was the most improbable, and would to them have proved the most pernicious, — neglected all other enterprises, to which their situation so strongly invited them, and which, in time, would have brought them an accession of riches, grandeur, and security. The small army which they maintained in Ireland, they never supplied regularly with pay; and as no money could be levied on the island, which possessed none, they gave their soldiers the privilege of free quarter upon the natives. Rapine and insolence inflamed the hatred which prevailed between the conquerors and the conquered: want of security among the Irish, introducing despair, nourished still more the sloth natural to that uncultivated people.

But the English carried further their ill-judged tyranny, instead of inviting the Irish to adopt the more civilized customs of their conquerors, they even refused, though earnestly solicited, to communicate to them the privilege of their laws and every where marked them out as aliens and as enemies. Thrown out of the protection of justice, the natives could find no security but in force; and flying the neighborhood of cities, which they could not approach with safety, they sheltered themselves in their marshes and forests from the insolence of their inhuman masters. Being treated like wild beasts, they became such; and joining the ardor of revenge to their yet untamed barbarity, they grew every day more intractable and more dangerous. [1]

As the English princes deemed the conquest of the dispersed Irish to be more the object of time and patience than the source of military glory, they willingly delegated that office to private adventurers; who, enlisting soldiers at their own charge, reduced provinces of that island, which they converted to their own profit. Separate jurisdictions and principalities were established by these lordly conquerors: the power of peace and war was assumed: military law was exercised over the Irish whom they subdued, and, by degrees, over the English by whose assistance they conquered; and, after their authority had once taken root, deeming the English institutions less favorable to barbarous dominion, they degenerated into mere Irish, and abandoned the garb, language, manners, and laws of their mother country. [2]

By all this imprudent conduct of England, the natives of its dependent state remained still in that abject condition into which the northern and western parts of Europe were sunk, before they received civility and slavery from the refined policy and irresistible bravery of Rome. Even at the end of the sixteenth century, when every Christian nation was cultivating with ardor every civil art of life, that island, lying in a temperate climate, enjoying a fertile soil, accessible in its situation, possessed of innumerable harbors, was still, notwithstanding these advantages, inhabited by a people whose customs and manners approached nearer those of savages than of barbarians. [3]

* Sir J. Davies, , 103, etc.

* * Sir J. Davies, , 134, etc

* * * See Spenser’s Account of Ireland, throughout.

As the rudeness and ignorance of the Irish were extreme they were sunk below the reach of that curiosity and love of novelty by which every other people in Europe had been seized at the beginning of that century, and which had engaged them in innovations and religious disputes, with which they were still so violently agitated. The ancient superstition, the practices and observances of their fathers, mingled and polluted with many wild opinions, still maintained an unshaken empire over them; and the example alone of the English was sufficient to render the reformation odious to the prejudiced and discontented Irish. The old opposition of manners, laws, and interest was now inflamed by religious antipathy; and the subduing and civilizing of that country seemed to become every day more difficult and more impracticable.

The animosity against the English was carried so far by the Irish, that, in an insurrection raised by two sons of the earl of Clanricarde, they put to the sword all the inhabitants of the town of Athenry, though Irish, because they began to conform themselves to English customs, and had embraced a more civilized form of life than had been practised by their ancestors. [1]

The usual revenue of Ireland amounted only to six thousand pounds a year: [2] the queen, though with much repining, [3] commonly added twenty thousand more, which she remitted from England; and with this small revenue a body of a thousand men was supported, which, on extraordinary emergencies, was augmented to two thousand. [4] No wonder that a force so disproportioned to the object, instead of subduing a mutinous kingdom, served rather to provoke the natives, and to excite those frequent insurrections, which still further inflamed the animosity between the two nations, and increased the disorders to which the Irish were naturally subject.

In 1560, Shan O’Neale, or the great O’Neale, as the Irish called him, because head of that potent clan, raised a rebellion in Ulster; but after some skirmishes, he was received into favor, upon his submission, and his promise of a more dutiful behavior for the future.

* Camden, .

* * Memoirs of the Sidneys, vol. i. .

* * * Cox, . Sidney, vol. i. , 200.

* * * * Camden, . Sidney, vol. i. , 109, 183, 184.

v Camden, , 391. 305

This impunity tempted him to undertake a new insurrection in 1567; but being pushed by Sir Henry Sidney, lord deputy, he retreated into Clandeboy, and rather than submit to the English, he put himself into the hands of some Scottish islanders, who commonly infested those parts by their incursions. The Scots, who retained a quarrel against him on account of former injuries, violated the laws of hospitality, and murdered him at a festival to which they had invited him. He was a man equally noted for his pride, his violence, his debaucheries, and his hatred of the English nation. He is said to have put some of his followers to death because they endeavored to introduce the use of bread after the English fashion. [1] Though so violent an enemy to luxury, he was extremely addicted to riot; and was accustomed, after his intemperance had thrown him into a fever, to plunge his body into mire, that he might allay the flame which he had raised by former excesses. [2] Such was the life led by this haughty barbarian; who scorned the title of the earl of Tyrone, which Elizabeth intended to have restored to him, and who assumed the rank and appellation of king of Ulster. He used also to say, that though the queen was his sovereign lady, he never made peace with her but at her seeking. [3]

Sir Henry Sidney was one of the wisest and most active governors that Ireland had enjoyed for several reigns; [4] and he possessed his authority eleven years; during which he struggled with many difficulties, and made some progress in repressing those disorders which had become inveterate among the people. The earl of Desmond, in 1569, gave him disturbance, from the hereditary animosity which prevailed between that nobleman and the earl of Ormond, descended from the only family, established in Ireland, that had steadily maintained its loyalty to the English crown. The earl of Thomond, in 1570, attempted a rebellion in Connaught, but was obliged to fly into France before his designs were ripe for execution. Stukely, another fugitive, found such credit with the pope, Gregory XIII., that he flattered that pontiff with the prospect of making his nephew, Buon Compagno, king of Ireland; and, as if this project had already taken effect, he accepted the title of marquis of Leinster from the new sovereign.[v*] He passed next into Spain; and after having received much encouragement and great rewards from Philip, who intended to employ him as an instrument in disturbing Elizabeth, he was found to possess too little interest for executing those high promises which he had made to that monarch.

* Camden, .

* * Camden, . Cox, .

* * * Camden, .

* * * * Cox, .

v Camden, .

v* Camden, . Cox,

He retired into Portugal; and following the fortunes of Don Sebastian, he perished with that gallant prince in his bold but unfortunate expedition against the Moors.

Lord Gray, after some interval, succeeded to the government of Ireland; and in 1579 suppressed a new rebellion of the earl of Desmond, though supported by a body of Spaniards and Italians. The rebellion of the Bourks followed a few years after; occasioned by the strict and equitable administration of Sir Richard Bingham, governor of Connaught, who endeavored to repress the tyranny of the chieftains over their vassals. [1] The queen, finding Ireland so burdensome to her, tried several expediants for reducing it to a state of greater order and submission. She encouraged the earl of Essex, father to that nobleman who was afterwards her favorite, to attempt the subduing and planting of Clandeboy, Ferny, and other territories, part of some late forfeitures; but that enterprise proved unfortunate; and Essex died of a distemper, occasioned, as is supposed, by the vexation which he had conceived from his disappointments. A university was founded in Dublin with a view of introducing arts and learning into that kingdom, and civilizing the uncultivated manners of the inhabitants. [2] But the most unhappy expedient employed in the government of Ireland, was that made use of in 1585 by Sir John Perrot, at that time lord deputy; he put arms into the hands of the Irish inhabitants of Ulster, in order to enable them, without the assistance of the government, to repress the incursions of the Scottish islanders, by which these parts were much infested. [3] At the same time, the invitations of Philip, joined to their zeal for the Catholic religion, engaged many of the gentry to serve in the Low Country wars, and thus Ireland, being provided with officers and soldiers, with discipline and arms, became formidable to the English, and was thenceforth able to maintain a more regular war against her ancient masters.

* Stowe, .

* * Camden, .

* * * Nanton’s Fragmenta Regalia, .

Hugh O’Neale, nephew to Shan O’Neale, had been raised by the queen to the dignity of earl of Tyrone; but having murdered his cousin, son of that rebel, and being acknowledged head of his clan, he preferred the pride of barbarous license and dominion to the pleasures of opulence and tranquillity, and he fomented all those disorders by which he hoped to weaken or overturn the English government. He was noted for the vices of perfidy and cruelty, so common among uncultivated nations; and was also eminent for courage, a virtue which their disorderly course of life requires, and which, notwithstanding, being less supported by the principle of honor, is commonly more precarious among them than among a civilized people. Tyrone actuated by this spirit, secretly fomented the discontents of the Maguires, O’Donnels, O’Rourks, Macmahons, and other rebels; yet, trusting to the influence of his deceitful oaths and professions, he put himself into the hands of Sir William Russel, who, in the year 1594, was sent over deputy to Ireland. Contrary to the advice and protestation of Sir Henry Bagnal, marshal of the army, he was dismissed; and returning to his own country, he embraced the resolution of raising an open rebellion, and of relying no longer on the lenity or inexperience of the English government. He entered into a correspondence with Spain; he procured thence a supply of arms and ammunition; and having united all the Irish chieftains in a dependence upon himself, he began to be regarded as a formidable enemy.

The native Irish were so poor, that their country afforded few other commodities than cattle and oatmeal, which were easily concealed or driven away on the approach of the enemy; and as Elizabeth was averse to the expense requisite for supporting her armies, the English found much difficulty in pushing their advantages, and in pursuing the rebels into the bogs, woods, and other fastnesses to which they retreated. These motives rendered Sir John Norris, who commanded the English army, the more willing to hearken to any proposals of truce or accommodation made him by Tyrone; and after the war was spun out by these artifices for some years, that gallant Englishman, finding that he had been deceived by treacherous promises, and that he had performed nothing worthy of his ancient reputation, was seized with a languishing distemper, and died of vexation and discontent. Sir Henry Bagnal, who succeeded him in the command, was still more unfortunate. As he advanced to relieve the fort of Black Water, besieged by the rebels, he was surrounded in disadvantageous ground: his soldiers, discouraged by part of their powders accidentally taking fire, were put to flight; and, though the pursuit was stopped by Montacute, who commanded the English horse, fifteen hundred men, together with the general himself, were left dead upon the spot. This victory, so unusual to the Irish, roused their courage, supplied them with arms and ammunition, and raised the reputation of Tyrone, who assumed the character of the deliverer of his country, and patron of Irish liberty. [1]

The English council were now sensible, that the rebellion of Ireland was come to a dangerous head, and that the former temporizing arts, of granting truces and pacifications to the rebels, and of allowing them to purchase pardons by resigning part of the plunder acquired during their insurrection, served only to encourage the spirit of mutiny and disorder among them. It was therefore resolved to push the war by more vigorous measures; and the queen cast her eye on Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, as a man, who, though hitherto less accustomed to arms than to books and literature, was endowed, she thought, with talents equal to the undertaking. But the young earl of Essex, ambitious of fame, and desirous of obtaining this government for himself, opposed the choice of Mountjoy; and represented the necessity of appointing for that important employment, some person more experienced in war than this nobleman, more practised in business, and of higher quality and reputation. By this description, he was understood to mean himself; [2] and no sooner was his desire known, than his enemies, even more zealously than his friends, conspired to gratify his wishes. Many of his friends thought, that he never ought to consent, except for a short time, to accept of any employment which must remove him from court, and prevent him from cultivating that personal inclination which the queen so visibly bore him. [3]

His enemies hoped, that if by his absence she had once leisure to forget the charms of his person and conversation, his impatient and lofty demeanor would soon disgust a princess who usually exacted such profound submission and implicit obedience from all her servants. But Essex was incapable of entering into such cautious views; and even Elizabeth, who was extremely desirous of subduing the Irish rebels, and who was much prepossessed in favor of Essex's genius, readily agreed to appoint him governor of Ireland, by the title of lord lieutenant. The more to encourage him in his undertaking, she granted him by his patent more extensive authority had ever before been conferred on any lieutenant; the power of carrying on or finishing the war as he pleased, of pardoning the rebels, and of filling all the most considerable employments of the kingdom. [1] And to insure him of success, she levied a numerous army of sixteen thousand foot and thirteen hundred horse, which she afterwards augmented to twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse; a force which, it was apprehended, would be able in one campaign to overwhelm the rebels, and make an entire conquest of Ireland. Nor did Essex's enemies, the earl of Nottingham, Sir Robert Cecil, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Lord Cobham, throw any obstacles in the way of these preparations; but hoped that the higher the queen's expectations of success were raised, the more difficult it would be for the event to correspond to them. In a like view, they rather seconded than opposed those exalted encomiums, which Essex's numerous and sanguine friends dispersed, of his high genius, of his elegant

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* Cox, .

* * Bacon, vol. iv. .

* * * Cabala, .

endowments, his heroic courage, his unbounded generosity, and his noble birth; nor were they displeased to observe that passionate fondness which the people every where expressed for this nobleman. These artful politicians had studied his character; and finding that his open and undaunted spirit, if taught temper and reserve from opposition, must become invincible, they resolved rather to give full breath to those sails which were already too much expanded and to push him upon dangers of which he seemed to make such small account. [2] And the better to make advantage of his indiscretions, spies were set upon all his actions, and even expressions; and his vehement spirit, which, while he was in the midst of the court and environed by his rivals, was unacquainted with disguise, could not fail, after he thought himself surrounded by none but friends, to give a pretence for malignant suspicions and constructions.

* Rymer, tom. xvi. .

* * Camden. Osborne, .

Essex left London in the month of March, attended with the acclamations of the populace; and, what did him more honor, accompanied by a numerous train of nobility and gentry, who, from affection to his person, had attached themselves to his fortunes, and sought fame and military experience under so renowned a commander. The first act of authority which he exercised after his arrival in Ireland, was an indiscretion, but of the generous kind, and in both these respects suitable to his character. He appointed his intimate friend the earl of Southampton, general of the horse; a nobleman who had incurred the queen’s displeasure by secretly marrying without her consent, and whom she had therefore enjoined Essex not to employ in any command under him. She no sooner heard of this instance of disobedience, than she reprimanded him, and ordered him to recall his commission to Southampton. But Essex, who had imagined that some reasons which he opposed to her first injunctions had satisfied her, had the imprudence to remonstrate against these second orders; [1] and it was not till she reiterated her commands that he could be prevailed on to displace his friend.

Essex, on his landing at Dublin, deliberated with the Irish council concerning the proper methods of carrying on the war against the rebels;

and here he was guilty of a capital error, which was the ruin of his enterprise. He had always, while in England, blamed the conduct of former commanders, who artfully protracted the war, who harassed their troops in small enterprises, and who, by agreeing to truces and temporary pacifications with the rebels, had given them leisure to recruit their broken forces. [2] In conformity to these views, he had ever insisted upon leading his forces immediately into Ulster against Tyrone, the chief enemy; and his instructions had been drawn agreeably to these his declared resolutions. But the Irish counsellors persuaded him that the season was too early for the enterprise, and that as the morasses, in which the northern Irish usually sheltered themselves, would not as yet be passable to the English forces, it would be better to employ the present time in an expedition into Munster. Their secret reason for this advice was, that many of them possessed estates in that province, and were desirous to have the enemy dislodged from their neighborhood; [3] but the same selfish spirit which had induced them to give this counsel, made them soon after disown it, when they found the bad consequences with which it was attended. [4]

* Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii , 451.

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. . Bacon, vol. iv. 512.

* * * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * * * Winwood, vol. i. .

Essex obliged all the rebels of Munster either to submit or to fly into the neighboring provinces: but as the Irish, from the greatness of the queen’s preparations, had concluded that she intended to reduce them to total subjection, or even utterly to exterminate them, they considered their defence as a common cause; and the English forces were no sooner withdrawn, than the inhabitants of Munster relapsed into rebellion, and renewed their confederacy with their other countrymen. The army, meanwhile, by the fatigue of long and tedious marches, and by the influence of the climate, was become sickly; and on its return to Dublin, about the middle of July, was surprisingly diminished in number. The courage of the soldiers was even much abated: for though they had prevailed in some lesser enterprises against Lord Cahir and others, yet had they sometimes met with more stout resistance than they expected from the Irish, whom they were wont to despise; and as they were raw troops and unexperienced, a considerable body of them had been put to flight at the Glins by an inferior number of the enemy. Essex was so enraged at this misbehavior, that he cashiered all the officers, and decimated the private men. [1] But this act of seventy, though necessary, had intimidated the soldiers, and increased their aversion to the service.

The queen was extremely disgusted, when she heard that so considerable a part of the season was consumed in these frivolous enterprises; and was still more surprised, that Essex persevered in the same practice which he had so much condemned in others, and which he knew to be so much contrary to her purpose and intention. That nobleman, in order to give his troops leisure to recruit from their sickness and fatigue, left the main army in quarters, and marched with a small body of fifteen hundred men into the county of Ophelie against the O’Connors and O’Mores, whom he forced to a submission: but, on his return to Dublin, he found the army so much diminished, that he wrote to the English council an account of its condition, and informed them, that if he did not immediately receive a reënforcement of two thousand men, it would be impossible for him this season to attempt any thing against Tyrone. That there might be no pretence for further inactivity, the queen immediately sent over the number demanded; [2] and Essex began at last to assemble his forces for the expedition into Ulster.

* Cox, .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. . Cox, .

The army was so averse to this enterprise, and so terrified with the reputation of Tyrone, that many of them counterfeited sickness, many of them deserted; [1] and Essex found, that after leaving the necessary garrisons, he could scarcely lead four thousand men against the rebels. He marched, however, with this small army; but was soon sensible, that in so advanced a season, it would be impossible for him to effect any thing against an enemy who, though superior in number, was determined to avoid every decisive action. He hearkened, therefore, to a message sent him by

Tyrone, who desired a conference; and a place near the two camps was appointed for that purpose. The generals met without any of their attendants; and a river ran between them, into which Tyrone entered to the depth of his saddle; but Essex stood on the opposite bank. After half an hour's conference, where Tyrone behaved with great submission to the lord lieutenant, a cessation of arms was concluded to the first of May, renewable from six weeks to six weeks; but which might be broken off by either party upon a fortnight's warning. [2] Essex also received from Tyrone proposals for a peace, in which that rebel had inserted many unreasonable and exorbitant conditions: and there appeared afterwards some reason to suspect that he had here commenced a very unjustifiable correspondence with the enemy. [3]

* Sydney's Letters, vol. ii. , 113.

* * Sydney's Letters, vol. ii. .

* * * Winwood, vol. i. . State Trials. Bacon, vol. iv. , 585, 537.

So unexpected an issue of an enterprise, the greatest and most expensive that Elizabeth had ever undertaken, provoked her extremely against Essex; and this disgust was much augmented by other circumstances of that nobleman's conduct. He wrote many letters to the queen and council, full of peevish and impatient expressions; complaining of his enemies, lamenting that their calumnies should be believed against him, and discovering symptoms of a mind equally haughty and discontented. She took care to inform him of her dissatisfaction: but commanded him to remain in Ireland till further orders.

Essex heard at once of Elizabeth's anger, and of the promotion of his enemy, Sir Robert Cecil, to the office of master of the wards, an office to which he himself aspired: and dreading that, if he remained any longer absent, the queen would be totally alienated from him, he hastily embraced a resolution which, he knew, had once succeeded with the earl of Leicester, the former favorite of Elizabeth. Leicester, being informed, while in the Low Countries, that his mistress was extremely displeased with his conduct, disobeyed her orders by coming over to England; and having pacified her by his presence, by his apologies, and by his flattery and insinuation, disappointed all the expectations of his enemies. [1] Essex, therefore, weighing more the similarity of circumstances than the difference of character between himself and Leicester, immediately set out for England; and making speedy journeys, he arrived at court before any one was in the least apprised of his intentions. [2] Though besmeared with dirt and sweat, he hastened upstairs to the presence chamber, thence to the privy chamber; nor stopped till he was in the queen's bed-chamber, who was newly risen, and was sitting with her hair about her face. He threw himself on his knees, kissed her hand, and had some private conference with her; where he was so graciously received, that on his departure he was heard to express great satisfaction, and to thank God that, though he had suffered much trouble and many storms abroad, he found a sweet calm at home. [3]

* Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * Winwood, vol. i. .

* * * Sidney's Letters, vol. ii. .

But this placability of Elizabeth was merely the result of her surprise, and of the momentary satisfaction which she felt on the sudden and unexpected appearance of her favorite: after she had leisure for recollection, all his faults recurred to her; and she thought it necessary, by some severe discipline to subdue that haughty, imperious spirit, who, presuming on her partiality, had pretended to domineer in her councils, to engross all her favor, and to act, in the most important affairs, without regard to her orders and instructions. When Essex waited on her in the afternoon, he found her extremely altered in her carriage towards him: she ordered him to be confined to his chamber; to be twice examined by the council; and though his answers were calm and submissive, she committed him to the custody of Lord Keeper Egerton, and held him sequestered from all company, even from that of his countess, nor was so much as the intercourse of letters permitted between them. Essex dropped many expressions of humiliation and sorrow, none of resentment: he professed an entire submission to the queen's will; declared his intention of retiring into the country, and of leading thenceforth a private life remote from courts and business: but though he affected to be so entirely cured of his aspiring ambition, the vexation of this disappointment, and of the triumph gained by his enemies, preyed upon his haughty spirit, and he fell into a distemper which seemed to put his life in danger.

The queen had always declared to all the world, and even to the earl himself, that the purpose of her severity was to correct, not to ruin him; [1] and when she heard of his sickness, she was not a little alarmed with his situation. She ordered eight physicians of the best reputation and experience to consult of his case; and being informed that the issue was much to be apprehended, she sent Dr. James to him with some broth, and desired that physician to deliver him a message, which she probably deemed of still greater virtue, that if she thought such a step consistent with her honor, she would herself pay him a visit. The bystanders, who carefully observed her countenance, remarked, that in pronouncing these words her eyes were suffused with tears. [2]

When these symptoms of the queen's returning affection towards Essex were known, they gave a sensible alarm to the faction which had declared their opposition to him. Sir Walter Raleigh in particular, the most violent as well as the most ambitious of his enemies, was so affected with the appearance of this sudden revolution, that he was seized with sickness in his turn; and the queen was obliged to apply the same salve to his wound, and to send him a favorable message, expressing her desire of his recovery. [3]

1600.

The medicine which the queen administered to these aspiring rivals was successful with both; and Essex, being now allowed the company of his countess, and having entertained more promising hopes of his future fortunes, was so much restored in his health as to be thought past danger. A belief was instilled into Elizabeth, that his distemper had been entirely counterfeit, in order to move her compassion; [4] and she relapsed into her former rigor against him. He wrote her a letter, and sent her a rich present on new-year's day, as was usual with the courtiers at that time: she read the letter but rejected the present. After some interval, however, of severity, she allowed him to retire to his own house; and though he remained still under custody, and was sequestered from all company, he was so grateful for this mark of lenity, that he sent her a letter of thanks on the occasion.

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* Birch's Memoirs, , 445. Sidney's Letters, vol. ii. .

* * Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. .

* * * Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. .

* * * * Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii.

v Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. , 156.

“This further degree of goodness,” said he, “doth sound in my ears, as if your majesty spake these words: ‘Die not, Essex; for though I punish thine offence, and humble thee for thy good yet will I one day be served again by thee.’ My prostrate soul makes this answer: ‘I hope for that blessed day.’ And in expectation of it, all my afflictions of body and mind are humbly, patiently, and cheerfully borne by me.” [1] The countess of Essex, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, possessed, as well as her husband, a refined taste in literature; and the chief consolation which Essex enjoyed, during this period of anxiety and expectation, consisted in her company, and in reading with her those instructive and entertaining authors, which, even during the time of his greatest prosperity, he had never entirely neglected.

There were several incidents which kept alive the queen’s anger against Essex. Every account which she received from Ireland, convinced her more and more of his misconduct in that government, and of the insignificant purposes to which he had employed so much force and treasure. Tyrone, so far from being quelled, had thought proper, in less than three months, to break the truce, and joining with O’Donnel and other rebels, had overrun almost the whole kingdom. He boasted that he was certain of receiving a supply of men, money, and arms from Spain: he pretended to be champion of the Catholic religion: and he openly exulted in the present of a phoenix plume, which the pope, Clement VIII., in order to encourage him in the prosecution of so good a cause, had consecrated, and had conferred upon him. [2]

* Birch’s Memoirs, .

* * Camden

The queen, that she might check his progress, returned to her former intention of appointing Mountjoy lord deputy; and though that nobleman, who was an intimate friend of Essex, and desired his return to the government of Ireland, did at first very earnestly excuse himself on account of his bad state of health, she obliged him to accept of the employment. Mountjoy found the island almost in a desperate condition; but being a man of capacity and vigor, he was so little discouraged, that he immediately advanced against Tyrone in Ulster. He penetrated into the heart of that country, the chief seat of the rebels; he fortified Derry and Mount-Norris, in order to bridle the Irish: he chased them from the field, and obliged them to take shelter in the woods and morasses: he employed, with equal success, Sir George Carew in Munster: and by these promising enterprises, he gave new life to the queen's authority in that island.

As the comparison of Mountjoy's administration with that of Essex contributed to alienate Elizabeth from her favorite, she received additional disgust from the partiality of the people, who, prepossessed with an extravagant idea of Essex's merit, complained of the injustice done him by his removal from court, and by his confinement. Libels were secretly dispersed against Cecil and Raleigh and all his enemies: and his popularity, which was always great, seemed rather to be increased than diminished by his misfortunes. Elizabeth, in order to justify to the public her conduct with regard to him, had often expressed her intentions of having him tried in the star chamber for his offences: but her tenderness for him prevailed at last over her severity; and she was contented to have him only examined by the privy council. The attorney-general, Coke, opened the cause against him, and treated him with the cruelty and insolence which that great lawyer usually exercised against the unfortunate. He displayed in the strongest colors all the faults committed by Essex in his administration of Ireland: his making Southampton general of the horse, contrary to the queen's injunctions; his deserting the enterprise against Tyrone, and marching to Leinster and Munster, his conferring knighthood on too many persons; his secret conference with Tyrone; and his sudden return from Ireland, in contempt of her majesty's commands. He also exaggerated the indignity of the conditions which Tyrone had been allowed to propose; odious and abominable conditions, said he; a public toleration of an idolatrous religion, pardon for himself and every traitor in Ireland, and full restitution of lands and possessions to all of them. [1] The solicitor-general, Fleming, insisted upon the wretched situation in which the earl had left that kingdom; and Francis, son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, who had been lord keeper in the beginning of the present reign, closed the charge with displaying the undutiful expressions contained in some letters written by the earl.

* Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. .

Essex, when he came to plead in his own defence renounced, with great submission and humility, all pretensions to an apology; [1] and declared his resolution never, on this or any other occasion, to have any contest with his sovereign. He said, that having severed himself from the world, and abjured all sentiments of ambition, he had no scruple to confess every failing or error into which his youth, folly, or manifold infirmities might have betrayed him; that his inward sorrow for his offences against her majesty was so profound, that it exceeded all his outward crosses and afflictions, nor had he any scruple of submitting to a public confession of whatever she had been pleased to impute to him; that in his acknowledgments he retained only one reserve, which he never would relinquish but with his life, the assertion of a loyal and unpolluted heart, of an unfeigned affection, of an earnest desire ever to perform to her majesty the best service which his pool abilities would permit; and that, if this sentiment were allowed by the council, he willingly acquiesced in any condemnation or sentence which they could pronounce against him. This submission was uttered with so much eloquence, and in so pathetic a manner, that it drew tears from many of the audience. [2] All the privy counsellors, in giving their judgment, made no scruple of doing the earl justice with regard to the loyalty of his intentions. Even Cecil, whom he believed his capital enemy, treated him with regard and humanity. And the sentence pronounced by the lord keeper, (to which the council assented,) was in these words: “If this cause,” said he, “had been heard in the star chamber, my sentence must have been for as great a fine as ever was set upon any man’s head in that court, together with perpetual confinement in that prison which belongeth to a man of his quality, the Tower. But since we are now in another place, and in a course of favor, my censure is, that the earl of Essex is not to execute the office of a counsellor, nor that of earl marshal of England, nor of master of the ordnance; and to return to his own house, there to continue a prisoner till it shall please her majesty to release this and all the rest of his sentence.” [3] The earl of Cumberland made a slight opposition to this sentence; and said, that if he thought it would stand, he would have required a little more time to deliberate; that he deemed it somewhat severe; and that any commander-in-chief might easily incur a like penalty.

* Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. .

* * Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. , 201.

* * * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. . Camden, p 626, 627.

“But however,” added he, “in confidence of her majesty’s mercy, I agree with the rest.” The earl of Worcester delivered his opinion in a couple of Latin verses; importing, that where the gods are offended, even, misfortunes ought to be imputed as crimes, and that accident is no excuse for transgressions against the Divinity.

Bacon, so much distinguished afterwards by his high offices, and still more by his profound genius for the sciences, was nearly allied to the Cecil family, being nephew to Lord Burleigh, and cousin-german to the secretary: but notwithstanding his extraordinary talents, he had met with so little protection from his powerful relations, that he had not yet obtained any preferment in the law, which was his profession. But Essex, who could distinguish merit, and who passionately loved it, had entered into an intimate friendship with Bacon; had zealously attempted, though without success, to procure him the office of solicitor-general; and in order to comfort his friend under the disappointment, had conferred on him a present of land to the value of eighteen hundred pounds. [1] The public could ill excuse Bacon’s appearance before the council against so munificent a benefactor; though he acted in obedience to the queen’s commands: but she was so well pleased with his behavior, that she imposed on him a new task, of drawing a narrative of that day’s proceedings, in order to satisfy the public of the justice and lenity of her conduct. Bacon, who wanted firmness of character more than humanity, gave to the whole transaction the most favorable turn for Essex; and, in particular, painted out, in elaborate expression, the dutiful submission which that nobleman discovered in the defence that he made for his conduct. When he read the paper to her, she smiled at that passage, and observed to Bacon, that old love, she saw, could not easily be forgotten. He replied, that he hoped she meant that of herself. [2]

All the world, indeed, expected that Essex would soon be reinstated in his former credit; [3] perhaps, as is usual in reconcilements founded on inclination, would acquire an additional ascendant over the queen, and after all his disgraces would again appear more a favorite than ever.

* Cabala, .

* * Cabala, .

* * * Winwood, vol i. ., Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii p. 462.

They were confirmed in this hope, when they saw that, though he was still prohibited from appearing at court, he was continued in his office of master of horse, and was restored to his liberty, and that all his friends had access to him. Essex himself seemed determined to persevere in that conduct which had hitherto been so successful, and which the queen, by all this discipline, had endeavored to render habitual to him: he wrote to her, that he kissed her majesty’s hands, and the rod with which she had corrected him; but that he could never recover his wonted cheerfulness, till she deigned to admit him to that presence which had ever been the chief source of his happiness and enjoyment: and that he had now resolved to make amends for his past errors, to retire into a country solitude, and say with Nebucidnezzar, “Let my dwelling be with the beasts of the field; let me eat grass as an ox, and be wet with the dew of heaven; till it shall please the queen to restore me to my understanding.” The queen was much pleased with these sentiments; and replied, that she heartily wished his actions might correspond with his expressions; that he had tried her patience a long time, and it was but fitting she should now make some experiment of his submission; that her father would never have pardoned so much obstinacy; but that, if the furnace of affliction produced such good effects, she should ever after have the better opinion of her chemistry. [1]

The earl of Essex possessed a monopoly of sweet wines; and as his patent was near expiring, he patiently expected that the queen would renew it; and he considered this event as the critical circumstance of his life, which would determine whether he could ever hope to be reinstated in credit and authority. [2] But Elizabeth, though gracious in her deportment, was of a temper somewhat haughty and severe; and being continually surrounded with Essex's enemies, means were found to persuade her, that his lofty spirit was not yet sufficiently subdued, and that he must undergo this further trial, before he could again be safely received into favor. She therefore denied his request; and even added, in a contemptuous style, that an ungovernable beast must be stinted in his provender. [3]

* Camden, .

* * Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * * Camden, .

This rigor, pushed one step too far, proved the final ruin of this young nobleman, and was the source of infinite sorrow and vexation to the queen herself. Essex, who had with great difficulty so long subdued his proud spirit, and whose patience was now exhausted, imagining that the queen was entirely inexorable, burst at once all restraints of submission and of prudence, and determined to seek relief by proceeding to the utmost extremities against his enemies. Even during his greatest favor, he had ever been accustomed to carry matters with a high hand towards his sovereign, and as this practice gratified his own temper, and was sometimes successful, he had imprudently imagined that it was the only proper method of managing her: [1] but being now reduced to despair, he gave entire reins to his violent disposition, and threw off all appearance of duty and respect. Intoxicated with the public favor which he already possessed, he practised anew every art of popularity; and endeavored to increase the general good will by a hospitable manner of life, little suited to his situation and circumstances. His former employments had given him great connections, with men of the military profession; and he now entertained, by additional caresses and civilities, a friendship with all desperate adventurers, whose attachment, he hoped, might, in his present views, prove serviceable to him. He secretly courted the confidence of the Catholics; but his chief trust lay in the Puritans, whom he openly caressed, and whose manners he seemed to have entirely adopted. He engaged the most celebrated preachers of that sect to resort to Essex House; he had daily prayers and sermons in his family; and he invited all the zealots in London to attend those pious exercises. Such was the disposition now beginning to prevail among the English, that, instead of feasting and public spectacles, the methods anciently practised to gain the populace, nothing so effectually ingratiated an ambitious leader with the public as these fanatical entertainments. And as the Puritanical preachers frequently inculcated in their sermons the doctrine of resistance to the civil magistrate, they prepared the minds of their hearers for those seditious projects which Essex was secretly meditating. [2]

* Cabala, .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. . Camden, .

But the greatest imprudence of this nobleman proceeded from the openness of his temper, by which he was ill qualified to succeed in such difficult, and dangerous enterprises. He indulged himself in great liberties of speech, and was even heard to say of the queen, that she was now grown an old woman and was become as crooked in her mind as in her body. [1] Some court ladies, whose favors Essex had formerly neglected, carried her these stories, and incensed her to a high degree against him. Elizabeth was ever remarkably jealous on this head; and though she was now approaching to her seventieth year, she allowed her courtiers, [2] and even foreign ambassadors, [3] to compliment her upon her beauty; nor had all her good sense been able to cure her of this preposterous vanity. [4]

* Camden, . Osborne, . Sir Walter Raleigh’s Prerogative of Parliament, .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. , 443.

* * * Sidney’s Letters, vol. ii. .

* * * * See note KK, at the end of the volume.

There was also an expedient employed by Essex, which, if possible, was more provoking to the queen than those sarcasms on her age and deformity;

and that was, his secret applications to the king of Scots, her heir and successor. That prince had this year very narrowly escaped a dangerous, though ill-formed conspiracy of the earl of Gowry; and even his deliverance was attended with this disagreeable circumstance, that the obstinate ecclesiastics persisted, in spite of the most incontestable evidence, to maintain to his face, that there had been no such conspiracy. James, harassed with his turbulent and factious subjects, cast a wishful eye to the succession of England; and in proportion as the queen advanced in years, his desire increased of mounting that throne, on which, besides acquiring a great addition of power and splendor, he hoped to govern a people so much more tractable and submissive. He negotiated with all the courts of Europe, in order to insure himself friends and partisans: he even neglected not the court of Rome and that of Spain; and though he engaged himself in no positive promise, he flattered the Catholics with hopes that, in the event of his succession, they might expect some more liberty than was at present indulged them. Elizabeth was the only sovereign in Europe to whom he never dared to mention his right of succession: he knew that, though her advanced age might now invite her to think of fixing an heir to the crown, she never could bear the prospect of her own death without horror, and was determined still to retain him, and all other competitors, in an entire dependence upon her.

Essex was descended by females from the royal family and some of his sanguine partisans had been so imprudent as to mention his name among those of other pretenders to the crown; but the earl took care, by means of Henry Lee, whom he secretly sent into Scotland, to assure James, that so far from entertaining such ambitious views, he was determined to use every expedient for extorting an immediate declaration in favor of that monarch’s right of succession. James willingly hearkened to this proposal, but did not approve of the violent methods which Essex intended to employ. Essex had communicated his scheme to Mountjoy, deputy of Ireland; and as no man ever commanded more the cordial affection and attachment of his friends, he had even engaged a person of that virtue and prudence to entertain thoughts of bringing over part of his army into England, and of forcing the queen to declare the king of Scots her successor. [1] And such was Essex’s impatient ardor, that, though James declined this dangerous expedient, he still endeavored to persuade Mountjoy not to desist from the project; but the deputy, who thought that such violence, though it might be prudent, and even justifiable, when supported by a sovereign prince, next heir to the crown, would be rash and criminal if attempted by subjects, absolutely refused his concurrence. The correspondence, however, between Essex and the court of Scotland was still conducted with great secrecy and cordiality; and that nobleman, besides conciliating the favor of James, represented all his own adversaries as enemies to that prince’s succession, and as men entirely devoted to the interests of Spain, and partisans of the chimerical title of the infanta.

* Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii. .

The infanta and the archduke Albert had made some advances to the queen for peace; and Boulogne, as a neutral town, was chosen for the place of conference. Sir Henry Nevil, the English resident in France, Herbert, Edmondes, and Beale, were sent thither as ambassadors from England; and negotiated with Zuniga, Carillo, Richetrdot, and Verheiken, ministers of Spain and the archduke: but the conferences were soon broken off, by disputes with regard to the ceremonial. Among the European states, England had ever been allowed the precedency above Castile, Arragon, Portugal, and the other kingdoms of which the Spanish monarchy was composed; and Elizabeth insisted, that this ancient right was not lost on account of the junction of these states, and that that monarchy in its present situation, though it surpassed the English in extent as well as in power, could not be compared with it in point of antiquity, the only durable and regular foundation of precedency among kingdoms as well as noble families. That she might show, however, a pacific disposition, she was content to yield to an equality; but the Spanish ministers, as their nation had always disputed precedency even with France, to which England yielded, would proceed no further in the conference till their superiority of rank were acknowledged. [1] During the preparations for this abortive negotiation, the earl of Nottingham, the admiral, Lord Buckhurst, treasurer, and Secretary Cecil, had discovered their inclination to peace, but as the English nation, flushed with success, and sanguine in their hopes of plunder and conquest, were in general averse to that measure, it was easy for a person so popular as Essex to infuse into the multitude an opinion, that these ministers had sacrificed the interests of their country to Spain, and would even make no scruple of receiving a sovereign from that hostile nation.

* Winwood’s Memorials, vol. i. — 226.

1601.

But Essex, not content with these arts for decrying his adversaries, proceeded to concert more violent methods of ruining them; chiefly instigated by Cuffe, his secretary, a man of a bold and arrogant spirit, who had acquired a great ascendant over his patron. A select council of malecontents was formed, who commonly met at Drury House, and were composed of Sir Charles Davers, to whom the house belonged, the earl of Southampton, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, Sir Christopher Blount, Sir John Davies, and John Littleton; and Essex, who boasted that he had a hundred and twenty barons, knights, and gentlemen of note at his devotion, and who trusted still more to his authority with the populace, communicated to his associates those secret designs with which his confidence in so powerful a party had inspired him. Among other criminal projects, the result of blind rage and despair, he deliberated with them concerning the method of taking arms; and asked their opinion, whether he had best begin with seizing the palace or the Tower, or set out with making himself master at once of both places. The first enterprise being preferred, a method was concerted for executing it. It was agreed, that Sir Christopher Blount, with a choice detachment, should possess himself of the palace gates; that Davies should seize the hall, Davers the guard chamber and presence chamber; and that Essex should rush in from the Meuse, attended by a body of his partisans; should entreat the queen, with all demonstrations of humility, to remove his enemies; should oblige her to assemble a parliament; and should, with common consent, settle a new plan of government. [1]

* Camden, . Birch’s Memoirs vol. ii. . State Trials Bacon, vol. iv. , 543.

While these desperate projects were in agitation, many reasons of suspicion were carried to the queen; and she sent Robert Sacville, son of the treasurer, to Essex House, on pretence of a visit, but, in reality, with a view of discovering whether there were in that place any unusual concourse of people, or any extraordinary preparations which might threaten an insurrection. Soon after, Essex received a summons to attend the council, which met at the treasurer’s house; and while he was musing on this circumstance, and comparing it with the late unexpected visit from Sacville, a private note was conveyed to him, by which he was warned to provide for his own safety. He concluded, that all his conspiracy was discovered, at least suspected; and that the easiest punishment which he had reason to apprehend, was a new and more severe confinement: he therefore excused himself to the council on pretence of an indisposition; and he immediately despatched messages to his more intimate confederates, requesting their advice and assistance in the present critical situation of his affairs. They deliberated, whether they should abandon all their projects, and fly the kingdom; or instantly seize the palace with the force which they could assemble; or rely upon the affections of the citizens, who were generally known to have a great attachment to the earl. Essex declared against the first expedient, and professed himself determined to undergo any fate rather than submit to live the life of a fugitive. To seize the palace seemed impracticable without more preparations; especially as the queen seemed now aware of their projects, and, as they heard, had used the precaution of doubling her ordinary guards. There remained, therefore, no expedient but that of betaking themselves to the city; and while the prudence and feasibility of this resolution was under debate, a person arrived, who, as if he had received a commission for the purpose, gave them assurance of the affections of the Londoners, and affirmed that they might securely rest any project on that foundation. The popularity of Essex had chiefly buoyed him up in all his vain undertakings; and he fondly imagined, that, with no other assistance than the good will of the multitude, he might overturn Elizabeth’s government, confirmed by time, revered for wisdom, supported by vigor, and concurring with the general sentiments of the nation. The wild project of raising the city was immediately resolved on; the execution of it was decayed till next day; and emissaries were despatched to all Essex’s friends, informing them that Cobham and Raleigh had laid schemes against his life, and entreating their presence and assistance.

Next day, there appeared at Essex House the earls of Southampton and Rutland, the lords Sandys and Monteagle, with about three hundred gentlemen of good quality and fortune; and Essex informed them of the danger to which, he pretended, the machinations of his enemies exposed him. To some, he said that he would throw himself at the queen’s feet, and crave her justice and protection; to others, he boasted of his interest in the city, and affirmed that, whatever might happen, this resource could never fail him. The queen was informed of these designs, by means of intelligence conveyed, as is supposed, to Raleigh by Sir Ferdinando Gorges; and having ordered the magistrates of London to keep the citizens in readiness, she sent Egerton, lord keeper; to Essex House, with the earl of Worcester, Sir William Knollys, comptroller, and Popham, chief justice, in order to learn the cause of these unusual commotions. They were with difficulty admitted through a wicket; but all their servants were excluded, except the purse-bearer. After some altercation, in which they charged Essex's retainers, upon their allegiance, to lay down, their arms, and were menaced in their turn by the angry multitude who surrounded them, the earl, who found that matters were past recall, resolved to leave them prisoners in his house, and to proceed to the execution of his former project. He sallied forth with about two hundred attendants, armed only with walking swords; and in his passage to the city was joined by the earl of Bedford and Lord Cromwell He cried aloud, "For the queen! for the queen! a plot is laid for my life;" and then proceeded to the house of Smith the sheriff, on whose aid he had great reliance. The citizens flocked about him in amazement; but though he told them that England was sold to the infanta, and exhorted them to arms instantly otherwise they could not do him any service, no one showed a disposition to join him. The sheriff, on the earl's approach to his house, stole out at the back door, and made the best of his way to the mayor. Essex, meanwhile, observing the coldness of the citizens, and hearing that he was proclaimed a traitor by the earl of Cumberland and Lord Burleigh, began to despair of success, and thought of retreating to his own house. He found the streets in his passage barricaded and guarded by the citizens under the command of Sir John Levison. In his attempt to force his way, Tracy, a young gentleman to whom he bore great friendship, was killed, with two or three of the Londoners; and the earl himself, attended by a few of his partisans, (for the greater part began secretly to withdraw themselves,) retired towards the river, and taking boat, arrived at Essex House. He there found that Gorges, whom he had sent before to capitulate with the lord keeper and the other counsellors, had given all of them their liberty, and had gone to court with them. He was now reduced to despair; and appeared determined, in prosecution of Lord Sandy's advice, to defend himself to the last extremity, and rather to perish like a brave man, with his sword in his hand, than basely by the hands of the executioner: but after some parley, and after demanding in vain, first hostages, then conditions, from the besiegers, he surrendered at discretion; requesting only civil treatment, and a fair and impartial hearing. [1]

The queen, who, during all this commotion, had behaved with as great tranquillity and security as if there had only passed a fray in the streets, in which she was nowise concerned, [2] soon gave orders for the trial of the most considerable of the criminals.

* Camden .

* * Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii.

The earls of Essex and Southampton were arraigned before a jury of twenty-five peers, where Buckhurst acted as lord steward. The guilt of the prisoners was too apparent to admit of any doubt; and, besides the insurrection known to every body, the treasonable conferences at Drury House were proved by undoubted evidence. Sir Ferdinando Gorges was produced in court: the confessions of the earl of Rutland, of the lords Cromwell, Sandys, and Monteagle, of Davers, Blount, and Davies, were only read to the peers, according to the practice of that age. Essex’s best friends were scandalized at his assurance in insisting so positively on his innocence, and the goodness of his intentions, and still more at his vindictive disposition, in accusing, without any appearance of reason, Secretary Cecil as a partisan of the infanta’s title. The secretary, who had expected this charge, stepped into the court, and challenged Essex to produce his authority, which, on examination, was found extremely weak and frivolous. [1]

* Bacon, vol. iv. .

When sentence was pronounced, Essex spoke like a man who expected nothing but death; but he added, that he should be sorry if he were represented to the queen as a person that despised her clemency; though he should not, he believed, make any cringing submissions to obtain it. Southampton’s behavior was more mild and submissive; he entreated the good offices of the peers in so modest and becoming a manner, as excited compassion in every one.

The most remarkable circumstance in Essex’s trial was Bacon’s appearance against him. He was none of the crown lawyers; so was not obliged by his office to assist at this trial: yet did he not scruple, in order to obtain the queen’s favor, to be active in bereaving of life his friend and patron, whose generosity he had often experienced. He compared Essex’s conduct, in pretending to fear the attempts of his adversaries, to that of Pisistratus the Athenian, who cut and wounded his own body, and, making the people believe that his enemies had committed the violence, obtained a guard for his person, by whose assistance he afterwards subdued the liberties of his country.

After Essex had passed some days in the solitude and reflections of a prison, his proud heart was at last subdued, not by the fear of death, but by the sentiments of religion; a principle which he had before attempted to make the instrument of his ambition, but which now took a more firm hold of his mind, and prevailed over every other motive and consideration. His spiritual directors persuaded him, that he never could obtain the pardon of Heaven, unless he made a full confession of his disloyalty; and he gave in to the council an account of all his criminal design, as well as of his correspondence with the king of Scots. He spared not even his most intimate friends, such as Lord Mountjoy, whom he had engaged in these conspiracies; and he sought to pacify his present remorse by making such atonements as, in any other period of his life, he would have deemed more blamable than those attempts themselves which were the objects of his penitence. [1] Sir Henry Nevil, in particular, a man of merit, he accused of a correspondence with the conspirators though it appears that this gentleman had never assented to the proposals made him, and was no further criminal than in not revealing the earl’s treason; an office to which every man of honor naturally bears the strongest reluctance. [2] Nevil was thrown into prison, and underwent a severe persecution but as the queen found Mountjoy an able and successful commander, she continued him in his government, and sacrificed her resentment to the public service.

Elizabeth affected extremely the praise of clemency; and in every great example which she had made during her reign, she had always appeared full of reluctance and hesitation: but the present situation of Essex called forth all her tender affections, and kept her in the most real agitation and irresolution. She felt a perpetual combat between resentment and inclination, pride and compassion, the care of her own safety and concern for her favorite; and her situation, during this interval, was perhaps more an object of pity than that to which Essex himself was reduced. She signed the warrant for his execution; she countermanded it; she again resolved on his death; she felt a new return of tenderness. Essex's enemies told her, that he himself desired to die, and had assured her, that she could never be in safety while he lived: it is likely that this proof of penitence and of concern for her would produce a contrary effect to what they intended, and would revive all the fond affection which she had so long indulged towards the unhappy prisoner. But what chiefly hardened her heart against him was his supposed obstinacy, in never making, as she hourly expected, any application to her for mercy; and she finally gave her consent to his execution. He discovered at his death symptoms rather of penitence and piety than of fear; and willingly acknowledged the justice of the sentence by which he suffered. The execution was private in the Tower, agreeably to his own request. He was apprehensive, he said, lest the favor and compassion of the people would too much raise his heart in those moments, when humiliation under the afflicting hand of Heaven was the only proper sentiment which he could indulge. [3] And the queen no doubt, thought that prudence required the removing of so melancholy a spectacle from the public eye.

* Winwood, vol. i. .

* * Winwood, vol. i. .

* * * Dr. Barlow's Sermon on Essex's Execution. Bacon, vol. iv.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who came to the Tower on purpose, and who beheld Essex's execution from a window, increased much by this action the general hatred under which he already labored: it was thought, that his sole intention was to feast his eyes with the death of an enemy; and no apology which he could make for so ungenerous a conduct could be accepted by the public. The cruelty and animosity with which he urged on Essex's fate, even when Cecil relented, [1] were still regarded as the principles of this unmanly behavior.

* Murdin, .

The earl of Essex was but thirty-four years of age, when his rashness, imprudence, and violence brought him to this untimely end. We must here, as in many other instances, lament the inconstancy of human nature, that a person endowed with so many noble virtues — generosity, sincerity, friendship, valor, eloquence, and industry — should, in the latter period of his life, have given reins to his ungovernable passions, and involved, not only himself, but many of his friends, in utter ruin. The queen's tenderness and passion for him, as it was the cause of those premature honors which he attained, seems, on the whole, the chief circumstance which brought on his unhappy fate. Confident of her partiality towards him, as well as of his own merit, he treated her with a haughtiness which neither her love nor her dignity could bear; and as her amorous inclinations, in so advanced an age, would naturally make her appear ridiculous, if not odious, in his eyes, he was engaged, by an imprudent openness, of which he made profession, to discover too easily those sentiments to her. The many reconciliations and returns of affection, of which he had still made advantage, induced him to venture on new provocations, till he pushed her beyond all bounds of patience; and he forgot, that though the sentiments of the woman were ever strong in her, those of the sovereign had still in the end appeared predominant.

Some of Essex's associates, Cuffe, Davers, Blount, Meric, and Davies, were tried and condemned, and all of these except Davies, were executed. The queen pardoned the rest; being persuaded that they were drawn in merely from their friendship to that nobleman, and their care of his safety, and were ignorant of the more criminal part of his intentions.

Southampton's life was saved with great difficulty; but he was detained in prison during the remainder of this reign.

The king of Scots, apprehensive lest his correspondence with Essex might have been discovered, and have given offence to Elizabeth sent the earl of Marre and Lord Kinloss as ambassadors to England, in order to congratulate the queen on her escape from the late insurrection and conspiracy. They were also ordered to make secret inquiry, whether any measures had been taken by her for excluding him from the succession, as well as to discover the inclinations of the chief nobility and counsellors, in case of the queen's demise. [1] They found the dispositions of men as favorable as they could wish; and they even entered into a correspondence with Secretary Cecil, whose influence, after the fall of Essex, was now uncontrolled, [2] and who was resolved, by this policy, to acquire in time the confidence of the successor. He knew how jealous Elizabeth ever was of her authority, and he therefore carefully concealed from her his attachment to James: but he afterwards asserted, that nothing could be more advantageous to her than this correspondence; because the king of Scots, secure of mounting the throne by his undoubted title, aided by those connections with the English ministry was the less likely to give any disturbance to the present sovereign. He also persuaded that prince to remain in quiet, and patiently to expect that time should open to him the inheritance of the crown, without pushing his friends on desperate enterprises, which would totally incapacitate them from serving him. James's equity, as well as his natural facility of disposition, easily inclined him to embrace that resolution; [3] and in this manner the minds of the English were silently but universally disposed to admit, without opposition, the succession of the Scottish line: the death of Essex, by putting an end to faction, had been rather favorable than prejudicial to that great event.

The French king, who was little prepossessed in favor of James, and who, for obvious reasons, was averse to the union of England and Scotland, [4] made his ambassador drop some hints to Cecil of Henry's willingness to concur in any measure for disappointing the hopes of the Scottish monarch; but as Cecil showed an entire disapprobation of such schemes.

* Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * Osborne, .

* * * Spotswood, , 472

* * * * Winwood, vol. i.

The court of France took no further steps in that matter; and thus the only foreign power which could give much disturbance to James's succession, was induced to acquiesce in it. [1]

* Spotswood,

Henry made a journey this summer to Calais; and the queen, hearing of his intentions, went to Dover, in hopes of having a personal interview with a monarch, whom, of all others, she most loved and most respected. The king of France, who felt the same sentiments towards her, would gladly have accepted of the proposal; but as many difficulties occurred, it appeared necessary to lay aside, by common consent, the project of an interview. Elizabeth, however, wrote successively two letters to Henry, one by Edmondes, another by Sir Robert Sidney; in which she expressed a desire of conferring about a business of importance, with some minister in whom that prince reposed entire confidence. The marquis of Rosni the king’s favorite and prime minister, came to Dover in disguise; and the memoirs of that able statesman contain a full account of his conference with Elizabeth. This princess had formed a scheme for establishing, in conjunction with Henry, a new system in Europe, and of fixing a durable balance of power, by the erection of new states on the ruins of the house of Austria. She had even the prudence to foresee the perils which might ensue from the aggrandizement of her ally; and she purposed to unite all the seventeen provinces of the Low Countries in one republic, in order to form a perpetual barrier against the dangerous increase of the French as well as of the Spanish monarchy. Henry had himself long meditated such a project against the Austrian family; and Rosni could not forbear expressing his astonishment, when he found that Elizabeth and his master, though they had never communicated their sentiments on this subject, not only had entered into the same general views, but had also formed the same plan for their execution. The affairs, however, of France were not yet brought to a situation which might enable Henry to begin that great enterprise; and Rosni satisfied the queen that it would be necessary to postpone for some years their united attack on the house of Austria. He departed, filled with just admiration at the solidity of Elizabeth’s judgment, and the greatness of her mind; and he owns, that she was entirely worthy of that high reputation which she enjoyed in Europe.

The queen’s magnanimity in forming such extensive projects was the more remarkable, as, besides her having fallen so far into the decline of life, the affairs of Ireland, though conducted with abilities and success, were still in disorder, and made a great diversion of her forces. The expense incurred by this war lay heavy upon her narrow revenues; and her ministers, taking advantage of her disposition to frugality, proposed to her an expedient of saving, which, though she at first disapproved of it, she was at last induced to embrace. It was represented to her, that the great sums of money remitted to Ireland for the pay of the English forces, came, by the necessary course of circulation, into the hands of the rebels, and enabled them to buy abroad all necessary supplies of arms and ammunition, which, from the extreme poverty of that kingdom and its want of every useful commodity, they could not otherwise find means to purchase. It was therefore recommended to her, that she should pay her forces in base money; and it was asserted that, besides the great saving to the revenue, this species of coin could never be exported with advantage, and would not pass in any foreign market. Some of her wiser counsellors maintained, that if the pay of the soldiers were raised in proportion, the Irish rebels would necessarily reap the same benefit from the base money, which would always be taken at a rate suitable to its value; if the pay were not raised, there would be danger of a mutiny among the troops, who, whatever names might be affixed to the pieces of metal, would soon find from experience that they were defrauded in their income. [1] But Elizabeth, though she justly valued herself on fixing the standard of the English coin, much debased by her predecessors, and had innovated very little in that delicate article, was seduced by the specious arguments employed by the treasurer on this occasion; and she coined a great quantity of base money, which he made use of in the pay of her forces in Ireland. [2]

* Camden,

* * Rymer, tom, xvi. .

Mountjoy, the deputy, was a man of abilities; and foreseeing the danger of mutiny among the troops, he led them instantly into the field, and resolved, by means of strict discipline, and by keeping them employed against the enemy, to obviate those inconveniencies which were justly to be apprehended. He made military roads, and built a fortress at Moghery; he drove the Mac-Genises out of Lecale; he harassed Tyrone in Ulster with inroads and lesser expeditions; and by destroying every where, and during all seasons, the provisions of the Irish, he reduced them to perish by famine in the woods and morasses, to which they were obliged to retreat. At the same time, Sir Henry Docwray, who commanded another body of troops, took the Castle of Derry, and put garrisons into Newton and Ainogh; and having seized the monastery of Donnegal, near Balishannon, he threw troops into it, and defended it against the assaults of O'Donnel and the Irish.

Nor was Sir George Carew idle in the province of Munster. He seized the titular earl of Desmond, and sent him over, with Florence Macarty, another chieftain, prisoner to England. He arrested many suspected persons, and took hostages from others. And having got a reënforcement of two thousand men from England, he threw himself into Corke, which he supplied with arms and provisions; and he put every thing in a condition for resisting the Spanish invasion, which was daily expected. The deputy, informed of the danger to which the southern provinces were exposed, left the prosecution of the war against Tyrone, who was reduced to great extremities; and he marched with his army into Munster.

At last the Spaniards, under Don John d'Aquila, arrived at Kinsale; and Sir Richard Piercy, who commanded in the town with a small garrison of a hundred and fifty men, found himself obliged to abandon it on their appearance. These invaders amounted to four thousand men, and the Irish discovered a strong propensity to join them, in order to free themselves from the English government, with which they were extremely discontented. One chief ground of their complaint, was the introduction of trials by jury; [1] an institution abhorred by that people, though nothing contributes more to the support of that equity and liberty for which the English laws are so justly celebrated.

* Camden, p 644.

The Irish, also, bore a great favor to the Spaniards, having entertained the opinion that they themselves were descended from that nation; and their attachment to the Catholic religion proved a new cause of affection to the invaders. D'Aquila assumed the title of general "in the holy war for the preservation of the faith" in Ireland; and he endeavored to persuade the people that Elizabeth was, by several bulls of the pope, deprived of her crown; that her subjects were absolved from their oaths of allegiance; and that the Spaniards were come to deliver the Irish from the dominion of the devil. [1] Mountjoy found it necessary to act with vigor, in order to prevent a total insurrection of the Irish; and having collected his forces, he formed the siege of Kinsale by land, while Sir Richard Levison, with a small squadron, blockaded it by sea. He had no sooner begun his operations than he heard of the arrival of another body of two thousand Spaniards under the command of Alphonso Ocampo, who had taken possession of Baltimore and Berehaven; and he was obliged to detach Sir George Carew to oppose their progress. Tyrone, meanwhile, with Randal, Mac-Surley, Tirel, baron of Kelley, and other chieftains of the Irish, had joined Ocampo with all their forces, and were marching to the relief of Kinsale. The deputy, informed of their design by intercepted letters, made preparations to receive them; and being reenforced by Levison with six hundred marines, he posted his troops on an advantageous ground, which lay on the passage of the enemy, leaving some cavalry to prevent a sally from D'Aquila and the Spanish garrison. When Tyrone, with a detachment of Irish and Spaniards, approached, he was surprised to find the English so well posted, and ranged in good order, and he immediately sounded a retreat: but the deputy gave orders to pursue him; and having thrown these advanced troops into disorder, he followed them to the main body, whom he also attacked and put to flight, with the slaughter of twelve hundred men. [2] Ocampo was taken prisoner; Tyrone fled into Ulster; O'Donnel made his escape into Spain; and D'Aquila, finding himself reduced to the greatest difficulties, was obliged to capitulate upon such terms as the deputy prescribed to him; he surrendered Kinsale and Baltimore, and agreed to evacuate the kingdom. This great blow, joined to other successes gained by Wlimot, governor of Kerry, and by Roger and Gavin Harvey, threw the rebels into dismay, and gave a prospect of the final reduction of Ireland.

The Irish war, though successful, was extremely burdensome on the queen's revenue; and besides the supplies granted by parliament, which were indeed very small, but which they ever regarded as mighty concessions, she had been obliged, notwithstanding her great frugality, to employ other expedients, such as selling the royal demesnes and crown jewels, [3] and exacting loans from the people, [4] in order to support this cause, so essential to the honor and interests of England.

* Camden, .

* * Winwood, vol. i. .

* * * D'Ewes, .

* * * * D'Ewes, .

The necessity of her affairs obliged her again to summon a parliament; and it here appeared, that though old age was advancing fast upon her, though she had lost much of her popularity by the unfortunate execution of Essex, insomuch that when she appeared in public she was not attended with the usual acclamations, [1] yet the powers of her prerogative, supported by her vigor, still remained as high and uncontrollable as ever.

The active reign of Elizabeth had enabled many persons to distinguish themselves in civil and military employments; and the queen, who was not able from her revenue to give them any rewards proportioned to their services, had made use of an expedient which had been employed by her predecessors, but which had never been carried to such an extreme as under her administration. She granted her servants and courtiers patents for monopolies; and these patents they sold to others, who were thereby enabled to raise commodities to what price they pleased, and who put invincible restraints upon all commerce, industry, and emulation in the arts. It is astonishing to consider the number and importance of those commodities which were thus assigned over to patentees. Currants, salt, iron, powder, cards, calf-skins, fells, pouldavies, ox-shin-bones, train oil, lists of cloth, potashes, aniseseeds, vinegar, seacoals, steel, aquavitæ, brushes, pots, bottles, saltpetre, lead, accidences, oil, calamine stone, oil of blubber, glasses, paper, starch, tin, sulphur, new drapery, dried pilchards, transportation of iron ordnance, of beer, of horn, of leather, importation of Spanish wool, of Irish yarn: these are but a part of the commodities which had been appropriated to monopolists. [2] When this list was read in the house, a member cried, “Is not bread in the number?” “Bread,” said every one with astonishment. “Yes, I assure you,” replied he, “if affairs go on at this rate, we shall have bread reduced to a monopoly before next parliament.” [3] These monopolists were so exorbitant in their demands, that in some places they raised the price of salt from sixteen pence a bushel, to fourteen or fifteen shillings. [4]

* D’Ewes, p 629. Osborne, .

* * D’Ewes, p 648, 650, 652.

* * * D’Ewes, .

* * * * D’Ewes, .

Such high profits naturally begat intruders upon their commerce; and in order to secure themselves against encroachments, the patentees were armed with high and arbitrary powers from the council, by which they were enabled to oppress the people at pleasure, and to exact money from such as they thought proper to accuse of interfering with their patent. [1] The patentees of saltpetre, having the power of entering into every house, and of committing what havoc they pleased in stables, cellars, or wherever they suspected saltpetre might be gathered, commonly extorted money from those who desired to free themselves from this damage or trouble. [2] And while all domestic intercourse was thus restrained, lest any scope should remain for industry, almost every species of foreign commerce was confined to exclusive companies, who bought and sold at any price that they themselves thought proper to offer or exact.

These grievances, the most intolerable for the present, and the most pernicious in their consequences, that ever were known in any age or under any government, had been mentioned in the last parliament, and a petition had even been presented to the queen, complaining of the patents; but she still persisted in defending her monopolists against her people. A bill was now introduced into the lower house, abolishing all these monopolies; and as the former application had been unsuccessful, a law was insisted on as the only certain expedient for correcting these abuses. The courtiers, on the other hand, maintained, that this matter regarded the prerogative, and that the commons could never hope for success, if they did not make application, in the most humble and respectful manner, to the queen’s goodness and beneficence. The topics which were advanced in the house, and which came equally from the courtiers and the country gentlemen, and were admitted by both, will appear the most extraordinary to such as are prepossessed with an idea of the privileges enjoyed by the people during that age, and of the liberty possessed under the administration of Elizabeth. It was asserted that the queen inherited both an enlarging and a restraining power; by her prerogative she might set at liberty what was restrained by statute or otherwise, and by her prerogative she might restrain what was otherwise at liberty: [3] that the royal prerogative was not to be canvassed, nor disputed, nor examined; [4] and did not even admit of any limitation.

* D’Ewes, , 646, 652.

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * D’Ewes, , 675.

* * * * D’Ewes, , 649.

v D’Ewes, . 654.

That absolute princes, such as the sovereigns of England, were a species of divinity; [1] that it was in vain to attempt tying the queen’s hands by laws or statutes; since, by means of her dispensing power, she could loosen herself at pleasure: [2] and that even if a clause should be annexed to a statute, excluding her dispensing power, she could first dispense with that clause and then with the statute. [3] After all this discourse, more worthy of a Turkish divan than of an English house of commons, according to our present idea of this assembly, the queen, who perceived how odious monopolies had become, and what heats were likely to arise, sent for the speaker, and desired him to acquaint the house, that she would immediately cancel the most grievous and oppressive of these patents. [4]

The house was struck with astonishment, and admiration and gratitude, at this extraordinary instance of the queen’s goodness and condescension. A member said, with tears in his eyes, that if a sentence of everlasting happiness had been pronounced in his favor, he could not have felt more joy than that with which he was at present over whelmed. Another observed, that this message from the sacred person of the queen was a kind of gospel or glad tidings, and ought to be received as such, and be written in the tablets of their hearts.[v*] And it was further remarked, that in the same manner as the Deity would not give his glory to another, so the queen herself was the only agent in their present prosperity and happiness.[v* *] The house voted, that the speaker, with a committee, should ask permission to wait on her majesty, and return thanks to her for her gracious concessions to her people.

When the speaker, with the other members, was introduced to the queen, they all flung themselves on their knees, and remained in that posture a considerable time, till she thought proper to express her desire that they should rise.[v* * *]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * D’Ewes, , 646.

* * * * See note LL, at the end of the volume.

v D’Ewes, .

v* D’Ewes, .

v* * D’Ewes, .

v* * * We learn from Hentzner’s Travels, that no one spoke to Queen Elizabeth without kneeling; though now and then she raised some with waving her hand. Nay, wherever she turned her eye, every one fell on his knees. Her successor first allowed his courtiers to omit this ceremony; and as he exerted not the power, so he relinquished the appearance of despotism. Even when Queen Elizabeth was absent, those who covered her table, though persons of quality, neither approached it nor retired from it without kneeling, and that often three times.

The speaker displayed the gratitude of the commons, because her sacred ears were ever open to hear them, and her blessed hands ever stretched out to relieve them. They acknowledged, he said, in all duty and thankfulness acknowledged, that, before they called, her “preventing grace” and “all-deserving goodness” watched over them for their good; more ready to give than they could desire, much less deserve. He remarked, that the attribute which was most proper to God, to perform all he promiseth, appertained also to her; and that she was all truth, all constancy, and all goodness. And he concluded with these expressions: “Neither do we present our thanks in words or any outward sign, which can be no sufficient retribution for so great goodness; but in all duty and thankfulness, prostrate at your feet, we present our most loyal and thankful hearts, even the last drop of blood in our hearts, and the last spirit of breath in our nostrils, to be poured out, to be breathed up, for your safety.” [1]

* D’Ewes, , 659.

The queen heard very patiently this speech, in which she was flattered in phrases appropriated to the Supreme Being; and she returned an answer full of such expressions of tenderness towards her people, as ought to have appeared fulsome after the late instances of rigor which she had employed, and from which nothing but necessity had made her depart. Thus was this critical affair happily terminated; and Elizabeth, by prudently receding, in time, from part of her prerogative, maintained her dignity, and preserved the affections of her people.

The commons granted her a supply quite unprecedented, of four subsidies and eight fifteenths; and they were so dutiful as to vote this supply before they received any satisfaction in the business of monopolies, which they justly considered as of the utmost importance to the interest and happiness of the nation. Had they attempted to extort that concession by keeping the supply in suspense, so haughty was the queen’s disposition, that this appearance of constraint and jealousy had been sufficient to have produced a denial of all their requests, and to have forced her into some acts of authority still more violent and arbitrary.

1602.

The remaining events of this reign are neither numerous nor important. The queen, finding that the Spaniards had involved her in so much trouble, by fomenting and assisting the Irish rebellion, resolved to give them employment at home; and she fitted out a squadron of nine ships, under Sir Richard Levison, admiral, and Sir William Monson, vice-admiral, whom she sent on an expedition to the coast of Spain. The admiral, with part of the squadron, met the galleons loaded with treasure; but was not strong enough to attack them. The vice-admiral also fell in with some rich ships, but they escaped for a like reason; and these two brave officers, that their expedition might not prove entirely fruitless, resolved to attack the harbor of Cerimbra, in Portugal; where, they received intelligence, a very rich carrack had taken shelter. The harbor was guarded by a castle: there were eleven galleys stationed in it; and the militia of the country, to the number, as was believed, of twenty thousand men, appeared in arms on the shore: yet, notwithstanding these obstacles, and others derived from the winds and tides, the English squadron broke into the harbor, dismounted the guns of the castle, sunk, or burnt, or put to flight the galleys, and obliged the carrack to surrender. [1] They brought her home to England, and she was valued at a million of ducats: [2] a sensible loss to the Spaniards, and a supply still more important to Elizabeth. [3]

* Monson, .

* Camden, .

* This year the Spaniards began the siege of Ostend, which was bravely defended for five months by Sir Francis Vere. The states then relieved him, by sending a new governor; and on the whole, the siege lasted three years, and is computed to have cost the lives of one hundred thousand men.

The affairs of Ireland, after the defeat of Tyrone and the expulsion of the Spaniards, hastened to a settlement. Lord Mountjoy divided his army into small parties, and harassed the rebels on every side: he built Charlemont and many other small forts, which were impregnable to the Irish, and guarded all the important passes of the country: the activity of Sir Henry Docwray and Sir Arthur Chichester permitted no repose or security to the rebels; and many of the chieftains, after skulking during some time in woods and morasses, submitted to mercy, and received such conditions as the deputy was pleased to impose upon them.

1603.

Tyrone himself made application by Arthur Mac-Baron, his brother, to be received upon terms; but Mountjoy would not admit him, except he made an absolute surrender of his life and fortunes to the queen’s mercy. He appeared before the deputy at Millefont, in a habit and posture suitable to his present fortune; and after acknowledging his offence in the most humble terms, he was committed to custody by Mountjoy, who intended to bring him over captive into England, to be disposed of at the queen’s pleasure.

But Elizabeth was now incapable of receiving any satisfaction from this fortunate event: she had fallen into a profound melancholy; which all the advantages of her high fortune, all the glories of her prosperous reign, were unable in any degree to alleviate or assuage. Some ascribed this depression of mind to her repentance of granting a pardon to Tyrone, whom she had always resolved to bring to condign punishment for his treasons, but who had made such interest with the ministers as to extort a remission from her.

Others, with more likelihood, accounted for her dejection by a discovery which she had made, of the correspondence maintained in her court with her successor, the king of Scots, and by the neglect to which, on account of her old age and infirmities, she imagined herself to be exposed. But there is another cause assigned for her melancholy, which has long been rejected by historians as romantic, but which late discoveries seem to have confirmed: [1] some incidents happened which revived her tenderness for Essex, and filled her with the deepest sorrow for the consent which she had unwarily given to his execution.

* See the proofs of this remarkable fact collected in Birch's Negotiations, . And Memoirs, vol. ii. , 505, 506, etc.

The earl of Essex, after his return from the fortunate expedition against Cadiz, observing the increase of the queen's fond attachment towards him, took occasion to regret, that the necessity of her service required him often to be absent from her person, and exposed him to all those ill offices which his enemies, more assiduous in their attendance, could employ against him. She was moved with this tender jealousy; and making him the present of a ring, desired him to keep that pledge of her affection, and assured him, that into whatever disgrace he should fall, whatever prejudices she might be induced to entertain against him, yet, if he sent her that ring, she would immediately upon the sight of it recall her former tenderness, would afford him a patient hearing, and would lend a favorable ear to his apology. Essex, notwithstanding all his misfortunes, reserved this precious gift to the last extremity; but after his trial and condemnation, he resolved to try the experiment, and he committed the ring to the countess of Nottingham, whom he desired to deliver it to the queen. The countess was prevailed on by her husband, the mortal enemy of Essex, not to execute the commission; and Elizabeth, who still expected that her favorite would make this last appeal to her tenderness, and who ascribed the neglect of it to his invincible obstinacy, was, after much delay and many internal combats, pushed by resentment and policy to sign the warrant for his execution. The countess of Nottingham, falling into sickness, and affected with the near approach of death, was seized with remorse for her conduct; and having obtained a visit from the queen, she craved her pardon, and revealed to her the fatal secret. The queen, astonished with this incident, burst into a furious passion: she shook the dying countess in her bed; and crying to her, "that God might pardon her, but she never could," she broke from her, and thenceforth resigned herself over to the deepest and most incurable melancholy. She rejected all consolation: she even refused food and sustenance: and throwing herself on the floor, she remained sullen and immovable, feeding her thoughts on her afflictions, and declaring life and existence an insufferable burden to her. Few words she uttered; and they were all expressive of some inward grief which she cared not to reveal: but sighs and groans were the chief vent which she gave to her despondency, and which, though they discovered her sorrows, were never able to ease or assuage them. Ten days and nights she lay upon the carpet, leaning on cushions which her maids brought her; and her physicians could not persuade her to allow herself to be put to bed, much less to make trial of any remedies which they prescribed to her. [1]

* Strype, vol. iv. No. 276.

Her anxious mind at last had so long preyed on her frail body, that her end was visibly approaching; and the council, being assembled, sent the keeper, admiral, and secretary, to know her will with regard to her successor. She answered with a faint voice, that as she had held a regal sceptre, she desired no other than a royal successor. Cecil requesting her to explain herself more particularly, she subjoined, that she would have a king to succeed her; and who should that be but her nearest kinsman, the king of Scots? Being then advised by the archbishop of Canterbury to fix her thoughts upon God, she replied, that she did so, nor did her mind in the least wander from him. Her voice soon after left her and senses failed; she fell into a lethargic slumber, which continued some hours; and she expired gently, without further struggle or convulsion, in the seventieth year of her age, and forty-fifth of her reign.

So dark a cloud overcast the evening of that day which had shone out with a mighty lustre in the eyes of all Europe. There are few great personages in history who have been more exposed to the calumny of enemies and the adulation of friends than Queen Elizabeth; and yet there scarcely is any whose reputation has been more certainly determined by the unanimous consent of posterity. The unusual length of her administration, and the strong features of her character, were able to overcome all prejudices; and obliging her detractors to abate much of their invectives, and her admirers somewhat of their panegyrics, have at last, in spite of political factions and, what is more, of religious animosities, produced a uniform judgment with regard to her conduct. Her vigor, her constancy, her magnanimity, her penetration, vigilance, address, are allowed to merit the highest praises, and appear not to have been surpassed by any person that ever filled a throne: a conduct less rigorous, less imperious, more sincere, more indulgent to her people, would have been requisite to form a perfect character. By the force of her mind, she controlled all her more active and stronger qualities, and prevented them from running into excess: her heroism was exempt from temerity, her frugality from avarice, her friendship from partiality, her active temper from turbulency and a vain ambition; she guarded not herself with equal care or equal success from lesser infirmities; the rivalship of beauty, the desire of admiration, the jealousy of love, and the sallies of anger.

Her singular talents for government were founded equally on her temper and on her capacity. Endowed with a great command over herself, she soon obtained an uncontrolled ascendant over her people; and while she merited all their esteem by her real virtues, she also engaged their affections by her pretended ones. Few sovereigns of England succeeded to the throne in more difficult circumstances; and none ever conducted the government with such uniform success and felicity. Though unacquainted with the practice of toleration, the true secret for managing religious factions, she preserved her people, by her superior prudence, from those confusions in which theological controversy had involved all the neighboring nations: and though her enemies were the most powerful princes of Europe, the most active, the most enterprising, the least scrupulous, she was able by her vigor to make deep impressions on their states; her own greatness, meanwhile, remained untouched and unimpaired.

The wise ministers and brave warriors who flourished under her reign, share the praise of her success; but instead of lessening the applause due to her, they make great addition to it. They owed all of them their advancement to her choice; they were supported by her constancy; and, with all their abilities, they were never able to acquire any undue ascendant over her. In her family, in her court, in her kingdom, she remained equally mistress: the force of the tender passions was great over her, but the force of her mind was still superior; and the combat which her victory visibly cost her, serves only to display the firmness of her resolution, and the loftiness of her ambitious sentiments.

The fame of this princess, though it has surmounted the prejudices both of faction and bigotry, yet lies still exposed to another prejudice, which is more durable because more natural, and which, according to the different views in which we survey her, is capable either of exalting beyond measure, or diminishing the lustre of her character. This prejudice is founded on the consideration of her sex. When we contemplate her as a woman, we are apt to be struck with the highest admiration of her great qualities and extensive capacity; but we are also apt to require some more softness of disposition, some greater lenity of temper, some of those amiable weaknesses by which her sex is distinguished. But the true method of estimating her merit, is to lay aside all these considerations, and consider her merely as a rational being placed in authority, and intrusted with the government of mankind. We may find it difficult to reconcile our fancy to her as a wife or a mistress; but her qualities as a sovereign, though with some considerable exceptions, are the object of undisputed applause and approbation.

APPENDIX III

The party among us who have distinguished themselves by their adhering to liberty and a popular government, have long indulged their prejudices against the succeeding race of princes, by bestowing unbounded panegyrics on the virtue and wisdom of Elizabeth. They have even been so extremely ignorant of the transactions of this reign, as to extol her for a quality which, of all others, she was the least possessed of; a tender regard for the constitution, and a concern for the liberties and privileges of her people. But as it is scarcely possible for the prepossessions of party to throw a veil much longer over facts so palpable and undeniable, there is danger lest the public should run into the opposite extreme, and should entertain an aversion to the memory of a princess who exercised the royal authority in a manner so contrary to all the ideas which we at present entertain of a legal constitution. But Elizabeth only supported the prerogatives transmitted to her by her predecessors: she believed that her subjects were entitled to no more liberty than their ancestors had enjoyed: she found that they entirely acquiesced in her arbitrary administration: and it was not natural for her to find fault with a form of government by which she herself was invested with such unlimited authority. In the particular exertions of power, the question ought never to be forgotten, What is best? But in the general distribution of power among the several members of a constitution, there can seldom be admitted any other question than, What is established? Few examples occur of princes who have willingly resigned their power; none of those who have, without struggle and reluctance, allowed it to be extorted from them. If any other rule than established practice be followed, factions and dissensions must multiply without end: and though many constitutions, and none more than the British, have been improved even by violent innovations, the praise bestowed on those patriots to whom the nation has been indebted for its privileges, ought to be given with some reserve, and surely without the least rancor against those who adhered to the ancient constitution. [1]

In order to understand the ancient constitution of England, there is not a period which deserves more to be studied than the reign of Elizabeth. The prerogatives of this princess were scarcely ever disputed, and she therefore employed them without scruple: her imperious temper — a circumstance in which she went far beyond her successors — rendered her exertions of power violent and frequent, and discovered the full extent of her authority: the great popularity which she enjoyed, proves that she did not infringe any established liberties of the people: there remains evidence sufficient to ascertain the most noted acts of her administration: and though that evidence must be drawn from a source wide of the ordinary historians, it becomes only the more authentic on that account, and serves as a stronger proof, that her particular exertions of power were conceived to be nothing but the ordinary course of administration, since they were not thought remarkable enough to be recorded even by contemporary writers. If there was any difference in this particular, the people in former reigns seem rather to have been more submissive than even during the age of Elizabeth; [2] it may not here be improper to recount some of the ancient prerogatives of the crown, and lay open the sources of that great power which the English monarchs formerly enjoyed.

* By the ancient constitution, is here meant that which prevailed before the settlement of our present plan of liberty. There was a more ancient constitution, where,

though the people had perhaps less liberty than under the Tudors, yet the king had also less authority: the power of the barons was a great check upon him, and exercised great tyranny over them. But there was still a more ancient constitution, viz., that before the signing of the charters,

when neither the people nor the barons had any regular privileges; and the power of the government during the reign of an able prince was almost wholly in the king. The English constitution, like all others, has been in a state of continual fluctuation.

* * In a memorial of the state of the realm, drawn by Secretary Cecil in 1569, there is this passage: “Then followeth the decay of obedience in civil policy, which being compared with the fearfulness and reverence of all inferior estates to their superiors in times past, will astonish any wise and considerate person, to behold the desperation of reformation,” Haynes, p, 586. Again, .

One of the most ancient and most established instruments of power was the court of star chamber, which possessed an unlimited discretionary authority of fining, imprisoning, and inflicting corporal punishment; and whose jurisdiction extended to all sorts of offences, contempts, and disorders that lay not within reach of the common law. The members of this court consisted of the privy council and the judges; men who all of them enjoyed their offices during pleasure; and when the prince himself was present, he was the sole judge, and all the others could only interpose with their advice. There needed but this one court in any government to put an end to all regular, legal, and exact plans of liberty; for who durst set himself in opposition to the crown and ministry, or aspire to the character of being a patron of freedom, while exposed to so arbitrary a jurisdiction? I much question whether any of the absolute monarchies in Europe contain, at present, so illegal and despotic a tribunal.

The court of high commission was another jurisdiction still more terrible; both because the crime of heresy, of which it took cognizance, was more undefinable than any civil offence, and because its methods of inquisition, and of administering oaths, were more contrary to all the most simple ideas of justice and equity. The fines and imprisonments imposed by this court were frequent: the deprivations and suspensions of the clergy for nonconformity were also numerous, and comprehended at one time the third of all the ecclesiastics of England. [1] The queen, in a letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, said expressly, that she was resolved “that no man should be suffered to decline, either on the left or on the right hand, from the drawn line limited by authority, and by her laws and injunctions.” [2]

But martial law went beyond even these two courts in a prompt, and arbitrary, and violent method of decision. Whenever there was any insurrection or public disorder, the crown employed martial law; and it was, during that time, exercised not only over the soldiers, but over the whole people; any one might be punished as a rebel, or an aider and abettor of rebellion, whom the provost martial, or lieutenant of a county, or their deputies, pleased to suspect. Lord Bacon says, that the trial at common law granted to the earl of Essex and his fellow-conspirators, was a favor; for that the case would have borne and required the severity of martial law. [3]

* Neal, vol. i. .

* * Vol. iv. .

* * * * Murden, .

We have seen instances of its being employed by Queen Mary in defence of orthodoxy. There remains a letter of Queen Elizabeth's to the earl of Sussex, after the suppression of the northern rebellion, in which she sharply reproves him, because she had not heard of his having executed any criminals by martial law; [1] though it is probable that near eight hundred persons suffered, one way or other, on account of that slight insurrection. But the kings of England did not always limit the exercise of this law to times of civil war and disorder. In 1552, when there was no rebellion or insurrection, King Edward granted a commission of martial law; and empowered the commissioners to execute it, "as should be thought by their discretions most necessary." [2] Queen Elizabeth too was not sparing in the use of this law. In 1573, one Peter Burchet, a Puritan, being persuaded that it was meritorious to kill such as opposed the truth of the gospel, ran into the streets, and wounded Hawkins, the famous sea captain, whom he took for Hatton, the queen's favorite. The queen was so incensed, that she ordered him to be punished instantly by martial law; but upon the remonstrance of some prudent counsellors, who told her that this law was usually confined to turbulent times, she recalled her order, and delivered over Burchet to the common law. [3] But she continued not always so reserved in executing this authority. There remains a proclamation of hers, in which she orders martial law to be used against all such as import bulls, or even forbidden books and pamphlets from abroad; [4] and prohibits the questioning of the lieutenants or their deputies for their arbitrary punishment of such offenders, "any law or statute to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding."

* MS. of Lord Royston's, from the paper office.

* * Strype's Eccles. Memoirs, vol. ii. , 458, 459.

* * * Camden, . Strype, vol. ii. .

* * * * Strype, vol. iii.

We have another act of hers still more extraordinary. The streets of London were much infested with idle vagabonds and riotous persons: the lord mayor had endeavored to repress this disorder: the star chamber had exerted its authority, and inflicted punishment on these rioters: but the queen, finding those remedies ineffectual, revived martial law, and gave Sir Thomas Wilford a commission of provost-martial: “Granting him authority, and commanding him, upon signification given by the justices of peace in London or the neighboring counties, of such offenders worthy to be speedily executed by martial law, to attach and take the same persons, and in the presence of the said justices, according to justice of martial law, to execute them upon the gallows or gibbet openly, or near to such place where the said rebellious and incorrigible offenders shall be found to have committed the said great offences.” [1] I suppose it would be difficult to produce an instance of such an act of authority in any place nearer than Muscovy. The patent of high constable, granted to Earl Rivers by Edward IV., proves the nature of the office. The powers are unlimited, perpetual, and remain in force during peace as well as during war and rebellion. The parliament in Edward VI.’s reign acknowledged the jurisdiction of the constable and martial’s court to be part of the law of the land. [2]

The star chamber, and high commission, and court martial, though arbitrary jurisdictions, had still some pretence of a trial, at least of a sentence; but there was a grievous punishment very generally inflicted in that age, without any other authority than the warrant of a secretary of state or of the privy council; [3] and that was, imprisonment in any jail, and during any time, that the ministers should think proper. In suspicious times, all the jails were full of prisoners of state; and these unhappy victims of public jealousy were sometimes thrown into dungeons, and loaded with irons, and treated in the most cruel manner, without their being able to obtain any remedy from law.

This practice was an indirect way of employing torture: but the rack itself, though not admitted in the ordinary execution of justice, [4] was frequently used, upon any suspicion, by authority of a warrant from a secretary or the privy council. Even the council in the marches of Wales was empowered, by their very commission, to make use of torture whenever they thought proper.

* Rymer, vol. xvi. .

* * 7 Edw. VI. ca. See Sir John Davis’s Question concerning Impositions, .

* * * In 1588, the lord mayor committed several citizens to prison, because they refused to pay the loan demanded of them. Murden, .

* * * * Harrison, cha.

v Haynes, p 196. See further, La Boderie, vol. i. .

There cannot be a stronger proof how lightly the rack was employed than the following story, told by Lord Bacon. We shall give it in his own words: “The queen was mightily incensed against Haywarde, on account of a book he dedicated to Lord Essex, being a story of the first year of Henry IV., thinking it a seditious prelude to put into the people’s heads boldness and faction: [1] she said, she had an opinion that there was treason in it, and asked me if I could not find any places in it that might be drawn within the case of treason? Whereto I answered, For treason, sure I found none; but for felony, very many: and when her majesty hastily asked me, Wherein? I told her, the author had committed very apparent theft; for he had taken most of the sentences of Cornelius Tacitus, and translated them into English, and put them into his text. And another time, when the queen could not be persuaded that it was his writing whose name was to it, but that it had some more mischievous author, and said with great indignation, that she would have him racked to produce his author; I replied, Nay, madam, he is a doctor; never rack his person, but rack his style: let him have pen, ink, and paper, and help of books, and be enjoined to continue the story where it breaketh off, and I will undertake, by collating the styles, to judge whether he were the author or no.” [2] Thus, had it not been for Bacon’s humanity, or rather his wit, this author, a man of letters, had been put to the rack for a most innocent performance. His real offence was his dedicating a book to that munificent patron of the learned, the earl of Essex, at a time when this nobleman lay under her majesty’s displeasure.

* To our apprehension, Haywarde’s book seems rather to have a contrary tendency. For he has there preserved the famous speech of the bishop of Carlisle, which contains, in the most express terms, the doctrine of passive obedience. But Queen Elizabeth was very difficult to please on this head.

* * Cabala, . anciently common of fining, imprisoning, or otherwise punishing the jurors, merely at the discretion of the court, for finding a verdict contrary to the direction of these dependent judges, it is obvious that juries were then no manner of security to the liberty of the subject.

The queen's menace of trying and punishing Haywarde for treason could easily have been executed, let his book have been ever so innocent. While so many terrors hung over the people, no jury durst have acquitted a man when the court was resolved to have him condemned. The practice, also, of not confronting witnesses with the prisoner, gave the crown lawyers all imaginable advantage against him. And indeed there scarcely occurs an instance during all these reigns, that the sovereign or the ministers were ever disappointed in the issue of a prosecution. Timid juries, and judges who held their offices during pleasure, never failed to second all the views of the crown.

The power of pressing, both for sea and land service, and obliging any person to accept of any office, however mean or unfit for him, was another prerogative totally incompatible with freedom. Osborne gives the following account of Elizabeth's method of employing this prerogative: "In case she found any likely to interrupt her occasions," says he, "she did seasonably prevent him by a chargeable employment abroad, or putting him upon some service at home, which she knew least grateful to the people; contrary to a false maxim, since practised with far worse success, by such princes as thought it better husbandry to buy off enemies than reward friends." [1] The practice with which Osborne reproaches the two immediate successors of Elizabeth, proceeded partly from the extreme difficulty of their situation, partly from the greater lenity of their disposition. The power of pressing, as may naturally be imagined, was often abused, in other respects, by men of inferior rank; and officers often exacted money for freeing persons from the service. [2]

* Page 392.

* Murden, .

The government of England during that age, however different in other particulars, bore in this respect some resemblance to that of Turkey at present: the sovereign possessed every power, except that of imposing taxes; and in both countries, this limitation, unsupported by other privileges, appears rather prejudicial to the people. In Turkey, it obliges the sultan to permit the extortion of the pashas and governors of provinces, from whom he afterwards squeezes presents or takes forfeitures: in England, it engaged the queen to erect monopolies, and grant patents for exclusive trade; an invention so pernicious, that had she gone on during a tract of years at her own rate, England, the seat of riches, and arts, and commerce, would have contained at present as little industry as Morocco or the coast of Barbary.

We may further observe that this valuable privilege, valuable only because it proved afterwards the means by which the parliament extorted all their other privileges, was very much encroached on, in an indirect manner, during the reign of Elizabeth, as well as of her predecessors. She often exacted loans from her people; an arbitrary and unequal kind of imposition, and which individuals felt severely; for though the money had been regularly repaid, which was seldom the case, [1] it lay in the prince’s hands without interest, which was a sensible loss to the persons from whom the money was borrowed. [2]

There remains a proposal, made by Lord Burleigh, for levying a general loan on the people, equivalent to a subsidy; [3] a scheme which would have laid the burden more equally, but which was, in different words, a taxation imposed without consent of parliament. It is remarkable, that the scheme thus proposed, without any visible necessity, by that wise minister, is the very same which Henry VIII. executed, and which Charles I., enraged by ill usage from his parliament, and reduced to the greatest difficulties, put afterwards in practice, to the great discontent of the nation.

The demand of benevolence was another invention of that age for taxing the people. This practice was so little conceived to be irregular, that the commons in 1585 offered the queen a benevolence; which she very generously refused, as having no occasion at that time for money. [4] Queen Mary, also, by an order of council, increased the customs in some branches; and her sister imitated the example. There was a species of ship money imposed at the time of the Spanish invasion: the several ports were required to equip a certain number of vessels at their own charge: and such was the alacrity of the people for the public defence, that some of the ports, particularly London, sent double the number demanded of them.[v*]

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* Bacon, vol. iv. .

* * In the second of Richard II., it was enacted that in loans which the king shall require of his subjects, upon letters of privy seal, such as have “reasonable” excuse of not lending, may there be received without further summons,

travel, or grief. See Cotton’s Abridg. . By this law,

the king’s prerogative of exacting loans was ratified; and what ought to be deemed a “reasonable” excuse was still left in his own breast to determine.

* * * Haynes, , 519.

* * * * D’Ewes, .

v Bacon, vol. iv .

v* Monson, p 267.

When any levies were made for Ireland, France, or the Low Countries, the queen obliged the counties to levy the soldiers, to arm and clothe them, and carry them to the seaports at their own charge. New-year’s gifts were at that time expected from the nobility, and from the more considerable gentry. [1]

Purveyance and preëmption were also methods of taxation, unequal, arbitrary, and oppressive. The whole kingdom sensibly felt the burden of those impositions; and it was regarded as a great privilege conferred on Oxford and Cambridge, to prohibit the purveyors from taking any commodities within five miles of these universities. The queen victualled her navy by means of this prerogative, during the first years of he reign. [2]

Wardship was the most regular and legal of all these impositions by prerogative; yet was it a great badge of slavery and oppressive to all the considerable families. When an estate devolved to a female, the sovereign obliged her to marry anyone he pleased: whether the heir were male or female, the crown enjoyed the whole profit of the estate during the minority. The giving of a rich wardship was a usual method of rewarding a courtier or favorite.

The inventions were endless which arbitrary power might employ for the extorting of money, while the people imagined that their property was secured by the crown’s being debarred from imposing taxes. Strype has preserved a speech of Lord Burleigh to the queen and council, in which are contained some particulars not a little extraordinary. [3]

* Strype's Memoirs, vol. i. .

* * Camden, .

* * * Annals, vol. iv. et seq.

Burleigh proposes, that she should erect a court for the correction of all abuses, and should confer on the commissioners a general inquisitorial power over the whole kingdom. He sets before her the example of her wise grandfather, Henry VII., who by such methods extremely augmented his revenue; and he recommends that this new court should proceed, "as well by the direction and ordinary course of the laws, as by virtue of her majesty's supreme regiment and absolute power, from whence law proceeded." In a word, he expects from this institution greater accession to the royal treasure than Henry VIII. derived from the abolition of the abbeys, and all the forfeitures of ecclesiastical revenues. This project of Lord Burleigh's needs not, I think, any comment. A form of government must be very arbitrary indeed, where a wise and good minister could make such a proposal to the sovereign.

Embargoes on merchandise was another engine of royal power, by which the English princes were able to extort money from the people. We have seen instances in the reign of Mary. Elizabeth, before her coronation, issued an order to the custom-house, prohibiting the sale of all crimson silks which should be imported, till the court were first supplied. [1] She expected, no doubt, a good pennyworth from the merchants while they lay under this restraint.

The parliament pretended to the right of enacting laws, as well as of granting subsidies; but this privilege was, during that age, still more insignificant than the other. Queen Elizabeth expressly prohibited them from meddling either with state matters or ecclesiastical causes; and she openly sent the members to prison who dared to transgress her imperial edict in these particulars. There passed few sessions of parliament, during her reign where there occur not instances of this arbitrary conduct.

But the legislative power of the parliament was a mere fallacy, while the sovereign was universally acknowledged to possess a dispensing power, by which all the laws could be invalidated, and rendered of no effect. The exercise of this power was also an indirect method practised for erecting monopolies. Where the statutes laid any branch of manufacture under restrictions, the sovereign, by exempting one person from the laws, gave him in effect the monopoly of that commodity. [2] There was no grievance at that time more universally complained of, than the frequent dispensing with the penal laws. [3]

But in reality the crown possessed the full legislative power, by means of proclamations, which might affect any matter, even of the greatest importance, and which the star chamber took care to see more rigorously executed than the laws themselves. The motives for these proclamations were sometimes frivolous, and even ridiculous. Queen Elizabeth had taken offence at the smell of woad; and she issued an edict prohibiting any one from cultivating that useful plant. [4]

* Strype, vol. i. .

* * Rymer, tom. xv. . D'Ewes, .

* * * Murden, .

* * * * Townsend's Journals, . Stow's Annals.

She was also pleased to take offence at the long swords and high ruffs then in fashion: she sent about her officers to break every man's sword, and clip every man's ruff which was beyond a certain dimension. [1] This practice resembles the method employed by the great Czar Peter to make his subjects change their garb.

The queen's prohibition of the "prophesyings," or the assemblies instituted for fanatical prayers and conferences, was founded on a better reason, but shows still the unlimited extent of her prerogative. Any number of persons could not meet together, in order to read the Scriptures and confer about religion, though in ever so orthodox a manner, without her permission.

There were many other branches of prerogative incompatible with an exact or regular enjoyment of liberty. None of the nobility could marry without permission from the sovereign. The queen detained the earl of Southampton long in prison, because he privately married the earl of

Essex's cousin. [2] No man could travel without the consent of the prince. Sir William Evers underwent a severe persecution because he had presumed to pay a private visit to the king of Scots. [3] The sovereign even assumed a supreme and uncontrolled authority over all foreign trade; and neither allowed any person to enter or depart the kingdom, nor any commodity to be imported or exported, without his consent. [4]

The parliament, in the thirteenth of the queen, praised her for not imitating the practice usual among her predecessors, of stopping the course of justice by particular warrants. There could not possibly be a greater abuse, nor a stronger mark of arbitrary power; and the queen, in refraining from it, was very laudable. But she was by no means constant in this reserve. There remain in the public records some warrants of hers for exempting particular persons from all law-suits and prosecutions;[v*] If and these warrants, she says, she grants from her royal prerogative, which she will not allow to be disputed.

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* Townsend's Journals, . Stow's Annals. Strype, vol. i p 603.

* * Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * * Birch's Memoirs, vol. ii. .

* * * * Sir John Davis's Question concerning Impositions, passim

v D'Ewes, .

v* Rymer, tom, xv. p 652 708, 777.

It was very usual in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and probably in all the preceding reigns, for noblemen or privy counsellors to commit to prison any one who had happened to displease them by suing for his just debts; and the unhappy person, though he gained his cause in the courts of justice, was commonly obliged to relinquish his property in order to obtain his liberty. Some, likewise, who had been delivered from prison by the judges, were again committed to custody in secret places, without any possibility of obtaining relief; and even the officers and serjeants of the courts of law were punished for executing the writs in favor of these persons. Nay, it was usual to send for people by pursuivants, a kind of harpies who then attended the orders of the council and high commission; and they were brought up to London, and constrained by imprisonment, not only to withdraw their lawful suits, but also to pay the pursuivants great sums of money. The judges, in the thirty-fourth of the queen, complain to her majesty of the frequency of this practice. It is probable that so egregious a tyranny was carried no farther down than the reign of Elizabeth; since the parliament who presented the petition of right found no later instances of it. [1] And even these very judges of Elizabeth, who thus protect the people against the tyranny of the great, expressly allow, that a person committed by special command of the queen is not bailable.

It is easy to imagine that, in such a government, no justice could by course of law be obtained of the sovereign, unless he were willing to allow it. In the naval expedition undertaken by Raleigh and Frobisher against the Spaniards, in the year 1592, a very rich carrack was taken, worth two hundred thousand pounds. The queen's share in the adventure was only a tenth; but as the prize was so great, and exceeded so much the expectation of all the adventurers, she was determined not to rest contented with her share. Raleigh humbly and earnestly begged her to accept of a hundred thousand pounds in lieu of all demands, or rather extortions; and says that the present which the proprietors were willing to make her of eighty thousand pounds, was the greatest that ever prince received from a subject. [2]

But it is no wonder the queen, in her administration, should pay so little regard to liberty, while the parliament itself, in enacting laws, was entirely negligent of it. The persecuting statutes which they passed against Papists and Puritans are extremely contrary to the genius of freedom; and by exposing such multitudes to the tyranny of priests and bigots, accustomed the people to the most disgraceful subjection. Their conferring an unlimited supremacy on the queen, or, what is worse, acknowledging her inherent right to it, was another proof of their voluntary servitude.

The law of the twenty-third of her reign, making seditious words against the queen capital, is also a very tyrannical statute; and a use no less

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* Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn's Annals, , 251.

* * Strype, vol. iv. , 129.

tyrannical was sometimes made of it. The case of Udal, a Puritanical clergyman, seems singular even in those arbitrary times. This man had published a book, called a Demonstration of Discipline, in which he inveighed against the government of bishops; and though he had carefully endeavored to conceal his name, he was thrown into prison upon suspicion, and brought to a trial for this offence. It was pretended, that the bishops were part of the queen's political body; and to speak against them, was really to attack her, and was therefore felony by the statute. This was not the only iniquity to which Udal was exposed. The judges would not allow the jury to determine any thing but the fact, whether Udal had written the book or not, without examining his intention, or the import of the words. In order to prove the fact, the crown lawyers did not produce a single witness to the court: they only read the testimony of two persons absent, one of whom said, that Udal had told him he was the author; another, that a friend of Udal's had said so. They would not allow Udal to produce any exculpatory evidence; which, they said, was never to be permitted against the crown. [1] And they tendered him an oath, by which he was required to depose that he was not the author of the book; and his refusal to make that deposition was employed as the strongest proof of his guilt. It is almost needless to add, that notwithstanding these multiplied iniquities, a verdict of death was given by the jury against Udal; for, as the queen was extremely bent upon his prosecution, it was impossible he could escape. [2] He died in prison, before execution of the sentence.

* It was never fully established that the prisoner could legally produce evidence against the crown, till after the revolution. See Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. .

* * State Trials, vol. i. . Strype, voL iv. . Strype's Life of Whitgift, .

The case of Penry was, if possible, still hardier. This man was a zealous Puritan, or rather a Brownist, a small sect, which afterwards increased, and received the name of "Independents." He had written against the hierarchy several tracts, such as Martin Marprelate, Theses Martinianæ, and other compositions, full of low scurrility and petulant satire. After concealing himself for some years, he was seized; and as the statute against seditious words required that the criminal should be tried within a year after committing the offence, he could not be indicted for his printed books. He was therefore tried for some papers found in his pocket, as if he had thereby scattered sedition. [1] It was also imputed to him, by the lord keeper, Puckering, that in some of these papers, “he had only acknowledged her majesty’s royal power to establish laws ecclesiastical and civil; but had avoided the usual terms of making, enacting, decreeing, and ordaining laws; which imply,” says the lord keeper, “a most absolute authority.” [2] Penry for these offences was condemned and executed.

Thus we have seen, that the “most absolute” authority of the sovereign, to make use of the lord keeper’s expression was established on above twenty branches of prerogative, which are now abolished, and which were, every one of them totally incompatible with the liberty of the subject. But what insured more effectually the slavery of the people, than even these branches of prerogative, was, the established principles of the times, which attributed to the prince such an unlimited and indefeasible power, as was supposed to be the origin of all law, and could be circumscribed by none. The homilies published for the use of the clergy, and which they were enjoined to read every Sunday in all the churches, inculcate every where a blind and unlimited passive obedience to the prince, which on no account, and under no pretence, is it ever lawful for subjects in the smallest article to depart from or infringe. Much noise has been made because some court chaplains, during the succeeding reigns, were permitted to preach such doctrines; but there is a great difference between these sermons, and discourses published by authority, avowed by the prince and council, and promulgated to the whole nation. [3]

* Strype’s Life of Whitgift, book iv. cha. Neal, vol. i. .

* * Strype’s Annals, vol. iv. .

* * * Gifford, a clergyman, was suspended in the year 1584, for preaching up a limited obedience to the civil magistrate, Neal, vol. i. .

So thoroughly were these principles imbibed by the people, during the reigns of Elizabeth and her predecessors, that opposition to them was regarded as the most flagrant sedition; and was not even rewarded by that public praise and approbation, which can alone support men under such dangers and difficulties as attend the resistance of tyrannical authority. [1] It was only during the next generation that the noble principles of liberty took root, and spreading themselves under the shelter of Puritanical absurdities, became fashionable among the people.

It is worth remarking, that the advantage usually ascribed to absolute monarchy, a greater regularity of police, and a more strict execution of the laws, did not attend the former English government, though in many respects it fell under that denomination. A demonstration of this truth is contained in a judicious paper which is preserved by Strype, [2] and which was written by an eminent justice of peace of Somersetshire, in the year 1596, near the end of the queen's reign; when the authority of that princess may be supposed to be fully corroborated by time, and her maxims of government improved by long practice.

This paper contains an account of the disorders which then prevailed in the county of Somerset. The author says, that forty persons had there been executed in a year for robberies, thefts, and other felonies; thirty-five burnt in the hand, thirty-seven whipped, one hundred and eighty-three discharged: that those who were discharged were most wicked and desperate persons, who never could come to any good, because they would not work, and none would take them into service: that notwithstanding this great number of indictments, the fifth part of the felonies committed in the county were not brought to trial; the greater number escaped censure, either from the superior cunning of the felons, the remissness of the magistrates, or the foolish lenity of the people: that the rapines committed by the infinite number of wicked, wandering, idle people, were intolerable to the poor

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* It is remarkable, that in all the historical plays of Shakspeare, where the manners and characters, and even the transactions of the several reigns, are so exactly copied, there is scarcely any mention of civil liberty, which some pretended historians have imagined to be the object of all the ancient quarrels, insurrections, and civil wars. In the elaborate panegyric of England, contained in the tragedy of Richard II., and the detail of its advantages, not a word of its civil constitution, as anywise different from or superior to that of other European kingdoms; an omission which cannot be supposed in any English author that wrote since the restoration, at least since the revolution.

* * Annals, vol. iv.

countrymen, and obliged them to keep a perpetual watch over their sheepfolds, their pastures, their woods, and their cornfields: that the other counties of England were in no better condition than Somersetshire; and many of them were even in a worse: that there were at least three or four hundred able-bodied vagabonds in every county, who lived by theft and rapine; and who sometimes met in troops to the number of sixty, and committed spoil on the inhabitants: that if all the felons of this kind were assembled, they would be able, if reduced to good subjection, to give the greatest enemy her majesty has a “strong battle:” and that the magistrates themselves were intimidated from executing the laws upon them; and there were instances of justices of peace who, after giving sentence against rogues, had interposed to stop the execution of their own sentence, on account of the danger which hung over them from the confederates of these felons.

In the year 1575, the queen complained in parliament of the bad execution of the laws; and threatened, that if the magistrates were not for the future more vigilant, she would intrust authority to indigent and needy persons, who would find an interest in a more exact administration of justice. [1] It appears that she was as good as her word. For in the year 1601, there were great complaints made in parliament of the rapine of justices of peace; and a member said, that this magistrate was an animal who, for half a dozen of chickens, would dispense with a dozen of penal statutes. [2] It is not easy to account for this relaxation of government, and neglect of police, during a reign of so much vigor as that of Elizabeth. The small revenue of the crown is the most likely cause that can be assigned. The queen had it not in her power to interest a great number in assisting her to execute the laws. [3]

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, -694.

* * * See note MM, at the end of the volume.

On the whole, the English have no reason, from the example of their ancestors, to be in love with the picture of absolute monarchy; or to prefer the unlimited authority of the prince and his unbounded prerogatives, to that noble liberty, that sweet equality, and that happy security, by which they are at present distinguished above all nations in the universe. The utmost that can be said in favor of the government of that age and perhaps it may be said with truth, is, that the power of the prince, though really unlimited, was exercised after the European manner, and entered not into every part of the administration; that the instances of a high exerted prerogative were not so frequent as to render property sensibly insecure, or reduce the people to a total servitude; that the freedom from faction, the quickness of execution, and the promptitude of those measures which could be taken for offence or defence, made some compensation for the want of a legal and determinate liberty; that as the prince commanded no mercenary army, there was a tacit check on him, which maintained the government in that medium, to which the people had been accustomed; and that this situation of England, though seemingly it approached nearer, was in reality more remote from a despotic and Eastern monarchy, than the present government of that kingdom, where the people, though guarded by multiplied laws, are totally naked, defenceless, and disarmed; and besides, are not secured by any middle power, or independent powerful nobility, interposed between them and the monarch.

We shall close the present Appendix with a brief account of the revenues, the military force, the commerce, the arts, and the learning of England during this period.

Queen Elizabeth’s economy was remarkable; and in some instances seemed to border on avarice. The smallest expense, if it could possibly be spared, appeared considerable in her eyes; and even the charge of an express, during the most delicate transactions, was not below her notice. [1] She was also attentive to every profit, and embraced opportunities of gain which may appear somewhat extraordinary. She kept, for instance, the see of Ely vacant nineteen years, in order to retain the revenue; [2] and it was usual with her, when she promoted a bishop, to take the opportunity of pillaging the see of some of its manors. [3]

* Birch’s Negot. .

* * Strype, vol. iv. p.. 351.

* * * Strype, vol. iv. . There is a curious letter of the queen's written to a bishop of Ely, and preserved in the register of that see. It is in these words: "Proud prelate,

I understand you are backward in complying with your agreement: but I would have you know, that I, who made you what you are, can unmake you; and if you do not forthwith fulfil your engagement, by God I will immediately unfrock you. Yours, as you demean yourself, Elizabeth." The bishop,

it seems, had promised to exchange some part of the land belonging to the see for a pretended equivalent; and did so,

but it was in consequence of the above letter. Annual Register. 1761, .

But that in reality there was little of no avarice in the queen's temper, appears from this circumstance, that she never amassed any treasure; and even refused subsidies from the parliament when she had no present occasion for them. Yet we must not conclude, from this circumstance, that her economy proceeded from a tender concern for her people; she loaded them with monopolies and exclusive patents, which are much more oppressive than the most heavy taxes levied in an equal and regular manner. The real source of her frugal conduct was derived from her desire of independency, and her care to preserve her dignity, which would have been endangered had she reduced herself to the necessity of having frequent recourse to parliamentary supplies. In consequence of this motive, the queen, though engaged in successful and necessary wars, thought it more prudent to make a continual dilapidation of the royal demesnes, [1] than demand the most moderate supplies from the commons. As she lived unmarried, and had no posterity, she was content to serve her present turn, though at the expense of her successors; who, by reason of this policy, joined to other circumstances, found themselves on a sudden reduced to the most extreme indigence.

The splendor of a court was during this age a great part of the public charge; and as Elizabeth was a single woman, and expensive in no kind of magnificence, except clothes, this circumstance enabled her to perform great things by her narrow revenue. She is said to have paid four millions of debt, left on the crown by her father, brother, and sister; an incredible sum for that age. [2] The states at the time of her death owed her about eight hundred thousand pounds; and, the king of France four hundred and fifty thousand. [3]

* Rymer, tom. xvi. . D’Ewes, ,457,525,629. Bacon, vol. iv. .

* * D’Ewes, . I think it impossible to reconcile this account of the public debts with that given by Strype, (Eccles. Mem. vol. ii. ,) that in the year 1553 the crown owed but three hundred thousand pounds. I own that this last sum appears a great deal more likely. The whole revenue of Queen Elizabeth would not in ten years have paid four millions.

* * * Winwood, vol. i. , 54.

Though that prince was extremely frugal, and after the peace of Vervins was continually amassing treasure, the queen never could, by the most pressing importunities, prevail on him to make payment of those sums which she had so generously advanced him during his greatest distresses. One payment of twenty thousand crowns, and another of fifty thousand, were all she could obtain, by the strongest representations she could make of the difficulties to which the rebellion in Ireland had reduced her. [1] The queen expended on the wars with Spain, between the years 1589 and 1593, the sum of one million three hundred thousand pounds, besides the pittance of a double subsidy, amounting to two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, granted her by parliament. [2] In the year 1599, she spent six hundred thousand pounds in six months on the service of Ireland. [3] Sir Robert Cecil affirmed, that in ten years Ireland cost her three millions four hundred thousand pounds. [4] She gave the earl of Essex a present of thirty thousand pounds upon his departure for the government of that kingdom. Lord Burleigh computed, that the value of the gifts conferred on that favorite amounted to three hundred thousand pounds; a sum which, though probably exaggerated, is a proof of her strong affection towards him. It was a common saying during this reign, “The queen pays bountifully, though she rewards sparingly.”[v*]

It is difficult to compute exactly the queen’s ordinary revenue, but it certainly fell much short of five hundred thousand pounds a year.[v* *] In the year 1590, she raised the customs from fourteen thousand pounds a year to fifty thousand, and obliged Sir Thomas Smith, who had farmed them, to refund some of his former profits.[v* * *]

* Winwood, vol. i. — 195.

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * Camden, .

* * * * Appendix to the Earl of Essex’s Apology.

v Birch’s Memoirs, vol. ii.

v* Nanton’s Regalia, cha.

v* * Franklyn, in his Annals, (,) says that the profit of the kingdom, besides wards and the duchy of Lancaster,

(which amounted to about one hundred and twenty thousand pounds,) was one hundred and eighty-eight thousand one hundred and ninety-seven pounds: the crown lands seem to be comprehended in this computation.

v* * * Camden, . This account of Camden is difficult or impossible to be reconciled to the state of the customs in the beginning of the subsequent reign, as they appear in the journals of the commons. See Hist. of James, cha.

This improvement of the revenue was owing to the suggestions of one Caermarthen; and was opposed by Burleigh, Leicester, and Walsingham: but the queen’s perseverance overcame all their opposition. The great undertakings which she executed with so narrow a revenue, and with such small supplies from her people, prove the mighty effects of wisdom and economy. She received from the parliament, during the course of her whole reign, only twenty subsidies and thirty-nine fifteenths. I pretend not to determine exactly the amount of these supplies; because the value of a subsidy was continually falling; and in the end of her reign it amounted only to eighty thousand pounds, [1] though in the beginning it had been a hundred and twenty thousand. If we suppose that the supplies granted Elizabeth during a reign of forty-five years amounted to three millions, we shall not probably be much wide of the truth. [2] This sum makes only sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty-six pounds a year; and it is surprising, that while the queen’s demands were so moderate, and her expenses so well regulated, she should ever have found any difficulty in obtaining a supply from parliament, or be reduced to make sale of the crown lands. But such was the extreme, I had almost said, absurd parsimony of the parliaments during that period.

* D’Ewes, .

* Lord Salisbury computed these supplies only at two millions eight hundred thousand pounds, Journ. 17th Feb. 1609. King James was certainly mistaken when he estimated the queen’s annual supplies at one hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds. Franklyn, . It is curious to observe that the minister, in the war begun in 1754, was in some periods allowed to lavish in two months as great a sum as was granted by parliament to Queen Elizabeth in forty-five years. The extreme frivolous object of the late war, and the great importance of hers, set this matter in still a stronger light. Money too, we may observe, was in most particulars of the same value in both periods: she paid eight pence a day to every foot soldier. But our late delusions have much exceeded any thing known in history, not even excepting those of the crusades. For I suppose there is no mathematical, still less an arithmetical demonstration,

that the road to the Holy Land was not the road to paradise,

as there is, that the endless increase of national debts is the direct road to national ruin. But having now completely reached that goal, it is needless at present to reflect on the past. It will be found in the present year, 1776, that all the revenues of this island north of Trent and west of Reading, are mortgaged or anticipated forever. Could the small remainder be in a worse condition were those provinces seized by Austria and Prussia? There is only this difference, that some event might happen in Europe, which would oblige these great monarchs to disgorge their acquisitions. But no imagination can figure a situation which will induce our creditors to relinquish their claims,

or the public to seize their revenues. So egregious indeed has been our folly, that we have even lost all title to compassion in the numberless calamities that are awaiting us.

They valued nothing in comparison of their money: the members had no connection with the court; and the very idea which they conceived of the trust committed to them, was, to reduce the demands of the crown, and to grant as few supplies as possible. The crown, on the other hand, conceived the parliament in no other light than as a means of supply. Queen Elizabeth made a merit to her people of seldom summoning parliaments. [1] No redress of grievances was expected from these assemblies: they were supposed to meet for no other purpose than to impose taxes.

Before the reign of Elizabeth, the English princes had usually recourse to the city of Antwerp for voluntary loans; and their credit was so low, that, besides paying the high interest of ten or twelve per cent., they were obliged to make the city of London join in the security. Sir Thomas Gresham, that great and enterprising merchant, one of the chief ornaments of this reign, engaged the company of merchant-adventurers to grant a loan to the queen; and as the money was regularly repaid, her credit by degrees established itself in the city, and she shook off this dependence on foreigners. [2]

In the year 1559, however, the queen employed Gresham to borrow for her two hundred thousand pounds at Antwerp, in order to enable her to reform the coin, which was at that time extremely debased. [3] She was so impolitic as to make, herself, an innovation in the coin; by dividing a pound of silver into sixty-two shillings, instead of sixty, the former standard. This is the last time that the coin has been tampered with in England.

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* Strype, vol. iv. .

* * Stowe's Survey of London, book i. .

* * * MS. of Lord Royston's, from the paper office, .

Queen Elizabeth, sensible how much the defence of her kingdom depended on its naval power, was desirous to encourage commerce and navigation: but as her monopolies tended to extinguish all domestic industry, which is much more valuable than foreign trade, and is the foundation of it, the general train of her conduct was ill calculated to serve the purpose at which she aimed, much less to promote the riches of her people. The exclusive companies also were an immediate check on foreign trade. Yet, notwithstanding these discouragements, the spirit of the age was strongly bent on naval enterprises; and besides the military expeditions against the Spaniards, many attempts were made for new discoveries, and many new branches of foreign commerce were opened by the English. Sir Martin Frobisher undertook three fruitless voyages to discover the north-west passage: Davis, not discouraged by this ill success, made a new attempt, when he discovered the straits which pass by his name. In the year 1600, the queen granted the first patent to the East India Company: the stock of that company was seventy-two thousand pounds; and they fitted out four ships, under the command of James Lancaster, for this new branch of trade. The adventure was successful; and the ships returning with a rich cargo, encouraged the company to continue the commerce.

The communication with Muscovy had been opened in Queen Mary’s time by the discovery of the passage to Archangel: but the commerce to that country did not begin to be carried on to a great extent till about the year 1569. The queen obtained from the czar an exclusive patent to the English for the whole trade of Muscovy; [1] and she entered into a personal as well as national alliance with him. This czar was named John Basilides, a furious tyrant, who, continually suspecting the revolt of his subjects, stipulated to have a safe retreat and protection in England. In order the better to insure this resource, he purposed to marry an English woman; and the queen intended to have sent him Lady Anne Hastings; daughter of the earl of Huntingdon: but when the lady was informed of the barbarous manners of the country, she wisely declined purchasing an empire at the expense of her ease and safety. [2]

The English, encouraged by the privileges which they had obtained from Basilides, ventured farther into those countries than any Europeans had formerly done. They transported their goods along the River Dwina in boats made of one entire tree, which they towed and rowed up the stream as far as Walogda. Thence they carried their commodities seven days’ journey by land to Yeraslau, and then down the Volga to Astracan. At Astracan they built ships, crossed the Caspian Sea, and distributed their manufactures into Persia. But this bold attempt met with such discouragements, that it was never renewed. [3]

* Camden, .

* * Camden, .

* * * Camden, .

After the death of John Basilides, his son Theodore revoked the patent which the English enjoyed for a monopoly of the Russian trade: when the queen remonstrated against this innovation, he told her ministers, that princes must carry an indifferent hand, as well between their subjects as between foreigners; and not convert trade, which, by the laws of nations, ought to be common to all, into a monopoly for the private gain of a few. [1]

So much juster notions of commerce were entertained by this barbarian than appear in the conduct of the renowned Queen Elizabeth! Theodore, however, continued some privileges to the English, on account of their being the discoverers of the communication between Europe and his country.

The trade to Turkey commenced about the year 1583; and that commerce was immediately confined to a company by Queen Elizabeth. Before that time, the grand seignior had always conceived England to be a dependent province of France; [2] but having heard of the queen's power and reputation, he gave a good reception to the English, and even granted them larger privileges than he had given to the French.

The merchants of the Hanse Towns complained loudly, in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, of the treatment which they had received in the reigns of Edward and Mary. She prudently replied, that as she would not innovate any thing, she would still protect them in the immunities and privileges of which she found them possessed. This answer not contenting them, their commerce was soon after suspended for a time, to the great advantage of the English merchants, who tried what they could themselves effect for promoting their commerce. They took the whole trade into their own hands; and their returns proving successful, they divided themselves into staplers and merchant adventurers; the former residing constantly at one place, the latter trying their fortunes in other towns and states abroad with cloth and other manufactures. This success so enraged the Hanse Towns, that they tried all the methods which a discontented people could devise, to draw upon the English merchants the ill opinion of other nations and states. They prevailed so far as to obtain an imperial edict, by which the English were prohibited all commerce in the empire: the queen, by way of retaliation, retained sixty of their ships, which had been seized in the River Tagus with contraband goods of the Spaniards. These ships the queen intended to have restored, as desiring to have compromised all differences with those trading cities; but when she was informed, that a general assembly was held at Lubec, in order to concert measures for distressing the English trade, she

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* Camden, .

* * Birch's Memoirs, vol. i.

caused the ships and cargoes to be confiscated: only two of them were released to carry home the news, and to inform these states, that she had the greatest contempt imaginable for all their proceedings. [1]

Henry VIII., in order to fit out a navy, was obliged to hire ships from Hamburgh, Lubec, Dantzic, Genoa, and Venice, but Elizabeth, very early in her reign, put affairs upon a better footing; both by building some ships of her own, and by encouraging the merchants to build large trading vessels which, on occasion, were converted into ships of war. [2] In the year 1582, the seamen in England were found to be fourteen thousand two hundred and ninety-five men; [3] the number of vessels twelve hundred and thirty-two; of which there were only two hundred and seventeen above eighty tons. Monson pretends, that though navigation decayed in the first years of James I., by the practice of the merchants, who carried on their trade in foreign bottoms, [4] yet, before the year 1640, this number of seamen was tripled in England.

The navy which the queen left at her decease appears considerable, when we reflect only on the number of vessels, which were forty-two: but when we consider that none of these ships carried above forty guns; that four only came up to that number; that there were but two ships of a thousand tons; and twenty-three below five hundred, some of fifty, and some even of twenty tons; and that the whole number of guns belonging to the fleet was seven hundred and seventy four;[v*] we must entertain a contemptible idea of the English navy, compared to the force which it has now attained. [1] In the year 1588, there were not above five vessels fitted out by the noblemen and seaports, which exceeded two hundred tons.[v* *]

* Lives of the Admirals, vol. i. .

* * Camden, .

* * * Monson, .

* * * * Monson, .

v Monson, , 256.

v* Monson, . The English navy at present carries about fourteen thousand guns.

v* * See note NN, at the end of the volume.

Monson, . Spaniards; and the queen equipped a fleet and levied an army in a fortnight to oppose them.

Nothing gave foreigners a higher idea of the power of England than this sudden armament.

In the year 1575, all the militia in the kingdom were computed at a hundred and eighty-two thousand nine hundred and twenty-nine. [1] A distribution was made, in the year 1595, of a hundred and forty thousand men, besides those which Wales could supply. [2] These armies were formidable by their numbers; but their discipline and experience were not proportionate. Small bodies from Dunkirk and Newport frequently ran over and plundered the east coast: so unfit was the militia, as it was then constituted, for the defence of the kingdom. The lord lieutenants were first appointed to the counties in this reign.

Mr. Murden [3] has published, from the Salisbury collections, a paper which contains the military force of the nation at the time of the Spanish armada, and which is somewhat different from the account given by our ordinary historians. It makes all the able-bodied men of the kingdom amount to a hundred and eleven thousand five hundred and thirteen; those armed, to eighty thousand eight hundred and seventy-five; of whom forty-four thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven were trained. It must be supposed that these able-bodied men consisted of such only as were registered, otherwise the small number is not to be accounted for. Yet Sir Edward Coke [4] said, in the house of commons, that he was employed about the same time, together with Popham, chief justice, to take a survey of all the people of England, and that they found them to be nine hundred thousand of all sorts. This number, by the ordinary rules of computation, supposes that there were above two hundred thousand men able to bear arms. Yet even this number is surprisingly small. Can we suppose that the kingdom is six or seven times more populous at present? and that Murden's was the real number of men, excluding Catholics, and children, and infirm persons?

* Lives of the Admirals, vol. i. .

* * Strype, vol. iv.

* * * Page 608.

* * * * Journ. 25 April 1621.

Harrison says, that in the musters taken in the years 1574 and 1575, the men fit for service amounted to one million one hundred and seventy-two thousand six hundred and seventy-four; yet was it believed that a full third was omitted. Such uncertainty and contradiction are there in all these accounts.

Notwithstanding the greatness of this number, the same author complains much of the decay of populousness; a vulgar complaint in all places and all ages. Guicciardini makes the inhabitants of England in this reign amount to two millions.

Whatever opinion we may form of the comparative populousness of England in different periods, it must be allowed that, abstracting from the national debt, there is a prodigious increase of power in that, more perhaps than in any other European state, since the beginning of the last century. It would be no paradox to affirm, that Ireland alone could, at present, exert a greater force than all the three kingdoms were capable of at the death of Queen Elizabeth. And we might go further, and assert, that one good county in England is able to make, at least to support, a greater effort than the whole kingdom was capable of in the reign of Henry V.; when the maintenance of a garrison in a small town like Calais, formed more than a third of the ordinary national expense. Such are the effects of liberty, industry, and good government!

The state of the English manufactures was at this time very low; and foreign wares of almost all kinds had the preference. [1] About the year 1590, there were in London four persons only rated in the subsidy books so high as four hundred pounds. [2] This computation is not indeed to be deemed an exact estimate of their wealth. In 1567, there were found, on inquiry, to be four thousand eight hundred and fifty-one strangers of all nations in London; of whom three thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight were Flemings, and only fifty-eight Scots. [3] The persecutions in France and the Low Countries drove afterwards a greater number of foreigners into England; and the commerce, as well as manufactures of that kingdom, was very much improved by them. [4] It was then that Sir Thomas Gresham built, at his own charge, the magnificent fabric of the Exchange for the reception of the merchants: the queen visited it, and gave it the appellation of the Royal Exchange.

* D’Ewes, .

* * D’Ewes, .

* * * Haynes, , 462.

* * * * Stowe, .

By a lucky accident in language, which has a great effect on men’s ideas, the invidious word usury which formerly meant the taking of any interest for money, came now to express only the taking of exorbitant and illegal interest. An act passed in 1571 violently condemns all usury; but permits ten per cent, interest to be paid. Henry IV. of France reduced Interest to six and a half per cent.; an indication of the great advance of France above England in commerce.

Dr. Howell says, [1] that Queen Elizabeth, in the third of her reign, was presented with a pair of black silk knit stockings by her silk-woman, and never wore cloth hose any more. The author of the Present State of England, says, that about 1577, pocket watches were first brought into England from Germany. They are thought to have been invented at Nurem berg. About 1580, the use of coaches was introduced by the earl of Arundel. [2] Before that time, the queen, on public occasions, rode behind her chamberlain.

Camden says, that in 1581, Randolph, so much employed by the queen in foreign embassies, possessed the office of postmaster-general of England. It appears, therefore, that posts were then established; though from Charles I.’s regulations in 1635, it would seem that few post-houses were erected before that time.

In a remonstrance of the Hanse Towns to the diet of the empire, in 1582, it is affirmed that England exported annually about two hundred thousand pieces of cloth. [3] This number seems to be much exaggerated.

In the fifth of this reign was enacted the first law for the relief of the poor.

A judicious author of that age confirms the vulgar observation, that the kingdom was depopulating, from the increase of enclosures and decay of tillage; and he ascribes the reason very justly to the restraints put oh the exportation of corn; while full liberty was allowed to export all the produce of pasturage, such as wool, hides, leather, tallow, etc. These prohibitions of exportation were derived from the prerogative, and were very injudicious. The queen once, on the commencement of her reign, had tried a contrary practice, and with good success. From the same author we learn, that the complaints renewed in our time were then very common, concerning the high prices of every thing. [4]

* History of the World, vol. ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. i. .

* * * Anderson, voL i. .

* * * * A compendious or brief Examination of certain ordinary Complaints of divers of our Countrymen. The author says, that in twenty or thirty years before 1581, commodities had in general risen fifty per cent.; some more. “Cannot you,

neighbor, remember,” say she “that, indeed, to have been two periods, in which prices rose remarkably in England;” namely,

that in Queen Elizabeth’s reign, when they are computed to have doubled, and that in the present age. Between the two,

there seems to have been a stagnation. It would appear, that industry, during that intermediate period, increased as fast as gold and silver, and kept commodities nearly at a par with money.

There were two attempts made in this reign to settle colonies in America; one by Sir Humphrey Gilbert in Newfoundland, another by Sir Walter Raleigh in Virginia: but neither of these projects proved successful. All those noble settlements were made in the following reigns. The current specie of the kingdom, in the end of this reign, is computed at four millions. [1]

The earl of Leicester desired Sir Francis Walsingham, then ambassador in France, to provide him with a riding master in that country, to whom he promises a hundred pounds a year, besides maintaining himself and servant and a couple of horses. “I know,” adds the earl, “that such a man as I want may receive higher wages in France: but let him consider, that a shilling in England goes as far as two shillings in France.” [2] It is known that every thing is much changed since that time.

The nobility in this age still supported, in some degree, the ancient magnificence in their hospitality, and in the numbers of their retainers; and the queen found it prudent to retrench, by proclamation, their expenses in this last particular. [3] The expense of hospitality she somewhat encouraged, by the frequent visits she paid her nobility, and the sumptuous feasts which she received from them.

“I could, in this town, buy the best pig or goose I could lay my hands on for fourpence, which now costeth twelvepence; a good capon for threepence or fourpence; a chicken for a penny; a hen for twopence?” (.) “Yet the price of ordinary labor was then eightpence a day,” (.)

* Lives of the Admirals, vol. i. .

* * Digges’s Complete Ambassador.

* * * Strype, vol. iii. Append, .

Harrison, after enumerating the queen’s palaces, adds, “But what shall I need to take upon me to repeat all, and tell what houses the queen’s majesty hath? Sith all is hers; and when it pleaseth her in the summer season to recreate herself abroad, and view the estate of the country, and hear the complaints of her poor commons injured by her unjust officers or their substitutes, every nobleman’s house is her palace, where she continueth during pleasure and tell her an entertainment in Kenilworth Castle, which was extraordinary for expense and magnificence.” Among other particulars, we are told that three hundred and sixty-five hogsheads of beer were drunk at it. [1] The earl had fortified this castle at great expense; and it contained arms for ten thousand men. [2] The earl of Derby had a family consisting of two hundred and forty servants. [3] Stowe remarks it as a singular proof of beneficence in this nobleman, that he was contented with his rent from his tenants, and exacted not any extraordinary services from them; a proof that the great power of the sovereign (what was almost unavoidable) had very generally countenanced the nobility in tyrannizing over the people. Burleigh, though he was frugal, and had no paternal estate, kept a family consisting of a hundred servants. [4] He had a standing table for gentlemen, and two other tables for persons of meaner condition, which were always served alike, whether he were in town or in the country. About his person he had people of great distinction; insomuch that he could reckon up twenty gentlemen retainers who had each a thousand pounds a year; and as many among his ordinary servants who were worth from a thousand pounds to three, five, ten, and twenty thousand pounds. It is to be remarked, that though the revenues of the crown were at that time very small, the ministers and courtiers sometimes found means, by employing the boundless prerogative, to acquire greater fortunes than it is possible for them at present to amass, from their larger salaries, and more limited authority.

Burleigh entertained the queen twelve several times in his country house; where she remained three, four, or five weeks at a time. Each visit cost him two or three thousand pounds.[v*] The quantity of silver plate possessed by this nobleman is surprising; no less than fourteen or fifteen thousand pounds weight;[v* *] which, besides the fashion, would be above forty-two thousand pounds sterling in value. Yet Burleigh left only four thousand pounds a year in land, and eleven thousand pounds in money; and as land was then commonly sold at ten years' purchase, his plate was nearly equal to all the rest of his fortune. It appears that little value was then put upon the fashion of the plate, which probably was but rude: the weight was chiefly considered.

*"She return again to some of her own, in which she remaineth so long as she pleaseth." Book ii. cha. Surely one may say of such a guest, what Cicero says to Atticus, on occasion of a visit paid him by Cæsar. "Hospes tamen non is cui diceres, Amabo te, eodem ad me cum revertêre." Lib. xiii. E. If she relieved the people from oppressions, (to whom it seems the law could give no relief,) her visits were a great oppression on the nobility.

* * Biogr. Brit. vol. iii. .

* * * Strype, vol. iii. .

* * * * Stowe, .

v Strype, vol. iii. . Append.

v* Life of Burleigh, published by Collins.

v* * Life of Burleigh published by Collins, .

But though there were preserved great remains of the ancient customs, the nobility were by degrees acquiring a taste for elegant luxury; and many edifices, in particular were built by them, neat, large, and sumptuous; to the great ornament of the kingdom, says Camden, [1] but to the no less decay of the glorious hospitality of the nation. It is, however, more reasonable to think, that this new turn of expense promoted arts and industry; while the ancient hospitality was the source of vice, disorder, sedition, and idleness. [2]

Among the other species of luxury, that of apparel began much to increase during this age; and the queen thought proper to restrain it by proclamation. [3] Her example was very little conformable to her edicts. As no woman was ever more conceited of her beauty, or more desirous of making impression on the hearts of beholders, no one ever went to a greater extravagance in apparel, or studied more the variety and richness of her dresses. She appeared almost every day in a different habit; and tried all the several modes by which she hoped to render herself agreeable. She was also so fond of her clothes, that she never could part with any of them; and at her death she had in her wardrobe all the different habits, to the number of three thousand, which she had ever worn in her lifetime. [4]

* See note OO, at the end of the volume.

* * This appears from Burleigh’s will: he specifies only the number of ounces to be given to each legatee, and appoints a goldsmith to see it weighed out to them, without making any distinction of the pieces.

* * * * See note PP, at the end of the volume.

The retrenchment of the ancient hospitality, and the diminution of retainers, were favorable to the prerogative of the sovereign; and, by disabling the great noblemen from resistance, promoted the execution of the laws, and extended the authority of the courts of justice. There were many peculiar causes in the situation and character of Henry VII. which augmented the authority of the crown: most of these causes concurred in succeeding princes; together with the factions in religion, and the acquisition of the supremacy, a most important article of prerogative: but the manners of the age were a general cause, which operated during this whole period, and which continually tended to diminish the riches, and still more the influence, of the aristocracy, anciently so formidable to the crown. The habits of luxury dissipated the immense fortunes of the ancient barons: and as the new methods of expense gave subsistence to mechanics and merchants, who lived in an independent manner on the fruits of their own industry, a nobleman, instead of that unlimited ascendant which he was wont to assume over those who were maintained at his board, or subsisted by salaries conferred on them, retained only that moderate influence which customers have over tradesmen, and which can never be dangerous to civil government. The landed proprietors also, having a greater demand for money than for men, endeavored to turn their lands to the best account with regard to profit; and either enclosing their fields, or joining many small farms into a few large ones, dismissed those useless hands which formerly were always at their call in every attempt to subvert the government, or oppose a neighboring baron. By all these means the cities increased; the middle rank of men began to be rich and powerful; the prince, who in effect was the same with the law, was implicitly obeyed: and though the further progress of the same causes begat a new plan of liberty, founded on the privileges of the commons, yet in the interval between the fall of the nobles and the rise of this order, the sovereign took advantage of the present situation, and assumed an authority almost absolute.

Whatever may be commonly imagined, from the authority of Lord Bacon, and from that of Harrington, and later authors the laws of Henry VII. contributed very little towards the great revolution which happened about this period in the English constitution. The practice of breaking entails by a fine and recovery, had been introduced in the preceding reigns; and this prince only gave indirectly a legal sanction to the practice, by reforming some abuses which attended it. But the settled authority which he acquired to the crown enabled the sovereign to encroach on the separate jurisdictions of the barons, and produced a more general and regular execution of the laws. The counties palatine underwent the same fate as the feudal powers; and, by a statute of Henry VIII., [1] the jurisdiction of these counties was annexed to the crown, and all writs were ordained to run in the king’s name. But the change of manners was the chief cause of the secret revolution of government, and subverted the power of the barons. There appear still in this reign some remains of the ancient slavery of the boors and peasants, [1] but none afterwards.

Learning, on its revival, was held in high estimation by the English princes and nobles; and as it was not yet prostituted by being too common, even the great deemed it an object of ambition to attain a character for literature. The four successive sovereigns, Henry, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth, may, on one account or other, be admitted into the class of authors. Queen Catharine Parr translated a book: Lady Jane Gray, considering her age, and her sex, and her station, may be regarded as a prodigy of literature. Sir Thomas Smith was raised from being professor in Cambridge, first to be ambassador to France, then secretary of state. The despatches of those times, and among others those of Burleigh himself, are frequently interlarded with quotations from the Greek and Latin classics. Even the ladies of the court valued themselves on knowledge: Lady Burleigh, Lady Bacon, and their two sisters, were mistresses of the ancient as well as modern languages; and placed more pride in their erudition than in their rank and quality.

Queen Elizabeth wrote and translated several books: and she was familiarly acquainted with the Greek as well as Latin tongue. [2]

* 27 Henry VIII. c. 24.

* * See note QQ, at the end of the volume.

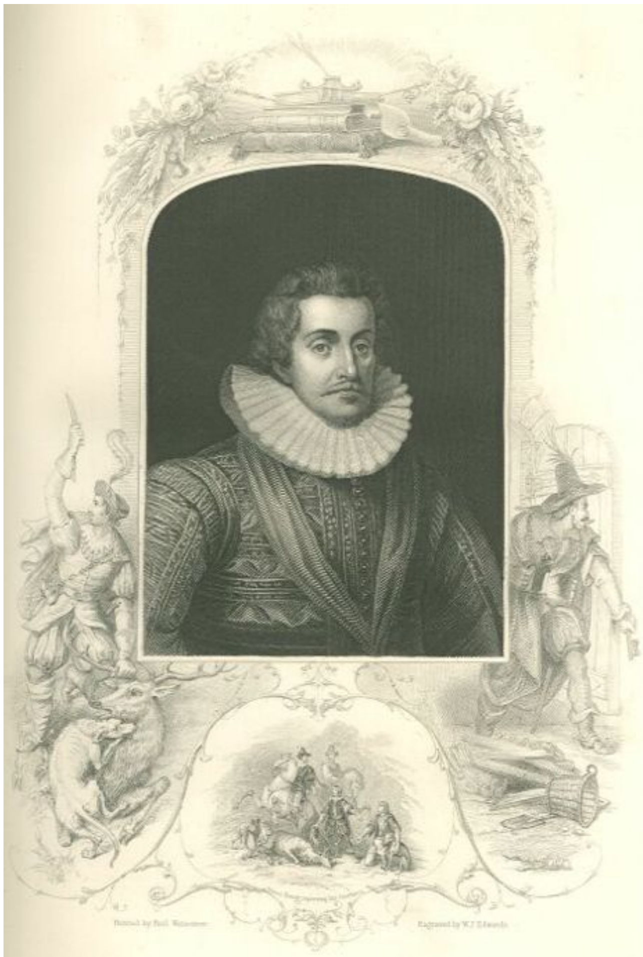
It is pretended that she made an extemporary reply in Greek to the university of Cambridge, who had addressed her in that language. It is certain that she answered in Latin without premeditation, and in a very spirited manner, to the Polish ambassador, who had been wanting in respect to her. When she had finished, she turned about to her courtiers, and said, “God’s death, my lords,” (for she was much addicted to swearing,) “I have been forced this day to scour up my old Latin, that hath long lain rusting.” [1]

* Speed.

Elizabeth, even after she was queen, did not entirely drop the ambition of appearing as an author; and, next to her desire of admiration for beauty, this seems to have been the chief object of her vanity. She translated Boethius of the Consolation of Philosophy; in order, as she pretended, to allay her grief for Henry IV.'s change of religion. As far us we can judge from Elizabeth's compositions, we may pronounce that, notwithstanding her application, and her excellent parts, her taste in literature was but indifferent: she was much inferior to her successor in this particular, who was himself no perfect model of eloquence.

Unhappily for literature, at least for the learned of this age, the queen's vanity lay more in shining by her own learning, than in encouraging men of genius by her liberality. Spenser himself, the finest English writer of his age, was long neglected; and after the death of Sir Philip Sidney, his patron, was allowed to die almost for want. This poet contains great beauties, a sweet and harmonious versification, easy elocution, a fine imagination; yet does the perusal of his work become so tedious, that one never finishes it from the mere pleasure which it affords; it soon becomes a kind of task-reading, and it requires some effort and resolution to carry us on to the end of his long performance. This effect, of which every one is conscious, is usually ascribed to the change of manners: but manners have more changed since Homer's age; and yet that poet remains still the favorite of every reader of taste and judgment. Homer copied true natural manners, which, however rough or uncultivated, will always form an agreeable and interesting picture; but the pencil of the English poet was employed in drawing the affectations, and conceits, and fopperies of chivalry, which appear ridiculous as soon as they lose the recommendation of the mode. The tediousness of continued allegory, and that, too, seldom striking or ingenious, has also contributed to render the Fairy Queen peculiarly tiresome; not to mention the too great frequency of its descriptions, and the languor of its stanza. Upon the whole, Spenser maintains his place upon the shelves among our English classics; but he is seldom seen on the table; and there is scarcely any one, if he dares to be ingenuous, but will confess, that, notwithstanding all the merit of the poet, he affords an entertainment with which the palate is soon satiated. Several writers of late have amused themselves in copying the style of Spenser; and no imitation has been so indifferent as not to bear a great resemblance to the original: his manner is so peculiar that it is almost impossible not to transfer some of it into the copy.

CHAPTER XLV.



Painted by Paul Vansomer. Engraved by W.J. Edwards.

JAMES I.

JAMES I.

1603.

The crown of England was never transmitted from father to son with greater tranquillity than it passed from the family of Tudor to that of Stuart. During the whole reign of Elizabeth, the eyes of men had been employed in search of her successor; and when old age made the prospect of her death more immediate, there appeared none but the king of Scots who could advance any just claim or pretension to the throne. He was great-grandson of Margaret, elder daughter of Henry VII.; and, on the failure of the male line, his hereditary right remained unquestionable. If the religion of Mary queen of Scots, and the other prejudices contracted against her, had formed any considerable obstacle to her succession, these objections, being entirely personal, had no place with regard to her son. Men also considered, that though the title derived from blood had been frequently violated since the Norman conquest, such licenses had proceeded more from force or intrigue than from any deliberate maxims of government. The lineal heir had still in the end prevailed: and both his exclusion and restoration had been commonly attended with such convulsions as were sufficient to warn all prudent men not lightly to give way to such irregularities. If the will of Henry VIII., authorized by act of parliament, had tacitly excluded the Scottish line, the tyranny and caprices of that monarch had been so signal, that a settlement of this nature, unsupported by any just reason, had no authority with the people. Queen Elizabeth, too, with her dying breath, had recognized the undoubted title of her kinsman James; and the whole nation seemed to dispose themselves with joy and pleasure for his reception. Though born and educated amidst a foreign and hostile people, men hoped, from his character of moderation and wisdom, that he would embrace the maxims of an English monarch; and the prudent foresaw greater advantages resulting from a union with Scotland, than disadvantages from submitting to a prince of that nation. The alacrity with which the English looked towards the successor had appeared so evident to Elizabeth, that, concurring, with other causes, it affected her with the deepest melancholy; and that wise princess, whose penetration and experience had given her the greatest insight into human affairs, had not yet, sufficiently weighed the ingratitude of courtiers and levity of the people.

As victory abroad and tranquillity at home had attended this princess, she left the nation in such flourishing circumstances, that her successor possessed every advantage, except that of comparison with her illustrious name, when he mounted the throne of England. The king’s journey from Edinburgh to London immediately afforded to the inquisitive some circumstances of comparison, which even the natural partiality in favor of their new sovereign could not interpret to his advantage. As he passed along, all ranks of men flocked about him from every quarter, allured by interest or curiosity. Great were the rejoicings, and loud and hearty the acclamations, which resounded from all sides; and every one could remember how the affability and popular manners of their queen displayed themselves amidst such concourse and exultation of her subjects. But James, though sociable and familiar with his friends and courtiers, hated the bustle of a mixed multitude; and though far from disliking flattery, yet was he still fonder of tranquillity and ease. He issued, therefore, a proclamation, forbidding this resort of people, on pretence of the scarcity of provisions, and other inconveniencies, which, he said, would necessarily attend it. [1]

* Kennet, .

He was not, however, insensible to the great flow of affection which appeared in his new subjects; and being himself of an affectionate temper, he seems to have been in haste to make them some return of kindness and good offices. To this motive, probably, we are to ascribe that profusion of titles which was observed in the beginning of his reign; when, in six weeks’ time after his entrance into the kingdom, he is computed to have bestowed knighthood on no less than two hundred and thirty-seven persons. If Elizabeth’s frugality of honors, as well as of money, had formerly been repined at, it began now to be valued and esteemed, and every one was sensible that the king, by his lavish and premature conferring of favors, had failed of obliging the persons on whom he bestowed them. Titles of all kinds became so common, that they were scarcely marks of distinction; and being distributed, without choice or deliberation, to persons unknown to the prince, were regarded more as the proofs of facility and good nature, than of any determined friendship or esteem.

A pasquinade was affixed to St. Paul’s, in which an art was promised to be taught, very necessary to assist frail memories in retaining the names of the new nobility. [1]

We may presume that the English would have thrown less blame on the king’s facility in bestowing favors, had these been confined entirely to their own nation, and had not been shared out, in too unequal proportions, to his old subjects. James, who, through his whole reign, was more guided by temper and inclination than by the rules of political prudence, had brought with him great numbers of his Scottish courtiers, whose impatience and importunity were apt, in many particulars, to impose on the easy nature of their master, and extort favors of which, it is natural to imagine, his English subjects would loudly complain. The duke of Lenox, the earl of Marre, Lord Hume, Lord Kinloss, Sir George Hume, Secretary Elphinstone, [2] were immediately added to the English privy council. Sir George Hume, whom he created earl of Dunbar, was his declared favorite as long as that nobleman lived, and was one of the wisest and most virtuous, though the least powerful, of all those whom the king ever honored with that distinction. Hay, some time after, was created Viscount Doncaster, then earl of Carlisle, and got an immense fortune from the crown, all which he spent in a splendid and courtly manner. Ramsay obtained the title of earl of Holderness; and many others being raised on a sudden to the highest elevation, increased, by their insolence, that envy which naturally attended them as strangers and ancient enemies.

It must, however, be owned, in justice to James, that he left almost all the chief offices in the hands of Elizabeth’s ministers, and trusted the conduct of political concerns, both foreign and domestic, to his English subjects. Among these, Secretary Cecil, created successively Lord Effindon, Viscount Cranborne, and earl of Salisbury, was always regarded as his prime minister and chief counsellor. Though the capacity and penetration of this minister were sufficiently known, his favor with the king created

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* Wilson, in Kennet, .

* * Wilson, in Kennet, .

surprise on the accession of that monarch. The secret correspondence into which he had entered with James, and which had sensibly contributed to the easy reception of that prince in England, laid the foundation of Cecil's credit; and while all his former associates, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Grey, Lord Cobham, were discountenanced on account of their animosity against Essex, as well as for other reasons, this minister was continued in employment, and treated with the greatest confidence and regard.

The capacity of James and his ministers in negotiation was immediately put to trial on the appearance of ambassadors from almost all the princes and states of Europe, in order to congratulate him on his accession, and form with him new treaties and alliances. Besides ministers from Venice, Denmark, the Palatinate; Henry Frederic of Nassau, assisted by Barnevelt, the pensionary of Holland, was ambassador from the states of the United Provinces. Aremberg was sent by Archduke Albert, and Taxis was expected in a little time from Spain. But he who most excited the attention of the public, both on account of his own merit and that of his master, was the marquis of Rosni, afterwards duke of Sully, prime minister and favorite of Henry IV. of France.

When the dominions of the house of Austria devolved on Philip II., all Europe was struck with terror, lest the power of a family, which had been raised by fortune, should now be carried to an immeasurable height by the wisdom and conduct of this monarch. But never were apprehensions found in the event to be more groundless. Slow without prudence, ambitious without enterprise, false without deceiving any body, and refined without any true judgment; such was the character of Philip, and such the character which, during his lifetime, and after his death, he impressed on the Spanish councils. Revolted or depopulated provinces, discontented or indolent inhabitants, were the spectacles which those dominions, lying in every climate of the globe, presented to Philip III., a weak prince, and to the duke of Lerma, a minister weak and odious. But though military discipline, which still remained, was what alone gave some appearance of life and vigor to that languishing body, yet so great was the terror produced by former power and ambition, that the reduction of the house of Austria was the object of men's vows throughout all the states of Christendom. It was not perceived, that the French empire, now united in domestic peace, and governed by the most heroic and most amiable prince that adorns modern story, was become, of itself, a sufficient counterpoise to the Spanish greatness. Perhaps that prince himself did not perceive it, when he proposed, by his minister, a league with James, in conjunction with Venice, the United Provinces, and the northern crowns, in order to attack the Austrian dominions on every side, and depress the exorbitant power of that ambitious family. [1] But the genius of the English monarch was not equal to such vast enterprises. The love of peace was his ruling passion; and it was his peculiar felicity, that the conjunctures of the times rendered the same object which was agreeable to him in the highest degree advantageous to his people.

The French ambassador, therefore, was obliged to depart from these extensive views, and to concert with James the means of providing for the safety of the United Provinces: nor was this object altogether without its difficulties. The king, before his accession, had entertained scruples with regard to the revolt of the Low Countries; and being commonly open and sincere, [2] he had, on many occasions, gone so far as to give to the Dutch the appellation of rebels; [3] but having conversed more fully with English ministers and courtiers, he found their attachment to that republic so strong, and their opinion of common interest so established, that he was obliged to sacrifice to politics his sense of justice; a quality which, even when erroneous, is respectable as well as rare in a monarch.

* Sully’s Memoirs.

* * La Boderie, voL i. .

* * * Winwood, vol. ii. p 55.

He therefore agreed with Rosni to support secretly the states general, in concert with the king of France; lest their weakness and despair should oblige them to submit to their old master. The articles of the treaty were few and simple. It was stipulated, that the two kings should allow the Dutch to levy forces in their respective dominions; and should underhand remit to that republic the sum of one million four hundred thousand livres a year, for the pay of these forces: that the whole sum should be advanced by the king of France; but that the third of it should be deducted from the debt due by him to Queen Elizabeth. And if the Spaniards attacked either of the princes, they agreed to assist each other; Henry with a force of ten thousand men, James with that of six. This treaty, one of the wisest and most equitable concluded by James during the course of his reign was more the work of the prince himself, than any of his ministers. [1]

Amidst the great tranquillity, both foreign and domestic with which the nation was blest, nothing could be more surprising than the discovery of a conspiracy to subvert the government, and to fix on the throne Arabella Stuart, a near relation of the king's by the family of Lenox, and descended equally from Henry VII. Every thing remains still mysterious in this conspiracy; and history can give us no clew to unravel it. Watson and Clarke, two Catholic priests, were accused of the plot; Lord Grey, a Puritan; Lord Cobham, a thoughtless man, of no fixed principle; and Sir Walter Raleigh, suspected to be of that philosophical sect who were then extremely rare in England, and who have since received the appellation of "Free-thinkers;" together with these, Mr. Broke, brother to Lord Cobham, Sir Griffin Markham, Mr. Copeley, Sir Edward Parham. What cement could unite men of-such discordant principles in so dangerous a combination, what end they proposed, or what means proportioned to an undertaking of this nature, has never yet been explained, and cannot easily be imagined. As Raleigh, Grey, and Cobham were commonly believed, after the queen's death, to have opposed proclaiming the king till conditions should be made with him, they were, upon that account, extremely obnoxious to the court and ministry; and people were apt, at first, to suspect that the plot was merely a contrivance of Secretary Cecil, to get rid of his old confederates, now become his most inveterate enemies. But the confession, as well as trial, of the criminals, put the matter beyond doubt. [2] And though no one could find any marks of a concerted enterprise, it appeared that men of furious and ambitious spirits, meeting frequently together, and believing all the world discontented like themselves, had entertained very criminal projects, and had even entered, some of them at least, into a correspondence with Aremberg, the Flemish ambassador in order to give disturbance to the new settlement.

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* Sully's Memoirs.

* * State Trials, , 2d edit. Winwood, vol. ii. ,11.

The two priests [1] and Broke [2] were executed: Cobham, Grey, and Markham were pardoned, [3] after they had laid their heads upon the block. [4] Raleigh too was reprieved, not pardoned; and he remained in confinement many years afterwards.

It appears from Sully’s Memoirs, that Raleigh secretly offered his services to the French ambassador; and we may thence presume that, meeting with a repulse from that quarter, he had recourse, for the same unwarrantable purposes, to the Flemish minister. Such a conjecture we are now enabled to form; but it must be confessed, that on his trial there appeared no proof of this transaction, nor indeed any circumstance which could justify his condemnation. He was accused by Cobham alone, in a sudden fit of passion, upon hearing that Raleigh, when examined, had pointed out some circumstances by which Cobham’s guilt might be known and ascertained. This accusation Cobham afterwards retracted; and, soon after, he retracted his retractation. Yet upon the written evidence of this single witness, a man of no honor or understanding, and so contradictory in his testimony; not confronted with Raleigh; not supported by any concurring circumstance; was that great man, contrary to all law and equity, found guilty by the jury. His name was at that time extremely odious in England; and every man was pleased to give sentence against the capital enemy of Essex, the favorite of the people.

Sir Edward Coke, the famous lawyer, then attorney-general, managed the cause for the crown, and threw out on Raleigh such gross abuse, as may be deemed a great reflection, not only on his own memory, but even, in some degree, on the manners of the age. Traitor, monster, viper, and spider of hell, are the terms which he employs against one of the most illustrious men of the kingdom, who was under trial for life and fortune, and who defended himself with temper, eloquence, and courage.

* November 29.

* * December 5.

* * * December 9.

* * * * Winwood, vol. ii .

v State Trials, 1st edit. , 177, 182.

1604.

The next occupation of the king was entirely according to his heart’s content. He was employed in dictating magisterially to an assembly of divines concerning points of faith and discipline, and in receiving the applauses of these holy men for his superior zeal and learning. The religious disputes between the church and the Puritans had induced him to call a conference at Hampton Court, on pretence of finding expedients which might reconcile both parties.

Though the severities of Elizabeth towards the Catholics had much weakened that party, whose genius was opposite to the prevailing spirit of the nation, like severities had had so little influence on the Puritans, who were encouraged by that spirit, that no less than seven hundred and fifty clergymen of that party signed a petition to the king on his accession; and many more seemed willing to adhere to it. [1]

They all hoped that James, having received his education in Scotland, and having sometimes professed an attachment to the church established there, would at least abate the rigor of the laws enacted in support of the ceremonies, and against Puritans; if he did not show more particular grace and encouragement to that sect. But the king’s disposition had taken strongly a contrary bias. The more he knew the Puritanical clergy, the less favor he bore to them. He had remarked in their Scottish brethren a violent turn towards republicanism, and a zealous attachment to civil liberty; principles nearly allied to that religious enthusiasm with which they were actuated. He had found, that being mostly persons of low birth and mean education, the same lofty pretensions which attended them in their familiar addresses to their Maker, of whom they believed themselves the peculiar favorites, induced them to use the utmost freedoms with their earthly sovereign. In both capacities, of monarch and of theologian, he had experienced the little complaisance which they were disposed to show him; whilst they controlled his commands, disputed his tenets, and to his face, before the whole people, censured his conduct and behavior. If he had

* Fuller, book x. Collier, vol. ii. .

submitted to the indignity of courting their favor, he treasured up, on that account, the stronger resentment against them, and was determined to make them feel, in their turn, the weight of his authority. Though he had often met with resistance, and faction, and obstinacy in the Scottish nobility, he retained no ill will to that order; or rather showed them favor and kindness in England, beyond what reason and sound policy could well justify; but the ascendant which the Presbyterian clergy had assumed over him, was what his monarchical pride could never thoroughly digest. [1]

* James ventured to say, in his Basilicon Duron, published while he was in Scotland, "I protest before the great God, and since I am here as upon my Testament, it is no place for me to lie in, that ye shall never find with any highland or borderer thieves, greater in gratitude, and more lies and vile perjuries, than with these fanatic spirits: and suffer not the principal of them to brook your land," — King James's Works, .

He dreaded likewise the popularity which attended this order of men in both kingdoms. As useless austerities and self-denial are imagined, in many religions, to render us acceptable to a benevolent Being, who created us solely for happiness, James remarked, that the rustic severity of these clergymen, and of their whole sect, had given them, in the eyes of the multitude, the appearance of sanctity and virtue. Strongly inclined himself to mirth, and wine, and sports of all kinds, he apprehended their censure for his manner of life, free and disengaged. And being thus averse, from temper as well as policy, to the sect of Puritans, he was resolved, if possible, to prevent its further growth in England.

But it was the character of James's councils, throughout his whole reign, that they were more wise and equitable in their end, than prudent and political in the means. Though justly sensible that no part of civil administration required greater care or a nicer judgment than the conduct of religious parties, he had not perceived that, in the same proportion as this practical knowledge of theology is requisite, the speculative refinements in it are mean, and even dangerous in a monarch. By entering zealously into frivolous disputes, James gave them an air of importance and dignity which they could not otherwise have acquired; and being himself enlisted in the quarrel, he could no longer have recourse to contempt and ridicule, the only proper method of appeasing it. The church of England had not yet abandoned the rigid doctrines of grace and pre-destination: the puritans had not yet separated themselves from the church, nor openly renounced

Episcopacy. Though the spirit of the parties was considerably different, the only appearing subjects of dispute were concerning the cross in baptism, the ring in marriage, the use of the surplice, and the bowing at the name of Jesus. These were the mighty questions which were solemnly agitated in the conference at Hampton Court between some bishops and dignified clergymen on the one hand, and some leaders of the Puritanical party on the other, the king and his ministers being present. [1]

The Puritans were here so unreasonable as to complain of a partial and unfair management of the dispute; as if the search after truth were in any degree the object of such conferences, and a candid indifference, so rare even among private inquirers in philosophical questions, could ever be expected among princes and prelates, in a theological controversy. The king, it must be confessed, from the beginning of the conference, showed the strongest propensity to the established church, and frequently inculcated a maxim which, though it has some foundation, is to be received with great limitations, “No bishop, no king.” The bishops, in their turn, were very liberal of their praises towards the royal disputant; and the archbishop of Canterbury said, that “undoubtedly his majesty spake by the special assistance of God’s Spirit.” [2] A few alterations in the liturgy were agreed to, and both parties separated with mutual dissatisfaction.

It had frequently been the practice of the Puritans to form certain assemblies, which they called “prophesyings;” where alternately, as moved by the spirit, they displayed their pious zeal in prayers and exhortations, and raised their own enthusiasm, as well as that of their audience, to the highest pitch, from that social contagion which has so mighty an influence on holy fervors, and from the mutual emulation which arose in those trials of religious eloquence. Such dangerous societies had been suppressed by Elizabeth; and the ministers in this conference moved the king for their revival. But James sharply replied, “If you aim at a Scottish presbytery, it agrees as well with monarchy as God and the devil. There Jack and Tom, and Will and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my council. Therefore I reiterate my former speech: Le roi s’avisera. Stay, I pray, for one seven years, before you demand; and then, if you find me grow pursy and fat, I may perchance hearken unto you. For that government will keep me in breath, and give me work enough.” [3] Such were the political considerations which determined the king in his choice among religious parties.

* Fuller’s Ecclesiastical History.

* * Kennet, .

* * * Fuller’s Ecclesiastical History.

The next assembly in which James displayed his learning and eloquence, was one that showed more spirit of liberty than appeared among his bishops and theologians The parliament was now ready to assemble; being so long delayed on account of the plague, which had broken out in London, and raged to such a degree, that above thirty thousand persons are computed to have died of it in a year; though the city contained at that time little more than one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants.

The speech which the king made on opening the parliament, fully displays his character, and proves him to have possessed more knowledge and better parts, than prudence, or any just sense of decorum and propriety.[1] Though few productions of the age surpass this performance either in style or matter, it wants that majestic brevity and reserve which become a king in his addresses to the great council of the nation. It contains, however, a remarkable stroke of candor, where he confesses his too great facility in yielding to the solicitations of suitors:[2] a fault which he promises to correct, but which adhered to him, and distressed him, during the whole course of his reign.

The first business in which the commons were engaged was of the utmost importance to the preservation of their privileges; and neither temper nor resolution was wanting in their conduct of it.

In the former periods of the English government, the house of commons was of so small weight in the balance of the constitution, that little attention had been given either by the crown, the people, or the house itself, to the choice and continuance of the members. It had been usual, after parliaments were prolonged beyond one session, for the chancellor to exert a discretionary authority of issuing new writs to supply the place of any members whom he judged incapable of attending, either on account of their employment, their sickness, or other impediment. This practice gave that minister, and consequently the prince, an unlimited power of modelling at pleasure the representatives of the nation; yet so little jealousy had it created, that the commons of themselves, without any court influence or intrigue, and contrary to some former votes of their own, confirmed it in the twenty-third of Elizabeth. [3]

* King James's Works, , 485, etc. Journ. 22d March, 1603. Kennet, .

* * King James's Works, , 496.

* * * Journ. January 19th, 1580.

At that time, though some members, whose places had been supplied on account of sickness, having now recovered their health, appeared in the house and claimed their seat, such was the authority of the chancellor, that, merely out of respect to him, his sentence was adhered to, and the new members were continued in their places. Here a most dangerous prerogative was conferred on the crown: but to show the genius of that age, or rather the channels in which power then ran, the crown put very little value on this authority; insomuch that two days afterwards the chancellor of himself resigned it back to the commons, and gave them power to judge of a particular vacancy in their house. And when the question concerning the chancellor's new writs was again brought on the carpet towards the end of the session, the commons were so little alarmed at the precedent, that though they readmitted some old members, whose seats had been vacated on account of slight indispositions, yet they confirmed the chancellor's sentence, in instances where the distemper appeared to have been dangerous and incurable. [1]

* Journ. March 18th, 1580. See further, D'Ewes, p 430.

Nor did they proceed any further in vindication of their privileges than to vote, "That during the sitting of parliament, there do not, at any time, any writ go out for choosing or returning any member without the warrant of the house." In Elizabeth's reign, we may remark, and the reigns preceding, sessions of parliament were not usually the twelfth part so long as the vacations; and during the latter, the chancellor's power, if he pleased to exert it, was confirmed, at least left, by this vote, as unlimited and unrestrained as ever.

In a subsequent parliament, the absolute authority of the queen was exerted in a manner still more open; and began for the first time to give alarm to the commons. New writs having been issued by the chancellor when there was no vacancy, and a controversy arising upon that incident, the queen sent a message to the house, informing them that it were impertinent for them to deal in such matters. These questions, she said, belonged only to the chancellor; and she had appointed him to confer with the judges, in order to settle all disputes with regard to elections. The commons had the courage, a few days after, to vote, “That it was a most perilous precedent, where two knights of a county were duly elected, if any new writ should issue out for a second election without order of the house itself: that the discussing and adjudging of this and such like differences belonged only to the house; and that there should be no message sent to the lord chancellor, not so much as to inquire what he had done in the matter, because it was conceived to be a matter derogatory to the power and privilege of the house.” [1] This is the most considerable, and almost only instance of parliamentary liberty, which occurs during the reign of that princess.

Outlaws, whether on account of debts or crimes, had been declared by the judges [1] incapable of enjoying a seat in the house, where they must themselves be lawgivers; but this opinion of the judges had been frequently overruled. I find, however, in the case of Vaughan, [2] who was questioned for an outlawry, that, having proved all his debts to have been contracted by suretyship, and to have been most of them honestly compounded, he was allowed, on account of these favorable circumstances, to keep his seat; which plainly supposes, that otherwise it would have been vacated on account of the outlawry. [3]

When James summoned this parliament, he issued a proclamation, [4] in which, among many general advices, which, like a kind tutor, he bestowed on his people, he strictly enjoins them not to choose any outlaw for their representative. And he adds, “If any person take upon him the place of knight, citizen, or burgess, not being duly elected, according to the laws and statutes in that behalf provided, and according to the purport, effect, and true meaning of this our proclamation, then every person so offending to be fined or imprisoned for the same.” A proclamation here was plainly put on the same footing with a law, and that in so delicate a point as the right of elections; most alarming circumstances, had there not been reason to believe that this measure, being entered into so early in the king's reign, proceeded more from precipitation and mistake, than from any serious design of invading the privileges of parliament.

* D'Ewes, .

* * 39 H. 6.

* * * Journ. Feb. 8th, 1580.

* * * * In a subsequent parliament, that of the thirty-fifth of the queen, the commons, after a great debate, expressly voted, that a person outlawed might be elected. D'Ewes, p.

518. But as the matter had been much contested, the king might think the vote of the house no law, and might esteem his own decision of more weight than theirs. We may also suppose that he was not acquainted with this vote. Queen Elizabeth, in her speech to her last parliament, complained of their admitting outlaws, and represents that conduct of the house as a great abuse.

v Jan. 11th, 1604. Rymer, tom. xvi. .

Sir Francis Goodwin was chosen member for the county of Bucks; and his return, as usual, was made into chancery. The chancellor, pronouncing him an outlaw, vacated his seat and issued writs for a new election. [1] Sir John Fortescue was chosen in his place by the county: but the first act of the house was to reverse the chancellor's sentence, and restore Sir Francis to his seat. At the king's suggestion, the lords desired a conference on the subject; but were absolutely refused by the commons, as the question entirely regarded their own privileges. [2] The commons, however, agreed to make a remonstrance to the king by the mouth of their speaker; in which they maintained that, though the returns were by form made into chancery, yet the sole right of judging with regard to elections belonged to the house itself, not to the chancellor. [3] James was not satisfied, and ordered a conference between the house and the judges, whose opinion in this case was opposite to that of the commons. This conference, he said, he commanded as an "absolute" king; [4] an epithet, we are apt to imagine, not very grateful to English ears, but one to which they had already been somewhat accustomed from the mouth of Elizabeth. He added, “That all their privileges were derived from his grant, and hoped they would not turn them against him;”[v*] a sentiment which, from her conduct, it is certain that princess had also entertained, and which was the reigning principle of her courtiers and ministers, and the spring of all her administration.

* The duke of Sully tells us, that it was a maxim of James, that no prince, in the first year of his reign, should begin any considerable undertaking; a maxim reasonable in itself,

and very suitable to his cautious, not to say timid character. The facility with which he departed from this pretension, is another proof that his meaning was innocent.

But had the privileges of parliament been at that time exactly ascertained, or royal power fully limited, could such an imagination ever have been entertained by him, as to think that his proclamations could regulate parliamentary elections?

* * Winwood, vol. ii. , 19.

* * * Journ. 26th March, 1604

* * * * Journ. 3d April, 1604.

v See note RR, at the end of the volume.

v* Camden, in Kennet, .

The commons were in some perplexity. Their eyes were now opened, and they saw the consequences of that power which had been assumed by the chancellor, and to which their predecessors had in some instances blindly submitted. “By this course,” said a member, “the free election of the counties is taken away, and none shall be chosen but such as shall please the king and council. Let us therefore with fortitude, understanding, and sincerity, seek to maintain our privilege. This cannot be construed any contempt in us, but merely a maintenance of our common rights, which our ancestors have left us, and which it is just and fit for us to transmit to our posterity.” [1] Another said, “This may be called a quo warranto to seize all our liberties.” [2] “A chancellor,” added a third, “by this course may call a parliament consisting of what persons he pleases. Any suggestion, by any person, may be the cause of sending a new writ. It is come to this plain question, whether the chancery or parliament ought to have authority.” [3]

Notwithstanding this watchful spirit of liberty which now appeared in the commons, their deference for majesty was so great that they appointed a committee to confer with the judges before the king and council. There the question of law began to appear in James’s eyes a little more doubtful than he had hitherto imagined it; and in order to extricate himself with some honor, he proposed that both Goodwin and Fortescue should be set aside, and a writ be issued, by warrant of the house, for a new election. Goodwin gave his consent, and the commons embraced the expedient; but in such a manner that, while they showed their regard for the king, they secured for the future the free possession of their seats, and the right which they claimed of judging solely in their own elections and returns. [4]

A power like this, so essential to the exercise of all their other powers, themselves so essential to public liberty, cannot fairly be deemed an encroachment in the commons; but must be regarded as an inherent privilege, happily rescued from that ambiguity which the negligence of some former parliaments had thrown upon it.

At the same time, the commons, in the case of Sir Thomas Shirley, established their power of punishing, as well the persons at whose suit any member is arrested, as the officers who either arrest or detain him. Their asserting of this privilege admits of the same reflection.

About this period, the minds of men throughout Europe, especially in England, seem to have undergone a general but insensible revolution. Though letters had been revived in the preceding age, they were chiefly cultivated by those of sedentary professions; nor had they till now begun to

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* Journ, 30th March, 1604.

* * Journ, 30th March, 1604.

* * * Journ. 30th March, 1604.

* * * * See note SS, at the end of the volume.

v Journ. 6th and 7th May, 1604.

spread themselves in any degree among men of the world. Arts, both mechanical and liberal, were every day receiving great improvements. Navigation had extended itself over the whole globe. Travelling was secure and agreeable. And the general system of politics in Europe was become more enlarged and comprehensive.

In consequence of this universal fermentation, the ideas of men enlarged themselves on all sides; and the several constituent parts of the Gothic governments, which seem to have lain long inactive, began everywhere to operate and encroach on each other. On the continent, where the necessity of discipline had begotten standing armies, the princes commonly established an unlimited authority, and overpowered, by force or intrigue, the liberties of the people. In England, the love of freedom, which, unless checked, flourishes extremely in all liberal natures, acquired new force, and was regulated by more enlarged views, suitable to that cultivated understanding which became every day more common among men of birth and education. A familiar acquaintance with the precious remains of antiquity excited in every generous breast a passion for a limited constitution, and begat an emulation of those manly virtues which the Greek and Roman authors, by such animating examples, as well as pathetic expressions, recommend to us. The severe, though popular government of Elizabeth had confined this rising spirit within very narrow bounds; but when a new and a foreign family succeeded to the throne, and a prince less dreaded and less beloved, symptoms immediately appeared of a more free and independent genius in the nation.

Happily, this prince possessed neither sufficient capacity to perceive the alteration, nor sufficient art and vigor to check it in its early advances. Jealous of regal, because conscious of little personal authority, he had established within his own mind a speculative system of absolute government, which few of his subjects, he believed, and none but traitors and rebels, would make any scruple to admit. On whichever side he cast his eye, every thing concurred to encourage his prejudices. When he compared himself with the other hereditary sovereigns of Europe, he imagined that, as he bore the same rank, he was entitled to equal prerogatives; not considering the innovations lately introduced by them, and the military force by which their authority was supported. In England, that power, almost unlimited, which had been exercised for above a century, especially during the late reign, he ascribed solely to royal birth and title; not to the prudence and spirit of the monarchs, nor to the conjunctures of the times. Even the opposition which he had struggled with in Scotland, encouraged him still further in his favorite notions; while he there saw, that the same resistance which opposed regal authority, violated all law and order, and made way either for the ravages of a barbarous nobility, or for the more intolerable insolence of seditious preachers. In his own person, therefore, he thought all legal power to be centred, by an hereditary and a divine right: and this opinion might have proved dangerous, if not fatal to liberty, had not the firmness of the persuasion, and its seeming evidence, induced him to trust solely to his right, without making the smallest provision, either of force or politics, in order to support it.

Such were the opposite dispositions of parliament and prince at the commencement of the Scottish line; dispositions just beginning to exist and to appear in the parliament, [1] but thoroughly established and openly avowed on the part of the prince.

* See note TT, at the end of the volume.

The spirit and judgment of the house of commons appeared, not only in defence of their own privileges, but also in their endeavor, though at this time in vain, to free trade from those shackles which the high exerted prerogative, and even, in this respect, the ill-judged tyranny of Elizabeth, had imposed upon it.

James had already, of his own accord, called in and annulled all the numerous patents for monopolies which had been granted by his predecessor, and which extremely fettered every species of domestic industry: but the exclusive companies still remained; another species of monopoly, by which almost all foreign trade, except that to France, was brought into the hands of a few rapacious engrossers, and all prospect of future improvement in commerce was forever sacrificed to a little temporary advantage of the sovereign. These companies, though arbitrarily erected, had carried their privileges so far, that almost all the commerce of England was centred in London; and it appears that the customs of that port amounted to one hundred and ten thousand pounds a year, while those of all the kingdom beside yielded only seventeen thousand. [1] Nay, the whole trade of London was confined to about two hundred citizens, [2] who were easily enabled, by combining among themselves, to fix whatever price they pleased both to the exports and imports of the nation. The committee appointed to consider this enormous grievance, one of the greatest which we read of in English story, insist on it as a fact well known and avowed, however contrary to present received opinion, that shipping and seamen had insensibly decayed during all the preceding reign. [3] And though nothing be more common than complaints of the decay of trade, even during the most flourishing periods, yet is this a consequence which might naturally result from such arbitrary establishments, at a time when the commerce of all the other nations of Europe, except that of Scotland, enjoyed full liberty and indulgence.

While the commons were thus attempting to give liberty to the trading part of the nation, they also endeavored to free the landed property from the burden of wardships, [4] and to remove those remains of the feudal tenures under which the nation still labored. A just regard was shown to the crown in the conduct of this affair; nor was the remedy sought for considered as a matter of right, but merely of grace and favor. The profit which the king reaped, both from wards and from respite of homage, was estimated; and it was intended to compound for these prerogatives by a secure and independent revenue. But after some debates in the house, and some conferences with the lords, the affair was found to contain more difficulties than could easily, at that time, be surmounted; and it was not then brought to any conclusion.

The same fate attended an attempt of a like nature, to free the nation from the burden of purveyance. This prerogative had been much abused by the purveyors; and the commons showed some intention to offer the king fifty thousand pounds a year for the abolition of it.

* Journ. 21st May, 1604.

* * Journ. 21st May, 1604.

* * * A remonstrance from the Trinity House, in 1602, says, that in a little above twelve years after 1588, the shipping and number of seamen in England decayed about a third.

Anglesey’s Happy Future State of England, , from Sir Julius Caesar’s Collections. See Journ. 21st May, 1604.

* * * * Journ. 1st June, 1604.

v Journ. 30th April, 1604.

Another affair of the utmost consequence was brought before the parliament, where the commons showed a greater spirit of independence than any true judgment of national interest. The union of the two kingdoms was zealously, and even impatiently, urged by the king. [1] He justly regarded it as the peculiar felicity of his reign, that he had terminated the bloody animosities of these hostile nations; and had reduced the whole island under one government, enjoying tranquillity within itself, and security from all foreign invasions. He hoped that, while his subjects of both kingdoms reflected on past disasters, besides regarding his person as infinitely precious, they would entertain the strongest desire of securing themselves against the return of like calamities, by a thorough union of laws, parliaments, and privileges. He considered not, that this very reflection operated, as yet, in a contrary manner on men's prejudices, and kept alive that mutual hatred between the nations, which had been carried to the greatest extremities, and required time to allay it. The more urgent the king appeared in promoting so useful a measure, the more backward was the English parliament in concurring with him; while they ascribed his excessive zeal to that partiality in favor of his ancient subjects, of which they thought that, on other occasions, they had reason to complain. Their complaisance for the king, therefore, carried them no further than to appoint forty-four English to meet with thirty-one Scottish commissioners, in order to deliberate concerning the terms of a union; but without any power of making advances towards the establishment of it. [2]

* Journ. 21st April, 1st May, 1604. Parliamentary History, vol v .

* * Journ. 7th June, 1604. Kennet, .

The same spirit of independence, and perhaps not better judgment, appeared in the house of commons when the question of supply was brought before them by some members attached to the court. In vain was it urged that, though the king received a supply which had been voted to Elizabeth, and which had not been collected before her death, yet he found it burdened with a debt contracted by the queen, equal to the full amount of it: that peace was not yet thoroughly concluded with Spain, and that Ireland was still expensive.

On his journey from Scotland, amidst such a concourse of people, and on that of the queen and royal family he had expended considerable sums; and that, as the courtiers had looked for greater liberalities from the prince on his accession, and had imposed on his generous nature, so the prince, in his turn, would expect, at the beginning, some mark of duty and attachment from his people, and some consideration of his necessities. No impression was made on the house of commons by these topics; and the majority appeared fully determined to refuse all supply. The burden of government, at that time, lay surprisingly light upon the people: and that very reason, which to us, at this distance, may seem a motive of generosity, was the real cause why the parliament was, on all occasions, so remarkably, frugal and reserved. They were not, as yet, accustomed to open their purses in so liberal a manner as their successors, in order to supply the wants of their sovereign; and the smallest demand, however requisite, appeared in their eyes unreasonable and exorbitant. The commons seem also to have been desirous of reducing the crown to still further necessities, by their refusing a bill, sent down to them by the lords, for entailing the crown lands forever on the king's heirs and successors. [1] The dissipation made by Elizabeth had probably taught James the necessity of this law, and shown them the advantage of refusing it.

In order to cover a disappointment with regard to supply, which might bear a bad construction both at home and abroad, James sent a message to the house, [1] in which he told them that he desired no supply; and he was very forward in refusing what was never offered him.

* Parliamentary Hist. vol. v. .

Soon after, he prorogued the parliament, not without discovering in his speech visible marks of dissatisfaction. Even so early in his reign, he saw reason to make public complaints of the restless and encroaching spirit of the Puritanical party, and of the malevolence with which they endeavored to inspire the commons. Nor were his complaints without foundation, or the Puritans without interest; since the commons, now finding themselves free from the arbitrary government of Elizabeth, made application for a conference with the lords, and presented a petition to the king; the purport of both which was, to procure in favor of the Puritans, a relaxation of the ecclesiastical laws. [1] The use of the surplice, and of the cross in baptism is there chiefly complained of; but the remedy seems to have been expected solely from the king’s dispensing power, [2] In the papers which contain this application and petition, we may also see proofs of the violent animosity of the commons against the Catholics, together with the intolerating spirit of that assembly. [3]

This summer, the peace with Spain was finally concluded, and was signed by the Spanish ministers at London. [4] In the conferences previous to this treaty, the nations were found to have so few claims on each other, that, except on account of the support given by England to the Low Country provinces, the war might appear to have been continued more on account of personal animosity between Philip and Elizabeth, than any contrariety of political interests between their subjects. Some articles in the treaty, which seemed prejudicial to the Dutch commonwealth, were never executed by the king; and as the Spaniards made no complaints on that head, it appeared that, by secret agreement, the king had expressly reserved the power of sending assistance to the Hollanders. The constable of Castile came into England to ratify the peace; and on the part of England, the earl of Hertford was sent into the Low Countries for the same purpose, and the earl of Nottingham, high admiral, into Spain. The train of the latter was numerous and splendid; and the Spaniards, it is said, were extremely surprised when they beheld the blooming countenances and graceful appearance of the English, whom their bigotry, inflamed by the priests, had represented as so many monsters and infernal demons.

* La Boderie, the French ambassador, says, that the house of commons [Greek:][Greek:]was composed mostly of Puritans. Vol. i. .

* * Parl. Hist. vol. v. , 99, 100.

* * * See note UU, at the end of the volume.

* * * * Rymer, torn. xvi. , etc.

v Winwood, vol. ii. , 330, et alibi.

Though England, by means of her naval force, was perfectly secure during the latter years of the Spanish war, James showed an impatience to put an end to hostilities; and soon after his accession, before any terms of peace were concerted, or even proposed by Spain, he recalled all the letters of marque.

In this respect, James's peace was more honorable than that which Henry IV. himself made with Spain. This latter prince stipulated not to assist the Dutch; and the supplies which he secretly sent them were in direct contravention to the treaty. [1] which had been granted by Queen Elizabeth. Archduke Albert had made some advances of a like nature [2] which invited the king to take this friendly step. But what is remarkable, in James's proclamation for that purpose he plainly supposes, that as he had himself, while king of Scotland, always lived in amity with Spain, peace was attached to his person; and that merely by his accession to the crown of England, without any articles of treaty or agreement, he had ended the war between the kingdoms. [3] This ignorance of the law of nations may appear surprising in a prince who was thirty-six years of age, and who had reigned from his infancy; did we not consider that a king of Scotland, who lives in close friendship with England, has few transactions to manage with foreign princes, and has little opportunity of acquiring experience. Unhappily for James, his timidity, his prejudices, his indolence, his love of amusement, particularly of hunting, to which he was much addicted, ever prevented him from making any progress in the knowledge or practice of foreign politics, and in a little time diminished that regard which all the neighboring nations had paid to England during the reign of his predecessor. [4]

* 23d June., 1603.

* * Grotii Annal. lib xii.

* * * See Proclamations during the first seven years of King James Winwood, vol. ii. .

* * * * Mémoires do la Boderia, vol i ,181, 195, 217, 302; vol. ii , 278.

CHAPTER XLVI.

JAMES I.

1604.

We are now to relate an event, one of the most memorable that history has conveyed to posterity, and containing at once a singular proof both of the strength and weakness of the human mind; its widest departure from morals, and most steady attachment to religious prejudices. It is the “gunpowder treason” of which I speak; a fact as certain as it appears incredible.

The Roman Catholics had expected great favor and indulgence on the accession of James, both as he was descended from Mary, whose life they believed to have been sacrificed to their cause, and as he himself, in his early youth, was imagined to have shown some partiality towards them, which nothing, they thought, but interest and necessity had since restrained. It is pretended, that he had even entered into positive engagements to tolerate their religion as soon as he should mount the throne of England; whether their credulity had interpreted in this sense some obliging expressions of the king’s, or that he had employed such an artifice in order to render them favorable to his title. [1]

* State Trials, vol. ii. , 202, 203. Winwood, vol. ii. .

Very soon they discovered their mistake; and were at once surprised and enraged to find James on all occasions express his intention of strictly executing the laws enacted against them, and of persevering in all the rigorous measures of Elizabeth. Catesby, a gentleman of good parts and of an ancient family, first thought of a most extraordinary method of revenge; and he opened his intention to Piercy, a descendant of the illustrious house of Northumberland. In one of their conversations with regard to the distressed condition of the Catholics, Piercy having broken into a sally of passion, and mentioned assassinating the king, Catesby took the opportunity of revealing to him a nobler and more extensive plan of treason, which not only included a sure execution of vengeance, but afforded some hopes of restoring the Catholic religion in England. “In vain,” said he, “would you put an end to the king’s life: he has children, who would succeed both to his crown and to his maxims of government. In vain would you extinguish the whole royal family: the nobility, the gentry, the parliament are all infected with the same heresy, and could raise to the throne another prince and another family, who, besides their hatred to our religion, would be animated with revenge for the tragical death of their predecessors. To serve any good purpose, we must destroy, at one blow, the king, the royal family, the lords, the commons; and bury all our enemies in one common ruin. Happily, they are all assembled on the first meeting of the parliament, and afford us the opportunity of glorious and useful vengeance. Great preparations will not be requisite. A few of us, combining, may run a mine below the hall in which they meet; and choosing the very moment when the king harangues both houses, consign over to destruction these determined foes to all piety and religion. Meanwhile, we ourselves standing aloof, safe and unsuspected, shall triumph in being the instruments of divine wrath, and shall behold with pleasure those sacrilegious walls, in which were passed the edicts for proscribing our church and butchering her children, tossed into a thousand fragments; while their impious inhabitants, meditating, perhaps, still new persecutions against us, pass from flames above to flames below, there forever to endure the torments due to their offences.” [1]

Piercy was charmed with this project of Catesby; and they agreed to communicate the matter to a few more, and among the rest to Thomas Winter, whom they sent over to Flanders in quest of Fawkes, an officer in the Spanish service, with whose zeal and courage they were all thoroughly acquainted. When they enlisted any new conspirator, in order to bind him to secrecy, they always, together with an oath, employed the communion, the most sacred rite of their religion. [2] And it is remarkable, that no one of these pious devotees ever entertained the least compunction with regard to the cruel massacre which they projected, of whatever was great and eminent in the nation. Some of them only were startled by the reflection, that of necessity many Catholics must be present, as spectators or attendants on the king, or as having seats in the house of peers: but Tesmond, a Jesuit, and Garnet, superior of that order in England, removed these scruples, and showed them how the interests of religion required that the innocent should here be sacrificed with the guilty.

* History of the Gunpowder Treason.

* * State Trials, vol. i. , 198, 210.

All this passed in the spring and summer of the year 1604; when the conspirators also hired a house in Piercy's name, adjoining to that in which the parliament was to assemble. Towards the end of that year, they began their operations. That they might be less interrupted, and give less suspicion to the neighborhood, they carried in store of provisions with them, and never desisted from their labor. Obstinate in their purpose, and confirmed by passion, by principle, and by mutual exhortation, they little feared death in comparison of a disappointment; and having provided arms, together with the instruments of their labor, they resolved there to perish in case of a discovery. Their perseverance advanced the work; and they soon pierced the wall, though three yards in thickness; but on approaching the other side, they were somewhat startled at hearing a noise which they knew not how to account for.

1605.

Upon inquiry, they found that it came from the vault below the house of lords; that a magazine of coals had been kept there; and that, as the coals were selling off, the vault would be let to the highest bidder. The opportunity was immediately seized; the place hired by Piercy; thirty-six barrels of powder lodged in it; the whole covered up with fagots and billets; the doors of the cellar boldly flung open; and every body admitted, as if it contained nothing dangerous.

Confident of success, they now began to look forward, and to plan the remaining part of their project. The king, the queen, Prince Henry, were all expected to be present at the opening of parliament. The duke, by reason of his tender age, would be absent; and it was resolved that Piercy should seize him, or assassinate him. The princess Elizabeth, a child likewise, was kept at Lord Harrington's house in Warwickshire; and Sir Everard Digby, Rookwood, Grant, being let into the conspiracy, engaged to assemble their friends on pretence of a hunting match, and seizing that princess, immediately to proclaim her queen. So transported were they with rage against their adversaries, and so charmed with the prospect of revenge, that they forgot all care of their own safety; and trusting to the general confusion which must result from so unexpected a blow, they foresaw not that the fury of the people, now unrestrained by any authority, must have turned against them, and would probably have satiated itself by a universal massacre of the Catholics.

The day so long wished for now approached, on which the parliament was appointed to assemble. The dreadful secret, though communicated to above twenty persons, had been religiously kept during the space of near a year and a half. No remorse, no pity, no fear of punishment, no hope of reward, had as yet induced any one conspirator either to abandon the enterprise, or make a discovery of it. The holy fury had extinguished in their breast every other motive; and it was an indiscretion at last, proceeding chiefly from these very bigoted prejudices and partialities, which saved the nation.

Ten days before the meeting of parliament, Lord Monteagle, a Catholic, son to Lord Morley, received the following letter, which had been delivered to his servant by an unknown hand: “My Lord, — Out of the love I bear to some of your friends, I have a care of your preservation. Therefore I would advise you, as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift off your attendance at this parliament For God and man have concurred to punish the wickedness of this time. And think not slightly of this advertisement; but retire yourself into your country, where you may expect the event in safety. For though there be no appearance of any stir, yet, I say, they will receive a terrible blow this parliament, and yet they shall not see who hurts them. This counsel is not to be contemned, because it may do you good, and can do you no harm: for the danger is past as soon as you have burned the letter. And I hope God will give you the grace to make good use of it, unto whose holy protection I commend you.” [1]

* King James’s Works, .

Monteagle knew not what to make of this letter; and though inclined to think it a foolish attempt to frighten and ridicule him, he judged it safest to carry it to Lord Salisbury, secretary of state. Though Salisbury, too, was inclined to pay little attention to it, he thought proper to lay it before the king, who came to town a few days after. To the king it appeared not so light a matter; and from the serious, earnest style of the letter, he conjectured that it implied something dangerous and important A “terrible blow," and yet "the authors concealed;" a danger so "sudden," and yet so "great;" these circumstances seemed all to denote some contrivance by gun powder; and it was thought advisable to inspect all the vaults below the houses of parliament. This care belonged to the earl of Suffolk, lord chamberlain, who purposely delayed the search till the day before the meeting of parliament. He remarked those great piles of wood and fagots which lay in the vault under the upper house; and he cast his eye upon Fawkes, who stood in a dark corner, and passed himself for Piercy's servant. That daring and determined courage which so much distinguished this conspirator, even among those heroes in villany, was fully painted in his countenance, and was not passed unnoticed by the chamberlain. [1] Such a quantity also of fuel, for the use of one who lived so little in town as Piercy, appeared a little extraordinary; [2] and upon comparing all circumstances, it was resolved that a more thorough inspection should be made. About midnight, Sir Thomas Knevet, a justice of peace, was sent with proper attendants; and before the door of the vault finding Fawkes, who had just finished all his preparations, he immediately seized him, and turning over the fagots, discovered the powder. The matches, and every thing proper for setting fire to the train, were taken in Fawkes's pocket; who, finding his guilt now apparent, and seeing no refuge but in boldness and despair, expressed the utmost regret that he had lost the opportunity of firing the powder at once, and of sweetening his own death by that of his enemies. [3] Before the council he displayed the same intrepid firmness, mixed even with scorn and disdain; refusing to discover his accomplices, and showing no concern but for the failure of the enterprise. [4] This obstinacy lasted two or three days: but being confined to the Tower, left to reflect on his guilt and danger, and the rack being just shown to him, his courage, fatigued with so long an effort, and unsupported by hope or society, at last failed him, and he made a full discovery of all the conspirators.

* King James's Works, .

* * King James's Works, .

* * * King James's Works, .

* * * * Winwood, vol. ii. .

v King James's Works, .

Catesby, Piercy, and the other criminals who were in London, though they had heard of the alarm taken at a letter sent to Monteagle; though they had heard of the chamberlain's search; yet were resolved to persist to the utmost, and never abandon their hopes of success. [1] But at last, hearing that Fawkes was arrested, they hurried down to Warwickshire; where Sir Everard Digby, thinking himself assured that success had attended his confederates, was already in arms, in order to seize the princess Elizabeth. She had escaped into Coventry; and they were obliged to put themselves on their defence against the country, who were raised from all quarters and armed by the sheriff. The conspirators, with all their attendants, never exceeded the number of eighty persons; and being surrounded on every side, could no longer entertain hopes either of prevailing or escaping. Having therefore confessed themselves, and received absolution, they boldly prepared for death, and resolved to sell their lives as dear as possible to the assailants. But even this miserable consolation was denied them. Some of their powder took fire, and disabled them for defence. [2] The people rushed in upon them. Piercy and Catesby were killed by one shot. Digby, Rookwood, Winter, and others, being taken prisoners, were tried, confessed their guilt, and died, as well as Garnet, by the hands of the executioner. Notwithstanding this horrid crime, the bigoted Catholics were so devoted to Garnet, that they fancied miracles to be wrought by his blood; [3] and in Spain he was regarded as a martyr. [4]

Neither had the desperate fortune of the conspirators urged them to this enterprise, nor had the former profligacy of their lives prepared them for so great a crime. Before that audacious attempt, their conduct seems, in general, to be liable to no reproach. Catesby's character had entitled him to such regard, that Rookwood and Digby were seduced by their implicit trust in his judgment; and they declared that, from the motive alone of friendship to him, they were ready, on any occasion, to have sacrificed their lives. Digby himself was as highly esteemed and beloved as any man in England; and he had been particularly honored with the good opinion of Queen Elizabeth.

* See note XX, at the end of the volume.

* * State Trials, vol. i. . Discourse of the Manner, etc. , 70.

* * * Winwood, vol. ii. .

* * * * Winwood, vol. ii. .

v State Trials, vol. i. .

It was bigoted zeal alone, the most absurd of prejudices masked with reason, the most criminal of passions covered with the appearance of duty, which seduced them into measures that were fatal to themselves, and had so nearly proved fatal to their country. [1]

The lords Mordaunt and Stourton, two Catholics, were fined, the former ten thousand pounds, the latter four thousand, by the star chamber; because their absence from parliament had begotten a suspicion of their being acquainted with the conspiracy. The earl of Northumberland was fined thirty thousand pounds, and detained several years prisoner in the Tower, because, not to mention other grounds of suspicion, he had admitted Piercy into the number of gentlemen pensioners without his taking the requisite oaths. [2]

The king, in his speech to the parliament, observed that, though religion had engaged the conspirators in so criminal an attempt, yet ought we not to involve all the Roman Catholics in the same guilt, or suppose them equally disposed to commit such enormous barbarities. Many holy men, he said, and our ancestors among the rest, had been seduced to concur with that church in her scholastic doctrines, who yet had never admitted her seditious principles concerning the pope's power of dethroning kings, or sanctifying assassination. The wrath of Heaven is denounced against crimes, but innocent error may obtain its favor; and nothing can be more hateful than the uncharitableness of the Puritans, who condemn alike to eternal torments even the most inoffensive partisans of Popery. For his part, he added, that conspiracy, however atrocious, should never alter in the least his plan of government: while with one hand he punished guilt, with the other he would still support and protect innocence. [3] After this speech he prorogued the parliament till the twenty-second of January. [4]

* Digby, after his condemnation, said, in a letter to his wife, "Now for my intention, let me tell you, that if I had thought there had been the least sin in the plot, I would not have been of it for all the world; and no other cause drew me to hazard my fortune and life,

but zeal to God’s religion.” He expresses his surprise to hear that any Catholics had condemned it. Digby’s Papers, published by Secretary Coventry.

* Camden, in Kennet, .

* King James’s Works, , 504.

* The parliament this session passed an act obliging every one to take the oath of allegiance; a very moderate test, since it decided no controverted points between the two religions, and only engaged the persons who took it to abjure the pope’s power of dethroning kings. See King James’s Works .

The moderation, and, I may say, magnanimity of the king immediately after so narrow an escape from a most detestable conspiracy, was nowise agreeable to his subjects. Their animosity against Popery, even before this provocation, has risen to a great pitch; and it had perhaps been more prudent in James, by a little dissimulation, to have conformed himself to it. His theological learning, confirmed by disputation, has happily fixed his judgment in the Protestant faith; yet was his heart a little biased by the allurements of Rome; and he had been well pleased, if the making of some advances could have effected a union with that ancient mother church. He strove to abate the acrimony of his own subjects against the religion of their fathers: he became himself the object of their diffidence and aversion. Whatever measures he embraced — in Scotland to introduce prelacy, in England to enforce the authority of the established church, and support its rites and ceremonies — were interpreted as so many steps towards Popery; and were represented by the Puritans as symptoms of idolatry and superstition. Ignorant of the consequences, or unwilling to sacrifice to politics his inclination, which he called his conscience, he persevered in the same measures, and gave trust and preferment, almost indifferently, to his Catholic and Protestant subjects. And finding his person, as well as his title, less obnoxious to the church of Rome, than those of Elizabeth, he gradually abated the rigor of those laws which had been enacted against that church, and which were so acceptable to his bigoted subjects. But the effects of these dispositions on both sides became not very sensible till towards the conclusion of his reign.

1606.

At this time, James seems to have possessed the affections even of his English subjects, and, in a tolerable degree, their esteem and regard. Hitherto their complaints were chiefly levelled against his too great constancy in his early friendships; a quality which, had it been attended with more economy, the wise would have excused, and the candid would even, perhaps, have applauded. His parts, which were not despicable, and his learning, which was great, being highly extolled by his courtiers and gownmen, and not yet tried in the management of any delicate affairs, for which he was unfit, raised a high idea of him in the world; nor was it always through flattery or insincerity that he received the title of the second Solomon. A report, which was suddenly spread about this time of his being assassinated, visibly struck a great consternation into all orders of men. [1] The commons also abated, this session, somewhat of their excessive frugality, and granted him an aid, payable in four years, of three subsidies and six fifteenths, which, Sir Francis Bacon said in the house, [2] might amount to about four hundred thousand pounds; and for once the king and parliament parted in friendship and good humor. The hatred which the Catholics so visibly bore him, gave him, at this time, an additional value in the eyes of his people. The only considerable point in which the commons incurred his displeasure, was by discovering their constant good will to the Puritans, in whose favor they desired a conference with the lords; [3] which was rejected.

The chief affair transacted next session, was the intended union of the two kingdoms. [4] Nothing could exceed the king’s passion and zeal for this noble enterprise, but the parliament’s prejudice and reluctance against it. There remain two excellent speeches in favor of the union, which it would not be improper to compare together; that of the king, and that of Sir Francis Bacon. Those who affect in every thing such an extreme contempt for James, will be surprised to find that his discourse, both for good reasoning and elegant composition, approaches very near that of a man who was undoubtedly, at that time, one of the greatest geniuses in Europe. A few trivial indiscretions and indecorums may be said to characterize the harangue of the monarch, and mark it for his own. And, in general, so open and avowed a declaration in favor of a measure, while he had taken no care, by any precaution or intrigue, to insure success, may safely be pronounced an indiscretion. But the art of managing parliaments by private interest or cabal, being found hitherto of little use or necessity, had not as yet become a part of English politics. In the common course of affairs, government could be conducted without their assistance; and when their concurrence became necessary to the measures of the crown, it was, generally speaking, except in times of great faction and discontent, obtained without much difficulty.

* Kennet, .

* * Journ. 20th May, 1606

* * * Journ. 5th April, 1606.

* * * * Kennet, p 676.

v King James's Works, .

The king's influence seems to have rendered the Scottish parliament cordial in all the steps which they took towards the union. Though the advantages which Scotland might hope from that measure were more considerable, yet were the objections too, with regard to that kingdom more striking and obvious. The benefit which must have resulted to England, both by accession of strength and security, was riot despicable; and as the English were by far the greater nation, and possessed the seat of government, the objections, either from the point of honor or from jealousy, could not reasonably have any place among them. The English parliament, indeed, seem to have been swayed merely by the vulgar motive of national antipathy. And they persisted so obstinately in their prejudices, that all the efforts for a thorough union and incorporation ended only in the abolition of the hostile laws formerly enacted between the kingdoms. [1]

* The commons were even so averse to the union, that they had complained in the former session, to the lords, of the bishop of Bristol, for writing a book in favor of it; and the prelate was obliged to make submissions for this offence. The crime imputed to him seems to have consisted in his treating of a subject which lay before the parliament:

so little notion had they as yet of general liberty. See Parliamentary History, vol. v. p 108, 109, 110

Some precipitate steps, which the king, a little after his accession, had taken, in order to promote his favorite project, had been here observed to do more injury than service. From his own authority, he had assumed the title of king of Great Britain; and had quartered the arms of Scotland with those of England, in all coins, flags, and ensigns. He had also engaged the judges to make a declaration, that all those who, after the union of the crowns, should be born in either kingdom, were, for that reason alone, naturalized in both. This was a nice question, and, according to the ideas of those times, susceptible of subtle reasoning on both sides. The king was the same: the parliaments were different. To render the people therefore the same, we must suppose that the sovereign authority resided chiefly in the prince, and that these popular assemblies were rather instituted to assist with money and advice, than endowed with any controlling or active powers in the government. "It is evident," says Bacon, in his pleadings on this subject, "that all other commonwealths, monarchies only excepted, do subsist by a law precedent. For where authority is divided amongst many officers, and they not perpetual, but annual or temporary, and not to receive their authority but by election, and certain persons to have voices only in that election, and the like; these are busy and curious frames, which of necessity do presuppose a law precedent, written or unwritten, to guide and direct them: but in monarchies, especially hereditary, that is, when several families or lineages of people do submit themselves to one line, imperial or royal, the submission is more natural and simple; which afterwards, by law subsequent, is perfected, and made more formal; but that is grounded upon nature." [1] It would seem, from this reasoning, that the idea of an hereditary limited monarchy, though implicitly supposed in many public transactions, had scarcely ever as yet been expressly formed by any English lawyer or politician.

Except the obstinacy of the parliament with regard to the union, and an attempt on the king's ecclesiastical jurisdiction, [1] most of their measures, during this session, were sufficiently respectful and obliging; though they still discover a vigilant spirit, and a careful attention towards national liberty. The votes also of the commons show that the house contained a mixture of Puritans, who had acquired great authority among them, [2] and who, together with religious prejudices, were continually suggesting ideas more suitable to a popular than a monarchical form of government. The natural appetite for rule made the commons lend a willing ear to every doctrine which tended to augment their own power and influence.

1607.

A petition was moved in the lower house for a more rigorous execution of the laws against Popish recusants and an abatement towards Protestant clergymen who scrupled to observe the ceremonies. Both these points were equally unacceptable to the king; and he sent orders to the house to proceed no further in that matter. The commons were inclined, at first, to consider these orders as a breach of privilege; but they soon acquiesced, when told that this measure of the king's was supported by many precedents during the reign of Elizabeth. [3] Had they been always disposed to make the precedents of that reign the rule of their conduct, they needed never have had any quarrel with any of their monarchs.

The complaints of Spanish depredations were very loud among the English merchants. [4] The lower house sent a message to the lords, desiring a conference with them, in order to their presenting a joint petition to the king on the subject.

The lords took some time to deliberate on this message; because, they said, the matter was weighty and rare. It probably occurred to them, at first, that the parliament's interposing in affairs of state would appear unusual and extraordinary. And to show that in this sentiment they were not guided by court influence, after they had deliberated, they agreed to the conference.

The house of commons began now to feel themselves of such importance, that, on the motion of Sir Edwin Sandys, a member of great authority, they entered, for the first time, an order for the regular keeping of

* Bacon's Works, vol. iv. , 191, edit. 1730.

* * Journ. 2d December; 5th March, 1606. 25th, 26th June, 1607.

* * * Journ. 26th February; 4th, 7th March, 1606. 2d May; 17th June, 1607.

* * * *Journ. 16th, 17th June, 1607.

their journals. [1] When all business was finished, the king prorogued the parliament.

* Journ. 3d July, 1607.

About this time there was an insurrection of the country people in Northamptonshire, headed by one Reynolds, a man of low condition. They went about destroying enclosures; but carefully avoided committing any other outrage. This insurrection was easily suppressed; and, though great lenity was used towards the rioters, yet were some of the ringleaders punished. The chief cause of that trivial commotion seems to have been, of itself, far from trivial. The practice still continued in England of disusing tillage and throwing the land into enclosures, for the sake of pasture. By this means the kingdom was depopulated, at least prevented from increasing so much in people as might have been expected from the daily increase of industry and commerce.

1608.

Next year presents us with nothing memorable; but in the spring of the subsequent,

1609.

after a long negotiation, was concluded, by a truce of twelve years, that war which, for near half a century, had been carried on with such fury between Spain and the states of the United Provinces. Never contest seemed, at first, more unequal; never contest was finished with more honor to the weaker party. On the side of Spain were numbers, riches, authority, discipline: on the side of the revolted provinces were found the attachment to liberty and the enthusiasm of religion. By her naval enterprises, the republic maintained her armies; and, joining peaceful industry to military valor, she was enabled, by her own force, to support herself, and gradually rely less on those neighboring princes, who, from jealousy to Spain, were at first prompted to encourage her revolt. Long had the pride of that monarchy prevailed over her interest, and prevented her from hearkening to any terms of accommodation with her rebellious subjects. But finding all intercourse cut off between her provinces by the maritime force of the states, she at last agreed to treat with them as a free people, and solemnly to renounce all claim and pretension to their sovereignty.

This chief point being gained, the treaty was easily brought to a conclusion, under the joint mediation and guaranty of France and England. All exterior appearances of honor were paid equally to both crowns: but very different were the sentiments which the states, as well as all Europe, entertained of the princes who wore them. Frugality and vigor, the chief circumstances which procure regard among foreign nations, shone out as conspicuously in Henry as they were deficient in James. To a contempt of the English monarch, Henry seems to have added a considerable degree of jealousy and aversion, which were sentiments altogether without foundation. James was just and fair in all transactions with his allies; [1] but it appears from the memoirs of those times, that each side deemed him partial towards their adversary, and fancied that he had entered into secret measures against them; [2] so little equity have men in their judgments of their own affairs; and so dangerous is that entire neutrality affected by the king of England!

1610.

The little concern which James took in foreign affairs, renders the domestic occurrences, particularly those of parliament, the most interesting of his reign. A new session was held this spring; the king, full of hopes of receiving supply; the commons, of circumscribing his prerogative. The earl of Salisbury, now created treasurer on the death of the earl of Dorset, laid open the king's necessities, first to the peers, then to a committee of the lower house. [3]

* The plan of accommodation which James recommended is found in Winwood, (vol. ii. , 430,) and is the same that was recommended by Henry, as we learn from Jeanin, (tom. iii. p.

416, 417.) It had long been imagined by historians, from Jeanin's authority, that James had declared to the court of Spain, that he would not support the Dutch in their pretensions to liberty and independence. But it has since been discovered by Winwood's Memorials, (vol. ii. ,

466, 469, 475, 476,) that that report was founded on a lie of President Richardot's.

* * Winwood and Jeanin, passim.

* * * Journ. 17th Feb. 1609. Kennet, .

He insisted on the unavoidable expense incurred in supporting the navy, and in suppressing a late insurrection in Ireland: he mentioned three numerous courts which the king was obliged to maintain, for himself, for the queen, and for the prince of Wales: he observed that Queen Elizabeth, though a single woman, had received very large supplies in the years preceding her death, which alone were expensive to her: and he remarked, that during her reign she had alienated many of the crown lands; an expedient which, though it supplied her present necessities, without laying burdens on her people, extremely multiplied the necessities of her successor. From all these causes he thought it nowise strange that the king's income should fall short so great a sum as eighty-one thousand pounds of his stated and regular expense; without mentioning contingencies, which ought always to be esteemed a fourth of the yearly charges. And as the crown was now necessarily burdened with a great and urgent debt of three hundred thousand pounds, he thence inferred the absolute necessity of an immediate and large supply from the people. To all these reasons, which James likewise urged in a speech addressed to both houses, the commons remained inexorable. But not to shock the king with an absolute refusal, they granted him one subsidy and one fifteenth; which would scarcely amount to a hundred thousand pounds. And James received the mortification of discovering in vain all his wants, and of begging aid of subjects who had no reasonable indulgence or consideration for him.

Among the many causes of disgust and quarrel which now daily and unavoidably multiplied between prince and parliament, this article of money is to be regarded as none of the least considerable. After the discovery and conquest of the West Indies, gold and silver became every day more plentiful in England, as well as in the rest of Europe; and the price of all commodities and provisions rose to a height beyond what had been known since the declension of the Roman empire. As the revenue of the crown rose not in proportion, [1] the prince was insensibly reduced to poverty amidst the general riches of his subjects, and required additional funds in order to support the same magnificence and force which had been maintained by former monarchs. But, while money thus flowed into England, we may observe, that, at the same time, and probably from that very cause, arts and industry of all kinds received a mighty increase; and elegance in every enjoyment of life became better known and more cultivated among all ranks of people.

* Besides the great alienation of the crown lands, the fee- farm rents never increased, and the other lands were let on long leases and at a great undervalue, little or nothing above the old rent.

The king’s servants, both civil and military, his courtiers, his ministers, demanded more ample supplies from the impoverished prince, and were not contented with the same simplicity of living which had satisfied their ancestors. The prince himself began to regard an increase of pomp and splendor as requisite to support the dignity of his character, and to preserve the same superiority above his subjects which his predecessors had enjoyed. Some equality, too, and proportion to the other sovereigns of Europe, it was natural for him to desire; and as they had universally enlarged their revenue, and multiplied their taxes, the king of England deemed it reasonable that his subjects, who were generally as rich as theirs, should bear with patience some additional burdens and impositions.

Unhappily for the king, those very riches, with the increasing knowledge of the age, bred opposite sentiments in his subjects; and, begetting a spirit of freedom and independence, disposed them to pay little regard either to the entreaties or menaces of their sovereign. While the barons possessed their former immense property and extensive jurisdictions, they were apt, at every disgust, to endanger the monarch, and throw the whole government into confusion; but this confusion often, in its turn, proved favorable to the monarch, and made the nation again submit to him, in order to reëstablish justice and tranquillity. After the power of alienations, as well as the increase of commerce, had thrown the balance of property into the hands of the commons, the situation of affairs, and the dispositions of men, became susceptible of a more regular plan of liberty; and the laws were not supported singly by the authority of the sovereign. And though in that interval, after the decline of the peers, and before the people had yet experienced their force, the princes assumed an exorbitant power, and had almost annihilated the constitution under the weight of their prerogative; as soon as the commons recovered from their lethargy, they seem to have been astonished at the danger, and were resolved to secure liberty by firmer barriers than their ancestors had hitherto provided for it.

Had James possessed a very rigid frugality, he might have warded off this crisis somewhat longer; and waiting patiently for a favorable opportunity to increase and fix his revenue, might have secured the extensive authority transmitted to him. On the other hand, had the commons been inclined to act with more generosity and kindness towards their prince, they might probably have turned his necessities to good account, and have bribed him to depart peaceably from the more dangerous articles of his prerogative. But he was a foreigner, and ignorant of the arts of popularity; they were soured by religious prejudices, and tenacious of their money: and in this situation it is no wonder, that during this whole reign we scarcely find an interval of mutual confidence and friendship between prince and parliament.

The king, by his prerogative alone, had some years before altered the rates of the customs, and had established higher impositions on several kinds of merchandise. This exercise of power will naturally, to us, appear arbitrary and illegal; yet, according to the principles and practices of that time, it might admit of some apology. The duties of tonnage and poundage were at first granted to the crown by a vote of parliament, and for a limited time; and as the grant frequently expired and was renewed, there could not then arise any doubt concerning the origin of the king's right to levy these duties; and this imposition, like all others, was plainly derived from the voluntary consent of the people. But as Henry V., and all the succeeding sovereigns, had the revenue conferred on them for life, the prince, so long in possession of these duties, began gradually to consider them as his own proper right and inheritance, and regarded the vote of parliament as a mere formality, which rather expressed the acquiescence of the people in his prerogative, than bestowed any new gift or revenue upon him.

The parliament, when it first granted poundage to the crown, had fixed no particular rates: the imposition was given as a shilling in a pound, or five percent, on all commodities: it was left to the king himself and the privy council, aided by the advice of such merchants as they should think proper to consult, to fix the value of goods, and thereby the rates of the customs: and as that value had been settled before the discovery of the West Indies, it was become much inferior to the prices which almost all commodities bore in every market in Europe; and consequently the customs on many goods, though supposed to be five per cent., was in reality much inferior. The king, therefore, was naturally led to think, that rates which were now plainly false, ought to be corrected; [1] that a valuation of commodities, fixed by one act of the privy council, might be amended by another; that if his right to poundage were inherent in the crown, he should also possess, of himself, the right of correcting its inequalities; if this duty were granted by the people, he should at least support the spirit of the law, by fixing a new and a juster valuation of all commodities. But, besides this reasoning, which seems plausible, if not solid, the king was supported in that act of power by direct precedents, some in the reign of Mary, some in the beginning of Elizabeth. [2] Both these princesses had, without consent of parliament, altered the rates of commodities; and as their impositions had all along been submitted to without a murmur, and still continued to be levied, the king had no reason to apprehend that a further exertion of the same authority would give any occasion of complaint. That less umbrage might be taken, he was moderate in the new rates which he established: the customs, during his whole reign, rose only from one hundred and twenty-seven thousand pounds a year to one hundred and ninety thousand; though, besides the increase of the rates, there was a sensible increase of commerce and industry during that period: every commodity, besides, which might serve to the subsistence of the people, or might be considered as a material of manufactures, was exempted from the new impositions of James; [3] but all this caution could not prevent the complaints of the commons.

* Winwood, vol. ii. .

* * Journ. 18th April; 5th and 10th May, 1614, etc.; 20th February 1625. See also Sir John Davis's Question concerning Impositions. , 128.

* * * Sir John Davis's Question concerning Impositions.

A spirit of liberty had now taken possession of the house: the leading members, men of an independent genius and large views, began to regulate their opinions more by the future consequences which they foresaw, than by the former precedents which were set before them; and they less aspired at maintaining the ancient constitution, than at establishing a new one, and a freer, and a better. In their remonstrances to the king on this occasion, they observed it to be a general opinion, "That the reasons of that practice might be extended much further, even to the utter ruin of the ancient liberty of the kingdom, and the subjects' right of property in their lands and goods." [1]

Though expressly forbidden by the king to touch his prerogative, they passed a bill abolishing these impositions; which was rejected by the house of lords.

In another address to the king, they objected to the practice of borrowing upon privy seals, and desired that the subjects should not be forced to lend money to his majesty, nor give a reason for their refusal. Some murmurs likewise were thrown out in the house against a new monopoly of the license of wines. [2] It must be confessed, that forced loans and monopolies were established on many and ancient as well as recent precedents; though diametrically opposite to all the principles of a free government. [3]

The house likewise discovered some discontent against the king's proclamations. James told them, "That though he well knew, by the constitution and policy of the kingdom, that proclamations were not of equal force with laws, yet he thought it a duty incumbent on him, and a power inseparably annexed to the crown, to restrain and prevent such mischiefs and inconveniencies as he saw growing on the state, against which no certain law was extant, and which might tend to the great detriment of the subject, if there should be no remedy provided till the meeting of a parliament. And this prerogative," he adds, "our progenitors have in all times used and enjoyed." [4] The intervals between sessions, we may observe, were frequently so long as to render it necessary for a prince to interpose by his prerogative. The legality of this exertion was established by uniform and undisputed practice; and was even acknowledged by lawyers, who made, however, this difference between laws and proclamations, that the authority of the former was perpetual, that of the latter expired with the sovereign who emitted them. But what the authority could be which bound the subject, yet was different from the authority of laws, and inferior to it, seems inexplicable by any maxims of reason or politics: and in this instance, as in many others, it is easy to see how inaccurate the English constitution was, before the parliament was enabled, by continued acquisitions or encroachments, to establish it on fixed principles of liberty.

* Journ. 28th May, 1610.

* * Parliament. Hist. vol. v. .

* * * See note YY, at the end of the volume.

* * * * Parliament. Hist. vol. v. .

v Journ. 12th May, 1624.

Upon the settlement of the reformation, that extensive branch of power which regards ecclesiastical matters, being then without an owner, seemed to belong to the first occupant; and Henry VIII. failed not immediately to seize it, and to exert it even to the utmost degree of tyranny. The possession of it was continued with Edward, and recovered by Elizabeth; and that ambitious princess was so remarkably jealous of this flower of her crown, that she severely reprimanded the parliament if they ever presumed to intermeddle in these matters; and they were so overawed by her authority as to submit, and to ask pardon on these occasions. But James's parliaments were much less obsequious. They ventured to lift up their eyes, and to consider this prerogative. They there saw a large province of government, possessed by the king alone, and scarcely ever communicated with the parliament. They were sensible that this province admitted not of any exact boundary or circumscription. They had felt that the Roman pontiff, in former ages, under pretence of religion, was gradually making advances to usurp the whole civil power. They dreaded still more dangerous consequences from the claims of their own sovereign, who resided among them, and who, in many other respects, possessed such unlimited authority. They therefore deemed it absolutely necessary to circumscribe this branch of prerogative; and accordingly, in the preceding session, they passed a bill against the establishment of any ecclesiastical canons without consent of parliament. [1] But the house of lords, as is usual, defended the barriers of the throne, and rejected the bill.

In this session, the commons, after passing anew the same bill, made remonstrances against the proceedings of the high commission court. [2] It required no great penetration to see the extreme danger to liberty, arising in a regal government, from such large discretionary powers as were exercised by that court. But James refused compliance with the application of the commons. He was probably sensible that, besides the diminution of his authority, many inconveniencies must necessarily result from the abolishing of all discretionary power in every magistrate; and that the laws, were they ever so carefully framed and digested, could not possibly provide against every contingency; much less, where they had not as yet attained a sufficient degree of accuracy and refinement.

* Journ. 2d, 11th December; 5th March, 1606.

* * Parliament. Hist. vol. v. . Kennet, .

But the business which chiefly occupied the commons during this session, was the abolition of wardships and purveyance; prerogatives which had been more or less touched on every session during the whole reign of James. In this affair the commons employed the proper means which might entitle them to success: they offered the king a settled revenue, as an equivalent for the powers which he should part with; and the king was willing to hearken to terms. After much dispute, he agreed to give up these prerogatives for two hundred thousand pounds a year, which they agreed to confer upon him. [1] And nothing remained towards closing the bargain, but that the commons should determine the funds by which this sum should be levied. This session was too far advanced to bring so difficult a matter to a full conclusion; and though the parliament met again towards the end of the year, and resumed the question, they were never able to terminate an affair upon which they seemed so intent. The journals of that session are lost; and as the historians of this reign are very negligent in relating parliamentary affairs, of whose importance they were not sufficiently apprised, we know not exactly the reason of this failure. It only appears, that the king was extremely dissatisfied with the conduct of the parliament, and soon after dissolved it. This was his first parliament, and it sat near seven years.

* We learn from Winwood's Memorials (vol. ii.) the reason assigned for this particular sum. "From thence my lord treasurer came to the price; and here he said, that the king would no more rise and fall like a merchant. That he would not have a flower of his crown (meaning the court of wards) so much tossed; that it was too dainty to be so handled; and then he said, that he must deliver the very countenance and character of the king's mind out of his own handwriting; which before he read, he said he would acquaint us with a pleasant conceit of his majesty. As concerning the number of ninescore thousand pounds, which was our number,

he could not affect, because nine was the number of the poets, who were always beggars, though they served so many muses; and eleven was the number of the apostles, when the traitor Judas was away; and therefore might best be affected by his majesty: but there was a mean number, which might accord us both; and that was ten: which, says my lord treasurer, is a sacred number; for so many were God's commandments, which tend to virtue and edification." If the commons really voted twenty thousand pounds a year more, on account of this "pleasant conceit" of the king and the treasurer, it was certainly the best paid wit, for its goodness, that ever was in the world.

Amidst all these attacks, some more, some less violent, on royal prerogative, the king displayed, as openly as ever, all his exalted notions of monarchy and the authority of princes. Even in a speech to the parliament where he begged for supply, and where he should naturally have used every art to ingratiate himself with that assembly, he expressed himself in these terms: "I conclude, then, the point touching the power of kings, with this axiom of divinity, that, as to dispute what God may do, is blasphemy; but what God wills, that divines may lawfully and do ordinarily dispute and discuss. So is it sedition in subjects to dispute what a king may do in the height of his power. But just kings will ever be willing to declare what they will do, if they will not incur the curse of God. I will not be content that my power be disputed upon; but I shall ever be willing to make the reason appear of my doings, and rule my actions according to my laws." [1] Notwithstanding the great extent of prerogative in that age, these expressions would probably give some offence. But we may observe, that, as the king's despotism was more speculative than practical, so the independency of the commons was, at this time, the reverse; and, though strongly supported by their present situation, as well as disposition, was too new and recent to be as yet founded on systematical principles and opinions. [2]

This year was distinguished by a memorable event, which gave great alarm and concern in England; the murder of the French monarch by the poniard of the fanatical Ravaillac. With his death, the glory of the French monarchy suffered an eclipse for some years; and as that kingdom fell under an administration weak and bigoted, factious and disorderly, the Austrian greatness began anew to appear formidable to Europe. In England, the antipathy to the Catholics revived a little upon this tragical event; and some of the laws which had formerly been enacted, in order to keep these religionists in awe, began now to be executed with greater rigor and severity. [3]

* King James's Works, .

* * See note ZZ at the end of the volume.

* * * Kennet, .

1611.

Though James's timidity and indolence fixed him, during most of his reign, in a very prudent inattention to foreign affairs, there happened this year an event in Europe of such mighty consequence as to rouse him from his lethargy, and summon up all his zeal and enterprise. A professor of divinity, named Vorstius, the disciple of Arminius was called from a German to a Dutch university; and as he differed from his Britannic majesty in some nice questions concerning the intimate essence and secret decrees of God, he was considered as a dangerous rival in scholastic fame, and was at last obliged to yield to the legions of that royal doctor, whose syllogisms he might have refuted or eluded. If vigor was wanting in other incidents of James's reign, here he behaved even with haughtiness and insolence; and the states were obliged, after several remonstrances, to deprive Vorstius of his chair, and to banish him their dominions. [1] The king carried no further his animosity against that professor; though he had very charitably hinted to the states, "That, as to the burning of Vorstius for his blasphemies and atheism, he left them to their own Christian wisdom; but surely never heretic better deserved the flames." [2] It is to be remarked, that, at this period, all over Europe, except in Holland alone, the practice of burning heretics still prevailed, even in Protestant countries; and instances were not wanting in England during the reign of James.

To consider James in a more advantageous light, we must take a view of him as the legislator of Ireland; and most of the institutions which he had framed for civilizing that kingdom being finished about this period, it may not here be improper to give some account of them. He frequently boasts of the management of Ireland as his masterpiece; and it will appear, upon inquiry, that his vanity in this particular was not altogether without foundation.

After the subjection of Ireland by Elizabeth, the more difficult task still remained; to civilize the inhabitants, to reconcile them to laws and industry, and to render their subjection durable and useful to the crown of England. James proceeded in this work by a steady, regular, and well-concerted plan; and in the space of nine years, according to Sir John Davis, he made greater advances towards the reformation of that kingdom, than had been made in the four hundred and forty years which had elapsed since the conquest was first attempted. [3]

* Kennet, .

* * King James's Works, .

* * * King James's Works, , edit. 1613.

It was previously necessary to abolish the Irish customs, which supplied the place of laws, and which were calculated to keep that people forever in a state of barbarism and disorder.

By the "Brehon" law or custom, every crime, however enormous, was punished, not with death, but by a fine or pecuniary mulct, which was levied upon the criminal. Murder itself, as among all the ancient barbarous nations, was atoned for in this manner; and each man, according to his rank, had a different rate or value affixed to him, which if any one were willing to pay, he needed not fear assassinating his enemy. This rate was called his "eric." When Sir William Fitzwilliams, being lord deputy, told Maguire, that he was to send a sheriff into Fermannah, which a little before had been made a county, and subjected to the English law; "Your sheriff," said Maguire, "shall be welcome to me: but let me know, beforehand, his eric, or the price of his head, that, if my people cut it off, I may levy the money upon the county." [1] As for oppression, extortion, and other trespasses, so little were they regarded, that no penalty was affixed to them, and no redress for such offences could ever be obtained.

The customs of "gavelkinde" and "tanistry" were attended with the same absurdity in the distribution of property.

The land, by the custom of gavelkinde, was divided among all the males of the sept, or family, both bastard and legitimate: and, after partition made if any of the sept died, his portion was not shared out among his sons, but the chieftain, at his discretion, made a new partition of all the lands belonging to that sept, and gave every one his share. [2] As no man, by reason of this custom, enjoyed the fixed property of any land; to build, to plant, to enclose, to cultivate, to improve, would have been so much lost labor.

The chieftains and the tanists, though drawn from the principal families, were not hereditary, but were established by election, or, more properly speaking, by force and violence. Their authority was almost absolute; and, notwithstanding that certain lands were assigned to the office, its chief profit resulted from exactions, dues, assessments, for which there was no fixed law, and which were levied at pleasure. [3]

* Sir John Davis, .

* * Sir John Davis,

* * * Sir John Davis,

Hence arose that common by-word among the Irish, “That they dwelt westward of the law which dwelt beyond the river of the Barrow;” meaning the country where the English inhabited, and which extended not beyond the compass of twenty miles, lying in the neighborhood of Dublin. [1]

After abolishing these Irish customs, and substituting English law in their place, James, having taken all the natives under his protection, and declared them free citizens, proceeded to govern them by a regular administration, military at well as civil.

A small army was maintained, its discipline inspected, and its pay transmitted from England, in order to keep the soldiers from preying upon the country, as had been usual in former reigns. When Odoghartie raised an insurrection, a reënforcement was sent over, and the flames of that rebellion were immediately extinguished.

All minds being first quieted by a general indemnity, [2] circuits were established, justice administered, oppression banished, and crimes and disorders of every kind severely punished. [3] As the Irish had been universally engaged in the rebellion against Elizabeth, a resignation of all the rights which had been formerly granted them to separate jurisdictions, was rigorously exacted; and no authority, but that of the king and the law, was permitted throughout the kingdom. [4]

A resignation of all private estates was even required; and when they were restored, the proprietors received them under such conditions as might prevent, for the future, all tyranny and oppression over the common people. The value of the dues which the nobles usually claimed from their vassals, was estimated at a fixed sum, and all further arbitrary exactions prohibited under severe penalties.

The whole province of Ulster having fallen to the crown by the attainder of rebels, a company was established in London for planting new colonies in that fertile country: the property was divided into moderate shares, the largest not exceeding two thousand acres: tenants were brought over from England and Scotland: the Irish were removed from the hills and fastnesses, and settled in the open country: husbandry and the arts were taught them: a fixed habitation secured: plunder and robbery punished: and by these means, Ulster, from being the most wild and disorderly province of all Ireland, soon became the best cultivated and most civilized.[v*]

* Sir John Davis, .

* * Sir John Davis, .

* * * Sir John Davis, , 265, etc

* * * * Sir John Davis, .

v Sir John Davis, .

Such were the arts by which James introduced humanity and justice among a people who had ever been buried in the most profound barbarism. Noble cares! much superior to the vain and criminal glory of conquests; but requiring ages of perseverance and attention to perfect what had been so happily begun.

A laudable act of justice was about this time executed in England upon Lord Sanqubir, a Scottish nobleman, who had been guilty of the base assassination of Turner, a fencing master. The English nation, who were generally dissatisfied with the Scots, were enraged at this crime, equally mean and atrocious; but James appeased them, by preferring the severity of law to the intercession of the friends and family of the criminal. [1]

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* Kennet, .

CHAPTER XLVII.

JAMES I.

1612.

This year the sudden death of Henry, prince of Wales, diffused a universal grief throughout the nation. Though youth and royal birth, both of them strong allurements, prepossess men mightily in favor of the early age of princes, it is with peculiar fondness that historians mention Henry, and, in every respect, his merit seems to have been extraordinary. He had not reached his eighteenth year, and he already possessed more dignity in his behavior, and commanded more respect, than his father, with all his age, learning, and experience. Neither his high fortune, nor his youth, had seduced him into any irregular pleasures: business and ambition seem to have been his sole passion. His inclinations, as well as exercises, were martial. The French ambassador, taking leave of him, and asking his commands for France, found him employed in the exercise of the pike: "Tell your king," said he, "in what occupation you left me engaged." [1] He had conceived great affection and esteem for the brave Sir Walter Raleigh. It was his saying, "Sure no king but my father would keep such a bird in a cage." [2]

* The French monarch had given particular orders to his ministers to cultivate the prince's friendship; who must soon, said he, have chief authority in England, where the king and queen are held in so little estimation. See Dep. de la Boderie, vol. i. , 415; vol. ii , 349.

* * Coke's Detection, .

He seems indeed to have nourished too violent a contempt for the king, on account of his pedantry and pusillanimity; and by that means struck in with the restless and martial spirit of the English nation. Had he lived, he had probably promoted the glory, perhaps not the felicity, of his people. The unhappy prepossession which men commonly entertain in favor of ambition, courage, enterprise, and other warlike virtues, engages generous natures, who always love fame, in such pursuits all destroy their own peace, and that of the rest of mankind.

Violent reports were propagated, as if Henry had been carried off by poison; but the physicians, on opening his body, found no symptoms to confirm such an opinion. [1] The bold and criminal malignity of men's tongues and pens spared not even the king on the occasion. But that prince's character seems rather to have failed in the extreme of facility and humanity, than in that of cruelty and violence. His indulgence to Henry was great, and perhaps imprudent, by giving him a large and independent settlement, even in so early youth.

* Kennet, . Coke, . Welwood,

1613.

The marriage of the princess Elizabeth with Frederic, elector palatine, was finished some time after the death of the prince, and served to dissipate the grief which arose on that melancholy event. But this marriage, though celebrated with great joy and festivity, proved itself an unhappy event to the king, as well as to his son-in-law, and had ill consequences on the reputation and fortunes of both. The elector, trusting to so great an alliance, engaged in enterprises beyond his strength: and the king, not being able to support him in his distress, lost entirely, in the end of his life, what remained of the affections and esteem of his own subjects.

Except during sessions of parliament, the history of this reign may more properly be called the history of the court, than that of the nation. An interesting object had for some years engaged the attention of the court; it was a favorite, and one beloved by James with so profuse and unlimited an affection, as left no room for any rival or competitor. About the end of the year 1609, Robert Carre, a youth of twenty years of age, and of a good family in Scotland, arrived in London, after having passed some time in his travels. All his natural accomplishments consisted in good looks: all his acquired abilities in an easy air and graceful demeanor. He had letters of recommendation to his countryman Lord Hay; and that nobleman no sooner cast his eye upon him, than he discovered talents sufficient to entitle him immediately to make a great figure in the government. Apprised of the king's passion for youth and beauty, and exterior appearance, he studied how matters might be so managed that this new object should make the strongest impression upon him. Without mentioning him at court, he assigned him the office, at a match of tilting, of presenting to the king his buckler and device; and hoped that he would attract the attention of the monarch. Fortune proved favorable to his design, by an incident which bore at first a contrary aspect. When Carre was advancing to execute his office, his unruly horse flung him, and broke his leg in the king's presence. James approached him with pity and concern: love and affection arose on the sight of his beauty and tender years; and the prince ordered him immediately to be lodged in the palace, and to be carefully attended. He himself, after the tilting, paid him a visit in his chamber, and frequently returned during his confinement. The ignorance and simplicity of the boy finished the conquest begun by his exterior graces and accomplishments. Other princes have been fond of choosing their favorites from among the lower ranks of their subjects, and have reposed themselves on them with the more unreserved confidence and affection, because the object has been beholden to their bounty for every honor and acquisition: James was desirous that his favorite should also derive from him all his sense, experience, and knowledge. Highly conceited of his own wisdom, he pleased himself with the fancy, that this raw youth, by his lessons and instructions, would, in a little time, be equal to his sagest ministers, and be initiated into all the profound mysteries of government, on which he set so high a value. And as this kind of creation was more perfectly his own work than any other, he seems to have indulged an unlimited fondness for his minion, beyond even that which he bore to his own children. He soon knighted him, created him Viscount Rochester, gave him the garter, brought him into the privy council, and, though at first without assigning him any particular office, bestowed on him the supreme direction of all his business and political concerns. Agreeable to this rapid advancement in confidence and honor, were the riches heaped upon the needy favorite; and while Salisbury and all the wisest ministers could scarcely find expedients sufficient to keep in motion the overburdened machine of government, James, with unsparing hand, loaded with treasures this insignificant and useless pageant. [1]

* Kennet, , 686, etc.

It is said, that the king found his pupil so ill educated as to be ignorant even of the lowest rudiments of the Latin tongue; and that the monarch, laying aside the sceptre, took the birch into his royal hand, and instructed him in the principles of grammar. During the intervals of this noble occupation, affairs of state, would be introduced; and the stripling, by the ascendant which he had acquired, was now enabled to repay on political, what he had received in grammatical instruction. Such scenes, and such incidents, are the more ridiculous, though the less odious, as the passion of James seems not to have contained in it any thing criminal or flagitious. History charges herself willingly with a relation of the great crimes, and still more with that of the great virtues, of mankind; but she appears to fall from her dignity, when necessitated to dwell on such frivolous events and ignoble personages.

The favorite was not, at first, so intoxicated with advancement, as not to be sensible of his own ignorance and inexperience. He had recourse to the assistance and advice of a friend; and he was more fortunate in his choice than is usual with such pampered minions. In Sir Thomas Overbury he met with a judicious and sincere counsellor; who, building all hopes of his own preferment on that of the young favorite, endeavored to instil into him the principles of prudence and discretion. By zealously serving every body, Carre was taught to abate the envy which might attend his sudden elevation: by showing a preference for the English, he learned to escape the prejudices which prevailed against his country. And so long as he was content to be ruled by Overbury's friendly counsels, he enjoyed — what is rare — the highest favor of the prince, without being hated by the people.

To complete the measure of courtly happiness, nought was wanting but a kind mistress; and, where high fortune concurred with all the graces of youth and beauty, this circumstance could not be difficult to attain. But it was here that the favorite met with that rock on which all his fortunes were wrecked, and which plunged him forever into an abyss of infamy, guilt, and misery.

No sooner had James mounted the throne of England, than he remembered his friendship for the unfortunate families of Howard and Devereux, who had suffered for their attachment to the cause of Mary and to his own. Having restored young Essex to his blood and dignity, and conferred the titles of Suffolk and Northampton on two brothers of the house of Norfolk, he sought the further pleasure of uniting these families by the marriage of the earl of Essex with Lady Frances Howard, daughter of the earl of Suffolk. She was only thirteen, he fourteen years of age; and it was thought proper, till both should attain the age of puberty that he should go abroad, and pass some time in his travels. [1] He returned into England after four years' absence, and was pleased to find his countess in the full lustre of beauty, and possessed of the love and admiration of the whole court. But, when the earl approached, and claimed the privileges of a husband, he met with nothing but symptoms of aversion and disgust, and a flat refusal of any further familiarities. He applied to her parents, who constrained her to attend him into the country, and to partake of his bed: but nothing could overcome her rigid sullenness and obstinacy; and she still rose from his side without having shared the nuptial pleasures. Disgusted with reiterated denials, he at last gave over the pursuit, and separating himself from her, thenceforth abandoned her conduct to her own will and discretion.

Such coldness and aversion in Lady Essex arose not without an attachment to another object. The favorite had opened his addresses, and had been too successful in making impression on the tender heart of the young countess. [2] She imagined that, so long as she refused the embraces of Essex, she never could be deemed his wife; and that a separation and divorce might still open the way for a new marriage with her beloved Rochester. [3] Though their passion was so violent, and their opportunities of intercourse so frequent, that they had already indulged themselves in all the gratifications of love, they still lamented their unhappy fate, while the union between them was not entire and indissoluble. And the lover, as well as his mistress, was impatient till their mutual ardor should be crowned by marriage.

So momentous an affair could not be concluded without consulting Overbury, with whom Rochester was accustomed to share all his secrets. While that faithful friend had considered his patron's attachment to the countess of Essex merely as an affair of gallantry, he had favored its progress; and it was partly owing to the ingenious and passionate letters

* Kennet, .

* * Kennet, .

* * * State Trials, vol. i. .

which he dictated, that Rochester had met with such success in his addresses. Like an experienced courtier, he thought that a conquest of this nature would throw a lustre on the young favorite, and would tend still further to endear him to James, who was charmed to hear of the amours of his court, and listened with attention to every tale of gallantry. But great was Overbury's alarm, when Rochester mentioned his design of marrying the countess; and he used every method to dissuade his friend from so foolish an attempt. He represented how invidious, how difficult an enterprise to procure her a divorce from her husband: how dangerous, how shameful, to take into his own bed a profligate woman, who, being married to a young nobleman of the first rank, had not scrupled to prostitute her character, and to bestow favors on the object of a capricious and momentary passion. And in the zeal of friendship, he went so far as to threaten Rochester, that he would separate himself forever from him, if he could so far forget his honor and his interest as to prosecute the intended marriage. [1]

Rochester had the weakness to reveal this conversation to the countess of Essex; and when her rage and fury broke out against Overbury, he had also the weakness to enter into her vindictive projects, and to swear vengeance against his friend, for the utmost instance which he could receive of his faithful friendship. Some contrivance was necessary for the execution of their purpose. Rochester addressed himself to the king; and after complaining, that his own indulgence to Overbury had begotten in him a degree of arrogance which was extremely disagreeable, he procured a commission for his embassy to Russia; which he represented as a retreat for his friend, both profitable and honorable. When consulted by Overbury, he earnestly dissuaded him from accepting this offer, and took on himself the office of satisfying the king, if he should be anywise displeased with the refusal. [2] To the king again, he aggravated the insolence of Overbury's conduct, and obtained a warrant for committing him to the Tower, which James intended as a slight punishment for his disobedience. The lieutenant of the Tower was a creature of Rochester's, and had lately been put into the office for this very purpose: he confined Overbury so strictly, that the unhappy prisoner was debarred the sight even of his nearest relations, and no communication of any kind was allowed with him during near six months which he lived in prison.

* State Trials, vol. i. , 236, 252. Franklyn, .

* * State Trials, vol. i. , 237, etc.

This obstacle being removed, the lovers pursued their purpose; and the king himself, forgetting the dignity of his character, and his friendship for the family of Essex, entered zealously into the project of procuring the countess a divorce from her husband. Essex also embraced the opportunity of separating himself from a bad woman, by whom he was hated; and he was willing to favor their success by any honorable expedient. The pretence for a divorce was his incapacity to fulfil the conjugal duties; and he confessed that, with regard to the countess, he was conscious of such an infirmity, though he was not sensible of it with regard to any other woman. In her place, too, it is said, a young virgin was substituted under a mask, to undergo a legal inspection by a jury of matrons. After such a trial, seconded by court influence, and supported by the ridiculous opinion of fascination or witchcraft, the sentence of divorce was pronounced between the earl of Essex and his countess. [1] And, to crown the scene, the king, solicitous lest the lady should lose any rank by her new marriage, bestowed on his minion the title of earl of Somerset.

Notwithstanding this success, the countess of Somerset was not satisfied till she should further satiate her revenge on Overbury: and she engaged her husband, as well as her uncle, the earl of Northampton, in the atrocious design of taking him off secretly by poison. Fruitless attempts were reiterated by weak poisons; but at last they gave him one so sudden and violent, that the symptoms were apparent to every one who approached him. [2] His interment was hurried on with the greatest precipitation; and though a strong suspicion immediately prevailed in the public, the full proof of the crime was not brought to light till some years after.

* State Trials, vol. i. , 224, etc.

* * Franklyn’s Annais. , 3, etc.

The fatal catastrophe of Overbury increased or begot the suspicion that the prince of Wales had been carried off by poison given him by Somerset. Men considered not that the contrary inference was much juster. If Somerset was so great a novice in this detestable art, that, during the course of five months, a man who was his prisoner and attended by none but his emissaries, could not be despatched but in so bungling a manner, how could it be imagined, that a young prince, living in his own court, surrounded by his own friends and domestics, could be exposed to Somerset's attempts, and be taken off by so subtile a poison, if such a one exist, as could elude the skill of the most experienced physicians?

The ablest minister that James ever possessed, the earl of Salisbury, was dead. [1] Suffolk, a man of slender capacity, had succeeded him in his office; and it was now his task to supply, from an exhausted treasury, the profusion of James and of his young favorite. The title of baronet, invented by Salisbury, was sold; and two hundred patents of that species of knighthood were disposed of for so many thousand pounds; each rank of nobility had also its price affixed to it: [2] privy seals were circulated to the amount of two hundred thousand pounds: benevolences were exacted to the amount of fifty-two thousand pounds: [3] and some monopolies, of no great value, were erected. But all these expedients proved insufficient to supply the king's necessities; even though he began to enter into some schemes for retrenching his expenses. [4] However small the hopes of success, a new parliament must be summoned, and this dangerous expedient — for such it was now become — once more be put to trial.

1614.

When the commons were assembled, they discovered an extraordinary alarm, on account of the rumor which was spread abroad concerning "undertakers." It was reported, that several persons, attached to the king, had entered into a confederacy; and having laid a regular plan for the new elections, had distributed their interest all over England, and had undertaken to secure a majority for the court. So ignorant were the commons, that they knew not this incident to be the first infallible symptom of any regular or established liberty. Had they been contented to follow the maxims of their predecessors, who, as the earl of Salisbury said to the last parliament, never, but thrice in six hundred years, refused a supply,[v*] they needed not dread that the crown should ever interest itself in their elections. Formerly the kings even insisted, that none of their household should be elected members; and though the charter was afterwards declared void, Henry VI., from his great favor to the city of York, conferred a peculiar privilege on its citizens, that they should be exempted from this trouble.[v* *]

* 14th of May, 1612.

* * Franklyn, , 33.

* * * Franklyn, .

* * * * Franklyn, .

v Parliament. Hist. vol. v. . Kennet, . Journ. 12th April; 2d May, 1614, etc. Franklyn, .

v* Journ. 17th Feb. 1609. It appears, however, that Salisbury was somewhat mistaken in this fact; and if the kings were not oftener refused supply by the parliament, it was only because they would not often expose themselves to the hazard of being refused: but it in certain that English parliaments did anciently carry their frugality to an extreme, and seldom could be prevailed upon to give the necessary support to government.

v* * Coke's Institutes, part iv. chap. I, of Charters of Exemption.

It is well known, that, in ancient times, a seat in the house being considered as a burden, attended neither with honor nor profit, it was requisite for the counties and boroughs to pay fees to their representatives. About this time, a seat began to be regarded as an honor, and the country gentlemen contended for it; though the practice of levying wages for the parliament men was not altogether discontinued. It was not till long after, when liberty was thoroughly established, and popular assemblies entered into every branch of public business, that the members began to join profit to honor, and the crown found it necessary to distribute among them all the considerable offices of the kingdom.

So little skill, or so small means, had the courtiers in James's reign for managing elections, that this house of commons showed rather a stronger spirit of liberty than the foregoing; and instead of entering upon the business of supply, as urged by the king, who made them several liberal offers of grace, [1] they immediately resumed the subject which had been opened last parliament, and disputed his majesty's power of levying new customs and impositions, by the mere authority of his prerogative. It is remarkable, that, in their debates on this subject, the courtiers frequently pleaded, as a precedent, the example of all the other hereditary monarchs in Europe, and particularly mentioned the kings of France and Spain; nor was this reasoning received by the house either with surprise or indignation. [2] The members of the opposite party either contented themselves with denying the justness of the inference, or they disputed the truth of the observation. [3] And a patriot member in particular, Sir Roger Owen, even in arguing against the impositions, frankly allowed, that the king of England was endowed with as ample a power and prerogative as any prince in Christendom. [4] The nations on the continent, we may observe, enjoyed still, in that age, some small remains of liberty; and the English were possessed of little more.

* Journ. 11th April, 1614.

* * Journ. 21st May, 1614.

* * * Journ. 12th, 21st May, 1614.

* * * * Journ. 18th April, 1614.

The commons applied to the lords for a conference with regard to the new impositions. A speech of Neile, bishop of Lincoln, reflecting on the lower house, begat some altercation with the peers; [1] and the king seized the opportunity of dissolving, immediately, with great indignation, a parliament which had shown so firm a resolution of retrenching his prerogative, without communicating, in return, the smallest supply to his necessities. He carried his resentment so far, as even to throw into prison some of the members who had been the most forward in their opposition to his measures. [2] In vain did he plead, in excuse for this violence, the example of Elizabeth, and other princes of the line of Tudor, as well as Plantagenet. The people and the parliament, without abandoning forever all their liberties and privileges, could acquiesce in none of these precedents, how ancient and frequent soever. And were the authority of such precedents admitted, the utmost that could be inferred is, that the constitution of

England was, at that time, an inconsistent fabric, whose jarring and discordant parts must soon destroy each other, and from the dissolution of the old, beget some new form of civil government, more uniform and consistent.

* See note AAA, at the end of the volume.

* * Kennet, .

In the public and avowed conduct of the king and the house of commons, throughout this whole reign, there appears sufficient cause of quarrel and mutual disgust; yet are we not to imagine that this was the sole foundation of that jealousy which prevailed between them. During debates in the house, it often happened that a particular member, more ardent and zealous than the rest, would display the highest sentiments of liberty, which the commons contented themselves to hear with silence and seeming approbation; and the king, informed of these harangues, concluded the whole house to be infected with the same principles, and to be engaged in a combination against his prerogative. The king, on the other hand, though he valued himself extremely on his kingcraft, and perhaps was not altogether incapable of dissimulation, seems to have been very little endowed with the gift of secrecy; but openly at his table, in all companies, inculcated those monarchical tenets which he had so strongly imbibed. Before a numerous audience, he had expressed himself with great disparagement of the common law of England, and had given the preference, in the strongest terms, to the civil law: and for this indiscretion he found himself obliged to apologize, in a speech to the former parliament. [1] As a specimen of his usual liberty of talk, we may mention a story, though it passed some time after, which we meet with in the life of Waller, and which that poet used frequently to repeat. When Waller was young, he had the curiosity to go to court; and he stood in the circle, and saw James dine; where, among other company, there sat at table two bishops, Neile and Andrews. The king proposed aloud this question, Whether he might not take his subjects' money, when he needed it, without all this formality of parliament? Neile replied, "God forbid you should not: for you are the breath of our nostrils." Andrews declined answering, and said he was not skilled in parliamentary cases: but upon the king's urging him, and saying he would admit of no evasion, the bishop replied pleasantly, “Why, then, I think your majesty may lawfully take my brother Neile’s money; for he offers it.” [2]

1615.

The favorite had hitherto escaped the inquiry of justice; but he had not escaped that still voice which can make itself be heard amidst all the hurry and flattery of a court, and astonishes the criminal with a just representation of his most secret enormities. Conscious of the murder of his friend, Somerset received small consolation from the enjoyments of love, or the utmost kindness and indulgence of his sovereign. The graces of his youth gradually disappeared, the gayety of his manners was obscured, his politeness and obliging behavior were changed into sullenness and silence. And the king, whose affections had been engaged by these superficial accomplishments, began to estrange himself from a man who no longer contributed to his amusement.

The sagacious courtiers observed the first symptoms of this disgust: Somerset’s enemies seized the opportunity, and offered a new minion to the king. George Villiers, a youth of one-and-twenty, younger brother of a good family, returned at this time from his travels, and was remarked for the advantages of a handsome person, genteel air, and fashionable apparel. At a comedy, he was purposely placed full in James’s eye, and immediately engaged the attention, and, in the same instant, the affections of that monarch. [3] Ashamed of his sudden attachment, the king endeavored, but in vain, to conceal the partiality which he felt for the handsome stranger; and he employed all his profound politics to fix him in his service, without seeming to desire it.

He declared his resolution not to confer any office on him, unless entreated by the queen; and he pretended, that it should only be in complaisance to her choice he would agree to admit him near his person.

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* King James’s Works, .

* * Preface to Waller’s Works.

* * * Franklyn, . Kennet, vol. ii. .

The queen was immediately applied to; but she, well knowing the extreme to which the king carried these attachments, refused, at first, to lend her countenance to this new passion. It was not till entreated by Abbot, archbishop of Canterbury, a decent prelate, and one much prejudiced against Somerset, that she would condescend to oblige her husband, by asking this favor of him. [1] And the king, thinking now that all appearances were fully saved, no longer constrained his affection, but immediately bestowed the office of cup-bearer on young Villiers.

* Coke, , 47. Rush, vol. i. .

The whole court was thrown into parties between the two minions: while some endeavored to advance the rising fortunes of Villiers, others deemed it safer to adhere to the established credit of Somerset. The king himself, divided between inclination and decorum, increased the doubt and ambiguity of the courtiers; and the stern jealousy of the old favorite, who refused every advance of friendship from his rival, begat perpetual quarrels between their several partisans. But the discovery of Somerset's guilt in the murder of Overbury at last decided the controversy, and exposed him to the ruin and infamy which he so well merited.

An apothecary's apprentice, who had been employed in making up the poisons, having retired to Flushing, began to talk very freely of the whole secret; and the affair at last came to the ears of Trumbal, the king's envoy in the Low Countries. By his means, Sir Ralph Winwood, secretary of state, was informed; and he immediately carried the intelligence to James. The king, alarmed and astonished to find such enormous guilt in a man whom he had admitted into his bosom, sent for Sir Edward Coke, chief justice, and earnestly recommended to him the most rigorous and unbiased scrutiny. This injunction was executed with great industry and severity: the whole labyrinth of guilt was carefully unravelled: the lesser criminals, Sir Jervis Elvis, lieutenant of the Tower, Franklin, Weston, Mrs. Turner, were first tried and condemned: Somerset and his countess were afterwards found guilty. Northampton's death, a little before, had saved him from a like fate.

It may not be unworthy of remark, that Coke, in the trial of Mrs. Turner, told her that she was guilty of the seven deadly sins: she was a whore, a bawd, a sorcerer, a witch, a Papist, a felon, and a murderer. [1] And, what may more surprise us, Bacon, then attorney-general, took care to observe, that poisoning was a Popish trick. [2] Such were the bigoted prejudices which prevailed: poisoning was not of itself sufficiently odious, if it were not represented as a branch of Popery. Stowe tells us, that when the king came to Newcastle, on his first entry into England, he gave liberty to all the prisoners, except those who were confined for treason, murder, and Papistry. When one considers these circumstances, that furious bigotry of the Catholics which broke out in the gunpowder conspiracy, appears the less surprising.

All the accomplices in Overbury's murder received the punishment due to their crime: but the king bestowed a pardon on the principals, Somerset and the countess. It must be confessed, that James's fortitude had been highly laudable, had he persisted in his first intention of consigning over to severe justice all the criminals: but let us still beware of blaming him too harshly, if, on the approach of the fatal hour, he scrupled to deliver into the hands of the executioner persons whom he had once favored with his most tender affections. To soften the rigor of their fate, after some years' imprisonment, he restored them to their liberty, and conferred on them a pension, with which they retired, and languished out old age in infamy and obscurity. Their guilty loves were turned into the most deadly hatred; and they passed many years together in the same house, without any intercourse or correspondence with each other. [3]

Several historians, [4] in relating these events, have insisted much on the dissimulation of James's behavior, when he delivered Somerset into the hands of the chief justice; on the insolent menaces of that criminal; on his peremptory refusal to stand a trial; and on the extreme anxiety of the king during the whole progress of this affair.

Allowing all these circumstances to be true, of which some are suspicious, if not palpably false, [1] the great remains of tenderness which

* State Trials, vol. i. .

* * State Trials, vol. i. .

* * * Kennet, .

* * * * Coke, Weldon, etc.

James still felt for Somerset, may, perhaps, be sufficient to account for them. That favorite was high-spirited, and resolute rather to perish than live under the infamy to which he was exposed. James was sensible, that the pardoning of so great a criminal, which was of itself invidious, would become still more unpopular, if his obstinate and stubborn behavior on his trial should augment the public hatred against him. [2] At least, the unreserved confidence in which the king had indulged his favorite for several years, might render Somerset master of so many secrets, that it is impossible, without further light, to assign the particular reason of that superiority which, it is said, he appeared so much to assume.

The fall of Somerset, and his banishment from court, opened the way for Villiers to mount up at once to the full height of favor, of honors, and of riches. Had James's passion been governed by common rules of prudence, the office of cup-bearer would have attached Villiers to his person, and might well have contented one of his age and family; nor would any one, who was not cynically austere, have much censured the singularity of the king's choice in his friends and favorites. But such advancement was far inferior to the fortune which he intended for his minion. In the course of a few years, he created him Viscount Villiers, earl, marquis, and duke of Buckingham, knight of the garter, master of the horse, chief justice in eyre, warden of the cinque ports, master of the king's bench office, steward of Westminster, constable of Windsor, and lord high admiral of England. His mother obtained the title of countess of Buckingham: his brother was created Viscount Purbeck; and a numerous train of needy relations were all pushed up into credit and authority. And thus the fond prince, while he meant to play the tutor to his favorite, and to train him up in the rules of prudence and politics, took an infallible method, by loading him with premature and exorbitant honors, to render him, forever, rash, precipitate, and insolent.

* See Biog. Brit, article Coke, .

* * Bacon, vol.iv. .

* * * Franklyn, . Clarendon, 8vo. edit. vol. i.

A young minion to gratify with pleasure, a necessitous family to supply with riches, were enterprises too great for the empty exchequer of James. In order to obtain a little money, the cautionary towns must be delivered up to the Dutch; a measure which has been severely blamed by almost all historians; and I may venture to affirm, that it has been censured much beyond its real weight and importance.

When Queen Elizabeth advanced money for the support of the infant republic, besides the view of securing herself against the power and ambition of Spain, she still reserved the prospect of reimbursement; and she got consigned into her hands the three important fortresses of Flushing, the Brille, and Rammekins, as pledges for the money due to her. Indulgent to the necessitous condition of the states, she agreed that the debt should bear no interest; and she stipulated, that if ever England should make a separate peace with Spain, she should pay the troops which garrisoned those fortresses. [1]

After the truce was concluded between Spain and the United Provinces, the states made an agreement with the king, that the debt, which then amounted to eight hundred thousand pounds, should be discharged by yearly payments of forty thousand pounds; and as five years had elapsed, the debt was now reduced to six hundred thousand pounds; and in fifteen years more, if the truce were renewed, it would be finally extinguished. [2]

* Rymer, tom. xvi. . Winwood, vol. ii. .

* * Sir Dudley Carleton’s Letters, , 28.

But of this sum, twenty-six thousand pounds a year were expended on the pay of the garrisons: the remainder alone accrued to the king: and the states, weighing these circumstances, thought that they made James a very advantageous offer, when they expressed their willingness, on the surrender of the cautionary towns to pay him immediately two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, and to incorporate the English garrisons in their army. It occurred also to the king, that even the payment of the forty thousand pounds a year was precarious, and depended on the accident that the truce should be renewed between Spain and the republic: if war broke out, the maintenance of the garrisons lay upon England alone; a burden very useless, and too heavy for the slender revenues of that kingdom: that even during the truce, the Dutch, straitened by other expenses, were far from being regular in their payments; and the garrisons were at present in danger of mutinying for want of subsistence: that the annual sum of fourteen thousand pounds, the whole saving on the Dutch payments, amounted, in fifteen years, to no more than two hundred and ten thousand pounds; whereas two hundred and fifty thousand pounds were offered immediately, a larger sum; and if money be computed at ten per cent., the current interest more than double the sum to which England was entitled: [1] that if James waited till the whole debt were discharged, the troops which composed the garrisons remained a burden upon him, and could not be broken, without receiving some consideration for their past services: that the cautionary towns were only a temporary restraint upon the Hollanders; and, in the present emergence, the conjunction of interest between England and the republic was so intimate as to render all other ties superfluous; and no reasonable measures for mutual support would be wanting from the Dutch, even though freed from the dependence of these garrisons: that the exchequer of the republic was at present very low, insomuch that they found difficulty, now that the aids of France were withdrawn, to maintain themselves in that posture of defence which was requisite during the truce with Spain: and that the Spaniards were perpetually insisting with the king on the restitution of these towns, as belonging to their crown; and no cordial alliance could ever be made with that nation, while they remained in the hands of the English. [2] These reasons, together with his urgent wants, induced the king to accept of Caron’s offer; and he evacuated the cautionary towns, which held the states in a degree of subjection, and which an ambitious and enterprising prince would have regarded as his most valuable possessions. This is the date of the full liberty of the Dutch commonwealth.

* An annuity of fourteen thousand pounds during fifteen years, money being at ten per cent., is worth, on computation, only one hundred and six thousand five hundred pounds; whereas the king received two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. Yet the bargain was good for the Dutch, as well as the king; because they were both of them freed from the maintenance of useless garrisons.

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

1617.

When the crown of England devolved on James, it might have been foreseen by the Scottish nation, that the independence of their kingdom, the object for which their ancestors had shed so much blood, would now be lost; and that, if both states persevered in maintaining separate laws and parliaments, the weaker would more sensibly feel the subjection, than if it had been totally subdued by force of arms. But these views did not generally occur. The glory of having given a sovereign to their powerful enemy, the advantages of present peace and tranquillity, the riches acquired from the munificence of their master; these considerations secured their dutiful obedience to a prince who daily gave such sensible proofs of his friendship and partiality towards them. Never had the authority of any king who resided among them, been so firmly established as was that of James, even when absent; and as the administration had been hitherto conducted with great order and tranquillity, there had happened no occurrence to draw thither our attention. But this summer the king was resolved to pay a visit to his native country, in order to renew his ancient friendships and connections, and to introduce that change of ecclesiastical discipline and government on which he was extremely intent. The three chief points of this kind, which James proposed to accomplish by his journey to Scotland, were the enlarging of episcopal authority, the establishing of a few ceremonies in public worship, and the fixing of a superiority in the civil above the ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

But it is an observation suggested by all history, and by none more than by that of James and his successor, that the religious spirit, when it mingles with faction, contains in it something supernatural and unaccountable; and that, in its operations upon society, effects correspond less to their known causes than is found in any other circumstance of government; a reflection which may at once afford a source of blame against such sovereigns as lightly innovate in so dangerous an article, and of apology for such as, being engaged in an enterprise of that nature, are disappointed of the expected event, and fail in their undertakings.

When the Scottish nation was first seized with that zeal for reformation, which, though it caused such disturbance during the time, has proved so salutary in the consequences, the preachers, assuming a character little inferior to the prophetic or apostolical, disdained all subjection to the spiritual rulers of the church, by whom their innovations were punished and opposed. The revenues of the dignified clergy, no longer considered as sacred, were either appropriated by the present possessors, or seized by the more powerful barons; and what remained, after mighty dilapidations, was, by act of parliament, annexed to the crown. The prelates, however, and abbots, maintained their temporal jurisdictions and their seats in parliament; and though laymen were sometimes endowed with ecclesiastical titles, the church, notwithstanding its frequent protestations to the contrary, was still supposed to be represented by those spiritual lords in the states of the kingdom. After many struggles, the king, even before his accession to the throne of England, had acquired sufficient influence over the Scottish clergy, to extort from them an acknowledgment of the parliamentary jurisdiction of bishops; though attended with many precautions, in order to secure themselves against the spiritual encroachments of that order. [1] When king of England, he engaged them, though still with great reluctance on their part, to advance a step further, and to receive the bishops as perpetual presidents or moderators in their ecclesiastical synods; reiterating their protestations against all spiritual jurisdiction of the prelates, and all controlling power over the presbyters. [2] And by such gradual innovations, the king flattered himself that he should quietly introduce episcopal authority: but as his final scope was fully seen from the beginning, every new advance gave fresh occasion of discontent, and aggravated, instead of softening, the abhorrence entertained against the prelacy.

* 1598.

* * 1606.

What rendered the king’s aim more apparent, were the endeavors which, at the same time, he used to introduce into Scotland some of the ceremonies of the church of England: the rest, it was easily foreseen, would soon follow. The fire of devotion, excited by novelty, and inflamed by opposition, had so possessed the minds of the Scottish reformers, that all rites and ornaments, and even order of worship, were disdainfully rejected as useless burdens; retarding the imagination in its rapturous ecstasies, and cramping the operations of that divine spirit by which they supposed themselves to be animated. A mode of worship was established, the most naked and most simple imaginable; one that borrowed nothing from the senses, but reposed itself entirely on the contemplation of that divine essence which discovers itself to the understanding only. This species of devotion, so worthy of the Supreme Being, but so little suitable to human frailty, was observed to occasion great disturbances in the breast, and in many respects to confound all rational principles of conduct and behavior. The mind, straining for these extraordinary raptures, reaching them by short glances, sinking again under its own weakness, rejecting all exterior aid of pomp and ceremony, was so occupied in this inward life, that It fled from every intercourse of society, and from every cheerful amusement which could soften or humanize the character. It was obvious to all discerning eyes, and had not escaped the king's, that, by the prevalence of fanaticism, a gloomy and sullen disposition established itself among the people; a spirit obstinate and dangerous; independent and disorderly; animated equally with a contempt of authority, and a hatred to every other mode of religion, particularly to the Catholic. In order to mellow these humors, James endeavored to infuse a small tincture of ceremony into the national worship, and to introduce such rites as might, in some degree, occupy the mind, and please the senses, without departing too far from that simplicity by which the reformation was distinguished. The finer arts too, though still rude in these northern kingdoms, were employed to adorn the churches; and the king's chapel, in which an organ was erected, and some pictures and statues displayed, was proposed as a model to the rest of the nation. But music was grating to the prejudiced ears of the Scottish; clergy; sculpture and painting appeared instruments of idolatry the surplice was a rag of Popery; and every motion or gesture prescribed by the liturgy, was a step towards that spiritual Babylon, so much the object of their horror and aversion. Every thing was deemed impious but their own mystical comments on the Scriptures, which they idolized, and whose Eastern prophetic style they employed in every common occurrence.

It will not be necessary to give a particular account of the ceremonies which the king was so intent to establish. Such institutions, for a time, are esteemed either too divine to have proceeded from any other being than the Supreme Creator of the universe, or too diabolical to have been derived from any but an infernal demon. But no sooner is the mode of the controversy past, than they are universally discovered to be of so little importance, as scarcely to be mentioned with decency amidst the ordinary course of human transactions. It suffices here to remark, that the rites introduced by James regarded the kneeling at the sacrament, private communion, private baptism, confirmation of children, and the observance of Christmas and other festivals. [1]

* Franklyn, . Spotswood.

The acts establishing these ceremonies were afterwards known by the name of the Articles of Perth, from the place where they were ratified by the assembly.

A conformity of discipline and worship between the churches of England and Scotland, which was James's aim, he never could hope to establish, but by first procuring an acknowledgment of his own authority in all spiritual causes; and nothing could be more contrary to the practice as well as principles of the Presbyterian clergy. The ecclesiastical courts possessed the power of pronouncing excommunication; and that sentence, besides the spiritual consequences supposed to follow from it, was attended with immediate effects of the most important nature. The person excommunicated was shunned by every one as profane and impious; and his whole estate, during his lifetime, and all his movables, forever, were forfeited to the crown. Nor were the previous steps requisite before pronouncing this sentence, formal or regular, in proportion to the weight of it. Without accuser, without summons, without trial, any ecclesiastical court, however inferior, sometimes pretended, in a summary manner, to denounce excommunication, for any cause, and against any person, even though he lived not within the bounds of their jurisdiction. [1] And, by this means, the whole tyranny of the inquisition, though without its order, was introduced into the kingdom.

But the clergy were not content with the unlimited jurisdiction which they exercised in ecclesiastical matters: they assumed a censorial power over every part of administration; and, in all their sermons, and even prayers, mingling politics with religion, they inculcated the most seditious and most turbulent principles. Black, minister of St. Andrew's, went so far, [2] in a sermon, as to pronounce all kings the devil's children; he gave the queen of England the appellation of atheist; he said, that the treachery of the king's heart was now fully discovered; and in his prayers for the queen he used these words: "We must pray for her for the fashion's sake, but we have no cause: she will never do us any good." When summoned before the privy council, he refused to answer to a civil court for any thing delivered from the pulpit, even though the crime of which he was accused was of a civil nature. The church adopted his cause. They raised a sedition in Edinburgh. [3]

* Spotswood.

* * 1596.

* * * 17th Dec. 1596.

The king, during some time, was in the hands of the enraged populace; and it was not without courage, as well as dexterity, that he was able to extricate himself. [1] A few days after, a minister, preaching in the principal church of that capital, said, that the king was possessed with a devil; and that, one devil being expelled, seven worse had entered in his place. [2] To which he added, that the subjects might lawfully rise, and take the sword out of his hand. Scarcely, even during the darkest night of Papal superstition, are there found such instances of priestly encroachments, as the annals of Scotland present to us during that period.

By these extravagant stretches of power, and by the patient conduct of James, the church began to lose ground, even before the king's accession to the throne of England; but no sooner had that event taken place, than he made the Scottish clergy sensible that he was become the sovereign of a great kingdom, which he governed with great, authority. Though formerly he would have thought himself happy to have made a fair partition with them of the civil and ecclesiastical authority, he was now resolved to exert a supreme jurisdiction in church as well as state, and to put an end to their seditious practices. An assembly had been summoned at Aberdeen; [3] but, on account of his journey to London, he prorogued it to the year following. Some of the clergy, disavowing his ecclesiastical supremacy, met at the time first appointed, notwithstanding his prohibition. He threw them into prison. Such of them as submitted, and acknowledged their error, were pardoned. The rest were brought to their trial. They were condemned for high treason. The king gave them their lives, but banished them the kingdom. Six of them suffered this penalty. [4]

The general assembly was afterwards induced to acknowledge the king's authority in summoning ecclesiastical courts, and to submit to the jurisdiction and visitation of the bishops Even their favorite sentence of excommunication was declared invalid, unless confirmed by the ordinary. The king recommended to the inferior courts the members whom they should elect to this assembly; and every thing was conducted in it with little appearance of choice and liberty.[v*]

By his own prerogative, likewise, which he seems to have stretched on this occasion, the king erected a court of high commission, [1] in imitation of that which was established in England. The bishops and a few of the clergy, who had been summoned, willingly acknowledged this court; and it proceeded immediately upon business, as if its authority had been grounded on the full consent of the whole legislature.

But James reserved the final blow for the time when he should himself pay a visit to Scotland. He proposed to the parliament, which was then assembled, that they should enact, that "whatever his majesty should determine in the external government of the church, with the consent of the archbishops, bishops, and a competent number of the ministry, should have the force of law." [2] What number should be deemed competent was not determined; and their nomination was left entirely to the king: so that his ecclesiastical authority, had this bill passed, would have been established in its full extent. Some of the clergy protested. They apprehended, they said, that the purity of their church would, by means of this new authority, be polluted with all the rites and liturgy of the church of England. James, dreading clamor and opposition dropped the bill, which had already passed the lords of articles; and asserted, that the inherent prerogative of the crown contained more power than was recognized by it. Some time after, he called, at St. Andrew’s, a meeting of the bishops and thirty-six of the most eminent clergy. He there declared his resolution of exerting his prerogative, and of establishing, by his own authority, the few ceremonies which he had recommended to them. They entreated him rather to summon a general assembly, and to gain their assent. An assembly was accordingly summoned to meet on the twenty-fifth of November ensuing.

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* Spotswood.

* * Spotswood.

* * * July, 1604.

* * * * Spotswood.

V 6th June, 1610.

v* Spotswood.

* 15th Feb. 1610.

* * Spotswood. Franklyn, .

Yet this assembly, which met after the king’s departure from Scotland, eluded all his applications; and it was not till the subsequent year, that he was able to procure a vote for receiving his ceremonies. And through every step in this affair, in the parliament as well as in all the general assemblies, the nation betrayed the utmost reluctance to all these innovations, and nothing but James’s importunity and authority had extorted a seeming consent, which was belied by the inward sentiments of all ranks of people. Even the few over whom religious prejudices were not prevalent, thought national honor sacrificed by a servile imitation of the modes worship practised in England. And every prudent man agreed in condemning the measures of the king, who, by an ill-timed zeal for insignificant ceremonies, had betrayed, though in an opposite manner, equal narrowness of mind with the persons whom he treated with such contempt. It was judged that, had not these dangerous humors been irritated by opposition; had they been allowed peaceably to evaporate; they would at last have subsided within the limits of law and civil authority; and that, as all fanatical religions naturally circumscribe to very narrow bounds the numbers and riches of the ecclesiastics, no sooner is their first fire spent, than they lose their credit over the people, and leave them under the natural and beneficent influence of their civil and moral obligations.

At the same time that James shocked, in so violent a manner, the religious principles of his Scottish subjects, he acted in opposition to those of his English. He had observed, in his progress through England, that a Judaical observance of the Sunday, chiefly by means of the Puritans, was every day gaining ground throughout the kingdom; and that the people, under color of religion, were, contrary to former practice debarred such sports, and recreations as contributed both to their health and their amusement. [1] Festivals, which, in other nations and ages, are partly dedicated to public worship, partly to mirth and society, were here totally appropriated to the offices of religion, and served to nourish those sullen and gloomy contemplations to which the people were, of themselves, so unfortunately subject. The king imagined, that it would be easy to infuse cheerfulness into this dark spirit of devotion. He issued a proclamation to allow and encourage, after divine service, all kinds of lawful games and exercises; and, by his authority, he endeavored to give sanction to a practice which his subjects regarded as the utmost instance of profaneness and impiety. [2]

* Kennet, .

* * Franklyn, .

To show how rigid the English, chiefly the Puritans, were become in this particular, a bill was introduced into the house of commons, in the eighteenth of the king, for the more strict observance of the Sunday, which they affected to the Sabbath. One Shepherd opposed this bill, objected to the appellation of Sabbath as Puritanical, defended dancing by the example of David, and seems even to have justified sports on that day. For this profaneness he was expelled the house, by the suggestion of Mr. Pym the house of lords opposed so far this Puritanical spirit of the commons that they proposed that the appellation of Sabbath should be changed into that of the Lord’s day. [1]

* Journ. 15th, 16th, Feb. 1620. 28th May, 1621. In Shepherd’s sentence, his offence is said by the house to be great, exorbitant, unparalleled.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

JAMES I.

1618.

At the time when Sir Waller Raleigh was first confined in the Tower, his violent and haughty temper had rendered him the most unpopular man in England; and his condemnation was chiefly owing to that public odium under which he labored. During the thirteen years' imprisonment which he suffered, the sentiments of the nation were much changed with regard to him. Men had leisure to reflect on the hardship, not to say injustice, of his sentence; they pitied his active and enterprising spirit, which languished in the rigors of confinement; they were struck with the extensive genius of the man, who, being educated amidst naval and military enterprises, had surpassed, in the pursuits of literature, even those of the most recluse and sedentary lives; and they admired his unbroken magnanimity, which, at his age, and under his circumstances, could engage him to undertake and execute so great a work as his History of the World. To increase these favorable dispositions, on which he built the hopes of recovering his liberty, he spread the report of a golden mine which he had discovered in Guiana, and which was sufficient, according to his representation, not only to enrich all the adventurers, but to afford immense treasures to the nation. The king gave little credit to these mighty promises; both because he believed that no such mine as the one described was any where in nature, and because he considered Raleigh as a man of desperate fortunes, whose business it was, by any means, to procure his freedom, and to reinstate himself in credit and authority. Thinking, however, that he had already undergone sufficient punishment, he released him from the Tower; and when his vaunts of the golden mine had induced multitudes to engage with him, the king gave them permission to try the adventure, and, at their desire, he conferred on Raleigh authority over his fellow-adventurers. Though strongly solicited, he still refused to grant him a pardon, which he deemed a natural consequence, when he was intrusted with power and command. But James declared himself still diffident of Raleigh’s intentions; and he meant, he said, to reserve the former sentence, as a check upon his future behavior.

Raleigh well knew that it was far from the king’s purpose to invade any of the Spanish settlements: he therefore firmly denied that Spain had planted any colonies on that part of the coast where his mine lay. When Gondomar, the ambassador of that nation, alarmed at his preparations, carried complaints to the king, Raleigh still protested the innocence of his intentions; and James assured Gondomar, that he durst not form any hostile attempt, but should pay with his head for so audacious an enterprise. The minister, however, concluding that twelve armed vessels were not fitted out without some purpose of invasion, conveyed the intelligence to the court of Madrid, who immediately gave orders for arming and fortifying all their settlements, particularly those along the coast of Guiana.

When the courage and avarice of the Spaniards and Portuguese had discovered so many new worlds, they were resolved to show themselves superior to the barbarous heathens whom they invaded, not only in arts and arms, but also in the justice of the quarrel: they applied to Alexander VI.., who then filled the papal chair; and he generously bestowed on the Spaniards the whole western, and on the Portuguese the whole eastern part of the globe. The more scrupulous Protestants, who acknowledged not the authority of the Roman pontiff, established the first discovery as the foundation of *their* title; and if a pirate or sea adventurer of their nation had but erected a stick or a stone on the coast, as a memorial of his taking possession, they concluded the whole continent to belong to them, and thought themselves entitled to expel or exterminate, as usurpers, the ancient possessors and inhabitants It was in this manner that Sir Walter Raleigh, about twenty-three years before, had acquired to the crown of England a claim to the continent of Guiana, a region as large as the half of Europe; and though he had immediately left the coast, yet he pretended that the English title to the whole remained certain and indefeasible. But it had happened in the mean time, that the Spaniards, not knowing, or not acknowledging, this imaginary claim, had taken possession of a part of Guiana, had formed a settlement on the River Oronooko, had built a little town called St. Thomas, and were there working some mines of small value.

To this place Raleigh directly bent his course; and, remaining himself at the mouth of the river with five of the largest ships, he sent up the rest to St. Thomas, under the command of his son, and of Captain Keymis, a person entirely devoted to him. The Spaniards, who had expected this invasion, fired on the English at their landing, were repulsed, and pursued into the town. Young Raleigh, to encourage his men, called out, “That this was the true mine, and none but fools looked for any other;” and, advancing upon the Spaniards, received a shot, of which he immediately expired. This dismayed not Keymis and the others. They carried on the attack, got possession of the town, which they afterwards reduced to ashes; and found not in it any thing of value.

Raleigh did not pretend that he had himself seen the mine which he had engaged so many people to go in quest of: it was Keymis, he said, who had formerly discovered it, and had brought him that lump of ore, which promised such immense treasures. Yet Keymis, who owned that he was within two hours’ march of the place, refused, on the most absurd pretences, to take any effectual step towards finding it; and he returned immediately to Raleigh, with the melancholy news of his son’s death, and the ill success of the enterprise. Sensible to reproach, and dreading punishment for his behavior, Keymis, in despair, retired into his cabin, and put an end to his own life.

The other adventurers now concluded, that they were deceived by Raleigh; that he never had known of any such mine as he pretended to go in search of; that his intention had ever been to plunder St. Thomas; and having encouraged his company by the spoils of that place, to have thence proceeded to the invasion of the other Spanish settlements; that he expected to repair his ruined fortunes by such daring enterprises; and that he trusted to the money he should acquire, for making his peace with England; or, if that view failed him, that he purposed to retire into some other country, where his riches would secure his retreat.

The small acquisitions gained by the sack of St. Thomas discouraged Raleigh’s companions from entering into these views; though there were many circumstances in the treaty and late transactions between the nations, which might invite them to engage in such a piratical war against the Spaniards.

When England made peace with Spain, the example of Henry IV. was imitated, who, at the treaty of Vervins, finding a difficulty in adjusting all questions with regard to the Indian trade, had agreed to pass over that article in total silence.

The Spaniards, having all along published severe edicts against the this silence in their own favor, and considered it as a tacit acquiescence of England in the established laws of Spain. The English, on the contrary, pretended that, as they had never been excluded by any treaty from commerce with any part of the king of Spain's dominions, it was still as lawful for them to trade with his settlements in either Indies, as with his European territories. In consequence of this ambiguity, many adventurers from England sailed to the Spanish Indies, and met with severe punishment when caught; as they, on the other hand, often stole, and when superior in power, forced a trade with the inhabitants, and resisted, nay, sometimes plundered, the Spanish governors. Violences of this nature, which had been carried to a great height on both sides, it was agreed to bury in total oblivion; because of the difficulty which was found in remedying them upon any fixed principles.

But as there appeared a great difference between private adventurers in single ships, and a fleet acting under a royal commission, Raleigh's companions thought it safest to return immediately to England, and carry him along with them to answer for his conduct. It appears that he employed many artifices, first to engage them to attack the Spanish settlements, and, failing of that, to make his escape into France: but, all these proving unsuccessful, he was delivered into the king's hands, and strictly examined, as well as his fellow-adventurers, before the privy council. The council, upon inquiry, found no difficulty in pronouncing, that the former suspicions, with regard to Raleigh's intentions, had been well grounded; that he had abused the king in the representations which he had made of his projected adventure; that, contrary to his instructions, he had acted in an offensive and hostile manner against his majesty's allies; and that he had wilfully burned and destroyed a town belonging to the king of Spain. He might have been tried either by common law, for this act of violence and piracy; or by martial law, for breach of orders: but it was an established principle among lawyers, [1] that, as he lay under an actual attainder for high treason, he could not be brought to a new trial for any other crime. To satisfy, therefore the court of Spain, which raised the loudest complaints against him, the king made use of that power which he had purposely reserved in his own hands, and signed the warrant for his execution upon his former sentence. [2]

* See this matter discussed in Bacon’s Letters published by Dr Birch, .

* * See note BBB, at the end of the volume.

Raleigh, finding his fate inevitable, collected all his courage and though he had formerly made use of many mean artifices, such as feigning madness, sickness, and a variety of diseases, in order to protract his examination, and procure his escape, he now resolved to act his part with bravery and resolution, “’Tis a sharp remedy,” he said, “but a sure one for all ills,” when he felt the edge of the axe by which he was to be beheaded. [1] His harangue to the people was calm and eloquent; and he endeavored to revenge himself, and to load his enemies with the public hatred, by strong asseverations of facts, which, to say the least, may be esteemed very doubtful. [2] With the utmost indifference he laid his head upon the block, and received the fatal blow; and in his death there appeared the same great, but ill-regulated mind, which, during his life, had displayed itself in all his conduct and behavior.

* Franklyn, .

* * He asserted, in the most solemn manner, that he had nowise contributed to Essex’s death: but the last letter in Murden’s Collection contains the strongest proof of the contrary.

No measure of James’s reign was attended with more public dissatisfaction than the punishment of Sir Walter Raleigh. To execute a sentence which was originally so hard, which had been so long suspended, and which seemed to have been tacitly pardoned, by conferring on him a new trust and commission, was deemed an instance of cruelty and injustice. To sacrifice to a concealed enemy of England the life of the only man in the nation who had a high reputation for valor and military experience, was regarded as meanness and indiscretion; and the intimate connections which the king was now entering into with Spain, being universally distasteful, rendered this proof of his complaisance still more invidious and unpopular.

James had entertained an opinion, which was peculiar to himself, and which had been adopted by none of his predecessors, that any alliance below that of a great king was unworthy of a prince of Wales; and he never would allow any princess, but a daughter of France or Spain, to be mentioned as a match for his son. [1] This instance of pride, which really implies meanness, as if he could receive honor from any alliance, was so well known, that Spain had founded on it the hopes of governing, in the most important transactions, this monarch, so little celebrated for politics or prudence. During the life of Henry, the king of Spain had dropped some hints of bestowing on that prince his eldest daughter, whom he afterwards disposed of in marriage to the young king of France, Lewis XIII. At that time, the views of the Spaniards were to engage James into a neutrality with regard to the succession of Cleves, which was disputed between the Protestant and Popish line; [2] but the bait did not then take; and James, in consequence of his alliance with the Dutch, and with Henry IV. of France, marched [3] four thousand men, under the command of Sir Edward Cecil, who joined these two powers, and put the marquis of Brandenburgh and the palatine of Newbourg in possession of that duchy.

Gondomar was at this time the Spanish ambassador in England; a man whose flattery was the more artful, because covered with the appearance of frankness and sincerity; whose politics were the more dangerous, because disguised under the mask of mirth and pleasantry. He now made offer of the second daughter of Spain to Prince Charles; and, that he might render the temptation irresistible to the necessitous monarch, he gave hopes of an immense fortune, which should attend the princess. The court of Spain, though determined to contract no alliance with a heretic, [4] entered into negotiations with James, which they artfully protracted; and, amidst every disappointment, they still redoubled his hopes of success. The transactions in Germany, so important to the Austrian greatness, became every day a new motive for this duplicity of conduct.

* Kennet, p 703, 748

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * 1610.

* * * * La Boderie, vol. ii. .

v Franklyn, p, 71.

In that great revolution of manners which happened during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the only nations who had the honorable, though often melancholy advantage, of making an effort for their expiring privileges, were such as, together with the principles of civil liberty, were animated with a zeal for religious parties and opinions. Besides the irresistible force of standing armies, the European princes possessed this advantage, that they were descended from the ancient royal families; that they continued the same designations of magistrates, the same appearance of civil government; and restraining themselves by all the forms of legal administration, could insensibly impose the yoke on their unguarded subjects. Even the German nations, who formerly broke the Roman chains, and restored liberty to mankind, now lost their own liberty, and saw with grief the absolute authority of their princes firmly established among them. In their circumstances, nothing but a pious zeal, which disregards all motives of human prudence, could have made them entertain hopes of preserving any longer those privileges which their ancestors, through so many ages, had transmitted to them.

As the house of Austria, throughout all her extensive dominions, had ever made religion the pretence for her usurpations, she now met with resistance from a like principle; and the Catholic religion, as usual, had ranged itself on the side of monarchy; the Protestant, on that of liberty. The states of Bohemia, having taken arms against the emperor Matthias, continued their revolt against his successor, Ferdinand, and claimed the observance of all the edicts enacted in favor of the new religion, together with the restoration of their ancient laws and constitution. The neighboring principalities, Silesia, Moravia, Lusatia, Austria, even the kingdom of Hungary, took part in the quarrel; and throughout all these populous and martial provinces, the spirit of discord and civil war had universally diffused itself. [1]

1619.

Ferdinand II., who possessed more vigor and greater abilities, though not more lenity and moderation, than are usual with the Austrian princes, strongly armed himself for the recovery of his authority; and besides employing the assistance of his subjects, who professed the ancient religion, he engaged on his side a powerful alliance of the neighboring potentates. All the Catholic princes of the empire had embraced his defence; even Saxony, the most powerful of the Protestant: Poland had declared itself in his favor; [2] and, above all, the Spanish monarch, deeming his own interest closely connected with that of the younger branch of his family, prepared powerful succors from Italy, and from the Low Countries; and he also advanced large sums for the support of Ferdinand and of the Catholic religion.

* Rushworth, vol. i. , 8.

* * Rushworth, vol. i ,14.

The states of Bohemia, alarmed at these mighty preparations, began also to solicit foreign assistance; and, together with that support which they obtained from the evangelical union in Germany, they endeavored to establish connections with greater princes. They cast their eyes on Frederic, elector palatine. They considered that, besides commanding no despicable force of his own, he was son-in-law to the king of England, and nephew to Prince Maurice, whose authority was become almost absolute in the United Provinces. They hoped that these princes, moved by the connections of blood, as well as by the tie of their common religion, would interest themselves in all the fortunes of Frederic, and would promote his greatness. They therefore made him a tender of their crown, which they considered as elective; and the young palatine, stimulated by ambition, without consulting either James [1] or Maurice, whose opposition he foresaw, immediately accepted the offer, and marched all his forces into Bohemia, in support of his new subjects.

The news of these events no sooner reached England, than the whole kingdom was on fire to engage in the quarrel. Scarcely was the ardor greater, with which all the states of Europe, in former ages, flew to rescue the Holy Land from the dominion of infidels. The nation was as yet sincerely attached to the blood of their monarchs, and they considered their connection with the palatine, who had married a daughter of England, as very close and intimate; and when they heard of Catholics carrying on wars and persecutions against Protestants, they thought their own interest deeply concerned, and regarded their neutrality as a base desertion of the cause of God, and of his holy religion. In such a quarrel they would gladly have marched to the opposite extremity of Europe, have plunged themselves into a chaos of German politics, and have expended all the blood and treasure of the nation, by maintaining a contest with the whole house of Austria, at the very time and in the very place in which it was the most potent, and almost irresistible.

But James, besides that his temper was too little enterprising for such vast undertakings, was restrained by another motive, which had a mighty influence over him: he refused to patronize the revolt of subjects against their sovereign. From the very first, he denied to his son-in-law the title of king of Bohemia. [2]

* Franklyn, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. , 13.

He forbade him to be prayed for in the churches under that appellation; and though he owned, that he had nowise examined the pretensions, privileges, and constitution of the revolted states, [1] so exalted was his idea of the rights of kings, that he concluded subjects must ever be in the wrong, when they stood in opposition to those who had acquired or assumed that majestic title. Thus, even in measures founded on true politics, James intermixed so many narrow prejudices, as diminished his authority, and exposed him to the imputation of weakness and of error.

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Meanwhile affairs every where hastened to a crisis. Ferdinand levied a great force, under the command of the duke of Bavaria and the count of Bucquoy, and advanced upon his enemy in Bohemia. In the Low Countries, Spinola collected a veteran army of thirty thousand men. When Edmonds, the king's resident at Brussels, made remonstrances to the archduke Albert, he was answered, that the orders for this armament had been transmitted to Spinola from Madrid, and that he alone knew the secret destination of it. Spinola again told the minister that his orders were still sealed; but, if Edmonds would accompany him in his march to Coblentz, he would there open them, and give him full satisfaction. [2] It was more easy to see his intentions, than to prevent their success. Almost at one time it was known in England, that Frederic, being defeated in the great and decisive battle of Prague, had fled with his family into Holland, and that Spinola had invaded the Palatinate, and, meeting with no resistance, except from some princes of the union, and from one English regiment of two thousand four hundred men, commanded by the brave Sir Horace Vere, [3] had, in a little time, reduced the greater part of that principality.

* Franklyn, .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Franklyn, , 43. Rushworth, vol. i . Kennet, p. 723.

High were now the murmurs and complaints against the king’s neutrality and inactive disposition. The happiness and tranquillity of their own country became distasteful to the English, when they reflected on the grievances and distresses of their Protestant brethren in Germany. They considered not, that their interposition in the wars of the continent, though agreeable to religious zeal, could not, at that time, be justified by any sound maxims of politics; that, however exorbitant the Austrian greatness, the danger was still too distant to give any just alarm to England; that mighty resistance would yet be made by so many potent and warlike princes and states in Germany, ere they would yield their neck to the yoke; that France, now engaged to contract a double alliance with the Austrian family, must necessarily be soon roused from her lethargy, and oppose the progress of so hated a rival; that, in the further advance of conquests, even the interests of the two branches of that ambitious family must interfere, and beget mutual jealousy and opposition; that a land war, carried on at such a distance, would waste the blood and treasure of the English nation, without any hopes of success; that a sea war, indeed, might be both safe and successful against Spain, but would not affect the enemy in such vital parts as to make them stop their career of success in Germany, and abandon all their acquisitions; and that the prospect of recovering the Palatinate being at present desperate, the affair was reduced to this simple question, whether peace and commerce with Spain, or the uncertain hopes of plunder and of conquest in the Indies, were preferable? a question which, at the beginning of the king’s reign, had already been decided, and perhaps with reason, in favor of the former advantages.

James might have defended his pacific measures by such plausible arguments; but these, though the chief, seem not to have been the sole motives which swayed him. He had entertained the notion, that, as his own justice and moderation had shone out so conspicuously throughout all these transactions, the whole house of Austria, though not awed by the power of England, would willingly, from mere respect to his virtue, submit themselves to so equitable an arbitration. He flattered himself that, after he had formed an intimate connection with the Spanish monarch, by means of his son's marriage, the restitution of the Palatinate might be procured from the motive alone of friendship and personal attachment. He perceived not, that his unactive virtue, the more it was extolled, the greater disregard was it exposed to. He was not sensible, that the Spanish match was itself attended with such difficulties, that all his art of negotiation would scarcely be able to surmount them; much less, that this match could in good policy be depended on, as the means of procuring such extraordinary advantages. His unwarlike disposition, increased by age, rivetted him still faster in his errors, and determined him to seek the restoration of his son-in-law, by remonstrances and entreaties, by arguments and embassies, rather than by blood and violence. And the same defect of courage which held him in awe of foreign nations, made him likewise afraid of shocking the prejudices of his own subjects, and kept him from openly avowing the measures which he was determined to pursue. Or, perhaps, he hoped to turn these prejudices to account; and, by their means, engage his people to furnish him with supplies, of which their excessive frugality had hitherto made them so sparing and reserved. [1]

He first tried the expedient of a benevolence, or free gift, from individuals; pretending the urgency of the case, which would not admit of leisure for any other measure: but the jealousy of liberty was now roused, and the nation regarded these pretended benevolences as real extortions, contrary to law, and dangerous to freedom, however authorized by ancient precedent. A parliament was found to be the only resource which could furnish any large supplies; and writs were accordingly issued for summoning that great council of the nation. [2]

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In this parliament there appeared, at first, nothing but duty and submission on the part of the commons; and they seemed determined to sacrifice every thing, in order to maintain a good correspondence with their prince. They would allow no mention to be made of the new customs or impositions, which had been so eagerly disputed in the former parliament; [3] the imprisonment of the members of that parliament was here by some complained of; but, by the authority of the graver and more prudent part of the house, that grievance was buried in oblivion; [4] and, being informed that the king had remitted several considerable sums to the palatine, the commons, without a negative, voted him two subsidies; and that too at the very beginning of the session, contrary to the maxims frequently adopted by their predecessors.

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i.

* * See note CCC, at the end of the volume.

* * * Journ. 5th Dec. 1621.

* * * * Journ. 12th, 16th Feb. 1620.

v Journ. 16th Feb. 1620.

Afterwards they proceeded, but in a very temperate manner, to the examination of grievances. They found, that patents had been granted to Sir Giles Mompesson and Sir Francis Michel, for licensing inns and alehouses; that great sums of money had been exacted, under pretext of these licenses; and that such innkeepers as presumed to continue their business without satisfying the rapacity of the patentees, had been severely punished by fine, imprisonment, and vexatious prosecutions.

The same persons had also procured a patent, which they shared with Sir Edward Villiers, brother to Buckingham, for the sole making of gold and silver thread and lace, and had obtained very extraordinary powers for preventing any rivalship in these manufactures: they were armed with authority to search for all goods which might interfere with their patent; and even to punish, at their own will and discretion, the makers, importers, and venders of such commodities. Many had grievously suffered by this exorbitant jurisdiction; and the lace which had been manufactured by the patentees was universally found to be adulterated, and to be composed more of copper than of the precious metals.

These grievances the commons represented to the king and they met with a very gracious and very cordial reception. He seemed even thankful for the information given him; and declared himself ashamed that such abuses, unknowingly to him, had crept into his administration. "I assure you," said he, "had I before heard these things complained of, I would have done the office of a just king, and out of parliament have punished them, as severely, and peradventure more, than you now intend to do." [1] A sentence was passed for the punishment of Michel and Mompesson. [2] It was executed on the former. The latter broke prison and escaped. Villiers was at that time sent purposely on a foreign employment; and his guilt, being less enormous, or less apparent, than that of the others, he was the more easily protected by the credit of his brother Buckingham. [3]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Yelverton, the attorney-general, was accused by the commons for drawing the patents for these monopolies, and for supporting them. He apologized for himself, that he was forced by Buckingham, and that he supposed it to be the king's pleasure. The lords were so offended at these articles of defence, though necessary to the attorney-general, that they fined him ten thousand pounds to the king, five thousand to the duke. The fines, however, were afterwards remitted. Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. p. 31, 32, etc.

Encouraged by this success, the commons carried their scrutiny, and still with a respectful hand, into other abuses of importance. The great seal was at that time in the hands of the celebrated Bacon, created Viscount St. Albans; a man universally admired for the greatness of his genius, and beloved for the courteousness and humanity of his behavior. He was the great ornament of his age and nation; and nought was wanting to render him the ornament of human nature itself, but that strength of mind which might check his intemperate desire of preferment, that could add nothing to his dignity, and might restrain his profuse inclination to expense, that could be requisite neither for his honor nor entertainment. His want of economy, and his indulgence to servants, had involved him in necessities; and, in order to supply his prodigality, he had been tempted to take bribes, by the title of presents, and that in a very open manner, from suitors in chancery. It appears that it had been usual for former chancellors to take presents; and it is pretended that Bacon, who followed the same dangerous practice, had still, in the seat of justice, preserved the integrity of a judge, and had given just decrees against those very persons from whom he had received the wages of iniquity. Complaints rose the louder on that account, and at last reached the house of commons, who sent up an impeachment against him to the peers. The chancellor, conscious of guilt, deprecated the vengeance of his judges, and endeavored, by a general avowal, to escape the confusion of a stricter inquiry. The lords insisted on a particular confession of all his corruptions. He acknowledged twenty-eight articles; and was sentenced to pay a fine of forty thousand pounds, to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure, to be forever incapable of any office, place, or employment, and never again to sit in parliament, or come within the verge of the court.

This dreadful sentence, dreadful to a man of nice sensibility to honor, he survived five years; and being released in a little time from the Tower, his genius, yet unbroken, supported itself amidst involved circumstances and a depressed spirit, and shone out in literary productions which have made his guilt or weaknesses be forgotten or overlooked by posterity. In consideration of his great merit, the king remitted his fine, as well as all the other parts of his sentence, conferred on him a large pension of one thousand eight hundred pounds a year, and employed every expedient to alleviate the weight of his age and misfortunes. And that great philosopher at last acknowledged with regret, that he had too long neglected the true ambition of a fine genius; and by plunging into business and affairs, which require much less capacity, but greater firmness of mind, than the pursuits of learning, had exposed himself to such grievous calamities. [1]

The commons had entertained the idea, that they were the great patrons of the people, and that the redress of all grievances must proceed from them; and to this principle they were chiefly beholden for the regard and consideration of the public. In the execution of this office, they now kept their ears open to complaints of every kind; and they carried their researches into many grievances which, though of no great importance, could not be touched on without sensibly affecting the king and his ministers. The prerogative seemed every moment to be invaded; the king's authority, in every article, was disputed; and James, who was willing to correct the abuses of his power, would not submit to have his power itself questioned and denied. After the house, therefore, had sitten near six months, and had as yet brought no considerable business to a full conclusion, the king resolved, under pretence of the advanced season, to interrupt their proceedings; and he sent them word, that he was determined, in a little time, to adjourn them till next winter. The commons made application to the lords, and desired them to join in a petition for delaying the adjournment; which was refused by the upper house. The king regarded this project of a joint petition as an attempt to force him from his measures: he thanked the peers for their refusal to concur in it; and told them, that, if it were their desire, he would delay the adjournment, but would not so far comply with the request of the lower house. [2] And thus, in these great national affairs, the same peevishness, which, in private altercations, often raises a quarrel from the smallest beginnings, produced a mutual coldness and disgust between the king and the commons.

* It is thought, that appeals from chancery to the house of peers first came into practice while Bacon held the great seal. Appeals, under the form of writs of error, had long before lain against the courts of law. Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iii. .

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

During the recess of parliament, the king used every measure to render himself popular with the nation, and to appease the rising ill humor of their representatives. He had voluntarily offered the parliament to circumscribe his own prerogative, and to abrogate, for the future, his power of granting monopolies. He now recalled all the patents of that kind and redressed every article of grievance, to the number of thirty-seven, which had ever been complained of in the house of commons. [1] But he gained not the end which he proposed. The disgust which had appeared at parting, could not so suddenly be dispelled. He had likewise been so imprudent as to commit to prison Sir Edwin Sandys, [2] without any known cause, besides his activity and vigor in discharging his duty as member of parliament. And, above all, the transactions in Germany were sufficient, when joined to the king's cautions, negotiations, and delays, to inflame that jealousy of honor and religion which prevailed throughout the nation. [3] This summer, the ban of the empire had been published against the elector palatine; and the execution of it was committed to the duke of Bavaria. [4] The Upper

Palatinate was, in a little time, conquered by that prince; and measures were taking in the empire for bestowing on him the electoral dignity, of which the palatine was then despoiled. Frederic now lived with his numerous family, in poverty and distress, either in Holland, or at Sedan with his uncle the duke of Bouillon. And throughout all the new conquests, in both the Palatinates, as well as in Bohemia, Austria, and Lusatia, the progress of the Austrian arms was attended with rigors and severities, exercised against the professors of the reformed religion.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Kennet, .

* * Journ. 1st December, 1621.

* * * To show to what degree the nation was inflamed with regard to the Palatinate, there occurs a remarkable story this session. One Floyd, a prisoner in the Fleet, a Catholic, had dropped some expressions in private conversation, as if he were pleased with the misfortunes of the palatine and his wife. The commons were in a flame; and,
pretending to be a court of judicature and of record,
proceeded to condemn him to a severe punishment. The house of lords checked this encroachment; and, what was extraordinary, considering the present humor of the lower house, the latter acquiesced in the sentiments of the peers.

This is almost the only pretension of the English commons in which they have not prevailed. Happily for the nation, they have been successful in almost all their other claims. See Parliamentary History, vol. v. p 428, 429, etc. Journ. 4th,
8th, 12th of May, 1621.

* * * * Franklyn. .

The zeal of the commons immediately moved them, upon their assembling, to take all these transactions into consideration. They framed a remonstrance, which they intended to carry to the king. They represented, that the enormous growth of the Austrian power threatened the liberties of Europe; that the progress of the Catholic religion in England bred the most melancholy apprehensions, lest it should again acquire an ascendant in the kingdom; that the indulgence of his majesty towards the professors of that religion had encouraged their insolence and temerity; that the uncontrolled conquests made by the Austrian family in Germany, raised mighty expectations in the English Papists; but above all, that the prospect of the Spanish match elevated them so far as to hope for an entire toleration, if not the final reëstablishment of their religion. The commons, therefore, entreated his majesty, that he would immediately undertake the defence of the Palatinate, and maintain it by force of arms; that he would turn his sword against Spain, whose armies and treasures were the chief support of the Catholic interest in Europe that he would enter into no negotiation for the marriage of his son but with a Protestant princess; that the children of Popish recusants should be taken from their parents, and be committed to the care of Protestant teachers and schoolmasters; and that the fines and confiscations to which the Catholics were by law liable, should be levied with the utmost severity. [1]

* Franklyn, , 59. Rushworth, vol. i. , 41. Kennet, .

By this bold step, unprecedented in England for many years, and scarcely ever heard of in peaceable times, the commons attacked at once all the king’s favorite maxims of government; his cautious and pacific measures, his lenity towards the Romish religion, and his attachment to the Spanish alliance, from which he promised himself such mighty advantages. But what most disgusted him was, their seeming invasion of his prerogative, and their pretending, under color of advice, to direct his conduct in such points as had ever been acknowledged to belong solely to the management and direction of the sovereign. He was at that time absent at Newmarket; but as soon as he heard of the intended remonstrance of the commons, he wrote a letter to the speaker, in which he sharply rebuked the house for openly debating matters far above their reach and capacity; and he strictly forbade them to meddle with any thing that regarded his government, or deep matters of state, and especially not to touch on his son’s marriage with the daughter of Spain, nor to attack the honor of that king, or any other of his friends and confederates. In order the more to intimidate them, he mentioned the imprisonment of Sir Edwin Sandys; and though he denied that the confinement of that member had been owing to any offence committed in the house, he plainly told them, that he thought himself fully entitled to punish every misdemeanor in parliament, as well during its sitting as after its dissolution; and that he intended thenceforward to chastise any man whose insolent behavior there should minister occasion of offence. [1]

This violent letter, in which the king, though he here imitated former precedents, may be thought not to have acted altogether on the defensive, had the effect which might naturally have been expected from it: the commons were inflamed, not terrified. Secure of their own popularity, and of the bent of the nation towards a war with the Catholics abroad, and the persecution of Popery at home, they little dreaded the menaces of a prince who was unsupported by military force, and whose gentle temper would, of itself, so soon disarm his severity. In a new remonstrance, therefore, they still insisted on their former remonstrance and advice; and they maintained, though in respectful terms, that they were entitled to interpose with their counsel in all matters of government; that to possess entire freedom of speech in their debates on public business, was their ancient and undoubted right, and an inheritance transmitted to them from their ancestors; and that if any member abused this liberty, it belonged to the house alone, who were witnesses of his offence, to inflict a proper censure upon him. [2]

So vigorous an answer was nowise calculated to appease the king. It is said, when the approach of the committee who were to present it was notified to him, he ordered twelve chairs to be brought; for that there were so many kings a coming. [3]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Kennet, .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Kennet, p. 741.

* * * Kennet, .

His answer was prompt and sharp. He told the house, that their remonstrance was more like a denunciation of war than an address of dutiful subjects; that their pretension to inquire into all state affairs, without exception, was such a plenipotence as none of their ancestors, even during the reign of the weakest princes, had ever pretended to; that public transactions depended on a complication of views and intelligence, with which they were entirely unacquainted; that they could not better show their wisdom, as well as duty, than by keeping within their proper sphere; [1] and that in any business which depended on his prerogative, they had no title to interpose with their advice, except when he was pleased to desire it. And he concluded with these memorable words: “And though we cannot allow of your style, in mentioning your ancient and undoubted right and inheritance, but would rather have wished that ye had said, that your privileges were derived from the grace and permission of our ancestors and us, (for the most of them grew from precedents, which shows rather a toleration than inheritance,) yet we are pleased to give you our royal assurance, that as long as you contain yourselves within the limits of your duty, we will be as careful to maintain and preserve your lawful liberties and privileges as ever any of our predecessors were, nay, as to preserve our own royal prerogative.” [2]

This open pretension of the king’s naturally gave great alarm to the house of commons. They saw their title to every privilege, if not plainly denied, yet considered at least as precarious. It might be fortified by abuse; and they had already abused it. They thought proper, therefore, immediately to oppose pretension to pretension. They framed a protestation, in which they repeated all their former claims for freedom of speech, and an unbounded authority to interpose with their advice and counsel. And they asserted, “That the liberties, franchises, privileges, and jurisdictions of parliament, are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England.” [3]

The king, informed of these increasing heats and jealousies in the house, hurried to town. He sent immediately for the journals of the commons; and, with his own hand, before the council, he tore out this protestation; [4] and ordered his reasons to be inserted in the council-book. He was doubly displeased, he said, with the protestation of the lower house, on account of the manner of framing it, as well as of the matter which it contained.

* “Ne sutor ultra crepidam.” This expression is imagined to be insolent and disobliging: but it was a Latin proverb familiarly used on all occasions.

* * Franklyn, p, 62, 63, 64. Rushworth, vol. i. , 47 etc. Kennet, .

* * * * See note DDD, at the end of the volume.

It was tumultuously voted, at a late hour, and in a thin house; and it was expressed in such general and ambiguous terms, [1] as might serve for a foundation to the most enormous claims, and to the most unwarrantable usurpations upon his prerogative. [2]

The meeting of the house might have proved dangerous after so violent a breach. It was no longer possible, while men were in such a temper, to finish any business. The king, therefore, prorogued the parliament, and soon after dissolved it by proclamation; in which he also made an apology to the public for his whole conduct.

The leading members of the house, Sir Edward Coke and Sir Robert Philips, were committed to the Tower; Selden Pym, and Mallory, to other prisons. As a lighter punishment, Sir Dudley Digges, Sir Thomas Crew, Sir Nathaniel Rich, Sir James Perrot, joined in commission with others, were sent to Ireland, in order to execute some business. [3] The king at that time enjoyed, at least exercised, the prerogative of employing any man, even without his consent, in any branch of public service.

Sir John Savile, a powerful man in the house of commons, and a zealous opponent of the court, was made comptroller of the household, a privy counsellor, and soon after a baron. [4] This event is memorable, as being the first instance, perhaps, in the whole history of England, of any king's advancing a man on account of parliamentary interest, and of opposition to his measures. However irregular this practice, it will be regarded by political reasoners as one of the most early and most infallible symptoms of a regular, established liberty.

The king having thus, with so rash and indiscreet a hand, torn off that sacred veil which had hitherto covered the English constitution, and which threw an obscurity upon it so advantageous to royal prerogative, every man began to indulge himself in political reasonings and inquiries; and the same factions which commenced in parliament, were propagated throughout the nation. In vain did James, by reiterated proclamations, forbid the discoursing of state affairs. Such proclamations, if they had any effect, served rather to inflame the curiosity of the public. And in every company or society, the late transactions became the subject of argument and debate.

* Franklyn, .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Kennet, .

v Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. , 36, 55. The king also, in imitation of his predecessors, gave rules to preachers.

All history, said the partisans of the court, as well as the history of England, justify the king's position with regard to the origin of popular privileges; and every reasonable man must allow, that as monarchy is the most simple form of government, it must first have occurred to rude and uninstructed mankind. The other complicated and artificial additions were the successive invention of sovereigns and legislators; or, if they were obtruded on the prince by seditious subjects, their origin must appear, on that very account, still more precarious and unfavorable. In England, the authority of the king, in all the exterior forms of government, and in the common style of law, appears totally absolute and sovereign; nor does the real spirit of the constitution, as it has ever discovered itself in practice, fall much short of these appearances. The parliament is created by his will; by his will it is dissolved. It is his will alone, though at the desire of both houses, which gives authority to laws. To all foreign nations, the majesty of the monarch seems to merit sole attention and regard. And no subject who has exposed himself to royal indignation, can hope to live with safety in the kingdom; nor can he even leave it, according to law, without the consent of his master. If a magistrate, environed with such power and splendor, should consider his authority as sacred, and regard himself as the anointed of Heaven, his pretensions may bear a very favorable construction. Or, allowing them to be merely pious frauds, we need not be surprised, that the same stratagem which was practised by Minos, Numa, and the most celebrated legislators of antiquity, should now, in these restless and inquisitive times, be employed by the king of England. Subjects are not raised above that quality, though assembled in parliament. The same humble respect and deference is still due to their prince. Though he indulges them in the privilege of laying before him their domestic grievances, with which they are supposed to be best acquainted, this warrants not their bold intrusion into every province of government. And, to all judicious examiners, it must appear, "That the lines of duty are as much transgressed by a more independent and less respectful exercise of acknowledged powers, as by the usurpation of such as are new and unusual.” [1]

* Franklyn, . The pulpit was at that time much more dangerous than the press. Few people could read, and still fewer were in the practice of reading.

The lovers of liberty throughout the nation reasoned after a different manner. It is in vain, said they, that the king traces up the English government to its first origin, in order to represent the privileges of parliament as dependent and precarious: prescription, and the practice of so many ages, must, long ere this time, have given a sanction to these assemblies, even though they had been derived from an origin no more dignified than that which he assigns them. If the written records of the English nation, as asserted, represent parliaments to have arisen from the consent of monarchs, the principles of human nature, when we trace government a step higher, must show us, that monarchs themselves owe all their authority to the voluntary submission of the people. But, in fact, no age can be shown, when the English government was altogether an unmixed monarchy; and, if the privileges of the nation have, at any period, been overpowered by violent irruptions of foreign force or domestic usurpation, the generous spirit of the people has ever seized the first opportunity of reëstablishing the ancient government and constitution. Though in the style of the laws, and in the usual forms of administration, royal authority may be represented as sacred and supreme, whatever is essential to the exercise of sovereign and legislative power must still be regarded as equally divine and inviolable. Or, if any distinction be made in this respect, the preference is surely due to those national councils, by whose interposition the exorbitancies of tyrannical power are restrained, and that sacred liberty is preserved, which heroic spirits, in all ages, have deemed more precious than life itself. Nor is it sufficient to say, that the mild and equitable administration of James affords little occasion, or no occasion, of complaint. How moderate soever the exercise of his prerogative, how exact soever his observance of the laws and constitution, “If he founds his authority on arbitrary and dangerous principles, it is requisite to watch him with the same care, and to oppose him with the same vigor, as if he had indulged himself in all the excesses of cruelty and tyranny.”

Amidst these disputes, the wise and moderate in the nation endeavored to preserve, as much as possible, an equitable neutrality between the opposite parties; and the more they reflected on the course of public affairs, the greater difficulty they found in fixing just sentiments with regard to them. On the one hand, they regarded the very rise of parties as a happy prognostic of the establishment of liberty; nor could they ever expect to enjoy, in a mixed government, so invaluable a blessing, without suffering that inconvenience which, in such governments, has ever attended it. But when they considered, on the other hand, the necessary aims and pursuits of both parties, they were struck with apprehension of the consequences, and could discover no feasible plan of accommodation between them. From long practice, the crown was now possessed of so exorbitant a prerogative, that it was not sufficient for liberty to remain on the defensive, or endeavor to secure the little ground which was left her: it was become necessary to carry on an offensive war, and to circumscribe, within more narrow, as well as more exact bounds; the authority of the sovereign. Upon such provocation, it could not but happen, that the prince, however just and moderate, would endeavor to repress his opponents; and, as he stood upon the very brink of arbitrary power, it was to be feared that he would, hastily and unknowingly, pass those limits which were not precisely marked by the constitution. The turbulent government of England, ever fluctuating between privilege and prerogative, would afford a variety of precedents, which might be pleaded on both sides. In such delicate questions, the people must be divided: the arms of the state were still in their hands: a civil war must ensue; a civil war where no party, or both parties, would justly bear the blame and where the good and virtuous would scarcely know what vows to form; were it not that liberty, so necessary to the perfection of human society, would be sufficient to bias their affections towards the side of its defenders.

CHAPTER XLIX.

JAMES I.

1622.

To wrest the Palatinate from the hands of the emperor and the duke of Bavaria, must always have been regarded as a difficult task for the power of England, conducted by so unwarlike a prince as James: it was plainly impossible, while the breach subsisted between him and the commons. The king's negotiations, therefore, had they been managed with ever so great dexterity, must now carry less weight with them; and it was easy to elude all his applications. When Lord Digby, his ambassador to the emperor, had desired a cessation of hostilities, he was referred to the duke of Bavaria, who commanded the Austrian armies. The duke of Bavaria told him, that it was entirely superfluous to form any treaty for that purpose. "Hostilities are already ceased," said he, "and I doubt not but I shall be able to prevent their revival, by keeping firm possession of the Palatinate, till a final agreement shall be concluded between the contending parties." [1]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. p 38.

Notwithstanding this insult, James endeavored to resume with the emperor a treaty of accommodation; and he opened the negotiations at Brussels, under the mediation of Archduke Albert; and, after his death, which happened about this time, under that of the infanta: when the conferences were entered upon, it was found, that the powers of these princes to determine in the controversy were not sufficient or satisfactory. Schwartzenbourg, the imperial minister, was expected at London; and it was hoped that he would bring more ample authority: his commission referred entirely to the negotiation at Brussels. It was not difficult for the king to perceive that his applications were neglected by the emperor; but as he had no choice of any other expedient, and it seemed the interest of his son-in-law to keep alive his pretensions he was still content to follow Ferdinand through all his shifts and evasions. Nor was he entirely discouraged, even when the imperial diet at Ratisbon, by the influence, or rather authority of the emperor, though contrary to the protestation of Saxony, and of all the Protestant princes and cities, had transferred the electoral dignity from the palatine to the duke of Bavaria.

Meanwhile the efforts made by Frederic for the recovery of his dominions, were vigorous. Three armies were levied in Germany by his authority, under three commanders, Duke, Christian of Brunswick, the prince of Baden-Dourlach, and Count Mansfeldt. The two former generals were defeated by Count Tilly and the imperialists: the third, though much inferior in force to his enemies, still maintained the war; but with no equal supplies of money either from the palatine or the king of England. It was chiefly by pillage and free quarters in the Palatinate, that he subsisted his army. As the Austrians were regularly paid, they were kept in more exact discipline; and James justly became apprehensive, lest so unequal a contest, besides ravaging the palatine's hereditary dominions, would end in the total alienation of the people's affections from their ancient sovereign, by whom they were plundered, and in an attachment to their new masters, by whom they were protected. [1] He persuaded, therefore, his son-in-law to disarm, under color of duty and submission to the emperor; and, accordingly, Mansfeldt was dismissed from the palatine's service; and that famous general withdrew his army into the Low Countries, and there received a commission from the states of the United Provinces.

To show how little account was made of James's negotiations abroad, there is a pleasantry mentioned by all historians, which, for that reason, shall have place here. In a farce, acted at Brussels, a courier was introduced carrying the doleful news, that the Palatinate would soon be wrested from the house of Austria; so powerful were the succors which, from all quarters, were hastening to the relief of the despoiled elector: the king of Denmark had agreed to contribute to his assistance a hundred thousand pickled herrings, the Dutch a hundred thousand butter-boxes, and the king of England a hundred thousand ambassadors. On other occasions, he was painted with a scabbard, but without a sword, or with a sword which nobody could draw, though several were pulling at it. [2]

* Parl. Hist. vol. v. .

* * Kennet, .

It was not from his negotiations with the emperor or the duke of Bavaria, that James expected any success in his project of restoring the palatine: his eyes were entirely turned towards Spain; and if he could effect his son’s marriage with the infanta, he doubted not but that, after so intimate a conjunction, this other point could easily be obtained. The negotiations of that court being commonly dilatory, it was not easy for a prince of so little penetration in business, to distinguish whether the difficulties which occurred were real or affected; and he was surprised, after negotiating five years on so simple a demand, that he was not more advanced than at the beginning. A dispensation from Rome was requisite for the marriage of the infanta with a Protestant prince; and the king of Spain, having undertaken to procure that dispensation, had thereby acquired the means of retarding at pleasure, or of forwarding the marriage, and at the same time of concealing entirely his artifices from the court of England.

In order to remove all obstacles, James despatched Digby, soon after created earl of Bristol, as his ambassador to Philip IV., who had lately succeeded his father in the crown of Spain. He secretly employed Gage as his agent at Rome, and finding that the difference of religion was the principal, if not the sole difficulty, which retarded the marriage, he resolved to soften that objection as much as possible. He issued public orders for discharging all Popish recusants who were imprisoned; and it was daily apprehended that he would forbid, for the future, the execution of the penal laws enacted against them. For this step, so opposite to the rigid spirit of his subjects, he took care to apologize; and he even endeavored to ascribe it to his great zeal for the reformed religion. He had been making applications, he said, to all foreign princes, for some indulgence to the distressed Protestants; and he was still answered by objections derived from the severity of the English laws against Catholics. [1] It might indeed occur to him, that if the extremity of religious zeal were ever to abate among Christian sects, one of them must begin; and nothing would be more honorable for England, than to have led the way in sentiments so wise and moderate.

* Franklyn . Rushworth, vol. i. .

Not only the religious Puritans murmured at this tolerating measure of the king; the lovers of civil liberty were alarmed at so important an exertion of prerogative. But, among other dangerous articles of authority, the kings of England were at that time possessed of the dispensing power; at least, were at the constant practice of exercising it. Besides, though the royal prerogative in civil matters was then extensive, the princes, during some late reigns, had been accustomed to assume a still greater in ecclesiastical. And the king failed not to represent the toleration of Catholics as a measure entirely of that nature.

By James's concession in favor of the Catholics, he attained his end. The same religious motives which had hitherto rendered the court of Madrid insincere in all the steps taken with regard to the marriage, were now the chief cause of promoting it. By its means, it was there hoped the English Catholics would for the future enjoy ease and indulgence; and the infanta would be the happy instrument of procuring to the church some tranquillity, after the many severe persecutions which it had hitherto undergone. The earl of Bristol, a minister of vigilance and penetration, and who had formerly opposed all alliance with Catholics, [1] was now fully convinced of the sincerity of Spain; and he was ready to congratulate the king on the entire completion of his views and projects. [2] A daughter of Spain, whom he represents as extremely accomplished, would soon, he said, arrive in England, and bring with her an immense fortune of two millions of pieces of eight, or six hundred thousand pounds sterling; a sum four times greater than Spain had ever before given with any princess, and almost equal to all the money which the parliament, during the whole course of this reign, had hitherto granted to the king. But what was of more importance to James's honor and happiness, Bristol considered this match as an infallible prognostic of the palatine's restoration; nor would Philip, he thought, ever have bestowed his sister and so large a fortune, under the prospect of entering next day into a war with England. So exact was his intelligence, that the most secret counsels of the Spaniards, he boasts, had never escaped him; [3] and he found that they had all along considered the marriage of the infanta and the restitution of the Palatinate as measures closely connected, or altogether inseparable. [4]

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * We find, by private letters between Philip IV. and the Condé Oliarez, shown by the latter to Buckingham, that the marriage and the restitution of the Palatinate were always considered by the court of Spain as inseparable. See Franklyn, , 72. Rushworth, vol. i. , 280, 299,

300. Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

However little calculated James’s character to extort so vast a concession; however improper the measures which he had pursued for attaining that end; the ambassador could not withstand the plain evidence of facts, by which Philip now demonstrated his sincerity. Perhaps, too, like a wise man, he considered, that reasons of state, which are supposed solely to influence the councils of monarchs, are not always the motives which there predominate; that the milder views of gratitude, honor, friendship, generosity, are frequently able, among princes as well as private persons, to counterbalance these selfish considerations; that the justice and moderation of James had been so conspicuous in all these transactions, his reliance on Spain, his confidence in her friendship, that he had at last obtained the cordial alliance of that nation, so celebrated for honor and fidelity. Or, if politics must still be supposed the ruling motive of all public measures, the maritime power of England was so considerable, and the Spanish dominions so divided, as might well induce the council of Philip to think, that a sincere friendship with the masters of the sea could not be purchased by too great concessions. [1] And as James, during so many years, had been allured and seduced by hopes and protestations, his people enraged by delays and disappointments, it would probably occur, that there was now no medium left between the most inveterate hatred and the most intimate alliance between the nations. Not to mention that, as a new spirit began about this time to animate the councils of France, the friendship of England became every day more necessary to the greatness and security of the Spanish monarch.

All measures being, therefore, agreed on between the parties, nought was wanting but the dispensation from Rome, which might be considered as a mere formality. [2] The king, justified by success, now exulted in his pacific counsels, and boasted of his superior sagacity and penetration; when all these flattering prospects were blasted by the temerity of a man whom he had fondly exalted from a private condition, to be the bane of himself, of his family, and of his people.

* Franklyn, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

Ever since the fall of Somerset, Buckingham had governed, with an uncontrolled sway, both the court and nation; and could James’s eyes have been opened, he had now full opportunity of observing how unfit his favorite was for the high station to which he was raised. Some accomplishments of a courtier he possessed: of every talent of a minister he was utterly destitute. Headlong in his passions, and incapable equally of prudence and of dissimulation; sincere from violence rather than candor; expensive from profusion more than generosity; a warm friend, a furious enemy, but without any choice or discernment in either; with these qualities he had early and quickly mounted to the highest rank; and partook at once of the insolence which attends a fortune newly acquired, and the impetuosity which belongs to persons born in high stations and unacquainted with opposition.

1623.

Among those who had experienced the arrogance of this overgrown favorite, the prince of Wales himself had not been entirely spared; and a great coldness, if not an enmity, had, for that reason, taken place between them. Buckingham, desirous of an opportunity which might connect him with the prince, and overcome his aversion, and, at the same time envious of the great credit acquired by Bristol in the Spanish negotiation, bethought himself of an expedient by which he might at once gratify both these inclinations. He represented to Charles, that persons of his exalted station were peculiarly unfortunate in their marriage, the chief circumstance of life; and commonly received into their arms a bride unknown to them, to whom they were unknown; not endeared by sympathy, not obliged by service; wooed by treaties alone, by negotiations, by political interests: that however accomplished the infanta, she must still consider herself as a melancholy victim of state, and could not but think with aversion of that day when she was to enter the bed of a stranger; and, passing into a foreign country and a new family, bid adieu forever to her father’s house and to her native land: that it was in the prince’s power to soften all these rigors and lay such an obligation on her, as would attach the most indifferent temper, as would warm the coldest affections: that his journey to Madrid would be an unexpected gallantry, which would equal all the fictions of Spanish romance, and, suiting the amorous and enterprising character of that nation, must immediately introduce him to the princess under the agreeable character of a devoted lover and daring adventurer: that the negotiations with regard to the Palatinate, which had hitherto languished in the hands of ministers, would quickly he terminated by so illustrious an agent, seconded by the mediation and entreaties of the grateful infanta: that Spanish generosity, moved by that unexampled trust and confidence, would make concessions beyond what could be expected from political views and considerations: and that he would quickly return to the king with the glory of having reëstablished the unhappy palatine, by the same enterprise which procured him the affections and the person of the Spanish princess. [1]

The mind of the young prince, replete with candor, was inflamed by these generous and romantic ideas suggested by Buckingham. He agreed to make application to the king for his approbation. They chose the moment of his kindest and most jovial humor; and, more by the earnestness which they expressed, than by the force of their reasons, they obtained a hasty and unguarded consent to their undertaking. And having engaged his promise to keep their purpose secret, they left him, in order to make preparations for the journey.

No sooner was the king alone, than his temper, more cautious than sanguine, suggested very different views of the matter, and represented every difficulty and danger which could occur. He reflected that however the world might pardon this sally of youth in the prince, they would never forgive himself, who, at his years, and after his experience, could intrust his only son, the heir of his crown, the prop of his age, to the discretion of foreigners, without so much as providing the frail security of a safe-conduct in his favor: that if the Spanish monarch were sincere in his professions, a few months must finish the treaty of marriage, and bring the infanta into England; if he were not sincere, the folly was still more egregious of committing the prince into his hands: that Philip, when possessed of so invaluable a pledge, might well rise in his demands, and impose harder conditions of treaty: and that the temerity of the enterprise was so apparent, that the event, how prosperous soever, could not justify it; and if disastrous, it would render himself infamous to his people, and ridiculous to all posterity. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 12.

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

Tormented with these reflections, as soon as the prince and Buckingham returned for their despatches, he informed them of all the reasons which had determined him to change his resolution; and he begged them to desist from so foolish an adventure. The prince received the disappointment with sorrowful submission and silent tears: Buckingham presumed to speak in an imperious tone, which he had ever experienced to be prevalent over his too easy master. He told the king, that nobody for the future would believe any thing he said, When he retracted so soon the promise so solemnly given; that he plainly discerned this change of resolution to proceed from another breach of his word, in communicating the matter to some rascal, who had furnished him with those pitiful reasons which he had alleged, and he doubted not but he should hereafter know who his counsellor had been; and that if he receded from what he had promised, it would be such a disobligation to the prince, who had now set his heart upon the journey, after his majesty's approbation, that he could never forget it, nor forgive any man who had been the cause of it [1]

* Clarendon vol. i. .

The king, with great earnestness, fortified by many oaths, made his apology, by denying that he had communicated the matter to any; and finding himself assailed, as well by the boisterous importunities of Buckingham, as by the warm entreaties of his son, whose applications had hitherto, on other occasions, been always dutiful, never earnest, he had again the weakness to assent to their purposed journey. It was agreed that Sir Francis Cottington alone, the prince's secretary, and Endymion Porter, gentleman of his bed-chamber, should accompany them; and the former being at that time in the antechamber, he was immediately called in by the king's orders.

James told Cottington, that he had always been an honest man, and therefore he was now to trust him in an affair of the highest importance, which he was not, upon his life, to disclose to any man whatever. “Cottington,” added he, “here is baby Charles and Stenny,” (these ridiculous appellations he usually gave to the prince and Buckingham,) “who have a great mind to go post into Spain, and fetch home the infanta: they will have but two more in their company, and have chosen you for one. What think you of the journey?” Sir Francis, who was a prudent man, and had resided some years in Spain as the king’s agent, was struck with all the obvious objections to such an enterprise, and scrupled not to declare them. The king threw himself upon his bed, and cried, “I told you this before;” and fell into a new passion and new lamentations, complaining that he was undone, and should lose baby Charles.

The prince showed by his countenance, that he was extremely dissatisfied with Cottington’s discourse; but Buckingham broke into an open passion against him. The king, he told him, asked him only of the journey, and of the manner of travelling; particulars of which he might be a competent judge, having gone the road so often by post; but that he, without being called to it, had the presumption to give his advice upon matters of state, and against his master, which he should repent as long as he lived. A thousand other reproaches he added, which put the poor king into a new agony in behalf of a servant, who, he foresaw, would suffer for answering him honestly. Upon which he said, with some emotion, “Nay, by God, Stenny, you are much to blame for using him so: he answered me directly to the question which I asked him, and very honestly and wisely; and yet, you know, he said no more than I told you before he was called in.” However, after all this passion on both sides, James renewed his consent; and proper directions were given for the journey. Nor was he now at any loss to discover, that the whole intrigue was originally contrived by Buckingham, as well as pursued violently by his spirit and impetuosity.

These circumstances, which so well characterize the persons, seem to have been related by Cottington to Lord Clarendon, from whom they are here transcribed; and though minute, are not undeserving of a place in history.

The prince and Buckingham, with their two attendants, and Sir Richard Graham, master of horse to Buckingham, passed disguised and undiscovered through France; and they even ventured into a court ball at Paris, where Charles saw the princess Henrietta, whom he afterwards espoused, and who was at that time in the bloom of youth and beauty. In eleven days after their departure from London, they arrived at Madrid; and surprised every body by a step so unusual among great princes. The Spanish monarch immediately paid Charles a visit, expressed the utmost gratitude for the confidence reposed in him, and made warm protestations of a correspondent confidence and friendship. By the most studied civilities, he showed the respect which he bore to his royal guest. He gave him a golden key, which opened all his apartments, that the prince might; without any introduction, have access to him at all hours: he took the left hand of him on every occasion, except in the apartments assigned to Charles; for there, he said, the prince was at home: Charles was introduced into the palace with the same pomp and ceremony that attends the kings of Spain on their coronation: the council received public orders to obey him as the king himself.

Olivarez too, though a grandee of Spain, who has the right of being covered before his own king, would not put on his hat in the prince's presence: [1] all the prisons of Spain were thrown open, and all the prisoners received their freedom, as if the event the most honorable and most fortunate had happened to the monarchy: [2] and every sumptuary law with regard to apparel was suspended during Charles's residence in Spain. The infanta, however, was only shown to her lover in public; the Spanish ideas of decency being so strict, as not to allow of any further intercourse, till the arrival of the dispensation. [3]

The point of honor was carried so far by that generous people, that no attempt was made, on account of the advantage which they had acquired, of imposing any harder conditions of treaty: their pious zeal only prompted them, on one occasion, to desire more concessions in the religious articles; but, upon the opposition of Bristol, accompanied with some reproaches, they immediately desisted. The pope, however, hearing of the prince's arrival in Madrid, tacked some new clauses to the dispensation; [4] and it became necessary to transmit the articles to London, that the king might ratify them. This treaty, which was made public, consisted of several articles, chiefly regarding the exercise of the Catholic religion by the infanta and her household. Nothing could reasonably be found fault with, except one article, in which the king promised, that the children should be educated by the princess, till ten years of age. This condition could not be insisted on, but with a view of seasoning their minds with Catholic principles; and though so tender an age seemed a sufficient security against theological prejudices, yet the same reason which made the pope insert that article, should have induced the king to reject it.

Besides the public treaty, there were separate articles, privately sworn to by the king; in which he promised to suspend the penal laws enacted against Catholics, to procure a repeal of them in parliament, and to grant a toleration for the exercise of the Catholic religion in private houses.

* Franklyn, .

* * Franklyn, .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

v Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Kennet, p. 769.

Great murmurs, we may believe, would have arisen against these articles, had they been made known to the public; since we find it to have been imputed as an enormous crime to the prince that, having received, about this time, a very civil letter from the pope, he was induced to return a very civil answer. [1]

Meanwhile Gregory XV., who granted the dispensation, died; and Urban VIII. was chosen in his place. Upon this event, the nuncio refused to deliver the dispensation, till it should be renewed by Urban; and that crafty pontiff delayed sending a new dispensation, in hopes that, during the prince’s residence in Spain, some expedient might be fallen upon to effect his conversion. The king of England, as well as the prince, became impatient. On the first hint, Charles obtained permission to return; and Philip graced his departure with all the circumstances of elaborate civility and respect which had attended his reception. He even erected a pillar on the spot where they took leave of each other, as a monument of mutual friendship; and the prince, having sworn to the observance of all the articles, entered on his journey, and embarked on board the English fleet at St. Andero.

The character of Charles, composed of decency, reserve, modesty, sobriety, virtues so agreeable to the manners of the Spaniards; the unparalleled confidence which he had reposed in their nation; the romantic gallantry which he had practised towards the princess; all these circumstances, joined to his youth and advantageous figure, had endeared him to the whole court of Madrid, and had impressed the most favorable ideas of him. [2] But, in the same proportion that the prince was beloved and esteemed, was Buckingham despised and hated. His behavior, composed of English familiarity and French vivacity; his sallies of passion, his indecent freedoms with the prince, his dissolute pleasures, his arrogant, impetuous temper, which he neither could nor cared to disguise; qualities like these could, most of them, be esteemed nowhere, but to the Spaniards were the objects of peculiar aversion. [3] They could not conceal their surprise, that such a youth could intrude into a negotiation, now conducted to a period by so accomplished a minister as Bristol, and could assume to himself all the merit of it. They lamented the infanta's fate, who must be approached by a man whose temerity seemed to respect no laws, divine or human. [4]

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

And when they observed, that he had the imprudence to insult the Condé duke of Olivarez, their prime minister, every one who was ambitious of paying court to the Spanish became desirous of showing a contempt for the English favorite.

The duke of Buckingham told Olivarez, that his own attachment to the Spanish nation and to the king of Spain was extreme; that he would contribute to every measure which could cement the friendship between England and them; and that his peculiar ambition would be to facilitate the prince's marriage with the infanta. But he added, with a sincerity equally insolent and indiscreet, "With regard to you, sir, in particular, you must not consider me as your friend, but must ever expect from me all possible enmity and opposition." The Condé duke replied, with a becoming dignity, that he very willingly accepted of what was proffered him: and on these terms the favorites parted. [1]

Buckingham, sensible how odious he was become to the Spaniards, and dreading the influence which that nation would naturally acquire after the arrival of the infanta, resolved to employ all his credit in order to prevent the marriage, By what arguments he could engage the prince to offer such an insult to the Spanish nation, from whom he had met with such generous treatment; by what colors he could disguise the ingratitude and imprudence of such a measure; these are totally unknown to us. We may only conjecture, that the many unavoidable causes of delay which had so long prevented the arrival of the dispensation, had afforded to Buckingham a pretence for throwing on the Spaniards the imputation of insincerity in the whole treaty. It also appears, that his impetuous and domineering character had acquired, what it ever after maintained, a total ascendant over the gentle and modest temper of Charles; and, when the prince left Madrid, he was firmly determined, notwithstanding all his professions, to break off the treaty with Spain.

It is not likely that Buckingham prevailed so easily with James to abandon a project which, during so many years, had been the object of all his wishes, and which he had now unexpectedly conducted to a happy period. [2]

A rupture with Spain, the loss of two millions, were prospects little agreeable to this pacific and indigent monarch. But, finding his only son bent against a match which had always been opposed by his people and his parliament, he yielded to difficulties which he had not courage or strength of mind sufficient to overcome. The prince, therefore, and Buckingham, on their arrival at London, assumed entirely the direction of the negotiation; and it was their business to seek for pretences by which they could give a color to their intended breach of treaty.

Though the restitution of the Palatinate had ever been considered by James as a natural or necessary consequence of the Spanish alliance, he had always forbidden his ministers to insist on it as a preliminary article to the

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* Rushworth, vol. i. . Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Hacket’s Life of Williams.

conclusion of the marriage treaty. He considered, that this principality was now in the hands of the emperor and the duke of Bavaria and that it was no longer in the king of Spain's power, by a single stroke of his pen, to restore it to its ancient master. The strict alliance of Spain with these princes would engage Philip, he thought, to soften so disagreeable a demand by every art of negotiation; and many articles must of necessity be adjusted, before such an important point could be effected. It was sufficient, in James's opinion, if the sincerity of the Spanish court could, for the present, be ascertained; and, dreading further delays of the marriage, so long wished for, he was resolved to trust the palatine's full restoration to the event of future counsels and deliberations. [1]

This whole system of negotiation Buckingham now reversed; and he overturned every supposition upon which the treaty had hitherto been conducted. After many fruitless artifices were employed to delay or prevent the espousals, Bristol received positive orders not to deliver the proxy, which had been left in his hands, or to finish the marriage, till security were given for the full restitution of the Palatinate. [2]

Philip understood this language. He had been acquainted with the disgust received by Buckingham; and deeming him a man capable of sacrificing to his own ungovernable passions the greatest interests of his master and of his country, his had expected, that the unbounded credit of that favorite would be employed to embroil the two nations. Determined, however to throw the blame of the rupture entirely on the English, he delivered into Bristol's hand a written promise, by which he bound himself to procure the restoration of the Palatinate either by persuasion, or by every other possible means; and when he found that this concession gave no satisfaction, he ordered the infanta to lay aside the title of princess of Wales which she bore after the arrival of the dispensation from Rome, and to drop the study of the English language. [1] Any thinking that such rash counsels as now governed the court of England, would not stop at the breach of the marriage treaty, he ordered preparations for war immediately to be made throughout all his dominions. [2]

* Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Rennet, .

Thus James, having, by means inexplicable from the ordinary rules of politics, conducted, so near an honorable period, the marriage of his son and the restoration of his son-in-law, failed at last of his purpose, by means equally unaccountable.

But though the expedients already used by Buckingham were sufficiently inglorious, both for himself and for the nation, it was necessary for him, ere he could fully effect his purpose, to employ artifices still more dishonorable.

1624.

The king, having broken with Spain, was obliged to concert new measures; and, without the assistance of parliament, no effectual step of any kind could be taken. The benevolence which, during the interval, had been rigorously exacted for recovering the Palatinate, though levied for no popular an end, had procured to the king less money than ill will from his subjects. [3] Whatever discouragements, therefore, he might receive from his ill agreement with former parliaments, there was a necessity of summoning once more this assembly: and it might be hoped, that the Spanish alliance which gave such umbrage, being abandoned, the commons would now be better satisfied with the king's administration. In his speech to the houses, James dropped some hints of his cause of complaint against Spain; and he graciously condescended to ask the advice of parliament, which he had ever before rejected, with regard to the conduct of so important so affair as his son's marriage. [4]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * To show by what violent measures benevolences were usually raised, Johnstone tells us, in his Rerum Britanniearum Historia, that Barnes, a citizen of London,

was the first who refused to contribute any thing upon which the treasurer sent him word, that he must immediately prepare himself to carry by post a despatch into Ireland, The citizen was glad to make his peace by paying a hundred pounds. And no one durst afterwards refuse the benevolence required. See further, Coke, .

* * * * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Kennet, p. 778.

Buckingham delivered to a committee of lords and commons a long narrative, which he pretended to be true and complete, of every step taken in the negotiations with Philip: but, partly by the suppression of some facts, partly by the false coloring laid on others, this narrative was calculated entirely to mislead the parliament, and to throw on the court of Spain the reproach of artifice and insincerity. He said, that, after many years' negotiation, the king found not himself any nearer his purpose; and that Bristol had never brought the treaty beyond general professions and declarations; that the prince, doubting the good intentions of Spain, resolved at last to take a journey to Madrid, and put the matter to the utmost trial; that he there found such artificial dealing as made him conclude all the steps taken towards the marriage to be false and deceitful: that the restitution of the Palatinate, which had ever been regarded by the king as an essential preliminary, was not seriously intended by Spain; and that, after enduring much bad usage, the prince was obliged to return to England, without any hopes, either of obtaining the infanta, or of restoring the elector palatine. [1]

This narrative, which, considering the importance of the occasion, and the solemnity of that assembly to which it was delivered, deserves great blame, was yet vouched for truth by the prince of Wales, who was present; and the king himself lent it, indirectly, his authority, by telling the parliament, that it was by his orders Buckingham laid the whole affair before them. The conduct of these princes it is difficult fully to excuse. It is in vain to plead the youth and inexperience of Charles; unless his inexperience and youth, as is probable, [2] if not certain, really led him into error, and made him swallow all the falsities of Buckingham. And though the king was here hurried from his own measures by the impetuosity of others, nothing should have induced him to prostitute his character, and seem to vouch the impostures, at least false colorings, of his favorite, of which he had so good reason to entertain a suspicion. [3]

* Franklyn, p.89, 90, 91, etc. Rushworth, vol. i. , 120, etc. Parl. Hist. vol. vi. , 21, etc.

* * See note EEE, at the end of the volume.

* * * It must, however, be confessed, that the king afterwards warned the house not to take Buckingham’s narrative for his, though it was said before them by his order. Parl. Hist.

vol. vi. . James was probably ashamed to have been carried so far by his favorite.

Buckingham’s narrative, however artfully disguised, contained so many contradictory circumstances, as were sufficient to open the eyes of all reasonable men; but it concurred so well with the passions and prejudices of the parliament, that no scruple was made of immediately adopting it. [1] Charmed with having obtained at length the opportunity, so long wished for, of going to war with Papists, they little thought of future consequences; but immediately advised the king to break off both treaties with Spain, as well that which regarded the marriage, as that for the restitution of the Palatinate. [2] The people, ever greedy of war till they suffer by it, displayed their triumph at these violent measures by public bonfires and rejoicings, and by insults on the Spanish ministers. Buckingham was now the favorite of the public and of the parliament. Sir Edward Coke, in the house of commons, called him the savior of the nation. [3] Every place resounded with his praises. And he himself, intoxicated by a popularity which he enjoyed so little time, and which he so ill deserved, violated all duty to his indulgent master, and entered into cabals with the Puritanical members, who had ever opposed the royal authority. He even encouraged schemes for abolishing the order of bishops, and selling the dean and chapter lands, in order to defray the expenses of a Spanish war. And the king, though he still entertained projects for temporizing, and for forming an accommodation with Spain, was so borne down by the torrent of popular prejudices, conducted and increased by Buckingham, that he was at last obliged, in a speech to parliament, to declare in favor of hostile measures, if they would engage to support him. [4] Doubts of their sincerity in this respect, doubts which the event showed not to be ill grounded, had probably been one cause of his former pacific and dilatory measures.

* Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * * Franklyn, , 95. Rushworth, vol. i. , 130.

In his speech on this occasion, the king began with lamenting his own unhappiness, that, having so long valued himself on the epithet of the pacific monarch, he should now, in his old age, be obliged to exchange the blessings of peace for the inevitable calamities of war. He represented to them the immense and continued expense requisite for military armaments; and, besides supplies from time to time, as they should become necessary, he demanded a vote of six subsidies and twelve fifteenths, as a proper stock before the commencement of hostilities. He told them of his intolerable debts, chiefly contracted by the sums remitted to the palatine; [1] but he added, that he did not insist on any supply for his own relief, and that it was sufficient for him if the honor and security of the public were provided for. To remove all suspicion, he, who had ever strenuously maintained his prerogative, and who had even extended it into some points esteemed doubtful, now made an imprudent concession, of which the consequences might have proved fatal to royal authority; he voluntarily offered, that the money voted should be paid to a committee of parliament, and should be issued by them, without being intrusted to his management. [2] The commons willingly accepted of this concession, so unusual in an English monarch: they voted him only three subsidies and three fifteenths: [3] and they took no notice of the complaints which he made of his own wants and necessities.

Advantage was also taken of the present good agreement between the king and parliament, in order to pass the bill against monopolies, which had formerly been encouraged by the king, but which had failed by the rupture between him and the last house of commons. This bill was conceived in such terms as to render it merely declaratory; and all monopolies were condemned, as contrary to law and to the known liberties of the people. It was there supposed, that every subject of England had entire power to dispose of his own actions, provided he did no injury to any of his fellow subjects; and that no prerogative of the king, no power of any magistrate, nothing but the authority alone of laws, could restrain that unlimited freedom. The full prosecution of this noble principle into all its natural consequences, has at last, through many contests, produced that singular and happy government which we enjoy at present. [4]

* See note FFF, at the end of the volume.

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Less than three hundred thousand pounds.

* * * * See note GGG, at the end of the volume.

The house of commons also corroborated, by a new precedent, the important power of impeachment, which, two years before, they had exercised in the case of Chancellor Bacon, and which had lain dormant for near two centuries, except when they served as instruments of royal vengeance. The earl of Middlesex had been raised, by Buckingham's interest, from the rank of a London merchant, to be treasurer of England; and, by his activity and address, seemed not unworthy of that preferment. But, as he incurred the displeasure of his patron, by scrupling or refusing some demands of money during the prince's residence in Spain, that favorite vowed revenge, and employed all his credit among the commons to procure an impeachment of the treasurer. The king was extremely dissatisfied with this measure, and prophesied to the prince and duke, that they would live to have their fill of parliamentary prosecutions. [1] In a speech to the parliament, he endeavored to apologize for Middlesex, and to soften the accusation against him. [2] The charge, however, was still maintained by the commons; and the treasurer was found guilty by the peers, though the misdemeanors proved against him were neither numerous nor important. The accepting of two presents of five hundred pounds apiece, for passing two patents, was the article of greatest weight. His sentence was, to be fined fifty thousand pounds for the king's-use, and to suffer all the other penalties formerly inflicted upon Bacon. The fine was afterwards remitted by the prince, when he mounted the throne.

This session, an address was also made, very disagreeable to the king, craving the severe execution of the laws against Catholics. His answer was gracious and condescending; [3] though he declared against persecution, as being an improper measure for the suppression of any religion, according to the received maxim, “That the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.” He also condemned an entire indulgence of the Catholics; and seemed to represent a middle course as the most humane and most politic. He went so far as even to affirm with an oath, that he never had entertained any thoughts of granting a toleration to these religionists. [4] The liberty of exercising their worship in private houses, which he had secretly agreed to in the Spanish treaty, did not appear to him deserving that name; and it was probably by means of this explication, he thought that he had saved his honor. And as Buckingham, in his narrative, confessed that the king had agreed to a temporary suspension of the penal laws against the Catholics, which he distinguished from a toleration, (a term at that time extremely odious,) James naturally deemed his meaning to be sufficiently explained, and feared not any reproach of falsehood or duplicity, on account of this asseveration.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * * Franklyn, , 102.

* * * * See, further, Franklyn, .

v Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

After all these transactions, the parliament was prorogued by the king, who let fall some hints, though in gentle terms, of the sense which he entertained of their unkindness in not supplying his necessities. [1]

* Franklyn, .

James, unable to resist so strong a combination as that of his people, his parliament, his son, and his favorite, had been compelled to embrace measures for which, from temper as well as judgment, he had ever entertained a most settled aversion. Though he dissembled his resentment, he began to estrange himself from Buckingham, to whom he ascribed all those violent counsels, and whom he considered as the author, both of the prince’s journey to Spain, and of the breach of the marriage treaty. The arrival of Bristol he impatiently longed for; and it was by the assistance of that minister, whose wisdom he respected, and whose views he approved, that he hoped in time to extricate himself from his present difficulties.

During the prince’s abode in Spain, that able negotiator had ever opposed, though unsuccessfully, to the impetuous measures suggested by Buckingham, his own wise and well-tempered counsels. After Charles’s departure, he still, upon the first appearance of a change of resolution, interposed his advice, and strenuously insisted on the sincerity of the Spaniards in the conduct of the treaty, as well as the advantages which England must reap from the completion of it. Enraged to find that his successful labors should be rendered abortive by the levities and caprices of an insolent minion, he would understand no hints; and nothing but express orders from his master could engage him to make that demand which, he was sensible, must put a final period to the treaty. He was not, therefore, surprised to hear that Buckingham had declared himself his open enemy, and, on all occasions, had thrown out many violent reflections against him.

Nothing could be of greater consequence to Buckingham than to keep Bristol at a distance both from the king and the parliament; lest the power of truth, enforced by so well-informed a speaker, should open scenes which were but suspected by the former, and of which the latter had as yet entertained no manner of jealousy. He applied therefore to James, whose weakness, disguised to himself under the appearance of finesse and dissimulation, was now become absolutely incurable. A warrant for sending Bristol to the Tower was issued immediately upon his arrival in England; [1] and though he was soon released from confinement, yet orders were carried him from the king, to retire to his country seat, and to abstain from all attendance in parliament He obeyed; but loudly demanded an opportunity of justifying himself, and of laying his whole conduct before his master. On all occasions, he protested his innocence, and threw on his enemy the blame of every miscarriage. Buckingham, and, at his instigation, the prince, declared that they would be reconciled to Bristol, if he would but acknowledge his errors and ill conduct: but the spirited nobleman, jealous of his honor, refused to buy favor at so high a price. James had the equity to say, that the insisting on that condition was a strain of unexampled tyranny: but Buckingham scrupled not to assert, with his usual presumption, that neither the king, the prince, nor himself, were as yet satisfied of Bristol’s innocence. [2]

While the attachment of the prince to Buckingham, while the timidity of James or the shame of changing his favorite, kept the whole court in awe, the Spanish ambassador, Inoiosa, endeavored to open the king’s eyes, and to cure his fears by instilling greater fears into him. He privately slipped into his hand a paper, and gave him a signal to read it alone. He there told him, that he was as much a prisoner at London as ever Francis I. was at Madrid; that the prince and Buckingham had conspired together, and had the whole court at their devotion; that cabals among the popular leaders in parliament were carrying on, to the extreme prejudice of his authority; that the project was to confine him to some of his hunting seats, and to commit the whole administration to Charles; and that it was necessary for him, by one vigorous effort, to vindicate his authority, and to punish those who had so long and so much abused his friendship and beneficence. [3]

What credit James gave to this representation does not appear. He only discovered some faint symptoms, which he instantly retracted, of dissatisfaction with Buckingham. All his public measures, and all the alliances into which he entered, were founded on the system of enmity to the Austrian family, and of war to be carried on for the recovery of the Palatinate.

The states of the United Provinces were at this time governed by Maurice; and that aspiring prince, sensible that his credit would languish during peace, had, on the expiration of the twelve years’ truce, renewed the war with the Spanish monarchy. His great capacity in the military art would have compensated the inferiority of his forces, had not the Spanish armies been commanded by Spinola, a general equally renowned for conduct, and more celebrated for enterprise and activity. In such a situation, nothing could, be more welcome to the republic than the prospect of a rupture between James and the Catholic king; and they flattered themselves, as well

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* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Hacket’s Life of Williams. Coke .

from the natural union of interests between them and England, as from the influence of the present conjuncture, that powerful succors would soon march to their relief. Accordingly an army of six thousand men was levied in England, and sent over to Holland, commanded by four young noblemen, Essex, Oxford, Southampton, and Willoughby, who were ambitious of distinguishing themselves in so popular a cause, and of acquiring military experience under so renowned a captain as Maurice.

It might reasonably have been expected, that, as religious zeal had made the recovery of the Palatinate appear a point of such vast importance in England, the same effect must have been produced in France, by the force merely of political views and considerations. While that principality remained in the hands of the house of Austria, the French dominions were surrounded on all sides by the possessions of that ambitious family, and might be invaded by superior forces from every quarter. It concerned the king of France, therefore, to prevent the peaceable establishment of the emperor in his new conquests; and both by the situation and greater power of his state, he was much better enabled than James to give succor to the distressed palatine. [1]

* See Collection of State Papers by the earl of Clarendon, .

But though these views escaped not Louis, nor Cardinal Richelieu, who now began to acquire an ascendant in the French court, that minister was determined to pave the way for his enterprises by first subduing the Hugonots, and thence to proceed, by mature counsels, to humble the house of Austria. The prospect, however, of a conjunction with England was presently embraced, and all imaginable encouragement was given to every proposal for conciliating a marriage between Charles and the princess Henrietta.

Notwithstanding the sensible experience which James might have acquired of the unsurmountable antipathy entertained by his subjects against an alliance with Catholics, he still persevered in the opinion, that his son would be degraded by receiving into his bed a princess of less than royal extraction. After the rupture, therefore, with Spain, nothing remained but an alliance with France; and to that court he immediately applied himself. [1] The same allurements had not here place, which had so long entangled him in the Spanish negotiation: the portion promised was much inferior; and the peaceable restoration of the palatine could not thence be expected. But James was afraid lest his son should be altogether disappointed of a bride; and therefore, as soon as the French king demanded, for the honor of his crown, the same terms which had been granted to the Spanish, he was prevailed with to comply. And as the prince, during his abode in Spain, had given a verbal promise to allow the infanta the education of her children till the age of thirteen, this article was here inserted in the treaty; and to that imprudence is generally imputed the present distressed condition of his posterity. The court of England, however, it must be confessed, always pretended, even in their memorials to the French court that all the favorable conditions granted to the Catholics, were inserted in the marriage treaty merely to please the pope, and that their strict execution was, by an agreement with France, secretly dispensed with. [2]

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * See note HHH, at the end of the volume.

As much as the conclusion of the marriage treaty was acceptable to the king, as much were all the military enterprises disagreeable, both from the extreme difficulty of the undertaking in which he was engaged, and from his own incapacity for such a scene of action.

During the Spanish negotiation, Heidelberg and Manheim had been taken by the imperial forces; and Frankendale, though the garrison was entirely English, was closely besieged by them. After reiterated remonstrances from James, Spain interposed, and procured a suspension of arms during eighteen months. But as Frankendale was the only place of Frederic’s ancient dominions which was still in his hands, Ferdinand, desirous of withdrawing his forces from the Palatinate, and of leaving that state in security was unwilling that so important a fortress should remain in the possession of the enemy. To compromise all differences, it was agreed to sequestrate it into the hands of the infanta as a neutral person; upon condition that, after the expiration of the truce, it should be delivered to Frederic; though peace should not, at that time, be concluded between him and Ferdinand. [1] After the unexpected rupture with Spain, the infanta, when James demanded the execution of the treaty, offered him peaceable possession of Frankendale, and even promised a safe-conduct for the garrison through the Spanish

Netherlands: but there was some territory of the empire interposed between her state and the Palatinate; and for passage over that territory, no terms were stipulated. [2] By this chicane, which certainly had not been employed if amity with Spain had been preserved, the palatine was totally dispossessed of his patrimonial dominions.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

The English nation, however, and James’s warlike council, were not discouraged. It was still determined to reconquer the Palatinate; a state lying in the midst of Germany, possessed entirely by the emperor and duke of Bavaria, surrounded by potent enemies, and cut off from all communication with England. Count Mansfeldt was taken into pay; and an English army of twelve thousand foot and two hundred horse was levied by a general press throughout the kingdom. During the negotiation with France, vast promises had been made, though in general terms, by the French ministry; not only that a free passage should be granted to the English troops, but that powerful succors should also join them in their march towards the Palatinate. In England, all these professions were hastily interpreted to be positive engagements. The troops under Mansfeldt’s command were embarked at Dover; but, upon sailing over to Calais, found no orders yet arrived for their admission. After waiting in vain during some time, they were obliged to sail towards Zealand, where it had also been neglected to concert proper measures for their disembarkation; and some scruples arose among the states on account of the scarcity of provisions. Meanwhile a pestilential distemper crept in among the English forces, so long cooped up in narrow vessels. Half the army died while on board; and the other half, weakened by sickness, appeared too small a body to march into the Palatinate. [1]

1625.

And thus ended this ill-concerted and fruitless expedition; the only disaster which happened to England during the prosperous and pacific reign of James.

That reign was now drawing towards a conclusion. With peace, so successfully cultivated, and so passionately loved by this monarch, his life also terminated. This spring, he was seized with a tertian ague; and, when encouraged by his courtiers with the common proverb, that such a distemper, during that season, was health for a king, he replied, that the proverb was meant of a young king. After some fits, he found himself extremely weakened, and sent for the prince, whom he exhorted to bear a tender affection for his wife, but to preserve a constancy in religion; to protect the church of England; and to extend his care towards the unhappy family of the palatine. [2] With decency and courage, he prepared himself for his end; and he expired on the twenty-seventh of March, after a reign over England of twenty-two years and some days, and in the fifty-ninth year of his age. His reign over Scotland was almost of equal duration with his life. In all history, it would be difficult to find a reign less illustrious, yet more unspotted and unblemished, than that of James in both kingdoms.

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Dugdale, p. 24.

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

No prince, so little enterprising and so inoffensive, was ever so much exposed to the opposite extremes of calumny and flattery, of satire and panegyric. And the factions which began in his time, being still continued, have made his character be as much disputed to this day, as is commonly that of princes who are our contemporaries. Many virtues, however, it must be owned, he was possessed of, but scarce any of them pure, or free from the contagion of the neighboring vices. His generosity bordered on profusion, his learning on pedantry, his pacific disposition on pusillanimity, his wisdom on cunning, his friendship on light fancy and boyish fondness. While he imagined that he was only maintaining his own authority, he may, perhaps, be suspected, in a few of his actions, and still more of his pretensions, to have somewhat encroached on the liberties of his people: while he endeavored, by an exact neutrality, to acquire the good will of all his neighbors, he was able to preserve fully the esteem and regard of none. His capacity was considerable; but fitter to discourse on general maxims, than to conduct any intricate business: his intentions were just; but more adapted to the conduct of private life than to the government of kingdoms.

Awkward in his person, and ungainly in his manners, he was ill qualified to command respect; partial and undiscerning in his affections, he was little fitted to acquire general love. Of a feeble temper, more than of a frail judgment; exposed to our ridicule from his vanity; but exempt from our hatred by his freedom from pride and arrogance. And, upon the whole, it may be pronounced of his character, that all his qualities were sullied with weakness and embellished by humanity. Of political courage he certainly was destitute; and thence, chiefly, is derived the strong prejudice which prevails against his personal bravery; an inference, however, which must be owned, from general experience, to be extremely fallacious.

He was only once married, to Anne of Denmark, who died on the third of March, 1619, in the forty-fifth year of her age; a woman eminent neither for her vices nor her virtues. She loved shows and expensive amusements, but possessed little taste in her pleasures. A great comet appeared about the time of her death; and the vulgar esteemed it the prognostic of that event: so considerable in their eyes are even the most insignificant princes.

He left only one son, Charles, then in the twenty-fifth year of his age; and one daughter, Elizabeth, married to the elector palatine. She was aged twenty-nine years. Those alone remained of six legitimate children born to him. He never had any illegitimate; and he never discovered any tendency, even the smallest, towards a passion for any mistress.

The archbishops of Canterbury during this reign were Whitgift, who died in 1604; Bancroft, in 1610; Abbot, who survived the king. The chancellors, Lord Ellesmore, who resigned in 1617; Bacon was first lord keeper till 1619; then was created chancellor, and was displaced in 1621: Williams, bishop of Lincoln, was created lord keeper in his place. The high treasurers were the earl of Dorset, who died in 1609, the earl of Salisbury, in 1612; the earl of Suffolk, fined and displaced for bribery in 1618. Lord Mandeville resigned in 1621, the earl of Middlesex, displaced in 1624; the earl of Marlborough succeeded. The lord admirals were, the earl of Nottingham, who resigned in 1618; the earl, afterwards duke of Buckingham. The secretaries of state were, the earl of Salisbury, Sir Ralph Winwood, Nanton, Calvert, Lord Conway, Sir Albertus Moreton.

The numbers of the house of lords, in the first parliament of this reign, were seventy-eight temporal peers. The numbers in the first parliament of Charles were ninety-seven. Consequently James, during that period, created nineteen new peerages above those that expired.

The house of commons, in the first parliament of this reign, consisted of four hundred and sixty-seven members. It appears that four boroughs revived their charters, which they had formerly neglected. And as the first parliament of Charles consisted of four hundred and ninety-four members, we may infer that James created ten new boroughs.

APPENDIX TO THE REIGN OF JAMES I.

This history of the house of Stuart was written and published by the author before the history of the house of Tudor. Hence it happens that some passages, particularly in the present Appendix, may seem to be repetitions of what was formerly delivered in the reign of Elizabeth. The author, in order to obviate this objection, has cancelled some few passages in the foregoing chapters.

It may not be improper, at this period, to make a pause, and to take a survey of the state of the kingdom with regard to government, manners, finances, arms, trade, learning. Where a just notion is not formed of these particulars, history can be little instructive, and often will not be intelligible.

We may safely pronounce that the English government, at the accession of the Scottish line, was much more arbitrary than it is at present; the prerogative less limited, the liberties of the subject less accurately defined and secured. Without mentioning other particulars, the courts alone of high commission and star chamber were sufficient to lay the whole kingdom at the mercy of the prince.

The court of high commission had been erected by Elizabeth, in consequence of an act of parliament passed in the beginning of her reign: by this act it was thought proper during the great revolution of religion, to arm the sovereign with full powers, in order to discourage and suppress opposition. All appeals from the inferior ecclesiastical courts were carried before the high commission; and, of consequence, the whole life and doctrine of the clergy lay directly under its inspection. Every breach of the act of uniformity, every refusal of the ceremonies, was cognizable in this court; and, during the reign of Elizabeth, had been punished by deprivation, by fine, confiscation, and imprisonment. James contented himself with the gentler penalty of deprivation; nor was that punishment inflicted with rigor on every offender. Archbishop Spotswood tells us, that fee was informed by Bancroft, the primate, several years after the king’s accession, that not above forty-five clergymen had then been deprived. All the Catholics, too, were liable to be punished by this court, if they exercised any act of their religion, or sent abroad their children or other relations to receive that education which they could not procure them in their own country. Popish priests were thrown into prison, and might be delivered over to the law, which punished them with death; though that severity had been sparingly exercised by Elizabeth, and never almost by James. In a word, that liberty of conscience, which we so highly and so justly value at present, was totally suppressed; and no exercise of any religion but the established, was permitted throughout the kingdom. Any word or writing which tended towards heresy or schism, was punishable by the high commissioners, or any three of them: they alone were judges what expressions had that tendency: they proceeded not by information, but upon rumor, suspicion, or according to their discretion: they administered an oath, by which the party cited before them was bound to answer any question which should be propounded to him: whoever refused this oath, though he pleaded ever so justly, that he might thereby be brought to accuse himself or his dearest friend, was punishable by Imprisonment: and in short, an inquisitorial tribunal, with all its terrors and iniquities, was erected in the kingdom. Full discretionary powers were bestowed with regard to the inquiry, trial, sentence, and penalty inflicted; excepting only that corporal punishments were restrained by that patent of the prince which erected the court, not by the act of parliament which empowered him. By reason of the uncertain limits which separate ecclesiastical from civil causes, all accusations of adultery and incest were tried by the court of high commission; and every complaint of wives against their husbands was there examined and discussed. [1]

* Rymer, tom. xvii. .

On like pretences, every cause which regarded conscience, that is, every cause, could have been brought under their jurisdiction. But there was a sufficient reason why the king would not be solicitous to stretch the jurisdiction of this court: the star chamber possessed the same authority in civil matters; and its methods of proceeding were equally arbitrary and unlimited, The origin of this court was derived from the most remote antiquity [1] though it is pretended, that its power had first been carried to the greatest height by Henry VII. In all times, however, it is confessed, it enjoyed authority; and at no time was its authority circumscribed, or method of proceeding directed by any law or statute.

We have had already, or shall have sufficient occasion, dur-* ing the course of this history, to mention the dispensing power, the power of imprisonment, of exacting loans [2] and benevolences, of pressing and quartering soldiers, of altering the customs, of erecting monopolies. These branches of power, if not directly opposite to the principles of all free government, must, at least, be acknowledged dangerous to freedom in a monarchical constitution, where an eternal jealousy must be preserved against the sovereign, and no discretionary powers must ever be intrusted to him, by which the property or personal liberty of any subject can be affected. The kings of England, however, had almost constantly exercised these powers; and if, on any occasion, the prince had been obliged to submit to laws enacted against them, he had ever, in practice, eluded these laws, and returned to the same arbitrary administration. During almost three centuries before the accession of James, the regal authority, in all these particulars, had never once been called in question.

* Bushworth, vol. ii. . In Chambers's case, it was the unanimous opinion of the court of king's bench, that the court of star Chamber was not derived from the statute of Henry VII., but was a court many years before, and one of the most high and honorable courts of justice. See Coke's Rep. term. Mich. 5 Car. I. See, further, Camden's Brit. vol.
i. Intro, , edit. of Gibson.

* * During several centuries, no reign had passed without some forced loans from the subject.

We may also observe, that the principles in general which prevailed during that age, were so favorable to monarchy, that they bestowed on it an authority almost absolute and unlimited, sacred and indefeasible.

The meetings of parliament were so precarious, their sessions so short, compared to the vacations, that, when men's eyes were turned upwards in search of sovereign power, the prince alone was apt to strike them as the only permanent magistrate, invested with the whole majesty and authority of the state. The great complaisance too of parliaments, during so long a period, had extremely degraded and obscured those assemblies; and as all instances of opposition to prerogative must have been drawn from a remote age, they were unknown to a great many, and had the less authority even with those who were acquainted with them. These examples, besides, of liberty had commonly, in ancient times, been accompanied with such circumstances of violence, convulsion, civil war, and disorder, that they presented but a disagreeable idea to the inquisitive part of the people, and afforded small inducement to renew such dismal scenes. By a great many, therefore, monarchy, simple and unmixed, was conceived to be the government of England; and those popular assemblies were supposed to form only the ornament of the fabric, without being in any degree essential to its being and existence. [1] The prerogative of the crown was represented by lawyers as something real and durable; like those eternal essences of the schools, which no time or force could alter. The sanction of religion was by divines called in aid; and the Monarch of heaven was supposed to be interested in supporting the authority of his earthly vicegerent. And though it is pretended that these doctrines were more openly inculcated and more strenuously insisted on during the reign of the Stuarts, they were not then invented; and were only found by the court to be more necessary at that period, by reason of the opposite doctrines, which began to be promulgated by the Puritanical party. [2]

* See note III, at the end of the volume.

* * See note KKK, at the end of the volume.

In consequence of these exalted ideas of kingly authority, the prerogative, besides the articles of jurisdiction founded on precedent, was by many supposed to possess an inexhaustible fund of latent powers, which might be exerted on any emergence. In every government, necessity, when real, supersedes all laws, and levels all limitations; but in the English government, convenience alone was conceived to authorize any extraordinary act of regal power, and to render it obligatory on the people. Hence the strict obedience required to proclamations during all periods of the English history; and if James has incurred blame on account of his edicts, it is only because he too frequently issued them at a time when they began to be less regarded, not because he first assumed or extended to an unusual degree that exercise of authority. Of his maxims in a parallel case, the following is a pretty remark able instance.

Queen Elizabeth had appointed commissioners for the inspection of prisons, and had bestowed on them full discretionary powers to adjust all differences between prisoners and their creditors, to compound debts, and to give liberty to such debtors as they found honest and insolvent. From the uncertain and undefined nature of the English constitution, doubts sprang up in many, that this commission was contrary to law; and it was represented in that light to James. He forbore, therefore, renewing the commission, till the fifteenth of his reign; when complaints rose so high with regard to the abuses practised in prisons, that he thought himself obliged to overcome his scruples, and to appoint new commissioners, invested with the same discretionary powers which Elizabeth had formerly conferred. [1]

* Rymer, tom. xviii. , 594.

Upon the whole, we must conceive that monarchy, on the accession of the house of Stuart, was possessed of a very extensive authority: an authority, in the judgment of all, not exactly limited; in the judgment of some, not limitable. But, at the same time, this authority was founded merely on the opinion of the people, influenced by ancient precedent and example. It was not supported either by money or by force of arms. And, for this reason, we need not wonder that the princes of that line were so extremely jealous of their prerogative; being sensible, that when these claims were ravished from them, they possessed no influence by which they could maintain their dignity, or support the laws. By the changes which have since been introduced, the liberty and independence of individuals has been rendered much more full, entire and secure; that of the public more uncertain and precarious. And it seems a necessary, though perhaps a melancholy truth, that in every government, the magistrate must either possess a large revenue and a military force, or enjoy some discretionary powers, in order to execute the laws and support his own authority.

We have had occasion to remark, in so many instances, the bigotry which prevailed in that age, that we can look for no toleration among the different sects. Two Arians, under the title of heretics, were punished by fire during this period; and no other reign, since the reformation, had been free from the like barbarities. Stowe says, that these Arians were offered their pardon at the stake, if they would merit it by a recantation. A madman, who called himself the Holy Ghost, was without any indulgence for his frenzy, condemned to the same punishment. Twenty pounds a month could, by law, be levied on every one who frequented not the established worship. This rigorous law, however, had one indulgent clause, that the lines exacted should not exceed two thirds of the yearly income of the person. It had been usual for Elizabeth to allow those penalties to run on for several years; and to levy them all at once, to the utter ruin of such Catholics as had incurred her displeasure. James was more humane in this, as in every other respect. The Puritans formed a sect which secretly lurked in the church, but pretended not to any separate worship or discipline. An attempt of that kind would have been universally regarded as the most unpardonable enormity. And had the king been disposed to grant the Puritans a full toleration for a separate exercise of their religion, it is certain, from the spirit of the times, that this sect itself would have despised and hated him for it, and would have reproached him with luke-warmness and indifference in the cause of religion. They maintained, that they themselves were the only pure church; that their principles and practices ought to be established by law; and that no others ought to be tolerated. It may be questioned, therefore, whether the administration at this time could with propriety deserve the appellation of persecutors with regard to the Puritans. Such of the clergy, indeed, as refused to comply with the legal ceremonies, were deprived of their livings, and sometimes, in Elizabeth’s reign, were otherwise punished: and ought any man to accept of an office or benefice in an establishment, while he declines compliance with the fixed and known rules of that establishment? But Puritans were never punished for frequenting separate congregations; because there were none such in the kingdom; and no Protestant ever assumed or pretended to the right of erecting them. The greatest well-wishers of the Puritanical sect would have condemned a practice, which in that age was universally, by statesmen and ecclesiastics-philosophers and zealots, regarded as subversive of civil society. Even so great a reasoner as Lord Bacon thought that uniformity in religion was absolutely necessary to the support of government, and that no toleration could with safety be given to sectaries. [1]

* See his essay De Unitate Ecclesiae.

Nothing but the imputation of idolatry, which was thrown on the Catholic religion, could justify, in the eyes of the Puritans themselves, the schism made by the Hugonots and other Protestants who lived in Popish countries.

In all former ages, not wholly excepting even those of Greece and Rome, religious sects, and heresies, and schisms had been esteemed dangerous, if not pernicious, to civil government, and were regarded as the source of faction, and private combination, and opposition to the laws. [1] The magistrate, therefore, applied himself directly to the cure of this evil, as of every other; and very naturally attempted, by penal statutes, to suppress those separate communities, and punish the obstinate innovators. But it was found by fatal experience, and after spilling an ocean of blood in those theological quarrels, that the evil was of a peculiar nature, and was both inflamed by violent remedies, and diffused itself more rapidly throughout the whole society. Hence, though late, arose the paradoxical principle and salutary practice of toleration.

The liberty of the press was incompatible with such maxims and such principles of government as then prevailed, and was therefore quite unknown in that age. Besides employing the two terrible courts of star chamber and high commission, whose powers were unlimited, Queen Elizabeth exerted her authority by restraints upon the press. She passed a decree in her court of star chamber, that is, by her own will and pleasure, forbidding any book to be printed in any place but in London, Oxford, and Cambridge: [2] and another, in which she prohibited, under severe penalties, the publishing of any book or pamphlet “against the form or meaning of any restraint or ordinance, contained, or to be contained, in any statute or laws of this realm, or in any injunction made or set forth by her majesty or her privy council, or against the true sense or meaning of any letters patent, commissions or prohibitions under the great seal of England.” [3] James extended the same penalties to the importing of such books from abroad. [4]

* See Cicero de Legibus.

* * 28th of Elizabeth. See State Trials Sir Robert Knightly, vol vii. 1st edit.

* * * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

* * * * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

And to render these edicts more effectual, he afterwards inhibited the printing of any book without a license from the archbishop of Canterbury, the archbishop of York, the bishop of London, or the vice-chancellor of one of the universities, or of some person appointed by them. [1]

In tracing the coherence among the systems of modern theology, we may observe, that the doctrine of absolute decrees has ever been intimately connected with the enthusiastic spirit, as that doctrine affords the highest subject of joy, triumph, and security to the supposed elect, and exalts them by infinite degrees above the rest of mankind. All the first reformers adopted these principles; and the Jansenists too, a fanatical sect in France, not to mention the Mahometans in Asia, have ever embraced them. As the Lutheran establishments were subjected to Episcopal jurisdiction, their enthusiastic genius gradually decayed; and men had leisure to perceive the absurdity of supposing God to punish by infinite torments what he himself from all eternity had unchangeably decreed. The king, though at this time his Calvinistic education had rivetted him in the doctrine of absolute decrees, yet, being a zealous partisan of Episcopacy, was insensibly engaged, towards the end of his reign, to favor the milder theology of Arminius. Even in so great a doctor, the genius of the religion prevailed over its speculative tenets; and with him, the whole clergy gradually dropped the more rigid principles of absolute reprobation and unconditional decrees. Some noise was at first made about these innovations; but being drowned in the fury of factions and civil wars which ensued, the scholastic arguments made an insignificant figure amidst those violent disputes about civil and ecclesiastical power with which the nation was agitated. And at the restoration, the church, though she still retained her old subscriptions and articles of faith, was found to have totally changed her speculative doctrines, and to have embraced tenets more suitable to the genius of her discipline and worship, without its being possible to assign the precise period in which the alteration was produced.

It may be worth observing, that James, from his great desire to promote controversial divinity, erected a college at Chelsea for the entertainment of twenty persons, who should be entirely employed in refuting the Papists and Puritans. [2]

* Rymer, tom. xvii. .

* * Kennel, . Caraden’s Brit vol. i. . Gibson’s edit.

All the efforts of the great Bacon could not procure an establishment for the cultivation of natural philosophy: even to this day, no society has been instituted for the polishing and fixing of our language. The only encouragement which the sovereign in England has ever given to any thing that has the appearance of science, was this short-lived establishment of James; an institution quite superfluous, considering the unhappy propension which at that time so universally possessed the nation for polemical theology.

The manners of the nation were agreeable to the monarchical government which prevailed, and contained not that strange mixture which at present distinguishes England from all other countries. Such violent extremes were then unknown, of industry and debauchery, frugality and profusion, civility and rusticity, fanaticism and scepticism. Candor, sincerity, modesty, are the only qualities which the English of that age possessed in common with the present.

High pride of family then prevailed; and it was by a dignity and stateliness of behavior, that the gentry and nobility distinguished themselves from the common people. Great riches acquired by commerce were more rare, and had not as yet been able to confound all ranks of men, and render money the chief foundation of distinction. Much ceremony took place in the common intercourse of life, and little familiarity was indulged by the great. The advantages which result from opulence are so solid and real, that those who are possessed of them need not dread the near approaches of their inferiors. The distinctions of birth and title, being more empty and imaginary, soon vanish upon familiar access and acquaintance.

The expenses of the great consisted in pomp, and show, and a numerous retinue, rather than in convenience and true pleasure. The earl of Nottingham, in his embassy to Spain, was attended by five hundred persons: the earl of Hertford, in that to Brussels, carried three hundred gentlemen along with him. Lord Bacon has remarked, that the English nobility, in his time, maintained a larger retinue of servants than the nobility of any other nation, except, perhaps, the Polanders. [1]

Civil honors, which now hold the first place, were at that time subordinate to the military. The young gentry and nobility were fond of distinguishing themselves by arms. The fury of duels, too, prevailed more than at anytime before or since. [2] This was the turn that the romantic chivalry, for which the nation was formerly so renowned, had lately taken.

* Essays De profer, fin. imp.

* * Franklyn, See also Lord Herbert’s Memoirs.

Liberty of commerce between the sexes was indulged, but without any licentiousness of manners. The court was very little an exception to this observation. James had rather entertained an aversion and contempt for the females; nor were those young courtiers, of whom he was so fond, able to break through the established manners of the nation.

The first sedan chair seen in England was in this reign, and was used by the duke of Buckingham; to the great indignation of the people, who exclaimed, that he was employing his fellow-creatures to do the service of beasts.

The country life prevails at present in England beyond any cultivated nation of Europe; but it was then much more generally embraced by all the gentry. The increase of arts, pleasures, and social commerce, was just beginning to produce an inclination for the softer and more civilized life of the city. James discouraged, as much as possible, this alteration of manners. “He was wont to be very earnest,” as Lord Bacon tells us, “with the country gentlemen to go from London to their country seats. And sometimes he would say thus to them: ‘Gentlemen, at London you are like ships in a sea, which show like nothing; but in your country villages you are like ships in a river, which look like great things.’” [1]

He was not content with reproof and exhortation. As Queen Elizabeth had perceived with regret the increase of London, and had restrained all new buildings by proclamation, James, who found that these edicts were not exactly obeyed, frequently renewed them; though a strict execution seems still to have been wanting. He also issued reiterated proclamations, in imitation of his predecessor; containing severe menaces against the gentry who lived in town. [2]

* Apophthegms.

* * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

This policy is contrary to that which has ever been practised by all princes who studied the increase of their authority. To allure the nobility to court; to engage them in expensive pleasures or employments which dissipate their fortune; to increase their subjection to ministers by attendance; to weaken their authority in the provinces by absence: these have been the common arts of arbitrary government. But James, besides that he had certainly laid no plan for extending his power, had no money to support a splendid court, or bestow on a numerous retinue of gentry and nobility. He thought too, that by their living together, they became more sensible of their own strength, and were apt to indulge too curious researches into matters of government. To remedy the present evil, he was desirous of dispersing them into their country seats; where, he hoped, they would bear a more submissive reverence to his authority, and receive less support from each other. But the contrary effect soon followed. The riches amassed during their residence at home rendered them independent. The influence acquired by hospitality made them formidable. They would not be led by the court: they could not be driven: and thus the system of the English government received a total and a sudden alteration in the course of less than forty years.

The first rise of commerce and the arts had contributed, in preceding reigns, to scatter those immense fortunes of the barons which rendered them so formidable both to king and people. The further progress of these advantages began, during this reign, to ruin the small proprietors of land; [1] and, by both events, the gentry, or that rank which composed the house of commons, enlarged their power and authority. The early improvements in luxury were seized by the greater nobles, whose fortunes, placing them above frugality, or even calculation, were soon dissipated in expensive pleasures. These improvements reached at last all men of property; and those of slender fortunes, who at that time were often men of family, imitating those of a rank immediately above them, reduced themselves to poverty. Their lands, coming to sale, swelled the estates of those who possessed itches sufficient for the fashionable expenses, but who were not exempted from some care and attention to their domestic economy.

The gentry also of that age were engaged in no expense, except that of country hospitality. No taxes were levied, no wars waged, no attendance at court expected, no bribery or profusion required at elections. [2] Could human nature ever reach happiness, the condition of the English gentry, under so mild and benign a prince, might merit that appellation.

The amount of the king’s revenue, as it stood in 1617, is thus stated. [3]

* Cabala, , 1st edit.

* * Men seem then to have been ambitious of representing the counties, but careless on the boroughs. A seat in the house was, in itself, of small importance: but the former became a point of honor among the gentlemen. Journ. 10th Feb. 1620.

Towns which had formerly neglected their right of sending members, now began to claim it. Journ. 26th Feb. 1623.

* * * An Abstract, or brief Declaration of his Majesty’s Revenue, with the Assignations and Defalcations upon the same.

Of crown lands, eighty thousand pounds a year; by customs and new impositions, near one hundred and ninety thousand; by wards and other various branches of revenue, besides purveyance, one hundred and eighty thousand: the whole amounting to four hundred and fifty thousand. The king’s ordinary disbursements, by the same account, are said to exceed this sum thirty-six thousand pounds. [1] All the extraordinary sums which James had raised by subsidies, loans, sale of lands, sale of the title of baronet, money paid by the states and by the king of France, benevolences, etc., were, in the whole, about two millions two hundred thousand pounds; of which the sale of lands afforded seven hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds. The extraordinary disbursements of the king amounted to two millions; besides above four hundred thousand pounds given in presents. Upon the whole, a sufficient reason appears, partly from necessary expenses, partly for want of a rigid economy, why the king, even early in his reign, was deeply involved in debt, and found great difficulty to support the government.

Farmers, not commissioners, levied the customs. It seems, indeed, requisite, that the former method should always be tried before the latter, though a preferable one. When men’s own interest is concerned, they fall upon a hundred expedients to prevent frauds in the merchants; and these the public may afterwards imitate, in establishing proper rules for its officers.

The customs were supposed to amount to five per cent. of the value, and were levied upon exports, as well as imports. Nay, the imposition upon exports, by James’s additions, is said to amount, in some few instances, to twenty-five per cent This practice, so hurtful to industry, prevails still in France, Spain, and most countries of Europe. The customs in 1604 yielded one hundred and twenty-seven thousand pounds a year: [2] they rose to one hundred and ninety thousand towards the end of the reign.

* The excess was formerly greater, as appears by Salisbury’s account. See cha.

* * Journ. 21st May, 1604.

Interest, during this reign, was at ten per cent. till 1624, when it was reduced to eight. This high interest is an indication of the great profits and small progress of commerce.

The extraordinary supplies granted by parliament, during this whole reign, amounted not to more than six hundred and thirty thousand pounds; which, divided among twenty-one years, makes thirty thousand pounds a year. I do not include those supplies, amounting to three hundred thousand pounds, which were given to the king by his last parliament. These were paid in to their own commissioners; and the expenses of the Spanish war were much more than sufficient to exhaust them. The distressed family of the palatine was a great burden on James, during part of his reign. The king, it is pretended, possessed not frugality proportioned to the extreme narrowness of his revenue. Splendid equipages, however, he did not affect, nor costly furniture, nor a luxurious table, nor prodigal mistresses. His buildings too were not sumptuous; though the Banqueting House must not be forgotten, as a monument which does honor to his reign. Hunting was his chief amusement, the cheapest pleasure in which a king can indulge himself. His expenses were the effects of liberality, rather than of luxury.

One day, it is said, while he was standing amidst some of his courtiers, a porter passed by, loaded with money, which he was carrying to the treasury. The king observed that Rich, afterwards earl of Holland, one of his handsome, agreeable favorites, whispered something to one standing near him. Upon inquiry, he found that Rich had said, “How happy would that money make me!” Without hesitation, James bestowed it all upon him, though it amounted to three thousand pounds. He added, “You think yourself very happy in obtaining so large a sum; but I am more happy in having an opportunity of obliging a worthy man, whom I love.” The generosity of James was more the result of a benign humor or light fancy, than of reason or judgment. The objects of it were such as could render themselves agreeable to him in his loose hours; not such as were endowed with great merit, or who possessed talents or popularity which could strengthen his interest with the public.

The same advantage, we may remark, over the people, which the crown formerly reaped from that interval between the fall of the peers and rise of the commons, was now possessed by the people against the crown, during the continuance of a like interval. The sovereign had already lost that independent revenue by which he could subsist without regular supplies from parliament; and he had not yet acquired the means of influencing those assemblies. The effects of this situation, which commenced with the accession of the house of Stuart, soon rose to a great height, and were more of less propagated throughout all the reigns of that unhappy family.

Subsidies and fifteenths are frequently mentioned by historians; but neither the amount of these taxes, nor the method of levying them, have been well explained. It appears, that the fifteenths formerly corresponded to the name, and were that proportionable part of the movables. [1] But a valuation having been made in the reign of Edward III., that valuation was always adhered to, and each town paid unalterably a particular sum, which the inhabitants themselves assessed upon their fellow-citizens. The same tax in corporate towns was called a tenth; because there it was, at first, a tenth of the movables. The whole amount of a tenth and a fifteenth throughout the kingdom, or a fifteenth, as it is often more concisely called, was about twenty-nine thousand pounds. [2] The amount of a subsidy was not invariable, like that of a fifteenth. In the eighth of Elizabeth, a subsidy amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand pounds: in the fortieth, it was not above seventy-eight thousand. [3] It afterwards fell to seventy thousand, and was continually decreasing. [4] The reason is easily collected from the method of levying it. We may learn from the subsidy bills, that one subsidy was given for four shillings in the pound on land, and two shillings and eightpence on movables throughout the counties; a considerable tax, had it been strictly levied. But this was only the ancient state of a subsidy. During the reign of James, there was not paid the twentieth part of that sum. The tax was so far personal, that a man paid only in the county where he lived, though he should possess estates in other counties; and the assessors formed a loose estimation of his property, and rated him accordingly.

* Coke’s Inst. book iv. cha, cf fifteenths, quinzins.

* * Coke’s Inst. book iv. cha, subsidies temporary.

* * * Journ. 11th July, 1610.

* * * * Coke’s Inst. book iv. subsidies temporary.

v See Statutes at large.

To preserve, however, some rule in the estimation, it seems to have been the practice to keep an eye to former assessments, and to rate every man according as his ancestors, or men of such an estimated property, were accustomed to pay. This was a sufficient reason why subsidies could not increase, notwithstanding the great increase of money and rise of rents. But there was an evident reason why they continually decreased. The favor, as is natural to suppose, ran always against the crown; especially during the latter end of Elizabeth, when subsidies became numerous and frequent, and the sums levied were considerable, compared to former supplies. The assessors, though accustomed to have an eye to ancient estimations, were not bound to observe any such rule, but might rate anew any person, according to his present income. When rents fell, or parts of an estate were sold off, the proprietor was sure to represent these losses, and obtain a diminution of his subsidy; but where rents rose, or new lands were purchased, he kept his own secret, and paid no more than formerly. The advantage, therefore, of every change was taken against the crown; and the crown could obtain the advantage of none. And, to make the matter worse, the alterations which happened in property during this age, were in general unfavorable to the crown. The small proprietors, or twenty-pound men, went continually to decay; and when their estates were swallowed up by a greater, the new purchaser increased not his subsidy. So loose, indeed, is the whole method of rating subsidies, that the wonder was, not how the tax should continually diminish, but how it yielded any revenue at all. It became at last so unequal and uncertain, that the parliament was obliged to change it into a land tax.

The price of corn during this reign, and that of the other necessaries of life, was no lower, or was rather higher, than at present. By a proclamation of James, establishing public magazines, whenever wheat fell below thirty-two shillings a quarter, rye below eighteen, barley below sixteen, the commissioners were empowered to purchase corn for the magazines. [1] These prices then are to be regarded as low; though they would rather pass for high by our present estimation. The usual bread of the poor was at this time made of barley. [2] The best wool, during the greater part of James's reign, was at thirty-three shillings a tod. [3] At present, it is not above two-thirds of that value; though it is lo be presumed that our exports in woollen goods are somewhat increased. The finer manufactures, too, by the progress of arts and industry, have rather diminished in price, notwithstanding the great increase of money.

* Rymer, tom. xvii. . To the same purpose, see also 21st lac vi. ca.

* * Rymer, tom. xx. .

* * * See a compendium or dialogue inserted in the Memoirs of Wool, cha.

In Shakspeare, the hostess tells Falstaff, that the shirts she bought him were Holland at eight shillings a yard; a high price at this day, even supposing, what is not probable, that the best Holland at that time was equal in goodness to the best that can now be purchased. In like manner, a yard of velvet, about the middle of Elizabeth's reign, was valued at two and twenty shillings. It appears from Dr. Birch's life of Prince Henry, [1] that that prince, by contract with his butcher, paid near a groat a pound throughout the year for all the beef and mutton used in his family. Besides, we must consider, that the general turn of that age, which no laws could prevent, was the converting of arable land into pasture; a certain proof that the latter was found more profitable, and consequently that all butcher's meat, as well as bread, was rather higher than at present. We have a regulation of the market with regard to poultry, and some other articles, very early in Charles I.'s reign; [2] and the prices are high. A turkey cock four shillings and sixpence, a turkey hen three shillings, a pheasant cock six, a pheasant hen five, a partridge one shilling, a goose two, a capon two and sixpence, a pullet one and sixpence, a rabbit eightpence, a dozen of pigeons six shillings. [3] We must consider that London at present is more than three times more populous than it was at that time; a circumstance which much increases the price of poultry, and of every thing that cannot conveniently be brought from a distance: not to mention, that these regulations by authority are always calculated to diminish, never to increase the market prices. The contractors for victualling the navy were allowed by government eightpence a day for the diet of each man when in harbor, sevenpence halfpenny when at sea; [4] which would suffice at present. The chief difference in expense between that age and the present consists in the imaginary wants of men, which have since extremely multiplied. These are the principal reasons why James's revenue would go further than the same money in our time; though the difference is not near so great as is usually imagined.

* Page 449.

* * Rymer, tom. xix. .

* * * We may judge of the great grievance of purveyance by this circumstance, that the purveyors often gave but sixpence for a dozen of pigeons, and twopence for a fowl.

Journ. 25th May, 1626.

* * * * Rymer, tom. xvii. , et seq.

v This volume was written above twenty years before the edition of 1778. In that short period, prices have perhaps risen more than during the preceding hundred and fifty.

The public was entirely free from the danger and expense of a standing army. While James was vaunting his divine vicegerency, and boasting of his high prerogative, he possessed not so much as a single regiment of guards to maintain his extensive claims; a sufficient proof that he sincerely believed his pretensions to be well grounded, and a strong presumption that they were at least built on what were then deemed plausible arguments. The militia of England, amounting to one hundred and sixty thousand men, [1] was the sole defence of the kingdom. It is pretended that they were kept in good order during his reign. [2] The city of London procured officers who had served abroad, and who taught the trained bands their exercises in Artillery Garden; a practice which had been discontinued since 1588. All the counties of England, in emulation of the capital, were fond of showing a well-ordered and well-appointed militia. It appeared, that the natural propensity of men towards military shows and exercises will go far, with a little attention in the sovereign, towards exciting and supporting this spirit in any nation. The very boys, at this time, in mimicry of their elders, enlisted themselves voluntarily into companies, elected officers, and practised the discipline, of which the models were every day exposed to their view. [3] Sir Edward Harwood, In a memorial composed at the beginning of the subsequent reign, says, that England was so unprovided with horses fit for war, that two thousand men could not possibly be mounted throughout the whole kingdom. [4] At present, the breed of horses is so much improved, that almost all those which are employed, either in the plough, wagon, or coach, would be fit for that purpose.

The disorders of Ireland obliged James to keep up some forces there, and put him to great expense. The common pay of a private man in the infantry was eightpence a day, a lieutenant two shillings, an ensign eighteen pence.

* Journ. 1st March, 1623.

* * Stowe. See also Sir Walter Raleigh of the Prerogatives of Parliament, and Johnston Hist. lib. xviii.

* * * Stowe.

* * * * In the Harleian Miscellany, vol. iv, .

v Rymer, tom. xvi. .

The armies in Europe were not near so numerous during that age; and the private men, we may observe, were drawn from a better rank than at present, and approaching nearer to that of the officers.

In the year 1583, there was a general review made of all the men in England capable of bearing arms; and these were found to amount to one million one hundred and seventy-two thousand men, according to Raleigh. [1] It is impossible to warrant the exactness of this computation; or rather, we may fairly presume it to be somewhat inaccurate. But if it approached near the truth, England has probably, since that time, increased in populousness. The growth of London, in riches and beauty, as well as in numbers of inhabitants, has been prodigious. From 1600, it doubled every forty years; [1] and consequently, in 1680, it contained four times as many inhabitants as at the beginning of the century. It has ever been the centre of all the trade in the kingdom; and almost the only town that affords society and amusement. The affection which the English bear to a country life, makes the provincial towns be little frequented by the gentry. Nothing but the allurements of the capital, which is favored by the residence of the king, and by being the seat of government and of all the courts of justice, can prevail over their passion for their rural villas.

London at this time was almost entirely built of wood, and in every respect was certainly a very ugly city. The earl of Arundel first introduced the general practice of brick buildings. [2]

The navy of England was esteemed formidable in Elizabeth's time, yet it consisted only of thirty-three ships, besides pinnaces; [3] and the largest of these would not equal our fourth-rates at present. Raleigh advises never to build a ship of war above six hundred tons. James was not negligent of the navy. In five years preceding 1623, he built ten new ships, and expended fifty thousand pounds a year on the fleet.

* Sir William Petty.

* * Sir Edward Walker's Political Discourses,

* * * Coke's Inst. book iv. cha. Consultation in parliament for the navy.

Of the Invention of Shipping. This number is much superior to that contained in Murden, and that delivered by Sir Edward Coke to the house of commons; and is more likely.

By Raleigh's account, in his discourse of the first invention of shipping, the fleet, in the twenty-fourth of the queen, consisted only of thirteen ships, and was augmented afterwards eleven. He probably reckoned some to be pinnaces, which Coke called ships, besides the value of thirty-six thousand pounds in timber, which he annually gave from the royal forests. [1] The largest ship that ever had come from the English docks was built during this reign. She was only one thousand four hundred tons, and carried sixty-four guns. [2] The merchant ships, in cases of necessity, were instantly converted into ships of war. The king affirmed to the parliament, that the navy had never before been in so good a condition. [3]

Every session of parliament, during this reign, we meet with grievous lamentations concerning the decay of trade, and the growth of Popery: such violent propensity have men to complain of the present times, and to entertain discontent against their fortune and condition. The king himself was deceived by these popular complaints, and was at a loss to account for the total want of money, which he heard so much exaggerated. [4] It may, however, be affirmed, that during no preceding period of English history, was there a more sensible increase, than during the reign of this monarch, of all the advantages which distinguish a flourishing people. Not only the peace which he maintained was favorable to industry and commerce: his turn of mind inclined him to promote the peaceful arts: and trade being as yet in its infancy, all additions to it must have been the more evident to every eye which was not blinded by melancholy prejudices.

By an account[v*] which seems judicious and accurate, it appears, that all the seamen employed in the merchant service amounted to ten thousand men, which probably exceeds not the fifth part of their present number. Sir Thomas Overbury says, that the Dutch possessed three times more shipping than the English, but that their ships were of inferior burden to those of the latter.[v* *] Sir William Monson computed the English naval power to be little or nothing inferior to the Dutch,[v* * *] which is surely an exaggeration. The Dutch at this time traded to England with six hundred ships; England to Holland with sixty only.[v* * * *]

* Journ. 11th March, 1623. Sir William Monson makes the number amount only to nine new ships, (.)

* * Stowe.

* * * Parl. Hist, vol vi. .

* * * * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

v See note LLL, at the end of the volume.

v* The trade’s increase, in the Harleian Misc. vol. iii.

v* * Remarks on his travels, Harl. Misc. vol. ii. .

v* * * Naval Tracts, , 350.

v* * * * Raleigh’s Observations.

A catalogue of the manufactures for which the English were then eminent, would appear very contemptible, in comparison of those which flourish among them at present. Almost all the more elaborate and curious arts were only cultivated abroad, particularly in Italy, Holland, and the Netherlands. Ship-building and the founding of iron cannon were the sole in which the English excelled. They seem, indeed, to have possessed alone the secret of the latter; and great complaints were made every parliament against the exportation of English ordnance.

Nine tenths of the commerce of the kingdom consisted in woollen goods. [1] Wool, however, was allowed to be exported, till the nineteenth of the king. Its exportation was then forbidden by proclamation; though that edict was never strictly executed. Most of the cloth was exported raw, and was dyed and dressed by the Dutch; who gained, it is pretended, seven hundred thousand pounds a year by this manufacture. [2] A proclamation issued by the king against exporting cloth in that condition, had succeeded so ill during one year, by the refusal of the Dutch to buy the dressed cloth, that great murmurs arose against it; and this measure was retracted by the king, and complained of by the nation, as if it had been the most impolitic in the world. It seems indeed to have been premature.

In so little credit was the fine English cloth even at home, that the king was obliged to seek expedients by which he might engage the people of fashion to wear it. [3] The manufacture of fine linen was totally unknown in the kingdom. [4]

The company of merchant adventurers, by their patent, possessed the sole commerce of woollen goods, though the staple commodity of the kingdom.

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* Journ. 26th May, 1621.

* * Journ. 20th May, 1614. Raleigh, in his Observations, computes the loss at four hundred thousand pounds to the nation. There are about eighty thousand undressed cloths, says he, exported yearly. He computes, besides, that about one hundred thousand pounds a year had been lost by kerseys; not to mention other articles. The account of two hundred thousand cloths a year exported in Elizabeth’s reign, seems to be exaggerated.

* * * Kymer, tom. xvii. .

* * * * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

An attempt made during the reign of Elizabeth to lay open this important trade, had been attended with bad consequences for a time, by a conspiracy of the merchant adventurers not to make any purchases of cloth; and the queen immediately restored them their patent.

It was the groundless fear of a like accident, that enslaved the nation to those exclusive companies which confined so much every branch of commerce and industry. The parliament, however, annulled, in the third of the king, the patent of the Spanish company; and the trade to Spain, which was at first very insignificant, soon became the most considerable in the kingdom. It is strange that they were not thence encouraged to abolish all the other companies, and that they went no further than obliging them to enlarge their bottom, and to facilitate the admission of new adventurers.

A board of trade was erected by the king in 1622. [1] One of the reasons assigned in the commission is, to remedy the low price of wool, which begat complaints of the decay of the woollen manufactory. It is more probable, however, that this fall of prices proceeded from the increase of wool. The king likewise recommends it to the commissioners to inquire and examine, whether a greater freedom of trade, and an exemption from the restraint of exclusive companies, would not be beneficial. Men were then fettered by their own prejudices; and the king was justly afraid of embracing a bold measure, whose consequences might be uncertain. The digesting of a navigation act, of a like nature with the famous one executed afterwards by the republican parliament, is likewise recommended to the commissioners. The arbitrary powers then commonly assumed by the privy council, appear evidently through the whole tenor of the commission.

The silk manufacture had no footing in England: but, by James's direction, mulberry-trees were planted, and silk-worms introduced. [2] The climate seems unfavorable to the success of this project. The planting of hops increased much in England during this reign.

Greenland is thought to have been discovered about this period; and the whale fishery was carried on with success: but the industry of the Dutch, in spite of all opposition, soon deprived the English of this source of riches. A

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* Rymer tom, xvii. .

* * Stowe

company was erected for the discovery of the north-west passage; and many fruitless attempts were made for that purpose. In such noble projects, despair ought never to be admitted, till the absolute impossibility of success be fully ascertained.

The passage to the East Indies had been opened to the English during the reign of Elizabeth; but the trade to those parts was not entirely established till this reign, when the East India company received a new patent, enlarged their stock to one million five hundred thousand pounds, [1] and fitted out several ships on these adventures. In 1609, they built a vessel of twelve hundred tons, the largest merchant ship that England had ever known. She was unfortunate, and perished by shipwreck. In 1611, a large ship of the company, assisted by a pinnace, maintained five several engagements with a squadron of Portuguese, and gained a complete victory over forces much superior. During the following years, the Dutch company was guilty of great injuries towards the English, in expelling many of their factors, and destroying their settlements: but these violences were resented with a proper spirit by the court of England. A naval force was equipped under the earl of Oxford, [2] and lay in wait for the return of the Dutch East India fleet. By reason of cross winds, Oxford tailed of his purpose, and the Dutch escaped. Some time after, one rich ship was taken by Vice-admiral Merwin; and it was stipulated by the Dutch to pay seventy thousand pounds to the English company, in consideration of the losses which that company had sustained. [3]

* Journ. 26th Nov. 1621.

* * In 1622.

* * * Johnstoni Hist. lib. xix.

But neither this stipulation, nor the fear of reprisals, nor the sense of that friendship which subsisted between England and the states, could restrain the avidity of the Dutch company, or render them equitable in their proceedings towards their allies. Impatient to have the sole possession of the spice trade, which the English then shared with them, they assumed a jurisdiction over a factory of the latter in the Island of Amboyna; and on very improbable, and even absurd pretences, seized all the factors with their families, and put them to death with the most inhuman tortures. This dismal news arrived in England at the time when James, by the prejudices of his subjects and the intrigues of his favorite, was constrained to make a breach with Spain: and he was obliged, after some remonstrances, to acquiesce in this indignity from a state whose alliance was now become necessary to him. It is remarkable, that the nation, almost without a murmur, submitted to this injury from their Protestant confederates; an injury which, besides the horrid enormity of the action, was of much deeper importance to national interest, than all those which they were so impatient to resent from the house of Austria.

The exports of England from Christmas, 1612, to Christmas 1613, are computed at two millions four hundred and eighty-seven thousand four hundred and thirty-five pounds; the imports at two millions one hundred and forty-one thousand one hundred and fifty-one: so that the balance in favor of England was three Hundred and forty-six thousand two hundred and eighty-four. [1] But in 1622, the exports were two millions three hundred and twenty thousand four hundred and thirty-six pounds; the imports two millions six hundred and nineteen thousand three hundred and fifteen; which makes a balance of two hundred and ninety-eight thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine pounds against England. [2] The coinage of England from 1599 to 1619 amounted to four millions seven hundred and seventy-nine thousand three hundred and fourteen pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence: [3] a proof that the balance, in the main, was considerably in favor of the kingdom. As the annual imports and exports together rose to near five millions, and the customs never yielded so much as two Hundred thousand pounds a year, of which tonnage made a part, it appears that the new rates affixed by James did not, on the whole, amount to one shilling in the pound, and consequently were still inferior to the intention of the original grant of parliament. The East India company usually carried out a third of their cargo in commodities. [4] The trade to Turkey was one of the most gainful to the nation. It appears that copper halfpence and farthings began to be coined in this reign. Tradesmen had commonly carried on their retail business chiefly by means of leaden tokens. The small silver penny was soon lost, and at this time was nowhere to be found.

* Misselden’s Circle of Commerce, .

* * Misselden's Circle of Commerce, .

* * * Happy Future State of England, .

* * * * Munn's Discourse on the East India Trade.

v Anderson, vol. i. .

What chiefly renders the reign of James memorable, is the commencement of the English colonies in America; colonies established on the noblest footing that has been known in any age or nation. The Spaniards, being the first discoverers of the new world, immediately took possession of the precious mines which they found there; and, by the allurement of great riches, they were tempted to depopulate their own country, as well as that which they conquered; and added the vice of sloth to those of avidity and barbarity, which had attended their adventurers in those renowned enterprises. That fine coast was entirely neglected which reaches from St. Augustine to Cape Breton, and which lies in all the temperate climates, is watered by noble rivers, and offers a fertile soil, but nothing more, to the industrious planter. Peopled gradually from England by the necessitous and indigent, who at home increased neither wealth nor populousness, the colonies which were planted along that tract have promoted the navigation, encouraged the industry, and even perhaps multiplied the inhabitants of their mother country. The spirit of independency, which was reviving in England, here shone forth in its full lustre, and received new accession from the aspiring character of those who, being discontented with the established church and monarchy, had sought for freedom amidst those savage deserts.

Queen Elizabeth had done little more than given a name to the continent of Virginia; and, after her planting one feeble colony, which quickly decayed, that country was entirely abandoned. But when peace put an end to the military enterprises against Spain, and left ambitious spirits no hopes of making any longer such rapid advances towards honor and fortune, the nation began to second the pacific intentions of its monarch, and to seek a surer, though slower expedient, for acquiring riches and glory. In 1606, Newport carried over a colony, and began a settlement; which the company, erected by patent for that purpose in London and Bristol, took care to supply with yearly recruits of provisions, utensils, and new inhabitants.

About 1609, Argal discovered a more direct and shorter passage to Virginia, and left the track of the ancient navigators, who had first directed their course southwards to the tropic, sailed westward by means of the trade winds, and then turned northward, till they reached the English settlements. The same year, five hundred persons, under Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers, were embarked for Virginia. Somers's ship, meeting with a tempest, was driven into the Bermudas, and laid the foundation of a settlement in those islands. Lord Delawar afterwards undertook the government of the English colonies: but, notwithstanding all his care, seconded by supplies from James and by money raised from the first lottery ever known in the kingdom, such difficulties attended the settlement of these countries, that, in 1614, there were not alive more than four hundred men, of all that had been sent thither. After supplying themselves with provisions more immediately necessary for the support of life, the new planters began the cultivating of tobacco; and James, notwithstanding his antipathy to that drug, which he affirmed to be pernicious to men's morals, as well as their health, [1] gave them permission to enter it in England; and he inhibited by proclamation all importation of it from Spain. [2] By degrees, new colonies were established in that continent, and gave new names to the places where they settled, leaving that of Virginia to the province first planted. The Island of Barbadoes was also planted in this reign.

* Rymer, tom. xvii. .

* * Rymer, tom. xvii. , 633.

Speculative reasoners, during that age, raised many objections to the planting of those remote colonies; and foretold that, after draining their mother country of inhabitants, they would soon shake off her yoke, and erect an independent government in America: but time has shown, that the views entertained by those who encouraged such generous undertakings, were more just and solid. A mild government and great naval force have preserved, and may still preserve during some time, the dominion of England over her colonies. And such advantages have commerce and navigation reaped from these establishments, that more than a fourth of the

English shipping is at present computed to be employed in carrying on the traffic with the American settlements.

Agriculture was anciently very imperfect in England. The sudden transitions, so often mentioned by historians, from the lowest to the highest price of grain, and the prodigious inequality of its value in different years, are sufficient proofs, that the produce depended entirely on the seasons, and that art had as yet done nothing to fence against the injuries of the heavens. During this reign, considerable improvements were made, as in most arts, so in this, the most beneficial of any. A numerous catalogue might be formed of books and pamphlets treating of husbandry, which were written about this time. The nation, however, was still dependent on foreigners for daily bread; and though its exportation of grain forms a considerable branch of its commerce, notwithstanding its probable increase of people, there was, in that period, a regular importation from the Baltic, as well as from France and if it ever stopped, the bad consequences were sensibly felt by the nation. Sir Walter Raleigh, in his Observations, computes that two millions went out at one time for corn. It was not till the fifth of Elizabeth, that the exportation of corn had been allowed in England; and Camden observes, that agriculture from that moment received new life and vigor.

The endeavors of James, or, more properly speaking, those — of the nation, for promoting trade, were attended with greater success than those for the encouragement of learning. Though the age was by no means destitute of eminent writers, a very bad taste in general prevailed during that period; and the monarch himself was not a little infected with it.

On the origin of letters among the Greeks, the genius of poets and orators, as might naturally be expected, was distinguished by an amiable simplicity, which, whatever rudeness may sometimes attend it, is so fitted to express the genuine movements of nature and passion, that the compositions possessed of it must ever appear valuable to the discerning part of mankind. The glaring figures of discourse, the pointed antithesis, the unnatural conceit, the jingle of words; such false ornaments were not employed by early writers; not because they were rejected, but because they scarcely ever occurred to them. An easy, unforced strain of sentiment runs through their compositions; though at the same time we may observe, that, amidst the most elegant simplicity of thought and expression, one is sometimes surprised to meet with a poor conceit, which had presented itself unsought for, and which the author had not acquired critical observation enough to condemn. [1]

* The name of Polynices, one of OEdipus's sons, means in the original "much quarrelling." In the altercations between the two brothers, in Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, this conceit is employed; and it is remarkable, that so poor a conundrum could not be rejected by any of these three poets,

so justly celebrated for their taste and simplicity. What could Shakspeare have done worse? Terence has his "inceptio est amentium, non amanthim." Many similar instances will occur to the learned. It is well known that Aristotle treats very seriously of puns, divides them into several classes,

and recommends the use of them to orators.

A bad taste seizes with avidity these frivolous beauties, and even perhaps a good taste, ere surfeited by them: they multiply every day more and more in the fashionable compositions: nature and good sense are neglected: labored ornaments studied and admired: and a total degeneracy of style and language prepares the way for barbarism and ignorance. Hence the Asiatic manner was found to depart so much from the simple purity of Athens: hence that tinsel eloquence which is observable in many of the Roman writers, from which Cicero himself is not wholly exempted, and which so much prevails in Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, Martial, and the Plinys.

On the revival of letters, when the judgment of the public is yet raw and unformed, this false glitter catches the eye, and leaves no room, either in eloquence or poetry, for the durable beauties of solid sense and lively passion. The reigning genius is then diametrically opposite to that which prevails on the first origin of arts. The Italian writers, it is evident, even the most celebrated, have not reached the proper simplicity of thought and composition; and in Petrarch, Tasso, Guarini, frivolous witticisms and forced conceits are but too predominant. The period during which letters were cultivated in Italy was so short, as scarcely to allow leisure for correcting this adulterated relish.

The more early French writers are liable to the same reproach. Voiture, Balzac, even Coraeneille, have too much affected those ambitious ornaments, of which the Italians in general, and the least pure of the ancients, supplied them with so many models. And it was not till late, that observation and reflection gave rise to a more natural turn of thought and composition among that elegant people.

A like character may be extended to the first English writers; such as flourished during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, and even till long afterwards. Learning, on its revival in this island, was attired in the same unnatural garb which it wore at the time of its decay among the Greeks and Romans. And, what may be regarded as a misfortune, the English writers were possessed of great genius before they were endowed with any degree of taste, and by that means gave a kind of sanction to those forced turns and sentiments which they so much affected. Their distorted conceptions and expressions are attended with such vigor of mind, that we admire the imagination which produced them, as much as we blame the want of judgment which gave them admittance. To enter into an exact criticism of the writers of that age, would exceed our present purpose. A short character of the most eminent, delivered with the same freedom which history exercises over kings and ministers, may not be improper. The national prepossessions which prevail, will perhaps render the former liberty not the least perilous for an author.

If Shakspeare be considered as a man, born in a rude age, and educated in the lowest manner, without any instruction either from the world or from books, he may be regarded as a prodigy: if represented as a poet, capable of furnishing a proper entertainment to a refined or intelligent audience, we must abate much of this eulogy. In his compositions, we regret that many irregularities, and even absurdities, should so frequently disfigure the animated and passionate scenes intermixed with them; and at the same time, we perhaps admire the more those beauties, on account of their being surrounded with such deformities. A striking peculiarity of sentiment adapted to a singular character, he frequently hits, as it were by inspiration; but a reasonable propriety of thought he cannot for any time uphold. Nervous and picturesque expressions, as well as descriptions, abound in him; but it is in vain we look either for purity or simplicity of diction. His total ignorance of all theatrical art and conduct, however material a defect, yet, as it affects the spectator rather than the reader, we can more easily excuse, than that want of taste which often prevails in his productions, and which gives way only by intervals to the irradiations of genius. A great and fertile genius he certainly possessed, and one enriched equally with a tragic and comic vein; but he ought to be cited as a proof, how dangerous it is to rely on these advantages alone for attaining an excellence in the finer arts.[1] And there may even remain a suspicion, that we overrate, if possible, the greatness of his genius; in the same manner as bodies often appear more gigantic, on account of their being disproportioned and misshapen. He died in 1616, aged fifty-three years.

* Invenire etiam barbari solent, disponere et ornare non nisi eruditus. — PLIN

Jonson possessed all the learning which was wanting to Shakspeare, and wanted all the genius of which the other was possessed. Both of them were equally deficient in taste and elegance, in harmony and correctness. A servile copyist of the ancients, Jonson translated into bad English the beautiful passages of the Greek and Roman authors, without accommodating them to the manners of his age and country. His merit has been totally eclipsed by that of Shakspeare, whose rude genius prevailed over the rude art of his contemporary. The English theatre has ever since taken a strong tincture of Shakspeare's spirit and character; and thence it has proceeded, that the nation has undergone, from all its neighbors, the reproach of barbarism, from which its valuable productions in some other parts of learning would otherwise have exempted it. Jonson had a pension of a hundred marks from the king, which Charles afterwards augmented to a hundred pounds He died in 1637, aged sixty-three.

Fairfax has translated Tasso with an elegance and ease, and at the same time with an exactness, which, for that age, are surprising. Each line in the original is faithfully rendered by a correspondent line in the translation. Harrington's translation of Ariosto is not likewise without its merit. It is to be regretted, that these poets should have imitated the Italians in their stanza, which has a prolixity and uniformity in it that displeases in long performances. They had, otherwise, as well as Spenser, who went before them, contributed much to the polishing and refining of the English versification.

In Donne's satires, when carefully inspected, there appear some flashes of wit and ingenuity; but these totally suffocated and buried by the harshest and most uncouth expression that is any where to be met with.

If the poetry of the English was so rude and imperfect during that age, we may reasonably expect that their prose would be liable to still greater objections. Though the latter appears the more easy, as it is the more natural method of composition, it has ever in practice been found the more rare and difficult; and there scarcely is an instance, in any language, that it has reached a degree of perfection, before the refinement of poetical numbers and expression. English prose, during the reign of James, was written with little regard to the rules of grammar, and with a total disregard to the elegance and harmony of the period. Stuffed with Latin sentences and quotations, it likewise imitated those inversions, which, however forcible and graceful in the ancient languages, are entirely contrary to the idiom of the English. I shall indeed venture to affirm, that, whatever uncouth phrases and expressions occur in old books, they were chiefly owing to the unformed taste of the author; and that the language spoken in the courts of Elizabeth and James, was very little different from that which we meet with at present in good company. Of this opinion, the little scraps of speeches which are found in the parliamentary journals, and which carry all air so opposite to the labored: rations, seem to be a sufficient proof; and there want not productions of that age, which, being written by men who were not authors by profession, retain a very natural manner, and may give us some idea of the language which prevailed among men of the world. I shall particularly mention Sir John Davis's Discovery. Throgmorton's, Essex's, and Nevil's letters. In a more early period, Cavendish's life of Cardinal Wolsey, the pieces that remain of Bishop Gardiner, and Anne Boleyn's letter to the king, differ little or nothing from the language of our time.

The great glory of literature in this island during the reign of James, was Lord Bacon. Most of his performances were composed in Latin; though he possessed neither the elegance of that, nor of his native tongue. If we consider the variety of talents displayed by this man, as a public speaker, a man of business, a wit, a courtier, a companion, an author, a philosopher, he is justly the object of great admiration. If we consider him merely as an author and philosopher, the light in which we view him at present, though very estimable, he was yet inferior to his contemporary Galilaeo, perhaps even to Kepler. Bacon pointed out at a distance the road to true philosophy: Galilaeo both pointed it out to others, and made himself considerable advances in it. The Englishman was ignorant of geometry: the Florentine revived that science, excelled in it, and was the first that applied it, together with experiment, to natural philosophy. The former rejected, with the most positive disdain, the system of Copernicus: the latter fortified it with new proofs, derived both from reason and the senses. Bacon's style is stiff and rigid: his wit, though often brilliant, is also often unnatural and far-fetched; and he seems to be the original of those pointed similes and long-spun allegories which so much distinguish the English authors: Galilaeo is a lively and agreeable, though somewhat a prolix writer. But Italy not united in any single government, and perhaps satiated with that literary glory which it has possessed both in ancient and modern times, has too much neglected the renown which it has acquired by giving birth to so great a man. That national spirit which prevails among the English, and which forms their great happiness, is the cause why they bestow on all their eminent writers, and on Bacon among the rest, such praises and acclamations as may often appear partial and excessive. He died in 1626, in the sixty-sixth year of his life.

If the reader of Raleigh’s history can have the patience to wade through the Jewish and rabbinical learning which compose the half of the volume, he will find, when he comes to the Greek and Roman story, that his pains are not unrewarded. Raleigh is the best model of that ancient style which some writers would affect to revive at present. He was beheaded in 1618, aged sixty-six years.

Camden’s history of Queen Elizabeth may be esteemed good composition, both for style and matter. It is written with simplicity of expression, very rare in that age, and with a regard to truth. It would not perhaps be too much to affirm, that it is among the best historical productions which have yet been composed by any Englishman. It is well known that the English have not much excelled in that kind of literature. He died in 1623, aged seventy-three years.

We shall mention the king himself at the end of these English writers; because that is his place, when considered as an author. It may safely be affirmed, that the mediocrity of James’s talents in literature, joined to the great change in national taste, is one cause of that contempt under which his memory labors, and which is often carried by party writers to a great extreme. It is remarkable, how different from ours were the sentiments of the ancients with regard to learning. Of the first twenty Roman emperors, counting from Caesar to Severus, above the half were authors; and though few of them seem to have been eminent in that profession, it is always remarked to their praise, that by their example they encouraged literature. Not to mention Germanicus, and his daughter Agrippina, persons so nearly allied to the throne, the greater part of the classic writers whose works remain, were men of the highest quality. As every human advantage is attended with inconveniencies, the change of men’s ideas in this particular may probably be ascribed to the invention of printing; which has rendered books so common, that even men of slender fortunes can have access to them.

That James was but a middling writer, may be allowed: that he was a contemptible one, can by no means be admitted. Whoever will read his Basilicon Doron, particularly the two last books, the true law of free monarchies, his answer to Cardinal Perron, and almost all his speeches and messages to parliament, will confess him to have possessed no mean genius. If he wrote concerning witches and apparitions; who, in that age did not admit the reality of these fictitious beings? If he has composed a commentary on the Revelations, and proved the pope to be Antichrist; may not a similar reproach be extended to the famous Napier; and even to Newton, at a time when learning was much more advanced than during the reign of James? From the grossness of its superstitions we may infer the ignorance of an age; but never should pronounce concerning the folly of an individual, from his admitting popular errors, consecrated by the appearance of religion.

Such a superiority do the pursuits of literature possess above every other occupation, that even he who attains but a mediocrity in them, merits the preëminence above those that excel the most in the common and vulgar professions. The speaker of the house of commons is usually an eminent lawyer; yet the harangue of his majesty will always be found much superior to that of the speaker, in every parliament during this reign.

Every science, as well as polite literature, must be considered as being yet in its infancy. Scholastic learning and polemical divinity retarded the growth of all true knowledge. Sir Henry Saville, in the preamble of that deed by which he annexed a salary to the mathematical and astronomical professors in Oxford, says, that geometry was almost totally abandoned and unknown in England. [1] The best learning of that age was the study of the ancients. Casaubon, eminent for this species of knowledge, was invited over from France by James, and encouraged by a pension of three hundred pounds a year, as well as by church preferments. [2] The famous Antonio di Dominis, archbishop of Spalatro, no despicable philosopher, came likewise into England, and afforded great triumph to the nation, by their gaining so considerable a proselyte from the Papists. But the mortification followed soon after: the archbishop, though advanced to some ecclesiastical preferments. [3] received not encouragement sufficient to satisfy his ambition; he made his escape into Italy, where he died in confinement.

* Rymer, tom. xvii.

* * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

* * * Rymer, tom. xvii. .

CHARLES I.

1625.

No sooner had Charles taken into his hands the reins of government, than he showed an impatience to assemble the great council of the nation; and he would gladly, for the sake of despatch, have called together the same parliament which had sitten under his father, and which lay at that time under prorogation. But being told that this measure would appear unusual, he issued writs for summoning a new parliament on the seventh of May; and it was not without regret that the arrival of the princess Henrietta, whom he had espoused by proxy, obliged him to delay, by repeated prorogations, their meeting till the eighteenth of June, when they assembled at Westminster for the despatch of business. The young prince, unexperienced and impolitic, regarded as sincere all the praises and caresses with which he had been loaded while active in procuring the rupture with the house of Austria. And besides that he labored under great necessities, he hastened with alacrity to a period when he might receive the most undoubted testimony of the dutiful attachment of his subjects. His discourse to the parliament was full of simplicity and cordiality. He lightly mentioned the occasion which he had for supply. [1] He employed no intrigue to influence the suffrages of the members. He would not even allow the officers of the crown, who had seats in the house, to mention any particular sum which might be expected by him Secure of the affections of the commons, he was resolved that their bounty should be entirely their own deed; unasked, unsolicited; the genuine fruit of sincere confidence and regard.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. vi. . Franklyn, .

The house of commons accordingly took into consideration the business of supply. They knew that all the money granted by the last parliament had been expended on naval and military armaments; and that great anticipations were likewise made on the revenues of the crown. They were not ignorant that Charles was loaded with a large debt, contracted by his father, who had borrowed money both from his own subjects and from foreign princes. They had learned by experience, that the public revenue could with difficulty maintain the dignity of the crown, even under the ordinary charges of government. They were sensible, that the present war was very lately the result of their own importunate applications and entreaties, and that they had solemnly engaged to support their sovereign in the management of it. They were acquainted with the difficulty of military enterprises directed against the whole house of Austria; against the king of Spain, possessed of the greatest riches and most extensive dominions of any prince in Europe; against the emperor Ferdinand, hitherto the most fortunate monarch of his age, who had subdued and astonished Germany by the rapidity of his victories. Deep impressions they saw must be made by the English sword, and a vigorous offensive war be waged against these mighty potentates, ere they would resign a principality which they had now fully subdued, and which they held in secure possession, by its being surrounded with all their other territories.

To answer, therefore, all these great and important ends; to satisfy their young king in the first request which he made them; to prove their sense of the many royal virtues, particularly economy, with which Charles was endued; the house of Commons, conducted by the wisest and ablest senators that had ever flourished in England, thought proper to confer on the king a supply of two subsidies, amounting to one hundred and twelve thousand pounds. [1]

* A subsidy was now fallen to about fifty-six thousand pounds Cabala, , 1st edit.

This measure, which discovers rather a cruel mockery of Charles, than any serious design of supporting him, appears so extraordinary, when considered in all its circumstances, that it naturally summons up our attention, and raises an inquiry concerning the causes of a conduct unprecedented in an English parliament. So numerous an assembly, composed of persons of various dispositions, was not, it is probable, wholly influenced by the same motives; and few declared openly their true reason. We shall, therefore, approach nearer to the truth, if we mention all the views which the present conjuncture could suggest to them.

It is not to be doubted, but spleen and ill will against the duke of Buckingham had an influence with many. So vast and rapid a fortune, so little merited, could not fail to excite public envy; and however men’s hatred might have been suspended for a moment, while the duke’s conduct seemed to gratify their passions and their prejudices, it was impossible for him long to preserve the affections of the people. His influence over the modesty of Charles exceeded even that which he had acquired over the weakness of James; nor was any public measure conducted but by his counsel and direction. His vehement temper prompted him to raise suddenly, to the highest elevation, his flatterers and dependants; and upon the least occasion of displeasure, he threw them down with equal impetuosity and violence. Implacable in his hatred, fickle in his friendships, all men were either regarded as his enemies, or dreaded soon to become such. The whole power of the kingdom was grasped by his insatiable hand; while he both engrossed the entire confidence of his master, and held invested in his single person the most considerable offices of the crown.

However the ill humor of the commons might have been increased by these considerations, we are not to suppose them the sole motives. The last parliament of James, amidst all their joy and festivity, had given him a supply very disproportioned to his demand, and to the occasion. And as every house of commons which was elected during forty years, succeeded to all the passions and principles of their predecessors, we ought rather to account for this obstinacy from the general situation of the kingdom during that whole period, than from any circumstances which attended this particular conjuncture.

The nation was very little accustomed at that time to the burden of taxes, and had never opened their purses in any degree for supporting their sovereign. Even Elizabeth, notwithstanding her vigor and frugality, and the necessary wars in which she was engaged, had reason to complain of the commons in this particular; nor could the authority of that princess, which was otherwise almost absolute, ever extort from them the requisite supplies. Habits, more than reason, we find in every thing to be the governing principle of mankind. In this view, likewise, the sinking of the value of subsidies must be considered as a loss to the king. The parliament, swayed by custom, would not augment their number in the same proportion.

The Puritanical party, though disguised, had a great authority over the kingdom; and many of the leaders among the commons had secretly embraced the rigid tenets of that sect. All these were disgusted with the court, both by the prevalence of the principles of civil liberty essential to their party, and on account of the restraint under which they were held by the established hierarchy. In order to fortify himself against the resentment of James, Buckingham had affected popularity, and entered into the cabals of the Puritans: but, being secure of the confidence of Charles, he had since abandoned this party; and on that account was the more exposed to their hatred and resentment. Though the religious schemes of many of the Puritans, when explained, appear pretty frivolous, we are not thence to imagine that they were pursued by none but persons of weak understandings. Some men of the greatest parts and most extensive knowledge that the nation at this time produced, could not enjoy any peace of mind, because obliged to hear prayers offered up to the Divinity by a priest covered with a white linen vestment.

The match with France, and the articles in favor of Catholics which were suspected to be in the treaty, were likewise causes of disgust to this whole party: though it must be remarked, that the connections with that crown were much less obnoxious to the Protestants, and less agreeable to the Catholics, than the alliance formerly projected with Spain, and were therefore received rather with pleasure than dissatisfaction.

To all these causes we must yet add another, of considerable moment. The house of commons, we may observe, was almost entirely governed by a set of men of the most uncommon capacity and the largest views; men who were now formed into a regular party, and united, as well by fixed aims and projects, as by the hardships which some of them had undergone in prosecution of them. Among these we may mention the names of Sir Edward Coke, Sir Edwin Sandys, Sir Robert Philips, Sir Francis Seymour, Sir Dudley Digges, Sir John Elliot, Sir Thomas Wentworth, Mr. Selden, and Mr. Pym. Animated with a warm regard to liberty, these generous patriots saw with regret an unbounded power exercised by the crown, and were resolved to seize the opportunity which the king’s necessities offered them, of reducing the prerogative within more reasonable compass. Though their ancestors had blindly given way to practices and precedents favorable to kingly power, and had been able, notwithstanding, to preserve some small remains of liberty, it would be impossible, they thought, when all these pretensions were methodised, and prosecuted by the increasing knowledge of the age, to maintain any shadow of popular government, in opposition to such unlimited authority in the sovereign. It was necessary to fix a choice; either to abandon entirely the privileges of the people, or to secure them by firmer and more precise barriers than the constitution had hitherto provided for them. In this dilemma, men of such aspiring geniuses, and such independent fortunes, could not long deliberate: they boldly embraced the side of freedom, and resolved to grant no supplies to their necessitous prince, without extorting concessions in favor of civil liberty. The end they esteemed beneficent and noble; the means, regular and constitutional. To grant or refuse supplies was the undoubted privilege of the commons. And as all human governments, particularly those of a mixed frame, are in continual fluctuation, it was as natural, in their opinion, and allowable, for popular assemblies to take advantage of favorable incidents, in order to secure the subject, as for monarchs, in order to extend their own authority. With pleasure they beheld the king involved in a foreign war, which rendered him every day more dependent on the parliament; while at the same time the situation of the kingdom, even without any military preparations, gave it sufficient security against all invasion from foreigners. Perhaps, too, it had partly proceeded from expectations of this nature, that the popular leaders had been so urgent for a rupture with Spain; nor is it credible, that religious zeal could so far have blinded all of them, as to make them discover, in such a measure, any appearance of necessity, or any hopes of success.

But, however natural all these sentiments might appear to the country party, it is not to be imagined that Charles would entertain the same ideas. Strongly prejudiced in favor of the duke, whom he had heard so highly extolled in parliament, he could not conjecture the cause of so sudden an alteration in their opinions. And when the war which they themselves had so earnestly solicited, was at last commenced, the immediate desertion of their sovereign could not but seem very unaccountable. Even though no further motive had been suspected, the refusal of supply in such circumstances would naturally to him appear cruel and deceitful: but when he perceived that this measure proceeded from an intention of encroaching on his authority, he failed not to regard these aims as highly criminal and traitorous. Those lofty ideas of monarchical power which were very commonly adopted during that age, and to which the ambiguous nature of the English constitution gave so plausible an appearance, were firmly rivetted in Charles; and however moderate his temper, the natural and unavoidable prepossessions of self-love, joined to the late uniform precedents in favor of prerogative, had made him regard his political tenets as certain and uncontroverted. Taught to consider even the ancient laws and constitution more as lines to direct his conduct, than barriers to withstand his power; a conspiracy to erect new ramparts, in order to straiten his authority, appeared but one degree removed from open sedition and rebellion. So atrocious in his eyes was such a design, that he seems even unwilling to impute it to the commons; and though he was constrained to adjourn the parliament by reason of the plague, which at that time raged in London, he immediately reassembled them at Oxford, and made a new attempt to gain from them some supplies in such an urgent necessity.

Charles now found himself obliged to depart from that delicacy which he had formerly maintained. By himself or his ministers he entered into a particular detail, both of the alliances which he had formed, and of the military operations which he had projected. [1]

* Dugdale, , 26.

He told the parliament, that, by a promise of subsidies, he had engaged the king of Denmark to take part in the war; that this monarch intended to enter Germany by the north, and to rouse to arms those princes who impatiently longed for an opportunity of asserting the liberty of the empire; that Mansfeldt had undertaken to penetrate with an English army into the Palatinate, and by that quarter to excite the members of the evangelical unions that the states must be supported in the unequal warfare which they maintained with Spain; that no less a sum than seven hundred thousand pounds a year had been found, by computation, requisite for all these purposes; that the maintenance of the fleet, and the defence of Ireland, demanded an annual expense of four hundred thousand pounds; that he himself had already exhausted and anticipated, in the public service, his whole revenue, and had scarcely left sufficient for the daily subsistence of himself and his family; [1] that on his accession to the crown, he found a debt of above three hundred thousand pounds, contracted by his father in support of the palatine; and that while prince of Wales, he had himself contracted debts, notwithstanding his great frugality, to the amount of seventy thousand pounds, which he had expended entirely on naval and military armaments. After mentioning all these facts, the king even condescended to use entreaties. He said, that this request was the first that he had ever made them: that he was young, and in the commencement of his reign; and if he now met with kind and dutiful usage, it would endear to him the use of parliaments, and would forever preserve an entire harmony between him and his people. [2]

To these reasons the commons remained inexorable. Notwithstanding that the king's measures, on the supposition of a foreign war, which they had constantly demanded, were altogether unexceptionable, they obstinately refused any further aid. Some members, favorable to the court, having insisted on an addition of two fifteenths to the former supply, even this pittance was refused; [3] though it was known that a fleet and army were lying at Portsmouth, in great want of pay and provisions; and that Buckingham, the admiral, and the treasurer of the navy, had advanced on their own credit near a hundred thousand pounds for the sea service. [4]

Besides all their other motives, the house of commons had made a discovery, which, as they wanted but a pretence for their refusal, inflamed them against the court and against the duke of Buckingham. When James deserted the Spanish alliance, and courted that of France, he had promised to furnish Lewis, who was entirely destitute of naval force, with one ship of war, together with seven armed vessels hired from the merchants. These the French court had pretended they would employ against the Genoese, who, being firm and useful allies to the Spanish monarchy, were naturally regarded with an evil eye, both by the king of France and of England. When these vessels, by Charles's orders, arrived at Dieppe, there arose a strong suspicion that they were to serve against Rochelle. The sailors were inflamed. That race of men, who are at present both careless and ignorant in all matters of religion, were at that time only ignorant. They drew up a remonstrance to Pennington, their commander, and signing all their names in a circle, lest he should discover the ringleaders, they laid it under his prayer-book. Pennington declared that he would rather be hanged in

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* Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * Rush, vol. i. , 178, etc. Parl. Hist. vol. vi. p. 399. Franklyn, , 109. Journ. 10th Aug. 1625.

* * * Rush, vol. i. .

* * * * Parl. Hist. vol. vi. .

England for disobedience, than fight against his brother Protestants in France. The whole squadron sailed immediately to the Downs. There they received new orders from Buckingham, lord admiral, to return to Dieppe. As the duke knew that authority alone would not suffice, he employed much art and many subtleties to engage them to obedience; and a rumor which was spread, that peace had been concluded between the French king and the Hugonots, assisted him in his purpose. When they arrived at Dieppe, they found that they had been deceived. Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who commanded one of the vessels, broke through and returned to England. All the officers and sailors of all the other ships, notwithstanding great offers made them by the French, immediately deserted. One gunner alone preferred duty towards his king to the cause of religion; and he was afterwards killed in charging a cannon before Rochelle. [1] The care which historians have taken to record this frivolous event, proves with what pleasure the news was received by the nation.

* Franklyn, . Rush. vol. i. , 176, etc., 325, 326, etc.

The house of commons, when informed of these transactions, showed the same attachment with the sailors for the Protestant religion; nor was their zeal much better guided by reason and sound policy. It was not considered that it was highly probable the king and the duke themselves had here been deceived by the artifices of France, nor had they any hostile intention against the Hugonots; that, were it otherwise yet might their measures be justified by the most obvious and most received maxims of civil policy; that, if the force of Spain were really so exorbitant as the commons imagined, the French monarch was the only prince that could oppose its progress, and preserve the balance of Europe; that his power was at present fettered by the Hugonots, who, being possessed of many privileges, and even of fortified towns, formed an empire within his empire, and kept him in perpetual jealousy and inquietude; that an insurrection had been at that time wantonly and voluntarily formed by their leaders, who, being disgusted in some court intrigue, took advantage of the never failing pretence of religion, in order to cover their rebellion, that the Dutch, influenced by these views, had ordered a squadron of twenty ships to join the French fleet employed against the inhabitants of Rochelle; [1] that the Spanish monarch, sensible of the same consequences, secretly supported the Protestants in France; and that all princes had ever sacrificed to reasons of state the interests of their religion in foreign countries. All these obvious considerations had no influence. Great murmurs and discontents still prevailed in parliament. The Hugonots, though they had no ground of complaint against the French court, were thought to be as much entitled to assistance from England, as if they had taken arms in defence of their liberties and religion against the persecuting rage of the Catholics. And it plainly appears from this incident, as well as from many others, that, of all European nations, the British were at that time, and till long after, the most under the influence of that religious spirit which tends rather to inflame bigotry than increase peace and mutual charity.

On this occasion, the commons renewed their eternal complaints against the growth of Popery, which was ever the chief of their grievances, and now their only one. [2] They demanded a strict execution of the penal laws against the Catholics, and remonstrated against some late pardons granted to priests. [3] They attacked Montague, one of the king’s chaplains, on account of a moderate book which he had lately published, and which, to their great disgust, saved virtuous Catholics, as well as other Christians, from eternal torments. [4]

* Journ. 18th April, 1626.

* * Franklyn, , etc.

* * * Parl. Hist. vol. vi. . Journ. 1st Aug. 1625.

* * * * Parl. Hist. vol. vi. Journ. 7th July 1625.

Charles gave them a gracious and a compliant answer to all their remonstrances. He was, however, in his heart, extremely averse to these furious measures. Though a determined Protestant, by principle as well as inclination, he had entertained no violent horror against Popery: and a little humanity, he thought, was due by the nation to the religion of their ancestors. That degree of liberty which is now indulged to Catholics, though a party much more obnoxious than during the reign of the Stuarts, it suited neither with Charles’s sentiments nor the humor of the age to allow them. An abatement of the more rigorous laws was all he intended; and his engagements with France, notwithstanding that their regular execution had never been promised or expected, required of him some indulgence. But so unfortunate was this prince, that no measure embraced during his whole reign, was ever attended with more unhappy and more fatal consequences.

The extreme rage against Popery was a sure characteristic of Puritanism. The house of commons discovered other infallible symptoms of the prevalence of that party. They petitioned the king for replacing such able clergy as had been silenced for want of conformity to the ceremonies. [1] They also enacted laws for the strict observance of Sunday, which the Puritans affected to call the Sabbath, and which they sanctified by the most melancholy indolence. [2] It is to be remarked, that the different appellations of this festival were at that time known symbols of the different parties.

The king, finding that the parliament was resolved to grant him no supply, and would furnish him with nothing but empty protestations of duty, [3] or disagreeable complaints of grievances, took advantage of the plague, [4] which began to appear at Oxford, and on that pretence immediately dissolved them. By finishing the session with a dissolution, instead of a prorogation, he sufficiently expressed his displeasure at their conduct.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * 1 Car. I. ca. Journ. 21st June, 1625.

* * * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * The plague was really so violent, that it had been moved in the house, at the beginning of the session, to petition the king to adjourn them. (Journ. 21st June, 1625.)

So it was impossible to enter upon grievances, even if there had been any. The only business of the parliament was to give supply, which was so much wanted by the king, in order to carry on the war in which they had engaged him.

To supply the want of parliamentary aids, Charles issued privy seals for borrowing money from his subjects. [1] The advantage reaped by this expedient was a small compensation for the disgust which it occasioned. By means, however, of that supply, and by other expedients, he was, though with difficulty, enabled to equip his fleet. It consisted of eighty vessels, great and small; and carried an board an army of ten thousand men. Sir Edward Cecil, lately created Viscount Wimbleton, was intrusted with the command. He sailed immediately for Cadiz, and found the bay full of Spanish ships of great value. He either neglected to attack these ships or attempted it preposterously. The army was landed, and a fort taken; but the undisciplined soldiers, finding store of wine, could not be restrained from the utmost excesses. Further stay appearing fruitless, they were reëmbarked; and the fleet put to sea with an intention of intercepting the Spanish galleons. But the plague having seized the seamen and soldiers, they were obliged to abandon all hopes of this prize, and return to England. Loud complaints were made against the court for intrusting so important a command to a man like Cecil, whom, though he possessed great experience, the people, judging by the event, esteemed of slender capacity, [2]

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Charles, having failed of so rich a prize, was obliged again to have recourse to a parliament. Though the ill success of his enterprises diminished his authority, and showed every day more plainly the imprudence of the Spanish war; though the increase of his necessities rendered him more dependent, and more exposed to the encroachments of the commons, he was resolved to try once more that regular and constitutional expedient for supply. Perhaps, too, a little political art, which at that time he practised, was much trusted to. He had named four popular leaders, sheriffs of counties; Sir Edward Coke, Sir Robert Philips, Sir Thomas Wentworth, and Sir Francis Seymour; and, though the question had been formerly much contested, [3] he thought that he had by that means incapacitated them from being elected members. But his intention, being so evident, rather put the commons more upon their guard. Enow of patriots still remained to keep up the ill humor of the house; and men needed but little instruction or rhetoric to recommend to them practices which increased their own importance and consideration. The weakness of the court, also, could not more evidently appear, than by its being reduced to use so ineffectual an expedient, in order to obtain an influence over the commons.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist, vol. vi. .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * It is always an express clause in the writ of summons, that no sheriff shall be chosen; but the contrary practice had often prevailed D’Ewes, . Yet still great doubts were entertained on this head. See Journ. 9th April, 1614.

The views, therefore, of the last parliament were immediately adopted; as if the same men had been every where elected, and no time had intervened since their meeting. When the king laid before the house his necessities, and asked for supply, they immediately voted him three subsidies and three fifteenths; and though they afterwards added one subsidy more, the sum was little proportioned to the greatness of the occasion, and ill fitted to promote those views of success and glory, for which the young prince, in his first enterprise, so ardently longed. But this circumstance was not the most disagreeable one. The supply was only voted by the commons. The passing of that vote into a law was reserved till the end of the session. [1] A condition was thereby made, in a very undisguised manner, with their sovereign. Under color of redressing grievances, which during this short reign could not be very numerous, they were to proceed in regulating and controlling every part of government which displeased them; and if the king either cut them short in this undertaking, or refused compliance with their demands, he must not expect any supply from the commons. Great dissatisfaction was expressed by Charles at a treatment which he deemed so harsh and undutiful. [2] But his urgent necessities obliged him to submit; and he waited with patience, observing to what side they would turn themselves.

The duke of Buckingham, formerly obnoxious to the public, became every day more unpopular, by the symptoms which appeared both of his want of temper and prudence, and of the uncontrolled ascendant which he had acquired over his master. [3]

* Journ. 27th March, 1626.

* * Parliamentary History, vol. vi. . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * His credit with the king had given him such influence, that he had no less than twenty proxies granted him this parliament by so many peers; which occasioned a vote, that no peer should have above two proxies. The earl of Leicester, in 1585, had once ten proxies D’Ewes, .

Two violent attacks he was obliged this session to sustain, one from the earl of Bristol, another from the house of commons.

As long as James lived, Bristol, secure of the concealed favor of that monarch, had expressed all duty and obedience; in expectation that an opportunity would offer of reinstating himself in his former credit and authority. Even after Charles's accession he despaired not. He submitted to the king's commands of remaining at his country seat, and of absenting himself from parliament. Many trials he made to regain the good opinion of his master; but finding them all fruitless, and observing Charles to be entirely governed by Buckingham, his implacable enemy, he resolved no longer to keep any measures with the court. A new spirit he saw, and a new power arising in the nation; and to these he was determined for the future to trust for his security and protection.

When the parliament was summoned, Charles, by a stretch of prerogative, had given orders that no writ, as is customary, should be sent to Bristol. [1] That nobleman applied to the house of lords by petition; and craved their good offices with the king for obtaining what was his due as a peer of the realm. His writ was sent him, but accompanied with a letter from the lord keeper Coventry, commanding him, in the king's name, to absent himself from parliament. This letter Bristol conveyed to the lords, and asked advice how to proceed in so delicate a situation. [2] The king's prohibition was withdrawn, and Bristol took his seat. Provoked at these repeated instances of vigor, which the court denominated contumacy, Charles ordered his attorney-general to enter an accusation of high treason against him. By way of recrimination, Bristol accused Buckingham of high treason. Both the earl's defence of himself and accusation of the duke remain; [3] and, together with some original letters still extant, contain the fullest and most authentic account of all the negotiations with the house of Austria. From the whole, the great imprudence of the duke evidently appears, and the sway of his ungovernable passions; but it would be difficult to collect thence any action which, in the eye of the law, could be deemed a crime, much less could subject him to the penalty of treason.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, , etc. Franklyn, , etc

The impeachment of the commons was still less dangerous to the duke, were it estimated by the standard of law and equity. The house, after having voted, upon some queries of Dr. Turner’s, “that common fame was a sufficient ground of accusation by the commons,” [1] proceeded to frame regular articles against Buckingham. They accused him of having united many offices in his person; of having bought two of them; of neglecting to guard the seas, insomuch that many merchant ships had fallen into the hands of the enemy; of delivering ships to the French king in order to serve against the Hugonots; of being employed in the sale of honors and offices; of accepting extensive grants from the crown; of procuring many titles of honor for his kindred; and of administering physic to the late king without acquainting his physicians. All these articles appear, from comparing the accusation and reply, to be either frivolous or false, or both. [2] The only charge which could be regarded as important, was, that he had extorted a sum of ten thousand pounds from the East India company, and that he had confiscated some goods belonging to French merchants, on pretence of their being the property of Spanish. The impeachment never came to a full determination; so that it is difficult for us to give a decisive opinion with regard to these articles: but it must be confessed that the duke’s answer in these particulars, as in all the rest, is so clear and satisfactory, that it is impossible to refuse our assent to it. [3] His faults and blemishes were, in many respects, very great; but rapacity and avarice were vices with which he was entirely unacquainted.

It is remarkable that the commons, though so much at a loss to find articles of charge against Buckingham, never adopted Bristol’s accusation, or impeached the duke for his conduct in the Spanish treaty, the most blamable circumstance in his whole life. He had reason to believe the Spaniards sincere in their professions; yet, in order to gratify his private passions, he had hurried his master and his country into a war pernicious to the interests of both. But so rivetted throughout the nation were the

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitloeke, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. , etc., 375, etc. Journ. 25th March, 1626.

* * * Whitlocke, .

prejudices with regard to Spanish deceit and falsehood, that very few of the commons seem as yet to have been convinced that they had been seduced by Buckingham's narrative: a certain proof that a discovery of this nature was not, as is imagined by several historians, the cause of so sudden and surprising a variation in the measures of the parliament. [1]

While the commons were thus warmly engaged against Buckingham, the king seemed desirous of embracing every opportunity by which he could express a contempt and disregard for them. No one was at that time sufficiently sensible of the great weight which the commons bore in the balance of the constitution. The history of England had never hitherto afforded one instance where any great movement or revolution had proceeded from the lower house. And as their rank, both considered in a body and as individuals, was but the second in the kingdom, nothing less than fatal experience could engage the English princes to pay a due regard to the inclinations of that formidable assembly.

The earl of Suffolk, chancellor of the university of Cambridge, dying about this time, Buckingham, though lying under impeachment was yet, by means of court interest, chosen in his place. The commons resented and loudly complained of this affront; and the more to enrage them, the king himself wrote a letter to the university, extolling the duke, and giving them thanks for his election. [2]

The lord keeper, in the king's name, expressly commanded the house not to meddle with his minister and servant, Buckingham; and ordered them to finish, in a few days, the bill which they had begun for the subsidies, and to make some addition to them; otherwise they must not expect to sit any longer. [3] And though these harsh commands were endeavored to be explained and mollified, a few days after, by a speech of Buckingham's, [4] they failed not to leave a disagreeable impression behind them.

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* See note A, at the end of the volume.

* * Rush worth, vol. i. .

* * * Parliament. Hist. vol. vi. .

* * * * Parliament. Hist. vol. vi. p 451. Rushworth. vol. i. p. 225. Franklyn, .

Besides a more stately style which Charles in general affected to this parliament than to the last, he went so far, in a message, as to threaten the commons that, if they did not furnish him with supplies, he should be obliged to try new "counsels." This language was sufficiently clear: yet lest any ambiguity should remain, Sir Dudley Carleton, vice-chamberlain, took care to explain it. "I pray you, consider," said he, "what these new counsels are, or may be. I fear to declare those that I conceive. In all Christian kingdoms, you know that parliaments were in use anciently, by which those kingdoms were governed in a most flourishing manner; until the monarchs began to know their own strength, and seeing the turbulent spirit of their parliaments, at length they, by little and little, began to stand on their prerogatives, and at last overthrew the parliaments, throughout Christendom, except here only with us. Let us be careful then to preserve the king's good opinion of parliaments, which bringeth such happiness to this nation, and makes us envied of all others, while there is this sweetness between his majesty and the commons; lest we lose the repute of a free people by our turbulency in parliament." [1] These imprudent suggestions rather gave warning than struck terror. A precarious liberty, the commons thought, which was to be preserved by unlimited complaisance, was no liberty at all. And it was necessary, while yet in their power, to secure the constitution by such invincible barriers, that no king or minister should ever, for the future, dare to speak such a language to any parliament, or even entertain such a project against them.

Two members of the house, Sir Dudley Digges and Sir John Elliot, who had been employed as managers of the impeachment against the duke, were thrown into prison. [2] The commons immediately declared, that they would proceed no further upon business till they had satisfaction in their privileges. Charles alleged, as the reason of this measure, certain seditious expressions, which, he said, had, in their accusation of the duke, dropped from these members. Upon inquiry, it appeared that no such expressions had been used. [3] The members were released; and the king reaped no other benefit from this attempt than to exasperate the house still, and to show some degree of precipitancy and indiscretion.

Moved by this example, the house of peers were roused from their inactivity; and claimed liberty for the earl of Arundel, who had been lately confined in the Tower. After many fruitless evasions, the king, though somewhat ungracefully, was at last obliged to comply. [4] And in this incident it sufficiently appeared, that the lords, how little soever inclined to popular courses, were not wanting in a just sense of their own dignity.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. , 361. Franklyn, .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. , 364, etc. Franklyn, .

The ill humor of the commons, thus wantonly irritated by the court, and finding no gratification in the legal impeachment of Buckingham, sought other objects on which it might exert itself. The never-failing cry of Popery here served them in stead. They again claimed the execution of the penal laws against Catholics; and they presented to the king a list of persons intrusted with offices, most of them insignificant who were either convicted or suspected recusants. [1] In this particular they had, perhaps, some reason to blame the king's conduct. He had promised to the last house of commons a redress of this religious grievance: but he was apt, in imitation of his father, to imagine that the parliament, when they failed of supplying his necessities, had, on their part, freed him from the obligation of a strict performance. A new odium, likewise, by these representations, was attempted to be thrown upon Buckingham. His mother, who had great influence over him, was a professed Catholic; his wife was not free from suspicion: and the indulgence given to Catholics was of course supposed to proceed entirely from his credit and authority. So violent was the bigotry of the times, that it was thought a sufficient reason for disqualifying any one from holding an office, that his wife, or relations, or companions were Papists, though he himself were a conformist. [2]

It is remarkable, that persecution was here chiefly pushed on by laymen; and that the church was willing to have granted more liberty than would be allowed by the commons. The reconciling doctrines, likewise, of Montague failed not anew to meet with severe censures from that zealous assembly. [3]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth.

* * See the list in Franklyn and Rushworth.

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

The next attack made by the commons, had it prevailed, would have proved decisive. They were preparing a remonstranace against the levying of tonnage and poundage without consent of parliament. This article, together with the new impositions laid on merchandise by James, constituted near half of the crown revenues; and by depriving the king of these resources, they would have reduced him to total subjection and dependence. While they retained such a pledge, besides the supply already promised, they were sure that nothing could be refused them. Though, after canvassing the matter near three ninths, they found themselves utterly incapable of fixing any legal crime upon the duke, they regarded him as an unable, and perhaps a dangerous minister; and they intended to present a petition, which would then have been equivalent to a command, for removing him from his majesty's person and councils. [1]

The king was alarmed at the yoke which he saw prepared for him. Buckingham's sole guilt, he thought, was the being his friend and favorite. [2]

* Rushworth, vol. i. Franklyn, .

* * Franklyn, .

All the other complaints against him were mere pretences. A little before, he was the idol of the people. No new crime had since been discovered. After the most diligent inquiry, prompted by the greatest malice, the smallest appearance of guilt could not be fixed upon him. What idea, he asked, must all mankind entertain of his honor, should he sacrifice his innocent friend to pecuniary considerations? What further authority should he retain in the nation, were he capable, in the beginning of his reign, to give, in so signal an instance, such matter of triumph to his enemies, and discouragement to his adherents? To-day the commons pretend to wrest his minister from him: to-morrow they will attack some branch of his prerogative. By their remonstrances, and promises, and protestations, they had engaged the crown in a war. As soon as they saw a retreat impossible, without waiting for new incidents, without covering themselves with new pretences, they immediately deserted him, and refused him all reasonable supply. It was evident, that they desired nothing so much as to see him plunged in inextricable difficulties, of which they intended to take advantage. To such deep perfidy, to such unbounded usurpations, it was necessary to oppose a proper firmness and resolution. All encroachments on supreme power could only be resisted successfully on the first attempt. The sovereign authority was, with some difficulty, reduced from its ancient and legal height, but when once pushed downwards, it soon became contemptible, and would easily, by the continuance of the same effort, now encouraged by success, be carried to the lowest extremity.

Prompted by these plausible motives, Charles was determined immediately to dissolve the parliament. When this resolution was known, the house of peers, whose compliant behavior entitled them to some authority with him, endeavored to interpose; [1] and they petitioned him, that he would allow the parliament to sit some time longer. “Not a moment longer,” cried the king hastily; [2] and he soon after ended the session by a dissolution.

As this measure was foreseen, the commons took care to finish and disperse their remonstrance, which they intended as a justification of their conduct to the people. The king likewise, on his part, published a declaration, in which he gave the reasons of his disagreement with the parliament, and of their sudden dissolution, before they had time to conclude any one act. [3] These papers furnished the partisans on both sides with ample matter of apology or of recrimination. But all impartial men judged, “that the commons, though they had not as yet violated any law, yet, by their unpliableness and independence, were insensibly changing, perhaps improving, the spirit and genius, while they preserved the form of the constitution and that the king was acting altogether without any plan; running on in a road surrounded on all sides with the most dangerous precipices, and concerting no proper measures, either for submitting to the obstinacy of the commons, or for subduing it.”

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Sanderson's Life of Charles I., .

* * * Franklyn, , etc Parliament. Hist. vol. vii

After a breach with the parliament, which seemed so difficult to repair, the only rational counsel which Charles could pursue, was immediately to conclude a peace with Spain, and to render himself, as far as possible, independent of his people, who discovered so little inclination to support him, or rather who seemed to have formed a determined resolution to abridge his authority. Nothing could be more easy in the execution than this measure, nor more agreeable to his own and to national interest. But, besides the treaties and engagements which he had entered into with Holland and Denmark, the king's thoughts were at this time averse to pacific counsels. There are two circumstances in Charles's character, seemingly incompatible, which attended him during the whole course of his reign, and were in part the cause of his misfortunes: he was very steady, and even obstinate in his purpose; and he was easily governed, by reason of his facility, and of his deference to men much inferior to himself both in morals and understanding. His great ends he inflexibly maintained; but the means of attaining them he readily received from his ministers and favorites, though not always fortunate in his choice. The violent, impetuous Buckingham, inflamed with a desire of revenge for injuries which he himself had committed, and animated with a love of glory which he had not talents to merit, had at this time, notwithstanding his profuse licentious life, acquired an invincible ascendant over the virtuous and gentle temper of the king.

The "new counsels," which Charles had mentioned to the parliament, were now to be tried, in order to supply his necessities. Had he possessed any military force on which he could rely, it is not improbable, that he had at once taken off the mask, and governed without any regard to parliamentary privileges: so high an idea had he received of kingly prerogative, and so contemptible a notion of the rights of those popular assemblies, from which, he very naturally thought, he had met with such ill usage. But his army was new levied, ill paid, and worse disciplined; nowise superior to the militia, who were much more numerous, and who were in a great measure under the influence of the country gentlemen. It behoved him, therefore, to proceed cautiously, and to cover his enterprises under the pretence of ancient precedents, which, considering the great authority commonly enjoyed by his predecessors, could not be wanting to him.

A commission was openly granted to compound with the Catholics, and agree for dispensing with the penal laws enacted against them. [1] By this expedient, the king both filled his coffers, and gratified his inclination of giving indulgence to these religionists; but he could not have employed any branch of prerogative which would have been more disagreeable, or would have appeared more exceptionable to his Protestant subjects.

From the nobility he desired assistance: from the city he required a loan of one hundred thousand pounds. The former contributed slowly; but the latter, covering themselves under many pretences and excuses, gave him at last a flat refusal. [2]

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .

In order to equip a fleet, a distribution, by order of council, was made to all the maritime towns; and each of them was required, with the assistance of the adjacent counties, to arm so many vessels as were appointed them. [1] The city of London was rated at twenty ships. This is the first appearance, in Charles's reign, of ship-money; a taxation which had once been imposed by Elizabeth, but which afterwards, when carried some steps further by Charles, created such violent discontents.

Of some, loans were required: [2] to others the way of benevolence was proposed: methods supported by precedent, but always invidious, even in times more submissive and compliant. In the most absolute governments, such expedients would be regarded as irregular and unequal.

These counsels for supply were conducted with some moderation; till news arrived, that a great battle was fought between the king of Denmark and Count Tilly, the imperial general; in which the former was totally defeated. Money now more than ever, became necessary, in order to repair so great a breach in the alliance, and to support a prince who was so nearly allied to Charles, and who had been engaged in the war chiefly by the intrigues, solicitations, and promises of the English monarch. After some deliberation, an act of council was passed, importing, that as the urgency of affairs admitted not the way of parliament, the most speedy, equal, and convenient method of supply was by a “general loan” from the subject, according as every man was assessed in the rolls of the last subsidy. That precise sum was required which each would have paid, had the vote of four subsidies passed into a law: but care was taken to inform the people, that the sums exacted were not to be called subsidies, but loans. [3] Had any doubt remained, whether forced loans, however authorized by precedent, and even by statute, were a violation of liberty, and must, by necessary consequence, render all parliaments superfluous, this was the proper expedient for opening the eyes of the whole nation. The example of Henry VIII., who had once, in his arbitrary reign, practiced a like method of levying a regular supply, was generally deemed a very insufficient authority.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

The commissioners appointed to levy these loans, among other articles of secret instruction, were enjoined, “If any shall refuse to lend, and shall make delays or excuses, and persist in his obstinacy, that they examine him upon oath, whether he has been dealt with to deny or refuse to lend, or make an [excuse] for not lending? Who has dealt with him, and what speeches or persuasions were used to that purpose? And that they also shall charge every such person, in his majesty’s name, upon his allegiance, not to disclose to any one what his answer was.” [1] So violent an inquisitorial power, so impracticable an attempt at secrecy, were the objects of indignation, and even, in some degree, of ridicule.

That religious prejudices might support civil authority, sermons were preached by Sibthorpe and Manwaring, in favor of the general loan; and the court industriously spread them over the kingdom. Passive obedience was there recommended in its full extent, the whole authority of the state was represented as belonging to the king alone, and all limitations of law and a constitution were rejected as seditious and impious. [2] So openly was this doctrine espoused by the court, that Archbishop Abbot, a popular and virtuous prelate, was, because he refused to license Sibthorpe’s sermon, suspended from the exercise of his office, banished from London, and confined to one of his country seats. [3] Abbot’s principles of liberty, and his opposition to Buckingham, had always rendered him very ungracious at court, and had acquired him the character of a Puritan. For it is remarkable, that this party made the privileges of the nation as much a part of their religion, as the church party did the prerogatives of the crown: and nothing tended further to recommend among the people, who always take opinions in the lump, the whole system and all the principles of the former sect. The king soon found by fatal experience, that this engine of religion, which with so little necessity was introduced into politics, falling under more fortunate management, was played with the most terrible success against him.

While the king, instigated by anger and necessity, thus employed the whole extent of his prerogative, the spirit of the people was far from being subdued. Throughout England, many refused these loans; some were even active in encouraging their neighbors to insist upon their common rights and privileges. By warrant of the council, these were thrown into prison. [4]

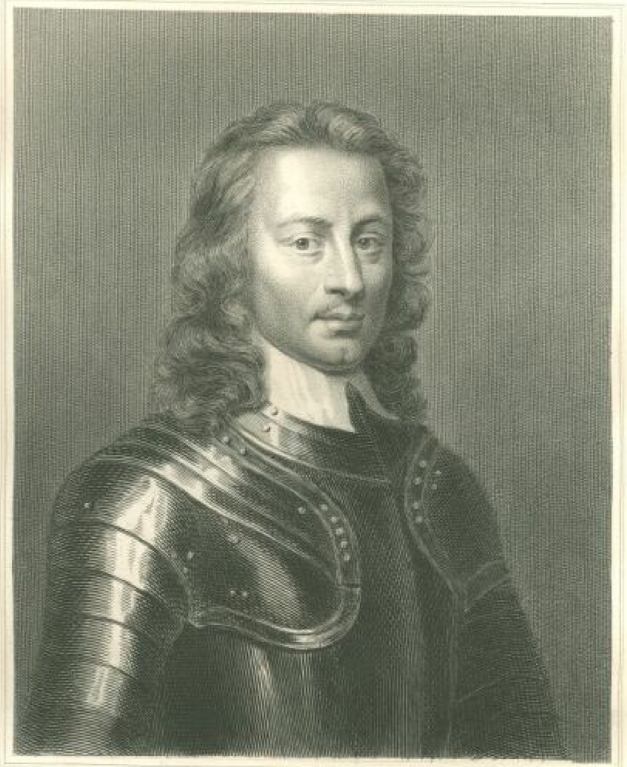
Most of them with patience submitted to confinement, or applied by petition to the king, who commonly released them. Five gentlemen alone, Sir Thomas Darnel, Sir John Corbet, Sir Walter Earl, Sir John Heveningham, and Sir Edmond Hambden, had spirit enough, at their own hazard and expense, to defend the public liberties, and to demand releasement, not as a favor from the court, but as their due, by the laws of their country. [1] No particular cause was assigned of their commitment. The special command alone of the king and council was pleaded. And it was asserted, that, by law, this was not sufficient reason for refusing bail or releasement to the prisoners.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .



HAMPDEN.

From a Print by
J. Houbraken 1740.

This question was brought to a solemn trial, before the king's bench; and the whole kingdom was attentive to the issue of a cause which was of much greater consequence than the event of many battles.

By the debates on this subject, it appeared, beyond controversy, to the nation, that their ancestors had been so jealous of personal liberty, as to secure it against arbitrary power in the crown, by six [2] several statutes, and by an article [3] of the Great Charter itself, the most sacred foundation of the laws and constitution. But the kings of England, who had not been able to prevent the enacting of these laws, had sufficient authority, when the tide of liberty was spent, to obstruct their regular execution; and they deemed it superfluous to attempt the formal repeal of statutes which they found so many expedients and pretences to elude.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, . Whitlocke, p. 8.

* * 25 Edw. III. ca. 28 Edw. III. cap, 3. 37 Edw. III. ca 88 Edw. III. ca 42 Edw. III. ca. 1 Richard II. ca.

* * * Cha

Turbulent and seditious times frequently occurred, when the safety of the people absolutely required the confinement of factious leaders; and by the genius of the old constitution, the prince, of himself, was accustomed to assume every branch of prerogative which was found necessary for the preservation of public peace and of his own authority. Expediency, at other times, would cover itself under the appearance of necessity; and, in proportion as precedents multiplied, the will alone of the sovereign was sufficient to supply the place of expediency, of which he constituted himself the sole judge. In an age and nation where the power of a turbulent nobility prevailed, and where the king had no settled military force, the only means that could maintain public peace, was the exertion of such prompt and discretionary powers in the crown; and the public itself had become so sensible of the necessity, that those ancient laws in favor of personal liberty, while often violated, had never been challenged or revived during the course of near three centuries. Though rebellious subjects had frequently, in the open field, resisted the king’s authority, no person had been found so bold, while confined and at mercy, as to set himself in opposition to regal power, and to claim the protection of the constitution against the will of the sovereign. It was not till this age, when the spirit of liberty was universally diffused, when the principles of government were nearly reduced to a system, when the tempers of men, more civilized, seemed less to require those violent exertions of prerogative, that these five gentlemen above mentioned, by a noble effort, ventured, in this national cause, to bring the question to a final determination. And the king was astonished to observe, that a power exercised by his predecessors almost without interruption, was found, upon trial, to be directly opposite to the clearest laws, and supported by few undoubted precedents in courts of judicature. These had scarcely in any instance refused bail upon commitments by special command of the king, because the persons committed had seldom or never dared to demand it, at least to insist on their demand.

1627.

Sir Randolf Crew, chief justice, had been displaced, as unfit for the purposes of the court: Sir Nicholas Hyde, esteemed more obsequious, had obtained that high office: yet the judges, by his direction, went no further than to remand the gentlemen to prison, and refuse the bail which was offered. [1] Heathe, the attorney-general, insisted that the court, in imitation of the judges in the thirty-fourth of Elizabeth, [2] should enter a general judgment, that no bail could be granted upon a commitment by the king or council. [3] But the judges wisely declined complying. The nation, they saw, was already to the last degree exasperated. In the present disposition of men's minds, universal complaints prevailed, as if the kingdom were reduced to slavery. And the most invidious prerogative of the crown, it was said, that of imprisoning the subject, is here openly, and solemnly, and in numerous instances, exercised for the most invidious purpose; in order to extort loans, or rather subsidies, without consent of parliament.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * State Trials, vol. vii. .

* * * State Trials, vol. vii. .

But this was not the only hardship of which the nation thought they had reason to complain. The army which had made the fruitless expedition to Cadiz, was dispersed throughout the kingdom; and money was levied upon the counties for the payment of their quarters. [1]

The soldiers were billeted upon private houses, contrary to custom, which required that, in all ordinary cases, they should be quartered in inns and public houses. [2]

Those who had refused or delayed the loan, were sure to be loaded with a great number of these dangerous and disorderly guests.

Many too, of low condition, who had shown a refractory disposition, were pressed into the service, and enlisted in the fleet or army, [3] Sir Peter Hayman, for the same reason, was despatched on an errand to the Palatinate. [4] Glanville, an eminent lawyer, had been obliged, during the former interval of parliament, to accept of an office in the navy.

The soldiers, ill paid and undisciplined, committed many crimes and outrages, and much increased the public discontents. To prevent these disorders, martial law, so requisite to the support of discipline, was exercised upon the soldiers. By a contradiction which is natural when the people are exasperated, the outrages of the army were complained of; the remedy was thought still more intolerable.[v*] Though the expediency, if we are not rather to say the necessity, of martial law had formerly been deemed of itself a sufficient ground for establishing it, men, now become more jealous of liberty, and more refined reasoners in questions of government, regarded as illegal and arbitrary every exercise of authority which was not supported by express statute or uninterrupted precedent.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol i. .

v Parl. Hist. vol. vii. .

v* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

It may safely be affirmed, that, except a few courtiers or ecclesiastics, all men were displeased with this high exertion of prerogative, and this new spirit of administration. Though ancient precedents were pleaded in favor of the king’s measures, a considerable difference, upon comparison, was observed between the cases. Acts of power, however irregular, might casually, and at intervals, be exercised by a prince, for the sake of despatch or expediency, and yet liberty still subsist in some tolerable degree under his administration. But where all these were reduced into a system, were exerted without interruption, were studiously sought for, in order to supply the place of laws, and subdue the refractory spirit of the nation, it was necessary to find some speedy remedy, or finally to abandon all hopes of preserving the freedom of the constitution. Nor did moderate men esteem the provocation which the king had received, though great, sufficient to warrant all these violent measures. The commons as yet had nowise invaded his authority: they had only exercised, as best pleased them, their own privileges. Was he justifiable, because from one house of parliament he had met with harsh and unkind treatment, to make, in revenge, an invasion on the rights and liberties of the whole nation?

But great was at this time the surprise of all men, when Charles, baffled in every attempt against the Austrian dominions, embroiled with his own subjects, unsupplied with any treasure but what he extorted by the most invidious and most dangerous measures; as if the half of Europe, now his enemy, were not sufficient for the exercise of military prowess; wantonly attacked France, the other great kingdom in his neighborhood, and engaged at once in war against these two powers, whose interests were hitherto deemed so incompatible that they could never, it was thought, agree either in the same friendships or enmities. All authentic memoirs, both foreign and domestic, ascribe to Buckingham’s counsels this war with France, and represent him as actuated by motives which would appear incredible, were we not acquainted with the violence and temerity of his character.

The three great monarchies of Europe were at this time ruled by young princes, Philip, Louis, and Charles, who were nearly of the same age, and who had resigned the government of themselves, and of their kingdoms, to their creatures and ministers, Olivarez, Richelieu, and Buckingham. The people, whom the moderate temper or narrow genius of their princes would have allowed to remain forever in tranquillity, were strongly agitated by the emulation and jealousy of the ministers. Above all, the towering spirit of Richelieu, incapable of rest, promised an active age, and gave indications of great revolutions throughout all Europe.

This man had no sooner, by suppleness and intrigue, gotten possession of the reins of government, than he formed at once three mighty projects; to subdue the turbulent spirits of the great, to reduce the rebellious Hugonots, and to curb the encroaching power of the house of Austria. Undaunted and implacable, prudent and active, he braved all the opposition of the French princes and nobles in the prosecution of his vengeance; he discovered and dissipated all their secret cabals and conspiracies. His sovereign himself he held in subjection, while he exalted the throne. The people, while they lost their liberties, acquired, by means of his administration, learning, order, discipline, and renown. That confused and inaccurate genius of government, of which France partook in common with other European kingdoms, he changed into a simple monarchy; at the very time when the incapacity of Buckingham encouraged the free spirit of the commons to establish in England a regular system of liberty.

However unequal the comparison between these ministers, Buckingham had entertained a mighty jealousy against Richelieu; a jealousy not founded on rivalship of power and politics, but of love and gallantry; where the duke was as much superior to the cardinal, as he was inferior in every other particular.

At the time when Charles married by proxy the princess Henrietta, the duke of Buckingham had been sent to France, in order to grace the nuptials, and conduct the new queen into England. The eyes of the French court were directed by curiosity towards that man who had enjoyed the unlimited favor of two successive monarchs, and who, from a private station, had mounted, in the earliest youth, to the absolute government of three kingdoms. The beauty of his person, the gracefulness of his air, the splendor of his equipage, his fine taste in dress, festivals, and carousals, corresponded to the prepossessions entertained in his favor: the affability of his behavior, the gayety of his manners, the magnificence of his expense, increased still further the general admiration which was paid him. All business being already concerted, the time was entirely spent in mirth and entertainments; and during those splendid scenes among that gay people, the duke found himself in a situation where he was perfectly qualified to excel. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

But his great success at Paris proved as fatal as his former failure at Madrid. Encouraged by the smiles of the court, he dared to carry his ambitious addresses to the queen herself; and he failed not to make impression on a heart not undisposed to the tender passions. That attachment at least of the mind, which appears so delicious, and is so dangerous, seems to have been encouraged by the princess; and the duke presumed so far on her good graces, that, after his departure, he secretly returned upon some pretence, and, paying a visit to the queen, was dismissed with a reproof which savored more of kindness than of anger. [1]

Information of this correspondence was soon carried to Richelieu. The vigilance of that minister was here further roused by jealousy. He, too, either from vanity or politics, had ventured to pay his addresses to the queen. But a priest, past middle age, of a severe character, and occupied in the most extensive plans of ambition or vengeance, was but an unequal match, in that contest, for a young courtier, entirely disposed to gayety and gallantry. The cardinal's disappointment strongly inclined him to counterwork the amorous projects of his rival. When the duke was making preparations for a new embassy to Paris, a message was sent him from Louis, that he must not think of such a journey. In a romantic passion he swore, "That he would see the queen, in spite of all the power of France;" and, from that moment, he determined to engage England in a war with that kingdom. [2]

He first took advantage of some quarrels excited by the queen of England's attendants; and he persuaded Charles to dismiss at once all her French servants, contrary to the articles of the marriage treaty. [3] He encouraged the English ships of war and privateers to seize vessels belonging to French merchants; and these he forthwith condemned as prizes, by a sentence of the court of admiralty. But finding that all these injuries produced only remonstrances and embassies, or at most reprisals, on the part of France, he resolved to second the intrigues of the duke of Soubize, and to undertake at once a military expedition against that kingdom.

* Mémoires de Mad. de Motteville.

* * Clarendon, vol. i.

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. , 424.

Soubize, who, with his brother, the duke of Rohan, was the leader of the Hugonot faction, was at that time in London, and strongly solicited Charles to embrace the protection of these distressed religionists. He represented, that after the inhabitants of Rochelle had been repressed by the combined squadrons of England and Holland, after peace was concluded with the French king under Charles's mediation, the ambitious cardinal was still meditating the destruction of the Hugonots: that preparations were silently making in every province of France for the suppression of their religion; that forts were erected in order to bridle Rochelle, the most considerable bulwark of the Protestants; that the reformed in France cast their eyes on Charles as the head of their faith, and considered him as a prince engaged by interest, as well as inclination, to support them; that so long as their party subsisted, Charles might rely on their attachment as much as on that of his own subjects; but if their liberties were once ravished from them, the power of France, freed from this impediment, would soon become formidable to England, and to all the neighboring nations.

Though Charles probably bore but small favor to the Hugonots, who so much resembled the Puritans in discipline and worship, in religion and politics, he yet allowed himself to be gained by these arguments, enforced by the solicitations of Buckingham. A fleet of a hundred sail, and an army of seven thousand men, were fitted out for the invasion of France, and both of them intrusted to the command of the duke, who was altogether unacquainted both with land and sea service. The fleet appeared before Rochelle; but so ill concerted were Buckingham's measures, that the inhabitants of that city shut their gates and refused to admit allies of whose coming they were not previously informed. [1] All his military operations showed equal incapacity and inexperience. Instead of attacking Oleron, a fertile island, and defenceless, he bent his course to the Isle of Rhé, which was well garrisoned and fortified: having landed his men, though with some loss, he followed not the blow, but allowed Toiras, the French governor, five days' respite, during which St. Martin was victualled and provided for a siege. [2]

* Rushworth, vol i. .

* * Whitlocke, . Sir Philip Warwick, .

He left behind him the small fort of Prie, which could at first have made no manner of resistance: though resolved to starve St. Martin, he guarded the sea negligently, and allowed provisions and ammunition to be thrown into it: despairing to reduce it by famine, he attacked it without having made any breach, and rashly threw away the lives of the soldiers: having found that a French army had stolen over in small divisions, and had landed at Prie, the fort which he had at first overlooked, he began to think of a retreat; but made it so unskilfully, that it was equivalent to a total rout; he was the last of the army that embarked; and he returned to England, having lost two thirds of his land forces; totally discredited both as an admiral and a general; and bringing no praise with him, but the vulgar one of courage and personal bravery.

The duke of Rohan, who had taken arms as soon as Buckingham appeared upon the coast, discovered the dangerous spirit of the sect, without being able to do any mischief; the inhabitants of Rochelle, who had at last been induced to join the English, hastened the vengeance of their master, exhausted their provisions in supplying their allies, and were threatened with an immediate siege. Such were the fruits of Buckingham’s expedition against France.

CHAPTER LI.

CHARLES I.

1628.

There was reason to apprehend some disorder or insurrection from the discontents which prevailed among the people in England. Their liberties, they believed, were ravished from them; illegal taxes extorted; their commerce which had met with a severe check from the Spanish, was totally annihilated by the French war; those military honors transmitted to them from their ancestors, had received a grievous stain by two unsuccessful and ill-conducted expeditions; scarce an illustrious family but mourned, from the last of them, the loss of a son or brother; greater calamities were dreaded from the war with these powerful monarchies, concurring with the internal disorders under which the nation labored. And these ills were ascribed, not to the refractory disposition of the two former parliaments, to which they were partly owing, but solely to Charles's obstinacy in adhering to the counsels of Buckingham, a man nowise entitled by his birth, age, services, or merit, to that unlimited confidence reposed in him. To be sacrificed to the interest, policy, and ambition of the great, is so much the common lot of the people, that they may appear unreasonable who would pretend to complain of it: but to be the victim of the frivolous gallantry of a favorite, and of his boyish caprices, seemed the object of peculiar indignation.

In this situation, it may be imagined the king and the duke dreaded, above all things, the assembling of a parliament; but so little foresight had they possessed in their enterprising schemes, that they found themselves under an absolute necessity of embracing that expedient. The money levied, or rather extorted, under color of prerogative, had come in very slowly, and had left such ill humor in the nation, that it appeared dangerous to renew the experiment. The absolute necessity of supply, it was hoped, would engage the commons to forget all past injuries; and, having experienced the ill effects of former obstinacy, they would probably assemble with a resolution of making some reasonable compliances. The more to soften them, it was concerted, by Sir Robert Cotton's advice, [1] that Buckingham should be the first person that proposed in council the calling of a new parliament. Having laid in this stock of merit, he expected that all his former misdemeanors would be overlooked and forgiven; and that, instead of a tyrant and oppressor, he should be regarded as the first patriot in the nation.

The views of the popular leaders were much more judicious and profound. When the commons assembled, they appeared to be men of the same independent spirit with their predecessors, and possessed of such riches, that their property was computed to surpass three times that of the house of peers; [2] they were deputed by boroughs and counties, inflamed all of them by the late violations of liberty; many of the members themselves had been cast into prison, and had suffered by the measures of the court; yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, which might prompt them to embrace violent resolutions, they entered upon business with perfect temper and decorum. They considered that the king, disgusted at these popular assemblies, and little prepossessed in favor of their privileges, wanted but a fair pretence for breaking with them, and would seize the first opportunity offered by any incident, or any undutiful behavior of the members. He fairly told them in his first speech, that, "If they should not do their duties in contributing to the necessities of the state, he must, in discharge of his conscience, use those other means which God had put into his hands, in order to save that which the follies of some particular men may otherwise put in danger. Take not this for a threatening," added the king, "for I scorn to threaten any but my equals; but as an admonition from him who, by nature and duty, has most care of your preservation and prosperity." [3] The lord keeper, by the king's direction, subjoined, "This way of parliamentary supplies as his majesty told you, he hath chosen, not as the only way, but as the fittest; not because he is destitute of others, but because it is most agreeable to the goodness of his own most gracious disposition, and to the desire and weal of his people. If this be deferred, necessity and the sword of the enemy make way for the others. Remember his majesty's admonition. I say, remember it." [4]

* Franklyn, .

* * Sanderson, . Walker,

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn, .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Franklyn,

From these avowed maxims, the commons foresaw that, if the least handle were afforded, the king would immediately dissolve them, and would thenceforward deem himself justified for violating, in a manner still more open, all the ancient forms of the constitution. No remedy could then be looked for but from insurrections and civil war, of which the issue would be extremely uncertain, and which must, in all events, prove calamitous to the nation. To correct the late disorders in the administration required some new laws, which would, no doubt, appear harsh to a prince so enamored of his prerogative; and it was requisite to temper, by the decency and moderation of their debates, the rigor which must necessarily attend their determinations. Nothing can give us a higher idea of the capacity of those men who now guided the commons, and of the great authority which they had acquired, than the forming and executing of so judicious and so difficult a plan of operations.

The decency, however, which the popular leaders had prescribed to themselves, and recommended to others, hindered them not from making the loudest and most vigorous complaints against the grievances under which the nation had lately labored. Sir Francis Seymour said, “This is the great council of the kingdom; and here with certainty, if not here only, his majesty may see, as in a true glass, the state of the kingdom. We are called hither by his writs, in order to give him faithful counsel; such as may stand with his honor: and this we must do without flattery. We are also sent hither by the people, in order to deliver their just grievances: and this we must do without fear. Let us not act like Cambyses’s judges, who, when their approbation was demanded by the prince to some illegal measure, said, that ‘Though there was a written law, the Persian kings might follow their own will and pleasure.’ This was base flattery, fitter for our reproof than our imitation; and as fear, so flattery, taketh away the judgment. For my part, I shall shun both; and speak my mind with as much duty as any man to his majesty, without neglecting the public.

“But how can we express our affections while we retain our fears; or speak of giving, till we know whether we have any thing to give? For if his majesty may be persuaded to take what he will, what need we give?

“That this hath been done, appeareth by the billeting of soldiers, a thing nowise advantageous to the king’s service, and a burden to the commonwealth: by the imprisonment of gentlemen for refusing the loan, who, if they had done the contrary for fear, had been as blamable as the projector of that oppressive measure. To countenance these proceedings, hath it not been preached in the pulpit, or rather prated, that ‘All we have is the king’s by divine right’? But when preachers forsake their own calling, and turn ignorant statesmen, we see how willing they are to exchange a good conscience for a bishopric.

“He, I must confess, is no good subject, who would not willingly and cheerfully lay down his life, when that sacrifice may promote the interests of his sovereign, and the good of the commonwealth. But he is not a good subject, he is a slave, who will allow his goods to be taken from him against his will, and his liberty against the laws of the kingdom. By opposing these practices, we shall but tread in the steps of our forefathers, who still preferred the public before their private interest, nay, before their very lives. It will in us be a wrong done to ourselves, to our posterities, to our consciences, if we forego this claim and pretension.” [1]

* Franklyn . Rushworth, vol. i, .

“I read of a custom,” said Sir Robert Philips, “among the old Romans, that once every year they held a solemn festival, in which their slaves had liberty, without exception, to speak what they pleased, in order to ease their afflicted minds; and, on the conclusion of the festival, the slaves severally returned to their former servitudes.

“This institution may, with some distinction, well set forth our present state and condition. After the revolution of some time, and the grievous sufferance of many violent oppressions, we have now at last, as those slaves, obtained, for a day, some liberty of speech; but shall not, I trust, be hereafter slaves: for we are born free. Yet what new illegal burdens our estates and persons have groaned under, my heart yearns to think of, my tongue falters to utter. ——

“The grievances by which we are oppressed, I draw under two heads; acts of power against law, and the judgments of lawyers against our liberty.”

Having mentioned three illegal judgments passed within his memory; that by which the Scots, born after James’s accession, were admitted to all the privileges of English subjects; [2 semi-colon inserted, not in scan] that by which the new impositions had been warranted; and the late one, by which arbitrary imprisonments were authorized; he thus proceeded: —

“I can live, though another, who has no right, be put to live along with me; nay, I can live, though burdened with impositions beyond what at present I labor under: but to have my liberty, which is the soul of my life, ravished from me to have my person pent up in a jail, without relief by law, and to be so adjudged, — O, improvident ancestors! O, unwise forefathers! to be so curious in providing for the quiet possession of our lands, and the liberties of parliament; and at the same time to neglect our personal liberty, and let us lie in prison, and that during pleasure, without redress or remedy! If this be law, why do we talk of liberties? why trouble ourselves with disputes about a constitution, franchises, property of goods, and the like? What may any man call his own, if not the liberty of his person?

“I am weary of treading these ways; and therefore conclude to have a select committee, in order to frame a petition to his majesty for redress of these grievances. And this petition, being read, examined, and approved, may be delivered to the king; of whose gracious answer we have no cause to doubt, our desires being so reasonable, our intentions so loyal, and the manner so dutiful. Neither need we fear that this is the critical parliament, as has been insinuated; or that this is the way to distraction: but assure ourselves of a happy issue. Then shall the king, as he calls us his great council, find us his true council, and own us his good council.” [1]

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* Franklyn, . Parl. Hist. vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol i. .

The same topics were enforced by Sir Thomas Wentworth. After mentioning projectors and ill ministers of state, “These,” said he, “have introduced a privy council, ravishing at once the spheres of all ancient government; destroying all liberty; imprisoning us without bail or bond. They have taken from us — What shall I say? Indeed, what have they left us? By tearing up the roots of all property, they have taken from us every means of supplying the king, and of ingratiating ourselves by voluntary proofs of our duty and attachment towards him.

“To the making whole all these breaches I shall apply myself, and to all these diseases shall propound a remedy. By one and the same thing have the king and the people been hurt, and by the same must they be cured. We must vindicate — what? New things? No: our ancient, legal, and vital liberties; by reënforcing the laws enacted by our ancestors; by setting such a stamp upon them, that no licentious spirit shall dare henceforth to invade them. And shall we think this a way to break a parliament? No: our desires are modest and just. I speak both for the interest of king and people. If we enjoy not these rights, it will be impossible for us to relieve him. Let us never, therefore, doubt of a favorable reception from his goodness.” [1]

These sentiments were unanimously embraced by the whole house. Even the court party pretended not to plead, in defence of the late measures, any thing but the necessity to which the king had been reduced by the obstinacy of the two former parliaments. A vote, therefore, was passed, without opposition, against arbitrary imprisonments and forced loans. [2] And the spirit of liberty having obtained some contentment by this exertion, the reiterated messages of the king, who pressed for supply, were attended to with more temper. Five subsidies were voted him; with which, though much inferior to his wants, he declared himself well satisfied; and even tears of affection started in his eye when he was informed of this concession. The duke’s approbation too was mentioned by Secretary Coke; but the conjunction of a subject with the sovereign was ill received by the house. [3] Though disgusted with the king, the jealousy which they felt for his honor was more sensible than that which his unbounded confidence in the duke would allow even himself to entertain.

The supply, though voted, was not as yet passed into a law; and the commons resolved to employ the interval in providing some barriers to their rights and liberties so lately violated. They knew that their own vote, declaring the illegality of the former measures, had not, of itself, sufficient authority to secure the constitution against future invasion. Some act to that purpose must receive the sanction of the whole legislature; and they appointed a committee to prepare the model of so important a law. By collecting into one effort all the dangerous and oppressive claims of his prerogative, Charles had exposed them to the hazard of one assault and had further, by presenting a nearer view of the consequences attending them,

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* Franklyn, p 243. Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke,

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. , Whitlocke, .

roused the independent genius of the commons. Forced loans, benevolences, taxes without consent of parliament, arbitrary imprisonments, the billeting of soldiers, martial law; these were the grievances complained of, and against these an eternal remedy was to be provided. The commons pretended not, as they affirmed, to any unusual powers or privileges: they aimed only at securing those which had been transmitted them from their ancestors: and their law they resolved to call a Petition of Right; as implying that it contained a corroboration or explanation of the ancient constitution, not any infringement of royal prerogative, or acquisition of new liberties.

While the committee was employed in framing the petition of right, the favorers of each party, both in parliament and throughout the nation, were engaged in disputes about this bill, which, in all likelihood, was to form a memorable era in the English government.

That the statutes, said the partisans of the commons, which secure English liberty, are not become obsolete, appears hence, that the English have ever been free, and have ever been governed by law and a limited constitution. Privileges in particular, which are founded on the Great Charter, must always remain in force, because derived from a source of never-failing authority, regarded in all ages as the most sacred contract between king and people. Such attention was paid to this charter by our generous ancestors, that they got the confirmation of it reiterated thirty several times; and even secured it by a rule which, though vulgarly received, seems in the execution impracticable. They have established it as a maxim “That even a statute which should be enacted in contradiction to any article of that charter, cannot have force or validity.” But with regard to that important article which secures personal liberty, so far from attempting at any time any legal infringement of it, they have corroborated it by six statutes, and put it out of all doubt and controversy. If in practice it has often been violated, abuses can never come in the place of rules; nor can any rights or legal powers be derived from injury and injustice. But the title of the subject to personal liberty not only is founded on ancient, and, therefore, the most sacred laws; it is confirmed by the whole analogy of the government and constitution. A free monarchy in which every individual is a slave, is a glaring contradiction: and it is requisite, where the laws assign privileges to the different orders of the state, that it likewise secure the independence of the members. If any difference could be made in this particular, it were better to abandon even life or property to the arbitrary will of the prince; nor would such immediate danger ensue, from that concession, to the laws and to the privileges of the people. To bereave of his life a man not condemned by any legal trial, is so egregious an exercise of tyranny, that it must at once shock the natural humanity of princes, and convey an alarm throughout the whole commonwealth. To confiscate a man’s fortune, besides its being a most atrocious act of violence, exposes the monarch so much to the imputation of avarice and rapacity, that it will seldom be attempted in any civilized government. But confinement, though a less striking, is no less severe a punishment; nor is there any spirit so erect and independent, as not to be broken by the long continuance of the silent and inglorious sufferings of a jail. The power of imprisonment, therefore, being the most natural and potent engine of arbitrary government, it is absolutely necessary to remove it from a government which is free and legal.

The partisans of the court reasoned after a different manner. The true rule of government, said they, during any period, is that to which the people, from time immemorial, have been accustomed, and to which they naturally pay a prompt obedience. A practice which has ever struck their senses, and of which they have seen and heard innumerable precedents, has an authority with them much superior to that which attends maxims derived from antiquated statutes and mouldy records. In vain do the lawyers establish it as a principle, that a statute can never be abrogated by opposite custom; but requires to be expressly repealed by a contrary statute: while they pretend to inculcate an axiom peculiar to English jurisprudence, they violate the most established principles of human nature; and even by necessary consequence reason in contradiction to law itself, which they would represent as so sacred and inviolable. A law, to have any authority must be derived from a legislature which has right. And whence do all legislatures derive their right, but from long custom and established practice? If a statute contrary to public good has at any time been rashly voted and assented to, either from the violence of faction or the inexperience of senates and princes, it cannot be more effectually abrogated by a train of contrary precedents, which prove, that by common consent it has been tacitly set aside, as inconvenient and impracticable. Such has been the case with all those statutes enacted during turbulent times, in order to limit royal prerogative, and cramp the sovereign in his protection of the public, and his execution of the laws. But above all branches of prerogative, that which is most necessary to be preserved, is the power of imprisonment. Faction and discontent, like diseases, frequently arise in every political body; and during these disorders, it is by the salutary exercise alone of this discretionary power, that rebellions and civil wars can be prevented. To circumscribe this power, is to destroy its nature: entirely to abrogate it, is impracticable; and the attempt itself must prove dangerous, if not pernicious to the public. The supreme magistrate, in critical and turbulent times, will never, agreeably either to prudence or duty, allow the state to perish, while there remains a remedy which, how irregular soever, it is still in his power to apply. And if, moved by a regard to public good, he employs any exercise of power condemned by recent and express statute, how greedily, in such dangerous times, will factious leaders seize this pretence of throwing on his government the imputation of tyranny and despotism! Were the alternative quite necessary, it were surely much better for human society to be deprived of liberty than to be destitute of government.

Impartial reasoners will confess that this subject is not, on both sides, without its difficulties. Where a general and rigid law is enacted against arbitrary imprisonment, it would appear that government cannot, in times of sedition and faction, be conducted but by temporary suspensions of the law; and such an expedient was never thought of during the age of Charles. [2period inserted] The meetings of parliament were too precarious, and their determinations might be too dilatory, to serve in cases of urgent necessity. Nor was it then conceived, that the king did not possess of himself sufficient power for the security and protection of his people, or that the authority of these popular assemblies was ever to become so absolute, that the prince must always conform himself to it, and could never have any occasion to guard against their practices, as well as against those of his other subjects.

Though the house of lords was not insensible to the reasons urged in favor of the pretensions of the commons, they deemed the arguments pleaded in favor of the crown still more cogent and convincing. That assembly seems, during this whole period, to have acted, in the main, a reasonable and a moderate part; and if their bias inclined a little too much, as is natural, to the side of monarchy, they were far from entertaining any design of sacrificing to arbitrary will the liberties and privileges of the nation. Ashley, the king’s serjeant, having asserted, in pleading before the peers, that the king must sometimes govern by acts of state as well as by law, this position gave such offence, that he was immediately committed to prison, and was not released but upon his recantation and submission. [1] Being, however, afraid lest the commons should go too far in their projected petition, the peers proposed a plan of one more moderate, which they recommended to the consideration of the other house. It consisted merely in a general declaration, that the Great Charter, and the six statutes conceived to be explanations of it, stand still in force, to all intents and purposes; that, in consequence of the charter and the statutes, and by the tenor of the ancient customs and laws of the realm, every subject has a fundamental property in his goods, and a fundamental liberty of his person; that this property and liberty are as entire at present as during any former period of the English government; that in all common cases, the common law ought to be the standard of proceedings: "And in case that, for the security of his majesty's person, the general safety of his people, or the peaceable government of the kingdom, the king shall find just cause, for reasons of state, to imprison or restrain any man's person, he was petitioned graciously to declare that, within a convenient time, he shall and will express the cause of the commitment or restraint, either general or special, and, upon a cause so expressed, will leave the prisoner immediately to be tried according to the common law of the land." [2]

* Whitlocke, .

* * State Trials, vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol. i. p. 548.

Archbishop Abbot was employed by the lords to recommend, in a conference, this plan of a petition to the house of commons. The prelate, as was no doubt foreseen, from his known principles, was not extremely urgent in his applications; and the lower house was fully convinced that the general declarations signified nothing, and that the latter clause left their liberties rather in a worse condition than before. They proceeded, therefore, with great zeal, in framing, the model of a petition which should contain expressions more precise, and more favorable to public freedom.

The king could easily see the consequence of these proceedings. Though he had offered, at the beginning of the session, to give his consent to any law for the security of the rights and liberties of the people, he had not expected that such inroads would be made on his prerogative. In order, therefore, to divert the commons from their intention, he sent a message, wherein he acknowledged past errors, and promised that hereafter there should be no just cause of complaint. And he added, “That the affairs of the kingdom press him so, that he could not continue the session above a week or two longer: and if the house be not ready by that time to do what is fit for themselves, it shall be their own fault.” [1] On a subsequent occasion, he asked them, “Why demand explanations, if you doubt not the performance of the statutes according to their true meaning? Explanations will hazard an encroachment upon the prerogative; and it may well be said, What need a new law to confirm an old, if you repose confidence in the declarations which his majesty made to both houses?” [2] The truth is, the Great Charter and the old statutes were sufficiently clear in favor of personal liberty: but as all kings of England had ever, in cases of necessity or expediency, been accustomed at intervals to elude them; and as Charles, in a complication of instances, had lately violated them; the commons judged it requisite to enact a new law, which might not be eluded or violated by any interpretation, construction, or contrary precedent. Nor was it sufficient, they thought, that the king promised to return into the way of his predecessors. His predecessors in all times had enjoyed too much discretionary power; and by his recent abuse of it, the whole world had reason to see the necessity of entirely retrenching it.

The king still persevered in his endeavors to elude the petition. He sent a letter to the house of lords, in which he went so far as to make a particular declaration, “That neither he nor his privy council shall or will, at any time hereafter, commit or command to prison, or otherwise restrain, any man for not lending money, or for any other cause which, in his conscience, [2joined-up though no hyphen] he thought not to concern the public good, and the safety of king and people.” And he further declared, “That he never would be guilty of so base an action as to pretend any cause of whose truth he was not fully satisfied.” [3] But this promise, though enforced to the commons by the recommendation of the upper house, made no more impression than all the former messages.

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* State Trials, vol. vii. .

* * State Trials, vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol. i.

* * * State Trials, vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol. i. p. 560, Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

Among the other evasions of the king, we may reckon the proposal of the house of peers, to subjoin to the intended petition of right the following clause: “We humbly present this petition to your majesty, not only with a care of preserving our own liberties, but with due regard to leave entire that sovereign power with which your majesty is intrusted for the protection, safety, and happiness of your people.” [1] Less penetration than was possessed by the leaders of the house of commons, could easily discover how captious this clause was, and how much it was calculated to elude the whole force of the petition.

These obstacles, therefore, being surmounted, the petition of right passed the commons, and was sent to the upper house. [2] The peers, who were probably well pleased in secret that all their solicitations had been eluded by the commons, quickly passed the petition without any material alteration; and nothing but the royal assent was wanting to give it the force of a law. The king accordingly came to the house of peers; sent for the commons; and, being seated in his chair of state, the petition was read to him. Great was now the astonishment of all men, when, instead of the usual concise and clear form by which a bill is either confirmed or rejected Charles said, in answer to the petition, “The king willeth, that right be done according to the laws and customs of the realm, and that the statutes be put into execution; that his subjects may have no cause to complain of any wrong or oppression, contrary to their just rights and liberties, to the preservation whereof he holds himself in conscience as much obliged as of his own prerogative.” [3]

* State Trials, vol. vii. . Ruskworth, vol. i. . Parl Hist. vol. viii. . Whitlocke, .

* * See note B, at the end of the volume.

* * * State Trials, vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol. i. p. 500.

It is surprising that Charles, who had seen so many instances of the jealousy of the commons, who had himself so much roused that jealousy by his frequent evasive messages during this session, could imagine that they would rest satisfied with an answer so vague and undeterminate. It was evident, that the unusual form alone of the answer must excite their attention; that the disappointment must inflame their anger; and that therefore it was necessary, as the petition seemed to bear hard on royal prerogative, to come early to some fixed resolution, either gracefully to comply with it, or courageously to reject it.

It happened as might have been foreseen. The commons returned in very ill humor. Usually, when in that disposition, their zeal for religion, and their enmity against the unfortunate Catholics, ran extremely high. But they had already, in the beginning of the session, presented their petition of religion and had received a satisfactory answer; though they expected that the execution of the laws against Papists would, for the future, be no more exact and rigid than they had hitherto found it. To give vent to their present indignation, they fell with their utmost force on Dr. Manwaring.

There is nothing which tends more to excuse, if not to justify, the extreme rigor of the commons towards Charles, than his open encouragement and avowal of such general principles as were altogether incompatible with a limited government. Manwaring had preached a sermon which the commons found, upon inquiry, to be printed by special command of the king; [1] and when this sermon was looked into, it contained doctrines subversive of all civil liberty. It taught, that, though property was commonly lodged in the subject, yet, whenever any exigency required supply, all property was transferred to the sovereign; that the consent of parliament was not necessary for the imposition of taxes; and that the divine laws required compliance with every demand, how irregular soever, which the prince should make upon his subjects [2] For these doctrines the commons impeached Manwaring. The sentence pronounced upon him by the peers was, that he should be imprisoned during the pleasure of the house, be fined a thousand pounds to the king, make submission and acknowledgment of his offence, be suspended during three years, be incapable of holding any ecclesiastical dignity or secular office, and that his book be called in and burnt. [3]

* Parliament. Hist. vol. viii. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. , 594. Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 168, 169, 170, etc. Welwood, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

It may be worthy of notice, that no sooner was the session ended, than this man, so justly obnoxious to both houses received a pardon, and was promoted to a living of considerable value. [1] Some years after, he was raised to the see of St. Asaph. If the republican spirit of the commons increased beyond all reasonable bounds, the monarchical spirit of the court, this latter, carried to so high a pitch, tended still further to augment the former. And thus extremes were every where affected, and the just medium was gradually deserted by all men.

From Manwaring, the house of commons proceeded to censure the conduct of Buckingham, whose name hitherto they had cautiously forborne to mention. [2] In vain did the king send them a message, in which he told them that the session was drawing near to a conclusion; and desired that they would not enter upon new business, nor cast any aspersions on his government and ministry. [3] Though the court endeavored to explain and soften this message by a subsequent message, [4] as Charles was apt hastily to correct any hasty step which he had taken, it served rather to inflame than appease the commons; as if the method of their proceedings had here been prescribed to them. It was foreseen that a great tempest was ready to burst on the duke; and in order to divert it, the king thought proper, upon a joint application of the lords and commons, to endeavor giving them satisfaction with regard to the petition of right. He came, therefore, to the house of peers, and pronouncing the usual form of words, “Let it be law, as is desired,” gave full sanction and authority to the petition. The acclamations with which the house resounded, and the universal joy diffused over the nation, showed how much this petition had been the object of all men’s vows and expectations[v*]

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist vol. viii. p. 197.

v Rushworth, vol. i. , Journ. 7th June, 1628. Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

v* Rushworth, vol. i. .

It may be affirmed, without any exaggeration, that the king's assent to the petition of right produced such a change in the government, as was almost equivalent to a revolution; and by circumscribing, in so many articles, the royal prerogative gave additional security to the liberties of the subject. Yet were the commons far from being satisfied with this important concession. Their ill humor had been so much irritated by the king's frequent evasions and delays, that it could not be presently appeased by an assent which he allowed to be so reluctantly extorted from him. Perhaps, too, the popular leaders, implacable and artful, saw the opportunity favorable; and, turning against the king those very weapons with which he had furnished them, resolved to pursue the victory. The bill, however, for five subsidies, which had been formerly voted, immediately passed the house; because the granting of that supply was, in a manner, tacitly contracted for, upon the royal assent to the petition; and had faith been here violated, no further confidence could have subsisted between king and parliament. Having made this concession, the commons continued to carry their scrutiny into every part of government. In some particulars, their industry was laudable; in some, it may be liable to censure.

A little after writs were issued for summoning this parliament, a commission had been granted to Sir Thomas Coventry, lord keeper, the earl of Marlborough, treasurer, the earl of Manchester, president of the council, the earl of Worcester, privy seal, the duke of Buckingham, high admiral, and all the considerable officers of the crown; in the whole, thirty-three. By this commission, which, from the number of persons named in it, could be no secret, the commissioners were empowered to meet, and to concert among themselves the methods of levying money by impositions, or otherwise; "Where form and circumstance," as expressed in the commission, "must be dispensed with, rather than the substance be lost or hazarded." [1] In other words, this was a scheme for finding expedients which might raise the prerogative to the greatest height, and render parliaments entirely useless. The commons applied for cancelling the commission; [2] and were, no doubt, desirous that all the world should conclude the king’s principles to be extremely arbitrary, and should observe what little regard he was disposed to pay to the liberties and privileges of his people.

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

* * Journ. 13th June, 1628.

A commission had likewise been granted, and some money remitted, in order to raise a thousand German horse, and transport them into England. These were supposed to be levied in order to support the projected impositions or excises, though the number seems insufficient for such a purpose, [1] The house took notice of this design in severe terms: and no measure, surely, could be projected more generally odious to the whole nation. It must, however, be confessed, that the king was so far right, that he had now at last fallen on the only effectual method for supporting his prerogative. But at the same time, he should have been sensible that, till provided with a sufficient military force, all his attempts in opposition to the rising spirit of the nation, must in the end prove wholly fruitless; and that the higher he screwed up the springs of government, while he had so little real power to retain them in that forced situation, with more fatal violence must they fly out, when any accident occurred to restore them to their natural action.

The commons next resumed their censure of Buckingham’s conduct and behavior, against whom they were implacable. They agreed to present a remonstrance to the king, in which they recapitulated all national grievances and misfortunes, and omitted no circumstance which could render the whole administration despicable and odious. The compositions with Catholics, they said, amounted to no less than a toleration, hateful to God, full of dishonor and disprofit to his majesty, and of extreme scandal and grief to his good people: they took notice of the violations of liberty above mentioned, against which the petition of right seems to have provided a sufficient remedy: they mentioned the decay of trade, the unsuccessful expeditions to Cadiz and the Isle of Rhé, the encouragement given to Arminians, the commission for transporting German horse, that for levying illegal impositions; and all these grievances they ascribed solely to the ill conduct of the duke of Buckingham. [2] This remonstrance was, perhaps, not the less provoking to Charles, because, joined to the extreme acrimony of the subject, there were preserved in it, as in most of the remonstrances of that age, an affected civility and submission in the language. And as it was the first return which he met with for his late beneficial concessions, and for his sacrifices of prerogative, — the greatest by far ever made by an English sovereign, — nothing could be more the object of just and natural indignation.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol viii. , 220, etc.

It was not without good grounds that the commons were so fierce and assuming. Though they had already granted the king the supply of five subsidies, they still retained a pledge in their hands, which they thought insured them success in all their applications. Tonnage and poundage had not yet been granted by parliament; and the commons had artfully, this session, concealed their intention of invading that branch of revenue, till the royal assent had been obtained to the petition of right, which they justly deemed of such importance. They then openly asserted, that the levying of tonnage and poundage without consent of parliament, was a palpable violation of the ancient liberties of the people, and an open infringement of the petition of right, so lately granted. [1] The king, in order to prevent the finishing and presenting this remonstrance, came suddenly to the parliament, and ended this session by a prorogation. [2]

* Rushworth, vol. i. . Journ. 18th 20th June, 1628.

* * Journ, 26th June, 1628.

Being freed for some time from the embarrassment of this assembly, Charles began to look towards foreign wars, where all his efforts were equally unsuccessful as in his domestic government. The earl of Denbigh, brother-in-law to Buckingham, was despatched to the relief of Rochelle, now closely besieged by land, and threatened with a blockade by sea: but he returned without effecting any thing; and having declined to attack the enemy’s fleet, he brought on the English arms the imputation either of cowardice or ill conduct. In order to repair this dishonor, the duke went to Portsmouth, where he had prepared a considerable fleet and army, on which all the subsidies given by parliament had been expended. This supply had very much disappointed the king’s expectations. The same mutinous spirit which prevailed in the house of commons had diffused itself over the nation; and the commissioners appointed for making the assessments had connived at all frauds which might diminish the supply, and reduce the crown to still greater necessities. This national discontent, communicated to a desperate enthusiast, soon broke out in an event which may be considered as remarkable.

There was one Felton, of a good family, but of an ardent, melancholic temper, who had served under the duke in the station of lieutenant. His captain being killed in the retreat at the Isle of Rhé, Felton had applied for the company; and when disappointed, he threw up his commission, and retired in discontent from the army. While private resentment was boiling in his sullen, unsociable mind, he heard the nation resound with complaints against the duke; and he met with the remonstrance of the commons, in which his enemy was represented as the cause of every national grievance, and as the great enemy of the public. Religious fanaticism further inflamed these vindictive reflections; and he fancied that he should do Heaven acceptable service, if at one blow he despatched this dangerous foe to religion and to his country. [1] Full of these dark views, he secretly arrived at Portsmouth at the same time with the duke, and watched for an opportunity of effecting his bloody purpose.

Buckingham had been engaged in conversation with Soubize and other French gentlemen; and a difference of sentiment having arisen, the dispute, though conducted with temper and decency, had produced some of those vehement gesticulations and lively exertions of voice, in which that nation, more than the English, are apt to indulge themselves. The conversation being finished, the duke drew towards the door; and in that passage, turning himself to speak to Sir Thomas Friar, a colonel in the army, he was on the sudden, over Sir Thomas’s shoulder, struck upon the breast with a knife. Without uttering other words than, “The villain has killed me,” in the same moment pulling out the knife, he breathed his last.

* May’s Hist. of the Parliament, .

No man had seen the blow, nor the person who gave it, but in the confusion every one made his own conjecture; and all agreed that the murder had been committed by the French gentlemen whose angry tone of voice had been heard, while their words had not been understood by the bystanders. In the hurry of revenge, they had instantly been put to death, had they not been saved by some of more temper and judgment, who, though they had the same opinion of their guilt, thought proper to reserve them for a judicial trial and examination.

Near the door there was found a hat, in the inside of which was sewed a paper, containing four or five lines of that remonstrance of the commons which declared Buckingham an enemy to the kingdom; and under these lines was a short ejaculation, or attempt towards a prayer. It was easily concluded that this hat belonged to the assassin: but the difficulty still remained, who that person should be; for the writing discovered not the same; and whoever he was, it was natural to believe that he had already fled far enough not to be found without a hat.

In this hurry, a man without a hat was seen walking very composedly before the door. One crying out, “Here is the fellow who killed the duke;” every body ran to ask, “Which is he?” The man very sedately answered, “I am he.” The more furious immediately rushed upon him with drawn swords: others, more deliberate, defended and protected him: he himself, with open arms, calmly and cheerfully exposed his breast to the swords of the most enraged; being willing to fall a sudden sacrifice to their anger, rather than be reserved for that public justice which he knew must be executed upon him.

He was now known to be that Felton who had served in the army. Being carried into a private room, it was thought proper so far to dissemble as to tell him, that Buckingham was only grievously wounded, but not without hopes of recovery. Felton smiled, and told them, that the duke, he knew full well, had received a blow which had terminated all their hopes. When asked at whose instigation he had performed the horrid deed, he replied, that they needed not to trouble themselves in that inquiry; that no man living had credit enough with him to have disposed him to such an action; that he had not even intrusted his purpose to any one; that the resolution proceeded only from himself, and the impulse of his own conscience; and that his motives would appear, if his hat were found; for that, believing he should perish in the attempt, he had there taken care to explain them. [1]

When the king was informed of this assassination, he received the news in public with an unmoved and undisturbed countenance; and the courtiers, who studied his looks, concluded, that secretly he was not displeased to be rid of a minister so generally odious to the nation. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 20.

* * Warwick, .

But Charles's command of himself proceeded entirely from the gravity and composure of his temper. He was still as much as ever attached to his favorite; and during his whole life he retained an affection for Buckingham's friends, and a prejudice against his enemies. He urged too, that Felton should be put to the question, in order to extort from him a discovery of his accomplices; but the judges declared, that though that practice had formerly been very usual, it was altogether illegal: so much reasoners, with regard to law, had they become from the jealous scruples of the house of commons.

Meanwhile the distress of Rochelle had risen to the utmost extremity. That vast genius of Richelieu, which made him form the greatest enterprises, led him to attempt their execution by means equally great and extraordinary. In order to deprive Rochelle of all succor, he had dared to project the throwing across the harbor a mole of a mile's extent in that boisterous ocean; and having executed his project, he now held the town closely blockaded on all sides. The inhabitants, though pressed with the greatest rigors of famine, still refused to submit; being supported, partly by the lectures of their zealous preachers, partly by the daily hopes of relief from England. After Buckingham's death, the command of the fleet and army was conferred on the earl of Lindesey; who, arriving before Rochelle, made some attempts to break through the mole, and force his way into the harbor: but by the delays of the English, that work was now fully finished and fortified; and the Rochellers, finding their last hopes to fail them, were reduced to surrender at discretion, even in sight of the English admiral. Of fifteen thousand persons shut up in the city, four thousand alone survived the fatigues and famine which they had undergone. [1]

* Rushworth, vol. 1. .

This was the first necessary step towards the prosperity of France. Foreign enemies, as well as domestic factions, being deprived of this resource, that kingdom began now to shine forth in its full splendor. By a steady prosecution of wise plans, both of war and policy, it gradually gained an ascendant over the rival power of Spain; and every order of the state, and every sect, were reduced to pay submission to the lawful authority of the sovereign. The victory, however, over the Hugonots, was at first pushed by the French king with great moderation. A toleration was still continued to them; the only avowed and open toleration which at that time was granted in any European kingdom.

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The failure of an enterprise in which the English nation, from religious sympathy, so much interested themselves, could not but diminish the king's authority in the parliament during the approaching session: but the commons, when assembled, found many other causes of complaint. Buckingham's conduct and character with some had afforded a reason, with others a pretence, for discontent against public measures but after his death there wanted not new reasons and new pretences for general dissatisfaction. Manwaring's pardon and promotion were taken notice of: Sibthorpe and Cosins, two clergymen, who, for like reasons, were no less obnoxious to the commons, had met with like favor from the king: Montague, who had been censured for moderation towards the Catholics, the greatest of crimes, had been created bishop of Chichester. They found likewise, upon inquiry, that all the copies of the petition of right which were dispersed, had, by the king's orders, annexed to them the first answer, which had given so little satisfaction to the commons; [1] an expedient by which Charles endeavored to persuade the people that he had nowise receded from his former claims and pretensions, particularly with regard to the levying of tonnage and poundage. Selden also complained in the house, that one Savage, contrary to the petition of right, had been punished with the loss of his ears, by a discretionary or arbitrary sentence of the star chamber: [2] so apt were they, on their part, to stretch the petition into such consequences as might deprive the crown of powers which, from immemorial custom, were supposed inherent in it.

But the great article on which the house of commons broke with the king, and which finally created in Charles a disgust to all parliaments, was their claim with regard to tonnage and poundage. On this occasion, therefore, it is necessary to give an account of the controversy.

The duty of tonnage and poundage, in more ancient times, had been commonly a temporary grant of parliament; but it had been conferred on Henry V., and all the succeeding princes, during life, in order to enable them to maintain a naval force for the defence of the kingdom. The necessity of levying this duty had been so apparent, that each king had ever claimed it from the moment of his accession; and the first parliament of each reign had usually by vote conferred on the prince what they found him already in possession of. Agreeably to the inaccurate genius of the old constitution, this abuse, however considerable, had never been perceived nor remedied; though nothing could have been easier than for the parliament to have prevented it. [3]

* State Trials, vol. vii. . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * State Trials, vol. vii. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 246.

* * * Parl. Hist. vol. viii. , 343.

By granting this duty to each prince during his own life, and for a year after his demise to the successor, all inconveniencies had been obviated; and yet the duty had never for a moment been levied without proper authority. But contrivances of that nature were not thought of during those rude ages; and as so complicated and jealous a government as the English cannot subsist without many such refinements, it is easy to see how favorable every inaccuracy must formerly have proved to royal authority, which, on all emergencies, was obliged to supply, by discretionary power, the great deficiency of the laws.

The parliament did not grant the duty of tonnage and poundage to Henry VIII. till the sixth of his reign: yet this prince, who had not then raised his power to its greatest height, continued during that whole time to levy the imposition; the parliament, in their very grant, blame the merchants who had neglected to make payment to the crown; and though one expression of that bill may seem ambiguous, they employ the plainest terms in calling tonnage and poundage the king's due, even before that duty was conferred on him by parliamentary authority. [1] Four reigns, and above a whole century, had since elapsed; and this revenue had still been levied before it was voted by parliament: so long had the inaccuracy continued, without being remarked or corrected.

During that short interval which passed between Charles's accession and his first parliament, he had followed the example of his predecessors; and no fault was found with his conduct in this particular. But what was most remarkable in the proceedings of that house of commons, and what proved beyond controversy that they had seriously formed a plan for reducing their prince to subjection, was, that instead of granting this supply during the king's lifetime, as it had been enjoyed by all his immediate predecessors, they voted it only for a year; and, after that should be elapsed, reserved to themselves the power of renewing or refusing the same concession. [2] But the house of peers, who saw that this duty was now become more necessary than ever to supply the growing necessities of the crown, and who did not approve of this encroaching spirit in the commons, rejected the bill; and the dissolution of that parliament followed so soon after, that no attempt seems to have been made for obtaining tonnage and poundage in any other form. [3]

* 6 Henry VIII. ca.

* * Journ. 5th July, 1625.

* * * See note C, at the end of the volume.

Charles, meanwhile, continued still to levy this duty by his own authority, and the nation was so accustomed to that exertion of royal power, that no scruple was at first entertained of submitting to it. But the succeeding parliament excited doubts in every one. The commons took there some steps towards declaring it illegal to levy tonnage and poundage without consent of parliament; and they openly showed their intention of employing this engine, in order to extort from the crown concessions of the most important nature. But Charles was not yet sufficiently tamed to compliance; and the abrupt dissolution of that parliament, as above related, put an end, for the time, to their further pretensions.

The following interval between the second and third parliament, was distinguished by so many exertions of prerogative, that men had little leisure to attend to the affair of tonnage and poundage, where the abuse of power in the crown might seem to be of a more disputable nature. But after the commons, during the precedent session, had remedied all these grievances by means of their petition of right, which they deemed so necessary, they afterwards proceeded to take the matter into consideration, and they showed the same intention as formerly, of exacting, in return for the grant of this revenue, very large compliances on the part of the crown. Their sudden profulgation prevented them from bringing their pretensions to a full conclusion.

When Charles opened this session, he had foreseen that the same controversy would arise; and he therefore took care very early, among many mild and reconciling expressions, to inform the commons, "That he had not taken these duties as appertaining to his hereditary prerogative; but that it ever was, and still is, his meaning to enjoy them as a gift of his people: and that, if he had hitherto levied tonnage and poundage he pretended to justify himself only by the necessity of so doing, not by any right which he assumed." [1]

* Rushworth, vol. i. Parl. Hist. vol. viii. , 346.

This concession, which probably arose from the king's moderate temper, now freed from the impulse of Buckingham's violent counsels, might have satisfied the commons, had they entertained no other view than that of ascertaining their own powers and privileges. But they carried their pretensions much higher. They insisted, as a necessary preliminary, that the king should once entirely desist from levying these duties; after which they were to take it into consideration, how far they would restore, him to the possession of a revenue of which he had clearly divested himself. But, besides that this extreme rigor had never been exercised towards any of his predecessors, and many obvious inconveniencies must follow from the intermission of the customs, there were other reasons which deterred Charles from complying with so hard a condition. It was probable, that the commons might renew their former project of making this revenue only temporary, and thereby reducing their prince to perpetual dependence; they certainly would cut off the new impositions which Mary and Elizabeth, but especially James, had levied, and which formed no despicable part of the public revenue: and they openly declared, that they had at present many important pretensions, chiefly with regard to religion; and if compliance were refused, no supply must be expected from the commons.

It is easy to see in what an inextricable labyrinth Charles was now involved. By his own concessions, by the general principles of the English government, and by the form of every bill which had granted this duty, tonnage and poundage was derived entirely from the free gift of the people; and, consequently, might be withdrawn at their pleasure. If unreasonable in their refusal, they still refused nothing but what was their own. If public necessity required this supply, it might be thought also to require the king's compliance with those conditions which were the price of obtaining it. Though the motive for granting it had been the enabling of the king to guard the seas, it did not follow, that because he guarded the seas, he was therefore entitled to this revenue without further formality: since the people had still reserved to themselves the right of judging how far that service merited such a supply. But Charles, notwithstanding his public declaration, was far from assenting to this conclusion in its full extent. The plain consequence, he saw, of all these rigors, and refinements, and inferences, was, that he, without any public necessity, and without any fault of his own, must of a sudden, even from his accession, become a magistrate of a very different nature from any of his predecessors, and must fall into a total dependence on subjects over whom former kings, especially those immediately preceding, had exercised an authority almost unlimited. Entangled in a chain of consequences which he could not easily break, he was inclined to go higher, and rather deny the first principle, than admit of conclusions which to him appeared so absurd and unreasonable. Agree-* to the ideas hitherto entertained both by natives and foreigners, the monarch he esteemed the essence and soul of the English government: and whatever other power pretended to annihilate or even abridge, the royal authority, must necessarily, he thought, either in its nature or exercise, be deemed no better than a usurpation. Willing to preserve the ancient harmony of the constitution, he had ever intended to comply as far as he easily could, with the ancient forms of administration; but when these forms appeared to him, by the inveterate obstinacy of the commons, to have no other tendency than to disturb that harmony, and to introduce a new constitution, he concluded that, in this violent situation, what was subordinate must necessarily yield to what was principal, and the privileges of the people, for a time, give place to royal prerogative. From the rank of a monarch, to be degraded into a slave of his insolent, ungrateful subjects, seemed of all indignities the greatest; and nothing, in his judgment, could exceed the humiliation attending such a state, but the meanness of tamely submitting to it, without making some efforts to preserve the authority transmitted to him by his predecessors.

Though these were the king’s reflections and resolutions before the parliament assembled, he did not immediately break with them upon their delay in voting him this supply. He thought that he could better justify any strong measure which he might afterwards be obliged to take, if he allowed them to carry to the utmost extremities their attacks upon his government and prerogative. [1] He contented himself, for the present, with soliciting the house by messages and speeches. But the commons, instead of hearkening to his solicitations proceeded to carry their scrutiny into his management of religion, [2] which was the only grievance to which, in their opinion, they had not as yet, by their petition of right, applied a sufficient remedy.

* Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

It was not possible that this century, so fertile in religious sects and disputes, could escape the controversy concerning fatalism and free will, which, being strongly interwoven both with philosophy and theology had, in all ages, thrown every school and every church into such inextricable doubt and perplexity. The first reformers in England, as in other European countries, had embraced the most rigid tenets of predestination and absolute decrees, and had composed upon that, system all the articles of their religious creed. But these principles having met with opposition from Arminius and his sectaries, the controversy was soon brought into this island and began here to diffuse itself. The Arminians, finding more encouragement from the superstitious spirit of the church than from the fanaticism of the Puritans, gradually incorporated themselves with the former; and some of that sect, by the indulgence of James and Charles, had attained the highest preferments in the hierarchy. But their success with the public had not been altogether answerable to that which they met with in the church and the court. Throughout the nation, they still lay under the reproach of innovation and heresy. The commons now levelled against them their formidable censures, and made them the objects of daily invective and declamation. Their protectors were stigmatized; their tenets canvassed; their views represented as dangerous and pernicious. To impartial spectators surely, if any such had been at that time in England, it must have given great entertainment to see a popular assembly, inflamed with faction and enthusiasm, pretend to discuss questions to which the greatest philosophers, in the tranquillity of retreat, had never hitherto been able to find any satisfactory solution.

Amidst that complication of disputes in which men were then involved, we may observe, that the appellation “Puritan” stood for three parties, which, though commonly united, were yet actuated by very different views and motives. There were the political Puritans, who maintained the highest principles of civil liberty; the Puritans in discipline, who were averse to the ceremonies and Episcopal government of the church; and the doctrinal Puritans, who rigidly defended the speculative system of the first reformers. In opposition to all these stood the court party, the hierarchy, and the Arminians; only with this distinction, that the latter sect, being introduced a few years before, did not as yet comprehend all those who were favorable to the church and to monarchy. But, as the controversies on every subject grew daily warmer, men united themselves more intimately with their friends, and separated themselves wider from their antagonists; and the distinction gradually became quite uniform and regular.

This house of commons, which, like all the preceding, during the reigns of James and Charles, and even of Elizabeth, was much governed by the Puritanical party, thought that they could not better serve their cause than by branding and punishing the Arminian sect, which, introducing an innovation in the church, were the least favored and least powerful of all their antagonists. From this measure, it was easily foreseen, that, besides gratifying the animosity of the doctrinal Puritans, both the Puritans in discipline and those in politics would reap considerable advantages. Laud, Neile, Montague, and other bishops, who were the chief supporters of Episcopal government, and the most zealous partisans of the discipline and ceremonies of the church, were all supposed to be tainted with Arminianism. The same men and their disciples were the strenuous preachers of passive obedience, and of entire submission to princes; and if these could once be censured, and be expelled the church and court, it was concluded, that the hierarchy would receive a mortal blow, the ceremonies be less rigidly insisted on, and the king, deprived of his most faithful friends, be obliged to abate those high claims of prerogative on which at present he insisted.

But Charles, besides a view of the political consequences which must result from a compliance with such pretensions, was strongly determined, from principles of piety and conscience, to oppose them. Neither the dissipation incident to youth, nor the pleasures attending a high fortune, had been able to prevent this virtuous prince from embracing the most sincere sentiments of religion: and that character, which in that religious age should have been of infinite advantage to him, proved in the end the chief cause of his ruin; merely because the religion adopted by him was not of that precise mode and sect which began to prevail among his subjects. His piety, though remote from Popery, had a tincture of superstition in it; and, being averse to the gloomy spirit of the Puritans, was represented by them as tending towards the abominations of Antichrist. Laud also had unfortunately acquired a great ascendant over him; and as all those prelates obnoxious to the commons, were regarded as his chief friends and most favored courtiers, he was resolved not to disarm and dishonor himself by abandoning them to the resentment of his enemies. Being totally unprovided with military force, and finding a refractory, independent spirit to prevail among the people, the most solid basis of his authority, he thought consisted in the support which he received from the hierarchy.

In the debates of the commons, which are transmitted to us, it is easy to discern so early some sparks of that enthusiastic fire which afterwards set the whole nation in combustion. One Rouse made use of an allusion which, though familiar seems to have been borrowed from the writings of Lord Bacon. [1] “If a man meet a dog alone,” said he, “the dog is fearful, though ever so fierce by nature: but if the dog have his master with him, he will set upon that man from whom he fled before. This shows, that lower natures, being backed by higher, increase in courage and strength; and certainly man, being backed with Omnipotency, is a kind of omnipotent creature. All things are possible to him that believes; and where all things are possible, there is a kind of omnipotency. Wherefore, let it be the unanimous consent and resolution of us all, to make a vow and covenant henceforth to hold fast our God and our religion; and then shall we henceforth expect with certainty happiness in this world.” [2]

Oliver Cromwell, at that time a young man of no account in the nation, is mentioned in these debates, as complaining of one who, he was told, preached flat Popery. [3] It is amusing to observe the first words of this fanatical hypocrite correspond so exactly to his character.

The inquiries and debates concerning tonnage and poundage went hand in hand with these theological or metaphysical controversies. The officers of the custom-house were summoned before the commons, to give an account by what authority they had seized the goods of merchants who had refused to pay these duties: the barons of the exchequer were questioned concerning their decrees on that head. [4] One of the sheriffs of London was committed to the Tower for his activity in supporting the officers of the custom-house: the goods of Rolles, a merchant, and member of the house, being seized for his refusal to pay the duties, complaints were made of this violence as if it were a breach of privilege: Charles supported his officers in all these measures; and the quarrel grew every day higher between him and the commons.[v*] Mention was made in the house of impeaching Sir Richard Weston the treasurer;[v* *] and the king began to entertain thoughts of finishing the session by a dissolution.

* Essay of Atheism.

* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 289.

* * * * Rushworth, vol. i. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 301.

v Rushworth, vol. i. .

v* Rushworth, vol. i. .

v* * Parl. Hist. vol. viii. .

Sir John Elliot framed a remonstrance against levying tonnage and poundage without consent of parliament, and offered it to the clerk to read. It was refused. He read it himself. The question being then called for, the speaker, Sir John Finch, said, “That he had a command from the king to adjourn, and to put no question;” [1] upon which he rose and left the chair. The whole house was in an uproar. The speaker was pushed back into the chair, and forcibly held in it by Hollis and Valentine, till a short remonstrance was framed, and was passed by acclamation rather than by vote. Papists and Arminians were there declared capital enemies to the commonwealth. Those who levied tonnage and poundage were branded with the same epithet. And even the merchant who should voluntarily pay these duties, were denominated betrayers of English liberty, and public enemies. The doom, being locked, the gentleman usher of the house of lords, who was sent by the king, could not get admittance till this remonstrance was finished. By the king's order, he took the mace from the table, which ended their proceedings, [2] and a few days after the parliament was dissolved.

The discontents of the nation ran high, on account of this violent rupture between the king and parliament. These discontents Charles inflamed by his affectation of a severity which he had not power, nor probably inclination, to carry to extremities. Sir Miles Hobart, Sir Peter Heyman, Selden, Coriton, Long, Strode, were committed to prison on account of the last tumult in the house, which was called sedition. [3]

* The king's power of adjourning, as well as proroguing the parliament, was and is never questioned. In the nineteenth of the late king, the judges determined, that the adjournment by the king kept the parliament in statu quo until the next sitting, but that then no committees were to meet; but if the adjournment be by the house then the committees and other matters do continue. Parl. Hist, vol v.

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* * Rushworth, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

* * * Rushworth, vol. i. , 681. Parl. Hist. vol. viii. May,

With great difficulty, and after several delays, they were released; and the law was generally supposed to be wrested in order to prolong their imprisonment. Sir John Elliot, Hollis, and Valentine, were summoned to their trial in the king's bench, for seditious speeches and behavior in parliament; but refusing to answer before an inferior court for their conduct as members of a superior, they were condemned to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure, to find sureties for their good behavior, and to be fined, the two former a thousand pounds apiece, the latter five hundred. [1] This sentence, procured by the influence of the crown, served only to show the king’s disregard to the privileges of parliament, and to acquire an immense stock of popularity to the sufferers who had so bravely, in opposition to arbitrary power, defended the liberties of their native country. The commons of England, though an immense body, and possessed of the greater part of national property, were naturally somewhat defenceless, because of their personal equality, and their want of leaders: but the king’s severity, if these prosecutions deserve the name, here pointed out leaders to them, whose resentment was inflamed, and whose courage was nowise daunted, by the hardships which they had undergone in so honorable a cause.

So much did these prisoners glory in their sufferings, that, though they were promised liberty on that condition, they would not condescend even to present a petition to the king, expressing their sorrow for having offended him. [2] They unanimously refused to find sureties for their good behavior, and disdained to accept of deliverance on such easy terms. Nay, Hollis was so industrious to continue his meritorious distress, that when one offered to bail him, he would not yield to the rule of court, and be himself bound with his friend. Even Long, who had actually found sureties in the chief justice’s chamber, declared in court that his sureties should no longer continue. [3] Yet because Sir John Elliot Happened to die while in custody, a great clamor was raised against the administration; and he was universally regarded as a martyr to the liberties of England. [4]

* Rushworth, vol. i. , 691.

* * Whitlocke, p. *13.

* * * Kennet vol. iii. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol. v. .

CHAPTER LII

CHARLES I.

1629.

There now opens to us a new scene. Charles naturally disgusted with parliaments, who, he found, were determined to proceed against him with unmitigated rigor, both in invading his prerogative and refusing him all supply, resolved not to call any more, till he should see greater indications of a compliant disposition in the nation. Having lost his great favorite, Buckingham, he became his own minister and never afterwards reposed in any one such unlimited confidence. As he chiefly follows his own genius and disposition, his measures are henceforth less rash and hasty; though the general tenor of his administration still wants somewhat of being entirely legal, and perhaps more of being entirely prudent.

We shall endeavor to exhibit a just idea of the events which followed for some years, so far as they regard foreign affairs, the state of the court, and the government of the nation. The incidents are neither numerous nor illustrious; but the knowledge of them is necessary for understanding the subsequent transactions which are so memorable.

Charles, destitute of all supply, was necessarily reduced to embrace a measure which ought to have been the result of reason and sound policy: he made peace with the two crowns against which he had hitherto waged a war, entered into without necessity, and conducted without glory. Notwithstanding the distracted and helpless condition of England, no attempt was made either by France or Spain to invade their enemy nor did they entertain any further project than to defend themselves against the feeble and ill-concerted expeditions of that kingdom. Pleased that the jealousies and quarrels, between king and parliament had disarmed so formidable a power, they carefully avoided any enterprise which might rouse either the terror or anger of the English, and dispose them to domestic union and submission. The endeavors to regain the good will of the nation were carried so far by the king of Spain, that he generously released and sent home all the English prisoners taken in the expedition against Cadiz.

The example was imitated by France after the retreat of the English from the Isle of Rhé. When princes were in such dispositions, and had so few pretensions on each other, it could not be difficult to conclude a peace. The treaty was first signed with France. [1] The situation of the king’s affairs did not entitle him to demand any conditions for the Hugonots, and they were abandoned to the will of their sovereign.

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Peace was afterwards concluded with Spain, where no conditions were made in favor of the palatine, except that Spain promised in general to use their good offices for his restoration. [2] The influence of these two wars on domestic affairs, and on the dispositions of king and people, was of the utmost consequence; but no alteration was made by them on the foreign interests of the kingdom.

* Rushworth, vol. ii. , 24.

* * Rushworth, vol. ii. . Whitlocke, .

Nothing more happy can be imagined than the situation in which England then stood with regard to foreign affairs. Europe was divided between the rival families of Bourbon and Austria, whose opposite interests, and still more, their mutual jealousies, secured the tranquillity of this island. Their forces were so nearly counterpoised, that no apprehensions were entertained of any event which could suddenly disturb the balance of power between them. The Spanish monarch, deemed the most powerful, lay at greatest distance; and the English, by that means, possessed the advantage of being engaged by political motives into a more intimate union and confederacy with the neighboring potentate. The dispersed situation of the Spanish dominions rendered the naval power of England formidable to them, and kept that empire in continual dependence. France, more vigorous and more compact, was every day rising in policy and discipline; and reached at last an equality of power with the house of Austria; but her progress, slow and gradual, left it still in the power of England, by a timely interposition, to check her superiority. And thus Charles, could he have avoided all dissensions with his own subjects, was in a situation to make himself be courted and respected by every power in Europe; and, what has scarcely ever since been attained by the princes of this island, he could either be active with dignity, or neutral with security.

A neutrality was embraced by the king; and during the rest of his reign, he seems to have little regarded foreign affairs, except so far as he was engaged by honor and by friendship for his sister and the palatine, to endeavor the procuring of some relief for that unhappy family. He joined his good offices to those of France, and mediated a peace between the kings of Sweden and Poland, in hopes of engaging the former to embrace the protection of the oppressed Protestants in the empire. This was the famed Gustavus, whose heroic genius, seconded by the wisest policy, made him in a little time the most distinguished monarch of the age, and rendered his country, formerly unknown and neglected, of great weight in the balance of Europe. To encourage and assist him in his projected invasion of Germany, Charles agreed to furnish him with six thousand men; but, that he might preserve the appearance of neutrality, he made use of the marquis of Hamilton's name. [1]

* Rushworth, vol. i. , 53, 62. 83.

That nobleman entered into an engagement with Gustavus; and enlisting these troops in England and Scotland, at Charles's expense, he landed them in the Elbe. The decisive battle of Leipsic was fought soon after, where the conduct of Tilly and the valor of the imperialists were overcome by the superior conduct of Gustavus and the superior valor of the Swedes. What remained of this hero's life was one continued series of victory, for which he was less beholden to fortune than to those personal endowments which he derived from nature and from industry. That rapid progress of conquest which we so much admire in ancient history, was here renewed in modern annals; and without that cause to which, in former ages, it had ever been owing. Military nations were not now engaged against an undisciplined and unwarlike people; nor heroes set in opposition to cowards. The veteran troops of Ferdinand, conducted by the most celebrated generals of the age, were foiled in every encounter; and all Germany was overrun in an instant by the victorious Swede. But by this extraordinary and unexpected success of his ally, Charles failed of the purpose for which he framed the alliance. Gustavus, elated by prosperity, began to form more extensive plans of ambition; and in freeing Germany from the yoke of Ferdinand, he intended to reduce it to subjection under his own. He refused to restore the palatine to his principality, except on conditions which would have kept him in total dependence. [1] And thus the negotiation was protracted, till the battle of Lutzen, where the Swedish monarch perished in the midst of a complete victory which he obtained over his enemies.

We have carried on these transactions a few years beyond the present period, that we might not be obliged to return to them, nor be henceforth interrupted in our account of Charles's court and kingdoms.

* Franklyn, vol. i. .

When we consider Charles as presiding in his court, as associating with his family, it is difficult to imagine a character at once more respectable and more amiable. A kind husband, an indulgent father, a gentle master, a steadfast friend; to all these eulogies his conduct in private life fully entitled him. As a monarch too, in the exterior qualities, he excelled; in the essential, he was not defective. His address and manner, though perhaps inclining a little towards stateliness and formality, in the main corresponded to his high rank, and gave grace to that reserve and gravity which were natural to him. The moderation and equity which shone forth in his temper seemed to secure him against rash and dangerous enterprises: the good sense which he displayed in his discourse and conversation, seemed to warrant his success in every reasonable undertaking. Other endowments likewise he had attained, which, in a private gentleman, would have been highly ornamental, and which, in a great monarch, might have proved extremely useful to his people. He was possessed of an excellent taste in all the fine arts; and the love of painting was in some degree his favorite passion. Learned beyond what is common in princes, he was a good judge of writing in others, and enjoyed himself no mean talent in composition. In any other age or nation, this monarch had been secure of a prosperous and a happy reign. But the high idea of his own authority which he had imbibed, made him incapable of giving way to the spirit of liberty which began to prevail among his subjects. His politics were not supported by such vigor and foresight as might enable him to subdue their pretensions, and maintain his prerogative at the high pitch to which it had been raised by his predecessors. And, above all, the spirit of enthusiasm, being universally diffused, disappointed all the views of human prudence, and disturbed the operation of every motive which usually influences society.

But the misfortunes arising from these causes were yet remote. Charles now enjoyed himself in the full exercise of his authority, in a social intercourse with his friends and courtiers, and in a moderate use of those pleasures which he most affected.

After the death of Buckingham, who had somewhat alienated Charles from the queen, she is to be considered as his chief friend and favorite. That rustic contempt of the fair sex which James affected, and which, banishing them from his court, made it resemble more a fair or an exchange than the seat of a great prince, was very wide of the disposition of this monarch. But though full of complaisance to the whole sex, Charles reserved all his passion for his consort, to whom he attached himself with unshaken fidelity and confidence. By her sense and spirit, as well as by her beauty, she justified the fondness of her husband; though it is allowed that, being somewhat of a passionate temper, she precipitated him into hasty and imprudent measures. Her religion likewise, to which she was much addicted, must be regarded as a great misfortune; since it augmented the jealousy which prevailed against the court, and engaged her to procure for the Catholics some indulgences which were generally distasteful to the nation. [1]

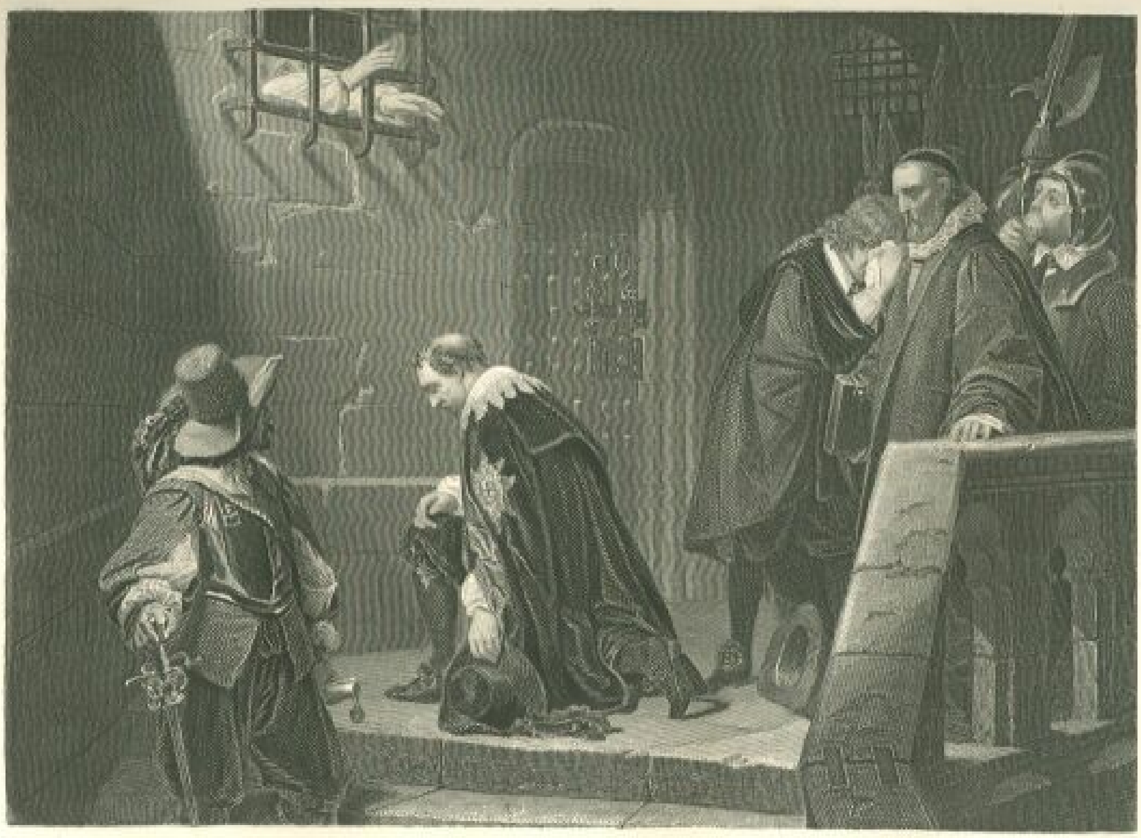
In the former situation of the English government, when the sovereign was in a great measure independent of his subjects, the king chose his ministers either from personal favor, or from an opinion of their abilities, without any regard to their parliamentary interest or talents. It has since been the maxim of princes, wherever popular leaders encroach too much on royal authority, to confer offices on them, in expectation that they will afterwards become more careful not to diminish that power which has become their own. These politics were now embraced by Charles; a sure proof that a secret revolution had happened in the constitution, and had necessitated the prince to adopt new maxims of government. [2]

* May, p 21.

* * Sir Edw. Walker, .

But the views of the king were at this time so repugnant to those of the Puritans, that the leaders whom he gained, lost from that moment all interest with their party, and were even pursued as traitors with implacable hatred and resentment. This was the case with Sir Thomas Wentworth, whom the king created, first a baron, then a viscount, and afterwards earl of Strafford; made him president of the council of York, and deputy of Ireland; and regarded him as his chief minister and counsellor. By his eminent talents and abilities, Strafford merited all the confidence which his master reposed in him: his character was stately and austere; more fitted to procure esteem than love: his fidelity to the king was unshaken; but as he now employed all his counsels to support the prerogative, which he had formerly bent all his endeavors to diminish his virtue seems not to have been entirely pure, but to have been susceptible of strong impressions from private interest and ambition. Sir Dudley Digges was about the same time created master of the rolls; Noy, attorney-general; Littleton, solicitor-general. All these had likewise been parliamentary leaders, and were men eminent in their profession. [1]

* Whitlocke, . May, .



LORD STRAFFORD.

In all ecclesiastical affairs, and even in many civil, Laud, bishop of London, had great influence over the king. This man was virtuous, if severity of manners alone, and abstinence from pleasure, could deserve that name. He was learned, if polemical knowledge could entitle him to that praise. He was disinterested; but with unceasing industry he studied to exalt the priestly and prelatical character, which was his own. His zeal was unrelenting in the cause of religion; that is, in imposing by rigorous measures his own tenets and pious ceremonies on the obstinate Puritans, who had profanely dared to oppose him. In prosecution of his holy purposes, he overlooked every human consideration; or, in other words, the heat and indiscretion of his temper made him neglect the views of prudence and rules of good manners. He was in this respect happy, that all his enemies were also imagined by him the declared enemies to loyalty and true piety, and that every exercise of his anger by that means became in his eyes a merit and a virtue. This was the man who acquired so great an ascendant over Charles, and who led him, by the facility of his temper, into a conduct which proved so fatal to himself and to his kingdoms.

The humor of the nation ran at that time into the extreme opposite to superstition; and it was with difficulty that the ancient ceremonies to which men had been accustomed, and which had been sanctified by the practice of the first reformers, could be retained in divine service: yet was this the time which Laud chose for the introduction of new ceremonies and observances. Besides that these were sure to displease as innovations, there lay, in the opinion of the public, another very forcible objection against them. Laud, and the other prelates who embraced his measures, were generally well instructed in sacred antiquity, and had adopted many of those religious sentiments which prevailed during the fourth and fifth centuries; when the Christian church, as is well known, was already sunk into those superstitions which were afterwards continued and augmented by the policy of Rome. The revival, therefore, of the ideas and practices of that age, could not fail of giving the English faith and liturgy some resemblance to the Catholic superstition, which the kingdom in general, and the Puritans in particular, held in the greatest horror and detestation. Men also were apt to think, that, without some secret purpose, such insignificant observances would not be imposed with such unrelenting zeal on the refractory nation; and that Laud's scheme was, to lead back the English by gradual steps to the religion of their ancestors. They considered not, that the very insignificancy of these ceremonies recommended them to the superstitious prelate, and made them appear the more peculiarly sacred and religious, as they could serve to no other purpose. Nor was the resemblance to the Romish ritual any objection, but rather a merit with Laud and his brethren; who bore a much greater kindness to the mother church, as they called her, than to the sectaries and Presbyterians, and frequently recommended her as a true Christian church; an appellation which they refused, or at least scrupled to give to the others. [1] So openly were these tenets espoused, that not only the discontented Puritans believed the church of England to be relapsing fast into Romish superstition: the court of Rome itself entertained hopes of regaining its authority in this island; and, in order to forward Laud's supposed good intentions, an offer was twice made him in private of a cardinal's hat, which he declined accepting. [2] His answer was, as he says himself, "That something dwelt within him, which would not suffer his compliance, till Rome were other than it is." [3]

* May, .

* * Rushworth, vol. ii. . Welwood, .

* * * Rushworth, vol. iii. . Whitlocke, .

A court lady, daughter of the earl of Devonshire, having turned Catholic, was asked by Laud the reason of her conversion: “’Tis chiefly,” said she, “because I hate to travel in a crowd.” The meaning of this expression being demanded, she replied, “I perceive your grace and many others are making haste to Rome; and therefore, in order to prevent my being crowded, I have gone before you.” It must be confessed, that though Laud deserved not the appellation of Papist, the genius of his religion was, though in a less degree, the same with that of the Romish: the same profound respect was exacted to the sacerdotal character, the same submission required to the creeds and decrees of synods and councils; the same pomp and ceremony was affected in worship; and the same superstitious regard to days, postures, meats, and vestments. No wonder, therefore, that this prelate was every where among the Puritans regarded with horror, as the forerunner of Antichrist.

As a specimen of the new ceremonies to which Laud sacrificed his own quiet and that of the nation, it may not be amiss to relate those which he was accused of employing in the consecration of St. Catharine’s church, and which were the object of such general scandal and offence.

On the bishop’s approach to the west door of the church, a loud voice cried, “Open, open, ye everlasting doors, that the king of glory may enter in!” Immediately the doors of the church flew open, and the bishop entered. Falling upon his knees, with eyes elevated and arms expanded, he uttered these words: “This place is holy; the ground is holy: in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I pronounce it holy.”

Going towards the chancel, he several times took up from the floor some of the dust, and threw it in the air. When he approached, with his attendants, near to the communion table, he bowed frequently towards it; and on their return, they went round the church, repeating, as they marched along, some of the psalms; and then said a form of prayer, which concluded with these words: “We consecrate this church, and separate it unto thee as holy ground, not to be profaned any more to common uses.”

After this, the bishop, standing near the communion table solemnly pronounced many imprecations upon such as should afterwards pollute that holy place by musters of soldiers, or keeping in it profane law-courts, or carrying burdens through it. On the conclusion of every curse, he bowed towards the east, and cried, “Let all the people say, Amen.”

The imprecations being all so piously finished, there were poured out a number of blessings upon such as had any hand in framing and building that sacred and beautiful edifice, and on such as had given, or should hereafter give to it, any chalices, plate, ornaments, or utensils. At every benediction he in like manner bowed towards the east, and cried, “Let all the people say, Amen.”

The sermon followed; after which the bishop consecrated and administered the sacrament in the following manner.

As he approached the communion table, he made many lowly reverences; and coming up to that part of the table where the bread and wine lay, he bowed seven times. After the reading of many prayers, he approached the sacramental elements, and gently lifted up the corner of the napkin in which the bread was placed. When he beheld the bread, he suddenly let fall the napkin, flew back a step or two, bowed three several times towards the bread; then he drew nigh again, opened the napkin, and bowed as before.

Next he laid his hand on the cup, which had a cover upon it, and was filled with wine. He let go the cup, fell back, and bowed thrice towards it. He approached again; and lifting op the cover, peeped into the cup. Seeing the wine, he let fall the cover, started back, and bowed as before. Then he received the sacrament, and gave it to others. And many prayers being said, the solemnity of the consecration ended. The walls, and floor, and roof of the fabric were then supposed to be sufficiently holy. [1]

Orders were given, and rigorously insisted on, that the communion table should be removed from the middle of the area where it hitherto stood in all churches, except in cathedrals. [2] It was placed at the east end, railed in, and denominated an “altar;” as the clergyman who officiated received commonly the appellation of “priest.” It is not easy to imagine the discontents excited by this innovation, and the suspicions which it gave rise to.

* Rushworth, vol. ii. , 77. Welwood, . Franklyn, .

* * Rushworth, vol ii. . Whitlocke, .

The kneeling at the altar, and the using of copes, a species of embroidered vestment, in administering the sacrament, were also known to be great objects of scandal, as being Popish practices; but the opposition rather increased than abated the zeal of the prelate for the introduction of these habits and ceremonies.

All kinds of ornament, especially pictures, were necessary for supporting that mechanical devotion which was purposed to be raised in this model of religion: but as these had been so much employed by the church of Rome, and had given rise to so much superstition, or what the Puritans called idolatry it was impossible to introduce them into English churches without exciting general murmurs and complaints. But Laud possessed of present authority, persisted in his purpose, and made several attempts towards acquiring these ornaments. Some of the pictures introduced by him were also found, upon inquiry, to be the very same that might be met with in the mass-book. The crucifix too, that eternal consolation of all pious Catholics, and terror to all sound Protestants, was not forgotten on this occasion. [1]

It was much remarked, that Sheffield, the recorder of Salisbury, was tried in the star chamber, for having broken, contrary to the bishop of Salisbury's express injunctions, a painted window of St. Edmond's church in that city. He boasted that he had destroyed these monuments of idolatry: but for this effort of his zeal, he was fined five hundred pounds, removed from his office, condemned to make a public acknowledgment, and be bound to his good behavior. [2]

Not only such of the clergy as neglected to observe every ceremony were suspended and deprived by the high commission court: oaths were, by many of the bishops, imposed or the churchwardens; and they were sworn to inform against any one who acted contrary to the ecclesiastical canons. [3] Such a measure, though practised during the reign of Elizabeth, gave much offence, as resembling too nearly the practice of the Romish inquisition.

To show the greater alienation from the churches reformed after the Presbyterian model, Laud advised that the discipline and worship of the church should be imposed on the English regiments and trading companies abroad. [4] All foreigners of the Dutch and Walloon congregations were commanded to attend the established church; and indulgence was granted to none after the children of the first denizens.

* Rushworth, vol. ii. , 273.

* * Rushworth, Vol. ii. . State Trials, vol. v. p 46. Franklyn, , 411, 412.

* * * Rushworth, vol. ii. .

* * * * Rushworth, vol, ii. . Franklyn, .

v Rushworth, vol. ii.

Scudamore, too, the king's ambassador at Paris, had orders to withdraw himself from the communion of the Hugonots. Even men of sense were apt to blame this conduct, not only because it gave offence in England, but because, in foreign countries, it lost the crown the advantage of being considered as the head and support of the reformation. [1]

On pretence of pacifying disputes, orders were issued from the council, forbidding on both sides all preaching and printing with regard to the controverted points of predestination and free will. But it was complained of, and probably with reason that the impartiality was altogether confined to the orders, and that the execution of them was only meant against the Calvinists.

In return for Charles's indulgence towards the church, Laud and his followers took care to magnify, on every occasion, the regal authority, and to treat with the utmost disdain or detestation all Puritanical pretensions to a free and independent constitution. But while these prelates were so liberal in raising the crown at the expense of public liberty, they made no scruple of encroaching, themselves, on the royal rights the most incontestable, in order to exalt the hierarchy, and procure to their own order dominion and independence. All the doctrines which the Romish church had borrowed from some of the fathers, and which freed the spiritual from subordination to the civil power, were now adopted by the church of England, and interwoven with her political and religious tenets. A divine and apostolical charter was insisted on, preferably to a legal and parliamentary one. [2]

* State Papers collected by the earl of Clarendon, p 338.

* * Whitlocke, .

The sacerdotal character was magnified as sacred and indefeasible: all right to spiritual authority, or even to private judgment in spiritual subjects, was refused to profane laymen: ecclesiastical courts were held by the bishops in their own name, without any notice taken of the king's authority: and Charles, though extremely jealous of every claim in popular assemblies, seemed rather to encourage than repress those encroachments of his clergy. Having felt many sensible inconveniencies from the independent spirit of parliaments, he attached himself entirely to those who professed a devoted obedience to his crown and person; nor did he foresee, that the ecclesiastical power which he exalted, not admitting of any precise boundary, might in time become more dangerous to public peace, and no less fatal to royal prerogative, than the other.

So early as the coronation, Laud was the person, according to general opinion, that introduced a novelty which, though overlooked by Charles, made a deep impression on many of the bystanders. After the usual ceremonies, these words were recited to the king: "Stand and hold fast, from henceforth the place to which you have been heir by the succession of your forefathers, being now delivered to you by the authority of Almighty God, and by the hands of us and all the bishops and servants of God. And, as you see the clergy to come nearer the altar than others, so remember that, in all places convenient, you give them greater honor; that the Mediator of God and man may establish you on the kingly throne, to be a mediator betwixt the clergy and the laity; and that you may reign forever with Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords." [1]

The principles which exalted prerogative, were not entertained by the king merely as soft and agreeable to his royal ears; they were also put in practice during the time that he ruled without parliaments. Though frugal and regular in his expense, he wanted money for the support of government; and he levied it, either by the revival of obsolete laws, or by violations, some more open, some more disguised, of the privileges of the nation. Though humane and gentle in his temper, he gave way to a few severities in the star chamber and high commission, which seemed necessary in order to support the present mode of administration, and repress the rising spirit of liberty throughout the kingdom. Under these two heads may be reduced all the remarkable transactions of this reign during some years; for, in peaceable and prosperous times, where a neutrality in foreign affairs is observed, scarcely any thing is remarkable, but what is in some degree blamed or blamable. And, lest the hope of relief or protection from parliament might encourage opposition, Charles issued a proclamation, in which he declared, “That whereas, for several ill ends, the calling again of a parliament is divulged; though his majesty has shown, by frequent meetings with his people, his love to the use of parliaments: yet the late abuse having for the present driven him unwillingly out of that course; he will account it presumption for anyone to prescribe to him any time for the calling of that assembly.” [2]

* Franklyn, . Rushworth, vol. i. .

* * Parl. Hist. vol. viii. . Rush. vol. ii. .

This was generally construed as a declaration, that during this reign no more parliaments were intended to be summoned. [1] And every measure of the king’s confirmed a suspicion so disagreeable to the generality of the people.

Tonnage and poundage continued to be levied by the royal authority alone. The former additional impositions were still exacted. Even new impositions were laid on several kinds of merchandise. [2]

The custom-house officers received orders from the council to enter into any house, warehouse, or cellar; to search any trunk or chest; and to break any bulk whatever; in default of the payment of customs. [3]

In order to exercise the militia, and to keep them in good order, each county, by an edict of the council, was assessed in a certain sum, for maintaining a muster-master, appointed for that service. [4]

Compositions were openly made with recusants, and the Popish religion became a regular part of the revenue. This was all the persecution which it underwent during the reign of Charles.

A commission was granted for compounding with such as were possessed of crown lands upon defective titles; and on this pretence some money was exacted from the people.[v*]

There was a law of Edward II.,[v* *] that whoever was possessed of twenty pounds a year in land, should be obliged, when summoned, to appear and to receive the order of knighthood. Twenty pounds at that time, partly by the change of denomination, partly by that in the value of money, were equivalent to two hundred in the seventeenth century; and it seemed just that the king should not strictly insist on the letter of the law, and oblige people of so small revenue to accept of that expensive honor. Edward VI,[v* * *] and Queen Elizabeth,[v* * * *] who had both of them made use of this expedient for raising money, had summoned only those who were possessed of forty pounds a year and upwards to receive knighthood, or compound for their neglect; and Charles imitated their example, in granting the same indulgence.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . May, .

* * Rush. vol. ii. . May, .

* * * Rush. vol. ii. .

* * * * Rush. vol. ii. .

v Rush. vol. ii. , 12, 13, 247.
v* Rush. vol. ii: .
v* * Statutum de militibus.
v* * * Rymer, tom. xv. .
v* * * * Rymer, tom. xv. , 504.

Commissioners were appointed for fixing the rates of composition; and instructions were given to these commissioners not to accept of a less sum than would have been due by the party upon a tax of three subsidies and a half. [1] Nothing proves more plainly how ill disposed the people were to the measures of the crown, than to observe that they loudly complained of an expedient founded on positive statute, and warranted by such recent precedents. The law was pretended to be obsolete; though only one reign had intervened since the last execution of it.

Barnard, lecturer of St. Sepulchre’s, London, used this expression in his prayer before sermon: “Lord, open the eyes of the queen’s majesty, that she may see Jesus Christ, whom she has pierced with her infidelity, superstition, and idolatry.” He was questioned in the high commission court for this insult on the queen; but, upon his submission, dismissed. [2] Leighton, who had written libels against the king, the queen, the bishops, and the whole administration, was condemned by a very severe, if not a cruel sentence; but the execution of it was suspended for some time, in expectation of his submission. [3] All the severities, indeed, of this reign were exercised against those who triumphed in their sufferings, who courted persecution, and braved authority; and on that account their punishment may be deemed the more just, but the less prudent. To have neglected them entirely, had it been consistent with order and public safety, had been the wisest measure that could have been embraced; as perhaps it had been the most severe punishment that could have been inflicted on these zealots.

1631.

In order to gratify the clergy with a magnificent fabric, subscriptions were set on foot for repairing and rebuilding St. Paul's; and the king, by his countenance and example, encouraged this laudable undertaking. [4] By order of the privy council, St. Gregory's church was removed, as an impediment to the project of extending and beautifying the cathedral. Some houses and shops likewise were pulled down, and compensation was made to the owners.

* Rush. vol. ii. , 71, 72. May, .

* * Rush vol. ii. .

* * * Kennets Complete Hist. vol. iii. . Whitlocke, p. 15.

* * * * Whitlocke, .

v Rush. vol. ii. , 89, 90, 207, 462 718.

As there was no immediate prospect of assembling a parliament, such acts of power in the king became necessary; and in no former age would the people have entertained any scruple with regard to them. It must be remarked, that the Puritans were extremely averse to the raising of this ornament to the capital. It savored, as they pretended, of Popish superstition.

A stamp duty was imposed on cards; a new tax, which of itself was liable to no objection, but appeared of dangerous consequence when considered as arbitrary and illegal. [1]

Monopolies were revived; an oppressive method of levying money, being unlimited, as well as destructive of industry. The last parliament of James, which abolished monopolies, had left an equitable exception in favor of new inventions; and on pretence of these, and of erecting new companies and corporations, was this grievance now renewed. The manufacture of soap was given to a company who paid a sum for their patent. [2] Leather, salt, and many other commodities, even down to linen rags, were likewise put under restrictions.

It is affirmed by Clarendon, that so little benefit was reaped from these projects, that of two hundred thousand pounds thereby levied on the people, scarcely one thousand five hundred came into the king's coffers. Though we ought not to suspect the noble historian of exaggerations to the disadvantage of Charles's measures, this fact, it must be owned, appears somewhat incredible. The same author adds, that the king's intention was to teach his subjects how unthrifty a thing it was to refuse reasonable supplies to the crown: an imprudent project: to offend a whole nation under the view of punishment: and to hope by acts of violence to break their refractory spirits, without being possessed of any force to prevent resistance.

1632.

The council of York had been first erected, after a rebellion, by a patent from Henry VIII., without any authority of parliament; and this exercise cf power, like many others, was indulged to that arbitrary monarch. This council had long acted chiefly as a criminal court; but, besides some innovations introduced by James, Charles thought proper some time after Wentworth was made president, to extend its powers, and to give it a large civil jurisdiction, and that in some respects discretionary. [3]

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* Rush. vol. ii. .

* * Rush. vol. ii. , 142, 189, 252.

* * * Rush. vol. ii. p, 158, 159, etc. Franklyn, .

It is not improbable, that the king’s intention was only to prevent inconveniencies, which arose from the bringing of every cause, from the most distant parts of the kingdom, into Westminster Hall: but the consequence, in the mean time, of this measure, was the putting of all the northern counties out of the protection of ordinary law, and subjecting them to an authority somewhat arbitrary. Some irregular acts of that council were this year complained of. [1]

1633.

The court of star chamber extended its authority; and it was matter of complaint that it encroached upon the jurisdiction of the other courts; imposing heavy fines and inflicting severe punishment, beyond the usual course of justice. Sir David Foulis was fined five thousand pounds, chiefly because he had dissuaded a friend from compounding with the commissioners of knighthood. [2]

* Rush. vol. ii. , 203.

* * Rush, vol. ii. , 216, etc.

Prynne, a barrister of Lincoln’s Inn, had written an enormous quarto of a thousand pages, which he called Histrio-Mastyx. Its professed purpose was to decry stage-plays, comedies, interludes, music, dancing; but the author likewise took occasion to declaim against hunting, public festivals, Christmas-keeping, bonfires, and may-poles. His zeal against all these levities, he says, was first moved by observing that plays sold better than the choicest sermons, and that they were frequently printed on finer paper than the Bible itself. Besides, that the players were often Papists, and desperately wicked; the play-houses, he affirms, are Satan’s chapels; the play-haunters little better than incarnate devils; and so many steps in a dance, so many paces to hell. The chief crime of Nero, he represents to have been his frequenting and acting of plays; and those who nobly conspired his death, were principally moved to it, as he affirms, by their indignation at that enormity. The rest of his thousand pages is of a like strain. He had obtained a license from Archbishop Abbot’s chaplain; yet was he indicted in the star chamber as a libeller. It was thought somewhat hard that general invectives against plays should be interpreted into satires against the king and queen, merely because they frequented these amusements, and because the queen sometimes acted a part in pastorals and interludes which were represented at court. The author, it must be owned, had, in plainer terms, blamed the hierarchy, the ceremonies, the innovations in religious worship, and the new superstitions introduced by Laud; [1] and this, probably, together with the obstinacy and petulance of his behavior before the star chamber, was the reason why his sentence was so severe. He was condemned to be put from the bar; to stand on the pillory in two places, Westminster and Cheapside; to lose both his ears, one in each place; to pay five thousand pounds’ fine to the king; and to be imprisoned during life. [2]

This same Prynne was a great hero among the Puritans; and it was chiefly with a view of mortifying that sect, that though of an honorable profession, he was condemned by the star chamber to so ignominious a punishment. The thorough-paced Puritans were distinguishable by the sourness and austerity of their manners, and by their aversion to all pleasure and society. [3] To inspire them with better humor was certainly, both for their own sake and that of the public, a laudable intention in the court; but whether pillories, fines and prisons were proper expedients for that purpose, may admit of some question.

Another expedient which the king tried, in order to infuse cheerfulness into the national devotion, was not much more successful. He renewed his father’s edict for allowing sports and recreations on Sunday to such as attended public worship; and he ordered his proclamation for that purpose to be publicly read by the clergy after divine service. [4] Those who were Puritanically affected refused obedience, and were punished by suspension or deprivation. The differences between the sects were before sufficiently great; nor was it necessary to widen them further by these inventions.

Some encouragement and protection which the king and the bishops gave to wakes, church ales, bride ales, and other cheerful festivals of the common people, were the objects of like scandal to the Puritans.

* Rush. vol. ii. .

* * Rush. vol. ii. , 221, etc.

* * * Dugdale, .

* * * * Rush, vol. ii. , 459. Whitlocke, , 17. Franklyn, *.

v Rush. vol. ii. , 192. May, .

The music in the churches he affirmed not to be the noise of men, but a bleating of brute beasts; choristers bellow the tenor, as it were oxen; bark a counterpart, as it were a kennel of dogs; roar out a treble, as it were a sort of bulls; and grunt out a bass, as it were a number of hogs: Christmas, as it is kept, is the devil’s Christmas: and Prynne employed a great number of pages to persuade men to affect the name of “Puritan,” as if Christ had been a Puritan; and so he saith in his index.

This year, Charles made a journey to Scotland, attended by the court, in order to hold a parliament there, and to pass through the ceremony of his coronation. The nobility and gentry of both kingdoms rivalled each other in expressing all duty and respect to the king, and in showing mutual friendship and regard to each other. No one could have suspected, from exterior appearances, that such dreadful scenes were approaching.

One chief article of business, (for it deserves the name,) which the king transacted in this parliament, was, besides obtaining some supply, to procure authority for ordering the habits of clergymen. [1] The act did not pass without opposition and difficulty. The dreadful surplice was before men’s eyes, and they apprehended, with some reason, that under sanction of this law, it would soon be introduced among them. Though the king believed that his prerogative entitled him to a power, in general, of directing whatever belonged to the exterior government of the church, this was deemed a matter of too great importance to be ordered without the sanction of a particular statute.

Immediately after the king’s return to England, he heard of Archbishop Abbot’s death; and, without delay, he conferred that dignity on his favorite, Laud; who, by this accession of authority, was now enabled to maintain ecclesiastical discipline with greater rigor, and to aggravate the general discontent of the nation.

Laud obtained the bishopric of London for his friend Juxon: and, about a year after the death of Sir Richard Weston, created earl of Portland, had interest enough to engage the king to make that prelate high treasurer. Juxon was a person of great integrity, mildness, and humanity, and endued with a good understanding. [2] Yet did this last promotion give general offence. His birth and character were deemed too obscure for a man raised to one of the highest offices of the crown. And the clergy, it was thought, were already too much elated by former instances of the king's attachment to them, and needed not this further encouragement to assume dominion over the laity. [3] The Puritans, likewise, were much dissatisfied with Juxon, notwithstanding his eminent virtues, because he was a lover of profane field sports and hunting.

* Bushworth, vol. ii. .

* * Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. . May, .

1634.

Ship money was now introduced. The first writs of this kind had been directed to seaport towns only: but ship money was at this time levied on the whole kingdom; and each county was rated at a particular sum, which was after wards assessed upon individuals. [1] The amount of the whole tax was very moderate, little exceeding two hundred thousand pounds: it was levied upon the people with equality: the money was entirely expended on the navy, to the great honor and advantage of the kingdom: as England had no military force, while all the other powers of Europe were strongly armed, a fleet seemed absolutely necessary for her security; and it was obvious, that a navy must be built and equipped at leisure, during peace; nor could it possibly be fitted out on a sudden emergence, when the danger became urgent; yet all these considerations could not reconcile the people to the imposition. It was entirely arbitrary: by the same right any other tax might be imposed: and men thought a powerful fleet, though very desirable both for the credit and safety of the kingdom, but an unequal recompense for their liberties, which, they apprehended, were thus sacrificed to the obtaining of it.

England, it must be owned, was in this respect unhappy in its present situation, that the king had entertained a very different idea of the constitution, from that which began in general to prevail among his subjects. He did not regard national privileges as so sacred and inviolable, that nothing but the most extreme necessity could justify an infringement of them. He considered himself as the supreme magistrate, to whose care Heaven, by his birthright, had committed his people; whose duty it was to provide for their security and happiness, and who was vested with ample discretionary powers for that salutary purpose. If the observance of ancient laws and customs was consistent with the present convenience of government, he thought himself obliged to comply with that rule, as the easiest, the safest, and what procured the most prompt and willing obedience. But when a change of circumstances, especially if derived from the obstinacy of the people, required a new plan of administration, national privileges, he thought, must yield to supreme power; nor could any order of the state oppose any right to the will of the sovereign, directed to the good of the public. [2]

* Rush. vol. ii. , 258, etc.

* * Rush. vol. iv p 535, 542.

That these principles of government were derived from the uniform tenor of the English laws, it would be rash to affirm. The fluctuating nature of the constitution, the impatient humor of the people, and the variety of events, had, no doubt, in different ages, produced exceptions and contradictions. These observations alone may be established on both sides, that the appearances were sufficiently strong in favor of the king to apologize for his following such maxims; and that public liberty must be so precarious under this exorbitant prerogative, as to render an opposition not only excusable, but laudable in the people. [1]

Some laws had been enacted, during the reign of Henry VII., against depopulation, or the converting of arable lands into pasture. By a decree of the star chamber, Sir Anthony Roper was fined four thousand pounds for an offence of that nature. [2] This severe sentence was intended to terrify others into composition; and above thirty thousand pounds were levied by that expedient. [3] Like compositions, or, in default of them, heavy fines, were required for encroachments on the king’s forests, whose bounds, by decrees deemed arbitrary, were extended much beyond what was usual. [4] The bounds of one forest, that of Rockingham, were increased from six miles to sixty. The same refractory humor which made the people refuse to the king voluntary supplies, disposed them, with better reason, to murmur against these irregular methods of taxation.

Morley was fined ten thousand pounds for reviling, challenging, and striking, in the court of Whitehall, Sir George Theobald, one of the king’s servants.[v*] This fine was thought exorbitant; but whether it was compounded, as was usual in fines imposed by the star chamber, we are not informed.

* See note D, at the end of the volume.

* * Rush. vol. ii. ; vol. iii. App. .

* * * Rush. vol. iii. . Franklyn, .

* * * * May, .

v Strafford’s Letters and Despatches, vol. ii. .

v* Rush. vol. ii. .

Allison had reported, that the archbishop of York had incurred the king’s displeasure, by asking a limited toleration for the Catholics, and an allowance to build some churches for the exercise of their religion. For this slander against the archbishop, he was condemned in the star chamber to be fined one thousand pounds, to be committed to prison, to be bound to his good behavior during life, to be whipped, and to be set on the pillory at Westminster, and in three other towns in England. Robins, who had been an accomplice in the guilt, was condemned by a sentence equally severe. [1] Such events are rather to be considered as rare and detached incidents, collected by the severe scrutiny of historians, than as proofs of the prevailing genius of the king’s administration which seems to have been more gentle and equitable than, that of most of his predecessors: there were, on the whole, only five or six such instances of rigor during the course of fifteen years, which elapsed before the meeting of the long parliament. And it is also certain, that scandal against the great, though seldom prosecuted at present, is, however, in the eye of the law, a great crime, and subjects the offender to very heavy penalties.

There are other instances of the high respect paid to the nobility and to the great in that age, when the powers of monarchy, though disputed, still maintained themselves in their pristine vigor. Clarendon [2] tells us a pleasant incident to this purpose: a waterman, belonging to a man of quality, having a squabble with a citizen about his fare, showed his badge, the crest of his master, which happened to be a swan; and thence insisted on better treatment from the citizen. But the other replied carelessly, that he did not trouble his head about that goose. For this offence, he was summoned before the marshal's court; was fined, as having opprobriously defamed the nobleman's crest, by calling the swan a goose; and was in effect reduced to beggary.

Sir Richard Granville had thought himself ill used by the earl of Suffolk in a lawsuit; and he was accused before the star chamber of having said of that nobleman, that he was a base lord. The evidence against him was somewhat lame; yet for this slight offence, insufficiently proved, he was condemned to pay a fine of eight thousand pounds; one half to the earl, the other to the king. [3]

Sir George Markham, following a chase where Lord Darcy's huntsman was exercising his hounds, kept closer to the dogs than was thought proper by the huntsman, who, besides other rudeness, gave him foul language, which Sir George returned with a stroke of his whip. The fellow threatened to complain to his master: the knight replied, "If his master should justify such insolence, he would serve him in the same manner;" or words to that effect. Sir George was summoned before the Star chamber, and fined ten thousand pounds: "So fine a thing was it in those days to be a lord!" — a natural reflection of Lord Lansdown's in relating this incident. [1] The people, in vindicating their liberties from the authority of the crown, threw

* Bush. vol. u. p, 269.

* * Life of Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * Lord Lansdown, .

off also the yoke of the nobility. It is proper to remark that this last incident happened early in the reign of James. The present practice of the star chamber was far from being an innovation; though the present dispositions of the people made them repine more at this servitude.

1635.

Charles had imitated the example of Elizabeth and James, and had issued proclamations forbidding the landed gentlemen and the nobility to live idly in London, and ordering them to retire to their country seats. [2] For disobedience to this edict, many were indicted by the attorney-general, and were fined in the star chamber. [3] This occasioned discontents; and the sentences were complained of as illegal. But if proclamations had authority, of which nobody pretended to doubt, must they not be put in execution? In no instance I must confess, does it more evidently appear, what confused and uncertain ideas were during that age entertained concerning the English constitution.

Ray, having exported fuller’s earth, contrary to the king’s proclamation, was, besides the pillory, condemned in the star chamber to a fine of two thousand pounds. [4] Like fines were levied on Terry, Eman, and others, for disobeying a proclamation which forbade the exportation of gold. In order to account for the subsequent convulsions, even these incidents are not to be overlooked as frivolous or contemptible. Such severities were afterwards magnified into the greatest enormities.

There remains a proclamation of this year, prohibiting hackney coaches from standing in the street.[v*] We are told, that there were not above twenty coaches of that kind in London. There are at present near eight hundred.

* Lord Lansdown, . This story is told differently in Hobart’s Reports, . It there appears, that Markham was fined only five hundred pounds, and very deservedly; for he gave the lie and wrote a challenge to Lord Darcy. James was anxious to discourage the practice of duelling, which was then very prevalent.

* * Rush. vol. ii. .

* * * Rush. vol. ii, .

* * * * Rush. vol. ii. .

v Rush. vol. ii. .
v* Rush. vol. ii. .

1636.

The effects of ship money began now to appear. A formidable fleet of sixty sail, the greatest that England had ever known, was equipped under the earl of Northumberland, who had orders to attack the herring busses of the Dutch, which fished in what were called the British seas. The Dutch were content to pay thirty thousand pounds for a license during this year. They openly denied, however, the claim of dominion in the seas beyond the friths, bays, and shores; and it may be questioned whether the laws of nations warrant any further pretensions.

This year, the king sent a squadron against Sallee; and, with the assistance of the emperor of Morocco, destroyed that receptacle of pirates, by whom the English commerce, and even the English coasts, had long been infested.

1637.

Burton, a divine, and Bastwick, a physician, were tried in the star chamber for seditious and schismatical libels, and were condemned to the same punishment that had been inflicted on Prynne. Prynne himself was tried for a new offence; and, together with another fine of five thousand pounds, was condemned to lose what remained of his ears. Besides that these writers had attacked with great severity, and even an intemperate zeal, the ceremonies, rites, and government of the church, the very answers which they gave in to the court were so full of contumacy and of invectives against the prelates, that no lawyer could be prevailed on to sign them. [1] The rigors, however, which they underwent, being so unworthy men of their profession, gave general offence; and the patience, or rather alacrity, with which they suffered, increased still further the indignation of the public. [2]

* Rush. vol. ii. , 382, etc. State Trials, vol. v. p. 66.

* * State Trials, vol. v. .

The severity of the star chamber, which was generally ascribed to Laud’s passionate disposition, was, perhaps, in itself somewhat blamable; but will naturally, to us, appear enormous, who enjoy, in the utmost latitude, that liberty of the press, which is esteemed so necessary in every monarchy, confined by strict legal limitations. But as these limitations were not regularly fixed during the age of Charles, nor at any time before, so was this liberty totally unknown, and was generally deemed, as well as religious toleration, incompatible with all good government. No age or nation among the moderns had ever set an example of such an indulgence; and it seems unreasonable to judge of the measures embraced during one period by the maxims which prevail in another.

Burton, in his book where he complained of innovations mentioned, among others, that a certain Wednesday had been appointed for a fast, and that the fast was ordered to be celebrated without any sermons. [1] The intention, as he pretended, of that novelty was, by the example of a fast without sermons, to suppress all the Wednesday’s lectures in London. It is observable, that the church of Rome and that of England, being both of them lovers of form, and ceremony, and order, are more friends to prayer than preaching; while the Puritanical sectaries, who find that the latter method of address, being directed to a numerous audience present and visible, is more inflaming and animating, have always regarded it as the chief part of divine service. Such circumstances, though minute, it may not be improper to transmit to posterity; and those who are curious of tracing the history of the human mind, may remark how far its several singularities coincide in different ages.

Certain zealots had erected themselves into a society for buying in of impropriations, and transferring them to the church; and great sums of money had been bequeathed to the society for these purposes. But it was soon observed, that the only use which they made of their funds was to establish lecturers in all the considerable churches; men who, without being subjected to Episcopal authority, employed themselves entirely in preaching and spreading the fire of Puritanism. Laud took care, by a decree which was passed in the court of exchequer, and which was much complained of, to abolish this society, and to stop their progress. [2] It was, however, still observed, that throughout England the lecturers were all of them Puritanically affected; and from them the clergymen, who contented themselves with reading prayers and homilies to the people, commonly received the reproachful appellation of “dumb dogs.”

* State Trials, vol. v. . Franklyn, .

* * Rush. vol. ii. , 151. Whitlocke, . History of the Life Sufferings of Laud, , 212.

The Puritans, restrained in England, shipped themselves off for America, and laid there the foundations of a government which possessed all the liberty, both civil and religious, of which they found themselves bereaved in their native country. But their enemies, unwilling that they should any where enjoy ease and contentment, and dreading, perhaps, the dangerous consequences of so disaffected a colony, prevailed on the king to issue a proclamation, debarring these devotees access even into those inhospitable deserts. [1] Eight ships, lying in the Thames, and ready to sail, were detained by order of the council; and in these were embarked Sir Arthur Hazelrig, John Hambden, John Pym, and Oliver Cromwell, [2] who had resolved forever to abandon their native country, and fly to the other extremity of the globe; where they might enjoy lectures and discourses of any length or form which pleased them. The king had afterwards full leisure to repent this exercise of his authority.

The bishop of Norwich, by rigorously insisting on uniformity, had banished many industrious tradesmen from that city, and chased them into Holland. [3] The Dutch began to be more intent on commerce than on orthodoxy; and thought that the knowledge of useful arts and obedience to the laws formed a good citizen; though attended with errors in subjects where it is not allowable for human nature to expect any positive truth or certainty.

Complaints about this time were made, that the petition of right was in some instances violated; and that, upon a commitment by the king and council, bail or releasement had been refused to Jennings, Pargiter, and Danvers. [4]

Williams, bishop of Lincoln, a man of spirit and learning, a popular prelate, and who had been lord keeper, was fined ten thousand pounds by the star chamber, committed to the Tower during the king’s pleasure, and suspended from his office. This severe sentence was founded on frivolous pretences, and was more ascribed to Laud’s vengeance, than to any guilt of the bishop. Laud, however, had owed his first promotion to the good offices of that prelate with King James. But so implacable was the haughty primate, that he raised up a new prosecution against Williams, on the strangest pretence imaginable.

* Rush. vol. ii. , 418.

* * Mather’s History of New England, book i. Dugdale. Bates Hutchinson’s History of Massachusetts Bay, vol. i. . This last quoted author puts the fact beyond controversy.

And it is a curious fact, as well with regard to the characters of the men, as of the times. Can any one doubt that the ensuing quarrel was almost entirety theological,

not political? What might be expected of the populace when such was the character of the most enlightened Readers?

* * * May, .

* * * * Rush. vol. ii. .

v Rush. vol. ii. , etc.

In order to levy the fine above mentioned, some officers had been sent to seize all the furniture and books of his episcopal palace of Lincoln; and in rummaging the house, they found in a corner some neglected letters, which had been thrown by as useless. These letters were written by one Osbaldistone, a schoolmaster, and were directed to Williams. Mention was there made of “a little great man;” and in another passage, the same person was denominated “a little urchin.” By inferences and constructions, these epithets were applied to Laud; and on no better foundation was Williams tried anew, as having received scandalous letters, and not discovering that private correspondence. For this offence, another fine of eight thousand pounds was levied on him: Osbaldistone was likewise brought to trial, and condemned to pay a fine of five thousand pounds, and to have his ears nailed to the pillory before his own school. He saved himself by flight; and left a note in his study, wherein he said, “that he was gone beyond Canterbury.” [1]

These prosecutions of Williams seem to have been the most iniquitous measure pursued by the court during the time that the use of parliaments was suspended. Williams had been indebted for all his fortune to the favor of James; but having quarrelled, first with Buckingham, then with Laud, he threw himself into the country party; and with great firmness and vigor opposed all the measures of the king. A creature of the court to become its obstinate enemy, a bishop to countenance Puritans; these circumstances excited indignation, and engaged the ministers in those severe measures. Not to mention, what some writers relate, that, before the sentence was pronounced against him, Williams was offered a pardon upon his submission, which he refused to make; the court was apt to think, that so refractory a spirit must by any expedient be broken and subdued.

In a former trial which Williams underwent, [2] (for these were not the first,) there was mentioned in court a story, which, as it discovers the genius of parties, may be worth relating. Sir John Lambe urging him to prosecute the Puritans, the prelate asked what sort of people these same Puritans were. Sir John replied, “that to the world they seemed to be such as would not swear, whore, or be drunk; out they would lie, cozen, and deceive; that they would frequently hear two sermons a day, and repeat them too, and that some, times they would fast all day long.” This character must be conceived to be satirical; yet it may be allowed, that that sect was more averse to such irregularities as proceed from the excess of gayety and pleasure, than to those enormities which are the most destructive of society, The former were opposite to the very genius and spirit of their religion; the latter were only a transgression of its precepts: and it was not difficult for a gloomy enthusiast to convince himself, that a strict observance of the one would atone for any violation of the other.

* Rush. voL ii. , etc. Whittocke, .

* * Rush. vol. ii. .

In 1632, the treasurer Portland had insisted with the vintners, that they should submit to a tax of a penny a quart upon all the wine which they retailed; but they rejected the demand, In order to punish them, a decree suddenly, without much inquiry or examination, passed in the star chamber, prohibiting them to sell or dress victuals in their houses. [1] Two years after, they were questioned for the breach of this decree; and in order to avoid punishment, they agreed to lend the king six thousand pounds. Being threatened, during the subsequent years, with fines and prosecutions, they at last compounded the matter, and submitted to pay half of that duty which was at first demanded of them. [2] It required little foresight to perceive, that the king's right of issuing proclamations must, if prosecuted, draw on a power of taxation.

* Rash. vol. ii .

* * Rush. vol. ii, .

Lilburne was accused before the star chamber of publishing and dispersing seditious pamphlets. He was ordered to be examined; but refused to take the oath usual in that court that he would answer interrogatories, even though they might lead him to accuse himself. For this contempt, as it was interpreted, he was condemned to be whipped, pilloried, and imprisoned. While he was whipped at the cart, and stood on the pillory, he harangued the populace, and declaimed violently against the tyranny of bishops. From his pockets also he scattered pamphlets, said to be seditious, because they attacked the hierarchy. The star chamber, which was sitting at that very time, ordered him immediately to be gagged. He ceased not, however, though both gagged and pilloried, to stamp with his foot and gesticulate, in order to show the people that, if he had it in his power, he would still harangue them. This behavior gave fresh provocation to the star chamber; and they condemned him to be imprisoned in a dungeon, and to be loaded with irons. [1] It was found difficult to break the spirits of men who placed both their honor and their conscience in suffering.

The jealousy of the church appeared in another instance less tragical. Archy, the king's fool, who by his office had the privilege of jesting on his master and the whole court, happened unluckily to try his wit upon Laud, who was too sacred a person to be played with. News having arrived from Scotland of the first commotions excited by the liturgy, Archy, seeing the primate pass by, called to him, "Who's fool now, my lord?" For this offence Archy was ordered, by sentence of the council, to have his coat pulled over his head and to be dismissed the king's service. [2]

Here is another instance of that rigorous subjection in which all men were held by Laud. Some young gentlemen of Lincoln's Inn, heated by their cups, having drunk confusion to the archbishop, were at his instigation cited before the star chamber. They applied to the earl of Dorset for protection. "Who bears witness against you?" said Dorset. "One of the drawers," they said. "Where did he stand when you were supposed to drink this health?" subjoined the earl, "He was at the door," they replied, "going out of the room." "Tush!" cried he, "the drawer must be mistaken: you drank confusion to the archbishop of Canterbury's enemies and the fellow was gone before you pronounced the last word." This hint supplied the young gentlemen with a new method of defence: and being advised by Dorset to behave with great humility and great submission to the primate, the modesty of their carriage, the ingenuity of their apology, with the patronage of that noble lord, saved them from any severer punishment than a reproof and admonition, with which they were dismissed. [3]

* Rush. vol. ii. , 466, 467.

* * Rush. voL ii. . Welwood, .

* * * Rush. vol. iii. .

This year, John Hambden acquired, by his spirit and courage, universal popularity throughout the nation, and has merited great renown with posterity, for the bold stand which he made in defence of the laws and liberties of his country. After the imposing of ship money, Charles, in order to discourage all opposition, had proposed this question to the judges: "Whether, in a case of necessity, for the defence of the kingdom, he might not impose this taxation; and whether he were not sole judge of the necessity." These guardians of law and liberty replied, with great complaisance, "that in a case of necessity he might impose that taxation, and that he was sole judge of the necessity." [1] Hambden had been rated at twenty shillings for an estate which he possessed in the county of Buckingham: yet, notwithstanding this declared opinion of the judges, notwithstanding the great power and sometimes rigorous maxims of the crown, notwithstanding the small prospect of relief from parliament, he resolved, rather than tamely submit to so illegal an imposition, to stand a legal prosecution, and expose himself to all the indignation of the court. The case was argued during twelve days, in the exchequer chamber, before all the judges of England; and the nation regarded, with the utmost anxiety, every circumstance of this celebrated trial. The event was easily foreseen: but the principles, and reasonings, and behavior of the parties engaged in the trial, were much canvassed and inquired into; and nothing could equal the favor paid to the one side, except the hatred which attended the other.

It was urged by Hambden’s counsel, and by his partisans in the nation, that the plea of necessity was in vain introduced into a trial of law; since it was the nature of necessity to abolish all law, and, by irresistible violence, to dissolve all the weaker and more artificial ties of human society. Not only the prince, in cases of extreme distress, is exempted from the ordinary rules of administration: all orders of men are then levelled; and any individual may consult the public safety by any expedient which his situation enables him to employ. But to produce so violent an effect, and so hazardous to every community, an ordinary danger or difficulty is not sufficient; much less a necessity which is merely fictitious and pretended. Where the peril is urgent and extreme, it will be palpable to every member of the society; and though all ancient rules of government are in that case abrogated, men will readily, of themselves, submit to that irregular authority which is exerted for their preservation. But what is there in common between such suppositions and the present condition of the nation? England enjoys a profound peace with al her neighbors; and what is more, all her neighbors are engaged in furious and bloody wars among themselves, and by their mutual enmities further insure their tranquillity. The very writs themselves, which are issued for the levying of ship money, contradict the supposition of necessity, and pretend only that the seas are infested with pirates; a slight and temporary inconvenience, which may well await a legal supply from parliament. The writs likewise allow several months for equipping the ships; which proves a very calm and deliberate species of necessity, and one that admits of delay much beyond the forty days requisite for summoning that assembly. It is strange, too, that an extreme necessity, which is always apparent, and usually comes to a sudden crisis, should now have continued without interruption for near four years, and should have remained during so long a time invisible to the whole kingdom. And as to

* Rush. vol. ii. . Whitlocke, .

the pretension, that the king is sole judge of the necessity, what is this but to subject all the privileges of the nation to his arbitrary will and pleasure? To expect that the public will be convinced by such reasoning, must aggravate the general indignation, by adding to violence against men’s persons, and their property, so cruel a mockery of their understanding.

In vain are precedents of ancient writs produced: these writs, when examined, are only found to require the seaports, sometimes at their own charge, sometimes at the charge of the counties, to send their ships for the defence of the nation. Even the prerogative which empowered the crown to issue such writs is abolished, and its exercise almost entirely discontinued from the time of Edward III.; [1] and all the authority which remained, or was afterwards exercised, was to press ships into the public service, to be paid for by the public.

How wide are these precedents from a power of obliging the people, at their own charge, to build new ships, to victual and pay them, for the public; nay, to furnish money to the crown for that purpose? What security either against the further extension of this claim, or against diverting to other purposes the public money so levied? The plea of necessity would warrant any other taxation as well as that of ship money; wherever any difficulty shall occur, the administration, instead of endeavoring to elude or overcome it by gentle and prudent measures, will instantly represent it as a reason for infringing all ancient laws and institutions: and if such maxims and such practices prevail, what has become of national liberty? What authority is left to the Great Charter, to the statutes, and to the very petition of right, which in the present reign had been so solemnly enacted by the concurrence of the whole legislature?

The defenceless condition of the kingdom while unprovided with a navy; the inability of the king, from his established revenues, with the utmost care and frugality, to equip and maintain one; the impossibility of obtaining, on reasonable terms, any voluntary supply from parliament; all these are reasons of state, not topics of law. If these reasons appear to the king so urgent as to dispense with the legal rules of government, let him enforce his edicts by his court of star chamber, the proper instrument of irregular and absolute power, not prostitute the character of his judges by a decree which is not, and cannot possibly be legal. By this means, the boundaries, at least,

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* State Trials, vol. v. , 255.

will be kept more distinct between ordinary law and extraordinary exertions of prerogative; and men will know, that the national constitution is only suspended during a present and difficult emergence, but has not under gone a total and fundamental alteration.

Notwithstanding these reasons, the prejudiced judges, four [1] excepted, gave sentence in favor of the crown. Hambden, however, obtained by the trial the end for which he had so generously sacrificed his safety and his quiet: the people were roused from their lethargy, and became sensible of the danger to which their liberties were exposed.

* See State Trials, article, Ship Money, which contains the speeches of four judges in favor of Hambden.

These national questions were canvassed in every company; and the more they were examined, the more evidently did it appear to many, that liberty was totally subverted, and an unusual and arbitrary authority exercised over the kingdom. Slavish principles they said, concur with illegal practices; ecclesiastical tyranny gives aid to civil usurpation; iniquitous taxes are supported by arbitrary punishments; and all the privileges of the nation, transmitted through so many ages, secured by so many laws and purchased by the blood of so many heroes and patriots, now lie prostrate at the feet of the monarch. What though public peace and national industry increased the commerce and opulence of the kingdom? This advantage was temporary, and due alone, not to any encouragement given by the crown, but to the spirit of the English, the remains of their ancient freedom. What though the personal character of the king amidst all his misguided counsels, might merit indulgence, or even praise? He was but one man; and the privileges of the people, the inheritance of millions, were too valuable to be sacrificed to his prejudices and mistakes. Such, or more severe, were the sentiments promoted by a great party in the nation: no excuse on the king’s part, or alleviation, how reasonable soever, could be hearkened to or admitted: and to redress these grievances, a parliament was impatiently longed for; or any other incident, however calamitous, that might secure the people against these oppressions which they felt, or the greater ills which they apprehended from the combined encroachments of church and state.

CHAPTER LIII

CHARLES I.

1637.

The grievances under which the English labored when considered in themselves, without regard to the constitution, scarcely deserve the name; nor were they either burdensome on the people’s properties, or anywise shocking to the natural humanity of mankind. Even the imposition of ship money, independent of the consequences, was a great and evident advantage to the public, by the judicious use which the king made of the money levied by that expedient. And though it was justly apprehended, that such precedents, if patiently submitted to, would end in a total disuse of parliaments, and in the establishment of arbitrary authority, Charles dreaded no opposition from the people, who are not commonly much affected with consequences, and require some striking motive to engage them in a resistance of established government. All ecclesiastical affairs were settled by law and uninterrupted precedent; and the church was become a considerable barrier to the power, both legal and illegal, of the crown. Peace too, industry, commerce, opulence; nay, even justice and lenity of administration, notwithstanding some very few exceptions; all these were enjoyed by the people; and every other blessing of government, except liberty, or rather the present exercise of liberty and its proper security. [1] It seemed probable, therefore, that affairs might long have continued on the same footing in England, had it not been for the neighborhood of Scotland; a country more turbulent, and less disposed to submission and obedience. It was thence the commotions first arose; and is therefore time for us to return thither, and to give an account of the state of affairs in that kingdom.

* Clarendon, , 75. May, . Warwick, .

Though the pacific, and not unskilful government of James, and the great authority which he had acquired, had much allayed the feuds among the great families, and had established law and order throughout the kingdom, the Scottish nobility were still possessed of the chief power and influence over the people. Their property was extensive; their hereditary jurisdictions and the feudal tenures increased their authority; and the attachment of the gentry to the heads of families established a kind of voluntary servitude under the chieftains. Besides that long absence had much loosened the King’s connections with the nobility, who resided chiefly at their country seats, they were in general, at this time, though from slight causes, much disgusted with the court. Charles, from the natural piety or superstition of his temper, was extremely attached to the ecclesiastics; and as it is natural for men to persuade themselves that their interest coincides with their inclination, he had established it as a fixed maxim of policy, to increase the power and authority of that order. The prelates, he thought, established regularity and discipline among the clergy; the clergy inculcated obedience and loyalty among the people; and as that rank of men had no separate authority and no dependence but on the crown, the royal power, it would seem, might with the greater safety be intrusted in their hands. Many of the prelates, therefore, were raised to the chief dignities of the state; [1] Spotswood, archbishop of St. Andrews, was created chancellor: nine of the bishops were privy councillors: the bishop of Ross aspired to the office of treasurer: some of the prelates possessed places in the exchequer: and it was even endeavored to revive the first institution of the college of justice, and to share equally between the clergy and laity the whole judicial authority. [2]

* Rush. vol. ii. . May, .

* * Guthry’s Memoirs, Burnet’s Mem. , 30.

These advantages, possessed by the church, and which the bishops did not always enjoy with suitable modesty, disgusted the haughty nobility, who, deeming themselves much superior in rank and quality to this new order of men, were displeased to find themselves inferior in power and influence. Interest joined itself to ambition, and begat a jealousy lest the episcopal sees, which at the reformation had been pillaged by the nobles, should again be enriched at the expense of that order. By a most useful and beneficial law, the impropriations had already been ravished from the great men: competent salaries had been assigned to the impoverished clergy from the tithes of each parish: and what remained, the proprietor of the land was empowered to purchase at a low valuation. [1] The king likewise, warranted by ancient law and practice, had declared for a general resumption of all crown lands alienated by his predecessors; and though he took no step towards the execution of this project, the very pretension to such power had excited jealousy and discontent. [2]

Notwithstanding the tender regard which Charles bore to the whole church, he had been able in Scotland to acquire only the affection of the superior rank among the clergy. The ministers in general equalled, if not exceeded, the nobility in their prejudices against the court, against the prelates, and against episcopal authority. [3] Though the establishment of the hierarchy might seem advantageous to the inferior clergy, both as it erected dignities to which all of them might aspire, and as it bestowed a lustre on the whole body, and allured men of family into it, these views had no influence on the Scottish ecclesiastics. In the present disposition of men's minds, there was another circumstance which drew consideration, and counterbalanced power and riches, the usual foundations of distinction among men; and that was the fervor of piety, and the rhetoric, however barbarous, of religious lectures and discourses. Checked by the prelates in the license of preaching, the clergy regarded episcopal jurisdiction both as a tyranny and a usurpation, and maintained a parity among ecclesiastics to be a divine privilege, which no human law could alter or infringe. While such ideas prevailed, the most moderate exercise of authority would have given disgust; much more, that extensive power which the king's indulgence encouraged the prelates to assume. The jurisdiction of presbyteries, synods, and other democratical courts, was in a manner abolished by the bishops; and the general assembly itself had not been summoned for several years. [4] A new oath was arbitrarily imposed on intrants, by which they swore to observe the articles of Perth, and submit to the liturgy and canons. And in a word, the whole system of church government, during a course of thirty years, had been changed by means of the innovations introduced by James and Charles.

* King's Declaration, . Franklyn, p, 611.

* * King's Declaration, .

* * * Burnet's Mem., , 30.

* * * * May, .

The people, under the influence of the nobility and clergy, could not fail to partake of the discontents which prevailed among these two orders; and where real grounds of complaint were wanting, they greedily laid hold of imaginary ones. The same horror against Popery with which the English Puritans were possessed, was observable among the populace in Scotland; and among these, as being more uncultivated and uncivilized, seemed rather to be inflamed into a higher degree of ferocity. The genius of religion which prevailed in the court and among the prelates, was of an opposite nature; and having some affinity to the Romish worship, led them to mollify, as much as possible, these severe prejudices, and to speak of the Catholics in more charitable language, and with more reconciling expressions. From this foundation a panic fear of Popery was easily raised; and every new ceremony or ornament introduced into divine service, was part of that great mystery of iniquity, which, from the encouragement of the king and the bishops, was to overspread the nation. [1] The few innovations which James had made, were considered as preparatives to this grand design; and the further alterations attempted by Charles, were represented as a plain declaration of his intentions. Through the whole course of this reign, nothing had more fatal influence, in both kingdoms, than this groundless apprehension, which with so much industry was propagated, and with so much credulity was embraced, by all ranks of men.

* Burnet’s Mem. , 30, 31.

Amidst these dangerous complaints and terrors of religious innovation, the civil and ecclesiastical liberties of the nation were imagined, and with some reason, not to be altogether free from invasion.

The establishment of the high commission by James, without any authority of law, seemed a considerable encroachment of the crown, and erected the most dangerous and arbitrary of all courts, by a method equally dangerous and arbitrary. All the steps towards the settlement of Episcopacy had indeed been taken with consent of parliament: the articles of Perth were confirmed in 1621: in 1633, the king had obtained a general ratification of every ecclesiastical establishment: but these laws had less authority with the nation, as they were known to have passed contrary to the sentiments even of those who voted for them, and were in reality extorted by the authority and importunity of the sovereign. The means, however, which both James and Charles had employed, in order to influence the parliament, were entirely regular, and no reasonable pretence had been afforded for representing these laws as null or invalid.

But there prevailed among the greater part of the nation another principle, of the most important and most dangerous nature; and which, if admitted, destroyed entirely the validity of all such statutes. The ecclesiastical authority was supposed totally independent of the civil; and no act of parliament, nothing but the consent of the church itself, was represented as sufficient ground for the introduction of any change in religious worship or discipline. And though James had obtained the vote of assemblies for receiving Episcopacy and his new rites; it must be confessed, that such irregularities had prevailed in constituting these ecclesiastical courts, and such violence in conducting them, that there were some grounds for denying the authority of all their acts. Charles, sensible that an extorted consent, attended with such invidious circumstances, would rather be prejudicial to his measures, had wholly laid aside the use of assemblies, and was resolved, in conjunction with the bishops, to govern the church by an authority to which he thought himself fully entitled, and which he believed inherent in the crown.

The king's great aim was to complete the work so happily begun by his father; to establish discipline upon a regular system of canons, to introduce a liturgy into public worship, and to render the ecclesiastical government of all his kingdoms regular and uniform. Some views of policy might move him to this undertaking; but his chief motives were derived from principles of zeal and conscience.

The canons for establishing ecclesiastical jurisdiction were promulgated in 1635; and were received by the nation, though without much appearing opposition, yet with great inward apprehension and discontent. Men felt displeasure at seeing the royal authority highly exalted by them, and represented as absolute and uncontrollable. They saw these speculative principles reduced to practice, and a whole body of ecclesiastical laws established without any previous consent either of church or state. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

They dreaded lest, by a parity of reason, like arbitrary authority, from like pretences and principles, would be assumed in civil matters: they remarked, that the delicate boundaries which separate church and state were already passed, and many civil ordinances established by the canons, under color of ecclesiastical institutions: and they were apt to deride the negligence with which these important edicts had been compiled, when they found that the new liturgy or service-book was every where, under severe penalties, enjoined by them, though it had not yet been composed or published. [1] It was, however, soon expected; and in the reception of it, as the people are always most affected by what is external and exposed to the senses, it was apprehended that the chief difficulty would consist.

The liturgy which the king, from his own authority, imposed on Scotland, was copied from that of England: but, lest a servile imitation might shock the pride of his ancient kingdom, a few alterations, in order to save appearances, were made in it; and in that shape it was transmitted to the bishops at Edinburgh. [2] But the Scots had universally entertained a notion, that, though riches and worldly glory had been shared out to them with a sparing hand, they could boast of spiritual treasures more abundant and more genuine than were enjoyed by any nation under heaven. Even their southern neighbors, they thought, though separated from Rome, still retained a great tincture of the primitive pollution; and their liturgy was represented as a species of mass, though with some less show and embroidery. [3] Great prejudices, therefore, were entertained against it, even considered in itself; much more when regarded as a preparative, which was soon to introduce into Scotland all the abominations of Popery. And as the very few alterations which distinguished the new liturgy from the English, seemed to approach nearer to the doctrine of the real presence, this circumstance was deemed an undoubted confirmation of every suspicion with which the people were possessed. [4]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * King’s Decl. . May, .

* * * King’s Decl. .

* * * * Burnet’s Mem. p. *8*1. Rush. vol. ii. . May, p. 31.

Easter-day was, by proclamation, appointed for the first reading of the service in Edinburgh: but in order to judge more surely of men's dispositions, the council delayed the matter till the twenty-third of July; and they even gave notice, the Sunday before, of their intention to commence the use of the new liturgy. As no considerable symptoms of discontent appeared, they thought that they might safely proceed in their purpose; and accordingly, in the cathedral church of St. Giles, the dean of Edinburgh, arrayed in his surplice, began the service; the bishop himself and many of the privy council being present. But no sooner had the dean opened the book than a multitude of the meanest sort, most of them women, clapping their hands, cursing, and crying out, "A pope, a pope! Antichrist! stone him!" raised such a tumult that it was impossible to proceed with the service. The bishop, mounting the pulpit in order to appease the populace, had a stool thrown at him; the council was insulted: and it was with difficulty that the magistrates were able, partly by authority, partly by force, to expel the rabble, and to shut the doors against them. The tumult, however, still continued without: stones were thrown at the doors and windows: and when the service was ended, the bishop, going home, was attacked, and narrowly escaped from the hands of the enraged multitude. In the afternoon, the privy seal, because he carried the bishop in his coach, was so pelted with stones, and hooted at with execrations, and pressed upon by the eager populace, that if his servants with drawn swords had not kept them off, the bishop's life had been exposed to the utmost danger. [1]

Though it was violently suspected that the low populace, who alone appeared, had been instigated by some of higher condition, yet no proof of it could be produced; and every one spake with disapprobation of the licentiousness of the giddy multitude. [2] It was not thought safe, however, to hazard a new insult by any new attempt to read the liturgy; and the people seemed for the time to be appeased and satisfied. But it being known that the king still persevered in his intentions of imposing that mode of worship, men fortified themselves still further in their prejudices against it; and great multitudes resorted to Edinburgh, in order to oppose the introduction of so hated a novelty. [3]

* King's Decl. . Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush, vol. ii. .

* * King's Decl. , 24, 25. Rush. vol. ii. .

* * * King’s Decl. , 30. Clarendon, vol. i. .

It was not long before they broke, out in the most violent disorder. The bishop of Galloway was attacked in the streets, and chased into the chamber where the privy council was sitting. The council itself was besieged and violently attacked: the town council met with the same fate: and nothing could have saved the lives of all of them, but their application to some popular lords, who protected them, and dispersed the multitude. In this sedition, the actors were of some better condition than in the former; though nobody of rank seemed as yet to countenance them. [1]

All men, however, began to unice and to encourage each other in opposition to the religious innovations introduced into the kingdom. Petitions to the council were signed and presented by persons of the highest quality: the women took part, and, as was usual, with violence: the clergy every where loudly declaimed against Popery and the liturgy, which they represented as the same: the pulpits resounded with vehement invectives against Antichrist: and the populace, who first opposed the service, was often compared to Balaam’s ass, an animal in itself stupid and senseless, but whose mouth had been opened by the Lord, to the admiration of the whole world. In short, fanaticism mingling with faction, private interest with the spirit of liberty, symptoms appeared on all hands of the most dangerous insurrection and disorder.

* King’s Decl. , 36 etc. Rush. vol. ii. .

The primate, a man of wisdom and prudence, who was all along averse to the introduction of the liturgy, represented to the king the state of the nation: the earl of Traquaire, the treasurer, set out for London, in order to lay the matter more fully before him: every circumstance, whether the condition of England or of Scotland were considered, should have engaged him to desist from so hazardous an attempt: yet was Charles inflexible. In his whole conduct of this affair, there appear no marks of the good sense with which he was endowed: a lively instance of that species of character so frequently to be met with; where there are found parts and judgment in every discourse and opinion; in many actions, indiscretion and imprudence. Men’s views of things are the result of their understanding alone: their conduct is regulated by their understanding, their temper, and their passions.

1638.

To so violent a combination of a whole kingdom, Charles had nothing to oppose but a proclamation; in which he pardoned all past offences, and exhorted the people to be more obedient for the future, and to submit peaceably to the use of the liturgy. This proclamation was instantly encountered with a public protestation, presented by the earl of Hume and Lindesey: and this was the first time that men of quality had appeared in any violent act of opposition. [1] But this proved a crisis. The insurrection, which had been advancing by a gradual and slow progress, now blazed up at once. No disorder, however, attended it. On the contrary, a new order immediately took place. Four “tables,” as they were called, were formed in Edinburgh. One consisted of nobility, another of gentry, a third of ministers, a fourth of burgesses. The table of gentry was divided into many subordinate tables, according to their different counties. In the hands of the four tables the whole authority of the kingdom was placed. Orders were issued by them, and every where obeyed with the utmost regularity. [2] And among the first acts of their government was the production of the “Covenant.”

This famous covenant consisted first of a renunciation of Popery, formerly signed by James in his youth, and composed of many invectives, fitted to inflame the minds of men against their fellow-creatures, whom Heaven has enjoined them to cherish and to love. There followed a bond of union, by which the subscribers obliged themselves to resist religious innovations, and to defend each other against all opposition whatsoever: and all this, for the greater glory of God, and the greater honor and advantage of their king and country. [3] The people, without distinction of rank or condition, of age or sex, flocked to the subscription of this covenant: few in their judgment disapproved of it; and still fewer durst openly condemn it. The king’s ministers and counsellors themselves were most of them seized by the general contagion. And none but rebels to God, and traitors to their country, it was thought, would withdraw themselves from so salutary and so pious a combination.

* King’s Decl. , 48, etc. Guthry, . May, .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. ii. .

* * * King’s Decl. , 58. Rush. vol. ii. . May, p. 38.

The treacherous, the cruel, the unrelenting Philip, accompanied with all the terrors of a Spanish inquisition, was scarcely, during the preceding century, opposed in the Low Countries with more determined fury, than was now, by the Scots, the mild, the humane Charles, attended with his inoffensive liturgy.

The king began to apprehend the consequences. He sent the marquis of Hamilton, as commissioner, with authority to treat with the Covenanters. He required the covenant to be renounced and recalled: and he thought, that on his part he had made very satisfactory concessions, when he offered to suspend the canons and the liturgy, till in a fair and legal way they could be received; and so to model the high commission, that it should no longer give offence to his subjects. [1] Such general declarations could not well give content to any, much less to those who carried so much higher their pretensions. The Covenanters found themselves seconded by the zeal of the whole nation. Above sixty thousand people were assembled in a tumultuous manner in Edinburgh and the neighborhood. Charles possessed no regular forces in either of his kingdoms. And the discontents in England, though secret, were believed so violent, that the king, it was thought, would find it very difficult to employ in such a cause the power of that kingdom. The more, therefore, the popular leaders in Scotland considered their situation, the less apprehension did they entertain of royal power, and the more rigorously did they insist on entire satisfaction. In answer to Hamilton’s demand of renouncing the covenant, they plainly told him that they would sooner renounce their baptism. [2] And the clergy invited the commissioner himself to subscribe it, by informing him “with what peace and comfort it had filled the hearts of all God’s people; what resolutions and beginnings of reformation of manners were sensibly perceived in all parts of the nation, above any measure they had ever before found or could have expected; how great glory the Lord had received thereby; and what confidence they had that God would make Scotland a blessed kingdom.” [3]

Hamilton returned to London; made another fruitless journey, with new concessions, to Edinburgh; returned again to London; and was immediately sent back with still more satisfactory concessions. The king was now willing entirely to abolish the canons, the liturgy, and the high commission court. He was even resolved to limit extremely the power of the bishops, and was content if on any terms he could retain that order in the church of Scotland. [4] And to insure all these gracious offers, he gave Hamilton authority to summon first an assembly, then a parliament, where every national grievance might be redressed and remedied.

* Rush, vol. ii. , etc.

* * King’s Decl. .

* * * King’s Decl. . Rush, vol. ii. .

* * * * King’s Decl. . Rush, vol. ii. .

These successive concessions of the king, which yet came still short of the rising demands of the malecontents, discovered his own weakness, encouraged their insolence, and gave no satisfaction. The offer, however, of an assembly and a parliament, in which they expected to be entirely masters, was willingly embraced by the Covenanters.

Charles, perceiving what advantage his enemies had reaped from their covenant, resolved to have a covenant on his side; and he ordered one to be drawn up for that purpose. It consisted of the same violent renunciation of Popery above mentioned; which, though the king did not approve of it, he thought it safest to adopt, in order to remove all the suspicions entertained against him. As the Covenanters, in their bond of mutual defence against all opposition, had been careful not to except the king, Charles had formed a bond, which was annexed to this renunciation, and which expressed the duty and loyalty of the subscribers to his majesty. [1] But the Covenanters, perceiving that this new covenant was only meant to weaken and divide them, received it with the utmost scorn and detestation. And without delay they proceeded to model the future assembly, from which such great achievments were expected. [2]

The genius of that religion which prevailed in Scotland, and which every day was secretly gaining ground in England, was far front inculcating deference and submission to the ecclesiastics, merely as such; or rather, by nourishing in every individual the highest raptures and ecstasies of devotion, it consecrated, in a manner, every individual, and in his own eyes bestowed a character on him much superior to what forms and ceremonious institutions could alone confer. The clergy of Scotland, though such tumult was excited about religious worship and discipline, were both poor and in small numbers; nor are they in general to be considered, at least in the beginning, as the ringleaders of the sedition which was raised on their account. On the contrary, the laity, apprehending, from several instances which occurred, a spirit of moderation in that order, resolved to domineer entirely in the assembly which was summoned, and to hurry on the ecclesiastics by the same furious zeal with which they were themselves transported. [3]

* King's Decl. , etc.

* * Rush. vol. ii. .

* * * King's Decl. , 189. Rush. voL ii. .

It had been usual, before the establishment of prelacy, for each presbytery to send to the assembly, besides two or three ministers, one lay commissioner; [1] and, as all the boroughs and universities sent likewise commissioners, the lay members in that ecclesiastical court nearly equalled the ecclesiastics. Not only this institution, which James, apprehensive of zeal in the laity, had abolished, was now revived by the Covenanters; they also introduced an innovation, which served still further to reduce the clergy to subjection. By an edict of the tables, whose authority was supreme, an elder from each parish was ordered to attend the presbytery, and to give his vote in the choice both of the commissioners and ministers who should be deputed to the assembly. As it is not usual for the ministers, who are put in the list of candidates, to claim a vote, all the elections by that means fell into the hands of the laity: the most furious of all ranks were chosen: and the more to overawe the clergy, a new device was fallen upon, of choosing to every commissioner four or five lay assessors, who, though they could have no vote, might yet interpose with their advice and authority in the assembly. [2]

The assembly met at Glasgow; and, besides a great concourse of the people, all the nobility and gentry of any family or interest were present, either as members, assessors, or spectators; and it was apparent that the resolutions taken by the Covenanters could here meet with no manner of opposition. A firm determination had been entered into of utterly abolishing episcopacy; and as a preparative to it, there was laid before the presbytery of Edinburgh, and solemnly read in all the churches of the kingdom, an accusation against the bishops, as guilty, all of them, of heresy, simony, bribery, perjury, cheating, incest, adultery, fornication, common swearing, drunkenness, gaming, breach of the Sabbath, and every other crime that had occurred to the accusers. [3] The bishops sent a protest, declining the authority of the assembly: the commissioner, too, protested against the court, as illegally constituted and elected; and, in his majesty's name, dissolved it. This measure was foreseen, and little regarded. The court still continued to sit, and to finish their business. [4]

* A presbytery in Scotland is an inferior ecclesiastical court, the same that was afterwards called a classis in England, and is composed of the clergy of the neighboring parishes, to the number commonly of between twelve and twenty.

* * King's Decl. , 191, 290. Guthry, , etc.

* * * King's Decl. . Rush. vol. ii .

* * * * May, .

All the acts of assembly, since the accession of James to the crown of England, were, upon pretty reasonable grounds, declared null and invalid. The acts of parliament which affected ecclesiastical affairs were supposed, on that very account, to have no manner of authority. And thus episcopacy, the high commission, the articles of Perth, the canons, and the liturgy, were abolished and declared unlawful; and the whole fabric which Jamas and Charles, in a long course of years, had been rearing with so much care and policy, fell at once to the ground.

1639.

The covenant, likewise, was ordered to be signed by every one, under pain of excommunication. [1]

The independency of the ecclesiastical upon the civil power, was the old Presbyterian principle, which had been zealously adopted at the reformation, and which, though James and Charles had obliged the church publicly to disclaim it, had secretly been adhered to by all ranks of people. It was commonly asked whether Christ or the king were superior; and as the answer seemed obvious, it was inferred, that the assembly, being Christ's council, was superior in all spiritual matters to the parliament, which was only the king's. But as the Covenanters were sensible that this consequence, though it seemed to them irrefragable, would not be assented to by the king, it became necessary to maintain their religious tenets by military force, and not to trust entirely to supernatural assistance, of which, however, they held themselves well assured. They cast their eyes on all sides, abroad and at home, whence ever they could expect any aid or support.

After France and Holland had entered into a league against Spain, and framed a treaty of partition, by which they were to conquer and to divide between them the Low Country provinces, England was invited to preserve a neutrality between the contending parties, while the French and Dutch should attack the maritime towns of Flanders. But the king replied to D'Estrades, the French ambassador, who opened the proposal, that he had a squadron ready, and would cross the seas, if necessary, with an army of fifteen thousand men, in order to prevent these projected conquests. [2] This answer, which proves that Charles though he expressed his mind with an imprudent candor, had at last acquired a just idea of national interest irritated Cardinal Richelieu; and, in revenge, that politic and enterprising minister carefully fomented the first commotions in Scotland, and secretly supplied the Covenanters with money and arms, in order to encourage them in their opposition against their sovereign.

* King's Decl. .

* * Mem. D'Estrades, vol. i.

But the chief resource of the Scottish malecontents was in themselves, and in their own vigor and abilities. No regular established commonwealth could take juster measures, or execute them with greater promptitude, than did this tumultuous combination, inflamed with bigotry for religious trifles, and faction without a reasonable object. The whole kingdom was in a manner engaged, and the men of greatest abilities soon acquired the ascendant, which their family interest enabled them to maintain. The earl of Argyle, though he long seemed to temporize, had at last embraced the covenant; and he became the chief leader of that party; a man equally supple and inflexible, cautious and determined, and entirely qualified to make a figure during a factious and turbulent period. The earls of Rothes, Cassils, Montrose, Lothian, the lords Lindesey, Louden, Yester, Balmerino, distinguished themselves in that party. Many Scotch officers had acquired reputation in the German wars, particularly under Gustavus; and these were invited over to assist their country in her present necessity. The command was intrusted to Lesley, a soldier of experience and abilities. Forces were regularly enlisted and disciplined. Arms were commissioned and imported from foreign countries. A few castles which belonged to the king, being unprovided with victuals, ammunition, and garrisons, were soon seized. And the whole country, except a small part, where the marquis of Huntley still adhered to the king, being in the hands of the Covenanters, was in a very little time put in a tolerable posture of defence. [1]

The fortifications of Leith were begun and carried on with great rapidity. Besides the inferior sort, and those who labored for pay, incredible numbers of volunteers, even noblemen and gentlemen, put their hand to the work, and deemed the most abject employment to be dignified by the sanctity of the cause. Women, too, of rank and condition, forgetting the delicacy of their sex and the decorum of their character were intermingled with the lowest rabble, and carried on their shoulders the rubbish requisite for completing the fortifications. [2]

* May, .

* * Guthry’s Memoirs, .

We must not omit another auxiliary of the Covenanters and no inconsiderable one; a prophetess, who was much followed and admired by all ranks of people. Her name Michelson, a woman full of whimseys partly hysterical, partly religious; and inflamed with a zealous concern for the ecclesiastical discipline of the Presbyterians. She spoke at certain times only, and had often interruptions of days and weeks: but when she began to renew her ecstasies, warning of the happy event was conveyed over the whole country; thousands crowded about her house; and every word which she uttered was received with veneration, as the most sacred oracles. The covenant was her perpetual theme. The true, genuine covenant, she said, was ratified in heaven: the king's covenant was an invention of Satan: when she spoke of Christ, she usually gave him the name of the Covenanting Jesus. Rollo, a popular preacher, and zealous Covenanter, was her great favorite, and paid her, on his part, no less veneration. Being desired by the spectators to pray with her, and speak to her, he answered, "that he durst not; and that it would be ill manners in him to speak while his master, Christ, was speaking in her." [1]

* King's Declaration at large, . Burnet's Memoirs of Hamilton.

Charles had agreed to reduce episcopal authority so much, that it would no longer have been of any service to support the crown; and this sacrifice of his own interests he was willing to make, in order to attain public peace and tranquillity. But he could not consent entirely to abolish an order which he thought as essential to the being of a Christian church, as his Scottish subjects deemed it incompatible with that sacred institution. This narrowness of mind, if we would be impartial, we must either blame or excuse equally on both sides; and thereby anticipate, by a little reflection, that judgment which time, by introducing new subjects of controversy, will undoubtedly render quite familiar to posterity.

So great was Charles's aversion to violent and sanguinary measures, and so strong his affection to his native kingdom that it is probable the contest in his breast would be nearly equal between these laudable passions and his attachment to the hierarchy. The latter affection, however, prevailed for the time, and made him hasten those military preparations which he had projected for subduing the refractory spirit of the Scottish nation. By regular economy, he had not only paid all the debts contracted during the Spanish and French wars, but had amassed a sum of two hundred thousand pounds, which he reserved for any sudden exigency. The queen had great interest with the Catholics, both from the sympathy of religion, and from the favors and indulgences which she had been able to procure to them. She now employed her credit, and persuaded them that it was reasonable to give large contributions, as a mark of their duty to the king, during this urgent necessity. [1] A considerable supply was obtained by this means; to the great scandal of the Puritans, who were offended at seeing the king on such good terms with the Papists, and repined that others should give what they themselves were disposed to refuse him.

Charles's fleet was formidable and well supplied. Having put five thousand land forces on board, he intrusted it to the marquis of Hamilton, who had orders to sail to the Frith of Forth, and to cause a diversion in the forces of the malecontents. An army was levied of near twenty thousand foot, and above three thousand horse; and was put under the command of the earl of Arundel, a nobleman of great family, but celebrated neither for military nor political abilities. The earl of Essex, a man of strict honor, and extremely popular, especially among the soldiery, was appointed lieutenant-general: the earl of Holland was general of the horse. The king himself joined the army, and he summoned all the peers of England to attend him. The whole had the appearance of a splendid court, rather than of a military armament; and in this situation, carrying more show than real force with it, the camp arrived at Berwick. [2]

The Scottish army was as numerous as that of the king, but inferior in cavalry. The officers had more reputation and experience; and the soldiers, though undisciplined and ill armed, were animated, as well by the national aversion to England, and the dread of becoming a province to their old enemy, as by an unsurmountable fervor of religion. The pulpits had extremely assisted the officers in levying recruits, and had thundered out anathemas against all those "who went not out to assist the Lord against the mighty." [3] Yet so prudent were the leaders of the malecontents, that they immediately sent submissive messages to the king, and craved to be admitted to a treaty.

* Rush. vol. iii. . Franklyn, .

* * Clarendon, vol. i , 116, 117.

* * * Burnet's Memoirs of Hamilton.

Charles knew that the force of the Covenanters was considerable, their spirits high, their zeal furious; and that, as they were not yet daunted by any ill success, no reasonable terms could be expected from them. With regard therefore to a treaty, great difficulties occurred on both sides. Should he submit to the pretensions of the malecontents, (besides that the prelacy must be sacrificed to their religious prejudices,) such a check would be given to royal authority, which had very lately, and with much difficulty, been thoroughly established in Scotland, that he must expect ever after to retain in that kingdom no more than the appearance of majesty. The great men, having proved by so sensible a trial the impotence of law and prerogative, would return to their former licentiousness: the preachers would retain their innate arrogance: and the people, unprotected by justice, would recognize no other authority than that which they found to domineer over them. England also, it was much to be feared, would imitate so bad an example; and having already a strong propensity towards republican and Puritanical factions, would expect, by the same seditious practices, to attain the same indulgence. To advance so far, without bringing the rebels to a total submission, at least to reasonable concessions, was to promise them, in all future time, an impunity for rebellion.

On the other hand, Charles considered that Scotland was never before, under any of his ancestors, so united and so animated in its own defence; yet had often been able to foil or elude the force of England, combined heartily in one cause, and inured by long practice to the use of arms. How much greater difficulty should he find, at present, to subdue by violence a people inflamed with religious prejudices; while he could only oppose to them a nation enervated by long peace, and lukewarm in his service; or, what was more to be dreaded, many of them engaged in the same party with the rebels? [1]

* Rush. vol. iii. .

Should the war be only protracted beyond a campaign, (and who could expect to finish it in that period?) his treasures would fail him; and for supply he must have recourse to an English parliament, which, by fatal experience, he had ever found more ready to encroach on the prerogatives, than to supply the necessities of the crown. And what if he receive a defeat from the rebel army? This misfortune was far from being impossible. They were engaged in a national cause, and strongly actuated by mistaken principles. His army was retained entirely by pay, and looked on the quarrel with the same indifference which naturally belongs to mercenary troops without possessing the discipline by which such troops are commonly distinguished. And the consequences of a defeat, while Scotland was enraged and England discontented, were so dreadful, that no motive should persuade him to hazard it.

It is evident, that Charles had fallen into such a situation, that whichever side he embraced, his errors must be dangerous. No wonder, therefore, he was in great perplexity. But he did worse than embrace the worst side; for, properly speaking, he embraced no side at all. He concluded a sudden pacification, in which it was stipulated, that he should withdraw his fleet and army; that within eight and forty hours the Scots should dismiss their forces; that the king's forts should be restored to him; his authority be acknowledged; and a general assembly and a parliament be immediately summoned, in order to compose all differences. [1] What were the reasons which engaged the king to admit such strange articles of peace, it is in vain to inquire; for there scarcely could be any. The causes of that event may admit of a more easy explication.

* Rush vol. iii. .

The malecontents had been very industrious in representing to the English the grievances under which Scotland labored, and the ill counsels which had been suggested to their sovereign. Their liberties, they said, were invaded; the prerogatives of the crown extended beyond all former precedent; illegal courts erected; the hierarchy exalted at the expense of national privileges; and so many new superstitions introduced by the haughty, tyrannical prelates, as begat a just suspicion that a project was seriously formed for the restoration of Popery. The king's conduct, surely, in Scotland, had been in every thing, except in establishing the ecclesiastical canons, more legal than in England; yet was there such a general resemblance in the complaints of both kingdoms, that the English readily assented to all the representations of the Scottish malecontents, and believed that nation to have been driven by oppression into the violent counsels which they had embraced. So far, therefore, from being willing to second the king in subduing the free spirit of the Scots, they rather pitied that unhappy people, who had been pushed to those extremities; and they thought, that the example of such neighbors, as well as their assistance, might some time be advantageous to England, and encourage her to recover, by a vigorous effort, her violated laws and liberties. The gentry and nobility, who, without attachment to the court, without command in the army, attended in great numbers the English camp, greedily seized, and propagated, and gave authority to these sentiments: a retreat, very little honorable, which the earl of Holland, with a considerable detachment of the English forces, had made before a detachment of the Scottish, caused all these humors to blaze up at once: and the king, whose character was not sufficiently vigorous or decisive, and who was apt from facility to embrace hasty counsels, suddenly assented to a measure which was recommended by all about him, and which favored his natural propension towards the misguided subjects of his native kingdom. [1]

Charles, having so far advanced in pacific measures, ought, with a steady resolution, to have prosecuted them, and have submitted to every tolerable condition demanded by the assembly and parliament; nor should he have recommenced hostilities, but on account of such enormous and unexpected pretensions as would have justified his cause, if possible, to the whole English nation. So far, indeed, he adopted this plan, that he agreed, not only to confirm his former concessions, of abrogating the canons, the liturgy, the high commission, and the articles of Perth, but also to abolish the order itself of bishops, for which he had so zealously contended. [2] But this concession was gained by the utmost violence which he could impose on his disposition and prejudices: he even secretly retained an intention of seizing favorable opportunities, in order to: recover the ground which he had lost. [3] And one step farther he could not prevail with himself to advance. The assembly, when it met, paid no deference to the king’s prepossessions, but gave full indulgence to their own. They voted episcopacy to be unlawful in the church of Scotland: he was willing to allow it contrary to the constitutions of that church. They stigmatized the liturgy and canons as Popish: he agreed simply to abolish them. They denominated the high commission, tyranny: he was content to set it aside. [4]

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 123. May, .

* * Rush. vol. iii. .

* * * Burnet’s Memoirs, Rush. vol. iii. .

* * * * Rush. vol. iii. , etc.

The parliament, which sat after the assembly, advanced pretensions which tended to diminish the civil power of the monarch; and, what probably affected Charles still more, they were proceeding to ratify the acts of assembly, when, by the king's instructions, [1] Traquaire, the commissioner, prorogued them. And on account of these claims, which might have been foreseen, was the war renewed; with great advantages on the side of the Covenanters and disadvantages on that of the king.

No sooner had Charles concluded the pacification without conditions than the necessity of his affairs and his want of money obliged him to disband his army; and as the soldiers had been held together solely by mercenary views, it was not possible, without great trouble, and expense, and loss of time, again to assemble them. The more prudent Covenanters had concluded, that their pretensions being so contrary to the interests, and still more to the inclinations, of the king, it was likely that they should again be obliged to support their cause by arms; and they were therefore careful, in dismissing their troops, to preserve nothing but the appearance of a pacific disposition. The officers had orders to be ready on the first summons: the soldiers were warned not to think the nation secure from an English invasion: and the religious zeal which animated all ranks of men, made them immediately fly to their standards as soon as the trumpet was sounded by their spiritual and temporal leaders. The credit which in their last expedition they had acquired, by obliging their sovereign to depart from all his pretensions, gave courage to every one in undertaking this new enterprise. [2]

* Rush vol. iii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush vol. iii. .

1640.

The king, with great difficulty, found means to draw together an army; but soon discovered that all savings being gone, and great debts contracted, his revenue would be insufficient to support them. An English parliament, therefore, formerly so unkind and intractable, must now, after above eleven years’ intermission, after the king had tried many irregular methods of taxation, after multiplied disgusts given to the Puritanical party, be summoned to assemble, amidst the must pressing necessities of the crown.

As the king resolved to try whether this house of commons would be more compliant than their predecessors, and grant him supply on any reasonable terms, the time appointed for the meeting of parliament was late, and very near the time allotted for opening the campaign against the Scots. After the past experience of their ill humor, and of their encroaching disposition, he thought that he could not in prudence trust them with a long session, till he had seen some better proofs of their good intentions: the urgency of the occasion, and the little time allowed for debate, were reasons which he reserved against the malecontents in the house; and an incident had happened, which, he believed, had now furnished him with still more cogent arguments.

The earl of Traquaire had intercepted a letter written to the king of France by the Scottish malecontents, and had conveyed this letter to the king. Charles, partly repenting of the large concessions made to the Scots, partly disgusted at their fresh insolence and pretensions, seized this opportunity of breaking with them. He had thrown into the Tower Lord Loudon, commissioner from the Covenanters, one of the persons who had signed the treasonable letter. [1] And he now laid the matter before the parliament, whom he hoped to inflame by the resentment, and alarm by the danger, of this application to a foreign power.

By the mouth of the lord keeper Finch, he discovered his wants, and informed them, that he had been able to assemble his army, and to subsist them, not by any revenue which he possessed, but by means of a large debt of above three hundred thousand pounds, which he had contracted, and for which he had given security upon the crown lands. He represented, that it was necessary to grant supplies for the immediate and urgent demands of his military armaments: that the season was far advanced, the time precious, and none of it must be lost in deliberation; that though his coffers were empty, they had not been exhausted by unnecessary pomp, or sumptuous buildings, or any other kind of magnificence: that whatever supplies had been levied on his subjects, had been employed for their advantage and preservation; and, like vapors rising out of the earth, and gathered into a

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* Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. iii. p 956. May, p. 56.

cloud, had fallen in sweet and refreshing showers on the same fields from which they had at first been exhaled: that though he desired such immediate assistance as might prevent for the time a total disorder in the government he was far from any intention of precluding them from their right to inquire into the state of the kingdom, and to offer his petitions for the redress of their grievances: that as much as was possible of this season should afterwards be allowed them for that purpose: that as he expected only such supply at present as the current service necessarily required, it would be requisite to assemble them again next winter, when they should have full leisure to conclude whatever business had this session been left imperfect and unfinished: that the parliament of Ireland had twice put such trust in his good intentions as to grant him, in the beginning of the session, a large supply, and had ever experienced good effects from the confidence reposed in him: and that; in every circumstance, his people should find his conduct suitable to a just, pious, and gracious king; and such as was calculated to promote an entire harmony between prince and parliament. [1]

* Rush. vol. iii. .

However plausible these topics, they made small impression on the house of commons. By some illegal, and several suspicious measures of the crown, and by the courageous opposition which particular persons, amidst dangers and hardships, had made to them, the minds of men, throughout the nation, had taken such a turn, as to ascribe every honor to the refractory opposers of the king and the ministers. These were the only patriots, the only lovers of their country, the only heroes, and perhaps, too, the only true Christians. A reasonable compliance with the court was slavish dependence; a regard to the king, servile flattery; a confidence in his promises, shameful prostitution. This general cast of thought, which has more or less prevailed in England during near a century and a half, and which has been the cause of much good and much ill in public affairs, never predominated more than during the reign of Charles. The present house of commons, being entirely composed of country gentlemen, who came into parliament with all their native prejudices about them, and whom the crown had no means of influencing, could not fail to contain a majority of these stubborn patriots.

Affairs likewise, by means of the Scottish insurrection and the general discontents in England, were drawing so near to a crisis, that the leaders of the house, sagacious and penetrating, began to foresee the consequences, and to hope that the time so long wished for was now come, when royal authority must fall into a total subordination under popular assemblies, and when public liberty must acquire a full ascendant. By reducing the crown to necessities, they had hitherto found that the king had been pushed into violent counsels, which had served extremely the purposes of his adversaries: and by multiplying these necessities, it was foreseen that his prerogative, undermined on all sides, must at last be overthrown, and be no longer dangerous to the privileges of the people. Whatever, therefore, tended to compose the differences between king and parliament, and to preserve the government uniformly in its present channel, was zealously opposed by these popular leaders; and their past conduct and sufferings gave them credit sufficient to effect all their purposes.

The house of commons, moved by these and many other obvious reasons, instead of taking notice of the king's complaints against his Scottish subjects, or his applications for supply, entered immediately upon grievances; and a speech which Pym made them on that subject was much more hearkened to, than that which the lord keeper had delivered to them in the name of their sovereign. The subject of Pym's harangue has been sufficiently explained above; where we gave an account of all the grievances, imaginary in the church, more real in the state, of which the nation at that time so loudly complained. [1] The house began with examining the behavior of the speaker the last day of the former parliament; when he refused, on account of the king's command, to put the question: and they declared it a breach of privilege. They proceeded next to inquire into the imprisonment and prosecution of Sir John Elliot, Hollis, and Valentine: [2] the affair of ship money was canvassed: and plentiful subject of inquiry was suggested on all hands. Grievances were regularly classed under three heads; those with regard to privileges of parliament, to the property of the subject, and to religion. [3]

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. iii. . May, .

* * Rush. vol. iii .

* * * Rush. vol. iii. .

The king, seeing a large and inexhaustible field opened, pressed them again for supply; and finding his message ineffectual, he came to the house of peers, and desired their good offices with the commons. The peers were sensible of the king's urgent necessities; and thought that supply on this occasion ought, both in reason and in decency, to go before grievances. They ventured to represent their sense of the matter to the commons; but their intercession did harm. The commons had always claimed, as their peculiar province the granting of supplies; and, though the peers had here gone no further than offering advice, the lower house immediately thought proper to vote so unprecedented an interposition to be a breach of privilege.[1] Charles, in order to bring the matter of supply to some issue, solicited the house by new messages: and finding that ship money gave great alarm and disgust; besides informing them, that he never intended to make a constant revenue of it, that all the money levied had been regularly, with other great sums, expended on equipping the navy; he now went so far as to offer them a total abolition of that obnoxious claim, by any law which the commons should think proper to present to him. In return, he only asked for his necessities a supply of twelve subsidies, — about six hundred thousand pounds, — and that payable in three years; but at the same time he let them know, that, considering the situation of his affairs, a delay would be equivalent to a denial.[2] The king though the majority was against him, never had more friends in any house of commons; and the debate was carried on for two days, with great zeal and warmth on both sides.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Clarendon, vol. 1. . Rush. vol. iii .

It was urged by the partisans of the court, that the happiest occasion which the fondest wishes could suggest, was now presented for removing all disgusts and jealousies between king and people, and for reconciling their sovereign forever to the use of parliaments: that if they, on their part, laid aside all enormous claims and pretensions, and provided in a reasonable manner for the public necessities, they needed entertain no suspicion of any insatiable ambition or illegal usurpation in the crown: that though due regard had not always been paid, during this reign, to the rights of the people, yet no invasion of them had been altogether deliberate and voluntary; much less the result of wanton tyranny and injustice; and still less of a formal design to subvert the constitution. That to repose a reasonable confidence in the king, and generously to supply his present wants, which proceeded neither from prodigality nor misconduct, would be the true means of gaining on his generous nature, and extorting, by a gentle violence, such concessions as were requisite for the establishment of public liberty: that he had promised, not only on the word of a prince, but also on that of a gentleman, (the expression which he had been pleased to use,) that, after the supply was granted the parliament should still have liberty to continue their deliberations: could it be suspected that any man, any prince much less such a one, whose word was as yet sacred and inviolate, would, for so small a motive forfeit his honor, and, with it, all future trust and confidence, by breaking a promise so public and so solemn? that even if the parliament should be deceived in reposing this confidence in him, they neither lost any thing, nor incurred any danger; since it was evidently necessary, for the security of public peace, to supply him with money, in order to suppress the Scottish rebellion: that he had so far suited his first demands to their prejudices, that he only asked a supply for a few months, and was willing, after so short a trust from them, to fall again into dependence, and to trust them for his further support and subsistence: that if he now seemed to desire something further, he also made them, in return, a considerable offer, and was willing, for the future, to depend on them for a revenue which was quite necessary for public honor and security: that the nature of the English constitution supposed a mutual confidence between king and parliament: and if they should refuse it on their part, especially with circumstances of such outrage and indignity, what could be expected but a total dissolution of government, and violent factions, followed by the most dangerous convulsions and intestine disorders?

In opposition to these arguments, it was urged by the malecontent party, that the court had discovered, on their part, but few symptoms of that mutual confidence to which they now so kindly invited the commons: that eleven years’ intermission of parliaments — the longest that was to be found in the English annals — was a sufficient indication of the jealousy entertained against the people; or rather of designs formed for the suppression of all their liberties and privileges: that the ministers might well plead necessity, nor could any thing, indeed, be a stronger proof of some invincible necessity, than their embracing a measure for which they had conceived so violent an aversion, as the assembling of an English parliament: that this necessity, however, was purely ministerial, not national; and if the same grievances, ecclesiastical and civil, under which this nation itself labored, had pushed the Scots to extremities, was it requisite that the English should forge their own chains, by imposing chains on their unhappy neighbors? that the ancient practice of parliament was to give grievances the precedency of supply; and this order, so carefully observed by their ancestors, was founded on a jealousy inherent in the constitution, and was never interpreted as any peculiar diffidence of the present sovereign: that a practice which had been upheld during times the most favorable to liberty, could not, in common prudence, be departed from, where such undeniable reasons for suspicion had been afforded: that it was ridiculous to plead the advanced season, and the urgent occasion for supply; when it plainly appeared that, in order to afford a pretence for this topic, and to seduce the commons, great political contrivance had been employed: that the writs for elections were issued early in the winter; and if the meeting of parliament had not purposely been delayed till so near the commencement of military operations, there had been leisure sufficient to have redressed all national grievances, and to have proceeded afterwards to an examination of the king's occasion for supply: that the intention of so gross an artifice was to engage the commons, under pretence of necessity, to violate the regular order of parliament; and a precedent of that kind being once established, no inquiry into public measures would afterwards be permitted: that scarcely any argument more unfavorable could be pleaded for supply, than an offer to abolish ship money; a taxation the most illegal and the most dangerous that had ever, in any reign, been imposed upon the nation: and that, by bargaining for the remission of that duty, the commons would in a manner ratify the authority by which it had been levied; at least give encouragement for advancing new pretensions of a like nature, in hopes of resigning them on like advantageous conditions.

These reasons, joined to so many occasions of ill humor, seemed to sway with the greater number: but, to make the matter worse, Sir Harry Vane, the secretary, told the commons, without any authority from the king, that nothing less than twelve subsidies would be accepted as a compensation for the abolition of ship money. This assertion, proceeding from the indiscretion, if we are not rather to call it the treachery of Vane, displeased the house, by showing a stiffness and rigidity in the king, which, in a claim so ill grounded, was deemed inexcusable. [1] We are informed likewise, that some men, who were thought to understand the state of the nation, affirmed in the house, that the amount of twelve subsidies was a greater sum than could be found in all England: such were the happy ignorance and inexperience of those times with regard to taxes. [2]

The king was in great doubt and perplexity. He saw that his friends in the house were outnumbered by his enemies, and that the same counsels were still prevalent which had ever bred such opposition and disturbance. Instead of hoping that any supply would be granted him to carry on war against the Scots, whom the majority of the house regarded as their best friends and firmest allies; he expected every day that they would present him an address for making peace with those rebels. And if the house met again, a vote, he was informed, would certainly pass, to blast his revenue of ship money; and thereby renew all the opposition which, with so much difficulty, he had surmounted in levying that taxation. Where great evils lie on all sides, it is difficult to follow the best counsel; nor is it any wonder that the king, whose capacity was not equal to situations of such extreme delicacy, should hastily have formed and executed the resolution of dissolving this parliament: a measure, however, of which he soon after repented, and which the subsequent events, more than any convincing reason, inclined every one to condemn. The last parliament, which ended with such rigor and violence, had yet at first covered their intentions with greater appearance of moderation than this parliament had hitherto assumed.

An abrupt and violent dissolution naturally excites discontents among the people, who usually put entire confidence in their representatives, and expect from them the redress of all grievances. As if there were not already sufficient grounds of complaint, the king persevered still in those counsels which, from experience, he might have been sensible were so dangerous and unpopular. Bellasis and Sir John Hotham were summoned before the council; and, refusing to give any account of their conduct in parliament, were committed to prison. All the petitions and complaints which had been sent to the committee of religion, were demanded from Crew, chairman of

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* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Clarendon, vol. *i. .

that committee; and on his refusal to deliver them, he was sent to the Tower. The studies, and even the pockets of the earl of Warwick and Lord Broke, before the expiration of privilege, were searched, in expectation of finding treasonable papers. These acts of authority were interpreted, with some appearance of reason, to be invasions on the right of national assemblies. [1] But the king, after the first provocation which he met with, never sufficiently respected the privileges of parliament; and, by his example, he further confirmed their resolution, when they should acquire power, to pay like disregard to the prerogatives of the crown.

* Rush. vol. iii. . May, .

Though the parliament was dissolved, the convocation was still allowed to sit; a practice of which, since the reformation, there were but few instances, [1] and which was for that reason supposed by many to be irregular. Besides granting to the king a supply from the spirituality, and framing many canons, the convocation, jealous of like innovations with those which had taken place in Scotland, imposed an oath on the clergy and the graduates in the universities, by which every one swore to maintain the established government of the church by archbishops, bishops, deans, chapters, etc. [2] These steps, in the present discontented humor of the nation, were commonly deemed illegal; because not ratified by consent of parliament, in whom all authority was now supposed to be centred. And nothing, besides, could afford more subject of ridicule, than an oath which contained an "et cætera," in the midst of it.

The people, who generally abhorred the convocation as much as they revered the parliament, could scarcely be restrained from insulting and abusing this assembly; and the king was obliged to give them guards, in order to protect them. [3] An attack too was made during the night upon Laud, in his palace of Lambeth, by above five hundred persons; and he found it necessary to fortify himself for his defence. [4] A multitude, consisting of two thousand secretaries, entered St. Paul's, where the high commission then sat, tore down the benches, and cried out, "No bishop; no high commission." All these instances of discontent were presages of some great revolution, had the court possessed sufficient skill to discern the danger, or sufficient power to provide against it.

In this disposition of men's minds, it was in vain that the king issued a declaration, in order to convince his people of the necessity which he lay under of dissolving the last parliament.[v*]

* There was one in 1586: see History of Archbishop Laud, p. 80. The authority of the convocation was, indeed, in most respects, independent of the parliament: and there was no reason which required the one to be dissolved upon the dissolution of the other.

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Dugdale, . Clarendon, vol. i. .

v Dugdale, .

V* Rush. vol. iii. .

The chief topic on which he insisted was, that the commons imitated the bad example of all then predecessors of late years, in making continual encroachments on his authority, in censuring his whole administration and conduct, in discussing every circumstance of public government, and in their indirect bargaining and contracting with their king for supply; as if nothing ought to be given him but what he should purchase, either by quitting somewhat of his royal prerogative, or by diminishing and lessening his standing revenue. These practices, he said, were contrary to the maxims of their ancestors; and these practices were totally incompatible with monarchy. [1]

The king, disappointed of parliamentary subsidies, was obliged to have recourse to other expedients, in order to supply his urgent necessities. The ecclesiastical subsidies served him in some stead; and it seemed but just that the clergy should contribute to a war which was in a great measure of their own raising. [2] He borrowed money from his ministers and courtiers; and so much was he beloved among them, that above three hundred thousand pounds were subscribed in a few days; though nothing surely could be more disagreeable to a prince full of dignity, than to be a burden on his friends instead of being a support to them. Some attempts were made towards forcing a loan from the citizens; but still repelled by the spirit of liberty, which was now become unconquerable. [3] A loan of forty thousand pounds was extorted from the Spanish merchants, who had bullion in the Tower exposed to the attempts of the king. Coat and conduct money for the soldiery was levied on the counties; an ancient practice, [4] but supposed to be abolished by the petition of right. All the pepper was bought from the East India Company upon trust, and sold at a great discount for ready money. A scheme was proposed for coining two or three hundred thousand pounds of base money:[v*] such were the extremities to which Charles was reduced. The fresh difficulties which, amidst the present distresses, were every day raised with regard to the payment of ship money, obliged him to exert continual acts of authority, augmented the discontents of the people, and increased his indigence and necessities.[v* *]

* See note E, at the end of the volume.

* * May, .

* * * Rush. vol. iii. .

* * * * Rush. vol. i. .

v May, .
v* Rush. vol. iii. . May, .
v* * Rush. vol. iii. , 1182, 1184, 1199, 1200, 1203, 1204.

The present expedients, however, enabled the king, though with great difficulty, to march his army, consisting of nineteen thousand foot and two thousand horse. [1] The earl of Northumberland was appointed general; the earl of Strafford, who was called over from Ireland, lieutenant-general; Lord Conway, general of the horse. A small fleet was thought sufficient to serve the purposes of this expedition.

So great are the effects of zeal and unanimity, that the Scottish army, though somewhat superior, were sooner ready than the king's; and they marched to the borders of England. To engage them to proceed, besides their general knowledge of the secret discontents of that kingdom, Lord Saville had forged a letter, in the name of six noblemen the most considerable of England, by which the Scots were invited to assist their neighbors in procuring a redress of grievances. [2] Notwithstanding these warlike preparations and hostile attempts, the Covenanters still preserved the most pathetic and most submissive language; and entered England, they said, with no other view than to obtain access to the king’s presence, and lay their humble petition at his royal feet. At Newburn upon Tyne, they were opposed by a detachment of four thousand five hundred men under Conway, who seemed resolute to dispute with them the passage of the river. The Scots first entreated them, with great civility, not to stop them in their march to their gracious sovereign; and then attacked them with great bravery, killed several, and chased the rest from their ground. Such a panic seized the whole English army, that the forces at Newcastle fled immediately to Durham; and not yet thinking themselves safe, they deserted that town, end retreated into Yorkshire. [3]

The Scots took possession of Newcastle; and though sufficiently elated with their victory, they preserved exact discipline, and persevered in their resolution of paying for every thing, in order still to maintain the appearance of an amicable correspondence with England. They also despatched messengers to the king, who was arrived at York; and they took care, after the advantage which they had obtained, to redouble their expressions of loyalty, duty, and submission to his person; and they even made apologies, full of sorrow and contrition for their late victory. [4]

* Rush. vol. iii. .

* * Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * * Rush. vol. iii. .

Charles was in a very distressed condition. The nation was universally and highly discontented. The army was discouraged, and began likewise to be discontented, both from the contagion of general disgust, and as an excuse for their misbehavior, which they were desirous of representing rather as want of will than of courage to fight. The treasury too was quite exhausted, and every expedient for supply had been tried to the uttermost. No event had happened, but what might have been foreseen as necessary, at least as very probable; yet such was the king’s situation, that no provision could be made, nor was even any resolution taken against such an exigency.

In order to prevent the advance of the Scots upon him, the king agreed to a treaty, and named sixteen English noblemen, who met with eleven Scottish commissioners at Rippon. The earls of Hertford, Bedford, Salisbury, Warwick, Essex, Holland, Bristol, and Berkshire, the lords Kimbolton, Wharton. Dunsmore, Paget, Broke Saville, Paulet, and Howard of Escric, were chosen by the king; all of them popular men and consequently supposed nowise averse to the Scottish invasion, or unacceptable to that nation. [1]

An address arrived from the city of London, petitioning for a parliament; the great point to which all men's projects at this time tended. [2] Twelve noblemen presented a petition to the same purpose. [3] But the king contented himself with summoning a great council of the peers at York; a measure which had formerly been taken in cases of sudden emergency, but which at present could serve to little purpose. Perhaps the king, who dreaded above all things the house of commons, and who expected no supply from them on any reasonable terms, thought that, in his present distresses, he might be enabled to levy supplies by the authority of the peers alone. But the employing so long the plea of a necessity which appeared distant and doubtful, rendered it impossible for him to avail himself of a necessity which was now at last become real, urgent, and inevitable.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Rush. vol. iii. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. p, 146. Rush. vol. iii. . May, . Warwick, .

By Northumberland's sickness, the command of the army had devolved on Strafford. This nobleman possessed more vigor of mind than the king or any of the council. He advised Charles rather to put all to hazard, than submit to unworthy terms as were likely to be imposed upon him.

The loss sustained at Newburn, he said, was inconsiderable and though a panic had for the time seized the army, that event was nothing strange among new levied troops and the Scots, being in the same condition, would no doubt be liable in their turn to a like accident. His opinion therefore was, that the king should push forward and attack the Scots, and bring the affair to a quick decision; and, if he were ever so unsuccessful, nothing worse could befall him than what from his inactivity he would certainly be exposed to. [1] To show how easy it would be to execute this project, he ordered an assault to be made on some quarters of the Scots, and he gained an advantage over them. No cessation of arms had as yet been agreed to during the treaty at Rippon; yet great clamor prevailed on account of this act of hostility. And when it was known that the officer who conducted the attack was a Papist, a violent outcry was raised against the king for employing that hated sect in the murder of his Protestant subjects. [2]

It may be worthy of remark, that several mutinies had arisen among the English troops when marching to join the army; and some officers had been murdered merely on suspicion of their being Papists. [3] The petition of right had abolished all martial law; and by an inconvenience which naturally attended the plan, as yet new and unformed, of regular and rigid liberty, it was found absolutely impossible for the generals to govern the army by all the authority which the king could legally confer upon them. The lawyers had declared, that martial law could not be exercised, except in the very presence of an enemy; and because it had been found necessary to execute a mutineer, the generals thought it advisable, for their own safety, to apply for a pardon from the crown. This weakness, however, was carefully concealed from the army, and Lord Conway said, that if any lawyer were so imprudent as to discover the secret to the soldiers, it would be necessary instantly to refute it, and to hang the lawyer himself by sentence of a court martial. [4]

* Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * Rush. vol. iii. 1190, 1191, 1192, etc. May, .

* * * * Rush. vol. iii. p 1199.

An army new levied, undisciplined, frightened, seditious, ill paid, and governed by no proper authority, was very unfit for withstanding a victorious and high-spirited enemy, and retaining in subjection a discontented and zealous nation.

Charles, in despair of being able to stem the torrent, at last determined to yield to it: and as he foresaw that the great council of the peers would advise him to call a parliament, he told them, in his first speech, that he had already taken this resolution. He informed them likewise, that the queen, in a letter which she had written to him, had very earnestly recommended that measure. This good prince, who was extremely attached to his consort, and who passionately wished to render her popular in the nation, forgot not, amidst all his distress, the interests of his domestic tenderness. [1]

In order to subsist both armies, (for the king was obliged, in order to save the northern counties, to pay his enemies,) Charles wrote to the city, desiring a loan of two hundred thousand pounds. And the peers at York, whose authority was now much greater than that of their sovereign, joined in the same request: [2] so low was this prince already fallen in the eyes of his own subjects.

As many difficulties occurred in the negotiation with the Scots, it was proposed to transfer the treaty from Rippon to London; a proposal willingly embraced by that nation, who were now sure of treating with advantage in a place where the king, they foresaw, would be in a manner a prisoner, in the midst of his implacable enemies, and their determined friends. [3]

* Clarendon, vol. 1. . Bush. vol. iii. .

* * Rush. vol. iii. p 1279.

* * * Rush, vol. iii. p 1805.

CHAPTER LIV.

CHARLES I

1640.

The causes of disgust which for above thirty years had daily been multiplying in England, were now come to full maturity, and threatened the kingdom with some great revolution or convulsion. The uncertain and undefined limits of prerogative and privilege had been eagerly disputed during that whole period; and in every controversy between prince and people, the question, however doubtful, had always been decided by each party in favor of its own pretensions. Too lightly, perhaps, moved by the appearance of necessity, the king had even assumed powers incompatible with the principles of limited government, and had rendered it impossible for his most zealous partisans entirely to justify his conduct, except by topics so unpopular, that they were more fitted, in the present disposition of men's minds, to inflame than appease the general discontent. Those great supports of public authority, law and religion, had likewise, by the unbounded compliance of judges and prelates, lost much of their influence over the people; or rather had, in a great measure, gone over to the side of faction, and authorized the spirit of opposition and rebellion. The nobility, also, whom the king had no means of retaining by offices and preferments suitable to their rank, had been seized with the general discontent, and unwarily threw themselves into the scale which already began too much to preponderate. Sensible of some encroachments which had been made by royal authority, men entertained no jealousy of the commons, whose enterprises for the acquisition of power had ever been covered with the appearance of public good, and had hitherto gone no further than some disappointed efforts and endeavors. The progress of the Scottish malecontents reduced the crown to an entire dependence for supply: their union with the popular party in England brought great accession of authority to the latter: the near prospect of success roused all latent murmurs and pretensions, which had hitherto been held in such violent constraint; and the torrent of general inclination and opinion ran so strongly against the court, that the king was in no situation to refuse any reasonable demands of the popular leaders either for defining or limiting the powers of his prerogative. Even many exorbitant claims, in his present situation, would probably be made, and must necessarily be complied with.

The triumph of the malecontents over the church was not yet so immediate or certain. Though the political and religious Puritans mutually lent assistance to each other, there were many who joined the former, yet declined all connection with the latter. The hierarchy had been established in England ever since the reformation: the Romish church, in all ages, had carefully maintained that form of ecclesiastical government: the ancient fathers too bore testimony to episcopal jurisdiction; and though parity may seem at first to have had place among Christian pastors, the period during which it prevailed was so short, that few undisputed traces of it remained in history. The bishops and their more zealous partisans inferred, thence the divine, indefeasible right of prelacy: others regarded that institution as venerable and useful; and if the love of novelty led some to adopt the new rites and discipline of the Puritans, the reverence to antiquity retained many in their attachment to the liturgy and government of the church. It behoved, therefore, the zealous innovators in parliament to proceed with some caution and reserve. By promoting all measures which reduced the powers of the crown, they hoped to disarm the king, whom they justly regarded, from principle, inclination, and policy, to be the determined patron of the hierarchy. By declaiming against the supposed encroachments and tyranny of the prelates, they endeavored to carry the nation, from a hatred of their persons, to an opposition against their office and character. And when men were enlisted in party, it would not be difficult, they thought, to lead them by degrees into many measures for which they formerly entertained the greatest aversion. Though the new sectaries composed not at first the majority of the nation, they were inflamed, as is usual among innovators, with extreme zeal for their opinions. Their unsurmountable passion, disguised to themselves as well as to others under the appearance of holy fervors, was well qualified to make proselytes, and to seize the minds of the ignorant multitude. And one furious enthusiast was able, by his active industry, to surmount the indolent efforts of many sober and reasonable antagonists.

When the nation, therefore, was so generally discontented and little suspicion was entertained of any design to subvert the church and monarchy, no wonder that almost all elections ran in favor of those who, by their high pretensions to piety and patriotism, had encouraged the national prejudices. It is a usual compliment to regard the king’s inclination in the choice of a speaker; and Charles had intended to advance Gardiner, recorder of London, to that important trust; but so little interest did the crown at that time possess in the nation, that Gardiner was disappointed of his election, not only in London, but in every other place where it was attempted; and the king was obliged to make the choice of speaker fail on Lenthal, a lawyer of some character, but not sufficiently qualified for so high and difficult an office. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

The eager expectations of men with regard to a parliament, summoned at so critical a juncture, and during such general discontents; a parliament which, from the situation of public affairs, could not be abruptly dissolved, and which was to execute every thing left unfinished by former parliaments; these motives, so important and interesting, engaged the attendance of all the members; and the house of commons was never observed to be from the beginning so full and numerous. Without any interval, therefore, they entered upon business, and by unanimous consent they immediately struck a blow which may in a manner be regarded as decisive.

The earl of Strafford was considered as chief minister, both on account of the credit which he possessed with his master, and of his own great and uncommon vigor and capacity. By a concurrence of accidents, this man labored under the severe hatred of all the three nations which composed the British monarchy. The Scots, whose authority now ran extremely high, looked on him as the capital enemy of their country and one whose counsels and influence they had most reason to apprehend. He had engaged the parliament of Ireland to advance large subsidies, in order to support a war against them: he had levied an army of nine thousand men, with which he had menaced all their western coast: he had obliged the Scots who lived under his government, to renounce the Covenant, their national idol: he had in Ireland proclaimed the Scottish Covenanters rebels and traitors, even before the king had issued any such declaration against them in England, and he had ever dissuaded his master against the late treaty and suspension of arms, which he regarded as dangerous and dishonorable. So avowed and violent were the Scots in their resentment of all these measures, that they had refused to send commissioners to treat at York, as was at first proposed; because, they said, the lieutenant of Ireland, their capital enemy, being general of the king's forces, had there the chief command and authority.

Strafford, first as deputy, then as lord lieutenant, had governed Ireland during eight years with great vigilance, activity, and prudence, but with very little popularity. In a nation so averse to the English government and religion, these very virtues were sufficient to draw on him the public hatred. The manners too and character of this great man, though to all full of courtesy, and to his friends full of affection, were at bottom haughty, rigid, and severe. His authority and influence during the time of his government had been unlimited; but no sooner did adversity seize him, than the concealed aversion of the nation blazed up at once, and the Irish parliament used every expedient to aggravate the charge against him.

The universal discontent which prevailed in England against the court, was all pointed towards the earl of Strafford; though without any particular reason, but because he was the minister of state whom the king most favored and most trusted. His extraction was honorable, his paternal fortune considerable, yet envy attended his sudden and great elevation. And his former associates in popular counsels, finding that he owed his advancement to the desertion of their cause, represented him as the great apostate of the commonwealth, whom it behoved them to sacrifice as a victim to public justice.

Strafford, sensible of the load of popular prejudices under which he labored, would gladly have declined attendance in parliament; and he begged the king's permission to withdraw himself to his government of Ireland, at least to remain at the head of the army in Yorkshire; where many opportunities, he hoped, would offer, by reason of his distance, to elude the attacks of his enemies. But Charles, who had entire confidence in the earl's capacity, thought that his counsels would be extremely useful during the critical session which approached. And when Strafford still insisted on the danger of his appearing amidst so many enraged enemies, the king, little apprehensive that his own authority was so suddenly to expire, promised him protection, and assured him that not a hair of his head should be touched by the parliament. [1]

No sooner was Strafford's arrival known, than a concerted attack was made upon him in the house of commons. Pym, in a long studied discourse, divided into many heads, after his manner, enumerated all the grievances under which the nation labored; and, from a complication of such oppressions, inferred that a deliberate plan had been formed of changing entirely the frame of government, and subverting the ancient laws and liberties of the kingdom. [2] Could any thing, he said, increase our indignation against so enormous and criminal a project, it would be to find that, during the reign of the best of princes, the constitution had been endangered by the worst of ministers, and that the virtues of the king had been seduced by wicked and pernicious counsel. We must inquire, added he, from what fountain these waters of bitterness flow; and though doubtless many evil counsellors will be found to have contributed their endeavors, yet there is one who challenges the infamous preeminence, and who, by his courage, enterprise, and capacity, is entitled to the first place among these betrayers of their country. He is the earl of Strafford, lieutenant of Ireland, and president of the council of York, who, in both places, and in all other provinces where he has been intrusted with authority, has raised ample monuments of tyranny, and will appear, from a survey of his actions, to be the chief promoter of every arbitrary counsel. Some instances of imperious expressions, as well as actions, were given by Pym; who afterwards entered into a more personal attack of that minister, and endeavored to expose his whole character and manners. The austere genius of Strafford, occupied in the pursuits of ambition, had not rendered his breast altogether inaccessible to the tender passions, or secured him from the dominion of the fair; and in that sullen age, when the irregularities of pleasure were more reproachful than the most odious crimes, these weaknesses were thought worthy of being mentioned, together with his treasons, before so great an assembly. And, upon the whole, the orator concluded, that it belonged to the house to provide a remedy proportionable to the disease, and to prevent the further mischiefs justly to be apprehended from the influence which this man had acquired over the measures and counsels of their sovereign. [3]

* Whitlocke, .

* * Whitlocke,

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

Sir John Clotworthy, an Irish gentleman, Sir John Hotham of Yorkshire, and many others, entered into the same topics, and after several hours spent in bitter invective, when the doors were locked, in order to prevent all discovery of their purpose, it was moved, in consequence of the resolution secretly taken, that Strafford should immediately be impeached of high treason. This motion was received with universal approbation; nor was there, in all the debate, one person who offered to stop the torrent by any testimony in favor of the earls conduct. Lord Falkland alone, though known to be his enemy, modestly desired the house to consider whether it would not better suit the gravity of their proceedings, first to digest by a committee many of those particulars which had been mentioned, before they sent up an accusation against him. It was ingeniously answered by Pym, that such a delay might probably blast all their hopes, and put it out of their power to proceed any further in the prosecution: that when Strafford should learn that so many of his enormities were discovered, his conscience would dictate his condemnation; and so great was his power and credit, he would immediately procure the dissolution of the parliament, or attempt some other desperate measure for his own preservation: that the commons were only accusers, not judges; and it was the province of the peers to determine whether such a complication of enormous crimes in one person, did not amount to the highest crime known by the law. [1] Without further debate, the impeachment was voted: Pym was chosen to carry it up to the lords: most of the house accompanied him on so agreeable an errand; and Strafford, who had just entered the house of peers, and who little expected so speedy a prosecution was immediately, upon this general charge, ordered into custody, with several symptoms of violent prejudice in his judges as well as in his prosecutors.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

In the inquiry concerning grievances, and in the censure of past measures, Laud could not long escape the severe scrutiny of the commons; who were led too, in their accusation of that prelate, as well by their prejudices against his whole order, as by the extreme antipathy which his intemperate zeal had drawn upon him. After a deliberation which scarcely lasted half an hour, an impeachment of high treason was voted against this subject, the first both in rank and in favor throughout the kingdom. Though this incident, considering the example of Stratford’s impeachment, and the present disposition of the nation and parliament, needed be no surprise to him, yet was he betrayed into some passion when the accusation was presented. “The commons themselves,” he said, “though his accusers, did not believe him guilty of the crimes with which they charged him;” an indiscretion which, next day, upon more mature deliberation, he desired leave to retract; but so little favorable were the peers, that they refused him this advantage or indulgence. Laud also was immediately, upon this general charge, sequestered from parliament, and committed to custody. [1]

The capital article insisted on against these two great men, was the design which the commons supposed to have been formed of subverting the laws and constitution of England, and introducing arbitrary and unlimited authority into the kingdom. Of all the king’s ministers, no one was so obnoxious in this respect as the lord keeper Finch. He it was who, being speaker in the king’s third parliament, had left the chair, and refused to put the question when ordered by the house. The extrajudicial opinion of the judges in the case of ship money had been procured by his intrigues, persuasions, and even menaces. In all unpopular and illegal measures, he was ever most active; and he was even believed to have declared publicly, that, while he was keeper, an order of council should always with him be equivalent to a law. To appease the rising displeasure of the commons, he desired to be heard at their bar. He prostrated himself with all humility before them; but this submission availed him nothing. An impeachment was resolved on; and in order to escape their fury, he thought proper secretly to withdraw, and retire into Holland. As he was not esteemed equal to Stratford, or even to Laud, either in capacity or in fidelity to his master, it was generally believed that his escape had been connived at by the popular leaders. [2] His impeachment, however, in his absence, was carried up to the house of peers.

Sir Francis Windebank, the secretary, was a creature of Laud’s; a sufficient reason for his being extremely obnoxious to the commons. He was secretly suspected too of the crime of Popery; and it was known that, from complaisance to the queen, and indeed in compliance with the king’s

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* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, , Rush. vol. iii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. i. p 129.

maxims of government, he had granted many indulgences to Catholics, and had signed warrants for the pardon of priests, and their delivery from confinement. Grimstone, a popular member, called him, in the house, the very pander and broker to the whore of Babylon. [1] Finding that the scrutiny of the commons was pointing towards him, and being sensible that England was no longer a place of safety for men of his character, he suddenly made his escape into France. [2]

Thus in a few weeks this house of commons, not opposed, or rather seconded by the peers, had produced such a revolution in the government, that the two most powerful and most favored ministers of the king were thrown into the Tower, and daily expected to be tried for their life: two other ministers had, by flight alone, saved themselves from a like fate: all the king's servants saw that no protection could be given them by their master: a new jurisdiction was erected in the nation; and before that tribunal all those trembled who had before exulted most in their credit and authority.

* Rush, vol. v. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

What rendered the power of the commons more formidable was, the extreme prudence with which it was conducted. Not content with the authority which they had acquired by attacking these great ministers, they were resolved to render the most considerable bodies of the nation obnoxious to them. Though the idol of the people, they determined to fortify themselves likewise with terrors, and to overawe those who might still be inclined to support the falling ruins of monarchy.

During the late military operations, several powers had been exercised by the lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of counties; and these powers, though necessary for the defence of the nation, and even warranted by all former precedent yet not being authorized by statute, were now voted to be illegal, and the persons who had assumed them declared delinquents. This term was newly come into vogue, and expressed a degree and species of guilt not exactly known or ascertained. In consequence of that determination, many of the nobility and prime gentry of the nation, while only exerting as they justly thought, the legal powers of magistracy unexpectedly found themselves involved in the crime of delinquency. And the commons reaped this multiplied advantage by their vote: they disarmed the crown; they established the maxims of rigid law and liberty; and they spread the terror of their own authority. [1]

The writs for ship money had been directed to the sheriffs, who were required, and even obliged, under severe penalties, to assess the sums upon individuals, and to levy them by their authority: yet were all the sheriffs, and all those who had been employed in that illegal service, voted, by a very rigorous sentence, to be delinquents. The king, by the maxims of law, could do no wrong: his ministers and servants, of whatever degree, in case cf any violation of the constitution, were alone culpable. [2]

All the farmers and officers of the customs, who had been employed during so many years in levying tonnage and poundage and the new impositions, were likewise declared criminals, and were afterwards glad to compound for a pardon by paying a fine of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Every discretionary or arbitrary sentence of the star chamber and high commission, courts which, from their very constitution, were arbitrary, underwent a severe scrutiny; and all those who had concurred in such sentences were voted to be liable to the penalties of law. [3] No minister of the king, no member of the council, but found himself exposed by this decision.

The judges who had given their vote against Hambden in the trial of ship money, were accused before the peers, and obliged to find surety for their appearance. Berkeley, a judge of the king’s bench, was seized by order of the house, even when sitting in his tribunal; and all men saw with astonishment the irresistible authority of their jurisdiction. [4]

The sanction of the lords and commons, as well as that of the king, was declared necessary for the confirmation of ecclesiastical canons. And this judgment, it must be confessed, however reasonable, at least useful, it would have been difficult to justify by any precedent.[v*]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * * Whitlocke, .

v Nalson, vol. i. .

v* An act of parliament, 25th Henry VIII., ca,

allowed the convocation with the king’s consent to make canons. By the famous act of submission to that prince, the clergy bound themselves to enact no canons without the king’s consent. The parliament was never mentioned nor thought of. Such pretensions as the commons advanced at present, would in any former age have been deemed strange usurpations.

But the present was no time for question or dispute. That decision which abolished all legislative power except that of parliament, was requisite for completing the new plan of liberty, and rendering it quite uniform and systematical. Almost all the bench of bishops, and the most considerable of the inferior clergy, who had voted in the late convocation, found themselves exposed by these new principles to the imputation of delinquency. [1]

The most unpopular of all Charles’s measures, and the least justifiable, was the revival of monopolies, so solemnly abolished, after reiterated endeavors, by a recent act of parliament. Sensible of this unhappy measure, the king had of himself recalled, during the time of his first expedition against Scotland, many of these oppressive patents; and the rest were now annulled by authority of parliament, and every one who was concerned in them declared delinquents. The commons carried so far their detestation of this odious measure, that they assumed a power which had formerly been seldom practised, [2] and they expelled all their members who were monopolists or projectors; an artifice by which, besides increasing their own privileges, they weakened still further the very small party which the king secretly retained in the house. Mildmay, a notorious monopolist, yet having associated himself with the ruling party, was still allowed to keep his seat. In all questions, indeed, of elections, no steady rule of decision was observed; and nothing further was regarded than the affections and attachments of the parties. [3] Men’s passions were too much heated to be shocked with any instance of injustice, which served ends so popular as those which were pursued by this house of commons.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. , 359. Nalson, vol. i. .

* * Lord Clarendon says it was entirely new; but there are instances of it in the reign of Elizabeth. D’Ewes, , 352. There are also instances in the reign of James.

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

The whole sovereign power being thus in a manner transferred to the commons, and the government, without any seeming violence or disorder, being changed in a moment from a monarchy almost absolute to a pure democracy, the popular leaders seemed willing for some time to suspend their active vigor, and to consolidate their authority, ere they proceeded to any violent exercise of it. Every day produced some new harangue on past grievances. The detestation of former usurpations was further enlivened; the jealousy of liberty roused; and, agreeably to the spirit of free government, no less indignation was excited by the view of a violated constitution, than by the ravages of the most enormous tyranny.

This was the time when genius and capacity of all kinds, freed from the restraint of authority, and nourished by unbounded hopes and projects, began to exert themselves, and be distinguished by the public. Then was celebrated the sagacity of Pym, more fitted for use than ornament; matured, not chilled, by his advanced age and long experience: then was displayed the mighty ambition of Hambden, taught disguise, not moderation, from former constraint; supported by courage, conducted by prudence, embellished by modesty; but whether founded in a love of power or zeal for liberty, is still, from his untimely end, left doubtful and uncertain: then too were known the dark, ardent, and dangerous character of St. John; the impetuous spirit of Hollis, violent and sincere, open and entire in his enmities and in his friendships; the enthusiastic genius of young Vane, extravagant in the ends which he pursued, sagacious and profound in the means which he employed; incited by the appearances of religion, negligent of the duties of morality.

So little apology would be received for past measures, so contagious the general spirit of discontent, that even men of the most moderate tempers, and the most attached to the church and monarchy, exerted themselves with the utmost vigor in the redress of grievances, and in prosecuting the authors of them. The lively and animated Digby displayed his eloquence on this occasion; the firm and undaunted Capel, the modest and candid Palmer. In this list too of patriot royalists are found the virtuous names of Hyde and Falkland. Though in their ultimate views and intentions these men differed widely from the former, in their present actions and discourses an entire concurrence and unanimity was observed.

By the daily harangues and invectives against illegal usurpations, not only the house of commons inflamed themselves with the highest animosity against the court: the nation caught new fire from the popular leaders, and seemed now to have made the first discovery of the many supposed disorders in the government. While the law in several instances seemed to be violated, they went no further than some secret and calm murmurs; but mounted up into rage and fury as soon as the constitution was thought to be restored to its former integrity and vigor. The capital especially, being the seat of parliament, was highly animated with the spirit of mutiny and disaffection. Tumults were daily raised; seditious assemblies encouraged; and every man, neglecting his own business, was wholly intent on the defence of liberty and religion. By stronger contagion, the popular affections were communicated from breast to breast in this place of general rendezvous and society.

The harangues of members, now first published and dispersed, kept alive the discontents against the king’s administration. The pulpits, delivered over to Puritanical preachers and lecturers, whom the commons arbitrarily settled in all the considerable churches, resounded with faction and fanaticism. Vengeance was fully taken for the long silence and constraint in which, by the authority of Laud and the high commission, these preachers had been retained. The press, freed from all fear or reserve, swarmed with productions, dangerous by their seditious zeal and calumny, more than by any art or eloquence of composition. Noise and fury, cant and hypocrisy, formed the sole rhetoric which, during this tumult of various prejudices and passions, could be heard or attended to.

The sentence which had been executed against Prynne, Bastwic, and Burton, now suffered a revisal from parliament. These libellers, far from being tamed by the rigorous punishments which they had undergone, showed still a disposition of repeating their offence; and the ministers were afraid lest new satires should issue from their prisons, and still further inflame the prevailing discontents. By an order, therefore, of council, they had been carried to remote prisons; Bastwic to Scilly, Prynne to Jersey, Burton to Guernsey; all access to them was denied; and the use of books, and of pen, ink and paper, was refused them. The sentence for these additional punishments was immediately reversed, in an arbitrary manner, by the commons: even the first sentence, upon examination, was declared illegal; and the judges who passed it were ordered to make reparation to the sufferers. [1]

* Nalson, vol. i. p 783. May, .

When the prisoners landed in England, they were received and entertained with the highest demonstrations of affection; were attended by a mighty confluence of company, their charges were borne with great magnificence, and liberal presents bestowed on them. On their approach to any town, all the inhabitants crowded to receive them, and welcomed their reception with shouts and acclamations. Their train still increased as they drew nigh to London. Some miles from the city, the zealots of their party met them in great multitudes, and attended their triumphant entrance: boughs were carried in this tumultuous procession; the roads were strewed with flowers; and amidst the highest exultations of joy, were intermingled loud and virulent invectives against the prelates, who had so cruelly persecuted such godly personages. [1] The more ignoble these men were, the more sensible was the insult upon royal authority, and the more dangerous was the spirit of disaffection and mutiny which it discovered among the people.

Lilburne, Leighton, and every one that had been punished for seditious libels during the preceding administration, now recovered their liberty, and were decreed damages from the judges and ministers of justice. [2]

Not only the present disposition of the nation insured impunity to all libellers: a new method of framing and dispersing libels was invented by the leaders of popular discontent. Petitions to parliament were drawn, craving redress against particular grievances; and when a sufficient number of subscriptions was procured, the petitions were presented to the commons, and immediately published. These petitions became secret bonds of association among the subscribers, and seemed to give undoubted sanction and authority to the complaints which they contained.

It is pretended by historians favorable to the royal cause, [3] and is even asserted by the king himself in a declaration, [4] that a most disingenuous, or rather criminal, practice prevailed in conducting many of these addresses. A petition was first framed; moderate, reasonable, such as men of character willingly subscribed. The names were afterwards torn off and affixed to another petition which served better the purposes of the popular faction. We may judge of the wild fury which prevailed throughout the nation, when so scandalous an imposture, which affected such numbers of people, could be openly practised without drawing infamy and ruin upon the managers.

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 200, etc. Nalson, vol. i. p. 570. May .

* * Rushworth, vol. v. p 228. Nalson, vol. i. .

* * * Dugdale. Clarendon, vol i. .

* * * * Husb. Col. .

So many grievances were offered, both by the members and by petitions without doors, that the house was divided into above forty committees, charged each of them with the examination of some particular violation of law and liberty which had been complained of. Besides the general committees of religion, trade, privileges, laws, many subdivisions of these were framed, and a strict scrutiny was every where carried on. It is to be remarked that, before the beginning of this century, when the commons assumed less influence and authority, complaints of grievances were usually presented to the house by any members who had had particular opportunity of observing them. These general committees, which were a kind of inquisitorial courts, had not then been established; and we find that the king, in a former declaration. [1] complains loudly of this innovation, so little favorable to royal authority. But never was so much multiplied, as at present, the use of these committees; and the commons, though themselves the greatest innovators, employed the usual artifice of complaining against innovations, and pretending to recover the ancient and established government.

* Published on dissolving the third parliament. See Parl. Hist, vol. viii. .

From the reports of their committees, the house daily passed votes which mortified and astonished the court, and inflamed and animated the nation. Ship money was declared illegal and arbitrary; the sentence against Hambden cancelled; the court of York abolished; compositions for knighthood stigmatized; the enlargement of the forests condemned; patents for monopolies annulled; and every late measure of administration treated with reproach and obloquy. To-day a sentence of the star chamber was exclaimed against; to-morrow a decree of the high commission. Every discretionary act of council was represented as arbitrary and tyrannical; and the general inference was still inculcated, that a formed design had been laid to subvert the laws and constitution of the kingdom.

From necessity the king remained entirely passive during all these violent operations. The few servants who continued faithful to him, were seized with astonishment at the rapid progress made by the commons in power and popularity, and were glad, by their inactive and inoffensive behavior, to compound for impunity. The torrent rising to so dreadful and unexpected a height, despair seized all those who from interest or habit were most attached to monarchy. And as for those who maintained their duty to the king merely from their regard to the constitution, they seemed by their concurrence to swell that inundation which began already to deluge every thing. "You have taken the whole machine of government in pieces," said Charles, in a discourse to the parliament; "a practice frequent with skilful artists, when they desire to clear the wheels from any rust which may have grown upon them. The engine," continued he, "may again be restored to its former use and motions, provided it be put up entire, so as not a pin of it be wanting." But this was far from the intention of the commons. The machine, they thought, with some reason, was encumbered with many wheels and springs which retarded and crossed its operations, and destroyed its utility. Happy! had they proceeded with moderation, and been contented, in their present plenitude of power, to remove such parts only as might justly be deemed superfluous and incongruous.

In order to maintain that high authority which they had acquired, the commons, besides confounding and overawing their opponents, judged it requisite to inspire courage into their friends and adherents; particularly into the Scots, and the religious Puritans, to whose assistance and good offices they were already so much beholden.

No sooner were the Scots masters of the northern counties, than they laid aside their first professions, which they had not indeed means to support, of paying for every thing; and in order to prevent the destructive expedient of plunder and free quarters, the country consented to give them a regular contribution of eight hundred and fifty pounds a day, in full of their subsistence. [1]

* Rush. vol. iii. .

The parliament, that they might relieve the northern counties from so grievous a burden, agreed to remit pay to the Scottish as well as to the English army; and because subsidies would be levied too slowly for so urgent an occasion, money was borrowed from the citizens upon the security of particular members. Two subsidies, a very small sum, [1] were at first voted; and as the intention of this supply was to indemnify the members who by their private had supported public credit, this pretence was immediately laid hold of, and the money was ordered to be paid, not into the treasury, but to commissioners appointed by parliament; a practice which as it diminished the authority of the crown, was willingly embraced, and was afterwards continued by the commons with regard to every branch of revenue which they granted to the king. The invasion of the Scots had evidently been the cause of assembling the parliament: the presence of their army reduced the king to that total subjection in which he was now held: the commons, for this reason, openly professed their intention of retaining these invaders, till all their own enemies should be suppressed, and all their purposes effected. “We cannot yet spare the Scots,” said Strode plainly in the house, “the sons of Zeruiah are still too strong for us;” [2] an allusion to a passage of Scripture, according to the mode of that age. Eighty thousand pounds a month were requisite for the subsistence of the two armies; a sum much greater than the subject had ever been accustomed in any former period to pay to the public. And though several subsidies, together with a poll-tax, were from time to time voted to answer the charge, the commons still took care to be in debt, in order to render the continuance of the session the more necessary.

* It appears that a subsidy was now fallen to fifty thousand pounds.

* * Dugdale, .

The Scots being such useful allies to the malecontent party in England, no wonder they were courted with the most unlimited complaisance and the most important services. The king, having in his first speech called them rebels, observed that he had given great offence to the parliament; and he was immediately obliged to soften, and even retract the expression.

The Scottish commissioners, of whom the most considerable were the earl of Rothes and Lord Loudon, found every advantage in conducting their treaty; yet made no haste in bringing it to an issue. They were lodged in the city, and kept an intimate correspondence, as well with the magistrates who were extremely disaffected, as with the popular leaders in both houses. St. Antholine's church was assigned them for their devotions; and their chaplains here began openly to practise the Presbyterian form of worship, which, except in foreign languages, had never hitherto been allowed any indulgence or toleration. So violent was the general propensity towards this new religion, that multitudes of all ranks crowded to the church. Those who were so happy as to find access early in the morning, kept their places the whole day, those who were excluded clung to the doors or windows, in hopes of catching at least some distant murmur or broken phrases of the holy rhetoric. [1] All the eloquence of parliament, now well refined from pedantry, animated with the spirit of liberty and employed in the most important interests, was not attended to with such insatiable avidity, as were these lectures, delivered with ridiculous cant and a provincial accent, full of barbarism and of ignorance.

The most effectual expedient for paying court to the zealous Scots, was to promote the Presbyterian discipline and worship throughout England; and to this innovation the popular leaders among the commons, as well as their more devoted partisans, were of themselves sufficiently inclined. The Puritanical party, whose progress, though secret, had hitherto been gradual in the kingdom, taking advantage of the present disorders, began openly to profess their tenets, and to make furious attacks on the established religion. The prevalence of that sect in the parliament discovered itself, from the beginning, by insensible but decisive symptoms. Marshall and Burgess, two Puritanical clergymen, were chosen to preach before them, and entertained them with discourses seven hours in length. [2] It being the custom of the house always to take the sacrament before they enter upon business, they ordered, as a necessary preliminary, that the communion table should be removed from the east end of St. Margaret's into the middle of the area. [3] The name of the "spiritual lords" was commonly left out in acts of parliament; and the laws ran in the name of king, lords, and commons. The clerk of the upper house, in reading bills, turned his back on the bench of bishops; nor was his insolence ever taken notice of.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Nalson, vol. i. , 533.

* * * Nalson, voL i.

On a day appointed for a solemn fast and humiliation, all the orders of temporal peers, contrary to former practice, in going to church took place of the spiritual; and Lord Spencer remarked that the humiliation that day seemed confined alone to the prelates.

Every meeting of the commons produced some vehement harangue against the usurpations of the bishops, against the high commission, against the late convocation, against the new canons. So disgusted were all lovers of civil liberty at the doctrines promoted by the clergy, that these invectives were received without control; and no distinction at first appeared between such as desired only to repress the exorbitancies of the hierarchy, and such as pretended totally to annihilate episcopal jurisdiction. Encouraged by these favorable appearances, petitions against the church were framed in different parts of the kingdom. The epithet of the ignorant and vicious priesthood was commonly applied to all churchmen addicted to the established discipline and worship; though the episcopal clergy in England, during that age, seem to have been, as they are at present, sufficiently learned and exemplary. An address against episcopacy was presented by twelve clergymen to the committee of religion, and pretended to be signed by many hundreds of the Puritanical persuasion. But what made most noise was, the city petition for a total alteration of church government; a petition to which fifteen thousand subscriptions were annexed, and which was presented by Alderman Pennington, the city member. [1] It is remarkable that, among the many ecclesiastical abuses there complained of, an allowance given by the licensers of books to publish a translation of Ovid’s Art of Love, is not forgotten by these rustic censors. [2]

Notwithstanding the favorable disposition of the people, the leaders in the house resolved to proceed with caution. They introduced a bill for prohibiting all clergymen the exercise of any civil office. As a consequence, the bishops were to be deprived of their seats in the house of peers; a measure not unacceptable to the zealous friends of liberty, who observed with regret the devoted attachment of that order to the will of the monarch.

But when this bill was presented to the peers, it was rejected by a great majority; [3] the first check which the commons had received in their popular career, and a prognostic of what they might afterwards expect from the upper house, whose inclinations and interests could never be totally separated from the throne.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, . Nalson, vol. i. .

* * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

But to show how little they were discouraged, the Puritans immediately brought in another bill for the total abolition of episcopacy; though they thought proper to let that bill sleep at present, in expectation of a more favorable opportunity of reviving it. [1]

Among other acts of regal executive power which the commons were every day assuming, they issued orders for demolishing all images, altars, crucifixes. The zealous Sir Robert Harley, to whom the execution of these orders was committed, removed all crosses even out of streets and markets; and, from his abhorrence of that superstitious figure, would not any where allow one piece of wood or stone to lie over another at right angles. [2]

The bishop of Ely and other clergymen were attacked on account of innovations. [3] Cozens, who had long been obnoxious, was exposed to new censures. This clergyman, who was dean of Peterborough, was extremely zealous for ecclesiastical ceremonies: and so far from permitting the communicants to break the sacramental bread with their fingers, a privilege on which the Puritans strenuously insisted, he would not so much as allow it to be cut with an ordinary household instrument. A consecrated knife must perform that sacred office, and must never afterwards be profaned by any vulgar service. [4]

Cozens likewise was accused of having said, “The king has no more authority in ecclesiastical matters, than the boy who rubs my horse’s heels.” The expression was violent: but it is certain that all those high churchmen, who were so industrious in reducing the laity to submission, were extremely fond of their own privileges and independency, and were desirous of exempting the mitre from all subjection to the crown.

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * * Rush. vol. v. .

v Parl. Hist. vol. vii. . Rush. vol. v. .

A committee was elected by the lower house as a court of inquisition upon the clergy, and was commonly denominated the committee of “scandalous ministers.” The politicians among the commons were apprised of the great importance of the pulpit for guiding the people; the bigots were enraged against the prelatical clergy; and both of them knew that no established government could be overthrown by strictly observing the principles of justice, equity, or clemency. The proceedings, therefore, of this famous committee, which continued for several years, were cruel and arbitrary, and made great havoc both on the church and the universities. They began with harassing, imprisoning, and molesting the clergy; and ended with sequestrating and ejecting them. In order to join contumely to cruelty, they gave the sufferers the epithet of “scandalous,” and endeavored to render them as odious as they were miserable. [1] The greatest vices, however, which they could reproach to a great part of them, were, bowing at the name of Jesus, placing the communion table in the east, reading the king’s orders for sports on Sunday, and other practices which the established government, both in church and state, had strictly enjoined them.

It may be worth observing, that all historians who lived near that age, or, what perhaps is more decisive, all authors who have casually made mention of those public transactions, still represent the civil disorders and convulsions as proceeding from religious controversy, and consider the political disputes about power and liberty as entirely subordinate to the other. It is true, had the king been able to support government, and at the same time to abstain from all invasion of national privileges, it seems not probable that the Puritans ever could have acquired such authority as to overturn the whole constitution: yet so entire was the subjection into which

Charles was now fallen, that, had not the wound been poisoned by the infusion of theological hatred, it must have admitted of an easy remedy. Disuse of parliaments, imprisonments and prosecution of members, ship money, an arbitrary administration; these were loudly complained of; but the grievances which tended chiefly to inflame the parliament and nation, especially the latter, were the surplice, the rails placed about the altar, the bows exacted on approaching it, the liturgy, the breach of the Sabbath, embroidered copes, lawn sleeves, the use of the ring in marriage, and of the cross in baptism. On account of these were the popular leaders content to throw the government into such violent convulsions; and, to the disgrace of that age and of this island, it must be acknowledged, that the disorders in Scotland entirely, and those in England mostly proceeded from so mean and contemptible an origin. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, . May, .

* * Lord Clarendon (vol. i.) says, that the parliamentary party were not agreed about the entire abolition of episcopacy: they were only the root and branch men, as they were called, who insisted on that measure. But those who were willing to retain bishops, insisted on reducing their authority to a low ebb, as well as on abolishing the ceremonies of worship and vestments of the clergy. The controversy therefore, between the parties was almost wholly theological, and that of the most frivolous and ridiculous kind.

Some persons, partial to the patriots of this age, have ventured to put them in a balance with the most illustrious characters of antiquity; and mentioned the names of Pym, Hambden, Vane, as a just parallel to those of Cato, Brutus, Cassius. Profound capacity, indeed, undaunted courage, extensive enterprise; in these particulars, perhaps, the Roman do not much surpass the English worthies: but what a difference, when the discourse, conduct, conversation, and private as well as public behavior of both are inspected! Compare only one circumstance, and consider its consequences. The leisure of those noble ancients was totally employed in the study of Grecian eloquence and philosophy; in the cultivation of polite letters and civilized society: the whole discourse and language of the moderns were polluted with mysterious jargon, and full of the lowest and most vulgar hypocrisy.

The laws, as they stood at present, protected the church but they exposed the Catholics to the utmost rage of the Puritans; and these unhappy religionists, so obnoxious to the prevailing sect, could not hope to remain long unmolested. The voluntary contribution, which they had made, in order to assist the king in his war against the Scottish Covenanters, was inquired into, and represented as the greatest enormity. [1] By an address from the commons, all officers of that religion were removed from the army, and application was made to the king for seizing two thirds of the lands of recusants; a proportion to which by law he was entitled, but which he had always allowed them to possess upon easy compositions. The execution of the severe and bloody laws against priests was insisted on; and one Goodman, a Jesuit, who was found in prison, was condemned to a capital punishment. Charles, however, agreeably to his usual principles, scrupled to sign the warrant for his execution; and the commons expressed great resentment on the occasion. [2] There remains a singular petition of Goodman, begging to be hanged, rather than prove a source of contention between the king and his people. [3]

* Rush, vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v. , 159. Nalson, vol. i. .

* * * Rush. vol. v. . Nalson, vol. i. .

He escaped with his life; but it seems more probable, that he was overlooked amidst affairs of greater consequence, than that such unrelenting hatred would be softened by any consideration of his courage and generosity.

For some years Con, a Scotchman, afterwards Rosetti, an Italian, had openly resided at London, and frequented the court, as vested with a commission from the pope. The queen’s zeal, and her authority with her husband, had been the cause of this imprudence, so offensive to the nation. [1] But the spirit of bigotry now rose too high to permit any longer such indulgences. [2]

Hayward, a justice of peace, having been wounded, when employed in the exercise of his office, by one James, a Catholic madman, this enormity was ascribed to the Popery, not to the frenzy of the assassin; and great alarms seized the nation and parliament. [3] A universal conspiracy of the Papists was supposed to have taken place; and every man for some days imagined that he had a sword at his throat. Though some persons of family and distinction were still attached to the Catholic superstition, it is certain that the numbers of that sect did not amount to the fortieth part of the nation: and the frequent panics to which men, during this period, were so subject on account of the Catholics, were less the effects of fear, than of extreme rage and aversion entertained against them.

* It is now known from the Clarendon papers, that the king had also an authorized agent who resided at Rome. His name was Bret, and his chief business was to negotiate with the pope concerning indulgences to the Catholics, and to engage the Catholics, in return, to be good and loyal subjects. But this whole matter, though very innocent, was most carefully kept secret. The king says, that he believed Bret to be as much his as any Papist could be. See , 354.

* * Bush. vol. v. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. Rush. vol. v. .

The queen mother of France, having been forced into banishment by some court intrigues, had retired into England; and expected shelter, amidst her present distresses, in the dominions of her daughter and son-in-law, But though she behaved in the most inoffensive manner, she was insulted by the populace on account of her religion, and was even threatened with worse treatment. The earl of Holland, lieutenant of Middlesex, had ordered a hundred musketeers to guard her; but finding that they had imbibed the same prejudices with the rest of their countrymen, and were unwillingly employed in such a service, he laid the case before the house of peers, for the king’s authority was now entirely annihilated. He represented the indignity of the action, that so great a princess, mother to the king of France and to the queens of Spain and England, should be affronted by the multitude. He observed the indelible reproach which would fall upon the nation, if that unfortunate queen should suffer any violence from the misguided zeal of the people. He urged the sacred rights of hospitality, due to every one, much more to a person in distress, of so high a rank, with whom the nation was so nearly connected. The peers thought proper to communicate the matter to the commons, whose authority over the people was absolute. The commons agreed to the necessity of protecting the queen mother; but at the same time prayed that she might be desired to depart the kingdom, "for the quieting those jealousies in the hearts of his majesty's well-affected subjects, occasioned by some ill instruments about that queen's person, by the flowing of priests and Papists to her house, and by the use and practice of the idolatry of the mass, and exercise of other superstitious services of the Romish church, to the great scandal of true religion." [1]

Charles, in the former part of his reign, had endeavored to overcome the intractable and encroaching spirit of the commons, by a perseverance in his own measures, by a stately dignity of behavior, and by maintaining at their utmost height, and even perhaps stretching beyond former precedent, the rights of his prerogative. Finding, by experience, how unsuccessful those measures had proved, and observing the low condition to which he was now reduced, he resolved to alter his whole conduct, and to regain the confidence of his people by pliableness, by concessions, and by a total conformity to their inclinations and prejudices. It may safely be averred, that this new extreme into which the king, for want of proper counsel or support, was fallen, became no less dangerous to the constitution, and pernicious to public peace, than the other, in which he had so long and so unfortunately persevered.

The pretensions with regard to tonnage and poundage were revived, and with certain assurance of success, by the commons. [2]

* Rush, vol. v. .

* It appears not that the commons, though now entirely masters, abolished the new impositions of James, against which they had formerly so loudly complained; a certain proof that the rates of customs settled by that prince, were in most instances just, and proportioned to the new price of commodities. They seem rather to have been low. See Journ.

10th Aug. 1625.

The levying of these duties as formerly, without consent of parliament, and even increasing them at pleasure, was such an incongruity in a free constitution, where the people by their fundamental privileges cannot be taxed but by their own consent, as could no longer be endured by these jealous patrons of liberty. In the preamble, therefore, to the bill by which the commons granted these duties to the king, they took care, in the strongest and most positive terms, to assert their own right of bestowing this gift, and to divest the crown of all independent title of assuming it. And that they might increase, or rather finally fix, the entire dependence and subjection of the king, they voted these duties only for two months; and afterwards, from time to time, renewed their grant for very short periods. [1] Charles, in order to show that he entertained no intention ever again to separate himself from his parliament, passed this important bill without any scruple or hesitation. [2]

* It was an instruction given by the house to the committee which framed one of these bills, to take care that the rates upon exportation may be as light as possible, and upon importation as heavy as trade will bear; a proof that the nature of commerce began now to be understood. Journ. 1st June, 1641

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

With regard to the bill for triennial parliaments, he made a little difficulty. By an old statute, passed during the reign of Edward III., it had been enacted, that parliaments should be held once every year, or more frequently if necessary: but as no provision had been made in case of failure, and no precise method pointed out for execution, this statute had been considered merely as a general declaration, and was dispensed with at pleasure. The defect was supplied by those vigilant patriots who now assumed the reins of government. It was enacted, that if the chancellor, who was first bound under severe penalties, failed to issue writs by the third of September in every third year, any twelve or more of the peers should be empowered to exert this authority; in default of the peers, that the sheriffs, mayors, bailiffs, etc., should summon the voters; and in their default, that the voters themselves should meet and proceed to the election of members, in the same manner as if writs had been regularly issued from the crown. Nor could the parliament, after it was assembled, be adjourned, prorogued, or dissolved, without their own consent, during the space of fifty days. By this bill, some of the noblest and most valuable prerogatives of the crown were retrenched; but at the same time nothing could be more necessary than such a statute, for completing a regular plan of law and liberty. A great reluctance to assemble parliaments must be expected in the king, where these assemblies, as of late, establish it as a maxim to carry their scrutiny into every part of government. During long intermissions of parliament, grievances and abuses, as was found by recent experience, would naturally creep in; and it would even become necessary for the king and council to exert a great discretionary authority, and by acts of state to supply, in every emergence, the legislative power, whose meeting was so uncertain and precarious. Charles, finding that nothing less would satisfy his parliament and people, at last gave his assent to this bill which produced so great an innovation in the constitution. [1] Solemn thanks were presented him by both houses. Great rejoicings were expressed both in the city and throughout the nation. And mighty professions were every where made of gratitude and mutual returns of supply and confidence. This concession of the king, it must be owned, was not entirely voluntary: it was of a nature too important to be voluntary. The sole inference which his partisans were entitled to draw from the submissions so frankly made to present necessity was, that he had certainly adopted a new plan of government, and for the future was resolved, by every indulgence, to acquire the confidence and affections of his people.

Charles thought, that what concessions were made to the public were of little consequence, if no gratifications were bestowed on individuals who had acquired the direction of public counsels and determinations. A change of ministers, as well as of measures, was therefore resolved on. In one day, several new privy counsellors were sworn; the earls of Hertford Bedford, Essex, Bristol; the lords Say, Saville, Kimbolton. within a few days after was admitted the earl of Warwick. [2] All these noblemen were of the popular party; and some of them afterwards, when matters were pushed to extremities by the commons, proved the greatest support of monarchy.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. p, 189.

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

Juxon, bishop of London, who had never desired the treasurer’s staff, now earnestly solicited for leave to resign it, and retire to the care of that turbulent diocese committed to him. The king gave his consent; and it is remarkable that, during all the severe inquiries carried on against the conduct of ministers and prelates, the mild and prudent virtues of this man who bore both these invidious characters, remained unmolested. [1] It was intended that Bedford, a popular man, of great authority, as well as wisdom and moderation, should succeed Juxon; but that nobleman, unfortunately both for king and people, died about this very time. By some promotions, place was made for St. John, who was created solicitor-general. Hollis was to be made secretary of state, in the room of Windebank, who had fled: Pym, chancellor of the exchequer, in the room of Lord Cottington, who had resigned: Lord Say, master of the wards, in the room of the same nobleman: the earl of Essex, governor, and Hambden, tutor to the prince. [2]

* Warwick, p, 95.

* * Clarendon, vol. i. , 211.

What retarded the execution of these projected changes, was the difficulty of satisfying all those who, from their activity and authority in parliament, had pretensions for offices, and who still had it in their power to embarrass and distress the public measures. Their associates too in popularity, whom the king intended to distinguish by his favor, were unwilling to undergo the reproach of having driven a separate bargain, and of sacrificing to their own ambitious views the cause of the nation. And as they were sensible that they must owe their preferment entirely to their weight and consideration in parliament, they were most of them resolved still to adhere to that assembly, and both to promote its authority, and to preserve their own credit in it. On all occasions, they had no other advice to give the king, than to allow himself to be directed by his great council; or, in other words, to resign himself passively to their guidance and government. And Charles found, that instead of acquiring friends by the honors and offices which he should bestow, he should only arm his enemies with more power to hurt him.

The end on which the king was most intent in changing ministers was, to save the life of the earl of Strafford, and to mollify, by these indulgences, the rage of his most furious prosecutors. But so high was that nobleman's reputation for experience and capacity, that all the new counsellors and intended ministers plainly saw, that if he escaped their vengeance, he must return into favor and authority; and they regarded his death as the only security which they could have, both for the establishment of their present power, and for success in their future enterprises. His impeachment, therefore, was pushed on with the utmost vigor; and, after long and solemn preparations, was brought to a final issue.

Immediately after Strafford was sequestered from parliament, and confined in the Tower, a committee of thirteen was chosen by the lower house, and intrusted with the office of preparing a charge against him. These, joined to a small committee of lords, were vested with authority to examine all witnesses, to call for every paper, and to use any means of scrutiny, with regard to any part of the earl's behavior and conduct. [1] After so general and unbounded an inquisition, exercised by such powerful and implacable enemies, a man must have been very cautious or very innocent, not to afford, during the whole course of his life, some matter of accusation against him.

This committee, by direction from both houses, took an oath of secrecy; a practice very unusual, and which gave them the appearance of conspirators, more than ministers of justice. [2] But the intention of this strictness was, to render it more difficult for the earl to elude their search, or prepare for his justification.

Application was made to the king, that he would allow this committee to examine privy counsellors with regard to opinions delivered at the board: a concession which Charles unwarily made, and which thenceforth banished all mutual confidence from the deliberations of council; where every man is supposed to have entire freedom, without fear of future punishment or inquiry, of proposing any expedient, questioning any opinion, or supporting any argument. [3]

Sir George Ratcliffe, the earl's intimate friend and confidant, was accused of high treason, sent for from Ireland, and committed to close custody. As no charge ever appeared or was prosecuted against him, it is impossible to give a more charitable interpretation to this measure, than that the commons thereby intended to deprive Strafford, in his present distress, of the assistance of his best friend, who was most enabled, by his testimony, to justify the innocence of his patron's conduct and behavior. [4]

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. i. p 214.

When intelligence arrived in Ireland of the plans laid for Stafford’s ruin, the Irish house of commons, though they had very lately bestowed ample praises on his administration, entered into all the violent counsels against him, and prepared a representation of the miserable state into which, by his misconduct, they supposed the kingdom to be fallen. They sent over a committee to London, to assist in the prosecution of their unfortunate governor; and by intimations from this committee, who entered into close confederacy with the popular leaders in England, was every measure of the Irish parliament governed and directed. Impeachments, which were never prosecuted, were carried up against Sir Richard Bolton, the chancellor, Sir Gerard Louther, chief justice, and Bramhall, bishop of Derry. [1] This step, which was an exact counterpart to the proceedings in England, served also the same purposes: it deprived the king of the ministers whom he most trusted; it discouraged and terrified all the other ministers and it prevented those persons who were best acquainted with Strafford’s counsels from giving evidence in his favor before the English parliament.

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The bishops, being forbidden by the ancient canons to assist in trials for life, and being unwilling by any opposition to irritate the commons, who were already much prejudiced against them, thought proper of themselves to withdraw. [2] The commons also voted, that the new-created peers ought to have no voice in this trial; because the accusation being agreed to while they were commoners, their consent to it was implied with that of all the commons of England. Notwithstanding this decision, which was meant only to deprive Strafford of so many friends, Lord Seymour and some others still continued to keep their seat; nor was their right to it any further questioned. [3]

To bestow the greater solemnity on this important trial scaffolds were erected in Westminster Hall; where both houses sat, the one as accusers, the other as judges. Besides the chair of state, a close gallery was prepared for the king and queen, who attended during the whole trial. [4]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. p 216.

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * * *Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. iv. ., May. .

An accusation carried on by the united effort of three kingdoms against one man, unprotected by power, unassisted by counsel, discountenanced by authority, was likely to prove a very unequal contest; yet such were the capacity, genius presence of mind, displayed by this magnanimous statesman, that, while argument, and reason, and law had any place, he obtained an undisputed victory. And *he perished at last, overwhelmed, and still unsubdued, by the open violence of his fierce and unrelenting antagonists.

The articles of impeachment against Strafford are twenty-eight in number; and regard his conduct, as president of the council of York, as deputy or lieutenant of Ireland, and as counsellor or commander in England. But though four months were employed by the managers in framing the accusation, and all Strafford’s answers were extemporary, it appears from comparison, not only that he was free from the crime of treason, of which there is not the least appearance, but that his conduct, making allowance for human infirmities, exposed to such severe scrutiny, was innocent, and even laudable.

The powers of the northern council, while he was president, had been extended by the king’s instructions beyond what formerly had been practised: but that court being at first instituted by a stretch of royal prerogative, it had been usual for the prince to vary his instructions; and the largest authority committed to it was altogether as legal as the most moderate and most limited. Nor was it reasonable to conclude, that Strafford had used any art to procure those extensive powers; since he never once sat as president, or exercised one act of jurisdiction, after he was invested with the authority so much complained of. [1]

In the government of Ireland, his administration had been equally promotive of his master’s interest, and that of the subjects committed to his care. A large debt he had paid off: he had left a considerable sum in the exchequer: the revenue, which never before answered the charges of government, was now raised to be equal to them. [2] A small standing army, formerly kept in no order, was augmented, and was governed by exact discipline; and a great force was there raised and paid for the support of the king’s authority against the Scottish covenanters.

* Bush. vol. iv, .

* * Bush. vol. v. , 247. Warwick, .

Industry and all the arts of peace were introduced among that rude people; the shipping of the kingdom augmented a hundred fold; [1] the customs tripled upon the same rates: the exports double in value to the imports; manufactures, particularly that of linen, introduced and promoted; [2] agriculture, by means of the English and Scottish plantations, gradually advancing; the Protestant religion encouraged, without the persecution or discontent of the Catholics.

* Nelson, vol. ii. .

* * Rush. vol. iv. ., Warwick, .

The springs of authority he had enforced without overstraining them. Discretionary acts of jurisdiction, indeed, he had often exerted, by holding courts martial, billetting soldiers, deciding causes upon paper petitions before the council, issuing proclamations, and punishing their infraction. But discretionary authority during that age was usually exercised even in England. In Ireland, it was still more requisite, among a rude people, not yet thoroughly subdued, averse to the religion and manners of their conquerors, ready on all occasions to relapse into rebellion and disorder. While the managers of the commons demanded every moment, that the deputy’s conduct should be examined by the line of rigid law and severe principles, he appealed still to the practice of all former deputies, and to the uncontrollable necessity of his situation.

So great was his art of managing elections and balancing parties, that he had engaged the Irish parliament to vote whatever was necessary, both for the payment of former debts, and for support of the new-levied army; nor had he ever been reduced to the illegal expedients practised in England for the supply of public necessities. No imputation of rapacity could justly lie against his administration. Some instances of imperious expressions, and even actions, may be met with. The case of Lord Mountnorris, of all those which were collected with so much industry, is the most flagrant and the least excusable.

It had been reported at the table of Lord Chancellor Loftus, that Annesley, one of the deputy's attendants, in moving a stool, had sorely hurt his master's foot, who was at that time afflicted with the gout. "Perhaps," said Mountnorris, who was present at table, "it was done in revenge of that public affront which my lord deputy formerly put upon him: but he has a brother who would not have taken such a revenge." This casual, and seemingly innocent, at least ambiguous expression, was reported to Stafford; who, on pretence that such a suggestion might prompt Annesley to avenge himself in another manner, ordered Mountnorris, who was an officer to be tried by a court martial for mutiny and sedition against his general. The court, which consisted of the chief officers of the army, found the crime to be capital, and condemned that nobleman to lose his head. [1]

In vain did Strafford plead in his own defence against this article of impeachment, that the sentence of Mountnorris was the deed, and that too unanimous, of the court, not the act of the deputy; that he spake not to a member of the court, nor voted in the cause, but sat uncovered as a party, and then immediately withdrew, to leave them to their freedom; that, sensible of the iniquity of the sentence, he procured his majesty's free pardon to Mountnorris; and that he did not even keep that nobleman a moment in suspense with regard to his fate, but instantly told him, that he himself would sooner lose his right hand than execute such a sentence, nor was his lordship's life in any danger. In vain did Strafford's friends add, as a further apology, that Mountnorris was a man of an infamous character, who paid court by the lowest adulation to all deputies while present, and blackened their character by the vilest calumnies when recalled; and that Strafford, expecting like treatment, had used this expedient for no other purpose than to subdue the petulant spirit of the man. These excuses alleviate the guilt; but there still remains enough to prove, that the mind of the deputy, though great and firm, had been not a little debauched by the riot of absolute power and uncontrolled authority.

When Strafford was called over to England, he found every thing falling into such confusion, by the open rebellion of the Scots, and the secret discontents of the English, that, if he had counselled or executed any violent measure, he might perhaps have been able to apologize for his conduct from the great law of necessity, which admits not, while the necessity is extreme, of any scruple, ceremony, or delay. [2] But, in fact, no illegal advice or action was proved against him; and the whole amount of his guilt, during this period, was some peevish, or at most imperious expressions, which, amidst such desperate extremities, and during a bad state of health, had unhappily fallen from him.

* Rush. vol. iv. .

* * Rush. vol. iv. .

If Strafford's apology was in the main so satisfactory when he pleaded to each particular article of the charge, his victory was still more decisive when he brought the whole together, and repelled the imputation of treason; the crime which the commons would infer from the full view of his conduct and behavior. Of all species of guilt, the law of England had with the most scrupulous exactness defined that of treason; because on that side it was found most necessary to protect the subject against the violence of the king and of his ministers. In the famous statute of Edward III., all the kinds of treason are enumerated; and every other crime, besides such as are there expressly mentioned, is carefully excluded from that appellation. But with regard to this guilt, "an endeavor to subvert the fundamental laws," the statute of treasons is totally silent: and arbitrarily to introduce it into the fatal catalogue, is itself a subversion of all law; and under color of defending liberty, reverses a statute the best calculated for the security of liberty that had ever been enacted by an English parliament.

As this species of treason, discovered by the commons, is entirely new and unknown to the laws, so is the species of proof by which they pretend to fix that guilt upon the prisoner. They have invented a kind of accumulative or constructive evidence, by which many actions either totally innocent in themselves, or criminal in a much inferior degree, shall, when united, amount to treason, and subject the person to the highest penalties inflicted by the law. A hasty and unguarded word, a rash and passionate action, assisted by the malevolent fancy of the accuser, and tortured by doubtful constructions, is transmuted into the deepest guilt; and the lives and fortunes of the whole nation, no longer protected by justice, are subjected to arbitrary will and pleasure.

“Where has this species of guilt lain so long concealed?” said Strafford in conclusion. “Where has this fire been so long buried during so many centuries, that no smoke should appear till it burst out at once to consume me and my children? Better it were to live under no law at all, and by the maxims of cautious prudence to conform ourselves the best we can to the arbitrary will of a master, than fancy we have a law on which we can rely, and find at last, that this law shall inflict a punishment precedent to the promulgation, and try us by maxims unheard of till the very moment of the prosecution. If I sail on the Thames, and split my vessel on an anchor, in case there be no buoy to give warning, the party shall pay me damages: but if the anchor be marked out, then is the striking on it at my own peril. Where is the mark set upon this crime? where the token by which I should discover it? It has lain concealed under water; and no human prudence, no human innocence, could save me from the destruction with which I am at present threatened.

“It is now full two hundred and forty years since treasons were defined; and so long has it been since any man was touched to this extent upon this crime before myself. We have lived, my lords, happily to ourselves at home: we have lived gloriously abroad to the world: let us be content with what our fathers have left us.*let not our ambition carry us to be more learned than they were in these killing and destructive arts. Great wisdom it will be in your lordships, and just providence for yourselves, for your posterities, for the whole kingdom, to cast from you into the fire these bloody and mysterious volumes of arbitrary and constructive treasons, as the primitive Christians did their books of curious arts, and betake yourselves to the plain letter of the statute, which tells you where the crime is, and points out to you the path by which you may avoid it.

“Let us not, to our own destruction, awake those sleeping lions, by rattling up a company of old records which have lain for so many ages by the wall, forgotten and neglected. To all my afflictions, add not this, my lords, the most severe of any; that I, for my other sins, not for my treasons, be the means of introducing a precedent so pernicious to the laws and liberties of my native country.

“However, these gentlemen at the bar say they speak for the commonwealth, and they believe so; yet, under favor, it is I who, in this particular, speak for the commonwealth. Precedents like those which are endeavored to be established against me, must draw along such inconveniencies and miseries, that in a few years the kingdom will be in the condition expressed in a statute of Henry IV.; and no man shall know by what rule to govern his words and actions.

"Impose not, my lords, difficulties insurmountable upon ministers of state, nor disable them from serving with cheerfulness their king and country. If you examine them, and under such severe penalties, by every grain, by every little weight, the scrutiny will be intolerable. The public affairs of the kingdom must be left waste; and no wise man, who has any honor or fortune to lose, will ever engage himself in such dreadful, such unknown perils.

"My lords, I have now troubled your lordships a great deal longer than I should have done. Were it not for the interest of these pledges, which a saint in heaven left me, I should be loath—" (Here he pointed to his children, and his weeping stopped him.) "What I forfeit for myself, it is nothing: but, I confess, that my indiscretion should forfeit for them, it wounds me very deeply. You will be pleased to pardon my infirmity: something I should have said; but I see I shall not be able, and therefore I shall leave it.

"And now, my lords, I thank God, I have been by his blessing sufficiently instructed in the extreme vanity of all temporary enjoyments, compared to the importance of our eternal duration. And so, my lords, even so, with all humility, and with all tranquillity of mind, I submit, clearly and freely, to your judgments: and whether that righteous doom shall be to life or death, I shall repose myself, full of gratitude and confidence, in the arms of the great Author of my existence." [1]

"Certainly," says Whitlocke, [2] with his usual candor, "never any man acted such a part, on such a theatre, with more wisdom, constancy, and eloquence, with greater reason, judgment, and temper, and with a better grace in all his words and actions, than did this great and excellent person; and he moved the hearts of all his auditors, some few excepted, to remorse and pity." It is remarkable, that the historian who expresses himself in these terms, was himself chairman of that committee which conducted the impeachment against this unfortunate statesman. The accusation and defence lasted eighteen days. The managers divided the several articles among them, and attacked the prisoner with all the weight of authority, with all the vehemence of rhetoric, with all the accuracy of long preparation.

Strafford was obliged to speak with deference and reserve towards his most inveterate enemies, the commons, the Scottish nation, and the Irish parliament. He took only a very short time on each article to recollect himself: yet he alone, without assistance, mixing modesty and humility with firmness and vigor, made such a defence that the commons saw it impossible, by a legal prosecution, ever to obtain a sentence against him.

* Rush. vol. iv. p *59, etc.

* * Page 41.

But the death of Stafford was too important a stroke of party to be left unattempted by any expedient, however extraordinary. Besides the great genius and authority of that minister, he had threatened some of the popular leaders with an impeachment; and, had he not himself been suddenly prevented by the impeachment of the commons, he had that very day, it was thought, charged Pym, Hambden, and others with treason, for having invited the Scots to invade England. A bill of attainder was therefore brought into the lower house immediately after finishing these pleadings; and, preparatory to it, a new proof of the earl's guilt was produced, in order to remove such scruples as might be entertained with regard to a method of proceeding so unusual and irregular.

Sir Henry Vane, secretary, had taken some notes of a debate in council, after the dissolution of the last parliament; and being at a distance, he had sent the keys of his cabinet, as was pretended, to his son Sir Henry, in order to search for some papers which were necessary for completing a marriage settlement. Young Vane, falling upon this paper of notes, deemed the matter of the utmost importance; and immediately communicated it to Pym, who now produced the paper before the house of commons. The question before the council was, "Offensive or defensive war with the Scots." The king proposes this difficulty, "But how can I undertake offensive war, if I have no more money?" The answer ascribed to Strafford was in these words: "Borrow of the city a hundred thousand pounds: go on vigorously to levy ship money. Your majesty having tried the affections of your people, you are absolved and loose from all rules of government, and may do what power will admit. Your majesty, having tried all ways, shall be acquitted before God and man. And you have an army in Ireland, which you may employ to reduce this kingdom to obedience: for I am confident the Scots cannot hold out five months." There followed some counsels of Laud and Cottington, equally violent with regard to the king's being absolved from all rules of government. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 229, 230, etc. Whitlocke, p. 41. May .

This paper, with all the circumstances of its discovery and communication, was pretended to be equivalent to two witnesses, and to be an unanswerable proof of those pernicious counsels of Strafford which tended to the subversion of the laws and constitution. It was replied by Strafford and his friends, that old Vane was his most inveterate and declared enemy; and if the secretary himself, as was by far most probable, had willingly delivered to his son this paper of notes, to be communicated to Pym, this implied such a breach of oaths and of trust as rendered him totally unworthy of all credit: that the secretary's deposition was at first exceedingly dubious: upon two examinations, he could not remember any such words: even the third time, his testimony was not positive, but imported only, that Strafford had spoken such or suchlike words; and words may be very like in sound, and differ much in sense; nor ought the lives of men to depend upon grammatical criticisms of any expressions, much less of those which had been delivered by the speaker without premeditation, and committed by the hearer for any time however short, to the uncertain record of memory: that, in the present case, changing this kingdom into that kingdom a very slight alteration, the earl's discourse could regard nothing but Scotland, and implies no advice unworthy of an English counsellor: that even retaining the expression, this kingdom, the words may fairly be understood of Scotland, which alone was the kingdom that the debate regarded, and which alone had thrown off allegiance, and could be reduced to obedience: that it could be proved, as well by the evidence of all the king's ministers, as by the known disposition of the forces, that the intention never was to land the Irish army in England, but in Scotland: that of six other counsellors present, Laud and Windebank could give no evidence; Northumberland, Hamilton, Cottington, and Juxon, could recollect no such expression; and the advice was too remarkable to be easily forgotten: that it was nowise probable such a desperate counsel would be openly delivered at the board, and before Northumberland, a person of that high rank, and whose attachments to the court were so much weaker than his connections with the country. That though Northumberland, and he alone, had recollected some such expression as that of "being absolved from rules of government," yet, in such desperate extremities as those into which the king and kingdom were then fallen, a maxim of that nature, allowing it to be delivered by Strafford, may be defended upon principles the most favorable to law and liberty and that nothing could be more iniquitous than to extract an accusation of treason from an opinion simply proposed at the council table; where all freedom of debate ought to be permitted, and where it was not unusual for the members, in order to draw forth the sentiments of others, to propose counsels very remote from their own secret advice and judgment. [1]

The evidence of Secretary Vane, though exposed to such unsurmountable objections, was the real cause of Strafford' unhappy fate; and made the bill of attainder pass the commons with no greater opposition than that of fifty-nine dissenting votes. But there remained two other branches of the legislature, the king and the lords, whose assent was requisite; and these, if left to their free judgment, it was easily foreseen, would reject the bill without scruple or deliberation. To overcome this difficulty, the popular leaders employed expedients for which they were beholden partly to their own industry, partly to the indiscretion of their adversaries.

Next Sunday, after the bill passed the commons, the Puritanical pulpits resounded with declamations concerning the necessity of executing justice upon great delinquents. [2] The populace took the alarm. About six thousand men, armed with swords and cudgels, flocked from the city, and surrounded the houses of parliament. [3] The names of the fifty-nine commoners who had voted against the bill of attainder, were posted up under the title of "Straffordians, and betrayers of their country." These were exposed to all the insults of the ungovernable multitude. When any of the lords passed, the cry for justice against Strafford resounded in their ears; and such as were suspected of friendship to that obnoxious minister, were sure to meet with menaces, not unaccompanied with symptoms of the most desperate resolutions in the furious populace. [4]

Complaints in the house of commons being made against these violences, as the most flagrant breach of privilege, the ruling members, by their affected coolness and indifference, showed plainly, that the popular tumults were not disagreeable to them. But a new discovery, made about this time, served to throw every thing into still greater flame and combustion.

* Rush. vol. iv. .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. i. , 256. Rush. vol. v. , 1279.

v Whitlocke, ut supra.

Some principal officers, Piercy, Jermyn, O’Neale, Goring, Wilmot, Pollard, Ashburnham, partly attached to the court, partly disgusted with the parliament, had formed a plan of engaging into the king’s service the English army, whom they observed to be displeased at some marks of preference given by the commons to the Scots. For this purpose, they entered into an association, took an oath of secrecy, and kept a close correspondence with some of the king’s servants. The form of a petition to the king and parliament was concerted; and it was intended to get this petition subscribed by the army. The petitioners there represent the great and unexampled concessions made by the king for the security of public peace and liberty; the endless demands of certain insatiable and turbulent spirits, whom nothing less will content than a total subversion of the ancient constitution; the frequent tumults which these factious malecontents had excited, and which endangered the liberty of parliament. To prevent these mischiefs, the army offered to come up and guard that assembly, “So shall the nation,” as they express themselves in the conclusion, “not only be vindicated from preceding innovations, but be secured from the future, which are threatened, and which are likely to produce more dangerous effects than the former.” [1] The draught of this petition being conveyed to the king, he was prevailed on, somewhat imprudently, to countersign it himself, as a mark of his approbation. But as several difficulties occurred, the project was laid aside two months before any public discovery was made of it.

It was Goring who betrayed the secret to the popular leaders. The alarm may easily be imagined which this intelligence conveyed. Petitions from the military to the civil power are always looked on as disguised or rather undisguised commands, and are of a nature widely different from petitions presented by any other rank of men. Pym opened the matter in the house. [2] On the first intimation of a discovery, Piercy concealed himself, and Jermyn withdrew beyond sea. This further confirmed the suspicion of a dangerous conspiracy. Goring delivered his evidence before the house: Piercy wrote a letter to his brother, Northumberland, confessing most of the particulars. [3] Both their testimonies agree with regard to the oath of secrecy; and as this circumstance had been denied by Pollard, Ashburnham, and Wilmot, in all their examinations, it was regarded as a new proof of some desperate resolutions which had been taken.

To convey more quickly the terror and indignation at this plot, the commons voted that a protestation should be signed by all the members. It was sent up to the lords, and signed by all of them, except Southampton and Robarts. Orders were given by the commons alone, without other authority that it should be subscribed by the whole nation. The protestation was in itself very inoffensive, even insignificant; and contained nothing but general declarations, that the subscribers would defend their religion and liberties. [1] But it tended to increase the popular panic, and intimated, what was more expressly declared in the preamble, that these blessings were now exposed to the utmost peril.

Alarms were every day given of new conspiracies. [2] In Lancashire, great multitudes of Papists were assembling: secret meetings were held by them in caves and under ground in Surrey: they had entered into a plot to blow up the river with gunpowder, in order to drown the city: [3] provisions of arms were making beyond sea: sometimes France, sometimes Denmark, was forming designs against the kingdom; and the populace, who are always terrified with present, and enraged with distant dangers, were still further animated in their demands of justice against the unfortunate Strafford.

The king came to the house of lords: and though he expressed his resolution, for which he offered them any security, never again to employ

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Whitlocke, .

* * Rush, vol v. .

* * * Rush. vol. v. .

Strafford in any branch of public business, he professed himself totally dissatisfied with regard to the circumstance of treason, and on that account declared his difficulty in giving his assent to the bill of attainder. [4] The commons took fire, and voted it a breach of privilege for the king to take notice of any bill depending before the houses, Charles did not perceive that his attachment to Strafford was the chief motive for the bill; and that the greater proofs he gave of anxious concern for this minister, the more inevitable did he render his destruction.

About eighty peers had constantly attended Strafford's trial; but such apprehensions were entertained on account of the popular tumults, that only forty-five were present when the bill of attainder was brought into the house. Yet of these nineteen had the courage to vote against it; a certain proof that if entire freedom had been allowed, the bill had been rejected by a great majority.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. v. . Warwick, .

* * Dugdale, . Franklyn, .

* * * Sir Edward Walker .

* * * * Rush. vol. v. .

v Whitlocke, .

In carrying up the bill to the lords, St. John, the solicitor-general, advanced two topics well suited to the fury of the times; that though the testimony against Strafford were not clear, yet, in this way of bill, private satisfaction to each man's conscience was sufficient, even should no evidence at all be produced; and that the earl had no title to plead law, because he had broken the law. It is true, added he, we give law to hares and deer, for they are beasts of chase: but it was never accounted either cruel or unfair to destroy foxes or wolves wherever they can be found, for they are beasts of prey. [1]

After popular violence had prevailed over the lords, the same battery was next applied to force the king's assent. The populace flocked about Whitehall, and accompanied their demand of justice with the loudest clamors and most open menaces. Rumors of conspiracies against the parliament were anew spread abroad; invasions and insurrections talked of; and the whole nation was raised into such a ferment, as threatened some great and imminent convulsion. On whichever side the king cast his eyes, he saw no resource or security. All his servants, consulting their own safety, rather than their master's honor, declined interposing with their advice between him and his parliament. The queen, terrified with the appearance of so mighty a danger, and bearing formerly no good will to Strafford, was in tears, and pressed him to satisfy his people in this demand, which, it was hoped, would finally content them. Juxon, alone, whose courage was not inferior to his other virtues, ventured to advise him, if in his conscience he did not approve of the bill, by no means to assent to it. [2]

Strafford, hearing of Charles's irresolution and anxiety, took a very extraordinary step: he wrote a letter, in which he entreated the king, for the sake of public peace, to put an end to his unfortunate, however innocent life, and to quiet the tumultuous people by granting them the request for which they were so importunate. [3]

"In this," added he, "my consent will more acquit you to God than all the world can do besides. To a willing man there is no injury. And as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world, with a calmness and meekness of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul, so, sir, to you I can resign the life of this world with all imaginable cheerfulness, in the just acknowledgment of your exceeding favors." Perhaps Strafford hoped, that this unusual instance of generosity would engage the king still more strenuously to protect him: perhaps he gave his life for lost; and finding himself in the hands of his enemies, and observing that Balfour, the lieutenant of the Tower, was devoted to the popular party, [1] he absolutely despaired of ever escaping the multiplied dangers with which he was every way environed. We might ascribe this step to a noble effort of disinterestedness, not unworthy the great mind of Strafford, if the measure which he advised had not been, in

* Clarendon, vol. i. .

* * Clarendon, vol. i. . Warwick, .

* * * Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. v. .

the event, as pernicious to his master, as it was immediately fatal to himself. [2]

* Whitlocke, . Franklyn, .

* * See note F, at the end of the volume.

After the most violent anxiety and doubt, Charles at last granted a commission to four noblemen to give the royal assent in his name to the bill; flattering himself probably, in this extremity of distress, that as neither his will consented to the deed, nor was his hand immediately engaged in it, he was the more free from all the guilt which attended it. These commissioners he empowered, at the same time, to give his assent to the bill which rendered the parliament perpetual.

The commons, from policy rather than necessity, had embraced the expedient of paying the two armies by borrowing money from the city; and these loans they had repaid afterwards by taxes levied upon the people. The citizens, either of themselves or by suggestion, began to start difficulties with regard to a further loan, which was demanded. We make no scruple of trusting the parliament, said they, were we certain that the parliament were to continue till our repayment. But in the present precarious situation of affairs, what security can be given us for our money? In pretence of obviating this objection, a bill was suddenly brought into the house, and passed with great unanimity and rapidity, that the parliament should not be dissolved, prorogued, or adjourned, without their own consent. It was hurried in like manner through the house of peers, and was instantly carried to the king for his assent. Charles, in the agony of grief, shame, and remorse for Strafford’s doom, perceived not that this other bill was of still more fatal consequence to his authority, and rendered the power of his enemies perpetual, as it was already uncontrollable. [1] In comparison of the bill of attainder, by which he deemed himself an accomplice in his friend’s murder, this concession made no figure in his eyes; [2] a circumstance which, if it lessen our idea of his resolution or penetration serves to prove the integrity of his heart, and the goodness of his disposition. It is indeed certain, that strong compunction for his consent to Strafford’s execution attended this unfortunate prince during the remainder of his life; and even at his own fatal end, the memory of this guilt, with great sorrow and remorse, recurred upon him. All men were so sensible of the extreme violence which was done him, that he suffered the less, both in character and interest, from this unhappy measure; and though he abandoned his best friend, yet was he still able to preserve, in some degree, the attachment of all his adherents.

Secretary Carleton was sent by the king to inform Strafford of the final resolution which necessity had extorted from him. The earl seemed surprised, and starting up, exclaimed, in the words of Scripture, "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the sons of men, for in them there is no salvation." [3] He was soon able, however, to collect his courage; and he prepared himself to suffer the fatal sentence. Only three days' interval was allowed him. The king, who made a new effort in his behalf, and sent by the hands of the young prince a letter addressed to the peers, in which he entreated them to confer with the commons about a mitigation of Strafford's sentence, and begged at least for some delay, was refused in both requests. [4]

Strafford, in passing from his apartment to Tower Hill, where the scaffold was erected, stopped under Laud's windows, with whom he had long lived in intimate friendship, and entreated the assistance of his prayers in those awful moments which were approaching. The aged primate dissolved in tears; and having pronounced, with a broken voice, a tender blessing on his departing friend, sunk into the arms of his attendants. Stafford, still superior to his fate, moved on with an elated countenance, and with an air even of greater dignity than what usually attended him.

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 262. Rush. vol. v. .

* * See note G, at the end of the volume

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Rush. vol. v. .

v Nalson, vol. ii. .

He wanted that consolation which commonly supports those who perish by the stroke of injustice and oppression: he was not buoyed up by glory, nor by the affectionate compassion of the spectators; yet his mind, erect and undaunted, found resources within itself, and maintained its unbroken resolution amidst the terrors of death, and the triumphant exultations of his misguided enemies. His discourse on the scaffold was full of decency and courage. “He feared,” he said, “that the omen was bad for the intended reformation of the state, that it commenced with the shedding of innocent blood.” Having bid a last adieu to his brother and friends who attended him, and having sent a blessing to his nearer relations who were absent, “And now,” said he, “I have nigh done! One stroke will make my wife a widow, my dear children fatherless, deprive my poor servants of their indulgent master, and separate me from my affectionate brother and all my friends! But let God be to you and them all in all!” Going to disrobe and prepare himself for the block, “I thank God,” said he, “that I am nowise afraid of death, nor am daunted with any terrors; but do as cheerfully lay down my head at this time as ever I did when going to repose!” With one blow was a period put to his life by the executioner. [1]

Thus perished, in the forty-ninth year of his age, the earl of Strafford, one of the most eminent personages that has appeared in England. Though his death was loudly demanded as a satisfaction to justice, and an atonement for the many violations of the constitution, it may safely be affirmed, that the sentence by which he fell was an enormity greater than the worst of those which his implacable enemies prosecuted with so much cruel industry. The people, in their rage, had totally mistaken the proper object of their resentment. All the necessities, or, more properly speaking, the difficulties by which the king had been induced to use violent expedients for raising supply, were the result of measures previous to Strafford’s favor; and if they arose from ill conduct, he at least was entirely innocent. Even those violent expedients themselves, which occasioned the complaint that the constitution was subverted, had been, all of them, conducted, so far as appeared, without his counsel or assistance. And whatever his private advice might be, [2] this salutary maxim he failed not often and publicly to inculcate in the king’s presence, that, if any inevitable necessity ever obliged the sovereign to violate the laws, this license ought to be practised with extreme reserve, and, as soon as possible, a just atonement be made to the constitution for any injury which it might sustain from such dangerous precedents. [3] The first parliament after the restoration reversed the bill of attainder; and even a few weeks after Strafford’s execution, this very parliament remitted to his children the more severe consequences of his sentence; as if conscious of the violence with which the prosecution had been conducted.

* Rush, vol, v. .

* * That Strafford was secretly no enemy to arbitrary counsels, appears from some of his letters and despatches, particularly vol. ii. , where he seems to wish that a standing army were established.

* * * Rush. vol. iv. , 568, 569, 570.

In vain did Charles expect, as a return for so many instances of unbounded compliance, that the parliament would at last show him some indulgence, and would cordially fall into that unanimity to which, at the expense of his own power and of his friend’s life, he so earnestly courted them. All his concessions were poisoned by their suspicion of his want of cordiality; and the supposed attempt to engage the army against them, served with many as a confirmation of this jealousy. It was natural for the king to seek some resource, while all the world seemed to desert him, or combine against him; and this probably was the utmost of that embryo scheme which was formed with regard to the army. But the popular leaders still insisted, that a desperate plot was laid to bring up the forces immediately, and offer violence to the parliament; a design of which Piercy’s evidence acquits the king, and which the near neighborhood of the Scottish army seems to render absolutely impracticable. [1] By means, however, of these suspicions, was the same implacable spirit still kept alive; and the commons, without giving the king any satisfaction in the settlement of his revenue, proceeded to carry their inroads with great vigor into his now defenceless prerogative. [2]

* The project of bringing up the army to London, according to Piercy, was proposed to the king: but he rejected it as foolish; because the Scots, who were in arms, and lying in their neighborhood, must be at London as soon as the English army. This reason is so solid and convincing, that it leaves no room to doubt of the veracity of Piercy’s evidence; and consequently acquits the king of this terrible plot of bringing up the army, which made such a noise at the time, and was a pretence for so many violences.

* * Clarendon, vol. i. .

The two ruling passions of this parliament were, zeal for liberty, and an aversion to the church; and to both of these, nothing could appear more exceptionable than the court of high commission, whose institution rendered it entirely arbitrary, and assigned to it the defence of the ecclesiastical establishment. The star chamber also was a court which exerted high discretionary powers and had no precise rule or limit, either with regard to the causes which came under its jurisdiction, or the decisions which it formed. A bill unanimously passed the houses to abolish these two courts; and in them to annihilate the principal and most dangerous articles of the king's prerogative. By the same bill, the jurisdiction of the council was regulated, and its authority abridged. [1] Charles hesitated before he gave his assent. But finding that he had gone too far to retreat, and that he possessed no resource in case of a rupture, he at last affixed the royal sanction to this excellent bill. But to show the parliament that he was sufficiently apprised of the importance of his grant, he observed to them, that this statute altered in a great measure the fundamental laws, ecclesiastical and civil, which many of his predecessors had established. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 284. Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. iii. , 1384.

* * Rush. vol. v. .

By removing the star chamber, the king's power of binding the people by his proclamations was indirectly abolished; and that important branch of prerogative, the strong symbol of arbitrary power, and unintelligible in a limited constitution, being at last removed, left the system of government more consistent and uniform. The star chamber alone was accustomed to punish infractions of the king's edicts: but as no courts of judicature now remained except those in Westminster Hall, which take cognizance only of common and statute law, the king may thenceforth issue proclamations, but no man is bound to obey them, It must, however, be confessed, that the experiment here made by the parliament was not a little rash and adventurous. No government at that time appeared in the world, nor is perhaps to be found in the records of any history, which subsisted without the mixture of some arbitrary authority committed to some magistrate; and it might reasonably, beforehand, appear doubtful, whether human society could ever reach that state of perfection, as to support itself with no other control than the general and rigid maxims of law and equity. But the parliament justly thought, that the king was too eminent a magistrate to be trusted with discretionary power, which he might so easily turn to the destruction of liberty. And in the event, it has hitherto been found, that, though some sensible inconveniencies arise from the maxim of adhering strictly to law, yet the advantages overbalance them, and should render the English grateful to the memory of their ancestors, who, after repeated contests, at last established that noble, though dangerous principle.

At the request of the parliament, Charles, instead of the patents during pleasure, gave all the judges patents during their good behavior; [1] a circumstance of the greatest moment towards securing their independency, and barring the entrance of arbitrary power into the ordinary courts of judicature.

The marshal's court, which took cognizance of offensive, words, and was not thought sufficiently limited by law, was also for that reason abolished. [2] The stannary courts, which exercised jurisdiction over the miners, being liable to a like objection, underwent a like fate. The abolition of the council of the north and the council of Wales followed from the same principles. The authority of the clerk of the market, who had a general inspection over the weights and measures throughout the kingdom, was transferred to the mayors, sheriffs, and ordinary magistrates.

* May, .

* * Nalson, vol. i .

In short, if we take a survey of the transactions of this memorable parliament during the first period of its operations, we shall find that, excepting Strafford's attainder, which was a complication of cruel iniquity, their merits in other respects so much outweigh their mistakes, as to entitle them to praise, from all lovers of liberty. Not only were former abuses remedied, and grievances redressed; great provision for the future was made by law against the return of like complaints. And if the means by which they obtained such advantages savor often of artifice, sometimes of violence, it is to be considered, that revolutions of government cannot be effected by the mere force of argument and reasoning; and that factions being once excited, men can neither so firmly regulate the tempers of others, nor their own, as to insure themselves against all exorbitances.

The parliament now came to a pause. The king had promised his Scottish subjects that he would this summer pay them a visit, in order to settle their government; and though the English parliament was very importunate with him, that he should lay aside that journey, they could not prevail with him so much as to delay it. As he must necessarily, in his journey, have passed through the troops of both nations, the commons seem to have entertained great jealousy on that account, and to have now hurried on, as much as they formerly delayed, the disbanding of the armies. The arrears, therefore, of the Scots were fully paid them; and those of the English in part. The Scots returned home, and the English were separated into their several counties, and dismissed.

After this, the parliament adjourned to the twentieth of October; and a committee of both houses — a thing unprecedented — was appointed to sit during the recess, with very ample powers. [1] Pym was elected chairman of the committee of the lower house. Further attempts were made by the parliament while it sat, and even by the commons alone for assuming sovereign executive powers, and publishing their ordinances, as they called them, instead of laws. The committee too, on their part, was ready to imitate the example.

A small committee of both houses was appointed to attend the king into Scotland, in order, as was pretended, to see that the articles of pacification were executed; but really to be spies upon him, and extend still further the ideas of parliamentary authority, as well as eclipse the majesty of the king. The earl of Bedford, Lord Howard, Sir Philip Stapleton, Sir William Armyne, Fiennes, and Hambden, were the persons chosen. [2]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v.

Endeavors were used, before Charles’s departure, to have a protector of the kingdom appointed, with a power to pass laws without having recourse to the king: so little regard was now paid to royal authority, or to the established constitution of the kingdom.

Amidst the great variety of affairs which occurred during this busy period, we have almost overlooked the marriage of the princess Mary with William, prince of Orange. The king concluded not this alliance without communicating his intentions to the parliament, who received the proposal with satisfaction. [1] This was the commencement of the connections with the family of Orange; connections which were afterwards attended with the most important consequences, both to the kingdom and to the house of Stuart.

* Whitlocke, .

CHAPTER LV.

CHARLES I.

1641.

THE Scots, who began these fatal commotions, thought that they had finished a very perilous undertaking much to their profit and reputation. Besides the large pay voted them for lying in good quarters during a twelvemonth, the English parliament had conferred on them a present of three hundred thousand pounds for their brotherly assistance. [1] In the articles of pacification, they were declared to have ever been good subjects; and their military expeditions were approved of, as enterprises calculated and intended for his majesty's honor and advantage. To carry further the triumph over their sovereign, these terms, so ignominious to him, were ordered by a vote of parliament to be read in all churches, upon a day of thanksgiving appointed for the national pacification; [2] all their claims for the restriction of prerogative were agreed to be ratified; and, what they more valued than all these advantages, they had a near prospect of spreading the Presbyterian discipline in England and Ireland, from the seeds which they had scattered of their religious principles. Never did refined Athens so exult in diffusing the sciences and liberal arts over a savage world, never did generous Rome so please herself in the view of law and order established by her victorious arms, as the Scots now rejoiced in communicating their barbarous zeal and theological fervor to the neighboring nations.

* Nalson, vol. i. . May, .

* * Rush. vol. v. . Clarendon, vol. ii .

Charles, despoiled in England of a considerable part of his authority, and dreading still further encroachments upon him, arrived in Scotland, with an intention of abdicating almost entirely the small share of power which there remained to him, and of giving full satisfaction, if possible, to his restless subjects in that kingdom.

The lords of articles were an ancient institution in the Scottish parliament. They were constituted after this manner: The temporal lords chose eight bishops: the bishops elected eight temporal lords: these sixteen named eight commissioners of counties, and eight burgesses, and without the previous consent of the thirty-two, who were denominated lords of articles, no motion could be made in parliament. As the bishops were entirely devoted to the court, it is evident, that all the lords of articles, by necessary consequence, depended on the king's nomination; and the prince, besides one negative after the bills had passed through parliament, possessed indirectly another before their introduction; a prerogative of much greater consequence than the former. The bench of bishops being now abolished, the parliament laid hold of the opportunity, and totally set aside the lords of articles: and till this important point was obtained, the nation, properly speaking, could not be said to enjoy any regular freedom. [1]

It is remarkable that, notwithstanding this institution, to which there is no parallel in England, the royal authority was always deemed much lower in Scotland than in the former kingdom. Bacon represents it as one advantage to be expected from the union, that the too extensive prerogative of England would be abridged by the example of Scotland, and the too narrow prerogative of Scotland be enlarged from the imitation of England. The English were at that time a civilized people, and obedient to the laws; but among the Scots it was of little consequence how the laws were framed, or by whom voted, while the exorbitant aristocracy had it so much in their power to prevent their regular execution.

The peers and commons formed only one house in the Scottish parliament: and as it had been the practice of James, continued by Charles, to grace English gentlemen with Scottish titles, all the determinations of parliament, it was to be feared, would in time depend upon the prince, by means of these votes of foreigners, who had no interest or property in the nation. It was therefore a law deserving approbation, that no man should be created a Scotch peer, who possessed not ten thousand marks (above five hundred pounds) of annual rent in the kingdom. [2]

A law for triennial parliaments was likewise passed; and it was ordained, that the last act of every parliament should be to appoint the time and place for holding the parliament next ensuing. [3]

* Burnet, Mem.

* * Burnet, Mem.

* * * Burnet, Mem.

The king was deprived of that power formerly exercised of issuing proclamations which enjoined obedience under the penalty of treason; a prerogative which invested him with the whole legislative authority, even in matters of the highest importance. [1]

So far was laudable: but the most fatal blow given to royal authority, and what in a manner dethroned the prince, was the article, that no member of the privy council, in whose hands during the king's absence the whole administration lay, no officer of state, none of the judges, should be appointed but by advice and approbation of parliament. Charles even agreed to deprive of their seats four judges who had adhered to his interests; and their place was supplied by others more agreeable to the ruling party. Several of the Covenanters were also sworn of the privy council. And all the ministers of state, counsellors, and judges, were by law to hold their places during life or good behavior. [2]

The king while in Scotland conformed himself entirely to the established church, and assisted with great gravity at the long prayers and longer sermons with which the Presbyterians endeavored to regale him. He bestowed pensions and preferments on Henderson, Gillespy, and other popular preachers, and practised every art to soften, if not to gain, his greatest enemies. The earl of Argyle was created a marquis, Lord Loudon an earl, Lesley was dignified with the title of earl of Leven. [3] His friends he was obliged for the present to neglect and overlook: some of them were disgusted; and his enemies were not reconciled, but ascribed all his caresses and favors to artifice and necessity.

* Burnet, Mem.

* * Burnet, Mem.

* * * Clarendon, vol. ii .

Argyle and Hamilton, being seized with an apprehension, real or pretended, that the earl of Crawfurd and others meant to assassinate them, left the parliament suddenly, and retired into the country; but upon invitation and assurances, returned in a few days. This event, which had neither cause nor effect that was visible, nor purpose, nor consequence, was commonly denominated the incident. But though the incident had no effect In Scotland; what was not expected, it was attended with consequences in England. The English parliament, which was now assembled, being willing to awaken the people's tenderness by exciting their fears, immediately took the alarm; as if the malignants — so they called the king's party — had had laid a plot at once to murder them and all the godly in both kingdoms. They applied therefore to Essex, whom the king had left general in the south of England; and he ordered a guard to attend them. [1]

But while the king was employed in pacifying the commotions in Scotland, and was preparing to return to England, in order to apply himself to the same salutary work in that kingdom, he received intelligence of a dangerous rebellion broken but in Ireland, with circumstances of the utmost horror, bloodshed, and devastation. On every side this unfortunate prince was pursued with murmurs, discontent, faction, and civil wars, and the fire from all quarters, even by the most independent accidents, at once blazed up about him.

The great plan of James in the administration of Ireland, continued by Charles, was, by justice and peace to reconcile that turbulent people to the authority of laws; and, introducing art and industry among them, to cure them of that sloth and barbarism to which they had ever been subject. In order to serve both these purposes, and at the same time secure the dominion of Ireland to the English crown, great colonies of British had been carried over, and, being intermixed with the Irish, had every where introduced a new face of things into that country. During a peace of near forty years, the inveterate quarrels between the nations seemed, in a great measure, to be obliterated; and though much of the landed property forfeited by rebellion had been conferred on the new planters, a more than equal return had been made, by their instructing the natives in tillage, building, manufactures, and all the civilized arts of life. [2] This had been the course of things during the successive administrations of Chichester, Grandison, Falkland, and, above all, of Strafford. Under the government of this latter nobleman, the pacific plans, now come to great maturity, and forwarded by his vigor and industry, seemed to have operated with full success, and to have bestowed at last on that savage country the face of a European settlement.

* Whitlocke, . Dugdale, . Burnet’s Memoirs of the House of Hamilton, , 185. Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * Sir John Temple’s Irish Rebellion, .

After Strafford fell a victim to popular rage, the humors excited in Ireland by that great event could not suddenly be composed, but continued to produce the greatest innovations in the government.

The British Protestants transplanted into Ireland, having every moment before their eyes all the horrors of Popery, had naturally been carried into the opposite extreme, and had universally adopted the highest principles and practices of the Puritans. Monarchy, as well as the hierarchy, was become odious to them; and every method of limiting the authority of the crown, and detaching themselves from the king of England, was greedily adopted and pursued. They considered not, that as they scarcely formed the sixth part of the people, and were secretly obnoxious to the ancient inhabitants, their only method of supporting themselves was by maintaining royal authority, and preserving a great dependence on their mother country. The English commons, likewise, in their furious persecution of Strafford, had overlooked the most obvious consequences; and, while they imputed to him as a crime every discretionary act of authority, they despoiled all succeeding governors of that power by which alone the Irish could be retained in subjection. And so strong was the current for popular government in all the three kingdoms, that the most established maxims of policy were every where abandoned, in order to gratify this ruling passion.

Charles, unable to resist, had been obliged to yield to the Irish, as to the Scottish and English parliaments; and found, too, that their encroachments still rose in proportion to his concessions. Those subsidies which themselves had voted, they reduced, by a subsequent vote, to a fourth part; the court of high commission was determined to be a grievance; martial law abolished; the jurisdiction of the council annihilated; proclamations and acts of state declared of no authority; every order or institution which depended on monarchy was invaded; and the prince was despoiled of all his prerogative, without the least pretext of any violence or illegality in his administration.

The standing army of Ireland was usually about three thousand men; but, in order to assist the king in suppressing the Scottish Covenanters, Strafford had raised eight thousand more, and had incorporated with them a thousand men drawn from the old army; a necessary expedient for bestowing older and discipline on the new-levied soldiers. The private men in this army were all Catholics; but the officers, both commission and non-commission, were Protestants, and could entirely be depended on by Charles. The English commons entertained the greatest apprehensions on account of this army, and never ceased soliciting the king till he agreed to break it. Nor they consent to any proposal for augmenting the standing army to five thousand men; a number which the king deemed necessary for retaining Ireland in obedience.

Charles, thinking it dangerous that eight thousand men accustomed to idleness, and trained to the use of arms, should be dispersed among a nation so turbulent and unsettled, agreed with the Spanish ambassador to have them transported into Flanders, and enlisted in his master's service. The English commons, pretending apprehensions, lest regular bodies of troops, disciplined in the Low Countries, should prove still more dangerous, showed some aversion to this expedient; and the king reduced his allowance to four thousand men. But when the Spaniards had hired ships for transporting these troops, and the men were ready to embark, the commons, willing to show their power, and not displeased with an opportunity of curbing and affronting the king, prohibited every one from furnishing vessels for that service. And thus the project formed by Charles, of freeing the country from these men was unfortunately disappointed. [1]

The old Irish remarked all these false steps of the English, and resolved to take advantage of them. Though their animosity against that nation, for want of an occasion to exert itself, seemed to be extinguished, it was only composed into a temporary and deceitful tranquillity. [2] Their interests, both with regard to property and religion, secretly stimulated them to a revolt. No individual of any sept, according to the ancient customs, had the property of any particular estate; but as the whole sept had a title to a whole territory, they ignorantly preferred this barbarous community before the more secure and narrower possessions assigned them by the English. An indulgence, amounting almost to a toleration, had been given to the

Catholic religion: but so long as the churches and the ecclesiastical revenues were kept from the priests, and they were obliged to endure the neighborhood of profane heretics, being themselves discontented, they continually endeavored to retard any cordial reconciliation between the English and the Irish nations.

* Clarendon, vol. i. . Rush. vol. v. p, 381. Dugdale, May, book ii. .

* * Temple,

There was a gentleman called Roger More, who, though of a narrow fortune, was descended from an ancient Irish family and was much celebrated among his countrymen for valor and capacity. This man first formed the project of expelling the English, and asserting the independency of his native country. [1]

* Nalson, vol. iii. .

He secretly went from chieftain to chieftain, and roused up every latent principle of discontent. He maintained a close correspondence with Lord Maguire and Sir Phelim O'Neale, the most powerful of the old Irish. By conversation, by letters, by his emissaries, he represented to his countrymen the motives of a revolt. He observed to them, that, by the rebellion of the Scots, and factions of the English, the king's authority in Britain was reduced to so low a condition, that he never could exert himself with any vigor in maintaining the English dominion over Ireland: that the Catholics in the Irish house of commons, assisted by the Protestants, had so diminished the royal prerogative and the power of the lieutenant, as would much facilitate the conducting to its desired effect any conspiracy or combination which could be formed: that the Scots, having so successfully thrown off dependence on the crown of England, and assumed the government into their own hands, had set an example to the Irish, who had so much greater oppressions to complain of: that the English planters, who had expelled them their possessions, suppressed their religion, and bereaved them of their liberties were but a handful in comparison of the natives: that they lived in the most supine security, interspersed with their numerous enemies, trusting to the protection of a small army, which was itself scattered in inconsiderable divisions through out the whole kingdom: that a great body of men, disciplined by the government, were now thrown loose, and were ready for any daring or desperate enterprise: that though the Catholics had hitherto enjoyed, in some tolerable measure, the exercise of their religion, from the moderation of their indulgent prince, they must henceforth expect that the government will be conducted by other maxims and other principles: that the Puritanical parliament, having at length subdued their sovereign, would no doubt, as soon as they had consolidated their authority, extend their ambitious enterprises to Ireland, and make the Catholics in that kingdom feel the same furious persecution, to which their brethren in England were at present exposed: and that a revolt in the Irish, tending only to vindicate their native liberty against the violence of foreign invaders, could never at any time be deemed rebellion, much less during the present confusions, when their prince was in a manner a prisoner, and obedience must be paid, not to him, but to those who had traitorously usurped his lawful authority. [1]

By these considerations, More engaged all the heads of the native Irish into the conspiracy. The English of the pale, as they were called, or the old English planters, being all Catholics, it was hoped would afterwards join the party which restored their religion to its ancient splendor and authority. The intention was, that Sir Phelim O’Neale and the other conspirators should begin an insurrection on one day throughout the provinces, and should attack all the English settlements; and that, on the same day, Lord Maguire and Roger More should surprise the Castle of Dublin. The commencement of the revolt was fixed on the approach of winter, that there might be more difficulty in transporting forces from England. Succors to themselves and supplies of arms they expected from France, in consequence of a promise made them by Cardinal Richelieu. And many Irish officers, who served in the Spanish troops, had engaged to join them, as soon as they saw an insurrection entered upon by their Catholic brethren. News, which every day arrived from England, of the fury expressed by the commons against all Papists, struck fresh terror into the Irish nation, and both stimulated the conspirators to execute their fatal purpose, and gave them assured hopes of the concurrence of all their country men. [2]

Such propensity to a revolt was discovered in all the Irish, that it was deemed unnecessary, as it was dangerous to intrust the secret to many hands; and the appointed day drew nigh, nor had any discovery been yet made to the government. The king, indeed, had received information from his ambassadors, that something was in agitation among the Irish in foreign parts; but though he gave warning to the administration in Ireland, the intelligence was entirely neglected. [3]

* Temple, , 73, 78. Dugdale, .

* * Dugdale, .

* * * Bush vol. v. . Nalson, vol ii. .

Secret rumors likewise were heard of some approaching conspiracy; but no attention was paid to them. The earl of Leicester, whom the king had appointed lieutenant, remained in London, The two justices, Sir William Parsons and Sir John Borlace, were men of small abilities; and, by an inconvenience common to all factious times, owed their advancement to nothing but their zeal for the party by whom every thing was now governed. Tranquil from their ignorance and inexperience, these men indulged themselves in the most profound repose, on the very brink of destruction.

But they were awakened from their security on the very day before that which was appointed for the commencement of hostilities. The Castle of Dublin, by which the capital was commanded, contained arms for ten thousand men, with thirty-five pieces of cannon, and a proportionable quantity of ammunition; yet was this important place guarded, and that too without any care, by no greater force than fifty men. Maguire and More were already in town with a numerous band of their partisans; others were expected that night and next morning they were to enter upon what they esteemed the easiest of all enterprises, the surprisal of the castle. O’Conolly, an Irishman, but a Protestant, betrayed the conspiracy to Parsons. [1] The justices and council fled immediately for safety into the castle, and reënforced the guards. The alarm was conveyed to the city, and all the Protestants prepared for defence. More escaped; Maguire was taken; and Mahone, one of the conspirators, being likewise seized, first discovered to the justices the project of a general insurrection, and redoubled the apprehensions which already were universally diffused throughout Dublin. [2]

But though O’Conolly’s discovery saved the castle from a surprise, the confession extorted from Mahone came too late to prevent the intended insurrection. O’Neale and his Confederates had already taken arms in Ulster. The Irish, every where intermingled with the English, needed but a hint from their leaders and priests to begin hostilities against a people whom they hated on account of their religion, and envied for their riches and prosperity. [3]

* Rush, vol. v. . Nalson, vol. ii. . May, book ii

* * Temple p 17, 18, 19, 20. Rush. vol. v .

* * * Ten ple, , 40, 79.

The houses, cattle, goods, of the unwary English were first seized. Those who heard of the commotions in their neighborhood, instead of deserting their habitations, and assembling for mutual protection, remained at home in hopes of defending their property, and fell thus separately into the hands of their enemies. [1] After rapacity had fully exerted itself, cruelty, and the most barbarous that ever in any nation was known or heard of, began its operations. A universal massacre commenced of the English, now defenceless, and passively resigned to their inhuman foes. No age, no sex, no condition was spared. The wife weeping for her butchered husband, and embracing her helpless children, was pierced with them, and perished by the same stroke. [2] The old, the young, the vigorous, the infirm, underwent a like fate, and were confounded in one common ruin. In vain did flight save from the first assault: destruction was every where let loose, and met the hunted victims at every turn. In vain was recourse had to relations, to companions, to friends: all connections were dissolved, and death was dealt by that hand from which protection was implored and expected. Without provocation, without opposition, the astonished English, living in profound peace and full security were massacred by their nearest neighbors, with whom they had long upheld a continued intercourse of kindness and good offices. [3]

But death was the lightest punishment inflicted by those rebels. All the tortures which wanton cruelty could devise all the lingering pains of body, the anguish of mind, the agonies of despair, could not satiate revenge excited without injury, and cruelty derived from no cause. To enter into particulars would shock the least delicate humanity. Such enormities, though attested by undoubted evidence, appear almost incredible. Depraved nature, even perverted religion encouraged by the utmost license, reach not to such a pitch of ferocity, unless the pity inherent in human breasts be destroyed by that contagion of example which transports men beyond all the usual motives of conduct and behavior.

The weaker sex themselves, naturally tender to their own sufferings, and compassionate to those of others, here emulated their more robust companions in the practice of every cruelty. [4] Even children, taught by the example and encouraged by the exhortation of their parents, essayed their feeble blows on the dead carcasses or defenceless children of the English.

* Temple, .

* * Temple, .

* * * Temple, , 40

* * * * Temple, , 101. Rush. vol. v. .

v Temple,

The very avarice of the Irish was not a sufficient restraint to their cruelty. Such was their frenzy, that the cattle which they had seized, and by rapine made their own, yet, because they bore the name of English, were wantonly slaughtered, or, when covered with wounds, turned loose into the woods or deserts. [1]

The stately buildings or commodious habitations of the planters, as if upbraiding the sloth and ignorance of the natives, were consumed with fire, or laid level with the ground. And where the miserable owners, shut up in their houses, and preparing for defence, perished in the flames, together with their wives and children, a double triumph was afforded to their insulting foes. [2]

If any where a number assembled together, and, assuming courage from despair, were resolved to sweeten death by revenge on their assassins, they were disarmed by capitulations and promises of safety, confirmed by the most solemn oaths. But no sooner had they surrendered, than the rebels, with perfidy equal to their cruelty, made them share the fate of their unhappy countrymen. [3]

Others, more ingenious still in their barbarity, tempted their prisoners, by the fond love of life, to imbrue their hands in the blood of friends, brothers, parents; and having thus rendered them accomplices in guilt, gave them that death which they sought to shun by deserving it. [4]

Amidst all these enormities, the sacred name of religion resounded on every side; not to stop the hands of these murderers, but to enforce their blows, and to steel their hearts against every movement of human or social sympathy. The English, as heretics, abhorred of God and detestable to all holy men, were marked out by the priests for slaughter; and of all actions, to rid the world of these declared enemies to Catholic faith and piety, was represented as the most meritorious. Nature, which in that rude people was sufficiently inclined to atrocious deeds, was further stimulated by precept: and national prejudices empoisoned by those aversions, more deadly and incurable, which arose from an enraged superstition. While death finished the sufferings of each victim, the bigoted assassins, with joy and exultation, still echoed in his expiring ears, that these agonies were but the commencement of torments infinite and eternal.[v*]

* Temple, .

* * Temple, , 106. Rash. vol. v.

* * * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. .

* * * * Temple, p 100.

v Temple, , 106.

v* Temple, p 94, 107, 108. Rush. vol. v. .

Such were the barbarities by which Sir Phelim O’Neale and the Irish in Ulster signalized their rebellion; an event memorable in the annals of human kind, and worthy to be held in perpetual detestation and abhorrence. The generous nature of More was shocked at the recital of such enormous cruelties. He flew to O’Neale’s camp; but found that his authority, which was sufficient to excite the Irish to an insurrection, was too feeble to restrain their inhumanity. Soon after, he abandoned a cause polluted by so many crimes; and he retired into Flanders. Sir Phelim, recommended by the greatness of his family, and perhaps too by the unrestrained brutality of his nature, though without any courage or capacity, acquired the entire ascendent over the northern rebels. [1] The English colonies were totally annihilated in the open country of Ulster: the Scots at first met with more favorable treatment. In order to engage them to a passive neutrality, the Irish pretended to distinguish between the British nations; and, claiming friendship and consanguinity with the Scots, extended not over them the fury of their massacres. Many of them found an opportunity to fly the country; others retired into places of security, and prepared themselves for defence; and by this means the Scottish planters, most of them at least, escaped with their lives. [2]

From Ulster the flames of rebellion diffused themselves in an instant over the other three provinces of Ireland. In all places, death and slaughter were not uncommon; though the Irish in these other provinces pretended to act with moderation and humanity. But cruel and barbarous was their humanity! Not content with expelling the English their houses, with despoiling them of their goodly manors, with wasting their cultivated fields, they stripped them of their very clothes, and turned them out, naked and defenceless, to all the severities of the season. [3] The heavens themselves, as if conspiring against that unhappy people, were armed with cold and tempest unusual to the climate, and executed what the merciless sword had left unfinished. [4] The roads were covered with crowds of naked English, hastening towards Dublin and the other cities which yet remained in the hands of their countrymen. The feeble age of children, the tender sex of women, soon sunk under the multiplied rigors of cold and hunger.

* Temple, .

* * Temple, Rush, i. .

* * * Temple, .

* * * * Temple,

Here the husband, bidding a final adieu to his expiring family, envied them that fate which, he himself expected so soon to share: there the son, having long supported his aged parent, with reluctance obeyed his last commands, and, abandoning him in this uttermost distress, reserved himself to the hopes of avenging that death which all his efforts could not prevent nor delay. The astonishing greatness of the calamity deprived the sufferers of any relief from the view of companions in affliction. With silent tears, or lamentable cries, they hurried on through the hostile territories, and found every heart which was not steeled by native barbarity, guarded by the more implacable furies of mistaken piety and religion. [1]

The saving of Dublin preserved in Ireland the remains of the English name. The gates of that city, though timorously opened, received the wretched supplicants, and presented to the view a scene of human misery beyond what any eye had ever before beheld. [2] Compassion seized the amazed inhabitants, aggravated with the fear of like calamities; while they observed the numerous foes, without and within, which every where environed them, and reflected on the weak resources by which they were themselves supported. The more vigorous of the unhappy fugitives, to the number of three thousand, were enlisted into three regiments; the rest were distributed into the houses; and all care was taken, by diet and warmth, to recruit their feeble and torpid limbs. Diseases of unknown name and species, derived from these multiplied distresses, seized many of them, and put a speedy period to their lives: others, having now leisure to reflect on their mighty loss of friends and fortune, cursed that being which they had saved. Abandoning themselves to despair, refusing all succor, they expired; without other consolation than that of receiving among their countrymen the honors of a grave, which, to their slaughtered companions, had been denied by the inhuman barbarians. [3]

* Temple, .

* * Temple, .

* * * * Temple, , 62.

By some computations, those who perished by all these cruelties are supposed to be a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand: by the most moderate, and probably the most reasonable account, they are made to amount to forty thousand; if this estimation itself be not, as is usual in such cases, somewhat exaggerated.

The justices ordered to Dublin all the bodies of the army which were not surrounded by the rebels; and they assembled a force of one thousand five hundred veterans. They soon enlisted and armed from the magazines above four thousand men more. They despatched a body of six hundred men to throw relief into Tredah, besieged by the Irish. But these troops, attacked by the enemy, were seized with a panic, and were most of them put to the sword. Their arms, falling into the hands of the Irish, supplied them with what they most wanted. [1] The justices, willing to foment the rebel lion in a view of profiting by the multiplied forfeitures, henceforth thought of nothing more than providing for their own present security and that of the capital. The earl of Ormond, their general, remonstrated against such timid, not to say base and interested counsels; but was obliged to submit to authority.

The English of the pale, who probably were not at first in the secret, pretended to blame the insurrection, and to detest the barbarity with which it was accompanied. [2] By their protestations and declarations, they engaged the justices to supply them with arms, which they promised to employ in defence of the government. [3] But in a little time, the interests of religion were found more prevalent over them than regard and duty to their mother country. They chose Lord Gormanstone their leader; and, joining the old Irish, rivalled them in every act of violence towards the English Protestants. Besides many smaller bodies dispersed over the kingdom, the principal army of the rebels amounted to twenty thousand men, and threatened Dublin with an immediate siege. [4]

Both the English and Irish rebels conspired in one imposture, with which they seduced many of their deluded countrymen: they pretended authority from the king and queen, but chiefly from the latter, for their insurrection; and they affirmed, that the cause of their taking arms was to vindicate royal prerogative, now invaded by the Puritanical parliament. Sir Phelim O’Neale, having found a royal patent in Lord Caulfield’s house, whom he had murdered, tore off the seal, and affixed it to a commission which he had forged for himself.[v*]

* Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Temple, . Rush. vol. v. .

* * * Temple, . Borlase, Hist. .

* * * * Whitlocke, .

v Rush. vol. v. , 401.

v* Rush. vol. v. .

The king received an account of this insurrection by a messenger despatched from the north of Ireland. He immediately communicated his intelligence to the Scottish parliament. He expected that the mighty zeal expressed by the Scots for the Protestant religion, would immediately engage them to fly to its defence where it was so violently invaded; he hoped that their horror against Popery, a religion which now appeared in its most horrible aspect, would second all his exhortations: he had observed with what alacrity they had twice run to arms, and assembled troops in opposition to the rights of their sovereign: he saw with how much greater facility they could now collect forces which had been very lately disbanded, and which had been so long inured to military discipline. The cries of their affrighted and distressed brethren in Ireland, he promised himself, would powerfully incite them to send over succors, which could arrive so quickly, and aid them with such promptitude in this uttermost distress. But the zeal of the Scots, as is usual among religious sects, was very feeble when not stimulated either by faction or by interest. They now considered themselves entirely as a republic, and made no account of the authority of their prince, which they had utterly annihilated. Conceiving hopes from the present distresses of Ireland, they resolved to make an advantageous bargain for the succors with which they should supply their neighboring nation. And they cast their eye towards the English parliament, with whom they were already so closely connected, and who could alone fulfil any articles which might be agreed on. Except despatching a small body to support the Scottish colonies in Ulster, they would therefore go no further at present than sending commissioners to London in order to treat with that power to whom the sovereign authority was now in reality transferred. [1]

* Rush. vol. v. .

The king, too, sensible of his utter inability to subdue the Irish rebels, found himself obliged, in this exigency, to have recourse to the English parliament, and depend on their assistance for supply. After communicating to them the intelligence which he had received, he informed them, that the insurrection was not, in his opinion, the result of any rash enterprise, but of a formed conspiracy against the crown of England. To their care and wisdom, therefore, he said, he committed the conduct and prosecution of the war, which, in a cause so important to national and religious interests, must of necessity be immediately entered upon, and vigorously pursued. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. ii. .

The English parliament was now assembled, and discovered in every vote the same dispositions in which they had separated. The exalting of their own authority, the diminishing of the king's, were still the objects pursued by the majority. Every attempt which had been made to gain the popular leaders, and by offices to attach them to the crown, had failed of success, either for want of skill in conducting it, or by reason of the slender preferments which it was then in the king's power to confer. The ambitious and enterprising patriots disdained to accept, in detail, of a precarious power, while they deemed it so easy, by one bold and vigorous assault, to possess themselves forever of the entire sovereignty. Sensible that the measures which they had hitherto pursued rendered them extremely obnoxious to the king; were many of them in themselves exceptionable; some of them, strictly speaking, illegal; they resolved to seek their own security, as well as greatness, by enlarging popular authority in England. The great necessities to which the king was reduced; the violent prejudices which generally, throughout the nation, prevailed against him; his facility in making the most important concessions; the example of the Scots, whose encroachments had totally subverted monarchy; all these circumstances further instigated the commons in their invasion of royal prerogative. And the danger to which the constitution seemed to have been so lately exposed, persuaded many that it never could be sufficiently secured, but by the entire abolition of that authority which had invaded it.

But this project it had not been in the power, scarcely in the intention of the popular leaders to execute, had it not been for the passion which seized the nation for Presbyterian discipline, and for the wild enthusiasm which at that time accompanied it. The license which the parliament had bestowed on this spirit, by checking ecclesiastical authority; the countenance and encouragement with which they had honored it; had already diffused its influence to a wonderful degree; and all orders of men had drunk deep of the intoxicating poison. In every discourse or conversation this mode of religion entered; in all business it had a share; every elegant pleasure or amusement it utterly annihilated; many vices or corruptions of mind it promoted: even diseases and bodily distempers were not totally exempted from it; and it became requisite, we are told, for all physicians to be expert in the spiritual profession, and by theological considerations to allay those religious terrors with which their patients were so generally haunted. Learning itself, which tends so much to enlarge the mind and humanize the temper, rather served on this occasion to exalt that epidemical frenzy which prevailed. Rude as yet, and imperfect, it supplied the dismal fanaticism with a variety of views, founded it on some coherency of system, enriched it with different figures of elocution; advantages with which a people totally ignorant and barbarous had been happily unacquainted.

From policy, at first, and inclination, now from necessity the king attached himself extremely to the hierarchy: for like reasons, his enemies were determined, by one and the same effort, to overpower the church and monarchy.

While the commons were in this disposition, the Irish rebellion was the event which tended most to promote the views in which all their measures terminated. A horror against the Papists, however innocent, they had constantly encouraged, a terror from the conspiracies of that sect, however improbable, they had at all times endeavored to excite. Here was broken out a rebellion, dreadful and unexpected; accompanied with circumstances the most detestable of which there ever was any record; and what was the peculiar guilt of the Irish Catholics, it was no difficult matter, in the present disposition of men’s minds, to attribute to that whole sect, who were already so much the object of general abhorrence. Accustomed in all invectives to join the prelatical party with the Papists, the people immediately supposed this insurrection to be the result of their united counsels. And when they heard that the Irish rebels pleaded the king’s commission for all their acts of violence, bigotry, ever credulous and malignant, assented without scruple to that gross imposture, and loaded the unhappy prince with the whole enormity of a contrivance so barbarous and inhuman. [1]

* See note H. at the end of the volume

By the difficulties and distresses of the crown, the commons, who possessed alone the power of supply, had aggrandized themselves; and it seemed a peculiar happiness, that the Irish rebellion had succeeded at so critical a juncture to the pacification of Scotland. That expression of the king's, by which he committed to them the care of Ireland, they immediately laid hold of, and interpreted in the most, unlimited sense. They had on other occasions been gradually encroaching on the executive power of the crown, which forms its principal and most natural branch of authority; but with regard to Ireland, they at once assumed it, fully and entirely, as if delivered over to them by a regular gift or assignment. And to this usurpation the king was obliged passively to submit; both because of his inability to resist, and lest he should still more expose himself to the reproach of favoring the progress of that odious rebellion.

The project of introducing further innovations in England being once formed by the leaders among the commons, it became a necessary consequence, that their operations with regard to Ireland should, all of them, be considered as subordinate to the former, on whose success, when once undertaken, their own grandeur, security, and even being, must entirely depend. While they pretended the utmost zeal against the Irish insurrection, they took no steps towards its suppression, but such as likewise tended to give them the superiority in those commotions which, they foresaw, must so soon be excited in England. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. ii. p, 435. Sir Ed. Walker p 6.

The extreme contempt entertained for the natives in Ireland, made the popular leaders believe that it would be easy at any time to suppress their rebellion, and recover that kingdom: nor were they willing to lose, by too hasty success, the advantage which that rebellion would afford them in their projected encroachments on the prerogative. By assuming the total management of the war, they acquired the courtship and dependence of every one who had any connection with Ireland, or who was desirous of enlisting in these military enterprises: they levied money under pretence of the Irish expedition; but reserved it for purposes which concerned them more nearly: they took arms from the king’s magazines; but still kept them with a secret intention of employing them against himself: whatever law they deemed necessary for aggrandizing themselves, was voted, under color of enabling them to recover Ireland; and if Charles withheld the royal assent, his refusal was imputed to those pernicious counsels which had at first excited the Popish rebellion, and which still threatened total destruction to the Protestant interest throughout all his dominions. [1] And though no forces were for a long time sent over to Ireland, and very little money remitted during the extreme distress of that kingdom, so strong was the people’s attachment to the commons, that the fault was never imputed to those pious zealots, whose votes breathed nothing but death and destruction to the Irish rebels.

To make the attack on royal authority by regular approaches, it was thought proper to frame a general remonstrance of the state of the nation; and accordingly the committee, which at the first meeting of parliament had been chosen for that purpose, and which had hitherto made no progress in their work, received fresh injunctions to finish that undertaking.

The committee brought into the house that remonstrance which has become so memorable, and which was soon afterwards attended with such important consequences. It was not addressed to the king; but was openly declared to be an appeal to the people. The harshness of the matter was equalled by the severity of the language. It consists of many gross falsehoods, intermingled with some evident truths: malignant insinuations are joined to open invectives; loud complaints of the past, accompanied with jealous prognostications of the future. Whatever unfortunate, whatever invidious, whatever suspicious measure had been embraced by the king, from the commencement of his reign, is insisted on and aggravated with merciless rhetoric: the unsuccessful expeditions to Cadiz and the Isle of Rhé are mentioned; the sending of ships to France for the suppression of the Hugonots; the forced loans; the illegal confinement of men for not obeying illegal commands; the violent dissolution of four parliaments; the arbitrary government which always succeeded; the questioning, fining, and imprisoning of members for their conduct in the house; the levying of taxes without consent of the commons; the introducing of superstitious

* Nalson, vol. ii. p 318. Clarendon, vol. iv. .

innovations into the church, without authority of law: in short, every thing which, either with or without reason, had given offence during the course of fifteen years, from the accession of the king to the calling of the present parliament. And though all these grievances had been already redressed, and even laws enacted for future security against their return, the praise of these advantages was ascribed, not to the king, but to the parliament, who had extorted his consent to such salutary statutes. Their own merits too, they asserted, towards the king, were no less eminent than towards the people. Though they had seized his whole revenue, rendered it totally precarious, and made even their temporary supplies be paid to their own commissioners, who were independent of him, they pretended that they had liberally supported him in his necessities. By an insult still more egregious, the very giving of money to the Scots for levying war against their sovereign, they represented as an instance of their duty towards him. And all their grievances, they said, which amounted to no less than a total subversion of the constitution, proceeded entirely from the formed combination of a Popish faction, who had ever swayed the king's counsels, who had endeavored, by an uninterrupted effort, to introduce their superstition into England and Scotland, and who had now at last excited an open and bloody rebellion in Ireland. [1]

This remonstrance, so full of acrimony and violence, was a plain signal for some further attacks intended on royal prerogative, and a declaration, that the concessions already made, however important, were not to be regarded as satisfactory. What pretensions would be advanced, how unprecedented, how unlimited, were easily imagined; and nothing less was foreseen, whatever ancient names might be preserved, than an abolition, almost total, of the monarchical government of England. The opposition, therefore, which the remonstrance met with in the house of commons was great. For above fourteen hours the debate was warmly managed; and from the weariness of the king's party, which probably consisted chiefly of the elderly people, and men of cool spirits, the vote was at last carried by a small majority of eleven. [2] Some time after, the remonstrance was ordered to be printed and published, without being carried up to the house of peers for their assent and concurrence.

* Rush. vol. v. . Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Whitlocke, . Dugdale, . Nalson, vol. ii. p. 668.

When this remonstrance was dispersed, it excited every where the same violent controversy which attended it when introduced into the house of commons. This parliament, said the partisans of that assembly, have at length profited by the fatal example of their predecessors; and are resolved, that the fabric which they have generously undertaken to wear for the protection of liberty, shall not be left to future ages insecure and imperfect. At the time when the petition of right, that requisite vindication of a violated constitution, was extorted from the unwilling prince, who but imagined that liberty was at last secured, and that the laws would thenceforth maintain themselves in opposition to arbitrary authority? But what was the event? A right was indeed acquired to the people, or rather their ancient right was more exactly defined; but as the power of invading it still remained in the prince, no sooner did an opportunity offer, than he totally disregarded all laws and preceding engagements, and made his will and pleasure the sole rule of government. Those lofty ideas of monarchical authority, which he has derived from his early education, which are united in his mind with the irresistible illusions of self-love, which are corroborated by his mistaken principles of religion, it is in vain to hope that, in his more advanced age, he will sincerely renounce from any subsequent reflection or experience. Such conversions, if ever they happen, are extremely rare; but to expect that they will be derived from necessity, from the jealousy and resentment of antagonists, from blame, from reproach, from opposition, must be the result of the fondest and most blind credulity. These violences, however necessary, are sure to irritate a prince against limitations so cruelly imposed upon him; and each concession which he is constrained to make, is regarded as a temporary tribute paid to faction and sedition, and is secretly attended with a resolution of seizing every favorable opportunity to retract it. Nor should we imagine that opportunities of that kind will not offer in the course of human affairs. Governments, especially those of a mixed kind, are in continual fluctuation: the humors of the people change perpetually from one extreme to another: and no resolution can be more wise, as well as more just, than that of employing the present advantages against the king, who had formerly pushed much less tempting ones to the utmost extremities against, his people and his parliament. It is to be feared, that if the religious rage which has seized the multitude be allowed to evaporate, they will quickly return to the ancient ecclesiastical establishment; and with it embrace those principles of slavery which it inculcates with such zeal on its submissive proselytes. Those patriots who are now the public idols, may then become the objects of general detestation; and equal shouts of joy attend their ignominious execution, with those which second their present advantages and triumphs. Nor ought the apprehension of such an event to be regarded in them as a selfish consideration: in their safety is involved the security of the laws. The patrons of the constitution cannot suffer without a fatal blow to the constitution: and it is but justice in the public to protect, at any hazard, those who have so generously exposed themselves to the utmost hazard for the public interest. What though monarchy, the ancient government of England, be impaired, during these contests, in many of its former prerogatives: the laws will flourish the more by its decay; and it is happy, allowing that matters are really carried beyond the bounds of moderation, that the current at least runs towards liberty, and that the error is on that side which is safest for the general interests of mankind and society.

The best arguments of the royalists against a further attack on the prerogative, were founded more on opposite ideas which they had formed of the past events of this reign, than on opposite principles of government. Some invasions, they said, and those too of moment, had undoubtedly been made on national privileges: but were we to look for the cause of these violences, we should never find it to consist in the wanton tyranny and injustice of the prince, not even in his ambition or immoderate appetite for authority. The hostilities with Spain, in which the king on his accession found himself engaged, however imprudent and unnecessary, had proceeded from the advice, and even importunity of the parliament; who deserted him immediately after they had embarked him in those warlike measures. A young prince, jealous of honor, was naturally afraid of being foiled in his first enterprise, and had not as yet attained such maturity of counsel, as to perceive that his greatest honor lay in preserving the laws inviolate, and gaining the full confidence of his people. The rigor of the subsequent parliaments had been extreme with regard to many articles, particularly tonnage and poundage; and had reduced the king to an absolute necessity, if he would preserve entire the royal prerogative, of levying those duties by his own authority, and of breaking through the forms, in order to maintain the spirit of the constitution. Having once made so perilous a step, he was naturally induced to continue, and to consult the public interest by imposing ship money, and other moderate though irregular burdens and taxations. A sure proof that he had formed no system for enslaving his people is, that the chief object of his government has been to raise a naval, not a military force; a project useful, honorable, nay, indispensably requisite, and, in spite of his great necessities, brought almost to a happy conclusion. It is now full time to free him from all these necessities, and to apply cordials and lenitives, after those severities which have already had their full course against him. Never was sovereign blessed with more moderation of temper, with more justice, more humanity, more honor, or a more gentle disposition. What pity that such a prince should so long have been harassed with rigors, suspicions, calumnies, complaints, encroachments; and been forced from that path, in which the rectitude of his principles would have inclined him to have constantly trod! If some few instances are found of violations made on the petition of right, which he himself had granted, there is an easier and more natural way for preventing the return of like inconveniencies, than by a total abolition of royal authority. Let the revenue be settled, suitably to the ancient dignity and splendor of the crown; let the public necessities be fully supplied; let the remaining articles of prerogative be left untouched; and the king, as he has already lost the power, will lay aside the will, of invading the constitution. From what quarter can jealousies now arise? What further security can be desired or expected? The king's preceding concessions, so far from being insufficient for public security, have rather erred on the other extreme; and, by depriving him of all power of self-defence, are the real cause why the commons are emboldened to raise pretensions hitherto unheard of in the kingdom, and to subvert the whole system of the constitution. But would they be content with moderate advantages, is it not evident that, besides other important concessions, the present parliament may be continued, till the government be accustomed to the new track, and every part be restored to full harmony and concord? By the triennial act, a perpetual succession of parliaments is established, as everlasting guardians to the laws, while the king possesses no independent power or military force by which he can be supported in his invasion of them. No danger remains but what is inseparable from all free constitutions, and what forms the very essence of their freedom; the danger of a change in the people's disposition, and of general disgust contracted against popular privileges To prevent such an evil, no expedient is more proper than to contain ourselves within the bounds of moderation, and to consider, that all extremes naturally and infallibly beget each other. In the same manner as the past usurpations of the crown, however excusable on account of the necessity or provocations whence they arose, have excited an immeasurable appetite for liberty; let us beware, lest our encroachments, by introducing anarchy, make the people seek shelter under the peaceable and despotic rule of a monarch. Authority, as well as liberty, is requisite to government; and is even requisite to the support of liberty itself, by maintaining the laws, which can alone regulate and protect it. What madness, while every thing is so happily settled under ancient forms and institutions, now more exactly poised and adjusted, to try the hazardous experiment of a new constitution, and renounce the mature wisdom of our ancestors for the crude whimseys of turbulent innovators! Besides the certain and inconceivable mischiefs of civil war, are not the perils apparent, which the delicate frame of liberty must inevitably sustain amidst the furious shock of arms? Whichever side prevails, she can scarcely hope to remain inviolate, and may suffer no less, or rather greater injuries from the boundless pretensions of forces engaged in her cause, than from the invasion of enraged troops enlisted on the side of monarchy.

The king, upon his return from Scotland, was received in London with the shouts and acclamations of the people, and with every demonstration of regard and affection. [1] Sir Richard Gournay, lord mayor, a man of moderation and authority, had promoted these favorable dispositions, and had engaged the populace, who so lately insulted the king, and who so soon after made furious war upon him, to give him these marks of their dutiful attachment. But all the pleasure which Charles reaped from this joyous reception, was soon damped by the remonstrance of the commons, which was presented him, together with a petition of a like strain. The bad counsels which he followed are there complained of; his concurrence in the Irish rebellion plainly insinuated; the scheme laid for the introduction of Popery and superstition inveighed against; and, as a remedy for all these evils, he is desired to intrust every office and command to persons in whom his parliament should have cause to confide. [2]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Bush. vol. v. . Nalson, vol. ii. .

By this phrase, which is so often repeated in all the memorials and addresses of that time, the commons meant themselves and their adherents.

As soon as the remonstrance of the commons was published the king dispersed an answer to it. In this contest, he lay under great disadvantages. Not only the ears of the people were extremely prejudiced against him; the best topics upon which he could justify, at least apologize for his former conduct, were such as it was not safe or prudent for him at this time to employ. So high was the national idolatry towards parliaments, that to blame the past conduct of these assemblies would have been very ill received by the generality of the people. So loud were the complaints against regal usurpations, that had the king asserted the prerogative of supplying, by his own authority, the deficiencies in government arising from the obstinacy of the commons, he would have increased the clamors with which the whole nation already resounded. Charles, therefore, contented himself with observing in general, that even during that period so much complained of, the people enjoyed a great measure of happiness, not only comparatively, in respect of their neighbors, but even in respect of those times which were justly accounted the most fortunate. He made warm protestations of sincerity in the reformed religion; he promised indulgence to tender consciences with regard to the ceremonies of the church; he mentioned his great concessions to national liberty; he blamed the infamous libels every where dispersed against his person and the national religion; he complained of the general reproaches thrown out in the remonstrance with regard to ill counsels, though he had protected no minister from parliamentary justice, retained no unpopular servant, and conferred offices on no one who enjoyed not a high character and estimation in the public. "If, notwithstanding this," he adds, "any malignant party shall take heart, and be willing to sacrifice the peace and happiness of their country to their own sinister ends and ambition, under whatever pretence of religion and conscience; if they shall endeavor to lessen my reputation and interest, and to weaken my lawful power and authority; if they shall attempt, by discountenancing the present laws, to loosen the bands of government, that all disorder and confusion may break in upon us; I doubt not but God in his good time will discover them to me, and that the wisdom and courage of my high court of parliament will join with me in their suppression and punishment." [1] Nothing shows more evidently the hard situation in which

Charles was placed, than to observe that he was obliged to confine himself within the limits of civility towards subjects who had transgressed all bounds of regard, and even of good manners, in the treatment of their sovereign.

The first instance of those parliamentary encroachments which Charles was now to look for, was the bill for pressing soldiers to the service of Ireland. This bill quickly passed the lower house. In the preamble, the king's power of pressing, a power exercised during all former times, was declared illegal, and contrary to the liberty of the subject. By a necessary consequence, the prerogative, which the crown had ever assumed, of obliging men to accept of any branch of public service, was abolished and annihilated; a prerogative, it must be owned, not very compatible with a limited monarchy. In order to elude this law, the king offered to raise ten thousand volunteers for the Irish service: but the commons were afraid lest such an army should be too much at his devotion. Charles, still unwilling to submit to so considerable a diminution of power, came to the house of peers, and offered to pass the law without the preamble; by which means, he said, that ill-timed question with regard to the prerogative would for the present be avoided, and the pretensions of each party be left entire. Both houses took fire at this measure, which, from a similar instance, while the bill of attainder against Strafford was in dependence, Charles might foresee would be received with resentment. The lords, as well as commons, passed a vote, declaring it to be a high breach of privilege for the king to take notice of any bill which was in agitation in either of the houses, or to express his sentiments with regard to it, before it be presented to him for his assent in a parliamentary manner. The king was obliged to compose all matters by an apology. [2]

* Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Rush. vol. v. , 458, etc. Clarendon, vol. ii. p. 327. Nalson, vol. ii. , 750, 751, etc.

The general question, we may observe, with regard to privileges of parliament, has always been, and still continues, one of of the greatest mysteries in the English constitution; and in some respects, notwithstanding the accurate genius of that government, these privileges are at present as undetermined as were formerly the prerogatives of the crown. Such privileges as are founded on long precedent cannot be controverted: but though it were certain, that former kings had not in any instance taken notice of bills lying before the houses, (which yet appears to have been very common,) it follows not, merely from their never exerting such a power, that they had renounced it, or never were possessed of it. Such privileges also as are essential to all free assemblies which deliberate, they may be allowed to assume, whatever precedents may prevail: but though the king's interposition, by an offer or advice, does in some degree overawe or restrain liberty; it may be doubted whether it imposes such evident violence as to entitle the parliament, without any other authority or concession, to claim the privilege of excluding it. But this was the favorable time for extending privileges; and had none more exorbitant or unreasonable been challenged, few bad consequences had followed. The establishment of this rule, it is certain, contributes to the order and regularity, as well as freedom, of parliamentary proceedings.

The interposition of peers in the election of commoners was likewise about this time declared a breach of privilege, and continues ever since to be condemned by votes of the commons, and universally practised throughout the nation.

Every measure pursued by the commons, and, still more, every attempt made by their partisans, were full of the most inveterate hatred against the hierarchy, and showed a determined resolution of subverting the whole ecclesiastical establishment. Besides numberless vexations and persecutions which the clergy underwent from the arbitrary power of the lower house, the peers, while the king was in Scotland, having passed an order for the observance of the laws with regard to public worship, the commons assumed such authority, that, by a vote alone of their house, they suspended those laws, though enacted by the whole legislature: and they particularly forbade bowing at the name of Jesus; a practice which gave them the highest scandal, and which was one of their capital objections against the established religion. [1] They complained of the king's filling five vacant sees, and considered it as an insult upon them, that he should complete and strengthen an order which they intended soon entirely to abolish. [2] They had accused thirteen bishops of high treason, for enacting canons without consent of parliament, [3] though, from the foundation of the monarchy, no other method had ever been practised: and they now insisted that the peers, upon this general accusation, should sequester those bishops from their seats in parliament, and commit them to prison.

* Rush. vol. v. , 386. Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Nalson, vol. ii. p 511.

* * * Rush. vol. v.

Their bill for taking away the bishops' votes had last winter been rejected by the peers: but they again introduced the same bill, though no prorogation had intervened; and they endeavored, by some minute alterations, to elude that rule of parliament which opposed them. And when they sent up this bill to the lords, they made a demand, the most absurd in the world, that the bishops, being all of them parties, should be refused a vote with regard to that question. [1] After the resolution was once formed by the commons, of invading the established government of church and state, it could not be expected that their proceedings, in such a violent attempt, would thenceforth be altogether regular and equitable: but it must be confessed that, in their attack on the hierarchy, they still more openly passed all bounds of moderation; as supposing, no doubt, that the sacredness of the cause would sufficiently atone for employing means the most irregular and unprecedented. This principle, which prevails so much among zealots, never displayed itself so openly as during the transactions of this whole period.

* Clarendon. vol. ii. .

But, notwithstanding these efforts of the commons, they could not expect the concurrence of the upper house either to this law, or to any other which they should introduce for the further limitation of royal authority. The majority of the peers adhered to the king, and plainly foresaw the depression of nobility, as a necessary consequence of popular usurpations on the crown. The insolence, indeed, of the commons, and their haughty treatment of the lords, had already risen to a great height, and gave sufficient warning of their future attempts upon that order. They muttered somewhat of their regret that they should be obliged to save the kingdom alone, and that the house of peers would have no part in the honor. Nay, they went so far as openly to tell the lords, “That they themselves were the representative body of the whole kingdom, and that the peers were nothing but individuals who held their seats in a particular capacity; and therefore, if their lordships will not consent to the passing of acts necessary for the preservation of the people, the commons, together with such of the lords as are more sensible of the danger, must join together, and represent the matter to his majesty.” [1] So violent was the democratical, enthusiastic spirit diffused throughout the nation, that a total confusion of all rank and order was justly to be apprehended; and the wonder was, not that the majority of the nobles should seek shelter under the throne, but that any of them should venture to desert it. But the tide of popularity seized many, and carried them wide of the most established maxims of civil policy. Among the opponents of the king are ranked the earl of Northumberland, lord admiral, a man of the first family and fortune, and endowed with that dignified pride which so well became his rank and station: the earl of Essex, who inherited all his father’s popularity, and having from his early youth sought renown in arms, united to a middling capacity that rigid inflexibility of honor which forms the proper ornament of a nobleman and a soldier: Lord Kimbolton, soon after earl of Manchester, a person distinguished by humanity, generosity, affability, and every amiable virtue. These men, finding that their credit ran high with the nation, ventured to encourage those popular disorders, which, they vainly imagined, they possessed authority sufficient to regulate and control.

In order to obtain a majority in the upper house, the commons had recourse to the populace, who on other occasions had done them such important service. Amidst the greatest security, they affected continual fears of destruction to themselves and the nation, and seemed to quake at every breath or rumor of danger. They again excited the people by never-ceasing inquiries after conspiracies, by reports of insurrections, by feigned intelligence of invasions from abroad, by discoveries of dangerous combinations at home among Papists and their adherents. When Charles dismissed the guard which they had ordered during his absence, they complained; and upon his promising them a new guard, under the command of the earl of Lindesey, they absolutely refused the offer, an were well pleased to insinuate, by this instance of jealousy, that their danger chiefly arose from the king himself. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * Journ. 30th Nov. 1641 Nalson, vol ii. y 688.

They ordered halberts to be brought into the hall where they assembled, and thus armed themselves against those conspiracies with which, they pretended, they were hourly threatened. As stories of plots, however ridiculous, were willingly attended to, and were dispersed among the multitude, to whose capacity they were well adapted. Beale, a tailor, informed the commons that, walking in the fields, he had hearkened to the discourse of certain persons unknown to him, and had heard them talk of a most dangerous conspiracy. A hundred and eight ruffians, as he learned, had been appointed to murder a hundred and eight lords and commoners, and were promised rewards for these assassinations, ten pounds for each lord, forty shillings for each commoner. Upon this notable intelligence, orders were issued for seizing priests and Jesuits, a conference was desired with the lords, and the deputy lieutenants of some suspected counties were ordered to put the people in a posture of defence. [1]

The pulpits likewise were called in aid, and resounded with the dangers which threatened religion from the desperate attempts of Papists and malignants. Multitudes flocked towards Westminster, and insulted the prelates and such of the lords as adhered to the crown. The peers voted a declaration against those tumults, and sent it to the lower house; but these refused their concurrence. [2] Some seditious apprentices, being seized and committed to prison, immediately received their liberty, by an order of the commons. [3] The sheriffs and justices having appointed constables with strong watches to guard the parliament, the commons sent for the constables, and required them to discharge the watches, convened the justices, voted their orders a breach of privilege, and sent one of them to the Tower. [4]

* Nalson, vol. ii. . Journ. 16th Nov. 1641. Dugdale, .

* * Rush. part. iii. vol. i. .

* * * Nalson, vol ii. p 784, 792.

* * * * Nalson, vol. ii. . Journ. 27th, 28th, and 29th of Dec. 1641.

Encouraged by these intimations of their pleasure, the populace crowded about Whitehall, and threw out insolent menaces against Charles himself. Several seduced officers and young gentlemen of the inns of court, during this time of disorder and danger, offered their service to the king. Between them and the populace there passed frequent skirmishes, which ended not without bloodshed. By way of reproach, these gentlemen gave the rabble the appellation of Roundheads, on account of the short cropped hair which they wore: these called the others Cavaliers. And thus the nation, which was before sufficiently provided with religious as well as civil causes of quarrel, was also supplied with party names, under which the factions might rendezvous and signalize their mutual hatred. [1]

Meanwhile the tumults still continued, and even increased about Westminster and Whitehall. The cry incessantly resounded against "bishops and rotten-hearted lords." [2] The former especially, being distinguishable by their habit, and being the object of violent hatred to all the sectaries, were exposed to the most dangerous insults. [3] Williams, now created archbishop of York, having been abused by the populace, hastily called a meeting of his brethren. By his advice, a protestation was drawn and addressed to the king and the house of lords. The bishops there set forth, that though they had an undoubted right to sit and vote in parliament, yet in coming thither, they had been menaced, assaulted, affronted, by the unruly multitude, and could no longer with safety attend their duty in the house. For this reason they protested against all laws, votes, and resolutions, as null and invalid, which should pass during the time of their constrained absence. This protestation, which, though just and legal, was certainly ill-timed, was signed by twelve bishops, and communicated to the king, who hastily approved of it. As soon as it was presented to the lords, that house desired a conference with the commons, whom they informed of this unexpected protestation. The opportunity was seized with joy and triumph. An impeachment of high treason was immediately sent up against the bishops, as endeavoring to subvert the fundamental laws, and to invalidate the authority of the legislature. [4] They were, on the first demand, sequestered from parliament, and committed to custody. No man in either house ventured to speak a word in their vindication; so much displeased was every one at the egregious imprudence of which they had been guilty. One person alone said, that he did not believe them guilty of high treason; but that they were stark mad, and therefore desired they might be sent to bedlam.

* Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * * Dugdale, .

* * * * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. . Nalson, vol. ii. p, 794.

v Clarendon, vol. ii. .

1642.

A few days after, the king was betrayed into another indiscretion, much more fatal; an indiscretion to which all the ensuing disorders and civil wars ought immediately and directly to be ascribed; this was the impeachment of Lord Kimbolton and the five members.

When the commons employed in their remonstrance language so severe and indecent, they had not been actuated entirely by insolence and passion; their views were more solid and profound. They considered that in a violent attempt, such as an invasion of the ancient constitution, the more leisure was afforded the people to reflect, the less would they be inclined to second that rash and dangerous enterprise: that the peers would certainly refuse their concurrence; nor were there any hopes of prevailing on them, but by instigating the populace to tumult and disorder: that the employing of such odious means for so invidious an end would, at long-run, lose them all their popularity, and turn* the tide of favor to the contrary party; and that, if the king only remained in tranquillity, and cautiously eluded the first violence of the tempest he would in the end certainly prevail, and be able at least to preserve the ancient laws and constitution. They were therefore resolved, if possible, to excite him to some violent passion, in hopes that he would commit indiscretions of which they might make advantage.

It was not long before they succeeded beyond their fondest wishes. Charles was enraged to find that all his concessions but increased their demands; that the people who were returning to a sense of duty towards him, were again roused to sedition and tumults; that the blackest calumnies were propagated against him, and even the Irish massacre ascribed to his counsels and machinations; and that a method of address was adopted not only unsuitable towards so great a prince, but which no private gentleman could bear without resentment. When he considered all these increasing acts of insolence in the commons, he was apt to ascribe them in a great measure to his own indolence and facility. The queen and the ladies of the court further stimulated his passion, and represented that, if he exerted the vigor and displayed the majesty of a monarch, the daring usurpations of his subjects would shrink before him. Lord Digby, a man of fine parts but full of levity, and hurried on by precipitate passions, suggested like counsels; and Charles, who, though commonly moderate in his temper, was ever disposed to hasty resolutions, gave way to the fatal importunity of his friends and servants. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. ii. .

Herbert, attorney-general, appeared in the house of peers and in his majesty’s name entered an accusation of high treason against Lord Kimbolton and five commoners, Hollis, Sir Arthur Hazlerig, Hambden, Pym, and Strode. The articles were, that they had traitorously endeavored to subvert the fundamental laws and government of the kingdom, to deprive the king of his regal power, and to impose on his subjects an arbitrary and tyrannical authority: that they had endeavored, by many foul aspersions on his majesty and his government, to alienate the affections of his people, and make him odious to them: that they had attempted to draw his late army to disobedience of his royal commands, and to side with them in their traitorous designs: that they had invited and encouraged a foreign power to invade the kingdom: that they had aimed at subverting the rights and very being of parliament: that, in order to complete their traitorous designs, they had endeavored, as far as in them lay, by force and terror to compel the parliament to join with them; and to that end had actually raised and countenanced tumults against the king and parliament: and that they had traitorously conspired to levy, and actually had levied war against the king. [1]

* Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. . Nalson, vol. ii. . Franklyn, .

The whole world stood amazed at this important accusation, so suddenly entered upon without concert, deliberation, or reflection. Some of these articles of accusation, men said, to judge by appearance, seem to be common between the impeached members and the parliament; nor did these persons appear any further active in the enterprises of which they were accused, than so far as they concurred with the majority in their votes and speeches. Though proofs might perhaps be produced of their privately inviting the Scots to invade England, how could such an attempt be considered as treason, after the act of oblivion which had passed, and after that both houses, with the king's concurrence, had voted that nation three hundred thousand pounds for their brotherly assistance? While, the house of peers are scarcely able to maintain their independency, or to reject the bills sent them by the commons, will they ever be permitted by the populace, supposing them inclined, to pass a sentence which must totally subdue the lower house, and put an end to their ambitious undertakings? These five members, at least Pym, Hambden and Hollis, are the very heads of the popular party; and if these be taken off, what fate must be expected by their followers, who are, many of them, accomplices in the same treason? The punishment of leaders is ever the last triumph over a broken and routed party; but surely was never before attempted, in opposition to a faction, during the full tide of its power and success.

But men had not leisure to wonder at the indiscretion of this measure: their astonishment was excited by new attempts, still more precipitate and imprudent. A serjeant at arms, in the king's name, demanded of the house the five members: and was sent back without any positive answer. Messengers were employed to search for them, and arrest them. Their trunks, chambers, and studies were sealed and locked. The house voted all these acts of violence to be breaches of privilege, and commanded every one to defend the liberty of the members. [1] The king, irritated by all this opposition, resolved next day to come in person to the house, with an intention to demand, perhaps seize in their presence, the persons whom he had accused.

This resolution was discovered to the countess of Carlisle, sister to Northumberland, a lady of spirit, wit, and intrigue. [2] She privately sent intelligence to the five members; and they had time to withdraw, a moment before the king entered. He was accompanied by his ordinary retinue, to the number of above two hundred, armed as usual, some with halberts, some with walking swords. The king left them at the door, and he himself advanced alone through the hall, while all the members rose to receive him.

* Whitlocke, Rush. vol. v. , 475.

* * Whitlocke, . Warwick, .

The speaker withdrew from his chair, and the king took possession of it. The speech which he made was as follows: “Gentlemen, I am sorry for this occasion of coming to you. Yesterday I sent a serjeant at arms to demand some who, by my order, were accused of high treason. Instead of obedience, I received a message. I must here declare to you, that though no king that ever was in England could be more careful of your privileges than I shall be, yet in cases of treason no person has privilege. Therefore am I come to tell you, that I must have these men wheresoever I can find them. Well, since I see all the birds are flown, I do expect that you will send them to me as soon as they return. But I assure you, on the word of a king, I never did intend any force, but shall proceed against them in a fair and legal way; for I never meant any other. And now, since I see I cannot do what I came for, I think this is no unfit occasion to repeat what I have said formerly, that whatever I have done in favor and to the good of my subjects, I do intend to maintain it.” [1]

When the king was looking around for the accused members, he asked the speaker, who stood below, whether any of these persons were in the house. The speaker, falling on his knee, prudently replied, “I have, sir, neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the house is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am. And I humbly ask pardon, that I cannot give any other answer to what your majesty is pleased to demand of me.” [2]

The commons were in the utmost disorder; and when the king was departing, some members cried aloud, so as he might hear them, “Privilege! privilege!” And the house immediately adjourned till next day. [3]

* Whitloeke, .

* * Whitlocke, . May, book ii. .

* * * Whitlocke, .

That evening the accused members, to show the greater apprehension, removed into the city, which was their fortress. The citizens were the whole night in arms. Some people, who were appointed for that purpose, or perhaps actuated by their own terrors, ran from gate to gate, crying out that the cavaliers were coming to burn the city, and that the king himself was at their head.

Next morning, Charles sent to the mayor, and ordered him to call a common council immediately. About ten o'clock, he himself, attended only by three or four lords, went to Guildhall. He told the common council, that he was sorry to hear of the apprehensions entertained of him; that he was come to them without any guard, in order to show how much he relied on their affections; and that he had accused certain men of high treason, against whom he would proceed in a legal way, and therefore presumed that they would not meet with protection in the city. After many other gracious expressions, he told one of the sheriffs, who of the two was thought the least inclined to his service, that he would dine with him. He departed the hall without receiving the applause which he expected. In passing through the streets, he heard the cry, "Privilege of parliament! privilege of parliament!" resounding from all quarters. One of the populace, more insolent than the rest drew nigh to his coach, and called out with a loud voice, "To your tents, O Israel!" the words employed by the mutinous Israelites when they abandoned Rehoboam, their rash and ill-counselled sovereign, [1]

When the house of commons met, they affected the greatest dismay; and adjourning themselves for some days, ordered a committee to sit in Merchant Tailors Hall in the city. The committee made an exact inquiry into all circumstances attending the king's entry into the house: every passionate speech, every menacing gesture of any, even the meanest of his attendants, was recorded and aggravated. An intention of offering violence to the parliament, of seizing the accused members in the very house, and of murdering all who should make resistance, was inferred. And that unparalleled breach of privilege — so it was called — was still ascribed to the counsel of Papists and their adherents. This expression, which then recurred every moment in speeches and memorials, and which at present is so apt to excite laughter in the reader, begat at that time the deepest and most real consternation throughout the kingdom.

A letter was pretended to be intercepted, and was communicated to the committee, who pretended to lay great stress upon it. One Catholic there congratulates another on the accusation of the members; and represents that incident as a branch of the same pious contrivance which had excited the Irish insurrection, and by which the profane heretics would soon be exterminated in England. [2]

* Rush. vol. v. . Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * Nalson, vol. ii. .

The house again met; and, after confirming the votes of their committee, instantly adjourned, as if exposed to the most imminent perils from the violence of their enemies. This practice they continued for some time. When the people, by these affected panics, were wrought up to a sufficient degree of rage and terror, it was thought proper that the accused members should, with a triumphant and military procession, take their seats in the house. The river was covered with boats and other vessels, laden with small pieces of ordnance, and prepared for fight. Skippon, whom the parliament had appointed, by their own authority, major-general of the city militia, [1] conducted the members, at the head of this tumultuary army, to Westminster Hall. And when the populace, by land and by water, passed Whitehall, they still asked, with insulting shouts, “What has become of the king and his cavaliers? And whither are they fled?” [2]

* Nalson, vol. ii. p 833.

* * Whitlocke. Dugdale, . Clarendon, vol ii p. 380.

The king, apprehensive of danger from the enraged multitude, had retired to Hampton Court, deserted by all the world, and overwhelmed with grief, shame, and remorse, for the fatal measures into which he had been hurried. His distressed situation he could no longer ascribe to the rigors of destiny, or the malignity of enemies: his own precipitancy and indiscretion must bear the blame of whatever disasters should henceforth befall him. The most faithful of his adherents, between sorrow and indignation, were confounded with reflections on what had happened, and what was likely to follow. Seeing every prospect blasted, faction triumphant, the discontented populace inflamed to a degree of fury, they utterly despaired of success in a cause to whose ruin friends and enemies seemed equally to conspire.

The prudence of the king, in his conduct of this affair, nobody pretended to justify. The legality of his proceedings met with many and just apologies, though generally offered to unwilling ears. No maxim of law, it was said, is more established, or more universally allowed, than that privilege of parliament extends not to treason, felony, or breach of peace; nor has either house, during former ages, ever pretended, in any of those cases, to interpose in behalf of its members. Though some inconveniencies should result from the observance of this maxim, that would not be sufficient, without other authority, to abolish a principle established by uninterrupted precedent, and founded on the tacit consent of the whole legislature. But what are the inconveniencies so much dreaded? The king, on pretence of treason, may seize any members of the opposite faction, and for a time gain to his partisans the majority of voices. But if he seize only a few, will he not lose more friends by such a gross artifice than he confines enemies? If he seize a great number, is not this expedient force, open and barefaced? And what remedy at all times against such force, but to oppose to it a force which is superior? Even allowing that the king intended to employ violence, not authority, for seizing the members; though at that time, and ever afterwards, he positively asserted the contrary; yet will his conduct admit of excuse. That the hall where the parliament assembles is an inviolable sanctuary, was never yet pretended. And if the commons complain of the affront offered them, by an attempt to arrest their members in their very presence, the blame must lie entirely on themselves! who had formerly refused compliance with the king’s message, when he peaceably demanded these members. The sovereign is the great executor of the laws; and his presence was here legally employed, both in order to prevent opposition, and to protect the house against those insults which their disobedience had so well merited.

Charles knew to how little purpose he should urge these reasons against the present fury of the commons. He proposed, therefore, by a message, that they would agree upon a legal method by which he might carry on his prosecution against the members, lest further misunderstandings happen with regard to privilege. They desired him to lay the grounds of accusation before the house; and pretended that they must first judge whether it were proper to give up their members, to a legal trial. The king then informed them, that he would waive, for the present, all prosecution: by successive messages he afterwards offered a pardon to the members; offered to concur in any law that should acquit or secure them; offered any reparation to the house for the beach of privilege, of which, he acknowledged, they had reason to complain. [1] They were resolved to accept of no satisfaction, unless he would discover his advisers in that illegal measure; a condition to which, they knew that, without rendering himself forever vile and contemptible, he could not possibly submit. Meanwhile, they continued to thunder against the violation of parliamentary privileges, and by their violent outcries to inflame the whole nation. The secret reason of their displeasure, however obvious, they carefully concealed. In the king's accusation of the members, they plainly saw his judgment of late parliamentary proceedings; and every adherent of the ruling faction dreaded the same fate, should royal authority be reëstablished in its ancient lustre. By the most unhappy conduct, Charles, while he extremely augmented in his opponents the will, had also increased the ability of hurting him.

* Dugdale, . Rush, vol v. , 488, 492, etc.

The more to excite the people, whose dispositions were already very seditious, the expedient of petitioning was renewed. A petition from the county of Buckingham was presented to the house by six thousand subscribers, who promised to live and die in defence of the privileges of parliament. [1] The city of London, the county of Essex, that of Hertford, Surrey, Berks, imitated the example. A petition from the apprentices was graciously received. [2] Nay, one was encouraged from the porters, whose numbers amounted, as they said, to fifteen thousand. [3] The address of that great body contained the same articles with all the others; the privileges of parliament, the danger of religion, the rebellion of Ireland, the decay of trade. The porters further desired, that justice might be done upon offenders, as the atrociousness of their crimes had deserved. And they added, "That if such remedies were any longer suspended, they should be forced to extremities not fit to be named, and make good the saying, that 'Necessity has no law.'" [4]

Another petition was presented by several poor people, or beggars, in the name of many thousands more; in which the petitioners proposed as a remedy for the public miseries "That those noble worthies of the house of peers, who concur with the happy votes of the commons, may separate themselves from the rest, and sit and vote as one entire body." The commons gave thanks for this petition.

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * Dugdale, .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. ii. .

v Clarendon, vol. li. .

The very women were seized with the same rage. A brewer's wife, followed by many thousands of her sex, brought a petition to the house, in which the petitioners expressed their terror of the Papists and prelates, and their dread of like massacres, rapes, and outrages, with those which had been committed upon their sex in Ireland. They had been necessitated, they said, to imitate the example of the women of Tekoah: and they claimed equal right with the men, of declaring by petition their sense of the public cause; because Christ had purchased them at as dear a rate, and in the free enjoyment of Christ consists equally the happiness of both sexes. Pym came to the door of the house; and having told the female zealots that their petition was thankfully accepted and was presented in a seasonable time, he begged that their prayers for the success of the commons might follow their petition. Such low arts of popularity were affected, and by such illiberal cant were the unhappy people incited to civil discord and convulsions.

In the mean time, not only all petitions which favored the church or monarchy, from whatever hand they came, were discouraged, but the petitioners were sent for, imprisoned, and prosecuted as delinquents; and this unequal conduct was openly avowed and justified. Whoever desire a change, it was said, must express their sentiments; for how otherwise shall they be known? But those who favor the established government in church or state, should not petition; because they already enjoy what they wish for. [1]

The king had possessed a great party in the lower house, as appeared in the vote for the remonstrance; and this party, had every new cause of disgust been carefully avoided, would soon have become the majority, from the odium attending the violent measures embraced by the popular leaders. A great majority he always possessed in the house of peers, even after the bishops were confined or chased away; and this majority could not have been overcome but by outrages which, in the end, would have drawn disgrace and ruin on those who incited them. By the present fury of the people, as by an inundation, were all these obstacles swept away, and every rampart of royal authority laid level with the ground. The victory was pursued with impetuosity by the sagacious commons, who knew the importance of a favorable moment in all popular commotions. The terror of their authority they extended over the whole nation; and all opposition, and even all blame vented in private conversation, were treated as the most atrocious crimes by these severe inquisitors. Scarcely was it permitted to find fault with the conduct of any particular member, if he made a figure in the house; and reflections thrown out on Pym were at this time treated as breaches of privilege. The populace without doors were ready to execute, from the least hint, the will of their leaders; nor was it safe for any member to approach either house, who pretended to control or oppose the general torrent. After so undisguised a manner was this violence conducted, that Hollis, in a speech to the peers, desired to know the names of such members as should vote contrary to the sentiments of the commons: [2] and Pym said in the lower house, that the people must not be restrained in the expressions of their just desires. [3]

* Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * King’s Declaration of 12th of August, 1642

* * * King’s Declaration of 12th August, 1642.

By the flight, or terror, or despondency of the king’s party, an undisputed majority remained everywhere to their opponents; and the bills sent up by the commons, which had hitherto stopped with the peers, and would certainly have been rejected, now passed, and were presented for the royal assent. These were, the pressing bill with its preamble, and the bill against the votes of the bishops in parliament. The king's authority was at that time reduced to the lowest ebb. The queen too, being secretly threatened with an impeachment, and finding no resource in her husband's protection, was preparing to retire into Holland. The rage of the people was, on account of her religion, as well as her spirit and activity, universally levelled against her. Usage the most contumelious she had hitherto borne with silent indignation. The commons, in their fury against priests, had seized her very confessor, nor would they release him upon her repeated applications. Even a visit of the prince to his mother had been openly complained of, and remonstrances against it had been presented to her. [1] Apprehensive of attacks still more violent, she was desirous of facilitating her escape; and she prevailed with the king to pass these bills, in hopes of appeasing for a time the rage of the multitude. [2]

These new concessions, however important, the king immediately found to have no other effect than had all the preceding ones: they were made the foundation of demands still more exorbitant. From the facility of his disposition, from the weakness of his situation, the commons believed that he could now refuse them nothing. And they regarded the least moment of relaxation in their invasion of royal authority as highly impolitic, during the uninterrupted torrent of their successes. The very moment they were informed of these last acquisitions, they affronted the queen by opening some intercepted letters written to her by Lord Digby: they carried up an impeachment against Herbert, attorney-general, for obeying his master's commands in accusing their members. [3] And they prosecuted with fresh vigor their plan of the militia, on which they rested all future hopes of an uncontrolled authority.

* Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * * Rush. vol. v. . Clarendon, vol. ii. .

The commons were sensible that monarchical government, which during so many ages had been established in England, would soon regain some degree of its former dignity, after the present tempest was overblown; nor would all their new invented limitations be able totally to suppress an authority to which the nation had ever been accustomed. The sword alone, to which all human ordinances must submit, could guard their acquired power, and fully insure to them personal safety against the rising indignation of their sovereign. This point, therefore, became the chief object of their aims. A large magazine of arms being placed in the town of Hull, they despatched thither Sir John Hotham, a gentleman of considerable fortune in the neighborhood, and of an ancient family, and they gave him the authority of governor. They sent orders to Goring, governor of Portsmouth, to obey no commands but such as he should receive from the parliament. Not content with having obliged the king to displace Lunsford, whom he had appointed governor of the Tower, [1] they never ceased soliciting him till he had also displaced Sir John Biron, a man of unexceptionable character, and had bestowed that command on Sir John Conyers, in whom alone, they said, they could repose confidence. After making a fruitless attempt, in which the peers refused their concurrence, to give public warning, that the people should put themselves in a posture of defence against the enterprises of “Papists and other ill-affected persons,” [2] they now resolved, by a bold and decisive stroke, to seize at once the whole power of the sword, and to confer it entirely on their own creatures and adherents.

* Rush. voL v. .

* * Nalson, vol. ii. .

The severe votes passed in the beginning of this parliament against lieutenants and their deputies, for exercising powers assumed by all their predecessors, had totally disarmed the crown, and had not left in any magistrate military authority sufficient for the defence and security of the nation. To remedy this inconvenience now appeared necessary. A bill was introduced, and passed the two houses, which restored to lieutenants and deputies the same powers of which the votes of the commons had bereaved them; but at the same time the names of all the lieutenants were inserted in the bill; and these consisted entirely of men in whom the parliament could confide. And for their conduct they were accountable, by the express terms of the bill, not to the king, but to the parliament.

The policy pursued by the commons, and which had hitherto succeeded to admiration, was, to astonish the king by the boldness of their enterprises, to intermingle no sweetness with their severity, to employ expressions no less violent than their pretensions, and to make him sensible in what little estimation they held both his person and his dignity. To a bill so destructive of royal authority, they prefixed, with an insolence seemingly wanton, a preamble equally dishonorable to the personal character of the king. These are the words: “Whereas there has been of late a most dangerous and desperate design upon the house of commons, which we have just cause to believe an effect of the bloody counsels of Papists and other ill-affected persons who have already raised a rebellion in the kingdom of Ireland. And whereas, by reason of many discoveries, we cannot but fear they will proceed, not only to stir up the like rebellions and insurrections in this kingdom of England, but also to back them with forces from abroad,” etc. [1]

Here Charles first ventured to put a stop to his concessions, and that not by a refusal, but a delay. When this demand was made, — a demand, which, if granted, the commons justly regarded as the last they should ever have occasion to make, — he was at Dover, attending the queen and the princess of Orange in their embarkation. He replied, that he had not now leisure to consider a matter of so great importance, and must therefore respite his answer till his return. [2] The parliament instantly despatched another message to him, with solicitations still more importunate. They expressed their great grief on account of his majesty’s answer to their just and necessary petition. They represented, that any delay during dangers and distractions so great and pressing, was not less unsatisfactory and destructive than an absolute denial. They insisted, that it was their duty to see put in execution a measure so necessary for public safety. And they affirmed, that the people in many counties had applied to them for that purpose, and in some places were, of themselves and by their own authority, providing against those urgent dangers with which they were threatened. [3]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * Rush, vol. v. .

Even after this insolence, the king durst not venture upon a flat denial. Besides excepting to the preamble, which such dishonor upon him, and protesting the innocence of his intentions when he entered the house of commons, he only desired that the military authority, if it were defective, should first be conferred upon the crown; and he promised to bestow commissions, but such as should be revocable at pleasure, on the same persons whom the parliament had named in the bill. [1] By a former message, he had expressed his wishes that they would lay before him, in one view, all the concessions which they deemed requisite for the settlement of the nation. They pretended, that they were exposed to perils so dreadful and imminent, that they had not leisure for such a work. [2] The expedient proposed by the king seemed a sufficient remedy during this emergence, and yet maintained the prerogatives of the crown entire and unbroken.

But the intentions of the commons were wide of this purpose, and their panics could be cured by one remedy alone. They instantly replied, that the dangers and distempers of the nation were such as could endure no longer delay; and unless the king speedily complied with their demands, they should be constrained, for the safety of prince and people, to dispose of the militia by the authority of both houses, and were resolved to do it accordingly. They asserted, that those parts of the kingdom which had, from their own authority, put themselves in a posture of defence during these prevailing fears and jealousies, had acted suitably to the declarations and directions of both houses, and conformably to the laws of the kingdom. And while they thus menaced the king with their power they invited him to fix his residence at London, where they knew he would be entirely at mercy. [3]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v. , 517.

* * * Rush, part iii. vol. i. chap. iv. .

“I am so much amazed at this message,” said the king in his prompt reply, “that I know not what to answer. You speak of jealousies and fears. Lay your hands on your hearts, and ask yourselves whether I may not likewise be disturbed with fears and jealousies, and if so, I assure you that this message has nothing lessened them.

“As to the militia, I thought so much of it before I gave that answer, and am so much assured that the answer is agreeable to what in justice or reason you can ask, or I in honor grant, that I shall not alter it in any point.

“For my residence near you, I wish it might be safe and honorable, and that I had no cause to absent myself from Whitehall: ask yourselves whether I have not. [1]

“What would you have? Have I violated your laws? Have I denied to pass any bill for the ease and security of my subjects? I do not ask what you have done for me.

“Have any of my people been transported with fears and apprehensions? I offer as free and general a pardon as yourselves can devise. All this considered, there is a judgment of Heaven upon this nation if these distractions continue.

“God so deal with me and mine as all my thoughts and intentions are upright for the maintenance of the true Protestant profession, and for the observance and preservation of the laws; and I hope God will bless and assist those laws for my preservation.” [2]

No sooner did the commons despair of obtaining the king’s consent to their bill, than they instantly voted, that those who advised his majesty’s answer were enemies to the state, and mischievous projectors against the safety of the nation; that this denial is of such dangerous consequence, that, if his majesty persist in it, it will hazard the peace and tranquillity of all his kingdoms, unless some speedy remedy be applied by the wisdom and authority of both houses; and that such of the subjects as have put themselves in a posture of defence against the common danger, have done nothing but what is justifiable, and approved by the house. [3]

Lest the people might be averse to the seconding of all these usurpations, they were plied anew with rumors of danger, with the terrors of invasion, with the dread of English and Irish Papists; and the most unaccountable panics were spread throughout the nation. Lord Digby having entered Kingston in a coach and six, attended by a few livery servants, the intelligence was conveyed to London; and it was immediately voted, that he had appeared in a hostile manner, to the terror and affright of his majesty's subjects, and had levied war against the king and kingdom. [4] Petitions from all quarters loudly demanded of the parliament to put the nation in a posture of defence; and the county of Stafford in particular expressed such dread of an insurrection among the Papists, that every man, they said, was constrained to stand upon his guard, not even daring to go to church unarmed.

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * Rush. part. iii. vol. i. chap. iv. .

* * * * Clarendon. Rush., part. iii. vol. i. chap, ii .

v Dugdale, .

That the same violence by which he had so long been oppressed might not still reach him, and extort his consent to the militia bill, Charles had resolved to remove farther from London; and accordingly, taking the prince of Wales and the duke of York along with him, he arrived by slow journeys at York, which he determined for some time to make the place of his residence. The distant parts of the kingdom, being removed from that furious vortex of new principles and opinions which had transported the capital, still retained a sincere regard for the church and monarchy; and the king here found marks of attachment beyond what he had before expected. [1]

* Warwick, .

From all quarters of England, the prime nobility and gentry, either personally or by messages and letters, expressed their duty towards him; and exhorted him to save himself and them from that ignominious slavery with which they were threatened. The small interval of time which had passed since the fatal accusation of the members, had been sufficient to open the eyes of many, and to recover them from the astonishment with which at first they had been seized. One rash and passionate attempt of the king’s seemed but a small counterbalance to so many acts of deliberate violence which had been offered to him and every branch of the legislature; and, however sweet the sound of liberty, many resolved to adhere to that moderate freedom transmitted them from their ancestors, and now better secured by such important concessions, rather than, by engaging in a giddy search after more independence, run a manifest risk either of incurring a cruel subjection, or abandoning all law and order.

Charles, finding himself supported by a considerable party in the kingdom, began to speak in a firmer tone, and to retort the accusations of the commons with a vigor which he had not before exerted. Notwithstanding their remonstrances, and menaces, and insults, he still persisted in refusing their bill; and they proceeded to frame an ordinance, in which, by the authority of the two houses, without the king’s consent, they named lieutenants for all the counties, and conferred on them the command of the whole military force, of all the guards, garrisons, and forts of the kingdom. He issued proclamations against this manifest usurpation; and, as he professed a resolution strictly to observe the law himself, so was he determined, he said, to oblige every other person to pay it a like obedience The name of the king was so essential to all laws, and so familiar in all acts of executive authority, that the parliament was afraid, had they totally omitted it, that the innovation would be too sensible to the people. In all commands, therefore, which they conferred, they bound the persons to obey the orders of his majesty signified by both houses of parliament. And inventing a distinction, hitherto unheard of, between the office and the person of the king, those very forces which they employed against him they levied in his name and by his authority. [1]

It is remarkable how much the topics of argument were now reversed between the parties. The king, while he acknowledged his former error, of employing a plea of necessity in order to infringe the laws and constitution, warned the parliament not to imitate an example on which they threw such violent blame; and the parliament, while they clothed their personal fears or ambition under the appearance of national and imminent danger, made unknowingly an apology for the most exceptionable part of the king’s conduct. That the liberties of the people were no longer exposed to any peril from royal authority, so narrowly circumscribed, so exactly defined, so much unsupported by revenue and by military power, might be maintained upon very plausible topics: but that the danger, allowing it to have any existence, was not of that kind, great, urgent, inevitable, which dissolves all law and levels all limitations, seems apparent from the simplest view of these transactions. So obvious indeed was the king's present inability to invade the constitution, that the fears and jealousies which operated on the people, and pushed them so furiously to arms, were undoubtedly not of a civil, but of a religious nature. The distempered imaginations of men were agitated with a continual dread of Popery, with a horror against prelacy, with an antipathy to ceremonies and the liturgy, and with a violent affection for whatever was most opposite to these objects of aversion. The fanatical spirit, let loose, confounded all regard to ease, safety, interest; and dissolved every moral and civil obligation. [2]

* Rush. vol. v. .

* * See note I, at the end of the volume.

Each party was now willing to throw on its antagonist the odium of commencing a civil war; but both of them prepared for an event which they deemed inevitable. To gain the people's favor and good opinion was the chief point on both sides. Never was there a people less corrupted by vice, and more actuated by principle, than the English during that period: never were there individuals who possessed more capacity, more courage, more public spirit, more disinterested zeal. The infusion of one ingredient in too large a proportion had corrupted all these noble principles, and converted them into the most virulent poison. To determine his choice in the approaching contests, every man hearkened with avidity to the reasons proposed on both sides. The war of the pen preceded that of the sword, and daily sharpened the humors of the opposite parties. Besides private adventurers without number, the king and parliament themselves carried on the controversy by messages, remonstrances, and declarations; where the nation was really the party to whom all arguments were addressed. Charles had here a double advantage. Not only his cause was more favorable, as supporting the ancient government in church and state against the most illegal pretensions; it was also defended with more art and eloquence. Lord Falkland had accepted the office of secretary; a man who adorned the purest virtue, with the richest gifts of nature, and the most valuable acquisitions of learning. By him, assisted by the king himself, were the memorials of the royal party chiefly composed. So sensible was Charles of his superiority in this particular, that he took care to disperse every where the papers of the parliament together with his own, that the people might be the more enabled, by comparison, to form a judgment between them: the parliament, while they distributed copies of their own, were anxious to suppress all the king's compositions. [1]

To clear up the principles of the constitution, to mark the boundaries of the powers intrusted by law to the several members, to show what great improvements the whole political system had received from the king's late concessions, to demonstrate his entire confidence in his people, and his reliance on their affections, to point out the ungrateful returns which had been made him, and the enormous encroachments, insults, and indignities to which he had been exposed; these were the topics which, with so much justness of reasoning and propriety of expression, were insisted on in the king's declarations and remonstrances. [2]

Though these writings were of consequence, and tended much to reconcile the nation to Charles, it was evident that they would not be decisive, and that keener weapons must determine the controversy. To the ordinance of the parliament concerning the militia, the king opposed his commissions of array. The counties obeyed the one or the other, according as they stood affected. And in many counties, where the people were divided, mobbish combats and skirmishes ensued. [1] The parliament on this occasion went so far as to vote, "That when the lords and commons in parliament, which is the supreme court of judicature, shall declare what the law of the land is, to have this not only questioned, but contradicted, is a high breach of their privileges." [2] This was a plain assuming of the whole legislative authority, and exerting it in the most material article, the government of the militia. Upon the same principles they pretended, by a verbal criticism on the tense of a Latin verb, to ravish from the king his negative voice in the legislature. [3]

The magazine of Hull contained the arms of all the forces levied against the Scots; and Sir John Hotham, the governor, though he had accepted of a

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* Rush. vol. v. .

* * See note K, at the end of the volume.

commission from the parliament, was not thought to be much disaffected to the church and monarchy. Charles therefore entertained hopes that if he presented himself at Hull before the commencement of hostilities, Hotham, overawed by his presence, would admit him with his retinue; after which he might easily render himself master of the place. But the governor was on his guard. He shut the gates, and refused to receive the king, who desired leave to enter with twenty persons only. Charles immediately proclaimed him traitor, and complained to the parliament of his disobedience. The parliament avowed and justified the action. [4]

* May, book ii. .

* * Rush. vol. v. .

* * * The king, by his coronation oath, promises that he would maintain the laws and customs which the people had chosen, “quas vulgus elegerit:” the parliament pretended, that elegerit meant shall choose; and, consequently, that the king had no right to refuse any bills which should be presented him. See Rush. vol. v. .

* * * * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. etc. May, book ii .

The county of York levied a guard for the king of six hundred men; for the kings of England had hitherto lived among their subjects like fathers among their children, and had derived all their security from the dignity of their character, and from the protection of the laws. The two houses, though they had already levied a guard for themselves, had attempted to seize all the military power, all the navy, and all the forts of the kingdom, and had openly employed their authority in every kind of warlike preparations, yet immediately voted, “That the king, seduced by wicked counsel, intended to make war against his parliament, who, in all their consultations and actions, had proposed no other end but the care of his kingdoms, and the performance of all duty and loyalty to his person; that this attempt was a breach of the trust reposed in him by his people, contrary to his oath, and tending to a dissolution of the government; and that whoever should assist him in such a war, were traitors to the fundamental laws of the kingdom.” [1]

The armies which had been everywhere raised on pretence of the service in Ireland, were henceforth more openly enlisted by the parliament for their own purposes, and the command of them was given to the earl of Essex. In London, no less than four thousand men enlisted in one day. [2] And the parliament voted a declaration, which they required every member to subscribe, that they would live and die with their general.

They issued orders for bringing in loans of money and plate, in order to maintain forces which should defend the king and both houses of parliament; for this style they still preserved. Within ten days, vast quantities of plate were brought to their treasurers. Hardly were there men enough to receive it, or room sufficient to stow it; and many with regret were obliged to carry back their offerings, and wait till the treasurers could find leisure to receive them; such zeal animated the pious partisans of the parliament, especially in the city. The women gave up all the plate and ornaments of their houses, and even their silver thimbles and bodkins, “in order to support the good cause against the malignants.” [3]

Meanwhile the splendor of the nobility with which the king was environed much eclipsed the appearance at Westminster. Lord Keeper Littleton, after sending the great seal before him, had fled to York. Above forty peers of the first rank attended the king, [1] whilst the house of lords seldom consisted of more than sixteen members. Near the moiety, too, of the lower house absented themselves from counsels which they deemed so full of danger. The commons sent up an impeachment against nine peers, for deserting their duty in parliament. Their own members, also, who should return to them, they voted not to admit till satisfied concerning the reason of their absence.

Charles made a declaration to the peers who attended him, that he expected from them no obedience to any commands which were not warranted by the laws of the land. The peers answered this declaration by a protest, in which they declared their resolution to obey no commands but such as were warranted by that authority. [2] By these deliberate engagements, so worthy of an English prince and English nobility, they

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* Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. v. . Dugdale, . May, book 11. .

* * Vicar’s God in the Mount.

* * * Whitlocke, . Dugdale, , 99.

meant to confound the furious and tumultuary resolutions taken by the parliament.

* May, book ii. .

* * Rush vol. v. , 627. May, book ii. . Warwick, .

The queen, disposing of the crown jewels in Holland, had been enabled to purchase a cargo of arms and ammunition. Part of these, after escaping many perils, arrived safely to the king. His preparations were not near so forward as those of the parliament. In order to remove all jealousy, he had resolved that their usurpations and illegal pretensions should be apparent to the whole world; and thought that to recover the confidence of the people was a point much more material to his interest, than the collecting of any magazines, stores, or armies which might breed apprehensions of violent or illegal counsels. But the urgent necessity of his situation no longer admitted of delay. He now prepared himself for defence. With a spirit, activity, and address, which neither the one party apprehended nor the other expected, he employed all the advantages which remained to him, and roused up his adherents to arms. The resources of this prince's genius increased in proportion to his difficulties, and he never appeared greater than when plunged into the deepest perils and distresses. From the mixed character, indeed, of Charles, arose in part the misfortunes in which England was at this time involved. His political errors, or rather weaknesses, had raised him inveterate enemies: his eminent moral virtues had procured him zealous partisans; and between the hatred of the one, and the affections of the other, was the nation agitated with the most violent convulsions.

That the king might despair of all composition, the parliament sent him the conditions on which they were willing to some to an agreement. Their demands, contained in nineteen propositions, amounted to a total abolition of monarchical authority. They required that no man should remain in the council who was not agreeable to parliament; that no deed of the king's should have validity unless it passed the council, and was attested under their hand; that all the officers of state and principal judges should be chosen with consent of parliament, and enjoy their offices for life; that none of the royal family should marry without consent of parliament or council; that the laws should be executed against Catholics; that the votes of Popish lords should be excluded; that the reformation of the liturgy and church government should, have place according to advice of parliament; that the ordinance with regard to the militia be submitted to; that the justice of parliament pass upon all delinquents; that a general pardon be granted, with such exceptions as should be advised by parliament that the forts and castles be disposed of by consent of parliament; and that no peer be made but with consent of both houses. [1]

“Should I grant these demands,” said the king in reply, “I may be waited on bareheaded; I may have my hand kissed; the title of majesty may be continued to me; and ‘the king’s authority, signified by both houses,’ may still be the style of your commands; I may have swords and maces carried before me, and please myself with the sight of a crown and sceptre, (though even these twigs would not long flourish when the stock upon which they grew was dead;) but as to true and real power, I should remain but the outside, but the picture, but the sign of a king.” [2] War on any terms was esteemed, by the king and all the counsellors, preferable to so ignominious a peace. Charles accordingly resolved to support his authority by arms. “His towns,” he said, “were taken from him, his ships, his arms, his money; but there still remained to him a good cause, and the hearts of his loyal subjects, which, with God’s blessing, he doubted not would recover all the rest.” Collecting, therefore, some forces, he advanced southwards; and at Nottingham he erected his royal standard, the open signal of discord and civil war throughout the kingdom.

* Rush. vol. v. . May, book ii. .

* * Rush. vol. v, . Warwick, p, 189.

CHAPTER LVI.

CHARLES I.

1642.

When two names so sacred in the English constitution as those of king and parliament were placed in opposition, no wonder the people were divided in their choice, and were agitated with the most violent animosities and factions.

The nobility and more considerable gentry, dreading a total confusion of rank from the fury of the populace, enlisted themselves in defence of the monarch, from whom they received and to whom they communicated their lustre. Animated with the spirit of loyalty derived from their ancestors they adhered to the ancient principles of the constitution, and valued themselves on exerting the maxims, as well as inheriting the possessions of the old English families. And while they passed their time mostly at their country seats, they were surprised to hear of opinions prevailing with which they had ever been unacquainted, and which implied not a limitation, but an abolition almost total of monarchical authority.

The city of London, on the other hand, and most of the great corporations, took part with the parliament, and adopted with zeal those democratical principles, on which the pretensions of that assembly were founded. The government of cities, which even under absolute monarchies is commonly republican, inclined them to this party: the small hereditary influence which can be retained over the industrious inhabitants of towns, the natural independence of citizens, and the force of popular currents over those more numerous associations of mankind; all these causes gave their authority to the new principles propagated throughout the nation. Many families, too, which had lately been enriched by commerce, saw with indignation that, notwithstanding their opulence, they could not raise themselves to a level with the ancient gentry: they therefore adhered to a power by whose success they hoped to acquire rank and consideration. [1] And the new splendor and glory of the Dutch commonwealth, where liberty so happily supported industry, made the commercial part af the nation desire to see a like form of government established in England.

* Clarendon, vol. iii. .

The genius of the two religions, so closely at this time interwoven with politics, corresponded exactly to these divisions. The Presbyterian religion was new, republican, and suited to the genius of the populace: the other had an air of greater show and ornament, was established on ancient authority, and bore an affinity to the kingly and aristocratical parts of the constitution. The devotees of Presbytery became of course zealous partisans of the parliament: the friends of the Episcopal church valued themselves on defending the rights of monarchy.

Some men also there were of liberal education, who, being either careless or ignorant of those disputes bandied about by the clergy of both sides, aspired to nothing but an easy enjoyment of life, amidst the jovial entertainment and social intercourse of their companions. All these flocked to the king’s standard, where they breathed a freer air, and were exempted from that rigid preciseness and melancholy austerity which reigned among the parliamentary party.

Never was a quarrel more unreal than seemed at first than between the contending parties: almost every advantage lay against the royal cause. The king’s revenue had been seized from the beginning by the parliament, who issued out to him from time to time small sums for his present subsistence; and as soon as he withdrew to York, they totally stopped all payments. London, and all the seaports, except Newcastle, being in their hands, the customs yielded them a certain and considerable supply of money; and all contributions, loans, and impositions were more easily raised from the cities, which possessed the ready money, and where men lived under their inspection, than they could be levied by the king in those open countries which after some time declared for him.

The seamen naturally followed the disposition of the sea ports to which they belonged: and the earl of Northumberland, lord admiral, having embraced the party of the parliament, had appointed, at their desire, the earl of Warwick to be his lieutenant; who at once established his authority in the fleet, and kept the entire dominion of the sea in the hands of that assembly.

All the magazines of arms and amunition were from the first seized by the parliament; and their fleet intercepted the greater part of those which were sent by the queen from Holland. The king was obliged, in order to arm his followers, to borrow the weapons of the train bands, under promise of restoring them as soon as peace should be settled in the kingdom.

The veneration for parliaments was at this time extreme throughout the nation. [1] The custom of reviling those assemblies for corruption, as it had no pretence, so was it unknown during all former ages. Few or no instances of their encroaching ambition or selfish claims had hitherto been observed. Men considered the house of commons in no other light than as the representatives of the nation, whose interest was the same with that of the public, who were the eternal guardians of law and liberty, and whom no motive, but the necessary defence of the people, could ever engage in an opposition to the crown. The torrent, therefore, of general affection ran to the parliament. What is the great advantage of popularity, the privilege of affixing epithets fell of course to that party. The king's adherents were the wicked and the malignant: their adversaries were the godly and the well-affected. And as the force of the cities was more united than that of the country, and at once gave shelter and protection to the parliamentary party, who could easily suppress the royalists in their neighborhood, almost the whole kingdom, at the commencement of the war, seemed to be in the hands of the parliament. [2]

* Walker p 336.

* * Warwick, .

What alone gave the king some compensation for all the advantages possessed by his adversaries was, the nature and qualities of his adherents. More bravery and activity were hoped for from the generous spirit of the nobles and gentry, than from the base disposition of the multitude. And as the men of estates, at their own expense, levied and armed their tenants, besides an attachment to their masters, greater force and courage were to be expected in these rustic troops, than in the vicious and enervated populace of cities.

The neighboring states of Europe, being engaged in violent wars, little interested themselves in these civil commotions; and this island enjoyed the singular advantage (for such it surely was) of fighting out its own quarrels without the interposition of foreigners. France, from policy, had fomented the first disorders in Scotland, had sent over arms to the Irish rebels, and continued to give countenance to the English parliament; Spain, from bigotry, furnished the Irish with some supplies of money and arms. The prince of Orange, closely allied to the crown, encouraged English officers who served in the Low Countries to enlist in the king's army: the Scottish officers, who had been formed in Germany and in the late commotions, chiefly took part with the parliament.

The contempt entertained by the parliament for the king's party was so great, that it was the chief cause of pushing matters to such extremities against him; and many believed that he never would attempt resistance, but must soon yield to the pretensions, however enormous, of the two houses. Even after his standard was erected, men could not be brought to apprehend the danger of a civil war; nor was it imagined that he would have the imprudence to enrage his implacable enemies, and render his own condition more desperate, by opposing a force which was so much superior. The low condition in which he appeared at Nottingham confirmed all these hopes. His artillery, though far from numerous, had been left at York for want of horses to transport it. Besides the trained bands of the county, raised by Sir John Digby, the sheriff, he had not gotten together above three hundred infantry. His cavalry, in which consisted his chief strength, exceeded not eight hundred, and were very ill provided with arms. The forces of the parliament lay at Northampton, within a few days' march of him, and consisted of above six thousand men, well armed and well appointed. Had these troops advanced upon him, they must soon have dissipated the small force which he had assembled. By pursuing him in his retreat, they had so discredited his cause and discouraged his adherents, as to have forever prevented his collecting an army able to make head against them. But the earl of Essex, the parliamentary general, had not yet received any orders from his masters. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. , 2.

What rendered them so backward, after such precipitate steps as they had formerly taken, is not easily explained. It is probable, that in the extreme distress of his party consisted the present safety of the king. The parliament hoped that the royalists, sensible of their feeble condition, and convinced of their slender resources, would disperse of themselves, and leave their adversaries a victory so much the more complete and secure, as it would be gained without the appearance of force, and without bloodshed. Perhaps, too, when it became necessary to make the concluding step, and offer barefaced violence to their sovereign, their scruples and apprehensions, though not sufficient to overcome their resolutions, were able to retard the execution of them. [1]

Sir Jacob Astley, whom the king had appointed major-general of his intended army, told him, that he could not give him assurance but he might be taken out of his bed, if the rebels should make a brisk attempt to that purpose. All the king’s attendants were full of well-grounded apprehensions. Some of the lords having desired that a message might be sent to the parliament with overtures to a treaty, Charles, who well knew that an accommodation in his present condition meant nothing but a total submission, hastily broke up the council lest this proposal should be further insisted on. But next day the earl of Southampton, whom no one could suspect of base or timid sentiments, having offered the same advice in council it was hearkened to with more coolness and deliberation. He urged, that though such a step would probably increase the insolence of the parliament, this was so far from being an objection, that such dispositions must necessarily turn to the advantage of the royal cause: that if they refused to treat, which was more probable, the very sound of peace was so popular, that nothing could more disgust the nation than such haughty severity: that if they admitted of a treaty, their proposals, considering their present situation, would be so exorbitant, as to open the eyes of their most partial adherents, and turn the general favor to the king’s party: and that, at worst, time might be gained by this expedient, and a delay of the imminent danger with which the king was at present threatened. [2]

Charles, on assembling the council, had declared against all advances towards an accommodation; and had said that, having now nothing left him but his honor, this last possession he was resolved steadily to preserve, and rather to perish than yield any further to the pretensions of his enemies: [3] but, by the unanimous desire of the counsellors, he was prevailed on to embrace Southampton’s advice. That nobleman, therefore, with Sir John Colepeper and Sir William Uvedale, was despatched to London with offers of a treaty. [4]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * * * Rush. vol. v. .

The manner in which they were received gave little hopes of success. Southampton was not allowed by the peers to take his seat; but was ordered to deliver his message to the usher, and immediately to depart the city: the commons showed little better disposition towards Colepeper and Uvedale. [1] Both houses replied, that they could admit of no treaty with the king till he took down his standard, and recalled his proclamations, in which the parliament supposed themselves to be declared traitors. The king, by a second message, denied any such intention against the two houses; but offered to recall these proclamations, provided the parliament agreed to recall theirs, in which his adherents were declared traitors. They desired him, in return, to dismiss his forces, to reside with his parliament, and to give up delinquents to their justice; that is abandon himself and his friends to the mercy of his enemies. [2] Both parties flattered themselves that, by these messages and replies, they had gained the ends which they proposed. [3] The king believed that the people were made sufficiently sensible of the parliament’s insolence and aversion to peace: the parliament intended, by this vigor in their resolutions, to support the vigor of their military operations.

The courage of the parliament was increased, besides their great superiority of force, by two recent events which had happened in their favor. Goring was governor of Portsmouth, the best fortified town in the kingdom, and by its situation of great importance. This man seemed to have rendered himself an implacable enemy to the king, by betraying, probably magnifying, the secret cabals of the army; and the parliament thought that his fidelity to them might on that account be entirely depended on. But the same levity of mind still attended him, and the same disregard to engagements and professions. He took underhand his measures with the court, and declared against the parliament. But though he had been sufficiently supplied with money, and long before knew his danger, so small was his foresight, that he had left the place entirely destitute of provisions, and in a few days he was obliged to surrender to the parliamentary forces. [4]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * Rush. vol. v. . Dugdale, .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Rush, vol. v. . Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

The marquis of Hertford was a nobleman of the greatest quality and character in the kingdom, and, equally with the king, descended by a female from Henry VII. During the reign of James, he had attempted, without having obtained the consent of that monarch, to marry Arabella Stuart, a lady nearly related to the crown; and, upon discovery of his intentions, had been obliged for some time to fly the kingdom. Ever after, he was looked on with an evil eye at court, from which in a great measure he withdrew; and living in an independent manner, he addicted himself entirely to literary occupations and amusements. In proportion as the king declined in popularity, Hertford's character flourished with the people; and when this parliament assembled, no nobleman possessed more general favor and authority. By his sagacity he soon perceived that the commons, not content with correcting the abuses of government, were carried, by the natural current of power and popularity, into the opposite extreme, and were committing violations, no less dangerous than the former, upon the English constitution. Immediately he devoted himself to the support of the king's falling authority, and was prevailed with to be governor to the young prince and reside at court; to which, in the eyes of all men, he gave by his presence a new lustre and authority. So high was his character for mildness and humanity, that he still preserved, by means of these popular virtues, the public favor; and every one was sensible of the true motive of his change. Notwithstanding his habits of ease and study, he now exerted himself in raising an army for the king; and being named general of the western counties, where his interest chiefly lay, he began to assemble forces in Somersetshire. By the assistance of Lord Seymour, Lord Paulet, John

Digby, son of the earl of Bristol, Sir Francis Hawley, and others, he had drawn together some appearance of an army; when the parliament, apprehensive of the danger, sent the earl of Bedford with a considerable force against him. On his approach Hertford was obliged to retire into Sherborne Castle; and finding that place untenable, he himself passed over into Wales, leaving Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir John Berkeley, Digby and other officers, with their horse, consisting of about a hundred and twenty, to march into Cornwall, in hopes of finding that county better prepared for their reception. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. vi. , 3, etc.

All the dispersed bodies of the parliamentary army were now ordered to march to Northampton; and the earl of Essex who had joined them, found the whole amount to fifteen thousand men. [1] The king, though his camp had been gradually reënforced from all quarters, was sensible that he had no army which could cope with so formidable a force, and he thought it prudent, by slow marches, to retire to Derby, thence to Shrewsbury, in order to countenance the levies which his friends were making in those parts. At Wellington, a day's march from Shrewsbury, he made a rendezvous of all his forces, and caused his military orders to be read at the head of every regiment. That he might bind himself by reciprocal ties, he solemnly made the following declaration before his whole army.

"I do promise, in the presence of Almighty God, and as I hope for his blessing and protection, that I will, to the utmost of my power, defend and maintain the true reformed Protestant religion established in the church of England, and, by the grace of God, in the same will live and die.

"I desire that the laws may ever be the measure of my government, and that the liberty and property of the subject may be preserved by them with the same care as my own just rights. And if it please God, by his blessing on this army raised for my necessary defence, to preserve me from the present rebellion, I do solemnly and faithfully promise, in the sight of God, to maintain the just privileges and freedom of parliament, and to govern, to the utmost of my power, by the known statutes and customs of the kingdom; and particularly to observe inviolably the laws to which I have given my consent this parliament. Meanwhile, if this emergence, and the great necessity to which I am driven, beget any violation of law, I hope it shall be imputed by God and man to the authors of this war; not to me, who have so earnestly labored to preserve the peace of the kingdom.

"When I willingly fail in these particulars, I shall expect no aid or relief from man, nor any protection from above: but in this resolution I hope for the cheerful assistance of all good men, and am confident of the blessing of Heaven." [1]

* Whitlocke, ., Clarendon, vol. iii. , 17. Dugdale, .

Though the concurrence of the church undoubtedly increased the king's adherents, it may safely be affirmed, that the high monarchical doctrines, so much inculcated by the clergy, had never done him any real service. The bulk of that generous train of nobility and gentry who now attended the king in his distresses, breathed the spirit of liberty as well as of loyalty; and in the hopes alone of his submitting to a legal and limited government, were they willing in his defence to sacrifice their lives and fortunes.

While the king's army lay at Shrewsbury, and he was employing himself in collecting money, which he received, though in no great quantities, by voluntary contributions, and by the plate of the universities, which was sent him, the news arrived of an action, the first which had happened in these wars, and where he was successful.

On the appearance of commotions in England, the princes Rupert and Maurice, sons of the unfortunate palatine, had offered their service to the king; and the former at that time commanded a body of horse, which had been sent to Worcester in order to watch the motions of Essex, who was marching towards that city. No sooner had the prince arrived, than he saw some cavalry of the enemy approaching the gates. Without delay, he briskly attacked them, as they were defiling from a lane, and forming themselves. Colonel Sandys, who led them, and who fought with valor, being mortally wounded, fell from his horse. The whole party was routed, and was pursued above a mile. The prince, hearing of Essex's approach, retired to the main body. [1] This rencounter, though in itself of small importance, mightily raised the reputation of the royalists, and acquired to Prince Rupert the character of promptitude and courage; qualities which he eminently displayed during the whole course of the war.

The king, on mustering his army, found it amount to ten thousand men. The earl of Lindesey, who in his youth had sought experience of military service in the Low Countries, [2] was general; Prince Rupert commanded the horse; Sir Jacob Astley, the foot; Sir Arthur Aston, the dragoons; Sir John Heydon, the artillery. Lord Bernard Stuart was at the head of a troop of guards. The estates and revenue of this single troop, according to Lord Clarendon's computation, were at least equal-to those of all the members who at the commencement of war voted in both houses. Their servants, under the command of Sir William Killigrew, made another troop, and always marched with their masters. [3]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. . May. book iii. .

* * He was then Lord Willoughby.

* * * Clarendon, vol. iii. . Warwick, .

With this army the king left Shrewsbury, resolving to give battle as soon as possible to the army of the parliament, which he heard was continually augmenting by supplies from London. In order to bring on an action, he directed his march towards the capital, which he knew the enemy would not abandon to him. Essex had now received his instructions. The import of them was, to present a most humble petition to the king, and to rescue him and the royal family from those desperate malignants who had seized their persons. [1] Two days after the departure of the royalists from Shrewsbury, he left Worcester. Though it be commonly easy in civil wars to get intelligence, the armies were within six miles of each other ere either of the generals was acquainted with the approach of his enemy. Shrewsbury and Worcester, the places from which they set out, are not above twenty miles distant; yet had the two armies marched ten days in this mutual ignorance: so much had military skill, during a long peace, decayed in England. [2]

* Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii, , 28, etc.

* * Clarendon, vol. iii. .

The royal army lay near Banbury; that of the parliament, at Keinton, in the county of Warwick. Prince Rupert sent intelligence of the enemy's approach. Though the day was far advanced, the king resolved upon the attack: Essex drew up his men to receive him. Sir Faithful Fortescue, who had levied a troop for the Irish wars, had been obliged to serve in the parliamentary army, and was now posted on the left wing, commanded by Ramsay, a Scotchman. No sooner did the king's army approach, than Fortescue, ordering his troop to discharge their pistols in the ground, put himself under the command of Prince Rupert. Partly from this incident, partly from the furious shock made upon them by the prince, that whole wing of cavalry immediately fled, and were pursued for two miles. The right wing of the parliament's army had no better success. Chased from their ground by Wilmot and Sir Arthur Aston, they also took to flight. The king's body of reserve, commanded by Sir John Biron, judging, like raw soldiers, that all was over, and impatient to have some share in the action, heedlessly followed the chase which their left wing had precipitately led them. Sir William Balfour, who commanded Essex's reserve, perceived the advantage: he wheeled about upon the king's infantry, now quite unfurnished of horse; and he made great havoc among them. Lindesey, the general, was mortally wounded, and taken prisoner. His son, endeavoring his rescue, fell likewise into the enemy's hands. Sir Edmund Verney, who carried the king's standard, was killed, and the standard taken; but it was afterwards recovered. In this situation, Prince Rupert, on his return, found affairs. Every thing bore the appearance of a defeat, instead of a victory, with which he had hastily flattered himself. Some advised the king to leave the field; but that prince rejected such pusillanimous counsel. The two armies faced each other for some time, and neither of them retained courage sufficient for a new attack. All night they lay under arms; and next morning found themselves in sight of each other. General, as well as soldier, on both sides, seemed averse to renew the battle. Essex first drew off, and retired to Warwick. The king returned to his former quarters. Five thousand men are said to have been found dead on the field of battle, and the loss of the two armies, as far as we can judge by the opposite accounts, was nearly equal. Such was the event of this first battle fought at Keinton, or Edge Hill. [1]

Some of Essex's horse, who had been driven off the field in the beginning of the action, flying to a great distance, carried news of a total defeat, and struck a mighty terror into the city and parliament. After a few days, a more just account arrived; and then the parliament pretended to a complete victory. [2] The king also, on his part, was not wanting to display his advantages; though, except the taking of Banbury a few days after, he had few marks of victory to boast of. He continued his march, and took possession of Oxford, the only town in his dominions which was altogether at his devotion.

* Clarendon, vol. iii. , etc. May, book iii. , etc.

* * Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

After the royal army was recruited and refreshed, as the weather still continued favorable, it was again put in motion, A party of horse approached to Reading, of which Martin was appointed governor by the parliament. Both governor and garrison were seized with a panic, and fled with precipitation to London. The king, hoping that every thing would yield before him, advanced with his whole army to Reading. The parliament, who, instead of their fond expectations that Charles would never be able to collect an army, had now the prospect of a civil war, bloody, and of uncertain event; were further alarmed at the near approach of the royal army, while their own forces lay at a distance. They voted an address for a treaty. The king's nearer approach to Colebroke quickened their advances for peace. Northumberland and Pembroke, with three commoners, presented the address of both houses; in which they besought his majesty to appoint some convenient place where he might reside, till committees could attend him with proposals. The king named Windsor, and desired that their garrison might be removed, and his own troops admitted into that castle. [1]

Meanwhile Essex, advancing by hasty marches, had arrived at London. But neither the presence of his army, nor the precarious hopes of a treaty, retarded the king's approaches. Charles attacked at Brentford two regiments quartered there, and after a sharp action beat them from that village, and took, about five hundred prisoners. The parliament had sent orders to forbear all hostilities, and had expected the same from the king; though no stipulations to that purpose had been mentioned by their commissioners. Loud complaints were raised against this attack, as if it had been the most apparent perfidy and breach of treaty. [2] Inflamed with resentment, as well as anxious for its own safety, the city marched its trained bands in excellent order, and joined the army under Essex. The parliamentary army now amounted to above twenty-four thousand men, and was much superior to that of the king. [3] After both armies had faced each other for some time, Charles drew off and retired to Reading, thence to Oxford.

While the principal armies on both sides were kept in inaction by the winter season, the king and parliament were employed in real preparations for war, and in seeming advances towards peace. By means of contributions or assessments levied by the horse, Charles maintained his cavalry; by loans and voluntary presents sent him from all parts of the kingdom, he supported his infantry: but the supplies were still very unequal to the necessities under which he labored. [4]

* Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. iii .

The parliament had much greater resources for money; and had by consequence every military preparation in much greater order and abundance. Besides an imposition levied in London, amounting to the five-and-twentieth part of every one’s substance, they established on that city a weekly assessment of ten thousand pounds, and another of twenty-three thousand five hundred and eighteen on the rest of the kingdom. [1] And as their authority was at present established in most counties, they levied these taxes with regularity; though they amounted to sums much greater than the nation had formerly paid to the public.

1643.

The king and parliament sent reciprocally their demands; and a treaty commenced, but without any cessation of hostilities, as had at first been proposed. The earl of Northumberland and four members of the lower house came to Oxford, as commissioners. [2] In this treaty, the king perpetually insisted on the reëstablishment of the crown in its legal powers, and on the restoration of his constitutional prerogative: [3] the parliament still required new concessions, and a further abridgment of regal authority, as a more effectual remedy to their fears and jealousies. Finding the king supported by more forces and a greater party than they had ever looked for, they seemingly abated somewhat of those extravagant conditions which they had formerly claimed; but their demands were still too high for an equal treaty. Besides other articles, to which a complete victory alone could entitle them, they required the king, in express terms, utterly to abolish Episcopacy; a demand which before they had only insinuated; and they required, that all other ecclesiastical controversies should be determined by their assembly of divines; that is, in the manner the most repugnant to the inclinations of the king and all his partisans. They insisted, that he should submit to the punishment of his most faithful adherents. And they desired him to acquiesce in their settlement of the militia, and to confer on their adherents the entire power of the sword. In answer to the king's proposal, that his magazines, towns, forts, and ships should be restored to him, the parliament required that they should be put into such hands as they could confide in: [4] the nineteen propositions which they formerly sent to the king, showed their inclination to abolish monarchy: they only asked at present the power of doing it.

* Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * Whitlocke, *.

* * * Rush, vol. vi. .

* * * * Rush, vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

And having now in the eye of the law been guilty of treason, by levying war against their sovereign, it is evident that their fears and jealousies must on that account have multiplied extremely, and have rendered their personal safety, which they interwove with the safety of the nation, still more incompatible with the authority of the monarch. Though the gentleness and lenity of the king's temper might have insured them against schemes of future vengeance, they preferred, as is no doubt natural, an independent security, accompanied too with sovereign power, to the station of subjects, and that not entirely guarded from all apprehensions of danger. [1]

The conferences went no further than the first demand on each side. The parliament, finding that there was no likelihood of coming to any agreement, suddenly recalled their commissioners.

A military enterprise, which they had concerted early in the spring, was immediately undertaken. Reading, the garrison of the king's which lay nearest to London, was esteemed a place of considerable strength in that age, when the art of attacking towns was not well understood in Europe, and was totally unknown in England. The earl of Essex sat down before this place with an army of eighteen thousand men, and carried on the siege by regular approaches. Sir Arthur Aston, the governor, being wounded, Colonel Fielding succeeded to the command. In a little time, the town was found to be no longer in a condition of defence; and though the king approached with an intention of obliging Essex to raise the siege, the disposition of the parliamentary army was so strong as rendered the design impracticable. Fielding, therefore, was contented to yield the town, on condition that he should bring off all the garrison with the honors of war, and deliver up deserters. This last article was thought so ignominious and so prejudicial to the king's interests, that the governor was tried by a council of war, and condemned to lose his life for consenting to it. His sentence was afterwards remitted by the king. [2]

* See note L, at the end of the volume.

* * Rush. vol. vi. , etc. Clarendon, vol. iii. , 238, etc.

Essex's army had been fully supplied with all necessaries from London; even many superfluities and luxuries were sent them by the care of the zealous citizens; yet the hardships which they suffered from the siege during so early a season had weakened them to such a degree, that they were no longer fit for any new enterprise. And the two armies for some time encamped in the neighborhood of each other, without attempting on either side any action of moment.

Besides the military operations between the principal armies which lay in the centre of England, each county, each town, each family almost, was divided within itself; and the most violent convulsions shook the whole kingdom. Throughout the winter, continual efforts had every where been made by each party to surmount its antagonist; and the English, roused from the lethargy of peace, with eager though unskilful hands employed against their fellow-citizens their long-neglected weapons. The furious zeal for liberty and Presbyterian discipline, which had hitherto run uncontrolled throughout the nation, now at last excited an equal ardor for monarchy and Episcopacy, when the intention of abolishing these ancient modes of government was openly avowed by the parliament. Conventions for neutrality, though in several counties they had been entered into and confirmed by the most solemn oaths, yet being voted illegal by the two houses, were immediately broken; [1] and the fire of discord was spread into every quarter. The altercation of discourse, the controversies of the pen, but above all the declamations of the pulpit, indisposed the minds of men towards each other, and propagated the blind rage of party. [2] Fierce, however, and inflamed as were the dispositions of the English, by a war both civil and religious, that great destroyer of humanity, all the events of this period are less distinguished by atrocious deeds either of treachery or cruelty, than were ever any intestine discords which had so long a continuance; a circumstance which will be found to reflect great praise on the national character of that people now so unhappily roused to arms.

* Clarendon, vol. iii. , 139.

* * Dugdale, .

In the north, Lord Fairfax commanded for the parliament, the earl of Newcastle for the king. The latter nobleman began those associations which were afterwards so much practised in other parts of the kingdom. He united in a league for the king the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmoreland, and the bishopric, and engaged some time after other counties in the same association. Finding that Fairfax, assisted by Hotham and the garrison of Hull, was making progress in the southern parts of Yorkshire, he advanced with a body of four thousand men, and took possession of York. At Tadcaster, he attacked the forces of the parliament, and dislodged them: but his victory was not decisive. In other rencounters, he obtained some inconsiderable advantages. But the chief benefit which resulted from his enterprises was, the establishing of the king’s authority in all the northern provinces.

In another part of the kingdom, Lord Broke was killed by a shot while he was taking possession of Lichfield for the parliament. [1] After a sharp combat near Stafford, between the earl of Northampton and Sir John Gell, the former, who commanded the king's forces, was killed while he fought with great valor; and his forces, discouraged by his death, though they had obtained the advantage in the action, retreated into the town of Stafford. [2]

Sir William Waller began to distinguish himself among the generals of the parliament. Active and indefatigable in his operations, rapid and enterprising, he was fitted by his genius to the nature of the war; which, being managed by raw troops, conducted by unexperienced commanders, afforded success to every bold and sudden undertaking. After taking Winchester and Chichester, he advanced towards Gloucester, which was in a manner blockaded by Lord Herbert, who had levied considerable forces in Wales for the royal party. [3] While he attacked the Welsh on one side, a sally from Gloucester made impression on the other. Herbert was defeated; five hundred of his men killed on the spot; a thousand taken prisoners; and he himself escaped with some difficulty to Oxford. Hereford, esteemed a strong town, defended by a considerable garrison, was surrendered to Waller, from the cowardice of Colonel Price, the governor. Tewkesbury underwent the same fate. Worcester refused him admittance; and Waller, without placing any garrisons in his new conquests, retired to Gloucester, and he thence joined the army under the earl of Essex. [4]

* He had taken possession of Lichfield, and was viewing from a window St. Chad's cathedral, in which a party of the royalists had fortified themselves. He was cased in complete armor, but was shot through the eye by a random ball. Lord Broke was a zealous Puritan; and had formerly said, that he hoped to see with his eyes the ruin of all the cathedrals of England. It was a superstitious remark of the royalists,

that he was killed on St. Chad's day by a shot from St.

Chad's cathedral, which pierced that very eye by which he hoped to see the ruin of all cathedrals. Dugdale, .

Clarendon, etc.

* Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* Rush. vol. vi. D. 92, 100.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

GLOUCESTER.

But the most memorable actions of valor during this winter season were performed in the west. When Sir Ralph Hopton with his small troop, retired into Cornwall before the earl of Bedford, that nobleman, despising so inconsiderable a force, abandoned the pursuit, and committed the care of suppressing the royal party to the sheriffs of the county. But the affections of Cornwall were much inclined to the king's service. While Sir Richard Duller and Sir Alexander Carew lay at Launceston, and employed themselves in executing the parliament's ordinance for the militia, a meeting of the county was assembled at Truro; and after Hopton produced his commission from the earl of Hertford, the king's general, it was agreed to execute the laws, and to expel these invaders of the county. The train bands were accordingly levied, Launceston taken, and all Cornwall reduced to peace and to obedience under the king.

It had been usual for the royal party, on the commencement of these disorders, to claim on all occasions the strict execution of the laws, which, they knew, were favorable to them; and the parliament, rather than have recourse to the plea of necessity, and avow the transgression of any statute, had also been accustomed to warp the laws, and by forced constructions to interpret them in their own favor. [1]

* Clarerdon, vol. iii. .

But though the king was naturally the gainer by such a method of conducting war, and it was by favor of law that the train, bands were raised in Cornwall, it appeared that those maxims were now prejudicial to the royal party. These troops could not legally, without their own consent, be carried out of the county; and consequently it was impossible to push into Devonshire the advantage which they had obtained. The Cornish royalists, therefore, bethought themselves of levying a force which might be more serviceable. Sir Bevil Granville, the most beloved man of that country, Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir Nicholas Slanning, Arundel, and Trevannion undertook as their own charges to raise an army for the king; and their great interest in Cornwall soon enabled them to effect their purpose. The parliament, alarmed at this appearance of the royalists, gave a commission to Ruthven, a Scotchman, governor of Plymouth, to march with all the forces to Dorset. Somerset, and Devon, and make an entire conquest of Cornwall. The earl of Stamford followed him at some distance With a considerable supply. Ruthven, having entered Cornwall by bridges thrown over the Tamar, hastened to an action, lest Stamwood should join him, and obtain the honor of that victory which he looked for with assurance. The royalists in like manner were impatient to bring the affair to a decision before Ruthven's army should receive so considerable a reënforcement. The battle was fought on Bradoc Down; and the king's forces, though inferior in number, gave a total defeat to their enemies. Ruthven, with a few broken troops, fled to Saltash; and when that town was taken, he escaped with some difficulty, and almost alone, into Plymouth. Stamford retired, and distributed his forces into Plymouth and Exeter.

Notwithstanding these advantages, the extreme want both of money and ammunition under which the Cornish royalists labored, obliged them to enter into a convention of neutrality with the parliamentary party in Devonshire; and this neutrality held all the winter season. In the spring, it was broken by the authority of the two houses; but war recommenced with great appearance of disadvantage to the king's party. Stamford, having assembled a strong body of near seven thousand men, well supplied with money, provisions, and ammunition, advanced upon the royalists, who were not half his number, and were oppressed by every kind of necessity. Despair, joined to the natural gallantry of these troops, commanded by the prime gentry of the county, made them resolve by one vigorous effort, to overcome all these disadvantages. Stamford being encamped on the top of a high hill near Stratum, they attacked him in four divisions, at five in the morning, having lain all night under arms. One division was commanded by Lord Mohun and Sir Ralph Hopton, another by Sir Bevil Granville and Sir John Berkeley, a third by Slanning and Trevannion, a fourth by Basset and Godolphin. In this manner the action began; the king's forces pressing with vigor those four ways up the hill, and their enemies obstinately defending themselves. The fight continued with doubtful success, till word was brought to the chief officers of the Cornish, that their ammunition was spent to less than four barrels of powder. This defect, which they concealed from the soldiers, they resolved to supply by their valor. They agreed to advance without firing till they should reach the top of the hill, and could be on equal ground with the enemy. The courage of the officers was so well seconded by the soldiers, that the royalists began on all sides to gain ground. Major-General Chidley, who commanded the parliamentary army, (for Stamford kept at a distance,) failed not in his duty; and when he saw his men recoil, he himself advanced with a good stand of pikes, and piercing into the thickest of the enemy, was at last overpowered by numbers, and taken prisoner. His army, upon this disaster, gave ground apace; insomuch that the four parties of the royalists, growing nearer and nearer as they ascended, at length met together upon the plain at the top; where they embraced with great joy, and signalized their victory with loud shouts and mutual congratulations. [1]

After this success, the attention both of king and parliament was turned towards the west, as to a very important scene of action. The king sent thither the marquis of Hertford and Prince Maurice, with a reënforcement of cavalry; who, having joined the Cornish army, soon overran the county of Devon; and advancing into that of Somerset, began to reduce it to obedience. On the other hand, the parliament, having supplied Sir William Waller, in whom they much trusted, with a complete army, despatched him westwards, in order to check the progress of the royalists. After some skirmishes, the two armies met at Lansdown, near Bath, and fought a pitched battle, with great loss on both sides, but without any decisive event. [2] The gallant Granville was there killed; and Hopton, by the blowing up of some powder, was dangerously hurt.

* Rush, vol. vi. , 273. Clarendon, vol. iii. , 279.

* * Rush, vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

The royalists next attempted to march eastwards, and to join their forces to the king's at Oxford: but Waller hung on their rear, and infested their march till they reached the Devizes. Reënforced by additional troops, which flocked to him from all quarters, he so much surpassed the royalists in number, that they durst no longer continue their march, or expose themselves to the hazard of an action. It was resolved that Hertford and Prince Maurice should proceed with the cavalry; and, having procured a reënforcement from the king, should hasten back to the relief of their friends. Waller was so confident of taking this body of infantry, now abandoned by the horse, that he wrote to the parliament that their work was done, and that by the next post he would inform them of the number and quality of the prisoners. But the king, even before Hertford's arrival, hearing of the great difficulties to which his western army was reduced, had prepared a considerable body of cavalry, which he immediately despatched to their succor under the command of Lord Wilmot. Waller drew up on Roundway Down, about two miles from the Devizes, and advancing with his cavalry to fight Wilmot, and prevent his conjunction with the Cornish infantry, was received with equal valor by the royalists. After a sharp action, he was totally routed, and flying with a few horse, escaped to Bristol. Wilmot, seizing the enemy's cannon, and having joined his friends whom he came to relieve, attacked Waller's infantry with redoubled courage, drove them off the field, and routed and dispersed the whole army.[1]

* Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendoo. vol. iii. l.

This important victory, following so quick after many other successes, struck great dismay into the parliament, and gave an alarm to their principal army, commanded by Essex. Waller exclaimed loudly against that general, for allowing Wilmot to pass him, and proceed without any interruption to the succor of the distressed infantry at the Devizes. But Essex, finding that his army fell continually to decay after the siege of Reading, was resolved to remain upon the defensive; and the weakness of the king, and his want of all military stores, had also restrained the activity of the royal army. No action had happened in that part of England, except one skirmish, which of itself was of no great consequence, and was rendered memorable by the death alone of the famous Hambden.

Colonel Urrey, a Scotchman, who served in the parliamentary army, having received some disgust, came to Oxford and offered his services to the king. In order to prove the sincerity of his conversion, he informed Prince Rupert of the loose disposition of the enemy's quarters, and exhorted him to form some attempt upon them. The prince, who was entirely fitted for that kind of service, falling suddenly upon the dispersed bodies of Essex's army, routed two regiments of cavalry and one of infantry, and carried his ravages within two miles of the general's quarters. The alarm being given, every one mounted on horseback, in order to pursue the prince, to recover the prisoners, and to repair the disgrace which the army had sustained. Among the rest Hambden, who had a regiment of infantry that lay at a distance, joined the horse as a volunteer; and overtaking the royalists on Chalgrave field, entered into the thickest of the battle. By the bravery and activity of Rupert, the king's troops were brought off, and a great booty, together with two hundred prisoners, was conveyed to Oxford. But what most pleased the royalists was the expectation that some disaster had happened to Hambden their capital and much dreaded enemy. One of the prisoners taken in the action, said, that he was confident Mr. Hambden was hurt: for he saw him, contrary to his usual custom, ride off the field before the action was finished; his head hanging down, and his hands leaning upon his horse's neck. Next day the news arrived, that he was shot in the shoulder with a brace of bullets, and the bone broken. Some days after, he died, in exquisite pain, of his wound; nor could his whole party, had their army met with a total overthrow, have been thrown into greater consternation. The king himself so highly valued him, that, either from generosity or policy, he intended to have sent him his own surgeon to assist at his cure. [1]

* See note M, at the end of the volume.

Many were the virtues and talents of this eminent personage; and his valor during the war had shone out with a lustre equal to that of the other accomplishments by which he had ever been distinguished. Affability in conversation; temper, art, and eloquence in debate; penetration and discernment in counsel; industry, vigilance, and enterprise in action; all these praises are unanimously ascribed to him by historians of the most opposite parties. His virtue, too, and integrity in all the duties of private life, are allowed to have been beyond exception: we must only be cautious, notwithstanding his generous zeal for liberty, not hastily to ascribe to him the praises of a good citizen. Through all the horrors of civil war, he sought the abolition of monarchy, and subversion of the constitution; an end which, had it been attainable by peaceful measures, ought carefully to have been avoided by every lover of his country. But whether, in the pursuit of this violent enterprise, he was actuated by private ambition or by honest prejudices, derived from the former exorbitant powers of royalty, it belongs not to an historian of this age, scarcely even to an intimate friend, positively to determine.

Essex, discouraged by this event, dismayed by the total rout of Waller, was further informed, that the queen, who landed at Burlington Bay, had arrived at Oxford, and had brought from the north a reënforcement of three thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. Dislodging from Thame and Aylesbury, where he had hitherto lain, he thought proper to retreat nearer to London; and he showed to his friends his broken and disheartened forces, which a few months before he had led into the field in so flourishing a condition. The king, freed from this enemy, sent his army westward under Prince Rupert; and, by their conjunction with the Cornish troops, a formidable force, for numbers as well as reputation and valor, was composed. That an enterprise correspondent to men's expectations might be undertaken, the prince resolved to lay siege to Bristol, the second town for riches and greatness in the kingdom. Nathaniel Fiennes, son of Lord Say he himself, as well as his father, a great parliamentary leader was governor, and commanded a garrison of two thousand five hundred foot, and two regiments, one of horse, another of dragoons. The fortifications not being complete or regular, it was resolved by Prince Rupert to storm the city, and next morning, with little other provisions suitable to such a work besides the courage of the troops, the assault began. The Cornish in three divisions attacked the west side, with a resolution which nothing could control; but though the middle division had already mounted the wall, so great was the disadvantage of the ground, and so brave the defence of the garrison, that in the end the assailants were repulsed with a considerable loss both of officers and soldiers. On the prince's side, the assault was conducted with equal courage, and almost with equal loss, but with better success. One party, led by Lord Grandison, was indeed beaten off, and the commander himself mortally wounded: another, conducted by Colonel Bellasis, met with a like fate: but Washington, with a less party, finding a place in the curtain weaker than the rest, broke in, and quickly made room for the horse to follow. By this irruption, however, nothing but the suburbs was yet gained: the entrance into the town was still more difficult: and by the loss already sustained, as well as by the prospect of further danger, every one was extremely discouraged; when, to the great joy of the army, the city beat a parley. The garrison was allowed to march out with their arms and baggage, leaving their cannon, ammunition, and colors. For this instance of cowardice, Fiennes was afterwards tried by a court martial, and condemned to lose his head; but the sentence was remitted by the general. [1]

* Rush. vol. vi . Clarendon, vol. iii. p 293, 294, etc.

Great complaints were made of violences exercised on the garrison, contrary to the capitulation. An apology was made by the royalists, as if these were a retaliation for some violences committed on their friends at the surrender of Reading. And under pretence of like retaliations, but really from the extreme animosity of the parties, were such irregularities continued during the whole course of the war. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. iii.

The loss sustained by the royalists in the assault of Bristol was considerable. Five hundred excellent soldiers perished. Among those of condition were Grandison, Slanning, Trevannion, and Moyle; Bellasis, Ashley, and Sir John Owen were wounded; yet was the success upon the whole so considerable, as mightily raised the courage of the one party and depressed that of the other. The king, to show that he was not intoxicated with good fortune, nor aspired to a total victory over the parliament, published a manifesto, in which he renewed the protestation formerly taken, with great solemnity, at the head of his army, and expressed his firm intention of making peace upon the reestablishment of the constitution. Having joined the camp at Bristol, and sent Prince Maurice with a detachment into Devonshire, he deliberated how to employ the remaining forces in an enterprise of moment. Some proposed, and seemingly with reason, to march directly to London, where every thing was in confusion, where the army of the parliament was baffled, weakened, and dismayed, and where, it was hoped, either by an insurrection of the citizens, by victory, or by treaty, a speedy end might be put to the civil disorders. But this undertaking, by reason of the great number and force of the London militia, was thought by many to be attended with considerable difficulties. Gloucester, lying within twenty miles, presented an easier, yet a very important conquest. It was the only remaining garrison possessed by the parliament in those parts. Could that city be reduced, the king held the whole course of the Severn under his command; the rich and malecontent counties of the west, having lost all protection from their friends, might be forced to pay high contributions as an atonement for their disaffection; an open communication could be preserved between Wales and these new conquests; and half of the kingdom being entirely freed from the enemy, and thus united into one firm body, might be employed in reestablishing the king's authority throughout the remainder. These were the reasons for embracing that resolution, fatal, as it was ever esteemed to the royal party.[1]

The governor of Gloucester was one Massey, a soldier of fortune, who, before he engaged with the parliament, had offered his service to the king; and as he was free from the fumes of enthusiasm, by which most of the officers on that side were intoxicated, he would lend an ear, it was presumed, to proposals for accommodation. But Massey was resolute to preserve an entire fidelity to his masters; and though no enthusiast himself, he well knew how to employ to advantage that enthusiastic spirit so prevalent in his city and garrison. The summons to surrender allowed two hours for an answer; but before that time expired, there appeared before the king two citizens, with lean, pale, sharp, and dismal visages; faces so strange and uncouth, according to Clarendon, figures so habited and accoutred, as at once moved the most severe countenance to mirth, and the most cheerful heart to sadness; it seemed impossible that such messengers could bring less than a defiance. The men, without any circumstance of duty or good manners, in a pert, shrill, undismayed accent, said that they brought an answer from the godly city of Gloucester; and extremely ready were they, according to the historian, to give insolent and seditious replies to any question; as if their business were chiefly, by provoking the king, to make him violate his own safe-conduct. The answer from the city was in these words: "We, the inhabitants, magistrates, officers, and soldiers within the garrison of Gloucester, unto his majesty's gracious message, return this humble answer: that we do keep this city, according to our oaths and allegiance, to and for the use of his majesty and his royal posterity; and do accordingly conceive ourselves wholly bound to obey the commands of his majesty, signified by both houses of parliament, and are resolved, by God's help, to keep this city accordingly." [2] After these preliminaries, the siege was resolutely undertaken by the army, and as resolutely sustained by the citizens and garrison.

* Whitlocke, . May, book iii. .

* Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. . May, book iii. .

When intelligence of the siege of Gloucester arrived in London, the consternation among the inhabitants was as great as if the enemy were already at their gates. The rapid progress of the royalists threatened the parliament with immediate subjection: the factions and discontents among themselves in the city, and throughout the neighboring counties, prognosticated some dangerous division or insurrection. Those parliamentary leaders, it must be owned, who had introduced such mighty innovations into the English constitution, and who had projected so much greater, had not engaged in an enterprise which exceeded their courage and capacity. Great vigor, from the beginning, as well as wisdom, they had displayed in all their counsels; and a furious, headstrong body, broken loose from the restraint of law, had hitherto been retained in subjection under their authority, and firmly united by zeal and passion, as by the most legal and established government. A small committee, on whom the two houses devolved their power, had directed all their military operations, and had preserved a secrecy in deliberation, and a promptitude in execution, beyond what the king, notwithstanding the advantages possessed by a single leader, had ever been able to attain. Sensible that no jealousy was by their partisans entertained against them, they had on all occasions exerted an authority much more despotic than the royalists, even during the pressing exigencies of war, could with patience endure in their sovereign. Whoever incurred their displeasure, or was exposed to their suspicions, was committed to prison, and prosecuted under the notion of delinquency: after all the old jails were full, many new ones were erected; and even the ships were crowded with the royalists, both gentry and clergy, who anguished below decks, and perished in those unhealthy confinements: they imposed taxes, the heaviest and of the most unusual nature, by an ordinance of the two houses; they voted a commission for sequestrations; and they seized, wherever they had power, the revenues of all the king's party; [1] and knowing that themselves, and all their adherents, were, by resisting the prince, exposed to the penalties of law, they resolved, by a severe administration, to overcome those terrors, and to retain the people in obedience by penalties of a more immediate execution. In the beginning of this summer, a combination, formed against them in London, had obliged them to exert the plenitude of their authority.

* The king afterwards copied from this example; but, as the far greater part of the nobility and landed gentry were his friends, he reaped much less profit from this measure.

Edward Waller, the first refiner of English versification, was a member of the lower house; a man of considerable fortune, and not more distinguished by his poetical genius than by his parliamentary talents, and by the politeness and elegance of his manners. As full of keen satire and invective in his eloquence, as of tenderness and panegyric in his poetry, he caught the attention of his hearers, and exerted the utmost boldness in blaming those violent counsels by which the commons were governed. Finding all opposition within doors to be fruitless, he endeavored to form a party without, which might oblige the parliament to accept of reasonable conditions, and restore peace to the nation. The charms of his conversation, joined to his character of courage and integrity, had procured him the entire confidence of Northumberland, Conway, and every eminent person of either sex who resided in London. They opened their breasts to him without reserve, and expressed their disapprobation of the furious measures pursued by the commons, and their wishes that some expedient could be found for stopping so impetuous a career. Tomkins, Waller's brother-in-law, and Chaloner, the intimate friend of Tomkins, had entertained like sentiments: and as the connections of these two gentlemen lay chiefly in the city, they informed Waller that the same abhorrence of war prevailed there among all men of reason and moderation. Upon reflection, it seemed not impracticable that a combination might be formed between the lords and citizens; and, by mutual concert, the illegal taxes be refused, which the parliament, without the royal assent, imposed on the people. While this affair was in agitation, and lists were making of such as they conceived to be well affected to their design, a servant of Tomkins, who had overheard their discourse, immediately carried intelligence to Pym. Waller, Tomkins, and Chaloner were seized, and tried by a court martial. [1]

* Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. , 250, etc.

They were all three condemned, and the two latter executed on gibbets erected before their own doors. A covenant, as a test, was taken by the lords and commons, and imposed on their army, and on all who lived within their quarters. Besides resolving to amend and reform their lives, the covenanters their vow, that they will never lay down their arms so long as the Papists, now in open war against the parliament, shall by force of arms be protected from justice; they express their abhorrence of the late conspiracy; and they promise to assist to the utmost the forces raised by both houses, against the forces levied by the king. [1]

Waller, as soon as imprisoned, sensible of the great danger into which he had fallen, was so seized with the dread of death, that all his former spirit deserted him; and he confessed whatever he knew, without sparing his most intimate friends, without regard to the confidence reposed in him, without distinguishing between the negligence of familiar conversation and the schemes of a regular conspiracy. With the most profound dissimulation, he counterfeited such remorse of conscience, that his execution was put off, out of mere Christian compassion, till he might recover the use of his understanding. He invited visits from the ruling clergy of all sects; and while he expressed his own penitence, he received their devout exhortations with humility and reverence, as conveying clearer conviction and information than in his life he had ever before attained. Presents too, of which, as well as of flattery, these holy men were not insensible, were distributed among them, as a small retribution for their prayers and ghostly counsel. And by all these artifices, more than from any regard to the beauty of his genius, of which, during that time of furious cant and faction, small account would be made, he prevailed so far as to have his life spared, and a fine of ten thousand pounds accepted in lieu of it. [2]

The severity exercised against the conspiracy, or rather project of Waller, increased the authority of the parliament, and seemed to insure them against like attempts for the future. But by the progress of the king’s arms, the defeat of Sir William Waller, the taking of Bristol, the siege of Gloucester, a cry for peace was renewed, and with more violence than ever. Crowds of women, with a petition for that purpose, flocked about the house, and were so clamorous and, importunate, that orders were given for dispersing them; and some of the females were killed in the fray. [3] Bedford, Holland, and Conway had deserted the parliament, and had gone to Oxford; Clare and Lovelace had followed them. [4] Northumberland had retired to his country seat: Essex himself showed extreme dissatisfaction, and exhorted the parliament to make peace.

* Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. ii. .

* * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii , 254, etc.

* * * Rush. vol. vi. .

* * * * Whitlocke, .

v Rush. vol. vi. .

The upper house sent down terms of accommodation, more moderate than had hitherto been insisted on. It even passed by a majority among the commons, that these proposals should be transmitted to the King. The zealots took the alarm. A petition against peace was framed in the city, and presented by Pennington, the factious mayor. Multitudes attended him, and renewed all the former menaces against the moderate party. [1] The pulpits thundered; and rumors were spread of twenty thousand Irish who had landed, and were to cut the throat of every Protestant. [2] The majority was again turned to the other side, and all thoughts of pacification being dropped, every preparation was made for resistance, and for the immediate relief of Gloucester, on which the parliament was sensible all their hopes of success in the war did so much depend.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Clarendon, vol. iii. . Rush, vol. vi. .

Massey, resolute to make a vigorous defence, and having under his command a city and garrison ambitious of the crown of martyrdom, had hitherto maintained the siege with courage and abilities, and had much retarded the advances of the king's army. By continual sallies he infested them in their trenches, and gained sudden advantages over them: by disputing every inch of ground, he repressed the vigor and alacrity of their courage, elated by former successes. His garrison, however, was reduced to the last extremity; and he failed not from time to time to inform the parliament that, unless speedily relieved, he should be necessitated, from the extreme want of provisions and ammunition, to open his gates to the enemy.

The parliament, in order to repair their broken condition, and put themselves in a posture of defence, now exerted to the utmost their power and authority. They voted that an army should be levied under Sir William Waller, whom, notwithstanding his misfortunes, they loaded with extraordinary caresses. Having associated in their cause the counties of Hertford, Essex, Cambridge, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincoln, and Huntingdon, they gave the earl of Manchester a commission to be general of the association, and appointed an army to be levied under his command. But, above all, they were intent that Essex's army, on which their whole fortune depended, should be put in a condition of marching against the king. They excited afresh their preachers to furious declamations against the royal cause. They even employed the expedient of pressing, though abolished by a late law, for which they had strenuously contended. [1] And they engaged the city to send four regiments of its militia to the relief of Gloucester. All shops, meanwhile, were ordered to be shut; and every man expected, with the utmost anxiety, the event of that important enterprise. [2]

Essex, carrying with him a well-appointed army of fourteen thousand men, took the road of Bedford and Leicester: and though inferior in cavalry, yet, by the mere force of conduct and discipline, he passed over those open champaign country, and defended himself from the enemy's horse, who had advanced to meet him, and who infested him during his whole march. As he approached to Gloucester, the king was obliged to raise the siege, and open the way for Essex to enter that city. The necessities of the garrison were extreme. One barrel of powder was their whole stock of ammunition remaining; and their other provisions were in the same proportion. Essex had brought with him military stores; and the neighboring country abundantly supplied him with victuals of every kind. The inhabitants had carefully concealed all provisions from the king's army, and, pretending to be quite exhausted, had reserved their stores for that cause which they so much favored. [3]

The chief difficulty still remained. Essex dreaded a battle with the king's army, on account of its great superiority in cavalry; and he resolved to return, if possible, without running that hazard. He lay five days at Tewkesbury, which was his first stage after leaving Gloucester; and he feigned, by some preparations, to point towards Worcester. By a forced march during the night, he reached Cirencester, and obtained the double advantage of passing unmolested an open country, and of surprising a convoy of provisions which lay in that town. [4] Without delay he proceeded towards London; but when he reached Newbury, he was surprised to find that the king, by hasty marches, had arrived before him, and was already possessed of the place.

* Rush, vol. vi. .

* * Rush, vol. vi. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * * * Rush, vol. vi. p 292.

An action was now unavoidable; and Essex prepared for it with presence of mind, and not without military conduct. On both sides the battle was fought with desperate valor and a steady bravery. Essex's horse were several times broken by the king's, but his infantry maintained themselves in firm array; and, besides giving a continued fire, they presented an invincible rampart of pikes against the furious shock of Prince Rupert, and those gallant troops of gentry of which the royal cavalry was chiefly composed. The militia of London especially, though utterly unacquainted with action, though drawn hut a few days before from their ordinary occupations, yet having learned all military exercises, and being animated with unconquerable zeal for the cause in which they were engaged, equalled on this occasion what could be expected from the most veteran forces. While the armies were engaged with the utmost ardor, night put an end to the action and left the victory undecided. Next morning, Essex proceeded on his march; and though his rear was once put in some disorder by an incursion of the king's horse, he reached London in safety, and received applause for his conduct and success in the whole enterprise. The king followed him on his march; and having taken possession of Reading after the earl left it, he there established a garrison, and straitened by that means London and the quarters of the enemy. [1]

* Rush, vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

In the battle of Newbury, on the part of the king, besides the earls of Sunderland and Carnarvon, two noblemen of promising hopes, was unfortunately slain, to the regret of every lover of ingenuity and virtue throughout the kingdom, Lucius Gary, Viscount Falkland, secretary of state. Before assembling the present parliament, this man, devoted to the pursuits of learning and to the society of all the polite and elegant, had enjoyed himself in every pleasure which a fine genius, a generous disposition, and an opulent fortune could afford. Called into public life, he stood foremost in all attacks on the high prerogatives of the crown; and displayed that masculine eloquence and undaunted love of liberty, which, from his intimate acquaintance with the sublime spirits of antiquity, he had greedily imbibed. When civil convulsions proceeded to extremities, and it became requisite for him to choose his side, he tempered the ardor of his zeal, and embraced the defence of those limited powers which remained to monarchy, and which he deemed necessary for the support of the English constitution. Still anxious, however, for his country, he seems to have dreaded the too prosperous success of his own party as much as of the enemy; and among his intimate friends often after a deep silence and frequent sighs, he would with a sad accent reiterate the word peace. In excuse for the too free exposing of his person, which seemed unsuitable in a secretary of state, he alleged, that it became him to be more active than other men in all hazardous enterprises, lest his impatience for peace might bear the imputation of cowardice or pusillanimity. From the commencement of the war, his natural cheerfulness and vivacity became clouded; and even his usual attention to dress, required by his birth and station gave way to a negligence which was easily observable. On the morning of the battle in which he fell, he had shown some care of adorning his person; and gave for a reason, that the enemy should not find his body in any slovenly, indecent situation. “I am weary,” subjoined he, “of the times, and foresee much misery to my country; but believe that I shall be out of it ere night.” [1] This excellent person was but thirty-four years of age when a period was thus put to his life.

* Whitlocke, . Clarendon, vol. iii. , 351, etc.

The loss sustained on both sides in the battle of Newbury, and the advanced season, obliged the armies to retire into winter quarters.

In the north, during this summer, the great interest and popularity of the earl, now created marquis of Newcastle, had raised a considerable force for the king; and great hopes of success were entertained from that quarter. There appeared, however, in opposition to him, two men on whom the event of the war finally depended, and who began about this time to be remarked for their valor and military conduct. These were Sir Thomas Fairfax, son of the lord of that name, and Oliver Cromwell. The former gained a considerable advantage at Wakefield over a detachment of royalists, and took General Goring prisoner: the latter obtained a victory at Gainsborough over a party commanded by the gallant Cavendish, who perished in the action. But both these defeats of the royalists were more than sufficiently compensated by the total rout of Lord Fairfax at Atherton Moor, and the dispersion of his army. After this victory, Newcastle, with an army of fifteen thousand men, sat down before Hull. Hotham was no longer governor of this place. That gentleman and his son partly from a jealousy entertained of Lord Fairfax, partly repenting of their engagements against the king, had entered into a correspondence with Newcastle, and had expressed an intention of delivering Hull into his hands. But their conspiracy being detected, they were arrested and sent prisoners to London; where, without any regard to their former services, they fell, both of them, victims to the severity of the parliament. [1]

Newcastle, having carried on the attack of Hull for some time, was beat off by a sally of the garrison, and suffered so much that he thought proper to raise the siege. About the same time, Manchester, who advanced from the eastern associated counties, having joined Cromwell and young Fairfax, obtained a considerable victory over the royalists at Horncastle; where the two officers last mentioned gained renown by their conduct and gallantry. And though fortune had thus balanced her favors, the king's party still remained much superior in those parts of England; and had it not been for the garrison of Hull, which kept Yorkshire in awe, a conjunction of the northern forces with the army in the south might have been made, and had probably enabled the king, instead of entering on the unfortunate, perhaps imprudent, enterprise of Gloucester, to march directly to London, and put an end to the war. [2]

* Rush, vol. vi. .

* * Warwick, . Walker, . laudable.

While the military enterprises were carried on with vigor in England, and the event became every day more doubtful, both parties cast their eye towards the neighboring kingdoms, and sought assistance for the finishing of that enterprise in which their own forces experienced such furious opposition. The parliament had recourse to Scotland; the king to Ireland.

When the Scottish Covenanters obtained that end for which they so earnestly contended, the establishment of Presbyterian discipline in their own country, they were not satisfied, but indulged still in an ardent passion for propagating, by all methods, that mode of religion in the neighboring kingdoms. Having flattered themselves, in the fervor of their zeal, that by supernatural assistances they should be enabled to carry their triumphant covenant to the gates of Rome itself, it behoved them first to render it prevalent in England, which already showed so great a disposition to receive it. Even in the articles of pacification, they expressed a desire of uniformity in worship with England; and the king, employing general expressions, had approved of this inclination as pious and no sooner was there an appearance of a rupture, than the English parliament, in order to allure that nation into a close confederacy, openly declared their wishes of ecclesiastical reformation, and of imitating the example of their northern brethren. [1] When war was actually commenced, the same artifices were used, and the Scots beheld, with the utmost impatience, a scene of action of which they could not deem themselves indifferent spectators. Should the king, they said, be able by force of arms to prevail over the parliament of England, and reestablish his authority in that powerful kingdom, he will undoubtedly retract all those concessions which, with so many circumstances of violence and indignity, the Scots have extorted from him. Besides a sense of his own interest, and a regard to royal power, which has been entirely annihilated in this country, his very passion for prelacy and for religious ceremonies must lead him to invade a church which he has ever been taught to regard as anti-Christian and unlawful. Let us but consider who the persons are that compose the factions now so furiously engaged in arms. Does not the parliament consist of those very men who have ever opposed all war with Scotland, who have punished the authors of our oppressions, who have obtained us the redress of every grievance, and who, with many honorable expressions, have conferred on us an ample reward for our brotherly assistance? And is not the court full of Papists, prelates, malignants; all of them zealous enemies to our religious model, and resolute to sacrifice their lives for their idolatrous establishments? Not to mention our own necessary security can we better express our gratitude to Heaven for that pure light with which we are, above all nations, so eminently distinguished, than by conveying the same divine knowledge to our unhappy neighbors, who are wading through a sea of blood in order to attain it? These were in Scotland the topics of every conversation: with these doctrines the pulpits echoed: and the famous curse of Meroz, that curse so solemnly denounced and reiterated against neutrality and moderation, resounded from all quarters. [2]

* Rush, vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Judges, chap. v ver. 23.

The parliament of England had ever invited the Scots, from the commencement of the civil dissensions, to interpose their mediation, which they knew would be so little favorable to the king: and the king for that very reason had ever endeavored, with the least offensive expressions, to decline it. [1] Early this spring, the earl of Loudon, the chancellor, with other commissioners, and attended by Henderson, a popular and intriguing preacher, was sent to the king at Oxford, and renewed the offer of mediation; but with the same success as before. The commissioners were also empowered to press the king on the article of religion, and to recommend to him the Scottish model of ecclesiastic worship and discipline. This was touching Charles in a very tender point: his honor his conscience, as well as his interest, he believed to be intimately concerned in supporting prelacy and the liturgy. [2] He begged the commissioners, therefore, to remain satisfied with the concessions which he had made to Scotland; and having modelled their own church according to their own principles, to leave their neighbors in the like liberty, and not to intermeddle with affairs of which they could not be supposed competent judges. [3]

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * See note N, at the end of the volume.

* * * Bush. vol. vi. .

The divines of Oxford, secure, as they imagined, of a victory, by means of their authorities from church history, their quotations from the fathers, and their spiritual arguments, desired a conference with Henderson, and undertook by dint of reasoning to convert that great apostle of the north: but Henderson, who had ever regarded as impious the least doubt with regard to his own principles, and who knew of a much better way to reduce opponents than by employing any theological topics, absolutely refused all disputation or controversy. The English divines went away full of admiration at the blind assurance and bigoted prejudices of the man: he on his part was moved with equal wonder at their obstinate attachment to such palpable errors and delusions.

By the concessions which the king had granted to Scotland, it became necessary for him to summon a parliament once in three years; and in June of the subsequent year was fixed the period for the meeting of that assembly. Before that time elapsed, Charles flattered himself that he should be able, by some decisive advantage, to reduce the English parliament to a reasonable submission, and might then expect with security the meeting of a Scottish parliament. Though earnestly solicited by Loudon to summon presently that great council of the nation, he absolutely refused to give authority to men who had already excited such dangerous commotions, and who showed still the same disposition to resist and invade his authority. The commissioners, therefore, not being able to prevail in any of their demands, desired the king's passport for London, where they purposed to confer with the English parliament; [1] and being likewise denied this request, they returned with extreme dissatisfaction to Edinburgh.

The office of conservators of the peace was newly erected in Scotland, in order to maintain the confederacy between the two kingdoms; and these, instigated by the clergy, were resolved, since they could not obtain the king's consent, to summon in his name, but by their own authority, a convention of states; and to bereave their sovereign of this article, the only one which remained, of his prerogative. Under color of providing for national peace, endangered by the neighborhood of English armies, was a convention called; an assembly which though it meets with less solemnity, has the same authority as a parliament in raising money and levying forces. Hamilton, and his brother the earl of Laneric, who had been sent into Scotland in order to oppose, these measures, wanted either authority or sincerity; and passively yielded to the torrent. The general assembly of the church met at the same time with the convention; and exercising an authority almost absolute over the whole civil power, made every political consideration yield to their theological zeal and prejudices.

The English parliament was at that time fallen into great distress by the progress of the royal arms; and they gladly sent to Edinburgh commissioners, with ample powers to treat of a nearer union and confederacy with the Scottish nation. The persons employed were the earl of Rutland, Sir William Armyne, Sir Henry Vane the younger, Thomas Hatcher, and Henry Dailey, attended by Marshall and Nye, two clergymen of signal authority. [2]

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. iii. p.300

In this negotiation, the man chiefly trusted was Vane, who, in eloquence, address, capacity, as well as in art and dissimulation, was not surpassed by any one even during that age, so famous for active talents. By his persuasion was framed, at Edinburgh, that Solemn League and Covenant, which effaced all former protestations and vows taken in both kingdoms, and long maintained its credit and authority. In this covenant, the subscribers, besides engaging mutually to defend each other against all opponents bound themselves to endeavor, without respect of persons the extirpation of Popery and prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness; to maintain the rights and privileges of parliaments, together with the king's authority, and to discover and bring to justice all incendiaries and malignants. [1]

* Rush vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol iii. .

The subscribers of the covenant vowed also to preserve the reformed religion established in the church of Scotland; but, by the artifice of Vane, no declaration more explicit was made with regard to England and Ireland, than that these kingdoms should be reformed according to the word of God and the example of the purest churches. The Scottish zealots, when prelacy was abjured, deemed this expression quite free from ambiguity, and regarded their own model as the only one which corresponded in any degree to such a description: but that able politician had other views; and while he employed his great talents in overreaching the Presbyterians, and secretly laughed at their simplicity, he had blindly devoted himself to the maintenance of systems still more absurd and more dangerous.

In the English parliament there remained some members who, though they had been induced, either by private ambition or by zeal for civil liberty, to concur with the majority, still retained an attachment to the hierarchy, and to the ancient modes of worship. But in the present danger which threatened their cause, all scruples were laid aside; and the covenant, by whose means alone they could expect to obtain so considerable a reënforcement as the accession of the Scottish nation, was received without opposition. The parliament, therefore, having first subscribed it themselves, ordered it to be received by all who lived under their authority.

Great were the rejoicings among the Scots, that they should be the happy instruments of extending their mode of religion, and dissipating that profound darkness in which the neighboring nations were involved. The general assembly applauded this glorious imitation of the piety displayed by their ancestors who, they said, in three different applications, during the reign of Elizabeth, had endeavored to engage the English, by persuasion, to lay aside the use of the surplice, tippet, and corner-cap. [1] The convention, too, in the height of their zeal, ordered every one to swear to this covenant, under the penalty of confiscation; besides what further punishment it should please the ensuing parliament to inflict on the refusers, as enemies to God, to the king, and to the kingdom. And being determined that the sword should carry conviction to all refractory minds, they prepared themselves, with great vigilance and activity, for their military enterprises. By means of a hundred thousand pounds, which they received from England; by the hopes of good pay and warm quarters; not to mention men's favorable disposition towards the cause; they soon completed their levies. And having added to their other forces the troops which they had recalled from Ireland, they were ready, about the end of the year, to enter England, under the command of their old general, the earl of Leven, with an army of above twenty thousand men. [2]

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* Rush., vol. vi. p 388.

* * Clarendon, vol. iii. p 383.

The king, foreseeing this tempest which was gathering upon him, endeavored to secure himself by every expedient; and he cast his eye towards Ireland, in hopes that this kingdom, from which his cause had already received so much prejudice, might at length contribute somewhat towards his protection and security.

After the commencement of the Irish insurrection, the English parliament, though they undertook the suppression of it, had ever been too much engaged, either in military projects or expeditions at home, to take any effectual step towards finishing that enterprise. They had entered, indeed, into a contract with the Scots, for sending over an army of ten thousand men into Ireland; and in order to engage that nation in this undertaking, besides giving a promise of pay, they agreed to put Caricfergus into their hands, and to invest their general with an authority quite independent of the English government. These troops, so long as they were allowed to remain, were useful, by diverting the force of the Irish rebels, and protecting in the north the small remnants of the British planters. But except this contract with the Scottish nation, all the other measures of the parliament either were hitherto absolutely insignificant, or tended rather to the prejudice of the Protestant cause in Ireland. By continuing their violent persecution, and still more violent menaces against priests and Papists, they confirmed the Irish Catholics in their rebellion, and cut off all hopes of indulgence and toleration. By disposing beforehand of all the Irish forfeitures to subscribers or adventurers, they rendered all men of property desperate, and seemed to threaten a total extirpation of the natives. [1] And while they thus infused zeal and animosity into the enemy, no measure was pursued which could tend to support or encourage the Protestants, now reduced to the last extremities.

So great is the ascendant which, from a long course of successes, the English has acquired over the Irish nation, that though the latter, when they receive military discipline among foreigners, are not surpassed by any troops, they have never, in their own country, been able to make any vigorous effort for the defence or recovery of their liberties. In many rencounters, the English, under Lord More, Sir William St. Leger, Sir Frederic Hamilton, and others, had, though under great disadvantages of situation and numbers, put the Irish to rout, and returned in triumph to Dublin. The rebels raised the siege of Tredah, after an obstinate defence made by the garrison. [2] Ormond had obtained two complete victories at

Kilrush and Ross; and had brought relief to all the forts which were besieged or blockaded in different parts of the kingdom. [3]

* A thousand acres in Ulster were given to every one that subscribed two hundred pounds, in Connaught to the subscribers of three hundred and fifty, in Munster for four hundred and fifty, in Leinster for six hundred.

* Rush vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. .

But notwithstanding these successes, even the most common necessaries of life were wanting to the victorious armies. The Irish, in their wild rage against the British planters, had laid waste the whole kingdom, and were themselves totally unfit, from their habitual sloth and ignorance, to raise any convenience of human life. During the course of six months, no supplies had come from England, except the fourth part of one small vessel’s lading. Dublin, to save itself from starving, had been obliged to send the greater part of its inhabitants to England. The army had little ammunition, scarcely exceeding forty barrels of gunpowder; not even shoes or clothes; and for want of food, the soldiers had been obliged to eat their own horses. And though the distress of the Irish was not much inferior, [1] besides that they were more hardened against such extremities, it was but a melancholy reflection, that the two nations, while they continued their furious animosities, should make desolate that fertile island, which might serve to the subsistence and happiness, of both.

The justices and council of Ireland had been engaged, chiefly by the interest and authority of Ormond, to fall into an entire dependence on the king. Parsons, Temple, Loftus, and Meredith, who favored the opposite party, had been removed; and Charles had supplied their place by others better affected to his service. A committee of the English house of commons, which had been sent over to Ireland in order to conduct the affairs of that kingdom, had been excluded the council, in obedience to orders transmitted from the king. [2] And these were reasons sufficient, besides the great difficulties under which they themselves labored, why the parliament was unwilling to send supplies to an army which, though engaged in a cause much favored by them, was commanded by their declared enemies. They even intercepted some small succors sent thither by the king.

The king, as he had neither money, arms, ammunition, nor provisions to spare from his own urgent wants, resolved to embrace an expedient which might at once relieve the necessities of the Irish Protestants, and contribute to the advancement of his affairs in England. A truce with the rebels, he thought, would enable his subjects in Ireland to provide for their own support, and would procure him the assistance of the army against the English parliament. But as a treaty with a people so odious for their barbarities, and still more for their religion, might be represented in invidious colors, and renew all those calumnies with which he had been loaded, it was necessary to proceed with great caution in conducting that measure. A remonstrance from the army was made to the Irish council, representing their intolerable necessities, and craving permission to leave the kingdom: and if that were refused, “We must have recourse,” they said, “to that first and primary law with which God has endowed all men; we mean the law of nature, which teaches every creature to preserve itself.” [3]

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. p 530. Clarendon, vol. iii. .

* * * Rush. vol. vi. .

Memorials both to the king and parliament were transmitted by the justices and council, in which then wants and dangers are strongly set forth; [1] and though the general expressions in these memorials might perhaps be suspected of exaggeration, yet from the particular facts mentioned, from the confession of the English parliament itself, [2] and from the very nature of things, it is apparent that the Irish Protestants were reduced to great extremities; [3] and it became prudent in the king, if not absolutely necessary, to embrace some expedient which might secure them for a time from the ruin and misery with which they were threatened.

Accordingly the king gave orders [4] to Ormond and the justices to conclude, for a year, a cessation of arms with the council of Kilkenny, by whom the Irish were governed, and to leave both sides in possession of their present advantages. The parliament, whose business it was to find fault with every measure adopted by the opposite party, and who would not lose so fair an opportunity of reproaching the king with his favor to the Irish Papists, exclaimed loudly against this cessation. Among other reasons, they insisted upon the divine vengeance, which England might justly dread for tolerating anti-Christian idolatry, on pretence of civil contracts and political agreements. Religion, though every day employed as the engine of their own ambitious purposes, was supposed too sacred to be yielded up to the temporal interests or safety of kingdoms.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush, vol. vi. .

* * * See further, Carte’s Ormond, (vol. iii. No. 113, 127, 128, 129 134, 136, 141, 144, 149, 158, 159.) All these papers put it past doubt, that the necessities of the English army in Ireland were extreme. See further, Rush.
vol. vi. . and Dugdale, p. *53 *54.

* * * * Rush. vol. vi , 544, 547

v Rush, vol. vi. .

After the cessation, there was little necessity, as well as no means of subsisting the army in Ireland. The king ordered Ormond, who was entirely devoted to him, to send over considerable bodies of it to England. Most of them continued in his service; but a small part, having imbibed in Ireland a strong animosity against the Catholics, and hearing the king’s party universally reproached with Popery, soon after deserted to the Parliament.

Some Irish Catholics came over with these troops, and joined the royal army, where they continued the same cruelties and disorders to which they had been accustomed. [1] The parliament voted, that no quarter in any action should ever be given them; but Prince Rupert, by making some reprisals, soon repressed this inhumanity. [2]

* Whitlocke, p 78, 103.

* * Rush. vol. vi. , 788.

CHAPTER LVII

CHARLES I.

1644.

The king had hitherto, during the course of the war, obtained many advantages over the parliament, and had raised himself from that low condition into which he had at first fallen, to be nearly upon an equal footing with his adversaries. Yorkshire, and all the northern counties, were reduced by the marquis of Newcastle; and, excepting Hull, the parliament was master of no garrison in these quarters. In the west, Plymouth alone, having been in vain besieged by Prince Maurice, resisted the king's authority; and had it not been for the disappointment in the enterprise of Gloucester, the royal garrisons had reached, without interruption, from one end of the kingdom to the other, and had occupied a greater extent of ground than those of the parliament. Many of the royalists flattered themselves, that the same vigorous spirit which had elevated them to the present height of power would still favor their progress, and obtain them a final victory over their enemies: but those who judged more soundly, observed, that, besides the accession of the whole Scottish nation to the side of the parliament, the very principle on which the royal successes had been founded, was every day acquired more and more by the opposite party. The king's troops, full of gentry and nobility, had exerted a valor superior to their enemies, and had hitherto been successful in almost every rencounter; but in proportion as the whole nation became warlike by the continuance of civil discords, this advantage was more equally shared; and superior numbers, it was expected, must at length obtain the victory..The king's troops, also, ill paid, and destitute of every necessary, could not possibly be retained in equal discipline with the parliamentary forces, to whom all supplies were furnished from unexhausted stores and treasures. [1]

* Rush, vol vi. p, 560.

The severity of manners, so much affected by these zealous religionists, assisted their military institutions and the rigid inflexibility of character by which the austere reformers of church and state were distinguished, enabled the parliamentary chiefs to restrain their soldiers within stricter rules and more exact order. And while the king's officers indulged themselves even in greater licenses than those to which during times of peace they had been accustomed, they were apt both to neglect their military duty, and to set a pernicious example of disorder to the soldiers under their command.

At the commencement of the civil war, all Englishmen who served abroad were invited over, and treated with extraordinary respect; and most of them, being descended of good families, and by reason of their absence unacquainted with the new principles which depressed the dignity of the crown, had enlisted under the royal standard. But it is observable, that though the military profession requires great genius and long experience in the principal commanders, all its subordinate duties may be discharged by ordinary talents and from superficial practice. Citizens and country gentlemen soon became excellent officers; and the generals of greatest fame and capacity happened, all of them, to spring up on the side of the parliament. The courtiers and great nobility, in the other party, checked the growth of any extraordinary genius among the subordinate officers; and every man there, as in a regular established government, was confined to the station in which his birth had placed him.

The king, that he might make preparations during winter for the ensuing campaign, summoned to Oxford all the members of either house who adhered to his interests; and endeavored to avail himself of the name of parliament, so passionately cherished by the English nation. [1] The house of peers was pretty full; and, beside the nobility employed in different parts of the kingdom, it contained twice as many members as commonly voted at Westminster. The house of commons consisted of about one hundred and forty; which amounted not to above half of the other house of commons. [2]

So extremely light had government hitherto lain upon the people that the very name of excise was unknown to them; and among the other evils arising from these domestic wars was the introduction of that impost into England. The parliament at Westminster having voted an excise on beer,

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. , 574, 575.

wine, and other commodities, those at Oxford imitated the example, and conferred that revenue on the king. And, in order to enable him the better to recruit his army, they granted him the sum of one hundred thousand pounds, to be levied by way of loan upon the subject. The king circulated privy seals, countersigned by the speakers of both houses, requiring the loan of particular sums from such persons as lived within his quarters. [1] Neither party had as yet got above the pedantry of reproaching their antagonists with these illegal measures.

The Westminster parliament passed a whimsical ordinance, commanding all the inhabitants of London and the neighborhood to retrench a meal a week, and to pay the value of it for the support of the public cause. [2] It is easily imagined that, provided the money were paid, they troubled themselves but little about the execution of their ordinance.

Such was the king's situation, that, in order to restore peace to the nation, he had no occasion to demand any other terms than the restoring of the laws and constitution; the replacing him in the same rights which had ever been enjoyed by his predecessors; and the reëstablishing on its ancient basis the whole frame of government, civil as well as ecclesiastical. And that he might facilitate an end seemingly so desirable, he offered to employ means equally popular, a universal act of oblivion, and a toleration or indulgence to tender consciences. Nothing therefore could contribute more to his interests than every discourse of peace, and every discussion of the conditions upon which that blessing could be obtained. For this reason, he solicited a treaty on all occasions, and desired a conference and mutual examination of pretensions, even when he entertained no hopes that any conclusion could possibly result from it.

For like reasons, the parliament prudently avoided, as much as possible, all advances towards negotiation, and were cautious not to expose too easily to censure those high terms which their apprehensions or their ambition made them previously demand of the king. Though their partisans were blinded with the thickest veil of religious prejudices, they dreaded to bring their pretensions to the test, or lay them open before the whole nation. In

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* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Dugdale, . Rush. vol. vi. .

opposition to the sacred authority of the laws, to the venerable precedents of many ages, the popular leaders were ashamed to plead nothing but fears and jealousies, which were not avowed by the constitution, and for which neither the personal character of Charles, so full of virtue, nor his situation, so deprived of all independent authority, seemed to afford any reasonable foundation. Grievances which had been fully redressed; powers, either legal or illegal, which had been entirely renounced; it seemed unpopular, and invidious, and ungrateful, any further to insist on.

The king, that he might abate the universal veneration paid to the name of parliament, had issued a declaration, in which he set forth all the tumults by which himself and his partisans in both houses had been driven from London; and he thence inferred, that the assembly at Westminster was no longer a free parliament, and, till its liberty were restored, was entitled to no authority. As this declaration was an obstacle to all treaty, some contrivance seemed requisite in order to elude it.

A letter was written in the foregoing spring to the earl of Essex, and subscribed by the prince, the duke of York, and forty-three noblemen. [1] They there exhort him to be an instrument of restoring peace, and to promote that happy end with those by whom he was employed. Essex, though much disgusted with the parliament, though apprehensive of the extremities to which they were driving, though desirous of any reasonable accommodation, yet was still more resolute to preserve an honorable fidelity to the trust reposed in him. He replied, that as the paper sent him neither contained any address to the two houses of parliament, nor any acknowledgment of their authority, he could not communicate it to them. Like proposals had been reiterated by the king during the ensuing campaign, and still met with a like answer from Essex. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. . Rush, vol vi. . Whitlocke, .

* * Clarendon, vol. iii. . Rush. vol. vi. , 570. Whitlocke, .

In order to make a new trial for a treaty, the king this spring sent another letter, directed to the lords and commons of parliament assembled at Westminster: but as he also mentioned in the letter the lords and commons of parliament assembled at Oxford, and declared, that his scope and intention was to make provision that all the members of both houses might securely meet in a full and free assembly, the parliament, perceiving the conclusion implied, refused all treaty upon such terms. [1] And the king, who knew what small hopes there were of accommodation, would not abandon the pretensions which he had assumed; nor acknowledge the two houses, more expressly, for a free parliament.

This winter the famous Pym died; a man as much hated by one party as respected by the other. At London, he was considered as the victim to national liberty, who had abridged his life by incessant labors for the interests of his country: [2] at Oxford, he was believed to have been struck with an uncommon disease, and to have been consumed with vermin, as a mark of divine vengeance, for his multiplied crimes and treasons. He had been so little studious of improving his private fortune in those civil wars, of which he had been one principal author, that the parliament thought themselves obliged from gratitude to pay the debts which he had contracted. [3] We now return to the military operations, which, during the winter, were carried on with vigor in several places, notwithstanding the severity of the season.

The forces brought from Ireland were landed at Mostyne, in North Wales; and being put under the command of Lord Biron, they besieged and took the Castles of Hawarden, Beeston, Acton, and Deddington House. [4] No place in Cheshire or the neighborhood now adhered to the parliament, except Nantwich; and to this town Biron laid siege during the depth of winter. Sir Thomas Fairfax, alarmed at so considerable a progress of the royalists, assembled an army of four thousand men in Yorkshire, and having joined Sir William Brereton, was approaching to the camp of the enemy. Biron and his soldiers, elated with successes obtained in Ireland, had entertained the most profound contempt for the parliamentary forces; a disposition which, if confined to the army, may be regarded as a good presage of victory; but if it extend to the general, is the most probable forerunner of a defeat. Fairfax suddenly attacked the camp of the royalists. The swelling of the river by a thaw divided one part of the army from the other. That part exposed to Fairfax, being beaten from their post, retired into the church of Acton, and were all taken prisoners; the other retreated with precipitation.

* Clarendon, vol. iii. . Whitlocke, .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Journ. 13th of February, 1645.

* * * * Rush. vol. vi. .

v Rush. vol. vi. .

And thus was dissipated or rendered useless that body of forces which had been drawn from Ireland; and the parliamentary party revived in those north-west counties of England.

The invasion from Scotland was attended with consequences of much greater importance. The Scots, having summoned in vain the town of Newcastle, which was fortified by the vigilance of Sir Thomas Glenham, passed the Tyne, and faced the marquis of Newcastle, who lay at Durham with an army of fourteen thousand men. [1] After some military operations, in which that nobleman reduced the enemy to difficulties for forage and provisions, he received intelligence of a great disaster which had befallen his forces in Yorkshire. Colonel Bellasis, whom he had left with a considerable body of troops, was totally routed at Selby by Sir Thomas Fairfax, who had returned from Cheshire with his victorious forces. [2] Afraid of being enclosed between two armies, Newcastle retreated; and Leven having joined Lord Fairfax, they sat down before York, to which the army of the royalists had retired. But as the parliamentary and Scottish forces were not numerous enough to invest so large a town, divided by a river, they contented themselves with incommoding it by a loose blockade; and affairs remained for some time in suspense between these opposite armies. [3]

During this winter and spring, other parts of the kingdom had also been infested with war. Hopton, having assembled an army of fourteen thousand men, endeavored to break into Sussex, Kent, and the southern association, which seemed well disposed to receive him. Waller fell upon him at Cherington, and gave him a defeat of considerable importance. In another quarter, siege being laid to Newark by the parliamentary forces, Prince Rupert prepared himself for relieving a town of such consequence, which alone preserved the communication open between the king's southern and northern quarters. [4] With a small force, but that animated by his active courage, he broke through the enemy, relieved the town, and totally dissipated that army of the parliament.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. .

* * * Rush. vol. vi. .

* * * Rush. vol. vi. .

But though fortune seemed to have divided her favors between the parties, the king found himself, in the main, a considerable loser by this winter campaign; and he prognosticated a still worse event from the ensuing summer. The preparations of the parliament were great, and much exceeded the slender resources of which he was possessed. In the eastern association they levied fourteen thousand men, under the earl of Manchester, seconded by Cromwell. [1] An army of ten thousand men, under Essex; another of nearly the same force, under Waller, were assembled in the neighborhood of London. The former was destined to oppose the king: the latter was appointed to march into the west, where Prince Maurice, with a small army which went continually to decay, was spending his time in vain before Lyme, an inconsiderable town upon the sea-coast. The utmost efforts of the king could not raise above ten thousand men at Oxford; and on their sword chiefly, during the campaign, were these to depend for subsistence.

The queen, terrified with the dangers which every way environed her, and afraid of being enclosed in Oxford, in the middle of the kingdom, fled to Exeter, where she hoped to be delivered unmolested of the child with which she was now pregnant, and whence she had the means of an easy escape into France, if pressed by the forces of the enemy. She knew the implacable hatred which the parliament, on account of her religion and her credit with the king, had all along borne her. Last summer, the commons had sent up to the peers an impeachment of high treason against her; because, in his utmost distresses, she had assisted her husband with arms and ammunition which she had bought in Holland. [2] And had she fallen into their hands, neither her sex, she knew, nor high station, could protect her against insults at least, if not danger, from those haughty republicans, who so little affected to conduct themselves by the maxims of gallantry and politeness.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. .

From the beginning of these dissensions, the parliament, it is remarkable, had in all things assumed an extreme ascendant over their sovereign, and had displayed a violence, and arrogated an authority, which, on his side, would not have been compatible either with his temper or his situation. While he spoke perpetually of pardoning all rebels, they talked of nothing but the punishment of delinquents and malignants: while he offered a toleration and indulgence to tender consciences, they threatened the utter extirpation of prelacy: to his professions of lenity they opposed declarations of rigor; and the more the ancient tenor of the laws inculcated a respectful subordination to the crown, the more careful were they, by their lofty pretensions, to cover that defect under which they labored.

Their great advantages in the north seemed to second their ambition, and finally to promise them success in their unwarrantable enterprises. Manchester, having taken Lincoln, had united his army to that of Leven and Fairfax; and York was now closely besieged by their combined forces. That town, though vigorously defended by Newcastle, was reduced to extremity; and the parliamentary generals, after enduring great losses and fatigues, flattered themselves that all their labors would at last be crowned by this important conquest. On a sudden, they were alarmed by the approach of Prince Rupert. This gallant commander, having vigorously exerted himself in Lancashire and Cheshire, had collected a considerable army; and joining Sir Charles Lucas, who commanded Newcastle’s horse, hastened to the relief of York with an army of twenty thousand men. The Scottish and parliamentary generals raised the siege, and drawing up on Marston Moor, purposed to give battle to the royalists. Prince Rupert approached the town by another quarter, and, interposing the River Ouse between him and the enemy, safely joined his forces to those of Newcastle. The marquis endeavored to persuade him, that, having so successfully effected his purpose, he ought to be content with the present advantages, and leave the enemy, now much diminished by their losses, and discouraged by their ill success, to dissolve by those mutual dissensions which had begun to take place among them. [1] The prince, whose martial disposition was not sufficiently tempered with prudence, nor softened by complaisance, pretending positive orders from the king, without deigning to consult with Newcastle, whose merits and services deserved better treatment, immediately issued orders for battle, and led out the army to Marston Moor. [2] This action was obstinately disputed between the most numerous armies that were engaged during the course of these wars; nor were the forces on each side much different in number. Fifty thousand British troops were led to mutual slaughter; and the victory seemed long undecided between them. Prince Rupert, who commanded the right wing of the royalists, was opposed to Cromwell, [3] who conducted the choice troops of the parliament, inured to danger under that determined leader, animated by zeal, and confirmed by the most rigid discipline.

After a short combat, the cavalry of the royalists gave way; and such of the infantry as stood next them were likewise borne down and put to flight. Newcastle’s regiment alone, resolute to conquer or to perish, obstinately kept their ground, and maintained, by their dead bodies, the same order in which they had at first been ranged. In the other wing, Sir Thomas Fairfax and Colonel Lambert, with some troops, broke through the royalists; and, transported by the ardor of pursuit, soon reached their victorious friends, engaged also in pursuit of the enemy. But after that tempest was past, Lucas, who commanded the royalists in this wing, restoring order to his broken forces, made a furious attack on the parliamentary cavalry, threw them into disorder, pushed them upon their own infantry, and put that whole wing to rout. When ready to seize on their carriages and baggage, he perceived Cromwell, who was now returned from pursuit of the other wing. Both sides were not a little surprised to find that they must again renew the combat for that victory which each of them thought they had already obtained. The front of the battle was now exactly counterchanged; and each

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* Life of the Duke of Newcastle, .

* * Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * * Rush, part iii. vol. ii. .

army occupied the ground which had been possessed by the enemy at the beginning of the day. This second battle was equally furious and desperate with the first: but after the utmost efforts of courage by both parties, victory wholly turned to the side of the parliament. The prince's train of artillery was taken; and his whole army pushed off the field of battle. [1]

* Rush. vol. vi. . Whitlocke, .

This event was in itself a mighty blow to the king; but proved more fatal in its consequences. The marquis of Newcastle was entirely lost to the royal cause. That nobleman the ornament of the court and of his order, had been engaged, contrary to the natural bent of his disposition, into these military operations merely by a high sense of honor and a personal regard to his master. The dangers of war were disregarded by his valor; but its fatigues were oppressive to his natural indolence. Munificent and generous in his expense; polite and elegant in his taste; courteous and humane in his behavior; he brought a great accession of friends and of credit to the party which he embraced. But amidst all the hurry of action, his inclinations were secretly drawn to the soft arts of peace, in which he took delight; and the charms of poetry music, and conversation often stole him from his rougher occupations. He chose Sir William Devenant, an ingenious poet, for his lieutenant-general: the other persons in whom he placed confidence were more the instruments of his refined pleasures, than qualified for the business which they undertook; and the severity and application requisite to the support of discipline, were qualities in which he was entirely wanting. [1]

When Prince Rupert, contrary to his advice, resolved on this battle, and issued all orders without communicating his intentions to him, he took the field, but, he said, merely as a volunteer; and, except by his personal courage, which shone out with lustre, he had no share in the action. Enraged to find that all his successful labors were rendered abortive by one act of fatal temerity, terrified with the prospect of renewing his pains and fatigue, he resolved no longer to maintain the few resources which remained to a desperate cause, and thought, that the same regard to honor which had at first called him to arms, now required him to abandon a party where he met with such unworthy treatment. Next morning early, he sent word to the prince, that he was instantly to leave the kingdom; and without delay, he went to Scarborough, where he found a vessel, which carried him beyond sea. During the ensuing years, till the restoration, he lived abroad in great necessity, and saw with indifference his opulent fortune sequestered by those who assumed the government of England. He disdained, by submission or composition, to show obeisance to their usurped authority; and the least favorable censors of his merit allowed, that the fidelity and services of a whole life had sufficiently atoned for one rash action, into which his passion had betrayed him. [2]

Prince Rupert, with equal precipitation, drew off the remains of his army, and retired into Lancashire. Glenham, in a few days, was obliged to surrender York; and he marched out his garrison with all the honors of war. [3] Lord Fairfax, remaining in the city, established his government in that whole county, and sent a thousand horse into Lancashire, to join with the parliamentary forces in that quarter, and attend the motions of the Scottish army marched northwards, in order to join the earl of Calender, who was advancing with ten thousand additional forces; [4] and to reduce the town of Newcastle, which they took by storm: the earl of Manchester, with Cromwell, to whom the fame of this great victory was chiefly ascribed, and who was wounded in the action, returned to the eastern association, in order to recruit his army.

* Clarendon, vol. v. , 508. See Warwick.

* * Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * * Rush. vol. vi. . Prince Rupert:

* * * * Whitlocke,

v Rush. vol. vi. .

While these events passed in the north, the king’s affairs in the south were conducted with more success and greater abilities. Ruthven, a Scotchman, who had been created earl of Brentford, acted under the king as general.

The parliament soon completed their two armies commanded by Essex and Waller. The great zeal of the city facilitated this undertaking. Many speeches were made to the citizens by the parliamentary leaders, in order to excite their ardor. Hollis, in particular, exhorted them not to spare, on this important occasion, either their purses, their persons, or their prayers; [1] and, in general, it must be confessed, they were sufficiently liberal in all these contributions.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

The two generals had orders to march with their combined armies towards Oxford; and, if the king retired into that city, to lay siege to it, and by one enterprise put a period to the war. The king, leaving a numerous garrison in Oxford, passed with dexterity between the two armies, which had taken Abingdon, and had enclosed him on both sides. He marched towards Worcester; and Waller received orders from Essex to follow him and watch his motions, while he himself marched into the west, in quest of Prince Maurice. Waller had approached within two miles of the royal camp, and was only separated from it by the Severn, when he received intelligence that the king was advanced to Bewdly, and had directed his course towards Shrewsbury. In order to prevent him, Waller presently dislodged, and hastened by quick marches to that town while the king, suddenly returning upon his own footsteps reached Oxford; and having reënforced his army from that garrison, now in his turn marched out in quest of Waller. The two armies faced each other at Cropredy Bridge, near Banbury; but the Charwell ran between them. Next day, the king decamped, and marched towards Daventry. Waller ordered a considerable detachment to pass the bridge, with an intention of falling on the rear of the royalists. He was repulsed, routed, and pursued with considerable loss. [1] Stunned and disheartened with this blow, his army decayed and melted away by desertion; and the king thought he might safely leave it, and march westward against Essex. That general, having obliged Prince Maurice to raise the siege of Lyme, having taken Weymouth and Taunton, advanced still in his conquests, and met with no equal opposition. The king followed him, and having reënforced his army from all quarters, appeared in the field with an army superior to the enemy. Essex, retreating into Cornwall, informed the parliament of his danger, and desired them to send an army which might fall on the king's rear. General Middleton received a commission to execute that service; but came too late. Essex's army, cooped up in a narrow corner at Lestithiel, deprived of all forage and provisions, and seeing no prospect of succor, was reduced to the last extremity. The king pressed them on one side; Prince Maurice on another; Sir Richard Granville on a third. Essex, Robarts, and some of the principal officers escaped in a boat to Plymouth; Balfour with his horse passed the king’s outposts in a thick mist, and got safely to the garrisons of his own party. The foot under Skippon were obliged to surrender their arms, artillery, baggage, and ammunition; and being conducted to the parliament’s quarters, were dismissed. By this advantage, which was much boasted of, the king, besides the honor of the enterprise, obtained what he stood extremely in need of: the parliament, having preserved the men, lost what they could easily repair. [2]

* Rush. vol. vi. . Clarendon, vol. v. . Sir Ed. Walker, .

* * Rush. vol. vi. , etc. Whitloeke, . Clarendon, vol. v , 525. Sir Edward Walker, , 70, etc.

No sooner did this intelligence reach London, than the committee of the two kingdoms voted thanks to Essex for his fidelity, courage, and conduct; and this method of proceeding, no less politic than magnanimous, was preserved by the parliament throughout the whole course of the war. Equally indulgent to their friends and rigorous to their enemies, they employed with success these two powerful engines of reward and punishment, in confirmation of their authority.

That the king might have less reason to exult in the advantages which he had obtained in the west, the parliament opposed to him very numerous forces. Having armed anew Essex’s subdued but not disheartened troops, they ordered Manchester and Cromwell to march with their recruited forces from the eastern association; and, joining their armies to those of Waller and Middleton, as well as of Essex, offer battle to the king. Charles chose his post at Newbury, where the parliamentary armies, under the earl of Manchester, attacked him with great vigor; and that town was a second time the scene of the bloody animosities of the English. Essex’s soldiers, exhorting one another to repair their broken honor, and revenge the disgrace of Lestithiel, made an impetuous assault on the royalists; and having recovered some of their cannon lost in Cornwall, could not forbear embracing them with tears of joy. Though the king’s troops defended themselves with valor, they were overpowered by numbers; and the night came very seasonably to their relief, and prevented a total overthrow.

Charles, leaving his baggage and cannon in Dennington Castle, near Newbury, forthwith retreated to Wallingford, and thence to Oxford. There Prince Rupert and the earl of Northampton joined him, with considerable bodies of cavalry. Strengthened by this reënforcement, he ventured to advance towards the enemy, now employed before Dennington Castle. [1] Essex, detained by sickness, had not joined the army since his misfortune in Cornwall. Manchester, who commanded, though his forces were much superior to those of the king, declined an engagement, and rejected Cromwell's advice, who earnestly pressed him not to neglect so favorable an opportunity of finishing the war. The king's army, by bringing off their cannon from Dennington Castle in the face of the enemy, seemed to have sufficiently repaired the honor which they had lost at Newbury; and Charles, having the satisfaction to excite between Manchester and Cromwell equal animosities with those which formerly took place between Essex and Waller, [1] distributed his army into winter quarters.

* Rush. vol. vi. p, 721, etc.

* * Rush. vol. vii. .

Those contests among the parliamentary generals, which had disturbed their military operations, were renewed in London during the winter season; and each being supported by his own faction, their mutual reproaches and accusations agitated the whole city and parliament. There had long prevailed in that party a secret distinction, which, though the dread of the king's power had hitherto suppressed it, yet, in proportion as the hopes of success became nearer and more immediate, began to discover itself with high contest and animosity. The Independents, who had at first taken shelter and concealed themselves under the wings of the Presbyterians, now evidently appeared a distinct party, and betrayed very different views and pretensions. We must here endeavor to explain the genius of this party, and of its leaders, who henceforth occupy the scene of action.

During those times, when the enthusiastic spirit met with such honor and encouragement, and was the immediate means of distinction and preferment, it was impossible to set bounds to these holy fervors, or confine within any natural limits what was directed towards an infinite and a supernatural object. Every man, as prompted by the warmth of his temper, excited by emulation, or supported by his habits of hypocrisy, endeavored to distinguish himself beyond his fellows, and to arrive at a higher pitch of saintship and perfection. In proportion to its degree of fanaticism, each sect became dangerous and destructive; and as the Independents went a note higher than the Presbyterians, they could less be restrained within any bounds of temper and moderation. From this distinction, as from a first principle, were derived, by a necessary consequence, all the other differences of these two sects.

The Independents rejected all ecclesiastical establishments, and would admit of no spiritual courts, no government among pastors, no interposition of the magistrate in religious concerns, no fixed encouragement annexed to any system of doctrines or opinions. According to their principles, each congregation, united voluntarily and by spiritual ties, composed within itself a separate church, and exercised a jurisdiction, but one destitute of temporal sanctions, over its own pastor and its own members. The election alone of the congregation was sufficient to bestow the sacerdotal character; and as all essential distinction was denied between the laity and the clergy, no ceremony, no institution, no vocation, no imposition of hands was, as in all other churches, supposed requisite to convey a right to holy orders. The enthusiasm of the Presbyterians led them to reject the authority of prelates, to throw off the restraint of liturgies, to retrench ceremonies, to limit the riches and authority of the priestly office: the fanaticism of the Independents, exalted to a higher pitch, abolished ecclesiastical government, disdained creeds and systems, neglected every ceremony, and confounded all ranks and orders. The soldier, the merchant, the mechanic, indulging the fervors of zeal, and guided by the illapses of the spirit, resigned himself to an inward and superior direction, and was consecrated, in a manner, by an immediate intercourse and communication with heaven.

The Catholics, pretending to an infallible guide, had justified upon that principle their doctrine and practice of persecution; the Presbyterians, imagining that such clear and certain tenets as they themselves adopted could be rejected only from a criminal and pertinacious obstinacy, had hitherto gratified to the full their bigoted zeal, in a like doctrine and practice: the Independents, from the extremity of the same zeal, were led into the milder principles of toleration. Their mind, set afloat in the wide sea of inspiration, could confine itself within no certain limits; and the same variations in which an enthusiast indulged himself, he was apt, by a natural train of thinking, to permit in others. Of all Christian sects, this was the first which, during its prosperity as well as its adversity, always adopted the principle of toleration; and it is remarkable that so reasonable a doctrine owed its origin, not to reasoning, but to the height of extravagance and fanaticism.

Popery and prelacy alone, whose genius seemed to tend towards superstition, were treated by the Independents with rigor. The doctrines too of fate or destiny were deemed by them essential to all religion. In these rigid opinions the whole sectaries, amidst all their other differences, unanimously concurred.

The political system of the Independents kept pace with their religious. Not content with confining to very narrow limits the power of the crown, and reducing the king to the rank of first magistrate, which was the project of the Presbyterians, this sect, more ardent in the pursuit of liberty, aspired to a total abolition of the monarchy, and even of the aristocracy, and projected an entire equality of rank and order, in a republic, quite free and independent. In consequence of this scheme, they were declared enemies to all proposals of peace, except on such terms as they knew it was impossible to obtain; and they adhered to that maxim, which is in the main prudent and political, that whoever draws the sword against his sovereign, should throw away the scabbard. By terrifying others with the fear of vengeance from the offended prince, they had engaged greater numbers into the opposition against peace, than had adopted their other principles with regard to government and religion. And the great success which had already attended the arms of the parliament, and the greater which was soon expected, confirmed them still further in this obstinacy.

Sir Henry Vane, Oliver Cromwell, Nathaniel Fiennes, and Oliver St. John, the solicitor-general, were regarded as the leaders of the Independents. The earl of Essex, disgusted with a war of which he began to foresee the pernicious consequences, adhered to the Presbyterians, and promoted every reasonable plan of accommodation. The earl of Northumberland, fond of his rank and dignity, regarded with horror a scheme which, if it took place, would confound him and his family with the lowest in the kingdom. The earls of Warwick and Denbigh, Sir Philip Stapleton, Sir William Waller, Hollis, Massey, Whitlocke, Maynard, Glyn, had embraced the same sentiments. In the parliament, a considerable majority, and a much greater in the nation, were attached to the Presbyterian party; and it was only by cunning and deceit at first, and afterwards by military violence, that the Independents could entertain any hopes of success.

The earl of Manchester, provoked at the impeachment which the king had lodged against him, had long forwarded the war with alacrity; but being a man of humanity and good principles, the view of public calamities, and the prospect of a total subversion of government, began to moderate his ardor, and inclined him to promote peace on any safe or honorable terms. He was even suspected in the field not to have pushed to the utmost against the king the advantages obtained by the arms of the parliament; and Cromwell in the public debates revived the accusation, that this nobleman had wilfully neglected at Dennington Castle a favorable opportunity of finishing the war by a total defeat of the royalists. "I showed him evidently," said Cromwell, "how this success might be obtained; and only desired leave, with my own brigade of horse to charge the king's army in their retreat; leaving it in the earl's choice, if he thought proper, to remain neuter with the rest of his forces: but, notwithstanding my importunity, he positively refused his consent; and gave no other reason but that, if we met with a defeat, there was an end of our pretensions we should all be rebels and traitors, and be executed and forfeited by law." [1]

Manchester, by way of recrimination, informed the parliament, that, at another time, Cromwell having proposed some scheme to which it seemed improbable the parliament would agree, he insisted, and said, "My lord, if you will stick firm to honest men, you shall find yourself at the head of an army which shall give law both to king and parliament." "This discourse," continued Manchester, "made the greater impression on me, because I knew the lieutenant-general to be a man of very deep designs; and he has even ventured to tell me, that it never would be well with England till I were Mr. Montague, and there were ne'er a lord or peer in the kingdom." [1] So full was Cromwell of these republican projects, that, notwithstanding his habits of profound dissimulation, he could not so carefully guard his expressions, but that sometimes his favorite notions would escape him.

These violent dissensions brought matters to extremity, and pushed the Independents to the execution of their designs. The present generals, they thought, were more desirous of protracting than finishing the war; and

* Clarendon, vol. v. .

having entertained a scheme for preserving still some balance in the constitution, they were afraid of entirely subduing the king, and reducing him to a condition where he should not be entitled to ask any concessions. A new model alone of the army could bring complete victory to the parliament, and free the nation from those calamities under which it labored. But how to effect this project was the difficulty. The authority, as well as merits, of Essex was very great with the parliament. Not only he had served them all along with the most exact and scrupulous honor: it was in some measure owing to his popularity that they had ever been enabled to levy an army, or make head against the royal cause. Manchester, Warwick, and the other commanders, had likewise great credit with the public; nor were there any hopes of prevailing over them, but by laying the plan of an oblique and artificial attack, which would conceal the real purposes of their antagonists. The Scots and the Scottish commissioners, jealous of the progress of the Independents, were a new obstacle, which, without the utmost art and subtlety, it would be difficult to surmount. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * Clarendon, vol. v. .

The methods by which this intrigue was conducted are so singular, and show so fully the genius of the age, that we shall give a detail of them as they are delivered by Lord Clarendon. [1]

A fast, on the last Wednesday of every month, had been ordered by the parliament at the beginning of these commotions; and their preachers on that day were careful to keep alive, by their vehement declamations, the popular prejudices entertained against the king, against prelacy, and against Popery. The king, that he might combat the parliament with their own weapons, appointed likewise a monthly fast, when the people should be instructed in the duties of loyalty, and of submission to the higher powers; and he chose the second Friday of every month for the devotion of the royalists. [2] It was now proposed and carried in parliament, by the Independents, that a new and more solemn fast should be voted; when they should implore the divine assistance for extricating them from those perplexities in which they were at present involved. On that day, the preachers, after many political prayers, took care to treat of the reigning divisions in the parliament, and ascribed them entirely to the selfish ends pursued by the members. In the hands of those members, they said, are lodged all the considerable commands of the army, all the lucrative offices in the civil administration: and while the nation is falling every day into poverty, and groans under an insupportable load of taxes, these men multiply possession on possession, and will in a little time be masters of all the wealth of the kingdom. That such persons, who fatten on the calamities of their country, will ever embrace any effectual measure for bringing them to a period, or insuring final success to the war, cannot reasonably be expected. Lingering expedients alone will be pursued; and operations in the field concurring in the same pernicious end with deliberations in the cabinet, civil commotions will forever be perpetuated in the nation. After exaggerating these disorders, the ministers returned to their prayers; and besought the Lord that he would take his own work into his own hand; and if the instruments whom he had hitherto employed were not worthy to bring to a conclusion so glorious a design, that he would inspire others more fit, who might perfect what was begun, and, by establishing true religion, put a speedy period to the public miseries.

* Clarendon, vol. v.

* * Rush. vol. vi.

On the day subsequent to these devout animadversions when the parliament met, a new spirit appeared in the looks of many. Sir Henry Vane told the commons, that if ever God appeared to them, it was in the ordinances of yesterday; that, as he was credibly informed by many who had been present in different congregations, the same lamentations and discourses which the godly preachers had made before them, had been heard in other churches: that so remarkable a concurrence could proceed only from the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit: that he therefore entreated them, in vindication of their own honor, in consideration of their duty to God and their country, to lay aside all private ends, and renounce every office attended with profit or advantage: that the absence of so many members, occupied in different employments, had rendered the house extremely thin, and diminished the authority of their determinations: and that he could not forbear, for his own part, accusing himself as one who enjoyed a gainful office, that of treasurer of the navy; and though he was possessed of it before the civil commotions, and owed it not to the favor of the parliament, yet was he ready to resign it, and to sacrifice, to the welfare of his country, every consideration of private interest and advantage.

Cromwell next acted his part, and commended the preachers for having dealt with them plainly and impartially, and told them of their errors, of which they were so unwilling to be informed. Though they dwelt on many things, he said, on which he had never before reflected, yet, upon revolving them, he could not but confess that, till there were a perfect reformation in these particulars, nothing which they undertook could possibly prosper. The parliament, no doubt, continued he, had done wisely on the commencement of the war, in engaging several of its members in the most dangerous parts of it, and thereby satisfying the nation that they intended to share all hazards with the meanest of the people. But affairs are now changed. During the progress of military operations, there have arisen in the parliamentary armies many excellent officers, who are qualified for higher commands than they are now possessed of. And though it becomes not men engaged in such a cause "to put trust in the arm of flesh," yet he could assure them, that their troops contained generals fit to command in any enterprise in Christendom. The army, indeed, he was sorry to say it, did not correspond by its discipline to the merit of the officers; nor were there any hopes, till the present vices and disorders which prevail among the soldiers were repressed by a new model that their forces would ever be attended with signal success in any undertaking.

In opposition to this reasoning of the Independents, many of the Presbyterians showed the inconvenience and danger of the projected alteration. Whitlocke, in particular, a man of honor, who loved his country, though in every change of government he always adhered to the ruling power, said, that besides the ingratitude of discarding, and that by fraud and artifice, so many noble persons, to whom the parliament had hitherto owed its chief support, they would find it extremely difficult to supply the place of men now formed by experience to command and authority: that the rank alone possessed by such as were members of either house, prevented envy, retained the army in obedience, and gave weight to military orders: that greater confidence might safely be reposed in men of family and fortune, than in mere adventurers, who would be apt to entertain separate views from those which were embraced by the persons who employed them: that no maxim of policy was more undisputed, than the necessity of preserving an inseparable connection between the civil and military powers, and of retaining the latter in strict subordination to the former: that the Greeks and Romans, the wisest and most passionate lovers of liberty, had ever intrusted to their senators the command of armies, and had maintained an unconquerable jealousy of all mercenary forces: and that such men alone, whose interests were involved in those of the public, and who possessed a vote in the civil deliberations, would sufficiently respect the authority of parliament, and never could be tempted to turn the sword against those by whom it was committed to them. [1]

* Whitlocke, , 115. Rush. vol. vii. .

Notwithstanding these reasonings, a committee was chosen to frame what was called the “self-denying ordinance,” by which the members of both houses were excluded from all civil and military employments, except a few offices which were specified. This ordinance was the subject of great debate, and for a long time rent the parliament and city into factions. But at last, by the prevalence of envy with some; with others, of false modesty; with a great many, of the republican and Independent views; it passed the house of commons, and was sent to the upper house. The peers, though the scheme was in part levelled against their order; though all of them were at bottom extremely averse to it; though they even ventured once to reject it; yet possessed so little authority, that they durst not persevere in opposing the resolution of the commons; and they thought it better policy, by an unlimited compliance, to ward off that ruin which they saw approaching. [1] The ordinance, therefore, having passed both houses, Essex, Warwick, Manchester, Denbigh, Waller, Brereton, and many others, resigned their commands, and received the thanks of parliament for their good services. A pension of ten thousand pounds a year was settled on Essex.

1645.

It was agreed to recruit the army to twenty-two thousand men; and Sir Thomas Fairfax was appointed general. [2] It is remarkable that his commission did not run, like that of Essex, in the name of the king and parliament, but in that of the parliament alone; and the article concerning the safety of the king’s person was omitted: so much had animosities increased between the parties. [3] Cromwell, being a member of the lower house, should have been discarded with the others; but this impartiality would have disappointed all the views of those who had introduced the self-denying ordinance. He was saved by a subtlety, and by that political craft in which he was so eminent. At the time when the other officers resigned their commissions, care was taken that he should be sent with a body of horse to relieve Taunton besieged by the royalists. His absence being remarked orders were despatched for his immediate attendance in parliament; and the new general was directed to employ some other officer in that service. A ready compliance was feigned; and the very day was named on which, it was averred, he would take his place in the house. But Fairfax, having appointed a rendezvous of the army, wrote to the parliament, and desired leave to retain for some days Lieutenant General Cromwell, whose advice, he said, would be useful in supplying the place of those officers who had resigned. Shortly after, he begged, with much earnestness, that they would allow Cromwell to serve that campaign. [4] And thus the Independents, though the minority, prevailed by art and cunning over the Presbyterians, and bestowed the whole military authority in appearance, upon Fairfax; in reality, upon Cromwell.

* Rush. vol. vii. , 15.

* * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. vii. .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. v. , 630. Whitlocke, .

Fairfax was a person equally eminent for courage and for humanity; and though strongly infected with prejudices, or principles derived from religious and party zeal, he seems never, in the course of his public conduct, to have been diverted by private interest or ambition from adhering strictly to these principles. Sincere in his professions, disinterested in his views, open in his conduct, he had formed one of the most shining characters of the age, had not the extreme narrowness of his genius in every thing but in war, and his embarrassed and confused elocution on every occasion but when he gave orders, diminished the lustre of his merit, and rendered the part which he acted, even when vested with the supreme command, but secondary and subordinate.

Cromwell, by whose sagacity and insinuation Fairfax was entirely governed, is one of the most eminent and most singular personages that occurs in history: the strokes of his character are as open and strongly marked, as the schemes of his conduct were, during the time, dark and impenetrable. His extensive capacity enabled him to form the most enlarged projects: his enterprising genius was not dismayed with the boldest and most dangerous. Carried by his natural temper to magnanimity, to grandeur, and to an imperious and domineering policy, he yet knew, when necessary, to employ the most profound dissimulation, the most oblique and refined artifice, the semblance of the greatest moderation and simplicity. A friend to justice, though his public conduct was one continued violation of it; devoted to religion, though he perpetually employed it as the instrument of his ambition; he was engaged in crimes from the prospect of sovereign power, a temptation which is in general irresistible to human nature. And by using well that authority which he had attained by fraud and violence, he has lessened, if not overpowered, our detestation of his enormities, by our admiration of his success and of his genius.

During this important transaction of the self-denying ordinance, the negotiations for peace were likewise carried on, though with small hopes of success. The king having sent two messages, one from Evesham, [1] another from Tavistoke, [2] desiring a treaty, the parliament despatched commissioners to Oxford with proposals, as high as if they had obtained a complete victory. [3]

The advantages gained during the campaign and the great distresses of the royalists, had much elevated their hopes; and they were resolved to repose no trust in men inflamed with the highest animosity against them,

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* 4th of July, 1644.

* * 8th of Sept 1644.

* * * Dugdale, . Rush. vol. vi. p 850.

and who, were they possessed of power, were fully authorized by law to punish all their opponents as rebels and traitors.

The king, when he considered the proposals, and the disposition of the parliament, could not expect any accommodation, and had no prospect but of war, or of total submission and subjection: yet, in order to satisfy his own party, who were impatient for peace, he agreed to send the duke of Richmond and earl of Southampton with an answer to the proposals of the parliament, and at the same time to desire a treaty upon their mutual demands and pretensions. [1] It now became necessary for him to retract his former declaration, that the two houses at Westminster were not a free parliament; and accordingly he was induced, though with great reluctance, to give them, in his answer, the appellation of the parliament of England. [2] But it appeared afterwards, by a letter which he wrote to the queen, and of which a copy was taken at Naseby, that he secretly entered an explanatory protest in his council book; and he pretended, that though he had called them the parliament, he had not thereby acknowledged them for such. [3] This subtlety, which has been frequently objected to Charles, is the most noted of those very few instances from which the enemies of this prince have endeavored to load him with the imputation of insincerity; and have inferred that the parliament could repose no confidence in his professions and declarations, not even in his laws and statutes. There is, however, it must be confessed, a difference universally avowed between simply giving to men the appellation which they assume, and the formal acknowledgment of their title to it; nor is any thing more common and familiar in all public transactions.

* Whitlocke, .

* * Whitlocke, Dugdale, .

* * * His words are, “As for my calling those at London a parliament, I shall refer thee to Digby for particular satisfaction. This in general: if there had been but two besides myself of my opinion, I had not done it; and the argument that prevailed with me was, that the calling did no ways acknowledge them to be a parliament; upon which condition and construction I did it, and no otherwise; and accordingly it is registered in the council books, with the council’s unanimous approbation.” The King’s Cabinet opened.

Rush. vol. i. .

The time and place of treaty being settled, sixteen commissioners from the king met at Uxbridge with twelve authorized by the parliament, attended by the Scottish commissioners. It was agreed, that the Scottish and parliamentary commissioners should give in their demands with regard to three important articles, religion, the militia, and Ireland; and that these should be successively discussed in conference with the king's commissioners. [1] It was soon found impracticable to come to any agreement with regard to any of these articles.

In the summer of 1643, while the negotiations were carried on with Scotland, the parliament had summoned an assembly at Westminster, consisting of one hundred and twenty-one divines and thirty laymen, celebrated in their party for piety and learning. By their advice, alterations were made in the thirty-nine articles, or in the metaphysical doctrines of the church; and what was of greater importance, the liturgy was entirely abolished, and in its stead a new directory for worship was established; by which, suitably to the spirit of the Puritans, the utmost liberty both in praying and preaching was indulged to the public teachers. By the solemn league and covenant, episcopacy was abjured, as destructive of all true piety; and a national engagement, attended with every circumstance that could render a promise sacred and obligatory, was entered into with the Scots, never to suffer its readmission. All these measures showed little spirit of accommodation in the parliament; and the king's commissioners were not surprised to find the establishment of presbytery and the directory positively demanded, together with the subscription of the covenant, both by the king and kingdom. [2]

* Whitlocke, . Dugdale, .

* * Such love of contradiction prevailed in the parliament, that they had converted Christmas, which with the churchmen was a great festival, into a solemn fast and humiliation;

"in order," as they said, "that it might call to remembrance our sins and the sins of our forefathers, who, pretending to celebrate the memory of Christ, have turned this feast into an extreme forgetfulness of him, by giving liberty to carnal and sensual delights." Rush. vol. vi. . It is remarkable, that as the parliament abolished all holydays, and severely prohibited all amusement on the Sabbath; and even burned, by the hands of the hangman, the king's Book of Sports; the nation found that there was no time left for relaxation or diversion. Upon application, therefore, of the servants and apprentices, the parliament appointed the second Tuesday of every month for play and recreation. Rush.

vol. vii. . Whitlocke, . But these institutions they found great difficulty to execute: and the people were resolved to be merry when they themselves pleased, not when the parliament should prescribe it to them. The keeping of Christmas holydays was long a great mark of malignancy, and very severely censured by the commons. Whitlocke, .

Even minced pies, which custom had made a Christmas dish among the churchmen, was regarded, during that season, as a profane and superstitious viand by the sectaries; though at other times it agreed very well with their stomachs. In the parliamentary ordinance, too, for the observance of the Sabbath, they inserted a clause for the taking down of maypoles, which they called a heathenish vanity. Since we are upon this subject, it may not be amiss to mention that,

besides setting apart Sunday for the ordinances, as they called them, the godly had regular meetings on the Thursdays, for resolving cases of conscience, and conferring about their progress in grace. What they were chiefly anxious about, was the fixing the precise moment of their conversion or new birth; and whoever could not ascertain so difficult a point of calculation, could not pretend to any title to saintship. The profane scholars at Oxford, after the parliament became masters of that town, gave to the house in which the zealots assembled the denomination of Sernple Shop: the zealots, in their turn, insulted the scholars and professors; and, intruding into the place of lectures, declaimed against human learning, and challenged the most knowing of them to prove that their calling was from Christ. See Wood's Fasti Oxonienses, .

Had Charles been of a disposition to neglect all theological controversy, he yet had been obliged, in good policy, to adhere to episcopal jurisdiction; not only because it was favorable to monarchy, but because all its adherents were passionately devoted to it; and to abandon them, in what they regarded as so important an article, was forever to relinquish their friendship and assistance. But Charles had never attained such enlarged principles. He deemed bishops essential to the very being of a Christian church; and he thought himself bound, by more sacred ties than those of policy, or even of honor, to the support of that order. His concessions, therefore, on this head, he judged sufficient, when he agreed that an indulgence should be given to tender consciences with regard to ceremonies; that the bishops should exercise no act of jurisdiction or ordination without the consent and counsel of such presbyters as should be chosen by the clergy of each diocese; that they should reside constantly in their diocese, and be bound to preach every Sunday; that pluralities be abolished; that abuses in ecclesiastical courts be redressed; and that a hundred thousand pounds be levied on the bishops' estates and the chapter lands, for payment of debts contracted by the parliament. [1]

* Dugdale, , 780.

These concessions, though considerable gave no satisfaction to the parliamentary commissioners; and, without abating any thing of their rigor on this head, they proceeded to their demands with regard to the militia.

The king's partisans had all along maintained, that the fears and jealousies of the parliament, after the securities so early and easily given to public liberty, were either feigned or groundless; and that no human institution could be better poised and adjusted than was now the government of England. By the abolition of the star chamber and court of high commission, the prerogative, they said, has lost all that coercive power by which it had formerly suppressed or endangered liberty: by the establishment of triennial parliaments, it can have no leisure to acquire new powers, or guard itself, during any time, from the inspection of that vigilant assembly: by the slender revenue of the crown, no king can ever attain such influence as to procure a repeal of these salutary statutes; and while the prince commands no military force, he will in vain by violence attempt an infringement of laws so clearly defined by means of late disputes, and so passionately cherished by all his subjects. In this situation, surely the nation, governed by so virtuous a monarch, may for the present remain in tranquillity, and try whether it be not possible, by peaceful arts, to elude that danger with which it is pretended its liberties are still threatened.

But though the royalists insisted on these plausible topics before the commencement of war, they were obliged to own, that the progress of civil commotions had somewhat abated the force and evidence of this reasoning. If the power of the militia, said the opposite party, be intrusted to the king, it would not now be difficult for him to abuse that authority. By the rage of intestine discord, his partisans are inflamed into an extreme hatred against their antagonists; and have contracted, no doubt, some prejudices against popular privileges, which, in their apprehension, have been the source of so much disorder. Were the arms of the state, therefore, put entirely into such hands, what public security, it may be demanded, can be given to liberty, or what private security to those who, in opposition to the letter of the law, have so generously ventured their lives in its defence? In compliance with this apprehension, Charles offered that the arms of the state should be intrusted, during three years, to twenty commissioners, who should be named either by common agreement between him and the parliament, or one half by him, the other by the parliament. And after the expiration of that term, he insisted that his constitutional authority over the militia should again return to him. [1]

The parliamentary commissioners at first demanded, that the power of the sword should forever be intrusted to such persons as the parliament alone should appoint: [2] but afterwards they relaxed so far as to require that authority only for seven years; after which it was not to return to the king but to be settled by bill, or by common agreement between him and his parliament. [1] The king's commissioners asked, whether jealousies and fears were all on one side; and whether the prince, from such violent attempts and pretensions as he had experienced, had not at least as great reason to entertain apprehensions for his authority, as they for their liberty? Whether there were any equity in securing only one party, and leaving the other, during the space of seven years, entirely at the mercy of their enemies? Whether, if unlimited power were intrusted to the parliament during so long a period, it would not be easy for them to frame the subsequent bill in the manner most agreeable to themselves, and keep forever possession of the sword, as well as of every article of civil power and jurisdiction. [4]

The truth is, after the commencement of war, it was very difficult, if not impossible, to find security for both parties, especially for that of the parliament. Amidst such violent animosities, power alone could insure safety; and the power of one side was necessarily attended with danger to the other. Few or no instances occur in history of an equal, peaceful, and durable accommodation that has been concluded between two factions which had been inflamed into civil war.

With regard to Ireland, there were no greater hopes of agreement between the parties. The parliament demanded, that the truce with the rebels should be declared null; that the management of the war should be given over entirely to the parliament; and that, after the conquest of Ireland, the nomination of the lord lieutenant and of the judges, or in other words the sovereignty of that kingdom, should likewise remain in their hands.

* Dugdale, .

* * Dugdale, .

* * * Dugdale, .

* * * * Dugdale, .

v Dugdale, , 827

What rendered an accommodation more desperate was, that the demands on these three heads, however exorbitant, were acknowledged, by the parliamentary commissioners, to be nothing but preliminaries. After all these were granted, it would be necessary to proceed to the discussion of those other demands, still more exorbitant, which a little before had been transmitted to the king at Oxford. Such ignominious terms were there insisted on, that worse could scarcely be demanded, were Charles totally vanquished, a prisoner, and in chains. The king was required to attaint and except from a general pardon forty of the most considerable of his English subjects, and nineteen of his Scottish, together with all Popish recusants in both kingdoms who had borne arms for him. It was insisted that forty-eight more, with all the members who had sitten in either house at Oxford, all lawyers and divines who had embraced the king’s party, should be rendered incapable of any office, be forbidden the exercise of their profession, be prohibited from coming within the verge of the court, and forfeit the third of their estates to the parliament. It was required that whoever had borne arms for the king, should forfeit the tenth of their estates; or, if that did not suffice, the sixth, for the payment of public debts. As if royal authority were not sufficiently annihilated by such terms, it was demanded that the court of wards should be abolished; that all the considerable officers of the crown, and all the judges, should be appointed by parliament; and that the right of peace and war should not be exercised without the consent of that assembly.[1]

* Rush. vol. vi. . Dugdale, .

The Presbyterians, it must be confessed, after insisting on such conditions, differed only in words from the Independents, who required the establishment of a pure republic. When the debates had been carried on to no purpose during twenty days among the commissioners, they separated, and returned; those of the king to Oxford, those of the parliament to London.

A little before the commencement of this fruitless treaty, a deed was executed by the parliament, which proved their determined resolution to yield nothing, but to proceed in the same violent and imperious manner with which they had at first entered on these dangerous enterprises. Archbishop Laud, the most favored minister of the king, was brought to the scaffold; and in this instance the public might see, that popular assemblies, as, by their very number, they are in a great measure exempt from the restraint of shame, so when they also overleap the bounds of law, naturally break out into acts of the greatest tyranny and injustice.

From the time that Laud had been committed, the house of commons, engaged in enterprises of greater moment, had found no leisure to finish his impeachment, and he had patiently endured so long an imprisonment, without being brought to any trial. After the union with Scotland, the bigoted prejudices of that nation revived the like spirit in England; and the sectaries resolved to gratify their vengeance in the punishment of this prelate, who had so long, by his authority, and by the execution of penal laws, kept their zealous spirit under confinement. He was accused of high treason, in endeavoring to subvert the fundamental laws, and of other high crimes and misdemeanors. The same illegality of an accumulative crime and a constructive evidence which appeared in the case of Strafford, the same violence and iniquity in conducting the trial, are conspicuous throughout the whole course of this prosecution. The groundless charge of Popery, though belied by his whole life and conduct, was continually urged against the prisoner; and every error rendered unpardonable by this imputation, which was supposed to imply the height of all enormities. “This man, my lords," said Serjeant Wilde, concluding his long speech against him, "is like Naaman the Syrian; a great man, but a leper." [1]

We shall not enter into a detail of this matter, which at present seems to admit of little controversy. It suffices to say, that after a long trial, and the examination of above a hundred and fifty witnesses, the commons found so little likelihood of obtaining a judicial sentence against Laud, that they were obliged to have recourse to their legislative authority, and to pass an ordinance for taking away the life of this aged prelate. Notwithstanding the low condition into which the house of peers was fallen, there appeared some intention of rejecting this ordinance; and the popular leaders were again obliged to apply to the multitude, and to extinguish, by threats of new tumults, the small remains of liberty possessed by the upper house. Seven peers alone voted in this important question. The rest, either from shame or fear, took care to absent themselves. [1]

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Warwick, .

Laud, who had behaved during his trial with spirit and vigor of genius, sunk not under the horrors of his execution but though he had usually professed himself apprehensive of a violent death, he found all his fears to be dissipated before that superior courage by which he was animated. "No one," said he, "can be more willing to send me out of life, than I am desirous to go," Even upon the scaffold, and during the intervals of his prayers, he was harassed and molested by Sir John Clotworthy, a zealot of the reigning sect, and a great leader in the lower house: this was the time he chose for examining the principles of the dying primate, and trepanning him into a confession, that he trusted for his salvation to the merits of good works, not to the death of the Redeemer. [1] Having extricated himself from these theological toils, the archbishop laid his head on the block, and it was severed from the body at one blow. [2] Those religious opinions for which he suffered, contributed, no doubt, to the courage and constancy of his end. Sincere he undoubtedly was, and, however misguided, actuated by pious motives in all his pursuits; and it is to be regretted that a man of such spirit, who conducted his enterprises with so much warmth and industry, had not entertained more enlarged views, and embraced principles more favorable to the general happiness of society.

* Rush. vol. vi. p, 838, 839.

* * 12th of July, 1644.

The great and important advantage which the party gained by Strafford's death, may in some degree palliate the iniquity of the sentence pronounced against him: but the execution of this old, infirm prelate, who had so long remained an inoffensive prisoner, can be ascribed to nothing but vengeance and bigotry in those severe religionists by whom the parliament was entirely governed. That he deserved a better fate was not questioned by any reasonable man: the degree of his merit in other respects was disputed. Some accused him of recommending slavish doctrines, of promoting persecution, and of encouraging superstition; while others thought that his conduct in these three particulars would admit of apology and extenuation.

That the letter of the law, as much as the most flaming court sermon, inculcates passive obedience, is apparent; and though the spirit of a limited government seems to require, in extraordinary cases, some mitigation of so rigorous a doctrine, it must be confessed, that the presiding genius of the English constitution had rendered a mistake in this particular very natural and excusable. To inflict death, at least, on those who depart from the exact line of truth in these nice questions, so far from being favorable to national liberty, savors strongly of the spirit of tyranny and proscription.

Toleration had hitherto been so little the principle of any Christian sect, that even the Catholics, the remnant of the religion professed by their forefathers, could not obtain from the English the least indulgence. This very house of commons, in their famous remonstrance, took care to justify themselves, as from the highest imputation, from any intention to relax the golden reins of discipline, as they called them, or to grant any toleration; [1] and the enemies of the church were so fair from the beginning, as not to lay claim to liberty of conscience, which they called a toleration for soul-murder. They openly challenged the superiority, and even menaced the established church with that persecution which they afterwards exercised against her with such severity. And if the question be considered in the view of policy, though a sect, already formed and advanced, may, with good reason, demand a toleration, what title had the Puritans to this indulgence, who were just on the point of separation from the church, and whom, it might be hoped, some wholesome and legal severities would still retain in obedience? [2]

* Nalson, vol. ii. .

* * See note O, at the end of the volume.

Whatever ridicule, to a philosophical mind, may be thrown on pious ceremonies, it must be confessed that, during a very religious age, no institutions can be more advantageous to the rude multitude, and tend more to mollify that fierce and gloomy spirit of devotion to which they are subject. Even the English church, though it had retained a share of Popish ceremonies, may justly be thought too naked and unadorned, and still to approach too near the abstract and spiritual religion of the Puritans. Laud and his associates, by reviving a few primitive institutions of this nature, corrected the error of the first reformers, and presented to the affrightened and astonished mind some sensible, exterior observances, which might occupy it during its religious exercises, and abate the violence of its disappointed efforts. The thought, no longer bent on that divine and mysterious essence, so superior to the narrow capacities of mankind, was able, by means of the new model of devotion, to relax itself in the contemplation of pictures, postures, vestments, buildings; and all the fine arts which minister to religion, thereby received additional encouragement. The primate, it is true, conducted this scheme, not with the enlarged sentiments and cool reflection of a legislator, but with the intemperate zeal of a sectary; and by over looking the circumstances of the times, served rather to inflame that religious fury which he meant to repress. But this blemish is more to be regarded as a general imputation on the whole age, than any particular failing of Laud’s; and it is sufficient for his vindication to observe, that his errors were the most excusable of all those which prevailed during that zealous period.

CHAPTER LVIII

CHARLES I

1645.

While the king’s affairs declined in England, some events happened in Scotland which seemed to promise him a more prosperous issue of the quarrel.

Before the commencement of these civil disorders, the earl of Montrose, a young nobleman of a distinguished family, returning from his travels, had been introduced to the king, and had made an offer of his services; but by the insinuations of the marquis, afterwards duke of Hamilton, who possessed much of Charles’s confidence, he had not been received with that distinction to which he thought himself justly entitled. [1]

* Nalson, Intr .

Disgusted with this treatment, he had forwarded all the violence of the Covenanters; and, agreeably to the natural ardor of his genius, he had employed himself, during the first Scottish insurrection, with great zeal, as well as success, in levying and conducting their armies. Being commissioned by the “Tables,” to wait upon the king while the royal army lay at Berwick, he was so gained by the civilities and caresses of that monarch, that he thenceforth devoted himself entirely, though secretly, to his service, and entered into a close correspondence with him. In the second insurrection, a great military command was intrusted to him by the Covenanters; and he was the first that passed the Tweed, at the head of their troops, in the invasion of England. He found means, however, soon after to convey a letter to the king; and by the infidelity of some about that prince, — Hamilton as was suspected, — a copy of this letter was sent to Leven, the Scottish general. Being accused of treachery, and a correspondence with the enemy, Montrose openly avowed the letter, and asked the generals if they dared to call their sovereign an enemy; and by this bold and magnanimous behavior he escaped the danger of an immediate prosecution. As he was now fully known to be of the royal party, he no longer concealed his principles; and he endeavored to draw those who had entertained like sentiments into a bond of association for his master's service. Though thrown into prison for this enterprise, [1] and detained some time, he was not discouraged; but still continued, by his countenance and protection, to infuse spirit into the distressed royalists. Among other persons of distinction who united themselves to him was Lord Napier of Merchiston, son of the famous inventor of the logarithms, the person to whom the title of a "great man" is more justly due, than to any other whom his country ever produced. There was in Scotland another party, who, professing equal attachment to the king's service, pretended only to differ with Montrose about the means of attaining the same end; and of that party Duke Hamilton was the leader. This nobleman had cause to be extremely devoted to the king, not only by reason of the connection of blood which united him to the royal family, but on account of the great confidence and favor with which he had ever been honored by his master. Being accused by Lord Rae, not without some appearance of probability, of a conspiracy against the king, Charles was so far from harboring suspicion against him, that, the very first time Hamilton came to court, he received him into his bed-chamber, and passed alone the night with him. [2] But such was the duke's unhappy fate or conduct, that he escaped not the imputation of treachery to his friend and sovereign; and though he at last sacrificed his life in the king's service, his integrity and sincerity have not been thought by historians entirely free from blemish. Perhaps (and this is the more probable opinion) the subtleties and refinements of his conduct, and his temporizing maxims, though accompanied with good intentions, have been the chief cause of a suspicion which has never yet been either fully proved or refuted.

* It is not improper to take notice of a mistake committed by Clarendon, much to the disadvantage of this gallant nobleman; that he offered the king, when his majesty was in Scotland, to assassinate Argyle. All the time the king was in Scotland, Montrose was confined in prison. Rush. vol. vi.

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* * Nalson, vol ii. .

As much as the bold and vivid spirit of Montrose prompted him to enterprising measures, as much was the cautious temper of Hamilton inclined to such as were moderate and dilatory. While the former foretold that the Scottish Covenanters were secretly forming a union with the

English parliament, and inculcated the necessity of preventing them by some vigorous undertaking, the latter still insisted, that every such attempt would precipitate them into measures to which otherwise they were not perhaps inclined. After the Scottish convention was summoned without the king’s authority, the former exclaimed, that their intentions were now visible, and that if some unexpected blow were not struck to dissipate them, they would arm the whole nation against the king; the latter maintained the possibility of outvoting the disaffected party, and securing by peaceful means the allegiance of the kingdom. [1] Unhappily for the royal cause, Hamilton’s representations met with more credit from the king and queen than those of Montrose; and the Covenanters were allowed, without interruption, to proceed in all their hostile measures. Montrose then hastened to Oxford where his invectives against Hamilton’s treachery, concurring with the general prepossession, and supported by the unfortunate event of his counsels, were entertained with universal probation. Influenced by the clamor of his party, more than his own suspicions, Charles, as soon as Hamilton appeared, sent him prisoner to Pendennis Castle, in Cornwall. His brother Laneric, who was also put under confinement found means to make his escape, and to fly into Scotland.

The king’s ears were now open to Montrose’s counsels, who proposed none but the boldest and most daring, agreeably to the desperate state of the royal cause in Scotland. Though the whole nation was subjected by the Covenanters, though great armies were kept on foot by them, and every place guarded by a vigilant administration, he undertook, by his own credit, and that of the few friends who remained to the king, to raise such commotions as would soon oblige the malecontents to recall those forces which had so sensibly thrown the balance in favor of the parliament. [2] Not discouraged with the defeat at Marston Moor, which rendered it impossible for him to draw any succor from England, he was content to stipulate with the earl of Antrim, a nobleman of Ireland, for some supply of men from that country. And he himself changing his disguises, and passing through many dangers, arrived in Scotland; where he lay concealed in the borders of the Highlands, and secretly prepared the minds of his partisans for attempting some great enterprise. [3]

* Clarendon, vol. iii. , 381. Rush. vol. vi. . Wishart, ca.

* * Wishart, ca.

* * * Clarendon, vol. v. . Rush. vol. vi. p, 982. Wishart, ca

No sooner were the Irish landed, though not exceeding eleven hundred foot, very ill armed, than Montrose declared himself, and entered upon that scene of action which has rendered his name so celebrated. About eight hundred of the men of Athole flocked to his standard. Five hundred men more, who had been levied by the Covenanters, were persuaded to embrace the royal cause: and with this combined force, he hastened to attack Lord Elcho, who lay at Perth with an army of six thousand men, assembled upon the first news of the Irish invasion. Montrose, inferior in number, totally unprovided with horse, ill supplied with arms and ammunition, had nothing to depend on, but the courage which he himself, by his own example, and the rapidity of his enterprises, should inspire into his raw soldiers. Having received the fire of the enemy, which was answered chiefly by a volley of stones, he rushed amidst them with his sword drawn, threw them into confusion, pushed his advantage, and obtained a complete victory, with the slaughter of two thousand of the Covenanters. [1]

This victory, though it augmented the renown of Montrose, increased not his power or numbers. The far greater part of the kingdom was extremely attached to the covenant; and such as bore an affection to the royal cause, were terrified by the established authority of the opposite party. Dreading the superior power of Argyle, who, having joined his vassals to a force levied by the public, was approaching with a considerable army, Montrose hastened northwards, in order to rouse again the marquis of Huntley and the Gordons, who, having before hastily taken arms, had been instantly suppressed by the Covenanters. He was joined on his march by the earl of Airly, with his two younger sons, Sir Thomas and Sir David Ogilvy: the eldest was at that time a prisoner with the enemy. He attacked at Aberdeen the Lord Burley, who commanded a force of two thousand five hundred men. After a sharp combat, by his undaunted courage, which in his situation was true policy, and was also not unaccompanied with military skill, he put the enemy to flight, and in the pursuit did great execution upon them. [2]

* 1st of September, 1644. Rush. vol. vi. . Wishart, ca.

* * 11th of September, 1644. Rush. vol. vi. . Wishart, ca.

But by this second advantage he obtained not the end which he expected. The envious nature of Huntley, jealous of Montrose’s glory, rendered him averse to join an army where he himself must be so much eclipsed by the superior merit of the general. Argyle, reënforced by the earl of Lothian, was behind him with a great army: the militia of the northern counties, Murray, Ross, Caithness, to the number of five thousand men, opposed him in front, and guarded the banks of the Spey, a deep and rapid river. In order to elude these numerous armies, he turned aside into the hills, and saved his weak but active troops in Badenoch. After some marches and countermarches, Argyle came up with him at Faivy Castle. This nobleman’s character, though celebrated for political courage and conduct, was very low for military prowess, and after some skirmishes, in which he was worsted, he here allowed Montrose to escape him. By quick marches through these inaccessible mountains, that general freed himself from the superior forces of the Covenanters.

Such was the situation of Montrose, that very good or very ill fortune was equally destructive to him, and diminished his army. After every victory, his soldiers, greedy of spoil, but deeming the smallest acquisition to be unexhausted riches, deserted in great numbers, and went home to secure the treasures which they had acquired. Tired too, and spent with hasty and long marches in the depth of winter, through snowy mountains, unprovided with every necessary, they fell off, and left their general almost alone with the Irish, who, having no place to which they could retire, still adhered to him in every fortune.

With these, and some reënforcements of the Atholemen and Macdonalds whom he had recalled, Montrose fell suddenly upon Argyle’s country, and let loose upon it all the rage of war; carrying off the cattle, burning the houses, and putting the inhabitants to the sword. This severity, by which Montrose sullied his victories, was the result of private animosity against the chieftain, as much as of zeal for the public cause, Argyle, collecting three thousand men, marched in quest of the enemy, who had retired with their plunder; and he lay at Innerlochy, supposing himself still at a considerable distance from them. The earl of Seaforth, at the head of the garrison of Inverness, who were veteran soldiers, joined to five thousand new levied troops of the northern counties, pressed the royalists on the other side, and threatened them with inevitable destruction. By a quick and unexpected march, Montrose hastened to Innerlochy, and presented himself in order of battle before the surprised but not affrightened Covenanters. Argyle alone, seized with a panic, deserted his army, who still maintained their ground, and gave battle to the royalists. After a vigorous resistance, they were defeated, and pursued with great slaughter. [1] And the power of the Campbells (that is Argyle's name) being thus broken, the Highlanders, who were in general well affected to the royal cause, began to join Montrose's camp in great numbers. Seaforth's army dispersed of itself, at the very terror of his name. And Lord Gordon, eldest son of Huntley, having escaped from his uncle Argyle, who had hitherto detained him, now joined Montrose, with no contemptible number of his followers, attended by his brother, the earl of Aboine.

The council at Edinburgh, alarmed at Montrose's progress, began to think of a more regular plan of defence against an enemy whose repeated victories had rendered him extremely formidable. They sent for Baillie, an officer of reputation, from England; and joining him in command with Urrey, who had again enlisted himself among the king's enemies, they sent them to the field with a considerable army against the royalists. Montrose, with a detachment of eight hundred men, had attacked Dundee, a town extremely zealous for the covenant, and having carried it by assault, had delivered it up to be plundered by his soldiers; when Baillie and Urrey, with their whole force, were unexpectedly upon him. [2] His conduct and presence of mind in this emergence appeared conspicuous. Instantly he called off his soldiers from plunder, put them in order, secured his retreat by the most skilful measures; and having marched sixty miles in the face of an enemy much superior, without stopping, or allowing his soldiers the least sleep or refreshment, he at last secured himself in the mountains.

Baillie and Urrey now divided their troops, in order the better to conduct the war against an enemy who surprised them as much by the rapidity of his marches, as by the boldness of his enterprises. Urrey, at the head of four thousand men, met him at Alderne, near Inverness; and, encouraged by the

* Rush. vol. vi. . Wishart, ca.

* * Rush. vol. vii. . Wishart, ca.

superiority of number, (for the Covenanters were double the royalists,) attacked him in the post which he had chosen Montrose, having placed his right wing in strong ground, drew the best of his forces to the other, and left no main body between them; a defect which he artfully concealed, by showing a few men through the trees and bushes with which that ground was covered. That Urrey might have no leisure to perceive the stratagem, he instantly led his left wing to the charge; and, making a furious impression upon the Covenanters, drove them off the field, and gained a complete victory. [1] In this battle, the valor of young Napier, son to the lord of that name, shone out with signal lustre.

Baillie now advanced, in order to revenge Urrey’s discomfiture; but at Alford he met himself with a like fate. Montrose, weak in cavalry, here lined his troops of horse with infantry; and after putting the enemy’s horse to rout, fell with united force upon their foot, who were entirely cut in pieces, though with the loss of the gallant Lord Gordon on the part of the royalists. [2] And having thus prevailed in so many battles, which his vigor ever rendered as decisive as they were successful, he summoned together all his friends and partisans, and prepared himself for marching into the southern provinces, in order to put a final period to the power of the Covenanters, and dissipate the parliament, which, with great pomp and solemnity, they had summoned to meet at St. Johnstone’s.

While the fire was thus kindled in the north of the island, it blazed out with no less fury in the south: the parliamentary and royal armies, as soon as the season would permit, prepared to take the field, in hopes of bringing their important quarrel to a quick decision. The passing of the self-denying ordinance had been protracted by so many debates and intrigues, that the spring was far advanced before it received the sanction of both houses; and it was thought dangerous by many to introduce, so near the time of action, such great innovations into the army. Had not the punctilious principles of Essex engaged him, amidst all the disgusts which he received, to pay implicit obedience to the parliament, this alteration had not been effected without some fatal accident: since, notwithstanding his prompt resignation of the command, a mutiny was generally apprehended. [3]

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* Rush. vol. vii. . Wishart, ca.

* * Rush. vol. vii. . Wishart, ca.

* * * Rush. vol. vii. , 127.

Fairfax, or, more properly speaking, Cromwell under his name, introduced at last the new model into the army, and threw the troops into a different shape. From the same men new regiments and new companies were formed, different officers appointed, and the whole military force put into such hands as the Independents could rely on. Besides members of parliament who were excluded, many officers, unwilling to serve under the new generals, threw up their commissions, and unwarily facilitated the project of putting the army entirely into the hands of that faction.

Though the discipline of the former parliamentary army was not contemptible, a more exact plan was introduced, and rigorously executed, by these new commanders. Valor indeed was very generally diffused over the one party as well as the other, during this period: discipline also was attained by the forces of the parliament: but the perfection of the military art, in concerting the general plans of action and the operations of the field, seems still on both sides to have been in a great measure wanting. Historians at least, perhaps from their own ignorance and inexperience, have not remarked any thing but a headlong, impetuous conduct; each party hurrying to a battle, where valor and fortune chiefly determined the success. The great ornament of history, during these reigns, are the civil, not the military transactions.

Never surely was a more singular army assembled, than that which was now set on foot by the parliament. To the greater number of the regiments chaplains were not appointed, the officers assumed the spiritual duty, and united it with their military functions. During the intervals of action, they occupied themselves in sermons, prayers, exhortations; and the same emulation there attended them, which in the field is so necessary to support the honor of that profession. Rapturous ecstasies supplied the place of study and reflection; and while the zealous devotees poured out their thoughts in unpremeditated harangues, they mistook that eloquence which to their own surprise, as well as that of others, flowed in upon them, for divine illuminations, and for illapses of the Holy Spirit. Wherever they were quartered, they excluded the minister from his pulpit; and, usurping his place, conveyed their sentiments to the audience, with all the authority which followed their power, their valor, and their military exploits, united to their appearing zeal and fervor. The private soldiers, seized with the same spirit, employed their vacant hours in prayer, in perusing the Holy Scriptures, in ghostly conferences where they compared the progress of their in grace, and mutually stimulated each other to further advances in the great work of their salvation. When they were marching to battle, the whole field resounded, as well with psalms and spiritual songs adapted to the occasion, as with the instruments of military music: [1] and every man endeavored to drown the sense of present danger in the prospect of that crown of glory which was set before him. In so holy a cause, wounds were esteemed meritorious; death, martyrdom; and the hurry and dangers of action, instead of banishing their pious visions, rather served to impress their minds more strongly with them.

The royalists were desirous of throwing a ridicule on this fanaticism of the parliamentary armies, without being sensible how much reason they had to apprehend its dangerous consequences. The forces assembled by the king at Oxford, in the west, and in other places, were equal, if not superior in number to their adversaries; but actuated by a very different spirit. That license which had been introduced by want of pay, had risen to a great height among them, and rendered them more formidable to their friends than to their enemies. Prince Rupert, negligent of the people, fond of the soldiery, had indulged the troops in unwarrantable liberties: Wilmot, a man of dissolute manners, had promoted the same spirit of disorder: and the licentious Goring, Gerrard, Sir Richard Granville, now carried it to a great pitch of enormity. In the west especially, where Goring commanded, universal spoil and havoc were committed; and the whole country was laid waste by the rapine of the army. All distinction of parties being in a manner dropped, the most devoted friends of the church and monarchy wished there for such success to the parliamentary forces as might put an end to these oppressions. The country people, despoiled of their substance, flocked together in several places, armed with clubs and staves; and though they professed an enmity to the soldiers of both parties, their hatred was in most places levelled chiefly against the royalists, from whom they had met with the worst treatment. Many thousands of these tumultuary peasants were assembled in different parts of England; who destroyed all such straggling soldiers as they met with, and much infested the armies. [2]

* Dugdale, . Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vii. , 61, 62. Whitlocke, , 131, 133, 136, Clarendon, vol. v. .

The disposition of the forces on both sides was as follows: part of the Scottish army was employed in taking Pomfret and other towns in Yorkshire: part of it besieged Carlisle valiantly defended by Sir Thomas Glenham. Chester, where Biron commanded, had long been blockaded by Sir William Brereton; and was reduced to great difficulties. The king, being joined by the princes Rupert and Maurice, lay at Oxford with a considerable army, about fifteen thousand men. Fairfax and Cromwell were posted at Windsor, with the new-modelled army, about twenty-two thousand men. Taunton, in the county of Somerset, defended by Blake, suffered a long siege from Sir Richard Granville, who commanded an army of about eight thousand men; and though the defence had been obstinate, the garrison was now reduced to the last extremity. Goring commanded in the west an army of nearly the same number. [1]

On opening the campaign, the king formed the project of relieving Chester; Fairfax, that of relieving Taunton. The king was first in motion. When he advanced to Draiton, in Shropshire, Biron met him, and brought intelligence that his approach had raised the siege, and that the parliamentary army had withdrawn. Fairfax, having reached Salisbury in his road westward, received orders from the committee of both kingdoms appointed for the management of the war, to return and lay siege to Oxford, now exposed by the king’s absence. He obeyed, after sending Colonel Weldon to the west with a detachment of four thousand men. On Weldon’s approach, Granville, who imagined that Fairfax with his whole army was upon him, raised the siege, and allowed this pertinacious town, now half taken and half burned, to receive relief: but the royalists, being reënforced with three thousand horse under Goring, again advanced to Taunton, and shut up Weldon, with his small army, in that ruinous place. [2]

The king, having effected his purpose with regard to Chester returned southwards: and in his way sat down before Leicester, a garrison of the parliaments. Having made a breach in the wall, he stormed the town on all sides; and, after a furious assault, the soldiers entered sword in hand, and committed all those disorders to which their natural violence, especially when inflamed by resistance, is so much addicted. [3]

* Rush. vol. vii. , 19, etc.

* * Rush, vol. vii. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. v. .

A great booty was taken and distributed among them: fifteen hundred prisoners fell into the king's hands. This success, which struck a great terror into the parliamentary army, determined Fairfax to leave Oxford, which he was beginning to approach; and he marched towards the king, with an intention of offering him battle. The king was advancing towards Oxford, in order to raise the siege, which, he apprehended, was now begun; and both armies, ere they were aware, had advanced within six miles of each other. A council of war was called by the king, in order to deliberate concerning the measures which he should now pursue. On the one hand, it seemed more prudent to delay the combat; because Gerrard, who lay in Wales with three thousand men, might be enabled in a little time to join the army; and Goring, it was hoped, would soon be master of Taunton, and having put the west in full security, would then unite his forces to those of the king, and give him an incontestable superiority over the enemy. On the other hand, Prince Rupert, whose boiling ardor still pushed him on to battle, excited the impatient humor of the nobility and gentry of which the army was full; and urged the many difficulties under which the royalists labored, and from which nothing but a victory could relieve them: the resolution was taken to give battle to Fairfax; and the royal army immediately advanced upon him.

At Naseby was fought, with forces nearly equal, this decisive and well-disputed action between the king and parliament. The main body of the royalists was commanded by the king himself; the right wing by Prince Rupert; the left by Sir Marmaduke Langdale. Fairfax, seconded by Skippon, placed himself in the main body of the opposite army; Cromwell in the right wing; Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, in the left. The charge was begun, with his usual celerity and usual success, by Prince Rupert. Though Ireton made stout resistance, and even after he was run through the thigh with a pike, still maintained the combat till he was taken prisoner, yet was that whole wing broken, and pursued with precipitate fury by Rupert: he was even so inconsiderate as to lose time in summoning and attacking the artillery of the enemy, which had been left with a good guard of infantry.

The king led on his main body, and displayed in this action all the conduct of a prudent general, and all the valor of a stout soldier. [1]

* Whitlocke, .

Fairfax and Skippon encountered him, and well supported that reputation which they had acquired. Skippon, being dangerously wounded, was desired by Fairfax to leave the field; but he declared that he would remain there as long as one man maintained his ground. [1] The infantry of the parliament was broken, and pressed upon by the king; till Fairfax, with great presence of mind, brought up the reserve, and renewed the combat. Meanwhile Cromwell, having led on his troops to the attack of Langdale, overbore the force of the royalists, and by his prudence improved that advantage which he had gained by his valor. Having pursued the enemy about a quarter of a mile, and detached some troops to prevent their rallying, he turned back upon the king's infantry, and threw them into the utmost confusion. One regiment alone preserved its order unbroken, though twice desperately assailed by Fairfax: and that general, excited by so steady a resistance, ordered Doyley, the captain of his life-guard, to give them a third charge in front, while he himself attacked them in the rear. The regiment was broken. Fairfax, with his own hands, killed an ensign, and, having seized the colors, gave them to a soldier to keep for him. The soldier, afterwards boasting that he had won this trophy, was reproved by Doyley, who had seen the action. "Let him retain that honor," said Fairfax; "I have to-day acquired enough beside." [2]

Prince Rupert, sensible too late of his error, left the fruitless attack on the enemy's artillery, and joined the king, whose infantry was now totally discomfited. Charles exhorted this body of cavalry not to despair, and cried aloud to them, "One charge more, and we recover the day." [3] But the disadvantages under which they labored were too evident; and they could by no means be induced to renew the combat. Charles was obliged to quit the field, and leave the victory to the enemy. [4]

* Rush, vol. vii. . Whitlocke, .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. .

* * * * Clarendon, vol. iv. , 657. Walker , 131

The slain on the side of the parliament exceeded those on the side of the king: they lost a thousand men; he not above eight hundred. But Fairfax made five hundred officers prisoners, and four thousand private men; took all the king's artillery and ammunition, and totally dissipated his infantry: so that scarce any victory could be more complete than that which he obtained.

Among the other spoils was seized the king's cabinet, with the copies of his letters to the queen, which the parliament afterwards ordered to be published. [1] They chose, no doubt, such of them as they thought would reflect dishonor on him: yet, upon the whole, the letters are written with delicacy and tenderness, and give an advantageous idea both of the king's genius and morals. A mighty fondness, it is true, and attachment, he expresses to his consort, and often professes that he never would embrace any measures which she disapproved: but such declarations of civility and confidence are not always to be taken in a full, literal sense. And so legitimate an affection, avowed by the laws of God and man, may perhaps be excusable towards a woman of beauty and spirit, even though she was a Papist. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. iv. .

* * Hearne has published the following extract from a manuscript work of Sir Simon D'Ewes, who was no mean man in the parliamentary party. "On Thursday, the 30th and last day of this instant June, 1625, I went to Whitehall, purposely to see the queen, which I did fully all the time she sat at dinner. I perceived her to be a most absolute delicate lady,

after I had exactly surveyed all the features of her face,

much enlivened by her radiant and sparkling black eyes.

Besides, her deportment among her women was so sweet and humble, and her speech and looks to her other servants so mild and gracious, as I could not abstain from divers deep-fetched sighs, to consider that she wanted the knowledge of the true religion." See Preface to the Chronicle of Dunstable, p 64.

The Athenians, having intercepted a letter written by their enemy, Philip of Macedon, to his wife Olympia, so far from being moved by a curiosity of prying into the secrets of that relation, immediately sent the letter to the queen unopened. Philip was not their sovereign; nor were they inflamed with that violent animosity against him which attends all civil commotions.

After the battle, the king retreated with that body of horse which remained entire, first to Hereford, then to Abergavenny; and remained some time in Wales, from the vain hope of raising a body of infantry in those harassed and exhausted quarters. Fairfax, having first retaken Leicester, which was surrendered upon articles, began to deliberate concerning his future enterprises. A letter was brought him, written by Goring to the king, and unfortunately intrusted to a spy of Fairfax's. Goring there informed the king, that in three weeks he hoped to be master of Taunton, after which he would join his majesty with all the forces in the west; and entreated him, in the mean while to avoid coming to any general action. This letter, which, had it been safely delivered, had probably prevented the battle of Naseby, served now to direct the operations of Fairfax. [1] After leaving a body of three thousand men to Pointz and Rossiter, with orders to attend the king's motions, he marched immediately to the west, with a view of saving Taunton, and suppressing the only considerable force which now remained to the royalists.

In the beginning of the campaign, Charles, apprehensive of the event, had sent the prince of Wales, then fifteen years of age, to the west, with the title of General, and had given orders, if he were pressed by the enemy, that he should make his escape into a foreign country, and save one part of the royal family from the violence of the parliament. Prince Rupert had thrown himself into Bristol, with an intention of defending that important city. Goring commanded the army before Taunton.

On Fairfax's approach, the siege of Taunton was raised; and the royalists retired to Lamport, an open town in the county of Somerset. Fairfax attacked them in that post, beat them from it, killed about three hundred men, and took one thousand four hundred prisoners. [2] After this advantage, he sat down before Bridgewater, a town esteemed strong, and of great consequence in that country. When he had entered the outer town by storm, Windham, the Governor, who had retired into the inner, immediately capitulated, and delivered up the place to Fairfax. The garrison, to the number of two thousand six hundred men, were made prisoners of war.

Fairfax, having next taken Bath and Sherborne, resolved to lay siege to Bristol, and made great preparations for an enterprise which, from the strength of the garrison, and the reputation of Prince Rupert, the governor, was deemed of the last importance. But, so precarious in most men is this quality of military courage, a poorer defence was not made by any town during the whole war; and the general expectations were here extremely disappointed. No sooner had the parliamentary forces entered the lines by storm, than the prince capitulated, and surrendered the city to Fairfax. [3] A few days before, he had written a letter to the king, in which he undertook to defend the place for four months, if no mutiny obliged him to surrender it.

* Rush, vol. vii. .

* * Rush, vol. vii. .

* * * Rush, vol. vii .

Charles, who was forming schemes and collecting forces for the relief of Bristol, was astonished at so unexpected an event, which was little less fatal to his cause than the defeat at Naseby. [1] Full of indignation, he instantly recalled all Prince Rupert’s commissions, and sent him a pass to go beyond sea. [2]

The king’s affairs now went fast to ruin in all quarters. The Scots, having made themselves masters of Carlisle, after an obstinate siege, marched southwards, and laid siege to Hereford; but were obliged to raise it on the king’s approach: and this was the last glimpse of success which attended his arms. Having marched to the relief of Chester, which was anew besieged by the parliamentary forces under Colonel Jones, Pointz attacked his rear, and forced him to give battle. While the fight was continued with great obstinacy, and victory seemed to incline to the royalists, Jones fell upon them from the other side, and put them to rout, with the loss of six hundred slain and one thousand prisoners. [3] The king, with the remains of his broken army, fled to Newark, and thence escaped to Oxford, where he shut himself up during the winter season.

* Clarendon, vol. vi. . Walker, .

* * Clarendon, vol. iv. .

* * * Rush, vii. .

The news which he received from every quarter, were no less fatal than those events which passed where he himself was present. Fairfax and Cromwell, after the surrender of Bristol, having divided their forces, the former marched westwards, in order to complete the conquest of Devonshire and Cornwall; the latter attacked the king’s garrisons which lay to the east of Bristol. The Devizes were surrendered to Cromwell; Berkeley Castle was taken by storm; Winchester capitulated; Basing House was entered sword in hand; and all these middle counties of England were, in a little time, reduced to obedience under the parliament.

1646.

The same rapid and uninterrupted success attended Fairfax. The parliamentary forces, elated by past victories, governed by the most rigid discipline, met with no equal opposition from troops dismayed by repeated defeats, and corrupted by licentious manners. After beating up the quarters of the royalists at Bovey Tracy, Fairfax sat down before Dartmouth, and in a few days entered it by storm. Poudram Castle being taken by him, and Exeter blockaded on all sides, Hopton, a man of merit, who now commanded the royalists, having advanced to the relief of that town with an army of eight thousand men, met with the parliamentary army at Torrington, where he was defeated, all his foot dispersed, and he himself with his horse obliged to retire into Cornwall. Fairfax followed him, and vigorously pursued the victory. Having enclosed the royalists at Truro, he forced the whole army, consisting of five thousand men, chiefly cavalry, to surrender upon terms. The soldiers, delivering up their horses and arms, were allowed to disband, and received twenty shillings apiece, to carry them to their respective abodes. Such of the officers as desired it had passes to retire beyond sea: the others, having promised never more to bear arms, paid compositions to the parliament, [1] and procured their pardon. [2] And thus Fairfax, after taking Exeter, which completed the conquest of the west, marched with his victorious army to the centre of the kingdom, and fixed his camp at Newbury. The prince of Wales, in pursuance of the king's orders, retired to Scilly, thence to Jersey; whence he went to Paris, where he joined the queen, who had fled thither from Exeter, at the time the earl of Essex conducted the parliamentary army to the west.

In the other parts of England, Hereford was taken by surprise: Chester surrendered: Lord Digby, who had attempted with one thousand two hundred horse to break into Scotland and join Montrose, was defeated at Sherburne, in Yorkshire, by Colonel Copley; his whole force was dispersed, and he himself was obliged to fly, first to the Isle of Man, thence to Ireland. News, too, arrived that Montrose himself, after some more successes, was at last routed; and this only remaining hope of the royal party finally extinguished.

When Montrose descended into the southern counties, the Covenanters, assembling their whole force, met him with a numerous army, and gave him battle, but without success, at Kilsyth. [3] This was the most complete victory that Montrose ever obtained.

* These compositions were different, according to the demerits of the person: but by a vote of the house, they could not be under two years' rent of the delinquent's estate. Journ. 11th of August, 1648 Whitlocke, .

* * Rush, vol. vii. p 108.

* * * 15th August, 1645.

The royalists put to sword six thousand of their enemies, and left the Covenanters no remains of any army in Scotland. The whole kingdom was shaken with these repeated successes of Montrose; and many noblemen, who secretly favored the royal cause, now declared openly for it when they saw a force able to support them. The marquis of Douglas, the earls of Annandale and Hartfield, the lords Fleming, Seton, Maderty, Carnegy, with many others, flocked to the royal standard. Edinburgh opened its gates, and gave liberty to all the prisoners there detained by the Covenanters. Among the rest was Lord Ogilvy, son of Airly, whose family had contributed extremely to the victory gained at Kilsyth. [1]

David Lesly was detached from the army in England, and marched to the relief of his distressed party in Scotland. Montrose advanced still farther to the south, allured by vain hopes, both of rousing to arms the earls of Hume, Traquaire, and Roxborough, who had promised to join him; and of obtaining from England some supply of cavalry, in which he was deficient. By the negligence of his scouts, Lesly, at Philipbaugh in the Forest, surprised his army, much diminished in numbers, from the desertion of the Highlanders, who had retired to the hills, according to custom, in order to secure their plunder. After a sharp conflict, where Montrose exerted great valor, his forces were routed by Lesly's cavalry; [2] and he himself was obliged to fly with his broken forces into the mountains, where he again prepared himself for new battles and new enterprises. [3]

The Covenanters used the victory with rigor. Their prisoners, Sir Robert Spotiswood, secretary of state, and son to the late primate, Sir Philip Nisbet, Sir William Hollo, Colonel Nathaniel Gordon, Andrew Guthry, son of the bishop of Murray, William Murray, son of the earl of Tullibardine, were condemned and executed. The sole crime imputed to the secretary was his delivering to Montrose the king's commission to be captain-general of Scotland. Lord Ogilvy, who was again taken prisoner, would have undergone the same fate, had not his sister found means to procure his escape by changing clothes with him. For this instance of courage and dexterity, she met with harsh usage. The clergy solicited the parliament that more royalists might be executed; but could not obtain their request. [4]

* Rush, vol. vii , 231. Wishart, cap, 13.

* * 13th Sept. 1645.

* * * Rush, vol. vii.

* * * * Guthry's Memoirs. Rush. vol. vii. .

After all these repeated disasters, which every where befell the royal party, there remained only one body of troops on which fortune could exercise her rigor. Lord Astley, with a small army of three thousand men, chiefly cavalry, marching to Oxford in order to join the king, was met at Stowe by Colonel Morgan, and entirely defeated, himself being taken prisoner. "You have done your work," said Astley to the parliamentary officers; "and may now go to play, unless you choose to fall out among yourselves." [1]

The condition of the king during this whole winter was to the last degree disastrous and melancholy. As the dread of ills is commonly more oppressive than their real presence, perhaps in no period of his life was he more justly the object of compassion. His vigor of mind, which, though it sometimes failed him in acting, never deserted him in his sufferings, was what alone supported him; and he was determined, as he wrote to Lord Digby, if he could not live as a king, to die like a gentleman; nor should any of his friends, he said, ever have reason to blush for the prince whom they had so unfortunately served. [2] The murmurs of discontented officers, on the one hand, harassed their unhappy sovereign; while they overrated those services and sufferings which they now saw must forever go unrewarded. [3] The affectionate duty, on the other hand, of his more generous friends, who respected his misfortunes and his virtues as much as his dignity, wrung his heart with a new sorrow, when he reflected that such disinterested attachment would so soon be exposed to the rigor of his implacable enemies. Repeated attempts which he made for a peaceful and equitable accommodation with the parliament, served to no purpose but to convince them that the victory was entirely in their hands. They deigned not to make the least reply to several of his messages, in which he desired a passport for commissioners. [4]

* Rush, vol. vii. . It was the same Astley who, before he charged at the battle of Edgehill, made this short prayer: "O Lord, thou knowest how busy I must be this day.

If I forget thee, do not thou forget me," And with that rose up and cried, "March on, boys!" Warwick, . There were certainly much longer prayers said in the parliamentary army; but I doubt if there were so good a one.

* * Carte's Ormond, vol. iii. No. 433.

* * * Walker,

* * * * Rush, vol. vii. , etc.

At last, after reproaching him with the blood spilt during the war, they told him that they were preparing bills for him; and his passing them would be the best pledge of his inclination towards peace: in other words, he must yield at discretion. [1] He desired a personal treaty, and offered to come to London, upon receiving a safe-conduct for himself and his attendants: they absolutely refused him admittance, and issued orders for the guarding, that is, the seizing of his person, in case he should attempt to visit them. [2]

* Rush, vol. vii. , 219. Clarendon, vol. iv. .

* * Rush, vol. vii. p 249. Clarendon, vol. iv. .

A new incident, which happened in Ireland, served to inflame the minds of men, and to increase those calumnies with which his enemies had so much loaded him, and which he ever regarded as the most grievous part of his misfortunes. After the cessation with the Irish rebels, the king was desirous of concluding a final peace with them, and obtaining their assistance in England: and he gave authority to Ormond, lord lieutenant, to promise them an abrogation of all the penal laws enacted against Catholics; together with the suspension of Poinings's statute, with regard to some particular bills which should be agreed on. Lord Herbert, created earl of Glamorgan, (though his patent had not yet passed the seals,) having occasion for his private affairs to go to Ireland, the king considered that this nobleman, being a Catholic, and allied to the best Irish families, might be of service: he also foresaw that further concessions with regard to religion might probably be demanded by the bigoted Irish; and that, as these concessions, however necessary, would give great scandal to the Protestant zealots in his three kingdoms, if would be requisite both to conceal them during some time, and to preserve Ormond's character by giving private orders to Glamorgan to conclude and sign these articles. But as he had a better opinion of Glamorgan's zeal and affection for his service than of his capacity, he enjoined him to communicate all his measures to Ormond; and though the final conclusion of the treaty must be executed only in Glamorgan's own name, he was required to be directed in the steps towards it by the opinion of the lord lieutenant. Glamorgan, bigoted to his religion, and passionate for the king's service, but guided in these pursuits by no manner of judgment or discretion, secretly, of himself, without any communication with Ormond, concluded a peace with the council of Kilkenny, and agreed, in the king’s name, that the Irish should enjoy all the churches of which they had ever been in possession since the commencement of their insurrection, on condition that they should assist the king in England with a body of ten thousand men. This transaction was discovered by accident. The titular archbishop of Tuam being killed by a sally of the garrison of Sligo, the articles of the treaty were found among his baggage, and were immediately published every where, and copies of them sent over to the English parliament. [1] The lord lieutenant and Lord Digby, foreseeing the clamor which would be raised against the king, committed Glamorgan to prison, charged him with treason for his temerity, and maintained that he had acted altogether without any authority from his master. The English parliament, however, neglected not so favorable an opportunity of reviving the old clamor with regard to the king’s favor of Popery, and accused him of delivering over, in a manner, the whole kingdom of Ireland to that hated sect. The king told them, “that the earl of Glamorgan, having made an offer to raise forces in the kingdom of Ireland, and to conduct them into England for his majesty’s service, had a commission to that purpose, and to that purpose only; and that he had no commission at all to treat of any thing else, without the privity and direction of the lord lieutenant, much less to capitulate any thing concerning religion, or any property belonging either to church or laity.” [2] Though this declaration seems agreeable to truth, it gave no satisfaction to the parliament; and some historians, even at present, when the ancient bigotry is somewhat abated, are desirous of representing this very innocent transaction, in which the king was engaged by the most violent necessity, as a stain on the memory of that unfortunate prince. [3]

* Rush, vol. vii. .

* * Birch, .

* * * See note P, at the end of the volume.

Having lost all hope of prevailing over the rigor of the parliament, either by arms or by treaty, the only resource which remained to the king was derived from the intestine dissensions which ran very high among his enemies. Presbyterians and Independents, even before their victory was fully completed, fell into contests about the division of the spoil; and their religious as well as civil disputes agitated the whole kingdom.

The parliament, though they had early abolished Episcopal authority, had not, during so long a time, substituted any other spiritual government in its place; and their committees of religion had hitherto assumed the whole ecclesiastical jurisdiction; but they now established, by an ordinance, the Presbyterian model in all its forms of congregational, classical, provincial, and national assemblies. All the inhabitants of each parish were ordered to meet and choose elders, on whom together with the minister, was bestowed the entire direction of all spiritual concerns within the congregation. A number of neighboring parishes, commonly between twelve and twenty, formed a classis; and the court which governed this division was composed of all the ministers, together with two, three, or four elders chosen from each parish. The provincial assembly retained an inspection over several neighboring classes, and was composed entirely of clergymen: the national assembly was constituted in the same manner; and its authority extended over the whole kingdom. It is probable, that the tyranny exercised by the Scottish clergy, had given warning not to allow laymen a place in the provincial or national assemblies; lest the nobility and more considerable gentry, soliciting a seat in these great ecclesiastical courts, should bestow a consideration upon them, and render them, in the eyes of the multitude, a rival to the parliament. In the inferior courts, the mixture of the laity might serve rather to temper the usual zeal of the clergy. [1]

But though the Presbyterians, by the establishment of parity among the ecclesiastics, were so far gratified, they were denied satisfaction in several other points on which they were extremely intent. The assembly of divines had voted Presbytery to be of divine right: the parliament refused their assent to that decision. [2] Selden, Whitlocke, and other political reasoners, assisted by the Independents, had prevailed in this important deliberation. They thought, that had the bigoted religionists been able to get their heavenly charter recognized, the presbyters would soon become more dangerous to the magistrate than had ever been the prelatical clergy. These latter, white they claimed to themselves a divine right, admitted of a like origin to civil authority: the former, challenging to their own order a celestial pedigree, derived the legislative power from a source no more dignified than the voluntary association of the people.

* Rush. vol. vii. .

* * Whitlocke, . Rush. vol. vii. , 261.

Under color of keeping the sacraments from profanation, the clergy of all Christian sects had assumed what they call the power of the keys, or the right of fulminating excommunication. The example of Scotland was a sufficient lesson for the parliament to use precaution in guarding against so severe a tyranny. They determined, by a general ordinance, all the cases in which excommunication could be used. They allowed of appeals to parliament from all ecclesiastical courts. And they appointed commissioners in every province to judge of such cases as fell not within their general ordinance. [1] So much civil authority, intermixed with the ecclesiastical, gave disgust to all the zealots.

But nothing was attended with more universal scandal than the propensity of many in the parliament towards a toleration of the Protestant sectaries. The Presbyterians exclaimed, that this indulgence made the church of Christ resemble Noah’s ark, and rendered it a receptacle for all unclean beasts. They insisted, that the least of Christ’s truths was superior to all political considerations. [2] They maintained the eternal obligation imposed by the covenant to extirpate heresy and schism. And they menaced all their opponents with the same rigid persecution under which they themselves had groaned, when held in subjection by the hierarchy.

* Rush. vol. vii. .

* * Rush, vol vii. .

So great prudence and reserve, in such material points, does great honor to the parliament; and proves that, notwithstanding the prevalency of bigotry and fanaticism, there were many members who had more enlarged views, and paid regard to the civil interests of society. These men, uniting themselves to the enthusiasts, whose genius is naturally averse to clerical usurpations, exercised so jealous an authority over the assembly of divines, that they allowed them nothing but the liberty of tendering advice, and would not intrust them even with the power of electing their own chairman or his substitute, or of supplying the vacancies of their own members.

While these disputes were canvassed by theologians, who engaged in their spiritual contests every order of the state the king, though he entertained hopes of reaping advantage from those divisions, was much at a loss which side it would be most for his interest to comply with. The Presbyterians were, by their principles, the least averse to regal authority but were rigidly bent on the extirpation of prelacy: the Independents were resolute to lay the foundation of a republican government; but as they pretended not to erect themselves into a national church, it might be hoped that, if gratified with am toleration, they would admit the reëstablishment of the hierarchy. So great attachment had the king to episcopal jurisdiction, that he was ever inclined to put it in balance even with his own power and kingly office.

But whatever advantage he might hope to reap from the divisions in the parliamentary party, he was apprehensive lest it should come too late to save him from the destruction with which he was instantly threatened. Fairfax was approaching with a powerful and victorious army, and was taking the proper measures for laying siege to Oxford, which must infallibly fall into his hands. To be taken captive, and led in triumph by his insolent enemies, was what Charles justly abhorred; and every insult, if not violence, was to be dreaded from that enthusiastic soldiery who hated his person and despised his dignity. In this desperate extremity, he embraced a measure which, in any other situation, might lie under the imputation of imprudence and indiscretion.

Montreville, the French minister, interested for the king more by the natural sentiments of humanity than any instructions from his court, which seemed rather to favor the parliament, had solicited the Scottish generals and commissioners to give protection to their distressed sovereign; and having received many general professions and promises, he had always transmitted these, perhaps with some exaggeration, to the king. From his suggestions, Charles began to entertain thoughts of leaving Oxford, and flying to the Scottish army, which at that time lay before Newark. [1] He considered, that the Scottish nation had been fully gratified in all their demands; and having already, in their own country, annihilated both episcopacy and regal authority, had no further concessions to exact from him. In all disputes which had passed about settling the terms of peace, the Scots, he heard, had still adhered to the milder side, and had endeavored to soften the rigor of the English parliament. Great disgusts also, on other accounts, had taken place between the nations; and the Scots found that, in proportion as their assistance became less necessary, less value was put upon them. The progress of the Independents gave them great alarm; and they were scandalized to hear their beloved covenant spoken of every day with less regard, and reverence. The refusal of a divine right to presbytery, and the infringing of ecclesiastical discipline from political considerations, were to them the subject of much offence; and the king hoped that, in their present disposition, the plight of their native prince, flying to them in this extremity of distress, would rouse every-spark of generosity in their bosom, and procure him their favor and protection.

* Clarendon, vol. iv. ; vol. v. .

That he might the better conceal his intentions, orders were given at every gate in Oxford for allowing three persons to pass; and in the night the king, accompanied by none but Dr. Hudson and Mr. Ashburnham, went out at that gate which leads to London. He rode before a portmanteau, and called himself Ashburnham's servant. He passed through Henley, St. Albans, and came so near to London as Harrow on the Hill. He once entertained thoughts of entering into that city, and of throwing himself on the mercy of the parliament. But at last, after passing through many cross roads, he arrived at the Scottish camp before Newark. [1] The parliament, hearing of his escape from Oxford, issued rigorous orders, and threatened with instant death whoever should harbor or conceal him. [2]

The Scottish generals and commissioners affected great surprise on the appearance of the king; and though they paid him all the exterior respect due to his dignity, they instantly set a guard upon him, under color of protection, and made him in reality a prisoner. They informed the English parliament of this unexpected incident, and assured them that they had entered into no private treaty with the king. They applied to him for orders to Bellasis, governor of Newark, to surrender that town, now reduced to extremity; and the orders were instantly obeyed. And hearing that the parliament laid claim to the entire disposal of the king's person, and that the English army was making some motion towards them, they thought proper to retire northwards, and to fix their camp at Newcastle. [3]

* Rush, vol. vii. .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Rush, vol. vii. . Clarendon, vol. v. .

This measure was very grateful to the king; and he began to entertain hopes of protection from the Scots. He was particularly attentive to the behavior of their preachers, on whom all depended. It was the mode of that age to make the pulpit the scene of news; and on every great event, the whole Scripture was ransacked by the clergy for passages applicable to the present occasion. The first minister who preached before the king chose these words for his text: “And behold all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto him, Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away, and have brought the king and his household, and all David’s men with him, over Jordan? And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us; wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? Have we eaten at all of the king’s cost? or hath he given us any gift? And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.” [1] But the king soon found, that the happiness chiefly of the allusion had tempted the preacher to employ this text, and that the covenanting zealots were nowise pacified towards him. Another preacher, after reproaching him to his face with his misgovernment, ordered this psalm to be sung: —

“Why dost thou, tyrant, boast thyself, Thy wicked deeds to praise?”

The king stood up, and called for that psalm which begins with these words,

“Have mercy, Lord, on me, I pray; For men would me devour.”

The good-natured audience, in pity to fallen majesty, showed for once greater deference to the king than to the minister, and sung the psalm which the former had called for. [2]

Charles had very little reason to be pleased with his situation. He not only found himself a prisoner, very strictly guarded: all his friends were kept at a distance; and no intercourse, either by letters or conversation, was allowed him with any one on whom he could depend, or who was suspected of any attachment towards him. The Scottish generals would enter into no confidence with him; and still treated him with distant ceremony and feigned respect. And every proposal which they made him tended further to his abasement and to his ruin. [3]

* 2 Sam. chap. xix. ver. 41,42,43. See Clarendon, vol v. p. 23, 24

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Clarendon, vol. v. .

They required him to issue orders to Oxford and to all his other garrisons, commanding their surrender to the parliament; and the king, sensible that their resistance was to very little purpose, willingly complied. The terms given to most of them were honorable; and Fairfax, as far as it lay in his power, was very exact in observing them. Far from allowing violence, he would not even permit insults or triumph over the unfortunate royalists; and by his generous humanity, so cruel a civil war was ended, in appearance, very calmly between the parties.

Ormond, having received like orders, delivered Dublin and other forts into the hands of the parliamentary officers. Montrose also, after having experienced still more variety of good and bad fortune, threw down his arms, and retired out of the kingdom.

The marquis of Worcester, a man past eighty-four, was the last in England that submitted to the authority of the parliament. He defended Raglan Castle to extremity; and opened not its gates till the middle of August. Four years, a few days excepted, were now elapsed since the king first erected his standard at Nottingham: [1] so long had the British nations, by civil and religious quarrels, been occupied in shedding their own blood, and laying waste their native country.

The parliament and the Scots laid their proposals before the king. They were such as a captive, entirely at mercy, could expect from the most inexorable victor. Yet were they little worse than what were insisted on before the battle of Naseby. The power of the sword, instead of ten, which the king now offered, was demanded for twenty years, together with a right to levy whatever money the parliament should think proper for the support of their armies. The other conditions were, in the main, the same with those which had formerly been offered to the king. [2]

Charles said, that proposals which introduced such important innovations in the constitution, demanded time for deliberation: the commissioners replied, that he must give his answer in ten days. [3] He desired to reason about the meaning and import of some terms: they informed him, that they had no power of debate; and peremptorily required his consent or refusal. He requested a personal treaty with the parliament. They threatened that, if he delayed compliance, the parliament would, by their own authority, settle the nation.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush. vol. vi. .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. .

What the parliament was most intent upon, was not their treaty with the king, to whom they paid little regard, but that with the Scots. Two important points remained to be settled with that nation: their delivery of the king, and the estimation of their arrears.

The Scots might pretend, that, as Charles was king of Scotland as well as of England, they were entitled to an equal vote in the disposal of his person; and that, in such a case, where the titles are equal, and the subject indivisible, the preference was due to the present possessor. The English maintained, that the king, being in England, was comprehended within the jurisdiction of that kingdom, and could not be disposed of by any foreign nation: a delicate question this, and what surely could not be decided by precedent; since such a situation is not any where to be found in history. [1]

* Rush, vol. vii. .

As the Scots concurred with the English in imposing such severe conditions on the king, that, notwithstanding his unfortunate situation, he still refused to accept of them, it is certain that they did not desire his freedom: nor could they ever intend to join lenity and rigor together, in so inconsistent a manner. Before the settlement of terms, the administration must be possessed entirely by the parliaments of both kingdoms; and how incompatible that scheme with the liberty of the king, is easily imagined. To carry him a prisoner into Scotland, where few forces could be supported to guard him, was a measure so full of inconvenience and danger, that, even if the English had consented to it, it must have appeared to the Scots themselves altogether uneligible: and how could such a plan be supported in opposition to England, possessed of such numerous and victorious armies, which were, at that time at least seemed to be, in entire union with the parliament? The only expedient, it is obvious, which the Scots could embrace, if they scrupled wholly to abandon the king, was immediately to return, fully and cordially, to their allegiance; and, uniting themselves with the royalists in both kingdoms, endeavor, by force of arms, to reduce the English parliament to more moderate conditions: but, besides that this measure was full of extreme hazard, what was it but instantly to combine with their old enemies against their old friends; and, in a fit of romantic generosity, overturn what, with so much expense of blood and treasure, they had, during the course of so many years, been so carefully erecting?

But though all these reflections occurred to the Scottish commissioners, they resolved to prolong the dispute, and to keep the king as a pledge for those arrears which they claimed from England, and which they were not likely, in the present disposition of that nation, to obtain by any other expedient. The sum, by their account, amounted to near two millions: for they had received little regular pay since they had entered England. And though the contributions which they had levied, as well as the price of their living at free quarters, must be deducted, yet still the sum which they insisted on was very considerable. After many discussions, it was at last agreed, that, in lieu of all demands, they should accept of four hundred thousand pounds, one half to be paid instantly, another in two subsequent payments. [1]

* Rush, vol. vii. . Parl. Hist. vol. xv.

Great pains were taken by the Scots (and the English complied with their pretended delicacy) to make this estimation and payment of arrears appear a quite different transaction from that for the delivery of the king's person: but common sense requires that they should be regarded as one and the same. The English, it is evident, had they not been previously assured of receiving the king, would never have parted with so considerable a sum; and, while they weakened themselves, by the same measure, have strengthened a people with whom they must afterwards have so material an interest to discuss.

Thus the Scottish nation underwent, and still undergo, (for such grievous stains are not easily wiped off,) the reproach of selling their king and betraying their prince for money. In vain did they maintain, that this money was, on account of former services, undoubtedly their due; that in their present situation, no other measure, without the utmost, indiscretion, or even their apparent ruin, could be embraced; and that, though they delivered their king into the hands of his open enemies they were themselves as much his open enemies as those to whom they surrendered him; and their common hatred against him had long united the two parties in strict alliance with each other. They were still answered, that they made use of this scandalous expedient for obtaining their wages; and that, after taking arms without any provocation against their sovereign, who had ever loved and cherished them, they had deservedly fallen into a situation from which they could not extricate themselves without either infamy or imprudence.

The infamy of this bargain had such an influence on the Scottish parliament, that they once voted that the king should be protected, and his liberty insisted on. But the general assembly interposed, and pronounced that, as he had refused to take the covenant, which was pressed on him, it became not the godly to concern themselves about his fortunes. After this declaration, it behoved the parliament to retract their vote. [1]

Intelligence concerning the final resolution of the Scottish nation to surrender him, was brought to the king; and he happened, at that very time, to be playing at chess. [2] Such command of temper did he possess, that he continued his game without interruption; and none of the bystanders could perceive that the letter which he perused had brought him news of any consequence. The English commissioners, who, some days after, came to take him under their custody, were admitted to kiss his hands; and he received them with the same grace and cheerfulness as if they had travelled on no other errand than to pay court to him. The old earl of Pembroke, in particular, who was one of them, he congratulated on his strength and vigor, that he was still able, during such a season, to perform so long a journey, in company with so many young people.

1647.

The king, being delivered over by the Scots to the English commissioners, was conducted under a guard to Holdenby, in the county of Northampton. On his journey, the whole country flocked to behold him, moved partly by curiosity, partly by compassion and affection. If any still retained rancor against him, in his present condition, they passed in silence; while his well-wishers, more generous than prudent, accompanied his march with tears, with acclamations, and with prayers for his safety. [3] That ancient superstition, likewise, of desiring the king’s touch in scrofulous distempers, seemed to acquire fresh credit among the people, from the general tenderness which began to prevail for this virtuous and unhappy monarch.

* Parl. Hist. vol. xv. , 244.

* * Burnet’s Memoirs of the Hamiltons.

* * * Ludlow. Herbert.

The commissioners rendered his confinement at Holdenby very rigorous; dismissing his ancient servants, debarring him from visits, and cutting off all communication with his friends or family. The parliament, though earnestly applied to by the king, refused to allow his chaplains to attend him, because they had not taken the covenant. The king refused to assist at the service exercised according to the directory; because he had not as yet given his consent to that mode of worship. [1] Such religious zeal prevailed on both sides; and such was the unhappy and distracted condition to which it had reduced king and people.

During the time that the king remained in the Scottish army at Newcastle, died the earl of Essex, the discarded, but still powerful and popular general of the parliament. His death, in this conjuncture, was a public misfortune. Fully sensible of the excesses to which affairs had been carried, and of the worse consequences which were still to be apprehended, he had resolved to conciliate a peace, and to remedy, as far as possible, all those ills to which, from mistake rather than any bad intentions, he had himself so much contributed. The Presbyterian, or the moderate party among the commons, found themselves considerably weakened by his death; and the small remains of authority, which still adhered to the house of peers, were in a manner wholly extinguished. [2]

* Clarendon, voL T. . Warwick, .

* * Clarendon, vol. v. .

CHAPTER LIX.

CHARLES I.

1647.

The dominion of the parliament was of short duration. No sooner had they subdued their sovereign, than their own servants rose against them, and tumbled them from their slippery throne. The sacred boundaries of the laws being once violated, nothing remained to confine the wild projects of zeal and ambition: and every successive revolution became a precedent for that which followed it.

In proportion as the terror of the king’s power diminished, the division between Independent and Presbyterian became every day more apparent; and the neuters found it at last requisite to seek shelter in one or the other faction. Many new writs were issued for elections, in the room of members who had died, or were disqualified by adhering to the king; yet still the Presbyterians retained the superiority among the commons: and all the peers, except Lord Say, were esteemed of that party. The Independents, to whom the inferior sectaries adhered, predominated in the army; and the troops of the new model were universally infected with that enthusiastic spirit. To their assistance did the Independent party among the commons chiefly trust in their projects for acquiring the ascendant over their antagonists.

Soon after the retreat of the Scots, the Presbyterians, seeing every thing reduced to obedience, began to talk of diminishing the army; and, on pretence of easing the public burdens, they levelled a deadly blow at the opposite faction. They purposed to embark a strong detachment, under Skippon and Massey, for the service of Ireland; they openly declared their intention of making a great reduction of the remainder. [1] It was even imagined that another new model of the army was projected, in order to regain to the Presbyterians that superiority which they had so imprudently lost by the former. [2]

* Fourteen thousand men were only intended to be kept up; six thousand horse, six thousand foot, and two thousand dragoons. Bates.

* * Rush. vol. vii. .

The army had small inclination to the service of Ireland; a country barbarous, uncultivated, and laid waste by massacres and civil commotions: they had less inclination to disband, and to renounce that pay which, having earned it through fatigues and dangers, they now purposed to enjoy in ease and tranquillity. And most of the officers, having risen from the dregs of the people, had no other prospect, if deprived of their commission, than that of returning to languish in their native poverty and obscurity.

These motives of interest acquired additional influence, and became more dangerous to the parliament, from the religious spirit by which the army was universally actuated. Among the generality of men educated in regular, civilized societies, the sentiments of shame, duty, honor, have considerable authority, and serve to counterbalance and direct the motives derived from private advantage: but, by the predominancy of enthusiasm among the parliamentary forces, these salutary principles lost their credit, and were regarded as mere human inventions, yea, moral institutions, fitter for heathens than for Christians. [1] The saint, resigned over to superior guidance, was at full liberty to gratify all his appetites, disguised under the appearance of pious zeal. And besides the strange corruptions engendered by this spirit, it eluded and loosened all the ties of morality, and gave entire scope, and even sanction, to the selfishness and ambition which naturally adhere to the human mind.

The military confessors were further encouraged in disobedience to superiors, by that spiritual pride to which a mistaken piety is so subject. They were not, they said, mere janizaries; mercenary troops enlisted for hire, and to be disposed of at the will of their paymasters. [2] Religion and liberty were the motives which had excited them to arms; and they had a superior right to see those blessings, which they had purchased with their blood, insured to future generations. By the same title that the Presbyterians, in contradistinction to the royalists, had appropriated to themselves the epithet of godly, or the well affected, [3] the Independents did now, in contradistinction to the Presbyterians, assume this magnificent appellation, and arrogate all the ascendant which naturally belongs to it.

* Rush. vol. vi. .

* * Rush, vol. vii. .

* * * Bush. vol. vii. p 474.

Hearing of parties in the house of commons, and being informed that the minority were friends to the army, the majority enemies, the troops naturally interested themselves in that dangerous distinction, and were eager to give the superiority to their partisans. Whatever hardships they underwent, though perhaps derived from inevitable necessity, were ascribed to a settled design of oppressing them, and resented as an effect of the animosity and malice of their adversaries.

Notwithstanding the great revenue which accrued from taxes, assessments, sequestrations, and compositions, considerable arrears were due to the army; and many of the private men, as well as officers, had near a twelvemonth’s pay still owing them. The army suspected that this deficiency was purposely contrived in order to oblige them to live at free quarters; and, by rendering them odious to the country, serve as a pretence for disbanding them. When they saw such members as were employed in committees and civil offices accumulate fortunes, they accused them of rapine and public plunder. And as no plan was pointed out by the commons for the payment of arrears, the soldiers dreaded, that after they should be disbanded or embarked for Ireland, their enemies, who predominated in the two houses, would entirely defraud them of their right, and oppress them with impunity.

On this ground or pretence did the first commotions begin in the army. A petition, addressed to Fairfax, the general, was handed about, craving an indemnity, and that ratified by the king, for any illegal actions of which, during the course of the war, the soldiers might have been guilty; together with satisfaction in arrears, freedom from pressing, relief of widows and maimed soldiers, and pay till disbanded. [1] The commons, aware of what combustible materials the army was composed, were alarmed at this intelligence. Such a combination, they knew, if not checked in its first appearance, must be attended with the most dangerous consequences, and must soon exalt the military above the civil authority. Besides summoning some officers to answer for this attempt, they immediately voted, that the petition tended to introduce mutiny, to put conditions upon the parliament, and to obstruct the relief of Ireland; and they threatened to proceed against the promoters of it as enemies to the state, and disturbers of public peace. [2]

* Parl. Hist. vol. xv.

* * Parl. Hist vol. xv. .

This declaration, which may be deemed violent, especially as the army had some ground for complaint, produced fatal effects. The soldiers lamented, that they were deprived of the privileges of Englishmen; that they were not allowed so much as to represent their grievances; that, while petitions from Essex and other places were openly encouraged against the army, their mouths were stopped; and that they, who were the authors of liberty to the nation, were reduced, by a faction in parliament, to the most grievous servitude.

In this disposition was the army found by Warwick, Dacres, Massey, and other commissioners, who were sent to make them proposals for entering into the service of Ireland. [1] instead of enlisting, the generality objected to the terms; demanded an indemnity; were clamorous for their arrears; and, though they expressed no dissatisfaction against Skippon, who was appointed commander, they discovered much stronger inclination to serve under Fairfax and Cromwell. [2] Some officers, who were of the Presbyterian party, having entered into engagements for this service, could prevail on very few of the soldiers to enlist under them. And, as these officers lay all under the grievous reproach of deserting the army, and betraying the interests of their companions, the rest were further confirmed in that confederacy which they had secretly formed. [3]

To petition and remonstrate being the most cautious method of conducting a confederacy, an application to parliament was signed by near two hundred officers, in which they made their apology with a very imperious air, asserted their right of petitioning, and complained of that imputation thrown upon them by the former declaration of the lower house. [4] The private men, likewise, of some regiments sent a letter to Skippon, in which, together with insisting on the same topics, they lament that designs were formed against them and many of the godly party in the kingdom; and declare that they could not engage for Ireland, till they were satisfied in their expectations, and had their just desires granted. The army, in a word, felt their power, and resolved to be masters.

* Rush. vol. vii, .

* * Rush. vol. vii. .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. , 556.

* * * * Rush. vol. vii. .

v Rush. vol. vii. .

The parliament, too, resolved, if possible, to preserve their dominion; but being destitute of power; and not retaining much authority, it was not easy for them to employ any expedient which could contribute to their purpose. The expedient which they now made use of was the worst imaginable. They sent Skippon, Cromwell, Ireton, and Fleetwood, to the head quarters at Saffron Weldon, in Essex, and empowered them to make offers to the army, and inquire into the cause of its distempers. These very generals, at least the three last, were secretly the authors of all the discontents; and failed not to foment those disorders which they pretended to appease. By their suggestion, a measure was embraced which at once brought matters to extremity, and rendered the mutiny incurable.

In opposition to the parliament at Westminster, a military parliament was formed. Together with a council of the principal officers, which was appointed after the model of the house of peers, a more free representative of the army was composed, by the election of two private men or inferior officers, under the title of agitators, from each troop or company. [1] By this means, both the general humor of that time was gratified, intent on plans of imaginary republics; and an easy method contrived for conducting, underhand, and propagating the sedition of the army.

This terrible court, when assembled, having first declared that they found no distempers in the army, but many grievances under which it labored, immediately voted the offers of the parliament unsatisfactory. Eight weeks' pay alone, they said, was promised; a small part of fifty-six weeks, which they claimed as their due: no visible security was given for the remainder:

and having been declared public enemies by the commons, they might hereafter be prosecuted as such, unless the declaration were recalled. [2] Before matters came to this height, Cromwell had posted up to London, on pretence of laying before the parliament the rising discontents of the army.

The parliament made one vigorous effort more, to try the force of their authority: they voted, that all the troops which did not engage for Ireland, should instantly be disbanded in their quarters. [3]

At the same time, the council of the army ordered a general rendezvous of all the regiments, in order to provide for their common interests. And while they thus prepared themselves for opposition to the parliament, they struck a blow which at once decided the victory in their favor.

A party of five hundred horse appeared at Holdenby, conducted by one Joyce, who had once been a tailor by profession, but was now advanced to the rank of cornet, and was an active agitator in the army. Without being opposed by the guard, whose affections were all on their side, Joyce came into the king's presence, armed with pistols, and told him, that he must immediately go along with him. "Whither?" said the king. "To the army," replied Joyce. "By what warrant?" asked the king. Joyce pointed to the soldiers whom he brought along; tall, handsome, and well accoutred. "Your warrant," said Charles, smiling, "is writ in fair characters, legible without spelling." [1] The parliamentary commissioners came into the room: they asked Joyce whether he had any orders from the parliament? he said, "No;" from the general? "No;" by what authority he came? he made the same reply as to the king. "They would write," they said, "to the parliament to know their pleasure." "You may do so," replied Joyce; "but in the mean time, the king must immediately go with me." Resistance was vain. The king, after protracting the time as long as he could, went into his coach and was safely conducted to the army, who were hastening to their rendezvous at Triplo Heath, near Cambridge. The parliament, informed of this event by their commissioners, were thrown into the utmost consternation. [2]

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* Rush. vol. vii . Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * Rusk. vol. vii , 505. Whitlocke, .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. .

* Whitlocke, . Warwick, .

* * Rush. vol. vii. , 515. Clarendon, vol. v. .

Fairfax himself was no less surprised at the king’s arrival. That bold measure, executed by Joyce, had never been communicated to the general. The orders were entirely verbal, and nobody avowed them. And while every one affected astonishment at the enterprise, Cromwell, by whose counsel it had been directed, arrived from London, and put an end to their deliberations.

This artful and audacious conspirator had conducted himself in the parliament with such profound dissimulation, with such refined hypocrisy, that he had long deceived those who, being themselves very dexterous practitioners in the same arts, should naturally have entertained the more suspicion against others. At every intelligence of disorders in the army, he was moved to the highest pitch of grief and of anger. He wept bitterly: he lamented the misfortunes of his country: he advised every violent measure for suppressing the mutiny; and by these precipitate counsels at once seemed to evince his own sincerity, and inflamed those discontents of which he intended to make advantage. He obtested heaven and earth, that his devoted attachment to the parliament had rendered him so odious in the army, that his life, while among them, was in the utmost danger; and he had very narrowly escaped a conspiracy formed to assassinate him. But information being brought that the most active officers and agitators were entirely his creatures, the parliamentary leaders secretly resolved, that, next day, when he should come to the house, an accusation should be entered against him, and he should be sent to the Tower. [1] Cromwell, who, in the conduct of his desperate enterprises, frequently approached to the very brink of destruction, knew how to make the requisite turn with proper dexterity and boldness. Being informed of this design, he hastened to the camp; where he was received with acclamations, and was instantly invested with the supreme command both of general and army.

* Clarendon, vol. v. .

Fairfax, having neither talents himself for cabal, nor penetration to discover the cabals of others, had given his entire confidence to Cromwell; who, by the best colored pretences, and by the appearance of an open sincerity and a scrupulous conscience, imposed on the easy nature of this brave and virtuous man. The council of officers and the agitators were moved altogether by Cromwell’s direction, and conveyed his will to the whole army. By his profound and artful conduct, he had now attained a situation where he could cover his enterprises from public view; and seeming either to obey the commands of his superior officer, or yield to the movements of the soldiers, could secretly pave the way for his future greatness. While the disorders of the army were yet in their infancy, he kept at a distance, lest his counterfeit aversion might throw a damp upon them, or his secret encouragement beget suspicion in the parliament. As soon as they came to maturity, he openly joined the troops; and, in the critical moment, struck that important blow of seizing the king’s person, and depriving the parliament of any resource of an accommodation with him. Though one visor fell off another still remained to cover his natural countenance.

Where delay was requisite, he could employ the most indefatigable patience: where celerity was necessary, he flew to a decision. And by thus uniting in his person the most opposite talents, he was enabled to combine the most contrary interests in a subserviency to his secret purposes.

The parliament, though at present defenceless, was possessed of many resources; and time might easily enable them to resist that violence with which they were threatened. Without further deliberation, therefore, Cromwell advanced the army upon them, and arrived in a few days at St. Albans.

Nothing could be more popular than this hostility which the army commenced against the parliament. As much as that assembly was once the idol of the nation, as much was it now become the object of general hatred and aversion.

The self-denying ordinance had no longer been put in execution, than till Essex, Manchester, Waller, and the other officers of that party, had resigned their commission: immediately after, it was laid aside by tacit consent; and the members, sharing all offices of power and profit among them, proceeded with impunity in exercising acts of oppression on the helpless nation. Though the necessity of their situation might serve as an apology for many of their measures, the people, not accustomed to such a species of government, were not disposed to make the requisite allowances.

A small supply of one hundred thousand pounds a year could never be obtained by former kings from the jealous humor of parliaments; and the English, of all nations in Europe, were the least accustomed to taxes; but this parliament, from the commencement of the war, according to some computations, had levied, in five years, above forty millions; [1] yet were loaded with debts and incumbrances, which, during that age, were regarded as prodigious. If these computations should be thought much exaggerated, as they probably are, [2] the taxes and impositions were certainly far higher than in any former state of the English government; and such popular exaggerations are at least a proof of popular discontents.

* Clement Walker's History of the two Juntos, prefixed to his History of Independency, . This is an author of spirit and ingenuity; and being a zealous parliamentarian,

his authority is very considerable, notwithstanding the air of satire which prevails in his writings. This computation,
however, seems much too large; especially as the sequestrations during the time of war could not be so considerable as afterwards.

* Yet the same sum precisely is assigned in another book, called Royal Treasury of England, .

But the disposal of this money was no less the object of general complaint against the parliament than the levying of it. The sum of three hundred thousand pounds they openly took, it is affirmed, [1] and divided among their own members. The committees, to whom the management of the different branches of revenue was intrusted, never brought in their accounts, and had unlimited power of secreting whatever sums they pleased from the public treasure. [2] These branches were needlessly multiplied, in order to render the revenue more intricate, to share the advantages among greater numbers, and to conceal the frauds of which they were universally suspected. [3]

The method of keeping accounts practised in the exchequer, was confessedly the exactest, the most ancient, the best known, and the least liable to fraud. The exchequer was for that reason abolished, and the revenue put under the management of a committee, who were subject to no control. [4]

The excise was an odious tax, formerly unknown to the nation; and was now extended over provisions, and the common necessaries of life. Near one half of the goods and chattels, and at least one half of the lands, rents, and revenues of the kingdom, had been sequestered. To great numbers of loyalists, all redress from these sequestrations was refused: to the rest, the remedy could be obtained only by paying large compositions, and subscribing the covenant, which they abhorred. Besides pitying the ruin and desolation of so many ancient and honorable families, indifferent spectators could not but blame the hardship of punishing with such severity actions which the law, in its usual and most undisputed interpretation, strictly required of every subject.

The severities, too, exercised against the Episcopal clergy naturally affected the royalists, and even all men of candor, in a sensible manner. By the most moderate computation, it appears, that above one half of the established clergy had been turned out to beggary and want, for no other crime than their adhering to the civil and religious principles in which they had been educated, and for their attachment to those laws under whose countenance they had at first embraced that profession.

* Clement Walker's History of Independency, , 166.

* * Clement Walker's History of Independency, p, 8.

* * * Clement Walker's History of Independency, .

* * * * Clement Walker's History of Independency, .

v See John Walker's Attempt towards recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy. The parliament pretended to leave the sequestered clergy a fifth of their revenue; but this author makes it sufficiently appear that this provision, small as it is, was never regularly paid the ejected clergy.

To renounce Episcopacy and the liturgy, and to subscribe the covenant, were the only terms which could save them from so rigorous a fate; and if the least mark of malignancy, as it was called, or affection to the king, who so entirely loved them, had ever escaped their lips, even this hard choice was not permitted. The sacred character, which gives the priesthood such authority over mankind, becoming more venerable from the sufferings endured for the sake of principle by these distressed royalists, aggravated the general indignation against their persecutors.

But what excited the most universal complaint was, the unlimited tyranny and despotic rule of the country committees. During the war, the discretionary power of these courts was excused, from the plea of necessity; but the nation was reduced to despair, when it saw neither end put to their duration, nor bounds to their authority. These could sequester, fine, imprison, and corporally punish, without law or remedy. They interposed in questions of private property. Under color of malignancy, they exercised vengeance against their private enemies. To the obnoxious, and sometimes to the innocent, they sold their protection. And instead of one star chamber, which had been abolished, a great number were anew erected, fortified with better pretences, and armed with more unlimited authority. [1]

* Clement Walker's History of Independency, . Hollis gives the same representation as Walker, of the plundering, oppressions, and tyranny of the parliament; only, instead of laying the fault on both parties, as Walker does, he ascribes it solely to the Independent faction. The Presbyterians, indeed, being commonly denominated the moderate party, would probably be more inoffensive. See Rush. vol. vii. : and Parl. Hist. vol. xv. .

Could any thing have increased the indignation against that slavery into which the nation, from the too eager pursuit of liberty, had fallen, it must have been the reflection on the pretences by which the people had so long been deluded. The sanctified hypocrites, who called their oppressions the spoiling of the Egyptians, and their rigid severity the dominion of the elect, interlarded all their iniquities with long and fervent prayers, saved themselves from blushing by their pious grimaces, and exercised, in the name of the Lord, all their cruelty on men. An undisguised violence could be forgiven: but such a mockery of the understanding, such an abuse of religion, were, with men of penetration, objects of peculiar resentment.

The parliament, conscious of their decay in popularity, seeing a formidable armed force advance upon them, were reduced to despair, and found all their resources much inferior to the present necessity. London still retained a strong attachment to Presbyterianism; and its militia, which was numerous, and had acquired reputation in the wars, had, by a late ordinance, been put into hands in whom the parliament could entirely confide. This militia was now called out, and ordered to guard the lines which had been drawn round the city, in order to secure it against the king. A body of horse was ordered to be instantly levied. Many officers, who had been cashiered by the new model of the army, offered their service to the parliament. An army of five thousand men lay in the north under the command of General Pointz, who was of the Presbyterian faction; but these were too distant to be employed in so urgent a necessity. The forces destined for Ireland were quartered in the west; and, though deemed faithful to the parliament, they also lay at a distance. Many inland garrisons were commanded by officer: of the same party; but their troops, being so much dispersed, could at present be of no manner of service. The Scots were faithful friends, and zealous for Presbytery and the covenant; but a long time was required ere they could collect their forces and march to the assistance of the parliament.

In this situation it was thought more prudent to submit, and by compliance to stop the fury of the enraged army. The declaration by which the military petitioners had been voted public enemies was recalled, and erased from the journal book. [1] This was the first symptom which the parliament gave of submission; and the army, hoping by terror alone to effect all their purposes, stopped at St. Albans, and entered into negotiation with their masters.

* Rush. vol. vii. , 547. Clarendon, vol. v. .

Here commenced the encroachments of the military upon the civil authority. The army, in their usurpations on the parliament, copied exactly the model which the parliament itself had set them in their recent usurpations on the crown.

Every day they rose in their demands. If one claim was granted, they had another ready, still more enormous and exorbitant; and were determined never to be satisfied. At first, they pretended only to petition for what concerned themselves as soldiers: next, they must have a vindication of their character: then, it was necessary that their enemies be punished: [1] at last, they claimed a right of modelling the whole government, and settling the nation. [2]

They preserved, in words, all deference and respect to the parliament; but, in reality, insulted them and tyrannized over them. That assembly they pretended not to accuse: it was only evil counsellors, who seduced and betrayed it.

They proceeded so far as to name eleven members, whom, in general terms, they charged with high treason, as enemies to the army and evil counsellors to the parliament. Their names were Hollis, Sir Philip Stapleton, Sir William Lewis, Sir John Clotworthy, Sir William Waller, Sir John Maynard, Massey, Glyn, Long, Harley, and Nichols. [3] These were the very leaders of the Presbyterian party.

They insisted, that these members should immediately be sequestered from parliament, and be thrown into prison. [4] The commons replied, that they could not, upon a general charge, proceed so far. The army observed to them, that the cases of Strafford and Laud were direct precedents for that purpose.[v*] At last, the eleven members themselves, not to give occasion for discord, begged leave to retire from the house; and the army, for the present, seemed satisfied with this mark of submission.[v* *]

Pretending that the parliament intended to levy war upon them, and to involve the nation again in blood and confusion, they required that all new levies should be stopped. The parliament complied with this demand.[v* * *]

* Rush. vol. vii. .

* * Rush. vol. vii. , 633, vol. viii. .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. .

* * * * Rush. vol. vii. .

v Rush. vol. vii. .

v* Rush. vol vii. . Whitlocke, .

v* * Rush. vol. vii. , 594.

v* * * Rush. vol. vii. , 574.

There being no signs of resistance, the army, in order to save appearances, removed, at the desire of the parliament to a greater distance from London, and fixed their head quarters at Reading. They carried the king along with them in all their marches.

That prince now found himself in a better situation than at Holdenby, and had attained some greater degree of freedom as well as of consideration with both parties.

All his friends had access to his presence: his correspondence with the queen was not interrupted: his chaplains were restored to him, and he was allowed the use of the liturgy. His children were once allowed to visit him, and they passed a few days at Caversham, where he then resided. [1] He had not seen the duke of Gloucester, his youngest son, and the princess Elizabeth, since he left London, at the commencement of the civil disorders; [2] nor the duke of York, since he went to the Scottish army before Newark. No private man, unacquainted with the pleasures of a court and the tumult of a camp, more passionately loved his family, than did this good prince; and such an instance of indulgence in the army was extremely grateful to him. Cromwell, who was witness to the meeting of the royal family, confessed that he never had been present at so tender a scene; and he extremely applauded the benignity which displayed itself in the whole disposition and behavior of Charles.

That artful politician, as well as the leaders of all parties, paid court to the king; and fortune, notwithstanding all his calamities, seemed again to smile upon him. The parliament, afraid of his forming some accommodation with the army, addressed him in a more respectful style than formerly; and invited him to reside at Richmond, and contribute his assistance to the settlement of the nation. The chief officers treated him with regard, and spake on all occasions of restoring him to his just powers and prerogatives. In the public declarations of the army, the settlement of his revenue and authority was insisted on. [3] The royalists every where entertained hopes of the restoration of monarchy; and the favor which they universally bore to the army, contributed very much to discourage the parliament, and to forward their submission.

* Clarendon, vol. i. , 52, 57.

* * When the king applied to have his children, the parliament always told him, that they could take as much care at London, both of their bodies and souls, as could be done at Oxford. Parl. Hist. vol. xiii. .

* * * Rush. vol. vii. .

The king began to feel of what consequence he was. The more the national confusions increased, the more was he confident that all parties would at length have recourse to his lawful authority, as the only remedy for the public disorders “You cannot be without me,” said he, on several occasions: “you cannot settle the nation but by my assistance.” A people without government and without liberty, a parliament without authority, an army without a legal master; distractions every where, terrors, oppressions, convulsions: from this scene of confusion, which could not long continue, all men, he hoped, would be brought to reflect on that ancient government under which they and their ancestors had so long enjoyed happiness and tranquillity.

Though Charles kept his ears open to all proposals, and expected to hold the balance between the opposite parties, he entertained more hopes of accommodation with the army. He had experienced the extreme rigor of the parliament. They pretended totally to annihilate his authority: they had confined his person. In both these particulars, the army showed more indulgence. [1] He had a free intercourse with his friends. And, in the proposals which the council of officers sent for the settlement of the nation, they insisted neither on the abolition of Episcopacy, nor on the punishment of the royalists; the two points to which the king had the most extreme reluctance: and they demanded, that a period should be put to the present parliament, the event for which he most ardently longed.

* Warwick, . Parl. Hist. vol. xvi. . Clarendon, vol. *v .

His conjunction, too, seemed more natural with the generals, than with that usurping assembly who had so long assumed the entire sovereignty of the state, and who had declared their resolution still to continue masters. By gratifying a few persons with titles and preferments, he might draw over, he hoped, the whole military power, and in an instant reinstate himself in his civil authority. To Ireton he offered the lieutenancy of Ireland; to Cromwell the garter, the title of earl of Essex, and the command of the army. Negotiations to this purpose were secretly conducted. Cromwell pretended to hearken to them and was well pleased to keep the door open for an accommodation, if the course of events should at any time render it necessary. And the king, who had no suspicion that one born a private gentleman could entertain the daring ambition of seizing a sceptre, transmitted through a long line of monarchs, indulged hopes that he would at last embrace a measure which, by all the motives of duty, interest, and safety, seemed to be recommended to him.

While Cromwell allured the king by these expectations, he still continued his scheme of reducing the parliament to subjection, and depriving them of all means of resistance. To gratify the army, the parliament invested Fairfax with the title of general-in-chief of all the forces in England and Ireland; and intrusted the whole military authority to a person who, though well inclined to their service, was no longer at his own disposal.

They voted, that the troops which, in obedience to them had enlisted for Ireland, and deserted the rebellious army, should be disbanded, or, in other words, be punished for their fidelity. The forces in the north, under Pointz, had already mutinied against their general, and had entered into an association with that body of the army which was so successfully employed in exalting the military above the civil authority. [1]

That no resource might remain to the parliament, it was demanded, that the militia of London should be changed, the Presbyterian commissioners displaced, and the command restored to those who, during the course of the war, had constantly exercised it. The parliament even complied with so violent a demand, and passed a vote in obedience to the army. [2]

By this unlimited patience, they purposed to temporize under their present difficulties, and they hoped to find a more favorable opportunity for recovering their authority and influence: but the impatience of the city lost them all the advantage of their cautious measures. A petition against the alteration of the militia was carried to Westminster, attended by the apprentices and seditious multitude, who besieged the door of the house of commons; and by their clamor, noise, and violence, obliged them to reverse that vote which they had passed so lately. When gratified in this pretension, they immediately dispersed, and left the parliament at liberty. [3]

* Rush. vol. vii. .

* * Rush. vol. vii. , 632.

* * * Rush. vol. vii. , 643. Clarendon, vol. v. . Whitlocke . Cl. Walker,

No sooner was intelligence of this tumult conveyed to Reading, than the army was put in motion. The two houses being under restraint, they were resolved, they said, to vindicate, against the seditious citizens, the invaded privileges of parliament, and restore that assembly to its just freedom of debate and counsel. In their way to London, they were drawn up on Hounslow Heath; a formidable body, twenty thousand strong, and determined, without regard to laws or liberty, to pursue whatever measures their generals should dictate to them. Here the most favorable event happened to quicken and encourage their advance. The speakers of the two houses, Manchester and Lenthal, attended by eight peers and about sixty commoners, having secretly retired from the city, presented themselves with their maces, and all the ensigns of their dignity; and complaining of the violence put upon them, applied to the army for defence and protection. They were received with shouts and acclamations: respect was paid to them, as to the parliament of England: and the army, being provided with so plausible a pretence, which in all public transactions is of great consequence, advanced to chastise the rebellious city, and to reinstate the violated parliament. [1]

Neither Lenthal nor Manchester were esteemed Independents; and such a step in them was unexpected. But they probably foresaw that the army must in the end prevail; and they were willing to pay court in time to that authority which began to predominate in the nation.

The parliament, forced from their temporizing measures, and obliged to resign at once, or combat for their liberty and power, prepared themselves with vigor for defence, and determined to resist the violence of the army. The two houses immediately chose new speakers, Lord Hunsdon and Henry Pelham: they renewed their former orders for enlisting troops: they appointed Massey to be commander: they ordered the trained bands to man the lines: and the whole city was in a ferment, and resounded with military preparations. [2]

When any intelligence arrived, that the army stopped or retreated, the shout of “One and all.” ran with alacrity, from street to street, among the citizens: when news came of their advancing, the cry of “Treat and capitulate,” was no less loud and vehement. [3] The terror of a universal pillage, and even massacre, had seized the timid inhabitants.

* Rush. vol. viii. . Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * Rush vol. vii.

* * * Whitlocke, .

As the army approached, Rainsborow, being sent by the general over the river, presented himself before Southwark, and was gladly received by some soldiers who were quartered there for its defence, and who were resolved not to separate their interests from those of the army. It behoved then the parliament to submit. The army marched in triumph through the city; but preserved the greatest order, decency, and appearance of humility. They conducted to Westminster the two speakers, who took their seats as if nothing had happened. The eleven impeached members, being accused as authors of the tumult, were expelled; and most of them retired beyond sea: seven peers were impeached; the mayor, one sheriff, and three aldermen, sent to the Tower, several citizens and officers of the militia committed to prison; every deed of the parliament annulled, from the day of the tumult till the return of the speakers; the lines about the city levelled; the militia restored to the Independents; regiments quartered in Whitehall and the Mews; and the parliament being reduced to a regular formed servitude, a day was appointed of solemn thanksgiving for the restoration of its liberty.[1]

* Rush. vol. viii. , 798, etc.

The Independent party among the commons exulted in their victory. The whole authority of the nation, they imagined, was now lodged in their hands; and they had a near prospect of moulding the government into that imaginary republic which had long been the object of their wishes. They had secretly concurred in all encroachments of the military upon the civil power; and they expected, by the terror of the sword, to impose a more perfect system of liberty on the reluctant nation. All parties, the king, the church, the parliament, the Presbyterians, had been guilty of errors since the commencement of these disorders: but it must be confessed, that this delusion of the Independents and republicans was, of all others, the most contrary to common sense and the established maxims of policy. Yet were the leaders of that party, Vane, Fiennes, St. John, Martin, the men in England the most celebrated for profound thought and deep contrivance; and by their well-colored pretences and professions, they had overreached the whole nation. To deceive such men, would argue a superlative capacity in Cromwell; were it not that besides the great difference there is between dark, crooked counsels and true wisdom, an exorbitant passion for rule and authority will make the most prudent overlook the dangerous consequences of such measures as seem to tend, in any degree, to their own advancement.

The leaders of the army, having established their dominion over the parliament and city, ventured to bring the king to Hampton Court; and he lived for some time in that palace, with an appearance of dignity and freedom. Such equability of temper did he possess, that, during all the variety of fortune which he underwent, no difference was perceived in his countenance or behavior; and though a prisoner in the hands of his most inveterate enemies, he supported, towards all who approached him, the majesty of a monarch; and that neither with less nor greater state than he had been accustomed to maintain. His manner, which was not in itself popular nor gracious, now appeared amiable, from its great meekness and equality.

The parliament renewed their applications to him, and presented him with the same conditions which they had offered at Newcastle. The king declined accepting them, and desired the parliament to take the proposals of the army into consideration, and make them the foundation of the public sentiment. [1] He still entertained hopes that his negotiations with the generals would be crowned with success; though every thing, in that particular, daily bore a worse aspect. Most historians have thought that Cromwell never was sincere in his professions; and that having by force rendered himself master of the king's person, and by fair pretences acquired the countenance of the royalists, he had employed these advantages to the enslaving of the parliament; and afterwards thought of nothing but the establishment of his own unlimited authority, with which he esteemed the restoration, and even life, of the king altogether incompatible. This opinion, so much warranted by the boundless ambition and profound dissimulation of his character, meets with ready belief; though it is more agreeable to the narrowness of human views, and the darkness of futurity, to suppose that this daring usurper was guided by events, and did not as yet foresee, with any assurance, that unparalleled greatness which he afterwards attained. Many writers of that age have asserted, [2] that he really intended to make a private bargain with the king; a measure which carried the most plausible appearance both for his safety and advancement; but that he found insuperable difficulties in reconciling to it the wild humors of the army.

* Rush. vol. viii. .

* * See note Q, at the end of the volume.

The horror and antipathy of these fanatics had for many years been artfully fomented against Charles; and though their principles were, on all occasions, easily warped and eluded by private interest, yet was some coloring requisite, and a flat contradiction to all former professions and tenets could not safely be proposed to them. It is certain, at least, that Cromwell made use of this reason why he admitted rarely of visits from the king’s friends, and showed less favor than formerly to the royal cause. The agitators, he said, had rendered him odious to the army, and had represented him as a traitor, who, for the sake of private interest, was ready to betray the cause of God to the great enemy of piety and religion. Desperate projects, too, he asserted to be secretly formed for the murder of the king; and he pretended much to dread lest all his authority, and that of the commanding officers, would not be able to restrain these enthusiasts from their bloody purposes. [1]

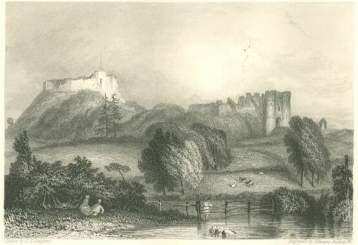
Intelligence being daily brought to the king of menaces thrown out by the agitators, he began to think of retiring from Hampton Court, and of putting himself in some place of safety. The guards were doubled upon him; the promiscuous concourse of people restrained; a more jealous care exerted in attending his person; all under color of protecting him from danger, but really with a view of making him uneasy in his present situation. These artifices soon produced the intended effect. Charles, who was naturally apt to be swayed by counsel, and who had not then access to any good counsel, took suddenly a resolution of withdrawing himself, though without any concerted, at least, any rational scheme for the future disposal of his person. Attended only by Sir John Berkeley, Ashburnham, and Leg, he privately left Hampton court; and his escape was not discovered till near an hour after; when those who entered his chamber, found on the table some letters directed to the parliament, to the general, and to the officer who had attended him. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * Rush. vol. viii. p 871.

All night he travelled through the forest, and arrived next day at Tichfield, a seat of the earl of Southampton’s, where the countess dowager resided, a woman of honor, to whom the king knew he might safely intrust his person. Before he arrived at this place, he had gone to the sea-coast; and expressed great anxiety that a ship which he seemed to look for, had not arrived; and thence, Berkeley and Leg, who were not in the secret, conjectured that his intention was to transport himself beyond sea.

The king could not hope to remain long concealed at Tichfield: what measure should next be embraced, was the question. In the neighborhood lay the Isle of Wight, of which Hammond was governor. This man was entirely dependent on Cromwell. At his recommendation, he had married a daughter of the famous Hambden, who during his lifetime had been an intimate friend of Cromwell’s, and whose memory was ever respected by him. These circumstances were very unfavorable: yet, because the governor was nephew to Dr. Hammond, the king’s favorite chaplain, and had acquired a good character in the army, it was thought proper to have recourse to him in the present exigence, when no other rational expedient could be thought of. Ashburnham and Berkeley were despatched to the island. They had orders not to inform Hammond of the place where the king was concealed, till they had first obtained a promise from him not to deliver up his majesty, though the parliament and the army should require him; but to restore him to his liberty, if he could not protect him. This promise, it is evident, would have been a very slender security: yet, even without exacting it, Ashburnham imprudently, if not treacherously, brought Hammond to Tichfield; and the king was obliged to put himself in his hands, and to attend him to Carisbroke Castle, in the Isle of Wight where, though received with great demonstrations of respect and duty, he was in reality a prisoner.



CARISBROOKE CASTLE,
ISLE OF WIGHT.

Lord Clarendon [1] is positive, that the king, when he fled from Hampton Court, had no intention of going to this island; and indeed all the circumstances of that historian’s narrative, which we have here followed, strongly favor this opinion. But there remains a letter of Charles’s to the earl of Laneric, secretary of Scotland, in which he plainly intimates, that that measure was voluntarily embraced: and even insinuates, that if he had thought proper, he might have been in Jersey, or any other place of safety.[2]

* Page 79, 80, etc.

* * See note R, at the end of the volume.

Perhaps he still confided in the promises of the generals; and flattered himself, that if he were removed from the fury of the agitators, by which his life was immediately threatened, they would execute what they had so often promised in his favor.

Whatever may be the truth in this matter, — for it is impossible fully to ascertain the truth, — Charles never took a weaker step, nor one more agreeable to Cromwell and all his enemies. He was now lodged in a place removed from his partisans, at the disposal of the army, whence it would be very difficult to deliver him, either by force or artifice. And though it was always in the power of Cromwell, whenever he pleased, to have sent him thither, yet such a measure, without the king’s consent, would have been very invidious, if not attended with some danger. That the king should voluntarily throw himself into the snare, and thereby gratify his implacable persecutors, was to them an incident peculiarly fortunate, and proved in the issue very fatal to him.

Cromwell, being now entirely master of the parliament and free from all anxiety with regard to the custody of the king’s person, applied himself seriously to quell those disorders in the army, which he himself had so artfully raised, and so successfully employed, against both king and parliament. In order to engage the troops into a rebellion against their masters, he had encouraged an arrogant spirit among the inferior officers and private men; and the camp, in many respects, carried more the appearance of civil liberty than of military obedience. The troops themselves were formed into a kind of republic; and the plans of imaginary republics, for the settlement of the state, were every day the topics of conversation among these armed legislators. Royalty it was agreed to abolish: nobility must be set aside: even all ranks of men be levelled; and a universal equality of property, as well as of power, be introduced among the citizens. The saints, they said, were the salt of the earth: an entire parity had place among the elect; and by the same rule that the apostles were exalted from the most ignoble professions, the meanest sentinel, if enlightened by the Spirit, was entitled to equal regard with the greatest commander. In order to wean the soldiers from these, licentious maxims, Cromwell had issued orders for discontinuing the meetings of the agitators; and he pretended to pay entire obedience to the parliament, whom being now fully reduced to subjection, he purposed to make for the future, the instruments of his authority. But the "levellers," — for so that party in the army was called, — having experienced the sweets of dominion, would not so easily be deprived of it. They secretly continued their meetings: they asserted, that their officers, as much as any part of the church or state, needed reformation: several regiments joined in seditious remonstrances and petitions: [1] separate rendezvouses were concerted; and every thing tended to anarchy and confusion. But this distemper was soon cured by the rough but dexterous hand of Cromwell. He chose the opportunity of a review, that he might display the greater boldness, and spread the terror the wider. He seized the ringleaders before their companions; held in the field a council of war; shot one mutineer instantly; and struck such dread into the rest, that they presently threw down the symbols of sedition, which they had displayed, and thenceforth returned to their wonted discipline and obedience. [2]

Cromwell had great deference for the counsels of Ireton, a man who, having grafted the soldier on the lawyer the statesman on the saint, had adopted such principles as were fitted to introduce the severest tyranny, while they seemed to encourage the most unbounded license in human society. Fierce in his nature, though probably sincere in his intentions, he purposed by arbitrary power to establish liberty, and, in prosecution of his imagined religious purposes, he thought himself dispensed from all the ordinary rules of morality, by which inferior mortals must allow themselves to be governed. From his suggestion, Cromwell secretly called at Windsor a council of the chief officers, in order to deliberate concerning the settlement of the nation, and the future disposal of the king's person. [3]

* Rush. vol. viii. , 859.

* * Rush. vol. viii. . Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * * Clarendon, vol. v. .

In this conference, which commenced with devout prayers, poured forth by Cromwell himself and other inspired persons, (for the officers of this army received inspiration with their commission,) was first opened the daring and unheard-of counsel, of bringing the king to justice, and of punishing, by a judicial sentence, their sovereign, for his pretended tyranny and maleadministration. While Charles lived, even though restrained to the closest prison, conspiracies, they knew, and insurrections would never be wanting in favor of a prince who was so extremely revered and beloved by his own party, and whom the nation in general began to regard with great affection and compassion. To murder him privately was exposed to the imputation of injustice and cruelty, aggravated by the baseness of such a crime; and every odious epithet of “traitor” and “assassin” would, by the general voice of mankind, be indisputably ascribed to the actors in such a villany. Some unexpected procedure must be attempted, which would astonish the world by its novelty, would bear the semblance of justice, and would cover its barbarity by the audaciousness of the enterprise. Striking in with the fanatical notions of the entire equality of mankind, it would insure the devoted obedience of the army, and serve as a general engagement against the royal family, whom, by their open and united deed, they would so heinously affront and injure. [1]

This measure, therefore, being secretly resolved on, it was requisite, by degrees, to make the parliament adopt it, and to conduct them from violence to violence, till this last act of atrocious iniquity should seem in a manner wholly inevitable. The king, in order to remove those fears and jealousies, which were perpetually pleaded as reasons for every invasion of the constitution, had offered, by a message sent from Carisbroke Castle, to resign, during his own life, the power of the militia and the nomination to all the great offices; provided that, after his demise, these prerogatives should revert to the crown. [2] But the parliament acted entirely as victors and enemies; and, in all their transactions with him, paid no longer any regard to equity or reason. At the instigation of the Independents and army, they neglected this offer, and framed four proposals, which they sent him as preliminaries; and before they would deign to treat, they demanded his positive assent to all of them.

* The following was a favorite text among the enthusiasts of that age: “Let the high praises of God be in the mouths of his saints, and a twofold sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishment upon the people;

to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgments written:

This honor have all his saints.” Psalm cxlix, ver. 6, 7, 8,

9. Hugh Peters, the mad chaplain of Cromwell, preached frequently upon this text.

* * Rush. vol. viii. p 880.

By one, he was required to invest the parliament with the military power for twenty years, together with an authority to levy whatever money should be necessary for exercising it; and even after the twenty years should be elapsed, they reserved a right of resuming the same authority, whenever they should declare the safety of the kingdom to require it. By the second, he was to recall all his proclamations and declarations against the parliament, and acknowledge that assembly to have taken arms in their just and necessary defence. By the third, he was to annul all the acts, and void all the patents of peerage, which had passed the great seal since it had been carried from London by Lord Keeper Littleton; and at the same time, renounce for the future the power of making peers without consent of parliament. By the fourth, he gave the two houses power to adjourn as they thought proper; a demand seemingly of no great importance, but contrived by the Independents, that they might be able to remove the parliament to places where it should remain in perpetual subjection to the army. [1]

1648.

The king regarded the pretension as unusual and exorbitant, that he should make such concessions, while not secure of any settlement; and should blindly trust his enemies for the conditions which they were afterwards to grant him. He required, therefore, a personal treaty with the parliament, and desired that all the terms on both sides should be adjusted, before any concession on either side should be insisted on. The republican party in the house pretended to take fire at this answer; and openly inveighed, in violent terms, against the person and government of the king; whose name, hitherto, had commonly, in all debates, been mentioned with some degree of reverence. Ireton, seeming to speak the sense of the army, under the appellation of many thousand godly men, who had ventured their lives in defence of the parliament, said, that the king, by denying the four bills, had refused safety and protection to his people; that their obedience to him was but a reciprocal duty for his protection of them; and that, as he had failed on his part, they were freed from all obligations to allegiance, and must settle the nation, without consulting any longer so misguided a prince. [2]

* Clarendon, vol. v.

* * Cl. Walker, .

Cromwell, after giving an ample character of the valor, good affections, and godliness of the army, subjoined, that it was expected the parliament should guide and defend the kingdom by their own power and resolutions, and not accustom the people any longer to expect safety and government from an obstinate man, whose heart God had hardened; that those who, at the expense of their blood, had hitherto defended the parliament from so many dangers, would still continue, with fidelity and courage, to protect them against all opposition in this vigorous measure. “Teach them not,” added he, “by your neglecting your own safety and that of the kingdom, (in which theirs too is involved,) to imagine themselves betrayed, and their interests abandoned to the rage and malice of an irreconcilable enemy, whom, for your sake, they have dared to provoke. Beware,” and at these words he laid his hand on his sword, “beware, lest despair cause them to seek safety by some other means than by adhering to you, who know not how to consult your own safety.” [1] Such arguments prevailed; though ninety-one members had still the courage to oppose. It was voted, that no more addresses be made to the king, nor any letters or messages be received from him; and that it be treason for any one, without leave of the two houses, to have any intercourse with him. The lords concurred in the same ordinance. [2]

By this vote of non-addresses, — so it was called, — the king was in reality dethroned, and the whole constitution formally overthrown. So violent a measure was supported by a declaration of the commons no less violent. The blackest calumnies were there thrown upon the king; such as, even in their famous remonstrance, they thought proper to omit, as incredible and extravagant: the poisoning of his father, the betraying of Rochelle, the contriving of the Irish massacre. [3] By blasting his fame, had that injury been in their power, they formed a very proper prelude to the executing of violence on his person.

No sooner had the king refused his assent to the four bills, than Hammond, by orders from the army, removed all his servants, cut off his correspondence with his friends, and shut him up in close confinement. The king afterwards showed to Sir Philip Warwick a decrepit old man, who, he said, was employed to kindle his fire, and was the best company he enjoyed during several months that this rigorous confinement lasted. [4]

* Cl. Walker, .

* * Rush. vol. viii. , 967.

* * * Rush. vol. viii. . Clarendon, vol. v. .

* * * * Warwick, .

No amusement was allowed him, nor society, which might relieve his anxious thoughts: to be speedily poisoned or assassinated was the only prospect which he had every moment before his eyes; for he entertained no apprehension of a judicial sentence and execution; an event of which no history hitherto furnished an example. Meanwhile, the parliament was very industrious in publishing, from time to time, the intelligence which they received from Hammond; how cheerful the king was, how pleased with every one that approached him, how satisfied in his present condition: [1] as if the view of such benignity and constancy had not been more proper to inflame than allay the general compassion of the people.

* Rush, vol. viii. .

The great source whence the king derived consolation amidst all his calamities, was undoubtedly religion; a principle which, in him, seems to have contained nothing fierce or gloomy, nothing which enraged him against his adversaries, or terrified him with the dismal prospect of futurity. While every thing around him bore a hostile aspect; while friends, family, relations, whom he passionately loved, were placed at a distance, and unable to serve him, he reposed himself with confidence in the arms of that Being who penetrates and sustains all nature, and whose severities, if received with piety and resignation, he regarded as the surest pledges of unexhausted favor.

The parliament and army, meanwhile, enjoyed not in tranquillity that power which they had obtained with so much violence and injustice. Combinations and conspiracies, they were sensible, were every where forming around them; and Scotland, whence the king's cause had received the first fatal disaster, seemed now to promise it support and assistance.

Before the surrender of the king's person at Newcastle, and much more since that event, the subjects of discontent had been daily multiplying between the two kingdoms. The Independents, who began to prevail, took all occasions of mortifying the Scots, whom the Presbyterians looked on with the greatest affection and veneration. When the Scottish commissioners, who, joined to a committee of English lords and commons, had managed the war, were ready to depart, it was proposed in parliament to give them thanks for their civilities and good offices. The Independents insisted, that the words "good offices" should be struck out; and thus the whole brotherly friendship and intimate alliance with the Scots resolved itself into an acknowledgment of their being well-bred gentlemen.

The advance of the army to London, the subjection of the parliament, the seizing of the king at Holdenby, his confinement in Carisbroke Castle, were so many blows sensibly felt by that nation, as threatening the final overthrow of Presbytery, to which they were so passionately devoted. The covenant was profanely called, in the house of commons an almanac out of date; [1] and that impiety, though complained of, had passed uncensured. Instead of being able to determine and establish orthodoxy by the sword and by penal statutes, they saw the sectarian army, who were absolute masters, claim an unbounded liberty of conscience, which the Presbyterians regarded with the utmost abhorrence. All the violences put on the king, they loudly blamed, as repugnant to the covenant by which they stood engaged to defend his royal person. And those very actions of which they themselves had been guilty, they denominated treason and rebellion, when executed by an opposite party.

The earls of Loudon, Lauderdale, and Laneric, who were sent to London, protested against the four bills, as containing too great a diminution of the king's civil power, and providing no security for religion. They complained that, notwithstanding this protestation, the bills were still insisted on, contrary to the solemn league, and to the treaty between the two nations. And when they accompanied the English commissioners to the Isle of Wight, they secretly formed a treaty with the king for arming Scotland in his favor. [2]

* Cl. Walker, .

* * Clarendon, vol. v. .

Three parties at that time prevailed in Scotland: the "royalists," who insisted upon the restoration of the king's authority, without any regard to religion sects or tenets: of these, Montrose, though absent, was regarded as the head. The "rigid Presbyterians," who hated the king even more than they abhorred toleration; and who determined to give him no assistance, till he should subscribe the covenant: these were governed by Argyle. The "moderate Presbyterians," who endeavored to reconcile the interests of religion and of the crown; and hoped, by supporting the Presbyterian party in England, to suppress the sectarian army, and to reinstate the parliament, as well as the king, in their just freedom and authority: the two brothers, Hamilton and Laneric, were leaders of this party.

When Pendennis Castle was surrendered to the parliamentary army, Hamilton, who then obtained his liberty, returned into Scotland; and being generously determined to remember ancient favors more than recent injuries, he immediately embraced, with zeal and success, the protection of the royal cause. He obtained a vote from the Scottish parliament to arm forty thousand men in support of the king's authority, and to call over a considerable body under Monro, who commanded the Scottish forces in Ulster. And though he openly protested that the covenant was the foundation of all his measures, he secretly entered into correspondence with the English royalists, Sir Marmaduke Langdale and Sir Philip Musgrave, who had levied considerable forces in the north of England.

The general assembly, who sat at the same time, and was guided by Argyle, dreaded the consequences of these measures; and foresaw that the opposite party, if successful, would effect the restoration of monarchy, without the establishment of Presbytery in England. To join the king before he had subscribed the covenant, was, in their eyes, to restore him to his honor before Christ had obtained his; [1] and they thundered out anathemas against every one who paid obedience to the parliament.

* Whitlocke, .

Two supreme independent judicatures were erected in the kingdom; one threatening the people with damnation and eternal torments, the other with imprisonment, banishment, and military execution. The people were distracted in their choice; and the armament of Hamilton's party, though seconded by all the civil power, went on but slowly. The royalists he would not as yet allow to join him, lest he might give offence to the ecclesiastical party; though he secretly promised them trust and preferment as soon as his army should advance into England.

While the Scots were making preparations for the invasion of England, every part of that kingdom was agitated with tumults, insurrections, conspiracies, discontents. It is seldom that the people gain any thing by revolutions in government; because the new settlement, jealous and insecure, must commonly be supported with more expense and severity than the old: but on no occasion was the truth of this maxim more sensibly felt, than in the present situation of England. Complaints against the oppression of ship money, against the tyranny of the star chamber, had roused the people to arms: and having gained a complete victory over the crown, they found themselves loaded with a multiplicity of taxes, formerly unknown; and scarcely an appearance of law and liberty remained in the administration. The Presbyterians, who had chiefly supported the war, were enraged to find the prize, just when it seemed within their reach, snatched by violence from them. The royalists, disappointed in their expectations by the cruel treatment which the king now received from the army, were strongly animated to restore him to liberty, and to recover the advantages which they had unfortunately lost. All orders of men were inflamed with indignation at seeing the military prevail over the civil power, and king and parliament at once reduced to subjection by a mercenary army. Many persons of family and distinction had, from the beginning of the war, adhered to the parliament: but all these were, by the new party, deprived of authority; and every office was intrusted to the most ignoble part of the nation. A base populace, exalted above their superiors; hypocrites, exercising iniquity under the visor of religion: these circumstances promised not much liberty or lenity to the people; and these were now found united in the same usurped and illegal administration.

Though the whole nation seemed to combine in their hatred of military tyranny, the ends which the several parties pursued were so different, that little concert was observed in their insurrections. Langhorne, Poyer, and Powel, Presbyterian officers, who commanded bodies of troops in Wales, were the first that declared themselves; and they drew together a considerable army in those parts, which were extremely devoted to the royal cause. An insurrection was raised in Kent by young Hales and the earl of Norwich. Lord Capel, Sir Charles Lucas, Sir George Lisle, excited commotions in Essex. The earl of Holland, who had several times changed sides since the commencement of the civil wars, endeavored to assemble forces in Surrey. Pomfret Castle, in Yorkshire, was surprised by Morrice. Langdale and Musgrave were in arms, and masters of Berwick and Carlisle in the north.

What seemed the most dangerous circumstance, the general spirit of discontent had seized the fleet. Seventeen ships, lying in the mouth of the river, declared for the king; and putting Rainsborow, their admiral, ashore, sailed over to Holland, where the prince of Wales took the command of them. [1]

* Clarendon, vol. v. .

The English royalists exclaimed loudly against Hamilton’s delays, which they attributed to a refined policy in the Scots as if their intentions were, that all the king’s party should first be suppressed, and the victory remain solely to the Presbyterians. Hamilton, with better reason, complained of the precipitate humor of the English royalists, who, by their ill-timed insurrections, forced him to march his army before his levies were completed, or his preparations in any forwardness.

No commotions beyond a tumult of the apprentices, which was soon suppressed, were raised in London: the terror of the army kept the citizens in subjection. The parliament was so overawed, that they declared the Scots to be enemies, and all who joined them traitors. Ninety members, however, of the lower house had the courage to dissent from this vote.

Cromwell and the military council prepared themselves with vigor and conduct for defence. The establishment of the army was at this time twenty-six thousand men; but by enlisting supernumeraries the regiments were greatly augmented, and commonly consisted of more than double their stated complement. [1]

* Whitlocke, .

Colonel Horton first attacked the revolted troops in Wales, and gave them a considerable defeat. The remnants of the vanquished threw themselves into Pembroke, and were there closely besieged, and soon after taken by Cromwell. Lambert was opposed to Langdale and Musgrave in the north, and gained advantages over them. Sir Michael Livesey defeated the earl of Holland at Kingston, and pursuing his victory, took him prisoner at St. Neots. Fairfax, having routed the Kentish royalists at Maidstone, followed the broken army; and when they joined the royalists of Essex, and threw themselves into Colchester, he laid siege to that place, which defended itself to the last extremity. A new fleet was manned, and sent out under the command of War wick, to oppose the revolted ships, of which the prince had taken the command.

While the forces were employed in all quarters, the parliament regained its liberty, and began to act with its wonted courage and spirit. The members who had withdrawn from terror of the army, returned; and infusing boldness into their companions, restored to the Presbyterian party the ascendant which it had formerly lost. The eleven impeached members were recalled, and the vote by which they were expelled was reversed. The vote, too, of non-addresses was repealed; and commissioners, five peers and ten commoners, were sent to Newport in the Isle of Wight, in order to treat with the king. [1] He was allowed to summon several of his friends and old counsellors, that he might have their advice in this important transaction. [2] The theologians on both sides, armed with their syllogisms and quotations, attended as auxiliaries. [3] By them the flame had first been raised; and their appearance was but a bad prognostic of its extinction. Any other instruments seemed better adapted for a treaty of pacification.

When the king presented himself to this company, a great and sensible alteration was remarked in his aspect, from what it appeared the year before, when he resided at Hampton Court. The moment his servants had been removed, he had laid aside all care of his person, and had allowed his beard and hair to grow, and to hang dishevelled and neglected. His hair was become almost entirely gray, either from the decline of years, or from that load of sorrows under which he labored; and which, though borne with constancy, preyed inwardly on his sensible and tender mind. His friends beheld with compassion, and perhaps even his enemies, "that gray and discrowned head," as he himself terms it, in a copy of verses, which the truth of the sentiment, rather than any elegance of expression, renders very pathetic. [4] Having in vain endeavored by courage to defend his throne from his armed adversaries, it now behoved him, by reasoning and persuasion, to save some fragments of it from these peaceful, and no less implacable negotiators.

The vigor of the king's mind, notwithstanding the seeming decline of his body, here appeared unbroken and undecayed. The parliamentary commissioners would allow none of his council to be present, and refused to enter into reasoning with any but himself. He alone, during the transactions of two months, was obliged to maintain the argument against fifteen men of the greatest parts and capacity in both houses; and no advantage was ever obtained over him, This was the scene above all others in which he was qualified to excel. A quick conception, a cultivated understanding, a chaste conclusion, a dignified manner; by these accomplishments he triumphed in all discussions of cool and temperate reasoning.

* Clarendon, vol. v. . Sir Edward Walker's Perfect Copies .

* * Sir Edward Walker's Perfect Copies, .

* * * Sir Edward Walker's Perfect Copies, , 38.

* * * * Burnet's Memoirs of Hamilton.

v Herbert's Memoirs, .

"The king is much changed," said the earl of Salisbury to Sir Philip Warwick: "he is extremely improved of late." "No," replied Sir Philip, "he was always so: but you are now at last sensible of it." [1] Sir Henry Vane, discoursing with his fellow-commissioners, drew an argument from the king's uncommon abilities, why the terms of pacification must be rendered more strict and rigid. [2] But Charles's capacity shone not equally in action as in reasoning.

The first point insisted on by the parliamentary commissioners, was the king's recalling all his proclamations and declarations against the parliament, and the acknowledging that they had taken arms in their own defence. He frankly offered the former concession, but long scrupled the latter. The falsehood, as well as indignity of that acknowledgment, begat in his breast an extreme reluctance against it. The king had, no doubt, in some particulars of moment, invaded, from a seeming necessity, the privileges of his people: but having renounced all claim to these usurped powers, having confessed his errors, and having repaired every breach in the constitution, and even erected new ramparts in order to secure it, he could no longer, at the commencement of the war, be represented as the aggressor. However it might be pretended, that the former display of his arbitrary inclinations, or rather his monarchical principles, rendered an offensive or preventive war in the parliament prudent and reasonable, it could never in any propriety of speech, make it be termed a defensive one. But the parliament, sensible that the letter of the law condemned them as rebels and traitors, deemed this point absolutely necessary for their future security; and the king, finding that peace could be obtained on no other terms, at last yielded to it. He only entered a protest, which was admitted, that no concession made by him should be valid, unless the whole treaty of pacification were concluded. [3]

* Warwick, .

* * Clarendon. Sir Edward Walker,

* * * Walker, , 12, 24.

He agreed that the parliament should retain, during the term of twenty years, the power over the militia and army, and that of levying what money they pleased for their support. He even yielded to them the right of resuming, at any time afterwards, this authority, whenever they should declare such a resumption necessary for public safety. In effect, the important power of the sword was forever ravished from him and his successors. [1]

He agreed that all the great offices, during twenty years should be filled by both houses of parliament. [2] He relinquished to them the entire government of Ireland, and the conduct of the war there. [3] He renounced the power of the wards, and accepted of one hundred thousand pounds a year in lieu of it. [4] He acknowledged the validity of their great seal, and gave up his own. He abandoned the power of creating peers without consent of parliament. And he agreed, that all the debts contracted in order to support the war against him, should be paid by the people.

So great were the alterations made on the English constitution by this treaty, that the king said, not without reason, that he had been more an enemy to his people by these concessions, could he have prevented them, than by any other action of his life.

Of all the demands of the parliament, Charles refused only two. Though he relinquished almost every power of the crown, he would neither give up his friends to punishment, nor desert what he esteemed his religious duty. The severe repentance which he had undergone for abandoning Strafford, had no doubt confirmed him in the resolution never again to be guilty of a like error. His long solitude and severe afflictions had contributed to rivet him the more in those religious principles which had ever a considerable influence over him. His desire, however, of finishing an accommodation, induced him to go as far in both these particulars as he thought any wise consistent with his duty.

The estates of the royalists being at that time almost entirely under sequestration, Charles who could give them no protection, consented that they should pay such compositions as they and the parliament should agree on; and only begged that they might be made as moderate as possible. He had not the disposal of offices; and it seemed but a small sacrifice to consent, that a certain number of his friends should be rendered incapable of public employments.[v*]

* Walker, .

* * Walker, .

* * * Walker, .

* * * * Walker, , 77

v Walker, , 68

v* Walker,

But when the parliament demanded a bill of attainder and banishment against *seven* persons, the marquis of Newcastle, Lord Digby, Lord Biron, Sir Marmaduke Langdale, Sir Richard Granville, Sir Francis Doddington, and Judge Jenkins, the king absolutely refused compliance; their banishment for a limited time he was willing to agree to. [1]

Religion was the fatal point about which the differences had arisen; and of all others, it was the least susceptible of composition or moderation between the contending parties. The parliament insisted on the establishment of Presbytery, the sale of the chapter lands, the abolition of all forms of prayer, and strict laws against Catholics. The king offered to retrench every thing which he did not esteem of apostolicat institution: he was willing to abolish archbishops, deans prebends, canons: he offered that the chapter lands should be let at low leases during ninety-nine years; he consented, that the present church government should continue during three years: [1] after that time, he required not that any thing should be restored to bishops but the power of ordination, and even that power to be exercised by advice of the presbyters. [2] If the parliament, upon the expiration of that period, still insisted on their demand, all other branches of episcopal jurisdiction were abolished, and a new form of church government must, by common consent, be established. The Book of Common Prayer he was willing to renounce, but required the liberty of using some other liturgy in his own chapel; [3] a demand, which, though seemingly reasonable, was positively refused by the parliament.

In the dispute on these articles, one is not surprised that two of the parliamentary theologians should tell the king, “that if he did not consent to the utter abolition of Episcopacy he would be damned.” But it is not without some indignation that we read the following vote of the lords and commons: “The houses, out of their detestation to that abominable idolatry used in the mass, do declare, that they cannot admit of, or consent unto, any such indulgence in any law, as is desired by his majesty, for exempting the queen and her family from the penalties to be enacted against the exercise of the mass.”* * * *

* Walker, , 93. * Walker, , 35, 49

* * Walker, .

* * * Walker, , 82. Rush. vol. viii.

* * * * Walker, .

The treaty of marriage, the regard to the queen’s sex and high station, even common humanity; all considerations were undervalued, in comparison of their bigoted prejudices. [1]

* See note S, at the end of the volume.

It was evidently the interest, both of king and parliament, to finish their treaty with all expedition; and endeavor by their combined force to resist, if possible, the usurping fury of the army. It seemed even the interest of the parliament to leave in the king’s hand a considerable share of authority, by which he might be enabled to protect them and himself from so dangerous an enemy. But the terms on which they insisted were so rigorous, that the king, fearing no worse from the most implacable enemies, was in no haste to come to a conclusion. And so great was the bigotry on both sides, that they were willing to sacrifice the greatest civil interests, rather than relinquish the most minute of their theological contentions. From these causes, assisted by the artifice of the Independents, the treaty was spun out to such a length, that the invasions and insurrections were every where subdued; and the army had leisure to execute their violent and sanguinary purposes.

Hamilton, having entered England with a numerous though undisciplined army, durst not unite his forces with those of Langdale; because the English royalists had refused to take the covenant; and the Scottish Presbyterians, though engaged for the king, refused to join them on any other terms. The two armies marched together, though at some distance; nor could even the approach of the parliamentary army under Cromwell, oblige the Covenanters to consult their own safety, by a close union with the royalists. When principles are so absurd and so destructive of human society, it may safely be averred, that the more sincere and the more disinterested they are, they only become the more ridiculous and the more odious.

Cromwell feared not to oppose eight thousand men to the numerous armies of twenty thousand commanded by Hamilton and Langdale. He attacked the latter by surprise near Preston, in Lancashire; and though the royalists made a brave resistance, yet, not being succored in time by their confederates, they were almost entirely cut in pieces. Hamilton was next attacked, put to rout, and pursued to Utoxeter, where he surrendered himself prisoner. Cromwell followed his advantage; and, marching into Scotland with a considerable body joined Argyle, who was also in arms; and having suppressed Laneric, Monro, and other moderate Presbyterians he placed the power entirely in the hands of the violent party. The ecclesiastical authority, exalted above the civil, exercised the severest vengeance on all who had a share in Hamilton's engagement, as it was called; nor could any of that party recover trust, or even live in safety, but by doing solemn and public penance for taking arms, by authority of parliament in defence of their lawful sovereign.

The chancellor, Loudon, who had at first countenanced Hamilton's enterprise, being terrified with the menaces of the clergy, had some time before gone over to the other party; and he now openly in the church, though invested with the highest civil character in the kingdom, did penance for his obedience to the parliament, which he termed a "carnal self-seeking." He accompanied his penance with so many tears, and such pathetical addresses to the people for their prayers in this his uttermost sorrow and distress, that a universal weeping and lamentation took place among the deluded audience. [1]

The loan of great sums of money, often to the ruin of families, was exacted from all such as lay under any suspicion of favoring the king's party, though their conduct had been ever so inoffensive. This was a device fallen upon by the ruling party, in order, as they said, to reach "heart malignants." [2] Never in this island was known a more severe and arbitrary government, than was generally exercised by the patrons of liberty in both kingdoms.

* Whitlocke, .

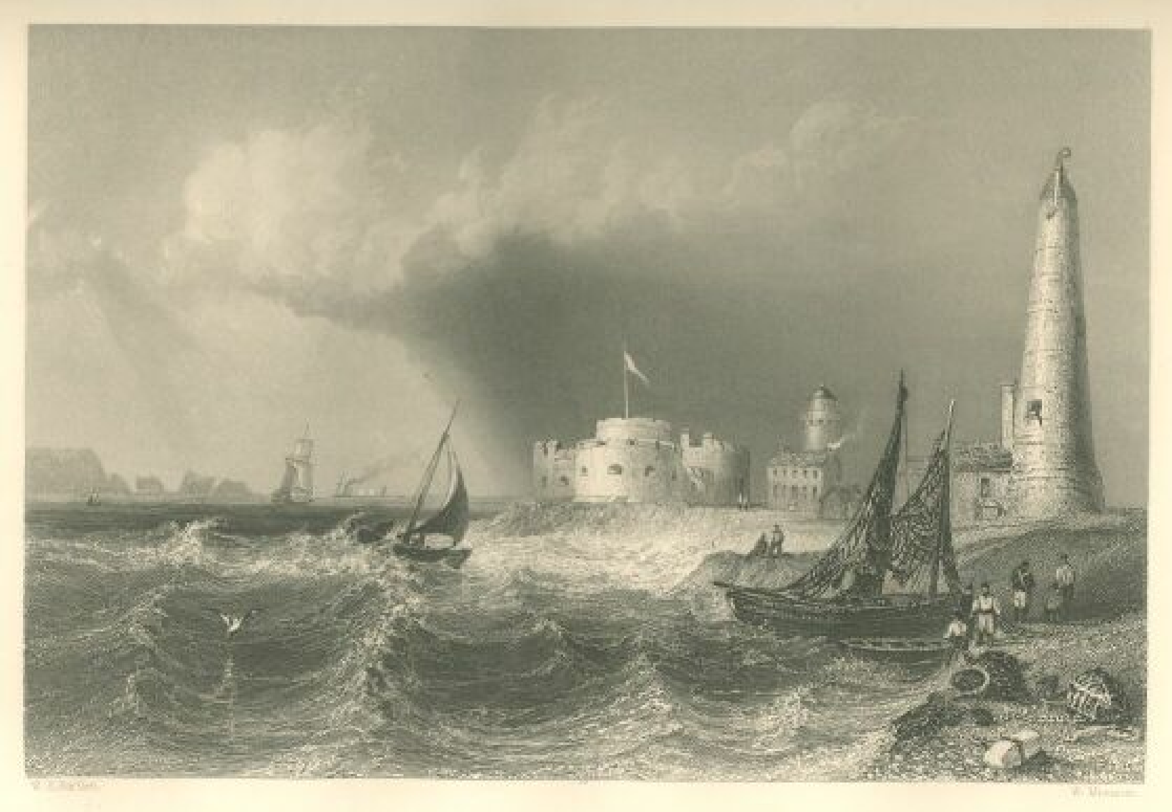
* * Guthrey. Lucas and Sir George Lisle.

The siege of Colchester terminated in a manner no less unfortunate than Hamilton's engagement for the royal cause. After suffering the utmost extremities of famine, after feeding on the vilest aliments, the garrison desired at last to capitulate. Fairfax required them to surrender at discretion; and he gave such an explanation to these terms, as to reserve to himself power, if he pleased, to put them all instantly to the sword. The officers endeavored, though in vain, to persuade the soldiers, by making a vigorous sally, to break through, at least to sell their lives as dear as possible. They were obliged to accept of the conditions offered; and Fairfax, instigated by Ireton, to whom Cromwell in his absence had consigned over the government of the passive general, seized Sir Charles and resolved to make them instant sacrifices to military justice. This unusual severity was loudly exclaimed against by all the prisoners. Lord Capel, fearless of danger, reproached Ireton with it; and challenged him, as they were all engaged in the same honorable cause, to exercise the same impartial vengeance on all of them. Lucas was first shot; and he himself gave orders to fire, with the same alacrity as if he had commanded a platoon of his own soldiers. Lisle instantly ran and kissed the dead body, then cheerfully presented himself to a like fate. Thinking that the soldiers destined for his execution stood at too great a distance, he called to them to come nearer: one of them replied, "I'll warrant you, sir, we'll hit you:" he answered, smiling, "Friends, I have been nearer you, when you have missed me." Thus perished this generous spirit, not less beloved for his modesty and humanity, than esteemed for his courage and military conduct.

Soon after, a gentleman appearing in the king's presence clothed in mourning for Sir Charles Lucas, that humane prince, suddenly recollecting the hard fate of his friends, paid them a tribute which none of his own unparalleled misfortunes ever extorted from him: he dissolved into a flood of tears. [1]

* Whitlocke.

By these multiplied successes of the army, they had subdued all their enemies; and none remained but the helpless king and parliament to oppose their violent measures. From Cromwell's suggestion, a remonstrance was drawn by the council of general officers, and sent to the parliament. They there complain of the treaty with the king; demand his punishment for the blood spilt during the war; require a dissolution of the present parliament, and a more equal representative for the future; and assert that, though servants, they are entitled to represent these important points to their masters, who are themselves no better than servants and trustees of the people. At the same time, they advanced with the army to Windsor, and sent Colonel Eure to seize the king’s person at Newport, and convey him to Hurst Castle, in the neighborhood, where he was detained in strict confinement.



HURST CASTLE.

This measure being foreseen some time before, the king was exhorted to make his escape, which was conceived to be very easy: but having given his word to the parliament not to attempt the recovery of his liberty during the treaty, and three weeks after, he would not, by any persuasion, be induced to hazard the reproach of violating that promise. In vain was it urged, that a promise given to the parliament could no longer be binding; since they could no longer afford him protection from violence threatened him by other persons, to whom he was bound by no tie or engagement. The king would indulge no refinements of casuistry, however plausible, in such delicate subjects; and was resolved that, what depredations soever fortune should commit upon him, she never should bereave him of his honor. [1]

* Colonel Cooke's Memoirs, . Rush. vol. viii. .

The parliament lost not courage, notwithstanding the danger with which they were so nearly menaced. Though without any plan for resisting military usurpations, they resolved to withstand them to the uttermost; and rather to bring on a violent and visible subversion of government, than lend their authority to those illegal and sanguinary measures which were projected. They set aside the remonstrance of the army, without deigning to answer it; they voted the seizing of the king's person to be without their consent, and sent a message to the general, to know by what authority that enterprise had been executed; and they issued orders that the army should advance no nearer to London.

Hollis, the present leader of the Presbyterians, was a man of unconquerable intrepidity; and many others of that party seconded his magnanimous spirit. It was proposed by them, that the generals and principal officers should, for their disobedience and usurpations, be proclaimed traitors by the parliament.

But the parliament was dealing with men who would not be frightened by words, nor retarded by any scrupulous delicacy. The generals, under the name of Fairfax, (for he still allowed them to employ his name,) marched the army to London, and placing guards in Whitehall, the Mews, St. James's, Durham House, Covent Garden, and Palace Yard, surrounded the parliament with their hostile armaments.

The parliament, destitute of all hopes of prevailing, retained, however, courage to resist. They attempted, in the face of the army, to close their treaty with the king; and, though they had formerly voted his concessions with regard to the church and delinquents to be unsatisfactory, they now took into consideration the final resolution with regard to the whole.

After a violent debate of three days, it was carried, by a majority of one hundred and twenty-nine against eighty-three, in the house of commons, that the king's concessions were a foundation for the houses to proceed upon in the settlement of the kingdom.

Next day, when the commons were to meet, Colonel Pride formerly a drayman, had environed the house with two regiments; and, directed by Lord Grey of Groby, he seized in the passage forty-one members of the

Presbyterian party, and sent them to a low room, which passed by the appellation of “hell;” whence they were afterwards carried to several inns. Above one hundred and sixty members more were excluded, and none were allowed to enter but the most furious and the most determined of the Independents; and these exceeded not the number of fifty or sixty. This invasion of the parliament commonly passed under the name of “Colonel Pride’s Purge;” so much disposed was the nation to make merry with the dethroning of those members who had violently arrogated the whole authority of government, and deprived the king of his legal prerogatives.

The subsequent proceedings of the parliament, if this diminutive assembly deserve that honorable name, retain not the least appearance of law, equity, or freedom. They instantly reversed the former vote, and declared the king’s concessions unsatisfactory. They determined that no member absent at this last vote should be received till he subscribed it, as agree able to his judgment. They renewed their former vote of non-addresses. And they committed to prison Sir William Waller, Sir John Clotworthy, the generals Massey, Brown, Copley, and other leaders of the Presbyterians. These men, by their credit and authority, which was then very high, had, at the commencement of the war, supported the parliament; and thereby prepared the way for the greatness of the present leaders, who at that time were of small account in the nation.

The secluded members having published a paper, containing a narrative of the violence which had been exercised upon them, and a protestation, that all acts were void, which from that time had been transacted in the house of commons, the remaining members encountered it with a declaration, in which they pronounced it false, scandalous, seditious, and tending to the destruction of the visible and fundamental government of the kingdom.

These sudden and violent revolutions held the whole nation in terror and astonishment. Every man dreaded to be trampled under foot, in the contention between those mighty powers which disputed for the sovereignty of the state. Many began to withdraw their effects beyond sea: foreigners scrupled to give any credit to a people so torn by domestic faction, and oppressed by military usurpation: even the internal commerce of the kingdom began to stagnate: and in order to remedy these growing evils, the generals, in the name of the army, published a declaration, in which they expressed their resolution of supporting law and justice. [1]

The more to quiet the minds of men, the council of officers took into consideration a scheme called “the agreement of the people;” being the plan of a republic, to be substituted in the place of that government which they so violently pulled in pieces. Many parts of this scheme for correcting the inequalities of the representative, are plausible; had the nation been disposed to receive it, or had the army intended to impose it. Other parts are too perfect for human nature, and savor strongly of that fanatical spirit so prevalent throughout the kingdom.

The height of all iniquity and fanatical extravagance yet remained — the public trial and execution of their sovereign. To this period was every measure precipitated by the zealous Independents. The parliamentary leaders of that party had intended, that the army themselves should execute that daring enterprise; and they deemed so irregular and lawless a deed best fitted to such irregular and lawless instruments. [2] But the generals were too wise to load themselves singly with the infamy which, they knew, must attend an action so shocking to the general sentiments of mankind. The parliament, they were resolved, should share with them the reproach of a measure which was thought requisite for the advancement of their common ends of safety and ambition. In the house of commons, therefore, a committee was appointed to bring in a charge against the king. On their report a vote passed, declaring it treason in a king to levy war against his parliament, and appointing a high court of justice to try Charles for this new-invented treason. This vote was sent up to the house of peers.

* Rush. vol. viii. .

* * Whitlocke.

The house of peers, during the civil wars, had all along been of small account; but it had lately, since the king’s fall, become totally contemptible; and very few members would submit to the mortification of attending it. It happened that day to be fuller than usual, and they were assembled to the number of sixteen. Without one dissenting voice, and almost without deliberation, they instantly rejected the vote of the lower house, and adjourned themselves for ten days, hoping that this delay would be able to retard the furious career of the commons.

The commons were not to be stopped by so small an obstacle. Having first established a principle which is noble in itself, and seems specious, but is belied by all history and experience, “that the people are the origin of all just power;” they next declared, that the commons of England, assembled in parliament, being chosen by the people, and representing them, are the supreme authority of the nation, and that whatever is enacted and declared to be law by the commons, hath the force of law, without the consent of king or house of peers. The ordinance for the trial of Charles Stuart, king of England, (so they called him,) was again read, and unanimously assented to.

In proportion to the enormity of the violences and usurpations, were augmented the pretences of sanctity, among those regicides. “Should any one have voluntarily proposed,” said Cromwell in the house, “to bring the king to punishment, I should have regarded him as the greatest traitor; but since Providence and necessity have cast us upon it, I will pray to God for a blessing on your counsels; though I am not prepared to give you any advice on this important occasion. Even I myself,” subjoined he, “when I was lately offering up petitions for his majesty’s restoration, felt my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and considered this preternatural movement as the answer which Heaven, having rejected the king, had sent to my supplications.”

A woman of Hertfordshire, illuminated by prophetical visions, desired admittance into the military council, and communicated to the officers a revelation, which assured them that their measures were consecrated from above, and ratified by a heavenly sanction. This intelligence gave them great comfort, and much confirmed them in their present resolutions. [1]

* Whitlocke, .

Colonel Harrison, the son of a butcher, and the most furious enthusiast in the army, was sent with a strong party to conduct the king to London. At Windsor, Hamilton, who was there detained a prisoner, was admitted into the king’s presence: and falling on his knees, passionately exclaimed, “My dear master!”— “I have indeed been so to you,” replied Charles, embracing him. No further intercourse was allowed between them, The king was instantly hurried away. Hamilton long followed him with his eyes all suffused in tears, and prognosticated, that in this short salutation, he had given the last adieu to his sovereign and his friend.

Charles himself was assured that the period of his life was now approaching; but notwithstanding all the preparations which were making, and the intelligence which he received, he could not even yet believe that his enemies really meant to conclude their violences by a public trial and execution. A private assassination he every moment looked for; and though Harrison assured him that his apprehensions were entirely groundless, it was by that catastrophe, so frequent with dethroned princes, that he expected to terminate his life. In appearance, as well as in reality, the king was now dethroned. All the exterior symbols of sovereignty were withdrawn, and his attendants had orders to serve him without ceremony. At first, he was shocked with instances of rudeness and familiarity, to which he had been so little accustomed. “Nothing so contemptible as a despised prince!” was the reflection which they suggested to him. But he soon reconciled his mind to this, as he had done to his other calamities.

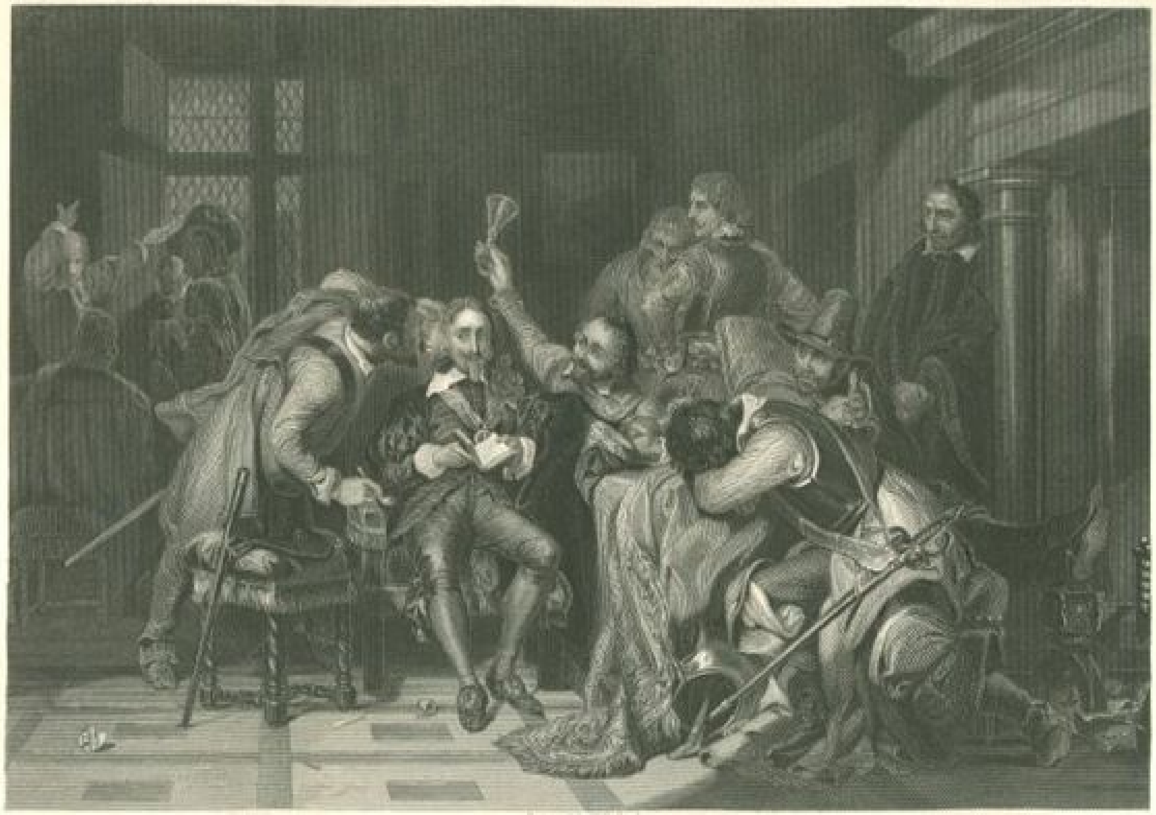
All the circumstances of the trial were now adjusted, and the high court of justice fully constituted. It consisted of one hundred and thirty-three persons, as named by the commons; but there scarcely ever sat above seventy: so difficult was it, notwithstanding the blindness of prejudice and the allurements of interest, to engage men of any name or character in that criminal measure. Cromwell, Ireton, Harrison, and the chief officers of the army, most of them of mean birth, were members, together with some of the lower house, and some citizens of London. The twelve judges were at first appointed in the number: but as they had affirmed, that it was contrary to all the ideas of English law to try the king for treason, by whose authority all accusations for treason must necessarily be conducted, their names, as well as those of some peers, were afterwards struck out. Bradshaw, a lawyer, was chosen president. Coke was appointed solicitor for the people of England. Dorislaus, Steele, and Arke, were named assistants. The court sat in Westminster Hall.

It is remarkable, that in calling over the court, when the crier pronounced the name of Fairfax, which had been inserted in the number, a voice came from one of the spectators, and cried, “He has more wit than to be here.” When the charge was read against the king, “In the name of the people of England,” the same voice exclaimed, “Not a tenth part of them.” Axtel, the officer who guarded the court, giving orders to fire into the box whence these insolent speeches came, it was discovered that Lady Fairfax was there, and that it was she who had had the courage to utter them. She was a person of noble extraction, daughter of Horace Lord Vere of Tilbury; but being seduced by the violence of the times, she had long seconded her husband’s zeal against the royal cause, and was now, as well as he, struck with abhorrence at the fatal and unexpected consequence of all his boasted victories.

The pomp, the dignity, the ceremony of this transaction corresponded to the greatest conception that is suggested in the annals of human kind; the delegates of a great people sitting in judgment upon their supreme magistrate, and trying him for his misgovernment and breach of trust. The solicitor, in the name of the commons, represented, that Charles Stuart, being admitted king of England, and intrusted with a limited power, yet nevertheless, from a wicked design to erect an unlimited and tyrannical government, had traitorously and maliciously levied war against the present parliament, and the people, whom they represented, and was therefore impeached as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and a public and implacable enemy to the commonwealth. After the charge was finished, the president directed his discourse to the king, and told him that the court expected his answer.

The king, though long detained a prisoner, and now produced as a criminal, sustained, by his magnanimous courage, the majesty of a monarch. With great temper and dignity, he declined the authority of the court, and refused to submit himself to their jurisdiction. He represented, that having been engaged in treaty with his two houses of parliament, and having finished almost every article, he had expected to be brought to his capital in another manner, and ere this time to have been restored to his power, dignity, revenue, as well as to his personal liberty: that he could not now perceive any appearance of the upper house, so essential a member of the constitution; and had learned, that even the commons, whose authority was pretended, were subdued by lawless force, and were bereaved of their liberty: that he himself was their “native, hereditary king;” nor was the whole authority of the state, though free and united, entitled to try him, who derived his dignity from the Supreme Majesty of heaven: that, admitting those extravagant principles which levelled all orders of men, the court could plead no power delegated by the people; unless the consent of every individual, down to the meanest and most ignorant peasant, had been previously asked and obtained: that he acknowledged, without scruple, that he had a trust committed to him, and one most sacred and inviolable; he was intrusted with the liberties of his people, and would not now betray them by recognizing a power founded on the most atrocious violence and usurpation: that having taken arms, and frequently exposed his life in defence of public liberty, of the constitution, of the fundamental laws of the kingdom, he was willing in this last and most solemn scene, to seal with his blood those precious rights for which, though in vain, he had so long contended: that those who arrogated a title to sit as his judges, were born his subjects, and born subjects to those laws which determined "that the king can do no wrong:" that he was not reduced to the necessity of sheltering himself under this general maxim which guards every English monarch, even the least deserving; but was able, by the most satisfactory reasons, to justify those measures in which he had been engaged: that to the whole world, and even to them, his pretended judges, he was desirous, if called upon in another manner, to prove the integrity of his conduct, and assert the justice of those defensive arms to which, unwillingly and unfortunately, he had had recourse; but that, in order to preserve a uniformity of conduct, he must at present forego the apology of his innocence lest, by ratifying an authority no better founded than that of robbers and pirates, he be justly branded as the betrayer instead of being applauded as the martyr, of the constitution.

The president, in order to support the majesty of the people, and maintain the superiority of his court above the prisoner still inculcated, that he must not decline the authority of his judges; that they overruled his objections; that they were delegated by the people, the only source of every lawful power; and that kings themselves acted but in trust from that community which had invested this high court of justice with its jurisdiction. Even according to those principles, which, in his present situation, he was perhaps obliged to adopt, his behavior in general will appear not a little harsh and barbarous; but when we consider him as a subject, and one too of no high character, addressing himself to his unfortunate sovereign, his style will be esteemed to the last degree audacious and insolent.



Engraved by W. Holland

CHARLES 1ST IN THE GUARD ROOM.

From the Painting by Paul de la Roche

Three times was Charles produced before the court, and as often declined their jurisdiction. On the fourth, the judges having examined some witnesses, by whom it was proved that the king had appeared in arms against the forces commissioned by the parliament, they pronounced sentence against him. He seemed very anxious at this time to be admitted to a conference with the two houses; and it was supposed, that he intended to resign the crown to his son: but the court refused compliance, and considered that request as nothing but a delay of justice.

It is confessed, that the king’s behavior during this last scene of his life does honor to his memory; and that, in all appearances before his judges, he never forgot his part, either as a prince or as a man. Firm and intrepid, he maintained, in each reply, the utmost perspicuity and justness both of thought and expression; mild and equable, he rose into no passion at that unusual authority which was assumed over him. His soul, without effort or affectation, seemed only to remain in the situation familiar to it, and to look down with contempt on all the efforts of human malice and iniquity. The soldiers, instigated by their superiors, were brought, though with difficulty, to cry aloud for justice. “Poor souls!” said the king to one of his attendants, “for a little money they would do as much against their commanders.” [1] Some of them were permitted to go the utmost length of brutal insolence, and to spit in his face, as he was conducted along the passage to the court. To excite a sentiment of pity was the only effect which this inhuman insult was able to produce upon him.

The people, though under the rod of lawless, unlimited power, could not forbear, with the most ardent prayers, pouring forth their wishes for his preservation; and in his present distress, they avowed him, by their generous tears, for their monarch, whom, in their misguided fury, they had before so violently rejected. The king was softened at this moving scene, and expressed his gratitude for their dutiful affection. One soldier, too, seized by contagious sympathy, demanded from Heaven a blessing on oppressed and fallen majesty: his officer, overhearing the prayer, beat him to the ground in the king’s presence. “The punishment, methinks, exceeds the offence:” this was the reflection which Charles formed on that occasion. [1]

As soon as the intention of trying the king was known in foreign countries, so enormous an action was exclaimed against by the general voice of reason and humanity; and all men, under whatever form of government they were born, rejected the example, as the utmost effort of undisguised usurpation, and the most heinous insult on law and justice. The French ambassador, by orders from his court, interposed in the king’s behalf: the Dutch employed their good offices: the Scots exclaimed and protested against the violence: the queen, the prince, wrote pathetic letters to the parliament. All solicitations were found fruitless with men whose resolutions were fixed and irrevocable.

Four of Charles’s friends, persons of virtue and dignity, Richmond, Hertford, Southampton, Lindesey, applied to the commons. They represented, that they were the king’s counsellors, and had concurred by their advice in all those measures which were now imputed as crimes to their royal master: that, in the eye of the law, and according to the dictates

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* Rush. vol. viii. .

of common reason, they alone were guilty, and were alone exposed to censure for every blamable action of the prince; and that they now presented themselves, in order to save, by their own punishment, that precious life which it became the commons themselves, and every subject, with the utmost hazard to protect and defend. [2] Such a generous effort tended to their honor, but contributed nothing towards the king's safety.

* Warwick, .

* * Perinchef, p, 85. Lloyde, .

The people remained in that silence and astonishment, which all great passions, when they have not an opportunity of exerting themselves, naturally produce in the human mind. The soldiers, being incessantly plied with prayers, sermons and exhortations, were wrought up to a degree of fury, and imagined, that in the acts of the most extreme disloyalty towards their prince consisted their greatest merit in the eye of Heaven. [1]

Three days were allowed the king between his sentence and his execution. This interval he passed with great tranquillity, chiefly in reading and devotion. All his family that remained in England were allowed access to him. It consisted only of the princess Elizabeth and the duke of Gloucester; for the duke of York had made his escape. Gloucester was little more than an infant: the princess, notwithstanding her tender years, showed an advanced judgment; and the calamities of her family had made a deep impression upon her. After many pious consolations and advices, the king gave her in charge to tell the queen, that during the whole course of his life, he had never once, even in thought, failed in his fidelity towards her; and that his conjugal tenderness and his life should have an equal duration.

To the young duke, too, he could not forbear giving some advice, in order to season his mind with early principles of loyalty and obedience towards his brother, who was so soon to be his sovereign. Holding him on his knee, he said, "Now they will cut off thy father's head." At these words, the child looked very steadfastly upon him. "Mark, child! what I say: they will cut off my head! and perhaps make thee a king: but mark what I say: thou must not be a king as long as thy brothers Charles and James are alive. They will cut off thy brothers' heads, when they can catch them! And thy head, too they will cut off at last! Therefore I charge thee, do not be made a king by them!” The duke, sighing, replied, “I will be torn in pieces first!” So determined an answer, from one of such tender years, filled the king’s eyes with tears of joy and admiration.

Every night during this interval the king slept as sound as usual; though the noise of workmen employed in framing the scaffold, and other preparations for his execution, continually resounded in his ears. [2]

The morning of the fatal day he rose early, and calling Herbert, one of his attendants, he bade him employ more than usual care in dressing him, and preparing him for so great and joyful a solemnity. Bishop Juxon, a man endowed with the same mild and steady virtues by which the king himself was so much distinguished, assisted him in his devotions, and paid the last melancholy duties to his friend and sovereign.

The street before Whitehall was the place destined for the execution; for it was intended, by choosing that very place, in sight of his own palace, to display more evidently the triumph of popular justice over royal majesty. When the king came upon the scaffold, he found it so surrounded with soldiers, that he could not expect to be heard by any of the people: he addressed, therefore, his discourse to the few persons who were about him; particularly Colonel Tomlinson, to whose care he had lately been committed, and upon whom, as upon many others, his amiable deportment had wrought an entire conversion. He justified his own innocence in the late fatal wars; and observed, that he had not taken arms till after the parliament had enlisted forces; nor had he any other object in his warlike operations, than to preserve that authority entire which his predecessors had transmitted to him. He threw not, however, the blame upon the parliament, but was more inclined to think, that ill instruments had interposed, and raised in them fears and jealousies with regard to his intentions. Though innocent towards his people, he acknowledged the equity of his execution in the eyes of his Maker; and observed, that an unjust sentence which he had suffered to take effect, was now punished by an unjust sentence upon himself. He forgave all his enemies, even the chief instruments of his death; but exhorted them and the whole nation to return to the ways of peace, by

* Burnet’s History of his Own Times.

* * Clement Walker’s History of Independency.

paying obedience to their lawful sovereign, his son and successor. When he was preparing himself for the block, Bishop Juxon called to him: “There is, sir, but one stage more, which, though turbulent and troublesome, is yet a very short one. Consider, it will soon carry you a great way; it will carry you from earth to heaven; and there you shall find, to your great joy, the prize to which you hasten, a crown of glory.” “I go,” replied the king, “from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown; where no disturbance can have place.” At one blow was his head severed from his body. A man in a visor performed the office of executioner: another, in a like disguise, held up to the spectators the head, streaming with blood, and cried aloud, “This is the head of a traitor!”

It is impossible to describe the grief, indignation, and astonishment which took place, not only among the spectators, who were overwhelmed with a flood of sorrow, but throughout the whole nation, as soon as the report of this fatal execution was conveyed to them. Never monarch, in the full triumph of success and victory, was more dear to his people, than his misfortunes and magnanimity, his patience and piety, had rendered this unhappy prince. In proportion to their former delusions, which had animated them against him, was the violence of their return to duty and affection; while each reproached himself either with active disloyalty towards him, or with too indolent defence of his oppressed cause. On weaker minds, the effect of these complicated passions was prodigious. Women are said to have cast forth the untimely fruit of their womb: others fell into convulsions, or sunk into such a melancholy as attended them to their grave: nay, some, unmindful of themselves, as though they could not or would not survive their beloved prince, it is reported, suddenly fell down dead. The very pulpits were bedewed with unsuborned tears; those pulpits, which had formerly thundered out the most violent imprecations and anathemas against him. And all men united in their detestation of those hypocritical parricides, who, by sanctified pretences, had so long disguised their treasons, and in this last act of iniquity had thrown an indelible stain upon the nation.

A fresh instance of hypocrisy was displayed the very day of the king’s death. The generous Fairfax, not content with being absent from the trial, had used all the interest which he yet retained to prevent the execution of the fatal sentence; and had even employed persuasion with his own regiment, though none else should follow him, to rescue the king from his disloyal murderers. Cromwell and Ireton, informed of this intention, endeavored to convince him that the Lord had rejected the king; and they exhorted him to seek by prayer some direction from Heaven on this important occasion: but they concealed from him that they had already signed the warrant for the execution. Harrison was the person appointed to join in prayer with the unwary general. By agreement, he prolonged his doleful cant till intelligence arrived, that the fatal blow was struck. He then rose from his knees, and insisted with Fairfax, that this event was a miraculous and providential answer which Heaven had sent to their devout supplications. [1]

* Herbert, .

It being remarked, that the king, the moment before he stretched out his neck to the executioner, had said to Juxon with a very earnest accent, the single word “Remember,” great mysteries were supposed to be concealed under that expression; and the generals vehemently insisted with the prelate, that he should inform them of the king’s meaning, Juxon told them that the king, having frequently charged him to inculcate on his son the forgiveness of his murderers, had taken this opportunity, in the last moment of his life, when his commands, he supposed would be regarded as sacred and inviolable, to reiterate that desire; and that his mild spirit thus terminated its present course by an act of benevolence towards his greatest enemies.

The character of this prince, as that of most men, if not of all men, was mixed; but his virtues predominated extremely above his vices, or, more properly speaking, his imperfections; for scarce any of his faults rose to that pitch as to merit the appellation of vices. To consider him in the most favorable light, it may be affirmed, that his dignity was free from pride, his humanity from weakness, his bravery from rashness, his temperance from austerity, his frugality from avarice; all these virtues in him maintained their proper bounds, and merited unreserved praise. To speak the most harshly of him, we may affirm, that many of his good qualities were attended with some latent frailty, which, though seemingly inconsiderable was able, when seconded by the extreme malevolence of his fortune, to disappoint them of all their influence: his beneficent disposition was clouded by a manner not very gracious; his virtue was tinctured with superstition; his good sense was disfigured by a deference to persons of a capacity inferior to his own; and his moderate temper exempted him not from hasty and precipitate resolutions. He deserves the epithet of a good, rather than of a great man: and was more fitted to rule in a regular established government, than either to give way to the encroachments of a popular assembly, or finally to subdue their pretensions. He wanted suppleness and dexterity sufficient for the first measure; he was nor endowed with the vigor requisite for the second. Had he been born an absolute prince, his humanity and good sense had rendered his reign happy and his memory precious; had the limitations on prerogative been in his time quite fixed and certain, his integrity had made him regard as sacred the boundaries of the constitution. Unhappily, his fate threw him into a period, when the precedents of many former reigns savored strongly of arbitrary power, and the genius of the people ran violently towards liberty. And if his political prudence was not sufficient to extricate him from so perilous a situation, he may be excused; since, even after the event, when it is commonly easy to correct all errors, one is at a loss to determine what conduct, in his circumstances, could have maintained the authority of the crown, and preserved the peace of the nation. Exposed, without revenue, without arms, to the assault of furious, implacable, and bigoted factions, it was never permitted him, but with the most fatal consequences, to commit the smallest mistake; a condition too rigorous to be imposed on the greatest human capacity.

Some historians have rashly questioned the good faith of this prince; but, for this reproach, the most malignant scrutiny of his conduct, which in every circumstance is now thoroughly known, affords not any reasonable foundation. On the contrary, if we consider the extreme difficulties to which he was so frequently reduced, and compare the sincerity of his professions and declarations, we shall avow, that probity and honor ought justly to be numbered among his most shining qualities. In every treaty, those concessions which he thought he could not in conscience maintain, he never could, by any motive or persuasion, be induced to make. And though some violations of the petition of right may perhaps be imputed to him, these are more to be ascribed to the necessity of his situation, and to the lofty ideas of royal prerogative, which, from former established precedents, he had imbibed, than to any failure in the integrity of his principles. [1]

* See note T, at the end of the volume.

This prince was of a comely presence; of a sweet, but melancholy aspect. His face was regular, handsome, and well complexioned; his body strong, healthy, and justly proportioned; and being of a middle stature, he was capable of enduring the greatest fatigues. He excelled in horsemanship and other exercises; and he possessed all the exterior, as well as many of the essential qualities which form an accomplished prince.

The tragical death of Charles begat a question, whether the people, in any case, were entitled to judge and to punish their sovereign; and most men, regarding chiefly the atrocious usurpation of the pretended judges, and the merit of the virtuous prince who suffered, were inclined to condemn the republican principle, as highly seditious and extravagant: but there still were a few who, abstracting from the particular circumstances of this case, were able to consider the question in general, and were inclined to moderate, not contradict, the prevailing sentiment. Such might have been their reasoning. If ever, on any occasion, it were laudable to conceal truth from the populace, it must be confessed, that the doctrine of resistance affords such an example; and that all speculative reasoners ought to observe, with regard to this principle, the same cautious silence which the laws, in every species of government, have ever prescribed to themselves. Government is instituted in order to restrain the fury and injustice of the people; and being always founded on opinion, not on force, it is dangerous to weaken, by these speculations, the reverence which the multitude owe to authority, and to instruct them beforehand, that the case can ever happen when they may be freed from their duty of allegiance. Or should it be found impossible to restrain the license of human disquisitions, it must be acknowledged, that the doctrine of obedience ought alone to be inculcated; and that the exceptions, which are rare, ought seldom or never to be mentioned in popular reasonings and discourses. Nor is there any danger that mankind, by this prudent reserve, should universally degenerate into a state of abject servitude. When the exception really occurs, even though it be not previously expected and descanted on, it must, from its very nature, be so obvious and undisputed, as to remove all doubt, and overpower the restraint, however great, imposed by teaching the general doctrine of obedience. But between resisting a prince and dethroning him, there is a wide interval; and the abuses of power which can warrant the latter violence, are greater and more enormous than those which will justify the former. History, however, supplies us with examples even of this kind; and the reality of the supposition, though for the future it ought ever to be little looked for, must, by all candid inquirers, be acknowledged in the past. But between dethroning a prince and punishing him, there is another very wide interval; and it were not strange, if even men of the most enlarged thought should question, whether human nature could ever, in any monarch, reach that height of depravity, as to warrant, in revolted subjects, this last act of extraordinary jurisdiction. That illusion, if it be an illusion, which teaches us to pay a sacred regard to the persona of princes, is so salutary, that to dissipate it by the formal trial and punishment of a sovereign, will have more pernicious effects upon the people, than the example of justice can be supposed to have a beneficial influence upon princes, by checking their career of tyranny. It is dangerous also, by these examples, to reduce princes to despair, or bring matters to such extremities against persons endowed with great power as to leave them no resource, but in the most violent and most sanguinary counsels. This general position being established, it must, however, be observed, that no reader, almost of any party or principle, was ever shocked, when he read in ancient history, that the Roman senate voted Nero, their absolute sovereign, to be a public enemy, and, even without trial, condemned him to the severest and most ignominious punishment; a punishment from which the meanest Roman citizen was, by the laws, exempted. The crimes of that bloody tyrant are so enormous, that they break through all rules; and extort a confession, that such a dethroned prince is no longer superior to his people, and can no longer plead, in his own defence, laws which were established for conducting the ordinary course of administration. But when we pass from the case of Nero to that of Charles, the great disproportion, or rather total contrariety, of character immediately strikes us; and we stand astonished, that, among a civilized people, so much virtue could ever meet with so fatal a catastrophe. History, the great mistress of wisdom, furnishes examples of all kinds; and every prudential, as well as moral precept, may be authorized by those events which her enlarged mirror is able to present to us. From the memorable revolutions which passed in England during this period, we may naturally deduce the same useful lesson which Charles himself, in his later years, inferred; that it is dangerous for princes, even from the appearance of necessity, to assume more authority than the laws have allowed them. But it must be confessed, that these events furnish us with another instruction, no less natural and no less useful, concerning the madness of the people, the furies of fanaticism, and the danger of mercenary armies.

In order to close this part of British history, it is also necessary to relate the dissolution of the monarchy in England: that event soon followed upon the death of the monarch. When the peers met, on the day appointed in their adjournment, they entered upon business, and sent down some votes to the commons, of which the latter deigned not to take the least notice. In a few days, the lower house passed a vote, that they would make no more addresses to the house of peers nor receive any front them; and that that house was useless and dangerous, and was therefore to be abolished. A like vote passed with regard to the monarchy; and it is remarkable, that Martin, a zealous republican, in the debate on this question, confessed, that if they desired a king, the last was as proper as any gentleman in England. [1] The commons ordered a new great seal to be engraved, on which that assembly was represented, with this legend, “On the first year of freedom, by God’s blessing, restored, 1648.” The forms of all public business were changed, from the king’s name, to that of the keepers of the liberties of England. [2] And it was declared high treason to proclaim, or any otherwise acknowledge Charles Stuart, commonly called prince of Wales.

The commons intended, it is said, to bind the princess Elizabeth apprentice to a button-maker: the duke of Gloucester was to be taught some other mechanical employment. But the former soon died; of grief, as is supposed, for her father’s tragical end: the latter was, by Cromwell, sent beyond sea.

The king’s statue, in the exchange, was thrown down; and on the pedestal these words were inscribed: “Exit tyrannus, regum ultimus;” The tyrant is gone, the last of the kings.

Duke Hamilton was tried by a new high court of justice, as earl of Cambridge, in England; and condemned for treason. This sentence, which was certainly hard, but which ought to save his memory from all imputations of treachery to his master, was executed on a scaffold erected before Westminster Hall. Lord Capel underwent the same fate. Both these noblemen had escaped from prison, but were afterwards discovered and

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* Walker’s History of Independency, part ii.

* The court of king’s bench was called the court of public bench. So cautious on this head were some of the republicans, that, it is pretended, in reciting the Lord’s prayer, they would not say, “thy kingdom come,” but always,
“thy commonwealth come.”

taken. To all the solicitations of their friends for pardon, the generals and parliamentary leaders still replied, that it was certainly the intention of Providence they should suffer; since it had permitted them to fall into the hands of their enemies, after they had once recovered their liberty.

The earl of Holland lost his life by a like sentence. Though of a polite and courtly behavior, he died lamented by no party. His ingratitude to the king, and his frequent changing of sides, were regarded as great stains on his memory. The earl of Norwich and Sir John Owen, being condemned by the same court, were pardoned by the commons.

The king left six children — three males: Charles, born in 1630; James, duke of York, born in 1633; Henry, duke of Gloucester, born in 1641; — and three females: Mary, princess of Orange, born 1631; Elizabeth, born 1635; and Henrietta, afterwards duchess of Orleans, born at Exeter, 1644.

The archbishops of Canterbury in this reign were Abbot and Laud; the lord keepers, Williams bishop of Lincoln, Lord Coventry, Lord Finch, Lord Littleton, and Sir Richard Lane; the high admirals, the duke of Buckingham and the earl of Northumberland; the treasurers, the earl of Marlborough, the earl of Portland, Juxon bishop of London, and Lord Cottington; the secretaries of state, Lord Conway, Sir Albertus Moreton, Coke, Sir Henry Vane, Lord Falkland, Lord Digby, and Sir Edward Nicholas.

It may be expected that we should here mention the Icon Basiliké, a work published in the king's name a few days after his execution. It seems almost impossible, in the controverted parts of history, to say any thing which will satisfy the zealots of both parties: but with regard to the genuineness of that production, it is not easy for an historian to fix any opinion which will be entirely to his own satisfaction. The proofs brought to evince that this work is or is not the king's, are so convincing, that if an impartial reader peruse any one side apart, [1] he will think it impossible that arguments could be produced, sufficient to counterbalance so strong an evidence: and when he compares both sides, he will be some time at a loss to fix any determination. Should an absolute suspense of judgment be found difficult or disagreeable in so interesting a question, I must confess, that I much incline to give the preference to the arguments of the royalists. The testimonies which prove that performance to be the king's, are more numerous, certain, and direct, than those on the other side. This is the case, even if we consider the external evidence: but when we weigh the internal, derived from the style and composition, there is no manner of comparison.

These meditations resemble, in elegance, purity, neatness, and simplicity, the genius of those performances which we know with certainty to have flowed from the royal pen; but are so unlike the bombast, perplexed, rhetorical, and corrupt style of Dr. Gauden, to whom they are ascribed, that no human testimony seems sufficient to convince us that he was the author. Yet all the evidences which would rob the king of that honor, tend to prove that Dr. Gauden had the merit of writing so fine a performance, and the infamy of imposing it on the world for the king's.

* See, on the one hand, Toland's Amyntor, and on the other, Wagataffe's Vindication of the Royal Martyr, with Young's Addition. We may remark, that Lord Clarendon's total silence with regard to this subject, in so full of history, composed in vindication of the king's measures and character, forms a presumption on Toland's side, and a presumption of which that author was ignorant; the works of the noble historian not being then published. Bishop Burnet's testimony, too, must be allowed of some weight against the Icon.

It is not easy to conceive the general compassion excited towards the king, by the publishing, at so critical a juncture, a work so full of piety, meekness, and humanity. Many have not scrupled to ascribe to that book the subsequent restoration of the royal family. Milton compares its effects to those which were wrought on the tumultuous Romans by Anthony's reading to them the will of Cæsar. The Icon passed through fifty editions in a twelvemonth; and, independent of the great interest taken in it by the nation, as the supposed production of their murdered sovereign, it must be acknowledged the best prose composition which, at the time of its publication, was to be found in the English language.

CHAPTER LX.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

CONTEMPORARY MONARCHS.

EMP of GERM.	K. OF FRANCE.	K. or SPAIN.
Ferdinand III 1658	Lewis XIII.	Philip IV.

1649.

The confusions which overspread England after the murder of Charles I., proceeded as well from the spirit of refinement and innovation which agitated the ruling party, as from the dissolution of all that authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, by which the nation had ever been accustomed to be governed. Every man had framed the model of a republic; and, however new it was, or fantastical, he was eager in recommending it to his fellow-citizens, or even imposing it by force upon them. Every man had adjusted a system of religion, which, being derived from no traditional authority, was peculiar to himself; and being founded on supposed inspiration, not on any principles of human reason, had no means, besides cant and low rhetoric, by which it could recommend itself to others. The levellers insisted on an equal distribution of power and property, and disclaimed all dependence and subordination. The Millenarians, or Fifth Monarchy men, required, that government itself should be abolished, and all human powers be laid in the dust, in order to pave the way for the dominion of Christ, whose second coming they suddenly expected. The Antinomians even insisted, that the obligations of morality and natural law were suspended, and that the elect, guided by an internal principle more perfect and divine, were superior to the beggarly elements of justice and humanity. A considerable party declaimed against tithes and a hireling priesthood, and were resolved that the magistrate should not support by power or revenue any ecclesiastical establishment. Another party inveighed against the law and its professors; and, on pretence of rendering more simple the distribution of justice, were desirous of abolishing the whole system of English jurisprudence, which seemed interwoven with monarchical government. Even those among the republicans who adopted not such extravagancies, were so intoxicated with their saintly character, that they supposed themselves possessed of peculiar privileges; and all professions, oaths, laws, and engagements, had, in a great measure, lost their influence over them. The bands of society were every where loosened; and the irregular passions of men were encouraged by speculative principles, still more unsocial and irregular.

The royalists, consisting of the nobles and more considerable gentry, being degraded from their authority and plundered of their property, were inflamed with the highest resentment and indignation against those ignoble adversaries who had reduced them to subjection. The Presbyterians, whose credit had first supported the arms of the parliament, were enraged to find that, by the treachery or superior cunning of then associates, the fruits of all their successful labors were ravished from them. The former party, from inclination and principle, zealously attached themselves to the son of their unfortunate monarch, whose memory they respected, and whose tragical death they deplored. The latter cast their eye towards the same object; but they had still many prejudices to overcome, many fears and jealousies to be allayed, ere they could cordially entertain thoughts of restoring the family which they had so grievously offended, and whose principles they regarded with such violent abhorrence.

The only solid support of the republican independent faction, which, though it formed so small a part of the nation, had violently usurped the government of the whole, was a numerous army of near fifty thousand men. But this army, formidable from its discipline and courage, as well as its numbers, was actuated by a spirit that rendered it dangerous to the assembly which had assumed the command over it. Accustomed to indulge every chimera in politics, every frenzy in religion, the soldiers knew little of the subordination of citizens, and had only learned, from apparent necessity, some maxims of military obedience. And while they still maintained, that all those enormous violations of law and equity, of which they had been guilty, were justified by the success with which providence had blessed them; they were ready to break out into any new disorder, wherever they had the prospect of a like sanction and authority.

What alone gave some stability to all these unsettled humors was the great influence, both civil and military, acquired by Oliver Cromwell. This man, suited to the age in which he lived, and to that alone, was equally qualified to gain the affection and confidence of men, by what was mean, vulgar, and ridiculous in his character, as to command their obedience by what was great, daring, and enterprising. Familiar even to buffoonery with the meanest sentinel, he never lost his authority: transported to a degree of madness with religious ecstasies, he never forgot the political purposes to which they might serve. Hating monarchy while a subject, despising liberty while a citizen, though he retained for a time all orders of men under a seeming obedience to the parliament, he was secretly paving the way, by artifice and courage, to his own unlimited authority.

The parliament, — for so we must henceforth call a small and inconsiderable part of the house of commons, — having murdered their sovereign with so many appearing circumstances of solemnity and justice, and so much real violence, and even fury, began to assume more the air of a civil legal power, and to enlarge a little the narrow bottom upon which they stood. They admitted a few of the excluded and absent members, such as were liable to least exception; but on condition that these members should sign an approbation of whatever had been done in their absence with regard to the king's trial; and some of them were willing to acquire a share of power on such terms: the greater part disdained to lend their authority to such apparent usurpations. They issued some writs for new elections, in places where they hoped to have interest enough to bring in their own friends and dependents. They named a council of state, thirty-eight in number, to whom all addresses were made, who gave orders to all generals and admirals, who executed the laws, and who digested all business before it was introduced into parliament. [1] They pretended to employ themselves entirely in adjusting the laws, forms, and plan of a new representative; and as soon as they should have settled the nation, they professed their intention of restoring the power to the people, from whom they acknowledged they had entirely derived it.

* Their names were, the earls of Denbigh, Mulgrave, Pembroke, Salisbury, Lords Grey and Fairfax, Lisle, Rolles, St. John, Wilde, Bradshaw, Cromwell, Skippon, Pickering,

> Massam, Haselrig, Harrington, Vane, Jun., Danvers, Armine,
> Mildmay, Constable, Pennington, Wilson, Whitlocke, Martin,
> Ludlow, Stapleton, Hevingham, Wallop, Hutchinson, Bond,
> Popham, Valentine, Walton, Scott, Purefoy, Jones.

The commonwealth found every thing in England composed into a seeming tranquillity by the terror of their arms. Foreign powers, occupied in wars among themselves, had no leisure or inclination to interpose in the domestic dissensions of this island. The young king, poor and neglected, living sometimes in Holland, sometimes in France, sometimes in Jersey, comforted himself amidst his present distresses with the hopes of better fortune. The situation alone of Scotland and Ireland gave any immediate inquietude to the new republic.

After the successive defeats of Montrose and Hamilton, and the ruin of their parties, the whole authority in Scotland fell into the hands of Argyle and the rigid churchmen, that party which was most averse to the interests of the royal family. Their enmity, however, against the Independents, who had prevented the settlement of Presbyterian discipline in England, carried them to embrace opposite maxims in their political conduct. Though invited by the English parliament to model their government into a republican form, they resolved still to adhere to monarchy, which had ever prevailed in their country, and which, by the express terms of their covenant they had engaged to defend. They considered, besides, that as the property of the kingdom lay mostly in the hands of great families, it would be difficult to establish a common wealth; or without some chief magistrate, invested with royal authority, to preserve peace or justice in the community. The execution, therefore, of the king, against which they had always protested, having occasioned a vacancy of the throne, they immediately proclaimed his son and successor, Charles II.; but upon condition "of his good behavior, and strict observance of the covenant, and his entertaining no other persons about him but such as were godly men, and faithful to that obligation." These unusual clauses, inserted in the very first acknowledgment of their prince, sufficiently showed their intention of limiting extremely his authority. And the English commonwealth, having no pretence to interpose in the affairs of that kingdom, allowed the Scots, for the present, to take their own measures in settling their government.

The dominion which England claimed over Ireland, demanded more immediately their efforts for subduing that country. In order to convey a just notion of Irish affairs, it will be necessary to look backwards some years, and to relate briefly those transactions which had passed during the memorable revolutions in England. When the late king agreed to that cessation of arms with the Popish rebels, [1] which was become so requisite, as well for the security of the Irish Protestants as for promoting his interests in England, the parliament, in order to blacken his conduct, reproached him with favoring that odious rebellion, and exclaimed loudly against the terms of the cessation. They even went so far as to declare it entirely null and invalid, because finished without their consent; and in this declaration the Scots in Ulster, and the earl of Inchiquin, a nobleman of great authority in Munster, professed to adhere. By their means the war was still kept alive; but as the dangerous distractions in England hindered the parliament from sending any considerable assistance to their allies in Ireland, the marquis of Ormond, lord lieutenant, being a native of Ireland, and a person endowed with great prudence and virtue, formed a scheme for composing the disorders of his country, and for engaging the rebel Irish to support the cause of his royal master. There were many circumstances which strongly invited the natives of Ireland to embrace the king's party. The maxims of that prince had always led him to give a reasonable indulgence to the Catholics throughout all his dominions; and one principal ground of that enmity which the Puritans professed against him, was this tacit toleration. The parliament, on the contrary, even when unprovoked, had ever menaced the Papists with the most rigid restraint, if not a total extirpation; and immediately after the commencement of the Irish rebellion, they put to sale all the estates of the rebels, and had engaged the public faith for transferring them to the adventurers, who had already advanced money upon that security. The success, therefore, which the arms of the parliament met with at Naseby, struck a just terror into the Irish; and engaged the council of Kilkenny, composed of deputies from all the Catholic counties and cities, to conclude a peace with the marquis of Ormond. [2]

* 1643.

* * 1646.

They professed to return to their duty and allegiance, engaged to furnish ten thousand men for the support of the king's authority in England, and were content with stipulating, in return, indemnity for their rebellion, and toleration of their religion. Ormond, not doubting but a peace, so advantageous and even necessary to the Irish, would be strictly observed, advanced with a small body of troops to Kilkenny, in order to concert measures for common defence with his new allies. The pope had sent over to Ireland a nuncio, Rinuccini, an Italian; and this man, whose commission empowered him to direct the spiritual concerns of the Irish, was emboldened, by their ignorance and bigotry, to assume the chief authority in the civil government. Foreseeing that a general submission to the lord lieutenant would put an end to his own influence, he conspired with Owen O'Neal, who commanded the native Irish, in Ulster, and who bore a great jealousy to Preston, the general chiefly trusted by the council of Kilkenny. By concert, these two malecontents secretly drew forces together, and were ready to fall on Ormond, who remained in security, trusting to the pacification so lately concluded with the rebels. He received intelligence of their treachery, made his retreat with celerity and conduct, and sheltered his small army in Dublin and the other fortified towns, which still remained in the hands of the Protestants.

The nuncio, full of arrogance, levity, and ambition, was not contented with this violation of treaty. He summoned an assembly of the clergy at Waterford, and engaged them to declare against that pacification which the civil council had concluded with their sovereign. He even thundered out a sentence of excommunication against all who should adhere to a peace so prejudicial, as he pretended, to the Catholic religion; and the deluded Irish, terrified with his spiritual menaces, ranged themselves every where on his side, and submitted to his authority. Without scruple, he carried on war against the lord lieutenant, and threatened with a siege the Protestant garrisons, which were all of them very ill provided for defence.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate king was necessitated to take shelter in the Scottish army; and being there reduced to close confinement, and secluded from all commerce with his friends, despaired that his authority, or even his liberty, would ever be restored to him. He sent orders to Ormond, if he could not defend himself, rather to submit to the English than to the Irish rebels; and accordingly the lord lieutenant, being reduced to extremities, delivered up Dublin, Tredah, Dundalk, and other garrisons, to Colonel Michael Jones, who took possession of them in the name of the English parliament. Ormond himself went over to England, was admitted into the king's presence, received a grateful acknowledgment for his past services, and during some time lived in tranquillity near London. But being banished, with the other royalists, to a distance from that city, and seeing every event turn out unfortunately for his royal master, and threaten him with a catastrophe still more direful, he thought proper to retire into France, where he joined the queen and the prince of Wales.

In Ireland, during these transactions, the authority of the nuncio prevailed without control among all the Catholics; and that prelate, by his indiscretion and insolence, soon made them repent of the power with which they had intrusted him. Prudent men likewise were sensible of the total destruction which was hanging over the nation from the English parliament, and saw no resource or safety but in giving support to the declining authority of the king. The earl of Clanricarde, a nobleman of an ancient family, a person too of merit, who had ever preserved his loyalty, was sensible of the ruin which threatened his countrymen, and was resolved, if possible, to prevent it. He secretly formed a combination among the Catholics; he entered into a correspondence with Inchiquin, who preserved great authority over the Protestants in Munster; he attacked the nuncio, whom he chased out of the island; and he sent to Paris a deputation, inviting the lord lieutenant to return and take possession of his government.

Ormond, on his arrival in Ireland, found the kingdom divided into many factions, among which either open war or secret enmity prevailed. The authority of the English parliament was established in Dublin, and the other towns which he himself had delivered into their hands. O’Neal maintained his credit in Ulster; and having entered into a secret correspondence with the parliamentary generals, was more intent on schemes for his own personal safety, than anxious for the preservation of his country or religion. The other Irish, divided between their clergy, who were averse to Ormond, and their nobility, who were attached to him, were very uncertain in their motions and feeble in their measures. The Scots in the north, enraged, as well as their other countrymen, against the usurpations of the sectarian army, professed their adherence to the king; but were still hindered by many prejudices from entering into a cordial union with his lieutenant. All these distracted councils and contrary humors checked the progress of Ormond, and enabled the parliamentary forces in Ireland to maintain their ground against him. The republican faction, meanwhile, in England, employed in subduing the revolted royalists, in reducing the parliament to subjection, in the trial, condemnation, and execution of their sovereign, totally neglected the supplying of Ireland, and allowed Jones and the forces in Dublin to remain in the utmost weakness and necessity. The lord lieutenant, though surrounded with difficulties, neglected not the favorable opportunity of promoting the royal cause. Having at last assembled an army of sixteen thousand men, he advanced upon the parliamentary garrisons. Dundalk, where Monk commanded, was delivered up by the troops, who mutinied against their governor. Tredah, Neury, and other forts, were taken. Dublin was threatened with a siege; and the affairs of the lieutenant appeared in so prosperous a condition, that the young king entertained thoughts of coming in person into Ireland.

When the English commonwealth was brought to some tolerable settlement, men began to cast their eyes towards the neighboring island. During the contest of the two parties, the government of Ireland had remained a great object of intrigue; and the Presbyterians endeavored to obtain the lieutenancy for Waller, the Independents for Lambert. After the execution of the king, Cromwell himself began to aspire to a command, where so much glory, he saw, might be won, and so much authority acquired. In his absence, he took care to have his name proposed to the council of state; and both friends and enemies concurred immediately to vote him into that important office: the former suspected, that the matter had not been proposed merely by chance, without his own concurrence; the latter desired to remove him to a distance, and hoped, during his absence, to gain the ascendant over Fairfax, whom he had so long blinded by his hypocritical professions. Cromwell himself, when informed of his election, feigned surprise, and pretended at first to hesitate with regard to the acceptance of the command. And Lambert, either deceived by his dissimulation, or, in his turn, feigning to be deceived, still continued, notwithstanding this disappointment his friendship and connections with Cromwell.

The new lieutenant immediately applied himself with his wonted vigilance to make preparations for his expedition. Many disorders in England it behoved him previously to compose. All places were full of danger and inquietude. Though men, astonished with the successes of the army, remained in seeming tranquillity, symptoms of the greatest discontent every where appeared. The English, long accustomed to a mild administration, and unacquainted with dissimulation, could not conform their speech and countenance to the present necessity, or pretend attachment to a form of government which they generally regarded with such violent abhorrence. It was requisite to change the magistracy of London, and to degrade, as well as punish, the mayor and some of the aldermen, before the proclamation for the abolition of monarchy could be published in the city. An engagement being framed to support the commonwealth without king or house of peers, the army was with some difficulty brought to subscribe it; but though it was imposed upon the rest of the nation under severe penalties, no less than putting all who refused out of the protection of law, such obstinate reluctance was observed in the people, that even the imperious parliament was obliged to desist from it. The spirit of fanaticism, by which that assembly had at first been strongly supported, was now turned, in a great measure, against them. The pulpits, being chiefly filled with Presbyterians or disguised royalists, and having long been the scene of news and politics, could by no penalties be restrained from declarations unfavorable to the established government. Numberless were the extravagancies which broke out among the people. Everard, a disbanded soldier, having preached that the time was now come when the community of goods would be renewed among Christians, led out his followers to take possession of the land; and being carried before the general, he refused to salute him, because he was but his fellow-creature. [1] What seemed more dangerous, the army itself was infected with like humors. [2]

* Whitlocke.

* * See note U, at the end of the volume.

Though the levellers had for a time been suppressed by the audacious spirit of Cromwell, they still continued to propagate their doctrines among the private men and inferior officers, who pretended a right to be consulted, as before, in the administration of the commonwealth. They now practised against their officers the same lesson which they had been taught against the parliament. They framed a remonstrance, and sent five agitators to present it to the general and council of war: these were cashiered with ignominy by sentence of a court martial. One Lockier, having carried his sedition further, was sentenced to death; but this punishment was so far from quelling the mutinous spirit, that above a thousand of his companions showed their adherence to him, by attending his funeral, and wearing in their hats black and sea-green ribbons by way of favors. About four thousand assembled at Burford, under the command of Thomson, a man formerly condemned for sedition by a court martial, but pardoned by the general. Colonel Reynolds, and afterwards Fairfax and Cromwell, fell upon them, while unprepared for defence, and seduced by the appearance of a treaty. Four hundred were taken prisoners; some of them capitally punished, the rest pardoned. And this tumultuous spirit, though it still lurked in the army, and broke, out from time to time, seemed for the present to be suppressed.

Petitions, framed in the same spirit of opposition, were presented to the parliament by Lieutenant-Colonel Lilburn, the person who, for dispersing seditious libels, had formerly been treated with such severity by the star chamber. His liberty was at this time as ill relished by the parliament; and he was thrown into prison, as a promoter of sedition and disorder in the commonwealth. The women applied by petition for his release; but were now desired to mind their household affairs, and leave the government of the state to the men. From all quarters the parliament was harassed with petitions of a very free nature, which strongly spoke the sense of the nation, and proved how ardently all men longed for the restoration of their laws and liberties. Even in a feast which the city gave to the parliament and council of state, it was deemed a requisite precaution, if we may credit Walker and Dugdale, to swear all the cooks, that they would serve nothing but wholesome food to them.

The parliament judged it necessary to enlarge the laws of high treason beyond those narrow bounds within which they had been confined during the monarchy. They even comprehended verbal offences, nay, intentions, though they had never appeared in any overt act against the state. To affirm the present government to be a usurpation, to assert that the parliament or council of state were tyrannical or illegal, to endeavor subverting their authority, or stirring up sedition against them: these offences were declared to be high treason. The power of imprisonment, of which the petition of right had bereaved the king, it was now found necessary to restore to the council of state; and all the jails in England were filled with men whom the jealousies and fears of the ruling party had represented as dangerous. [1] The taxes continued by the new government, and which, being unusual, were esteemed heavy, increased the general ill will under which it labored. Besides the customs and excise, ninety thousand pounds a month were levied on land for the subsistence of the army. The sequestrations and compositions of the royalists, the sale of the crown lands, and of the dean and chapter lands, though they yielded great sums, were not sufficient to support the vast expenses, and, as was suspected, the great depredations, of the parliament and of their creatures. [1]

* History of Independency, part ii.

* * Parl. History, vol. xix. , 176.

Amidst all these difficulties and disturbances, the steady mind of Cromwell, without confusion or embarrassment, still pursued its purpose. While he was collecting an army of twelve thousand men in the west of England, he sent to Ireland, under Reynolds and Venables, a reënforcement of four thousand horse and foot, in order to strengthen Jones, and enable him to defend himself against the marquis of Ormond, who lay at Finglass, and was making preparations for the attack of Dublin. Inchiquin, who had now made a treaty with the king's lieutenant, having, with a separate body, taken Tredah and Dundalk, gave a defeat to Offarrell, who served under O'Neal, and to young Coot, who commanded some parliamentary forces. After he had joined his troops to the main army, with whom for some time he remained united, Ormond passed the River Liffy, and took post at Rathmines, two miles from Dublin, with a view of commencing the siege of that city. In order to cut off all further supply from Jones, he had begun the reparation of an old fort which lay at the gates of Dublin; and being exhausted with continual fatigue for some days, he had retired to rest, after leaving orders to keep his forces under arms. He was suddenly awaked with the noise of firing; and starting from his bed, saw every thing already in tumult and confusion. Jones, an excellent officer, formerly a lawyer, had sallied out with the reënforcement newly arrived; and attacking the party employed in repairing the fort, he totally routed them, pursued the advantage, and fell in with the army, which had neglected Ormond's orders. These he soon threw into disorder; put them to flight, in spite of all the efforts of the lord lieutenant; chased them off the field; seized all their tents, baggage, ammunition; and returned victorious to Dublin, after killing a thousand men, and taking above two thousand prisoners. [1]

* Parl. Hist. vol. xix. .

This loss, which threw some blemish on the military character of Ormond, was irreparable to the royal cause. That numerous army, which, with so much pains and difficulty, the lord lieutenant had been collecting for more than a year, was dispersed in a moment. Cromwell soon after arrived in Dublin, where he was welcomed with shouts and rejoicings. He hastened to Tredah. That town was well fortified: Ormond had thrown into it a good garrison of three thousand men, under Sir Arthur Aston, an officer of reputation. He expected that Tredah, lying in the neighborhood of Dublin, would first be attempted by Cromwell, and he was desirous to employ the enemy some time in that siege, while he himself should repair his broken forces. But Cromwell knew the importance of despatch. Having made a breach, he ordered a general assault. Though twice repulsed with loss, he renewed the attack, and himself, along with Ireton, led on his men. All opposition was overborne by the furious valor of the troops. The town was taken sword in hand; and orders being issued to give no quarter, a cruel slaughter was made of the garrison. Even a few, who were saved by the soldiers, satiated with blood, were next day miserably butchered by orders from the general. One person alone of the garrison escaped to be a messenger of this universal havoc and destruction.

Cromwell pretended to retaliate by this severe execution the cruelty of the Irish massacre: but he well knew, that almost the whole garrison was English; and his justice was only a barbarous policy, in order to terrify all other garrisons from resistance. His policy, however, had the desired effect. Having led the army without delay to Wexford, he began to batter the town. The garrison, after a slight defence, offered to capitulate; but before they obtained a cessation, they imprudently neglected their guards; and the English army rushed in upon them. The same severity was exercised as at Tredah.

Every town before which Cromwell presented himself, now opened its gates without resistance. Ross, though strongly garrisoned, was surrendered by Lord Taffe. Having taken Estionage, Cromwell threw a bridge over the Barrow, and made himself master of Passage and Carrie. The English had no further difficulties to encounter than what arose from fatigue and the advanced season. Fluxes and contagious distempers crept in among the soldiers, who perished in great numbers. Jones himself, the brave governor of Dublin, died at Wexford. And Cromwell had so far advanced with his decayed army, that he began to find it difficult, either to subsist in the enemy’s country, or retreat to his own garrisons. But while he was in these straits, Corke, Kinsale, and all the English garrisons in Munster deserted to him, and opening their gates, resolved to share the fortunes of their victorious countrymen.

This desertion of the English put an end to Ormond's authority, which was already much diminished by the misfortunes at Dublin, Tredah, and Wexford. The Irish, actuated by national and religious prejudices, could no longer be kept in obedience by a Protestant governor, who was so unsuccessful in all his enterprises. The clergy renewed their excommunications against him and his adherents, and added the terrors of superstition to those which arose from a victorious enemy. Cromwell, having received a reënforcement from England, again took the field early in the spring. He made himself master of Kilkenny and Clonmel, the only places where he met with any vigorous resistance. The whole frame of the Irish union being in a manner dissolved, Ormond soon after left the island, and delegated his authority to Clanricarde, who found affairs so desperate as to admit of no remedy. The Irish were glad to embrace banishment as a refuge, Above forty thousand men passed into foreign service; and Cromwell, well pleased to free the island from enemies who never could be cordially reconciled to the English, gave them full liberty and leisure for their embarkation.

While Cromwell proceeded with such uninterrupted success in Ireland, which in the space of nine months he had almost entirely subdued, fortune was preparing for him a new scene of victory and triumph in Scotland. Charles was at the Hague, when Sir Joseph Douglas brought him intelligence, that he was proclaimed king by the Scottish parliament. At the same time, Douglas informed him of the hard conditions annexed to the proclamation, and extremely damped that joy which might arise from his being recognized sovereign in one of his kingdoms. Charles too considered, that those who pretended to acknowledge his title, were at that very time in actual rebellion against his family, and would be sure to intrust very little authority in his hands, and scarcely would afford him personal liberty and security. As the prospect of affairs in Ireland was at that time not unpromising, he intended rather to try his fortune in that kingdom, from which he expected more dutiful submission and obedience.

Meanwhile he found it expedient to depart from Holland. The people in the United Provinces were much attached to his interests. Besides his connection with the family of Orange, which was extremely beloved by the populace, all men regarded with compassion his helpless condition, and expressed the greatest abhorrence against the murder of his father; a deed to which nothing, they thought, but the rage of fanaticism and faction could have impelled the parliament. But though the public in general bore great favor to the king, the states were uneasy at his presence. They dreaded the parliament, so formidable by their power, and so prosperous in all their enterprises. They apprehended the most precipitate resolutions from men of such violent and haughty dispositions. And after the murder of Dorislaus, they found it still more necessary to satisfy the English commonwealth, by removing the king to a distance from them.

1650.

Dorislaus, though a native of Holland, had lived long in England; and being employed as assistant to the high court of justice which condemned the late king, he had risen to great credit and favor with the ruling party. They sent him envoy to Holland; but no sooner had he arrived at the Hague, than he was set upon by some royalists, chiefly retainers to Montrose. They rushed into the room where he was sitting with some company; dragged him from the table; put him to death as the first victim to their murdered sovereign f very leisurely and peaceably separated themselves; and though orders were issued by the magistrates to arrest them, these were executed with such slowness and reluctance, that the criminals had all of them the opportunity of making their escape.

Charles, having passed some time at Paris, where no assistance was given him, and even few civilities were paid him, made his retreat into Jersey, where his authority was still acknowledged. Here Winram, laird of Liberton, came to him as deputy from the committee of estates in Scotland, and informed him of the conditions to which he must necessarily submit before he could be admitted to the exercise of his authority. Conditions more severe were never imposed by subjects upon their sovereign; but as the affairs of Ireland began to decline, and the king found it no longer safe to venture himself in that island, he gave a civil answer to Winram, and desired commissioners to meet him at Breda, in order to enter into a treaty with regard to these conditions.

The earls of Cassilis and Lothian, Lord Burley, the laird of Liberton, and other commissioners, arrived at Breda; but without any power of treating: the king must submit without reserve to the terms imposed upon him. The terms were, that he should issue a proclamation, banishing from court all excommunicated persons, that is, all those who, either under Hamilton or

Montrose, had ventured their lives for his family; that no English subject who had served against the parliament, should be allowed to approach him; that he should bind himself by his royal promise to take the covenant; that he should ratify all acts of parliament by which Presbyterian government, the directory of worship, the confession of faith, and the catechism were established; and that in civil affairs he should entirely conform himself to the direction of parliament, and in ecclesiastical to that of the assembly. These proposals the commissioners, after passing some time in sermons and prayers, in order to express the more determined resolution, very solemnly delivered to the king.

The king's friends were divided with regard to the part which he should act in this critical conjuncture. Most of his English counsellors dissuaded him from accepting conditions so disadvantageous and dishonorable. They said, that the men who now governed Scotland were the most furious and bigoted of that party which, notwithstanding his gentle government, had first excited a rebellion against the late king; after the most unlimited concessions, had renewed their rebellion, and stopped the progress of his victories in England; and after he had intrusted his person to them in his uttermost distress, had basely sold him, together with their own honor, to his barbarous enemies: that they had as yet shown no marks of repentance; and even in the terms which they now proposed, displayed the same anti-monarchical principles, and the same jealousy of their sovereign, by which they had ever been actuated: that nothing could be more dishonorable, than that the king, in his first enterprise, should sacrifice, merely for the empty name of royalty those principles for which his father had died a martyr, and in which he himself had been strictly educated: that by this hypocrisy he might lose the royalists, who alone were sincerely attached to him; but never would gain the Presbyterians, who were averse to his family and his cause, and would ascribe his compliance merely to policy and necessity: that the Scots had refused to give him any assurances of their intending to restore him to the throne of England; and could they even be brought to make such an attempt, it had sufficiently appeared, by the event of Hamilton's engagement, how unequal their force was to so great an enterprise: that on the first check which they should receive, Argyle and his partisans would lay hold of the quickest expedient for reconciling themselves to the English parliament, and would betray the king, as they had done his father, into the hands of his enemies: and that, however desperate the royal cause, it must still be regarded as highly imprudent in the king to make a sacrifice of his honor, where the sole purchase was to endanger his life or liberty.

The earl of Laneric, now duke of Hamilton, the earl of Lauderdale, and others of that party who had been banished their country for the late engagement, were then with the king; and being desirous of returning home in his retinue, they joined the opinion of the young duke of Buckingham, and earnestly pressed him to submit to the conditions required of him. It was urged, that nothing would more gratify the king's enemies than to see him fall into the snare laid for him, and by so scrupulous a nicety, leave the possession of his dominions to those who desired but a pretence for excluding him: that Argyle, not daring so far to oppose the bent of the nation as to throw off all allegiance to his sovereign, had embraced this expedient, by which he hoped to make Charles dethrone himself, and refuse a kingdom which was offered him: that it was not to be doubted but the same national spirit, assisted by Hamilton and his party, would rise still higher in favor of their prince after he had intrusted himself to their fidelity, and would much abate the rigor of the conditions now imposed upon him: that whatever might be the present intentions of the ruling party, they must unavoidably be engaged in a war with England, and must accept the assistance of the king's friends of all parties, in order to support themselves against a power so much superior: that how much soever a steady, uniform conduct might have been suitable to the advanced age and strict engagements of the late king, no one would throw any blame on a young prince for complying with conditions which necessity had extorted from him: that even the rigor of those principles professed by his father, though with some it had exalted his character, had been extremely prejudicial to his interests; nor could any thing be more serviceable to the royal cause, than to give all parties room to hope for more equal and more indulgent maxims of government; and that where affairs were reduced to so desperate a situation, dangers ought little to be regarded; and the king's honor lay rather in showing some early symptoms of courage and activity, than in choosing strictly a party among theological controversies, with which, it might be supposed, he was as yet very little acquainted.

These arguments, seconded by the advice of the queen mother and of the prince of Orange, the king's brother-in-law, who both of them thought it ridiculous to refuse a kingdom merely from regard to Episcopacy, had great influence on Charles. But what chiefly determined him to comply, was the account brought him of the fate of Montrose, who, with all the circumstances of rage and contumely, had been put to death by his zealous countrymen. Though in this instance the king saw more evidently the furious spirit by which the Scots were actuated, he had now no further resource, and was obliged to grant whatever was demanded of him.

Montrose, having laid down his arms at the command of the late king, had retired into France, and, contrary to his natural disposition, had lived for some time inactive at Paris. He there became acquainted with the famous Cardinal de Retz, and that penetrating judge celebrates him in his memoirs as one of those heroes, of whom there are no longer any remains in the world, and who are only to be met with in Plutarch. Desirous of improving his martial genius, he took a journey to Germany, was caressed by the emperor, received the rank of mareschal, and proposed to levy a regiment for the imperial service. While employed for that purpose in the Low Countries, he heard of the tragical death of the king; and at the same time received from his young master a renewal of his commission of captain-general in Scotland. [1] His ardent and daring spirit needed but this authority to put him in action. He gathered followers in Holland and the north of Germany whom his great reputation allured to him. The king of Denmark and duke of Holstein sent him some small supply of money; the queen of Sweden furnished him with arms; the prince of Orange with ships; and Montrose, hastening his enterprise, lest the king's agreement with the Scots should make him revoke his commission, set out for the Orkneys with about five hundred men, most of them Germans.

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* Burnet. Clarendon.

These were all the preparations which he could make against a kingdom, settled in domestic peace, supported by a disciplined army, fully apprised of his enterprise, and prepared against him. Some of his retainers having told him of a prophecy, that "to him and him alone it was reserved to restore the king's authority in all his dominions," he lent a willing ear to suggestions which, however ill grounded or improbable, were so conformable to his own daring character.

He armed several of the inhabitants of the Orkneys, though an unwarlike people, and carried them over with him to Caithness; hoping that the general affection to the king's service, and the fame of his former exploits, would make the Highlanders flock to his standard. But all men were now harassed and fatigued with wars and disorders: many of those who formerly adhered to him, had been severely punished by the Covenanters: and no prospect of success was entertained in opposition to so great a force as was drawn together against him. But however weak Montrose's army, the memory of past events struck a great terror into the committee of estates. They immediately ordered Lesley and Holborne to march against him with an army of four thousand men. Strahan was sent before with a body of cavalry to check his progress. He fell unexpectedly on Montrose, who had no horse to bring him intelligence. The royalists were put to flight; all of them either killed or taken prisoners; and Montrose himself, having put on the disguise of a peasant, was perfidiously delivered into the hands of his enemies by a friend to whom he had intrusted his person.

All the insolence which success can produce in ungenerous minds, was exercised by the Covenanters against Montrose, whom they so much hated and so much dreaded. Theological antipathy further increased their indignities towards a person, whom they regarded as impious on account of the excommunication which had been pronounced against him. Lesley led him about for several days in the same low habit under which he had disguised himself. The vulgar, wherever he passed, were instigated to reproach and vilify him. When he came to Edinburgh, every circumstance of elaborate rage and insult was put in practice by order of the parliament. At the gate of the city he was met by the magistrates, and put into a new cart, purposely made with a high chair or bench, where he wus placed, that the people might have a full view of him. He was bound with a cord, drawn over his breast and shoulders, and fastened through holes made in the cart. The hangman then took off the hat of the noble prisoner, and rode himself before the cart in his livery, and with his bonnet on; the other officers, who were taken prisoners with the marquis, walking two and two before them.

The populace, more generous and humane, when they saw so mighty a change of fortune in this great man, so lately their dread and terror, into whose hands the magistrates, a few years before, had delivered on their knees the keys of the city, were struck with compassion, and viewed him with silent tears and admiration. The preachers next Sunday exclaimed against this movement of rebel nature, as they termed it; and reproached the people with their profane tenderness towards the capital enemy of piety and religion.

When he was carried before the parliament, which was then sitting, Loudon, the chancellor, in a violent declamation, reproached him with the breach of the national covenant, which he had subscribed; his rebellion against God, the king, and the kingdom; and the many horrible murders, treasons, and impieties for which he was now to be brought to condign punishment. Montrose, in his answer, maintained the same superiority above his enemies, to which, by his fame and great actions, as well as by the consciousness of a good cause, he was justly entitled. He told the parliament, that since the king, as he was informed, had so far avowed their authority as to enter into a treaty with them, he now appeared uncovered before their tribunal: a respect which, while they stood in open defiance to their sovereign, they would in vain have required of him: that he acknowledged, with infinite shame and remorse, the errors of his early conduct, when their plausible pretences had seduced him to tread with them the paths of rebellion, and bear arms against his prince and country: that his following services, he hoped, had sufficiently testified his repentance; and his death would now atone for that guilt, the only one with which he could justly reproach himself. That in all his warlike enterprises he was warranted by that commission which he had received from his and their master, against whose lawful authority they had erected their standard: that to venture his life for his sovereign was the least part of his merit: he had even thrown down his arms in obedience to the sacred commands of the king; and had resigned to them the victory, which, in defiance of all their efforts, he was still enabled to dispute with them: that no blood had ever been shed by him but in the field of battle; and many persons were now in his eye, many now dared to pronounce sentence of death upon him, whose life, forfeited by the laws of war, he had formerly saved from the fury of the soldiers: that he was sorry to find no better testimony of their return to allegiance than the murder of so faithful a subject, in whose death the king's commission must be at once so highly injured and affronted: that as to himself, they had in vain endeavored to vilify and degrade him by all their studied indignities: the justice of his cause, he knew, would ennoble any fortune; nor had he other affliction than to see the authority of his prince, with which he was invested, treated with so much ignominy: and that he now joyfully followed, by a like unjust sentence, his late sovereign; and should be happy, if in his future destiny he could follow him to the same blissful mansions, where his piety and humane virtues had already, without doubt, secured him an eternal recompense.

Montrose's sentence was next pronounced against him: "That he James Graham," (for this was the only name they vouchsafed to give him,) "should next day be carried to Edinburgh Cross, and there be hanged on a gibbet, thirty feet high, for the space of three hours: then be taken down, his head, he cut off upon a scaffold, and affixed to the prison: his legs and arms be stuck up on the four chief towns of the kingdom: his body be buried in the place appropriated for common malefactors; except the church, upon his repentance, should take off his excommunication."

The clergy, hoping that the terrors of immediate death had now given them an advantage over their enemy, flocked about him, and insulted over his fallen fortunes. They pronounced his damnation, and assured him that the judgment which he was so soon to suffer, would prove but an easy prologue to that which he must undergo hereafter. They next offered to pray with him; but he was too well acquainted with those forms of imprecation which they called prayers. "Lord, vouchsafe yet to touch the obdurate heart of this proud, incorrigible sinner; this wicked, perjured, traitorous, and profane person, who refuses to hearken to the voice of thy church." Such were the petitions which he expected they would, according to custom, offer up for him. He told them, that they were a miserably deluded and deluding people; and would shortly bring their country under the most insupportable servitude to which any nation had ever been reduced. "For my part," added he, "I am much prouder to have my head affixed to the place where it is sentenced to stand, than to have my picture hang in the king's bed-chamber. So far from being sorry that my quarters are to be sent to four cities of the kingdom, I wish I had limbs enow to be dispersed into all the cities of Christendom, there to remain as testimonies in favor of the cause for which I suffer." This sentiment, that very evening, while in prison, he threw into verse. The poem remains; a single monument of his heroic spirit, and no despicable proof of his poetical genius.

Now was led forth, amidst the insults of his enemies, and the tears of the people, this man of illustrious birth, and of the greatest renown in the nation, to suffer, for his adhering to the laws of his country, and the rights of his sovereign, the ignominious death destined to the meanest malefactor. Every attempt which the insolence of the governing party had made to subdue his spirit, had hitherto proved fruitless; they made yet one effort more, in this last and melancholy scene, when all enmity, arising from motives merely human, is commonly softened and disarmed. The executioner brought that book which had been published in elegant Latin, of his great military actions, and tied it with a cord about his neck. Montrose smiled at this new instance of their malice. He thanked them, however, for their officious zeal; and said, that he bore this testimony of his bravery and loyalty with more pride than he had ever worn the garter. Having asked whether they had any more indignities to put upon him, and renewing some devout ejaculations, he patiently endured the last act of the executioner.

Thus perished, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, the gallant marquis of Montrose; the man whose military genius both by valor and conduct had shone forth beyond any which, during these civil disorders, had appeared in the three kingdoms. The finer arts, too, he had in his youth successfully cultivated; and whatever was sublime, elegant, or noble touched his great soul. Nor was he insensible to the pleasures either of society or of love. Something, however, of the vast and unbounded characterized his actions and deportment; and it was merely by an heroic effort of duty, that he brought his mind, impatient of superiority, and even of equality, to pay such unlimited submission to the will of his sovereign.

The vengeance of the Covenanters was not satisfied with Montrose’s execution. Urrey, whose inconstancy now led him to take part with the king, suffered about the same time: Spotiswood of Daersie, a youth of eighteen, Sir Francis Hay of Dalgetie, and Colonel Sibbald, all of them of birth and character, underwent a like fate. These were taken prisoners with Montrose. The marquis of Huntley, about a year before, had also fallen a victim to the severity of the Covenanters.

The past scene displays in a full light the barbarity of this theological faction: the sequel will sufficiently display their absurdity.

The king, in consequence of his agreement with the commissioners of Scotland, set sail for that country; and being escorted by seven Dutch ships of war, who were sent to guard the herring fishery, he arrived in the Frith of Cromarty. Before he was permitted to land, he was required to sign the covenant; and many sermons and lectures were made him, exhorting him to persevere in that holy confederacy. [1] Hamilton, Lauderdale, Dumfermling, and other noblemen of that party whom they called engagers, were immediately separated from him, and obliged to retire to their houses, where they lived in a private manner, without trust or authority. None of his English friends, who had served his father, were allowed to remain in the kingdom. The king himself found that he was considered as a mere pageant of state, and that the few remains of royalty which he possessed, served only to draw on him the greater indignities. One of the quarters of Montrose, his faithful servant, who had borne his commission, had been sent to Aberdeen, and was still allowed to hang over the gates when he passed by that place. [2]

* Sir Edward Walker’s Historical Discourses, .

* * Sir Edward Walker’s Historical Discourses, p, 160.

The general assembly, and afterwards the committee of estates and the army, who were entirely governed by the assembly, set forth a public declaration, in which they protested, “that they did not espouse any malignant quarrel or party, but fought merely on their former grounds or principles; that they disclaimed all the sins and guilt of the king, and of his house; nor would they own him or his interest, otherwise than with a subordination to God, and so far as he owned and prosecuted the cause of God, and acknowledged the sins of his house, and of his former ways.” [1]

The king, lying entirely at mercy, and having no assurance of life or liberty further than was agreeable to the fancy of these austere zealots, was constrained to embrace a measure which nothing but the necessity of his affairs and his great youth and inexperience could excuse. He issued a declaration, such as they required of him. [2] He there gave thanks for the merciful dispensations of Providence, by which he was recovered from the snare of evil counsel, had attained a full persuasion of the righteousness of the covenant, and was induced to cast himself and his interests wholly upon God. He desired to be deeply humbled and afflicted in spirit, because of his father’s following wicked measures, opposing the covenant and the work of reformation, and shedding the blood of God’s people throughout all his dominions. He lamented the idolatry of his mother, and the toleration of it in his father’s house; a matter of great offence, he said, to all the Protestant churches, and a great provocation to him who is a jealous God, visiting the sins of the father upon the children, He professed, that he would have no enemies but the enemies of the covenant; and that he detested all Popery, superstition, prelacy, heresy, schism, and profaneness; and was resolved not to tolerate, much less to countenance, any of them in any of his dominions. He declared that he should never love or favor those who had so little conscience as to follow his interests, in preference to the gospel and the kingdom of Jesus Christ. And he expressed his hope, that whatever ill success his former guilt might have drawn upon his cause, yet now, having obtained mercy to be on God's side, and to acknowledge his own cause subordinate to that of God, divine providence would crown his arms with victory.

* Sir Edward Walker's Historical Discourses, , 167.

* * Sir Edward Walker's Historical Discourses, .

Still the Covenanters and the clergy were diffident of the king's sincerity. The facility which he discovered in yielding whatever was required of him, made them suspect, that he regarded all his concessions merely as ridiculous farces, to which he must of necessity submit. They had another trial prepared for him. Instead of the solemnity of his coronation, which was delayed, they were resolved, that he should pass through a public humiliation, and do penance before the whole people. They sent him twelve articles of repentance, which he was to acknowledge; and the king had agreed that he would submit to this indignity. The various transgressions of his father and grandfather, together with the idolatry of his mother, are again enumerated and aggravated in these articles; and further declarations were insisted on, that he sought the restoration of his rights, for the sole advancement of religion, and in subordination to the kingdom of Christ. [1] In short, having exalted the altar above the throne, and brought royalty under their feet, the clergy were resolved to trample on it and vilify it, by every instance of contumely which their present influence enabled them to impose upon their unhappy prince.

Charles, in the mean time, found his authority entirely annihilated, as well as his character degraded. He was consulted in no public measure. He was not called to assist at any councils. His favor was sufficient to discredit any pretender to office or advancement. All efforts which he made to unite the opposite parties, increased the suspicion which the Covenanters had entertained of him, as if he were not entirely their own, Argyle, who, by subtleties and compliances, partly led and partly was governed by this wild faction, still turned a deaf ear to all advances which the king made to enter into confidence with him. Malignants and engagers continued to be the objects of general hatred and persecution; and whoever was obnoxious to the clergy, failed not to have one or other of these epithets affixed to him. The fanaticism which prevailed, being so full of sour and angry principles, and so overcharged with various antipathies, had acquired a new object of abhorrence: these were the sorcerers. So prevalent was the opinion of witchcraft, that great numbers, accused of that crime, were burnt by sentence of the magistrates throughout all parts of Scotland. In a village near Berwick, which contained only fourteen houses, fourteen persons were punished by fire; [2] and it became a science, every where much studied and cultivated, to distinguish a true witch by proper trials and symptoms. [3]

* Sir Edward Walker's Historical Discourses, .

* * Whitlocke, , 408.

* * * Whitlocke, , 418.

The advance of the English army under Cromwell was not able to appease or soften the animosities among the parties in Scotland. The clergy were still resolute to exclude all but their most zealous adherents. As soon as the English parliament found that the treaty between the king and the Scots would probably terminate in an accommodation, they made preparations for a war, which, they saw, would in the end prove inevitable. Cromwell, having broken the force and courage of the Irish, was sent for; and he left the command of Ireland to Ireton, who governed that kingdom in the character of deputy, and with vigilance and industry persevered in the work of subduing and expelling the natives.

It was expected that Fairfax, who still retained the name of general, would continue to act against Scotland, and appear at the head of the forces; a station for which he was well qualified, and where alone he made any figure. But Fairfax, though he had allowed the army to make use of his name in murdering their sovereign, and offering violence to the parliament, had entertained unsurmountable scruples against invading the Scots, whom he considered as zealous Presbyterians, and united to England by the sacred bands of the covenant. He was further disgusted at the extremities into which he had already been hurried; and was confirmed in his repugnance by the exhortations of his wife, who had great influence over him, and was herself much governed by the Presbyterian clergy. A committee of parliament was sent to reason with him; and Cromwell was of the number. In vain did they urge, that the Scots had first broken the covenant by their invasion of England under Hamilton; and that they would surely renew their hostile attempts, if not prevented by the vigorous measures of the commonwealth. Cromwell, who knew the rigid inflexibility of Fairfax, in every thing which he regarded as matter of principle, ventured to solicit him with the utmost earnestness; and he went so far as to shed tears of grief and vexation on the occasion. No one could suspect any ambition in the man who labored so zealously to retain his general in that high office, which, he knew, he himself was alone entitled to fill. The same warmth of temper which made Cromwell a frantic enthusiast, rendered him the most dangerous of hypocrites; and it was to this turn of mind, as much as to his courage and capacity, that he owed all his wonderful successes. By the contagious ferment of his zeal, he engaged every one to coöperate with him in his measures; and entering easily and affectionately into every part which he was disposed to act, he was enabled, even after multiplied deceits, to cover, under a tempest of passion, all his crooked schemes and profound artifices.

Fairfax having resigned his commission, it was bestowed on Cromwell, who was declared captain-general of all the forces in England. This command, in a commonwealth which stood entirely by arms, was of the utmost importance; and was the chief step which this ambitious politician had yet made towards sovereign power. He immediately marched his forces, and entered Scotland with an army of sixteen thousand men.

The command of the Scottish army was given to Lesley, an experienced officer, who formed a very proper plan of defence. He intrenched himself in a fortified camp between Edinburgh and Leith, and took care to remove from the counties of Merse and the Lothians every thing which could serve to the subsistence of the English army. Cromwell advanced to the Scotch camp, and endeavored by every expedient to bring Lesley to a battle: the prudent Scotchman knew that, though superior in numbers, his army was much inferior in discipline to the English; and he carefully kept himself within his intrenchments. By skirmishes and small rencounters he tried to confirm the spirits of his soldiers; and he was successful in these enterprises. His army daily increased both in numbers and courage. The king came to the camp; and having exerted himself in an action, gained on the affections of the soldiery, who were more desirous of serving under a young prince of spirit and vivacity, than under a committee of talking gown-men. The clergy were alarmed. They ordered Charles immediately to leave the camp. They also purged it carefully of about four thousand malignants and engagers whose zeal had led them to attend the king, and who were the soldiers of chief credit and experience in the nation. [1] They then concluded that they had an army composed entirely of saints, and could not be beaten. They murmured extremely, not only against their prudent general, but also against the Lord, on account of his delays in giving them deliverance; [2] and they plainly told him, that if he would not save them from the English sectaries, he should no longer be their God. [3]

* Sir Edw. Walker, .

* * Sir Edw. Walker .

* * * Whitlocke, .

An advantage having offered itself on a Sunday, they hindered the general from making use of it, lest he should involve the nation in the guilt of Sabbath-breaking.

Cromwell found himself in a very bad situation. He had no provisions but what he received by sea. He had not had the precaution to bring these in sufficient quantities; and his army was reduced to difficulties. He retired to Dunbar. Lesley followed him, and encamped on the heights of Lammermure, which overlook that town. There lay many difficult passes between Dunbar and Berwick, and of these Lesley had taken possession. The English general was reduced to extremities. He had even embraced a resolution of sending by sea all his foot and artillery to England, and of breaking through, at all hazards, with his cavalry. The madness of the Scottish ecclesiastics saved him from this loss and dishonor.

Night and day the ministers had been wrestling with the Lord in prayer, as they termed it; and they fancied that they had at last obtained the victory. Revelations, they said, were made them, that the sectarian and heretical army, together with Agag, meaning Cromwell, was delivered into their hands. Upon the faith of these visions, they forced their general, in spite of his remonstrances, to descend into the plain with a view of attacking the English in their retreat. Cromwell, looking through a glass, saw the enemy's camp in motion; and foretold, without the help of revelations, that the Lord had delivered them into his hands. He gave orders immediately for an attack. In this battle it was easily observed, that nothing in military actions can supply the place of discipline and experience; and that, in the presence of real danger, where men are not accustomed to it, the fumes of enthusiasm presently dissipate, and lose their influence. The Scots, though double in number to the English, were soon put to flight, and pursued with great slaughter. The chief, if not only resistance, was made by one regiment of Highlanders, that part of the army which was the least infected with fanaticism. No victory could be more complete than this which was obtained by Cromwell. About three thousand of the enemy were slain, and nine thousand taken prisoners. Cromwell pursued his advantage, and took possession of Edinburgh and Leith. The remnant of the Scottish army fled to Stirling. The approach of the winter season, and an ague which seized Cromwell, kept him from pushing the victory any further.

The clergy made great lamentations, and told the Lord that to them it was little to sacrifice their lives and estates, but to him it was a great loss to suffer his elect to be destroyed. [1] They published a declaration containing the cause of their late misfortunes. These visitations they ascribed to the manifold provocations of the king's house, of which, they feared, he had not yet thoroughly repented; the secret intrusion of malignants into the king's family, and even into the camp; the leaving of a most malignant and profane guard of horse, who, being sent for to be purged, came two days before the defeat, and were allowed to fight with the army; the owning of the king's quarrel by many without subordination to religion and liberty; and the carnal self-seeking of some, together with the neglect of family prayers by others.

Cromwell, having been so successful in the war of the sword, took up the pen against the Scottish ecclesiastics. He wrote them some polemical letters, in which he maintained the chief points of the Independent theology. He took care likewise, to retort on them their favorite argument of providence; and asked them, whether the Lord had not declared against them. But the ministers thought that the same events which to their enemies were judgments, to them were trials, and they replied, that the Lord had only hid his face for a time from Jacob. But Cromwell insisted that the appeal had been made to God in the most express and solemn manner; and that, in the fields of Dunbar, an irrevocable decision had been awarded in favor of the English army. [2]

* Sir Edward Walker.

* This is the best of Cromwell's wretched compositions that remains, and we shall here extract a passage out of it. "You say you have not so learned Christ as to hang the equity of your cause upon events. We could wish that blindness had not been upon your eyes to all those marvellous dispensations which God hath wrought lately in England. But did not you solemnly appeal and pray? Did not we do so too? And ought not we and you to think, with fear and trembling, of the hand of the great God, in this mighty and strange appearance of his, but can slightly call it an event? Were not both your and our expectations renewed from time to time, while we waited on God, to see which way he would manifest himself upon our appeals? And shall we, after all these our prayers, fastings, tears, expectations, and solemn appeals, call these mere events? The Lord pity you. Surely we fear, because it has been a merciful and a gracious deliverance to us.

"I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, search after the mind of the Lord in it towards you, and we shall help you by our prayers, that you may find it. For yet, if we know our heart at all, our bowels do in Christ yearn after the godly in Scotland." Thurloe, vol. i. .

1651.

The defeat of the Scots was regarded by the king as a fortunate event. The armies which fought on both sides, were almost equally his enemies; and the vanquished were now obliged to give him some more authority, and apply to him for support. The parliament was summoned to meet at St. Johnstone's. Hamilton, Lauderdale, and all the engagers were admitted into court and camp, on condition of doing public penance, and expressing repentance for their late transgressions. Some malignants also crept in under various pretences. The intended humiliation or penance of the king was changed into the ceremony of his coronation, which was performed at Scone with great pomp and solemnity. But amidst all this appearance of respect, Charles remained in the hands of the most rigid Covenanters; and though treated with civility and courtesy by Argyle, a man of parts and address, he was little better than a prisoner, and was still exposed to all the rudeness and pedantry of the ecclesiastics.

This young prince was in a situation which very ill suited his temper and disposition. All those good qualities which he possessed, his affability, his wit, his gayety, his gentleman-like, disengaged behavior, were here so many vices; and his love of ease, liberty, and pleasure, was regarded as the highest enormity. Though artful in the practice of courtly dissimulation, the sanctified style was utterly unknown to him; and he never could mould his deportment into that starched grimace which the Covenanters required as an infallible mark of conversion. The duke of Buckingham was the only English courtier allowed to attend him; and by his ingenious talent for ridicule, he had rendered himself extremely agreeable to his master. While so many objects of derision surrounded them, it was difficult to be altogether insensible to the temptation, and wholly to suppress the laugh. Obliged to attend from morning to night at prayers and sermons, they betrayed evident symptoms of weariness or contempt. The clergy never could esteem the king sufficiently regenerated; and by continual exhortations, remonstrances, and reprimands, they still endeavored to bring him to a juster sense of his spiritual duty.

The king's passion for the fair could not altogether be restrained. He had once been observed using some familiarities with a young woman; and a committee of ministers was appointed to reprove him for a behavior so unbecoming a covenanted monarch. The spokesman of the committee, one Douglas began with a severe aspect, informed the king, that great scandal had been given to the godly, enlarged on the heinous nature of sin, and concluded with exhorting his majesty, whenever he was disposed to amuse himself, to be more careful for the future in shutting the windows. This delicacy, so unusual to the place and to the character of the man, was remarked by the king; and he never forgot the obligation.

The king, shocked at all the indignities, and perhaps still more tired with all the formalities to which he was obliged to submit, made an attempt to regain his liberty. General Middleton, at the head of some royalists, being proscribed by the Covenanters, kept in the mountains, expecting some opportunity of serving his master. The king resolved to join this body. He secretly made his escape from Argyle, and fled towards the Highlands.

Colonel Montgomery, with a troop of horse, was sent in pursuit of him. He overtook the king, and persuaded him to return. The royalists being too weak to support him, Charles was the more easily induced to comply. This incident procured him afterwards better treatment and more authority; the Covenanters being afraid of driving him, by their rigors, to some desperate resolution. Argyle renewed his courtship to the king; and the king, with equal dissimulation, pretended to repose great confidence in Argyle. He even went so far as to drop hints of his intention to marry that nobleman's daughter; but he had to do with a man too wise to be seduced by such gross artifices.

As soon as the season would permit, the Scottish army was assembled under Hamilton and Lesley; and the king was allowed to join the camp. The forces of the western counties, notwithstanding the imminent danger which threatened their country, were resolute not to unite their cause with that of an army which admitted any engagers or malignants among them; and they kept in a body apart under Ker. They called themselves the protesters; and their frantic clergy declaimed equally against the king and against Cromwell. The other party were denominated resolutioners; and these distinctions continued long after to divide and agitate the kingdom.

Charles encamped at the Torwood; and his generals resolved to conduct themselves by the same cautious maxims, which so long as they were embraced, had been successful during the former campaign. The town of Stirling lay at his back, and the whole north supplied him with provisions. Strong intrenchments defended his front; and it was in vain that Cromwell made every attempt to bring him to an engagement. After losing much time, the English general sent Lambert over the Frith into Fife, with an intention of cutting off the provisions of the enemy. Lambert fell upon Holborne and Brown, who commanded a party of the Scots, and put them to rout with great slaughter. Cromwell also passed over with his whole army; and lying at the back of the king, made it impossible for him to keep his post any longer.

Charles, reduced to despair, embraced a resolution worthy of a young prince contending for empire. Having the way open, he resolved immediately to march into England, where he expected that all his friends, and all those who were discontented with the present government, would flock to his standard. He persuaded the generals to enter into the same views; and with one consent the army, to the number of fourteen thousand men, rose from their camp, and advanced by great journeys towards the south.

Cromwell was surprised at this movement of the royal army. Wholly intent on offending his enemy, he had exposed his friends to imminent danger, and saw the king with numerous forces marching into England; where his presence, from the general hatred which prevailed against the parliament, was capable of producing some great revolution. But if this conduct was an oversight in Cromwell, he quickly repaired it by his vigilance and activity. He despatched letters to the parliament, exhorting them not to be dismayed at the approach of the Scots: he sent orders every where for assembling forces to oppose the king: he ordered Lambert with a body of cavalry to hang upon the rear of the royal army, and infest their march; and he himself, leaving Monk with seven thousand men to complete the reduction of Scotland, followed the king with all the expedition possible.

Charles found himself disappointed in his expectations of increasing his army. The Scots, terrified at the prospect of so hazardous an enterprise, fell off in great numbers. The English Presbyterians, having no warning given them of the king's approach, were not prepared to join him. To the royalists, this measure was equally unexpected; and they were further deterred from joining the Scottish army by the orders which the committee of ministers had issued, not to admit any, even in this desperate extremity, who would not subscribe the covenant. The earl of Derby, leaving the Isle of Man, where he had hitherto maintained his independence, was employed in levying forces in Cheshire and Lancashire; but was soon suppressed by a party of the parliamentary army. And the king, when he arrived at Worcester, found that his forces, extremely harassed by a hasty and fatiguing march, were not more numerous than when he rose from his camp in the Torwood.

Such is the influence of established government, that the commonwealth, though founded in usurpation the most unjust and unpopular, had authority sufficient to raise every where the militia of the counties; and these, united with the regular forces, bent all their efforts against the king. With an army of about thirty thousand men, Cromwell fell upon Worcester; and attacking it on all sides, and meeting with little resistance, except from Duke Hamilton and General Middleton, broke in upon the disordered royalists. The streets of the city were strowed with dead. Hamilton, a nobleman of bravery and honor, was mortally wounded; Massey wounded and taken prisoner; the king himself, having given many proofs of personal valor, was obliged to fly. The whole Scottish army was either killed or taken prisoners. The country people, inflamed with national antipathy, put to death the few that escaped from the field of battle.

The king left Worcester at six o’clock in the afternoon, and without halting, travelled about twenty-six miles, in company with fifty or sixty of his friends. To provide for his safety, he thought it best to separate himself from his companions; and he left them without communicating his intentions to any of them. By the earl of Derby’s directions, he went to Boscobel, a lone house in the borders of Staffordshire, inhabited by one Penderell, a farmer. To this man Charles intrusted himself. The man had dignity of sentiments much above his condition, and though death was denounced against all who concealed the king, and a great reward promised to any one who should betray him, he professed and maintained unshaken fidelity. He took the assistance of his four brothers, equally honorable with himself: and having clothed the king in a garb like their own, they led him into the neighboring wood, put a bill in his hand, and pretended to employ themselves in cutting fagots. Some nights he lay upon straw in the house, and fed on such homely fare as it afforded. For a better concealment, he mounted upon an oak, where he sheltered himself among the leaves and branches for twenty-four hours. He saw several soldiers pass by. All of them were intent in search of the king; and some expressed in his hearing their earnest wishes of seizing him. This tree was afterwards denominated the royal oak, and for many years was regarded by the neighborhood with great veneration.

Charles was in the middle of the kingdom, and could neither stay in his retreat, nor stir a step from it, without the most imminent danger. Fears, hopes, and party zeal interested multitudes to discover him; and even the smallest indiscretion of his friends might prove fatal. Having joined Lord Wilmot, who was skulking in the neighborhood, they agreed to put themselves into the hands of Colonel Lane, a zealous royalist, who lived at Bentley, not many miles distant. The king’s feet were so hurt by walking about in heavy boots or countrymen’s shoes which did not fit him, that he was obliged to mount on horseback; and he travelled in this situation to Bentley, attended by the Penderells, who had been so faithful to him. Lane formed a scheme for his journey to Bristol, where, it was hoped, he would find a ship in which he might transport himself. He had a near kinswoman, Mrs. Norton, who lived within three miles of that city, and was with child, very near the time of her delivery. He obtained a pass (for during those times of confusion this precaution was requisite) for his sister, Jane Lane, and a servant, to travel towards Bristol, under pretence of visiting and attending her relation. The king rode before the lady, and personated the servant.

When they arrived at Norton's, Mrs. Lane pretended that she had brought along, as her servant, a poor lad, a neighboring farmer's son, who was ill of an ague; and she begged a private room for him, where he might be quiet. Though Charles kept himself retired in this chamber, the butler, one Pope, soon knew him: the king was alarmed, but made the butler promise that he would keep the secret from every mortal, even from his master; and he was faithful to his engagement.

No ship, it was found, would for a month set sail from Bristol, either for France or Spain, and the king was obliged to go elsewhere for a passage. He intrusted himself to Colone Windham of Dorsetshire, an affectionate partisan of the royal family. The natural effect of the long civil wars, and of the furious rage to which all men were wrought up in their different factions, was, that every one's inclinations and affections were thoroughly known; and even the courage and fidelity of most men, by the variety of incidents, had been put to trial. The royalists, too, had, many of them, been obliged to make concealments in their houses for themselves, their friends, or more valuable effects; and the arts of eluding the enemy had been frequently practised. All these circumstances proved favorable to the king in the present exigency. As he often passed through the hands of Catholics, the priests hole, as they called it, the place where they were obliged to conceal their persecuted priests, was sometimes employed for sheltering their distressed sovereign.

Windham, before he received the king, asked leave to intrust the important secret to his mother, his wife, and four servants, on whose fidelity he could rely. Of all these, no one proved wanting either in honor or discretion. The venerable old matron, on the reception of her royal guest, expressed the utmost joy, that having lost, without regret, three sons and one grandchild in defence of his father, she was now reserved, in her declining years, to be instrumental in the preservation of himself. Windham told the king, that Sir Thomas, his father, in the year 1636, a few days before his death, called to him his five sons. “My children,” said he, “we have hitherto seen serene and quiet times under our three last sovereigns: but I must now warn you to prepare for clouds and storms. Factions arise on every side, and threaten the tranquillity of your native country. But whatever happen, do you faithfully honor and obey your prince, and adhere to the crown. I charge you never to forsake the crown, though it should hang upon a bush.” “These last words,” added Windham, “made such impressions on all our breasts, that the many afflictions of these sad times could never efface their indelible characters.” From innumerable instances, it appears how deep rooted, in the minds of the English gentry of that age, was the principle of loyalty to their sovereign; that noble and generous principle, inferior only in excellence to the more enlarged and more enlightened affection towards a legal constitution. But during those times of military usurpation, these passions were the same.

The king continued several days in Windham’s house; and all his friends in Britain, and in every part of Europe, remained in the most anxious suspense with regard to his fortunes: no one could conjecture whether he were dead or alive; and the report of his death, being generally believed, happily relaxed the vigilant search of his enemies. Trials were made to procure a vessel for his escape; but he still met with disappointments. Having left Windham’s house, he was obliged again to return to it. He passed through many other adventures; assumed different disguises; in every step was exposed to imminent perils and received daily proofs of uncorrupted fidelity and attachment. The sagacity of a smith, who remarked that his horse’s shoes had been made in the north, not in the west, as he pretended, once detected him; and he narrowly escaped. At Shoreham, in Sussex, a vessel was at last found, in which he embarked. He had been known to so many, that if he had not set sail in that critical moment, it had been impossible for him to escape. After one and forty days’ concealment, he arrived safely at Fescamp, in Normandy. No less than forty men and women had at different times been privy to his concealment and escape. [1]

The battle of Worcester, afforded Cromwell what he called his “crowning mercy.” [2] So elated was he, that he intended to have knighted in the field two of his generals, Lambert and Fleetwood; but was dissuaded by his friends from exerting this act of regal authority. His power and ambition were too great to brook submission to the empty name of a republic, which stood chiefly by his influence, and was supported by his victories. How early he entertained thoughts of taking into his hand the reins of government, is uncertain. We are only assured, that he now discovered to his intimate friends these aspiring views; and even expressed a desire of assuming the rank of king, which he had contributed with such seeming zeal to abolish. [3]

The little popularity and credit acquired by the republicans, further stimulated the ambition of this enterprising politician. These men had not that large thought, nor those comprehensive views, which might qualify them for acting the part of legislators: selfish aims and bigotry chiefly engrossed their attention. They carried their rigid austerity so far as to enact a law declaring fornication, after the first act, to be felony, without benefit of clergy. [4] They made small progress in that important work which they professed to have so much at heart, the settling of a new model of representation, and a bill was introduced into the house against painting, patches, and other immodest dress of women; but it did not pass.

* Heath’s Chronicle, .

* * Parl. Hist. vol. xx. .

* * * Whitlocke, .

* * * * Scobel, .

v Parl. Hist. vol. xix. .

The nation began to apprehend that they intended to establish themselves as a perpetual legislature, and to confine the whole power to sixty or seventy persons, who called themselves the parliament of the commonwealth of England. And while they pretended to bestow new liberties upon the nation, they found themselves obliged to infringe even the most valuable of those which, through time immemorial, had been transmitted from their ancestors. Not daring to intrust the trials of treason to juries, who, being chosen indifferently from among the people, would have been little favorable to the commonwealth, and would have formed their verdict upon the ancient laws, they eluded that noble institution, by which the government of this island has ever been so much distinguished. They had evidently seen in the trial of Lilburn what they could expect from juries. This man, the most turbulent, but the most upright and courageous of human kind, was tried for a transgression of the new statute of treasons: but though he was plainly guilty, he was acquitted, to the great joy of the people. Westminster Hall, nay, the whole city, rang with shouts and acclamations. Never did any established power receive so strong a declaration of its usurpation and invalidity; and from no institution, besides the admirable one of juries, could be expected this magnanimous effort.

That they might not for the future be exposed to affronts which so much lessened their authority, the parliament erected a high court of justice, which was to receive indictments from the council of state. This court was composed of men devoted to the ruling party, without name or character, determined to sacrifice every thing to their own safety or ambition. Colonel Eusebius Andrews and Colonel Walter Slingsby were tried by this court for conspiracies, and condemned to death. They were royalists, and refused to plead before so illegal a jurisdiction. Love, Gibbons, and other Presbyterians, having entered into a plot against the republic, were also tried, condemned, and executed. The earl of Derby, Sir Timothy Featherstone, Bemboe, being taken prisoners after the battle of Worcester, were put to death by sentence of a court martial; a method of proceeding declared illegal by that very petition of right, for which a former parliament had so strenuously contended, and which, after great efforts, they had extorted from the king.

Excepting their principles of toleration, the maxims by which the republicans regulated ecclesiastical affairs no more prognosticated any durable settlement, than those by which they conducted their civil concerns. The Presbyterian model of congregations, classes, and assemblies was not allowed to be finished: it seemed even the intention of many leaders in the parliament to admit of no established church, and to leave every one, without any guidance of the magistrate, to embrace whatever sect and to support whatever clergy were most agreeable to him.

The parliament went so far as to make some approaches, in one province, to their Independent model. Almost all the clergy of Wales being ejected as malignants, itinerant preachers with small salaries were settled, not above four or five in each county; and these, being furnished with horses at the public expense, hurried from place to place, and carried, as they expressed themselves, the glad tidings of the gospel. [1] They were all of them men of the lowest birth and education, who had deserted mechanical trades, in order to follow this new profession. And in this particular, as well as in their wandering life, they pretended to be more truly apostolical.

* Dr. John Walker’s Attempt, , et seq.

The republicans, both by the turn of their disposition, and by the nature of the instruments which they employed, were better qualified for acts of force and vigor, than for the slow and deliberate work of legislation. Notwithstanding the late wars and bloodshed, and the present factions, the power of England had never, in any period, appeared so formidable to the neighboring kingdoms as it did at this time, in the hands of the commonwealth. A numerous army served equally to retain every one in implicit subjection to established authority, and to strike a terror into foreign nations. The power of peace and war was lodged in the same hands with that of imposing taxes; and no difference of views, among the several members of the legislature, could any longer be apprehended. The present impositions, though much superior to what had ever formerly been experienced, were in reality moderate, and what a nation so opulent could easily bear. The military genius of the people had, by the civil contests, been roused from its former lethargy; and excellent officers were formed in every branch of service. The confusion into which all things had been thrown, had given opportunity to men of low stations to break through their obscurity, and to raise themselves by their courage to commands which they were well qualified to exercise, but to which their birth could never have entitled them. And while so great a power was lodged in such active hands, no wonder the republic was successful in all its enterprises.

Blake, a man of great courage and a generous disposition the same person who had defended Lyme and Taunten with such unshaken obstinacy against the late king, was made an admiral; and though he had hitherto been accustomed only to land service, into which, too, he had not entered till past fifty years of age, he soon raised the naval glory of the nation to a greater height than it had ever attained in any former period. A fleet was put under his command, and he received orders to pursue Prince Rupert, to whom the king had intrusted that squadron which had deserted to him. Rupert took shelter in Kinsale; and escaping thence, fled towards the coast of Portugal. Blake pursued, and chased him into the Tagus, where he intended to make an attack upon him. But the king of Portugal, moved by the favor which throughout all Europe attended the royal cause, refused Blake admittance, and aided Prince Rupert in making his escape. To be revenged of this partiality, the English admiral made prize of twenty Portuguese ships, richly laden; and he threatened still further vengeance. The king of Portugal, dreading so dangerous a foe to his newly-acquired dominion, and sensible of the unequal contest in which he was engaged, made all possible submissions to the haughty republic, and was at last admitted to negotiate the renewal of his alliance with England. Prince Rupert, having lost a great part of his squadron on the coast of Spain, made sail towards the West Indies. His brother, Prince Maurice, was there shipwrecked in a hurricane. Every where this squadron subsisted by privateering, sometimes on English, sometimes on Spanish vessels. And Rupert at last returned to France, where he disposed of the remnants of his fleet, together with his prizes.

All the settlements in America, except New England, which had been planted entirely by the Puritans, adhered to the royal party, even after the settlement of the republic; and Sir George Ayscue was sent with a squadron to reduce them. Bermudas, Antigua, and Virginia were soon subdued. Barbadoes, commanded by Lord Willoughby of Parham, made some resistance; but was at last obliged to submit.

With equal ease were Jersey, Guernsey, Scilly, and the Isle of Man brought under subjection to the republic; and the sea, which had been much infested by privateers from these islands, was rendered safe to the English commerce. The countess of Derby defended the Isle of Man; and with great reluctance yielded to the necessity of surrendering to the enemy. This lady, a daughter of the illustrious house of Trimoille, in France, had, during the civil war, displayed a manly courage by her obstinate defence of Latham House against the parliamentary forces; and she retained the glory of being the last person in the three kingdoms, and in all their dependent dominions, who submitted to the victorious commonwealth. [1]

* See note X, at the end of the volume.

Ireland and Scotland were now entirely subjected, and reduced to tranquillity. Ireton, the new deputy of Ireland, at the head of a numerous army, thirty thousand strong, prosecuted the work of subduing the revolted Irish; and he defeated them in many rencounters, which, though of themselves of no great moment, proved fatal to their declining cause. He punished without mercy all the prisoners who had any hand in the massacres. Sir Phelim O’Neale, among the rest, was some time after brought to the gibbet, and suffered an ignominious death, which he had so well merited by his inhuman cruelties. Limeric, a considerable town, still remained in the hands of the Irish; and Ireton, after a vigorous siege, made himself master of it. He was here infected with the plague, and shortly after died; a memorable personage, much celebrated for his vigilance, industry, capacity even for the strict execution of justice in that unlimited command which he possessed in Ireland. He was observed to be inflexible in all his purposes; and it was believed by many that he was animated with a sincere and passionate love of liberty, and never could have been induced by any motive to submit to the smallest appearance of regal government. Cromwell appeared to be much affected by his death; and the republicans, who reposed great confidence in him, were inconsolable. To show their regard for his merit and services, they bestowed an estate of two thousand pounds a year on his family, and honored him with a magnificent funeral at the public charge. Though the established government was but the mere shadow of a commonwealth, yet was it beginning by proper arts, to encourage that public spirit, which no other species of civil polity is ever able fully to inspire.

The command of the army in Ireland devolved on Lieutenant-General Ludlow. The civil government of the island was intrusted to commissioners. Ludlow continued to push the advantages against the Irish, and every where obtained an easy victory. That unhappy people, disgusted with the king on account of those violent declarations against them and their religion which had been extorted by the Scots, applied to the king of Spain, to the duke of Lorraine; and found assistance nowhere. Clanricarde, unable to resist the prevailing power, made submissions to the parliament, and retired into England, where he soon after died. He was a steady Catholic, but a man much respected by all parties.

The successes which attended Monk in Scotland were no less decisive. That able general laid siege to Stirling Castle, and though it was well provided for defence, it was soon surrendered to him. He there became master of all the records of the kingdom; and he sent them to England. The earl of Leven, the earl of Crawford, Lord Ogilvy, and other noblemen, having met near Perth, in order to concert measures for raising a new army, were suddenly set upon by Colonel Alured, and most of them taken prisoners. Sir Philip Musgrave, with some Scots, being engaged at

Dumfries in a like enterprise, met with a like fate. Dundee was a town well fortified, supplied with a good garrison under Lumisden, and full of all the rich furniture, the plate and money of the kingdom, which had been sent thither as to a place of safety. Monk appeared before it; and having made a breach, gave a general assault. He carried the town; and following the example and instructions of Cromwell, put all the inhabitants to the sword, in order to strike a general terror into the kingdom. Warned by this example, Aberdeen, St. Andrew's, Inverness, and other towns and forts, yielded of their own accord to the enemy. Argyle made his submissions to the English commonwealth; and excepting a few royalists, who remained some time in the mountains, under the earl of Glencairn, Lord Balcarras, and General Middleton, that kingdom, which had hitherto, through all ages, by means of its situation, poverty, and valor, maintained its independence, was reduced to total subjection.

The English parliament sent Sir Harry Vane, St. John, and other commissioners to settle Scotland. These men, who possessed little of the true spirit of liberty, knew how to maintain the appearance of it; and they required the voluntary consent of all the counties and towns of this conquered kingdom, before they would unite them into the same commonwealth with England. The clergy protested; because, they said, this incorporating union would draw along with it a subordination of the church to the state in the things of Christ. [1] English judges, joined to some Scottish, were appointed to determine all causes; justice was strictly administered; order and peace maintained; and the Scots, freed from the tyranny of the ecclesiastics, were not much dissatisfied with the present government. [2] The prudent conduct of Monk, a man who possessed a capacity for the arts both of peace and war, served much to reconcile the minds of men, and to allay their prejudices.

1652.

By the total reduction and pacification of the British dominions, the parliament had leisure to look abroad, and to exert their vigor in foreign enterprises. The Dutch were the first that felt the weight of their arms.

During the life of Frederic Henry, prince of Orange, the Dutch republic had maintained a neutrality in the civil wars of England, and had never interposed, except by her good offices, between the contending parties.

When William, who had married an English princess, succeeded to his father’s commands and authority, [3] the states, both before and after the execution of the late king, were accused of taking steps more favorable to the royal cause, and of betraying a great prejudice against that of the parliament. It was long before the envoy of the English commonwealth could obtain an audience of the states general. The murderers of Dorislaus were not pursued with such vigor as the parliament expected. And much regard had been paid to the king, and many good offices performed to him, both by the public, and by men of all ranks, in the United Provinces.

After the death of William, prince of Orange, [4] which was attended with the depression of his party and the triumph of the Dutch republicans, the parliament thought that the time was now favorable for cementing a closer confederacy with the states.

St. John, chief justice, who was sent over to the Hague, had entertained the idea of forming a kind of coalition between the two republics, which would have rendered their interests totally inseparable; but fearing that so extraordinary a project would not be relished, he contented himself with dropping some hints of it, and openly went no further than to propose a strict defensive alliance between England and the United Provinces, such as has now, for near seventy years taken place between these friendly powers. [1] But the states, who were unwilling to form a nearer confederacy with a government whose measures were so obnoxious, and whose situation seemed so precarious, offered only to renew the former alliances with England. And the haughty St. John, disgusted with this disappointment, as well as incensed at many affronts which had been offered him with impunity by the retainers of the Palatine and Orange families, and indeed by

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* Whitlocke, . Heathe’s Chronicle, .

* * See note Y, at the end of the volume.

* * * 1647.

* * * * October 17, 1650.

the populace in general, returned into England, and endeavored to foment a quarrel between the republics.

The movement of great states are often directed by as slender springs as those of individuals. Though war with so considerable a naval power as the Dutch, who were in peace with all their other neighbors, might seem dangerous to the yet unsettled commonwealth, there were several motives which at this time induced the English parliament to embrace hostile measures. Many of the members thought, that a foreign war would serve as a pretence for continuing the same parliament, and delaying the new model of a representative, with which the nation had so long been flattered. Others hoped, that the war would furnish a reason for maintaining, some time longer, that numerous standing army, which was so much complained of. [2]

* Thurloe, vol. i. .

* * We are told, in the Life of Sir Harry Vane, that that famous republican opposed the Dutch war, and that it was the military gentlemen chiefly who supported that measure.

On the other hand, some, who dreaded the increasing power of Cromwell, expected that the great expense of naval armaments would prove a motive for diminishing the military establishment. To divert the attention of the public from domestic quarrels towards foreign transactions, seemed, in the present disposition of men's minds, to be good policy. The superior power of the English commonwealth, together with its advantages of situation, promised success; and the parliamentary leaders hoped to gain many rich prizes from the Dutch, to distress and sink their flourishing commerce, and by victories to throw a lustre on their own establishment, which was so new and unpopular. All these views, enforced by the violent spirit of St. John, who had great influence over Crom-well, determined the parliament to change the purposed alliance into a furious war against the United Provinces.

To cover these hostile intentions, the parliament, under pretence of providing for the interests of commerce, embraced such measures as they knew would give disgust to the states. They framed the famous act of navigation; which prohibited all nations from importing into England in their bottoms any commodity which was not the growth and manufacture of their own country. By this law, though the terms in which it was conceived were general, the Dutch were principally affected; because their country produces few commodities, and they subsist chiefly by being the general carriers and factors of Europe. Letters of reprisal were granted to several merchants, who complained of injuries which, they pretended, they had received from the states; and above eighty Dutch ships fell into their hands, and were made prizes. The cruelties committed on the English at Amboyna, which were certainly enormous, but which seemed to be buried in oblivion by a thirty years' silence, were again made the ground of complaint. And the allowing the murderers of Dorislaus to escape, and the conniving at the insults to which St. John had been exposed, were represented as symptoms of an unfriendly, if not a hostile disposition in the states.

The states, alarmed at all these steps, sent orders to their ambassadors to endeavor the renewal of the treaty of alliance, which had been broken off by the abrupt departure of St. John. Not to be unprepared, they equipped a fleet of a hundred and fifty sail, and took care, by their ministers at London, to inform the council of the state of that armament. This intelligence, instead of striking terror into the English republic, was considered as a menace, and further confirmed the parliament in their hostile resolutions. The minds of men in both states were every day more irritated against each other; and it was not long before these humors broke forth into action.

Tromp, an admiral of great renown, received from the states the command of a fleet of forty-two sail, in order to protect the Dutch navigation against the privateers of the English. He was forced by stress of weather, as he alleged, to take shelter in the road of Dover, where he met with Blake, who commanded an English fleet much inferior in number. Who was the aggressor in the action which ensued between these two admirals, both of them men of such prompt and fiery dispositions, it is not easy to determine; since each of them sent to his own state a relation totally opposite in all its circumstances to that of the other, and yet supported by the testimony of every captain in his fleet. Blake pretended, that having given a signal to the Dutch admiral to strike, Tromp, instead of complying, fired a broadside at him. Tromp asserted, that he was preparing to strike, and that the English admiral, nevertheless, began hostilities. It is certain that the admiralty of Holland, who are distinct from the council of state, had given Tromp no orders to strike, but had left him to his own discretion with regard to that vain but much contested ceremonial. They seemed willing to introduce the claim of an equality with the new commonwealth, and to interpret the former respect paid the English flag as a deference due only to the monarchy. This circumstance forms a strong presumption against the narrative of the Dutch admiral. The whole Orange party, it must be remarked, to which Tromp was suspected to adhere, was desirous of a war with England.

Blake, though his squadron consisted only of fifteen vessels, reënforced, after the battle began, by eight under Captain Bourne, maintained the fight with bravery for five hours, and sunk one ship of the enemy, and took another. Night parted the combatants, and the Dutch fleet retired towards the coast of Holland. The populace of London were enraged, and would have insulted the Dutch ambassadors, who lived at Chelsea, had not the council of state sent guards to protect them.

When the states heard of this action, of which the consequences were easily foreseen, they were in the utmost consternation. They immediately despatched Paw, pensionary of Holland, as their ambassador extraordinary to London, and ordered him to lay before the parliament the narrative which Tromp had sent of the late rencounter. They entreated them, by all the bands of their common religion and common liberties, not to precipitate themselves into hostile measures, but to appoint commissioners, who should examine every circumstance of the action, and clear up the truth, which lay in obscurity. And they pretended, that they had given no orders to their admiral to offer any violence to the English, but would severely punish him, if they found, upon inquiry, that he had been guilty of an action which they so much disapproved. The imperious parliament would hearken to none of these reasons or remonstrances. Elated by the numerous successes which they had obtained over their domestic enemies, they thought that every thing must yield to their fortunate arms; and they gladly seized the opportunity, which they sought, of making war upon the states. They demanded that, without any further delay or inquiry, reparation should be made for all the damages which the English had sustained. And when this demand was not complied with, they despatched orders for commencing war against the United Provinces.

Blake sailed northwards with a numerous fleet, and fell upon the herring busses, which were escorted by twelve men-of-war. All these he either took or dispersed. Tromp followed him with a fleet of above a hundred sail. When these two admirals were within sight of each other, and preparing for battle, a furious storm attacked them. Blake took shelter in the English harbors. The Dutch fleet was dispersed, and received great damage.

Sir George Ayscue, though he commanded only forty ships, according to the English accounts, engaged near Plymouth the famous De Ruiter, who had under him fifty ships of war, with thirty merchantmen. The Dutch ships were indeed of inferior force to the English. De Ruiter, the only admiral in Europe who has attained a renown equal to that of the greatest general, defended himself so well, that Ayscue gained no advantage over him. Night parted them in the greatest heat of the action. De Ruiter next day sailed off with his convoy. The English fleet had been so shattered in the fight, that it was not able to pursue.

Near the coast of Kent, Blake, seconded by Bourne and Pen, met a Dutch squadron, nearly equal in numbers, commanded by De Witte and De Ruiter. A battle was fought, much to the disadvantage of the Dutch. Their rear-admiral was boarded and taken. Two other vessels were sunk, and one blown up. The Dutch next day made sail towards Holland.

The English were not so successful in the Mediterranean. Van Galen, with much superior force, attacked Captain Badily, and defeated him. He bought, however, his victory with the loss of his life.

Sea fights are seldom so decisive as to disable the vanquished from making head in a little time against the victors. Tromp, seconded by De Ruiter, met near the Goodwins, with Blake; whose fleet was inferior to the Dutch, but who resolved not to decline the combat. A furious battle commenced where the admirals on both sides, as well as the inferior officers and seamen, exerted great bravery. In this action the Dutch had the advantage. Blake himself was wounded. The Garland and Bonaventure were taken. Two ships were burned, and one sunk; and night came opportunely to save the English fleet. After this victory, Tromp, in a bravado fixed a broom to his mainmast; as if he were resolved to sweep the sea entirely of all English vessels.

1653.

Great preparations were made in England, in order to wipe off this disgrace. A gallant fleet of eighty sail was fitted out. Blake commanded, and Dean under him, together with Monk, who had been sent for from Scotland. When the English lay off Portland, they descried, near break of day, a Dutch fleet of seventy-six vessels, sailing up the Channel, along with a convoy of three hundred merchantmen, who had received orders, to wait at the Isle of Rhé, till the fleet should arrive to escort them. Tromp, and under him De Ruiter, commanded the Dutch. This battle was the most furious that had yet been fought between these warlike and rival nations. Three days was the combat continued with the utmost rage and obstinacy; and Blake, who was victor, gained not more honor than Tromp, who was vanquished. The Dutch admiral made a skilful retreat, and saved all the merchant ships, except thirty. He lost, however, eleven ships of war, had two thousand men slain, and near fifteen hundred taken prisoners. The English, though many of their ships were extremely shattered, had but one sunk. Their slain were not much inferior in number to those of the enemy.

All these successes of the English were chiefly owing to the superior size of their vessels; an advantage which all the skill and bravery of the Dutch admirals could not compensate. By means of ship money, an imposition which had been so much complained of, and in some respects with reason, the late king had put the navy into a situation which it had never attained in any former reign; and he ventured to build ships of a size which was then unusual. But the misfortunes which the Dutch met with in battle, were small in comparison of those which their trade sustained from the English. Their whole commerce by the Channel was cut off: even that to the Baltic was much infested by English privateers. Their fisheries were totally suspended. A great number of their ships, above sixteen hundred, had fallen into the hands of the enemy. And all this distress they suffered, not for any national interests or necessity, but from vain points of honor and personal resentments, of which it was difficult to give a satisfactory account to the public. They resolved therefore to gratify the pride of the parliament, and to make some advances towards peace. They met not, however, with a favorable reception; and it was not without pleasure that they learned the dissolution of that haughty assembly by the violence of Cromwell; an even from which they expected a more prosperous turn to their affairs.

The zealous republicans in the parliament had not been the chief or first promoters of the war; but, when it was once entered upon, they endeavored to draw from it every possible advantage. On all occasions, they set up the fleet in opposition to the army, and celebrated the glory and successes of their naval armaments. They insisted on the intolerable expense to which the nation was subjected, and urged the necessity of diminishing it by a reduction of the land forces. They had ordered some regiments to serve on board the fleet in the quality of marines. And Cromwell, by the whole train of their proceedings, evidently saw that they had entertained a jealousy of his power and ambition, and were resolved to bring him to a subordination under their authority. Without scruple or delay, he resolved to prevent them.

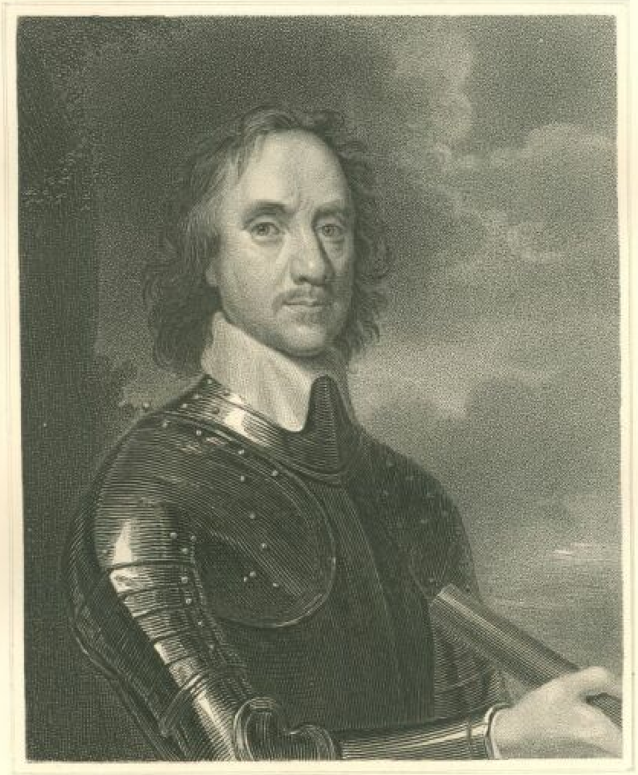
On such firm foundations was built the credit of this extraordinary man, that though a great master of fraud and dissimulation, he judged it superfluous to employ any disguise in conducting this bold enterprise. He summoned a general council of officers; and immediately found, that they were disposed to receive whatever impressions he was pleased to give them. Most of them were his creatures, had owed their advancement to his favor, and relied entirely upon him for their future preferment. The breach being already made between the military and civil powers, when the late king was seized at Holdenby, the general officers regarded the parliament as at once their creature and their rival; and thought, that they themselves were entitled to share among them those offices and riches, of which its members had so long kept possession. Harrison, Rich, Overton, and a few others, who retained some principle, were guided by notions so extravagant, that they were easily deluded into measures the most violent and most criminal. And the whole army had already been guilty of such illegal and atrocious actions, that they could entertain no further scruple with regard to any enterprise which might serve their selfish or fanatical purposes.

In the council of officers it was presently voted to frame a remonstrance to the parliament. After complaining of the arrears due to the army, they there desired the parliament to reflect how many years they had sitten, and what professions they had formerly made of their intentions to new model the representative, and establish successive parliaments, who might bear the burden of national affairs, from which they themselves would gladly, after so much danger and fatigue, be at last relieved. They confessed that the parliament had achieved great enterprises, and had surmounted mighty difficulties; yet was it an injury, they said, to the rest of the nation to be excluded from bearing any part in the service of their country. It was now full time for them to give place to others; and they therefore desired them, after settling a council, who might execute the laws during the interval, to summon a new parliament, and establish that free and equal government which they had so long promised to the people.

The parliament took this remonstrance in ill part, and made a sharp reply to the council of officers. The officers insisted on their advice; and by mutual altercation and opposition, the breach became still wider between the army and the commonwealth. Cromwell, finding matters ripe for his purpose, called a council of officers, in order to come to a determination with regard to the public settlement. As he had here many friends, so had he also some opponents. Harrison having assured the council, that the general sought only to pave the way for the government of Jesus and his saints, Major Streater briskly replied, that Jesus ought then to come quickly: for if he delayed it till after Christmas, he would come too late; he would find his place occupied. While the officers were in debate, Colonel Ingoldsby informed Cromwell, that the parliament was sitting, and had come to a resolution not to dissolve themselves, but to fill up the house by new elections; and was at that very time engaged in deliberations with regard to this expedient. Cromwell in a rage immediately hastened to the house, and carried a body of three hundred soldiers along with him. Some of them he placed at the door, some in the lobby, some on the stairs. He first addressed himself to his friend St. John, and told him that he had come with a purpose of doing what grieved him to the very soul, and what he had earnestly with tears besought the Lord not to impose upon him: but there was a necessity, in order to the glory of God and good of the nation. He sat down for some time, and heard the debate. He beckoned Harrison, and told him that he now judged the parliament ripe for a dissolution. “Sir,” said Harrison “the work is very great and dangerous: I desire you seriously to consider, before you engage in it.” “You say well,” replied the general; and thereupon sat still about a quarter of an hour. When the question was ready to be put, he said again to Harrison, “This is the time: I must do it.” And suddenly starting up, he loaded the parliament with the vilest reproaches, for their tyranny, ambition, oppression, and robbery of the public. Then stamping with his foot, which was a signal for the soldiers to enter, “For shame,” said he to the parliament, “get you gone: give place to honester men; to those who will more faithfully discharge their trust. You are no longer a parliament. I tell you, you are no longer a parliament. The Lord has done with you: he has chosen other instruments for carrying on his work.” Sir Harry Vane exclaiming against this proceeding, he cried with a loud voice, “O! Sir Harry Vane, Sir Harry Vane! The Lord deliver me from Sir Harry Vane!” Taking hold of Martin by the cloak, “Thou art a whoremaster,” said he; to another, “Thou art an adulterer;” to a third, “Thou art a drunkard and a glutton;” “And thou an extortioner,” to a fourth. He commanded a soldier to seize the mace. “What shall we do with this bauble? Here, take it away. It is you,” said he, addressing himself to the house, “that have forced me upon this. I have sought the Lord night and day, that he would rather slay me than put me upon this work.” Having commanded the soldiers to clear the hall, he himself went out the last, and ordering the doors to be locked, departed to his lodgings in Whitehall.

In this furious manner, which so well denotes his genuine character, did Cromwell, without the least opposition, or even murmur, annihilate that famous assembly, which had filled all Europe with the renown of its actions, and with astonishment at its crimes, and whose commencement was not more ardently desired by the people than was its final dissolution. All parties now reaped successively the melancholy pleasure of seeing the injuries which they had suffered, revenged on their enemies, and that too by the same arts which had been practised against them. The king had, in some instances, stretched his prerogative beyond its just bounds; and aided by the church, had well nigh put an end to all the liberties and privileges of the nation. The Presbyterians checked the progress of the court and clergy, and excited, by cant and hypocrisy, the populace, first to tumults, then to war against the king, the peers, and all the royalists. No sooner had they reached the pinnacle of grandeur, than the Independents, under the appearance of still greater sanctity, instigated the army against them, and reduced them to subjection. The Independents, amidst their empty dreams of liberty, or rather of dominion, were oppressed by the rebellion of their own servants, and found themselves at once exposed to the insults of power and hatred of the people. By recent, as well as all ancient example, it was become evident, that illegal violence, with whatever preferences it may be covered, and whatever object it may pursue, must inevitably end at last in the arbitrary and despotic government of a single person.

CHAPTER LXI.



Engraved by E. Scriven

CROMWELL.

From the Picture presented by Cromwell to Col.l Rich,
and bequeathed by his great grandson Sr Robt Rich, Bart. to the British Museum.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

1653.

OLIVER CROMWELL, in whose hands the dissolution of the parliament had left the whole power, civil and military, of three kingdoms, was born at Huntingdon, the last year of the former century, of a good family; though he himself, being the son of a second brother, inherited but a small estate from his father. In the course of his education, he had been sent to the university; but his genius was found little fitted for the calm and elegant occupations of learning; and he made small proficiency in his studies. He even threw himself into a dissolute and disorderly course of life; and he consumed, in gaming, drinking, debauchery, and country riots, the more early years of his youth, and dissipated part of his patrimony. All of a sudden, the spirit of reformation seized him; he married, affected a grave and composed behavior entered into all the zeal and rigor of the Puritanical party, and offered to restore to every one whatever sums he had formerly gained by gaming. The same vehemence of temper which had transported him into the extremes of pleasure, now distinguished his religious habits. His house was the resort of all the zealous clergy of the party; and his hospitality, as well as his liberalities to the silenced and deprived ministers, proved as chargeable as his former debaucheries. Though he had acquired a tolerable fortune by a maternal uncle, he found his affairs so injured by his expenses, that he was obliged to take a farm at St. Ives, and apply himself for some years to agriculture as a profession. But this expedient served rather to involve him in further debts and difficulties. The long prayers which he said to his family in the morning, and again in the afternoon, consumed his own time and that of his ploughmen; and he reserved no leisure for the care of his temporal affairs. His active mind, superior to the low occupations to which he was condemned, preyed upon itself; and he indulged his imagination in visions, illuminations, revelations; the great nourishment of that hypochondriacal temper to which he was ever subject. Urged by his wants and his piety, he had made a party with Hambden, his near kinsman, who was pressed only by the latter motive, to transport himself into New England, now become the retreat of the more zealous among the Puritanical party; and it was an order of council which obliged them to disembark and remain in England. The earl of Bedford, who possessed a large estate in the fen country near the Isle of Ely, having undertaken to drain these morasses, was obliged to apply to the king; and by the powers of the prerogative, he got commissioners appointed, who conducted that work, and divided the new-acquired land among the several proprietors. He met with opposition from many, among whom Cromwell distinguished himself; and this was the first public opportunity which he had met with, of discovering the factious zeal and obstinacy of his character.

From accident and intrigue he was chosen by the town of Cambridge member of the long parliament. His domestic affairs were then in greater disorder; and he seemed not to possess any talents which could qualify him to rise in that public sphere into which he was now at last entered. His person was ungraceful, his dress slovenly, his voice untonable, his elocution homely, tedious, obscure, and embarrassed. The fervor of his spirit frequently prompted him to rise in the house; but he was not heard with attention: his name, for above two years, is not to be found oftener than twice in any committee; and those committees into which he was admitted, were chosen for affairs which would more interest the zealots than the men of business. In comparison of the eloquent speakers and fine gentlemen of the house, he was entirely overlooked; and his friend Hambden alone was acquainted with the depth of his genius, and foretold that, if a civil war should ensue, he would soon rise to eminence and distinction.

Cromwell himself seems to have been conscious where his strength lay; and partly from that motive, partly from the uncontrollable fury of his zeal, he always joined that party which pushed every thing to extremities against the king. He was active in promoting the famous remonstrance, which was the signal for all the ensuing commotions; and when, after a long debate, it was carried by a small majority, he told Lord Falkland, that if the question had been lost, he was resolved next day to have converted into ready money the remains of his fortune, and immediately to have left the kingdom. Nor was this resolution, he said, peculiar to himself: many others of his party he knew to be equally determined.

He was no less than forty-three years of age when he first embraced the military profession; and by force of genius, without any master, he soon became an excellent officer; though perhaps he never reached the fame of a consummate commander. He raised a troop of horse; fixed his quarters in Cambridge; exerted great severity towards that university which zealously adhered to the royal party; and showed himself a man who would go all lengths in favor of that cause which he had espoused. He would not allow his soldiers to perplex their heads with those subtleties of fighting by the king's authority against his person, and of obeying his majesty's commands signified by both houses of parliament: he plainly told them, that if he met the king in battle, he would fire a pistol in his face as readily as against any other man. His troop of horse he soon augmented to a regiment; and he first instituted that discipline, and inspired that spirit, which rendered the parliamentary armies in the end victorious. "Your troops," said he to Hambden, according to his own account, [1] "are most of them old, decayed serving men and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; the king's forces are composed of gentlemen's younger sons and persons of good quality. And do you think that the mean spirits of such base and low fellows as ours will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honor, and courage, and resolution in them? You must get men of spirit; and take it not ill that I say, of a spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go, or else I am sure you will still be beaten, as you have hitherto been, in every encounter."

* Conference held at Whitehall.

He did as he proposed. He enlisted the sons of freeholders and farmers. He carefully invited into his regiment all the zealous fanatics throughout England. When they were collected in a body, their enthusiastic spirit still rose to a higher pitch. Their colonel, from his own natural character, as well as from policy, was sufficiently inclined to increase the flame. He preached, he prayed, he fought, he punished, he rewarded. The wild enthusiasm, together with valor and discipline, still propagated itself; and all men cast their eyes on so pious and so successful a leader. From low commands, he rose with great rapidity to be really the first, though in appearance only the second, in the army. By fraud and violence, he soon rendered himself the first in the state. In proportion to the increase of his authority, his talents always seemed to expand themselves; and he displayed every day new abilities, which had lain dormant till the very emergence by which they were called forth into action. All Europe stood astonished to see a nation, so turbulent and unruly, who, for some doubtful encroachments on their privileges, had dethroned and murdered an excellent prince, descended from a long line of monarchs, now at last subdued and reduced to slavery by one who, a few years before, was no better than a private gentleman, whose name was not known in the nation, and who was little regarded even in that low sphere to which he had always been confined.

The indignation entertained by the people against an authority founded on such manifest usurpation, was not so violent as might naturally be expected. Congratulatory addresses, the first of the kind, were made to Cromwell by the fleet, by the army, even by many of the chief corporations and counties of England; but especially by the several congregations of saints dispersed throughout the kingdom. [1]

The royalists, though they could not love the man who had imbrued his hands in the blood of their sovereign, expected more lenity from him than from the jealous and imperious republicans, who had hitherto governed. The Presbyterians were pleased to see those men by whom they had been outwitted and expelled, now in their turn expelled and outwitted by their own servant; and they applauded him for this last act of violence upon the parliament. These two parties composed the bulk of the nation, and kept the people in some tolerable temper. All men, likewise, harassed with wars and factions, were glad to see any prospect of settlement. And they deemed it less ignominious to submit to a person of such admirable talents and capacity, than to a few ignoble, enthusiastic hypocrites, who, under the name of a republic, had reduced them to a cruel subjection.

The republicans, being dethroned by Cromwell, were the party whose resentment he had the greatest reason to apprehend. That party, besides the Independents, contained two sets of men who are seemingly of the most opposite principles, but who were then united by a similitude of genius and of character. The first and most numerous were the Millenarians, or Fifth Monarchy men, who insisted that, dominion being founded in grace, all distinction in magistracy must be abolished, except what arose from piety and holiness; who expected suddenly the second coming of Christ upon earth; and who pretended, that the saints in the mean while, that is, themselves, were alone entitled to govern. The second were the Deists, who had no other object than political liberty, who denied entirely the truth of revelation, and insinuated, that all the various sects, so heated against each

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* See Milton’s State Papers.

other, were alike founded in folly and in error. Men of such daring geniuses were not contented with the ancient and legal forms of civil government; but challenged a degree of freedom beyond what they expected ever to enjoy under any monarchy. Martin, Challoner, Harrington, Sidney, Wildman, Nevil, were esteemed the heads of this small division.

The Deists were perfectly hated by Cromwell, because he had no hold of enthusiasm by which he could govern or overreach them; he therefore treated them with great rigor and disdain, and usually denominated them the heathens. As the Millenarians had a great interest in the army, it was much more important for him to gain their confidence; and their size of understanding afforded him great facility in deceiving them. Of late years, it had been so usual a topic of conversation to discourse of parliaments, and councils, and senates, and the soldiers themselves had been so much accustomed to enter into that spirit, that Cromwell thought it requisite to establish something which might bear the face of a commonwealth. He supposed that God, in his providence, had thrown the whole right, as well as power, of government into his hands; and without any more ceremony, by the advice of his council of officers, he sent summons to a hundred and twenty-eight persons of different towns and counties of England, to five of Scotland, to six of Ireland. He pretended by his sole act and deed, to devolve upon these the whole authority of the state. This legislative power they were to exercise during fifteen months; and they were afterwards to choose the same number of persons, who might succeed them in that high and important office.

There were great numbers at that time who made it a principle always to adhere to any power which was uppermost, and to support the established government. This maxim is not peculiar to the people of that age; but what may be esteemed peculiar to them is, that there prevailed a hypocritical phrase for expressing so prudential a conduct: it was called a waiting upon providence. When providence, therefore, was so kind as to bestow on these men, now assembled together, the supreme authority, they must have been very ungrateful, if, in their turn, they had been wanting in complaisance towards it. They immediately voted themselves a parliament; and having their own consent, as well as that of Oliver Cromwell, for their legislative authority, they now proceeded very gravely to the exercise of it.

In this notable assembly were some persons of the rank of gentlemen; but the far greater part were low mechanics; Fifth Monarchy men, Anabaptists, Antinomians, Independents; the very dregs of the fanatics. They began with seeking God by prayer: this office was performed by eight or ten gifted men of the assembly; and with so much success, that, according to the confession of all, they had never before, in any of their devotional exercises, enjoyed so much of the Holy Spirit as was then communicated to them. [1] Their hearts were, no doubt, dilated when they considered the high dignity to which they supposed themselves exalted. They had been told by Cromwell, in his first discourse, that he never looked to see such a day, when Christ should be so owned. [2]

* Parl. Hist. vol. xx. .

* These are his expressions: “Indeed, I have but one word more to say to you, though in that perhaps I shall show my weakness: it is by way of encouragement to you in this work;

give me leave to begin thus: I confess I never looked to have seen such a day as this, — it may be nor you neither, — when Jesus Christ should be so owned as he is at this day and in this work. Jesus Christ is owned this day by your call, and you own him by your willingness to appear for him, and you manifest this (as far as poor creatures can do) to be a day of the power of Christ. I know you will remember that scripture, ‘he makes his people willing in the day of his power.’ God manifests it to be the day of the power of Christ, having through so much blood and so much trial as has been upon this nation, he makes this one of the greatest mercies, next to his own Son, to have his people called to the supreme authority. God hath owned his Son, and hath owned you, and hath made you to own him. I confess I never looked to have seen such a day: I did not.” I suppose at this passage he cried; for he was very much given to weeping, and could at any time shed abundance of tears. The rest of the speech may be seen among Milton’s State Papers, . It is very curious, and full of the same obscurity, confusion, embarrassment, and absurdity, which appear in almost all Oliver’s productions.

They thought it, therefore, their duty to proceed to a thorough reformation, and to pave the way for the reign of the Redeemer, and for that great work which, it was expected, the Lord was to bring forth among them.

All fanatics, being consecrated by their own fond imaginations, naturally hear an antipathy to the ecclesiastics, who claim a peculiar sanctity, derived merely from their office and priestly character. This parliament took into consideration the abolition of the clerical function, as savoring of Popery; and the taking away of tithes, which they called a relic of Judaism. Learning also and the universities were deemed heathenish and unnecessary: the common law was denominated a badge of the conquest and of Norman slavery; and they threatened the lawyers with a total abrogation of their profession. Some steps were even taken towards an abolition of the chancery, [1] the highest court of judicature in the kingdom; and the Mosaical law was intended to be established as the sole system of English jurisprudence. [2]

Of all the extraordinary schemes adopted by these legislators, they had not leisure to finish any, except that which established the legal solemnization of marriage by the civil magistrate alone, without the interposition of the clergy. They found themselves exposed to the derision of the public. Among the fanatics of the house, there was an active member much noted for his long prayers, sermons, and harangues. He was a leather-seller in London, his name Praise-God Barebone. This ridiculous name, which seems to have been chosen by some poet or allegorist to suit so ridiculous a personage struck the fancy of the people; and they commonly affixed to this assembly the appellation of Barebone’s parliament. [3]

* Whitlocke, , 548.

* Conference held at Whitehall.

* It was usual for the pretended saints at that time to change their names from Henry, Edward, Anthony, William, which they regarded as heathenish, into others more sanctified and godly: even the New Testament names, James,

Andrew, John, Peter, were not held in such regard as those which were borrowed from the Old Testament, Hezekiah Habakkuk, Joshua, Zerobabel. Sometimes a whole godly sentence was adopted as a name. Here are the names of a jury said to be enclosed in the county of Sussex about that time:—

Accepted, Trevor of Norsham. Redeemed, Compton of Battle.
Faint not, Hewit of Heathfield. Make Peace, Heaton of Hare.

God Reward, Smart of Fivehurst. Standfast on High, Stringer of Crowhurst. Earth, Adams of Warbleton. Called, Lower of the same. Kill Sin, Pimple of Witham. Return, Spelman of Watling. Be Faithful, Joiner of Britling. Fly Debate,

Roberts of the same. Fight the good Fight of Faith, White of Emer. More Fruit, Fowler of East Hadley. Hope for, Bending of the same. Graceful, Harding of Lewes. Weep not, Billing of the same. Meek, Brewer of Okeham.

See Brome's Travels into England, . "Cromwell," says Cleveland, "hath beat up his drums clean through the Old Testament. You may learn the genealogy of our Savior by the names of his regiment. The mustermaster has no other list than the first chapter of St. Matthew." The brother of this Praise-God Barebone had for name, "If Christ had not died for you, you had been damned, Barebone." But the people,

tired of this long name, retained only the last word, and commonly gave him the appellation of Damn'd Barebone.

The Dutch ambassadors endeavored to enter into negotiation with this parliament; but though Protestants, and even Presbyterians, they met with a bad reception from those who pretended to a sanctity so much superior. The Hollanders were regarded as worldly-minded men, intent only on commerce and industry; whom it was fitting the saints should first extirpate, ere they undertook that great work, to which they believed themselves destined by Providence, of subduing Antichrist, the man of sin, and extending to the uttermost bounds of the earth the kingdom of the Redeemer. [1] The ambassadors, finding themselves proscribed, not as enemies of England but of Christ, remained in astonishment, and knew not which was most to be admired, the implacable spirit or egregious folly of these pretended saints.

Cromwell began to be ashamed of his legislature. If he ever had any design in summoning so preposterous an assembly beyond amusing the populace and the army, he had intended to alarm the clergy and lawyers; and he had so far succeeded as to make them desire any other government, which might secure their professions, now brought in danger by these desperate fanatics. Cromwell himself was dissatisfied, that the parliament, though they had derived all their authority from him, began to pretend power from the Lord, [2] and to insist already on their divine commission.

He had been careful to summon in his writs several persons entirely devoted to him.

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* Thurloe, vol. i. , 591. Also Stubbe, , 92.

* * Thurloe, vol. i. p 393

By concert, these met early; and it was mentioned by some among them, that the sitting of this parliament any longer would be of no service to the nation. They hastened, therefore, to Cromwell, along with Rouse, their speaker; and, by a formal deed or assignment, restored into his hands that supreme authority which they had so lately received from him. General Harrison and about twenty more remained in the house; and that they might prevent the reign of the saints from coming to an untimely end, they placed one Moyer in the chair, and began to draw up protests. They were soon interrupted by Colonel White, with a party of soldiers. He asked them what they did there. “We are seeking the Lord,” said they. “Then you may go elsewhere,” replied he; “for to my certain knowledge, he has not been here these many years.”

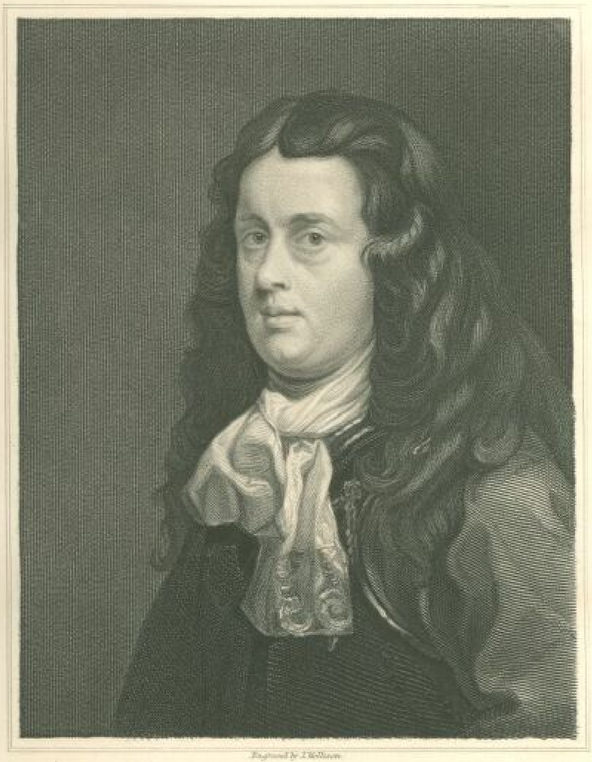
The military being now, in appearance, as well as in reality the sole power which prevailed in the nation, Cromwell though fit to indulge a new fancy; for he seems not to have had any deliberate plan in all these alterations. Lambert, his creature, who, under the appearance of obsequiousness to him, indulged in unbounded ambition, proposed, in a council of officers, to adopt another scheme of government, and to temper the liberty of a commonwealth by the authority of a single person, who should be known by the appellation of protector. Without delay, he prepared what was called “the instrument of government,” containing the plan of this new legislature; and as it was supposed to be agreeable to the general, it was immediately voted by the council of officers. Cromwell was declared protector; and with great solemnity installed in that high office.

So little were these men endowed with the spirit of legislation, that they confessed, or rather boasted, that they had employed only four days in drawing this instrument, by which the whole government of three kingdoms was pretended to be regulated and adjusted to all succeeding generations. There appears no difficulty in believing them, when it is considered how crude and undigested a system of civil polity they endeavored to establish.

The chief articles of the instrument are these: A council was appointed, which was not to exceed twenty-one, nor be less than thirteen persons. These were to enjoy their office during life or good behavior; and in case of a vacancy, the remaining members named three, of whom the protector chose one. The protector was appointed supreme magistrate of the commonwealth: in his name was all justice to be administered; from him were all magistracy and honors derived; he had the power of pardoning all crimes, excepting murder and treason; to him the benefit of all forfeitures devolved. The right of peace, war, and alliance, rested in him but in these particulars he was to act by the advice and with the consent of his council. The power of the sword was vested in the protector jointly with the parliament, while it was sitting, or with the council of state in the intervals. He was obliged to summon a parliament every three years, and allow them to sit five months, without adjournment, prorogation, or dissolution. The bills which they passed were to be presented to the protector for his assent; but if within twenty days it were not obtained, they were to become laws by the authority alone of parliament. A standing army for Great Britain and Ireland was established, of twenty thousand foot and ten thousand horse; and funds were assigned for their support. These were not to be diminished without *consent of the protector; and in this article alone he assumed a negative, During the intervals of parliament, the protector and council had the power of enacting laws, which were to be valid till the next meeting of parliament. The chancellor, treasurer, admiral, chief governors of Ireland and Scotland, and the chief justices of both the benches, must be chosen with the approbation of parliament; and in the intervals, with the approbation of the council, to be afterwards ratified by parliament. The protector was to enjoy his office during life; and on his death, the place was immediately to be supplied by the council. This was the instrument of government enacted by the council of officers, and solemnly sworn to by Oliver Cromwell. The council of state named by the instrument, were fifteen; men entirely devoted to the protector, and by reason of the opposition among themselves in party and principles, not likely ever to combine against him.

Cromwell said, that he accepted the dignity of protector, merely that he might exert the duty of a constable, and preserve peace in the nation. Affairs indeed were brought to that pass, by the furious animosities of the several factions, that the extensive authority and even arbitrary power of some first magistrate was become a necessary evil, in order to keep the people from relapsing into blood and confusion. The Independents were too small a party ever to establish a popular government, or intrust the nation, where they had so little interest, with the free choice of its representatives. The Presbyterians had adopted the violent maxims of persecution; incompatible at all times with the peace of society, much more with the wild zeal of those numerous sects which prevailed among the people. The royalists were so much enraged by the injuries which they had suffered, that the other prevailing parties would never submit to them, who, they knew, were enabled, merely by the execution of the ancient laws, to take severe vengeance upon them. Had Cromwell been guilty of no crime but this temporary usurpation, the plea of necessity and public good, which he alleged, might be allowed, in every view, a reasonable excuse for his conduct.

During the variety of ridiculous and distracted scenes which the civil government exhibited in England, the military force was exerted with vigor, conduct, and unanimity; and never did the kingdom appear more formidable to all foreign nations. The English fleet, consisting of a hundred sail, and commanded by Monk and Dean, and under them by Pen and Lauson, met near the coast of Flanders with the Dutch fleet equally numerous, and commanded by Tromp. The two republics were not inflamed by any national antipathy, and their interests very little interfered: yet few battles have been disputed with more fierce and obstinate courage, than were those many naval combats which were fought during this short but violent war. The desire of remaining sole lords of the ocean animated these states to an honorable emulation against each other. After a battle of two days, in the first of which Dean was killed, the Dutch, inferior in the size of their ships, were obliged, with great loss, to retire into their harbors. Blake, towards the end of the fight, joined his countrymen with eighteen sail. The English fleet lay off the coast of Holland, and totally interrupted the commerce of that republic.



Engraved by T. Woolnoth

ADMIRAL BLAKE.

From the Picture in the Hall of Wadham College, Oxford.

The ambassadors whom the Dutch had sent over to England, gave them hopes of peace. But as they could obtain no cessation of hostilities, the states, unwilling to suffer any longer the loss and dishonor of being blockaded by the enemy, made the utmost efforts to recover their injured honor. Never, on any occasion, did the power and vigor of that republic appear in a more conspicuous light. In a few weeks, they had repaired and manned their fleet; and they equipped some Ships of a larger size than any which they had hitherto sent to sea. Tromp issued out, determined again to fight the victors, and to die rather than to yield the contest. He met with the enemy, commanded by Monk; and both sides immediately rushed into the combat. Tromp, gallantly animating his men, with his sword drawn, was shot through the heart with a musket ball. This event alone decided the battle in favor of the English. Though near thirty ships of the Dutch were sunk and taken, they little regarded this loss compared with that of their brave admiral.

Meanwhile the negotiations of peace were continually advancing. The states, overwhelmed with the expense of the war, terrified by their losses, and mortified by their defeats, were extremely desirous of an accommodation with an enemy whom they found by experience too powerful for them. The king having shown an inclination to serve on board their fleet, though they expressed their sense of the honor intended them, they declined an offer which might inflame the quarrel with the English commonwealth. The great obstacle to the peace was found, not to be any animosity on the part of the English, but, on the contrary, a desire too earnest of union and confederacy. Cromwell had revived the chimerical scheme of a coalition with the United Provinces; a total conjunction of government, privileges, interests, and councils.

1654.

This project appeared so wild to the states, that they wondered any man of sense could ever entertain it; and they refused to enter into conferences with regard to a proposal which could serve only to delay any practicable scheme of accommodation. The peace was at last signed by Cromwell now invested with the dignity of protector, and it proves sufficiently, that the war had been impolitic, since, after the most signal victories, no terms more advantageous could be obtained. A defensive league was made between the two republics. They agreed, each of them, to banish the enemies of the other: those who had been concerned in the massacre of Amboyna were to be punished, if any remained alive; the honor of the flag was yielded to the English: eighty-five thousand pounds were stipulated to be paid by the Dutch East India Company for losses which the English Company had sustained; and the Island of Polerone, in the East Indies was promised to be ceded to the latter.

Cromwell, jealous of the connections between the royal family and that of Orange, insisted on a separate article; that neither the young prince nor any of his family should ever be invested with the dignity of stadtholder. The province of Holland, strongly prejudiced against that office, which they esteemed dangerous to liberty, secretly ratified this article. The protector, knowing that the other provinces would not be induced to make such a concession, was satisfied with this security.

The Dutch war, being successful, and the peace reasonable brought credit to Cromwell’s administration. An act of justice, which he exercised at home, gave likewise satisfaction to the people: though the regularity of it may perhaps appear somewhat doubtful. Don Pantaleon, brother to the Portuguese ambassador, and joined with him in the same commission, [1] fancying himself to be insulted, came upon the exchange, armed and attended by several servants. By mistake, he fell on a gentleman whom he took for the person that had given him the offence; and having butchered him with many wounds, he and all his attendants took shelter in the house of the Portuguese ambassador, who had connived at this base enterprise. [2] The populace surrounded the house, and threatened to set fire to it. Cromwell sent a guard, who seized all the criminals. They were brought to trial; and notwithstanding the opposition of the ambassador, who pleaded the privileges of his office, Don Pantaleon was executed on Tower Hill. The laws of nations were here plainly violated; but the crime committed by the Portuguese gentleman was to the last degree atrocious; and the vigorous chastisement of it, suiting so well the undaunted character of Cromwell, was universally approved of at home, and admired among foreign nations. The situation of Portugal obliged that court to acquiesce; and the ambassador soon after signed, with the protector, a treaty of peace and alliance, which was very advantageous to the English commerce.

* Thurloe, vol. ii. .

* * Thurloe, vol. i. .

Another act of severity, but necessary in his situation, was, at the very same time, exercised by the protector, in the capital punishment of Gerard and Vowel, two royalists, who were accused of conspiring against his life. He had erected a high court of justice for their trial; an infringement of the ancient laws which at this time was become familiar, but one to which no custom or precedent could reconcile the nation. Juries were found altogether unmanageable. The restless Lilburn, for new offences, had been brought to a new trial; and had been acquitted with new triumph and exultation. If no other method of conviction had been devised during this illegal and unpopular government, all its enemies were assured of entire impunity.

The protector had occasion to observe the prejudices entertained against his government, by the disposition of the parliament, which he summoned on the third of September, that day of the year on which he gained his two great victories of Dunbar and Worcester, and which he always regarded as fortunate for him. It must be confessed that, if we are left to gather Cromwell's intentions from his instrument of government, it is such a motley piece, that we cannot easily conjecture whether he seriously meant to establish a tyranny or a republic. On one hand, a first magistrate in so extensive a government seemed necessary both for the dignity and tranquillity of the state; and the authority which he assumed as protector was, in some respects, inferior to the prerogatives which the laws intrusted and still intrust to the king. On the other hand, the legislative power which he reserved to himself and council, together with so great an army, independent of the parliament, were bad prognostics of his intention to submit to a civil and legal constitution. But if this were not his intention, the method in which he distributed and conducted the elections, being so favorable to liberty, form an inconsistency which is not easily accounted for. He deprived of their right of election all the small boroughs, places the most exposed to influence and corruption. Of four hundred members which represented England, two hundred and seventy were chosen by the counties. The rest were elected by London, and the more considerable corporations. The lower populace too, so easily guided or deceived, were excluded from the elections: an estate of two hundred pounds' value was necessary to entitle any one to a vote. The elections of this parliament were conducted with perfect freedom; and, excepting that such of the royalists as had borne arms against the parliament and all their sons were excluded, a more fair representation of the people could not be desired or expected. Thirty members were returned from Scotland; as many from Ireland.

The protector seems to have been disappointed, when he found that all these precautions, which were probably nothing but covers to his ambition, had not procured him the confidence of the public. Though Cromwell's administration was less odious to every party than that of any other party, yet was it entirely acceptable to none. The royalists had been instructed by the king to remain quiet, and to cover themselves under the appearance of republicans; and they found in this latter faction such inveterate hatred against the protector, that they could not wish for more zealous adversaries to his authority. It was maintained by them, that the pretence of liberty and a popular election was but a new artifice of this great deceiver, in order to lay asleep the deluded nation, and give himself leisure * rivet their chains more securely upon them: that in the instrument of government he openly declared his intention of still retaining the same mercenary army, by whose assistance he had subdued the ancient established government, and who would with less scruple obey him in overturning, whenever he should please to order them, that new system which he himself had been pleased to model: that being sensible of the danger and uncertainty of all military government, he endeavored to intermix some appearance, and but an appearance, of civil administration, and to balance the army by a seeming consent of the people: that the absurd trial which he had made of a parliament, elected by himself, appointed perpetually to elect their successors, plainly proved, that he aimed at nothing but temporary expedients, was totally averse to a free republican government, and possessed not that mature and deliberate reflection which could qualify him to act the part of a legislator: that his imperious character, which had betrayed itself in so many incidents, could never seriously submit to legal limitations; nor would the very image of popular government be longer upheld than while conformable to his arbitrary will and pleasure: and that the best policy was to oblige him to take off the mask at once; and either submit entirely to that parliament which he had summoned, or, by totally rejecting its authority, leave himself no resource but in his seditious and enthusiastic army.

In prosecution of these views, the parliament, having heard the protector's speech, three hours long, [1] and having chosen Lenthal for their speaker, immediately entered into a discussion of the pretended instrument of government, and of that authority which Cromwell, by the title of protector, had assumed over the nation.

The greatest liberty was used in arraigning this new dignity; and even the personal character and conduct of Cromwell escaped not without censure. The utmost that could be obtained by the officers and by the court party, — for so they were called, — was to protract the debate by arguments and long speeches, and prevent the decision of a question which, they were sensible,

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* Thurloe, vol. ii. .

would be carried against them by a great majority. The protector, surprised and enraged at this refractory spirit in the parliament, which, however, he had so much reason to expect, sent for them to the painted chamber, and with an air of great authority inveighed against their conduct. He told them, that nothing could be more absurd than for them to dispute his title; since the same instrument of government which made them a parliament, had invested him with the protectorship: that some points in the new constitution were supposed to be fundamentals, and were not, on any pretence, to be altered or disputed: that among these were the government of the nation by a single person and a parliament, their joint authority over the army and militia, the succession of new parliaments, and liberty of conscience: and that, with regard to these particulars, there was reserved to him a negative voice; to which, in the other circumstances of government, he confessed himself nowise entitled.

The protector now found the necessity of exacting a security, which, had he foreseen the spirit of the house, he would with better grace have required at their first meeting. [1]

* Thurloe, vol ii. .

He obliged the members to sign a recognition of his authority, and an engagement not to propose or consent to any alteration in the government, as it was settled in a single person and a parliament; and he placed guards at the door of the house, who allowed none but subscribers to enter. Most of the members, after some hesitation, submitted to this condition; but retained the same refractory spirit which they had discovered in their first debates. The instrument of government was taken in pieces, and examined, article by article, with the most scrupulous accuracy: very free topics were advanced with the general approbation of the house: and during the whole course of their proceedings, they neither sent up one bill to the protector, nor took any notice of him. Being informed that conspiracies were entered into between the members and some malecontent officers, he hastened to the dissolution of so dangerous an assembly. By the instrument of government, to which he had sworn, no parliament could be dissolved till it had sitten five months; but Cromwell pretended, that a month contained only twenty-eight days, according to the method of computation practised in paying the fleet and army. The full time, therefore, according to this reckoning, being elapsed, the parliament was ordered to attend the protector, who made them a tedious, confused, angry harangue, and dismissed them.

1655.

Were we to judge of Cromwell's capacity by this, and indeed by all his other compositions, we should be apt to entertain no very favorable idea of it. But in the great variety of human geniuses, there are some which, though they see their object clearly and distinctly in general, yet, when they come to unfold its parts by discourse or writing, lose that luminous conception which they had before attained. All accounts agree in ascribing to Cromwell a tiresome, dark, unintelligible elocution, even when he had no intention to disguise his meaning: yet no man's actions were ever, in such a variety of difficult incidents, more decisive and judicious.

The electing of a discontented parliament is a proof of a discontented nation: the angry and abrupt dissolution of that parliament is always sure to increase the general discontent. The members of this assembly, returning to their counties, propagated that spirit of mutiny which they had exerted in the house. Sir Harry Vane and the old republicans, who maintained the indissoluble authority of the long parliament, encouraged the murmurs against the present usurpation; though they acted so cautiously as to give the protector no handle against them. Wildman and some others of that party carried still further their conspiracies against the protector's authority. The royalists, observing this general ill will towards the establishment, could no longer be retained in subjection; but fancied that every one who was dissatisfied like them, had also embraced the same views and inclinations. They did not consider, that the old parliamentary party, though many of them were displeased with Cromwell, who had dispossessed them of their power, were still more apprehensive of any success to the royal cause; whence, besides a certain prospect of the same consequence, they had so much reason to dread the severest vengeance for their past transgressions.

In concert with the king, a conspiracy was entered into by the royalists throughout England, and a day of general rising appointed. Information of this design was conveyed to Cromwell. The protector's administration was extremely vigilant. Thurloe, his secretary, had spies every where. Manning, who had access to the king's family, kept a regular correspondence with him; and it was not difficult to obtain intelligence of a confederacy so generally diffused, among a party who valued themselves more on zeal and courage, than on secrecy and sobriety Many of the royalists were thrown into prison. Others, on the approach of the day, were terrified with the danger of the undertaking, and remained at home. In one place alone the conspiracy broke into action. Penruddoc, Groves, Jones, and other gentlemen of the west, entered Salisbury with about two hundred horse, at the very time when the sheriff and judges were holding the assizes. These they made prisoners; and they proclaimed the king. Contrary to their expectations, they received no accession of force; so prevalent was the terror of the established government. Having in vain wandered about for some time, they were totally discouraged; and one troop of horse was able at last to suppress them. The leaders of the conspiracy, being taken prisoners, were capitally punished. The rest were sold for slaves, and transported to Barbadoes.

The easy subduing of this insurrection, which, by the boldness of the undertaking, struck at first a great terror into the nation, was a singular felicity to the protector; who could not, without danger, have brought together any considerable body of his mutinous army in order to suppress it. The very insurrection itself he regarded as a fortunate event; since it proved the reality of those conspiracies which his enemies on every occasion represented as mere fictions, invented to color his tyrannical severities. He resolved to keep no longer any terms with the royalists, who, though they were not perhaps the most implacable of his enemies, were those whom he could oppress under the most plausible pretences, and who met with least countenance and protection from his adherents. He issued an edict, with the consent of his council, for exacting the tenth penny from that whole party; in order, as he pretended, to make them pay the expenses to which their mutinous disposition continually exposed the public. Without regard to compositions, articles of capitulation, or acts of indemnity, all the royalists, however harassed with former oppressions, were obliged anew to redeem themselves by great sums of money; and many of them were reduced by these multiplied disasters to extreme poverty. Whoever was known to be disaffected, or even lay under any suspicion, though no guilt could be proved against him, was exposed to the new exaction.

In order to raise this imposition, which commonly passed by the name of decimation, the protector instituted twelve major-generals; and divided the whole kingdom of England into so many military jurisdictions. [1]

* Parl. Hist. vol. xx. .

These men, assisted by commissioners, had power to subject whom they pleased to decimation, to levy all the taxes imposed by the protector and his council, and to imprison any person who should be exposed to their jealousy or suspicion; nor was there any appeal from them but to the protector himself and his council. Under color of these powers, which were sufficiently exorbitant, the major-generals exercised an authority still more arbitrary, and acted as if absolute masters of the property and person of every subject. All reasonable men now concluded, that the very mask of liberty was thrown aside, and that the nation was forever subjected to military and despotic government, exercised not in the legal manner of European nations, but according to the maxims of Eastern tyranny. Not only the supreme magistrate owed his authority to illegal force and usurpation; he had parcelled out the people into so many subdivisions of slavery, and had delegated to his inferior ministers the same unlimited authority which he himself had so violently assumed.

A government totally military and despotic, is almost sure, after some time, to fall into impotence and languor: but when it immediately succeeds a legal constitution, it may, at first, to foreign nations appear very vigorous and active, and may exert with more unanimity that power, spirit, and riches, which had been acquired under a better form. It seems now proper, after so long an interval, to look abroad to the general state of Europe, and to consider the measures which England at this time embraced in its negotiations with the neighboring princes. The moderate temper and unwarlike genius of the two last princes, the extreme difficulties under which they labored at home, and the great security which they enjoyed from foreign enemies, had rendered them negligent of the transactions on the continent; and England, during their reigns, had been, in a manner, overlooked in the general system of Europe. The bold and restless genius of the protector led him to extend his alliances and enterprises to every part of Christendom; and partly from the ascendant of his magnanimous spirit, partly from the situation of foreign kingdoms, the weight of England, even under its most legal and bravest princes, was never more sensibly felt than during this unjust and violent usurpation.

A war of thirty years, the most signal and most destructive that had appeared in modern annals, was at last finished in Germany, [1] and by the treaty of Westphalia, were composed those fatal quarrels which had been excited by the palatine's precipitate acceptance of the crown of Bohemia. The young palatine was restored to part of his dignities and of his dominions. [2] The rights, privileges, and authority of the several members of the Germanic body were fixed and ascertained: sovereign princes and free states were in some degree reduced to obedience under laws: and by the valor of the heroic Gustavus, the enterprises of the active Richelieu, the intrigues of the artful Mazarine, was in part effected, after an infinite expense of blood and treasure, which had been fondly expected and loudly demanded from the feeble efforts of the pacific James, seconded by the scanty supplies of his jealous parliaments.

Sweden, which had acquired by conquest large dominions in the north of Germany, was engaged in enterprises which promised her, from her success and valor, still more extensive acquisitions on the side both of Poland and of Denmark. Charles X., who had mounted the throne of that kingdom after the voluntary resignation of Christina, being stimulated by the fame of Gustavus, as well as by his own martial disposition, carried his conquering arms to the south of the Baltic, and gained the celebrated battle of Warsaw, which had been obstinately disputed during the space of three days. The protector, at the time his alliance was courted by every power in Europe, anxiously courted the alliance of Sweden; and he was fond of forming a confederacy with a Protestant power of such renown, even though it threatened the whole north with conquest and subjection.

The transactions of the parliament and protector with France had been various and complicated. The emissaries of Richelieu had furnished fuel to the flame of rebellion, when it first broke out in Scotland; but after the conflagration had diffused itself, the French court, observing the materials to be of themselves sufficiently combustible, found it unnecessary any longer to animate the British malecontents to an opposition of their sovereign. On the contrary, they offered their mediation for composing

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* In 1648.

* * This prince, during the civil wars, had much neglected his uncle, and paid court to the parliament; he accepted of a pension of eight thousand pounds a year from them, and took a place in their assembly of divines.

these intestine disorders; and their ambassadors, from decency, pretended to act in concert with the court of England, and to receive directions from a prince with whom their master was connected by so near an affinity. Meanwhile Richelieu died, and soon after him the French king, Louis XIII., leaving his son, an infant four years old, and his widow, Anne of Austria, regent of the kingdom. Cardinal Mazarine succeeded Richelieu in the ministry; and the same general plan of policy, though by men of such opposite characters, was still continued in the French councils. The establishment of royal authority, the reduction of the Austrian family, were pursued with ardor and success; and every year brought an accession of force and grandeur to the French monarchy. Not only battles were won, towns and fortresses taken; the genius too of the nation seemed gradually to improve, and to compose itself to the spirit of dutiful obedience and of steady enterprise. A Condé, a Turenne were formed; and the troops, animated by their valor, and guided by their discipline, acquired every day a greater ascendant over the Spaniards. All of a sudden, from some intrigues of the court, and some discontents in the courts of judicature, intestine commotions were excited, and every thing relapsed into confusion. But these rebellions of the French, neither ennobled by the spirit of liberty, nor disgraced by the fanatical extravagancies which distinguished the British civil wars, were conducted with little bloodshed, and made but a small impression on the minds of the people. Though seconded by the force of Spain, and conducted by the prince of Condé, the malecontents in a little time were either expelled or subdued; and the French monarchy, having lost a few of its conquests, returned with fresh vigor to the acquisition of new dominion.

The queen of England and her son Charles, during these commotions, passed most of their time at Paris; and notwithstanding their near connection of blood, received but few civilities, and still less support, from the French court. Had the queen regent been ever so much inclined to assist the English prince, the disorders of her own affairs would, for a long time, have rendered such intentions impracticable. The banished queen had a moderate pension assigned her; but it was so ill paid, and her credit ran so low, that, one morning, when the cardinal De Retz waited on her, she informed him that her daughter, the princess Henrietta, was obliged to lie abed for want of a fire to warm her. To such a condition was reduced, in the midst of Paris, a queen of England, and daughter of Henry IV. of France.

The English parliament, however, having assumed the sovereignty of the state, resented the countenance, cold as it was, which the French court gave to the unfortunate monarch. On pretence of injuries of which the English merchants complained, they issued letters of reprisal upon the French; and Blake went so far as to attack and seize a whole squadron of ships which were carrying supplies to Dunkirk, then closely besieged by the Spaniards. That town, disappointed of these supplies, fell into the hands of the enemy. The French ministers soon found it necessary to change their measures. They treated Charles with such affected indifference, that he thought it more decent to withdraw, and prevent the indignity of being desired to leave the kingdom. He went first to Spaw, thence he retired to Cologne; where he lived two years, on a small pension, about six thousand pounds a year, paid him by the court of France, and on some contributions sent him by his friends in England. In the management of his family he discovered a disposition to order and economy; and his temper, cheerful, careless, and sociable, was more than a sufficient compensation for that empire of which his enemies had bereaved him. Sir Edward Hyde, created lord chancellor, and the marquis of Ormond, were his chief friends and confidants.

If the French ministry had thought it prudent to bend under the English parliament, they deemed it still more necessary to pay deference to the protector, when he assumed the reins of government. Cardinal Mazarine, by whom all the counsels of France were directed, was artful and vigilant, supple and patient, false and intriguing; desirous rather to prevail by dexterity than violence, and placing his honor more in the final success of his measures, than in the splendor and magnanimity of the means which he employed. Cromwell, by his imperious character, rather than by the advantage of his situation, acquired an ascendant over this man; and every proposal made by the protector, however unreasonable in itself, and urged with whatever insolence, met with a ready compliance from the politic and timid cardinal. Bourdeaux was sent over to England as minister; and all circumstances of respect were paid to the daring usurper, who had imbrued his hands in the blood of his sovereign, a prince so nearly related to the royal family of France. With indefatigable patience did Bourdeaux conduct this negotiation, which Cromwell seemed entirely to neglect; and though privateers with English commission committed daily depredations on the French commerce, Mazarine was content, in hopes of a fortunate issue, still to submit to these indignities. [1]

* Thurloe, vol. iii. , 619, 653. In the treaty, which was signed after long negotiation, the protector's name was inserted before the French king's in that copy which remained in England. Thurloe vol. vi. See further,

vol. vii. .

The court of Spain, less connected with the unfortunate royal family, and reduced to greater distress than the French monarchy, had been still more forward in her advances to the prosperous parliament and protector. Don Alonzo de Cardenas, the Spanish envoy, was the first public minister who recognized the authority of the new republic; and in return for this civility, Ascham was sent envoy into Spain by the parliament. No sooner had this minister arrived in Madrid, than some of the banished royalists, inflamed by that inveterate hatred which animated the English factions, broke into his chamber, and murdered him together with his secretary. Immediately they took sanctuary in the churches; and, assisted by the general favor which every where attended the royal cause, were enabled, most of them, to make their escape. Only one of the criminals suffered death; and the parliament seemed to rest satisfied with this atonement.

Spain, at this time, assailed every where by vigorous enemies from without, and laboring under many internal disorders, retained nothing of her former grandeur, except the haughty pride of her counsels, and the hatred and jealousy of her neighbors. Portugal had rebelled, and established her monarchy in the house of Braganza: Catalonia, complaining of violated privileges, had revolted to France: Naples was shaken with popular convulsions: the Low Countries were invaded with superior forces, and seemed ready to change their master: the Spanish infantry, anciently so formidable, had been annihilated by Condé in the fields of Rocroy: and though the same prince, banished France, sustained by his activity and valor the falling fortunes of Spain, he could only hope to protract, not prevent, the ruin with which that monarchy was visibly threatened.

Had Cromwell understood and regarded the interests of his country, he would have supported the declining condition of Spain against the dangerous ambition of France, and preserved that balance of power on which the greatness and security of England so much depend. Had he studied only his own interests, he would have maintained an exact neutrality between those great monarchies; nor would he have hazarded his ill-acquired and unsettled power by provoking foreign enemies who might lend assistance to domestic faction, and overturn his tottering throne. But his magnanimity undervalued danger; his active disposition and avidity of extensive glory made him incapable of repose: and as the policy of men is continually warped by their temper, no sooner was peace made with Holland, than he began to deliberate what new enemy he should invade with his victorious arms.

The extensive empire and yet extreme weakness of Spain in the West Indies, the vigorous courage and great naval power of England, were circumstances which, when compared, excited the ambition of the enterprising protector, and made him hope that he might, by some gainful conquest, render forever illustrious that dominion which he had assumed over his country. Should he fail of these durable acquisitions, the Indian treasures, which must every year cross the ocean to reach Spain, were, he thought, a sure prey to the English navy, and would support his military force without his laying new burdens on the discontented people. From France a vigorous resistance must be expected: no plunder, no conquests could be hoped for: the progress of his arms, even if attended with success, must there be slow and gradual; and the advantages acquired, however real, would be less striking to the multitude, whom it was his interest to allure. The royal family, so closely connected with the French monarch, might receive great assistance from that neighboring kingdom; and an army of French Protestants landed in England would be able, he dreaded, to unite the most opposite factions against the present usurpation. [1]

These motives of policy were probably seconded by his bigoted prejudices; as no human mind ever contained so strange a mixture of sagacity and absurdity as that of this extraordinary personage. The Swedish alliance, though much contrary to the interests of England, he had contracted merely from his zeal for Protestantism; [2] and Sweden being closely connected with France, he could not hope to maintain that confederacy, in which he so much prided himself, should a rupture ensue between England and this latter kingdom. [3]

* See the account of the negotiations with France and Spain by Thurloe, vol. i. .

* * He proposed to Sweden a general league and confederacy of all the Protestants. Whitlocke, . Thurloe, vol. vii. . In order to judge of the maxims by which he conducted his foreign politics see, further, Thurloe, vol. iv. ,
343, 443; vol. vii. .

* * * Thurloe, vol. i. .

The Hugonots, he expected, would meet with better treatment while he engaged in a close union with their sovereign. [1] And as the Spaniards were much more Papists than the French, were much more exposed to the old Puritanical hatred, [2] and had even erected the bloody tribunal of the inquisition, whose rigors they had refused to mitigate on Cromwell’s solicitation, [3] he hoped that a holy and meritorious war with such idolaters could not fail of protection from Heaven. [4] A preacher, likewise, inspired as was supposed by a prophetic spirit, bid him “go and prosper;” calling him “a stone cut out of the mountains without hands, that would break the pride of the Spaniard, crush Antichrist, and make way for the purity of the gospel over the whole world.”

* Thurloe, vol. i. .

* * Thurloe, vol. i. .

* * * Thurloe, vol. i. . Don Alonzo said, that the Indian trade and the inquisition were his master’s two eyes, and the protector insisted upon the putting out both of them at once.

* * * * Carrington, .

v Bates.

Actuated equally by these bigoted, these ambitious, and these interested motives, the protector equipped two considerable squadrons; and while he was making those preparations, the neighboring states, ignorant of his intentions, remained in suspense, and looked with anxious expectation on what side the storm should discharge itself. One of these squadrons, consisting of thirty capital ships, was sent into the Mediterranean under Blake, whose fame was now spread over Europe. No English fleet, except during the crusades, had ever before sailed in those seas; and from one extremity to the other there was no naval force, Christian or Mahometan, able to resist them. The Roman pontiff, whose weakness and whose pride equally provoked attacks, dreaded invasion from a power which professed the most inveterate enmity against him, and which so little regulated its movements by the usual motives of interest and prudence. Blake, casting anchor before Leghorn, demanded and obtained from the duke of Tuscany reparation for some losses which the English commerce had formerly sustained from him. He next sailed to Algiers, and compelled the dey to make peace, and to restrain his piratical subjects from further violences on the English. He presented himself before Tunis; and having there made the same demands, the dey of that republic bade him look to the castles of Porto-Farino and Goletta, and do his utmost. Blake needed not to be roused by such a bravado: he drew his ships close up to the castles, and tore them in pieces with his artillery. He sent a numerous detachment of sailors in their long boats into the harbor, and burned every ship which lay there. This bold action, which its very temerity perhaps rendered safe, was executed with little loss, and filled all that part of the world with the renown of English valor.

The other squadron was not equally successful. It was commanded by Pen, and carried on board four thousand men under the command of Venables. About five thousand more joined them from Barbadoes and St. Christopher's. Both these officers were inclined to the king's service; [1] and it is pretended that Cromwell was obliged to hurry the soldiers on board, in order to prevent the execution of a conspiracy which had been formed among them in favor of the exiled family. [2] The ill success of this enterprise may justly be ascribed as much to the injudicious schemes of the protector who planned it, as to the bad execution of the officers by whom it was conducted. The soldiers were the refuse of the whole army: the forces enlisted in the West Indies were the most profligate of mankind: Pen and Venables were of incompatible tempers: the troops were not furnished with arms fit for such an expedition: their provisions were defective both in quantity and quality: all hopes of pillage, the best incentive to valor among such men, were refused the soldiers and seamen: no directions or intelligence were given to conduct the officers in then enterprise: and at the same time they were tied down to follow the advice of commissioners, who disconcerted them in all their projects. [3]

* Clarendon.

* Vita de Berwici,

* * Burchet's Naval History. See also Carte's Collection, vol. ii. , 47. Thurloe, vol. iii. .

It was agreed by the admiral and general to attempt St. Domingo, the only place of strength in the Island of Hispaniola. On the approach of the English, the Spaniards in a fright deserted their houses, and fled into the woods. Contrary to the opinion of Venables, the soldiers were disembarked without guides ten leagues distant from the town. They wandered four days through the woods without provisions, and was still more intolerable in that sultry climate, without water. The Spaniards recovered spirit, and attacked them. The English, discouraged with the bad conduct of their officers and scarcely alive from hunger, thirst, and fatigue, were unable to resist. An inconsiderable number of the enemy put the whole army to rout, killed six hundred of them, and chased the rest on board their vessels.

The English commanders, in order to atone as much as possible for this unprosperous attempt, bent their course to Jamaica, which was surrendered to them without a blow. Pen and Venables returned to England, and were both of them sent to the Tower by the protector, who, though commonly master of his fiery temper, was thrown into a violent passion at this disappointment. He had made a conquest of greater importance than he was himself at that time aware of; yet was it much inferior to the vast projects which he had formed. He gave orders, however, to support it by men and money; and that island has ever since remained in the hands of the English; the chief acquisition which they owe to the enterprising spirit of Cromwell.

1656.

As soon as the news of this expedition, which was an unwarrantable violation of treaty, arrived in Europe, the Spaniards declared war against England, and seized all the ships and goods of English merchants, of which they could make themselves masters. The commerce with Spain, so profitable to the English, was cut off; and near fifteen hundred vessels, it is computed, [1] fell in a few years into the hands of the enemy. Blake, to whom Montague was now joined in command, after receiving new orders, prepared himself for hostilities against the Spaniards.

Several sea officers, having entertained scruples of conscience with regard to the justice of the Spanish war, threw up their commissions, and retired. [2]

* Thurloe, vol. iv. . World’s Mistake in Oliver Cromwell in the Harl. Miscel. vol. i.

* * Thurloe. vol. iv. , 688.

No commands, they thought, of their superiors could justify a war which was contrary to the principles of natural equity, and which the civil magistrate had no right to order. Individuals, they maintained, in resigning to the public their natural liberty, could bestow on it only what they themselves were possessed of, a right of performing lawful actions, and could invest it with no authority of commanding what is contrary to the decrees of Heaven. Such maxims, though they seem reasonable, are perhaps too perfect for human nature; and must be regarded as one effect, though of the most innocent and even honorable kind, of that spirit, partly fanatical, partly republican, which predominated in England.

Blake lay some time off Cadiz, in expectation of intercepting the Plate fleet, but was at last obliged, for want of water, to make sail towards Portugal. Captain Stayner, whom he had left on the coast with a squadron of seven vessels, came in sight of the galleons, and immediately set sail to pursue them. The Spanish admiral ran his ship ashore: two others followed his example: the English took two ships, valued at near two millions of pieces of eight. Two galleons were set on fire; and the marquis of Badajox, viceroy of Peru, with his wife, and his daughter, betrothed to the young duke of Medina Celi, were destroyed in them. The marquis himself might have escaped; but seeing these unfortunate women, astonished with the danger, fall in a swoon, and perish in the flames, he rather chose to die with them, than drag out a life imbittered with the remembrance of such dismal scenes. [1] When the treasures gained by this enterprise arrived at Portsmouth, the protector, from a spirit of ostentation, ordered them to be transported by land to London.

* Thurloe, vol. v. .

The next action against the Spaniards was more honorable, though less profitable, to the nation. Blake, having heard that a Spanish fleet of sixteen ships, much richer than the former, had taken shelter in the Canaries, immediately made sail towards them. He found them in the Bay of Santa Cruz, disposed in a formidable posture. The bay was secured with a strong castle, well provided with cannon, besides seven forts in several parts of it, all united by a line of communication, manned with musketeers. Don Diego Diagues, the Spanish admiral, ordered all his smaller vessels to moor close to the shore, and posted the larger galleons farther off, at anchor, with their broadsides to the sea.

Blake was rather animated than daunted with this appearance. The wind seconded his courage, and blowing full into the bay, in a moment brought him among the thickest of his enemies. After a resistance of four hours, the Spaniards yielded to English valor, and abandoned their ships, which were set on fire, and consumed with all their treasure. The greatest danger still remained to the English. They lay under the fire of the castle and all the forts, which must in a little time have torn them in pieces. But the wind, suddenly shifting, carried them out of the bay; where they left the Spaniards in astonishment at the happy temerity of their audacious victors.

This was the last and greatest action of the gallant Blake. He was consumed with a dropsy and scurvy, and hastened home, that he might yield up his breath in his native country, which he had so much adorned by his valor. As he came within sight of land, he expired. [1]

* 20th of April, 1657.

Never man, so zealous for a faction, was so much respected and esteemed even by the opposite factions. He was by principle an inflexible republican; and the late usurpations, amidst all the trust and caresses which he received from the ruling powers, were thought to be very little grateful to him. “It is still our duty,” he said to the seamen, “to fight for our country, into what hands soever the government may fall.” Disinterested, generous, liberal; ambitious only of true glory, dreadful only to his avowed enemies; he forms one of the most perfect characters of the age, and the least stained with those errors and violences which were then so predominant. The protector ordered him a pompous funeral at the public charge: but the tears of his countrymen were the most honorable panegyric on his memory.

The conduct of the protector in foreign affairs, though imprudent and impolitic, was full of vigor and enterprise, and drew a consideration to his country, which, since the reign of Elizabeth, it seemed to have totally lost. The great mind of this successful usurper was intent on spreading the renown of the English nation; and while he struck mankind with astonishment at his extraordinary fortune, he seemed to ennoble instead of debasing, that people whom he had reduced to subjection. It was his boast, that he would render the name of an Englishman as much feared and revered as ever was that of a Roman; and as his countrymen found some reality in these pretensions, their national vanity, being gratified, made them bear with more patience all the indignities and calamities under which they labored.

It must also be acknowledged, that the protector, in his civil and domestic administration, displayed as great regard both to justice and clemency, as his usurped authority, derived from no law, and founded only on the sword, could possibly permit. All the chief offices in the courts of judicature were filled with men of integrity: amidst the virulence of faction, the decrees of the judges were upright and impartial; and to every man but himself, and to himself, except where necessity required the contrary, the law was the great rule of conduct and behavior. Vane and Lilburn, whose credit with the republicans and levellers he dreaded, were indeed for some time confined to prison: Cony, who refused to pay illegal taxes, was obliged by menaces to depart from his obstinacy: high courts of justice were erected to try those who had engaged in conspiracies and insurrections against the protector’s authority, and whom he could not safely commit to the verdict of juries. But these irregularities were deemed inevitable consequences of his illegal authority. And though often urged by his officers, as is pretended, [1] to attempt a general massacre of the royalists, he always with horror rejected such sanguinary counsels.

In the army was laid the sole basis of the protector’s power; and in managing it consisted the chief art and delicacy of his government. The soldiers were held in exact discipline; a policy which both accustomed them to obedience, and made them less hateful and burdensome to the people. He augmented their pay; though the public necessities sometimes obliged him to run in arrears to them. Their interests, they were sensible, were closely connected with those of their general and protector. And he entirely commanded their affectionate regard, by his abilities and success in almost every enterprise which he had hitherto undertaken. But all military government is precarious; much more where it stands in opposition to civil establishments; and still more where it encounters religious prejudices. By the wild fanaticism which he had nourished in the soldiers, he had seduced them into measures, for which, if openly proposed to them, they would have entertained the utmost aversion. But this same spirit rendered them more difficult to be governed, and made their caprices terrible even to that hand

* Clarendon, Life of Lord Berwick, etc.

which directed their movements. So often taught, that the office of king was a usurpation upon Christ, they were apt to suspect a protector not to be altogether compatible with that divine authority. Harrison, though raised to the highest dignity, and possessed of Cromwell’s confidence, became his most inveterate enemy as soon as the authority of a single person was established, against which that usurper had always made such violent protestations. Overton, Rich, Okey, officers of rank in the army, were actuated with like principles, and Cromwell was obliged to deprive them of their commissions. Their influence, which was before thought unbounded among the troops, seemed from that moment to be totally annihilated.

The more effectually to curb the enthusiastic and seditious spirit of the troops, Cromwell established a kind of militia in the several counties. Companies of infantry and cavalry were enlisted under proper officers, regular pay distributed among them, and a resource by that means provided both against the insurrections of the royalists and mutiny of the army.

Religion can never be deemed a point of small consequence in civil government: but during this period, it may be regarded as the great spring of men’s actions and determinations. Though transported himself with the most frantic whimseys, Cromwell had adopted a scheme for regulating this principle in others, which was sagacious and political. Being resolved to maintain a national church, yet determined neither to admit Episcopacy nor Presbytery, he established a number of commissioners, under the name of tryers, partly laymen, partly ecclesiastics, some Presbyterians, some Independents. These presented to all livings which were formerly in the gift of the crown; they examined and admitted such persons as received holy orders; and they inspected the lives, doctrine, and behavior of the clergy. Instead of supporting that union between learning and theology, which has so long been attempted in Europe, these tryers embraced the latter principle in its full purity, and made it the sole object of their examination. The candidates were no more perplexed with questions concerning their progress in Greek and Roman erudition; concerning their talent for profane arts and sciences: the chief object of scrutiny regarded their advances in grace, and fixing the critical moment of their conversion.

With the pretended saints of all denominations Cromwell was familiar and easy. Laying aside the state of protector, which on other occasions he well knew how to maintain, he insinuated to them, that nothing but necessity could ever oblige him to invest himself with it. He talked spiritually to *them; he sighed he wept, he canted, he prayed. He even entered with them into an emulation of ghostly gifts, and these men, instead of grieving to be outdone in their own way, were proud that his highness, by his princely example, had dignified those practices in which they themselves were daily occupied. [1]

* Cromwell followed, though but in part, the advice which he received from General Harrison, at the time when the intimacy and endearment most strongly subsisted betwixt them. “Let the waiting upon Jehovah,” said that military saint, “be the greatest and most considerable business you have every day: reckon it so, more than to eat, sleep, and counsel together. Run aside sometimes from your company, and get a word with the Lord. Why should not you have three or four precious souls always standing at your elbow, with whom you might now and then turn into a corner? I have found refreshment and mercy in such a way.” —Milton’s State Papers, .

If Cromwell might be said to adhere to any particular form of religion, they were the Independents who could chiefly boast of his favor; and it may be affirmed, that such pastors of that sect as were not passionately addicted to civil liberty, were all of them devoted to him. The Presbyterian clergy, also saved from the ravages of the Anabaptists and Millenarians, and enjoying their establishments and tithes, were not averse to his government; though he still entertained a great jealousy of that ambitious and restless spirit by which they were actuated. He granted an unbounded liberty of conscience to all but Catholics and Prelatists; and by that means he both attached the wild sectaries to his person, and employed them in curbing the domineering spirit of the Presbyterians. “I am the only man,” he was often heard to say, “who has known how to subdue that insolent sect, which can suffer none but itself.”

The Protestant zeal which possessed the Presbyterians and Independents, was highly gratified by the haughty manner in which the protector so successfully supported the persecuted Protestants throughout all Europe. Even the duke of Savoy, so remote a power, and so little exposed to the naval force of England, was obliged, by the authority of France, to comply with his mediation, and to tolerate the Protestants of the valleys, against whom that prince had commenced a furious persecution. France itself was constrained to bear, not only with the religion, but even, in some instances, with the seditious insolence of the Hugonots; and when the French court applied for a reciprocal toleration of the Catholic religion in England, the protector, who arrogated in every thing the superiority, would hearken to no such proposal. He had entertained a project of instituting a college, in imitation of that at Rome, for the propagation of the faith; and his apostles, in zeal, though not in unanimity, had certainly been a full match for the Catholics.

Cromwell retained the church of England in constraint though he permitted its clergy a little more liberty than the Republican parliament had formerly allowed. He was pleased that the superior lenity of his administration should in every thing be remarked. He bridled the royalists, both by the army which he retained, and by those secret spies which he found means to intermix in all their counsels. Manning being detected, and punished with death, he corrupted Sir Richard Willis, who was much trusted by Chancellor Hyde and all the royalists; and by means of this man he was let into every design and conspiracy of the party. He could disconcert any project, by confining the persons who were to be the actors in it; and as he restored them afterwards to liberty, his severity passed only for the result of general jealousy and suspicion, The secret source of his intelligence remained still unknown and unsuspected.

Conspiracies for an assassination he was chiefly afraid of; these being designs which no prudence or vigilance could evade. Colonel Titus, under the name of Allen, had written a spirited discourse, exhorting every one to embrace this method of vengeance; and Cromwell knew, that the inflamed minds of the royal party were sufficiently disposed to put the doctrine in practice against him. He openly told them, that assassinations were base and odious, and he never would commence hostilities by so shameful an expedient; but if the first attempt or provocation came from them, he would retaliate to the uttermost. He had instruments, he said, whom he could employ; and he never would desist till he had totally exterminated the royal family. This menace, more than all his guards, contributed to the security of his person. [1]

* See note Z at the end of the volume.

There was no point about which the protector was more solicitous than to procure intelligence. This article alone, it is said, cost him sixty thousand pounds a year. Postmasters, both at home and abroad, were in his pay: carriers were searched or bribed: secretaries and clerks were corrupted the greatest zealots in all parties were often these who conveyed private information to him: and nothing could escape his vigilant inquiry. Such at least is the representation made by historians of Cromwell's administration: but it must be confessed, that, if we may judge by those volumes of Thurloe's papers which have been lately published, this affair, like many others, has been greatly magnified. We scarcely find by that collection, that any secret counsels of foreign states, except those of Holland, which are not expected to be concealed, were known to the protector.

The general behavior and deportment of this man, who had been raised from a very private station, who had passed most of his youth in the country, and who was still constrained so much to frequent bad company, was such as might befit the greatest monarch. He maintained a dignity without either affectation or ostentation; and supported with all strangers that high idea with which his great exploits and prodigious fortune had impressed them. Among his ancient friends, he could relax himself; and by trifling and amusement, jesting and making verses, he feared not exposing himself to their most familiar approaches. [1] With others he sometimes pushed matters to the length of rustic buffoonery; and he would amuse himself by putting burning coals into the boots and hose of the officers who attended him. [2] Before the king's trial, a meeting was agreed on between the chiefs of the republican party and the general officers, in order to concert the model of that free government which they were to substitute in the room of the monarchical constitution now totally subverted. After debates on this subject, the most important that could fall under the discussion of human creatures, Ludlow tells us that Cromwell, by way of frolic, threw a cushion at his head; and when Ludlow took up another cushion, in order to return the compliment, the general ran down stairs, and had almost fallen in the hurry. When the high court of justice was signing the warrant for the execution of the king, a matter, if possible, still more serious, Cromwell, taking the pen in his hand, before he subscribed his name, bedaubed with ink the face of Martin, who sat next him. And the pen being delivered to Martin, he practised the same frolic upon Cromwell. [3]

* Whitlocke, .

* * Bates.

* * * Trial of the Regicides.

He frequently gave feasts to his inferior officers; and when the meat was set upon the table, a signal was given; the soldiers rushed in upon, them; and with much noise, tumult, and confusion, ran away with all the dishes, and disappointed the guests of their expected meal. [1]

That vein of frolic and pleasantry which made a part, however inconsistent, of Cromwell’s character, was apt sometimes to betray him into other inconsistencies, and to discover itself even where religion might seem to be a little concerned. It is a tradition, that one day, sitting at table, the protector had a bottle of wine brought him, of a kind which he valued so highly, that he must needs open the bottle himself; but in attempting it, the corkscrew dropped from his hand. Immediately his courtiers and generals flung themselves on the floor to recover it. Cromwell burst out a laughing. “Should any fool,” said he, “put in his head at the door, he would fancy, from your posture, that you were seeking the Lord; and you are only seeking a corkscrew.”

Amidst all the unguarded play and buffoonery of this singular personage, he took the opportunity of remarking the characters, designs, and weaknesses of men; and he would sometimes push them, by an indulgence in wine, to open to him the most secret recesses of their bosom. Great regularity, however, and even austerity of manners, were always maintained in his court; and he was careful never by any liberties to give offence to the most rigid of the godly. Some state was upheld; but with little expense, and without any splendor. The nobility, though courted by him, kept at a distance, and disdained to intermix with those mean persons who were the instruments of his government. Without departing from economy, he was generous to those who served him; and he knew how to find out and engage in his interests every man possessed of those talents which any particular employment demanded. His generals, his admirals, his judges, his ambassadors, were persons who contributed, all of them, in their several spheres, to the security of the protector, and to the honor and interest of the nation.

Under pretence of uniting Scotland and Ireland in one commonwealth with England, Cromwell had reduced those kingdoms to a total subjection; and he treated them entirely as conquered provinces. The civil

* Bates.

administration of Scotland was placed in a council, consisting mostly of English, of which Lord Broghile was president. Justice was administered by seven judges, four of whom were English. In order to cure the tyrannical nobility, he both abolished all vassalage, [1] and revived the office of justice of peace, which King James had introduced, but was not able to support. [2] A long line of forts and garrisons was maintained throughout the kingdom. An army of ten thousand men [3] kept everything in peace and obedience; and neither the banditti of the mountains nor the bigots of the Low Countries could indulge their inclination to turbulence and disorder. He courted the Presbyterian clergy though he nourished that intestine enmity which prevailed between the resolutioners and protesters; and he found that very little policy was requisite to foment quarrels among theologians. He permitted no church assemblies; being sensible that from thence had proceeded many of the past disorders. And in the main, the Scots were obliged to acknowledge, that never before, while they enjoyed their irregular, factious liberty, had they attained so much happiness as at present, when reduced to subjection under a foreign nation.

* Whitlocke, .

* * Thurloe, vol. iv. .

* * * Thurloe, vol. vi. .

The protector’s administration of Ireland was more severe and violent. The government of that island was first intrusted to Fleetwood, a notorious fanatic, who had married Ireton’s widow; then to Henry Cromwell, second son of the protector, a young man of an amiable, mild disposition, and not destitute of vigor and capacity. Above five millions of acres, forfeited either by the Popish rebels or by the adherents of the king, were divided, partly among the adventurers, who had advanced money to the parliament, partly among the English soldiers, who had arrears due to them. Examples of a more sudden and violent change of property are scarcely to be found in any history. An order was even issued to confine all the native Irish to the province of Connaught, where they would be shut up by rivers, lakes, and mountains, and could not, it was hoped, be any longer dangerous to the English government: but this barbarous and absurd policy, which, from an impatience of attaining immediate security, *must have depopulated all the other provinces, and rendered the English estates of no value, was soon abandoned as impracticable.

Cromwell began to hope that, by his administration, attended with so much lustre and success abroad, so much order and tranquillity at home, he had now acquired such authority as would enable him to meet the representatives of the nation, and would assure him of their dutiful compliance with his government. He summoned a parliament; but not trusting altogether to the good will of the people, he used every art which his new model of representation allowed him to employ, in order to influence the elections, and fill the house with his own creatures. Ireland, being entirely in the hands of the army, chose few but such officers as were most acceptable to him. Scotland showed a like compliance; and as the nobility and gentry of that kingdom regarded their attendance on English parliaments as an ignominious badge of slavery, it was on that account more easy for the officers to prevail in the elections. Notwithstanding all these precautions, the protector still found that the majority would not be favorable to him. He set guards, therefore, on the door, who permitted none to enter but such as produced a warrant from his council; and the council rejected about a hundred, who either refused a recognition of the protector’s government, or were on other accounts obnoxious to him. These protested against so egregious a violence, subversive of all liberty; but every application for redress was neglected both by the council and the parliament.

The majority of the parliament, by means of these arts and violences, was now at last either friendly to the protector, or resolved, by their compliance, to adjust, if possible, this military government to their laws and liberties. They voted a renunciation of all title in Charles Stuart, or any of his family; and this was the first act, dignified with the appearance of national consent, which had ever had that tendency. Colonel Jephson, in order to sound the inclinations of the house, ventured to move, that the parliament should bestow the crown on Cromwell; and no surprise or reluctance was discovered on the occasion. When Cromwell afterwards asked Jephson what induced him to make such a motion, “As long,” said Jephson, “as I have the honor to sit in parliament, I must follow the dictates of my own conscience, whatever offence I may be so unfortunate as to give you.” “Get thee gone," said Cromwell, giving him a gentle blow on the shoulder; "get thee gone, for a mad fellow as thou art."

In order to pave the way to this advancement, for which he so ardently longed, Cromwell resolved to sacrifice his major-generals, whom he knew to be extremely odious to the nation That measure was also become necessary for his own security. All government, purely military, fluctuates perpetually between a despotic monarchy and a despotic aristocracy, according as the authority of the chief commander prevails, or that of the officers next him in rank and dignity. The major-generals, being possessed of so much distinct jurisdiction, began to establish a separate title to power, and had rendered themselves formidable to the protector himself; and for this inconvenience, though he had not foreseen it, he well knew, before it was too late, to provide a proper remedy. Claypole, his son-in-law, who possessed his confidence, abandoned them to the pleasure of the house; and though the name was still retained, it was agreed to abridge, or rather entirely annihilate, the power of the major-generals.

At length, a motion in form was made by Alderman Pack, one of the city members, for investing the protector with the dignity of king. This motion at first excited great disorder, and divided the whole house into parties. The chief opposition came from the usual adherents of the protector, the major-generals, and such officers as depended on them. Lambert a man of deep intrigue, and of great interest in the army, had long entertained the ambition of succeeding Cromwell in the protectorship; and he foresaw, that if the monarchy were restored, hereditary right would also be established, and the crown be transmitted to the posterity of the prince first elected. He pleaded, therefore, conscience; and rousing all those civil and religious jealousies against kingly government, which had been so industriously encouraged among the soldiers, and which served them as a pretence for so many violences, he raised a numerous, and still more formidable party, against the motion.

On the other hand, the motion was supported by every one who was more particularly devoted to the protector, and who hoped, by so acceptable a measure, to pay court to the prevailing authority. Many persons also, attached to their country, despaired of ever being able to subvert the present illegal establishment; and were desirous, by fixing it on ancient foundations, to induce the protector, from views of his own safety, to pay a regard to the ancient laws and liberties of the kingdom. Even the royalists imprudently joined in the measure; and hoped that, when the question regarded only persons, not forms of government, no one would any longer balance between the ancient royal family and an ignoble usurper, who, by blood, treason, and perfidy, had made his way to the throne.

1657.

The bill was voted by a considerable majority; and a committee was appointed to reason with the protector, and to overcome those scruples which he pretended against accepting so liberal an offer.

The conference lasted for several days. The committee urged, that all the statutes and customs of England were founded on the supposition of regal authority, and could not, without extreme violence, be adjusted to any other form of government: that a protector, except during the minority of a king, was a name utterly unknown to the laws; and no man was acquainted with the extent or limits of his authority; that if it were attempted to define every part of his jurisdiction, many years, if not ages, would be required for the execution of so complicated a work; if the whole power of the king were at once transferred to him, the question was plainly about a name, and the preference was indisputably due to the ancient title: that the English constitution was more anxious concerning the form of government, than concerning the birthright of the first magistrate; and had provided, by an express law of Henry VII., for the security of those who act in defence of the king in being, by whatever means he might have acquired possession: that it was extremely the interest of all his highness's friends to seek the shelter of this statute; and even the people in general were desirous of such a settlement, and in all juries were with great difficulty induced to give their verdict in favor of a protector: that the great source of all the late commotions had been the jealousy of liberty: and that a republic, together with a protector, had been established in order to provide further securities for the freedom of the constitution; but that by experience the remedy had been found insufficient, even dangerous and pernicious; since every indeterminate power, such as that of a protector, must be arbitrary; and the more arbitrary, as it was contrary to the genius and inclination of the people.

The difficulty consisted not in persuading Cromwell. He was sufficiently convinced of the solidity of these reasons; and his inclination, as well as judgment, was entirely on the side of the committee. But how to bring over the soldiers to the same way of thinking, was the question. The office of king had been painted to them in such horrible colors, that there were no hopes of reconciling them suddenly to it, even though bestowed upon their general, to whom they were so much devoted. A contradiction, open and direct, to all past professions, would make them pass, in the eyes of the whole nation, for the most shameless hypocrites, enlisted, by no other than mercenary motives, in the cause of the most perfidious traitor. Principles, such as they were, had been encouraged in them by every consideration, human and divine; and though it was easy, where interest concurred, to deceive them by the thinnest disguises, it might be found dangerous at once to pull off the mask, and to show them in a full light the whole crime and deformity of their conduct. Suspended between these fears and his own most ardent desires, Cromwell protracted the time, and seemed still to oppose the reasonings of the committee; in hopes that by artifice he might be able to reconcile the refractory minds of the soldiers to his new dignity.

While the protector argued so much in contradiction both to his judgment and inclination, it is no wonder that his elocution, always confused, embarrassed, and unintelligible, should be involved in tenfold darkness, and discover no glimmering of common sense or reason. An exact account of this conference remains, and may be regarded as a great curiosity. The members of the committee in their reasonings discover judgment, knowledge, elocution: Lord Broghill in particular exerts himself on this memorable occasion. But what a contrast when we pass to the protector’s replies! After so singular a manner does nature distribute her talents, that, in a nation abounding with sense and learning, a man who, by superior personal merit alone, had made his way to supreme dignity, and had even obliged the parliament to make him a tender of the crown, was yet incapable of expressing himself on this occasion, but in a manner which a peasant of the most ordinary capacity would justly be ashamed of. [1]

* We shall produce any passage at random; for his discourse is all of a piece. “I confess, for it behoves me to deal plainly with you, I must confess, I would say, I hope I may be understood in this; for indeed I must be tender what I say to such an audience as this; I say, I would be understood, that in this argument I do not make parallel betwixt men of a different mind, and a parliament, which shall have their desires. I know there is no comparison, nor can it be urged upon me that my words have the least color that way, because the parliament seems to give liberty to me to say any thing to you;

as that, that is a tender of my humble reasons and judgment and opinion to them; and if I think they are such, and will be such to them, and are faithful servants, and will be so to the supreme authority, and the legislative wheresoever it is: if, I say, I should not tell you, knowing their minds to be so, I should not be faithful if I should not tell you so, to the end you may report it to the parliament: I shall say something for myself, for my own mind, I do profess it, I urn not a man scrupulous about words or names of such things I have not; but as I have the word of God, and I hope I shall ever have it, for the rule of my conscience, for my informations; so truly men that have been led in dark paths, through the providence and dispensation of God; why, surely it is not to be objected to a man; for who can love to walk in the dark? But providence does so dispose. And though a man may impute his own folly and blindness to providence sinfully, yet it must be at my peril; the case may be that it is the providence of God that doth lead men in darkness: I must need say, that I have had a great deal of experience of providence; and though it is no rule without or against the word, yet it is a very good expositor of the word in many cases." Conference at Whitehall. The great defect in Oliver's speeches consists not in his want of elocution, but in his want of ideas. The sagacity of his actions, and the absurdity of his discourse, form the most prodigious contrast that ever was known. The collection of all his speeches, letters, sermons, (for he also wrote sermons,) would make a great curiosity, and, with a few exceptions, might justly pass for one of the most nonsensical books in the world.

The opposition which Cromwell dreaded, was not that which came from Lambert and his adherents, whom he now regarded as capital enemies, and whom he was resolved, on the first occasion, to deprive of all power and authority; it was that which he met with in his own family, and from men who, by interest as well as inclination, were the most devoted to him. Fleetwood had married his daughter; Desborow his sister; yet these men, actuated by principle alone, could by no persuasion, artifice, or entreaty be induced to consent that their friend and patron should be invested with regal dignity. They told him, that if he accepted of the crown, they would instantly throw up their commissions, and never afterwards should have it in their power to serve him. [1]

* Thurloe, vol. vi. .

Colonel Pride procured a petition against the office of king, signed by a majority of the officers who were in London and the neighborhood. Several persons, it is said, had entered into an engagement to murder the protector within a few hours after he should have accepted the offer of the parliament. Some sudden mutiny in the army was justly dreaded. And upon the whole, Cromwell, after the agony and perplexity of long doubt, was at last obliged to refuse that crown which the representatives of the nation, in the most solemn manner, had tendered to him. Most historians are inclined to blame his choice; but he must be allowed the best judge of his own situation. And in such complicated subjects, the alteration of a very minute circumstance, unknown to the spectator, will often be sufficient to cast the balance, and render a determination, which in itself may be uneligible, very prudent, or even absolutely necessary to the actor.

A dream or prophecy, Lord Clarendon mentions, which, he affirms, (and he must have known the truth,) was universally talked of almost from the beginning of the civil wars, and long before Cromwell was so considerable a person as to bestow upon it any degree of probability. In this prophecy, it was foretold that Cromwell should be the greatest man in England, and would nearly, but never would fully, mount the throne. Such a prepossession probably arose from the heated imagination either of himself or of his followers; and as it might be one cause of the great progress which he had already made, it is not an unlikely reason which may be assigned for his refusing at this time any further elevation.

The parliament, when the regal dignity was rejected by Cromwell, found themselves obliged to retain the name of a commonwealth and protector; and as the government was hitherto a manifest usurpation, it was thought proper to sanctify it by a seeming choice of the people and their representatives. Instead of the “instrument of government,” which was the work of the general officers alone, “an humble petition and advice” was framed, and offered to the protector, by the parliament. This was represented as the great basis cf the republican establishment, regulating and limiting the powers of each member of the constitution, and securing the liberty of the people to the most remote posterity. By this deed, the authority of protector was in some particulars enlarged; in others, it was considerably diminished. He had the power of nominating his successor; he had a perpetual revenue assigned him, a million a year for the pay of the fleet and army, three hundred thousand pounds for the support of civil government; and he had authority to name another house, who should enjoy their seats during life, and exercise some functions of the former house of peers. But he abandoned the power, assumed in the intervals of parliament, of framing laws with the consent of his council; and he agreed, that no members of either house should be excluded but by the consent of that house of which they were members. The other articles were in the main the same as in the instrument of government. The instrument of government Cromwell had formerly extolled as the most perfect work of human invention: he now represented it as a rotten plank, upon which no man could trust himself without sinking. Even the humble petition and advice, which he extolled in its turn, appeared so lame and imperfect, that it was found requisite, this very session, to mend it by a supplement; and after all, it may be regarded as a crude and undigested model of government. It was, however, accepted for the voluntary deed of the whole people in the three united nations; and Cromwell, as if his power had just commenced from this popular consent, was anew inaugurated in Westminster Hall, after the most solemn and most pompous manner.

The parliament having adjourned itself, the protector deprived Lambert of all his commissions; but still allowed him a considerable pension of two thousand pounds a year, as a bribe for his future peaceable deportment. Lambert’s authority in the army, to the surprise of every body, was found immediately to expire with the loss of his commission. Packet and some other officers, whom Cromwell suspected, were also displaced.

Richard, eldest son of the protector, was brought to court, introduced into public business, and thenceforth regarded by many as his heir in the protectorship; though Cromwell sometimes employed the gross artifice of flattering others with hopes of the succession. Richard was a person possessed of the most peaceable, inoffensive, unambitious character; and had hitherto lived contentedly in the country, on a small estate which his wife had brought him. All the activity which he discovered, and which never was great, was, however, exerted to beneficent purposes: at the time of the king’s trial, he had fallen on his knees before his father, and had conjured him, by every tie of duty and humanity, to spare the life of that monarch. Cromwell had two daughters unmarried; one of them he now gave in marriage to the grandson and heir of his great friend the earl of

Warwick, with whom he had, in every fortune, preserved an uninterrupted intimacy and good correspondence. The other he married to the viscount Fauconberg of a family formerly devoted to the royal party. He was ambitious of forming connections with the nobility; and it was one chief motive for his desiring the title of king, that he might replace every thing in its natural order, and restore to the ancient families the trust and honor of which he now found himself obliged, for his own safety, to deprive them.

1658.

The parliament was again assembled; consisting, as in the times of monarchy, of two houses, the commons and the other house. Cromwell, during the interval, had sent writs to his house of peers, which consisted of sixty members. They were composed of five or six ancient peers, of several gentlemen of fortune and distinction, and of some officers who had risen from the meanest stations. None of the ancient peers, however, though summoned by writ, would deign to accept of a seat which they must share with such companions as were assigned them. The protector endeavored at first to maintain the appearance of a legal magistrate. He placed no guard at the door of either house; but soon found how incompatible liberty is with military usurpations. By bringing so great a number of his friends and adherents into the other house he had lost the majority among the national representatives. In consequence of a clause in the humble petition and advice the commons assumed a power of readmitting those members whom the council had formerly excluded. Sir Arthur Hazelrig and some others, whom Cromwell had created lords, rather chose to take their seat with the commons. An incontestable majority now declared themselves against the protector; and they refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of that other house which he had established. Even the validity of the humble petition and advice was questioned, as being voted by a parliament which lay under force, and which was deprived by military violence of a considerable number of its members. The protector, dreading combinations between the parliament and the malecontents in the army, resolved to allow no leisure for forming any conspiracy against him; and, with expressions of great displeasure, he dissolved the parliament. When urged by Fleetwood and others of his friends not to precipitate himself into this rash measure, he swore by the living God that they should not sit a moment longer.

These distractions at home were not able to take off the protector’s attention from foreign affairs; and in all his measures, he proceeded with the same vigor and enterprise, as if secure of the duty and attachment of the three kingdoms. His alliance with Sweden he still supported; and he endeavored to assist that crown in its successful enterprises for reducing all its neighbors to subjection, and rendering itself absolute master of the Baltic. As soon as Spain declared war against him, he concluded a peace and an alliance with France, and united himself in all his counsels with that potent and ambitious kingdom. Spain, having long courted in vain the friendship of the successful usurper, was reduced at last to apply to the unfortunate prince. Charles formed a league with Philip, removed his small court to Bruges in the Low Countries, and raised four regiments of his own subjects, whom he employed in the Spanish service. The duke of York, who had with applause served some campaigns in the French army, and who had merited the particular esteem of Marshal Turenne, now joined his brother, and continued to seek military experience under Don John of Austria, and the prince of Condé.

The scheme of foreign politics adopted by the protector was highly imprudent, but was suitable to that magnanimity and enterprise with which he was so signally endowed. He was particularly desirous of conquest and dominion on the continent; [1] and he sent over into Flanders six thousand men under Reynolds, who joined the French army commanded by Turenne. In the former campaign, Mardyke was taken, and put into the hands of the English. Early this campaign, siege was laid to Dunkirk; and when the Spanish army advanced to relieve it, the combined armies of France and England marched out of their trenches, and fought the battle of the Dunes, where the Spaniards were totally defeated. [2]

* He aspired to get possession of Elsinore and the passage of the Sound. See World’s Mistake in Oliver Cromwell. He also endeavored to get possession of Bremen. Thurloe, vol.

vi. .

* It was remarked by the saints of that time, that the battle was fought on a day which was held for a fast in London; so that, as Fleetwood said, (Thurloe, vol. vii. p.

159,) “while we were praying, they were fighting; and the Lord hath given a signal answer. The Lord has not only owned us in our work there, but in our waiting upon him in a way of prayer, which is indeed our old experienced approved way in all streights and difficulties.” Cromwell’s letter to Blake and Montague, his brave admirals, is remarkable for the same spirit. Thurloe, vol. iv. . “You have,” says he, “as I verily believe and am persuaded, a plentiful stock of prayers going for you daily, sent up by the soberest and most approved ministers and Christians in this nation; and,

notwithstanding some discouragements very much wrestling of faith for you, which are to us, and I trust will be to you,

matter of great encouragement. But notwithstanding all this,

it will be good for you and us to deliver up ourselves and all our affairs to the disposition of our all-wise Father,

who, not only out of prerogative, but because of his goodness, wisdom, and truth, ought to be resigned unto by his creatures, especially those who are children of his begetting through the spirit,” etc.

The valor of the English was much remarked on this occasion. Dunkirk, being soon after surrendered, was by agreement delivered to Cromwell. He committed the government of that important place to Lockhart, a Scotchman of abilities, who had married his niece, and was his ambassador at the court of France.

This acquisition was regarded by the protector as the means only of obtaining further advantages. He was resolved to concert measures with the French court for the final conquest and partition of the Low Countries. [1] Had he lived much longer, and maintained his authority in England, so chimerical, or rather so dangerous, a project would certainly have been carried into execution. And this first and principal step towards more extensive conquest, which France during a whole century has never yet been able, by an infinite expense of blood and treasure, fully to attain, had at once been accomplished by the enterprising, though unskilful politics of Cromwell.

During these transactions, great demonstrations of mutual friendship and regard passed between the French king and the protector. Lord Fauconberg, Cromwell’s son-in-law, was despatched to Louis, then in the camp before Dunkirk; and was received with the regard usually paid to foreign princes by the French court. [2] Mazarine sent to London his nephew Mancini, along with the duke of Crequi; and expressed his regret that his urgent affairs should deprive him of the honor which he had long wished for, of paying in person his respects to the greatest man in the world. [3]

* Thurloe, vol. i. .

* * Thurloe, vol. vii. , 158.

* * * In reality, the cardinal had not entertained so high an idea of Cromwell. He used to say that he was a fortunate madman. Vie de Cromwell, par Raguenet. See also Carte's Collection, vol. ii. Gumble's Life of Monk, .

World's Mistake in Oliver Cromwell.

The protector reaped little satisfaction from the success of his arms abroad: the situation in which he stood at home kept him in perpetual uneasiness and inquietude. His administration, so expensive both by military enterprises and secret intelligence, had exhausted his revenue, and involved him in a considerable debt. The royalists, he heard, had renewed their conspiracies for a general insurrection; and Ormond was secretly come over with a view of concerting measures for the execution of this project. Lord Fairfax, Sir William Waller, and many heads of the Presbyterians, had secretly entered into the engagement. Even the army was infected with the general spirit of discontent; and some sudden and dangerous eruption was every moment to be dreaded from it. No hopes remained, after his violent breach with the last parliament, that he should ever be able to establish, with general consent, a legal settlement, or temper the military with any mixture of civil authority. All his arts and policy were exhausted; and having so often, by fraud and false pretences, deceived every party, and almost every individual, he could no longer hope, by repeating the same professions, to meet with equal confidence and regard.

However zealous the royalists, their conspiracy took not effect: Willis discovered the whole to the protector. Ormond was obliged to fly, and he deemed himself fortunate to have escaped so vigilant an administration. Great numbers were thrown into prison. A high court of justice was anew erected for the trial of those criminals whose guilt was most apparent. Notwithstanding the recognition of his authority by the last parliament, the protector could not as yet trust to an unbiased jury. Sir Henry Slingsby and Dr. Huet were condemned and beheaded. Mordaunt, brother to the earl of Peterborough, narrowly escaped. The numbers for his condemnation and his acquittal were equal; and just as the sentence was pronounced in his favor. Colonel Pride, who was resolved to condemn him, came into court. Ashton, Storey, and Bestley were hanged in different streets of the city.

The conspiracy of the Millenarians in the army struck Cromwell with still greater apprehensions. Harrison and the other discarded officers of that party could not remain at rest. Stimulated equally by revenge, by ambition, and by conscience, they still harbored in their breast some desperate project; and there wanted not officers in the army who, from like motives, were disposed to second all their undertakings. The levellers and agitators had been encouraged by Cromwell to interpose with their advice in all political deliberations; and he had even pretended to honor many of them with his intimate friendship, while he conducted his daring enterprises against the king and the parliament. It was a usual practice with him, in order to familiarize himself the more with the agitators, who were commonly corporals or sergeants, to take them to bed with him, and there, after prayers and exhortations, to discuss together their projects and principles, political as well as religious. Having assumed the dignity of protector, he excluded them from all his councils, and had neither leisure nor inclination to indulge them any further in their wonted familiarities. Among those who were enraged at this treatment was Sexby, an active agitator, who now employed against him all that restless industry which had formerly been exerted in his favor. He even went so far as to enter into a correspondence with Spain, and Cromwell, who knew the distempers of the army, was justly afraid of some mutiny, to which a day, an hour, an instant, might provide leaders.

Of assassinations, likewise, he was apprehensive, from the zealous spirit which actuated the soldiers. Sindercome had undertaken to murder him; and by the most unaccountable accidents, had often been prevented from executing his bloody purpose. His design was discovered; but the protector could never find the bottom of the enterprise, nor detect any of his accomplices. He was tried by a jury; and, notwithstanding the general odium attending that crime, notwithstanding the clear and full proof of his guilt, so little conviction prevailed of the protector’s right to the supreme government, it was with the utmost difficulty [1] that this conspirator was condemned. When every thing was prepared for his execution, he was found dead; from poison, as is supposed, which he had voluntarily taken.

* Thurloe, voL vi. .

The protector might better have supported those fears and apprehensions which the public distempers occasioned, had he enjoyed any domestic satisfaction, or possessed any cordial friend of his own family, in whose bosom he could safely have unloaded his anxious and corroding cares. But Fleetwood, his son-in-law, actuated by the wildest zeal, began to estrange himself from him; and was enraged to discover, that Cromwell, in all his enterprises, had entertained views of promoting his own grandeur, more than of encouraging piety and religion, of which he made such fervent professions. His eldest daughter, married to Fleetwood, had adopted republican principles so vehement, that she could not with patience behold power lodged in a single person, even in her indulgent father. His other daughters were no less prejudiced in favor of the royal cause, and regretted the violences and iniquities into which, they thought, their family had so unhappily been transported. Above all, the sickness of Mrs. Claypole, his peculiar favorite, a lady endued with many humane virtues and amiable accomplishments, depressed his anxious mind, and poisoned all his enjoyments. She had entertained a high regard for Dr. Huet, lately executed; and being refused his pardon, the melancholy of her temper, increased by her distempered body, had prompted her to lament to her father all his sanguinary measures, and urge him to compunction for those heinous crimes into which his fatal ambition had betrayed him. Her death, which followed soon after, gave new edge to every word which she had uttered.

All composure of mind was now forever fled from the protector: he felt that the grandeur which he had attained with so much guilt and courage, could not insure him that tranquillity which it belongs to virtue alone, and moderation, fully to ascertain. Overwhelmed with the load of public affairs, dreading perpetually some fatal accident in his distempered government, seeing nothing around him but treacherous friends or enraged enemies, possessing the confidence of no party, resting his title on no principle, civil or religious, he found his power to depend on so delicate a poise of factions and interests, as the smallest event was able, without any preparation, in a moment to overturn. Death, too, which with such signal intrepidity he had braved in the field, being incessantly threatened by the poniards of fanatical or interested assassins, was ever present to his terrified apprehension, and haunted him in every scene of business or repose. Each action of his life betrayed the terrors under which he labored. The aspect of strangers was uneasy to him: with a piercing and anxious eye he surveyed every face to which he was not daily accustomed. He never moved a step without strong guards attending him: he wore armor under his clothes, and further secured himself by offensive weapons, a sword, falchion, and pistols, which he always carried about him. He returned from no place by the direct road, or by the same way which he went. Every journey he performed with hurry and precipitation. Seldom he slept above three nights together in the same chamber; and he never let it be known beforehand what chamber he intended to choose, nor intrusted himself in any which was not provided with back doors, at which sentinels were carefully placed. Society terrified him, while he reflected on his numerous, unknown, and implacable enemies: solitude astonished him, by withdrawing that protection which he found so necessary for his security.

His body, also, from the contagion of his anxious mind, began to be affected, and his health seemed sensibly to decline. He was seized with a slow fever, which changed into a tertian ague. For the space of a week, no dangerous symptoms appeared: and in the intervals of the fits he was able to walk abroad. At length the fever increased, and he himself began to entertain some thoughts of death, and to cast his eye towards that future existence, whose idea had once been intimately present to him; though since, in the hurry of affairs, and the shock of wars and factions, it had, no doubt, been considerably obliterated. He asked Goodwin, one of his preachers, if the doctrine were true, that the elect could never fall, or suffer a final reprobation. “Nothing more certain,” replied the preacher. “Then I am safe,” said the protector; “for I am sure that once I was in a state of grace.”

His physicians were sensible of the perilous condition to which his distemper had reduced him; but his chaplains, by their prayers, visions, and revelations, so buoyed up his hopes, that he began to believe his life out of all danger. A favorable answer, it was pretended, had been returned by Heaven to the petitions of all the godly: and he relied on their asseverations much more than on the opinion of the most experienced physicians. “I tell you,” he cried with confidence to the latter, “I tell you, I shall not die of this distemper: I am well assured of my recovery. It is promised by the Lord, not only to my supplications, but to those of men who hold a stricter commerce and more intimate correspondence with him. Ye may have skill in your profession; but nature can do more than all the physicians in the world, and God is far above nature.”(*) Nay, to such a degree of madness did their enthusiastic assurances mount, that, upon a fast day, which was observed on his account both at Hampton Court and at Whitehall, they did not so much pray for his health, as give thanks for the undoubted pledges which they had received of his recovery. He himself was overheard offering up his addresses to Heaven; and so far had the illusions of fanaticism prevailed over the plainest dictates of natural morality, that he assumed more the character of a mediator, in interceding for his people, than that of a criminal, whose atrocious violation of social duty had, from every tribunal, human and divine, merited the severest vengeance.

* Bates. See also Ihurloe, vol. vii. , 416.

Meanwhile, all the symptoms began to wear a more fatal aspect; and the physicians were obliged to break silence, and to declare that the protector could not survive the next fit with which he was threatened. The council was alarmed. A deputation was sent to know his will with regard to his successor His senses were gone, and he could not now express his intentions. They asked him whether he did not mean that his eldest son, Richard, should succeed him in the protectorship. A simple affirmative was, or seemed to be, extorted from him. Soon after, on the third of September, that very day which he had always considered as the most fortunate for him, he expired, A violent tempest, which immediately succeeded his death, served as a subject of discourse to the vulgar. His partisans, as well as his enemies, were fond of remarking this event; and each of them endeavored, by forced inferences, to interpret it as a confirmation of their particular prejudices.

The writers attached to the memory of this wonderful person, make his character, with regard to abilities, bear the air of the most extravagant panegyric: his enemies form such a representation of his moral qualities as resembles the most virulent invective. Both of them, it must be confessed, are supported by such striking circumstances in his conduct and fortune, as bestow on their representation a great air of probability. “What can be more extraordinary,” it is said, [1] “than that a person of private birth and education, no fortune, no eminent qualities of body, which have sometimes, nor shining talents of mind, which have often, raised men to the highest dignities, should have the courage to attempt, and the abilities to execute, so great a design as the subverting one of the most ancient and best established monarchies in the world? That he should have the power and boldness to put his prince and master to an open and infamous death? Should banish that numerous and strongly allied family? Cover all these temerities under a seeming obedience to a parliament, in whose service he pretended to be retained? Trample, too, upon that parliament in their turn, and scornfully expel them as soon as they gave him ground of dissatisfaction? Erect in their place the dominion of the saints, and give reality to the most visionary idea which the heated imagination of any fanatic was ever able to entertain? Suppress again that monster in its infancy, and openly set up himself above all things that ever were called sovereign in England? Overcome first all his enemies by arms, and all his friends afterwards by artifice? Serve all parties patiently for a while, and command them victoriously at last? Overrun each corner of the three nations, and subdue, with equal facility, both the riches of the south and the poverty of the north? Be feared and courted by all foreign princes, and be adopted a brother to the gods of the earth? Call together parliaments with a word of his pen, and scatter them again with the breath of his mouth? Reduce to subjection a warlike and discontented nation, by means of a mutinous army? Command a mutinous army by means of seditious and factious officers? Be humbly and daily petitioned, that he would be pleased, at the rate of millions a year, to be hired as master of those who had hired him before to be their servant? Have the estates and lives of three nations as much at his disposal as was once the little inheritance of his father, and be as noble and liberal in the spending of them? And lastly, (for there is no end of enumerating every particular of his glory,) with one word bequeath all this power and splendor to his posterity? He possessed of peace at home and triumph abroad? Be buried among kings, and with more than regal solemnity; and leave a name behind him not to be extinguished but with the whole world; which as it was too little for his praise, so might it have been for his conquests, if the short line of his mortal life could have stretched out to the extent of his immortal designs?”

* Cowley’s Discourses. This passage is altered in some particulars from the original.

My intention is not to disfigure this picture, drawn by so masterly a hand: I shall only endeavor to remove from it somewhat of the marvellous; a circumstance which, on all occasions, gives much ground for doubt and suspicion. It seems to me, that the circumstance of Cromwell’s life in which his abilities are principally discovered, is his rising from a private station, in opposition to so many rivals, so much advanced before him, to a high command and authority, in the army. His great courage, his signal military talents, his eminent dexterity and address, were all requisite for this important acquisition. Yet will not this promotion appear the effect of supernatural abilities, when we consider, that Fairfax himself, a private gentleman, who had not the advantage of a seat in parliament, had, through the same steps, attained even a superior rank, and, if endued with common capacity and penetration, had been able to retain it. To incite such an army to rebellion against the parliament, required no uncommon art or industry: to have kept them in obedience had been the more difficult enterprise. When the breach was once formed between the military and civil powers, a supreme and absolute authority, from that moment, is devolved on the general; and if he be afterwards pleased to employ artifice or policy, it may be regarded, on most occasions, as great condescension, if not as superfluous caution. That Cromwell was ever able really to blind or overreach either the king or the republicans, does not appear: as they possessed no means of resisting the force under his command, they were glad to temporize with him, and, by seeming to be deceived, wait for opportunities of freeing themselves from his dominion. If he seduced the military fanatics, it is to be considered, that their interests and his evidently concurred; that their ignorance and low education exposed them to the grossest imposition; and that he himself was at bottom as frantic an enthusiast as the worst of them; and, in order to obtain their confidence, needed but to display those vulgar and ridiculous habits which he had early acquired, and on which he set so high a value. An army is so forcible, and at the same time so coarse a weapon, that any hand which wields it, may, without much dexterity, perform any operation, and attain any ascendant, in human society.

The domestic administration of Cromwell, though it discovers great abilities, was conducted without any plan either of liberty or arbitrary power: perhaps his difficult situation admitted of neither. His foreign enterprises, though full of intrepidity, were pernicious to national interest, and seem more the result of impetuous fury or narrow prejudices, than of cool foresight and deliberation. An eminent personage, however, he was in many respects, and even a superior genius; but unequal and irregular in his operations. And though not defective in any talent, except that of elocution, the abilities which in him were most admirable, and which most contributed to his marvellous success, were the magnanimous resolution of his enterprises, and his peculiar dexterity in discovering the characters, and practising on the weaknesses, of mankind.

If we survey the moral character of Cromwell with that indulgence which is due to the blindness and infirmities of the human species, we shall not be inclined to load his memory with such violent reproaches as those which his enemies usually throw upon it. Amidst the passions and prejudices of that period, that he should prefer the parliamentary to the royal cause, will not appear extraordinary; since, even at present, some men of sense and knowledge are disposed to think, that the question, with regard to the justice of the quar* *rel, may be regarded as doubtful and uncertain. The murder of the king, the most atrocious of all his actions, was to him covered under a mighty cloud of republican and fanatical illusions; and it is not impossible, but he might believe it, as many others did, the most meritorious action that he could perform. His subsequent usurpation was the effect of necessity, as well as of ambition; nor is it easy to see how the various factions could at that time have been restrained, without a mixture of military and arbitrary authority. The private deportment of Cromwell, as a son, a husband, a father, a friend, is exposed to no considerable censure, if it does not rather merit praise. And, upon the whole, his character does not appear more extraordinary and unusual by the mixture of so much absurdity with so much penetration, than by his tempering such violent ambition and such enraged fanaticism with so much regard to justice and humanity.

Cromwell was in the fifty-ninth year of his age when he died. He was of a robust frame of body, and of a manly, though not of an agreeable aspect. He left only two sons, Richard and Henry; and three daughters; one married to General Fleetwood, another to Lord Fauconberg, a third to Lord Rich. His father died when he was very young. His mother lived till after he was protector; and, contrary to her orders, he buried her with great pomp in Westminster Abbey. She could not be persuaded that his power or person was ever in safety. At every noise which she heard, she exclaimed that her son was murdered; and was never satisfied that he was alive, if she did not receive frequent visits from him. She was a decent woman; and by her frugality and industry had raised and educated a numerous family upon a small fortune. She had even been obliged to set up a brewery at Huntingdon, which she managed to good advantage. Hence Cromwell, in the invectives of that age, is often stigmatized with the name of the brewer. Ludlow, by way of insult, mentions the great accession which he would receive to his royal revenues upon his mother’s death, who possessed a jointure of sixty pounds a year upon his estate. She was of a good family, of the name of Stuart; remotely allied, as is by some supposed, to the royal family.

CHAPTER LXII

THE COMMONWEALTH.

1658.

All the arts of Cromwell’s policy had been so often practised, that they began to lose their effect; and his power, instead of being confirmed by time and success, seemed every day to become more uncertain and precarious. His friends the most closely connected with him, and his counsellors the most trusted, were entering into cabals against his authority; and with all his penetration into the characters of men, he could not find any ministers on whom he could rely. Men of probity and honor, he knew, would not submit to be the instruments of a usurpation violent and illegal: those who were free from the restraint of principle, might betray, from interest, that cause in which, from no better motives, they had enlisted themselves. Even those on whom he conferred any favor, never deemed the recompense an equivalent for the sacrifices which they made to obtain it: whoever was refused any demand, justified his anger by the specious colors of conscience and of duty. Such difficulties surrounded the protector, that his dying at so critical a time is esteemed by many the most fortunate circumstance that ever attended him; and it was thought, that all his courage and dexterity could not much longer have extended his usurped administration.

But when that potent hand was removed which conducted the government, every one expected a sudden dissolution of the unwieldy and ill-jointed fabric. Richard, a young man of no experience, educated in the country, accustomed to a retired life, unacquainted with the officers, and unknown to them, recommended by no military exploits, endeared by no familiarities, could not long, it was thought, maintain that authority which his father had acquired by so many valorous achievements and such signal successes. And when it was observed, that he possessed only the virtues of private life, which in his situation were so many vices; that indolence, incapacity, irresolution, attended his facility and good nature, the various hopes of men were excited by the expectation of some great event or revolution. For some time, however, the public was disappointed in this opinion. The council recognized the succession of Richard: Fleetwood, in whose favor it was supposed, Cromwell had formerly made a will, renounced all claim or pretension to the protectorship: Henry, Richard's brother, who governed Ireland with popularity, insured him the obedience of that kingdom: Monk, whose authority was well established in Scotland, being much attached to the family of Cromwell, immediately proclaimed the new protector: the army, every where, the fleet, acknowledged his title: above ninety addresses, from the counties and most considerable corporations, congratulated him on his accession, in all the terms of dutiful allegiance: foreign ministers were forward in paying him the usual compliments: and Richard, whose moderate, unambitious character never would have led him to contend for empire, was tempted to accept of so rich an inheritance, which seemed to be tendered to him by the consent of all mankind.

It was found necessary to call a parliament, in order to furnish supplies, both for the ordinary administration, and for fulfilling those engagements with foreign princes, particularly Sweden, into which the late protector had entered. In hopes of obtaining greater influence in elections, the ancient right was restored to all the small boroughs; and the counties were allowed no more than their usual members.

1659.

The house of peers, or the other house, consisted of the same persons that had been appointed by Oliver.

All the commons, at first, signed without hesitation an engagement not to alter the present government. They next proceeded to examine the humble petition and advice; and after great opposition and many vehement debates, it was at length, with much difficulty, carried by the court party to confirm it. An acknowledgment, too, of the authority of the other house, was extorted from them; though it was resolved not to treat this house of peers with any greater respect than they should return to the commons. A declaration was also made, that the establishment of the other house should nowise prejudice the right of such of the ancient peers as had from the beginning of the war adhered to the parliament. But in all these proceedings, the opposition among the commons was so considerable, and the debates were so much prolonged, that all business was retarded, and great alarm given to the partisans of the young protector.

But there was another quarter from which greater dangers were justly apprehended. The most considerable officers of the army, and even Fleetwood, brother-in-law to the protector, were entering into cabals against him. No character in human society is more dangerous than that of the fanatic; because, if attended with weak judgment, he is exposed to the suggestions of others; if supported by more discernment, he is entirely governed by his own illusions, which sanctify his most selfish views and passions. Fleetwood was of the former species; and as he was extremely addicted to a republic, and even to the fifth monarchy or dominion of the saints, it was easy for those who had insinuated themselves into his confidence, to instil disgusts against the dignity of protector. The whole republican party in the army, which was still considerable, Fitz, Mason, Moss, Farley, united themselves to that general. The officers, too, of the same party, whom Cromwell had discarded, Overton, Ludlow, Rich, Okey, Alured, began to appear, and to recover that authority which had been only for a time suspended. A party, likewise, who found themselves eclipsed in Richard’s favor, Sydenham, Kelsey, Berry, Haines, joined the cabal of the others. Even Desborow, the protector’s uncle, lent his authority to that faction. But above all, the intrigues of Lambert, who was now roused from his retreat, inflamed all those dangerous humors, and threatened the nation with some great convulsion. The discontented officers established their meetings in Fleetwood’s apartments; and because he dwelt in Wallingford House, the party received a denomination from that place.

Richard, who possessed neither resolution nor penetration, was prevailed on to give an unguarded consent for calling a general council of officers, who might make him proposals, as they pretended, for the good of the army. No sooner were they assembled than they voted a remonstrance. They there lamented, that the good old cause, as they termed it, that is, the cause for which they had engaged against the late king, was entirely neglected; and they proposed as a remedy, that the whole military power should be intrusted to some person in whom they might all confide. The city militia, influenced by two aldermen, Tichburn and Ireton, expressed the same resolution of adhering to the good old cause.

The protector was justly alarmed at those movements among the officers. The persons in whom he chiefly confided, were all of them, excepting

Broghill, men of civil characters and professions; Fiennes, Thurloe, Whitlocke, Wolseley, who could only assist him with their advice and opinion. He possessed none of those arts which were proper to gain an enthusiastic army. Murmurs being thrown out against some promotions which he had made, “Would you have me,” said he, “prefer none but the godly? Here is Dick Ingoldsby,” continued he, “who can neither pray nor preach; yet will I trust him before ye all.” [1] This imprudence gave great offence to the pretended saints. The other qualities of the protector were correspondent to these sentiments: he was of a gentle, humane, and generous disposition. Some of his party offering to put an end to those intrigues by the death of Lambert, he declared that he would not purchase power or dominion by such sanguinary measures.

The parliament was no less alarmed at the military cabals. They voted that there should be no meeting or general council of officers, except with the protector’s consent, or by his orders. This vote brought affairs immediately to a rupture. The officers hastened to Richard, and demanded of him the dissolution of the parliament. Desborow, a man of a clownish and brutal nature, threatened him, if he should refuse compliance. The protector wanted the resolution to deny, and possessed little ability to resist. The parliament was dissolved; and by the same act, the protector was by every one considered as effectually dethroned. Soon after, he signed his demission in form.

Henry, the deputy of Ireland, was endowed with the same moderate disposition as Richard; but as he possessed more vigor and capacity, it was apprehended that he might make resistance. His popularity in Ireland was great; and even his personal authority, notwithstanding his youth, was considerable. Had his ambition been very eager, he had, no doubt, been able to create disturbance: but being threatened by Sir Hardress Waller, Colonel John Jones, and other officers, he very quietly resigned his command, and retired to England. He had once entertained thoughts, which he had not resolution to execute, of proclaiming the king in Dublin. [2]

* Ludlow.

* * Carte’s Collections, vol. ii. .

Thus fell, suddenly and from an enormous height, but, by a rare fortune, without any hurt or injury, the family of the Cromwells. Richard continued to possess an estate, which was moderate, and burdened too with a large debt, which he had contracted for the interment of his father. After the restoration, though he remained unmolested, he thought proper to travel for some years; and at Pezenas, in Languedoc, he was introduced under a borrowed name to the prince of Conti. That prince, talking of English affairs, broke out into admiration of Cromwell's courage and capacity. "But as for that poor, pitiful fellow Richard," said he, "what has become of him? How could he be such a blockhead as to reap no greater benefit from all his father's crimes and successes?" Richard extended his peaceful and quiet life to an extreme old age, and died not till the latter end of Queen Anne's reign. His social virtues, more valuable than the greatest capacity, met with a recompense more precious than noisy fame, and more suitable — contentment and tranquillity.

The council of officers, now possessed of supreme authority, deliberated what form of government they should establish. Many of them seemed inclined to exercise the power of the sword in the most open manner; but as it was apprehended, that the people would with great difficulty be induced to pay taxes levied by arbitrary will and pleasure, it was agreed to preserve the shadow of civil administration, and to revive the long parliament, which had been expelled by Cromwell. That assembly could not be dissolved, it was asserted, but by their own consent; and violence had interrupted, but was not able to destroy, their right to government. The officers also expected, that as these members had sufficiently felt their own weakness, they would be contented to act in subordination to the military commanders, and would thenceforth allow all the authority to remain where the power was so visibly vested.

The officers applied to Lenthal, the speaker, and proposed to him, that the parliament should resume their seats. Lenthal was of a low, timid spirit; and being uncertain what issue might attend these measures, was desirous of evading the proposal. He replied, that he could by no means comply with the desire of the officers; being engaged in a business of far greater importance to himself, which he could not omit on any account, because it concerned the salvation of his own soul. The officers pressed him to tell what it might be. He was preparing, he said, to participate of the Lord's supper, which he resolved to take next Sabbath. They insisted, that mercy was preferable to sacrifice; and that he could not better prepare himself for that great duty, than by contributing so the public service. All their remonstrances had no effect.

However, on the appointed day, the speaker, being informed that a quorum of the house was likely to meet, thought proper, notwithstanding the salvation of his soul, as Ludlow observes, to join them; and the house immediately proceeded upon business. The secluded members attempted, but in vain, to resume their seats among them.

The numbers of this parliament were small, little exceeding seventy members: the authority in the nation, ever since they had been purged by the army, was extremely diminished; and, after their expulsion, had been totally annihilated; but being all of them men of violent ambition, some of them men of experience and capacity, they were resolved, since they enjoyed the title of the supreme authority, and observed that some appearance of a parliament was requisite for the purposes of the army, not to act a subordinate part to those who acknowledged themselves their servants. They chose a council, in which they took care that the officers of Wallingford House should not be the majority: they appointed Fleetwood lieutenant-general, but inserted in his commission, that it should only continue during the pleasure of the house: they chose seven persons, who should nominate to such commands as became vacant; and they voted, that all commissions should be received from the speaker, and be signed by him in the name of the house. These precautions, the tendency of which was visible, gave great disgust to the general officers; and their discontent would immediately have broken out into some resolution fatal to the parliament, had it not been checked by the apprehensions of danger from the common enemy.

The bulk of the nation consisted of royalists and Presbyterians; and to both these parties the dominion of the pretended parliament had ever been to the last degree odious. When that assembly was expelled by Cromwell, contempt had succeeded to hatred; and no reserve had been used in expressing the utmost derision against the impotent ambition of these usurpers. Seeing them reinstated in authority, all orders of men felt the highest indignation; together with apprehensions, lest such tyrannical rulers should exert their power by taking vengeance upon their enemies, who had so openly insulted them. A secret reconciliation, therefore, was made between the rival parties; and it was agreed, that, burying former enmities in oblivion, all efforts should be used for the overthrow of the rump; so they called the parliament, in allusion to that part of the animal body. The Presbyterians, sensible from experience that their passion for liberty, how ever laudable, had carried them into unwarrantable excesses were willing to lay aside ancient jealousies, and at all hazards to restore the royal family. The nobility, the gentry, bent their passionate endeavors to the same enterprise, by which alone they could be redeemed from slavery. And no man was so remote from party, so indifferent to public good, as not to feel the most ardent wishes for the dissolution of that tyranny, which, whether the civil or the military part of it were considered, appeared equally oppressive and ruinous to the nation.

Mordaunt, who had so narrowly escaped on his trial before the high court of justice, seemed rather animated than daunted with past danger; and having by his resolute behavior obtained the highest confidence of the royal party, he was now become the centre of all their conspiracies. In many counties, a resolution was taken to rise in arms. Lord Willoughby of Parham and Sir Horatio Townshend undertook to secure Lynne. General Massey engaged to seize Gloucester: Lord Newport, Littleton, and other gentlemen, conspired to take possession of Shrewsbury; Sir George Booth of Chester; Sir Thomas Middleton of North Wales; Arundel, Pollar, Granville, Trelawney, of Plymouth and Exeter. A day was appointed for the execution of all these enterprises. And the king, attended by the duke of York, had secretly arrived at Calais, with a resolution of putting himself at the head of his loyal subjects. The French court had promised to supply him with a small body of forces, in order to countenance the insurrections of the English.

This combination was disconcerted by the infidelity of Sir Richard Willis. That traitor continued with the parliament the same correspondence which he had begun with Cromwell. He had engaged to reveal all conspiracies, so far as to destroy their effect; but reserved to himself, if he pleased, the power of concealing the conspirators. He took care never to name any of the old genuine cavaliers, who had zealously adhered, and were resolved still to adhere, to the royal cause in every fortune. These men he esteemed; these he even loved. He betrayed only the new converts among the Presbyterians, or such lukewarm royalists as, discouraged with their disappointments, were resolved to expose themselves to no more hazards; a lively proof how impossible it is, even for the most corrupted minds, to divest themselves of all regard to morality and social duty.

Many of the conspirators in the different counties were thrown into prison: others, astonished at such symptoms of secret treachery, left their houses, or remained quiet: the most tempestuous weather prevailed during the whole time appointed for the rendezvouses; insomuch that some found it impossible to join their friends, and others were dismayed with fear and superstition at an incident so unusual during the summer season. Of all the projects, the only one which took effect, was that of Sir George Booth for the seizing of Chester. The earl of Derby, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Mr. Lee, Colonel Morgan, entered into this enterprise. Sir William Middleton joined Booth with some troops from North Wales; and the malecontents were powerful enough to subdue all in that neighborhood who ventured to oppose them. In their declaration they made no mention of the king; they only demanded a free and full parliament.

The parliament was justly alarmed. How combustible the materials, they well knew; and the fire was now fallen among them. Booth was of a family eminently Presbyterian; and his conjunction with the royalists they regarded as a dangerous symptom. They had many officers whose fidelity they could more depend on than that of Lambert; but there was no one in whose vigilance and capacity they reposed such confidence. They commissioned him to suppress the rebels. He made incredible haste. Booth imprudently ventured himself out of the walls of Chester, and exposed, in the open field, his raw troops against these hardy veterans. He was soon routed and taken prisoner. His whole army was dispersed. And the parliament had no further occupation than to fill all the jails with their open or secret enemies. Designs were even entertained of transporting the loyal families to Barbadoes, Jamaica, and the other colonies, lest they should propagate in England children of the same malignant affections with themselves.

This success hastened the ruin of the parliament. Lambert, at the head of a body of troops, was no less dangerous to them than Booth. A thousand pounds, which they sent him to buy a jewel, were employed by him in liberalities to his officers. At his instigation, they drew up a petition, and transmitted it to Fleetwood, a weak man, and an honest, if sincerity in folly deserve that honorable name. The import of this petition was, that Fleetwood should be made commander-in-chief, Lambert major-general, Desborow lieutenant-general of the horse, Monk major-general of the foot.

To which a demand was added, that no officer should be dismissed from his command but by a court martial.

The parliament, alarmed at the danger, immediately cashiered Lambert, Desborow, Berry, Clarke, Barrow, Kelsey, Cobbet. Sir Arthur Hazelrig proposed the impeachment of Lambert for high treason. Fleetwood's commission was vacated, and the command of the army was vested in seven persons, of whom that general was one. The parliament voted, that they would have no more general officers. And they declared it high treason to levy any money without consent of parliament.

But these votes were feeble weapons in opposition to the swords of the soldiery. Lambert drew some troops together, in order to decide the controversy. Okey, who was leading his regiment to the assistance of the parliament, was deserted by them. Morley and Moss brought their regiments into Palace-yard, resolute to oppose the violence of Lambert. But that artful general knew an easy way of disappointing them. He placed his soldiers in the streets which led to Westminster Hall. When the speaker came in his coach, he ordered the horses to be turned, and very civilly conducted him home. The other members were in like manner intercepted. And the two regiments in Palace-yard, observing that they were exposed to derision, peaceably retired to their quarters. A little before this bold enterprise, a solemn fast had been kept by the army; and it is remarked, that this ceremony was the usual prelude to every signal violence which they committed.

The officers found themselves again invested with supreme authority, of which they intended forever to retain the substance, however they might bestow on others the empty shadow or appearance. They elected a committee of twenty-three persons, of whom seven were officers. These they pretended to invest with sovereign authority; and they called them a "committee of safety." They spoke every where of summoning a parliament chosen by the people; but they really took some steps towards assembling a military parliament, composed of officers elected from every regiment in the service. [1]

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* Ludlow.

Throughout the three kingdoms there prevailed nothing but the melancholy fears, to the nobility and gentry of a bloody massacre and extermination; to the rest of the people, of perpetual servitude beneath those sanctified robbers, whose union and whose divisions would be equally destructive and who, under pretence of superior illuminations, would soon extirpate, if possible, all private morality, as they had already done all public law and justice, from the British dominions.

During the time that England continued in this distracted condition, the other kingdoms of Europe were hastening towards a composure of those differences by which they had so long been agitated. The parliament, while it preserved authority, instead of following the imprudent politics of Cromwell, and lending assistance to the conquering Swede, embraced the maxims of the Dutch commonwealth, and resolved, in conjunction with that state, to mediate by force an accommodation between the northern crowns. Montague was sent with a squadron to the Baltic, and carried with him, as ambassador, Algernon Sidney, the celebrated republican. Sidney found the Swedish monarch employed in the siege of Copenhagen, the capital of his enemy; and was highly pleased that, with a Roman arrogance, he could check the progress of royal victories, and display in so signal a manner the superiority of freedom above tyranny. With the highest indignation, the ambitious prince was obliged to submit to the imperious mediation of the two commonwealths. “It is cruel,” said he, “that laws should be prescribed me by parricides and pedlers.” But his whole army was enclosed in an island, and might be starved by the combined squadrons of England and Holland. He was obliged therefore to quit his prey, when he had so nearly gotten possession of it; and having agreed to a pacification with Denmark, he retired into his own country, where he soon after died.

The wars between France and Spain were also concluded by the treaty of the Pyrenees. These animosities had long been carried on between the rival states, even while governed by a sister and brother, who cordially loved and esteemed each other. But politics, which had so long prevailed over these friendly affections, now at last yielded to their influence; and never was the triumph more full and complete. The Spanish Low Countries, if not every part of that monarchy, lay almost entirely at the mercy of its enemy. Broken armies, disordered finances, slow and irresolute counsels by these resources alone were the dispersed provinces of Spain defended against the vigorous power of France. But the queen regent, anxious for the fate of her brother, employed her authority with the cardinal to stop the progress of the French conquests, and put an end to a quarrel which, being commenced by ambition, and attended with victory, was at last concluded with moderation.

The young monarch of France, though aspiring and warlike in his character, was at this time entirely occupied in the pleasures of love and gallantry, and had passively resigned the reins of empire into the hands of his politic minister. And he remained an unconcerned spectator, while an opportunity for conquest was parted with, which he never was able, during the whole course of his active reign, fully to retrieve.

The ministers of the two crowns, Mazarine and Don Louis de Haro, met at the foot of the Pyrenees, in the Isle of Pheasants, a place which was supposed to belong to neither kingdom. The negotiation being brought to an issue by frequent conferences between the ministers, the monarchs themselves agreed to a congress; and these two splendid courts appeared in their full lustre amidst those savage mountains. Philip brought his daughter, Mary Therese, along with him; and giving her in marriage to his nephew Louis, endeavored to cement by this new tie the incompatible interests of the two monarchies. The French king made a solemn renunciation of every succession which might accrue to him in right of his consort; a vain formality, too weak to restrain the ungoverned ambition of princes.

The affairs of England were in so great disorder, that it was not possible to comprehend that kingdom in the treaty, or adjust measures with a power which was in such incessant fluctuation. The king, reduced to despair by the failure of all enterprises for his restoration, was resolved to try the weak resource of foreign succors; and he went to the Pyrenees at the time when the two ministers were in the midst of their negotiations. Don Louis received him with that generous civility peculiar to his nation; and expressed great inclination, had the low condition of Spain allowed him, to give assistance to the distressed monarch. The cautious Mazarine, pleading the alliance of France with the English commonwealth, refused even to see him; and though the king offered to marry the cardinal's niece, [1] he could for the present obtain nothing but empty profusions of respect and protestations of services. The condition of that monarch, to all the world, seemed totally desperate.

His friends had been baffled in every attempt for his service: the scaffold had often streamed with the blood of the more active royalists: the spirits of many were broken with tedious imprisonments: the estates of all were burdened by the fines and confiscations which had been levied upon them:

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* King James's Memoirs.

no one durst openly avow himself of that party: and so small did their number seem to a superficial view, that, even should the nation recover its liberty, which was deemed nowise probable, it was judged uncertain what form of government it would embrace. But amidst all these gloomy prospects, fortune, by a surprising revolution, was now paving the way for the king to mount, in peace and triumph, the throne of his ancestors. It was by the prudence and loyalty of General Monk that this happy change was at last accomplished.

George Monk, to whom the fate was reserved of reëstablishing monarchy, and finishing the bloody dissensions of three kingdoms, was the second son of a family in Devonshire, ancient and honorable, but lately, from too great hospitality and expense, somewhat fallen to decay. He betook himself in early youth to the profession of arms; and was engaged in the unfortunate expeditions to Cadiz and the Isle of Rhé. After England had concluded peace with all her neighbors, he sought military experience in the Low Countries, the great school of war to all the European nations; and he rose to the command of a company under Lord Goring. This company consisted of two hundred men, of whom a hundred were volunteers, often men of family and fortune, sometimes noblemen, who lived upon their own income in a splendid manner: such a military turn at that time prevailed among the English.

When the sound of war was first heard in this island, Monk returned to England, partly desirous of promotion in his native country, partly disgusted with some ill usage from the states, of which he found reason to complain. Upon the Scottish pacification, he was employed by the earl of Leicester against the Irish rebels; and having obtained a regiment, was soon taken notice of for his military skill, and for his calm and deliberate valor. Without ostentation, expense, or caresses, merely by his humane and equal temper, he gained the good will of the soldiery; who, with a mixture of familiarity and affection, usually called him “honest George Monk,” an honorable appellation, which they still continued to him even during his greatest elevation. He was remarkable for his moderation in party; and while all around him were inflamed into rage against the opposite faction, he fell under suspicion from the candor and tranquillity of his behavior. When the Irish army was called over into England, surmises of this kind had been so far credited, that he had even been suspended from his command, and ordered to Oxford, that he might answer the charge laid against him. His established character for truth and sincerity here stood him in great stead; and upon his earnest protestations and declarations, he was soon restored to his regiment, which he joined at the siege of Nantwich. The day after his arrival, Fairfax attacked and defeated the royalists commanded by Biron, and took Colonel Monk prisoner. He was sent to the Tower, where he endured, above two years, all the rigors of poverty and confinement. The king, however, was so mindful as to send him, notwithstanding his own difficulties, a present of one hundred guineas; but it was not till after the royalists were totally subdued that he recovered his liberty. Monk, however distressed, had always refused the most inviting offers from the parliament: but Cromwell, sensible of his merit, having solicited him to engage in the wars against the Irish, who were considered as rebels both by king and parliament, he was not unwilling to repair his broken fortunes by accepting a command which, he flattered himself, was reconcilable to the strictest principles of honor. Having once engaged with the parliament, he was obliged to obey orders; and found himself necessitated to fight both against the marquis of Ormond in Ireland, and against the king himself in Scotland. Upon the reduction of the latter kingdom, Monk was left with the supreme command; and by the equality and justice of his administration, he was able to give contentment to that restless people, now reduced to subjection by a nation whom they hated. No less acceptable was his authority to the officers and soldiers; and foreseeing that the good will of the army under his command might some time be of great service to him, he had with much care and success cultivated their friendship.

The connections which he had formed with Cromwell, his benefactor, preserved him faithful to Richard, who had been enjoined by his father to follow in every thing the directions of General Monk. When the long parliament was restored, Monk, who was not prepared for opposition, acknowledged their authority, and was continued in his command, from which it would not have been safe to attempt dislodging him. After the army had expelled the parliament, he protested against the violence, and resolved, as he pretended, to vindicate their invaded privileges. Deeper designs, either in the king’s favor or his own, were from the beginning suspected to be the motive of his actions.

A rivalship had long subsisted between him and Lambert; and every body saw the reason why he opposed the elevation of that ambitious general, by whose success his own authority, he knew, would soon be subverted. But little friendship had ever subsisted between him and the parliamentary leaders; and it seemed nowise probable that he intended to employ his industry, and spend his blood, for the advancement of ene enemy above another. How early he entertained designs for the king’s restoration, we know not with certainty: it is likely that, as soon as Richard was deposed, he foresaw that, without such an expedient, it would be impossible ever to bring the nation to a regular settlement. His elder and younger brothers were devoted to the royal cause: the Granvilles, his near relations, and all the rest of his kindred, were in the same interests: he himself was intoxicated with no fumes of enthusiasm, and had maintained no connections with any of the fanatical tribe. His early engagements had been with the king; and he had left that service without receiving any disgust from the royal family. Since he had enlisted himself with the opposite party, he had been guilty of no violence or rigor which might render him obnoxious. His return, therefore, to loyalty, was easy and open; and nothing could be supposed to counterbalance his natural propensity to that measure, except the views of his own elevation, and the prospect of usurping the same grandeur and authority which had been assumed by Cromwell. But from such exorbitant, if not impossible projects, the natural tranquillity and moderation of his temper, the calmness and solidity of his genius, not to mention his age, now upon the decline, seem to have set him at a distance. Cromwell himself, he always asserted, [1] could not long have maintained his usurpation; and any other person, even equal to him in genius, it was obvious, would now find it more difficult to practise arts of which every one from experience was sufficiently aware. It is more agreeable, therefore, to reason as well as candor, to suppose, that Monk, as soon as he put himself in motion, had entertained views of effecting the king’s restoration; nor ought any objections, derived from his profound silence even to Charles himself, to be regarded as considerable. His temper was naturally reserved; his circumstances required dissimulation; the king, he knew, was surrounded with spies and traitors; and, upon the whole, it seems hard to interpret that conduct which ought to exalt our idea of his prudence, as a disparagement of his probity.

* Gumble’s Life of Monk, .

Sir John Granville, hoping that the general would engage in the king’s service, sent into Scotland his younger brother, a clergyman, Dr. Monk, who carried him a letter and invitation from the king. When the doctor arrived, he found that his brother was then holding a council of officers, and was not to be seen for some hours. In the mean time, he was received and entertained by Price, the general’s chaplain, a man of probity, as well as a partisan of the king’s. The doctor, having an entire confidence in the chaplain, talked very freely to him about the object of his journey, and engaged him, if there should be occasion, to second his applications. At last, the general arrives; the brothers embrace; and after some preliminary conversation, the doctor opens his business. Monk interrupted him, to know whether he had ever before to any body mentioned the subject. “To nobody,” replied his brother, “but to Price, whom I know to be entirely in your confidence.” The general, altering his countenance, turned the discourse; and would enter into no further confidence with him, but sent him away with the first opportunity. He would not trust his own brother the moment he knew that he had disclosed the secret, though to a man whom he himself could have trusted. [1]

* Lord Lansdowne’s Defence of General Monk.

His conduct in all other particulars was full of the same reserve and prudence; and no less was requisite for effecting the difficult work which he had undertaken. All the officers in his army of whom he entertained any suspicion, he immediately cashiered; Cobbet, who had been sent by the committee of safety, under pretence of communicating their resolutions to Monk, but really with a view of debauching his army, he committed to custody: he drew together the several scattered regiments: he summoned an assembly somewhat resembling a convention of states; and having communicated to them his resolution of marching into England, he received a seasonable, though no great supply of money.

Hearing that Lambert was advancing northward with his army, Monk sent Cloberry and two other commissioners to London, with large professions of his inclination to peace, and with offers of terms for an accommodation. His chief aim was to gain time, and relax the preparations of his enemies. The committee of safety fell into the snare. A treaty was signed by Monk’s commissioners; but he refused to ratify it, and complained that they had exceeded their powers. He desired, however, to enter into a new negotiation at Newcastle. The committee willingly accepted this fallacious offer.

Meanwhile these military sovereigns found themselves surrounded on all hands with inextricable difficulties. The nation had fallen into total anarchy; and by refusing the payment of all taxes, reduced the army to the greatest necessities. While Lambert's forces were assembling at Newcastle, Hazelrig and Morley took possession of Portsmouth, and declared for the parliament. A party, sent to suppress them, was persuaded by their commander to join in the same declaration. The city apprentices rose in a tumult, and demanded a free parliament. Though they were suppressed by Colonel Hewson, a man who from the profession of a cobbler had risen to a high rank in the army, the city still discovered symptoms of the most dangerous discontent. It even established a kind of separate government, and assumed the supreme authority within itself. Admiral Lawson with his squadron came into the river, and declared for the parliament. Hazelrig and Morley, hearing of this important event, left Portsmouth, and advanced towards London. The regiments near that city, being solicited by their old officers, who had been cashiered by the committee of safety, revolted again to the parliament. Desborow's regiment, being sent by Lambert to support his friends, no sooner arrived at St. Albans, than it declared for the same assembly.

Fleetwood's hand was found too weak and unstable to support this ill-founded fabric, which every where around him was falling into ruins. When he received intelligence of any murmurs among the soldiers, he would prostrate himself in prayer, and could hardly be prevailed with to join the troops. Even when among them, he would, in the midst of any discourse, invite them all to prayer, and put himself on his knees before them. If any of his friends exhorted him to more vigor, they could get no other answer than, that God had spitten in his face, and would not hear him. Men now ceased to wonder why Lambert had promoted him to the office of general, and had contented himself with the second command in the army.

Lenthal, the speaker, being invited by the officers, again assumed authority, and summoned together the parliament, which twice before had been expelled with so much reproach and ignominy. As soon as assembled, they repealed their act against the payment of excise and customs; they appointed commissioners for assigning quarters to the army; and, without taking any notice of Lambert, they sent orders to the forces under his command immediately to repair to those quarters which were appointed them.

1660.

Lambert was now in a very disconsolate condition. Monk, he saw, had passed the Tweed at Coldstream, and was advancing upon him. His own soldiers deserted him in great multitudes, and joined the enemy. Lord Fairfax, too, he heard, had raised forces behind him, and had possessed himself of York, without declaring his purpose. The last orders of the parliament so entirely stripped him of his army, that there remained not with him above a hundred horse: all the rest went to their quarters with quietness and resignation; and he himself was, some time after, arrested and committed to the Tower. The other officers, who had formerly been cashiered by the parliament, and who had resumed their commands that they might subdue that assembly, were again cashiered and confined to their houses. Sir Harry Vane and some members who had concurred with the committee of safety, were ordered into a like confinement. And the parliament now seemed to be again possessed of more absolute authority than ever, and to be without any danger of opposition or control.

The republican party was at this time guided by two men, Hazelrig and Vane, who were of opposite characters, and mortally hated each other. Hazelrig, who possessed greater authority in the parliament, was haughty, imperious, precipitate, vainglorious; without civility, without prudence; qualified only by his noisy, pertinacious obstinacy to acquire an ascendant in public assemblies. Vane was noted in all civil transactions for temper, insinuation, address, and a profound judgment; in all religious speculations, for folly and extravagance. He was a perfect enthusiast; and fancying that he was certainly favored with inspiration, he deemed himself, to speak in the language of the times, to be a *man above ordinances*, and, by reason of his perfection, to be unlimited and unrestrained by any rules which govern inferior mortals. These whimseys, mingling with pride, had so corrupted his excellent understanding, that sometimes he thought himself the person deputed to reign on earth for a thousand years over the whole congregation of the faithful. [1]

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* Clarendon.

Monk, though informed of the restoration of the parliament, from whom he received no orders, still advanced with his army, which was near six thousand men: the scattered forces in England were above five times more numerous. Fairfax, who had resolved to declare for the king, not being able to make the general open his intentions, retired to his own house in Yorkshire. In all counties through which Monk passed, the prime gentry flocked to him with addresses, expressing their earnest desire that he would be instrumental in restoring the nation to peace and tranquillity, and to the enjoyment of those liberties which by law were their birthright, but of which, during so many years, they had been fatally bereaved; and that, in order to this salutary purpose, he would prevail, either for the restoring of those members who had been secluded before the king's death, or for the election of a new parliament, who might legally and by general consent again govern the nation. Though Monk pretended not to favor these addresses, that ray of hope which the knowledge of his character and situation afforded, mightily animated all men. The tyranny and the anarchy which now equally oppressed the kingdom; the experience of past distractions, the dread of future convulsions, the indignation against military usurpation, against sanctified hypocrisy; all these motives had united every party, except the most desperate, into ardent wishes for the king's restoration, the only remedy for all these fatal evils.

Scot and Robinson were sent as deputies by the parliament, under pretence of congratulating the general, but in reality to serve as spies upon him. The city despatched four of their principal citizens to perform like compliments; and at the same time to confirm the general in his inclination to a free parliament, the object of all men's prayers and endeavors. The authority of Monk could scarcely secure the parliamentary deputies from those insults which the general hatred and contempt towards their masters drew from men of every rank and denomination.

Monk continued his march with few interruptions till he reached St. Albans. He there sent a message to the parliament, desiring them to remove from London those regiments which, though they now professed to return to their duty, had so lately offered violence to that assembly. This message was unexpected, and exceedingly perplexed the house. Their fate, they found, must still depend on a mercenary army; and they were as distant as ever from their imaginary sovereignty. However, they found it necessary to comply. The soldiers made more difficulty. A mutiny arose among them.

One regiment in particular, quartered in Somerset House, expressly refused to yield their place to the northern army. But those officers who would gladly on such an occasion have inflamed the quarrel, were absent or in confinement; and for want of leaders, the soldiers were at last, with great reluctance, obliged to submit. Monk with his army took quarters in Westminster.

The general was introduced to the House; and thanks were given him by Lenthal, for the eminent services which he had done his country. Monk was a prudent, not an eloquent speaker. He told the house, that the services which he had been enabled to perform were no more than his duty, and merited not such praises as those with which they were pleased to honor him: that among many persons of greater worth who bore their commission, he had been employed as the instrument of Providence for effecting their restoration; but he considered this service as a step only to more important services, which it was their part to render to the nation: that while on his march, he observed all ranks of men, in all places, to be in earnest expectation of a settlement, after the violent convulsions to which they had been exposed; and to have no prospect of that blessing but from the dissolution of the present parliament, and from the summoning of a new one, free and full, who, meeting without oaths or engagements, might finally give contentment to the nation: that applications had been made to him for that purpose; but that he, sensible of his duty, had still told the petitioners, that the parliament itself, which was now free, and would soon be full, was the best judge of all these measures; and that the whole community ought to acquiesce in their determination: that though he expressed himself in this manner to the people, he must now freely inform the house, that the fewer engagements were exacted, the more comprehensive would their plan prove, and the more satisfaction would it give to the nation: and that it was sufficient for public security, if the fanatical party and the royalists were excluded; since the principles of these factions were destructive either of government or of liberty.

This speech, containing matter which was both agreeable and disagreeable to the house, as well as to the nation, still kept every one in suspense, and upheld that uncertainty in which it seemed the general’s interest to retain the public. But it was impossible for the kingdom to remain long in this doubtful situation: the people, as well as the parliament, pushed matters to a decision. During the late convulsions, the payment of taxes had been interrupted; and though the parliament, upon their assembling, renewed the ordinances for impositions, yet so little reverence did the people pay to those legislators, that they gave very slow and unwilling obedience to their commands. The common council of London flatly refused to submit to an assessment required of them; and declared that, till a free and lawful parliament imposed taxes, they never should deem it their duty to make any payment. This resolution, if yielded to, would immediately have put an end to the dominion of the parliament: they were determined, therefore, upon this occasion, to make at once a full experiment of their own power, and of their general’s obedience.

Monk received orders to march into the city; to seize twelve persons, the most obnoxious to the parliament; to remove the posts and chains from all the streets; and to take down and break the portcullises and gates of the city; and very few hours were allowed him to deliberate upon the execution of these violent orders. To the great surprise and consternation of all men, Monk prepared himself for obedience. Neglecting the entreaties of his friends, the remonstrances of his officers, the cries of the people, he entered the city in a military manner; he apprehended as many as he could of the proscribed persons, whom he sent to the Tower; with all the circumstances of contempt, he broke the gates and portcullises; and having exposed the city to the scorn and derision of all who hated it, he returned in triumph to his quarters in Westminster.

No sooner had the general leisure to reflect, than he found that this last measure, instead of being a continuation of that cautious ambiguity which he had hitherto maintained, was taking party without reserve, and laying himself, as well as the nation, at the mercy of that tyrannical parliament, whose power and long been odious, as their persons contemptible, to all men. He resolved, therefore, before it were too late, to repair the dangerous mistake into which he had been betrayed, and to show the whole world, still more without reserve, that he meant no longer to be the minister of violence and usurpation. After complaining of the odious service in which ha had been employed, he wrote a letter to the house, reproaching them, as well with the new cabals which they had formed with Vane and Lambert, as with the encouragement given to a fanatical petition presented by Praise-God Barebone; and he required them, in the name of the citizens, soldiers, and whole commonwealth, to issue writs within a week, for the filling of their house, and to fix the time for their own dissolution and the assembling of a new parliament. Having despatched this letter, which might be regarded, he thought, as an undoubted pledge of his sincerity, he marched with his army into the city, and desired Allen, the mayor, to summon a common council at Guildhall. He there made many apologies for the indignity which two days before he had been obliged to put upon them; assured them of his perseverance in the measures which he had adopted; and desired that they might mutually plight their faith for a strict union between city and army, in every enterprise for the happiness and settlement of the commonwealth.

It would be difficult to describe the joy and exultation which displayed itself throughout the city, as soon as intelligence was conveyed of this happy measure embraced by the general. The prospect of peace, concord, liberty, justice, broke forth at once from amidst the deepest darkness in which the nation had ever been involved. The view of past calamities no longer presented dismal prognostics of the future: it tended only to enhance the general exultation for those scenes of happiness and tranquillity which all men now confidently promised themselves. The royalists, the Presbyterians, forgetting all animosities, mingled in common joy and transport, and vowed never more to gratify the ambition of false and factious tyrants by their calamitous divisions. The populace more outrageous in their festivity, made the air resound with acclamations, and illuminated every street with signals of jollity and triumph. Applauses of the general were every where intermingled with detestation against the parliament The most ridiculous inventions were adopted, in order to express this latter passion. At every bonfire rumps were roasted; and where these could no longer be found, pieces of flesh were cut into that shape; and the funeral of the parliament (the populace exclaimed) was celebrated by these symbols of hatred and derision.

The parliament, though in the agonies of despair, made still one effort for the recovery of their dominion. They sent a committee with offers to gain the general. He refused to hear them, except in the presence of some of the secluded members. Though several persons, desperate from guilt and fanaticism, promised to invest him with the dignity of supreme magistrate, and to support his government, he would not hearken to such wild proposals. Having fixed a close correspondence with the city, and established its militia in hands whose fidelity could be relied on, he returned with his army to Westminster, and pursued every proper measure for the settlement of the nation. While he still pretended to maintain republican principles, he was taking large steps towards the reëstablishment of the ancient monarchy.

The secluded members, upon the general’s invitation, went to the house, and finding no longer any obstruction, they entered, and immediately appeared to be the majority: most of the Independents left the place. The restored members first repealed all the ordinances by which they had been excluded: they gave Sir George Booth and his party their liberty and estates: they renewed the general’s commission, and enlarged his powers: they fixed an assessment for the support of the fleet and army: and having passed these votes for the present composure of the kingdom, they dissolved themselves, and issued writs for the immediate assembling of a new parliament. This last measure had been previously concerted with the general, who knew that all men, however different in affections, expectations, and designs, united in their detestation of the long parliament.

A council of state was established, consisting of men of character and moderation; most of whom, during the civil wars, had made a great figure among the Presbyterians. The militia of the kingdom was put into such hands as would promote order and settlement. These, conjoined with Monk’s army, which lay united at London, were esteemed a sufficient check on the more numerous, though dispersed army, of whose inclinations there was still much reason to be diffident Monk, however, was every day removing the more obnoxious officers, and bringing the troops to a state of discipline and obedience.

Overton, governor of Hull, had declared his resolution to keep possession of that fortress till the coming of King Jesus, but when Alured produced the authority of parliament for his delivering the place to Colonel Fairfax, he thought proper to comply.

Montague, who commanded the fleet in the Baltic, had entered into the conspiracy with Sir George Booth; and pretending want of provisions, had sailed from the Sound towards the coast of England, with an intention of supporting that insurrection of the royalists. On his arrival, he received the news of Booth’s defeat, and the total failure of the enterprise. The great difficulties to which the parliament was then reduced, allowed them no leisure to examine strictly the reasons which he gave for quitting his station; and they allowed him to retire peaceably to his country house. The council of state now conferred on him, in conjunction with Monk, the command of the fleet; and secured the naval, as well as military force, in hands favorable to the public settlement.

Notwithstanding all these steps which were taking towards the reëstablishment of monarchy, Monk still maintained the appearance of zeal for a commonwealth, and hitherto allowed no canal of correspondence between himself and the king to be opened. To call a free parliament, and to restore the royal family, were visibly, in the present disposition of the kingdom, one and the same measure: yet would not the general declare, otherwise than by his actions, that he had adopted the king's interests; and nothing but necessity extorted at last the confession from him. His silence in the commencement of his enterprise ought to be no objection to his sincerity; since he maintained the same reserve at a time when, consistent with common sense, he could have entertained no other purpose. [1]

* See note AA, at the end of the volume.

There was one Morrice, a gentleman of Devonshire, of a sedentary, studious disposition, nearly related to Monk, and one who had always maintained the strictest intimacy with him. With this friend alone did Monk deliberate concerning that great enterprise which he had projected. Sir John Granville, who had a commission from the king, applied to Morrice for access to the general; but received for answer, that the general desired him to communicate his business to Morrice. Granville, though importunately urged, twice refused to deliver his message to any but Monk himself; and this cautious politician, finding him now a person whose secrecy could be safely trusted, admitted him to his presence, and opened to him his whole intentions. Still he scrupled to commit any thing to writing: he delivered only a verbal message by Granville assuring the king of his services, giving advice for his conduct, and exhorting him instantly to leave the Spanish territories, and retire into Holland. He was apprehensive lest Spain might detain him as a pledge for the recovery of Dunkirk and Jamaica. Charles followed these directions, and very narrowly escaped to Breda. Had he protracted his journey a few hours, he had certainly, under pretence of honor and respect, been arrested by the Spaniards. [1]

Lockhart, who was governor of Dunkirk, and nowise averse to the king's service, was applied to on this occasion. The state of England was set before him, the certainty of the restoration represented, and the prospect of great favor displayed, if he would anticipate the vows of the kingdom, and receive the king into his fortress. Lockhart still replied, that his commission was derived from an English parliament, and he would not open his gates but in obedience to the same authority. [2] This scruple, though in the present emergence it approaches towards superstition, it is difficult for us entirely to condemn.

* Lansdowne, Clarendon.

* * Burnet.

The elections for the new parliament went every where in favor of the king's party. This was one of those popular torrents, where the most indifferent, or even the most averse, are transported with the general passion, and zealously adopt the sentiments of the community to which they belong. The enthusiasts themselves seemed to be disarmed of their fury; and, between despair and astonishment, gave way to those measures which they found it would be impossible for them, by their utmost efforts, to withstand. The Presbyterians and the royalists, being united, formed the voice of the nation, which, without noise, but with infinite ardor, called for the king's restoration. The kingdom was almost entirely in the hands of the former party; and some zealous leaders among them began to renew the demand of those conditions which had been required of the late king in the treaty of Newport: but the general opinion seemed to condemn all those rigorous and jealous capitulations with their sovereign. Harassed with convulsions and disorders, men ardently longed for repose; and were terrified at the mention of negotiations or delays, which might afford opportunity to the seditious army still to breed new confusion. The passion too for liberty, having been carried to such violent extremes, and having produced such bloody commotions, began, by a natural movement, to give place to a spirit of loyalty and obedience; and the public was less zealous in a cause which was become odious, on account of the calamities which had so long attended it. After the legal concessions made by the late king, the constitution seemed to be sufficiently secured; and the additional conditions insisted on, as they had been framed during the greatest ardor of the contest, amounted rather to annihilation than a limitation of monarchy. Above all, the general was averse to the mention of conditions; and resolved, that the crown, which he intended to restore, should be conferred on the king entirely free and unencumbered. Without further scruple, therefore, or jealousy, the people gave their voice in elections for such as they knew to entertain sentiments favorable to monarchy; and all paid court to a party, which they foresaw was soon to govern the nation. Though the parliament had voted, that no one should be elected who had himself, or whose father, had borne arms for the late king, little regard was any where paid to this ordinance. The leaders of the Presbyterians, the earl of Manchester, Lord Fairfax, Lord Robarts, Hollis, Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, Annesley, Lewis, were determined to atone for past transgressions by their present zeal for the royal interests; and from former merits, successes, and sufferings, they had acquired with their party the highest credit and authority.

The affairs of Ireland were in a condition no less favorable to the king. As soon as Monk declared against the English army, he despatched emissaries into Ireland, and engaged the officers in that kingdom to concur with him in the same measures. Lord Broghill, president of Munster, and Sir Charles Coote, president of Connaught, went so far as to enter into a correspondence with the king, and to promise their assistance for his restoration. In conjunction with Sir Theophilus Jones and other officers, they took possession of the government, and excluded Ludlow, who was zealous for the rump parliament, but whom they, pretended to be in a confederacy with the committee of safety. They kept themselves in readiness to serve the king; but made no declarations, till they should see the turn which affairs took in England.

But all these promising views had almost been blasted by an untoward accident. Upon the admission of the secluded members, the republican party, particularly the late king's judges, were seized with the justest despair, and endeavored to infuse the same sentiment into the army. By themselves or their emissaries, they represented to the soldiers, that all those brave actions which had been performed during the war, and which were so meritorious in the eyes of the parliament, would, no doubt, be regarded as the deepest crimes by the royalists, and would expose the army to the severest vengeance: that in vain did that party make professions of moderation and lenity; the king's death, the execution of so many of the nobility and gentry, the sequestration and imprisonment of the rest, were in their eyes crimes so deep, and offences so personal, as must be prosecuted with the most implacable resentment: that the loss of all arrears, and the cashiering of every officer and soldier, were the lightest punishment which must be expected; after the dispersion of the army, no further protection remained to them, either for life or property, but the clemency of enraged victors: and that, even if the most perfect security could be obtained, it were inglorious to be reduced by treachery and deceit to subjection under a foe, who, in the open field, had so often yielded to their superior valor.

After these suggestions had been infused into the army, Lambert suddenly made his escape from the Tower, and threw Monk and the council of state into great consternation. They knew Lambert's vigor and activity; they were acquainted with his popularity in the army; they were sensible that, though the soldiers had lately deserted him, they sufficiently expressed their remorse, and their detestation of those who, by false professions, they found had so egregiously deceived them. It seemed necessary, therefore, to employ the greatest celerity in suppressing so dangerous a foe: Colonel Ingoldsby, who had been one of the late king's judges, but who was now entirely engaged in the royal cause, was despatched after him. He overtook him at Daventry, while he had yet assembled but four troops of horse. One of them deserted him. Another quickly followed the example. He himself, endeavoring to make his escape, was seized by Ingoldsby, to whom he made submissions not suitable to his former character of spirit and valor. Okey, Axtel, Cobbet, Crede, and other officers of that party, were taken prisoners with him. All the roads were full of soldiers hastening to join them. In a few days, they had been formidable. And it was thought, that it might prove dangerous for Monk himself to have assembled any considerable body of his republican army for their suppression: so that nothing could be more happy than the sudden extinction of this rising flame.

When the parliament met, they chose Sir Harbottle Grimstone speaker, a man who, though he had for some time concurred with the late parliament, had long been esteemed affectionate to the king's service. The great dangers incurred during former usurpations, joined to the extreme caution of the general, kept every one in awe; and none dared for some days to make any mention of the king. The members exerted their spirit chiefly in bitter invectives against the memory of Cromwell, and in execrations against the inhuman murder of their late sovereign. At last, the general, having sufficiently sounded their inclinations, gave directions to Annesley, president of the council, to inform them, that one Sir John Granville, a servant of the king’s, had been sent over by his majesty, and was now at the door with a letter to the commons. The loudest acclamations were excited by this intelligence. Granville was called in; the letter, accompanied with a declaration, greedily read: without one moment’s delay, and without a contradictory vote, a committee was appointed to prepare an answer: and in order to spread the same satisfaction throughout the kingdom, it was voted that the letter and declaration should immediately be published.

The people, freed from the state of suspense in which they had so long been held, now changed their anxious hope for the unmixed effusions of joy; and displayed a social triumph and exultation, which no private prosperity, even the greatest, is ever able fully to inspire. Traditions remain of men, particularly of Oughtred, the mathematician, who died of pleasure, when informed of this happy and surprising event. The King’s declaration was well calculated to uphold the satisfaction inspired by the prospect of public settlement. It offered a general amnesty to all persons whatsoever: and that without any exceptions but such as should afterwards be made by parliament: it promised liberty of conscience; and a concurrence in any act of parliament which, upon mature deliberation, should be offered, for insuring that indulgence: it submitted to the arbitration of the same assembly, the inquiry into all grants, purchases, and alienations; and it assured the soldiers of all their arrears, and promised them, for the future, the same pay which they then enjoyed.

The lords, perceiving the spirit by which the kingdom as well as the commons was animated, hastened to reinstate themselves in their ancient authority, and to take their share in the settlement of the nation. They found the doors of their house open; and all were admitted, even such as had formerly been excluded on account of their pretended delinquency.

The two houses attended; while the king was proclaimed, with great solemnity, in Palace Yard, at Whitehall, and at Temple Bar. The commons voted five hundred pounds to buy a jewel for Granville, who had brought them the king’s gracious messages: a present of fifty thousand pounds was conferred on the king, ten thousand pounds on the duke of York, five thousand pounds on the duke of Gloucester. A committee of lords and commons was despatched to invite his majesty to return and take possession of the government. The rapidity with which all these events were conducted was marvellous, and discovered the passionate zeal and entire unanimity of the nation. Such an impatience appeared, and such an emulation, in lords, and commons, and city, who should make the most lively expressions of their joy and duty, that, as the noble historian expresses it, a man could not but wonder where those people dwelt who had done all the mischief, and kept the king so many years from enjoying the comfort and support of such excellent subjects. The king himself said, that it must surely have been his own fault, that he had not sooner taken possession of the throne; since he found every body so zealous in promoting his happy restoration.

The respect of foreign powers soon followed the submission of the king’s subjects. Spain invited him to return to the Low Countries, and embark in some of her maritime towns. France made protestations of affection and regard, and offered Calais for the same purpose. The states general sent deputies with a like friendly invitation. The king resolved to accept of this last offer. The people of the republic bore him a cordial affection; and politics no longer restrained their magistrates from promoting and expressing that sentiment. As he passed from Breda to the Hague, he was attended by numerous crowds, and was received with the loudest acclamations; as if themselves, not their rivals in power and commerce, were now restored to peace and security. The states general in a body, and afterwards the states of Holland apart, performed their compliments with the greatest solemnity: every person of distinction was ambitious of being introduced to his majesty; all ambassadors and public ministers of kings, princes, or states, repaired to him, and professed the joy of their masters in his behalf; so that one would have thought, that from the united efforts of Christendom had been derived this revolution, which diffused every where such universal satisfaction.

The English fleet came in sight of Scheveling. Montague had not waited for orders from the parliament; but had persuaded the officers of themselves to tender their duty to his majesty. The duke of York immediately went on board, and took the command of the fleet as high admiral.

When the king disembarked at Dover, he was met by the general, whom he cordially embraced. Never subject in fact, probably in his intentions, had deserved better of his king and country. In the space of a few months, without effusion of blood, by his cautious and disinterested conduct alone, he had bestowed settlement on three kingdoms, which had long been torn with the most violent convulsions; and having obstinately refused the most inviting conditions offered him by the king, as well as by every party in the kingdom, he freely restored his injured master to the vacant throne. The king entered London on the twenty-ninth of May, which was also his birthday. The fond imaginations of men interpreted as a happy omen the concurrence of two such joyful periods.

At this era, it may be proper to stop a moment, and take a general survey of the age, so far as regards manners, finances, arms, commerce, arts, and sciences. The chief use of history is, that it affords materials for disquisitions of this nature; and it seems the duty of an historian to point out the proper inferences and conclusions.

No people could undergo a change more sudden and entire in their manners, than did the English nation during this period. From tranquillity, concord, submission, sobriety, they passed in an instant to a state of faction, fanaticism, rebellion, and almost frenzy. The violence of the English parties exceeded any thing which we can now imagine: had they continued but a little longer, there was just reason to dread all the horrors of the ancient massacres and proscriptions. The military usurpers, whose authority was founded on palpable injustice, and was supported by no national party, would have been impelled by rage and despair into such sanguinary measures; and if these furious expedients had been employed on one side, revenge would naturally have pushed the other party, after a return of power, to retaliate upon their enemies. No social intercourse was maintained between the parties; no marriages or alliances contracted. The royalists, though oppressed, harassed, persecuted, disdained all affinity with their masters. The more they were reduced to subjection, the greater superiority did they affect above those usurpers, who, by violence and injustice, had acquired an ascendant over them.

The manners of the two factions were as opposite as those of the most distant nations. “Your friends, the cavaliers,” said a parliamentarian to a royalist, “are very dissolute and debauched.” “True,” replied the royalist, “they have the infirmities of men; but your friends, the roundheads, have the vices of devils — tyranny, rebellion, and spiritual pride.” [1] Riot and disorder, it is certain, notwithstanding the good example set them by Charles I., prevailed very much among his partisans. Being commonly men of birth and fortune, to whom excesses are less pernicious than to the vulgar, they were too apt to indulge themselves in all pleasures, particularly those of the table. Opposition to the rigid preciseness of their antagonists increased their inclination to good fellow-ship; and the character of a man of pleasure was affected among them, as a sure pledge of attachment to the church and monarchy. Even when ruined by confiscations and sequestrations, they endeavored to maintain the appearance of a careless and social jollity. “As much as hope is superior to fear,” said a poor and merry cavalier, “so much is our situation preferable to that of our enemies. We laugh while they tremble.”

* Sir Philip Warwick.

The gloomy enthusiasm which prevailed among the parliamentary party, is surely the most curious spectacle presented by any history; and the most instructive, as well as entertaining, to a philosophical mind. All recreations were in a manner suspended by the rigid severity of the Presbyterians and Independents. Horse-races and cock-matches were prohibited as the greatest enormities. [1]

* Killing no Murder

Even bear-baiting was esteemed heathenish and unchristian: the sport of it, not the inhumanity, gave offence. Colonel Hewson, from his pious zeal, marched with his regiment into London, and destroyed all the bears which were kept there for the diversion of the citizens. This adventure seems to have given birth to the fiction of Hudibras. Though the English nation be naturally candid and sincere, hypocrisy prevailed among them beyond any example in ancient or modern times. The religious hypocrisy, it may be remarked, is of a peculiar nature; and being generally unknown to the person himself, though more dangerous, it implies less falsehood than any other species of insincerity. The Old Testament, preferably to the New, was the favorite of all the sectaries. The Eastern poetical style of that composition made it more easily susceptible of a turn which was agreeable to them.

We have had occasion, in the course of this work, to speak of the many sects which prevailed in England: to enumerate them all would be impossible. The Quakers, however, are so considerable, at least so singular, as to merit some attention; and as they renounced by principle the use of arms, they never made such a figure in public transactions as to enter into any part of our narrative.

The religion of the Quakers, like most others, began with the lowest vulgar, and, in its progress, came at last to comprehend people of better quality and fashion. George Fox, born at Drayton, in Lancashire, in 1624, was the founder of this sect. He was the son of a weaver, and was himself bound apprentice to a shoemaker. Feeling a stronger impulse towards spiritual contemplations than towards that mechanical profession, he left his master, and went about the country clothed in a leathern doublet, a dress which he long affected, as well for its singularity as its cheapness. That he might wean himself from sublunary objects, he broke off all connections with his friends and family, and never dwelt a moment in one place; lest habit should beget new connections, and depress the sublimity of his aerial meditations. He frequently wandered into the woods, and passed whole days in hollow trees without company, or any other amusement than his Bible. Having reached that pitch of perfection as to need no other book, he soon advanced to another state of spiritual progress, and began to pay less regard even to that divine composition itself. His own breast, he imagined, was full of the same inspiration which had guided the prophets and apostles themselves; and by this inward light must every spiritual obscurity be cleared, by this living spirit must the dead letter be animated.

When he had been sufficiently consecrated in his own imagination, he felt that the fumes of self-applause soon dissipate, if not continually supplied by the admiration of others; and he began to seek proselytes. Proselytes were easily gained, at a time when all men's affections were turned towards religion, and when the most extravagant modes of it were sure to be most popular. All the forms of ceremony, invented by pride and ostentation, Fox and his disciples, from a superior pride and ostentation, carefully rejected: even the ordinary rites of civility were shunned, as the nourishment of carnal vanity and self-conceit. They would bestow no titles, of distinction: the name of "friend" was the only salutation, with which they indiscriminately accosted every one. To no person would they make a bow, or move their hat, or give any signs of reverence. Instead of that affected adulation introduced into modern tongues, of speaking to individuals as if they were a multitude, they returned to the simplicity of ancient languages; and "thou" and "thee" were the only expressions which, on any consideration, they could be brought to employ.

Dress too, a material circumstance, distinguished the members of this sect. Every superfluity and ornament was carefully retrenched: no plaits to their coat, no buttons to their sleeves; no lace, no ruffles, no embroidery.

Even a button to the hat, though sometimes useful, yet not being always so, was universally rejected by them with horror and detestation.

The violent enthusiasm of this sect, like all high passions, being too strong for the weak nerves to sustain, threw the preachers into convulsions, and shakings, and distortions in their limbs; and they thence receded the appellation of “Quakers.” Amidst the great toleration which was then granted to all sects, and even encouragement given to all innovations, this sect alone suffered persecution. From the fervor of their zeal, the Quakers broke into churches, disturbed public worship, and harassed the minister and audience with railing and reproaches. When carried before a magistrate, they refused him all reverence, and treated him with the same familiarity as if he had been their equal. Sometimes they were thrown into mad-houses, sometimes into prisons; sometimes whipped, sometimes pilloried. The patience and fortitude with which they suffered, begat compassion, admiration, esteem. [1] A supernatural spirit was believed to support them under those sufferings, which the ordinary state of humanity, freed from the illusions of passion, is unable to sustain.

* The following story is told by Whitlocke, . Some Quakers at Hasington, in Northumberland, coming to the minister on the Sabbath day, and speaking to him, the people fell upon the Quakers, and almost killed one or two of them,

who, going out, fell on their knees, and prayed God to pardon the people, who knew not what they did; and afterwards speaking to the people, so convinced them of the evil they had done in beating them, that the country people fell a quarrelling, and beat one another more than they had before beaten the Quakers.

The Quakers crept into the army; but as they preached universal peace, they seduced the military zealots from their profession, and would soon, had they been suffered, have put an end, without any defeat or calamity, to the dominion of the saints. These attempts became a fresh ground of persecution, and a new reason for their progress among the people.

Morals with this sect were carried, or affected to be carried to the same degree of extravagance as religion. Give a Quaker a blow on one cheek, he held up the other: ask his cloak, he gave you his coat also; the greatest interest could not engage him, in any court of judicature, to swear even to the truth: he never asked more for his wares than the precise sum which he was determined to accept. This last maxim is laudable, and continues still to be religiously observed by the sect.

No fanatics ever carried further the hatred to ceremonies forms, orders, rites, and positive institutions. Even baptism and the Lord's supper, by all other sects believed to be interwoven with the very vitals of Christianity, were disdainfully rejected by them. The very Sabbath they profaned. The holiness of churches they derided; and they would give to these sacred edifices no other appellation than that of shops or steeplehouses. No priests were admitted in their sect: every one had received from immediate illumination a character much superior to the sacerdotal. When they met for divine worship, each rose up in his place, and delivered the extemporary inspirations of the Holy Ghost: women also were admitted to teach the brethren, and were considered as proper vehicles to convey the dictates of the spirit. Sometimes a great many preachers were moved to speak at once sometimes a total silence prevailed in their congregations.

Some Quakers attempted to fast forty days, in imitation of Christ; and one of them bravely perished in the experiment. [1] A female Quaker came naked into the church where the protector sat; being moved by the spirit, as she said, to appeal as a sign to the people. A number of them fancied, that the renovation of all things had commenced, and that clothes were to be rejected, together with other superfluities. The sufferings which followed the practice of this doctrine, were a species of persecution not well calculated for promoting it.

James Naylor was a Quaker, noted for blasphemy, or rather madness, in the time of the protectorship. He fancied, that he himself was transformed into Christ, and was become the real savior of the world; and in consequence of this frenzy, he endeavored to imitate many actions of the Messiah related in the evangelists. As he bore a resemblance to the common pictures of Christ, he allowed his beard to grow in a like form: he raised a person from the dead: [2] he was ministered unto by women: [3] he entered Bristol mounted on a horse, (I suppose, from the difficulty in that place of finding an ass:) his disciples spread their garments before him, and cried, "Hosanna to the highest; holy, holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth." When carried before the magistrate, he would give no other answer to all questions than "Thou hast said it." What is remarkable, the parliament thought that the matter deserved their attention. Near ten days they spent in inquiries and debates about him. [4]

* Whitlocke, .

* * Harleian Miscellany, vol. vi. . One Dorcas Barberry made oath before a magistrate, that she had been dead two days, and that Naylor had brought her to life.

* * * Harleian Miscellany, vol. vi.

* * * * Thurloe, vol v. .

They condemned him to be pilloried, whipped, burned in the face, and to have his tongue bored through with a red-hot iron. All these severities he bore with the usual patience. So far his delusion supported him. But the sequel spoiled all. He was sent to Bridewell, confined to hard labor, fed on bread and water, and debarred from all his disciples, male and female. His illusions dissipated; and after some time, he was contented to come out an ordinary man, and return to his usual occupations.

The chief taxes in England, during the time of the commonwealth, were the monthly assessments, the excise, and the customs. The assessments were levied on personal estates as well as on land; [1] and commissioners were appointed in each county for rating the individuals. The highest assessment amounted to one hundred and twenty thousand pounds a month in England; the lowest was thirty-five thousand. The assessments in Scotland were sometimes ten thousand pounds a month; [2] commonly six thousand. Those on Ireland nine thousand. At a medium, this tax might have afforded about a million a year. The excise, during the civil wars, was levied on bread, flesh-meat, as well as beer, ale, strong waters and many other commodities. After the king was subdued bread and flesh-meat were exempted from excise. The customs on exportation were lowered in 1656. [3] In 1650, commissioners were appointed to levy both customs and excises. Cromwell, in 1657, returned to the old practice of farming. Eleven hundred thousand pounds were then offered, both for customs and excise, a greater sum than had ever been levied by the commissioners: [4] the whole of the taxes during that period might at a medium amount to above two millions a year; a sum which, though moderate, much exceeded the revenue of any former king. Sequestrations, compositions, sale of crown and church lands, and of the lands of delinquents, yielded also considerable sums, but very difficult to be estimated. Church lands are said to have been sold for a million.[v*] None of these were ever valued at above ten or eleven years' purchase.[v* *] The estates of delinquents amounted to above two hundred thousand pounds a year. [2] Cromwell died more than two millions in debt; [v* * *] though the parliament had left him in the treasury above five hundred thousand pounds; and in stores, the value of seven hundred thousand pounds.[v* * * *]

* Scobel, .

* * Thurloe, vol. ii. .

* * * Scobel, .

* * * * Thurloe, vol. vi. .

v It appears that the late king's revenue, from 1637 to the meeting of the long parliament, was only nine hundred thousand pounds of which two hundred thousand may be esteemed illegal.

v* Dr Walker, .
v* * Thurloe, vol. i. .
v* * * Thurloe, vol. ii. .
v* * * * Thurloe, vol. vii. .

The committee of danger, in April, 1648, voted to raise the army to forty thousand men. [1] The same year, the pay of the army was estimated at eighty thousand pounds a month. [2] The establishment of the army, in 1652, was, in Scotland, fifteen thousand foot, two thousand five hundred and eighty horse, five hundred and sixty dragoons; in England, four thousand seven hundred foot, two thousand five hundred and twenty horse, garrisons six thousand one hundred and fifty-four. In all, thirty one thousand five hundred and fourteen, besides officers. [3] The army in Scotland was afterwards considerably reduced. The army in Ireland was not much short of twenty thousand men; so that, upon the whole, the commonwealth maintained, in 1652, a standing army of more than fifty thousand men. Its pay amounted to a yearly sum of one million forty-seven thousand seven hundred and fifteen pounds. [4] Afterwards the protector reduced the establishment to thirty thousand men; as appears by the "instrument of government and humble petition and advice.” His frequent enterprises obliged him from time to time to augment them. Richard had on foot in England an army of thirteen thousand two hundred and fifty-eight men, in Scotland nine thousand five hundred and six, in Ireland about ten thousand men. The foot soldiers had commonly a shilling a day.[v*] The horse had two shillings and sixpence; so that many gentlemen and younger brothers of good family enlisted in the protector’s cavalry.[v* *] No wonder that such men were averse from the reëstablishment of civil government, by which, they well knew, they must be deprived of so gainful a profession.

At the time of the battle of Worcester the parliament had on foot about eighty thousand men, partly militia, partly regular forces. The vigor of the commonwealth, and the great capacity of those members who had assumed the government, never at any time appeared so conspicuous.[v* * *]

* Whitlocke, .

* * Whitlocke, .

* * * Journal, 2d December, 1652.

* * * * Journal, 2d December, 1652.

v Journal, 6th of April, 1659.
v* Thurloe, vol. i. ; vol. ii. .
v* * Gumble’s Life of Monk.
v* * * Whitlocke, .

The whole revenue of the public during the protectorship of Richard was estimated at one million eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand seven hundred and seventeen pounds; his annual expenses at two millions two hundred and one thousand five hundred and forty pounds. An additional revenue was demanded from parliament. [1]

The commerce and industry of England increased extremely during the peaceable period of Charles’s reign: the trade to the East Indies and to Guinea became considerable. The English possessed almost the sole trade with Spain. Twenty thousand cloths were annually sent to Turkey. [2] Commerce met with interruption, no doubt, from the civil wars and convulsions which afterwards prevailed; though it soon recovered after the establishment of the commonwealth. The war with the Dutch, by distressing the commerce of so formidable a rival, served to encourage trade in England; the Spanish war was to an equal degree pernicious. All the effects of the English merchants, to an immense value, were confiscated in Spain. The prevalence of democratical principles engaged the country gentlemen to bind their sons apprentices to merchants; [3] and commerce has ever since been more honorable in England than in any other European kingdom. The exclusive companies, which formerly confined trade, were never expressly abolished by any ordinance of parliament during the commonwealth; but as men paid no regard to the prerogative whence the charters of these companies were derived, the monopoly was gradually invaded, and commerce increased by the increase of liberty. Interest in 1650 was reduced to six per cent.

The customs in England, before the civil wars, are said to have amounted to five hundred thousand pounds a year; [4] a sum ten times greater than during the best period in Queen Elizabeth's reign: but there is probably some exaggeration in this matter.

The post-house, in 1653, was farmed at ten thousand pounds a year, which was deemed a considerable sum for the three kingdoms. Letters paid only about half the present postage.

From 1619 to 1638, there had been coined six millions nine hundred thousand and forty-two pounds. From 1638 to 1657, the coinage amounted to seven millions seven hundred and thirty-three thousand five hundred and twenty-one pounds.

* Journal, 7th April, 1659.

* * Strafford's Letters, vol. i. , 423, 430, 467.

* * * Clarendon.

* * * * Lewis Roberts's Treasure of Traffick.

v Happy Future State of England

Dr. Davenant has told us, from the registers of the mint, that, between 1558 and 1659, there had been coined nineteen millions eight hundred and thirty-two thousand four hundred and seventy-six pounds in gold and silver.

The first mention of tea, coffee, and chocolate, is about 1660. [1] Asparagus, artichokes, cauliflower, and a variety of salads, were about the same time introduced into England. [2]

The colony of New England increased by means of the Puritans, who fled thither in order to free themselves from the constraint which Laud and the church party had imposed upon them; and, before the commencement of the civil wars, it is supposed to have contained twenty-five thousand souls. [3] For a like reason, the Catholics, afterwards, who found themselves exposed to many hardships, and dreaded still worse treatment went over to America in great numbers, and settled the colony of Maryland.

Before the civil wars, learning and the fine arts were favored at court, and a good taste began to prevail in the nation. The king loved pictures, sometimes handled the pencil himself, and was a good judge of the art. The pieces of foreign masters were bought up at a vast price; and the value of pictures doubled in Europe by the emulation between Charles and Philip IV. of Spain, who were touched with the same elegant passion. Vandyke was caressed and enriched at court. Inigo Jones was master of the king's buildings; though afterwards persecuted by the parliament, on account of the part which he had in rebuilding St. Paul's, and for obeying some orders of council, by which he was directed to pull down houses, in order to make room for that edifice. Laws, who had not been surpassed by any musician before him, was much beloved by the king, who called him the father of music. Charles was a good judge of writing, and was thought by some more anxious with regard to purity of style than became a monarch. [4]

* Anderson, vol. ii. .

* * Anderson, vol. ii. .

* * * British Empire in America, vol. i. .

* * * * Purnet.

Notwithstanding his narrow revenue, and his freedom from all vanity, he lived in such magnificence, that he possessed four and twenty palaces, all of them elegantly and completely furnished; insomuch that, when he removed from one to another, he was not obliged to transport any thing along with him.

Cromwell, though himself a barbarian was not insensible to literary merit. Usher, notwithstanding his being a bishop, received a pension from him. Marvel and Milton were in his service. Waller, who was his relation, was caressed by him. That poet always said, that the protector himself was not so wholly illiterate as was commonly imagined. He gave a hundred pounds a year to the divinity professor at Oxford; and an historian mentions this bounty as an instance of his love of literature. [1] He intended to have erected a college at Durham for the benefit of the northern counties.

Civil wars, especially when founded on principles of liberty are not commonly unfavorable to the arts of elocution and composition; or rather, by presenting nobler and more interesting objects, they amply compensate that tranquillity of which they bereave the muses. The speeches of the parliamentary orators, during this period, are of a strain much superior to what any former age had produced in England; and the force and compass of our tongue were then first put to trial. It must, however, be confessed, that the wretched fanaticism, which so much infected the parliamentary party, was no less destructive of taste and science, than of all law and order. Gayety and wit were proscribed; human learning despised; freedom of inquiry detested; cant and hypocrisy alone encouraged. It was an article positively insisted on in the preliminaries to the treaty of Uxbridge, that all play-houses should forever be abolished. Sir John Davenant, says Whitlocke, [2] speaking of the year 1658, published an opera, notwithstanding the nicety of the times. All the king’s furniture was put to sale: his pictures, disposed of at very low prices, enriched all the collections in Europe: the cartoons, when complete, were only appraised at three hundred pounds, though the whole collection of the king’s curiosities was sold at above fifty thousand, [3]

* Neale’s History of the Puritans, vol. iv. .

* * Page 639.

* * * Parl. Hist. vol. xix. .

Even the royal palaces were pulled in pieces, and the materials of them sold. The very library and medals at St. James's were intended by the generals to be brought to auction, in order to pay the arrears of some regiments of cavalry quartered near London; but, Seiden, apprehensive of the loss, engaged his friend Whitlocke, then lord-keeper for the commonwealth, to apply for the office of librarian. This expedient saved that valuable collection.

It is, however, remarkable, that the greatest genius by far that shone out in England during this period, was deeply engaged with these fanatics, and even prostituted his pen in theological controversy, in factious disputes, and in justifying the most violent measures of the party. This was John Milton, whose poems are admirable, though liable to some objections; his prose writings disagreeable, though not altogether defective in genius. Nor are all his poems equal: his Paradise Lost, his Comus, and a few others, shine out amidst some flat and insipid compositions. Even in the Paradise Lost, his capital performance, there are very long passages, amounting to near a third of the work, almost wholly destitute of harmony and elegance, nay, of all vigor of imagination. This natural inequality in Milton's genius was much increased by the inequalities in his subject; of which some parts are of themselves the most lofty that can enter into human conception; others would have required the most labored elegance of composition to support them. It is certain that this author, when in a happy mood, and employed on a noble subject, is the most wonderfully sublime of any poet in any language, Homer, and Lucretius, and Tasso not excepted. More concise than Homer, more simple than Tasso, more nervous than Lucretius, had he lived in a later age, and learned to polish some rudeness in his verses; had he enjoyed better fortune, and possessed leisure to watch the returns of genius in himself; he had attained the pinnacle of perfection, and borne away the palm of epic poetry.

It is well known, that Milton never enjoyed in his lifetime the reputation which he deserved. His Paradise Lost was long neglected: prejudices against an apologist for the regicides, and against a work not wholly purged from the cant of former times, kept the ignorant world from perceiving the prodigious merit of that performance. Lord Somers, by encouraging a good edition of it, about twenty years after the author's death, first brought it into request; and Tonson, in his dedication of a smaller edition, speaks of it as a work just beginning to be known. Even during the prevalence of Milton's party, he seems never to have been much regarded, and Whitlocke talks of one Milton, as he calls him, a blind man, who was employed in translating a treaty with Sweden into Latin. These forms of expression are amusing to posterity, who consider how obscure Whitlocke himself though lord-keeper and ambassador, and indeed a man of great abilities and merit, has become in comparison of Milton.

It is not strange that Milton received no encouragement after the restoration: it is more to be admired that he escaped with his life. Many of the cavaliers blamed extremely that lenity towards him, which was so honorable in the king, and so advantageous to posterity. It is said, that he had saved Davenant's life during the protectorship; and Davenant in return afforded him like protection after the restoration; being sensible that men of letters ought always to regard their sympathy of taste as a more powerful band of union, than any difference of party or opinion as a source of animosity. It was during a state of poverty, blindness, disgrace, danger, and old age, that Milton composed his wonderful poem, which not only surpassed all the performances of his contemporaries, but all the compositions which had flowed from his pen during the vigor of his age and the height of his prosperity. This circumstance is not the least remarkable of all those which attend that great genius. He died in 1674, aged sixty-six.

Waller was the first refiner of English poetry, at least of English rhyme; but his performances still abound with many faults, and, what is more material, they contain but feeble and superficial beauties. Gayety, wit, and ingenuity are their ruling character: they aspire not to the sublime; still less to the pathetic. They treat of love, without making us feel any tenderness; and abound in panegyric, without exciting admiration. The panegyric, however, on Cromwell, contains more force than we should expect, from the other compositions of this poet.

Waller was born to an ample fortune, was early introduced to the court, and lived in the best company. He possessed talents for eloquence as well as poetry; and till his death, which happened in a good old age, he was the delight of the house of commons. The errors of his life proceeded more from want of courage, than of honor or integrity. He died in 1687, aged eighty-two.

Cowley is an author extremely corrupted by the bad taste of his age; but had he lived even in the purest times of Greece nor Rome, he must always have been a very indifferent poet. He had no ear for harmony; and his verses are only known to be such by the rhyme which terminates them. In his rugged untenable numbers are conveyed sentiments the most strained and distorted; long-spun allegories, distant allusions, and forced conceits. Great ingenuity, however, and vigor of thought, sometimes break out amidst those unnatural conceptions: a few anacreontics surprise us by their ease and gayety: his prose writings please by the honesty and goodness which they express, and even by their spleen and melancholy. This author was much more praised and admired during his lifetime, and celebrated after his death, than the great Milton. He died in 1667, aged forty-nine.

Sir John Denham, in his Cooper's Hill, (for none of his other poems merit attention,) has a loftiness and vigor which had not before him been attained by any English poet who wrote in rhyme. The mechanical difficulties of that measure retarded its improvement. Shakspeare, whose tragic scenes are sometimes so wonderfully forcible and expressive, is a very indifferent poet when he attempts to rhyme. Precision and neatness are chiefly wanting in Denham. He died in 1688, aged seventy-three.

No English author in that age was more celebrated, both abroad and at home, than Hobbes: in our time, he is much neglected; a lively instance how precarious all reputations founded on reasoning and philosophy. A pleasant comedy, which paints the manners of the age, and exposes a faithful picture of nature, is a durable work, and is transmitted to the latest posterity. But a system, whether physical or metaphysical, commonly owes its success to its novelty; and is no sooner canvassed with impartiality than its weakness is discovered. Hobbes's politics are fitted only to promote tyranny, and his ethics to encourage licentiousness. Though an enemy to religion, he partakes nothing of the spirit of scepticism; but is as positive and dogmatical as if human reason, and his reason in particular, could attain a thorough conviction in these subjects. Clearness and propriety of style are the chief excellencies of Hobbes's writings. In his own person, he is represented to have been a man of virtue; a character nowise surprising, notwithstanding his libertine system of ethics. Timidity is the principal fault with which he is reproached; he lived to an extreme old age, yet could never reconcile himself to the thoughts of death. The boldness of his opinions and sentiments form a remarkable contrast to this part of his character. He died in 1679, aged ninety-one.

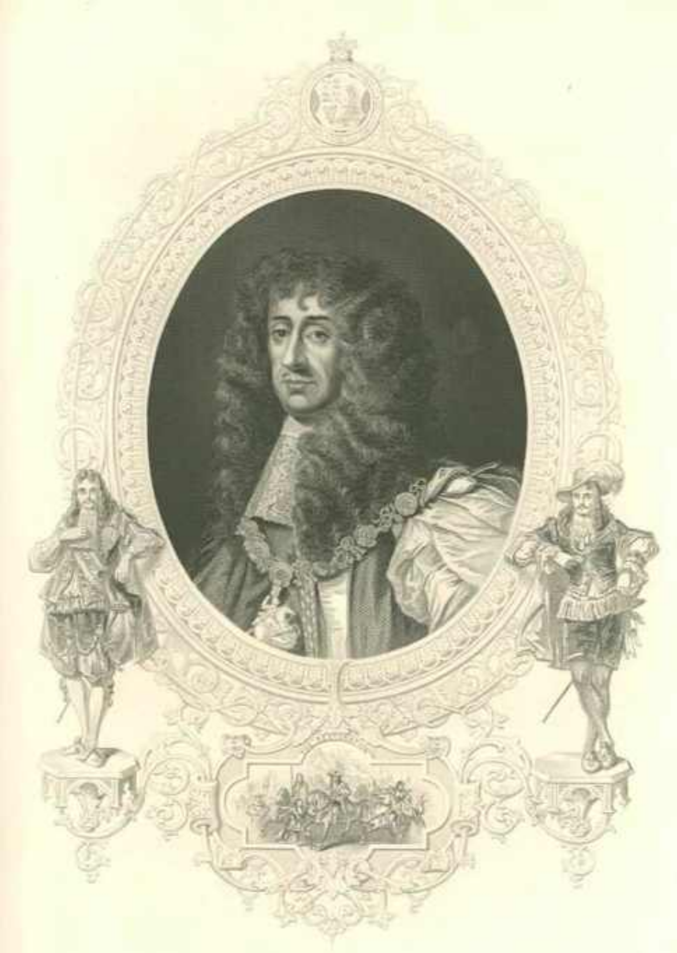
Harrington's Oceana was well adapted to that age, when the plans of imaginary republics were the daily subjects of debate and conversation; and even in our time, it is justly admired as a work of genius and invention. The idea however, of a perfect and immortal commonwealth, will always be found as chimerical as that of a perfect and immortal man. The style of this author wants ease and fluency; but the good matter which his work contains, makes compensation. He died in 1677, aged sixty-six.

Harvey is entitled to the glory of having made, by reasoning alone, without any mixture of accident, a capital discovery in one of the most important branches of science. He had also the happiness of establishing at once his theory on the most solid and convincing proofs; and posterity has added little to the arguments suggested by his industry and ingenuity. His treatise of the circulation of the blood is further embellished by that warmth and spirit which so naturally accompany the genius of invention. This great man was much favored by Charles I., who gave him the liberty of using all the deer in the royal forests for perfecting his discoveries on the generation of animals. It was remarked, that no physician in Europe, who had reached forty years of age, ever, to the end of his life, adopted Harvey's doctrine of the circulation of the blood; and that his practice in London diminished extremely, from the reproach drawn upon him by that great and signal discovery. So slow is the progress of truth in every science, even when not opposed by factious or superstitious prejudices. He died in 1657, aged seventy-nine.

This age affords great materials for history; but did not produce any accomplished historian. Clarendon, however, will always be esteemed an entertaining writer, even independent of our curiosity to know the facts which he relates. His style is prolix and redundant, and suffocates us by the length of its periods: but it discovers imagination and sentiment, and pleases us at the same time that we disapprove of it. He is more partial in appearance than in reality for he seems perpetually anxious to apologize for the king; but his apologies are often well grounded. He is less partial in his relation of facts, than in his account of characters: he was too honest a man to falsify the former; his affections were easily capable, unknown to himself, of disguising the latter. An air of probity and goodness runs through the whole work; as these qualities did in reality embellish the whole life of the author. He died in 1674, aged sixty-six.

These are the chief performances which engage the attention of posterity. Those numberless productions with which the press then abounded; the cant of the pulpit, the declamations of party, the subtilties of theology, all these have long ago sunk in silence and oblivion. Even a writer such as Selden, whose learning was his chief excellency, or Chillingworth, an acute disputant against the Papists, will scarcely be ranked among the classics of our language or country.

CHAPTER LXIII.



CHARLES II.

From a Painting in Bridewell Hosp. by Sir Peter Lely.

CHARLES II.

1660

CHARLES II., when he ascended the throne of his ancestors, was thirty years of age. He possessed a vigorous constitution, a fine shape, a manly figure, a graceful air; and though his features were harsh, yet was his countenance in the main lively and engaging. He was in that period of life when there remains enough of youth to render the person amiable, without preventing that authority and regard which attend the years of experience and maturity. Tenderness was excited by the memory of his recent adversities. His present prosperity was the object rather of admiration than of envy. And as the sudden and surprising revolution which restored him to his regal rights, had also restored the nation to peace, law, order, and liberty, no prince ever obtained a crown in more favorable circumstances, or was more blessed with the cordial affection and attachment of his subjects.

This popularity the king, by his whole demeanor and behavior, was well qualified to support and to increase. To a lively wit and quick comprehension, he united a just understanding and a general observation both of men and things. The easiest manners, the most unaffected politeness, the most engaging gayety, accompanied his conversation and address. Accustomed during his exile, to live among his courtiers rather like a companion than a monarch, he retained, even while on the throne, that open affability which was capable of reconciling the most determined republicans to his royal dignity. Totally devoid of resentment, as well from the natural lenity as carelessness of his temper, he insured pardon to the most guilty of his enemies, and left hopes of favor to his most violent opponents. From the whole tenor of his actions and discourse, he seemed desirous of losing the memory of past animosities, and of uniting every party in an affection for their prince and their native country.

Into his council were admitted the most eminent men of the nation, without regard to former distinctions: the Presbyterians, equally with the royalists, shared this honor. Annesley was also created earl of Anglesey;

Ashley Cooper, Lord Ashley; Denzil Hollis, Lord Hollis. The earl of Manchester was appointed lord chamberlain, and Lord Say, privy seal. Calamy and Baxter, Presbyterian clergymen, were even made chaplains to the king.

Admiral Montague, created earl of Sandwich, was entitled from his recent services to great favor; and he obtained it. Monk, created duke of Albemarle, had performed such signal services, that, according to a vulgar and malignant observation, he ought rather to have expected hatred and ingratitude; yet was he ever treated by the king with great marks of distinction. Charles's disposition, free from jealousy, and the prudent behavior of the general, who never overrated his merits, prevented all those disgusts which naturally arise in so delicate a situation. The capacity, too, of Albemarle was not extensive, and his parts were more solid than shining. Though he had distinguished himself in inferior stations, he was imagined, upon familiar acquaintance, not to be wholly equal to those great achievements which fortune, united to prudence, had enabled him to perform; and he appeared unfit for the court, a scene of life to which he had never been accustomed. Morrice, his friend, was created secretary of state, and was supported more by his patron's credit than by his own abilities or experience.

But the choice which the king at first made of his principal ministers and favorites, was the circumstance which chiefly gave contentment to the nation, and prognosticated future happiness and tranquillity. Sir Edward Hyde, created earl of Clarendon, was chancellor and prime minister; the marquis, created duke of Ormond, was steward of the household, the earl of Southampton, high treasurer; Sir Edward Nicholas, secretary of state. These men, united together in friendship, and combining in the same laudable inclinations, supported each other's credit, and pursued the interests of the public.

Agreeable to the present prosperity of public affairs was the universal joy and festivity diffused throughout the nation. The melancholy austerity of the fanatics fell into discredit together with their principles. The royalists, who had ever affected a contrary disposition, found in their recent success new motives for mirth and gayety; and it now belonged to them to give repute and fashion to their manners. From past experience it had sufficiently appeared, that gravity was very distinct from wisdom, formality from virtue, and hypocrisy from religion. The king himself, who bore a strong propensity to pleasure, served, by his powerful and engaging example, to banish those sour and malignant humors which had hitherto engendered such confusion. And though the just bounds were undoubtedly passed, when men returned from their former extreme, yet was the public happy in exchanging vices pernicious to society, for disorders hurtful chiefly to the individuals themselves who were guilty of them.

It required some time before the several parts of the state, disfigured by war and faction, could recover their former arrangement; but the parliament immediately fell into good correspondence with the king; and they treated him with the same dutiful regard which had usually been paid to his predecessors. Being summoned without the king’s consent, they received, at first, only the title of a convention; and it was not till he passed an act for that purpose, that they were called by the appellation of parliament. All judicial proceedings, transacted in the name of the commonwealth or protector, were ratified by a new law. And both houses, acknowledging the guilt of the former rebellion, gratefully received, in their own name, and in that of all the subjects, his majesty’s gracious pardon and indemnity.

The king, before his restoration, being afraid of reducing any of his enemies to despair, and at the same time unwilling that such enormous crimes as had been committed should receive a total impunity, had expressed himself very cautiously in his declaration of Breda, and had promised an indemnity to all criminals, but such as should be excepted by parliament. He now issued a proclamation declaring that such of the late king’s judges as did not yield themselves pris-* * oners within fourteen days, should receive no pardon. Nine teen surrendered themselves; some were taken in their flight; others escaped beyond sea.

The commons seem to have been more inclined to lenity than the lords. The upper house, inflamed by the ill usage which they had received, were resolved, besides the late king’s judges, to except every one who had sitten in any high court of justice. Nay, the earl of Bristol moved, that no pardon might be granted to those who had anywise contributed to the king’s death. So wide an exception, in which every one who had served the parliament might be comprehended, gave a general alarm; and men began to apprehend, that this motion was the effect of some court artifice or intrigue. But the king soon dissipated these fears. He came to the house of peers, and in the most earnest terms passed the act of general indemnity. He urged both the necessity of the thing, and the obligation of his former promise; a promise, he said which he would ever regard as sacred; since to it he probably owed the satisfaction which at present he enjoyed of meeting his people in parliament. This measure of the king's was received with great applause and satisfaction.

After repeated solicitations, the act of indemnity passed both houses, and soon received the royal assent. Those who had an immediate hand in the late king's death, were there excepted: even Cromwell, Ireton, Bradshaw, and others now dead, were attainted, and their estates forfeited. Vane and Lambert, though none of the regicides, were also excepted. St. John and seventeen persons more were deprived of all benefit from this act, if they ever accepted any public employment. All who had sitten in any illegal high court of justice were disabled from bearing offices. These were all the severities which followed such furious civil wars and convulsions.

The next business was the settlement of the king's revenue. In this work, the parliament had regard to public freedom, as well as to the support of the crown. The tenures of wards and liveries had long been regarded as a grievous burden by the nobility and gentry: several attempts had been made during the reign of James to purchase this prerogative, together with that of purveyance: and two hundred thousand pounds a year had been offered that prince in lieu of them; wardships and purveyance had been utterly abolished by the republican parliament; and even in the present parliament before the king arrived in England, a bill had been introduced offering him a compensation for the emolument of these prerogatives. A hundred thousand pounds a year was the sum agreed to; and half of the excise was settled in perpetuity upon the crown as the fund whence this revenue should be levied. Though that impost yielded more profit, the bargain might be esteemed hard; and it was chiefly the necessity of the king's situation which induced him to consent to it. No request of the parliament, during the present joy, could be refused them.

Tonnage and poundage and the other half of the excise, were granted to the king during life. The parliament even proceeded so far as to vote, that the settled revenue of the crown for all charges should be one million two hundred thousand pounds a year; a sum greater than any English monarch had ever before enjoyed. But as all the princes of Europe were perpetually augmenting their military force, and consequently their expense, it became requisite that England, from motives both of honor and security, should bear some proportion to them, and adapt its revenue to the new system of politics which prevailed. According to the chancellor’s computation, a charge of eight hundred thousand pounds a year was at present requisite for the fleet and other articles, which formerly cost the crown but eighty thousand.

Had the parliament, before restoring the king, insisted on any further limitations than those which the constitution already imposed, besides the danger of reviving former quarrels among parties, it would seem that their precaution had been entirely superfluous. By reason of its slender and precarious revenue, the crown in effect was still totally dependent. Not a fourth part of this sum, which seemed requisite for public expenses, could be levied without consent of parliament; and any concessions, had they been thought necessary, might, even after the restoration, be extorted by the commons from their necessitous prince. This parliament showed no intention of employing at present that engine to any such purposes; but they seemed still determined not to part with it entirely, or to render the revenues of the crown fixed and independent. Though they voted in general, that one million two hundred thousand pounds a year should be settled on the king, they scarcely assigned any funds which could yield two thirds of that sum. And they left the care of fulfilling their engagements to the future consideration of parliament. In all the temporary supplies which they voted, they discovered the same cautious frugality. To disband the army, so formidable in itself, and so much accustomed to rebellion and changes of government, was necessary for the security both of king and parliament; yet the commons showed great jealousy in granting the sums requisite for that end. An assessment of seventy thousand pounds a month was imposed; but it was at first voted to continue only three months; and all the other sums which they levied for that purpose, by a poll-bill and new assessments, were still granted by parcels, as if they were not as yet well assured of the fidelity of the hand to which the money was intrusted. Having proceeded so far in the settlement of the nation, the parliament adjourned itself for some time.

During the recess of parliament, the object which chiefly interested the public, was the trial and condemnation of the regicides. The general indignation attending the enormous crime of which these men had been guilty, made their sufferings the subject of joy to the people: but in the peculiar circumstances of that action, in the prejudices of the times, as well as in the behavior of the criminals, a mind seasoned with humanity will find a plentiful source of compassion and indulgence. Can any one, without concern for human blindness and ignorance, consider the demeanor of General Harrison, who was first brought to his trial? With great courage and elevation of sentiment, he told the court, that the pretended crime of which he stood accused, was not a deed performed in a corner; the sound of it had gone forth to most nations; and in the singular and marvellous conduct of it, had chiefly appeared the sovereign power of Heaven: that he himself, agitated by doubts, had often, with passionate tears, offered up his addresses to the divine Majesty, and earnestly sought for light and conviction: he had still received assurance of a heavenly sanction, and returned from these devout supplications with more serene tranquillity and satisfaction: that all the nations of the earth were, in the eyes of their Creator, less than a drop of water in the bucket; nor were their erroneous judgments aught but darkness, compared with divine illuminations: that these frequent relapses of the divine spirit he could not suspect to be interested illusions; since he was conscious, that for no temporal advantage would he offer injury to the poorest man or woman that trod upon the earth: that all the allurements of ambition, all the terrors of imprisonment, had not been able, during the usurpation of Cromwell, to shake his steady resolution, or bend him to a compliance with that deceitful tyrant: and that when invited by him to sit on the right hand of the throne, when offered riches and splendor and dominion, he had disdainfully rejected all temptations; and neglecting the tears of his friends and family, had still, through every danger, held fast his principles and his integrity.

Scot, who was more a republican than a fanatic, had said in the house of commons, a little before the restoration, that he desired no other epitaph to be inscribed on his tombstone than this: “Here lies Thomas Scot, who adjudged the king to death.” He supported the same spirit upon his trial.

Carew, a Millenarian, submitted to his trial, “saving to our Lord Jesus Christ his right to the government of these kingdoms.” Some scrupled to say, according to form, that they would be tried by God and their country; because God was not visibly present to judge them. Others said, that they would be tried by the word of God.

No more than six of the late king’s judges, Harrison, Scot, Carew, Clement, Jones, and Scrope, were executed; Scrope alone, of all those who came in upon the king’s proclamation. He was a gentleman of good family and of a decent character: but it was proved, that he had a little before, in conversation, expressed himself as if he were nowise convinced of any guilt in condemning the king. Axtel, who had guarded the high court of justice, Hacker, who commanded on the day of the king's execution, Coke, the solicitor for the people of England, and Hugh Peters, the fanatical preacher, who inflamed the army and impelled them to regicide; all these were tried, and condemned, and suffered with the king's judges. No saint or confessor ever went to martyrdom with more assured confidence of heaven, than was expressed by those criminals, even when the terrors of immediate death, joined to many indignities, were set before them. The rest of the king's judges, by an unexampled lenity, were reprieved; and they were dispersed into several prisons.

This punishment of declared enemies interrupted not the rejoicings of the court: but the death of the duke of Gloucester, a young prince of promising hopes, threw a great cloud upon them. The king, by no incident in his life, was ever so deeply affected. Gloucester was observed to possess united the good qualities of both his brothers: the clear judgment and penetration of the king; the industry and application of the duke of York. He was also believed to be affectionate to the religion and constitution of his country. He was but twenty years of age, when the small-pox put an end to his life.

The princess of Orange, having come to England in order to partake of the joy attending the restoration of her family, with whom she lived in great friendship, soon after sickened and died. The queen mother paid a visit to her son; and obtained his consent to the marriage of the princess Henrietta with the duke of Orleans, brother to the French king.

After a recess of near two months, the parliament met, and proceeded in the great work of the national settlement. They established the post-office, wine-licenses, and some articles of the revenue. They granted more assessments, and some arrears for paying and disbanding the army. Business, being carried on with great unanimity, was soon despatched; and after they had sitten near two months, the king, in a speech full of the most gracious expressions, thought proper to dissolve them.

This house of commons had been chosen during the reign of the old parliamentary party; and though many royalists had crept in amongst them, yet did it chiefly consist of Presbyterians, who had not yet entirely laid aside their old jealousies and principles. Lenthal, a member, having said, that those who first took arms against the king were as guilty as those who afterwards brought him to the scaffold, was severely reprimanded by order of the house; and the most violent efforts of the long parliament, to secure the constitution, and bring delinquents to justice, were in effect vindicated and applauded. [1] The claim of the two houses to the militia, the first ground of the quarrel, however exorbitant a usurpation, was never expressly resigned by this parliament. They made all grants of money with a very sparing hand. Great arrears being due, by the protectors, to the fleet, the army, the navy office, and every branch of service, this whole debt they threw upon the crown, without establishing funds sufficient for its payment. Yet, notwithstanding this jealous care expressed by the parliament, there prevails a story, that Popham, having sounded the disposition of the members, undertook to the earl of Southampton to procure, during the king's life, a grant of two millions a year, land tax; a sum which, added to the customs and excise, would forever have rendered this prince independent of his people.

* Journals, vol. viii.

Southampton, it is said, merely from his affection to the king, had unwarily embraced the offer; and it was not till he communicated the matter to the chancellor, that he was made sensible of its pernicious tendency. It is nor improbable, that such an offer might have been made, and been hearkened to; but it is nowise probable, that all the interest of the court would ever with this house of commons, have been able to make it effectual. Clarendon showed his prudence, no less than his integrity, in entirely rejecting it.

The chancellor, from the same principles of conduct, hastened to disband the army. When the king reviewed these veteran troops, he was struck with their beauty, order, discipline, and martial appearance; and being sensible, that regular forces are most necessary implements of royalty, he expressed a desire of finding expedients still to retain them.

But his wise minister set before him the dangerous spirit by which these troops were actuated, their enthusiastic genius, their habits of rebellion and mutiny; and he convinced the king, that, till they were disbanded, he never could esteem himself securely established on his throne. No more troops were retained than a few guards and garrisons, about one thousand horse and four thousand foot. This was the first appearance, under the monarchy, of a regular standing army in this island. Lord Mordaunt said, that the king, being possessed of that force, might now look upon himself as the most considerable gentleman in England. [1] The fortifications of Gloucester, Taunton, and other towns, which had made resistance to the king during the civil wars, were demolished.

* King James's Memoirs. This prince says, that Vernier's insurrection furnished a reason or pretence for keeping up the guards, which were intended at first to have been disbanded with the rest of the army.

Clarendon not only behaved with wisdom and justice in the office of chancellor; all the counsels which he gave the king tended equally to promote the interest of prince and people. Charles, accustomed in his exile to pay entire deference to the judgment of this faithful servant, continued still to submit to his direction; and for some time no minister was ever possessed of more absolute authority. He moderated the forward zeal of the royalists, and tempered their appetite for revenge. With the opposite party, he endeavored to preserve inviolate all the king's engagements: he kept an exact register of the promises which had been made for any service, he employed all his industry to fulfil them. This good minister was now nearly allied to the royal family. His daughter, Ann Hyde, a woman of spirit and fine accomplishments, had hearkened, while abroad, to the addresses of the duke of York, and under promise of marriage, had secretly admitted him to her bed. Her pregnancy appeared soon after the restoration; and though many endeavored to dissuade the king from consenting to so unequal an alliance, Charles, in pity to his friend and minister, who had been ignorant of these engagements, permitted his brother to marry her. [1] Clarendon expressed great uneasiness at the honor which he had obtained; and said that, by being elevated so much above his rank, he thence dreaded a more sudden downfall.

* King James's Memoirs.

Most circumstances of Clarendon's administration have met with applause: his maxims alone in the conduct of ecclesiastical politics have by many been deemed the effect of prejudices narrow and bigoted. Had the jealousy of royal power prevailed so far with the convention parliament as to make them restore the king with strict limitations, there is no question but the establishment of Presbyterian discipline had been one of the conditions most rigidly insisted on. Not only that form of ecclesiastical government is more favorable to liberty than to royal power; it was likewise, on its own account, agreeable to the majority of the house of commons, and suited their religious principles. But as the impatience of the people, the danger of delay, the general disgust towards faction, and the authority of Monk, had prevailed over that jealous project of limitations, the full settlement of the hierarchy, together with the monarchy, was a necessary and infallible consequence. All the royalists were zealous for that mode of religion; the merits of the Episcopal clergy towards the king, as well as their sufferings on that account, had been great; the laws which established bishops and the liturgy, were as yet unrepealed by legal authority; and any attempt of the parliament, by new acts, to give the superiority to Presbyterianism, had been sufficient to involve the nation again in blood and confusion. Moved by these views, the commons had wisely postponed the examination of all religious controversy, and had left the settlement of the church to the king and to the ancient laws.

The king at first used great moderation in the execution of the laws. Nine bishops still remained alive; and these were immediately restored to their sees: all the ejected clergy recovered their livings: the liturgy, a form of worship decent, and not without beauty, was again admitted into the churches: but at the same time a declaration was issued, in order to give contentment to the Presbyterians, and preserve an air of moderation and neutrality. [1] In this declaration, the king promised, that he would provide suffragan bishops for the larger dioceses; that the prelates should, all of them, be regular and constant preachers; that they should not confer ordination, or exercise any jurisdiction, without the advice and assistance of presbyters chosen by the diocese; that such alterations should be made in the liturgy as would render it totally unexceptionable; that, in the mean time, the use of that mode of worship should not be imposed on such as were unwilling to receive it; and that the surplice, the cross in baptism, and bowing at the name of Jesus, should not be rigidly insisted on. This declaration was issued by the king as head of the church; and he plainly assumed, in many parts of it, a legislative authority in ecclesiastical matters. But the English government, though more exactly defined by late contests, was not as yet reduced in every particular to the strict limits of law. And if ever pre-rogative was justifiably employed, it seemed to be on the present occasion; when all parts of the state were torn with past convulsions, and required the moderating hand of the chief magistrate to reduce them to their ancient order.

* Parl. Hist vol. xxiii.

But though these appearances of neutrality were maintained, and a mitigated Episcopacy only seemed to be insisted on, it was far from the intention of the ministry always to preserve like regard to the Presbyterians. The madness of the Fifth Monarchy men afforded them a pretence for departing from it. Venner, a desperate enthusiast, who had often conspired against Cromwell, having, by his zealous lectures inflamed his own imagination and that of his followers, issued forth at their head into the streets of London. They were, to the number of sixty, completely armed, believed themselves invulnerable and invincible, and firmly expected the same success which had attended Gideon and other heroes of the Old Testament Every one at first fled before them. One unhappy man, who, being questioned, said, “he was for God and King Charles,” was instantly murdered by them. They went triumphantly from street to street, every where proclaiming King Jesus, who, they said, was their invisible leader. At length, the magistrates, having assembled some train bands, made an attack upon them. They defended themselves with order as well as valor; and after killing many of the assailants they made a regular retreat into Cane Wood, near Hampstead. Next morning, they were chased thence by a detachment of the guards; but they ventured again to invade the city, which was not prepared to receive them. After committing great disorder, and traversing almost every street of that immense capital, they retired into a house, which they were resolute to defend to the last extremity. Being surrounded, and the house untiled, they were fired upon from every side; and they still refused quarter. The people rushed in upon them, and seized the few who were alive. These were tried, condemned, and executed; and to the last they persisted in affirming, that, if they were deceived, it was the Lord that had deceived them.

Clarendon and the ministry took occasion, from this insurrection, to infer the dangerous spirit of the Presbyterians, and of all the sectaries: but the madness of the attempt sufficiently proved, that it had been undertaken by no concert, and never could have proved dangerous. The well-known hatred, too, which prevailed between the Presbyterians and the other sects, should have removed the former from all suspicion of any concurrence in the enterprise. But as a pretence was wanted, besides their old demerits, for justifying the intended rigors against all of them, this reason, however slight, was greedily laid hold of.

Affairs in Scotland hastened with still quicker steps then those in England towards a settlement and a compliance with the king. It was deliberated in the English council, whether that nation should be restored to its liberty, or whether the forts erected by Cromwell should not still be upheld, in order to curb the mutinous spirit by which the Scots in all ages had been so much governed. Lauderdale, who, from the battle of Worcester to the restoration, had been detained prisoner in the Tower, had considerable influence with the king; and he strenuously opposed this violent measure. He represented that it was the loyalty of the Scottish nation which had engaged them in an opposition to the English rebels; and to take advantage of the calamities into which, on that account, they had fallen, would be regarded as the highest injustice and ingratitude: that the spirit of that people was now fully subdued by the servitude under which the usurpers had so long held them, and would of itself yield to any reasonable compliance with their legal sovereign, if, by this means, they recovered their liberty and independence: that the attachment of the Scots towards their king, whom they regarded as their native prince, was naturally much stronger than that of the English; and would afford him a sure resource, in case of any rebellion among the latter: that republican principles had long been, and still were, very prevalent with his southern subjects, and might again menace the throne with new tumults and resistance: that the time would probably come, when the king, instead of desiring to see English garrisons in Scotland, would be better pleased to have Scottish garrisons in England; who, supported by English pay, would be fond to curb the seditious genius of that opulent nation: and that a people, such as the Scots, governed by a few nobility, would more easily be reduced to submission under monarchy, than one like the English, who breathed nothing but the spirit of democratical equality.

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These views induced the king to disband all the forces in Scotland, and to raze all the forts which had been erected. General Middleton, created earl of that name, was sent commissioner to the parliament, which was summoned. A very compliant spirit was there discovered in all orders of men. The commissioner had even sufficient influence to obtain an act, annulling at once all laws which had passed since the year 1633; on pretext of the violence which, during that time, had been employed against the king and his father, in order to procure their assent to these statutes. This was a very large, if not an unexampled concession; and, together with many dangerous limitations, overthrew some useful barriers which had been erected to the constitution. But the tide was now running strongly towards monarchy; and the Scottish nation plainly discovered, that their past resistance had proceeded more from the turbulence of their aristocracy, and the bigotry of their ecclesiastics, than from any fixed passion towards civil liberty. The lords of articles were restored, with some other branches of prerogative; and royal authority fortified with more plausible claims and pretences, was, in its full extent, reestablished in that kingdom.

The prelacy likewise, by the abrogating of every statute enacted in favor of Presbytery, was thereby tacitly restored; and the king deliberated what use he should make of this concession. Lauderdale, who at bottom was a passionate zealot against Episcopacy, endeavored to persuade him, that the Scots, if gratified in this favorite point of ecclesiastical government, would, in every other demand, be entirely compliant with the king. Charles, though he had not so much attachment to prelacy as had influenced his father and grandfather, had suffered such indignities from the Scottish Presbyterians, that he ever after bore them a hearty aversion. He said to Lauderdale, that Presbyterianism, he thought, was not a religion for a gentleman; and he could not consent to its further continuance in Scotland. Middleton too and his other ministers persuaded him, that the nation in general was so disgusted with the violence and tyranny of the ecclesiastics, that any alteration of church government would be universally grateful. And Clarendon, as well as Ormond, dreading that the Presbyterian sect, if legally established in Scotland, would acquire authority in England and Ireland, seconded the application of these ministers. The resolution was therefore taken to restore prelacy; a measure afterwards attended with many and great inconveniencies: but whether in this resolution Charles chose not the lesser evil, it is very difficult to determine. Sharp, who had been commissioned by the Presbyterians in Scotland to manage their interests with the king, was persuaded to abandon that party; and, as a reward for his compliance, was created archbishop of St. Andrews. The conduct of ecclesiastical affairs was chiefly intrusted to him; and as he was esteemed a traitor and a renegade by his old friends, he became on that account, as well as from the violence of his conduct, extremely obnoxious to them.

Charles had not promised to Scotland any such indemnity as he had insured to England by the declaration of Breda: and it was deemed more political for him to hold over men's heads, for some time, the terror of punishment, till they should have made the requisite compliances with the new government. Though neither the king's temper nor plan of administration led him to severity, some examples, after such a bloody and triumphant rebellion, seemed necessary; and the marquis of Argyle and one Guthry were pitched on as the victims. Two acts of indemnity, one passed by the late king in 1641, another by the present in 1651, formed, it was thought, invincible obstacles to the punishment of Argyle, and barred all inquiry into that part of his conduct which might justly be regarded as the most exceptionable. Nothing remained but to try him for his compliance with the usurpation; a crime common to him with the whole nation, and such a one as the most loyal and affectionate subject might frequently by violence be obliged to commit. To make this compliance appear the more voluntary and hearty, there were produced in court letters which he had written to Albemarle, while that general commanded in Scotland, and which contained expressions of the most cordial attachment to the established government. But besides the general indignation excited by Albemarle's discovery of this private correspondence, men thought, that even the highest demonstrations of affection might, during jealous times, be exacted as a necessary mark of compliance from a person of such distinction as Argyle, and could not, by any equitable construction, imply the crime of treason. The parliament, however, scrupled not to pass sentence upon him; and he died with great constancy and courage. As he was universally known to have been the chief instrument of the past disorders and civil wars, the irregularity of his sentence, and several iniquitous circumstances in the method of conducting his trial, seemed on that account to admit of some apology. Lord Lorne, son of Argyle, having ever preserved his loyalty, obtained a gift of the forfeiture. Guthry was a seditious preacher, and had personally affronted the king: his punishment gave surprise to nobody. Sir Archibald Johnstone of Warriston was attainted and fled; but was seized in France about two years after, brought over, and executed. He had been very active during all the late disorders; and was even suspected of a secret correspondence with the English regicides.

Besides these instances of compliance in the Scottish parliament, they voted an additional revenue to the king of forty thousand pounds a year, to be levied by way of excise. A small force was purposed to be maintained by this revenue, in order to prevent like confusions with those to which the kingdom had been hitherto exposed. An act was also passed, declaring the covenant unlawful, and its obligation void and null.

In England, the civil distinctions seemed to be abolished by the lenity and equality of Charles's administration. Cavalier and roundhead were heard of no more: all men seemed to concur in submitting to the king's lawful prerogatives, and in cherishing he just privileges of the people and of parliament. Theological controversy alone still subsisted, and kept alive some sparks of that flame which had thrown the nation into combustion. While Catholics, Independents, and other sectaries were content with entertaining some prospect of toleration, Prelacy and Presbytery struggled for the superiority, and the hopes and fears of both parties kept them in agitation. A conference was held in the Savoy between twelve bishops and twelve leaders among the Presbyterian ministers, with an intention, at least on pretence, of bringing about an accommodation between the parties. The surplice, the cross in baptism, the kneeling at the sacrament, the bowing at the name of Jesus, were anew canvassed; and the ignorant multitude were in hopes, that so many men of gravity and learning could not fail, after deliberate argumentation, to agree in all points of controversy: they were surprised to see them separate more inflamed than ever, and more confirmed in their several prejudices. To enter into particulars would be superfluous. Disputes concerning religious forms are, in themselves, the most frivolous of any; and merit attention only so far as they have influence on the peace and order of civil society.

The king's declaration had promised, that some endeavors should be used to effect a comprehension of both parties; and Charles's own indifference with regard to all such questions seemed a favorable circumstance for the execution of that project. The partisans of a comprehension said, that the Presbyterians, as well as the Prelatists, having felt by experience the fatal effects of obstinacy and violence, were now well disposed towards an amicable agreement: that the bishops, by relinquishing some part of their authority, and dispensing with the most exceptionable ceremonies, would so gratify their adversaries as to obtain their cordial and affectionate compliance, and unite the whole nation in one faith and one worship: that by obstinately insisting on forms, in themselves insignificant, an air of importance was bestowed on them, and men were taught to continue equally obstinate in rejecting them: that the Presbyterian clergy would go every reasonable length, rather than, by parting with their livings, expose themselves to a state of beggary, at best of dependence: and that if their pride were flattered by some seeming alterations, and a pretence given them for affirming that they had not abandoned their former principles, nothing further was wanting to produce a thorough union between those two parties, which comprehended the bulk of the nation.

It was alleged, on the other hand, that the difference between religious sects was founded, not on principle, but on passion; and till the irregular affections of men could be corrected, it was in vain to expect, by compliances, to obtain a perfect unanimity and comprehension: that the more insignificant the objects of dispute appeared, with the more certainty might it be inferred, that the real ground of dissension was different from that which was universally pretended: that the love of novelty, the pride of argumentation, the pleasure of making proselytes, and the obstinacy of contradiction, would forever give rise to sects and disputes; nor was it possible that such a source of dissension could ever, by any concessions, be entirely exhausted: that the church, by departing from ancient practices and principles, would tacitly acknowledge herself guilty of error, and lose that reverence, so requisite for preserving the attachment of the multitude; and that if the present concessions (which was more than probable) should prove ineffectual, greater must still be made; and in the issue discipline would be despoiled of all its authority, and worship of all its decency, without obtaining that end which had been so fondly sought for by these dangerous indulgences.

The ministry were inclined to give the preference to the latter arguments; and were the more confirmed in that intention by the disposition which appeared in the parliament lately assembled. The royalists and zealous churchmen were at present the popular party in the nation, and, seconded by the efforts of the court, had prevailed in most elections. Not more than fifty-six members of the Presbyterian party had obtained seats in the lower house; [1] and these were not able either to oppose or retard the measures of the majority. Monarchy, therefore, and Episcopacy, were now exalted to as great power and splendor as they had lately suffered misery and depression. Sir Edward Turner was chosen speaker.

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[1] Carte's Answer to the Bystander, .

An act was passed for the security of the king’s person and government. To intend or devise the king’s imprisonment, or bodily harm, or deposition, or levying war against him, was declared, during the lifetime of his present majesty, to be high treason. To affirm him to be a Papist or heretic, or to endeavor by speech or writing to alienate his subjects’ affections from him; these offences were made sufficient to incapacitate the person guilty from holding any employment in church or state. To maintain that the long parliament is not dissolved, or that either or both houses, without the king, are possessed of legislative authority, or that the covenant is binding, was made punishable by the penalty of premunire.

The covenant itself, together with the act for erecting the high court of justice, that for subscribing the engagement, and that for declaring England a commonwealth, were ordered to be burnt by the hands of the hangman. The people assisted with great alacrity on this occasion.

The abuses of petitioning in the preceding reign had been attended with the worst consequences; and to prevent such irregular practices for the future, it was enacted that no more than twenty hands should be fixed to any petition, unless with the sanction of three justices, or the major part of the grand jury, and that no petition should be presented to the king or either house by above ten persons. The penalty annexed to a transgression of this law was a fine of a hundred pounds and three months’ imprisonment.

The bishops, though restored to their spiritual authority, were still excluded from parliament, by the law which the late king had passed immediately before the commencement of the civil disorders. Great violence, both against the king and the house of peers, had been employed in passing this law; and on that account alone the partisans of the church were provided with a plausible pretence for repealing it. Charles expressed much satisfaction when he gave his assent to the act for that purpose. It is certain that the authority of the crown, as well as that of the church, was interested in restoring the prelates to their former dignity. But those who deemed every acquisition of the prince a detriment to the people, were apt to complain of this instance of complaisance in the parliament.

After an adjournment of some months, the parliament was again assembled, and proceeded in the same spirit as before. They discovered no design of restoring, in its full extent, the ancient prerogative of the crown: they were only anxious to repair all those breaches which had been made, not by the love of liberty, but by the fury of faction and civil war. The power of the sword had in all ages been allowed to be vested in the crown; and though no law conferred this prerogative every parliament, till the last of the preceding reign, had willingly submitted to an authority more ancient, and therefore more sacred, than that of any positive statute. It was now thought proper solemnly to relinquish the violent pretensions of that parliament, and to acknowledge that neither one house nor both houses, independent of the king, were possessed of any military authority. The preamble to this statute went so far as to renounce all right even of defensive arms against the king; and much observation has been made with regard to a concession esteemed so singular. Were these terms taken in their full literal sense, they imply a total renunciation of limitations to monarchy, and of all privileges in the subject, independent of the will of the sovereign. For as no rights can subsist without some remedy, still less rights exposed to so much invasion from tyranny, or even from ambition; if subjects must never resist, it follows that every prince, without any effort, policy, or violence, is at once rendered absolute and uncontrollable; the sovereign needs only issue an edict abolishing every authority but his own; and all liberty from that moment is in effect annihilated. But this meaning it were absurd to impute to the present parliament, who, though zealous royalists, showed in their measures that they had not cast off all regard to national privileges. They were probably sensible, that to suppose in the sovereign any such invasion of public liberty, is entirely unconstitutional; and that therefore expressly to reserve, upon that event, any right of resistance in the subject, must be liable to the same objection. They had seen that the long parliament, under color of defence, had begun a violent attack upon kingly power; and after involving the kingdom in blood, had finally lost that liberty for which they had so imprudently contended. They thought, perhaps erroneously, that it was no longer possible, after such public and such exorbitant pretensions, to persevere in that prudent silence hitherto maintained by the laws; and that it was necessary, by some positive declaration, to bar the return of like inconveniencies. When they excluded, therefore, the right of defence, they supposed that the constitution, remaining firm upon its basis, there never really could be an attack made by the sovereign. If such an attack was at any time made, the necessity was then extreme; and the case of extreme and violent necessity, no laws, they thought, could comprehend; because to such a necessity no laws could beforehand point out a proper remedy.

The other measures of this parliament still discovered a more anxious care to guard against rebellion in the subject than encroachments in the crown; the recent evils of civil war and usurpation had naturally increased the spirit of submission to the monarch, and had thrown the nation into that dangerous extreme. During the violent and jealous government of the parliament and of the protectors, all magistrates liable to suspicion had been expelled the corporations; and none had been admitted who gave not proofs of affection to the ruling powers, or who refused to subscribe the covenant. To leave all authority in such hands seemed dangerous; and the parliament therefore empowered the king to appoint commissioners for regulating the corporations, and expelling such magistrates as either intruded themselves by violence, or professed principles dangerous to the constitution, civil and ecclesiastical. It was also enacted, that all magistrates should disclaim the obligation of the covenant, and should declare both their belief that it was not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to resist the king, and their abhorrence of the traitorous position of taking arms by the king’s authority against his person, or against those who were commissioned by him.

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The care of the church was no less attended to by this parliament than that of monarchy; and the bill of uniformity was a pledge of their sincere attachment to the Episcopal hierarchy, and of their antipathy to Presbyterianism, Different parties, however, concurred in promoting this bill, which contained many severe clauses. The Independents and other sectaries, enraged to find all their schemes subverted by the Presbyterians, who had once been their associates, exerted themselves to disappoint that party of the favor and indulgence to which, from their recent merits in promoting the restoration, they thought themselves justly entitled. By the Presbyterians, said they, the war was raised; by them was the populace first incited to tumults; by their zeal, interest, and riches, were the armies supported; by their force was the king subdued; and if, in the sequel, they protested against those extreme violences committed on his person by the military leaders, their opposition came too late, after having supplied these usurpers with the power and the pretences by which they maintained their sanguinary measures. They had indeed concurred with the royalists in recalling the king; but ought they to be esteemed, on that account, more affectionate to the royal cause? Rage and animosity, from disappointed ambition, were plainly their sole motives; and if the king should now be so imprudent as to distinguish them by any particular indulgences, he would soon experience from them the same hatred and opposition which had proved so fatal to his father.

The Catholics, though they had little interest in the nation, were a considerable party at court; and from their services and sufferings during the civil wars, it seemed but just to bear them some favor and regard. These religionists dreaded an entire union among the Protestants. Were they the sole nonconformists in the nation, the severe execution of penal laws upon their sect seemed an infallible consequence; and they used, therefore, all their interest to push matters to extremity against the Presbyterians, who had formerly been their most severe oppressors, and whom they now expected for their companions in affliction. The earl of Bristol, who, from conviction, or interest, or levity, or complaisance for the company with whom he lived, had changed his religion during the king’s exile, was regarded as the head of this party.

The church party had, during so many years, suffered such injuries and indignities from the sectaries of every denomination, that no moderation, much less deference, was on this occasion to be expected in the ecclesiastics. Even the laity of that communion seemed now disposed to retaliate upon their enemies, according to the usual measures of party justice. This sect or faction (for it partook of both) encouraged the rumors of plots and conspiracies against the government; crimes which, without any apparent reason, they imputed to their adversaries. And instead of enlarging the terms of communion, in order to comprehend the Presbyterians, they gladly laid hold of the prejudices which prevailed among that sect, in order to eject them from their livings. By the bill of uniformity, it was required, that every clergyman should be reordained, if he had not before received Episcopal ordination; should declare his assent to every thing contained in the Book of Common Prayer; should take the oath of canonical obedience; should abjure the solemn league, and covenant; and should renounce the principle of taking arms on any pretence whatsoever against the king.

This bill reinstated the church in the same condition in which it stood before the commencement of the civil wars; and as the old persecuting laws of Elizabeth still subsisted in their full rigor, and new clauses of a like nature were now enacted, all the king’s promises of toleration and of indulgence to tender consciences were thereby eluded and broken. It is true, Charles, in his declaration from Breda, had expressed his intention of regulating that indulgence by the advice and authority of parliament; but this limitation could never reasonably be extended to a total infringement and violation of his engagements. However, it is agreed that the king did not voluntarily concur with this violent measure; and that the zeal of Clarendon and of the church party among the commons, seconded by the intrigues of the Catholics, was the chief cause which extorted his consent.

The royalists, who now predominated, were very ready to signalize their victory, by establishing those high principles of monarchy which their antagonists had controverted: but when any real power or revenue was demanded for the crown, they were neither so forward nor so liberal in their concessions as the king would gladly have wished. Though the parliament passed laws for regulating the navy, they took no notice of the army, and declined giving their sanction to this dangerous innovation. The king’s debts were become intolerable; and the commons were at last constrained to vote him an extraordinary supply of one million two hundred thousand pounds, to be levied by eighteen monthly assessments. But besides that this supply was much inferior to the occasion, the king was obliged earnestly to solicit the commons, before he could obtain it; and, in order to convince the house of its absolute necessity, he desired them to examine strictly into all his receipts and disbursements. Finding, likewise, upon inquiry, that the several branches of revenue fell much short of the sums expected, they at last, after much delay, voted a new imposition of two shillings on each hearth; and this tax they settled on the king during life. The whole established revenue, however, did not for many years exceed a million; [1] a sum confessedly too narrow for the public expenses. A very rigid frugality at least, which the king seems to have wanted, would have been requisite to make it suffice for the dignity and security of government. After all business was despatched, the parliament was prorogued.

* D’Estrades, July 25, 1661. Mr. Ralph’s History, vol. i. p. 176.

Before the parliament rose, the court was employed in making preparations for the reception of the new queen, Catharine of Portugal, to whom the king was betrothed, and who had just landed at Portsmouth. During the time that the protector carried on the war with Spain, he was naturally led to support the Portuguese in their revolt; and he engaged himself by treaty to supply them with ten thousand men for their defence against the Spaniards. On the king's restoration, advances were made by Portugal for the renewal of the alliance; and in order to bind the friendship closer, an offer was made of the Portuguese princess, and a portion of five hundred thousand pounds, together with two fortresses, Tangiers in Africa, and Bombay in the East Indies. Spain, who, after the peace of the Pyrenees, bent all her force to recover Portugal, now in appearance abandoned by France, took the alarm, and endeavored to fix Charles in an opposite interest The Catholic king offered to adopt any other princess as a daughter of Spain, either the princess of Parma, or, what he thought more popular, some Protestant princess, the daughter of Denmark, Saxony, or Orange; and on any of these he promised to confer a dowry equal to that which was offered by Portugal. But many reasons inclined Charles rather to accept of the Portuguese proposals. The great disorders in the government and finances of Spain made the execution of her promises be much doubted; and the king's urgent necessities demanded some immediate supply of money. The interest of the English commerce likewise seemed to require that the independency of Portugal should be supported, lest the union of that crown with Spain should put the whole treasures of America into the hands of one potentate. The claims, too, of Spain upon Dunkirk and Jamaica, rendered it impossible, without further concessions, to obtain the cordial friendship of that power; and on the other hand, the offer, made by Portugal, of two such considerable fortresses, promised a great accession to the naval force of England. Above all, the proposal of a Protestant princess was no allurement to Charles, whose inclinations led him strongly to give the preference to a Catholic alliance. According to the most probable accounts, [1] the resolution of marrying ihe daughter of Portugal was taken by the king, unknown to all his ministers, and no remonstrances could prevail with him to alter his intentions.

* Carte's Ormond, vol. ii. . This account seems better supported than that in Ablancourt's Memoirs, that the chancellor chiefly pushed the Portuguese alliance. The secret transactions of

the court of England could not be supposed to be much known to a French resident at Lisbon:

and whatever opposition the chancellor might make, he would certainly endeavor to conceal it from the queen and all her family; and even in the parliament and council would support the resolution already taken. Clarendon himself says, in his Memoirs, that he never either opposed or promoted the Portuguese match.

When the matter was laid before the council, all voices concurred in approving the resolution; and the parliament expressed the same complaisance. And thus was concluded, seemingly with universal consent, the inauspicious marriage with Catharine, a princess of virtue, but who was never able, either by the graces of her person or humor, to make herself agreeable to the king. The report, however, of her natural incapacity to have children, seems to have been groundless, since she was twice declared to be pregnant. [1]

* Lord Lansdowne's Defence of General Monk. Temple vol. ii

The festivity of these espousals was clouded by the trial and execution of criminals. Berkstead, Cobbet, and Okey, three regicides, had escaped beyond sea; and after wandering some time concealed in Germany, came privately to Delft, having appointed their families to meet them in that place. They were discovered by Downing, the king's resident in Holland, who had formerly served the protector and commonwealth in the same station, and who once had even been chaplain to Okey's regiment. He applied for a warrant to arrest them. It had been usual for the states to grant these warrants; though at the same time, they had ever been careful secretly to advertise the persons, that they might be enabled to make their escape. This precaution was eluded by the vigilance and despatch of Downing. He quickly seized the criminals, hurried them on board a frigate which lay off the coast, and sent them to England. These three men behaved with more moderation and submission than any of the other regicides who had suffered. Okey in particular, at the place of execution, prayed for the king, and expressed his intention, had he lived, of submitting peaceably to the established government. He had risen, during the wars, from being a chandler in London, to a high rank in the army; and in all his conduct appeared to be a man of humanity and honor. In consideration of his good character and of his dutiful behavior, his body was given to his friends to be buried.

The attention of the public was much engaged by the trial of two distinguished criminals, Lambert and Vane. These men, though none of the late king’s judges, had been excepted from the general indemnity, and committed to prison. The convention parliament, however, was so favorable to them, as to petition the king, if they should be found guilty, to suspend their execution: but this new parliament, more zealous for monarchy, applied for their trial and condemnation. Not to revive disputes which were better buried in oblivion, the indictment of Vane did not comprehend any of his actions during the war between the king and parliament: it extended only to his behavior after the late king’s death, as member of the council of state, and secretary of the navy, where fidelity to the trust reposed in him required his opposition to monarchy.

Vane wanted neither courage nor capacity to avail himself of this advantage. He urged that, if a compliance with the government at that time established in England, and the acknowledging of its authority, were to be regarded as criminal, the whole nation had incurred equal guilt, and none would remain whose innocence could entitle them to try or condemn him for his pretended treasons: that, according to these maxims, wherever an illegal authority was established by force, a total and universal destruction must ensue; while the usurpers proscribed one part of the nation for disobedience, the lawful prince punished the other for compliance: that the legislature of England, foreseeing this violent situation, had provided for public security by the famous statute of Henry VII.; in which it was enacted that no man, in case of any revolution, should ever be questioned for his obedience to the king in being: that whether the established government were a monarchy or a commonwealth, the reason of the thing was still the same; nor ought the expelled prince to think himself entitled to allegiance, so long as he could not afford protection: that it belonged not to private persons, possessed of no power, to discuss the title of their governors; and every usurpation, even the most flagrant, would equally require obedience with the most legal establishment: that the controversy between the late king and his parliament was of the most delicate nature; and men of the greatest probity had been divided in their choice of the party which they should embrace; that the parliament, being rendered indissoluble but by its own consent, was become a kind of coördinate power with the king; and as the case was thus entirely new and unknown to the constitution, it ought not to be tried rigidly by the letter of the ancient laws: that for his part, all the violences which had been put upon the parliament, and upon the person of the sovereign, he had ever condemned; nor had he once in the house for some time before and after the execution of the king: that, finding the whole government thrown into disorder, he was still resolved, in every revolution, to adhere to the commons, the root, the foundation, of all lawful authority: that in prosecution of this principle, he had cheerfully under gone all the violence of Cromwell's tyranny; and would now with equal alacrity, expose himself to the rigors of perverted law and justice: that though it was in his power, on the king's restoration, to have escaped from his enemies, he was determined, in imitation of the most illustrious names of antiquity, to perish in defence of liberty, and to give testimony with his blood for that honorable cause in which he had been enlisted; and that, besides the ties by which God and nature had bound him to his native country, he was voluntarily engaged by the most sacred covenant, whose obligation no earthly power should ever be able to make him relinquish.

All the defence which Vane could make was fruitless. The court, considering more the general opinion of his active guilt in the beginning and prosecution of the civil wars, than the articles of treason charged against him, took advantage of the letter of the law, and brought him in guilty. His courage deserted him not upon his condemnation. Though timid by nature, the persuasion of a just cause supported him against the terrors of death, while his enthusiasm, excited by the prospect of glory, embellished the conclusion of a life, which through the whole course of it, had been so much disfigured by the prevalence of that principle. Lest pity for a courageous sufferer should make impression on the populace, drummers were placed under the scaffold, whose noise, as he began to launch out in reflections on the government, drowned his voice, and admonished him to temper the ardor of his zeal. He was not astonished at this unexpected incident. In all his behavior there appeared a firm and animated intrepidity; and he considered death but as a passage to that eternal felicity which he believed to be prepared for him.

This man, so celebrated for his parliamentary talents, and for his capacity in business, has left some writings behind him: they treat, all of them, of religious subjects, and are absolutely unintelligible: no traces of eloquence, or even of common sense, appear in them. A strange paradox! did we not know, that men of the greatest genius, where they relinquish by principle the use of their reason, are only enabled, by their vigor of mind, to work themselves the deeper into error and absurdity. It was remarkable, that as Vane, by being the chief instrument of Strafford's death, had first opened the way for that destruction which overwhelmed the nation, so by his death he closed the scene of blood. He was the last that suffered on account of the civil wars. Lambert, though condemned, was reprieved at the bar; and the judges declared, that if Vane's behavior had been equally dutiful and submissive, he would have experienced like lenity in the king. Lambert survived his condemnation near thirty years. He was confined to the Isle of Guernsey, where he lived contented, forgetting all his past schemes of greatness, and entirely forgotten by the nation. He died a Roman Catholic.

However odious Vane and Lambert were to the Presbyterians, that party had no leisure to rejoice at their condemnation. The fatal St. Bartholomew approached; the day when the clergy were obliged, by the late law, either to relinquish their livings, or to sign the articles required of them. A combination had been entered into by the more zealous of the Presbyterian ecclesiastics to refuse the subscription, in hopes that the bishops would not venture at once to expel so great a number of the most popular preachers. The Catholic party at court, who desired a great rent among the Protestants, encouraged them in this obstinacy, and gave them hopes that the king would protect them in their refusal. The king himself, by his irresolute conduct, contributed, either from design or accident, to increase this opinion. Above all, the terms of subscription had been made strict and rigid, on purpose to disgust all the zealous and scrupulous among the Presbyterians, and deprive them of their livings. About two thousand of the clergy, in one day, relinquished their cures; and, to the astonishment of the court, sacrificed their interest to their religious tenets. Fortified by society in their sufferings, they were resolved to undergo any hardships, rather than openly renounce those principles, which, on other occasions, they were so apt, from interest, to warp or elude. The church enjoyed the pleasure of retaliation; and even pushed, as usual, the vengeance farther than the offence. During the dominion of the parliamentary party, a fifth of each living had been left to the ejected clergyman; but this indulgence, though at first insisted on by the house of peers, was now refused to the Presbyterians. However difficult to conciliate peace among theologians, it was hoped by many, that some relaxation in the terms of communion might have kept the Presbyterians united to the church, and have cured those ecclesiastical factions which had been so fatal, and were still so dangerous. Bishoprics were offered to Calamy, Baxter, and Reynolds, leaders among the Presbyterians: the last only could be prevailed on to accept. Deaneries and other preferments were refused by many.

The next measure of the king has not had the good fortune to be justified by any party, but is often considered, on what grounds I shall not determine, as one of the greatest mistakes, if not blemishes, of his reign. It is the sale of Dunkirk to the French. The parsimonious maxims of the parliament, and the liberal, or rather careless disposition of Charles, were ill suited to each other; and notwithstanding the supplies voted him, his treasury was still very empty and very much indebted. He had secretly received the sum of two hundred thousand crowns from France for the support of Portugal, but the forces sent over to that country, and the fleets maintained in order to defend it, had already cost the king that sum, and, together with it, near double the money which had been paid as the queen's portion. [1] The time fixed for payment of his sister's portion to the duke of Orleans was approaching. Tangiers, a fortress from which great benefit was expected, was become an additional burden to the crown; and Rutherford, who now commanded in Dunkirk, had increased the charge of that garrison to a hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year. These considerations had such influence, not only on the king, but even on Clarendon, that this uncorrupt minister was the most forward to advise accepting a sum of money in lieu of a place which, he thought, the king, from the narrow state of his revenue, was no longer able to retain. By the treaty with Portugal, it was stipulated that Dunkirk should never be yielded to the Spaniards; France was therefore the only purchaser that remained. D'Estrades was invited over by a letter from the chancellor himself, in order to conclude the bargain. Nine hundred thousand pounds were demanded: one hundred thousand were offered. The English by degrees lowered their demand; the French raised their offer: and the bargain was concluded at four hundred thousand pounds. The artillery and stores were valued at a fifth of the sum. [2]

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* D'Estrades, 17th of August, 1662. There was above half of five hundred thousand pounds really paid as the queen's portion.

* D'Estrades, 21st of August, 12th of September, 1662.

The importance of this sale was not, at this time, sufficiently known, either abroad or at home. [1] The French monarch himself, so fond of acquisitions, and so good a judge of his own interests, thought that he had made a hard bargain; [2] and this sum, in appearance so small, was the utmost which he would allow his ambassador to offer.

* It appears, however, from many of D’Estrades’s letters, particularly that of the 21st of August, 1661, that the king might have transferred Dunkirk to the parliament, who would not have refused to bear the charges of it, but were unwilling to give money to the king for that purpose. The king, on the other hand, was jealous lest the parliament should acquire any separate dominion or authority in a branch of administration which seemed so little to belong to them; a proof that the government was not yet settled into that composure and mutual confidence which is absolutely requisite for conducting it.

* D’Estrades, 3d of October, 1662. The chief importance, indeed, of Dunkirk to the English was, that it was able to distress their trade when in the hands of the French: but it was Lewis XIV. who first made it a good seaport. If ever England have occasion to transport armies to the continent, it must be in support of some ally whose towns serve to the same purpose as Dunkirk would, if in the hands of the English.

A new incident discovered such a glimpse of the king’s character and principles as, at first, the nation was somewhat at a loss how to interpret, but such as subsequent events, by degrees, rendered sufficiently plain and manifest. He issued a declaration on pretence of mitigating the rigors contained in the act of uniformity. After expressing his firm resolution to observe the general indemnity, and to trust entirely to the affections of his subjects, not to any military power, for the support of his throne, he mentioned the promises of liberty of conscience contained in his declaration of Breda. And he subjoined, that, “as in the first place he had been zealous to settle the uniformity of the church of England, in discipline, ceremony, and government, and shall ever constantly maintain it, so, as for what concerns the penalties upon those who, living peaceably, do not conform themselves thereunto, through scruple and tenderness of misguided conscience, but modestly and without scandal perform their devotions in their own way, he should make it his special care, so far as in him lay, without invading the freedom of parliament, to incline their wisdom, next approaching sessions, to concur with him in making some such act for that purpose, as may enable him to exercise, with a more universal satisfaction, that power of dispensing, which he conceived to be inherent in him." [1] Here a most important prerogative was exercised by the king; but under such artful reserves and limitations as might prevent the full discussion of the claim, and obviate a breach between him and his parliament. The foundation of this measure lay much deeper, and was of the utmost consequence.

The king, during his exile, had imbibed strong prejudices a favor of the Catholic religion; and, according to the most probable accounts, had already been secretly reconciled in form to the church of Rome. The great zeal expressed by the parliamentary party against all Papists, had always, from a spirit of opposition, inclined the court and all the royalists to adopt more favorable sentiments towards that sect, which, through the whole course of the civil wars, had strenuously supported the rights of the sovereign. The rigor, too, which the king, during his abode in Scotland, had experienced from the Presbyterians, disposed him to run into the other extreme, and to bear a kindness to the party most opposite in its genius to the severity of those religionists. The solicitations and importunities of the queen mother, the contagion of the company which he frequented, the view of a more splendid and courtly mode of worship, the hopes of indulgence in pleasure, all these causes operated powerfully on a young prince, whose careless and dissolute temper made him incapable of adhering closely to the principles of his early education. But if the thoughtless humor of Charles rendered him an easy convert to Popery, the same disposition ever prevented the theological tenets of that sect from taking any fast hold of him. During his vigorous state of health, while his blood was warm and his spirits high, a contempt and disregard to all religion held possession of his mind; and he might more properly be denominated a deist than a Catholic. But in those revolutions of temper, when the love of raillery gave place to reflection, and his penetrating, but negligent understanding was clouded with fears and apprehensions, he had starts of mere sincere conviction; and a sect which always possessed his inclination, was then master of his judgment and opinion. [2]

* Kennet's Register, .

* The author confesses, that the king's zeal for Popery was apt at intervals to go further than is here supposed, as appears from many passages in James II.'s Memoirs.

But though the king thus fluctuated, during his whole reign, between irreligion, which he more openly professed, and Popery, to which he retained a secret propensity, his brother the duke of York, had zealously adopted all the principles of that theological party. His eager temper and narrow understanding made him a thorough convert, without any reserve from interest, or doubts from reasoning and inquiry. By his application to business, he had acquired a great ascendant over the king; who, though possessed of more discernment, was glad to throw the burden of affairs on the duke, of whom he entertained little jealousy. On pretence of easing the Protestant dissenters, they agreed upon a plan for introducing a general toleration, and giving the Catholics the free exercise of their religion; at least the exercise of it in private houses. The two brothers saw with pleasure so numerous and popular a body of the clergy refuse conformity; and it was hoped that, under shelter of their name, the small and hated sect of the Catholics might meet with favor and protection.

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But while the king pleaded his early promises of toleration, and insisted on many other plausible topics, the parliament, who sat a little after the declaration was issued, could by no means be satisfied with this measure. The declared intention of easing the dissenters, and the secret purpose of favoring the Catholics, were equally disagreeable to them and in these prepossessions they were encouraged by the king’s ministers themselves, particularly the chancellor. The house of commons represented to the king, that his declaration of Breda contained no promise to the Presbyterians and other dissenters, but only an expression of his intentions, upon supposition of the concurrence of parliament: that even if the nonconformists had been entitled to plead a promise, they had intrusted this claim, as all their other rights and privileges, to the house of commons, who were their representatives, and who now freed the king from that obligation: that it was not to be supposed, that his majesty and the houses were so bound by that declaration, as to be incapacitated from making any laws which might be contrary to it: that even at the king’s restoration, there were laws of uniformity in force, which could not be dispensed with but by act of parliament: and that the indulgence intended would prove most pernicious both to church and state, would open the door to schism, encourage faction, disturb the public peace, and discredit the wisdom of the legislature. The king did not think proper, after this remonstrance, to insist any further at present on the project of indulgence.

In order to deprive the Catholics of all hopes, the two houses concurred in a remonstrance against them. The king gave a gracious answer; though he scrupled not to profess his gratitude towards many of that persuasion, on account of their faithful services in his father's cause and in his own. A proclamation, for form's sake, was soon after issued against Jesuits and Romish priests: but care was taken, by the very terms of it, to render it ineffectual. The parliament had allowed, that all foreign priests, belonging to the two queens, should be excepted, and that a permission for them to remain in England should still be granted. In the proclamation, the word foreign was purposely omitted; and the queens were thereby authorized to give protection to as many English priests as they should think proper.

That the king might reap some advantage from his compliances, however fallacious, he engaged the commons anew into an examination of his revenue, which, chiefly by the negligence in levying it, had proved, he said, much inferior to the public charges. Notwithstanding the price of Dunkirk, his debts, he complained, amounted to a considerable sum; and to satisfy the commons that the money formerly granted him had not been prodigally expended, he offered to lay before them the whole account of his disbursements. It is, however, agreed on all hands, that the king, though during his banishment he had managed his small and precarious income with great order and economy, had now much abated of these virtues, and was unable to make his royal revenues suffice for his expenses. The commons, without entering into too nice a disquisition, voted him four subsidies; and this was the last time that taxes were levied in that manner.

Several laws were made this session with regard to trade. The militia also came under consideration, and some rules were established for ordering and arming it. It was enacted, that the king should have no power of keeping the militia under arms above fourteen days in the year. The situation of this island, together with its great naval power, has always occasioned other means of security, however requisite, to be much neglected among us: and the parliament showed here a very superfluous jealousy of the king's strictness in disciplining the militia. The principles of liberty rather require a contrary jealousy.

The earl of Bristol’s friendship with Clarendon, which had subsisted, with great intimacy, during their exile and the distresses of the royal party, had been considerably impaired, since the restoration, by the chancellor’s refusing his assent to some grants which Bristol had applied for to a court lady: and a little after, the latter nobleman, agreeably to the impetuosity and indiscretion of his temper, broke out against the minister in the most outrageous manner. He even entered a charge of treason against him before the house of peers; but had concerted his measures so imprudently, that the judges, when consulted, declared, that neither for its matter nor its form could the charge be legally received. The articles indeed resemble more the incoherent altercations of a passionate enemy, than a serious accusation, fit to be discussed by a court of judicature; and Bristol himself was so ashamed of his conduct and defeat, that he absconded during some time. Notwithstanding his fine talents, his eloquence, his spirit, and his courage, he could never regain the character which he lost by this hasty and precipitate measure.

But though Clarendon was able to elude this rash assault, his credit at court was sensibly declining; and in proportion as the king found himself established on the throne, he began to alienate himself from a minister whose character was so little suited to his own. Charles’s favor for the Catholics was always opposed by Clarendon, public liberty was secured against all attempts of the over-zealous royalists, prodigal grants of the king were checked or refused, and the dignity of his own character was so much consulted by the chancellor, that he made it an inviolable rule, as did also his friend Southampton, never to enter into any connection with the royal mistresses. The king’s favorite was Mrs. Palmer, afterwards created duchess of Cleveland; a woman prodigal, rapacious, dissolute, violent, revengeful. She failed not in her turn to undermine Clarendon’s credit with his master; and her success was at this time made apparent to the whole world. Secretary Nicholas, the chancellor’s great friend, was removed from his place; and Sir Harry Bennet, his avowed enemy, was advanced to that office. Bennet was soon after created Lord Arlington.

Though the king’s conduct had hitherto, since his restoration, been in the main laudable, men of penetration began to observe, that those virtues by which he had at first so much dazzled and enchanted the nation, had great show, but not equal solidity. His good understanding lost much of its influence by his want of application his bounty was more the result of a facility of disposition than any generosity of character; his social humor led him frequently to neglect his dignity; his love of pleasure was not attended with proper sentiment and decency; and while he seemed to bear a good will to every one that approached him, he had a heart not very capable of friendship, and he had secretly entertained a very bad opinion and distrust of mankind. But above all, what sullied his character in the eyes of good judges, was his negligent ingratitude towards the unfortunate cavaliers, whose zeal and sufferings in the royal cause had known no bounds. This conduct, however, in the king may, from the circumstances of his situation and temper, admit of some excuse; at least, of some alleviation. As he had been restored more by the efforts of his reconciled enemies than of his ancient friends, the former pretended a title to share his favor; and being from practice acquainted with public business, they were better qualified to execute any trust committed to them. The king's revenues were far from being large, or even equal to his necessary expenses; and his mistresses, and the companions of his mirth and pleasures, gained by solicitation every request from his easy temper. The very poverty to which the more zealous royalists had reduced themselves, by rendering them insignificant, made them unfit to support the king's measures, and caused him to deem them a useless encumbrance. And as many false and ridiculous claims of merit were offered, his natural indolence, averse to a strict discussion or inquiry, led him to treat them all with equal indifference. The parliament took some notice of the poor cavaliers. Sixty thousand pounds were at one time distributed among them; Mrs. Lane also and the Penderells had handsome presents and pensions from the king. But the greater part of the royalists still remained in poverty and distress, aggravated by the cruel disappointment in their sanguine hopes, and by seeing favor and preferment bestowed upon their most inveterate foes. With regard to the act of indemnity and oblivion, they universally said, that it was an act of indemnity to the king's enemies and of oblivion to his friends.

CHAPTER LXIV.

CHARLES II.

1664

The next session of parliament discovered a continuance of the same principles which had prevailed in all the foregoing. Monarchy and the church were still the objects of regard and affection. During no period of the present reign did this spirit more evidently pass the bounds of reason and moderation.

The king, in his speech to the parliament, had ventured openly to demand a repeal of the triennial act; and he even went so far as to declare that, notwithstanding the law, he never would allow any parliament to be assembled by the methods prescribed in that statute. The parliament, without taking offence at this declaration, repealed the law; and in lieu of all the securities formerly provided, satisfied themselves with a general clause, "that parliament should not be interrupted above three years at the most." As the English parliament had now raised itself to be a regular check and control upon royal power, it is evident that they ought still to have preserved a regular security for their meeting, and not have trusted entirely to the good will of the king, who, if ambitious or enterprising, had so little reason to be pleased with these assemblies. Before the end of Charles's reign, the nation had occasion to feel very sensibly the effects of this repeal.

By the act of uniformity, every clergyman who should officiate without being properly qualified, was punishable by fine and imprisonment: but this security was not thought sufficient for the church. It was now enacted, that, wherever five persons above those of the same household should assemble in a religious congregation, every one of them was liable, for the first offence, to be imprisoned three months, or pay five pounds; for the second, to be imprisoned six months, or pay ten pounds; and for the third, to be transported seven years, or pay a hundred pounds. The parliament had only in their eye the malignity of the sectaries; they should have carried their attention further, to the chief cause of that malignity, the restraint under which they labored.

The commons likewise passed a vote, that the wrongs, dishonors, and indignities offered to the English by the subjects of the United Provinces, were the greatest obstructions to all foreign trade: and they promised to assist the king with their lives and fortunes in asserting the rights of his crown against all opposition whatsoever. This was the first open step towards a Dutch war. We must explain the causes and motives of this measure.

That close union and confederacy which, during a course of near seventy years, has subsisted, almost without interruption or jealousy, between England and Holland, is not so much founded on the natural, unalterable interests of these states, as on their terror of the growing power of the French monarch, who, without their combination, it is apprehended, would soon extend his dominion over Europe. In the first years of Charles's reign, when the ambitious genius of Lewis had not as yet displayed itself, and when the great force of his people was in some measure unknown even to themselves, the rival-ship of commerce, not checked by any other jealousy or apprehension, had in England begotten a violent enmity against the neighboring republic.

Trade was beginning among the English to be a matter of general concern; but notwithstanding all their efforts and advantages, their commerce seemed hitherto to stand upon a footing which was somewhat precarious. The Dutch, who by industry and frugality were enabled to undersell them in every market, retained possession of the most lucrative branches of commerce; and the English merchants had the mortification to find, that all attempts to extend their trade were still turned, by the vigilance of their rivals, to their loss and dishonor. Their indignation increased, when they considered the superior naval power of England; the bravery of her officers and seamen; her favorable situation, which enabled her to intercept the whole Dutch commerce. By the prospect of these advantages, they were strongly prompted, from motives less just and political, to make war upon the states; and at once to ravish from them by force what they could not obtain, or could obtain but slowly, by superior skill and industry.

The careless, unambitious temper of Charles rendered him little capable of forming so vast a project as that of engrossing the commerce and naval power of Europe; yet could he not remain altogether insensible to such obvious and such tempting prospects. His genius, happily turned towards mechanics, had inclined him to study naval affairs, which, of all branches of business, he both loved the most and understood the best. Though the Dutch, during his exile, had expressed towards him more civility and friendship than he had received from any other foreign power, the Louvestein or aristocratic faction, which at this time ruled the commonwealth, had fallen into close union with France; and could that party be subdued, he might hope that his nephew, the young prince of Orange, would be reinstated in the authority possessed by his ancestors, and would bring the states to a dependence under England. His narrow revenues made it still requisite for him to study the humors of his people, which now ran violently towards war; and it has been suspected, though the suspicion was not justified by the event, that the hopes of diverting some of the supplies to his private use were not overlooked by this necessitous monarch.

The duke of York, more active and enterprising, pushed more eagerly the war with Holland. He desired an opportunity of distinguishing himself: he loved to cultivate commerce: he was at the head of a new African company, whose trade was extremely checked by the settlements of the Dutch: and perhaps the religious prejudices by which that prince was always so much governed, began, even so early, to instil into him an antipathy against a Protestant commonwealth, the bulwark of the reformation. Clarendon and Southampton, observing that the nation was not supported by any foreign alliance, were averse to hostilities; but their credit was now on the decline.

By these concurring motives, the court and parliament were both of them inclined to a Dutch war. The parliament was prorogued without voting supplies: but as they had been induced, without any open application from the crown, to pass that vote above mentioned against the Dutch encroachments, it was reasonably considered as sufficient sanction for the rigorous measures which were resolved on.

Downing, the English minister at the Hague, a man of an insolent, impetuous temper, presented a memorial to the states, containing a list of those depredations of which the English complained. It is remarkable, that all the pretended depreciations preceded the year 1662, when a treaty of league and alliance had been renewed with the Dutch; and these complaints were then thought either so ill grounded or so frivolous, that they had not been mentioned in the treaty. Two ships alone, the Bonaventure and the Good Hope, had been claimed by the English; and it was agreed that the claim should be prosecuted by the ordinary course of justice. The states had consigned a sum of money, in case the cause should be decided against them; but the matter was still in dependence. Cary who was intrusted by the proprietors with the management of the lawsuit for the Bonaventure, had resolved to accept of thirty thousand pounds, which were offered him; but was hindered by Downing, who told him that the claim was a matter of state between the two nations, not a concern of private persons. [1] These circumstances give us no favorable idea of the justice of the English pretensions.

* Temple, vol. ii, .

Charles confined not himself to memorials and remonstrances. Sir Robert Holmes was secretly despatched with a squadron of twenty-two ships to the coast of Africa. He not only expelled the Dutch from Cape Corse, to which the English had some pretensions; he likewise seized the Dutch settlements of Cape Verde and the Isle of Goree, together with several ships trading on that coast. And having sailed to America, he possessed himself of Nova Belgia, since called New York; a territory which James I. had given by patent to the earl of Stirling, but which had never been planted but by the Hollanders. When the states complained of these hostile measures, the king, unwilling to avow what he could not well justify, pretended to be totally ignorant of Holmes's enterprise. He likewise confined that admiral to the Tower; but some time after released him.

The Dutch, finding that their applications for redress were likely to be eluded, and that a ground of quarrel was industriously sought for by the English, began to arm with diligence. They even exerted, with some precipitation, an act of vigor which hastened on the rupture. Sir John Lawson and De Ruyter had been sent with combined squadrons into the Mediterranean, in order to chastise the piratical states on the coast of Barbary; and the time of their separation and return was now approaching. The states secretly despatched orders to De Ruyter, that he should take in provisions at Cadiz; and sailing towards the coast of Guinea, should retaliate on the English, and put the Dutch in possession of those settlements whence Holmes had expelled them. De Ruyter, having a considerable force on board, met with no opposition in Guinea.

All the new acquisitions of the English, except Cape Corse were recovered from them. They were even dispossessed of some old settlements. Such of their ships as fell into his hands were seized by De

Ruyter. That admiral sailed next to America. He attacked Barbadoes, but was repulsed. He afterwards committed hostilities on Long Island.

Meanwhile the English preparations for war were advancing with vigor and industry. The king had received no supplies from parliament; but by his own funds and credit he was enabled to equip a fleet: the city of London lent him one hundred thousand pounds: the spirit of the nation seconded his armaments: he himself went from port to port, inspecting with great diligence, and encouraging the work; and in a little time the English navy was put in a formidable condition. Eight hundred thousand pounds are said to have been expended on this armament. When Lawson arrived, and communicated his suspicion of De Ruyter's enterprise, orders were issued for seizing all Dutch ships; and one hundred and thirty-five fell into the hands of the English. These were not declared prizes till afterwards, when war was proclaimed.

The parliament, when it met, granted a supply, the largest by far that had ever been given to a king of England, yet scarcely sufficient for the present undertaking. Near two millions and a half were voted, to be levied by quarterly payments in three years. The avidity of the merchants, together with the great prospect of success, had animated the whole nation against the Dutch.

A great alteration was made this session in the method of taxing the clergy. In almost all the other monarchies of Europe, the assemblies, whose consent was formerly requisite to the enacting of laws, were composed of three estates, the clergy, the nobility, and the commonalty, which formed so many members of the political body, of which the king was considered as the head. In England too, the parliament was always represented as consisting of three estates; but their separation was never so distinct as in other kingdoms. A convocation, however, had usually sitten at the same time with the parliament; though they possessed not a negative voice in the passing of laws, and assumed no other temporal power than that of imposing taxes on the clergy. By reason of ecclesiastical preferments, which he could bestow, the king's influence over the church was more considerable than over the laity; so that the subsidies granted by the convocation were commonly greater than those which were voted by parliament. The church, therefore, was not displeased to depart tacitly from the right of taxing herself, and allow the commons to lay impositions on ecclesiastical revenues, as on the rest of the kingdom. In recompense, two subsidies, which the convocation had formerly granted, were remitted, and the parochial clergy were allowed to vote at elections. Thus the church of England made a barter of power for profit. Their convocations, having become insignificant to the crown, have been much disused of late years.

The Dutch saw, with the utmost regret, a war approaching, whence they might dread the most fatal consequences, but which afforded no prospect of advantage. They tried every art of negotiation, before they would come to extremities. Their measures were at that time directed by John de Wit, a minister equally eminent for greatness of mind, for capacity, and for integrity. Though moderate in his private deportment, he knew how to adopt in his public counsels that magnanimity which suits the minister of a great state. It was ever his maxim, that no independent government should yield to another any evident point of reason or equity; and that all such concessions, so far from preventing war, served to no other purpose than to provoke fresh claims and insults. By his management a spirit of union was preserved in all the provinces; great sums were levied; and a navy was equipped, composed of larger ships than the Dutch had ever built before, and able to cope with the fleet of England.

1665

As soon as certain intelligence arrived of De Ruyter's enterprises, Charles declared war against the states. His fleet, consisting of one hundred and fourteen sail, besides fireships and ketches, was commanded by the duke of York, and under him by Prince Rupert and the earl of Sandwich. It had about twenty-two thousand men on board. Obdam, who was admiral of the Dutch navy, of nearly equal force, declined not the combat. In the heat of action, when engaged in close fight with the duke of York, Obdam's ship blew up. This accident much discouraged the Dutch, who fled towards their own coast. Tromp alone, son of the famous admiral killed during the former war, bravely sustained with his squadron the efforts of the English, and protected the rear of his countrymen. The vanquished had nineteen ships sunk and taken. The victors lost only one. Sir John Lawson died soon after of his wounds. It is affirmed, and with an appearance of reason, that this victory might have been rendered more complete, had not orders been issued to slacken sail by Brounker, one of the duke's bed-chamber, who pretended authority from his master. The duke disclaimed the orders; but

Brounker never was sufficiently punished for his temerity. [1] It is allowed, however, that the duke behaved with great bravery during the action. He was long in the thickest of the fire. The earl of Falmouth, Lord Muskerry, and Mr. Boyle, were killed by one shot at his side, and covered him all over with their brains and gore. And it is not likely, that, in a pursuit, where even persons of inferior station, and of the most cowardly disposition, acquire courage, a commander should feel his spirits to flag ana should turn from the back of an enemy, whose face he had not been afraid to encounter.

* King James, in his Memoirs, gives an account of this affair different from what we meet with in any historian. He says, that, while he was asleep, Brounker brought orders to Sir John Harman, captain of the ship, to slacken sail. Sir John remonstrated, but obeyed. After some time, finding that his falling back was likely to produce confusion in the fleet, he hoisted the sail as before; so that the prince, coming soon after on the quarter deck, and finding all things as he left them, knew nothing of what had passed during his repose. Nobody gave him the least intimation of it. It was long after that he heard of it, by a kind of accident; and he intended to have punished Brounker by martial law; but just about that time, the house of commons took up the question, and impeached him, which made it impossible for the duke to punish him otherwise than by dismissing him his service. Brounker, before the house,

never pretended that he had received any orders from the duke.

This disaster threw the Dutch into consternation, and determined De Wit, who was the soul of their councils, to exert his military capacity, in order to support the declining courage of his countrymen. He went on board the fleet, which he took under his command; and he soon remedied all those disorders which had been occasioned by the late misfortune. The genius of this man was of the most extensive nature. He quickly became as much master of naval affairs, as if he had from his infancy been educated in them; and he even made improvements in some parts of pilotage and sailing, beyond what men expert in those arts had ever been able to attain.

The misfortunes of the Dutch determined their allies to act for their assistance and support. The king of France was engaged in a defensive alliance with the states; but as his naval force was yet in its infancy, he was extremely averse, at that time, from entering into a war with so formidable a power as England. He long tried to mediate a peace between the states, and for that purpose sent an embassy to London, which returned without effecting any thing. Lord Hollis, the English ambassador at Paris, endeavored to draw over Lewis to the side of England; and, in his master’s name, made him the most tempting offers. Charles was content to abandon all the Spanish Low Countries to the French, without pretending to a foot of ground for himself, provided Lewis would allow him to pursue his advantages against the Dutch. [1] But the French monarch, though the conquest of that valuable territory was the chief object of his ambition, rejected the offer as contrary to his interests: he thought, that if the English had once established an uncontrollable dominion over the sea and over commerce, they would soon be able to render his acquisitions a dear purchase to him. When De Lionne, the French secretary, assured Van Beuninghen, ambassador of the states, that this offer had been pressed on his master during six months, “I can readily believe it,” replied the Dutchman; “I am sensible that it is the interest of England.” [2]

* D’Estrades, December 19, 1664.

* * D’Estrades, August 14, 1665.

Such were the established maxims at that time with regard to the interests of princes. It must, however, be allowed, that the politics of Charles, in making this offer, were not a little hazardous. The extreme weakness of Spain would have rendered the French conquests easy and infallible; but the vigor of the Dutch, it might be foreseen, would make the success of the English much more precarious. And even were the naval force of Holland totally annihilated, the acquisition of the Dutch commerce to England could not be relied on as a certain consequence; nor is trade a constant attendant of power, but depends on many other, and some of them very delicate, circumstances.

Though the king of France was resolved to support the Hollanders in that unequal contest in which they were engaged, he yet protracted his declaration, and employed the time in naval preparations, both in the ocean and the Mediterranean. The king of Denmark, meanwhile, was resolved not to remain an idle spectator of the contest between the maritime powers. The part which he acted was the most extraordinary: he made a secret agreement with Charles to seize all the Dutch ships in his harbors, and to share the spoils with the English, provided they would assist him in executing this measure. In order to increase his prey, he perfidiously invited the Dutch to take shelter in his ports; and accordingly the East India fleet, very richly laden, had put into Bergen. Sandwich, who now commanded the English navy, (the duke having gone ashore,) despatched Sir Thomas Tiddiman with a squadron to attack them; but whether from the king of Denmark's delay in sending orders to the governor, or, what is more probable, from his avidity in endeavoring to engross the whole booty, the English admiral, though he behaved with great bravery, failed of his purpose. The Danish governor fired upon him; and the Dutch, having had leisure to fortify themselves, made a gallant resistance.

The king of Denmark, seemingly ashamed of his conduct, concluded with Sir Gilbert Talbot, the English envoy, an offensive alliance against the states; and at the very same time, his resident at the Hague, by his orders, concluded an offensive alliance against England. To this latter alliance he adhered, probably from jealousy of the increasing naval power of England; and he seized and confiscated all the English ships in his harbors. This was a sensible check to the advantages which Charles had obtained over the Dutch. Not only a blow was given to the English commerce; the king of Denmark's naval force was also considerable, and threatened every moment a conjunction with the Hollanders. That prince stipulated to assist his ally with a fleet of thirty sail; and he received in return a yearly subsidy of one million five hundred thousand crowns, of which three hundred thousand were paid by France.

The king endeavored to counterbalance these confederacies by acquiring new friends and allies. He had despatched Sir Richard Fanshaw into Spain, who met with a very cold reception. That monarchy was sunk into a state of weakness, and was menaced with an invasion from France; yet could not any motive prevail with Philip to enter into cordial friendship with England. Charles's alliance with Portugal, the detention of Jamaica and Tangiers, the sale of Dunkirk to the French, all these offences sunk so deep in the mind of the Spanish monarch, that no motive of interest was sufficient to outweigh them.

The bishop of Munster was the only ally that Charles could acquire. This prelate, a man of restless enterprise and ambition, had entertained a violent animosity against the states and he was easily engaged, by the promise of subsidies from England, to make an incursion on that republic. With a tumultuary army of near twenty thousand men, he invaded her territories, and met with weak resistance. The land forces of the states were as feeble and ill governed, as their fleets were gallant and formidable. But after his committing great ravages in several of the provinces, a stop was put to the progress of this warlike prelate. He had not military skill sufficient to improve the advantages which fortune had put into his hands: the king of France sent a body of six thousand men to oppose him: subsidies were not regularly remitted him from England; and many of his troops deserted for want of pay: the elector of Brandenburgh threatened him with an invasion in his own state; and on the whole, he was glad to conclude a peace under the mediation of France. On the first surmise of his intentions, Sir William Temple was sent from London with money to fix him in his former alliance; but found that he arrived too late.

The Dutch, encouraged by all these favorable circumstances, continued resolute to exert themselves to the utmost in their own defence. De Ruyter, their great admiral, was arrived from his expedition to Guinea: their Indian fleet was come home in safety: their harbors were crowded with merchant ships: faction at home was appeased: the young prince of Orange had put himself under the tuition of the states of Holland, and of De Wit, their pensionary, who executed his trust with honor and fidelity; and the animosity which the Hollanders entertained against the attack of the English, so unprovoked, as they thought it, made them thirst for revenge, and hope for better success in their next enterprise. Such vigor was exerted in the common cause, that, in order to man the fleet, all merchant ships were prohibited to sail, and even the fisheries were suspended. [1]

The English likewise continued in the same disposition, though another more grievous calamity had joined itself to that of war. The plague had broken out in London; and that with such violence as to cut off, in a year, near ninety thousand inhabitants. The king was obliged to summon the Parliament at Oxford.

A good agreement still subsisted between the king and parliament. They, on their part, unanimously voted him the supply demanded, twelve hundred and fifty thousand pounds, to be levied in two years by monthly assessments. And he, to gratify them, passed the five-mile act, which has given occasion to grievous and not unjust complaints. The church, under pretence of guarding monarchy against its inveterate enemies, persevered in the project of wreaking her own enmity against the nonconformists. It was

* Tromp’s Life. D’Estrades February 5, 1665.

enacted, that no dissenting teacher, who took not the nonresistance oath above mentioned, should, except upon the road, come within five miles of any corporation, or of any place, where he had preached after the act of oblivion. The penalty was a fine of fifty pounds, and six months' imprisonment. By ejecting the nonconforming clergy from their churches, and prohibiting all separate congregations, they had been rendered incapable of gaining any livelihood by their spiritual profession. And now, under color of removing them from places where their influence might be dangerous, an expedient was fallen upon to deprive them of all means of subsistence. Had not the spirit of the nation undergone a change, these violences were preludes to the most furious persecution.

However prevalent the hierarchy, this law did not pass without opposition. Besides several peers, attached to the old parliamentary party, Southampton himself, though Clarendon's great friend, expressed his disapprobation of these measures. But the church party, not discouraged with this opposition, introduced into the house of commons a bill for imposing the oath of nonresistance on the whole nation. It was rejected only by three voices. The parliament, after a short session, was prorogued.

1666

After France had declared war, England was evidently overmatched in force. Yet she possessed this advantage by her situation, that she lay between the fleets of her enemies, and might be able, by speedy and well-concerted operations, to prevent their junction. But such was the unhappy conduct of her commanders, or such the want of intelligence in her ministers, that this circumstance turned rather to her prejudice. Lewis had given orders to the duke of Beaufort, his admiral, to sail from Toulon; and the French squadron under his command, consisting of above forty sail, [1] was now commonly supposed to be entering the Channel.

* D'Estrades, May 21, 1666.

The Dutch fleet, to the number of seventy-six sail, was at sea, under the command of De Ruyter and Tromp, in order to join him. The duke of Albemarle and Prince Rupert commanded the English fleet, which exceeded not seventy-four sail. Albemarle, who, from his successes under the protector, had too much learned to despise the enemy, proposed to detach Prince Rupert with twenty ships, in order to oppose the duke of Beaufort. Sir George Ayscue, well acquainted with the bravery and conduct of De Ruyter, protested against the temerity of this resolution: but Albemarle's authority prevailed. The remainder of the English set sail to give battle to the Dutch; who, seeing the enemy advance quickly upon them, cut their cables, and prepared for the combat. The battle that ensued is one of the most memorable that we read of in story; whether we consider its long duration, or the desperate courage with which it was fought. Albemarle made here some atonement by his valor for the rashness of the attempt. No youth, animated by glory and ambitious hopes, could exert himself more than did this man, who was now in the decline of life, and who had reached the summit of honors. We shall not enter minutely into particulars. It will be sufficient to mention the chief events of each day's engagement.

In the first day, Sir William Berkeley, vice-admiral, leading the van, fell into the thickest of the enemy, was overpowered, and his ship taken. He himself was found dead in his cabin, all covered with blood. The English had the weather-gage of the enemy; but as the wind blew so hard that they could not use their lower tier, they derived but small advantage from this circumstance. The Dutch shot, however, fell chiefly on their sails and rigging; and few ships were sunk or much damaged. Chain-shot was at that time a new invention; commonly attributed to De Wit. Sir John Harman exerted himself extremely on this day. The Dutch admiral, Evertz, was killed in engaging him. Darkness parted the combatants.

The second day, the wind was somewhat fallen, and the combat became more steady and more terrible. The English now found, that the greatest valor cannot compensate the superiority of numbers, against an enemy who is well conducted, and who is not defective in courage. De Ruyter and Van Tromp, rivals in glory and enemies from faction, exerted themselves in emulation of each other; and De Ruyter had the advantage of disengaging and saving his antagonist, who had been surrounded by the English, and was in the most imminent danger. Sixteen fresh ships joined the Dutch fleet during the action: and the English were so shattered, that their fighting ships were reduced to twenty-eight, and they found themselves obliged to retreat towards their own coast. The Dutch followed them, and were on the point of renewing the combat; when a calm, which came a little before night, prevented the engagement.

Next morning, the English were obliged to continue their retreat; and a proper disposition was made for that purpose. The shattered ships were ordered to stretch ahead; and sixteen of the most entire followed them in good order, and kept the enemy in awe. Albemarle himself closed the rear, and presented an undaunted countenance to his victorious foes. The earl of Ossory, son of Ormond, a gallant youth, who sought honor and experience in every action throughout Europe, was then on board the admiral. Albemarle confessed to him his intention rather to blow up his ship and perish gloriously, than yield to the enemy. Ossory applauded this desperate resolution.

About two o'clock, the Dutch had come up with their enemy, and were ready to renew the fight; when a new fleet was descried from the south, crowding all their sail to reach the scene of action. The Dutch flattered themselves that Beaufort was arrived to cut off the retreat of the vanquished: the English hoped, that Prince Rupert had come, to turn the scale of action. Albemarle, who had received intelligence of the prince's approach, bent his course towards him. Unhappily, Sir George Ayscue, in a ship of a hundred guns, the largest in the fleet, struck on the Galloper sands, and could receive no assistance from his friends, who were hastening to join the reënforcement. He could not even reap the consolation of perishing with honor, and revenging his death on his enemies. They were preparing fireships to attack him, and he was obliged to strike. The English sailors, seeing the necessity, with the utmost indignation surrendered themselves prisoners.

Albemarle and Prince Rupert were now determined to face the enemy; and next morning, the battle began afresh, with more equal force than ever, and with equal valor. After long cannonading, the fleets came to a close combat; which was continued with great violence, till parted by a mist. The English retired first into their harbors.

Though the English, by their obstinate courage, reaped the chief honor in this engagement it is somewhat uncertain who obtained the victory. The Hollanders took a few ships; and having some appearances of advantage, expressed their satisfaction by all the signs of triumph and rejoicing. But as the English fleet was repaired in a little time, and put to sea more formidable than ever, together with many of those ships which the Dutch had boasted to have burned or destroyed, all Europe saw, that those two brave nations were engaged in a contest which was not likely, on either side, to prove decisive.

It was the conjunction alone of the French, that could give a decisive superiority to the Dutch. In order to facilitate this conjunction, De Ruyter, having repaired his fleet, posted himself at the mouth of the Thames. The English, under Prince Rupert and Albemarle, were not long in coming to the attack. The numbers of each fleet amounted to about eighty sail; and the valor and experience of the commanders, as well as of the seamen, rendered the engagement fierce and obstinate. Sir Thomas Allen, who commanded the white squadron of the English, attacked the Dutch van, which he entirely routed; and he killed the three admirals who commanded it. Van Tromp engaged Sir Jeremy Smith; and during the heat of action, he was separated from De Ruyter and the main body, whether by accident or design was never certainly known. De Ruyter, with conduct and valor, maintained the combat against the main body of the English; and, though overpowered by numbers, kept his station, till night ended the engagement. Next day, finding the Dutch fleet scattered and discouraged, his high spirit submitted to a retreat, which yet he conducted with such skill, as to render it equally honorable to himself as the greatest victory. Full of indignation, however, at yielding the superiority to the enemy, he frequently exclaimed, “My God! what a wretch am I! Among so many thousand bullets, is there not one to put an end to my miserable life?” One De Witte, his son-in-law, who stood near, exhorted him, since he sought death, to turn upon the English, and render his life a dear purchase to the victors. But De Ruyter esteemed it more worthy a brave man to persevere to the uttermost, and, as long as possible, to render service to his country. All that night and next day, the English pressed upon the rear of the Dutch; and it was chiefly by the redoubled efforts of De Ruyter, that the latter saved themselves in their harbors.

The loss sustained by the Hollanders in this action was not very considerable; but as violent animosities had broken out between the two admirals, who engaged all the officers on one side or other, the consternation which took place was great among the provinces. Tromp’s commission was at last taken from him; but though several captains had misbehaved, they were so effectually protected by their friends in the magistracy of the towns, that most of them escaped punishment, and many were still continued in their commands.

The English now rode incontestable masters of the sea, and insulted the Dutch in their harbors. A detachment under Holmes was sent into the road of Vlie, and burned a hundred and forty merchantmen, two men-of-war, together with Brandaris, a large and rich village on the coast. The Dutch merchants, who lost by this enterprise, uniting themselves to the Orange faction, exclaimed against an administration which, they pretended, had brought such disgrace and ruin on their country. None but the firm and intrepid mind of De Wit could have supported itself under such a complication of calamities.

The king of France, apprehensive that the Dutch would sink under their misfortunes, at least that De Wit, his friend, might be dispossessed of the administration, hastened the advance of the duke of Beaufort. The Dutch fleet likewise was again equipped; and under the command of De Ruyter, cruised near the Straits of Dover. Prince Rupert with the English navy, now stronger than ever, came full sail upon them. The Dutch admiral thought proper to decline the combat, and retired into St. John’s road, near Bulloigne. Here he sheltered himself, both from the English, and from a furious storm which arose. Prince Rupert, too, was obliged to retire into St. Helens; where he staid some time, in order to repair the damages which he had sustained. Meanwhile the duke of Beaufort proceeded up the Channel, and passed the English fleet unperceived; but he did not find the Dutch, as he expected. De Ruyter had been seized with a fever: many of the chief officers had fallen into sickness: a contagious distemper was spread through the fleet: and the states thought it necessary to recall them into their harbors, before the enemy should be refitted. The French king, anxious for his navy, which with so much care and industry he had so lately built, despatched orders to Beaufort, to make the best of his way to Brest. That admiral had again the good fortune to pass the English. One ship alone, the Ruby, fell into the hands of the enemy.

While the war continued without any decisive success on either side, a calamity happened in London which threw the people into great consternation. Fire, breaking out in a baker’s house near the bridge, spread itself on all sides with such rapidity, that no efforts could extinguish it, till it laid in ashes a considerable part of the city. The inhabitants, without being able to provide effectually for their relief, were reduced to be spectators of their own ruin; and were pursued from street to street by the flames, which unexpectedly gathered round them. Three days and nights did the fire advance; and it was only by the blowing up of houses that it was at last extinguished. The king and duke used their utmost endeavors to stop the progress of the flames; but all their industry was unsuccessful. About four hundred streets and thirteen thousand houses were reduced to ashes.

The causes of this calamity were evident. The narrow streets of London, the houses built entirely of wood, the dry season, and a violent east wind which blew; these were so many concurring circumstances, which rendered it easy to assign the reason of the destruction that ensued. But the people were not satisfied with this obvious account. Prompted by blind rage, some ascribed the guilt to the republicans, others to the Catholics; though it is not easy to conceive how the burning of London could serve the purposes of either party. As the Papists were the chief objects of public detestation, the rumor which threw the guilt on them was more favorably received by the people. No proof, however, or even presumption, after the strictest inquiry by a committee of parliament, ever appeared to authorize such a calumny; yet, in order to give countenance to the popular prejudice, the inscription, engraved by authority on the monument, ascribed this calamity to that hated sect. This clause was erased by order of King James, when he came to the throne; but after the revolution it was replaced: so credulous, as well as obstinate, are the people in believing every thing which flatters their prevailing passion.

The fire of London, though at that time a great calamity, has proved in the issue beneficial both to the city and the kingdom. The city was rebuilt in a very little time; and care was taken to make the streets wider and more regular than before. A discretionary power was assumed by the king to regulate the distribution of the buildings, and to forbid the use of lath and timber, the materials of which the houses were formerly composed. The necessity was so urgent, and the occasion so extraordinary that no exceptions were taken at an exercise of authority which otherwise might have been deemed illegal. Had the king been enabled to carry his power still further, and made the houses be rebuilt with perfect regularity, and entirely upon one plan, he had much contributed to the convenience, as well as embellishment of the city. Great advantages, however, have resulted from the alterations though not carried to the full length. London became much more healthy after the fire. The plague, which used to break out with great fury twice or thrice every century, and indeed was always lurking in some corner or other of the city, has scarcely ever appeared since that calamity.

The parliament met soon after, and gave the sanction of law to those regulations made by royal authority; as well as appointed commissioners for deciding all such questions of property as might arise from the fire. They likewise voted a supply of one million eight hundred thousand pounds, to be levied, partly by a poll-bill, partly by assessments. Though their inquiry brought out no proofs which could fix on the Papists the burning of London, the general aversion against that sect still prevailed; and complaints were made, probably without much foundation, of its dangerous increase. Charles, at the desire of the commons, issued a proclamation for the banishment of all priests and Jesuits; but the bad execution of this, as well as of former edicts, destroyed all confidence in his sincerity, whenever he pretended an aversion towards the Catholic religion. Whether suspicions of this nature had diminished the king's popularity, is uncertain; but it appears that the supply was voted much later than Charles expected, or even than the public necessities seemed to require. The intrigues of the duke of Buckingham, a man who wanted only steadiness to render him extremely dangerous, had somewhat embarrassed the measures of the court: and this was the first time that the king found any considerable reason to complain of a failure of confidence in this house of commons. The rising symptoms of ill humor tended, no doubt, to quicken the steps which were already making towards a peace with foreign enemies.

Charles began to be sensible, that all the ends for which the war had been undertaken were likely to prove entirely abortive. The Dutch, even when single, had defended themselves with vigor, and were every day improving in their military skill and preparations.

1667

Though their trade had suffered extremely, their extensive credit enabled them to levy great sums; and while the seamen of England loudly complained of want of pay, the Dutch navy was regularly supplied with money and every thing requisite for its subsistence. As two powerful kings now supported them, every place, from the extremity of Norway to the coasts of Bayonne, was become hostile to the English. And Charles, neither fond of action, nor stimulated by any violent ambition, earnestly sought for means of restoring tranquillity to his people, disgusted with a war, which, being joined with the plague and fire, had proved so fruitless and destructive.

The first advances towards an accommodation were made by England. When the king sent for the body of Sir William Berkeley, he insinuated to the states his desire of peace on reasonable terms; and their answer corresponded in the same amicable intentions. Charles, however, to maintain the appearance of superiority, still insisted that the states should treat at London; and they agreed to make him this compliment so far as concerned themselves: but being engaged in alliance with two crowned heads, they could not, they said, prevail with these to depart in that respect from their dignity. On a sudden, the king went so far on the other side as to offer the sending of ambassadors to the Hague; but this proposal, which seemed honorable to the Dutch, was meant only to divide and distract them, by affording the English an opportunity to carry on cabals with the disaffected party. The offer was therefore rejected; and conferences were secretly held in the queen mother's apartments at Paris, where the pretensions of both parties were discussed. The Dutch made equitable proposals; either that all things should be restored to the same condition in which they stood before the war, or that both parties should continue in possession of their present acquisitions. Charles accepted of the latter proposal; and almost every thing was adjusted, except the disputes with regard to the Isle of Polerone. This island lies in the East Indies, and was formerly valuable for its produce of spices. The English had been masters of it, but were dispossessed at the time when the violences were committed against them at Amboyna. Cromwell had stipulated to have it restored; and the Hollanders, having first entirely destroyed all the spice trees, maintained that they had executed the treaty, but that the English had been anew expelled during the course of the war. Charles renewed his pretensions to this island; and as the reasons on both sides began to multiply, and seemed to require a long discussion, it was agreed to transfer the treaty to some other place; and Charles made choice of Breda.

Lord Hollis and Henry Coventry were the English ambassadors. They immediately desired that a suspension of arms should be agreed to, till the several claims should be adjusted; but this proposal, seemingly so natural, was rejected by the credit of De Wit. That penetrating and active minister, thoroughly acquainted with the characters of princes and the situation of affairs, had discovered an opportunity of striking a blow, which might at once restore to the Dutch the honor lost during the war, and severely revenge those injuries which he ascribed to the wanton ambition and injustice of the English.

Whatever projects might have been formed by Charles for secreting the money granted him by parliament, he had hitherto failed in his intention. The expenses of such vast armaments had exhausted all the supplies, [1] and even a great debt was contracted to the seamen. The king, therefore, was resolved to save, as far as possible, the last supply of one million eight hundred thousand pounds; and to employ it for payment of his debts, as well those which had been occasioned by the war, as those which he had formerly contracted. He observed, that the Dutch had been with great reluctance forced into the war, and that the events of it were not such as to inspire them with great desire of its continuance. The French, he knew, had been engaged into hostilities by no other motive than that of supporting their ally; and were now more desirous than ever of putting an end to the quarrel. The differences between the parties were so inconsiderable, that the conclusion of peace appeared infallible; and nothing but forms, at least some vain points of honor, seemed to remain for the ambassadors at Breda to discuss. In this situation, Charles, moved by an ill-timed frugality, remitted his preparations, and exposed England to one of the greatest affronts which it has ever received. Two small squadrons alone were equipped, and during a war with such potent and martial enemies, every thing was left almost in the same situation as in times of the most profound tranquillity.

* The Dutch had spent on the war near forty millions of livres a year, about three millions sterling; a much greater sum than had been granted by the English parliament.

D’Estrades, December 24 1665. January 1, 1666. Temple, vol.

i. . It was probably the want of money which engaged the king to pay the seamen with tickets; a contrivance which proved so much to their loss.

De Wit protracted the negotiations at Breda, and hastened the naval preparations. The Dutch fleet appeared in the Thames, under the command of De Ruyter, and threw the English into the utmost consternation. A chain had been drawn across the River Medway; some fortifications had been added to Sheerness and Upnore Castle; but all these preparations were unequal to the present necessity. Sheerness was soon taken; nor could it be saved by the valor of Sir Edward Sprague, who defended it. Having the advantage of a spring tide and an easterly wind, the Dutch pressed on, and broke the chain, though fortified by some ships, which had been there sunk by orders of the duke of Albemarle. They burned the three ships which lay to guard the chain — the Matthias, the Unity, and the Charles V. After damaging several vessels, and possessing themselves of the hull of the Royal Charles, which the English had burned, they advanced with six men-of-war and five fireships as far as Upnore Castle, where they burned the Royal Oak, the Loyal London, and the Great James. Captain Douglas, who commanded on board the Royal Oak, perished in the flames, though he had an easy opportunity of escaping. “Never was it known,” he said, “that a Douglas had left his post without orders.” [1] The Hollanders fell down the Medway without receiving any considerable damage; and it was apprehended, that they might next tide sail up the Thames, and extend their hostilities even to the bridge of London. Nine ships were sunk at Woolwich, four at Blackwall: platforms were raised in many places, furnished with artillery; the train bands were called out, and every place was in a violent agitation. The Dutch sailed next to Portsmouth, where they made a fruitless attempt: they met with no better success at Plymouth: they insulted Harwich: they sailed again up the Thames as far as Tilbury, where they were repulsed. The whole coast was in alarm; and had the French thought proper at this time to join the Dutch fleet, and to invade England, consequences the most fatal might justly have been apprehended. But Lewis had no intention to push the victory to such extremities. His interest required that a balance should be kept between the two maritime powers; not that an uncontrolled superiority should be given to either.

* Temple, vol. ii. .

Great indignation prevailed amongst the English, to see an enemy, whom they regarded as inferior, whom they had expected totally to subdue, and over whom they had gained many honorable advantages, now of a sudden ride undisputed masters of the ocean, burn their ships in their very harbors, fill every place with confusion, and strike a terror into the capital itself. But though the cause of all these disasters could be ascribed neither to bad fortune, to the misconduct of admirals, nor to the ill behavior of seamen, but solely to the avarice, at least to the improvidence, of the government, no dangerous symptoms of discontent appeared, and no attempt for an insurrection was made by any of those numerous sectaries who had been so openly branded for their rebellious principles, and who, upon that supposition, had been treated with such severity. [1]

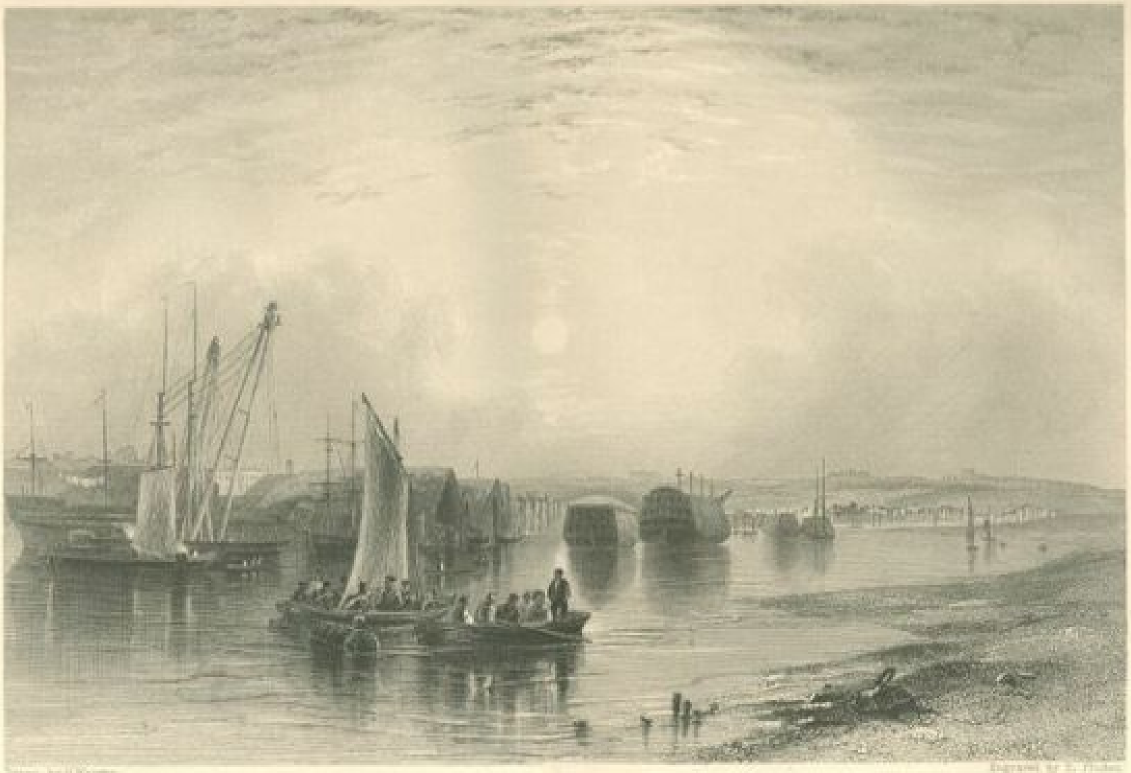
* Some nonconformists, however, both in Scotland and England, had kept a correspondence with the states, and had entertained projects for insurrections; but they were too weak even to attempt the execution of them. D'Estrades,

October 13, 1665.

In the present distress, two expedients were embraced: an army of twelve thousand men was suddenly levied; and the parliament, though it lay under prorogation, was summoned to meet. The houses were very thin; and the only vote which the commons passed, was an address for breaking the army; which was complied with. This expression of jealousy showed the court what they might expect from that assembly; and it was thought more prudent to prorogue them till next winter.

But the signing of the treaty at Breda extricated the king from his present difficulties. The English ambassadors received orders to recede from those demands, which, how ever frivolous in themselves, could not now be relinquished without acknowledging a superiority in the enemy. Polerone remained with the Dutch; satisfaction for the ships Bonaventure and Good Hope, the pretended grounds of the quarrel, was no longer insisted on; Acadie was yielded to the French. The acquisition of New York, a settlement so important by its situation, was the chief advantage which the English reaped from a war, in which the national character of bravery had shone out with lustre, but where the misconduct of the government, especially in the conclusion, had been no less apparent.

To appease the people by some sacrifice seemed requisite before the meeting of parliament; and the prejudices of the nation pointed out the victim. The chancellor was at this time much exposed to the hatred of the public, and of every party which divided the nation. All the numerous sectaries regarded him as their determined enemy; and ascribed to his advice and influence those persecuting laws to which they had lately been exposed. The Catholics knew, that while he retained any authority, all their credit with the king and the duke would be entirely useless to them, nor must they ever expect any favor or indulgence. Even the royalists, disappointed in their sanguine hopes of preferment, threw a great load of envy on Clarendon, into whose hands the king seemed at first to have resigned the whole power of government. The sale of Dunkirk, the bad payment of the seamen, the disgrace at Chatham, the unsuccessful conclusion of the war all these misfortunes were charged on the chancellor, who though he had ever opposed the rupture with Holland, thought it still his duty to justify what he could not prevent. A building, likewise, of more expense and magnificence than his slender fortune could afford, being unwarily undertaken by him, much exposed him to public reproach, as if he had acquired great riches by corruption. The populace gave it commonly the appellation of Dunkirk House.



Drawn by H. Warren. Engraved by E. Finden.

CHATHAM.

The king himself, who had always more revered than loved the chancellor, was now totally estranged from him. Amidst the dissolute manners of the court, that minister still maintained an inflexible dignity, and would not submit to any condescensions which he deemed unworthy of his age and character. Buckingham, a man of profligate morals, happy in his talent for ridicule, but exposed in his own conduct to all the ridicule which he threw on others, still made him the object of his raillery, and gradually lessened in the king that regard which he bore to his minister. When any difficulties arose, either for want of power or money, the blame was still thrown on him, who, it was believed, had carefully at the restoration checked all lavish concessions to the king. And what, perhaps, touched Charles more nearly, he found in Clarendon, it is said, obstacles to his pleasures, as well as to his ambition.

The king, disgusted with the homely person of his consort, and desirous of having children, had hearkened to proposals of obtaining a divorce, on pretence either of her being pre-engaged to another, or having made a vow of chastity before her marriage. He was further stimulated by his passion for Mrs. Stuart, daughter of a Scotch gentleman; a lady of great beauty, and whose virtue he had hitherto found impregnable: but Clarendon, apprehensive of the consequences attending a disputed title, and perhaps anxious for the succession of his own grandchildren, engaged the duke of Richmond to marry Mrs. Stuart, and thereby put an end to the king's hopes. It is pretended that Charles never forgave this disappointment.

When politics, therefore, and inclination both concurred to make the king sacrifice Clarendon to popular prejudices, the memory of his past services was not able any longer to delay his fall. The great seal was taken from him, and given to Sir Orlando Bridgeman, by the title of lord keeper. Southampton, the treasurer, was now dead, who had persevered to the utmost in his attachments to the chancellor. The last time he appeared at the council table, he exerted his friendship with a vigor which neither age nor infirmities could abate. "This man," said he, speaking of Clarendon, "is a true Protestant, and an honest Englishman; and while he enjoys power, we are secure of our laws, liberties, and religion. I dread the consequences of his removal."

But the fall of the chancellor was not sufficient to gratify the malice of his enemies: his total ruin was resolved on. The duke of York in vain exerted his interest in behalf of his father-in-law. Both prince and people united in promoting that violent measure; and no means were thought so proper for ingratiating the court with a parliament, which had so long been governed by that very minister who was now to be the victim of their prejudices.

Some popular acts paved the way for the session; and the parliament, in their first address, gave the king thanks for these instances of his goodness; and, among the rest, they took care to mention his dismission of Clarendon. The king, in reply, assured the houses, that he would never again employ that nobleman in any public office whatsoever. Immediately the charge against him was opened in the house of commons by Mr. Seymour, afterwards Sir Edward, and consisted of seventeen articles. The house, without examining particulars, further than hearing general affirmations that all would be proved, immediately voted his impeachment. Many of the articles [1] we know to be either false or frivolous; and such of them as we are less acquainted with, we may fairly presume to be no better grounded. His advising the sale of Dunkirk seems the heaviest and truest part of the charge; but a mistake in judgment, allowing it to be such, where there appear no symptoms of corruption or bad intentions, it would be very hard to impute as a crime to any minister. The king's necessities, which occasioned that measure, cannot with any appearance of reason be charged on Clarendon; and chiefly proceeded from the over frugal maxims of the parliament itself, in not granting the proper supplies to the crown.

* See note A, at the end of the volume.

When the impeachment was carried up to the peers, as it contained an accusation of treason in general, without specifying any particulars, it seemed not a sufficient ground for committing Clarendon to custody. The precedents of Strafford and Laud were not, by reason of the violence of the times, deemed a proper authority; but as the commons still insisted upon his commitment, it was necessary to appoint a free conference between the houses. The lords persevered in their resolution; and the commons voted this conduct to be an obstruction to public justice, and a precedent of evil and dangerous tendency. They also chose a committee to draw up a vindication of their own proceedings.

Clarendon, finding that the popular torrent, united to the violence of power, ran with impetuosity against him, and that a defence offered to such prejudiced ears would be entirely ineffectual, thought proper to withdraw. At Calais he wrote a paper addressed to the house of lords. He there said, that his fortune, which was but moderate, had been gained entirely by the lawful, avowed profits of his office, and by the voluntary bounty of the king; that, during the first years after the restoration, he had always concurred in opinion with the other counsellors, men of such reputation that no one could entertain suspicions of their wisdom or integrity: that his credit soon declined; and however he might disapprove of some measures, he found it vain to oppose them; that his repugnance to the Dutch war, the source of all the public grievances, was always generally known, as well as his disapprobation of many unhappy steps taken in conducting it: and that, whatever pretence might be made of public offences, his real crime, that which had exasperated his powerful enemies, was his frequent opposition to exorbitant grants, which the importunity of suitors had extorted from his majesty.

The lords transmitted this paper to the commons, under the appellation of a libel; and by a vote of both houses it was condemned to be burned by the hands of the hangman. The parliament next proceeded to exert their legislative power against Clarendon, and passed a bill of banishment and incapacity, which received the royal assent. He retired into France, where he lived in a private manner. He survived his banishment six years; and he employed his leisure chiefly in reducing into order the History of the Civil Wars, for which he had before collected materials. The performance does honor to his memory; and, except Whitlocke's Memorials, is the most candid account of those times composed by any contemporary author.

Clarendon was always a friend to the liberty and constitution of his country. At the commencement of the civil wars, he had entered into the late king's service, and was honored with a great share in the esteem and friendship of that monarch: he was pursued with unrelenting animosity by the long parliament: he had shared all the fortunes and directed all the counsels of the present king during his exile: he had been advanced to the highest trust and offices after the restoration: yet all these circumstances, which might naturally operate with such force, either on resentment, gratitude, or ambition, had no influence on his uncorrupted mind. It is said, that when he first engaged in the study of the law, his father exhorted him with great earnestness to shun the practice, too common in that profession, of straining every point in favor of prerogative, and perverting so useful a science to the oppression of liberty; and in the midst of these rational and virtuous counsels, which he reiterated, he was suddenly seized with an apoplexy, and expired in his son's presence. This circumstance gave additional weight to the principles which he inculcated.

The combination of king and subject to oppress so good a minister, affords to men of opposite dispositions an equal occasion of inveighing against the ingratitude of princes, or ignorance of the people. Charles seems never to have mitigated his resentment against Clarendon; and the national prejudices pursued him to his retreat in France. A company of English soldiers, being quartered near him, assaulted his house, broke open the doors, gave him a dangerous wound on the head, and would have proceeded to the last extremities, had not their officers, hearing of the violence, happily interposed.

1668

The next expedient which the king embraced in order to acquire popularity, is more deserving of praise; and, had it been steadily pursued, would probably have rendered his reign happy, certainly his memory respected. It is the triple alliance of which I speak; a measure which gave entire satisfaction to the public.

The glory of France, which had long been eclipsed, either by domestic factions, or by the superior force of the Spanish monarchy, began now to break out with great lustre, and to engage the attention of the neighboring nations. The independent power and mutinous spirit of the nobility were subdued; the popular pretensions of the parliament restrained; the Hugonot party reduced to subjection: that extensive and fertile country, enjoying every advantage both of climate and situation, was fully peopled with ingenious and industrious inhabitants: and while the spirit of the nation discovered all the vigor and bravery requisite for great enterprises, it was tamed to an entire submission under the will of the sovereign.

The sovereign who now filled the throne was well adapted, by his personal character, both to increase and to avail himself of these advantages. Lewis XIV., endowed with every quality which could enchant the people, possessed many which merit the approbation of the wise. The masculine beauty of his person was embellished with a noble air: the dignity of his behavior was tempered with affability and politeness: elegant without effeminacy, addicted to pleasure without neglecting business, decent in his very vices, and beloved in the midst of arbitrary power, he surpassed all contemporary monarchs, as in grandeur, so likewise in fame and glory.

His ambition, regulated by prudence, not by justice, had carefully provided every means of conquest; and before he put himself in motion, he seemed to have absolutely insured success. His finances were brought into order; a naval power created; his armies increased and disciplined; magazines and military stores provided; and though the magnificence of his court was supported beyond all former example; so regular was the economy observed, and so willingly did the people, now enriched by arts and commerce, submit to multiplied taxes, that his military force much exceeded what in any preceding age had ever been employed by any European monarch.

The sudden decline, and almost total fall of the Spanish monarchy, opened an inviting field to so enterprising a prince, and seemed to promise him easy and extensive conquests* [2missing period] The other nations of Europe, feeble or ill governed, were astonished at the greatness of his rising empire; and all of them cast their eyes towards England, as the only power which could save them from that subjection with which they seemed to be so nearly threatened.

The animosity which had anciently subsisted between the English and French nations, and which had been suspended for above a century by the jealousy of Spanish greatness, began to revive and to exert itself. The glory of preserving the balance of Europe, a glory so much founded on justice and humanity, flattered the ambition of England; and the people were eager to provide for their own future security, by opposing the progress of so hated a rival. The prospect of embracing such measures had contributed, among other reasons, to render the peace of Breda so universally acceptable to the nation. By the death of Philip IV., king of Spain, an inviting opportunity, and some very slender pretences, had been afforded to call forth the ambition of Lewis.

At the treaty of the Pyrenees, when Lewis espoused the Spanish princess, he had renounced every title of succession to every part of the Spanish monarchy; and this renunciation had been couched in the most accurate and most precise terms that language could afford. But on the death of his father-in-law, he retracted his renunciation, and pretended that natural rights, depending on blood and succession, could not be annihilated by any extorted deed or contract. Philip had left a son, Charles II. of Spain; but as the queen of France was of a former marriage, she laid claim to a considerable province of the Spanish monarchy, even to the exclusion of her brother. By the customs of some parts of Brabant, a female of a first marriage was preferred to a male of a second, in the succession to private inheritances; and Lewis thence inferred, that his queen had acquired a right to the dominion of that important duchy.

A claim of this nature was more properly supported by military force than by argument and reasoning. Lewis appeared on the frontiers of the Netherlands with an army of forty thousand men, commanded by the best generals of the age, and provided with every thing necessary for action. The Spaniards, though they might have foreseen this measure, were totally unprepared. Their towns, without magazines, fortifications or garrisons, fell into the hands of the French king, as soon as he presented himself before them. Athe, Lisle, Tournay, Oudenarde, Courtray, Charleroi, Binche, were immediately taken: and it was visible, that no force in the Low Countries was able to stop or retard the progress of the French arms.

This measure, executed with such celerity and success, gave great alarm to almost every court in Europe. It had been observed with what dignity, or even haughtiness, Lewis, from the time he began to govern, had ever supported all his rights and pretensions. D’Estrades, the French ambassador, and Watteville, the Spanish, having quarrelled in London, on Account of their claims for precedency, the French monarch was not satisfied, till Spain sent to Paris a solemn embassy, and promised never more to revive such contests. Crequi, his ambassador at Rome, had met with an affront from the pope’s guards: the pope, Alexander VII., had been constrained to break his guards, to send his nephew to ask pardon, and to allow a pillar to be erected in Rome itself, as a monument of his own humiliation. The king of England too had experienced the high spirit and unsubmitting temper of Lewis. A pretension to superiority in the English flag having been advanced, the French monarch remonstrated with such vigor, and prepared himself to resist with such courage, that Charles found it more prudent to desist from his vain and antiquated claims. “The king of England,” said Lewis to his ambassador D’Estrades, “may know my force, but he knows not the sentiments of my heart: every thing appears to me contemptible in comparison of glory.” [1] These measures of conduct had given strong indications of his character: but the invasion of Flanders discovered an ambition, which, being supported by such overgrown power, menaced the general liberties of Europe.

* January 25, 1662

As no state lay nearer the danger, none was seized with more terror than the United Provinces. They were still engaged, together with France, in a war against England; and Lewis had promised them, that he would take no step against Spain without previously informing them: but, contrary to this assurance, he kept a total silence, till on the very point of entering upon action. If the renunciation made at the treaty of the Pyrenees was not valid, it was foreseen, that upon the death of the king of Spain, a sickly infant, the whole monarchy would be claimed by Lewis; after which it would be vainly expected to set bounds to his pretensions. Charles acquainted with these well-grounded apprehensions of the Dutch, had been the more obstinate in insisting on his own conditions at Breda; and by delaying to sign the treaty, had imprudently exposed himself to the signal disgrace which he received at Chatham. De Wit, sensible that a few weeks' delay would be of no consequence in the Low Countries, took this opportunity of striking an important blow, and of finishing the war with honor to himself and to his country.

Negotiations meanwhile commenced for the saving of Flanders; but no resistance was made to the French arms. The Spanish ministers exclaimed every where against the flagrant injustice of Lewis's pretensions, and represented it to be the interest of every power in Europe, even more than of Spain itself, to prevent his conquest of the Low Countries. The emperor and the German princes discovered evident symptoms of discontent; but their motions were slow and backward. The states, though terrified at the prospect of having their frontier exposed to so formidable a foe, saw no resource, no means of safety. England indeed seemed disposed to make opposition to the French; but the variable and impolitic conduct of Charles kept that republic from making him any open advances, by which she might lose the friendship of France, without acquiring any new ally. And though Lewis, dreading a combination of all Europe, had offered terms of accommodation, the Dutch apprehended lest these, either from the obstinacy of the Spaniards, or the ambition of the French, would never be carried into execution.

Charles resolved with great prudence to take the first step towards a confederacy. Sir William Temple, his resident at Brussels, received orders to go secretly to the Hague, and to concert with the states the means of saving the Netherlands. This man, whom philosophy had taught to despise the world, without rendering him unfit for it, was frank, open, sincere, superior to the little tricks of vulgar politicians; and meeting in De Wit with a man of the same generous and enlarged sentiments, he immediately opened his master's intentions, and pressed a speedy conclusion. A treaty was from the first negotiated between these two statesmen with the same cordiality as if it were a private transaction between intimate companions. Deeming the interests of their country the same, they gave full scope to that sympathy of character, which disposed them to an entire reliance on each other’s professions and engagements. And though jealousy against the house of Orange might inspire De Wit with an aversion to a strict union with England, he generously resolved to sacrifice all private considerations to the public service.

Temple insisted on an offensive league between England and Holland, in order to oblige France to relinquish all her conquests: but De Wit told him, that this measure was too bold and precipitate to be agreed to by the states. He said that the French were the old and constant allies of the republic; and till matters came to extremities, she never would deem it prudent to abandon a friendship so well established, and rely entirely on a treaty with England, which had lately waged so cruel a war against her: that ever since the reign of Elizabeth, there had been such a fluctuation in the English councils, that it was not possible, for two years together, to take any sure or certain measures with that kingdom: that though the present ministry, having entered into views so conformable to national interest, promised greater firmness and constancy, it might still be unsafe, in a business of such consequence, to put entire confidence in them: that the French monarch was young, haughty, and powerful; and if treated in so imperious a manner, would expose himself to the greatest extremities rather than submit: that it was sufficient, if he could be constrained to adhere to the offers which he himself had already made, and if the remaining provinces of the Low Countries could be thereby saved from the danger with which they were at present threatened: and that the other powers in Germany and the north, whose assistance they might expect, would be satisfied with putting a stop to the French conquests, without pretending to recover the places already lost.

The English minister was content to accept of the terms proposed by the pensionary. Lewis had offered to relinquish all the queen’s rights, on condition either of keeping the conquests which he had made last campaign, or of receiving, in lieu of them, Franche Compte, together with Cambray, Aire, and St. Omers. De Wit and Temple founded their treaty upon this proposal. They agreed to offer their mediation to the contending powers, and oblige France to adhere to this alternative, and Spain to accept of it. If Spain refused, they agreed that France should not prosecute her claim by arms, but leave it entirely to England and Holland to employ force for making the terms effectual. And the remainder of the Low Countries they thenceforth guarantied to Spain. A defensive alliance was likewise concluded between Holland and England.

The articles of this confederacy were soon adjusted by such candid and able negotiators: but the greatest difficulty still remained. By the constitution of the republic, all the towns in all the provinces must give their consent to every alliance; and besides that this formality could not be despatched in less than two months, it was justly to be dreaded that the influence of France would obstruct the passing of the treaty in some of the smaller cities. D'Estrades, the French ambassador, a man of abilities, hearing of the league which was on the carpet, treated it lightly. "Six weeks hence," said he, "we shall speak to it." To obviate this difficulty, De Wit had the courage, for the public good, to break through the laws in so fundamental an article; and by his authority, he prevailed with the states general at once to sign and ratify the league: though they acknowledged that, if that measure should displease their constituents, they risked their heads by this irregularity. After sealing, all parties embraced with great cordiality. Temple cried out, "At Breda, as friends: here, as brothers." And De Wit added, that now the matter was finished, it looked like a miracle.

Room had been left in the treaty for the accession of Sweden, which was soon after obtained; and thus was concluded in five days the triple league; an event received with equal surprise and approbation by the world. Notwithstanding the unfortunate conclusion of the last war, England now appeared in her proper station, and, by this wise conduct, had recovered all her influence and credit in Europe. Temple likewise received great applause; but to all the compliments made him on the occasion, he modestly replied, that to remove things from their centre, or proper element, required force and labor; but that of themselves they easily returned to it.

The French monarch was extremely displeased with this measure. Not only bounds were at present set to his ambition; such a barrier was also raised as seemed forever impregnable. And though his own offer was made the foundation of the treaty, he had prescribed so short a time for the acceptance of it that he still expected, from the delays and reluctance of Spain, to find some opportunity of eluding it. The court of Madrid showed equal displeasure. To relinquish any part of the Spanish provinces, in lieu of claims so apparently unjust, and these urged with such violence and haughtiness, inspired the highest disgust. Often did the Spaniards threaten to abandon entirely the Low Countries, rather than submit to so cruel a mortification; and they endeavored, by this menace, to terrify the mediating powers into more vigorous measures for their support. But Temple and De Wit were better acquainted with the views and interests of Spain. They knew that she must still retain the Low Countries, as a bond of connection with the other European powers, who alone, if her young monarch should happen to die without issue, could insure her independency against the pretensions of France. They still urged, therefore, the terms of the triple league, and threatened Spain with war in case of refusal. The plenipotentiaries of all the powers met at Aix-la-Chapelle. Temple was minister for England; Van Beuninghen for Holland; D'Ohna for Sweden.

Spain at last, pressed on all hands, accepted of the alternative offered; but in her very compliance, she gave strong symptoms of ill humor and discontent. It had been apparent that the Hollanders, entirely neglecting the honor of the Spanish monarchy, had been anxious only for their own security; and, provided they could remove Lewis to a distance from their frontier, were more indifferent what progress he made in other places. Sensible of these views, the queen regent of Spain resolved still to keep them in an anxiety, which might for the future be the foundation of a union more intimate than they were willing at present to enter into Franche Compte, by a vigorous and well-concerted plan of the French king, had been conquered in fifteen days, during a rigorous season, and in the midst of winter. She chose therefore to recover this province, and to abandon all the towns conquered in Flanders during the last campaign. By this means Lewis extended his garrisons into the heart of the Low Countries; and a very feeble barrier remained to the Spanish provinces.

But notwithstanding the advantages of his situation, the French monarch could entertain small hopes of ever extending his conquests on that quarter, which lay the most exposed to his ambition, and where his acquisitions were of most importance. The triple league guarantied the remaining provinces to Spain; and the emperor and other powers of Germany, whose interest seemed to be intimately concerned, were invited to enter into the same confederacy. Spain herself, having about this time, under the mediation of Charles, made peace on equal terms with Portugal, might be expected to exert more vigor and opposition to her haughty and triumphant rival. The great satisfaction expressed in England on account of the counsels now embraced by the court, promised the hearty concurrence of parliament in every measure which could be proposed for opposition to the grandeur of France. And thus all Europe seemed to repose herself with security under the wings of that powerful confederacy which had been so happily formed for her protection. It is now time to give some account of the state of affairs in Scotland and in Ireland.

The Scottish nation, though they had never been subject to the arbitrary power of their prince, had but very imperfect notions of law and liberty; and scarcely in any age had they ever enjoyed an administration which had confined itself within the proper boundaries. By their final union alone with England, their once hated adversary, they have happily attained the experience of a government perfectly regular, and exempt from all violence and injustice. Charles, from his aversion to business, had intrusted the affairs of that country to his ministers, particularly Middleton; and these could not forbear making very extraordinary stretches of authority.

There had been intercepted a letter, written by Lord Lorne to Lord Duffus, in which, a little too plainly, but very truly, he complained, that his enemies had endeavored by falsehood to prepossess the king against him. But he said, that he had now discovered them, had defeated them, and had gained the person, meaning the earl of Clarendon, upon whom the chief of them depended. This letter was produced before the parliament; and Lorne was tried upon an old, tyrannical, absurd law against leasing-making; by which it was rendered criminal to belie the subjects to the king, or create in him an ill opinion of them. He was condemned to die: but Charles was much displeased with the sentence, and granted him a pardon. [1]

* Burnet, .

It was carried in parliament, that twelve persons, without crime, witness, trial, or accuser, should be declared incapable of all trust or office; and to render this injustice more egregious, it was agreed, that these persons should be named by ballot; a method of voting which several republics had adopted at elections, in order to prevent faction and intrigue; but which could serve only as a cover to malice and iniquity in the inflicting of punishments. Lauderdale, Crawford, and Sir Robert Murray, among others, were incapacitated: but the king, who disapproved of this injustice, refused his assent. [1]

An act was passed against all persons who should move the king for restoring the children of those who were attainted by parliament; an unheard-of restraint on applications for grace and mercy. No penalty was affixed; but the act was but the more violent and tyrannical on that account. The court lawyers had established it as a maxim, that the assigning of a punishment was a limitation of the crown; whereas a law forbidding any thing, though without a penalty, made the offenders criminal. And in that case, they determined that the punishment was arbitrary; only that it could not extend to life. Middleton, as commissioner, passed this act; though he had no instructions for that purpose.

An act of indemnity passed; but at the same time it was voted, that all those who had offended during the late disorders, should be subjected to fines; and a committee of parliament was appointed for imposing them. These proceeded without any regard to some equitable rules which the king had prescribed to them. [1] The most obnoxious compounded secretly.

No consideration was had, either of men’s riches, or of the degrees of their guilt: no proofs were produced: inquiries were not so much as made: but as fast as information was given in against any man, he was marked down for a particular fine: and all was transacted in a secret committee. When the list was read in parliament, exceptions were made to several: some had been under age during the civil wars; some had been abroad. But it was still replied, that a proper time would come when every man should be heard in his own defence. The only intention, it was said, of setting the fines was, that such persons should have no benefit by the act of indemnity, unless they paid the sum demanded: every one that chose to stand upon his innocence, and renounce the benefit of the indemnity, might do it at his peril. It was well known, that no one would dare so far to set at defiance so arbitrary an administration. The king wrote to the council, ordering them to supersede the levying of those fines: but Middleton found means, during some time, to elude these orders. [1] And at last, the king obliged his ministers to compound for half the sums which had been imposed. In all these transactions, and in most others which passed during the present reign, we still find the moderating hand of the king interposed to protect the Scots from the oppressions which their own countrymen, employed in the ministry, were desirous of exercising over them.

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* Burnet, .

* * Burnet, .

* Burnet, .

But the chief circumstance whence were derived all the subsequent tyranny and disorders in Scotland, was the execution of the laws for the establishment of Episcopacy; a mode of government to which a great part of the nation had entertained an unsurmountable aversion. The rights of patrons had for some years been abolished; and the power of electing ministers had been vested in the kirk session and lay elders. It was now enacted, that all incumbents who had been admitted upon this title, should receive a presentation from the patron, and should be instituted anew by the bishop, under the penalty of deprivation. The more rigid Presbyterians concerted measures among themselves, and refused obedience: they imagined that their number would protect them. Three hundred and fifty parishes, above a third of the kingdom, were at once declared vacant. The western counties chiefly were obstinate in this particular. New ministers were sought for all over the kingdom; and no one was so ignorant or vicious as to be rejected. The people, who loved extremely and respected their former teachers; men remarkable for the severity of their manners, and their fervor in preaching; were inflamed against these intruders, who had obtained their livings under such invidious circumstances, and who took no care, by the regularity of their manners, to soften the prejudices entertained against them. Even most of those who retained their livings by compliance, fell under the imputation of hypocrisy, either by their showing a disgust to the new model of ecclesiastical government which they had acknowledged; or, on the other hand, by declaring, that their former adherence to Presbytery and the covenant had been the result of violence and necessity. And as Middleton and the new ministry indulged themselves in great riot and disorder, to which the nation had been little accustomed, an opinion universally prevailed, that any form of religion, offered by such hands, must be profane and impious.

The people, notwithstanding their discontents, were resolved to give no handle against them, by the least symptom of mutiny or sedition: but this submissive disposition, instead of procuring a mitigation of the rigors, was made use of as an argument for continuing the same measures, which, by their vigor, it was pretended, had produced so prompt an obedience. The king, however, was disgusted with the violence of Middleton; [1] and he made Rothes commissioner in his place. This nobleman was already president of the council; and soon after was made lord keeper and treasurer. Lauderdale still continued secretary of state, and commonly resided at London.

Affairs remained in a peaceable state, till the severe law was made in England against conventicles. [2] The Scottish parliament imitated that violence, by passing a like act. A kind of high commission court was appointed by the privy council, for executing this rigorous law, and for the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. But even this court, illegal as it might be deemed, was much preferable to the method next adopted. Military force was let loose by the council. Wherever the people had generally forsaken their churches, the guards were quartered throughout the country. Sir James Turner commanded them, a man whose natural ferocity of temper was often inflamed by the use of strong liquors. He went about, and received from the clergy lists of those who absented themselves from church, or were supposed to frequent conventicles. Without any proof or legal conviction, he demanded a fine from them, and quartered soldiers on the supposed delinquents, till he received payment. As an insurrection was dreaded during the Dutch war, new forces were levied, and intrusted to the command, of Dalziel and Drummond; two officers who had served the king during the civil wars, and had afterwards engaged in the service of Russia, where they had increased the native cruelty of their disposition. A full career was given to their tyranny by the Scottish ministry. Representations were made to the king against these enormities. He seemed touched with the state of the country; and besides giving orders that the ecclesiastical commission should be discontinued, he signified his opinion, that another way of proceeding was necessary for his service. [3]

* Burnet, p 202.

* * 1664.

* * * Burnet,

This lenity of the king’s came too late to remedy the disorders. The people, inflamed with bigotry, and irritated by ill usage, rose in arms. They were instigated by Guthry, Semple, and other preachers. They surprised Turner in Dumfries, and resolved to have put him to death; but finding that his orders, which fell into their hands, were more violent than his execution of them, they spared his life. At Laneric, after many prayers, they renewed the covenant, and published their manifesto; in which they professed all submission to the king: they desired only the reëstablishment of Presbytery, and of their former ministers. As many gentlemen of their party had been confined on suspicion, Wallace and Learmont, two officers who had served, but in no high rank, were intrusted by the populace with the command. Their force never exceeded two thousand men; and though the country in general bore them favor, men's spirits were so subdued, that the rebels could expect no further accession of numbers. Dalziel took the field to oppose their progress. Their number was now diminished to eight hundred; and these, having advanced near Edinburgh, attempted to find their way back into the west by Pentland Hills. They were attacked by the king's forces. [1] Finding that they could not escape, they stopped their march. Their clergy endeavored to infuse courage into them. After singing some psalms, the rebels turned on the enemy; and being assisted by the advantage of the ground, they received the first charge very resolutely. But that was all the action: immediately they fell into disorder, and fled for their lives. About forty were killed on the spot, and a hundred and thirty taken prisoners. The rest, favored by the night, and by the weariness, and even by the pity of the king's troops, made their escape.

* November 28, 1666.

The oppressions which these people had suffered, the delusions under which they labored, and their inoffensive behavior during the insurrection, made them the objects of compassion: yet were the king's ministers, particularly Sharpe, resolved to take severe vengeance. Ten were hanged on one gibbet at Edinburgh; thirty-five before their own doors in different places. These criminals might all have saved their lives, if they would have renounced the covenant. The executions were going on, when the king put a stop to them. He said, that blood enough had already been shed; and he wrote a letter to the privy council, in which he ordered, that such of the prisoners as should simply promise to obey the laws for the future, should be set at liberty, and that the incorrigible should be sent to the plantations. [1] This letter was brought by Burnet, archbishop of Glasgow; but not being immediately delivered to the council by Sharpe, the president, [2] one Maccail had in the interval been put to the torture, under which he expired.

He seemed to die in an ecstasy of joy. “Farewell, sun, moon, and stars; farewell, world and time; farewell, weak and frail body: welcome, eternity; welcome, angels and saints; welcome, Savior of the world; and welcome, God, the Judge of all!” Such were his last words: and these animated speeches he uttered with an accent and manner which struck all the bystanders with astonishment.

* Burnet, p 237.

* Wodrow’s History, vol. i. .

The settlement of Ireland, after the restoration, was a work of greater difficulty than that of England, or even of Scotland. Not only the power, during the former usurpations, had there been vested in the king’s enemies; the whole property, in a manner, of the kingdom had also been changed: and it became necessary to redress, but with as little violence as possible, many grievous hardships and iniquities which were there complained of.

The Irish Catholics had in 1648 concluded a treaty with Ormond, the king’s lieutenant; in which they had stipulated pardon for their past rebellion, and had engaged, under certain conditions, to assist the royal cause: and though the violence of the priests and the bigotry of the people had prevented, in a great measure, the execution of this treaty, yet were there many, who, having strictly, at the hazard of their lives, adhered to it, seemed on that account well entitled to reap the fruits of their loyalty. Cromwell, having without distinction expelled all the native Irish from the three provinces of Munster, Leinster, and Ulster, had confined them to Connaught and the county of Clare; and among those who had thus been forfeited, were many whose innocence was altogether unquestionable. Several Protestants likewise, and Ormond among the rest, had all along opposed the Irish rebellion; yet having afterwards embraced the king’s cause against the parliament, they were all of them attainted by Cromwell. And there were many officers who had from the commencement of the insurrection served in Ireland, and who, because they would not desert the king, had been refused all their arrears by the English commonwealth.

To all these unhappy sufferers some justice seemed to be due: but the difficulty was, to find the means of redressing such great and extensive iniquities. Almost all the valuable parts of Ireland had been measured out and divided, either to the adventurers, who had lent money to the parliament for the suppression of the Irish rebellion, or to the soldiers, who had received land in lieu of their arrears. These could not be dispossessed, because they were the most powerful and only armed part of Ireland; because it was requisite to favor them, in order to support the Protestant and English interest in that kingdom; and because they had generally, with a seeming zeal and alacrity, concurred in the king's restoration. The king, therefore, issued a proclamation, in which he promised to maintain their settlement, and at the same time engaged to give redress to the innocent sufferers. There was a quantity of land as yet undivided in Ireland; and from this and some other funds, it was thought possible for the king to fulfil both these engagements.

A court of claims was erected, consisting altogether of English commissioners, who had no connection with any of the parties into which Ireland was divided. Before these were laid four thousand claims of persons craving restitution on account of their innocence; and the commissioners had found leisure to examine only six hundred. It already appeared, that if all these were to be restored, the funds, whence the adventurers and soldiers must get reprisals, would fall short of giving them any tolerable satisfaction. A great alarm and anxiety seized all ranks of men: the hopes and fears of every party were excited: these eagerly grasped at recovering their paternal inheritance; those were resolute to maintain their new acquisitions.

The duke of Ormond was created lord lieutenant; being the only person whose prudence and equity could compose such jarring interests. A parliament was assembled at Dublin; and as the lower house was almost entirely chosen by the soldiers and adventurers, who still kept possession, it was extremely favorable to that interest. The house of peers showed greater impartiality.

An insurrection was projected, together with a surprisal of the Castle of Dublin, by some of the disbanded soldiers; but this design was happily defeated by the vigilance of Ormond. Some of the criminals were punished. Blood, the most desperate of them, escaped into England.

But affairs could not long remain in the confusion and uncertainty into which they had fallen. All parties seemed willing to abate somewhat of their pretensions, in order to attain some stability; and Ormond interposed his authority for that purpose. The soldiers and adventurers agreed to relinquish a third of their possessions; and as they had purchased their lands at very low prices, they had reason to think themselves favored by this composition. All those who had been attainted on account of their adhering to the king, were restored; and some of the innocent Irish. It was a hard situation that a man was obliged to prove himself innocent, in order to recover possession of the estate which he and his ancestors had ever enjoyed: but the hardship was augmented by the difficult conditions annexed to this proof. If the person had ever lived in the quarters of the rebels, he was not admitted to plead his innocence; and he was, for that reason alone, supposed to have been a rebel. The heinous guilt of the Irish nation made men the more readily overlook any iniquity which might fall on individuals; and it was considered that, though it be always the interest of all good governments to prevent injustice, it is not always possible to remedy it, after it has had a long course, and has been attended with great successes.

Ireland began to attain a state of some composure, when it was disturbed by a violent act passed by the English parliament, which prohibited the importation of Irish cattle into England. [1]

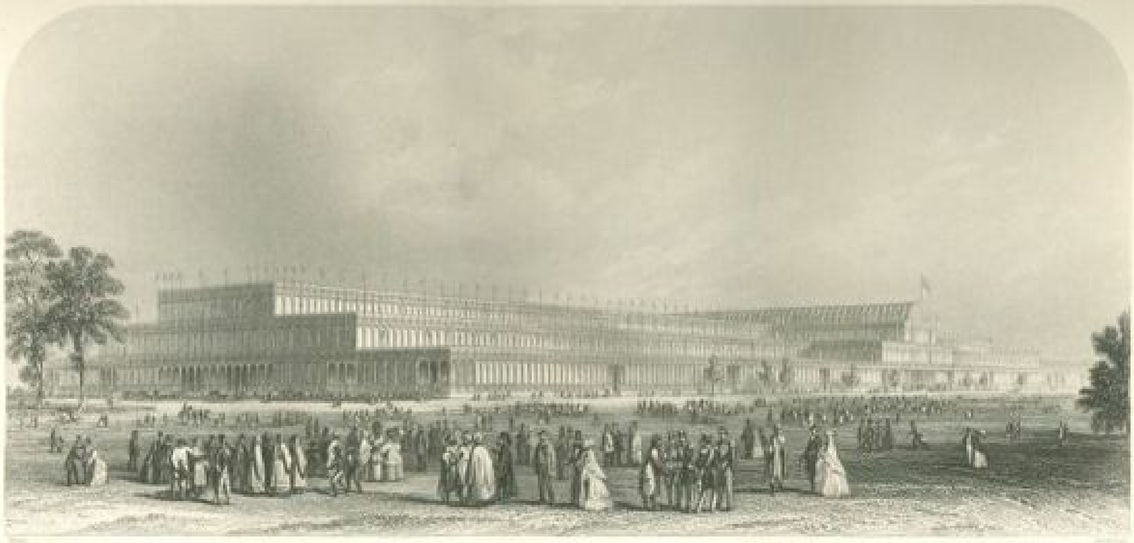
Ormond remonstrated strongly against this law. He said, that the present trade carried on between England and Ireland was extremely to the advantage of the former kingdom, which received only provisions or rude materials in return for every species of manufacture: that if the cattle of Ireland were prohibited, the inhabitants of that island had no other commodity by which they could pay England for their importations, and must have recourse to other nations for a supply: that the industrious inhabitants of England, if deprived of Irish provisions, which made living cheap, would be obliged to augment the price of labor, and thereby render their manufactures too dear to be exported to foreign markets: that the indolent inhabitants of Ireland, finding provisions fall almost to nothing, would never be induced to labor, but would perpetuate to all generations their native sloth and barbarism: that by cutting off almost entirely the trade between the kingdoms, all the natural bands of union were dissolved, and nothing remained to keep the Irish in their duty but force and violence: and that by reducing that kingdom to extreme poverty, it would be even rendered incapable of maintaining that military power, by which, during its well-grounded discontents, it must necessarily be retained in subjection.

* In 1666.

The king was so much convinced of the justness of these reasons, that he used all his interest to oppose the bill; and he openly declared, that he could not give his assent to it with a safe conscience. But the commons were resolute in their purpose. Some of the rents of England had fallen of late years, which had been ascribed entirely to the importation of Irish cattle: several intrigues had contributed to inflame that prejudice, particularly those of Buckingham and Ashley, who were desirous of giving Ormond disturbance in his government: and the spirit of tyranny, of which nations are as susceptible as individuals, had extremely animated the English to exert their superiority over their dependent state. No affair could be conducted with greater violence than this was by the commons. They even went so far, in the preamble of the bill, as to declare the importation of Irish cattle to be a nuisance. By this expression they gave scope to their passion, and at the same time barred the king's prerogative, by which he might think himself entitled to dispense with a law so full of injustice and bad policy. The lords expunged the word; but as the king was sensible that no supply would be given by the commons, unless they were gratified in their prejudices, he was obliged both to employ his interest with the peers for making the bill pass, and to give the royal assent to it. He could not, however, forbear expressing his displeasure at the jealousy entertained against him, and at the intention which the commons discovered of retrenching his prerogative.

This law brought great distress for some time upon the Irish; but it has occasioned their applying with greater industry to manufactures, and has proved in the issue beneficial to that kingdom.

CHAPTER LXV.



A VIEW OF THE GREAT INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION IN HYDE PARK.

CHARLES II.

1668

Since the restoration, England had attained a situation which had never been experienced in any former period of her government, and which seemed the only one that could fully insure, at once, her tranquillity and her liberty: the king was in continual want of supply from the parliament, and he seemed willing to accommodate himself to that dependent situation. Instead of reviving those claims of prerogative, so strenuously insisted on by his predecessors, Charles had strictly confined himself within the limits of law, and had courted, by every art of popularity, the affections of his subjects. Even the severities, however blamable, which he had exercised against nonconformists, are to be considered as expedients by which he strove to ingratiate himself with that party which predominated in parliament. But notwithstanding these promising appearances, there were many circumstances which kept the government from resting steadily on that bottom on which it was placed. The crown, having lost almost all its ancient demesnes, relied entirely on voluntary grants of the people; and the commons, not fully accustomed to this new situation, were not yet disposed to supply, with sufficient liberality, the necessities of the crown. They imitated too strictly the example of their predecessors in a rigid frugality of public money; and neither sufficiently considered the indigent condition of their prince, nor the general state of Europe, where every nation, by its increase both of magnificence and force, had made great additions to all public expenses. Some considerable sums, indeed, were bestowed on Charles; and the patriots of that age, tenacious of ancient maxims, loudly upbraided the commons with prodigality; but if we may judge by the example of a later period, when the government has become more regular, and the harmony of its parts has been more happily adjusted, the parliaments of this reign seem rather to have merited a contrary reproach.

The natural consequence of the poverty of the crown was besides feeble, irregular transactions in foreign affairs, a continual uncertainty in its domestic administration. No one could answer with any tolerable assurance for the measures of the house of commons. Few of the members were attached to the court by any other band than that of inclination. Royalists indeed in their principles, but unexperienced in business, they lay exposed to every rumor or insinuation; and were driven by momentary gusts or currents, no less than the populace themselves. Even the attempts made to gain an ascendant over them by offices, and, as it is believed, by bribes and pensions, were apt to operate in a manner contrary to what was intended by the ministers. The novelty of the practice conveyed a general, and indeed a just alarm; while, at the same time, the poverty of the crown rendered this influence very limited and precarious.

The character of Charles was ill fitted to remedy those defects in the constitution. He acted in the administration of public affairs, as if government were a pastime, rather than a serious occupation; and, by the uncertainty of his conduct he lost that authority which could alone bestow constancy on the fluctuating resolutions of the parliament. His expenses, too, which sometimes, perhaps, exceeded the proper bounds, were directed more by inclination than by policy; and while they increased his dependence on the parliament, they were not calculated fully to satisfy either the interested or disinterested part of that assembly.

The parliament met after a long adjournment, and the king promised himself every thing from the attachment of the commons. All his late measures had been calculated to acquire the good will of his people; and, above all, the triple league, it was hoped, would be able to efface all the disagreeable impressions left by the unhappy conclusion of the Dutch war. But a new attempt made by the court, and a laudable one, too, lost him for a time the effect of all these endeavors. Buckingham, who was in great favor with the king, and carried on many intrigues among the commons, had also endeavored to support connections with the nonconformists; and he now formed a scheme, in concert with the lord keeper, Sir Orlando Bridgeman, and the chief justice, Sir Matthew Hale, two worthy patriots, to put an end to those severities under which these religionists had so long labored. It was proposed to reconcile the Presbyterians by a comprehension, and to grant a toleration to the Independents and other sectaries Favor seems not, by this scheme, as by others embraced during the present reign, to have been intended the Catholics: yet were the zealous commons so disgusted, that they could not be prevailed on even to give the king thanks for the triple league, however laudable that measure was then, and has ever since been esteemed. They immediately voted an address for a proclamation against conventicles. Their request was complied with; but as the king still dropped some hints of his desire to reconcile his Protestant subjects, the commons passed a very unusual vote, that no man should bring into the house any bill of that nature. The king in vain reiterated his solicitations for supply; represented the necessity of equipping a fleet; and even offered, that the money which they should grant should be collected and issued for that purpose by commissioners appointed by the house. Instead of complying, the commons voted an inquiry into all the miscarriages during the late war; the slackening of sail after the duke's victory from false orders delivered by Brounker the miscarriage at Bergen, the division of the fleet under Prince Rupert and Albemarle, the disgrace at Chatham. Brounker was expelled the house, and ordered to be impeached. Commissioner Pet, who had neglected orders issued for the security of Chatham, met with the same fate. These impeachments were never prosecuted. The house at length, having been indulged in all their prejudices, were prevailed with to vote the king three hundred and ten thousand pounds, by an imposition on wine and other liquors; after which they were adjourned.

Public business, besides being retarded by the disgust of the commons against the tolerating maxims of the court, met with obstructions this session from a quarrel between the two houses. Skinner, a rich merchant in London, having suffered some injuries from the East India Company, laid the matter by petition before the house of lords, by whom he was relieved in costs and damages to the amount of five thousand pounds. The commons voted, that the lords, in taking cognizance of this affair, originally, without any appeal from inferior courts, had acted in a manner not agreeable to the laws of the land, and tending to deprive the subject of the right, ease, and benefit due to him by these laws; and that Skinner, in prosecuting the suit after this manner, had infringed the privileges of the commons; for which offence they ordered him to be taken into custody. Some conferences ensued between the houses where the lords were tenacious of their right of judicature, and maintained, that the method in which they had exercised it was quite regular. The commons rose into a great ferment; and went so far as to vote, that "whoever should be aiding or assisting in putting in execution the order or sentence of the house of lords, in the case of Skinner against the East India Company, should be deemed a betrayer of the rights and liberties of the commons of England, and an infringer of the privileges of the house of commons.” They rightly judged, that it would not be easy, after this vote, to find any one who would venture to incur their indignation. The proceedings indeed of the lords seem in this case to have been unusual and without precedent.

1669

The king’s necessities obliged him again to assemble the parliament, who showed some disposition to relieve him. The price, however, which he must pay for this indulgence, was his yielding to new laws against conventicles. His complaisance in this particular contributed more to gain the commons, than all the pompous pretences of supporting the triple alliance, that popular measure by which he expected to make such advantage. The quarrel between the two houses was revived; and as the commons had voted only four hundred thousand pounds, with which the king was not satisfied, he thought proper, before they had carried their vote into a law, to prorogue them. The only business finished this short session, was the receiving of the report of the committee appointed for examining the public accounts. On the first inspection of this report, there appears a great sum, no less than a million and a half, unaccounted for; and the natural inference is, that the king had much abused the trust reposed in him by parliament But a more accurate inspection of particulars serves, in a great measure, to remove this imputation. The king indeed went so far as to tell the parliament from the throne, “that he had fully informed himself of that matter, and did affirm, that no part of those moneys which they had given him had been diverted to other uses; but, on the contrary, besides all those supplies, a very great sum had been raised out of his standing revenue and credit, and a very great debt contracted; and all for the war.” Though artificial pretences have often been employed by kings in their speeches to parliament, and by none more than Charles, it is somewhat difficult to suspect him of a direct lie and falsehood. He must have had some reasons, and perhaps not unplausible ones, for this affirmation, of which all his hearers, as they had the accounts lying before them, were at that time competent judges. [1]

* See note B, at the end of the volume.

The method which all parliaments had hitherto followed, was to vote a particular sum for the supply, without any distinction, or any appropriation to particular services. So long as the demands of the crown were small and casual, no great inconveniencies arose from this practice. But as all the measures of government were now changed, it must be confessed that, if the king made a just application of public money, this inaccurate method of proceeding, by exposing him to suspicion, was prejudicial to him. If he were inclined to act otherwise, it was equally hurtful to the people. For these reasons, a contrary practice, during all the late reigns, has constantly been followed by the commons.

1670

When the parliament met after the prorogation, they entered anew upon the business of supply, and granted the king an additional duty, during eight years, of twelve pounds on each tun of Spanish wine imported, eight on each tun of French. A law also passed, empowering him to sell the fee-farm rents; the last remains of the demesnes, by which the ancient kings of England had been supported. By this expedient, he obtained some supply for his present necessities, but left the crown, if possible, still more dependent than before. How much money might be raised by these sales is uncertain; but it could not be near one million eight hundred thousand pounds, the sum assigned by some writers. [1]

* Mr. Carte, in his vindication of the Answer to the Bystander, (p 99,) says, that the sale of the fee-farm rents would not yield above one hundred thousand pounds; and his reasons appear well founded with regard to the interpretation of any part of the act.

The act against conventicles passed, and received the royal assent. It bears the appearance of mitigating the former persecuting laws; but if we may judge by the spirit which had broken out almost every session during this parliament, it was not intended as any favor to the nonconformists. Experience probably had taught, that laws over rigid and severe could not be executed. By this act, the hearer in a conventicle (that is, in a dissenting assembly, where more than five were present, besides the family) was fined five shillings for the first offence, ten for the second; the preacher, twenty pounds for the first offence, forty for the second. The person in whose house the conventicle met, was amerced a like sum with the preacher. One clause is remarkable; that if any dispute should arise the judges should always explain the doubt in the sense least favorable to conventicles, it being the intention of parliament entirely to suppress them. Such was the zeal of the commons, that they violated the plainest and most established maxims of civil policy, which require that in all criminal prosecutions favor should always be given to the prisoner.

The affair of Skinner still remained a ground of quarrel between the two houses; but the king prevailed with the peers to accept of the expedient proposed by the commons, that a general razure should be made of all the transactions with regard to that disputed question.

Some attempts were made by the king to effect a union between England and Scotland; though they were too feeble to remove all the difficulties which obstructed that useful and important undertaking. Commissioners were appointed to meet, in order to regulate the conditions: but the design, chiefly by the intrigues of Lauderdale, soon after came to nothing.

The king about this time began frequently to attend the debates of the house of peers. He said, that they amused him, and that he found them no less entertaining than a play. But deeper designs were suspected. As he seemed to interest himself extremely in the cause of Lord Roos, who had obtained a divorce from his wife on the accusation of adultery, and applied to parliament for leave to marry again, people imagined that Charles intended to make a precedent of the case, and that some other pretence would be found for getting rid of the queen. Many proposals to this purpose, it is said, were made him by Buckingham; but the king, how little scrupulous soever in some respects, was incapable of any action harsh or barbarous; and he always rejected every scheme of this nature. A suspicion, however, of such intentions, it was observed, had at this time begotten a coldness between the two royal brothers.

We now come to a period when the king's counsels, which had hitherto in the main been good, though negligent and fluctuating, became, during some time, remarkably bad, or even criminal; and breeding incurable jealousies in all men, were followed by such consequences as had almost terminated in the ruin both of prince and people. Happily, the same negligence still attended him; and, as it had lessened the influence of the good, it also diminished the effect of the bad measures which he embraced.

It was remarked, that the committee of council established for foreign affairs was entirely changed; and that Prince Rupert the duke of Ormond, Sectary Trevor, and Lord Keeper Bridgeman, men in whose honor the nation had great confidence, were never called to any deliberations. The whole secret was intrusted to five persons, Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale. These men were known by the appellation of the “cabal,” a word which the initial letters of their names happened to compose. Never was there a more dangerous ministry in England, nor one more noted for pernicious counsels.

Lord Ashley, soon after known by the name of earl of Shaftesbury, was one of the most remarkable characters of the age, and the chief spring of all the succeeding movements. During his early youth, he had engaged in the late king’s party; but being disgusted with some measures of Prince Maurice, he soon deserted to the parliament. He insinuated himself into the confidence of Cromwell; and as he had great influence with the Presbyterians, he was serviceable in supporting, with his party, the authority of that usurper. He employed the same credit in promoting the restoration; and on that account both deserved and acquired favor with the king. In all his changes, he still maintained the character of never betraying those friends whom he deserted; and whichever party he joined, his great capacity and singular talents soon gained him their confidence, and enabled him to take the lead among them. No station could satisfy his ambition, no fatigues were insuperable to his industry. Well acquainted with the blind attachment of faction, he surmounted all sense of shame; and relying on the subtilty of his contrivances, he was not startled with enterprises the most hazardous and most criminal. His talents, both of public speaking and private insinuation, shone out in an eminent degree; and amidst all his furious passions, he possessed a sound judgment of business, and still more of men. Though fitted by nature for beginning and pushing the greatest undertakings, he was never able to conduct any to a happy period; and his eminent abilities, by reason of his insatiable desires, were equally dangerous to himself, to the prince, and to the people.

The duke of Buckingham possessed all the advantages which a graceful person, a high rank, a splendid fortune, and a lively wit could bestow; but by his wild conduct, unrestrained either by prudence or principle, he found means to render himself in the end odious, and even insignificant. The least interest could make him abandon his honor; the smallest pleasure could seduce him from his interest; the most frivolous caprice was sufficient to counterbalance his pleasure* [[2]missing period] By his want of secrecy and constancy, he destroyed his character in public life; by his contempt of order and economy, he dissipated his private fortune; by riot and debauchery, he ruined his health; and he remained at last as incapable of doing hurt, as he had ever been little desirous of doing good to mankind.

The earl, soon after created duke of Lauderdale, was not defective in natural, and still less in acquired talents; but neither was his address graceful, nor his understanding just. His principles, or, more properly speaking, his prejudices, were obstinate, but unable to restrain his ambition: his ambition was still less dangerous than the tyranny and violence of his temper. An implacable enemy, but a lukewarm friend; insolent to his inferiors, but abject to his superiors; though in his whole character and deportment he was almost diametrically opposite to the king, he had the fortune, beyond any other minister, to maintain, during the greater part of his reign, an ascendant over him.

The talents of parliamentary eloquence and intrigue had raised Sir Thomas Clifford; and his daring, impetuous spirit gave him weight in the king’s councils. Of the whole cabal, Arlington was the least dangerous, either by his vices or his talents. His judgment was sound, though his capacity was but moderate; and his intentions were good, though he wanted courage and integrity to persevere in them. Together with Temple and Bridgeman, he had been a great promoter of the triple league; but he threw himself with equal alacrity into opposite measures, when he found them agreeable to his master. Clifford and he were secretly Catholics: Shaftesbury, though addicted to astrology, was reckoned a deist: Buckingham had too little reflection to embrace any steady principles: Lauderdale had long been a bigoted and furious Presbyterian; and the opinions of that sect still kept possession of his mind, how little soever they appeared in his conduct.

The dark counsels of the cabal, though from the first they gave anxiety to all men of reflection, were not thoroughly known but by the event. Such seem to have been the views which they, in concurrence with some Catholic courtiers who had the ear of their sovereign, suggested to the king and the duke, and which these princes too greedily embraced. They said, that the parliament, though the spirit of party, for the present, attached them to the crown, were still more attached to those powers and privileges which their predecessors had usurped from the sovereign: that after the first flow of kindness was spent, they had discovered evident symptoms of discontent; and would be sure to turn against the king all the authority which they yet retained, and still more those pretensions which it was easy for them in a moment to revive: that they not only kept the king in dependence by means of his precarious revenue, but had never discovered a suitable generosity, even in those temporary supplies which they granted him: that it was high time for the prince to rouse himself from his lethargy, and to recover that authority which his predecessors, during so many ages, had peaceably enjoyed; that the great error or misfortune of his father was, the not having formed any close connection with foreign princes, who, on the breaking out of the rebellion, might have found their interest in supporting him: that the present alliances, being entered into with so many weaker potentates, who themselves stood in need of the king's protection, could never serve to maintain much less augment, the royal authority: that the French monarch alone, so generous a prince, and by blood so nearly allied to the king, would be found both able and willing, if gratified in his ambition, to defend the common cause of kings against usurping subjects: that a war undertaken against Holland by the united force of two such mighty potentates, would prove an easy enterprise, and would serve all the purposes which were aimed at: that, under pretence of that war, it would not be difficult to levy a military force, without which, during the prevalence of republican principles among his subjects, the king would vainly expect to defend his prerogative; that his naval power might be maintained, partly by the supplies which on other pretences would previously be obtained from parliament; partly by subsidies from France; partly by captures, which might easily be made on that opulent republic: that, in such a situation, attempts to recover the lost authority of the crown would be attended with success; nor would any malecontents dare to resist a prince fortified by so powerful an alliance; or, if they did, they would only draw more certain ruin on themselves and on their cause; and that by subduing the states, a great step would be made towards a reformation of the government; since it was apparent, that that republic, by its fame and grandeur, fortified in his factious subjects their attachment to what they vainly termed their civil and religious liberties.

These suggestions happened fatally to concur with all the inclinations and prejudices of the king; his desire of more extensive authority, his propensity to the Catholic religion, his avidity for money. He seems, likewise, from the very beginning of his reign, to have entertained great jealousy of his own subjects, and, on that account, a desire of fortifying himself by an intimate alliance with France. So early as 1664, he had offered the French monarch to allow him without opposition to conquer Flanders, provided that prince would engage to furnish him with ten thousand infantry, and a suitable number of cavalry, in case of any rebellion in England. [1] As no dangerous symptoms at that time appeared, we are left to conjecture, from this incident, what opinion Charles had conceived of the factious disposition of his people.

Even during the time when the triple alliance was the most zealously cultivated, the king never seems to have been entirely cordial in those salutary measures, but still to have cast a longing eye towards the French alliance. Clifford, who had much of his confidence, said imprudently, “Notwithstanding all this joy, we must have a second war with Holland.” The accession of the emperor to that alliance had been refused by England on frivolous pretences. And many unfriendly cavils were raised against the states with regard to Surinam and the conduct of the East India Company. [2] But about April, 1669 the strongest symptoms appeared of those fatal measure which were afterwards more openly pursued.

* D’Estrades, July 21, 1667.

* * See note C, at the end of the volume.

De Wit at that time came to Temple, and told him, that he paid him a visit as a friend, not as a minister. The occasion was, to acquaint him with a conversation which he had lately had with Puffendorf, the Swedish agent, who had passed by the Hague in the way from Paris to his own country. The French ministers, Puffendorf said, had taken much pains to persuade him, that the Swedes would very ill find their account in those measures which they had lately embraced: that Spain would fail them in all her promises of subsidies; nor would Holland alone be able to support them: that England would certainly fail them, and had already adopted counsels directly opposite to those which by the triple league she had bound herself to pursue: and that the resolution was not the less fixed and certain, because the secret was as yet communicated to very few either in the French or English court. When Puffendorf seemed incredulous, Turenne showed him a letter from Colbert de Crossy, the French minister at London; in which after mentioning the success of his negotiations, and the favorable disposition of the chief ministers there, he added, “And I have at last made them sensible of the full extent of his majesty's bounty." [1] From this incident it appears, that the infamous practice of selling themselves to foreign princes, a practice which, notwithstanding the malignity of the vulgar, is certainly rare among men in high office, had not been scrupled by Charles's ministers, who even obtained their master's consent to this dishonorable corruption.

* Temple, vol. ii. .

But while all men of penetration, both abroad and at home were alarmed with these incidents, the visit which the king received from his sister, the duchess of Orleans, was the foundation of still stronger suspicions. Lewis, knowing the address and insinuation of that amiable princess, and the great influence which she had gained over her brother, had engaged her to employ all her good offices in order to detach Charles from the triple league, which, he knew, had fixed such unsurmountable barriers to his ambition; and he now sent her to put the last hand to the plan of their conjunct operations. That he might the better cover this negotiation, he pretended to visit his frontiers, particularly the great works which he had undertaken at Dunkirk: and he carried the queen and the whole court along with him. While he remained on the opposite shore, the duchess of Orleans went over to England; and Charles met her at Dover, where they passed ten days together in great mirth and festivity. By her artifices and caresses, she prevailed on Charles to relinquish the most settled maxims of honor and policy, and to finish his engagements with Lewis for the destruction of Holland, as well as for the subsequent change of religion in England.

But Lewis well knew Charles's character, and the usual fluctuations of his counsels. In order to fix him in the French interests, he resolved to bind him by the ties of pleasure, the only ones which with him were irresistible; and he made him a present of a French mistress, by whose means he hoped for the future to govern him. The duchess of Orleans brought with her a young lady of the name of Querouaille, whom the king carried to London, and soon after created duchess of Portsmouth. He was extremely attached to her during the whole course of his life; and she proved a great means of supporting his connections with her native country.

The satisfaction which Charles reaped from his new alliance received a great check by the death of his sister, and still more by those melancholy circumstances which attended it. Her death was sudden, after a few days' illness; and she was seized with the malady upon drinking a glass of succory water. Strong suspicions of poison arose in the court of France, and were spread all over Europe; and as her husband had discovered many symptoms of jealousy and discontent on account of her conduct, he was universally believed to be the author of the crime. Charles himself, during some time, was entirely convinced of his guilt; but upon receiving the attestation of physicians, who, on opening her body, found no foundation for the general rumor, he was, or pretended to be, satisfied. The duke of Orleans indeed did never, in any other circumstance of his life, betray such dispositions as might lead him to so criminal an action; and a lady, it is said, drank the remains of the same glass, without feeling any inconvenience. The sudden death of princes is commonly accompanied with these dismal surmises; and therefore less weight is in this case to be laid on the suspicions of the public.

Charles, instead of breaking with France upon this incident, took advantage of it to send over Buckingham, under pretence of condoling with the duke of Orleans, but in reality to concert further measures for the projected war. Never ambassador received greater caresses. The more destructive the present measures were to the interests of England, the more natural was it for Lewis to load with civilities, and even with favors, those whom he could engage to promote them.

The journey of Buckingham augmented the suspicions in Holland, which every circumstance tended still further to confirm. Lewis made a sudden irruption into Lorraine; and though he missed seizing the duke himself, who had no surmise of the danger, and who narrowly escaped, he was soon able, without resistance, to make himself master of the whole country. The French monarch was so far unhappy, that, though the most tempting opportunities offered themselves, he had not commonly so much as the pretence of equity and justice to cover his ambitious measures. This acquisition of Lorraine ought to have excited the jealousy of the contracting powers in the triple league, as much as an invasion of Flanders itself; yet did Charles turn a deaf ear to all remonstrances made him upon that subject.

But what tended chiefly to open the eyes of De Wit and the states with regard to the measures of England, was the sudden recall of Sir William Temple. This minister had so firmly established his character of honor and integrity, that he was believed incapable even of obeying his master’s commands in promoting measures which he esteemed pernicious to his country; and so long as he remained in employment, De Wit thought himself assured of the fidelity of England. Charles was so sensible of this prepossession, that he ordered Temple to leave his family at the Hague, and pretended that that minister would immediately return, after having conferred with the king about some business where his negotiation had met with obstructions. De Wit made the Dutch resident inform the English court, that he should consider the recall of Temple as an express declaration of a change of measures in England; and should even know what interpretation to put upon any delay of his return.

While these measures were secretly in agitation, the parliament met, according to adjournment. The king made a short speech, and left the business to be enlarged upon by the keeper. That minister much insisted on the king’s great want of supply; the mighty increase of the naval power of France, now triple to what it was before the last war with Holland; the decay of the English navy; the necessity of fitting out next year a fleet of fifty sail; the obligations which the king lay under by several treaties to exert himself for the common good of Christendom. Among other treaties, he mentioned the triple alliance, and the defensive league with the states.

The artifice succeeded. The house of commons, entirely satisfied with the king’s measures, voted him considerable supplies. A laud tax for a year was imposed of a shilling a pound; two shillings a pound on two thirds of the salaries of offices; fifteen shillings on every hundred pounds of bankers’ money and stock; an additional excise upon beer for six years, and certain impositions upon law proceedings for nine years. The parliament had never before been in a more liberal humor; and never surely was it less merited by the counsels of the king and of his ministers. [1]

* This year, on the 3d of January, died George Monk, duke of Albemarle, at Newhall, in Essex, after a languishing illness, and in the sixty-third year of his age. He left a great estate of fifteen thousand pounds a year in land, and sixty thousand pounds in money, acquired by the bounty of the king, and increased by his own frugality in his later years. Bishop Burnet, who, agreeably to his own factious spirit, treats this illustrious personage with great malignity, reproaches him with avarice; but as he appears not to have been in the least tainted with rapacity, his frugal conduct may more candidly be imputed to the habits acquired in early life, while he was possessed of a very narrow fortune. It is indeed a singular proof of the strange power of faction, that any malignity should pursue the memory of a nobleman, the tenor of whose life was so

unexceptionable, and who, by restoring the ancient, and legal, and free government to three kingdoms plunged in the most destructive anarchy, may safely be said to be the subject, in these islands, who, since the beginning of time, rendered the most durable and most essential services to his native country. The means also by which he achieved his great undertakings, were almost entirely unexceptionable.

His temporary dissimulation, being absolutely necessary, could scarcely be blamable. He had received no trust from that mongrel, pretended, usurping parliament whom he dethroned; therefore could betray none; he even refused to carry his dissimulation so far as to take the oath of abjuration against the king. I confess, however, that the Reverend Dr. Douglas has shown me, from the Clarendon papers, an original letter of his to Sir Arthur Hazelrig, containing very earnest, and certainly false protestations of his zeal for a commonwealth. It is to be lamented, that so worthy a man, and of such plain manners, should ever have found it necessary to carry his dissimulation to such a height. His family ended with his son. There was a private affair, which, during this session, disgusted the house of commons, and required some pains to accommodate it. The usual method of those who opposed the court in the money bills, was, if they failed in the main vote, as to the extent of the supply, to levy the money upon such funds as they expected would be unacceptable, or would prove deficient. It was proposed to lay an imposition upon playhouses: the courtiers objected, that the players were the king's servants, and a part of his pleasure. Sir John Coventry, a gentleman of the country party, asked, "whether the king's pleasure lay among the male or the female players." This stroke of satire was aimed at Charles, who, besides his mistresses of higher quality, entertained at that time two actresses, Davis and Nell Gwin. The king received not the raillery with the good humor which might have been expected. It was said that this being the first time that respect to majesty had been publicly violated, it was necessary, by some severe chastisement, to make Coventry an example to all who might incline to tread in his footsteps. Sands, Obrian, and some other officers of the guards, were ordered to waylay him, and to set a mark upon him. He defended himself with bravery, and after wounding several of the assailants, was disarmed with some difficulty. They cut his nose to the bone, in order, as they said, to teach him what respect he owed to the king. The commons were inflamed by this indignity offered to one of their members, on account of words spoken in the house. They passed a law which made it capital to maim any person; and they enacted, that those criminals, who had assaulted Coventry, should be incapable of receiving a pardon from the crown.

The commons passed another bill, for laying a duty on tobacco, Scotch salt, glasses, and some other commodities. Against this bill the merchants of London appeared by petition before the house of lords. The lords entered into their reasons, and began to make amendments on the bill sent up by the commons. This attempt was highly resented by the lower house as an encroachment on the right, which they pretended to possess alone, of granting money to the crown. Many remonstrances passed between the two houses; and by their altercations the king was obliged to prorogue the parliament; and he thereby lost the money which was intended him.

1671

This is the last time that the peers have revived any pretensions of that nature. Ever since, the privilege of the commons, in all other places except in the house of peers, has passed for uncontroverted.

There was another private affair transacted about this time, by which the king was as much exposed to the imputation of a capricious lenity, as he was here blamed for unnecessary severity. Blood, a disbanded officer of the protector’s, had been engaged in the conspiracy for raising an insurrection in Ireland; and on account of this crime, he himself had been attainted, and some of his accomplices capitally punished. The daring villain meditated revenge upon Ormond, the lord lieutenant. Having by artifice drawn off the duke’s footmen, he attacked his coach in the night time, as it drove along St. James’s Street in London; and he made himself master of his person. He might here have finished the crime, had he not meditated refinements in his vengeance: he was resolved to hang the duke of Tyburn and for that purpose bound him and mounted him on horseback behind one of his companions. They were advanced a good way into the fields, when the duke, making efforts for his liberty, threw himself to the ground, and brought down with him the assassin to whom he was fastened. They were struggling together in the mire, when Ormond’s servants, whom the alarm had reached, came and saved him. Blood and his companions, firing their pistols in a hurry at the duke, rode off, and saved themselves by means of the darkness.

Buckingham was at first, with some appearances of reason, suspected to be the author of this attempt. His profligate character, and his enmity against Ormond, exposed him to that imputation; Ossory soon after came to court, and seeing Buckingham stand by the king, his color rose, and he could not forbear expressing himself to this purpose: “My lord, I know well that you are at the bottom of this late attempt upon my father: but I give you warning; if by any means he come to a violent end, I shall not be at a loss to know the author: I shall consider you as the assassin: I shall treat you as such; and wherever I meet you, I shall pistol you, though you stood behind the king’s chair; and I tell it you in his majesty’s presence, that you may be sure I shall not fail of performance.” [1] If there was here any indecorum, it was easily excused in a generous youth, when his father’s life was exposed to danger.

* Carte’s Ormond, vol. ii. .

A little after, Blood formed a design of carrying off the crown and regalia from the Tower; a design to which he was prompted, as well by the surprising boldness of the enterprise, as by the views of profit. He was near succeeding. He had bound and wounded Edwards, the keeper of the jewel-office, and had gotten out of the Tower with his prey; but was overtaken and seized, with some of his associates. One of them was known to have been concerned in the attempt upon Ormond; and Blood was immediately concluded to be the ring-leader. When questioned, he frankly avowed the enterprise; but refused to tell his accomplices. “The fear of death,” he said, “should never engage him either to deny a guilt or betray a friend.” All these extraordinary circumstances made him the general subject of conversation; and the king was moved by an idle curiosity to see and speak with a person so noted for his courage and his crimes. Blood might now esteem himself secure of pardon; and he wanted not address to improve the opportunity. He told Charles, that he had been engaged, with others, in a design to kill him with a carabine above Battersea, where his majesty often went to bathe: that the cause of this resolution was the severity exercised over the consciences of the godly, in restraining the liberty of their religious assemblies: that when he had taken his stand among the reeds, full of these bloody resolutions, he found his heart checked with an awe of majesty; and he not only relented himself, but diverted his associates from their purpose: that he had long ago brought himself to an entire indifference about life, which he now gave for lost; yet could he not forbear warning the king of the danger which might attend his execution: that his associates had bound themselves by the strictest oaths to revenge the death of any of the confederacy; and that no precaution or power could secure any one from the effects of their desperate resolutions.

Whether these considerations excited fear or admiration in the king, they confirmed his resolution of granting a pardon to Blood; but he thought it a point of decency first to obtain the duke of Ormond’s consent. Arlington came to Ormond in the king’s name, and desired that he would not prosecute Blood, for reasons which he was commanded to give him. The duke replied, that his majesty’s commands were the only reason that could be given, and being sufficient, he might therefore spare the rest. Charles carried his kindness to Blood still further: he granted him an estate of five hundred pounds a year in Ireland; he encouraged his attendance about his person; he showed him great countenance; and many applied to him for promoting their pretensions at court. And while old Edwards, who had bravely ventured his life, and had been wounded, in defending the crown and regalia, was forgotten and neglected, this man, who deserved only to be stared at and detested as a monster, became a kind of favorite.

Errors of this nature in private life have often as bad an influence as miscarriages in which the public is more immediately concerned. Another incident happened this year, which infused a general displeasure, and still greater apprehensions, into all men. The duchess of York died; and in her last sickness, she made open profession of the Romish religion, and finished her life in that communion. This put an end to that thin disguise which the duke had hitherto worn and he now openly declared his conversion to the church of Rome. Unaccountable terrors of Popery, ever since the accession of the house of Stuart, had prevailed throughout the nation; but these had formerly been found so groundless, and had been employed to so many bad purposes, that surmises of this nature were likely to meet with the less credit among all men of sense; and nothing but the duke’s imprudent bigotry could have convinced the whole nation of his change of religion. Popery, which had hitherto been only a hideous spectre, was now become a real ground of terror being openly and zealously embraced by the heir to the crown a prince of industry and enterprise; while the king himself was not entirely free from like suspicions.

It is probable that the new alliance with France inspired the duke with the courage to make open profession of his religion, and rendered him more careless of the affections and esteem of the English. This alliance became every day more apparent. Temple was declared to be no longer ambassador to the states, and Downing, whom the Dutch regarded as the inveterate enemy of their republic, was sent over in his stead. A ground of quarrel was sought by means of a yacht, despatched for Lady Temple. The captain sailed through the Dutch fleet, which lay on their own coasts; and he had orders to make them strike, to fire on them, and to persevere till they should return his fire. The Dutch admiral, Van Ghent, surprised at this bravado, came on board the yacht, and expressed his willingness to pay respect to the British flag, according to former practice: but that a fleet on their own coasts should strike to a single vessel, and that not a ship of war, was, he said, such an innovation, that he durst not without express orders agree to it. The captain, thinking it dangerous, as well as absurd, to renew firing in the midst of the Dutch fleet, continued his course; and for that neglect of orders was committed to the Tower.

This incident, however, furnished Downing with a new article to increase those vain pretences on which it was purposed to ground the intended rupture. The English court delayed several months before they complained; lest, if they had demanded satisfaction more early, the Dutch might have had time to grant it. Even when Downing delivered his memorial, he was bound by his instructions not to accept of any satisfaction after a certain number of days: a very imperious manner of negotiating, and impracticable in Holland, where the forms of the republic render delays absolutely unavoidable. An answer, however, though refused by Downing, was sent over to London; with an ambassador extraordinary, who had orders to use every expedient that might give satisfaction to the court of England. That court replied, that the answer of the Hollanders was ambiguous and obscure; but they would not specify the articles or expressions which were liable to that objection. The Dutch ambassador desired the English ministry to draw the answer in what terms they pleased; and he engaged to sign it: the English ministry replied, that it was not their business to draw papers for the Dutch. The ambassador brought them the draught of an article, and asked them whether it were satisfactory: the English answered, that when he had signed and delivered it, they would tell him their mind concerning it. The Dutchman resolved to sign it at a venture; and on his demanding a new audience, an hour was appointed for that purpose: but when he attended, the English refused to enter upon business, and told him that the season for negotiating was now past. [1]

* England's Appeal, . This year, on the 12th of November, died, in his retreat, and in the sixtieth year of his age, Thomas Lord Fairfax, who performed many great actions without being a memorable personage, and allowed himself to be carried into many criminal enterprises with the best and most upright intentions. His daughter and heir was married to George Villiers, duke of Buckingham.

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Long and frequent prorogations were made of the parliament; lest the houses should declare themselves with vigor against counsels so opposite to the inclination as well as interests of the public. Could we suppose that Charles, in his alliance against Holland, really meant the good of his people, that measure must pass for an extraordinary, nay, a romantic strain of patriotism, which could lead him, in spite of all difficulties, and even in spite of themselves, to seek the welfare of the nation. But every step which he took in this affair became a proof to all men of penetration, that the present war was intended against the religion and liberties of his own subjects, even more than against the Dutch themselves. He now acted in every thing as if he were already an absolute monarch, and was never more to lie under the control of national assemblies.

The long prorogations of parliament, if they freed the king from the importunate remonstrances of that assembly, were, however, attended with this inconvenience, that no money could be procured to carry on the military preparations against Holland. Under pretence of maintaining the triple league, which at that very time he had firmly resolved to break, Charles had obtained a large supply from the commons; but this money was soon exhausted by debts and expenses. France had stipulated to pay two hundred thousand pounds a year during the war; but that supply was inconsiderable, compared to the immense charge of the English navy. It seemed as yet premature to venture on levying money without consent of parliament; since the power of taxing themselves was the privilege of which the English were with reason particularly jealous. Some other resource must be fallen on. The king had declared, that the staff of treasurer was ready for any one that could find an expedient for supplying the present necessities. Shaftesbury dropped a hint to Clifford, which the latter immediately seized, and carried to the king, who granted him the promised reward, together with a peerage. This expedient was the shutting up of the exchequer and the retaining of all the payments which should be made into it.

It had been usual for the bankers to carry their money to the exchequer, and to advance it upon security of the funds, by which they were afterwards reimbursed when the money was levied on the public. The bankers by this traffic got eight, sometimes ten per cent., for sums which either had been consigned to them without interest, or which they had borrowed at six per cent.; profits which they dearly paid for by this egregious breach of public faith. The measure was so suddenly taken, that none had warning of the danger. A general confusion prevailed in the city, followed by the ruin of many. The bankers stopped payment; the merchants could answer no bills; distrust took place every where, with a stagnation of commerce, by which the public was universally affected. And men, full of dismal apprehensions, asked each other what must be the scope of those mysterious counsels, whence the parliament and all men of honor were excluded, and which commenced by the forfeiture of public credit, and an open violation of the most solemn engagements, both foreign and domestic.

Another measure of the court contains something laudable, when considered in itself; but if we reflect on the motive whence it proceeded, as well as the time when it was embraced, it will furnish a strong proof of the arbitrary and dangerous counsels pursued at present by the king and his ministry. Charles resolved to make use of his supreme power in ecclesiastical matters; a power, he said, which was not only inherent in him, but which had been recognized by several acts of parliament. By virtue of this authority, he issued a proclamation, suspending the penal laws enacted against all nonconformists or recusants whatsoever; and granting to the Protestant dissenters the public exercise of their religion, to the Catholics the exercise of it in private houses. A fruitless experiment of this kind, opposed by the parliament, and retracted by the king, had already been made a few years after the restoration; but Charles expected that the parliament, whenever it should meet, would now be tamed to greater submission, and would no longer dare to control his measures. Meanwhile the dissenters, the most inveterate enemies of the court, were mollified by these indulgent maxims: and the Catholics, under their shelter, enjoyed more liberty than the laws had hitherto allowed them.

At the same time, the act of navigation was suspended by royal will and pleasure; a measure which, though a stretch of prerogative, seemed useful to commerce, while all the seamen were employed on board the royal navy. A like suspension had been granted during the first Dutch war, and was not much remarked; because men had at that time entertained less jealousy of the crown. A proclamation was also issued, containing rigorous clauses in favor of pressing; another full of menaces against those who presumed to speak undutifully of his majesty’s measures, and even against those who heard such discourse, unless they informed in due time against the offenders; another against importing or vending any sort of painted earthenware, “except those of China, upon pain of being grievously fined, and suffering the utmost punishment which might be lawfully inflicted upon contemners of his majesty’s royal authority.” An army had been levied; and it was found that discipline could not be enforced without the exercise of martial law, which was therefore established by order of council, though contrary to the petition of right. All these acts of power, how little important soever in themselves, savored strongly of arbitrary government; and were nowise suitable to that legal administration which the parliament, after such violent convulsions and civil wars, had hoped to have established in the kingdom.

It may be worth remarking, that the lord keeper refused to affix the great seal to the declaration for suspending the penal laws; and was for that reason, though under other pretences removed from his office. Shaftesbury was made chancellor in his place; and thus another member of the cabal received the reward of his counsels.

Foreign transactions kept pace with these domestic occurrences. An attempt, before the declaration of war, was made on the Dutch Smyrna fleet by Sir Robert Holmes. This fleet consisted of seventy sail, valued at a million and a half; and the hopes of seizing so rich a prey had been a great motive for engaging Charles in the present war, and he had considered that capture as a principal resource for supporting his military enterprises. Holmes, with nine frigates and three yachts, had orders to go on this command; and he passed Sprague in the Channel, who was returning with a squadron from a cruize in the Mediterranean. Sprague informed him of the near approach of the Hollanders; and had not Holmes, from a desire of engrossing the honor and profit of the enterprise, kept the secret of his orders, the conjunction of these squadrons had rendered the success infallible. When Holmes approached the Dutch, he put on an amicable appearance, and invited the admiral Van Ness, who commanded the convoy, to come on board of him: one of his captains gave a like insidious invitation to the rear-admiral. But these officers were on their guard. They had received an intimation of the hostile intentions of the English, and had already put all the ships of war and merchantmen in an excellent posture of defence. Three times were they valiantly assailed by the English; and as often did they valiantly defend themselves. In the third attack, one of the Dutch ships of war was taken; and three or four of their most inconsiderable merchantmen fell into the enemies' hands. The rest, fighting with skill and courage, continued their course; and, favored by a mist, got safe into their own harbors. This attempt is denominated perfidious and piratical by the Dutch writers, and even by many of the English. It merits at least the appellation of irregular; and as it had been attended with bad success, it brought double shame upon the contrivers. The English ministry endeavored to apologize for the action, by pretending that it was a casual rencounter, arising from the obstinacy of the Dutch in refusing the honors of the flag: but the contrary was so well known, that even Holmes himself had not the assurance to persist in this asseveration.

Till this incident, the states, notwithstanding all the menaces and preparations of the English, never believed them thoroughly in earnest; and had always expected, that the affair would terminate, either in some demands of money, or in some proposals for the advancement of the prince of Orange. The French themselves had never much reckoned on assistance from England; and scarcely could believe that their ambitious projects would, contrary to every maxim of honor and policy, be forwarded by that power which was most interested and most able to oppose them. But Charles was too far advanced to retreat. He immediately issued a declaration of war against the Dutch; and surely reasons more false and frivolous never were employed to justify a flagrant violation of treaty. Some complaints are there made of injuries done to the East India Company, which yet that company disavowed: the detention of some English in Surinam is mentioned; though it appears that these persons had voluntarily remained there: the refusal of a Dutch fleet on their own coasts to strike to an English yacht, is much aggravated: and to piece up all these pretensions, some abusive pictures are mentioned, and represented as a ground of quarrel. The Dutch were long at a loss what to make of this article, till it was discovered that a portrait of Cornelius de Wit, brother to the pensionary, painted by order of certain magistrates of Dort, and hung up in a chamber of the town-house, had given occasion to the complaint. In the perspective of this portrait, the painter had drawn some ships on fire in a harbor. This was construed to be Chatham, where De Wit had really distinguished himself, and had acquired honor; but little did he imagine that, while the insult itself committed in open war, had so long been forgiven, the picture of it should draw such severe vengeance upon his country. The conclusion of this manifesto, where the king still professed his resolution of adhering to the triple alliance, was of a piece with the rest of it.

Lewis’s declaration of war contained more dignity, if undisguised violence and injustice could merit that appellation. He pretended only, that the behavior of the Hollanders had been such, that it did not consist with his glory any longer to bear.

That monarch’s preparations were in great forwardness; and his ambition was flattered with the most promising views of success. Sweden was detached from the triple league; the bishop of Munster was engaged by the payment of subsidies to take part with France; the elector of Cologne had entered into the same alliance; and having consigned Bonne and other towns into the hands of Lewis, magazines were there erected; and it was from that quarter that France purposed to invade the United Provinces. The standing force of that kingdom amounted to a hundred and eighty thousand men; and with more than half of this great army was the French king now approaching to the Dutch frontiers. The order, economy, and industry of Colbert, equally subservient to the ambition of the prince and happiness of the people, furnished unexhausted treasures: these, employed by the unrelenting vigilance of Louvois, supplied every military preparation, and facilitated all the enterprises of the army: Condé, Turenne, seconded by Luxembourg, Crequi, and the most renowned generals of the age, conducted this army, and by their conduct and reputation inspired courage into every one. The monarch himself, surrounded with a brave nobility, animated his troops by the prospect of reward, or, what was more valued, by the hopes of his approbation. The fatigues of war gave no interruption to gayety: its dangers furnished matter for glory; and in no enterprise did the genius of that gallant and polite people ever break out with more distinguished lustre.

Though De Wit's intelligence in foreign courts was not equal to the vigilance of his domestic administration, he had long before received many surmises of this fatal confederacy; but he prepared not for defence so early, or with such industry, as the danger required. A union of England with France was evidently, he saw, destructive to the interests of the former kingdom; and therefore, overlooking or ignorant of the humors and secret views of Charles, he concluded it impossible that such pernicious projects could ever really be carried into execution. Secure in this fallacious reasoning, he allowed the republic to remain too long in that defenceless situation into which many concurring accidents had conspired to throw her.

By a continued and successful application to commerce, the people were become unwarlike, and confided entirely for their defence in that mercenary army which they maintained. After the treaty of Westphalia, the states, trusting to their peace with Spain, and their alliance with France, had broken a great part of this army, and did not support with sufficient vigilance the discipline of the troops which remained. When the aristocratic party prevailed, it was thought prudent to dismiss many of the old, experienced officers, who were devoted to the house of Orange; and their place was supplied by raw youths, the sons or kinsmen of burgomasters, by whose interest the party was supported. These new officers, relying on the credit of their friends and family, neglected their military duty; and some of them, it is said, were even allowed to serve by deputies, to whom they assigned a small part of their pay. During the war with England, all the forces of that nation had been disbanded: Lewis's invasion of Flanders, followed by the triple league, occasioned the dismission of the French regiments: and the place of these troops, which had ever had a chief share in the honor and fortune of all the wars in the Low Countries, had not been supplied by any new levies.

De Wit, sensible of this dangerous situation, and alarmed by the reports which came from all quarters, exerted himself to supply those defects to which it was not easy of a sudden to provide a suitable remedy. But every proposal which he could make met with opposition from the Orange party, now become extremely formidable. The long and uncontrolled administration of this statesman had begotten envy; the present incidents roused up his enemies and opponents, who ascribed to his misconduct alone the bad situation of the republic; and above all, the popular affection to the young prince, which had so long been held in violent constraint, and had thence acquired new accession of force, began to display itself, and to threaten the commonwealth with some great convulsion. William III., prince of Orange, was in the twenty-second year of his age, and gave strong indications of those great qualities by which his life was afterwards so much distinguished. De Wit himself, by giving him an excellent education, and instructing him in all the principles of government and sound policy, had generously contributed to make his rival formidable. Dreading the precarious situation of his own party, he was always resolved, he said, by conveying to the prince the knowledge of affairs, to render him capable of serving his country, if any future emergence should ever throw the administration into his hands. The conduct of William had hitherto been extremely laudable. Notwithstanding his powerful alliances with England and Brandenburgh, he had expressed his resolution of depending entirely on the states for his advancement; and the whole tenor of his behavior suited extremely the genius of that people. Silent and thoughtful given to hear and to inquire; of a sound and steady understanding; firm in what he once resolved, or once denied; strongly intent on business, little on pleasure; by these virtues he engaged the attention of all men And the people, sensible that they owed their liberty and very existence to his family, and remembering that his great-uncle Maurice had been able, even in more early youth, to defend them against the exorbitant power of Spain, were desirous of raising this prince to all the authority of his ancestors; and hoped, from his valor and conduct alone, to receive protection against those imminent dangers with which they were at present threatened.

While these two powerful factions struggled for superiority, every scheme for defence was opposed, every project retarded What was determined with difficulty, was executed without vigor. Levies, indeed, were made, and the army completed to seventy thousand men; [1] the prince was appointed both general and admiral of the commonwealth, and the whole military power was put into his hands. But new troops could not of a sudden acquire discipline and experience: and the partisans of the prince were still unsatisfied, as long as the perpetual edict (so it was called) remained in force; by which he was excluded from the stadtholdership, and from all share in the civil administration.

* Temple, vol. i. .

It had always been the maxim of De Wit's party to cultivate naval affairs with extreme care, and to give the fleet a preference above the army, which they represented as the object of an unreasonable partiality la the princes of Orange. The two violent wars which had of late been waged with England, had exercised the valor and improved the skill of the sailors. And, above all, De Ruyter, the greatest sea commander of the age, was closely connected with the Lovestein party; and every one was disposed, with confidence and alacrity, to obey him. The equipment of the fleet was therefore hastened by De Wit; in hopes that, by striking at first a successful blow, he might inspire courage into the dismayed states, and support his own declining authority. He seems to have been, in a peculiar manner, incensed against the English; and he resolved to take revenge on them for their conduct, of which, he thought, he himself and his country had such reason to complain. By ihe offer of a close alliance for mutual defence, they had seduced the republic to quit the alliance of France; but no sooner had she embraced these measures, than they formed leagues for her destruction, with that very power which they had treacherously engaged her to offend. In the midst of full peace, nay, during an intimate union, they attacked her commerce, her only means of subsistence; and, moved by shameful rapacity, had invaded that property which, from a reliance on their faith, they had hoped to find unprotected and defenceless. Contrary to their own manifest interest, as well as to their honor, they still retained a malignant resentment for her successful conclusion of the former war; a war which had at first sprung from their own wanton insolence and ambition. To repress so dangerous an enemy would, De Wit imagined, give peculiar pleasure, and contribute to the future security of his country, whose prosperity was so much the object of general envy.

Actuated by like motives and views, De Ruyter put to sea with a formidable fleet, consisting of ninety-one ships of war and forty-four fireships. Cornelius De Wit was on board, as deputy from the states. They sailed in quest of the English, who were under the command of the duke of York, and who had already joined the French under Mareschal D'Etrées. The combined fleets lay at Solebay in a very negligent posture, and Sandwich, being an experienced officer, had given the duke warning of the danger, but received, it is said, such an answer as intimated that there was more of caution than of courage in his apprehensions. Upon the appearance of the enemy, every one ran to his post with precipitation; and many ships were obliged to cut their cables, in order to be in readiness. Sandwich commanded the van; and though determined to conquer or to perish, he so tempered his courage with prudence, that the whole fleet was visibly indebted to him for its safety. He hastened out of the bay, where it had been easy for De Ruyter with his fireships to have destroyed the combined fleets, which were crowded together; and by this wise measure, he gave time to the duke of York, who commanded the main body, and to Mareschal D'Etrées, admiral of the rear, to disengage themselves. He himself meanwhile rushed into battle with the Hollanders; and by presenting himself to every danger, had drawn upon him all the bravest of the enemy, He killed Van Ghent, a Dutch admiral, and beat off his ship: he sunk another ship, which ventured to lay him aboard: he sunk three fireships, which endeavored to grapple with him: and though his vessel was torn in pieces with shot, and of a thousand men she contained, near six hundred were laid dead upon the deck, he continued still to thunder with all his artillery in the midst of the enemy. But another fireship, more fortunate than the preceding, having laid hold of his vessel, her destruction was now inevitable. Warned by Sir Edward Haddock, his captain, he refused to make his escape; and bravely embraced death, as a shelter from that ignominy which a rash expression of the duke's, he thought, had thrown upon him.

During this fierce engagement with Sandwich, De Ruyter remained not inactive. He attacked the duke of York, and fought him with such fury for above two hours, that of two and thirty actions in which that admiral had been engaged, he declared this combat to be the most obstinately disputed. The duke's ship was so shattered, that he was obliged to leave her, and remove his flag to another. His squadron was overpowered with numbers, till Sir Joseph Jordan, who had succeeded to Sandwich's command, came to his assistance; and the fight, being more equally balanced, was continued till night, when the Dutch retired, and were not followed by the English. The loss sustained by the fleets of the two maritime powers was nearly equal, if it did not rather fall more heavy on the English. The French suffered very little, because they had scarcely been engaged in the action; and as this backwardness is not their national character, it was concluded, that they had received secret orders to spare their ships, while the Dutch and

English should weaken each other by their mutual animosity. Almost all the other actions during the present war tended to confirm this suspicion.

It might be deemed honorable for the Dutch to have fought with some advantage the combined fleets of two such powerful nations; but nothing less than a complete victory could serve the purpose of De Wit, or save his country from those calamities which from every quarter threatened to overwhelm her. He had expected, that the French would make their attack on the side of Maestricht, which was well fortified, and provided with a good garrison; but Lewis, taking advantage of his alliance with Cologne, resolved to invade the enemy on that frontier, which he knew to be more feeble and defenceless. The armies of that elector, and those of Munster, appeared on the other side of the Rhine, and divided the force and attention of the states. The Dutch troops, too weak to defend so extensive a frontier, were scattered into so many towns, that no considerable body remained in the field and a strong garrison was scarcely to be found in any fortress Lewis passed the Meuse at Viset; and laying siege to Orsoi, a town of the elector of Brandenburgh's, but garrisoned by the Dutch, he carried it in three days. He divided his army, and invested at once Burik, Wesel, Emerik, and Rhimberg, four places regularly fortified, and not unprovided with troops: in a few days, all these places were surrendered. A general astonishment had seized the Hollanders, from the combination of such powerful princes against the republic; and nowhere was resistance made suitable to the ancient glory or present greatness of the state. Governors without experience commanded troops without discipline; and despair had universally extinguished that sense of honor, by which alone men in such dangerous extremities can be animated to a valorous defence.

Lewis advanced to the banks of the Rhine, which he prepared to pass. To all the other calamities of the Dutch was added the extreme drought of the season, by which the greatest rivers were much diminished, and in some places rendered fordable. The French cavalry, animated by the presence of their prince, full of impetuous courage, but ranged in exact order, flung themselves into the river: the infantry passed in boats: a few regiments of Dutch appeared on the other side, who were unable to make resistance. And thus was executed without danger, but not without glory, the passage of the Rhine so much celebrated at that time by the flattery of the French courtiers, and transmitted to posterity by the more durable flattery of their poets.

Each success added courage to the conquerors, and struck the vanquished with dismay. The prince of Orange, though prudent beyond his age, was but newly advanced to the command, unacquainted with the army, unknown to them; and all men, by reason of the violent factions which prevailed, were uncertain of the authority on which they must depend. It was expected that the fort of Skink, famous for the sieges which it had formerly sustained, would make some resistance; but it yielded to Turenne in a few days. The same general made himself master of Arnheim, Knotzembourg, and Nimeguen, as soon as he appeared before them. Doesbourg at the same time opened its gates to Lewis: soon after, Harderwic, Amersfort, Campen, Rhenen, Viane, Elberg, Zwol. Cuilemberg, Wageninguen, Lochem, Woerden, fell into the enemy's hands. Groll and Deventer surrendered to the mareschal Luxembourg, who commanded the troops of Munster. And every hour brought to the states news of the rapid progress of the French, and of the cowardly defence of their own garrisons.

The prince of Orange, with his small and discouraged army, retired into the province of Holland; where he expected, from the natural strength of the country, since all human art and courage failed, to be able to make some resistance. The town and province of Utrecht sent deputies, and surrendered themselves to Lewis Naerden, a place within three leagues of Amsterdam, was seized by the marquis of Rochfort; and had he pushed on to Muyden, he had easily gotten possession of it. Fourteen stragglers of his army having appeared before the gates of that town, the magistrates sent them the keys; but a servant maid, who was alone in the castle, having raised the drawbridge, kept them from taking possession of that fortress. The magistrates afterwards, finding the party so weak, made them drunk, and took the keys from them. Muyden is so near to Amsterdam, that its cannon may infest the ships which enter that city.

Lewis with a splendid court made a solemn entry into Utrecht, full of glory, because every where attended with success; though more owing to the cowardice and misconduct of his enemies, than to his own valor or prudence. Three provinces were already in his hands, Guelderland, Overyssel, and Utrecht; Groninghen was threatened; Friezeland was exposed: the only difficulty lay in Holland and Zealand; and the monarch deliberated concerning the proper measures for reducing them. Condé and Turenne exhorted him to dismantle all the towns which he had taken, except a few; and fortifying his main army by the garrisons, put himself in a condition of pushing his conquests. Louvois, hoping that the other provinces, weak and dismayed, would prove an easy prey, advised him to keep possession of places which might afterwards serve to retain the people in subjection. His counsel was followed though it was found, soon after, to have been the most impolitic.

Meanwhile the people throughout the republic, instead of collecting a noble indignation against the haughty conqueror discharged their rage upon their own unhappy minister, on whose prudence and integrity every one formerly bestowed the merited applause. The bad condition of the armies was laid to his charge: the ill choice of governors was ascribed to his partiality: as instances of cowardice multiplied, treachery was suspected; and his former connections with France being remembered, the populace believed, that he and his partisans had now combined to betray them to their most mortal enemy. The prince of Orange, notwithstanding his youth and inexperience, was looked on as the only savior of the state; and men were violently driven by their fears into his party, to which they had always been led by favor and inclination.

Amsterdam alone seemed to retain some courage; and by forming a regular plan of defence, endeavored to infuse spirit into the other cities. The magistrates obliged the burgesses to keep a strict watch: the populace, whom want of employment might engage to mutiny, were maintained by regular pay, and armed for the defence of the public. Some ships which lay useless in the harbor, were refitted, and stationed to guard the city; and the sluices being opened, the neighboring country, without regard to the damage sustained, was laid under water. All the province followed the example, and scrupled not, in this extremity, to restore to the sea those fertile fields which with great art and expense had been won from it.

The states were assembled to consider whether any means were left to save the remains of their lately flourishing and now distressed commonwealth. Though they were surrounded with waters, which barred all access to the enemy, their deliberations were not conducted with that tranquillity which could alone suggest measures proper to extricate them from their present difficulties. The nobles gave their vote, that, provided their religion, liberty, and sovereignty could be saved, every thing else should without scruple be sacrificed to the conqueror. Eleven towns concurred in the same sentiments. Amsterdam singly declared against all treaty with insolent and triumphant enemies: but notwithstanding that opposition, ambassadors were despatched to implore the pity of the two combined monarchs. It was resolved to sacrifice to Lewis, Maestricht and all the frontier towns which lay without the bounds of the seven provinces; and to pay him a large sum for the charges of the war.

Lewis deliberated with his ministers, Louvois and Pomponne, concerning the measures which he should embrace in the present emergence; and fortunately for Europe, he still preferred the violent counsels of the former. He offered to evacuate his conquests, on condition that all duties lately imposed on the commodities of France should be taken off: that the public exercise of the Romish religion should be permitted in the United Provinces; the churches shared with the Catholics; and their priests maintained by appointments from the states: that all the frontier towns of the republic should be yielded to him, together with Nimeguen, Skink, Knotzembourg, and that part of Guelderland which lay on the other side of the Rhine; as likewise the Isle of Bommel, that of Voorn, the fortress of St. Andrew, those of Louvestein and Crevecoeur: that the states should pay him the sum of twenty millions of livres for the charges of the war: that they should every year send him a solemn embassy, and present him with a golden medal, as an acknowledgment that they owed to him the preservation of that liberty which, by the assistance of his predecessors, they had formerly acquired: and that they should give entire satisfaction to the king of England: and he allowed them but ten days for the acceptance of these demands.

The ambassadors sent to London met with still worse reception: no minister was allowed to treat with them; and they were retained in a kind of confinement. But notwithstanding this rigorous conduct of the court, the presence of the Dutch ambassadors excited the sentiments of tender compassion, and even indignation, among the people in general, especially among those who could foresee the aim and result of those dangerous counsels. The two most powerful monarchs, they said, in Europe, the one by land, the other by sea, have, contrary to the faith of solemn treaties, combined to exterminate an illustrious republic: what a dismal prospect does their success afford to the neighbors of the one, and to the subjects of the other? Charles had formed the triple league, in order to restrain the power of France; a sure proof that he does not now err from ignorance. He had courted and obtained the applauses of his people by that wise measure: as he now adopts contrary counsels, he must surely expect by their means to render himself independent of his people, whose sentiments are become so indifferent to him. During the entire submission of the nation, and dutiful behavior of the parliament, dangerous projects, without provocation, are formed to reduce them to subjection; and all the foreign interests of the people are sacrificed, in order the more surely to bereave them of their domestic liberties. Lest any instance of freedom should remain within their view, the United Province; the real barrier of England, must be abandoned to the most dangerous enemy of England; and by a universal combination of tyranny against laws and liberty, all mankind, who have retained in any degree their precious, though hitherto precarious birthrights, are forever to submit to slavery and injustice.

Though the fear of giving umbrage to his confederate had engaged Charles to treat the Dutch ambassadors with such rigor, he was not altogether without uneasiness on account of the rapid and unexpected progress of the French arms. Were Holland entirely conquered, its whole commerce and naval force, he perceived, must become an accession to France; the Spanish Low Countries must soon follow; and Lewis, now independent of his ally, would no longer think it his interest to support him against his discontented subjects. Charles, though he never carried his attention to very distant consequences, could not but foresee these obvious events; and though incapable of envy or jealousy, he was touched with anxiety, when he found every thing yield to the French arms, while such vigorous resistance was made to his own. He soon dismissed the Dutch ambassadors, lest they should cabal among his subjects, who bore them great favor: but he sent over Buckingham and Arlington, and soon after Lord Halifax, to negotiate anew with the French king, in the present prosperous situation of that monarch’s affairs.

These ministers passed through Holland; and as they were supposed to bring peace to the distressed republic, they were every where received with the loudest acclamations. “God bless the king of England! God bless the prince of Orange! Confusion to the states!” This was every where the cry of the populace. The ambassadors had several conferences with the states and the prince of Orange; but made no reasonable advances towards an accommodation. They went to Utrecht where they renewed the league with Lewis, and agreed, that neither of the kings should make peace with Holland but by common consent. They next gave in their pretensions, of which the following are the principal articles: that the Dutch should give up the honor of the flag, without the least reserve or limitation nor should whole fleets, even on the coast of Holland, refuse to strike or lower their topsails to the smallest ship carrying the British flag: that all persons guilty of treason against the king, or of writing seditious libels, should, on complaint, be banished forever the dominions of the states; that the Dutch should pay the king a million sterling towards the charges of the war, together with ten thousand pounds a year, for permission to fish on the British seas: that they should share the Indian trade with the English: that the prince of Orange and his descendants should enjoy the sovereignty of the United Provinces; at least, that they should be invested with the dignities of stadtholder, admiral, and general, in as ample a manner as had ever been enjoyed by any of his ancestors: and that the Isle of Walcheren, the city and castle of Sluis, together with the isles of Cadsant, Gorée, and Vorne, should be put into the king's hands, as a security for the performance of articles.

The terms proposed by Lewis bereaved the republic of all security against any invasion by land from France: those demanded by Charles exposed them equally to an invasion by sea from England; and when both were united, they appeared absolutely intolerable, and reduced the Hollanders, who saw no means of defence, to the utmost despair. What extremely augmented their distress, were the violent factions with which they continued to be every where agitated. De Wit, too pertinacious in defence of his own system of liberty, while the very being of the commonwealth was threatened, still persevered in opposing the repeal of the perpetual edict, now become the object of horror to the Dutch populace. Their rage at last broke all bounds, and bore every thing before it. They rose in an insurrection at Dort, and by force constrained their burgomasters to sign the repeal so much demanded. This proved a signal of a general revolt throughout all the provinces.

At Amsterdam, the Hague, Middlebourg, Rotterdam, the people flew to arms, and trampling under foot the authority of their magistrates, obliged them to submit to the prince of Orange. They expelled from their office such as displeased them: they required the prince to appoint others in their place; and, agreeably to the proceedings of the populace in all ages, provided they might wreak their vengeance on their superiors, they expressed great indifference for the protection of their civil liberties.

The superior talents and virtues of De Wit made him on this occasion the chief object of envy, and exposed him to the utmost rage of popular prejudice. Four assassins, actuated by no other motive than mistaken zeal, had assaulted him in the streets; and after giving him many wounds, had left him for dead. One of them was punished: the others were never questioned for the crime. His brother Cornelius, who had behaved with prudence and courage on board the fleet, was obliged by sickness to come ashore; and he was now confined to his house at Dort. Some assassins broke in upon him; and it was with the utmost difficulty that his family and servants could repel their violence. At Amsterdam, the house of the brave De Ruyter, the sole resource of the distressed commonwealth, was surrounded by the enraged populace; and his wife and children were for some time exposed to the most imminent danger.

One Tichelaer, a barber, a man noted for infamy, accused Cornelius de Wit of endeavoring by bribes to engage him in the design of poisoning the prince of Orange. The accusation, though attended with the most improbable, and even absurd circumstances, was greedily received by the credulous multitude; and Cornelius was cited before a court of judicature. The judges, either blinded by the same prejudices, or not daring to oppose the popular torrent, condemned him to suffer the question. This man, who had bravely served his country in war, and who had been invested with the highest dignities, was delivered into the hands of the executioner, and torn in pieces by the most inhuman torments. Amidst the severe agonies which he endured, he still made protestations of his innocence, and frequently repeated an ode of Horace, which contained sentiments suited to his deplorable condition: —

Justum et tenacem propositi virum, etc. [1]

* Which may be thus translated: —

The man whose mind, on virtue bent, Pursues some greatly good intent, With undiverted aim, Serene beholds the angry crowd; Nor can their clamors, fierce and loud, His stubborn honor tame.

Not the proud tyrant’s fiercest threat, Nor storms, that from their dark retreat The lawless surges wake; Not Jove’s dread bolt, that shakes the pole, The firmer purpose of his soul With all its power can shake.

Should nature’s frame in ruins fall, And chaos o’er the sinking ball Resume primeval sway, His courage chance and fate defies, Nor feels the wreck of earth and skies Obstruct its destined way — BLACKLOCKE

The judges, however, condemned him to lose his offices, and to be banished the commonwealth. The pensionary, who had not been terrified from performing the part of a kind brother and faithful friend during this prosecution, resolved not to desert him on account of the unmerited infamy which was endeavored to be thrown upon him. He came to his brothers prison, determined to accompany him to the place of his exile. The signal was given to the populace. They rose in arms: they broke open the doors of the prison; they pulled out the two brothers; and a thousand hands vied who should first be imbrued in their blood. Even their death did not satiate the brutal rage of the multitude. They exercised on the dead bodies of those virtuous citizens, indignities too shocking to be recited; and till tired with their own fury, they permitted not the friends of the deceased to approach, or to bestow on them the honors of a funeral, silent and unattended.

The massacre of the De Wits put an end for the time to the remains of their party; and all men, from fear, inclination, or prudence, concurred in expressing the most implicit obedience to the prince of Orange. The republic, though half subdued by foreign force, and as yet dismayed by its misfortunes, was now firmly united under one leader, and began to collect the remains of its pristine vigor. William, worthy of that heroic family from which he sprang, adopted sentiments becoming the head of a brave and free people. He bent all his efforts against the public enemy: he sought not against his country any advantages which might be dangerous to civil liberty. Those intolerable conditions demanded by their insolent enemies, he exhorted the states to reject with scorn; and by his advice they put an end to negotiations, which served only to break the courage of their fellow-citizens, and delay the assistance of their allies. He showed them, that the numbers and riches of the people, aided by the advantages of situation, would still be sufficient, if they abandoned not themselves to despair, to resist, at least retard, the progress of their enemies, and preserve the remaining provinces, till the other nations of Europe, sensible of the common danger, could come to their relief. He represented that, as envy at their opulence and liberty had produced this mighty combination against them they would in vain expect by concessions to satisfy foes whose pretensions were as little bounded by moderation as by justice He exhorted them to remember the generous valor of their ancestors, who, yet in the infancy of the state, preferred liberty to every human consideration; and rousing their spirits to an obstinate defence, repelled all the power, riches, and military discipline of Spain. And he professed himself willing to tread in the steps of his illustrious predecessors, and hoped, that as they had honored him with the same affection which their ancestors paid to the former princes of Orange, they would second his efforts with the same constancy and manly fortitude.

The spirit of the young prince infused itself into his hearers. Those who lately entertained thoughts of yielding their necks to subjection, were now bravely determined to resist the haughty victor, and to defend those last remains of their native soil, of which neither the irruptions of Lewis, nor the inundation of waters, had as yet bereaved them. Should even the ground fail them on which they might combat, they were still resolved not to yield the generous strife; but, flying to their settlements in the Indies, erect a new empire in those remote regions, and preserve alive, even in the climates of slavery, that liberty of which Europe was become unworthy. Already they concerted measures for executing this extraordinary resolution; and found that the vessels contained in their harbors could transport above two hundred thousand inhabitants to the East Indies.

The combined princes, finding at last some appearance of opposition, bent all their efforts to seduce the prince of Orange, on whose valor and conduct the fate of the commonwealth entirely depended. The sovereignty of the province of Holland was offered him, and the protection of England and France, to insure him, as well against the invasion of foreign enemies, as the insurrection of his subjects. All proposals were generously rejected; and the prince declared his resolution to retire into Germany, and to pass his life in hunting on his lands there, rather than abandon the liberty of his country, or betray the trust reposed in him. When Buckingham urged the inevitable destruction which hung over the United Provinces, and asked him whether he did not see that the commonwealth was ruined, “There is one certain means,” replied the prince, “by which I can be sure never to see my country’s ruin: I will die in the last ditch.”

The people in Holland had been much incited to espouse the prince’s party, by the hopes that the king of England pleased with his nephew’s elevation, would abandon those dangerous engagements into which he had entered, and would afford his protection to the distressed republic. But all these hopes were soon found to be fallacious. Charles still persisted in his alliance with France; and the combined fleets approached the coast of

Holland with an English army on board, commanded by Count Schomberg. It is pretended that an unusual tide carried them off the coast; and that Providence thus interposed, in an extraordinary manner, to save the republic from the imminent danger to which it was exposed. Very tempestuous weather, it is certain, prevailed all the rest of the season; and the combined fleets either were blown to a distance, or durst not approach a coast which might prove fatal to them. Lewis, finding that his enemies gathered courage behind their inundations, and that no further success was likely for the present to attend his arms, had retired to Versailles.

The other nations of Europe regarded the subjection of Holland as the forerunner of their own slavery, and retained no hopes of defending themselves, should such a mighty accession be made to the already exorbitant power of France. The emperor, though he lay at a distance, and was naturally slow in his undertakings, began to put himself in motion; Brandenburgh showed a disposition to support the states; Spain had sent some forces to their assistance; and by the present efforts of the prince of Orange, and the prospect of relief from their allies, a different face of affairs began already to appear. Groninghen was the first place that stopped the progress of the enemy: the bishop of Munster was repulsed from before that town, and obliged to raise the siege with loss and dishonor. Naerden was attempted by the prince of Orange; but Mareschal Luxembourg, breaking in upon his intrenchments with a sudden irruption, obliged him to abandon the enterprise.

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There was no ally on whom the Dutch more relied for assistance, than the parliament of England, which the king’s necessities at last obliged him to assemble. The eyes of all men, both abroad and at home, were fixed on this session, which met after prorogations continued for near two years. It was evident how much the king dreaded the assembling of his parliament; and the discontents universally excited by the bold measures entered into, both in foreign and domestic administration, had given but too just foundation for his apprehensions.

The king, however, in his speech, addressed them with all the appearance of cordiality and confidence. He said, that he would have assembled them sooner, had he not been desirous to allow them leisure for attending their private affairs, as well as to give his people respite from taxes and impositions: that since their last meeting, he had been forced into a war, not only just, but necessary; necessary both for the honor and interest of the nation: that in order to have peace at home, while he had war abroad, he had issued his declaration of indulgence to dissenters, and had found many good effects to result from that measure: that he heard of some exceptions which had been taken to this exercise of power; but he would tell them plainly, that he was resolved to stick to his declaration, and would be much offended at any contradiction: and that though a rumor had been spread, as if the new-levied army had been intended to control law and property, he regarded that jealousy as so frivolous, that he was resolved to augment his forces next spring, and did not doubt but they would consider the necessity of them in their supplies. The rest of the business he left to the chancellor.

The chancellor enlarged on the same topics, and added many extraordinary positions of his own. He told them, that the Hollanders were the common enemies of all monarchies, especially that of England, their only competitor for commerce and naval power, and the sole obstacle to their views of attaining a universal empire, as extensive as that of ancient Rome: that, even during their present distress and danger, they were so intoxicated with these ambitious projects, as to slight all treaty, nay, to refuse all cessation of hostilities: that the king, in entering on this war, did no more than prosecute those maxims which had engaged the parliament to advise and approve of the last; and he might therefore safely say, that it was their war: that the states being the eternal enemies of England, both by interest and inclination, the parliament had wisely judged it necessary to extirpate them, and had laid it down as an eternal maxim, that “delenda est Carthago,” this hostile government by all means is to be subverted: and that though the Dutch pretended to have assurances that the parliament would furnish no supplies to the king, he was confident that this hope, in which they extremely trusted, would soon fail them.

Before the commons entered upon business, there lay before them an affair, which discovered, beyond a possibility of doubt, the arbitrary projects of the king; and the measures taken upon it, proved that the house was not at present in a disposition to submit to them. It had been the constant, undisputed practice, ever since the parliament in 1604, for the house, in case of any vacancy, to issue out writs for new elections; and the chancellor, who, before that time, had had some precedents in his favor, had ever afterwards abstained from all exercise of that authority. This indeed was one of the first steps which the commons had taken in establishing and guarding their privileges; and nothing could be more requisite than this precaution, in order to prevent the clandestine issuing of writs, and to insure a fair and free election. No one but so desperate a minister as Shaftesbury, who had entered into a regular plan for reducing the people to subjection, could have entertained thoughts of breaking in upon a practice so reasonable and so well established, or could have hoped to succeed in so bold an enterprise. Several members had taken their seats upon irregular writs issued by the chancellor; but the house was no sooner assembled, and the speaker placed in the chair, than a motion was made against them; and the members themselves had the modesty to withdraw. Their election was declared null; and new writs, in the usual form, were issued by the speaker.

The next step taken by the commons had the appearance of some more complaisance; but in reality proceeded from the same spirit of liberty and independence. They entered a resolution, that, in order to supply his majesty’s extraordinary occasions, (for that was the expression employed,) they would grant eighteen months’ assessment, at the rate of seventy thousand pounds a month, amounting in the whole to one million two hundred and sixty thousand pounds. Though unwilling to come to a violent breach with the king, they would not express the least approbation of the war; and they gave him the prospect of this supply, only that they might have permission to proceed peaceably in the redress of the other grievances of which they had such reason to complain.

No grievance was more alarming, both on account of the secret views from which it proceeded, and the consequences which might attend it, than the declaration of indulgence. A remonstrance was immediately framed against that exercise of prerogative. The king defended his measure. The commons persisted in their opposition to it; and they represented, that such a practice, if admitted, might tend to interrupt the free course of the laws, and alter the legislative power, which had always been acknowledged to reside in the king and the two houses. All men were in expectation with regard to the issue of this extraordinary affair. The king seemed engaged in honor to support his measure; and in order to prevent all opposition, he had positively declared that he would support it. The commons were obliged to persevere, not only because it was dishonorable to be foiled, where they could plead such strong reasons, but also because, if the king prevailed in his pretensions, an end seemed to be put to all the legal limitations of the constitution.

It is evident, that Charles was now come to that delicate crisis which he ought at first to have foreseen, when he embraced those desperate counsels; and his resolutions, in such an event, ought long ago to have been entirely fixed and determined. Besides his usual guards, he had an army encamped at Blackheath, under the command of Mareschal Schomberg, a foreigner; and many of the officers were of the Catholic religion. His ally, the French king, he might expect, would second him, if force became requisite for restraining his discontented subjects, and supporting the measures which, by common consent, they had agreed to pursue. But the king was startled when he approached so dangerous a precipice as that which lay before him. Were violence once offered, there could be no return, he saw, to mutual confidence and trust with his people; the perils attending foreign succors, especially from so mighty a prince, were sufficiently apparent; and the success which his own arms had met with in the war, was not so great as to increase his authority, or terrify the malecontents from opposition. The desire of power, likewise, which had engaged Charles in these precipitate measures, had less proceeded, we may observe, from ambition than from love of ease. Strict limitations of the constitution rendered the conduct of business complicated and troublesome; and it was impossible for him, without much contrivance and intrigue, to procure the money necessary for his pleasures, or even for the regular support of government. When the prospect, therefore, of such dangerous opposition presented itself, the same love of ease inclined him to retract what it seemed so difficult to maintain; and his turn of mind, naturally pliant and careless, made him find little objection to a measure which a more haughty prince would have embraced with the utmost reluctance. That he might yield with the better grace, he asked the opinion of the house of peers, who advised him to comply with the commons. Accordingly the king sent for the declaration, and with his own hands broke the seals. The commons expressed the utmost satisfaction with this measure, and the most entire duty to his majesty. Charles assured them, that he would willingly pass any law offered him, which might tend to give them satisfaction in all their just grievances.

Shaftesbury, when he found the king recede at once from so capital a point, which he had publicly declared his resolution to maintain, concluded, that all schemes for enlarging royal authority were vanished, and that

Charles was utterly incapable of pursuing such difficult and such hazardous measures. The parliament, he foresaw, might push their inquiries into those counsels which were so generally odious; and the king, from the same facility of disposition, might abandon his ministers to their vengeance. He resolved, therefore, to make his peace in time with that party which was likely to predominate, and to atone for all his violences in favor of monarchy by like violences in opposition to it. Never turn was more sudden, or less calculated to save appearances. Immediately he entered into all the cabals of the country party; and discovered to them, perhaps magnified, the arbitrary designs of the court, in which he himself had borne so deep a share. He was received with open arms by that party, who stood in need of so able a leader; and no questions were asked with regard to his late apostasy. The various factions into which the nation had been divided, and the many sudden revolutions to which the public had been exposed, had tended much to debauch the minds of men, and to destroy the sense of honor and decorum in their public conduct.

But the parliament, though satisfied with the king’s compliance, had not lost all those apprehensions to which the measures of the court had given so much foundation. A law passed for imposing a test on all who should enjoy any public office. Besides taking the oaths of allegiance and supremacy, and receiving the sacrament in the established church, they were obliged to abjure all belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. As the dissenters had seconded the efforts of the commons against the king’s declaration of indulgence, and seemed resolute to accept of no toleration in an illegal manner, they had acquired great favor with the parliament; and a project was adopted to unite the whole Protestant interest against the common enemy, who now began to appear formidable. A bill passed the commons for the ease and relief of the Protestant nonconformists; but met with some difficulties, at least delays, in the house of peers.

The resolution for supply was carried into a law; as a recompense to the king for his concessions. An act, likewise, of general pardon and indemnity was passed, which screened the ministers from all further inquiry. The parliament probably thought, that the best method of reclaiming the criminals, was to show them that their case was not desperate. Even the remonstrance which the commons voted of their grievances, may be regarded as a proof that their anger was, for the time, somewhat appeased. None of the capital points are there touched on; the breach of the triple league, the French alliance, or the shutting up of the exchequer. The sole grievances mentioned are, an arbitrary imposition on coals for providing convoys, the exercise of martial law, the quartering and pressing of soldiers: and they prayed that, after the conclusion of the war, the whole army should be disbanded. The king gave them a gracious, though an evasive answer. When business was finished, the two houses adjourned themselves.

Though the king had receded from his declaration of indulgence, and thereby had tacitly relinquished the dispensing power, he was still resolved, notwithstanding his bad success both at home and abroad, to persevere in his alliance with France, and in the Dutch war, and consequently in all those secret views, whatever they were, which depended on those fatal measures. The money granted by parliament sufficed to equip a fleet, of which Prince Rupert was declared admiral; for the duke was set aside by the test. Sir Edward Sprague and the earl of Ossory commanded under the prince. A French squadron joined them, commanded by d'Etrées. The combined fleets set sail towards the coast of Holland, and found the enemy lying at anchor within the sands at Schonvelt. There is a natural confusion attending sea fights, even beyond other military transactions; derived from the precarious operations of winds and tides, as well as from the smoke and darkness in which every thing is there involved. No wonder, therefore, that accounts of those battles are apt to contain uncertainties and contradictions; especially when delivered by writers of the hostile nations, who take pleasure in exalting the advantages of their own countrymen, and depressing those of the enemy. All we can say with certainty of this battle is, that both sides boasted of the victory; and we may thence infer, that the event was not decisive. The Dutch, being near home, retired into their harbors. In a week, they were refitted, and presented themselves again to the combined fleets. A new action ensued, not more decisive than the foregoing. It was not fought with great obstinacy on either side; but whether the Dutch or the allies first retired, seems to be a matter of uncertainty. The loss in the former cf these actions fell chiefly on the French, whom the English, diffident of their intentions, took care to place under their own squadrons; and they thereby exposed them to all the fire of the enemy. There seems not to have been a ship lost on either side in the second engagement.

It was sufficient glory to De Ruyter, that, with a fleet much inferior to the combined squadrons of France and England, he could fight them without any notable disadvantage; and it was sufficient victory, that he could defeat the project of a descent in Zealand, which, had it taken place, had endangered, in the present circumstances, the total overthrow of the Dutch commonwealth. Prince Rupert was also suspected not to favor the king's projects for subduing Holland, or enlarging his authority at home; and from these motives he was thought not to have pressed so hard on the enemy, as his well-known valer gave reason to expect. It is indeed remarkable, that during this war, though the English with their allies much overmatched the Hollanders, they were not able to gain any advantage over them; while in the former war, though often overborne by numbers, they still exerted themselves with the greatest courage, and always acquired great renown, sometimes even signal victories. But they were disgusted at the present measures, which they deemed pernicious to their country; they were not satisfied in the justice of the quarrel; and they entertained a perpetual jealousy of their confederates, whom, had they been permitted, they would, with much more pleasure, have destroyed than even the enemy themselves.

If Prince Rupert was not favorable to the designs of the court, he enjoyed as little favor from the court, at least from the duke, who, though he could no longer command the fleet still possessed the chief authority in the admiralty. The prince complained of a total want of every thing, powder shot, provisions, beer, and even water; and he went into harbor, that he might refit his ships, and supply their numerous necessities. After some weeks, he was refitted; and he again put to sea. The hostile fleets met at the mouth of the Texel, and fought the last battle, which, during the course of so many years, these neighboring maritime powers have disputed with each other. De Ruyter, and under him Tromp, commanded the Dutch in this action, as in the two former; for the prince of Orange had reconciled these gallant rivals; and they retained nothing of their former animosity, except that emulation which made them exert themselves with more distinguished bravery against the enemies of their country. Brankert was opposed to d'Etrées, De Ruyter to Prince Rupert, Tromp to Sprague. It is to be remarked, that in all actions, these brave admirals last mentioned had still selected each other as the only antagonists worthy each other's valor; and no decisive advantage had as yet been gained by either of them. They fought in this battle, as if there were no mean between death and victory.

D'Etrées and all the French squadron, except Rear-Admiral Martel, kept at a distance; and Brankert, instead of attacking them, bore down to the assistance of De Ruyter, who was engaged in furious combat with Prince Rupert. On no occasion did the prince acquire more deserved honor: his conduct, as well as valor, shone out with signal lustre. Having disengaged his squadron from the numerous enemies with whom he was every where surrounded, and having joined Sir John Chichely, his rear-admiral, who had been separated from him, he made haste to the relief of Sprague, who was hard pressed by Tromp's squadron. The Royal Prince, in which Sprague first engaged, was so disabled, that he was obliged to hoist his flag on board the St. George; while Tromp was for a like reason obliged to quit his ship, the Golden Lion, and go on board the Comet. The fight was renewed with the utmost fury by these valorous rivals, and by the rear-admirals, their seconds. Ossory, rear-admiral to Sprague, was preparing to board Tromp, when he saw the St. George terribly torn, and in a manner disabled. Sprague was leaving her, in order to hoist his flag on board a third ship, and return to the charge, when a shot, which had passed through the St. George, took his boat, and sunk her. The admiral was drowned, to the regret of Tromp himself, who bestowed on his valor the deserved praises.

Prince Rupert found affairs in this dangerous situation, and saw most of the ships in Sprague's squadron disabled from fight. The engagement, however, was renewed, and became very close and bloody. The prince threw the enemy into disorder. To increase it, he sent among them two fireships, and at the same time made a signal to the French to bear down; which if they had done, a decisive victory must have ensued. But the prince, when he saw that they neglected his signal, and observed that most of his ships were in no condition to keep the sea long, wisely provided for their safety by making easy sail towards the English coast. The victory in this battle was as doubtful as in all the actions fought during the present war.

The turn which the affairs of the Hollanders took by land was more favorable. The prince of Orange besieged and took Naerden; and from this success gave his country reason to hope for still more prosperous enterprises. Montecuculi, who commanded the imperialists on the Upper Rhine, deceived, by the most artful conduct, the vigilance and penetration of Turenne, and making a sudden march, sat down before Bonne. The prince of Orange's conduct was no less masterly; while he eluded all the French generals, and leaving them behind him, joined his army to that of the imperialists. Bonne was taken in a few days: several other places in the electorate of Cologne fell into the hands of the allies; and the communication being thus cut off between France and the United Provinces, Lewis was obliged to recall his forces, and to abandon all his conquests with greater rapidity than he had at first made them. The taking of Maestricht was the only advantage which he gained this campaign.

A congress was opened at Cologne under the mediation of Sweden; but with small hopes of success. The demands of the two kings were such as must have reduced the Hollanders to perpetual servitude. In proportion as the affairs of the states rose, the kings sunk in their demands; but the states still sunk lower in their offers; and it was found impossible for the parties ever to agree on any conditions. After the French evacuated Holland, the congress broke up; and the seizure of Prince William of Furstenburg by the Imperialists, afforded the French and English a good pretence for leaving Cologne. The Dutch ambassadors, in their memorials, expressed all the haughtiness and disdain so natural to a free state, which had met with such unmerited ill usage.

The parliament of England was now assembled, and discovered much greater symptoms of ill humor than had appeared in the last session. They had seen for some time a negotiation of marriage carried on between the duke of York and the archduchess of Inspruc, a Catholic of the Austrian family; and they had made no opposition. But when that negotiation failed, and the duke applied to a princess of the house of Modena, then in close alliance with France, this circumstance, joined to so many other grounds of discontent, raised the commons into a flame; and they remonstrated with the greatest zeal against the intended marriage. The king told them, that their remonstrance came too late, and that the marriage was already agreed on, and even celebrated by proxy. The commons still insisted; and proceeding to the examination of the other parts of government, they voted the standing army a grievance, and declared, that they would grant no more supply unless it appeared that the Dutch were so obstinate as to refuse all reasonable conditions of peace. To cut short these disagreeable attacks, the king resolved to prorogue the parliament; and with that intention he came unexpectedly to the house of peers, and sent the usher to summon the commons. It happened that the speaker and the usher nearly met at the door of the house; but the speaker being within, some of the members suddenly shut the door, and cried, “To the chair, to the chair;” while others cried, “The black rod is at the door.” The speaker was hurried to the chair; and the following motions were instantly made: That the alliance with France is a grievance; that the evil counsellors about the king are a grievance; that the duke of Lauderdale is a grievance, and not fit to be trusted or employed. There was a general cry, “To the question, to the question;” but the usher knocking violently at the door, the speaker leaped from the chair, and the house rose in great confusion.

During the interval, Shaftesbury, whose intrigues with the malecontent party were now become notorious, was dismissed from the office of chancellor; and the great seal was given to Sir Heneage Finch, by the title of lord keeper. The test had incapacitated Clifford; and the white staff was conferred on Sir Thomas Osborne, soon after created earl of Danby, a minister of abilities, who had risen by his parliamentary talents. Clifford retired into the country, and soon after died.

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The parliament had been prorogued, in order to give the duke leisure to finish his marriage; but the king’s necessities soon obliged him again to assemble them; and by some popular acts he paved the way for the session. But all his efforts were in vain. The disgust of the commons was fixed in foundations too deep to be easily removed. They began with applications for a general fast; by which they intimated that the nation was in a very calamitous condition: they addressed against the king’s guards, which they represented as dangerous to liberty, and even as illegal, since they never had yet received the sanction of parliament: they took some steps towards establishing a new and more rigorous test against Popery: and what chiefly alarmed the court, they made an attack on the members of the cabal, to whose pernicious counsels they imputed all their present grievances. Clifford was dead: Shaftesbury had made his peace with the country party, and was become their leader: Buckingham was endeavoring to imitate Shaftesbury; but his intentions were as yet known to very few. A motion was therefore made in the house of commons for his impeachment: he desired to be heard at the bar, but expressed himself in so confused and ambiguous a manner, as gave little satisfaction. He was required to answer precisely to certain queries which they proposed to him. These regarded all the articles of misconduct above mentioned; and among the rest, the following query seems remarkable: “By whose advice was the army brought up to overawe the debates and resolutions of the house of commons?” This shows to what length the suspicions of the house were at that time carried. Buckingham, in all his answers, endeavored to exculpate himself, and to load Arlington. He succeeded not in the former intention: the commons voted an address for his removal. But Arlington, who was on many accounts obnoxious to the house, was attacked. Articles were drawn up against him; though the impeachment was never prosecuted.

The king plainly saw, that he could expect no supply from the commons for carrying on a war so odious to them. He resolved, therefore, to make a separate peace with the Dutch on the terms which they had proposed through the channel of the Spanish ambassador. With a cordiality which, in the present disposition on both sides, was probably but affected, but which was obliging, he asked advice of the parliament. The parliament unanimously concurred, both in thanks for this gracious condescension, and in their advice for peace. Peace was accordingly concluded. The honor of the flag was yielded by the Dutch in the most extensive terms: a regulation of trade was agreed to: all possessions were restored to the same condition as before the war: the English planters in Surinam were allowed to remove at pleasure: and the states agreed to pay to the king the sum of eight hundred thousand patacoons, near three hundred thousand pounds. Four days after the parliament was prorogued, the peace was proclaimed in London, to the great joy of the people. Spain had declared, that she could no longer remain neuter, if hostilities were continued against Holland; and a sensible decay of trade was foreseen, in case a rupture should ensue with that kingdom. The prospect of this loss contributed very much to increase the national aversion to the present war, and to enliven the joy for its conclusion.

There was in the French service a great body of English, to the number of ten thousand men, who had acquired honor in every action, and had greatly contributed to the successes of Lewis. These troops, Charles said, he was bound by treaty not to recall; but he obliged himself to the states by a secret article not to allow them to be recruited. His partiality to France prevented a strict execution of this engagement.

CHAPTER LXVI

CHARLES II.

1674

IF we consider the projects of the famous cabal, it will appear hard to determine, whether the end which those ministers pursued were more blamable and pernicious, or the means by which they were to effect it more impolitic and imprudent. Though they might talk only of recovering or fixing the king’s authority, their intention could be no other than that of making him absolute; since it was not possible to regain or maintain, in opposition to the people, any of those powers of the crown abolished by late law or custom, without subduing the people, and rendering the royal prerogative entirely uncontrollable. Against such a scheme they might foresee that every part of the nation would declare themselves; not only the old parliamentary faction, which, though they kept not in a body, were still numerous, but even the greatest royalists, who were indeed attached to monarchy, but desired to see it limited and restrained by law. It had appeared, that the present parliament, though elected during the greatest prevalence of the royal party, was yet tenacious of popular privileges, and retained a considerable jealousy of the crown, even before they had received any just ground of suspicion. The guards, therefore, together with a small army, new levied and undisciplined, and composed, too, of Englishmen, were almost the only domestic resources which the king could depend on in the prosecution of these dangerous counsels.

The assistance of the French king was no doubt deemed by the cabal a considerable support in the schemes which they were forming; but it is not easily conceived they could imagine themselves capable of directing and employing an associate of so domineering a character. They ought justly to have suspected, that it would be the sole intention of Lewis, as it evidently was his interest, to raise incurable jealousies between the king and his people; and that he saw how much a steady, uniform government in this island, whether free or absolute, would form invincible barriers to his ambition. Should his assistance be demanded, if he sent a small supply, it would serve only to enrage the people, and render the breach altogether irreparable; if he furnished a great force, sufficient to subdue the nation, there was little reason to trust his generosity with regard to the use which he would make of this advantage.

In all its other parts, the plan of the cabal, it must be confessed, appears equally absurd and incongruous. If the war with Holland were attended with great success, and involved the subjection of the republic, such an accession of force must fall to Lewis, not to Charles: and what hopes afterwards of resisting by the greatest unanimity so mighty a monarch? How dangerous, or rather how ruinous, to depend upon his assistance against domestic discontents! If the Dutch, by their own vigor, and the assistance of allies, were able to defend themselves, and could bring the war to an equality, the French arms would be so employed abroad, that no considerable reënforcement could thence be expected to second the king's enterprises in England. And might not the project of overawing or subduing the people be esteemed of itself sufficiently odious, without the aggravation of sacrificing that state which they regarded as their best ally, and with which, on many accounts, they were desirous of maintaining the greatest concord and strictest confederacy? Whatever views likewise might be entertained of promoting by these measures the Catholic religion, they could only tend to render all the other schemes abortive, and make them fall with inevitable ruin upon the projectors. The Catholic religion, indeed, where it is established, is better fitted than the Protestant for supporting an absolute monarchy; but would any man have bought of it as the means of acquiring arbitrary authority in England, where it was more detested than even slavery itself?

It must be allowed that the difficulties, and even inconsistencies, attending the schemes of the cabal, are so numerous and obvious, that one feels at first an inclination to deny the reality of those schemes, and to suppose them entirely the chimeras of calumny and faction. But the utter impossibility of accounting, by any other hypothesis, for those strange measures embraced by the court, as well as for the numerous circumstances which accompanied them, obliges us to acknowledge, (though there remains no direct evidence of it, [1]) that a formal plan was laid for changing the religion, and subverting the constitution of England; and that the king and the ministry were in reality conspirators against the people. What is most probable in human affairs, is not always true and a very minute circumstance overlooked in our speculations, serves often to explain events which may seem the most surprising and unaccountable.

* Since the publication of this History, the author has had occasion to see the most direct and positive evidence of this conspiracy. From the urbanity and candor of the principal of the Scotch college at Paris, he was admitted to peruse James II.'s Memoirs, kept there. They amount to several volumes of small folio, all writ with that prince's own hand, and comprehending the remarkable incidents of his life, from his early youth till near the time of his death.

His account of the French alliance is as follows: The intention of the king and duke was chiefly to change the religion of England, which they deemed an easy undertaking,

because of the great propensity, as they imagined, of the cavaliers and church party to Popery: the treaty with Lewis was concluded at Versailles in the end of 1669, or beginning of 1670, by Lord Arundel of Wardour, whom no historian mentions as having had any hand in these transactions. The purport of it was, that Lewis was to give Charles two hundred thousand pounds a year in quarterly payments, in order to enable him to settle the Catholic religion in England; and he was also to supply him with an army of six thousand men, in case of any insurrection. When that work was finished, England was to join with France in making war upon Holland. In case of success, Lewis was to have the inland provinces; the prince of Orange, Holland in sovereignty; and Charles, Sluice, the Brille, Walkeren, with the rest of the seaports as far as Mazeland Sluice. The king's project was first to effect the change of religion in England; but the duchess of Orleans, in the interview at Dover, persuaded him to begin with the Dutch war, contrary to the remonstrances of the duke of York, who insisted that Lewis, after serving his own purpose, would no longer trouble himself about England. The duke makes no mention of any design to render the king absolute; but that was no doubt implied in the other project, which was to be effected entirely by royal authority. The king was so zealous a Papist, that he wept for joy when he saw the prospect of reuniting his kingdom to the Catholic church.

Sir John Dalrymple has since published some other curious particulars with regard to this treaty. We find that it was concerted and signed with the privity alone of four Popish counsellors of the king's; Arlington, Arundel, Clifford, and Sir Richard-Bealing. The secret was kept from Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale. In order to engage them to take part in it, a very refined and a very mean artifice was fallen upon by the king. After the secret conclusion and signature of the treaty, the king pretended to these three ministers that for smaller matters, [1] and the ordinary occurrences of life nor had he application enough to carry his view to distant consequences, or to digest and adjust any plan of political operations.

* Duke of Buckingham’s character of King Charles II.

As he scarcely ever thought twice on any one subject, every appearance of advantage was apt to seduce him; and when he found his way obstructed by unlooked-for difficulties, he readily turned aside into the first path, where he expected more to gratify the natural indolence of his disposition. To this versatility or pliancy of genius he himself was inclined to trust; and he thought that, after trying an experiment for enlarging his authority, and altering the national religion, he could easily, if it failed, return into the ordinary channel of government. But the suspicions of the people, though they burst not forth at once, were by this attempt rendered altogether incurable; and the more they reflected on the circumstances attending it, the more resentment and jealousy were they apt to entertain. They observed, that the king never had any favorite; that he was never governed by his ministers, scarcely even by his mistresses; and that he himself was the chief spring of all public counsels. Whatever appearance, therefore, of a change might be assumed, they still suspected that the same project was secretly in agitation; and they deemed no precaution too great to secure them against the pernicious consequences of such measures.

He wished to have a treaty and alliance with France for mutual supports and for a Dutch war; and when various pretended obstacles and difficulties were surmounted, a sham treaty was concluded with their consent and approbation, containing every article of the former real treaty, except that of the king’s change of religion. However, there was virtually involved, even in this treaty, the assuming of absolute government in England; for the support of French troops, and a war with Holland, so contrary to the interests and inclinations of his people, could mean nothing else. One cannot sufficiently admire the absolute want of common sense which appears throughout the whole of this criminal transaction. For if Popery was so much the object of national horror, that even the king’s three ministers, Buckingham, Ashley, and Lauderdale, and such profligate ones, too, either would not or durst not receive it, what hopes could he entertain of forcing the nation into that communion? Considering the state of the kingdom, full of veteran and zealous soldiers, bred during the civil wars, it is probable that he had not kept the crown two months after a declaration so wild and extravagant. This was probably the reason why the king of France and the French minister always dissuaded him from taking off the mask, till the successes of the Dutch war should render that measure prudent and practicable.

The king, sensible of this jealousy, was inclined thenceforth not to trust his people, of whom he had even before entertained a great diffidence; and though obliged to make a separate peace, he still kept up connections with the French monarch. He apologized for deserting his ally, by representing to him all the real, undissembled difficulties under which he labored; and Lewis, with the greatest complaisance and good humor, admitted the validity of his excuses. The duke likewise, conscious that his principles and conduct had rendered him still more obnoxious to the people, maintained on his own account a separate correspondence with the French court, and entered into particular connections with Lewis, which these princes dignified with the name of friendship. The duke had only in view to secure his succession, and favor the Catholics, and it must be acknowledged to his praise, that though his schemes were in some particulars dangerous to the people, they gave the king no just ground of jealousy. A dutiful subject, and an affectionate brother, he knew no other rule of conduct than obedience; and the same unlimited submission which afterwards, when king, he exacted of his people, he was ever willing, before he ascended the throne, to pay to his sovereign.

As the king was at peace with all the world, and almost the only prince in Europe placed in that agreeable situation, he thought proper to offer his mediation to the contending powers, in order to compose their differences. France, willing to negotiate under so favorable a mediator, readily accepted of Charles’s offer; but it was apprehended that, for a like reason, the allies would be inclined to refuse it. In order to give a sanction to his new measures, the king invited Temple from his retreat, and appointed him ambassador to the states. That wise minister, reflecting on the unhappy issue of his former undertakings, and the fatal turn of counsels which had occasioned it, resolved, before he embarked anew, to acquaint himself, as far as possible, with the real intentions of the king, in those popular measures which he seemed again to have adopted. After blaming the dangerous schemes of the cabal, which Charles was desirous to excuse, he told his majesty very plainly, that he would find it extremely difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to introduce into England the same system of government and religion which was established in France: that the universal bent of the nation was against both; and it required ages to change the genius and sentiments of a people: that many, who were at bottom indifferent in matters of religion, would yet oppose all alterations on that head because they considered, that nothing but force of arms could subdue the reluctance of the people against Popery; after which, they knew there could be no security for civil liberty: that in France, every circumstance had long been adjusted to that system of government, and tended to its establishment and support: that the commonalty, being poor and dispirited, were of no account; the nobility, engaged by the prospect or possession of numerous offices, civil and military, were entirely attached to the court; the ecclesiastics, retained by like motives, added the sanction of religion to the principles of civil policy: that in England, a great part of the landed property belonged either to the yeomanry or middling gentry; the king had few offices to bestow; and could not himself even subsist, much less maintain an army, except by the voluntary supplies of his parliament: that if he had an army on foot, yet, if composed of Englishmen, they would never be prevailed on to promote ends which the people so much feared and hated: that the Roman Catholics in England were not the hundredth part of the nation, and in Scotland not the two hundredth; and it seemed against all common sense to hope, by one part, to govern ninety-nine, who were of contrary sentiments and dispositions: and that foreign troops, if few, would tend only to inflame hatred and discontent; and how to raise and bring over at once, or to maintain many, it was very difficult to imagine. To these reasonings Temple added the authority of Gourville, a Frenchman, for whom he knew the king had entertained a great esteem. “A king of England,” said Gourville, “who will be the man of his people, is the greatest king in the world; but if he will be any thing more, he is nothing at all.” The king heard at first this discourse with some impatience; but being a dexterous dissembler, he seemed moved at last, and laying his hand on Temple’s, said, with an appearing cordiality, “And I will be the man of my people.”

Temple, when he went abroad, soon found that the scheme of mediating a peace was likely to prove abortive. The allies, besides their jealousy of the king’s mediation, expressed a great ardor for the continuance of war. Holland had stipulated with Spain never to come to an accommodation, till all things in Flanders were restored to the condition in which they had been left by the Pyrenean treaty. The emperor had high pretensions in Alsace; and as the greater part of the empire joined in the alliance, it was hoped that France, so much overmatched in force, would soon be obliged to submit to the terms demanded of her. The Dutch, indeed, oppressed by heavy taxes, as well as checked in their commerce, were desirous of peace; and had few or no claims of their own to retard it: but they could not in gratitude, or even in good policy, abandon allies to whose protection they had so lately been indebted for their safety. The prince of Orange likewise, who had great influence in their councils, was all on fire for military fame, and was well pleased to be at the head of armies, from which such mighty successes were expected. Under various pretences, he eluded, during the whole campaign, the meeting with Temple; and after the troops were sent into winter quarters, he told that minister, in his first audience, that till greater impression were made on France, reasonable terms could not be hoped for; and it were therefore vain to negotiate.

The success of the campaign had not answered expectation. The prince of Orange, with a superior army, was opposed in Flanders to the prince of Condé, and had hoped to penetrate into France by that quarter, where the frontier was then very feeble. After long endeavoring, though in vain, to bring Condé to a battle, he rashly exposed at Seneffe a wing of his army; and that active prince failed not at once to see and to seize the advantage. But this imprudence of the prince of Orange was amply compensated by his behavior in that obstinate and bloody action which ensued. He rallied his dismayed troops; he led them to the charge; he pushed the veteran and martial troops of France; and he obliged the prince of Condé, notwithstanding his age and character, to exert greater efforts, and to risk his person more, than in any action where, even during the heat of youth, he had ever commanded. After sunset, the action was continued by the light of the moon; and it was darkness at last, not the weariness of the combatants, which put an end to the contest, and left the victory undecided. “The prince of Orange,” said Condé, with candor and generosity, “has acted in every thing like an old captain, except venturing his life too like a young soldier.” Oudenarde was afterwards invested by the prince of Orange but he was obliged by the imperial and Spanish generals to raise the siege on the approach of the enemy. He afterwards besieged and took Grave; and at the beginning of winter the allied armies broke up, with great discontents and complaints on all sides.

The allies were not more successful in other places. Lewis in a few weeks reconquered Franche Gompte. In Alsace, Turenne displayed, against a much superior enemy, all that military skill which had long rendered him the most renowned captain of his age and nation. By a sudden and forced march, he attacked and beat at Sintzheim the duke of Lorraine and Caprara, general of the imperialists. Seventy thousand Germans poured into Alsace, and took up their quarters in that province. Turenne, who had retired into Lorraine, returned unexpectedly upon them. He attacked and defeated a body of the enemy at Mulhausen. He chased from Colmar the elector of Brandenburgh, who commanded the German troops* [2missing period] He gained a new advantage at Turkheim. And having dislodged all the allies, he obliged them to repass the Rhine, full of shame for their multiplied defeats, and still more, of anger and complaints against each other.

In England, all these events were considered by the people with great anxiety and concern; though the king and his ministers affected great indifference with regard to them. Considerable alterations were about this time made in the English ministry. Buckingham was dismissed, who had long, by his wit and entertaining humor, possessed the king's favor. Arlington, now chamberlain, and Danby, the treasurer, possessed chiefly the king's confidence. Great hatred and jealousy took place between these ministers; and public affairs were somewhat disturbed by their quarrels. But Danby daily gained ground with his master; and Arlington declined in the same proportion. Danby was a frugal minister; and by his application and industry he brought the revenue into tolerable order. He endeavored so to conduct himself as to give offence to no party; and the consequence was, that he was able entirely to please none. He was a declared enemy to the French alliance; but never possessed authority enough to overcome the prepossessions which the king and the duke retained towards it* [2missing period] It must be ascribed to the prevalence of that interest, aided by money remitted from Paris, that the parliament was assembled so late this year, lest they should attempt to engage the king in measures against France during the ensuing campaign. They met not till the approach of summer. [1]

* This year, on the twenty-fifth of March, died Henry Cromwell, second son of the protector, in the forty-seventh year of his age. He had lived unmolested in a private station, ever since the

king’s restoration, which he rather favored than opposed.

1675

Every step taken by the commons discovered that ill humor and jealousy to which the late open measures of the king, and his present secret attachments, gave but too just foundation. They drew up a new bill against Popery, and resolved to insert in it many severe clauses for the detection and prosecution of priests: they presented addresses a second time against Lauderdale; and when the king’s answer was not satisfactory, they seemed still determined to persevere in their applications: an accusation was moved against Danby; but upon examining the several articles, it was not found to contain any just reasons of a prosecution, and was therefore dropped: they applied to the king for recalling his troops from the French service; and as he only promised that they should not be recruited, they appeared to be much dissatisfied with the answer: a bill was brought in, making it treason to levy money without authority of parliament; another vacating the seats of such members as accepted of offices; another to secure the personal liberty of the subject, and to prevent sending any person prisoner beyond sea.

That the court party might not be idle during these attacks, a bill for a new test was introduced into the house of peers by the earl of Lindesey. All members of either house, and all who possessed any office, were by this bill required to swear mat it was not lawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take arms against the king; that they abhorred the traitorous position of taking arms by his authority against his person, or against those who were commissioned by him; and that they will not at any time endeavor the alteration of the Protestant religion, or of the established government either in church or state.

Great opposition was made to this bill, as might be expected from the present disposition of the nation. During seventeen days, the debates were carried on with much zeal; and all the reason and learning of both parties were displayed on the occasion. The question, indeed, with regard to resistance, was a point which entered into the controversies of the old parties, cavalier and roundhead; as it made an essential part of the present disputes between court and country. Few neuters were found in the nation: but among such as could maintain a calm indifference, there prevailed sentiments wide of those which were adopted by either party. Such persons thought, that all general speculative declarations of the legislature, either for or against resistance, were equally impolitic and could serve to no other purpose than to signalize in their turn the triumph of one faction over another: that the simplicity retained in the ancient laws of England, as well as in the laws of every other country, ought still to be preserved, and was best calculated to prevent the extremes on either side: that the absolute exclusion of resistance, in all possible cases, was founded on false principles; its express admission might be attended with dangerous consequences; and there was no necessity for exposing the public to either inconvenience: that if a choice must necessarily be made in the case, the preference of utility to truth in public institutions was apparent; nor could the supposition of resistance, beforehand and in general terms, be safely admitted in any government: that even in mixed monarchies, where that supposition seemed most requisite, it was yet entirely superfluous; since no man, on the approach of extraordinary necessity, could be at a loss, though not directed by legal declarations, to find the proper remedy: that even those who might at a distance, and by scholastic reasoning, exclude all resistance, would yet hearken to the voice of nature, when evident ruin, both to themselves and to the public, must attend a strict adherence to their pretended principles: that the question, as it ought thus to be entirely excluded from all determinations of the legislature, was, even among private reasoners, somewhat frivolous, and little better than a dispute of words: that the one party could not pretend that resistance ought ever to become a familiar practice; the other would surely have recourse to it in great extremities; and thus the difference could only turn on the degrees of danger or oppression which would warrant this irregular remedy; a difference which, in a general question, it was impossible by any language precisely to fix or determine.

There were many other absurdities in this test, particularly that of binding men by oath not to alter the government either in church or state; since all human institutions are liable to abuse, and require continual amendments, which are in reality so many alterations. It is not indeed possible to make a law which does not innovate, more or less, in the government. These difficulties produced such obstructions to the bill, that it was carried only by two voices in the house of peers. All the Popish lords, headed by the earl cf Bristol, voted against it. It was sent down to the house of commons, where it was likely to undergo a scrutiny still more severe.

But a quarrel which ensued between the two houses, prevented the passing of every bill projected during the present session. One Dr. Shirley, being cast in a lawsuit before chancery against Sir John Fag, a member of the house of commons, preferred a petition of appeal to the house of peers. The lords received it, and summoned Fag to appear before them. He complained to the lower house, who espoused his cause. They not only maintained, that no member of their house could be summoned before the peers; they also asserted, that the upper house could receive no appeals from any court of equity; a pretension which extremely retrenched the jurisdiction of the peers, and which was contrary to the practice that had prevailed during this whole century. The commons send Shirley to prison; the lords assert their powers. Conferences are tried; but no accommodation ensues. Four lawyers are sent to the Tower by the commons, for transgressing the orders of the house, and pleading in this cause before the peers. The peers denominate this arbitrary commitment a breach of the Great Charter, and order the lieutenant of the Tower to release the prisoners: he declines obedience: they apply to the king, and desire him to punish the lieutenant for his contempt. The king summons both houses; exhorts them to unanimity; and informs them, that the present quarrel had arisen from the contrivance of his and their enemies, who expected by that means to force a dissolution of the parliament. His advice has no effect: the commons continue as violent as ever; and the king, finding that no business could be finished, at last prorogued the parliament.

When the parliament was again assembled, there appeared not in any respect a change in the dispositions of either house. The king desired supplies, as well for the building of ships, as for taking off anticipations which lay upon his revenue, He even confessed, that he had not been altogether so frugal as he might have been, and as he resolved to be for the future; though he asserted that, to his great satisfaction, he had found his expenses by no means so exorbitant as some had represented them. The commons took into consideration the subject of supply. They voted three hundred thousand pounds for the building of ships; but they appropriated the sum by very strict clauses. They passed a resolution not to grant any supply for taking off the anticipations of the revenue. [1] This vote was carried in a full house, by a majority of four only: so nearly were the parties balanced. The quarrel was revived, to which Dr. Shirley's cause had given occasion. The proceedings of the commons discovered the same violence as during the last session. A motion was made in the house of peers, but rejected, for addressing the king to dissolve the present parliament. The king contented himself with proroguing them to a very long term. Whether these quarrels between the houses arose from contrivance or accident, was not certainly known. Each party might, according to their different views, esteem themselves either gainers or losers by them. The court might desire to obstruct all attacks from the commons, by giving them other employment. The country party might desire the dissolution of a parliament, which, notwithstanding all disgusts, still contained too many royalists ever to serve all the purposes of the malecontents.

* Several historians have affirmed, that the commons found this session, upon inquiry, that the king's revenue was one million six hundred thousand pounds a year, and that the necessary expense was out seven hundred thousand pounds; and have appealed to the journals for a proof. But there is not the least appearance of this in the journals; and the fact is impossible.

Soon after the prorogation, there passed an incident, which in itself is trivial, but tends strongly to mark the genius of the English government, and of Charles's administration during this period. The liberty of the constitution, and the variety as well as violence of the parties, had begotten a propensity for political conversation; and as the coffee-houses in particular were the scenes where the conduct of the king and the ministry was canvassed with great freedom, a proclamation was issued to suppress these places of rendezvous. Such an act of power, during former reigns, would have been grounded entirely on the prerogative; and before the accession of the house of Stuart, no scruple would have been entertained with regard to that exercise of authority. But Charles, finding doubts to arise upon his proclamation, had recourse to the judges, who supplied him with a chicane, and that too a frivolous one, by which he might justify his proceedings. The law which settled the excise enacted, that licenses for retailing liquors might be refused to such as could not find security for payment of the duties. But coffee was not a liquor subjected to excise; and even this power of refusing licenses was very limited, and could not reasonably be extended beyond the intention of the act. The king, therefore, observing the people to be much dissatisfied, yielded to a petition of the coffee-men, who promised for the future to restrain all seditious discourse in their houses; and the proclamation was recalled.

This campaign proved more fortunate to the confederates than any other during the whole war. The French took the field in Flanders with a numerous army; and Lewis himself served as a volunteer under the prince of Condé. But notwithstanding his great preparations, he could gain no advantages but the taking of Huy and Limbourg, places of small consequence. The prince of Orange with a considerable army opposed him in all his motions; and neither side was willing, without a visible advantage, to hazard a general action, which might be attended either with the entire loss of Flanders on the one hand, or the invasion of France on the other. Lewis, tired of so inactive a campaign, returned to Versailles; and the whole summer passed in the Low Countries without any memorable event.

Turenne commanded on the Upper Rhine, in opposition to his great rival, Montecuculi, general of the imperialists. The object of the latter was to pass the Rhine, to penetrate into Alsace, Lorraine, or Burgundy, and to fix his quarters in these provinces: the aim of the former was to guard the French frontiers, and to disappoint all the schemes of his enemy. The most consummate skill was displayed on both sides; and if any superiority appeared in Turenne's conduct, it was chiefly ascribed to his greater vigor of body, by which he was enabled to inspect all the posts in person, and could on the spot take the justest measures for the execution of his designs. By posting himself on the German side of the Rhine, he not only kept Montecuculi from passing that river: he had also laid his plan in so masterly a manner, that in a few days he must have obliged the Germans to decamp, and have gained a considerable advantage over them; when a period was put to his life by a random shot, which struck him on the breast as he was taking a view of the enemy. The consternation of his army was inexpressible. The French troops, who a moment before were assured of victory, now considered themselves as entirely vanquished; and the Germans, who would have been glad to compound for a safe retreat, expected no less than the total destruction of their enemy. But De Lorges, nephew to Turenne, succeeded him in the command, and possessed a great share of the genius and capacity of his predecessor. By his skilful operations, the French were enabled to repass the Rhine, without considerable loss; and this retreat was deemed equally glorious with the greatest victory. The valor of the English troops, who were placed in the rear, greatly contributed to save the French army. They had been seized with the same passion as the native troops of France for their brave general, and fought with ardor to revenge his death on the Germans. The duke of Marlborough, then Captain Churchill, here learned the rudiments of that art which he afterwards practised with such fatal success against France.

The prince of Condé left the army in Flanders under the command of Luxembourg; and carrying with him a considerable reënforcement, succeeded to Turenne’s command. He defended Alsace from the Germans, who had passed the Rhine, and invaded that province. He obliged them first to raise the siege of Hagenau, then that of Saberne. He eluded all their attempts to bring him to a battle. And having dexterously prevented them from establishing themselves in Alsace, he forced them, notwithstanding their superiority of numbers, to repass the Rhine, and to take up winter quarters in their own country.

After the death of Turenne, a detachment of the German army was sent to the siege of Treves; an enterprise in which the imperialists, the Spaniards, the palatine, the duke of Lorraine, and many other princes, passionately concurred. The project was well concerted, and executed with vigor. Mareschal Crequi, on the other hand, collected an army, and advanced with a view of forcing the Germans to raise the siege. They left a detachment to guard their lines, and, under the command of the dukes of Zell and Osnaburgh, marched in quest of the enemy. At Consarbric they fell unexpectedly, and with superior numbers, on Crequi, and put him to rout. He escaped with four attendants only; and throwing himself into Treves, resolved, by a vigorous defence, to make atonement for his former error or misfortune. The garrison was brave, but not abandoned to that total despair by which their governor was actuated. They mutinied against his obstinacy; capitulated for themselves; and because he refused to sign the capitulation, they delivered him a prisoner into the hands of the enemy.

It is remarkable, that this defeat, given to Crequi, is almost the only one which the French received at land, from Rocroi to Blenheim, during the course of above sixty years; and these, too, full of bloody wars against potent and martial enemies: their victories almost equal the number of years during that period. Such was the vigor and good conduct of that monarchy! and such, too, were the resources and refined policy of the other European nations, by which they were enabled to repair their losses, and still to confine that mighty power nearly within its ancient limits! A fifth part of these victories would have sufficed, in another period, to have given to France the empire of Europe.

The Swedes had been engaged, by the payment of large subsidies, to take part with Lewis, and invade the territories of the elector of Brandenburgh in Pomerania. That elector joined by some imperialists from Silesia, fell upon them with bravery and success. He soon obliged them to evacuate his part of that country, and he pursued them into their own. He had an interview with the king of Denmark, who had now joined the confederates, and resolved to declare war against Sweden. These princes concerted measures for pushing the victory.

To all these misfortunes against foreign enemies were added some domestic insurrections of the common people in Guienne and Brittany. Though soon suppressed, they divided the force and attention of Lewis. The only advantage gained by the French was at sea. Messina in Sicily had revolted; and a fleet under the duke de Vivonne was despatched to support the rebels. The Dutch had sent a squadron to assist the Spaniards. A battle ensued, where De Ruyter was killed. This event alone was thought equivalent to a victory.

The French, who twelve years before had scarcely a ship of war in any of their harbors, had raised themselves, by means of perseverance and policy, to be, in their present force, though not in their resources, the first maritime power in Europe. The Dutch, while in alliance with them against England, had supplied them with several vessels, and had taught them the rudiments of the difficult art of ship-building. The English next, when in alliance with them against Holland, instructed them in the method of fighting their ships, and of preserving order in naval engagements. Lewis availed him self of every opportunity to aggrandize his people, while Charles, sunk in indolence and pleasure, neglected all the noble arts of government; or if at any time he roused himself from his lethargy, that industry, by reason of the unhappy projects which he embraced, was often more pernicious to the public than his inactivity itself. He was as anxious to promote the naval power of France as if the safety of his crown had depended on it; and many of the plans executed in that kingdom were first, it is said, [1] digested and corrected by him.

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* Welwood, Burnet, Coke.

1676

The successes of the allies had been considerable the last campaign; but the Spaniards and imperialists well knew that France was not yet sufficiently broken, nor willing to submit to the terms which they resolved to impose upon her. Though they could not refuse the king's mediation, and Nimeguen, after many difficulties, was at last fixed on as the place of congress, yet, under one pretence or other, they still delayed sending their ambassadors, and no progress was made in the negotiation. Lord Berkeley, Sir William Temple, and Sir Lionel Jenkins were the English ministers at Nimeguen. The Dutch, who were impatient for peace, soon appeared: Lewis, who hoped to divide the allies, and who knew that he himself could neither be seduced nor forced into a disadvantageous peace, sent ambassadors: the Swedes, who hoped to recover by treaty what they had lost by arms, were also forward to negotiate. But as these powers could not proceed of themselves to settle terms, the congress, hitherto, served merely as an amusement to the public.

It was by the events of the campaign, not the conferences among the negotiators, that the articles of peace were to be determined. The Spanish towns, ill fortified and worse defended, made but a feeble resistance to Lewis; who, by laying up magazines during the winter, was able to take the field early in the spring, before the forage could be found in the open country. In the month of April, he laid siege to Condé, and took it by storm in four days. Having sent the duke of Orleans to besiege Bouchaine, a small but important fortress, he posted himself so advantageously with his main army, as to hinder the confederates from relieving it, or fighting without disadvantage. The prince of Orange, in spite of the difficulties of the season and the want of provisions, came in sight of the French army; but his industry served to no other purpose than to render him spectator of the surrender of Bouchaine. Both armies stood in awe of each other, and were unwilling to hazard an action which might be attended with the most important consequences. Lewis, though he wanted not personal courage, was little enterprising in the field; and being resolved this campaign to rest contented with the advantages which he had so early obtained, he thought proper to intrust his army to Mareschal Schomberg, and retired himself to Versailles. After his departure, the prince of Orange laid siege to Maestricht; but meeting with an obstinate resistance, he was obliged, on the approach of Schomberg, who in the mean time had taken Aire, to raise the siege. He was incapable of yielding to adversity, or bending under misfortunes: but he began to foresee that, by the negligence and errors of his allies, the war in Flanders must necessarily have a very unfortunate issue.

On the Upper Rhine, Philipsbourg was taken by the imperialists. In Pomerania, the Swedes were so unsuccessful against the Danes and Brandenburghers, that they seemed to be losing apace all those possessions which, with so much valor and good fortune, they had acquired in Germany.

About the beginning of winter, the congress of Nimeguen was pretty full; and the plenipotentiaries of the emperor and Spain, two powers strictly conjoined by blood and alliance, at last appeared. The Dutch had threatened, if they absented themselves any longer, to proceed to a separate treaty with France. In the conferences and negotiations, the dispositions of the parties became every day more apparent.

1677

The Hollanders, loaded with debts and harassed with taxes, were desirous of putting an end to a war, in which, besides the disadvantages attending all leagues, the weakness of the Spaniards, the divisions and delays of the Germans, prognosticated nothing but disgrace and misfortune. Their commerce languished; and, what gave them still greater anxiety, the commerce of England, by reason of her neutrality, flourished extremely; and they were apprehensive, lest advantages, once lost, would never thoroughly be regained. They had themselves no further motive for continuing the war, than to secure a good frontier to Flanders; but gratitude to their allies still engaged them to try, whether another campaign might procure a peace which would give general satisfaction. The prince of Orange, urged by motives of honor, of ambition, and of animosity against France, endeavored to keep them steady to this resolution.

The Spaniards, not to mention the other incurable weaknesses into which their monarchy was fallen, were distracted with domestic dissensions between the parties of the queen regent and Don John, natural brother to their young sovereign. Though unable of themselves to defend Flanders, they were resolute not to conclude a peace which would leave it exposed to every assault or inroad; and while they made the most magnificent promises to the states, their real trust was in the protection of England. They saw that, if that small but important territory were once subdued by France, the

Hollanders, exposed to so terrible a power, would fall into dependence, and would endeavor, by submissions, to ward off that destruction to which a war in the heart of their state must necessarily expose them. They believed that Lewis, sensible how much greater advantages he might reap from the alliance than from the subjection of the republic, which must scatter its people and depress its commerce, would be satisfied with very moderate conditions, and would turn his enterprises against his other neighbors. They thought it impossible but the people and parliament of England, foreseeing these obvious consequences, must at last force the king to take part in the affairs of the continent, in which their interests were so deeply concerned. And they trusted, that even the king himself, on the approach of so great a danger, must open his eyes, and sacrifice his prejudices in favor of France to the safety of his own dominions.

But Charles here found himself entangled in such opposite motives and engagements, as he had not resolution enough to break, or patience to unravel. On the one hand, he always regarded his alliance with France as a sure resource in case of any commotions among his own subjects; and whatever schemes he might still retain for enlarging his authority, or altering the established religion, it was from that quarter alone he could expect assistance. He had actually in secret sold his neutrality to France, and he received remittances of a million of livres a year, which was afterwards increased to two millions; a considerable supply in the present embarrassed state of his revenue. And he dreaded lest the parliament should treat him as they had formerly done his father; and after they had engaged him in a war on the continent, should take advantage of his necessities, and make him purchase supplies by sacrificing his prerogative, and abandoning his ministers.

On the other hand, the cries of his people and parliament, seconded by Danby, Arlington, and most of his ministers, incited him to take part with the allies, and to correct the unequal balance of power in Europe. He might apprehend danger from opposing such earnest desires: he might hope for large supplies if he concurred with them: and however inglorious and indolent his disposition, the renown of acting as arbiter of Europe would probably at intervals rouse him from his lethargy, and move him to support the high character with which he stood invested.

It is worthy of observation, that, during this period, the king was, by every one, abroad and at home, by France and by the allies, allowed to be the undisputed arbiter of Europe; and no terms of peace which he would have prescribed, could have been refused by either party. Though France afterwards found means to resist the same alliance, joined with England, yet was she then obliged to make such violent efforts as quite exhausted her; and it was the utmost necessity which pushed her to find resources far surpassing her own expectations. Charles was sensible, that, so long as the war continued abroad, he should never enjoy ease at home, from the impatience and importunity of his subjects; yet could he not resolve to impose a peace by openly joining himself with either party. Terms advantageous to the allies must lose him the friendship of France: the contrary would enrage his parliament. Between these views, he perpetually fluctuated; and from his conduct, it is observable, that a careless, remiss disposition, agitated by opposite motives, is capable of as great inconsistencies as are incident even to the greatest imbecility and folly.

The parliament was assembled; and the king made them a plausible speech, in which he warned them against all differences among themselves; expressed a resolution to do his part for bringing their consultations to a happy issue; and offered his consent to any laws for the further security of their religion, liberty, and property. He then told them of the decayed condition of the navy, and asked money for repairing it. He informed them, that part of his revenue, the additional excise, was soon to expire; and he added these words; "You may at any time see the yearly established expense of the government, by which it will appear, that the constant and unavoidable charge being paid, there will remain no overplus towards answering those contingencies which may happen in all kingdoms, and which have been a considerable burden on me this last year."

Before the parliament entered upon business, they were stopped by a doubt concerning the legality of their meeting It had been enacted, by an old law of Edward III., "That parliament should be held once every year, or oftener, if need be." The last prorogation had been longer than a year; and being supposed on that account illegal, it was pretended to be equivalent to a dissolution. The consequence seems by no means just; and besides, a later act, that which repealed the triennial law, had determined, that it was necessary to hold parliaments only once in three years. Such weight, however was put on this cavil, that Buckingham, Shaftesbury, Salisbury, and Wharton, insisted strenuously in the house of peers on the invalidity of the parliament, and the nullity of all its future acts. For such dangerous positions they were sent to the Tower, there to remain during the pleasure of his majesty and the house. Buckingham, Salisbury, and Wharton made submissions, and were soon after released. But Shaftesbury, more obstinate in his temper, and desirous of distinguishing himself by his adherence to liberty, sought the remedy of law; and being rejected by the judges, he was at last, after a twelvemonth’s imprisonment, obliged to make the same submissions; upon which he was also released.

The commons at first seemed to proceed with temper. They granted the sum of five hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds, for building thirty ships; though they strictly appropriated the money to that service. Estimates were given in of the expense; but it was afterwards found that they fell short near one hundred thousand pounds. They also voted, agreeably to the king’s request, the continuance of the additional excise for three years. This excise had been granted for nine years in 1668. Every thing seemed to promise a peaceable and an easy session.

But the parliament was roused from this tranquillity by the news received from abroad. The French king had taken the field in the middle of February, and laid siege to Valenciennes, which he carried in a few days by storm. He next invested both Cambray and St. Omers. The prince of Orange, alarmed with his progress, hastily assembled an army, and marched to the relief of St. Omers. He was encountered by the French, under the duke of Orleans and Mareschal Luxembourg. The prince possessed great talents for war; courage, activity, vigilance, patience; but still he was inferior in genius to those consummate generals opposed to him by Lewis and though he always found means to repair his losses, and to make head in a little time against the victors, he was during his whole life, unsuccessful. By a masterly movement of Luxembourg, he was here defeated, and obliged to retreat to Ypres. Cambray and St. Omers were soon after surrendered to Lewis.

This success, derived from such great power and such wise conduct, infused a just terror into the English parliament. They addressed the king, representing the danger to which the kingdom was exposed from the greatness of France; and praying that his majesty, by such alliances as he should think fit, would both secure his own dominions and the Spanish Netherlands, and thereby quiet the fears of his people. The king, desirous of eluding this application, which he considered as a kind of attack on his measures, replied in general terms, that he would use all means for the preservation of Flanders, consistent with the peace and safety of his kingdoms. This answer was an evasion, or rather a denial. The commons, therefore, thought proper to be more explicit. They entreated him not to defer the entering into such alliances as might attain that great end; and in case war with the French king should be the result of his measures, they promised to grant him all the aids and supplies, which would enable him to support the honor and interest of the nation. The king was also more explicit in his reply. He told them, that the only way to prevent danger, was to put him in a condition to make preparations for their security. This message was understood to be a demand of money. The parliament accordingly empowered the king to borrow on the additional excise two hundred thousand pounds at seven per cent.; a very small sum indeed; but which they deemed sufficient, with the ordinary revenue, to equip a good squadron, and thereby put the nation in security, till further resolutions should be taken.

But this concession fell far short of the king's expectations. He therefore informed them, that, unless they granted him the sum of six hundred thousand pounds upon new funds, it would not be possible for him, without exposing the nation to manifest danger, to speak or act those things which would answer the end of their several addresses. The house took this message into consideration: but before they came to any resolution, the king sent for them to Whitehall, where he told them, upon the word of a king, that they should not repent any trust which they would repose in him for the safety of his kingdom; that he would not for any consideration break credit with them, or employ their money to other uses than those for which they intended it; but that he would not hazard either his own safety or theirs, by taking any vigorous measures, or forming new alliances, till he were in a better condition both to defend his subjects and offend his enemies. This speech brought affairs to a short issue. The king required them to trust him with a large sum; he pawned his royal word for their security: they must either run the risk of losing their money, or fail of those alliances which they had projected, and at the same time declare to all the world the highest distrust of their sovereign.

But there were many reasons which determined the house of commons to put no trust in the king. They considered, that the pretence of danger was obviously groundless, while the French were opposed by such powerful alliances on the continent, while the king was master of a good fleet at sea, and while all his subjects were so heartily united in opposition to foreign enemies: that the only justifiable reason, therefore, of Charles’s backwardness, was not the apprehension of danger from abroad, but a diffidence which he might perhaps have entertained of his parliament; lest, after engaging him in foreign alliances for carrying on war, they should take advantage of his necessities, and extort from him concessions dangerous to his royal dignity: that this parliament, by their past conduct, had given no foundation for such suspicions, and were so far from pursuing any sinister ends, that they had granted supplies for the first Dutch war; for maintaining the triple league, though concluded without their advice; even for carrying on the second Dutch war, which was entered into contrary to their opinion, and contrary to the manifest interests of the nation: that, on the other hand, the king had, by former measures, excited very reasonable jealousies in his people, and did with a bad grace require at present their trust and confidence. That he had not scrupled to demand supplies for maintaining the triple league, at the very moment he was concerting measures for breaking it; and had accordingly employed, to that purpose, the supplies which he had obtained by those delusive pretences: that his union with France, during the war against Holland, must have been founded on projects the most dangerous to his people; and as the same union was still secretly maintained, it might justly be feared that the same projects were not yet entirely abandoned, that he could not seriously intend to prosecute vigorous measures against France; since he had so long remained entirely unconcerned during such obvious dangers; and, till prompted by his parliament, whose proper business it was not to take the lead in those parts of administration, had suspended all his activity: that if he really meant to enter into a cordial union with his people, he would have taken the first step, and have endeavored, by putting trust in them, to restore that confidence, which he himself, by his rash conduct, had first violated: that it was in vain to ask so small a sum as six hundred thousand pounds, in order to secure him against the future attempts of the parliament; since that sum must soon be exhausted by a war with France, and he must again fall into that dependence, which was become in some degree essential to the constitution: that if he would form the necessary alliances, that sum, or a greater, would instantly be voted; nor could there be any reason to dread, that the parliament would immediately desert measures in which they were engaged by their honor, their inclination, and the public interest: that the real ground, therefore, of the king’s refusal was neither apprehension of danger from foreign enemies, nor jealousy of parliamentary encroachments; but a desire of obtaining the money, which he intended, notwithstanding his royal word, to employ to other purposes; and that, by using such dishonorable means to so ignoble an end, he rendered himself still more unworthy the confidence of his people.

The house of commons was now regularly divided into two parties, the court and the country. Some were enlisted in the court party by offices, nay, a few by bribes secretly given them; a practice first begun by Clifford, a dangerous minister: but great numbers were attached merely by inclination; so far as they esteemed the measures of the court agreeable to the interests of the nation. Private views and faction had likewise drawn several into the country party: but there were also many of that party, who had no other object than the public good. These disinterested members on both sides fluctuated between the factions; and gave the superiority sometimes to the court, sometimes to the opposition.[A] In the present emergence, a general distrust of the king prevailed; and the parliament resolved not to hazard their money in expectation of alliances, which, they believed, were never intended to be formed. Instead of granting the supply, they voted an address, wherein they "besought his majesty to enter into a league, offensive and defensive, with the states general of the United Provinces, against the growth and power of the French king, and for the preservation of the Spanish Netherlands; and to make such other alliances with the confederates as should appear fit and useful to that end." They supported their advice with reasons; and promised speedy and effectual supplies, for preserving his majesty's honor and insuring the safety of the public. The king pretended the highest anger at this address, which he represented as a dangerous encroachment upon his prerogative. He reproved the commons in severe terms, and ordered them immediately to be adjourned.

It is certain, that this was the critical moment, when the king both might with ease have preserved the balance of power in Europe, which it has since cost this island a great expense of blood and treasure to restore, and might by perseverance have at last regained, in some tolerable measure, after all past errors, the confidence of his people. This opportunity being neglected, the wound became incurable; and notwithstanding his momentary appearances of vigor against France and Popery, and their momentary inclinations to rely on his faith, he was still believed to be at bottom engaged in the same interests, and they soon relapsed into distrust and jealousy. The secret memoirs of this reign, which have since been published, [1] prove beyond a doubt, that the king had at this time concerted measures with France, and had no intention to enter into a war in favor of the allies. He had entertained no view, therefore, even when he pawned his royal word to his people, than to procure a grant of money; and he trusted that, while he eluded their expectations, he could not afterwards want pretences for palliating his conduct.

* Such as the letters which passed betwixt Danby and Montague, the king's ambassador at Paris; Temple's Memoirs, and his Letters. In these last, we see that the king never made any proposals of terms but what were advantageous to France; and the prince of Orange believed them to have always been concerted with the French ambassador. Vol. i. p.
439.

In Sir John Dalrymple's Appendix, (,) it appears, that the king had signed himself, without the participation of his ministers, a secret treaty with France, and had obtained a pension on the promise of his neutrality; a tact which renders his royal word, solemnly given to his subjects, one of the most dishonorable and most scandalous acts that ever proceeded from a throne.

Negotiations meanwhile were carried on between France and Holland, and an eventual treaty was concluded; that is all their differences were adjusted, provided they could after wards satisfy their allies on both sides. This work, though in appearance difficult, seemed to be extremely forwarded, by further bad successes on the part of the confederates, and by the great impatience of the Hollanders; when a new event happened, which promised a more prosperous issue to the quarrel with France, and revived the hopes of all the English who understood the interests of their country.

The king saw with regret the violent discontents which prevailed in the nation, and which seemed every day to augment upon him. Desirous by his natural temper to be easy himself, and to make every body else easy, he sought expedients to appease those murmurs, which, as they were very disagreeable for the present, might in their consequences prove extremely dangerous. He knew that, during the late war with Holland, the malecontents at home had made applications to the prince of Orange; and if he continued still to neglect the prince's interests, and to thwart the inclinations of his own people, he apprehended lest their common complaints should cement a lasting union between them. He saw that the religion of the duke inspired the nation with dismal apprehensions; and though he had obliged his brother to allow the young princesses to be educated in the Protestant faith, something further, he thought, was necessary, in order to satisfy the nation. He entertained, therefore, proposals for marrying the prince of Orange to the lady Mary, the elder princess, and heir apparent to the crown, (for the duke had no male issue;) and he hoped, by so tempting an offer, to engage him entirely in his interests. A peace he purposed to make; such as would satisfy France, and still preserve his connections with that crown; and he intended to sanctify it by the approbation of the prince, whom he found to be extremely revered in England, and respected throughout Europe. All the reasons for this alliance were seconded by the solicitations of Danby, and also of Temple, who was at that time in England; and Charles at last granted permission to the prince, when the campaign should be over, to pay him a visit.

The king very graciously received his nephew at Newmarket. He would have entered immediately upon business but the prince desired first to be acquainted with the lady Mary; and he declared, that, contrary to the usual sentiments of persons of his rank, he placed a great part of happiness in domestic satisfaction, and would not, upon any consideration of interest or politics, match himself with a person disagreeable to him. He was introduced to the princess, whom he found in the bloom of youth, and extremely amiable both in her person and her behavior. The king now thought that he had a double tie upon him, and might safely expect his compliance with every proposal: he was surprised to find the prince decline all discourse of business, and refuse to concert any terms for the general peace, till his marriage should be finished. He foresaw, he said, from the situation of affairs that his allies were likely to have hard terms; and he never would expose himself to the reproach of having sacrificed their interests to promote his own purposes. Charles still believed, notwithstanding the cold, severe manner of the prince, that he would abate of this rigid punctilio of honor; and he protracted the time, hoping, by his own insinuation and address, as well as by the allurements of love and ambition, to win him to compliance. One day, Temple found the prince in very bad humor, repenting that he had ever come to England, and resolute in a few days to leave it: but before he went, the king, he said, must choose the terms on which they should hereafter live together: he was sure it must be like the greatest friends or the greatest enemies: and he desired Temple to inform his master next morning of these intentions. Charles was struck with this menace, and foresaw how the prince's departure would be interpreted by the people. He resolved, therefore, immediately to yield with a good grace; and having paid a compliment to his nephew's honesty, he told Temple that the marriage was concluded, and desired him to inform the duke of it, as of an affair already resolved on. The duke seemed surprised; but yielded a prompt obedience: which, he said, was his constant maxim to whatever he found to be the king's pleasure. No measure during this reign gave such general satisfaction. All parties strove who should most applaud it. And even Arlington, who had been kept out of the secret, told the prince, "that some things, good in themselves, were spoiled by the manner of doing them, as some things bad were mended by it; but he would confess, that this was a thing so good in itself, that the manner of doing it could not spoil it."

This marriage was a great surprise to Lewis, who, accustomed to govern every thing in the English court, now found so important a step taken, not only without his consent, but without his knowledge or participation. A conjunction of England with the allies, and a vigorous war in opposition to French ambition, were the consequences immediately expected, both abroad and at home: but to check these sanguine hopes, the king, a few days after the marriage, prolonged the adjournment of the parliament from the third of December to the fourth of April. This term was too late for granting supplies, or making preparations for war; and could be chosen by the king for no other reason, than as an atonement to France for his consent to the marriage. It appears also, that Charles secretly received from Lewis the sum of two millions of livres on account of this important service. [1]

The king, however, entered into consultations with the prince, together with Danby and Temple, concerning the terms which it would be proper to require of France. After some debate, it was agreed, that France should restore Lorraine to the duke; with Tournay, Valenciennes, Condé, Aeth, Charleroi, Courtray, Oudenarde, and Binche to Spain, in order to form a good frontier for the Low Countries. The prince insisted that Franche Compte should likewise be restored and Charles thought that, because he had patrimonial estates of great value in that province, and deemed his property more secure in the hands of Spain, he was engaged by such views to be obstinate in that point: but the prince declared, that to procure but one

* Sir John Dalrymple's Appendix, .

good town to the Spaniards in Flanders, he would willingly relinquish all those possessions. As the king still insisted on the impossibility of wresting Franche Compte from Lewis, the prince was obliged to acquiesce.

Notwithstanding this concession to France, the projected peace was favorable to the allies, and it was a sufficient indication of vigor in the king, that he had given his assent to it. He further agreed to send over a minister instantly to Paris, in order to propose these terms. This minister was to enter into no treaty: he was to allow but two days for the acceptance or refusal of the terms: upon the expiration of these, he was presently to return: and in case of refusal, the king promised to enter immediately into the confederacy. To carry so imperious a message, and so little expected from the English court, Temple was the person pitched on, whose declared aversion to the French interest was not likely to make him fail of vigor and promptitude in the execution of his commission.

But Charles next day felt a relenting in this assumed vigor. Instead of Temple, he despatched the earl of Feversham, a creature of the duke’s, and a Frenchman by birth; and he said, that the message being harsh in itself, it was needless to aggravate it by a disagreeable messenger. The prince left London; and the king, at his departure, assured him, that he never would abate in the least point of the scheme concerted, and would enter into war with Lewis if he rejected it.

Lewis received the message with seeming gentleness and complacency. He told Feversham, that the king of England well knew that he might always be master of the peace; but some of the towns in Flanders it seemed very hard to demand, especially Tournay, upon whose fortifications such immense sums had been expended: he would therefore take some short time to consider of an answer. Feversham said, that he was limited to two days’ stay: but when that time was elapsed, he was prevailed on to remain some few days longer; and he came away at last without any positive answer. Lewis said, that he hoped his brother would not break with him for one or two towns: and with regard to them too, he would send orders to his ambassador at London to treat with the king himself. Charles was softened by the softness of France; and the blow was thus artfully eluded. The French ambassador, Barillon, owned at last, that he had orders to yield all except Tournay, and even to treat about some equivalent for that fortress, if the king absolutely insisted upon it. The prince was gone who had given spirit to the English court; and the negotiation began to draw out into messages and returns from Paris.

By intervals, however, the king could rouse himself, and show still some firmness and resolution. Finding that affairs were not likely to come to any conclusion with France, he summoned, notwithstanding the long adjournment, the parliament on the fifteenth of January; an unusual measure, and capable of giving alarm to the French court. Temple was sent for to the council; and the king told him, that he intended he should go to Holland, in order to form a treaty of alliance with the states; and that the purpose of it should be, like the triple league, to force both France and Spain to accept of the terms proposed. Temple was sorry to find this act of vigor qualified by such a regard to France, and by such an appearance of indifference and neutrality between the parties. He told the king, that the resolution agreed on, was to begin the war in conjunction with all the confederates, in case of no direct and immediate answer from France: that this measure would satisfy the prince, the allies, and the people of England; advantages which could not be expected from such an alliance with Holland alone: that France would be disobliged, and Spain likewise; nor would the Dutch be satisfied with such a faint imitation of the triple league, a measure concerted when they were equally at peace with both parties. For these reasons, Temple declined the employment; and Lawrence Hyde, second son of Chancellor Clarendon, was sent in his place.

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The prince of Orange could not regard without contempt such symptoms of weakness and vigor conjoined in the English counsels. He was resolved, however, to make the best of a measure which he did not approve; and as Spain secretly consented that her ally should form a league, which was seemingly directed against her as well as France, but which was to fall only on the latter, the states concluded the treaty in the terms proposed by the king.

Meanwhile the English parliament met, after some new adjournments: and the king was astonished that, notwithstanding the resolute measures which he thought he had taken, great distrust, and jealousy, and discontent were apt, at intervals, still to prevail among the members. Though in his speech he had allowed that a good peace could no longer be expected from negotiation, and assured them, that he was resolved to enter into a war for that purpose, the commons did not forbear to insert in their reply several harsh and even unreasonable clauses. Upon his reproving them, they seemed penitent; and voted, that they would assist his majesty in the prosecution of the war. A fleet of ninety sail, an army of thirty thousand men, and a million of money were also voted. Great difficulties were made by the commons with regard to the army, which the house, judging by past measures, believed to be intended more against the liberties of England than against the progress of the French monarch. To this perilous situation had the king reduced both himself and the nation. In all debates, severe speeches were made, and were received with seeming approbation: the duke and the treasurer began to be apprehensive of impeachments: many motions against the king's ministers were lost by a small majority: the commons appointed a day to consider the state of the kingdom with regard to Popery; and they even went so far as to vote that, how urgent soever the occasion, they would lay no further charge on the people, till secured against the prevalence of the Catholic party. In short, the parliament was impatient for war whenever the king seemed averse to it; but grew suspicious of some sinister design as soon as he complied with their requests, and seemed to enter into their measures.

The king was enraged at this last vote: he reproached Temple with his popular notions, as he termed them; and asked him how he thought the house of commons could be trusted for carrying on the war, should it be entered on, when in the very commencement they made such declarations. The uncertainties indeed of Charles's conduct were so multiplied, and the jealousies on both sides so incurable, that even those who approached nearest the scene of action, could not determine, whether the king ever seriously meant to enter into a war; or whether, if he did, the house of commons would not have taken advantage of his necessities, and made him purchase supplies by a great sacrifice of his authority.[A]

The king of France knew how to avail himself of all the advantages which these distractions afforded him. By his emissaries, he represented to the Dutch the imprudence of their depending on England; where an indolent king, averse to all war, especially with France, and irresolute in his measures, was actuated only by the uncertain breath of a factious parliament. To the aristocratical party he remarked the danger of the prince's alliance with the royal family of England, and revived their apprehensions, lest, in imitation of his father, who had been honored with the same alliance, he should violently attempt to enlarge his authority, and enslave his native country. In order to enforce these motives with further terrors, he himself took the field very early in the spring; and after threatening Luxembourg, Mons, and Namur he suddenly sat down before Ghent and Ypres, and in a few weeks made himself master of both places. This success gave great alarm to the Hollanders, who were nowise satisfied with the conduct of England, or with the ambiguous treaty lately concluded; and it quickened all their advances towards an accommodation.

Immediately after the parliament had voted the supply, the king began to enlist forces; and such was the ardor of the English for a war with France, that an army of above twenty thousand men, to the astonishment of Europe, was completed in a few weeks. Three thousand men, under the duke of Monmouth, were sent over to secure Ostend: some regiments were recalled from the French service: a fleet was fitted out with great diligence: and a quadruple alliance was projected between England, Holland, Spain, and the emperor.

But these vigorous measures received a sudden damp from a passionate address of the lower house; in which they justified all their past proceedings that had given disgust to the king; desired to be acquainted with the measures taken by him; prayed him to dismiss evil counsellors; and named in particular the duke of Lauderdale, on whose removal they strenuously insisted. The king told them, that their address was so extravagant, that he was not willing speedily to give it the answer which it deserved. And he began again to lend an ear to the proposals of Lewis, who offered him great sums of money, if he would consent to France's making an advantageous peace with the allies.

Temple, though pressed by the king, refused to have any concern in so dishonorable a negotiation: but he informs us, that the king said, there was one article proposed which so incensed him that as long as he lived he should never forget it. Sir William goes no further; but the editor of his works, the famous Dr. Swift, says, that the French, before they would agree to any payment, required as a preliminary, that the king should engage never to keep above eight thousand regular troops in Great Britain. [1] Charles broke into a passion. "Cod's-fish," said he, (his usual oath,) "does my brother of France think to serve me thus? Are all his promises to make me absolute master of my people come to this? Or does he think that a thing to be done with eight thousand men?”

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* To wit, three thousand men for Scotland, and the usual guards and garrisons in England, amounting to near five thousand men. Sir J. Dalrymple’s App .

Van Beverning was the Dutch ambassador at Nimeguen, a man of great authority with the states. He was eager for peace, and was persuaded, that the reluctance of the king and the jealousies of the parliament would forever disappoint the allies in their hopes of succor from England. Orders were sent him by the states to go to the French king at Ghent, and to concert the terms of a general treaty, as well as procure a present truce for six weeks. The terms agreed on were much worse for the Spaniards than those which had been planned by the King and the prince of Orange. Six towns, some of them of no great importance, were to be restored to them, but Ypres, Condé, Valenciennes, and Tournay, in which consisted the chief strength of their frontier, were to remain with France.

Great murmurs arose in England when it was known that Flanders was to be left in so defenceless a condition. The chief complaints were levelled against the king, who, by his concurrence at first, by his favor afterwards, and by his delays at last, had raised the power of France to such an enormous height, that it threatened the general liberties of Europe. Charles, uneasy under these imputations, dreading the consequence of losing the affections of his subjects, and perhaps disgusted with the secret article proposed by France, began to wish heartily for war, which, he hoped, would have restored him to his ancient popularity.

An opportunity unexpectedly offered itself for his displaying these new dispositions. While the ministers at Nimeguen were concerting the terms of a general treaty, the marquis de Balbaces, the Spanish ambassador, asked the ambassadors of France at what time France intended to restore the six towns in Flanders. They made no difficulty in declaring, that the king, their master, being obliged to see an entire restitution made to the Swedes of all they had lost in the war, could not evacuate these towns till that crown had received satisfaction; and that this detention of places was the only means to induce the powers of the north to accept of the peace.

The states immediately gave the king intelligence of a pretension which might be attended with such dangerous consequences. The king was both surprised and angry. He immediately despatched Temple to concert with the states vigorous measures for opposing France. Temple in six days concluded a treaty, by which Lewis was obliged to declare, within sixteen days after the date, that he would presently evacuate the towns: and in case of his refusal, Holland was bound to continue the war, and England to declare immediately against France, in conjunction with the whole confederacy.

All these warlike measures were so ill seconded by the parliament, where even the French ministers were suspected, with reason, [1] of carrying on some intrigues, that the commons renewed their former jealousies against the king, and voted the army immediately to be disbanded.

* Sir John Dalrymple, in his Appendix, has given us, from Barilton's despatches in the secretary's office at Paris, a more particular detail of these intrigues. They were carried on with Lord Russel, Lord Hollis, Lord Berkshire, the duke of Buckingham, Algernon Sydney, Montague, Bulstrode, Colonel Titus, Sir Edward Harley, Sir John Baber, Sir Roger Hill, Boscawen, Littleton, Powle, Harbord, Hambden, Sir Thomas Armstrong, Hotham, Herbert, and some others of less note. Of these Lord Russel and Lord Hollis alone refused to touch any French money: all the others received presents or bribes from Barillon. But we are to remark, that the party views of these men, and their well-founded jealousies of the king and duke, engaged them, independently of the money, into the same measures that were suggested to them by the French ambassador. The intrigues of France, therefore, with the parliament, were a mighty small engine in the political machine. Those with the king, which have always been known, were of infinitely greater consequence. The sums distributed to all these men, excepting Montague, did not exceed sixteen thousand pounds in three years; and therefore could have little weight in the two houses, especially when opposed to the influence of the crown. Accordingly we find, in all Barillon's despatches, a great anxiety that the parliament should never be assembled. The conduct of these English patriots was more mean than criminal; and Monsieur Courten says, that two hundred thousand livres employed by the Spaniards and Germans, would have more influence than two millions distributed by France. See Sir J. Dalrymple's App.

. It is amusing to observe the general, and I may say national, rage excited by the late discovery of this secret negotiation; chiefly on account of Algernon Sydney, whom the blind prejudices of party had exalted into a hero. His ingratitude and breach of faith, in applying for the king’s pardon, and immediately on his return entering into cabals for rebellion, form a conduct much more criminal than the taking of French gold: yet the former circumstance was always known, and always disregarded. But every thing connected with France is supposed, in England, to be polluted beyond all possibility of expiation. Even Lord Russel, whose conduct in this negotiation was only factious, and that in an ordinary degree, is imagined to be dishonored by the same discovery.

The king by a message represented the danger of disarming before peace were finally concluded; and he recommended to their consideration, whether he could honorably recall his forces from those towns in Flanders which were put under his protection, and which had at present no other means of defence. The commons agreed to prolong the term with regard to these forces. Every thing, indeed, in Europe bore the appearance of war. France had positively declared, that she would not evacuate the six towns before the requisite cession was made to Sweden and her honor seemed now engaged to support that declaration. Spain and the empire, disgusted with the terms of peace imposed by Holland, saw with pleasure the prospect of a powerful support from the new resolutions of Charles. Holland itself, encouraged by the prince of Orange and his party, was not displeased to find that the war would be renewed on more equal terms. The allied army under that prince was approaching towards Mons, then blockaded by France. A considerable body of English, under the duke of Monmouth, was ready to join him.

Charles usually passed a great part of his time in the women’s apartments, particularly those of the duchess of Portsmouth; where, among other gay company, he often met with Barillon, the French ambassador, a man of polite conversation, who was admitted into all the amusements of that inglorious but agreeable monarch. It was the charms of this sauntering, easy life, which, during his later years, attached Charles to his mistresses. By the insinuations of Barillon and the duchess of Portsmouth, an order was, in an unguarded hour, procured, which instantly changed the face of affairs in Europe. One Du Cros, a French fugitive monk, was sent to Temple, directing him to apply to the Swedish ambassador, and persuade him not to insist on the conditions required by France, but to sacrifice to general peace those interests of Sweden. Du Cros, who had secretly received instructions from Barillon, published every where in Holland the commission with which he was intrusted; and all men took the alarm. It was concluded that Charles’s sudden alacrity for war was as suddenly extinguished, and that no steady measures could ever be taken with England. The king afterwards, when he saw Temple, treated this important matter in raillery; and said, laughing, that the rogue Du Cros had outwitted them all.

The negotiations, however, at Nimeguen still continued; and the French ambassadors spun out the time till the morning of the critical day, which, by the late treaty between England and Holland, was to determine whether a sudden peace or a long war were to have place in Christendom. The French ambassadors came then to Van Beverning, and told him that they had received orders to consent to the evacuation of the towns, and immediately to conclude and sign the peace. Van Boverning might have refused compliance, because it was now impossible to procure the consent and concurrence of Spain; but he had entertained so just an idea of the fluctuations in the English counsels, and was so much alarmed by the late commission given to Du Cros, that he deemed it fortunate for the republic to finish on any terms a dangerous war, where they were likely to be very ill supported. The papers were instantly drawn, and signed by the ministers of France and Holland between eleven and twelve o’clock at night. By this treaty, France secured the possession of Franche Compte, together with Cambray, Aire, St. Omers, Valenciennes, Tournay, Ypres, Bouchaine, Cassel, etc., and restored to Spain only Charleroi, Courtrai, Oudenard, Aeth, Ghent, and Limbourg.

Next day, Temple received an express from England, which brought the ratifications of the treaty lately concluded with the states, together with orders immediately to proceed to the exchange of them. Charles was now returned to his former inclinations for war with France.

Van Beverning was loudly exclaimed against by the ambassadors of the allies at Nimeguen, especially those of Brandenburg and Denmark, whose masters were obliged by the treaty to restore all their acquisitions. The ministers of Spain and the emperor were sullen and disgusted; and all men hoped that the states, importuned and encouraged by continual solicitations from England, would disavow their ambassador, and renew the war. The prince of Orange even took an extraordinary step, in order to engage them to that measure; or perhaps to give vent to his own spleen and resentment.

The day after signing the peace at Nimeguen, he attacked the French army at St. Dennis, near Mons; and gained some advantage over Luxembourg, who rested secure on the faith of the treaty, and concluded the war to be finished. The prince knew, at least had reason to believe, that the peace was signed, though it had not been formally notified to him; and he here sacrificed wantonly, without a proper motive, the lives of many brave men on both sides, who fell in this sharp and well-contested action.

Hyde was sent over with a view of persuading the states to disavow Van Beverning; and the king promised that England, if she might depend on Holland, would immediately declare war, and would pursue it, till France were reduced to reasonable conditions. Charles at present went further than words. He hurried on the embarkation of his army for Flanders and all his preparations wore a hostile appearance. But the states had been too often deceived to trust him any longer. They ratified the treaty signed at Nimeguen; and all the other powers of Europe were at last, after much clamor and many disgusts, obliged to accept of the terms prescribed to them.

Lewis had now reached the height of that glory which ambition can afford. His ministers and negotiators appeared as much superior to those of all Europe in the cabinet, as his generals and armies had been experienced in the field. A successful war had been carried on against an alliance, composed of the greatest potentates in Europe. Considerable conquests had been made, and his territories enlarged on every side. An advantageous peace was at last concluded, where he had given the law. The allies were so enraged against each other, that they were not likely to cement soon in any new confederacy. And thus he had, during some years a real prospect of attaining the monarchy of Europe, and of exceeding the empire of Charlemagne, perhaps equalling that of ancient Rome. Had England continued much longer in the same condition, and under the same government, it is not easy to conceive that he could have failed of his purpose.

In proportion as these circumstances exalted the French, they excited indignation among the English, whose animosity, roused by terror, mounted to a great height against that rival nation. Instead of taking the lead in the affairs of Europe, Charles, they thought, had, contrary to his own honor and interest, acted a part entirely subservient to the common enemy; and in all his measures had either no project at all, or such as was highly criminal and dangerous. While Spain, Holland, the emperor, the princes of Germany, called aloud on England to lead them to victory and to liberty, and conspired to raise her to a station more glorious than she had ever before attained, her king, from mean, pecuniary motives, had secretly sold his alliance to Lewis, and was bribed into an interest contrary to that of his people. His active schemes in conjunction with France were highly pernicious; his neutrality was equally ignominious; and the jealous, refractory behavior of the parliament, though in itself dangerous, was the only remedy for so many greater ills, with which the public, from the misguided counsels of the king, was so nearly threatened. Such, were the dispositions of men's minds at the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen: and these dispositions naturally prepared the way for the events which followed.

We must now return to the affairs of Scotland, which we left in some disorder, after the suppression of the insurrection in 1666. The king, who at that time endeavored to render himself popular in England, adopted like measures in Scot-* land, and he intrusted the government into the hands chiefly of Tweddale and Sir Robert Murray, men of prudence and moderation. These ministers made it their principal object to compose the religious differences, which ran so high, and for which scarcely any modern nation but the Dutch had as yet found the proper remedy. As rigor and restraint had failed of success in Scotland, a scheme of comprehension was tried; by which it was intended to diminish greatly the authority of bishops, to abolish their negative voice in the ecclesiastical courts, and to leave them little more than the right of precedency among the Presbyters. But the Presbyterian zealots entertained great jealousy against this scheme. They remembered that, by such gradual steps, King James had endeavored to introduce Episcopacy. Should the ears and eyes of men be once reconciled to the name and habit of bishops, the whole power of the function, they dreaded, would soon follow: the least communication with unlawful and anti-Christian institutions they esteemed dangerous and criminal. “Touch not, taste not, handle not;” this cry went out amongst them: and the king's ministers at last perceived, that they should prostitute the dignity of government, by making advances, to which the malecontents were determined not to correspond.

The next project adopted was that of indulgence. In prosecution of this scheme, the most popular of the expelled preachers, without requiring any terms of submission to the established religion, were settled in vacant churches; and small salaries of about twenty pounds a year were offered to the rest, till they should otherwise be provided for. These last refused the king’s bounty, which they considered as the wages of a criminal silence. Even the former soon repented their compliance. The people, who had been accustomed to hear them rail against their superiors, and preach to the times, as they termed it, deemed their sermons languid and spiritless when deprived of these ornaments. Their usual gifts, they thought, had left them, on account of their submission, which was stigmatized as Erastianism. They gave them the appellation, not of ministers of Christ, but of the king’s curates, as the clergy of the established church were commonly denominated the bishop’s curates. The preachers themselves returned in a little time to their former practices, by which they hoped to regain their former dominion over the minds of men. The conventicles multiplied daily in the west; the clergy of the established church were insulted; the laws were neglected; the Covenanters even met daily in arms at their places of worship; and though they usually dispersed themselves after divine service, yet the government took a just alarm at seeing men, who were so entirely governed by their seditious teachers, dare to set authority at defiance, and during a time of full peace to put themselves in a military posture.

There was here, it is apparent, in the political body, a disease dangerous and inveterate; and the government had tried every remedy but the true one to allay and correct it. An unlimited toleration, after sects have diffused themselves and are strongly rooted, is the only expedient which can allay their fervor, and make the civil union acquire a superiority above religious distinctions. But as the operations of this regimen are commonly gradual, and at first imperceptible, vulgar politicians are apt, for that reason, to have recourse to more hasty and more dangerous remedies. It is observable too, that these nonconformists in Scotland neither offered nor demanded toleration; but laid claim to an entire superiority, and to the exercise of extreme rigor against their adversaries. The covenant, which they idolized, was a persecuting, as well as a seditious band of confederacy; and the government, instead of treating them like madmen, who should be soothed, and flattered, and deceived into tranquillity, thought themselves entitled to a rigid obedience, and were too apt, from a mistaken policy, to retaliate upon the dissenters, who had erred from the spirit of enthusiasm.

Amidst these disturbances, a new parliament was assembled at Edinburgh; [1] and Lauderdale was sent down commissioner. The zealous Presbyterians, who were the chief patrons of liberty, were too obnoxious to resist, with any success, the measures of government; and in parliament the tide still ran strongly in favor of monarchy.

* October 19, 1669.

The commissioner had such influence as to get two acts passed, which were of great consequence to the ecclesiastical and civil liberties of the kingdom. By the one it was declared, that the settling of all things with regard to the external government of the church, was a right of the crown: that whatever related to ecclesiastical meetings, matters, and persons, was to be ordered according to such directions as the king should send to his privy council: and that these, being published by them should have the force of laws. The other act regarded the militia, which the king by his own authority had two years before established, instead of the army which was disbanded. By this act, the militia was settled, to the number of twenty-two thousand men, who were to be constantly armed and regularly disciplined. And it was further enacted, that these troops should be held in readiness to march into England, Ireland, or any part of the king's dominions, for any cause in which his majesty's authority, power, or greatness was concerned; on receiving orders, not from the king himself, but from the privy council of Scotland.

Lauderdale boasted extremely of his services in procuring these two laws. The king by the former was rendered absolute master of the church, and might legally, by his edict, reëstablish, if he thought proper, the Catholic religion in Scotland. By the latter, he saw a powerful force ready at his call: he had even the advantage of being able to disguise his orders under the name of the privy council; and in case of failure in his enterprises, could by such a pretence apologize for his conduct to the parliament of England. But in proportion as these laws were agreeable to the king, they gave alarm to the English commons, and were the chief cause of the redoubled attacks which they made upon Lauderdale. These attacks, however, served only to fortify him in his interest with the king; and though it is probable that the militia of Scotland, during the divided state of that kingdom, would, if matters had come to extremities, have been of little service against England, yet did Charles regard the credit of it as a considerable support to his authority: and Lauderdale, by degrees, became the prime, or rather sole, minister for Scotland. The natural indolence of the king disposed him to place entire confidence in a man who had so far extended the royal prerogative, and who was still disposed to render it absolutely uncontrollable.

In a subsequent session of the same parliament, [1] a severe law was enacted against conventicles. Ruinous fines were imposed both on the preachers and hearers, even if the meetings had been in houses; but field conventicles were subjected to the penalty of death and confiscation of goods: four hundred marks Scotch were offered as a reward to those who should seize the criminals; and they were indemnified for any slaughter which they might commit in the execution of such an undertaking. And as it was found difficult to get evidence against these conventicles, however numerous, it was enacted by another law, that whoever, being required by the council, refused to give information upon oath, should be punished by arbitrary fines, by imprisonment, or by banishment to the plantations; Thus all persecution naturally, or rather necessarily, adopts the iniquities, as well as rigors, of the inquisition. What a considerable part of the society consider as their duty and honor, and even many of the opposite party are apt to regard with compassion and indulgence, can by no other expedient be subjected to such severe penalties as the natural sentiments of mankind appropriate only to the greatest crimes.

Though Lauderdale found this ready compliance in the parliament, a party was formed against him, of which Duke Hamilton was the head. This nobleman, with Tweddale and others, went to London, and applied to the king, who, during the present depression and insignificance of parliament, was alone able to correct the abuses of Lauderdale’s administration. But even their complaints to him might be dangerous; and all approaches of truth to the throne were barred by the ridiculous law against leasing-making; a law which seems to have been extorted by the ancient nobles, in order to protect their own tyranny, oppression, and injustice. Great precautions, therefore, were used by the Scottish malecontents in their representations to the king; but no redress was obtained. Charles loaded them with caresses, and continued Lauderdale in his authority.

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* July 28, 1670.

A very bad, at least a severe use was made of this authority. The privy council dispossessed twelve gentlemen or noblemen of their houses; [1] which were converted into so many garrisons, established for the suppression of conventicles. The nation, it was pretended, was really, on account of these religious assemblies, in a state of war; and by the ancient law, the king, in such an emergence, was empowered to place a garrison in any house where he should judge it expedient.

It were endless to recount every act of violence and arbitrary authority exercised during Lauderdale’s administration.

All the lawyers were put from the bar, nay, banished by the King’s order twelve miles from the capital, and by that means the whole justice of the kingdom was suspended for a year; till these lawyers were brought to declare it as their opinion, that all appeals to parliament were illegal. A letter was procured from the king, for expelling twelve of the chief magistrates of Edinburgh, and declaring them incapable of all public office; though their only crime had been their want of compliance with Lauderdale. The boroughs of Scotland have a privilege of meeting once a year by their deputies, in order to consider the state of trade, and make by-laws for its regulation: in this convention a petition was voted, complaining of some late acts which obstructed commerce; and praying the king, that he would empower his commissioner, in the next session of parliament, to give his assent for repealing them. For this presumption, as it was called, several of the members were fined and imprisoned. One More, a member of parliament, having moved in the house, that, in imitation of the English parliament, no bill should pass except after three readings, he was, for this pretended offence, immediately sent to prison by the commissioner.

The private deportment of Lauderdale was as insolent and provoking as his public administration was violent and tyrannical. Justice, likewise, was universally perverted by faction and interest: and from the great rapacity of that duke, and still more of his duchess, all offices and favors were openly put to sale. No one was allowed to approach the throne who was not dependent on him; and no remedy could be hoped for or obtained against his manifold oppressions. The case of Mitchel shows, that this minister was as much destitute of truth and honor as of lenity and justice.

* In 1675.

Mitchel was a desperate fanatic, and had entertained a resolution of assassinating Sharpe, archbishop of St. Andrews, who, by his former apostasy and subsequent rigor, had rendered himself extremely odious to the Covenanters. In the year 1668, Mitchel fired a pistol at the primate, as he was sitting in his coach; but the bishop of Orkney, stepping into the coach, happened to stretch out his arm, which intercepted the ball, and was much shattered by it. This happened in the principal street of the city; but so generally was the archbishop hated, that the assassin was allowed peaceably to walk off; and having turned a street or two, and thrown off a wig which disguised him, he immediately appeared in public, and remained altogether unsuspected. Some years after, Sharpe remarked one who seemed to eye him very eagerly; and being still anxious lest an attempt of assassination should be renewed, he ordered the man to be seized and examined. Two loaded pistols were found upon him; and as he was now concluded to be the author of the former attempt, Sharpe promised that if he would confess his guilt, he should be dismissed without any punishment. Mitchel (for the conjecture was just) was so credulous as to believe him; but was immediately produced before the council by the faithless primate. The council, having no proof against him, but hoping to involve the whole body of Covenanters in this odious crime, solemnly renewed the promise of pardon, if he would make a full discovery; and it was a great disappointment to them, when they found, upon his confession, that only one person, who was now dead, had been acquainted with his bloody purpose. Mitchel was then carried before a court of judicature, and required to renew his confession; but being apprehensive, lest, though a pardon for life had been promised him, other corporal punishment might still be inflicted, he refused compliance; and was sent back to prison. He was next examined before the council, under pretence of his being concerned in the insurrection at Pentland; and though no proof appeared against him, he was put to the question, and, contrary to the most obvious principles of equity, was urged to accuse himself. He endured the torture with singular resolution, and continued obstinate in the denial of a crime, of which, it is believed, he really was not guilty. Instead of obtaining his liberty, he was sent to the Bass, a very high rock surrounded by the sea; at this time converted into a state prison, and full of the unhappy Covenanters, He there remained in great misery, loaded with irons, till the year 1677, when it was resolved, by some new examples, to strike a fresh terror into the persecuted but still obstinate enthusiasts. Mitchel was then brought before a court of judicature, and put upon his trial for an attempt to assassinate an archbishop and a privy counsellor. His former confession was pleaded against him, and was proved by the testimony of the duke of Lauderdale, lord commissioner, Lord Hatton his brother, the earl of Rothes, and the primate himself. Mitchel, besides maintaining that the privy council was no court of judicature, and that a confession before them was not judicial, asserted that he had been engaged to make that confession by a solemn promise of pardon. The four privy counsellors denied upon with that any such promise had ever been given. The prisoner then desired that the council books might be produced in court, and even offered a copy of that day's proceedings to be read; but the privy counsellors maintained, that, after they had made oath, no further proof could be admitted, and that the books of council contained the king's secrets, which were on no account to be divulged. They were not probably aware, when they swore, that the clerk having engrossed the promise of pardon in the narrative of Mitchel's confession, the whole minute had been signed by the chancellor, and that the proofs of their perjury were by that means committed to record. Though the prisoner was condemned, Lauderdale was still inclined to pardon him; but the unrelenting primate rigorously insisted upon his execution, and said, that if assassins remained unpunished, his life must be exposed to perpetual danger. Mitchel was accordingly executed at Edinburgh, in January, 1678. Such a complication of cruelty and treachery shows the character of those ministers to whom the king at this time intrusted the government of Scotland.

Lauderdale's administration, besides the iniquities arising from the violence of his temper, and the still greater iniquities inseparable from all projects of persecution, was attended with other circumstances which engaged him in severe and arbitrary measures. An absolute government was to be introduced, which on its commencement is often most rigorous; and tyranny was still obliged, for want of military power, to cover itself under an appearance of law; a situation which rendered it extremely awkward in its motions, and, by provoking opposition, extended the violence of its oppressions.

The rigors exercised against conventicles, instead of breaking the spirit of the fanatics, had tended only, as is usual, to render them more obstinate, to increase the fervor of then zeal, to link them more closely together, and to inflame them against the established hierarchy. The commonalty, almost every where in the south, particularly in the western counties frequented conventicles without reserve; and the gentry though they themselves commonly abstained from these illegal places of worship, connived at this irregularity in their inferiors. In order to interest the former on the side of the persecutors, a bond or contract was, by order of the privy council, tendered to the landlords in the west, by which they were to engage for the good behavior of their tenants; and in case any tenant frequented a conventicle, the landlord was to subject himself to the same fine as could by law be exacted from the delinquent. It was ridiculous to give sanction to laws by voluntary contracts: it was iniquitous to make one man answerable for the conduct of another: it was illegal to impose such hard conditions upon men who had nowise offended. For these reasons, the greater part of the gentry refused to sign these bonds; and Lauderdale, enraged at this opposition, endeavored to break their spirit by expedients which were still more unusual and more arbitrary.

The law enacted against conventicles had called them seminaries of rebellion. This expression, which was nothing but a flourish of rhetoric, Lauderdale and the privy council were willing to understand in a literal sense; and because the western counties abounded in conventicles, though otherwise in profound peace, they pretended that these counties were in a state of actual war and rebellion. They made therefore an agreement with some highland chieftains to call out their clans, to the number of eight thousand men: to these they joined the guards, and the militia of Angus; and they sent the whole to live at free quarters upon the lands of such as had refused the bonds illegally required of them. The obnoxious counties were the most populous and most industrious in Scotland. The Highlanders were the people the most disorderly and the least civilized. It is easy to imagine the havoc and destruction which ensued. A multitude, not accustomed to discipline, averse to the restraint of laws, trained up in rapine and violence, were let loose amidst those whom they were taught to regard as enemies to their prince and to their religion. Nothing escaped their ravenous hands: by menaces, by violence, and sometimes by tortures, men were obliged to discover their concealed wealth. Neither age, nor sex, nor innocence afforded protection; and the gentry, finding that even those who had been most compliant, and who had subscribed the bonds, were equally exposed to the rapacity of those barbarians, confirmed themselves still more in the resolution of refusing them. The voice of the nation was raised against this enormous outrage; and after two months' free quarter, the highlanders were sent back to their hills, loaded with the spoils and execrations of the west.

Those who had been engaged to subscribe the bonds, could find no security but by turning out such tenants as they suspected of an inclination to conventicles, and thereby depopulating their estates. To increase the misery of these unhappy farmers, the council enacted, that none should be received any where, or allowed a habitation, who brought not a certificate of his conformity from the parish minister. That the obstinate and refractory might not escape further persecution, a new device was fallen upon. By the law of Scotland, any man who should go before a magistrate, and swear that he thought himself in danger from another, might obtain a writ of law-burrows, as it is called; by which the latter was bound, under the penalty of imprisonment and outlawry, to find security for his good behavior. Lauderdale entertained the absurd notion of making the king sue out writs of law-burrows against his subjects. On this pretence, the refusers of the bonds were summoned to appear before the council, and were required to bind themselves, under the penalty of two years' rent, neither to frequent conventicles themselves, nor allow their family and tenants to be present at those unlawful assemblies. Thus chicanery was joined to tyranny; and the majesty of the king, instead of being exalted, was in reality prostituted; as if he were obliged to seek the same security which one neighbor might require of another.

It was an old law, but seldom executed, that a man who was accused of any crime, and did not appear in order to stand his trial, might be intercommuned, that is, he might be publicly outlawed; and whoever afterwards, either on account of business, relation, nay, charity, had the least intercourse with him, was subjected to the same penalties as could by law be inflicted on the criminal himself. Several writs of intercommuning were now issued against the hearers and preachers in conventicles; and by this severe and even absurd law, crimes and guilt went on multiplying in a geometrical proportion. Where laws themselves are so violent, it is no wonder that an administration should be tyrannical.

Lest the cry of an oppressed people should reach the throne, the council forbade, under severe penalties, all noblemen or gentlemen of landed property to leave the kingdom, a severe edict, especially where the sovereign himself resided in a foreign country. Notwithstanding this act of council, Cassilis first, afterwards Hamilton and Tweddale, went to London, and laid their complaints before the king. These violent proceedings of Lauderdale were opposite to the natural temper of Charles and he immediately issued orders for discontinuing the bonds and the writs of law-burrows. But as he was commonly little touched with what lay at a distance, he entertained not the proper indignation against those who had abused his authority: even while he retracted these oppressive measures, he was prevailed with to avow and praise them in a letter which he wrote to the privy council. This proof of confidence might fortify the hands of the ministry; but the king ran a manifest risk of losing the affections of his subjects, by not permitting even those who were desirous of it to distinguish between him and their oppressors.

It is reported [1] that Charles, after a full hearing of the debates concerning Scottish affairs, said, “I perceive that Lauderdale has been guilty of many bad things against the people of Scotland; but I cannot find that he has acted any thing contrary to my interest;” a sentiment unworthy of a sovereign.

* Burnet.

During the absence of Hamilton and the other discontented lords, the king allowed Lauderdale to summon a convention of estates at Edinburgh. This assembly, besides granting some money, bestowed applause on all Lauderdale’s administration, and in their addresses to the king, expressed the highest contentment and satisfaction. But these instances of complaisance had the contrary effect in England from what was expected by the contrivers of them. All men there concluded, that in Scotland the very voice of liberty was totally suppressed; and that, by the prevalence of tyranny, grievances were so rivetted, that it was become dangerous even to mention them, or complain to the prince, who alone was able to redress them. From the slavery of the neighboring kingdom, they inferred the arbitrary disposition of the king; and from the violence with which sovereign power was there exercised, they apprehended the miseries which might ensue to themselves upon their loss of liberty. If persecution, it was asked, by a Protestant church could be carried to such extremes, what might be dreaded from the prevalence of Popery, which had ever, in all ages, made open profession of exterminating by fire and sword every opposite sect or communion? And if the first approaches towards unlimited authority were so tyrannical, how dismal its final establishment; when all dread of opposition should at last be removed by mercenary armies, and all sense of shame by long and inveterate habit!

CHAPTER LXVII.

CHARLES II.

1678

THE English nation, ever since the fatal league with France, had entertained violent jealousies against the court; and the subsequent measures adopted by the king had tended more to increase than cure the general prejudices. Some mysterious design was still suspected in every enterprise and profession: arbitrary power and Popery were apprehended as the scope of all projects: each breath or rumor made the people start with anxiety: their enemies, they thought, were in their very bosom, and had gotten possession of their sovereign's confidence. While in this timorous, jealous disposition, the cry of a plot all on a sudden struck their ears: they were wakened from their slumber: and like men affrightened and in the dark, took every figure for a spectre. The terror of each man became the source of terror to another. And a universal panic being diffused, reason and argument, and common sense and common humanity, lost all influence over them. From this disposition of men's minds we are to account for the progress of the Popish plot, and the credit given to it; an event which would otherwise appear prodigious and altogether inexplicable.

On the twelfth of August, one Kirby, a chemist, accosted the king as he was walking in the park. "Sir," said he, "keep within the company: your enemies have a design upon your life; and you may be shot in this very walk." Being asked the reason of these strange speeches, he said, that two men, called Grove and Pickering, had engaged to shoot the king, and Sir George Wakeman, the queen's physician, to poison him. This intelligence, he added, had been communicated to him by Dr. Tongue, whom, if permitted, he would introduce to his majesty. Tongue was a divine of the church of England; a man active, restless, full of projects, void of understanding. He brought papers to the king, which contained information of a plot, and were digested into forty-three articles. The king, not having leisure to peruse them, sent them to the treasurer, Danby, and ordered the two informers to lay the business before that minister. Tongue confessed to

Danby, that he himself had not drawn the papers; that they had been secretly thrust under his door; and that, though he suspected, he did not certainly know who was the author. After a few days, he returned, and told the treasurer, that his suspicions, he found, were just; and that the author of the intelligence, whom he had met twice or thrice in the street, had acknowledged the whole matter, and had given him a more particular account of the conspiracy, but desired that his name might be concealed, being apprehensive lest the Papists should murder him.

The information was renewed with regard to Grove's and Pickering's intentions of shooting the king; and Tongue even pretended, that, at a particular time, they were to set out for Windsor with that intention. Orders were given for arresting them, as soon as they should appear in that place: but though this alarm was more than once renewed, some frivolous reasons were still found by Tongue for their having delayed the journey. And the king concluded, both from these evasions, and from the mysterious, artificial manner of communicating the intelligence, that the whole was an imposture.

Tongue came next to the treasurer, and told him, that a packet of letters, written by Jesuits concerned in the plot, was that night to be put into the post-house for Windsor, directed to Bennifield, a Jesuit, confessor to the duke. When this intelligence was conveyed to the king, he replied, that the packet mentioned had a few hours before been brought to the duke by Bennifield, who said, that he suspected some bad design upon him; that the letters seemed to contain matters of a dangerous import, and that he knew them not to be the handwriting of the persons whose names were subscribed to them. This incident still further confirmed the king in his incredulity.

The matter had probably slept forever, had it not been for the anxiety of the duke; who, hearing that priests and Jesuits, and even his own confessor, had been accused, was desirous that a thorough inquiry should be made by the council into the pretended conspiracy. Kirby and Tongue were inquired after, and were now found to be living in close connection with Titus Oates, the person who was said to have conveyed the first intelligence to Tongue. Oates affirmed, that he had fallen under suspicion with the Jesuits; that he had received three blows with a stick and a box on the ear from the provincial of that order, for revealing their conspiracy; and that, overhearing them speak of their intentions to punish him more severely, he had withdrawn, and concealed himself. This man, in whose breast was lodged a secret involving the fate of kings and kingdoms, was allowed to remain in such necessity, that Kirby was obliged to supply him with daily bread; and it was a joyful surprise to him, when he heard that the council was at last disposed to take some notice of his intelligence. But as he expected more encouragement from the public than from the king or his ministers, he thought proper, before he was presented to the council, to go with his two companions to Sir Edmundsbury Godfrey, a noted and active justice of peace, and to give evidence before him of all the articles of the conspiracy.

The wonderful intelligence which Oates conveyed both to Godfrey and the council, and afterwards to the parliament, was to this purpose. [1]

* Oates's Narrative.

The pope, he said, on examining the matter in the congregation de propaganda, had found himself entitled to the possession of England and Ireland on account of the heresy of prince and people, and had accordingly assumed the sovereignty of these kingdoms. This supreme power he had thought proper to delegate to the society of Jesuits; and De Oliva, general of that order, in consequence of the papal grant, had exerted every act of regal authority, and particularly had supplied, by commissions under the seal of the society, all the chief offices, both civil and military. Lord Arundel was created chancellor, Lord Powis treasurer, Sir William Godolphin privy seal, Coleman secretary of state, Langhorne attorney-general, Lord Bellasis general of the papal army, Lord Peters lieutenant-general, Lord Stafford paymaster; and inferior commissions, signed by the provincial of the Jesuits, were distributed all over England. All the dignities too of the church were filled, and many of them with Spaniards and other foreigners. The provincial had held a consult of the Jesuits under his authority; where the king, whom they opprobriously called the Black Bastard, was solemnly tried and condemned as a heretic, and a resolution taken to put him to death. Father Le Shee (for so this great plotter and informer called Father La Chaise, the noted confessor of the French king) had consigned in London ten thousand pounds, to be paid to any man who should merit it by this assassination. A Spanish provincial had expressed like liberality: the prior of the Benedictines was willing to go the length of six thousand. The Dominicans approved of the action, but pleaded poverty. Ten thousand pounds had been offered to Sir George Wakeman, the queen's physician, who demanded fifteen thousand, as a reward for so great a service: his demand was complied with; and five thousand had been paid him by advance. Lest his means should fail, four Irish ruffians had been hired by the Jesuits, at the rate of twenty guineas apiece, to stab the king at Windsor; and Coleman, secretary to the late duchess of York, had given the messenger, who carried them orders, a guinea to quicken his diligence. Grove and Pickering were also employed to shoot the king with silver bullets: the former was to receive the sum of fifteen hundred pounds; the latter, being a pious man, was to be rewarded with thirty thousand masses, which, estimating masses at a shilling apiece, amounted to a like value. Pickering would have executed his purpose, had not the flint at one time dropped out of his pistol, at another time the priming. Coniers, the Jesuit, had bought a knife at the price of ten shillings, which he thought was not dear, considering the purpose for which he intended it, to wit, stabbing the king. Letters of subscription were circulated among the Catholics all over England, to raise a sum for the same purpose. No less than fifty Jesuits had met, in May last, at the White Horse Tavern, where it was unanimously agreed to put the king to death. This synod did afterwards, for more convenience, divide themselves into many lesser cabals or companies; and Oates was employed to carry notes and letters from one to another, all tending to the same end, of murdering the king. He even carried, from one company to another, a paper, in which they formally expressed their resolution of executing that deed; and it was regularly subscribed by all of them. A wager of a hundred pounds was laid, and stakes made, that the king should eat no more Christmas pies. In short, it was determined, to use the expression of a Jesuit, that if he would not become R. C., (Roman Catholic,) he should no longer be C. R., (Charles Rex.) The great fire of London had been the work of the Jesuits, who had employed eighty or eighty-six persons for that purpose, and had expended seven hundred fire-balls; but they had a good return for their money, for they had been able to pilfer goods from the fire to the amount of fourteen thousand pounds: the Jesuits had also raised another fire on St. Margaret’s Hill, whence they had stolen goods to the value of two thousand pounds; another at Southwark: and it was determined in like manner to burn all the chief cities in England. A paper model was already framed for the firing London; the stations were regularly marked out, where the several fires were to commence; and the whole plan of operations were so concerted, that precautions were taken by the Jesuits to vary their measures, according to the variation of the wind.

Fire-balls were familiarly called among them Teuxbury mustard pills; and were said to contain a notable biting sauce. In the great fire, it had been determined to murder the king; but he had displayed such diligence and humanity in extinguishing the flames, that even the Jesuits relented, and spared his life. Besides these assassinations and fires, insurrections, rebellions, and massacres were projected by that religious order in all the three kingdoms. There were twenty thousand Catholics in London, who would rise in four and twenty hours, or less; and Jennison, a Jesuit, said, that they might easily cut the throats of a hundred thousand Protestants. Eight thousand Catholics had agreed to take arms in Scotland. Ormond was to be murdered by four Jesuits; a general massacre of the Irish Protestants was concerted; and forty thousand black bills were already provided for that purpose. Coleman had remitted two hundred thousand pounds to promote the rebellion in Ireland; and the French king was to land a great army in that island. Poole, who wrote the Synopsis, was particularly marked out for assassination; as was also Dr. Stillingfleet, a controversial writer against the Papists. Burnet tells us, that Oates paid him the same compliment. After all this havoc, the crown was to be offered to the duke, but on the following conditions: that he receive it as a gift from the pope; that he confirm all the papal commissions for offices and employments; that he ratify all past transactions, by pardoning the incendiaries, and the murderers of his brother and of the people; and that he consent to the utter extirpation of the Protestant religion. If he refuse these conditions, he himself was immediately to be poisoned or assassinated. "To pot James must go," according to the expression ascribed by Oates to the Jesuits.

Oates, the informer of this dreadful plot, was himself the most infamous of mankind. He was the son of an Anabaptist preacher, chaplain to Colonel Pride; but having taken orders in the church, he had been settled in a small living by the duke of Norfolk. He had been indicted for perjury, and by some means had escaped. He was afterwards a chaplain on board the fleet; whence he had been dismissed on complaint of some unnatural practices not fit to be named. He then became a convert to the Catholics; but he afterwards boasted, that his conversion was a mere pretence, in order to get into their secrets and to betray them. [1] He was sent over to the Jesuits' college at St. Omers, and though above thirty years of age, he there lived some time among the students. He was despatched on an errand to Spain; and thence returned to St. Omers; where the Jesuits, heartily tired of their convert, at last dismissed him from their seminary. It is likely that, from resentment of this usage, as well as from want and indigence, he was induced, in combination with Tongue, to contrive that plot of which he accused the Catholics.

This abandoned man, when examined before the council, betrayed his impostures in such a manner, as would have utterly discredited the most consistent story, and the most reputable evidence. While in Spain, he had been carried, he said, to Don John, who promised great assistance to the execution of the Catholic designs. The king asked him what sort of a man Don John was: he answered, a tall, lean man; directly contrary to truth, as the king well knew. [2] He totally mistook the situation of the Jesuits' college at Paris. [3] Though he pretended great intimacies with Coleman, he knew him not, when placed very near him; and had no other excuse than that his sight was bad in candle light. [4] He fell into like mistakes with regard to Wakeman.

* Burnet Echard, North, L'Estrange, etc.

* * Burnet North.

* * * North.

* * * * Burnet, North, Trials.

Notwithstanding these objections, great attention was paid to Oates's evidence, and the plot became very soon the subject of conversation, and even the object of terror to the people. The violent animosity which had been excited against the Catholics in general, made the public swallow the grossest absurdities, when they accompanied an accusation of those religionists: and the more diabolical any contrivance appeared, the better it suited the tremendous idea entertained of a Jesuit. Danby, likewise, who stood in opposition to the French and Catholic interest at court, was willing to encourage every story which might serve to discredit that party. By his suggestion, when a warrant was signed for arresting Coleman, there was inserted a clause for seizing his papers; a circumstance attended with the most important consequences.

Coleman, partly on his own account, partly by orders from the duke, had been engaged in a correspondence with Father La Chaise, with the pope’s nuncio at Brussels, and with other Catholics abroad; and being himself a fiery zealot, busy and sanguine, the expressions in his letters often betrayed great violence and indiscretion. His correspondence, during the years 1674, 1675, and part of 1676, was seized, and contained many extraordinary passages. In particular, he said to La Chaise, “We have here a mighty work upon our hands, no less than the conversion of three kingdoms, and by that perhaps the utter subduing of a pestilent heresy, which has a long time domineered over a great part of this northern world. There were never such hopes of success since the days of Queen Mary, as now in our days. God has given us a prince,” meaning the duke, “who is become (may I say a miracle) zealous of being the author and instrument of so glorious a work; but the opposition we are sure to meet with is also like to be great: so that it imports us to get all the aid and assistance we can.” In another letter he said, “I can scarce believe myself awake, or the thing real, when I think of a prince in such an age as we live in, converted to such a degree of zeal and piety, as not to regard any thing in the world in comparison of God Almighty’s glory, the salvation of his own soul, and the conversion of our poor kingdom.” In other passages, the interests of the crown of England, those of the French king, and those of the Catholic religion, are spoken of as inseparable. The duke is also said to have connected his interests unalterably with those of Lewis. The king himself, he affirms, is always inclined to favor the Catholics, when he may do it without hazard. “Money,” Coleman adds, “cannot fail of persuading the king to any thing. There is nothing it cannot make him do, were it ever so much to his prejudice. It has such an absolute power over him that he cannot resist it. Logic, built upon money, has in our court more powerful charms than any other sort of argument.” For these reasons, he proposed to Father La Chaise, that the French king should remit the sum of three hundred thousand pounds, on condition that the parliament be dissolved; a measure to which, he affirmed, the king was of himself sufficiently inclined, were it not for his hopes of obtaining money from that assembly. The parliament, he said, had already constrained the king to make peace with Holland, contrary to the interests of the Catholic religion, and of his most Christian majesty: and if they should meet again, they would surely engage him further, even to the making of war against France. It appears also from the same letters, that the assembling of the parliament so late as April in the year 1675, had been procured by the intrigues of the Catholic and French party, who thereby intended to show the Dutch and their confederates that they could expect no assistance from England.

When the contents of these letters were publicly known, they diffused the panic with which the nation began already to be seized on account of the Popish plot. Men reasoned more from their fears and their passions, than from the evidence before them. It is certain, that the restless and enterprising spirit of the Catholic church, particularly of the Jesuits, merits attention, and is in some degree dangerous to every other communion. Such zeal of proselytism actuates that sect, that its missionaries have penetrated into every nation of the globe; and, in one sense, there is a Popish plot perpetually carrying on against all states, Protestant, Pagan, and Mahometan. It is likewise very probable, that the conversion of the duke, and the favor of the king, had inspired the Catholic priests with new hopes of recovering in these islands their lost dominion, and gave fresh vigor to that intemperate zeal by which they are commonly actuated. Their first aim was to obtain a toleration; and such was the evidence, they believed, of their theological tenets, that, could they but procure entire liberty, they must infallibly in time open the eyes of the people. After they had converted considerable numbers, they might be enabled, they hoped, to reinstate themselves in full authority, and entirely to suppress that heresy with which the kingdom had so long been infected. Though these dangers to the Protestant religion were distant, it was justly the object of great concern to find, that the heir of the crown was so blinded with bigotry, and so deeply engaged in foreign interests; and that the king himself had been prevailed on, from low Interests, b hearken to his dangerous insinuations. Very bad consequences might ensue from such perverse habits and attachments; nor could the nation and parliament guard against them with too anxious a precaution. But that the Roman pontiff could hope to assume the sovereignty of these kingdoms; a project which, even during the darkness of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, would have appeared chimerical: that he should delegate this authority to the Jesuits, that order in the Romish church which was the most hated: that a massacre could be attempted of the Protestants, who surpassed the Catholics a hundred fold, and were invested with the whole authority of the state: that the king himself was to be assassinated, and even the duke, the only support of their party: these were such absurdities as no human testimony was sufficient to prove; much less the evidence of one man, who was noted for infamy, and who could not keep himself, every moment, from falling into the grossest inconsistencies. Did such intelligence deserve even so much attention as to be refuted, it would appear, that Coleman's letters were sufficient alone to destroy all its credit. For how could so long a train of correspondence be carried on by a man so much trusted by the party, and yet no traces of insurrections, if really intended, of fires, massacres, assassinations, invasions, be ever discovered in any single passage of these letters? But all such reflections, and many more equally obvious, were vainly employed against that general prepossession with which the nation was seized. Oates's plot and Coleman's were universally confounded together: and the evidence of the latter being unquestionable, the belief of the former, aided by the passions of hatred and of terror, took possession of the whole people.

There was danger, however, lest time might open the eyes of the public; when the murder of Godfrey completed the general delusion, and rendered the prejudices of the nation absolutely incurable. This magistrate had been missing some days; and after much search, and many surmises, his body was found lying in a ditch at Primrose Hill: the marks of strangling were thought to appear about his neck, and some contusions on his breast: his own sword was sticking in the body; but as no considerable quantity of blood ensued on drawing it out, it was concluded, that it had been thrust in after his death, and that he had not killed himself: he had rings on his fingers and money in his pocket; it was therefore inferred that he had not fallen into the hands of robbers. Without further reasoning, the cry rose, that he had been assassinated by the Papists, on account of his taking Oates's evidence. This clamor was quickly propagated, and met with universal belief. The panic spread itself on every side with infinite rapidity; and all men, astonished with fear, and animated with rage, saw in Godfrey's fate all the horrible designs ascribed to the Catholics: and no further doubt remained of Oates's veracity. The voice of the nation united against that hated sect; and notwithstanding that the bloody conspiracy was supposed to be now detected, men could scarcely be persuaded that their lives were yet in safety. Each hour teemed with new rumors and surmises. Invasions from abroad, insurrections at home, even private murders and poisonings, were apprehended. To deny the reality of the plot was to be an accomplice: to hesitate was criminal: royalist, republican; churchman, sectary; courtier, patriot; all parties concurred in the illusion. The city prepared for its defence as if the enemy were at its gates: the chains and posts were put up: and it was a noted saying at that time of Sir Thomas Player, the chamberlain, that, were it not for these precautions, all the citizens might rise next morning with their throats cut. [1]

In order to propagate the popular frenzy, several artifices were employed. The dead body of Godfrey was carried into the city, attended by vast multitudes. It was publicly exposed in the streets, and viewed by all ranks of men; and every one who saw it went away inflamed, as well by the mutual contagion of sentiments, as by the dismal spectacle itself. The funeral pomp was celebrated with great parade. The corpse was conducted through the chief streets of the city: seventy-two clergymen marched before: above a thousand persons of distinction followed after: and at the funeral sermon, two able-bodied divines mounted the pulpit, and stood on each side o. the preacher, lest in paying the last duties to this unhappy magistrate, he should, before the whole people, be murdered by the Papists, [2]

In this disposition of the nation, reason could no more be heard than a whisper in the midst of the most violent hurricane. Even at present, Godfrey’s murder can scarcely, upon any system, be rationally accounted for. That he was assassinated by the Catholics, seems utterly improbable. These religionists could not be engaged to commit that crime from policy, in order to deter other magistrates from acting against them. Godfrey’s fate was nowise capable of producing that effect, unless it were publicly known that the Catholics were his murderers; an opinion which, it was easy to foresee, must prove the ruin of their party. Besides, how many magistrates, during more than a century, had acted in the most violent manner against the Catholics, without its being ever suspected that any one had been cut off by assassination? Such jealous times as the present were surely ill fitted for beginning these dangerous experiments. Shall we therefore say, that the Catholics were pushed on, not by policy, but by blind revenge, against Godfrey? But Godfrey had given them little or no occasion of offence in

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* North, .

* *North .

taking Oates’s evidence. His part was merely an act of form belonging to his office; nor could he, or any man in his station, possibly refuse it. In the rest of his conduct, he lived on good terms with the Catholics, and was far from distinguishing himself by his severity against that sect. It is even certain, that he had contracted an intimacy with Coleman, and took care to inform his friend of the danger to which, by reason of Oates’s evidence, he was at present exposed.

There are some writers who, finding it impossible to account for Godfrey’s murder by the machinations of the Catholics, have recourse to the opposite supposition. They lay hold of that obvious presumption, that those commit the crime who reap advantage by it; and they affirm, that it was Shaftesbury and the heads of the popular party who perpetrated that deed, in order to throw the odium of it on the Papists. If this supposition be received, it must also be admitted, that the whole plot was the contrivance of these politicians; and that Oates acted altogether under their direction. But it appears that Oates, dreading probably the opposition of powerful enemies, had very anxiously acquitted the duke, Danby, Ormond, and all the ministry; persons who were certainly the most obnoxious to the popular leaders. Besides, the whole texture of the plot contains such low absurdity, that it is impossible to have been the invention of any man of sense or education. It is true the more monstrous and horrible the conspiracy, the better was it fitted to terrify, and thence to convince, the populace: but this effect, we may safely say, no one could beforehand have expected; and a fool was in this case more likely to succeed than a wise man. Had Shaftesbury laid the plan of a Popish conspiracy, he had probably rendered it moderate consistent, credible; and on that very account had never met with the prodigious success with which Oates’s tremendous fictions were attended.

We must, therefore, be contented to remain forever ignorant of the actors in Godfrey’s murder; and only pronounce in general, that that event in all likelihood, had no connection, one way or other, with the Popish plot. Any man, especially so active a magistrate as Godfrey, might, in such a city as London, have many enemies, of whom his friends and family had no suspicion. He was a melancholy man; and there is some reason, notwithstanding the pretended appearances to the contrary, to suspect that he fell by his own hands. The affair was never examined with tranquillity, or even with common sense, during the time; and it is impossible for us, at this distance, certainly to account for it.

No one doubted but the Papists had assassinated Godfrey; but still the particular actors were unknown. A proclamation was issued by the king, offering a pardon and a reward of five hundred pounds to any one who should discover them. As it was afterwards surmised, that the terror of a like assassination would prevent discovery, a new proclamation was issued, promising absolute protection to any one who should reveal the secret. Thus were indemnity, money, and security offered to the fairest bidder: and no one needed to fear, during the present fury of the people, that his evidence would undergo too severe a scrutiny.

While the nation was in this ferment, the parliament was assembled. In his speech, the king told them, that, though they had given money for disbanding the army, [1] he had found Flanders so exposed, that he had thought it necessary still to keep them on foot, and doubted not but this measure would meet with their approbation. He informed them, that his revenue lay under great anticipations, and at best was never equal to the constant and necessary expense of government; as would appear from the state of it, which he intended to lay before them. He also mentioned the plot formed against his life by Jesuits; but said that he would forbear delivering any opinion of the matter, lest he should seem to say too much or too little; and that he would leave the scrutiny of it entirely to the law.

* They had granted him six hundred thousand pounds for disbanding the army, for reimbursing the charges of his naval armament and for paying the princess of Orange’s portion.

The king was anxious to keep the question of the Popish plot from the parliament; where, he suspected, many designing people would very much abuse the present credulity of the nation, but Danby, who hated the Catholics, and courted popularity, and perhaps hoped that the king, if his life were believed in danger from the Jesuits, would be more cordially loved by the nation, had entertained opposite designs; and the very first day of the session, he opened the matter in the house of peers. The king was extremely displeased with this temerity, and told his minister, “Though you do not believe it, you will find, that you have given the parliament a handle to ruin yourself, as well as to disturb all my affairs; and you will surely live to repent it.” Danby had afterwards sufficient reason to applaud the sagacity of his master.

The cry of the plot was immediately echoed from one house to the other. The authority of parliament gave sanction to that fury with which the people were already agitated. An address was voted for a solemn fast: a form of prayer was contrived for that solemnity; and because the Popish plot had been omitted in the first draught, it was carefully ordered to be inserted; lest omniscience should want intelligence, to use the words of an historian. [1]

* North, .

In order to continue and propagate the alarm, addresses were voted for laying before the house such papers as might discover the horrible conspiracy; for the removal of Popish recusants from London; for administering every where the oaths of allegiance and supremacy; for denying access at court to all unknown or suspicious persons; and for appointing the train bands of London and Westminster to be in readiness. The lords Powis, Stafford, Arundel, Peters, and Bellasis were committed to the Tower, and were soon after impeached for high treason. And both houses, after hearing Oates’s evidence, voted, “That the lords and commons are of opinion, that there hath been, and still is, a damnable and hellish plot, contrived and carried on by the Popish recusants, for assassinating the king, for subverting the government, and for rooting out and destroying the Protestant religion.”

So vehement were the houses, that they sat every day, forenoon and afternoon, on the subject of the plot: for no other business could be attended to. A committee of lords was appointed to examine prisoners and witnesses: blank warrants were put into their hands, for the commitment of such as should be accused or suspected. Oates, who, though his evidence were true, must, by his own account, be regarded as an infamous villain, was by every one applauded, caressed and called the savior of the nation. He was recommended by the parliament to the king. He was lodged in Whitehall, protected by guards, and encouraged by a pension of one thousand two hundred pounds a year.

It was not long before such bountiful encouragement brought forth new witnesses. William Bedloe, a man, if possible, more infamous than Gates, appeared next upon the stage. He was of very low birth, had been noted for several cheats, and even thefts; had travelled over many parts of Europe under borrowed names, and frequently passed himself for a man of quality;

and had endeavored, by a variety of lies and contrivances, to prey upon the ignorant and unwary. When he appeared before the council, he gave intelligence of Godfrey's murder only, which, he said, had been perpetrated in Somerset House, where the queen lived, by Papists, some of them servants in her family. He was questioned about the plot; but utterly denied all knowledge of it, and also asserted, that he had no acquaintance with Oates. Next day, when examined before the committee of lords, he bethought himself better, and was ready to give an ample account of the plot, which he found so anxiously inquired into. This narrative he made to tally, as well as he could, with that of Oates, which had been published: but that he might make himself acceptable by new matter, he added some other circumstances, and these still more tremendous and extraordinary. He said, that ten thousand men were to be landed from Flanders in Burlington Bay, and immediately to seize Hull: that Jersey and Guernsey were to be surprised by forces from Brest; and that a French fleet was all last summer hovering in the Channel for that purpose: that the lords Powis and Peters were to form an army in Radnorshire, to be joined by another army, consisting of twenty or thirty thousand religious men and pilgrims, who were to land at Milford Haven from St. Iago in Spain: that there were forty thousand men ready in London; besides those who would, on the alarm, be posted at every alehouse door, in order to kill the soldiers as they came out of their quarters: that Lord Stafford, Coleman, and Father Ireland had money sufficient to defray the expenses of all these armaments: that he himself was to receive four thousand pounds, as one that could murder a man; as also a commission from Lord Bellasis, and a benediction from the pope that the king was to be assassinated; all the Protestants massacred who would not seriously be converted; the government offered to ONE, if he would consent to hold it of the church; but if he should refuse that condition, as was suspected, the supreme authority would be given to certain lords under the nomination of the pope. In a subsequent examination before the commons, Bedloe added, (for these men always brought out their intelligence successively and by piecemeal,) that Lord Carrington was also in the conspiracy for raising men and money against the government; as was likewise Loro Brudenel. These noblemen, with all the other persons mentioned by Bedloe, were immediately committed to custody by the parliament.

It is remarkable, that the only resource of Spain, in her present decayed condition, lay in the assistance of England: and, so far from being in a situation to transport ten thousand men for the invasion of that kingdom, she had solicited and obtained English forces to be sent into the garrisons of Flanders, which were not otherwise able to defend themselves against the French. The French too, we may observe, were at that very time in open war with Spain, and yet are supposed to be engaged in the same design against England; as if religious motives were become the sole actuating principle among sovereigns. But none of these circumstances, however obvious, were able, when set in opposition to multiplied horrors, antipathies, and prejudices, to engage the least attention of the populace: for such the whole nation were at this time become. The Popish plot passed for incontestable: and had not men soon expected with certainty the legal punishment of these criminals, the Catholics had been exposed to the hazard of a universal massacre. The torrent, indeed, of national prejudices ran so high, that no one, without the most imminent danger, durst venture openly to oppose it; nay, scarcely any one, without great force of judgment, could even secretly entertain an opinion contrary to the prevailing sentiments. The loud and unanimous voice of a great nation has mighty authority over weak minds; and even later historians are so swayed by the concurring judgment of such multitudes, that some of them have esteemed themselves sufficiently moderate, when they affirmed, that many circumstances of the plot were true, though some were added, and others much magnified. But it is an obvious principle, that a witness who perjures himself in one circumstance is credible in none and the authority of the plot, even to the end of the prosecutions, stood entirely upon witnesses. Though the Catholics had seen suddenly and unexpectedly detected, at the very moment when their conspiracy, it is said, was ripe for execution, no arms, no ammunition, no money, no commissions, no papers, no letters, after the most rigorous search, ever were discovered, to confirm the evidence of Oates and Bedloe. Yet still the nation, though often frustrated, went on in the eager pursuit and confident belief of the conspiracy: and even the manifold inconsistencies and absurdities contained in the narratives, instead of discouraging them, served only as further incentives to discover the bottom of the plot, and were considered as slight objections, which a more complete information would fully remove. In all history, it will be difficult to find such another instance of popular frenzy and bigoted delusion.

In order to support the panic among the people, especially among the citizens of London, a pamphlet was published with this title: “A narrative and impartial discovery of the horrid Popish plot, carried on for burning and destroying the cities of London and Westminster, with their suburbs: setting forth the several consults, orders, and resolutions of the Jesuits concerning the same: by Captain William Bedloe, lately engaged in that horrid design, and one of the Popish committee for carrying on such fires.” Every fire which had happened for several years past, is there ascribed to the machinations of the Jesuits, who purposed, as Bedloe said, by such attempts, to find an opportunity for the general massacre of the Protestants; and, in the mean time, were well pleased to enrich themselves by pilfering goods from the fire.

The king, though he scrupled not, wherever he could speak freely, to throw the highest ridicule on the plot, and on all who believed it, yet found it necessary to adopt the popular opinion before the parliament. The torrent, he saw, ran too strong to be controlled; and he could only hope, by a seeming compliance, to be able, after some time, to guide and direct and elude its fury. He made, therefore, a speech to both houses; in which he told them, that he would take the utmost care of his person during these times of danger; that he was as ready as their hearts could wish, to join with them in all means for establishing the Protestant religion, not only during his own time, but for all future ages; and that, provided the right of succession were preserved, he would consent to any laws for restraining a Popish successor: and, in conclusion, he exhorted them to think of effectual means for the conviction of Popish recusants; and he highly praised the duty and loyalty of all his subjects, who had discovered such anxious concern for his safety.

These gracious expressions abated nothing of the vehemence of parliamentary proceedings. A bill was introduced for a new test, in which Popery was denominated idolatry; and all members, who refused this test, were excluded from both houses. The bill passed the commons without much opposition; but in the upper house the duke moved, that an exception might be admitted in his favor. With great earnestness, and even with tears in his eyes, he told them that he was now to cast himself on their kindness, in the greatest concern which he could have in the world; and he protested, that, whatever his religion might be, it should only be a private thing between God and his own soul, and never should appear in his public conduct. Notwithstanding this strong effort, in so important a point, he prevailed only by two voices: a sufficient indication of the general disposition of the people. “I would not have,” said a noble peer, in the debate on this bill, “so much as a Popish man or a Popish woman to remain here; not so much as a Popish dog or a Popish bitch; not so much as a Popish cat to pur or mew about the king.” What is more extraordinary, this speech met with praise and approbation.

Encouraged by this general fury, the witnesses went still a step farther in their accusations; and though both Oates and Bedloe had often declared, that there was no other person of distinction whom they knew to be concerned in the plot, they were now so audacious as to accuse the queen herself of entering into the design against the life of her husband. The commons, in an address to the king, gave countenance to this scandalous accusation; but the lords would not be prevailed with to join in the address. It is here, if any where, that we may suspect the suggestions of the popular leaders to have had place. The king, it was well known, bore no great affection to his consort; and now, more than ever, when his brother and heir was so much hated, had reason to be desirous of issue which might quiet the jealous fears of his people. This very hatred, which prevailed against the duke, would much facilitate, he knew, any expedient that could be devised for the exclusion of that prince; and nothing further seemed requisite for the king, than to give way in this particular to the rage and fury of the nation. But Charles, notwithstanding all allurements of pleasure, or interest, or safety, had the generosity to protect his injured consort. “They think,” said he, “I have a mind to a new wife; but for all that, I will not see an innocent woman abused.” [1] He immediately ordered Oates to be strictly confined, seized his papers, and dismissed his servants; and this daring informer was obliged to make applications to parliament, in order to recover his liberty.

During this agitation of men’s minds, the parliament gave new attention to the militia; a circumstance which, even during times of greatest tranquillity, can never prudently be neglected. They passed a bill, by which it was enacted, that a regular militia should be kept in arms during six weeks of the year, and a third part of them do duty every fortnight of that time. The popular leaders probably intended to make use of the general prejudices, and even to turn the arms of the people against the prince. [2] But Charles refused his assent to the bill, and told the parliament, that he would not, were it for half an hour, part so far with the power of the sword: but if they would contrive any other bill for ordering the militia, and still leave it in his power to assemble or dismiss them as he thought proper, he would willingly give it the royal assent. The commons, dissatisfied with this negative, though the king had never before employed that prerogative, immediately voted that all the new-levied forces should be disbanded. They passed a bill, granting money for that purpose; but to show their extreme jealousy of the crown, besides appropriating the money by the strictest clauses, they ordered it to be paid, not into the exchequer, but into the chamber of London. The lords demurred with regard to so extraordinary a clause, which threw a violent reflection on the king's ministers, and even on himself; and by that means the act remained in suspense.

* North's Examen, .

* * Burnet, vol. i. ·

It was no wonder, that the present ferment and credulity of the nation engaged men of infamous character and indigent circumstances to become informers, when persons of rank and condition could be tempted to give into that scandalous practice. Montague, the king's ambassador at Paris, had procured a seat in the lower house; and without obtaining or asking the king's leave, he suddenly came over to England. Charles, suspecting his intention, ordered his papers to be seized; but Montague, who foresaw this measure, had taken care to secrete one paper, which he immediately laid before the house of commons. It was a letter from the treasurer Danby, written in the beginning of the year, during the negotiations at Nimeguen for the general peace. Montague was there directed to make a demand of money from France; or, in other words, the king was willing secretly to sell his good offices to Lewis, contrary to the general interests of the confederates, and even to those of his own kingdoms. The letter, among other particulars, contains these words: "In case the conditions of peace shall be accepted, the king expects to have six millions of livres a year for three years, from the time that this agreement shall be signed between his majesty and the king of France; because it will probably be two or three years before the parliament will be in humor to give him any supplies after the making of any peace with France; and the ambassador here has always agreed to that sum; but not for so long a time." Danby was so unwilling to engage in this negotiation, that the king, to satisfy him, subjoined with his own hand these words: “This letter is writ by my order. C. R.” Montague, who revealed this secret correspondence, had even the baseness to sell his base treachery at a high price to the French monarch. [1]

* Appendix to Sir John Dalrymple’s Memoirs.

The commons were inflamed with this intelligence against Danby; and carrying their suspicions further than the truth, they concluded, that the king had all along acted in concert with the French court; and that every step which he had taken in conjunction with the allies, had been illusory and deceitful. Desirous of getting to the bottom of so important a secret, and being pushed by Danby’s numerous enemies, they immediately voted an impeachment of high treason against that minister, and sent up six articles to the house of peers. These articles were, That he had traitorously engrossed to himself regal power, by giving instructions to his majesty’s ambassadors, without the participation of the secretaries of state, or the privy council: that he had traitorously endeavored to subvert the government, and introduce arbitrary power; and to that end, had levied and continued an army, contrary to act of parliament: that he had traitorously endeavored to alienate the affections of his majesty’s subjects, by negotiating a disadvantageous peace with France, and procuring money for that purpose: that he was popishly affected, and had traitorously concealed, after he had notice, the late horrid and bloody plot, contrived by the Papists against his majesty’s person and government: that he had wasted the king’s treasure: and that he had, by indirect means, obtained several exorbitant grants from the crown.

It is certain that the treasurer, in giving instructions to an ambassador, had exceeded the bounds of his office; and as the genius of a monarchy, strictly limited, requires, that the proper minister should be answerable for every abuse of power, the commons, though they here advanced a new pretension, might justify themselves by the utility, and even necessity of it. But in other respects their charge against Danby was very ill grounded. That minister made it appear to the house of lords, not only that Montague, the informer against him, had all along promoted the money negotiations with France, but that he himself was ever extremely averse to the interests of that crown, which he esteemed pernicious to his master and to his country. The French nation, he said, had always entertained, as he was certainly informed, the highest contempt both of the king’s person and government. His diligence, he added, in tracing and discovering the Popish plot, was generally known; and if he had common sense, not to say common honesty, he would surely be anxious to preserve the life of a master by whom he was so much favored. He had wasted no treasure, because there was no treasure to waste. And though he had reason to be grateful for the king's bounty, he had made more moderate acquisitions than were generally imagined, and than others in his office had often done, even during a shorter administration.

The house of peers plainly saw, that, allowing all the charges of the commons to be true, Danby's crimes fell not under the statute of Edward III; and though the words treason and traitorously had been carefully inserted in several articles, this appellation could not change the nature of things, or subject him to the penalties annexed to that crime. They refused, therefore, to commit Danby upon this irregular charge: the commons insisted on their demand; and a great contest was likely to arise, when the king, who had already seen sufficient instances of the ill humor of the parliament, thought proper to prorogue them. This prorogation was soon after followed by a dissolution; a desperate remedy in the present disposition of the nation. But the disease, it must be owned, the king had reason to esteem desperate. The utmost rage had been discovered by the commons, on account of the Popish plot; and their fury began already to point against the royal family, if not against the throne itself. The duke had been struck at in several motions: the treasurer had been impeached: all supply had been refused, except on the most disagreeable conditions: fears, jealousies, and antipathies were every day multiplying in parliament; and though the people were strongly infected with the same prejudices, the king hoped, that, by dissolving the present cabals, a set of men might be chosen, more moderate in their pursuits, and less tainted with the virulence of faction.

Thus came to a period a parliament which had sitten during the whole course of this reign, one year excepted. Its conclusion was very different from its commencement. Being elected during the joy and festivity of the restoration, it consisted almost entirely of royalists; who were disposed to support the crown by all the liberality which the habits of that age would permit. Alarmed by the alliance with France, they gradually withdrew their confidence from the king; and finding him still to persevere in a foreign interest, they proceeded to discover symptoms of the most refractory and most jealous disposition. The Popish plot pushed them beyond all bounds of moderation; and before their dissolution, they seemed to be treading fast in the footsteps of the last long parliament, on whose conduct they threw at first such violent blame. In all their variations, they had still followed the opinions and prejudices of the nation; and ever seemed to be more governed by humor and party views than by public interest, and more by public interest than by any corrupt or private influence.

During the sitting of the parliament, and after its prorogation and dissolution, the trials of the pretended criminals were carried on; and the courts of judicature, places which, if possible, ought to be kept more pure from injustice than even national assemblies themselves, were strongly infected with the same party rage and bigoted prejudices. Coleman, the most obnoxious of the conspirators, was first brought to his trial. His letters were produced against him. They contained, as he himself confessed, much indiscretion: but unless so far as it is illegal to be a zealous Catholic, they seemed to prove nothing criminal, much less treasonable against him. Gates and Bedloe deposed, that he had received a commission, signed by the superior of the Jesuits, to be Papal secretary of state, and had consented to the poisoning, shooting, and stabbing of the king: he had even, according to Oates's deposition, advanced a guinea to promote those bloody purposes. These wild stories were confounded with the projects contained in his letters; and Coleman received sentence of death. The sentence was soon after executed upon him. [1] He suffered with calmness and constancy, and to the last persisted in the strongest protestations of his innocence.

Coleman's execution was succeeded by the trial of Father Ireland, who, it is pretended, had signed, together with fifty Jesuits, the great resolution of murdering the king. Grove and Pickering, who had undertaken to shoot him, were tried at the same time. The only witnesses against the prisoners were still Gates and Bedloe. Ireland affirmed, that he was in Staffordshire all the month of August last, a time when Oates's evidence made him in London. He proved his assertion by good evidence; and would have proved it by undoubted, had he not most iniquitously been debarred, while in prison, from all use of pen, ink, and paper, and denied the liberty of sending for witnesses. All these men, before their arraignment, were condemned in the opinion of the judges, jury, and spectators; and to be a Jesuit, or even a Catholic, was of itself a sufficient proof of guilt. The chief justice, [2] in particular, gave sanction to all the narrow prejudices and bigoted fury of the populace. Instead of being counsel for the prisoners, as his office required, he pleaded the cause against them, browbeat their witnesses, and on every occasion represented their guilt as certain and uncontroverted. He even went so far as publicly to affirm, that the Papists had not the same principles which Protestants have, and therefore were not entitled to that common credence, which the principles and practices of the latter call for. And when the jury brought in their verdict against the prisoners, he said, “You have done, gentlemen, like very good subjects, and very good Christians, that is to say, like very good Protestants, and now much good may their thirty thousand masses do them;” alluding to the masses by which Pickering was to be rewarded for murdering the king. All these unhappy men went to execution, protesting their innocence; a circumstance which made no impression on the spectators.

* December 3.

* Sir William Scroggs.

1679

The opinion, that the Jesuits allowed of lies and mental reservations for promoting a good cause, was at this time so universally received, that no credit was given to testimony delivered either by that order, or by any of their disciples. It was forgotten, that all the conspirators engaged in the gunpowder treason, and Garnet, the Jesuit among the rest, had freely on the scaffold made confession of their guilt.

Though Bedloe had given information of Godfrey’s murder, he still remained a single evidence against the persons accused; and all the allurements of profit and honor had not hitherto tempted any one to confirm the testimony of that informer. At last, means were found to complete the legal evidence. One Prance, a silversmith and a Catholic, had been accused by Bedloe of being an accomplice in the murder; and upon his denial, had been thrown into prison, loaded with heavy irons and confined to the condemned hole, a place cold, dark, and full of nastiness. Such rigors were supposed to be exercised by orders from the secret committee of lords, particularly Shaftesbury and Buckingham; who, in examining the prisoners, usually employed (as it is said, and indeed sufficiently proved) threatenings and promises, rigor and indulgence, and every art, under pretence of extorting the truth from them. Prance had not courage to resist, but confessed himself an accomplice in Godfrey’s murder. Being asked concerning the plot, he also thought proper to be acquainted with it, and conveyed some intelligence to the council. Among other absurd circumstances, he said that one Le Fevre bought a second-hand sword of him; because he knew not, as he said, what times were at hand; and Prance expressing some concern for poor tradesmen, if such times came, Le Fevre replied, that it would be better for tradesmen if the Catholic religion were restored; and particularly, that there would be more church work for silversmiths. All this information, with regard to the plot as well as the murder of Godfrey, Prance solemnly retracted, both before the king and the secret committee: but being again thrown into prison, he was induced, by new terrors and new sufferings, to confirm his first information, and was now produced as a sufficient evidence.

Hill, Green, and Berry were tried for Godfrey’s murder, all of them men of low stations. Hill was servant to a physician: the other two belonged to the Popish chapel at Somerset House. It is needless to run over all the particulars of a long trial: it will be sufficient to say, that Bedloe’s evidence and Prance’s were in many circumstances totally irreconcilable, that both of them labored under unsurmountable difficulties, not to say gross absurdities; and that they were invalidated by contrary evidence, which is altogether convincing. But all was in vain: the prisoners were condemned and executed. They all denied their guilt at their execution; and as Berry died a Protestant, this circumstance was regarded as very considerable: but, instead of its giving some check to the general credulity of the people, men were only surprised, that a Protestant could be induced at his death to persist in so manifest a falsehood.

As the army could neither be kept up nor disbanded without money, the king, how little hopes soever he could entertain of more compliance, found himself obliged to summon a new parliament. The blood already shed on account of the Popish plot, instead of satiating the people, served only as an incentive to their fury; and each conviction of a criminal was hitherto regarded as a new proof of those horrible designs imputed to the Papists. This election is perhaps the first in England, which, since the commencement of the monarchy, had been carried on by a violent contest between the parties, and where the court interested itself to a high degree in the choice of the national representatives. But all its efforts were fruitless, in opposition to the torrent of prejudices which prevailed. Religion, liberty, property, even the lives of men, were now supposed to be at stake; and no security, it was thought, except in a vigilant parliament, could be found against the impious and bloody conspirators. Were there any part of the nation to which the ferment, occasioned by the Popish plot, had not as yet propagated itself, the new elections, by interesting the whole people in public concerns, tended to diffuse it into the remotest corner; and the consternation universally excited proved an excellent engine for influencing the electors. All the zealots of the former parliament were rechosen: new ones were added: the Presbyterians, in particular, being transported with the most inveterate antipathy against Popery, were very active and very successful in the elections. That party, it is said, first began at this time the abuse of splitting their freeholds, in order to multiply votes and electors. By accounts which came from every part of England, it was concluded, that the new representatives would, if possible, exceed the old in their refractory opposition to the court, and furious persecution of the Catholics.

The king was alarmed when he saw so dreadful a tempest arise from such small and unaccountable beginnings. His life, if Gates and Bedloe’s information were true, had been aimed at by the Catholics: even the duke’s was in danger; the higher, therefore, the rage mounted against Popery, the more should the nation have been reconciled to these princes in whom, it appeared, the church of Rome reposed no confidence. But there is a sophistry which attends all the passions, especially those into which the populace enter. Men gave credit to the informers, so far as concerned the guilt of the Catholics: but they still retained their old suspicions, that these religionists were secretly favored by the king, and had obtained the most entire ascendant over his brother. Charles had too much penetration not to see the danger to which the succession, and even his own crown and dignity, now stood exposed. A numerous party, he found, was formed against him: on the one hand, composed of a populace, so credulous from prejudice, so blinded with religious antipathy, as implicitly to believe the most palpable absurdities; and conducted, on the other hand, by leaders so little scrupulous, as to endeavor, by encouraging perjury, subornation, lies, impostures, and even by shedding innocent blood, to gratify their own furious ambition, and subvert all legal authority. Roused from his lethargy by so imminent a peril, he began to exert that vigor of mind, of which, on great occasions, he was not destitute; and without quitting in appearance his usual facility of temper, he collected an industry, firmness, and vigilance, of which he was believed altogether incapable. These qualities, joined to dexterity and prudence, conducted him happily through the many shoals which surrounded him; and he was at last able to make the storm fall on the heads of those who had blindly raised or artfully conducted it.

One chief step which the king took towards gratifying and appeasing his people and parliament, was, desiring the duke to withdraw beyond sea, that no further suspicion might remain of the influence of Popish counsels. The duke readily complied; but first required an order for that purpose, signed by the king; lest his absenting himself should be interpreted as a proof of fear or of guilt. He also desired, that his brother should satisfy him, as well as the public, by a declaration of the illegitimacy of the duke of Monmouth.

James, duke of Monmouth, was the king's natural son by Lucy Walters, and born about ten years before the restoration. He possessed all the qualities which could engage the affections of the populace; a distinguished valor, an affable address, a thoughtless generosity, a graceful person. He rose still higher in the public favor, by reason of the universal hatred to which the duke, on account of his religion, was exposed. Monmouth's capacity was mean; his temper pliant: so that, notwithstanding his great popularity, he had never been dangerous, had he not implicitly resigned himself to the guidance of Shaftesbury, a man of such a restless temper, such subtle wit, and such abandoned principles. That daring politician had flattered Monmouth with the hopes of succeeding to the crown. The story of a contract of marriage, passed between the king and Monmouth's mother, and secretly kept in a certain *black box*, had been industriously spread abroad, and was greedily received by the multitude. As the horrors of Popery still pressed harder on them, they might be induced either to adopt that fiction, as they had already done many others more incredible, or to commit open violation on the right of succession. And it would not be difficult, it was hoped, to persuade the king, who was extremely fond of his son, to give him the preference above a brother, who, by his imprudent bigotry, had involved him in such inextricable difficulties. But Charles, in order to cut off all such expectations, as well as to remove the duke's apprehensions, took care, in full council, to make a declaration of Monmouth's illegitimacy, and to deny all promise of marriage with his mother. The duke, being gratified in so reasonable a request, willingly complied with the king’s desire, and retired to Brussels.

But the king soon found that, notwithstanding this precaution, notwithstanding his concurrence in the prosecution of the Popish plot, notwithstanding the zeal which he expressed, and even at this time exercised against the Catholics, he had nowise obtained the confidence of his parliament. The refractory humor of the lower house appeared in the first step which they took upon their assembling. It had ever been usual for the commons, in the election of their speaker, to consult the inclinations of the sovereign; and even the long parliament, in 1641, had not thought proper to depart from so established a custom. The king now desired, that the choice should fall on Sir Thomas Meres: but Seymour, speaker to the last parliament, was instantly called to the chair, by a vote which seemed unanimous. The king, when Seymour was presented to him for his approbation, rejected him, and ordered the commons to proceed to a new choice. A great flame was excited. The commons maintained, that the king s approbation was merely a matter of form, and that he could not without giving a reason, reject the speaker chosen; the king, that, since he had the power of rejecting, he might, if he pleased, keep the reason in his own breast. As the question had never before been started, it might seem difficult to find principles upon which it could be decided. [1] By way of compromise, it was agreed to set aside both candidates. Gregory, a lawyer, was chosen; and the election was ratified by the king. It has ever since been understood, that the choice of the speaker lies in the house; but that the king retains the power of rejecting any person disagreeable to him.

[1] In 1566, the speaker said to Queen Elizabeth, that without her allowance the election of the house was of no significance. D’Ewes’s Journal, . In the parliament 1592, 1593, the speaker, who was Sir Edward Coke, advances a like position. D’Ewes, ; Townshend, . So that this pretension of the commons seems to have been somewhat new; like many of their other powers and privileges.

Seymour was deemed a great enemy to Danby; and it was the influence of that nobleman, as commonly supposed, which had engaged the king to enter into this ill-timed controversy with the commons. The impeachment, therefore, of Danby was on that account the sooner revived; and it was maintained by the commons, that notwithstanding the intervening dissolution, every part of that proceeding stood in the same condition in which it had been left by the last parliament; a pretension which, though unusual, seems tacitly to have been yielded them. The king had beforehand had the precaution to grant a pardon to Danby; and, in order to screen the chancellor from all attacks by the commons, he had taken the great seal into his own hands, and had himself affixed it to the parchment. He told the parliament, that, as Danby had acted in every thing by his orders, he was in no respect criminal; that his pardon, however, he would insist upon; and if it should be found anywise defective in form, he would renew it again and again, till it should be rendered entirely complete; but that he was resolved to deprive him of all employments, and to remove him from court.

The commons were nowise satisfied with this concession They pretended, that no pardon of the crown could be pleaded in bar of an impeachment, by the commons. The prerogative of mercy had hitherto been understood to be altogether unlimited in the king; and this pretension of the commons, it must be confessed, was entirely new. It was, however, not unsuitable to the genius of a monarchy strictly limited, where the king’s ministers are supposed to be forever accountable to national assemblies, even for such abuses of power as they may commit by orders from their master. The present emergence, while the nation was so highly inflamed, was the proper time for pushing such popular claims; and the commons failed not to avail themselves of this advantage. They still insisted On the impeachment of Danby. The peers, in compliance with them, departed from their former scruples, and ordered Danby to be taken into custody. Danby absconded. The commons passed a bill, appointing him to surrender himself before a certain day, or, in default of it, attainting him. A bill had passed the upper house, mitigating the penalty to banishment; but after some conferences, the peers thought proper to yield to the violence of the commons, and the bill of attainder was carried. Rather than undergo such severe penalties, Danby appeared, and was immediately committed to the Tower.

While a Protestant nobleman met with such violent prosecution, it was not likely that the Catholics would be overlooked by the zealous commons. The credit of the Popish plot still stood upon the oaths of a few infamous witnesses. Though such immense preparations were supposed to have been made in the very bowels of the kingdom, no traces of them, after the most rigorous inquiry, had as yet appeared. Though so many thousands, both abroad and at home, had been engaged in the dreadful secret, neither hope, nor fear, nor remorse, nor levity, nor suspicions, nor private resentment, had engaged any one to confirm the evidence. Though the Catholics, particularly the Jesuits, were represented as guilty of the utmost indiscretion, insomuch that they talked of the king's murder as common news, and wrote of it in plain terms by the common post, yet, among the great number of letters seized, no one contained any part of so complicated a conspiracy. Though the informers pretended that, even after they had resolved to betray the secret, many treasonable commissions and papers had passed through their hands, they had not had the precaution to keep any one of them, in order to fortify their evidence. But all these difficulties, and a thousand more, were not found too hard of digestion by me nation and parliament. The prosecution and further discovery of the plot were still the object of general concern. The commons voted, that, if the king should come to an untimely end, they would revenge his death upon the Papists; not reflecting that this sect were not his only enemies. They promised rewards to new discoverers; not considering the danger which they incurred of granting bribes to perjury. They made Bedloe a present of five hundred pounds; and particularly recommended the care of his safety to the duke of Monmouth. Colonel Sackville, a member, having, in a private company, spoken opprobriously of those who affirmed that there was any plot, was expelled the house. The peers gave power to their committees to send for and examine such as would maintain the innocence of those who had been condemned for the plot. A pamphlet having been published to discredit the informers, and to vindicate the Catholic lords in the Tower, these lords were required to discover the author, and thereby to expose their own advocate to prosecution. And both houses concurred in renewing the former vote, that the Papists had undoubtedly entered into a *horrid* and *treasonable* conspiracy against the king, the state, and the Protestant religion.

It must be owned, that this extreme violence, in prosecution of so absurd an imposture, disgraces the noble cause of liberty, in which the parliament was engaged. We may even conclude from such impatience of contradiction, that the prosecutors themselves retained a secret suspicion, that the general belief was but ill grounded. The politicians among them were afraid to let in light, lest it might put an end to so useful a delusion: the weaker and less dishonest party took care, by turning their eyes aside, not to see a truth, so opposite to those furious passions by which they were actuated, and in which they were determined obstinately to persevere.

Sir William Temple had lately been recalled from his foreign employments; and the king, who, after the removal of Danby, had no one with whom he could so much as discourse with freedom of public affairs, was resolved, upon Coventry's dismission, to make him one of his secretaries of state. But that philosophical patriot, too little interested for the intrigues of a court, too full of spleen and delicacy for the noisy turbulence of popular assemblies, was alarmed at the universal discontents and jealousies which prevailed, and was determined to make his retreat, as soon as possible, from a scene which threatened such confusion. Meanwhile, he could not refuse the confidence with which his master honored him; and he resolved to employ it to the public service. He represented to the king, that, as the jealousies of the nation were extreme, it was necessary to cure them by some new remedy, and to restore that mutual confidence, so requisite for the safety both of king and people: that to refuse every thing to the parliament in their present disposition, or to yield every thing, was equally dangerous to the constitution as well as to public tranquillity: that if the king would introduce into his councils such men as enjoyed the confidence of his people, fewer concessions would probably be required; or, if unreasonable demands were made, the king, under the sanction of such counsellors, might be enabled, with the greater safety, to refuse them: and that the heads of the popular party, being gratified with the king's favor, would probably abate of that violence by which they endeavored at present to pay court to the multitude.

The king assented to these reasons; and, in concert with Temple, he laid the plan of a new privy council, without whose advice he declared himself determined for the future to take no measure of importance. This council was to consist of thirty persons, and was never to exceed that number. Fifteen of the chief officers of the crown were to be continued, who, it was supposed, would adhere to the king, and, in case of any extremity, oppose the exorbitancies of faction. The other half of the council was to be composed, either of men of character, detached from the court, or of those who possessed chief credit in both houses. And the king, in filling up the names of his new council, was well pleased to find, that the members, in land and offices, possessed to the amount of three hundred thousand pounds a year; a sum nearly equal to the whole property of the house of commons, against whose violence the new council was intended as a barrier to the throne. [1]

* Their names were: Prince Rupert, the archbishop of Canterbury Lord Finch, chancellor, earl of Shaftesbury, president, earl of Anglesea, privy seal, duke of Albemarle,

duke of Monmouth, duke of Newcastle, duke of Lauderdale,
duke of Ormond, marquis of Winchester, marquis of Worcester,
earl of Arlington, earl of Salisbury, earl of Bridgewater,
earl of Sunderland, earl of Essex, earl of Bath, Viscount Fauconberg, Viscount Halifax, bishop of London, Lord Robarts, Lord Hollis, Lord Russel, Lord Cavendish, Secretary Coventry, Sir Francis North, chief justice, Sir Henry Capel,
Sir John Ernley, Sir Thomas Chicheley, Sir William Temple,
Edward Seymour, Henry Powle.

This experiment was tried, and seemed at first to give some satisfaction to the public. The earl of Essex, a nobleman of the popular party, son of that Lord Capel who had been beheaded a little after the late king, was created treasurer in the room of Danby: the earl of Sunderland, a man of intrigue and capacity, was made secretary of state: Viscount Halifax a fine genius, possessed of learning, eloquence, industry, but subject to inquietude, and fond of refinements, was admitted into the council. These three, together with Temple, who often joined them, though he kept himself more detached from public business, formed a kind of cabinet council, from which all affairs received their first digestion. Shaftesbury was made president of the council; contrary to the advice of Temple, who foretold the consequences of admitting a man of so dangerous a character into any part of the public administration.

As Temple foresaw, it happened. Shaftesbury, finding that he possessed no more than the appearance of court favor, was resolved still to adhere to the popular party, by whose attachment he enjoyed an undisputed superiority in the lower house, and possessed great influence in the other. The very appearance of court favor, empty as it was, tended to render him more dangerous. His partisans, observing the progress which he had already made, hoped that he would soon acquire the entire ascendant; and he constantly flattered them, that if they persisted in their purpose; the king, from indolence, and necessity, and fondness for Monmouth, would at last be induced, even at the expense of his brother's right, to make them every concession.

Besides, the antipathy to Popery, as well as jealousy of the king and duke, had taken too fast possession of men's minds, to be removed by so feeble a remedy as this new council projected by Temple. The commons, soon after the establishment of that council, proceeded so far as to vote unanimously, "That the duke of York's being a Papist, and the hopes of his coming to the crown, had given the highest countenance to the present conspiracies and designs of the Papists against the king and the Protestant religion." It was expected, that a bill for excluding him the throne would soon be brought in. To prevent this bold measure, the king concerted some limitations, which he proposed to the parliament. He introduced his plan by the following gracious expressions: "And to show you that, while you are doing your parts, my thoughts have not been misemployed, but that it is my constant care to do every thing that may preserve your religion, and secure if for the future in all events; I have commanded my lord chancellor to mention several particulars, which, I hope, will be an evidence that, in all things which concern the public rights, I shall not follow your zeal, but lead it."

The limitations projected were of the utmost importance and deprived the successor of the chief branches of royalty. A method was there chalked out, by which the nation, on every new reign, could be insured of having a parliament which the king should not, for a certain time, have it in his power to dissolve. In case of a Popish successor, the prince was to forfeit the right of conferring any ecclesiastical preferments: no member of the privy council, no judge of the common law or in chancery, was to be put in or displaced but by consent of parliament: and the same precaution was extended to the military part of the government; to the lord lieutenants and deputy lieutenants of the counties, and to all officers of the navy. The chancellor of himself added, "It is hard to invent another restraint; considering how much the revenue will depend upon the consent of parliament, and how impossible it is to raise money without such consent. But yet, if any thing else can occur to the wisdom of parliament, which may further secure religion and liberty against a Popish successor, without defeating the right of succession itself, his majesty will readily consent to it."

It is remarkable, that, when, these limitations were first laid before the council, Shaftesbury and Temple were the only members who argued against them. The reasons which they employed were diametrically opposite. Shaftesbury's opinion was, that the restraints were insufficient; and that nothing but the total exclusion of the duke could give a proper security to the kingdom. Temple, on the other hand, thought, that the restraints were so rigorous as even to subvert the constitution; and that shackles put upon a Popish successor would not afterwards be easily cast off by a Protestant. It is certain, that the duke was extremely alarmed when he heard of this step taken by the king, and that he was better pleased even with the bill of exclusion itself, which, he thought, by reason of its violence and injustice, could never possibly be carried into execution. There is also reason to believe, that the king would not have gone so far, had he not expected, from the extreme fury of the commons, that his concessions would be rejected, and that the blame of not forming a reasonable accommodation would by that means lie entirely at their door.

It soon appeared that Charles had entertained a just opinion of the dispositions of the house. So much were the commons actuated by the cabals of Shaftesbury and other malecontents, such violent antipathy prevailed against Popery that the king's concessions, though much more important than could reasonably have been expected, were not embraced. A bill was brought in for the total exclusion of the duke from the crown of England and Ireland. It was there declared, that the sovereignty of these kingdoms, upon the king's death or resignation, should devolve to the person next in succession after the duke; that all acts of royalty which that prince should afterwards perform, should not only be void, but be deemed treason; that if he so much as entered any of these dominions, he should be deemed guilty of the same offence; and that all who supported his title should be punished as rebels and traitors. This important bill, which implied banishment as well as exclusion, passed the lower house by a majority of seventy-nine.

The commons were not so wholly employed about the exclusion bill as to overlook all other securities to liberty. The country party, during all the last parliament, had much exclaimed against the bribery and corruption of the members; and the same reproach had been renewed against the present parliament. An inquiry was made into a complaint which was so dangerous to the honor of that assembly; but very little foundation was found for it. Sir

Stephen Fox, who was the paymaster, confessed to the house, that nine members received pensions to the amount of three thousand four hundred pounds; and after a rigorous inquiry by a secret committee, eight more pensioners were discovered. A sum also, about twelve thousand pounds, had been occasionally given or lent to others. The writers of that age pretend, that Clifford and Danby had adopted opposite maxims with regard to pecuniary influence. The former endeavored to gain the leaders and orators of the house, and deemed the others of no consequence. The latter thought it sufficient to gain the majority, however composed. It is likely, that the means, rather than the intention, were wanting to both these ministers.

Pensions and bribes, though it be difficult entirely to exclude them, are dangerous expedients for government; and cannot be too carefully guarded against, nor too vehemently decried, by every one who has a regard to the virtue and liberty of a nation. The influence, however, which the crown acquires from the disposal of places, honors, and preferments, is to be esteemed of a different nature. This engine of power may become too forcible, but it cannot altogether be abolished, without the total destruction of monarchy, and even of all regular authority. But the commons at this time were so jealous of the crown, that they brought in a bill, which was twice read, excluding from the lower house all who possessed any lucrative office.

The standing army and the king’s guards were by the commons voted to be illegal; a new pretension, it must be confessed, but necessary for the full security of liberty and a limited constitution.

Arbitrary imprisonment is a grievance which, in some degree, has place almost in every government, except in that of Great Britain; and our absolute security from it we owe chiefly to the present parliament; a merit, which makes some atonement for the faction and violence into which their prejudices had, in other particulars, betrayed them. The Great Charter had laid the foundation of this valuable part of liberty; the petition of right had renewed and extended it; but some provisions were still wanting to render it complete, and prevent all evasion or delay from ministers and judges. The act of habeas corpus, which passed this session, served these purposes. By this act, it was prohibited to send any one to a prison beyond sea. No judge, under severe penalties, must refuse to any prisoner a writ of habeas corpus, by which the jailer was directed to produce in court the body of the prisoner, (whence the writ has its name,) and to certify the cause of his detainer and imprisonment. If the jail lie within twenty miles of the judge, the writ must be obeyed in three days; and so proportionably for greater distances. Every prisoner must be indicted the first term after his commitment, and brought to trial in the subsequent term. And no man, after being enlarged by order of court, can be recommitted for the same offence. This law seems necessary for the protection of liberty in a mixed monarchy; and as it has not place in any other form of government, this consideration alone may induce us to prefer our present constitution to all others. It must, however, be confessed, that there is some difficulty to reconcile with such extreme liberty the full security and the regular police of a state, especially the police of great cities. It may also be doubted, whether the low state of the public revenue in this period, and of the military power, did not still render some discretionary authority in the crown necessary to the support of government.

During these zealous efforts for the protection of liberty no complaisance for the crown was discovered by this parliament. The king’s revenue lay under great debts and anticipations: those branches granted in the years 1669 and 1670 were ready to expire. And the fleet was represented by the king as in great decay and disorder. But the commons, instead of being affected by these distresses of the crown, trusted chiefly to them for passing the exclusion bill, and for punishing and displacing all the ministers who were obnoxious to them. They were therefore in no haste to relieve the king; and grew only the more assuming on account of his complaints and uneasiness. Jealous, however, of the army, they granted the sum of two hundred and six thousand pounds, which had been voted for disbanding it by the last parliament; though the vote, by reason of the subsequent prorogation and dissolution, joined to some scruples of the lords, had not been carried into an act. This money was appropriated by very strict clauses but the commons insisted not, as formerly, upon its being paid into the chamber of London.

The impeachment of the five Popish lords in the Tower, with that of the earl of Danby, was carried on with vigor. The power of this minister, and his credit with the king, rendered him extremely obnoxious to the popular leaders; and the commons hoped that, if he were pushed to extremity, he would be obliged, in order to justify his own conduct, to lay open the whole intrigue of the French alliance, which they suspected to contain a secret of the most dangerous nature. The king, on his part, apprehensive of the same consequences, and desirous to protect his minister, who was become criminal merely by obeying orders, employed his whole interest to support the validity of that pardon which had been granted him. The lords appointed a day for the examination of the question, and agreed to hear counsel on both sides: but the commons would not submit their pretensions to the discussion of argument and inquiry. They voted, that whoever should presume, without their leave, to maintain before the house of peers the validity of Danby's pardon, should be accounted a betrayer of the liberties of the English commons. And they made a demand, that the bishops, whom they knew to be devoted to the court, should be removed, not only when the trial of the earl should commence, but also when the validity of his pardon should be discussed.

The bishops before the reformation had always enjoyed a seat in parliament; but so far were they anciently from regarding that dignity as a privilege, that they affected rather to form a separate order in the state, independent of the civil magistrate, and accountable only to the pope and to their own order. By the constitutions, however, of Clarendon, enacted during the reign of Henry II., they were obliged to give their presence in parliament; but as the canon law prohibited them from assisting in capital trials, they were allowed in such cases the privilege of absenting themselves. A practice which was at first voluntary, became afterwards a rule; and on the earl of Strafford's trial, the bishops, who would gladly have attended, and who were no longer bound by the canon law, were, yet obliged to withdraw. It had been usual for them to enter a protest, asserting their right to sit; and this protest, being considered as a mere form, was always admitted and disregarded. But here was started a new question of no small importance. The commons, who were now enabled, by the violence of the people, and the necessities of the crown, to make new acquisitions of powers and privileges, insisted, that the bishops had no more title to vote in the question of the earl's pardon than in the impeachment itself. The bishops asserted, that the pardon was merely a preliminary; and that, neither by the canon law nor the practice of parliament, were they ever obliged, in capital cases, to withdraw till the very commencement of the trial itself. If their absence were considered as a privilege, which was its real origin, it depended on their own choice how far they would insist upon it. If regarded as a diminution of their right of peerage, such unfavorable customs ought never to be extended beyond the very circumstance established by them; and all arguments, from a pretended parity of reason, were in that case of little or no authority.

The house of lords was so much influenced by these reasons, that they admitted the bishops’ right to vote, when the validity of the pardon should be examined. The commons insisted still on their withdrawing; and thus a quarrel being commenced between the two houses, the king, who expected nothing but fresh instances of violence from this parliament, began to entertain thoughts of laying hold of so favorable a pretence, and of finishing the session by a prorogation. While in this disposition, he was alarmed with sudden intelligence, that the house of commons was preparing a remonstrance, in order to inflame the nation still further upon the favorite topics of the plot and of Popery. He hastened, therefore, to execute his intention, even without consulting his new council, by whose advice he had promised to regulate his whole conduct. And thus were disappointed all the projects of the malecontents, who were extremely enraged at this vigorous measure of the king’s. Shaftesbury publicly threatened, that he would have the head of whoever had advised it. The parliament was soon after dissolved without advice of council; and writs were issued for a new parliament. The king was willing to try every means which gave a prospect of more compliance in his subjects; and, in case of failure, the blame, he hoped, would lie on those whose obstinacy forced him to extremities.

But even during the recess of parliament, there was no interruption to the prosecution of the Catholics accused of the plot: the king found himself obliged to give way to this popular fury. Whitebread, provincial of the Jesuits, Fenwick, Gavan, Turner, and Harcourt, all of them of the same order, were first brought to their trial. Besides Oates and Bedloe, Dugdale, a new witness, appeared against the prisoners. This man had been steward to Lord Aston, and, though poor, possessed a character somewhat more reputable than the other two: but his account of the intended massacres and assassinations was equally monstrous and incredible. He even asserted, that two hundred thousand Papists in England were ready to take arms. The prisoners proved by sixteen witnesses from St. Omers, students, and most of them young men of family, that Oates was in that seminary at the time when he swore that he was in London: but as they were Catholics and disciples of the Jesuits, their Testimony, both with the judges and jury, was totally disregarded. Even the reception which they met with in the court was full of outrage and mockery. One of them saying, that Oates always continued at St. Omers, if he could believe his senses, “You Papists,” said the chief justice, “are taught not to believe your senses.” It must be confessed that Oates, in opposition to the students of St. Omers, found means to bring evidence of his having been at that time in London: but this evidence, though it had at that time the appearance of some solidity, was afterwards discovered, when Oates himself was tried for perjury, to be altogether deceitful. In order further to discredit that witness, the Jesuits proved, by undoubted testimony, that he had perjured himself in Father Ireland’s trial, whom they showed to have been in Staffordshire at the very, time when Oates swore that he was committing treason in London. But all these pleas availed them nothing against the general prejudices. They received sentence of death, and were executed, persisting to their last breath in the most solemn, earnest, and deliberate, though disregarded protestations of their innocence.

The next trial was that of Langhorne, an eminent lawyer, by whom all the concerns of the Jesuits were managed. Oates and Bedloe swore, that all the Papal commissions by which the chief offices in England were filled with Catholics, passed through his hands. When verdict was given against the prisoner, the spectators expressed their savage joy by loud acclamations. So high indeed had the popular rage mounted, that the witnesses for this unhappy man, on approaching the court, were almost torn in pieces by the rabble: one in particular was bruised to such a degree, as to put his life in danger. And another, a woman, declared that, unless the court could afford her protection, she durst not give evidence: but as the judges could go no further than promise to punish such as should do her any injury, the prisoner himself had the humanity to waive her testimony.

So far the informers had proceeded with success: their accusation was hitherto equivalent to a sentence of death. The first check which they received was on the trial of Sir George Wakeman, the queen’s physician, whom they accused of an intention to poison the king. It was a strong circumstance in favor of Wakeman, that Oates, in his first information before the council, had accused him only upon hearsay; and when asked by the chancellor, whether he had any thing further to charge him with, he added, “God forbid I should say any thing against Sir George; for I know nothing more against him.” On the trial he gave positive evidence of the prisoner’s guilt. There were many other circumstances which favored

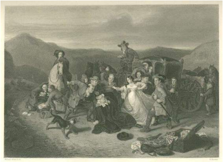
Wakeman: but what chiefly contributed to his acquittal, was the connection of his cause with that of the queen, whom no one, even during the highest prejudices of the times, could sincerely believe guilty. The great importance of the trial made men recollect themselves, and recall that good sense and humanity which seemed, during some time, to have abandoned the nation. The chief justice himself, who had hitherto favored the witnesses, exaggerated the plot, and railed against the prisoners, was observed to be considerably mollified, and to give a favorable charge to the jury. Oates and Bedloe had the assurance to attack him to his face, and even to accuse him of partiality before the council. The whole party, who had formerly much extolled his conduct, now made him the object of their resentment. Wakeman's acquittal was indeed a sensible mortification to the furious prosecutors of the plot, and fixed an indelible stain upon the witnesses. But Wakeman, after he recovered his liberty, finding himself exposed to such inveterate enmity, and being threatened with further prosecutions, thought it prudent to retire beyond sea; and his flight was interpreted as a proof of guilt, by those who were still resolved to persist in the belief of the conspiracy.

The great discontents in England, and the refractory disposition of the parliament, drew the attention of the Scottish Covenanters, and gave them a prospect of some time putting an end to those oppressions under which they had so long labored. It was suspected to have been the policy of Lauderdale and his associates to push these unhappy men to extremities, and force them into rebellion, with a view of reaping profit from the forfeitures and attainders which would ensue upon it. But the Covenanters, aware of this policy, had hitherto forborne all acts of hostility; and that tyrannical minister had failed of his purpose. An incident at last happened, which brought on an insurrection in that country.

The Covenanters were much enraged against Sharpe, the primate, whom they considered as an apostate from their principles, and whom they experienced to be an unrelenting persecutor of all those who dissented from the established worship. He had an officer under him, one Carmichael, no less zealous than himself against conventicles, and who, by his violent prosecutions, had rendered himself extremely obnoxious to the fanatics. A company of these had waylaid him on the road near St. Andrews, with an intention, if not of killing him, at least of chastising him so severely as would afterwards render him more cautious in persecuting the nonconformists. [1]

* Wodrow’s History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland vol. ii. .

While looking out for their prey, they were surprised at seeing the archbishop’s coach pass by; and they immediately interpreted this incident as a declaration of the secret purpose of Providence against him. But when they observed that almost all his servants, by some accident, were absent, they no longer doubted, but Heaven had here delivered their capital enemy into their hands. Without further deliberation, they fell upon him; dragged him from his coach; tore him from the arms of his daughter, who interposed with cries and tears; and piercing him with redoubled wounds, left him dead on the spot, and immediately dispersed themselves.



MURDER OF ARCHBISHOP SHARPE.

This atrocious action served the ministry as a pretence for a more violent persecution against the fanatics, on whom, without distinction, they threw the guilt of those furious assassins. It is indeed certain, that the murder of Sharpe had excited a universal joy among the Covenanters; and that their blind zeal had often led them, in their books and sermons, to praise and recommend the assassination of their enemies, whom they considered as the enemies of all true piety and godliness. The stories of Jael and Sisera, of Ehud and Eglon, resounded from every pulpit. The officers quartered in the west received more strict orders to find out and disperse all conventicles; and for that reason the Covenanters, instead of meeting in small bodies, were obliged to celebrate their worship in numerous assemblies, and to bring arms for their security. At Rutherglen, a small borough near Glasgow, they openly set forth a declaration against prelacy; and in the market place burned several acts of parliament and acts of council, which had established that mode of ecclesiastical government, and had prohibited conventicles. For this insult on the supreme authority, they purposely chose the twenty-ninth of May, the anniversary of the restoration; and previously extinguished the bonfires which had been kindled for that solemnity.

Captain Graham, afterwards Viscount Dundee, an active and enterprising officer, attacked a great conventicle upon Loudon Hill, and was repulsed with the loss of thirty men. The Covenanters, finding that they were unwarily involved in such deep guilt, were engaged to persevere, and to seek, from their valor and fortune alone, for that indemnity which the severity of the government left them no hopes of ever being able otherwise to obtain. They pushed on to Glasgow; and though at first repulsed, they afterwards made themselves masters of that city; dispossessed the established clergy; and issued proclamations, in which they declared, that they fought against the king's supremacy, against Popery and prelacy and against a Popish successor.

How accidental soever this insurrection might appear, there is reason to suspect that some great men, in combination with the popular leaders in England, had secretly instigated the Covenanters to proceed to such extremities, [1] and hoped for the same effects that had forty years before ensued from the disorders in Scotland.

* Algernon Sidney's Letters, .

The king also, apprehensive of like consequences, immediately despatched thither Monmouth with a small body of English cavalry. That nobleman joined to these troops the Scottish guards, and some regiments of militia, levied from the well-affected counties; and with great celerity marched in quest of the rebels. They had taken post near Bothwell Castle, between Hamilton and Glasgow, where there was no access to them but over a bridge, which a small body was able to defend against the king's forces. They showed judgment in the choice of their post, but discovered neither judgment nor valor in any other step of their conduct. No nobility and few gentry had joined them: the clergy were in reality the generals; and the whole army never exceeded eight thousand men. Monmouth attacked the bridge and the body of rebels who defended it maintained their post as long as their ammunition lasted. When they sent for more, they received orders to quit their ground, and to retire backwards. This imprudent measure occasioned an immediate defeat to the Covenanters. Monmouth passed the bridge without opposition, and drew up his forces opposite to the enemy. His cannon alone put them to rout. About seven hundred fell in the pursuit; for, properly speaking, there was no action. Twelve hundred were taken prisoners; and were treated by Monmouth with a humanity which they had never experienced in their own countrymen. Such of them as would promise to live peaceably were dismissed. About three hundred, who were so obstinate as to refuse this easy condition, were shipped for Barbadoes; but unfortunately perished in the voyage. Two of their clergy were hanged. Monmouth was of a generous disposition; and, besides, aimed at popularity in Scotland. The king intended to intrust the government of that kingdom in his hands. He had married a Scottish lady, heir of a great family, and allied to all the chief nobility. And Lauderdale, as he was now declining in his parts, and was much decayed in his memory, began to lose with the king that influence which he had maintained during so many years, notwithstanding the efforts of his numerous enemies both in Scotland and England, and notwithstanding the many violent and tyrannical actions of which he had been guilty. Even at present, he retained so much influence as to poison all the good intentions which the king, either of himself or by Monmouth's suggestion, had formed with regard to Scotland. An act of indemnity was granted; but Lauderdale took care that it should be so worded, as rather to afford protection to himself and his associates, than to the unhappy Covenanters. And though orders were given to connive thenceforwards at all conventicles, he found means, under a variety of pretences, to elude the execution of them. It must be owned, however, to his praise, that he was the chief person who, by his counsel, occasioned the expeditious march of the forces and the prompt orders given to Monmouth; and thereby disappointed all the expectations of the English malecontents, who, reflecting on the disposition of men's minds in both kingdoms, had entertained great hopes from the progress of the Scottish insurrection.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

CHARLES II.

1679

The king, observing that the whole nation concurred at first in the belief and prosecution of the Popish plot, had found it necessary for his own safety to pretend, in all public speeches and transactions, an entire belief and acquiescence in that famous absurdity; and by this artifice he had eluded the violent and irresistible torrent of the people. When a little time and recollection, as well as the execution of the pretended conspirators, had somewhat moderated the general fury, he was now enabled to form a considerable party, devoted to the interests of the crown, and determined to oppose the pretensions of the malecontents.

In every mixed government, such as that of England, the bulk of the nation will always incline to preserve the entire frame of the constitution; but according to the various prejudices, interests, and dispositions of men, some will ever attach themselves with more passion to the regal, others to the popular part of the government. Though the king, after his restoration, had endeavored to abolish the distinction of parties, and had chosen his ministers from among all denominations, no sooner had he lost his popularity, and exposed himself to general jealousy, than he found it necessary to court the old cavalier party, and to promise them full compensation for that neglect of which they had hitherto complained. The present emergence made it still more necessary for him to apply for their support; and there were many circumstances which determined them, at this time, to fly to the assistance of the crown, and to the protection of the royal family.

A party strongly attached to monarchy will naturally be jealous of the right of succession, by which alone they believe stability to be preserved in the government, and a barrier fixed against the encroachments of popular assemblies. The project, openly embraced, of excluding the duke, appeared to that party a dangerous innovation: and the design, secretly projected, of advancing Monmouth, made them apprehensive, lest the inconveniencies of a disputed succession should be propagated to all posterity. While the jealous lovers of liberty maintained, that a king, whose title depended on the parliament, would naturally be more attentive to the interests, at least to the humors of the people, the passionate admirers of monarchy considered all dependence as a degradation of kingly government, and a great step towards the establishment of a commonwealth in England.

But though his union with the political royalists brought great accession of force to the king, he derived no less support from the confederacy which he had at this time the address to form with the church of England. He represented to the ecclesiastics the great number of Presbyterians and other sectaries, who had entered into the popular party; the encouragement and favor which they met with; the loudness of their cries with regard to Popery and arbitrary power. And he made the established clergy and their adherents apprehend, that the old scheme for the abolition of prelacy as well as monarchy was revived, and that the same miseries and oppressions awaited them, to which, during the civil wars and usurpations, they had so long been exposed.

The memory also of those dismal times united many indifferent and impartial persons to the crown, and begat a dread lest the zeal for liberty should ingraft itself on fanaticism, and should once more kindle a civil war in the kingdom. Had not the king still retained the prerogative of dissolving the parliament, there was indeed reason to apprehend the renewal of all the pretensions and violences which had ushered in the last commotions. The one period appeared an exact counterpart to the other: but still discerning judges could perceive, both in the spirit of the parties and in the genius of the prince, a material difference; by means of which Charles was enabled at last, though with the imminent peril’ of liberty, to preserve the peace of the nation.

The cry against Popery was loud; but it proceeded less from religious than from party zeal, in those who propagated, and even in those who adopted it. The spirit of enthusiasm had occasioned so much mischief, and had been so successfully exploded, that it was not possible, by any artifice, again to revive and support it. Cant had been ridiculed, hypocrisy detected; the pretensions to a more thorough reformation, and to greater purity, had become suspicious; and instead of denominating themselves the godly party, the appellation affected at the beginning of the civil wars, the present patriots were content with calling themselves the good and the honest party;

[1] a sure prognostic that their measures were not to be so furious nor their pretensions so exorbitant.

The king too, though not endowed with the integrity and strict principles of his father, was happy in a more amiable manner and more popular address. Far from being distant stately, or reserved, he had not a grain of pride or vanity in his whole composition; [2] but was the most affable, best bred man alive. He treated his subjects like noblemen, like gentlemen, like freemen; not like vassals or boors. His professions were plausible, his whole behavior engaging; so that he won upon the hearts, even while he lost the good opinion of his subjects, and often balanced their judgment of things by their personal inclination. [3] In his public conduct likewise, though he had sometimes embraced measures dangerous to the liberty and religion of his people, he had never been found to persevere obstinately in them, but had always returned into that path which their united opinion seemed to point out to him. And upon the whole, it appeared to many cruel, and even iniquitous, to remark too rigorously the failings of a prince who discovered so much facility in correcting his errors, and so much lenity in pardoning the offences committed against himself.

The general affection borne the king appeared signally about this time. He fell sick at Windsor; and had two or three fits of a fever, so violent as made his life be thought in danger. A general consternation seized all ranks of men increased by the apprehensions entertained of his successor In the present disposition of men’s minds, the king’s death, to use an expression of Sir William Temple, [4] was regarded as the end of the world. The malecontents, it was feared, would proceed to extremities, and immediately kindle a civil war in the kingdom.

* Temple, vol. i. .

* * Temple, vol. i .

* * * Dissertation on Parties, letter vii.

* * * * Vol i. .

Either their entire success, or entire failure, or even the balance and contest of parties, seemed all of them events equally fatal. The king's chief counsellors, therefore Essex, Halifax, and Sunderland, who stood on bad terms with Shaftesbury and the popular party, advised him to send secretly for the duke, that, in case of any sinister accident, that prince might be ready to assert his right against the opposition which he was likely to meet with. When the duke arrived, he found his brother out of danger; and it was agreed to conceal the invitation which he had received. His journey, however, was attended with important consequences. He prevailed on the king to disgrace Monmouth, whose projects were now known and avowed; to deprive him of his command in the army; and to send him beyond sea. He himself returned to Brussels; but made a short stay in that place. He obtained leave to retire to Scotland, under pretence still of quieting the apprehensions of the English nation; but in reality with a view of securing that kingdom in his interests.

Though Essex and Halifax had concurred in the resolution of inviting over the duke, they soon found that they had not obtained his confidence, and that even the king, while he made use of their service, had no sincere regard for their persons. Essex in disgust resigned the treasury: Halifax retired to his country seat: Temple, despairing of any accommodation among such enraged parties, withdrew almost entirely to his books and his gardens. The king, who changed ministers as well as measures with great indifference, bestowed at this time his chief confidence on Hyde, Sunderland, and Godolphin. Hyde succeeded Essex in the treasury.

All the king's ministers, as well as himself, were extremely averse to the meeting of the new parliament, which they expected to find as refractory as any of the preceding. The elections had gone mostly in favor of the country party. The terrors of the plot had still a mighty influence over the populace; and the apprehensions of the duke's bigoted principles and arbitrary character weighed with men of sense and reflection. The king therefore resolved to prorogue the parliament, that he might try whether time would allay those humors, which, by every other, expedient, he had in vain attempted to mollify. In this measure he did not expect the concurrence of his council. He knew that those, popular leaders, whom he had admitted, would zealously oppose a resolution which disconcerted all their schemes; and that the royalists would not dare, by supporting it, to expose themselves to the vengeance of the parliament, when it should be assembled. These reasons obliged him to take this step entirely of himself; and he only declared his resolution in council. It is remarkable that, though the king had made profession never to embrace any measure without the advice of these counsellors, he had often broken that resolution, and had been necessitated, in affairs of the greatest consequence, to control their opinion. Many of them in disgust threw up about this time; particularly Lord Russel, the most popular man in the nation, as well from the mildness and integrity of his character, as from his zealous attachment to the religion and liberties of his country. Though carried into some excesses, his intentions were ever esteemed upright; and being heir to the greatest fortune in the kingdom, as well as void of ambition, men believed that nothing but the last necessity could ever engage him to embrace any desperate measures. Shaftesbury, who was, in most particulars, of an opposite character, was removed by the king from the office of president of the council; and the earl of Radnor, a man who possessed whimsical talents and splenetic virtues, was substituted in his place.

It was the favor and countenance of the parliament which had chiefly encouraged the rumor of plots; but the nation had gotten so much into that vein of credulity, and every necessitous villain was so much incited by the success of Oates and Bedloe, that even during the prorogation the people were not allowed to remain in tranquillity. There was one Dangerfield, a fellow who had been burned in the hand for crimes, transported, whipped, pilloried four times, fined for cheats, outlawed for felony, convicted of coining, and exposed to all the public infamy which the laws could inflict on the basest and most shameful enormities. The credulity of the people, and the humor of the times, enabled even this man to become a person of consequence. He was the author of a new incident called the meal-tub plot, from the place where some papers relating to it were found. The bottom of this affair it is difficult and not very material to discover. It only appears, that Dangerfield, under pretence of betraying the conspiracies of the Presbyterians, had been countenanced by some Catholics of condition, and had even been admitted to the duke's presence and the king's; and that under pretence of revealing new Popish plots, he had obtained access to Shaftesbury and some of the popular leaders. Which side he intended to cheat, is uncertain; or whether he did not rather mean to cheat both: but he soon found, that the belief of the nation was more open to a Popish than a Presbyterian plot; and he resolved to strike in with the prevailing humor.

Though no weight could be laid on his testimony, great clamor was raised; as if the court, by way of retaliation, had intended to load the Presbyterians with the guilt of a false conspiracy It must be confessed, that the present period, by the prevalence and suspicion of such mean and ignoble arts on all sides, throws a great stain on the British annals.

One of the most innocent artifices practised by party men at this time, was the additional ceremony, pomp, and expense, with which a pope-burning was celebrated in London: the spectacle served to entertain, and amuse, and inflame the populace. The duke of Monmouth likewise came over without leave, and made a triumphant procession through many parts of the kingdom, extremely caressed and admired by the people. All these arts seemed requisite to support the general prejudices during the long interval of parliament. Great endeavors were also used to obtain the king's consent for the meeting of that assembly.

1680

Seventeen peers presented a petition to this purpose. Many of the corporations imitated the example. Notwithstanding several marks of displeasure, and even a menacing proclamation from the king, petitions came from all parts, earnestly insisting on a session of parliament. The danger of Popery, and the terrors of the plot, were never forgotten in any of these addresses.

Tumultuous petitioning was one of the chief artifices by which the malecontents in the last reign had attacked the own: and though the manner of subscribing and delivering petitions was now somewhat regulated by act of parliament, the thing itself still remained; and was an admirable expedient for infesting the court, for spreading discontent, and for uniting the nation in any popular clamor. As the king found no law by which he could punish those importunate, and, as he deemed them, undutiful solicitations, he was obliged to encounter them by popular applications of a contrary tendency Wherever the church and court party prevailed, addresses were framed, containing expressions of the highest regard to his majesty, the most entire acquiescence in his wisdom, the most dutiful submission to his prerogative, and the deepest abhorrence of those who endeavored to encroach upon it, by prescribing to him any time for assembling the parliament. Thus the nation came to be distinguished into petitioners and abhorrers. Factions indeed were at this time extremely animated against each other. The very names by which each party denominated its antagonist, discover the virulence and rancor which prevailed. For besides petitioner and abhorrer, appellations which were soon forgotten, this year is remarkable for being the epoch of the well-known epithets of “whig” and “tory”, by which, and sometimes without any material difference, this island has been so long divided. The court party reproached their antagonists with their affinity to the fanatical conventiclers in Scotland, who were known by the name of whigs: the country party found a resemblance between the courtiers and the Popish banditti in Ireland, to whom the appellation of tory was affixed. And after this manner these foolish terms of reproach came into public and general use; and even at present seem not nearer their end than when they were first invented.

The king used every art to encourage his partisans, and to reconcile the people to his government. He persevered in the great zeal which he affected against Popery. He even allowed several priests to be put to death, for no other crime than their having received orders in the Romish church. It is singular, that one of them, called Evans, was playing at tennis when the warrant for his immediate execution was notified to him: he swore that he would play out his set first. Charles, with the same view of acquiring popularity, formed an alliance with Spain, and also offered an alliance to Holland: but the Dutch, terrified with the great power of France, and seeing little resource in a country so distracted as England, declined acceptance. He had sent for the duke from Scotland; but desired him to return, when the time of assembling the parliament began to approach.

It was of great consequence to the popular party, while the meeting of parliament depended on the king’s will, to keep the law, whose operations are perpetual, entirely on their side. The sheriffs of London by their office return the juries: it had been usual for the mayor to nominate one sheriff by drinking to him; and the common hall had ever, without dispute, confirmed the mayor’s choice. Sir Robert Clayton, the mayor, appointed one who was not acceptable to the popular party: the common hall rejected him; and Bethel and Cornish, two Independents and republicans, and of consequence deeply engaged with the malecontents, were chosen by a majority of voices. In spite of all remonstrances and opposition, the citizens persisted in their choice; and the court party was obliged for the present to acquiesce.

Juries, however, were not so partial in the city, but that reason and justice, even when the Popish plot was in question, could sometimes prevail. The earl of Castlemaine, husband to the duchess of Cleveland, was acquitted about this time, though accused by Oates and Dangerfield of an intention to assassinate the king. Sir Thomas Gascoigne, a very aged gentleman in the north, being accused by two servants, whom he had dismissed for dishonesty, received a like verdict. These trials were great blows to the plot, which now began to stagger, in the judgment of most men, except those who were entirely devoted to the country party. But in order still to keep alive the zeal against Popery, the earl of Shaftesbury appeared in Westminster Hall, attended by the earl of Huntingdon, the lords Russel, Cavendish, Grey, Brandon, Sir Henry Caverly, Sir Gilbert Gerrard, Sir William Cooper, and other persons of distinction, and presented to the grand jury of Middlesex reasons for indicting the duke of York as a Popish recusant. While the jury were deliberating on this extraordinary presentment, the chief justice sent for them, and suddenly, even somewhat irregularly, dismissed them. Shaftesbury, however, obtained the end for which he had undertaken this bold measure: he showed to all his followers the desperate resolution which he had embraced, never to admit of any accommodation or composition with the duke. By such daring conduct he gave them assurance, that he was fully determined not to desert their cause; and he engaged them to a like devoted perseverance in all the measures which he should suggest to them.

As the kingdom was regularly and openly divided into two zealous parties, it was not difficult for the king to know, that the majority of the new house of commons was engaged in interests opposite to the court: but that he might leave no expedient untried, which could compose the unhappy differences among his subjects, he resolved at last, after a long interval, to assemble the parliament. In his speech he told them, that the several prorogations which he had made had been very advantageous to his neighbors, and very useful to himself: that he had employed that interval in perfecting with the crown of Spain an alliance which had often been desired by former parliaments, and which, he doubted not, would be extremely agreeable to them: that, in order to give weight to this measure, and render it beneficial to Christendom, it was necessary to avoid all domestic dissensions, and to unite themselves firmly in the same views and purposes: that he was determined, that nothing on his part should be wanting to such a salutary end; and provided the succession were preserved in its due and legal course, he would concur in any expedient for the security of the protestant religion, that the further examination of the Popish plot, and the punishment of the criminals, were requisite for the safety both of king and kingdom; and after recommending to them the necessity of providing, by some supplies, for the safety of Tangiers, he proceeded in these words: "But that which I value above all the treasure in the world, and which I am sure will give us greater strength and reputation both at home and abroad than any treasure can do, is a perfect union among ourselves. Nothing but this can restore the kingdom to that strength and vigor which it seems to have lost, and raise us again to that consideration which England hath usually possessed. All Europe have their eyes upon this assembly, and think their own happiness and misery, as well as ours, will depend upon it. If we should be so unhappy as to fall into misunderstandings among ourselves to that degree as would render our friendship unsafe to trust to, will not be wondered at, if our neighbors should begin to take new resolutions, and perhaps such as may be fatal to us. Let us therefore take care, that we do not gratify our enemies, and discourage our friends, by any unseasonable disputes. If any such do happen, the world will see that it is no fault of mine; for I have done all that it was possible for me to do, to keep you in peace while I live, and to leave you so when I die. But from so great prudence and so good affection as yours, I can fear nothing of this kind; but do rely upon you all, that you will do your best endeavors to bring this parliament to a good and happy conclusion."

All these mollifying expressions had no influence with the commons. Every step which they took betrayed the zeal with which they were animated. They voted, that it was the undoubted right of the subject to petition the king for the calling and sitting of parliament. Not content with this decision, which seems justifiable in a mixed monarchy, they fell with the utmost violence on all those abhorrers, who in their addresses to the crown, had expressed their disapprobation of those petitions. They did not reflect, that it was as lawful for one party of men as for another to express their sense of public affairs; and that the best established right may, in particular circumstances, be abused, and even the exercise of it become an object of abhorrence. For this offence they expelled Sir Thomas Withens. They appointed a committee for further inquiry into such members as had been guilty of a like crime, and complaints were lodged against Lord

Paston, Sir Robert Malverer, Sir Bryan Stapleton, Taylor, and Turner. They addressed the king against Sir George Jefferies, recorder of London, for his activity in the same cause; and they frightened him into a resignation of his office, in which he was succeeded by Sir George Treby, a great leader of the popular party. They voted an impeachment against North, chief justice of the common pleas, for drawing the proclamation against tumultuous petitions; but upon examination found the proclamation so cautiously worded, that it afforded them no handle against him. A petition had been presented to the king from Taunton. "How dare you deliver me such a paper?" said the king to the person who presented it. "Sir," replied he, "my name is DARE." For this saucy reply, but under other pretences, he had been tried, fined, and committed to prison. The commons now addressed the king for his liberty, and for remitting his fine. Some printers also and authors of seditious libels they took under their protection.

Great numbers of the abhorrers, from all parts of England, were seized by order of the commons, and committed to custody. The liberty of the subject, which had been so carefully guarded by the Great Charter, and by the late law of habeas corpus, was every day violated by their arbitrary and capricious commitments. The chief jealousy, it is true, of the English constitution is naturally and justly directed against the crown; nor indeed have the commons any other means of securing their privileges than by commitments, which, as they cannot beforehand be exactly determined by law, must always appear in some degree arbitrary. Sensible of these reasons, the people had hitherto, without murmuring, seen this discretionary power exercised by the house: but as it was now carried to excess, and was abused to serve the purposes of faction, great complaints against it were heard from all quarters. At last, the vigor and courage of one Stowel of Exeter, an abhorrer, put an end to the practice. He refused to obey the serjeant at arms, stood upon his defence, and said that he knew of no law by which they pretended to commit him. The house, finding it equally dangerous to proceed or to recede, got off by an evasion: they inserted in their votes, that Stowel was indisposed, and that a month's time was allowed him for the recovery of his health.

But the chief violence of the house of commons appeared in all their transactions with regard to the plot, which they prosecuted with the same zeal and the same credulity as their predecessors. They renewed the former vote, which affirmed the reality of the horrid Popish plot; and, in order the more to terrify the people, they even asserted that, notwithstanding the discovery, the plot still subsisted. They expelled Sir Robert Can and Sir Robert Yeomans, who had been complained of for saying, that there was no Popish, but there was a Presbyterian plot. And they greatly lamented the death of Bedloe, whom they called a material witness, and on whose testimony they much depended. He had been seized with a fever at Bristol; had sent for Chief Justice North; confirmed all his former evidence, except that with regard to the duke and the queen; and desired North to apply to the king for some money to relieve him in his necessities. A few days after, he expired; and the whole party triumphed extremely in these circumstances of his death: as if such a testimony could be deemed the affirmation of a dying man; as if his confession of perjury in some instances could assure his veracity in the rest; and as if the perseverance of one profligate could outweigh the last words of so many men, guilty of no crime but that of Popery.

The commons even endeavored, by their countenance and protection, to remove the extreme infamy with which Dangerfield was loaded, and to restore him to the capacity of being an evidence. The whole tribe of informers they applauded and rewarded: Jennison, Turberville, Dugdale, Smith, La Faria, appeared before them; and their testimony, however frivolous or absurd, met with a favorable reception: the king was applied to in their behalf for pensions and pardons: their narratives were printed with that sanction which arose from the approbation of the house: Dr. Tongue was recommended for the first considerable church preferment which should become vacant. Considering men's determined resolution to believe, instead of admiring that a palpable falsehood should be maintained by witnesses, it may justly appear wonderful, that no better evidence was ever produced against the Catholics.

The principal reasons which still supported the clamor of the Popish plot, were the apprehensions entertained by the people of the duke of York, and the resolution embraced by their leaders of excluding him from the throne. Shaftesbury, and many considerable men of the party, had rendered themselves irreconcilable with him, and could find their safety no way but in his ruin. Monmouth's friends hoped, that the exclusion of that prince would make way for their patron. The resentment against the duke's apostasy, the love of liberty, the zeal for religion, the attachment to faction; all these motives incited the country party. And above all, what supported the resolution of adhering to the exclusion, and rejecting all other expedients offered, was the hope, artfully encouraged, that the king would at last be obliged to yield to their demand. His revenues were extremely burdened; and, even if free, could scarcely suffice for the necessary charges of government, much less for that pleasure and expense to which he was inclined. Though he had withdrawn his countenance from Monmouth, he was known secretly to retain a great affection for him. On no occasion had he ever been found to persist obstinately against difficulties and importunity. And as his beloved mistress, the duchess of Portsmouth, had been engaged, either from lucrative views, or the hopes of making the succession fall on her own children, to unite herself with the popular party, this incident was regarded as a favorable prognostic of their success. Sunderland, secretary of state, who had linked his interest with that of the duchess, had concurred in the same measure.

But besides friendship for his brother, and a regard to the right of succession, there were many strong reasons which had determined Charles to persevere in opposing the exclusion. All the royalists and the devotees to the church, that party by which alone monarchy was supported, regarded the right of succession as inviolable; and if abandoned by the king in so capital an article, it was to be feared that they would, in their turn, desert his cause, and deliver him over to the pretensions and usurpations of the country party. The country party, or the whigs, as they were called, if they did not still retain some propensity towards a republic, were at least affected with a violent jealousy of regal power; and it was equally to be dreaded, that being enraged with past opposition, and animated by present success, they would, if they prevailed in this pretension, be willing as well as able to reduce the prerogative within very narrow limits. All menaces therefore, all promises, were in vain employed against the king’s resolution: he never would be prevailed on to desert his friends, and put himself into the hands of his enemies. And having voluntarily made such important concessions, and tendered, over and over again, such strong limitations, he was well pleased to find them rejected by the obstinacy of the commons; and hoped that, after the spirit of opposition had spent itself in fruitless violence, the time would come, when he might safely appeal against his parliament to his people.

So much were the popular leaders determined to carry matters to extremities, that in less than a week after the commencement of the session, a motion was made for bringing in an exclusion bill, and a committee was appointed for that purpose. This bill differed in nothing from the former, but in two articles, which showed still an increase of zeal in the commons: the bill was to be read to the people twice a year in all the churches of the kingdom; and every one who should support the duke's title, was rendered incapable of receiving a pardon but by act of parliament.

The debates were carried on with great violence on both sides. The bill was defended by Sir William Jones, who had now resigned his office of attorney-general, by Lord Russel, by Sir Francis Winnington, Sir Harry Capel, Sir William Pulteney, by Colonel Titus, Treby, Hambden, Montague. It was opposed by Sir Leoline Jenkins, secretary of state, Sir John Ernley, chancellor of the exchequer, by Hyde, Seymour, Temple. The arguments transmitted to us may be reduced to the following topics.

In every government, said the exclusionists, there is some-where an authority absolute and supreme; nor can any determination, how unusual soever, which receives the sanction of the legislature, admit afterwards of dispute or control. The liberty of a constitution, so far from diminishing this absolute power, seems rather to add force to it, and to give it greater influence over the people. The more members of the state concur in any legislative decision, and the more free their voice, the less likelihood is there that any opposition will be made to those measures which receive the final sanction of their authority. In England, the legislative power is lodged in king, lords, and commons, which comprehend every order of the community; and there is no pretext for exempting any circumstance of government, not even the succession of the crown, from so full and decisive a jurisdiction. Even express declarations have, in this particular, been made of parliamentary authority: instances have occurred where it has been exerted; and though prudential reasons may justly be alleged, why such innovations should not be attempted but on extraordinary occasions, the power and right are forever vested in the community. But if any occasion can be deemed extraordinary, if any emergence can require unusual expedients, it is the present; when the heir to the crown has renounced the religion of the state, and has zealously embraced a faith totally hostile and incompatible. A prince of that communion can never put trust in a people so prejudiced against him: the people must be equally diffident of such a prince: foreign and destructive alliances will seem to one the only protection of his throne: perpetual jealousy, opposition, faction, even insurrections will be employed by the other as the sole securities for their liberty and religion. Though theological principles, when set in opposition to passions, have often small influence on mankind in general, still less on princes, yet when they become symbols of faction, and marks of party distinctions, they concur with one of the strongest passions in the human frame, and are then capable of carrying men to the greatest extremities. Notwithstanding the better judgment and milder disposition of the king, how much has the influence of the duke already disturbed the tenor of government! how often engaged the nation into measures totally destructive of their foreign interests and honor, of their domestic repose and tranquillity! The more the absurdity and incredibility of the Popish plot are insisted on, the stronger reason it affords for the exclusion of the duke; since the universal belief of it discovers the extreme antipathy of the nation to his religion, and the utter impossibility of ever bringing them to acquiesce peaceably under the dominion of such a sovereign. The prince, finding himself in so perilous a situation, must seek for security by desperate remedies, and by totally subduing the privileges of a nation, which had betrayed such hostile dispositions towards himself, and towards every thing which he deems the most sacred. It is in vain to propose limitations and expedients. Whatever share of authority is left in the duke's hands, will be employed to the destruction of the nation; and even the additional restraints, by discovering the public diffidence and aversion, will serve him as incitements to put himself in a condition entirely superior and independent. And as the laws of England still make resistance treason, and neither do nor can admit of any positive exceptions, what folly to leave the kingdom in so perilous and absurd a situation, where the greatest virtue will be exposed to the most severe proscription, and where the laws can only be saved by expedients, which these same laws have declared the highest crime and enormity!

The court party reasoned in an opposite manner. An authority, they said, wholly absolute and uncontrollable is a mere chimera, and is nowhere to be found in any human institutions. All government is founded on opinion and a sense of duty; and wherever the supreme magistrate, by any law or positive prescription, shocks an opinion regarded as fundamental, and established with a firmness equal to that of his own authority, he subverts the principle by which he himself is established, and can no longer hope for obedience. In European monarchies, the right of succession is justly esteemed a fundamental; and even though the whole legislature be vested in a single person, it would never be permitted him, by an edict, to disinherit his lawful heir, and call a stranger or more distant relation to the throne. Abuses in other parts of government are capable of redress, from more dispassionate inquiry or better information of the sovereign, and till then ought patiently to be endured: but violations of the right of succession draw such terrible consequences after them, as are not to be paralleled by any other grievance or inconvenience. Vainly is it pleaded that England is a mixed monarchy; and that a law, assented to by king, lords, and commons, is enacted by the concurrence of every part of the state: it is plain, that there remains a very powerful party, who may indeed be outvoted, but who never will deem a law, subversive of hereditary right, anywise valid or obligatory. Limitations, such as are proposed by the king, give no shock to the constitution, which, in many particulars, is already limited; and they may be so calculated as to serve every purpose sought for by an exclusion. If the ancient barriers against regal authority have been able, during so many ages, to remain impregnable, how much more those additional ones, which, by depriving the monarch of power, tend so far to their own security? The same jealousy too of religion, which has engaged the people to lay these restraints upon the successor, will extremely lessen the number of his partisans, and make it utterly impracticable for him, either by force or artifice, to break the fetters imposed upon him. The king's age and vigorous state of health promise him a long life; and can it be prudent to tear in pieces the whole state, in order to provide against a contingency which, it is very likely, may never happen? No human schemes can secure the public in all possible, imaginable events; and the bill of exclusion itself however accurately framed, leaves room for obvious and natural suppositions, to which it pretends not to provide any remedy. Should the duke have a son after the king's death must that son, without any default of his own forfeit his title? or must the princess of Orange descend from the throne, in order to give place to the lawful successor? But were all these reasonings false, it still remains to be considered that, in public deliberations, we seek not the expedient which is best in itself, but the best of such as are practicable. The king willingly consents to limitations, and has already offered some which are of the utmost importance: but he is determined to endure any extremity rather than allow the right of succession to be invaded. Let us beware of that factious violence, which leads to demand more than will be granted;

lest we lose the advantage of those beneficial concessions, and leave the nation, on the king's demise, at the mercy of a zealous prince, irritated with the ill usage which, he imagines, he has already met with.

In the house of commons, the reasoning of the exclusionists appeared the more convincing; and the bill passed by a great majority. It was in the house of peers that the king expected to oppose it with success. The court party was there so prevalent, that it was carried only by a majority of two to pay so much regard to the bill as even to commit it. When it came to be debated, the contest was violent. Shaftesbury, Sunderland, and Essex argued for it; Halifax chiefly conducted the debate against it, and displayed an extent of capacity and a force of eloquence which had never been surpassed in that assembly. He was animated, as well by the greatness of the occasion, as by a rivalship with his uncle Shaftesbury; whom, during that day's debate, he seemed, in the judgment of all, to have totally eclipsed. The king was present during the whole debate, which was prolonged till eleven at night. The bill was thrown out by a considerable majority. All the bishops, except three, voted against it. Besides the influence of the court over them, the church of England, they imagined or pretended, was in greater danger from the prevalence of Presbyterianism than of Popery, which, though favored by the duke, and even by the king was extremely repugnant to the genius of the nation.

The commons discovered much ill humor upon this disappointment. They immediately voted an address for the removal of Halifax from the king's councils and presence forever. Though the pretended cause was his advising the late frequent prorogations of parliament, the real reason was apparently his vigorous opposition to the exclusion bill. When the king applied for money to enable him to maintain Tangiers, which he declared his present revenues totally unable to defend, instead of complying, they voted such an address as was in reality a remonstrance, and one little less violent than that famous remonstrance which ushered in the civil wars. All the abuses of government, from the beginning almost of the reign, are there insisted on; the Dutch war, the alliance with France, the prorogations and dissolutions of parliament; and as all these measures, as well as the damnable and hellish plot, are there ascribed to the machinations of Papists, it was plainly insinuated, that the king had, all along, lain under the influence of that party, and was in reality the chief conspirator against the religion and liberties of his people.

The commons, though they conducted the great business of the exclusion with extreme violence, and even imprudence, had yet much reason for the jealousy which gave rise to it: but their vehement prosecution of the Popish plot, even after so long an interval, discovers such a spirit, either of credulity or injustice, as admits of no apology. The impeachment of the Catholic lords in the Tower was revived; and as Viscount Stafford, from his age, infirmities, and narrow capacity, was deemed the least capable of defending himself, it was determined to make him the first victim, that his condemnation might pave the way for a sentence against the rest. The chancellor, now created earl of Nottingham, was appointed high steward for conducting the trial.

Three witnesses were produced against the prisoner; Oates, Dugdale, and Turberville. Oates swore, that he saw Fenwick the Jesuit, deliver to Stafford a commission signed by De Oliva, general of the Jesuits, appointing him paymaster to the Papal army, which was to be levied for the subduing of England; for this ridiculous imposture still maintained its credit with the commons. Dugdale gave testimony, that the prisoner, at Tixal; a seat of Lord Aston's, had endeavored to engage him in the design of murdering the king; and had promised him, besides the honor of being sainted by the church, a reward of five hundred pounds for that service. Turberville deposed, that the prisoner, in his own house at Paris, had made him a like proposal. To offer money for murdering a king, without laying down any scheme by which the assassin may insure some probability or possibility of escape, is so incredible in itself, and may so easily be maintained by any prostitute evidence, that an accusation of that nature, not accompanied with circumstances, ought very little to be attended to by any court of judicature. But notwithstanding the small hold which the witnesses afforded, the prisoner was able, in many material particulars, to discredit their testimony. It was sworn by Dugdale, that Stafford had assisted in a great consult of the Catholics held at Tixal; but Stafford proved by undoubted testimony, that at the time assigned he was in Bath, and in that neighborhood. Turberville had served a novitiate among the Dominicans; but having deserted the convent, he had enlisted as a trooper in the French army; and being dismissed that service, he now lived in London, abandoned by all his relations, and exposed to great poverty. Stafford proved, by the evidence of his gentleman and his page, that Turberville had never, either at Paris or at London, been seen in his company; and it might justly appear strange, that a person who had so important a secret in his keeping, was so long entirely neglected by him.

The clamor and outrage of the populace, during the trial, were extreme: great abilities and eloquence were displayed by the managers, Sir William Jones, Sir Francis Winnington, and Serjeant Maynard: yet did the prisoner, under all these disadvantages, make a better defence than was expected, either by his friends or his enemies: the unequal contest in which he was engaged, was a plentiful source of compassion to every mind seasoned with humanity. He represented that, during a course of forty years, from the very commencement of the civil wars, he had, through many dangers, difficulties, and losses, still maintained his loyalty: and was it credible, that now, in his old age, easy in his circumstances, but dispirited by infirmities, he would belie the whole course of his life, and engage against his royal master, from whom he had ever received kind treatment, in the most desperate and most bloody of all conspiracies? He remarked the infamy of the witnesses; the contradictions and absurdities of their testimony; the extreme indigence in which they had lived, though engaged, as they pretended, in a conspiracy with kings, princes, and nobles; the credit and opulence to which they were at present raised. With a simplicity and tenderness more persuasive than the greatest oratory, he still made protestations of his innocence; and could not forbear, every moment, expressing the most lively surprise and indignation at the audacious impudence of the witnesses.

It will appear astonishing to us, as it did to Stafford himself, that the peers, after a solemn trial of six days, should by a majority of twenty-four voices, give sentence against him. He received, however, with resignation, the fatal verdict. “God’s holy name be praised,” was the only exclamation which he uttered. When the high steward told him, that the peers would intercede with the king for remitting the more cruel and ignominious parts of the sentence, hanging and quartering, he burst into tears; but he told the lords, that he was moved to this weakness by his sense of their goodness, not by any terror of that fate which he was doomed to suffer.

It is remarkable that, after Charles, as is usual in such cases, had remitted to Stafford the hanging and quartering, the two Sheriffs, Bethel and Cornish, indulging their own republican humor, and complying with the prevalent spirit of their party, over jealous of Monarchy, started a doubt with regard to the king’s power of exercising even this small degree of lenity. “Since he cannot pardon the whole,” said they, “how can he have power to remit any part of the sentence?” They proposed the doubt to both houses: the peers pronounced it superfluous; and even the commons, apprehensive lest a question of this nature might make way for Stafford’s escape, gave this singular answer: “This house is content, that the sheriffs do execute William late Viscount Stafford by severing his head from his body only.” Nothing can be a stronger proof of the fury of the times, than that Lord Russel, notwithstanding the virtue and humanity of his character, seconded in the house this barbarous scruple of the Sheriffs.

In the interval between the sentence and execution, many efforts were made to shake the resolution of the infirm and aged prisoner, and to bring him to some confession of the treason for which he was condemned. It was even rumored that he had confessed; and the zealous partymen, who, no doubt, had secretly, notwithstanding their credulity, entertained some doubts with regard to the reality of the Popish conspiracy, expressed great triumph on the occasion. But Stafford, when again called before the house of peers, discovered many schemes, which had been laid by himself and others, for procuring a toleration to the Catholics, at least a mitigation of the penal laws enacted against them: and he protested, that this was the sole treason of which he had ever been guilty.

Stafford now prepared himself for death with the intrepidity which became his birth and station, and which was the natural result of the innocence and integrity which, during the course of a long life, he had ever maintained: his mind seemed even to collect new force from the violence and oppression under which he labored. When going to execution, he called for a cloak to defend him against the rigor of the season. “Perhaps,” said he, “I may shake with cold; but, I trust in God, not for fear.” On the scaffold, he continued, with reiterated and earnest asseverations, to make protestations of his innocence: all his fervor was exercised on that point: when he mentioned the witnesses, whose perjuries had bereaved him of life, his expressions were full of mildness and of charity. He solemnly disavowed all those immoral principles, which over-zealous Protestants had ascribed without distinction to the church of Rome: and he hoped, he said, that the time was now approaching, when the present delusion would be dissipated; and when the force of truth, though late, would engage the whole world to make reparation to his injured honor.

The populace, who had exulted at Stafford’s trial and condemnation, were now melted into tears, at the sight of that tender fortitude which shone forth in each feature, and motion, and accent of this aged noble. Their profound silence was only interrupted by sighs and groans: with difficulty they found speech to assent to those protestations of innocence which he frequently repeated: “We believe you, my lord! God bless you, my lord!” These expressions with a faltering accent flowed from them. The executioner himself was touched with sympathy. Twice he lifted up the axe, with an intent to strike the fatal blow; and as often felt his resolution to fail him. A deep sigh was heard to accompany his last effort, which laid Stafford forever at rest. All the spectators seemed to feel the blow. And when the head was held up to them with the usual cry, “This is the head of a traitor,” no clamor of assent was uttered. Pity, remorse, and astonishment had taken possession of every heart, and displayed itself in every countenance.

This is the last blood which was shed on account of the Popish plot; an incident which, for the credit of the nation, it were better to bury in eternal oblivion; but which it is necessary to perpetuate, as well to maintain the truth of history, as to warn, if possible, their posterity and all mankind never again to fall into so shameful, so barbarous a delusion.

The execution of Stafford gratified the prejudices of the country party; but it contributed nothing to their power and security: on the contrary, by exciting commiseration, it tended still further to increase the disbelief of the whole plot, which began now to prevail. The commons, therefore, not to lose the present opportunity, resolved to make both friends and enemies sensible of their power. They passed a bill for easing the Protestant dissenters, and for repealing the persecuting statute of the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth: this laudable bill was likewise carried through the house of peers. The chief justice was very obnoxious for dismissing the grand jury in an irregular manner, and thereby disappointing that bold measure of Shaftesbury and his friends, who had presented the duke as a recusant. For this crime the commons sent up an impeachment against him; as also against Jones and Weston, two of the judges, who, in some speeches from the bench, had gone so far as to give to many of the first reformers the appellation of fanatics.

The king, in rejecting the exclusion bill, had sheltered himself securely behind the authority of the house of peers; and the commons had been deprived of the usual pretence, to attack the sovereign himself under color of attacking his ministers and counsellors. In prosecution, however, of the scheme which he had formed, of throwing the blame on the commons in case of any rupture, he made them a new speech. After warning them, that a neglect of this opportunity would never be retrieved, he added these words: "I did promise you the fullest satisfaction which your hearts could wish, for the security of the Protestant religion, and to concur with you in any remedies which might consist with preserving the succession of the crown in its due and legal course of descent. I do again, with the same reservations, renew the same promises to you: and being thus ready on my part to do all that can reasonably be expected from me, I should be glad to know from you, as soon as may be, how far I shall be assisted by you, and what it is you desire from me."

The most reasonable objection against the limitations proposed by the king, is, that they introduced too considerable an innovation in the government, and almost totally annihilated the power of the future monarch. But considering the present disposition of the commons and their leaders, we may fairly presume, that this objection would have small weight with them, and that their disgust against the court would rather incline them to diminish than support regal authority. They still hoped, from the king's urgent necessities and his usual facility, that he would throw himself wholly into their hands; and that thus, without waiting for the accession of the duke, they might immediately render themselves absolute masters of the government. The commons, therefore, besides insisting still on the exclusion, proceeded to bring in bills of an important, and some of them of an alarming nature: one to renew the triennial act, which had been so inadvertently repealed in the beginning of the reign; a second to make the office of judge during good behavior; a third to declare the levying of money without consent of parliament to be high treason; a fourth to order an association for the safety of his majesty's person, for defence of the Protestant religion, for the preservation of the Protestant subjects against all invasions and opposition whatsoever, and for preventing the duke of York, or any Papist, from succeeding to the crown. The memory of the covenant was too recent for men to overlook the consequences of such an association; and the king, who was particularly conversant in Davila, could not fail of recollecting a memorable foreign instance, to fortify this domestic experience.

The commons also passed many votes, which, though they had not the authority of laws, served, however, to discover the temper and disposition of the house. They voted, that whoever had advised his majesty to refuse the exclusion bill, were promoters of Popery and enemies to the king and kingdom. In another vote, they named the marquis of Worcester, the earls of Clarendon, Feversham, and Halifax, Laurence Hyde, and Edward Seymour, as those dangerous enemies; and they requested his majesty to remove them from his person and councils forever. They voted, that, till the exclusion bill were passed, they could not, consistent with the trust reposed in them, grant the king any manner of supply. And lest he should be enabled, by any other expedient, to support the government, and preserve himself independent, they passed another vote, in which they declared, that whoever should hereafter lend, by way of advance, any money upon those branches of the king's revenue arising from customs, excise, or hearth money, should be judged a hinderer of the sitting of parliament, and be responsible for the same in parliament.

The king might presume that the peers, who had rejected the exclusion bill, would still continue to defend the throne, and that none of the dangerous bills, introduced into the othe* [2missing r] house, would ever be presented for the royal assent and approbation. But as there remained no hopes of bringing the commons to any better temper, and as their further sitting served only to keep faction alive, and to perpetuate the general ferment of the nation, he came secretly to a resolution of proroguing them.

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They got intelligence about a quarter of an hour before the black rod came to their door. Not to lose such precious time, they passed, in a tumultuous manner, some extraordinary resolutions. They voted, that whosoever advised his majesty to prorogue this parliament to any other purpose than in order to pass the bill of exclusion, was a betrayer of the king, of the Protestant religion, and of the kingdom of England; a promoter of the French interest, and a pensioner of France: that thanks be given to the city of London for their manifest loyalty, and for their care and vigilance in the preservation of the king and of the Protestant religion: that it is the opinion of this house, that that city was burned in the year 1666 by the Papists, designing thereby to introduce arbitrary power and Popery into the kingdom: that humble application be made to his majesty for restoring the duke of Monmouth to all his offices and commands, from which, it appears to the house, he had been removed by the influence of the duke of York: and that it is the opinion of the house, that the prosecution of the Protestant dissenters upon the penal laws is at this time grievous to the subject, a weakening of the Protestant interest, an encouragement of Popery, and dangerous to the peace of the kingdom.

The king passed some laws of no great importance: but the bill for repealing the thirty-fifth of Elizabeth, he privately ordered the clerk of the crown not to present to him. By this artifice, which was equally disobliging to the country party as if the bill had been rejected, and at the same time implied some timidity in the king, that salutary act was for the present eluded. The king had often of himself attempted, and sometimes by irregular means, to give indulgence to nonconformists: but besides that he had usually expected to comprehend the Catholics in this liberty, the present refractory disposition of the sectaries had much incensed him against them; and he was resolved, if possible, to keep them still at mercy.

The last votes of the commons seemed to be an attempt of forming indirectly an association against the crown, after they found that their association bill could not pass: the dissenting interest, the city, and the duke of Monmouth, they endeavored to connect with the country party. A civil war indeed never appeared so likely as at present; and it was high time for the king to dissolve a parliament which seemed to have entertained such dangerous projects. Soon after, he summoned another. Though he observed, that the country party had established their interest so strongly in all the electing boroughs, that he could not hope for any disposition more favorable in the new parliament, this expedient was still a prosecution of his former project, of trying every method by which he might form an accommodation with the commons; and if all failed, he hoped that he could the better justify to his people, at least to his party, a final breach with them.

It had always been much regretted by the royalists, during the civil wars, that the long parliament had been assembled at Westminster, and had thereby received force and encouragement from the vicinity of a potent and factious city, which had zealously embraced their party. Though the king was now possessed of guards, which in some measure overawed the populace, he was determined still further to obviate all inconveniences; and he summoned the new parliament to meet at Oxford. The city of London showed how just a judgment he had formed of their dispositions. Besides reelecting the same members, they voted thanks to them for their former behavior, in endeavoring to discover the depth of the horrid and hellish Popish plot, and to exclude the duke of York, the principal cause of the ruin and misery impending over the nation. Monmouth with fifteen peers presented a petition against assembling the parliament at Oxford, “where the two houses,” they said, “could not be in safety; but would be easily exposed to the swords of the Papists and their adherents, of whom too many had crept into his majesty’s guards.” These insinuations, which pointed so evidently at the king himself, were not calculated to persuade him, but to inflame the people.

The exclusionists might have concluded, both from the king’s dissolution of the last parliament, and from his summoning of the present to meet at Oxford, that he was determined to maintain his declared resolution of rejecting their favorite bill; but they still flattered themselves, that his urgent necessities would influence his easy temper, and finally gain them the ascendant. The leaders came to parliament, attended not only by their servants, but by numerous bands of their partisans. The four city members in particular were followed by great multitudes, wearing ribbons, in which were woven these words, “No Popery! No slavery!” The king had his guards regularly mustered: his party likewise endeavored to make a show of their strength; and on the whole, the assembly at Oxford rather bore the appearance of a tumultuous Polish diet, than of a regular English parliament.

The king, who had hitherto employed the most gracious expressions to all his parliaments, particularly the two last, thought proper to address himself to the present in a more authoritative manner. He complained of the unwarrantable proceedings of the former house of commons; and said, that, as he would never use arbitrary government himself, neither would he ever suffer it in others. By calling, however, this parliament so soon, he had sufficiently shown, that no past irregularities could inspire him with a prejudice against those assemblies. He now afforded them, he added, yet another opportunity of providing for the public safety; and to all the world had given one evidence more, that on his part he had not neglected the duty incumbent on him.

The commons were not overawed by the magisterial air of the king’s speech. They consisted almost entirely of the same members; they chose the same speaker; and they instantly fell into the same measures, the impeachment of Danby, the repeal of the persecuting statute of Elizabeth, the inquiry into the Popish plot, and the bill of exclusion. So violent were they on this last article, that no other expedient, however plausible, could so much as be hearkened to. Ernley, one of the king's ministers, proposed, that the duke should be banished, during life, five hundred miles from England and that on the king's demise the next heir should be constituted regent with regal power: yet even this expedient, which left the duke only the bare title of king, could not, though seconded by Sir Thomas Lyttleton and Sir Thomas Mompesson, obtain the attention of the house. The past disappointments of the country party, and the opposition made by the court, had only rendered them more united, more haughty, and more determined. No method but their own, of excluding the duke, could give them any satisfaction.

There was one Fitzharris, an Irish Catholic, who had insinuated himself into the duchess of Portsmouth's acquaintance, and had been very busy in conveying to her intelligence of any libel written by the country party, or of any designs entertained against her or against the court. For services of this kind, and perhaps too from a regard to his father. Sil Edward Fitzharris, who had been an eminent royalist, he had received from the king a present of two hundred and fifty pounds. This man met with one Everard, a Scotchman, a spy of the exclusionists, and an informer concerning the Popish plot; and he engaged him to write a libel against the king, the duke, and the whole administration. What Fitzharris's intentions were, cannot well be ascertained: it is probable, as he afterwards asserted, that he meant to carry this libel to his patron, the duchess, and to make a merit of the discovery. Everard, who suspected some other design, and who was well pleased on his side to have the merit of a discovery with his patrons, resolved to betray his friend: he posted Sir William Waller, a noted justice of peace, and two persons more, behind the hangings, and gave them an opportunity of seeing and hearing the whole transaction. The libel, sketched out by Fitzharris, and executed partly by him, partly by Everard, was the most furious, indecent, and outrageous performance imaginable, and such as was fitter to hurt than serve any party which should be so imprudent as to adopt it. Waller carried the intelligence to the king, and obtained a warrant for committing Fitzharris, who happened at that very time to have a copy of the libel in his pocket. Finding himself now delivered over to the law, he resolved to pay court to the popular party, who were alone able to protect him, and by whom he observed almost all trials to be governed and directed. He affirmed, that he had been employed by the court to write the libel, in order to throw the odium of it on the exclusionists: but this account, which was within the bounds of credibility, he disgraced by circumstances which are altogether absurd and improbable. The intention of the ministers, he said, was to send about copies to all the heads of the country party; and the moment they received them, they were to be arrested, and a conspiracy to be imputed to them. That he might merit favor by still more important intelligence, he commenced a discoverer of the great Popish plot; and he failed not to confirm all the tremendous circumstances, insisted on by his predecessors. He said, that the second Dutch war was entered into with a view of extirpating the Protestant religion, both abroad and at home; that Father Parry, a Jesuit, on the disappointment by the peace, told him, that the Catholics resolved to murder the king, and had even engaged the queen in that design; that the envoy of Medena offered him two thousand pounds to kill the king, and upon his refusal the envoy said, that the duchess of Mazarine, who was as expert at poisoning as her sister, the Countess of Soissons, would, with a little phial, execute that design; that upon the king's death, the army in Flanders was to come over and massacre the Protestants; that money was raised in Italy for recruits and supplies, and there should be no more parliaments; and that the Duke was privy to this whole plan, and had even entered into the design of Godfrey's murder, which was executed in the manner related by France.

The popular leaders had all along been very desirous of having an accusation against the Duke; and though Oates and Bedloe, in their first evidence, had not dared to go so far, both Dugdale and Dangerfield had afterwards been encouraged to supply so material a defect, by comprehending him in the conspiracy. The commons, therefore, finding that Fitzharris was also willing to serve this purpose, were not ashamed to adopt his evidence, and resolved for that end, to save him from the destruction with which he was at present threatened. The king had removed him from the city prison, where he was exposed to be tampered with by the exclusionists; had sent him to the Tower; and had ordered him to be prosecuted by an indictment at common law. In order to prevent his trial and execution, an impeachment was voted by the commons against him, and sent up to the lords. That they might show the greater contempt of the court, they ordered, by way of derision, that the impeachment should be carried up by Secretary Jenkins; who was so provoked by the intended affront, that he at first refused obedience; though afterwards, being threatened with commitment, he was induced to comply. The lords voted to remit the affair to the ordinary courts of justice, before whom, as the attorney-general informed them, it was already determined to try Fitzharris. The commons maintained that the peers were obliged to receive every impeachment from the commons; and this indeed seems to have been the first instance of their refusal: they therefore voted, that the lords, in rejecting their impeachment, had denied justice, and had violated the constitution of parliament. They also declared, that whatever inferior court should proceed against Fitzharris, or any one that lay under impeachment, would be guilty of a high breach of privilege. Great heats were likely to ensue; and as the king saw no appearance of any better temper in the commons, he gladly laid hold of the opportunity afforded by a quarrel between the two houses, and he proceeded to a dissolution of the parliament. The secret was so well kept, that the commons had no intimation of it till the black rod came to their door, and summoned them to attend the king at the house of peers.

This vigorous measure, though it might have been foreseen, excited such astonishment in the country party, as deprived them of all spirit, and reduced them to absolute despair. They were sensible, though too late, that the king had finally taken his resolution, and was determined to endure any extremity rather than submit to those terms which they had resolved to impose upon him. They found that he had patiently waited till affairs should come to full maturity; and having now engaged a national party on his side, had boldly set his enemies at defiance. No parliament, they knew, would be summoned for some years; and during that long interval, the court, though perhaps at the head of an inferior party, yet being possessed of all authority, would have every advantage over a body dispersed and disunited. These reflections crowded upon every one; and all the exclusionists were terrified, lest Charles should follow the blow by some action more violent, and immediately take vengeance on them for their long and obstinate opposition to his measures. The king on his part was no less apprehensive, lest despair might prompt them to have recourse to force, and make some sudden attempt upon his person. Both parties therefore hurried from Oxford; and in an instant that city, so crowded and busy, was left in its usual emptiness and tranquillity.

The court party gathered force from the dispersion and astonishment of their antagonists, and adhered more firmly to the king, whose resolutions, they now saw, could be entirely depended on. The violences of the exclusionists were every where exclaimed against and aggravated; and even the reality of the plot, that great engine of their authority, was openly called in question* [[2]missing period] The clergy especially were busy in this great revolution; and being moved, partly by their own fears partly by the insinuations of the court, they represented all their antagonists as sectaries and republicans, and rejoiced in escaping those perils which they believed to have been hanging over them. Principles the most opposite to civil liberty were every where enforced from the pulpit, and adopted in numerous addresses; where the king was flattered in his present measures, and congratulated on his escape from parliaments. Could words have been depended on, the nation appeared to be running fast into voluntary servitude, and seemed even ambitious of resigning into the king's hands all the privileges transmitted to them, through so many ages, by their gallant ancestors.

But Charles had sagacity enough to distinguish between men's real internal sentiments, and the language which zeal and opposition to a contrary faction may sometimes extort from them. Notwithstanding all these professions of duty and obedience, he was resolved not to trust, for a long time, the people with a new election, but to depend entirely on his own economy for alleviating those necessities under which he labored. Great retrenchments were made in the household: even his favorite navy was neglected: Tangiers, though it had cost great sums of money, was a few years after abandoned and demolished. The mole was entirely destroyed; and the garrison, being brought over to England, served to augment that small army which the king relied on as the solid basis of his authority. It had been happy for the nation, had Charles used his victory with justice and moderation equal to the prudence and dexterity with which he obtained it.

The first step taken by the court was the trial of Fitzharris. Doubts were raised by the jury with regard to their power of trying him, after the concluding vote of the commons: but the judges took upon them to decide the question in the affirmative, and the jury were obliged to proceed. The writing of the libel was clearly proved upon Fitzharris: the only question was with regard to his intentions. He asserted, that he was a spy of the court, and had accordingly carried the libel to the duchess of Portsmouth; and he was desirous that the jury should, in this transaction, consider him as a cheat, not as a traitor. He failed, however, somewhat in the proof; and was brought in guilty of treason by the jury.

Finding himself entirely in the hands of the king, he now retracted all his former impostures with regard to the popish plot, and even endeavored to atone for them by new impostures against the country party. He affirmed, that these fictions had been extorted from him by the suggestions and artifices of Treby, the recorder, and of Bethel and Cornish, the two sheriffs: this account he persisted in even at his execution; and though men knew that nothing could be depended on which came from one so corrupt, and so lost to all sense of honor, yet were they inclined, from his perseverance, to rely somewhat more on his veracity in these last asseverations. But it appears that his wife had some connections with Mrs. Wall, the favorite maid of the duchess of Portsmouth; and Fitzharris hoped, if he persisted in a story agreeable to the court, that some favor might, on that account, be shown to his family.

It is amusing to reflect on the several lights in which this story has been represented by the opposite factions. The country party affirmed, that Fitzharris had been employed by the court, in order to throw the odium of the libel on the exclusionists, and thereby give rise to a Protestant plot: the court party maintained, that the exclusionists had found out Fitzharris, a spy of the ministers, and had set him upon this undertaking, from an intention of loading the court with the imputation of such a design upon the exclusionists. Rather than acquit their antagonists, both sides were willing to adopt an account the most intricate and incredible. It was a strange situation in which the people at this time were placed; to be every day tortured with these perplexed stories, and inflamed with such dark suspicions against their fellow-citizens. This was no less than the fifteenth false plot, or sham plot, as they were then called, with which the court, it was imagined, had endeavored to load their adversaries. [1]

* College's trial.

The country party had intended to make use of Fitzharris's evidence against the duke and the Catholics; and his execution was therefore a great mortification to them. But the king and his ministers were resolved not to be contented with so slender an advantage. They were determined to pursue the victory, and to employ against the exclusionists those very offensive arms, however unfair, which that party had laid up in store against their antagonists. The whole gang of spies, witnesses, informers, suborners, who had so long been supported and encouraged by the leading patriots, finding now that the king was entirely master, turned short upon their old patrons and offered their service to the ministers. To the disgrace of the court and of the age, they were received with hearty welcome, and their testimony, or rather perjury, made use of in order to commit legal murder upon the opposite party. With an air of triumph and derision, it was asked, "Are not these men good witnesses, who have established the Popish plot, upon whose testimony Stafford and so many Catholics have been executed, and whom you yourselves have so long celebrated as men of credit and veracity? You have admitted them into your bosom: they are best acquainted with your treasons: they are determined in another shape to serve their king and country: and you cannot complain, that the same measure which you meted to others, should now, by a righteous doom or vengeance, be measured out to you."

It is certain that the principle of retaliation may serve in some cases as a full apology, in others as an alleviation, for a conduct which would otherwise be exposed to great blame. But these infamous arts, which poison justice in its very source, and break all the bands of human society, are so detestable and dangerous, that no pretence of retaliation can be pleaded as an apology or even an alleviation of the crime incurred by them. On the contrary, the greater indignation the king and his ministers felt, when formerly exposed to the perjuries of abandoned men, the more reluctance should they now have discovered against employing the same instruments of vengeance upon their antagonists.

The first person on whom the ministers fell was one College, a London joiner, who had become extremely noted for his zeal against Popery, and was much connected with Shaftesbury and the leaders of the country party: for as they relied much upon the populace, men of College's rank and station were useful to them. College had been in Oxford armed with sword and pistol during the sitting of the parliament; and this was made the foundation of his crime. It was pretended that a conspiracy had been entered into to seize the king's person, and detain him in confinement, till he should make the concessions demanded of him. The sheriffs of London were in strong opposition to the court; and it was not strange, that the grand jury named by them rejected the bill against College. The prisoner was therefore sent to Oxford, where the treason was said to have been committed. Lord Norris, a courtier, was sheriff of the county; and the inhabitants were in general devoted to the court party. A jury was named, consisting entirely of royalists; and though they were men of credit and character, yet such was the factious rage which prevailed, that little justice could be expected by the prisoner. Some papers, containing hints and directions for his defence, were taken from him, as he was conducted to his trial; an iniquity which some pretended to justify by alleging, that a like violence had been practised against a prisoner daring the fury of the Popish plot. Such wild notes of retaliation were at that time propagated by the court party.

The witnesses produced against College were Dugdale, Turberville, Haynes, Smith; men who had before given evidence against the Catholics, and whom the jury, for that very reason, regarded as the most perjured villains. College, though beset with so many toils, and oppressed with so many iniquities, defended himself with spirit, courage, capacity, presence of mind; and he invalidated the evidence of the crown, by convincing arguments and undoubted testimony: yet did the jury, after half an hour’s deliberation, bring in a verdict against him. The inhuman spectators received the verdict with a shout of applause: but the prisoner was nowise dismayed. At his execution, he maintained the same manly fortitude, and still denied the crime imputed to him. His whole conduct and demeanor prove him to have been a man led astray only by the fury of the times, and to have been governed by an honest but indiscreet zeal for his country and his religion.

Thus the two parties, actuated by mutual rage, but cooped up within the narrow limits of the law, levelled with poisoned daggers the most deadly blows against each other’s breast, and buried in their factious divisions all regard to truth, honor and humanity.

CHAPTER LXIX.

CHARLES II.

1681

When the cabal entered into the mysterious alliance with France, they took care to remove the duke of Ormond from the committee of foreign affairs; and nothing tended further to increase the national jealousy entertained against the new measures, than to see a man of so much loyalty, as well as probity and honor, excluded from public councils. They had even so great interest with the king as to get Ormond recalled from the government of Ireland; and Lord Robarts, afterwards earl of Radnor, succeeded him in that important employment. Lord Berkeley succeeded Robarts; and the earl of Essex, Berkeley. At last, in the year 1677 Charles cast his eye again upon Ormond, whom he had so long neglected; and sent him over lieutenant to Ireland. “I have done every thing,” said the king, “to disoblige that man; but it is not in my power to make him my enemy.” Ormond, during his disgrace, had never joined the malecontents, nor encouraged those clamors which, with too much reason, but often for bad purposes, were raised against the king’s measures. He even thought it his duty regularly, though with dignity, to pay his court at Whitehall; and to prove, that his attachments were founded on gratitude, inclination, and principle, not on any temporary advantages. All the expressions which dropped from him, while neglected by the court, showed more of good humor than any prevalence of spleen and indignation. “I can do you no service,” said he to his friends; “I have only the power left by my applications to do you some hurt.” When Colonel Cary Dillon solicited him to second his pretensions for an office, and urged that he had no friends but God and his grace, “Alas! poor Cary,” replied the duke, “I pity thee: thou couldst not have two friends that possess less interest at court.” “I am thrown by,” said he, on another occasion, “like an old rusty clock; yet even that neglected machine, twice in twenty-four hours, points right.”

On such occasions when Ormond, from decency, paid his attendance at court, the king, equally ashamed to show him civility and to neglect him, was abashed and confounded. “Sir,” said the profligate Buckingham, “I wish to know whether it be the duke of Ormond that is out of favor with your majesty, or your majesty with the duke of Ormond; for of the two, you seem the most out of countenance.”

When Charles found it his interest to show favor to the old royalists, and to the church of England, Ormond, who was much revered by that whole party, could not fail of recovering, together with the government of Ireland, his former credit and authority. His administration, when lord lieutenant corresponded to the general tenor of his life; and tended equally to promote the interests of prince and people, of Protestant and Catholic. Ever firmly attached to the established religion, he was able, even during those jealous times, to escape suspicion, though he gratified not vulgar prejudices by any persecution of the Popish party. He increased the revenue of Ireland to three hundred thousand pounds a year: he maintained a regular army of ten thousand men: he supported a well-disciplined militia of twenty thousand: and though the act of settlement had so far been infringed, that Catholics were permitted to live in corporate towns, they were guarded with so careful an eye, that the most timorous Protestant never apprehended any danger from them.

The chief object of Essex’s ambition was to return to the station of lord lieutenant, where he had behaved with honor and integrity: Shaftesbury and Buckingham bore an extreme hatred to Ormond, both from personal and party considerations: the great aim of the anti-courtiers was to throw reflections on every part of the king’s government. It could be no surprise, therefore, to the lord lieutenant to learn, that his administration was attacked in parliament, particularly by Shaftesbury; but he had the satisfaction, at the same time, to hear of the keen though polite defence made by his son, the generous Ossory. After justifying several particulars of Ormond’s administration against that intriguing patriot, Ossory proceeded in the following words: “Having spoken of what the lord lieutenant has done, I presume with the same truth to tell your lordships what he has not done. He never advised the breaking of the triple league; he never advised the shutting up of the exchequer; he never advised the declaration for a toleration; he never advised the falling out with the Dutch and the joining with France: he was not the author of that most excellent position, Delenda est Carthago, that Holland, a Protestant country, should, contrary to the true interests of England, be totally destroyed. I beg that your lordships will be so just as to judge of my father and all men according to their actions and their counsels.” These few sentences pronounced by a plain, gallant soldier, noted for probity, had a surprising effect upon the audience, and confounded all the rhetoric of his eloquent and factious adversary. The prince of Orange, who esteemed the former character as much as he despised the latter, could not forbear congratulating by letter the earl of Ossory on this new species of victory which he had obtained.

Ossory, though he ever kept at a distance from faction, was the most popular man in the kingdom; though he never made any compliance with the corrupt views of the court, was beloved and respected by the king. A universal grief appeared on his death, which happened about this time, and which the populace, as is usual wherever they are much affected, foolishly ascribed to poison. Ormond bore the loss with patience and dignity; though he ever retained a pleasing, however melancholy, sense of the signal merit of Ossory. “I would not exchange my dead son,” said he, “for any living son in Christendom.”

These particularities may appear a digression; but it is with pleasure, I own, that I relax myself for a moment in the contemplation of these humane and virtuous characters, amidst that scene of fury and faction, fraud and violence, in which at present our narration has unfortunately engaged us.

Besides the general interest of the country party to decry the conduct of all the king’s ministers, the prudent and peaceable administration of Ormond was in a particular manner displeasing to them. In England, where the Catholics were scarcely one to a hundred, means had been found to excite a universal panic, on account of insurrections and even massacres projected by that sect; and it could not but seem strange that in Ireland, where they exceeded the Protestants six to one, there should no symptoms appear of any combination or conspiracy. Such an incident, when duly considered, might even in England shake the credit of the plot, and diminish the authority of those leaders who had so long, with such industry, inculcated the belief of it on the nation Rewards, therefore, were published in Ireland to any that would bring intelligence or become witnesses; and some profligates were sent over to that kingdom, with a commission to seek out evidence against the Catholics. Under pretence of searching for arms or papers, they broke into houses, and plundered them: they threw innocent men into prison, and took bribes for their release: and after all their diligence, it was with difficulty that that country, commonly fertile enough in witnesses, could furnish them with any fit for their purpose.

At last, one Fitzgerald appeared, followed by Ivey, Sanson, Dennis, Bourke, two Macnamaras, and some others. These men were immediately sent over to England; and though they possessed neither character sufficient to gain belief even for truth, nor sense to invent a credible falsehood, they were caressed, rewarded, supported, and recommended by the earl of Shaftesbury. Oliver Plunket, the titular primate of Ireland, a man of peaceable dispositions, was condemned and executed upon such testimony. And the Oxford parliament entered so far into the matter, as to vote that they were entirely satisfied in the reality of the horrid and damnable Irish plot. But such decisions, though at first regarded as infallible, had now lost much of their authority; and the public still remained somewhat indifferent and incredulous.

After the dissolution of the parliament, and the subsequent victory of the royalists, Shaftesbury’s evidences, with Turberville, Smith, and others, addressed themselves to the ministers, and gave information of high treason against their former patron. It is sufficiently scandalous, that intelligence conveyed by such men should have been attended to; but there is some reason to think, that the court agents, nay, the ministers, nay, the king himself, [1] went further, and were active in endeavoring, though in vain, to find more reputable persons to support the blasted credit of the Irish witnesses.

Shaftesbury was committed to prison, and his indictment was presented to the grand jury. The new sheriffs of London, Shute and Pilkington, were engaged as deeply as their predecessors in the country party; and they took care to name a jury devoted to the same cause; a precaution quite necessary, when it was scarcely possible to find men indifferent or attached to neither party. As far as swearing could go, the treason was clearly proved against Shaftesbury; or rather so clearly as to merit no kind of credit or attention. That veteran leader of a party, inured from his early youth to faction and intrigue, to cabals and conspiracies, was represented as opening, without reserve, his treasonable intentions to these obscure banditti, and throwing out such violent and outrageous reproaches upon the king, as none but men of low education, like themselves, could be supposed to employ. The

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* See Captain Wilkinson’s Narrative.

draught of an association, it is true, against Popery and the duke, was found in Shaftesbury’s cabinet; and dangerous inferences might be drawn from many clauses of that paper. But it did not appear, that it had been framed by Shaftesbury, or so much as approved by him. And as projects of an association had been proposed in parliament, it was very natural for this nobleman, or his correspondents, to be thinking of some plan which it might be proper to lay before that assembly. The grand jury, therefore, after weighing all these circumstances, rejected the indictment; and the people who attended the hall testified their joy by the loudest acclamations, which were echoed throughout the whole city.

About this time, a scheme of oppression was laid in Scotland after a manner still more flagrant, against a nobleman much less obnoxious than Shaftesbury; and as that country was reduced to a state of almost total subjection, the project had the good fortune to succeed.

The earl of Argyle, from his youth, had distinguished himself by his loyalty, and his attachment to the royal family. Though his father was head of the Covenanters, he himself refused to concur in any of their measures; and when a commission of colonel was given him by the convention of states, he forbore to act upon it till it should be ratified by the king. By his respectful behavior, as well as by his services, he made himself acceptable to Charles when that prince was in Scotland: and even after the battle of Worcester, all the misfortunes which attended the royal cause could not engage him to desert it. Under Middleton, he obstinately persevered to harass and infest the victorious English; and it was not till he received orders from that general, that he would submit to accept of a capitulation. Such jealousy of his loyal attachments was entertained by the commonwealth and protector, that a pretence was soon after fallen upon to commit him to prison; and his confinement was rigorously continued till the restoration. The king, sensible of his services, had remitted to him his father’s forfeiture, and created him earl of Argyle; and when a most unjust sentence was passed upon him by the Scottish parliament, Charles had anew remitted it. In the subsequent part of this reign, Argyle behaved himself dutifully; and though he seemed not disposed to go all lengths with the court, he always appeared, even in his opposition, to be a man of mild dispositions and peaceable deportment.

A parliament was summoned at Edinburgh this summer, and the duke was appointed commissioner. Besides granting money to the king and voting the indefeasible right of succession, this parliament enacted a test, which all persons possessed of offices, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, were bound to take. In this test the king's supremacy was asserted, the covenant renounced, passive obedience assented to, and all obligations disclaimed of endeavoring any alteration in civil or ecclesiastical establishments. This was the state of the test, as proposed by the courtiers; but the country party proposed also to insert a clause, which could not with decency be refused, expressing the person's adherence to the Protestant religion. The whole was of an enormous length, considered as an oath; and what was worse, a confession of faith was there ratified, which had been imposed a little after the reformation, and which contained many articles altogether forgotten by the parliament and nation. Among others, the doctrine of resistance was inculcated; so that the test, being voted in a hurry, was found on examination to be a medley of contradiction and absurdity. Several persons, the most attached to the crown, scrupled to take it: the bishops and many of the clergy remonstrated: the earl of Queensberry refused to swear, except he might be allowed to add an explanation: and even the privy council thought it necessary to publish, for general satisfaction, a solution of some difficulties attending the test.

Though the courtiers could not reject the clause of adhering to the Protestant religion, they proposed, as a necessary mark of respect, that all princes of the blood should be exempted from taking the oath. This exception was zealously opposed by Argyle; who observed, that the sole danger to be dreaded for the Protestant religion must proceed from the perversion of the royal family. By insisting on such topics, he drew on himself the secret indignation of the duke, of which be soon felt the fatal consequences.

When Argyle took the test as a privy counsellor, he subjoined, in the duke's presence, an explanation, which he had beforehand communicated to that prince, and which he believed to have been approved by him. It was in these words "I have considered the test, and am very desirous of giving obedience as far as I can. I am confident that the parliament never intended to impose contradictory oaths: therefore I think no man can explain it but for himself. Accordingly, I take it as far as it is consistent with itself and the Protestant religion. And I do declare, that I mean not to bind myself, in my station, and in a lawful way, from wishing and endeavoring any alteration which I think to the advantage of church or state, and not repugnant to the

Protestant religion and my loyalty: and this I understand as a part of my oath.” The duke, as was natural, heard these words with great tranquillity: no one took the least offence: Argyle was admitted to sit that day in council: and it was impossible to imagine, that a capital offence had been committed, where occasion seemed not to have been given so much as for a frown or reprimand.

Argyle was much surprised, a few days after, to find that a warrant was issued for committing him to prison; that he was indicted for high treason, leasing-making, and perjury; and that from these innocent words an accusation was extracted, by which he was to forfeit honors, life, and fortune. It is needless to enter into particulars where the iniquity of the whole is so apparent. Though the sword of justice was displayed, even her semblance was not put on; and the forms alone of law were preserved, in order to sanctify, or rather aggravate, the oppression. Of five judges, three did not scruple to find the guilt of treason and leasing-making to have been incurred by the prisoner: a jury of fifteen noblemen gave verdict against him: and the king, being consulted, ordered the sentence to be pronounced, but the execution of it to be suspended till further orders.

It was pretended by the duke and his creatures, that Argyle’s life and fortune were not in any danger, and that the sole reason for pushing the trial to such extremities against him was, in order to make him renounce some hereditary jurisdictions, which gave his family a dangerous authority in the highlands, and obstructed the course of public justice. But allowing the end to be justifiable, the means were infamous; and such as were incompatible, not only with a free, but a civilized government. Argyle had therefore no reason to trust any longer to the justice or mercy of such enemies: he made his escape from prison; and till he should find a ship for Holland he concealed himself during some time in London. The king heard of his lurking-place, but would not allow him to be arrested. [1] All the parts, however, of his sentence, as far as the government in Scotland had power, were rigorously executed; his estate confiscated, his arms reversed and torn.

It would seem, that the genuine passion for liberty was at this time totally extinguished in Scotland: there was only preserved a spirit of mutiny and sedition, encouraged by a mistaken zeal for religion. Cameron and Cargil, two furious preachers, went a step beyond all their brethren: they publicly

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* Burnet, vol. i. .

excommunicated the king for his tyranny and his breach of the covenant, and they renounced all allegiance to him. Cameron was killed by the troops in an action at Airs Moss: Cargil was taken and hanged. Many of their followers were tried and convicted. Their lives were offered them if they would say, “God save the king:” but they would only agree to pray for his repentance. This obstinacy was much insisted on as an apology for the rigors of the administration: but if duly considered, it will rather afford reason for a contrary inference. Such unhappy delusion is an object rather of commiseration than of anger: and it is almost impossible that men could have been carried to such a degree of frenzy, unless provoked by a long train of violence and oppression.

1682

As the king was master in England, and no longer dreaded the clamors of the country party, he permitted the duke to pay him a visit; and was soon after prevailed on to allow of his return to England, and of his bearing a part in the administration. The duke went to Scotland, in order to bring up his family, and settle the government of that country; and he chose to take his passage by sea. The ship struck on a sand-bank, and was lost: the duke escaped in the barge; and it is pretended that, while many persons of rank and quality were drowned, and among the rest Hyde, his brother-in-law, he was very careful to save several of his dogs and priests; for these two species of favorites are coupled together by some writers. It has likewise been asserted, that the barge might safely have held more persons, and that some who swam to it were thrust off, and even their hands cut, in order to disengage them. But every action of every eminent person, during this period is so liable to be misinterpreted and misrepresented by faction, that we ought to be very cautious in passing judgment on too slight evidence. It is remarkable, that the sailors on board the ship, though they felt themselves sinking, and saw inevitable death before their eyes, yet, as soon as they observed the duke to be in safety, gave a loud shout, in testimony of their joy and satisfaction.

The duke, during his abode in Scotland, had behaved with great civility towards the gentry and nobility; and by his courtly demeanor had much won upon their affections: but his treatment of the enthusiasts was still somewhat rigorous; and in many instances he appeared to be a man of a severe, if not an unrelenting temper. It is even asserted, that he sometimes assisted at the torture of criminals, and looked on with tranquillity, as if he were considering some curious experiment. [1] He left the authority in the hands of the earl of Aberdeen, chancellor, and the earl of Queensberry, treasurer: a very arbitrary spirit appeared in their administration.

* Burnet, vol. i. . Wodrow, vol. ii. . This last author, who is much the better authority, mentions only one instance, that of Spreul, which seems to have been an extraordinary one.

A gentleman of the name of Weir was tried, because he had kept company with one who had been in rebellion; though that person had never been marked out by process or proclamation. The inferences upon which Weir was condemned, (for a prosecution by the government and a condemnation were in Scotland the same thing,) hung upon each other after the following manner. No man, it was supposed, could have been in a rebellion without being exposed to suspicion in the neighborhood: if the neighborhood had suspected him, it was to be presumed that each individual had likewise heard of the grounds of suspicion: every man was bound to declare to the government his suspicion against every man, and to avoid the company of traitors: to fail in this duty was to participate in the treason: the conclusion, on the whole, was, You have conversed with a rebel; therefore you are yourself a rebel. A reprieve was with some difficulty procured for Weir; but it was seriously determined to make use of the precedent. Courts of judicature were erected in the southern and western counties, and a strict inquisition carried on against this new species of crime. The term of three years was appointed for the continuance of these courts; after which an indemnity was promised. Whoever would take the test, was instantly entitled to the benefit of this indemnity. The Presbyterians, alarmed with such tyranny, from which no man could deem himself safe, began to think of leaving the country; and some of their agents were sent to England, in order to treat with the proprietors of Carolina for a settlement in that colony. Any condition seemed preferable to the living in their native country, which, by the prevalence of persecution and violence, was become as insecure to them as a den of robbers.

Above two thousand persons were outlawed on pretence of their conversing or having intercourse with rebels, [1] and they were continually hunted in their retreat by soldiers, spies, informers, and oppressive magistrates. It was usual to put insnaring questions to people living peaceably in their own houses; such as, “Will you renounce the covenant?

Do you esteem the rising at Bothwel to be rebellion? Was the killing of the archbishop of St. Andrews murder?” And when the poor deluded creatures refused to answer, capital punishments were inflicted on them. [2] Even women were brought to the gibbet for this pretended crime. A number of fugitives, rendered frantic by oppression, had published a seditious declaration, renouncing allegiance to Charles Stuart, whom they called, as they, for their parts, had indeed some reason to esteem him, a tyrant. This incident afforded the privy council a pretence for an unusual kind of oppression. Soldiers were dispersed over the country, and power was given to all commission officers, even the lowest, to oblige every one they met with to abjure the declaration; and, upon refusal, instantly, without further questions, to shoot the delinquent. [3] It were endless, as well as shocking, to enumerate all the instances of persecution, or, in other words, of absurd tyranny, which at that time prevailed in Scotland. One of them, however, is so singular, that I cannot forbear relating it.

Three women were seized; [4] and the customary oath was tendered to them, by which they were to abjure the seditious declaration above mentioned.

They all refused, and were condemned to a capital punishment by drowning. One of them was an elderly woman: the other two were young; one eighteen years of age, the other only thirteen. Even these violent persecutors were ashamed to put the youngest to death: but the other two were conducted to the place of execution, and were tied to stakes within the sea mark at low water; a contrivance which rendered their death lingering and dreadful. The elderly woman was placed farthest in, and by the rising of the waters was first suffocated. The younger, partly terrified with the view of her companion’s death, partly subdued by the entreaty of her friends, was

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* Wodrow vol. ii. appendix, 94.

* * Wodrow, vol. ii. passim.

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prevailed with to say, “God save the king.” Immediately the spectators called out, that she had submitted; and she was loosened from the stake. Major Winram, the officer who guarded the execution, again required her to sign the abjuration; and upon her refusal, he ordered her instantly to be plunged in the water, where she was suffocated.

The severity of the administration in Scotland is in part to be ascribed to the duke’s temper, to whom the king had consigned over the government of that country, and who gave such attention to affairs as to allow nothing of moment to escape him. Even the government of England, from the same cause, began to be somewhat infected with the same severity. The duke’s credit was great at court. Though neither so much beloved nor esteemed as the king, he was more dreaded; and thence an attendance more exact, as well as a submission more obsequious, was paid to him. The saying of Waller was remarked, that Charles, in spite to the parliament, who had determined that the duke should not succeed him, was resolved that he should reign even in his lifetime.

The king, however, who loved to maintain a balance in his councils, still supported Halifax, whom he created a marquis, and made privy seal; though ever in opposition to the duke. This man, who possessed the finest genius and most extensive capacity of all employed in public affairs during the present reign, affected a species of neutrality between the parties and was esteemed the head of that small body known by the denomination of “trimmers.” This conduct, which is more natural to men of integrity than of ambition, could not, however, procure him the former character; and he was always, with reason, regarded as an intriguer rather than a patriot. Sunderland, who had promoted the exclusion bill, and who had been displaced on that account, was again, with the duke’s consent, brought into the administration. The extreme duplicity, at least variableness, of this man’s conduct, through the whole course of his life, made it be suspected, that it was by the king’s direction he had mixed with the country party. Hyde, created earl of Rochester, was first commissioner of the treasury, and was entirely in the duke’s interests.

The king himself was obliged to act as the head of a party; a disagreeable situation for a prince, and always the source of much injustice and oppression. He knew how obnoxious the dissenters were to the church; and he resolved, contrary to the maxims of toleration, which he had hitherto supported in England, to gratify his friends by the persecution of his enemies. The laws against conventicles were now rigorously executed; an expedient which, the king knew, would diminish neither the numbers nor influence of the nonconformists; and which is therefore to be deemed more the result of passion than of policy. Scarcely any persecution serves the intended purpose but such as amounts to a total extermination.

Though the king's authority made everyday great advances, it still met with considerable obstacles, chiefly from the city, which was entirely in the hands of the malecontents. The juries, in particular, named by the sheriffs, were not likely to be impartial judges between the crown and the people; and after the experiments already made in the case of Shaftesbury, and that of College, treason, it was apprehended, might there be committed with impunity. There could not, therefore, be a more important service to the court than to put affairs upon a different footing. Sir John Moore, the mayor, was gained by Secretary Jenkins, and encouraged to insist upon the customary privilege of his office, of naming one of the sheriffs. Accordingly, when the time of election came, he drank to North, a Levant merchant, who accepted of that expensive office. The country party said, that, being lately returned from Turkey, he was, on account of his recent experience, better qualified to serve the purposes of the court. A poll was opened for the election of another sheriff; and here began the contest. The majority of the common hall, headed by the two sheriffs of the former year, refused to acknowledge the mayor's right of appointing one sheriff, but insisted that both must be elected by the livery. Papillon and Dubois were the persons whom the country party agreed to elect: Box was pointed out by the courtiers. The poll was opened; but as the mayor would not allow the election to proceed for two vacancies, the sheriffs and he separated, and each carried on the poll apart. The country party, who voted with the sheriffs for Papillon and Dubois, were much more numerous than those who voted with the mayor for Box: but as the mayor insisted chat his poll was the only legal one, he declared Box to be duly elected. All difficulties, however, were not surmounted. Box, apprehensive of the consequences which might attend so dubious an election, fined off; and the mayor found it necessary to proceed to a new choice. When the matter was proposed to the common hall, a loud cry was raised, “No election! No election!” The two sheriffs already elected, Papillon and Dubois, were insisted on as the only legal magistrates. But as the mayor still maintained, that Box alone had been legally chosen, and that it was now requisite to supply his place, he opened books anew; and during the tumult and confusion of the citizens, a few of the mayor’s partisans elected Rich, unknown to and unheeded by the rest of the livery. North and Rich were accordingly sworn in sheriffs for the ensuing year; but it was necessary to send a guard of the train bands to protect them in entering upon their office. A new mayor of the court party was soon after chosen, by means, as is pretended, still more violent and irregular.

Thus the country party were dislodged from their stronghold in the city; where, ever since the commencement of factions in the English government, they had, without interruption, almost without molestation, maintained a superiority. It had been happy, had the partialities, hitherto objected to juries, been corrected, without giving place to partialities of an opposite kind: but in the present distracted state of the nation, an equitable neutrality was almost impossible to be attained. The court and church party, who were now named on juries, made justice subservient to their factious views; and the king had a prospect of obtaining full revenge on his enemies. It was not long before the effects of these alterations were seen. When it was first reported that the duke intended to leave Scotland, Pilkington, at that time sheriff, a very violent man, had broken out in these terms: “He has already burned the city; and he is now coming to cut all our throats!” For these scandalous expressions, the duke sued Pilkington; and enormous damages, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds, were decreed him. By the law of England, ratified in the Great Charter, no fine or damages ought to extend to the total ruin of a criminal. Sir Patience Ward, formerly mayor, who gave evidence for Pilkington, was sued for perjury, and condemned to the pillory; a severe sentence, and sufficient to deter all witnesses from appearing in favor of those who were prosecuted by the court.

1683

But though the crown had obtained so great a victory in the city, it was not quite decisive; and the contest might be renewed every year at the election of magistrates. An important project, therefore, was formed, not only to make the king master of the city, but by that precedent to gain him uncontrolled influence in all the corporations of England, and thereby give the greatest wound to the legal constitution, which the most powerful and most arbitrary monarchs had ever yet been able to inflict. A writ of quo warranto was issued against the city; that is, an inquiry into the validity of its charter. It was pretended, that the city had forfeited all its privileges, and ought to be declared no longer a corporation, on account of two offences which the court of aldermen and common council had committed. After the great fire in 1666, all the markets had been rebuilt, and had been fitted up with many conveniencies; and, in order to defray the expense, the magistrates had imposed a small toll on goods brought to market: in the year 1679, they had addressed the king against the prorogation of parliament, and had employed the following terms: “Your petitioners are greatly surprised at the late prorogation, whereby the prosecution of the public justice of the kingdom, and the making of necessary provisions for the preservation of your majesty and your Protestant subjects, have received interruption.” These words were pretended to contain a scandalous reflection on the king and his measures. The cause of the city was defended against the attorney and solicitor-generals by Treby and Pollexfen.

These last pleaded, that, since the foundation of the monarchy, no corporation had ever yet been exposed to forfeiture, and the thing itself implied an absurdity: that a corporation, as such, was incapable of all crime or offence; and none were answerable for any iniquity but the persons themselves who committed it: that the members, in choosing magistrates, had intrusted them with legal powers only; and where the magistrates exceeded these powers, their acts were void, but could never involve the body itself in any criminal imputation: that such had ever been the practice of England, except at the reformation, when the monasteries were abolished; but this was an extraordinary case; and it was even thought necessary to ratify afterwards the whole transaction by act of parliament: that corporate bodies, framed for public good, and calculated for perpetual duration, ought not to be annihilated for the temporary faults of their members, who might themselves, without hurting the community, be questioned for their offences: that even a private estate, if entailed, could not be forfeited to the crown on account of treason committed by the tenant for life; but, upon his demise, went to the next in remainder: that the offences objected to the city, far from deserving so severe a punishment, were not ever worthy of the smallest reprehension: that all corporations were invested with the power of making by-laws; and the smallest borough in England had ever been allowed to carry the exercise of this power further than London had done in the instance complained of: that the city having, at its own expense, repaired the markets, which were built too on its own estate, might as lawfully claim a small recompense from such as brought commodities thither, as a man might require rent for a house of which he was possessed: that those who disliked the condition might abstain from the market; and whoever paid, had done it voluntarily: that it was an avowed right of the subjects to petition; nor had the city in their address abused this privilege, that the king himself had often declared, the parliament often it is evident, could not be fully prosecuted but in a parliamentary manner: that the impeachment of the Popish lords was certainly obstructed by the frequent prorogations; as was also the enacting of necessary laws, and providing for the defence of the nation: that the loyalty of the city, no less than their regard to self-preservation, might prompt them to frame the petition; since it was acknowledged, that the king's life was every moment exposed to the most imminent danger from the Popish conspiracy: that the city had not accused the king of obstructing justice, much less of having any such intention; since it was allowed, that evil counsellors were alone answerable for all the pernicious consequences of any measure: and that it was unaccountable, that two public deeds, which had not, during so long a time, subjected to any, even the smallest penalty, the persons guilty of them, should now be punished so severely upon the corporation, which always was, and always must be innocent.

It is evident, that those who would apologize for the measures of the court, must, in this case, found their arguments, not on law, but reasons of state. The judges, therefore, who condemned the city, are inexcusable; since the sole object of their determinations must ever be the pure principles of justice and equity. But the office of judge was at that time held during pleasure; and it was impossible that any cause, where the court bent its force, could ever be carried against it. After sentence was pronounced, the city applied in an humble manner to the king; and he agreed to restore their charter, but in return they were obliged to submit to the following regulations that no mayor, sheriff, recorder, common serjeant, town clerk, or coroner, should be admitted to the exercise of his office without his majesty's approbation: that if the king disapprove twice of the mayor or sheriffs elected, he may by commission appoint these magistrates: that the mayor and court of aldermen may, with his majesty's leave, displace any magistrate: and that no alderman, in case of a vacancy, shall be elected without consent of the court of aldermen, who, if they disapprove twice of the choice, may fill the vacancy.

All the corporations in England, having the example of London before their eyes, saw how vain it would prove to contend with the court, and were, most of them, successively induced to surrender their charters into the king's hands. Considerable sums were exacted for restoring the charters; and all offices of power and profit were left at the disposal of the crown. It seems strange that the independent royalists, who never meant to make the crown absolute, should yet be so elated with the victory obtained over their adversaries, as to approve of a precedent which left no national privileges in security, but enabled the king, under like pretences, and by means of like instruments, to recall anew all those charters which at present he was pleased to grant. And every friend to liberty must allow, that the nation, whose constitution was thus broken in the shock of faction, had a right, by every prudent expedient, to recover that security of which it was so unhappily bereaved.

While so great a faction adhered to the crown, it is apparent that resistance, however justifiable, could never be prudent; and all wise men saw no expedient but peaceably to submit to the present grievances. There was, however, a party of malecontents, so turbulent in their disposition, that, even before this last iniquity, which laid the whole constitution at the mercy of the king, they had meditated plans of resistance; at a time when it could be as little justifiable as prudent. In the spring of 1681, [1] a little before the Oxford parliament, the king was seized with a fit of sickness at Windsor, which gave great alarm to the public.

The duke of Monmouth, Lord Russel, Lord Grey, instigated by the restless Shaftesbury, had agreed, in case the king's sickness should prove mortal, to rise in arms, and to oppose the succession of the duke. Charles recovered; but these dangerous projects were not laid aside. The same

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* Lord Grey's Secret History of the Rye-house Plot. This is the most full and authentic account of all these transactions; but is in the main confirmed by Bishop Sprat, and even Burnet, as well as by the trials and dying confessions of the conspirators; so that nothing can be more unaccountable than that any one should pretend that this conspiracy was an imposture, like the Popish plot.

Monmouth's declaration, published in the next reign,
confesses a consult for extraordinary remedies.

conspirators, together with Essex and Salisbury were determined to continue the Oxford parliament, after the king, as was daily expected, should dissolve it; and they engaged some leaders among the commons in the same desperate measure. They went so far as to detain several lords in the house, under pretence of signing a protest against rejecting Fitzharris's impeachment; but hearing that the commons had broken up in great consternation, they were likewise obliged at last to separate. Shaftesbury's imprisonment and trial put an end for some time to these machinations; and it was not till the new sheriffs were imposed on the city that they were revived. The leaders of the country party began then to apprehend themselves in imminent danger; and they were well pleased to find that the citizens were struck with the same terror, and were thence inclined to undertake the most perilous enterprises. Besides the city, the gentry and nobility in several counties of England were solicited to rise in arms. Monmouth engaged the earl of Macclesfield, Lord Brandon, Sir Gilbert Gerrard, and other gentlemen in Cheshire; Lord Russel fixed a correspondence with Sir William Courtney, Sir Francis Rowles, Sir Francis Drake, who promised to raise the west; and Trenchard in particular, who had interest in the disaffected town of Taunton, assured him of considerable assistance from that neighborhood. Shaftesbury and his emissary Ferguson, an Independent clergyman and a restless plotter, managed the correspondence in the city, upon which the confederates chiefly relied. The whole train was ready to take fire; but was prevented by the caution of Lord Russel, who induced Monmouth to delay the enterprise. Shaftesbury, in the mean time, was so much affected with the sense of his danger, that he had left his house, and secretly lurked in the city; meditating all those desperate schemes which disappointed revenge and ambition could inspire. He exclaimed loudly against delay, and represented to his confederates, that having gone so far, and intrusted the secret into so many hands, there was no safety for them but in a bold and desperate prosecution of their purpose. The projects were therefore renewed: meetings of the conspirators were appointed in different houses, particularly in Shephard's, an eminent wine-merchant in the city: the plan of an insurrection was laid in London, Cheshire, Devonshire, and Bristol: the several places of rendezvous in the city were concerted; and all the operations fixed: the state of the guards was even viewed by Monmouth and Armstrong, and an attack on them pronounced practicable: a declaration to justify the enterprise to the public was read and agreed to: and every circumstance seemed now to render an insurrection unavoidable; when a new delay was procured by Trenchard, who declared that the rising in the west could not for some weeks be in sufficient forwardness.

Shaftesbury was enraged at these perpetual cautions and delays in an enterprise which, he thought, nothing but courage and celerity could render effectual: he threatened to commence the insurrection with his friends in the city alone; and he boasted, that he had ten thousand brisk boys, as he called them, who, on a motion of his finger, were ready to fly to arms. Monmouth* [2missing comma] Russel, and the other conspirators, were during some time in apprehensions lest despair should push him into some dangerous measure; when they heard that, after a long combat between fear and rage, he had at last abandoned all hopes of success, and had retired into Holland. He lived in a private manner at Amsterdam; and for greater security desired to be admitted into the magistracy of that city: but his former violent counsels against the Dutch commonwealth were remembered; and all applications from him were rejected. He died soon after, and his end gave neither sorrow to his friends nor joy to his enemies. His furious temper, notwithstanding his capacity, had done great injury to the cause in which he was engaged. The violences and iniquities which he suggested and encouraged, were greater than even faction itself could endure; and men could not forbear sometimes recollecting, that the same person who had become so zealous a patriot, was once a most prostitute courtier. It is remarkable, that this man, whose principles and conduct were in all other respects so exceptionable, proved an excellent chancellor; and that all his decrees, while he possessed that high office, were equally remarkable for justness and for integrity: so difficult is it to find in history a character either wholly bad or perfectly good; though the prejudices of party make writers run easily into the extremes both of panegyric and of satire.

After Shaftesbury’s departure, the conspirators found some difficulty in renewing the correspondence with the city malecontents, who had been accustomed to depend solely on that nobleman. Their common hopes, however, as well as common fears, made them at last have recourse to each other; and a regular project of an insurrection was again formed. A council of six was erected, consisting of Monmouth, Russel, Essex, Howard, Algernon Sidney, and John Hambden, grandson of the great parliamentary leader. These men entered into an agreement with Argyle and the Scottish malecontents; who engaged, that, upon the payment of ten thousand pounds for the purchase of arms in Holland, they would bring the Covenanters into the field. Insurrections likewise were anew projected in Cheshire and the west, as well as in the city; and some meetings of the leaders were held, in order to reduce these projects into form. The conspirators differed extremely in their views. Sidney was passionate for a commonwealth. Essex had embraced the same project. But Monmouth had entertained hopes of acquiring the crown for himself. Russel, as well as Hambden, was much attached to the ancient constitution, and intended only the exclusion of the duke and the redress of grievances. Lord Howard was a man of no principle, and was ready to embrace any party which his immediate interest should recommend to him. But notwithstanding this difference of characters and of views, their common hatred of the duke and the present administration united them in one party; and the dangerous experiment of an insurrection was fully resolved on.

While these schemes were concerting among the leaders, there was an inferior order of conspirators, who held frequent meetings, and, together with the insurrection, carried on projects quite unknown to Monmouth and the cabal of six* [2missing period] Among these men were Colonel Rumsey, an old republican officer, who had distinguished himself in Portugal, and had been recommended to the king by Mareschal Schomberg; Lieutenant-Colonel Walcot, likewise a republican officer; Goodenough, under-sheriff of London, a zealous and noted party-man; West, Tyley, Norton, Ayloffe, lawyers; Ferguson, Rouse, Hone, Keiling, Holloway, Bourne, Lee, Rumbald. Most of these last were merchants or tradesmen; and the only persons of this confederacy who had access to the leaders of the party, were Rumsey and Ferguson. When these men met together, they indulged themselves in the most desperate and most criminal discourse; they frequently mentioned the assassination of the king and the duke, to which they had given the familiar appellation of lopping: they even went so far as to have thought of a scheme for that purpose. Rumbald, who was a maltster, possessed a farm, called the Ryehouse, which lay on the road to Newmarket, whither the king commonly went once a year, for the diversion of the races. A plan of this farm had been laid before some of the conspirators by Rumbald, who showed them how easy it would be, by overturning a cart, to stop at that place the king’s coach; while they might fire upon him from the hedges, and be enabled afterwards, through by-lanes and across the fields, to make their escape. But though the plausibility of this scheme gave great pleasure to the conspirators, no concerted design was as yet laid, nor any men, horses, or arms provided: the whole was little more than loose discourse, the overflowings of their zeal and rancor. The house in which the king lived at Newmarket, took fire accidentally; and he was obliged to leave that place eight days sooner than he intended. To this circumstance his safety was afterwards ascribed, when the conspiracy was detected; and the court party could not sufficiently admire the wise dispensations of Providence. It is, indeed, certain, that as the king had thus unexpectedly left Newmarket, he was worse attended than usual; and Rumbald informed his confederates with regret what a fine opportunity was thus unfortunately lost.

Among the conspirators I have mentioned Keiling, a salter in London. This man had been engaged in a bold measure, of arresting the mayor of London, at the suit of Papillon and Dubois, the outed sheriffs; and being liable to prosecution for that action, he thought it safest to purchase a pardon by revealing the conspiracy, in which he was deeply concerned. He brought to Secretary Jenkins intelligence of the assassination plot; but as he was a single evidence, the secretary, whom many false plots had probably rendered incredulous, scrupled to issue warrants for the commitment of so great a number of persons. Keiling, therefore, in order to fortify his testimony, engaged his brother in treasonable discourse with Goodenough, one of the conspirators; and Jenkins began now to give more attention to the intelligence. The conspirators had got some hint of the danger in which they were involved, and all of them concealed themselves. One person alone, of the name of Barber, an instrument-maker, was seized; and as his confession concurred in many particulars with Keiling's information, the affair seemed to be put out of all question; and a more diligent search was every where made after the conspirators.

West, the lawyer, and Colonel Rumsey, finding the perils to which they were exposed in endeavoring to escape, resolved to save their own lives at the expense of their companions; and they surrendered themselves with an intention of becoming evidence. West could do little more than confirm the testimony of Keiling with regard to the assassination plot; but Rumsey, besides giving additional confirmation of the same design, was at last, though with much difficulty, led to reveal the meetings at Shephard's.

Shephard was immediately apprehended, and had not courage to maintain fidelity to his confederates. Upon his information, orders were issued for arresting the great men engaged in the conspiracy. Monmouth absconded: Russel was sent to the Tower: Grey was arrested, but escaped from the messenger: Howard was taken, while he concealed himself in a chimney; and being a man of profligate morals, as well as indigent circumstances, he scrupled not, in hopes of a pardon and a reward, to reveal the whole conspiracy. Essex, Sidney, and Hambden were immediately apprehended upon his evidence. Every day some of the conspirators were detected in their lurking-places, and thrown into prison.

Lieutenant-Colonel Walcot was first brought to his trial, This man, who was once noted for bravery, had been so far overcome by the love of life, that he had written to Secretary Jenkins, and had offered upon promise of pardon to turn evidence: but no sooner had he taken this mean step, than he felt more generous sentiments arise in him; and he endeavored, though in vain, to conceal himself. The witnesses against him were Rumsey, West, Shephard, together with Bourne, a brewer. His own letter to the secretary was produced, and rendered the testimony of the witnesses unquestionable. Hone and Rouse were also condemned. These two men, as well as Walcot, acknowledged at their execution the justice of the sentence; and from their trial and confession it is sufficiently apparent, that the plan of an insurrection had been regularly formed, and that even the assassination had been often talked of, and not without the approbation of many of the conspirators.

The condemnation of these criminals was probably intended as a preparative to the trial of Lord Russel, and served to impress the public with a thorough belief of the conspiracy, as well as a horror against it. The witnesses produced against the noble prisoner were Rumsey, Shephard, and Lord Howard. Rumsey swore, that he himself had been introduced to the cabal at Shephard’s, where Russel was present; and had delivered them a message from Shaftesbury, urging them to hasten the intended insurrection; but had received for answer, that it was found necessary to delay the design, and that Shaftesbury must therefore, for some time, rest contented. This answer, he said, was delivered by Ferguson; but was assented to by the prisoner. He added, that some discourse had been entered into about taking a survey of the guards; and he thought that Monmouth, Grey, and Armstrong undertook to view them. Shephard deposed, that his house had beforehand been bespoken by Ferguson for the secret meeting of the conspirators, and that he had been careful to keep all his servants from approaching them, and had served them himself. Their discourse, he said, ran chiefly upon the means of surprising the guards; and it was agreed, that Monmouth and his two friends should take a survey of them. The report which they brought next meeting was, that the guards were remiss, and that the design was practicable: but he did not affirm that any resolution was taken of executing it. The prisoner, he thought, was present at both these meetings; but he was sure that at least he was present at one of them. A declaration, he added, had been read by Ferguson in Russel's presence: the reasons of the intended insurrection were there set forth, and all the public grievances fully displayed.

Lord Howard had been one of the cabal of six, established after Shaftesbury's flight; and two meetings had been held by the conspirators, one at Hambden's, another at Russel's. Howard deposed, that, at the first meeting, it was agreed to begin the insurrection in the country before the city; the places were fixed, the proper quantity and kind of arms agreed on, and the whole plan of operations concerted: that at the second meeting, the conversation chiefly turned upon their correspondence with Argyle and the discontented Scots; and that the principal management of that affair was intrusted to Sidney, who had sent one Aaron Smith into Scotland with proper instructions. He added, that in these deliberations no question was put, or votes collected; but there was no contradiction; and, as he took it, all of them, and the prisoner among the rest, gave their consent. Rumsey and Shephard were very unwilling witnesses against Lord Russel; and it appears from Grey's Secret History, [1] that, if they had pleased, they could have given a more explicit testimony against him.

This reluctance, together with the difficulty in recollecting circumstances of a conversation which had passed above eight months before, and which the persons had not at that time any intention to reveal, may beget some slight objection to their evidence. But, on the whole, it was undoubtedly proved, that the insurrection had been deliberated on by the prisoner, and fully resolved; the surprisal of the guards deliberated on, but not fully resolved; and that an assassination had never once been mentioned nor

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* Page 43.

imagined by him. So far the matter of fact seems certain: but still, with regard to law, there remained a difficulty, and that of an important nature.

The English laws of treason, both in the manner of defining that crime, and in the proof required, are the mildest and most indulgent, and consequently the most equitable, that are any where to be found. The two chief species of treason contained in the statute of Edward III. are the compassing and intending of the king's death, and the actually levying of war against him; and by the law of Mary, the crime must be proved by the concurring testimony of two witnesses, to some overt act, tending to these purposes. But the lawyers, partly desirous of paying court to the sovereign, partly convinced of ill consequences which might attend such narrow limitations, had introduced a greater latitude both in the proof and definition of the crime. It was not required that the two witnesses should testify the same precise overt act: it was sufficient that they both testified some overt act of the same treason; and though this evasion may seem a subtilty, it had long prevailed in the courts of judicature, and had at last been solemnly fixed by parliament at the trial of Lord Stafford. The lawyers had used the same freedom with the law of Edward III. They had observed that, by that statute, if a man should enter into a conspiracy for a rebellion, should even fix a correspondence with foreign powers for that purpose, should provide arms and money, yet, if he were detected, and no rebellion ensued, he could not be tried for treason. To prevent this inconvenience, which it had been better to remedy by a new law, they had commonly laid their indictment for intending the death of the king and had produced the intention of rebellion as a proof of that other intention. But though this form of indictment and trial was very frequent, and many criminals had received sentence upon it, it was still considered as somewhat irregular, and was plainly confounding by a sophism two species of treason, which the statute had accurately distinguished. What made this refinement still more exceptionable, was, that a law had passed soon after the restoration, in which the consulting or the intending of a rebellion was, during Charles's lifetime, declared treason; and it was required, that the prosecution should be commenced within six months after the crime was committed. But notwithstanding this statute, the lawyers had persevered, as they still do persevere, in the old form of indictment; and both Sir Harry Vane and Oliver Plunket, titular primate of Ireland, had been tried by it. Such was the general horror entertained against the old republicans and the Popish conspirators, that no one had murmured against this interpretation of the statute; and the lawyers thought that they might follow the precedent, even in the case of the popular and beloved Lord Russel. Russel's crime fell plainly within the statute of Charles II.; but the facts sworn to by Rumsey and Shephard were beyond the six months required by law, and to the other facts Howard was a single witness. To make the indictment, therefore, more extensive, the intention of murdering the king was comprehended in it; and for proof of this intention the conspiracy for raising a rebellion was assigned; and, what seemed to bring the matter still nearer, the design of attacking the king's guards.

Russel perceived this irregularity, and desired to have the point argued by counsel: the chief justice told him, that this favor could not be granted, unless he previously confessed the facts charged upon him. The artificial confounding of the two species of treason, though a practice supported by many precedents, is the chief, but not the only hardship of which Russel had reason to complain on his trial. His defence was feeble: and he contented himself with protesting, that he never had entertained any design against the life of the king: his veracity would not allow him to deny the conspiracy for an insurrection. The jury were men of fair and reputable characters, but zealous royalists: after a short deliberation, they brought in the prisoner guilty.

Applications were made to the king for a pardon: even money, to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds, was offered to the duchess of Portsmouth by the old earl of Bedford, father to Russel. The king was inexorable. He had been extremely harassed with the violence of the country party; and he had observed, that the prisoner, besides his secret designs, had always been carried to the highest extremity of opposition in parliament. Russel had even adopted a sentiment similar to what we meet with in a letter of the younger Brutus. Had his father, he said, advised the king to reject the exclusion bill, he would be the first to move for a parliamentary impeachment against him. When such determined resolution was observed, his popularity, his humanity, his justice, his very virtues, became so many crimes, and were used as arguments against sparing him. Charles, therefore, would go no further than remitting the more ignominious part of the sentence which the law requires to be pronounced against traitors. "Lord Russel," said he, "shall find that I am possessed of that prerogative which, in the case of Lord Stafford, he thought proper to deny me." As the fury of the country party had rendered it impossible for the king, without the imminent danger of his crown, to pardon so many Catholics, whom he firmly believed innocent, and even affectionate and loyal to him, he probably thought that, since the edge of the law was now ready to fall upon that party themselves, they could not reasonably expect that he would interpose to save them.

Russel’s consort, a woman of virtue, daughter and heir of the good earl of Southampton, threw herself at the king’s feet and pleaded with many tears the merits and loyalty of her father, as an atonement for those errors into which honest, however mistaken, principles had seduced her husband. These supplications were the last instance of female weakness (if they deserve the name) which she betrayed. Finding all applications vain, she collected courage, and not only fortified herself against the fatal blow, but endeavored by her example to strengthen the resolution of her unfortunate lord. With a tender and decent composure they took leave of each other on the day of his execution. “The bitterness of death is now past,” said he, when he turned from her. Lord Cavendish had lived in the closest intimacy with Russel, and deserted not his friend in the present calamity. He offered to manage his escape, by changing clothes with him, and remaining at al hazards in his place. Russel refused to save his own life by an expedient which might expose his friend to so many hardships When the duke of Monmouth by message offered to surrender himself, if Russel thought that this measure would anywise contribute to his safety, “It will be no advantage to me,” he said, “to have my friends die with me.” Some of his expressions discover, not only composure, but good humor, in this melancholy extremity. The day before his execution, he was seized with a bleeding at the nose. “I shall not now let blood to divert this distemper,” said he to Dr. Burnet, who attended him; “that will be done to-morrow.” A little before the sheriffs conducted him to the scaffold, he wound up his watch: “Now I have done,” said he, “with time, and hence forth must think solely of eternity.”

The scaffold was erected in Lincoln’s Inn Fields, a place distant from the Tower; and it was probably intended, by conducting Russel through so many streets, to show the mutinous city their beloved leader, once the object of all their confidence, now exposed to the utmost rigors of the law. As he was the most popular among his own party, so was he ever the least obnoxious to the opposite faction; and his melancholy fate united every heart, sensible of humanity, in a tender compassion for him. Without the least change of countenance, he laid his head on the block; and at two strokes, it was severed from his body.

In the speech which he delivered to the sheriffs, he was very anxious to clear his memory from any imputation of ever intending the king’s death, or any alteration in the government: he could not explicitly confess the projected insurrection without hurting his friends, who might still be called in question for it; but he did not purge himself of that design, which, in the present condition of the nation, he regarded as no crime. By many passages in his speech, he seems to the last to have lain under the influence of party zeal; a passion which, being nourished by a social temper, and clothing itself under the appearance of principle, it is almost impossible for a virtuous man, who has acted in public life, ever thoroughly to eradicate. He professed his entire belief in the Popish plot: and he said that, though he had often heard the seizure of the guards mentioned, he had ever disapproved of that attempt. To which he added, that the massacring of so many innocent men in cool blood was so like a Popish practice, that he could not but abhor it. Upon the whole, the integrity and virtuous intentions, rather than the capacity, of this unfortunate nobleman, seem to have been the shining parts of his character.

Algernon Sidney was next brought to his trial. This gallant person, son of the earl of Leicester, had entered deeply into the war against the late king; and though nowise tainted with enthusiasm, he had so far shared in all the counsels of the Independent republican party, as to have been named on the high court of justice which tried and condemned that monarch: he thought not proper, however, to take his seat among the judges. He ever opposed Cromwell’s usurpation with zeal and courage; and after making all efforts against the restoration, he resolved to take no benefit of the general indemnity, but chose voluntary banishment, rather than submit to a government and family which he abhorred. As long as the republican party had any existence, he was active in every scheme, however unpromising, which tended to promote their cause; but at length, in 1677, finding it necessary for his private affairs to return to England, he had applied for the king’s pardon, and had obtained it. When the factions arising from the Popish plot began to run high, Sidney, full of those ideas of liberty which he had imbibed from the great examples of antiquity, joined the popular party; and was even willing to seek a second time, through all the horrors of civil war, for his adored republic.

From this imperfect sketch of the character and conduct of this singular personage, it may easily be conceived how obnoxious he was become to the court and ministry: what alone renders them blamable was, the illegal method which they took for effecting their purpose against him. On Sidney's trial, they produced a great number of witnesses, who proved the reality of a plot in general; and when the prisoner exclaimed, that all these evidences said nothing of him, he was answered, that this method of proceeding, however irregular, had been practised in the prosecutions of the Popish conspirators; a topic more fit to condemn one party than to justify the other. The only witness who deposed against Sidney was Lord Howard; but as the law required two witnesses, a strange expedient was fallen on to supply this deficiency. In ransacking the prisoner's closet, some discourses on government were found; in which he had maintained principles, favorable indeed to liberty, but such as the best and most dutiful subjects in all ages have been known to embrace; the original contract, the source of power from a consent of the people, the lawfulness of resisting tyrants, the preference of liberty to the government of a single person. These papers were asserted to be equivalent to a second witness, and even to many witnesses. The prisoner replied, that there was no other reason for ascribing those papers to him as the author, besides a similitude of hand; a proof which was never admitted in criminal prosecutions: that allowing him to be the author, he had composed them solely for his private amusement, and had never published them to the world, or even communicated them to any single person: that, when examined, they appeared by the color of the ink to have been written many years before, and were in vain produced as evidence of a present conspiracy against the government: and that where the law positively requires two witnesses, one witness attended with the most convincing circumstances, could never suffice; much less, when supported by a circumstance so weak and precarious. All these arguments, though urged by the prisoner with great courage and pregnancy of reason, had no influence. The violent and inhuman Jefferies was now chief justice; and by his direction a partial jury was easily prevailed on to give verdict against Sidney. His execution followed a few days after: he complained, and with reason, of the iniquity of the sentence; but he had too much greatness of mind to deny those conspiracies with Monmouth and Russel, in which he had been engaged. He rather gloried, that he now suffered for that "good old cause,” in which, from his earliest youth, he said he had enlisted himself.

The execution of Sidney is regarded as one of the greatest blemishes of the present reign. The evidence against him, it must be confessed, was not legal; and the jury who condemned him were, for that reason, very blamable. But that, after sentence passed by a court of judicature, the king should interpose and pardon a man who, though otherwise possessed of merit, was undoubtedly guilty, who had ever been a most inflexible and most inveterate enemy to the royal family, and who lately had even abused the king’s clemency, might be an act of heroic generosity, but can never be regarded as a necessary and indispensable duty.

Howard was also the sole evidence against Hambden; and his testimony was not supported by any material circumstance. The crown lawyers therefore found it in vain to try the prisoner for treason: they laid the indictment only for a misdemeanor, and obtained sentence against him. The fine imposed was exorbitant; no less than forty thousand pounds.

Holloway, a merchant of Bristol, one of the conspirators, had fled to the West Indies, and was now brought over. He had been outlawed; but the year allowed him for surrendering himself was not expired. A trial was therefore offered him but as he had at first confessed his being engaged in a conspiracy for an insurrection, and even allowed that he had heard some discourse of an assassination, though he had not approved of it, he thought it more expedient to throw himself on the king’s mercy. He was executed, persisting in the same confession.

Sir Thomas Armstrong, who had been seized in Holland, and sent over by Chidley, the king’s minister, was precisely in the same situation with Holloway: but the same favor, or rather justice, was refused him. The lawyers pretended, that unless he had voluntarily surrendered himself before the expiration of the time assigned, he could not claim the privilege of a trial; not considering that the seizure of his person ought in equity to be supposed the accident which prevented him. The king bore a great enmity against this gentleman, by whom he believed the duke of Monmouth to have been seduced from his duty; he also asserted, that Armstrong had once promised Cromwell to assassinate him; though it must be confessed, that the prisoner justified himself from this imputation by very strong arguments. These were the reasons of that injustice which was now done him. It was apprehended that sufficient evidence of his guilt could not be produced; and that even the partial juries which were now returned, and which allowed themselves to be entirely directed by Jefferies and other violent judges, would not give sentence against him.

On the day that Russel was tried, Essex, a man eminent both for virtues and abilities, was found in the Tower with his throat cut. The coroner’s inquest brought in their verdict, self-murder; yet because two children ten years old (one of whom, too, departed from his evidence) had affirmed that they heard a great noise from his window, and that they saw a hand throw out a bloody razor, these circumstances were laid hold of, and the murder was ascribed to the king and the duke, who happened that morning to pay a visit to the Tower. Essex was subject to fits of deep melancholy, and had been seized with one immediately upon his commitment: he was accustomed to maintain the lawfulness of suicide: and his countess upon a strict inquiry, which was committed to the care of Dr. Burnet, found no reason to confirm the suspicion: yet could not all these circumstances, joined to many others, entirely remove the imputation. It is no wonder, that faction is so productive of vices of all kinds; for, besides that it inflames all the passions, it tends much to remove those great restraints, horror and shame; when men find that no iniquity can lose them the applause of their own party, and no innocence secure them against the calumnies of the opposite.

But though there is no reason to think that Essex had been murdered by any orders from court, it must be acknowledged that an unjustifiable use in Russel’s trial was made of that incident. The king’s counsel mentioned it in their pleadings as a strong proof of the conspiracy; and it is said to have had great weight with the jury. It was insisted on in Sidney’s trial for the same purpose.

Some memorable causes, tried about this time, though they have no relation to the Rye-house conspiracy, show the temper of the bench and of the juries. Oates was convicted of having called the duke a Popish traitor; was condemned in damages to the amount of one hundred thousand pounds; and was adjudged to remain in prison till he should make payment. A like sentence was passed upon Dutton-Colt, for a like offence Sir Samuel Barnardiston was fined ten thousand pounds, because, in some private letters which had been intercepted, he had reflected on the government. This gentleman was obnoxious, because he had been foreman of that jury which rejected the bill against Shaftesbury. A pretence was therefore fallen upon for punishing him; though such a precedent may justly be deemed a very unusual act of severity, and sufficient to destroy all confidence in private friendship and correspondence.

There is another remarkable trial, which shows the disposition of the courts of judicature, and which, though it passed in the ensuing year, it may not be improper to relate in this place. One Rosewel, a Presbyterian preacher, was accused by three women of having spoken treasonable words in a sermon. They swore to two or three periods, and agreed so exactly together, that there was not the smallest variation in their depositions. Rosewel, on the other hand, made a very good defence. He proved that the witnesses were lewd and infamous persons. He proved that, even during Cromwell's usurpation, he had always been a royalist; that he prayed constantly for the king in his family; and that in his sermons he often inculcated the obligations of loyalty. And as to the sermon of which he was accused, several witnesses who heard it, and some who wrote it in shorthand, deposed that he had used no such expressions as those which were imputed to him. He offered his own notes as a further proof. The women could not show by any circumstance or witness that they were at his meeting. And the expressions to which they deposed were so gross, that no man in his senses could be supposed to employ them before a mixed audience. It was also urged, that it appeared next to impossible for three women to remember so long a period upon one single hearing, and to remember it so exactly, as to agree to a tittle in their depositions with regard to it. The prisoner offered to put the whole upon this issue: he would pronounce, with his usual tone of voice, a period as long as that to which they had sworn; and then let them try to repeat it, if they could. What was more unaccountable, they had forgotten even the text of his sermon; nor did they remember any single passage but the words to which they gave evidence. After so strong a defence, the solicitor-general thought not proper to make any reply: even Jefferies went no further than some general declamations against conventicles and Presbyterians: yet so violent were party prejudices, that the jury gave a verdict against the prisoner; which, however, appeared so palpably unjust, that it was not carried into execution.

The duke of Monmouth had absconded on the first discovery of the conspiracy; and the court could get no intelligence of him. At length, Halifax, who began to apprehend the too great prevalence of the royal party, and who thought that Monmouth's interest would prove the best counterpoise to the duke’s, discovered his retreat, and prevailed on him to write two letters to the king, full of the tenderest and most submissive expressions. The king’s fondness was revived; and he permitted Monmouth to come to court. He even endeavored to mediate a reconciliation between his son and his brother; and having promised Monmouth, that his testimony should never be employed against any of his friends, he engaged him to give a full account of the plot. But, in order to put the country party to silence, he called next day an extraordinary council, and informed them, that Monmouth had showed great penitence for the share which he had had in the late conspiracy, and had expressed his resolutions never more to engage in such criminal enterprises. He went so far as to give orders, that a paragraph to the like purpose should be inserted in the gazette. Monmouth kept silence till he had obtained his pardon in form: but finding that, by taking this step, he was entirely disgraced with his party, and that, even though he should not be produced in court as an evidence, his testimony, being so publicly known might have weight with juries on any future trial, he resolved at all hazards to retrieve his honor. His emissaries, therefore received orders to deny that he had ever made any such confession as that which was imputed to him; and the party exclaimed that the whole was an imposture of the court. The king, provoked at this conduct, banished Monmouth his presence, and afterwards ordered him to depart the kingdom.

The court was aware, that the malecontents in England had held a correspondence with those of Scotland; and that Baillie of Jerviswood, a man of merit and learning, with two gentlemen of the name of Campbell, had come to London, under pretence of negotiating the settlement of the Scottish Presbyterians in Carolina, but really with a view of concerting measures with the English conspirators. Baillie was sent prisoner to Edinburgh; but as no evidence appeared against him, the council required him to swear, that he would answer all questions which should be propounded to him. He refused to submit to so iniquitous a condition; and a fine of six thousand pounds was imposed upon him. At length two persons, Spence and Carstares, being put to the torture, gave evidence which involved the earl of Tarras and some others, who, in order to save themselves, were reduced to accuse Baillie. He was brought to trial; and being in so languishing a condition from the treatment which he had met with in prison, that it was feared he would not survive that night, he was ordered to be executed the very afternoon on which he received sentence.

The severities exercised during this part of the present reign, were much contrary to the usual tenor of the king’s conduct; and though those who studied his character more narrowly, have pronounced, that towards great offences he was rigid and inexorable, the nation were more inclined to ascribe every unjust or hard measure to the prevalence of the duke, into whose hands the king had, from indolence, not from any opinion of his brother’s superior capacity, resigned the reins of government. The crown, indeed, gained great advantage from the detection of the conspiracy, and lost none by the rigorous execution of the conspirators: the horror entertained against the assassination plot, which was generally confounded with the project for an insurrection, rendered the whole party unpopular and reconciled the nation to the measures of the court. The most loyal addresses came from all parts; and the doctrine of submission to the civil magistrate, and even of an unlimited passive obedience, became the reigning principle of the times. The university of Oxford passed a solemn decree, condemning some doctrines which they termed republican, but which indeed are, most of them, the only tenets on which liberty and a limited constitution can be founded. The faction of the exclusionists, lately so numerous, powerful, and zealous, were at the king’s feet; and were as much fallen in their spirit as in their credit with the nation. Nothing that had the least appearance of opposition to the court could be hearkened to by the public. [1]

* In the month of November this year died Prince Rupert, in the sixty-third year of his age. He had left his own country so early, that he had become an entire Englishman; and was even suspected, in his latter days, of a bias to the country party. He was for that reason much neglected at court. The duke of Lauderdale died also this year.

1684

The king endeavored to increase his present popularity by every art; and knowing that the suspicion of Popery was of all others the most dangerous, he judged it proper to marry his niece, the Lady Anne, to Prince George, brother to the king of Denmark. All the credit, however, and persuasion of Halifax could not engage him to call a parliament, or trust the nation with the election of a new representative. Though his revenues were extremely burdened, he rather chose to struggle with the present difficulties, than try an experiment which, by raising afresh so many malignant humors, might prove dangerous to his repose. The duke likewise zealously opposed this proposal, and even engaged the king in measures which could have no tendency, but to render any accommodation with a parliament altogether impracticable. Williams, who had been speaker during the two last parliaments, was prosecuted for warrants issued by him in obedience to orders of the house: a breach of privilege which it seemed not likely any future house of commons would leave unquestioned. Danby and the Popish lords, who had so long been confined in the Tower, and who saw no prospect of a trial in parliament, applied by petition, and were admitted to bail; a measure just in itself, but deemed a great encroachment on the privileges of that assembly. The duke, contrary to law, was restored to the office of high admiral without taking the test.

Had the least grain of jealousy or emulation been mixed in the king’s character; had he been actuated by that concern for his people’s or even for his own honor, which his high station demanded; he would have hazarded many domestic inconveniencies rather than allow France to domineer in so haughty a manner as that which at present she assumed in every negotiation. The peace of Nimeguen, imposed by the Dutch on their unwilling allies, had disjointed the whole confederacy; and all the powers engaged in it had disbanded their supernumerary troops, which they found it difficult to subsist. Lewis alone still maintained a powerful army, and by his preparations rendered himself every day more formidable. He now acted as if he were the sole sovereign in Europe, and as if all other princes were soon to become his vassals. Courts or chambers were erected in Metz and Brisac, for reuniting such territories as had ever been members of any part of his new conquests. They made inquiry into titles buried in the most remote antiquity. They cited the neighboring princes to appear before them, and issued decrees, expelling them the contested territories. The important town of Strasbourg, an ancient and a free state, was seized by Lewis: Alost was demanded of the Spaniards, on a frivolous and even ridiculous pretence; and upon their refusal to yield it, Luxembourg was blockaded, and soon after taken. [1] Genoa had been bombarded, because the Genoese had stipulated to build some galleys for the Spaniards; and, in order to avoid more severe treatment, that republic was obliged to yield to the most mortifying conditions. The empire was insulted in its head and principal members; and used no other expedient for redress, than impotent complaints and remonstrances.

* It appears from Sir John Dalrymple’s Appendix, that the king received from France a million of livres for his connivance at the seizure of Luxembourg, besides his ordinary pension.

Spain was so enraged at the insolent treatment which she met with, that, without considering her present weak condition she declared war against her haughty enemy: she hoped that the other powers of Europe, sensible of the common danger, would fly to her assistance. The prince of Orange, whose ruling passions were love of war and animosity against Prance, seconded every where the applications of the Spaniards. In the year 1681, he made a journey to England, in order to engage the king into closer measures with the confederates. He also proposed to the states to make an augmentation of their forces; but several of the provinces, and even the town of Amsterdam, had been gained by the French, and the proposal was rejected. The prince's enemies derived the most plausible reasons of their opposition from the situation of England, and the known and avowed attachments of the English monarch.

No sooner had Charles dismissed his parliament, and embraced the resolution of governing by prerogative alone, than he dropped his new alliance with Spain, and returned to his former dangerous connections with Lewis. This prince had even offered to make him arbiter of his differences with Spain; and the latter power, sensible of Charles's partiality, had refused to submit to such a disadvantageous proposal. Whether any money was now remitted to England, we do not certainly know; but we may fairly presume, that the king's necessities were in some degree relieved by France. [1] And though Charles had reason to apprehend the utmost danger from the great, and still increasing naval power of that kingdom, joined to the weak condition of the English fleet, no consideration was able to rouse him from his present lethargy.

* The following passage is an extract from M. Barillon's letters kept in the Dépôt des Affaires étrangères at Versailles. It was lately communicated to the author while in France. "Convention verbale arrêtée le 1 Avril 1681.

Charles 2 s'engage à ne rien omettre pour pouvoir faire connoitre à sa majesté qu'elle avoit raison de prendre confiance en lui; a se dégager peu-à-peu de l'alliance avec l'Espagne, et à se mettre en état de ne point ètre contraint par son parlement de faire quelque chose d'opposé aux nouveaux engagemens qu'il prenoit. En conséquence, le roi promet un subside de deux millions la première des trois années de cet engagement, et 500,000 écus les deux autres se contentant de la parole de sa majesté Britannique, d'agir à l'égard de sa majesté conformement aux obligations qu'il lui avoit. Le Sr. Hyde demanda que le roi s'engagea à ne point attaquer les pays bas et même Strasbourg, térnoignant que le roi son maìtre ne pournoit s’empêcher de secourir les pais bas, quand même son parlement ne seroit point assemblé. M.

Barillon lui répondit en termes généraux par ordre du roi,

que sa majesté n’avoit point intention de rompre la paix, et qu’il n’engageroit pas sa majesté Britannique en choses contraires à ses véritables intérêts.”

It is here we are to fix the point of the highest exaltation which the power of Lewis, or that of any European prince since the age of Charlemagne, had ever attained. The monarch most capable of opposing his progress was entirely engaged in his interests; and the Turks, invited by the malecontents of Hungary, were preparing to invade the emperor, and to disable that prince from making head against the progress of the French power. Lewis may even be accused of oversight, in not making sufficient advantage of such favorable opportunities, which he was never afterwards able to recall. But that monarch, though more governed by motives of ambition than by those of justice or moderation, was still more actuated by the suggestions of vanity. He contented himself with insulting and domineering over all the princes and free states of Europe; and he thereby provoked their resentment, without subduing their power. While every one who approached his person, and behaved with submission to his authority, was treated with the highest politeness, all the neighboring potentates had successively felt the effects of his haughty, imperious disposition. And by indulging his poets, orators, and courtiers in their flatteries, and in their prognostications of universal empire, he conveyed faster, than by the prospect of his power alone, the apprehension of general conquest and subjection.

1685

The French greatness never, during his whole reign, inspired Charles with any apprehensions; and Clifford, it is said, one of his most favored ministers, went so far as to affirm, that it were better for the king to be viceroy under a great and generous monarch, than a slave to five hundred of his own insolent subjects. The ambition, therefore, and uncontrolled power of Lewis were no diminution of Charles’s happiness; and in other respects his condition seemed at present more eligible than it had ever been since his restoration. A mighty faction, which had shaken his throne and menaced his family, was totally subdued; and by their precipitate indiscretion had exposed themselves both to the rigor of the laws and to public hatred. He had recovered his former popularity in the nation; and, what probably pleased him more than having a compliant parliament, he was enabled to govern altogether without one. But it is certain that the king, amidst all these promising circumstances, was not happy or satisfied. Whether he found himself exposed to difficulties for want of money, or dreaded a recoil of the popular humor from the present arbitrary measures, is uncertain. Perhaps the violent, imprudent temper of the duke, by pushing Charles upon dangerous attempts, gave him apprehension and uneasiness. He was overheard one day to say, in opposing some of the duke's hasty counsels, "Brother, I am too old to go again to my travels: you may, if you choose it." Whatever was the cause of the king's dissatisfaction, it seems probable that he was meditating some change of measures, and had formed a new plan of administration. He was determined, it is thought, to send the duke to Scotland, to recall Monmouth, to summon a parliament, to dismiss all his unpopular ministers, and to throw himself entirely on the good will and affections of his subjects. [1]

* King James's Memoirs confirm this rumor, as also D'Avaux's Negotiations, 14 Dec. 1684.

Amidst these truly wise and virtuous designs, he was seized with a sudden fit, which resembled an apoplexy; and though he was recovered from it by bleeding, he languished only for a few days, and then expired, in the fifty-fifth year of his age, and twenty-fifth of his reign. He was so happy in a good constitution of body, and had ever been so remarkably careful of his health, that his death struck as great a surprise into his subjects as if he had been in the flower of his youth. And their great concern for him, owing to their affection for his person, as well as their dread of his successor, very naturally, when joined to the critical time of his death, begat the suspicion of poison. All circumstances, however, considered, this suspicion must be allowed to vanish; like many others, of which all histories are full.

During the few days of the king's illness, clergymen of the church of England attended him; but he discovered a total indifference towards their devotions and exhortations. Catholic priests were brought, and he received the sacrament from them, accompanied with the other rites of the Romish church. Two papers were found in his cabinet, written with his own hand, and containing arguments in favor of that communion. The duke had the imprudence immediately to publish these papers, and thereby both confirmed all the reproaches of those who had been the greatest enemies to his brother’s measures, and afforded to the world a specimen of his own bigotry.

If we survey the character of Charles II. in the different lights which it will admit of, it will appear various, and give rise to different and even opposite sentiments. When considered as a companion, he appears the most amiable and engaging of men; and indeed, in this view, his deportment must be allowed altogether unexceptionable. His love of raillery was so tempered with good breeding, that it was never offensive; his propensity to satire was so checked with discretion, that his friends never dreaded their becoming the object of it: his wit, to use the expression of one who knew him well, and who was himself a good judge, [1] could not be said so much to be very refined or elevated, qualities apt to beget jealousy and apprehension in company, as to be a plain, gaining, well-bred, recommending kind of wit. And though, perhaps, he talked more than strict rules of behavior might permit, men were so pleased with the affable communicative deportment of the monarch that they always went away contented both with him and with themselves.

* Marquis of Halifax.

This, indeed, is the most shining part of the king’s character; and he seems to have been sensible of it; for he was fond of dropping the formality of state, and of relapsing every moment into the companion.

In the duties of private life, his conduct, though not free from exception, was, in the main, laudable. He was an easy, generous lover, a civil, obliging husband, a friendly brother, an indulgent father, and a good-natured master. [1] The voluntary friendships, however, which this prince contracted, nay, even his sense of gratitude, were feeble; and he never attached himself to any of his ministers or courtiers with a sincere affection. He believed them to have no motive in serving him but self-interest; and he was still ready, in his turn, to sacrifice them to present ease or convenience.

* Duke of Buckingham.

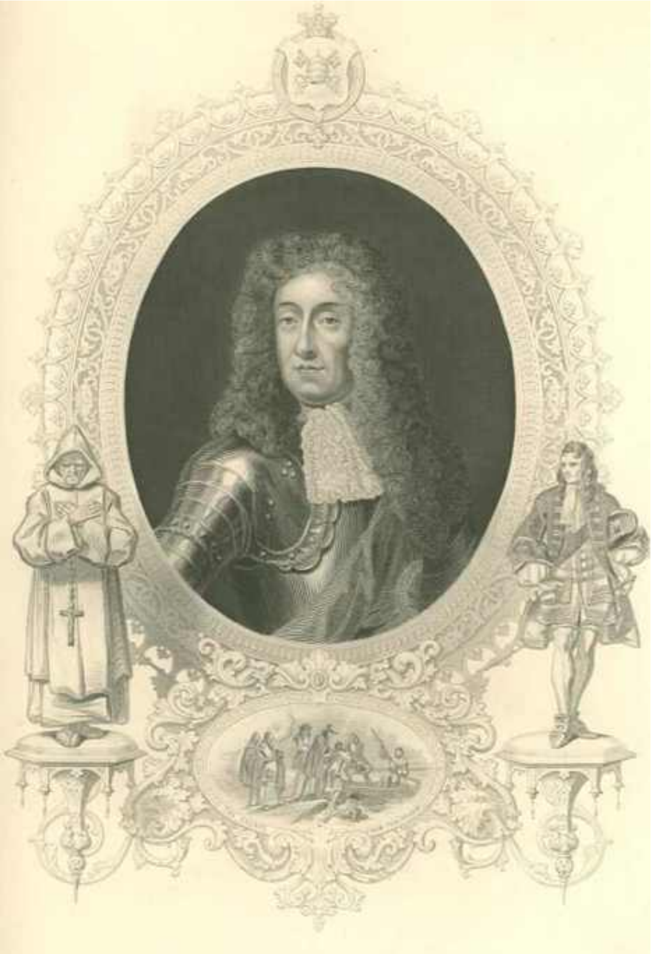
With a detail of his private character we must set bounds to our panegyric on Charles. The other parts of his conduct may admit of some apology, but can deserve small applause. He was indeed so much fitted for private life, preferably to public, that he even possessed order, frugality, and economy in the former; was profuse, thoughtless, and negligent in the latter. When we consider him as a sovereign, his character, though not altogether destitute of virtue, was in the main dangerous to his people, and dishonorable to himself. Negligent of the interests of the nation, careless of its glory, averse to its religion, jealous of its liberty, lavish of its treasure, sparing only of its blood, he exposed it by his measures, though he ever appeared but in sport, to the danger of a furious civil war, and even to the ruin and ignominy of a foreign conquest. Yet may all these enormities, if fairly and candidly examined, be imputed, in a great measure, to the indolence of his temper; a fault which, however unfortunate in a monarch, it is impossible for us to regard with great severity.

It has been remarked of Charles, that he never said a foolish thing nor ever did a wise one; a censure which, though too far carried, seems to have some foundation in his character and deportment. When the king was informed of this saying, he observed that the matter was easily accounted for; for that his discourse was his own, his actions were the ministry's.

If we reflect on the appetite for power inherent in human nature, and add to it the king's education in foreign countries and among the cavaliers, a party which would naturally exaggerate the late usurpations of popular assemblies upon the rights of monarchy, it is not surprising that civil liberty should not find in him a very zealous patron. Harassed with domestic faction, weary of calumnies and complaints, oppressed with debts, straitened in his revenue, he sought, though with feeble efforts, for a form of government more simple in its structure and more easy in its management. But his attachment to France, after all the pains which we have taken by inquiry and conjecture to fathom it, contains still something, it must be confessed, mysterious and inexplicable. The hopes of rendering himself absolute by Lewis's assistance seem so chimerical, that they could scarcely be retained with such obstinacy by a prince of Charles's penetration: and as to pecuniary subsidies, he surely spent much greater sums in one season, during the second Dutch war, than were remitted him from France during the whole course of his reign. I am apt, therefore, to imagine, that Charles was in this particular guided chiefly by inclination, and by a prepossession in favor of the French nation. He considered that people as gay, sprightly, polite, elegant, courteous, devoted to their prince, and attached to the Catholic faith; and for these reasons he cordially loved them. The opposite character of the Dutch had rendered them the objects of his aversion; and even the uncourtly humors of the English made him very indifferent towards them. Our notions of interest are much warped by our affections, and it is not altogether without example, that a man may be guided by national prejudices, who has ever been little biased by private and personal friendship.

The character of this prince has been elaborately drawn by two great masters, perfectly well acquainted with him, the duke of Buckingham and the marquis of Halifax; not to mention several elegant strokes given by Sir William Temple. Dr Welwood, likewise, and Bishop Burnet have employed their pencil on the same subject; but the former is somewhat partial in his favor, as the latter is by far too harsh and malignant. Instead of finding an exact parallel between Charles II. and the emperor Tiberius, as asserted by that prelate, it would be more just to remark a full contrast and opposition. The emperor seems as much to have surpassed the king in abilities, as he falls short of him in virtue. Provident, wise, active, jealous, malignant, dark, sullen, unsociable, reserved, cruel, unrelenting, unforgiving these are the lights under which the Roman tyrant has been transmitted to us. And the only circumstance in which it can justly be pretended he was similar to Charles, is his love of women, a passion which is too general to form any striking resemblance, and which that detestable and detested monster shared also with unnatural appetites.

CHAPTER LXX.



JAMES II.

From a Painting by Sir Godfrey Kneller, [illegible]

JAMES II.

1685

THE first act of James's reign was to assemble the privy council; where, after some praises bestowed on the memory of his predecessor, he made professions of his resolution to maintain the established government, both in church and state. Though he had been reported, he said, to have imbibed arbitrary principles, he knew that the laws of England were sufficient to make him as great a monarch as he could wish; and he was determined never to depart from them. And as he had heretofore ventured his life in defence of the nation, he would still go as far as any man in maintaining all its just rights and liberties.

This discourse was received with great applause, not only by the council, but by the nation. The king universally passed for a man of great sincerity and great honor; and as the current of favor ran at that time for the court, men believed that his intentions were conformable to his expressions. "We have now," it was said, "the word of a king, and a word never yet broken." Addresses came from all quarters, full of duty, nay, of the most servile adulation. Every one hastened to pay court to the new monarch: [1] and James had reason to think, that, notwithstanding the violent efforts made by so potent a party for his exclusion, no throne in Europe was better established than that of England.

* The Quakers' address was esteemed somewhat singular for its plainness and simplicity. It was conceived in these terms: "We are come to testify our sorrow for the death of our good friend Charles, and our joy for thy being made our governor. We are told thou art not of the persuasion of the church of England, no more than we, wherefore we hope thou wilt grant us the same liberty which thou allowest thyself.

Which doing, we wish thee all manner of happiness."

The king, however, in the first exercise of his authority, showed, that either he was not sincere in his professions of attachment to the laws, or that he had entertained so lofty an idea of his own legal power, that even his utmost sincerity would tend very little to secure the liberties of the people. All the customs and the greater part of the excise had been settled by parliament on the late king during life, and consequently the grant was now expired; nor had the successor any right to levy these branches of revenue. But James issued a proclamation, ordering the customs and excise to be paid as before; and this exertion of power he would not deign to qualify by the least act or even appearance of condescension. It was proposed to him, that, in order to prevent the ill effects of any intermission in levying these duties, entries should be made, and bonds for the sums be taken from the merchants and brewers; but the payment be suspended till the parliament should give authority to receive it. This precaution was recommended as an expression of deference to that assembly, or rather to the laws: but for that very reason, probably, it was rejected by the king; who thought that the commons would thence be invited to assume more authority, and would regard the whole revenue, and consequently the whole power of the crown, as dependent on their good will and pleasure.

The king likewise went openly, and with all the ensigns of his dignity, to mass, an illegal meeting: and by this imprudence he displayed at once his arbitrary disposition, and the bigotry of his principles; these two great characteristics of his reign, and bane of his administration. He even sent Caryl as his agent to Rome, in order to make submissions to the pope, and to pave the way for a solemn readmission of England into the bosom of the Catholic church. The pope, Innocent XI., prudently advised the king not to be too precipitate in his measures, nor rashly attempt what repeated experience might convince him was impracticable. The Spanish ambassador, Ronquillo, deeming the tranquillity of England necessary for the support of Spain, used the freedom to make like remonstrances. He observed to the king how busy the priests appeared at court, and advised him not to assent with too great facility to their dangerous counsels. “Is it not the custom in Spain,” said James, “for the king to consult with his confessor?” “Yes,” replied the ambassador; “and it is for that very reason our affairs succeed so ill.”

James gave hopes, on his accession, that he would hold the balance of power more steadily than his predecessor; and that France, instead of rendering England subservient to her ambitious projects, would now meet with strong opposition from that kingdom. Besides applying himself to business with industry, he seemed jealous of national honor; and expressed great care that no more respect should be paid to the French ambassador at London, than his own received at Paris. But these appearances were not sufficiently supported; and he found himself immediately under the necessity of falling into a union with that great monarch, who, by his power as well as his zeal, seemed alone able to assist him in the projects formed for promoting the Catholic religion in England.

Notwithstanding the king’s prejudices, all the chief offices of the crown continued still in the hands of Protestants. Rochester was treasurer; his brother Clarendon chamberlain, Godolphin chamberlain to the queen; Sunderland secretary of state; Halifax president of the council. This nobleman had stood in opposition to James during the last years of his brother’s reign; and when he attempted, on the accession, to make some apology for his late measures, the king told him that he would forget every thing past, except his behavior during the bill of exclusion. On other occasions, however, James appeared not of so forgiving a temper. When the principal exclusionists came to pay their respects to the new sovereign, they either were not admitted, or were received very coldly, sometimes even with frowns. This conduct might suit the character which the king so much affected, of sincerity; but by showing that a king of England could resent the quarrels of a duke of York, he gave his people no high idea either of his lenity or magnanimity.

On all occasions, the king was open in declaring, that men must now look for a more active and more vigilant government, and that he would retain no ministers who did not practise an unreserved obedience to his commands. We are not indeed to look for the springs of his administration so much in his council and chief officers of state, as in his own temper, and in the character of those persons with whom he secretly consulted. The queen had great influence over him; a woman of spirit, whose conduct had been popular till she arrived at that high dignity. She was much governed by the priests especially the Jesuits; and as these were also the King’s favorites, all public measures were taken originally from the suggestions of these men, and bore evident marks of their ignorance in government, and of the violence of their religious zeal.

The king, however, had another attachment, seemingly not very consistent with this devoted regard to his queen and to his priests: it was to Mrs. Sedley, whom he soon after created countess of Dorchester, and who expected to govern him with the same authority which the duchess of Portsmouth had possessed during the former reign. But James, who had entertained the ambition of converting his people, was told, that the regularity of his life ought to correspond to the sanctity of his intentions; and he was prevailed with to remove Mrs. Sedley from court; a resolution in which he had not the courage to persevere. Good agreement between the mistress and the confessor of princes is not commonly a difficult matter to compass: but in the present case, these two potent engines of command were found very incompatible. Mrs. Sedley, who possessed all the wit and ingenuity of her father, Sir Charles made the priests and their counsels the perpetual objects cf her raillery; and it is not to be doubted but they, on their part, redoubled their exhortations with their penitent to break off so criminal an attachment.

How little inclination soever the king, as well as his queen and priests, might bear to an English parliament, it was absolutely necessary, at the beginning of the reign, to summon that assembly. The low condition to which the whigs, or country party, had fallen during the last years of Charles's reign, the odium under which they labored on account of the Rye-house conspiracy; these causes made that party meet with little success in the elections. The general resignation, too, of the charters had made the corporations extremely dependent; and the recommendations of the court, though little assisted at that time by pecuniary influence, were become very prevalent. The new house of commons, therefore, consisted almost entirely of zealous tories and churchmen; and were, of consequence, strongly biased by their affections in favor of the measures of the crown.

The discourse which the king made to the parliament was more fitted to work on their fears than their affections. He repeated, indeed, and with great solemnity, the promise which he had made before the privy council, of governing according to the laws, and of preserving the established religion: but at the same time, he told them, that he positively expected they would settle his revenue, and during life too, as in the time of his brother. "I might use many arguments," said he, "to enforce this demand; the benefit of trade, the support of the navy, the necessities of the crown, and the well-being of the government itself, which I must not suffer to be precarious, but I am confident, that your own consideration, and your sense of what is just and reasonable, will suggest to you whatever on this occasion might be enlarged upon. There is indeed one popular argument," added he, "which may be urged against compliance with my demand: men may think, that by feeding me from time to time with such supplies as they think convenient, they will better secure frequent meetings of parliament: but as this is the first time I speak to you from the throne, I must plainly tell you, that such an expedient would be very improper to employ with me; and that the best way to engage me to meet you often, is always to use me well."

It was easy to interpret this language of the king's. He plainly intimated, that he had resources in his prerogative for supporting the government independent of their supplies; and that, so long as they complied with his demands, he would have recourse to them; but that any ill usage on their part would set him free from those measures of government, which he seemed to regard more as voluntary than as necessary. It must be confessed, that no parliament in England was ever placed in a more critical situation, nor where more forcible arguments could be urged, either for their opposition to the court, or their compliance with it.

It was said on the one hand, that jealousy of royal power was the very basis of the English constitution, and the principle to which the nation was beholden for all that liberty which they enjoy above the subjects of other monarchies: that this jealousy, though at different periods it may be more or less intense, can never safely be laid asleep, even under the best and wisest princes: that the character of the present sovereign afforded cause for the highest vigilance, by reason of the arbitrary principles which he had imbibed; and still more, by reason of his religious zeal, which it is impossible for him ever to gratify without assuming more authority than the constitution allows him: that power is to be watched in its very first encroachments; nor is any thing ever gained by timidity and submission: that every concession adds new force to usurpation; and at the same time, by discovering the dastardly dispositions of the people, inspires it with new courage and enterprise: that as arms were intrusted altogether in the hands of the prince, no check remained upon him but the dependent condition of his revenue; a security, therefore, which it would be the most egregious folly to abandon: that all the other barriers which of late years had been erected against arbitrary power, would be found without this capital article, to be rather pernicious and destructive: that new limitations in the constitution stimulated the monarch's inclination to surmount the laws, and required frequent meetings of parliament, in order to repair all the breaches which either time or violence may have made upon that complicated fabric: that recent experience during the reign of the late king, a prince who wanted neither prudence nor moderation, had sufficiently proved the solidity of all these maxims: that his parliament, having rashly fixed his revenue for life, and at the same time repealed the triennial bill, found that they themselves were no longer of importance; and that liberty, not protected by national assemblies, was exposed to every outrage and violation: and that the more openly the king made an unreasonable demand, the more obstinately ought it to be refused; since it is evident, that his purpose in making it cannot possibly be justifiable.

On the other hand, it was urged, that the rule of watching the very first encroachments of power could only have place where the opposition to it could be regular, peaceful, and legal: that though the refusal of the king's present demand might seem of this nature, yet in reality it involved consequences which led much further than at first sight might be apprehended: that the king in his speech had intimated, that he had resources in his prerogative, which, in case of opposition from parliament, he thought himself fully entitled to employ: that if the parliament openly discovered an intention of reducing him to dependence, matters must presently be brought to a crisis, at a time the most favorable to his cause which his most sanguine wishes could ever have promised him: that if we cast our eyes abroad to the state of affairs on the continent, and to the situation of Scotland and Ireland; or, what is of more importance, if we consider the disposition of men's minds at home, every circumstance would be found adverse to the cause of liberty: that the country party, during the late reign, by their violent, and in many respects unjustifiable measures in parliament, by their desperate attempts out of parliament, had exposed their principles to general hatred, and had excited extreme jealousy in all the royalists and zealous churchmen, who now formed the bulk of the nation: that it would not be acceptable to that party to see this king worse treated than his brother in point of revenue, or any attempts made to keep the crown in dependence: that they thought parliaments as liable to abuse as courts; and desired not to see things in a situation where the king could not, if he found it necessary, either prorogue or dissolve those assemblies: that if the present parliament, by making great concessions, could gain the king's confidence, and engage him to observe the promises now given them, every thing would by gentle methods succeed to their wishes: that if, on the contrary, after such instances of compliance, he formed any designs on the liberty and religion of the nation, he would, in the eyes of all mankind, render himself altogether inexcusable, and the whole people would join in opposition to him: that resistance could scarcely be attempted twice; and there was therefore the greater necessity for waiting till time and incidents had fully prepared the nation for it: that the king's prejudices in favor of Popery, though in the main pernicious, were yet so far fortunate, that they rendered the connection inseparable between the national religion and national liberty: and that if any illegal attempts were afterwards made, the church, which was at present the chief support of the crown, would surely catch the alarm, and would soon dispose the people to an effectual resistance.

These last reasons, enforced by the prejudices of party, prevailed in parliament; and the common's, besides giving thanks for the king's speech, voted unanimously, that they would settle on his present majesty during life all the revenue enjoyed by the late king at the time of his demise. That they might not detract from this generosity by any symptoms of distrust, they also voted unanimously, that the house entirely relied on his majesty's royal word and repeated declarations to support the religion of the church of England; but they added, that that religion was dearer to them than their lives. The speaker, in presenting the revenue bill, took care to inform the king of their vote with regard to religion; but could not, by so signal a proof of confidence, extort from him one word in favor of that religion, on which, he told his majesty, they set so high a value. Notwithstanding the grounds of suspicion which this silence afforded, the house continued in the same liberal disposition. The king having demanded a further supply for the navy and other purposes, they revived those duties on wines and vinegar which had once been enjoyed by the late king; and they added some impositions on tobacco and sugar. This grant amounted on the whole to about six hundred thousand pounds a year.

The house of lords were in a humor no less compliant. They even went some lengths towards breaking in pieces all the remains of the Popish plot, that once formidable engine [1] of bigotry and faction.

A little before the meeting of parliament, Oates had been tried for perjury on two indictments; one for deposing, that he was present at a consult of Jesuits in London the twenty-fourth of April, 1679; another for deposing, that Father Ireland was in London between the eighth and twelfth of August, and in the beginning of September, in the same year. Never criminal was convicted on fuller and more undoubted evidence. Two and twenty persons, who had been students at St. Omers, most of them men of credit and family, gave evidence, that Oates had entered into that seminary about Christmas in the year 1678, and had never been absent but one night till the month of July following. Forty-seven witnesses, persons also of untainted character, deposed that Father Ireland, on the third of August, 1679, had gone to Staffordshire, where he resided till the middle of September; and, what some years before would have been regarded as a very material circumstance, nine of these witnesses were Protestants of the church of England. Oates's sentence was, to be fined a thousand marks on each indictment, to be whipped on two different days from Aldgate to Newgate, and from Newgate to Tyburn, to be imprisoned during life, and to be pilloried five times every year. The impudence of the man supported itself under the conviction, and his courage under the punishment. He made solemn appeals to Heaven, and protestations of the veracity of his testimony: though the whipping was so cruel, that it was evidently the intention of the court to put him to death by that punishment, he was enabled, by the care of his friends, to recover; and he lived to King William's reign, when a pension of four hundred pounds a year was settled on him. A considerable number still adhered to him in his distresses, and regarded him as the martyr of the Protestant cause. The populace were affected with the sight of a punishment more severe than is commonly inflicted in England. And the sentence of perpetual imprisonment was deemed illegal.

The conviction of Oates's perjury was taken notice of by the house of peers. Besides freeing the Popish lords, Powis, Arundel, Bellasis, and Tyrone, together with Danby, from the former impeachment by the commons, they went so far as to vote a reversal of Stafford's attainder, on account of the falsehood of that evidence on which he had been condemned. This bill fixed so deep a reproach on the former proceedings of the exclusionists, that it met with great opposition among the lords; and it was at last, after one reading, dropped by the commons. Though the reparation of injustice be the second honor which a nation can attain, the present emergence seemed very improper for granting so full a justification to the Catholics, and throwing so foul a stain on the Protestants.

The course of parliamentary proceedings was interrupted by the news of Monmouth's arrival in the west with three ships from Holland. No sooner was this intelligence conveyed to the parliament, than they voted that they would adhere to his majesty with their lives and fortunes. They passed a bill of attainder against Monmouth; and they granted a supply of four hundred thousand pounds for suppressing his rebellion. Having thus strengthened the hands of the king, they adjourned themselves.

Monmouth, when ordered to depart the kingdom, during the late reign, had retired to Holland; and as it was well known that he still enjoyed the favor of his indulgent father, all marks of honor and distinction were bestowed upon him by the prince of Orange. After the accession of James, the prince thought it necessary to dismiss Monmouth and all his followers; and that illustrious fugitive retired to Brussels. Finding himself still pursued by the king's severity, he was pushed, contrary to his judgment as well as inclination, to make a rash and premature attempt upon England. He saw that James had lately mounted the throne, not only without opposition, but seemingly with the good will and affections of his subjects. A parliament was sitting, which discovered the greatest disposition to comply with the king, and whose adherence, he knew, would give a sanction and authority to all public measures. The grievances of this reign were hitherto of small importance; and the people were not as yet in a disposition to remark them with great severity. All these considerations occurred to Monmouth; but such was the impatience of his followers, and such the precipitate humor of Argyle, who set out for Scotland a little before him, that no reasons could be attended to; and this unhappy man was driven upon his fate.

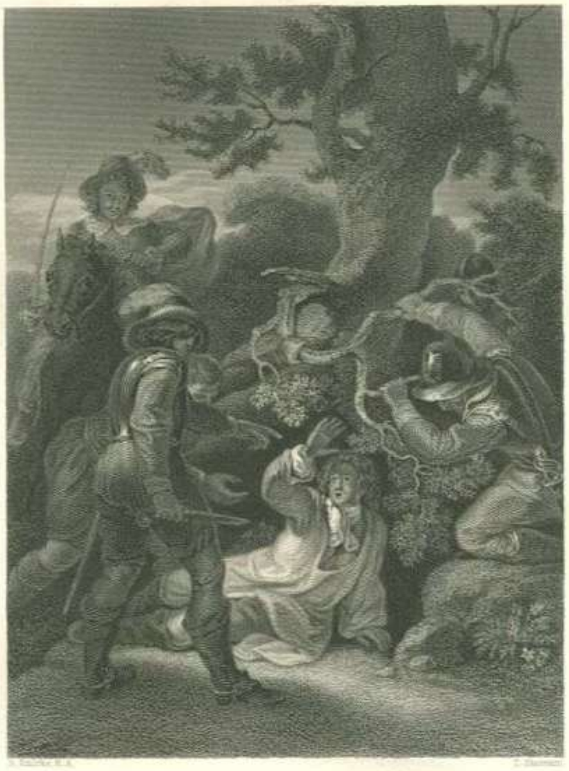
The imprudence, however, of this enterprise did not at first appear. Though on his landing at Lime, in Dorsetshire, he had scarcely a hundred followers, so popular was his name, that in four days he had assembled above two thousand horse and foot. They were, indeed, almost all of them the lowest of the people; and the declaration which he published was chiefly calculated to suit the prejudices of the vulgar, or the most bigoted of the whig party. He called the king, duke of York; and denominated him a traitor, a tyrant, an assassin, and a Popish usurper. He imputed to him the fire of London, the murder of Godfrey and of Essex, nay, the poisoning of the late king. And he invited all the people to join in opposition to his tyranny.

The duke of Albemarle, son to him who had restored the royal family, assembled the militia of Devonshire to the number of four thousand men, and took post at Axminster, in order to oppose the rebels; but observing that his troops bore a great affection to Monmouth, he thought proper to retire. Monmouth, though he had formerly given many proofs of personal courage, had not the vigor of mind requisite for an undertaking of this nature. From an ill-grounded diffidence of his men, he neglected to attack Albemarle; an easy enterprise, by which he might both have acquired credit, and have supplied himself with arms. Lord Gray, who commanded his horse, discovered himself to be a notorious coward; yet such was the softness of Monmouth’s nature, that Gray was still continued in his command. Fletcher of Salton, a Scotchman, a man of signal probity and fine genius, had been engaged by his republican principles in this enterprise, and commanded the cavalry together with Gray; but being insulted by one who had newly joined the army, and whose horse he had in a hurry made use of, he was prompted by passion, to which he was much subject to discharge a pistol at the man; and he killed him on the spot. This incident obliged him immediately to leave the camp; and the loss of so gallant an officer was a great prejudice to Monmouth’s enterprise.

The next station of the rebels was Taunton, a disaffected town, which gladly and even fondly received them, and reënforced them with considerable numbers. Twenty young maids of some rank presented Monmouth with a pair of colors of their handiwork, together with a copy of the Bible. Monmouth was here persuaded to take upon him the title of king, and assert the legitimacy of his birth; a claim which he advanced in his first declaration, but whose discussion he was determined, he then said, during some time to postpone. His numbers had now increased to six thousand; and he was obliged every day, for want of arms, to dismiss a great many who crowded to his standard. He entered Bridgewater, Wells, Frome; and was proclaimed in all these places: but forgetting, that such desperate enterprises can only be rendered successful by the most adventurous courage, he allowed the expectations of the people to languish, without attempting any considerable undertaking.

While Monmouth, by his imprudent and misplaced caution, was thus wasting time in the west, the king employed himself in making preparations to oppose him. Six regiments of British troops were called over from Holland: the army was considerably augmented: and regular forces, to the number of three thousand men, were despatched under the command of Feversham and Churchill, in order to check the progress of the rebels.

Monmouth, observing that no considerable men joined him, finding that an insurrection which was projected in the city had not taken place, and hearing that Argyle, his confederate, was already defeated and taken, sunk into such despondency, that he had once resolved to withdraw himself, and leave his unhappy followers to their fate. His followers expressed more courage than their leader, and seemed determined to adhere to him in every fortune. The negligent disposition made by Feversham, invited Monmouth to attack the king’s army at Sedgemoor, near Bridgewater; and his men in this action showed what a native courage and a principle of duty, even when unassisted by discipline, is able to perform. They threw the veteran forces into disorder; drove them from their ground; continued the fight till their ammunition failed them; and would at last have obtained a victory, had not the misconduct of Monmouth and the cowardice of Gray prevented it. After a combat of three hours, the rebels gave way, and were followed with great slaughter. About fifteen hundred fell in the battle and pursuit* [2missing period] And thus was concluded in a few weeks this enterprise rashly undertaken and feebly conducted.



DUKE OF MONMOUTH TAKEN AFTER THE BATTLE OF SEDGEMOOR.

Monmouth fled from the field of battle above twenty miles till his horse sunk under him. He then changed clothes with a peasant in order to conceal himself. The peasant was discovered by the pursuers, who now redoubled the diligence of their search. At last, the unhappy Monmouth was found, lying in the bottom of a ditch, and covered with fern; his body depressed with fatigue and hunger; his mind by the memory of past misfortunes, by the prospect of future disasters. Human nature is unequal to such calamitous situations; much more the temper of a man softened by early prosperity, and accustomed to value himself solely on military bravery. He burst into tears when seized by his enemies; and he seemed still to indulge the fond hope and desire of life. Though he might have known, from the greatness of his own offences, and the severity of James's temper, that no mercy could be expected, he wrote him the most submissive letters, and conjured him to spare the issue of a brother who had ever been so strongly attached to his interest. James, finding such symptoms of depression and despondency in the unhappy prisoner, admitted him to his presence, in hopes of extorting a discovery of his accomplices; but Monmouth would not purchase life, however loved, at the price of so much infamy. Finding all efforts vain, he assumed courage from despair, and prepared himself for death, with a spirit better suited to his rank and character. This favorite of the people was attended to the scaffold with a plentiful effusion of tears. He warned the executioner not to fall into the error which he had committed in beheading Russel, where it had been necessary to repeat the blow. This precaution served only to dismay the executioner. He struck a feeble blow on Monmouth, who raised his head from the block, and looked him in the face, as if reproaching him for his failure. He gently laid down his head a second time; and the executioner struck him again and again to no purpose. He then threw aside the axe, and cried out that he was incapable of finishing the bloody office. The sheriff obliged him to renew the attempt; and at two blows more the head was severed from the body.

Thus perished, in the thirty-sixth year of his age, a nobleman who, in less turbulent times, was well qualified to be an ornament of the court, even to be serviceable to his country. The favor of his prince, the caresses of faction, and the allurements of popularity, seduced him into enterprises which exceeded his capacity. The good will of the people still followed him in every fortune. Even after his execution, their fond credulity flattered them with hopes of seeing him once more at their head. They believed, that the person executed was not Monmouth, but one, who, having the fortune to resemble him nearly, was willing to give this proof of his extreme attachment, and to suffer death in his stead.

This victory, obtained by the king in the commencement of his reign, would naturally, had it been managed with prudence, have tended much to increase his power and authority. But by reason of the cruelty with which it was prosecuted, and of the temerity with which it afterwards inspired him, it was a principal cause of his sudden ruin and downfall.

Such arbitrary principles had the court instilled into all its servants, that Feversham, immediately after the victory, hanged above twenty prisoners; and was proceeding in his executions, when the bishop of Bath and Wells warned him, that these unhappy men were now by law entitled to a trial, and that their execution would be deemed a real murder. This remonstrance, however, did not stop the savage nature of Colonel Kirke, a soldier of fortune, who had long served at Tangiers, and had contracted, from his intercourse with the Moors, an inhumanity less known in European and in free countries. At his first entry into Bridge water, he hanged nineteen prisoners without the least inquiry into the merits of their cause. As if to make sport with death, he ordered a certain number to be executed, while he and his company should drink the king’s health, or the queen’s, or that of Chief Justice Jefferies. Observing their feet to quiver in the agonies of death, he cried that he would give them music to their dancing; and he immediately commanded the drums to beat and the trumpets to sound. By way of experiment, he ordered one man to be hung up three times, questioning him at each interval, whether he repented of his crime: but the man obstinately asserting, that notwithstanding the past, he still would willingly engage in the same cause, Kirke ordered him to be hung in chains. One story, commonly told of him, is memorable for the treachery, as well as barbarity, which attended it. A young maid pleaded for the life of her brother, and flung herself at Kirke’s feet, armed with all the charms which beauty and innocence, bathed in tears, could bestow upon her. The tyrant was inflamed with desire, not softened into love or clemency. He promised to grant her request, provided that she, in her turn, would be equally compliant to him. The maid yielded to the conditions: but after she had passed the night with him, the wanton savage next morning showed her from the window her brother, the darling object for whom she had sacrificed her virtue, hanging on a gibbet, which he had secretly ordered to be there erected for the execution. Rage, and despair, and indignation took possession of her mind, and deprived her forever of her senses. All the inhabitants of that country, innocent as well as guilty, were exposed to the ravages of this barbarian. The soldiery were let loose to live at free quarters; and his own regiment, instructed by his example, and encouraged by his exhortations, distinguished themselves in a particular manner by their outrages. By way of pleasantry, he used to call them his lambs; an appellation which was long remembered with horror in the west of England. The violent Jefferies succeeded after some interval; and showed the people, that the rigors of law might equal, if not exceed, the ravages of military tyranny. This man, who wantoned in cruelty, had already given a specimen of his character in many trials where he presided; and he now set out with a savage joy, as to a full harvest of death and destruction. He began at Dorchester; and thirty rebels being arraigned, he exhorted them, but in vain, to save him, by their free confession, the trouble of trying them: and when twenty-nine were found guilty, he ordered them, as an additional punishment of their disobedience, to be led to immediate execution. Most of the other prisoners, terrified with this example, pleaded guilty; and no less than two hundred and ninety-two received sentence at Dorchester. Of these, eighty were executed. Exeter was the next stage of his cruelty: two hundred and forty-three were there tried, of whom a great number were condemned and executed. He also opened his commission at Taunton and Wells; and every where carried consternation along with him. The juries were so struck with his menaces, that they gave their verdict with precipitation; and many innocent persons, it is said, were involved with the guilty. And on the whole, besides those who were butchered by the military commanders, two hundred and fifty-one are computed to have fallen by the hand of justice. The whole country was strowed with the heads and limbs of traitors. Every village almost beheld the dead carcass of a wretched inhabitant. And all the rigors of justice, unabated by any appearance of clemency, were fully displayed to the people by the inhuman Jefferies.

Of all the executions, during this dismal period, the most remarkable were those of Mrs. Gaunt and Lady Lisle, who had been accused of harboring traitors. Mrs. Gaunt was an Anabaptist, noted for her beneficence, which she extended to persons of all profession and persuasions. One of the rebels, knowing her humane disposition, had recourse to her in his distress, and was concealed by her. Hearing of the proclamation, which offered an indemnity and rewards to such as discovered criminals, he betrayed his benefactress, and bore evidence against her. He received a pardon as a recompense for his treachery; she was burned alive for her charity.

Lady Lisle was widow of one of the regicides, who had enjoyed great favor and authority under Cromwell, and who having fled, after the restoration, to Lauzanne, in Switzerland, was there assassinated by three Irish ruffians, who hoped to make their fortune by this piece of service. His widow was now prosecuted for harboring two rebels the day after the battle of Sedgemoor; and Jefferies pushed on the trial with an unrelenting violence. In vain did the aged prisoner plead, that these criminals had been put into no proclamation; had been convicted by no verdict; nor could any man be denominated a traitor, till the sentence of some legal court was passed upon him: that it appeared not by any proof, that she was so much as acquainted with the guilt of the persons, or had heard of their joining the rebellion of Monmouth: that though she might be obnoxious on account of her family, it was well known that her heart was ever loyal; and that no person in England had shed more tears for that tragical event, in which her husband had unfortunately borne too great a share: and that the same principles which she herself had ever embraced, she had carefully instilled into her son; and had, at that very time, sent him to fight against those rebels whom she was now accused of harboring. Though these arguments did not move Jefferies, they had influence on the jury. Twice they seemed inclined to bring in a favorable verdict: they were as often sent back with menaces and reproaches; and at last were constrained to give sentence against the prisoner. Notwithstanding all applications for pardon, the cruel sentence was executed. The king said, that he had given Jefferies a promise not to pardon her; an excuse which could serve only to aggravate the blame against himself.

It might have been hoped that, by all these bloody executions, a rebellion so precipitate, so ill supported, and of such short duration, would have been sufficiently expiated: but nothing could satiate the spirit of rigor which possessed the administration. Even those multitudes who received pardon, were obliged to atone for their guilt by fines which reduced them to beggary; or where their former poverty made them incapable of paying, they were condemned to cruel whippings or severe imprisonments. Nor could the innocent escape the hands, no less rapacious than cruel, of the chief justice. Prideaux, a gentleman of Devonshire, being thrown into prison, and dreading the severe and arbitrary spirit which at that time met with no control, was obliged to buy his liberty of Jefferies at the price of fifteen thousand pounds; though he could never so much as learn the crime of which he was accused.

Goodenough, the seditious under sheriff of London, who had been engaged in the most bloody and desperate part of the Rye-house conspiracy, was taken prisoner after the battle of Sedgemoor, and resolved to save his own life by an accusation of Cornish, the sheriff, whom he knew to be extremely obnoxious to the court. Colonel Rumsey joined him in the accusation; and the prosecution was so hastened, that the prisoner was tried, condemned, and executed in the space of a week. The perjury of the witnesses appeared immediately after; and the king seemed to regret the execution of Cornish. He granted his estate to his family, and condemned the witnesses to perpetual imprisonment.

The injustice of this sentence against Cornish was not wanted to disgust the nation with the court: the continued rigor of the other executions had already impressed a universal hatred against the ministers of justice, attended with compassion for the unhappy sufferers, who, as they had been seduced into this crime by mistaken principles, bore their punishment with the spirit and zeal of martyrs. The people might have been willing on this occasion to distinguish between the king and his ministers: but care was taken to prove, that the latter had done nothing but what was agreeable to their master. Jefferies, on his return, was immediately, for those eminent services, created a peer; and was soon after vested with the dignity of chancellor. It is pretended, however, with some appearance of authority, that the king was displeased with these cruelties, and put a stop to them by orders, as soon as proper information of them was conveyed to him. [1]

We must now take a view of the state of affairs in Scotland; where the fate of Argyle had been decided before that of Monmouth. Immediately after the king's accession, a parliament had been summoned at Edinburgh; and all affairs were there conducted by the duke of Queensberry the commissioner, and the earl of Perth chancellor. The former had resolved to make an entire surrender of the liberties of his country; but was determined still to adhere to its religion: the latter entertained no scruple of paying court

* Life of Lord Keeper North, . K. James's Memoirs, p, 144.

even by the sacrifice of both. But no courtier, even the most prostitute, could go further than the parliament itself towards a resignation of their liberties. In a vote, which they called an offer of duty, after adopting the fabulous history of a hundred and eleven Scottish monarchs, they acknowledged, that all these princes, by the primary and fundamental law of the state, had been vested with a solid and absolute authority. They declared their abhorrence of all principles and positions derogatory to the king's sacred, supreme, sovereign, absolute power, of which none, they said, whether single persons or collective bodies, can participate, but in dependence on him, and by commission from him. They promised, that the whole nation, between sixteen and sixty, shall be in readiness for his majesty's service, where and as oft as it shall be his royal pleasure to require them. And they annexed the whole excise, both of inland and foreign commodities, forever to the crown.

All the other acts of this assembly savored of the same spirit. They declared it treason for any person to refuse the test, if tendered by the council. To defend the obligation of the covenant, subjected a person to the same penalty. To be present at any conventicle, was made punishable with death and confiscation of movables. Even such as refused to give testimony, either in cases of treason or nonconformity, were declared equally punishable as if guilty of those very crimes; an excellent prelude to all the rigors of an inquisition. It must be confessed, that nothing could equal the abject servility of the Scottish nation during this period but the arbitrary severity of the administration.

It was in vain that Argyle summoned a people so lost to all sense of liberty, so degraded by repeated indignities, to rise in vindication of their violated laws and privileges. Even those who declared for him, were, for the greater part, his own vassals; men who, if possible, were still more sunk in slavery than the rest of the nation. He arrived, after a prosperous voyage, in Argyleshire, attended by some fugitives from Holland; among the rest, by Sir Patrick Hume, a man of mild dispositions, who had been driven to this extremity by a continued train of oppression. The privy council was beforehand apprised of Argyle's intentions. The whole militia of the kingdom, to the number of twenty-two thousand men, were already in arms; and a third part of them, with the regular forces, were on their march to oppose him. All the considerable gentry of his clan were thrown into prison. And two ships of war were on the coast to watch his motions. Under all these discouragements he yet made a shift, partly from terror, partly from affection, to collect and arm a body of about two thousand five hundred men; but soon found himself surrounded on all sides with insuperable difficulties. His arms and ammunition were seized, his provisions cut off: the marquis of Athole pressed him on one side; Lord Charles Murray on another; the duke of Gordon hung upon his rear; the earl of Dunbarton met him in front. His followers daily fell off from him; but Argyle, resolute to persevere, broke at last with the shattered remains of his troops into the disaffected part of the low countries, which he had endeavored to allure to him by declarations for the covenant. No one showed either courage or inclination to join him; and his small and still decreasing army, after wandering about for a little time, was at last defeated and dissipated without an enemy. Argyle himself was seized and carried to Edinburgh, where, after enduring many indignities with a gallant spirit, he was publicly executed. He suffered on the former unjust sentence which had been passed upon him. The rest of his followers either escaped or were punished by transportation: Rumbold and Ayloffe, two Englishmen who had attended Argyle on this expedition, were executed.

The king was so elated with this continued tide of prosperity, that he began to undervalue even an English parliament, at all times formidable to his family; and from his speech to that assembly, which he had assembled early in the winter, he seems to have thought himself exempted from all rules of prudence or necessity of dissimulation. He plainly told the two houses, that the militia, which had formerly been so much magnified, was now found, by experience in the last rebellion, to be altogether useless; and he required a new supply, in order to maintain those additional forces which he had levied. He also took notice that he had employed a great many Catholic officers, and that he had, in their favor, dispensed with the law requiring the test to be taken by every one that possessed any public office. And to cut short all opposition, he declared, that, having reaped the benefit of their service during such times of danger he was determined neither to expose them afterwards to disgrace, nor himself, in case of another rebellion, to the want of their assistance.

Such violent aversion did this parliament bear to opposition so great dread had been instilled of the consequences attending any breach with the king, that it is probable, had he used his dispensing power without declaring it, no inquiries would have been made, and time might have reconciled the nation to this dangerous exercise of prerogative. But to invade at once their constitution, to threaten their religion, to establish a standing army, and even to require them, by their concurrence, to contribute towards all these measures, exceeded the bounds of their patience; and they began, for the first time, to display some small remains of English spirit and generosity. When the king's speech was taken into consideration by the commons, many severe reflections were thrown out against the present measures; and the house was with seeming difficulty engaged to promise, in a general vote, that they would grant some supply. But instead of finishing that business, which could alone render them acceptable to the king, they proceeded to examine the dispensing power; and they voted an address to the king against it. Before this address was presented, they resumed the consideration of the supply; and as one million two hundred thousand pounds were demanded by the court, and two hundred thousand proposed by the country party, a middle course was chosen, and seven hundred thousand, after some dispute, were at last voted. The address against the dispensing power was expressed in the most respectful and submissive terms; yet was it very ill received by the king; and his answer contained a flat denial, uttered with great warmth and vehemence. The commons were so daunted with this reply, that they kept silence a long time; and when Coke, member for Derby, rose up and said, "I hope we are all Englishmen, and not to be frightened with a few hard words," so little spirit appeared in that assembly, often so refractory and mutinous, that they sent him to the Tower for bluntly expressing a free and generous sentiment. They adjourned without fixing a day for the consideration of his majesty's answer: and on their next meeting, they submissively proceeded to the consideration of the supply, and even went so far as to establish funds for paying the sum voted in nine years and a half. The king, therefore, had in effect, almost without contest or violence, obtained a complete victory over the commons; and that assembly, instead of guarding their liberties, now exposed to manifest peril, conferred an additional revenue on the crown; and, by rendering the king in some degree independent, contributed to increase those dangers with which they had so much reason to be alarmed.

The next opposition came from the house of peers, which has not commonly taken the lead on these occasions; and even from the bench of bishops, where the court usually expects the greatest complaisance and submission. The upper house had been brought, in the first days of the session, to give general thanks for the king’s speech; by which compliment they were understood, according to the practice of that time, to have acquiesced in every part of it: yet notwithstanding that step, Compton, bishop of London, in his own name and that of his brethren, moved that a day should be appointed for taking the speech into consideration: he was seconded by Halifax, Nottingham, and Mordaunt. Jefferies, the chancellor, opposed the motion; and seemed inclined to use in that house the same arrogance to which on the bench he had so long been accustomed: but he was soon taught to know his place; and he proved, by his behavior, that insolence, when checked, naturally sinks into meanness and cowardice. The bishop of London’s motion prevailed.

The king might reasonably have presumed, that, even if the peers should so far resume courage as to make an application against his dispensing power, the same steady answer which he had given to the commons would make them relapse into the same timidity; and he might by that means have obtained a considerable supply, without making any concessions in return. But so imperious was his temper, so lofty the idea which he had entertained of his own authority, and so violent the schemes suggested by his own bigotry and that of his priests, that, without any delay, without waiting for any further provocation, he immediately proceeded to a prorogation. He continued the parliament during a year and a half by four more prorogations; but having in vain tried, by separate applications, to break the obstinacy of the leading members, he at last dissolved that assembly. And as it was plainly impossible for him to find among his Protestant subjects a set of men more devoted to royal authority, it was universally concluded, that he intended thenceforth to govern entirely without parliaments.

Never king mounted the throne of England with greater advantages than James; nay, possessed greater facility, if that were any advantage, of rendering himself and his posterity absolute: but all these fortunate circumstances tended only, by his own misconduct, to bring more sudden ruin upon him. The nation seemed disposed of themselves to resign their liberties, had he not, at the same time, made an attempt upon their religion: and he might even have succeeded in surmounting at once their liberties and religion, had he conducted his schemes with common prudence and discretion. Openly to declare to the parliament, so early in his reign, his intention to dispense with the tests, struck a universal alarm throughout the nation; infused terror into the church, which had hitherto been the chief support of monarchy; and even disgusted the army, by whose means alone he could now purpose to govern. The former horror against Popery was revived by polemical books and sermons; and in every dispute the victory seemed to be gained by the Protestant divines, who were heard with more favorable ears, and who managed the controversy with more learning and eloquence. But another incident happened at this time, which tended mightily to excite the animosity of the nation against the Catholic communion.

Lewis XIV., having long harassed and molested the Protestants, at last revoked entirely the edict of Nantz; which had been enacted by Henry IV. for securing them the free exercise of their religion; which had been declared irrevocable; and which, during the experience of near a century, had been attended with no sensible inconvenience. All the iniquities inseparable from persecution were exercised against those unhappy religionists; who became obstinate in proportion to the oppressions which they suffered, and either covered under a feigned conversion a more violent abhorrence of the Catholic communion, or sought among foreign nations for that liberty of which they were bereaved in their native country. Above half a million of the most useful and industrious subjects deserted France; and exported, together with immense sums of money, those arts and manufactures which had chiefly tended to enrich that kingdom. They propagated every where the most tragical accounts of the tyranny exercised against them; and revived among the Protestants all that resentment against the bloody and persecuting spirit of Popery, to which so many incidents in all ages had given too much foundation. Near fifty thousand refugees passed over into England; and all men were disposed, from their representations, to entertain, the utmost horror against the projects which they apprehended to be formed by the king for the abolition of the Protestant religion. When a prince of so much humanity and of such signal prudence as Lewis could be engaged, by the bigotry of his religion alone, without any provocation, to embrace such sanguinary and impolitic measures, what might be dreaded, they asked, from James, who was so much inferior in these virtues, and who had already been irritated by such obstinate and violent opposition? In vain did the king affect to throw the highest blame on the persecutions in France: in vain did he afford the most real protection and assistance to the distressed Hugonots. All these symptoms of toleration were regarded as insidious; opposite to the avowed principles of his sect, and belied by the severe administration which he himself had exercised against the nonconformists in Scotland.

The smallest approach towards the introduction of Popery, must, in the present disposition of the people, have afforded reason of jealousy; much more so wide a step as that of dispensing with the tests, the sole security which the nation, being disappointed of the exclusion bill, found provided against those dreaded innovations. Yet was the king resolute to persevere in his purpose; and having failed in bringing over the parliament, he made an attempt, with more success, for establishing his dispensing power by a verdict of the judges. Sir Edward Hales, a new proselyte, had accepted a commission of colonel; and directions were given his coachman to prosecute him for the penalty of five hundred pounds, which the law, establishing the tests, had granted to informers. By this feigned action the king hoped, both from the authority of the decision, and the reason of the thing, to put an end to all questions with regard to his dispensing power.

It could not be expected that the lawyers appointed to plead against Hales would exert great force on that occasion: but the cause was regarded with such anxiety by the public, that it has been thoroughly canvassed in several elaborate discourses; [1] and could men divest themselves of prejudice, there want not sufficient materials on which to form a true judgment.

The claim and exercise of the dispensing power is allowed to be very ancient in England; and though it seems at first to have been copied from Papal usurpations, it may plainly be traced up as high as the reign of Henry III. In the feudal governments, men were more anxious to secure their private property than to share in the public administration; and provided no innovations were attempted on their rights and possessions, the care of executing the laws, and insuring general safety, was, without jealousy, intrusted to the sovereign. Penal statutes were commonly intended to arm the prince with more authority for that purpose: and being in the main calculated for promoting his influence as first magistrate, there seemed no danger in allowing him to dispense with their execution, in such particular cases as might require an exception or indulgence. That practice had so much prevailed, that the parliament itself had more than once acknowledged this prerogative of the crown; particularly during the reign of

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* Particularly Sir Edward Herbert’s defence in the State Trials, and Sir Robert Atkins’s Inquiry concerning the Dispensing Power.

Henry V., when they enacted the law against aliens, [1] and also when they passed the statute of provisors. [2]

* Rot. Parl. I Hen. V. n. xv.

* * Ibid. I Hen. V. n. xxii. It is remarkable, however, that in the reign of Richard II. the parliament granted the king only a temporary power of dispensing with the statute of provisors. Rot. Parl. 15 Rich. [2 15 is a best guess] II. n. i.: a plain implication that he had not, of himself, such prerogative. So uncertain were many of these points at that time.

But though the general tenor of the penal statutes was such as gave the king a superior interest in their execution, beyond any of his subjects, it could not but sometimes happen in a mixed government, that the parliament would desire to enact laws by which the regal power, in some particulars, even where private property was not immediately concerned, might be regulated and restrained. In the twenty-third of Henry VI., a law of this kind was enacted, prohibiting any man from serving in a county as sheriff above a year; and a clause was inserted, by which the king was disabled from granting a dispensation. Plain reason might have taught, that this law, at least, should be exempted from the king's prerogative: but as the dispensing power still prevailed in other cases, it was soon able, aided by the servility of the courts of judicature, even to overpower this statute, which the legislature had evidently intended to secure against violation. In the reign of Henry VII., the case was brought to a trial before all the judges in the exchequer chamber; and it was decreed, that, notwithstanding the strict clause above mentioned, the king might dispense with the statute: he could first, it was alleged, dispense with the prohibitory clause, and then with the statute itself. This opinion of the judges, though seemingly absurd, had ever since passed for undoubted law; the practice of continuing the sheriffs had prevailed: and most of the property in England had been fixed by decisions which juries, returned by such sheriffs, had given in the courts of judicature. Many other dispensations of a like nature may be produced; not only such as took place by intervals, but such as were uniformly continued. Thus the law was dispensed with, which prohibited any man from going a judge of assize into his own county; that which rendered all Welshmen incapable of bearing offices in Wales; and that which required every one who received a pardon for felony, to find sureties for his good behavior. In the second of James I., a new consultation of all the judges had been held upon a like question: this prerogative of the crown was again unanimously affirmed, [1] and it became an established principle in English jurisprudence, that, though the king could not allow of what was morally unlawful, he could permit what was only prohibited by positive statute. Even the jealous house of commons who extorted the petition of right from Charles I., made no scruple, by the mouth of Glanville, their manager, to allow of the dispensing power in its full extent; [2] and in the famous trial of ship money, Holborne, the popular lawyer, had freely, and in the most explicit terms, made the same concession. [3] Sir Edward Coke, the great oracle of English law, had not only concurred with all other lawyers in favor of this prerogative, but seems even to believe it so inherent in the crown, that an act of parliament itself could not abolish it. [4] And he particularly observes, that no law can impose such a disability of enjoying offices as the king may not dispense with; because the king, from the law of nature, has a right to the service of all his subjects.

* Sir Edward Coke's Reports, seventh report.

* * State Trials, vol. ii. first edit. . Parl. Hist. vol. viii, .

* * * State Trials, vol. v. first edit. .

* * * * Sir Edward Coke's Reports, twelfth report, . our ancestors were, to depend upon his prudence and discretion in the exercise of them.

This particular reason, as well as all the general principles, is applicable to the question of the tests; nor can the dangerous consequence of granting dispensations in that case be ever allowed to be pleaded before a court of judicature. Every prerogative of the crown, it may be said, admits of abuse: should the king pardon all criminals, law must be totally dissolved: should he declare and continue perpetual war against all nations, inevitable ruin must ensue: yet these powers are intrusted to the sovereign.

Though this reasoning seems founded on such principles as are usually admitted by lawyers, the people had entertained such violent prepossessions against the use which James here made of his prerogative, that he was obliged, before he brought on Hales's cause, to displace four of the judges, Jones, Montague, Charleton, and Nevil; and even Sir Edward Herbert, the chief justice, though a man of acknowledged virtue, yet, because he here supported the pretensions of the crown, was exposed to great and general reproach. Men deemed a dispensing to be in effect the same with a repealing power; and they could not conceive, that less authority was necessary to repeal than to enact any statute, if one penal law was dispensed with, any other might undergo the same fate: and by what principle could even the laws which define property be afterwards secured from violation? The test act had ever been conceived the great barrier of the established religion under a Popish successor: as such it had been insisted on by the parliament; as such granted by the king; as such, during the debates with regard to the exclusion, recommended by the chancellor. By what magic, what chicane of law, is it now annihilated, and rendered of no validity? These questions were every where asked; and men, straitened by precedents and decisions of great authority, were reduced either to question the antiquity of this prerogative itself, or to assert, that even the practice of near five centuries could not bestow on it sufficient authority. [1]

* Sir Robert Atkins, .

It was not considered, that the present difficulty or seeming absurdity had proceeded from late innovations introduced into the government. Ever since the beginning of this century, the parliament had, with a laudable zeal, been acquiring powers and establishing principles favorable to law and liberty: the authority of the crown had been limited in many important particulars: and penal statutes were often calculated to secure the constitution against the attempts of ministers, as well as to preserve general peace, and repress crimes and immoralities. A prerogative, however, derived from very ancient and almost uniform practice, the dispensing power, still remained, or was supposed to remain, with the crown; sufficient in an instant to overturn this whole fabric, and to throw down all fences of the constitution. If this prerogative, which carries on the face of it such strong symptoms of an absolute authority in the prince, had yet, in ancient times, subsisted with some degree of liberty in the subject, this fact only proves that scarcely any human government, much less one erected in rude and barbarous times, is entirely consistent and uniform in all its parts. But to expect that the dispensing power could, in any degree, be rendered compatible with those accurate and regular limitations which had of late been established, and which the people were determined to maintain, was a vain hope; and though men knew not upon what principles they could deny that prerogative, they saw that, if they would preserve their laws and constitution, there was an absolute necessity for denying, at least for abolishing it. The revolution alone, which soon succeeded, happily put an end to all these disputes: by means of it, a more uniform edifice was at last erected: the monstrous inconsistence, so visible between the ancient Gothic parts of the fabric and the recent plans of liberty, was fully corrected; and, to their mutual felicity, King and people were finally taught to know their proper boundaries. [1]

Whatever topics lawyers might find to defend James's dispensing power, the nation thought it dangerous, if not fatal, to liberty; and his resolution of exercising it may on that account be esteemed no less alarming, than if the power had been founded on the most recent and most flagrant usurpation. It was not likely, that an authority which had been assumed through so many obstacles, would in his hands lie long idle and unemployed. Four Catholic lords were brought into the privy council, Powis, Arundel, Bellasis, and Dover. Halifax, finding that, notwithstanding his past merits, he possessed no real credit or authority, became refractory in his opposition; and his office of privy seal was given to Arundel. The king was open, as well as zealous, in the desire of making converts; and men plainly saw, that the only way to acquire his affection and confidence was by a sacrifice of their

* It is remarkable, that the convention, summoned by the prince of Orange, did not, even when they had the making of their own terms in the declaration of rights, venture to condemn the dispensing power in general, which had been uniformly exercised by the former kings of England. They only condemned it so far, as it had been assumed and exercised of late, without being able to tell wherein the difference lay. But in the bill of rights, which passed about a twelvemonth after the parliament took care to secure themselves more effectually against a branch of prerogative incompatible with all legal liberty and limitations; and they excluded, in positive terms, all dispensing power in the crown. Yet even then the house of lords rejected that clause of the bill which condemned the exercise of this power in former kings, and obliged the commons to rest content with abolishing it for the future. There needs no other proof of the irregular nature of the old English government, than the existence of such a prerogative, always exercised and never questioned, till the acquisition of real liberty discovered, at last, the danger of it. See the Journals.

religion. Sunderland, some time after, scrupled not to gain favor at this price, Rochester the treasurer, though the king's brother-in-law, yet, because he refused to give this instance of complaisance, was turned out of his office; the treasury was put in commission, and Bellasis was placed at the head of it. All the courtiers were disgusted, even such as had little regard to religion. The dishonor, as well as distrust, attending renegades, made most men resolve, at all hazards, to adhere to their ancient faith.

In Scotland, James's zeal for proselytism was more successful. The earls of Murray, Perth, and Melfort were brought over to the court religion; and the two latter noblemen made use of a very courtly reason for their conversion: they pretended, that the papers found in the late king's cabinet had opened their eyes, and had convinced them of the preference due to the Catholic religion. Queensberry, who showed not the same complaisance, fell into total disgrace, notwithstanding his former services, and the important sacrifices which he had made to the measures of the court. These merits could not even insure him of safety against the vengeance to which he stood exposed. His rival, Perth, who had been ready to sink under his superior interest, now acquired the ascendant; and all the complaints exhibited against him were totally obliterated. His faith, according to a saying of Halifax, had made him whole.

But it was in Ireland chiefly that the mask was wholly taken off, and that the king thought himself at liberty to proceed to the full extent of his zeal and his violence. The duke of Ormond was recalled; and though the primate and Lord Granard, two Protestants, still possessed the authority of justices, the whole power was lodged in the hands of Talbot, the general, soon after created earl of Tyrconnel; a man who, from the blindness of his prejudices and fury of his temper, was transported with the most immeasurable ardor for the Catholic cause. After the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, orders were given by Tyrconnel to disarm all the Protestants, on pretence of securing the public peace, and keeping their arms in a few magazines for the use of the militia. Next, the army was new modelled; and a great number of officers were dismissed, because it was pretended that they or their fathers had served under Cromwell and the republic. The injustice was not confined to them. Near three hundred officers more were afterwards broken, though many of them had purchased their commissions: about four or five thousand private soldiers, because they were Protestants, were dismissed; and being stripped even of their regimentals, were turned out to starve in the streets. While these violences were carrying on, Clarendon, who had been named lord lieutenant, came over; but he soon found, that, as he had refused to give the king the desired pledge of fidelity by changing his religion, he possessed no credit or authority. He was even a kind of prisoner in the hands of Tyrconnel: and as he gave all opposition in his power to the precipitate measures of the Catholics, he was soon after recalled, and Tyrconnel substituted in his place. The unhappy Protestants now saw all the civil authority, as well as the military force, transferred into the *hands of their inveterate enemies; inflamed with hereditary hatred, and stimulated by every motive which the passion either for power, property, or religion could inspire. Even the barbarous banditti were let loose to prey on them in their present defenceless condition. A renewal of the ancient massacres was apprehended; and great multitudes, struck with the best-grounded terror, deserted the kingdom, and infused into the English nation a dread of those violences to which, after some time, they might justly, from the prevalence of the Catholics, think themselves exposed.

All judicious persons of the Catholic communion were disgusted with these violent measures, and could easily foresee the consequences. But James was entirely governed by the rash counsels of the queen and of his confessor, Father Peters, a Jesuit, whom he soon after created a privy counsellor. He thought too, that, as he was now in the decline of life, it was necessary for him, by hasty steps, to carry his designs into execution; lest the succession of the princess of Orange should overturn all his projects. In vain did Arundel, Powis, and Bellasis, remonstrate, and suggest more moderate and cautious measures. These men had seen and felt, during the prosecution of the Popish plot, the extreme antipathy which the nation bore to their religion; and though some subsequent incidents had seemingly allayed that spirit, they knew that the settled habits of the people were still the same, and that the smallest incident was sufficient to renew the former animosity. A very moderate indulgence, therefore, to the Catholic religion would have satisfied them; and all attempts to acquire power, much more to produce a change of the national faith, they deemed dangerous and destructive.

On the first broaching of the Popish plot, the clergy of the church of England had concurred in the prosecution of it, with the same violence and credulity as the rest of the nation: but dreading afterwards the prevalence of republican and Presbyterian principles, they had been engaged to support the measures of the court; and to their assistance chiefly, James had owed his succession to the crown. Finding that all these services were forgotten, and that the Catholic religion was the king's sole favorite, the church had commenced an opposition to court measures; and Popery was now acknowledged the more immediate danger. In order to prevent inflammatory sermons on this popular subject, James revived some directions to preachers, which had been promulgated by the late king, in the beginning of his reign, when no design against the national religion was yet formed, or at least apprehended. But in the present delicate and interesting situation of the church, there was little reason to expect that orders, founded on no legal authority, would be rigidly obeyed by preachers, who saw no security to themselves but in preserving the confidence and regard of the people. Instead of avoiding controversy, according to the king's injunctions, the preachers every where declaimed against Popery; and among the rest, Dr. Sharpe, a clergyman of London, particularly distinguished himself, and affected to throw great contempt on those who had been induced to change their religion by such pitiful arguments as the Romish missionaries could suggest. This topic, being supposed to reflect on the king, gave great offence at court; and positive orders were issued to the bishop of London, his diocesan, immediately to suspend Sharpe, till his majesty's pleasure should be further known. The prelate replied, that he could not possibly obey these commands; But that he was not empowered, in such a summary manner, to inflict any punishment even upon the greatest delinquent. But neither this obvious reason, nor the most dutiful submissions, both of the prelate and of Sharpe himself, could appease the court. The king was determined to proceed with violence in the prosecution of this affair. The bishop himself he resolved to punish for disobedience to his commands; and the expedient which he employed for that purpose, was of a nature at once the most illegal and most alarming.

* D'Avaux, January 10, 1687.

Among all the engines of authority formerly employed by the crown, none had been more dangerous or even destructive to liberty, than the court of high commission, which, together with the star chamber, had been abolished in the reign of Charles I. by act of parliament; in which a clause was also inserted, prohibiting the erection, in all future times, of that court, or any of a like nature. But this law was deemed by James no obstacle; and an ecclesiastical commission was anew issued, by which seven commissioners [1] were vested with full and unlimited authority over the church of England.

On them were bestowed the same inquisitorial powers possessed by the former court of high commission: they might proceed upon bare suspicion; and the better to set the law at defiance, it was expressly inserted in their patent itself, that they were to exercise their jurisdiction, notwithstanding any law or statute to the contrary. The king’s design to subdue the church was now sufficiently known; and had he been able to establish the authority of this new-erected court, his success was infallible. A more sensible blow could not be given both to national liberty and religion; and happily the contest could not be tried in a cause more iniquitous and unpopular than that against Sharpe and the bishop of London.

The prelate was cited before the commissioners. After denying the legality of the court, and claiming the privilege of all Christian bishops, to be tried by the metropolitan and his suffragans, he pleaded in his own defence, that as he was obliged, if he had suspended Sharpe, to act in the capacity of a judge, he could not, consistent either with law or equity, pronounce sentence without a previous citation and trial: that he had by petition represented this difficulty to his majesty; and not receiving any answer, he had reason to think that his petition had given entire satisfaction: that in order to show further his deference, he had advised Sharpe to abstain from preaching, till he had justified his conduct to the king; an advice which, coming from a superior, was equivalent to a command, and had accordingly met with the proper obedience: that he had thus, in his apprehension, conformed himself to his majesty’s pleasure; but if he should still be found wanting to his duty in any particular, he was now willing to crave pardon, and to make reparation. All this submission, both in Sharpe and the prelate, had no effect: it was determined to have an example: orders were accordingly sent to the commissioners to proceed: and by a majority of votes, the bishop, as well as the doctor, was suspended.

Almost the whole of this short reign consists of attempts, always imprudent, often illegal, sometimes both, against whatever was most loved

* The persons named were, the archbishop of Canterbury, Sancroft; the bishop of Durham, Crew; of Rochester, Sprat; the earl of Rochester, Sunderland, Chancellor Jeffries, and Lord Chief Justice Herbert. The archbishop refused to act and the bishop of Chester was substituted in his place.

and revered by the nation: even such schemes of the king’s as might be laudable in themselves were so disgraced by his intentions, that they serve only to aggravate the charge against him. James was become a great patron of toleration, and an enemy to all those persecuting laws which, from the influence of the church, had been enacted both against the dissenters and Catholics. Not content with granting dispensations to particular persons, he assumed a power of issuing a declaration of general indulgence, and of suspending at once all the penal statutes by which a conformity was required to the established religion. This was a strain of authority, it must be confessed, quite inconsistent with law and a limited constitution; yet was it supported by many strong precedents in the history of England. Even after the principles of liberty were become more prevalent, and began to be well understood, the late king had, oftener than once, and without giving much umbrage, exerted this dangerous power: he had, in 1662, suspended the execution of a law which regulated carriages: during the two Dutch wars, he had twice suspended the act of navigation: and the commons, in 1666, being resolved, contrary to the king’s judgment, to enact that iniquitous law against the importation of Irish cattle, found it necessary, in order to obviate the exercise of this prerogative, which they desired not at that time entirely to deny or abrogate, to call that importation a nuisance.

Though the former authority of the sovereign was great in civil affairs, it was still greater in ecclesiastical; and the whole despotic power of the popes was often believed, in virtue of the supremacy, to have devolved to the crown. The last parliament of Charles I., by abolishing the power of the king and convocation to frame canons without consent of parliament, had somewhat diminished the supposed extent of the supremacy; but still very considerable remains of it, at least very important claims, were preserved, and were occasionally made use of by the sovereign. In 1662, Charles, pleading both the rights of his supremacy and his suspending power, had granted a general indulgence or toleration; and, in 1672, he renewed the same edict: though the remonstrances of his parliament obliged him, on both occasions, to retract; and, in the last instance, the triumph of law over prerogative was deemed very great and memorable. In general, we may remark that, where the exercise of the suspending power was agreeable and useful, the power itself was little questioned: where the exercise was thought liable to exceptions, men not only opposed it, but proceeded to deny altogether the legality of the prerogative on which it was founded.

James, more imprudent and arbitrary than his predecessor, issued his proclamation, suspending all the penal laws in ecclesiastical affairs, and granting a general liberty of conscience to all his subjects. He was not deterred by the reflection, both that this scheme of indulgence was already blasted by two fruitless attempts; and that in such a government as that of England, it was not sufficient that a prerogative be approved of by some lawyers and antiquaries: if it was condemned by the general voice of the nation, and yet was still exerted, the victory over national liberty was no less signal than if obtained by the most flagrant injustice and usurpation. These two considerations, indeed, would rather serve to recommend this project to James; who deemed himself superior in vigor and activity to his brother, and who probably thought that his people enjoyed no liberties but by his royal concession and indulgence.

In order to procure a better reception for his edict of toleration, the king, finding himself opposed by the church, began to pay court to the dissenters; and he imagined that, by playing one party against another, he should easily obtain the victory over both: a refined policy which it much exceeded his capacity to conduct. His intentions were so obvious, that it was impossible for him ever to gain the sincere confidence and regard of the nonconformists. They knew that the genius of their religion was diametrically opposite to that of the Catholics, the sole object of the king’s affection. They were sensible, that both the violence of his temper, and the maxims of his religion, were repugnant to the principles of toleration They had seen that, on his accession, as well as during his brother’s reign, he had courted the church at their expense; and it was not till his dangerous schemes were rejected by the prelates, that he had recourse to the nonconformists. All his favors, therefore, must, to every man of judgment among the sectaries, have appeared insidious: yet such was the pleasure reaped from present ease, such the animosity of the dissenters against the church, who had so long subjected them to the rigors of persecution, that they every where expressed the most entire duty to the king, and compliance with his measures; and could not forbear rejoicing extremely in the present depression of their adversaries.

But had the dissenters been ever so much inclined to shut their eyes with regard to the king’s intentions, the manner of conducting his scheme in Scotland was sufficient to discover the secret. The king first applied to the Scottish parliament, and desired an indulgence for the Catholics alone, without comprehending the Presbyterians: but that assembly, though more disposed than even the parliament of England to sacrifice their civil liberties, resolved likewise to adhere pertinaciously to their religion; and they rejected, for the first time, the king’s application. James therefore found himself obliged to exert his prerogative; and he now thought it prudent to interest a party among his subjects, besides the Catholics, in supporting this act of authority. To the surprise of the harassed and persecuted Presbyterians, they heard the principles of toleration every where extolled, and found that full permission was granted to attend conventicles; an offence which, even during this reign, had been declared no less than a capital enormity. The king’s declaration, however, of indulgence, contained clauses sufficient to depress their joy. As if Popery were already predominant, he declared, “that he never would use force or invincible necessity against any man on account of his persuasion of the Protestant religion;” a promise surely of toleration given to the Protestants with great precaution, and admitting a considerable latitude for persecution and violence. It is likewise remarkable, that the king declared in express terms, “that he had thought fit, by his sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power, which all his subjects were to obey, without reserve, to grant this royal toleration.”

The dangerous designs of other princes are to be collected by a comparison of their several actions, or by a discovery of their more secret counsels: but so blinded was James with zeal, so transported by his imperious temper, that even his proclamations and public edicts contain expressions which, without further inquiry, may suffice to his condemnation.

The English well knew that the king, by the constitution of their government, thought himself entitled, as indeed he was, to as ample authority in his southern as in his northern kingdom; and therefore, though the declaration of indulgence published for England was more cautiously expressed, they could not but be alarmed by the arbitrary treatment to which their neighbors were exposed. It is even remarkable, that the English declaration contained clauses of a strange import. The king there promised, that he would maintain his loving subjects in all their properties and possessions, as well of church and abbey lands as of any other. Men thought that, if the full establishment of Popery were not at hand, this promise was quite superfluous; and they concluded, that the king was so replete with joy on the prospect of that glorious event, that he could not, even for a moment, refrain from expressing it.

But what afforded the most alarming prospect, was the continuance and even increase of the violent and precipitate conduct of affairs in Ireland. Tyrconnel was now vested with full authority; and carried over with him as chancellor one Fitton, a man who was taken from a jail, and who had been convicted of forgery and other crimes, but who compensated for all his enormities by a headlong zeal for the Catholic religion. He was even heard to say from the bench, that the Protestants were all rogues, and that there was not one among forty thousand that was not a traitor, a rebel, and a villain. The whole strain of the administration was suitable to such sentiments. The Catholics were put in possession of the council table, of the courts of judicature, and of the bench of justices. In order to make them masters of the parliament, the same violence was exercised that had been practised in England. The charters of Dublin and of all the corporations were annulled; and new charters were granted, subjecting the corporations to the will of the sovereign. The Protestant freemen were expelled, Catholics introduced; and the latter sect, as they always were the majority in number, were now invested with the whole power of the kingdom. The act of settlement was the only obstacle to their enjoying the whole property; and Tyrconnel had formed a scheme for calling a parliament, in order to reverse that act, and empower the king to bestow all the lands of Ireland on his Catholic subjects. But in this scheme he met with opposition from the moderate Catholics in the king's council. Lord Bellasis went even so far as to affirm with an oath, "that that fellow in Ireland was fool and madman enough to ruin ten kingdoms." The decay of trade, from the desertion of the Protestants, was represented; the sinking of the revenue; the alarm communicated to England: and by these considerations the king's resolutions were for some time suspended; though it was easy to foresee, from the usual tenor of his conduct, which side would at last preponderate.

But the king was not content with discovering in his own kingdoms the imprudence of his conduct: he was resolved that all Europe should be witness to it. He publicly sent the earl of Castelmaine ambassador extraordinary to Rome, in order to express his obeisance to the pope, and to make advances for reconciling his kingdoms, in form, to the Catholic communion. Never man, who came on so important an errand, met with so many neglects, and even affronts, as Castelmaine. The pontiff, instead of being pleased with this forward step, concluded, that a scheme conducted with so much indiscretion, could never possibly be successful. And as he was engaged in a violent quarrel with the French monarch, a quarrel which interested him more nearly than the conversion of England, he bore little regard to James, whom he believed too closely connected with his capital enemy.

The only proof of complaisance which James received from the pontiff, was his sending a nuncio to England, in return for the embassy. By act of parliament, any communication with the pope was made treason: yet so little regard did the king pay to the laws, that he gave the nuncio a public and solemn reception at Windsor. The duke of Somerset, one of the bedchamber, because he refused to assist at this ceremony, was dismissed from his employment. The nuncio resided openly in London during the rest of this reign. Four Catholic bishops were publicly consecrated in the king's chapel, and sent out, under the title of vicars apostolical, to exercise the episcopal function in their respective dioceses. Their pastoral letters, directed to the lay Catholics of England, were printed and dispersed by the express allowance and permission of the king. The regular clergy of that communion appeared in court in the habits of their order; and some of them were so indiscreet as to boast, that, in a little time, they hoped to walk in procession through the capital.

While the king shocked in the most open manner all the principles and prejudices of his Protestant subjects, he could not sometimes but be sensible, that he stood in need of their assistance for the execution of his designs. He had himself, by virtue of his prerogative, suspended the penal laws, and dispensed with the test; but he would gladly have obtained the sanction of parliament to these acts of power; and he knew that, without this authority, his edicts alone would never afford a durable security to the Catholics. He had employed, therefore, with the members of parliament many private conferences, which were then called "closetings;" and he used every expedient of reasons, menaces, and promises to break their obstinacy in this particular. Finding all his efforts fruitless, he had dissolved the parliament, and was determined to call a new one, from which he expected more complaisance and submission. By the practice of annulling the charters, the king was become master of all the corporations, and could at pleasure change every where the whole magistracy. The church party, therefore, by whom the crown had been hitherto so remarkably supported, and to whom the king visibly owed his safety from all the efforts of his enemies, was deprived of authority; and the dissenters, those very enemies, were first in London, and afterwards in every other corporation, substituted in their place. Not content with this violent and dangerous innovation, the king appointed certain regulators to examine the qualifications of electors; and directions were given them to exclude all such as adhered to the test and penal statutes. [1]

* The elections in some places, particularly in York, were transferred from the people to the magistrates, who, by the new charter, were all named by the crown. Sir John Reresby's Memoirs, . This was in reality nothing different from the king's naming the members. The same act of authority had been employed in all the boroughs of Scotland.

Queries to this purpose were openly proposed in all places, in order to try the sentiments of men, and enable the king to judge of the proceedings of the future parliament. The power of the crown was at this time so great, and the revenue managed by James's frugality, so considerable and independent, that, if he had embraced any national party, he had been insured of success, and might have carried his authority to what length he pleased. But the Catholics, to whom he had entirely devoted himself, were scarcely the hundredth part of the people. Even the Protestant nonconformists, whom he so much courted, were little more than the twentieth; and, what was worse, reposed no confidence in the unnatural alliance contracted with the Catholics, and in the principles of toleration, which, contrary to their usual practice in all ages, seemed at present to be adopted by that sect. The king, therefore finding little hopes of success, delayed the summoning of a parliament, and proceeded still in the exercise of his illegal and arbitrary authority.

The whole power in Ireland had been committed to Catholics. In Scotland, all the ministers whom the king chiefly trusted, were converts to that religion. Every great office in England, civil and military, was gradually transferred from the Protestants. Rochester and Clarendon, the king's brothers-in-law, though they had ever been faithful to his interests, could not, by all their services, atone for their adherence to the national religion; and had been dismissed from their employments. The violent Jefferies himself, though he had sacrificed justice and humanity to the court, yet, because he refused also to give up his religion, was declining in favor and interest. Nothing now remained but to open the door in the church and universities to the intrusion of the Catholics. It was not long before the king made this rash effort; and by constraining the prelacy and established church to seek protection in the principles of liberty, he at last left himself entirely without friends and adherents.

Father Francis, a Benedictine, was recommended by the king's mandate to the university of Cambridge for the degree of master of arts; and as it was usual for the university to confer that degree on persons eminent for learning, without regard to their religion; and as they had even admitted lately the secretary to the ambassador of Morocco; the king on that account thought himself the better entitled to compliance. But the university considered, that there was a great difference between a compliment bestowed on foreigners, and degrees which gave a title to vote in all the elections and statutes cf the university, and which, if conferred on the Catholics would infallibly in time render that sect entirely superior. They therefore refused to obey the king's mandate, and were cited to appear before the court of ecclesiastical commission. The vice-chancellor was suspended by that court; but as the university chose a man of spirit to succeed him, the king thought proper for the present to drop his pretensions.

The attempt upon the university of Oxford was prosecuted with more inflexible obstinacy, and was attended with more important consequences. This university had lately, in their famous decree, made a solemn profession of passive obedience; and the court, probably, expected that they would show their sincerity when their turn came to practise that doctrine; which, though, if carried to the utmost extent it be contrary both to reason and to nature, is apt to meet with the more effectual opposition from the latter principle. The president of Magdalen College, one of the richest foundations in Europe, dying about this time, a mandate was sent in favor of Farmer, a new convert, but one who, besides his being a Catholic, had not in other respects the qualifications required by the statutes for enjoying that office. The fellows of the college made submissive applications to the king for recalling his mandate; but before they received an answer, the day came on which, by their statutes, they were obliged to proceed to an election. They chose Dr. Hough, a man of virtue, as well as of the firmness and vigor requisite for maintaining his own rights and those of the university. In order to punish the college for this contumacy, as it was called, an inferior ecclesiastical commission was sent down, and the new president and the fellows were cited before it. So little regard had been paid to any consideration besides religion, that Farmer, on inquiry, was found guilty of the lowest and most scandalous vices; insomuch that even the ecclesiastical commissioners were ashamed to insist on his election. A new mandate, therefore, was issued in favor of Parker, lately created bishop of Oxford, a man of a prostitute character, but who, like Farmer, atoned for all his vices by his avowed willingness to embrace the Catholic religion. The college represented, that all presidents had ever been appointed by election and there were few instances of the king's interposing by his recommendation in favor of any candidate: that, having already made a regular election of a president, they could not deprive him of his office, and, during his lifetime, substitute any other in his place: that, even if there were a vacancy, Parker, by the statutes of their founder, could not be chosen: that they had all of them bound themselves by oath to observe these statutes, and never on any account to accept of a dispensation and that the college had at all times so much distinguished itself by its loyalty, that nothing but the most invincible necessity could now oblige them to oppose his majesty's inclinations. All these reasons availed them nothing. The president and all the fellows, except two who complied, were expelled the college; and Parker was put in possession of the office. This act of violence, of all those which were committed during the reign of James, is perhaps the most illegal and arbitrary. When the dispensing power was the most strenuously insisted on by court lawyers, it had still been allowed, that the statutes which regard private property could not legally be infringed by that prerogative: yet in this instance it appeared, that even these were not now secure from invasion. The privileges of a college are attacked: men are illegally dispossessed of their property, for adhering to their duty, to their oaths, and to their religion: the fountains of the church are attempted to be poisoned; nor would it be long, it was concluded, ere all ecclesiastical, as well as civil preferments, would be bestowed on such as, negligent of honor, virtue, and sincerity, basely sacrificed their faith to the reigning superstition. Such were the general sentiments; and as the universities have an intimate connection with the ecclesiastical establishments, and mightily interest all those who have there received their education, this arbitrary proceeding begat a universal discontent against the king's administration.

The next measure of the court was an insult still more open on the ecclesiastics, and rendered the breach between the king and that powerful body fatal as well as incurable. It is strange that James, when he felt, from the sentiments of his own heart, what a mighty influence religious zeal had over him should yet be so infatuated as never once to suspect, that it might possibly have a proportionable authority over his subjects. Could he have profited by repeated experience, he had seen instances enough of their strong aversion to that communion, which, from a violent, imperious temper, he was determined, by every possible expedient, to introduce into his kingdoms.

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The king published a second declaration of indulgence, almost in the same terms with the former; and he subjoined an order, that, immediately after divine service, it should be read by the clergy in all the churches. As they were known universally to disapprove of the use made of the suspending power, this clause, they thought, could be meant only as an insult upon them; and they were sensible, that by their compliance, they should expose themselves both to public contempt, on account of their tame behavior, and to public hatred, by their indirectly patronizing so obnoxious a prerogative.[1] They were determined, therefore, almost universally, to preserve the regard of the people; their only protection, while the laws were become of so little validity, and while the court was so deeply engaged in opposite interests. In order to encourage them in this resolution, six prelates, namely, Lloyde bishop of St. Asaph, Ken of Bath and Wells, Turner of Ely, Lake of Chichester, White of Peterborough, and Trelawney of Bristol, met privately with the primate, and concerted the form of a petition to the king. They there represent, in few words, that, though possessed of the highest sense of loyalty, a virtue of which the church of England had given such eminent testimonies; and though desirous of affording ease in a legal way to all Protestant dissenters; yet, because the declaration of indulgence was founded on a prerogative formerly declared illegal by parliament, they could not, in prudence, honor, or conscience, so far make themselves parties, as the distribution of it all over the kingdom would be interpreted to amount to. They therefore besought the king, that he would not insist upon their reading that declaration.[2]

* When Charles dissolved his last parliament, he set forth a declaration, giving his reasons for that measure, and this declaration the clergy had been ordered to read to the people after divine service. These orders were agreeable to their party prejudices, and they willingly submitted to them. The contrary was now the case.

* * The words of the petition were: That the great averseness found in themselves to their distributing and publishing in all their churches your majesty's late declaration for liberty of conscience, proceeds neither from any want of duty and obedience to your majesty, (our holy mother the church of England, being both in her principles and her constant practice unquestionably loyal, and having to her great honor been more than once publicly acknowledged to be so by your gracious majesty,) nor yet from any want of tenderness to dissenters, in relation to whom we are willing to come to such a temper as shall be thought fit, when the matter shall be considered and settled in parliament and convocation; but, among many other considerations, from this especially, because that declaration is founded upon such a dispensing power as hath been often declared illegal in parliament, and particularly in the years 1662 and 1672, and in the beginning of your majesty's reign, and is a matter of so great moment and consequence to the whole nation both in church and state, that your petitioners cannot, in prudence,

honor, or conscience, so far make themselves parties to it as a distribution of it all over the nation, and the solemn publication of it once and again, even in God's house, and in the time of divine service, must amount to in common and reasonable construction.

The king was incapable, not only of yielding to the greatest opposition, but of allowing the slightest and most respectful contradiction to pass uncensured. He immediately embraced a resolution (and his resolutions, when once embraced, were inflexible) of punishing the bishops, for a petition so popular in its matter, and so prudent and cautious in the expression. As the petition was delivered him in private, he summoned them before the council; and questioned them whether they would acknowledge it. The bishops saw his intention, and seemed long desirous to decline answering; but being pushed by the chancellor, they at last avowed the petition. On their refusal to give bail, an order was immediately drawn for their commitment to the Tower; and the crown lawyers received directions to prosecute them for the seditious libel which, it was pretended, they had composed and uttered.

The people were already aware of the danger to which the prelates were exposed; and were raised to the highest pitch of anxiety and attention with regard to the issue of this extraordinary affair. But when they beheld these fathers of the church brought from court under the custody of a guard, when they saw them embark in vessels on the river, and conveyed towards the

Tower, all their affection for liberty, all their zeal for religion, blazed up at once; and they flew to behold this affecting spectacle. The whole shore was covered with crowds of prostrate spectators, who at once implored the blessing of those holy pastors, and addressed their petitions towards heaven for protection during this extreme danger to which their country and their religion stood exposed. Even the soldiers, seized with the contagion of the same spirit, flung themselves on their knees before the distressed prelates and craved the benediction of those criminals whom they were appointed to guard. Some persons ran into the water, that they might participate more nearly in those blessings which the prelates were distributing on all around them. The bishops themselves, during this triumphant suffering, augmented the general favor, by the most lowly, submissive deportment; and they still exhorted the people to fear God, honor the king, and maintain their loyalty; expressions more animating than the most inflammatory speeches. And no sooner had they entered the precincts of the Tower than they hurried to chapel, in order to return thanks for those afflictions which heaven, in defence of its holy cause, had thought them worthy to endure.

Their passage, when conducted to their trial, was, if possible, attended by greater crowds of anxious spectators. All men saw the dangerous crisis to which affairs were reduced, and were sensible, that the king could not have put the issue on a cause more unfavorable for himself than that in which he had so imprudently engaged. Twenty-nine temporal peers (for the other prelates kept aloof) attended the prisoners to Westminster Hall; and such crowds of gentry followed the procession, that scarcely was any room left for the populace to enter. The lawyers for the bishops were, Sir Robert Sawyer, Sir Francis Pemberton, Pollexfen, Treby, and Sommers. No cause, even during the prosecution of the Popish plot, was ever heard with so much zeal and attention. The popular torrent, which of itself ran fierce and strong, was now further irritated by the opposition of government.

The council for the bishops pleaded, that the law allowed subjects, if they thought themselves aggrieved in any particular, to apply by petition to the king, provided they kept within certain bounds, which the same law prescribed to them, and which, in the present petition, the prelates had strictly observed: that an active obedience in cases which were contrary to conscience, was never pretended to be due to government; and law was allowed to be the great measure of the compliance and submission of subjects: that when any person found commands to be imposed upon him which he could not obey, it was more respectful in him to offer his reasons for refusal, than to remain in a sullen and refractory silence: that it was no breach of duty in subjects, even though not called upon, to discover their sense of public measures, in which every one had so intimate a concern: that the bishops in the present case were called upon, and must either express their approbation by compliance, or their disapprobation by petition: that it could be no sedition to deny the prerogative of suspending the laws; because there really was no such prerogative, nor ever could be, in a legal and limited government: that even if this prerogative were real, it had yet been frequently controverted before the whole nation, both in Westminster Hall and in both houses of parliament; and no one had ever dreamed of punishing the denial of it as criminal: that the prelates, instead of making an appeal to the people, had applied in private to his majesty, and had even delivered their petition so secretly, that, except by the confession extorted from them before the council, it was found impossible to prove them the authors: and that though the petition was afterwards printed and dispersed, it was not so much as attempted to be proved that they had the least knowledge of the publication.

These arguments were convincing in themselves, and were heard with a favorable disposition by the audience. Even some of the judges, though their seats were held during pleasure, declared themselves in favor of the prisoners. The jury, however, from what cause is unknown, took several hours to deliberate, and kept, during so long a time, the people in the most anxious expectation. But when the wished-for verdict, not guilty, was at last pronounced, the intelligence was echoed through the hall, was conveyed to the crowds without, was carried into the city, and was propagated with infinite joy throughout the kingdom.

Ever since Monmouth’s rebellion, the king had every summer encamped his army on Hounslow Heath, that he might both improve their discipline, and by so unusual a spectacle overawe the mutinous people. A Popish chapel was openly erected in the midst of the camp; and great pains were taken, though in vain, to bring over the soldiers to that communion. The few converts whom the priests had made, were treated with such contempt and ignominy, as deterred every one from following the example. Even the Irish officers, whom the king introduced into the army, served rather, from the aversion borne them, to weaken his interest among them. It happened, that the very day on which the trial of the bishops was finished, James had reviewed the troops, and had retired into the tent of Lord Feversham, the general; when he was surprised to hear a great uproar in the camp, attended with the most extravagant symptoms of tumultuary joy. He suddenly inquired the cause, and was told by Feversham, “It was nothing but the rejoicing of the soldiers for the acquittal of the bishops.” “Do you call that nothing?” replied he: “but so much the worse for them.”

The king was still determined to rush forward in the same course in which he was already, by his precipitate career, so fatally advanced. Though he knew that every order of men, except a handful of Catholics, were enraged at his past measures, and still more terrified with the future prospect; though he saw that the same discontents had reached the army, his sole resource during the general disaffection; yet was he incapable of changing his measures, or even of remitting his violence in the prosecution of them. He struck out two of the judges, Powel and Holloway, who had appeared to favor the bishops: he issued orders to prosecute all those clergymen who had not read his declaration; that is, the whole church of England, two hundred excepted: he sent a mandate to the new fellows whom he had obtruded on Magdalen College, to elect for president, in the room of Parker, lately deceased, one Gifford, a doctor of the Sorbonne, and titular bishop of Madura: and he is even said to have nominated the same person to the see of Oxford. So great an infatuation is perhaps an object of compassion rather than of anger; and is really surprising in a man who, in other respects, was not wholly deficient in sense and accomplishments.

A few days before the acquittal of the bishops, an event happened which, in the king’s sentiments, much overbalanced all the mortifications received on that occasion. The queen was delivered of a son, who was baptized by the name of James. This blessing was impatiently longed for, not only by the king and queen, but by all the zealous Catholics both abroad and at home. They saw, that the king was past middle age; and that on his death the succession must devolve to the prince and princess of Orange, two zealous Protestants, who would soon replace every thing on ancient foundations. Vows, therefore, were offered at every shrine for a male successor: pilgrimages were undertaken, particularly one to Loretto, by the duchess of Modena; and success was chiefly attributed to that pious journey. But in proportion as this event was agreeable to the Catholics, it increased the disgust of the Protestants, by depriving them of that pleasing though somewhat distant prospect, in which at present they flattered themselves. Calumny even went so far as to ascribe to the king the design of imposing on the world a supposititious child, who might be educated in his principles, and after his death support the Catholic religion in his dominions. The nation almost universally believed him capable, from bigotry, of committing any crime; as they had seen that, from like motives, he was guilty of every imprudence: and the affections of nature, they thought, would be easily sacrificed to the superior motive of propagating a Catholic and orthodox faith. The present occasion was not the first when that calumny had been invented. In the year 1682, the queen, then duchess of York, had been pregnant; and rumors were spread that an imposture would at that time be obtruded upon the nation: but happily, the infant proved a female, and thereby spared the party all the trouble of supporting their improbable fiction. [1]

* This story is taken notice of in a weekly paper, the Observator, published at that very time, 23d of August, 1682. Party zeal is capable of swallowing the most incredible story; but it is surely singular, that the same calumny, when once baffled, should yet be renewed with such success.

CHAPTER LXXI.

JAMES II.

1688

While every motive, civil and religious, concurred to alienate from the king every rank and denomination of men, it might be expected that his throne would, without delay fall to pieces by its own weight: but such is the influence of established government, so averse are men from beginning hazardous enterprises, that, had not an attack been made from abroad, affairs might long have remained in their present delicate situation, and James might at last have prevailed in his rash and ill-concerted projects.

The prince of Orange, ever since his marriage with the lady Mary, had maintained a very prudent conduct; agreeably to that sound understanding with which he was so eminently endowed. He made it a maxim to concern himself little in English affairs, and never by any measure to disgust any of the factions, or give umbrage to the prince who filled the throne. His natural inclination, as well as his interest, led him to employ himself with assiduous industry in the transactions on the continent, and to oppose the grandeur of the French monarch, against whom he had long, both from personal and political considerations, conceived a violent animosity. By this conduct he gratified the prejudices of the whole English nation: but, as he crossed the inclinations of Charles, who sought peace by compliance with France, he had much declined in the favor and affections of that monarch.

James, on his accession, found it so much his interest to live on good terms with the heir apparent, that he showed the prince some demonstrations of friendship; and the prince, on his part, was not wanting in every instance of duty and regard towards the king. On Monmouth’s invasion, he immediately despatched over six regiments of British troops, which were in the Dutch service; and he offered to take the command of the king’s forces against the rebels. How little however he might approve of James’s administration, he always kept a total silence on the subject, and gave no countenance to those discontents which were propagated with such industry throughout the nation.

It was from the application of James himself that the prince first openly took any part in English affairs. Notwithstanding the lofty ideas which the king had entertained of his prerogative, he found that the edicts emitted from it still wanted much of the authority of laws, and that the continuance of them might in the issue become dangerous both to himself and to the Catholics, whom he desired to favor. An act of parliament alone could insure the indulgence or toleration which he had labored to establish; and he hoped that, if the prince would declare in favor of that scheme, the members who had hitherto resisted all his own applications, would at last be prevailed with to adopt it. The consent, therefore, of the prince to the repeal of the penal statutes and of the test was strongly solicited by the king; and in order to engage him to agree to that measure, hopes were given, [1] that England would second him in all those enterprises which his active and extensive genius had with such success planned on the continent. He was at this time the centre of all the negotiations of Christendom.

* Bennet vol. i. . D’Avanx, April 15, 1688.

The emperor and the king of Spain, as the prince well knew, were enraged by the repeated injuries which they had suffered from the ambition of Lewis, and still more by the frequent insults which his pride had made them undergo. He was apprised of the influence of these monarchs over the Catholic princes of the empire: he had himself acquired great authority with the Protestant: and he formed a project of uniting Europe in one general league against the encroachments of France, which seemed so nearly to threaten the independence of all its neighbors.

No characters are more incompatible than those of a conqueror and a persecutor; and Lewis soon found, that besides his weakening France by the banishment of so many useful subjects, the refugees had inflamed all the Protestant rations against him, and had raised him enemies, who, in defence of their religion as well as liberty, were obstinately resolved to oppose his progress. The city of Amsterdam and other towns in Holland, which had before fallen into a dependence on France, being terrified with the accounts which they every moment received of the furious persecutions against the Hugonots, had now dropped all domestic faction, and had entered into an entire confidence with the prince of Orange. [1] The Protestant princes of the empire formed a separate league at Magdebourg for the defence of their religion. The English were anew enraged at the blind bigotry of their sovereign, and were disposed to embrace the most desperate resolutions against him. From a view of the state of Europe during this period, it appears that Lewis, besides sullying an illustrious reign, had wantonly, by this persecution, raised invincible barriers to his arms, which otherwise it had been difficult, if not impossible, to resist.

* D’Avaux, July 24, 1681; June 10 October 15, November 11 1688; vol. iv .

The prince of Orange knew how to avail himself of all these advantages. By his intrigues and influence, there was formed at Augsbourg a league, in which the whole empire united for its defence against the French monarch. Spain and Holland became parties in the alliance. The accession of Savoy was afterwards obtained. Sweden and Denmark seemed to favor the same cause. But though these numerous states composed the greater part of Europe, the league was still deemed imperfect and unequal to its end, so long as England maintained that neutrality in which she had hitherto persevered.

James, though more prone to bigotry, was more sensible to his own and to national honor than his brother; and had he not been restrained by the former motive, he would have maintained with more spirit the interests and independence of his kingdoms. When a prospect, therefore, appeared of effecting his religious schemes by opposing the progress of France, he was not averse to that measure; and he gave his son-in-law room to hope, that, by concurring with his views in England, he might prevail with him to second those projects which the prince was so ambitious of promoting.

A more tempting offer could not be made to a person of his enterprising character: but the objections to that measure, upon deliberation, appeared to him unsurmountable. The king, he observed, had incurred the hatred of his own subjects. Great apprehensions were entertained of his designs: the only resource which the nation saw, was in the future succession of the prince and princess: should he concur in those dreaded measures, he should draw on himself all the odium under which the king labored; the nation might even refuse to bear the expense of alliances, which would in that case become so suspicious: and he might himself incur danger of losing a succession which was awaiting him, and which the egregious indiscretion of the king seemed even to give him hopes of reaping before it should devolve to him by the course of nature. The prince, therefore, would go no further than to promise his consent to the repeal of the penal statutes, by which the nonconformists as well as Catholics were exposed to punishment: the test he deemed a security absolutely necessary for the established religion.

The king did not remain satisfied with a single trial. There was one Stuart, a Scotch lawyer, who had been banished for pretended treasonable practices; but who had afterwards obtained a pardon, and had been recalled. By the king’s directions, Stuart wrote several letters to Pensionary Fagel, with whom he had contracted an acquaintance in Holland; and besides urging all the motives for an unlimited toleration, he desired that his reasons should, in the king’s name, be communicated to the prince and princess of Orange. Fagel during a long time made no reply; but finding that his silence was construed into an assent, he at last expressed his own sentiments and those of their highnesses. He said, that it was their fixed opinion, that no man, merely because he differed from the established faith, should ever, while he remained a peaceable subject, be exposed to any punishment, or even vexation: that the prince and princess gave heartily their consent for repealing legally all the penal statutes, as well those which had been enacted against the Catholics as against the Protestant nonconformists; and would concur with the king in any measure for that purpose: that the test was not to be considered as a penalty inflicted on the professors of any religion, but as a security provided for the established worship: that it was no punishment on men to be excluded from public offices, and to live peaceably on their own revenues or industry: that even in the United Provinces, which were so often cited as models of toleration, though all sects were admitted, yet civil offices were enjoyed by the professors of the established religion alone: that military commands, indeed, were sometimes bestowed on Catholics; but as they were conferred with great precaution, and still lay under the control of the magistrate, they could give no just reason for umbrage: and that their highnesses, however desirous of gratifying the king, and of endeavoring by every means to render his reign peaceable and happy, could not agree to any measure which would expose their religion to such imminent danger.

When this letter was published, as it soon was, it inspired great courage into the Protestants of all denominations, and served to keep them united in their opposition to the encroachments of the Catholics. On the other hand, the king, who was not content with a simple toleration for his own religion, but was resolved that it should enjoy great credit, if not an absolute superiority, was extremely disgusted, and took every occasion to express his displeasure, as well against the prince of Orange as the United Provinces. He gave the Algerine pirates, who preyed on the Dutch, a reception in his harbors, and liberty to dispose of their prizes. He revived some complaints of the East India Company with regard to the affair of Bantam, [1] He required the six British regiments in the Dutch service to be sent over. He began to put his navy in a formidable condition. And from all his movements, the Hollanders entertained apprehensions that he sought only an occasion and pretence for making war upon them.

The prince, in his turn, resolved to push affairs with more vigor, and to preserve all the English Protestants in his interests, as well as maintain them firm in their present union against the Catholics. He knew that men of education in England were, many of them, retained in their religion more by honor than by principle; [2] and that, though every one was ashamed to be the first proselyte, yet if the example were once set by some eminent persons, interest would every day make considerable conversions to a communion which was so zealously encouraged by the sovereign.

Dykvelt therefore was sent over as envoy to England; and the prince gave him instructions, besides publicly remonstrating on the conduct of affairs both at home and abroad, to apply in his name, after a proper manner, to every sect and denomination. To the church party he sent assurances of favor and regard, and protested, that his education in Holland had nowise prejudiced him against Episcopal government. The nonconformists were exhorted not to be deceived by the fallacious caresses of a Popish court, but to wait patiently till, in the fulness of time, laws enacted by Protestants should give them that toleration which, with so much reason, they had long demanded. Dykvelt executed his commission with such dexterity, that all orders of men cast their eyes towards Holland, and expected thence a deliverance from those dangers with which their religion and liberty were so nearly threatened.

Many of the most considerable persons, both in church and state, made secret applications to Dykvelt, and through him to the prince of Orange.

* D’Avaux, 21st of January, 1687.

* * Burnet.

Admiral Herbert too, though a man of great expense, and seemingly of little religion, had thrown up his employments, and had retired to the Hague, where he assured the prince of the disaffection of the seamen, by whom that admiral was extremely beloved. Admiral Russel, cousin german to the unfortunate lord of that name, passed frequently between England and Holland, and kept the communication open with all the great men of the Protestant party. Henry Sidney, brother to Algernon, and uncle to the earl of Sunderland, came over under pretence of drinking the waters at Spaw, and conveyed still stronger assurances of a universal combination against the measures of the king. Lord Dumblaine, son of the earl of Danby, being master of a frigate, made several voyages to Holland, and carried from many of the nobility tenders of duty, and even considerable sums of money,[1] to the prince of Orange.

* D'Avaux, 14th and 24th of September, 8th and 15th of October, 1688.

There remained, however, some reasons which retained all parties in awe, and kept them from breaking out into immediate hostility. The prince, on the one hand, was afraid of hazarding, by violent measures, an inheritance which the laws insured to the princess; and the English Protestants, on the other, from the prospect of her succession, still entertained hopes of obtaining at last a peaceable and a safe redress of all their grievances. But when a son was born to the king, both the prince and the English nation were reduced to despair, and saw no resource but in a confederacy for their mutual interests. And thus the event which James had so long made the object of his most ardent prayers, and from which he expected the firm establishment of his throne, proved the immediate cause of his ruin and downfall.

Zuylestein, who had been sent over to congratulate the king on the birth of his son, brought back to the prince invitations from most of the great men in England, to assist them by his arms in the recovery of their laws and liberties. The bishop of London, the earls of Danby, Nottingham, Devonshire, Dorset, the duke of Norfolk, the lords Lovelace Delamere, Paulet, Eland, Mr. Hambden, Powle, Lester, besides many eminent citizens of London; all these persons, though of opposite parties, concurred in their applications to the prince. The whigs, suitably to their ancient principles of liberty, which had led them to attempt the exclusion bill, easily agreed to oppose a king, whose conduct had justified whatever his worst enemies had prognosticated concerning his succession. The tories and the church party, finding their past services forgotten, their rights invaded, their religion threatened, agreed to drop for the present all overstrained doctrines of submission, and attend to the great and powerful dictates of nature. The nonconformists, dreading the caresses of known and inveterate enemies, deemed the offers of toleration more secure from a prince educated in those principles, and accustomed to that practice. And thus all faction was for a time laid asleep in England; and rival parties, forgetting their animosity, had secretly concurred in a design of resisting their unhappy and misguided sovereign. The earl of Shrewsbury, who had acquired great popularity by deserting, at this time, the Catholic religion, in which he had been educated, left his regiment, mortgaged his estate for forty thousand pounds, and made a tender of his sword and purse to the prince of Orange. Lord Wharton, notwithstanding his age and infirmities, had taken a journey for the same purpose. Lord Mordaunt was at the Hague, and pushed on the enterprise with that ardent and courageous spirit for which he was so eminent. Even Sunderland, the king's favorite minister, is believed to have entered into a correspondence with the prince; and, at the expense of his own honor and his master's interests, to have secretly favored a cause which, he foresaw, was likely soon to predominate. [1]

* D'Avaux was always of that opinion. See his Negotiations, 6th and 20th of May, 18th, 27th of September, 22d of November, 1688. On the whole, that opinion is the most probable.

The prince was easily engaged to yield to the applications of the English, and to embrace the defence of a nation which, during its present fears and distresses, regarded him as its sole protector. The great object of his ambition was to be placed at the head of a confederate army, and by his valor to avenge the injuries which he himself, his country, and his allies, had sustained from the haughty Lewis. But while England remained under the present government, he despaired of ever forming a league which would be able, with any probability of success, to make opposition against that powerful monarch. The ties of affinity could not be supposed to have great influence over a person of the prince's rank and temper much more as he knew that they were at first unwillingly contracted by the king, and had never since been cultivated by any essential favors or good offices. Or should any reproach remain upon him for violating the duties of private life, the glory of delivering oppressed nations would, he hoped, be able, in the eyes of reasonable men, to make ample compensation. He could not well expect, on the commencement of his enterprise, that it would lead him to mount the throne of England: but he undoubtedly foresaw, that its success would establish his authority in that kingdom. And so egregious was James's temerity, that there was no advantage so great or obvious, which that prince's indiscretion might not afford his enemies.

The prince of Orange, throughout his whole life, was peculiarly happy in the situations in which he was placed. He saved his own country from ruin, he restored the liberties of these kingdoms, he supported the general independency of Europe. And thus, though his virtue, it is confessed, be not the purest which we meet with in history, it will be difficult to find any person whose actions and conduct have contributed more eminently to the general interests of society and of mankind.

The time when the prince entered on his enterprise was well chosen; as the people were then in the highest ferment on account of the insult which the imprisonment and trial of the bishops had put upon the church, and indeed upon all the Protestants of the nation. His method of conducting his preparations was no less wise and politic. Under other pretences he had beforehand made considerable augmentations to the Dutch navy; and the ships were at that time lying in harbor. Some additional troops were also levied; and sums of money raised for other purposes, were diverted by the prince to the use of this expedition. The states had given him their entire confidence; and partly from terror of the power of France, partly from disgust at some restraints laid on their commerce in that kingdom, were sensible how necessary success in this enterprise was become to their domestic happiness and security. Many of the neighboring princes regarded him as their guardian and protector, and were guided by him in all their counsels. He held conferences with Castanaga, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, with the electors of Brandenburgh and Saxony, with the landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, and with the whole house of Lunenbourg. It was agreed, that these princes should replace the troops employed against England, and should protect the United Provinces during the absence of the prince of Orange. Their forces were already on their march for that purpose: a considerable encampment of the Dutch army was formed at Nimeguén: every place was in movement: and though the roots of this conspiracy reached from one end of Europe to the other, so secret were the prince's counsels, and so fortunate was the situation of affairs, that he could still cover his preparations under other pretences; and little suspicion was entertained of his real intentions.

The king of France, menaced by the league of Augsbourg, had resolved to strike the first blow against the allies; and having sought a quarrel with the emperor and the elector Palatine, he had invaded Germany with a great Army, and had laid siege to Philipsbourg. The elector of Cologne, who was also bishop of Liege and Munster, and whose territories almost entirely surrounded the United Provinces, had died about this time; and the candidates for that rich succession were Prince Clement of Bavaria, supported by the house of Austria, and the cardinal of Furstemberg, a prelate dependent on France. The pope, who favored the allies, was able to throw the balance between the parties, and Prince Clement was chosen; a circumstance which contributed extremely to the security of the states. But as the cardinal kept possession of many of the fortresses, and had applied to France for succor, the neighboring territories were full of troops; and by this means the preparations of the Dutch and their allies seemed intended merely for their own defence against the different enterprises of Lewis.

All the artifices, however, of the prince could not entirely conceal his real intentions from the sagacity of the French court. D’Avaux, Lewis’s envoy at the Hague, had been able by a comparison of circumstances, to trace the purposes of the preparations in Holland; and he instantly informed his master of the discovery. Lewis conveyed the intelligence to James, and accompanied the information with an important offer. He was willing to join a squadron of French ships to the English fleet; and to send over any number of troops which James should judge requisite for his security. When this proposal was rejected, he again offered to raise the siege of Philipsbourg, to march his army into the Netherlands, and by the terror of his arms to detain the Dutch forces in their own country. This proposal met with no better reception.

James was not, as yet, entirely convinced that his son-in-law intended an invasion upon England. Fully persuaded himself of the sacredness of his own authority, he fancied that a like belief had made deep impression on his subjects: and notwithstanding the strong symptoms of discontent which broke out every where, such a universal combination in rebellion appeared to him nowise credible. His army, in which he trusted, and which he had considerably augmented, would easily be able, he thought, to repel foreign force, and to suppress any sedition among the populace. A small number of

French troops, joined to these, might tend only to breed discontent; and afford them a pretence for mutinying against foreigners, so much feared and hated by the nation. A great body of auxiliaries might indeed secure him both against an invasion from Holland, and against the rebellion of his own subjects; but would be able afterwards to reduce him to dependence, and render his authority entirely precarious. Even the French invasion of the Low Countries might be attended with dangerous consequences; and would suffice, in these jealous times, to revive the old suspicion of a combination against Holland, and against the Protestant religion, a suspicion which had already produced such discontents in England. These were the views suggested by Sunderland, and it must be confessed, that the reasons on which they were founded were sufficiently plausible; as indeed the situation to which the king had reduced himself was, to the last degree, delicate and perplexing.

Still Lewis was unwilling to abandon a friend and ally, whose interests he regarded as closely connected with his own. By the suggestion of Skelton, the king's minister at Paris, orders were sent to D'Avaux to remonstrate with the states, in Lewis's name, against those preparations which they were making to invade England. The strict amity, said the French minister, which subsists between the two monarchs, will make Lewis regard every attempt against his ally as an act of hostility against himself. This remonstrance had a bad effect and put the states in a flame. What is this alliance, they asked, between France and England, which has been so care fully concealed from us? Is it of the same nature with the former; meant for our destruction, and for the extirpation of the Protestant religion? If so, it is high time for us to provide for our own defence, and to anticipate those projects which are forming against us.

Even James was displeased with the officious step taken by Lewis for his service. He was not reduced, he said, to the condition of the cardinal of Furstemberg, and obliged to seek the protection of France. He recalled Skelton, and threw him into the Tower for his rash conduct. He solemnly disavowed D'Avaux's memorial; and protested that no alliance subsisted between him and Lewis, but what was public and known to all the world. The states, however, still affected to appear incredulous on that head; [1] and the English, prepossessed against their sovereign, firmly believed, that he had concerted a project with Lewis for their entire subjection. Portsmouth, it was said, was to be put into the hands of that ambitious monarch: England was to be filled with French and Irish troops: and every man who refused to embrace the Romish superstition, was by these bigoted princes devoted to certain destruction.

* That there really was no new alliance formed betwixt France and England, appears both, from Sunderland’s Apology, and from D’Avaux’s Negotiations, lately published: see vol.

iv. . Eng translation, 27th of September, 1687; 16th of March, 6th of May, 10th of August, 2d, 23d, and 24th of September, 5th and 7th of October, 11th of November, 1688.

These suggestions were every where spread abroad, and tended to augment the discontents of which both the fleet and army, as well as the people, betrayed every day the most evident symptoms. The fleet had begun to mutiny; because Stricland, the admiral, a Roman Catholic, introduced the mass aboard his ship, and dismissed the Protestant chaplain. It was with some difficulty the seamen could be appeased; and they still persisted in declaring that they would not fight against the Dutch, whom they called friends and brethren; but would willingly give battle to the French, whom they regarded as national enemies. The king had intended to augment his army with Irish recruits; and he resolved to try the experiment on the regiment of the duke of Berwick, his natural son: but Beaumont, the lieutenant-colonel, refused to admit them; and to this opposition five captains steadily adhered. They were all cashiered; and had not the discontents of the army on this occasion become very apparent, it was resolved to have punished those officers for mutiny.

The king made a trial of the dispositions of his army, in a manner still more undisguised. Finding opposition from all the civil and ecclesiastical orders of the kingdom, he resolved to appeal to the military, who, if unanimous, were able alone to serve all his purposes, and to enforce universal obedience. His intention was to engage all the regiments, one after another, to give their consent to the repeal of the test and penal statutes; and accordingly, the major of Litchfield’s drew out the battalion before the king, and told them, that they were required either to enter into his majesty’s views in these particulars, or to lay down their arms. James was surprised to find that, two captains and a few Popish soldiers excepted, the whole battalion immediately embraced the latter part of the alternative. For some time he remained speechless; but having recovered from his astonishment, he commanded them to take up their arms; adding with a sullen, discontented air, “That for the future, he would not do them the honor to apply for their approbation.”

While the king was dismayed with these symptoms of general disaffection, he received a letter from the marquis of Albeville, his minister at the Hague, which informed him with certainty, that he was soon to look for a powerful invasion from Holland; and that Pensionary Fagel had at length acknowledged, that the scope of all the Dutch naval preparations was to transport forces into England. Though James could reasonably expect no other intelligence, he was astonished at the news: he grew pale, and the letter dropped from his hand: his eyes were now opened, and he found himself on the brink of a frightful precipice, which his delusions had hitherto concealed from him. His ministers and counsellors, equally astonished, saw no resource but in a sudden and precipitate retraction of all those fatal measures by which he had created to himself so many enemies, foreign and domestic. He paid court to the Dutch, and offered to enter into any alliance with them for common security: he replaced in all the counties the deputy lieutenants and justices who had been deprived of their commissions for their adherence to the test and the penal laws: he restored the charters of London, and of all the corporations: he annulled the court of ecclesiastical commission: he took off the bishop of London’s suspension: he reinstated the expelled president and fellows of Magdalen College: and he was even reduced to caress those bishops whom he had so lately prosecuted and insulted. All these measures were regarded as symptoms of fear, not of repentance. The bishops, instead of promising succor or suggesting comfort, recapitulated to him all the instances of his maleadministration, and advised him thenceforwards to follow more salutary counsel. And as intelligence arrived of a great disaster which had befallen the Dutch fleet, it is commonly believed, that the king recalled, for some time, the concessions which he had made to Magdalen College; a bad sign of his sincerity in his other concessions. Nay, so prevalent were his unfortunate prepossessions, that amidst all his present distresses, he could not forbear, at the baptism of the young prince, appointing the pope to be one of the god-fathers.

The report that a supposititious child was to be imposed on the nation, had been widely spread, and greedily received, before the birth of the prince of Wales: but the king, who, without seeming to take notice of the matter, might easily have quashed that ridiculous rumor, had, from an ill-timed haughtiness, totally neglected it. He disdained, he said, to satisfy those who could deem him capable of so base and villanous an action. Finding that the calumny gained ground, and had made deep impression on his subjects, he was now obliged to submit to the mortifying task of ascertaining the reality of the birth. Though no particular attention had been beforehand given to insure proof, the evidence both of the queen’s pregnancy and delivery was rendered indisputable and so much the more, as no argument or proof of any importance, nothing but popular rumor and surmise, could be thrown into the opposite scale.

Meanwhile the prince of Orange’s declaration was dispersed over the kingdom, and met with universal approbation. All the grievances of the nation were there enumerated: the dispensing and suspending power; the court of ecclesiastical commission; the filling of all offices with Catholics, and the raising of a Jesuit to be privy counsellor; the open encouragement given to Popery, by building every where churches, colleges, and seminaries for that sect; the displacing of judges, if they refused to give sentence according to orders received from court; the annulling of the charters of all the corporations, and the subjecting of elections to arbitrary will and pleasure; the treating of petitions, even the most modest, and from persons of the highest rank, as criminal and seditious; the committing of the whole authority of Ireland, civil and military, into the hands of Papists; the assuming of an absolute power over the religion and laws of Scotland, and openly exacting in that kingdom an obedience without reserve; and the violent presumptions against the legitimacy of the prince of Wales. In order to redress all these grievances, the prince said, that he intended to come over to England with an armed force, which might protect him from the king’s evil counsellors; and that his sole aim was to have a legal and free parliament assembled, who might provide for the safety and liberty of the nation, as well as examine the proofs of the prince of Wales’s legitimacy. No one, he added, could entertain such hard thoughts of him as to imagine, that he had formed any other design than to procure the full and lasting settlement of religion, liberty, and property. The force which he meant to bring with him, was totally disproportioned to any views of conquest; and it were absurd to suspect, that so many persons of high rank, both in church and state, would have given him so many solemn invitations for such a pernicious purpose. Though the English ministers, terrified with his enterprise, had pretended to redress some of the grievances complained of, there still remained the foundation of all grievances, that upon which they could in an instant be again erected, an arbitrary and despotic power in the crown. And for this usurpation there was no possible remedy, but by a full declaration of all the rights of the subject in a free parliament.

So well concerted were the prince's measures, that, in three days, above four hundred transports were hired; the army quickly fell down the rivers and canals from Nimeguen; the artillery, arms, stores, and horses, were embarked; and the prince set sail from Helvoet-Sluice, with a fleet of near five hundred vessels, and an army of above fourteen thousand men. He first encountered a storm, which drove him back: but his loss being soon repaired, the fleet put to sea under the command of Admiral Herbert, and made sail with a fair wind towards the west of England. The same wind detained the king's fleet in their station near Harwich, and enabled the Dutch to pass the Straits of Dover without opposition. Both shores were covered with multitudes of people, who, besides admiring the grandeur of the spectacle, were held in anxious suspense by the prospect of an enterprise, the most important which, during some ages, had been undertaken in Europe. The prince had a prosperous voyage, and landed his army safely in Torbay on the fifth of November, the anniversary of the gunpowder treason.

The Dutch army marched first to Exeter; and the prince's declaration was there published. That whole county was so terrified with the executions which had ensued upon Monmouth's rebellion, that no one for several days joined the prince. The bishop of Exeter in a fright fled to London and carried to court intelligence of the invasion. As a reward of his zeal, he received the archbishopric of York, which had long been kept vacant, with an intention, as was universally believed, of bestowing it on some Catholic. The first person who joined the prince, was Major Burrington; and he was quickly followed by the gentry of the counties of Devon and Somerset. Sir Edward Seymour made proposals for an association, which every one signed. By degrees, the earl of Abingdon, Mr. Russel, son of the earl of Bedford, Mr. Wharton, Godfrey, Howe, came to Exeter. All England was in commotion. Lord Delamere took arms in Cheshire, the earl of Danby seized York, the earl of Bath, governor of Plymouth, declared for the prince, the earl of Devonshire made a like declaration in Derby. The nobility and gentry of Nottinghamshire embraced the same cause; and every day there appeared some effect of that universal combination into which the nation had entered against the measures of the king. Even those who took not the field against him, were able to embarrass and confound his counsels. A petition for a free parliament was signed by twenty-four bishops and peers of the greatest distinction, and was presented to the king. No one thought of opposing or resisting the invader.

But the most dangerous symptom was the disaffection which, from the general spirit of the nation, not from any particular reason, had crept into the army. The officers seemed ill disposed to prefer the interests of their country and of their religion, to those principles of honor and fidelity which are commonly esteemed the most sacred ties by men of that profession. Lord Colchester, son of the earl of Rivers, was the first officer that deserted to the prince; and he was attended by a few of his troops. Lord Lovelace made a like effort: but was intercepted by the militia under the duke of Beaufort, and taken prisoner; Lord Cornbury, son of the earl of Clarendon, was more successful. He attempted to carry over three regiments of cavalry; and he actually brought a considerable part of them to the prince's quarters. Several officers of distinction informed Feversham, the general, that they could not in conscience fight against the prince of Orange.

Lord Churchill had been raised from the rank of a page had been invested with a high command in the army, had been created a peer, and had owed his whole fortune to the king's favor: yet even he could resolve, during the present extremity, to desert his unhappy master, who had ever reposed entire confidence in him. He carried with him the duke of Grafton, natural son of the late king, Colonel Berkeley, and some troops of dragoons. This conduct was a signal sacrifice to public virtue of every duty in private life; and required ever after, the most upright, disinterested, and public-spirited behavior to render it justifiable.

The king had arrived at Salisbury, the head-quarters of his army, when he received this fatal intelligence. That prince, though a severe enemy, had ever appeared a warm, steady, and sincere friend; and he was extremely shocked with this, as with many other instances of ingratitude to which he was now exposed. There remained none in whom he could confide. As the whole army had discovered symptoms of discontent, he concluded it full of treachery; and being deserted by those whom he had most favored and obliged, he no longer expected that others would hazard their lives in his service. During this distraction and perplexity, he embraced a sudden resolution of drawing off his army, and retiring towards London; a measure which could only serve to betray his fears, and provoke further treachery.

But Churchill had prepared a still more mortal blow for his distressed benefactor. His lady and he had an entire ascendant over the family of Prince George of Denmark; and the time now appeared seasonable for overwhelming the unhappy king, who was already staggering with the violent shocks which he had received. Andover was the first stage of James’s retreat towards London; and there Prince George together with the young duke of Ormond, [1] Sir George Huet, and some other persons of distinction, deserted him in the night-time, and retired to the prince’s camp.

No sooner had this news reached London, than the princess Anne, pretending fear of the king’s displeasure, withdrew herself in company with the bishop of London and Lady Churchill. She fled to Nottingham; where the earl of Dorset received her with great respect, and the gentry of the county quickly formed a troop for her protection.

The late king, in order to gratify the nation, had intrusted the education of his nieces entirely to Protestants; and as these princesses were deemed the chief resource of the established religion after their father’s defection, great care had been taken to instil into them, from their earliest infancy, the strongest prejudices against Popery. During the violence too of such popular currents as now prevailed in England, all private considerations are commonly lost in the general passion; and the more principle any person possesses, the more apt is he, on such occasions, to neglect and abandon his domestic duties. Though these causes may account for the behavior of the princess, they had nowise prepared the king to expect so astonishing an event. He burst into tears when the first intelligence of it was conveyed to him. Undoubtedly he foresaw in this incident the total expiration of his royal authority: but the nearer and more intimate concern of a parent laid hold of his heart, when he found himself abandoned in his uttermost distress by a child, and a virtuous child, whom he had ever regarded with the most tender affection. “God help me,” cried he, in the extremity of his agony; “my own children have forsaken me!” It is indeed singular, that a prince, whose chief blame consisted in imprudencies and misguided principles, should be exposed, from religious antipathy, to such treatment as even

* His grandfather, the first duke of Ormond, had died this year July 21.

Nero, Domitian, or the most enormous tyrants that have disgraced the records of history, never met with from their friends and family.

So violent were the prejudices which at this time prevailed, that this unhappy father, who had been deserted by his favorite child, was believed, upon her disappearing, to have put her to death: and it was fortunate that the truth was timely discovered, otherwise the populace, even the king’s guards themselves, might have been engaged, in revenge, to commence a massacre of the priests and Catholics.

The king s fortune now exposed him to the contempt of his enemies and his behavior was not such as could gain him the esteem of his friends and adherents. Unable to resist the torrent, he preserved not presence of mind in yielding to it; but seemed in this emergence as much depressed with adversity, as he had before been vainly elated by prosperity. He called a council of all the peers and prelates who were in London; and followed their advice in issuing writs for a new parliament, and in sending Halifax, Nottingham, and Godolphin as commissioners to treat with the prince of Orange. But these were the last acts of royal authority which he exerted. He even hearkened to imprudent counsel, by which he was prompted to desert the throne, and to gratify his enemies beyond what their fondest hopes could have promised them.

The queen, observing the fury of the people, and knowing how much she was the object of general hatred, was struck with the deepest terror, and began to apprehend a parliamentary impeachment, from which, she was told, the queens of England were not exempted. The Popish courtiers, and above all the priests, were aware that they should be the first sacrifice, and that their perpetual banishment was the smallest penalty which they must expect from national resentment. They were, therefore, desirous of carrying the king along with them, whose presence, they knew, would still be some resource and protection to them in foreign countries, and whose restoration, if it ever happened, would again reinstate them in power and authority. The general defection of the Protestants made the king regard the Catholics as his only subjects on whose counsel he could rely; and the fatal catastrophe of his father afforded them a plausible reason for making him apprehend a like fate. The great difference of circumstances was not, during men’s present distractions, sufficiently weighed. Even after the people were inflamed by a long civil war, the execution of Charles I. could not be deemed a national deed: it was perpetrated by a fanatical army pushed on by a daring and enthusiastic leader; and the whole kingdom had ever entertained, and did still entertain, a violent abhorrence against that enormity. The situation of public affairs, therefore, no more resembled what it was forty years before, than the prince of Orange, either in birth, character, fortune, or connections, could be supposed a parallel to Cromwell.

The emissaries of France, and among the rest Barillon, the French ambassador, were busy about the king, and they had entertained a very false notion, which they instilled into him, that nothing would more certainly retard the public settlement, and beget universal confusion, than his deserting the kingdom.

The prince of Orange had with good reason embraced a contrary opinion; and he deemed it extremely difficult to find expedients for securing the nation, so long as the king kept possession of the crown. Actuated, therefore, by this public motive, and no less, we may well presume, by private ambition, he was determined to use every expedient which might intimidate the king, and make him quit that throne which he himself was alone enabled to fill. He declined a personal conference with James's commissioners, and sent the earls of Clarendon and Oxford to treat with them: the terms which he proposed implied almost a present participation of the sovereignty: and he stopped not a moment the march of his army towards London.

The news which the king received from all quarters, served to continue the panic into which he was fallen, and which his enemies expected to improve to their advantage. Colonel Copel, deputy governor of Hull, made himself master of that important fortress; and threw into prison Lord Langdale, the governor, a Catholic; together with Lord Montgomery, a nobleman of the same religion. The town of Newcastle received Lord Lumley, and declared for the prince of Orange and a free parliament. The duke of Norfolk, lord lieutenant of the county of that name, engaged it in the same measure. The prince's declaration was read at Oxford by the duke of Ormond, and was received with great applause by that loyal university, who also made an offer of their plate to the prince. Every day some person of quality or distinction, and among the rest the duke of Somerset, went over to the enemy. A violent declaration was dispersed in the prince's name, but without his participation; in which every one was commanded to seize and punish all Papists, who, contrary to law, pretended either to carry arms or exercise any act of authority. It may not be unworthy of notice that a merry ballad, called Lillibullero, being at this time published in derision of the Papists and the Irish, it was greedily received by the people, and was sung by all ranks of men, even by the king’s army, who were strongly seized with the national spirit. This incident both discovered and served to increase the general discontent of the kingdom.

The contagion of mutiny and disobedience had also reached Scotland, whence the regular forces, contrary to the advice of Balcarras the treasurer, were withdrawn, in order to reënforce the English army. The marquis of Athole, together with Viscount Tarbat and others, finding the opportunity favorable, began to form intrigues against Perth, the chancellor; and the Presbyterians and other malecontents flocked from all quarters to Edinburgh. The chancellor, apprehensive of the consequences, found it expedient to abscond; and the populace, as if that event were a signal for their insurrection, immediately rose in arms, and rifled the Popish chapel in the king’s palace. All the Catholics, even all the zealous royalists, were obliged to conceal themselves; and the privy council, instead of their former submissive strains of address to the king, and violent edicts against their fellow-subjects, now made applications to the prince of Orange, as the restorer of law and liberty.

The king, every moment alarmed more and more by these proofs of a general disaffection, not daring to repose trust in any but those who were exposed to more danger than himself, agitated by disdain towards ingratitude, by indignation against disloyalty, impelled by his own fears and those of others, precipitately embraced the resolution of escaping into France; and he sent off beforehand the queen and the infant prince, under the conduct of Count Lauzun, an old favorite of the French monarch. He himself disappeared in the night-time, attended only by Sir Edward Hales; and made the best of his way to a ship which waited for him near the mouth of the river. As if this measure had not been the most grateful to his enemies of any that he could adopt, he had carefully concealed his intention from all the world; and nothing could equal the surprise which seized the city, the court, and the kingdom, upon the discovery of this strange event. Men beheld, all of a sudden, the reins of government thrown up by the hand which held them; and saw none who had any right, or even pretension, to take possession of them.

The more effectually to involve every thing in confusion, the king appointed not any one who should, in his absence, exercise any part of the administration; he threw the great seal into the river; and he recalled all those writs which had been issued for the election of the new parliament. It is often supposed, that the sole motive which impelled him to this sudden desertion, was his reluctance to meet a free parliament and his resolution not to submit to those terms which his subjects would deem requisite for the security of their liberties and their religion. But it must be considered, that his subjects had first deserted him, and entirely lost his confidence; that he might reasonably be supposed to entertain fears for his liberty, if not for his life; and that the conditions would not probably be moderate, which the nation, sensible of his inflexible temper, enraged with the violation of their laws and the danger of their religion, and foreseeing his resentment on account of their past resistance, would, in his present circumstances exact from him.

By this temporary dissolution of government, the populace were masters; and there was no disorder which, during their present ferment, might not be dreaded from them. They rose in a tumult and destroyed all the mass-houses. They even attacked and rifled the houses of the Florentine envoy and Spanish ambassador, where many of the Catholics had lodged their most valuable effects. Jefferies, the chancellor, who had disguised himself in order to fly the kingdom, was discovered by them, and so abused, that he died a little after. Even the army, which should have suppressed those tumults, would, it was apprehended, serve rather to increase the general disorder. Feversham had no sooner heard of the king’s flight, than he disbanded the troops in the neighborhood, and without either disarming or paying them, let them loose to prey upon the country.

In this extremity, the bishops and peers who were in town, being the only remaining authority of the state, (for the privy council, composed of the king’s creatures, was totally disregarded,) thought proper to assemble, and to interpose for the preservation of the community. They chose the marquis of Halifax speaker: they gave directions to the mayor and aldermen for keeping the peace of the city: they issued orders, which were readily obeyed, to the fleet, the army, and all the garrisons: and they made applications to the prince of Orange, whose enterprise they highly applauded, and whose success they joyfully congratulated.

The prince on his part was not wanting to the tide of success which flowed in upon him, nor backward in assuming that authority which the present exigency had put into his hands. Besides the general popularity attending his cause, a new incident made his approach to London still more grateful. In the present trepidation of the people, a rumor arose, either from chance or design, that the disbanded Irish had taken arms, and had commenced a universal massacre of the Protestants. This ridiculous belief was spread all over the kingdom in one day, and begat every where the deepest consternation. The alarum bells were rung; the beacons fired; men fancied that they saw at a distance the smoke of the burning cities, and heard the groans of those who were slaughtered in their neighborhood. It is surprising that the Catholics did not all perish in the rage which naturally succeeds to such popular panics.

While every one, from principle, interest, or animosity, turned his back on the unhappy king, who had abandoned his own cause, the unwelcome news arrived, that he had been seized by the populace at Feversham, as he was making his escape in disguise; that he had been much abused, till he was known; but that the gentry had then interposed and protected him, though they still refused to consent to his escape. This intelligence threw all parties into confusion. The prince sent Zuylestein with orders that the king should approach no nearer than Rochester; but the message came too late. He was already arrived in London, where the populace, moved by compassion for his unhappy fate, and actuated by their own levity, had received him with shouts and acclamations.

During the king’s abode at Whitehall, little attention was paid to him by the nobility or any persons of distinction. They had all of them been previously disgusted on account of his blind partiality to the Catholics; and they knew that they were now become criminal in his eyes by their late public applications to the prince of Orange. He himself showed not any symptom of spirit, nor discovered any intention of resuming the reins of government which he had once thrown aside. His authority was now plainly expired; and as he had exercised his power, while possessed of it, with very precipitate and haughty counsels, he relinquished it by a despair equally precipitate and pusillanimous.

Nothing remained for the now ruling powers but to deliberate how they should dispose of his person. Besides that the prince may justly be supposed to have possessed more generosity than to think of offering violence to an unhappy monarch, so nearly related to him, he knew that nothing would so effectually promote his own views as the king's retiring into France, a country at all times obnoxious to the English. It was determined, therefore, to push him into that measure, which of himself he seemed sufficiently inclined to embrace. The king having sent Lord Feversham on a civil message to the prince, desiring a conference for an accommodation in order to the public settlement, that nobleman was put in arrest, under pretence of his coming without a passport: the Dutch guards were ordered to take possession of Whitehall, where James then resided, and to displace the English: and Halifax, Shrewsbury, and Delamere, brought a message from the prince, which they delivered to the king in bed after midnight, ordering him to leave his palace next morning, and to depart for Ham, a seat of the duchess of Lauderdale's. He desired permission, which was easily granted, of retiring to Rochester, a town near the sea-coast. It was perceived, that the artifice had taken effect; and that the king, terrified with this harsh treatment, had renewed his former resolution of leaving the kingdom.

He lingered, however, some days at Rochester, under the protection of a Dutch guard, and seemed desirous of an invitation still to keep possession of the throne. He was undoubtedly sensible, that as he had at first trusted too much to his people's loyalty, and, in confidence of their submission, had offered the greatest violence to their principles and prejudices, so had he, at last, on finding his disappointment, gone too far in the other extreme, and had hastily supposed them destitute of all sense of duty or allegiance. But observing that the church, the nobility, the city, the country, all concurred in neglecting him, and leaving him to his own counsels, he submitted to his melancholy fate; and being urged by earnest letters from the queen, he privately embarked on board a frigate which waited for him; and he arrived safety at Ambleteuse, in Picardy, whence he hastened to St. Germains. Lewis received him with the highest generosity, sympathy, and regard: a conduct which, more than his most signal victories, contributes to the honor of that great monarch.

Thus ended the reign of a prince, whom if we consider his personal character rather than his public conduct, we may safely pronounce more unfortunate than criminal. He had many of those qualities which form a good citizen: even some of those which, had they not been swallowed up in bigotry and arbitrary principles, serve to compose a good sovereign. In domestic life, his conduct was irreproachable, and is entitled to our approbation. Severe, but open in his enmities, steady in his counsels, diligent in his schemes, brave in his enterprises, faithful, sincere, and honorable in his dealings with all men; such was the character with which the duke of York mounted the throne of England. In that high station, his frugality of public money was remarkable, his industry exemplary, his application to naval affairs successful, his encouragement of trade judicious, his jealousy of national honor laudable: what then was wanting to make him an excellent sovereign? A due regard and affection to the religion and constitution of his country. Had he been possessed of this essential quality, even his middling talents, aided by so many virtues, would have rendered his reign honorable and happy. When it was wanting, every excellency which he possessed became dangerous and pernicious to his kingdoms.

The sincerity of this prince (a virtue on which he highly valued himself) has been much questioned in those reiterated promises which he had made of preserving the liberties and religion of the nation. It must be confessed, that his reign was almost one continued invasion of both; yet it is known, that, to his last breath, he persisted in asserting, that he never meant to subvert the laws, or procure more than a toleration and an equality of privileges to his Catholic subjects. This question can only affect the personal character of the king, not our judgment of his public conduct. Though by a stretch of candor we should admit of his sincerity in these professions, the people were equally justifiable in their resistance of him. So lofty was the idea which he had entertained of his *legal* authority, that it left his subjects little or no right to liberty, but what was dependent on his sovereign will and pleasure. And such was his zeal for proselytism, that, whatever he might at first have intended, he plainly stopped not at toleration and equality: he confined all power, encouragement, and favor to the Catholics: converts from interest would soon have multiplied upon him: if not the greater, at least the better part of the people, he would have flattered himself, was brought over to his religion: and he would in a little time have thought it just, as well as pious to bestow on them all the public establishments. Rigors and persecutions against heretics would speedily have followed: and thus liberty and the Protestant religion would in the issue have been totally subverted; though we should not suppose that James, in the commencement of his reign, had formally fixed a plan for that purpose. And on the whole, allowing this king to have possessed good qualities and good intentions, his conduct serves only, on that very account, as a stronger proof how dangerous it is to allow any prince, infected with the Catholic superstition, to wear the crown of these kingdoms.

After this manner, the courage and abilities of the prince of Orange, seconded by surprising fortune, had effected the deliverance of this island; and with very little effusion of blood (for only one officer of the Dutch army and a few private soldiers fell in an accidental skirmish) had dethroned a great prince supported by a formidable fleet and a numerous army. Still the more difficult task remained, and what perhaps the prince regarded as not the least important: the obtaining for himself that crown which had fallen from the head of his father-in-law. Some lawyers, entangled in the subtleties and forms of their profession, could think of no expedient, but that the prince should claim the crown by right of conquest; should immediately assume the title of sovereign; and should call a parliament, which, being thus legally summoned by a king in possession, could ratify whatever had been transacted before they assembled. But this measure, being destructive of the principles of liberty, the only principles on which his future throne could be established, was prudently rejected by the prince; who, finding himself possessed of the good will of the nation, resolved to leave them entirely to their own guidance and direction. The peers and bishops, to the number of near ninety, made an address, desiring him to summon a convention by circular letters; to assume, in the mean time, the management of public affairs; and to concert measures for the security of Ireland. At the same time, they refused reading a letter which the king had left, in order to apologize for his late desertion by the violence which had been put upon him. This step was a sufficient indication of their intentions with regard to that unhappy monarch.

The prince seemed still unwilling to act upon an authority which might be deemed so imperfect: he was desirous of obtaining a more express declaration of the public consent. A judicious expedient was fallen on for that purpose. All the members who had sitten in the house of commons during any parliament of Charles II., (the only parliaments whose election was regarded as free,) were invited to meet; and to them were added the mayor, aldermen, and fifty of the common council. This was regarded as the most proper representative of the people that could be summoned during the present emergence. They unanimously voted the same address with the lords: and the prince, being thus supported by all the legal authority which could possibly be obtained in this critical juncture, wrote circular letters to the counties and corporations of England; and his orders were universally complied with. A profound tranquillity prevailed throughout the kingdom; and the prince's administration was submitted to, as if he had succeeded in the most regular manner to the vacant throne. The fleet received his orders: the army, without murmur or opposition, allowed him to new model them: and the city supplied him with a loan of two hundred thousand pounds.

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The conduct of the prince with regard to Scotland, was founded on the same prudent and moderate maxims. Finding that there were many Scotchmen of rank at that time in London, he summoned them together, laid before them his intentions, and asked their advice in the present emergency. This assembly, consisting of thirty noblemen and about four-score gentlemen, chose Duke Hamilton president; a man who, being of a temporizing character, was determined to pay court to the present authority. His eldest son, the earl of Arran, professed an adherence to King James; a usual policy in Scotland, where the father and son, during civil commotions, were often observed to take opposite sides, in order to secure in all events the family from attainder. Arran proposed to invite back the king upon conditions; but as he was vehemently opposed in this motion by Sir Patrick Hume, and seconded by nobody, the assembly made an offer to the prince of the present administration, which he willingly accepted. To anticipate a little in our narration; a convention, by circular letters from the prince, was summoned at Edinburgh on the twenty-second of March, where it was soon visible that the interest of the malecontents would entirely prevail. The more zealous royalists, regarding this assembly as illegal, had forborne to appear at elections; and the other party were returned for most places. The revolution was not in Scotland, as in England, effected by a coalition of whig and tory: the former party alone had overpowered the government, and were too much enraged, by the past injuries which they had suffered, to admit of any composition with their former masters. As soon as the purpose of the convention was discovered, the earl of Balcarras and Viscount Dundee, leaders of the tories, withdrew from Edinburgh; and the convention having passed a bold and decisive vote, that King James, by his maleadministration, and his abuse of power, had forfeited all title to the crown, they made a tender of the royal dignity to the prince and princess of Orange.

The English convention was assembled; and it immediately appeared, that the house of commons, both from the prevailing humor of the people, and from the influence of present authority, were mostly chosen from among the whig party.

After thanks were unanimously given by both houses to the prince of Orange for the deliverance which he had brought them, a less decisive vote than that of the Scottish convention was in a few days passed by a great majority of the commons, and sent up to the peers for their concurrence. It was contained in these words: “That King James II., having endeavored to subvert the constitution of the kingdom by breaking the original contract between king and people; and having, by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons, violated the fundamental laws, and withdrawn himself out of the kingdom; has abdicated the government, and that the throne is thereby vacant.” This vote, when carried to the upper house, met with great opposition; of which it is here necessary for us to explain the causes.

The tories and the high church party, finding themselves at once menaced with a subversion of the laws and of their religion, had zealously promoted the national revolt, and had on this occasion departed from those principles of non-resistance, of which, while the king favored them, they had formerly made such loud professions. Their present apprehensions had prevailed over their political tenets; and the unfortunate James, who had too much trusted to those general declarations, which never will be reduced to practice, found, in the issue, that both parties were secretly united against him. But no sooner was the danger past, and the general fears somewhat allayed, than party prejudices resumed, in some degree, their former authority; and the tories were abashed at that victory which their antagonists, during the late transactions, had obtained over them. They were inclined, therefore, to steer a middle course; and, though generally determined to oppose the king’s return, they resolved not to consent to dethroning him, or altering the line of succession. A regent with kingly power was the expedient which they proposed; and a late instance in Portugal seemed to give some authority and precedent to that plan of government.

In favor of this scheme, the tories urged that, by the uniform tenor of the English laws the title to the crown was ever regarded as sacred, and could on no account, and by no maleadministration, be forfeited by the sovereign: that to dethrone a king and to elect his successor, was a practice quite unknown to the constitution, and had a tendency to render kingly power entirely dependent and precarious: that where the sovereign, from his tender years, from lunacy, or from other natural infirmity, was incapacitated to hold the reins of government, both the laws and former practice agreed in appointing a regent, who, during the interval, was invested with the whole power of the administration: that the inveterate and dangerous prejudices of King James had rendered him as unfit to sway the English sceptre, as if he had fallen into lunacy; and it was therefore natural for the people to have recourse to the same remedy: that the election of one king was a precedent for the election of another; and the government, by that means, would either degenerate into a republic, or, what was worse, into a turbulent and seditious monarchy: that the case was still more dangerous, if there remained a prince who claimed the crown by right of succession, and disputed, on so plausible a ground, the title of the present sovereign: that though the doctrine of non-resistance might not, in every possible circumstance, be absolutely true, yet was the belief of it very expedient; and to establish a government which should have the contrary principle for its basis, was to lay a foundation for perpetual revolutions and convulsions: that the appointment of a regent was indeed exposed to many inconveniencies; but so long as the line of succession was preserved entire, there was still a prospect of putting an end, some time or other, to the public disorders: and that scarcely an instance occurred in history, especially in the English history, where a disputed title had not, in the issue, been attended with much greater ills, than all those which the people had sought to shun by departing from the lineal successor.

The leaders of the whig party, on the other hand, asserted that if there were any ill in the precedent, that ill would result as much from establishing a regent, as from dethroning one king and appointing his successor; nor would the one expedient, if wantonly and rashly embraced by the people, be less the source of public convulsions than the other: that it the laws gave no express permission to depose the sovereign, neither did they authorize resisting his authority, or separating the power from the title: that a regent was unknown, except where the king, by reason of his tender age or his infirmities, was incapable of a will; and in that case, his will was supposed to be involved in that of the regent; that it would be the height of absurdity to try a man for acting upon a commission received from a prince whom we ourselves acknowledge to be the lawful sovereign; and no jury would decide so contrary both to law and common sense, as to condemn such a pretended criminal: that even the prospect of being delivered from this monstrous inconvenience was, in the present situation of affairs, more distant than that of putting an end to a disputed succession: that allowing the young prince to be the legitimate heir, he had been carried abroad; he would be educated in principles destructive of the constitution and established religion: and he would probably leave a son liable to the same insuperable objection: that if the whole line were cut off by law, the people would in time forget or neglect their claim; an advantage which could not be hoped for while the administration was conducted in their name, and while they were still acknowledged to possess the legal title: and that a nation thus perpetually governed by regents or protectors, approached much nearer to a republic, than one subject to monarchs whose hereditary regular succession, as well as present authority, was fixed and appointed by the people.

This question was agitated with great zeal by the opposite parties in the house of peers. The chief speakers among the tories were Clarendon, Rochester, and Nottingham; among the whigs, Halifax and Danby. The question was carried for a king by two voices only, fifty-one against forty-nine. All the prelates, except two, the bishops of London and Bristol, voted for a regent. The primate, a disinterested but pusillanimous man, kept at a distance both from the prince’s court and from parliament.

The house of peers proceeded next to examine piecemeal the votes sent up to them by the commons. They debated, “Whether there were an original contract between king and people?” and the affirmative was carried by fifty-three against forty-six: a proof that the tories were already losing ground. The next question was, “Whether King James had broken that original contract?” and, after a slight opposition, the affirmative prevailed. The lords proceeded to take into consideration the word abdicated; and it was carried that deserted was more proper. The concluding question was, “Whether King James having broken the original contract, and deserted the government, the throne was thereby vacant?” This question was debated with more heat and contention than any of the former; and upon a division, the tories prevailed by eleven voices, and it was carried to omit the last article with regard to the vacancy of the throne. The vote was sent back to the commons with these amendments.

The earl of Danby had entertained the project of bestowing the crown solely upon the princess of Orange, and of admitting her as hereditary legal successor to King James [1] passing by the infant prince, as illegitimate or supposititious. His change of party in the last question gave the tories so considerable a majority in the number of voices.

The commons still insisted on their own vote, and sent up reasons why the lords should depart from their amendments. The lords were not convinced; and it was necessary to have a free conference, in order to settle this controversy. Never surely was national debate more important, or managed by more able speakers; yet is one surprised to find the topics insisted on by both sides so frivolous; more resembling the verbal disputes of the schools, than the solid reasonings of statesmen and legislators. In public transactions of such consequence, the true motives which produce any measure are seldom avowed. The whigs, now the ruling party, having united with the tories in order to bring about the revolution had so much deference for their new allies, as not to insist that the crown should be declared forfeited on account of the king’s maleadministration: such a declaration, they thought, would imply too express a censure of the old tory principles, and too open a preference of their own. They agreed, therefore, to confound together the king’s abusing his power, and his withdrawing from the kingdom; and they called the whole an abdication; as if he had given a virtual, though not a verbal, consent to dethroning himself. The tories took advantage of this obvious impropriety, which had been occasioned merely by the complaisance or prudence of the whigs; and they insisted upon the word desertion, as more significant and intelligible. It was retorted on them, that, however that expression might be justly applied to the king’s withdrawing himself, it could not with any propriety be extended to his violation of the fundamental laws. And thus both parties, while they warped their principles from regard to their antagonists, and from prudential considerations, lost the praise of consistence and uniformity.

The managers for the lords next insisted, that even allowing the king’s abuse of power to be equivalent to an abdication, or, in other words, to a civil death, it could operate no other-*wise than his voluntary resignation, or his natural death; and could only make way for the next successor. It was a maxim of English law, that the throne was never vacant; but instantly, upon the demise of one king, was filled with his legal heir, who was entitled to all the authority of his predecessor. And however young or unfit for government the successor, however unfortunate in his situation, though he were even a captive in the hands of public enemies, yet no just reason, they thought, could be assigned why, without any default of his own, he should lose a crown, to which by birth he was fully entitled. The managers for the commons might have opposed this reasoning by many specious and even solid arguments. They might have said, that the great security for allegiance being merely opinion, any scheme of settlement should be adopted in which it was most probable the people would acquiesce and persevere: that though, upon the natural death of a king whose administration had been agreeable to the laws, many and great inconveniences would be endured, rather than exclude his lineal successor, yet the case was not the same when the people had been obliged, by their revolt, to dethrone a prince whose illegal measures had, in every circumstance, violated the constitution: that in these extraordinary revolutions, the government reverted, in some degree, to its first principles, and the community acquired a right of providing for the public interest by expedients which, on other occasions, might be deemed violent and irregular: that the recent use of one extraordinary remedy reconciled their minds to such licenses, than if the government had run the people to the practice of another, and more familiarized on in its usual tenor: and that King James, having carried abroad his son, as well as withdrawn himself, had given such just provocation to the kingdom, had voluntarily involved it in such difficulties, that the interests of his family were justly sacrificed to the public settlement and tranquillity. Though these topics seem reasonable, they were entirely forborne by the whig managers; both because they implied an acknowledgment of the infant prince’s legitimacy, which it was agreed to keep in obscurity, and because they contained too express a condemnation of tory principles. They were content to maintain the vote of the commons by shifts and evasions; and both sides parted at last without coming to any agreement.

But it was impossible for the public to remain long in the present situation. The perseverance, therefore, of the lower house obliged the lords to comply; and, by the desertion of some peers to the whig party, the vote of the commons, without any alteration, passed by a majority of fifteen in the upper house, and received the sanction of every part of the legislature which then subsisted.

It happens unluckily for those who maintain an original contract between the magistrate and people, that great revolutions of government, and new settlements of civil constitutions, are commonly conducted with such violence, tumult, and disorder, that the public voice can scarcely ever be heard; and the opinions of the citizens are at that time less attended to than even in the common course of administration. The present transactions in England, it must be confessed, are a singular exception to this observation. The new elections had been carried on with great tranquillity and freedom: the prince had ordered the troops to depart from all the towns where the voters assembled: a tumultuary petition to the two houses having been promoted, he took care, though the petition was calculated for his advantage, effectually to suppress it: he entered into no intrigues, either with the electors or the members: he kept himself in a total silence, as if he had been nowise concerned in these transactions: and so far from forming cabals with the leaders of parties, he disdained even to bestow caresses on those whose assistance might be useful to him. This conduct was highly meritorious, and discovered great moderation and magnanimity; even though the prince unfortunately, through the whole course of his life, and on every occasion, was noted for an address so cold, dry, and distant, that it was very difficult for him, on account of any interest, to soften or familiarize it.

At length the prince deigned to break silence, and to express, though in a private manner, his sentiments on the present situation of affairs. He called together Halifax, Shrewsbury, Danby, and a few more; and he told them, that, having been invited over to restore their liberty, he had engaged in this enterprise, and had at last happily effected his purpose: that it belonged to the parliament, now chosen and assembled with freedom, to concert measures for the public settlement; and he pretended not to interpose in their determinations: that he heard of several schemes proposed for establishing the government: some insisted on a regent; others were desirous of bestowing the crown on the princess: it was their concern alone to choose the plan of administration most agreeable or advantageous to them: that if they judged it proper to settle a regent, he had no objection: he only thought it incumbent on him to inform them, that he was determined not to be the regent, nor ever to engage in a scheme which, he knew, would be exposed to such insuperable difficulties: that no man could have a juster or deeper sense of the princess’s merit than he was impressed with; but he would rather remain a private person, than enjoy a crown which must depend on the will or life of another: and that they must therefore make account, if they were inclined to either of these two plans of settlement, that it would be totally out of his power to assist them in carrying it into execution: his affairs abroad were too important to be abandoned for so precarious a dignity, or even to allow him so much leisure as would be requisite to introduce order into their disjointed government.

These views of the prince were seconded by the princess herself; who, as she possessed many virtues, was a most obsequious wife to a husband who, in the judgment of the generality of her sex, would have appeared so little attractive and amiable. All considerations were neglected, when they came in competition with what she deemed her duty to the prince. When Danby and others of her partisans wrote her an account of their schemes and proceedings, she expressed great displeasure; and even transmitted their letters to her husband, as a sacrifice to conjugal fidelity. The princess Anne also concurred in the same plan for the public settlement; and being promised an ample revenue, was content to be postponed in the succession to the crown. And as the title of her infant brother was, in the present establishment, entirely neglected, she might, on the whole, deem herself, in point of interest, a gainer by this revolution.

The chief parties, therefore, being agreed, the convention passed a bill, in which they settled the crown on the prince and princess of Orange, the sole administration to remain in the prince: the princess of Denmark to succeed after the death of the prince and princess of Orange; her posterity after those of the princess, but before those of the prince by any other wife. The convention annexed to this settlement of the crown a declaration of rights, where all the points which had of late years been disputed between the king and people, were finally determined; and the powers of royal prerogative were more narrowly circumscribed and more exactly defined, than in any former period of the English government.

Thus have we seen, through the course of four reigns, a continual struggle maintained between the crown and the people: privilege and prerogative were ever at variance: and both parties, beside the present object of dispute, had many latent claims, which, on a favorable occasion, they produced against their adversaries. Governments too steady and uniform as they are seldom free, so are they, in the judgment of some attended with another sensible inconvenience: they abate the active powers of men; depress courage, invention, and genius; and produce a universal lethargy in the people. Though this opinion may be just, the fluctuation and contest, it must be allowed, of the English government, were, during these reigns, much too violent both for the repose and safety of the people. Foreign affairs, at that time, were either entirely neglected, or managed to pernicious purposes: and in the domestic administration there was felt a continued fever, either secret or manifest; sometimes the most furious convulsions and disorders. The revolution forms a new epoch in the constitution; and was probably attended with consequences more advantageous to the people, than barely freeing them from an exceptionable administration. By deciding many important questions in favor of liberty, and still more by that great precedent of deposing one king, and establishing a new family, it gave such an ascendant to popular principles, as has put the nature of the English constitution beyond all controversy. And it may justly be affirmed, without any danger of exaggeration, that we in this island have ever since enjoyed, if not the best system of government, at least the most entire system of liberty, that ever was known amongst mankind.

To decry with such violence, as is affected by some, the whole line of Stuart; to maintain, that their administration was one continued encroachment on the incontestable rights of the people; is not giving due honor to that great event, which not only put a period to their hereditary succession, but made a new settlement of the whole constitution. The inconveniencies suffered by the people under the two first reigns of that family, (for in the main they were fortunate,) proceeded in a great measure from the unavoidable situation of affairs; and scarcely any thing could have prevented those events, but such vigor of genius in the sovereign, attended with such good fortune, as might have enabled him entirely to overpower the liberties of his people. While the parliaments in those reigns were taking advantage of the necessities of the prince, and attempting every session to abolish, or circumscribe, or define, some prerogative of the crown, and innovate in the usual tenor of government, what could be expected, but that the prince would exert himself in defending, against such inveterate enemies an authority which, during the most regular course of the former English government, had been exercised without dispute or controversy? And though Charles II., in 1672, may with reason be deemed the aggressor, nor is it possible to justify his conduct, yet were there some motives, surely, which could engage a prince so soft and indolent, and at the same time so judicious, to attempt such hazardous enterprises. He felt that public affairs had reached a situation at which they could not possibly remain without some further innovation. Frequent parliaments were become almost absolutely necessary to the conducting of public business; yet these assemblies were still, in the judgment of the royalists, much inferior in dignity to the sovereign, whom they seemed better calculated to counsel than control. The crown still possessed considerable power of opposing parliaments; and had not as yet acquired the means of influencing them. Hence a continual jealousy between these parts of the legislature: hence the inclination mutually to take advantage of each other's necessities: hence the impossibility, under which the king lay, of finding ministers who could at once be serviceable and faithful to him. If he followed his own choice in appointing his servants, without regard to their parliamentary interest, a refractory session was instantly to be expected: if he chose them from among the leaders of popular assemblies, they either lost their influence with the people by adhering to the crown, or they betrayed the crown in order to preserve their influence. Neither Hambden, whom Charles I. was willing to gain at any price; nor Shaftesbury, whom Charles II., after the Popish plot, attempted to engage in his counsels, would renounce their popularity for the precarious, and, as they esteemed it, deceitful favor of the prince. The root of their authority they still thought to lie in the parliament; and as the power of that assembly was not yet uncontrollable, they still resolved to augment it, though at the expense of the royal prerogatives.

It is no wonder that these events have long, by the representations of faction, been extremely clouded and obscured. No man has yet arisen, who has paid an entire regard to truth, and has dared to expose her, without covering or disguise, to the eyes of the prejudiced public. Even that party amongst us which boasts of the highest regard to liberty, has not possessed sufficient liberty of thought in this particular; nor has been able to decide impartially of their own merit, compared with that of their antagonists. More noble perhaps in their ends, and highly beneficial to mankind they must also be allowed to have often been less justifiable in the means, and in many of their enterprises to have paid more regard to political than to moral considerations. Obliged to court the favor of the populace, they found it necessary to comply with their rage and folly; and have even, on many occasions, by propagating calumnies, and by promoting violence, served to infatuate as well as corrupt that people to whom they made a tender of liberty and justice. Charles I. was a tyrant, a Papist, and a contriver of the Irish massacre: the church of England was relapsing fast into idolatry: Puritanism was the only true religion, and the covenant the favorite object of heavenly regard. Through these delusions the party proceeded, and, what may seem wonderful, still to the increase of law and liberty; till they reached the imposture of the Popish plot, a fiction which exceeds the ordinary bounds of vulgar credulity. But however singular these events may appear, there is really nothing altogether new in any period of modern history: and it is remarkable, that tribunitian arts, though sometimes useful in a free constitution, have usually been such as men of probity and honor could not bring themselves either to practise or approve. The other faction, which, since the revolution, has been obliged to cultivate popularity, sometimes found it necessary to employ like artifices.

The whig party, for a course of near seventy years, has, almost without interruption, enjoyed the whole authority of government; and no honors or offices could be obtained but by their countenance and protection. But this event, which in some particulars has been advantageous to the state, has proved destructive to the truth of history, and has established many gross falsehoods, which it is unaccountable how any civilized nation could have embraced with regard to its domestic occurrences. Compositions the most despicable, both for style and matter, have been extolled, and propagated, and read; as if they had equalled the most celebrated remains of antiquity. [1]

* Such as Rapin Thoyras, Locke, Sidney, Hoadley, etc.

And forgetting that a regard to liberty, though a laudable passion, ought commonly to be subordinate to a reverence for established government, the prevailing faction has celebrated only the partisans of the former, who pursued as their object the perfection of civil society, and has extolled them at the expense of their antagonists, who maintained those maxims that are essential to its very existence. But extremes of all kinds are to be avoided; and though no one will ever please either faction by moderate opinions, it is there we are most likely to meet with truth and certainty.

We shall subjoin to this general view of the English government some account of the state of the finances, arms trade, manners, arts, between the restoration and revolution.

The revenue of Charles II., as settled by the long parliament, was put upon a very bad footing. It was too small, if they intended to make him independent in the common course of his administration: it was too large, and settled during too long a period, if they resolved to keep him in entire dependence. The great debts of the republic, which were thrown upon that prince; the necessity of supplying the naval and military stores, which were entirely exhausted; [1] that of repairing and furnishing his palaces: all these causes involved the king in great difficulties immediately after his restoration; and the parliament was not sufficiently liberal in supplying him. Perhaps, too, he had contracted some debts abroad; and his bounty to the distressed cavaliers, though it did not correspond either to their services or expectations, could not fail, in some degree, to exhaust his treasury. The extraordinary sums granted the king during the first years did not suffice for these extraordinary expenses; and the excise and customs, the only constant revenue, amounted not to nine hundred thousand pounds a year, and fell much short of the ordinary burdens of government. The addition of hearth money in 1662, and of other two branches in 1669 and 1670, brought up the revenue to one million three hundred and fifty-eight thousand pounds, as we learn from Lord Danby's account: but the same authority informs us, that the yearly expense of government was at that time one million three hundred and eighty-seven thousand seven hundred and seventy pounds. [2]

* Lord Clarendon's speech to the parliament, Oct. 9, 1665.

* Ralph's History, vol. i. .

We learn from that lord's Memoirs, (,) that the receipts of the exchequer, during six years, from 1673 to 1679, were about eight millions two hundred thousand pounds or one million three hundred and sixty-six thousand pounds a year. See likewise . mentioning contingencies, which are always considerable, even under the most prudent administration. Those branches of revenue granted in 1669 and 1670, expired in 1680, and were never renewed by parliament: they were computed to be above two hundred thousand pounds a year. It must be allowed, because asserted by all contemporary authors of both parties, and even confessed by himself, that King Charles was somewhat profuse and negligent. But it is likewise certain, that a very rigid frugality was requisite to support the government under such difficulties. It is a familiar rule in all business, that every man should be paid in proportion to the trust reposed in him, and to the power which he enjoys; and the nation soon found reason, from Charles's dangerous connections with France, to repent their departure from that prudential maxim. Indeed, could the parliaments in the reign of Charles I. have been induced to relinquish so far their old habits, as to grant that prince the same revenue which was voted to his successor, or had those in the reign of Charles II. conferred on him as large a revenue as was enjoyed by his brother, all the disorders in both reigns might easily have been prevented, and probably all reasonable concessions to liberty might peaceably have been obtained from both monarchs. But these assemblies, unacquainted with public business, and often actuated by faction and fanaticism, could never be made sensible, but too late and by fatal experience, of the incessant change of times and situations. The French ambassador informs his court, that Charles was very well satisfied with his share of power, could the parliament have been induced to make him tolerable easy in his revenue. [1]

If we estimate the ordinary revenue of Charles II. at one million two hundred thousand pounds a year during his whole reign, the computation will rather exceed than fall below the true value. The convention parliament, after all the sums which they had granted the king towards the payment of old debts, threw, the last day of their meeting, a debt upon him amounting to one million seven hundred and forty-three thousand two hundred and sixty-three pounds. [2] All the extraordinary sums which were afterwards voted him by parliament, amounted to eleven millions four hundred and forty-three thousand four hundred and seven pounds; which, divided by twenty-four, the number of years which that king reigned, make four hundred and seventy-six thousand eight hundred and eight pounds a year. During that time, he had two violent wars to sustain with the Dutch; and in 1678, he made expensive preparations for a war with France. In the first Dutch war, both France and Denmark were allies to the United Provinces, and the naval armaments in England were very great; so that it is impossible he could have secreted any part, at least any considerable part, of the sums which were then voted him by parliament.

* Dalrymple's Appendix, .

* * Journals, 29th of December, 1660.

To these sums we must add about one million two hundred thousand pounds, which had been detained from the bankers on shutting up the exchequer in 1672. The king paid six per cent. for this money during the rest of his reign. [1] It is remarkable that, notwithstanding this violent breach of faith, the king, two years after, borrowed money at eight per cent.; the same rate of interest which he had paid before that event; [2] a proof that public credit, instead of being of so delicate a nature as we are apt to imagine, is, in reality, so hardy and robust, that it is very difficult to destroy it.

The revenue of James was raised by the parliament to about one million eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds; [3] and his income as duke of York being added, made the whole amount to two millions a year; a sum well proportioned to the public necessities, but enjoyed by him in too independent a manner. The national debt at the revolution amounted to one million fifty-four thousand nine hundred and twenty-five pounds. [4]

The militia fell much to decay during these two reigns, partly by the policy of the kings, who had entertained a diffidence of their subjects, partly by that ill-judged law which limited the king’s power of mustering and arraying them. In the beginning, however, of Charles’s reign, the militia was still deemed formidable. De Wit having proposed to the French king an invasion of England during the first Dutch war, that monarch replied, that such an attempt would be entirely fruitless, and would tend only to unite the English. In a few days, said he, after our landing, there will be fifty thousand men at least upon us.

* Danby’s Memoirs, .

* * Danby’s Memoirs, .

* * * Journ. 1st of March, 1689.

* * * * Journ. 20th of March, 1689.

v D’Estrades, 20th of October. 1666.

Charles in the beginning of his reign had in pay near five thousand men, of guards and garrisons. At the end of his reign, he augmented this number to near eight thousand. James, on Monmouth’s rebellion, had on foot about fifteen thousand men; and when the prince of Orange invaded him, there were no fewer than thirty thousand regular troops in England.

The English navy, during the greater part of Charles’s reign, made a considerable figure, for number of ships, valor of the men, and conduct of the commanders. Even in 1678, the fleet consisted of eighty-three ships; [1] besides thirty which were at that time on the stocks. On the king’s restoration, he found only sixty-three vessels of all sizes. [2] During the latter part of Charles’s reign, the navy fell somewhat to decay, by reason of the narrowness of the king’s revenue: but James, soon after his accession, restored it to its former power and glory; and before he left the throne, carried it much further. The administration of the admiralty under Pepys, is still regarded as a model for order and economy. The fleet at the revolution consisted of one hundred and seventy-three vessels of all sizes, and required forty-two thousand seamen to man it. [3] That king, when duke of York, had been the first inventor of sea signals. The military genius during these two reigns had not totally decayed among the young nobility. Dorset, Mulgrave, Rochester, not to mention Ossory, served on board the fleet, and were present in the most furious engagements against the Dutch.

The commerce and riches of England did never, during any period, increase so fast as from the restoration to the revolution. The two Dutch wars, by disturbing the trade of that republic, promoted the navigation of this island; and after Charles had made a separate peace with the states, his subjects enjoyed unmolested the trade of Europe. The only disturbance which they met with, was from a few French privateers, who infested the channel; and Charles interposed not in behalf of his subjects with sufficient spirit and vigor.

* Pepys’s Memoirs, .

* * Memoirs of English Affairs, chiefly naval.

* * * Lives of the Admirals, vol. ii. .

The recovery or conquest of New York and the Jerseys was a considerable accession to the strength and security of the English colonies; and, together with the settlement of Pennsylvania and Carolina which was effected during that reign, extended the English empire in America. The persecutions of the dissenters, or, more properly speaking, the restraints imposed upon them contributed to augment and people these colonies. Dr. Davenant affirms, [1] that the shipping of England more than doubled during these twenty-eight years. Several new manufactures were established; in iron brass, silk, hats, glass, paper, etc. One Brewer, leaving the Low Countries when they were threatened with a French conquest, brought the art of dying woollen cloth into England, and by that improvement saved the nation great sums of money. The increase of coinage during these two reigns was ten millions two hundred and sixty-one thousand pounds. A board of trade was erected in 1670; and the earl of Sandwich was made president. Charles revived and supported the charter of the East India Company; a measure whose utility is by some thought doubtful: he granted a charter to the Hudson’s Bay Company; a measure probably hurtful.

We learn from Sir Josiah Child, [2] that in 1688 there were on the Change more men worth ten thousand pounds than there were in 1650 worth a thousand; that five hundred pounds with a daughter was, in the latter period, deemed a larger portion than two thousand in the former; that gentlewomen, in those earlier times, thought themselves well clothed in a serge gown, which a chambermaid would, in 1688, be ashamed to be seen in; and that, besides the great increase of rich clothes, plate, jewels, and household furniture, coaches were in that time augmented a hundred fold.

The duke of Buckingham introduced from Venice the manufacture of glass and crystal into England. Prince Rupert was also an encourager of useful arts and manufactures: he himself was the inventor of etching.

The first law for erecting turnpikes was passed in 1662: the places of the turnpikes were Wadesmill, Caxton, and Stilton: but the general and great improvement of highways took not place till the reign of George II.

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* Discourse on the Public Revenues, part ii. , 33, 36.

* * Brief Observations, etc.

In 1663 was passed the first law for allowing the exportation of foreign coin and bullion.

In 1667 was concluded the first American treaty between England and Spain: this treaty was made more general and complete in 1670. The two states then renounced all right of trading with each other’s colonies; and the title of England was acknowledged to all the territories in America of which she was then possessed.

The French king, about the beginning of Charles’s reign, laid some impositions on English commodities: and the English, partly displeased with this innovation, partly moved by their animosity against France, retaliated, by laying such restraints on the commerce with that kingdom as amounted almost to a prohibition. They formed calculations, by which they persuaded themselves that they were losers a million and a half or near two millions a year by the French trade. But no good effects were found to result from these restraints, and in King James’s reign they were taken off by parliament.

Lord Clarendon tells us, that, in 1665, when money, in consequence of a treaty, was to be remitted to the bishop of Munster, it was found, that the whole trade of England could not supply above a thousand pounds a month to Frankfort and Cologne, nor above twenty thousand pounds a month to Hamburgh: these sums appear surprisingly small. [1]

* Life of Clarendon, .

At the same time that the boroughs of England were deprived of their privileges, a like attempt was made on the colonies. King James recalled the charters, by which their liberties were secured; and he sent over governors invested with absolute power. The arbitrary principles of that monarch appear in every part of his administration.

The people, during these two reigns, were in a great measure cured of that wild fanaticism by which they had formerly been so much agitated. Whatever new vices they might acquire, it may be questioned, whether by this change they were, in the main, much losers in point of morals. By the example of Charles II. and the cavaliers, licentiousness and debauchery became prevalent in the nation. The pleasures of the table were much pursued. Love was treated more as an appetite than a passion. The one sex began to abate of the national character of chastity, without being able to inspire the other with sentiment or delicacy.

The abuses in the former age, arising from overstrained pretensions to piety, had much propagated the spirit of irreligion; and many of the ingenious men of this period lie under the imputation of Deism. Besides wits and scholars by profession, Saftesbury, Halifax, Buckingham, Mulgrave, Sunderland Essex, Rochester, Sidney, Temple, are supposed to have adopted these principles.

The same factions which formerly distracted the nation were revived, and exerted themselves in the most ungenerous and unmanly enterprises against each other. King Charles, being in his whole deportment a model of easy and gentleman-like behavior, improved the politeness of the nation; as much as faction, which of all things is most destructive to that virtue, could possibly permit. His courtiers were long distinguishable in England by their obliging and agreeable manners.

Till the revolution, the liberty of the press was very imperfectly enjoyed in England, and during a very short period. The star chamber, while that court subsisted, put effectual restraints upon printing. On the suppression of that tribunal in 1641, the long parliament, after their rupture with the king, assumed the same power with regard to the licensing of books; and this authority was continued during all the period of the republic and protectorship. [1]

* Scobell i. 44, 134; ii. 88, 230.

Two years after the restoration, an act was passed reviving the republican ordinances. This act expired in 1679; but was revived in the first of King James. The liberty of the press did not even commence with the revolution. It was not till 1694 that the restraints were taken off; to the great displeasure of the king and his ministers, who, seeing nowhere, in any government, during present or past ages, any example of such unlimited freedom, doubted much of its salutary effects; and probably thought, that no books or writings would ever so much improve the general understanding of men, as to render it safe to intrust them with an indulgence so easily abused.

In 1677, the old law for burning heretics was repealed; a prudent measure, while the nation was in continual dread of the return of Papery.

Amidst the thick cloud of bigotry and ignorance which overspread the nation during the commonwealth and protectorship, there were a few sedate philosophers, who, in the retirement of Oxford, cultivated their reason, and established conferences for the mutual communication of their discoveries in physics and geometry. Wilkins, a clergyman, who had married Cromwell's sister, and was afterwards bishop of Chester, promoted these philosophical conversations. Immediately after the restoration, these men procured a patent, and having enlarged their number, were denominated the Royal Society. But this patent was all they obtained from the king. Though Charles was a lover of the sciences, particularly chemistry and mechanics, he animated them by his example alone not by his bounty. His craving courtiers and mistresses, by whom he was perpetually surrounded, engrossed all his expense, and left him neither money nor attention for literary merit. His contemporary Lewis, who fell short of the king's genius and knowledge in this particular, much exceeded him in liberality. Besides pensions conferred on learned men throughout all Europe, his academies were directed by rules and supported by salaries; a generosity which does great honor to his memory; and, in the eyes of all the ingenious part of mankind, will be esteemed an atonement for many of the errors of his reign. We may be surprised that this example should not be more followed by princes; since it is certain that that bounty, so extensive, so beneficial, and so much celebrated, cost not this monarch so great a sum as is often conferred on one useless, overgrown favorite or courtier.

But though the French Academy of Sciences was directed, encouraged, and supported by the sovereign, there arose in England some men of superior genius, who were more than sufficient to cast the balance, and who drew on themselves and on their native country the regard and attention of Europe. Besides Wilkins, Wren, Wallis, eminent mathematicians, Hooke, an accurate observer by microscopes, and Sydenham, the restorer of true physic, there flourished during this period a Boyle and a Newton; men who trod with cautious, and therefore the more secure steps, the only road which leads to true philosophy.

Boyle improved the pneumatic engine, invented by Otto Guericke, and was thereby enabled to make several new and curious experiments on the air, as well as on other bodies: his chemistry is much admired by those who are acquainted with that art: his hydrostatics contain a greater mixture of reasoning and invention with experiment than any other of his works; but his reasoning is still remote from that boldness and temerity which had led astray so many philosophers. Boyle was a great partisan of the mechanical philosophy; a theory which by discovering some of the secrets of nature, and allowing us to imagine the rest, is so agreeable to the natural vanity and curiosity of men. He died in 1691, aged sixty-five.

In Newton this island may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of the species. Cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded on experiment, but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new or unusual; from modesty, ignorant of his superiority above the rest of mankind, and thence less careful to accommodate his reasonings to common apprehension; more anxious to merit than acquire fame; he was from these causes long unknown to the world; but his reputation at last broke out with a lustre which scarcely any writer, during his own lifetime, had ever before attained. While Newton seemed to draw off the veil from some of the mysteries of nature, he showed at the same time the imperfections of the mechanical philosophy; and thereby restored her ultimate secrets to that obscurity, in which they ever did and ever will remain. He died in 1727, aged eighty-five.

This age was far from being so favorable to polite literature as to the sciences. Charles, though fond of wit, though possessed himself of a considerable share of it, though his taste in conversation seems to have been sound and just, served rather to corrupt than improve the poetry and eloquence of his time. When the theatres were opened at the restoration, and freedom was again given to pleasantry and ingenuity, men, after so long an abstinence, fed on these delicacies with less taste than avidity, and the coarsest and most irregular species of wit was received by the court as well as by the people. The productions represented at that time on the stage were such monsters of extravagance and folly, so utterly destitute of all reason or even common sense, that they would be the disgrace of English literature, had not the nation made atonement for its former admiration of them by the total oblivion to which they are now condemned. The duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal, which exposed these wild productions, seems to be a piece of ridicule carried to excess; yet in reality, the copy scarcely equals some of the absurdities which we meet with in the originals. [1]

* The duke of Buckingham died on the 16th of April 1688.

This severe satire, together with the good sense of the nation, corrected, after some time, the extravagancies of the fashionable wit; but the productions of literature still wanted much of that correctness and delicacy which we so much admire in the ancients, and in the French writers, their judicious imitators. It was, indeed, during this period chiefly, that that nation left the English behind them in the productions of poetry, eloquence, history, and other branches of polite letters; and acquired a superiority which the efforts of English writers, during the subsequent age, did more successfully contest with them. The arts and sciences were imported from Italy into this island as early as into France; and made at first more sensible advances. Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon, Jonson, were superior to their contemporaries who flourished in that kingdom. Milton, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Harvey, were at least equal to their contemporaries. The reign of Charles II., which some preposterously represent as our Augustan age, retarded the progress of polite literature in this island; and it was then found, that the immeasurable licentiousness, indulged or rather applauded at court, was more destructive to the refined arts, than even the cant, nonsense, and enthusiasm of the preceding period.

Most of the celebrated writers of this age remain monuments of genius, perverted by indecency and bad taste; and none more than Dryden, both by reason of the greatness of his talents and the gross abuse which he made of them. His plays, excepting a few scenes, are utterly disfigured by vice or folly, or both. His translations appear too much the offspring of haste and hunger: even his fables are ill-chosen tales, conveyed in an incorrect, though spirited versification. Yet amidst this great number of loose productions, the refuse of our language, there are found some small pieces, his Ode to St. Cecilia, the greater part of Absalom and Achitophel, and a few more, which discover so great genius, such richness of expression, such pomp and variety of numbers, that they leave us equally full of regret and indignation, on account of the inferiority or rather great absurdity of his other writings. He died in 1701, aged sixty-nine.

The very name of Rochester is offensive to modest ears, yet does his poetry discover such energy of style and such poignancy of satire, as give ground to imagine what so fine a genius, had he fallen in a more happy age, and had followed better models, was capable of producing. The ancient satirists often used great liberties in their expressions; but their free-* *dom no more resembles the licentiousness of Rochester, than the nakedness of an Indian does that of a common prostitute.

Wycherley was ambitious of the reputation of wit and libertinism, and he attained it: he was probably capable of reaching the fame of true comedy and instructive ridicule. Otway had a genius finely turned to the pathetic; but he neither observed strictly the rules of the drama, nor the rules, still more essential, of propriety and decorum. By one single piece, the duke of Buckingham did both great service to his age and honor to himself. The earls of Mulgrave, Dorset, and Roscommon wrote in a good taste; but their productions are either feeble or careless. The marquis of Halifax discovers a refined genius; and nothing but leisure and an inferior station seem wanting to have procured him eminence in literature.

Of all the considerable writers of this age, Sir William Temple is almost the only one that kept himself altogether unpolluted by that inundation of vice and licentiousness which overwhelmed the nation. The style of this author, though extremely negligent, and even infected with foreign idioms, is agreeable and interesting. That mixture of vanity which appears in his works, is rather a recommendation to them. By means of it we enter into acquaintance with the character of the author, full of honor and humanity; and fancy that we are engaged, not in the perusal of a book, but in conversation with a companion. He died in 1698, aged seventy.

Though Hudibras was published, and probably composed, during the reign of Charles II., Butler may justly, as well as Milton, be thought to belong to the foregoing period. No composition abounds so much as Hudibras in strokes of just and inimitable wit; yet are there many performances which give as great or greater entertainment on the whole perusal. The allusions in Butler are often dark and far-fetched; and though scarcely any author was ever able to express his thoughts in so few words, he often employs too many thoughts on one subject, and thereby becomes prolix after an unusual manner. It is surprising how much erudition Butler has introduced with so good a grace into a work of pleasantry and humor: Hudibras is perhaps one of the most learned compositions that is to be found in any language. The advantage which the royal cause received from this poem, in exposing the fanaticism and false pretences of the former parliamentary party, was prodigious. The king himself had so good a taste as to be highly pleased with the merit of the work, and had even got a great part of it by heart: yet was he either so careless in his temper, or so little endowed with the virtue of liberality, or, more properly speaking, of gratitude, that he allowed the author, a man of virtue and probity, to live in obscurity, and die in want. [1]

Dryden is an instance of a negligence of the same kind. His Absalom sensibly contributed to the victory which the tories obtained over the whigs, after the exclusion parliaments; yet could not this merit, aided by his great genius, procure him an establishment which might exempt him from the necessity of writing for bread. Otway, though a professed royalist, could not even procure bread by his writings; and he had the singular fate of dying literally of hunger. These incidents throw a great stain on the memory of Charles; who had discernment, loved genius, was liberal of money, but attained not the praise of true generosity.

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* Butler died in 1680, aged sixty-eight.

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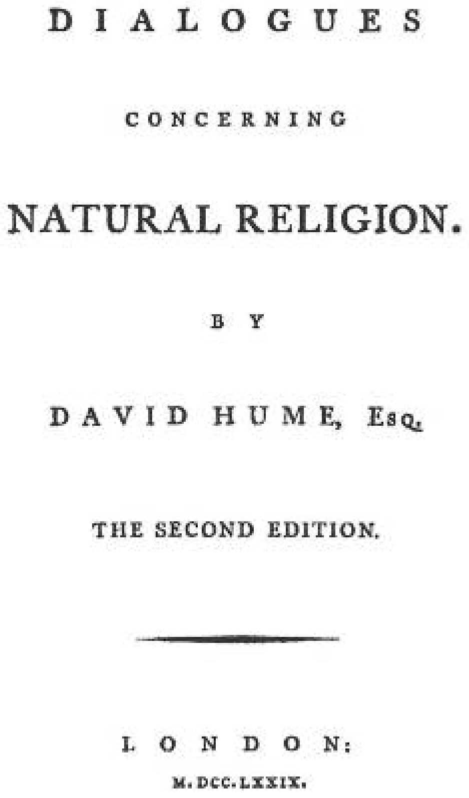
DIALOGUES CONCERNING NATURAL RELIGION

Hume started writing *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* in 1750, but did not complete it until 1776, shortly before his death. The dialogue is based partly on Cicero’s *De Natura Deorum*, a philosophical dialogue written in 45 BC and laid out in three books, each of which discusses the theology of different Roman and Greek philosophers. Hume’s *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* was published posthumously in 1779, originally with neither the author’s nor the publisher’s name. The text features three philosophers named Demea, Philo, and Cleanthes, who debate the nature of God’s existence. Whether or not these names reference specific philosophers, ancient or otherwise, still remains a topic of critical dispute. Though all three characters agree that a god exists, they differ greatly on God’s nature or attributes and how, or if, humankind can come to knowledge of a deity. They debate a number of arguments for the existence of God, and arguments whose proponents believe through which we may come to know the nature of God. Such topics debated include the argument from design — for which Hume uses a house — and whether there is more suffering or good in the world (argument from evil).



DIALOGUES

CONCERNING

NATURAL RELIGION.

BY

DAVID HUME, Esq.

THE SECOND EDITION.

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The second edition’s title page

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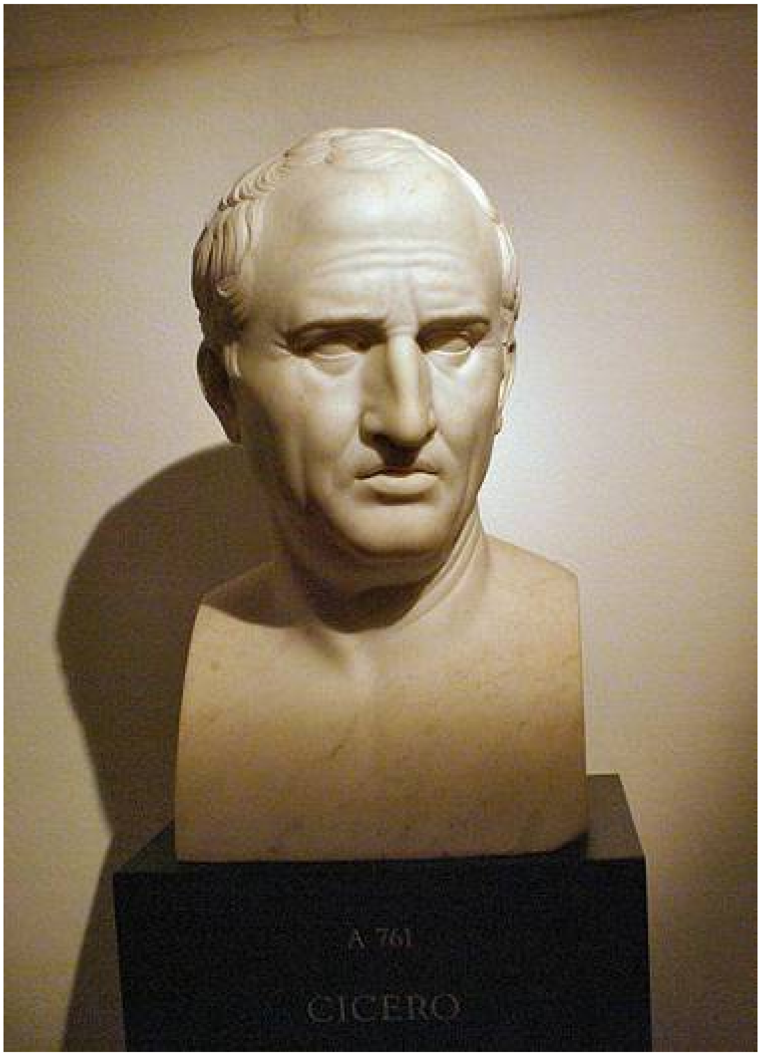


Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC-43 BC), the Roman philosopher, politician, lawyer, orator, political theorist, consul and constitutionalist.

PAMPHILUS TO HERMIPPUS

It has been remarked, my HERMIPPUS, that though the ancient philosophers conveyed most of their instruction in the form of dialogue, this method of composition has been little practised in later ages, and has seldom succeeded in the hands of those who have attempted it. Accurate and regular argument, indeed, such as is now expected of philosophical inquirers, naturally throws a man into the methodical and didactic manner; where he can immediately, without preparation, explain the point at which he aims; and thence proceed, without interruption, to deduce the proofs on which it is established. To deliver a SYSTEM in conversation, scarcely appears natural; and while the dialogue-writer desires, by departing from the direct style of composition, to give a freer air to his performance, and avoid the appearance of Author and Reader, he is apt to run into a worse inconvenience, and convey the image of Pedagogue and Pupil. Or, if he carries on the dispute in the natural spirit of good company, by throwing in a variety of topics, and preserving a proper balance among the speakers, he often loses so much time in preparations and transitions, that the reader will scarcely think himself compensated, by all the graces of dialogue, for the order, brevity, and precision, which are sacrificed to them.

There are some subjects, however, to which dialogue-writing is peculiarly adapted, and where it is still preferable to the direct and simple method of composition.

Any point of doctrine, which is so obvious that it scarcely admits of dispute, but at the same time so important that it cannot be too often inculcated, seems to require some such method of handling it; where the novelty of the manner may compensate the triteness of the subject; where the vivacity of conversation may enforce the precept; and where the variety of lights, presented by various personages and characters, may appear neither tedious nor redundant.

Any question of philosophy, on the other hand, which is so OBSCURE and UNCERTAIN, that human reason can reach no fixed determination with regard to it; if it should be treated at all, seems to lead us naturally into the style of dialogue and conversation. Reasonable men may be allowed to differ, where no one can reasonably be positive. Opposite sentiments, even without any decision, afford an agreeable amusement; and if the subject be curious and interesting, the book carries us, in a manner, into company; and unites the two greatest and purest pleasures of human life, study and society.

Happily, these circumstances are all to be found in the subject of NATURAL RELIGION. What truth so obvious, so certain, as the being of a God, which the most ignorant ages have acknowledged, for which the most refined geniuses have ambitiously striven to produce new proofs and arguments? What truth so important as this, which is the ground of all our hopes, the surest foundation of morality, the firmest support of society, and the only principle which ought never to be a moment absent from our thoughts and meditations? But, in treating of this obvious and important truth, what obscure questions occur concerning the nature of that Divine Being, his attributes, his decrees, his plan of providence? These have been always subjected to the disputations of men; concerning these human reason has not reached any certain determination. But these are topics so interesting, that we cannot restrain our restless inquiry with regard to them; though nothing but doubt, uncertainty, and contradiction, have as yet been the result of our most accurate researches.

This I had lately occasion to observe, while I passed, as usual, part of the summer season with CLEANTHES, and was present at those conversations of his with PHILO and DEMEA, of which I gave you lately some imperfect account. Your curiosity, you then told me, was so excited, that I must, of necessity, enter into a more exact detail of their reasonings, and display those various systems which they advanced with regard to so delicate a subject as that of natural religion. The remarkable contrast in their characters still further raised your expectations; while you opposed the accurate philosophical turn of CLEANTHES to the careless scepticism of PHILO, or compared either of their dispositions with the rigid inflexible orthodoxy of DEMEA. My youth rendered me a mere auditor of their disputes; and that curiosity, natural to the early season of life, has so deeply imprinted in my memory the whole chain and connection of their arguments, that, I hope, I shall not omit or confound any considerable part of them in the recital.

PART 1

After I joined the company, whom I found sitting in CLEANTHES's library, DEMEA paid CLEANTHES some compliments on the great care which he took of my education, and on his unwearied perseverance and constancy in all his friendships. The father of PAMPHILUS, said he, was your intimate friend: The son is your pupil; and may indeed be regarded as your adopted son, were we to judge by the pains which you bestow in conveying to him every useful branch of literature and science. You are no more wanting, I am persuaded, in prudence, than in industry. I shall, therefore, communicate to you a maxim, which I have observed with regard to my own children, that I may learn how far it agrees with your practice. The method I follow in their education is founded on the saying of an ancient, "That students of philosophy ought first to learn logics, then ethics, next physics, last of all the nature of the gods." [Chrysippus apud Plut: de repug: Stoicorum] This science of natural theology, according to him, being the most profound and abstruse of any, required the maturest judgement in its students; and none but a mind enriched with all the other sciences, can safely be entrusted with it.

Are you so late, says PHILO, in teaching your children the principles of religion? Is there no danger of their neglecting, or rejecting altogether those opinions of which they have heard so little during the whole course of their education? It is only as a science, replied DEMEA, subjected to human reasoning and disputation, that I postpone the study of Natural Theology. To season their minds with early piety, is my chief care; and by continual precept and instruction, and I hope too by example, I imprint deeply on their tender minds an habitual reverence for all the principles of religion. While they pass through every other science, I still remark the uncertainty of each part; the eternal disputations of men; the obscurity of all philosophy; and the strange, ridiculous conclusions, which some of the greatest geniuses have derived from the principles of mere human reason. Having thus tamed their mind to a proper submission and self-diffidence, I have no longer any scruple of opening to them the greatest mysteries of religion; nor apprehend any danger from that assuming arrogance of philosophy, which may lead them to reject the most established doctrines and opinions.

Your precaution, says PHILO, of seasoning your children’s minds early with piety, is certainly very reasonable; and no more than is requisite in this profane and irreligious age. But what I chiefly admire in your plan of education, is your method of drawing advantage from the very principles of philosophy and learning, which, by inspiring pride and self-sufficiency, have commonly, in all ages, been found so destructive to the principles of religion. The vulgar, indeed, we may remark, who are unacquainted with science and profound inquiry, observing the endless disputes of the learned, have commonly a thorough contempt for philosophy; and rivet themselves the faster, by that means, in the great points of theology which have been taught them. Those who enter a little into study and inquiry, finding many appearances of evidence in doctrines the newest and most extraordinary, think nothing too difficult for human reason; and, presumptuously breaking through all fences, profane the inmost sanctuaries of the temple. But CLEANTHES will, I hope, agree with me, that, after we have abandoned ignorance, the surest remedy, there is still one expedient left to prevent this profane liberty. Let DEMEA’s principles be improved and cultivated: Let us become thoroughly sensible of the weakness, blindness, and narrow limits of human reason: Let us duly consider its uncertainty and endless contrarieties, even in subjects of common life and practice: Let the errors and deceits of our very senses be set before us; the insuperable difficulties which attend first principles in all systems; the contradictions which adhere to the very ideas of matter, cause and effect, extension, space, time, motion; and in a word, quantity of all kinds, the object of the only science that can fairly pretend to any certainty or evidence. When these topics are displayed in their full light, as they are by some philosophers and almost all divines; who can retain such confidence in this frail faculty of reason as to pay any regard to its determinations in points so sublime, so abstruse, so remote from common life and experience? When the coherence of the parts of a stone, or even that composition of parts which renders it extended; when these familiar objects, I say, are so inexplicable, and contain circumstances so repugnant and contradictory; with what assurance can we decide concerning the origin of worlds, or trace their history from eternity to eternity?

While PHILO pronounced these words, I could observe a smile in the countenance both of DEMEA and CLEANTHES. That of DEMEA seemed to imply an unreserved satisfaction in the doctrines delivered: But, in CLEANTHES's features, I could distinguish an air of finesse; as if he perceived some raillery or artificial malice in the reasonings of PHILO.

You propose then, PHILO, said CLEANTHES, to erect religious faith on philosophical scepticism; and you think, that if certainty or evidence be expelled from every other subject of inquiry, it will all retire to these theological doctrines, and there acquire a superior force and authority. Whether your scepticism be as absolute and sincere as you pretend, we shall learn by and by, when the company breaks up: We shall then see, whether you go out at the door or the window; and whether you really doubt if your body has gravity, or can be injured by its fall; according to popular opinion, derived from our fallacious senses, and more fallacious experience. And this consideration, DEMEA, may, I think, fairly serve to abate our ill-will to this humorous sect of the sceptics. If they be thoroughly in earnest, they will not long trouble the world with their doubts, cavils, and disputes: If they be only in jest, they are, perhaps, bad raillers; but can never be very dangerous, either to the state, to philosophy, or to religion.

In reality, PHILO, continued he, it seems certain, that though a man, in a flush of humour, after intense reflection on the many contradictions and imperfections of human reason, may entirely renounce all belief and opinion, it is impossible for him to persevere in this total scepticism, or make it appear in his conduct for a few hours. External objects press in upon him; passions solicit him; his philosophical melancholy dissipates; and even the utmost violence upon his own temper will not be able, during any time, to preserve the poor appearance of scepticism. And for what reason impose on himself such a violence? This is a point in which it will be impossible for him ever to satisfy himself, consistently with his sceptical principles. So that, upon the whole, nothing could be more ridiculous than the principles of the ancient PYRRHONIANS; if in reality they endeavoured, as is pretended, to extend, throughout, the same scepticism which they had learned from the declamations of their schools, and which they ought to have confined to them.

In this view, there appears a great resemblance between the sects of the STOICS and PYRRHONIANS, though perpetual antagonists; and both of them seem founded on this erroneous maxim, That what a man can perform sometimes, and in some dispositions, he can perform always, and in every disposition. When the mind, by Stoical reflections, is elevated into a sublime enthusiasm of virtue, and strongly smit with any species of honour or public good, the utmost bodily pain and sufferings will not prevail over such a high sense of duty; and it is possible, perhaps, by its means, even to smile and exult in the midst of tortures. If this sometimes may be the case in fact and reality, much more may a philosopher, in his school, or even in his closet, work himself up to such an enthusiasm, and support in imagination the acutest pain or most calamitous event which he can possibly conceive. But how shall he support this enthusiasm itself? The bent of his mind relaxes, and cannot be recalled at pleasure; avocations lead him astray; misfortunes attack him unawares; and the philosopher sinks by degrees into the plebeian.

I allow of your comparison between the STOICS and SKEPTICS, replied PHILO. But you may observe, at the same time, that though the mind cannot, in Stoicism, support the highest flights of philosophy, yet, even when it sinks lower, it still retains somewhat of its former disposition; and the effects of the Stoic’s reasoning will appear in his conduct in common life, and through the whole tenor of his actions. The ancient schools, particularly that of ZENO, produced examples of virtue and constancy which seem astonishing to present times.

Vain Wisdom all and false Philosophy.
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain, for a while, or anguish; and excite
Fallacious Hope, or arm the obdurate breast
With stubborn Patience, as with triple steel.

In like manner, if a man has accustomed himself to sceptical considerations on the uncertainty and narrow limits of reason, he will not entirely forget them when he turns his reflection on other subjects; but in all his philosophical principles and reasoning, I dare not say in his common conduct, he will be found different from those, who either never formed any opinions in the case, or have entertained sentiments more favourable to human reason.

To whatever length any one may push his speculative principles of scepticism, he must act, I own, and live, and converse, like other men; and for this conduct he is not obliged to give any other reason, than the absolute necessity he lies under of so doing. If he ever carries his speculations further than this necessity constrains him, and philosophises either on natural or moral subjects, he is allured by a certain pleasure and satisfaction which he finds in employing himself after that manner. He considers besides, that every one, even in common life, is constrained to have more or less of this philosophy; that from our earliest infancy we make continual advances in forming more general principles of conduct and reasoning; that the larger experience we acquire, and the stronger reason we are endued with, we always render our principles the more general and comprehensive; and that what we call philosophy is nothing but a more regular and methodical operation of the same kind. To philosophise on such subjects, is nothing essentially different from reasoning on common life; and we may only expect greater stability, if not greater truth, from our philosophy, on account of its exacter and more scrupulous method of proceeding.

But when we look beyond human affairs and the properties of the surrounding bodies: when we carry our speculations into the two eternities, before and after the present state of things; into the creation and formation of the universe; the existence and properties of spirits; the powers and operations of one universal Spirit existing without beginning and without end; omnipotent, omniscient, immutable, infinite, and incomprehensible: We must be far removed from the smallest tendency to scepticism not to be apprehensive, that we have here got quite beyond the reach of our faculties. So long as we confine our speculations to trade, or morals, or politics, or criticism, we make appeals, every moment, to common sense and experience, which strengthen our philosophical conclusions, and remove, at least in part, the suspicion which we so justly entertain with regard to every reasoning that is very subtle and refined. But, in theological reasonings, we have not this advantage; while, at the same time, we are employed upon objects, which, we must be sensible, are too large for our grasp, and of all others, require most to be familiarised to our apprehension. We are like foreigners in a strange country, to whom every thing must seem suspicious, and who are in danger every moment of transgressing against the laws and customs of the people with whom they live and converse. We know not how far we ought to trust our vulgar methods of reasoning in such a subject;

since, even in common life, and in that province which is peculiarly appropriated to them, we cannot account for them, and are entirely guided by a kind of instinct or necessity in employing them.

All sceptics pretend, that, if reason be considered in an abstract view, it furnishes invincible arguments against itself; and that we could never retain any conviction or assurance, on any subject, were not the sceptical reasonings so refined and subtle, that they are not able to counterpoise the more solid and more natural arguments derived from the senses and experience. But it is evident, whenever our arguments lose this advantage, and run wide of common life, that the most refined scepticism comes to be upon a footing with them, and is able to oppose and counterbalance them. The one has no more weight than the other. The mind must remain in suspense between them; and it is that very suspense or balance, which is the triumph of scepticism.

But I observe, says CLEANTHES, with regard to you, PHILO, and all speculative sceptics, that your doctrine and practice are as much at variance in the most abstruse points of theory as in the conduct of common life. Wherever evidence discovers itself, you adhere to it, notwithstanding your pretended scepticism; and I can observe, too, some of your sect to be as decisive as those who make greater professions of certainty and assurance. In reality, would not a man be ridiculous, who pretended to reject NEWTON’s explication of the wonderful phenomenon of the rainbow, because that explication gives a minute anatomy of the rays of light; a subject, forsooth, too refined for human comprehension? And what would you say to one, who, having nothing particular to object to the arguments of COPERNICUS and GALILEO for the motion of the earth, should withhold his assent, on that general principle, that these subjects were too magnificent and remote to be explained by the narrow and fallacious reason of mankind?

There is indeed a kind of brutish and ignorant scepticism, as you well observed, which gives the vulgar a general prejudice against what they do not easily understand, and makes them reject every principle which requires elaborate reasoning to prove and establish it. This species of scepticism is fatal to knowledge, not to religion; since we find, that those who make greatest profession of it, give often their assent, not only to the great truths of Theism and natural theology, but even to the most absurd tenets which a traditional superstition has recommended to them. They firmly believe in witches, though they will not believe nor attend to the most simple proposition of Euclid. But the refined and philosophical sceptics fall into an inconsistence of an opposite nature. They push their researches into the most abstruse corners of science; and their assent attends them in every step, proportioned to the evidence which they meet with. They are even obliged to acknowledge, that the most abstruse and remote objects are those which are best explained by philosophy. Light is in reality anatomised. The true system of the heavenly bodies is discovered and ascertained. But the nourishment of bodies by food is still an inexplicable mystery. The cohesion of the parts of matter is still incomprehensible. These sceptics, therefore, are obliged, in every question, to consider each particular evidence apart, and proportion their assent to the precise degree of evidence which occurs. This is their practice in all natural, mathematical, moral, and political science. And why not the same, I ask, in the theological and religious? Why must conclusions of this nature be alone rejected on the general presumption of the insufficiency of human reason, without any particular discussion of the evidence? Is not such an unequal conduct a plain proof of prejudice and passion?

Our senses, you say, are fallacious; our understanding erroneous; our ideas, even of the most familiar objects, extension, duration, motion, full of absurdities and contradictions. You defy me to solve the difficulties, or reconcile the repugnancies which you discover in them. I have not capacity for so great an undertaking: I have not leisure for it: I perceive it to be superfluous. Your own conduct, in every circumstance, refutes your principles, and shows the firmest reliance on all the received maxims of science, morals, prudence, and behaviour.

I shall never assent to so harsh an opinion as that of a celebrated writer [L’Arte de penser], who says, that the Sceptics are not a sect of philosophers: They are only a sect of liars. I may, however, affirm (I hope without offence), that they are a sect of jesters or raillers. But for my part, whenever I find myself disposed to mirth and amusement, I shall certainly choose my entertainment of a less perplexing and abstruse nature. A comedy, a novel, or at most a history, seems a more natural recreation than such metaphysical subtleties and abstractions.

In vain would the sceptic make a distinction between science and common life, or between one science and another. The arguments employed in all, if just, are of a similar nature, and contain the same force and evidence. Or if there be any difference among them, the advantage lies entirely on the side of theology and natural religion. Many principles of mechanics are founded on very abstruse reasoning; yet no man who has any pretensions to science, even no speculative sceptic, pretends to entertain the least doubt with regard to them. The COPERNICAN system contains the most surprising paradox, and the most contrary to our natural conceptions, to appearances, and to our very senses: yet even monks and inquisitors are now constrained to withdraw their opposition to it. And shall PHILO, a man of so liberal a genius and extensive knowledge, entertain any general undistinguished scruples with regard to the religious hypothesis, which is founded on the simplest and most obvious arguments, and, unless it meets with artificial obstacles, has such easy access and admission into the mind of man?

And here we may observe, continued he, turning himself towards DEMEA, a pretty curious circumstance in the history of the sciences. After the union of philosophy with the popular religion, upon the first establishment of Christianity, nothing was more usual, among all religious teachers, than declamations against reason, against the senses, against every principle derived merely from human research and inquiry. All the topics of the ancient academics were adopted by the fathers; and thence propagated for several ages in every school and pulpit throughout Christendom. The Reformers embraced the same principles of reasoning, or rather declamation; and all panegyrics on the excellency of faith, were sure to be interlarded with some severe strokes of satire against natural reason. A celebrated prelate [Monsr. Huet] too, of the Romish communion, a man of the most extensive learning, who wrote a demonstration of Christianity, has also composed a treatise, which contains all the cavils of the boldest and most determined PYRRHONISM. LOCKE seems to have been the first Christian who ventured openly to assert, that faith was nothing but a species of reason; that religion was only a branch of philosophy; and that a chain of arguments, similar to that which established any truth in morals, politics, or physics, was always employed in discovering all the principles of theology, natural and revealed. The ill use which BAYLE and other libertines made of the philosophical scepticism of the fathers and first reformers, still further propagated the judicious sentiment of Mr. LOCKE: And it is now in a manner avowed, by all pretenders to reasoning and philosophy, that Atheist and Sceptic are almost synonymous. And as it is certain that no man is in earnest when he professes the latter principle, I would fain hope that there are as few who seriously maintain the former.

Don’t you remember, said PHILO, the excellent saying of LORD BACON on this head? That a little philosophy, replied CLEANTHES, makes a man an Atheist: A great deal converts him to religion. That is a very judicious remark too, said PHILO. But what I have in my eye is another passage, where, having mentioned DAVID’s fool, who said in his heart there is no God, this great philosopher observes, that the Atheists nowadays have a double share of folly; for they are not contented to say in their hearts there is no God, but they also utter that impiety with their lips, and are thereby guilty of multiplied indiscretion and imprudence. Such people, though they were ever so much in earnest, cannot, methinks, be very formidable.

But though you should rank me in this class of fools, I cannot forbear communicating a remark that occurs to me, from the history of the religious and irreligious scepticism with which you have entertained us. It appears to me, that there are strong symptoms of priestcraft in the whole progress of this affair. During ignorant ages, such as those which followed the dissolution of the ancient schools, the priests perceived, that Atheism, Deism, or heresy of any kind, could only proceed from the presumptuous questioning of received opinions, and from a belief that human reason was equal to every thing. Education had then a mighty influence over the minds of men, and was almost equal in force to those suggestions of the senses and common understanding, by which the most determined sceptic must allow himself to be governed. But at present, when the influence of education is much diminished, and men, from a more open commerce of the world, have learned to compare the popular principles of different nations and ages, our sagacious divines have changed their whole system of philosophy, and talk the language of STOICS, PLATONISTS, and PERIPATETICS, not that of PYRRHONIANS and ACADEMICS. If we distrust human reason, we have now no other principle to lead us into religion. Thus, sceptics in one age, dogmatists in another; whichever system best suits the purpose of these reverend gentlemen, in giving them an ascendant over mankind, they are sure to make it their favourite principle, and established tenet.

It is very natural, said CLEANTHES, for men to embrace those principles, by which they find they can best defend their doctrines; nor need we have any recourse to priestcraft to account for so reasonable an expedient. And, surely nothing can afford a stronger presumption, that any set of principles are true, and ought to be embraced, than to observe that they tend to the confirmation of true religion, and serve to confound the cavils of Atheists, Libertines, and Freethinkers of all denominations.

PART 2

I must own, CLEANTHES, said DEMEA, that nothing can more surprise me, than the light in which you have all along put this argument. By the whole tenor of your discourse, one would imagine that you were maintaining the Being of a God, against the cavils of Atheists and Infidels; and were necessitated to become a champion for that fundamental principle of all religion. But this, I hope, is not by any means a question among us. No man, no man at least of common sense, I am persuaded, ever entertained a serious doubt with regard to a truth so certain and self-evident. The question is not concerning the being, but the nature of God. This, I affirm, from the infirmities of human understanding, to be altogether incomprehensible and unknown to us. The essence of that supreme Mind, his attributes, the manner of his existence, the very nature of his duration; these, and every particular which regards so divine a Being, are mysterious to men. Finite, weak, and blind creatures, we ought to humble ourselves in his august presence; and, conscious of our frailties, adore in silence his infinite perfections, which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. They are covered in a deep cloud from human curiosity. It is profaneness to attempt penetrating through these sacred obscurities. And, next to the impiety of denying his existence, is the temerity of prying into his nature and essence, decrees and attributes.

But lest you should think that my piety has here got the better of my philosophy, I shall support my opinion, if it needs any support, by a very great authority. I might cite all the divines, almost, from the foundation of Christianity, who have ever treated of this or any other theological subject: But I shall confine myself, at present, to one equally celebrated for piety and philosophy. It is Father MALEBRANCHE, who, I remember, thus expresses himself [Recherche de la Verite. Liv. 3. Chap.9]. “One ought not so much,” says he, “to call God a spirit, in order to express positively what he is, as in order to signify that he is not matter. He is a Being infinitely perfect: Of this we cannot doubt. But in the same manner as we ought not to imagine, even supposing him corporeal, that he is clothed with a human body, as the ANTHROPOMORPHITES asserted, under colour that that figure was the most perfect of any; so, neither ought we to imagine that the spirit of God has human ideas, or bears any resemblance to our spirit, under colour that we know nothing more perfect than a human mind. We ought rather to believe, that as he comprehends the perfections of matter without being material.... he comprehends also the perfections of created spirits without being spirit, in the manner we conceive spirit: That his true name is, He that is; or, in other words, Being without restriction, All Being, the Being infinite and universal."

After so great an authority, DEMEA, replied PHILO, as that which you have produced, and a thousand more which you might produce, it would appear ridiculous in me to add my sentiment, or express my approbation of your doctrine. But surely, where reasonable men treat these subjects, the question can never be concerning the Being, but only the Nature, of the Deity. The former truth, as you well observe, is unquestionable and self-evident. Nothing exists without a cause; and the original cause of this universe (whatever it be) we call God; and piously ascribe to him every species of perfection. Whoever scruples this fundamental truth, deserves every punishment which can be inflicted among philosophers, to wit, the greatest ridicule, contempt, and disapprobation. But as all perfection is entirely relative, we ought never to imagine that we comprehend the attributes of this divine Being, or to suppose that his perfections have any analogy or likeness to the perfections of a human creature. Wisdom, Thought, Design, Knowledge; these we justly ascribe to him; because these words are honourable among men, and we have no other language or other conceptions by which we can express our adoration of him. But let us beware, lest we think that our ideas anywise correspond to his perfections, or that his attributes have any resemblance to these qualities among men. He is infinitely superior to our limited view and comprehension; and is more the object of worship in the temple, than of disputation in the schools.

In reality, CLEANTHES, continued he, there is no need of having recourse to that affected scepticism so displeasing to you, in order to come at this determination. Our ideas reach no further than our experience. We have no experience of divine attributes and operations. I need not conclude my syllogism. You can draw the inference yourself. And it is a pleasure to me (and I hope to you too) that just reasoning and sound piety here concur in the same conclusion, and both of them establish the adorably mysterious and incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Being.

Not to lose any time in circumlocutions, said CLEANTHES, addressing himself to DEMEA, much less in replying to the pious declamations of PHILO; I shall briefly explain how I conceive this matter. Look round the world: contemplate the whole and every part of it: You will find it to be nothing but one great machine, subdivided into an infinite number of lesser machines, which again admit of subdivisions to a degree beyond what human senses and faculties can trace and explain. All these various machines, and even their most minute parts, are adjusted to each other with an accuracy which ravishes into admiration all men who have ever contemplated them. The curious adapting of means to ends, throughout all nature, resembles exactly, though it much exceeds, the productions of human contrivance; of human designs, thought, wisdom, and intelligence. Since, therefore, the effects resemble each other, we are led to infer, by all the rules of analogy, that the causes also resemble; and that the Author of Nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man, though possessed of much larger faculties, proportioned to the grandeur of the work which he has executed. By this argument a posteriori, and by this argument alone, do we prove at once the existence of a Deity, and his similarity to human mind and intelligence.

I shall be so free, CLEANTHES, said DEMEA, as to tell you, that from the beginning, I could not approve of your conclusion concerning the similarity of the Deity to men; still less can I approve of the mediums by which you endeavour to establish it. What! No demonstration of the Being of God! No abstract arguments! No proofs a priori! Are these, which have hitherto been so much insisted on by philosophers, all fallacy, all sophism? Can we reach no further in this subject than experience and probability? I will not say that this is betraying the cause of a Deity: But surely, by this affected candour, you give advantages to Atheists, which they never could obtain by the mere dint of argument and reasoning.

What I chiefly scruple in this subject, said PHILO, is not so much that all religious arguments are by CLEANTHES reduced to experience, as that they appear not to be even the most certain and irrefragable of that inferior kind. That a stone will fall, that fire will burn, that the earth has solidity, we have observed a thousand and a thousand times; and when any new instance of this nature is presented, we draw without hesitation the accustomed inference. The exact similarity of the cases gives us a perfect assurance of a similar event; and a stronger evidence is never desired nor sought after. But wherever you depart, in the least, from the similarity of the cases, you diminish proportionably the evidence; and may at last bring it to a very weak analogy, which is confessedly liable to error and uncertainty. After having experienced the circulation of the blood in human creatures, we make no doubt that it takes place in TITIUS and MAEVIUS. But from its circulation in frogs and fishes, it is only a presumption, though a strong one, from analogy, that it takes place in men and other animals. The analogical reasoning is much weaker, when we infer the circulation of the sap in vegetables from our experience that the blood circulates in animals; and those, who hastily followed that imperfect analogy, are found, by more accurate experiments, to have been mistaken.

If we see a house, CLEANTHES, we conclude, with the greatest certainty, that it had an architect or builder; because this is precisely that species of effect which we have experienced to proceed from that species of cause. But surely you will not affirm, that the universe bears such a resemblance to a house, that we can with the same certainty infer a similar cause, or that the analogy is here entire and perfect. The dissimilitude is so striking, that the utmost you can here pretend to is a guess, a conjecture, a presumption concerning a similar cause; and how that pretension will be received in the world, I leave you to consider.

It would surely be very ill received, replied CLEANTHES; and I should be deservedly blamed and detested, did I allow, that the proofs of a Deity amounted to no more than a guess or conjecture. But is the whole adjustment of means to ends in a house and in the universe so slight a resemblance? The economy of final causes? The order, proportion, and arrangement of every part? Steps of a stair are plainly contrived, that human legs may use them in mounting; and this inference is certain and infallible. Human legs are also contrived for walking and mounting; and this inference, I allow, is not altogether so certain, because of the dissimilarity which you remark; but does it, therefore, deserve the name only of presumption or conjecture?

Good God! cried DEMEA, interrupting him, where are we? Zealous defenders of religion allow, that the proofs of a Deity fall short of perfect evidence! And you, PHILO, on whose assistance I depended in proving the adorable mysteriousness of the Divine Nature, do you assent to all these extravagant opinions of CLEANTHES? For what other name can I give them? or, why spare my censure, when such principles are advanced, supported by such an authority, before so young a man as PAMPHILUS?

You seem not to apprehend, replied PHILO, that I argue with CLEANTHES in his own way; and, by showing him the dangerous consequences of his tenets, hope at last to reduce him to our opinion. But what sticks most with you, I observe, is the representation which CLEANTHES has made of the argument a posteriori; and finding that that argument is likely to escape your hold and vanish into air, you think it so disguised, that you can scarcely believe it to be set in its true light. Now, however much I may dissent, in other respects, from the dangerous principles of CLEANTHES, I must allow that he has fairly represented that argument; and I shall endeavour so to state the matter to you, that you will entertain no further scruples with regard to it.

Were a man to abstract from every thing which he knows or has seen, he would be altogether incapable, merely from his own ideas, to determine what kind of scene the universe must be, or to give the preference to one state or situation of things above another. For as nothing which he clearly conceives could be esteemed impossible or implying a contradiction, every chimera of his fancy would be upon an equal footing; nor could he assign any just reason why he adheres to one idea or system, and rejects the others which are equally possible.

Again; after he opens his eyes, and contemplates the world as it really is, it would be impossible for him at first to assign the cause of any one event, much less of the whole of things, or of the universe. He might set his fancy a rambling; and she might bring him in an infinite variety of reports and representations. These would all be possible; but being all equally possible, he would never of himself give a satisfactory account for his preferring one of them to the rest. Experience alone can point out to him the true cause of any phenomenon.

Now, according to this method of reasoning, DEMEA, it follows, (and is, indeed, tacitly allowed by CLEANTHES himself,) that order, arrangement, or the adjustment of final causes, is not of itself any proof of design; but only so far as it has been experienced to proceed from that principle. For aught we can know a priori, matter may contain the source or spring of order originally within itself, as well as mind does; and there is no more difficulty in conceiving, that the several elements, from an internal unknown cause, may fall into the most exquisite arrangement, than to conceive that their ideas, in the great universal mind, from a like internal unknown cause, fall into that arrangement. The equal possibility of both these suppositions is allowed. But, by experience, we find, (according to CLEANTHES), that there is a difference between them. Throw several pieces of steel together, without shape or form; they will never arrange themselves so as to compose a watch. Stone, and mortar, and wood, without an architect, never erect a house. But the ideas in a human mind, we see, by an unknown, inexplicable economy, arrange themselves so as to form the plan of a watch or house. Experience, therefore, proves, that there is an original principle of order in mind, not in matter. From similar effects we infer similar causes. The adjustment of means to ends is alike in the universe, as in a machine of human contrivance. The causes, therefore, must be resembling.

I was from the beginning scandalised, I must own, with this resemblance, which is asserted, between the Deity and human creatures; and must conceive it to imply such a degradation of the Supreme Being as no sound Theist could endure. With your assistance, therefore, DEMEA, I shall endeavour to defend what you justly call the adorable mysteriousness of the Divine Nature, and shall refute this reasoning of CLEANTHES, provided he allows that I have made a fair representation of it.

When CLEANTHES had assented, PHILO, after a short pause, proceeded in the following manner.

That all inferences, CLEANTHES, concerning fact, are founded on experience; and that all experimental reasonings are founded on the supposition that similar causes prove similar effects, and similar effects similar causes; I shall not at present much dispute with you. But observe, I entreat you, with what extreme caution all just reasoners proceed in the transferring of experiments to similar cases. Unless the cases be exactly similar, they repose no perfect confidence in applying their past observation to any particular phenomenon. Every alteration of circumstances occasions a doubt concerning the event; and it requires new experiments to prove certainly, that the new circumstances are of no moment or importance. A change in bulk, situation, arrangement, age, disposition of the air, or surrounding bodies; any of these particulars may be attended with the most unexpected consequences: And unless the objects be quite familiar to us, it is the highest temerity to expect with assurance, after any of these changes, an event similar to that which before fell under our observation. The slow and deliberate steps of philosophers here, if any where, are distinguished from the precipitate march of the vulgar, who, hurried on by the smallest similitude, are incapable of all discernment or consideration.

But can you think, CLEANTHES, that your usual phlegm and philosophy have been preserved in so wide a step as you have taken, when you compared to the universe houses, ships, furniture, machines, and, from their similarity in some circumstances, inferred a similarity in their causes? Thought, design, intelligence, such as we discover in men and other animals, is no more than one of the springs and principles of the universe, as well as heat or cold, attraction or repulsion, and a hundred others, which fall under daily observation. It is an active cause, by which some particular parts of nature, we find, produce alterations on other parts. But can a conclusion, with any propriety, be transferred from parts to the whole? Does not the great disproportion bar all comparison and inference? From observing the growth of a hair, can we learn any thing concerning the generation of a man? Would the manner of a leaf's blowing, even though perfectly known, afford us any instruction concerning the vegetation of a tree?

But, allowing that we were to take the operations of one part of nature upon another, for the foundation of our judgement concerning the origin of the whole, (which never can be admitted,) yet why select so minute, so weak, so bounded a principle, as the reason and design of animals is found to be upon this planet? What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call thought, that we must thus make it the model of the whole universe? Our partiality in our own favour does indeed present it on all occasions; but sound philosophy ought carefully to guard against so natural an illusion.

So far from admitting, continued PHILO, that the operations of a part can afford us any just conclusion concerning the origin of the whole, I will not allow any one part to form a rule for another part, if the latter be very remote from the former. Is there any reasonable ground to conclude, that the inhabitants of other planets possess thought, intelligence, reason, or any thing similar to these faculties in men? When nature has so extremely diversified her manner of operation in this small globe, can we imagine that she incessantly copies herself throughout so immense a universe? And if thought, as we may well suppose, be confined merely to this narrow corner, and has even there so limited a sphere of action, with what propriety can we assign it for the original cause of all things? The narrow views of a peasant, who makes his domestic economy the rule for the government of kingdoms, is in comparison a pardonable sophism.

But were we ever so much assured, that a thought and reason, resembling the human, were to be found throughout the whole universe, and were its activity elsewhere vastly greater and more commanding than it appears in this globe; yet I cannot see, why the operations of a world constituted, arranged, adjusted, can with any propriety be extended to a world which is in its embryo state, and is advancing towards that constitution and arrangement. By observation, we know somewhat of the economy, action, and nourishment of a finished animal; but we must transfer with great caution that observation to the growth of a foetus in the womb, and still more to the formation of an animalcule in the loins of its male parent. Nature, we find, even from our limited experience, possesses an infinite number of springs and principles, which incessantly discover themselves on every change of her position and situation. And what new and unknown principles would actuate her in so new and unknown a situation as that of the formation of a universe, we cannot, without the utmost temerity, pretend to determine.

A very small part of this great system, during a very short time, is very imperfectly discovered to us; and do we thence pronounce decisively concerning the origin of the whole?

Admirable conclusion! Stone, wood, brick, iron, brass, have not, at this time, in this minute globe of earth, an order or arrangement without human art and contrivance; therefore the universe could not originally attain its order and arrangement, without something similar to human art. But is a part of nature a rule for another part very wide of the former? Is it a rule for the whole? Is a very small part a rule for the universe? Is nature in one situation, a certain rule for nature in another situation vastly different from the former?

And can you blame me, CLEANTHES, if I here imitate the prudent reserve of SIMONIDES, who, according to the noted story, being asked by HIERO, What God was? desired a day to think of it, and then two days more; and after that manner continually prolonged the term, without ever bringing in his definition or description? Could you even blame me, if I had answered at first, that I did not know, and was sensible that this subject lay vastly beyond the reach of my faculties? You might cry out sceptic and railler, as much as you pleased: but having found, in so many other subjects much more familiar, the imperfections and even contradictions of human reason, I never should expect any success from its feeble conjectures, in a subject so sublime, and so remote from the sphere of our observation. When two species of objects have always been observed to be conjoined together, I can infer, by custom, the existence of one wherever I see the existence of the other; and this I call an argument from experience. But how this argument can have place, where the objects, as in the present case, are single, individual, without parallel, or specific resemblance, may be difficult to explain. And will any man tell me with a serious countenance, that an orderly universe must arise from some thought and art like the human, because we have experience of it? To ascertain this reasoning, it were requisite that we had experience of the origin of worlds; and it is not sufficient, surely, that we have seen ships and cities arise from human art and contrivance...

PHILO was proceeding in this vehement manner, somewhat between jest and earnest, as it appeared to me, when he observed some signs of impatience in CLEANTHES, and then immediately stopped short. What I had to suggest, said CLEANTHES, is only that you would not abuse terms, or make use of popular expressions to subvert philosophical reasonings. You know, that the vulgar often distinguish reason from experience, even where the question relates only to matter of fact and existence; though it is found, where that reason is properly analysed, that it is nothing but a species of experience. To prove by experience the origin of the universe from mind, is not more contrary to common speech, than to prove the motion of the earth from the same principle. And a caviller might raise all the same objections to the Copernican system, which you have urged against my reasonings. Have you other earths, might he say, which you have seen to move? Have...

Yes! cried PHILO, interrupting him, we have other earths. Is not the moon another earth, which we see to turn round its centre? Is not Venus another earth, where we observe the same phenomenon? Are not the revolutions of the sun also a confirmation, from analogy, of the same theory? All the planets, are they not earths, which revolve about the sun? Are not the satellites moons, which move round Jupiter and Saturn, and along with these primary planets round the sun? These analogies and resemblances, with others which I have not mentioned, are the sole proofs of the COPERNICAN system; and to you it belongs to consider, whether you have any analogies of the same kind to support your theory.

In reality, CLEANTHES, continued he, the modern system of astronomy is now so much received by all inquirers, and has become so essential a part even of our earliest education, that we are not commonly very scrupulous in examining the reasons upon which it is founded. It is now become a matter of mere curiosity to study the first writers on that subject, who had the full force of prejudice to encounter, and were obliged to turn their arguments on every side in order to render them popular and convincing. But if we peruse GALILEO's famous Dialogues concerning the system of the world, we shall find, that that great genius, one of the sublimest that ever existed, first bent all his endeavours to prove, that there was no foundation for the distinction commonly made between elementary and celestial substances. The schools, proceeding from the illusions of sense, had carried this distinction very far; and had established the latter substances to be ingenerable, incorruptible, unalterable, impassable; and had assigned all the opposite qualities to the former. But GALILEO, beginning with the moon, proved its similarity in every particular to the earth; its convex figure, its natural darkness when not illuminated, its density, its distinction into solid and liquid, the variations of its phases, the mutual illuminations of the earth and moon, their mutual eclipses, the inequalities of the lunar surface, &c. After many instances of this kind, with regard to all the planets, men plainly saw that these bodies became proper objects of experience; and that the similarity of their nature enabled us to extend the same arguments and phenomena from one to the other.

In this cautious proceeding of the astronomers, you may read your own condemnation, CLEANTHES; or rather may see, that the subject in which you are engaged exceeds all human reason and inquiry. Can you pretend to show any such similarity between the fabric of a house, and the generation of a universe? Have you ever seen nature in any such situation as resembles the first arrangement of the elements? Have worlds ever been formed under your eye; and have you had leisure to observe the whole progress of the phenomenon, from the first appearance of order to its final consummation? If you have, then cite your experience, and deliver your theory.

PART 3

How the most absurd argument, replied CLEANTHES, in the hands of a man of ingenuity and invention, may acquire an air of probability! Are you not aware, PHILO, that it became necessary for Copernicus and his first disciples to prove the similarity of the terrestrial and celestial matter; because several philosophers, blinded by old systems, and supported by some sensible appearances, had denied this similarity? but that it is by no means necessary, that Theists should prove the similarity of the works of Nature to those of Art; because this similarity is self-evident and undeniable? The same matter, a like form; what more is requisite to show an analogy between their causes, and to ascertain the origin of all things from a divine purpose and intention? Your objections, I must freely tell you, are no better than the abstruse cavils of those philosophers who denied motion; and ought to be refuted in the same manner, by illustrations, examples, and instances, rather than by serious argument and philosophy.

Suppose, therefore, that an articulate voice were heard in the clouds, much louder and more melodious than any which human art could ever reach: Suppose, that this voice were extended in the same instant over all nations, and spoke to each nation in its own language and dialect: Suppose, that the words delivered not only contain a just sense and meaning, but convey some instruction altogether worthy of a benevolent Being, superior to mankind: Could you possibly hesitate a moment concerning the cause of this voice? and must you not instantly ascribe it to some design or purpose? Yet I cannot see but all the same objections (if they merit that appellation) which lie against the system of Theism, may also be produced against this inference.

Might you not say, that all conclusions concerning fact were founded on experience: that when we hear an articulate voice in the dark, and thence infer a man, it is only the resemblance of the effects which leads us to conclude that there is a like resemblance in the cause: but that this extraordinary voice, by its loudness, extent, and flexibility to all languages, bears so little analogy to any human voice, that we have no reason to suppose any analogy in their causes: and consequently, that a rational, wise, coherent speech proceeded, you know not whence, from some accidental whistling of the winds, not from any divine reason or intelligence? You see clearly your own objections in these cavils, and I hope too you see clearly, that they cannot possibly have more force in the one case than in the other.

But to bring the case still nearer the present one of the universe, I shall make two suppositions, which imply not any absurdity or impossibility. Suppose that there is a natural, universal, invariable language, common to every individual of human race; and that books are natural productions, which perpetuate themselves in the same manner with animals and vegetables, by descent and propagation. Several expressions of our passions contain a universal language: all brute animals have a natural speech, which, however limited, is very intelligible to their own species. And as there are infinitely fewer parts and less contrivance in the finest composition of eloquence, than in the coarsest organised body, the propagation of an Iliad or Aeneid is an easier supposition than that of any plant or animal.

Suppose, therefore, that you enter into your library, thus peopled by natural volumes, containing the most refined reason and most exquisite beauty; could you possibly open one of them, and doubt, that its original cause bore the strongest analogy to mind and intelligence? When it reasons and discourses; when it expostulates, argues, and enforces its views and topics; when it applies sometimes to the pure intellect, sometimes to the affections; when it collects, disposes, and adorns every consideration suited to the subject; could you persist in asserting, that all this, at the bottom, had really no meaning; and that the first formation of this volume in the loins of its original parent proceeded not from thought and design? Your obstinacy, I know, reaches not that degree of firmness: even your sceptical play and wantonness would be abashed at so glaring an absurdity.

But if there be any difference, PHILO, between this supposed case and the real one of the universe, it is all to the advantage of the latter. The anatomy of an animal affords many stronger instances of design than the perusal of LIVY or TACITUS; and any objection which you start in the former case, by carrying me back to so unusual and extraordinary a scene as the first formation of worlds, the same objection has place on the supposition of our vegetating library. Choose, then, your party, PHILO, without ambiguity or evasion; assert either that a rational volume is no proof of a rational cause, or admit of a similar cause to all the works of nature.

Let me here observe too, continued CLEANTHES, that this religious argument, instead of being weakened by that scepticism so much affected by you, rather acquires force from it, and becomes more firm and undisputed. To exclude all argument or reasoning of every kind, is either affectation or madness. The declared profession of every reasonable sceptic is only to reject abstruse, remote, and refined arguments; to adhere to common sense and the plain instincts of nature; and to assent, wherever any reasons strike him with so full a force that he cannot, without the greatest violence, prevent it. Now the arguments for Natural Religion are plainly of this kind; and nothing but the most perverse, obstinate metaphysics can reject them. Consider, anatomise the eye; survey its structure and contrivance; and tell me, from your own feeling, if the idea of a contriver does not immediately flow in upon you with a force like that of sensation. The most obvious conclusion, surely, is in favour of design; and it requires time, reflection, and study, to summon up those frivolous, though abstruse objections, which can support Infidelity. Who can behold the male and female of each species, the correspondence of their parts and instincts, their passions, and whole course of life before and after generation, but must be sensible, that the propagation of the species is intended by Nature? Millions and millions of such instances present themselves through every part of the universe; and no language can convey a more intelligible irresistible meaning, than the curious adjustment of final causes. To what degree, therefore, of blind dogmatism must one have attained, to reject such natural and such convincing arguments?

Some beauties in writing we may meet with, which seem contrary to rules, and which gain the affections, and animate the imagination, in opposition to all the precepts of criticism, and to the authority of the established masters of art. And if the argument for Theism be, as you pretend, contradictory to the principles of logic; its universal, its irresistible influence proves clearly, that there may be arguments of a like irregular nature. Whatever cavils may be urged, an orderly world, as well as a coherent, articulate speech, will still be received as an incontestable proof of design and intention.

It sometimes happens, I own, that the religious arguments have not their due influence on an ignorant savage and barbarian; not because they are obscure and difficult, but because he never asks himself any question with regard to them. Whence arises the curious structure of an animal? From the copulation of its parents. And these whence? From their parents? A few removes set the objects at such a distance, that to him they are lost in darkness and confusion; nor is he actuated by any curiosity to trace them further. But this is neither dogmatism nor scepticism, but stupidity: a state of mind very different from your sifting, inquisitive disposition, my ingenious friend. You can trace causes from effects: You can compare the most distant and remote objects: and your greatest errors proceed not from barrenness of thought and invention, but from too luxuriant a fertility, which suppresses your natural good sense, by a profusion of unnecessary scruples and objections.

Here I could observe, HERMIPPUS, that PHILO was a little embarrassed and confounded: But while he hesitated in delivering an answer, luckily for him, DEMEA broke in upon the discourse, and saved his countenance.

Your instance, CLEANTHES, said he, drawn from books and language, being familiar, has, I confess, so much more force on that account: but is there not some danger too in this very circumstance; and may it not render us presumptuous, by making us imagine we comprehend the Deity, and have some adequate idea of his nature and attributes? When I read a volume, I enter into the mind and intention of the author: I become him, in a manner, for the instant; and have an immediate feeling and conception of those ideas which revolved in his imagination while employed in that composition. But so near an approach we never surely can make to the Deity. His ways are not our ways. His attributes are perfect, but incomprehensible. And this volume of nature contains a great and inexplicable riddle, more than any intelligible discourse or reasoning.

The ancient PLATONISTS, you know, were the most religious and devout of all the Pagan philosophers; yet many of them, particularly PLOTINUS, expressly declare, that intellect or understanding is not to be ascribed to the Deity; and that our most perfect worship of him consists, not in acts of veneration, reverence, gratitude, or love; but in a certain mysterious self-annihilation, or total extinction of all our faculties. These ideas are, perhaps, too far stretched; but still it must be acknowledged, that, by representing the Deity as so intelligible and comprehensible, and so similar to a human mind, we are guilty of the grossest and most narrow partiality, and make ourselves the model of the whole universe.

All the sentiments of the human mind, gratitude, resentment, love, friendship, approbation, blame, pity, emulation, envy, have a plain reference to the state and situation of man, and are calculated for preserving the existence and promoting the activity of such a being in such circumstances. It seems, therefore, unreasonable to transfer such sentiments to a supreme existence, or to suppose him actuated by them; and the phenomena besides of the universe will not support us in such a theory. All our ideas, derived from the senses, are confessedly false and illusive; and cannot therefore be supposed to have place in a supreme intelligence: And as the ideas of internal sentiment, added to those of the external senses, compose the whole furniture of human understanding, we may conclude, that none of the materials of thought are in any respect similar in the human and in the divine intelligence. Now, as to the manner of thinking; how can we make any comparison between them, or suppose them any wise resembling? Our thought is fluctuating, uncertain, fleeting, successive, and compounded; and were we to remove these circumstances, we absolutely annihilate its essence, and it would in such a case be an abuse of terms to apply to it the name of thought or reason. At least if it appear more pious and respectful (as it really is) still to retain these terms, when we mention the Supreme Being, we ought to acknowledge, that their meaning, in that case, is totally incomprehensible; and that the infirmities of our nature do not permit us to reach any ideas which in the least correspond to the ineffable sublimity of the Divine attributes.

PART 4

It seems strange to me, said CLEANTHES, that you, DEMEA, who are so sincere in the cause of religion, should still maintain the mysterious, incomprehensible nature of the Deity, and should insist so strenuously that he has no manner of likeness or resemblance to human creatures. The Deity, I can readily allow, possesses many powers and attributes of which we can have no comprehension: But if our ideas, so far as they go, be not just, and adequate, and correspondent to his real nature, I know not what there is in this subject worth insisting on. Is the name, without any meaning, of such mighty importance? Or how do you mystics, who maintain the absolute incomprehensibility of the Deity, differ from Sceptics or Atheists, who assert, that the first cause of all is unknown and unintelligible? Their temerity must be very great, if, after rejecting the production by a mind, I mean a mind resembling the human, (for I know of no other,) they pretend to assign, with certainty, any other specific intelligible cause: And their conscience must be very scrupulous indeed, if they refuse to call the universal unknown cause a God or Deity; and to bestow on him as many sublime eulogies and unmeaning epithets as you shall please to require of them.

Who could imagine, replied DEMEA, that CLEANTHES, the calm philosophical CLEANTHES, would attempt to refute his antagonists by affixing a nickname to them; and, like the common bigots and inquisitors of the age, have recourse to invective and declamation, instead of reasoning? Or does he not perceive, that these topics are easily retorted, and that Anthropomorphite is an appellation as invidious, and implies as dangerous consequences, as the epithet of Mystic, with which he has honoured us? In reality, CLEANTHES, consider what it is you assert when you represent the Deity as similar to a human mind and understanding. What is the soul of man? A composition of various faculties, passions, sentiments, ideas; united, indeed, into one self or person, but still distinct from each other. When it reasons, the ideas, which are the parts of its discourse, arrange themselves in a certain form or order; which is not preserved entire for a moment, but immediately gives place to another arrangement. New opinions, new passions, new affections, new feelings arise, which continually diversify the mental scene, and produce in it the greatest variety and most rapid succession imaginable. How is this compatible with that perfect immutability and simplicity which all true Theists ascribe to the Deity? By the same act, say they, he sees past, present, and future: His love and hatred, his mercy and justice, are one individual operation: He is entire in every point of space; and complete in every instant of duration. No succession, no change, no acquisition, no diminution. What he is implies not in it any shadow of distinction or diversity. And what he is this moment he ever has been, and ever will be, without any new judgement, sentiment, or operation. He stands fixed in one simple, perfect state: nor can you ever say, with any propriety, that this act of his is different from that other; or that this judgement or idea has been lately formed, and will give place, by succession, to any different judgement or idea.

I can readily allow, said CLEANTHES, that those who maintain the perfect simplicity of the Supreme Being, to the extent in which you have explained it, are complete Mystics, and chargeable with all the consequences which I have drawn from their opinion. They are, in a word, Atheists, without knowing it. For though it be allowed, that the Deity possesses attributes of which we have no comprehension, yet ought we never to ascribe to him any attributes which are absolutely incompatible with that intelligent nature essential to him. A mind, whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not distinct and successive; one, that is wholly simple, and totally immutable, is a mind which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hatred; or, in a word, is no mind at all. It is an abuse of terms to give it that appellation; and we may as well speak of limited extension without figure, or of number without composition.

Pray consider, said PHILO, whom you are at present inveighing against. You are honouring with the appellation of Atheist all the sound, orthodox divines, almost, who have treated of this subject; and you will at last be, yourself, found, according to your reckoning, the only sound Theist in the world. But if idolaters be Atheists, as, I think, may justly be asserted, and Christian Theologians the same, what becomes of the argument, so much celebrated, derived from the universal consent of mankind?

But because I know you are not much swayed by names and authorities, I shall endeavour to show you, a little more distinctly, the inconveniences of that Anthropomorphism, which you have embraced; and shall prove, that there is no ground to suppose a plan of the world to be formed in the Divine mind, consisting of distinct ideas, differently arranged, in the same manner as an architect forms in his head the plan of a house which he intends to execute.

It is not easy, I own, to see what is gained by this supposition, whether we judge of the matter by Reason or by Experience. We are still obliged to mount higher, in order to find the cause of this cause, which you had assigned as satisfactory and conclusive.

If Reason (I mean abstract reason, derived from inquiries a priori) be not alike mute with regard to all questions concerning cause and effect, this sentence at least it will venture to pronounce, That a mental world, or universe of ideas, requires a cause as much, as does a material world, or universe of objects; and, if similar in its arrangement, must require a similar cause. For what is there in this subject, which should occasion a different conclusion or inference? In an abstract view, they are entirely alike; and no difficulty attends the one supposition, which is not common to both of them.

Again, when we will needs force Experience to pronounce some sentence, even on these subjects which lie beyond her sphere, neither can she perceive any material difference in this particular, between these two kinds of worlds; but finds them to be governed by similar principles, and to depend upon an equal variety of causes in their operations. We have specimens in miniature of both of them. Our own mind resembles the one; a vegetable or animal body the other. Let experience, therefore, judge from these samples. Nothing seems more delicate, with regard to its causes, than thought; and as these causes never operate in two persons after the same manner, so we never find two persons who think exactly alike. Nor indeed does the same person think exactly alike at any two different periods of time. A difference of age, of the disposition of his body, of weather, of food, of company, of books, of passions; any of these particulars, or others more minute, are sufficient to alter the curious machinery of thought, and communicate to it very different movements and operations. As far as we can judge, vegetables and animal bodies are not more delicate in their motions, nor depend upon a greater variety or more curious adjustment of springs and principles.

How, therefore, shall we satisfy ourselves concerning the cause of that Being whom you suppose the Author of Nature, or, according to your system of Anthropomorphism, the ideal world, into which you trace the material? Have we not the same reason to trace that ideal world into another ideal world, or new intelligent principle? But if we stop, and go no further; why go so far? why not stop at the material world? How can we satisfy ourselves without going on in infinitum? And, after all, what satisfaction is there in that infinite progression? Let us remember the story of the Indian philosopher and his elephant. It was never more applicable than to the present subject. If the material world rests upon a similar ideal world, this ideal world must rest upon some other; and so on, without end. It were better, therefore, never to look beyond the present material world. By supposing it to contain the principle of its order within itself, we really assert it to be God; and the sooner we arrive at that Divine Being, so much the better. When you go one step beyond the mundane system, you only excite an inquisitive humour which it is impossible ever to satisfy.

To say, that the different ideas which compose the reason of the Supreme Being, fall into order of themselves, and by their own nature, is really to talk without any precise meaning. If it has a meaning, I would fain know, why it is not as good sense to say, that the parts of the material world fall into order of themselves and by their own nature. Can the one opinion be intelligible, while the other is not so?

We have, indeed, experience of ideas which fall into order of themselves, and without any known cause. But, I am sure, we have a much larger experience of matter which does the same; as, in all instances of generation and vegetation, where the accurate analysis of the cause exceeds all human comprehension. We have also experience of particular systems of thought and of matter which have no order; of the first in madness, of the second in corruption. Why, then, should we think, that order is more essential to one than the other? And if it requires a cause in both, what do we gain by your system, in tracing the universe of objects into a similar universe of ideas? The first step which we make leads us on for ever. It were, therefore, wise in us to limit all our inquiries to the present world, without looking further. No satisfaction can ever be attained by these speculations, which so far exceed the narrow bounds of human understanding.

It was usual with the PERIPATETICS, you know, CLEANTHES, when the cause of any phenomenon was demanded, to have recourse to their faculties or occult qualities; and to say, for instance, that bread nourished by its nutritive faculty, and senna purged by its purgative. But it has been discovered, that this subterfuge was nothing but the disguise of ignorance; and that these philosophers, though less ingenuous, really said the same thing with the sceptics or the vulgar, who fairly confessed that they knew not the cause of these phenomena. In like manner, when it is asked, what cause produces order in the ideas of the Supreme Being; can any other reason be assigned by you, Anthropomorphites, than that it is a rational faculty, and that such is the nature of the Deity? But why a similar answer will not be equally satisfactory in accounting for the order of the world, without having recourse to any such intelligent creator as you insist on, may be difficult to determine. It is only to say, that such is the nature of material objects, and that they are all originally possessed of a faculty of order and proportion. These are only more learned and elaborate ways of confessing our ignorance; nor has the one hypothesis any real advantage above the other, except in its greater conformity to vulgar prejudices.

You have displayed this argument with great emphasis, replied CLEANTHES: You seem not sensible how easy it is to answer it. Even in common life, if I assign a cause for any event, is it any objection, PHILO, that I cannot assign the cause of that cause, and answer every new question which may incessantly be started? And what philosophers could possibly submit to so rigid a rule? philosophers, who confess ultimate causes to be totally unknown; and are sensible, that the most refined principles into which they trace the phenomena, are still to them as inexplicable as these phenomena themselves are to the vulgar. The order and arrangement of nature, the curious adjustment of final causes, the plain use and intention of every part and organ; all these bespeak in the clearest language an intelligent cause or author. The heavens and the earth join in the same testimony: The whole chorus of Nature raises one hymn to the praises of its Creator. You alone, or almost alone, disturb this general harmony. You start abstruse doubts, cavils, and objections: You ask me, what is the cause of this cause? I know not; I care not; that concerns not me. I have found a Deity; and here I stop my inquiry. Let those go further, who are wiser or more enterprising.

I pretend to be neither, replied PHILO: And for that very reason, I should never perhaps have attempted to go so far; especially when I am sensible, that I must at last be contented to sit down with the same answer, which, without further trouble, might have satisfied me from the beginning. If I am still to remain in utter ignorance of causes, and can absolutely give an explication of nothing, I shall never esteem it any advantage to shove off for a moment a difficulty, which, you acknowledge, must immediately, in its full force, recur upon me. Naturalists indeed very justly explain particular effects by more general causes, though these general causes themselves should remain in the end totally inexplicable; but they never surely thought it satisfactory to explain a particular effect by a particular cause, which was no more to be accounted for than the effect itself. An ideal system, arranged of itself, without a precedent design, is not a whit more explicable than a material one, which attains its order in a like manner; nor is there any more difficulty in the latter supposition than in the former.

PART 5

But to show you still more inconveniences, continued PHILO, in your Anthropomorphism, please to take a new survey of your principles. Like effects prove like causes. This is the experimental argument; and this, you say too, is the sole theological argument. Now, it is certain, that the liker the effects are which are seen, and the liker the causes which are inferred, the stronger is the argument. Every departure on either side diminishes the probability, and renders the experiment less conclusive. You cannot doubt of the principle; neither ought you to reject its consequences.

All the new discoveries in astronomy, which prove the immense grandeur and magnificence of the works of Nature, are so many additional arguments for a Deity, according to the true system of Theism; but, according to your hypothesis of experimental Theism, they become so many objections, by removing the effect still further from all resemblance to the effects of human art and contrivance. For, if LUCRETIUS[Lib. II. 1094], even following the old system of the world, could exclaim,

Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas?
Quis pariter coelos omnes convertere? et omnes
Ignibus aetheriis terras suffire feraces?
Omnibus inque locis esse omni tempore praesto?

If TULLY [De. nat. Deor. Lib. I] esteemed this reasoning so natural, as to put it into the mouth of his EPICUREAN:

“Quibus enim oculis animi intueri potuit vester Plato fabricam illam tanti operis, qua construi a Deo atque aedificari mundum facit? quae molitio? quae ferramenta? qui vectes? quae machinae? qui ministri tanti muneris fuerunt? quemadmodum autem obedire et parere voluntati architecti aer, ignis, aqua, terra potuerunt?”

If this argument, I say, had any force in former ages, how much greater must it have at present, when the bounds of Nature are so infinitely enlarged, and such a magnificent scene is opened to us? It is still more unreasonable to form our idea of so unlimited a cause from our experience of the narrow productions of human design and invention.

The discoveries by microscopes, as they open a new universe in miniature, are still objections, according to you, arguments, according to me. The further we push our researches of this kind, we are still led to infer the universal cause of all to be vastly different from mankind, or from any object of human experience and observation.

And what say you to the discoveries in anatomy, chemistry, botany?... These surely are no objections, replied CLEANTHES; they only discover new instances of art and contrivance. It is still the image of mind reflected on us from innumerable objects. Add, a mind like the human, said PHILO. I know of no other, replied CLEANTHES. And the liker the better, insisted PHILO. To be sure, said CLEANTHES.

Now, CLEANTHES, said PHILO, with an air of alacrity and triumph, mark the consequences. First, By this method of reasoning, you renounce all claim to infinity in any of the attributes of the Deity. For, as the cause ought only to be proportioned to the effect, and the effect, so far as it falls under our cognisance, is not infinite; what pretensions have we, upon your suppositions, to ascribe that attribute to the Divine Being? You will still insist, that, by removing him so much from all similarity to human creatures, we give in to the most arbitrary hypothesis, and at the same time weaken all proofs of his existence.

Secondly, You have no reason, on your theory, for ascribing perfection to the Deity, even in his finite capacity, or for supposing him free from every error, mistake, or incoherence, in his undertakings. There are many inexplicable difficulties in the works of Nature, which, if we allow a perfect author to be proved a priori, are easily solved, and become only seeming difficulties, from the narrow capacity of man, who cannot trace infinite relations. But according to your method of reasoning, these difficulties become all real; and perhaps will be insisted on, as new instances of likeness to human art and contrivance. At least, you must acknowledge, that it is impossible for us to tell, from our limited views, whether this system contains any great faults, or deserves any considerable praise, if compared to other possible, and even real systems. Could a peasant, if the Aeneid were read to him, pronounce that poem to be absolutely faultless, or even assign to it its proper rank among the productions of human wit, he, who had never seen any other production?

But were this world ever so perfect a production, it must still remain uncertain, whether all the excellences of the work can justly be ascribed to the workman. If we survey a ship, what an exalted idea must we form of the ingenuity of the carpenter who framed so complicated, useful, and beautiful a machine? And what surprise must we feel, when we find him a stupid mechanic, who imitated others, and copied an art, which, through a long succession of ages, after multiplied trials, mistakes, corrections, deliberations, and controversies, had been gradually improving? Many worlds might have been botched and bungled, throughout an eternity, ere this system was struck out; much labour lost, many fruitless trials made; and a slow, but continued improvement carried on during infinite ages in the art of world-making. In such subjects, who can determine, where the truth; nay, who can conjecture where the probability lies, amidst a great number of hypotheses which may be proposed, and a still greater which may be imagined?

And what shadow of an argument, continued PHILO, can you produce, from your hypothesis, to prove the unity of the Deity? A great number of men join in building a house or ship, in rearing a city, in framing a commonwealth; why may not several deities combine in contriving and framing a world? This is only so much greater similarity to human affairs. By sharing the work among several, we may so much further limit the attributes of each, and get rid of that extensive power and knowledge, which must be supposed in one deity, and which, according to you, can only serve to weaken the proof of his existence. And if such foolish, such vicious creatures as man, can yet often unite in framing and executing one plan, how much more those deities or demons, whom we may suppose several degrees more perfect!

To multiply causes without necessity, is indeed contrary to true philosophy: but this principle applies not to the present case. Were one deity antecedently proved by your theory, who were possessed of every attribute requisite to the production of the universe; it would be needless, I own, (though not absurd,) to suppose any other deity existent. But while it is still a question, Whether all these attributes are united in one subject, or dispersed among several independent beings, by what phenomena in nature can we pretend to decide the controversy? Where we see a body raised in a scale, we are sure that there is in the opposite scale, however concealed from sight, some counterpoising weight equal to it; but it is still allowed to doubt, whether that weight be an aggregate of several distinct bodies, or one uniform united mass. And if the weight requisite very much exceeds any thing which we have ever seen conjoined in any single body, the former supposition becomes still more probable and natural. An intelligent being of such vast power and capacity as is necessary to produce the universe, or, to speak in the language of ancient philosophy, so prodigious an animal exceeds all analogy, and even comprehension.

But further, CLEANTHES: men are mortal, and renew their species by generation; and this is common to all living creatures. The two great sexes of male and female, says MILTON, animate the world. Why must this circumstance, so universal, so essential, be excluded from those numerous and limited deities? Behold, then, the theogony of ancient times brought back upon us.

And why not become a perfect Anthropomorphite? Why not assert the deity or deities to be corporeal, and to have eyes, a nose, mouth, ears, &c.? EPICURUS maintained, that no man had ever seen reason but in a human figure; therefore the gods must have a human figure. And this argument, which is deservedly so much ridiculed by CICERO, becomes, according to you, solid and philosophical.

In a word, CLEANTHES, a man who follows your hypothesis is able perhaps to assert, or conjecture, that the universe, sometime, arose from something like design: but beyond that position he cannot ascertain one single circumstance; and is left afterwards to fix every point of his theology by the utmost license of fancy and hypothesis. This world, for aught he knows, is very faulty and imperfect, compared to a superior standard; and was only the first rude essay of some infant deity, who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance: it is the work only of some dependent, inferior deity; and is the object of derision to his superiors: it is the production of old age and dotage in some superannuated deity; and ever since his death, has run on at adventures, from the first impulse and active force which it received from him. You justly give signs of horror, DEMEA, at these strange suppositions; but these, and a thousand more of the same kind, are CLEANTHES’s suppositions, not mine. From the moment the attributes of the Deity are supposed finite, all these have place. And I cannot, for my part, think that so wild and unsettled a system of theology is, in any respect, preferable to none at all.

These suppositions I absolutely disown, cried CLEANTHES: they strike me, however, with no horror, especially when proposed in that rambling way in which they drop from you. On the contrary, they give me pleasure, when I see, that, by the utmost indulgence of your imagination, you never get rid of the hypothesis of design in the universe, but are obliged at every turn to have recourse to it. To this concession I adhere steadily; and this I regard as a sufficient foundation for religion.

PART 6

It must be a slight fabric, indeed, said DEMEA, which can be erected on so tottering a foundation. While we are uncertain whether there is one deity or many; whether the deity or deities, to whom we owe our existence, be perfect or imperfect, subordinate or supreme, dead or alive, what trust or confidence can we repose in them? What devotion or worship address to them? What veneration or obedience pay them? To all the purposes of life the theory of religion becomes altogether useless: and even with regard to speculative consequences, its uncertainty, according to you, must render it totally precarious and unsatisfactory.

To render it still more unsatisfactory, said PHILO, there occurs to me another hypothesis, which must acquire an air of probability from the method of reasoning so much insisted on by CLEANTHES. That like effects arise from like causes: this principle he supposes the foundation of all religion. But there is another principle of the same kind, no less certain, and derived from the same source of experience; that where several known circumstances are observed to be similar, the unknown will also be found similar. Thus, if we see the limbs of a human body, we conclude that it is also attended with a human head, though hid from us. Thus, if we see, through a chink in a wall, a small part of the sun, we conclude, that, were the wall removed, we should see the whole body. In short, this method of reasoning is so obvious and familiar, that no scruple can ever be made with regard to its solidity.

Now, if we survey the universe, so far as it falls under our knowledge, it bears a great resemblance to an animal or organised body, and seems actuated with a like principle of life and motion. A continual circulation of matter in it produces no disorder: a continual waste in every part is incessantly repaired: the closest sympathy is perceived throughout the entire system: and each part or member, in performing its proper offices, operates both to its own preservation and to that of the whole. The world, therefore, I infer, is an animal; and the Deity is the SOUL of the world, actuating it, and actuated by it.

You have too much learning, CLEANTHES, to be at all surprised at this opinion, which, you know, was maintained by almost all the Theists of antiquity, and chiefly prevails in their discourses and reasonings. For though, sometimes, the ancient philosophers reason from final causes, as if they thought the world the workmanship of God; yet it appears rather their favourite notion to consider it as his body, whose organisation renders it subservient to him. And it must be confessed, that, as the universe resembles more a human body than it does the works of human art and contrivance, if our limited analogy could ever, with any propriety, be extended to the whole of nature, the inference seems juster in favour of the ancient than the modern theory.

There are many other advantages, too, in the former theory, which recommended it to the ancient theologians. Nothing more repugnant to all their notions, because nothing more repugnant to common experience, than mind without body; a mere spiritual substance, which fell not under their senses nor comprehension, and of which they had not observed one single instance throughout all nature. Mind and body they knew, because they felt both: an order, arrangement, organisation, or internal machinery, in both, they likewise knew, after the same manner: and it could not but seem reasonable to transfer this experience to the universe; and to suppose the divine mind and body to be also coeval, and to have, both of them, order and arrangement naturally inherent in them, and inseparable from them.

Here, therefore, is a new species of Anthropomorphism, CLEANTHES, on which you may deliberate; and a theory which seems not liable to any considerable difficulties. You are too much superior, surely, to systematical prejudices, to find any more difficulty in supposing an animal body to be, originally, of itself, or from unknown causes, possessed of order and organisation, than in supposing a similar order to belong to mind. But the vulgar prejudice, that body and mind ought always to accompany each other, ought not, one should think, to be entirely neglected; since it is founded on vulgar experience, the only guide which you profess to follow in all these theological inquiries. And if you assert, that our limited experience is an unequal standard, by which to judge of the unlimited extent of nature; you entirely abandon your own hypothesis, and must thenceforward adopt our Mysticism, as you call it, and admit of the absolute incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature.

This theory, I own, replied CLEANTHES, has never before occurred to me, though a pretty natural one; and I cannot readily, upon so short an examination and reflection, deliver any opinion with regard to it. You are very scrupulous, indeed, said PHILO: were I to examine any system of yours, I should not have acted with half that caution and reserve, in starting objections and difficulties to it. However, if any thing occur to you, you will oblige us by proposing it.

Why then, replied CLEANTHES, it seems to me, that, though the world does, in many circumstances, resemble an animal body; yet is the analogy also defective in many circumstances the most material: no organs of sense; no seat of thought or reason; no one precise origin of motion and action. In short, it seems to bear a stronger resemblance to a vegetable than to an animal, and your inference would be so far inconclusive in favour of the soul of the world.

But, in the next place, your theory seems to imply the eternity of the world; and that is a principle, which, I think, can be refuted by the strongest reasons and probabilities. I shall suggest an argument to this purpose, which, I believe, has not been insisted on by any writer. Those, who reason from the late origin of arts and sciences, though their inference wants not force, may perhaps be refuted by considerations derived from the nature of human society, which is in continual revolution, between ignorance and knowledge, liberty and slavery, riches and poverty; so that it is impossible for us, from our limited experience, to foretell with assurance what events may or may not be expected. Ancient learning and history seem to have been in great danger of entirely perishing after the inundation of the barbarous nations; and had these convulsions continued a little longer, or been a little more violent, we should not probably have now known what passed in the world a few centuries before us. Nay, were it not for the superstition of the Popes, who preserved a little jargon of Latin, in order to support the appearance of an ancient and universal church, that tongue must have been utterly lost; in which case, the Western world, being totally barbarous, would not have been in a fit disposition for receiving the GREEK language and learning, which was conveyed to them after the sacking of CONSTANTINOPLE. When learning and books had been extinguished, even the mechanical arts would have fallen considerably to decay; and it is easily imagined, that fable or tradition might ascribe to them a much later origin than the true one. This vulgar argument, therefore, against the eternity of the world, seems a little precarious.

But here appears to be the foundation of a better argument. LUCULLUS was the first that brought cherry-trees from ASIA to EUROPE; though that tree thrives so well in many EUROPEAN climates, that it grows in the woods without any culture. Is it possible, that throughout a whole eternity, no EUROPEAN had ever passed into ASIA, and thought of transplanting so delicious a fruit into his own country? Or if the tree was once transplanted and propagated, how could it ever afterwards perish? Empires may rise and fall, liberty and slavery succeed alternately, ignorance and knowledge give place to each other; but the cherry-tree will still remain in the woods of GREECE, SPAIN, and ITALY, and will never be affected by the revolutions of human society.

It is not two thousand years since vines were transplanted into FRANCE, though there is no climate in the world more favourable to them. It is not three centuries since horses, cows, sheep, swine, dogs, corn, were known in AMERICA. Is it possible, that during the revolutions of a whole eternity, there never arose a COLUMBUS, who might open the communication between EUROPE and that continent? We may as well imagine, that all men would wear stockings for ten thousand years, and never have the sense to think of garters to tie them. All these seem convincing proofs of the youth, or rather infancy, of the world; as being founded on the operation of principles more constant and steady than those by which human society is governed and directed. Nothing less than a total convulsion of the elements will ever destroy all the EUROPEAN animals and vegetables which are now to be found in the Western world.

And what argument have you against such convulsions? replied PHILO. Strong and almost incontestable proofs may be traced over the whole earth, that every part of this globe has continued for many ages entirely covered with water. And though order were supposed inseparable from matter, and inherent in it; yet may matter be susceptible of many and great revolutions, through the endless periods of eternal duration. The incessant changes, to which every part of it is subject, seem to intimate some such general transformations; though, at the same time, it is observable, that all the changes and corruptions of which we have ever had experience, are but passages from one state of order to another; nor can matter ever rest in total deformity and confusion. What we see in the parts, we may infer in the whole; at least, that is the method of reasoning on which you rest your whole theory. And were I obliged to defend any particular system of this nature, which I never willingly should do, I esteem none more plausible than that which ascribes an eternal inherent principle of order to the world, though attended with great and continual revolutions and alterations. This at once solves all difficulties; and if the solution, by being so general, is not entirely complete and satisfactory, it is at least a theory that we must sooner or later have recourse to, whatever system we embrace. How could things have been as they are, were there not an original inherent principle of order somewhere, in thought or in matter? And it is very indifferent to which of these we give the preference. Chance has no place, on any hypothesis, sceptical or religious. Every thing is surely governed by steady, inviolable laws. And were the inmost essence of things laid open to us, we should then discover a scene, of which, at present, we can have no idea. Instead of admiring the order of natural beings, we should clearly see that it was absolutely impossible for them, in the smallest article, ever to admit of any other disposition.

Were any one inclined to revive the ancient Pagan Theology, which maintained, as we learn from HESIOD, that this globe was governed by 30,000 deities, who arose from the unknown powers of nature: you would naturally object, CLEANTHES, that nothing is gained by this hypothesis; and that it is as easy to suppose all men animals, beings more numerous, but less perfect, to have sprung immediately from a like origin. Push the same inference a step further, and you will find a numerous society of deities as explicable as one universal deity, who possesses within himself the powers and perfections of the whole society. All these systems, then, of Scepticism, Polytheism, and Theism, you must allow, on your principles, to be on a like footing, and that no one of them has any advantage over the others. You may thence learn the fallacy of your principles.

PART 7

But here, continued PHILO, in examining the ancient system of the soul of the world, there strikes me, all on a sudden, a new idea, which, if just, must go near to subvert all your reasoning, and destroy even your first inferences, on which you repose such confidence. If the universe bears a greater likeness to animal bodies and to vegetables, than to the works of human art, it is more probable that its cause resembles the cause of the former than that of the latter, and its origin ought rather to be ascribed to generation or vegetation, than to reason or design. Your conclusion, even according to your own principles, is therefore lame and defective.

Pray open up this argument a little further, said DEMEA, for I do not rightly apprehend it in that concise manner in which you have expressed it.

Our friend CLEANTHES, replied PHILO, as you have heard, asserts, that since no question of fact can be proved otherwise than by experience, the existence of a Deity admits not of proof from any other medium. The world, says he, resembles the works of human contrivance; therefore its cause must also resemble that of the other. Here we may remark, that the operation of one very small part of nature, to wit man, upon another very small part, to wit that inanimate matter lying within his reach, is the rule by which CLEANTHES judges of the origin of the whole; and he measures objects, so widely disproportioned, by the same individual standard. But to waive all objections drawn from this topic, I affirm, that there are other parts of the universe (besides the machines of human invention) which bear still a greater resemblance to the fabric of the world, and which, therefore, afford a better conjecture concerning the universal origin of this system. These parts are animals and vegetables. The world plainly resembles more an animal or a vegetable, than it does a watch or a knitting-loom. Its cause, therefore, it is more probable, resembles the cause of the former. The cause of the former is generation or vegetation. The cause, therefore, of the world, we may infer to be something similar or analogous to generation or vegetation.

But how is it conceivable, said DEMEA, that the world can arise from any thing similar to vegetation or generation?

Very easily, replied PHILO. In like manner as a tree sheds its seed into the neighbouring fields, and produces other trees; so the great vegetable, the world, or this planetary system, produces within itself certain seeds, which, being scattered into the surrounding chaos, vegetate into new worlds. A comet, for instance, is the seed of a world; and after it has been fully ripened, by passing from sun to sun, and star to star, it is at last tossed into the unformed elements which every where surround this universe, and immediately sprouts up into a new system.

Or if, for the sake of variety (for I see no other advantage), we should suppose this world to be an animal; a comet is the egg of this animal: and in like manner as an ostrich lays its egg in the sand, which, without any further care, hatches the egg, and produces a new animal; so...

I understand you, says DEMEA: But what wild, arbitrary suppositions are these! What data have you for such extraordinary conclusions? And is the slight, imaginary resemblance of the world to a vegetable or an animal sufficient to establish the same inference with regard to both? Objects, which are in general so widely different, ought they to be a standard for each other?

Right, cries PHILO: This is the topic on which I have all along insisted. I have still asserted, that we have no data to establish any system of cosmogony. Our experience, so imperfect in itself, and so limited both in extent and duration, can afford us no probable conjecture concerning the whole of things. But if we must needs fix on some hypothesis; by what rule, pray, ought we to determine our choice? Is there any other rule than the greater similarity of the objects compared? And does not a plant or an animal, which springs from vegetation or generation, bear a stronger resemblance to the world, than does any artificial machine, which arises from reason and design?

But what is this vegetation and generation of which you talk? said DEMEA. Can you explain their operations, and anatomise that fine internal structure on which they depend?

As much, at least, replied PHILO, as CLEANTHES can explain the operations of reason, or anatomise that internal structure on which it depends. But without any such elaborate disquisitions, when I see an animal, I infer, that it sprang from generation; and that with as great certainty as you conclude a house to have been reared by design. These words, generation, reason, mark only certain powers and energies in nature, whose effects are known, but whose essence is incomprehensible; and one of these principles, more than the other, has no privilege for being made a standard to the whole of nature.

In reality, DEMEA, it may reasonably be expected, that the larger the views are which we take of things, the better will they conduct us in our conclusions concerning such extraordinary and such magnificent subjects. In this little corner of the world alone, there are four principles, reason, instinct, generation, vegetation, which are similar to each other, and are the causes of similar effects. What a number of other principles may we naturally suppose in the immense extent and variety of the universe, could we travel from planet to planet, and from system to system, in order to examine each part of this mighty fabric? Any one of these four principles above mentioned, (and a hundred others which lie open to our conjecture,) may afford us a theory by which to judge of the origin of the world; and it is a palpable and egregious partiality to confine our view entirely to that principle by which our own minds operate. Were this principle more intelligible on that account, such a partiality might be somewhat excusable: But reason, in its internal fabric and structure, is really as little known to us as instinct or vegetation; and, perhaps, even that vague, indeterminate word, Nature, to which the vulgar refer every thing, is not at the bottom more inexplicable. The effects of these principles are all known to us from experience; but the principles themselves, and their manner of operation, are totally unknown; nor is it less intelligible, or less conformable to experience, to say, that the world arose by vegetation, from a seed shed by another world, than to say that it arose from a divine reason or contrivance, according to the sense in which CLEANTHES understands it.

But methinks, said DEMEA, if the world had a vegetative quality, and could sow the seeds of new worlds into the infinite chaos, this power would be still an additional argument for design in its author. For whence could arise so wonderful a faculty but from design? Or how can order spring from any thing which perceives not that order which it bestows?

You need only look around you, replied PHILO, to satisfy yourself with regard to this question. A tree bestows order and organisation on that tree which springs from it, without knowing the order; an animal in the same manner on its offspring; a bird on its nest; and instances of this kind are even more frequent in the world than those of order, which arise from reason and contrivance. To say, that all this order in animals and vegetables proceeds ultimately from design, is begging the question; nor can that great point be ascertained otherwise than by proving, a priori, both that order is, from its nature, inseparably attached to thought; and that it can never of itself, or from original unknown principles, belong to matter.

But further, DEMEA; this objection which you urge can never be made use of by CLEANTHES, without renouncing a defence which he has already made against one of my objections. When I inquired concerning the cause of that supreme reason and intelligence into which he resolves every thing; he told me, that the impossibility of satisfying such inquiries could never be admitted as an objection in any species of philosophy. “We must stop somewhere”, says he; “nor is it ever within the reach of human capacity to explain ultimate causes, or show the last connections of any objects. It is sufficient, if any steps, so far as we go, are supported by experience and observation.” Now, that vegetation and generation, as well as reason, are experienced to be principles of order in nature, is undeniable. If I rest my system of cosmogony on the former, preferably to the latter, it is at my choice. The matter seems entirely arbitrary. And when CLEANTHES asks me what is the cause of my great vegetative or generative faculty, I am equally entitled to ask him the cause of his great reasoning principle. These questions we have agreed to forbear on both sides; and it is chiefly his interest on the present occasion to stick to this agreement. Judging by our limited and imperfect experience, generation has some privileges above reason: for we see every day the latter arise from the former, never the former from the latter.

Compare, I beseech you, the consequences on both sides. The world, say I, resembles an animal; therefore it is an animal, therefore it arose from generation. The steps, I confess, are wide; yet there is some small appearance of analogy in each step. The world, says CLEANTHES, resembles a machine; therefore it is a machine, therefore it arose from design. The steps are here equally wide, and the analogy less striking. And if he pretends to carry on my hypothesis a step further, and to infer design or reason from the great principle of generation, on which I insist; I may, with better authority, use the same freedom to push further his hypothesis, and infer a divine generation or theogony from his principle of reason. I have at least some faint shadow of experience, which is the utmost that can ever be attained in the present subject. Reason, in innumerable instances, is observed to arise from the principle of generation, and never to arise from any other principle.

HESIOD, and all the ancient mythologists, were so struck with this analogy, that they universally explained the origin of nature from an animal birth, and copulation. PLATO too, so far as he is intelligible, seems to have adopted some such notion in his TIMAEUS.

The BRAHMINS assert, that the world arose from an infinite spider, who spun this whole complicated mass from his bowels, and annihilates afterwards the whole or any part of it, by absorbing it again, and resolving it into his own essence. Here is a species of cosmogony, which appears to us ridiculous; because a spider is a little contemptible animal, whose operations we are never likely to take for a model of the whole universe. But still here is a new species of analogy, even in our globe. And were there a planet wholly inhabited by spiders, (which is very possible,) this inference would there appear as natural and irrefragable as that which in our planet ascribes the origin of all things to design and intelligence, as explained by CLEANTHES. Why an orderly system may not be spun from the belly as well as from the brain, it will be difficult for him to give a satisfactory reason.

I must confess, PHILO, replied CLEANTHES, that of all men living, the task which you have undertaken, of raising doubts and objections, suits you best, and seems, in a manner, natural and unavoidable to you. So great is your fertility of invention, that I am not ashamed to acknowledge myself unable, on a sudden, to solve regularly such out-of-the-way difficulties as you incessantly start upon me: though I clearly see, in general, their fallacy and error. And I question not, but you are yourself, at present, in the same case, and have not the solution so ready as the objection: while you must be sensible, that common sense and reason are entirely against you; and that such whimsies as you have delivered, may puzzle, but never can convince us.

PART 8

What you ascribe to the fertility of my invention, replied PHILO, is entirely owing to the nature of the subject. In subjects adapted to the narrow compass of human reason, there is commonly but one determination, which carries probability or conviction with it; and to a man of sound judgement, all other suppositions, but that one, appear entirely absurd and chimerical. But in such questions as the present, a hundred contradictory views may preserve a kind of imperfect analogy; and invention has here full scope to exert itself. Without any great effort of thought, I believe that I could, in an instant, propose other systems of cosmogony, which would have some faint appearance of truth, though it is a thousand, a million to one, if either yours or any one of mine be the true system.

For instance, what if I should revive the old EPICUREAN hypothesis? This is commonly, and I believe justly, esteemed the most absurd system that has yet been proposed; yet I know not whether, with a few alterations, it might not be brought to bear a faint appearance of probability. Instead of supposing matter infinite, as EPICURUS did, let us suppose it finite. A finite number of particles is only susceptible of finite transpositions: and it must happen, in an eternal duration, that every possible order or position must be tried an infinite number of times. This world, therefore, with all its events, even the most minute, has before been produced and destroyed, and will again be produced and destroyed, without any bounds and limitations. No one, who has a conception of the powers of infinite, in comparison of finite, will ever scruple this determination.

But this supposes, said DEMEA, that matter can acquire motion, without any voluntary agent or first mover.

And where is the difficulty, replied PHILO, of that supposition? Every event, before experience, is equally difficult and incomprehensible; and every event, after experience, is equally easy and intelligible. Motion, in many instances, from gravity, from elasticity, from electricity, begins in matter, without any known voluntary agent: and to suppose always, in these cases, an unknown voluntary agent, is mere hypothesis; and hypothesis attended with no advantages. The beginning of motion in matter itself is as conceivable a priori as its communication from mind and intelligence.

Besides, why may not motion have been propagated by impulse through all eternity, and the same stock of it, or nearly the same, be still upheld in the universe? As much is lost by the composition of motion, as much is gained by its resolution. And whatever the causes are, the fact is certain, that matter is, and always has been, in continual agitation, as far as human experience or tradition reaches. There is not probably, at present, in the whole universe, one particle of matter at absolute rest.

And this very consideration too, continued PHILO, which we have stumbled on in the course of the argument, suggests a new hypothesis of cosmogony, that is not absolutely absurd and improbable. Is there a system, an order, an economy of things, by which matter can preserve that perpetual agitation which seems essential to it, and yet maintain a constancy in the forms which it produces? There certainly is such an economy; for this is actually the case with the present world. The continual motion of matter, therefore, in less than infinite transpositions, must produce this economy or order; and by its very nature, that order, when once established, supports itself, for many ages, if not to eternity. But wherever matter is so poised, arranged, and adjusted, as to continue in perpetual motion, and yet preserve a constancy in the forms, its situation must, of necessity, have all the same appearance of art and contrivance which we observe at present. All the parts of each form must have a relation to each other, and to the whole; and the whole itself must have a relation to the other parts of the universe; to the element in which the form subsists; to the materials with which it repairs its waste and decay; and to every other form which is hostile or friendly. A defect in any of these particulars destroys the form; and the matter of which it is composed is again set loose, and is thrown into irregular motions and fermentations, till it unite itself to some other regular form. If no such form be prepared to receive it, and if there be a great quantity of this corrupted matter in the universe, the universe itself is entirely disordered; whether it be the feeble embryo of a world in its first beginnings that is thus destroyed, or the rotten carcass of one languishing in old age and infirmity. In either case, a chaos ensues; till finite, though innumerable revolutions produce at last some forms, whose parts and organs are so adjusted as to support the forms amidst a continued succession of matter.

Suppose (for we shall endeavour to vary the expression), that matter were thrown into any position, by a blind, unguided force; it is evident that this first position must, in all probability, be the most confused and most disorderly imaginable, without any resemblance to those works of human contrivance, which, along with a symmetry of parts, discover an adjustment of means to ends, and a tendency to self-preservation. If the actuating force cease after this operation, matter must remain for ever in disorder, and continue an immense chaos, without any proportion or activity. But suppose that the actuating force, whatever it be, still continues in matter, this first position will immediately give place to a second, which will likewise in all probability be as disorderly as the first, and so on through many successions of changes and revolutions. No particular order or position ever continues a moment unaltered. The original force, still remaining in activity, gives a perpetual restlessness to matter. Every possible situation is produced, and instantly destroyed. If a glimpse or dawn of order appears for a moment, it is instantly hurried away, and confounded, by that never-ceasing force which actuates every part of matter.

Thus the universe goes on for many ages in a continued succession of chaos and disorder. But is it not possible that it may settle at last, so as not to lose its motion and active force (for that we have supposed inherent in it), yet so as to preserve an uniformity of appearance, amidst the continual motion and fluctuation of its parts? This we find to be the case with the universe at present. Every individual is perpetually changing, and every part of every individual; and yet the whole remains, in appearance, the same. May we not hope for such a position, or rather be assured of it, from the eternal revolutions of unguided matter; and may not this account for all the appearing wisdom and contrivance which is in the universe? Let us contemplate the subject a little, and we shall find, that this adjustment, if attained by matter of a seeming stability in the forms, with a real and perpetual revolution or motion of parts, affords a plausible, if not a true solution of the difficulty.

It is in vain, therefore, to insist upon the uses of the parts in animals or vegetables, and their curious adjustment to each other. I would fain know, how an animal could subsist, unless its parts were so adjusted? Do we not find, that it immediately perishes whenever this adjustment ceases, and that its matter corrupting tries some new form? It happens indeed, that the parts of the world are so well adjusted, that some regular form immediately lays claim to this corrupted matter: and if it were not so, could the world subsist? Must it not dissolve as well as the animal, and pass through new positions and situations, till in great, but finite succession, it falls at last into the present or some such order?

It is well, replied CLEANTHES, you told us, that this hypothesis was suggested on a sudden, in the course of the argument. Had you had leisure to examine it, you would soon have perceived the insuperable objections to which it is exposed. No form, you say, can subsist, unless it possess those powers and organs requisite for its subsistence: some new order or economy must be tried, and so on, without intermission; till at last some order, which can support and maintain itself, is fallen upon. But according to this hypothesis, whence arise the many conveniences and advantages which men and all animals possess? Two eyes, two ears, are not absolutely necessary for the subsistence of the species. Human race might have been propagated and preserved, without horses, dogs, cows, sheep, and those innumerable fruits and products which serve to our satisfaction and enjoyment. If no camels had been created for the use of man in the sandy deserts of AFRICA and ARABIA, would the world have been dissolved? If no lodestone had been framed to give that wonderful and useful direction to the needle, would human society and the human kind have been immediately extinguished? Though the maxims of Nature be in general very frugal, yet instances of this kind are far from being rare; and any one of them is a sufficient proof of design, and of a benevolent design, which gave rise to the order and arrangement of the universe.

At least, you may safely infer, said PHILO, that the foregoing hypothesis is so far incomplete and imperfect, which I shall not scruple to allow. But can we ever reasonably expect greater success in any attempts of this nature? Or can we ever hope to erect a system of cosmogony, that will be liable to no exceptions, and will contain no circumstance repugnant to our limited and imperfect experience of the analogy of Nature? Your theory itself cannot surely pretend to any such advantage, even though you have run into Anthropomorphism, the better to preserve a conformity to common experience. Let us once more put it to trial. In all instances which we have ever seen, ideas are copied from real objects, and are ectypal, not archetypal, to express myself in learned terms: You reverse this order, and give thought the precedence. In all instances which we have ever seen, thought has no influence upon matter, except where that matter is so conjoined with it as to have an equal reciprocal influence upon it. No animal can move immediately any thing but the members of its own body; and indeed, the equality of action and reaction seems to be an universal law of nature: But your theory implies a contradiction to this experience. These instances, with many more, which it were easy to collect, (particularly the supposition of a mind or system of thought that is eternal, or, in other words, an animal ingenerable and immortal); these instances, I say, may teach all of us sobriety in condemning each other, and let us see, that as no system of this kind ought ever to be received from a slight analogy, so neither ought any to be rejected on account of a small incongruity. For that is an inconvenience from which we can justly pronounce no one to be exempted.

All religious systems, it is confessed, are subject to great and insuperable difficulties. Each disputant triumphs in his turn; while he carries on an offensive war, and exposes the absurdities, barbarities, and pernicious tenets of his antagonist. But all of them, on the whole, prepare a complete triumph for the Sceptic; who tells them, that no system ought ever to be embraced with regard to such subjects: For this plain reason, that no absurdity ought ever to be assented to with regard to any subject. A total suspense of judgement is here our only reasonable resource. And if every attack, as is commonly observed, and no defence, among Theologians, is successful; how complete must be his victory, who remains always, with all mankind, on the offensive, and has himself no fixed station or abiding city, which he is ever, on any occasion, obliged to defend?

PART 9

But if so many difficulties attend the argument a posteriori, said DEMEA, had we not better adhere to that simple and sublime argument a priori, which, by offering to us infallible demonstration, cuts off at once all doubt and difficulty? By this argument, too, we may prove the infinity of the Divine attributes, which, I am afraid, can never be ascertained with certainty from any other topic. For how can an effect, which either is finite, or, for aught we know, may be so; how can such an effect, I say, prove an infinite cause? The unity too of the Divine Nature, it is very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to deduce merely from contemplating the works of nature; nor will the uniformity alone of the plan, even were it allowed, give us any assurance of that attribute. Whereas the argument a priori ...

You seem to reason, DEMEA, interposed CLEANTHES, as if those advantages and conveniences in the abstract argument were full proofs of its solidity. But it is first proper, in my opinion, to determine what argument of this nature you choose to insist on; and we shall afterwards, from itself, better than from its useful consequences, endeavour to determine what value we ought to put upon it.

The argument, replied DEMEA, which I would insist on, is the common one. Whatever exists must have a cause or reason of its existence; it being absolutely impossible for any thing to produce itself, or be the cause of its own existence. In mounting up, therefore, from effects to causes, we must either go on in tracing an infinite succession, without any ultimate cause at all; or must at last have recourse to some ultimate cause, that is necessarily existent: Now, that the first supposition is absurd, may be thus proved. In the infinite chain or succession of causes and effects, each single effect is determined to exist by the power and efficacy of that cause which immediately preceded; but the whole eternal chain or succession, taken together, is not determined or caused by any thing; and yet it is evident that it requires a cause or reason, as much as any particular object which begins to exist in time. The question is still reasonable, why this particular succession of causes existed from eternity, and not any other succession, or no succession at all. If there be no necessarily existent being, any supposition which can be formed is equally possible; nor is there any more absurdity in Nothing's having existed from eternity, than there is in that succession of causes which constitutes the universe. What was it, then, which determined Something to exist rather than Nothing, and bestowed being on a particular possibility, exclusive of the rest? External causes, there are supposed to be none. Chance is a word without a meaning. Was it Nothing? But that can never produce any thing. We must, therefore, have recourse to a necessarily existent Being, who carries the REASON of his existence in himself, and who cannot be supposed not to exist, without an express contradiction. There is, consequently, such a Being; that is, there is a Deity.

I shall not leave it to PHILO, said CLEANTHES, though I know that the starting objections is his chief delight, to point out the weakness of this metaphysical reasoning. It seems to me so obviously ill-grounded, and at the same time of so little consequence to the cause of true piety and religion, that I shall myself venture to show the fallacy of it.

I shall begin with observing, that there is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments a priori. Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no being, whose existence is demonstrable. I propose this argument as entirely decisive, and am willing to rest the whole controversy upon it.

It is pretended that the Deity is a necessarily existent being; and this necessity of his existence is attempted to be explained by asserting, that if we knew his whole essence or nature, we should perceive it to be as impossible for him not to exist, as for twice two not to be four. But it is evident that this can never happen, while our faculties remain the same as at present. It will still be possible for us, at any time, to conceive the non-existence of what we formerly conceived to exist; nor can the mind ever lie under a necessity of supposing any object to remain always in being; in the same manner as we lie under a necessity of always conceiving twice two to be four. The words, therefore, necessary existence, have no meaning; or, which is the same thing, none that is consistent.

But further, why may not the material universe be the necessarily existent Being, according to this pretended explication of necessity? We dare not affirm that we know all the qualities of matter; and for aught we can determine, it may contain some qualities, which, were they known, would make its non-existence appear as great a contradiction as that twice two is five. I find only one argument employed to prove, that the material world is not the necessarily existent Being: and this argument is derived from the contingency both of the matter and the form of the world. "Any particle of matter," it is saidDr. Clarke, "may be conceived to be annihilated; and any form may be conceived to be altered. Such an annihilation or alteration, therefore, is not impossible." But it seems a great partiality not to perceive, that the same argument extends equally to the Deity, so far as we have any conception of him; and that the mind can at least imagine him to be non-existent, or his attributes to be altered. It must be some unknown, inconceivable qualities, which can make his non-existence appear impossible, or his attributes unalterable: And no reason can be assigned, why these qualities may not belong to matter. As they are altogether unknown and inconceivable, they can never be proved incompatible with it.

Add to this, that in tracing an eternal succession of objects, it seems absurd to inquire for a general cause or first author. How can any thing, that exists from eternity, have a cause, since that relation implies a priority in time, and a beginning of existence?

In such a chain, too, or succession of objects, each part is caused by that which preceded it, and causes that which succeeds it. Where then is the difficulty? But the whole, you say, wants a cause. I answer, that the uniting of these parts into a whole, like the uniting of several distinct countries into one kingdom, or several distinct members into one body, is performed merely by an arbitrary act of the mind, and has no influence on the nature of things. Did I show you the particular causes of each individual in a collection of twenty particles of matter, I should think it very unreasonable, should you afterwards ask me, what was the cause of the whole twenty. This is sufficiently explained in explaining the cause of the parts.

Though the reasonings which you have urged, CLEANTHES, may well excuse me, said PHILO, from starting any further difficulties, yet I cannot forbear insisting still upon another topic. It is observed by arithmeticians, that the products of 9, compose always either 9, or some lesser product of 9, if you add together all the characters of which any of the former products is composed. Thus, of 18, 27, 36, which are products of 9, you make 9 by adding 1 to 8, 2 to 7, 3 to 6. Thus, 369 is a product also of 9; and if you add 3, 6, and 9, you make 18, a lesser product of 9. To a superficial observer, so wonderful a regularity may be admired as the effect either of chance or design: but a skilful algebraist immediately concludes it to be the work of necessity, and demonstrates, that it must for ever result from the nature of these numbers. Is it not probable, I ask, that the whole economy of the universe is conducted by a like necessity, though no human algebra can furnish a key which solves the difficulty? And instead of admiring the order of natural beings, may it not happen, that, could we penetrate into the intimate nature of bodies, we should clearly see why it was absolutely impossible they could ever admit of any other disposition? So dangerous is it to introduce this idea of necessity into the present question! and so naturally does it afford an inference directly opposite to the religious hypothesis!

But dropping all these abstractions, continued PHILO, and confining ourselves to more familiar topics, I shall venture to add an observation, that the argument a priori has seldom been found very convincing, except to people of a metaphysical head, who have accustomed themselves to abstract reasoning, and who, finding from mathematics, that the understanding frequently leads to truth through obscurity, and, contrary to first appearances, have transferred the same habit of thinking to subjects where it ought not to have place. Other people, even of good sense and the best inclined to religion, feel always some deficiency in such arguments, though they are not perhaps able to explain distinctly where it lies; a certain proof that men ever did, and ever will derive their religion from other sources than from this species of reasoning.

PART 10

It is my opinion, I own, replied DEMEA, that each man feels, in a manner, the truth of religion within his own breast, and, from a consciousness of his imbecility and misery, rather than from any reasoning, is led to seek protection from that Being, on whom he and all nature is dependent. So anxious or so tedious are even the best scenes of life, that futurity is still the object of all our hopes and fears. We incessantly look forward, and endeavour, by prayers, adoration, and sacrifice, to appease those unknown powers, whom we find, by experience, so able to afflict and oppress us. Wretched creatures that we are! what resource for us amidst the innumerable ills of life, did not religion suggest some methods of atonement, and appease those terrors with which we are incessantly agitated and tormented?

I am indeed persuaded, said PHILO, that the best, and indeed the only method of bringing every one to a due sense of religion, is by just representations of the misery and wickedness of men. And for that purpose a talent of eloquence and strong imagery is more requisite than that of reasoning and argument. For is it necessary to prove what every one feels within himself? It is only necessary to make us feel it, if possible, more intimately and sensibly.

The people, indeed, replied DEMEA, are sufficiently convinced of this great and melancholy truth. The miseries of life; the unhappiness of man; the general corruptions of our nature; the unsatisfactory enjoyment of pleasures, riches, honours; these phrases have become almost proverbial in all languages. And who can doubt of what all men declare from their own immediate feeling and experience?

In this point, said PHILO, the learned are perfectly agreed with the vulgar; and in all letters, sacred and profane, the topic of human misery has been insisted on with the most pathetic eloquence that sorrow and melancholy could inspire. The poets, who speak from sentiment, without a system, and whose testimony has therefore the more authority, abound in images of this nature. From Homer down to Dr. Young, the whole inspired tribe have ever been sensible, that no other representation of things would suit the feeling and observation of each individual.

As to authorities, replied DEMEA, you need not seek them. Look round this library of CLEANTHES. I shall venture to affirm, that, except authors of particular sciences, such as chemistry or botany, who have no occasion to treat of human life, there is scarce one of those innumerable writers, from whom the sense of human misery has not, in some passage or other, extorted a complaint and confession of it. At least, the chance is entirely on that side; and no one author has ever, so far as I can recollect, been so extravagant as to deny it.

There you must excuse me, said PHILO: LEIBNIZ has denied it; and is perhaps the first [That sentiment had been maintained by Dr. King and some few others before Leibniz; though by none of so great a fame as that German philosopher] who ventured upon so bold and paradoxical an opinion; at least, the first who made it essential to his philosophical system.

And by being the first, replied DEMEA, might he not have been sensible of his error? For is this a subject in which philosophers can propose to make discoveries especially in so late an age? And can any man hope by a simple denial (for the subject scarcely admits of reasoning), to bear down the united testimony of mankind, founded on sense and consciousness?

And why should man, added he, pretend to an exemption from the lot of all other animals? The whole earth, believe me, PHILO, is cursed and polluted. A perpetual war is kindled amongst all living creatures. Necessity, hunger, want, stimulate the strong and courageous: Fear, anxiety, terror, agitate the weak and infirm. The first entrance into life gives anguish to the new-born infant and to its wretched parent: Weakness, impotence, distress, attend each stage of that life: and it is at last finished in agony and horror.

Observe too, says PHILO, the curious artifices of Nature, in order to embitter the life of every living being. The stronger prey upon the weaker, and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. The weaker too, in their turn, often prey upon the stronger, and vex and molest them without relaxation. Consider that innumerable race of insects, which either are bred on the body of each animal, or, flying about, infix their stings in him. These insects have others still less than themselves, which torment them. And thus on each hand, before and behind, above and below, every animal is surrounded with enemies, which incessantly seek his misery and destruction.

Man alone, said DEMEA, seems to be, in part, an exception to this rule. For by combination in society, he can easily master lions, tigers, and bears, whose greater strength and agility naturally enable them to prey upon him.

On the contrary, it is here chiefly, cried PHILO, that the uniform and equal maxims of Nature are most apparent. Man, it is true, can, by combination, surmount all his real enemies, and become master of the whole animal creation: but does he not immediately raise up to himself imaginary enemies, the demons of his fancy, who haunt him with superstitious terrors, and blast every enjoyment of life? His pleasure, as he imagines, becomes, in their eyes, a crime: his food and repose give them umbrage and offence: his very sleep and dreams furnish new materials to anxious fear: and even death, his refuge from every other ill, presents only the dread of endless and innumerable woes. Nor does the wolf molest more the timid flock, than superstition does the anxious breast of wretched mortals.

Besides, consider, DEMEA: This very society, by which we surmount those wild beasts, our natural enemies; what new enemies does it not raise to us? What woe and misery does it not occasion? Man is the greatest enemy of man. Oppression, injustice, contempt, contumely, violence, sedition, war, calumny, treachery, fraud; by these they mutually torment each other; and they would soon dissolve that society which they had formed, were it not for the dread of still greater ills, which must attend their separation.

But though these external insults, said DEMEA, from animals, from men, from all the elements, which assault us, form a frightful catalogue of woes, they are nothing in comparison of those which arise within ourselves, from the distempered condition of our mind and body. How many lie under the lingering torment of diseases? Hear the pathetic enumeration of the great poet.

Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans: despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.

And over them triumphant death his dart
Shook: but delay’d to strike, though oft invok’d
With vows, as their chief good and final hope.

The disorders of the mind, continued DEMEA, though more secret, are not perhaps less dismal and vexatious. Remorse, shame, anguish, rage, disappointment, anxiety, fear, dejection, despair; who has ever passed through life without cruel inroads from these tormentors? How many have scarcely ever felt any better sensations? Labour and poverty, so abhorred by every one, are the certain lot of the far greater number; and those few privileged persons, who enjoy ease and opulence, never reach contentment or true felicity. All the goods of life united would not make a very happy man; but all the ills united would make a wretch indeed; and any one of them almost (and who can be free from every one?) nay often the absence of one good (and who can possess all?) is sufficient to render life ineligible.

Were a stranger to drop on a sudden into this world, I would show him, as a specimen of its ills, a hospital full of diseases, a prison crowded with malefactors and debtors, a field of battle strewed with carcasses, a fleet foundering in the ocean, a nation languishing under tyranny, famine, or pestilence. To turn the gay side of life to him, and give him a notion of its pleasures; whither should I conduct him? to a ball, to an opera, to court? He might justly think, that I was only showing him a diversity of distress and sorrow.

There is no evading such striking instances, said PHILO, but by apologies, which still further aggravate the charge. Why have all men, I ask, in all ages, complained incessantly of the miseries of life?... They have no just reason, says one: these complaints proceed only from their discontented, repining, anxious disposition...And can there possibly, I reply, be a more certain foundation of misery, than such a wretched temper?

But if they were really as unhappy as they pretend, says my antagonist, why do they remain in life?...

Not satisfied with life, afraid of death.

This is the secret chain, say I, that holds us. We are terrified, not bribed to the continuance of our existence.

It is only a false delicacy, he may insist, which a few refined spirits indulge, and which has spread these complaints among the whole race of mankind. . . . And what is this delicacy, I ask, which you blame? Is it any thing but a greater sensibility to all the pleasures and pains of life? and if the man of a delicate, refined temper, by being so much more alive than the rest of the world, is only so much more unhappy, what judgement must we form in general of human life?

Let men remain at rest, says our adversary, and they will be easy. They are willing artificers of their own misery. . . . No! reply I: an anxious languor follows their repose; disappointment, vexation, trouble, their activity and ambition.

I can observe something like what you mention in some others, replied CLEANTHES: but I confess I feel little or nothing of it in myself, and hope that it is not so common as you represent it.

If you feel not human misery yourself, cried DEMEA, I congratulate you on so happy a singularity. Others, seemingly the most prosperous, have not been ashamed to vent their complaints in the most melancholy strains. Let us attend to the great, the fortunate emperor, CHARLES V, when, tired with human grandeur, he resigned all his extensive dominions into the hands of his son. In the last harangue which he made on that memorable occasion, he publicly avowed, that the greatest prosperities which he had ever enjoyed, had been mixed with so many adversities, that he might truly say he had never enjoyed any satisfaction or contentment. But did the retired life, in which he sought for shelter, afford him any greater happiness? If we may credit his son’s account, his repentance commenced the very day of his resignation.

CICERO’s fortune, from small beginnings, rose to the greatest lustre and renown; yet what pathetic complaints of the ills of life do his familiar letters, as well as philosophical discourses, contain? And suitably to his own experience, he introduces CATO, the great, the fortunate CATO, protesting in his old age, that had he a new life in his offer, he would reject the present.

Ask yourself, ask any of your acquaintance, whether they would live over again the last ten or twenty years of their life. No! but the next twenty, they say, will be better:

And from the dregs of life, hope to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.

Thus at last they find (such is the greatness of human misery, it reconciles even contradictions), that they complain at once of the shortness of life, and of its vanity and sorrow.

And is it possible, CLEANTHES, said PHILO, that after all these reflections, and infinitely more, which might be suggested, you can still persevere in your Anthropomorphism, and assert the moral attributes of the Deity, his justice, benevolence, mercy, and rectitude, to be of the same nature with these virtues in human creatures? His power we allow is infinite: whatever he wills is executed: but neither man nor any other animal is happy: therefore he does not will their happiness. His wisdom is infinite: He is never mistaken in choosing the means to any end: But the course of Nature tends not to human or animal felicity: therefore it is not established for that purpose. Through the whole compass of human knowledge, there are no inferences more certain and infallible than these. In what respect, then, do his benevolence and mercy resemble the benevolence and mercy of men?

EPICURUS's old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?

You ascribe, CLEANTHES (and I believe justly), a purpose and intention to Nature. But what, I beseech you, is the object of that curious artifice and machinery, which she has displayed in all animals? The preservation alone of individuals, and propagation of the species. It seems enough for her purpose, if such a rank be barely upheld in the universe, without any care or concern for the happiness of the members that compose it. No resource for this purpose: no machinery, in order merely to give pleasure or ease: no fund of pure joy and contentment: no indulgence, without some want or necessity accompanying it. At least, the few phenomena of this nature are overbalanced by opposite phenomena of still greater importance.

Our sense of music, harmony, and indeed beauty of all kinds, gives satisfaction, without being absolutely necessary to the preservation and propagation of the species. But what racking pains, on the other hand, arise from gouts, gravels, megrims, toothaches, rheumatisms, where the injury to the animal machinery is either small or incurable? Mirth, laughter, play, frolic, seem gratuitous satisfactions, which have no further tendency:

spleen, melancholy, discontent, superstition, are pains of the same nature. How then does the Divine benevolence display itself, in the sense of you Anthropomorphites? None but we Mystics, as you were pleased to call us, can account for this strange mixture of phenomena, by deriving it from attributes, infinitely perfect, but incomprehensible.

And have you at last, said CLEANTHES smiling, betrayed your intentions, PHILO? Your long agreement with DEMEA did indeed a little surprise me; but I find you were all the while erecting a concealed battery against me. And I must confess, that you have now fallen upon a subject worthy of your noble spirit of opposition and controversy. If you can make out the present point, and prove mankind to be unhappy or corrupted, there is an end at once of all religion. For to what purpose establish the natural attributes of the Deity, while the moral are still doubtful and uncertain?

You take umbrage very easily, replied DEMEA, at opinions the most innocent, and the most generally received, even amongst the religious and devout themselves: and nothing can be more surprising than to find a topic like this, concerning the wickedness and misery of man, charged with no less than Atheism and profaneness. Have not all pious divines and preachers, who have indulged their rhetoric on so fertile a subject; have they not easily, I say, given a solution of any difficulties which may attend it? This world is but a point in comparison of the universe; this life but a moment in comparison of eternity. The present evil phenomena, therefore, are rectified in other regions, and in some future period of existence. And the eyes of men, being then opened to larger views of things, see the whole connection of general laws; and trace with adoration, the benevolence and rectitude of the Deity, through all the mazes and intricacies of his providence.

No! replied CLEANTHES, No! These arbitrary suppositions can never be admitted, contrary to matter of fact, visible and uncontroverted. Whence can any cause be known but from its known effects? Whence can any hypothesis be proved but from the apparent phenomena? To establish one hypothesis upon another, is building entirely in the air; and the utmost we ever attain, by these conjectures and fictions, is to ascertain the bare possibility of our opinion; but never can we, upon such terms, establish its reality.

The only method of supporting Divine benevolence, and it is what I willingly embrace, is to deny absolutely the misery and wickedness of man.

Your representations are exaggerated; your melancholy views mostly fictitious; your inferences contrary to fact and experience. Health is more common than sickness; pleasure than pain; happiness than misery. And for one vexation which we meet with, we attain, upon computation, a hundred enjoyments.

Admitting your position, replied PHILO, which yet is extremely doubtful, you must at the same time allow, that if pain be less frequent than pleasure, it is infinitely more violent and durable. One hour of it is often able to outweigh a day, a week, a month of our common insipid enjoyments; and how many days, weeks, and months, are passed by several in the most acute torments? Pleasure, scarcely in one instance, is ever able to reach ecstasy and rapture; and in no one instance can it continue for any time at its highest pitch and altitude. The spirits evaporate, the nerves relax, the fabric is disordered, and the enjoyment quickly degenerates into fatigue and uneasiness. But pain often, good God, how often! rises to torture and agony; and the longer it continues, it becomes still more genuine agony and torture. Patience is exhausted, courage languishes, melancholy seizes us, and nothing terminates our misery but the removal of its cause, or another event, which is the sole cure of all evil, but which, from our natural folly, we regard with still greater horror and consternation.

But not to insist upon these topics, continued PHILO, though most obvious, certain, and important; I must use the freedom to admonish you, CLEANTHES, that you have put the controversy upon a most dangerous issue, and are unawares introducing a total scepticism into the most essential articles of natural and revealed theology. What! no method of fixing a just foundation for religion, unless we allow the happiness of human life, and maintain a continued existence even in this world, with all our present pains, infirmities, vexations, and follies, to be eligible and desirable! But this is contrary to every one’s feeling and experience: It is contrary to an authority so established as nothing can subvert. No decisive proofs can ever be produced against this authority; nor is it possible for you to compute, estimate, and compare, all the pains and all the pleasures in the lives of all men and of all animals: And thus, by your resting the whole system of religion on a point, which, from its very nature, must for ever be uncertain, you tacitly confess, that that system is equally uncertain.

But allowing you what never will be believed, at least what you never possibly can prove, that animal, or at least human happiness, in this life, exceeds its misery, you have yet done nothing: For this is not, by any means, what we expect from infinite power, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness. Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, so decisive; except we assert, that these subjects exceed all human capacity, and that our common measures of truth and falsehood are not applicable to them; a topic which I have all along insisted on, but which you have, from the beginning, rejected with scorn and indignation.

But I will be contented to retire still from this entrenchment, for I deny that you can ever force me in it. I will allow, that pain or misery in man is compatible with infinite power and goodness in the Deity, even in your sense of these attributes: What are you advanced by all these concessions? A mere possible compatibility is not sufficient. You must prove these pure, unmixed, and uncontrollable attributes from the present mixed and confused phenomena, and from these alone. A hopeful undertaking! Were the phenomena ever so pure and unmixed, yet being finite, they would be insufficient for that purpose. How much more, where they are also so jarring and discordant!

Here, CLEANTHES, I find myself at ease in my argument. Here I triumph. Formerly, when we argued concerning the natural attributes of intelligence and design, I needed all my sceptical and metaphysical subtlety to elude your grasp. In many views of the universe, and of its parts, particularly the latter, the beauty and fitness of final causes strike us with such irresistible force, that all objections appear (what I believe they really are) mere cavils and sophisms; nor can we then imagine how it was ever possible for us to repose any weight on them. But there is no view of human life, or of the condition of mankind, from which, without the greatest violence, we can infer the moral attributes, or learn that infinite benevolence, conjoined with infinite power and infinite wisdom, which we must discover by the eyes of faith alone. It is your turn now to tug the labouring oar, and to support your philosophical subtleties against the dictates of plain reason and experience.

PART 11

I scruple not to allow, said CLEANTHES, that I have been apt to suspect the frequent repetition of the word infinite, which we meet with in all theological writers, to savour more of panegyric than of philosophy; and that any purposes of reasoning, and even of religion, would be better served, were we to rest contented with more accurate and more moderate expressions. The terms, admirable, excellent, superlatively great, wise, and holy; these sufficiently fill the imaginations of men; and any thing beyond, besides that it leads into absurdities, has no influence on the affections or sentiments. Thus, in the present subject, if we abandon all human analogy, as seems your intention, DEMEA, I am afraid we abandon all religion, and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration. If we preserve human analogy, we must for ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind, a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted. A less evil may then be chosen, in order to avoid a greater; inconveniences be submitted to, in order to reach a desirable end; and in a word, benevolence, regulated by wisdom, and limited by necessity, may produce just such a world as the present. You, PHILO, who are so prompt at starting views, and reflections, and analogies, I would gladly hear, at length, without interruption, your opinion of this new theory; and if it deserve our attention, we may afterwards, at more leisure, reduce it into form.

My sentiments, replied PHILO, are not worth being made a mystery of; and therefore, without any ceremony, I shall deliver what occurs to me with regard to the present subject. It must, I think, be allowed, that if a very limited intelligence, whom we shall suppose utterly unacquainted with the universe, were assured, that it were the production of a very good, wise, and powerful Being, however finite, he would, from his conjectures, form beforehand a different notion of it from what we find it to be by experience; nor would he ever imagine, merely from these attributes of the cause, of which he is informed, that the effect could be so full of vice and misery and disorder, as it appears in this life. Supposing now, that this person were brought into the world, still assured that it was the workmanship of such a sublime and benevolent Being; he might, perhaps, be surprised at the disappointment; but would never retract his former belief, if founded on any very solid argument; since such a limited intelligence must be sensible of his own blindness and ignorance, and must allow, that there may be many solutions of those phenomena, which will for ever escape his comprehension. But supposing, which is the real case with regard to man, that this creature is not antecedently convinced of a supreme intelligence, benevolent, and powerful, but is left to gather such a belief from the appearances of things; this entirely alters the case, nor will he ever find any reason for such a conclusion. He may be fully convinced of the narrow limits of his understanding; but this will not help him in forming an inference concerning the goodness of superior powers, since he must form that inference from what he knows, not from what he is ignorant of. The more you exaggerate his weakness and ignorance, the more diffident you render him, and give him the greater suspicion that such subjects are beyond the reach of his faculties. You are obliged, therefore, to reason with him merely from the known phenomena, and to drop every arbitrary supposition or conjecture.

Did I show you a house or palace, where there was not one apartment convenient or agreeable; where the windows, doors, fires, passages, stairs, and the whole economy of the building, were the source of noise, confusion, fatigue, darkness, and the extremes of heat and cold; you would certainly blame the contrivance, without any further examination. The architect would in vain display his subtlety, and prove to you, that if this door or that window were altered, greater ills would ensue. What he says may be strictly true: The alteration of one particular, while the other parts of the building remain, may only augment the inconveniences. But still you would assert in general, that, if the architect had had skill and good intentions, he might have formed such a plan of the whole, and might have adjusted the parts in such a manner, as would have remedied all or most of these inconveniences. His ignorance, or even your own ignorance of such a plan, will never convince you of the impossibility of it. If you find any inconveniences and deformities in the building, you will always, without entering into any detail, condemn the architect.

In short, I repeat the question: Is the world, considered in general, and as it appears to us in this life, different from what a man, or such a limited being, would, beforehand, expect from a very powerful, wise, and benevolent Deity? It must be strange prejudice to assert the contrary. And from thence I conclude, that however consistent the world may be, allowing certain suppositions and conjectures, with the idea of such a Deity, it can never afford us an inference concerning his existence. The consistence is not absolutely denied, only the inference. Conjectures, especially where infinity is excluded from the Divine attributes, may perhaps be sufficient to prove a consistence, but can never be foundations for any inference.

There seem to be four circumstances, on which depend all, or the greatest part of the ills, that molest sensible creatures; and it is not impossible but all these circumstances may be necessary and unavoidable. We know so little beyond common life, or even of common life, that, with regard to the economy of a universe, there is no conjecture, however wild, which may not be just; nor any one, however plausible, which may not be erroneous. All that belongs to human understanding, in this deep ignorance and obscurity, is to be sceptical, or at least cautious, and not to admit of any hypothesis whatever, much less of any which is supported by no appearance of probability. Now, this I assert to be the case with regard to all the causes of evil, and the circumstances on which it depends. None of them appear to human reason in the least degree necessary or unavoidable; nor can we suppose them such, without the utmost license of imagination.

The first circumstance which introduces evil, is that contrivance or economy of the animal creation, by which pains, as well as pleasures, are employed to excite all creatures to action, and make them vigilant in the great work of self-preservation. Now pleasure alone, in its various degrees, seems to human understanding sufficient for this purpose. All animals might be constantly in a state of enjoyment: but when urged by any of the necessities of nature, such as thirst, hunger, weariness; instead of pain, they might feel a diminution of pleasure, by which they might be prompted to seek that object which is necessary to their subsistence. Men pursue pleasure as eagerly as they avoid pain; at least they might have been so constituted. It seems, therefore, plainly possible to carry on the business of life without any pain. Why then is any animal ever rendered susceptible of such a sensation? If animals can be free from it an hour, they might enjoy a perpetual exemption from it; and it required as particular a contrivance of their organs to produce that feeling, as to endow them with sight, hearing, or any of the senses. Shall we conjecture, that such a contrivance was necessary, without any appearance of reason? and shall we build on that conjecture as on the most certain truth?

But a capacity of pain would not alone produce pain, were it not for the second circumstance, viz. the conducting of the world by general laws; and this seems nowise necessary to a very perfect Being. It is true, if everything were conducted by particular volitions, the course of nature would be perpetually broken, and no man could employ his reason in the conduct of life. But might not other particular volitions remedy this inconvenience? In short, might not the Deity exterminate all ill, wherever it were to be found; and produce all good, without any preparation, or long progress of causes and effects?

Besides, we must consider, that, according to the present economy of the world, the course of nature, though supposed exactly regular, yet to us appears not so, and many events are uncertain, and many disappoint our expectations. Health and sickness, calm and tempest, with an infinite number of other accidents, whose causes are unknown and variable, have a great influence both on the fortunes of particular persons and on the prosperity of public societies; and indeed all human life, in a manner, depends on such accidents. A being, therefore, who knows the secret springs of the universe, might easily, by particular volitions, turn all these accidents to the good of mankind, and render the whole world happy, without discovering himself in any operation. A fleet, whose purposes were salutary to society, might always meet with a fair wind. Good princes enjoy sound health and long life. Persons born to power and authority, be framed with good tempers and virtuous dispositions. A few such events as these, regularly and wisely conducted, would change the face of the world; and yet would no more seem to disturb the course of nature, or confound human conduct, than the present economy of things, where the causes are secret, and variable, and compounded. Some small touches given to CALIGULA’s brain in his infancy, might have converted him into a TRAJAN. One wave, a little higher than the rest, by burying CAESAR and his fortune in the bottom of the ocean, might have restored liberty to a considerable part of mankind. There may, for aught we know, be good reasons why Providence interposes not in this manner; but they are unknown to us; and though the mere supposition, that such reasons exist, may be sufficient to save the conclusion concerning the Divine attributes, yet surely it can never be sufficient to establish that conclusion.

If every thing in the universe be conducted by general laws, and if animals be rendered susceptible of pain, it scarcely seems possible but some ill must arise in the various shocks of matter, and the various concurrence and opposition of general laws; but this ill would be very rare, were it not for the third circumstance, which I proposed to mention, viz. the great frugality with which all powers and faculties are distributed to every particular being. So well adjusted are the organs and capacities of all animals, and so well fitted to their preservation, that, as far as history or tradition reaches, there appears not to be any single species which has yet been extinguished in the universe. Every animal has the requisite endowments; but these endowments are bestowed with so scrupulous an economy, that any considerable diminution must entirely destroy the creature. Wherever one power is increased, there is a proportional abatement in the others. Animals which excel in swiftness are commonly defective in force. Those which possess both are either imperfect in some of their senses, or are oppressed with the most craving wants. The human species, whose chief excellency is reason and sagacity, is of all others the most necessitous, and the most deficient in bodily advantages; without clothes, without arms, without food, without lodging, without any convenience of life, except what they owe to their own skill and industry. In short, nature seems to have formed an exact calculation of the necessities of her creatures; and, like a rigid master, has afforded them little more powers or endowments than what are strictly sufficient to supply those necessities. An indulgent parent would have bestowed a large stock, in order to guard against accidents, and secure the happiness and welfare of the creature in the most unfortunate concurrence of circumstances. Every course of life would not have been so surrounded with precipices, that the least departure from the true path, by mistake or necessity, must involve us in misery and ruin. Some reserve, some fund, would have been provided to ensure happiness; nor would the powers and the necessities have been adjusted with so rigid an economy. The Author of Nature is inconceivably powerful: his force is supposed great, if not altogether inexhaustible: nor is there any reason, as far as we can judge, to make him observe this strict frugality in his dealings with his creatures. It would have been better, were his power extremely limited, to have created fewer animals, and to have endowed these with more faculties for their happiness and preservation. A builder is never esteemed prudent, who undertakes a plan beyond what his stock will enable him to finish.

In order to cure most of the ills of human life, I require not that man should have the wings of the eagle, the swiftness of the stag, the force of the ox, the arms of the lion, the scales of the crocodile or rhinoceros; much less do I demand the sagacity of an angel or cherubim. I am contented to take an increase in one single power or faculty of his soul. Let him be endowed with a greater propensity to industry and labour; a more vigorous spring and activity of mind; a more constant bent to business and application. Let the whole species possess naturally an equal diligence with that which many individuals are able to attain by habit and reflection; and the most beneficial consequences, without any allay of ill, is the immediate and necessary result of this endowment. Almost all the moral, as well as natural evils of human life, arise from idleness; and were our species, by the original constitution of their frame, exempt from this vice or infirmity, the perfect cultivation of land, the improvement of arts and manufactures, the exact execution of every office and duty, immediately follow; and men at once may fully reach that state of society, which is so imperfectly attained by the best regulated government. But as industry is a power, and the most valuable of any, Nature seems determined, suitably to her usual maxims, to bestow it on men with a very sparing hand; and rather to punish him severely for his deficiency in it, than to reward him for his attainments. She has so contrived his frame, that nothing but the most violent necessity can oblige him to labour; and she employs all his other wants to overcome, at least in part, the want of diligence, and to endow him with some share of a faculty of which she has thought fit naturally to bereave him. Here our demands may be allowed very humble, and therefore the more reasonable. If we required the endowments of superior penetration and judgement, of a more delicate taste of beauty, of a nicer sensibility to benevolence and friendship; we might be told, that we impiously pretend to break the order of Nature; that we want to exalt ourselves into a higher rank of being; that the presents which we require, not being suitable to our state and condition, would only be pernicious to us. But it is hard; I dare to repeat it, it is hard, that being placed in a world so full of wants and necessities, where almost every being and element is either our foe or refuses its assistance ... we should also have our own temper to struggle with, and should be deprived of that faculty which can alone fence against these multiplied evils.

The fourth circumstance, whence arises the misery and ill of the universe, is the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature. It must be acknowledged, that there are few parts of the universe, which seem not to serve some purpose, and whose removal would not produce a visible defect and disorder in the whole. The parts hang all together; nor can one be touched without affecting the rest, in a greater or less degree. But at the same time, it must be observed, that none of these parts or principles, however useful, are so accurately adjusted, as to keep precisely within those bounds in which their utility consists; but they are, all of them, apt, on every occasion, to run into the one extreme or the other. One would imagine, that this grand production had not received the last hand of the maker; so little finished is every part, and so coarse are the strokes with which it is executed. Thus, the winds are requisite to convey the vapours along the surface of the globe, and to assist men in navigation: but how oft, rising up to tempests and hurricanes, do they become pernicious? Rains are necessary to nourish all the plants and animals of the earth: but how often are they defective? how often excessive? Heat is requisite to all life and vegetation; but is not always found in the due proportion. On the mixture and secretion of the humours and juices of the body depend the health and prosperity of the animal: but the parts perform not regularly their proper function. What more useful than all the passions of the mind, ambition, vanity, love, anger? But how oft do they break their bounds, and cause the greatest convulsions in society? There is nothing so advantageous in the universe, but what frequently becomes pernicious, by its excess or defect; nor has Nature guarded, with the requisite accuracy, against all disorder or confusion. The irregularity is never perhaps so great as to destroy any species; but is often sufficient to involve the individuals in ruin and misery.

On the concurrence, then, of these four circumstances, does all or the greatest part of natural evil depend. Were all living creatures incapable of pain, or were the world administered by particular volitions, evil never could have found access into the universe: and were animals endowed with a large stock of powers and faculties, beyond what strict necessity requires; or were the several springs and principles of the universe so accurately framed as to preserve always the just temperament and medium; there must have been very little ill in comparison of what we feel at present. What then shall we pronounce on this occasion? Shall we say that these circumstances are not necessary, and that they might easily have been altered in the contrivance of the universe? This decision seems too presumptuous for creatures so blind and ignorant. Let us be more modest in our conclusions. Let us allow, that, if the goodness of the Deity (I mean a goodness like the human) could be established on any tolerable reasons a priori, these phenomena, however untoward, would not be sufficient to subvert that principle; but might easily, in some unknown manner, be reconcilable to it. But let us still assert, that as this goodness is not antecedently established, but must be inferred from the phenomena, there can be no grounds for such an inference, while there are so many ills in the universe, and while these ills might so easily have been remedied, as far as human understanding can be allowed to judge on such a subject. I am Sceptic enough to allow, that the bad appearances, notwithstanding all my reasonings, may be compatible with such attributes as you suppose; but surely they can never prove these attributes. Such a conclusion cannot result from Scepticism, but must arise from the phenomena, and from our confidence in the reasonings which we deduce from these phenomena.

Look round this universe. What an immense profusion of beings, animated and organised, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other! How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children!

Here the MANICHAEAN system occurs as a proper hypothesis to solve the difficulty: and no doubt, in some respects, it is very specious, and has more probability than the common hypothesis, by giving a plausible account of the strange mixture of good and ill which appears in life. But if we consider, on the other hand, the perfect uniformity and agreement of the parts of the universe, we shall not discover in it any marks of the combat of a malevolent with a benevolent being. There is indeed an opposition of pains and pleasures in the feelings of sensible creatures: but are not all the operations of Nature carried on by an opposition of principles, of hot and cold, moist and dry, light and heavy? The true conclusion is, that the original Source of all things is entirely indifferent to all these principles; and has no more regard to good above ill, than to heat above cold, or to drought above moisture, or to light above heavy.

There may four hypotheses be framed concerning the first causes of the universe: that they are endowed with perfect goodness; that they have perfect malice; that they are opposite, and have both goodness and malice; that they have neither goodness nor malice. Mixed phenomena can never prove the two former unmixed principles; and the uniformity and steadiness of general laws seem to oppose the third. The fourth, therefore, seems by far the most probable.

What I have said concerning natural evil will apply to moral, with little or no variation; and we have no more reason to infer, that the rectitude of the Supreme Being resembles human rectitude, than that his benevolence resembles the human. Nay, it will be thought, that we have still greater cause to exclude from him moral sentiments, such as we feel them; since moral evil, in the opinion of many, is much more predominant above moral good than natural evil above natural good.

But even though this should not be allowed, and though the virtue which is in mankind should be acknowledged much superior to the vice, yet so long as there is any vice at all in the universe, it will very much puzzle you Anthropomorphites, how to account for it. You must assign a cause for it, without having recourse to the first cause. But as every effect must have a cause, and that cause another, you must either carry on the progression in infinitum, or rest on that original principle, who is the ultimate cause of all things...

Hold! hold! cried DEMEA: Whither does your imagination hurry you? I joined in alliance with you, in order to prove the incomprehensible nature of the Divine Being, and refute the principles of CLEANTHES, who would measure every thing by human rule and standard. But I now find you running into all the topics of the greatest libertines and infidels, and betraying that holy cause which you seemingly espoused. Are you secretly, then, a more dangerous enemy than CLEANTHES himself?

And are you so late in perceiving it? replied CLEANTHES. Believe me, DEMEA, your friend PHILO, from the beginning, has been amusing himself at both our expense; and it must be confessed, that the injudicious reasoning of our vulgar theology has given him but too just a handle of ridicule. The total infirmity of human reason, the absolute incomprehensibility of the Divine Nature, the great and universal misery, and still greater wickedness of men; these are strange topics, surely, to be so fondly cherished by orthodox divines and doctors. In ages of stupidity and ignorance, indeed, these principles may safely be espoused; and perhaps no views of things are more proper to promote superstition, than such as encourage the blind amazement, the diffidence, and melancholy of mankind. But at present...

Blame not so much, interposed PHILO, the ignorance of these reverend gentlemen. They know how to change their style with the times. Formerly it was a most popular theological topic to maintain, that human life was vanity and misery, and to exaggerate all the ills and pains which are incident to men. But of late years, divines, we find, begin to retract this position; and maintain, though still with some hesitation, that there are more goods than evils, more pleasures than pains, even in this life. When religion stood entirely upon temper and education, it was thought proper to encourage melancholy; as indeed mankind never have recourse to superior powers so readily as in that disposition. But as men have now learned to form principles, and to draw consequences, it is necessary to change the batteries, and to make use of such arguments as will endure at least some scrutiny and examination. This variation is the same (and from the same causes) with that which I formerly remarked with regard to Scepticism.

Thus PHILO continued to the last his spirit of opposition, and his censure of established opinions. But I could observe that DEMEA did not at all relish the latter part of the discourse; and he took occasion soon after, on some pretence or other, to leave the company.

PART 12

After DEMEA’s departure, CLEANTHES and PHILO continued the conversation in the following manner. Our friend, I am afraid, said CLEANTHES, will have little inclination to revive this topic of discourse, while you are in company; and to tell truth, PHILO, I should rather wish to reason with either of you apart on a subject so sublime and interesting. Your spirit of controversy, joined to your abhorrence of vulgar superstition, carries you strange lengths, when engaged in an argument; and there is nothing so sacred and venerable, even in your own eyes, which you spare on that occasion.

I must confess, replied PHILO, that I am less cautious on the subject of Natural Religion than on any other; both because I know that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of any man of common sense; and because no one, I am confident, in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions. You, in particular, CLEANTHES, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy; you are sensible, that notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason, in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of nature. A purpose, an intention, a design, strikes every where the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it. That Nature does nothing in vain, is a maxim established in all the schools, merely from the contemplation of the works of Nature, without any religious purpose; and, from a firm conviction of its truth, an anatomist, who had observed a new organ or canal, would never be satisfied till he had also discovered its use and intention. One great foundation of the Copernican system is the maxim, That Nature acts by the simplest methods, and chooses the most proper means to any end; and astronomers often, without thinking of it, lay this strong foundation of piety and religion. The same thing is observable in other parts of philosophy: And thus all the sciences almost lead us insensibly to acknowledge a first intelligent Author;

and their authority is often so much the greater, as they do not directly profess that intention.

It is with pleasure I hear GALEN reason concerning the structure of the human body. The anatomy of a man, says he [De formatione foetus], discovers above 600 different muscles; and whoever duly considers these, will find, that, in each of them, Nature must have adjusted at least ten different circumstances, in order to attain the end which she proposed; proper figure, just magnitude, right disposition of the several ends, upper and lower position of the whole, the due insertion of the several nerves, veins, and arteries: So that, in the muscles alone, above 6000 several views and intentions must have been formed and executed. The bones he calculates to be 284: The distinct purposes aimed at in the structure of each, above forty. What a prodigious display of artifice, even in these simple and homogeneous parts! But if we consider the skin, ligaments, vessels, glandules, humours, the several limbs and members of the body; how must our astonishment rise upon us, in proportion to the number and intricacy of the parts so artificially adjusted! The further we advance in these researches, we discover new scenes of art and wisdom: But descry still, at a distance, further scenes beyond our reach; in the fine internal structure of the parts, in the economy of the brain, in the fabric of the seminal vessels. All these artifices are repeated in every different species of animal, with wonderful variety, and with exact propriety, suited to the different intentions of Nature in framing each species. And if the infidelity of GALEN, even when these natural sciences were still imperfect, could not withstand such striking appearances, to what pitch of pertinacious obstinacy must a philosopher in this age have attained, who can now doubt of a Supreme Intelligence!

Could I meet with one of this species (who, I thank God, are very rare), I would ask him: Supposing there were a God, who did not discover himself immediately to our senses, were it possible for him to give stronger proofs of his existence, than what appear on the whole face of Nature? What indeed could such a Divine Being do, but copy the present economy of things; render many of his artifices so plain, that no stupidity could mistake them; afford glimpses of still greater artifices, which demonstrate his prodigious superiority above our narrow apprehensions; and conceal altogether a great many from such imperfect creatures? Now, according to all rules of just reasoning, every fact must pass for undisputed, when it is supported by all the arguments which its nature admits of; even though these arguments be not, in themselves, very numerous or forcible: How much more, in the present case, where no human imagination can compute their number, and no understanding estimate their cogency!

I shall further add, said CLEANTHES, to what you have so well urged, that one great advantage of the principle of Theism, is, that it is the only system of cosmogony which can be rendered intelligible and complete, and yet can throughout preserve a strong analogy to what we every day see and experience in the world. The comparison of the universe to a machine of human contrivance, is so obvious and natural, and is justified by so many instances of order and design in Nature, that it must immediately strike all unprejudiced apprehensions, and procure universal approbation. Whoever attempts to weaken this theory, cannot pretend to succeed by establishing in its place any other that is precise and determinate: It is sufficient for him if he start doubts and difficulties; and by remote and abstract views of things, reach that suspense of judgement, which is here the utmost boundary of his wishes. But, besides that this state of mind is in itself unsatisfactory, it can never be steadily maintained against such striking appearances as continually engage us into the religious hypothesis. A false, absurd system, human nature, from the force of prejudice, is capable of adhering to with obstinacy and perseverance: But no system at all, in opposition to a theory supported by strong and obvious reason, by natural propensity, and by early education, I think it absolutely impossible to maintain or defend.

So little, replied PHILO, do I esteem this suspense of judgement in the present case to be possible, that I am apt to suspect there enters somewhat of a dispute of words into this controversy, more than is usually imagined. That the works of Nature bear a great analogy to the productions of art, is evident; and according to all the rules of good reasoning, we ought to infer, if we argue at all concerning them, that their causes have a proportional analogy. But as there are also considerable differences, we have reason to suppose a proportional difference in the causes; and in particular, ought to attribute a much higher degree of power and energy to the supreme cause, than any we have ever observed in mankind. Here then the existence of a DEITY is plainly ascertained by reason: and if we make it a question, whether, on account of these analogies, we can properly call him a mind or intelligence, notwithstanding the vast difference which may reasonably be supposed between him and human minds; what is this but a mere verbal controversy? No man can deny the analogies between the effects: To restrain ourselves from inquiring concerning the causes is scarcely possible. From this inquiry, the legitimate conclusion is, that the causes have also an analogy: And if we are not contented with calling the first and supreme cause a GOD or DEITY, but desire to vary the expression; what can we call him but MIND or THOUGHT, to which he is justly supposed to bear a considerable resemblance?

All men of sound reason are disgusted with verbal disputes, which abound so much in philosophical and theological inquiries; and it is found, that the only remedy for this abuse must arise from clear definitions, from the precision of those ideas which enter into any argument, and from the strict and uniform use of those terms which are employed. But there is a species of controversy, which, from the very nature of language and of human ideas, is involved in perpetual ambiguity, and can never, by any precaution or any definitions, be able to reach a reasonable certainty or precision. These are the controversies concerning the degrees of any quality or circumstance. Men may argue to all eternity, whether HANNIBAL be a great, or a very great, or a superlatively great man, what degree of beauty CLEOPATRA possessed, what epithet of praise LIVY or THUCYDIDES is entitled to, without bringing the controversy to any determination. The disputants may here agree in their sense, and differ in the terms, or vice versa; yet never be able to define their terms, so as to enter into each other's meaning: Because the degrees of these qualities are not, like quantity or number, susceptible of any exact mensuration, which may be the standard in the controversy. That the dispute concerning Theism is of this nature, and consequently is merely verbal, or perhaps, if possible, still more incurably ambiguous, will appear upon the slightest inquiry. I ask the Theist, if he does not allow, that there is a great and immeasurable, because incomprehensible difference between the human and the divine mind: The more pious he is, the more readily will he assent to the affirmative, and the more will he be disposed to magnify the difference: He will even assert, that the difference is of a nature which cannot be too much magnified. I next turn to the Atheist, who, I assert, is only nominally so, and can never possibly be in earnest; and I ask him, whether, from the coherence and apparent sympathy in all the parts of this world, there be not a certain degree of analogy among all the operations of Nature, in every situation and in every age; whether the rotting of a turnip, the generation of an animal, and the structure of human thought, be not energies that probably bear some remote analogy to each other: It is impossible he can deny it: He will readily acknowledge it. Having obtained this concession, I push him still further in his retreat; and I ask him, if it be not probable, that the principle which first arranged, and still maintains order in this universe, bears not also some remote inconceivable analogy to the other operations of nature, and, among the rest, to the economy of human mind and thought. However reluctant, he must give his assent. Where then, cry I to both these antagonists, is the subject of your dispute? The Theist allows, that the original intelligence is very different from human reason: The Atheist allows, that the original principle of order bears some remote analogy to it. Will you quarrel, Gentlemen, about the degrees, and enter into a controversy, which admits not of any precise meaning, nor consequently of any determination? If you should be so obstinate, I should not be surprised to find you insensibly change sides; while the Theist, on the one hand, exaggerates the dissimilarity between the Supreme Being, and frail, imperfect, variable, fleeting, and mortal creatures; and the Atheist, on the other, magnifies the analogy among all the operations of Nature, in every period, every situation, and every position. Consider then, where the real point of controversy lies; and if you cannot lay aside your disputes, endeavour, at least, to cure yourselves of your animosity.

And here I must also acknowledge, CLEANTHES, that as the works of Nature have a much greater analogy to the effects of our art and contrivance, than to those of our benevolence and justice, we have reason to infer, that the natural attributes of the Deity have a greater resemblance to those of men, than his moral have to human virtues. But what is the consequence? Nothing but this, that the moral qualities of man are more defective in their kind than his natural abilities. For, as the Supreme Being is allowed to be absolutely and entirely perfect, whatever differs most from him, departs the furthest from the supreme standard of rectitude and perfection.

It seems evident that the dispute between the Skeptics and Dogmatists is entirely verbal, or at least regards only the degrees of doubt and assurance which we ought to indulge with regard to all reasoning; and such disputes are commonly, at the bottom, verbal, and admit not of any precise determination. No philosophical Dogmatist denies that there are difficulties both with regard to the senses and to all science, and that these difficulties are in a regular, logical method, absolutely insolvable. No Skeptic denies that we lie under an absolute necessity, notwithstanding these difficulties, of thinking, and believing, and reasoning, with regard to all kinds of subjects, and even of frequently assenting with confidence and security. The only difference, then, between these sects, if they merit that name, is, that the Sceptic, from habit, caprice, or inclination, insists most on the difficulties; the Dogmatist, for like reasons, on the necessity.

These, CLEANTHES, are my unfeigned sentiments on this subject; and these sentiments, you know, I have ever cherished and maintained. But in proportion to my veneration for true religion, is my abhorrence of vulgar superstitions; and I indulge a peculiar pleasure, I confess, in pushing such principles, sometimes into absurdity, sometimes into impiety. And you are sensible, that all bigots, notwithstanding their great aversion to the latter above the former, are commonly equally guilty of both.

My inclination, replied CLEANTHES, lies, I own, a contrary way. Religion, however corrupted, is still better than no religion at all. The doctrine of a future state is so strong and necessary a security to morals, that we never ought to abandon or neglect it. For if finite and temporary rewards and punishments have so great an effect, as we daily find; how much greater must be expected from such as are infinite and eternal?

How happens it then, said PHILO, if vulgar superstition be so salutary to society, that all history abounds so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs? Factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversions of government, oppression, slavery; these are the dismal consequences which always attend its prevalency over the minds of men. If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it. And no period of time can be happier or more prosperous, than those in which it is never regarded or heard of.

The reason of this observation, replied CLEANTHES, is obvious. The proper office of religion is to regulate the heart of men, humanise their conduct, infuse the spirit of temperance, order, and obedience; and as its operation is silent, and only enforces the motives of morality and justice, it is in danger of being overlooked, and confounded with these other motives. When it distinguishes itself, and acts as a separate principle over men, it has departed from its proper sphere, and has become only a cover to faction and ambition.

And so will all religion, said PHILO, except the philosophical and rational kind. Your reasonings are more easily eluded than my facts. The inference is not just, because finite and temporary rewards and punishments have so great influence, that therefore such as are infinite and eternal must have so much greater. Consider, I beseech you, the attachment which we have to present things, and the little concern which we discover for objects so remote and uncertain. When divines are declaiming against the common behaviour and conduct of the world, they always represent this principle as the strongest imaginable (which indeed it is); and describe almost all human kind as lying under the influence of it, and sunk into the deepest lethargy and unconcern about their religious interests. Yet these same divines, when they refute their speculative antagonists, suppose the motives of religion to be so powerful, that, without them, it were impossible for civil society to subsist; nor are they ashamed of so palpable a contradiction. It is certain, from experience, that the smallest grain of natural honesty and benevolence has more effect on men's conduct, than the most pompous views suggested by theological theories and systems. A man's natural inclination works incessantly upon him; it is for ever present to the mind, and mingles itself with every view and consideration: whereas religious motives, where they act at all, operate only by starts and bounds; and it is scarcely possible for them to become altogether habitual to the mind. The force of the greatest gravity, say the philosophers, is infinitely small, in comparison of that of the least impulse: yet it is certain, that the smallest gravity will, in the end, prevail above a great impulse; because no strokes or blows can be repeated with such constancy as attraction and gravitation.

Another advantage of inclination: It engages on its side all the wit and ingenuity of the mind; and when set in opposition to religious principles, seeks every method and art of eluding them: In which it is almost always successful. Who can explain the heart of man, or account for those strange salvos and excuses, with which people satisfy themselves, when they follow their inclinations in opposition to their religious duty? This is well understood in the world; and none but fools ever repose less trust in a man, because they hear, that from study and philosophy, he has entertained some speculative doubts with regard to theological subjects. And when we have to do with a man, who makes a great profession of religion and devotion, has this any other effect upon several, who pass for prudent, than to put them on their guard, lest they be cheated and deceived by him?

We must further consider, that philosophers, who cultivate reason and reflection, stand less in need of such motives to keep them under the restraint of morals; and that the vulgar, who alone may need them, are utterly incapable of so pure a religion as represents the Deity to be pleased with nothing but virtue in human behaviour. The recommendations to the Divinity are generally supposed to be either frivolous observances, or rapturous ecstasies, or a bigoted credulity. We need not run back into antiquity, or wander into remote regions, to find instances of this degeneracy. Amongst ourselves, some have been guilty of that atrociousness, unknown to the Egyptian and Grecian superstitions, of declaiming in express terms, against morality; and representing it as a sure forfeiture of the Divine favour, if the least trust or reliance be laid upon it.

But even though superstition or enthusiasm should not put itself in direct opposition to morality; the very diverting of the attention, the raising up a new and frivolous species of merit, the preposterous distribution which it makes of praise and blame, must have the most pernicious consequences, and weaken extremely men’s attachment to the natural motives of justice and humanity.

Such a principle of action likewise, not being any of the familiar motives of human conduct, acts only by intervals on the temper; and must be roused by continual efforts, in order to render the pious zealot satisfied with his own conduct, and make him fulfil his devotional task. Many religious exercises are entered into with seeming fervour, where the heart, at the time, feels cold and languid: A habit of dissimulation is by degrees contracted; and fraud and falsehood become the predominant principle. Hence the reason of that vulgar observation, that the highest zeal in religion and the deepest hypocrisy, so far from being inconsistent, are often or commonly united in the same individual character.

The bad effects of such habits, even in common life, are easily imagined; but where the interests of religion are concerned, no morality can be forcible enough to bind the enthusiastic zealot. The sacredness of the cause sanctifies every measure which can be made use of to promote it.

The steady attention alone to so important an interest as that of eternal salvation, is apt to extinguish the benevolent affections, and beget a narrow, contracted selfishness. And when such a temper is encouraged, it easily eludes all the general precepts of charity and benevolence.

Thus, the motives of vulgar superstition have no great influence on general conduct; nor is their operation favourable to morality, in the instances where they predominate.

Is there any maxim in politics more certain and infallible, than that both the number and authority of priests should be confined within very narrow limits; and that the civil magistrate ought, for ever, to keep his fasces and axes from such dangerous hands? But if the spirit of popular religion were so salutary to society, a contrary maxim ought to prevail. The greater number of priests, and their greater authority and riches, will always augment the religious spirit. And though the priests have the guidance of this spirit, why may we not expect a superior sanctity of life, and greater benevolence and moderation, from persons who are set apart for religion, who are continually inculcating it upon others, and who must themselves imbibe a greater share of it? Whence comes it then, that, in fact, the utmost a wise magistrate can propose with regard to popular religions, is, as far as possible, to make a saving game of it, and to prevent their pernicious consequences with regard to society? Every expedient which he tries for so humble a purpose is surrounded with inconveniences. If he admits only one religion among his subjects, he must sacrifice, to an uncertain prospect of tranquillity, every consideration of public liberty, science, reason, industry, and even his own independency. If he gives indulgence to several sects, which is the wiser maxim, he must preserve a very philosophical indifference to all of them, and carefully restrain the pretensions of the prevailing sect; otherwise he can expect nothing but endless disputes, quarrels, factions, persecutions, and civil commotions.

True religion, I allow, has no such pernicious consequences: but we must treat of religion, as it has commonly been found in the world; nor have I any thing to do with that speculative tenet of Theism, which, as it is a species of philosophy, must partake of the beneficial influence of that principle, and at the same time must lie under a like inconvenience, of being always confined to very few persons.

Oaths are requisite in all courts of judicature; but it is a question whether their authority arises from any popular religion. It is the solemnity and importance of the occasion, the regard to reputation, and the reflecting on the general interests of society, which are the chief restraints upon mankind. Custom-house oaths and political oaths are but little regarded even by some who pretend to principles of honesty and religion; and a Quaker’s asseveration is with us justly put upon the same footing with the oath of any other person. I know, that POLYBIUS [Lib. vi. ca.] ascribes the infamy of GREEK faith to the prevalency of the EPICUREAN philosophy: but I know also, that Punic faith had as bad a reputation in ancient times as Irish evidence has in modern; though we cannot account for these vulgar observations by the same reason. Not to mention that Greek faith was infamous before the rise of the Epicurean philosophy; and EURIPIDES [Iphigenia in Tauride], in a passage which I shall point out to you, has glanced a remarkable stroke of satire against his nation, with regard to this circumstance.

Take care, PHILO, replied CLEANTHES, take care: push not matters too far: allow not your zeal against false religion to undermine your veneration for the true. Forfeit not this principle, the chief, the only great comfort in life; and our principal support amidst all the attacks of adverse fortune. The most agreeable reflection, which it is possible for human imagination to suggest, is that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a Being perfectly good, wise, and powerful; who created us for happiness; and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires, and render our felicity complete and durable. Next to such a Being himself (if the comparison be allowed), the happiest lot which we can imagine, is that of being under his guardianship and protection.

These appearances, said PHILO, are most engaging and alluring; and with regard to the true philosopher, they are more than appearances. But it happens here, as in the former case, that, with regard to the greater part of mankind, the appearances are deceitful, and that the terrors of religion commonly prevail above its comforts.

It is allowed, that men never have recourse to devotion so readily as when dejected with grief or depressed with sickness. Is not this a proof, that the religious spirit is not so nearly allied to joy as to sorrow?

But men, when afflicted, find consolation in religion, replied CLEANTHES. Sometimes, said PHILO: but it is natural to imagine, that they will form a notion of those unknown beings, suitably to the present gloom and melancholy of their temper, when they betake themselves to the contemplation of them. Accordingly, we find the tremendous images to predominate in all religions; and we ourselves, after having employed the most exalted expression in our descriptions of the Deity, fall into the flattest contradiction in affirming that the damned are infinitely superior in number to the elect.

I shall venture to affirm, that there never was a popular religion, which represented the state of departed souls in such a light, as would render it eligible for human kind that there should be such a state. These fine models of religion are the mere product of philosophy. For as death lies between the eye and the prospect of futurity, that event is so shocking to Nature, that it must throw a gloom on all the regions which lie beyond it; and suggest to the generality of mankind the idea of CERBERUS and FURIES; devils, and torrents of fire and brimstone.

It is true, both fear and hope enter into religion; because both these passions, at different times, agitate the human mind, and each of them forms a species of divinity suitable to itself. But when a man is in a cheerful disposition, he is fit for business, or company, or entertainment of any kind; and he naturally applies himself to these, and thinks not of religion. When melancholy and dejected, he has nothing to do but brood upon the terrors of the invisible world, and to plunge himself still deeper in affliction. It may indeed happen, that after he has, in this manner, engraved the religious opinions deep into his thought and imagination, there may arrive a change of health or circumstances, which may restore his good humour, and raising cheerful prospects of futurity, make him run into the other extreme of joy and triumph. But still it must be acknowledged, that, as terror is the primary principle of religion, it is the passion which always predominates in it, and admits but of short intervals of pleasure.

Not to mention, that these fits of excessive, enthusiastic joy, by exhausting the spirits, always prepare the way for equal fits of superstitious terror and dejection; nor is there any state of mind so happy as the calm and equable. But this state it is impossible to support, where a man thinks that he lies in such profound darkness and uncertainty, between an eternity of happiness and an eternity of misery. No wonder that such an opinion disjoints the ordinary frame of the mind, and throws it into the utmost confusion. And though that opinion is seldom so steady in its operation as to influence all the actions; yet it is apt to make a considerable breach in the temper, and to produce that gloom and melancholy so remarkable in all devout people.

It is contrary to common sense to entertain apprehensions or terrors upon account of any opinion whatsoever, or to imagine that we run any risk hereafter, by the freest use of our reason. Such a sentiment implies both an absurdity and an inconsistency. It is an absurdity to believe that the Deity has human passions, and one of the lowest of human passions, a restless appetite for applause. It is an inconsistency to believe, that, since the Deity has this human passion, he has not others also; and, in particular, a disregard to the opinions of creatures so much inferior.

To know God, says SENECA, is to worship him. All other worship is indeed absurd, superstitious, and even impious. It degrades him to the low condition of mankind, who are delighted with entreaty, solicitation, presents, and flattery. Yet is this impiety the smallest of which superstition is guilty. Commonly, it depresses the Deity far below the condition of mankind; and represents him as a capricious DEMON, who exercises his power without reason and without humanity! And were that Divine Being disposed to be offended at the vices and follies of silly mortals, who are his own workmanship, ill would it surely fare with the votaries of most popular superstitions. Nor would any of human race merit his favour, but a very few, the philosophical Theists, who entertain, or rather indeed endeavour to entertain, suitable notions of his Divine perfections: As the only persons entitled to his compassion and indulgence would be the philosophical Sceptics, a sect almost equally rare, who, from a natural diffidence of their own capacity, suspend, or endeavour to suspend, all judgement with regard to such sublime and such extraordinary subjects.

If the whole of Natural Theology, as some people seem to maintain, resolves itself into one simple, though somewhat ambiguous, at least undefined proposition, That the cause or causes of order in the universe probably bear some remote analogy to human intelligence: If this proposition be not capable of extension, variation, or more particular explication: If it affords no inference that affects human life, or can be the source of any action or forbearance: And if the analogy, imperfect as it is, can be carried no further than to the human intelligence, and cannot be transferred, with any appearance of probability, to the other qualities of the mind; if this really be the case, what can the most inquisitive, contemplative, and religious man do more than give a plain, philosophical assent to the proposition, as often as it occurs, and believe that the arguments on which it is established exceed the objections which lie against it? Some astonishment, indeed, will naturally arise from the greatness of the object; some melancholy from its obscurity; some contempt of human reason, that it can give no solution more satisfactory with regard to so extraordinary and magnificent a question. But believe me, CLEANTHES, the most natural sentiment which a well-disposed mind will feel on this occasion, is a longing desire and expectation that Heaven would be pleased to dissipate, at least alleviate, this profound ignorance, by affording some more particular revelation to mankind, and making discoveries of the nature, attributes, and operations of the Divine object of our faith. A person, seasoned with a just sense of the imperfections of natural reason, will fly to revealed truth with the greatest avidity: While the haughty Dogmatist, persuaded that he can erect a complete system of Theology by the mere help of philosophy, disdains any further aid, and rejects this adventitious instructor. To be a philosophical Sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian; a proposition which I would willingly recommend to the attention of PAMPHILUS: And I hope CLEANTHES will forgive me for interposing so far in the education and instruction of his pupil.

CLEANTHES and PHILO pursued not this conversation much further: and as nothing ever made greater impression on me, than all the reasonings of that day, so I confess, that, upon a serious review of the whole, I cannot but think, that PHILO's principles are more probable than DEMEA's; but that those of CLEANTHES approach still nearer to the truth.

The Autobiography

Old College, Edinburgh University — Hume attended the university at the unusually early age of twelve at a time when fourteen was normal. At first, because of his family, he considered a career in law, but came to have, in his words, "an insurmountable aversion to everything but the pursuits of Philosophy".

MY OWN LIFE

It is difficult for a man to speak long of himself without vanity; therefore, I shall be short. It may be thought an instance of vanity that I pretend at all to write my life; but this Narrative shall contain little more than the History of my Writings; as, indeed, almost all my life has been spent in literary pursuits and occupations. The first success of most of my writings was not such as to be an object of vanity.

I was born the 26th of April 1711, old style, at Edinburgh. I was of a good family, both by father and mother: my father's family is a branch of the Earl of Home's, or Hume's; and my ancestors had been proprietors of the estate, which my brother possesses, for several generations. My mother was daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice: the title of Lord Halkerton came by succession to her brother.

My family, however, was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and educating of her children. I passed through the ordinary course of education with success, and was seized very early with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and the great source of my enjoyments. My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an unsurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring.

My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me. I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature.

During my retreat in France, first at Reims, but chiefly at La Fleche, in Anjou, I composed my Treatise of Human Nature. After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737. In the end of 1738, I published my Treatise, and immediately went down to my mother and my brother, who lived at his country-house, and was employing himself very judiciously and successfully in the improvement of his fortune.

Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my Treatise of Human Nature. It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction, as even to excite a murmur among the zealots. But being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country. In 1742, I printed at Edinburgh the first part of my Essays: the work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.

In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England; I found also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. — I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune. I then received an invitation from General St. Clair to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France. Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the general, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life: I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so; in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.

I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the Treatise of Human Nature, had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the Enquiry concerning Human Understanding, which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the Treatise of Human Nature. On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton's Free Enquiry, while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected. A new edition, which had been published at London of my Essays, moral and political, met not with a much better reception.

Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression on me. I went down in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country-house, for my mother was now dead. I there composed the second part of my Essays, which I called Political Discourses, and also my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, which is another part of my treatise that I cast anew. Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by Reverends, and Right Reverends, came out two or three in a year; and I found, by Dr. Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company. However, I had fixed a resolution, which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to any body; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of all literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favourable than unfavourable side of things; a turn of mind which it is more happy to possess, than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year.

In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters. In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my Political Discourses, the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London, my Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals; which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world.

In 1752, the Faculty of Advocates chose me their Librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the History of England; but being frightened with the notion of continuing a narrative through a period of 1700 years, I commenced with the accession of the House of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian, that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, churchman and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man, who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere.

In this interval, I published at London my Natural History of Religion, along with some other small pieces: its public entry was rather obscure, except only that Dr. Hurd wrote a pamphlet against it, with all the illiberal petulance, arrogance, and scurrility, which distinguish the Warburtonian school. This pamphlet gave me some consolation for the otherwise indifferent reception of my performance.

In 1756, two years after the fall of the first volume, was published the second volume of my History, containing the period from the death of Charles I. till the Revolution. This performance happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.

But though I had been taught by experience, that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations, which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution before that period as a regular plan of liberty.

In 1759, I published my History of the House of Tudor. The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious. But I was now callous against the impressions of public folly, and continued very peaceably and contentedly in my retreat at Edinburgh, to finish, in two volumes, the more early part of the English History, which I gave to the public in 1761, with tolerable, and but tolerable success.

But, notwithstanding this variety of winds and seasons, to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances, that the copy-money given me by the booksellers, much exceeded any thing formerly known in England; I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship’s repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway.

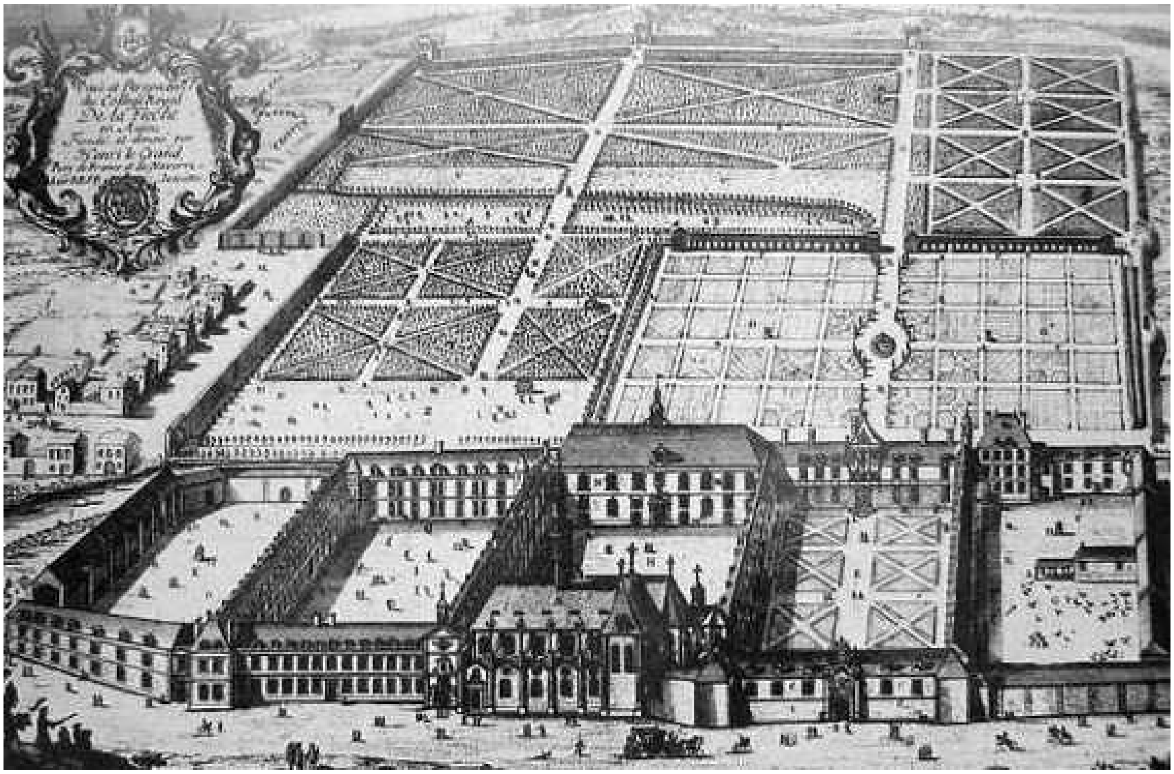
Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I resiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris, from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.

I was appointed secretary to the embassy; and, in summer 1765, Lord Hertford left me, being appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. I was chargé d’affaires till the arrival of the Duke of Richmond, towards the end of the year. In the beginning of 1766, I left Paris, and next summer went to Edinburgh, with the same view as formerly, of burying myself in a philosophical retreat. I returned to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford’s friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But, in 1767, I received from Mr. Conway an invitation to be Under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining. I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of 1000 l. a year), healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation.

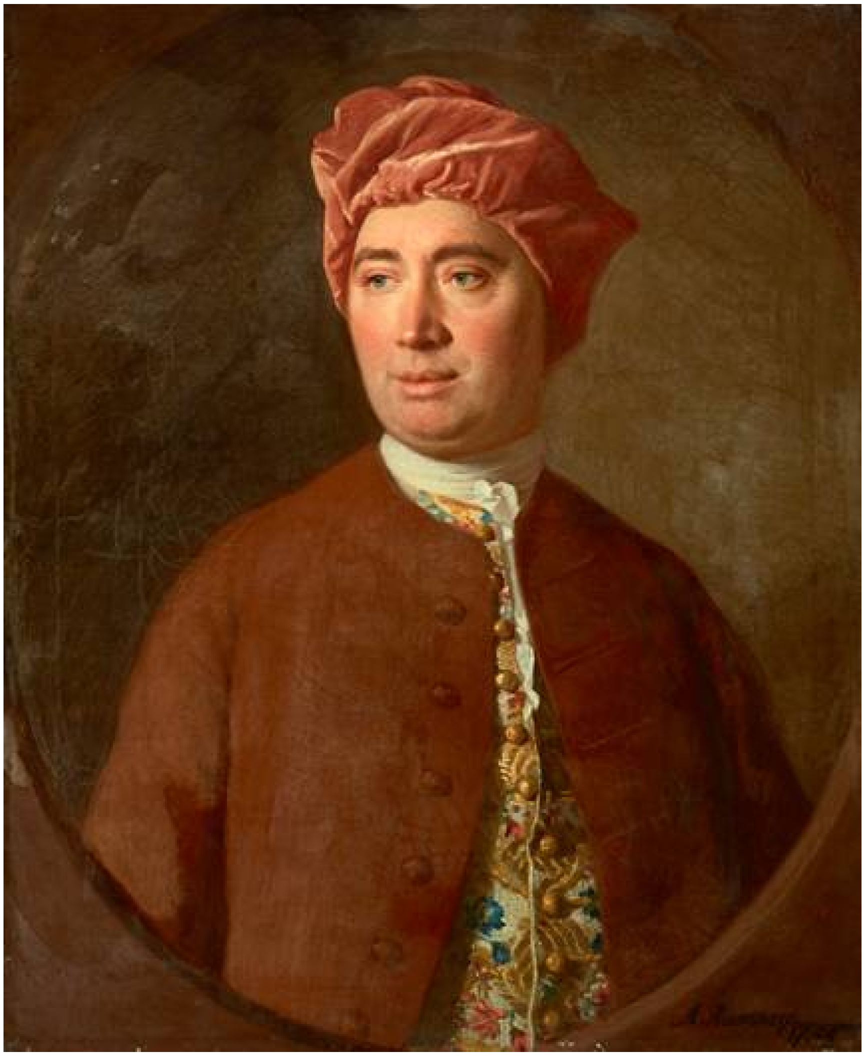
In spring 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment’s abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name the period of my life, which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this later period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation’s breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

To conclude historically with my own character. I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments); I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed in my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

The Biographies



The Prytanée National Militaire, a French school managed by the military, offering regular secondary education as well as special preparatory classes — at 25 years of age, Hume, although of noble ancestry, had no source of income and no learned profession. As was common at his time, he became a merchant's assistant, but he had to leave his native Scotland. He travelled via Bristol to La Flèche in Anjou, France. There he had frequent discourse with the Jesuits of the College of La Flèche.



David Hume by Allan Ramsay, 1754

LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE OF DAVID HUME by John Hill Burton

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TO THE PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL

OF

THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH,

THIS WORK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY

THEIR MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

J. H. BURTON.

VOLUME I.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In this work, an attempt has been made to connect together a series of original documents, by a narrative of events in the life of him to whom they relate; an account of his literary labours; and a picture of his character, according to the representations of it preserved by his contemporaries. The scantiness of the resources at the command of previous biographers, and the extent and variety of the new materials now presented to the world, render unnecessary any other apology for the present publication. How far these materials have been rightly used, readers and critics must judge; but I may be perhaps excused for offering a brief explanation of the spirit in which I desired to undertake the task; and the responsibility I felt attached to the duty, of ushering before the public, documents of so much importance to literature.

The critic or biographer, who writes from materials already before the public, may be excused if he give way to his prepossessions and partialities, and limit his task to the representation of all that justifies and supports them. If he have any misgivings, that, in following the direction of his prepossessions, he may not have taken the straight line of truth, he may be assured, that if the cause be one of any interest, an advocate, having the same resources at his command, will speedily appear on the other side. But when original manuscripts are for the first time to be used, it is due to truth, and to the desire of mankind to satisfy themselves about the real characters of great men, that they should be so presented as to afford the means of impartially estimating those to whom they relate. We possess many brilliant Eulogiums of the leaders of our race — many vivid pictures of their virtues and their vices — their greatness or their weakness. But if a humbler, it is perhaps a no less useful task, to represent these men — their character, their conduct, and the circumstances of their life, precisely as they were; rejecting nothing that truly exemplifies them, because it is beneath the dignity of biography, or at variance with received notions of their character and the tendency of their public conduct. The desire to have a closer view of the fountain head whence the outward manifestations of a great intellect have sprung, is but one of the many examples of man's spirit of inquiry from effects to their causes; and the desire will not be gratified by reproducing the object of inquiry in all the pomp and state of his public intercourse with the world, and keeping the veil still closed upon his inner nature. It is difficult to write with mere descriptive impartiality, and without exhibiting any bias of opinion, on matters which are, at the same time, the most deeply interesting to mankind, and the objects of their strongest partialities. Though the task that was before me was simply to describe, and never to controvert, I do not profess to have avoided all indications of opinion in the departments of the work which have the character of original authorship. I have the satisfaction, however, of reflecting, that the documents, which are the real elements of value in this work, are impartially presented to the reader, and that nothing is omitted which seemed to bear distinctly on the character and conduct of David Hume.

I now offer a few words in explanation of the nature of these original documents. The late Baron Hume had collected together his uncle's papers, consisting of the letters addressed to him, the few drafts or copies he had left of letters written by himself, the letters addressed *by* him to his immediate relations, and apparently all the papers in his handwriting, which had been left in the possession of the members of his family. To these the Baron seems to have been enabled to add the originals of many of the letters addressed by him to his intimate friends, Adam Smith, Blair, Mure, and others. The design with which this interesting collection was made, appears to have been that of preparing a work of a similar description to the present; and it is a misfortune to literature that this design was not accomplished. On the death of Baron Hume, it was found that he had left this mass of papers at the uncontrolled disposal of the Council of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. This learned body, after having fully considered the course proper to be adopted in these circumstances, determined that they would permit the papers to be made use of by any person desirous to apply them to a legitimate literary purpose, who might enjoy their confidence. Having for some time indulged in a project of writing a life of Hume, postponed from time to time, on account of the imperfect character of the materials at my disposal, I applied to the Council of the Royal Society for access to the Hume papers; and after having considered my application with that deliberation which their duty to the public as custodiers of these documents seemed to require, they acceded to my request. The ordinary form of returning thanks for the privilege of using papers in the possession of private parties, appears not to be applicable to this occasion; and I look on the concession of the Council as conferring on me an honour, which is felt to be all the greater, that it was bestowed in the conscientious discharge of a public duty.

The Hume papers, besides a manuscript of the "Dialogues on Natural Religion," and of a portion of the History, fill seven quarto volumes of various thickness, and two thin folios. In having so large a mass of private and confidential correspondence committed to their charge, the Council naturally felt that they would be neglecting their duty, if they did not keep in view the possibility that there might be in the collection, allusions to the domestic conduct or private affairs of persons whose relations are still living; and that good taste, and a kind consideration for private feelings should prevent the accidental publication of such passages. On inspection, less of this description of matter was found than so large a mass of private documents might be supposed to contain. There is no passage which I have felt any inclination to print, as being likely to afford interest to the reader, of which the use has been denied me; and I can therefore say that I have had in all respects full and unlimited access to this valuable collection. Before leaving this matter, I take the opportunity of returning my thanks for the kind and polite attention I have received from those gentlemen of the Council, on whom the arrangements for my getting access to these papers, imposed no little labour and sacrifice of valuable time.

A rumour has obtained currency regarding the contents of these papers, which seems to demand notice on the present occasion.

It is stated in *The Quarterly Review*,[xi:1] that "those who have examined the Hume papers — which we know only by report — speak highly of their interest, but add, that they furnish painful disclosures concerning the opinions then prevailing amongst the clergy of the northern metropolis: distinguished ministers of the gospel encouraging the scoffs of their familiar friend, the author of 'the Essay upon Miracles;' and echoing the blasphemies of their associate, the author of the 'Essay upon Suicide!'" I have the pleasing task of removing the painful feelings which, as this writer justly observes, must attend the belief in such a rumour, by saying that I could not find it justified by a single sentence in the letters of the Scottish clergy contained in these papers, or in any other documents that have passed under my eye. I make this statement as an act of simple justice to the memory of men to whose character, being a member of a different church, I have no partisan attachment: and I may add that, in the whole course of my pretty extensive researches in connexion with Hume and his friends, I found no reason for believing that letters containing evidence of any such frightful duplicity ever existed.

Among these papers, a variety of letters, chiefly from eminent foreigners, though interesting in themselves, were entitled to no place in the body of this work, as illustrative of the life and character of Hume. These I had intended to print in an appendix, believing that, though not directly connected with my own project, the lovers of literature would not readily excuse me for neglecting the opportunity afforded by my access to these papers, for adding to the stock of the letters of celebrated men. But the work, according to its original scope and design, continuing to increase under my hands, I found that if it contained the documents specially referred to in the text, its bulk would be sufficiently extended, and I have determined to let the other papers here alluded to follow in a separate volume, which will contain letters to Hume from D'Alembert, Turgot, Diderot, Helvétius, Franklin, Walpole, and other distinguished persons.

The reader will find that many original documents printed in this collection have been obtained from other sources than the Hume papers. My acknowledgments are particularly due to the Earl of Minto, for the liberality with which he allowed me the uncontrolled use of the large and valuable collection of correspondence between Hume and Sir Gilbert Elliot. For the letters in the Kilravock collection I am indebted to Cosmo Innes, Esq., sheriff of Morayshire; and I obtained access to those addressed to Colonel Edmondstoune, through the polite intervention of George Dundas, Esq., sheriff of Selkirkshire. I am obliged to the kindness of Lord Murray for much assistance in obtaining materials and information for this work; and to Robert Chambers, Esq., who has been accustomed from time to time, to preserve such letters and other documents connected with Scottish biography, as came under his notice, I have to offer my thanks for the whole of his collections regarding Hume, which he generously transferred to me.

In the use of printed books, where the Advocates' Library, to which I have professional access, has failed me, I have found the facilities for consulting the select and well arranged collection of the Writers to the Signet of great service.

I owe acknowledgments to many friends for useful advice in the conduct of the work. To one especially, who, after having long occupied a distinguished place in the literature of his country, permits his friends still to enjoy the social exercise of those intellectual qualities that have delighted the world, I am indebted for such critical counsel as no other could have given, and few would have had the considerate kindness to bestow, were they able.

Of the two portraits engraved for this work, that which will, probably, most strikingly attract attention, is taken from a bust, of coarse and unartistic workmanship, but bearing all the marks of a genuine likeness. It was moulded by a country artist, at the desire of Hume’s esteemed friend, Professor Ferguson; and I am under obligations to his son, Sir Adam, for the privilege of using it on this occasion, and to Sir George Mackenzie, for having kindly mentioned its existence, and exerted himself in its recovery, after it had been long lost sight of. The medallion, from which the other portrait is taken, is in the possession of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, Esq., by whom I was presented with the engraved plate, from which the fac simile of a letter, addressed by Hume to his collateral ancestor, is printed.

Edinburgh, February, 1846.

* * * It may be right to explain, that the two sizes of type, used in this work, were first adopted with the design of presenting all letters addressed to Hume, all extracts, and all letters from him with which the public is already familiar, in the smaller type, in order that the reader coming to a document with which he is already acquainted, might see at once where it ends. This arrangement was accidentally broken through, several letters having been printed in the larger that should have appeared in the smaller type.

CHAPTER I.

1711-1734. Æt. 0-23.

Birth — Parentage — His own account of his Ancestors — Local associations of Ninewells — Education — Studies — Early Correspondence — The Ramsays — Specimen of his early Writings — Essay on Chivalry — Why he deserted the Law — Early ambition to found a School of Philosophy — Letter to a Physician describing his studies and habits — Criticism on the Letter — Supposition that it was addressed to Dr. Cheyne — Hume goes to Bristol.

David Hume was born at Edinburgh, on the 26th of April, 1711. He was the second son of Joseph Hume, or Home, proprietor of the estate of Ninewells, in the parish of Chirnside, in Berwickshire. His mother was a daughter of Sir David Falconer of Newton, who filled the office of Lord President of the Court of Session from 1682 to 1685, and is known to lawyers as the collector of a series of decisions of the Court of Session, published in 1701. His son, the brother of Hume's mother, succeeded to the barony of Halkerton in 1727. Mr. Hume the elder, was a member of the Faculty of Advocates. He appears, however, if he ever intended to follow the legal profession as a means of livelihood, to have early given up that view, and to have lived, as his eldest son John afterwards did, the life of a retired country gentleman.

It is an established rule, that all biographical attempts of considerable length, shall contain some genealogical inquiry regarding the family of their subject. The present writer is relieved both of the labour of such an investigation, and the responsibility of adjusting it to the appropriate bounds, by being able to print a letter in which the philosopher has himself exhibited the results of an inquiry into the subject.

David Hume *to* Alexander Home *of Whitfield*.

"Edinburgh, 12th April, 1758.

“Dear Sir, — I was told by Mrs. Home, when she was in town, that you intended to make some researches into our family, in order to give them to Mr. Douglas, who must insert them, or the substance of them, into his account of the Scottish nobility. I think that your purpose is very laudable, and is very obliging to us all; and for this reason I shall inform you of what I know of the matter. These hints will at least serve to point out to you more authentic documents.

“My brother has no very ancient charters: the oldest he has, are some charters of the lands of Horndean. There he is designated Home, or Hume, of Ninewells. The oldest charters of Ninewells are lost. It was always a tradition in our family, that we were descended from Lord Home, in this manner. Lord Home gave to his younger son the lands of Tinningham, East Lothian. This gentleman proved a spendthrift and dissipated his estate, upon which Lord Home provided his grandchild, or nephew, in the lands of Ninewells as a patrimony. This, probably, is the reason why, in all the books of heraldry, we are styled to be cadets of Tinningham; and Tinningham was undoubtedly a cadet of Home. I was told by my grand-aunt, Mrs. Sinclair of Hermiston, that Charles earl of Home told her, that he had been looking over some old papers of the family, where the Lord Home designs Home of Ninewells either his grandson or nephew, I do not precisely remember which.

“The late Sir James Home of Blackadder showed me a paper, which he himself had copied a few days before from a gravestone in the churchyard of Hutton: the words were these— ‘Here lies John Home of Bell, son of John Home of Ninewells, son of John Home of Tinningham, son of John Lord Home, founder of Dunglas.’

“I find that this Lord Home, founder of Dunglas, was the very person whom Godscroft says went over to France with the Douglas, and was father to Tinningham: so thus the two stories tally exactly. He was killed either in the battle of Crevant or Verneuil, gained by the Duke of Bedford, the regent, against the French. Douglas fell in the same battle. I think it was the battle of Verneuil. All the French and English histories, as well as the Scotch, contain this fact. This Lord Home was your ancestor, and ours, lived in the time of James the First and Second of Scotland, Henrys the Fifth and Sixth of England.

“I have asked old Bell the descent of his family. He said he was really sprung from Ninewells, but that the lands fell to an heiress who married a brother of Polwarth's.

"By Godscroft's account, Tinningham was the third son of Home in the same generation that Wedderburn was the second, so that the difference of antiquity is nothing, or very inconsiderable.

"The readiest way of vouching these facts would be for you to take a jaunt to the churchyard of Hutton, and inquire for Bell's monument, and see whether the inscription be not obliterated; for it is above twenty-five years ago that I saw the paper in Sir James Home's hand, and he told us, at that time, that the inscription was somewhat difficult to be read. If it be still legible it would be very well done to take a copy of it in some authentic manner, and transmit it to Mr. Douglas, to be inserted in his volume. If it be utterly effaced, the next, but most difficult task would be to search for the paper above-mentioned in the family of Home: it must be some time about the year 1440 or 1450. If both these means fail, we must rest upon the tradition.

"I am not of the opinion of some, that these matters are altogether to be slighted. Though we should pretend to be wiser than our ancestors, yet it is arrogant to pretend that we are wiser than the other nations of Europe, who, all of them, except perhaps the English, make great account of their family descent. I doubt that our morals have not much improved since we began to think riches the sole thing worth regarding.

"If I were in the country I should be glad to attend you to Hutton, in order to make the inquiry I propose. I doubt whether my brother will think of doing it: he has such an extreme aversion to every thing that savours of vanity, that he would not willingly expose himself to censure; but this is a justice that one owes to their posterity, for we are not certain that these matters will be always so little regarded.

"I shall farther observe to you, that the Lord Home, founder of Dunglas, married the heiress of that family, of the name of Pepdie, and from her we always bear the Pepingos in our arms.

"I find in Hall's Chronicle that the Earl of Surrey, in an inroad upon the Merse, made during the reign of Henry the Eighth, after the battle of Flouden, destroyed the castles of Hedderburn, West Nisgate, and Blackadder, and the towers of East Nisgate, and Winwalls. The names, you see, are somewhat disfigured; but I cannot doubt but he means Nisbet and Ninewells: the situation of the places leads us to that conjecture.

“I have reason to believe, notwithstanding the fact, as Ninewells lay very near Berwick, our ancestors commonly paid contributions to the governor of that place, and abstained from hostilities and were prevented from ravages. There is, in Hayne’s State Papers, a very particular account of the ravages committed by an inroad of the English, during the minority of Queen Mary. Not a village, scarce a single house in the Merse, but what is mentioned as burnt or overthrown, till you come to Whitwater. East of the river, there was not one destroyed. This reason will perhaps explain why, in none of the histories of that time, even the more particular, there is any mention made of our ancestors; while we meet with Wedderburn, Aiton, Manderston, Cowdenknows, Sprot, and other cadets of Home.

“I have learned from my mother, that my father, in a lawsuit with Hilton, claimed an old apprizing upon the lands of Hutton-Hall, upon which there had been no deed done for 140 years. Hilton thought that it must necessarily be expired; but my father was able to prove that, during that whole time there had not been forty years of majority in the family. He died soon after, and left my mother very young; so that there was near 160 years during which there was not forty years of majority. Now we are upon this subject, I shall just mention to you a trifle, with regard to the spelling of our name. The practice of spelling Hume is by far the most ancient and most general till about the Restoration, when it became common to spell Home contrary to the pronunciation. Our name is frequently mentioned in Rymer’s Fœdera, and always spelt Hume. I find a subscription of Lord Hume in the memoirs of the Sidney family, where it is spelt as I do at present. These are a few of the numberless authorities on this head.

“I wish the materials I give you were more numerous and more satisfactory; but such as they are, I am glad to have communicated them to you. — I am,” &c.

A competent authority in such matters gives the following partly heraldic, partly topographical account of the Humes and their territory: —

“Hume of Ninewells, the family of the great historian, bore ‘Vert a lion rampant, argent, within a bordure or, charged with *nine wells*, or springs, barry-wavy and argent.’

“The estate of Ninewells is so named from a cluster of springs of that number. Their situation is picturesque. They burst forth from a gentle declivity in front of the mansion, which has on each side a semicircular rising bank, covered with fine timber, and fall, after a short time, into the bed of the river Whitewater, which forms a boundary in the front. These springs, as descriptive of their property, were assigned to the Humes of this place, as a difference in arms from the chief of their house."

The scenes amidst which Hume passed his boyhood, and many of the years of his later life, have subsequently, in the light of a national literature, become a classic land, visited by strangers, with the same feeling with which Hume himself trod the soil of Mantua. In his own days, the elements of this literature were no less in existence; but it was not part of his mental character to find any pleasing associations in spots, remarkable only for the warlike or adventurous achievements they had witnessed. Intellect was the material on which his genius worked: with it were all his associations and sympathies; and what had not been adorned by the feats of the mind had no charm in his eye. Had he been a stranger of another land, visiting at the present, or some later day, the scenes of the Lay and of Marmion, they would, without doubt, like the land of Virgil, have lit in his mind some sympathetic glow; but the scenes illustrated solely by deeds of barbarous warfare, and by a rude illiterate minstrelsy, had nothing in them to rouse a mind, which was yet far from being destitute of its own peculiar enthusiasm. He had often, in his history, to mention great historical events that had taken place in the immediate vicinity of his paternal residence, and in places to which he could hardly have escaped, if he did not court occasional visits. About six miles from Ninewells, stands Norham castle. Three or four miles farther off, are Twisel bridge, where Surrey crossed the Till to engage the Scots, and the other localities connected with the battle of Flodden. In the same neighbourhood is Holiwell Haugh, where Edward I. met the Scottish nobility, when he professed himself to be the arbiter of the disputes between Bruce and Baliol. In his notices of these spots, in connexion with the historical events which he describes, he betrays no symptom of having passed many of his youthful days in their vicinity, but is as cold and general as when he describes Agincourt or Marston Moor; and it may safely be said, that in none of his historical or philosophical writings does any expression used by him, unless in those cases where a Scoticism has escaped his vigilance, betray either the district or the country of his origin. Hume tells us, in his short autobiography, "My family was not rich, and being myself a younger brother, my patrimony, according to the mode of my country, was of course very slender. My father, who passed for a man of parts, died when I was an infant, leaving me, with an elder brother and a sister, under the care of our mother, a woman of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and education of her children.” He says no more of his education, than that he “passed through the ordinary course of education with success.” In a document which will be immediately quoted at length, we find him speaking of having received the usual college education of Scotland, which terminates when the student is fourteen or fifteen years old. It is probable that he studied at the University of Edinburgh, in the matriculation book of which the name of “David Home” appears, as intrant of the class of William Scott, Professor of Greek, on 27th February, 1723. Holding the year to commence on 1st January, which was then the practice in Scotland, though not in England, he would be at that time nearly twelve years old. The name does not appear in any of the subsequent matriculation lists: it was probably not then the practice for the student to be entered more than once, at the commencement of his curriculum; and neither the name of Hume, nor of Home, occurs in the list of graduates.

Of his method of studying, and of his habits of life, after he left the university, as of his literary aspirations and projects, we fortunately possess some curious notices in his correspondence. The earliest letter written by Hume, known to be extant, is in a scroll which has been apparently preserved by himself. It is addressed to Michael Ramsay, with whom it will be seen, from the letters quoted in the course of this work, that the friendship formed, when both were young, remained uninterrupted and vigorous during their mature years. I have been unable to discover any thing of the history of this Michael Ramsay, beyond what may be gathered from the internal evidence supplied by the correspondence. He must have been destined for the English Church, but he appears not to have taken orders; as in a letter from Hume, which, though undated, must have been written at an advanced period of both their lives, he is addressed “Michael Ramsay, Esq.” Writing on 5th June, 1764, he says to Hume, “I continue in the old wandering way in which I have passed so much of my life, and in which it is likely I shall end it.” He appears to have had many connexions well to do in the world, and to have died before the year 1779, leaving his papers in the possession of a nephew having his own Christian name of Michael; which was also, it may be observed, the name of the Chevalier Ramsay, of whom Hume’s correspondent was perhaps a relation.

Hume *to* Michael Ramsay.

“July 4, 1727.

“D^{r} M. — I received all the books you writ of, and your Milton among the rest. When I saw it, I perceived there was a difference betwixt preaching and practising: you accuse me of niceness, and yet practise it most egregiously yourself. What was the necessity of sending your Milton, which I knew you were so fond of? Why, I lent your’s and can’t get it. But would you not, in the same manner, have lent your own? Yes. Then, why this ceremony and good breeding? I write all this to show you how easily any action may be brought to bear the countenance of a fault. You may justify yourself very well, by saying it was kindness; and I am satisfied with it, and thank you for it. So, in the same manner, I may justify myself from your reproofs. You say that I would not send in my papers, because they were not polished nor brought to any form: which you say is nicety. But was it not reasonable? Would you have me send in my loose incorrect thoughts? Were such worth the transcribing? All the progress that I made is but drawing the outlines, on loose bits of paper: here a hint of a passion; there a phenomenon in the mind accounted for: in another the alteration of these accounts; sometimes a remark upon an author I have been reading; and none of them worth to any body, and I believe scarce to myself. The only design I had of mentioning any of them at all, was to see what you would have said of your own, whether they were of the same kind, and if you would send any; and I have got my end, for you have given a most satisfactory reason for not communicating them, by promising they shall be told *vivâ voce* — a much better way indeed, and in which I promise myself much satisfaction; for the free conversation of a friend is what I would prefer to any entertainment. Just now I am entirely confined to myself and library for diversion since we parted.

—— ea sola voluptus,
Solamenque mali —

And indeed to me they are not a small one: for I take no more of them than I please; for I hate task-reading, and I diversify them at pleasure — sometimes a philosopher, sometimes a poet — which change is not unpleasant nor disserviceable neither; for what will more surely engrave upon my mind a Tusculan disputation of Cicero’s De Ægritudine Lenienda, than an eclogue or georgick of Virgil’s? The philosopher’s wise man and the poet’s husbandman agree in peace of mind, in a liberty and independency on fortune, and contempt of riches, power, and glory. Every thing is placid and quiet in both: nothing perturbed or disordered.

At secura quies, et nescia fallere vita ——
Speluncæ, vivique laci; at frigida Tempe,
Mugitusque boum, mollesque sub arbore somnos
Non absint.

“These lines will, in my opinion, come nothing short of the instruction of the finest sentence in Cicero: and is more to me, as Virgil’s life is more the subject of my ambition, being what I can apprehend to be more within my power. For the perfectly wise man, that outbraves fortune, is surely greater than the husbandman who slips by her; and, indeed, this pastoral and saturnian happiness I have in a great measure come at just now. I live like a king, pretty much by myself, neither full of action nor perturbation, — *molles somnos*. This state, however, I can foresee is not to be relied on. My peace of mind is not sufficiently confirmed by philosophy to withstand the blows of fortune. This greatness and elevation of soul is to be found only in study and contemplation — this can alone teach us to look down on human accidents. You must allow [me] to talk thus, like a philosopher: ’tis a subject I think much on, and could talk all day long of. But I know I must not trouble you. Wherefore I wisely practise my rules, which prescribe to check our appetite; and, for a mortification, shall descend from these superior regions to low and ordinary life; and so far as to tell you, that John has bought a horse: he thinks it neither cheap nor dear. It cost six guineas, but will be sold cheaper against winter, which he is not resolved on as yet. It has no fault, but bogles a little. It is tolerably well favoured, and paces naturally. Mamma bids me tell you, that Sir John Home is not going to town; but he saw Eccles in the country, who says he will do nothing in that affair, for he is only taking off old adjudications, so it is needless to let him see the papers. He desires you would trouble yourself to inquire about the Earle’s affairs, and advise us what to do in this affair.

“If it were not breaking the formal rule of connexions I have prescribed myself in this letter — and it did not seem unnatural to raise myself from so low affairs as horses and papers, to so high and elevate things as books and study — I would tell you that I read some of Longinus already, and that I am mightily delighted with him. I think he does really answer the character of being the great sublime he describes. He delivers his precepts with such force, as if he were enchanted with the subject; and is himself an author that may be cited for an example to his own rules, by any one who shall be so adventurous as to write upon his subject."

This is certainly a remarkable letter to have been written by a youth little more than sixteen years old. If it had been written by one less distinguished by the originality of his mature intellect, it might be looked upon as one of those illustrations of the faculty of imitation, for which some young persons display peculiar powers; but its grave and high-toned philosophical feeling is evidently no echo of other people's words, but the deeply felt sentiments of the writer. In some measure, perhaps, he deceived himself in believing that he had attuned his mind to pastoral simplicity, and had weeded it of all ambitious longings. If he had a sympathy with Virgil, it was not, as he has represented, with the poet's ideas of life, but with his realizations of it; not with the quiet sphere of a retired and unnoticed existence, but with the lustre of a well-earned fame. Through the whole, indeed, of the memorials of Hume's early feelings, we find the traces of a bold and far-stretching literary ambition; and though he believed that he had seared his mind to ordinary human influences, it was because this one had become so engrossing as to overwhelm all others. "I was seized very early," he tells us, in his 'own life,' "with a passion for literature, which has been the ruling passion of my life, and a great source of my enjoyments." Joined to this impulse, we find a practical philosophy partaking far more of the stoical than of that sceptical school with which his metaphysical writings have identified him; a morality of self-sacrifice and endurance, for the accomplishment of great ends. In whatever light we may view his speculative opinions, we gather from the habits of his life, and from the indications we possess of his passing thoughts, that he devotedly acted up to the principle, that his genius and power of application should be laid out with the greatest prospect of permanent advantage to mankind. He was an economist of all his talents from early youth: no memoir of a literary man presents a more cautious and vigilant husbandry of the mental powers and acquirements. There is no instance of a man of genius who has wasted less in idleness or in unavailing pursuits. Money was not his object, nor was temporary fame; though, of the means of independent livelihood, and a good repute among men, he never lost sight: but his ruling object of ambition, pursued in poverty and riches, in health and sickness, in laborious obscurity and amidst the blaze of fame, was to establish a permanent name, resting on the foundation of literary achievements, likely to live as long as human thought endured, and mental philosophy was studied.

There is among Hume's papers a fragment of "An Historical Essay on Chivalry and Modern Honour." It is evidently a clean copy from a corrected scrawl, written with great precision and neatness, and no despicable specimen of caligraphy. From the pains that appear to have been bestowed on the penmanship, and from many rhetorical defects and blemishes which do not appear in any of his published works, it may be inferred that this is a production of very early years, and properly applicable to this period of his life; although its matured thought, and clear systematic analysis, might, in other circumstances, have indicated it as the fruit of a mind long and carefully cultivated. It is scarcely necessary to frame an excuse for quoting such a document on the present occasion. It could not be legitimately incorporated with his works; because, whatever is given to the public in that shape, is presumed to consist of those productions which the author himself, or those entitled to represent him, have thought fit to lay before the public, as the efforts by which the full stretch and compass of his intellectual powers are to be tested. From such collections, the editor who performs his functions with a kind and respectful consideration for the reputation of the illustrious dead, will exclude whatever is characterized by the crudeness of youth, or the feebleness of superannuation. To the reputation of Hume it would be peculiarly unjust to publish among his acknowledged and printed works, any productions of extreme youth; because, from his earliest years to an advanced period of his life, his mind was characterized by constant improvement, and he was every now and then reaching a point from which he looked back with regret and disapprobation at the efforts of earlier years.

But in a biographical work, where the chief object is the tracing the history of the author's mind, not the representation of its matured efforts, these early specimens of budding genius have their legitimate place, and receive that charitable consideration for the circumstances in which they were written, which their author's reputation demands.

The essay commences with a sketch of the decline of virtue, and the prevalence of luxury among the Romans; and describes their possession of the arts which they had learned in their better days, when not seconded by bravery and enterprise, as furnishing, like the fine clothes of a soldier, a temptation to hostile cupidity. He then represents the conquerors adapting themselves, after the manner peculiar to their own barbarous state, to the habits and ideas of the civilized people whom they had subdued. He represents the conquered people as sunk in indolence, but imperfectly preserving the arts and elegancies transmitted to them by their ancestors; and the conquerors full of energy and activity, as the sources of whatever impulse was thereafter given to thought or action. They "came with freshness and alacrity to the business; and being encouraged both by the novelty of these subjects and by the success of their arms, would naturally ingraft some new kind of fruit on the ancient stock." He then proceeds with the following train of reflections: —

"'Tis observable of the human mind, that when it is smit with any idea of merit or perfection beyond what its faculties can attain, and in the pursuit of which it uses not reason and experience for its guide, it knows no mean, but as it gives the rein, and even adds the spur, to every florid conceit or fancy, runs in a moment quite wide of nature. Thus we find, when, without discretion, it indulges its devote terrors, that working in such fairy-ground, it quickly buries itself in its own whimsies and chimeras, and raises up to itself a new set of passions, affections, desires, objects, and, in short, a perfectly new world of its own, inhabited by different beings, and regulated by different laws from this of ours. In this new world 'tis so possessed that it can endure no interruption from the old; but as nature is apt still on every occasion to recall it thither, it must undermine it by art, and retiring altogether from the commerce of mankind, if it be so bent upon its religious exercise, from the mystic, by an easy transition, degenerate into the hermite. The same thing is observable in philosophy, which though it cannot produce a different world in which we may wander, makes us act in this as if we were different beings from the rest of mankind; at least makes us frame to ourselves, though we cannot execute them, rules of conduct different from those which are set to us by nature. No engine can supply the place of wings, and make us fly, though the imagination of such a one may make us stretch and strain and elevate ourselves upon our tiptoes. And in this case of an imagined merit, the farther our chimeras hurry us from nature, and the practice of the world, the better pleased we are, as valuing ourselves upon the singularity of our notions, and thinking we depart from the rest of mankind only by flying above them. Where there is none we excel, we are apt to think we have no excellency; and self-conceit makes us take every singularity for an excellency.

“When, therefore, these barbarians came first to the relish of some degree of virtue and politeness beyond what they had ever before been acquainted with, their minds would necessarily stretch themselves into some vast conceptions of things, which, not being corrected by sufficient judgment and experience, must be empty and unsolid. Those who had first bred these conceptions in them could not assist them in their birth, as the Grecians did the Romans; but being themselves scarce half civilized, would be rather apt to entertain any extravagant misshapen conceit of their conquerors, than able to lick it into any form. ’Twas thus that that monster of romantic chivalry, or knight-errantry, by the necessary operation of the principles of human nature, was brought into the world; and it is remarkable that it descended from the Moors and Arabians, who, learning somewhat of the Roman civility from the province they conquered, and being themselves a southern people, which are commonly observed to be more quick and inventive than the northern, were the first who fell upon this vein of achievement. When it was once broken upon it ran like wild-fire over all the nations of Europe, who, being in the same situation with these nations, kindled with the least spark.

“What kind of monstrous birth this of chivalry must prove, we may learn from considering the different revolutions in the arts, particularly in architecture, and comparing the Gothic with the Grecian models of it. The one are plain, simple, and regular, but withal majestic and beautiful, which when these barbarians unskilfully imitated, they ran into a wild profusion of ornaments, and by their rude embellishments departed far from nature and a just simplicity. They were struck with the beauties of the ancient buildings; but, ignorant how to preserve a just mean, and giving an unbounded liberty to their fancy in heaping ornament upon ornament, they made the whole a heap of confusion and irregularity. For the same reason, when they would rear up a new scheme of manners, or heroism, it must be strangely overcharged with ornaments, and no part exempt from their unskilful refinements; and this we find to have been actually the case, as may be proven by running over the several parts of it.”

He then inquires into the reason, why courage is the principal virtue of barbarous nations, and why they esteem deeds of heroism, however useless or mischievous, as far more meritorious than useful efforts of government or internal organization. He contrasts the heroism of the barbarous periods of the ancient world, with those of the dark ages of modern Europe; and finding the former selfish and aggrandizing, while the latter is characterized by the more generous features of chivalry, he thus accounts for this characteristic.

"The method by which these courteous knights acquired this extreme civility of theirs, was by mixing love with their courage. Love is a very generous passion, and well fitted both to that humanity and courage they would reconcile. The only one that can contest with it is friendship, which, besides that it is too refined a passion for common use, is not by many degrees so natural as love, to which almost every one has a great propensity, and which it is impossible to see a beautiful woman, without feeling some touches of. Besides, as love is a capricious passion, it is the more susceptible of these fantastic forms, which it must take when it mixes with chivalry. Friendship is a solid and serious thing, and, like the love of their country in the Roman heroes, would dispel and put to flight all the chimeras, inseparable from this spirit of adventure. So that a mistress is as necessary to a cavalier or knight-errant, as a god or saint to a devotee. Nor would he stop here, or be contented with a submiss reverence and adoration to one of the sex, but would extend in some degree the same civility to the whole, and by a curious reversement of the order of nature, make them the superior. This is no more than what is suitable to that infinite generosity of which he makes profession. Every thing below him he treats with submission, and every thing above him, with contumacy. Thus he carries these double symptoms of generosity which Virgil makes mention of into extravagance.

Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.

Hence arises the knight-errant's strong and irreconcileable aversion to all giants, with his most humble and respectful submission to all damsels. These two affections of his, he unites in all his adventures, which are always designed to relieve distressed damsels from the captivity and violence of giants.

"As a cavalier is composed of the greatest warmth of love, tempered with the most humble submission and respect, his mistress's behaviour is in every point the reverse of this; and what is conspicuous in her temper is the utmost coldness along with the greatest haughtiness and disdain; until at last, gratitude for the many deliverances she has met with, and the giants and monsters without number that he has destroyed for her sake, reduces her, though unwilling, to the necessity of commencing a bride. Here the chastity of women, which, from the necessity of human affairs, has been in all ages and countries an extravagant point of honour with them, is run into still greater extravagance, that none of the sexes may be exempt from this fantastic ornament.

"Such were the notions of bravery in that age, and such the fictions by which they formed models of it. The effects these had on their ordinary life and conversation was, first, an extravagant gallantry and adoration of the whole female sex, and romantic notions of extraordinary constancy, fidelity, and refined passion for one mistress. Secondly, the introduction of the practice of single combat. How naturally this sprung up from chivalry may easily be understood. A knight-errant fights, not like another man full of passion and resentment, but with the utmost civility mixed with his undaunted courage. He salutes you before he cuts your throat; and a plain man, who understood nothing of the mystery, would take him for a treacherous ruffian, and think that, like Judas, he was betraying with a kiss, while he is showing his generous calmness and amicable courage. In consequence of this, every thing is performed with the greatest ceremony and order; and whenever either chance or his superior bravery make either of them victorious, he generously gives his antagonist his life, and again embraces him as his friend. When these fantastic practices have come in use, the amazed world, who, merely because there is nothing real in all this, must certainly imagine there is a great deal, could not but look upon such a courteous enmity as the most heroic and sublime thing in nature; and instead of punishing any murder that might ensue, as the law directs in such cases, would praise and applaud the murderer."

Perhaps the reader of these passages will have come to the conclusion that the powers of reason displayed in them are as bold and original as the imagination is meagre and servile. The reflections on Gothic architecture are the commonplace opinions of the day, uttered by one who was singularly destitute of sympathy with the human intellect, in its early efforts to resolve itself into symmetry and elegance; whose mind shrunk from the contemplation of any work of man that did not bear the stamp of high intellectual culture. The same want of sympathy with man in his rude and grand, though inharmonious efforts, here attends both the chivalric manners and the solemn architecture of the dark ages. Of the former, he has made a cold, clear, unsympathizing, perhaps accurate estimate. The latter, unless a large proportion of the architectural enthusiasts of the present day have raised the taste of the age upon false foundations, he utterly misappreciated.

It must have been about his seventeenth year that Hume commenced, and abruptly relinquished the practical study of the law, — a curious episode in his history, which he thus describes in his "own life:" "My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me; but I found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning; and while they fancied I was poring upon Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors which I was secretly devouring."

But this by no means gives the reader a full and faithful impression of his motives. The passage calls up the vision of a contemplative, gentle, unambitious youth, shrinking from the arid labours that lead to wealth and distinction, and content to dream away his life in obscurity with the companionship of his favourite books. The document already referred to, and immediately to be quoted, shows that far other thoughts were in his mind; that he did not shrink from the professional labours of the bar, to sink into studious ease, but rejected them to encounter higher and more arduous toils — that he did not drop passively from the path of ambition opened to him, but deserted it for a higher and more adventurous course. He had indeed already before him the prospect of being a discoverer in philosophy, and his mind, crowded with the images of his new system, could see nothing else in life worthy of pursuit.

Without this clue, Hume's aversion to the study of the law would have been a problem not to be easily solved. Had he lived in the present day, when the mass of statute and precedent that have accumulated even within the narrow domain of Scottish law, have completely precluded those luxurious digressions into the field of speculation and theory, which characterized the legal practice of our ancestors, one might readily comprehend the aversion of his fastidiously cultivated logical mind to such hard and coarse materials. But a lawyer's library, in his days, consisted of the classics, the philosophers of mind, and the civilians. The advocate often commenced his pleadings with a quotation from the young philosopher's favourite poet Virgil, and then digressed into a speculative inquiry into the general principles of law and government: the philosophical genius of Themis long soaring sublime, until at last, folding her wings, she rested on some vulgar question about dry multures or an irritancy of a tailzie, to the settlement of which the wide principles so announced were applied. Surely that science, within the boundaries of which the speculative spirit of Lord Kames had room for its flights, could not have been rejected on the ground that it cramped and restrained the faculty of generalizing. Yet in a letter to Smith, of 12th April, 1759, which shows that Hume retained his antipathy to the study to an advanced period of his life, he says, “I am afraid of Kames’ Law Tracts. A man might as well think of making a fine sauce by a mixture of wormwood and aloes, as an agreeable composition by joining metaphysics and Scottish law. However, the book I believe has merit, though few people will take the pains of inquiring into it.”

In truth there appear to have been in Hume all the elements of which a good lawyer is made: clearness of judgment, power of rapidly acquiring knowledge, untiring industry, and dialectic skill; and, if his mind had not been preoccupied, he might have fallen into that gulf in which many of the world’s greatest geniuses lie buried — professional eminence, and might have left behind him a reputation limited to the traditional recollections of the Parliament House, or associated with important decisions. He was through life an able, clear-headed man of business, and I have seen several legal documents written in his own hand and evidently drawn by himself. They stand the test of general professional observation; and their writer, by preparing documents of such a character on his own responsibility, showed that he had considerable confidence in his ability to adhere to the forms adequate for the occasion. He talks of it as “an ancient prejudice industriously propagated by the dunces in all countries, that *a man of genius is unfit for business*;” and he showed, in his general conduct through life, that he did not choose to come voluntarily under this proscription.

His writings, however, bear but slight traces of his juridical studies. In analysing the foundations of our notions of property, he criticises some of the subtleties of the early civilians, but shows no more intimate acquaintance with their works than any well-informed scholar of the day might be supposed to exhibit. He shows no pleasure in dwelling on matters connected with this study, but rather appears disposed to release himself and his reader from a subject so little congenial to his taste. The particular law of Scotland is one of those subjects to which he would be careful to avoid a reference, as carrying with it that tone of provincial thought and education which he was always anxious to avoid. It may be perhaps an unfortunate result of this early prejudice against the study of jurisprudence, that in after life he failed to acquire that knowledge of the progress of the law of England, which would have made his history much less amenable than it has been to censorious criticism.

It is now time that the reader should be possessed of the document above alluded to, as throwing much light on Hume's early studies and habits of life; and it is here presented, without any introductory explanation, as it first appeared to me in going through the papers in the possession of the Royal Society.

A Letter to a Physician.

"Sir, — Not being acquainted with this handwriting, you will probably look to the bottom to find the subscription, and not finding any, will certainly wonder at this strange method of addressing to you. I must here in the beginning beg you to excuse it, and, to persuade you to read what follows with some attention, must tell you, that this gives you an opportunity to do a very good-natured action, which I believe is the most powerful argument I can use. I need not tell you, that I am your countryman, a Scotsman; for without any such tie, I dare rely upon your humanity even to a perfect stranger, such as I am. The favour I beg of you is your advice, and the reason why I address myself in particular to you, need not be told, — as one must be a skilful physician, a man of letters, of wit, of good sense, and of great humanity, to give me a satisfying answer. I wish fame had pointed out to me more persons, in whom these qualities are united, in order to have kept me some time in suspense. This I say in the sincerity of my heart, and without any intention of making a compliment; for though it may seem necessary, that, in the beginning of so unusual a letter, I should say some fine things, to bespeak your good opinion, and remove any prejudices you may conceive at it, yet such an endeavour to be witty, would ill suit with the present condition of my mind; which, I must confess, is not without anxiety concerning the judgment you will form of me. Trusting, however, to your candour and generosity, I shall, without further preface, proceed to open up to you the present condition of my health, and to do that the more effectually, shall give you a kind of history of my life, after which you will easily learn why I keep my name a secret.

"You must know then that, from my earliest infancy, I found always a strong inclination to books and letters. As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it incline me almost equally to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics, knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me, which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium, by which truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was about eighteen years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought, which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardour natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it. The law, which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world, but that of a scholar and philosopher. I was infinitely happy in this course of life for some months; till at last, about the beginning of September, 1729, all my ardour seemed in a moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my mind to that pitch, which formerly gave me such excessive pleasure. I felt no uneasiness or want of spirits, when I laid aside my book; and therefore never imagined there was any bodily distemper in the case, but that my coldness proceeded from a laziness of temper, which must be overcome by redoubling my application. In this condition I remained for nine months, very uneasy to myself, as you may well imagine, but without growing any worse, which was a miracle. There was another particular, which contributed, more than any thing, to waste my spirits and bring on me this distemper, which was, that having read many books of morality, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch, and being smit with their beautiful representations of virtue and philosophy, I undertook the improvement of my temper and will, along with my reason and understanding. I was continually fortifying myself with reflections against death, and poverty, and shame, and pain, and all the other calamities of life. These no doubt are exceeding useful, when joined with an active life, because the occasion being presented along with the reflection, works it into the soul, and makes it take a deep impression; but in solitude they serve to little other purpose, than to waste the spirits, the force of the mind meeting with no resistance, but wasting itself in the air, like our arm when it misses its aim. This, however, I did not learn but by experience, and till I had already ruined my health, though I was not sensible of it. Some scurvy spots broke out on my fingers the first winter I fell ill, about which I consulted a very knowing physician, who gave me some medicine that removed these symptoms, and at the same time gave me a warning against the vapours, which, though I was labouring under at that time, I fancied myself so far removed from, and indeed from any other disease, except a slight scurvy, that I despised his warning. At last, about April 1730, when I was nineteen years of age, a symptom, which I had noticed a little from the beginning, increased considerably; so that, though it was no uneasiness, the novelty of it made me ask advice; it was what they call a ptyalism or wateryness in the mouth. Upon my mentioning it to my physician, he laughed at me, and told me I was now a brother, for that I had fairly got the disease of the learned. Of this he found great difficulty to persuade me, finding in myself nothing of that lowness of spirit, which those who labour under that distemper so much complain of. However upon his advice I went under a course of bitters, and anti-hysteric pills, drank an English pint of claret wine every day, and rode eight or ten Scotch miles. This I continued for about seven months after.

"Though I was sorry to find myself engaged with so tedious a distemper, yet the knowledge of it set me very much at ease, by satisfying me that my former coldness proceeded not from any defect of temper or genius, but from a disease to which any one may be subject. I now began to take some indulgence to myself; studied moderately, and only when I found my spirits at their highest pitch, leaving off before I was weary, and trifling away the rest of my time in the best manner I could. In this way, I lived with satisfaction enough; and on my return to town next winter found my spirits very much recruited, so that, though they sank under me in the higher flights of genius, yet I was able to make considerable progress in my former designs. I was very regular in my diet and way of life from the beginning, and all that winter made it a constant rule to ride twice or thrice a-week, and walk every day. For these reasons, I expected, when I returned to the country, and could renew my exercise with less interruption, that I would perfectly recover. But in this I was much mistaken; for next summer, about May 1731, there grew upon me a very ravenous appetite, and as quick a digestion, which I at first took for a good symptom, and was very much surprised to find it bring back a palpitation of heart, which I had felt very little of before. This appetite, however, had an effect very unusual, which was to nourish me extremely; so that in six weeks' time, I passed from the one extreme to the other; and being before tall, lean, and raw-boned, became on a sudden the most sturdy, robust, healthful-like fellow you have seen, with a ruddy complexion and a cheerful countenance. In excuse for my riding, and care of my health, I always said that I was afraid of consumption, which was readily believed from my looks, but now every body congratulated me upon my thorough recovery. This unnatural appetite wore off by degrees, but left me as a legacy the same palpitation of the heart in a small degree, and a good deal of wind in my stomach, which comes away easily, and without any bad *goût*, as is ordinary. However, these symptoms are little or no uneasiness to me. I eat well; I sleep well; have no lowness of spirits, at least never more than what one of the best health may feel from too full a meal, from sitting too near a fire, and even that degree I feel very seldom, and never almost in the morning or forenoon. Those who live in the same family with me, and see me at all times, cannot observe the least alteration in my humour, and rather think me a better companion than I was before, as choosing to pass more of my time with them. This gave me such hopes, that I scarce ever missed a day's riding, except in the winter time; and last summer undertook a very laborious task, which was to travel eight miles every morning, and as many in the forenoon, to and from a mineral well of some reputation. I renewed the bitter and anti-hysteric pills twice, along with anti-scorbutic juice, last spring, but without any considerable effect, except abating the symptoms for a little time.

"Thus I have given you a full account of the condition of my body; and without staying to ask pardon, as I ought to do, for so tedious a story, shall explain to you how my mind stood all this time, which on every occasion, especially in this distemper, have a very near connexion together. Having now time and leisure to cool my inflamed imagination, I began to consider seriously how I should proceed in my philosophical inquiries. I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity laboured under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience: every one consulted his fancy in erecting schemes of virtue and of happiness, without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality. I believe it is a certain fact, that most of the philosophers who have gone before us, have been overthrown by the greatness of their genius, and that little more is required to make a man succeed in this study, than to throw off all prejudices either for his own opinions or for those of others. At least this is all I have to depend on for the truth of my reasonings, which I have multiplied to such a degree, that within these three years, I find I have scribbled many a quire of paper, in which there is nothing contained but my own inventions. This, with the reading most of the celebrated books in Latin, French, and English, and acquiring the Italian, you may think a sufficient business for one in perfect health, and so it would had it been done to any purpose; but my disease was a cruel encumbrance on me. I found that I was not able to follow out any train of thought, by one continued stretch of view, but by repeated interruptions, and by refreshing my eye from time to time upon other objects. Yet with this inconvenience I have collected the rude materials for many volumes; but in reducing these to words, when one must bring the idea he comprehended in gross, nearer to him, so as to contemplate its minutest parts, and keep it steadily in his eye, so as to copy these parts in order, —this I found impracticable for me, nor were my spirits equal to so severe an employment. Here lay my greatest calamity. I had no hopes of delivering my opinions with such elegance and neatness, as to draw to me the attention of the world, and I would rather live and die in obscurity than produce them maimed and imperfect.

“Such a miserable disappointment I scarce ever remember to have heard of. The small distance betwixt me and perfect health makes me the more uneasy in my present situation. It is a weakness rather than a lowness of spirits which troubles me, and there seems to be as great a difference betwixt my distemper and common vapours, as betwixt vapours and madness. I have noticed in the writings of the French mystics, and in those of our fanatics here, that when they give a history of the situation of their souls, they mention a coldness and desertion of the spirit, which frequently returns; and some of them, at the beginning, have been tormented with it many years. As this kind of devotion depends entirely on the force of passion, and consequently of the animal spirits, I have often thought that their case and mine were pretty parallel, and that their rapturous admirations might discompose the fabric of the nerves and brain, as much as profound reflections, and that warmth or enthusiasm which is inseparable from them.

“However this may be, I have not come out of the cloud so well as they commonly tell us they have done, or rather began to despair of ever recovering. To keep myself from being melancholy on so dismal a prospect, my only security was in peevish reflections on the vanity of the world and of all human glory; which, however just sentiments they may be esteemed, I have found can never be sincere, except in those who are possessed of them. Being sensible that all my philosophy would never make me contented in my present situation, I began to rouse up myself; and being encouraged by instances of recovery from worse degrees of this distemper, as well as by the assurances of my physicians, I began to think of something more effectual than I had hitherto tried. I found, that as there are two things very bad for this distemper, study and idleness, so there are two things very good, business and diversion; and that my whole time was spent betwixt the bad, with little or no share of the good. For this reason I resolved to seek out a more active life, and though I could not quit my pretensions in learning but with my last breath, to lay them aside for some time, in order the more effectually to resume them. Upon examination, I found my choice confined to two kinds of life, that of a travelling governor, and that of a merchant. The first, besides that it is in some respects an idle life, was, I found, unfit for me; and that because from a sedentary and retired way of living, from a bashful temper, and from a narrow fortune, I had been little accustomed to general companies, and had not confidence and knowledge enough of the world to push my fortune, or to be serviceable in that way. I therefore fixed my choice upon a merchant; and having got recommendation to a considerable trader in Bristol, I am just now hastening thither, with a resolution to forget myself, and every thing that is past, to engage myself, as far as is possible, in that course of life, and to toss about the world, from the one pole to the other, till I leave this distemper behind me.

“As I am come to London in my way to Bristol, I have resolved, if possible, to get your advice, though I should take this absurd method of procuring it. All the physicians I have consulted, though very able, could never enter into my distemper; because not being persons of great learning beyond their own profession, they were unacquainted with these motions of the mind. Your fame pointed you out as the properest person to resolve my doubts, and I was determined to have somebody’s opinion, which I could rest upon in all the varieties of fears and hopes, incident to so lingering a distemper. I hope I have been particular enough in describing the symptoms to allow you to form a judgment; or rather, perhaps, have been too particular. But you know it is a symptom of this distemper, to delight in complaining and talking of itself. The questions I would humbly propose to you are: Whether, among all those scholars you have been acquainted with, you have ever known any affected in this manner? Whether I can ever hope for a recovery? Whether I must long wait for it? Whether my recovery will ever be perfect, and my spirits regain their former spring and vigour, so as to endure the fatigue of deep and abstruse thinking? Whether I have taken a right way to recover? I believe all proper medicines have been used, and therefore I need mention nothing of them."

The history of this eventful period in the mental biography of Hume, is very briefly narrated in his "own life." Alluding to his adoption of the life of a student, he says, "My very slender fortune, however, being unsuitable to this plan of life, and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734, I went to Bristol, with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me."

I am sure the reader will sympathize with me in esteeming it a high privilege to be the humble instrument of ushering into the world so curious a piece of literary autobiography as that which he has just perused. We are here admitted into the confessional. So secret is the communication of thought by the writer to the receiver, that the latter, who was made acquainted with so much of the internal meditations of the former, was not to be allowed to know with what outward man this mind of which he obtained a description was connected. The individual mind was fully and minutely described — to what individual man this mind belonged was to be preserved a profound secret. The writer shrunk from the admission of any man to a participation with him in his self-conferences, and he planned that by keeping his name a secret, the link which would connect this knowledge of the inner to an acquaintance with the outer man should be broken. We have surely in this an argument in favour of the candour and explicitness of his narrative. He felt that to be known, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, by the person he addressed, would be a restraint on the freedom of his revelations — he threw off this restraint, and we are entitled to infer that his letter is a piece of full and candid self-examination. Every word of it, as it was originally written, is here printed, and it will perhaps be admitted that there is not one word of it that does not do honour to its writer. To Aristotle and others it is attributed that they taught esoteric doctrines to a chosen few — doctrines not to be promulgated to the world at large, because they were likely to have a dangerous influence on minds not skilfully trained for their reception. For any vestiges of these hidden doctrines the world searches, anticipating that in them will be found a nearer approach to that which the philosopher believed in his own mind, as distinct from that which he desired to inculcate on others. In all ages there has been a natural and a praiseworthy curiosity to know the hidden thoughts of great teachers. Mankind in general admit, that truth is what is valuable in all philosophy, and if a man entertained thoughts in his own mind in any way different from those which he taught, it has been a conclusion certainly quite legitimate, that truth is more likely to be found in the former than in the latter. But certainly there can hardly be found any other instance in which a document, so likely to be the honest impress of a philosopher’s own mind, has been laid before the world; and it is an attestation of the sincerity with which the opinions then in the course of formation in his mind were believed.

But, independently of the philosophical value of the document, to be thus admitted into the secrecy of the thoughts of a man ambitious of high literary distinction, and who has attained his object, is a rare privilege. The revelation, notwithstanding its foreboding tone, is calculated to give far more pleasure than pain. The future, which seemed to the desponding philosopher for a moment so dark, we know to have brightened on him. Hume was of the happy few who lived to see their airy castles substantially realized. Comparing what it reveals of the inner man, with the subsequent history of his achievements, the picture supplied by this fragment of autobiography is a happy one. We sympathize with the aspiring dreams of the young man, without feeling that they were afterwards doomed to disappointment. The immediate occasion of his earnest appeal is undoubtedly one of despondency; but it was preceded by hope, as we know it was followed by success; and notwithstanding this passing cloud, it may fairly be pronounced, that though Hume enjoyed through life more than the average portion of human happiness, he had no moments of purer felicity than those in which, in the retirement of his paternal home, he was sketching the airy outline of his subsequent career.

Perhaps the feature that will most forcibly strike the reader, is the evidence of the deep-rooted ambition to found a philosophical reputation, that seems to have filled the mind of the writer of this document. The consciousness that the receiver of the paper must at once perceive this circumstance, and the desire not to let a stranger penetrate his aspiring thoughts, must have been the reasons of his desire for secrecy: it was natural that one who had not entered the lists to struggle for literary distinction, should wish to conceal how strong and inextinguishable was his desire to obtain the prize. The intensity of his anxiety on this subject seems to have made him, in relation to his mind, what the ordinary hypochondriac is as to his physical constitution. The desire to preserve the elements of distinction was so intense, that it disturbed him with vain fears for their disappearance. Feeling within him, at times, the consciousness of possessing an original genius, — that it should depart from him, and that his lot should be cast among that of ordinary mortals, with good physical health and commonplace abilities, appeared to him the most awful calamity which fate could have in store for him. Of the excellent physical health which accompanied these unpleasant variations of his mental capacity, he speaks with an almost sardonic scorn, as one who, in the bitterness of being bereft of what is all in all to him, talks of some paltry trifle which fortune in her sarcastic malice has chosen to leave untouched. In short, the manner in which he speaks of the departure of his cunning, must almost necessarily convey to the reader a considerable portion of that ludicrous character which is always presented by a scene in which a man appears to be dreadfully anxious about the safety of that which either is of no importance, or is not in danger.

It may be a question whether this strange letter was ever sent to its destination, as the version from which it is here printed is not a rough draught, but a neatly written copy, such as might have been prepared for transmission. But this does not afford so full a presumption in Hume’s case, as it would in that of the average of literary men, as he seems to have felt a sort of enjoyment in his earlier years in having his papers neatly written out. The first name that suggested itself as that of the person to whom the paper was addressed was Arbuthnot, whose fine genius was just then flickering in the socket. But a more full consideration showed to my satisfaction that it must have been destined for Dr. George Cheyne, and that it was suggested by that eminent physician’s publication, in the preceding year, of “The

English Malady; or, a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all kinds, as Spleen, Vapours, Lowness of Spirits, Hypochondriacal Distempers, &c.” There is a certain unison of tone between Hume’s letter and this book, that, added to other coincidences, strongly impresses on the mind their connexion with each other; and though it is perhaps necessary, before this is fully seen, to enter into the whole tenor and tone of Cheyne’s book, the reader will perhaps find the following passage sufficient to render the conjecture probable: —

“It is a common observation, (and I think has great probability on its side,) that fools, weak or stupid persons, heavy and dull souls, are seldom much troubled with vapours or lowness of spirits. The intellectual faculty, without all manner of doubt, has material and animal organs, by which it mediately works, as well as the animal functions. What they are, and how they operate, as I believe very few know, so it is very little necessary to know them for my present purpose. As a philosophical musician may understand proportions and harmony, and yet never be in a condition to gratify a company with a fine piece of music, without the benefit of sounds from proper organs, so the intellectual operations (as long as the present union between soul and body lasts) can never be performed in the best manner without proper instruments. The works of imagination and memory, of study, thinking, and reflecting, from whatever source the principle on which they depend springs, must necessarily require bodily organs. Some have these organs finer, quicker, more agile, and sensible, and perhaps more numerous than others; brute animals have few or none, at least none that belong to reflection; vegetables certainly none at all. There is no account to be given how a disease, a fall, a blow, a debauch, poisons, violent passions, astral and aerial influences, much application, and the like, should possibly alter or destroy these intellectual operations without this supposition. It is evident, that in nervous distempers, and a great many other bodily diseases, these faculties and their operations are impaired, nay, totally ruined and extinguished to all appearance; and yet, by proper remedies, and after recovery of health, they are restored and brought to their former state. Now, since this present age has made efforts to go beyond former times, in all the arts of ingenuity, invention, study, learning, and all the contemplative and sedentary professions, (I speak only here of our own nation, our own times, and of the better sort, whose chief employments and studies these are,) the organs of these faculties being thereby worn and spoiled, must affect and deaden the whole system, and lay a foundation for the diseases of lowness and weakness. Add to this, that those who are likeliest to excel and apply in this manner, are most capable and most in hazard of following that way of life which I have mentioned, as the likeliest to produce these diseases. Great wits are generally great epicures, at least, men of taste. And the bodies and constitutions of one generation are still more corrupt, infirm, and diseased, than those of the former, as they advance in time and the use of the causes assigned."

Then there are the farther coincidences, that Cheyne was a Scotsman, that he was an eminent man in his profession, and that he had bestowed some attention on mental philosophy. "I passed my youth," he tells us, "in close study, and almost constant application to the abstracted sciences, wherein my chief pleasure consisted." "Having," he elsewhere says, "had a liberal education, with the instruction and example of pious parents, (who at first had designed me for the church,) I had preserved a firm persuasion of the great and fundamental principles of all virtue and morality: viz. the existence of a supreme and infinitely perfect Being, the freedom of the will, the immortality of the spirits of all intellectual beings, and the certainty of future rewards or punishments. These doctrines I had examined carefully, and had been confirmed in, from abstracted reasonings, as well as from the best natural philosophy, and some clearer knowledge of the material system of the world in general, and the wisdom, fitness, and beautiful contrivance of particular things animated and inanimated; so that the truth and necessity of these principles was so riveted in me, (which may be seen by the first edition of my 'Philosophical Principles,' published some years before that happened,) as never after to be shaken in all my wanderings and follies." It may be mentioned also, as a circumstance likely to bring Cheyne's work early under Hume's observation, that it contains a long statement of the case of Dr. William Cranstoun, an eminent medical man then residing at Jedburgh, in the same district of country with Ninewells.

CHAPTER II.

1734-1739. Æt. 23-27.

Hume leaves Bristol for France — Paris — Miracles at the Tomb of the Abbé Paris — Rheims — La Flêche — Associations with the Abbé Pluche and Des Cartes — Observations on French Society and Manners — Story of La Roche — Return to Britain. — Correspondence with Henry Home — Publication of the first and second volume of The Treatise of Human Nature — Character of that Work — Its Influence on mental Philosophy.

We have no account of Hume's sojourn in Bristol, except his own very brief statement, that "in a few months," he "found that scene totally unsuitable" to him. He must have proceeded to France about the middle of the year 1734, and he thus describes in his "own life," his motives and intentions. "I went over to France, with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I there laid that plan of life, which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature."

His subsequent letters show that he proceeded in the first instance to Paris, where he remained for a short time. Not long before his arrival there, some occurrences had taken place which were afterwards prominently referred to in his philosophical writings. A Jansenist, distinguished by his sanctity and the wide circle of his charities — the Abbé Paris, having died, a tomb was erected over his remains in the cemetery of St. Médard. Thither the poor, whom the good man had succoured in life, repaired to bless his memory and pray for the state of his soul. But it was discovered that this devotion was speedily rewarded; for the sick were cured, the blind saw, all manner of miracles were performed; and the evidence of their genuineness was considered so satisfactory, that the Jesuits were never able to impugn them — an instance which it might be well for every one to recall to mind who is told of phenomena out of the ordinary course of nature being authenticated by the testimony of respectable and enlightened people. At length, this series of miracles became offensive to the government — there was no saying how far the matter might proceed. It was resolved that there should be no more miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris: the gates of the cemetery were closed, and the miracles necessarily came to an end. This occurred in the year 1732, just two years before Hume's visit; and it will easily be imagined that the references to these wonderful events which he would hear in conversation, suggested many trains of thought to the young philosopher. It was not long afterwards, and probably while all this was very fresh in his memory, that the principal theory of his Essay on Miracles was suggested to him. In that Essay he says:

"Many of the miracles of Abbé Paris were proved immediately by witnesses before the officialty or bishop's court at Paris, under the eye of Cardinal Noailles, whose character for integrity and capacity was never contested even by his enemies.

"His successor in the archbishopric was an enemy to the Jansenists, and for that reason promoted to the see by the court. Yet twenty-two rectors or curés of Paris, with infinite earnestness, press him to examine those miracles, which they assert to be known to the whole world, and indisputably certain. But he wisely forbore."

And farther on: —

"No less a man than the Duc de Chatillon, a duke and peer of France, of the highest rank and family, gives evidence of a miraculous cure, performed upon a servant of his, who had lived several years in his house with a visible and palpable infirmity.

"I shall conclude with observing, that no clergy are more celebrated for strictness of life and manners than the secular clergy of France, particularly the rectors or curés of Paris, who bear testimony to these impostures."

An illustration of his notice of what was passing around him in Paris, occurs in the following passage in his "Natural History of Religion."

"I lodged once at Paris in the same hotel with an ambassador from Tunis, who, having passed some years at London, was returning home that way. One day I observed his Moorish excellency diverting himself under the porch, with surveying the splendid equipages that drove along; when there chanced to pass that way some Capucin friars, who had never seen a Turk, as he, on his part, though accustomed to the European dresses, had never seen the grotesque figure of a Capucin: and there is no expressing the mutual admiration with which they inspired each other. Had the chaplain of the embassy entered into a dispute with these Franciscans, their reciprocal surprise had been of the same nature. Thus all mankind stand staring at one another; and there is no beating it into their heads, that the turban of the African is not just as good or as bad a fashion as the cowl of the European. — ‘He is a very honest man,’ said the Prince of Sallee, speaking of De Ruyter; ‘it is a pity he were a Christian.’”

After leaving Paris, he resided at Rheims in the province of Champagne, about eighty miles north-east of the metropolis. Thence he addressed to his friend Michael Ramsay the following letter, full of observation and thought.

Hume *to* Michael Ramsay.

“Rheims, September 12, 1734.

“My Dear Michael, — I suppose you have received two letters from me, dated at Paris, in one of which was enclosed a letter to my Lord Stair. I am now arrived at Rheims, which is to be the place of my abode for some considerable time, and where I hope both to spend my time happily for the present, and lay up a stock for the future. It is a large town, containing about forty thousand inhabitants, and has in it about thirty families that keep coaches, though, by the appearance of the houses, you would not think there was one. I am recommended to two of the best families in town, and particularly to a man, who they say is one of the most learned in France. He is just now in the country, so that I have not yet seen him; though, if I had seen him, it would be some time before I could contract a friendship with him, not being yet sufficient master of the language to support a conversation; which is a great vexation to me, but which I hope in a short time to get over. As I have little more than this to say about business, I shall use the freedom to entertain you with any idle thoughts that come into my head, hoping at least you will excuse them, if not be pleased with them, because they come from an absent friend.

“When I parted from Paris, the Chevalier Ramsay gave me as his advice, to observe carefully, and imitate as much as possible, the manners of the French. For, says he, though the English, perhaps, have more of the real politeness of the heart, yet the French certainly have the better way of expressing it. This gave me occasion to reflect upon the matter, and in my humble opinion it is just the contrary: viz., that the French have more real politeness, and the English the better method of expressing it. By real politeness I mean softness of temper, and a sincere inclination to oblige and be serviceable, which is very conspicuous in this nation, not only among the high but low; in so much that the porters and coachmen here are civil, and that, not only to gentlemen, but likewise among themselves; so that I have not yet seen one quarrel in France, though they are every where to be met with in England. By the expressions of politeness, I mean those outward deferences and ceremonies which custom has invented, to supply the defect of real politeness or kindness, that is unavoidable towards strangers, or indifferent persons, even in men of the best dispositions in the world. These ceremonies ought to be so contrived, as that, though they do not deceive nor pass for sincere, yet still they please by their appearance, and lead the mind by its own consent and knowledge into an agreeable delusion. One may err by running into either of the two extremes; that of making them too like truth or too remote from it: though we may observe, that the first is scarce possible, because whenever any expression or action becomes customary, it can deceive nobody. Thus, when the Quakers say, ‘your friend,’ they are as easily understood, as another, that says, ‘your humble servant.’ The French err in the contrary extreme, that of making their civilities too remote from truth, which is a fault, though they are not designed to be believed; just as it is a transgression of rules in a dramatic poet to mix any improbabilities with his fable, though ’tis certain that, in the representation, the scenes, lights, company, and a thousand other circumstances, make it impossible he can ever deceive.

“Another fault I find in the French manners, is that, like their clothes and furniture, they are too glaring. An English fine gentleman distinguishes himself from the rest of the world, by the whole tenor of his conversation, more than by any particular part of it; so that though you are sensible he excels, you are at a loss to tell in what, and have no remarkable civilities and compliments to pitch on as a proof of his politeness. These he so smooths over, that they pass for the common actions of life, and never put you to trouble of returning thanks for them. The English politeness is always greatest where it appears least.

“After all, it must be confessed that the little niceties of French behaviour, though troublesome and impertinent, yet serve to polish the ordinary kind of people, and prevent rudeness and brutality. For in the same manner as soldiers are found to become more courageous in learning to hold their muskets within half an inch of a place appointed; and your devotees feel their devotion increase by the observance of trivial superstitions, as sprinkling, kneeling, crossing, &c.; so men insensibly soften towards each other in the practice of these ceremonies. The mind pleases itself by the progress it makes in such trifles, and while it is so supported, makes an easy transition to something more material. And I verily believe it is for this reason that you scarce ever meet with a clown or an ill-bred man in France.

"You may perhaps wonder that I, who have stayed so short time in France, and who have confessed that I am not master of their language, should decide so positively of their manner. But you will please to observe, that it is with nations as with particular men, where one trifle frequently serves more to discover the character, than a whole train of considerable actions. Thus, when I compare our English phrase of 'humble servant,' which likewise we omit upon the least intimacy, with the French one of 'the honour of being your most humble servant,' which they never forget, — this, compared with other circumstances, lets me clearly see the different humours of the nations. This phrase, of the honour of doing or saying such a thing to you, goes so far, that my washing-woman to-day told me, that she hoped she would have the honour of serving me while I staid at Rheims; and what is still more absurd, it is said by people to those who are very much their inferiors.

"Before I conclude my letter, I must tell you that I hope you will excuse my rudeness, if I use the freedom (?) to desire of you that, the next time you do me the honour of writing to me, you will be so good as to sit down a day before the post goes away; for I cannot help being afraid that, in your haste, you have omitted many things, which otherwise I would have had the honour and satisfaction of hearing from you. When you are so good as to condescend to write, please to direct so:— 'A Monsieur — Monsieur David Hume, gentilhomme, Ecossois, chez Monsieur Mesier, au Peroquet verd, proche la porte au Ferron, Rheims.'"

Hume states, in his "own life," that he passed "three years" very agreeably in France. We find from a letter to Principal Campbell, that two of these years were spent at La Flêche, and that he had some communication with the members of the Jesuits' College there. He says, "It may perhaps amuse you to learn the first hint, which suggested to me that argument which you have so strenuously attacked. I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuits' College of La Flêche, a town in which I passed two years of my youth, and engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and learning, who was relating to me, and urging some nonsensical miracle performed lately in their convent, when I was tempted to dispute against him; and as my head was full of the topics of my Treatise of Human Nature, which I was at that time composing, this argument immediately occurred to me, and I thought it very much gravelled my companion; but at last he observed to me, that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the Catholic miracles; — which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer. I believe you will allow, that the freedom at least of this reasoning makes it somewhat extraordinary to have been the produce of a convent of Jesuits, though perhaps you may think the sophistry of it savours plainly of the place of its birth."

This same Jesuits' College of La Flêche, is familiar to the philosophical reader as the seminary in which Des Cartes was educated. The place which Hume had just left, has been seen to be associated with the birth and residence of a distinguished opponent of the Cartesian theory. We now find him perfecting his work in that academic solitude, where Des Cartes himself was educated, and where he formed his theory of commencing with the doubt of previous dogmatic opinions, and framing for himself a new fabric of belief. The coincidence is surely worthy of reflective association, and it is perhaps not the least striking instance of Hume's unimaginative nature, that in none of his works, printed or manuscript, do we find an allusion to the circumstance, that while framing his own theories, he trod the same pavement that had upwards of a century earlier borne the weight of one whose fame and influence on human thought was so much of the same character as he himself panted to attain.

It is to Hume's early sojourn in France that we must assign the time and the scene of Mackenzie's pleasant fiction, called the "Story of La Roche," published in the Mirror of 1779. It is generally admitted that the writer's materials were merely the character and habits of the philosopher, and that there was no groundwork for the narrative in any incident that had actually occurred. But the story must be taken as the observations of an acute perception, and a finely adjusted taste, upon Hume's character; and our reliance on the accuracy of the picture is enhanced by the circumstance that Smith, deceived by its air of reality, expressed his wonder that Hume had never told him of the incident.

The opening description is in these words: —

“More than forty years ago, an English philosopher, whose works have since been read and admired by all Europe, resided at a little town in France. Some disappointments in his native country had first driven him abroad, and he was afterwards induced to remain there, from having found in this retreat, where the connexions even of nature and language were avoided, a perfect seclusion and retirement, highly favourable to the development of abstract subjects, in which he excelled all the writers of his time.

“Perhaps in the structure of such a mind as Mr. — — ‘s, the fine and more delicate sensibilities are seldom known to have place; or, if originally implanted there, are in a great measure extinguished by the exertions of intense study and profound investigation. Hence the idea of philosophy and unfeelingness being united, has become proverbial; and, in common language, the former word is often used to express the latter. Our philosopher had been censured by some, as deficient in warmth and feeling: but the mildness of his manners has been allowed by all; and it is certain, that if he was not easily melted into compassion, it was at least not difficult to awaken his benevolence.”

The impression of the actions of a kind, charitable, and tolerant disposition, conveyed by the circumstances of the narrative, cannot be represented without incorporating it in full; and it will probably be thought that one or two passing sketches of character, such as the above, are all that should be taken into a work like the present, from a book accessible to every reader. Thus, when the housekeeper comes with the account of the distresses of the poor protestant clergyman and his daughter:

“Her master laid aside the volume in his hand, and broke off the chain of ideas it had inspired. His night-gown was exchanged for a coat, and he followed his gouvernante to the sick man’s apartment.”

Again, —

“La Roche found a degree of simplicity and gentleness in his companion, which is not always annexed to the character of a learned or a wise man. His daughter, who was prepared to be afraid of him, was equally undeceived. She found in him nothing of that self-importance which superior parts, or great cultivation of them, is apt to confer. He talked of every thing but philosophy or religion; he seemed to enjoy every pleasure and amusement of ordinary life, and to be interested in the most common topics of discourse: when his knowledge or learning at any time appeared, it was delivered with the utmost plainness, and without the least shadow of dogmatism."

And not less distinctly are the following sentences the echo of Mackenzie's own observations of the character and habits of the philosopher, that they are put in the varied shape of dialogue and narrative.

"You regret, my friend," said [La Roche,] "when my daughter and I talk of the exquisite pleasure derived from music, you regret your want of musical powers and musical feelings; it is a department of soul, you say, which nature has almost denied you, which, from the effects you see it have on others, you are sure must be highly delightful. Why should not the same thing be said of religion? Trust me, I feel it in the same way, an energy, an inspiration, which I would not lose for all the blessings of sense or enjoyments of the world. . . . . . And it would have been inhuman in our philosopher to have clouded, even with a doubt, the sunshine of this belief.

"His discourse was very remote from metaphysical disquisition or religious controversy. Of all men I ever knew, his ordinary conversation was the least tinctured with pedantry or liable to dissertation. With La Roche and his daughter it was perfectly familiar. The country round them, the manners of the villagers, the comparison of both with those of England, remarks on the works of favourite authors, or the sentiments they conveyed, and the passions they excited, with many other topics in which there was an equality, or alternate advantage among the speakers, were the subjects they talked on."

Nor can one, after having quoted so much, avoid giving the concluding sentence, in which the philosopher contemplates the old clergyman's grief for the loss of his daughter, and at the same time that he perceives its bitterness and intensity, is made aware of the consolations which the bereaved old man finds in religion, and "rejoices that such consolation" is his.

"Mr. — — 's heart was smitten; and I have heard him long after confess, that there were moments when the remembrance overcame him even to weakness; when, amidst all the pleasures of philosophical discovery, and the pride of literary fame, he recalled to his mind the venerable figure of the good La Roche, and wished that he had never doubted."

The account of his sojourn in France is thus given in his "own life:"—"During my retreat in France, first at Rheims, but chiefly at La Flêche, in

Anjou, I composed my 'Treatise of Human Nature.' After passing three years very agreeably in that country, I came over to London in 1737."

We must now follow him to London, where we find him occupied in carrying his "Treatise of Human Nature," through the press. One of his early friends was his namesake Henry Home, afterwards Lord Kames, who pursued, but with unequal step, the same path with himself. Home was fifteen years the elder of the two, and had joined the bar in 1723. He had already published some of his professional works; but it was at a subsequent period of his life, and when he perhaps became emulous of the fame of his friend, that he attempted works in ethics, metaphysics, and criticism. During many years of continued intimacy, these two distinguished men enjoyed each other's mutual respect; but, in their early intercourse, when his senior had for some time occupied a prominent position in the eye of the public, we naturally find Hume writing about his great project in a tone of modest deference.

Hume *to* Henry Home.

"London, December 2, 1737.

"Dear Sir, — I am sorry I am not able to satisfy your curiosity by giving you some general notion of the plan upon which I proceed. But my opinions are so new, and even some terms I am obliged to make use of, that I could not propose, by any abridgment, to give my system an air of likelihood, or so much as make it intelligible. It is a thing I have in vain attempted already, at a gentleman's request in this place, who thought it would help him to comprehend and judge of my notions, if he saw them all at once before him. I have had a greater desire of communicating to you the plan of the whole, that I believe it will not appear in public before the beginning of next winter. For, besides that it would be difficult to have it printed before the rising of the parliament, I must confess I am not ill pleased with a little delay, that it may appear with as few imperfections as possible. I have been here near three months, always within a week of agreeing with my printers; and you may imagine I did not forget the work itself during that time, where I began to feel some passages weaker for the style and diction than I could have wished. The nearness and greatness of the event roused up my attention, and made me more difficult to please, than when I was alone in perfect tranquillity in France. But here I must tell you one of my foibles. I have a great inclination to go down to Scotland this spring to see my friends; and have your advice concerning my philosophical discoveries; but cannot overcome a certain shamefacedness I have to appear among you at my years, without having yet a settlement, or so much as attempted any. How happens it that we philosophers cannot as heartily despise the world as it despises us? I think in my conscience the contempt were as well founded on our side as on the other.

“Having a franked letter, I was resolved to make use of it; and accordingly enclose some ‘*Reasonings concerning Miracles*,’ which I once thought of publishing with the rest, but which I am afraid will give too much offence, even as the world is disposed at present. There is something in the turn of thought, and a good deal in the turn of expression, which will not perhaps appear so proper, for want of knowing the context: but the force of the argument you’ll be judge of, as it stands. Tell me your thoughts of it. Is not the style too diffuse? though, as that was a popular argument, I have spread it out much more than the other parts of the work. I beg of you to show it to nobody, except to Mr. Hamilton, if he pleases; and let me know at your leisure that you have received it, read it, and burnt it. Your thoughts and mine agree with respect to Dr. Butler, and I would be glad to be introduced to him. I am at present castrating my work, that is, cutting off its nobler parts; that is, endeavouring it shall give as little offence as possible, before which, I could not pretend to put it into the Doctor’s hands. This is a piece of cowardice, for which I blame myself, though I believe none of my friends will blame me. But I was resolved not to be an enthusiast in philosophy, while I was blaming other enthusiasms. If ever I indulge myself in any, ‘twill be when I tell you that I am, dear Sir, yours.”

Butler, to whom Hume is thus found desiring an introduction, had, in the immediately preceding year, published “The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature;” and it appears that Hume courted the attention of the author of that clear logical work to those speculations of his own, which, in the opinion of the world in general, have so opposite a tendency to that of the “Analogy.” The following letter, acknowledging an introduction from Home, and dated 4th March, 1738, tells its own tale.

“I shall not trouble you with any formal compliments or thanks, which would be but an ill return for the kindness you have done me in writing in my behalf, to one you are so little acquainted with as Dr. Butler; and, I am afraid, stretching the truth in favour of a friend. I have called upon the Doctor, with a design of delivering him your letter, but find he is at present in the country. I am a little anxious to have the Doctor’s opinion. My own I dare not trust to; both because it concerns myself, and because it is so variable, that I know not how to fix it. Sometimes it elevates me above the clouds; at other times, it depresses me with doubts and fears; so that, whatever be my success, I cannot be entirely disappointed. Somebody has told me that you might perhaps be in London this spring. I should esteem this a very lucky event; and notwithstanding all the pleasures of the town, I would certainly engage you to pass some philosophical evenings with me, and either correct my judgment, where you differ from me, or confirm it where we agree. I believe I have some need of the one, as well as the other; and though the propensity to diffidence be an error on the better side, yet ’tis an error, and dangerous as well as disagreeable. — I am, &c.

“I lodge at present in the Rainbow Coffeehouse, Lancaster Court.”

The transactions between authors and booksellers are seldom accompanied by any formidable array of legal formalities; but Hume and his publishers seem to have thought it necessary to bind each other in the most stringent manner, to the performance of their respective obligations, by “articles of agreement, made, concluded, and agreed, upon the 26th day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-eight, and in the twelfth year of the reign of our sovereign lord King George the Second, — between David Hume of Lancaster Court of the one part, and John Noone of Cheapside, London, bookseller, of the other part.” By this very precise document, it is provided, that “the said David Hume shall and will permit and suffer the said John Noone to have, hold, and enjoy, the sole property, benefit, and advantage of printing and publishing the first edition of the said book, not exceeding one thousand copies thereof.” The author, in return, receives £50, and twelve bound copies of the book. The transaction is on the whole creditable to the discernment and liberality of Mr. Noone. It may be questioned, whether, in this age, when knowledge has spread so much wider, and money is so much less valuable, it would be easy to find a bookseller, who, on the ground of its internal merits, would give £50 for an edition of a new metaphysical work, by an unknown and young author, born and brought up in a remote part of the empire. These articles refer to the first and second of the three volumes of the “Treatise of Human Nature;” and they were accordingly published in January, 1739. They include “Book I. Of the Understanding,” and “Book II. Of the Passions.”

It has been generally and justly remarked, that the Treatise is among the least systematic of philosophical works — that it has neither a definite and comprehensive plan, nor a logical arrangement. It was, indeed, so utterly deficient in the former — there was so complete a want of any projected scope of subject which the author was bound to exhaust in what he wrote — that an attempt to divide and subdivide the matter after it had been written, according to a logical arrangement, would only, as a sort of *experimentum crucis*, have exposed the imperfect character of the original plan. The author, therefore, very discreetly allowed his matter to be arranged as the subjects of which he treated had respectively suggested themselves, and bestowed on his work a title rather general than comprehensive, — a title, of which all that can be said of its aptness to the subject is, that no part of his book can be said to be wholly without it, while he might have included an almost incalculable multitude of other subjects within it. He called it simply "A Treatise of Human Nature;" and by a subsidiary title, explanatory rather of his method than definitive of his matter, he called it "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."

The purely metaphysical, and, at the same time, the most original portion of the work, and that which has most conspicuously rendered itself a constituent part of the literature of intellectual philosophy, is "Book I. Of the Understanding." "Book II. Of the Passions," contains mixed metaphysics and ethics, with occasional notices of phenomena, which, though Hume does not, other writers would be likely to connect with physiological inquiries. The third book, "Of Virtue and Vice in General," published a year later, is of an ethical character, being an inquiry into the origin and proper system of morals, and an application of the system to government and politics.

The "Treatise of Human Nature" afforded materials for the criticism of two very distinct classes of writers. The one consisted of men imbued with a spirit of inquiry kindred to that of Hume, and a genius capable of appreciating his services in the cause of truth; who, as the teachers of systems of which they were themselves the architects, had to attack or to defend the principles promulgated in the Treatise, according as these differed from or corresponded with their own. It is in the writings of these men that the true immortality of Hume as a philosopher consists. Whether they find in him great truths to acknowledge, or subtle and plausible errors to attack, they are the vital evidence of the originality of his work, of the genius that inspired it, and of its great influence on human thought and action. The other class of critics are those who, in pamphlets, or works more ambitious but not rising in real solidity above that fugitive class, or in occasional digressions from other topics, have endeavoured to prejudice the minds of their readers against the principles of the Treatise, by exaggeration, or by the misapplication of their metaphysical doctrines to the proceedings of every-day life, — a set of literary efforts of quick production and as quick decay.

To the former class of authors, it is of course not within the scope of the present writer's ambition to belong, and he sees no occasion to attempt to imitate the latter. In a work, however, which professes to give a life of David Hume, it is necessary to say something about the "Treatise of Human Nature;" and as a preliminary to such an attempt, it may be well to mark the boundaries within which the writer conceives that the duty he has assumed calls on him for a description of the work, neither impugning nor defending any of the opinions it sets forth.

It seems to be right that some attempt should be made to describe the character and strength of the author's intellect, and the method of its operations; and to give a view of the fundamental characteristic principles by which he professes to distinguish his own philosophy from that of other writers on metaphysical subjects. An attempt should also be made to tell in what respect Hume has made incidental suggestions which have either been admitted as new truths in metaphysics, or have, as original but perhaps fallacious suggestions, afforded to other thinkers the means of establishing truths. These being the general objects to be kept in view, there is no intention to take them in any precise order, or to exhaust them in remarks on this one work. To attempt an analysis of the work would be out of place. There can be no more repulsive matter for reading than condensed metaphysics; and probably there is nothing less instructive than those abridgments, which, necessarily suppressing the author's discursive arguments, appeal almost entirely to the memory. To seize on and give a descriptive rather than an analytical account of the prominent features of the system, will be the chief aim of these remarks. Moreover, the Treatise bears on subjects which are nearly all recalled in its author's subsequent works; and while there are some things in the critical history of Hume's opinions which may be appropriately viewed in connexion with his first publication, there are others which it may be more expedient to examine when he is found reconsidering the subjects in his later works; and again, others which may be viewed in a general attempt to describe the extent of his literary achievements.

The Treatise has been already spoken of as embracing two great objects, metaphysics and ethics; or three, if politics be considered as distinct from ethics. The great leading principle of the metaphysical department, and a principle which is never lost sight of in any part of the book, is, that the materials on which intellect works are the *impressions* which represent immediate sensation, whether externally as by the senses, or internally as by the passions, and *ideas* which are the faint reflections of these impressions. Thus to speak colloquially, when I see a picture, or when I am angry with some one, there is an *impression*; but when I think about this picture in its absence, or call to recollection my subsided anger, what exists in either case is an *idea*. Hume looked from words to that which they signified, and he found that where they signified any thing, it must be found among the things that either are or have been impressions. The whole varied and complex system of intellectual machinery he found occupied in the representation, the combination, or the arrangement of these raw materials of intellectual matter. If I say I see an object, I give expression to the fact, that a certain impression is made on the retina of my eye. If I convey to the person I am speaking to an accurate notion of what I mean, I awaken in his mind ideas left there by previous impressions, brought thither by his sense of sight. Thus, in the particular case of the external senses, when they are considered as in direct communication between the mind and any object, there are impressions: when the senses are not said to be in communication with the object, the operations of the mind in connexion with it, are from vestiges which the impressions have left on the mind; and these vestiges are called ideas, and are always more faint than the original impressions themselves. And a material circumstance to be kept in view at the very threshold of the system is, that there is no specific and distinct line drawn between impressions and ideas. Their difference is in degree merely — the former are stronger, the latter weaker. There is no difference in kind; and there is sometimes doubt whether that which is supposed to be an impression may not be a vivid idea, and that which is supposed to be an idea a faint impression.

When Hume examined, with more and more minuteness, the elements of the materials on which the mind works, he could still find nothing but these impressions and ideas. Looking at language as a machinery for giving expression to thought, he thus established for himself a test of its adaptation to its right use, — a test for discovering whether in any given case it really served the purpose of language, or was a mere unmeaning sound. As he found that there was nothing on which thought could operate but the impressions received through sensation, or the ideas left by them, he considered that a word which had not a meaning to be found in either of these things, had no meaning at all. He looked upon ideas as the goods with which the mind was stored; and on these stores, as being of the character of impressions, while they were in the state of coming into the mind. When any one, then, in reasoning, or any other kind of literature, spoke of any thing as existing, the principle of his theory was, that this storehouse of idealized impressions should be searched for one corresponding to the term made use of. If such an impression were not found, the word was, so far as our human faculties were concerned, an unmeaning one. Whether there was any existence corresponding to its meaning, no one could say: all that the sceptical philosopher could decide was, that, so far as human intellect was put in possession of materials for thought, it had nothing to warrant it in saying, that this word represented any thing of which that intellect had cognizance.

This limitation of the material put at the disposal of the mind, was largely illustrated in the course of the work; and the illustrations assumed some such character as this: — Imaginative writers present us with descriptions of things which never, within our own experience, have existed, — of things which, we believe, never have had existence. Yet, however fantastic and heterogeneous may be the representations thus presented to our notice, there is no one part, of which we form a conception, that is any thing more than a new arrangement of ideas that have been left in the mind by impressions deposited there by sensation. The most extravagant of eastern or classical fictions there find their elements. If it be a three-headed dog, a winged horse, a fiery dragon, or a golden palace, that is spoken of, the reader who forms a conception of the narrative puts it together with the ideas left in his mind by impressions conveyed through the external senses. If a spectre is said to be raised, it may be spoken of as not denser than the atmosphere, yet the attributes that bring a conception of it to the intellect are the form and proportions of a human being, — expression, action, and habiliments: all elements the ideas of which the mind has received through the impressions of the senses. If words were used in a book of fiction which did not admit of being thus realized by the mind putting together a corresponding portion of the ideas stored up within it — supplying, as it were, the described costume from this wardrobe — then, according to Hume's philosophy, the word would be a sound without meaning. He maintained a like rule as to books of philosophy. If the authors used terms which were not thus represented in the storehouse of the matter of thought and language, they were not reasoning on what they knew; they were not using words as the signs of things signified, but printing unmeaning collections of letters, or uttering senseless sounds.

The system, if it were to be classed under the old metaphysical divisions, was one of nominalism. Such words as shape, colour, hardness, roughness, &c. the author of the Treatise could only admit to have a meaning in as far as they signified ideas in the mind; and these ideas could only be there as the relics of impressions derived through the senses. Thus, general terms, such as the categories of Aristotle, could have no existence except in so far as they represented and called up particulars. Of the abstract term colour, our notion is derived solely from the ideas left in the mind by the actual impressions made through the senses. Heat, cold, and largeness, so far as these words represent what is really in the mind, have no other foundation.

The application of this system to the mathematics, and to natural philosophy, was so startling as to afford to some readers almost a *reductio ad absurdum*. The infinite divisibility of matter was arraigned by Hume as so far from being a truth, that it was not even capable of being conceived by the mind, which had never yet received any impressions through the senses corresponding to the expression. Every man had seen matter divided — some into smaller fragments than others; but where our ideas, derived from actual experiment, stopped in minuteness of division, the conception of divisibility stopped also. The truth of geometrical demonstration, as applicable to practice, he did not deny; but he maintained, or rather seemed to maintain, for his reasoning here is of a highly subtle order, that we have a conception of these operations only in as far as they concur with really existing things, or, more properly speaking, with the ideas in the mind conveyed thither by the senses. Of the point, which has no breadth, depth, or length; of the straight line, which is deficient in the first and second, and not in the last of these qualities, he denied that we could have an idea, unless that idea were just as much the representative of an actual existence as any other idea is.

Infinity of space was an expression to which he had an objection on similar grounds; it had no idea corresponding to it lodged in the mind. Of space finite in various quantities, the mind possessed ideas stored up from repeated impressions, and by adding these ideas together, more or less vastness in the conception of finite space was afforded. But any thing beyond this definitive increase, attested as it was by the senses, the mind had no means of conceiving. Whatever might be in another intellectual world, there was no idea corresponding to infinity of space in the mind of man. It thence followed, that space unoccupied was a conception of which the mind was incapable, because the impressions originally conveyed to the mind were the medium through which the conception of space existed, and where there were no ideas of such impressions, an aggregate idea of space was wanting. In the same manner it was held, that it was in a succession of impressions, with ideas corresponding, that the conception of time consisted, and that without such a succession, time would be a thing unknown and unconceived. Our ideas of numbers he found to be but the collected ideas of the impressions of the units of which the senses have received distinct impressions; and in confirmation of this he appealed to the distinctness of our notion of small numbers, which our mind has been accustomed to find represented by units, and our imperfect conception of those large numbers, which we have never had presented to us in detail. How readily we have a notion of six, but how imperfectly the mind receives the conception of six millions; how clearly we perceive, in units, the difference between six and twelve, but how imperfect is our notion of the difference between six millions and twelve millions.

All human consciousness being of these two materials, impressions and ideas, the answer to the question, What knowledge have we of an external world, resolved itself into this, that there were certain impressions and ideas which we supposed to relate to it — further we knew not. When we turn, according to this theory, from the external world, and, looking into ourselves, ask what certainty we have of separate self-existence, we find but a string of impressions and ideas, and we have no means of linking these together into any notion of a continuous existence. Such is that boasted thing the human intellect, when its elements are searched out by a rigid application of the sceptical philosophy of Hume. Not a thing separate and self-existent, which was, and is, and shall continue; but a succession of mere separate entities, called in one view impressions, in another ideas.

It may make this brief sketch more clear, to notice a circumstance in the history of philosophy, which, perhaps, serves better in an incidental manner to mark the boundaries of the field of Hume's inquiry, than many pages of discursive description. The transcendentalists took him up as having examined the materials solely, on which pure reason operates; not pure reason itself. They said that he had examined the classes of matter which come before the judge, but had omitted to describe the judge himself, the extent of his jurisdiction, and his method of enforcing it. They maintained, that all these things, which with Hume appeared to be the constituent elements of philosophy, were nothing but the materials on which philosophy works, — that to presume them to be of service presupposed a reason which could make use of them, — that Hume himself, while thus speculating and telling us that his mind consisted but of a string of ideas, left behind by certain impressions, was himself making use of that pure reason which was in him before the ideas or impressions existed, and was through that power adapting the impressions and ideas to use. He characterized his system as "an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects:" but they said that there was another and a preliminary matter of inquiry — the faculty, to speak popularly, which suggested what experiments should be made, and judged of their results.

Hume may be found indirectly lamenting the fate of his own work on metaphysics, in his remarks on other works of a kindred character; and in these criticisms we have a clue to the expectations he had formed. In his well-known rapid criticism on the literature of the epoch of the civil wars, he says of Hobbes: "No author in that age was more celebrated both abroad and at home than Hobbes. In our times, he is much neglected: a lively instance how precarious all reputations founded on reasoning and philosophy! A pleasant comedy which paints the manners of the age, and exposes a faithful picture of nature, is a durable work, and is transmitted to the latest posterity. But a system, whether physical or metaphysical, owes commonly its success to its novelty; and is no sooner canvassed with impartiality, than its weakness is discovered."

Like the majority of literary prophecies dictated by feeling and not by impartial criticism, this one, whether as it refers to “The Leviathan,” of which it is ostensibly uttered, or to the “Treatise of Human Nature,” the fate of which doubtless suggested it, has proved untrue. The influence of Hobbes has revived, as that of the Treatise remained undiminished from the time when it was first fully appreciated. And in both cases their influence has arisen from that element which seems alone to be capable of giving permanent value to metaphysical thought. It is not that in either case the fundamental theory of the author is adopted, as the disciples of old imbibed the system of their masters, but that each has started some novelties in thought, and, either by themselves sweeping away prevailing fallacies, or suggesting to others the means of doing so, have cleared the path of philosophy. As a general system, the philosophy of Hobbes has been perhaps most completely rejected at those times when its incidental discoveries and suggestions made it most serviceable to philosophy, and were the cause of its being most highly esteemed. “Harm I can do none,” says Hobbes, when speaking of the metaphysicians who preceded him, “though I err not less than they, for I leave men but as they are, in doubt and dispute.” There is indeed nothing in the later history of metaphysical writing to show that the triumphs in that department of thought are to stretch beyond the establishment of incidental truths, the removal of fallacies, and the suggestion of theories that may teach men to think. The field is a republic: incidental merit has its praise, and is allowed its pre-eminence; but no one mind, it may safely be pronounced, holds in it that monarchical sway which Adam Smith retains over the empire of political economy. The ancient systems anterior to Christianity allowed of such empire. The pupil did not follow his master merely in this and that incidental truth developed, but adopted the system in all its details and proportions as his system and his creed. In later times it would probably be found that the most devoted admirers of great writers on metaphysics do not adopt their opinions in the mass; and it seems that men must now go elsewhere than to the produce of human reason, for the grand leading principles of the philosophy of belief and disbelief.

To those who hold that the writings of the great metaphysicians are thus to be esteemed on account, not of their fundamental principles, but of the truths they bring out in detail, a new theory is like a new road through an unfrequented country, valuable, not for itself, but for the scenery which it opens up to the traveller’s eye. The thinker who adopts this view, often wonders at the small beginnings of philosophical systems — wonders, perhaps, at the circumstance of Kant having believed that his own system started into life at one moment as he was reading Hume’s views of Cause and Effect. But the solution is ready at hand. We feel that the philosopher of Königsberg had in his mind the impulses that would have driven him into a new path had no Hume preceded him. We owe it to the Essay on Cause and Effect that it was the starting-point at which he left the beaten track; but, had it not attracted his attention, his path would have been as original, though not, perhaps, in the same direction. And so of Hume himself. If the main outline of his theory had never occurred to him, he would still have been a great philosopher; for in some form or other he would have found his way to those incidental and subsidiary discoveries, which are admitted to have reality in them by many who repudiate his general theory.

Of all the secondary applications of the leading principle of the Treatise, none has perhaps exercised so extensive an influence on philosophy, as this same doctrine of cause and effect. Looking to those separate phenomena, of which in common language we call the one the cause of the other, and the other the effect of that cause, he could see no other connexion between them than that the latter immediately followed the former. He found that the mind, proceeding on the inductive system, when it repeatedly saw two phenomena thus conjoined, expected, when that which had been in use to precede the other made its appearance, that the other would follow; and he found that by repeated experiment this expectation might be so far strengthened, that people were ready to stake their most important temporal interests on the occurrence of the phenomenon called the effect, when that called the cause had taken place. But if there were any thing else but this conjunction, of which a knowledge was demanded — if the unsatisfied investigator sought for some power in the one phenomenon which enabled it to be the fabricator of the other — the sceptical reasoner would answer, that for all he could say to the contrary such a thing might be, but he had no clue to that knowledge — no impression of any such quality passed into his intellect through sensation — his mind had no material committed to it by which the existence or non-existence of any such thing could be argued.

The vulgar notion of this theory was, that it destroyed all our notions of regularity and system in the order of nature; that it made no provision for unseen causes, and contemplated only the application of the doctrines of cause and effect to things which were palpably seen following each other. But the inventor of the theory never questioned the regularity of the operations of nature as established by the inductive philosophy; he only endeavoured to show how far and within what limits we could acquire a cognizance of the machinery of that regularity. He denied not that when the spark was applied, the gunpowder would ignite, or that when the ball was dropped, it would proceed to the earth with the accelerated motion of gravitation; but he denied that we could see any other connexion between the cause and effect in either case, than that of uniform sequence. When it was scientifically adopted, the theory was found to be productive of the most important results. The view that when any effect was observed, that phenomenon which was most uniform in its precedence was the one entitled to be termed the cause, was a salutary incentive to close and patient investigation, by laying before the philosopher the simple, numerical question — what was that phenomenon which, by the uniformity of its precedence, was entitled to be termed the cause? The test became of the simplest kind; and, if the experimentalist had at a particular time considered some phenomenon as a cause, — if the farther progress of patient and unprejudiced inquiry showed that another, by the occurrence of instances in which it preceded the effect while the former did not, had a preferable title to be termed the cause, the mind in its unbiassed estimate of numbers at once admitted the claim. But when, according to the antagonist system, it became settled that any given phenomenon had in it the power of bringing into existence another, that power was viewed as a quality of the object. When things are admitted to have qualities, it is not easy for the mind at once to assent to their non-existence and to admit that others have the proper title to these qualities. Analogy, the great source of fallacies, comes to increase the difficulty, by a confusion of what are termed the qualities of bodies, and those endowments with which we invest our fellow-creatures. In this respect Hume’s theory of cause and effect has been of great service to inductive philosophy.

It was an objection to it that it made no allowance for unseen causes; but it was part of its author’s system, that the uniformity which our observation teaches us, proceeds unseen in those cases to which our observation cannot penetrate. It was part of the theory, that where there is a want of the absolute uniformity in the sequence of two phenomena, they are not respectively cause and effect. This principle is of vital importance in physical science. It is a notion with the vulgar, and one that sometimes perhaps lurks unseen in scientific operations, that the cause sometimes does not produce its effect by reason of some failure in the operating power. It is from a vague amplification of this heresy, that the popular notion of chance is derived. Hume's theory nips the bud of such a fallacy by denying, whenever there is a break in the sequence, that the phenomena which have in other instances followed each other, really are cause and effect. It is perhaps in the unscientific application of therapeutics, that the popular fallacy is most widely and most dangerously exemplified. The whole of the complexity of that wondrous science consists in the immediate causes and effects being unseen — in the phenomena immediately conjoined not being ascertained, but in attempts being made to estimate them through the connexion between those external causes to which the internal causes may have had the relation of effects, and those external effects of which these internal effects may have been the causes. The character of unseen causes was aptly illustrated by Hume himself, from the throwing of a die. The vulgar mind can see no cause and effect in the operation, because there is a series of causes and effects, which are hidden from the sight, in the interior of the box; but the philosopher knows not the less, that those laws of motion, which induction has established to him as truths, are taking place; and that there is no turn made by the die, which is not as much the effect of some cause, as the turning of the hands of a watch, or the parallel motion in a steam engine.

It is one of the peculiar features of the history of mental philosophy, that there is scarcely ever a new principle, associated with the name of a great author, but it is shown that it has been anticipated, in some oracular sentence, probably by an obscure writer. Joseph Glanvill is pretty well known as the author of "Saducismus Triumphatus," a vindication of the belief in witches and apparitions, which must have been perused by all the curious in this species of lore. Glanvill was the author of various tracts on biblical subjects, but it was not generally known that he wrote a book on sceptical philosophy, called "Scepsis Scientifica, or, Confest Ignorance the Way to Science," until it was unearthed by the persevering inquiries of Mr. Hallam. In that book there is the passage, "all knowledge of causes is *deductive*, for we know none by simple intuition, but through the medium of their effects; so that we cannot conclude any thing to be the cause of another but from its continual accompanying it, for the causality itself is *insensible*.” This is an addition to the many instances where writers have almost, as it were by chance, laid down principles, of which they show, by neglecting to follow them to their legitimate conclusions, that they have not understood their full meaning; if it do not rather illustrate the view already noticed, that in metaphysics our assent is secured, not to general propositions as such, but to their particular applications; and that it is not in the laying down of first principles that important truths are exhibited to the world, but in those subsidiary expositions by which the discoverer endeavours to show their application.

The subsequent history of Hume’s theory of Cause and Effect, is a marked illustration of the danger of bringing forward as an argument against theories purely metaphysical, the statement that they are dangerous to religion. It is difficult to see where there is a difference between adducing that argument in the sphere of natural philosophy, from which it has been long scouted by common consent, and bringing it forward as an answer to the theories of the metaphysician. In either case it is a threat, which, in the days of Galileo, bore the terror of corporal punishment, and in the present day carries the threat of unpopularity, to the person against whom it is used. If any one should suppose that he finds lurking in the speculations of some metaphysical writer, opinions from which it may be inferred that he is not possessed of the hopes and consolations of the Christian, humanity to the unhappy author should suggest that he ought rather to be pitied than condemned, and respect for the religious feelings of others should teach that there is no occasion to endeavour, by a laborious pleading, to demonstrate that a man who has said nothing against religion is in reality an enemy to Christianity. They are surely no enlightened friends to religion, who maintain that the suppression of inquiry as to the material or the immaterial world, is favourable to the cause of revealed truth. The blasphemer who raises his voice offensively and contentiously against what his fellow citizens hold sacred, invokes the public wrath, and is no just object of sympathy. The extent of his punishment is regretted only when, by its vindictive excess, it is liable to excite retaliatory attacks from the same quarter. But the speculative philosopher, who does not directly interfere with the religion of his neighbours, should be left to the peaceful pursuit of his inquiries; and those who, instead of meeting him by fair argument, cry out irreligion, and call in the mob to their aid, should reflect first, whether it is absolutely certain that they are right in their conclusion, that his inquiries, if carried out, would be inimical to religion — whether some mind more acute and philosophical than their own, may not either finally confute the sceptical philosopher’s argument, or prove that it is not inimical to religion; and secondly, whether they are not likely to be themselves the greatest foes to religion, by holding that it requires such defence, and the practical blasphemers, by proclaiming that religion is in danger?

Kant, the most illustrious opponent of Hume, in allusion to those who have appealed against him to our religious feelings, asks, what the man is doing that we should meddle with him; says he is but trying the strength of human reason, and bids us leave him to combat with those who are giving him specimens of the fabric on which to try his skill — tells us to wait and see who will produce one too strong to be broken to pieces — and not cry treason, and appeal to the angry multitude, who are strangers to these refined reasonings, to rush in. Shall we ask reason to give us lights, and prescribe beforehand what they are to show us? “The observation of human blindness and weakness,” says Hume himself, “is the result of all philosophy, and meets us at every turn, in spite of our endeavours to elude or avoid it.” A solemn saying, and characteristic of one who has done more than any other man to show the feebleness of poor human reason, and to teach man that he is not all sufficient to himself.

Those revelations in astronomy and geology, the first glimmerings of which made the timid if not doubting friends of their cause tremble, have enlarged year by year in rapid progression; but revealed religion is not less firm on her throne; and many of those who held that Hume’s theory of Cause and Effect was inimical to revelation, lived to see how startlingly that argument could be turned against themselves. It has been well observed by Dugald Stewart, that this theory is the most effectual confutation of the gloomy materialism of Spinoza, “as it lays the axe to the very root from which Spinozism springs.” “The cardinal principle,” he says, “on which the whole of that system turns is, that all events, physical and moral, are *necessarily* linked together as causes and effects; from which principle all the most alarming conclusions adopted by Spinoza follow as unavoidable and manifest corollaries. But if it be true, as Mr. Hume contends, and as most philosophers now admit, that physical causes and effects are known to us merely as *antecedents* and *consequents*; still more if it be true that the word *necessity*, as employed in this discussion, is altogether unmeaning and insignificant, the whole system of Spinoza is nothing better than a rope of sand, and the very proposition which it professes to demonstrate is incomprehensible by our faculties."

It will be remembered how signally, in the question in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, as to Sir John Leslie's professorship, the argument of irreligion was retaliated; and it was shown that, in the theory of an existing machinery in nature enabling the universe to proceed in its regular course, the cause having within it the adequate power for producing its effect, the omnipresence of a Deity was dispensed with, and there was substituted for the all-pervading influence of a superior wisdom, a mere material machine, having within itself the elements of its own regular motion. Thus, in instances where writers have claimed credit for having aided the cause of religion by carrying out the principles of natural theology, this merit has in many cases, and among certain classes of devout religious thinkers, been sternly denied them; and it has been said that their labours are rather adverse than favourable to revealed religion, because, through their tendency to make people believe in an established order in nature, by which causes produce their effects according to a fixed system, they have the effect of making mankind forget the existence of a revealed, omnipresent Deity, whose all-competent superintendence regulates the world, and they supply a religion independent of the religion of revelation.

Perhaps in this little history we may find an illustration of the view, that the greatest service which the Treatise has done to philosophy is that purely incidental one of teaching human reason its own weakness — of showing how easily the noblest fabric of human thought may be undermined, by a destroying agency of power not greater than that of the constructive genius which has raised it. In this respect it has done to philosophy the invaluable service of teaching philosophers their own fallibility. In all the departments of thought, and not only in the world of thought but in that of action, the spirit of human infallibility is the greatest obstacle to truth and goodness. Whether it appear to protect a system which the thinker has framed for himself, or assume the more modest shape of maintaining, that among conflicting systems he has made choice of that which is absolutely and certainly right, while all others which in any way differ from it are as absolutely and certainly wrong; this offspring of the pride of human intellect is an equally dangerous enemy of human improvement; and to have contributed to its downfal is of itself no small achievement for one mind.

Such are a few remarks on the matter of the first part of the “Treatise of Human Nature” — given not by any means as an analysis of the doctrines there taught, but merely as an attempt to characterize them by their prominent features. It will naturally be expected that a similar attempt should be made to characterize the form in which these doctrines were promulgated. As to the style of the Treatise, it possesses the clearness, flexibility, and simplicity that distinguish the maturity of its author’s literary career, though not quite in all the perfection in which they afterwards attended his pen. There are occasional Scoticisms — a defect which he took infinite pains to cure, but of which he was never entirely rid. He uses a few obsolete and now harsh sounding forms of expression, from which he afterwards abstained: such as the elliptical combination ’tis, for it is. Here, and in the first editions of his History, he frequently neglects the increment on the perfect tense, as by saying, “I have forgot,” instead of, I have forgotten; “I have wrote,” instead of I have written.

The Treatise has that happy equality of flight, which distinguishes the author’s maturer productions. There is no attempt to soar, and none of those ambitious inequalities which often deform the works of young authors. His imagination and language seem indeed to have been kept permanently chained down by the character of his inquiries. His constant aim is to make his meaning clear; and in the subtleties of a new and intricate system of metaphysics, he seems to have felt that there lay upon him so heavy a responsibility to make use on all occasions of the clearest and simplest words, that any flight of imagination or eloquence would be a dangerous experiment.

There is a corresponding absence of pedantic ornament. A young writer who has read much, is generally more anxious to show his learning and information than his own power of thought. With many the defect lasts through maturer years, and they write as if to find a good thing in some unknown author, were more meritorious than to have invented it. Montesquieu, whom Hume has been accused of imitating, carried this defect to a vice, and often distorted the order of his reasoning, that he might introduce an allusion to something discovered in the course of his peculiar learning. That Hume had read much in philosophy before he undertook his great work, cannot be doubted, but he does not drag his readers through the minutiæ of his studies, and is content with giving them results. In many respects, indeed, one would have desired to know more of his appreciation of his predecessors. The name of Aristotle is, it is believed, not once mentioned in the work, and there are only some indirect allusions to him, and these not very respectful, in casual remarks on the opinions of the Peripatetics. One would have expected from Hume a kindred sympathy with the great master of intellectual philosophy, and a respectful appreciation of one whose inquiries were conducted with a like acute severity, but whose mind took so much more wide and comprehensive a grasp of the sources of human knowledge.

It has been often observed, that a person so original in his opinions as Hume, ought to have made a new nomenclature for the new things which he taught. But he has no philosophical nomenclature; he appears indeed to have despised that useful instrument of method, and means of communicating clear ideas to learners. This want has prevented his system from being clearly and fully learned by the student, while it has at the same time probably made his works less repulsive to the general reader. He seems indeed hardly to have been conscious of the advantage to all philosophy, of uniformity of expression. Using the words “force,” “vivacity,” “solidity,” “firmness,” and “steadiness,” all with the same meaning, he speaks of this usage as a “variety of terms which may seem so unphilosophical;” and then observes, more in the style of one who is tired of philosophical precision than of a philosopher, “Provided we agree about the thing, ’tis needless to dispute about the terms.”

This is a kindred defect to that absence of method which has been already taken notice of. A fixed nomenclature is a beacon against repetition and discursiveness. But the Treatise has no pretension to be a work of which he who omits paying attention to any part, thereby drops a link in a chain, the loss of which will make the whole appear broken and inconsistent. There are, it is true, places where the essential parts of the author’s philosophy are developed, the omission of which would render that which follows hard to be understood, but in general each department of the work is intelligible in itself. Its author appears to have composed it in separate fragments; holding in view, while he was writing each part, the general principle of his theory, but not taking it for granted that the reader is so far master of that principle, as not to require it to be generally explained in connexion with the particular matter under consideration. He seems indeed rather desirous to dwell on it, as something that the reader may have seen in the earlier part of the work, but may have neglected to keep in his mind while he reads the other parts. Perhaps the true model of every philosophical work is to be found in the usual systems of geometry, where, whatever is once proposed and proved, is held a fixed part of knowledge, and is never repeated; but as far as psychological reasoning is from the certainty of geometrical, so distant perhaps, will ever be the precision of its method from that of geometry.

It may safely be pronounced, that no book of its age presents itself to us at this day, more completely free from exploded opinions in the physical sciences. With the exception perhaps of occasional allusions to “animal spirits,” as a moving influence in the human body, the author’s careful sifting sceptical mind seems, without having practically tested them, to have turned away from whatever doctrines were afterwards destined to fall before the test of experiment and induction. It was not that he was so much of a natural philosopher himself as to be able to test their truth or falsehood, but that with a wholesome jealousy, characteristic of the mind in which the Disquisition on Miracles was working itself into shape, he avoided them as things neither coming within the scope of his own analysis, nor bearing the marks of having been satisfactorily established by those whose more peculiar province it was to investigate their claims to be believed. At a later date, his friend D’Alembert admitted judicial astrology and alchemy as branches of natural philosophy in his “Systême Figuré des Connoissances Humaines.” Cudworth, and even the scrutinizing Locke, dealt gravely with matters doomed afterwards to be ranked among popular superstitions, and Sir Thomas Browne, in some respects a sceptic, eloquently defended more “vulgar errors” than he exposed. Hobbes was, in the midst of the darkest scepticism, a practical believer in the actual presence of the spirits of the air; and Johnson, whose name, however, it may scarcely be fair to class in this list, as he did not profess, except for conversational triumph, to be a reducer and demolisher of unfounded beliefs, along with his partial admission of the existence of spectres, has left behind him many dogmatic announcements of physical doctrines, which the progress of science has now long buried under its newer systems.

It is by no means maintained that Hume was beyond his age — or even on a par with its scientific ornaments, in physical knowledge; but merely that he showed a judicious caution in distinguishing, in his published work, those parts of physical philosophy which had been admitted within the bounds of true and permanent science, from those which were still in a state of mere hypothesis. His knowledge of physical science was probably not very extensive. A small portion of a collection of his notes on subjects that attracted his attention bear on this subject. The collection from which they are taken will be noticed in the next chapter; but as those which are set apart from the others, and are headed "Natural Philosophy," seem to have been written at an earlier period than the rest of the collection, and are appropriate to the present subject, they are here given. It is not expected that they will awaken in the natural philosopher any great respect for the extent of Hume's inquiries in this department of knowledge.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

"A ship sails always swiftest when her sides yield a little.

"Two pieces of timber, resting upon one another, will bear as much as both of them laid across at the distance of their opening.

"Calcined antimony more heavy than before.

"A proof that natural philosophy has no truth in it, is, that it has only succeeded in things remote, as the heavenly bodies; or minute, as light.

"'Tis probable that mineral waters are not formed by running over beds of minerals, but by imbibing the vapours which form these minerals, since we cannot make mineral waters with all the same qualities.

"Hot mineral waters come not a-boiling sooner than cold water.

"Hot iron put into cold water soon cools, but becomes hot again.

"There falls usually at Paris, in June, July, and August, as much rain as in the other nine months.

"This seems to be a strong presumption against medicines, that they are mostly disagreeable, and out of the common use of life. For the weak and uncertain operation of the common food, &c. is well known by experience. These others are the better objects of quackery."

The system of philosophy to which the foregoing remarks apply, was published when its author was twenty-six years old, and he completed it in voluntary exile, and in that isolation from the counsel and sympathy of early friends, which is implied by a residence in an obscure spot in a foreign country. While he was framing his metaphysical theory, Hume appears to have permitted no confidential adviser to have access to the workings of his inventive genius; and as little did he take for granted any of the reasonings and opinions of the illustrious dead, as seek counsel of the living. Nowhere is there a work of genius more completely authenticated, as the produce of the solitary labour of one mind; and when we reflect on the boldness and greatness of the undertaking, we have a picture of self-reliance calculated to inspire both awe and respect. The system seems to be characteristic of a lonely mind — of one which, though it had no enmity with its fellows, had yet little sympathy with them. It has few of the features that characterize a partaker in the ordinary hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, of humanity; little to give impulse to the excitement of the enthusiast; nothing to dry the tear of the mourner. It exposes to poor human reason her own weakness and nakedness, and supplies her with no extrinsic support or protection. Such a work, coming from a man at the time of life when our sympathies with the world are strongest, and our anticipations brightest, would seem to indicate a mind rendered callous by hardship and disappointment. But it was not so with Hume. His coldness and isolation were in his theories alone; as a man he was frank, warm, and friendly. But the same impulses which gave him resolution to adopt so bold a step, seem at the same time to have armed him with a hard contempt for the opinions of the rest of mankind. Hence, though his philosophy is sceptical, his manner is frequently dogmatical, even to intolerance; and while illustrating the feebleness of all human reasoning, he seems as if he felt an innate infallibility in his own. He afterwards regretted this peculiarity; and in a letter, written apparently at an advanced period of life, we find him deprecating not only the tone of the Inquiry, but many of its opinions. He says: —

“Allow me to tell you, that I never asserted so absurd a proposition as *that any thing might arise without a cause*. I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another source. *That Cœsar existed*, that there is such an island as Sicily, — for these propositions, I affirm, we have no demonstration nor intuitive proof, — would you infer that I deny their *truth*, or even their certainty? There are many different kinds of certainty; and some of them as satisfactory to the mind, though perhaps not so regular as the demonstrative kind.

“Where a man of sense mistakes my meaning, I own I am angry; but it is only with myself, for having expressed my meaning so ill, as to have given occasion to the mistake.

“That you may see I would no way scruple of owning my mistakes in argument, I shall acknowledge (what is infinitely more material) a very great mistake in conduct, viz. my publishing at all the ‘Treatise of Human Nature,’ a book which pretended to innovate in all the sublimest paths of philosophy, and which I composed before I was five-and-twenty; above all, the positive air which prevails in that book, and which may be imputed to the ardour of youth, so much displeases me, that I have not patience to review it. But what success the same doctrines, better illustrated and expressed, may meet with, *adhuc sub judice lis est*. The arguments have been laid before the world, and by some philosophical minds have been attended to. I am willing to be instructed by the public; though human life is so short, that I despair of ever seeing the decision. I wish I had always confined myself to the more easy parts of erudition; but you will excuse me from submitting to a proverbial decision, let it even be in Greek."

The reader, who passes from the first book of the Treatise, on "the Understanding," to the second, on "the Passions," will, in many instances, feel like one who is awakened from a dream, or as if, after penetrating in solitude and darkness into the unseen world of thought, he had come forth to the cheerful company of mankind, and were holding converse with a shrewd and penetrating observer of the passing world. As Hume was never totally insensible to the elements of social enjoyment, but had indeed an ample sympathy with the joys and sorrows of his fellow men, he appears occasionally, in the midst of his most subtle speculations, to experience a desire to burst from the dark prison of solitude, into which he had voluntarily immured himself, and bask in the sunshine of the world. "Man," he says, in his Treatise, "is the creature of the universe who has the most ardent desire of society, and is fitted for it by the most advantages. We can form no wish which has not a reference to society. A perfect solitude is, perhaps, the greatest punishment we can suffer. Every pleasure languishes when enjoyed apart from company, and every pain becomes more cruel and intolerable." In a remarkable passage, in which, after having long proceeded in enthusiasm with his solitary labours, he seems to have stopped for a moment, and recalling within himself the feelings and sympathies of an ordinary man, to have reflected on the scope and tendency of the system in which he was involving himself, he thus expresses himself, regarding its gloomy tendency, and the effect it has in destroying, in the mind of its fabricator, those stays of satisfactory belief in which it is so comfortable for the wearied intellect to find a resting-place: —

Before I launch out into those immense depths of philosophy which lie before me, I find myself inclined to stop a moment in my present station, and to ponder that voyage which I have undertaken, and which undoubtedly requires the utmost art and industry to be brought to a happy conclusion. Methinks I am like a man, who, having struck on many shoals, and having narrowly escaped shipwreck in passing a small frith, has yet the temerity to put out to sea in the same leaky weather-beaten vessel, and even carries his ambition so far as to think of compassing the globe under these disadvantageous circumstances. My memory of past errors and perplexities makes me diffident for the future. The wretched condition, weakness, and disorder of the faculties, I must employ in my inquiries, increase my apprehensions. And the impossibility of amending or correcting these faculties, reduces me almost to despair, and makes me resolve to perish on the barren rock, on which I am at present, rather than venture myself upon that boundless ocean which runs out into immensity. This sudden view of my danger strikes me with melancholy; and, as ’tis usual for that passion, above all others, to indulge itself, I cannot forbear feeding my despair with all those desponding reflections which the present subject furnishes me with in such abundance.

I am first affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude in which I am placed in my philosophy, and fancy myself some strange uncouth monster, who, not being able to mingle and unite in society, has been expelled all human commerce, and left utterly abandoned and disconsolate. Fain would I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth, but cannot prevail with myself to mix with such deformity. I call upon others to join me, in order to make a company apart, but no one will hearken to me. Every one keeps at a distance, and dreads that storm which beats upon me from every side. I have exposed myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians; and can I wonder at the insults I must suffer? I have declared my disapprobation of their systems; and can I be surprised if they should express a hatred of mine and of my person? When I look abroad, I foresee on every side dispute, contradiction, anger, calumny, and detraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. All the world conspires to oppose and contradict me; though such is my weakness, that I feel all my opinions loosen and fall of themselves, when unsupported by the approbation of others. Every step I take is with hesitation, and every new reflection makes me dread an error and absurdity in my reasoning.

For with what confidence can I venture upon such bold enterprises, when, beside those numberless infirmities peculiar to myself, I find so many which are common to human nature? Can I be sure that, in leaving all established opinions, I am following truth? and by what criterion shall I distinguish her, even if fortune should at last guide me on her footsteps? After the most accurate and exact of my reasonings, I can give no reason why I should assent to it, and feel nothing but a *strong* propensity to consider objects *strongly* in that view under which they appear to me.

Occasionally, seduced by some impulse of playful candour, we find him giving us admission as it were into the chamber of his thoughts, and desiring that some one would drag him into the common circle of the world. When there, he consents for a short time to comport himself as a man, is social and sympathetic with his kind, and pleased with what is passing around; when anon the ambition which had prompted his solitary musings stirs his soul, tells him that in active life and the world at large, the sphere of his true greatness is not placed, and prompts him to reimprison himself, and pursue the great aim of his existence.

But what have I here said, that reflections very refined and metaphysical have little or no influence upon us? This opinion I can scarce forbear retracting, and condemning from my present feeling and experience. The *intense* view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me, and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what causes do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

Most fortunately it happens, that since Reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, Nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strained, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.

Here, then, I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live, and talk, and act like other people in the common affairs of life. But notwithstanding that my natural propensity, and the course of my animal spirits and passions reduce me to this indolent belief in the general maxims of the world, I still feel such remains of my former disposition, that I am ready to throw all my books and papers into the fire, and resolve never more to renounce the pleasures of life for the sake of reasoning and philosophy. For those are my sentiments in that splenetic humour which governs me at present. I may, nay I must yield to the current of nature, in submitting to my senses and understanding; and in this blind submission I show most perfectly my sceptical disposition and principles. But does it follow that I must strive against the current of nature, which leads me to indolence and pleasure; that I must seclude myself, in some measure, from the commerce and society of men, which is so agreeable; and that I must torture my brain with subtilties and sophistries, at the very time that I cannot satisfy myself concerning the reasonableness of so painful an application, nor have any tolerable prospect of arriving by its means at truth and certainty? Under what obligation do I lie of making such an abuse of time? And to what end can it serve, either for the service of mankind, or for my own private interest? No: if I must be a fool, as all those who reason or believe any thing *certainly* are, my follies shall at least be natural and agreeable. Where I strive against my inclination, I shall have a good reason for my resistance; and will no more be led a-wandering into such dreary solitudes, and rough passages, as I have hitherto met with.

These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence; and indeed I must confess, that philosophy has nothing to oppose to them, and expects a victory more from the returns of a serious good-humoured disposition, than from the force of reason and conviction. In all the incidents of life, we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe that fire warms, or water refreshes, ’tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise. Nay, if we are philosophers, it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination which we feel to the employing ourselves after that manner. Where reason is lively, and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to. Where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us.

At the time, therefore, that I am tired with amusement and company, and have indulged a *reverie* in my chamber, or in a solitary walk by a river side, I feel my mind all collected within itself, and am naturally *inclined* to carry my view into all those subjects, about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation. I cannot forbear having a curiosity to be acquainted with the principles of moral good and evil, the nature and foundation of government, and the cause of those several passions and inclinations which actuate and govern me. I am uneasy to think I approve of one object, and disapprove of another; call one thing beautiful, and another deformed; decide concerning truth and falsehood, reason and folly, without knowing upon what principles I proceed. I am concerned for the condition of the learned world, which lies under such a deplorable ignorance in all these particulars. I feel an ambition to arise in me of contributing to the instruction of mankind, and of acquiring a name by my inventions and discoveries. These sentiments spring up naturally in my present disposition; and should I endeavour to banish them, by attaching myself to any other business or diversion, I *feel* I should be a loser in point of pleasure; and this is the origin of my philosophy.

The acuteness which the solitary metaphysician brought to his aid when he chose to contemplate mankind, is not the least interesting feature in his book. That he could have seen much of men, since his life had been but brief and his converse with books great, is not probable; yet Chesterfield and Rochefoucauld did not observe men more clearly and truly, though they may have done so more extensively. The following sketch of the mental features of a vain man, would not have been unworthy of Theophrastus.

Every thing belonging to a vain man is the best that is any where to be found. His houses, equipage, furniture, clothes, horses, hounds, excel all others in his conceit; and ’tis easy to observe, that from the least advantage in any of these, he draws a new subject of pride and vanity. His wine, if you’ll believe him, has a finer flavour than any other; his cookery is more exquisite; his table more orderly; his servant more expert; the air in which he lives more healthful; the soil he cultivates more fertile; his fruits ripen earlier, and to greater perfection; such a thing is remarkable for its novelty; such another for its antiquity: this is the workmanship of a famous artist; that belonged to such a prince or great man; all objects, in a word, that are useful, beautiful, or surprising, or are related to such, may, by means of property, give rise to this passion. These agree in giving pleasure, and agree in nothing else. This alone is common to them, and therefore must be the quality that produces the passion, which is their common effect.

CHAPTER III.

1739-1741. Æt. 27-29.

Letters to his friends after the publication of the first and second volume of the Treatise — Returns to Scotland — Reception of his Book — Criticism in "The Works of the Learned" — Charge against Hume of assaulting the publisher — Correspondence with Francis Hutcheson — Seeks a situation — Connexion with Adam Smith — Publication of the third volume of the Treatise — Account of it — Hume's notes of his reading — Extracts from his Note books.

Immediately after the publication of his work we find Hume thus writing to Henry Home: —

"London, February 13, 1739.

"Sir, — I thought to have wrote this from a place nearer you than London, but have been detained here by contrary winds, which have kept all Berwick ships from sailing. 'Tis now a fortnight since my book was published; and, besides many other considerations, I thought it would contribute very much to my tranquillity, and might spare me many mortifications, to be in the country while the success of the work was doubtful. I am afraid 'twill remain so very long. Those who are accustomed to reflect on such abstract subjects, are commonly full of prejudices; and those who are unprejudiced are unacquainted with metaphysical reasonings. My principles are also so remote from all the vulgar sentiments on the subject, that were they to take place, they would produce almost a total alteration in philosophy; and you know, revolutions of this kind are not easily brought about. I am young enough to see what will become of the matter; but am apprehensive lest the chief reward I shall have for some time will be the pleasure of studying on such important subjects, and the approbation of a few judges. Among the rest, you may believe I aspire to your approbation; and next to that, to your free censure and criticism. I shall present you with a copy as soon as I come to Scotland; and hope your curiosity, as well as friendship, will make you take the pains of perusing it.

"If you know any body that is a judge, you would do me a sensible pleasure in engaging him to a serious perusal of the book. 'Tis so rare to meet with one that will take pains on a book, that does not come recommended by some great name or authority, that I must confess I am as fond of meeting with such a one as if I were sure of his approbation. I am, however, so doubtful in that particular, that I have endeavoured all I could to conceal my name; though I believe I have not been so cautious in this respect as I ought to have been.

"I have sent the Bishop of Bristol a copy, but could not wait on him with your letter after he had arrived at that dignity. At least I thought it would be to no purpose after I began the printing. You'll excuse the frailty of an author in writing so long a letter about nothing but his own performances. Authors have this privilege in common with lovers; and founded on the same reason, that they are both besotted with a blind fondness of their object. I have been upon my guard against this frailty; but perhaps this has rather turned to my prejudice. The reflection on our caution is apt to give us a more implicit confidence afterwards, when we come to form a judgment. I am," &c.

To the same year we must attribute a letter from Hume to Michael Ramsay, bearing no more precise date than 27th February. He says:— "As to myself, no alteration has happened to my fortune: nor have I taken the least step towards it. I hope things will be riper next winter; and I would not aim at any thing till I could judge of my success in my grand undertaking, and see upon what footing I shall stand in the world. I am afraid, however, that I shall not have any great success of a sudden. Such performances make their way very heavily at first, when they are not recommended by any great name or authority."

In the same letter he speaks of Ramsay as being then a tutor in the Marchmont family, and offers him this sage and business-like advice:— "Should a living fall to the gift of the Duchess of Marlborough, or any other of your friends and patrons, 'twould have but an ill air to say that the gentleman was in the South of France, and that he should be informed of the matter. Besides, you know how necessary a man's presence is to quicken his friends, to make them unite their interests, and to save them the trouble of contriving and thinking about his affairs. Many a one may endeavour to serve you when you point out the service you desire of them, who would not take the pains to find it out themselves.”

Early in the year 1739, desiring apparently to await in retirement the effect of his work on the mind of the public, he proceeded to Scotland, and took up his residence at Ninewells, whence we find him writing to Henry Home on 1st June.

“Dear Sir, — You see I am better than my word, having sent you two papers instead of one. I have hints for two or three more, which I shall execute at my leisure. I am not much in the humour of such compositions at present, having received news from London of the success of my Philosophy, which is but indifferent, if I may judge by the sale of the book, and if I may believe my bookseller. I am now out of humour with myself; but doubt not, in a little time, to be only out of humour with the world, like other unsuccessful authors. After all, I am sensible of my folly in entertaining any discontent, much more despair, upon this account, since I could not expect any better from such abstract reasoning; nor, indeed, did I promise myself much better. My fondness for what I imagined new discoveries, made me overlook all common rules of prudence; and, having enjoyed the usual satisfaction of projectors, ’tis but just I should meet with their disappointments. However, as ’tis observed with such sort of people, one project generally succeeds another, I doubt not but in a day or two I shall be as easy as ever, in hopes that truth will prevail at last over the indifference and opposition of the world.

“You see I might at present subscribe myself your most *humble* servant with great propriety: but, notwithstanding, shall presume to call myself your most affectionate friend as well as humble servant.”

His account of the success of his work in his “own life,” is contained in these well-known sentences: “Never literary attempt was more unfortunate than my ‘Treatise of Human Nature.’ It fell *dead born from the press*, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots.” But he was never easily satisfied with the success of his works; and we know that this one was not so entirely unnoticed by the periodical press, such as it then was, but that it called forth a long review in the number for November, 1739, of *The History of the Works of the Learned*, a periodical which may be said to have set the example in England, of systematic reviews of new books. This review is written with considerable spirit, and has a few pretty powerful strokes of sarcasm — as where, in relation to Hume’s sceptical examination of the results of the demonstrations of the geometricians, the writer says, “I will have nothing to do in the quarrel; if they cannot maintain their demonstrations against his attacks, they may even perish.” The paper is of considerable length, and it has throughout a tone of clamorous jeering and vulgar raillery that forcibly reminds one of the writings of Warburton. But it is the work of one who respects the adversary he has taken arms against; and, before leaving the subject, the writer makes a manly atonement for his wrath, saying of the Treatise,— “It bears, indeed, incontestable marks of a great capacity, of a soaring genius, but young and not yet thoroughly practised. The subject is vast and noble as any that can exercise the understanding; but it requires a very mature judgment to handle it as becomes its dignity and importance: the utmost prudence, tenderness, and delicacy are requisite to this desirable issue. Time and use may ripen these qualities in our author; and we shall probably have reason to consider this, compared with his later productions, in the same light as we view the juvenile works of Milton, or the first manner of a Raphael or other celebrated painter.”

Immediately after Hume’s death, there appeared in *The London Review*, the following account of the manner in which he had acknowledged the article in *The Works of the Learned*: “It does not appear our author had acquired, at this period of his life, that command over his passions of which he afterwards makes his boast. His disappointment at the public reception of his ‘Essay on Human Nature,’ had, indeed, a violent effect on his passions in a particular instance; it not having dropped so dead born from the press but that it was severely handled by the reviewers of those times, in a publication entitled *The Works of the Learned*. A circumstance this which so highly provoked our young philosopher, that he flew in a violent rage to demand satisfaction of Jacob Robinson, the publisher, whom he kept, during the paroxysm of his anger, at his sword’s point, trembling behind the counter lest a period should be put to the life of a sober critic by a raving philosopher.”

This statement is in a note to a Review of Hume’s “own life,” and it has after it the letters “Rev.” which serve to give it the attestation of William Shakespeare Kenrick, the editor of *The London Review*, and a man whose sole title to literary remembrance rests on the hardy effrontery and deadly spite of his falsehoods. There is nothing in the story to make it in itself incredible — for Hume was far from being that docile mass of imperturbability, which so large a portion of the world have taken him for. But the anecdote requires authentication; and has it not. Moreover, there are circumstances strongly against its truth. Hume was in Scotland at the time when the criticism on his work was published: he did not visit London for some years afterwards; and, to believe the story, we must look upon it not as a momentary ebullition of passion, but as a manifestation of long-treasured resentment, — a circumstance inconsistent with his character, inconsistent with human nature in general, and not in keeping with the modified tone of dissatisfaction with the criticism, evinced in his correspondence.

While Hume was preparing for the press the third part of his “Treatise of Human Nature,” — on the subject of Morals, Francis Hutcheson, then professor of moral philosophy in the university of Glasgow, was enjoying a reputation in the philosophical world scarcely inferior to that of either of his great contemporaries, Berkeley and Wolff. From the following correspondence it will be seen that Hume submitted the manuscript of his forthcoming volume to Hutcheson’s inspection; and he shows more inclination to receive with deference the suggestions of that distinguished man, than to allow himself to be influenced from any other quarter. But still, it will be observed that it is only in details that he receives instruction, and that he vigorously supports the fundamental principles of his system. The correspondence illustrates the method in which he held himself as working with human nature — not as an artist, but an anatomist, whose minute critical examinations might be injured by any bursts of feeling or eloquence. The letters show how far he saw into the depths of the utilitarian system; and prove that it was more completely formed in his mind than it appeared in his book. Notions of prudence appear to have restrained him, at that time, from issuing so full a development of the system as that which he afterwards published; but he soon discovered that it was not in that department of his works that he stood on the most dangerous ground.

Hume *to* Francis Hutcheson.

“Ninewells, 17th Sept. 1739.

“Sir, — I am much obliged to you for your reflections on my papers. I have perused them with care, and find they will be of use to me. You have mistaken my meaning in some passages, which, upon examination, I have found to proceed from some ambiguity or defect in my expression.

“What affected me most in your remarks, is your observing that there wants a certain warmth in the cause of virtue, which you think all good men would relish, and could not displease amidst abstract inquiries. I must own this has not happened by chance, but is the effect of a reasoning either good or bad. There are different ways of examining the mind, as well as the body. One may consider it either as an anatomist or as a painter: either to discover its most secret springs and principles, or to describe the grace and beauty of its actions. I imagine it impossible to conjoin these two views. Where you pull off the skin, and display all the minute parts, there appears something trivial, even in the noblest attitudes and most vigorous actions; nor can you ever render the object graceful or engaging, but by clothing the parts again with skin and flesh, and presenting only their bare outside. An anatomist, however, can give very good advice to a painter or statuary. And, in like manner, I am persuaded that a metaphysician may be very helpful to a moralist, though I cannot easily conceive these two characters united in the same work. Any warm sentiment of morals, I am afraid, would have the air of declamation amidst abstract reasonings, and would be esteemed contrary to good taste. And though I am much more ambitious of being esteemed a friend to virtue than a writer of taste, yet I must always carry the latter in my eye, otherwise I must despair of ever being serviceable to virtue. I hope these reasons will satisfy you; though at the same time I intend to make a new trial, if it be possible to make the moralist and metaphysician agree a little better.

“I cannot agree to your sense of *natural*. ’Tis founded on final causes, which is a consideration that appears to me pretty uncertain and unphilosophical. For, pray, what is the end of man? Is he created for happiness, or for virtue? for this life, or for the next? for himself, or for his Maker? Your definition of *natural* depends upon solving these questions, which are endless, and quite wide of my purpose. I have never called justice unnatural, but only artificial. ‘*Atque ipsa utilitas, justi prope mater et æqui*,’ says one of the best moralists of antiquity. Grotius and Puffendorf, to be consistent, must assert the same.

“Whether natural abilities be virtue, is a dispute of words. I think I follow the common use of language; *virtus* signified chiefly courage among the Romans. I was just now reading this character of Alexander VI. in Guicciardin. ‘In Alessandro sesto fu solertia et sagacità singulare: consiglio eccellente, efficacia a persuadere maravigliosa, et a tutte le faccende gravi, sollicitudine, et destrezza incredibile. Ma erano queste virtù avanzate di grande intervallo da vitii.' Were benevolence the only virtue, no characters could be mixed, but would depend entirely on their degrees of benevolence. Upon the whole, I desire to take my catalogue of virtues from 'Cicero's Offices,' not from 'The Whole Duty of Man.' I had indeed the former book in my eye in all my reasonings.

"I have many other reflections to communicate to you; but it would be troublesome. I shall therefore conclude with telling you, that I intend to follow your advice in altering most of those passages you have remarked as defective in point of prudence; though, I must own, I think you a little too delicate. Except a man be in orders, or be immediately concerned in the instruction of youth, I do not think his character depends upon his philosophical speculations, as the world is now modelled; and a little liberty seems requisite to bring into the public notice a book that is calculated for few readers. I hope you will allow me the freedom of consulting you when I am in any difficulty, and believe me," &c.

"P.S. — I cannot forbear recommending another thing to your consideration. Actions are not virtuous nor vicious, but only so far as they are proofs of certain qualities or durable principles in the mind. This is a point I should have established more expressly than I have done. Now, I desire you to consider if there be any quality that is virtuous, without having a tendency either to the public good or to the good of the person who possesses it. If there be none without these tendencies, we may conclude that their merit is derived from sympathy. I desire you would only consider the *tendencies* of qualities, not their actual operations, which depend on chance. *Brutus* riveted the chains of *Rome* faster by his opposition; but the natural tendency of his noble dispositions — his public spirit and magnanimity — was to establish her liberty.

"You are a great admirer of *Cicero* as well as I am. Please to review the fourth book *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*: where you find him prove against the *Stoics*, that if there be no other goods but virtue, 'tis impossible there can be any virtue, because the mind would then want all motives to begin its actions upon; and 'tis on the goodness or badness of the motives that the virtue of the action depends. This proves, that to every virtuous action there must be a motive or impelling passion distinct from the virtue, and that virtue can never be the sole motive to any action. You do not assent to this: though I think there is no proposition more certain or important. I must own my proofs were not distinct enough and must be altered. You see with what reluctance I part with you, though I believe it is time I should ask your pardon for so much trouble."

In the mean time we find Hume anxious to be employed in the capacity of a travelling governor or tutor, and writing to Mr. George Carre of Nisbet, intimating his readiness to officiate to that gentleman's cousins, Lord Haddington and Mr. Baillie, if there are no favoured candidates for the situation. There is nothing in the letter to excite much interest. He says, he hears the young gentlemen are proposing to travel; observes that he has the honour to be their relation, "which gives a governor a better air in attending his pupils," and that he has some leisure time. In his letter to a physician, in the preceding chapter, we find him mentioning this office as one of the few to which his prospects were limited, and, at the same time, as one for which his knowledge of the world scarcely fitted him. His six years' farther experience of life had perhaps in his own opinion provided him with opportunities of better qualifying himself for the duties of this office. It was held by many able and accomplished men at that time, and appears to have been the profession of his friend Michael Ramsay. There are no traces of the manner in which his application was received.

From such matters as these, one readily turns with interest to the most trifling notices connected with his literary history. On 4th March, 1740, we find him thus writing to Hutcheson.

"My bookseller has sent to Mr. Smith a copy of my book, which I hope he has received, as well as your letter. I have not yet heard what he has done with the abstract; perhaps you have. I have got it printed in London, but not in *The Works of the Learned*, there having been an article with regard to my book, somewhat abusive, printed in that work, before I sent up the abstract."

The "Smith" here mentioned as receiving a copy of the Treatise, we may fairly conclude, notwithstanding the universality of the name, to be Adam Smith, who was then a student in the university of Glasgow, and not quite seventeen years old. It may be inferred from Hume's letter, that Hutcheson had mentioned Smith as a person on whom it would serve some good purpose to bestow a copy of the Treatise: and we have here, evidently, the first introduction to each other's notice, of two friends, of whom it can be said, that there was no third person writing the English language during the same period, who has had so much influence upon the opinions of mankind as either of these two men.

The correspondence with Hutcheson is continued as follows:

Hume *to* Francis Hutcheson.

“16th March,1740.

“Dear Sir, — I must trouble you to write that letter you was so kind as to offer to Longman the bookseller. I concluded somewhat of a hasty bargain with my bookseller, from indolence and an aversion to bargaining: as also because I was told that few or no bookseller would engage for one edition with a new author. I was also determined to keep my name a secret for some time, though I find I have failed in that point. I sold one edition of these two volumes for fifty guineas, and also engaged myself heedlessly in a clause, which may prove troublesome, viz. that upon printing a second edition I shall take all the copies remaining upon hand at the bookseller’s price at the time. ’Tis in order to have some check upon my bookseller, that I would willingly engage with another: and I doubt not but your recommendation would be very serviceable to me, even though you be not personally acquainted with him.

“I wait with some impatience for a second edition, principally on account of alterations I intend to make in my performance. This is an advantage that we authors possess since the invention of printing, and renders the *nonum prematur in annum* not so necessary to us as to the ancients. Without it I should have been guilty of a very great temerity, to publish at my years so many novelties in so delicate a part of philosophy; and at any rate, I am afraid that I must plead as my excuse that very circumstance of youth which may be urged against me. I assure you, that without running any of the heights of scepticism, I am apt in a cool hour to suspect, in general, that most of my reasonings will be more useful by furnishing hints and exciting people’s curiosity, than as containing any principles that will augment the stock of knowledge, that must pass to future ages. I wish I could discover more fully the particulars wherein I have failed. I admire so much the candour I have observed in Mr. Locke, yourself, and a very few more, that I would be extremely ambitious of imitating it, by frankly confessing my errors. If I do not imitate it, it must proceed neither from my being free from errors nor want of inclination, but from my real unaffected ignorance. I shall consider more carefully all the particulars you mention to me: though with regard to *abstract ideas*, ’tis with difficulty I can entertain a doubt on that head, notwithstanding your authority. Our conversation together has furnished me a hint, with which I shall augment the second edition. ’Tis this — the word *simple idea* is an abstract term, comprehending different individuals that are similar. Yet the point of their similarity, from the very nature of such ideas, is not distinct nor separable from the rest. Is not this a proof, among many others, that there may be a similarity without any possible separation even in thought.

“I must consult you in a point of prudence. I have concluded a reasoning with these two sentences: ‘When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing but that, from the particular constitution of your nature, you have a feeling or sentiment of blame from the contemplation of it. Vice and virtue, therefore, may be compared to sounds, colours, heat, and cold, which, according to modern philosophy, are not qualities in objects, but perceptions in the mind. And this discovery in morals, like that other in physics, is to be regarded as a mighty advancement of the speculative sciences, though like that too it has little or no influence on practice.’

“Is not this laid a little too strong? I desire your opinion of it, though I cannot entirely promise to conform myself to it. I wish from my heart I could avoid concluding, that since morality, according to your opinion, as well as mine, is determined merely by sentiment, it regards only human nature and human life. This has been often urged against you, and the consequences are very momentous. If you make any alterations in your performances, I can assure you, there are many who desire you would more fully consider this point, if you think that the truth lies on the popular side. Otherwise common prudence, your character, and situation, forbid you [to] touch upon it. If morality were determined by reason, that is the same to all rational beings; but nothing but experience can assure us that the sentiments are the same. What experience have we with regard to superior beings? How can we ascribe to them any sentiments at all? They have implanted those sentiments in us for the conduct of life like our bodily sensations, which they possess not themselves. I expect no answer to these difficulties in the compass of a letter. ’Tis enough if you have patience to read so long a letter as this. — I am.” &c.

The third volume of the “Treatise of Human Nature” being the part relating to morals, was published by Thomas Longman in 1740. It is not so original as the metaphysical part of the work, nor are its principles so clearly and decidedly laid down. Its author’s metaphysical theories were rather modified than confirmed in his subsequent works. But his opinions on ethical subjects, only indistinctly shadowed forth in his early work, were afterwards reduced to a more compact system, and were more clearly and fully set forth.

The metaphysical department of the Treatise is a system with a great leading principle throughout, of which its author intended that all the details should be but the individual applications. If his reasoning in that department of his work be accurate, he sweeps away all other systems of the foundation of knowledge, and substitutes another in their stead. But the third book, “on Morals,” like the second, on “the Passions,” has no such pretension. The leading principles of the metaphysical department are certainly kept in view, but the details are not necessarily parts of it. They have a separate existence of their own: they are an analysis of phenomena which we witness in our daily life; and the reader assents or dissents as the several opinions expressed correspond with or diverge from his own observation of what he sees passing in the world around him, without, in that mental operation, either receiving or rejecting any general theory. In short, it is to a considerable extent a series of observations of human conduct and character; and as such they are admitted or denied, are sympathized with or contemned, according to the previous feelings and opinions of the reader. Among the prominent features of the theoretical part of this book, is the admission of a moral sense, but the negation of an abstract code of morality, separately existing, and independent of the position of the persons who are applying this sense. The work in some measure foreshadows the systems which have been respectively called the utilitarian and the selfish; the former applying as the scale of moral excellence the extent to which an action is beneficial or hurtful to the human race; the latter referring the actions of mankind, whether good or bad, interested or disinterested, to self, and to impulses which are always connected with the individual in whom they act, and his passions or desires.

In this respect it had its influence, when joined to other hints thrown out by philosophers, in supplying the texts on which Helvetius, Beccaria, and Bentham discoursed at greater length and with a clearer application to definite systems. The utilitarian principle Hume afterwards extended and rendered systematic, in pursuance of the views announced in his correspondence with Hutcheson. In connexion with what is called the “selfish system” of morals, he went no farther than to point out that the source of every impulse must have its relation to the individual person on whom that impulse acts. If it be the sordid impulse of the miser, it must be because the man who feels it loves gold; if it be the profuse impulse of the spendthrift, it must be because the individual who spends has a corresponding desire within himself; if it be the charitable impulse of the person who feeds the poor, it must be because that person is under the influence of inducements which incline him rather to do so than not do so. If the principle be applied to a martyr suffering for conscience sake, or to a soldier who prefers death to submission, it is still because the person who acts fulfils impulses acting on himself. But this is a subject from which Hume appears to have shrunk in his subsequent works. He seems to have disliked the character of being connected with “the selfish school;” and he thus failed to revert to a subject on which his rigid and clear examination would have been a matter of greater interest, than his merely arguing against self-interest being the proper rule of action — an argument that with him amounts to nothing more than a protest against that vulgarization of the system, which charges it with such a doctrine for the purpose of rendering it odious. We shall afterwards find that he had a correspondence on this subject with Helvetius, who wished to bring him over to the admission of his own opinions.

In this department of the Treatise there are some inquiries into the first principles of law and government. Here, if any where, he shows the influence over his mind of his reading in the works of the civilians. His own utilitarian principle, when carried out on these subjects, shows that the best government is that which is most conducive to the welfare of the community. But he occasionally mixes up this principle with elements totally heterogeneous to it — as in those instances where he considers the privilege of governing as held by the same tenure with the right of property, and views the question whether any particular government is good or bad, in its effect upon the persons governed, as secondary to the question whether it is or is not held by a good tenure when it is considered as if it were a matter of private property. But, notwithstanding these inconsistencies, which he afterwards amended when he had more fully investigated the principles of politics, the general aim of his observations on the sources of government is to show that they are to be found in reason, and to dispel the various irrational and superstitious notions of political authority, which are comprehended in the use of the term Divine Right. Indeed, the observations which he makes with a practical application to governments, are a partial anticipation of the clear good sense which distinguished his subsequent political essays. In connexion with the motives of that insurrection which occurred within eight years after the publication of the Treatise, and with the partiality for high monarchical principles with which Hume's name is so much associated, the following remarks are interesting and instructive.

Whoever considers the history of the several nations of the world, their revolutions, conquests, increase and diminution, the manner in which their particular governments are established, and the successive right transmitted from one person to another, will soon learn to treat very lightly all disputes concerning the rights of princes, and will be convinced that a strict adherence to any general rules, and the rigid loyalty to particular persons and families, on which some people set so high a value, are virtues that hold less of reason than of bigotry and superstition. In this particular, the study of history confirms the reasonings of true philosophy, which, showing us the original qualities of human nature, teaches us to regard the controversies in politics as incapable of any decision in most cases, and as entirely subordinate to the interests of peace and liberty. Where the public good does not evidently demand a change, 'tis certain that the concurrence of all those titles, *original contract*, *long possession*, *present possession*, *succession*, and *positive laws*, forms the strongest title to sovereignty, and is justly regarded as sacred and inviolable. But when these titles are mingled and opposed in different degrees, they often occasion perplexity, and are less capable of solution from the arguments of lawyers and philosophers, than from the swords of the soldiery. Who shall tell me, for instance, whether Germanicus or Drusus ought to have succeeded Tiberius, had he died while they were both alive, without naming any of them for his successor? Ought the right of adoption to be received as equivalent to that of blood, in a nation where it had the same effect in private families, and had already, in two instances, taken place in the public? Ought Germanicus to be esteemed the eldest son, because he was born before Drusus; or the younger, because he was adopted after the birth of his brother? Ought the right of the elder to be regarded in a nation, where the eldest brother had no advantage in the succession to private families? Ought the Roman empire at that time to be esteemed hereditary, because of two examples; or ought it, even so early, to be regarded as belonging to the stronger, or the present possessor, as being founded on so recent an usurpation? Upon whatever principles we may pretend to answer these and such-like questions, I am afraid we shall never be able to satisfy an impartial inquirer, who adopts no party in political controversies, and will be satisfied with nothing but sound reason and philosophy.

Some of Hume's notes, of matters which have occurred to him in the course of his reading as worthy of observation, or of remarkable thoughts passing through his mind, have been preserved. They appear to be merely a few stray leaves, which have accidentally survived the loss of many others, as the number of subjects to which they refer is limited in comparison with the wide compass of knowledge embraced in Hume's various works. The specimens so preserved, appear generally to have been written at this period of his life, with the exception, perhaps, of those which are printed above, and which have reference to physical science. They are set down with clearness and precision, as if by one who knew both the step in a series of reasoning to which each of them belongs, and the form in which it should be expressed. They are written on long sheets of paper; and unless the few that appear under the head "Natural Philosophy," and some which have the general heading "Philosophy," they appear to have been subjected to no system of pre-arrangement, such as that which Locke suggested, but to have been set down according as the fruits of the annotator's reading or thought presented themselves to him. A few specimens are here given: they will be found to have been chiefly made use of in the "Natural History of Religion," and in the "Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations," while a few of them — as for instance that relating to Gustavus Vasa — make their appearance in the little volume of "Essays, Moral and Political," published in 1741. A considerable proportion of them have not been made use of in Hume's printed works, and some of them contain information which is embodied in Smith's "Wealth of Nations." It is an occurrence quite characteristic of the friendship of these two great men, that either of them should have supplied the other with facts or ideas applicable to the subjects on which he might be engaged.

EXTRACTS FROM A COLLECTION OF MEMORANDUMS.

Perhaps the custom of allowing parents to murder their infant children, though barbarous, tends to render a state more populous, as in China. Many marry by that inducement; and such is the force of natural affection, that none make use of that privilege but in extreme necessity.

A pound of steel, when manufactured, may become of £10,000 value.

No hospitals in Holland have any land or settled revenue, and yet the poor better provided for than any where else in the world.

The Romans had two ways chiefly of levying their taxes, — by public lands, which were all dissipated by popular tribunes about the end of the republic; or by customs upon importation, which were different in different places; in some the fortieth part of the value; in Sicily the twentieth.

They had also a kind of excise, which began with the emperors, and was the two-hundredth or one-hundredth part of the value of all goods sold, the fiftieth of slaves.

Beside this, they had pretty early, even in the time of the republic, duties upon mines and salt; and in order to levy the former more easily, they forbid all mines in Italy. Their mines near Carthagena yielded them 25,000 drachms a-day. *Burman de Vict. Rom.*

In the time of the monarchy, the kings had the sole power of imposing taxes. In the time of the republic, 'tis strange to see this power belonging sometimes to the magistrates, sometimes to the senate, or to the people. We learn from Livy, in the second Punic War, that the senate could contract debt alone. Polybius says, that all money matters belonged to the senate. The censors levied all the taxes, and farmed them out to the Roman knights. The Romans could be no great politicians; since the senate could not gain the sovereignty, nor the censors the supreme magistracy, notwithstanding these advantages.

All French projectors take it for granted that 'tis equally dangerous to make the people too easy as to oppress them too much. *Comte de Boulainvilliers.*

The charter governments in America, almost entirely independent of England.

Those north of Virginia interfere most with us in manufactures, which proceeds from the resemblance of soil and climate.

Gustavus Vasa is perhaps the only instance of a prince who humbled the clergy while he aspired to arbitrary power.

From 1729 to 1730, imported of corn into Ireland to the value of £274,000, — ascribed to the want of a drawback by the Irish House of Commons.

The exchange to Holland always against us. *Craftsman.* Not true.

Our exports no rule to judge of our trade: masters enter more than they export, to persuade others that their ship is near full.

The East India Company have offered to pay all the duties upon tea, provided it may be sold duty free. The interest the crown has in seizures thought to be the cause why they were refused. — Never asked; because afterwards they cannot expect the execution of the laws against foreign tea.

The government of England perhaps the only one, except Holland, wherein the legislature has not force enough to execute the laws without the good-will of the people. This is an irregular kind of check upon the legislature.

Men have much oftener erred from too great respect to government than from too little.

The French sugar colonies supplied entirely with provisions from our northern colonies.

Hogsheads of tobacco exported to France at £20 a hogshead; at £5.

The gross produce of the English customs £3,000,000 a-year; the neat produce £1,800,000.

In all the British Leeward Islands, the muster-roll exceeded not two thousand five hundred men a few years ago, and yet there are twenty thousand blacks in Antigua alone.

The French fish on the coasts of Newfoundland in the winter, which gives them an advantage above us.

Our bustle about the Ostend company, the cause of the great progress of the French company.

The East India Company have desired to have China raw silk put upon the same footing as to duty with the Italian, but have been refused.

The reason why the court has a greater superiority among the Lords than Commons, beside the bishops, is that the court gives places to the Lords, chiefly for their interest among the Commons.

Eighteen hundred children put upon the parishes at Dublin in five years, of which, upon inquiry, there remained only twenty-eight.

Ninety-five thousand seamen computed to be in France; only sixty thousand in England.

Ships formerly lasted twenty-seven years in the English navy; now only thirteen.

Within the last two thousand years, almost all the despotic governments of the world have been improving, and the free ones degenerating; so that now they are pretty near a par.

There must be a balance in all governments; and the inconvenience of allowing a single person to have any share is, that what may be too little for a balance in one hand will be too much in another.

The fiars of wheat, in 1400, were fixed at Edinburgh, 6 sh. 7 p. Scots money.

Banks first invented in Sweden on account of their copper money.

There is not a word of trade in all Machiavel, which is strange, considering that Florence rose only by trade.

About twenty thousand tun of wine imported into England about the time of the first Dutch war. — *Sir Josiah Child.*

One per cent. in interest, worse than two per cent. in customs; because ships pay the interest, not the customs.

Eight hundred thousand Jews chased from Spain by Ferdinand the Catholic. — *Geddes.*

About 100,000 Moors condemned for apostacy, by the Inquisition, in forty years. 4000 burned. — *Id.*

Near a million of Moors expelled Spain. — *Id.*

The Commons of Castile, in taking arms against Charles the Fifth, among other things petition, that no sheep nor wool shall be allowed to go out of the kingdom. — *Id.*

The interest in Rome reduced to six per cent. under Tiberius. — *Tacit.*

The laws of Arragon required a public trial for the subjects: but allowed the king a kind of despotic power over his servants and ministers, in order to render the great men less fond of court preferment. — *Geddes.*

’Twould be more easy for the English liberties to recover themselves than the Roman, because of the mixed government. The transition is not so violent.

The farms were large among the ancients. The Leontine farms in Sicily contained 130,000 acres, and were farmed to eighty-three farmers. — *Cicero in Verrem.*

After the conquest of Egypt by Augustus, the prices of every thing doubled in Rome.

The Roman colonies, in the time of Augustus, voted in their colonies, and sent their votes to Rome.

The Romans very exact in their book-keeping; in so much, that a crime, such as bribery or poisoning, could be proved or refuted from their books. — *Cic. pro Cluentio.*

They also kept commentaries or ephemerides, wherein every action or word was wrote down; at least Augustus practised this with his daughters and nieces. — *Sueton.*

In Nero’s time, 30,000 buried in one autumn, while there was a plague.

Machiavel makes it a question, whether absolute power is best founded on the nobility or the people. In my opinion, a subject who usurps upon a free state, cannot trust the nobles, and must caress the people. This was the case with the Roman emperors. But an established monarchy is better founded on the nobles.

When the Lex Licinia was promulgated, the senate voted that it should be binding from that moment, as if it had been voted by the people.

In 1721, the English and Dutch drew more money from Spain than France did. — *Dict. de Com.*

There is computed to be 3000 tun of gold in the bank of Amsterdam, at 100,000 florins a tun. — *Id.*

A ship of 50 or 60 tun has commonly seven hands, and increases a man every 10 tun. — *Id.*

The French commerce sunk much about the middle of the seventeenth century, by reason of their infidelity in their goods. — *Id.*

There seems to have been a very bad police in Rome; for Cicero says, that if Milo had waylaid Clodius, he would have waited for him in the neighbourhood, where his death might have been attributed to robbers, by reason of the commonness of the accident; and yet Clodius had above sixty servants with him, all armed.

Thirty-eight holidays in the year in France. — *Vauban.* One hundred and eighty working days at a medium. — *Id.*

The people commonly live poorest in countries which have the richest natural soil.

600 slaves, working in the silver mines of Athens, yielded a mina a-day to their master Xenophon. He computes that 10,000 slaves would produce a revenue of 100 talents a-year.

The holidays in Athens made two months in the year. — *Salmasius.*

The public in Athens paid 20 per cent. for money. — *Xenophon.*

Many of the chief officers of the army were named by the people in old Rome. — *Liv.* lib. ix. and lib. vii.

The Roman senate were obliged by law to give their authority to the Comitia Centuriata before the suffrages were called. — *Id.* lib. viii. ca.

The Pontifices of old Rome suppressed the records of their religion on purpose, as well as those of new Rome. — *Id.* lib. ix.

Every part of the office of the senate could be brought before the people; even the distribution of provinces. An evident part of the executive. — *Id.* lib. x. ca.

£60,000 sterling amassed beforehand for building the Capitol. — *Id.* lib. i.

Plays, a part of religious service for a pestilence. — *Id.* lib. vii.

The senators were forbid trade among the Romans. — *Id.* lib. viii. ca.

In the Roman government, there was a great restraint on liberty, since a man could not leave his colony, or live where he pleased. — *Id.* lib. xxxix. ca.

External superstition punished by the Romans. — *Id.* lib. xxxix. ca.

They were very jealous of the established religion. — *Id.* lib. xl. ca.

Robbers established in legal companies in Egypt; and such captains as Jonathan Wyld established. — *Diodorus Siculus.*

Whoever consecrated the tenth of their goods to Hercules, was esteemed sure of happiness by the Romans. — *Id.*

Jupiter, according to the Cretan tradition, was a pious worshipper of the gods; a clear proof that those people had a preceding religion. — *Id.* lib. v.

Gradenigo’s change of the Venetian republic was made in 1280. — *St. Didier.*

The clergy are chosen by a popular call. — *Id.*

Vossius says he saw in Rome, that, digging forty foot underground, they found the tops of columns buried.

Horses were very rare among the ancients, (before the Romans,) and not employed in any thing but war. 1st, In the retreat of the ten thousand, ’twould have been easy to have mounted the whole army, if horses had been as common as at present. 2d, They had about fifty horses, which, instead of increasing, diminished during the road, though very useful. 3d, In the spoils of villages, Xenophon frequently mentions sheep and oxen; never horses. 4th, Cleombrotus’ army, in lib. v. Hist. made use of asses for the carriages.

Demosthenes tells the Athenians, that a very honest man of Macedonia, who would not lie, told him such and such things of Philip's situation: a kind of style that marks but bad intelligence, and little communication among the different states. — *Olynth.* 2.

The 30 tyrants killed about 1500 citizens untried. — *Æschines.*

Thrasybulus restoring the people, and Cæsar's conquest, the only instances in ancient history of revolutions without barbarous cruelty.

There seems to be a natural course of things which brings on the destruction of great empires. They push their conquests till they come to barbarous nations, which stop their progress by the difficulty of subsisting great armies. After that, the nobility and considerable men of the conquering nation and best provinces withdraw gradually from the frontier army, by reason of its distance from the capital, and barbarity of the country in which they quarter. They forget the use of war. Their barbarous soldiers become their masters. These have no law but their sword, both from their bad education, and from their distance from the sovereign to whom they bear no affection. Hence disorder, violence, anarchy, tyranny, and a dissolution of empire.

Perseus's ambassadors to the Rhodians spoke a style like the modern, with regard to the balance of power, but are condemned by Livy. — Lib. xlii. ca.

Herodotus makes a scruple of so much as delivering an account of the difference of religion among foreigners, lest he should give offence. — Lib. ii.

The Egyptians more careful of preserving their cats than their houses in time of fire. — *Id.*

Plutarch says, that the effect of the naval power of Athens, established by Themistocles, was to render their government more popular: and that husbandmen and labourers are more friends to nobility than merchants and seamen are. — *In Vita Themist.*

Solon is the first person mentioned in history to have raised the value of money, which, says Plutarch, was a benefit to the poor in paying their debts, and no loss to the rich. — *In Vita Solon.*

PHILOSOPHY.

Men love pleasure more than they hate pain. — *Bayle.*

Men are vicious, but hate a religion that authorizes vice. — *Id.*

The accounts we have of the sentiments of the ancient philosophers not very distinct nor consistent. Cicero contradicts himself in two sentences: in saying that Thales allowed the ordering of the world by a mind, and in saying that Anaxagoras was the first.

Strato’s atheism the most dangerous of the ancient — holding the origin of the world from nature, or a matter endued with activity. Bayle thinks there are none but the Cartesians can refute this atheism.

A Stratonician could retort the arguments of all the sects of philosophy. Of the Stoics, who maintained their God to be fiery and compound; and of the Platonicians, who asserted the ideas to be distinct from the Deity. The same question, — Why the parts or ideas of God had that particular arrangement? — is as difficult as why the world had.

Some pretend that there can be no necessity, according to the system of atheism, “because even matter cannot be determined without something superior to determine it.” — *Fenelon.*

Three proofs of the existence of a God: 1st, Some thing necessarily existent, and what is so is infinitely perfect. 2d, The idea of infinite must come from an infinite being. 3d, The idea of infinite perfection implies that of actual existence.

There is a remarkable story to confirm the Cartesian philosophy of the brain. A man hurt by the fall of a horse, forgot about twenty years of his life, and remembered what went before in a much more lively manner than usual.

CHAPTER IV.

1741-1745. Æt. 30-34.

Publication of the Essays, Moral and Political — Their Character — Correspondence with Home and Hutcheson — Hume’s Remarks on Hutcheson’s System — Education and Accomplishments of the Scottish Gentry — Hume’s Intercourse with Mure of Caldwell and Oswald of Dunnikier — Opinions on a Sermon by Dr. Leechman — Attempts to succeed Dr. Pringle in the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh.

A small duodecimo volume, the first of the “Essays Moral and Political,” was published at Edinburgh in 1741, and the second was published in 1742. The publication was anonymous; and it is remarkable that, although thus shielded, Hume appears to have, at that early period, been so anxious to disconnect himself with the authorship of the Treatise, that, in the advertisement, he addresses his readers as if he were then appearing as an author for the first time. “Most of these essays,” he says, “were wrote with a view of being published as weekly papers, and were intended to comprehend the designs both of the Spectators and Craftsmen. But, having dropt that undertaking, partly from laziness, partly from want of leisure, and being willing to make trial of my talents for writing before I ventured upon any more serious compositions, I was induced to commit these trifles to the judgment of the public. Like most new authors, I must confess I feel some anxiety concerning the success of my work; but one thing makes me more secure, — that the reader may condemn my abilities, but must approve of my moderation and impartiality in my method of handling political subjects; and, as long as my moral character is in safety, I can, with less anxiety, abandon my learning and capacity to the most severe censure and examination.”

Some of the subjects of these essays were not less untrodden at the time when they appeared, than they are hackneyed in the present day. Of these may be cited, “The Liberty of the Press;” “The Parties of Great Britain;”

"The Independency of Parliament." When they are compared with the *Craftsman*, with *Mist's Journal*, and with the other periodicals of the day, which had set the example of discussing such subjects, these essays as little resemble their precursors, as De Lolme's "Remarks on the British Constitution" do the articles in a daily London party paper. Whatever he afterwards became, Hume was at that time no party politician. He retained the Stoic severity of thought with which we have found that he had sixteen years previously invested himself; and would allow the excitements or rewards of no party in the state to drag him out of the even middle path of philosophical observation. There is consequently a wonderful impartiality in these essays, and an acuteness of observation, which to the reader, who keeps in view how little the true workings of the constitution were noticed in that day, is not less remarkable. How completely, for instance, has the wisdom of the following observations in the essay on "The Liberty of the Press," been justified by the experience of a century.

We need not dread from this liberty any such ill consequences as followed from the harangues of the popular demagogues of Athens and tribunes of Rome. A man reads a book or pamphlet alone and coolly. There is none present from whom he can catch the passion by contagion. He is not hurried away by the force and energy of action. And should he be wrought up to never so seditious a humour, there is no violent resolution presented to him by which he can immediately vent his passion. The liberty of the press, therefore, however abused, can scarce ever excite popular tumults or rebellion. And as to those murmurs or secret discontents it may occasion, 'tis better they should get vent in words, that they may come to the knowledge of the magistrate before it be too late, in order to his providing a remedy against them. Mankind, 'tis true, have always a greater propension to believe what is said to the disadvantage of their governors than the contrary; but this inclination is inseparable from them whether they have liberty or not. A whisper may fly as quick, and be as pernicious as a pamphlet. Nay, it will be more pernicious, where men are not accustomed to think freely, or distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood.

It has also been found, as the experience of mankind increases, that the *people* are no such dangerous monster as they have been represented, and that 'tis in every respect better to guide them like rational creatures, than to lead or drive them like brute beasts. Before the United Provinces set the example, toleration was deemed incompatible with good government; and

’twas thought impossible that a number of religious sects could live together in harmony and peace, and have all of them an equal affection to their common country and to each other. England has set a like example of civil liberty; and though this liberty seems to occasion some small ferment at present, it has not as yet produced any pernicious effects; and it is to be hoped that men, being every day more accustomed to the free discussion of public affairs, will improve in their judgment of them, and be with greater difficulty seduced by every idle rumour and popular clamour.

’Tis a very comfortable reflection to the lovers of liberty, that this peculiar privilege of Britain is of a kind that cannot easily be wrested from us, and must last as long as our government remains in any degree free and independent. ’Tis seldom that liberty of any kind is lost all at once. Slavery has so frightful an aspect to men accustomed to freedom, that it must steal in upon them by decrees, and must disguise itself in a thousand shapes in order to be received. But if the liberty of the press ever be lost, it must be lost at once. The general laws against sedition and libelling are at present as strong as they possibly can be made. Nothing can impose a farther restraint but either the clapping an imprimatur upon the press, or the giving very large discretionary powers to the court to punish whatever displeases them. But these concessions would be such a barefaced violation of liberty, that they will probably be the last efforts of a despotic government. We may conclude that the liberty of Britain is gone for ever when these attempts shall succeed.

The opinion generally acceded to at the present day, that ministerial and judicial functions should be intrusted to responsible individuals, and not to bodies of men who may individually escape from a joint responsibility, is anticipated in the following passage:— “Honour is a great check upon mankind; but where a considerable body of men act together, this check is in a great measure removed, since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party for what promotes the common interest, and he soon learns to despise the clamour of adversaries.” The Grenville Act, and the subsequent measures for reducing the number of the judges on controverted elections, are a practical commentary on the truth of this remark.

It has often been observed, that foreigners have been the first to remark the leading peculiarities of the British constitution, and of the administration of justice in this country, in a manner rational and unimpassioned, yet so as to give them greater prominence, and a more full descriptive development than they obtain from our own impassioned party writers — an observation attested by the character which the works of Montesquieu and De Lolme held in the preceding century, and those of Thierry, Cottu, Meyer, and Raumer, have obtained in the present. The reason of this superiority is to be sought in the circumstance that the acuteness of these foreign observers was not obscured, or their feelings excited, by any connexion with the workings of the systems they have described; and the isolation from active life in which Hume was placed, appears to have in some measure given him like qualifications for the examination of our political institutions. He expresses a general partiality for the monarchical government of Britain, but it is a partiality of a calm utilitarian character, which would not be inconsistent with an equally great esteem for a well-ordered republic. On his philosophical appreciation of its merits, the monarchy has no stronger claims than these — that to have an individual at the head of the government who is merely the name through which other persons act, and who is not amenable to any laws, while the real actors are personally responsible for what they do in his name, is an expedient arrangement. That it is very convenient to have some fixed criterion such as the hereditary principle, which shall obviate the trouble and danger of a competition for this elevated station. But that these are all recommendations on the ground of expediency, which may be outweighed by others, and the misconduct of a weak or tyrannical prince will justify an alteration in that arrangement, which convenience only, and the avoidance of occasions for turbulence and anarchy, have sanctioned.

It may be observed, that in the edition of these essays which he directed to be published after his death, many of those passages which bear a democratic tendency are suppressed. Such was the fate of the passage in “The Liberty of the Press” quoted above, and of the remarks put within brackets in the quotation which follows, from the essay on “The Parties of Great Britain.”

Some who will not venture to assert, that the real difference between Whig and Tory, was lost at the Revolution, seem inclined to think that the difference is now abolished, and that affairs are so far returned to their natural state, that there are at present no other parties amongst us but court and country; that is, men who, by interest or principle, are attached either to monarchy or to liberty. It must indeed be confessed, that the Tory party has of late decayed much in their numbers, still more in their zeal, and I may venture to say, still more in their credit and authority. [There is no man of knowledge or learning, who would not be ashamed to be thought of that party; and in almost all companies, the name of *Old Whig* is mentioned as an incontestible appellation of honour and dignity. Accordingly, the enemies of the ministry, as a reproach, call the courtiers the true *Tories*; and, as an honour, denominate the gentlemen in the *Opposition* the true *Whigs*.] The Tories have been so long obliged to talk in the republican style, that they seem to have made converts of themselves by their hypocrisy, and to have embraced the sentiments as well as language of their adversaries. There are, however, very considerable remains of that party in England, with all their old prejudices; and a proof that court and country are not our only parties, is, that almost all our dissenters side with the court, and the lower clergy, at least of the Church of England, with the opposition. This may convince us that some bias still hangs upon our constitution, some extrinsic weight which turns it from its natural course, and causes a confusion in our parties.

Perhaps the most ambitious of the essays, and those on which the author bestowed most of his skill and attention, are “The Epicurean,” “The Stoic,” “The Sceptic,” and “The Platonist.” These are productions of the imagination, suggested apparently by the style and method of *The Spectator*. There is no attempt either to support or to attack the systems represented by the names of the essays, nor is there a description or definition of them; but on each occasion a member of one of these celebrated schools speaks in his own person, and describes the nature of the satisfaction that he finds in his own code of philosophy, as a solution of the great difficulty of the right rule of thought and action. “The Epicurean” takes a flight of imagination beyond that of Hume’s other works. It departs from the cold atmosphere of philosophy, and desires to fascinate as well as enlighten. But though it possesses all the marks of a fine intellect, the reader is apt to feel how far more sweetly and gracefully the subject would have been handled by Addison, to whose department of literature it seems rightly to belong. The follower of Epicurus is not represented, as indulging in that gross licentiousness, as wallowing in that disgusting “stye” which the representations of Diogenes Laertius, and others, have impressed on the vulgar associations with the name of that master. On the other hand, the picture is far from embodying what many maintain to be the fundamental precept of Epicurus, that happiness being the great end sought by man, the proper method of reaching it is by the just regulation of the passions and propensities; a precept embodied in the

“Sperne voluptates. Nocet empta dolere voluptas.”

Hume, who was not correcting errors, or instructing his readers in the true meaning of terms, or appreciation of characters, draws in “The Epicurean” a picture of one who is not gross or grovelling in his pleasures, and who restrains himself lest he should outrun enjoyment; but whose ruling principle is still that of the voluptuary.

The reader expects to find an attempt to draw his own picture in “The Sceptic;” but it is not to be found there. The sceptic of the essays is not a man analyzing the principles of knowledge, to find wherein they consist, but one who is dissatisfied with rules of morality, and who, examining the current codes one after another, tosses them aside as unsatisfactory. It is into “The Stoic” that the writer has thrown most of his heart and sympathy; and it is in that sketch that, though probably without intention, some of the features of his own character are portrayed. There are passages which have considerable unison of tone with those autobiographical documents already quoted, in which he describes himself as having laboured to subdue the rebellious passions, to reduce the mind to a regulated system, to drive from it the influence of petty impressions, — to hold one great object of life in view, and to sacrifice before that object whatever stood in the way of his firmly settled purpose.

Of the success of these essays, and the method in which he occupied himself after their publication, he thus speaks in his “own life:”— “The work was favourably received, and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment. I continued with my mother and brother in the country, and in that time recovered the knowledge of the Greek language, which I had too much neglected in my early youth.” On 13th June, 1742, he says to Henry Home:— “The *Essays* are all sold in London, as I am informed by two letters from English gentlemen of my acquaintance. There is a demand for them; and, as one of them tells me, Innys, the great bookseller in Paul’s Churchyard, wonders there is not a new edition, for that he cannot find copies for his customers. I am also told that Dr. Butler has every where recommended them; so that I hope they will have some success. They may prove like dung with marl, and bring forward the rest of my Philosophy, which is of a more durable, though of a harder and more stubborn nature.

You see I can talk to you in your own style.” In consequence of this favourable reception, a second edition appeared in 1742.

The communication of which the above is a part, contains the following short essay on the Orations of Cicero: —

I agree with you, that Cicero’s reasonings in his “Orations” are very often loose, and what we should think to be wandering from the point; insomuch, that now-a-days a lawyer, who should give himself such liberties, would be in danger of meeting with a reprimand from the judge, or at least of being admonished of the point in question. His Orations against Verres, however, are an exception; though that plunderer was so impudent and open in his robberies, that there is the less merit in his conviction and condemnation. However, these orations have all a very great merit. The Oration for Milo is commonly esteemed Cicero’s masterpiece, and indeed is, in many respects, very beautiful; but there are some points in the reasoning of it that surprise me. The true story of the death of Clodius, as we learn from the Roman historians, was this: — It was only a casual rencontre betwixt Milo and him; and the squabble was begun by their servants, as they passed each other on the road. Many of Clodius’s servants were killed, the rest dispersed, and himself wounded, and obliged to hide himself in some neighbouring shops; from whence he was dragged out by Milo’s orders, and killed in the street. These circumstances must have been largely insisted on by the prosecutors, and must have been proved too, since they have been received as truth by all antiquity. But not a word of them in Cicero, whose oration only labours to prove two points, that Milo did not waylay Clodius, and that Clodius was a bad citizen, and it was meritorious to kill him. If you read his oration, you’ll agree with me. I believe that he has scarce spoke any thing to the question, as it would now be conceived, by a court of judicature.

The Orations for Marcellus and Ligarius, as also that for Archias, are very fine, and chiefly because the subjects do not require or admit of close reasoning.

’Tis worth your while to read the conclusion of the Oration for Plancius, where I think the passions are very well touched. There are many noble passages in the Oration for Muræna, though ’tis certain that the prosecutors (who, however, were Servius Sulpicius, and Cato,) must either have said nothing to the purpose, or Cicero has said nothing. There is some of that oration lost.

’Twould be a pleasure to read and compare the two first philippics, that you may judge of the manners of those times, compared to modern manners. When Cicero spoke the first philippic, Antony and he had not broke all measures with each other, but there were still some remains of a very great intimacy and friendship betwixt them; and besides, Cicero lived in close correspondence with all the rest of Cæsar’s captains; Dolabella had been his son-in-law; Hirtius and Pansa were his pupils; Trebasius was entirely his creature. For this reason, prudence laid him under great restraints at that time in his declamations against Antony; there is great elegance and delicacy in them; and many of the thoughts are very fine, particularly where he mentions his meeting Brutus, who had been obliged to leave Rome. “I was ashamed,” says he, “that I durst return to Rome after Brutus had left it, and that I could be in safety where he could not.” In short, the whole oration is of such a strain, that the Duke of Argyle might have spoke it in the House of Peers against my Lord Orford; and decency would not allow the greatest enemies to go farther. But this oration is not much admired by the ancients. The *Divine Philippic*, as Juvenal calls it, is the second, where he gives a full loose to his scurrility; and without having any point to gain by it, except vilifying his antagonist, and without supporting any fact by witnesses (for there was no trial or accusation) he rakes into all the filth of Antony’s character; reproaches him with drunkenness and vomiting, and cowardice, and every sort of debauchery and villany. There is great genius and wit in many passages of this oration; but I think the whole turn of it would not now be generally admired.

In 1742, Hutcheson published his celebrated outline of a system of ethics, “Philosophiæ Moralis Institutio Compendiaria.” The following letter contains Hume’s remarks on the work; and to render them more intelligible, the passages he had particularly in view are printed in notes. It is not, however, as pieces of detached criticism, so much as in the character of an elucidation of those features of his own system in which it differs from that of Hutcheson, that the letter is valuable. It is an argument for the utilitarian system of morality — an argument that there is no *summum bonum* which should be the object of moral conduct, apart from the good of the human species.

Hume *to* Francis Hutcheson.

“Dear Sir, — I received your very agreeable present, for which I esteem myself much obliged to you. I think it needless to express to you my esteem of the performance, because both the solidity of your judgment, and the general approbation your writings meet with, instruct you sufficiently what opinion you ought to form of them. Though your good nature might prompt you to encourage me by some praises, the same reason has not place with me, however justice might require them of me. Will not this prove that justice and good nature are not the same? I am surprised you should have been so diffident about your Latin. I have not wrote any in that language these many years, and cannot pretend to judge of particular words and phrases. But the turn of the whole seems to me very pure, and even easy and elegant.

“I have subjoined a few reflections, which occurred to me in reading over the book. By these I pretend only to show you how much I thought myself obliged to you for the pains you took with me in a like case, and how willing I am to be grateful.

“P. 9, l. *ult. et quæ seq.* These instincts you mention seem not always to be violent and impetuous, more than self-love or benevolence. There is a calm ambition, a calm anger or hatred, which, though calm, may likewise be very strong, and have the absolute command over the mind. The more absolute they are, we find them to be commonly the calmer. As these instincts may be calm without being weak, so self-love may likewise become impetuous and disturbed, especially where any great pain or pleasure approaches.

“P. 21. l. 11. In opposition to this, I shall cite a fine writer, — not for the sake of his authority, but for the fact, which you may have observed. ‘Les hommes comptent presque pour rien toutes les vertus du cœur, et idolâtrent les talens du corps et de l’esprit: celui qui dit froidement de soi, et sans croire blesser la modestie, qu’il est bon, qu’il est constant, fidèle, sincère, équitable, reconnoissant, n’ose dire qu’il est vif, qu’il a les dents belles et la peau douce: cela est trop fort.’ — *La Bruyere.*

“I fancy, however, this author stretches the matter too far. It seems arrogant to pretend to genius or magnanimity, which are the most shining qualities a man can possess. It seems foppish and frivolous to pretend to bodily accomplishments. The qualities of the heart lie in a medium; and are neither so shining as the one, nor so little valued as the other. I suppose the reason why good nature is not more valued, is its commonness, which has a vast effect on all our sentiments. Cruelty and hardness of heart is the most detested of all vices. I always thought you limited too much your ideas of virtue; and I find I have this opinion in common with several that have a very high esteem for your philosophy.

"P. 30, l. *antepen. et quæ seq.* You seem here to embrace Dr. Butler's opinion in his "Sermons on Human Nature," that our moral sense has an authority distinct from its force and durableness; and that because we always think it *ought* to prevail. But this is nothing but an instinct or principle, which approves of itself upon reflection, and that is common to all of them. I am not sure that I have not mistaken your sense, since you do not prosecute this thought.

"P. 52. l. 1. I fancy you employ the epithet *ærumnosam* more from custom than your settled opinion.

"P. 129, *et quæ seq.* You sometimes, in my opinion, ascribe the original of property and justice to public benevolence, and sometimes to private benevolence towards the possessors of the goods; neither of which seem to me satisfactory. You know my opinion on this head. It mortifies me much to see a person who possesses more candour and penetration than any almost I know, condemn reasonings of which I imagine I see so strongly the evidence. I was going to blot out this after having wrote it, but hope you will consider it only as a piece of folly, as indeed it is.

"P. 244, l. 7. You are so much afraid to derive any thing of virtue from artifice or human conventions, that you have neglected what seems to me the most satisfactory reason, viz. lest near relations, having so many opportunities in their youth, might debauch each other, if the least encouragement or hope was given to these desires, or if they were not easily repressed by an artificial horror inspired against them.

"P. 263, l. 14. As the phrase is true Latin, and very common, it seemed not to need an apology, as when necessity obliges one to employ modern words.

"P. 266, l. 18, *et quæ seq.* You imply a condemnation of Locke's opinion, which, being the received one, I could have wished the condemnation had been more express.

"These are the most material things that occurred to me upon a perusal of your ethics. I must own I am pleased to see such just philosophy, and such instructive morals to have once set their foot in the schools. I hope they will next get into the world, and then into the churches.

Nil desperandum, Teucro duce et auspice Teucro.

"Edinb. Jan. 10, 1743."

Among the Scottish gentry of Hume's day, there were many men of high education and accomplishments; and the glimpses we occasionally obtain into the society which he frequented, show us a circle possessing a much less provincial tone than later times would probably have exhibited in the same class. The notion that a university was a seat of learning, where the scholarship of all the world should meet, and not a provincial school, still lingered in our country, and prompted the gentry to educate their sons abroad. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the registers of the universities of Paris, Bourgès, Bologna, and Leyden, were crowded with familiar Scottish names, whom we find holding as great a proportion among the teachers as among the learners; and thus a Wilson, a Barclay, a Bellenden, a Jack, and many others, whose fame hardly reached their native country, are conspicuous among the literary ornaments of the foreign universities. It is perhaps in a great measure to the lingering continuance of this practice through part of the eighteenth century, that we may attribute the learning and accomplishments of the society in Scotland during that period.

"Many are poets who have never penned their inspiration, and perchance the best." Many also are philosophers who have never either penned their philosophy, or put it into shape in their own minds. The two operations of induction and analysis proceed in every human mind with more or less success; but it is only when literary ambition, or pecuniary necessity, or the desire to head a system, prompts a man to collect and put into shape their results, that they are given to the world. Instances have occurred in which they have appeared very nearly in their raw unwrought form. Thus, Tucker's "Light of Nature" is nothing more than the reflections of an English country gentleman, collected and strung together. Paley and Reid used them as if they had themselves gone through the operation, and put the results into shape; while the late William Hazlitt was at the pains of writing an abridgment of the book. It was fortunate for philosophy that these disconnected observations and thoughts were collected and preserved. And the reflection leads to the recollection of the quantity of valuable thoughts that any man, who notices the course of conversation around him, hears produced and dropped. In after-dinner social intercourse, in general verbal criticism of books or men, how much of the gold of true philosophy is scattered away with the dross; lost almost at the moment it is uttered, and forgotten both by hearer and speaker.

It is interesting to have so much of this valuable matter, as may have found its way into epistolary correspondence, preserved. The conversation of Hume's friends we have unfortunately lost, for there was no Boswell at his elbow. But their letters show how much of scholarship, and elegant literature, and philosophy slumbered in the minds of the Scottish gentry of that age; and assure us that in his intercourse with an Elliot, a Mure, an Edmonstone, an Elibank, a Macdonald, an Oswald, Hume was exchanging ideas with men not unworthy of literary fellowship with a mind even so highly cultivated as his own.

William Mure of Caldwell, who was in 1761 made a Baron of the Exchequer in Scotland, was among those who seem to have earliest secured and longest retained Hume's esteem. The letters which passed between them are not often dated, but the circumstances under which many of them are written are attested by internal evidence. The following is one of the few which do not admit of being thus tested, but its merit is in a vein of quiet, easy, epistolary humour, rather than in its connexion with the events of the writer's life.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

"September 10.

"I made a pen, dipt it in ink, and set myself down in a posture of writing, before I had thought of any subject, or made provision of one single thought, by which I might entertain you. I trusted to my better genius that he would supply me in a case of such urgent necessity; but having thrice scratched my head, and thrice bit my nails, nothing presented itself, and I threw away my pen in great indignation. 'O! thou instrument of dulness,' says I, 'doest thou desert me in my greatest necessity? and, being thyself so false a friend, hast thou a secret repugnance at expressing my friendship to the faithful Mure, who knows thee too well ever to trust to thy caprices, and who never takes thee in his hand without reluctance. While I, miserable wretch that I am, have put my chief confidence in thee; and, relinquishing the sword, the gown, the cassock, and the toilette, have trusted to thee alone for my fortune and my fame. Begone! avaunt! Return to the goose from whence thou camest. With her thou wast of some use, while thou conveyedst her through the etherial regions. And why, alas! when plucked from her wing, and put into my hand, doest thou not recognise some similitude betwixt it and thy native soil, and render me the same service, in aiding the flights of my heavy imagination?'

“Thus accused, the pen erected itself upon its point, placed itself betwixt my fingers and my thumb, and moved itself to and fro upon this paper, to inform you of the story, complain to you of my injustice, and desire your good offices to the reconciling such ancient friends. But not to speak nonsense any longer, (by which, however, I am glad I have already filled a page of paper,) I arrived here about three weeks ago, am in good health, and very deeply immersed in books and study. Tell your sister, Miss Betty, (after having made her my compliments,) that I am as grave as she imagines a philosopher should be, — laugh only once a fortnight, sigh tenderly once a week, but look sullen every moment. In short, none of Ovid’s metamorphoses ever showed so absolute a change from a human creature into a beast; I mean, from a gallant into a philosopher.

“I doubt not but you see my Lord Glasgow very often, and therefore I shall suppose, when I write to one, I pay my respects to both. At least, I hope he will so far indulge my laziness. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.*

“Did you receive my letter from Glasgow? I hope it did not displease you. What are your resolutions with regard to that affair?

“Remember me to your sister, Miss Nancy, to Miss Dunlop, and to Mr. Leechman. Tell your mother, or sisters, or whoever is most concerned about the matter, that their cousin, John Steuart, is in England, and, as ’tis believed, will return with a great fortune.

“I say not a word of Mr. Hutcheson, for fear you should think I intend to run the whole circle of my West-country acquaintance, and to make you a bearer of a great many formal compliments. But I remember you all very kindly, and desire to be remembered by you, and to be spoke of sometimes, and to be wrote to.”

The following letter is in reference to Mr. Mure having been chosen member of Parliament for Renfrewshire as successor to Alexander Cunningham, on whose death a new writ was moved on 22d November, 1742. The advice which this letter offers to a young statesman, seems to be both sagacious and honest.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

“I have wrote to Mr. Oswald by this post, in order to promote an intimacy and friendship betwixt you. I exhort you to persevere in your intention of cultivating a friendship with him. You cannot possibly find a man of more worth, of a gentler disposition, or better understanding. There are infinite advantages attending an intimacy with such persons; among which this is not the least, as far as I can judge by my own experience, that I always derive from it an additional motive to preserve my character for honour and integrity; because I know that nothing else can preserve their friendship. Should I give you an exhortation of this kind, you might think me very impertinent; though really you ought to ascribe it more to my friendship, than my diffidence. ’Tis impossible ever to think ourselves secure enough, where our concern is extremely great; and, though I dare be confident of your good conduct, as of my own, yet you must also allow me to be diffident of it, as I should be of my own. When I consider your disposition to virtue, cultivated by letters, together with your moderation, I cannot doubt of your steadiness. The delicacy of the times does not diminish this assurance, but only dashes it with a few fears, which rise in me without my approbation, and against my judgment. Let a strict frugality be the guardian of your virtue; and preserve your frugality by a close application to business and study. Nothing would so effectually throw you into the lumber and refuse of the house as your departure from your engagements at this time; as a contrary behaviour will secure your own good opinion, and that of all mankind. These advantages are not too dearly purchased even by the loss of fortune, but it belongs to your prudence and frugality to procure them, without paying so dear a purchase for them. I say no more; and hope you will ascribe what I have said, not to the pedagogue, or even to the philosopher, but to the friend. I make profession of being such with regard to you; and desire you to consider me as such no longer than I shall appear to be a man of honour. Yours.”

January 26.

Among Hume’s friends in early life, we find James Oswald of Dunnikier, who is mentioned in the foregoing letter — a name pretty well known in the political history of Scotland. He was elected member for the Kirkaldy district of burghs in 1741. He filled successively the situations of Commissioner of the Navy, Member of the Board of Trade, Lord of the Treasury, and Treasurer of Ireland. He was well read in the sources of literary information, and brought to his official duties a sagacious, practical understanding, which made him infinitely serviceable to the speculative labours of his two illustrious friends, Hume and Smith. “I know,” says Hume, “you are the most industrious and the most indolent man of my acquaintance; the former in business, the latter in ceremony.” We have occasional glimpses of philosophical rambles, not unmixed with a little conviviality, in which Oswald sometimes embarked with his speculative friends. “You will remember,” he says, writing to Henry Home in 1742, “how your friend David Hume and you, used to laugh at a most sublime declamation I one night made, after a drunken expedition to Cupar, on the impotency of corruption in certain circumstances; how I maintained, that on certain occasions, men felt, or seemed to feel, a certain dignity in themselves, which made them disdain to act on sordid motives: and how I imagined it to be extremely possible, in such situations, that even the lowest of men might become superior to the highest temptations.” The political course which he afterwards adopted, however, was not precisely of this soaring cast, but savoured more of the school of practical expedients founded by Sir Robert Walpole. We shall afterwards have occasion to see his intercourse with Hume illustrated at greater length.

The following letter to Mure, contains a pretty sagacious division of the prominent political movements of the day, into those which a supporter of the court party would advocate, and those which he would oppose. Hume seems to have had some dread lest the spirit of what was then termed patriotism, might sway an inexperienced, young, and aspiring politician into devious paths, inconsistent with the straight road of duty and devotion to an adopted party. But Mure seems to have been a sagacious steady-minded man, not likely to be seduced out of the path he had chosen. He was subsequently much relied on by Lord Bute, and rose to eminence and distinction as a Tory politician. The letter exhibits a playful practice of talking of his correspondents as his pupils, which Hume adopted sometimes with those who had least sympathy with his principles, unless they were clergymen, or otherwise likely to take the familiarity in bad part.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

“I am surprised you should find fault with my letter. For my part, I esteem it the best I ever wrote. There is neither barbarism, solecism, equivoque, redundancy, nor transgression of one single rule of grammar or rhetoric, through the whole. The words were chosen with an exact propriety to the sense, and the sense was full of masculine strength and energy. In short, it comes up fully to the Duke of Buckingham’s description of fine writing, — *Exact propriety of words and thought*. This is more than what can be said of most compositions. But I shall not be redundant in the praise of brevity, though much might be said on that subject. To conclude all, I shall venture to affirm, that my last letter will be equal in bulk to all the orations you shall deliver, during the two first sessions of parliament. For, let all the letters of my epistle be regularly divided, they will be found equivalent to a dozen of *No's* and as many *Ay's*. There will be found a *No* for the triennial bill, for the pension bill, for the bill about regulating elections, for the bill of pains and penalties against Lord Orford, &c. There will also be found an Ay for the standing army, for votes of credit, for the approbation of treaties, &c. As to the last *No* I mentioned, with regard to Lord Orford, I beg it of you as a particular favour. For, having published to all Britain my sentiments on that affair, it will be thought by all Britain that I have no influence on you, if your sentiments be not conformable to mine. Besides, as you are my disciple in religion and morals, why should you not be so in politics? I entreat you to get the bill about witches repealed, and to move for some new bill to secure the Christian religion, by burning Deists, Socinians, Moralists, and Hutchinsonians.

"I shall be in town about Christmas, where, if I find not Lord Glasgow, I shall come down early in the spring to the borders of the Atlantic Ocean, and rejoice the Tritons and sea-gods with the prospect of Kelburn in a blaze. For I find, that is the only way to unnestle his lordship. But I intend to use the freedom to write to himself on this subject, if you will tell me how to direct to him. In the meantime do you make use of all your eloquence and argument to that purpose.

"Make my humble compliments to the ladies, and tell them, I should endeavour to satisfy them, if they would name the subject of the essay they desire. For my part, I know not a better subject than themselves; if it were not, that being accused of being unintelligible in some of my writings, I should be extremely in danger of falling into that fault, when I should treat of a subject so little to be understood as women. I would, therefore, rather have them assign me the deiform fund of the soul, the passive unions of nothing with nothing, or any other of those mystical points, which I would endeavour to clear up, and render perspicuous to the meanest readers.

"Allow not Miss Dunlop to forget, that she has a humble servant, who has the misfortune to be divided from her, by the whole breadth of this island. I know she never forgets her friends; but, as I dare not pretend to that relation, upon so short an acquaintance, I must be beholden to your good offices for preserving me in her memory; because I suspect mightily that she is apt to forget and overlook those who can aspire no higher than the relation I first mentioned.

"This, I think, is enough in all conscience. I see you are tired with my long letter, and begin to yawn. What! can nothing satisfy you, and must you grumble at every thing? I hope this is a good prognostic of your being a patriot."

"Nov. 14th."

In the course of these Memoirs there will be many occasions for exhibiting Hume's acquaintance with some of the most distinguished clergymen of his time, and the mutual esteem which he and they entertained towards each other. Among those members of the Presbyterian church, with whom he appears to have had the most early intercourse, we find the name of Dr. Leechman, who was his senior by about five years. They probably got acquainted with each other in the family of the Mures of Caldwell, where Leechman had been tutor to Hume's friend and correspondent. Whatever other jealousies or distastes may have occurred between them, it would be no drawback to their subsequent intimacy, that Leechman was by his marriage with Miss Balfour, the brother-in-law of one of Hume's most zealous controversial opponents, Mr. Balfour of Pilrig. Dr. Leechman was for many years professor of divinity in the university of Glasgow, of which he afterwards became principal. His sermons, now little known, stood at one time in formidable rivalry with those of Blair. He appears to have been a man who united settled religious principles with a calm conscientious inquiring mind; and the account which his biographer, the Rev. James Wodrow, gives of his lectures, is characteristic of one who had too much respect for truth to hate or contemn any man engaged in purely metaphysical inquiries, whatever might be the opinions to which they led him. We are told, that "no dictatorial opinion, no infallible or decisive judgment on any great controverted point, was ever delivered from that theological chair. After the point had undergone a full discussion, none of the students yet knew the particular opinion of this venerable professor, in any other way than by the superior weight of the arguments which he had brought under their view; so delicately scrupulous was he to throw any bias at all upon ingenuous minds, in their inquiries after sacred truth."

There is a letter by Hume to Baron Mure, containing a criticism on the composition and substance of a sermon by Dr. Leechman. From the general tenor of the letter, it would appear that the sermon was placed in Hume's hands that the author might have the advantage of his suggestions in preparing a second edition for the press. The criticisms on style and collocation are careful and minute, but they all indicate blemishes peculiar to the piece of composition before the critic, and suggest corresponding improvements; and none of them appear so far to illustrate any canon of criticism as to be intelligible to a reader who has not the sermon in his hands, in the same state as that in which it was inspected by Hume. These corrective annotations precede the following general remarks on the sermon and its subject. There may be seen in these remarks a desire, which haunts the whole of Hume's writings on kindred subjects; a desire to call forth argument and evidence in support of that side from which he himself feels inclined to dissent; like the unsatisfied feeling of one who would rather find refuge in the argumentative fortress of some other person, than remain a sceptical wanderer at his own free will.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

"These are all the minute faults I could observe in the sermon. Mr. Leechman has a very clear and manly expression; but, in my humble opinion, he does not consult his ear enough, nor aim at a style which may be smooth and harmonious, which, next to perspicuity, is the chief ornament of style; *vide* Cicero, Quinctilian, Longinus, &c. &c. &c. If this sermon were not a popular discourse, I should also think it might be made more concise.

"As to the argument, I could wish Mr. Leechman would, in the second edition, answer this objection both to devotion and prayer, and indeed to every thing we commonly call religion, except the practice of morality, and the assent of the understanding to the proposition *that God exists*.

"It must be acknowledged, that nature has given us a strong passion of admiration for whatever is excellent, and of love and gratitude for whatever is benevolent and beneficial; and that the Deity possesses these attributes in the highest perfection: and yet I assert, he is not the natural object of any passion or affection. He is no object either of the senses or imagination, and very little of the understanding, without which it is impossible to excite any affection. A remote ancestor, who has left us estates and honours acquired with virtue, is a great benefactor; and yet 'tis impossible to bear him any affection, because unknown to us: though in general we know him to be a man or a human creature, which brings him vastly nearer our comprehension than an invisible, infinite spirit. A man, therefore, may have his heart perfectly well disposed towards every proper and natural object of affection — friends, benefactors, country, children, &c. — and yet, from this circumstance of the invisibility and incomprehensibility of the Deity, may feel no affection towards him. And, indeed, I am afraid that all enthusiasts mightily deceive themselves. Hope and fear perhaps agitate their breast when they think of the Deity; or they degrade him into a resemblance with themselves, and by that means render him more comprehensible. Or they exult with vanity in esteeming themselves his peculiar favourites; or at best they are actuated by a forced and strained affection, which moves by starts and bounds, and with a very irregular, disorderly pace. Such an affection cannot be required of any man as his duty. Please to observe, that I not only exclude the turbulent passions, but the calm affections. Neither of them can operate without the assistance of the senses and imagination; or at least a more complete knowledge of the object than we have of the Deity. In most men this is the case; and a natural infirmity can never be a crime. But, secondly, were devotion never so much admitted, prayer must still be excluded. First, the addressing of our virtuous wishes and desires to the Deity, since the address has no influence on him, is only a kind of rhetorical figure, in order to render these wishes more ardent and passionate. This is Mr. Leechman's doctrine. Now, the use of any figure of speech can never be a duty. Secondly, this figure, like most figures of rhetoric, has an evident impropriety in it; for we can make use of no expression, or even thought, in prayers and entreaties, which does not imply that these prayers have an influence. Thirdly, this figure is very dangerous, and leads directly, and even unavoidably, to impiety and blasphemy. 'Tis a natural infirmity of men to imagine that their prayers have a direct influence; and this infirmity must be extremely fostered and encouraged by the constant use of prayer. Thus, all wise men have excluded the use of images and pictures in prayer, though they certainly enliven devotion; because 'tis found by experience, that with the vulgar these visible representations draw too much towards them, and become the only objects of devotion."

The literary history of this sermon is curious and instructive. When its author received his appointment of professor of divinity in 1744, a party in the church opposed his being admitted in the usual manner as a member of the presbytery of Glasgow; and one of their methods of attack was to charge him with heretical opinions, promulgated in this sermon, of which the first edition had been then published. It is singular enough, in comparing their charge with Hume's criticism, to find the two attacks brought against the same point, though with different weapons. "The purport of the whole went to charge Mr. Leechman with having laid too little stress on the merit of the satisfaction and intercession of our blessed Saviour, as the sole ground of our acceptance with God in prayer, and with teaching Christians to look for pardon and acceptance on other grounds than this."

At this time, we find Hume making an effort to obtain a professorship in Edinburgh. Dr. Pringle, subsequently Sir John Pringle, and President of the Royal Society of London, —

"Who sat in Newton's chair,
And wonder'd how the devil he got there," —

held the chair of "ethics and pneumatic philosophy" in the university of Edinburgh. In 1742, he was appointed physician to the Earl of Stair, commander of the British troops in the Low Countries; and through this circumstance it will be seen, from the following letter, that Hume contemplated a vacancy, and that he was employing the usual means for securing his own appointment to the chair.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

"Dear Will, — I shall tell you how my affair stands. Dr. Pringle has been absent two years by allowance, and about six weeks ago wrote a letter to the provost, in which he seemed in a manner to have resigned his office; and desired the council, if they thought the university any way a sufferer by his absence, to send him over a resignation in form, which he would sign, and then they might proceed to the choice of a successor. Mr. Couts, upon receiving this, mentioned me to several of the council, and desired me to mention myself as a candidate to all my friends; not with a view of soliciting or making interest, but in order to get the public voice on my side, that he might with the more assurance employ his interest in my behalf. I accordingly did so; and being allowed to make use of the provost's name, I found presently that I should have the whole council on my side, and that, indeed, I should have no antagonist. But when the provost produced the doctor's letter to the council, he discovered that he had in secret wrote differently to some of his friends, who still insisted that the town should give him allowance to be absent another year. The whole council, however, except two or three, exclaimed against this proposal, and it appeared evidently, that if the matter had been put to a vote, there would have been a majority of ten to one against the doctor. But Mr. Couts, though his authority be quite absolute in the town, yet makes it a rule to govern them with the utmost gentleness and moderation: and this good maxim he sometimes pushes even to an extreme. For the sake of unanimity, therefore, he agrees to an expedient, started by one of the doctor's friends, which he thought would be a compliment to the doctor, and yet would serve the same purpose as the immediate declaration of a vacancy in the office. This expedient was to require either the doctor's resignation, or a declaration upon honour, that whether it were peace or war, or in any event, he would against November, 1745, return to his office, and resign his commission of physician to the army, or any other employment incompatible with his attendance in this place. This last condition, Mr. Couts thinks it impossible he will comply with, because he has a guinea a-day at present, as physician to the army, along with a good deal of business and half-pay during life. And there seems at present to be small chance for a peace before the term here assigned. I find, however, that some are of a contrary opinion; and particularly several of the doctor's friends say that he will sign the obligation above-mentioned. We shall receive his answer in a fortnight, upon which my success seems entirely to depend.

"In the mean time, I have received another offer, which I shall tell you as a friend, but desire you may not mention to any body. My Lord Garlees received a commission from Mr. Murray of Broughton to look out for a travelling tutor to his son, who is at present at Glasgow. My lord inclines to give me the preference, but I could not positively accept, till I had seen the end of this affair, which is so near a crisis. Please to inform me of any particulars that you know with regard to the young man, his family, &c., that in case the former project fail, I may deliberate upon the other. The accusation of heresy, deism, scepticism, atheism, &c. &c. &c., was started against me; but never took, being bore down by the contrary authority of all the good company in town. But what surprised me extremely, was to find that this accusation was supported by the pretended authority of Mr. Hutcheson and even Mr. Leechman, who, 'tis said, agreed that I was a very unfit person for such an office. This appears to me absolutely incredible, especially with regard to the latter gentleman. For, as to Mr. Hutcheson, all my friends think that he has been rendering me bad offices to the utmost of his power. And I know that Mr. Couts, to whom I said rashly that I thought I could depend upon Mr. Hutcheson's friendship and recommendation, — I say, Mr. Couts now speaks of that professor rather as my enemy than as my friend. What can be the meaning of this conduct in that celebrated and benevolent moralist, I cannot imagine. I shall be glad to find, for the honour of philosophy, that I am mistaken: and, indeed, I hope so too; and beg of you to inquire a little into the matter, but very cautiously, lest I make him my open and professed enemy, which I would willingly avoid. Here then it behoves you to be very discreet.

"'Tis probable Mr. Murray of Broughton may consult Mr. Hutcheson and the other professors of Glasgow, before he fix absolutely on a tutor for his son. We shall then see whether he really entertains a bad opinion of my orthodoxy, or is only unwilling that I should be Professor of Ethics in Edinburgh; lest that town, being in the neighbourhood of Glasgow, should spread its contagion all around it, and even infect the students of the latter university.

"I have passed a week with Mr. Oswald at Kirkcaldy. He makes his compliments to you. He has shown me the whole economy of the navy, the source of the navy debt, with many other branches of public business. He seems to have a great genius for these affairs, and I fancy will go far in that way if he perseveres."

"Edinburgh, August 4, 1744."

It may easily be imagined that both Mr. Hutcheson and Dr. Leechman would be opposed to the appointment of David Hume as a teacher of moral philosophy in one of the universities; and that they might entertain this opinion along with an honest admiration of his character, and an appreciation of the value of his talents when exercised in another sphere. It is at all events gratifying to find, that whatever opposition Hutcheson may have made, he was influenced by no sordid motive, as he was offered the chair, and refused it. On 27th March, 1745, a letter in which Dr. Pringle resigned the chair, was read to the Town Council. On 3d April, a nomination to the chair was transmitted to Hutcheson. He declined the honour, in a rather verbose letter, in which he speaks in the tone of one whose tenure of life cannot be expected to be strong enough to fit him for new labours: yet he was then only fifty years old. His death occurred two years later, and he probably felt that his long series of intellectual labours had exhausted too much of the stamina of life to leave him the prospect of a successful career in a new sphere of duty. On Hutcheson's letter being read to the council, on 10th April, 1745, the minutes bear, that "several other persons having been named as proper candidates, it was thereupon moved in council, whether to proceed to take the ministers’ avisamentum betwixt and next council day, in order to facilitate their choice, or to delay the same for a month or six weeks, so that the members of council might with the greater leisure deliberate thereanent; and the rolls having thereupon been called, and the vote marked, it carried delay for said space.”

It is probable that the “ministers’ avisamentum,” whatever may be precisely designed by that phrase, was not such a recommendation as would turn the minds of the members of council in favour of Hume. His name is not mentioned in the council records in connexion with the proceedings, and the vacancy was filled up on 5th June, 1745, by the appointment of William Cleghorn, who had acted for Dr. Pringle in his absence.

The date of these transactions, brings us into the middle of a very curious episode in Hume’s history, which must now be examined.

CHAPTER V.

1745-1747. Æt. 34-36.

Hume's Residence with the Marquis of Annandale — His Predecessor Colonel Forrester — Correspondence with Sir James Johnstone and Mr. Sharp of Hoddam — Quarrel with Captain Vincent — Estimate of his Conduct, and Inquiry into the Circumstances in which he was placed — Appointed Secretary to General St. Clair — Accompanies the expedition against the Court of France as Judge-Advocate — Gives an Account of the Attack on Port L'Orient — A tragic Incident.

Hume's history of his residence with the Marquis of Annandale, is given in the following brief terms, in his "own life." "In 1745, I received a letter from the Marquis of Annandale, inviting me to come and live with him in England: I found, also, that the friends and family of that young nobleman were desirous of putting him under my care and direction, for the state of his mind and health required it. I lived with him a twelvemonth. My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune."

It might have been favourable perhaps to the dignity of his position in the world of letters, that this episode in his history had never been more fully narrated; for a philosopher conducting a litigation for £75 of arrears of salary, is apt to experience that diminution of respect in the eyes of the public, which the prince of Condé discovered that a hero suffered in those of his valet. Since, however, many statements have been given to the world, connected with that part of Hume's life, and many charges and countercharges among the persons connected with it are preserved, it is necessary to give such a brief view of the whole affair, as may enable the reader to estimate the respective merits of the parties in the dispute. A collection of documents on the subject was lately published by a gentleman to whom the literary history of Scotland is indebted for many other services; and from his book the following statement is compiled.

The person with whom David Hume was thus connected was the last Marquis of Annandale, on whose death that title became dormant. On the 5th of March, 1748, he was found, on an inquest from the Court of Chancery in England, to be a lunatic, incapable of governing himself and managing his own affairs, and to have been so since 12th December, 1744, a few months anterior to Hume's engagement with him. The correspondence does not give the reader the notion of one reduced to so abject a mental state, but rather that of a man nervously timid and reserved; distrustful of himself and his ability to transact business with other people, but not quite incapable of managing his affairs, though exciteable, and liable to be driven into fits of passion by causes not susceptible of being anticipated. A party to the correspondence, talking of him as in an improved condition, says: "My Lord walked out with me lately two or three miles, received and returned the compliments of the hat of those we met, and without any shyness or reserve: and bears to stand by, and hear me talk with any farmer or countryman. This is a vast change for the better, and the greatest appearance that it will continue." He appears to have been haunted by a spirit of literary ambition. Hume says in a letter to Lord Elibank, "I have copied out half a dozen of epigrams, which I hope will give you entertainment. The thought in them is indeed little inferior to that in the celebrated Epigrams of Rousseau; though the versification be not so correct. What a pity! I say this on account both of the author and myself; for I am afraid I must leave him." And on another occasion he alludes at length to a far more extensive literary achievement, a novel, which the excited Marquis had written, and which those about him had found it necessary to print, circulating a few copies, and advertising it in one newspaper to allay any suspicions in the author's mind that a thousand copies had not been printed. Hume says:

"You would certainly be a little surprised and vexed on receiving a printed copy of the novel, which was in hands when you left London. If I did not explain the mystery to you, I believe I told you, that I hoped that affair was entirely over, by my employing Lord Marchmont and Lord Bolingbroke's authority against publishing that novel; though you will readily suppose that neither of these two noble Lords ever perused it. This machine operated for six weeks; but the vanity of the author returned with redoubled force, fortified by suspicions, and increased by the delay. 'Pardie,' dit il, 'je crois que ces messieurs veulent être les seules Seigneurs d’Angleterre qui eussent de l’esprit. Mais je leur montrerai ce que le petit A —— peut faire aussi.’ In short, we were obliged to print off thirty copies, to make him believe that we had printed a thousand, and that they were to be dispersed all over the kingdom.

“My Lady Marchioness will also receive a copy, and I am afraid it may give her a good deal of uneasiness, by reason of the story alluded to in the novel, and which she may imagine my Lord is resolved to bring to execution. Be so good, therefore, as to inform her, that I hope this affair is all over. I discovered, about a fortnight ago, that one of the papers sent to that damsel had been sent back by her under cover to his rival, Mr. M’ ——, and that she had plainly, by that step, sacrificed him to her other lover. This was real matter of fact, and I had the good fortune to convince him of it; so that his pride seems to have got the better of his passion, and he never talks of her at present.”

The “novel” appears to have referred to some little event in its author’s private history. If there be a copy of it now any where existing, it is to be feared that it wastes its fragrance on the desert air, as the existence of so choice a flower of literature, were it in the possession of any collector, could not fail to have been rumoured through the bibliographical world.

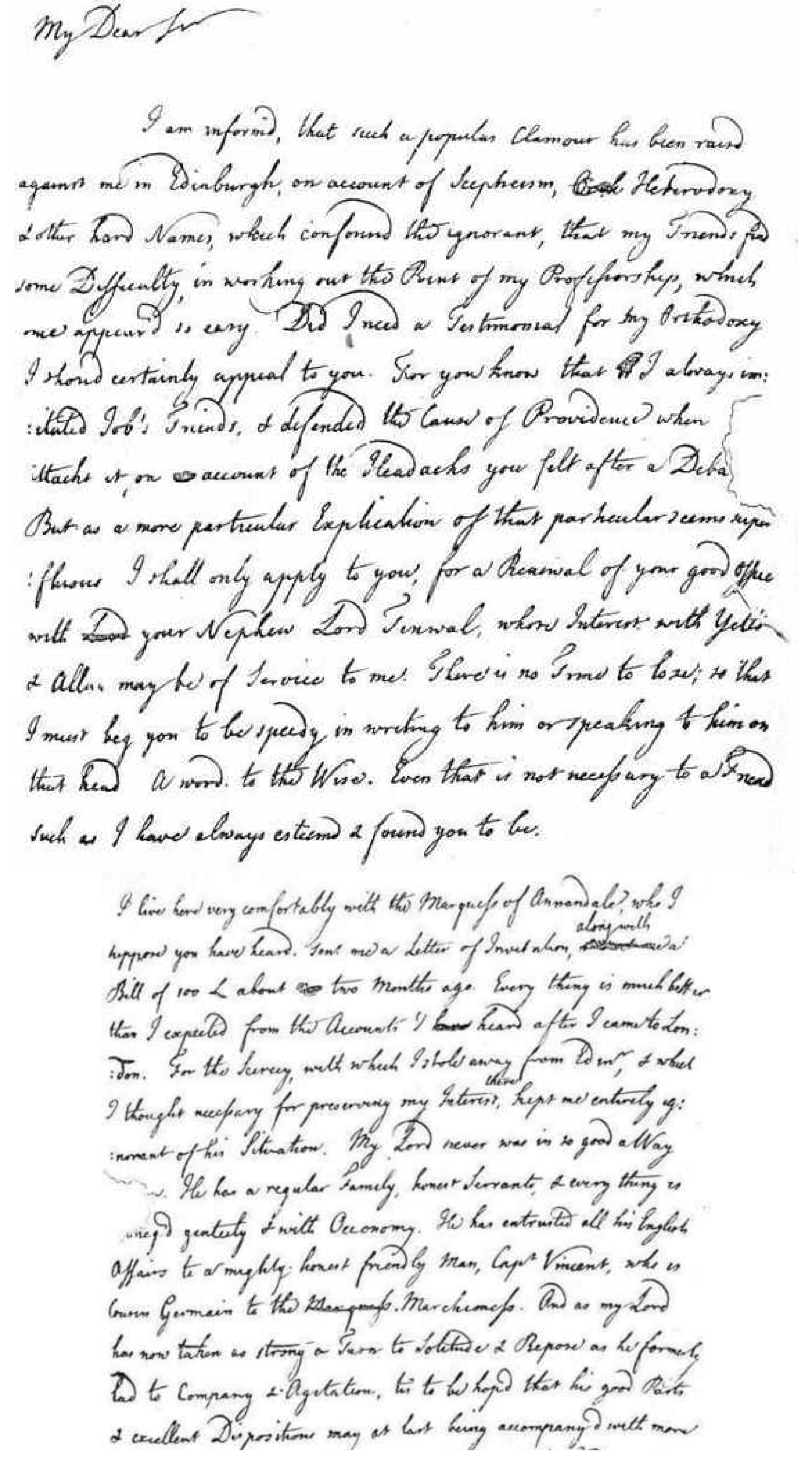
The Marquis had previously been attended by a succession of hired companions, of whom one was a man of considerable distinction, Colonel James Forrester, a person who, in the Scottish society of the age, seems to have united some of the qualities of a Chesterfield to a like proportion of those of a Beau Fielding. He was the author of “The Polite Philosopher;” a lively little essay, sometimes published along with Chesterfield’s “Advice,” in which the author is so much at ease with his reader, that he discourses in prose or poetry as his own humour dictates. Johnson said, with reference to the man and the book, that “he was himself the great polite he drew;” and if it did not happen that his coxcombry excited the poor invalid’s irritable nerves to distraction, he was probably an infinitely more suitable man for the office of companion to the Marquis of Annandale, than David Hume.

The overtures to Hume were made by the Marquis himself; who was, according to an expression used by Sir James Johnstone, when writing to Hume, “charmed with something contained in his Essays.” The place of residence of the Marquis was Weldhall, near St. Alban’s, in Hertfordshire. Hume had to go to London to make the anticipatory arrangements, and he commenced his companionship on 1st April, 1745. The insurrection, headed by Prince Charles Edward in Scotland, commenced four months afterwards; and there is perhaps nothing more curious in the whole dispute than the indifference with which this matter, fraught with so much importance to his countrymen, is spoken of by Hume; while there could not probably be a better answer to those who afterwards insinuated that he was a Jacobite, than an account of the manner in which his thoughts were occupied during that struggle. He occasionally complains that he is prevented from personally discussing, with the individuals interested, the matters he is writing about, on account of “the present unhappy troubles;” and the following portion of a letter to Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, the brother of the Marquis’s stepfather, written immediately after he had left his attendance on the Marquis, is the only occasion in which he appears to show the least sympathy in the conflict or its results.

“Portsmouth, June 6, 1746.

“Dear Sir, — I have always sympathized very cordially with you, whenever I met with any of the names, wherein you was interested, in any of the public papers; but I hope that one of the persons is now safe by his escape, and the other protected by her sex and innocence. We live not now in a time, when public crimes are supposed to cancel all private ties, or when the duties of relation, even though executed beyond the usual bounds, will render the persons criminal. I am willing, therefore, to flatter myself, that your anxiety must now be in a great measure over, and that a more happy conclusion of so calamitous an affair could not be expected, either for private individuals or for the public. Some little time ago, we had here a conversation with regard to L —— , and other persons in her condition, when General St. Clair said, that he heard, from some of the ministers, that the intentions of the menaces, or even of the intended prosecutions (if they went so far,) were not to proceed to execution; but only to teach our countrywomen (many of whom had gone beyond all bounds) that their sex was no absolute protection to them, and that they were equally exposed to the law with the other sex. However, I doubt not but your friend has no occasion for their clemency, whatever may be the case with the other ladies in the same situation, who had particularly valued themselves upon their activity and courage.”

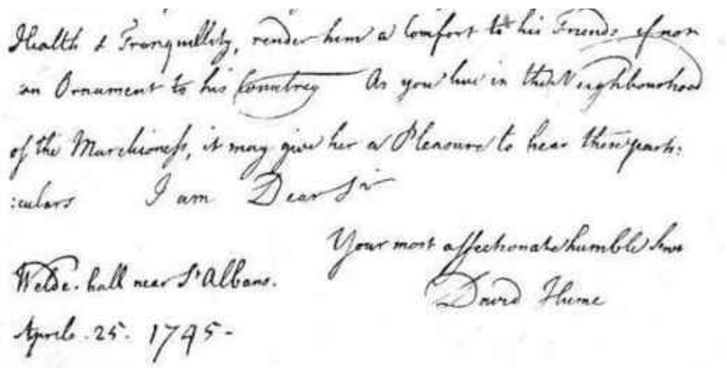
It is now necessary to enter on a subject, which one feels a natural inclination to postpone, as long as the order of events will afford any excuse for looking at other things: the treatment Hume experienced in this his self-adopted slavery. He had to deal with a capricious unreasonable employer; to that he would, in the circumstances, philosophically reconcile himself. He states in one of his letters, that he lived with him “in a more equal way of complaisance and good humour than could well have been expected. Some little disgusts and humours could not be prevented, and never were proposed to be of any consequence.” But he had another and a far more unpleasant person to deal with, in a certain Philip Vincent, a captain in the navy, a relation of the Dowager-marchioness of Annandale. For some months matters appear to have gone smoothly with all concerned. The following letter to one of his esteemed friends, shows that Hume was consoling himself for the probable dissipation of his hopes of a professorship, by reflecting on his good fortune in being connected with so amiable and excellent a man as Captain Vincent: —



My Dear Sir

I am inform'd, that such a popular Clamour has been rais'd against me in Edinburgh, on account of Scepticism, ~~[illegible]~~ Heterodoxy & other hard Names, which confound the ignorant, that my Friends fin some Difficulty in working out the Point of my Professorship, which to me appear'd so easy. Did I need a Testimonial for my Orthodoxy I shoud certainly appeal to you. For you know that ~~[illegible]~~ I always imitated Job's Friends, & defended the Cause of Providence when attackt it, on ~~[illegible]~~ account of the Headachs you felt after a Deba But as a more particular Explication of that particular seems superfluous I shall only apply to you, for a Renewal of your good Offic with ~~Lord~~ your Nephew Lord Tinwal, whose Interest with Yett & Allan may be of Service to me. There is no Time to lose; so that I must beg you to be speedy in writing to him or speaking to him on that head. A word to the Wise. Even that is not necessary to a Friend such as I have always esteem'd & found you to be.

I live here very comfortably with the Marquess of Annandale, who I suppose you have heard, sent me a Letter of Invitation, along with ~~[illegible]~~ a Bill of 100 £ about ~~[illegible]~~ two Months ago. Every thing is much better than I expected from the Accounts I ~~have~~ heard after I came to London. For the Secrecy, with which I stole away from Edinr, & which I thought necessary for preserving my Interest there, kept me entirely ignorant of his Situation. My Lord never was in so good a Way w. He has a regular Family, honest Servants, & every thing is nag'd genteely & with Oeconomy. He has entrusted all his English Affairs to a mighty honest friendly Man, Capt Vincent, who is Cousin German to the ~~Marquess~~ Marchioness. And as my Lord has now taken as strong a Turn to Solitude & Repose as he formerly had to Company & Agitation, tis to be hoped that his good Parts & excellent Dispositions may at last being accompany'd with more



Health & Tranquillity, render him a Comfort to his Friends & an
an Ornament to his Country As you live in the Neighbourhood
of the Marchioness, it may give her a Pleasure to hear these partic:
:culars I am Dear Sir

Your most affectionate humble Servt
David Hume

Weldehall near St Albans.
April 25. 1745-

Hume *to* Matthew Sharp *of Hoddam*.

“My Dear Sir, — I am informed that such a popular clamour has been raised against me in Edinburgh, on account of scepticism, heterodoxy, and other hard names, which confound the ignorant, that my friends find some difficulty, in working out the point of my professorship, which once appeared so easy. Did I need a testimonial for my orthodoxy, I should certainly appeal to you; for you know that I always imitated Job’s friends, and defended the cause of Providence when [you] attacked it, on account of the headachs you felt after a deba[uch.] But, as a more particular explication of that particular seems superfluous, I shall only apply to you for a renewal of your good offices with your nephew, Lord Tinwal, whose interest with Yetts and Allan may be of service to me. There is no time to lose; so that I must beg you to be speedy in writing to him, or speaking to him on that head. A word to the wise. Even that is not necessary to a friend, such as I have always esteemed and found you to be.

“I live here very comfortably with the Marquis of Annandale, who, I suppose you have heard, sent me a letter of invitation, along with a bill of one hundred pounds, about two months ago. Every thing is much better than I expected, from the accounts I heard after I came to London; for the secrecy with which I stole away from Edinburgh, and which I thought necessary for preserving my interest there, kept me entirely ignorant of his situation.

“My lord never was in so good a way [before.] He has a regular family, honest servants, and every thing is managed genteelly and with economy. He has intrusted all his English affairs to a mighty honest friendly man, Captain Vincent, who is cousin-german to the Marchioness. And as my lord has now taken so strong a turn to solitude and repose, as he formerly had to company and agitation, ’tis to be hoped that his good parts and excellent dispositions may at last, being accompanied with more health and tranquillity, render him a comfort to his friends, if not an ornament to his country. As you live in the neighbourhood of the Marchioness, it may give her a pleasure to hear these particulars. I am, &c.

“Weldehall, near St. Albans,
“April 25, 1745.”

On the other hand, we find Captain Vincent, when he speaks of Hume, saying, “I think it very happy that he is with my lord, and still more so if he is constantly to remain with him, which I do not foresee but that he may; and I must do him the justice to say, that after having had time enough to weigh the temper, situation, and circumstances of the person he has to deal with, he very candidly owned that it was what he could cheerfully abide with.” And again in August, “Mr. Hume is almost wholly taken up with our friend personally, so that he can scarce have the resource of amusement, or even of business, which is somewhat hard upon a man of erudition and letters, whom indeed I think very deserving and good natured; and whilst he can be his companion, there could not be a better made choice of.” The captain, in other letters, speaks of Hume as “a very worthy and knowing man,” and as “My friend Mr. Hume;” and seems at one time to have wished that an annuity of £100 a-year should be settled upon him, without reference to his continuance in his office, and in addition to the salary he might receive while he did so. But the dawn was soon afterwards overcast.

Hume, in the first place, disliked some of Captain Vincent’s proposed arrangements, as to the disposal of the person of the Marquis, and seems to have soon suspected him of wishing to carry through designs which would materially affect the interest of some of the Marquis’s relations. It is probable that a feeling of friendliness, or of duty, may have prompted him to interfere. It may be so, and he may in reality have done good; but the impression produced by the correspondence is, regret that Hume did not at once retire in lofty scorn from the scene of these paltry cabals.

Captain Vincent held a commission from the Marquis to “hire and dismiss servants,” and perform other like functions. It was in virtue of this authority that he dealt with Hume; and he seems at first to have thought, that in the person of the philosopher he had met with a sort of superior and valuable member of the fraternity of upper-servants. Though Hume had then written the works on which a large portion of his European reputation was afterwards built, this man seems to have regarded his literary abilities as merely an enhancement of the qualities which suited him for his servile office. Looking upon himself as a member of the family, he appears to have had much the same disposition to admit that Hume's literary distinction put them on a par with each other, as he might have had to admit that the display of an unexpected degree of musical talent in the servants' hall would qualify one of its frequenters to be hail-fellow well met with him in the dining-room. Whether Hume was right or wrong in the suspicions he entertained of Vincent, the conduct of Vincent to Hume was brutal, and that on his own showing.

One of Hume's views, as to the proper treatment of the Marquis, was, that the isolation of Weldhall was unsuitable to his condition: that he should be in a a more cheerful residence, and one in other respects more suitable; and the dispute appears to have been for some time suspended on this peg. On the 31st October, Hume writes: —

"What is the mighty matter in dispute? Only about hiring a few carts to remove the family to another house, in order to quit this; which, for very good reasons, is infinitely disagreeable to your friend, very dangerous, will be uninhabitable for cold during the winter season, and costs £300 to £400 a-year, at least, to the family, more than is requisite." And afterwards he says of Vincent:— "He said, when he was here, that we shall live in this house till the lease was out, in spite of all opposition."

In the letter from which the preceding passage is taken, he says to Sir James Johnstone, —

"I must begin by complaining of you for having yoked me here with a man of the Captain's character, without giving me the least hint concerning it, if it was known to you, as, indeed, it is no secret to the world. You seemed satisfied with his conduct, and even praised him to me; which I am fully persuaded was the effect of your caution, not your conviction. However, I, who was altogether a stranger, entered into the family with so gross a prepossession. I found a man who took an infinite deal of pains for another, with the utmost professions both of disinterestedness and friendship to him and me; and I readily concluded that such a one must be either one of the best, or one of the worst of men. I can easily excuse myself for having judged at first on the favourable side; and must confess that, when light first began to break in upon me, I resisted it as I would a temptation of the devil. I thought it, however, proper to keep my eyes open for farther observation; till the strangest and most palpable facts, which I shall inform you of at meeting, put the matter out of all doubt to me.

“There is nothing he would be fonder of than to sow dissension betwixt my Lady and you, whom he hates and fears. He flatters, and caresses, and praises, and hates me also; and would be glad to chase me away, as doing me the honour, and, I hope, the justice of thinking me a person very unfit for his purposes. As he wants all manner of pretext from my conduct and behaviour, he has broken his word.”

That these statements are not those of a secret foe emitting calumnies in the dark, is made clear by the concluding terms of the letter, in which the writer, instead of asking his correspondent to keep its contents secret — a very common clause when people, thrown much in each other’s way, write about each other’s conduct to third parties — says, “I wish you would bring this letter south with you, that, if you will allow it, I may show it to him,” — that is, to Vincent.

The excitement communicated to Hume’s nerves on this occasion, is shown by the following short letter to Sir James, so much at variance with the usual character of his writings: —

“God forgive you, dear Sir, God forgive you, for neither coming to us, nor writing to us. The unaccountable, and, I may say, the inhuman treatment we meet with here, throws your friend into rage and fury, and me into the greatest melancholy. My only comfort is when I think of your arrival; but still I know not when I can propose to myself that satisfaction. I flatter myself you have received two short letters I wrote within this month; though the uncertainty of the post gives me apprehension. I must again entreat you to favour me with a short line, to let me know the time you can propose to be with us; for, if it be near, I shall wait with patience and with pleasure; if distant, I shall write you at length, that you and my Lady Marchioness may judge of our circumstances and situation. — I am, Dear Sir, yours, with great sincerity,

D. H.”

Unfortunately, the precise objects which the parties respectively desired to accomplish cannot be distinctly ascertained, as the letters generally refer to explanations which it will be necessary for the parties to make when they meet, because the troubled character of the times made private letters liable to be opened and inspected. Hume at the same time, being in the midst of a considerable retinue of servants under the control and management of his enemy, was in dread that spies were set on his motions. Thus he says to Sir James Johnstone, —

“I did write you the very first occasion after I came out thither. But I find my letters have great difficulty to reach you; for which reason I shall put this into the post-house myself, to prevent such practices as I suspect are used in this family. I have some reason also to think that spies are placed upon my most indifferent actions. I told you that I had had more conversation with one of the servants than was natural, and for what reason. Perhaps this fellow had the same privilege granted him as other spies, to rail against his employer, in order to draw in an unguarded man to be still more unguarded. But such practices, if real, (for I am not altogether certain,) can only turn to the confusion of those who use them. Where there is no arbitrary power, innocence must be safe; and if there be arbitrary power in this family, ’tis long since I knew I could not remain in it. What a scene is this for a man nourished in philosophy and polite letters to enter into, all of a sudden, and unprepared! But I can laugh, whatever happens; and the newness of such practices rather diverts me. At first they caused indignation and hatred; and even (though I am ashamed to confess it) melancholy and sorrow.”

What a scene indeed!

The chief incidental light that can be thrown on the nature of the suspicions which Hume entertained of Vincent, is derived from the position of the person to whom the greater part of these letters were addressed — Sir James Johnstone, who has already been alluded to as a connexion of the Annandale family. His brother, Colonel John Johnstone, had married the Marchioness-dowager, the mother of the Marquis, and by her had three children. She was an heiress; and though the Scottish estates, following an entail, were destined to pass to another family, her own property would be inherited by the children of her second marriage, on the death of the Marquis. The accumulated rents of his estates, being movable property, would also be the subject of succession, different from that of the entail; and therefore the management of this property, during his imbecility, was a matter of much moment to some of his connexions. The public had ample opportunity of knowing the extent of these accumulated funds. They rose to the sum of £415,000, and were the subject of long litigation both in England and Scotland. The “Annandale cases” had a material effect in settling in Britain the important principle which had been previously adopted over the greater part of Europe, that the movable or personal estate of a deceased person must be distributed according to the law of the country where he had his domicile or permanent residence at the time of his death.

It is pretty evident that Vincent had certain family projects in view in connexion with the management of the estate, and that Hume wished to defeat them. Before the outbreak of the quarrel, the latter had written to Sir James:

"I shall endeavour to give you my opinion, which I am certain would be yours, were you to pass a day amongst us. I am sorry, therefore, to inform you, that nothing now remains but to take care of your friend's person, in the most decent and convenient manner; and, with regard to his fortune, to be attentive that the great superplus, which will remain after providing for these purposes, should be employed by my Lady and your nephews, as the true proprietors, for their honour and advantage."

Having written a civil letter to Vincent, stating that he desired the intervention of Sir James Johnstone, and that he believed, in the mean time, that the Marquis was satisfied with the engagement, and did not wish him to be dismissed, he thus hints to Sir James his suspicions of Vincent's views.

"I must own it was with excessive reluctance I wrote so softening and obliging a letter to this man; but as I knew that such a method of proceeding was conformable to your intentions, I thought it my duty to comply. However, I easily saw it would all be vain, and would only fortify him in his arrogance. Do you think that *the absolute possession of so ample a fortune*, to which this is the first requisite step, is a prize to be resigned for a few fair words or flattering professions? He deals too much in that bait himself ever to be caught with it by others.

"I think this is the last opportunity that will ever offer of retrieving the family and yourself (as far as you are concerned with the family,) from falling into absolute slavery to so odious a master. If, in the beginning, and while he is watched by jealous eyes, he can attempt such things, what will he not do when he has fixed his authority, and has no longer any inspector over him?

"'Tis lucky, therefore, that this, as it seems the last, is so good an opportunity. Nothing was ever so barefaced as his conduct. To quarrel with me, merely because I civilly supported a most reasonable project; to threaten me with his vengeance, if I opened my lips to you concerning your friend's affairs; to execute that threat, without a pretext, or without consulting you; these steps give us such advantages over him as must not be neglected.

“I hope you will not take it amiss, if I say, that your conduct, with regard to your friend, and to those who have at different times been about him, has all along been too gentle and cautious. I had considerably shaken the authority of this man (though I had no authority myself,) merely by my firmness and resolution. He now assumes more, when he observes your precautions.

“But, as I do not believe that, though your firmness may daunt him, it will ever engage him to loose hold of so fine a prize, it will be requisite to think of more effectual remedies. Happily there is time enough both to contrive and to execute. For, though he makes me the offer of present payment, (which I hope you observed,) in order to engage me to leave you presently, he shall not get rid of me so easily.”

Hume appears, with a marvellous degree of self-restraint — marvellous in a man of independent spirit — to have felt that it was his duty not to be driven from his post by the insults of Vincent. He says to Sir James Johnstone, when apparently wearied out, “I fancy he must prevail at last; and I shall take care not to be a bone of contention betwixt you, unless you think I am the most advantageous piece of ground on which you can resist him.” His opinion, that the interests of the other relations were concerned in his resisting Vincent’s designs, is confirmed by the following letter, also addressed to Sir James Johnstone: —

“He [Vincent] desired you should intermeddle as little as possible in these affairs; adding, that he intended, by keeping my Lord’s person and his English affairs in his own hands, to free my Lady from all slavery to you.

“Ever since, no entreaties, no threatenings have been spared to make me keep silence to you; to which my constant answer was, that I thought not that consistent with my duty. I told him freely, that I would lay all the foregoing reasons before you, when you came to London, and hoped you would prevail with him to alter his opinion. If not, we should all write, if you thought proper, to my Lady Marchioness, in order to have her determination. The endeavouring, then, to make me keep silence to you, was also to keep my Lady in the dark about such material points, since I could not have access to let her know the situation of our affairs, by any other means.

“He offered to let me leave your friend in the beginning of winter, if I pleased, provided I would make no opposition to his plan, — that is, would not inform you; for I was not capable of making any other opposition. He added, he would allow me my salary for the whole year, and that he would himself supply my place, leave his house in London, and live with your friend. Can all this pains be taken, merely for the difference betwixt one house and another?

“An evening or two before his departure from Weldehall, he offered me the continuance of the same friendship, which had always subsisted betwixt us, if I would promise not to open my lips to you about this matter.

“The morning of his departure, he burst out all of a sudden, when the subject was not talked of, into threatenings, and told me, that, if I ever entered upon this subject with you, I should repent it. He went out of the house presently, and these were almost his last words.”

The circumstance of these “threatenings” is amply confirmed by a letter of Vincent himself, addressed to the Marchioness; an admirable specimen of the outpouring of a vulgar and insolent mind: —

“I will venture to say I have the knack of parrying and managing him, but that Mr. Hume, who is so extraordinarily well paid, only for his company, and lodged and lives, that, if it was at his own expense, he could not do it for £200 a-year, should be gloomy and inconsolable for want of society, and show, for this good while past, little or no sign of content or gratitude to me for all I have done, and the best intentions to serve him, and principally promoted his being in this station, and repeatedly offered to come out frequently during the winter and stay two or three days at a time, whilst he should be in town. I shall do so, but nowise in consideration to him, but out of tenderness and regard to our friend. Mr. Hume is a scholar, and I believe an honest man; but one of his best friends at Edinburgh at first wrote me, he had conversed more with books than the world, or any of the elegant part of it, chiefly owing to the narrowness of his fortune. He does not in this case seem to know his own interest, though I have long perceived it is what he mostly has a peculiar eye to. Hereafter I shall consider him no more than if I had never known him. Our friend in reality does not desire he should stay with him. I don’t see his policy in offering to oppose my pleasure, and think it very wrong in him to mention his appealing to Sir James Johnstone. I dare say your ladyship thinks as I do, that it is unbecoming for me to be in a subservient state, in such a case, to any body. I am very zealously disposed to be accountable to you; both regard, civility, justice, long friendship and acquaintance, as well as near relationship, are all the motives in the world for it; and I hoped my being concerned would produce all possible good effects in your having constant, true, and satisfactory accounts, as well as that, in due time, those advantages in your own affairs might be accruing, which you are so justly entitled to, and which I have before declared to be one of the main ends to be accomplished, and which I believe you think I could effect better than another. It is not one of the most pleasing circumstances that, in the situation of our friend, it is an inlet to strangers, taken in by accident, to be too much acquainted with private family affairs. I certainly desire that Sir James and I should be in good correspondence, and I believe he is satisfied of that; but this man, taking it into his head to thwart my methods, and all to gratify his own desire of being near town in the winter forsooth, after the offer I have made of giving him relief sometimes, and as nothing will satisfy some dispositions, I shall, at the end of the year, close all accounts, in which there will be done what was never done before, a complete state of the receipt and the expense, and then very willingly desire to be excused from having any farther concern. Most certainly I would do every thing in my power to serve and oblige you; but if you desire the continuance of my care, please to write to Sir James to signify occasionally to Mr. Hume that the management is left to me, and not to a stranger, who, if he is not satisfied, is at his liberty to remove from such attendance."

This illustration of character would be incomplete without a passage in a subsequent letter, in which, after Hume had ceased to attend on the Marquis, Vincent characterizes the sort of person who would be a desirable successor.

"If any proper person is about him again whilst I am concerned, terms for their behaviour must be specified, and as they wax fat and are encouraged, they must be discreet enough and reasonable in their nature, so as not to kick. Such deportment would engage any good offices of mine, in favour of a worthy man, fit for the purpose, which, I confess, is very hard to find, and possibly my Lord will not care to have any body put upon him by way of terms of continuance."

That the iron of this bondage entered into his soul, is apparent in many passages of Hume's letters. He regretted that he had left independence in a humble home, for dependence in a lordly mansion: he regretted that he had been led to meddle with intrigues, in which a vulgar selfish man, who knew the world, was far more than a match for a profound philosopher. How wise it had been for him had he never deserted the humble prospects of an independent life, the following complaints, addressed to Lord Elibank, testify: —

“Meanwhile, I own to you, that my heart rebels against this unworthy treatment; and nothing but the prospect of depending entirely on you, and being independent of him, could make me submit to it. I have fifty resolutions about it. My loss, in ever hearkening to his treacherous professions, has been very great; but, as it is now irreparable, I must make the best of a bad bargain. I am proud to say that, as I am no plotter myself, I never suspect others to be such, till it be too late; and, having always lived independent, and in such a manner as that it never was any one’s interest to profess false friendship to me, I am not sufficiently on my guard in this particular. . . . . My way of living is more melancholy than ever was submitted to by any human creature, who ever had any hopes or pretensions to any thing better; and if to confinement, solitude, and bad company, be also added these marks of disregard, ... I shall say nothing, but only that books, study, leisure, frugality, and independence, are a great deal better.”

The filling up of the cup of his slights and injuries, and the termination of his servitude, is thus described by Hume; and one reads it with a feeling of relief, as an event long protracted, and for the occurrence of which the reader of the narrative is impatient. He says, writing to Sir James Johnstone, on 17th April, 1746, —

“You’ll be surprised, perhaps, that I date my letters no longer from Weldehall; this happened from an accident, if our inconstancies and uncertainties can be called such.

“You may remember in what humour you saw your friend a day or two before you left us. He became gay and good-humoured afterwards, but more moderately than usual. After that, he returned to his former disposition. These revolutions, we have observed, are like the hot and cold fits of an ague: and, like them too, in proportion as the one is gentle, the other is violent. But the misfortune is, that this prejudice continued even after he seemed, in other respects, entirely recovered. So that, having tried all ways to bring him to good humour, by talking with him, absenting myself for some days, &c., I have at last been obliged yesterday to leave him. He is determined, he says, to live altogether alone; and I fancy, indeed, it must come to that. As far as I can judge, this caprice came from nobody, and no cause, except physical ones. The wonder only is, that it was so long a-coming."

There is a stroke of generosity in his thus attributing the impulse to physical causes, and not only abstaining from an accusation of his enemy, but expressly exempting him from all blame. The readers of the correspondence have not probably all seconded the charitable exemption; and the exulting tones in which Vincent speaks of the dismissal, foster the suspicion that he had paved the way for it. He says, on the 19th April, —

"This day was a fortnight, my Lord told Mr. Hume to be gone, and that in terms which I shall not repeat; the Monday following, the same directions were renewed in a very peremptory manner, attended with such expressions of resentment, that I advised Hume to go away the next day, which he did, the 8th; and on the 15th I went out thither, and had told my Lord before, that, if he could be reconciled to have him return, I was very willing to contribute towards it, which proposal was not in the least agreed to. . . . . Hume has not for many months stomached depending in any respect upon my decision, who was originally the cause of his being received at all, and had very great difficulty, long since and at different times, to get my Lord to bear him. He has mistaken the point; for there is nothing irritates his Lordship so much, as the thought of any one showing some tokens of authority, and looking on what he says as caprice, and of no consequence; and I really believe it is some such notion as this, which has produced so thorough an aversion."

There are two different views that may be taken of Hume's motives for not having at once resigned his appointment, at the very commencement of the train of indignities to which he was subjected. Whoever anticipates that a man who had tutored his mind by the rules of philosophy, and who lived an upright and independent life, may be actuated by some better views than those of mere pecuniary aggrandizement, will give him credit for having believed it to be his duty to watch over certain interests of the Annandale family at the sacrifice of his own feelings. Those who, strongly disapproving of his opinions as a philosopher, believe them to be therefore the dictate of a corrupted mind, will probably search for base and selfish motives; and will have little difficulty in identifying them with a pure love of gain, sufficiently strong to absorb all gentlemanly feeling and all spirit of independence. The favourable and charitable view admits of no direct demonstration on which an opponent could not be able to throw doubt; and, the circumstances being stated, each reader is left to form his own opinion.

There is one thing that Hume never attempts to conceal — his feeling that the situation was in a pecuniary point of view advantageous to him, and his consequent desire to preserve it for his own sake, so long as he could do so with honour. That it should be so is one of those inconsistencies often exhibited in fine geniuses, which ordinary men of the world find it difficult to appreciate. It frequently proceeds from this circumstance, that, not being acquainted with the ordinary beaten tracks towards wealth and independence, which other men so easily find; yet desiring the latter, although perhaps they care not for the former endowment, they lay hold with avidity on any guide that is likely to lead them, by however devious and unpleasant a path, to the desired object. Men whose minds are much occupied with abstract subjects, if they be poor and desire to be free of unpleasant obligations, are thus apt to grasp at trifling rights with a pertinacity which has the air of selfishness. They feel a timidness of their own ability to make way in a bustling active world; and, conscious that it would be vain to compete with hard-headed acute men of business in the enlargement of their fortune, treat with an undue importance any comparatively trifling claims and advantages; while the sagacious world, which sees before it so many more advantageous paths to the objects of men's secondary ambition, ridicules their much ado about nothing. It was Hume's first and chief desire to be independent. That if he had enjoyed a choice of means, to be the hired companion of the Marquis of Annandale would have been among the last on which he would have fixed, will easily be believed. But this occupation was the only method of gaining a livelihood that offered itself at the time; it was an honest one, and the disagreeable circumstances attending the means were overlooked in the desirableness of the end.

It is necessary, also, along with the account of Hume's efforts to gain a humble livelihood, to keep in mind the state of society in Scotland at that time. The union with England had introduced new habits of living, which made the means of the smaller aristocracy insufficient for the support of their younger children. On the other hand, England was jealous of Scottish rivalry in foreign trade: neither agriculture nor manufactures had made any considerable progress in Scotland; while Indian enterprise was in its infancy, and Scottish adventurers in the East had not yet found a Pactolus in the Ganges. At that period the gentleman-merchant, manufacturer, or money dealer; the civil engineer, architect, editor, or artist, were nearly unknown in Scotland. The only form in which a man poor and well born could retain the rank of a gentleman, if he did not follow one of the learned professions, was by obtaining a commission in the army, or a government civil appointment.

Here ended the channels to subsistence along with gentility, and he who had none of these paths open to him, and had resolved to make an independent livelihood by his own talents or labour, had at once, as the German nobles frequently do in the present day, to abandon his rank, and become a shopkeeper or small farmer, probably with the intention of returning to the bosom of his former social circle when he had realized an independence, but more commonly ending his days with the consciousness that he was, in the words of Henry Hunt, “the first of a race of gentlemen who had become a tradesman.” Any lawyer who pays attention to the statistics of the Scottish decisions in mercantile cases, during the earlier part of the eighteenth century, will have noticed how frequently it occurs that the younger sons of some good family are mentioned as fulfilling the humblest duties of village tradesmen. The practice is now comparatively unknown. The well educated gentleman’s son, if he be brought up to commerce, connects himself with those more liberal departments of it, in which he may reap the advantage of his education and training. To the practice which distinguished the period of depression above alluded to, aided perhaps by the spirit of clanship, we may owe the existence of so many aristocratic names among the humbler tradesmen in Scotland. In England the nomenclature of a city directory will as surely indicate the court and the tradesmen end of the town, as the Norman name used to indicate nobility and the Saxon vassalage. We do not find Edward Plantagenet keeping an oyster shop, or Henry Seymour cobbling shoes; but it would not be difficult to exemplify these humble occupations, in the regal names of a Robert Bruce or a James Stuart. In his essay on “The Parties of Great Britain,” published in 1741, Hume alludes to the absence of a middle class in Scotland, where he says there are only “two ranks of men,” “gentlemen who have some fortune and education, and the meanest starving poor: without any considerable number of the middling rank of men, which abounds more in England, both in cities and in the country, than in any other quarter of the world.”

The history of the miserable quarrels and intrigues connected with Hume’s residence in the Annandale family, is a sad picture, not only of the position of the individual, but of his class, — the poor scholars, the servile drudges for bread. The modern literary labourer — or hack, as he is called by those who deem the word labourer too respectable to be employed on such an occasion — may look from the narrow bounds of his own independent home, with a feeling of sincere though not boastful superiority on David Hume, living in the splendid bondage of a peer’s mansion. But in drawing the comparison on which the reflection rests, let him keep in view the state of literature and of society at that period, and ask where lay the hopes of the literary labourer? If he remained in the less conspicuous walks of learned industry, and became a divine or a teacher, there was before him the career of Parson Adams, taking his pot and pipe with the upper servants; or that of the threadbare tutor, subjected to the caprice and insolence of young men, who, if they do not happen to be endowed with a high tone of sentiment, must imbibe from all around them this feeling, that they are as far beyond the parallel of rank of their instructor, as the Brahmin is beyond that of the Pariah; or, thirdly, he might be the hired victim of a semi-maniac, whose few rays of remaining reason are but sufficient to indicate his own immeasurable superiority to the bought attendant of his humours. These were the resources of the man who distrusted the power of his own genius to soar into the higher flights of original literature; the man, who might perhaps be too conscientious, not to say also too timid, to throw the chance of his being able to meet his obligations to society and to perform his social duties, on the chance of his succeeding in the race for literary distinction.

But suppose the race run and gained, and the laurels on the victor’s brow, — for what, then, has all been risked, all encountered? True, Hume himself became one of the distinguished few who gained both fame and fortune; but in the ordinary case, if the former were achieved, the latter did not follow; and in seeking the types of literary distinction in his age, Fielding, Goldsmith, and Johnson are the names that rise before us. Was the garden in which these flowers bloomed so genial that we would have others transplanted thither?

Let not, then, the considerate and charitable reader overlook all these palliations of the motives which may have induced a great man to humble himself and bear so much contumely. Let us suppose that he who reads this narrative is an editor of a newspaper, with a salary of say two or three hundred a-year; or that he writes articles for the periodicals, and neither in name nor in reality bound to any one, gets the fair price of his independent labour; or that he is a teacher in an active commercial academy, who, after the harassing labours of the day, can retire to the bosom of his own family, without fearing the frown or desiring the smile of any great man, — let him, if such should be his lot, indulge, in all its luxury, the consciousness of his superior independence and happier fate; but in looking from its elevation to David Hume, a bondman in the house of an insane lord, let compassion rather than contempt tinge his estimate of the illustrious victim’s motives, and let him thank the better times, that with all the drudgery of his lot, its disappointed aspirations, and the bitterness of unavailing efforts to raise it to a higher and more justly-respected position in the eye of the world, have yet enabled him to quaff the sweet cup of independence.

Before entirely leaving the subject of Hume’s connexion with the Marquis of Annandale, it is necessary to take a view of his conduct regarding a pecuniary dispute which arose out of the transaction. The terms of the agreement were very distinctly set forth by Captain Vincent in the following letter: —

“Sir, — You desire to have a letter from me, expressing all the conditions of the agreement concluded betwixt us, with regard to your living with the Marquis of Annandale. In compliance with so reasonable a request, I hereby acknowledge that, by virtue of powers committed to me by the said Marquis, and with the approbation and consent of his Lordship and Sir James Johnstone, I engaged that my Lord should pay you three hundred pounds sterling a-year, so long as you continued to live with him, beginning from the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and forty-five: also that the said Marquis, or his heirs, should be engaged to pay you, or your heirs, the sum of three hundred pounds, as one year’s salary, even though the Marquis should happen to die any time in the first year of your attendance, or should embrace any new scheme or plan of life, which should make him choose that you should not continue to live out the first year with him. Another condition was, that, if you should, on your part, choose to leave the Marquis any time in the first or subsequent years, you should be free to do it; and that the Marquis should be bound to pay you your salary for the time you had attended him, and also the salary for that quarter in which you should leave him, in the same manner as if that quarter should be fully expired.

"These were the conditions of our agreement about the end of February last, on your first coming up to London for the purposes here mentioned, and which I have committed to writing for your satisfaction and security, this first day of September, at Weldehall, four miles south of St. Alban's, in the county of Hertford, and in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-five."

Vincent, in continuation, and for Hume's information, gives him a copy of the agreement, under which one of his predecessors in office, by name Peter Young, had been engaged; an agreement, containing terms rather more favourable to the stipendiary than those of which Hume had consented to accept. And he concludes, —

"You see the latter part of Mr. Young's agreement are more advantageous terms than the latter part of yours; but I have done as much as I thought reasonable and proper for me, and as much as you desired. I make no doubt but, in any contingency, all the Marquis's friends and relations, would be far from reducing your conditions less than that of others in the same case, as, in my opinion, and I dare believe in theirs, your character and conduct would rather entitle you to a preference."

Hume had in the mean time received a present of £100 from the Marquis of Annandale, no reference to which is made in the agreement, and which he considered as a gratuity to induce him to leave Scotland, and enter on those negotiations with Lord Annandale and his friends, which ended in his being engaged, but might have ended otherwise; as an indemnity, in short, for the time wasted and the trouble taken in the preliminary arrangements. Indeed, it will have been noticed in his letter to Mr. Sharp, quoted above, that this gratuity was sent by the Marquis along with the invitation to Hume to repair to London and hold a conference on the subject. Hume, then, was engaged at £300 a-year, with the condition that for any broken quarter a full quarter's salary should be paid. His engagement commenced on 1st April, 1745. It terminated on the 15th April, 1746. He thus considered himself entitled to £300 as a year's salary, and to £75 as the salary of the quarter, of which fifteen days had run. In the mean time, however, just after the expiry of the first year, it had occurred to the magnanimous Vincent, that though better terms than those given to Hume, had been obtained by the Peter Youngs and others, Hume's salary was twice as much as it should be, and ought to be reduced by a half. Hume, as if he had been subdued in spirit, by the life he had been leading — feeling as if his lot were cast, and his fate fixed — oblivious of the glorious dreams of ambition that had dawned on him ten years earlier in life and were yet to be realized, seems to have calmly contemplated this pecuniary reduction, and to have been inclined to agree to it if it should form the prelude to a permanent engagement. He thus wrote to the mother of the Marquis.

“I had the honour of a letter from my Lord Marquis last spring, inviting me to London, which I accordingly obeyed. He made me proposals of living with him; and Mr. Vincent, in concert with Sir James Johnstone, mentioned at first the yearly salary of £300 as an allowance which they thought reasonable; because my Lord had always paid so much to all the other gentlemen that attended him, even when his way of living, in other particulars, was much more expensive than at present. Since that, Mr. Vincent thinks this allowance too much, and proposes to reduce it from £300 to £150. My answer was, that whatever your Ladyship and my Lord should think my attendance merited, that I would very willingly accept of. As he still insisted on the reasonableness of his opinion, I have used the freedom to apply to your Ladyship, to whose sentiments every one, that has the honour of being connected with the family of Annandale, owe so entire a deference. I shall not insist on any circumstances in my own favour. Your Ladyship’s penetration will easily be able to discover those, as well as what may be urged in favour of Mr. Vincent’s opinion. And your determination shall be entirely submitted to by me.”

At the same time he appears to have submitted his grievances to the consideration of his kind friend Henry Home, who, in a letter to Sir James Johnstone, expresses views which will probably meet with more sympathy than those announced by Hume himself.

“Kames, 14th April, 1746.

“Sir, — I have a letter from Mr. David Hume lately, which surprised me not a little, as if there were a plot formed against him to diminish his salary. For my part, I was never hearty in his present situation; as I did not consider the terms offered as any sufficient temptation for him to relinquish his studies, which, in all probability, would redound more to his advantage some time or other. For this reason, though I had a good deal of indignation at the dishonourable behaviour of the author of this motion, yet underhand I was not displeased with any occasion, not blameable on my friend’s part, to disengage him. I thought instantly of writing him a letter not to stay upon any terms after such an affront; but, reflecting upon your interest in this matter, I found such an advice would be inconsistent with the duty I owe you, and therefore stopped short till I should hear from you. I'm well apprized of the great tenderness you have for your poor chief; and it is certainly of some consequence that he should have about him at least one person of integrity; and it should have given me pain to be the author of an advice that might affect you, though but indirectly. At the same time, I cannot think of sacrificing my friend, even upon your account, to make him submit to dishonourable terms; and, therefore, if you esteem his attendance of any use to the Marquis, I beg you'll interpose that no more attempts of this kind be made. For I must be so free to declare that, should he himself yield to accept of lower terms, which I trust he will not be so mean-spirited to do, he shall never have my consent, and I know he will not act without it."

The Marchioness declined to interfere, and thus the award by which Hume agreed to abide was not made. He had thus began the first quarter of a new year under the old agreement, and he had not consented either to abandon the terms of that agreement for the time that was running, or even to make new terms applicable to any subsequent period, though he had shown a disposition to accept, under certain circumstances, of these new terms. His abrupt dismissal, however, put an end to the negotiation; and, as the terms of his agreement entitled him to the £75 if he had chosen to throw up his appointment, he thought he was not the less entitled to the money that he had been dismissed, and that the ignominious and insulting treatment connected with his dismissal should not be any inducement to him to abandon his claim. He could not lose sight, moreover, of the circumstance, that to place the parties more at their ease in dealing with him, he had abandoned his claims on the professorship in Edinburgh. It is true that he had small chance of obtaining it, but that chance, such as it was, he was desired by the friends of the Marquis to abandon, and he did so. The question with him then was, how much injury he should allow to be added to the insults he had received. The £300, for his year's services, were paid. The payment of the £75, for the subsequent quarter, was resisted.

On the 9th June, 1746, Henry Home wrote a sensible and kind letter on the subject to Sir James Johnstone, in which he laid down the law of the case, that Hume's claim of salary for the broken quarter must be on the old agreement, and could not be "upon the footing of a proposal or offer, which never came the length of a covenant, and which, therefore, never had any effect;” and he says,— “The question then is, whether he is entitled to £75, for the broken quarter, or only to £37, 10s. The thing is a mere trifle to the Marquis of Annandale, but of some importance to a young gentleman who has not a large stock; and supposing the claim to be doubtful, I have great confidence in your generosity, that for a trifle you would not choose to leave a grudge in the young gentleman’s mind, of a hardship done to him.

“But to deal with you after that plain manner which I know you love, I will speak out my mind to you, that in strict justice, and in the direct words of the agreement, Mr. Hume is entitled to £75.”

Hume never entirely abandoned this claim. He was not in a position to urge it forward immediately after his dismissal, as another and more agreeable official appointment called him abroad. So late as 1760 and during the next ensuing year, we find him urging his demand, and allusion is made to an action having been raised in the Court of Session. “The case,” says Dr. Murray, “must have been settled extrajudicially or by reference; for, after a careful search in the minute book of the Court of Session, we do not find that it was ever enrolled.”

There has been a general tendency to consider this pertinacious adherence to a pecuniary claim, as a proceeding unworthy of a philosopher. In any ordinary man, whether wise or foolish after the wisdom of the world, such conduct would have appeared but just and natural; but a philosopher is presumed to have no more respect for money and its value, than the generous and sympathizing gentleman on the stage, who on the impulse of the moment, always tosses a heavy purse to somebody, without having any more distinct notion of its contents than the admiring audience can have. Hume’s notions of these matters were different. “Am I,” he said, “in a condition to make the Marquis of Annandale a present of £75, that of right belongs to me.” It is true that in the interval between the debt being incurred, and his insisting on its payment, he had by frugality and industry made himself independent. In 1747, he tells us that he was possessed of £1000, and in 1760, his fortune had probably considerably increased, though the sources of emolument which made him subsequently worth £1000 a-year, had not been then opened up. The surplus of the Marquis of Annandale’s estate had in the mean time accumulated in the manner that has been already mentioned, and Hume probably thought it was an action more truly worthy of a philosopher, to make over his salary of librarian to the poor blind poet Blacklock, than to abandon a claim of £75, justly due by an estate which had developed a surplus of £400,000.

Early in the year 1746, Hume received an invitation from General St. Clair, “to attend him as a secretary to his expedition, which was at first meant against Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France.” Before his departure, and while he expected to have to cross the Atlantic, he wrote the following letter, addressed to “Mr. Alexander Home, Advocate, His Majesty’s Solicitor for Scotland, at Edinburgh.” The concluding remarks evidently relate to the state prosecutions following on the insurrection in Scotland.

“Portsmouth, May 23, 1746.

“Dear Solicitor, — A letter you have good reason to expect from me, before my departure for America; but a long one you cannot look for, if you consider that I knew not a word of this matter till Sunday last at night, that we shall begin to embark from hence in two or three days, and that I had very ingeniously stripped myself of every thing, by sending down my whole baggage for Scotland on Sunday morning. Such a romantic adventure, and such a hurry I have not heard of before. The office is very genteel — 10s. a day, perquisites, and no expenses. Remember me kindly to your brothers. Tell Frank I ask him ten thousand pardons. Let Mr. Dysart, and Mrs. Dysart know of my good wishes. Be assured yourself of my friendship. I cannot leave Europe without giving you one instance of it, and so much the greater that with regard to any other person but you, it would be a dangerous one. In short, I have been told, that the zeal of party has been apt sometimes to carry you too far in your expressions, and that fools are afraid of your violence in your new office. Seek the praise, my dear Sandy, of humanity and moderation. ’Tis the most durable, the most agreeable, and in the end the most profitable.

“I am, dear Sandy, yours most sincerely.

“For God’s sake, think of *Willy Hamilton*.”

At the same time we find him writing to Henry Home, and speculating on the possibility of himself joining the military service.

“As to myself, my way of life is agreeable; and though it may not be so profitable as I am told, yet so large an army as will be under the general’s command in America, must certainly render my perquisites very considerable. I have been asked, whether I would incline to enter into the service? My answer was, that at my years I could not decently accept of a lower commission than a company. The only prospect of working this point would be, to procure at first a company in an American regiment, by the choice of the colonies. But this I build not on, nor indeed am I very fond of it. D. H.”

The person to whom we thus find Hume acting in the capacity of secretary, was the Honourable James St. Clair, one of those commanders whose fortune it is to have passed through a long life of active military service, without having one opportunity of performing a distinguished action; for though, on the present occasion, the path to honour appeared to be at last opened to him, it was closed by the mismanagement of others. He was the second son of Henry Lord St. Clair. His elder brother being engaged in the rebellion of 1715, was attainted by act of Parliament. The father left the family estates to General St. Clair, who, with a generous devotion to the hereditary principle, conveyed them to his elder brother, on that gentleman obtaining a pardon and a statutory removal of the disabilities of the attainder. He obtained the rank of colonel on 26th July, 1722, of major-general on 15th August, 1741, and of lieutenant-general on 4th June, 1745. During the last named year he was quarter-master general of the British forces in Flanders. He was for many years a member of Parliament, having been elected for the Dysart burghs in 1722, and subsequently for the counties of Sutherland and Fife. He died at Dysart on 30th November, 1762.

The marine force connected with the proposed expedition was commanded by Admiral Richard Lestock, a man whose professional fate was in some respects of a like character with that of his military colleague. The intended object of the armament was an attack on the French possessions in Canada, and steps had been taken to second its efforts on the other side of the Atlantic, by bringing together a British American force. But the indolence or negligence of the authorities at home, delayed the departure of the fleet until it was too late to attempt such an enterprise; and then, as if to furnish a vivid illustration of weak and blundering counsels, that all these preparations might not be thrown away, the force prepared for operations in America was sent to attempt a descent on the coast of France.

The naval force, consisting of sixteen ships of the line, eight frigates, and two bomb-ketches, accompanied by five thousand eight hundred land troops, including matrosses and bombardiers, set sail from Plymouth on

14th September. Its destination was the town of Port L’Orient, then a flourishing port, as the depot of the French East India Company, which has since fallen to decay in common with the great establishment with which it was connected. The history and fate of the expedition will be best described in Hume’s own words. It afforded no harvest of military glory to either country; and while it is but slightly described by our own historians, it is scarcely ever mentioned by those of France. National partiality will hardly make any lover of the true glory of his country regret that such an attempt was a failure. The method of conducting war by descents upon an enemy’s coast, is a relic of barbarism which it is to be hoped the progress of humanity and civilisation will not permit either false enthusiasm or the auspices of a great name to revive among the nations of Europe. It is precisely the warlike tactic of the scalping knife — the wreaking against the weak that vengeance which cannot reach the strong. The rules of civilized war are to strike such blows as will annihilate the power of an enemy’s government, with the least injury to the peaceful inhabitants of the country. Descents on a coast do much injury to individuals — they do little harm to the enemy’s government. It is a system by which the vital parts are not attacked until they suffer by exhaustion from the injuries done to the extremities. Such expeditions do a grievous injury to our enemies, to accomplish a very small good to ourselves. But if they cannot be avoided, the next step of mercy is to make them effectual by energetic and well-organized measures which render resistance hopeless, and subject the places attacked only to the modified license of a well-disciplined army. The blunders that made the present attempt as contemptible as it was cruel, are amply recorded by Hume, and may be a lesson of the responsibility incurred by those who fit out warlike expeditions.

In this expedition Hume not only acted as secretary to the general, but was appointed by him judge advocate of all the forces under his command, by a commission “given on board his majesty’s ship Superb, the third day of August, 1746,” in virtue of the power which the commander of an army possesses to fill up a vacancy in that office. The mixed ministerial and judicial duties of a judge advocate require a general knowledge of the great principles of law and justice, with a freedom from that technical thraldom of the practical lawyer which would be unsuitable to the rapidity of military operations; and there can be little doubt that these delicate and important functions were in this instance committed to one in every way capable of performing them in a satisfactory manner.

Some of Hume’s permanent friendships appear to have been formed during this expedition. General Abercromby, with whom we will afterwards find him corresponding, was quarter-master general, Harry Erskine was deputy quarter-master, and Edmonstoune of Newton was a captain in the Royal Scottish regiment. Of the operations of the expedition, and some other incidents of deep interest connected with it, he sent the following narrative to his brother, John Hume, or Home, of Ninewells.

Hume *to his Brother*.

“Our first warlike attempt has been unsuccessful, though without any loss or dishonour. The public rumour must certainly have informed you that, being detained in the Channel, till it was too late to go to America, the ministry, who were willing to make some advantage of so considerable a sea and land armament, sent us to seek adventures on the coast of France. Though both the general and admiral were totally unacquainted with every part of the coast, without pilots, guides, or intelligence of any kind, and even without the common maps of the country; yet, being assured there were no regular troops near this whole coast, they hoped it was not possible but something might be successfully undertaken. They bent their course to Port L’Orient, a fine town on the coast of Britanny, the seat of the French East India trade, and which about twenty years ago was but a mean, contemptible village. The force of this town, the strength of its garrison, the nature of the coast and country, they professed themselves entirely ignorant of, except from such hearsay information as they had casually picked up at Plymouth. However, we made a happy voyage of three days, landed in the face of about 3000 armed militia on the 20th of September, marched up next day to the gates of L’Orient, and surveyed it.

“It lies at the bottom of a fine bay two leagues long, the mouth of which is commanded by the town and citadel of Port Louis, or Blavet, a place of great strength, and situated on a peninsula. The town of L’Orient itself has no great strength, though surrounded by a new wall of about 30 foot high, fortified with half moons, and guarded with some cannon. They were in prodigious alarm at so unexpected an attack by numbers which their fears magnified, and immediately offered to capitulate, though upon terms which would have made their conquest of no significancy to us. They made some advances a few hours after, to abate of their demands; but the general positively refused to accept of the town on any other condition than that of surrendering at discretion. He had very good reason for this seeming rigour and haughtiness. It has long been the misfortune of English armies to be very ill-served in engineers; and surely there never was on any occasion such an assemblage of ignorant blockheads as those which at this time attended us. They positively affirmed it was easily in their power, by the assistance of a mortar and two twelve pounders, in ten hours' time, either to lay the town and East India magazine in ashes, or make a breach by which the forces might easily enter. This being laid before the general and admiral, they concluded themselves already masters of the town,and needed grant no terms. They were besides afraid that had they taken the town upon terms, and redeemed it for a considerable sum of money, the good people of England, who love mischief, would not be satisfied, but would still entertain a suspicion that the success of his majesty's arms had been secretly sold by his commanders. Besides, nothing could be a greater blow to the French trade than the destruction of this town; nor what could imprint a stronger terror of the English naval power, and more effectually reduce the French to a necessity of guarding their coast with regular forces, which must produce a great diversion from their ambitious projects on the frontiers. But when the engineers came to execution, it was found they could do nothing of what they had promised. Not one of their carkasses or red hot balls took effect. As the town could not be invested either by sea or land, they got a garrison of irregulars and regulars, which was above double our number, and played 35 pieces of cannon upon us while we could bring only four against them. Excessive rains fell, which brought sickness amongst our men that had been stowed in transports during the whole summer. We were ten miles from the fleet, the roads entirely spoilt, every thing was drawn by men, the whole horses in the country being driven away. So much fatigue and duty quite overcame our little army. The fleet anchored in a very unsafe place in Quimperlay Bay. For these and other reasons it was unanimously determined to raise the siege on the 27th of September; and to this measure there was not one contradictory opinion either in the fleet or army. We have not lost above ten men by the enemy in the whole expedition, and were not in the least molested either in our retreat or re-embarkation. We met with a violent storm on the 1st of October, while we were yet very near the coast, and have now got into Quiberon Bay south of Belle-Isle, where we wait for a reinforcement of three battalions from

England. There are five or six of our transports amissing. After our French projects are over, which must be very soon because of the late season, we sail to Cork and Kingsale.

"While we lay at Plœmeur, a village about a league from L'Orient, there happened in our family one of the most tragical stories ever I heard of, and than which nothing ever gave me more concern. I know not if ever you heard of Major Forbes, a brother of Sir Arthur's. He was, and was esteemed, a man of the greatest sense, honour, modesty, mildness, and equality of temper, in the world. His learning was very great for a man of any profession; but a prodigy for a soldier. His bravery had been tried, and was unquestioned. He had exhausted himself with fatigue and hunger for two days, so that he was obliged to leave the camp and come to our quarters, where I took the utmost care of him, as there was a great friendship betwixt us. He expressed vast anxiety that he should be obliged to leave his duty, and fear lest his honour should suffer by it. I endeavoured to quiet his mind as much as possible, and thought I had left him tolerably composed at night; but, returning to his room early next morning, I found him, with small remains of life, wallowing in his own blood, with the arteries of his arm cut asunder. I immediately sent for a surgeon, got a bandage tied to his arm, and recovered him entirely to his senses and understanding. He lived above four-and-twenty hours after, and I had several conversations with him. Never a man expressed a more steady contempt of life, nor more determined philosophical principles, suitable to his exit. He begged of me to unloosen his bandage, and hasten his death, as the last act of friendship I could show him: but, alas! we live not in Greek or Roman times. He told me that he knew he could not live a few days: but if he did, as soon as he became his own master, he would take a more expeditious method, which none of his friends could prevent. 'I die,' says he, 'from a jealousy of honour, perhaps too delicate; and do you think, if it were possible for me to live, I would now consent to it, to be a gazing-stock to the foolish world. I am too far advanced to return. And if life was odious to me before, it must be doubly so at present.' He became delirious a few hours before he died. He had wrote a short letter to his brother, above ten hours before he cut his arteries. This we found on the table."

"Quiberon Bay in Britanny, Oct. 4, 1746."

"P.S. — The general has not sent off his despatches till to-day, so that I have an opportunity of saying a few words more. Our army disembarked on the 4th of October, and took possession of the peninsula of Quiberon, without opposition. We lay there, without molestation, for eight days, though the enemy had formed a powerful, at least a numerous, army of militia on the continent. The separation of so many of our transports, and the reinforcements not coming, determined us to reimbark, and return home, with some small hopes that our expedition has answered the chief part of its intended purpose, by making a diversion from the French army in Flanders. The French pretend to have gained a great victory; but with what truth we know not. The admiral landed some sailors, and took possession of the two islands of Houat and Hedie, which were secured by small forts. The governor of one of them, when he surrendered his fort, delivered up his purse to the sea officer, and begged him to take care of it, and secure it from the pillage of the sailors. The officer took charge of it, and, finding afterwards a proper opportunity to examine it, found it contained the important sum of ten sous, which is less than sixpence of our money."

"October 17."

As Niebuhr was an eye-witness of the battle of Copenhagen, so Hume also had thus an opportunity of observing some practical warlike operations, though they were on a much smaller scale, and were witnessed in much less exciting circumstances than those which attended the position of the citizen of Copenhagen. Thus, although not themselves soldiers, these two great historians swell the list, previously containing the names of Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Guicciardini, Davila, and Rapin, of those historians of warfare who have witnessed its practical operation. Voltaire, when the accuracy of his description of a battle was questioned by one who had been engaged in it, bid the soldier keep to his profession of fighting, and not interfere with another man's, which was that of writing; but there is little doubt, that the person who would accurately describe military manœuvres, will have his task facilitated by having actually witnessed some warlike operations, on however small a scale, and however unlike in character to those which he has to describe. Scott considered that he had derived much of his facility as a narrative historian from his services in the Mid-Lothian yeomanry; and Gibbon found that to be an active officer in the Hampshire militia was not without its use to the historian of the latter days of Rome.

It is pretty clear that Hume looked upon these operations, not only as events likely to furnish him with some critical knowledge of warlike affairs, but with the inquiring eye of one who might have an opportunity of afterwards narrating them in some historical work. In the appendix there will be found a pretty minute account by Hume, of the causes which led to the failure of the expedition, in a paper apparently drawn up as a vindication of the conduct of General St. Clair. It does not appear to have been printed, although it seems to have been designed for the press. It contains the following passage: “A certain foreign writer, more anxious to tell his stories in an entertaining manner than to assure himself of their reality, has endeavoured to put this expedition in a ridiculous light; but as there is not one circumstance in his narration that has truth in it, or even the least appearance of truth, it would be needless to lose time in refuting it.”

The following passage in a letter to Sir Harry Erskine, dated 20th January, 1756, shows that he here alludes to Voltaire: “I have been set upon by several to write something, though it were only to be inserted in the Magazines, in opposition to this account which Voltaire has given of our expedition. But my answer still is, that it is not worth while, and that he is so totally mistaken in every circumstance of that affair, and indeed of every affair, that I presume nobody will pay attention to him. I hope you are of the same opinion.” But if Voltaire ever wrote on this subject, it must have been in one of those works of which he took the liberty of determinedly denying the authorship, for there appears to be nothing bearing on the subject in the usual editions of his published and acknowledged works, and in his “Précis du Siecle de Louis XV.,” he passes over the expedition with the briefest possible allusion.

We find Hume, on the return of the expedition, writing the following letter to Henry Home. It contains some curious notices of its writer’s views and intentions, and betrays a sort of irresolution as to his subsequent projects, which seems to have haunted him through life. It is here that we find the first allusion to his historical studies. The extracts from his notes, or adversaria, printed above, show that he had read much in history, but chiefly in that of the ancient nations. It does not appear that he had yet paid any marked attention to British history.

Hume *to* Henry Home.

“Dear Sir, — I am ashamed of being so long in writing to you. If I should plead laziness, you would say I am much altered; if multiplicity of business, you would scarce believe me; if forgetfulness of you and our friendship, I should tell a gross untruth. I can therefore plead nothing but idleness, and a gay, pleasurable life, which steals away hour after hour, and day after day, and leaves no time for such occupations as one's sober reason may approve most of. This is our case while on shore, and even while on board, as far as one can have much enjoyment in that situation.

"I wrote my brother from the coast of Britanny; giving him some account of our expedition, and of the causes of our disappointment. I suppose he received it after you had left the country, but I doubt not he has informed you of it. We were very near a great success, the taking of L'Orient, perhaps Port Louis, which would have been a prodigious blow to France; and, having an open communication with the sea, might have made a great diversion of their forces, and done great service to the common cause. I suppose you are become a great general, by the misfortune of the seat of war being so long in your neighbourhood. I shall be able when we meet to give you the just cause of our failure. Our expedition to North America is now at an end; we are recalled to England, the convoy is arrived, and we re-embark in a few days. I have an invitation to go over to Flanders with the general, and an offer of table, tent, horses, &c. I must own I have a great curiosity to see a real campaign, but I am deterred by the view of the expense, and am afraid, that living in a camp, without any character, and without any thing to do, would appear ridiculous. Had I any fortune which would give me a prospect of leisure and opportunity to prosecute my *historical projects*, nothing could be more useful to me, and I should pick up more literary knowledge in one campaign, by living in the general's family, and being introduced frequently to the duke's, than most officers could do after many years' service. But to what can all this serve? I am a philosopher, and so, I suppose, must continue.

"I am very uncertain of getting half pay, from several strange and unexpected accidents, which it would be too tedious to mention; and if I get it not, shall neither be gainer nor loser by the expedition. I believe, if I would have begun the world again, I might have returned an officer, gratis; and am certain, might have been made chaplain to a regiment gratis; but . . . . I need say no more. I shall stay a little time in London, to see if any thing new will present itself. If not, I shall return very cheerfully to books, leisure, and solitude, in the country. An elegant table has not spoiled my relish for sobriety; nor gaiety for study; and frequent disappointments have taught me that nothing need be despaired of, as well as that nothing can be depended on. You give yourself violent airs of wisdom; you will say, *Odi* *hominem ignavâ operâ, philosophicâ sententiâ*. But you will not say so when you see me again with my Xenophon or Polybius in my hand; which, however, I shall willingly throw aside to be cheerful with you, as usual. My kind compliments to Mrs. Home, who, I am sorry to hear, has not yet got entirely the better of her illness. I am," &c.

We find Hume corresponding also with Oswald and Colonel Abercromby, as to his claim of half-pay for his services as Judge Advocate in the expedition; and this subject we find him occasionally resuming down to so late a period as 1763, when he speaks of "insurmountable difficulties," and fears he must "despair of success." It must be admitted that when he thought fit to make a pecuniary claim he did not easily resign it. His correspondent, Colonel Abercromby of Glassauch, has already been mentioned as having held a command in the expedition. He was afterwards one of Hume's intimate friends. Besides his rank in the army, he held the two discordant offices of king's painter in Scotland, and deputy-governor of Stirling castle. He was elected member of parliament for the shire of Banff in 1735, and Hume's letters contain congratulations on his re-election in 1747, along with some incidents in his own journey towards Scotland.

"Ninewells. 7th August, 1747.

"Dear Col^{l}. — I have many subjects to congratulate you upon. The honour you acquired at Sandberg, your safety, and your success in your elections. You are equally eminent in the arts of peace and war. The cabinet is no less a scene of glory to you than the field. You are a hero even in your sports and amusements; and discover a superior genius in whist, as well as in a state intrigue or in a battle.

"I hope you recover well of your wound, and I beg of you to inform me. I should be glad to know what became of Forster, and whether Bob Horne got the majority. I write to you upon the supposition of your being at London; because Dr. Clephane wrote me some time ago, that you was just setting out for it. If that be the case please make my most humble compliments to Mrs. Abercromby.

"If the Colonel be still detained abroad by any accident, I must beg it of you, Mrs. Abercromby, to take these compliments to yourself, and to keep this letter till the Colonel comes over, for it is not worth while to pay postage for it. I suppose, madam, that Lady Abercromby informed you of our happy voyage together, and safe arrival in Newcastle: your young cousin was a little noisy and obstreperous; our ship was dirty; our accommodation bad; our company sick. There were four spies, two informers, and three evidences, who sailed in the same ship with us. Yet notwithstanding all these circumstances, we were very well pleased with our voyage, chiefly on account of its shortness, which indeed is almost the only agreeable circumstance that can be in a voyage. I am, &c.”

“To the royal in Bergen-op-zoom? Have they lost any officers? I hope Guidelianus is safe? I hope Fraser is converted?”

In his correspondence with Oswald on the same matter of his half-pay, his remarks on public affairs are very desponding. He says, —

“I know not whether I ought to congratulate you upon the success of your election, where you prevailed so unexpectedly. I think the present times are so calamitous, and our future prospect so dismal, that it is a misfortune to have any concern in public affairs, which one cannot redress, and where it is difficult to arrive at a proper degree of insensibility or philosophy, as long as one is in the scene. You know my sentiments were always a little gloomy on that head; and I am sorry to observe, that all accidents (besides the natural course of events) turn out against us. What a surprising misfortune is this Bergen-op-zoom, which is almost unparalleled in modern history! I hear the Dutch troops, besides their common cowardice, and ill-discipline, are seized with an universal panic. This winter may perhaps decide the fate of Holland, and then where are we? I shall not be much disappointed if this prove the last parliament, worthy the name, we shall ever have in Britain. I cannot therefore congratulate you upon your having a seat in it: I can only congratulate you upon the universal joy and satisfaction it gave to every body.”

CHAPTER VI.

1746-1748. Æt. 35-37.

Hume returns to Ninewells — His domestic Position — His attempts in Poetry — Inquiry as to his Sentimentalism — Takes an interest in Politics — Appointed Secretary to General St. Clair on his mission to Turin — His journal of his Tour — Arrival in Holland — Rotterdam — The Hague — Breda — The War — French Soldiers — Nimeguen — Cologne — Bonn — The Rhine and its scenery — Coblentz — Wiesbaden — Frankfurt — Battle of Dettingen — Wurzburg — Ratisbon — Descent of the Danube — Observations on Germany — Vienna — The Emperor and Empress Queen — Styria — Carinthia — The Tyrol — Mantua — Cremona — Turin.

We now find Hume restored, though but for a brief period, to the tranquil retirement of Ninewells; and undisturbed by public events, civil or warlike, sitting down quietly among his books in the midst of his family circle, consisting of his mother, his elder brother, and his sister. It would be interesting to obtain a glimpse of this circle and its habits; but the lapse of nearly a century has thrown it too far into the shade of time, to permit of these minute objects being distinguished. Perhaps the following scrap from the papers preserved by Hume himself, may represent the evening diversions of Ninewells. It is written by another hand, but is touched and corrected here and there by Hume. Whether or not it is intended to have any reference to himself, is a matter on which I shall not attempt to forestall the reader’s judgment.

Character of —— , written by himself.

1. A very good man, the constant purpose of whose life is to do mischief.

2. Fancies he is disinterested, because he substitutes vanity in place of all other passions.

3. Very industrious, without serving either himself or others.

4. Licentious in his pen, cautious in his words, still more so in his actions.

5. Would have had no enemies, had he not courted them; seems desirous of being hated by the public, but has only attained the being railed at.

6. Has never been hurt by his enemies, because he never hated any one of them.

7. Exempt from vulgar prejudices — full of his own.

8. Very bashful, somewhat modest, no way humble.

9. A fool, capable of performances which few wise men can execute.

10. A wise man, guilty of indiscretions which the greatest simpletons can perceive.

11. Sociable, though he lives in solitude.

12.

13. An enthusiast, without religion; a philosopher, who despairs to attain truth.

A moralist, who prefers instinct to reason.

A gallant, who gives no offence to husbands and mothers.

A scholar, without the ostentation of learning.

Sir Walter Scott says:— "We visited Corby castle on our return to Scotland, which remains, in point of situation, as beautiful as when its walks were celebrated by David Hume, in the only rhymes he was ever known to be guilty of. Here they are from a pane of glass in an inn at Carlisle, —

Here chicks in eggs for breakfast sprawl,
Here godless boys God's glories squall,
Here Scotchmen's heads do guard the wall,
But Corby's walks atone for all."

In the face, both of this assurance of the limited extent of Hume's poetical efforts, and of the circumstance that he was occasionally in the practice of copying such verses as pleased his ear, or fancy, I venture to offer the following specimens of his versification, admitting the possibility but not the probability that some minute investigator might be able to identify them as the production of a less distinguished bard. The censorious critic will probably admit their genuineness, on the plea that no one but their author would commit such verses to writing. But apart from their internal evidence, there is every reason to presume that these efforts are by Hume. The first piece is dated in the writer's hand, as if to mark the day when it was composed. With the exception of the third in order, they all contain, in corrections and otherwise, decided marks of being composed by the person in whose handwriting they are; and they are in the handwriting of David Hume.

4th Nov. 1747.

Go, plaintive sounds, and to the fair
My secret wounds impart,
Tell all I hope, tell all I fear,
Each motion in my heart.
But she, methinks, is listening now
To some amusing strain,
The smile that triumphs o’er her brow,
Seems not to heed my pain.
Yet, plaintive sounds — yet, yet delay,
Howe’er my love repine,
Let this gay minute pass away,
The next, perhaps, is mine.
Yes, plaintive sounds, no longer crost,
Your griefs shall soon be o’er;
Her cheek, undimpled now, has lost
The smile it lately wore.
Yes, plaintive sounds, she now is yours,
’Tis now your turn to move:
Essay to soften all her powers,
And be that softness love.
Cease plaintive sounds, your task is done,
That serious tender air
Proves o’er her heart the conquest won,
I see you melting there.
Return, ye smiles, — return again,
Bring back each sprightly grace:
I yield up to your charming reign
That sweet enchanting face.
I take no outward shows amiss;
Rove where you will, her eyes:
Still let her smiles each shepherd bless,
So that she hear my sighs.

If this piece be deficient in fire or polish, it has at least the merit of simplicity, and of not being a slavish adaptation to the formal taste of the age. The following pieces will scarcely perhaps be thought worthy of the like qualified praise.

Tell me, Clarinda, why this scorn,
Why hatred give for love?
Why for a gentler purpose born,
Wouldst thou a tyrant prove?
Why draw a cloud upon that face,
Made to enslave mankind?
Why through your lips does thunder pass,
Those lips for love design’d.
Kindness, conjoin’d with meaner charms,
Will from you conquests gain;
We fly into *extended* arms,
In *close-embraced* remain.
Thus when the angry heavens transform
To frowns their cheerful smiles,
When the dread thunder’s voice a storm
To trembling swains foretells,
If but a humble cottage nigh
Presents its peaceful shade,
We scorn the furies of the sky,
And court its friendly aid.

TO A LADY,

Suspecting that the friendship of men to her sex always concealed a more dangerous passion.

Hang, my lyre, upon the willow,
Sigh to winds thy notes forlorn,
Or along the foaming billow,
Float the wrecking tempest’s scorn.
Airs no more thy warbling raises,
Such as Laura deigns approve;
Laura scorns her poet’s praises,
Artless friendship calls it love.

Impious love, that, spurning duty,

Spurning nature’s chastest ties,
Mocks thy tears, dejected beauty,
Sports with fallen virtue’s sighs.
Call it love no more, profaning
Truth with dark suspicion’s wound;
Or, if still the term retaining,
Change the sense, preserve the sound.
Yes, ’tis love, that name is given,
Angels, to your purest flames;
Such a love as merits Heaven,
Heaven’s divinest image claims.

LAURA’S ANSWER.

Soon be thy lyre to winds consign’d.
Or hurl’d beneath the raging deep;
For while such strains seduce my mind,
How shall my heart its purpose keep.
Thy artless lays, which artless seem,
With too much fondness I approve;
Oh write no more in such a theme,
Or Laura’s friendship ends in love.

The question, whether the man concerning whom a biographical work is written was ever in love, is an important feature in his history, if any light can be thrown upon it. Perhaps some readers will hold, that the tameness of these verses show that, at all events, when he wrote *them*, Hume was under the impulse of no passion. Very little more light can be brought to bear on this subject; and what can be obtained, is of a like faint and negative cast. He tells us in his “own life,” “As I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them.” In his essays he frequently discusses the passion of love, dividing it into its elements about as systematically as if he had subjected it to a chemical analysis, and laying down rules regarding it as distinctly and specifically as if it were a system of logic. Nor do the references in his correspondence to any individuals of the other sex, show any perceptible warmth of sentiment. In a letter to Henry Home, of which the other portions are printed above, he speaks with perhaps as much appearance of sentiment as any where else, when he says, —

"I thank Mrs. Home for her intelligence, and have much employed my brain to find out the person she means. It could not be the widow: for she toasts always the Duke of Argyle or Lord Stair, and never would name a young man whom she may reasonably enough suppose to be in love with her. I shall therefore flatter myself it was Miss Dalrymple. It is now Exchequer term: she is among the few *very fine ladies* of Mrs. Home's acquaintance, whom I have the happiness of knowing. In short, many circumstances, besides my earnest wishes, concur to make me believe it was she who did me that honour. I will persevere in that opinion; unless you think it proper to disabuse me, for fear of my being too much puft up with vanity by such a conceit."

His friend Jardine, writing to him when he was secretary of legation in France, says, evidently in ironical reference to his notorious want of sensibility in this respect, "An inordinate love of the fair sex, as I have often told you, is one of those sins, that always, even from your earliest years, did most easily beset you."

Nor does the following passage in a letter from Mr. Crawford, dated, London, 9th December, 1766, seem to convey any more serious charge: —

"What keeps you in Scotland? Lord Ossory says, it can be nothing but the young beauty for whom you had formerly some passion. But we are both of opinion, that she must now be old and ugly, and cannot be worthy to detain you in so vile a country. Neither love nor wit can flourish there, otherwise you would not have cracked such bad jokes upon philosophers, the best subject in the world for joking upon. Then,

— fuge nate Deâ — *sterili teque abstrahe terrâ*.

Come up here, and I know not but what I may be able to introduce you to a young beauty, such as your imagination never figured to itself. With charms and accomplishments possessed by no other woman, she has an understanding equal to that of Madame du Deffand. — Would to God she were blind like her too, that I might dare to avow my passion for her."

If there be any thing in these passages tending to show a slight degree of interest in the sex, their tendency will perhaps be fully neutralized by Hume's exultation on the fortunate nature of his own happy indifference, in a letter to Oswald, which will be found a few pages farther on. It must be confessed, indeed, that, according to all appearance, the appellation, more expressive than classical, frequently used on such occasions, is applicable to Hume, and that he was a "sad indifferent dog."

To return to the verses. — The following is a specimen of a totally different cast; and, if less ambitious in its pretensions, it will probably be thought to have more successfully accomplished what it aims at. It is called “An Epistle to Mr. John Medina,” a son of Sir John Medina, the celebrated painter, to whom, probably from the habits hinted at in the verses, he was a far inferior artist. He is believed to have been the painter of a large portion of the very numerous extant portraits of Queen Mary. It would be difficult at this day to discover the individual whom he is here called upon to portray, with attributes about as grotesque as those of his inexplicable countryman, Aiken Drum. As several names of persons who were active supporters of the measures of social economy, and the agricultural improvements alluded to in the verses, might be adduced, but no one can be named to whom they appear distinctly and exclusively to apply, it may be less invidious to present them in the form of a purely imaginative picture, than to associate them with any name.

AN EPISTLE TO MR. JOHN MEDINA.

Now, dear Medina, honest John,
Since all your former friends are gone,
And even Macgibbon ‘s turn’d a saint,
You now perhaps have time to paint.
For you, and for your pencil fit,
The subject shall be full of wit.
Draw me a little lively knight,
And place the figure full in sight.
With mien erect, and sprightly air,
To win the great, and catch the fair.
Make him a wreath of turnip tops,
With madder interwove, and hops;
Lucerne, and St. Foin, here and there,
Amid the foliage must appear;
Then add potatoes, white and red,
A garland for our hero’s head.

His coat be of election laws,
Lined with the patriot’s good old cause.
His waistcoat of the linen bill,
Lapelled with flint and lined with tull.

The turnpike act must serve for breeches;
With hose of rape tied up with fetches,
Furrows, new horse-hoed, hide his shoes,
As earnest cross the fields he goes.
Draw Pallas offering him a spool,
The Lemnian god a miner’s tool.
Ceres three stalks of blighted corn,
Dangling from an inverted horn;
And Plutus every scheme inspiring
With proffer’d gold, but still retiring:
Alike to each important call,
Attentive, let him grasp at all.
Finish, my friend, this grand design,
And immortality be thine.
No more obliged, for twenty groats,
To draw the Duke, or Queen of Scots,
Your name shall rise, prophetic fame says,
Above your Mercis or your Ramsays.
Even I, in literary story,
Perhaps shall have my share of glory.

Hume was again called away from the studious retirement of Ninewells, by being appointed secretary to the mission of his friend General St. Clair, to the court of Turin. The real object of the mission, in whatever aspect it might have been openly represented, certainly was to satisfy the British court on the question, whether Sardinia, and perhaps some of the other stipendiary states, had furnished their respective quotas of men to the war. The following letter by Hume to his friend Oswald, details many of his feelings on assuming this new duty. It will be found to be as different in tone from his previous letters, as the life he was entering on was different from his hermit retirement at Ninewells, or his slavery at Weldhall. This letter, indeed, appears to mark an epoch in his correspondence. It is the first in which he mentions miscellaneous public events, with the feeling of one who takes an interest in the living politics of his time; and shows that the brief episode of active practical life, in which he had just borne a share, and the prospect of a renewal of such scenes, had opened his mind to the reception of external impressions.

Hume *to* James Oswald.

"I have little more to say to you than to bid you adieu before I leave this country. I got an invitation from General St. Clair, to attend him in his new employment at the court of Turin, which I hope will prove an agreeable, if not a profitable jaunt for me. I shall have an opportunity of seeing courts and camps; and if I can afterwards be so happy as to attain leisure and other opportunities, this knowledge may even turn to account to me, as a man of letters, which, I confess, has always been the sole object of my ambition. I have long had an intention, in my riper years, of composing some history; and I question not but some greater experience in the operations of the field, and the intrigues of the cabinet, will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgment upon these subjects. But, notwithstanding of these flattering ideas of futurity, as well as the present charms of variety, I must confess that I left home with infinite regret, where I had treasured up stores of study and plans of thinking for many years. I am sure I shall not be so happy as I should have been had I prosecuted these. But, in certain situations, a man dares not follow his own judgment or refuse such offers as these.

"The subscriptions for the stocks were filled up with wonderful quickness this year; but, as the ministry had made no private bargains with stock-jobbers, but opened books for every body, these money-dealers have clogged the wheels a little, and the subscribers find themselves losers on the disposal of their stock, to their great surprise.

"There was a controverted election, that has made some noise, betwixt John Pitt and Mr. Drax of the Prince's family, when Mr. Pelham, finding himself under a necessity of disobliging the heir-apparent, resolved to have others as deep in the scrape as himself; and accordingly obliged Fox, Pitt, Lyttelton, and Hume Campbell, all to speak on the same side. They say their speeches were very diverting. An ass could not mumble a thistle more ridiculously than they handled this subject. Particularly our countryman, not being prepared, was not able to speak a word to the subject, but spent half an hour in protestations of his own integrity, disinterestedness, and regard to every man's right and property.

"His brother, Lord Marchmont, has had the most extraordinary adventure in the world. About three weeks ago he was at the play, where he espied in one of the boxes a fair virgin, whose looks, air, and manner, made such a powerful and wonderful effect upon him as was visible to every bystander. His raptures were so undisguised, his looks so expressive of passion, his inquiries so earnest, that every body took notice of it. He soon was told that her name was Crompton, a linen-draper's daughter, that had been bankrupt last year, and had not been able to pay above five shillings in the pound. The fair nymph herself was about sixteen or seventeen, and being supported by some relations, appeared in every public place, and had fatigued every eye but that of his Lordship, which, being entirely employed in the severer studies, had never till that fatal moment opened upon her charms. Such and so powerful was their effect, as to be able to justify all the Pharamonds and Cyruses in their utmost extravagancies. He wrote next morning to her father, desiring leave to visit his daughter on honourable terms; and in a few days she will be Countess of Marchmont. All this is certainly true. They say many small fevers prevent a great one. Heaven be praised that I have always liked the persons and company of the fair sex! for by that means I hope to escape such ridiculous passions. But could you ever suspect the ambitious, the severe, the bustling, the impetuous, the violent Marchmont, of becoming so tender and gentle a swain — an Artamenes, an Oroondates?

"The officers, (I suppose from effeminacy,) are generally much disgusted at the service. They speak of no less than three hundred, high and low, who have desired leave to sell out. I am," &c.

"London, January 29, 1748."

On the same occasion he writes the following short letter to Henry Home.

"London, Feb. 9. 1748.

"Dear Sir, — The doubt and ambiguity with which I came hither was soon removed. General St. Clair positively refused to accept of a secretary from the ministry; and I go along with him in the same station as before. Every body congratulates me upon the pleasure I am to reap from this jaunt: and really I have little to oppose to this prepossession, except an inward reluctance to leave my books, and leisure and retreat. However, I am glad to find this passion still so fresh and entire; and am sure, by its means, to pass my latter days happily and cheerfully, whatever fortune may attend me.

"I leave here two works going on: a new edition of my Essays, all of which you have seen, except one, 'Of the Protestant Succession,' where I treat that subject as coolly and indifferently as I would the dispute between Cæsar and Pompey. The conclusion shows me a Whig, but a very sceptical one. Some people would frighten me with the consequences that may attend this candour, considering my present station; but I own I cannot apprehend any thing.

“The other work is the ‘Philosophical Essays,’ which you dissuaded me from printing. I won’t justify the prudence of this step, any other way than by expressing my indifference about all the consequences that may follow. I will expect to hear from you; as you may from me. Remember me to Mrs. Home, and believe me to be yours most sincerely.

“P.S. — We set out on Friday next for Harwich.”

Of his second appointment under General St. Clair, on the duties of which he entered at the beginning of the year 1748, Hume thus speaks in his “own life,” after having mentioned the descent on the coast of France, —

“Next year, to wit, 1747, I received an invitation from the General to attend him in the same station in his military embassy to the courts of Vienna and Turin. I then wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced at these courts as aid-de-camp to the General, along with Sir Harry Erskine and Captain Grant, now General Grant. These two years were almost the only interruptions which my studies have received during the course of my life. I passed them agreeably, and in good company; and my appointments, with my frugality, had made me reach a fortune, which I called independent, though most of my friends were inclined to smile when I said so: in short, I was now master of near a thousand pounds.”

We fortunately possess a more detailed account of his adventures and observations on this occasion, in a pretty minute journal which he transmitted to his brother, for the amusement of his family at home. It requires no farther introduction, and is as follows: —

“Hague, 3d March, 1748, N. S.

“Dear Brother, — I have taken a fancy, for your amusement, to write a sort of journal of our travels, and to send you the whole from Turin, by a messenger whom we are to despatch from thence. I shall endeavour to find little snatches of leisure in the several towns through which we shall pass, and shall give you an account of the appearances of things, more than of our own adventures. The former may be some entertainment, but the other will in all probability contain little diversity, at least for some time.

“We set out from Harwich the day I wrote you last, and in twenty-four hours arrived at Helvoet-Sluys. I had the misfortune to be excessively sick, but the consolation to see an admiral as sick as myself. ’Twas Admiral Forbes, the most agreeable, sensible sea officer in England. Harwich and Helvoet are the general images in abridgment of all the towns in the two countries; both of them small sea-port towns, without much trade, or any support but passengers; yet the industry, economy, and cleanliness of the Dutch, have made the latter the much prettier town. The day of our arrival we lay at Rotterdam, and passed through the Brill and Maeslan-Sluys. Yesterday we lay at this place. Holland has the beauties of novelty to a stranger, as being so much different from all the other parts of the world; but not those of diversity, for every part of it is like another. ’Tis an unbounded plain, divided by canals, and ditches, and rivers. The sea higher than the country, the towns higher than the sea, and the ramparts higher than the towns. The country is in general pretty open, except a few willow trees, and the avenues of elm, which lead to their towns, and shade the ramparts. But the country is at present covered with snow, so that it is difficult to judge of it. Were the season favourable, the way of travelling would be very pleasant, being along the dykes, which gives you a perfect prospect of the whole country. I need not describe the beauty and elegance of the Dutch towns, particularly of the Hague, which nothing can exceed. Rotterdam is also a handsome town. The mixture of houses, trees, and ships, has a fine effect, and unites town, country, and sea, in one prospect. Every person and every house has the appearance of plenty and sobriety, of industry and ease. I own, however, that the outside of their houses are the best; they are too slight, full of bad windows, and not very well contrived.”

“Hague, 10th March.

“The General intended to have left this place to-day, but was detained by the arrival of his Royal Highness, which will retard him a day or two longer. We go first to Breda, where the General’s two battalions lie, out of which he will endeavour to form one good healthy battalion to remain here. The other returns to Scotland. We go in a day or two. The Prince of Orange’s authority seems firmly established, and for the present is as absolute as that of any king in Europe; the favour of the people is the foundation of it. He is certainly a man of great humanity and moderation, but his courage and capacity is perhaps a little more doubtful. The present emergencies have given him an opportunity of establishing his authority on a firmer bottom than popular favour; viz. on foreign and mercenary forces. The Dutch troops have behaved so ill, that the people themselves are willing to see them disgraced, and discredited, and broke; so that the prince has been able to make great distinctions in favour of foreigners, with the good will of the people, who see the necessity of it.

“He has broke all the Dutch troops that were prisoners in France, but keeps up the foreigners that were in the same condition; and the latter are chiefly encouraged in every thing. Great and universal joy appeared on the birth of the young prince while we were there, though all the arrangements were taken to have the young princess succeed, and particularly, she was named colonel of a regiment of guards.

“This is a place of little or no amusement, nor has the court made much difference in this respect. No balls, no comedy, no opera. The prince gives great application to business, which, however, they pretend does not advance very much. But this we may venture to say, that Holland was undoubtedly ruined by its liberty, and has now a chance of being saved by its prince. Let republicans make the best of this example they can.

“’Tis here regarded as a point indisputable, that the old governors were in concert with the French, and were resolved, by delivering up town after town, and army after army, to have peace, though at the price of slavery and dependence. ’Tis a pity that the scrupulous and conscientious character of the prince has not allowed him to make some examples of these rascals, against whom, ’tis said, there could have been legal proofs. It was not the mob, properly speaking, that made the revolution, but the middling and substantial tradesmen. At Rotterdam particularly, these sent a regular deputation to the magistrates, requiring the establishment of the Prince of Orange, telling them, at the same time, that if their request was refused, they could no longer answer for the mob. This hint was sufficiently understood, and gave an example to all the other towns in the province.

“The only violence offered, was that of throwing into the canals whoever wore not Orange ribbons. Every yellow rag, woollen, silk, and linen, were employed; and when these were exhausted, the flowers were made use of; and happily the revolution began in the spring, when the primroses and daffodillys could serve as Orange cockades. To this day, every boor, and tradesman, and schoolboy, wears the ensigns of the prince; and every street in every village, as well as in every town, has triumphal arches with emblematical figures and Latin inscriptions, such as, ‘Tandem justitia triumphat,’ ‘Novus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo,’ ‘Vox populi, vox Dei.’ I shall only say, if this last motto be true, the Prince of Orange is the only *Jure divino* monarch in the universe. I believe, since the time of Germanicus, deservedly the darling of the Romans, never was a people so fond of one man; surely there entered not the smallest intrigue of his own into his election. There is something of innocence and simplicity in his character, which promotes more his popularity than the greatest capacity. But,

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis
Tempus eget.

“Breda, 16th March.

“We arrived here the day before yesterday, in three days from the Hague, and as the snows were then melted, after the most violent frost in the world, we discovered Holland in all its native deformity. Nothing can be more disagreeable than that heap of dirt, and mud, and ditches, and reeds, which they here call a country, except the silly collection of shells and clipped evergreens which they call a garden. It gave us a sensible pleasure, as we came near Breda, to find ourselves on a dry barren heath, and to see something like a human habitation. I have heard that a man, from the aspect of Holland, would imagine that land and water, after many struggles which should be master of it, had at last agreed to share it betwixt them. If so, the land has come by much the worst bargain, and has much the smallest share of the possession. I am told, however, that Holland is a pleasant enough habitation in the summer: though even that beauty lasts a very short time; for, during the latter end of summer and during the harvest, the canals send forth so disagreeable and unwholesome a smell, that there is no enduring of it.

“We passed over the Maese at Gorcum, where it is above half a mile broad; and as the ice had been softened by a thaw of three or four days, we were obliged to make use of an ice boat. The operation is after this manner: you place yourself on your ice boat, which is like an ordinary boat, except only that it runs upon two keels, shod with iron. Three or four men push you along in this boat, very cleverly, as long as the ice will bear you: but whenever that fails, plump down you go into the water of a sudden. You are very heartily frightened. The men are wet, up to the neck sometimes; but, keeping hold of the boat, leap in, row you through the water, till they come to ice which can bear. There they pull you up, run along with you, till you sink again; and so they renew the same operation.

“At Gorcum we met with Drumlanrig’s regiment, which does no great honour to their country by their looks and appearances. There has been a mutiny amongst them, out of discontent to the country. We met with some Highlanders, who regretted extremely their native hills.

“The night we came to Breda we supped with Lord Albemarle, who told us, in entering, that we might soon expect to hear of a battle in the neighbourhood; and accordingly, in about an hour, a messenger came in with the news, which is the best we have had in the Low Countries during the whole war. You have no doubt heard of it. It was the attack of a convoy to Bergen-op-Zoom, escorted by about 5000 French, where 400 were killed, and about 1000 taken prisoners. Next day, the prisoners were led through the town. They were the piquets of several old regiments, and some companies of grenadiers; but such pitiful-looking fellows never man set eye on. France is surely much exhausted of men, when she can fill her armies with such poor wretches. We all said, when they passed along, are these the people that have beat us so often?

“I stood behind Lord Albemarle, who was looking over a low window to see them. One of the ragged scarecrows, seeing his lordship’s star and ribbon, turned about to him, and said very briskly, ‘Aujourd’hui pour vous, Monsieur, demain pour le roi.’ If they have all this spirit, no wonder they beat us. However, when one compares to the French the figures of men that are in this town, British, Hessians, and Austrians, they seem almost of a different species. Their officers expect they will all do much better after having had leisure to see their enemy. Breda is a strong town, though not near so strong as Bergen-op-zoom. It is almost surrounded by water, and inaccessible except in one place, by which it will be taken, if the 206,000 men, whom we are to have in the field this year, in the Low Countries, cannot save it. ’Tis certain so many men are stipulated by the several powers, — the greatest army that ever was assembled together in the world, since the Xerxeses and Artaxerxeses; if these could be called armies. God prosper his royal highness, and give him what he only wants; I mean good fortune, to second his prudence and conduct.

“The French certainly have laid their account to give up Flanders by the peace; they squeeze, and oppress, and tax and abuse the Flemings so much, that ’tis evident they consider them not as subjects. They are also said to be pretty heartily tired of the war, notwithstanding of their great successes. I suppose the loss of their trade pinches them; so that there are some hopes of a peace, which may not be altogether intolerable. By the conversation I have had with several judicious officers, I find that Mareschal Saxe and Lowendahl, though sensible men and of great experience, are not regarded as such mighty generals as we are apt to imagine them at a distance, from their victories and conquests. Their blunders last campaign were many and obvious, and particularly that of besieging Bergen-op-zoom. ’Twas a thousand to one they got it, and it serves them to no purpose when they have it: It is not by that quarter they can penetrate into the Provinces.”

“Nimeguen, 20th March.

“We have come from Breda in two days, and lay last night at Bois-le-duc, which is situated in the midst of a lake, and is absolutely impregnable. That part of Brabant, through which we travelled, is not very fertile, and is full of sandy heaths. Nimeguen is in the Gueldre, the pleasantest province of the seven, perhaps of the seventeen. The land is beautifully divided into heights and plains, and is cut by the branches of the Rhine. Nimeguen has a very commanding prospect, and the country below it is particularly remarkable at present because of the innundation of the Wahal, a branch of the Rhine, which covers the whole fields for several leagues; and you see nothing but the tops of trees standing up amidst the waters, which recalls the idea of Egypt during the inundations of the Nile. Nimeguen is a well-built town, not very strong, though surrounded with a great many works. Here we met our machines, which came hither by a shorter road from the Hague. They are a berline for the general and his company, and a chaise for the servants. We set out to-morrow, and pass by Cologne, Frankfort, and Ratisbon, till we meet with the Danube, and then we sail down that river for two hundred and fifty miles to Vienna.

“Cologne, 23d March.

“We came hither last night, and have travelled through an extreme pleasant country along the banks of the Rhine. Particularly Cleves, which belongs to the King of Prussia, is very agreeable, because of the beauty of the roads, which are avenues bordered with fine trees. The land in that province is not fertile, but is well cultivated. The bishoprick of Cologne is more fertile and adorned with fine woods as well as Cleves. The country is all very populous, the houses good, and the inhabitants well clothed and well fed. This is one of the largest cities in Europe, being near a league in diameter. The houses are all high; and there is no interval of gardens or fields. So that you would expect it must be very populous. But it is not so. It is extremely decayed, and is even falling to ruin. Nothing can strike one with more melancholy than its appearance, where there are marks of past opulence and grandeur, but such present waste and decay, as if it had lately escaped a pestilence or famine. We are told, that it was formerly the centre of all the trade of the Rhine, which has been since removed to Holland, Liege, Frankfort, &c. Here we see the Rhine in its natural state; being only a little higher (but no broader) on account of the melting of the snows. I think it is as broad as from the foot of your house to the opposite banks of the river.”

“Bonne, 24th March.

“This is about six leagues from Cologne, a pleasant well-built little town, upon the banks of the Rhine, and is the seat of the archbishop. We have bestowed half a day in visiting his palace, which is an extensive magnificent building; and he is certainly the best lodged prince in Europe except the King of France. For, besides this palace, and a sort of Maison de Plaisance near it, (the most elegant thing in the world,) he has also two country houses very magnificent. He is the late emperor’s brother; and is, as they say, a very fine gentleman; — a man of pleasure, very gallant and gay; he has always at his court a company of French comedians and Italian singers. And as he always keeps out of wars, being protected by the sacredness of his character, he has nothing to hope and nothing to fear; and seems to be the happiest prince in Europe. However, we could wish he took a little more care of his high-ways, even though his furniture, pictures, and building were a little less elegant. We are got into a country where we have no fires but stoves; and no covering but feather beds; neither of which I like, both of them are too warm and suffocating.”

“Coblentz, 26th March.

“We have made the pleasantest journey in the world in two days from Bonne to this town. We travel all along the banks of the Rhine; sometimes in open, beautiful, well-cultivated plains; at another time sunk betwixt high mountains, which are only divided by the Rhine, the finest river in the world. One of these mountains is always covered with wood to the top; the other with vines; and the mountain is so steep that they are obliged to support the earth by walls, which rise one above another like terraces to the length of forty or fifty stories. Every quarter of a mile, (indeed as often as there is any flat bottom for a foundation,) you meet with a handsome village, situated in the most romantic manner in the world. Surely there never was such an assemblage of the wild and cultivated beauties in one scene. There are also several magnificent convents and palaces to embellish the prospects.

“This is a very thriving well-built town, situated at the confluence of the Moselle and the Rhine, and consequently very finely situated. Over the former river there is a handsome stone bridge; over the latter a flying bridge, which is a boat fixed by a chain: this chain is fixed by an anchor to the bottom of the middle of the river far above, and is supported by seven little boats placed at intervals that keep it along the surface of the water. By means of the rudder, they turn the head of the large boat to the opposite bank, and the current of the river carries it over of itself. It goes over in about four minutes, and will carry four or five hundred people. It stays about five or six minutes and then returns. Two men are sufficient to guide it, and it is certainly a very pretty machine. There is the like at Cologne. This town is the common residence of the Archbishop of Treves, who has here a pretty magnificent palace. We have now travelled along a great part of that country, through which the Duke of Marlborough marched up his army, when he led them into Bavaria. ’Tis of this country Mr. Addison speaks when he calls the people —

Nations of slaves by Tyranny debased,
Their Maker’s image more than half-defaced.

And he adds that the soldiers were —

Hourly instructed as they urge their toil,
To prize their Queen and love their native soil.

“If any foot soldier could have more ridiculous national prejudices than the poet, I should be much surprised. Be assured there is not a finer country in the world; nor are there any signs of poverty among the people. But John Bull’s prejudices are ridiculous, as his insolence is intolerable.”

“Frankfort, 28th March.

“Our road from Coblentz to this passes through a great many princes’ territories; Nassau’s, Hesse’s, Baden’s, Mentz, and this Republic, &c. and there is as great a diversity in the nature of the country. The first part of the road from Coblentz to Weis-Baden is very mountainous and woody, but populous and well-cultivated. In many places the snow is lying very thick. The road is disagreeable for a coach; sometimes you go along the side of a hill with a precipice below you, and have not an inch to spare; and the road hanging all the way towards the precipice, so that one had need to have a good head to look out of the windows. Nassau, the prince of Orange’s capital, is but a village, and one of the most indifferent I have seen in

Germany. Betwixt Weis-Baden and Frankfort we travel along the banks of the Maine, and see one of the finest plains in the world. I never saw such rich soil nor better cultivated; all in corn and sown grass. For we have not met with any natural grass in Germany.

"Frankfort is a very large town, well-built and of great riches and commerce. Around it there are several little country houses of the citizens, the first of that kind we have seen in Germany; for every body, except the farmers, live in towns, and these dwell all in villages. Whether this be for company or protection, or devotion, I cannot tell. But it has certainly its inconveniences. Princes have also seats in the country, and monks have their convents; but no private gentleman ever dwells there. To-morrow we pass over the field of Dettingen. We saw Heighst [Höchst] to-day, where Lord Stair past the Maine, and was recalled. The post he took seems not so good as we have heard it represented. We saw General Mordaunt at Cologne, who was at the battle of Dettingen, and gave us an exact description of the whole, which we are to-morrow to compare with the field. Frankfort is a Protestant town."

"Wurtzburg, 30th March.

"The first town we come to after leaving Frankfort is Hanau, which belongs to the Landgrave of Hesse, and where there is a palace, that may lodge any king in Europe, though the Landgrave never almost lives there. Hanau is a very beautiful, well-built, but not large town, on the banks of the Maine. All the houses almost in Germany are of plaster, either upon brick or wood, but very neatly done, and many of them painted over, which makes them look very gay. Their peasants' houses are sometimes plaster, sometimes clay upon wood, two stories high, and look very well.

"Next post beyond Hanau is the village of Dettingen, where we walked out and surveyed the field of battle, accompanied with the postmaster, who saw the battle from his windows. Good God, what an escape we made there! The Maine is a large river not fordable; this lay on our left hand. On our right, high mountains covered with thick wood, for several leagues. The plain is not half a mile broad. The French were posted by Noailles with their right supported by the river and the village of Dettingen; their left by the mountains; on their front a little rivulet, which formed some marshes and meadows altogether impassable for the cavalry, and passable with difficulty by the infantry. Add to this, that their cannon, played in safety on the other side of the Maine, raked the whole plain before Dettingen, and took our army in flank. Noailles had past the bridge of Aschaffenbourg which was not broke down, and came up upon our rear; and our army was starving for want of provisions.

"Such an arrangement of circumstances, as it were contrived to ruin an army, a king and kingdom, never was before found in the world; and yet there we gained a victory, by the folly of Grammont, who past that rivulet, and met us in the open plain, before Noailles had come up. We were travelling in great security, notwithstanding two repeated informations that the French had past the Maine; the baggage of the army was betwixt the two lines; and when the first cannons were fired, Neuperg and Stair both agreed that it could be nothing but the French signal guns. But when they were certain that the affair was more in earnest, Stair said, 'Go to the king; I take nothing upon me.' Clayton said, 'I will take it upon me, to remove the baggage.' And it was he that made the little disposition that was made that day. The English behaved ill: the French worse, which gave us the victory. But this victory so unexpectedly gained, we pushed not as we ought, by the counsel of Neuperg. What Lord Stair's whim was to advance to Aschaffenbourg, where he was twenty-five miles from Frankfort, the place of all his magazines, 'tis impossible to imagine. Surely he could advance no farther, as he must have been convinced had he reconnoitred the road. It runs over high mountains, and for twenty-five miles through the thickest woods in the world.

"There is a pass three or four miles beyond Aschaffenbourg, where no army could go with cannon and baggage. When we came to the foot of it a trumpeter met us, who played a tune for joy of our safe arrival; and the like on our ascending the opposite hill. The woods beyond are the finest I ever saw. Wurtzburg is a very well-built town, situated in a fine valley on the Maine. The banks of the river are very high, and covered with vines. The river runs through the town, and is passed on a very handsome bridge. But what renders this town chiefly remarkable, is a building which surprised us all, because we had never before heard of it, and did not there expect to meet with such a thing. 'Tis a prodigious magnificent palace of the bishop who is the sovereign. 'Tis all of hewn stone and of the richest architecture. I do think the king of France has not such a house. If it be less than Versailles, 'tis more complete and finished. What a surprising thing it is, that these petty princes can build such palaces: but it has been fifty years a rearing; and 'tis the chief expense of ecclesiastics. The bishop of Wurtzburg is chosen from amongst the canons, who have a very good artifice to exclude princes. ’Tis a rule, that every one at entering shall receive a very hearty drubbing from the rest: the brother of the elector of Bavaria offered a million of florins, to be exempted from the ceremony, and could not prevail.”

“Ratisbon, 2d April.

“We were all very much taken with the town of Nuremberg, where we lay two nights ago; the houses, though old-fashioned, and of a grotesque figure, (having sometimes five or six stories of garrets,) yet are they solid, well built, complete, and cleanly. The people are handsome, well clothed, and well fed; an air of industry and contentment, without splendour, prevails through the whole. ’Tis a Protestant republic on the banks of a river, (whose name I have forgot,) that runs into the Maine, and is navigable for boats. The town is of a large extent. On leaving Nuremberg we entered into the elector of Bavaria’s country, where the contrast appeared very strong with the inhabitants of the former republic. There was a great air of poverty in every face; the first poverty indeed we had seen in Germany. We travelled also through part of the elector Palatine’s country, and then returned to Bavaria; but though the country be good and well cultivated, and populous, the inhabitants are not at their ease. The late miserable wars have no doubt hurt them much. Ratisbon is a catholic republic situated on the banks of the Danube. The houses and buildings, and aspect of the people, are well enough, though not comparable to those of Nuremberg. ’Tis pretended that the difference is always sensible betwixt a Protestant and Catholic country, throughout all Germany; and perhaps there may be something in this observation, though it is not every where sensible.

“We descend the Danube from this to Vienna; we go in a large boat about eighty foot long, where we have three rooms, one for ourselves, a second for the servants, and a third for our kitchen. ’Tis made entirely of fir boards, and is pulled to pieces at Vienna, the wood sold, and the watermen return to Ratisbon a-foot. We lie on shore every night. We are all glad of this variety, being a little tired of our berline.”

“The Danube, 7th of April.

“We have really made a very pleasant journey, or rather voyage, with good weather, sitting at our ease, and having a variety of scenes continually presented to us, and immediately shifted, as it were in an opera. The banks of the Danube are very wild and savage, and have a very different beauty from those of the Rhine; being commonly high scraggy precipices, covered all with firs. The water is sometimes so straitened betwixt these mountains, that this immense river is often not sixty foot broad. We have lain in and seen several very good towns in Bavaria and Austria, such as Strauburg, Passau, Lintz; but what is most remarkable is the great magnificence of some convents, particularly Moelk, where a set of lazy rascals of monks live in the most splendid misery of the world; for, generally speaking, their lives are as little to be envied as their persons are to be esteemed.

"We enter Vienna in a few hours, and the country is here extremely agreeable; the fine plains of the Danube began about thirty miles above, and continued down, through Austria, Hungary, &c. till it falls into the Black Sea. The river is very magnificent. Thus we have finished a very agreeable journey of 860 miles (for so far is Vienna from the Hague,) have past through many a prince's territories, and have had more masters than many of these princes have subjects. Germany is undoubtedly a very fine country, full of industrious honest people; and were it united, it would be the greatest power that ever was in the world. The common people are here, almost every where, much better treated, and more at their ease, than in France; and are not very much inferior to the English, notwithstanding all the airs the latter give themselves. There are great advantages in travelling, and nothing serves more to remove prejudices; for I confess I had entertained no such advantageous idea of Germany; and it gives a man of humanity pleasure to see that so considerable a part of mankind as the Germans are in so tolerable a condition."

"Vienna, 15th April.

"The last week was Easter week, and every body was at their devotions, so that we saw not the court nor the emperor and empress, till yesterday, when we were all introduced by Sir Thomas Robinson. They are a well-looked couple, the emperor has a great air of goodness, and his royal consort of spirit. Her voice, and manner, and address are the most agreeable that can be, and she made us several compliments on our nation. She is not a beauty; but, being a sovereign, and a woman of sense and spirit, no wonder she has met such extraordinary support from her subjects, as well as from some other nations of Europe. However, the English gallantry towards her is a little relaxed; and the King of Sardinia is their present favourite. She begged of the general not to be so much her enemy as his predecessor, General Wentworth, had been. He replied, that a perfect impartiality was recommended him by the king, his master; and that he was resolved to preserve it, though he confessed that was difficult for a person who had had the honour of having had access to her imperial majesty.

“We were introduced to-day to the archdukes and archduchesses (who are fine children) and to the empress-dowager. She had seen no company for two months; but, hearing that Englishmen desired to be introduced to her, she immediately received us. You must know that you neither bow nor kneel to emperors and empresses, but curtsy; so that, after we had had a little conversation with her imperial majesty, we were to walk backwards through a very long room, curtsying all the way, and there was very great danger of our falling foul of each other, as well as of tumbling topsy-turvy. She saw the difficulty we were in; and immediately called to us: ‘Allez, allez, Messieurs, sans cérémonie; vous n’êtes pas accoutumés a ce mouvement, et le plancher est glissant.’ We esteemed ourselves very much obliged to her for this attention, especially my companions, who were desperately afraid of my falling on them and crushing them.

“This court is fine, without being gay; and the company is very accessible, without being very sociable. When we were to be introduced to the emperor and empress, Sir Thomas Robinson gathered us all together into a window, that he might be able to carry us to them at once, when the time should be proper. A lady came up to him, and asked him if these were not his chickens he was gathering under his wings, after which she joined conversation with us; and in a little time asked us, if we had any acquaintance of the ladies of the court, and if we should not be glad to know their names. We replied that she could not do us a greater favour. ‘Why, then,’ says she, ‘I shall tell you, beginning with myself; I am the Countess’ — she added her name, which I am sorry to have forgot. We have met with several instances of these agreeable liberties. The women here are many of them handsome; if you ever want toasts, please to name, upon my authority, Mademoiselle Staremberg, or the Countess Palfì.

“The men are ugly and awkward. We have seen all those fierce heroes, whom we have so often read of in gazettes, the Lichtensteins, the Esterhasis, the Colloredos; most of them have red heels to their shoes, and wear very well-dressed toupees.

“I have heard Maly Johnston say she was told that she was very like the empress-queen. Please tell her it is not so. The empress, though not very well shaped, is better than Maly; but she has not so good a face. She looks also as if she were prouder and worse tempered. Apropos, to our friends of Hutton hall, inform them that they have a very near relation at this court, who is a prodigious fine gentleman, and a great fool. His name is Sir James Caldwell. He told me his grandmother was a Hume, and that he expected soon to inherit a very fine estate by her, which he was to share with the Johnstones in Scotland. But he says it is only Wynne that has the half, not the ladies, who have no share; so that you'll please tell Sophy that I am off; and give her her liberty, notwithstanding all vows and promises that may have past betwixt us."

"Vienna, 25th April.

"We set out to-morrow, but go not by the way of Venice, as we at first proposed. This is some mortification to us. We shall go, however, by Milan. This town is very little for a capital, but excessively populous. The houses are very high, the streets very narrow and crooked, so that the many handsome buildings that are here, make not any figure. The suburbs are spacious and open; but, on the whole, I can never believe what they tell us, that there are two hundred thousand inhabitants in it. It is composed entirely of nobility and of lackeys, of soldiers and of priests. Now, I believe you'll allow, that in a town inhabited only by these four sets of people above-mentioned, the empress-queen could not have undertaken a more difficult task, than that which she has magnanimously entered upon, viz. the producing an absolute chastity amongst them. A court of chastity is lately erected here, who send all loose women to the frontiers of Hungary, where they can only debauch Turks and Infidels. I hope you will not pay your taxes with greater grudge, because you hear that her imperial majesty, in whose service they are to be spent, is so great a prude.

"There has been great noise made with us on account of the queen's new palace at Schönbrunn. It is, indeed, a handsome house, but not very great nor richly furnished. She said to the general last night, that not a single soldier had gone to the building, whatever might be said in England, but that she liked better to be tolerably lodged than to have useless diamonds by her; and that she had sold all her crown jewels to enable her to be at that expense. I think, for a sovereign, she is none of the worst in Europe, and one cannot forbear liking her for the spirit with which she looks, and speaks, and acts. But 'tis a pity her ministers have so little sense.

"Prince Eugene's palace in the suburbs is an expensive stately building, but of a very barbarous Gothic taste. He was *more skilled in battering walls* *than building*, as was said of his friend, the Duke of Marlborough. There is a room in it, where all Prince Eugene's battles were painted: upon which the Portuguese ambassador told him, that the whole house was indeed richly furnished, but that all the kings in Europe could not furnish such a room as that. I have been pretty busy since I came here, and have regretted it the less that there is no very great amusement in this place. No Italian opera; no French comedy; no dancing. I have, however, heard Monticelli, who is the next wonder of the world to Farinelli."

"Knittelfeldt in Styria, 28th April.

"This is about a hundred and twenty miles from Vienna. The first forty is a fine well-cultivated plain, after which we enter the mountains; and, as we are told, we have three hundred miles more of them before we reach the plains of Lombardy. The way of travelling through a mountainous country is generally very agreeable. We are obliged to trace the course of the rivers, and are always in a pretty valley surrounded by high hills; and have a constant and very quick succession of wild agreeable prospects every quarter of a mile. Through Styria nothing can be more curious than the scenes. In the valleys, which are fertile and finely cultivated, there is at present a full bloom of spring. The hills to a certain height are covered with firs and larch trees, the tops are all shining with snow. You may see a tree white with blossom, and, fifty fathom farther up, the ground white with snow. These hills, as you may imagine, give a great command of water to the valleys, which the industrious inhabitants distribute into every field, and render the whole very fertile. There are many iron mines in the country, and the valleys are upon that account extremely populous. But as much as the country is agreeable in its wildness, as much are the inhabitants savage, and deformed, and monstrous in their appearance. Very many of them have ugly swelled throats; idiots and deaf people swarm in every village; and the general aspect of the people is the most shocking I ever saw. One would think, that as this was the great road, through which all the barbarous nations made their irruptions into the Roman empire, they always left here the refuse of their armies before they entered into the enemy's country, and that from thence the present inhabitants are descended. Their dress is scarce European, as their figure is scarce human.

"There happened, however, a thing to-day, which surprised us all. The empress-queen, regarding this country as a little barbarous, has sent some missionaries of Jesuits to instruct them. They had sermons to-day in the street, under our windows, attended with psalms; and believe me, nothing could be more harmonious, better tuned, or more agreeable than the voices of these savages; and the chorus of a French opera does not sing in better time. You may infer from thence, if you please, that Orpheus did not civilize the savage nations by his music. I know not what progress the Jesuits have made by their eloquence; but it appears to me that religion is not the point in which the Styrians are defective, at least if we may judge by the number of their churches, crucifixes, &c. We shall be detained here some days by Sir Harry Erskine's illness, who is seized with an ague."

"Clagenfurt in Carinthia, May 4.

"This is a mighty pretty little town, near the Drave. It is the capital of the province, and stands in a tolerable large plain, surrounded with very high hills; and on the other side the Drave we see the savage Mountains of Carniola. You know the Alps join with the Pyrenees, these with the Alps, and run all along the north of Turkey in Europe to the Black Sea, and form the longest chain of mountains in the universe.

"The figure of the Carinthians is not much better than that of the Styrians."

"Trent, 8th of May.

"We are still amongst mountains, and follow the tract of rivers in order to find our way. But the aspect of the people is wonderfully changed on entering the Tyrol. The inhabitants are there as remarkably beautiful as the Styrians are ugly. An air of humanity, and spirit, and health, and plenty, is seen in every face. Yet their country is wilder than Styria, the hills higher, and the valleys narrower and more barren. They are both Germans, subject to the house of Austria; so that it would puzzle a naturalist or politician to find the reason of so great and remarkable a difference. We traced up the Drave to its source: (that river, you know, falls into the Danube, and into the Black Sea.) It ended in a small rivulet, and that in a ditch, and then in a little bog. On the top of the hill (though there was there a well cultivated plain) there was no more appearance of spring than at Christmas. In about half a mile after we had seen the Drave extinguish, we observed a little stripe of water to move. This was the beginning of the Adige, and the rivers that run into the Adriatic. We were now turning toward the south part of the hill, and descended with great rapidity. Our little brook in three or four miles became a considerable river, and every hour's travelling showed us a new aspect of spring; so that in one day we passed through all the gradations of that beautiful season, as we descended lower into the valleys, from its first faint dawn till its full bloom and glory. We are here in Italy; at least the common language of the people is Italian. This town is not remarkable neither for size nor beauty. ’Tis only famous for that wise assembly of philosophers and divines, who established such rational tenets for the belief of mankind.”

“Mantua, 11th of May.

“We are now in classic ground; and I have kissed the earth that produced Virgil, and have admired those fertile plains that he has so finely celebrated.

Perdidit aut quales felices Mantua campos.

“You are tired, and so am I, with the descriptions of countries; and therefore shall only say, that nothing can be more singularly beautiful than the plains of Lombardy, nor more beggarly and miserable than this town.”

“Cremona, 12th of May.

“Alas, poor Italy!

Impius haec tam culta novalia miles habebit;
Barbarus has segetes?
The poor inhabitant
Starves, in the midst of Nature’s plenty curst;
And in the loaded vineyard dies for thirst.

“The taxes are here exorbitant beyond all bounds. We lie to-morrow at Milan.”

“Turin, June 16th, 1748.

“I wrote you about three weeks ago. This is brought into England by Mr. Bathurst, a nephew of Lord Bathurst, who intended to serve a campaign in our family. We know nothing as yet of the time of our return. But I believe we shall make the tour of Italy and France before we come home. ’Tis thought the general will be sent as public minister to settle Don Philip; so that we shall have seen a great variety of Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish, and French courts in this jaunt.

Qui mores hominum multorum vidit, et urbes.

“I say nothing of Milan, or Turin, or Piedmont: because I shall have time enough to entertain you with accounts of all these. Though you may be little diverted with this long epistle, you ought at least to thank me for the pains I have taken in composing it. I have not yet got my baggage.”

Far different was the pomp and circumstance in which the writer of this narrative performed his journey, from the condition in which Goldsmith, four years afterwards, pursued nearly the same route to —

—— where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door.

And Hume’s motions seem to have partaken of the pomp and regularity of his official station; for, even in these familiar letters to his brother, he is all along the secretary of legation; or when he descends from that height, it is but to mount the chair of the scholar and philosopher. There are no escapades. We never hear that he has taken it in his head to diverge from the regular route to see an old castle or a waterfall. Yet he went with an eye for scenery. The Alpine passes excited his admiration, and his description of the banks of the Rhine will be recognised at this day as very accurate — with one material exception. He says nothing of the feudal fortresses perched like the nests of birds of prey, to which their moral resemblance was at least as close as their physical; and thus one of the greatest historians of his age, passes through a country without appearing to have noticed in their true character, this series of prominent marks of a remarkable chapter in the history of Europe. He speaks of them simply as “palaces” — a word not designative of the character of the buildings, or in any way evincing that their historical position had occurred to his mind. But it must be admitted, that later tourists on the Rhine have amply made up for his silence on these matters.

He does not condescend to mention any one of the fine specimens of Gothic architecture which he must have seen — not even that vast and beautiful fragment the cathedral of Cologne. One wonders whether or not he was at the trouble of inquiring, what was that huge mass which he must have seen towering over the city; and if, straying within its gates, and looking on Albert Durer’s painted windows, he had curiosity enough to inspect the reliquary of the tomb of the three kings, containing gems so ancient, that they are conjectured to be older than Christianity, and to have been the ornaments of some Pagan shrine, transferred to and historically associated with the pure creed which displaced the barbarous rites of Paganism. This might have at least formed a curious topic for his Natural History of Religion. But on this as on many other subjects, he would sympathize with La Bruyere when he speaks of “L’ordre Gothique, que la barbarie avoit introduit pour les palais et pour les temples;” and his thorough neglect of both the baronial and ecclesiastical architecture of the middle ages, is characteristic of a mind which could find nothing worthy of admiration, in the time which elapsed between the extinction of ancient classical literature, and the rise of the arts and sciences in modern Europe.

But upon scarcely any subject does Hume converse as a brother travelling into foreign lands might be supposed to address a brother residing at home, and cultivating his ancestral acres. We should expect to find him observing that this river is like the Tweed, or unlike it — larger or smaller; or comparing some range of hills with the Cheviots: but he is general and undomestic in all his remarks, save the one observation that the Rhine is as broad as from his brother's house to the opposite side of the river.

Until he comes to the land of Virgil, where he shows real enthusiasm, the chief object of his interest and observation appears to have been the warlike operations in the midst of which he found himself. The mission must have been attended with the ordinary dangers of a military enterprise. It was undertaken at a time when all Europe was at war, and though decisive battles were not taking place, petty conflicts and surprises were of perpetual occurrence until the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, a few months afterwards, restored repose to the exhausted nations. Yet we find no symptoms of anxiety in the mind of the philosophical actor of the military character. His tone is generally that of a private traveller in a peaceful country, rather than that of a member of an expedition armed for defence, and likely to be called on to defend itself. When he mentions warlike operations, he adopts the tone of a historical critic, and never that of a person who may find his personal safety or comfort compromised by them.

Though he seems to have set out with the too general notion that military affairs are the main object of attention to the man who is desirous of distinction in historical literature, we find already dawning on him the historian's nobler duty as a delineator of the state of society, and an inquirer into the causes of the happiness or misery of the people. And his observations are made with a wide and generous benevolence, strikingly at contrast with those prevailing doctrines of his day, which sought, in the success and happiness of one country, the elements of the misery of another, and made the good fortune of our neighbours a source of lamentation, as indicating calamity to ourselves. His unaffected declaration of pleasure, in finding the Germans so happy and comfortable a people, marks a heart full of genuine kindness and benevolence, and will more than atone for the want of a disposition to range through alpine scenery, or a taste to appreciate the beauties of Gothic architecture.

It will be seen that Hume had intended to continue his journal, but no farther trace of it has been found. The results of the mission have not been generally noticed by historians. Its objects were of a subordinate nature, and the occasion for attending to them was obviated by the completion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle on 7th October.

Meanwhile, of Hume's residence in Turin, we have some notices by an able observer, Lord Charlemont, the celebrated Irish political leader, who, then in his twentieth year, was following the practice of the higher aristocracy of his age, and endeavouring to enlarge his mind by foreign travel. In the following probably exaggerated description it will be seen that he was far mistaken in his estimate of Hume's age.

"With this extraordinary man I was intimately acquainted. He had kindly distinguished me from among a number of young men, who were then at the academy, and appeared so warmly attached to me, that it was apparent he not only intended to honour me with his friendship, but to bestow on me what was, in his opinion, the first of all favours and benefits, by making me his convert and disciple.

"Nature, I believe, never formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skilful in that science, pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind, in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and fat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his whole person, was far better fitted to communicate the idea of a turtle-eating alderman, than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent, and his French was, if possible, still more laughable; so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb. Though now near fifty years old, he was healthy and strong; but his health and strength, far from being advantageous to his figure, instead of manly comeliness, had only the appearance of rusticity. His wearing an uniform added greatly to his natural awkwardness, for he wore it like a grocer of the trained bands. Sinclair was a lieutenant-general, and was sent to the courts of Vienna and Turin, as a military envoy, to see that their quota of troops was furnished by the Austrians and Piedmontese. It was therefore thought necessary that his secretary should appear to be an officer, and Hume was accordingly disguised in scarlet."

CHAPTER VII.

1748-1751. Æt. 37-40.

Publication of the “Inquiry concerning Human Understanding” — Nature of that Work — Doctrine of Necessity — Observations on Miracles — New Edition of the “Essays, Moral and Political” — Reception of the new Publications — Return Home — His Mother’s Death — Her Talents and Character — Correspondence with Dr. Clephane — Earthquakes — Correspondence with Montesquieu — Practical jokes in connexion with the Westminster Election — John Home — The Bellman’s Petition.

Early in the year 1748, and while he was on his way to Turin, Hume’s “Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding,” which he afterwards styled “Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,” were published anonymously in London. The preparation of this work had probably afforded him a much larger share of genuine pleasure, than either the excitement of travelling, or the observation of the natural scenery, the works of art, and the men and manners among which he moved. In the tone of a true philosophical enthusiast, he says in the first section of the work, “Were there no advantage to be reaped from these studies beyond the gratification of an innocent curiosity, yet ought not even this to be despised, as being an accession to those few safe and harmless pleasures which are bestowed on the human race. The sweetest and most inoffensive path of life leads through the avenues of science and learning; and whoever can either remove any obstructions in this way, or open up any new prospect, ought so far to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind. And though these researches may appear painful and fatiguing, it is with some minds as with some bodies, which being endowed with vigorous and florid health, require severe exercise, and reap a pleasure from what, to the generality of mankind, may seem burdensome and laborious.”

On the publication of this work, he says in his “own life,”— “I had always entertained a notion, that my want of success in publishing the

‘Treatise of Human Nature,’ had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion, in going to the press too early. I, therefore, cast the first part of that work anew in the ‘Inquiry concerning Human Understanding,’ which was published while I was at Turin. But this piece was at first little more successful than the ‘Treatise of Human Nature.’ On my return from Italy, I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment, on account of Dr. Middleton’s ‘Free Inquiry,’ while my performance was entirely overlooked and neglected.”

He now desired that the “Treatise of Human Nature” should be treated as a work blotted out of literature, and that the “Inquiry” should be substituted in its place. In the subsequent editions of the latter work, he complained that this had not been complied with; that the world still looked at those forbidden volumes of which he had dictated the suppression. “Henceforth,” he says, “the author desires that the following pieces may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical principles and sentiments;” and he became eloquent on the uncandidness of bringing before the world as the sentiments of any author, a work written almost in boyhood, and printed at the threshold of manhood. But it was all in vain: he had to learn that the world takes possession of all that has passed through the gates of the printing press, and that neither the command of despotic authority, nor the solicitations of repentant authorship can reclaim it, if it be matter of sterling value. The bold and original speculations of the “Treatise” have been, and to all appearance ever will be, part of the intellectual property of man; great theories have been built upon them, which must be thrown down before we can raze the foundation. That he repented of having published the work, and desired to retract its extreme doctrines, is part of the mental biography of Hume; but it is impossible, at his command, to detach this book from general literature, or to read it without remembering who was its author.

But, indeed, there were pretty cogent reasons why the philosophical world, and Hume’s opponents in particular, should not lose sight of his early work. In the Inquiry, he did not revoke the fundamental doctrines of his first work. The elements of all thought and knowledge he still found to be in impressions and ideas. But he did not on this occasion carry out his principles with the same reckless hardihood that had distinguished the Treatise; and thus he neither on the one side gave so distinct and striking a view of his system, nor on the other afforded so strong a hold to his adversaries. This hold they were resolved not to lose; and therefore they retained the original bond, and would not accept of the offered substitute.

Of those views which are more fully developed in the Inquiry than in the early work, one of the most important is the attempt to establish the doctrine of necessity, and to refute that of free will in relation to the springs of human action. To those who adopted the vulgar notion of Hume’s theory of cause and effect, that it left the phenomena of nature without a ruling principle, the attempt to show that the human mind was bound by necessary laws appeared to be a startling inconsistency — a sort of reversal of the poet’s idea,

And binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

It appeared to remove the chains of necessity from inanimate nature, and rivet them on the will.

But there is a decided principle of connexion between the two doctrines: whether or not it be a principle that will bear scrutiny, is another question. The two systems are identified with each other, simply by the annihilation of the notion of power both in the material and in the immaterial world. As we cannot find in physical causes any power to produce their effect, so when a man moves his arm to strike, or his tongue to reprimand, we have no notion of any *power* being exercised; but we have an impression that certain impulses are followed, and we can no more suppose that it was at the choice of the individual whether, when these impulses or motives existed, they should or should not be obeyed, than that when the phenomenon called in the material world the cause, made its appearance, there could be any doubt of its being followed by the effect. The inference from this was, that human actions are as much the objects of inductive philosophy as the operations of nature; that they are equally regular, effect following cause as much in the operations of the passions as in those of the elements. Of the application of the theory to his historical observation of events, the following passage is a vivid enunciation: —

“It is universally acknowledged, that there is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages, and that human nature remains still the same in its principles and operations. The same motives always produce the same actions; the same events follow from the same causes. Ambition, avarice, self-love, vanity, friendship, generosity, public spirit; these passions, mixed in various degrees, and distributed through society, have been, from the beginning of the world, and still are, the source of all the actions and enterprises which have ever been observed among mankind. Would you know the sentiments, inclinations, and course of life of the Greeks and Romans? study well the temper and actions of the French and English: you cannot be much mistaken in transferring to the former *most* of the observations which you have made with regard to the latter. Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular. Its chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature, by showing men in all varieties of circumstances and situations, and furnishing us with materials from which we may form our observations, and become acquainted with the regular springs of human action and behaviour. These records of wars, intrigues, factions, and revolutions, are so many collections of experiments, by which the politician or moral philosopher fixes the principles of his science, in the same manner as the physician or natural philosopher becomes acquainted with the nature of plants, minerals, and other external objects, by the experiments which he forms concerning them. Nor are the earth, water, and other elements, examined by Aristotle and Hippocrates, more like to those which at present lie under our observation, than the men described by Polybius and Tacitus are to those who now govern the world.

“Should a traveller, returning from a far country, bring us an account of men wholly different from any with whom we were ever acquainted, men who were entirely divested of avarice, ambition, or revenge, who knew no pleasure but friendship, generosity, and public spirit, we should immediately, from these circumstances, detect the falsehood, and prove him a liar, with the same certainty as if he had stuffed his narration with stories of centaurs and dragons, miracles and prodigies. And if we would explode any forgery in history, we cannot make use of a more convincing argument than to prove, that the actions ascribed to any person are directly contrary to the course of nature, and that no human motives, in such circumstances, could ever induce him to such a conduct. The veracity of Quintus Curtius is as much to be suspected, when he describes the supernatural courage of Alexander, by which he was hurried on singly to attack multitudes, as when he describes his supernatural force and activity, by which he was able to resist them. So readily and universally do we acknowledge a uniformity in human motives and actions, as well as in the operations of body.

"Hence, likewise, the benefit of that experience, acquired by long life and a variety of business and company, in order to instruct us in the principles of human nature, and regulate our future conduct, as well as speculation. By means of this guide we mount up to the knowledge of men's inclinations and motives, from their actions, expressions, and even gestures; and again descend to the interpretation of their actions, from our knowledge of their motives and inclinations. The general observations, treasured up by a course of experience, give us the clue of human nature, and teach us to unravel all its intricacies. Pretexts and appearances no longer deceive us. Public declarations pass for the specious colouring of a cause. And though virtue and honour be allowed their proper weight and authority, that perfect disinterestedness, so often pretended to, is never expected in multitudes and parties, seldom in their leaders, and scarcely even in individuals of any rank or station. But were there no uniformity in human actions, and were every experiment, which we could form of this kind, irregular and anomalous, it were impossible to collect any general observations concerning mankind; and no experience, however accurately digested by reflection, would ever serve to any purpose. Why is the aged husbandman more skilful in his calling than the young beginner, but because there is a certain uniformity in the operation of the sun, rain, and earth, towards the production of vegetables; and experience teaches the old practitioner the rules by which this operation is governed and directed?"

How very clearly we find these principles practically illustrated in his History! A disinclination to believe in the narratives of great and remarkable deeds proceeding from peculiar impulses: a propensity, when the evidence adduced in their favour cannot be rebutted, to treat these peculiarities rather as diseases of the mind, than as the operation of noble aspirations: a levelling disposition to find all men pretty much upon a par, and none in a marked manner better or worse than their neighbours: an inclination to doubt all authorities which tended to prove that the British people had any fundamental liberties not possessed by the French and other European nations. Such are the practical fruits of this necessitarian philosophy.

It was on this occasion that Hume promulgated those opinions upon miracles, which we have found him afraid to make public even in that work of which he afterwards regretted the bold and rash character. No part of his writings gave more offence to serious and devout thinkers; but the offence was in the manner of the promulgation, not the matter of the opinions. To understand how this occurred, let us cast a glance for a moment at two opposite classes of religious thinkers, into which a large portion of the Christian world is divided, and find with which, if with either, Hume's opinions coincide.

If we suppose a man, impressed with a feeling of devotion and reverence for a Superior Being, who, seeing in the order of the world and all its movements, the omnipotent, all-wise, and all-merciful guidance of a divine Providence, believes that the Great Being will give to his creatures no revelation that is not in accordance with the merciful harmony of all his ways; and thus devoutly and submissively receives the word of God as promulgated in the Bible; attempts to make it the rule of his actions and opinions; receives with deference the views of those whom the same power that authorized it, has permitted to be the human instruments of its promulgation and explanation; tries to understand what it is within the power of his limited faculties to comprehend; but, implicitly believing that in the shadows of those mysteries which he is unable to penetrate, there lie operations as completely part of one great regular plan, as merciful, as beneficent, and as wise as the outward and comprehensible acts of Providence; who thus never for one moment allows his mind to doubt, where it is unable to comprehend or explain — such a man finds none of his sentiments in the writings of Hume, for he is at once told there that reason and revelation are two disconnected things, that each must act alone, and that the one derives no aid from the other.

But take one who believes that religion is too sacred to be in any way allied with so poor and miserable a thing as erring human reason; who feels that it is not in himself to merit any of the boundless mercies of the atonement; and that to endeavour by his actions, or the direction of his thoughts, to be made a participator in them, is but setting blind reason to lead the blind appetites and desires; who feels that by no act of his own, the true light of the Christian religion has been lighted within him as by a miracle; who has been adopted by a sudden change in his spiritual nature into the family of the faithful — then there is nothing in all Hume's philosophy to militate against the religion of such a man, but rather many arguments in its favour, both implied and expressed.

Since this is the case, it may be asked, why, if one party in religion attacked the opinions of Hume, another did not defend them? why, if

Beattie and Warburton couched the lance, Whitefield and John Erskine did not come forward as his champions? In the first place, it was only those who united reason and revelation as going hand in hand and aiding each other, that looked at books of philosophy with an eye to their influence on religion, and such works formed a department of literature in which the advocates of "eternal decrees" would not expect to find much to suit their purpose. But, in the second place, this class of religious thinkers are all, except the few who are hypocrites, devout and serious people, and Hume's method of treating these subjects was not such as they could feel a sympathy with. A want of proper deference for devotional feeling, is a defect that runs through all his works — a constitutional organic defect it might be termed. There is no ribaldry, but at the same time there are no expressions of decent reverence; while this religious party knew from the manner in which their predecessors in the same doctrines were historically treated by Hume, that if there were any coincidence in abstract opinions, there was very little in common between their sympathies and his.

In this same section on miracles, there are repeated protests against the reader assuming that the writer is arguing against the Christian faith. Against some Catholic miracles, which were asserted to be proved by testimony as strong as that which attested the miracles of our Saviour, he says, "As if the testimony of man could ever be put in the balance with that of God himself, who conducted the pen of the inspired writers!" and again, "Our most holy religion is founded on *faith*, not on reason; and it is a sure method of exposing it to put it to such a trial as it is by no means fitted to endure." These protests however were made briefly and coldly, and in such a manner as made people feel, that if Hume believed in the doctrines they announced, he certainly had not his heart in them. Hence, although, since the origin of rationalism, evangelical Christians have frequently had recourse to the arguments of Hume, there was long in that quarter a not unnatural reluctance to appeal to them.

It is perhaps one of the most remarkable warnings against hasty judgments on the effects of efforts of subtle reasoning, that, according to later scientific discoveries, no two things are in more perfect unison than Hume's theory of belief in miracles, and the belief that miracles, according to the common acceptation of the term, have actually taken place. The leading principle of this theory is, in conformity with its author's law of cause and effect, that where our experience has taught us that two things follow each other as cause and effect by an unvarying sequence, if we hear of an instance in which this has not been the case, we ought to doubt the truth of the narrative. In other words, if we are told of some circumstance having taken place out of the usual order of nature, we ought not to believe it; because the circumstance of the narrator having been deceived, or of his designedly telling a falsehood, is more probable than an event contradictory to all previous authenticated experience. It is a rule for marking the boundary and proper application of the inductive system, and one that is highly serviceable to science. But, in applying it to use, we must not be led away by the narrow application, in common conversation, of the word experience. There is the experience of the common workman, and there is the experience of the philosopher. There is that observation of phenomena which makes a ditcher know that the difficulty of pulling out a loosened stone with a mattock indicates it to be so many inches thick; and that observation, fully as sure, which shows the geologist that the stratum of the Pennsylvanian grauwacke is upwards of a hundred miles thick. The experience and observation of the husbandman teach him, that when the opposite hill is distinct to his view, the intervening atmosphere is not charged with vapour; but observation, not less satisfactory, shows the astronomer that Jupiter and the Moon have around them no atmosphere such as that by which our planet is enveloped. Now there is nothing more fully founded on experimental observation than the fact, that there was a time when the present order of the world was not in existence. That there have been convulsions, such as, did we now hear of their contemporary occurrence, instead of attesting their past existence through the sure course of observation and induction, we would at once maintain to be impossible. To this then, and this only, comes the theory of miracles, that at the present day, and for a great many years back, the accounts that are given of circumstances having taken place out of the general order of nature, are to be discredited, because between the two things to be believed, the falsehood of the narrative is more likely than the truth of the occurrence. But the very means by which we arrive at this conclusion bring us to another, that there was a time to which the rules taken from present observation of the course of nature did not apply.

That in history, in science, in the conduct of every-day life, and particularly in the formation of the minds of the young, this rule of belief is of the highest practical utility, few will doubt. The parish clergyman, who assists in throwing discredit on all the superstitious stories of spectres, witchcrafts, and demoniacal possessions with which his neighbourhood may be afflicted, is but an active promulgator of the doctrine. It was a narrow view that Campbell adopted when he said, that if we heard of a ferry boat, which had long crossed the stream in safety, having sunk, we would give credit to the testimony concerning it. Our experience teaches us that ferry boats are made of perishable materials, liable to be submerged; and thus, in this case, there is no balance of incredibility against the narrator. To have tried Campbell's practical faith in Hume's theory, he should have had before him a person professing to have become aware of the sinking of the boat, by some unprecedented means of perception, called a magnetic influence, in the absence of a more distinct name; while it is shown that the same person had an opportunity of being informed, through the organs of hearing, of the circumstance which had taken place. It would then be seen, whether that sagacious philosopher would have given the sanction of his belief to a phenomenon contrary to all previous experience — the ascertainment of an external event, without the aid of the senses; or would have acceded to the too commonly illustrated phenomenon, that human beings are capable of falsehood and folly.

It is much to be regretted that Hume employed the word miracles in the title of this inquiry. He thus employed a term which had been applied to sacred subjects, and raised a natural prejudice against reasonings, applicable to contemporary events, and to the rules of ordinary historical belief. He might have found some other title — such as, "The Principles of Belief in Human Testimony," which would have more satisfactorily explained the nature of the inquiry.

But it is not improbable that the odium thus occasioned first introduced Hume's philosophical works to controversial notoriety. Though disappointed by the silence of the public immediately on his arrival from abroad, he has soon to tell us in his "own life,"— "Meanwhile, my bookseller, A. Millar, informed me, that my former publications (all but the unfortunate Treatise) were beginning to be the subject of conversation; that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by reverends and right reverends came out two and three in a year; and I found, by Warburton's railing, that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good company."

It was in the “Inquiry concerning the Human Understanding,” that Hume promulgated the theory of association, which called forth so much admiration of its simplicity, beauty, and truth. “To me,” he says, “there appear to be only three principles of connexion among ideas, namely, *Resemblance*, *Contiguity* in time or place, and *Cause* or *Effect*.

“That these principles serve to connect ideas, will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original [Resemblance.] The mention of one apartment in a building, naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse concerning the others [Contiguity:] and if we think on a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it [Cause and Effect.]”

In connexion with this theory a curious charge has been brought forward by Coleridge, who says, “In consulting the excellent commentary of St. Thomas Aquinas, on the Parva Naturalia of Aristotle, I was struck at once with its close resemblance to Hume’s essay on association. The main thoughts were the same in both. The *order* of the thoughts was the same, and even the illustrations differed only by Hume’s occasional substitution of more modern examples. I mentioned the circumstance to several of my literary acquaintances, who admitted the closeness of the resemblance, and that it seemed too great to be explained by mere coincidence; but they thought it improbable that Hume should have held the pages of the angelic doctor worth turning over. But some time after, Mr. Payne of the King’s Mews, showed Sir James Mackintosh some odd volumes of St. Thomas Aquinas, partly perhaps from having heard that Sir James, (then Mr. Mackintosh,) had in his lectures passed a high encomium on this canonized philosopher, but chiefly from the fact that the volumes had belonged to Mr. Hume, and had here and there marginal marks and notes of reference in his own handwriting. Among these volumes was that which contains the Parva Naturalia, in the old Latin version, swathed and swaddled in the commentary aforementioned.”

On this, Sir James Macintosh says, that “the manuscript of a part of Aquinas, which I bought many years ago, (on the faith of a bookseller’s catalogue,) as being written by Mr. Hume, was not a copy of the commentary on the *Parva Naturalia*, but of Aquinas’s own *Secunda Secundæ*; and that, on examination, it proves not to be the handwriting of Mr. Hume, and to contain nothing written by him.” So much for the external evidence of plagiarism.

With regard to the internal evidence, the passage of Aquinas particularly referred to, which will be found below, refers to memory not imagination; to the recall of images in the relation to each other in which they have once had a place in the mind, not to the formation of new associations, or aggregates of ideas there; nor will it bring the theories to an identity, that, according to Hume's doctrine, nothing can be recalled in the mind unless its elements have already been deposited there in the form of ideas, because the observations of Aquinas apply altogether to the *reminiscence* of aggregate objects. But the classification is different: for Hume's embodies cause and effect, but not contrariety; while that of Aquinas has contrariety, but not cause and effect. In a division into three elements, this discrepancy is material; and, without entering on any lengthened reasoning, it may simply be observed, that the merit of Hume's classification is, that it is exhaustive, and neither contains any superfluous element, nor omits any principle under which an act of association can be classed.

But it is remarkable that Coleridge should have failed to keep in view, in his zeal to discover some curious thing to reward him for his researches among the fathers, that the classification is not that of Aquinas, but of Aristotle, and is contained in the very work on which the passage in Aquinas is one of the many commentaries.

The "Essays Moral and Political," had, though it is not mentioned by Hume in his "own life," been so well received, that a second edition appeared in 1742, the same year in which the second volume of the original edition was published. A third edition was published in London in 1748, of which Hume, comparing them with his neglected contemporaneous publication of the Inquiry, says that they "met not with a much better reception."

Two essays, which had appeared in the previous editions, were omitted in the third. One of these, "Of Essay Writing," was evidently written at the time when the author had the design of publishing his work periodically, and was meant as a prospectus or announcement to the readers, of the method in which he proposed to address them in his periodical papers. The other was a "Character of Sir Robert Walpole;" a curious attempt to take an impartial estimate of a man who, at the time of the first publication, had been longer in office, and was surrounded by a more numerous and powerful band of enemies, than any previous British statesman. But between the two publications the enemies had triumphed; and the statesman of forty years had been driven into retirement, where death speedily relieved him from a scene of inaction, which might have been repose to others, but was to him an insupportable solitude. Party rage had consequently changed its direction, and that air of solemn deliberation which, while the statesman was moving between the admiration of his friends and the hatred of his enemies, had an appearance of resolute stoical impartiality, might have appeared strained and affected, if the essay had been republished in 1748.

To this third edition three essays were added, “Of National Characters,” “Of the Original Contract,” and “Of Passive Obedience.” The first of these contains some very curious incidental notices of ancient morals and habits, so adapted to modern colloquial language and habits, as to make the descriptions as clear to the unlearned as to the learned; as, for example, the following notices of the drinking practices of the ancients: —

“The ancient Greeks, though born in a warm climate, seem to have been much addicted to the bottle; nor were their parties of pleasure any thing but matches of drinking among men, who passed their time altogether apart from the fair. Yet when Alexander led the Greeks into Persia, a still more southern climate, they multiplied their debauches of this kind, in imitation of the Persian manners. So honourable was the character of a drunkard among the Persians, that Cyrus the younger, soliciting the sober Lacedemonians for succour against his brother Artaxerxes, claims it chiefly on account of his superior endowments, as more valorous, more bountiful, and a better drinker. Darius Hystaspes made it be inscribed on his tomb-stone, among his other virtues and princely qualities, that no one could bear a greater quantity of liquor.”

The other two essays, though bearing on subjects which have now almost dropped out of political discussion, “The Original Contract,” and “Passive Obedience,” trod close on the heels of the long conflict in which Milton, Salmasius, Hobbes, Sidney, Locke, and Filmer, had been partakers; and while the din of arms was far from being exhausted, they professed to hold the balance equally between the combatants, or, more properly speaking, to examine philosophically the merits of the theory of each party, without taking up the angry arguments of either. They are, in truth, but a farther adaptation to politics of those utilitarian theories which Hume had previously applied both to private morals and to government. And the principle they promulgate is, that the citizen’s allegiance to the laws and constitution of his country, has its proper foundation neither in an acknowledgment of the divine right of any governor, nor in a contract with him by which both parties are bound, but in the moral duty of respecting internal peace and order, and of avoiding outbreaks which may plunge the people into anarchy and misery, to gratify the pride or baser passions of turbulent individuals.

It must have been on his return on this occasion, that Hume rejoined the family circle at Ninewells, bereaved of the parent whose devotion to his training and education he has so affectionately commemorated. “I went down,” he says, “in 1749, and lived two years with my brother at his country house, for my mother was now dead.” In a letter, which will have to be afterwards referred to, by Dr. Black, to Adam Smith, written when Hume was on his death-bed, and in relation to his final illness, there is the remark, “His mother,” he says, “had precisely the same constitution with himself, and died of this very disorder.”

On this subject, the American traveller, Silliman, gave currency to a foolish and improbable story, which he puts in the following shape: —

“It seems that Hume received a religious education from his mother, and early in life was the subject of strong and hopeful religious impressions; but, as he approached manhood, they were effaced, and confirmed infidelity succeeded. Maternal partiality, however alarmed at first, came at length to look with less and less pain upon this declension, and filial love and reverence seem to have been absorbed in the pride of philosophical scepticism; for Hume now applied himself with unwearied, and unhappily with successful efforts, to sap the foundation of his mother’s faith. Having succeeded in this dreadful work, he went abroad into foreign countries; and as he was returning, an express met him in London, with a letter from his mother, informing him that she was in a deep decline, and could not long survive: she said, she found herself without any support in her distress; that he had taken away that source of comfort, upon which, in all cases of affliction, she used to rely, and that now she found her mind sinking into despair. She did not doubt but her son would afford her some substitute for her religion; and she conjured him to hasten to her, or at least to send her a letter, containing such consolations as philosophy can afford to a dying mortal. Hume was overwhelmed with anguish on receiving this letter, and hastened to Scotland, travelling day and night; but before he arrived his mother expired. No permanent impression seems, however, to have been made on his mind by this most trying event; and whatever remorse he might have felt at the moment, he soon relapsed into his wonted obduracy of heart.”

This story, probably told after dinner, and invented on the spot, — the American narrator’s unfortunate name perhaps rendering him peculiarly liable to the machinations of the mischievous, — is totally at variance with Hume’s character. He was no propagandist; and, indeed, seems ever to have felt, that a firm faith in Christianity, unshaken by any doubts, was an invaluable privilege, of which it would be as much more cruel to deprive a fellow-creature than to rob him of his purse, as the one possession is more valuable than the other. Hence we shall find, that his conversation was acceptable to women and to clergymen, who never feared in his presence to encounter any sentiment that might shock their feelings; and what is more to the point, parents were never afraid of trusting their children to his care and social attentions, and indeed thought it a high privilege to obtain them.

The appearance of the above passage in a notice of “Silliman’s Travels” in *The Quarterly Review*, called forth a remonstrance from Baron Hume, which elicited the following statement from the editor: —

“That anecdote he has shown to be false by unquestionable dates, and by a circumstance related in the manuscript memoirs of the late Dr. Carlyle, an eminent clergyman of the Scottish Church, and friend of the historian. The circumstance, interesting in itself, and decisive on the subject, we transcribe, in the words of the manuscript, from the letter before us: —

“David and he (the Hon. Mr. Boyle, brother of the Earl of Glasgow) were both in London at the period when David’s mother died. Mr. Boyle, hearing of it, soon after went into his apartment, for they lodged in the same house, where he found him in the deepest affliction, and in a flood of tears. After the usual topics of condolence, Mr. Boyle said to him, ‘My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion; for if you had not, you would have been consoled with the firm belief that the good lady, who was not only the best of mothers but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just.’ To which David replied, ‘Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet, in other things, I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine.’”

One of Hume’s most intimate friends was Dr. Clephane, a physician in considerable practice in London. They appear to have become acquainted with each other during the expedition to Port L’Orient, in which Clephane was probably a medical officer, as Hume, in his letters about his own half-pay, speaks of him as in the same position with himself. The correspondence is characterized by the thorough ease and polite familiarity of the camp, and none of Hume’s letters are fuller of his playful spirit than those addressed to his brother officer.

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

“Ιητρὸς γὰρ ἀνηρ πολλῶν ἀντάξιος ἄλλων.

“Dear Doctor, — I have here received a great many thanks from an honest man, who tells me that he and all his family have been extremely obliged to me. This is my brother’s gardener, who showed me a letter from his son, wherein he acknowledges that he owes his life to your care; that you placed him in an hospital, and attended him with as much assiduity as if he had been the best nobleman in the land; that all he shall ever be worth will never be able to repay you: and that therefore he must content himself with being grateful: at the same time desiring his father to give me thanks, by whose means he was recommended to you.

“These thanks I received with great gravity, and replied, that one must always endeavour to do good when it is in one’s power. In short, I took upon me your part, and gave myself as many airs as if I had really shown the same beneficent dispositions. I considered that you have good deeds to spare, and are possessed of greater store of merits and works of supererogation, than any church, Pagan, Mahometan, or Catholic, ever was entitled to, and that, therefore, to rob you a little was no great crime: —

—— cui plura supersunt,
Et fallunt dominum, et prosunt furibus.

“I hope, dear Doctor, you find virtue its own reward — that, methinks, is but just — considering it is the only reward it is ever likely to meet with — in this world I mean; at least you may take your own reward yourself for me. I shall never trouble my head about the matter, and you need not expect that I shall even like or esteem you the better for this instance of your charity and humanity. You fancy, I suppose, that I already liked and esteemed you so much, that this makes no sensible addition. You may fancy what you please: I shall not so much as speak another word upon this subject, but proceed to a better. You shall see.

“You would perhaps ask, how I employ my time in this leisure and solitude, and what are my occupations? Pray, do you expect I should convey to you an encyclopedia, in the compass of a letter? The last thing I took my hand from was a very learned, elaborate discourse, concerning the populousness of antiquity; not altogether in opposition to *Vossius* and *Montesquieu*, who exaggerate that affair infinitely; but, starting some doubts, and scruples, and difficulties, sufficient to make us suspend our judgment on that head. Amongst other topics, it fell in my way to consider the greatness of ancient *Rome*; and in looking over the discourse, I find the following period. ‘If we may judge by the younger Pliny’s account of his house, and by the plans of ancient buildings in Dr. Mead’s collection, the men of quality had very spacious palaces, and their buildings were like the Chinese houses, where each apartment is separate from the rest, and rises no higher than a single story.’ Pray, on what authority are those plans founded? If I remember right, I was told they were discovered on the walls of the baths, and other subterraneous buildings. Is this the proper method of citing them? If you have occasion to communicate this to Dr. Mead, I beg that my sincere respects may be joined.

“I think the parsons have lately used the physicians very ill, for, in all the common terrors of mankind, you used commonly both to come in for a share of the profit: but in this new fear of earthquakes, they have left you out entirely, and have pretended alone to give prescriptions to the multitude. I remember, indeed, Mr. Addison talks of a quack that advertised pills for an earthquake, at a time when people lay under such terrors as they do at present. But I know not if any of the faculty have imitated him at this time. I see only a Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of London, where, indeed, he recommends certain pills, such as fasting, prayer, repentance, mortification, and other drugs, which are entirely to come from his own shop. And I think this is very unfair in him, and you have great reason to be offended; for why might he not have added, that medicinal powders and potions would also have done service? The worst is, that you dare not revenge yourself in kind, by advising your patients to have nothing to do with the parson; for you are sure he has a faster hold of them than you, and you may yourself be discharged on such an advice.

“You’ll scarcely believe what I am going to tell you; but it is literally true. Millar had printed off, some months ago, a new edition of certain philosophical essays, but he tells me very gravely that he has delayed publishing because of the earthquakes. I wish you may not also be a loser by the same common calamity; for I am told the ladies were so frightened, they took the rattling of every coach for an earthquake; and therefore would employ no physicians but from amongst the infantry: insomuch that some of you charioteers had not gained enough to pay the expenses of your vehicle. But this may only be waggery and banter, which I abhor. Please remember to give my respects to the General, and Sir Harry, and Captain Grant, who I hope are all in good health: indeed, as to the Captain, I do not know what to hope, or wish; for if he recover his health, he loses his shape, and must always remain in that perplexing dilemma. — Remember me also to Suncey Glassaugh, and remember me yourself.

"Ninewells, near Berwick, April 18, 1750.

"P.S. — Pray, did Guidelianus get his money, allowed him by the Pay-office? I suppose he is in Ireland, poor devil! so I give you no commission with regard to him.

"Pray, tell Glassaugh that I hope he has not suppressed the paper I sent him about the new year. If he has, pray ask for a sight of it, for it is very witty. I contrived it one night that I could not sleep for the tortures of rheumatism; and you have heard of a great lady, who always put on blisters, when she wanted to be witty. 'Tis a receipt I recommend to you."

The following letter to Oswald shows us that Hume was, at the time it was written, earnestly engaged in the preparation of the "Essays on Political Economy," which he published in 1752.

Hume *to* James Oswald *of Dunnikier*.

"Dear Sir, — I confess I was a little displeased with you for neglecting me so long; but you have made ample compensation. This commerce, I find, is of advantage to both of us; to me, by the new lights you communicate, and to you, by giving you occasion to examine these subjects more accurately. I shall here deliver my opinion of your reasonings with the freedom which you desire.

"I never meant to say that money, in all countries which communicate, must necessarily be on a level, but on a level proportioned to their people, industry, and commodities. That is, where there is double people, &c. there will be double money, and so on; and that the only way of keeping or increasing money is, by keeping and increasing the people and industry; not by prohibitions of exporting money, or by taxes on commodities, the methods commonly thought of. I believe we differ little on this head. You allow, that if all the money in England were increased fourfold in one night, there would be a sudden rise of prices; but then, say you, the importation of foreign commodities would soon lower the prices. Here, then, is the flowing out of the money already begun. But, say you, a small part of this stock of money would suffice to buy foreign commodities, and lower the prices. I grant it would for one year, till the imported commodities be consumed. But must not the same thing be renewed next year? No, say you; the additional stock of money may, in this interval, so increase the people and industry, as to enable them to retain their money. Here I am extremely pleased with your reasoning. I agree with you, that the increase of money, if not too sudden, naturally increases people and industry, and by that means may retain itself; but if it do not produce such an increase, nothing will retain it except hoarding. Suppose twenty millions brought into Scotland; suppose that, by some fatality, we take no advantage of this to augment our industry or people, how much would remain in the quarter of a century? not a shilling more than we have at present. My expression in the Essay needs correction, which has occasioned you to mistake it.

“Your enumeration of the advantages of rich countries above poor, in point of trade, is very just and curious; but I cannot agree with you that, barring ill policy or accidents, the former might proceed gaining upon the latter for ever. The growth of every thing, both in art and nature, at last checks itself. The rich country would acquire and retain all the manufactures that require great stock or great skill; but the poor country would gain from it all the simpler and more laborious. The manufactures of London, you know, are steel, lace, silk, books, coaches, watches, furniture, fashions; but the outlying provinces have the linen and woollen trade.

“The distance of China is a physical impediment to the communication, by reducing our commerce to a few commodities; and by heightening the price of these commodities, on account of the long voyage, the monopolies, and the taxes. A Chinese works for three-halfpence a-day, and is very industrious; were he as near us as France or Spain, every thing we used would be Chinese, till money and prices came to a level; that is, to such a level as is proportioned to the numbers of people, industry, and commodities of both countries.

“A part of our public funds serve in place of money; for our merchants, but still more our bankers, keep less cash by them when they have stock, because they can dispose of that upon any sudden demand. This is not the case with the French funds. The *rentes* of the Hotel de Ville are not transferable, but are most of them entailed in the families. At least, I know there is a great difference in this respect betwixt them and the *actions* of the Indian Company.

"That the industry and people of Spain, after the discovery of the West Indies, at first increased more than is commonly imagined, is a very curious fact; and I doubt not but you say so upon good authority, though I have not met with that observation in any author.

"Beside the bad effects of the paper credit in our colonies, as it was a cheat, it must also be allowed that it banished gold and silver, by supplying their place. On the whole, my intention in the Essay was to remove people's terrors, who are apt, from chimerical calculations, to imagine they are losing their specie, though they can show in no instance that either their people or industry diminish; and also to expose the absurdity of guarding money otherwise than by watching over the people and their industry, and preserving or increasing them. To prohibit the exportation of money, or the importation of commodities, is mistaken policy; and I have the pleasure of seeing you agree with me.

"I have no more to say, but compliments; and therefore shall conclude. I am," &c.

"Ninewells, 1st November, 1750."

In 1750 there was published in Edinburgh, an edition of Montesquieu's "Esprit des Loix; avec les dernieres corrections et illustrations de l'Auteur." That Hume was instrumental to this publication, is shown by the letters addressed to him by Montesquieu between the years 1749 and 1753, printed in the appendix. It appears, that, as he there intimates, the author sent over a copy of his corrections and illustrations; but the work must have been partly printed before their arrival, for, in the advertisement to the reader, it is stated that a few of the earliest sheets, where the more important amendments occurred, had to be reprinted, while some minor alterations are supplied by a list of corrections.

Montesquieu's appreciation of some of Hume's ethical works will be read with interest. Hume appears to have made the first advances towards an intimacy; and the great Frenchman, then in his sixtieth year, seems to have hailed with satisfaction the appearance of a kindred spirit, and to have received his proffers with warm cordiality. This is the commencement of that intercourse with his eminent contemporaries in France, which we shall hereafter find to occupy a prominent feature in Hume's literary and social history.

At this period we find Hume taking much interest in the conduct of a certain James Fraser, in connexion with the Westminster election of 1749 — one of the marked epochs in the parliamentary history of that renowned constituency. The candidates were Lord Trentham the eldest son of Earl Gower, and Sir George Vandeput, of whom the former was returned by the high bailiff. Sir George Vandeput was the "independent" candidate, representing the "English interest." Lord Trentham was a placeman, and was accused of a partiality for French interests. Though the Jacobites were ranged on the Vandeput side, Lord Trentham was by implication accused of having favoured the exiled family; as by one of the election placards issued on the occasion, the voters are desired to "ask Lord Trentham, who had his foot in the stirrup in the year 1715?" He was charged with having sacrificed his country or Jacobite principles for a place, and with being that most abhorred of all political characters, an ex-patriot, who has ratted to obtain office. Shortly before the election, a riotous attack had been made on a small French theatre, which had become peculiarly unpopular by obtaining a licence, when some English establishments had been suppressed under Walpole's act. It appears that Lord Trentham had, with some others, endeavoured to preserve the friendless foreigners from the fury of the mob. So un-English an act, as this harbouring and protecting of foreign vagabonds, against the just indignation of true born Britons, was very successfully displayed as an overt act in favour of Popery, Jacobitism, and French ascendency; and the skilful manner in which it was improved, in the hand-bills, and pasquinades of the Vandeput party, shows that this department of the electioneering art was not then far from its present state of maturity.

A pretty minute investigation has not enabled me to discover what precise conduct in connexion with this affair was important enough to elicit from Hume the elaborate joke against Fraser embodied in the following papers. He was evidently a medical man, but he does not appear in the list of those who attested Mr. Murray's health, or were appointed to visit him. He certainly acted on the Vandeput side, yet his name is nowhere mentioned, in connexion with it, in a pretty large collection of documents relating to this election, which I have had an opportunity of consulting.

Fraser was evidently, like Clephane, one of the medical officers in General St. Clair’s expedition, for, in a previous letter to Colonel Abercromby, Hume mentions him as an officer in the royal regiment. He appears to have been a thorough Jacobite, for, in another letter, Hume speaks of him as one of the extreme persons whom his history will displease by its too great partiality to the Whigs. A very pleasing and natural description of his character is given by Hume, in a letter to Clephane, a little farther on.

The following document was sent to Colonel Abercromby, along with the explanatory letters which immediately follow it.

To the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice Reason, and the Honourable the Judges Discretion, Prudence, Reserve, and Deliberation, the Petition of the Patients of Westminster, against James Fraser, Apothecary.

Most humbly showeth,

That your petitioners had put themselves and families under the direction and care of the said James Fraser, and had so continued for several years, to their great mutual benefit and emolument.

That many of your petitioners had, under his management, recovered from the most desperate and deplorable maladies, such as megrims, toothaches, cramps, stitches, vapours, crosses in love, &c. which wonderful success, after the blessing of God, they can ascribe to nothing but his consummate skill and capacity, since many of their neighbours, labouring under the same distresses, died every day, by the mistakes of less learned apothecaries.

That there are many disconsolate widows among your petitioners, who believed themselves, and were believed by all their neighbours, to be dying of grief; but as soon as the said James Fraser applied lenitives, and proper topical medicines, they were observed to recover wonderfully.

That in all hypochondriacal cases he was sovereign, in so much that his very presence dispelled the malady, cheering the sight, exciting a gentle agitation of the muscles of the lungs and thorax, and thereby promoting expectoration, exhilaration, circulation, and digestion.

That your petitioners verily believe, that not many more have died from amongst them, under the administration of the said James Fraser, than actually die by the course of nature in places where physic is not at all known or practised; which will scarcely be credited in this sceptical and unbelieving age.

That all this harmony and good agreement betwixt your petitioners and the said James Fraser had lately been disturbed, to the great detriment of your petitioners and their once numerous families.

That the said James Fraser, associating himself with —— Carey, surgeon, and William Guthrey, Esq. and other evil intentioned persons, not having the fear of God before their eyes, had given himself entirely up to the care of Dame **Public**, and had utterly neglected your petitioners.

That the lady above mentioned was of a most admirable **CONSTITUTION**, envied by all who had ever seen her or heard of her; and was only afflicted sometimes with vapours, and sometimes with a looseness or flux, which not being of the bloody kind, those about her were rather pleased with it.

That notwithstanding this, the said James Fraser uses all diligence and art to persuade the said lady that she is in the most desperate case imaginable, and that nothing will recover her but a medicine he has prepared, being a composition of *pulvis pyrius*, along with a decoction of northern steel, and an infusion of southern *aqua sacra* or holy water.

That the medicine, or rather poison, was at first wrapt up under a wafer marked Patriotism, but had since been attempted to be administrated without any cover or disguise.

That a dose of it had secretly been poured down the throat of the said Dame Public, while she was asleep, and had been attended with the most dismal symptoms, visibly heightening her vapours, and increasing her flux, and even producing some symptoms of the bloody kind; and had she not thrown it up with great violence, it had certainly proved fatal to her.

That the said James Fraser and his associates, now finding that the *Catholicon* does not agree with the constitution of the said Dame, prescribed to her large doses of *Phillipiacum*, *Cottontium*, and *Vandeputiana*, in order to alter her constitution, and prepare her body for the reception of the said Catholicon.

That he had even been pleased to see Lovitium applied to her, though known to be a virulent caustic, and really no better than a *lapis infernalis*.

That while the medicines Goveriacum and Trentuntium were very violent, resembling sublimate of *high flown* mercury, he also much approved of them, but since they were mollified by late operations, and made as innocent as mercurius dulcis, they were become his utter aversion.

That the said James Fraser, through his whole practice on the said Dame Public, entirely rejected all lenitives, soporifics, palliatives, &c. though approved of by the regular and graduate physicians, as Dr. Pelham, Dr. Fox, Dr. Pitt; and that he prescribed nothing but chemical salts and stimulating medicines, in which regimen none but quacks and empirics who had never taken their degrees will agree with him.

That your petitioners remember the story of an Irish servant to a physician, which seems fitted to the present purpose. The doctor bid Teague carry a potion to a patient, and tell him it was the most innocent in the world, and if it did him no good, could do him no harm. The footman obeys, but unluckily transposing a word, said, that if it did him no harm it could do him no good. And your petitioners are much afraid that the catholicon above mentioned is much of the same nature.

May it therefore please your worships to discharge the said James Fraser from any farther attendance on the said Dame Public, and to order him to return to the care and inspection of your petitioners and their families.

The following is entitled, “True letter to Colonel Abercromby, to be first read.”

“Dear Colonel, — Endeavour to make Fraser believe I am in earnest. If the thing takes, you may easily find somebody to personate Mr. Cockburn; and you may swear to the truth of the whole. To make it more probable, you may say that you suspect too much study has made me crazy; otherwise I had never thought of so foolish a thing.

“If there be any probability of succeeding, an advertisement, like that which is on the following page, may be put into any of the public papers — that is, if you think *que le jeu vaut la chandelle*.

“My compliments to Mrs. Abercromby. I hope some day to regain her good opinion. It shall be the great object of my ambition.

“Tell the Doctor I shall answer him sooner than he did me. He will assist you very well in any cheat or roguery: but do not attempt it, unless you think you can all be masters of your countenance. This is a note, not a letter. Yours sincerely.

“P.S. Read Fraser the letter, but do not put it into his hands; he will tear it. Show him first my other letter to you.”

“Advertisement. — Speedily will be published, price 1s. A letter to a certain turbulent Patriot in Westminster, from a friend in the country.

—— *Et* spargere voces
In vulgum ambiguas, et quærere conscius arma. — *Virgil*.”

The following is the letter which, in pursuance of the arrangements for completing this complicated joke, Colonel Abercromby was to read to Fraser. Its tone of mock heroic will at once be detected, and indeed, when the spilling of the last drop of blood, “or of ink,” is with so much simplicity made an alternative, it may be presumed that James Fraser was a very obtuse being, if he believed these protestations to be serious.

“Dear Sir, — This will be delivered you by Mr. William Cockburn, a friend of mine, who travels to London for the first time. I have taken the opportunity to send up by him a manuscript, which I intend to have printed. I have ordered him first to read it to you; but not to trust it out of his hands. You can scarce be surprised that I treat Mr. Fraser so roughly in it. No man, who loves his country, can be a friend to that gentleman, considering his late as well as former behaviour. For if I be rightly informed, his conduct shows no more the spirit of submission and tranquillity than that of prudence and discretion; and if he goes on at this rate, you yourself will be obliged to renounce all connexion and friendship with him.

“I have been ill of late; and am very low at present from the loss of blood which they have drawn from me. My friends would hinder me from reading; but my books and my pen are my only comfort and occupation; and while I am master of a drop of blood or of ink, I will joyfully spill it in the cause of my country. I am, Dear Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant.”

“Ninewells, Feb. 16th, 1751.”

In the following letter to Dr. Clephane, we find that the practical joke on James Fraser, which seems to have given a good deal of employment to the wits of a great philosopher, a learned physician, and a gallant colonel, is still a matter which Hume has very much at heart; while at the same time he seems to have been amusing himself with some other jocular effusions. The letter presents us with his first commemoration of the poetical genius of his friend, John Home, though it gives no forecast of the zeal with which he subsequently advocated his countryman’s claims to originality and high genius. The dramatic critic will probably feel an interest in the light thrown on Hume’s appreciation of Shakspere by the manner in which his name is connected with that of Racine.

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

“Ninewells, near Berwick,
18th February, 1751.

“Dear Doctor, — I will not pay you so bad a compliment as to say I was not angry with you for neglecting me so long; that would be to suppose I was indifferent whether I had any share in your memory or friendship. However, since there is nothing in it but the old vice of indolence,

Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

Ed io anche sóno Pittore, as Correggio said; I am therefore resolved to forgive you, and to keep myself in a proper disposition for saying the Lord’s prayer, whenever I shall find space enough for it.

“I must own I could not but think you excusable, even before you disarmed me by your submission and penitence; ’tis so common an artifice for provincials to hook on a correspondence with a Londoner, under pretext of friendship and regard, that a jealousy on that head is very pardonable in the latter. But I ought not to lie under that general suspicion; for the fashionable songs I cannot sing; the present or the expectant ministers I have no interest in; the old good books I have not yet all read or pondered sufficiently; and the current stories and *bon mots,* I would not repeat if I knew them. You see, therefore, that if I were not concerned about Dr. Clephane, I never should desire to hear from him, and consequently that a line of his would be equally acceptable whether it comes from London or Crookhaven.

“I have executed your desire and the Colonel’s as well as I could, but have not, I believe, succeeded so well as last year: the subject, indeed, was exhausted, and the patient may justly, I fear, be esteemed incurable. I leave you to manage the matter as you best can: but I beg of you to conduct it, so as not to make a quarrel betwixt Fraser and me; he is an honest, good-humoured, friendly, pleasant fellow, (though, it must be confessed, a little turbulent and impetuous,) and I should be sorry to disoblige him. The Colonel would be heartily bit, if by this or any other means Fraser should be cured of his politics and patriotism; all his friends would lose a great deal of diversion, and certainly would not like him near so well, if he were more cool and reasonable, and moderate, and prudent. But these are vices he is in no manner of danger of. Is it likely that reason will prevail against nature, habit, company, education, and prejudice? I leave you to judge.

“But since I am in the humour of displaying my wit, I must tell you that lately, at an idle hour, I wrote a sheet called the Bellman’s Petition: wherein (if I be not partial, which I certainly am,) there was some good pleasantry and satire. The Printers in Edinburgh refused to print it, (a good sign, you’ll say, of *my* prudence and discretion.) Mr. Mure, the member, has a copy of it; ask it of him if you meet with him, or bid the Colonel, who sees him every day at the house, ask it, and if you like it read it to the General, and then return it. I will not boast, for I have no manner of vanity; but when I think of the present dulness of London, I cannot forbear exclaiming,

Rome n’est pas dans Rome,
C’est par tout où je suis.

A namesake of mine has wrote a Tragedy, which he expects to come on this winter. I have not seen it, but some people commend it much. ’Tis very likely to meet with success, and not to deserve it, for the author tells me, he is a great admirer of Shakspere, and never read Racine.

“When I take a second perusal of your letter, I find you resemble the Papists, who deal much in penitence, but neglect extremely *les bonnes œuvres*. I asked you a question with regard to the plans of ancient buildings in Dr. Mead’s collection. Pray, are they authentic enough to be cited in a discourse of erudition and reasoning? have they never been published in any collection? and what are the proper terms in which I ought to cite them? I know you are a great proficient in the *virtu*, and consequently can resolve my doubts. This word I suppose you pretend to speak with an (e), which I own is an improvement: but admitting your orthography, you must naturally have a desire of doing a good-natured action, and instructing the ignorant.

“It appears to me that apothecaries bear the same relation to physicians, that priests do to philosophers; the ignorance of the former makes them positive, and dogmatical, and assuming, and enterprising, and pretending, and consequently much more taking with the people. Follow my example — let us not trouble ourselves about the matter; let the one stuff the beasts’ guts with antimony, and the other their heads with divinity, what is that to us? according to the Greek proverb, they are no more, but as ες την αμιδα ενουρουντες.

“You may tell me, indeed, that I mistake the matter quite; that it is not your kindness for the people, which makes you concerned, but something else. In short, that if self-interest were not in the case, they might take clysters, and physic, and ipecacuanha, till they were tired of them. Now, dear Doctor, this mercenary way of thinking I never could have suspected you of, and am heartily ashamed to find you of such a temper.

"If you answer this any time within the twelve months 'tis sufficient, and I promise not to answer you next at less than six months' interval; and so, as the Germans say, je me recomante a fos ponnes craces. Yours, &c."

The "Bellman's Petition," more than once alluded to in Hume's letters, is a little jeu d'esprit, to which he seems to have attributed far more than its due importance. The clergy and schoolmasters of Scotland were then appealing to the legislature for an increase of their incomes; and in this production, Hume, in a sort of parody on the representation of these reverend and learned bodies, shows that bell-ringers have the same, or even greater claims on the liberality of the public. It is perhaps a little too like the original, of which it professes to be a parody; and though it has some wit, is deficient in the bitter ridicule, which Swift would have thrown into such an effort. The following are some passages: —

"That as your petitioners serve in the quality of grave-diggers, the great use and necessity of their order, in every well regulated commonwealth, has never yet been called in question by any reasoner; an advantage they possess above their brethren the reverend clergy.

"That their usefulness is as extensive as it is great, for even those who neglect religion or despise learning, must yet, some time or other, stand in need of the good offices of this grave and venerable order.

"That it seems impossible the landed gentry can oppose the interest of your petitioners; since, by securing so perfectly as they have hitherto done, the persons of the fathers and elder brothers of the foresaid gentry, your petitioners, next after the physicians, are the persons in the world, to whom the present proprietors of land are the most beholden.

"That, as your petitioners are but half ecclesiastics, it may be expected they will not be altogether unreasonable nor exorbitant in their demands.

"That the present poverty of your petitioners in this kingdom is a scandal to all religion; it being easy to prove, that a modern bellman is not more richly endowed than a primitive apostle, and consequently possesseth not the twentieth part of the revenues belonging to a presbyterian clergyman.

"That whatever freedom the profane scoffers, and free thinkers of the age, may use with our reverend brethren the clergy, the boldest of them tremble when they think of us; and that a simple reflection on us has reformed more lives than all the sermons in the world.

“That the instrumental music allotted to your petitioners, being the only music of that kind left in our truly reformed churches, is a necessary prelude to the vocal music of the schoolmaster and minister, and is by many esteemed equally significant and melodious.

“That your petitioners trust the honourable house will not despise them on account of the present meanness of their condition; for, having heard a learned man say that the cardinals, who are now princes, were once nothing but the parish curates of Rome, your petitioners, observing the same laudable measures to be now prosecuted, despair not of being, one day, on a level with the nobility and gentry of these realms.”

The petition of which this is a specimen, is accompanied by a letter, signed “Zerubabel Macgilchrist, Bellman of Buckhaven;” who kindly says to the members of parliament he addresses, that the brother to whom is allotted “the comfortable task of doing you the last service in our power, shall do it so carefully, that you never shall find reason to complain of him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

1751-1752. Æt. 40-41.

Sir Gilbert Elliot — Hume's intimacy with him — Their Philosophical Correspondence — Dialogues on Natural Religion — Residence in Edinburgh — Jack's Land — Publication of the "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals" — The Utilitarian Theory — Attempt to obtain the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow — Competition with Burke — Publication of the "Political Discourses" — The foundation of Political Economy — French Translations.

Foremost in that body of accomplished gentlemen, whose friendship and companionship afforded to Hume so much pleasure and instruction, was Mr. afterwards Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto. A small portion of the letters, of which their correspondence consists, has already been embodied in philosophical literature; and I have now, through the favour of the noble descendant of the person to whom they were addressed, an opportunity of presenting the reader with all those portions of Hume's letters to Sir Gilbert Elliot, now existing, which have any claim on public attention, whether as containing valuable philosophical speculations, or throwing light on the social habits and intercourse of the two distinguished correspondents.

Sir Gilbert Elliot was the third baronet of the family of Minto, who bore the same Christian name. He joined the Scottish bar, though he does not seem to have sought professional practice.

He was, for a considerable period, a member of Parliament, and among other offices held that of treasurer of the navy. In lighter literature he is known as the author of some pretty pieces of poetry, among which, the popular song of "My Sheep I neglected," is well esteemed by the admirers of pastoral lyrics. His acquirements as a scholar and philosopher are amply attested by his correspondence with Hume.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Ninewells, near Berwick, 10th February, 1751.

"Dear Sir, — About six weeks ago, I gave our friend, Jack Stuart, the trouble of delivering you a letter, and some papers enclosed, which I was desirous to submit to your criticism and examination. I say not this by way of compliment and ceremonial, but seriously and in good earnest: it is pretty usual for people to be pleased with their own performance, especially in the heat of composition; but I have scarcely wrote any thing more whimsical, or whose merit I am more diffident of.

"But, in sending in these papers, I am afraid that I have not taken the best step towards conveying them to your hand. I should also have wrote you to ask for them, otherwise, perhaps, our friend may wear them out in his pocket, and forget the delivery of them: be so good, therefore, as to desire them from him, and having read them at your leisure, return them to him in a packet, and he will send them to me by the carrier. You would easily observe what I mentioned to you, that they had a reference to some other work, and were not complete in themselves: but, with this allowance, are they tolerable?"

The paper to which the following letter refers, was published as an appendix to the "Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals," to be shortly noticed, and was simply termed, "A Dialogue." It is, perhaps, more imaginative than any other of Hume's works, "The Epicurean" not excepted. It draws startling contrasts, by taking from ancient and modern times, two communities of men strikingly opposed to each other in habits, and describing those of the one in the social language of the other. In this manner, it gives an account of the vices of the Greeks, in the manner in which they would be described by a modern fashionable Englishman, seeking pleasure and companionship in Greece, as it was in the days of Alcibiades. This method of exhibiting national manners through the magnifying glass of national prejudices, has, in later times, been frequently adopted, and, perhaps, owes its popularity to the success with which it was exhibited in Montesquieu's "Lettres Persanes," and Goldsmith's "Citizen of the World."

Gilbert Elliot *of Minto, to* Hume.

February, 1751.

Dear Sir, — I have read over your Dialogue, with all the application I am master of. Though I have never looked into any thing of your writing, which did not either entertain or instruct me; yet, I must freely own to you, that I have received from this last piece an additional satisfaction, and what indeed I have a thousand times wished for in some of your other performances. In the first part of this work, you have given full scope to the native bent of your genius. The ancients and moderns, how opposite soever in other respects, equally combine in favour of the most unbounded scepticism. Principles, customs, and manners, the most contradictory, all seemingly lead to the same end; and agreeably to your laudable practice, the poor reader is left in the most disconsolate state of doubt and uncertainty. When I had got thus far, what do you think were my sentiments? I will not be so candid as to tell you; but how agreeable was my surprise, when I found you had led me into this maze, with no other view, than to point out to me more clearly the direct road. Why can't you always write in this manner? Indulge yourself as much as you will in starting difficulties, and perplexing received opinions: but let us be convinced at length, that you have not less ability to establish true principles, than subtlety to detect false ones. This unphilosophical, or, if you will, this lazy disposition of mine, you are at liberty to treat as you think proper; yet am I no enemy to free inquiry, and I would gladly flatter myself, no slave to prejudice or authority. I admit also that there is no writing or talking of any subject that is of importance enough to become the object of reasoning, without having recourse to some degree of subtlety or refinement. The only question is, where to stop, — how far we can go, and why no farther. To this question I should be extremely happy to receive a satisfactory answer. I can't tell if I shall rightly express what I have just now in my mind: but I often imagine to myself, that I perceive within me a certain instinctive feeling, which shoves away at once all subtle refinements, and tells me with authority, that these air-built notions are inconsistent with life and experience, and, by consequence cannot be true or solid. From this I am led to think, that the speculative principles of our nature ought to go hand in hand with the practical ones; and, for my own part, when the former are so far pushed, as to leave the latter quite out of sight, I am always apt to suspect that we have transgressed our limits. If it should be asked — how far will these practical principles go? I can only answer, that the former difficulty will recur, unless it be found that there is something in the intellectual part of our nature, resembling the moral sentiment in the moral part of our nature, which determines this, as it were, instinctively. Very possibly I have wrote nonsense. However, this notion first occurred to me at London, in conversation with a man of some depth of thinking; and talking of it since to your friend H. Home, he seems to entertain some notions nearly of the same kind, and to have pushed them much farther.

This is but an idle digression, so I return to the Dialogue.

With regard to the composition in general, I have nothing to observe, as it appears to me to be conducted with the greatest propriety, and the artifice in the beginning occasions, I think, a very agreeable surprise. I don't know, if, in the account of the modern manners, you [had] an eye to Bruyere's introduction to his translation of Theophrastes. If you had not, as he has a thought handled pretty much in that manner, perhaps looking into it might furnish some farther hints to embellish that part of your work.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Ninewells, 19th February, 1751.

"Dear Sir, — Your notion of correcting subtlety of sentiment, is certainly very just with regard to morals, which depend upon sentiment; and in politics and natural philosophy, whatever conclusion is contrary to certain matters of fact, must certainly be wrong, and there must some error lie somewhere in the argument, whether we be able to show it or not. But in metaphysics or theology, I cannot see how either of these plain and obvious standards of truth can have place. Nothing there can correct bad reasoning but good reasoning, and sophistry must be opposed by syllogisms. About seventy or eighty years ago, I observe, a principle like that which you advance prevailed very much in France among some philosophers and *beaux esprits*. The occasion of it was this: The famous Mons. Nicole of the Port Royal, in his *Perpétuité de la Foi*, pushed the Protestants very hard upon the impossibility of the people's reaching a conviction of their religion by the way of private judgment; which required so many disquisitions, reasonings, researches, eruditions, impartiality, and penetration, as not one in a hundred even among men of education, is capable of. Mons. Claude and the Protestants answered him, not by solving his difficulties, (which seems impossible,) but by retorting them, (which is very easy.) They showed that to reach the way of authority which the Catholics insist on, as long a train of acute reasoning, and as great erudition, was requisite, as would be sufficient for a Protestant. We must first prove all the truths of natural religion, the foundation of morals, the divine authority of the Scripture, the deference which it commands to the church, the tradition of the church, &c. The comparison of these controversial writings begot an idea in some, that it was neither by reasoning nor authority we learn our religion, but by sentiment: and certainly this were a very convenient way, and what a philosopher would be very well pleased to comply with, if he could distinguish sentiment from education. But to all appearance the sentiment of Stockholm, Geneva, Rome ancient and modern, Athens and Memphis, have the same characters; and no sensible man can implicitly assent to any of them, but from the general principle, that as the truth in these subjects is beyond human capacity, and that as for one’s own ease he must adopt some tenets, there is most satisfaction and convenience in holding to the Catholicism we have been first taught. Now this I have nothing to say against. I have only to observe, that such a conduct is founded on the most universal and determined scepticism, joined to a little indolence; for more curiosity and research gives a direct opposite turn from the same principles.

“I have amused myself lately with an essay or dissertation on the populousness of antiquity, which led me into many disquisitions concerning both the public and domestic life of the ancients. Having read over almost all the classics both Greek and Latin, since I formed that plan, I have extracted what served most to my purpose. But I have not a Strabo, and know not where to get one in this neighbourhood. He is an author I never read. I know your library — I mean the Advocates’ — is scrupulous of lending classics; but perhaps that difficulty may be got over. I should be much obliged to you, if you could procure me the loan of a copy, either in the original language or even in a good translation.

“The Greeks had military dances, particularly the Pyrrhicha; but these were not practised in their festivals nor amidst their jollity. Their way of dancing was very good for an indolent fellow; for commonly they rose not from their seats, but moved their arms and head in cadence. ’Tis difficult to imagine there could be much grace in that kind of dancing.

“I send you enclosed a little endeavour at drollery, against some people who care not much to be joked upon. I have frequently had it in my intentions to write a supplement to Gulliver, containing the ridicule of priests. ’Twas certainly a pity that Swift was a parson; had he been a lawyer or physician, we had nevertheless been entertained at the expense of these professions: but priests are so jealous, that they cannot bear to be touched on that head, and for a plain reason, because they are conscious they are really ridiculous. That part of the Doctor’s subject is so fertile, that a much inferior genius I am confident might succeed in it.

"Tell Jack Stuart, as soon as you see him, that I have sent you the copy, if he can make any thing of it. I intended to have had it printed, but I know not how — I find it will not do. If you like the thing, I wish you would contrive together some way of getting over the difficulties that have arisen, the most strangely in the world. I am, &c."

Among the papers submitted to the inspection of Mr. Elliot, were the "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion," which were not published until after their author's death, but which the following letter shows to have been written before the year 1751. The manuscript of this work is full of emendations and corrections; and while the sentiments appear to be substantially the same as when they were first set down, the alterations in the method of announcing them are a register of the improvements in their author's style, for a period apparently of twenty-seven years. Here at least he could not plead the excuse of youth and indiscretion. The work, penned in the full vigour of his faculties, comes to us with the sanction of his mature years, and his approval when he was within sight of the grave. Whatever sentiments, therefore, in this work, may be justly found to excite censure, carry with them a reproach from which their author's name cannot escape.

The Dialogues are written with a solemn simplicity of tone worthy of the character of the subject. The structure is in a great measure that of Cicero, though there appears not, as there generally does in the conversations professed to be recorded by the Roman moralist, any one mind completely predominating over the others. Of the interlocutors, Philo presents himself, at first as a materialist of the Spinoza school, who finds that the material world has within itself the principles of its own motion and development — the operating causes that produce its phenomena; while he denies that these phenomena exhibit an all perfect structure. He is not, however, a man of settled opinions, but rather a sceptical demolisher of other people's views; and we find him saying, "I must confess that I am less cautious on the subject of natural religion than on any other; both because I know that I can never, on that head, corrupt the principles of any man of common sense; and because no one, I am confident, in whose eyes I appear a man of common sense, will ever mistake my intentions. You in particular, Cleanthes, with whom I live in unreserved intimacy, you are sensible, that notwithstanding the freedom of my conversation, and my love of singular arguments, no one has a deeper sense of religion impressed on his mind, or pays more profound adoration to the Divine Being, as he discovers himself to reason, in the inexplicable contrivance and artifice of nature.”

Cleanthes, another speaker, has created a natural religion of his own — a system of Theism, in which, by induction from the beautiful order and mechanism of the world, he has reasoned himself into the belief of an all-wise and all-powerful Supreme Being. He holds, that “the most agreeable reflection which it is possible for human imagination to suggest, is that of genuine Theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a being perfectly good, wise, and powerful, who created us for happiness; and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires, and render our felicity complete and durable.” And, strangely enough, it is with this one that the author shows most sympathy, very nearly professing that the doctrine announced by Cleanthes is his own; while it will be found in his correspondence, that he admits his having designedly endeavoured to make the argument of that speaker the most attractive. This is another illustration of the inapplicability of perfectly abstract metaphysical disquisitions to religious faith; for, if there is any system of religion that is incompatible with Hume’s metaphysical opinions on ideas and impressions, it is a system that is, like this of Cleanthes, the workmanship of human reason. The third speaker, Demea, is a devoutly religious man, who, not venturing to create a system of belief for himself, sees in the order of the world such a merciful and wise dispensation of Divine Providence, as induces him to receive the whole revealed scheme of religion without questioning those parts of it which are beyond his comprehension, any more than he questions those of which the wisdom and goodness are immediately apparent.

The general scope and purport of the Dialogues are not unlike those of Voltaire’s Jenni. In both, the argument on natural theology, illustrating the existence of a ruling mind from the general order and harmony of created things, is adduced, and is measured with its counterpart, the argument from the imperfection of earthly things, and the calamities and unhappiness of the beings standing at the head of the whole social order, mankind. But in the mere similarity of the argument the resemblance stops; no two performances can be more unlike each other in tone and spirit than the English sceptic’s honest search after truth, and the French infidel’s ribald sport with all that men love and revere. The contrast may be found not only in these individual men, but in the two classes of thinkers at the head of which they respectively stood. Hume represented the cautious conscientious inquiry, which has established many truths and gradually ameliorated social evils; the Frenchman directed that scornful, careless, and cruel sport with whatever is dear and important to humanity, which one day bowed to absolute despotism, and the next destroyed the whole fabric of social order.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“Ninewells, near Berwick,
March 10, 1751.

“Dear Sir, — You would perceive by the sample I have given you, that I make Cleanthes the hero of the dialogue: whatever you can think of, to strengthen that side of the argument, will be most acceptable to me. Any propensity you imagine I have to the other side, crept in upon me against my will; and ’tis not long ago that I burned an old manuscript book, wrote before I was twenty, which contained, page after page, the gradual progress of my thoughts on that head. It began with an anxious search after arguments, to confirm the common opinion; doubts stole in, dissipated, returned; were again dissipated, returned again; and it was a perpetual struggle of a restless imagination against inclination, perhaps against reason.

“I have often thought, that the best way of composing a dialogue, would be for two persons that are of different opinions about any question of importance, to write alternately the different parts of the discourse, and reply to each other: by this means, that vulgar error would be avoided, of putting nothing but nonsense into the mouth of the adversary; and at the same time, a variety of character and genius being upheld, would make the whole look more natural and unaffected. Had it been my good fortune to live near you, I should have taken on me the character of Philo, in the dialogue, which you’ll own I could have supported naturally enough; and you would not have been averse to that of Cleanthes. I believe, too, we could both of us have kept our tempers very well; only, you have not reached an absolute philosophical indifference on these points. What danger can ever come from ingenious reasoning and inquiry? The worst speculative sceptic ever I knew, was a much better man than the best superstitious devotee and bigot. I must inform you, too, that this was the way of thinking of the ancients on this subject. If a man made a profession of philosophy, whatever his sect was, they always expected to find more regularity in his life and manners, than in those of the ignorant and illiterate. There is a remarkable passage of Appian to this purpose. That historian observes, that notwithstanding the established prepossession in favour of learning, yet some philosophers, who have been trusted with absolute power, have very much abused it; and he instances Critias, the most violent of the thirty, and Ariston, who governed Athens in the time of Sylla: but I find, upon inquiry, that Critias was a professed Atheist, and Ariston an Epicurean, which is little or nothing different. And yet Appian wonders at their corruption, as much as if they had been Stoics or Platonists. A modern zealot would have thought that corruption unavoidable.

"I could wish Cleanthes' argument could be so analyzed, as to be rendered quite formal and regular. The propensity of the mind towards it, — unless that propensity were as strong and universal as that to believe in our senses and experience, — will still, I am afraid, be esteemed a suspicious foundation. 'Tis here I wish for your assistance; we must endeavour to prove that this propensity is somewhat different from our inclination to find our own figures in the clouds, our faces in the moon, our passions and sentiments even in inanimate matter. Such an inclination may, and ought to be controlled, and can never be a legitimate ground of assent.

"The instances I have chosen for Cleanthes are, I hope, tolerably happy, and the confusion in which I represent the sceptic seems natural, but — si quid novisti rectius, &c.

"You ask me, '*If the idea of cause and effect is nothing but vicinity,*' (you should have said constant vicinity, or, regular conjunction,) I should be glad to know *whence is that farther idea of causation against which you argue*? This question is pertinent, but I hope I have answered it; we feel, after the constant conjunction, an easy transition from one idea to the other, or a connexion in the imagination; and as it is usual for us to transfer our own feelings to the objects on which they are dependent, we attach the internal sentiment to the external objects. If no single instances of cause and effect appear to have any connexion, but only repeated similar ones, you will find yourself obliged to have recourse to this theory.

"I am sorry our correspondence should lead us into these abstract speculations. I have thought, and read, and composed very little on such questions of late. Morals, Politics, and Literature have employed all my time; but still the other topics I must think more curious, important, entertaining, and useful, than any geometry that is deeper than Euclid. If in order to answer the doubts started, new principles of philosophy must be laid, are not these doubts themselves very useful? Are they not preferable to blind, and ignorant assent? I hope I can answer my own doubts; but if I could not, is it to be wondered at? To give myself airs, and speak magnificently, might I not observe, that Columbus did not conquer empires and plant colonies?

"If I have not unravelled the knot so well, in those last papers I sent you, as perhaps I did in the former, it has not, I assure you, proceeded from want of good will; but some subjects are easier than others: at some times one is happier in his researches and inquiries than at others. Still I have recourse to the *si quid novisti rectius*; not in order to pay you a compliment, but from a real philosophical doubt and curiosity.

"I do not pay compliments, because I do not desire them. For this reason, I am very well pleased you speak so coldly of my petition. I had, however, given orders to have it printed, which perhaps may be executed, though I believe I had better have let it alone; not because it will give you offence, but because it will give no entertainment; not because it may be called profane, but because it may perhaps be deservedly called dull. To tell the truth, I was always so indifferent about fortune, and especially now, that I am more advanced in life, and am a little more at my ease, suited to my extreme frugality, that I neither fear nor hope any thing from man; and am very indifferent either about offence or favour. Not only, I would not sacrifice truth and reason to political views, but scarce even a jest. You may tell me, I ought to have reversed the order of these points, and put the jest first: as it is usual for people to be the fondest of their performances on subjects on which they are least made to excel, and that, consequently, I would give more to be thought a good droll, than to have the praises of erudition, and subtilty, and invention. — This malicious insinuation, I will give no answer to, but proceed with my subject.

"I find, however, I have no more to say on it, but to thank you for *Strabo*. If the carrier who will deliver this to you do not find you at home, you will please send the book to his quarters; his name is Thomas Henderson, the Berwick carrier; he leaves town on the Thursdays, about the middle of the day; he puts up at James Henderson, stabler, betwixt the foot of Cant's Close and Blackfriar's Wynd. After you have done with these papers, please return them by the same carrier; but there is no hurry; on the contrary the longer you keep them, I shall still believe you are thinking the more seriously to execute what I desire of you. I am, dear Sir,

“Yours most sincerely.”

“P.S. — If you’ll be persuaded to assist me with Cleanthes, I fancy you need not take matters any higher than part 3d. He allows, indeed, in part 2d, that all our inference is founded on the similitude of the works of nature to the usual effects of mind, otherwise they must appear a mere chaos. The only difficulty is, why the other assimilations do not weaken the argument; and indeed it would seem from experience and feeling, that they do not weaken it so much as we might naturally expect. A theory to solve this would be very acceptable.”

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

1751.

“Dear Sir, — I am sorry your keeping these papers has proceeded from business and avocations, and not from your endeavours to clear up so difficult an argument. I despair not, however, of getting some assistance from you; the subject is surely of the greatest importance, and the views of it so new as to challenge some attention.

“I believe the Philosophical Essays contain every thing of consequence relating to the understanding, which you would meet with in the Treatise; and I give you my advice against reading the latter. By shortening and simplifying the questions, I really render them much more complete. *Addo dum minuo*. The philosophical principles are the same in both; but I was carried away by the heat of youth and invention to publish too precipitately. — So vast an undertaking, planned before I was one-and-twenty, and composed before twenty-five, must necessarily be very defective. I have repented my haste a hundred, and a hundred times.

“I return Strabo, whom I have found very judicious and useful. I give you a great many thanks for your trouble. I am,” &c.

Hume’s elder brother, John, the laird of Ninewells, was married in 1751; and the following letter, enlivened by touches of light and even elegant raillery, scarcely excelled in the writings of Addison, evidently refers to that event. The plan of life which he sets forth was afterwards altered, at least in so far as he had then in view a place of residence.

Hume *to* Mrs. Dysart.

"Ninewells, March 19th, 1751.

"Dear Madam, — Our friend at last plucked up a resolution, and has ventured on that dangerous encounter. He went off on Monday morning; and this is the first action of his life wherein he has engaged himself, without being able to compute exactly the consequences. But what arithmetic will serve to fix the proportion between good and bad wives, and rate the different classes of each? Sir Isaac Newton himself, who could measure the course of the planets, and weigh the earth as in a pair of scales, — even he had not algebra enough to reduce that amiable part of our species to a just equation; and they are the only heavenly bodies whose orbits are as yet uncertain.

"If you think yourself too grave a matron to have this florid part of the speech addressed to you, pray lend it to the Collector, and he will send it to Miss Nancy.

"Since my brother's departure, Katty and I have been computing in our turn, and the result of our deliberation is, that we are to take up house in Berwick; where, if arithmetic and frugality don't deceive us, (and they are pretty certain arts) we shall be able, after providing for hunger, warmth, and cleanliness, to keep a stock in reserve, which we may afterwards turn either to the purposes of hoarding, luxury, or charity. But I have declared beforehand against the first; I can easily guess which of the other two you and Mr. Dysart will be most favourable to. But we reject your judgment; for nothing blinds one so much as inveterate habits.

"My compliments to his Solicitorship. Unfortunately I have not a horse at present to carry my fat carcass, to pay its respects to his superior obesity. But if he finds travelling requisite either for his health or the captain's, we shall be glad to entertain him here, as long as we can do it at another's expense; in hopes we shall soon be able to do it at our own.

"Pray tell the Solicitor that I have been reading lately, in an old author called *Strabo*, that in some cities of ancient Gaul, there was a fixed legal standard established for corpulency; and that the senate kept a measure, beyond which, if any belly presumed to increase, the proprietor of that belly was obliged to pay a fine to the public, proportionable to its rotundity. Ill would it fare with his worship and I, if such a law should pass our parliament; for I am afraid we are already got beyond the statute.

“I wonder, indeed, no harpy of the treasury has ever thought of this method of raising money. Taxes on luxury are always most approved of; and no one will say, that the carrying about a portly belly is of any use or necessity. ’Tis a mere superfluous ornament; and is a proof, too, that its proprietor enjoys greater plenty than he puts to a good use; and, therefore, ’tis fit to reduce him to a level with his fellow-subjects, by taxes and impositions.

“As the lean people are the most active, unquiet, and ambitious, they every where govern the world, and may certainly oppress their antagonists whenever they please. Heaven forbid that Whig and Tory should ever be abolished; for then the nation might be split into fat and lean; and our faction, I am afraid, would be in piteous taking. The only comfort is, if they oppressed us very much, we should at last change sides with them.

“Besides, who knows if a tax were imposed on fatness, but some jealous divine might pretend that the church was in danger.

“I cannot but bless the memory of Julius Cæsar, for the great esteem he expressed for fat men, and his aversion to lean ones. All the world allows, that that emperor was the greatest genius that ever was, and the greatest judge of mankind.

“But I should ask your pardon, dear madam, for this long dissertation on fatness and leanness, in which you are no way concerned; for you are neither fat nor lean, and may indeed be denominated an arrant trimmer. But this letter may all be read to the Solicitor; for it contains nothing that need be a secret to him. On the contrary, I hope he will profit by the example; and, were I near him, I should endeavour to prove as good an encourager as in this other instance. What can the man be afraid of? The Mayor of London had more courage, who defied the hare.

“But I am resolved some time to conclude, by putting a grave epilogue to a farce, and telling you a real serious truth, that I am, with great esteem, dear madam, your most obedient humble servant.

“P.S. Pray let the Solicitor tell Frank, that he is a bad correspondent — the only way in which he can be a bad one, by his silence.”

We find, through the whole of his acts and written thoughts before his return from the embassy to Turin, the indications of an earnest wish to possess the means of independent livelihood, suitable to one belonging to the middle classes of life. Great wealth or ornamental rank he seems never to have desired: but the circumstance of his having, in the year 1748, achieved the means of independence through his official emoluments, seems to have taken so strong a hold of his mind, that nearly thirty years afterwards, in writing his autobiography, he speaks with exultation of his having been then in possession of £1000. The position of the man in comfortable circumstances, equally removed from the dread of want, and the uneasy pressure of superfluous wealth, appears always to have presented itself as the most desirable fate which, in mere pecuniary matters, fortune could have in store for him; and no commentary on the sacred text has perhaps better illustrated its application to the conduct and feelings of mankind, than his adaptation of Agur's prayer to the middle station in life, at a time when he was far from having realized that happy mediocrity of fortune, of which he gives so pleasing a picture.

Agur's prayer is sufficiently noted— "Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." — The middle station is here justly recommended, as affording the fullest security for virtue; and I may also add, that it gives opportunity for the most ample exercise of it, and furnishes employment for every good quality which we can possibly be possessed of. Those who are placed among the lower ranks of men, have little opportunity of exerting any other virtue besides those of patience, resignation, industry, and integrity. Those who are advanced into the higher stations, have full employment for their generosity, humanity, affability, and charity. When a man lies betwixt these two extremes, he can exert the former virtues towards his superiors, and the latter towards his inferiors. Every moral quality which the human soul is susceptible of, may have its turn, and be called up to action; and a man may, after this manner, be much more certain of his progress in virtue, than where his good qualities lie dormant, and without employment.

The following letter, of a somewhat later date, gives a view of his definitive intentions.

Hume *to* Michael Ramsay.

"Ninewells, 22d June, 1751.

"Dear Michael, — I cannot sufficiently express my sense of your kind letter. The concern you take in your friends is so warm, even after so long absence, and such frequent interruptions as our commerce has unhappily met with of late years, that the most recent familiarity of others can seldom equal it. I might perhaps pretend, as well as others, to complain of fortune; but I do not, and should condemn myself as unreasonable if I did. While interest remains as at present, I have £50 a-year, a hundred pounds worth of books, great store of linens and fine clothes, and near £100 in my pocket; along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabating love of study. In these circumstances I must esteem myself one of the happy and fortunate; and so far from being willing to draw my ticket over again in the lottery of life, there are very few prizes with which I would make an exchange. After some deliberation, I am resolved to settle in Edinburgh, and hope I shall be able with these revenues to say with Horace —

Est bona librorum et provisae frugis in annum
Copia.

Besides other reasons which determine me to this resolution, I would not go too far away from my sister, who thinks she will soon follow me; and in that case, we shall probably take up house either in Edinburgh, or the neighbourhood. Our sister-in-law behaves well, and seems very desirous we should both stay. . . . . . . And as she (my sister) can join £30 a-year to my stock, and brings an equal love of order and frugality, we doubt not to make our revenues answer. Dr. Clephane, who has taken up house, is so kind as to offer me a room in it; and two friends in Edinburgh have made me the same offer. But having nothing to ask or solicit at London, I would not remove to so expensive a place; and am resolved to keep clear of all obligations and dependencies, even on those I love the most.”

In fulfilment of the design thus announced, he tells us, in his “own life,” “In 1751, I removed from the country to the town, the true scene for a man of letters.” We find, from the dating of his letters, that Hume’s residence in Edinburgh was for a year or two in “Riddell’s Land,” and that it was afterwards in “Jack’s Land.” Since the plan of numbering the houses in each street extended to the Scottish capital, these names have no longer been in general use; but I find that the former applied to an edifice in the Lawnmarket, near the head of the West Bow, and that the latter was a tenement in the Canongate, right opposite to a house in which Smollet occasionally resided with his sister. The term “Land” applied to one of those edifices — some of them ten or twelve stories high, — in which the citizens of Edinburgh, pressed upwards as it were by the increase of the population within a narrow circuit of walls, made stair-cases supply the place of streets, and erected perpendicular thoroughfares. A single floor of one of these edifices was, a century ago, sufficient to accommodate the family of a Scottish nobleman; and we may be certain, that a very small “Flat” would suit the economical establishment of Hume.

In 1751, appeared the “Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals,” the full development, so far as it was made by Hume, of the utilitarian system. The leading principle kept in view throughout this work, is, that its tendency to be useful to mankind at large, is the proper criterion of the propriety of any action, or the justness of any ethical opinion. In this spirit he examines many of the social virtues, and shows that it is their usefulness to mankind that gives them a claim to sympathy, and a title to be included in the list of virtues. The defects of this exposition of the utilitarian system, are marked by the manner in which it was critically attacked. In 1753 a controversial examination of it was made, with temper and ability, by James Balfour of Pilrig, who in 1754 succeeded to the chair, in the university of Edinburgh, which Hume had been desirous of filling. Mr. Balfour’s great argument is the universality of the admission by mankind, in some shape or other, of the leading cardinal virtues, and the unhesitating adoption and practice of them by men on whom the utilitarian theory never dawned, and who are unconscious that their isolated acts are the fulfilment of any general or uniform law. Mr. Balfour argued that we must thus look to something else than utility, as the criterion of moral right and wrong. But a supporter of the utilitarian system, as it has been more fully developed in later days, would probably only take from Mr. Balfour’s argument a hint to enlarge the scope of Hume’s investigations. To the inquiry, how far utility is the proper end of human conduct, he would add the inquiry, how far the theory has been practically adopted by mankind at large. Though Bacon first laid down the broad rule of unvarying induction from experiment, many experiments were made, and many inductions derived from them, before he saw the light; and so before the utilitarian theory was first formally suggested — as it appears to have been by Aristotle in his Nicomachean Ethics — utility may frequently have been a rule of action.

It does not necessarily follow, that because a practice is universal, because it is adopted “by saint, by savage, and by sage,” it is therefore not the dictate of utility, provided it be admitted that utility was an influencing motive with men before the days of Hume. The followers of established customs may often be blind; but if we hunt back a practice to its first institution, we may find that the leaders were quick-sighted, and kept utility in view, so far as the state of things they had to deal with permitted. A minute inquiry into national prejudices and customs frequently surprises the speculative philosopher, by developing these practices and opinions of the vulgar and illiterate, as the fruit of great knowledge and forethought. Exhibiting, in their full extravagance, the contrasts between different codes of morality, was one of Hume's literary recreations; and it might have been worth his while to have inquired, had it occurred to him, how much of his own favourite utilitarian principle is common to all, or at least to many, of the systems he has thus contrasted with each other.

It was a consequence, perhaps, of the limited extent to which he had carried the utilitarian theory, that Hume was charged with having left no distinct line between talent and virtue. By making it seem as if he held that each man was virtuous according as he did good to mankind at large, and vicious in as far as he failed in accomplishing this end, he made way for the argument, that no man can rise high in virtue, unless he also rise high in intellectual gifts; since, without possessing the latter, he is not capable of deciding what actions are, and what are not, conducive to the good of the human race. Many sentiments expressed in the Inquiry appeared to justify this charge. There was thus no merit assigned to what is called good intention; and no ground for extending the just approbation of mankind to those who have never attempted to frame a code of morality to themselves, but who, following the track of established opinions, or the rules laid down by some of the many leaders of the human race, believe that, by a steadfast and disinterested pursuit of their adopted course, they are doing that which is right in the eye of God and man. It is certain, however, that in this way many a man may be pursuing a line of conduct conducive to the good of his fellow-creatures, without knowing that his actions have that ultimate end. While he follows the rules that have been laid down for him, his code of morality may be as far superior to that of his clever and aspiring neighbour, who has fabricated a system for himself, as the intelligence of the leader, followed by the one, is greater than the self-sufficient wisdom of the other. Hence multitudes in the humblest classes of society, in any well regulated community of modern Europe, will be found, almost blindly, following a code of morality as much above what the genius either of Socrates or

Cicero could devise, as the order of the universe is superior to the greatest efforts of man’s artificial skill.

“Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door,
Pillow and bobbins all her little store; —
Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay,
Shuffling her threads about the livelong day,
Just earns a scanty pittance; and at night
Lies down secure, — her heart and pocket light.
She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Receives no praise — but, though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true —
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
Oh, happy peasant! oh, unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He, praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come;
She never heard of half a mile from home;
He, lost in errors his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers.”

It was, perhaps, from a like want of inquiry into the full extent of the system, that his theory of utility encountered the charge of being a mere system of “expediency,” which estimated actions according as they accomplished what appeared at the moment to be good or evil, without any regard to their ultimate consequences. He certainly left for Bentham the task of making a material addition to the utilitarian theory, by applying it to the secondary effects of actions. Thus, according to Bentham’s view, when a successful highway robbery is committed, the direct evil done to the victim is but a part of the mischief accomplished. The secondary effects have an operation, if not so deep, yet very widely spread, in creating terror, anxiety, and distrust on the part of honest people, and emboldening the wicked to the perpetration of crimes. On the same principle a good measure must not be carried through the legislature by corrupt means; because the example so set, will, in the end, though not perhaps till the generation benefited by the measure has passed away, produce more bad measures than good, by lowering the tone of political morality. Had Hume kept in view these secondary effects, he never would have vindicated suicide, thought sudden death an occurrence rather fortunate than otherwise, or used expressions from which an opponent could with any plausibility infer, that, under any circumstances, he held strict female chastity in light esteem. But he was always careless about the offensive application of his principles; forgetting that if there be any thing in a set of opinions calculated deeply and permanently to outrage the feelings of mankind, the probability at least is, that they have something about them unsound, — that the mass of the public are right, and the solitary philosopher wrong.

Hume's account, in his "own life," of this period of his literary history, is contained in the following paragraph, in which, as in some other instances, it will be seen that his memory has not accurately retained the chronological sequence of his works.

"In 1752, were published at Edinburgh, where I then lived, my 'Political Discourses,' the only work of mine that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London, my 'Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals;' which, in my own opinion, (who ought not to judge on that subject,) is of all my writings, historical, philosophical, or literary, incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

Before noticing the "Political Discourses," it is necessary to state, that during this winter of 1751, we find Hume again attempting to obtain an academic chair, and again disappointed. Adam Smith, having been Professor of Logic in the university of Glasgow, succeeded to the chair of Moral Philosophy in November 1751, on the death of Professor Craigie, its former occupant. That Hume used considerable exertions to be appointed Smith's successor, is attested by some incidental passages in his correspondence, and particularly by the following letter to Dr. Cullen.

"Edinburgh, 21st January, 1752.

"Sir, — The part which you have acted in the late project for my election into your college, gave me so much pleasure, that I would do myself the greatest violence did I not take every opportunity of expressing my most lively sense of it. We have failed, and are thereby deprived of great opportunities of cultivating that friendship, which had so happily commenced by your zeal for my interests. But I hope other opportunities will offer; and I assure you, that nothing will give me greater pleasure than an intimacy with a person of your merit. You must even allow me to count upon the same privilege of friendship, as if I had enjoyed the happiness of a longer correspondence and familiarity with you; for as it is a common observation, that the conferring favours on another is the surest method of attaching us to him, I must, by this rule, consider you as a person to whom my interests can never be altogether indifferent. Whatever the reverend gentlemen may say of my religion, I hope I have as much morality as to retain a grateful sentiment of your favours, and as much sense as to know whose friendship will give greatest honour and advantage to me. I am," &c.

The distinguished scientific man, in the course of whose researches this curious literary incident was divulged, informs us that Burke was also a candidate for this chair, and that the successful competitor was a Mr. Clow. Concerning this fortunate person literary history is silent; but he has acquired a curious title to fame, from the greatness of the man to whom he succeeded, and of those over whom he was triumphant.

It is not, perhaps, to be regretted, that Hume failed in both his attempts to obtain a professor's chair. He was not of the stuff that satisfactory teachers of youth are made of. Although he was beyond all doubt an able man of business, in matters sufficiently important to command his earnest attention, yet it is pretty clear that he had acquired the outward manner of an absent, good-natured man, unconscious of much that was going on around him; and that he would have thus afforded a butt to the mischief and raillery of his pupils, from which all the lustre of his philosophical reputation would not have protected him.

Discoverers do not make, in ordinary circumstances, the best instructors of youth, because their minds are often too full of the fermentation of their own original ideas and partly developed systems, to possess the coolness and clearness necessary for conveying a distinct view of the laws and elements of an established system. But if this may be an incidental inconvenience in one whose discoveries are but extensions of admitted doctrines, the revolutionist who is endeavouring to pull to pieces what has been taught for ages within the same walls, and to erect a new system in its stead, can scarcely ever be a satisfactory instructor of any considerable number of young men. The teacher of the moral department of science especially must be, to a certain extent, a conformist; if he be not, what is taught in the class-room will be forgotten or contradicted in the closet. The teachers of youth are themselves not less irascible and sometimes not less prejudiced than other mortals. They have their hatreds and partisanships, often productive of acrimonious controversy; but when there is something like a unity of opinion in the systems of those who teach the same, or like subjects, these superficial discussions produce no evil fruit. Hume would have been at peace with all who would have let his unobtrusive spirit alone; but he would probably have quietly proceeded to inculcate doctrines to which most of his fellow-labourers were strongly averse; and that, perhaps, without knowing or feeling that he was in any way departing from the simple routine of duties which the public expected of him. And thus he would probably have created in the midst of the rising youth of the day, an isolated circle of disciples, taught to despise the acquirements and opinions of their contemporaries, as these contemporaries held theirs in abhorrence.

This was an important epoch in Hume's literary history; in 1751, he produced the work which he himself considered the most meritorious of all his efforts; in 1752, he published that which obtained the largest amount of contemporary popularity, the "Political Discourses." After a series of literary disappointments, borne with the spirit of one who felt within him the real powers of an original thinker and an agreeable writer, and the assurance that the world would some day acknowledge the sterling greatness of his qualifications, he now at last presented them in a form, in which they received the ready homage of the public. These Discourses are in truth the cradle of political economy; and, much as that science has been investigated and expounded in later times, these earliest, shortest, and simplest developments of its principles are still read with delight even by those who are masters of all the literature of this great subject. But they possess a quality which more elaborate economists have striven after in vain, in being a pleasing object of study not only to the initiated but to the ordinary popular reader, and of being admitted as just and true by many who cannot or who will not understand the views of later writers on political economy. They have thus the rarely conjoined merit, that, as they were the first to direct the way to the true sources of this department of knowledge, those who have gone farther, instead of superseding them, have in the general case confirmed their accuracy.

Political economy is a science of which the advanced extremities are the subject of debate and doubt, while the older doctrines are admitted by all as firm and established truths. It may be slippery ground, but it is not a tread-mill, and no step taken has ever to be entirely retraced. It is owing to this characteristic of the science that those who oppose the doctrines of modern economists do not think of denying those of David Hume; and thus, while in these essays the economist finds some of the most important doctrines of his peculiar subject set forth with a clearness and elegance with which he dare not attempt to compete, the ordinary reader, who has a distaste of new doctrines and innovating theories, awards them the respect due to old established opinion.

That they should have been, with all their innovation on received opinions, and their startling novelty, so popular in their own age, is also a matter which has its peculiar explanation. The dread of innovation, simply as change, and without reference to the interests it may affect, sprung up in later times, a child of the French revolution. Before that event some men were republican or constitutional in their views, and declared war against all changes which tended to throw power into the hands of the monarch. Others were monarchical, and opposed to the extension of popular rights. But if an alteration were suggested which did not affect these fundamental principles and opinions, it was welcomed with liberal courtesy, examined, and adopted or rejected on its own merits. Hence both Hume and Smith, writing in bold denunciation of all the old cherished prejudices in matters of commerce, instead of being met with a storm of reproach, as any one who should publish so many original views in the present day would be, at once received a fair hearing and a just appreciation.

Thus there was a period during which innovations, however bold or extensive, received a favourable hearing, and in which the literature both of England and of France was daily giving publicity to new theories embodying sweeping alterations of social systems. In this work the two countries presented their national characteristics. The English writers kept always in view the question how far there would be a vital principle remaining in society after the diseased part was removed; how far there was reason to suppose that the small quantity of good done to the public by any irrational system, which at the same time did much evil, might be accomplished after its abolition. The French were indiscriminate in their war against old received opinions, and offered nothing to fill their place when they were gone; and hence in some measure followed results which have made change and innovation words of dread throughout a great part of society.

Of the inquiries through which Hume brought together the materials for these essays, the reader will have found a specimen in the notes, or *adversaria* quoted above. A comparison of these fragments of the raw material, with the finished result, develops this marked feature in Hume's method of working, that in the way to a short proposition, he has often read and thought at great length. The simplicity and unity of his writings were of more importance to him than the appearance of elaboration; and where others would be scattering multitudinous statements and authorities, he is content with the simple embodiment of results, conscious that inquiry will confirm in the reader's mind the justness of what he lays down. In some respects we can watch the progress of Hume's mind in connexion with these subjects; for in his allusions to commercial matters in his earlier works, he uses the common phraseology, such as "balance of trade," in a manner indicating an adherence to those ordinary fallacies of the day, which, when he came to examine them in his essays on "commerce," "money," "interest," "the balance of trade," "taxes," and "public credit," he extensively repudiated. His examination of the nature and value of money as a medium of exchange, is probably the best and simplest that, even down to this day, can be found. His theory, so far as it goes, has hardly ever been questioned; and indeed at present it may be said, that beyond it we know little with certainty, and that its author had at once discovered the limits at which full and satisfactory knowledge was, for nearly a century, to rest. He shows that money is not in itself property or value; that it is a mere representative, which, if cheap or dear in its material, is just, in the same ratio, a cheap or a dear method of accomplishing a purpose. That if a community could conduct its transactions with a small quantity of money as well as with a large, it would, so far from being poorer, be the richer by so much as the superabundant money had cost. He examines those simple laws which, when there is no disturbing influence, have a tendency to equalize the distribution of the precious metals, through the cheapness of labour and commodities where they are scarce, the nominal enhancement where they are abundant. He notices with great clearness and precision the respective effects upon the community of a state of increase, and of a state of diminution of the available currency of a country. But he enters on few of those intricate monetary questions which are now so frequently the subject of discussion. Of inquiries into the causes which affect the quantity of money in a country, the moving influences from which arise gluts, drains, stagnations, and all the mysteries of finance, he shows us that he felt diffident; and on these matters, how little is the quantity of full satisfactory undisputed knowledge which we yet possess!

Indeed, one of the great merits of Hume's Essays on Political Economy is, that he knows when he is getting out of his depth, and does not conceal his position. With many writers on this subject, the point where clear and satisfactory inquiry ends, is that where dogmatism begins; but Hume stops at that point, sees and admits the difficulty, and acknowledges that he can go no farther with safety.

Among these essays there is one which, like the Oceana of Harrington, though on a smaller scale, is an attempt to construct a system of polity. It is called "Idea of a Perfect Commonwealth." The system so put together is liable to practical objections at every step, and is utterly destitute of that sagacious applicability to the transactions of real business, for which the efforts in hypothetical legislation by Bentham are distinguished.

Another essay of a different character is conspicuous for the vast extent of the learning and research which must have been expended in bringing together its crowd of apt illustrations, — that on "The Populousness of Ancient Nations." To afford a choice of so many applicable facts, directly bearing on the point, how wide must have been the research, how extensive the rejection of such fruit of that research, as did not answer his purpose! In the perusal of this essay one is inclined to regret that Hume afterwards made a portion of modern Europe the object of his historical labours, instead of taking up some department of the history of classical antiquity. The full blown lustre of Greek and Roman greatness had far more of his sympathy than the history of his own countrymen, and their slow progress from barbarism to civilisation. The materials were nearly all confined to the great spirits of antiquity, with whom he delighted to hold converse, instead of involving that heap of documentary matter with which the historian of Britain must grapple; acts of parliament, journals, writs, legal documents, &c. — all things which his soul abhorred. In such a field he might have escaped the imputation of not being a full and fair investigator; and he would, at all events, have avoided the reproach thrown on him by the prying antiquary, who, by the light of newly discovered documents, could charge him with having neglected that of which he did not, and could not, know the existence.

In a letter to Henry Home in 1748, we find Hume mentioning an essay on the Protestant Succession, as one which he was to include in the edition of his “Essays Moral and Political,” then preparing for the press. He speaks of people having endeavoured to divert him from this publication, as one likely to be injurious to him as an official man. Perhaps he was prevailed on to adopt the view of his prudent friends, for this essay is not among the “Essays Moral and Political,” but forms one of the volume of Discourses, among which it is somewhat inharmoniously placed, as it is the only one which bears a reference to the current internal party politics of the day.

The “Political Discourses” introduced Hume to the literature of the continent. The works of Quesnay, Rivière, Mirabeau, Raynal, and Turgot, had not yet appeared, but the public mind of France had been opened for novel doctrines by the bold appeal of Vauban, and by the curious and original inquiries of Montesquieu. The Discourses appear to have been first translated by Eléazer Mauvillon, a native of Provence, and private secretary to Frederic Augustus, King of Poland, who published his translation in 1753. Another, and better known translation, by the Abbé Le Blanc, was published in 1754. This Abbé had spent some time in England, and wrote a work on his experiences in Britain, called “Lettres sur les Anglois.” He was the author also of a tragedy called Aben Säid, which seems to have now lost any fame it ever acquired. His translations from Hume were, however, highly popular, that of the Discourses passing through several editions; and we shall find that they obtained the approbation of Hume himself. The Abbé, in a letter to the author, gives an account of the reception of the translation, the colour of which he may be supposed to have enriched, as regarding a matter in which he felt himself to be *pars magna*. He prophesies that it will produce a like sensation to that caused by the Esprit des Loix, and he finds his prophecy fulfilled. He states, that it is not only read with avidity, but that it has given rise to a multitude of other works. There can be no doubt, indeed, that as no Frenchman had previously approached the subject of political economy with a philosophical pen, this little book was a main instrument, either by causing assent or provoking controversy, in producing the host of French works on political economy, published between the time of its translation, and the publication of Smith’s “Wealth of Nations," in 1776. The work of the elder Mirabeau in particular — L'Ami des Hommes, was in a great measure a controversial examination of Hume's opinions on population.

CHAPTER IX.

1752-1755. Æt. 41-44.

Appointment as keeper of the Advocates’ Library — His Duties — Commences the History of England — Correspondence with Adam Smith and others on the History — Generosity to Blacklock the Poet — Quarrel with the Faculty of Advocates — Publication of the First Volume of the History — Its reception — Continues the History — Controversial and Polemical attacks — Attempt to subject him, along with Kames, to the Discipline of Ecclesiastical Courts — The Leader of the attack — Home’s “Douglas” — The first Edinburgh Review.

“In 1752,” says Hume in his “own life,” “the Faculty of Advocates chose me their librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library.” We have a very glowing account of the contest for this appointment from his own pen in the following letter:

Hume to Dr. Clephane.

“Edinburgh, February 4th, 1752.

“Dear Doctor, — I have been ready to burst with vanity and self-conceit this week past; and being obliged from decorum to keep a strict watch over myself, and check all eruptions of that kind, I really begin to find my health impaired by it, and perceive that there is an absolute necessity for breathing a vein, and giving a loose to my inclination. You shall therefore be my physician, “Dum podagricus fit pugil et medicum urget.” You must sustain the overflowings of my pride; and I expect, too, that by a little flattery you are to help nature in her discharge, and draw forth a still greater flux of the peccant matter. ’Tis not on my account alone you are to take part in this great event; philosophy, letters, science, virtue, triumph along with me, and have now in this one singular instance, brought over even the people from the side of bigotry and superstition.

"This is a very pompous exordium, you see; but what will you say when I tell you that all this is occasioned by my obtaining a petty office of forty or fifty guineas a-year. Since Caligula of lunatic memory, who triumphed on account of the cockle shells which he gathered on the sea shore, no one has ever erected a trophy for so small an advantage. But judge not by appearances! perhaps you will think, when you know all the circumstances, that this success is both as extraordinary in itself, and as advantageous to me, as any thing which could possibly have happened.

"You have probably heard that my friends in Glasgow, contrary to my opinion and advice, undertook to get me elected into that college; and they had succeeded, in spite of the violent and solemn remonstrances of the clergy, if the Duke of Argyle had had courage to give me the least countenance. Immediately upon the back of this failure, which should have blasted for some time all my pretensions, the office of library keeper to the Faculty of Advocates fell vacant, a genteel office, though of small revenue; and as this happened suddenly, my name was immediately set up by my friends without my knowledge. The President, and the Dean of Faculty his son, who used to rule absolutely in this body of advocates, formed an aversion to the project, because it had not come from them; and they secretly engaged the whole party called squadroney against me. The bigots joined them, and both together set up a gentleman of character, and an advocate, and who had great favour on both these accounts. The violent cry of deism, atheism, and scepticism, was raised against me; and 'twas represented that my election would be giving the sanction of the greatest and most learned body of men in this country to my profane and irreligious principles. But what was more dangerous, my opponents entered into a regular concert and cabal against me; while my friends were contented to speak well of their project in general, without having once formed a regular list of the electors, or considered of the proper methods of engaging them. Things went on in this negligent manner till within six days of the election, when they met together and found themselves in some danger of being outnumbered; immediately upon which they raised the cry of indignation against the opposite party; and the public joined them so heartily, that our antagonists durst show their heads in no companies nor assemblies: expresses were despatched to the country, assistance flocked to us from all quarters, and I carried the election by a considerable majority, to the great joy of all bystanders. When faction and party enter into a cause, the smallest trifle becomes important. Nothing since the rebellion has ever so much engaged the attention of this town, except Provost Stewart’s trial; and there scarce is a man whose friendship or acquaintance I would desire, who has not given me undoubted proofs of his concern and regard.

“What is more extraordinary, the cry of religion could not hinder the ladies from being violently my partisans, and I owe my success in a great measure to their solicitations. One has broke off all commerce with her lover, because he voted against me! and W. Lockhart, in a speech to the Faculty, said that there was no walking the streets, nor even enjoying one’s own fireside, on account of their importunate zeal. The town says, that even his bed was not safe for him, though his wife was cousin-german to my antagonist.

“’Twas vulgarly given out, that the contest was betwixt Deists and Christians; and when the news of my success came to the Play-house, the whisper ran that the Christians were defeated. Are you not surprised that we could keep our popularity, notwithstanding this imputation, which my friends could not deny to be well founded?

“The whole body of cadies bought flambeux, and made illuminations to mark their pleasure at my success; and next morning I had the drums and town music at my door, to express their joy, as they said, of my being made a great man. They could not imagine, that so great a fray could be raised about so mere a trifle.

“About a fortnight before, I had published a Discourse of the Protestant Succession, wherein I had very liberally abused both Whigs and Tories; yet I enjoyed the favour of both parties.

“Such, dear Doctor, is the triumph of your friend; yet, amidst all this greatness and glory, even though master of 30,000 volumes, and possessing the smiles of a hundred fair ones, in this very pinnacle of human grandeur and felicity, I cast a favourable regard on you, and earnestly desire your friendship and good-will: a little flattery too, from so eminent a hand, would be very acceptable to me. You know you are somewhat in my debt, in that particular. The present I made you of my Inquiry, was calculated both as a mark of my regard, and as a snare to catch a little incense from you. Why do you put me to the necessity of giving it to myself?

“Please tell General St. Clair, that W. St. Clair, the Advocate, voted for me on his account; but his nephew, Sir David, was so excessively holy, that nothing could bring him over from the opposite party, for which he is looked down upon a little by the fashionable company in town. But he is a very pretty fellow, and will soon regain the little ground he has lost.

"I am, dear Doctor, yours sincerely."

This letter is evidently but half serious. That there was a good deal of contest and caballing is pretty clear; and it is equally clear that Hume took a deep interest in the result: but he appears to have been inclined to laugh a little at his own fervour, and to hide the full extent of his feelings under a cloud of playful exaggeration.

The Advocates' Library, which is now probably next in extent in Britain after the Bodleian, cannot then have borne any great proportion to its present size. It had, however, existed for upwards of seventy years, and was undoubtedly the largest collection of books in Scotland. It was rich, perhaps unrivalled, in the works of the civilians and canonists, and possessed, what was more valuable to Hume, a considerable body of British historical literature, printed and MS. Hume's duties must have involved some attention, not only to the classification and custody of the books, but to the arrangements for making them accessible to the members of the Faculty, as numerous entries in his hand are to be found in the receipt book for borrowed books.

Hume informs us, that the stores thus put at his command enabled him to put his historical designs in practice, by commencing the "History of England." We shall now find a great part of his correspondence devoted to the "History of the House of Stuart," which appears to have been commenced early in 1752. The following is the earliest extant letter to Smith:

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"24th Sept. 1752.

"Dear Sir, — I confess I was once of the same opinion with you, and thought that the best period to begin an English history was about Henry the Seventh. But you will please to observe, that the change which then happened in public affairs, was very insensible, and did not display its influence till many years afterwards. 'Twas under James that the House of Commons began first to raise their head, and then the quarrel betwixt privilege and prerogative commenced. The government, no longer oppressed by the enormous authority of the crown, displayed its genius; and the factions which then arose, having an influence on our present affairs, form the most curious, interesting, and instructive part of our history. The preceding events, or causes, may easily be shown, in a reflection or review, which may be artfully inserted in the body of the work; and the whole, by that means, be rendered more compact and uniform. I confess, that the subject appears to me very fine; and I enter upon it with great ardour and pleasure. You need not doubt of my perseverance.

"I am just now diverted for a moment, by correcting my 'Essays Moral and Political,' for a new edition. If any thing occur to you to be inserted or retrenched, I shall be obliged to you for the hint. In case you should not have the last edition by you, I shall send you a copy of it. In that edition I was engaged to act contrary to my judgment, in retaining the sixth and seventh Essays, which I had resolved to throw out, as too frivolous for the rest, and not very agreeable neither, even in that trifling manner: but Millar, my bookseller, made such protestations against it, and told me how much he had heard them praised by the best judges, that the bowels of a parent melted, and I preserved them alive.

"All the rest of Bolingbroke's works went to the press last week, as Millar informs me. I confess my curiosity is not much raised.

"I had almost lost your letter by its being wrong directed. I received it late, which was the reason why you got not sooner a copy of Joannes Magnus. Direct to me in Riddal's Land, Lawnmarket. I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely."

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

1753.

"Dear Doctor, — I need not inform you, that in certain polite countries, a custom prevails, of writing *lettres de la nouvelle année*, and that many advantages result from this practice, which may seem merely ceremonious and formal. Acquaintance is thereby kept up, friendship revived, quarrels extinguished, negligence atoned for, and correspondences renewed. A man who has been so long conscious of his sins, that he knows not how to return into the way of salvation, taking advantage of this great jubilee, wipes off all past offences, and obtains plenary indulgence; instances are not wanting of such reclaimed sinners, who have afterwards proved the greatest saints, and have even heaped up many works of supererogation. Will you allow me, therefore, dear Doctor, in consideration of my present penitence, and hopes of my future amendment, to address myself to you, and to wish you many and happy new years, *multos et felices*. May pleasures spiritual (*spirituels*) multiply upon you without a decay of the carnal. May riches increase without an augmentation of desires. May your chariot still roll along without a failure of your limbs. May your tongue in due time acquire the *social sweet garrulity* of age, without your teeth losing the sharpness and keenness of youth. May —— but you yourself will best supply the last prayer, whether it should be for the recovery or continuance of the blessing which I hint at. In either case, may your prayer be granted, even though it should extend to the resurrection of the dead.

“I must now set you an example, and speak of myself. By this I mean that you are to speak to me of yourself. I shall exult and triumph to you a little, that I have now at last — being turned of forty, to my own honour, to that of learning, and to that of the present age — arrived at the dignity of being a householder. About seven months ago, I got a house of my own, and completed a regular family; consisting of a head, viz. myself, and two inferior members, a maid and a cat. My sister has since joined me, and keeps me company. With frugality I can reach, I find, cleanliness, warmth, light, plenty, and contentment. What would you have more? Independence? I have it in a supreme degree. Honour? that is not altogether wanting. Grace? that will come in time. A wife? that is none of the indispensable requisites of life. Books? that *is* one of them; and I have more than I can use. In short, I cannot find any blessing of consequence which I am not possessed of, in a greater or less degree; and without any great effort of philosophy, I may be easy and satisfied.

“As there is no happiness without occupation, I have begun a work which will employ me several years, and which yields me much satisfaction. ’Tis a History of Britain, from the Union of the Crowns to the present time. I have already finished the reign of King James. My friends flatter me (by this I mean that they don’t flatter me) that I have succeeded. You know that there is no post of honour in the English Parnassus more vacant than that of history. Style, judgment, impartiality, care — every thing is wanting to our historians; and even Rapin, during this latter period, is extremely deficient. I make my work very concise, after the manner of the ancients. It divides into three very moderate volumes: one to end with the death of Charles the First; the second at the Revolution; the third at the Accession, for I dare come no nearer the present times. The work will neither please the Duke of

Bedford nor James Fraser; but I hope it will please you and posterity. Κτῆμα εις ἀεὶ.

“So, dear Doctor, after having mended my pen, and bit my nails, I return to the narration of parliamentary factions, or court intrigues, or civil wars, and bid you heartily adieu.

“Edinburgh, Riddal’s Land,
5th January, 1753.

“P.S. — When I say that I dare come no nearer the present time than the Accession, you are not to imagine that I am afraid either of danger or offence; I hope, in many instances, that I have shown myself to be above all laws of prudence and discretion. I only mean, that I should be afraid of committing mistakes, in writing of so recent a period, by reason of the want of materials.”

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

“Edinburgh, 6th March, 1753.

“Dear Doctor, — This is delivered to you by my friend Mr. Wedderburn, who makes a jaunt to London, partly with a view to study, partly to entertainment. I thought I could not do him a better office, nor more suitable to both these purposes, than to recommend him to the friendship and acquaintance of a man of learning and conversation. He is young:

‘Mais dans les ames bien nées
La vertue n’attend point le nombre des années.’

It will be a great obligation, both to him and me, if you give him encouragement to see you frequently; and, after that, I doubt not you will think that you owe me an obligation —

‘La in giovenile corpo senile senno.’

“But I will say no more of him, lest my letter fall into the same fault which may be remarked in his behaviour and conduct in life; the only fault which has been remarked in them, that of promising so much that it will be difficult for him to support it. You will allow that he must have been guilty of some error of this kind, when I tell you that the man, with whose friendship and company I have thought myself very much favoured, and whom I recommend to you as a friend and companion, is just twenty. I am, dear Doctor, your affectionate friend and servant.”

Hume *to* James Oswald.

“Jack’s Land, 28th June, 1753.

“Dear Sir, — I am to give you great and very hearty thanks for your care in providing for my cousin, at my desire. The quickness in doing it, and the many obliging circumstances attending that good office, I shall not readily forget. What is usual, they say, makes little impression; but that this rule admits of exceptions, I feel upon every instance of your friendship.

“Mr. Mure told me that you had undertaken to get satisfaction with regard to the old English *subsidies*. I cannot satisfy myself on that head; but I find that all historians and antiquarians are as much at a loss. The nobility, I observe, paid according to their rank and quality, not their estates. The counties were subjected to no valuation; but it was in the power of the commissioners to sink the sums demanded upon every individual, without raising it upon others; and they practised this art when discontented with the court, as Charles complains of with regard to the subsidies voted by his third parliament: yet it seems certain that there must have been some rule of estimation. What was it? Why was it so variable? Lord Strafford raised an Irish subsidy from £12,000 to £40,000, by changing the rule of valuation; but the Irish Parliament, after his impeachment, brought it down again: if Mr. Harding undertakes the solution of this matter, it will be requisite to have these difficulties in his eye. I am glad to hear that we are to have your company here this summer, and that I shall have an opportunity of talking over this, and many other subjects, where I want your advice and opinion. The more I advance in my work, the more I am convinced that the history of England has never yet been written; not only for style, which is notorious to all the world, but also for matter; such is the ignorance and partiality of all our historians. Rapin, whom I had an esteem for, is totally despicable. I may be liable to the reproach of ignorance, but I am certain of escaping that of partiality: the truth is, there is so much reason to blame, and praise, alternately, king and parliament, that I am afraid the mixture of both, in my composition, being so equal, may pass sometimes for an affectation, and not the result of judgment and evidence. Of this you shall be judge; for I am resolved to encroach on your leisure and patience;

Quem vero arripuit, tenet occiditque legendo.

Let me hear of you as you pass through the town, that we may concert measures for my catching you idle, and without company, at Kirkcaldy. I am,” &c.

The rapidity with which the first volume of the “History of England” was composed and printed, has been the object both of surprise and censure. Hume’s labours at this time must have been intense; and during the whole of the period in which he was engaged in the different departments of this great work — from 1752 to 1763 — his correspondence is more scanty than at other periods of his history. Four months elapse between the letter last printed, and the next in order which has been preserved; and in the latter, we find him very wittily alluding to those great labours which he finds absorbing the petty duties of social intercourse.

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

“28th October, 1753.

“Dear Doctor, — I know not if you remember the giant in Rabelais, who swallowed every morning a windmill to breakfast, and at last was choked upon a pound of melted butter, hot from an oven. I am going to compare myself to that giant. I think nothing of despatching a quarto in fifteen or eighteen months, but am not able to compose a letter once in two years; and am very industrious to keep up a correspondence with posterity, whom I know nothing about, and who, probably, will concern themselves very little about me, while I allow myself to be forgot by my friends, whom I value and regard. However, it is some satisfaction that I can give you an account of my silence, with which I own I reproach myself. I have now brought down my History to the death of Charles the First: and here I intend to pause for some time; to read, and think, and correct; to look forward and backward; and to adopt the most moderate and most reasonable sentiments on all subjects. I am sensible that the history of the two first Stuarts will be most agreeable to the Tories; that of the two last to the Whigs; but we must endeavour to be above any regard either to Whigs or Tories.

“Having thus satisfied your curiosity — for I will take it for granted that your curiosity extends towards me — I must now gratify my own. I was very anxious to hear that you had been molested with some disorders this summer. I was told that you expected they would settle into a fit of the gout. It is lucky where that distemper overtakes a man in his chariot: we foot-walkers make but an awkward figure with it. I hope nobody has the impertinence to say to you, Physician, cure thyself. All the world allows that privilege to the gout, that it is not to be cured: it is itself a physician; and, of course, sometimes cures and sometimes kills. I fancy one fit of the gout would much increase your stock of interjections, and render that part of speech, which in common grammars is usually the most barren, with you more copious than either nouns or verbs.

"I must tell you good news of our friend Sir Harry. I am informed that his talent for eloquence will not rust for want of employment: he bids fair for another seat of the house; and what is the charming part of the story, it is General Anstruther's seat which he is to obtain. He has made an attack on the General's boroughs, and, by the assistance of his uncle's interest and purse, is likely to prevail. Is not this delicious revenge? It brings to my mind the story of the Italian, who reading that passage of Scripture, 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord,' burst forth, 'Ay, to be sure; it is too sweet for any mortal.' I own I envy Sir Harry: I never can hope to hate any body so perfectly as he does that renowned commander; and no victory, triumph, vengeance, success, can be more complete. Are not you pleased too? Pray, anatomize your own mind, and tell me how many grains of your satisfaction is owing to malice, and how many ounces to friendship. I leave the rest of this paper to be filled up by Edmonstone. I am, &c.

"P.S. — After keeping this by me eight days, I have never been able to meet with Edmonstone. I must, therefore, send off my own part of a letter which we projected in common. I shall only tell you, that I have since seen Mr. Oswald, who assures me that Anstruther's defeat is infallible."

The following letter to the same friend is a curious instance of Hume's diligent efforts to attain a correct English style: —

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

"Edinburgh, 8th Dec. 1753.

"Dear Doctor, — I am at present reduced to the utmost straits and difficulties. I know people are commonly ashamed to own such distresses. But to whom can one have recourse in his misfortunes, but to his friends? and who can I account my friend, if not Dr. Clephane? not a friend only in the sunshine of fortune, but also in the shade of adversity: not a security only in a calm; but in a storm a sheet-anchor. But, to cut short all prefaces, — though, commonly, beggars and authors abound with them, and I unite both these qualities, — the occasion of my distress is as follows:

"You know that the word *enough*, or *enuff*, as it is pronounced by the English, we commonly, in Scotland, when it is applied to number, pronounce enow. Thus we would say: such a one has books enow for study, but not leisure enuff. Now I want to know, whether the English make the same distinction. I observed the distinction already in Lord Shaftesbury;

‘Though there be doors enow,’ says he, ‘to get out of life;’ and thinking that this distinction of spelling words, that had both different letters, and different pronunciation, was an improvement, I followed it in my learned productions, though I knew it was not usual. But there has lately arisen in me a doubt, that this is a mere Scotticism; and that the English always pronounce the word, as if it were wrote enuff, whether it be applied to numbers or to quantity. To you, therefore, I apply in this doubt and perplexity. Though I make no question that your ear is well purged from all native impurities, yet trust not entirely to it, but ask any of your English friends, that frequent good company, and let me know their opinion.

“It is a rule of Vaugelas always to consult the ladies, rather than men, in all doubts of language; and he asserts, that they have a more delicate sense of the propriety of expressions. The same author advises us, if we desire any one’s opinion in any grammatical difficulty, not to ask him directly; for that confounds his memory, and makes him forget the use, which is the true standard of language. The best way, says he, is to engage him as it were by accident, to employ the expression about which we are in doubt. Now, if you are provided of any expedient, for making the ladies pronounce the word enough, applied both to quantity and number, I beg you to employ it, and to observe carefully and attentively, whether they make any difference in the pronunciation. I am, &c.

“P.S. — I am quite in earnest in desiring a solution of my grammatical doubt.”

The gentle sensitive character, and hard fate of poor blind Thomas Blacklock, the poet, operated strongly on Hume’s kindly feelings. He busied himself with many schemes for enabling his unfortunate friend to gain a subsistence which might make him enjoy “the glorious privilege of being independent:” but with small success. This appears to be the only pursuit which he permitted to divert his attention, at this time, from his great work. We find him writing the following letter to a person whose position in society might enable him to do some substantial service to Blacklock.

Hume *to* Matthew Sharp *of Hoddam*.

“Edinburgh, 25th February, 1754.

“Dear Sir, — I have enclosed this letter under one to my friend Mr. Blacklock, who has retired to Dumfries, and proposes to reside there for some time. His character and situation are no doubt known to you, and challenge the greatest regard from every one who has either good taste or sentiments of humanity. He has printed a collection of poems, which his friends are endeavouring to turn to the best account for him. Had he published them in the common way, their merit would have recommended them sufficiently to common sale; but, in that case, the greatest part of the profit, it is well known, would have redounded to the booksellers. His friends, therefore, take copies from him, and distribute them among their acquaintances. The poems, if I have the smallest judgment, are, many of them, extremely beautiful, and all of them remarkable for correctness and propriety. Every man of taste, from the merit of the performance, would be inclined to purchase them: every benevolent man, from the situation of the author, would wish to encourage him; and, as for those who have neither taste nor benevolence, they should be forced, by importunity, to do good against their will. I must, therefore, recommend it to you to send for a cargo of these poems, which the author's great modesty will prevent him from offering to you, and to engage your acquaintance to purchase them. But, dear sir, I would fain go farther: I would fain presume upon our friendship, (which now begins to be ancient between us,) and recommend to your civilities a man who does honour to his country by his talents, and disgraces it by the little encouragement he has hitherto met with. He is a man of very extensive knowledge and of singular good dispositions; and his poetical, though very much to be admired, is the least part of his merit. He is very well qualified to instruct youth, by his acquaintance both with the languages and sciences; and possesses so many arts of supplying the want of sight, that that imperfection would be no hinderance. Perhaps he may entertain some such project in Dumfries; and be assured you could not do your friends a more real service than by recommending them to him. Whatever scheme he may choose to embrace, I was desirous you should be prepossessed in his favour, and be willing to lend him your countenance and protection, which I am sensible would be of great advantage to him.

"Since I saw you, I have not been idle. I have endeavoured to make some use of the library which was intrusted to me, and have employed myself in a composition of British History, beginning with the union of the two crowns. I have finished the reigns of James and Charles, and will soon send them to the press. I have the impudence to pretend that I am of no party, and have no bias. Lord Elibank says, that I am a moderate Whig, and Mr. Wallace that I am a candid Tory. I was extremely sorry that I could not recommend your friend to Director Hume, as Mr. Cummin desired me. I have never exchanged a word with that gentleman since I carried Jemmy Kirkpatrick to him; and our acquaintance has entirely dropt. I am," &c.

Another letter by Hume, longer and fuller of detail, though it has already appeared in a work well known and much read, seems to demand insertion here. It is addressed to the author of Polymetis and friend of Pope.

Hume *to* Joseph Spence.

Edinburgh, Oct. 15, 1754.

Sir, — The agreeable productions, with which you have entertained the public, have long given me a desire of being known to you: but this desire has been much increased by my finding you engage so warmly in protecting a man of merit, so helpless as Mr. Blacklock. I hope you will indulge me in the liberty I have taken of writing to you. I shall very willingly communicate all the particulars I know of him; though others, by their longer acquaintance with him, are better qualified for this undertaking.

The first time I had ever seen or heard of Mr. Blacklock was about twelve years ago, when I met him in a visit to two young ladies. They informed me of his case, as far as they could in a conversation carried on in his presence. I soon found him to possess a very delicate taste, along with a passionate love of learning. Dr. Stevenson had, at that time, taken him under his protection; and he was perfecting himself in the Latin tongue. I repeated to him Mr. Pope's elegy to the memory of an unfortunate lady, which I happened to have by heart: and though I be a very bad reciter, I saw it affected him extremely. His eyes, indeed, the great index of the mind, could express no passion: but his whole body was thrown into agitation. That poem was equally qualified to touch the delicacy of his taste, and the tenderness of his feelings. I left the town a few days after; and being long absent from Scotland, I neither saw nor heard of him for several years. At last an acquaintance of mine told me of him, and said that he would have waited on me, if his excessive modesty had not prevented him. He soon appeared what I have ever since found him, a very elegant genius, of a most affectionate grateful disposition, a modest backward temper, accompanied with that delicate pride, which so naturally attends virtue in distress. His great moderation and frugality, along with the generosity of a few persons, particularly Dr. Stevenson and Provost Alexander, had hitherto enabled him to subsist. All his good qualities are diminished, or rather perhaps embellished, by a great want of knowledge of the world. Men of very benevolent or very malignant dispositions are apt to fall into this error; because they think all mankind like themselves: but I am sorry to say that the former are apt to be most egregiously mistaken.

I have asked him whether he retained any idea of light or colours. He assured me that there remained not the least traces of them. I found, however, that all the poets, even the most descriptive ones, such as Milton and Thomson, were read by him with pleasure. Thomson is one of his favourites. I remembered a story in Locke of a blind man, who said that he knew very well what scarlet was: it was like the sound of a trumpet. I therefore asked him, whether he had not formed associations of that kind, and whether he did not connect colour and sound together. He answered, that as he met so often, both in books and conversation, with the terms expressing colours, he had formed some false associations, which supported him when he read, wrote, or talked of colours: but that the associations were of the intellectual kind. The illumination of the sun, for instance, he supposed to resemble the presence of a friend; the cheerful colour of green, to be like an amiable sympathy, &c. It was not altogether easy for me to understand him: though I believe, in much of our own thinking, there will be found some species of association. ’Tis certain we always think in some language, viz. in that which is most familiar to us; and ’tis but too frequent to substitute words instead of ideas.

If you was acquainted with any mystic, I fancy you would think Mr. Blacklock’s case less paradoxical. The mystics certainly have associations by which their discourse, which seems jargon to us, becomes intelligible to themselves. I believe they commonly substitute the feelings of a common amour, in the place of their heavenly sympathies: and if they be not belied, the type is very apt to engross their hearts, and exclude the thing typified.

Apropos to this passion, I once said to my friend, Mr. Blacklock, that I was sure he did not treat love as he did colours; he did not speak of it without feeling it. There appeared too much reality in all his expressions to allow that to be suspected. “Alas!” said he, with a sigh, “I could never bring my heart to a proper tranquillity on that head.” Your passion, replied I, will always be better founded than ours, who have sight: we are so foolish as to allow ourselves to be captivated by exterior beauty: nothing but the beauty of the mind can affect you. “Not altogether neither,” said he: “the sweetness of the voice has a mighty effect upon me: the symptoms of youth too, which the touch discovers, have great influence. And though such familiar approaches would be ill-bred in others, the girls of my acquaintance indulge me, on account of my blindness, with the liberty of running over them with my hand. And I can by that means judge entirely of their shape. However, no doubt, humour, and temper, and sense, and other beauties of the mind, have an influence upon me as upon others."

You may see from this conversation how difficult it is even for a blind man to be a perfect Platonic. But though Mr. Blacklock never wants his Evanthe, who is the real object of his poetical addresses, I am well assured that all his passions have been perfectly consistent with the purest virtue and innocence. His life indeed has been in all respects perfectly irreproachable.

He had got some rudiments of Latin in his youth, but could not easily read a Latin author till he was near twenty, when Dr. Stevenson put him to a grammar school in Edinburgh. He got a boy to lead him, whom he found very docible; and he taught him Latin. This boy accompanied him to the Greek class in the College, and they both learned Greek. Mr. Blacklock understands that language perfectly, and has read with a very lively pleasure all the Greek authors of taste. Mr. William Alexander, second son to our late provost, and present member, was so good as to teach him French; and he is quite master of that language. He has a very tenacious memory and a quick apprehension. The young students of the College were very desirous of his company, and he reaped the advantage of their eyes, and they of his instructions. He is a very good philosopher, and in general possesses all branches of erudition, except the mathematical. The lad who first attended him having left him, he has got another boy, whom he is beginning to instruct; and he writes me that he is extremely pleased with his docility. The boy's parents, who are people of substance, have put him into Mr. Blacklock's service, chiefly on account of the virtuous and learned education which they know he gives his pupils.

As you are so generous to interest yourself in this poor man's case, who is so much an object both of admiration and compassion, I must inform you entirely of his situation. He has gained about one hundred guineas by this last edition of his poems, and this is the whole stock he has in the world. He has also a bursary, about six pounds a-year. I begun a subscription for supporting him during five years; and I made out twelve guineas a-year among my acquaintance. That is a most terrible undertaking; and some unexpected refusals I met with, damped me, though they have not quite discouraged me from proceeding. We have the prospect of another bursary of ten pounds a-year in the gift of the exchequer; but to the shame of human nature, we met with difficulties. Noblemen interpose with their valet-de-chambres or nurses' sons, who they think would be burdens on themselves. Could we ensure but thirty pounds a-year to this fine genius and man of virtue, he would be easy and happy: for his wants are none but those which Nature has given him, though she has unhappily loaded him with more than other men.

His want of knowledge of the world, and the great delicacy of his temper, render him unfit for managing boys or teaching a school: he would retain no authority. Had it not been for this defect, he could have been made professor of Greek in the University of Aberdeen.

Your scheme of publishing his poems by subscription, I hope will turn to account. I think it impossible he could want, were his case more generally known. I hope it will be so by your means. Sir George Lyttleton, who has so fine a taste, and so much benevolence of temper, would certainly, were the case laid before him in a just light, lend his assistance, or rather indeed quite overcome all difficulties. I know not, whether you have the happiness of that gentleman's acquaintance.

As you are a lover of letters, I shall inform you of a piece of news, which will be agreeable to you: we may hope to see good tragedies in the English language. A young man called Hume, a clergyman of this country, discovers a very fine genius for that species of composition. Some years ago, he wrote a tragedy called Agis, which some of the best judges, such as the Duke of Argyle, Sir George Lyttleton, Mr. Pitt, very much approved of. I own, though I could perceive fine strokes in that tragedy, I never could in general bring myself to like it: the author, I thought, had corrupted his taste by the imitation of Shakspere, whom he ought only to have admired. But the same author has composed a new tragedy on a subject of invention; and here he appears a true disciple of Sophocles and Racine. I hope in time he will vindicate the English stage from the reproach of barbarism.

I shall be very glad if the employing my name in your account of Mr. Blacklock can be of any service. I am, Sir, with great regard, &c.

P.S. — Mr. Blacklock is very docible, and glad to receive corrections. I am only afraid he is too apt to have a deference for other people's judgment. I did not see the last edition till it was printed; but I have sent him some objections to passages, for which he was very thankful. I also desired him to retrench some poems entirely; such as the Ode on Fortitude, and some others, which seemed to me inferior to the rest of the collection. You will very much oblige him, if you use the same freedom. I remarked to him some Scotticisms; but you are better qualified for doing him that service. I have not seen any of his essays; and am afraid his prose is inferior to his poetry. He will soon be in town, when I shall be enabled to write you further particulars.

In 1756, Spence published his edition of Blacklock's poems, with a long introduction, in which all allusion to Hume's letter, and his services to Blacklock, is carefully avoided. Blacklock was subsequently alienated from Hume, and was accused by some of ingratitude; while others threw the odium of the dispute on Hume, who, they said, was mortified because Spence's edition of Blacklock's Poems was not dedicated to him. Whoever may have been in the wrong, the latter supposition is erroneous, as we shall find Hume at a much later period conferring services on Blacklock, who in his turn gratefully acknowledges them. The zeal of Spence to blot from the work any mark that might connect it with the name of Hume, is alluded to with good-natured sarcasm, in a letter to Dr. Clephane, farther on.

The following letter, connected with another curious circumstance, describes an incident in Hume's conduct to Blacklock.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1754.

"Dear Sir, — I told you that I intended to apply to the Faculty for redress; and, if refused, to throw up the library. I was assured that two of the curators intended before the Faculty to declare their willingness to redress me, after which there could be no difficulty to gain a victory over the other two. But before the day came, the Dean prevailed on them to change their resolution, and joined them himself with all his interest. I saw it then impossible to succeed, and accordingly retracted my application. But being equally unwilling to lose the use of the books, and to bear an indignity, I retain the office, but have given Blacklock, our blind poet, a bond of annuity for the salary. I have now put it out of these malicious fellows' power to offer me any indignity, while my motive for remaining in this office is so apparent. I should be glad that you approve of my conduct. I own I am satisfied with myself."

The following minute or memorandum, in Hume's handwriting, explains the ground of his disgust. One of the "malicious fellows" appears to have been Lord Monboddo; another, Sir David Dalrymple, afterwards Lord Hailes, with whom he never was on very cordial terms.

“Edinburgh, 27th June, 1754.

“This day Mr. James Burnet, [Mr. Thomas Millar,] and Sir David Dalrymple, curators of the library, (then follow some arrangement as to meetings,) having gone through some accounts of books, lately bought for the library, and finding therein the three following French books, Les Contes de La Fontaine, L’Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules, and L’Écumoire, they ordain that the said books be struck out of the catalogue of the library, and removed from the shelves as indecent books, and unworthy of a place in a learned library.

“And to prevent the like abuses in time to come, they appoint that after this no books shall be bought for the library, without the authority of a meeting of the curators in time of session, and of two of them in time of vacation.”

It involves no approval of the licentious features of French literature, to pronounce this resolution of the curators pre-eminently absurd. A public library, purged of every book of which any portion might offend the taste of a well-regulated mind of the present day, would unfortunately be very barren in the most brilliant departments of the literature of other days and other languages. It would be wrong in the guardians of a public library to advance to the dignity of its shelves, those loathsome books written for the promotion of vice, of which, though they be published by no eminent bookseller, exhibited on no respectable counter, advertised in no newspaper, too many have found their way, by secret avenues, into the heart of society, where they corrupt its life-blood. But if Greece, Rome, and France, — if our own ancestors, had a freer tone in their imaginative literature than we have, we must yet admit their works to our libraries, if we would have these institutions depositaries of the genius of all times and all places. The Faculty of Advocates are probably not less virtuous at this moment than they were in 1754, yet they have now on their shelves the brilliant edition of all La Fontaine’s works, published at Amsterdam in 1762, — so that the expurgatory zeal of the three curators, had only put their constituents to the expense of replacing the condemned book. L’Écumoire may also still be found in the Advocates’ library, along with the other still more censurable works of its author, Crebillon the younger, who was certainly a free writer, but scarcely deserved the very opprobrious name which he obtained, of the

French Petronius. Hume was afterwards the acquaintance and correspondent of this author, who was anxious to hear that his works were well received in Britain. Would Hume tell him that it was considered in Edinburgh an offence against decency, to admit one of them to a national library? The other condemned work, which is generally attributed to Bussy Rabutin, is not now to be found in the catalogues of the Advocates' library.

Amidst such unpleasant interruptions he brought the first volume of his History to a conclusion; and thus announces the fact to a friend, while in the midst of his satisfaction he does not forget poor Blacklock.

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

"Sept. 1, 1754.

"Dear Doctor, — I desire you to give me joy. *Jamque opus exegi, &c.* This day I received from the press the last sheet of the volume of history which I intended to publish; and I am already well advanced in composing the second volume. It was impossible for the booksellers to refuse to several the sight of the sheets as we went on; and Whig and Tory, and Tory and Whig, (for I will alternately give them the precedence,) combine as I am told in approving of my politics. A few Christians only (and but a few) think I speak like a Libertine in religion: be assured I am tolerably reserved on this head. Elliot tells me that you had entertained apprehensions of my discretion: what I had done to forfeit with you the character of prudence, I cannot tell, but you will see little or no occasion for any such imputation in this work. I composed it *ad populum*, as well as *ad clerum*, and thought, that scepticism was not in its place in an historical production. I shall take care to convey a copy to you by the first opportunity, and shall be very proud of your approbation, and no less pleased with your reprehensions.

"Our friend Aber is again to enjoy the privilege of franking after a *hiatus valde deflendus*. Edmonstone is at Peterhead drinking the waters for his health. Sir Harry lives among his boroughs, but not so assiduous in his civilities as formerly; an instance of ingratitude which one would not expect in a man of such nice honour. I was lately told, that one day last winter he went to pay a visit to a deacon's wife, who happened in that very instant to be gutting fish. He came up to her with open arms, and said he hoped madam was well, and that the young ladies her daughters were in good health. 'Oh, come not near me,' cried she, 'Sir Harry; I am in a sad pickle, as nasty as a beast.'— 'Not at all, madam,' replied he, 'you are in a very agreeable négligé.' 'Well,' said she, 'I shall never be able to understand your fine English.'— 'I mean, madam,' returned he, 'that you are drest in a very genteel *deshabillé*.'

"There is a young man of this country, Mr. Thomas Blacklock, who has discovered a very fine genius for poetry, and under very extraordinary circumstances. He is the son of a poor tradesman, and was born blind; yet, notwithstanding these disadvantages, he has been able to acquire a great knowledge of Greek, Latin, and French, and to be well acquainted with all the classics in these languages, as well as in our own. He published last winter a volume of Miscellanies, which all men of taste admired extremely for their purity, elegance, and correctness; nor were they devoid of force and invention. I sent up half-a-dozen to Dodsley, desiring him to keep one, and to distribute the rest among men of taste of his acquaintance. I find they have been much approved of, and that Mr. Spence, in particular, has entertained thoughts of printing a new edition by subscription, for the benefit of the author. You are an acquaintance of Mr. Spence: encourage, I beseech you, so benevolent a thought, and promote it every where by your recommendation. The young man has a great deal of modesty, virtue, and goodness, as well as of genius, and notwithstanding very strict frugality, is in great necessities; but curst, or blest, with that honest pride of nature, which makes him uneasy under obligations, and disdain all applications. I need say no more to you. Dear Doctor, believe me, with great honesty and affection, your friend and servant."

Before the year 1754 came to an end, there was published, in a quarto volume of four hundred and seventy-three pages, "The History of Great Britain. Volume I. Containing the reigns of James I. and Charles I. By David Hume, Esq." He had now laid the foundation of a title to that which all the genius and originality of his philosophical works would never have procured for him — the reputation of a popular author. His other works might exhibit a wider and a more original grasp of thought: but the readers of metaphysics and ethics are a small number; while the readers of history, and especially of the history of their own country, are a community nearly as great as the number of those who can read their own language. In this large market he produced his ware; and after some hesitation on the part of those ordinary readers, who had never known his genius as a philosopher, and of those who knew his previous writings, but did not esteem them, it took the place of a permanent marketable commodity — a sort of necessary of literary life. The general reader found in it a distinct and animated narrative, announced in a style easy, strong, and elegant. The philosopher and statesman found in it profound and original views, such as the author of the “Treatise of Human Nature” could not wield the pen without occasionally dropping on his page. It was a work at once great in its excellencies and beauties, and great in its defects; yet even the latter circumstance swelled its fame, by producing a host of controversial attacks, conducted by no mean champions. No author or speaker could launch into a defence of monarchical prerogative without triumphantly citing the opinion of Hume; — no friend of any popular cause, from Chatham downwards, could appeal to history without condemning his plausible perversions. No season of a debating society has ever ended without the vexed questions he has started being discussed in conjunction with his name. Every newspaper has recorded the editor’s opinion of the tendency of Hume’s History. In reviews and magazines, and political pamphlets, the references, laudatory or condemnatory, are still, notwithstanding all that has been done for British history in later times, unceasing; and some books, of no small bulk, have been written, solely against the History, as one pamphlet is written against another.

Of a book which is so universally known, and has been subjected to so thorough a critical examination, both in its narrative and its reflective parts, a detailed criticism in a work like the present would be superfluous and unwelcome. But the great extent of the controversial writings on the subject, the quantity of able criticism which the controversy has produced, the new light it has frequently been the means of throwing on portions of British history, and the variety of contending opinions it has elicited, do, in some measure, enable one who is partial to that kind of reading, to note slightly and fugitively the leading opinions which this controversy has developed; and thus, looking back through the whole vista of debate and inquiry, to describe, in general terms, the estimate which those who have since Hume’s time studied British history to best effect, have formed of his great work. Perhaps, for casting a glance at the general principles he has announced as to the progress of the constitution and public opinion in Britain, as well as the general scope and extent of his historical labours, his work may be divided into two leading departments; the history from the accession of the house of Tudor downwards, which he completed in 1759; and the history anterior to that epoch, which was published at a later period of his life. In this arrangement, the general observations will find their place in a subsequent portion of this work; while, in the meantime, the opinions entertained of the narrative department of the volume, published in 1754, may be noticed.

The chief charge brought against it has been, that in describing the great conflict which ended in the protectorate, the author has shown a partiality to the side of the monarch, and particularly to Charles I. and his followers; and has endeavoured to make the opposite side — Independents, Presbyterians, Republicans, or under whatever name they raised the banner of opposition to the court — odious and ridiculous.

Before Hume's day, every historian of those times took his side from the beginning of the narrative, and proclaimed himself either the champion or the opponent of the monarchical party. Salmon, Echard, and Carte wrote histories, in which, if they had spoken with decency or temper of Oliver Cromwell, the Long Parliament, the Presbyterians, or the Independents, they would have felt that they had as much neglected their duty, as an advocate who, seeing some irregularity in the case of the opposite party, fails to take advantage of it. The title-page of Salmon announced his project: it promised "Remarks on Rapin, Burnet, and other Republican writers, vindicating the just right of the Established Church, and the prerogatives of the crown, against the wild schemes of enthusiasts and levellers, no less active and diligent in promoting the subversion of this beautiful frame of government, than their artful predecessors in hypocrisy," &c. But Hume professed to approach the subject as a philosopher, and to hold the balance even between Salmon and Echard on the one side, and Oldmixon and Rapin on the other. Hence, when it was believed that, under this air of impartiality, he masked a battery well loaded and skilfully pointed against the principles of the constitution, and the efforts of those who had fought for freedom, a louder cry of indignation was raised against him than had ever assailed the avowed retainers of the anti-popular cause.

The tendency of the History was unexpected and inexplicable. In his philosophical examination of the principles of government, written in times of hot party feeling, he had discarded the theories of arbitrary prerogative and divine right with bold and calm disdain. His utilitarian theory represented the good of the people, not the will or advantage of any one man, or small class of men, as the right object of government. Harrison, Milton, and Sidney, had not expressed opinions more thoroughly democratic than his. "Few things," says a critic, well accustomed to trace literary anomalies to their causes in the minds of their authors, “are more unaccountable, and, indeed, absurd, than that Hume should have taken part with high church and high monarchy men. The persecutions which he suffered in his youth from the Presbyterians, may, perhaps, have influenced his ecclesiastical partialities. But that he should have sided with the Tudors and the Stuarts against the people, seems quite inconsistent with all the great traits of his character. His unrivalled sagacity must have looked with contempt on the preposterous arguments by which the *jus divinum* was maintained. His natural benevolence must have suggested the cruelty of subjecting the enjoyments of thousands to the caprice of one unfeeling individual; and his own practical independence in private life, might have taught him the value of those feelings which he has so mischievously derided.”

In truth, it does not appear that Hume had begun his work with the intention of adopting a side in the politics of the time; and that sympathy, rather than rational conviction or political prejudice, dictated his partisanship. His misapprehensions regarding the state of the constitution, and the early foundation of British liberties, may be attributed to another cause; but in his treatment of the question between Charles I. and his opponents, he appears to have set out with the design of preserving a rigid neutrality; to have gradually felt his sympathies wavering, — to have at first restrained them, then let them sway him slightly from the even middle path, and finally allowed them to take possession of his opinions; opinions which, in their form of expression, still preserved that tone of calm impartiality with which he had set out. In the work of Clarendon — a scholar, a gentleman, a dignified and elegant writer, a man of high-toned and manly feeling — he found an attractive guide. In looking at the structure of Hume’s narrative, we can see that Clarendon was the author, whose account of the great conflict was chiefly present to his mind; and dwelling on his words and ideas, he must have in some measure felt the influence of that plausible writer. As he went on with his narrative, he found on the one side refinement and heroism, an elevated and learned priesthood, a chivalrous aristocracy, a refined court, — all “the divinity” that “doth hedge a king,” followed by all the sad solemnity of fallen greatness, — an adverse contest, borne with steady courage, and humiliation and death endured with patient magnanimity. On the other side appeared plebeian thoughts, rude uncivil speech, barbarous and ludicrous fanaticism, and success consummated by ungenerous triumphs. His philosophical indifference gave way before such temptations, and he went the way of his sympathies. Yet he never permitted himself boldly and distinctly to profess partisanship: he still bore the badge of neutrality; and perhaps believed that he was swerving neither to the right hand nor to the left. An eloquent writer has thus vividly described the tone of his History:

Hume, without positively asserting more than he can prove, gives prominence to all the circumstances which can support his case. He glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it. His own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Every thing that is offered on the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice. Concessions even are sometimes made; but this insidious candour only increases the effect of this vast mass of sophistry.

Yet when there was any thing of a grand and solemn character in the proceedings of the Republican party, — when they were not connected with the rude guards, and their insults to the fallen majesty of England; with the long psalms, long sermons, and long faces of the Puritans; with Trouble-world Lilburne, Praise-God Barebones, or eccentric, stubborn, impracticable William Prynne, — he could employ the easy majesty of his language in surrounding them with a suiting dignity of tone; and he did so with apparent pleasure. Witness his description of the meeting of the Long Parliament, and of the preparations for the king's trial before the High Court of Justice.

He seems to have felt, not unfrequently, the inconsistencies that must be perceptible between the tone of his historical, and the political doctrines of his philosophical works; and his attempts to reconcile them with each other, sometimes only serve to make the difference more conspicuous. Speaking of the act of holding judgment on Charles I., he says, "If ever, on any occasion, it were laudable to conceal truth from the populace, it must be confessed that the doctrine of resistance affords such an example; and that all speculative reasoners ought to observe, with regard to this principle, the same cautious silence which the laws, in every species of government, have ever prescribed to themselves." One could imagine a congress of crowned heads, or a conclave of cardinals, adopting such a view; and resolving, at the same moment, that it should be kept as secret as the grave. But that a man should speak of the right of resistance as existing, and say the knowledge of it ought not to be promulgated, and print and publish this in a book in his own vernacular language, is surely as remarkable an anomaly, as the history of practical contradictions can exhibit.

Owing to his opinion of the manner in which the Abbé Le Blanc had rendered his “Political Discourses” into French, he expressed a wish, in the following courteous letter, that the History should have the benefit of being translated by the same hand.

Hume *to the* Abbé Le Blanc.

“Edinburgh, 15th October, 1754.

“Sir, — You will receive, along with this, a copy of the first volume of my ‘History of Great Britain,’ which will be published next winter in London. The honour which you did me in translating my ‘Political Discourses,’ inspires me with an ambition of desiring to have this work translated by the same excellent hand. The great curiosity of the events related in this volume, embellished by your elegant pen, might challenge the attention of the public. If you do not undertake this translation, I despair of ever seeing it done in a satisfactory manner. Many intricacies in the English government, — many customs peculiar to this island, require explication; and it will be necessary to accompany the translation with some notes, however short, in order to render it intelligible to foreigners. None but a person as well acquainted as you with England and the English constitution, can pretend to clear up obscurities, or explain the difficulties which occur. If, at any time, you find yourself at a loss, be so good as to inform me. I shall spare no pains to solve all doubts; and convey all the lights which, by my long and assiduous study of the subject, I may have acquired. The distance betwixt us need be no impediment to this correspondence. If you favour me frequently with your letters, I shall be able to render you the same service as if I had the happiness of living next door to you, and was able to inspect the whole translation. In this attempt, the knowledge of the two languages is but one circumstance to qualify a man for a translator. Though your attainments, in this respect, be known to all the world, I own that I trust more to the spirit of reflection and reasoning which you discover; and I thence expect that my performance will not only have justice done it, but will even receive considerable improvements as it passes through your hands. I am, with great regard, Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant."

The Abbé received the proposal with rapture: he offered to translate with the zeal not only of the illustrious author's admirer, but of his friend. He desired Hume to postpone the publication for a while in London, and to send him the sheets with the utmost rapidity, lest he might be forestalled by some of that numerous host of rapid penmen, who are ready, in obedience to the commands of the booksellers, to translate such works, without knowing English, or even French. Holland was at that period a great book mart, and there the Abbé found rivals still more expeditious; for he was obliged to write to Hume, at a time when he seems to have made little or no progress with his work, stating that he is disheartened by the prospect of the immediate appearance of a translation in Holland, where they employ, in the rendering of excellent books into French, people who are only fit to manufacture paper. In the end, having encountered a host of interruptions, he intimates that he has placed the work in the hands of another person.

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

"Oct. 18th, 1754.

"Dear Doctor, — I received your kind letter, for which I thank you. Poor Aber is disappointed by a train of Norland finesse, alas — what you will. I have given orders to deliver to you a copy of my History, as soon as it arrives in London, and before it be published. Lend it not till it be published. It contains no paradoxes, and very little profaneness, — as little as could be expected. The Abbé Le Blanc, who has translated some other of my pieces, intends to translate it, and the enclosed is part of a copy I send him: excuse the freedom — you may perhaps receive some other packets of the same kind, which you will please to send carefully to the post-house. The General and Sir Henry are in town, who remember you. Edmonstone is well, and I just now left him a-bed. I may perhaps be in London for good and all in a year or two. Show me that frugality could make £120 a-year do, and I am with you: a man of letters ought always to live in a capital, says Bayle. I believe I have no more to say. You'll own that my style has not become more verbose, on account of my writing quartos. Yours affectionately," &c.

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

"Dear Mure, — I had sent to Sharpe a copy of my History, of which I hope you will tell me your opinion with freedom;

Finding, like a friend,
Something to blame, and something to commend.

"The first quality of an historian, is to be true and impartial. The next to be interesting. If you do not say that I have done both parties justice, and if Mrs. Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles, I shall burn all my papers and return to philosophy.

"I shall send a copy to Paris to L'Abbé Le Blanc, who has translated some other of my pieces; and therefore your corrections and amendments may still be of use, and prevent me from misleading or tiring the French nation. We shall also make a Dublin edition; and it were a pity to put the Irish farther wrong than they are already. I shall also be so sanguine as to hope for a second edition, when I may correct all errors. You know my docility."

Hume *to* Mrs. Dysart *of Eccles*.

"9th October.

"Dear Madam, — As I send you a long book, you will allow me to write a short letter, with this fruit of near two years' very constant application, my youngest and dearest child. You should have read it sooner; but, during the fine weather, I foresaw that it would produce some inconvenience: either you would attach yourself so much to the perusal of me, as to neglect walking, riding, and field diversions, which are much more beneficial than any history; or if this beautiful season tempted you, I must lie in a corner, neglected and forgotten. I assure you I would take the pet if so treated. Now that the weather has at last broke, and long nights are joined to wind and rain, and that a fireside has become the most agreeable object, a new book, especially if wrote by a friend, may not be unwelcome. In expectation, then, that you are to peruse me first with pleasure, then with ease, I expect to hear your remarks, and Mr. Dysart's, and the Solicitor's. Whether am I Whig or Tory? Protestant or Papist? Scotch or English? I hope you do not all agree on this head, and that there are disputes among you about my principles. We never see you in town, and I can never get to the country; but I hope I preserve a place in your memory. I am, &c.

"P.S. — I have seen John Hume's new unbaptized play, and it is a very fine thing. He now discovers a great genius for the theatre."

[Written at the top.] "I must beg of you not to lend the book out of your house, on any account, till the middle of November; any body may read it in the house."

In a continuation of the letter, of which the part relating to Blacklock was cited above, he thus desires Adam Smith's opinion of the History: —

"Pray tell me, and tell me ingenuously, what success has my History met with among the judges with you. I mean Dr. Cullen, Mr. Betham, Mrs. Betham, Mr. Leichman, Mr. Muirhead, Mr. Crawford, &c. Dare I presume that it has been thought worthy of examination, and that its beauties are found to overbalance its defects? I am very desirous to know my errors; and I dare swear you think me tolerably docile to be so veteran an author. I cannot, indeed, hope soon to have an opportunity of correcting my errors; this impression is so very numerous. The sale, indeed, has been very great in Edinburgh; but how it goes on in London, we have not been precisely informed. In all cases I am desirous of storing up instruction; and as you are now idle, (I mean, have nothing but your class to teach, which to you is comparative idleness,) I will insist upon hearing from you.

"Edinburgh, 17th Dec. 1754."

The following letter, still on the same subject, introduces the name of a new correspondent.

Hume *to the* Earl *of* Balcarres.

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1754.

"My Lord, — I did really intend to have paid my respects to your lordship this harvest; but I have got into such a recluse, studious habit, that I believe myself only fit to converse with books; and, however I may pretend to be acquainted with dead kings, shall become quite unsuitable for my friends and cotemporaries. Besides, the great gulf that is fixed between us terrifies me. I am not only very sick at sea, but often can scarce get over the sickness for some days.

"I am very proud that my History, even upon second thoughts, appears to have something tolerable in your lordship's eyes. It has been very much canvassed and read here in town, as I am told; and it has full as many inveterate enemies as partial defenders. The misfortune of a book, says Boileau, is not the being ill spoke of, but the not being spoken of at all. The sale has been very considerable here, about four hundred and fifty copies in five weeks. How it has succeeded in London, I cannot precisely tell; only I observe that some of the weekly papers have been busy with me. — I am as great an Atheist as Bolingbroke; as great a Jacobite as Carte; I cannot write English, &c. I do, indeed, observe that the book is in general rather more agreeable to those they call Tories; and I believe, chiefly for this reason, that, having no places to bestow, they are naturally more moderate in their expectations from a writer. A Whig, who can give hundreds a-year, will not be contented with small sacrifices of truth; and most authors are willing to purchase favour at so reasonable a price.

"I wish it were in my power to pass this Christmas at Balcarres. I should be glad to accompany your lordship in your rural improvements, and return thence to relish with pleasure the comforts of your fireside. You enjoy peace and contentment, my lord, which all the power and wealth of the nation cannot give to our rulers. The whole ministry, they say, is by the ears. This quarrel, I hope, they will fight out among themselves, and not expect to draw us in as formerly, by pretending it is for our good. We will not be the dupes twice in our life.

"I have the honour to be, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant."

The literary success that would satisfy Hume required to be of no small amount. Though neither, in any sense, a vain man, nor a caterer for ephemeral applause, he was greedy of fame; and what would have been to others pre-eminent success, appears to have, in his eyes, scarcely risen above failure. His expressions about the reception of his History, have a tinge of morbidness. In John Home's memorandum of his latest conversations, it is said that "he recurred to a subject not unfrequent with him, that is, the design to ruin him as an author, by the people that were ministers at the first publication of his History." In his "own life," written at the same time, the only passage truly bitter in its tone, gives fuller expression to a like feeling:— "I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment: I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Churchman and Sectary, Freethinker and Religionist, Patriot and Courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr. Millar told me, that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the primate of England, Dr. Herring, and the primate of Ireland, Dr. Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

"I was however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been, at that time, breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage, and to persevere."

Andrew Millar, a countryman of Hume, had, about this time, formed an extensive publishing connexion in London. An arrangement was made, by which he should take the History under his protection, — publish the subsequent volumes, and push the sale of the first. The arrangement is said to have been recommended by Hume's Edinburgh publishers; and it shows how much, in that age, as probably also in this, even a great work may depend on the publisher's exertions, for giving it a hold on the public mind. Hume had a pretty extensive correspondence with Millar. Many of the letters are purely on business, and sometimes on business not very important; but others, such as the following, have some literary interest. Hume appears to have contemplated a translation of Plutarch, and Millar seems to have wished to make him editor of a London newspaper.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"12th April, 1755.

"The second volume of my History I can easily find a way of conveying to you when finished and corrected, and fairly copied. Perhaps I may be in London myself about that time. I have always said, to all my acquaintance, that if the first volume bore a little of a Tory aspect, the second would probably be as grateful to the opposite party. The two first princes of the house of Stuart were certainly more excusable than the two second. The constitution was, in their time, very ambiguous and undetermined; and their parliaments were, in many respects, refractory and obstinate. But Charles the Second knew that he had succeeded to a very limited monarchy. His long parliament was indulgent to him, and even consisted almost entirely of royalists. Yet he could not be quiet, nor contented with a legal authority. I need not mention the oppressions in Scotland, nor the absurd conduct of King James the Second. These are obvious and glaring points. Upon the whole, I wish the two volumes had been published together. Neither one party nor the other would, in that case, have had the least pretext of reproaching me with partiality.

"I shall give no farther umbrage to the godly, though I am far from thinking, that my liberties on that head have been the real cause of checking the sale of the first volume. They might afford a pretext for decrying it to those who were resolved on other accounts to lay hold of pretexts.

"Pray tell Dr. Birch, if you have occasion to see him, that his story of the warrant for Lord Loudon's execution, though at first I thought it highly improbable, appears to me at present a great deal more likely. I find the same story in "Scotstarvet's Staggering State," which was published here a few months ago. The same story, coming from different canals, without any dependence on each other, bears a strong air of probability. I have spoke to Duke Hamilton, who says, that I shall be very welcome to peruse all his papers. I shall take the first opportunity of going to the bottom of that affair; and if I find any confirmation of the suspicion, will be sure to inform Dr. Birch. I own it is the strongest instance of any which history affords, of King Charles's arbitrary principles.

"I have made a trial of Plutarch, and find that I take pleasure in it; but cannot yet form so just a notion of the time and pains which it will require, as to tell you what sum of money I would think an equivalent. But I shall be sure to inform you as soon as I come to a resolution. The notes requisite will not be numerous, — not so many as in the former edition. I think so bulky a book ought to be swelled as little as possible; and nothing added but what is absolutely requisite. The little trial I have made, convinces me that the undertaking will require time. My manner of composing is slow, and I have great difficulty to satisfy myself."

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Edinburgh, 9th January, 1755.

"Dear Sir, — I beg you to make my compliments to the Society, and to take the fault on yourself, if I have not executed my duty, and sent them, this time, my anniversary paper. Had I got a week's warning I should have been able to have supplied them. I should willingly have sent some sheets of the history of the Commonwealth, or Protectorship; but they are all of them out of my hand at present, and I have not been able to recall them.

"I think you are extremely in the right, that the Parliament's bigotry has nothing in common with Hiero's generosity. They were, themselves, violent persecutors at home, to the utmost of their power. Besides, the Hugunots in France were not persecuted; they were really seditious, turbulent people, whom their king was not able to reduce to obedience. The French persecutions did not begin till sixty years after.

"Your objection to the Irish massacre is just, but falls not on the execution, but the subject. Had I been to describe the massacre of Paris, I should not have fallen into that fault. But, in the Irish massacre, no single eminent man fell, or by a remarkable death. If the elocution of the whole chapter be blamable, it is because my conception laboured with too great an idea of my subject, which is there the most important. But that misfortune is not unusual. I am," &c.

We shall have farther occasion to notice the deep interest which Hume took in John Home's tragedy of Douglas. The following letter, which is without date, was, probably, written at the beginning of the year 1755, and before Home made his unsuccessful journey to London, to submit his effort to the judgment of Garrick.

Hume *to* John Home.

"Dear Sir, — With great pleasure I have more than once perused your tragedy. It is interesting, affecting, pathetic. The story is simple and natural; but what chiefly delights me, is to find the language so pure, correct, and moderate. For God's sake read Shakspere, but get Racine and Sophocles by heart. It is reserved to you, and you alone, to redeem our stage from the reproach of barbarism.

"I have not forgot your request to find fault; but as you had neither numbered the pages nor the lines in your copy, I cannot point out particular expressions. I have marked the margin, and shall tell you my opinion when I have the pleasure of seeing you. The more considerable objections seem to be these: *Glenalvon's* character is too abandoned. Such a man is scarce in nature; at least it is inartificial in a poet to suppose such a one, as if he could not conduct his fable by the ordinary passions, infirmities, and vices of human nature. *Lord Barnet's* character is not enough decided; he hovers betwixt vice and virtue; which, though it be not unnatural, is not sufficiently theatrical nor tragic. After *Anna* had lived eighteen years with *Lady Barnet*, and yet had been kept out of the secret, there seems to be no sufficient reason why, at that very time, she should have been let into it. The spectator is apt to suspect that it was in order to instruct him; a very good end, indeed, but which might have been attained by a careful and artificial conduct of the dialogue.

“There seem to be too many casual rencounters. *Young Forman* passing by chance, saves *Lord Barnet*; *Old Forman*, passing that way, by chance, is arrested. Why might not *Young Forman* be supposed to be coming to the castle, in order to serve under *Lord Barnet*, and *Old Forman*, having had some hint of his intention, to have followed him that way?

[Some lines torn off and lost.]

Might not *Anna* be supposed to have returned to her mistress after long absence? This might account for a greater flow of confidence.”

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 12th June, 1755.

“Dear Sir, — I give you a great many thanks for thinking of me in your project of a weekly paper. I approve very much of the design, as you explain it to me; and there is nobody I would more willingly engage with. But, as I have another work in hand, which requires great labour and care to finish, I cannot think of entering on a new undertaking, till I have brought this to a conclusion. Your scheme would require me immediately to remove to London; and I live here, at present, in great tranquillity, with all my books around me; and I cannot think of changing while I have so great a work in hand as the finishing of my History.

“There are four short Dissertations, which I have kept some years by me, in order to polish them as much as possible. One of them is that which Allan Ramsay mentioned to you. Another, of the Passions; a third, of Tragedy; a fourth, some Considerations previous to Geometry and Natural Philosophy. The whole, I think, would make a volume, a fourth less than my Inquiry, as nearly as I can calculate; but it would be proper to print it in a larger type, in order to bring it to the same size and price. I would have it published about the new year; and I offer you the property for fifty guineas, payable at the publication. You may judge, by my being so moderate in my demands, that I do not propose to make any words about the bargain. It would be more convenient for me to print here, especially one of the Dissertations, where there is a good deal of literature; but, as the manuscript is distinct and accurate, it would not be impossible for me to correct it, though printed at London. I leave it to your choice; though I believe that it might be as cheaply and conveniently and safely executed here. However, the matter is pretty near indifferent to me. I would fain prognosticate better than you say with regard to my History; that you expect little sale till the publication of the second volume. I hope the prejudices will dissipate sooner. I am," &c.

In 1755, an effort was made to establish a periodical Review in Scotland, characterized by a higher literary spirit, and a more original tone of thinking, than the other periodical literature of the day could boast. It assumed the name, so famous in later times, of *The Edinburgh Review*. With such contributors as Smith, Robertson, Blair, and Jardine, it could not fail to achieve its object, so far as its own merit was concerned; but the public did not appreciate its excellence, and it died after two half-yearly numbers, which may now be found on the shelves of the curious. On this matter, Mackenzie says,

David Hume was not among the number of the writers of the *Review*, though we should have thought he would have been the first person whose co-operation they would have sought. But I think I have heard that they were afraid both of his extreme good nature, and his extreme artlessness; that, from the one, their criticisms would have been weakened or suppressed; and, from the other, their secret discovered. The merits of the work strongly attracted his attention, and he expressed his surprise, to some of the gentlemen concerned in it, with whom he was daily in the habit of meeting, at the excellence of a performance written, as he presumed, from his ignorance on the subject, by some persons out of their own literary circle. It was agreed to communicate the secret to him at a dinner, which was shortly after given by one of their number. At that dinner he repeated his wonder on the subject of *The Edinburgh Review*. One of the company said he knew the authors, and would tell them to Mr. Hume upon his giving an oath of secrecy. "How is the oath to be taken," said David, with his usual pleasantry, "of a man accused of so much scepticism as I am? You would not trust my Bible oath; but I will swear by the το καλον and the το πρεπον never to reveal your secret." He was then told the names of the authors and the plan of the work; but it was not continued long enough to allow of his contributing any articles.

It was a strong judgment to pass on a man who filled the office of secretary of legation, and under-secretary of state, that a secret was not safe in his keeping. Perhaps Hume had acquired absent habits about trifles. But he could transact important business with ability, and keep important secrets with strictness. There is a general propensity to find, in the nature and habits of abstruse thinkers, an innocent simplicity about the passing affairs of the world, which is often dispelled by a nearer view of their characters. Hume was careless about small matters; but in the serious transactions of life, he was sagacious, prompt, and energetic. Though he did not contribute to it, he owed some substantial services to this periodical, in the conflict in the ecclesiastical courts, which, in the course of events, comes now to be considered.

Hume was not one of those who, when they find that the opinions they have formed are at variance with those of the rest of mankind, blaze the unpopular portions forth in the light of day, or fling them in the face of their adversaries. Among his intimate friends, he could pass sly jests about his opinions; using, in regard to them, those strong expressions which he knew his adversaries would apply to them. But he disliked ostentation of any kind. He particularly disliked the ostentation of singularity; and so little was he aware that he was outraging any of the world’s opinions, in promulgating the fruits of his metaphysical speculations, that he appears to have been much astonished that any one should find in them any ground for serious objection, and to have marvelled greatly that clergymen and others should deem him an unfit person to be a professor of moral philosophy, or a teacher of youth. “Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ sentias dicere, licet,” was the motto of his first work; and he seems to have thought that he lived in an age when speculation might soar with unclipped wings, and when his opinions would be questioned only before the tribunal of reason.

In all this, however, he now found that he was mistaken, and that there were persons who, professing to have charge of these matters, and to know the final judgment concerning them, thought right to execute it on earth, by punishing the man whose opinions were different from their own. The soul of this crusade was a certain Reverend George Anderson, a restless, fiery, persevering being, probably of great polemical note in his day, the observed of all observers as he passed through the city, a Boanerges in church courts; but now only known through the eminence of those against whom the fury of his zeal was directed. Hume was not the only object of pursuit. Other game was started at the same time in the person of his friend, Lord Kames. It is somewhat remarkable, that it was against the latter that the pursuit was most persevering and bitter. He was certainly not a man likely to have provoked such attacks. It is true that he meddled with dangerous subjects, but he did so with great caution and skill. Bred to the practice of the bar, at a time when the advocate often felt a temptation to insinuate doctrines which could not be proclaimed without risk, he became like a chemist who is expert in the safe manipulation of detonating materials. Yet he made a narrow escape; for as he had been raised to the bench in 1752, any proceeding by a church court, professing to subject him to punishment, temporal or eternal, however lightly it might have fallen on a philosopher, might have tended materially to injure the usefulness of a judge.

Kames' work, which was published in 1751, and entitled "Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion," bears evident marks of having been written in opposition to the opinions laid down by Hume, although the author probably did not wish to expose the works of his kind friend to odium, by making a particular reference to them. It is clear that he considered his own opinions likely to be so very popular among the orthodox, that it would be doing an evil turn to his friend, to mention him as the promulgator of views on the other side. In his advertisement, he said, the object of his book was "to prepare the way for a proof of the existence of the Deity," and the Essays end with a prayer. Their leading principle is, that according to the doctrine of predestination, there can be no liberty to human beings, in the ordinary acceptation of the term, while the Deity has nevertheless, for wise purposes, which we cannot fathom, implanted in our race the feeling that we are free. Some have held that, while the scheme of predestination was exhibited by Hume as a mere metaphysical theory, Kames united it to vital religion. He had the misfortune, however, to write in a philosophical tone; and those who constituted themselves judges of the matter, seem to have taken example from the stern father, who, when there is a quarrel in the nursery, punishes both sides, because quarrelling is a thing not allowed in the house. In a letter to Michael Ramsay, Hume says, in continuation of a passage printed above, "Have you seen our friend Harry's Essays? They are well wrote, and are an unusual instance of an obliging method of answering a book. Philosophers must judge of the question; but the clergy have already decided it, and say he is as bad as me! Nay, some affirm him to be worse, — as much as a treacherous friend is worse than an open enemy." Dr. Blair is believed to have been the champion of Kames; and the following notice of his connexion with the controversy, given by Mackenzie, is valuable and instructive.

It is a singular enough coincidence with some church proceedings, about fifty years after, that Dr. Blair, in defence of his friend's Essays, expressly states, that one purpose of those Essays was to controvert what appeared to him to be a very dangerous doctrine, held by the author of certain other *Essays*, then recently published, (by Mr. David Hume,) that, by no principle in human nature, can we discover any real connexion between *cause* and *effect*. According to Dr. Blair, the object of one of Lord Kames' Essays is to show, that though such connexion is not discoverable by *reason*, and by a process of argumentative induction, there is, nevertheless, a real and obvious connexion, which every one intuitively perceives between an *effect* and its *cause*. We feel and acknowledge, that every effect implies a cause; that nothing can begin to exist without a cause of its existence. "We are not left," says the author of the Vindication, "to gather our belief of a *Deity*, from inferences and conclusions deduced through intermediate steps, many or few. How unhappy would it be, for the great bulk of mankind, if this were necessary!"

The first attack was made in a pamphlet, called "An Estimate of the Profit and Loss of Religion, personally and publicly stated: illustrated with reference to 'Essays on Morality and Natural Religion,'" published at Edinburgh, in 1753; the work of Anderson himself, and endowed with all the marks of its author. This was levelled against Kames alone; but it was followed in 1755 by a pamphlet, in which, under the name of Sopho, he was coupled with Hume, thus: "An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq., addressed to the consideration of the reverend and honourable members of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland." "My design," says the author, "is to analyze the works of these celebrated authors, giving their own expressions under the different heads to which they seem to belong. This method, I imagine, will not only give the clearest view of the sentiments of these gentlemen, but is such as they themselves must allow to be the most fair and candid; because if, in stating the proposition, I should happen to mistake their meaning, their own words, subjoined, must immediately do them justice." With this preamble, the writer ranges his quotations under such heads as, "All distinction betwixt virtue and vice is merely imaginary;" "Adultery is very lawful, but sometimes not expedient," &c.

A counter pamphlet was published, called “Observations upon a pamphlet, entitled ‘An Analysis of the Moral and Religious Sentiments contained in the Writings of Sopho and David Hume, Esq.’” In reference to his opponents’ boasted series of accurate quotations, the writer of this answer says, “If there should be found passages which are neither the words nor the meaning of the author, the falsehood cannot be palliated nor excused.” And then, after giving a specimen of these “accurate” quotations, he says, —

“In all that page there is no such sentence, neither is there any such sentiment to be found. The passage from the beginning is as follows,” &c. and he continues: “To glean disunited sentences, to patch them together arbitrarily, to omit the limitations or remarks with which a proposition is delivered; can this be styled exhibiting the sentiments of an author? I hope I shall not be thought to deviate into any thing ludicrous, when I refer the reader to a well-known treatise of the Dean of St. Patrick’s, in which the inquisitorial method of interpretation in the Church of Rome is by so just and so severe raillery rendered detestable. *Si non totidem sententiis, ast totidem verbis; si non totidem verbis, ast totidem syllabis; si non totidem syllabis ast totidem literis.* This is the genuine logic of persecution.”

The matter was brought before the immediately ensuing General Assembly, that of 1755; by which a general resolution was passed, expressive of the Church’s “utmost abhorrence” of “impious and infidel principles,” and of “the deepest concern on account of the prevalence of infidelity and immorality, the principles whereof have been, to the disgrace of our age and nation, so openly avowed in several books published of late in this country, and which are but too well known amongst us.” But this general anathema was not sufficient to satisfy the pious zeal of Mr. Anderson, who, in anticipation of the meeting of the Assembly in 1756, wrote another pamphlet, called “Infidelity a proper object of censure.”

The initiatory step in the legislative business of the General Assembly, is the bringing before it an overture, which has previously obtained the sanction, either of one of the inferior church courts, or of a committee of the Assembly for preparing overtures. In such a committee, it was moved on 28th May, 1756, that the following overture should be transmitted to the Assembly.

“The General Assembly, judging it their duty to do all in their power to check the growth and progress of infidelity; and considering, that as infidel writings have begun of late years to be published in this nation, against which they have hitherto only testified in general, so there is one person styling himself David Hume, Esq. who hath arrived at such a degree of boldness as publicly to avow himself the author of books containing the most rude and open attacks upon the glorious gospel of Christ, and principles evidently subversive even of natural religion, and the foundations of morality, if not establishing direct atheism: therefore the Assembly appoint the following persons . . . . . as a committee to inquire into the writings of this author, to call him before them, and prepare the matter for the next General Assembly.”

The matter was discussed with the usual keenness of such debates in such bodies. But toleration was triumphant, and the overture was rejected by fifty votes to seventeen.

Still the indefatigable Anderson returned to the charge, though he brought it against humbler persons in a less conspicuous arena. As he found the authors above his reach, he resolved to proceed against the booksellers; and he brought before the Presbytery of Edinburgh a “Petition and Complaint” against Alexander Kincaid and Alexander Donaldson, the publishers of “Kames’ Essays,” praying, “that the said printer and booksellers may be summoned to the next meeting of the Presbytery, and there and then to declare and give up the author of the said book; and that he and they may be censured, according to the law of the gospel, and the practice of this and all other well-governed churches.” Anderson indeed would seem to have imbibed the spirit of the great Anthony Arnauld: who, when Nicole spoke of some rest from the endless war of polemical controversy, exclaimed, “Rest! will you not have enough of rest hereafter, through all eternity?” Before the Presbytery could meet he accordingly published another pamphlet, called “the Complaint of George Anderson, minister of the gospel, verified by passages in the book libelled.” He died in the 19th October, just ten days before the meeting of the presbytery, for which he had made such active preparation. He fell in harness, and the departure of the restless spirit of the champion from its tenement of clay, was death to the cause. After the perusal of written pleadings, and a formal debate, the complaint was dismissed.

This matter appears to have given Hume very little disturbance. He does not mention it in his “own life.” He laboured uninterruptedly at the second volume of his History; and his correspondence, which we may now resume, will be found to pursue its even tenor, taking no farther notice of the proceedings of his opponents, than the simple question put to Smith, whether it will be a matter of much consequence if he should be excommunicated?

Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

"Edinburgh, 20th April, 1756.

"Dear Doctor, — There is certainly nothing so unaccountable as my long silence with you; that is, with a man whose friendship I desire most to preserve of any I know, and whose conversation I would be the most covetous to enjoy, were I in the same place with him. But to tell the truth, we people in the country, (for such you Londoners esteem our city,) are apt to be troublesome to you people in town; we are vastly glad to receive letters which convey intelligence to us of things which we should otherwise have been ignorant of, and can pay them back with nothing but provincial stories, which are no way interesting. It was perhaps an apprehension of this kind which held my pen: but really, I believe, the truth is, when I was idle, I was lazy — when I was busy, I was so extremely busy, that I had no leisure to think of any thing else. For, dear Doctor, what have we to do with news on either side, unless it be literary news, which I hope will always interest us? and of these, London seems to me as barren as Edinburgh; or rather more so, since I can tell you that our friend Hume's 'Douglas,' is altered and finished, and will be brought out on the stage next winter, and is a singular, as well as fine performance, [ ] of the spirit of the English theatre, not devoid of Attic and French elegance. You have sent us nothing worth reading this winter; even your vein of wretched novels is dried up, though not that of scurrilous partial politics. We hear of Sir George Lyttleton's History, from which the populace expect a great deal: but I hear it is to be three quarto volumes. 'O, magnum horribilem et sacrum Libellum.' — This last epithet of *sacrum* will probably be applicable to it in more senses than one. However, it cannot well fail to be readable, which is a great deal for an English book now-a-days.

"But, dear Doctor, even places more hyperborean than this, more provincial, more uncultivated, and more barbarous, may furnish articles for a literary correspondence. Have you seen the second volume of Blackwell's 'Court of Augustus?' I had it some days lying on my table, and, on turning it over, met with passages very singular for their ridicule and absurdity. He says that Mark Antony, travelling from Rome in a post-chaise, lay the first night at Redstones: I own I did not think this a very classical name; but, on recollection, I found, by the Philippics, that he lay at Saxa Rubra. He talks also of Mark Antony's favourite poet, Mr. Gosling, meaning Anser, who, methinks, should rather be called Mr. Goose. He also takes notice of Virgil's distinguishing himself, in his youth, by his epigram on Crossbow the robber! Look your Virgil, you'll find that, like other robbers, this man bore various names. Crossbow is the name he took at Aberdeen, but Balista at Rome. The book has many other flowers of a like nature, which made me exclaim, with regard to the author,

Nec *certe* apparet . . . utrum
Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triste bidental
Moverit incestus. Certe furit.

But other people, who have read through the volume, say that, notwithstanding these absurdities, it does not want merit; and, if it be so, I own the case is still more singular. What would you think of a man who should speak of the mayorality of Mr. Veitch; meaning the consulship of Cicero? — Is not this a fine way of avoiding the imputation of pedantry? Perhaps Cicero, to modernize him entirely, should be called Sir Mark Veitch, because his father was a Roman knight.

"I do not find your name among the subscribers of my friend Blacklock's poems, you have forgot; buy a copy of them and read them, they are many of them very elegant, and merit esteem, if they came from any one, but are admirable from him. [ ] Spence's industry in so good a work, but there is a circumstance of his conduct that will entertain you. In the Edinburgh edition there was a stanza to this effect:

The wise in every age conclude,
What Pyrrho taught and Hume renewed,
That Dogmatists are fools.

"Mr. Spence would not undertake to promote a London subscription, unless my name, as well as Lord Shaftesbury's, (who was mentioned in another place,) were erased: the author frankly gave up Shaftesbury, but said that he would forfeit all the profit he might expect from a subscription, rather than relinquish the small tribute of praise which he had paid to a man whom he was more indebted to than to all the world beside. I heard by chance of this controversy, and wrote to Mr. Spence, that, without farther consulting the author, I, who was chiefly concerned, would take upon me to empower him to alter the stanza where I was mentioned. He did so, and farther, having prefixed the life of the author, he took occasion to mention some people to whom he had been obliged, but is careful not to name me; judging rightly that such good deeds were only *splendida peccata*, and that till they were sanctified by the grace of God they would be of no benefit to salvation.

"I have seen (but, I thank God, was not bound to read) Dr. [Birch's] 'History of the Royal Society.' Pray make my compliments to him, and tell him, that I am his most obliged humble servant. I hope you understand that the last clause was spoken ironically. You would have surprised *him* very much had you executed the compliment. I shall conclude this article of literature by mentioning myself. I have finished the second volume of my History, and have maintained the same unbounded liberty in my politics which gave so much offence: religion lay more out of my way; and there will not be . . . in this particular: I think reason, and even some eloquence, are on my side, and . . . will, I am confident, get the better of faction and folly, which are the . . . least they never continue long in the same shape. I am sorry, however, that you speak nothing on this head in your postscript to me.

"It gives me great affliction, dear Doctor, when you speak of gouts and old age. Alas! you are going down hill, and I am tumbling fast after you. I have, however, very entire health, notwithstanding my studious sedentary life. I only grow fat more than I could wish. When shall I see you? God knows. I am settled here; have no pretensions, nor hopes, nor desires, to carry me to court the great. I live frugally on a small fortune, which I care not to dissipate by jaunts of pleasure. All these circumstances give me little prospect of seeing London. Were I to change my habitation, I would retire to some provincial town in France, to trifle out my old age, near a warm sun in a good climate, a pleasant country, and amidst a sociable people. My stock would then maintain me in some opulence; for I have the satisfaction to tell you, dear Doctor, that on reviewing my affairs, I find that I am worth £1600 sterling, which, at five per cent, makes near 1800 livres a-year — that is, the pay of two French captains.

"Edmonstone left this town for Ireland. I wish he were out of the way: he has no prospect of advancement suitable to his merit. Sir Harry, I hope, has only run backwards to make a better jump. Pray imitate not my example — delay not to write; or, if you do, I will imitate yours, and write again without waiting for an answer. Ever most sincerely."

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX A.

FRAGMENTS OF A PAPER IN HUME’S HANDWRITING, DESCRIBING THE DESCENT ON THE COAST OF BRITTANY, IN 1746, AND THE CAUSES OF ITS FAILURE.

The forces under Lieutenant General St. Clair consisted of five battalions, viz. the first battalion of the 1st Royal, the 5th Highlanders, 3d Brag’s, 4th Richbell’s, 2d Harrison’s, together with part of Frampton’s, and some companies of Marines, making in all about 4500 men. The fleet consisted of   . Though this army and fleet had been at first fitted out for entering upon action in summer 1746, and making conquest of Canada, it was found, after several vain efforts to get out of the Channel, first under Commodore Cotes, then under Admiral Listock, that so much time had been unavoidably lost, from contrary winds and contrary orders, as to render it dangerous for so large a body of ships to proceed thither. The middle of May was the last day of rendezvous appointed at Spithead; and in the latter end of August, the fleet had yet got no farther than St. Helen’s, about a league below it. It is an observation, that in the latter end of autumn, or beginning of winter, the north-west winds blow so furiously on the coast of North America, as to render it always difficult, and often impossible, for ships that set out late to reach any harbour in those parts. Instances have been found of vessels that have been obliged to take shelter from these storms, even in the Leeward Islands. It was therefore become necessary to abandon all thoughts of proceeding to America that season; and as the transports were fitted out and fleet equipped at great expense, an attempt was hastily made to turn them to some account in Europe, during the small remainder of the summer. The distress of the allies in Flanders demanded the more immediate attention of the English nation and ministry, and required, if possible, some speedy remedy. ’Twas too late to think of sending the six battalions under General St. Clair, to reinforce Prince

Charles of Lorraine, who commanded the armies of the allies; and their number was, besides, too inconsiderable to hope for any great advantages from that expedient. ’Twas more to be expected, that falling on the parts of France, supposed to be defenceless and disarmed, they might make a diversion, and occasion the sending a considerable detachment from the enemy’s army in Flanders. But as time pressed, and allowed not leisure to concert and prepare this measure, the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State, hoped to find that General St. Clair had already planned and projected some enterprise of this nature. He formed this presumption on a hint which had been started very casually, and which had been immediately dropped by the General.

In the spring, when the obstructions and delays thrown in the way of the American enterprise were partly felt and partly foreseen, the Secretary, lamenting the great and, he feared, useless expense to which the nation had been put by that undertaking, gave occasion to the General to throw out a thought, which would naturally occur in such a situation. He said, “Why may you not send the squadron and troops to some part of the coast of France, and at least frighten and alarm them as they have done us; and, as all their troops are on the Flanders and German frontiers, ’tis most probable that such an alarm may make them recall some of them?” The subject was then no farther prosecuted; but the King, being informed of this casual hint of the General’s, asked him if he had formed any plan or project by which the service above-mentioned might be effectuated. He assured his majesty that he had never so much as thought of it; but that, if it was his pleasure, he would confer with Sir John Ligonier, and endeavour to find other people in London who could let him into some knowledge of the coast of France. To this the King replied, “No, no; you need not give yourself any trouble about it.” And accordingly the General never more thought of it, farther than to inform the Duke of Newcastle of this conference with his majesty. However, the Duke being willing that the person who was to execute the undertaking should also be the projector of it, by which means both greater success might be hoped from it, and every body else be screened from reflection in case of its miscarriage, desired, in his letter of the 22d of August, that both the Admiral and General should give their opinion of such an invasion; and particularly the General, who, having, he said, formed some time ago a project of this nature, might be the better prepared to give his thoughts with regard to it. They both jointly replied, that their utter ignorance made them incapable of delivering their sentiments on so delicate a subject; and the General, in a separate letter, recalled to the Duke’s memory the circumstances of the story, as above related.

Though they declined proposing a project, they both cheerfully offered, that if his majesty would honour them with any plan of operation for a descent, they would do their best to carry it into execution. They hoped that the Secretary of State, who, by his office, is led to turn his eyes every where, and who lives at London, the centre of commerce and intelligence, could better form and digest such a plan, than they who were cooped up in their ships, in a remote sea-port town, without any former acquaintance with the coast of France, and without any possibility of acquiring new knowledge. They at least hoped, that so difficult a task would not be required of them as either to give their sentiments without any materials afforded them to judge upon, or to collect materials, while the most inviolable secrecy was strictly enjoined on them. It is remarkable, that the Duke of Newcastle, among other advantages proposed by this expedition, mentions the giving assistance to such Protestants as are already in arms, or may be disposed to rise on the appearance of the English, as if we were living in the time of the League, or during the confusion of Francis the Second’s minority.

Full of these reflections, they sailed from St. Helens on the 23d of August, and arrived at Plymouth on the 29th, in obedience to their orders, which required them to put into that harbour for farther instructions. They there found positive orders to sail immediately, with the first fair wind, to the coast of France, and make an attempt on L’Orient, or Rochefort, or Rochelle, or sail up the river of Bourdeaux; or, if they judged any of these enterprises impracticable, to sail to whatever other place on the western coast they should think proper. Such unbounded discretionary powers could not but be agreeable to commanders, had it been accompanied with better, or indeed with any intelligence. As the wind was then contrary, they had leisure to reply in their letters of the 29th and 30th. They jointly represented the difficulties, or rather impossibilities, of any attempt on L’Orient, Rochefort, and Rochelle, by reason of the real strength of these places, so far as their imperfect information could reach; or, if that were erroneous, by reason of their own absolute want of intelligence, guides, and pilots, which are the soul of all military operations.

The General, in a separate letter, enforced the same topics, and added many other reflections of moment. He said, that of all the places mentioned in his orders, Bourdeaux, if accessible, appeared to him the properest to be attempted; both as it is one of the towns of greatest commerce and riches in France, and as it is the farthest situated from their Flanders’ army, and on these accounts an attack on it would most probably produce the wished-for alarm and diversion. He added, that he himself knew the town to be of no strength, and that the only place there capable of making any defence, is Chateau Trompette, which serves it as a citadel, and was intended, as almost all citadels are, more as a curb, than a defence, on the inhabitants. But though these circumstances promised some success, he observed that there were many other difficulties to struggle with, which threw a mighty damp on these promising expectations. In the first place, he much questioned if there was in the fleet any one person who had been ashore on the western coast of France, except himself, who was once at Bourdeaux; and he, too, was a stranger to all the country betwixt the town and the sea. He had no single map of any part of France on board with him; and what intelligence he may be able to force from the people of the country can be but little to be depended on, as it must be their interest to mislead him. And if money prove necessary, either for obtaining intelligence, carrying on of works, or even subsisting the officers, he must raise it in the country; for, except a few chests of Mexican dollars, consigned to other uses, he carried no money with him. If he advanced any where into the country, he must be at a very great loss for want of horses to draw the artillery; as the inhabitants will undoubtedly carry off as many of them as they could, and he had neither hussars nor dragoons to force them back again. And as to the preserving any conquests he might make, (of which the Duke had dropped some hints,) he observed that every place which was not impregnable to him, with such small force, must be untenable by him. On the whole, he engaged for nothing but obedience; he promised no success; he professed absolute ignorance with regard to every circumstance of the undertaking; he even could not fix on any particular undertaking; and yet he lay under positive orders to sail with the first fair wind, to approach the unknown coast, march through the unknown country, and attack the unknown cities of the most potent nation of the universe.

Meanwhile, Admiral Anson, who had put into Plymouth, and had been detained there by the same contrary winds, which still prevailed, had a conversation with the General and Admiral on the subject of their enterprise. He told them, that he remembered to have once casually heard from Mr. Hume, member for Southwark, that he had been at L’Orient, and that, though it be very strong by sea, it is not so by land. Though Mr. Hume, the gentleman mentioned, be bred to a mercantile profession, not to war, and though the intelligence received from him was only casual, imperfect, and by second-hand, yet it gave pleasure to the Admiral and General, as it afforded them a faint glimmering ray in their present obscurity and ignorance; and they accordingly resolved to follow it. They wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, September the 3d, that ’twas to L’Orient they intended to bend their course, as soon as the wind offered. To remedy the ignorance of the coast and want of pilots, as far as possible, Commodore Cotes in the Ruby, together with Captain Stewart in the Hastings, and a sloop and tender, was immediately despatched by the Admiral to view Port L’Orient and all the places near it, so far as might regard the safe approach and anchorage of the ships. The ignorance of the country, and want of guides, was a desperate evil, for which the General could provide no remedy. But as the wind still continued contrary to the fleet and transports, though single ships of war might work their way against it, the General had occasion to see farther alterations made by the ministry in their project of an invasion.

The Duke of Newcastle, who had before informed the General that, if he could establish himself on any part of the coast of France, two battalions of the Guards, and General Huske’s regiment, should be despatched after him, now says, (Sept. 3,) that these three battalions have got immediate orders to follow him. He farther adds, that if the General finds it impracticable to make any descent on the coast of Brittany, or higher up in the Bay of Biscay, he would probably find, on his return, some intelligence sent him, by the reinforcement, with regard to the coast of Normandy. Next day the Duke changes his mind, and sends immediately this intelligence with regard to the coast of Normandy, and a plan for annoying the French on that quarter, proposed by Major Macdonald; and to this plan he seems entirely to give the preference to the other, of making an attempt on the western coast of France, to which he had before confined the Admiral and General. They considered the plan, and conversed with Major Macdonald, who came down to Plymouth a few days after. They found that this plan had been given in some years before, and was not in the least calculated for the present expedition, but required a body of cavalry as an essential point towards its execution; an advantage of which the General was entirely destitute. They found that Major Macdonald had had so few opportunities of improving himself in the art of war, that it would be dangerous, without farther information, to follow his plan in any military operations. They found that he pretended only to know the strength of the town, and nature of the country, in that province, but had never acquainted himself with the sea-coast, or pitched upon any proper place for disembarkation. They considered that a very considerable step had been already taken towards the execution of the other project on the coast of Brittany, viz. the sending Commodore Cotes to inspect and sound the coast; and that the same step must now be taken anew, in so late a season, with regard to the coast of Normandy. They thought that, if their whole operations were to begin, an attempt on the western coast was preferable, chiefly because of its remoteness from the Flanders' army, which must increase and spread the alarm, if the country were really so defenceless as was believed. They represented all those reasons to the Secretary; but at the same time expressed their intentions of remaining at Plymouth till they should receive his majesty's positive orders with regard to the enterprise on which they were to engage.

The Duke immediately despatched a messenger, with full powers to them to go whithersoever they pleased. During this interval, the General was obliged, to his great regret, to remain in a manner wholly inactive. Plymouth was so remote a place, that it was not to be expected he could there get any proper intelligence. He was bound up by his orders to such inviolable secrecy, that he could not make any inquiries for it, or scarce receive it, if offered. The Secretary had sent Major Macdonald, and one Cooke, captain of a privateer, who, 'twas found, could be of no manner of service in this undertaking. These, he said, were the only persons he could find in London that pretended to know any thing of the coast of France, as if the question had been with regard to the coast of Japan or of California. The General desired to have maps of France, chiefly of Gascony and Brittany. He receives only a map of Gascony, together with one of Normandy. No map of Brittany; none of France; he is obliged to set out on so important an enterprise without intelligence, without pilots, without guides, without any map of the country to which he was bound, except a common map, on a small scale, of the kingdom of France, which his Aid-de-camp had been able to pick up in a shop at Plymouth. He represented all these difficulties to the ministry; he begged them not to flatter themselves with any success from a General who had such obstacles to surmount, and who must leave his conduct to the government of chance more than prudence. He was answered, that nothing was expected of him, but to land any where he pleased in France, to produce an alarm, and to return safe, with the fleet and transports, to the British dominions. Though he was sensible that more would be expected by the people, yet he cheerfully despised their rash judgments, while he acted in obedience to orders, and in the prosecution of his duty. The fleet sailed from Plymouth on the 15th of September, and, after a short voyage of three days, arrived, in the evening of the 18th, off the island of Groa, where they found Commodore Cotes and Captain Stuart, who gave them an account of the success which they had met with in the survey of the coast near L'Orient. The place they had pitched on for landing, was ten miles from that town, at the mouth of the river of Quimperlay. They represented it as a flat open shore, with deep water: on these accounts a good landing-place for the troops, but a dangerous place for the ships to ride in, on account of the rocks with which it was every where surrounded, and the high swell which was thrown in, from the Bay of Biscay, by the west and south-west winds.

It was then about eight in the evening, a full moon and a clear sky, with a gentle breeze blowing in shore. The question was, whether to sail directly to the landing-place, or hold off till morning. The two officers who had surveyed the coast were divided in opinion: one recommended the former measure, the other suggested some scruples, by representing the dangerous rocks that lay on every side of them, and the ignorance of all the pilots with regard to their number and situation. The Admiral was determined, by these reasons, to agree to this opinion. The question seemed little important, as it regarded only a short delay; but really was of the utmost consequence, and was, indeed, the spring whence all the ill success in this expedition flowed.

The great age of Admiral Listock, as it increased his experience, should make us cautious of censuring his opinion in sea affairs, where he was allowed to have such consummate knowledge. But at the same time, it may beget a suspicion, that being now in the decline of life, he was thence naturally inclined rather to the prudent counsels which suit a concerted enterprise, than to the bold temerity which belongs to such hasty and blind undertakings. The unhappy consequences of this over-cautious measure immediately appeared. The Admiral had laid his account, that by a delay, which procured a greater safety to the fleet and transports, only four or five hours would be lost; but the wind changing in the morning, and blowing fresh off shore, all next day, and part of next night, was spent before the ships could reach the landing-place. Some of them were not able to reach it till two days after.

During this time, the fleet lay full in view of the coast, and preparations were making in Port Louis, L’Orient, and over the whole country, for the reception of an enemy, who threatened them with so unexpected an invasion.

The force of France, either for offence or defence, consists chiefly in three different bodies of men: first, in a numerous veteran army, which was then entirely employed in Italy and on their frontiers, except some shattered regiments, which were dispersed about the country, for the advantage of recruiting, and of which there were two regiments of dragoons at that time in Brittany; secondly, in a regular and disciplined militia, with which all the fortified cities along the sea-coast were garrisoned, and many of the frontier towns, that seemed not to be threatened with any immediate attack. Some bodies of this militia had also been employed in the field with the regular troops, and had acquired honour, which gave spirits and courage to the rest: thirdly, in a numerous body of coast militia, or gardes-du-cote, amounting to near 200,000, ill armed and ill disciplined, formidable alone by their numbers; and in Brittany, by the ferocity of the inhabitants, esteemed of old and at present, the most warlike and least civilized of all the French peasants. Regular signals were concerted for the assembling of these forces, by alarm guns, flags, and fires; and in the morning of the 20th of September, by break of day, a considerable body of all these different kinds of troops, but chiefly of the last, amounting to above 3000 men, were seen upon the sea-shore to oppose the disembarkation of the British forces. A disposition, therefore, of ships and boats must be made for the regular landing of the army; and as the weather was then very blustering, and the wind blew almost off shore, this could not be effected till afternoon.

There appeared, in view of the fleet, three places which seemed proper for a disembarkation, and which were separated from each other either by a rising ground, or by a small arm of the sea. The French militia had posted themselves in the two places which lay nearest to L’Orient; and finding that they were not numerous enough to cover the whole, they left the third, which lay to the windward, almost wholly defenceless. The General ordered the boats to rendezvous opposite to this beach; and he saw the French troops march off from the next contiguous landing-place, and take post opposite to him. They placed themselves behind some sandbanks, in such a manner as to be entirely sheltered from the cannon of those English ships which covered the landing, while at the same time they could rush in upon the troops, as soon as their approach to the shore had obliged the ships to leave off firing.

The General remarked their plan of defence, and was determined to disappoint them. He observed, that the next landing-place to the leeward was now empty; and that, though the troops which had been posted on the more distant beach had quitted their station, and were making a circuit round an arm of the sea, in order to occupy the place deserted by the others, they had not as yet reached it. He immediately seized the opportunity. He ordered his boats to row directly forward, as if he intended to land on the beach opposite to him; but while the enemy were expecting him to advance, he ordered the boats to turn, at a signal; and, making all the speed that both oars and sails could give them, to steer directly to the place deserted by the enemy. In order to render the disembarkation more safe, he had previously ordered two tenders to attack a battery, which had been placed on a mount towards the right, and which was well situated for annoying the boats on their approach. The tenders succeeded in chasing the French from their guns; the boats reached the shore before any of the French could be opposite to them. The soldiers landed, to the number of about six hundred men, and formed in an instant; immediately upon which the whole militia dispersed and fled up into the country. The English followed them regularly and in good order; prognosticating success to the enterprise from such a fortunate beginning.

There was a creek, or arm of the sea, dry at low water, which lay on the right hand of the landing-place, and through which ran the nearest road to L’Orient, and the only one fit for the march of troops, or the draught of cannon and heavy carriages. As it was then high water, the French runaways were obliged, by this creek, to make a circuit of some miles; and they thereby misled the general, who, justly concluding they would take shelter in that town, and having no other guides to conduct him, thought that, by following their footsteps, he would be led the readiest and shortest way to L’Orient. He detached, therefore, in pursuit of the flying militia, about a thousand men, under the command of Brigadier O’Farrel; who, after being harassed by some firing from the hedges, (by which Lieut.-Col. Erskine, Quarter-Master General, was dangerously wounded,) arrived that evening at Guidel, a village about a league distant from the landing-place. The general himself lay near the sea-shore, to wait for the landing of the rest of the forces. By break of day he led them up to join the brigadier at Guidel. He there learned from some peasants, taken prisoners, and who spoke the French language, (which few of the common people in Brittany are able to do,) that the road into which he had been led, by the reasons above specified, was the longest by four or five miles. He was also informed, what he had partly seen, that the road was very dangerous and difficult, running through narrow lanes and defiles, betwixt high hedges, faced with stone walls, and bordered in many places with thick woods and brushes, where a very few disciplined and brave troops might stop a whole army; and where even a few, without discipline or bravery, might, by firing suddenly upon the forces, throw them into confusion.

In order to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the country, of which he and the whole army were utterly ignorant, he here divided the troops into two equal bodies, and marched them up to L’Orient, by two different roads, which were pointed out to him. The one part, which he himself conducted, passed without much molestation. The other, under Brigadier O’Farrel, was not so fortunate. Two battalions of that detachment, Richbell’s and Frampton’s, partly from their want of experience, and partly from the terror naturally inspired into soldiers by finding themselves in a difficult country unknown both to themselves and leaders, and partly, perhaps, from accident, to which the courage of men is extremely liable, fell into confusion, before a handful of French peasants who fired at them from behind the hedges. Notwithstanding all the endeavours of the Brigadier, many of them threw down their arms, and ran away; others fired in confusion, and wounded each other; and if any regular forces had been present to take advantage of this disorder, the most fatal consequences might have ensued. And though they were at last led on, and joined the general that evening before L’Orient, the panic still remained in these two battalions afterwards, and communicated itself to others; kept the whole army in anxiety, even when they were not in danger, and threw a mighty damp on the expectations of success, conceived from this undertaking. L’Orient, lately a small village, now a considerable town, on the coast of Brittany, lies in the extremity of a fine bay, the mouth of which is very narrow, and guarded by the strong citadel of Port Louis. This town has become the centre of the French East India trade, the seat of the company established for that commerce, and the magazine whence they distribute the East India commodities. The great prizes made upon them by the English, during the course of the war, had given a check to this growing commerce; yet still the town was esteemed a valuable acquisition, were it only on account of the wealth it contained, and the store-houses of the company, a range of stately buildings, erected at public charge, both for use and ornament. The town itself is far from being strong. Two sides of it, which are not protected with water, are defended only with a plain wall, near thirty feet high, of no great thickness, and without any fosse or parapet. But the water which covers the other two sides, rendered it impossible to be invested, and gave an opportunity for multitudes of people to throw themselves into it from every corner of that populous country. And though these, for want of discipline, could not be trusted in the field against regular forces, yet became they of great use in a defence behind walls, by throwing up works, erecting batteries, and digging trenches, to secure (what was sufficient) for a few days, a weak town against a small and ill-provided army. The East India Company had numbers of cannon in their magazines, and had there erected a school of engineers, for the service of their ships and settlements; the vessels in the harbour supplied them with more cannon, and with seamen accustomed to their management and use; and whatever was wanting, either in artillery or warlike stores, could easily be brought by water from Port Louis, with which the town of L’Orient kept always an open communication.

But as these advantages, though great, require both a sufficient presence of mind, and some time, to be employed against an enemy, ’tis not improbable, that if the admiral had been supplied with proper pilots, and the general with proper guides, which could have led the English immediately upon the coast, and to the town, the very terror of so unexpected an invasion would have rendered the inhabitants incapable of resistance, and made them surrender at discretion. The want of these advantages had already lost two days; and more time must yet be consumed, before they could so much as make the appearance of an attack. Cannon was wanting, and the road by which the army had marched, was absolutely unfit for the conveyance of them. The general, therefore, having first despatched an officer and a party to reconnoitre the country, and find a nearer and better road, September 22d, went himself next day to the sea-shore, for the same purpose, and also in order to concert with the admiral the proper method of bringing up cannon; as almost all the horses in the country, which are extremely weak and of a diminutive size, had been driven away by the peasants. Accordingly, a road was found, much nearer, though still ten miles of length; and much better, though easily rendered impassable by rainy weather, as was afterwards experienced.

A council of war was held on board the Princessa, consisting of the admiral and general, Brigadier O’Farrel and Commodore Cotes. The engineers, Director-General Armstrong, and Captain Watson, who had surveyed the town of L’Orient, being called in, were asked their opinion with regard to the practicability of an attempt on it, together with the time, and artillery, and ammunition, requisite for that purpose. Their answer was, that with two twelve pounders, and a ten inch mortar, planted on the spot which they had pitched on for erecting a battery, they engaged either to make a practicable breach in the walls, or with cartridges, bombs, and red-hot balls, destroy the town, by laying it in ashes in twenty-four hours. Captain Chalmers, the captain of the artillery, who had not then seen the town, was of the same opinion, from their description of it, provided the battery was within the proper distance. Had the king’s orders been less positive for making an attempt on some part of the coast of France, yet such flattering views offered by men who promised what lay within the sphere of their own profession, must have engaged the attention of the admiral and general, and induced them to venture on a much more hazardous and difficult undertaking. ’Twas accordingly agreed that four twelve pounders, and a ten inch mortar, together with three field-pieces, should be drawn up to the camp by sailors, in order to make, with still greater assurance, the attempt, whose success seemed so certain to the engineers. These pieces of artillery, with the stores demanded, notwithstanding all difficulties, were drawn to the camp in two days, except two twelve pounders, which arrived not till the day afterwards. A third part of the sailors of the whole fleet, together with all the marines, were employed in this drudgery; the admiral gave all assistance in his power to the general; and the public, in one instance, saw that it was not impossible for land and sea officers to live in harmony together, and concur in promoting the success of an enterprise.

The general, on his arrival in the camp, found the officer returned whom he had sent to summon the town of L’Orient. By his information, it appeared that the inhabitants were so much alarmed by the suddenness of this incursion, and the terror of a force, which their fears magnified, as to think of surrendering, though upon conditions, which would have rendered the conquest of no avail to their enemies. The inhabitants insisted upon an absolute security to their houses and goods; the East India Company to their magazines and store-houses; and the garrison, consisting of about seven hundred regular militia and troops, besides a great number of irregulars, demanded a liberty of marching out with all the honours of war. A weak town that opened its gates on such conditions was not worth the entering; since it must immediately be abandoned, leaving only to its conquerors the shame of their own folly, and perhaps the reproach of treachery. The general, therefore, partly trusting to the promise of the engineers, and partly desirous of improving the advantages gained by the present danger, when the deputies arrived next day, September 23d, from the governor, from the town, and from the East India Company, refused to receive any articles but those from the governor, who commanded in the name of his most Christian majesty. He even refused liberty to the garrison to march out; well knowing that, as the town was not invested, they could take that liberty whenever they pleased.

Meanwhile, every accident concurred to render the enterprise of the English abortive. Some deserters got into the town, who informed the garrison of the true force of the English, which, conjecturing from the greatness and number of the ships, they had much magnified. Even this small body diminished daily, from the fatigue of excessive duty, and from the great rains that began to fall. Scarce three thousand were left to do duty, which still augmented the fatigue to the few that remained; especially when joined to the frequent alarms, that the unaccountable panic they were struck with made but too frequent. Rains had so spoilt the roads as to render it impracticable to bring up any heavier cannon, or more of the same calibre, so long a way, by the mere force of seamen. But what, above all things, made the enterprise appear desperate, was the discovery of the ignorance of the engineers, chiefly of the director-general, who in the whole course of his proceedings appeared neither to have skill in contrivance, nor order and diligence in execution. His own want of capacity and experience, made his projects of no use; his blind obstinacy rendered him incapable of making use of the capacity of others. Though the general offered to place and support the battery wherever the engineer thought proper, he chose to set it above six hundred yards from the wall, where such small cannon could do no manner of execution. He planted it at so oblique an angle to the wall that the ball thrown from the largest cannon must have recoiled, without making any impression. He trusted much to the red-hot balls, with which he promised to lay the town in ashes in twenty-four hours; yet, by his negligence, or that of others, the furnace with which these balls were to be heated, was forgot. After the furnace was brought, he found that the bellows, and other implements necessary for the execution of that work, were also left on board the store-ships. With great difficulty, and infinite pains, ammunition and artillery stores were drawn up from the sea-shore in tumbrels. He was totally ignorant, till some days after, that he had along with him ammunition wagons, which would have much facilitated this labour. His orders to the officers of the train were so confused, or so ill obeyed, that no ammunition came regularly up to the camp, to serve the few cannon and the mortars that played upon the town. Not only fascines, piquets, and every thing necessary for the battery, were supplied him beyond his demand; but even workmen, notwithstanding the great fatigue and small numbers of the army. These workmen found no addition to their fatigue in obeying his orders. He left them often unemployed, for want of knowing in what business he should occupy them.

Meanwhile the French garrison, being so weakly attacked, had leisure to prepare for a defence, and make proper use of their great number of workmen, if not of soldiers, and the nearness and plenty of their military stores. By throwing up earth in the inside of the wall, they had planted a great many cannon, some of a large calibre, and opened six batteries against one that played upon them from the English. The distance alone of the besiegers’ battery, made these cannon of the enemy do less execution; but that same distance rendered the attack absolutely ineffectual. Were the battery brought nearer, to a hundred paces for instance, ’twould be requisite to make it communicate with the camp by trenches and a covered way, to dig which was the work of some days for so small an army. During this time, the besieged, foreseeing the place to which the attack must be directed, could easily fortify it by retrenchments in the inside of the wall; and planting ten cannon to one, could silence the besiegers’ feeble battery in a few hours. They would not even have had leisure to make a breach in the thin wall, which first discovered itself; and that breach, if made, could not possibly serve to any purpose. Above fifteen thousand men, completely armed by the East India Company, and brave while protected by cannon and ramparts, still stood in opposition to three thousand, discouraged with fatigue, with sickness, and with despair of ever succeeding in so unequal a contest.

A certain foreign writer, more anxious to tell his stories in an entertaining manner than to assure himself of their reality, has endeavoured to put this expedition in a ridiculous light; but as there is not one circumstance of his narration, which has truth in it, or even the least appearance of truth, it would be needless to lose time in refuting it. With regard to the prejudices of the public, a few questions may suffice.

Was the attempt altogether impracticable from the beginning? The general neither proposed it, nor planned it, nor approved it, nor answered for its success. Did the disappointment proceed from want of expedition? He had no pilots, guides, nor intelligence, afforded him; and could not possibly provide himself in any of these advantages, so necessary to all military operations. Were the engineers blamable? This has always been considered as a branch of military knowledge, distinct from that of a commander, and which is altogether intrusted to those to whose profession it peculiarly belongs. By his vigour in combating the vain terrors spread amongst the troops, and by his prudence in timely desisting from a fruitless enterprise, the misfortune was confined merely to a disappointment, without any loss or any dishonour to the British arms. Commanders, from the situation of affairs, have had opportunities of acquiring more honour; yet there is no one whose conduct, in every circumstance, could be more free from reproach. On the first of October, the fleet sailed out of Quimperlay Road, from one of the most dangerous situations that so large a fleet had ever lain in, at so late a season, and in so stormy a sea as the Bay of Biscay. The reflection on this danger had been no inconsiderable cause of hastening the re-embarkation of the troops. And the more so, that the secretary had given express orders to the admiral not to bring the fleet into any hazard. The prudence of the hasty departure appeared the more visibly the very day the fleet sailed, when a violent storm arising from the south west, it was concluded, that if the ships had been lying at anchor on the coast, many of them must have necessarily been driven ashore, and wrecked on the rocks that surrounded them. The fleet was dispersed, and six transports being separated from the rest, went immediately for England, carrying with them about eight hundred of the forces. The rest put into Quiberon Bay, and the general landed his small body on the peninsula of that name. By erecting a battery of some guns on the narrow neck of land, which joins the peninsula to the continent, he rendered his situation almost impregnable, while he saw the fleet riding secure in his neighbourhood, in one of the finest bays in the world.

The industry and spirit of the general supported both himself and the army against all these disadvantages, while there was the smallest prospect of success. But his prudence determined him to abandon it, when it appeared altogether desperate.

The engineers, seeing no manner of effect from their shells and red-hot balls, and sensible that ’twas impossible either to make a breach from a battery, erected at so great a distance, or to place the battery nearer, under such a superiority of French cannon, at last unanimously brought a report to the general, that they had no longer any hope of success; and that even all the ammunition, which, with infinite labour, had been brought, was expended: no prospect remained of being farther supplied, on account of the broken roads, which lay between them and the fleet. The council of war held in consequence of this report, balanced the reasons for continuing or abandoning the enterprise, if men can be said to balance where they find nothing on the one side but an extreme desire to serve their king and country, and on the other every maxim of war and prudence. They unanimously agreed to abandon the attempt, and return on board the transports. The whole troops were accordingly re-embarked by the 28th of September, with the loss of near twenty men killed and wounded, on the whole enterprise.

APPENDIX B. LETTERS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT.

I. — LETTERS FROM MONTESQUIEU TO HUME.

(1.)

J’ai reçu Monsieur, comme une chose très précieuse, la belle lettre que vous m’avez fait l’honneur de m’écrire au sujet de mon ouvrage. Elle est remplie

de réflexions si judicieuses et si sensées, que je ne sçaurois vous dire à quel point j'en ai été charmé. Ce que vous dites sur la forme dont les jurés prononcent en Angleterre, ou en Ecosse, m'a surtout fait un grand plaisir, et l'endroit de mon livre où j'ai traité cette matière est peut-être celui qui m'a fait le plus de peine, et où j'ai le plus souvent changé. Ce que j'avois fait, parce-que je n'avois trouvé personne qui eut la-dessus des idées aussi nettes, que vous avez. Mais c'est assez parler de mon livre que j'ai l'honneur de vous présenter. J'aime mieux vous parler d'une belle dissertation où vous donnez une beaucoup plus grande influence aux causes morales qu'aux causes physiques — et il m'a paru, autant que je suis capable d'en juger, que ce sujet est traité à fond, quelque difficile qu'il soit à traiter, et écrit de main de maître, et rempli d'idées et de réflexions très neuves. Nous commençâmes aussi à lire — M. Stuart et moi — un autre ouvrage de vous où vous maltraitez un peu l'ordre ecclésiastique. Vous croyez bien que Monsr. Stuart et moi n'avons pas pu entièrement vous approuver — nous nous sommes contentés de vous admirer. Nous ne crûmes pas que ces Messieurs furent tels, mais nous trouvâmes fort bonnes les raisons que vous donnez pour qu'ils dussent être tels. M. Stuart m'a fait un grand plaisir en me faisant espérer que je trouverois à Paris une partie de ces beaux ouvrages. J'ai l'honneur, Monsieur, de vous en remercier, et d'être avec les sentimens de la plus parfaite estime, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur.

Montesquieu.

A Bordeaux, ce 19 May, 1749.

(2.)

Monsieur j'ai reçu la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire du 16 de Juillet, et il ne m'a été possible de la lire qu' aujourdhui, à cause d'une grande fluxion sur les yeux et que n'ayant point actuellement de secrétaire Anglais je ne pouvois me la faire lire. J'étois prêt à y faire réponse quand Mr. Le Mosnier est entré chez moi, et m'a parlé de l'honneur qu'on veut faire à mon livre en Ecosse de l'y imprimer, et m'a dit ce que vous m'avez déjà appris par votre lettre. Je suis très obligé à vous Monsieur et à Monsieur Alexandre, de la peine que vous avez prise. Je suis convenu avec M. Le Mosnier que je ferais faire une copie des corrections que j'ai envoiées en Angleterre, et à Paris, de la première édition de Genève, en 2 volumes in 4to qui est très fautive, et qu’il se chargeroit de les envoyer. J’ai reçu Monsieur, les exemplaires de vos beaux ouvrages que vous avez eu la bonté de m’envoyer, et j’ai lu avec un très grand plaisir l’essay sur l’esprit humain, qui ne peut partir que d’un esprit extrêmement philosophique. Tout ceci est rempli de belles idées, et je vous remercie du plaisir que la lecture m’en a fait; à l’égard de la citation des Lettres Persanes il vaut autant que mon nom y soit que celui d’un autre, et cela n’est d’aucune conséquence.

La réputation de Monsieur le Docteur Midleton est certainement venue jusqu’à nous. Notior ut jam sit canibus non Delia nostris, et j’espère bien me procurer l’avantage de lire les ouvrages dont vous me parlez. Je sçais que Mr. de Midleton est un homme éminent. J’ai Monsieur l’honneur d’être, &c.

A Paris ce 3 7bre, 1749.

Je vous prie Monsieur, de vouloir bien faire mes compliments très humbles à Mons. Stewart: il fairoit bien de venir nous revoir cet automne prochain.

(3.)

J’ai Monsieur reçu l’honneur de votre lettre avec la postille qui y est jointe, et j’ai de plus reçu un exemplaire de vos excellentes compositions par la voie de Milord Morton. Mr. de Jouquart qui a formé le dessein de traduire l’ouvrage de Mons$^{r.}$ Wallace, me dit hier qu’il traduiroit aussi le vôtre sur le nombre des peuples chez les anciennes nations. Cela dépendra du succès qu’aura sa traduction qui est la première qu’il ait faite. Il est certain qu’il a tous les talents qu’il faut pour s’en acquitter, et je ne doute pas que le public ne l’encourage à continuer. Le public qui admirera les deux ouvrages, n’admirera pas moins deux amis qui font céder d’une manière si noble les petits intérêts de l’esprit aux intérêts de l’amitié; et pour moi, je regarderai comme un très grand bonheur, si je puis me flatter d’avoir quelque part dans cette amitié. J’ai l’honneur d’être, &c.

Paris, ce 13 Juillet, 1753.

II. — LETTERS FROM THE ABBÉ LE BLANC TO HUME.

Referred to in vol. i. *, and* .

(1.)

Monsieur, — La traduction de vos discours politiques, que j'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer, est la preuve la plus éclatante que je pouvois vous donner de l'estime que j'en fais; vous en serez peut-être plus content si j'avois été à portée de profiter de vos lumières. Je vous prie, et votre intérêt s'y trouve comme le mien, de me faire la grâce de la lire avec attention, et de m'avertir des endroits, ou malgré toute l'attention que j'y ai apportée, j'aurois pu m'écarter de votre sens. J'en profiterai à la première édition, ainsi que des remarques, changements, ou additions, qu'il vous plaira me communiquer, soit à l'occasion de vos discours, soit sur les autres ouvrages Anglois dont je parle dans mes notes.

Je vous prie encore Monsieur que ce soit le plus tôt qu'il vous sera possible, car il est bon de vous dire que cette traduction, grâce à l'excellence de l'original, se débite ici comme un Roman; c'est tout dire, notre goût pour les futilités vous est connu; il vous étoit réservé de nous y faire renoncer, pour nous occuper des matières les plus dignes d'exercer les esprits raisonnables. Le Libraire m'avertit qu'il sera bientôt tems de penser à la seconde édition. J'attendrai votre réponse pour l'enrichir de vos remarques qui feront que celle-ci sera reçue du public avec encore plus d'applaudissements.

Je profite de cette occasion pour vous offrir une amitié qui vous sera, peut-être, inutile, et vous demander la vôtre que je serois très flatté d'obtenir. Il semble que l'auteur et le traducteur sont faits pour être liés ensemble: il est à présumer qui celui que traduit un ouvrage a d'avance ou du moins épousé la façon de parler de celui qui l'a fait. J'ai trouvé dans vos discours un politique Philosophe, et un Philosophe citoyen. Je n'ai moi-même donné aucun ouvrage qui ne porte ce double caractère, et je me flatte que vous le trouverez dans les Lettres d'un François, si par hazard elles vous sont connues.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec les sentiments d'estime dont je viens de vous donner des témoignages publics, et cette sorte de respect que je n'ai que pour quelques Philosophes tels que vous. Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

L'Abbé Le Blanc, Historiographe des Bâtiments
du Roy de France.

De Paris, le 25th Août, 1754.

(2.)

Monsieur, — La traduction de vos discours politiques est la première que j’ai donnée au public; et l’utilité que j’ai cru que ma patrie en pouvoit retirer, est l’unique motif que m’ait déterminé à l’entreprendre. Je n’ose me répondre que vous la trouverez telle que vous l’espérez. C’est à moi à vous demander votre indulgence pour les fautes que vous y trouverez, et à vous prier de me communiquer vos remarques sur des notes que j’ai cru y devoir adjouter. Je vous promets de corriger avec soumission les erreurs que vos m’y ferez apercevoir. A la fin du 2d vol. j’ai donné une notice des meilleurs ouvrages Anglois que j’ai consultés, sur les matières du commerce; j’ai hazardé de porter mon jugement sur chacun de ceux dont j’ai parlé. Je le rectifierai sur vos lumières, si vous voulez bien me les communiquer. Si j’en ai omis quelqu’un d’important, je vous prie de me le faire connoître, et de me dire vous-même, qui êtes un si excellent juge, ce que l’on en doit penser. J’enricherai la 2 Edition de tout ce dont vous voudrez bien me faire part.

A l’égard de votre histoire de la Grande Bretagne que vous m’annoncez, ce ne sera plus simplement comme votre admirateur mais comme votre ami Monsieur, que j’en entreprendrai la traduction, et je ferai de mon mieux pour qu’elle perde le moins qu’il est possible. J’aime votre façon de penser, et je suis familiarisé avec votre stile; si la matière exige qu’il soit plus élevé je tacherai d’y atteindre. Mais pour que je puisse entreprendre cette traduction avec succès, il faut s’il est possible, que vous retardiez à Londres au moins d’un mois la publication de votre ouvrage, et que vous me l’envoyez tout de suite par la poste, addressé sans autre enveloppe à Mr. Jannes, Chevalier de l’ordre du Roi, Controlleur Général des Postes à Paris. Nous avons ici une foule d’écrivains médiocres, qui sans savoir ni l’Anglois ni le François même, sont a l’affût de tout ce qui s’imprime chez vous, et qui à l’aide d’un dictionnaire vous massacreront impitoyablement. On nous a donné ainsi plusieurs bons ouvrages, et entre autres la dissertation de M. Wallace dont il n’est pas possible de supporter la lecture en François. Pour faire de pareille besogne, il ne faut pas beaucoup de tems à ces Messieurs là. Ils travaillent vîte, parce qu’ils travaillent *fami potius quam famæ*. Si je n’ai pas du tems devant eux, je serai prévenu, et si je le suis, je serai obligé d’abandonner l’ouvrage. Je ne vous parle pas des traducteurs de Hollande qui sont encore plus mauvais s’il est possible. Cette fois-ci je veux faire un office d’amitié, je vous prie de me mettre à portée de le bien faire. Vos discours Politiques vous ont, comme je m’y attendois, donné ici la plus haute réputation, dès que votre histoire paroîtra, un libraire la fera venir par la poste, et mettra ses ouvriers après, à moins que vous ne m’accordiez la grâce que je vous demande. Alors on saura que je la traduis, et je suis sûr que ces messieurs me laisseront faire.

J’ai encore à vous apprendre, monsieur, que le succès de vos Discours Politiques ne fait qu’augmenter tous les jours, et que tout retentit de vos Éloges. Nos ministres même n’en sont pas moins satisfaits que le public. Mr. le Comte d’Argenson, Mr. Le Maréchal de Noailles, en un mot tous ceux qui ont ici part au gouvernement ont parlé de votre ouvrage, comme d’un des meilleurs qui ayent jamais été faits sur ces matières. J’ai été obligé de céder mon exemplaire à un d’entre eux; ainsi je vous prie de m’en adresser un par la même voie que je vous ai indiquée, la poste après que vous m’aurez envoyé le I. vol. de votre histoire, d’autant plus que les additions et corrections dont vous m’avez fait part se rapportent à la 3^e edition qui je crois se trouveroit difficilement a Paris.

(3.)

Monsieur, — Je vous avois promis, et je m’étois flatté de pouvoir consacrer mes veilles à traduire aussi votre admirable Histoire de l’infortunée Maison de Stewart. Les obstacles les plus puissants, ceux-mêmes qui ôtent à l’esprit cette liberté sans laquelle on ne fait rien de bien, voyages, affaires, disgrâces, maladies — tout s’est opposé à l’exécution d’un projet qui rioit si fort à mon imagination et dont l’exécution ne pouroit que me faire honneur.

A ce défaut j’ai prêté à un de mes amis, homme d’esprit et laborieux, le premier volume que vous avez eu la bonté de m’envoyer. Il l’a traduit et le rendra public au commencement de l’hiver prochain.

J’ai de même que tous ceux qui savent ici l’Anglois, le plus grand empressement de lire votre second volume. J’en ferai le même usage que du premier.

Je vous avois annoncé que vos discours Politiques feroient parmi nous le même effet que *L’Esprit des Loix*. L’évènement m’a justifié, non seulement ils jouissent parmi nous de cette haute réputation qu’ils méritent, mais ils ont donné lieu à un grand nombre d’autres ouvrages plus ou moins estimables et qui la plus part n’ont d’original que la forme. Vous en trouverez le catalogue à la suite d’une troisième édition de ma traduction que je vais donner incessamment.

Il vient d’en paroître un qui fait ici un grand bruit, et que je n’ai garde de confondre avec tous ceux dont je viens de parler. Il est intitulé, *L’Ami des Hommes ou Traité de La Population*. L’Auteur est un génie hardi, original, qui comme Montaigne se laisse aller à ses idées, les expose sans orgueil, sans modestie; il ne suit ni ordre ni méthode; mais son ouvrage, plein d’excellentes choses, respire le bien de l’humanité et de la patrie. Il prêche l’agriculture, et foudroye la finance. Il combat votre système sur le luxe, mais avec les égards élevés à la superiorité de vos lumières. Il m’a remis un exemplaire de son ouvrage, qu’il me prie de vous présenter comme un tribut de son estime et de la reconnoissance qu’il vous doit, pour l’utilité qu’il a tirée de vos Discours Politiques. Il ne demande pas mieux que d’ être éclairé et par la noblesse des sentiments et la politesse de la conduite. Je ne crains pas de le dire. L’adversaire est digne de vous. C’est *Monsieur le Marquis de Mirabeau*, qui est tel qu’il paroît dans son livre — c’est à dire un des plus extraordinaires des hommes qu’il y ait en quelque pays que ce soit. Je vous prie Monsieur de m’indiquer une voie sûre pour vous faire parvenir son ouvrage.

(4.)

Dresde, le 25 Dec. 1754.

J’ai vu ici la traduction de vos Discours Politiques imprimée en Hollande; elle ne se peut pas lire; vous souffririez vous, Monsieur, de vous voir ainsi défiguré. Le Traducteur quel qu’il soit ne sait constamment ni l’Anglois ni le François. C’est probablement un de ces auteurs qui travaillent à la foire pour les libraires de Hollande, et dont les ouvrages bons ou mauvais se débitent aux foires de Leipsig et de Francfort. Les bibliothèques de ce pays ci sont remplies de livres François qui n’ont jamais été et ne seront jamais connus en France. Cette traduction passe ici pour être d’un Mr. Mauvillon de Leipsic dont le métier est de faire des livres François pour L’Allemagne, et d’enseigner ce qu’il ne sait — c’est à dire, votre langue et la nôtre. Ce qu’il y a de Saxons lettrés qui les possèdent l’une ou l’autre, et qui s’intéressent au bien de leur pays, connoissent l’excellence de votre ouvrage, me pressent de faire imprimer à Dresde même la seconde édition de ma traduction, et je pourrois bien me rendre à leur avis. Je n’attends plus que votre réponse pour me décider. Quelque part qu’elle se fasse, je tâcherai de faire en sorte qu’elle soit belle et correcte.

(5.)

Monsieur, — Il y a à peu près un an que notre commerce épistolaire a commencé, et j’ai grand regret que par des contretems de tout espèce il ait été sitôt interrompu. Vous m’avez donné trop de preuves de votre politesse pour que je ne sois pas à présent convaincu que vous n’avez reçu aucune des lettres que je vous ai écrites de Dresde, et que j’avois essayé de vous faire passer par la voie de votre ambassadeur à cette cour. Prêt a quitter la Saxe, je vous écrivis encor de Leïpzic, pour vous rendre compte de mon séjour en ce pays, et vous dire que la dissipation où j’y avois vécu forcément, ne m’avoit pas permis d’avancer beaucoup dans la traduction de votre histoire de la malheureuse famille des Stuarts. J’ai depuis été en Hollande, et, comme je l’avois prévu j’ai appris qu’un de ces auteurs, qui travaillent à la fois aux gages des libraires qui les employent, en avoit fait une de son coté, qui étoit toute prête à paroître. Vous pouvez aisément juger du découragement où une pareille nouvelle m’a jetté. La manufacture des livres de Hollande fait réellement grand tort à notre littérature Françoise. On y employe à traduire un excellent ouvrage des gens qui ne seroient bons qu’à travailler à la fabrique du papier.

APPENDIX C. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE POEMS OF OSSIAN.

I. — CORRESPONDENCE.

(1.)

Hume *to* —— .

Edinburgh, August 16, 1760.

Sir, — I am not surprised to find by your letter, that Mr. Gray should have entertained suspicions with regard to the authenticity of these

fragments of our Highland poetry. The first time I was shown the copies of some of them in manuscript, by our friend John Home, I was inclined to be a little incredulous on that head; but Mr. Home removed my scruples, by informing me of the manner in which he procured them from Mr. Macpherson, the translator.

These two gentlemen were drinking the waters together at Moffat last autumn, when their conversation fell upon Highland poetry, which Mr. Macpherson extolled very highly. Our friend, who knew him to be a good scholar, and a man of taste, found his curiosity excited, and asked whether he had ever translated any of them. Mr. Macpherson replied, that he never had attempted any such thing; and doubted whether it was possible to transfuse such beauties into our language; but, for Mr. Home's satisfaction, and in order to give him a general notion of the strain of that wild poetry, he would endeavour to turn one of them into English. He accordingly brought him one next day, which our friend was so much pleased with, that he never ceased soliciting Mr. Macpherson, till he insensibly produced that small volume which has been published.

After this volume was in every body's hands, and universally admired, we heard every day new reasons, which put the authenticity, not the great antiquity which the translator ascribes to them, beyond all question; for their antiquity is a point, which must be ascertained by reasoning; though the arguments he employs seem very probable and convincing. But certain it is, that these poems are in every body's mouth in the Highlands, have been handed down from father to son, and are of an age beyond all memory and tradition.

In the family of every Highland chieftain, there was anciently retained a bard, whose office was the same with that of the Greek rhapsodists; and the general subject of the poems which they recited was the wars of Fingal; an epoch no less remarkable among them, than the wars of Troy among the Greek poets. This custom is not even yet altogether abolished: the bard and piper are esteemed the most honourable offices in a chieftain's family, and these two characters are frequently united in the same person. Adam Smith, the celebrated Professor in Glasgow, told me that the piper of the Argyleshire militia repeated to him all those poems which Mr. Macpherson has translated, and many more of equal beauty. Major Mackay, Lord Reay's brother, also told me that he remembers them perfectly; as likewise did the Laird of Macfarlane, the greatest antiquarian whom we have in this country, and who insists so strongly on the historical truth, as well as on the poetical beauty of these productions. I could add the Laird and Lady Macleod to these authorities, with many more, if these were not sufficient, as they live in different parts of the Highlands, very remote from each other, and they could only be acquainted with poems that had become in a manner national works, and had gradually spread themselves into every mouth, and imprinted themselves on every memory.

Every body in Edinburgh is so convinced of this truth, that we have endeavoured to put Mr. Macpherson on a way of procuring us more of these wild flowers. He is a modest, sensible, young man, not settled in any living, but employed as a private tutor in Mr. Grahame of Balgowan’s family, a way of life which he is not fond of. We have, therefore, set about a subscription of a guinea or two guineas a-piece, in order to enable him to quit that family, and undertake a mission into the Highlands, where he hopes to recover more of these fragments. There is, in particular, a country surgeon somewhere in Lochaber, who, he says, can recite a great number of them, but never committed them to writing; as indeed the orthography of the Highland language is not fixed, and the natives have always employed more the sword than the pen. This surgeon has by heart the Epic poem mentioned by Mr. Macpherson in his Preface; and as he is somewhat old, and is the only person living that has it entire, we are in the more haste to recover a monument, which will certainly be regarded as a curiosity in the republic of letters.

I own that my first and chief objection to the authenticity of these fragments, was not on account of the noble and even tender strokes which they contain; for these are the offspring of genius and passion in all countries; I was only surprised at the regular plan which appears in some of these pieces, and which seems to be the work of a more cultivated age. None of the specimens of barbarous poetry known to us, the Hebrew, Arabian, or any other, contain this species of beauty; and if a regular epic poem, or even any thing of that kind, nearly regular, should also come from that rough climate or uncivilized people, it would appear to me a phenomenon altogether unaccountable.

I remember Mr. Macpherson told me, that the heroes of this Highland epic were not only, like Homer’s heroes, their own butchers, bakers, and cooks, but also their own shoemakers, carpenters, and smiths. He mentioned an incident which put this matter in a remarkable light. A warrior had the head of his spear struck off in battle; upon which he immediately retires behind the army, where a large forge was erected, makes a new one, hurries back to the action, pierces his enemy, while the iron, which was yet red-hot, hisses in the wound. This imagery you will allow to be singular, and so well imagined, that it would have been adopted by Homer, had the manners of the Greeks allowed him to have employed it.

I forgot to mention, as another proof of the authenticity of these poems, and even of the reality of the adventures contained in them, that the names of the heroes, Fingal, Oscar, Osur, Oscan, Dermid, are still given in the Highlands to large mastiffs, in the same manner as we affix to them the names of Cæsar, Pompey, Hector, or the French that of Marlborough.

It gives me pleasure to find, that a person of so fine a taste as Mr. Gray approves of these fragments; as it may convince us, that our fondness of them is not altogether founded on national prepossessions, which, however, you know to be a little strong. The translation is elegant; but I made an objection to the author, which I wish you would communicate to Mr. Gray, that we may judge of the justness of it. There appeared to me many verses in his prose, and all of them in the same measure with Mr. Shenstone’s famous ballad:

“Ye shepherds so cheerful and gay,
Whose flocks never carelessly roam, &c.”

Pray, ask Mr. Gray, whether he made the same remark, &c. and whether he thinks it a blemish. Yours most sincerely, &c.

(2.)

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

Lisle St. Leicester Fields, 19th Sept. 1763.

Dear Sir, — I live in a place where I have the pleasure of frequently hearing justice done to your Dissertation; but never heard it mentioned in a company where some one person or other did not express his doubts with regard to the authenticity of the poems which are its subject; and I often hear them totally rejected with disdain and indignation, as a palpable and most impudent forgery. This opinion has, indeed, become very prevalent among the men of letters in London; and I can foresee, that in a few years the poems, if they continue to stand on their present footing, will be thrown aside, and will fall into final oblivion. It is in vain to say that their beauty will support them, independent of their authenticity. No; that beauty is not so much to the general taste as to ensure you of this event; and if people be once disgusted with the idea of a forgery, they are thence apt to entertain a more disadvantageous notion of the excellency of the production itself. The absurd pride and caprice of Macpherson himself, who scorns, as he pretends, to satisfy any body that doubts his veracity, has tended much to confirm this general scepticism; and I must own, for my own part, that, though I have had many particular reasons to believe these poems genuine, more than it is possible for any Englishman of letters to have, yet I am not entirely without my scruples on that head. You think that the internal proofs in favour of the poems are very convincing; so they are: but there are also internal reasons against them, particularly from the manners, notwithstanding all the art with which you have endeavoured to throw a varnish on that circumstance; and the preservation of such long and such connected poems by oral tradition alone, during a course of fourteen centuries, is so much out of the ordinary course of human affairs, that it requires the strongest reasons to make us believe it.

My present purpose, therefore, is to apply to you, in the name of all the men of letters of this, and I may say of all other countries, to establish this capital point, and to give us proof that these poems are, I do not say so ancient as the age of Severus, but that they were not forged within these five years by James Macpherson. These proofs must not be arguments, but testimonies. People’s ears are fortified against the former: the latter may yet find their way before the poems are consigned to total oblivion. Now the testimonies may, in my opinion, be of two kinds. Macpherson pretends that there is an ancient manuscript of part of Fingal, in the family, I think, of Clanronald. Get that fact ascertained by more than one person of credit; let these persons be acquainted with the Gaelic; let them compare the original and the translation; and let them testify the fidelity of the latter. But the chief point in which it will be necessary for you to exert yourself, will be to get positive testimony from many different hands, that such poems are vulgarly recited in the Highlands, and have there long been the entertainment of the people. This testimony must be as particular as it is positive. It will not be sufficient that a Highland gentleman or clergyman say or write to you, that he has heard such poems; nobody questions that there are traditional poems in that part of the country, where the names of Ossian and Fingal, and Oscar, and Gaul, are mentioned in every stanza. The only doubt is, whether these poems have any farther resemblance to the poems published by Macpherson. I was told by Bourke, a very ingenious Irish gentleman, the author of a tract on the Sublime and Beautiful, that on the first publication of Macpherson's book, all the Irish cried out, We know all these poems, we have always heard them from our infancy. But when he asked more particular questions, he could never learn that any one had ever heard, or could repeat the original of any one paragraph of the pretended translation. This generality, then, must be carefully guarded against, as being of no authority.

Your connexions among your brethren of the clergy, may here be of great use to you. You may easily learn the names of all ministers of that country, who understand the language of it; you may write to them, expressing the doubts that have arisen, and desiring them to send for such of the bards as remain, and make them rehearse their ancient poems. Let the clergymen, then, have the translation in their hands, and let them write back to you, and inform you that they heard such a one, (naming him,) living in such a place, rehearse the original of such a passage, from such a page to such a page of the English translation, which appeared exact and faithful. If you give to the public a sufficient number of such testimonies, you may prevail. But I venture to foretel to you that nothing less will serve the purpose; nothing less will so much as command the attention of the public. Becket tells me that he is to give us a new edition of your Dissertation, accompanied with some remarks on Temora; here is a favourable opportunity for you to execute this purpose. You have a just and laudable zeal for the credit of these poems; they are, if genuine, one of the greatest curiosities, in all respects, that ever was discovered in the commonwealth of letters; and the child is, in a manner, become yours by adoption, as Macpherson has totally abandoned all care of it. These motives call upon you to exert yourself; and I think it were suitable to your candour, and most satisfactory also to the reader, to publish all the answers to all the letters you write, even though some of these letters should make somewhat against your own opinion in this affair. We shall always be the more assured that no arguments are strained beyond their proper force, and no contrary arguments suppressed, where such an entire communication is made to us. Becket joins me heartily in this application, and he owns to me, that the believers in the authenticity of the poems diminish every day among the men of sense and reflection. Nothing less than what I propose, can throw the balance on the other side. I depart from hence in about three weeks, and should be glad to hear your resolution before that time.

This journey to Paris is likely to contribute much to my entertainment, and will certainly tend much to improve my fortune; so that I have no reason to repent that I have allowed myself to be dragged from my retreat. I shall henceforth converse with authors, but shall not probably for some time have much leisure to peruse them; which is not perhaps the way of knowing them most to their advantage. I carried only four books along with me, a Virgil, a Horace, a Tasso, and a Tacitus. I could have wished also to carry my Homer, but I found him too bulky. I own that, in common decency, I ought to have left my Horace behind me, and that I ought to be ashamed to look him in the face. For I am sensible that, at my years, no temptation would have seduced him from his retreat; nor would he ever have been induced to enter so late into the path of ambition. But I deny that I enter into the path of ambition; I only walk into the green fields of amusement; and I affirm, that external amusement becomes more and more necessary as one advances in years, and can find less supplies from his own passions or imagination. I am, &c.

(3.)

Dr. Blair *to* Hume.

Edinburgh, 29th September, 1763.

Dear Sir, — I am much obliged to you for the information you have communicated to me, and for the concern you show that justice should be done to our Highland Poems. From what I saw myself when at London, I could easily believe that the disposition of men of letters was rather averse to their reception as genuine; but I trusted that the internal characters of their authenticity, together with the occasional testimonies given to them by Highland gentlemen who are every where scattered, would gradually surmount these prejudices. For my own part, it is impossible for me to entertain the smallest doubt of their being real productions, and ancient ones, too, of the Highlands. Neither Macpherson’s parts, though good, nor his industry, were equal to such a forgery. The whole publication, you know, was in its first rise accidental. Macpherson was entreated and dragged into it. Some of the MSS. sent to him passed through my hands. Severals of them he translated, in a manner, under my eye. He gave me these native and genuine accounts of them, which bore plain characters of truth. What he said was often confirmed to me by others. I had testimonies from several Highlanders concerning their authenticity, in words strong and explicit. And, setting all this aside, is it a thing which any man of sense can suppose, that Macpherson would venture to forge such a body of poetry, and give it to the public as ancient poems and songs, well known at this day through all the Highlands of Scotland, when he could have been refuted and exposed by every one of his own countrymen? Is it credible that he could bring so many thousand people into a conspiracy with him to keep his secret? or that some would not be found who, attached to their own ancient songs, would not cry out, “These are not the poems we deal in. You have forged characters and sentiments we know nothing about; you have modernized and dressed us up: we have much better songs and poems of our own.” Who but John Bull could entertain the belief of an imposture so incredible as this? The utmost I should think any rational scepticism could suppose is this, that Macpherson might have sometimes interpolated, or endeavoured to improve, by some corrections of his own. Of this I am verily persuaded there was very little, if any at all. Had it prevailed, we would have been able to trace more marks of inconsistency, and a different hand and style; whereas, these poems are more remarkable for nothing than an entire, and supported, and uniform consistency of character and manner through the whole.

However, seeing we have to do with such incredulous people, I think it were a pity not to do justice to such valuable monuments of genius. I have already, therefore, entered upon the task you prescribe me, though I foresee it may give me some trouble. I have writ by last post to Sir James Macdonald, who is fortunately at this time in the Isle of Skye. I have also, through the Laird of Macleod, writ to Clanronald, and likewise to two clergymen in the Isle of Skye, men of letters and character; one of them, Macpherson minister of Sleat, the author of a very learned work about to be published concerning the Antiquities of Scotland. Several others in Argyleshire, the Islands, and other poetical regions, worthy clergymen, who are well versed in the Gaelic, I intend also without delay to make application to.

My requisition to them all is for such positive and express testimonies as you desire; MSS. if they have any, compared before witnesses with the printed book, and recitations of bards compared in the same manner. I have given them express directions in what manner to proceed, so as to avoid that loose generality which, as you observe, can signify nothing. What use it may be proper to put these testimonies to, I can only judge after having got all my materials. I apprehend there may be some difficulty in obtaining the consent of those concerned to publish their letters, nor might it be proper. But concerning this, I may afterwards advise with you and my other friends.

In the meantime, you may please acquaint Mr. Becket, that this must retard for some time the publication of his new edition with my Dissertation; as the least I can allow for the return of letters from such distant parts, where the communication by post is irregular and slow, together with the time necessary for their executing what is desired, will be three months, perhaps some more; and, assuredly, any new evidence we can give the world, must accompany my Dissertation.

I am in some difficulty with Macpherson himself in this affair. Capricious as he is, I would not willingly hurt or disoblige him; and yet I apprehend that such an inquiry as this, which is like tracing him out, and supposing his veracity called in question, will not please him. I must write him by next post, and endeavour to put the affair in such a light as to soften him; which you, if you see him, may do likewise, and show him the necessity of something of this kind being done; and with more propriety, perhaps, by another than himself.

(4.)

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

6th October, 1763.

My dear Sir, — I am very glad you have undertaken the task which I used the freedom to recommend to you. Nothing less than what you propose will serve the purpose. You need expect no assistance from Macpherson, who flew into a passion when I told him of the letter I had wrote to you. But you must not mind so strange and heteroclite a mortal, than whom I have scarce ever known a man more perverse and unamiable. He will probably depart for Florida with governor Johnstone, and I would advise him to travel among the Chickisaws or Cherokees, in order to tame him and civilize him.

I should be much pleased to hear of the success of your labours. Your method of directing to me is under cover to the Earl of Hertford, Northumberland House; any letters that come to me under that direction, will be sent over to me at Paris.

I beg my compliments to Robertson and Jardine. I am very sorry to hear of the state of Ferguson’s health. John Hume went to the country yesterday with Lord Bute. I was introduced the other day to that noble lord, at his desire. I believe him a very good man, a better man than a politician.

Since writing the above, I have been in company with Mrs. Montague, a lady of great distinction in this place, and a zealous partisan of Ossian. I told her of your intention, and even used the freedom to read your letter to her. She was extremely pleased with your project; and the rather as the Duc de Nivernois, she said, had talked to her much on that subject last winter, and desired, if possible, to get collected some proofs of the authenticity of these poems, which he proposed to lay before the Académie des Belles Lettres at Paris. You see, then, that you are upon a great stage in this inquiry, and that many people have their eyes upon you. This is a new motive for rendering your proofs as complete as possible. I cannot conceive any objection, which a man, even of the gravest character, could have to your publication of his letters, which will only attest a plain fact known to him. Such scruples, if they occur, you must endeavour to remove. For on this trial of yours will the judgment of the public finally depend.

Lord Bath, who was in the company, agreed with me, that such documents of authenticity are entirely necessary and indispensable.

Please to write to me as soon as you make any advances, that I may have something to say on the subject to the literati of Paris. I beg my compliments to all those who bear that character at Edinburgh. I cannot but look upon all of them as my friends. I am, &c.

II.

ESSAY ON THE GENUINENESS OF THE POEMS.

I think the fate of this production the most curious effect of prejudice, where superstition had no share, that ever was in the world. A tiresome, insipid performance; which, if it had been presented in its real form, as the work of a contemporary, an obscure Highlander, no man could ever have had the patience to have once perused, has, by passing for the poetry of a royal bard, who flourished fifteen centuries ago, been universally read, has been pretty generally admired, and has been translated, in prose and verse, into several languages of Europe. Even the style of the supposed English translation has been admired, though harsh and absurd in the highest degree; jumping perpetually from verse to prose, and from prose to verse; and running, most of it, in the light cadence and measure of Molly Mog. Such is the Erse epic, which has been puffed with a zeal and enthusiasm that has drawn a ridicule on my countrymen.

But, to cut off at once the whole source of its reputation, I shall collect a few very obvious arguments against the notion of its great antiquity, with which so many people have been intoxicated, and which alone made it worthy of any attention.

(1.) The very manner in which it was presented to the public forms a strong presumption against its authenticity. The pretended translator goes on a mission to the Highlands to recover and collect a work, which, he affirmed, was dispersed, in fragments, among the natives. He returns, and gives a quarto volume, and then another quarto, with the same unsupported assurance as if it were a translation of the Orlando Furioso, or Lousiade, or any poem the best known in Europe. It might have been expected, at least, that he would have told the public, and the subscribers to his mission, and the purchasers of his book, *This part I got from such a person, in such a place; that other part, from such another person. I was enabled to correct my first copy of such a passage by the recital of such another person; a fourth supplied such a defect in my first copy*. By such a history of his gradual discoveries he would have given some face of probability to them. Any man of common sense, who was in earnest, must, in this case, have seen the peculiar necessity of that precaution, any man that had regard to his own character, would have anxiously followed that obvious and easy method. All the friends of the pretended translator exhorted and entreated him to give them and the public that satisfaction. No! those who could doubt his veracity were fools, whom it was not worth while to satisfy. The most incredible of all facts was to be taken on his word, whom nobody knew; and an experiment was to be made, I suppose in jest, how far the credulity of the public would give way to assurance and dogmatical affirmation.

(2.) But, to show the utter incredibility of the fact, let these following considerations be weighed, or, rather, simply reflected on; for it seems ridiculous to weigh them. Consider the size of these poems. What is given us is asserted to be only a part of a much greater collection; yet even these pieces amount to two quartos. And they were composed, you say, in the Highlands, about fifteen centuries ago; and have been faithfully transmitted, ever since, by oral tradition, through ages totally ignorant of letters, by the rudest, perhaps, of all the European nations; the most necessitous, the most turbulent, the most ferocious, and the most unsettled. Did ever any event happen that approached within a hundred degrees of this mighty wonder, even to the nations the most fortunate in their climate and situation? Can a ballad be shown that has passed, uncorrupted, by oral tradition, through three generations, among the Greeks, or Italians, or Phœnicians, or Egyptians, or even among the natives of such countries as Otaheite or Molacca, who seem exempted by nature from all attention but to amusement, to poetry, and music?

But the Celtic nations, it is said, had peculiar advantages for preserving their traditional poetry. The Irish, the Welsh, the Bretons, are all Celtic nations, much better entitled than the Highlanders, from their soil, and climate, and situation, to have leisure for these amusements. They, accordingly, present us not with complete epic and historical poems, (for they never had the assurance to go that length,) but with very copious and circumstantial traditions, which are allowed, by all men of sense, to be scandalous and ridiculous impostures.

(3.) The style and genius of these pretended poems are another sufficient proof of the imposition. The Lapland and Runic odes, conveyed to us, besides their small compass, have a savage rudeness, and sometimes grandeur, suited to those ages. But this Erse poetry has an insipid correctness, and regularity, and uniformity, which betrays a man without genius, that has been acquainted with the productions of civilized nations, and had his imagination so limited to that tract, that it was impossible for him even to mimic the character which he pretended to assume.

The manners are still a more striking proof of their want of authenticity. We see nothing but the affected generosity and gallantry of chivalry, which are quite unknown, not only to all savage people, but to every nation not trained in these artificial modes of thinking. In Homer, for instance, and Virgil, and Ariosto, the heroes are represented as making a nocturnal incursion into the camp of the enemy. Homer and Virgil, who certainly were educated in much more civilized ages than those of Ossian, make no scruple of representing their heroes as committing undistinguished slaughter on the sleeping foe. But Orlando walks quietly through the camp of the Saracens, and scorns to kill even an infidel who cannot defend himself. Gaul and Oscar are knight-errants, still more romantic: they make a noise in the midst of the enemy’s camp, that they may waken them, and thereby have a right to fight with them and to kill them. Nay, Fingal carries his ideas of chivalry still farther; much beyond what was ever dreamt of by Amadis de Gaul or Lancelot de Lake. When his territory is invaded, he scorns to repel the enemy with his whole force: he sends only an equal number against them, under an inferior captain: when these are repulsed, he sends a second detachment; and it is not till after a double defeat, that he deigns himself to descend from the hill, where he had remained, all the while, an idle spectator, and to attack the enemy. Fingal and Swaran combat each other all day, with the greatest fury. When darkness suspends the fight, they feast together with the greatest amity, and then renew the combat with the return of light. Are these the manners of barbarous nations, or even of people that have common sense? We may remark, that all this narrative is supposed to be given us by a contemporary poet. The facts, therefore, must be supposed entirely, or nearly, conformable to truth. The gallantry and extreme delicacy towards the women, which is found in these productions, is, if possible, still more contrary to the manners of barbarians. Among all rude nations, force and courage are the predominant virtues; and the inferiority of the females, in these particulars, renders them an object of contempt, not of deference and regard.

(4.) But I derive a new argument against the antiquity of these poems, from the general tenor of the narrative. Where manners are represented in them, probability, or even possibility, are totally disregarded: but in all other respects, the events are within the course of nature; no giants, no monsters, no magic, no incredible feats of strength or activity. Every transaction is conformable to familiar experience, and scarcely even deserves the name of wonderful. Did this ever happen in ancient and barbarous poetry? Why is this characteristic wanting, so essential to rude and ignorant ages? Ossian, you say, was singing the exploits of his contemporaries, and therefore could not falsify them in any great degree. But if this had been a restraint, your pretended Ossian had never sung the exploits of his contemporaries; he had gone back a generation or two, which would have been sufficient to throw an entire obscurity on the events; and he would thereby have attained the marvellous, which is alone striking to barbarians. I desire it may be observed, that manners are the only circumstances which a rude people cannot falsify; because they have no notion of any manners beside their own: but it is easy for them to let loose their imagination, and violate the course of nature, in every other particular; and indeed they take no pleasure in any other kind of narrative. In Ossian, nature is violated, where alone she ought to have been preserved; is preserved where alone she ought to have been violated.

(5.) But there is another species of the marvellous, wanting in Ossian, which is inseparable from all nations, civilized as well as barbarous, but still more, if possible, from the barbarous, and that is religion; no religious sentiment in this Erse poetry. All those Celtic heroes are more complete atheists than ever were bred in the school of Epicurus. To account for this singularity, we are told that a few generations before Ossian, the people quarrelled with their Druidical priests, and having expelled them, never afterwards adopted any other species of religion. It is not quite unnatural, I own, for the people to quarrel with their priests, — as we did with ours at the Reformation; but we attached ourselves with fresh zeal to our new preachers and new system; and this passion increased in proportion to our hatred of the old. But I suppose the reason of this strange absurdity in our new Erse poetry, is, that the author, finding by the assumed age of his heroes, that he must have given them the Druidical religion, and not trusting to his literature, (which seems indeed to be very slender) for making the representations consistent with antiquity, thought it safest to give them no religion at all; a circumstance so wonderfully unnatural, that it is sufficient alone, if men had eyes, to detect the imposition.

(6.) The state of the arts, as represented in those poems, is totally incompatible with the age assigned to them. We know, that the houses even of the Southern Britons, till conquered by the Romans, were nothing but huts erected in the woods; but a stately stone building is mentioned by Ossian, of which the walls remain, after it is consumed with fire. The melancholy circumstance of a fox is described, who looks out at the windows; an image, if I be not mistaken, borrowed from the Scriptures. The Caledonians, as well as the Irish, had no shipping but currachs, or wicker boats covered with hides: yet are they represented as passing, in great military expeditions, from the Hebrides to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; a most glaring absurdity. They live entirely by hunting, yet muster armies, which make incursions to these countries as well as to Ireland: though it is certain from the experience of America, that the whole Highlands would scarce subsist a hundred persons by hunting. They are totally unacquainted with fishing; though that occupation first tempts all rude nations to venture on the sea. Ossian alludes to a wind or water-mill, a machine then unknown to the Greeks and Romans, according to the opinion of the best antiquaries. His barbarians, though ignorant of tillage, are well acquainted with the method of working all kinds of metals. The harp is the musical instrument of Ossian; but the bagpipe, from time immemorial, has been the instrument of the Highlanders. If ever the harp had been known among them, it never had given place to the other barbarous discord.

Stridenti miserum stipula disperdere carmen.

(7.) All the historical facts of this poem are opposed by traditions, which, if all these tales be not equally contemptible, seem to merit much more attention. The Irish Scoti are the undoubted ancestors of the present Highlanders, who are but a small colony of that ancient people. But the Irish traditions make Fingal, Ossian, Oscar, all Irishmen, and place them some centuries distant from the Erse heroes. They represent them as giants, and monsters, and enchanters, a sure mark of a considerable antiquity of these traditions. I ask the partisans of Erse poetry, since the names of these heroes have crept over to Ireland, and have become quite familiar to the natives of that country, how it happens, that not a line of this poetry, in which they are all celebrated, which, it is pretended, alone preserves their memory with our Highlanders, and which is composed by one of these heroes themselves in the Irish language, ever found its way thither? The songs and traditions of the Senachies, the genuine poetry of the Irish, carry in their rudeness and absurdity the inseparable attendants of barbarism, a very different aspect from the insipid correctness of Ossian; where the incidents, if you will pardon the antithesis, are the most unnatural, merely because they are natural. The same observation extends to the Welsh, another Celtic nation.

(8.) The fiction of these poems is, if possible, still more palpably detected, by the great numbers of other traditions, which, the author pretends, are still fresh in the Highlands, with regard to all the personages. The poems, composed in the age of Truthil and Cormac, ancestors of Ossian, are, he says, full of complaints against the roguery and tyranny of the Druids. He talks as familiarly of the poetry of that period as Lucian or Longinus would of the Greek poetry of the Socratic age. I suppose here is a new rich mine of poetry ready to break out upon us, if the author thinks it can turn to account. For probably he does not mind the danger of detection, which he has little reason to apprehend from his experience of the public credulity. But I shall venture to assert, without any reserve or further inquiry, that there is no Highlander who is not, in some degree, a man of letters, that ever so much as heard there was a Druid in the world. The margin of every page almost of this wonderful production is supported, as he pretends, by minute oral traditions with regard to the personages. To the poem of Dar-thula, there is prefixed a long account of the pedigree, marriages, and adventures of three brothers, Nathos, Althos, and Ardan, heroes that lived fifteen hundred years ago in Argyleshire, and whose memory, it seems, is still celebrated there, and in every part of the Highlands. How ridiculous to advance such a pretension to the learned, who know that there is no tradition of Alexander the great all over the East; that the Turks, who have heard of him from their communication with the Greeks, believe him to have been the captain of Solomon's guard; that the Greek and Roman story, the moment it departs from the historical ages, becomes a heap of fiction and absurdity; that Cyrus himself, the conqueror of the East, became so much unknown, even in little more than half a century, that Herodotus himself, born and bred in Asia, within the limits of the Persian empire, could tell nothing of him, more than of Croesus, the contemporary of Cyrus, and who reigned in the neighbourhood of the historian, but the most ridiculous fables; and that the grandfather of Hengist and Horsa, the first Saxon conquerors, was conceived to be a divinity. I suppose it is sufficiently evident, that without the help of books and history, the very name of Julius Cæsar would at present be totally unknown in Europe. A gentleman, who travelled into Italy, told me, that in visiting Frescati or Tusculum, his cicerone showed him the foundation and ruins of Cicero's country house. He asked the fellow who this Cicero might be, "Un grandissimo gigante," said he.

(9.) I ask, since the memory of Fingal and his ancestors and descendants is still so fresh in the Highlands, how it happens, that none of the compilers of the Scotch fabulous history ever laid hold of them, and inserted them in the list of our ancient monarchs, but were obliged to have recourse to direct fiction and lying to make out their genealogies? It is to be remarked, that the Highlanders, who are now but an inferior part of the nation, anciently composed the whole; so that no tradition of theirs could be unknown to the court, the nobility, and the whole kingdom. Where, then, have these wonderful traditions skulked during so many centuries, that they have never come to light till yesterday? And the very names of our ancient kings are unknown; though it is pretended, that a very particular narrative of their transactions was still preserved, and universally diffused among a numerous tribe, who are the original stem of the nation. Father Innes, the only judicious writer that ever touched our ancient history, finds in monastic records the names, and little more than the names, of kings from Fergus, whom we call Fergus the Second, who lived long after the supposed Fingal: and he thence begins the true history of the nation. He had too good sense to give any attention to pretended traditions even of kings, much less would he have believed that the memory and adventures of every leader of banditti in every valley of the Highlands, could be circumstantially preserved by oral tradition through more than fifteen centuries.

(10.) I shall observe, that the character of the author, from all his publications, (for I shall mention nothing else,) gives us the greatest reason to suspect him of such a ludicrous imposition on the public. For to be sure it is only ludicrous; or at most a trial of wit, like that of the sophist, who gave us Phalaris' Epistles, or of him that counterfeited Cicero's Consolation, or supplied the fragments of Petronius. These literary amusements have been very common; and unless supported by too violent asseverations, or persisted in too long, never drew the opprobrious appellation of impostor on the author.

He writes an ancient history of Britain, which is plainly ludicrous. He gives us a long circumstantial history of the emigrations of the Belgae, Cimbri, and Sarmatae, so unsupported by any author of antiquity that nothing but a particular revelation could warrant it; and yet it is delivered with such seeming confidence, (for we must not think he was in earnest,) that the history of the Punic wars is not related with greater seriousness by Livy. He has even left palpable contradictions in his narrative, in order to try the faith of his reader. He tells us, for instance, that the present inhabitants of Germany have no more connexion with the Germans mentioned by Tacitus, than with the ancient inhabitants of Peloponnesus: the Saxons and Angles, in particular, were all Sarmatians, a quite different tribe from the Germans, in manners, laws, language, and customs. Yet a few pages after, when he pretends to deliver the origin of the Anglo-Saxon constitution, he professedly derives the whole account from Tacitus. All this was only an experiment to see how far the force of affirmation could impose on the credulity of the public: but it did not succeed; he was here in the open daylight of Greek and Roman erudition, not in the obscurity of his Erse poetry and traditions. Finding the style of his Ossian admired by some, he attempts a translation of Homer in the very same style. He begins and finishes, in six weeks, a work that was for ever to eclipse the translation of Pope, whom he does not even deign to mention in his preface; but this joke was still more unsuccessful: he made a shift, however, to bring the work to a second edition, where he says, that, notwithstanding all the envy of his malignant opponents, his name alone will preserve the work to a more equitable posterity!

In short, let him now take off the mask, and fairly and openly laugh at the credulity of the public, who could believe that long Erse epics had been secretly preserved in the Highlands of Scotland, from the age of Severus till his time.

The imposition is so gross, that he may well ask the world how they could ever possibly believe him to be in earnest?

But it may reasonably be expected that I should mention the external positive evidence, which is brought by Dr. Blair to support the authenticity of these poems. I own, that this evidence, considered in itself, is very respectable, and sufficient to support any fact, that both lies within the bounds of credibility, and has not become a matter of party. But will any man pretend to bring human testimony to prove, that above twenty thousand verses have been transmitted, by tradition and memory, during more than fifteen hundred years; that is, above fifty generations, according to the ordinary course of nature? verses, too, which have not, in their subject, any thing alluring or inviting to the people, no miracle, no wonders, no superstitions, no useful instruction; a people, too, who, during twelve centuries, at least, of that period, had no writing, no alphabet; and who, even in the other three centuries, made very little use of that imperfect alphabet for any purpose; a people who, from the miserable disadvantages of their soil and climate, were perpetually struggling with the greatest necessities of nature; who, from the imperfections of government, lived in a continual state of internal hostility; ever harassed with the incursions of neighbouring tribes, or meditating revenge and retaliation on their neighbours. Have such a people leisure to think of any poetry, except, perhaps, a miserable song or ballad, in praise of their own chieftain, or to the disparagement of his rivals?

I should be sorry to be suspected of saying any thing against the manners of the present Highlanders. I really believe that, besides their signal bravery, there is not any people in Europe, not even excepting the Swiss, who have more plain honesty and fidelity, are more capable of gratitude and attachment, than that race of men. Yet it was, no doubt, a great surprise to them to hear that, over and above their known good qualities, they were also possessed of an excellence which they never dreamt of, an elegant taste in poetry, and inherited from the most remote antiquity the finest compositions of that kind, far surpassing the popular traditional poems of any other language; no wonder they crowded to give testimony in favour of their authenticity. Most of them, no doubt, were sincere in the delusion; the same names that were to be found in their popular ballads were carefully preserved in the new publication; some incidents, too, were perhaps transferred from the one to the other; some sentiments also might be copied; and, on the whole, they were willing to believe, and still more willing to persuade others, that the whole was genuine. On such occasions, the greatest cloud of witnesses makes no manner of evidence. What Jansenist was there in Paris, which contains several thousands, that would not have given evidence for the miracles of Abbé Paris? The miracle is greater, but not the evidence, with regard to the authenticity of Ossian.

The late President Forbes was a great believer in the second sight; and I make no question but he could, on a month’s warning, have overpowered you with evidence in its favour. But as finite added to finite never approaches a hair’s breadth nearer to infinite; so a fact incredible in itself, acquires not the smallest accession of probability by the accumulation of testimony.

The only real wonder in the whole affair is, that a person of so fine a taste as Dr. Blair, should be so great an admirer of these productions; and one of so clear and cool a judgment collect evidence of their authenticity.

VOLUME II.

CHAPTER X.

1756-1759. Æt. 45-48.

The second volume of the History of the Stuarts — His Apologies for his Treatment of Religion — The Four Dissertations — The Two Suppressed Dissertations — Resigns his Office of Librarian — Home's Douglas — Commences the History of the Tudors — Wilkie's Epigoniad — Hume's Nationalism — Warburton — Colonel Edmondstoune — Dr. Robertson — Negotiations as to Ferguson's Chair — Hume goes to London — Writes letters of Fictitious and Extravagant News — Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments — Publication of the History of the House of Tudor — General View of the Constitutional Principles of the History.

We have now followed the personal history of David Hume through nearly twenty years of authorship. We have seen him approach the tribunal of public opinion with the strongest internal assurance of success, and in a form so different from that of his predecessors, as a high reliance on his own powers could alone have prompted. Baffled in the first, and in the second, and in the third attempt, he still persevered; and while the coldness of each reception showed him that his last effort had proved a failure, it never extinguished the fire of literary ardour which he felt burning within him, or quenched the hope, that it would one day blaze forth before the world. It is only towards the termination of this long period of laborious authorship that we find the philosopher's early visions of intellectual greatness beginning to be fulfilled. At the period at which we have now arrived, his name was famous over Europe. It was a fame that, once spread abroad, was not soon to die; for those to whom his name was first made known in his new popular work, speedily discovered that, in his earliest neglected effort, he had laid the foundation of a still surer claim on their admiration, and justified the sagacity with which, in the pride and strength of youthful genius, he had thrown its first fruits before the world unaided and unadvised.

The year 1756 seems to have been in a great measure devoted by Hume to the printing of the second volume of his History, to which the following letters to Millar refer. A great part of the correspondence with this sagacious publisher relates to minute business arrangements. It is presumed, that the reader may wish to see some specimens of the manner in which Hume transacted such matters, but that he will not care to have the whole of the arrangements between the author and publisher laid before him. A few specimens of the business part of the letters are accordingly selected, while those portions which have any general interest, literary, philosophical, or political, are given in full. The reader will see, perhaps, with some surprise, that he was very anxious to subject his style to the critical eye of Mallet. We shall hereafter have to disclose some curious features of his literary intercourse with this extraordinary person.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Edinburgh, 22d September, 1756.

"Mr. Strahan, in a few days, will have finished the printing this volume; and I hope you will find leisure, before the hurry of winter, to peruse it, and to write me your remarks on it. I fancy you will publish about the middle of November. I must desire you to take the trouble of distributing a few copies to my friends in London, and of sending me a few copies here. The whole will be fifteen copies.

"Notwithstanding Mr. Mallet's impertinence in not answering my letter, (for it deserves no better a name,) if you can engage him from yourself to mark on the perusal such slips of language as he thinks I have fallen into in this volume, it will be a great obligation to me: I mean that I shall lie under an obligation to you; for I would not willingly owe any to him. I am, dear sir, your most humble servant."

"Edinburgh, 4th December, 1756.

"Dear Sir, — I have two of yours before me, and should have answered them sooner, had not Mr. Dalrymple told me that he would come to a resolution, in a few days, about the method of printing his volume. As soon as he does so, I shall write you.

"I am certainly very well satisfied with your sale, which I hope continues. Lord Lyttelton's objection is not well grounded; I have not contradicted that story betwixt Shaftesbury and Clifford: I have only omitted it. It stands only on Burnet's authority, who is very careless and inaccurate. I believe I could convince both you and him that it was without foundation. I am very glad that Mr. Mallet has marked those expressions which appeared Scotticisms. You could not do me a greater pleasure than to procure me a list of them. I beg of you to employ all your interest with him to that purpose. I am very anxious to see them soon, that I may examine them at leisure, and correct them in all my writings. A very little time would suffice for him to take down the page and the line and the expression. If counting the line were too troublesome, he would oblige me by only marking the page and the expression; I would easily find it.

"I had a conversation, yesterday, with Messrs. Kincaid and Donaldson, when I made them a proposal, which, I hope, will be for both your advantage. They told me that you had only about four hundred complete sets of my philosophical writings. I am extremely desirous to have these four volumes, with that which you will publish this winter, brought into a quarto volume. They said that the small size was rather more proper for their sale; and, therefore, they would gladly take, at present, two hundred sets of the four volumes, to be paid for by so many of their shares in the quarto edition as would be an equivalent; that is, if the quarto volume were sold at the same price with the four volumes, then set for set: if at more, then such allowance to be made as, upon calculation, would appear to be an equivalent. If the History meet with success, it will certainly quicken the sale of the philosophical writings; and the taking two hundred sets from you, leaves you so small a number on hand, as gives you a certain prospect of coming soon to a new edition. Though some odd copies of particular volumes remain on hand, there is no great matter, as they may be disposed of with a small discount. If you agree to this proposal, they empowered me to desire you to put the two hundred copies on board a ship with the first occasion, and to write them a letter, by which they may be sure that there is no mistake in the conditions. The bringing these scattered pieces into one volume will, of itself, quicken the sale; and every new edition has naturally that effect.

"I again recommend to you, very earnestly, the procuring me that favour from Mr. Mallet. It is not possible that he can refuse you. I wish I had desired you to ask the same favour of Mr. Reid, to whom please to make my compliments. I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant."

The second volume of the History, bringing down the narrative to the Revolution, was published in 1756. "This performance," says Hume in his "own life," alluding to the previous volume, "happened to give less displeasure to the Whigs, and was better received. It not only rose itself, but helped to buoy up its unfortunate brother.”

The manner in which he had characterized the different religious bodies, whose conduct he had to describe, gave offence to many readers, and was afterwards matter of regret to himself. The toleration which forbids us to punish our neighbour on account of his creed, he had fully learned. That still higher toleration, which forbids us to treat our neighbour’s religious creed with disrespect, he had not yet acquired. He always speaks of the extreme Independents and Presbyterians as enthusiasts. With this term, not in itself opprobrious, because, though it implies excess, it does not imply the excess of a bad quality, he, on some occasions, associates the word fanaticism, and other expressions having a like sarcastic, or at least slighting tendency. To the Roman Catholic religion he was still less respectful, generally speaking of it as “the Catholic superstition.” In his “Natural History of Religion,” published in 1757, he used the same offensive expressions, and spoke of the ceremonies and essential doctrines of the church of Rome, in a tone which no sincere member of that church can encounter without painful feelings. In this respect he certainly did not act up to the character of a true philosopher, though his expressions are no doubt in harmony with the general tone of his mind. He certainly had no wish to insult any man’s creed, but he never dreamed that, among his readers, there might be some who sympathized deeply with the catholic spirit of the gothic ages, or with the independent temper of the covenanters. One whose mind revolted so nervously against whatever was not stamped with the character of profound philosophy, or of brilliant intellect, could see nothing to admire in the adaptation of the catholic system to the dark ages in which it flourished; and would have little respect for such achievements as it gained in the war with barbarous minds and brutal passions.

In Scotland, the Episcopal Church was at that time barely tolerated; and many an outcry against this toleration, as one of the sins of the time, made its adherents daily fear that their freedom of conscience might be made still more narrow. For the Roman Catholics there was no toleration in the proper acceptation of the term. Had their priesthood mingled in the ordinary society of Edinburgh, and had Hume become acquainted with them as he afterwards was with the clergy of France, he would perhaps have blushed to write as he did, of the creed of learned and accomplished men. In his subsequent editions, he carefully cleansed his History of these offensive expressions, substituting in general the word “creed” or “religion,” instead of superstition.

The coincidence of his metaphysical opinions, with those of a considerable portion of the Presbyterians, has already been noticed; and his desire to strip religion of all forms and symbols, would seem to point out the Presbyterian system as that with which he should naturally have had the greatest sympathy. But he disliked enthusiasm or zeal, whatever were the opinions of the zealots; and therefore he invariably marks with censure the extreme views of that religious party. In the English church, on the other hand, he met with a larger proportion of learned, accomplished, and gentlemanlike men. Among persons, too, many of whom were tempted to assume the sacerdotal character by its emoluments, not by its duties, he found a tolerable portion of that philosophical indifference, which it is to be feared he looked upon as no blemish in a clergyman’s character. In the Church of England, his sympathies were thus with the insincere. Where there was sincere belief, but not to the extent of enthusiasm, the clergy of the Church of Scotland would have the largest share of his confidence. Accordingly, we find that he had formed a warm intimacy with many of the members of the “moderate” party in that church. His own good taste and sense of colloquial politeness, would suggest to him the propriety of avoiding, whether in correspondence or conversation, all forms of expression or enunciations of opinion, such as it would be unbecoming in a clergyman to hear without reproving. On the other hand, his correspondence with the clergy bears traces of his having made it part of the understanding on which their intercourse was to be based, that they were not to make him a subject for the exercise of their calling; and that they were to abstain from all efforts of conversion, and all discussion of religious subjects. Hence, although there are many observations on church politics in his correspondence with his reverend friends, religion is a matter never mentioned.

Before he published his second volume, Hume felt conscious of the impropriety of the tone he had adopted in the first, towards religious creeds. In a letter to Dr. Clephane, he says,— “I am convinced that whatever I have said of religion should have received some more softenings. There is no passage in the History which strikes in the least at revelation. But as I run over all the sects successively, and speak of each of them with some mark of disregard, the reader, putting the whole together, concludes that I am of no sect; which to him will appear the same thing as the being of no religion. With regard to politics and the character of princes and great men, I think I am very moderate. My views of *things* are more conformable to Whig principles; my representations of *persons* to Tory prejudices. Nothing can so much prove that men commonly regard more persons than things, as to find that I am commonly numbered among the Tories."

The following paper is evidently a draft of a preface, which, in the consciousness that some apology was called for in connexion with this subject, he intended to prefix to the second volume. He afterwards published a great part of the substance of it in a note towards the end of the volume: but there is sufficient difference in the contents of the two papers to make the following a distinct object of interest.

PREFACE.

It ought to be no matter of offence, that in this volume, as well as in the foregoing, the mischiefs which arise from the abuses of religion are so often mentioned, while so little in comparison is said of the salutary consequences which result from true and genuine piety. The proper office of religion is to reform men's lives, to purify their hearts, to enforce all moral duties, and to secure obedience to the laws and civil magistrate. While it pursues these useful purposes, its operations, though infinitely valuable, are secret and silent, and seldom come under the cognisance of history. That adulterate species of it alone, which inflames faction, animates sedition, and prompts rebellion, distinguishes itself in the open theatre of the world. Those, therefore, who attempt to draw inferences disadvantageous to religion from the abuses of it mentioned by historians, proceed upon a very gross, and a very obvious fallacy; for, besides that every thing is liable to abuse, and the best things the most so, the beneficent influence of religion is not to be sought for in history. That principle is always the more pure and genuine, the less figure it makes in the annals of war, politics, intrigues, and revolutions, quarrels, and convulsions; which it is the business of an historian to record and transmit to posterity.

It ought as little to be matter of offence, that no religious sect is mentioned in this work without being exposed sometimes to some note of blame and disapprobation. The frailties of our nature mingle themselves with every thing in which we are employed, and no human institutions will ever reach perfection, the idea of an infinite mind. The author of the universe seems at first sight to require a worship absolutely pure, simple, unadorned, without rites, institutions, ceremonies; even without temples, priests, or verbal prayer and supplication. Yet has this species of devotion been often found to degenerate into the most dangerous fanaticism. When we have recourse to the aid of the senses and imagination, in order to adapt our religion in some degree to human infirmity, it is very difficult, and almost impossible, to prevent altogether the intrusion of superstition, or keep men from laying too great stress on the ceremonial and ornamental parts of their worship. Of all the sects into which Christians have been divided, the Church of England seems to have chosen the most happy medium; yet it will undoubtedly be allowed, that during the age of which these volumes treat, there was a tincture of superstition in the partisans of the hierarchy, as well as a strong mixture of enthusiasm in their antagonists. But it is the nature of the latter principle soon to evaporate and decay. A spirit of moderation usually succeeds in a little to the fervours of zeal; and it must be acknowledged, to the honour of the present Presbyterians, Independents, and other sectaries of this island, that they resemble in little more than in name their predecessors, who flourished during the civil wars, and who were the authors of such disorders. It would appear ridiculous in the eyes of the judicious part of mankind, to pretend that even the first reformers, in most countries of Europe, did not carry matters to a most violent extreme, and were not on many occasions liable to the imputation of fanaticism. Not to mention that uncharitable spirit which accompanies zealots of all kinds, and which led the early reformers, almost universally, to inflict upon the Catholics, and on all who differed from them, the same rigours of which they themselves so loudly complained.

These hints, however obvious, the author thought proper to suggest, with regard to the free and impartial manner in which he has treated religious controversy. As to the civil and political part of his performance, he scorns to suggest any apology, where he thinks himself entitled to approbation. To be above the temptation of interest is a species of virtue, which we do not find by experience to be very common; but to neglect at the same time all popular and vulgar applause, is an enterprise much more rare and arduous. Whoever, in a factious nation, pays court to neither party, must expect that justice will be done him by time only, perhaps only by a distant posterity.

The “Natural History of Religion” above referred to, remarkable even among its author’s other works, for the breadth of its research, and its apt union of philosophy with historical detail, was published in 1757, along with three other essays; and a curious incident connected with this publication has now to be revealed. In 1783, a work was published in London, called “Essays on Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul, ascribed to the late David Hume, Esq., never before published; with remarks, intended as an antidote to the poison contained in these performances, by the Editor.” The editor and his antidote are now both forgotten: but the style of Hume and his method of thinking were at once recognised in these essays, and they have been incorporated with the general edition of his works. If any doubt attached to the authorship, it would be cleared up by some allusions in his subsequent correspondence, where we shall find him naturally expressing alarm at the circumstance of Wilkes having, through the negligence of Millar, had possession of a copy containing the two suppressed essays. Many copies, indeed, of the first edition of the dissertations bear marks of having been mutilated. That Hume wrote these essays, and intended to publish them, is thus an incident in his life which ought not to be passed over; but it is also part of his history, that he repented of the act at the last available moment, and suppressed the publication.

That after the ghastly scene which he witnessed twenty years earlier, he should have written on suicide with his usual philosophical indifference, and contempt for the prevalent sentiments and feelings of mankind, is a remarkable proof how little he was liable to ordinary imaginative impressions; how completely he was free of subjection to those

“lords of the visionary eye, whose lid
Once raised remains aghast, and will not fall.”

It may safely be pronounced, that had he widened the circle of his utilitarian theory, and embraced within it, as he might have done, Hutcheson’s theory of universal benevolence, he never would have palliated self-slaughter. He looked at it only in relation to the person who perpetrates the act. The utilitarian principle, however, should have suggested to him the misery caused to surviving relatives by one such deed, the horrible uncertainty that must pervade any society where it is common; and he would have felt that no single life can be so dreadful a burden to the owner as to justify him in causing such an amount of evil to the rest of the world, as he would produce by casting it away. The result of modern reading and inquiry into vital statistics, is to show that the desire of longevity, which the author of our being has implanted in all bosoms, is an adaptation to universal utility; because it is from premature deaths, produced by violence or disease, that communities are burdened with those unproductive members of society, which in a healthy and long-lived community, receive domestic support from the productive members.

The reasonings of an enthusiast have generally more plausibility than those of a philosopher who has gone astray from his own theory; for the straying philosopher speaks like one who has misgivings; while the enthusiast never doubts that he is in the right, and urges his opinions with a corresponding confidence and sincerity. Thus the justification of suicide which Rousseau puts into a letter from St. Preux to Lord Edward Bomston, is a far more attractive vindication than that which Hume had intended to publish.

This was not the only suppression connected with the publication of the Dissertations. As at first printed, they were preceded by an affectionate and laudatory dedication to John Home. Before the edition was published, this dedication was suppressed; because Hume thought it might injure his friend, in the estimation of his brethren of the church. Before the edition was sold, however, Hume desired the dedication to be restored. This step was probably owing to Home having intimated to him his design of resigning his charge as minister of Athelstaneford, which he did in June, 1757. This not only removed the objection to the dedication, but as it severed the dramatic martyr from his professional brethren, it made him more dependant on the sympathy and suffrages of other friends, and rendered Hume's testimony to his merits more valuable.

He thus writes on this subject to Smith.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Dear Smith, — The dedication to John Home, you have probably seen; for I find it has been inserted in some of the weekly papers, both here and in London. Some of my friends thought it was indiscreet in me to make myself responsible to the public, for the productions of another. But the author had lain under such singular and unaccountable obstructions in his road to fame, that I thought it incumbent on his wellwishers to go as much out of the common road to assist him. I believe the composition of the dedication will be esteemed very prudent, and not inelegant.

"I can now give you the satisfaction of hearing that the play, though not near so well acted in Covent Garden as in this place, is likely to be very successful. Its great intrinsic merit breaks through all obstacles. When it shall be printed, (which will be soon,) I am persuaded it will be esteemed the best, and by French critics the only tragedy of our language! This encouragement will no doubt engage the author to go on in the same career. He meets with great countenance in London, and, I hope, will soon be rendered independent in his fortune.

"Did you ever hear of such madness and folly as our clergy have lately fallen into? For my part, I expect that the next Assembly will very solemnly pronounce the sentence of excommunication against me; but I do not apprehend it to be a matter of any consequence; what do you think?

"I am somewhat idle at present, and somewhat undetermined as to my next undertaking. Shall I go backwards or forwards in my History? I think you used to tell me, that you approved more of my going backwards. The other would be the more popular subject; but I am afraid that I shall not find materials sufficient to ascertain the truth — at least, without settling in London, which, I own, I have some reluctance to. I am settled here very much to my mind; and would not wish, at my years, to change the place of my abode.

"I have just now received a copy of 'Douglas' from London; it will instantly be put in the press. I hope to be able to send you a copy in the same parcel with the dedication."

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Edinburgh, 20th January, 1757.

"Dear Sir, — The dedication of my Dissertations to Mr. Hume was shown to some of his friends here, men of very good sense, who were seized with an apprehension that it would hurt that party in the church, with which he had always been connected, and would involve him, and them of consequence, in the suspicion of infidelity. Neither he nor I were in the least affected with their panic; but to satisfy them, we agreed to stand by the arbitration of one person, of great rank and of known prudence; and I promised them to write to you to suspend the publication for one post, in case you should have resolved to publish it presently. Next post you shall be sure to hear from me; and if we be obliged to suppress it, you'll be pleased to place the charges of print and paper to my account. I indorse this day your two bills to Mr. Alexander Cunningham. I am," &c.

Early in 1757, Hume resigned his office of librarian of the Advocates' Library. As a verbal intimation of his wishing to leave this situation was not considered satisfactory, he favoured his learned employers with the following laconic letter: —

“Edinburgh, January 8, 1757.

“Sir, — A few days ago, I sent the Faculty a verbal resignation; but as I am told that it is expected I should give a resignation under my hand, and as I am very desirous to deliver over the charge of the library as soon as possible, I have been induced to write you at present, and beg of you to inform the Faculty, that they may choose me a successor whenever they think proper. I am, sir, your most humble servant.

“To Mr. Charles Binning,
Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Advocates.”

Hume *to* William Mure *of Caldwell*.

“Dear Mure, — I hope you do not think yourself obliged, by saying civil things, to make atonement for the too homely truths, which you told me formerly. I will not believe so. I take for granted, that you are equally sincere in both: though I must own that I think my first volume a great deal better than the second. The subject admitted of more eloquence, and of greater nicety of reasoning, and more acute distinctions. The opposition, I may say the rage, with which it was received by the public, I must confess, did not a little surprise me. Whatever knowledge I pretend to in history, and human affairs, I had not so bad an opinion of men as to expect that candour, disinterestedness, and humanity, could entitle me to that treatment. Yet such was my fate. After a long interval, I at last collected so much courage, as to renew my application to the second volume, though with infinite disgust and reluctance; and I am sensible that, in many passages of it, there are great signs of that disposition, and that my usual fire does not every where appear. At other times, I excited myself, and perhaps succeeded better.

Exul eram; requiesque mihi, non fama, petita est;
Mens intenta suis, ne foret usque malis.
Nam simul ac mea caluerant pectora musae,
Altior humano spiritus ille malo est.

“I leave you to judge whether your letter came in a very seasonable time. I own that I had the weakness to be affected by it, when I found that a person, whose judgment I very much valued, could tell me, though I was not asking his opinion —— But I will not proceed any farther. The matter gave me uneasiness at the time, though without the least resentment. At present the uneasiness is gone; and all my usual friendship, confirmed by years and long acquaintance, still remains.

"Pray, whether do you pity or blame me most, with regard to this dedication of my Dissertations to my friend, the poet? I am sure I never executed any thing which was either more elegant in the composition, or more generous in the intention; yet such an alarm seized some fools here, (men of very good sense, but fools in that particular,) that they assailed both him and me with the utmost violence; and engaged us to change our intention. I wrote to Millar to suppress that dedication; two posts after, I retracted that order. Can any thing be more unlucky than that, in the interval of these four days, he should have opened his sale, and disposed of eight hundred copies, without that dedication, whence, I imagined, my friend would reap some advantage, and myself so much honour? I have not been so heartily vexed at any accident of a long time. However, I have insisted that the dedication shall still be published.

"I am a little uncertain what work I shall next undertake; for I do not care to be long idle. I think you seem to approve of my going forward: and I am sensible that the subject is much more interesting to us, and even will be so to posterity, than any other I could choose: but can I hope that there are materials for composing a just and sure history of it? I am afraid not. However, I shall examine the matter. I fancy it will be requisite for me to take a journey to London, and settle there for some time, in order to gather such materials as are not to be found in print. But, if I should go backwards, and write the History of England from the accession of Henry the Seventh, I might remain where I am; and I own to you, at my time of life, these changes of habitation are not agreeable, even though the place be better to which one removes.

"I am sorry my fair cousin does not find London so agreeable as, perhaps, she expected. She must not judge by one winter. It will improve against next winter, and appear still better the winter after that. Please make my compliments to her, and tell her that she must not be discouraged. By the by, Mrs. Binnie tells me that she writes her a very different account of matters, so that I find my cousin is a hypocrite.

"I shall make use of your criticisms, and wish there had been more of them. That practice of doubling the genitive is certainly very barbarous, and I carefully avoided it in the first volume; but I find it so universal a practice, both in writing and speaking, that I thought it better to comply with it, and have even changed all the passages in the first volume, in conformity to use. All languages contain solecisms of that kind.

“Please make my compliments to Sir Harry Erskine, and tell him that I have executed what I proposed. I am,” &c.

The following letter shows that he did not long remain idle, or undecided in his historical projects: —

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 20th May, 1757.

“I have already begun, and am a little advanced in a third volume of History. I do not preclude myself from the view of going forward to the period after the Revolution; but, at present, I begin with the reign of Henry the Seventh. It is properly at that period modern history commences. America was discovered; commerce extended; the arts cultivated; printing invented; religion reformed, and all the governments of Europe almost changed. I wish, therefore, I had begun here at first. I should have obviated many objections that were made to the other volumes. I shall be considerably advanced in this volume before I be in London.

“I come now to speak to you of an affair which gives me uneasiness, and which I mention with reluctance. I am told that one Dr. Brown has published a book in London, where there is a note containing personal reflections on me, for which he quotes a letter I wrote to you. What sort of behaviour this is, to make use of a private letter, without the permission of the person to whom it was addressed, is easily conceived; but how he came to see any of my letters, I cannot imagine; nor what I wrote, that could give him any handle for his calumny. All I can recollect of the matter is this, that above two years ago, when Bailie Hamilton was in London, he wrote me, that the stop in the sale of my History proceeded from some strokes of irreligion, which had raised the cry of the clergy against me. This gave me occasion to remark to you, that the Bailie’s complaint must have proceeded from his own misconduct; that the cause he assigned could never have produced that effect; that it was rather likely to increase the sale, according to all past experience; that you had offered (as I heard) a large sum for Bolingbroke’s Works, trusting to this consequence; and that the strokes complained of were so few, and of such small importance, that, if any ill effects could have been apprehended from them, they might easily have been retrenched. As far as I can recollect, this was the purport of my letter;

but I must beg you, that you would cause it to be transcribed, and send me a copy of it, for I find by John Hume that you have it still by you. I doubt not but I could easily refute Dr. Brown; but as I had taken a resolution never to have the least altercation with these fellows, I shall not readily be brought to pay any attention to him; and I cannot but be displeased that your inadvertence or indiscretion (for I cannot give it a better name) should have brought me to this dilemma. I fancy Brown will find it a difficult matter to persuade the public that I do not speak my sentiments in every subject I handle, and that I have any view to any interest whatsoever. I leave that to him and his gang: for he is a flatterer, as I am told, of that low fellow, Warburton; and any thing so low as Warburton, or his flatterers, I should certainly be ashamed to engage with. I am, &c.

"P.S. Since you are acquainted with Dr. Brown, I must beg of you to read this letter to him; for it is probably, or indeed certainly, all the answer I shall ever deign to give him."

The reader will feel interested in the sketch, by the pen of Hume, of an eminent contemporary — his friend Wilkie — in the following letter.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Edinburgh, 3d July, 1757.

"Dear Sir, — To show you that I am not such an affecter of singularity as to entertain prejudices against ministers of state, I am resolved to congratulate you on your return to power, and to express my wishes, that, both for your sake and the public's, your ministry, and that of your friends, may be more durable than it was before. We even hope it will, though the strange motley composition which it consists of, gives us some apprehensions. However, we are glad to find, from past experience, that you can neither rise nor fall, without credit and reputation. You know that, according to the whimsical way in this country, it is more difficult to rise than fall with reputation.

"I suppose that, by this time, you have undoubtedly read and admired the wonderful production of the Epigoniad, and that you have so much love for arts, and for your native country, as to be very industrious in propagating the fame of it. It is certainly a most singular production, full of sublimity and genius, adorned by a noble, harmonious, forcible, and even correct versification. We generally think the story deficient and uninteresting; but perhaps the new fancy of crossing the invention of all modern romance-writers may make some atonement, and even bestow an air of novelty on the imitation of Homer. As I cannot but hope that this work will soon become the subject of conversation in London, I shall take this opportunity of supplying you with some anecdotes with regard to the author, besides such as you already know, — of his being a very worthy and a very entertaining man, adorned with all that simplicity of manners, so common to great men, and even with some of that rusticity and negligence which serve to abate that envy to which they are so much exposed.

"You know he is a farmer's son, in the neighbourhood of this town, where there are a great number of pigeon-houses. The farmers are very much infested with the pigeons, and Wilkie's father planted him often as a scarecrow (an office for which he is well qualified) in the midst of his fields of wheat. It was in this situation that he confessed he first conceived the design of his epic poem, and even executed part of it. He carried out his Homer with him, together with a table, and pen and ink, and a great rusty gun. He composed and wrote two or three lines, till a flock of pigeons settled in the field, then rose up, ran towards them, and fired at them; returned again to his former station, and added a rhyme or two more, till he met with a fresh interruption.

"Two or three years ago, Jemmy Russel put a very pleasant trick on an English physician, one Dr. Roebuck, who was travelling in this country. Russel carried him out one day on horseback to see the outlets of the town, and purposely led him by Wilkie's farm. He saw the bard at a small distance, sowing his corn, with a sheet about him, all besmeared with dirt and sweat, with a coat and visage entirely proportioned to his occupation. Russel says to his companion, 'Here is a fellow, a peasant, with whom I have some business: let us call him.' He made a sign, and Wilkie came to them: some questions were asked him with regard to the season, to his farm and husbandry, which he readily answered; but soon took an opportunity of digressing to the Greek poets, and enlarging on that branch of literature. Dr. Roebuck, who had scarce understood his rustic English, or rather his broad Scotch, immediately comprehended him, for his Greek was admirable; and on leaving him, he could not forbear expressing the highest admiration to Russel, that a clown, a rustic, a mere hind, such as he saw this fellow was, should be possessed of so much erudition. 'Is it usual,' says he, 'for your peasants in Scotland to read the Greek poets?'— 'O Yes,' replies Russel, very coolly, 'we have long winter evenings; and in what can they employ themselves better, than in reading the Greek poets?' Roebuck left the country in a full persuasion that there are at least a dozen farmers in every parish who read Homer, Hesiod, and Sophocles, every winter-evening, to their families; and, if ever he writes an account of his travels, it is likely he will not omit so curious a circumstance.

“Wilkie is now a settled minister at Ratho, within four miles of the town. He possesses about £80 or £90 a-year, which he esteems exorbitant riches. Formerly, when he had only £20, as helper, he said that he could not conceive what article, either of human convenience or pleasure he was deficient in, nor what any man could mean by desiring more money. He possesses several branches of erudition, besides the Greek poetry; and, particularly, is a very profound geometrician, a science commonly very incompatible with the lively imagination of a poet. He has even made some new discoveries in that science; and he told me, that, when a young man, he threw cross and pile, whether he should devote himself chiefly to mathematics or to poetry, and fears that rather he crossed the bent of his genius in taking to the latter. Yet this man, who has composed the second epic poem in our language! understands so little of orthography, that, regularly through the whole poem, he spelled the word yield in this manner, ‘ealde;’ and I had great difficulty to convince him of his mistake.

“I fancy our friend, Robertson, will be able to publish his History next winter. You are sufficiently acquainted with the merit of this work; and really it is admirable how many men of genius this country produces at present. Is it not strange that, at a time when we have lost our princes, our parliaments, our independent government, — even the presence of our chief nobility; are unhappy, in our accent and pronunciation; speak a very corrupt dialect of the tongue we make use of, — is it not strange, I say, that, in these circumstances, we should really be the people most distinguished for literature in Europe?

“Having spoke so much to Mr. Elliot, the man of letters, you must now allow me to say a few words to Mr. Elliot, the lord of the admiralty. There is a cousin-german of mine, Alexander Edgar, who is midshipman in the Vestal, off Harwich, and has passed his trials, above four months ago, for a lieutenantcy. He always behaved well in all his service, which has been very long; and, almost from his infancy, he has had the good-will, and even friendship, of all his captains; is modest, sober, frugal, and attentive, and very deserving of promotion. I recommended him to Mr. Oswald, who always protected him, but can no longer be of service to him. He is of a very good family, though his father spent his estate and died a bankrupt; and the poor lad has now scarce any other friends than what I can procure him: permit me the freedom of recommending him to your protection. If I did not think him worthy of it, I should not venture to do so, notwithstanding his near relationship to me. I think I ought to make some apologies for this liberty I use with you; but I think it would be wronging our friendship to make too many. I am, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant."

Wilkie's Epigoniad, of which few ordinary readers now know more than the name, if even that be very generally remembered south of the Tweed, inspired many zealous Scotsmen of the day, with the belief that their country had, at last, produced a great epic poet: but the national feeling was not responded to in England.

Finding that the Epigoniad was attacked by the English critics, Hume was determined to be the champion of his countryman's fame against all comers; and accordingly addressed a letter to the editor of *The Critical Review* , containing a long complimentary criticism, in which he says, —

There remained a tradition among the Greeks, that Homer had taken this second siege of Thebes for the subject of a poem, which is lost; and our author seems to have pleased himself with the thoughts of reviving the work, as well as of treading in the footsteps of his favourite author. The actors are mostly the same with those of the Iliad; Diomede is the hero; Ulysses, Agamemnon, Menelaus, Nestor, Idomeneus, Merion, even Thersites, all appear in different passages of the poem; and act parts suitable to the lively characters drawn of them by that great master. The whole turn of this new poem would almost lead us to imagine, that the Scottish bard had found the lost manuscript of that father of poetry, and had made a faithful translation of it into English. Longinus imagines, that the Odyssey was executed by Homer in his old age; we shall allow the Iliad to be the work of his middle age; and we shall suppose that the Epigoniad was the essay of his youth, where his noble and sublime genius breaks forth by frequent intervals, and gives strong symptoms of that constant flame which distinguished its meridian. . . .

The story of a poem, whatever may be imagined, is the least essential part of it; the force of the versification, the vivacity of the images, the justness of the descriptions, the natural play of the passions, are the chief circumstances which distinguish the great poet from the prosaic novelist, and give him so high a rank among the heroes in literature; and I will venture to affirm, that all these advantages, especially the three former, are to be found, in an eminent degree, in the Epigoniad. The author, inspired with the true genius of Greece, and smit with the most profound veneration for Homer, disdains all frivolous ornaments; and relying entirely on his sublime imagination, and his nervous and harmonious expression, has ventured to present to his reader the naked beauties of nature, and challenges for his partisans all the admirers of genuine antiquity.

In his conduct on this occasion, Hume exhibited strong national partiality. It may seem at first sight at variance with some of his other characteristics; but it is undoubtedly true, that Hume was imbued with an intense spirit of nationality. It was a nationality, however, of a peculiar and restricted character. He cared little about the heroism of his country, or even its struggles for independence: Wallace, Bruce, and the Black Douglas, were, in his eyes, less interesting than Ulysses or Æneas,

—— carent quia vate sacro.

But in that arena which he thought the greatest, in the theatre where intellect exhibits her might, he panted to see his country first and greatest. No Scotsman could write a book of respectable talent without calling forth his loud and warm eulogiums. Wilkie was to be the Homer, Blacklock the Pindar, and Home the Shakspere, or something still greater, of his country. On those who were even his rivals in his own peculiar walks — Adam Smith, Robertson, Ferguson, and Henry, he heaped the same honest, hearty commendation. He urged them to write; he raised the spirit of literary ambition in their breasts; he found publishers for their works; and, when these were completed, he trumpeted the praises of the authors through society.

The following letter shows how accidentally Hume became acquainted with a matter, which, according to modern notions, should have formed part of his systematic studies, before he began to write a history of England.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“Edinburgh, 9th Aug. 1757.

“Dear Sir, — I can easily perceive that your friends were no lawyers, who said that there was no statute in Henry the Seventh’s reign, which facilitated the alienation of lands, and broke the ancient entails: it is 4 Hen. VII. ca; but a man may read that passage fifty times, and not find any thing that seems, in the least, to point that way. I should certainly have overlooked the meaning of it, had I not been guided by Lord Kames. You must know that it was a practice in the courts of justice, before Henry the Seventh’s time, to break entails by a device which seems very ridiculous, but which is continued to this day, and first received the sanction of law during the reign of that prince. You have an entailed estate, I suppose, and want to break the entail. You agree with me that I am to claim the estate by a sham title, prior to the first entailer; you confess in court that my title is good and valid; the judges, upon this confession of the party, adjudge the estate to me; upon which I immediately restore the estate to you, free and unencumbered; and by this hocus-pocus the entail is broke. — Such was the practice, pretty common before Henry the Seventh. All that the parliament then did, was to regulate the method of proceeding in this fine device, and to determine that the titles of minors, and femmes couvert, were not to be injured by it. As to other people, who had an interest to preserve an entail, and who had any good reason to plead in their own favour, they would naturally appear for themselves. This practice is called a fine, and a recovery: fine, from the Latin word finis; because it forecloses all parties, and puts a final issue to their claims and pretensions: a recovery, because a man thereby recovers his estate, without the encumbrance of an entail.

“By the bye, I am told, that there are many of these practices still continued in the law of England; which are as foolish, juvenile, and ridiculous, as are to be met with in —— I mean in —— I would be understood to mean in —— any craft or profession of the world.

“I am writing the History of England, from the accession of Henry the Seventh, and am some years advanced in Henry the Eighth. I undertook this work because I was tired of idleness, and found reading alone, after I had often perused all good books, (which I think is soon done,) somewhat a languid occupation. As to the approbation or esteem of those blockheads who call themselves the public, and whom a bookseller, a lord, a priest, or a party can guide, I do most heartily despise it. I shall be able, I think, to make a tolerable smooth, well-told tale of the history of England during that period; but I own I have not yet been able to throw much new light into it. I begin the Reformation to-morrow.

“I find the public, with you, have rejected the Epigoniad, for the present. They may do so if they please; but it has a great deal of merit, much more than any one of them is capable of throwing into a work.

“I disapprove very much of Ferguson’s scruples, with regard to entering into Lord Bute’s family, with the inspection of more than one boy; but I hope Lord Bute will conform himself to his delicacy, at least if he wants to have a man of sense, knowledge, taste, elegance, and morals, for a tutor to his son.

“I am obliged to you for your good intentions, with regard to my cousin; but you must express yourself otherwise, than by saying that you will concur with the rest of my friends in endeavouring to promote him; for now that Oswald is out of court, whom have I besides to apply to? Dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.”

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 3d September, 1757.

“As to my opinions, you know I defend none of them positively; I only propose my doubts where I am so unhappy as not to receive the same conviction with the rest of mankind. It surprises me much to see any body who pretends to be a man of letters, discover anger on that account; since it is certain, by the experience of all ages, that nothing contributes more to the progress of learning than such disputes and novelties.

“Apropos to anger; I am positively assured, that Dr. Warburton wrote that letter to himself, which you sent me; and indeed the style discovers him sufficiently. I should answer him; but he attacks so small a corner of my building, that I can abandon it without drawing great consequences after it. If he would come into the field and dispute concerning the principal topics of my philosophy, I should probably accept the challenge: at present nothing could tempt me to take the pen in hand but anger, of which I feel myself incapable, even upon this provocation.

“I have finished the Index to the new collection of my pieces; this Index cost me more trouble than I was aware of when I began it. I am obliged to Mr. Strahan, for the uncommon pains he has taken in making it correct. The Errata which I have given, consist mostly of small alterations in the style, which I made myself. You know I always expect half-a-dozen of copies on each new edition. I would wish that Mr. Strahan would accept of one, as a proof of the sense which I have of his care on this occasion. Please keep one by you, which I fancy I shall have occasion to send abroad; and be so good as to send the other four, with any other parcel you are sending hither. I am very assiduous in writing a new volume of History, and am now pretty well advanced. I find the whole will be comprised in one volume, though somewhat more bulky than any of the former. The period of time is a great deal longer than that of either of the former, but is not near so full of interesting matter; and as the original historians are much fewer, there are not so many circumstances transmitted to us. I am pretty certain, that I shall be able to deliver to you the manuscript about a twelvemonth hence, and shall certainly be in London myself for that purpose. You seemed desirous that we should mutually enter into articles about this volume; which I declined, till I should be so much advanced as to be sure of my resolution of executing it, and could judge with some certainty of the bulk. Now that I am satisfied in both these particulars, I am willing to engage with you for the same price, viz. seven hundred pounds, payable three months after the publication. If you approve of this proposal, please write me a letter for that purpose; and I shall also, in return, send you an obligatory letter. I think this justice is due to you, that you may see I do not intend, on account of any success, to screw up the price, or ask beyond what you have already allowed me, which, I own, was very reasonable.

“Mr. Dalrymple has paid me twenty pounds and a crown. I can never meet with Mr. Wright, though I call often at his shop. Mr. Balfour does not name any day.

“I am glad of the approbation which Mr. Dalrymple’s book meets with; I think it really deserves it.

“Nothing surprises me more than the ill usage which the Epigoniad has received. Every body here likes it extremely. The plan and story is not so much admired, as the poetry and versification; but your critics seem willing to allow it no merit at all. I fancy it has not been enough dispersed; and that your engaging on it, would extremely forward its success. The whole edition is out. There were five hundred and fifty disposed of here; two hundred sent to London. As the author is my very good friend and acquaintance, I should be much pleased to bring you to an understanding together. If the bad success on the first edition has not discouraged you, I would engage him to make you proposals for that purpose. He will correct all the blemishes remarked. I should not be displeased that you read to Dr. Warburton, the paragraph in the first page of my letter, with regard to himself. The hopes of getting an answer, might probably engage him to give us something farther of the same kind; which, at least, saves you the expense of advertising. I see the doctor likes a literary squabble.

“I would be glad to know, how near you think you are to a new edition of my History, and whether you intend a duodecimo edition of these philosophical pieces. I am,” &c.

David Hume *to* Dr. Clephane.

“Edinburgh, 3d Sept. 1757.

“Dear Doctor, — I am charmed to find you so punctual a correspondent. I always knew you to be a good friend, though I was afraid that I had lost you, and that you had joined that great multitude who abused me, and reproached me with Paganism, and Jacobitism, and many other wretched isms, of which I am only guilty of a part.

“I believe a man, when he is once an author, is an author for life; for I am now very busily engaged in writing another volume of history, and have crept backwards to the reign of Henry the Seventh. I wish indeed that I had begun there; for, by that means, I should have been able, without making any digression, by the plain course of the narration, to have shown how absolute the authority was which the English kings then possessed, and that the Stuarts did little or nothing more than continue matters in the former track, which the people were determined no longer to admit. By this means I should have escaped the reproach of the most terrible ism of them all, that of Jacobitism. I shall certainly be in London next summer; and probably to remain there during life; at least, if I can settle myself to my mind, which I beg you to have an eye to. A room in a sober, discreet family, who would not be averse to admit a sober, discreet, virtuous, frugal, regular, quiet, good-natured man of a bad character, — such a room, I say, would suit me extremely, especially if I could take most of my meals in the family; and more especially still, if it was not far distant from Dr. Clephane’s. I shall then be able, dear doctor, to spend £150 a-year, which is the sum upon which, I remember, you formerly undertook me. But I would not have you reckon upon *probabilities*, as you then called them, for I am resolved to write no more. I shall read and correct, and chat and be idle, the rest of my life.

“I must now make room for Sir Harry, who smiles at the sum at which I have set up my rest. I am,” &c.

Among the officers of the Scottish Royal Regiment who served in the expedition to Port L’Orient, and afterwards continued in terms of familiar acquaintance with Hume, was captain, afterwards Colonel Edmondstoune, of Newton in Perthshire. His letters, which were preserved by Hume, and will occasionally be cited in these pages, show that he was a man of wit and learning. Frequent allusions to him, under the name of Guidelianus, have already occurred in Hume's letters to mutual friends. The following, graceful and thoroughly amiable as it is, is apparently the earliest of Hume's letters to him which has been preserved.

Hume *to* Captain Edmondstoune.

"Edinburgh, 29th Sept. 1757.

"Dear Edmondstoune, — I believe it is a rule in law, that any summons prevents prescription; and in like manner, that the wakening a process keeps one's rank in the lords' row. It is with some such view that I now write to you; not to send you a formal letter, which would require a formal answer, and would therefore get no answer at all: but just to take a shake of your hand, and ask you how you do, and speak a little nonsense to you as usual, and then fall into s[ilence] without giving myself the trouble of supporting the conversation any lon[ger]; and, in a word, keep you from forgetting that you have some such friend in the world as myself.

"But pray, why did you not write me as you promised and give me your direction? Was you afraid I should write to you? You see I can find out a method of directing to you without your information.

"Tell me about the Epigoniad. Was there ever so much fine versification bestowed on so indifferent a story? Has it had any success in Ireland? I fancy not; for the criticklings in Dublin depend on the criticklings in London, who depend on the booksellers, who depend on their interest, which depends on their printing a book themselves. This is the cause why Wilkie's book is at present neglected, or damned, as they call it: but I am much mistaken if it end so. Pray what says the primate of it? I hear he has the generosity to support damned books till the resurrection, and that he is one of the saints who pray them out of purgatory. I hope he is an honest fellow and one of [us.] Captain Masterton told me, that he was not quite of my opinion with regard to the 'Douglas,' and that he blamed my dedicatory address to the author. But I persist still, and will prove in spite of him and you, and of every man who [wears eit]her black or scarlet, that it is an admirable tragedy, comparable [to the exce]llent pieces of the good age of Louis Quatorze. The author is here at present, and is refitting his 'Agis' for the theatre, which I hope will have justice done it. *Il est le mieux renté de touts les beaux esprits.* He has a pension from his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, as you have probably heard.

“I hear sometimes from the Doctor, who desires me to tell him something about you. But I am no necromancer; only, as the ancients said, — *prudentia est quædam divinatio*. I conjecture that you are lounging, and reading, and playing at whist, and blaming yourself for not writing letters, and yet persisting in the neglect of your duty.”

The following is the second letter in which we find Hume appreciating the merits of his friend and rival, Robertson. There is no passage in literary history, perhaps, more truly dignified, than the perfect cordiality and sincere interchange of services between two men, whose claims on the admiration of the world came in so close competition with each other.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 6th April, 1758.

“Dear Sir, — I am very glad that Mr. Robertson is entering on terms with you. It was indeed my advice to him, when he set out for London, that he should think of no other body; and I ventured to assure him that he would find your way of dealing frank, and open, and generous. He read me part of his History, and I had an opportunity of reading another part of it in manuscript above a twelvemonth ago. Upon the whole, my expectations, both from what I saw, and from my knowledge of the author, were very much raised, and I consider it as a work of uncommon merit. I know that he has employed himself with great diligence and care in collecting the facts: his style is lively and entertaining; and he judges with temper and candour. He is a man generally known and esteemed in this country: and we look upon him very deservedly as inferior to nobody in capacity and learning. Hamilton and Balfour have offered him a very unusual price; no less than five hundred pounds for one edition of two thousand; but I own, that I should be better pleased to see him in your hands. I only inform you of this fact, that you may see how high the general expectations are of Mr. Robertson’s performance. It will have a quick sale in this country, from the character of the author; and in England, from the merit of the work, as soon as it is known.

“Some part of his subject is common with mine; but as his work is a History of Scotland, mine of England, we do not interfere; and it will rather be an amusement to the reader to compare our method of treating the same subject. I give you thanks, however, for your attention in asking my opinion.”

The following is from another letter on the same subject.

“Edinburgh, 20th June, 1758.

“I send enclosed a letter from Mr. Robertson. He wishes it were practicable to send him more than one sheet every post. I am afraid, if this be not done, our publications will interfere, which would be disagreeable to you as well as to both of us.

“I have read a small pamphlet called ‘Sketches,’ which, from the style, I take to be Dr. Armstrong’s, though the public voice gives it to Allan Ramsay. I find the ingenious author, whoever he be, ridicules the new method of spelling, as he calls it; but that method of spelling *honor*, instead of *honour*, was Lord Bolingbroke’s, Dr. Middleton’s, and Mr. Pope’s; besides many other eminent writers’. However, to tell truth, I hate to be any way particular in a trifle; and therefore, if Mr. Strahan has not printed off above ten or twelve sheets, I should not be displeased if you told him to follow the usual, that is, his own way of spelling throughout; we shall make the other volumes conformable to it: if he be advanced farther, there is no great matter.”

A letter to Elliot, after some farther recommendations of Hume’s nephew, young Edgar, to his attention, thus proceeds: —

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“Edinburgh, 11th May, 1758.

“I have the prospect of paying my respects to you this autumn, in London. I am now come within sight of land, and am drawing near to a period of that volume which I had undertaken. I find the subject curious; and I believe that this volume will contain some novelty, as well as greater accuracy of composition, than is employed by our ordinary historians. I could add, greater than is requisite to please the taste of the public, — at least if we may judge by the vast success of Dr. Smollett’s history. *Vanitas vanitatum, atque omnia vanitas*, says the Preacher; the great object of us authors, and of you orators and statesmen, is to gain applause; and you see at what rate it is to be purchased. I fancy there is a future state, to give poets, historians, and philosophers their due reward, and to distribute to them those recompenses which are so strangely shared out in this life. It is of little consequence that posterity does them justice, if they are for ever to be ignorant of it, and are to remain in perpetual slumber in their literary paradise. However, it is some comfort, that virtue is its own reward, and that a man cannot employ himself in the cultivation of letters without reaping a real present satisfaction from his industry. I am, dear sir, your most obliged humble servant.

"P.S. — I am sorry to hear that the bill for the importation of Irish cattle is rejected. Besides other arguments for it, I remember a strong argument which was used in Charles II.'s time against the prohibition, when it was first laid on: it was affirmed that the shipping employed in that commerce was nearly equal to that which served for the carriage of coal from Newcastle to London. It is not improbable that this argument has, at present, escaped all the reasoners on that subject; and I thought it a proper one to be suggested to a lord of the Admiralty. It is to be found, if my memory do not deceive me, in Carte's Ormond, and was employed by that duke."

In the year 1759, Adam Ferguson was appointed professor of natural philosophy in the university of Edinburgh. From the following correspondence, it appears that Hume and others were desirous that Smith should occupy a chair in Edinburgh, and, apparently, the same that was obtained by Ferguson, and that Ferguson should succeed Smith in Glasgow. The singular terms on which the Edinburgh professorship appears to have been disposed of, were, probably, not such as Smith would accede to; and we afterwards find Hume conducting a negotiation for Ferguson alone.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"8th June, 1758.

"Dear Smith, — I sit down to write to you along with Johnstone; and as we have been talking over the matter, it is probable we shall employ the same arguments. As he is the younger lawyer, I leave him to open the case, and, suppose that you have read his letter first. We are certain that the settlement of you here, and of Ferguson at Glasgow, would be perfectly easy, by Lord Milton's interest. The prospect of prevailing with Abercromby is also very good; for the same statesman, by his influence over the town council, could oblige him either to attend, which he never would do, or dispose of the office for the money which he gave for it. The only real difficulty is, then, with you. Pray, then, consider that this is, perhaps, the only opportunity we shall ever have of getting you to town. I dare swear that you think the difference of place is worth paying something for; and yet it will really cost you nothing. You made above £100 a-year, by your class, when in this place, though you had not the character of professor. We cannot suppose that it will be less than £130 after you are settled. John Stevenson; and it is John Stevenson, makes near £150, as we were informed upon inquiry. Here is £100 a-year for eight years' purchase; which is a cheap purchase, even considered as the way of a bargain. We flatter ourselves that you rate our company at something; and the prospect of settling Ferguson will be an additional inducement. For, though we think of making him take up the project if you refuse it, yet it is uncertain whether he will consent; and it is attended, in his case, with many very obvious objections. I beseech you, therefore, to weigh all these motives over again. The alteration of these circumstances merit that you should put the matter again in deliberation. I had a letter from Miss Hepburn, where she regrets very much that you are settled at Glasgow, and that we had the chance of seeing you so seldom. I am," &c.

"P.S. — Lord Milton can, with his finger, stop the foul mouths of all the roarers against heresy."

Hume *to the* Rev. John Jardine.

"Rev. Sir, — I am informed, by the late Rev. Mr. John Home, that the still Rev. Adam Ferguson's affair is so far on a good footing, that it is agreed to refer the matter to the Justice Clerk, whether more shall be paid to Mr. Abercromby than he himself gave for that professorship. Now, as it is obvious that, in these kinds of references, where the question is not of law and justice, the circumstances of the person are to be considered, I beg of you to inform my Lord of the true state of the case. Ferguson must borrow almost the whole sum which he pays for this office. If any more, therefore, be asked than £1000, it would be the most ruinous thing in the world for him to accept of the office. I am even of opinion that if any other method of subsistence offered, it were preferable to this scheme of paying the length of £1000; at least such would be my sentiments, if the case were mine.

"If the Justice Clerk considers the matter aright, he will never agree to so unreasonable a demand as that of paying more; and I hope you will second these arguments with all your usual eloquence, by which you so successfully confound the devices of Satan, and bring sinners to repentance. I am, Rev. Sir, your most obsequious humble servant."

Towards the end of the year 1758, but at what particular time is not more minutely known, Hume went to London, and resided in Lisle Street, Leicester Fields. His object probably was to superintend the printing of the "History of the House of Tudor;" but he was able at the same time to perform essential services to his friend Dr. Robertson, whose "History of

Scotland" was then going through the press in London. Of Hume's letters to Dr. Robertson, several have been published, though only in a fragmentary form, in Dugald Stewart's "Life of Robertson." The portions thus preserved, are naturally those which have most relation to the person to whom they are addressed; but of the letters themselves, which doubtless, like many others from the same hand, contained some curious particulars of their author's habits and passing thoughts, no trace has been found. Several of these letters, written while Robertson's work was at press, have relation to minor historical questions, which have subsequently been settled. The following extracts are given, from the parts which have least reference to these details.

Hume *to* Dr. Robertson.

(*Extracts.*)

I am afraid that you, as well as myself, have drawn Mary's character with too great softenings. She was, undoubtedly, a violent woman at all times. You will see in *Murden* proofs of the utmost rancour against her innocent, good-natured, dutiful son. She certainly disinherited him. What think you of a conspiracy for kidnapping him, and delivering him a prisoner to the King of Spain, never to recover his liberty till he should turn Catholic? Tell Goodall, that if he can but give me up Queen Mary, I hope to satisfy him in every thing else; and he will have the pleasure of seeing John Knox and the Reformers made very ridiculous. . . .

You have very good cause to be satisfied with the success of your History, as far as it can be judged of from a few weeks' publication. I have not heard of one who does not praise it warmly; and were I to enumerate all those whose suffrages I have either heard in its favour, or been told of, I should fill my letter with a list of names. Mallet told me that he was sure there was no Englishman capable of composing such a work. The town will have it that you was educated at Oxford, thinking it impossible for a mere untravelled Scotsman to produce such language. In short, you may depend on the success of your work, and that your name is known very much to your advantage.

I am diverting myself with the notion how much you will profit by the applause of my enemies in Scotland. Had you and I been such fools as to have given way to jealousy, to have entertained animosity and malignity against each other, and to have rent all our acquaintance into parties, what a noble amusement we should have exhibited to the blockheads, which now they are likely to be disappointed of. All the people whose friendship or judgment either of us value, are friends to both, and will be pleased with the success of both, as we will be with that of each other. I declare to you I have not of a long time had a more sensible pleasure than the good reception of your History has given me within this fortnight.

25th January, 1759.

I am nearly printed out, and shall be sure to send you a copy by the stage-coach, or some other conveyance. I beg of you to make remarks as you go along. It would have been much better had we communicated before printing, which was always my desire, and was most suitable to the friendship which always did, and I hope always will, subsist between us. I speak this chiefly on my own account. For though I had the perusal of your sheets before I printed, I was not able to derive sufficient benefits from them, or indeed to make any alteration by their assistance. There still remain, I fear, many errors, of which you could have convinced me, if we had canvassed the matter in conversation. Perhaps I might also have been sometimes no less fortunate with you. Particularly I could almost undertake to convince you, that the Earl of Murray’s conduct with the Duke of Norfolk was no way dishonourable. . . .

Dr. Blair tells me that Prince Edward is reading you, and is charmed. I hear the same of the Princess and Prince of Wales. But what will really give you pleasure, I lent my copy to Elliot during the holidays, who thinks it one of the finest performances he ever read; and though he expected much, he finds more. He remarked, however, (which is also my opinion,) that in the beginning, before your pen was sufficiently accustomed to the historic style, you employed too many digressions and reflections. This was also somewhat my own case, which I have corrected in my new edition.

Millar was proposing to publish me about the middle of March; but I shall communicate to him your desire, even though I think it entirely groundless, as you will likewise think, after you have read my volume. He has very needlessly delayed your publication till the 1st of February, at the desire of the Edinburgh booksellers, who could no way be affected by a publication in London. I was exceedingly sorry not to be able to comply with your desire, when you expressed your wish that I should not write this period. I could not write downward. For when you find occasion, by new discoveries, to correct your opinion with regard to facts which passed in Queen Elizabeth’s days, who, that has not the best opportunities of informing himself, could venture to relate any recent transactions? I must, therefore, have abandoned altogether this scheme of the English history, in which I had proceeded so far, if I had not acted as I did. You will see what light and force this History of the Tudors bestows on that of the Stuarts. Had I been prudent, I should have begun with it. I care not to boast, but I will venture to say, that I have now effectually stopped the mouths of all those villanous Whigs who railed at me.

You are so kind as to ask me about my coming down. I can yet answer nothing. I have the strangest reluctance to change places. I lived several years happy with my brother at Ninewells; and had not his marriage changed a little the state of the family, I believe I should have lived and died there. I used every expedient to evade this journey to London; yet it is now uncertain whether I shall ever leave it. I have had some invitations, and some intentions, of taking a trip to Paris; but I believe it will be safer for me not to go thither, for I might probably settle there for life. No one was ever endowed with so great a portion of the *vis inertiae*. But as I live here very privately, and avoid as much as possible (and it is easily possible) all connexion with the great, I believe I should be better in Edinburgh. . . . .

London, 8th February, 1759.

. . . . As to the “Age of Leo the Tenth,” it was Warton himself who intended to write it; but he has not wrote it, and probably never will. If I understand your hint, I should conjecture, that you had some thoughts of taking up the subject. But how can you acquire knowledge of the great works of sculpture, architecture, and painting, by which that age was chiefly distinguished? Are you versed in all the anecdotes of the Italian literature? These questions I heard proposed in a company of literati, when I inquired concerning this design of Warton. They applied their remarks to that gentleman, who yet, they say, has travelled. I wish they do not, all of them, fall more fully on you. However, you must not be idle. May I venture to suggest to you the Ancient History, particularly that of Greece? I think Rollin’s success might encourage you; nor need you be in the least intimidated by his merit. That author has no other merit but a certain facility and sweetness of narration; but has loaded his work with silly puerilities. . . . .

I forgot to tell you, that two days ago I was in the House of Commons, where an English gentleman came to me, and told me that he had lately sent to a grocer’s shop for a pound of raisins, which he received wrapped up in a paper that he showed me. How would you have turned pale at the sight! It was a leaf of your History, and the very character of Queen Elizabeth, which you had laboured so finely, little thinking it would so soon come to so disgraceful an end. I happened a little after to see Millar, and told him the story; consulting him, to be sure, on the fate of his new boasted historian, of whom he was so fond. But the story proves more serious than I apprehended: for he told Strahan, who thence suspects villany among his apprentices and journeymen; and has sent me very earnestly to know the gentleman’s name, that he may find out the grocer, and trace the matter to the bottom. In vain did I remonstrate that this was sooner or later the fate of all authors, *serius, ocyus, sors exitura*. He will not be satisfied; and begs me to keep my jokes for another occasion. But that I am resolved not to do; and, therefore, being repulsed by his passion and seriousness, I direct them against you.

Next week I am published; and then I expect a constant comparison will be made between Dr. Robertson and Mr. Hume. I shall tell you in a few weeks which of these heroes is likely to prevail. Meanwhile, I can inform both of them for their comforts, that their combat is not likely to make half so much noise as that between Broughton and the one-eyed coachman. *Vanitas vanitatum, atque omnia vanitas.* I shall still except, however, the friendship and good opinion of worthy men. I am, &c.

London, 12th March, 1759.

My Dear Sir, — I believe I mentioned to you a French gentleman, Monsieur Helvetius, whose book, “*De l’Esprit*,” was making a great noise in Europe. He is a very fine genius, and has the character of a very worthy man. My name is mentioned several times in his work with marks of esteem; and he has made me an offer, if I would translate his work into English, to translate anew all my philosophical writings into French. He says that none of them are well done, except that on the “Natural History of Religion,” by Monsieur Martigny, a counsellor of state. He added, that the Abbé Prevôt, celebrated for the *Memoires d’un homme d’Honneur* , and other entertaining works, was just now translating my History. This account of Helvetius engaged me to send him over the new editions of all my writings; and I have added your History, which, I told him, was here published with great applause; adding, that the subject was interesting, and the execution masterly; and that it was probable some man of letters at Paris may think that a translation of it would be agreeable to the public. I thought that this was the best method of executing your intentions. I could not expect that any Frenchman here would be equal to the work. There is one Carraccioli, who came to me and spoke something of translating my new volume of History; but as he also mentioned his intentions of translating Smollett, I gave him no encouragement to proceed. The same reason would make me averse to see you in his hands.

But though I have given this character of your work to Monsieur Helvetius, I warn you, that this is the last time that, either to Frenchman or Englishman, I shall ever speak the least good of it. A plague take you! Here I sat near the historical summit of Parnassus, immediately under Dr. Smollett; and you have the impudence to squeeze yourself by me, and place yourself directly under his feet. Do you imagine that this can be agreeable to me? And must not I be guilty of great simplicity, to contribute, by my endeavours, to your thrusting me out of my place in Paris as well as at London? But I give you warning that you will find the matter somewhat difficult, at least in the former city. A friend of mine, who is there, writes home to his father, the strangest accounts on that head, which my modesty will not permit me to repeat, but which it allowed me very deliciously to swallow.

I have got a good reason or pretence for excusing me to Monsieur Helvetius, with regard to the translating his work. A translation of it was previously advertised here.

—— 20th, 1759.

I am afraid that my letters will be tedious and disagreeable to you by their uniformity. Nothing but continued and unvaried accounts of the same thing must in the end prove disgusting. Yet since you will hear me speak on this subject, I cannot help it, and must fatigue your ears as much as ours are in this place, by endless and repeated, and noisy praises of the “History of Scotland.” Dr. Douglas told me yesterday, that he had seen the Bishop of Norwich, who had just bought the book, from the high commendations he heard of it from Mr. Legge. Mallet told me that Lord Mansfield is at a loss whether he shall most esteem the matter or the style. Elliot told me, that being in company with George Grenville, that gentleman was speaking loud in the same key. Our friend pretended ignorance; said he knew the author, and if he thought the book good for any thing, would send for it and read it. “Send for it, by all means,” said Mr. Grenville; “you have not read a better book of a long time.”— “But,” said Elliot, “I suppose, although the matter may be tolerable, as the author was never on this side the Tweed till he wrote it, it must be very barbarous in the expression." "By no means," cried Mr. Grenville. "Had the author lived all his life in London, and in the best company, he could not have expressed himself with greater elegance and purity." Lord Lyttelton seems to think that, since the time of St. Paul, there scarce has been a better writer than Dr. Robertson. Mr. Walpole triumphs in the success of his favourites the Scotch, &c. &c. &c.

. . . . . The great success of your book, beside its real merit, is forwarded by its prudence, and by the deference paid to established opinions. It gains also by its being your first performance, and by its surprising the public, who are not upon their guard against it. By reason of these two circumstances, justice is more readily done to its merit; which, however, is really so great, that I believe there is scarce another instance of a first performance being so near perfection.

London, 29th May, 1759.

My Dear Sir, — I had a letter from Helvetius lately, wrote before your book arrived at Paris. He tells me, that the Abbé Prevôt, who had just finished the translation of my History, paroit très-disposé à traduire l'Histoire d'Ecosse que vient de faire Monsieur Robertson. If he be engaged by my persuasion, I shall have the satisfaction of doing you a real credit and pleasure; for he is one of the best pens in Paris. . . . . . .

Our friend Smith is very successful here, and Gerard is very well received. The Epigoniad I cannot so much promise for, though I have done all in my power to forward it, particularly by writing a letter to *The Critical Review* , which you may peruse. I find, however, some good judges profess a great esteem for it: but *habent et sua fata libelli*: however, if you want a little flattery to the author, (which I own is very refreshing to an author) you may tell him that Lord Chesterfield said to me he was a great poet. I imagine that Wilkie will be very much elevated by praise from an English Earl, and a knight of the Garter, and an ambassador, and a secretary of state, and a man of so great reputation. For I observe that the greatest rustics are commonly most affected with such circumstances.

Ferguson's book has a great deal of genius and fine writing, and will appear in time. . . . .

In 1759, Adam Smith published his "Theory of Moral Sentiments." The following letters embody Hume's appreciation of that work.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

London, April 12, 1759.

Dear Sir, — I give you thanks for the agreeable present of your Theory. Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintances as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Lyttelton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty Treatise on the Sublime. Millar desired my permission to send one in your name to Dr. Warburton.

I have delayed writing to you, till I could tell you something of the success of the book, and could prognosticate, with some probability, whether it should be finally damned to oblivion, or should be registered in the temple of immortality. Though it has been published only a few weeks, I think there appear already such strong symptoms, that I can almost venture to foretell its fate. It is, in short, this ——

But I have been interrupted in my letter by a foolish impertinent visit of one who has lately come from Scotland. He tells me that the University of Glasgow intend to declare Rouet's office vacant, upon his going abroad with Lord Hope. I question not but you will have our friend Ferguson in your eye, in case another project for procuring him a place in the University of Edinburgh should fail. Ferguson has very much polished and improved his Treatise on Refinement; and with some amendments it will make an admirable book, and discovers an elegant and a singular genius. The Epigoniad, I hope, will do; but it is somewhat up-hill work. As I doubt not but you consult the Reviews sometimes at present, you will see in *The Critical Review* a letter upon that poem; and I desire you to employ your conjectures in finding out the author. Let me see a sample of your skill in knowing hands by your guessing at the person.

I am afraid of Kames' "Law Tracts." A man might as well think of making a fine sauce by a mixture of wormwood and aloes, as an agreeable composition by joining metaphysics and Scottish law. However, the book, I believe, has merit; though few people will take the pains of inquiring into it. But to return to your book, and its success in this town, I must tell you ——

A plague of interruptions! I ordered myself to be denied; and yet here is one that has broke in upon me again. He is a man of letters, and we have had a good deal of literary conversation. You told me, that you was curious of literary anecdotes, and therefore I shall inform you of a few that have come to my knowledge. I believe I have mentioned to you already, Helvetius's book "*De l'Esprit*." It is worth your reading, not for its philosophy, which I do not highly value, but for its agreeable composition. I had a letter from him a few days ago, wherein he tells me that my name was much oftener in the manuscript, but that the censor of books at Paris obliged him to strike it out.

Voltaire has lately published a small work called *Candide, ou, l'Optimisme* . I shall give you a detail of it. But what is all this to my book, say you? My dear Mr. Smith, have patience: compose yourself to tranquillity; show yourself a philosopher in practice as well as profession: think on the emptiness, and rashness, and futility of the common judgments of men; how little they are regulated by reason in any subject, much more in philosophical subjects, which so far exceed the comprehension of the vulgar.

—— Non si quid turbida Roma,
Elevet, accedas: examenve improbum in illâ
Castiges trutinâ: nec te quaesiveris extra.

A wise man's kingdom is his own breast; or, if he ever looks farther, it will only be to the judgment of a select few, who are free from prejudices, and capable of examining his work. Nothing, indeed, can be a stronger presumption of falsehood than the approbation of the multitude; and Phocion, you know, always suspected himself of some blunder, when he was attended with the applauses of the populace.

Supposing, therefore, that you have duly prepared yourself for the worst by all these reflections, I proceed to tell you the melancholy news, that your book has been very unfortunate; for the public seem disposed to applaud it extremely. It was looked for by the foolish people with some impatience; and the mob of literati are beginning already to be very loud in its praises. Three bishops called yesterday at Millar's shop in order to buy copies, and to ask questions about the author. The Bishop of Peterborough said, he had passed the evening in a company where he heard it extolled above all books in the world. The Duke of Argyle is more decisive than he used to be in its favour. I suppose he either considers it as an exotic, or thinks the author will be serviceable to him in the Glasgow elections. Lord Lyttelton says that Robertson, and Smith, and Bower, are the glories of English literature. Oswald protests he does not know whether he has reaped more instruction or entertainment from it. But you may easily judge what reliance can be put on his judgment, who has been engaged all his life in public business, and who never sees any faults in his friends. Millar exults and brags that two-thirds of the edition are already sold, and that he is now sure of success. You see what a son of the earth that is, to value books only by the profit they bring him. In that view, I believe it may prove a very good book.

Charles Townsend, who passes for the cleverest fellow in England, is so taken with the performance, that he said to Oswald he would put the Duke of Buccleuch under the author's care, and would make it worth his while to accept of that charge. As soon as I heard this, I called on him twice, with a view of talking with him about the matter, and of convincing him of the propriety of sending that young nobleman to Glasgow: for I could not hope, that he could offer you any terms which would tempt you to renounce your professorship; but I missed him. Mr. Townsend passes for being a little uncertain in his resolutions; so perhaps you need not build much on his sally.

In recompense for so many mortifying things, which nothing but truth could have extorted from me, and which I could easily have multiplied to a greater number, I doubt not but you are so good a Christian as to return good for evil; and to flatter my vanity by telling me, that all the godly in Scotland abuse me for my account of John Knox and the Reformation. I suppose you are glad to see my paper end, and that I am obliged to conclude with — Your humble servant.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

London, 28th July, 1759.

Dear Sir, — Your friend, Mr. Wilson, called on me two three days ago when I was abroad, and he left your letter. I did not see him till to-day. He seems a very modest, sensible, ingenious man. Before I saw him, I spoke to Mr. A. Millar about him, and found him very much disposed to serve him. I proposed particularly to Mr. Millar, that it was worthy of so eminent a bookseller as he, to make a complete elegant set of the classics, which might set up his name equal to the Alduses, Stevenses, or Elzevirs; and that Mr. Wilson was the properest person in the world to assist him in such a project. He confessed to me that he had sometimes thought of it; but that his great difficulty was to find a man of letters, who could correct the press. I mentioned the matter to Wilson, who said he had a man of letters in his eye: one Lyon, a nonjuring clergyman at Glasgow. He is probably known to you, or at least may be so; I would desire your opinion of him.

Mr. Wilson told me of his machines, which seem very ingenious, and deserve much encouragement. I shall soon see them.

I am very well acquainted with Bourke, who was much taken with your book. He got your direction from me, with a view of writing to you, and thanking you for your present; for I made it pass in your name. I wonder he has not done it: he is now in Ireland. I am not acquainted with Jenyns; but he spoke very highly of the book to Oswald, who is his brother in the board of trade. Millar showed me, a few days ago, a letter from Lord Fitzmaurice; where he tells him, that he has carried over a few copies to the Hague, for presents. Mr. York was very much taken with it, as well as several others who had read it.

I am told that you are preparing a new edition, and propose to make some additions and alterations, in order to obviate objections. I shall use the freedom to propose one; which, if it appears to be of any weight, you may have in your eye. I wish you had more particularly and fully proved that all kinds of sympathy are necessarily agreeable. This is the hinge of your system, and yet you only mention the matter cursorily, in . Now, it would appear that there is a disagreeable sympathy, as well as an agreeable. And, indeed, as the sympathetic passion is a reflex image of the principal, it must partake of its qualities, and be painful where that is so. Indeed, *when we converse with a man with whom we can entirely sympathize*, that is, where there is a warm and intimate friendship, the cordial openness of such a commerce overpowers the pain of a disagreeable sympathy, and renders the whole movement agreeable. But, in ordinary cases, this cannot have place. An ill-humoured fellow; a man tired and disgusted with every thing, always *ennuié*, sickly, complaining, embarrassed; such a one throws an evident damp on company, which I suppose would be accounted for by sympathy, and yet is disagreeable.

It is always thought a difficult problem to account for the pleasure received from the tears, and grief, and sympathy of tragedy, which would not be the case if all sympathy was agreeable. An hospital would be a more entertaining place than a ball. I am afraid that, in , and 111, this proposition has escaped you, or, rather, is interwoven with your reasonings in that place. You say expressly, “It is painful to go along with grief, and we always enter into it with reluctance.” It will probably be requisite for you to modify or explain this sentiment, and reconcile it to your system.

My dear Mr. Smith, you must not be so much engrossed with your own book as never to mention mine. The Whigs, I am told, are anew in a rage against me, though they know not how to vent themselves; for they are constrained to allow all my facts. You have, probably, seen Hurd's abuse of me. He is of the Warburtonian school; and, consequently, very insolent and very scurrilous; but I shall never reply a word to him. If my past writings do not sufficiently prove me to be no Jacobite, ten volumes in folio never would.

I signed, yesterday, an agreement with Mr. Millar; where I mention that I proposed to write the History of England, from the beginning till the accession of Henry VII.; and he engages to give me £1400 for the copy. This is the first previous agreement ever I made with a bookseller. I shall execute this work at leisure, without fatiguing myself by such ardent application as I have hitherto employed. It is chiefly as a resource against idleness that I shall undertake this work; for, as to money, I have enough; and as to reputation, what I have wrote already will be sufficient, if it be good; if not, it is not likely I shall now write better. I found it impracticable (at least fancied so) to write the History since the Revolution. I am in doubt whether I shall stay here and execute the work; or return to Scotland, and only come up here to consult the manuscripts. I have several inducements on both sides. Scotland suits my fortune best, and is the seat of my principal friendships; but it is too narrow a place for me; and it mortifies me that I sometimes hurt my friends. Pray write me your judgment soon. Are the bigots much in arms on account of this last volume? Robertson's book has great merit; but it was visible that he profited here by the animosity against me. I suppose the case was the same with you. I am, dear Smith, yours sincerely.

In 1758 and 1759, much alarm was caused throughout Britain by a threatened invasion from France. Hume seems to have "improved" this state of matters, in the following letters, imparting wild and exaggerated news. His writing in such a tone, at such a juncture, is an example of his entertaining the same contempt for panics as for popular feeling in other forms. There is no address on the first of the letters. The second would reach its destination nearly at the same time with the account of Rodney's destruction of the flat-bottomed boats intended for the invasion.

"15th May,

“Dear Sir, — If you pass by Edinburgh, please bring me two pounds of rapee, such as Peggy Elliot uses to take. You will get it at Gillespy’s near the Cross.

“Mrs. Mallet has her compliments to you, and begs you to procure her a collection of Scotch pebbles. I assured her that I should inform you of her desire, and also that you would not fail to execute it.

“We hear that you are to be expelled the university with disgrace. Even the most partial of your friends here are obliged to allow that you deserve it.

“We expect over forty thousand French, with the first fair wind. They will probably settle the ministry; for, at present, the Pitts and the Legges, and the Grenvilles, are all going by the ears.

“We live in hopes of seeing you soon. My compliments to Smith, whose book is in a very good way.

“Dr. Warburton presents his compliments to you. Yours sincerely,” &c.

Hume *to* Mr. Ruat.

“6th July

“Dear Ruat, — I am very much obliged to you for the desire you express to Miss Elliot of hearing from me; and particularly your wishing to be informed, by me, of any news that pass. As soon as I knew, certainly, how to direct to you, I have sat down to write; and, though the occurrences are no way extraordinary which I can communicate, they shall all be strictly, and literally, and certainly true; and you may venture to tell them as such to all the idle people that frequent Buxton.

“This morning, there arrived an express from Admiral Hawke’s fleet, giving an account that the French fleet had sallied out of Brest, with twenty-four ships of the line, and had engaged the English fleet, in a desperate and bloody battle, from morning to night, which ended in a total victory on our side. There are seven of the French ships sunk and burnt, and four taken. There are two of our capital ships sunk, and the admiral’s ship was blown up, with its whole company, not one of whom is saved. Prince Edward, in the Phœnix, behaved to admiration; but, towards the end of the engagement, an unlucky cannon ball carried away both his legs, by which it is feared we shall loose that promising young prince. Our friend, poor Dr. Blair, would not go below deck, but stood by the prince’s side during the whole engagement, till his head was carried off by a double-headed shot.

“About three hours after the arrival of this express, there arrived another from the west, giving an account of the landing of the French in Torbay, to the number of twenty thousand foot, and five thousand horse. They believe already, in London, that they are sixty thousand strong. The panic is inconceivable. The people in the country are hurrying up to town; those in the town are hurrying down to the country. Nobody thinks of resistance. Every one believes the French, Popery, and the Pretender, to be at their heels.

"What adds to our general confusion is, the discovery of treachery in our councils. Mr. Pitt is sent to the Tower, for holding a secret correspondence with the French: — his ciphers and letters are taken. Mr. Wood, our friend, (if he can be said to deserve that name,) is thrown into a dungeon; and there will be certain proofs to convict him of that treachery.

"In order to prepare the way for this blow, the perfidious French had employed somebody to blow up the magazine in the Tower. I heard the explosion this morning about five o'clock. All London is covered with rubbish, and stones and brick, and broken arms. There fell into our back court a shattered musket, and the bloody leg of a man. I thought the day of judgment was come when I first heard the explosion, and began seriously to think of my sins.

"These events will, all of them, make a figure in future historians; and it is happy for these gentlemen, who are, or ought to be, very scrupulous with regard to matters of fact, that they can so well reconcile the true and the marvellous.

"As to private news, there is little stirring; only Dr. Warburton turned Mahometan, and was circumcised last week. They say he is to write a book, in order to prove the divine legation of Mahomet; and it is not doubted but he will succeed as well as in proving that of Moses. I saw him yesterday in the Mall with his turban; which really becomes him very well.

"Poor Andrew Millar is declared bankrupt; his debts amount to above £40,000, and it is said his creditors will not get above three shillings in the pound. All the world allow him to have been diligent and industrious; but his misfortunes are ascribed to the extravagance of his wife, a very ordinary case in this city.

"Miss —— , yesterday morning declared her marriage with Dr. Armstrong; but we were surprised in the afternoon to find Mr. Short the optician, come in and challenge her for his wife. It seems she has been married privately for some time to both of them. Her sister has been much more prudent, whom we find to have confined herself entirely to gallantry, and to have privately entertained a correspondence with three gallants. I am, dear Ruat, with great truth, your most sincere friend and humble servant."

About the commencement of November, Hume returned to Scotland, for he writes to Millar on 18th December that he has been six weeks in Edinburgh. He states, that he is correcting his "History of the Stuarts;" and says, "I fancy that I shall be able to put my account of that period of English history beyond controversy. As soon as this task is finished, I undertake the ancient English history. I find the Advocates' Library very well provided with books, in this period: but before I finish, I shall pass a considerable time in London, to peruse the manuscripts in the Museum."

On his return he left behind him, to be published in London, the two volumes of his "History of England, under the House of Tudor," of which he says in his "own life,"— "The clamour against this performance was almost equal to that against the History of the two first Stuarts. The reign of Elizabeth was particularly obnoxious."

He had now published the whole of that department of his History, from which his opinions on the later progress of the British constitution can be derived; and the epoch of this publication calls for some notice of the manner in which subsequent inquirers have found that he performed his task. He was not like such writers as Clarendon and Brady, the interested or prejudiced advocate of the crown against the people; and we must look for the causes of his erroneous views in what he did not know, or did not believe, rather than in what he wilfully misrepresented. In his "Essay on Commerce," published in 1752, we find him thus foreshadowing the principle on which he was to treat the History of Britain:— "Lord Bacon, accounting for the great advantages obtained by the English in their wars with France, ascribes them chiefly to the superior ease and plenty of the common people among the former; *yet the government of the two kingdoms was at that time pretty much alike*." This assertion has been satisfactorily proved to be erroneous. The spirit of credulity in historical inquiry makes out every thing ancient to be better and greater than its modern representative. The spirit of scepticism questions whatever is said in favour of antiquity. The sceptic cannot throw doubt on the existing wonders of modern times. If one nation is far beyond another in arts, arms, civilization, or wealth, the facts cannot be denied; but when he looks back into past ages, the pliability of the evidence admits the influence of the levelling principle of scepticism, the tendency of which is to make all mankind seem much alike; and Hume, who would not have ventured to say that in his own day the constitutions of France and England were very much alike, considered it but a piece of proper caution to discard as fallacious the evidence that there was any great difference between them in former times.

Unquestionably the doubting or inquiring spirit is a valuable quality in a historian; for the narratives of human affairs are full of falsehoods, which it is the philosophical historian’s function to discard. But the sifting will not be satisfactory, if the materials subjected to it have not been largely and laboriously collected; and the charge against Hume is, that he applied it to imperfect data. Where the data are insufficient, credulity and scepticism are merely the counterparts of each other, and produce erroneous results nearly alike. Those who proclaimed Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, to be a liar, for statements which have now been authenticated, believed in the account given of a fictitious people, in an impudent forgery, called Psalmanazer’s Formosa, which would not now impose for a moment on any educated person. Our enlarged knowledge of the matters to be subjected to sceptical analysis, has now, in both cases, brought us to the right conclusion.

An inquirer into the structure of the earth, who should know nothing of its crust but the sandy plains of Germany, would, were he of a sceptical spirit, discredit all those geological wonders which the most sceptical of scientific men now believe. In relation to some parts of the British constitution, Hume was in the position of such an investigator. His early prejudice against the study of the law, prevented him from being fully acquainted with a science, the knowledge of which is essential to any man who would clearly develop the progress of our constitution, — the common law of England. He did not understand its stubborn immovable nature, its solid impregnable masonry, against which the ambitious violence of monarchs, and the fury of popular tumults raged in vain. From the day when Gascoigne committed Henry V. to prison, to that when surly tyrannical old Sir Edward Coke argued face to face with King James against the interference of the prerogative with the independent authority of his court, those who were the honest administrators of the common law held that they were no man’s servants, and no man’s masters, but the sworn expounders of a settled rule of action, which no power within the realm could sway. It might be full of strange conceits, of passages hard to determine, of unreasonable and often cruel rules: but what this oracle bade them, that were they bound to do, be the consequences what they might.

To a mere onlooker, this system appeared to be clumsy and barbarous, and unendowed with that philosophical symmetry which characterized the rival system of the civil law. It required that one should have a full knowledge of its massive structure, and passive power of resistance, to appreciate its value in a country where king, nobles, and common people, were alike characterized by party spirit, courage, and restless activity. A philosopher, indulging in a distant contemplation, would at once prefer the nice philosophical adaptation to the wants of a state, and the fine logical structure, with which a despotic power, able to manipulate the laws at its own will, had endowed the system of Justinian; and if he found that the administrators of the rude common law waged a determined war against this philosophical code, his contempt for the one, and his admiration of the other, would be likely to be increased. But there is no doubt that the advocates of the common law were right in resisting the introduction of the pliant principles of the civilians. If it be true that the common law, and the constitution which grew along with it, embodied no philosophical principle of liberty, it is also true that they embodied no philosophical principle of despotism, such as that which was ready made in the Justinian legislation. The theories of passive obedience, and the sacredness of the monarchical character, were strangers to it; and these doctrines, so attractive to those who profit by them, were introduced by the civilians. In presence of the unbending operation of the common law, and dependent on a surly suspicious parliament, the sovereign might yet, if he were a man of talent and courage, be very powerful and very tyrannical: but he had none of those attributes through which the ingenuity of the civilians had divested him of all the moral failings, so far as they were accompanied with the moral responsibilities of a human being. He was often a “most dread sovereign:” but it was for these novel doctrines, the fruit of the reading of the clergy and the ecclesiastical lawyers, to invest him with the attributes of “sacred majesty.”

The supporters of the common law, and of the old popular rights, strove to keep the law above the king. Those who drew their constitutional principles from the civilians and canonists, desired to place the king above the law. They accomplished their object in name, but not in fact, by incorporating with the constitutional law those fictions, that the king never dies, is not responsible, does not require to appear by his attorney, suffers no laches, &c. But in reality the old principles which made the king merely the head of a community, all of whom were subjected to the law, substantially held its ground; for, in so far as the monarch was exempted from responsibilities, in the same proportion was he deprived of any powers which he could exercise otherwise than through a responsible minister.

There was in Hume a like want of appreciation of the value of parliamentary forms and privileges, and a corresponding indifference about their violation. He had not sufficiently studied the Journals of the Commons, and did not trace the rise and development of that system of procedure which has protected our own liberties, and afforded a model for the legislative assemblies of all free nations. It was in the Long Parliament, and under the eye of the able men of business who then held the lead, that this noble system was brought to perfection; but the reader whose historical information is derived solely from Hume, knows little of its value. Thus unconscious of the practical importance of the rights and privileges of the English people, he did not sympathize with those who expected alarming consequences from their infringement. He involved those who put the protection of their legal rights to the issue of the sword, in the same contemptuous estimate with the fanatics whom he charged with convulsing the state about religious differences of no essential moment. In either case the event at issue was of so little importance in his estimation, that he had small charity for those who made it a vitally important concern. But in all these matters we look back on Hume with the light of later times. To appreciate his services to constitutional history, we must, while we keep in view the successful labours of later inquirers, remember how little had been done by his predecessors. The old chroniclers, such as Hall and Holingshed, scarcely ever deign to descend from the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, to mention constitutional matters; and perhaps, in an impartial estimate, it will be admitted that in the gradual progress towards a better appreciation of what is truly valuable in British history, no one writer has taken so great a stride as Hume.

CHAPTER XI.

1760-1762. Æt. 49-51.

Alterations of the History in the direction of Despotic Principles — Specimens — Alterations in Style — Specimens — His Elaboration — Ossian's Poems — Labours at the early part of the History — Ferguson's "Sister Peg" — Acquaintance with Madame de Boufflers — Account of that lady — First intercourse with Rousseau — Rousseau's position — The exiled Earl Marishal — Campbell and his Dissertation on Miracles.

We have seen, from various indications in Hume's letters to his friends, that he employed himself occasionally in corrections and alterations of the published volumes of his History. In these revisals, and especially in that of the "History of the Stuarts," his alterations were not limited to the style. He tells us, with a sort of scornful candour, in his "own life," "Though I had been taught by experience that the Whig party were in possession of bestowing all places, both in the state and in literature, I was so little inclined to yield to their senseless clamour, that in above a hundred alterations which farther study, reading, or reflection engaged me to make in the reigns of the two first Stuarts, I have made all of them invariably to the Tory side. It is ridiculous to consider the English constitution, before that period, as a regular plan of liberty."

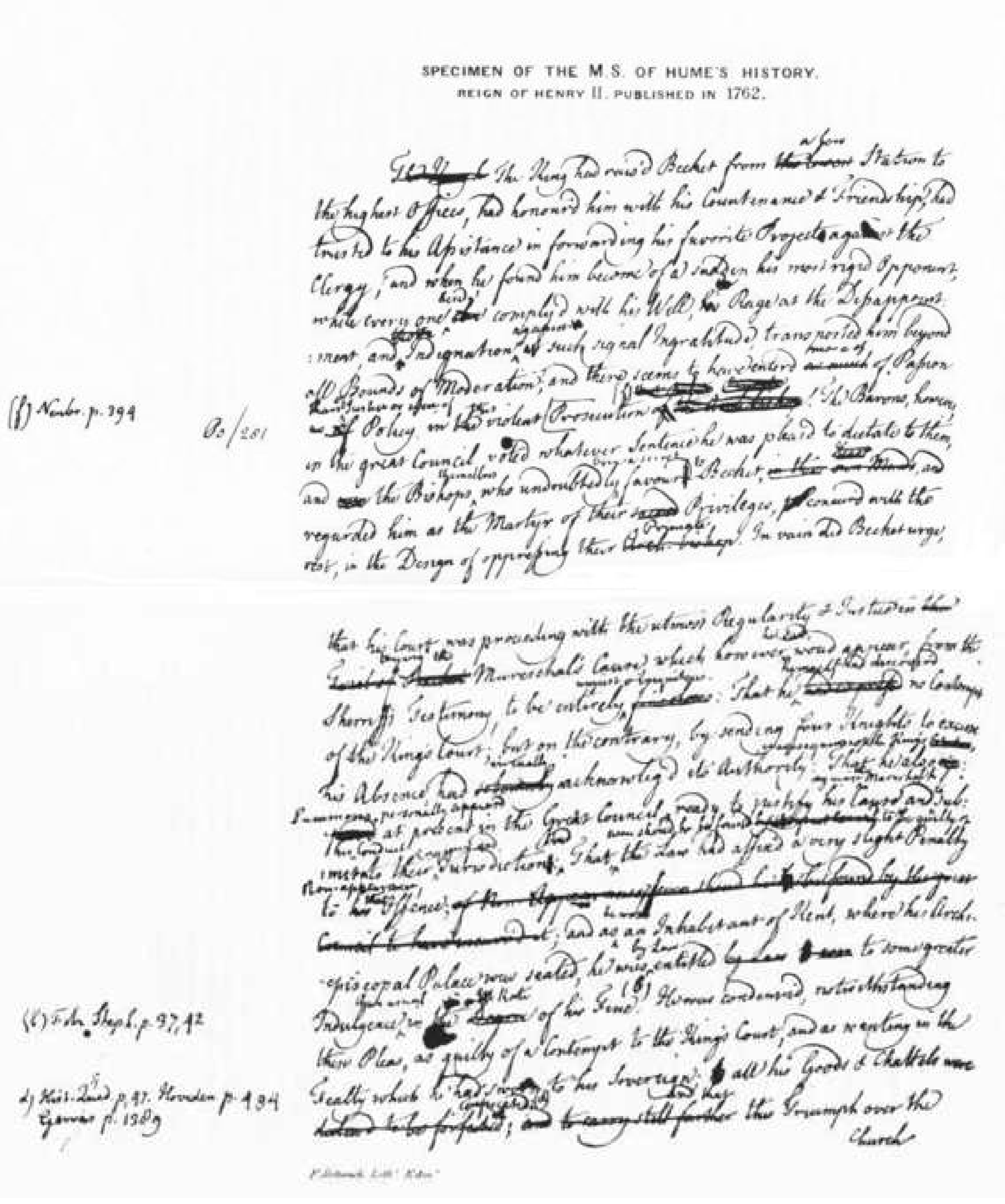
It was part of his nature, when popular clamour called for the adoption of a particular course, to turn his steps for that reason the more distinctly in the opposite direction. He has not exaggerated the extent or character of his alterations; for an inspection of the various editions of his History which came under his own revision, shows him, by turns of expression, structure of narrative, and other gentle alterations, approaching closer and closer to despotic principles. The democratic opinions contained in his early essays, have already been alluded to; and their suppression in subsequent editions, harmonizes with these variations of the opinions expressed in his History.

There are, however, a very few alterations in an opposite spirit. Thus, in the following sentence relative to the proceedings of the House of Commons regarding the militia, the part in italics is suppressed in the later editions. “He [the king] issued proclamations against this manifest usurpation; *the most precipitant and most enormous of which there is any instance in the English history*.”

On one incident of some importance in history, he was obliged materially to change his ground of argument, yet would not alter his original opinion. During the fervour of the civil wars in 1646, Lord Glamorgan had in the name of Charles I. concluded a treaty with the confederated Irish Catholics, by which, on the condition of their aiding the king, besides other concessions, the Roman Catholic religion was to be restored to its old supremacy through a great part of Ireland. Ormond, the lord lieutenant, charged Glamorgan with high treason: but he produced two commissions from the king. The king disowned the commissions: but the parliament believed in their genuineness. — It was in this shape that the matter appeared in the first instance before Hume. In his first edition he accordingly maintained that the commissions were forgeries; and a long note, explanatory of the grounds of this belief, is a remarkable instance of a plausible fabric of historical reasoning, doomed afterwards to fall to pieces by the removal of its foundation. Before he published his second edition, he received a letter from the Rev. John Douglas, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle, who was intrusted with the editing of the Clarendon Papers. In this communication, the reverend gentleman regrets that he cannot send to Hume a letter written by Glamorgan, describing the method in which the commissions were actually prepared, and its object; but he gives an account of the contents of the letter. Hume could no longer hold that the commissions were not genuine: but he still maintained Charles to be guiltless; and though they were unknown to the lord lieutenant, and bore no attestation of having passed through the proper offices, he still argued that Glamorgan, in treating with the Irish, though he was within the letter of his very wide powers, must have exceeded his instructions; and ingeniously pointed to his work, “The century of Inventions,” in connexion with which Lord Glamorgan is better known, by his subsequent title of Marquis of

Worcester, as the production of a man who never could have been trusted with powers so extensive as those which he arrogated.

Besides the variations in political opinion, there were in the subsequent editions of Hume's History other alterations suggested by other influences. His opinions were self-formed, and he jealously protected them in their formation from the influence of other minds; but in the cultivation of his style he sought assistance with avidity from all who could afford it. Hence he appears to have earnestly solicited the aid of Lyttelton, Mallet, and others, whose experience of English composition might enable them to detect Scotticisms.



SPECIMEN OF THE M.S. OF HUME'S HISTORY.
REIGN OF HENRY II. PUBLISHED IN 1762.

~~[illegible]~~ The King had raised Becket from ~~the lowest~~ a low Station to
the highest Offices, had honoured him with his Countenance & Friendship, had
trusted to his Assistance in forwarding his favourite Project against the
Clergy; and when he found him become of a sudden his most rigid Opponent,
while every one beside complied with his Will, his Rage at the Disappoint-
-ment, and Indignation against such signal Ingratitude transported him beyond
all Bounds of Moderation; and there seems to have entered more of Passion
(f) ~~[illegible]~~! The Barons, however,
than of Justice or even of
Policy, in the violent Prosecution ~~[illegible]~~
in the great Council voted whatever Sentence he was pleased to dictate to them;
and ~~[illegible]~~ the Bishops themselves, who undoubtedly favoured Becket, ~~in their own Minds~~, and
regarded him as the Martyr of their ~~[illegible]~~ Privileges, concurred with the
rest, in the Design of oppressing their ~~Arch-bishop~~ Primate. In vain did Becket urge,

that his Court was proceeding with the utmost Regularity & Justice in the
~~[illegible]~~ Mareschal's Cause; which however would appear, from the
Sheriff's Testimony, to be entirely ~~[illegible]~~: That he had ~~[illegible]~~ no Contempt
of the King's Court; but on the contrary, by sending four Knights to excuse
his Absence had ~~[illegible]~~ virtually acknowledged its Authority: That he also
Summons, personally appeared at present in the Great Council, ready to justify his Cause and sub-
mit his Conduct to their Jurisdiction: That the Law had affixed a very slight Penalty
to the Offence; ~~of Non-Appearance [illegible]~~
~~[illegible]~~; and as an Inhabitant of Kent, where his Arch-
episcopal Palace was seated, he was, by law, entitled ~~by Law~~ to some greater
Indulgence [illegible] of his Fine. (g) He was condemned, notwithstanding
these Pleas, as guilty of a Contempt to the King's Court, and as wanting in the
Fealty which he had sworn to his Sovereign; all his Goods & Chattels were
~~declared to be forfeited~~ confiscated; and ~~to carry still further~~ this Triumph over the
Church

(f) Neubr. p. 394

Po/201

(e) Fitz-Steph. p. 37, 42

(g) Hist. Quad. p. 47. Hoveden p. 494
Gervase p. 1389

[illegible] Lith. Edin.

Before they went to press, his compositions underwent a minute and rigorous correction. His manuscripts, as the small fac-simile engraved for these volumes shows, were subjected to a painful revisal. We sometimes find him, after he has adopted a form of expression, scoring it out and substituting another; but again, on a comparison of their mutual merits, restoring the rejected form, and perhaps again discarding it when he has lighted on a happier collocation of words. It is worthy of remark, that his most brilliant passages are those which bear the least appearance of being amended. It is not thence to be inferred that these passages sprang from his mind in their full symmetry and beauty: but rather that they had been elaborated, and made ready for insertion in their proper place, before they were put in writing.

We now resume the correspondence; which will be found to have reference, among other topics, to the preparation of the History anterior to the accession of the Tudors.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 22d March, 1760.

“Dear Sir, — You gave me a very sensible pleasure in informing me so early of the success of ‘The Siege of Aquileia’ on its first representation. I hope it sustained its reputation after it came into print. I showed Mr. Kincaid your letter; and he has published an edition here, of a thousand, which go off very well. As he had published a pamphlet, this winter, which he got from you, I told him that I fancied you would be satisfied with the same terms, which he then agreed to.

“I am very busy, and am making some progress; but find that this part of English History is a work of infinite labour and study; which, however, I do not grudge; for I have nothing better nor more agreeable to employ me. I have sent you a short catalogue of books, which either are not in the Advocates’ Library, or are not to be found at present. I must beg of you to procure them for me, and to send them down with the first ship. Send me also the prices; for I shall be able to engage the curators of the library to take from me such as they want at the price.

“Dr. Birch, (to whom make my compliments,) will be so good as to give you his advice about buying these books; and will tell you if several of them are collected in volumes, as is often the case with the old English historians.

“I hope Lord Lyttelton and Mr. Mallet are as busy as I; if so, we may expect to see their history soon. Please to inform me what you hear of them. We are informed that Lord Lyttelton is soon to appear. I wish very much to have the benefit of his work before I go to the press. Donaldson told me, that Strahan has, at last, finished the small edition of my Essays, and that you have shipped his and Kincaid’s number. They are resolved, I find, to dispose of them all in this place. I hope you have not forgot to send me half a dozen of copies in sheets, the number which we agreed to on any new edition.

"Your press, in London, has been somewhat barren this winter. We have had nothing from you but a good pamphlet or two, and have, I think, paid the same in kind. Our militia pamphlet was certainly wrote with spirit; and has been twice reprinted, as I hear, in London. I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Millar; and please tell her that I am very sorry we shall not have the pleasure of seeing her here this summer. I could wish her just as much sickness as to make her sensible that travelling is good for her. My compliments to Dr. Douglas and Strahan, and to Friend Cummin, who, I hope, sees now a better prospect of overcoming all his difficulties. I am," &c.

The following letter, though it must be already familiar to many readers, is so clear an exposition of the writer's views on some branches of historical and biographical literature, that it ought not to be omitted.

Hume *to* Dr. Robertson.

I have frequently thought, and talked with our common friends upon the subject of your letter. There always occurred to us several difficulties with regard to every subject we could propose. The ancient Greek history has several recommendations, particularly the good authors from which it must be drawn: but this same circumstance becomes an objection, when more narrowly considered; for what can you do in most places with these authors but transcribe and translate them? no letters or state papers from which you could correct their errors, or authenticate their narration, or supply their defects. Besides, Rollin is so well wrote with respect to style, that with superficial people it passes for sufficient. There is one Dr. Lelland, who has lately wrote the life of Philip of Macedon, which is one of the best periods. The book, they tell me, is perfectly well wrote; yet it has had such small sale, and has so little excited the attention of the public, that the author has reason to think his labour thrown away. I have not read the book; but by the size, I should judge it to be too particular. It is a pretty large quarto. I think a book of that size sufficient for the whole History of Greece till the death of Philip: and I doubt not but such a work would be successful, notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances. The subject is noble, and Rollin is by no means equal to it.

I own, I like still less your project of the age of Charles the Fifth. That subject is disjointed; and your hero, who is the sole connexion, is not very interesting. A competent knowledge at least is required of the state and constitution of the empire; of the several kingdoms of Spain, of Italy, of the Low Countries, which it would be the work of half a life to acquire; and, though some parts of the story may be entertaining, there would be many dry and barren; and the whole seems not to have any great charms.

But I would not willingly start objections to these schemes, unless I had something to propose, which would be plausible; and I shall mention to you an idea which has sometimes pleased me, and which I had once entertained thoughts of attempting. You may observe that, among modern readers, Plutarch is, in every translation, the chief favourite of the ancients. Numberless translations and numberless editions have been made of him in all languages; and no translation has been so ill done as not to be successful. Though those who read the originals never put him in comparison either with Thucydides or Xenophon, he always attaches more the reader in the translation; a proof that the idea and execution of his work is, in the main, happy. Now, I would have you think of writing modern lives, somewhat after that manner: not to enter into a detail of the actions, but to mark the manners of the great personages, by domestic stories, by remarkable sayings, and by a general sketch of their lives and adventures. You see that in Plutarch the life of Cæsar may be read in half an hour. Were you to write the life of Henry the Fourth of France after that model, you might pillage all the pretty stories in Sully, and speak more of his mistresses than of his battles. In short, you might gather the flower of all modern history in this manner: the remarkable Popes, the Kings of Sweden, the great discoverers and conquerors of the New World; even the eminent men of letters, might furnish you with matter, and the quick despatch of every different work would encourage you to begin a new one. If one volume were successful, you might compose another at your leisure, and the field is inexhaustible. There are persons whom you might meet with in the corners of history, so to speak, who would be a subject of entertainment quite unexpected; and as long as you live, you might give and receive amusement by such a work; even your son, if he had a talent for history, would succeed to the subject, and his son to him. I shall insist no farther on this idea; because, if it strikes your fancy, you will easily perceive all its advantages, and, by farther thought, all its difficulties.

In 1760, Macpherson published those “Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands of Scotland, and translated from the Gaelic or

Erse language," which, afterwards enlarged, became the celebrated "Ossian's Poems." Hume took an early interest in this professed resuscitation of early national literature. He at first doubted the truth of assertions so unprecedented in literary history, as those by which the genuineness of the poems was maintained. But there was nothing to which his heart would have responded with a warmer enthusiasm than the discovery, that his ancestors, generally reputed to be but late accessions to civilization, could look back upon a literature as rich and great as that which had crowned Greece with the literary supremacy of the world. Hence, he seems to have, after some time, willingly yielded to a belief in the genuineness of these poems. His good sense and sceptical spirit, however, resumed the supremacy, and he afterwards wrote a very searching though short "Essay on the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems." It is printed in the Appendix; and thither the whole correspondence on the subject is transferred, that the reader may peruse the various pieces in a series. It is probable that the sole reason why Hume never published this detection, was a kindly feeling to his friend Dr. Blair, against whom he might not wish to appear in a controversy, where the critical powers of the latter would be so severely tested. And yet they stood on perfectly fair ground. Neither Hume nor Blair had any knowledge of the archæological merits of the question. Each of them discussed the probable genuineness of the poems on grounds as purely critical as if they had been brought from Central Africa, instead of being the alleged literature of a people who are supposed to have at one time occupied the ground on which Edinburgh is built; and at the time of that controversy, as at the present day, might be visited on a journey of fifty miles. In such a state of knowledge, it required great freedom and decision in criticism to pronounce the poems forgeries. Then, as now, every genuine Celt protested that he had heard them over and over again in Gaelic with his own ears; and with this only difference from the translation, that there were peculiar delicate beauties in the native Gaelic, which neither Macpherson, nor any other man, was capable of expressing in English. In such an unequal controversy, between the internal evidence of criticism, and the external evidence of broad assertion, it is singular that no one should have attempted to solve the question through the faint light which the chronicles of the surrounding tribes throw on the history of the Celts in Scotland. That knowledge has now been pretty widely extended; and hence "Ossian's Poems" have been estimated at their true value, as an embossment of poetical language and imagery, on the surface of such barren metrical narratives as all uncivilized and warlike people possess; it has been found that the structure of the narratives, the characteristic names, the events of history, and the manners of the times, have been treated with no more deference, when an alteration was found to suit the purpose of the "translator."

Intensely occupied with his History anterior to the accession of the Tudors, we thus find Hume writing to Millar on 27th October: —

"I have been very busy ever since I came down; and if I keep my health, shall be able to publish the winter after the next, or at farthest in the subsequent spring; which I fancy will serve your purpose well enough. At any rate, this is not a matter which I can hurry on faster than I am able to satisfy myself in the execution.

"I am very much pleased with what you tell me, that the Clarendon Papers have fallen into Dr. Douglas's hands, especially as Dr. Robertson tells me he intends to publish them. What my sentiments are on the question you mention, you may learn from my letter to the Doctor, which I have sent you open, and which I beg you to take the trouble of sending; for I do not know how to direct it."

Hume wished to amuse himself with mystifying his friends about the pamphlet above alluded to, called Sister Peg. The circumstance which suggested to him the following letter, is said to have been his being kept in ignorance that his friend Ferguson was the author of the piece.

Hume *to* Dr. Carlyle.

"Edinburgh, 3d February, 1761.

"Dear Sir, — I am informed that you have received a letter from London, by which you learn that the manuscript of Sister Peg has been traced to the printer's, and has been found to be, in many places, interlined and corrected in my handwriting. I could have wished that you had not published this piece of intelligence before you told me of it. The truth is, after I had composed that trifling performance, and thought I had made it as correct as I could, I gave it to a sure hand to be transcribed, that in case any of the London printers had known my hand, they might not be able to discover me. But as it lay by me some weeks afterwards, I could not forbear reviewing it; and not having my amanuensis at hand, I was obliged in several places to correct it myself, rather than allow it to go to the press with inaccuracies of which I was sensible. I little dreamed that this small want of precaution would have betrayed me so soon; but as you know that I am very indifferent about princes or presidents, ministers of the gospel or ministers of state, kings or keysars, and set at defiance all powers, human or infernal, I had no other reason for concealing myself, but in order to try the taste of the public; whom, though I also set in some degree at defiance, I cannot sometimes forbear paying a little regard to. I find that frivolous composition has been better received than I had any reason to expect, and therefore cannot much complain of the injury you have done me by revealing my secret, and obliging me to acknowledge it more early than I intended. The only reason of my writing to you is, to know the printer's name, who has so far broke his engagements as to show the manuscript; for the bookseller assured my friend to whom I intrusted it, that we might depend upon an absolute secrecy. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Carlyle, and am, dear sir," &c.

We see by the date of the following letter, that Hume varied his city life with an occasional residence with his brother in Berwickshire.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Ninewells, 29th June, 1761.

"Dear Smith, — As your professorship of Hebrew is vacant, I have been applied to in behalf of young Mr. Cummin; and you are the person with whom I am supposed to have some interest. But as I imagine you will not put this election on the footing of interest, I shall say nothing on that head; but shall speak much more to the purpose by informing you, that I have known Mr. Cummin for some time, and have esteemed him a young man of exceeding good capacity, and of a turn towards literature. He tells me that he has made the oriental tongues, and particularly the Hebrew, a part of his study, and has made some proficiency in them. But of this fact, craving his pardon, I must be allowed to entertain some doubt; for if Hebrew roots, as Cowley says, thrive best in barren soil, he has a small chance of producing any great crop of them. But as you commonly regard the professorship of Hebrew as a step towards other professorships, in which a good capacity can better display itself, you will permit me to give it as my opinion, that you will find it difficult to pitch on a young man, who is more likely to be a credit to your college, by his knowledge and industry.

"I am so far on my road to London, where I hope to see you this season. I shall lodge in Miss Elliot's, Lisle Street, Leicester Fields; and I beg it of you to let me hear from you the moment of your arrival."

In 1761, commenced Hume’s acquaintance with Madame de Boufflers. It afterwards ripened into a friendship, of which we cannot fully estimate the nature, without looking not only at the character and position of the parties, but at some conventional notions of morality, to which Hume had been, previously, a stranger. Hyppolyte de Saujon, Comtesse de Boufflers-Rouvel, is not to be confounded with her contemporary the Marquise de Boufflers-Rémencourt, mother of the witty Chevalier de Boufflers. The prominent difference between them is but too startlingly characteristic of the moral atmosphere in which they both lived — that the former was mistress of the Prince of Conti, while the latter is supposed to have held the same relation to Prince Stanislaus Augustus of Poland, of whose court she was the great ornament and attraction. A friendship between a respectable Scotsman of letters and a person in Madame de Boufflers’ position, is apt to excite a smile or a frown, according to the habits or temper of the reader. Hume himself was not likely to take the most austere view of the matter; and must have felt, at any rate, that the scandal and even the blame of such connexions must be greatly affected by the countenance they receive from the society to which the parties belong. On the vileness of this code of organized immorality, it would be superfluous, at this hour, to enlarge; but there is a great difference between those who act up to the standard of a low social system and those who do the same acts in breach of a higher code. A Mahomedan who keeps a harem in Constantinople is inferior in his tone of morality to an English gentleman, of good domestic conduct; but he is infinitely superior to an Englishman with a harem in Piccadilly.

The lady in question undoubtedly held a very high station in the best society of Paris; and at that time, and in that country, it is certain that such attachments, if permanent and decorous, and in a very high class of society, acquired a more than tolerated respectability. In 1769, Madame de Boufflers speaks of her attachment as one of twenty years’ duration. Early in life, and soon after her marriage, she had been placed at the court of the Duchess of Orleans: but quarrelling with that princess, she came under the protection of the Prince of Conti. Of course, her correspondence bears no mark of her having been subjected to slights, or of her dreading them; or indeed of any suspicion that there was any thing in her position to prevent her from being rigid in her ideas of virtue, and a teacher of social duties. On her visit to England, she was well received by the British aristocracy, and was even honoured by a laudatory growl from Johnson. We find her exchanging visits with the Marchioness of Hertford, the wife of the English ambassador, one of the purest of that portion of the English female aristocracy which had not suffered taint. In one of her letters to Hume, she describes the death-bed of the prince’s mother; speaks of her displaying the heroism of a granddaughter of the great Condé; and talks with tearful gratitude of the early kindness of that princess to herself, and of her attempts to pay the debt by solacing her old age, and performing to her the last duties which the living receive from each other. It is in all its spirit the letter of a daughter-in-law.

The prince, though a generous and kind-hearted man, could not be prevailed on to make her his wife on her husband’s death; but when he died in 1776, he had raised no princess over her head. We shall find that she made Hume the confidant in her griefs and disappointments, and the adviser in her difficulties. There is a great air of earnestness and solicitude in these appeals; and though we cannot help presuming, that a woman so full in her disclosures to a foreigner, living among a people of totally different habits and morals, must have distributed a still larger portion of her confidential revelations nearer home; yet it is evident that she had much reliance on Hume’s counsel, and perhaps he was not ill fitted for a father-confessor to such a penitent.

The letters of Hume to the countess, have already been for some time before the English reader. On the present occasion some characteristic extracts will be interwoven with the letters which form the other side of the correspondence. It is difficult for a native of this country, with the fullest allowance for the redundancy of the French laudatory and amicable vocabulary, to estimate at its true value the ardour of these letters, or to adjust the amount of solid truth and friendliness represented by such a blaze of ardent expressions. The correspondence was of the lady’s seeking and pursuing. Frequently, when there is a pause, an impassioned letter from her rouses up the philosopher; who starts into a sort of artificial excitement, and, when it is over, sinks into lethargy again. Yet it must be admitted that Hume acted his part pretty well, and that the fat philosopher was not far behind the vivacious Frenchwoman. But with him it is visibly all acting; and there is a total absence of the playful ease which adorns those letters to his own chosen friends, with whom he was in heart and habits at ease. In some instances, perhaps, he studied a formal and measured style, as being more intelligible to a foreigner; and occasionally we find him offering his correspondent facilities by the adoption of idioms more French than

English; as where he says, “I am truly ashamed, dear madam, of your having *prevented* me in breaking our long silence; but you have *prevented* me only a few days.”

The letter with which the countess opens the correspondence, seems to have been forwarded to Hume by Lord Elibank’s brother, Alexander Murray, who was then mixing with the Jacobites abroad, and who appears to have enjoyed a very wide and much varied circle of acquaintance in France. He says, in a letter of the 18th May, 1761: —

“My Dear Sir, — It would appear great presumption in me to make you any compliments upon your History of England, after having read the enclosed; which with infinite pleasure I send you, as it procures you a correspondence with the most amiable and accomplished lady of this kingdom, or indeed any other. If after the peace you take a trip to this polite and elegant country, you are sure, by the means of your new female correspondent, of being made acquainted in a very short time with all the wits in this part of the world. It is true your most incomparable productions justly entitle you to that distinction. However, being took by the hand by Madame de Boufflers, won’t diminish your intrinsic value, even among the most profound philosophers. In case I can’t return to England, and you take the resolution of coming here . . . . . . I beg leave to assure you that I am, with as much esteem and veneration as human creature can be, my dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, and avowed friend,

“A. Murray.

“When you answer the enclosed, I beg it may be in English, as the lady is quite mistress of that language.”

The letter forwarded to Hume was as follows:

Madame De Boufflers *to* Hume.

(*Translation.*)

For a long time, sir, I have struggled with conflicting sentiments. The admiration which your sublime work has awakened in me, and the esteem with which it has inspired me for your person, your talents, and your virtue, have often aroused the desire of writing to you, that I might express those sentiments towards you with which I am so deeply penetrated.

On the other hand, keeping in view the little value you can have for my opinion, your want of personal acquaintance with me, and the reserve and privacy, even, which are suitable to my sex, I fear being accused of presumption, and of making myself be known, to my own disadvantage, by a man whose good opinion I shall always regard as the most flattering, and the most precious of benefits. Nevertheless, although the reflections I have made on this subject appeared to have much force, an irresistible inclination rendered them unavailing; and I come to add one to the thousand other instances, to justify the truth of that remark which I have read in your "History of the House of Stuart,"— "Men's views of things are the result of their understanding alone: their conduct is regulated by their understanding, their temper, and their passions." Thus, when my reason tells me I ought to be silent, my enthusiasm prevents me from regarding its voice.

Although a woman, and of no very advanced age, despite the dissipation attendant on the life one leads in this country, having always loved reading, there are few good books in any language, or of any kind, that I have not read, either in the original, or in translations; and I can assure you, sir, with a sincerity which cannot be questioned, that I have found none which, to my judgment, unites so many perfections as your own. I know no terms capable of expressing what I felt in reading this work. I was moved, transported: and the emotion which it caused me is, in some measure, painful by its continuance. It elevates the soul; it fills the heart with sentiments of humanity and benevolence; it enlightens the intellect, by showing that true happiness is closely connected with virtue; and discovers, by the same light, what is the end, and the sole end, of every reasonable being. In the midst of the calamities which, on all sides, surrounded Charles the First, we see peace and security shining in their brightness, and accompanying him to the scaffold; whilst trouble and remorse, the inseparable companions of crime, follow the steps of Cromwell, even to the throne.

Your book also teaches how the best of things are liable to abuse; and the reflections which are made on this subject ought to augment our caution and distrust of ourselves. It animates with a noble emulation; it inspires love of liberty; and teaches, at the same time, submission to the government under which we are obliged to live. In a word, it is a *terra fecunda* of morals and instruction, presented in colours so bright, that we believe we see them for the first time.

The clearness, the majesty, the touching simplicity of your style delight me. Its beauties are so striking, that, notwithstanding my ignorance of the English language, they cannot escape me. You are, sir, an admirable painter: your pictures have a grace, a nature, an energy, which surpass even what the imagination can portray.

But how shall I be able to express the effect produced upon me by your divine impartiality? I would that I had, on this occasion, your own eloquence in which to express my thought! In truth, I believed I had before my eyes the work of some celestial being, free from the passions of humanity, who, for the benefit of the human race, has deigned to write the events of these latter times.

I dare only add, that in all which issues from your pen, you show yourself a perfect philosopher, a statesman, a historian full of genius, an enlightened politician, a genuine patriot. All these sublime qualities are so far above the understanding of a woman, that it is fitting I should say little on the subject; and I have already great need of your indulgence for the faults I have committed against discretion and decorum, by the excess of my veneration for your merit. I entreat this of you, sir, and, at the same time, the greatest secrecy. The step I have taken is rather extraordinary. I fear it may attract blame: and I would be grieved if the sentiment which has constrained me to it should be misunderstood.

I have the honour to be, sir, your very humble and very obedient servant,

Hyppolyte De Saujon, Comtesse De Boufflers.

They tell me, sir, you have some idea of coming to France — to Paris. I earnestly wish you would execute this resolution, and that I may be able to assist in rendering your sojourn agreeable.

Paris, *15th March, 1761*.

Hume must have been the more than mortal being which his new friend describes, if he had resisted such an appeal; and he thus wrote in answer: —

Hume *to the* Comtesse de Boufflers.

Edinburgh, 15th May, 1761.

Madam, — It is not easy for your ladyship to imagine the pleasure I received from the letter, with which you have so unexpectedly honoured me, nor the agreeable visions of vanity, in which, upon that occasion, I indulged myself. I concluded, and, as I fancied, with certainty, that a person, who could write so well herself, must certainly be a good judge of writing in others; and that an author, who could please a lady of your distinction, educated in the court of France, and familiarized with every thing elegant and polite, might reasonably pretend to some degree of merit, and might presume to take his rank above the middling historians. But, madam, it is but fair, that I, who have pretended, in so long a work, to do justice to all parties and persons, should also do some to myself; and should not feed my vanity with chimeras, which, I am sensible, in my cooler moments, can have no foundation in reason. When I had the pleasure of passing some time in France, I had the agreeable experience of the polite hospitality, by which your nation is distinguished; and I now find, that the same favourable indulgence has appeared in your ladyship's judgment of my writings. And, perhaps, your esteem for the entire impartiality which I aim at, and which, to tell the truth, is so unusual in English historians, has made your ladyship overlook many defects, into which the want of art or genius has betrayed me.

In this particular, madam, I must own, that I am inclined to take your civilities in their full latitude, and to hope that I have not fallen much short of my intentions. The spirit of faction, which prevails in this country, and which is a natural attendant on civil liberty, carries every thing to extremes on the one side, as well as on the other; and I have the satisfaction to find, that my performance has alternately given displeasure to both parties. I could not reasonably hope to please both: such success is impossible from the nature of things; and next to your ladyship's approbation, who, as a foreigner, must necessarily be a candid judge, I shall always regard the anger of both as the surest warrant of my impartiality.

As I find that you are pleased to employ your leisure hours in the perusal of history, I shall presume to recommend to your ladyship a late work of this kind, wrote by my friend and countryman, Dr. Robertson, which has met with the highest approbation from all good judges.

It is the “History of Scotland” during the age of the unfortunate Queen Mary; and it is wrote in an elegant, agreeable, and interesting manner, and far exceeding, I shall venture to say, any performance of that kind that has appeared in English. The failings of that princess are not covered over; but her singular catastrophe is rendered truly lamentable and tragical; and the reader cannot forbear shedding tears for her fate, at the same time that he blames her conduct. There are few historical productions, where both the subject and execution have appeared so happy.

Some prospect is now given us, that this miserable war between the two nations is drawing towards a period, and that the former intercourse between them will again be renewed. If this happy event take place, I have entertained hopes that my affairs will permit me to take a journey to Paris; and the obliging offer, which you are pleased to make me, of allowing me to pay my respects to you, will prove a new and very powerful inducement to make me hasten the execution of my purpose.

But I give your ladyship warning, that I shall, on many accounts, stand in need of your indulgence. I passed a few years in France during my early youth; but I lived in a provincial town, where I enjoyed the advantages of leisure for study, and an opportunity of learning the language: what I had imperfectly learned, long disuse, I am afraid, has made me forget. I have rusted amid books and study; have been little engaged in the active, and not much in the pleasurable scenes of life; and am more accustomed to a select society than to general companies.

But all these disadvantages, and much greater, will be abundantly compensated by the honour of your ladyship's protection; and I hope that my profound sense of your obliging favours will render me not altogether unworthy of it.

I have the honour to be, with the greatest respect, madam, your ladyship's most obedient and most humble servant.

In return, Madame De Boufflers reiterates her compliments, vouches for her sincerity, and if Hume should fulfil his intention of visiting France, offers him the use of apartments, saying, that if he accept the offer it will be an infinite obligation to her; if he refuse it, she will be vexed but not offended. She will introduce him to her circle of friends, and do every thing that can tend to make his visit agreeable. In answer to this, Hume finds that the warlike aspect of affairs will preclude him, in the meantime, from enjoying the society "of a person so celebrated for her accomplishments by all who have any knowledge of the court of France."

Mr. Murray's praise of Madame de Boufflers' knowledge of the English language was not misapplied; as the following short letter, and another of greater length, which will be found a few pages farther on, show. With a few inaccuracies, they afford a very remarkable instance of idiomatic acquaintance with our tongue.

"I have received, sir, by an unknown hand, the continuation of your admirable performance. Some little perhaps of the pride so common in my sex, but much more the desire to contract an obligation with a man of your merit, and to obtain from him so valuable a favour, have persuaded me I was indebted to you for it. 'Tis natural to bend our thoughts towards what is most advantageous for us, however elevated it may be. The wrong should be only to believe we deserve it. Then, sir, I think, that in wishing such a proof of your kindness, and confessing in the same time I have no right to pretend to it, I prove my just opinion of both. I am, sir, your humble servant.

“Paris, May 29, 1762.”

On this, Hume, after observing with ingenious courtesy, that a fairy, a sylph, or a good genius, who knew his inmost thoughts, must have anticipated him in sending the copy of his History, continues:— “But, madam, what new wonder is this which your letter presents to me? I not only find a lady, who, in the bloom of beauty and height of reputation, can withdraw herself from the pleasures of a gay court, and find leisure to cultivate the sciences; but deigns to support a correspondence with a man of letters in a remote country, and to reward his labours by a suffrage the most agreeable of all others, to a man who has any spark of generous sentiments or taste for true glory. Besides these unusual circumstances, I find a lady, who, without any other advantages than her own talents, has made herself mistress of a language commonly esteemed very difficult to strangers, and possesses it to such a degree as might give jealousy to us who have made it the business of our lives to acquire and cultivate it.

“I cannot but congratulate my country on this incident, which marks the progress made by its literature and reputation in foreign countries.”

Nearly contemporary with the Comtesse de Boufflers, comes on the scene a person with whom we shall hereafter have much concern, Jean Jacques Rousseau. He had been living under the protection of the Maréchal de Luxembourg, in the celebrated hermitage near the castle of Montmorency, when he published his “Emile.” Highly as he was supported, the wrath of the clergy prevailed; and a writ of *prise de corps* was issued for his apprehension. It appears that in those strange times of intolerance and infidelity, there would have been no cause of wonder, if the proceedings had ended in a capital conviction. With the aid of his friends, the Luxembourgs and Choiseuls, Rousseau fled the kingdom. On this occasion he seems to have been thoroughly frightened; and his conduct was occasioned neither by ostentation, nor perverse discontent. His first place of refuge was Neufchâtel, one of the Swiss Cantons, of which the sovereignty was in the house of Brandenburg. Rousseau was thus for a time one of the illustrious literary men under the protection of Frederick the Great, though distant from his philosophical capital.

He appealed, however, to a warmer heart than ever beat in the breast of the conqueror of Prague. The exiled Earl Marischal of Scotland — a valued friend of Hume, as of all who became acquainted with him — was then Governor of Neufchâtel. Subsequently to his flight from his native country, for his concern in the rebellion of 1715, when he was a mere youth, he had suffered a long series of hardships, privations, and uncertainties; until Frederick saw his value, and purchased his services at such a rate as a friendless exile might not refuse. Adversity, which too often hardens the selfishness, and debases the propensities of an aristocracy driven from home by internal convulsions, had but taught him how much men are dependent on each other, and had opened his heart to a wider sympathy with his fellow creatures. His opinions were as tolerant as his nature was kind; and the fugitive could not have sought an asylum where he would be more sincerely welcomed. The power of the king of Prussia's representative, was, however, not sufficient to protect him from the people, — or from himself; and from the time of his flight from France, those who believed that he sincerely desired a retreat where he would be safe from all molestation, looked towards Britain. The following letters from the forfeited earl, at a few months' interval from each other, chiefly relate to Rousseau. The earl appears to have been so thoroughly imbued with foreign habits, that he wrote English with difficulty: most of his letters to Hume are in French, and when he commences in English, he generally relapses into French. Though so long employed by the Prussian court, he seems to have been ignorant of German. It may be observed, however, that French is the vernacular language of Neufchâtel.

The forfeited Earl Marischal *to* Hume.

April 29.

In answer to your question, the Donquixotisme you mention never entered into my head. I wish I could see you, to answer honestly all your questions; for though I had my share of folly with others, yet as my intentions were at bottom honest, I should open to you my whole budget, and let you know many things which are perhaps ill-represented, I mean not truly. I remember to have recommended to your acquaintance Mr. Floyd, son to old David Floyd, at St. Germains, as a man of good sense, honour, and honesty. I fear he is dead: he would have been of great service to you in a part of your History since 1688. Apropos of History, when you see Helvetius, tell I desired you to inquire of him concerning a certain History. I fancy he will answer you with his usual frankness. I do believe Mr. Rousseau will find it impossible to live where he finds nobody who understands a word of what he says; there occurs so often occasion, even of trifling things necessary, that it is a vexation not to understand the language of the country. I feel it often, though I understand many words of German, such as kleigh, nigh, nogh, ter migh, ter Teyfel, and others, high sounding as here pronounced, and of which the Ter Tunder would, I believe, put to flight the delicate ears of the whole town of Sienna.

I hear you are going to France this summer. If you will come to Frankfort on Main, I will meet you there the end of July, and stay with you a fortnight. Bon jour.

N.B. — You have better roads than I, you are strong as a giant, and I am growing ten years older every month; so I think my offer fair.

Oct. 2, 1762.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, persecuted for having writ what he thinks good, or rather, as some folks think, for having displeased persons in great power, who attributed to him what he never meant, came here to seek retreat, which I readily granted; and the king of Prussia not only approved of my so doing, but gave me orders to furnish him his small necessaries, if he would accept them; and though that king’s philosophy be very different from that of Jean Jacques, yet he does not think that a man of an irreproachable life is to be persecuted because his sentiments are singular. He designs to build him a hermitage with a little garden, which I find he will not accept, nor perhaps the rest which I have not yet offered to him. He is gay in company, polite, and what the French call *aimable*, and gains ground daily in the opinion of even the clergy here. His enemies elsewhere continue to persecute him: he is pestered with anonymous letters. This is not a country for him: his attachment and love to his native town is a strong tie to its neighbourhood. The liberty of England, and the character of my good and honoured friend, D. Hume, F —— i D —— r, (perhaps more singular than that of J. Jacques, for I take him to be the only historian impartial,) draws his inclinations to be near to the F —— i D —— r. For my part, though it be to me a very great pleasure to converse with the honest savage, yet I advise him to go to England, where he will enjoy

—— placidam sub libertate quietem.

He wishes to know, if he can print all his works, and make some profit, merely to live, from such an edition. I entreat you will let me know your thoughts on this, and if you can be of use to him in finding him a bookseller to undertake the work: you know he is not interested, and little will content him. If he goes to Britain, he will be a treasure to you, and you to him, and perhaps both to me (if I were not so old.) I have offered him lodging in Keith-hall. I am ever, with the greatest regard, your most obedient servant,

M —— .

At the same time Madame de Boufflers wrote as follows: —

Madame de Boufflers *to* Hume.

(*Translation.*)

Paris, 16th June, 1762.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, citizen of Geneva, and the author of many works with which you are probably acquainted, has composed a Treatise on Education, in four volumes, in which he sets forth many principles contrary to ours, both in politics and religion. As we do not enjoy here the liberty of the press, the Parliament, by a decree, just, (if it is, as I doubt not, conformable to the laws of the kingdom,) but nevertheless rigorous, has decreed the *prise de corps*; and it is said that, if he had not taken to flight, he would have been condemned to death. I can scarcely think they could have proceeded so far against him as a stranger; but, be that as it may, it would have been imprudent in him to remain in France under such circumstances. He has therefore departed, uncertain what asylum he will choose. I have advised him to go to England, promising him letters of recommendation to you, and other friends. I fulfil my promise, and I cannot, in my opinion, choose for him, in all Europe, a protector more respectable by his position, and more to be commended for his humanity. M. Rousseau is known to the greater part of the people in this country for an eccentric man. This epithet, according to its true signification, is most justly applied to him; for he differs, in many respects, in his modes of acting and thinking, from the men of his day. He has an upright heart, a noble and disinterested soul. He dreads every species of dependence, and consequently would have preferred being in France, gaining his subsistence by copying music, to receiving benefits even from his best friends, who are anxious to make up for his misfortunes. This delicacy may appear excessive, but it is not criminal, and it even augurs elevated sentiments. He flies from intercourse with the world; he feels pleasure only in solitude. This partiality for retirement has made him enemies. The self-love of those who court him is wounded by his rebuffs; but notwithstanding such apparent misanthropy, I do not believe you will find any where, a man more gentle, more humane, more compassionate to the sorrows of others, and more patient under his own. In short, his virtue appears so pure, so contented, so equal, that, until now, those who hated him could find only in their own heart reasons for suspecting him. As for me, with appearances so much in his favour, I would rather be deceived than doubt his sincerity.

From the opinion that I have of him, sir, he has been judged worthy of being known to you; and in procuring him this honour, I believe I give the most marked proof of my consideration for him.

To this Hume made answer in the postscript of the letter cited above.

“P.S. — So far I had wrote in answer to your ladyship’s of the 29th of May, when I was again honoured with yours of the 14th of June. Good God! madam, how much I regret my being absent from London on this occasion, which deprives me of the opportunity of showing in person my regard for your recommendation, and my esteem, I had almost said veneration, for the virtue and genius of M. Rousseau. I assure your ladyship there is no man in Europe of whom I have entertained a higher idea, and whom I would be prouder to serve; and as I find his reputation very high in England, I hope every one will endeavour to make him sensible of it by civilities, and by services, as far as he will accept of them. I revere his greatness of mind, which makes him fly obligations and dependence; and I have the vanity to think, that through the course of my life I have endeavoured to resemble him in those maxims.

“But as I have some connexions with men of rank in London, I shall instantly write to them, and endeavour to make them sensible of the honour M. Rousseau has done us in choosing an asylum in England. We are happy at present in a king who has a taste for literature; and I hope M. Rousseau will find the advantage of it, and that he will not disdain to receive benefits from a great monarch, who is sensible of his merit. I am only afraid that your friend will find his abode in England not so agreeable as may be wished, if he does not possess the language, which I am afraid is the case: for I never could observe in his writings any marks of his acquaintance with the English tongue.”

From these communications, Hume derived the notion that Rousseau had immediately proceeded to London. The following paragraph, in a letter from Elliot, indicates the nature of the inquiries pursued under this supposition.

Dear Sir, — As soon as I received your letter, I applied to Mr. Home, who had also heard from you by the same post, and desired him to make all possible inquiry after M. Rousseau. If he be in London we shall certainly find him out; and I need not assure you, that both on account of his own merit, and your recommendation, I shall not fail to show him all the attention in my power. I should doubt, from the known character of the man, whether he would accept a pension if it could be procured for him; and should rather apprehend that, though this government will protect and tolerate the boldness of his pen, yet it will hardly reward it. Rousseau is not the only man of genius, the singularity of whose opinions has intercepted the rewards due to the superiority of his talents.

In the supposition that he had passed over to England, Hume addressed a letter to Rousseau, as then in London, which was answered by the Chien de Diogène, as Voltaire called him, from his retreat in Neufchâtel, on 19th February, 1763. He says he has just received the letter, regrets that he should have made the mistake of trusting himself among his own countrymen, who have treated him with insult and outrage, instead of seeking the hospitable shores of Britain. He does something like justice to the kindness of Lord Marischal, in the midst of his general mordacity and discontent; and he praises the wide views, the wonderful impartiality, the genius of Hume, which would raise him so far above the rest of his kind, did not the goodness of his heart bring him nearer to their level.

The following letter from Madame de Boufflers, written in English, had been received in the meantime.

Madame de Boufflers *to* Hume.

July 30.

How difficult it is, sir, for one very far from being insensible to reputation, to refuse the praises of a man, whose sincerity and admirable talents render them so valuable. But in regard to veracity, and perhaps more to my true interest, I am obliged to acknowledge, I stand a great distance, for internal or external accomplishments, from the favourable opinion you have taken of me, whether, in consulting the noble sentiments which ever inspire you with sublime ideas, whether in hearkening to some of your countrymen, disposed to indulgence towards me, by my well-known inclination for their country.

Perhaps, sir, I confess it with ingenuity, had I been doomed to be never personally acquainted with you, I should not have generosity enough to correct your judgment of me. But in this particular occasion, as in all other, according to my humble opinion, right and good are closely united. What a shame indeed for me, and disappointment for you, in place of the object your imagination has adorned with such shining qualifications, to find a person to whom Nature has granted but indifferent ones. A great part of my youth is over. Some delicacy in features, mildness and decency in countenance, are the only exterior advantages I can boast of; and as for interior, common sense, improved a little by early good reading, are all I possess. My knowledge of the English language also is confined, as you can easily perceive. I have, indeed, acquired without assistance that which I know of it; but if I am entitled to some elegancy, I owe it to the repeated readings of your admirable works.

After this true picture of myself, in which I have struggled to exert the noble impartiality and candour which shine in all your writings, my first care is, sir, to acknowledge the infinite obligations you have conferred upon me by your kind letter. I have translated the P. S. to send it to my friend. The esteem of such a man must be the best balm for his wounded heart. But I am afraid he will not accept the glorious support you are so good as to offer him. I fear that the weight of his calamities has impaired his health, and he cannot sustain the fatigues of a long journey. In his last letter to me, he expresses a resolution never to see England upon that account. Nevertheless, I am informed since, that new persecutions may possibly determine him to alter his mind. An irregular trial has deprived him of the natural rights in his own country. The commonwealth of Berne, from the example of Geneva and France, has burnt his book, and he has been reduced to leave in a hurry the asylum that a friend had proffered him there. Such are the grievous misfortunes of this virtuous and unhappy man. I pity, I love him, and wish earnestly to sooth the sorrows under which he labours. Nevertheless, sir, I would fain also vindicate the honour of my nation in the eyes of so good a judge as you are. The reflection you cast upon it gives uneasiness; but mistrusting greatly my capacity, I fear to betray the cause I would defend by an enterprise so unequal to my force. I dare only to say, that your happy country has not attained in a moment the perfect constitution which gives us admiration. All convenient and well-calculated laws are not framed at once; and those most exceptionable, while they stand, deserve obedience and respect.

Is it possible, sir, that this late unhappy event could deprive of the honour of your presence, a country filled with your fervent admirers, and where every one will endeavour to outdo each other in expressing the veneration and regard you so justly deserve? I hope you will not keep this severe resolution. If we want a liberty you think an advantage, ’tis a reason to pity, and not to punish us. Besides, your case and that of M. Rousseau, though both foreigners in France, are quite different. Few days before I received your letter, I heard that it was a friend of mine who has favoured me with your last performance. I am infinitely obliged to him for this gracious gift, and to you, sir, for your good intention.

But what strange a creature will you think me, to venture to point a mistake in a work so perfect? In several parts of the first volume our countryman Godefroy of Bouillon is named Godefroy de Boulogne. You have reasons, perhaps, for the alteration, and I am ready to submit to them. I would only express my doubts: I hope you will excuse this freedom.

Since I have gone so far, permit me, sir, to ask your opinion upon the last book of M. Rousseau. I should be very glad to have my judgment of it confirmed or mended by yours. Nothing would be wanting to my satisfaction, if in the same letter, where you could grant me the favour I wish for, I was assured you had renewed the project to come here, and that you would speedily execute it. I am, sir, with esteem, gratitude, and, permit me to add, friendship, your most humble servant.

In answer to this letter, Hume says that he had at first regarded it as a sort of challenge to answer it in French, but that he had given up the attempt as an unequal contest with “the sole instance of a foreigner, not habituated to our tongue, who has, from reading alone, become so entirely mistress of it.” He then gives an account of the letter he had received from Lord Marischal, and says of Rousseau’s refusal of the kindnesses proferred to him,—“Rousseau, with his usual dignity, refused all these gratuities, though at the same time he desired my lord to learn from me, whether it were possible for him to gain from the London booksellers as much money as would suffice for his maintenance; and this recompense, being the fruit of his own industry, he would have no scruple to accept of. I think this instance of conduct a kind of phenomenon in the republic of letters, and one very honourable for M. Rousseau. One is only apt to wish that he could practise this virtue with less hardship and difficulty; though we must also confess, that the difficulty adds to the lustre of it. I have heard, that the circumstance which deterred him from coming over to England, as he first intended, was a harsh reflection, which he threw out on the people in his ‘Treatise of Education:’ if this was his motive, I am persuaded that he would find it a vain fear, and that every one would rather have been anxious to show respect to his merit.”

He then obeys the mandate to criticise the “Emile.”

You deign, madam, to ask my opinion of the new performance of M. Rousseau. I know that it becomes me better to form my judgment upon yours; but in compliance with your commands, I shall not make a secret of my sentiments. All the writings of that author appear to me admirable, particularly on the head of eloquence; and if I be not much mistaken, he gives to the French tongue an energy, which it scarce seems to have reached in any other hands. But as his enemies have objected, that with this domineering force of genius there is always intermingled some degree of extravagance, it is impossible for his friends altogether to deny the charge; and were it not for his frequent and earnest protestations to the contrary, one would be apt to suspect, that he chooses his topics less from persuasion, than from the pleasure of showing his invention, and surprising the reader by his paradoxes. The “Treatise of Education,” as it possesses much of the merit, seems also exposed to the faults of his other performances; and as he indulges his love of the marvellous even in so serious and important a subject, he has given a pledge to the public that he was in earnest in all his other topics. If I dared to object any thing to M. Rousseau’s eloquence, which is the shining side of his character, I should say, that it was not wholly free from the defect sometimes found in that of the Roman orator; and that their great talent for expression was apt to produce a prolixity in both. This last performance chiefly is exposed to this objection; and I own, that though it abounds in noble and shining passages, it gave me rather less pleasure than his former writings. However, it carries still the stamp of a great genius; and, what enhances its beauty, the stamp of a very particular genius. The noble pride and spleen and indignation of the author bursts out with freedom in a hundred places, and serves fully to characterize the lofty spirit of the man.

When I came to peruse that passage of Mons. Rousseau’s Treatise, which has occasioned all the persecution against him, I was not in the least surprised that it gave offence. He has not had the precaution to throw any veil over his sentiments; and as he scorns to dissemble his contempt of established opinions, he could not wonder that all the zealots were in arms against him. The liberty of the press is not so secured in any country, scarce even in this, as not to render such an open attack of popular prejudices somewhat dangerous.

In 1761, Dr. Blair communicated to Hume the sermon by Dr. Campbell, which, when subsequently expanded, became the "Dissertation on Miracles," already referred to. On this occasion, Hume wrote in the following terms to Dr. Blair: —

"Dear Sir, — I have perused the ingenious performance, which you was so obliging as to put into my hands, with all the attention possible; though not perhaps with all the seriousness and gravity which you have so frequently recommended to me. But the fault lies not in the piece, which is certainly very acute; but in the subject. I know you will say, it lies in neither, but in myself alone. If that be so, I am sorry to say that I believe it is incurable.

"I could wish that your friend had not chosen to appear as a controversial writer, but had endeavoured to establish his principles in general, without any reference to a particular book or person; though I own he does me a great deal of honour, in thinking that any thing I have wrote deserves his attention. For besides many inconveniences which attend that kind of writing, I see it is almost impossible to preserve decency and good manners in it. This author, for instance, says sometimes obliging things of me, much beyond what I can presume to deserve, and I thence conclude that in general he did not mean to insult me; yet I meet with some other passages, more worthy of Warburton and his followers, than of so ingenious an author.

"But as I am not apt to lose my temper, and would still less incline to do so with a friend of yours, I shall calmly communicate to you some remarks on the argument, since you seem to desire it. I shall employ very few words, since a hint will suffice to a gentleman of this author's penetration."

This is followed by a particular examination of some parts of Dr. Campbell's work, which may be perused to most advantage in conjunction with the Dissertation itself, along with which the letter is generally printed. He then says, —

"I could wish your friend had not denominated me an infidel writer, on account of ten or twelve pages, which seem to him to have that tendency, while I have wrote so many volumes on history, literature, politics, trade, morals, which, in that particular at least, are entirely inoffensive. Is a man to be called a drunkard, because he has been seen fuddled once in his lifetime?"

The letter terminates with a recommendation which accounts for the absence of all observations on religious topics in the correspondence between Blair and Hume: while it shows that their intercourse had not always excluded discussions of such a character.

"Having said so much to your friend, who is certainly a very ingenious man, though a little too zealous for a philosopher, permit me also the freedom of saying a word to yourself. Whenever I have had the pleasure to be in your company, if the discourse turned upon any common subject of literature, or reasoning, I always parted from you both entertained and instructed. But when the conversation was diverted by you from this channel towards the subject of your profession; though I doubt not but your intentions were very friendly towards me, I own I never received the same satisfaction: I was apt to be tired, and you to be angry. I would therefore wish, for the future, whenever my good fortune throws me in your way, that these topics should be forborne between us. I have long since done with all inquiries on such subjects, and am become incapable of instruction; though I own no one is more capable of conveying it than yourself. After having given you the liberty of communicating to your friend what part of this letter you think proper, I remain, sir," &c.

Hume afterwards wrote the following letter on the same subject: —

Hume *to* Dr. Campbell.

"January 7, 1762.

"Dear Sir, — It has so seldom happened that controversies in philosophy, much more in theology, have been carried on without producing a personal quarrel between the parties, that I must regard my present situation as somewhat extraordinary, who have reason to give you thanks for the civil and obliging manner in which you have conducted the dispute against me, on so interesting a subject as that of miracles. Any little symptoms of vehemence, of which I formerly used the freedom to complain, when you favoured me with a sight of the manuscript, are either removed or explained away, or atoned for by civilities, which are far beyond what I have any title to pretend to. It will be natural for you to imagine, that I will fall upon some shift to evade the force of your arguments, and to retain my former opinion in the point controverted between us; but it is impossible for me not to see the ingenuity of your performance, and the great learning which you have displayed against me.

"I consider myself as very much honoured in being thought worthy of an answer by a person of so much merit; and as I find that the public does you justice with regard to the ingenuity and good composition of your piece, I hope you will have no reason to repent engaging with an antagonist, whom, perhaps, in strictness, you might have ventured to neglect. I own to you, that I never felt so violent an inclination to defend myself as at present, when I am thus fairly challenged by you, and I think I could find something specious at least to urge in my defence; but as I had fixed a resolution, in the beginning of my life, always to leave the public to judge between my adversaries and me, without making any reply, I must adhere inviolably to this resolution, otherwise my silence on any future occasion would be construed an inability to answer, and would be matter of triumph against me."

He then, in the passage already cited, describes the occasion on which the "Theory of Miracles" was suggested to him.

In answer to this, there is a letter by Campbell, in which he endeavours to rival his opponent in candour, politeness, and gentlemanlike feeling. The happy courtesy with which he apologizes for the occasionally irascible tone of his essay, shows that the retired northern divine possessed in no small degree the qualities that might have adorned a more showy station.

Dr. Campbell *to* Hume.

25th June, 1762.

The testimony you are pleased to give in favour of my performance, is an honour of which I should be entirely unworthy, were I not sensible of the uncommon generosity you have shown in giving it. Ever since I was acquainted with your works, your talents as a writer have, notwithstanding some differences in abstract principles, extorted from me the highest veneration. But I could scarce have thought that, in spite of differences of a more interesting nature, even such as regard morals and religion, you could ever force me to love and honour you as a man. Yet no religious prejudices (as you would probably term them,) can hinder me from doing justice to that goodness and candour, which appear in every line of your letter.

It would be in vain to dissemble the pleasure which it gives me, that I am thought to have acquitted myself tolerably in a dispute with an author of such acknowledged merit. At the same time, it gives me real pain, that any symptoms of vehemence (which are not so easily avoided in disputation as one would imagine,) should give so generous an adversary the least ground of complaint. You have (if I remember right, for I have not the book here,) in the appendix to the third volume of your “Treatise on Human Nature,” apologized for using sometimes the expressions— ’Tis certain, ’Tis evident, and the like. These, you observe, were in a manner forced from you by the strong, though transient light in which a particular object then appeared, and are therefore not to be considered as at all inconsistent with the general principles of scepticism which are maintained in the Treatise. My apology is somewhat similar. There is in all controversy a struggle for victory, which I may say compels one to take every fair advantage that either the sentiments or the words of an antagonist present him with. But the appearances of asperity or raillery, which one will be thereby necessarily drawn into, ought not to be constructed as in the least affecting the habitual good opinion, or even the high esteem, which the writer may nevertheless entertain of his adversary.

CHAPTER XII.

1762-1763. Æt. 51-52.

The Publication of the History anterior to the Accession of the Tudors — Completion of the History — Inquiry how far it is a complete History — Hume's Intention to write an Ecclesiastical History — Opinions of Townsend and others on his History — Appreciation of the Fine Arts — Hume's House in James's Court — Its subsequent occupation by Boswell and Johnson — Conduct of David Mallet — Hume's Projects — The Douglas Cause — Correspondence with Reid.

In 1762 there was published, in two quarto volumes, the "History of England, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar, to the Accession of Henry VII." The farther back we proceed from those periods of which a full narrative of historical events is preserved by contemporary chroniclers, into those more obscure ages when even the lines of kings are hardly preserved, and fragments of laws, or of long obsolete literature, and antiquarian relics, are the historian's only guide, the less satisfactory is Hume's history, when compared with other historical works. The earliest part is thus the least valuable. He had here, however, to encounter difficulties which we are only at this day able to estimate, in the absence of those materials which the industry of antiquaries has lately brought to light, to so great an extent, as almost necessarily to supersede Hume's "History of England" during the early ages, as a source of historical knowledge.

But both in this and the other departments of his work, we are bound to estimate Hume, as we do great workmen in all departments of mental labour, not by the state of his science at the present day, but by that in which he found it. To comprehend how far it may be practicable for any one mind to create a full and satisfactory history of the island of Great Britain, without having the advantage of the previous labours of many minds, occupied in elucidating the details of the various branches of knowledge with which he has to deal, let us cast a casual glance at the prominent topics which must be fully discussed in such a History, if it be a satisfactory work.

The historian should be master of every scrap of information contained in Greek or Roman authors, about the connexion of the people of the ancient world with our island. In the works of Cæsar and Tacitus this will be a simple matter; but scattered about among the productions of the Panegyrists, and in other such obscure quarters, there are many important incidental notices, which will not be so easily found or so satisfactorily interpreted. To this the investigator must add more recondite stores of knowledge, collected from etymological investigations among the roots of languages — Celtic and Teutonic. He must study Strabo, Ptolemy, and the other geographers; and interpreting the information collected from them, and the incidents derived from the other sources above alluded to, with his etymological inquiries, he must endeavour to solve the vexed questions about the migration of races — whether the Cimbri were pure Celts? whether the Welsh are the descendants of that race? whether the Caledonii, with whom Agricola fought, were Celts? who and what were those mysterious people, called the Picts?

There must be some criticism, however unsatisfactory it may be, on the worship anterior to the introduction of Christianity, and on the vestiges of that and of other early customs supposed to be supplied by the remnants of ancient masonry and engineering, with which our island abounds. The historian must next be able to show what is truly known, and what is not, regarding the inroads of the Teutonic tribes, and must be able to fathom the learning of the German antiquaries on this department of history. Here the early literature of Ireland, of which so much has lately been printed by O’Conor and others, and the relics of Scandinavian metrical histories, will widen the inquiry, while they render it more satisfactory.

Having got these settlers from the Teutonic tribes, the Saxons as they are generally called, established in the island, the peculiar internal policy, national character, and literature of Britain, begin to assume a shape under the eye of the historian, and to gather round them their distinctive attributes as he proceeds. He will soon have to deal with the birth of laws and customs, which, modelled to the progress of an increasing population and civilisation, are still in daily practice.

From this epoch downwards, he has to watch the changes of the national literature. Observing it in its purely Anglo-Saxon period, he must estimate the extent to which it was altered by the adoption of Norman-French as a court language, while Anglo-Saxon still continued to be the tongue of the common people; and mark the continued existence of this fundamental Teutonic speech, and its action upon the language of the court, until the former became the established literary language of the day, the latter merely imparting to it one of its characteristic features. Thus tracing these elements from their respective sources down to the days of Chaucer, the influence of the revival of classical learning upon modern language and thought must find a place, and English literature must be described in its progress towards and arrival at full manhood. Along with this inquiry, there should be an ancillary investigation into the causes why the language and literature of the Scottish lowlands have so long differed from those of England, though both springing from the same root.

Returning to the Anglo-Saxon period, another and more laborious inquiry opens in the department of the laws and public institutions. There must be a search after those which were peculiar to the Anglo-Saxons; and in dealing with authorities posterior to the conquest, the historian must carefully sift them, that he may ascertain the extent to which any law or custom was undoubtedly Anglo-Saxon. After having ascertained how much of the spirit of feudal institutions had tinged the purely Saxon usages, he must next follow the progress of feudalism abroad, and fully explain the effect produced on Britain by its full grown importation at the era of the Conquest. In conjunction with this large inquiry, the jurisprudence of Rome must be kept in view; first, as some relics of it in municipal institutions, and otherwise, may have been associated with the very earliest forms of internal organization in modern Europe; and secondly, after its letter had been buried for centuries, as it was resuscitated by the civilians and canonists, and brought in array against the common law of England, and amalgamated with the feudal system in Scotland. From these elements the history of Parliament and of municipal bodies, the prerogatives of the crown, and the rights and privileges of the subject, together with the practical administration of the law, ought all to be developed in their origin and growth. The state of knowledge and of opinion among the people at large, on political matters, and particularly on the manner in which they are governed, should form a part of this constitutional inquiry.

The history of religion should occupy a conspicuous place in the historian’s studies. In the folios of the Bollandists, no inconsiderable portion of the scanty records of the civil history of the period are to be found. A full and patient study of the Roman Catholic creed and polity in their rise and development, is necessary for the effectual employment of the knowledge thus acquired; and it is needless to say how many other creeds and systems must be studied by the historian of Britain. By observing its mere results on the outward history of a people, the inquirer will never know the real influence of any system of religious tenets. A brief survey shows us the outward demonstrations. But to be acquainted with the character of the internal impulses of any religious creed, to see how the fire glows and radiates within the bosom of the votary, we must study the vital elements of the creed itself with industry and with zeal.

The language and literature of the country have already been alluded to. The state of the arts at different times must be carefully watched and explained. To accomplish this task, the historian should possess a wide knowledge of the principles and practice of art: not that conventional knowledge which teaches him how to distinguish from all that are below them those efforts which are entitled to the approbation of the fastidious, but the catholic spirit, which enables the mind fully to estimate progress before perfection is reached.

All the departments of the historian’s knowledge are more or less blended with each other. From the sixth century downwards, for several ages, the coinage of the realm only marks the state of the arts or serves to adjust disputed chronologies: gradually, however, the historian feels it becoming involved with more complex elements connected with the state of society, and at last the great question of the currency and the monetary system of the country has to be grappled with. Here the whole field of political economy is opened up. It is needless to say, that the historian, especially he who treats of a people in any degree civilized, must be thoroughly imbued with political economy.

The state of manufactures and of the sciences should not be neglected. A history of Britain during the nineteenth century, containing no account of the triumphs of the steam engine, or of the progress of railway engineering, would give a very imperfect view of the living progress of the nation. The history of the early period would be more satisfactory, if it informed us when the pump and the potter’s wheel were first used in Britain. Closely akin to this subject is the progress of agriculture, which, however, is a matter simpler and more easy of attainment than many of the historian's other objects of inquiry.

In truth, it may be safely said, that every circumstance that can be discovered concerning the particular country, and every thing, whether animate or inanimate that is on its surface, comes within the compass of its history, using that word in the sense of merely civil history, — unless in so far as it belongs to what is natural history. And yet even from this science civil history has many lights to receive. Human physiology is intimately connected with the elucidations of the historian; and it would appear that, in regard to the influence of political institutions on the physical as well as the moral state of races of men, we are still only on the threshold of knowledge. Here the physiologist, and the recorder of political events, who heretofore have travelled on different roads, may some day or other find a common object of exertion, and may tell us, by their united labours, why the race that inhabited ancient Egypt, from being the most inventive, should have been among the most supine of people; why the Chinese should have passed through an epoch of active discovery, and should have thenceforth, unlike the rest of the world, neither forgotten nor improved the fruits of their original enterprise; why the Celts, once the nurses of European learning, should, at a later time, have appeared as if doomed to retire before the ardent genius of the Teutonic race; and why this race, after being long inferior to other branches of the Caucasian family, should appear, with British enterprise and German thought, likely to absorb the faculties of the rest of mankind.

The historian must not wholly neglect other natural productions. The inferior animals and the vegetable kingdom are intimately connected with the fate of the human beings who are the immediate object of his labours. With geology he may appear to have comparatively little concern; yet the marble of Greece, and the coal and iron of Britain, have had no little influence on the destinies of these nations.

Hume did so much towards the completion of that circle of knowledge with which the historian has to deal, that he was the first to add to a mere narrative of events, an inquiry into the progress of the people, and of their arts, literature, manners, and general social condition. This attempt was so original, that, as it embodied in some measure the theory developed in Voltaire's "*Essai sur les Moeurs*," first published in 1756, when the first volume of the “History of the Stuarts” had been two years before the public, it was supposed that Hume might have borrowed the idea from some fragments of that work which had been surreptitiously printed with the title “*Abrégé de l’Histoire Universelle*.” There seems to be no room, however, for such a supposition. Hume’s own “Political Discourses” are as close an approach to this method of inquiry as the work of Voltaire; and if we look for such productions of other writers as may have led him into this train of thought, it would be more just to name Bacon and Montesquieu. The works of such authors as Guizot and Hallam may teach us that much had to be added to Hume’s system of historical composition, to render it perfect; but they do so in the same manner as the last steam engine shows us how many improvements have been made on the inventions of Watt.

We now resume the correspondence with Millar. The letter immediately following, puts beyond a doubt, what had only been partially believed, that Hume had, at one time, expressed an intention of writing an ecclesiastical history. Of the manner in which he would have executed such a task, opinions will widely vary.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 15th March, 1762.

“Dear Sir, — I am very glad that you are in so good a way, and that you think so soon of making a new edition. I am running over both the ancient history and the Tudors, and shall send you them up by the wagon as soon as they are corrected. Please tell Mr. Strahan, to keep carefully this copy I send up, as well as that which I left of the Stuarts; for if you intend to print an octavo edition next summer, it will be better to do it from these copies which are corrected, than from the new edition, where there will necessarily be some errors of the press.

“I give you full authority to contradict the report, that I am writing or intend to write an ecclesiastical history; I have no such intention; and I believe never shall. I am beginning to love peace very much, and resolve to be more cautious than formerly in creating myself enemies. But in contradicting this report, you will be so good as not to impeach Mr. Mallet’s veracity; for ’tis certain I said to Lord Chesterfield (from whom Mr. Mallet first had it) that I had entertained such a thought; but my saying so proceeded less from any serious purpose, than from a view of trying how far such an idea would be relished by his lordship.

“I have not laid aside thoughts of continuing my History to the period after the Revolution. It is not amiss to be idle a little time; but it is probable I shall tire of that kind of life: and if I then find that the public desires to see more of me, and that the great will not shut up their papers from me, I shall set to work in earnest.

“I never thought that Lord Kames’ Elements would be a popular book; but I hoped, that, as you engage for no copy money, it would certainly defray the charge of paper and print; and on that footing alone I recommended it to you. I find the author’s expectations raised up to a vast pitch, and indeed there are some parts of the work ingenious and curious; but it is too abtruse and crabbed ever to take with the public. As to the advice you desire me to give him, it is certainly very salutary; but I fancy neither I nor any other of his friends will ever venture to mention it. The admonitions, which come from you, are commonly the most effectual; and if this book do not sell, I think it were not amiss, that you tell him the plain truth without disguise or circumlocution. I find the booksellers here have sold off all their share of my Essays, and are desirous of another edition, which, however, I told them, I believed you was not ready for. I desire to be informed two or three months before you put it to the press: because I intend to make some considerable alterations on some parts of them.

“I hope Mrs. Millar intends to pay us a visit next summer, and that you will be of the party. Please make my most sincere respects to her. I am, dear Sir,” &c.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“8th April, 1762.

“I shall answer your story of Charles Townsend very fully, by another story of the same gentleman. Three years ago, when I was in London, I was told by a friend, that Mr. Townsend said, that my History of the Stuarts (the only one then published,) was full of gross blunders in the facts: he had consulted all the authentic documents, particularly the journals of the House of Commons, and found it so. When I made light of this information, as knowing somewhat of Mr. Townsend’s hasty manner of speaking, my friend said, that I ought not so much to neglect the matter; because Mr. Townsend had told him that Mr. Dyson, clerk to the House of Commons, a man of knowledge and solidity, had made to him the same observation. I was a little surprised and alarmed at this; and I went to Mr. Elliot, whom I desired to speak to Mr. Dyson, and to tell him that there was nothing in the world I desired so much as to be informed of my errors, and that he would oblige me extremely by pointing out those mistakes. Mr. Dyson replied, that he had never in his life spoke of the matter to Mr. Townsend; and that though he differed from me in my reasonings and views of the constitution, he had observed no blunders in facts, except one with regard to the dispensing power: which, by the bye, was the one also remarked to me by the Speaker, and which I corrected in the second edition. It was not an error with regard to the reign of James Second, but with regard to that of King William, which I had not sufficiently examined. I assure you there is not a quotation that I did not see with mine own eyes, except two or three at most, which I took from Tyrrel or Brady, because I had not the books referred to. That there is no mistake in such a number of references, would be rash or even absurd to affirm: that the printer also has not sometimes made mistakes in the name of the author or in the number of the page quoted, is what I dare not aver: for I only compared the sheet now and then with my manuscript, and was contented to be as correct as possible in the text. I knew that these mistakes could neither be frequent nor material. But if people, finding a few here and there, point them out, and give them as a specimen of the whole, I know no remedy for this malice, but to allow them to go on. Men of candour will judge otherwise without scrutiny: and men of diligence and industry will find that the case is otherwise, upon scrutiny.

“I have heard of Charles Townsend’s extolling and decrying me alternately, according as the humour bites; and all the world knows this to be his character. He is perhaps angry with me at present, because I did not wait of him when I was in London. It is strange, that great men in England should slight and neglect men of letters when they pay court to them, and rail at them when they do not. I have a regard to Mr. Townsend as a man of parts, I believe of very great parts; but I attach myself to no great man, and visit none of them but such as happen to be my friends, and particular acquaintance. I wish they would consider me as equally independent with themselves, or more so. However, there is no necessity of enraging Mr. Townsend farther by the story I told you in the first paragraph; and therefore I would not have you communicate it to any body, except a very particular friend whom you can trust. You may read the second paragraph to every body.”

In the following letter to Millar, we find him professing his ignorance of the practical application of the fine arts in engraving. Although he has written on the philosophy of taste, we find no traces in his writings of what the Germans have denominated the aesthetic; no sense of an internal emotion arising from the contemplation of works of art. In his travels, he had an opportunity of seeing many fine pictures, but he never mentions one; and it does not appear, from any incident in his life, or allusion in his letters, which I can remember, that he had ever really admired a picture or a statue.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Edinburgh, 17th May, 1762.

"I like much better your publishing in volumes than in numbers. Though this last method has been often practised, it has somewhat of a quackish air, which you have always avoided, as well as myself. I know not what to do for frontispieces; I have no manner of skill myself in designing, and am not able to point out the most proper subjects, nor the method of executing them. On the whole, I think it an expense which may be spared; but if you continue in the resolution of having some such ornament, I could write a letter to Allan Ramsay, who, I hope, would take the pains of directing the engraver. As to my head, I think that also a superfluous expense; and as there is no picture of me in London, I know not how it can be executed: with submission to you, would it not be better to throw these charges on the paper and print? I do not imagine, because these ornaments have helped off the sale of Smollett's History, that mine would be the better for them. These arts are seldom practised twice with the same success.

"I do not lose view of my design to continue my History, at least for two reigns more; but I question whether party prejudices with regard to me, are as yet sufficiently subsided, to enable me to carry on that work, without meeting with repulses and disgusts from those who have the materials in their power, which must serve for the foundation of my narrative: a little farther time will, I hope, operate that effect."

He concludes this letter by saying, "I remove my house this week to James's Court."

Entering a low gateway which pierces the line of lofty houses along the Lawnmarket, one finds oneself in a square court, surrounded by houses, which have now evidently fallen to the lot of humbler inhabitants than those for whom they were erected. These spaces, walled off by the intervening houses from the main street, were in the Scottish metropolis, like the similar edifices of the French nobility, frequently designed with the view of protecting those who dwelt within the gate from the unwelcome intrusion of either legal or illegal force. But it is probable that James's Court scarcely dates back to times so lawless, and that it was built early in the eighteenth century. The plan of a closed court was, perhaps, adopted as a means of enabling a small community to have the civic functions of lighting and cleaning performed more accurately than they were then administered to the inhabitants at large.

Entering one of the doors opposite the main entrance, the stranger is sometimes led by a friend, wishing to afford him an agreeable surprise, down flight after flight of the steps of a stone staircase, and when he imagines he is descending so far into the bowels of the earth, he emerges on the edge of a cheerful crowded thoroughfare, connecting together the Old and New Town; the latter of which lies spread before him, a contrast to the gloom from which he has emerged. When he looks up to the building containing the upright street through which he has descended, he sees that vast pile of tall houses standing at the head of the Mound, which creates astonishment in every visiter of Edinburgh. This vast fabric is built on the declivity of a hill, and thus one entering on the level of the Lawnmarket, is at the height of several stories from the ground on the side next the New Town. In Hume's day, a lake lay not many yards from the base of the building; and the whole space now occupied by the streets and squares of the New Town, was open ground, covered with woodland in those places where it did not consist of agricultural ground or barren heath. A full view of the surrounding country must have been possessed by every floor in this mass of buildings. I have ascertained that by ascending the western of the two stairs facing the entry of James's Court, to the height of three stories, we arrive at the door of David Hume's house, which, of the two doors on that landing-place, is the one towards the left.

Of the first impression made on a stranger, at that period, when entering such a house, a vivid description is given by Sir Walter Scott in "Guy Mannering;" and in Counsellor Pleydell's library, with its collection of books and the prospect from the window, we have probably an accurate picture of the room in which Hume spent his studious hours when he was in his own house in Edinburgh.

When Boswell describes the veritable locality of the house in which he did actually receive the illustrious Dr. Johnson, he tells us at the same time that it was in James's Court. Hume had then left his house, and it appears that James Boswell became his tenant. One cannot therefore resist the conclusion, that the house thus consecrated, was the very one which had been occupied by Hume. Would Boswell communicate such a fact, or tell what manner of man was the landlord of the habitation into which he had, under the guise of hospitality, entrapped the arch-intolerant? Who shall appreciate the mental conflict which Boswell may have experienced on this occasion! On the one side he would have to consider, whether it would not be more candid to let the appalling truth be known. But would Johnson have been able to "sleep o' nights" in such a house? The dilemma might not have been so easily solved as the dinner with Wilkes.

Hume's house was, during his absence in France, occupied by Dr. Blair; so that the old flat, three stories up from the entrance in James's Court, had in its day sheltered inmates of no common eminence.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Edinburgh, 22d Nov. 1762.

"Dear Sir, — As yours of the 16th of last month did not require any immediate reply, I have used the freedom to delay answering it. I am glad to find your two new editions so well advanced: I hope they will be successful. Some people tell me, that, as the two volumes last published do not shock any party prejudices, they have been better received than the former, and procure a good reception for the whole. If I should see them make any farther progress, it would be the best encouragement for me to proceed in writing the more recent history. I am far from losing sight of that project; but it is better not to begin it, till matters are more ripe for the execution, and till I find, that every one would frankly concur in opening their cabinets, and allowing me the use of all papers which may be necessary for my purpose. I had a letter from Mr. Mallet lately, by which I find, that he will no longer be an obstacle in my way; for he tells me that his History of the Duke of Marlborough is ready for the press; which is more than I or most people expected.

"Lord Marischal wrote me lately, that the celebrated Rousseau had taken shelter with him at Neufchâtel; but that he had thoughts of coming to England, and desired to know of me, if he could make an edition of his works by which he could gain a little money for his subsistence, as he was not interested. He wished also, that I could recommend him to a bookseller. You have told me, that you do not care to deal in French books; but if he should publish any new work, might he not have a translation of it ready to be published at the same time with the original? And would not you be willing to deal with him in that shape? I should think him very fortunate, if he were in your hands. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Millar, who, I hope, is at Bath, more for her amusement than her health. I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.

"P.S. — As your edition on royal paper is not numerous, I shall only desire three copies of it to be sent me, and shall reserve the other three for the octavo edition. Be so good therefore as to embark three copies in any parcel you send to Edinburgh. The peace will now make the intercourse of trade more open between us. The mention of peace reminds me to thank you for your assistance in making out my subscription last year, which is likely to turn out so much to my advantage. The stocks are now very high; but I suppose will not come to their full height this twelvemonth, and till then I fancy you will not think it prudent in me to sell out."

That Mallet had his History of the Duke of Marlborough ready for press, was, as Hume gently says, more than he or most people expected. However, Mallet seems to have convinced him that it really was the case; and his success in carrying conviction to the prince of sceptics, is a brilliant instance of that mingled cunning and impudence by which he had made himself a great man. The literary history of the life of Marlborough is well known. The duchess had left £1000 to Glover and Mallet, as a fee for a life to be written by them jointly. Glover gave up his share of the labour and its reward, and Mallet obtained the £1000. The service he gave in return, consisted entirely in the labour of convincing the world, by hints and skilfully mysterious announcements, that he had made considerable progress in the work, though he died without having commenced it; and if this systematic deception had been the service for which he was paid, it would have been admitted that he had done his duty. The following letter is a memorable instance of the manner in which Mallet conducted his operations; and it shows at the same time his infinitely lofty notion of his own position. He had managed to be a great author among the aristocracy, and to be a great aristocrat among authors; and the air of calm superiority which he adopts towards Hume is not the least remarkable feature in the production.

David Mallet *to* Hume.

Dear Sir, — I have done at last, what nothing but the greatest regard for the writer, and the truest friendship for the man, could have made me submit to; I have gone over both your volumes again, with the eye and attention of a mere grammarian. The task of looking after verbal mistakes, or errors against the idiom of a tongue, though not unnecessary, is trivial, and disgusting in the greatest decree; but your work, and you, deserved it of me: and I could not have forgiven myself had I not treated yours as I hope and expect you will do mine.

I have not been idle; though I give no account of my progress to one in a hundred I converse with; as it contains several particulars of the reigns of the two brothers, Charles and James, the most interesting though the least known parts of King William's, and embraces the whole of Queen Anne's reign, together with some anecdotes relative to her successor, — it will swell into two quarto volumes. I am resolved, too, that the translation, which will be done here by an excellent hand under my own eye, shall appear at the same time the original does. These are some of the causes that occasion the complaints I have been teased with: and there are many others, that would make no figure on paper, though they are unavoidable and consume much irretrievable time. But what is well done is done soon; and, as I have not you in my way, I should not feel the least uneasiness, if all our other complete historians should write the same period twenty times over. My work, both in matter and form, would still be new. If you are upon the undertaking, which you desired might remain a secret, I dare assure you, that besides the merit of accuracy and impartiality, it will have all the charm of novelty; for such a work, on a rational and philosophical plan, is a thing, as Milton has it, unattempted yet in prose or rhime. Adieu. I am, dear sir, most faithfully yours.

D. Mallet.

The following letter is a not less curious revelation of Mallet's proceedings.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Edinburgh, 21st April, 1763.

"Dear Sir, — I had a letter from Mr. Mallett, in which he tells me, that he has run over carefully the two volumes of my History last published, and has wrote all his remarks, as well on the language as matter, on the margin. He said, that he would find an opportunity to send them to me. I replied to him, that I was extremely obliged to him, (as I certainly am,) and that if he sent them to you, you would soon find an opportunity of conveying them to me. I wish you would speak to him on that subject, as you have occasion to meet with him, and would send the books carefully to me by the first parcel you send to Edinburgh. I should desire you also to give him a new copy in place of this which he has sacrificed; but if there be only a word here and there, I can efface them, after transcribing them into my own copy, and can afterwards restore the book as good as ever.

"In the same letter, he complains much of a report, that I was writing the English History since the revolution: which he says he cannot believe, because it would be a very invidious task to him. I answered him, that by his former letter I imagined his History was just ready for the press; that I had not wrote a line of the History of that period; but if I undertake it, one great inducement would be the hopes of seeing his volumes published before me; by which means, I could hope for much light and great materials; that as he was near twenty years advanced before me, it was ridiculous to fear that I could overtake him; and that I was glad of the report he mentioned, if it would prove a spur to his industry. I find Mr. Mallet would fain be like the dog in the manger, neither eat himself nor allow others to eat. I should have a breach with him, and might expect all ill offices from him, if I pursue my plan; but this would be a frivolous consideration, where his anger would be so ill-founded. As soon as the octavo edition of my History is finished, please send me a copy of it. I should be pleased to run it over; and make an errata to it. I am," &c.

The following letter to Elliot shows the zeal with which Hume carried on that systematic removal from his works of all passages tending to favour popular rights, which has been already alluded to.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Edinburgh, 12th March, 1763.

"Dear Sir, — In this new edition I have corrected several mistakes and oversights, which had chiefly proceeded from the plaguy prejudices of Whiggism, with which I was too much infected when I began this work. I corrected some of these mistakes in a former edition; but being resolved to add to this edition the quotations of authorities for the reigns of James I. and Charles I., I was obliged to run over again the most considerable authors who had treated of these reigns; and I happily discovered some more mistakes, which I have now corrected. As I began the History with these two reigns, I now find that they, above all the rest, have been corrupted with Whig rancour, and that I really deserved the name of a party writer, and boasted without any foundation of my impartiality: but if you now do me the honour to give this part of my work a second perusal, I am persuaded that you will no longer throw on me this reproachful epithet, and will acquit me of all propensity to Whiggism. If you still continue to upbraid me, I shall be obliged to retaliate on you, and cry, *Whig vous même*.

"In page 33, vol. v. you will find a full justification of the impositions laid on by James I. without authority of parliament: in , 114, 389, a justification of persecuting the Puritans: in , a justification of Charles I. for levying tonnage and poundage without consent of parliament: in , I acquit James I. of prevarication, with which I had before rashly charged him. This last mistake indeed was innocent, and I can easily account for it. I had read Buckingham's narrative in Rushworth and Franklyn, the two opposite collectors: I saw what I thought the same paper in the Parliamentary History; but I did not attend to a line at the bottom, in which it is said, that the paper is taken from the records more full, than in the preceding collection: when I read it lately, I found the article here quoted, so that this blunder proceeded not from any spirit of Whiggery.

"I now justify James II. more explicitly in his exercise of the dispensing power, which was intimately interwoven with the constitution and monarchy — see vol. vi. -394, 395-400. In vol. iv. -323, I mention a very remarkable vein of tyranny, or exertion of arbitrary power, practised in that period, and which came to my knowledge since the first publication of that volume.

"There are many other improvements and alterations throughout the whole; and I am glad that Millar has of himself made you an offer of this edition. Without flattering you I must say, that there is nobody whom I more desire to see my writings as correct as I can make them; and I was thinking to desire Mr. Millar to make you this offer.

"But there is no end of correcting. In this new edition, vol. v. , I have inserted a pretty curious story of Sir George Markham, which I took from Lord Lansdowne, whom I esteemed safe authority for a Whig story: but I have since been shown Hobart's Reports, which is infinitely more authentic than Lord Lansdowne; and the story is there told so entirely, as to justify the King and the Star-chamber, so that you may still reproach me that the villanous leaven is not entirely purged off.

"I am engaged in no work at present; but if I tire of idleness, or more properly speaking, of reading for amusement, I may probably continue my History. My only discouragement is, that I cannot hope to finish this work in my closet, but must apply to the great for papers and intelligence, a thing I mortally abhor.

“Is it not hard and tyrannical in you, more hard and tyrannical than any act of the Stuarts, not to allow me to publish my Dialogues? Pray, do you not think that a proper dedication may atone for what is exceptionable in them? I am become much of my friend Corbyn Morrice’s mind, who says, that he writes all his books for the sake of the dedications.

“I am very glad to hear from Lord Minto, that you intend to pass a great part of the ensuing summer in this country. Though you be now become a great man, I doubt not but I should receive very much satisfaction from your society and conversation; that is, if I be not jostled out by suitors who press in upon me.

“Meanwhile, I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and servant.”

He writes to Millar, on 10th March, 1763, “I am in a good measure idle at present: but if I tire of this way of life, I shall certainly continue my History, and have no thoughts of any other work. But in this state of affairs, I suppose your people of rank and quality would throw the door in my face, because I am a Scotsman.”

And again at a later date:

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Edinburgh, 28th March, 1763.

“I never lose view of the project of continuing my History. I may perhaps very soon gather silently together the books which will enable me to sketch out the reigns of King William and Queen Anne, and shall finish them afterwards, together with that of George I., in London. But to tell you the truth, I have an aversion to appear in that capital till I see that more justice is done to me with regard to the preceding volumes. The languishing sale of this edition makes me conjecture that the time is not yet come; and the general rage against the Scots is an additional discouragement. I think the Scotch minister is obliged to make me some compensation for this.

“I am told that Mr. Ralph is dead, who had certainly made a large collection of books and pamphlets for his work. I should be glad to know into whose hands they are fallen, and would purchase them if they could be got at a reasonable price.

“I hear Dr. Armstrong has sent you over a most violent renunciation of Wilkes’s friendship. Wilkes is indeed very blamable in indulging himself so much in national reflections; which are low, vulgar, and ungenerous, and come with a bad grace from him, who conversed so much with our countrymen. My compliments to Mrs. Millar, who, I hope, will favour me with a visit this summer. I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.”

On the same day he writes to Adam Smith:

“I set up a chaise in May next, which will give me the liberty of travelling about; and you may be sure a journey to Glasgow will be one of the first I shall undertake. I intend to require, with great strictness, an account how you have been employing your leisure, and I desire you to be ready for that purpose. Wo be to you if the balance be against you! Your friends here will also expect that I should bring you with me.”

A few letters written at this time to his friends, on the subject of the arrears of half-pay due for his services as judge-advocate, afford the following passages of general interest. To Oswald he says, on 3d April —

“I shall add, that it is the only thing in my life I ever asked, it is the only thing I ever shall ask, and consequently, it is the only thing I ever shall obtain. Those who assist me in procuring it do me a great favour, and I very willingly stand obliged to my friends for their good offices: but of the government and ministry, I ask it as my due. I imagined that after Lord Bute’s consent was obtained, all difficulties had been surmounted.”

To another correspondent he says, —

“To tell you the truth, dear Crawford, I made it a rule from the beginning of my life never to seek a favour of any man; and this humour, which, if you be very indulgent to me, you will call modesty, if less so, pride, I was unwilling to relinquish, after having maintained it through my youth, and during more difficult circumstances than those in which I am at present placed.”

Hume, like every Scotsman of his day, who concerned himself with any thing beyond his own domestic circle, took a deep interest in the progress of the Douglas cause. It is difficult, at the present day, to conceive the excitement which this litigation between private parties occasioned in the public mind. Men about to meet each other in company, used to lay an injunction on themselves not to open their lips on the subject, so fruitful was it in debates and brawls; and yet too often found that their prudence was no match for their enthusiasm. Hume adopted the view that the alleged children of Lady Jane Douglas were spurious. The Court of Session decided in favour of this opinion by a majority of one; but their decision was afterwards reversed by the House of Lords. The reversal occasioned many severe animadversions on Lord Mansfield, both by Hume and his friends.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Edinburgh, 21st July, 1763.

"Dear Smith, — To-day is the grand question decided by our judges, whether they will admit of any farther proof with regard to the Douglas affair, or whether they will rest contented with the proofs already produced. Their partiality is palpable and astonishing; yet few people think that they will dare to refuse inquiring into facts so remarkable and so strongly attested. They are at present sitting, but I hope to tell you the issue in a postscript. Our friend Johnstone has wrote the most super-excellentest paper in the world, which he has promised to send to you this evening in franks. Please to deliver the enclosed to Colonel Barré. I am," &c.

We have already found one distinguished fellow-countryman of Hume controversially attacking his works. But another and greater critic was soon to appear. Dr. Thomas Reid was preparing for the press his "Inquiry into the Human Mind," which he published in 1764. His was the greatest mind which set itself in opposition to Hume's system, in British literature; and he was great, because he examined the works of the sceptical philosopher, not in the temper of a wrangler or partisan, but in the honest spirit of an investigator, who is bound either to believe in the arguments he is examining, or to set against them a system which will satisfy his own mind, and the minds of other honest thinkers. Reid was born in 1710, and he was exactly a year older than Hume, for the birth-day of both was on the 26th of April. The philosopher of common sense, thus brought the accumulated thought and learning of advanced years to bear on a series of works which the sceptic had commenced in early youth. There is something in Reid's method of laying down his principles, and explaining their application, that disinclines the reader to allow him the palm of original genius, and suggests the idea that he is a personification of the natural sagacity and useful industry of his countrymen. But this feeling arises more from his hatred of such apparent paradoxes as Hume loved, from his courting rather than avoiding what is familiar and intelligible, and from the titles he gave to his books, than from deficiency of true originality. Whether his merit lay in his genius or his industry, he raised a new fabric of philosophy out of part of those fragments to which the sceptic had reduced previous systems. The term "common sense," which he used to characterize his system, had been long employed in philosophy; and if *bon sens* may be held its equivalent, it is to be found in the preliminary dissertation of a French translation of Hume's miscellaneous essays, published in the same year as Reid's Inquiry. Here, and occasionally by Reid, it is used in its popular sense, expressing philosophical opinions derived from the general notions of mankind. In this sense it is an application of induction to mental operations. It views the opinions of men at large as so many experimental facts, which, as in the case of the physical operations of nature, may be subjected to the rules of induction. Hume himself held that mental phenomena are as regular, and as capable of having laws of nature applied to them, as physical phenomena. But even if he were right, there is a disturbing influence at force in the circumstance, that, as the operation of induction is itself a phenomenon of the same class with those professed to be subjected to its observation, the philosopher is apt to embody in his writings the intuitions, if they may be so termed, of his own mind, instead of giving such an accurate transcript of the results of external observation as the physical inquirer is generally enabled to present.

Indeed, it is in promulgating the convictions of his own mind as a metaphysical thinker, more than in his avowed project of inducting from the common phenomena of the every-day world, that Reid's writings are most valuable. In the one case he has told us how far Hume's philosophy is at variance with the general opinions of mankind; in which he is met by the comprehensive argument, that Hume may, nevertheless, be right, and the rest of mankind wrong. But in travelling beyond his avowed object he certainly has anticipated many of those metaphysical arguments, on which the basis of the sceptical philosophy has been attacked; and the world has, perhaps, yet to learn how far the great system of the German philosophers is under obligations to this powerful thinker.

Before he put his "Inquiry into the Human Mind," to press, Reid desired, through Blair's interposition, to subject the manuscript to Hume's inspection. Fearing that this work might too closely follow the Warburton school, Hume met the application with the rather petulant remark: "I wish that the parsons would confine themselves to their old occupation of worrying one another, and leave philosophers to argue with temper, moderation, and good manners." But, after inspecting the manuscript, he thus addressed its author:

By Dr. Blair’s means, I have been favoured with the perusal of your performance, which I have read with great pleasure and attention. It is certainly very rare that a piece so deeply philosophical is wrote with so much spirit, and affords so much entertainment to the reader; though I must still regret the disadvantages under which I read it, as I never had the whole performance at once before me, and could not be able fully to compare one part with another. To this reason, chiefly, I ascribed some obscurities, which, in spite of your short analysis, or abstract, still seem to hang over your system; for I must do you the justice to own that, when I enter into your ideas, no man appears to express himself with greater perspicuity than you do; a talent which, above all others, is requisite in that species of literature which you have cultivated. There are some objections, which I would willingly propose, to the chapter “Of sight,” did I not suspect that they proceed from my not sufficiently understanding it; and I am the more confirmed in this suspicion, as Dr. Blair tells me that the former objections I made, had been derived chiefly from that cause. I shall therefore forbear till the whole can be before me, and shall not at present propose any further difficulties to your reasonings. I shall only say that, if you have been able to clear up these abstruse and important subjects, instead of being mortified, I shall be so vain as to pretend to a share of the praise; and shall think that my errors, by having at least some coherence, had led you to make a more strict review of my principles, which were the common ones, and to perceive their futility.

As I was desirous to be of some use to you, I kept a watchful eye all along over your style; but it is really so correct, and so good English, that I found not any thing worth the remarking. There is only one passage in this chapter, where you make use of the phrase, *hinder to do,* instead of *hinder from doing,* which is the English one; but I could not find the passage when I sought for it. You may judge how unexceptionable the whole appeared to me, when I could remark so small a blemish. I beg my compliments to my friendly adversaries, Dr. Campbell, and Dr. Gerard, and also to Dr. Gregory, whom I suspect to be of the same disposition, though he has not openly declared himself such.

This letter called forth the following answer, valuable as an acknowledgment of the services which the Scottish school of philosophy owed to Hume.

Dr. Reid *to* Hume.

King’s College, 18th March, 1763.

Sir, — On Monday last, Mr. John Farquhar brought me your letter of February 25th, enclosed in one from Dr. Blair. I thought myself very happy in having the means of obtaining at second-hand, through the friendship of Dr. Blair, your opinion of my performance: and you have been pleased to communicate it directly in so polite and friendly a manner, as merits great acknowledgments on my part. Your keeping a watchful eye over my style, with a view to be of use to me, is an instance of candour and generosity to an antagonist, which would affect me very sensibly, although I had no personal concern in it, and I shall always be proud to follow so amiable an example. Your judgment of the style, indeed, gives me great consolation, as I was very diffident of myself in regard to English, and have been indebted to Drs. Campbell and Gerard for many corrections of that kind.

In attempting to throw some new light upon these abstruse subjects, I wish to preserve the due mean betwixt confidence and despair. But whether I have any success in this attempt or not, I shall always avow myself your disciple in metaphysics. I have learned more from your writings in this kind, than from all others put together. Your system appears to me not only coherent in all its parts, but likewise justly deduced from principles commonly received among philosophers; principles which I never thought of calling in question, until the conclusions you draw from them in the “Treatise of Human Nature” made me suspect them. If these principles are solid, your system must stand; and whether they are or not, can better be judged after you have brought to light the whole system that grows out of them, than when the greater part of it was wrapped up in clouds and darkness. I agree with you, therefore, that if this system shall ever be demolished, you have a just claim to a great share of the praise, both because you have made it a distinct and determinate mark to be aimed at, and have furnished proper artillery for the purpose.

When you have seen the whole of my performance, I shall take it as a very great favour to have your opinion upon it, from which I make no doubt of receiving light, whether I receive conviction or no. Your friendly adversaries, Drs. Campbell and Gerard, as well as Dr. Gregory, return their compliments to you respectfully. A little philosophical society here, of which all the three are members, is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would, although we are all good Christians, be more acceptable than that of St. Athanasius; and since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought oftener than any other man to the bar, accused and defended with great zeal, but without bitterness. If you write no more in morals, politics, or metaphysics, I am afraid we shall be at a loss for subjects. I am, respectfully, sir, your most obliged humble servant.

Thomas Reid.

CHAPTER XIII.

1763-1764. Æt. 52-53.

Lord Hertford's appointment to the French Embassy, and invitation to Hume to accompany him — Correspondence on the occasion — Residence in London, and remarks on the Political Movements of 1763 — State of his reputation in France — His Arrival — Letters to friends at home about his flattering reception — The young French princes — Observations on eminent French people — His recommendations to a Clergyman — Introductions of Fellow Countrymen.

On the conclusion of the treaty of 1763, the Marquis of Hertford was appointed ambassador to the court of France. He invited Hume to attend him as secretary; and there is no reason to believe that the selection was owing to any other motive than the desire to place an able and honest man in office. The Marquis was a man of high moral character, and his religious opinions appear to have been considered by some of his contemporaries as too zealous and exclusive. The intercourse thus occasioned, was the commencement of a lasting friendship, in which the English Marquis and the Scottish philosopher, however separated by nominal difference of rank, had too genuine a respect for each other to be affected by such inequalities. The intimacy extended to General Seymour Conway, the brother of the Marquis; and Hume's intercourse with them both, tends to confirm the impression which the portraits of the two brothers convey to the present generation, of dispositions open, kind, and artless. In reference to this event, Hume says, in his "own life," "I retired to my native country of Scotland, determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all the rest of my life in this philosophical manner, when I received, in 1763, an invitation from the Earl of Hertford, with whom I was not in the least acquainted, to attend him on his embassy to Paris, with a near prospect of being appointed secretary to the embassy, and, in the meanwhile, of performing the functions of that office. This offer, however inviting, I at first declined, both because I was reluctant to begin connexions with the great, and because I was afraid that the civilities and gay company of Paris, would prove disagreeable to a person of my age and humour: but on his lordship's repeating the invitation, I accepted of it. I have every reason, both of pleasure and interest, to think myself happy in my connexions with that nobleman, as well as afterwards with his brother, General Conway."

We have, in his familiar correspondence, a fuller account of his feelings on the occasion.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Edinburgh, 9th August, 1763.

"My Dear Friend, — I have got an invitation, accompanied with great prospects and expectations, from Lord Hertford, if I would accompany him, though at first without any character, in his embassy to Paris. I hesitated much on the acceptance of this offer, though in appearance very inviting: and I thought it ridiculous at my years, to be entering on a new scene, and to put myself in the lists as a candidate of fortune. But I reflected that I had in a manner abjured all literary occupations; that I resolved to give up my future life entirely to amusements; that there could not be a better pastime than such a journey, especially with a man of Lord Hertford's character; and that it would be easy to prevent my acceptance from having the least appearance of dependance. For these reasons, and by the advice of every friend whom I consulted, I at last agreed to accompany his lordship, and I set out to-morrow for London. I am a little hurried in my preparations; but I could not depart without bidding you adieu, my good friend, and without acquainting you with the reasons of so sudden a movement. I have not great expectations of revisiting this country soon; but I hope it will not be impossible but we may meet abroad, which will be a great satisfaction to me. I am," &c.

Hume *to* Baron Mure.

"Lisle St. 1st Sept. 1763.

"My Dear Baron, — As I am not sure where you are, nor whether this direction be right, I am obliged to speak to you with reserve, both of public affairs and of my own. Of the latter, I shall only say, that notwithstanding of my first reluctance, I am entirely reconciled to my present situation, and have a great prepossession, or rather, indeed, a great esteem and affection for the person and family whom I am to accompany to France. The prospect of my being secretary to the embassy is neither very distant nor is it immediate; but Lord Hertford will certainly, before our departure, obtain a settlement for me for life; which at any events will improve my fortune, and is a great pledge of his friendship and regard.

"I have insulted [consulted] Elliot, Sir Harry, Oswald, and all our friends of that administration. The former said to me, that my situation was, taking all its circumstances, the most wonderful event in the world. I was now a person clean and white as the driven snow; and that were I to be proposed for the see of Lambeth, no objection could henceforth be made to me. What makes the matter more extraordinary, is, that the idea first came into my patron's head, without the suggestion of any one mortal.

"You must have heard of the late most astonishing events with regard to public affairs. Yesterday Lord Bute had a pretty large company dining with him, to whom he gave an account of the whole transactions, and desired them to publish it.

"One of them, a friend of mine, as soon as he went home, took it down in writing, of which he gave me a copy, and which I transmit to you. He is a military man, and his style is not elegant; but I am sure, from another certain authority, that the account is in the main just; only I have reason to think that Lord Halifax was proscribed along with the rest; at least he said so yesterday to a friend of mine. I wish this high spirit of his M. may be supported. But *femme qui écoute et ville qui parle sont bientôt rendues*. Lord Bute goes abroad very soon. Some pretend that the present administration is more enraged against him than is the opposition, on account of his taking this important step without consulting them. Never in any history was there so curious a scene; nor was there ever so formidable a demagogue as this man. Lord Sandwich, it is said, will be secretary for some weeks; our friend Wood is so at present. Many of the leading men in the opposition were left out on Mr. Pitt's plan; which, it is thought, will breed dissensions among them.

"I dined yesterday with Lord Chesterfield, along with Colonel Irvine. The Colonel made an apology for our arriving so late, on account of his being detained at court. 'At court?' said my lord: 'I should be glad to know what place that is.' Dear Mure, yours."

In an earlier part of this work, we have found Hume narrating events of contemporary military history. In the following, as in the preceding letter, he gives his version of a celebrated ministerial revolution, of which the public is as yet possessed of no account which is not liable to doubt.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“Lisle St. 13th Sept. 1763.

“My Dear Smith, — The settlement which I had made in Scotland was so much to my mind, I had indeed struck root so heartily, that it was with the utmost reluctance I could think of transplanting myself, and I began to approach towards that age in which these experiments became no longer practicable with safety. I own that, on my arrival in London, I found every circumstance more inviting than I had reason to expect; particularly the characters of Lord and Lady Hertford, who are allowed to be the two persons the most unexceptionable among all the English nobility. Even that circumstance of Lord Hertford’s character, his great piety, ought to make my connexions with him more agreeable, both because it is not attended with any thing sour and rigid, and because I draw the more honour from his choice, while he overlooked so many seeming objections which lay against me on that head. My fortune also receives a great addition during life from this connexion; besides many openings to ambition, were I so simple as to be exposed to temptation from that passion.

“But, notwithstanding all these considerations, shall I tell you the truth? I repine at my loss of ease and leisure, and retirement and independence; and it is not without a sigh I look backwards, nor without reluctance that I cast my eye forwards. Is this sentiment an instinct which admonishes me of the situation most proper and suitable to me? Or is it a momentary disgust, the effect of low spirits, which company and amusement, and a better state of health, will soon dissipate and remove? I must wait with patience till I see the decision of this question.

“I find that one view of Lord Hertford in engaging me to go along with him is, that he thinks I may be useful to Lord Beauchamp in his studies. That young nobleman is generally spoke of as very amiable and very promising; but I remember, though faintly, to have heard from you something to the contrary, which you had heard from that severe critic, Mr. Herbert: I should be obliged to you for informing me of it. I have not yet seen my Lord Beauchamp, who is at this time in Paris. We shall not leave London these three weeks.

“You have, no doubt, heard of the strange jumble among our ministers, and of the negotiation opened with Mr. Pitt. Never story was told with such contrary circumstances as that of his secret conference with the king, and of the terms demanded by that popular leader. The general outlines of the whole story seem to be these:

“Lord Bute, disgusted with the ministers, who had almost universally conspired to neglect him, and suspecting their bottom to be too narrow, had, before Lord Egremont’s death, opened a negotiation with Mr. Pitt, by means of Lord Shelburne, who employed Calcraft the agent. Mr. Pitt says, that he always declared it highly improper that he should be brought to the king, before all terms were settled on such a footing as to render it impossible for them to separate without agreeing. He accordingly thought they were settled. His first conference with the king confirmed him in that opinion, and he wrote to the Duke of Devonshire to come to town, in order to place himself at the head of the treasury. The Duke of Newcastle said, at his table on Sunday was a fortnight, that the ministry was settled. But when Mr. Pitt came to the king that afternoon, he found him entirely changed, and every thing was retracted that had been agreed on. This is his story. The other party says, that he rose in his terms, and wanted to impose the most exorbitant conditions on his sovereign. I suppose that the first conference passed chiefly in generals, and that Mr. Pitt would then be extremely humble, and submissive, and polite, and dutiful in his expressions. But when he came to particulars, they did not seem to correspond with these appearances. At least, this is the best account I can devise of the matter, consistent with the honour of both parties.

“You would see the present ministry by the papers. It is pretended that they are enraged against Lord Bute, for negotiating without their knowledge or consent; and that the other party are no less displeased with him for not finishing the treaty with them. That nobleman declared his resolution of going abroad a week or two ago. Now he is determined to pass the winter in London. Our countrymen are visibly hurt in this justle of parties, which I believe to be far from the intentions of Lord Bute. Lord Shelburne resigned, because he found himself obnoxious on account of his share in the negotiation. I see you are much displeased with that nobleman, but he always speaks of you with regard. I hear that your pupil, Mr. Fitzmaurice, makes a very good figure at Paris.

"It is generally thought that Mr. Pitt has gained credit and force by this negotiation. It turns the eyes of the public towards him. It shows that the king can overlook personal resentment against him and Lord Temple. It gains him the confidence of his own party, who see that he was negotiating for the whole of them; and puts people in mind of the French rhyme, — *ville qui parle et femme qui écoute*.

"You would hear that the case of the Douglas is now made clear, even in the eyes the most blinded and most prejudiced, which I am glad of on account of our friends. I am," &c.

The following notice, by one who has unfortunately left nothing behind to show posterity the grounds on which his reputation rested, the Rev. Dr. Carlyle, will be read with interest.

Robertson has managed with great address: he is principal, chaplain, minister, historiographer, and historian; that is to say, he has £50 a-year and a house, certain, besides what he can make by his books. It was taken for granted that he was to resign his charge on being appointed historiographer with £200 salary; but that he will do at his leisure. It is also supposed by his patrons, that he is to write the History of Britain in ten volumes quarto; that also, I presume, (dreadful task,) he will execute at his leisure.

Honest David Home, [Hume,] with the heart of all others that rejoices most at the prosperity of his friends, was certainly a little hurt with this last honour conferred on Robertson. A lucky accident has given him relief. The Earl of Hertford is appointed ambassador to France: not very capable himself, they have loaded him with an insignificant secretary, one Charles Bunbury, who, for the sake of pleasure, more than the thousand a-year, solicited for the office. Hertford knew David, and some good genius prompted him to ask him to go along and manage the business. It is an honourable character: he will see his friends in France. If he tires, he can return when he pleases. Bunbury will probably tire first, and then David will become secretary.

The following letter, without address, appears to have been written to Dr. Carlyle.

"Lisle Street, 15th Sept. 1763.

"Dear Doctor, — The case of poor Blacklock gives me great distress; and so much the more, as I am afraid it is not in the power of any human being to relieve him. His unhappiness seems to proceed from the infirmity of his body, and the delicacy, not to say weakness, of his mind. He has wrote to me letters full of the bitterest anguish, on account of the treatment he meets with from his parishioners. I believe it is not good; but it is impossible not to think it exaggerated by his imagination: and I am of your opinion that the same persecution, partly real, partly imaginary, would follow him in every other settlement. I had concerted with Baron Mure a very likely scheme for his removal; but to what purpose would this serve, if the same complaints must return in his new situation? I agree with you, that a small pension, could it be obtained, might bestow on him some degree of tranquillity; but how to obtain it I profess I do not know, as I suppose you will readily believe. That door was never very wide for men of letters; and is become still narrower than ever."

He proceeds, in terms similar to those already recorded, to state his satisfaction in the connexion with Lord Hertford, and continues: —

"I go to a place of the world which I have always admired the most; and it is not easy to imagine a reception better than I have reason to expect. What, then, can be wanting to my happiness? I hope, nothing; or if any thing, it will only be an age and temper better adapted to vanity and dissipation. I beg of you to embrace Mrs. Carlisle in my name, and to assure her of my sincere respects.

"I write no politics, having now become a politician. Please address yourself to John Hume for information on that head. Let him explain to you his patron's situation!!!! Pray, is there any body such an idiot at present as to be a partisan of the Douglas?"

To obtain literary distinction in France at that time, was to be received at court. The star of Germany had not yet risen in the horizon of literature, and the great monarch and warrior of the Teutonic tribes treated his native tongue as the speech of boors, tried to distinguish himself in French literature, and was ambitious of being received into equal companionship with the popular authors of France. Britain, notwithstanding her series of illustrious names, had not yet quite shaken off an air of provincialism. Shakspere was a strange wild genius, full of barbarisms and abominable galimatias: Voltaire had said it, and it was a judgment, not an opinion. Some discontented Frerons or Arnauds, might cavil against it: but this was rebellion, not controversy. The greatness of our masters in science and philosophy was fully admitted; but they were viewed as citizens of the great world of letters, accidentally born in one of its more barren districts; and they were scarcely more closely identified with the national literature of their country, than Linnæus might be with that of Sweden, or Tycho Brahe with that of Denmark. In truth, the apparent interregnum, following the decline of the Latin as the literary language of the world, appeared likely to end in the establishment of the French as its successor. Such expectations gave to the literature of France a metropolitan air, with which no other could cope; and communicated to those natives of other places, whose name was honoured in the French circles of letters, a corresponding elevation. Hume would have been impervious to the most conclusive evidence on the subject, if he had failed to know how greatly he was honoured among all the literary circles of the continent, and particularly in those of the metropolis of literature. Lord Elibank, writing from Paris, on 11th May, 1763, says to him, “No author ever yet attained to that degree of reputation in his own lifetime that you are now in possession of at Paris;” and the extent of his fame was abundantly attested by others.

Hume arrived in France on the 14th day of October, 1763. Of his reception, his own letters will give the best account.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“Fontainbleau, 26th Oct. 1763.

“My Dear Smith, — I have been three days at Paris, and two at Fontainbleau, and have every where met with the most extraordinary honours, which the most exorbitant vanity could wish or desire. The compliments of dukes and marischals of France, and foreign ambassadors, go for nothing with me at present: I retain a relish for no kind of flattery but that which comes from the ladies. All the courtiers, who stood around when I was introduced to Madame de Pompadour, assured me that she was never heard to say so much to any man; and her brother, to whom she introduced me, —— But I forget already, that I am to scorn all the civilities of men. However, even Madame Pompadour’s civilities were, if possible, exceeded by those of the Duchesse de Choiseul, the wife of the favourite and Prime Minister, and one of the ladies of the most distinguished merit in France. Not contented with the many obliging things she said to me on my first introduction, she sent to call me from the other end of the room, in order to repeat them, and to enter into a short conversation with me: and not contented with that, she sent the Danish ambassador after me, to assure me, that what she said was not from politeness, but that she seriously desired to be in friendship and correspondence with me. There is not a courtier in France, who would not have been transported with joy, to have had the half of these obliging things said to him by either of these great ladies; but what may appear more extraordinary, both of them, as far as I could conjecture, have read with some care all my writings that have been translated into French, — that is, almost all my writings. The king said nothing particular to me, when I was introduced to him; and (can you imagine it) I was become so silly, as to be a little mortified by it, till they told me, that he never says any thing to any body the first time he sees them. The Dauphin, as I am told from all hands, declares himself on every occasion very strongly in my favour; and many people assure me, that I have reason to be proud of his judgment, even were he an individual. I have scarce seen any of the geniuses of Paris, who, I think, have in general great merit, as men of letters. But every body is forward to tell me the high panegyrics I receive from them; and you may believe that —— approbation which has procured me all these civilities from the courtiers.

"I know you are ready to ask me, my dear friend, if all this does not make me very happy: No, I feel little or no difference. As this is the first letter I write to my friends at home, I have amused myself, (and I hope I have amused you,) by giving you a very abridged account of these transactions. But can I ever forget, that it is the very same species, that would scarce show me common civilities a very few years ago at Edinburgh, who now receive me with such applauses at Paris? I assure you, I reap more internal satisfaction from the very amiable manners and character of the family in which I live, (I mean Lord and Lady Hertford, and Lord Beauchamp,) than from all these external vanities; and it is that domestic enjoyment which must be considered as the agreeable circumstance in my situation. During the two last days, in particular, that I have been at Fontainbleau I have *suffered* (the expression is not improper) as much flattery as almost any man has ever done in the same time. But there are few days in my life, when I have been in good health, that I would not rather pass over again. Mr. Neville, our minister, an honest, worthy English gentleman, who carried me about, was astonished at the civilities I met with; and has assured me, that on his return, he will not fail to inform the king of England and the English ministry of all these particulars. But enough of all these follies. You see I trust to your friendship, that you will forgive me; and to your discretion, that you will keep my secret.

"I had almost forgot, in these effusions, shall I say of my misanthropy or my vanity, to mention the subject which first put my pen in my hand. The

Baron d'Holbach, whom I saw at Paris, told me, that there was one under his eye that was translating your 'Theory of Moral Sentiments;' and desired me to inform you of it. Mr. Fitzmaurice, your old friend, interests himself strongly in this undertaking. Both of them wish to know, if you propose to make any alterations on the work, and desire you to inform me of your intentions in that particular. Please direct to me under cover to the Earl of Hertford at Northumberland House, London. Letters so directed will be sent to us at Paris. I desire my compliments to all friends. I am, my dear Smith, yours sincerely."

Hume *to* Professor Ferguson.

"Fontainbleau, 9th Nov. 1763.

"Dear Ferguson, — I have now passed four days at Paris, and about a fortnight in the court at Fontainbleau, amidst a people who, from the royal family downwards, seem to have it much at heart to persuade me, by every expression of esteem, that they consider me as one of the greatest geniuses in the world. I am convinced that Louis XIV. never, in any three weeks of his life, suffered so much flattery: I say suffered, for it really confounds and embarrasses me, and makes me look sheepish. Lord Hertford has told them they will chase me out of France, *à coup de complimens et de louanges*. Our friend, General Clerk, came to this place after I had passed a week in it; and the first thing he said to me was, that he was sure I had never passed so many days with so little satisfaction. I asked him how he had happened to guess so well. He said, because he knew me, and knew the French. I really wish often for the plain roughness of the *Poker*, and particularly the sharpness of Dr. Jardine, to correct and qualify so much lusciousness. However, I meet sometimes with incidents that please me, because they contain no mixture of French complaisance or exaggeration. Yesterday I dined at the Duc de Praslin's, the secretary of state. After we had risen from dinner, I went into a corner to converse with somebody; when I saw enter the room, a tall gentleman, a little elderly, with a riband and star, who immediately called out to the Duchesse de Praslin, 'Hé, Madame la Duchesse, que je suis content, j'ai vu Monsieur Hume à la cour aujourd'hui.' Upon inquiry, I was told he was a man of quality, esteemed one of the cleverest and most sensible about the court.

"In two or three days we return to Paris, where I hope to live more at my ease, and shall pass my time with really great men; for there are such at present amongst the literati of France. Certainly there is something perverse, either in the structure of our mind, or in the incidents of life. My present situation ought naturally to appear an object of envy; for besides those circumstances of an universal good reception from all ranks of people, nothing can be more amiable than the character of the family with whom I live, and nothing can be more friendly than their behaviour to me. My fortune has already received a considerable increase by a pension procured me by Lord Hertford, and settled as they tell me for life. Mr. Bunbury has been told that he must not go to Paris, which my lord considers as a sure prelude to my being soon secretary to the embassy; an office which will expose me to little expense, and bring me a thousand a-year increase of revenue, and puts me in the road to all the great foreign employments. Yet I am sensible that I set out too late, and that I am misplaced; and I wish, twice or thrice a-day, for my easy chair and my retreat in James's Court! Never think, dear Ferguson, that as long as you are master of your own fireside and your own time, you can be unhappy, or that any other circumstance can make an addition to your enjoyment.

"When I think of my own house, you may believe I often reflect on Josey, who I am afraid will be more a loser by my absence, than ever I shall be a gainer by it; I mean in point of his education. I beg of you to have some inspection over him, and as often as my sister shall send to you to ask your advice, that you will be sure to give it. I am afraid that there occurs a difficulty at present about entering him to the Greek. He is too far advanced by his learning for the class in the High School to which he is put, and yet he is too young to go to the college: for this reason I thought that he might learn something of the Greek before he finished his Latin course, as is the practice in England; and, accordingly, Murray in Musselburgh gave him some lessons in that language. I propose that he should continue on the same footing in Edinburgh; but I am at a loss how it may be done. A master to himself alone, would not give him any emulation; and were he put to any other school for this purpose, the hours would interfere with those of the High School. Be so good as speak to Mathison, and then give your opinion to my sister.

"Please remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Adams. I saw Willie a moment at Fontainbleau: he had arrived a quarter of an hour after Jemmy left it, whom I did not see. These two brothers have been hunting one another in vain through all France; but I hope they have met at last in Paris.

"When you favour me with a letter, put it under cover to the Earl of Hertford, and direct it to him at Northumberland House, in the Strand; letters so directed come to us with the greatest safety. Make my compliments to Baron Mure, and Mrs. Mure, and all that family. I shall write to the Baron soon. Tell Dr. Blair that I have conversed here twice or thrice with the Duchesse D'Aiguillon, who has been amusing herself with translating passages of Ossian; and I have assured her that the authenticity of those poems is to be proved soon beyond all contradiction. Andrew Stuart is here at present: I meet with nobody here that doubts of the justice of his cause. I hope your fine judges will at last be ashamed of their scandalous partiality. I should be glad to hear of all friends. I am, dear Ferguson, with great sincerity and without flattery, your affectionate friend and servant.

"P.S. — I beg you to keep the follies of the above letter to yourself. I had a letter from Lord Marischal to-day, who tells me that he is to pass the winter at Edinburgh. Wait often on him; you will like him extremely: carry all our friends to him, and endeavour to make him pass his time as agreeably as possible."

We shall have farther opportunities of observing the affectionate anxiety with which Hume watched over the education of his nephews. Adam Ferguson appears to have undertaken the task of noticing the progress of Joseph, the elder nephew, during Hume's absence, to whom he writes, in answer to the above: —

Edinburgh, 26th Nov. 1763.

At present his journal, as he tells me, begins with getting up at eight, taking his breakfast and going to school, where he remains to eleven. Then to the High School Yard to play at Englishman and Scotsman, or the hare and the dogs; of which I take the merit, as I saved him from the writing-school at that hour. He returns to school at twelve, and continues till two: goes to writing between three and four; and spends his evenings, as he tells me, in getting his school tasks, or in reading amusing books, — such as his uncle's history. In short, he is a very amiable boy, with quick parts, in my opinion as well as yours; and there is no doubt but he will do well. I am very glad of every thing that gives you pleasure, — even of some things that give you pain. From all accounts, both before and since you went to Paris, it might be foreseen that your reception, even from sincere as well as affected admirers, would amount to a degree of teasing. But all for the best, as my fellow philosopher, Pangloss, says. I don't care if you are "chassé de France à coups de complimens, et accablé en Angleterre à coups de richesse," so as not to find any rest to the soles of your feet out of Scotland. I would fain consider every accession to your fortune as so many dishes added to the future dinners in James's Court; and your eclat in France, as the forerunner of much variety of chosen and excellent wines from every quarter of that great kingdom. Meantime, though I like to lounge at firesides in practice, I have not, in speculation, that opinion you mention. I know nothing that is necessary to happiness but cordiality and the talent of finding diversion in all places. I remember, somewhere, a man's being told that he was too nice, because he could not dine on a ragout, and must have cold mutton. But I should not, perhaps, contradict you so flatly, nor rub so hard, considering how tender your sensibility will be grown after so many lenient applications.

Hume *to* Dr. Robertson.

Paris, Dec. 1, 1763.

Dear Robertson, — Among other agreeable circumstances which attend me at Paris, I must mention that of having a lady for a translator; a woman of merit, the widow of an advocate. She was, before, very poor, and known but to few; but this work has got her reputation, and procured her a pension from the court, which sets her at ease. She tells me that she has got a habit of industry; and would continue, if I could point out to her any other English book she could undertake, without running the risk of being anticipated by any other translator. Your "History of Scotland" is translated, and is in the press; but I recommended to her your "History of Charles V.," and promised to write to you, in order to know when it would be printed, and to desire you to send over the sheets from London, as they come from the press; I should put them into her hands, and she would, by that means, have the start of every other translator. My two volumes last published, are, at present, in the press. She has a very easy natural style: sometimes she mistakes the sense; but I now correct her manuscript, and should be happy to render you the same service, if my leisure permit me, as I hope it will.

Do you ask me about my course of life? I can only say, that I eat nothing but ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe nothing but incense, and tread on nothing but flowers! Every man I meet, and, still more, every lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable duty, if they did not make a long and elaborate harangue in my praise. What happened last week, when I had the honour of being presented to the D —— n's children, at Versailles, is one of the most curious scenes I have yet passed through. The Duc de B., the eldest, a boy of ten years old, stepped forth, and told me how many friends and admirers I had in this country, and that he reckoned himself in the number, from the pleasure he had received from the reading of many passages in my works. When he had finished, his brother, the Count de P., who is two years younger, began his discourse, and informed me, that I had been long and impatiently expected in France; and that he himself expected soon to have great satisfaction from the reading of my fine History. But what is more curious; when I was carried thence to the Count D'A., who is but four years of age, I heard him mumble something which, though he had forgot in the way, I conjectured, from some scattered words, to have been also a panegyric dictated to him. Nothing could more surprise my friends, the Parisian philosophers, than this incident.

It is conjectured that this honour was paid me by express order from the D., who, indeed, is not on any occasion sparing in my praise.

All this attention and panegyric was at first oppressive to me; but now it sits more easy. I have recovered, in some measure, the use of the language, and am falling into friendships which are very agreeable; much more so than silly, distant admiration. They now begin to banter me, and tell droll stories of me, which they have either observed themselves, or have heard from others; so that you see I am beginning to be at home. It is probable that this place will be long my home. I feel little inclination to the factious barbarians of London; and have ever desired to remain in the place where I am planted. How much more so, when it is the best place in the world? I could here live in great abundance on the half of my income; for there is no place where money is so little requisite to a man who is distinguished, either by his birth or by personal qualities. I could run out, you see, in a panegyric on the people; but you would suspect that this was a mutual convention between us. However, I cannot forbear observing on what a different footing learning and the learned are here, from what they are among the factious barbarians abovementioned.

I have here met with a prodigious historical curiosity, the "Memoirs of King James II." in fourteen volumes, all wrote with his own hand, and kept in the Scots College. I have looked into it; and have made great discoveries. It will be all communicated to me: and I have had an offer of access to the

Secretary of State's office, if I want to know the despatches of any French minister that resided in London. But these matters are much out of my head. I beg of you to visit Lord Marischal, who will be pleased with your company. I have little paper remaining, and less time; and therefore conclude abruptly by assuring you that I am, dear Doctor, yours sincerely, &c.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

Paris, 1st Dec. 1763.

Dear Sir, — I have here fallen upon a great treasure, as I believe, of historical knowledge; which is, fifteen volumes of the late King James's Memoirs, wrote all with his own hand. I shall be able to make use of them for improving and correcting many passages of my History, in case of a new edition; which, however, I fancy will not be soon. I am glad to see public affairs likely to settle in favour of government. Nobody ever led a more dissipated life than I do here. Please send to Mr. Stewart, in Buckingham Street, six copies of the new edition of my History; and two of the last large paper quarto, all in sheets. Make them carefully up in a parcel: he is to send them to me. I shall be your debtor for the quartos. I should be glad to hear from you. My direction is at the English ambassador's. Excuse my hurry. I beg my compliments to Mrs. Millar. I am, very sincerely, dear sir, your most humble servant.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

Dear Doctor, — I write every thing in haste, except on public affairs, which are the only serious matters I have leisure to mind: so, excuse this letter, if it prove a scrawl. I approve very much of your plan for ascertaining the authenticity of Ossian's Poems; and I doubt not of your success. I do not think you can publish all the letters you receive, which nobody would read: a summary of them will do better; but endeavour to be as particular as you can with regard to names of persons and passages: for the force of your argument will be there. I have met here with enthusiasts for Ossian's poetry; but there are also several critics who are of my opinion, that, though great beauties, they are also great curiosities, and that they are a little tedious by reason of their uniformity.

You desire to know the particulars of my reception here, and my course of life. I own I write little upon this subject, and always with some degree of secrecy, both because I wish to have such intelligence conveyed by others rather than myself, and because I am somewhat indifferent whether it be conveyed or not. However, I wrote some circumstances to Robertson, which I allow him to communicate to you. I suppose this, like all other violent modes, will pass; and, in the meanwhile, the hurry and dissipation attending it, gives me more pain than pleasure. Never was there a stronger instance of the vanity of human wishes. But this embarrassment proceeds chiefly from my own fault, and from a vain anxiety to give no offence nor displeasure to any body.

The men of letters here are really very agreeable: all of them men of the world, living in entire, or almost entire harmony among themselves, and quite irreproachable in their morals. It would give you, and Jardine, and Robertson, great satisfaction to find that there is not a single deist among them. Those whose persons and conversation I like best, are D'Alembert, Buffon, Marmontel, Diderot, Duclos, Helvetius, and old President Henault, who, though now decaying, retains that amiable character which made him once the delight of all France. He had always the best cook and the best company in Paris. But though I know you will laugh at me, as they do, I must confess that I am more carried away from their society than I should be, by the great ladies, with whom I became acquainted at my first introduction to court, and whom my connexions with the English ambassador will not allow me entirely to drop.

Nothing can be more easy and agreeable than my situation with Lord Hertford, who is a man of strict honour, an amiable temper, a good understanding, and an elegant person and behaviour. He takes very much in this place. He has got an opinion very well founded, that the more acquaintance I make, and the greater intimacies I form with the French, the more I am enabled to be of service to him: so he exacts no attendance from me; and is well pleased to find me carried into all kinds of company. He tells me, that if he did not meet me by chance in third places, we should go out of acquaintance. Thus you see my present plan of life sketched out; but it is unsuitable to my age and temper; and I am determined to retrench and to abandon the fine folks, before they abandon me.

During his absence, Hume's house was let to Blair. In this letter he gives pretty minute instructions as to the most advantageous distribution of the occupation of the apartments, which incidentally illustrate his own domestic habits. Thus —

Never put a fire in the south room with the red paper. It is so warm of itself, that all last winter, which was a very severe one, I lay with a single blanket; and frequently upon coming in at midnight, starving with cold, have sat down and read for an hour, as if I had had a stove in the room.

You think it inconvenient to take the house only for an interval. Alas! my prospects of being home are very distant and very uncertain: I am afraid I might say worse. My connexions with Lord Hertford must probably last for some years; after which, I shall be rich enough to live in Paris or London as I please, or to retire to a provincial town in France, or to Bath, or God knows whither. I like to keep my house in case of accidents, and therefore neither choose to sell it, nor let a lease of it; but there is no great chance of your being disturbed in it for some time. I am, &c.

P.S. — Pray, do you not all pay court to the Lord Marischal? Do you imagine that you ever saw so excellent a man? or that you have any chance for seeing his equal if he were gone?

Hume *to* Colonel Edmondstoune.

Paris, 9th January, 1764.

Dear Edmondstoune, — I was fully settled, and, as I thought, for life at Edinburgh; had bought a very pretty little house, which I had repaired and furnished to my fancy; had purchased a chaise, and fixed every thing about my family on such a footing as to continue there the rest of my days. But while I was in this situation, which was far from disagreeable, I received a letter from my friend Mr. Wood, wrote by directions from Lord Hertford, by which I was invited to attend his lordship in his embassy to Paris, and to perform the functions of secretary to the embassy. I had never seen Lord Hertford, though I had heard an excellent character of him; but as I thought myself too old to enter on a new scene of life, and found myself settled to my mind, I at first refused the invitation; but on its being urged more home to me, I came up to London, where I found that Mr. Bunbury, a gentleman of considerable fortune, and married to the Duke of Richmond’s sister, had already been appointed secretary; but was so disagreeable to the ambassador, that he was resolved never to see, or do business with his secretary, and therefore desired I should attend him, in order to perform the functions. He also thought himself certain that Bunbury could not possibly continue in the situation; but in order to make me more secure, he procured me a pension of £200 a-year for life, from the king. As I became every day better acquainted with my lord, I liked him every day better; and I do not believe there is in the world a man of more probity or humanity, endowed with a very good understanding, and adorned with very elegant manners and behaviour. My lady is also a person of great merit; and nothing can be more amiable than my Lord Beauchamp: so that you see I have every domestic means of happiness; and the good reception I have met with at Paris, particularly, as you observe, by the ladies, renders my present course of life, though somewhat too hurried and dissipated, as amusing as I could wish. My lord appears zealously my friend, and has urged the matter so home, in my favour, to the king and the ministers, that he has obtained a promise, that I shall soon have the appointments and commission of secretary to the embassy, which is about £1000 a-year, added to what I already possess: so that you see, dear Edmondstoune, I am in the high road to riches; and as there is no instance of a secretary to the embassy at Paris, that has not been advanced to the most considerable employments, I am at the same time in the high road to dignities. You must know, that Lord Hertford has so high a character for piety, that his taking me by the hand is a kind of regeneration to me, and all past offences are now wiped off. But all these views are trifling to one of my age and temper. The material point is (if any thing can be material,) that I keep my health and humour as entire as I possessed them at five and-twenty. I am sorry to hear, dear Edmondstoune, that the case is not the same with you, at least with regard to the former; and perhaps somewhat with regard to the latter. Your situation is no doubt tiresome, and somewhat disagreeable. What is the fancy of sending one of the first noblemen in the kingdom to pass years in a country town? why do you not go forward to Italy, or back to Paris? When I arrived here, all M. Voltaire's friends told me of the regard he always expressed for me; that some advances on my part were due to his age, and would be well taken. I accordingly wrote him a letter, in which I expressed the esteem which are undoubtedly due to his talents; and among other things I said, that if I were not confined to Paris by public business, I should have a great ambition to pay him a visit at Geneva. This is the foundation of the report you mention; but I am absolutely confined to Paris and the court, and cannot on any account leave them so much as for three days.

Some advice, given at this time by Hume to a young man who, though in holy orders, had a tendency to scepticism, has already been before the public, and has been severely criticised. His view, that there are certain secrets which may be circulated among the learned in published books, without any risk that the vulgar, to whom a knowledge of them would be dangerous, should ever become acquainted with them, is one of the most incomprehensible features of his character. The application of his own ethical system to the circumstances, might have taught him that no good thing can connect itself with a lie; and that, independently of all more sacred considerations, nothing can be more desolating to human morality, than the discovery, that those who are professing to teach solemn truths, do not themselves believe in the opinions they promulgate. If, on the other hand, his counsel be a legitimate deduction from his ethical principles, it is right that the world should possess this test of their nature.

The following is the correspondence on both sides. For obvious reasons the name of the young clergyman is suppressed. It may be observed, that Hume's letter has been made a ground for attributing infidel opinions to the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. But justice requires it to be kept in view, that it appears from the immediately ensuing letter, that this individual belonged to the Church of *England*.

Colonel Edmondstoune *to* Hume.

Geneva, 26th March.

My Dear Secretary, — I have delayed for some time answering your letter, in expectation of being able to tell you what is to become of me; whether I am to return home, or remain abroad some years longer. Though I believe the latter will happen, I cannot speak of it with certainty, as I left it to Lord B. to determine for me; and he has not, as yet, given me any answer. I write to you at present to consult you about an acquaintance of yours, Mr. V —— , who is here with Lord Abingdon, and who thinks of returning to England, May next. You'll be so good as to determine for him what character he is to assume on his arrival, whether that of a clergyman or a layman. I suppose you know he is in orders, but he is very very low church. To speak plain language, I believe him to be a sort of disciple of your own; and, though he does not carry matters quite so far as you, yet you have given him notions not very consistent with his priestly character; so that you see you are somewhat bound to give him your best advice. V —— is a very good-natured, sensible, honest follow, without any fortune. My young man has a great liking for him, and has all the inclination in the world to serve him; but he neither knows what to ask for him, and is not sure if his father would ask any thing at present. We are as much in the dark as to what passes in England, as if we lived in Siberia. As you know probably something of the matter, without entering into politics, you may give us some hints to direct us in what manner to act, and whether we may not be of more use to our friend in acting as auxiliaries than principals. You'll determine whether a man of probity can accept of a living, a bishoprick, that does not believe all the Thirty-nine Articles; for you only can fix him: he has been hitherto irresolute. If [I am not] mistaken, he seems rather inclined not to be a clergyman; but you know as well, and better than I do, how difficult it is to get any tolerable civil employment. I mean any patent place; while as soon as you can conveniently, and if you should determine for his being a clergyman, throw in something consolatory on his being obliged to renounce white stockings the rest of his life. I wait with impatience to hear of your being made secretary to the embassy. Shall a descendant of Gospatrick, Earl of Northumberland, remain in the character of under-secretary? I hope not; though I am afraid our cursed politics at home will occasion some delay. Lord Mount Stuart offers his compliments to you, and thanks you for the pleasure your History gave him. You scrub, do you think we have so little taste or curiosity as not to have your History complete? We have two copies, one to lend, and another for our own use; they were sent us immediately on the publication; it is almost the only book he takes pleasure in reading. He has read it once, and has got through four volumes the second time. By the bye, what is this M^{c}Caulay history? I saw in the newspapers an extract of a preface that seemed to me to be the rhapsody of a crazy head. I hear it is in opposition to your History. We have her sister here, who seems to be a good sort of woman, a Mrs. Buckingham. I wish your time would allow you to come here: you have a great many friends; among the rest a Madame Tronchin, wife to the procureur-general, a virtuous, generous, charitable, good woman. She has learned English since I have been here, and can read your History with as much ease as her own language. Her husband is a man of merit, a man of genius; but knows you only by the translations of your works. Mallet, Professor Bertrand, and many others, even ministers, are your friends; even the Christians acknowledge your merit as an historian. The Christians here are the friends of Rousseau: those that are not, have been his persecutors; but it was not for his religious principles. They were afraid of his breeding disturbance in their state. I wish you could do something for Rousseau without his knowing it. Print his works in England for his benefit. You did not, I suppose, receive my letter on that subject. I never received that from you, which you say you enclosed to Sir Harry Erskine. Adieu, yours,

J. E.

Hume *to* Colonel Edmondstoune.

“Dear Edmondstoune, — I was just projecting to write a long letter to you, and another to Mr. V —— , when your last obliging epistle came to hand. I immediately put pen to paper, to assure you that the report is entirely groundless, and that I have not lost, nor ever could have lost, a shilling by Fairholm’s bankruptcy. Poor John Adams is very deeply engaged with him; but I had a letter last post from Dr. Blair, which informs me that he will yet be able to save fifteen or sixteen thousand pounds. I am glad to give you also this piece of intelligence.

“What! do you know that Lord Bute is again all-powerful, or rather that he was always so, but is now acknowledged for such by all the world? Let this be a new motive for Mr. V —— to adhere to the ecclesiastical profession, in which he may have so good a patron; for civil employments for men of letters can scarcely be found: all is occupied by men of business, or by parliamentary interest.

“It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar, and on their superstitions, to pique one’s self on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point of honour to speak truth to children or madmen. If the thing were worthy being treated gravely, I should tell him, that the Pythian oracle, with the approbation of Xenophon, advised every one to worship the gods — νομω πολεως. I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it; and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to an innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through the world. Am I a liar, because I order my servant to say, I am not at home, when I do not desire to see company?

“How could you imagine that I was under-secretary to Lord Hertford, or that I could ever be prevailed on to accept of such a character? I am not secretary at all, but do the business of secretary to the embassy without any character. Bunbury has the commission and appointments: a young man of three or four and twenty, somewhat vain and ignorant, whom Lord Hertford refused to accept of, as thinking he would be of no use to him. The king gave me a pension of £200 a-year for life, to engage me to attend his lordship. My lord is very impatient to have me secretary to the embassy; and writes very earnest letters to that purpose to the ministers, and, among the rest, to Lord Bute. He engaged me, somewhat against my will, to write also to such of my friends as had credit with that favourite, Oswald, Elliot, Sir Harry, and John Hume. The king has promised that my Lord Hertford shall soon be satisfied in this particular; and yet, I know not how, I suspect that some obstacle will yet interpose; though nothing can be more scandalous, than for a man to enjoy the revenue of an office, which is exercised by another. Mr. Bunbury has great interest, being married to a sister of the Duke of Richmond, and sister-in-law to Lord Holland. The appointments of this office are above £1000 a-year, and the expense attending it nothing; and it leads to all the great employments. I wait the issue with patience, and even with indifference. At my years, and with my fortune, a man with a little common sense, without philosophy, may be indifferent about what happens. I am, dear Edmondstoune, yours sincerely."

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Paris, 27th March, 1764.

"My Dear Sir, — I believe I need not inform you how little I have been inclined to solicit the great, or even my own friends, for any thing that regards my own fortune. I may venture to say, that, hitherto, I have never once made any application of this nature: and you may wonder that now, at my years, when the greatest part of life is past, and I may esteem myself, in other respects, pretty much at my ease, I should submit to prefer requests which I declined at an age when ambition ought naturally to be stronger, and when my circumstances much more powerfully called for assistance. But the step I take at present is at Lord Hertford's desire; who, being determined to make it a point that I should have the credentials and appointments of secretary to the embassy, expressed his wish that I should apply to all my own friends on the same subject. My obligations to him are so great, that, even were I more reluctant, I could not have declined compliance; and surely I can have but small reluctance to apply to you, one of my best friends, with whom I have long lived in a course of intimacy and good correspondence.

"I remember that the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you, you said, that I no doubt wondered how it happened, that while the prime minister and favourite, who inclined to be a Mæcenas, and who bore me no ill will, was surrounded by all my most particular friends, I should never have experienced any good effects from their credit. I own that I never was surprised; not from any diffidence in them, but from some obvious objections. Now all these objections are removed by Lord Hertford's friendship. Nobody, henceforth, need be afraid to patronize me, either as a Scotchman or a Deist. This circumstance encourages me in my present application to my friends.

“Surely it is impossible to give them a juster and more plausible cause to support than mine. I do the functions here of secretary to the embassy: Is it not scandalous that another should live in London and draw the salary?

“Is it for the credit of government, that such abuses should appear to foreign nations? Is it good policy to send an ambassador to the most important of all foreign employments, and yet declare that he has so little credit at home, as not to have the choice of his own secretary.

“I shall not say that the partiality I meet with here will make these abuses more remarked, than if another person, less known, were concerned. But surely the government puts me in a situation which ought to render me entirely useless to my Lord Hertford, by refusing me a character which should have appeared necessary, in order to gain me admittance into company.

“Allow me to inform you of another circumstance, which renders my prevailing on this point the most material step to my future fortune. When I came to London, and found, contrary to Lord Hertford’s opinion, that Mr. Bunbury was likely to keep his appointments, I declined going abroad, unless something certain was fixed in my favour. My lord said, that he would obtain me, from the public, a settlement of £200 a-year for life, or would give me as much from his private fortune. He applied to the king, who agreed; to Mr. Grenville, who also consented, two days before we came off. My pension was fixed on the most precarious footing of all pensions, by a simple order from the treasury to their secretary. Yet Mr. Grenville told my lord, that this was equivalent to a settlement for life. My lord believes so still; though I said nothing, perhaps from a foolish delicacy, as the time of our departure so near approached, and it was difficult then to correct the blunder. Were I to return to England, on my present footing, I should regard this pension as absolutely insignificant — not worth two years’ purchase; and never could form any plan on the supposition of its duration. But had I obtained the rank and character of secretary to the embassy, there are certain pensions annexed, by custom, to certain employments; and I believe I might more depend upon it.

“You see how materially my interests are concerned. I have wrote to others of my friends, Sir Harry, Oswald, and John Hume, in the same style, that an effort may be made, all at once, in my favour. I own that, notwithstanding all the plausible appearances, my hopes of success are but moderate. I have been accustomed to meet with nothing but insults and indignities from my native country; but if it continue so, ‘ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem habebis.’ I am, my dear sir, yours sincerely.”

When the fame of Hume’s reception in Paris had reached Scotland, some of his countrymen, who had not previously been very solicitous to court his notice, discovered that an introduction to him would be a valuable acquisition. The correspondence shows that the expectations of such persons were very large, and that if their names connected them with the aristocracy of Scotland, it could not fail that they should be at once put at their ease in the midst of the brilliant circle in which Hume was moving. The following may be taken as an instance of these attempts. On the 6th April, 1764, Blair writes:

“This letter will be presented to you by Colonel L —— , brother to the Earl of L —— ; who, going on a trip to Paris, is very ambitious of being introduced to your acquaintance. You will find him a very honourable, good-natured, well-behaved young man, of an amiable disposition and character. As I have been much connected with the L —— family, who were my first patrons in the ecclesiastical way, I was very glad to have it in my power to do them this favour at their desire; and will reckon myself much obliged to you for any civilities you show the Colonel.”

Blair was not the sole medium through whom this gentleman was recommended. Wallace writes, on 3d April, with all due ceremony: “The occasion of my writing at present this short letter, is a desire from the friends of the family of L —— here, asking me to write you by this night’s post, and acquaint you that the Honourable Alexander L —— , Esquire, son to the late Earl of L —— , lieutenant-colonel of Colonel Carey’s regiment of foot, is going to Paris, and will probably be in it before this reaches you, and wishes you may be acquainted, before he comes, who he is.” Taking the effect of these imposing denominations for granted, Mr. Wallace continues: — “I dare say you will introduce him to the good company where you are, and will be ready to put him on the best methods of enjoying and improving himself at Paris.”

In Hume’s answer to this application, we may trace some desire to reprove any notion that he was a person so insignificant as to feel highly honoured by an acquaintance with an Honourable, and bound as a matter of simple etiquette to receive his proffers with grateful eagerness.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

"Paris, 26th April, 1764.

"My Dear Sir, — Before I was favoured with yours, I had seen Colonel L —— , who waited on me, as is usual with the British who come to Paris. I returned his visit, and introduced him to the ambassador, who asked him to dinner among seven or eight of his countrymen. You will be surprised, perhaps, when I tell you that this is the utmost of the civilities which it will ever be possible for me to show Mr. L —— . For as to the ridiculous idea of foreigners, that I might introduce him to the good company of Paris, nothing can be more impracticable. I know not one family to which I could present such a man, silent, grave, awkward, speaking ill the language, not distinguished by any exploit, or science, or art. Were the French houses open to such people as these, they would be very little agreeable, considering the immense concourse of strangers to this place. But it is quite otherwise. The people are more scrupulous of receiving persons unknown, and I should soon lose all credit with them, were I to prostitute my recommendations of this nature. Your recommendations have great weight with me; but if I am not mistaken, I have often seen Colonel L — — 's face in Edinburgh. It is a little late he has bethought himself of being *ambitious*, as you say, of being introduced to my acquaintance. The only favour I can do him, is to advise him, as soon as he has seen Paris, to go to a provincial town where people are less shy of admitting new acquaintance, and are less delicate judges of behaviour. It is almost out of the memory of man, that any British has been here on a footing of familiarity with the good company except my Lord Holderness, who had a good stock of acquaintance to begin with, speaks the language like a native, has very insinuating manners, was presented under the character of an old secretary of state, and spent, as is said, £10,000 this winter, to obtain that object of vanity. Him, indeed, I met every where in the best company: but as to others — lords, earls, marquises, and dukes — they went about to plays, operas, and —— . Nobody minded them; they kept company with one another; and it would have been ridiculous to think of bringing them into French company. I may add General Clarke, who was liked and esteemed by several people of merit, which he owed to his great cleverness and ingenuity, and to his surprising courage in introducing himself. I enter into this detail with you, that people with whom I am much more connected than with the L. family, may not, at any time, be surprised that I am able to do so little for them in this way, and may not form false ideas of the hospitality of the French nation. But I fancy there will not arrive at Paris many people who will have great claims of past civilities to plead with me.

“What you tell me of John Adams gives me great consolation. I had heard of the alarming news of his connexions with Fairholm, and things were put in the worst light. I was just ready to write to Ferguson to get from him a just state of the case; but if he has £15,000, or £18,000 remaining, his industry will recover him, and he may go on in his usual way of beneficence and generosity. That family is one of the few to whose civilities I have been much beholden, and I retain a lively sense of them.

“Our friend, I mean your friend, Lord Kames, had much provoked Voltaire, who never forgives, and never thinks any enemy below his notice. He has accordingly sent to the *Gazette Literaire* , an article with regard to the ‘Elements of Criticism,’ which turns that book extremely into ridicule, with a good deal of wit. I tried to have it suppressed before it was printed; but the authors of that Gazette told me, that they durst neither suppress nor alter any thing that came from Voltaire. I suppose his lordship holds that satiric wit as cheap, as he does all the rest of the human race; and will not be in the least mortified by his censure.

“The taste for literature is neither decayed nor depraved here, as with the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames. Some people, who had read your dissertation, affirmed to me, that it was the finest piece of criticism, incomparably, to be found in the English tongue. I know not if you have read the ‘*Poetique de Marmontel*:’ it is worth your perusal. Voltaire has published an edition of Corneille, and his notes and dissertations contain many fine things. There is a book published in Holland, in two volumes octavo, called ‘De la Nature.’ It is prolix, and in many parts whimsical; but contains some of the boldest reasonings to be found in print. There is a miscellany in three volumes duodecimo published here, where there are many good pieces. It is perhaps more amusing to me, than it will be to you; as there is scarce a poem in it whose author I do not know, or the person to whom it is addressed.

“It is very silly to form distant schemes: but I am fixed at Paris for some time, and, to judge by probabilities, for life. My income would suffice me to live at ease, and a younger brother of the best family would not think himself ill provided for, if he had such a revenue. Lodgings, a coach, and clothes, are all I need; and though I have entered late into this scene of life, I am almost as much at my ease, as if I had been educated in it from my infancy. However, sickness, or the infirmities of age, which I may soon expect, may probably make me think of a retreat: But whether that will be better found in Paris or elsewhere, time must determine. I forbid myself all resolution on that head.

“I shall indulge myself in a folly, which I hope you will make a discreet use of: it is the telling you of an incident which may appear silly, but which gave more pleasure than perhaps any other I had ever met with. I was carried, about six weeks ago, to a masquerade, by Lord Hertford. We went both unmasked; and we had scarce entered the room when a lady, in mask, came up to me and exclaimed:— ‘*Ha! Monsr. Hume, vous faites bien de venir ici a visage découvert. Que vous serez bien comblé ce soir d’honnêtetés et de politesses! Vous verrez, par des preuves peu équivoques, jusqu’à quel point vous êtes chéri en France.*’ This prologue was not a little encouraging; but, as we advanced through the hall, it is difficult to imagine the caresses, civilities, and panegyrics which poured on me from all sides. You would have thought that every one had taken advantage of his mask to speak his mind with impunity. I could observe that the ladies were rather the most liberal on this occasion. But what gave me chief pleasure was to find that most of the eulogiums bestowed on me, turned on my personal character, my naïvéte, and simplicity of manners, the candour and mildness of my disposition, &c. — *Non sunt mihi cornea fibra.* I shall not deny that my heart felt a sensible satisfaction from this general effusion of good will; and Lord Hertford was much pleased, and even surprised, though he said, he thought that he had known before upon what footing I stood with the good company of Paris.

“I allow you to communicate this story to Dr. Jardine. I hope it will refute all his idle notions that I have no turn for gallantry and gaiety, — that I am on a bad footing with the ladies, — that my turn of conversation can never be agreeable to them, — that I never can have any pretensions to their favours, &c. &c. &c. A man in vogue will always have something to pretend to with the fair sex.

“Do you not think it happy for me to retain such a taste for idleness and follies at my years; especially since I have come into a country where the follies are so much more agreeable than elsewhere? I could only wish that some of my old friends were to participate with me of these amusements; though I know none of them that can, on occasion, be so thoroughly idle as myself.

"I am persuaded you will find great comfort in my house, which, in every respect, is agreeable. I beg of you and Mrs. Blair, (to whom I desire my compliments,) that you would sometimes pay some attention to my sister, who is the person that suffers most by my absence. I am, dear sir, yours very sincerely."

Blair writes, on the 15th November, assuring Hume that he is fully conscious of the unreasonableness of expecting him to introduce those who are accredited to him, to the good company of Paris. He says, that his own friend expressed himself as "very well satisfied" with Hume's behaviour towards him; and perhaps he had a better reception than the letter to Blair might seem to indicate. At all events, Blair seems not to have been discouraged, for he immediately introduced the son of the provost of Glasgow, travelling for his health, and Arthur Masson, a teacher of languages, recommending them to such good offices as Hume finds himself at liberty to bestow on them. It is clear, in short, that he had not been successful in frightening his friends from requesting him to perform offices of kindness and courtesy, or from trusting that he would perform them. The following passage, in Blair's letter, is evidence of the popularity of the Literary classes of the university of Edinburgh, during the middle of last century.

My class was, last season, in such reputation that I gave a second course in summer, at the desire of a body of the medical students. I am just about to open for this winter — with what success I cannot tell; for I tremble for it every season. Against next season I intend to print a synopsis of my lectures. In the medical school, a revolution is at a crisis, which is important to us. Dr. Rutherford wants to demit in favour of Frank Hume; a measure pushed by Lord Milton, Baron Mure, and John Home; the coalition of three formidable powers: but which we college people dread as boding us no good; and are much more inclined to another scheme, of placing Cullen in Rutherford's chair, and bringing Dr. Black, from Glasgow, into the chair of chemistry, which would greatly promote the reputation of our college, and which has all the popularity on its side at present.

How unimportant these things seem to you now? I hear much, from time to time, of your continuing, nay, increasing celebrity and fame. You are just the high mode, they tell us — the very delice of all the good company at Paris.

In a letter to Millar, chiefly in reference to some English law books, which Hume had engaged to obtain for a French lawyer, he recurs to the Memoirs of King James. He seems to have indolently adopted the notion that there were few chances of his having an opportunity of making additions to his History of the Stuarts. He did live, however, to see more than one new edition of it: but the references in them to the treasure he had discovered at Paris, are extremely meagre. Another letter immediately follows, in which we find that his anticipations of new editions are already outrun by the demands: and we find in his, as in many other cases, where permanent fame has been reached, that the excitement of expectant authorship has declined long before its visions are realized; and that their fulfilment comes at last on minds sobered down to indifference.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

“Paris, 18th March, 1764.

“I have lived such a life of dissipation as not to be able to think of any serious occupation. But I begin to tire of that course of life. I have, however, run over King James’s Memoirs, and have picked up some curious passages, which it is needless to speak of till we have occasion for a new edition, which I suppose is very distant.”

“Paris, 18th April, 1764.

“Dear Sir, — All the discoveries I made in King James’s Memoirs, make against himself and his brother; and he is surely a good enough witness on that side: but I believe him also a man of veracity, and I should have put trust in any matter of fact that he told from his own knowledge. But this it is needless for us to talk any more about; since, I suppose, you have got copies enough of my History, already printed, to last for your lifetime and mine. I shall certainly never think of adding another line to it. I am too much your friend to think of it. . . . I beg my sincere compliments to Mrs. Millar. I saw a few days ago Mrs. Mallet, who seems to be going upon a strange project, of living alone, in a hermitage, in the midst of the forest of Fontainbleau. I pass my time very agreeably here; though somewhat too much dissipated for one of my years and humour.”

“Paris, 23d April, 1764.

“I was very much surprised with what you tell me, that you had made a new edition in quarto, of my History of the Tudors, and might probably do the same with that of the Stuarts. I imagined that the octavo edition would for a long time supersede the necessity of any quarto edition; and I wonder that of the ancient history did not first become requisite. You were in the wrong to make any edition without informing me; because I left in Scotland a copy very fully corrected, with a few alterations, which ought to have been followed. I shall write to my sister to send it you, and I desire you may follow it in all future editions, if there be any such. I shall send you from here the alterations, which my perusal of King James's Memoirs has occasioned; they are not many, but some of them, one in particular, is of importance. I have some scruple of inserting it, on your account, till the sale of the other editions be pretty considerably advanced. You have not yet informed me how many you may have upon hand. I suppose a very considerable number. Father Gordon of the Scots College, who has an exact memory of King James's Memoirs, was so kind as to peruse anew my History during the Commonwealth, and the reigns of the two brothers; and he marked all the passages of fact, where they differed from the Memoirs. They were surprisingly few; which gave me some satisfaction; because as I told you, I take that prince's authority for a plain fact to be very good.

"I never see Mr. Wilkes here but at chapel, where he is a most regular, and devout, and edifying, and pious attendant; I take him to be entirely regenerate. He told me last Sunday, that you had given him a copy of my Dissertations, with the two which I had suppressed; and that he, foreseeing danger, from the sale of his library, had wrote to you to find out that copy, and to tear out the two obnoxious dissertations. Pray how stands that fact? It was imprudent in you to intrust him with that copy: it was very prudent in him to use that precaution. Yet I do not naturally suspect you of imprudence, nor him of prudence. I must hear a little farther before I pronounce."

Millar, writing on 5th June, gives the following account of his conduct as to the suppressed dissertations.

"I take Mr. Wilkes to be the same man he was, — acting a part. He has forgot the story of the *two* dissertations. The fact is, upon importunity, I lent to him the only copy I preserved, and for years never could recollect he had it, till his books came to be sold; upon this I went immediately to the gentleman that directed the sale, told him the fact, and reclaimed the two dissertations which were my property. Mr. Coates, who was the person, immediately delivered me the volume; and so soon as I got home, I tore them out and burnt them, that I might not lend them to any for the future. Two days after, Mr. Coates sent me a note for the volume, as Mr. Wilkes had desired it should be sent to him to Paris; I returned the volume, but told him the two dissertations, I had torn out of the volume and burnt, being my property. This is the truth of the matter, and nothing but the truth. It was certainly imprudent for me to lend them to him."

The interest taken by Hume, as by all his contemporary fellow-countrymen, in the Douglas cause, has already been noticed. As the inquiry which had taken place in France had not been long concluded, and was the object of discussion in the Court of Session, the adherents of the exiled royal house, and other Scottish families residing in Paris, naturally took such a deep interest in the proceedings, as the following letter explains.

Hume *to* Baron Mure.

"Paris, 22d June, 1764.

"My Dear Baron, — A few days ago I dined with the Duchess of Perth, which was the first time I had seen that venerable old lady, who is really a very sensible woman. Part of our conversation was upon the Douglas affair.

"That lady, as well as all the company, as well as every body of common sense here, shows her entire conviction of that imposture; and there was present a gentleman, an old friend of yours, a person of very good understanding and of undoubted honour, who laid open to us a scene of such deliberate dishonesty on the part of her grace of Douglas and her partisans, as was somewhat new and surprising. I suppose it is all known to poor Andrew, whom I heartily love and pity. 'Tis certain, that the imposture is as well known to her grace and her friends, as to any body; and Hay, the Pretender's old secretary, the only man of common honesty among them, confessed to this gentleman, that he has frequently been shocked with their practices, and has run away from them to keep out of the way of such infamy; though he had afterwards the weakness to yield to their solicitations. Carnegy knows the roguery as well as the rest; though I did not hear any thing of his scruples. Lord Beauchamp and Dr. Trail, our chaplain, passed four months last summer at Rheims, where this affair was much the subject of conversation. Except one curate, they did not meet with a person, that was not convinced of the imposture. Mons. de Puysieuls, whose country seat is in the neighbourhood, told me the same thing. Can any thing be more scandalous and more extraordinary than Frank Garden's behaviour? Can any thing be more scandalous and more ordinary than

Burnet's. I am afraid, that notwithstanding the palpable justice of your cause, it is yet uncertain whether you will prevail.

"I continue to live here in a manner amusing enough, and which gives me no time to be tired of any scene. What between public business, the company of the learned and that of the great, especially of the ladies, I find all my time filled up, and have no time to open a book, except it be some books newly published, which may be the subject of conversation. I am well enough pleased with this change of life, and a satiety of study had beforehand prepared the way for it: however, time runs off in one course of life as well as another, and all things appear so much alike, that I am afraid of falling into total Stoicism and indifference about every thing. For instance, I am every moment to be touching on the time when I am to receive my credential letters of secretary to the embassy, with a thousand a-year of appointments. The king has promised it, all the members have promised it; Lord Hertford earnestly solicits it; the plainest common sense and justice seem to require [it]: yet have I been in this condition above six months; and I never trouble my head about the matter, and have rather laid my account that there is to be no such thing.

"Please to express my most profound respects to Mrs. Mure, and my sense of the honour she did me. If I have leisure before the carrier goes off, I shall write her, and give her some account of my adventures; but I would not show her so little mark of my attention as to write her only in a postscript. I am, dear Baron," &c.

The correspondence with Madame de Boufflers was occasionally resumed, when Hume or she was absent from Paris. How well the philosopher could upon occasion accommodate himself to the taste of a French lady of the court, the following may suffice to show.

Hume *to the* Comtesse de Boufflers.

Compiegne, 6th July, 1764.

We live in a kind of solitude and retirement at Compiegne; at least I do, who, having nothing but a few general acquaintance at court, and not caring to make more, have given myself up almost entirely to study and retreat. You cannot imagine, madam, with what pleasure I return as it were to my natural element, and what satisfaction I enjoy in reading, and musing, and sauntering, amid the agreeable scenes that surround me. But yes, you can easily enough imagine it; you have yourself formed the same resolution; you are determined this summer to tie the broken thread of your studies and literary amusements. If you have been so happy as to execute your purpose, you are almost in the same state as myself, and are at present wandering along the banks of the same beautiful river, perhaps with the same books in your hand, a Racine, I suppose, or a Virgil, and despise all other pleasure and amusement. Alas! why am I not so near you, that I could see you for half an hour a day, and confer with you on these subjects?

But this ejaculation, methinks, does not lead me directly in my purposed road, of forgetting you. It is a short digression, which is soon over: and that I may return to the right path, I shall give you some account of the state of the court; I mean the exterior face of it; for I know no more; and if I did, I am become so great a politician, that nothing should make me reveal it. The king divides his evenings every week after the following manner: one he gives to the public, when he sups at the grand convent; two he passes with his own family; two in a society of men; and, to make himself amends, two he passes with ladies, Madame de Grammont, usually, Madame de Mirepoix, and Madame de Beauveau. This last princess passed three evenings in this manner at the Hermitage immediately before her departure, which was on Monday last. I think her absence a great loss to that society; I am so presumptuous as to think it one to myself. I found her as obliging and as friendly as if she had never conversed with kings, and never were a politician. I really doubt much of her talent for politics. Pray what is your opinion? Is she qualified, otherwise than by having great sense and an agreeable conversation, to make progress in the road to favour? and are not these qualities rather an encumbrance to her? I have met her once or twice, with another lady, in whose favour I am much prepossessed; she seems agreeable, well behaved, judicious, a great reader; speaks as if she had sentiment, and was superior to the vulgar train of amusements. I should have been willing, notwithstanding my present love of solitude, to have cultivated an acquaintance with her, but she did not say any thing so obliging to me as to give me encouragement. Would you conjecture that I mean the Countess of Tessé? I know not whether you are acquainted with that lady. But I shall never have done with this idle train of conversation; and therefore, to cut things short, I kiss your hands most humbly and devoutly, and bid you adieu.

CHAPTER XIV.

1764-1765. Æt. 53-54.

The French and English Society of Hume's day — Reasons of his warm reception in France — Society in which he moved — Mixture of lettered men with the Aristocracy — Madame Geoffrin — Madame Du Page de Boccage — Madame Du Deffand — Mademoiselle De L'Espinasse — D'Alembert — Turgot — The Prince of Conti — Notices of Hume among the Parisians — Walpole in Paris — Resumption of the Correspondence — Hume undertakes the management of Elliot's sons — Reminiscences of home — Mrs. Cockburn — Adam Smith — Madame De Boufflers and the Prince of Conti — Correspondence with Lord Elibank.

There were many things to make the social position he obtained in France infinitely gratifying to Hume. Even his good birth was no claim to admission on a position of liberal familiarity with the higher aristocracy of England. His descent from a line of Scottish lairds would be insufficient in the eyes of the Walpoles, Russels, and Seymours, to distinguish him from the common herd of men who could put on a laced waistcoat and powdered wig, and command decent treatment from the lackeys in their ante-chambers. His claims rested on his Literary rank; and the extent to which such claims might be admitted was fixed by Hereditary rank at its own discretion. It might cordially receive them one day, and repel them with cold disdain on another. In this doubtful and partial recognition, Hume would find himself in the motley crowd of those who force themselves, or are partly welcomed, into these high places — dissipated men of genius, underbred men of riches, hardworking, pertinacious politicians; persons with whom his finely trained mind, his reserve, and his habit of mixing in a refined though small society of Scotsmen, would not easily harmonize.

In France matters were widely different; there he was at once warmly and affectionately received into the bosom of a society to which many of the supercilious English aristocracy would have sought for admission in vain.

In England no distinct palpable barrier surrounded the distinguished group. The multitude clamorously asserted an equality. In default of other qualities, impudence and perseverance were sometimes sufficient to force admission. In these circumstances, each member of the privileged classes guarded his own portion of the arena as well as he might, and the intruder had to fight battle after battle, and contest every inch of ground he gained.

It seems as if in France the very rigidness with which the select circle was fortified was the reason why those admitted within it were placed so thoroughly at their ease. The aristocracy could open the door, look about them, and invite an individual to enter, without fearing to encounter a general rush for admission. There was much evil of every kind in that circle; we have not to deal here with its inward morality, but its outward form, and it certainly deserves to be remembered as one of the most memorable instances in which, on any large scale, the aristocracy of rank and wealth has met the aristocracy of letters without restraint. The quality of shining in conversation was not to be despised by the greatest in wealth, or the highest in the peerage; and their efforts were measured with those of the first wits of the time. To an aristocracy which could thus amuse itself, it was a great luxury to be surrounded by men of thought and learning. The courtier who could open his salon to the wits and philosophers of Paris, was far more dependant on their presence than they were on the privilege of admission. If a Barthélemi, a Marmontel, a Condillac, saw cause to desert the suppers of D’Holbach, they would be received at those of the Duc de Praslin or de Choiseul, the Prince of Conti, and Madame du Deffand; but how were such departed stars to be replaced?

There is perhaps no more striking type of the character and condition of the Parisian coteries than one of Hume’s most intimate friends, Madame Geoffrin. In this country, were an uneducated woman to frame and lead a social party, including the first in rank and in talent of the day, to which no one under royalty was too great not to deem admission a privilege; were she to be absolute in her admissions and exclusions, bold in her sarcasms, free and blunt often to rudeness in her observations and opinions, and severe or kind to all by turns as her own choice or caprice suggested, it would be at once pronounced that the reddest blood and the highest rank could alone produce such an anomaly. A very small number of eminent duchesses have perhaps occupied such a position in this country. Yet Madame Geoffrin, who acted this part to the full among the fastidious aristocracy of France before the revolution, was the daughter of a valet-de-chambre and the widow of a glass manufacturer. The foundation of her influence was her success in making herself the centre of a circle of artists and men of letters. She was much in the confidence of Madame De Tencin, and on that lady’s death succeeded in transferring to herself what remained of her distinguished society, dimmed as it was by the departure of Montesquieu and Fontenelle. Madame Geoffrin by activity and energy widened the circle. She never made visits herself, and those who had the privilege of entering her dining-room on her public days, found there assembled D’Alembert, Helvétius, Raynal, Marmontel, Caraccioli, Holbach, Galliani, and the artist Vanloo. During the British embassy, David Hume, the great philosopher from the far North, might there be met; and when all other attempts had perhaps failed, some chance of encountering such an erratic meteor as Rousseau still remained in attending Madame Geoffrin’s Wednesday dinner. Having once, by her signal wit and wisdom, gained her position, no obtrusive rivals from her own deserted class could push near enough to drive her from it. It is not the least admirable feature of this remarkable woman, that far from assuming the subdued and cautious tone of one of her own rank, who must be more wary than a denizen of committing breaches of the social rules of her new cast, a simplicity and freedom seems to have accompanied all her actions and ideas; a courageous adoption of what seemed good to her in place of what might be fit. Her letters, in their severe diction, give some notion of the writer’s character, but cannot convey so full an impression as when they are presented in the bold, irregular, and most “unlady-like” hand in which they are scribbled.

The pleasant retailers of the literary chit-chat of that time, Marmontel, Grimm, Bauchemont, and others, are full of details of Madame Geoffrin, who, if she was not quite as formally approached as Boufflers, or Deffand, was as much respected, loved, and feared. The author of the *Contes Moraux*,” tells us some of the weaknesses of this gifted lady; and, according to his account, she had been actually convicted, living as she was outwardly in the freest society in the world, of a turn for secret devotion! “Elle avait un apartement dans un couvent de religieuses et une tribune à l’Eglise des Capucins, — mais avec autant de mystère que les femmes galantes de ce temps-là avaient des petites maisons.” The picture would be sufficiently ludicrous, were it not for the darker features presented by a state of society, where no one should venture to be pious except under pain of being exterminated with ridicule.

There was one matter as to which Madame Geoffrin was timid and cautious; she never meddled with matters of state or unsafe political opinions, and was induced to discountenance those who did so. Surrounded by restless and inquiring spirits, she often dreaded being compromised by their conduct; and was especially uneasy at any time when the Bastille sheltered a more than usual number of those whose wit was wont to flash round her board. But her guests have recorded, that if there was a little saddened and earnest gravity in her deportment, when she received them after such naughty affairs, she abated nothing of her old kindness. Her good heart indeed was after all her noblest quality. She was one of those who held the simple notion, that were it not for the judicious distribution of favours by the rich, the poor, including artisans and producers of all kinds, must necessarily die of starvation. She was thus in the midst of an extensive distribution of charities, actively occupied in the *encouragement* of those who lived by the sweat of their brow; and if she believed that she accomplished much more than she actually did, it was a satisfaction not to be grudged to one who occupied herself with the fortunes of the poor, in the midst of the stony indifference of the French aristocracy of that day.

Another lady, a friend and correspondent of Hume, Madame le Page du Boccage, endeavoured to rival Madame Geoffrin as a centre of attraction; but though she possessed, along with wealth, both rank and beauty, she was unsuccessful, on account of the presence of a third quality — authorship. The wits must praise her bad poetry if they frequented her house, and where so many other doors were open without such a condition, they abandoned it. “Elle était d’une figure aimable,” says Grimm, “elle est bonne femme; elle est riche; elle pouvait fixer chez elle les gens d’esprit et de bonne compagnie, sans les mettre dans l’embarras de lui parler avec peu de sincérité de sa *Colombiade* ou de ses *Amazones*.”

Perhaps of all these eminent women, while Madame de Boufflers had the greatest amount of elegance and accomplishment, Madame du Deffand had the sharpest and most searching wit. She was the author of that proverbial *bon mot* about St. Denis carrying his head under his arm, *il n’y a que le premier pas qui coûte*; a saying sufficient to make a reputation in France. Madame du Deffand does not appear to have been a correspondent of Hume, nor, though they occasionally met, does much cordiality seem to have subsisted between them. The aveugle clairvoyante, as Voltaire aptly called her, in allusion to her blindness and her wit, thought that she discovered in Hume a worshipper at another shrine. She wrote to Walpole expressing her disgust of those who paid court to Madame de Boufflers, at the same time, only just not stating, in express terms, how much they were mistaken in not transferring their obsequiousness to herself. She, certainly an object of pity from her blindness, was still more so in her own discontented spirit. The days which tranquil ease and the attentions of kind friends might have soothed, were disturbed by restless vanity, an intense desire to interfere with the doings of that world which she could not see, dissipation, and literary wrangles.

One remarkable person, an offshoot of Madame du Deffand’s circle, and driven forth from it to raise an empire of her own, was Mademoiselle de L’Espinasse. Hume and she met frequently in Paris, and they subsequently corresponded together. She was an illegitimate child, who, having been well educated, had been adopted by Madame du Deffand as her companion, and the minister for supplying, as far as possible, her lost sense of sight. Mademoiselle had to be present at those displays of intellect which illuminated the table of her mistress. It soon began to transpire that the humble drudge possessed a soul of fire; and taking part in the conversation, her remarks rose as she acquired confidence and ease, into an originality of thought, fulness of judgment, and rich eloquence of language, which fascinated the senses of those veteran champions in the arena of intellect. Thus many of those who went to offer their incense to a woman old and blind, were constrained to bestow some of it on one “young in years, but in sage counsel old,” who had little more outward claim on their admiration; for Mademoiselle de L’Espinasse was naturally plain, and was deeply marked with smallpox. The patroness did not present herself till six o’clock in the evening; to her who knew no difference between light and darkness it was morning. She often found that her protégée had been entertaining the guests for an hour, and that they had come early to enjoy her conversation. This was treason — an overt tampering with the allegiance of the followers; and the subordinate was driven forth with contumely.

It is not easy to decide which party, if either, was in the right; though the memoir writers in general take the part of Mademoiselle de L’Espinasse. Far from being made a homeless wanderer by the dismissal, she was immediately supplied with a house and furniture by her friends, who obtained for her a pension from the crown. On these means she founded a rival establishment of her own; and surrounded herself with an intellectual circle, which seems to have more than rivalled in brilliancy that from which she was dismissed. D’Alembert was told that if he countenanced the new idol, he must bid farewell to his former patroness. He at once joined the party of the young aspirant. He became dangerously ill, and Mademoiselle de L’Espinasse nursed him with the untiring affection of a wife or a daughter. The philosopher, whose humble dwelling was found to be on too sordid a scale to be consistent with health, thenceforth took up his abode with his young friend. Hume must have witnessed the rise of this new connexion, for it was during his residence in Paris that D’Alembert’s illness took place, and it is the object of occasional anxious allusion by his Parisian acquaintance.

Though the circumstances in which he passed his earlier days were not likely to nourish such a taste, no man seems to have been more dependant on the presence of an educated and intellectual female than the secretary of the Academy. There is little doubt that the new attachment was of a Platonic character; but it boded evil to both parties. The lady, if she had some portion of the purer affections of the soul to bestow upon the sage, had warmer feelings for likelier objects; and her frame sunk before the consuming fires of more than one passion. She was carried to an early grave, and the mortifications, caused by her alienation, followed by grief for her death, broke the spirit, and imbittered and enfeebled the latter days of the philosopher. Hume seems to have established a closer friendship with D’Alembert than with any of his other contemporaries in France; and he left a memorial of his regard for the encyclopediast in his will. Unlike, in many respects, they had some features in common. D’Alembert’s personal character, and the habits of his life, had, like his philosophy, the dignity of simplicity. His figure, and still more his voice, were the objects of much malicious sarcasm; but cruel jests could not make his fragile body less the tenement of a noble spirit; or his shrill puny voice less the instrument of great and bold thoughts. His mind stands forth in strong relief from the frippery of that age; while his writings contain no marks of that reckless infidelity which distinguishes the productions of his fellow labourers. In some of those follies, so prevalent that a man utterly free of them, must have courted the charge of eccentricity, if not of insanity, he partook; but moderately and reluctantly, as one suited for a better time and a nobler sphere of exertion. In the quarrel with Rousseau, he adopted the cause of Hume with honest zeal. He wrote many letters to Hume, which are still preserved. They perhaps, in some measure, exhibit the least amiable feature of his character — his bitterness, it might be almost termed hatred, towards Madame du Deffand, on account of her conduct to his own friend.

It is unnecessary to discourse, at any length, on the distinguished men — including the names of Buffon, Malesherbes, Diderot, Crébillon, Morellet, Helvétius, Holbach, Hénault, Raynal, Suard, La Condamine, and De Brosses, who courted Hume's company in France. Next to D'Alembert, his closest friendship seems to have been with the honest and thoughtful statesman, Turgot; who, in the midst of that reckless whirl of vanity, was already looking far into the future, and predicting, from the disorganized and menacing condition of the elements of French society, the storm that was to come. He wrote many letters to Hume, containing remarks on matters of statesmanship and political economy, which are of great interest in a historical and economical view, especially in one instance, where he notices the want of any common principle of sympathies and interests connecting the aristocracy with the people, and reflects on the dangerous consequences of such a state of matters to the peace of Europe.

There are many circumstances showing that much as he loved the social ease, combined with learning and wit, for which his Parisian circle was conspicuous, he disliked one prominent feature of that social system — the scornful infidelity, the almost intolerance of any thing like earnest belief, so often exhibited, both in speech and conduct. Sir Samuel Romilly has preserved the following curious statement by Diderot:— "He spoke of his acquaintance with Hume. 'Je vous dirai un trait de lui, mais il vous sera un peu scandaleux peut-être, car vous Anglais vous croyez *un peu* en Dieu; pour nous autres nous n'y croyons guères. Hume dîna avec une grande compagnie chez le Baron D'Holbach. Il était assis à côté du Baron; on parla de la religion naturelle: 'Pour les Athées,' disait Hume, 'je ne crois pas qu'il en existe; je n'en ai jamais vu.' 'Vous avez été un peu malheureux,' répondit l'autre, 'vous voici à table avec dix-sept pour la première fois.'"

The secretary's residence in the metropolis was occasionally varied by official sojourns to Fontainbleau, or Compiègne, a visit to the Duchesse de Barbantane at Villers Cotterets, or an excursion with Madame de Boufflers and the Prince of Conti to L'Ile-Adam. That rural seat of princely magnificence and hospitality is a familiar name in the memoirs of the times;

and particularly in those of Madame de Genlis. It is singular, indeed, that this lady never mentions Hume, though she appears to have been living in the castle at the time when he visited it. The Prince of Conti was in every way possessed of the external qualifications which, in the eyes of his countrymen, were then the proper ornaments of his high station. He was brave, a distinguished military leader, generous, extravagant, gallant, and a lover of literature and the arts. There was probably little in such a character to rival a Turgot, or a D’Alembert in Hume’s esteem; but his intercourse with this prince, as with De Rohan, De Choiseul, and others, would be of a more limited and formal character. His influence with courtiers and statesmen, however, appears to have been considerable. In the letters addressed to him there are several instances where French people solicit his interposition with the great: thus, Madame Helvétius desires his good offices to procure an abbaye for her friend and neighbour the Abbé “Macdonalt,” of an illustrious Irish family. One lady, seeking ecclesiastical patronage, tells him that the clergy will have more pleasure in doing him a favour than in performing the functions of their office!

Hume has thus recorded in his “own life” the impression left on him by his reception in Paris:— “Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes, will never imagine the reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I resiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them. There is, however, a real satisfaction in living at Paris; from the great number of sensible, knowing, and polite company with which that city abounds above all places in the universe. I thought once of settling there for life.” If he thought that he could have taken up his residence in Paris, and preserved for the remainder of his days the fresh bloom of his reputation, he was undoubtedly mistaken; but, dazzled as he in some measure was, we can see in his correspondence that he estimated the sensation he made pretty nearly at its just value. In the circle of toys, seized and discarded, by a giddy fashionable crowd, philosophy will have its turn, as well as poodles, parrots, tulips, monkeys, cafés, and black pages. It had been so a century earlier, when the most abstruse works of Des Cartes had been the ornament of every fashionable lady’s toilette; and now the wheel had revolved and philosophy was again in vogue.

A second time we have Lord Charlemont affording us a passing sketch of Hume. Having had an opportunity of witnessing the philosopher’s reception in France, he says: —

"From what has been already said of him, it is apparent that his conversation to strangers, and particularly to Frenchmen, could be little delightful, and still more particularly, one would suppose, to French women: and yet no lady's toilette was complete without Hume's attendance. At the opera his broad unmeaning face was usually seen *entre deux jolis minois*. The ladies in France gave the ton, and the ton was deism: a species of philosophy ill suited to the softer sex, in whose delicate frame weakness is interesting, and timidity a charm. . . . . How my friend Hume was able to endure the encounter of these French female Titans, I know not. In England, either his philosophic pride or his conviction that infidelity was ill suited to women, made him perfectly averse from the initiation of ladies into the mysteries of his doctrine."

The same characteristics are recorded by Grimm. We have his position still more vividly painted by Madame d'Epinay, according to whom he must have undergone not a small portion of the martyrdom of lionism. One of the "rages" of the day was the holding of cafés, or giving entertainments in private houses, according to the arrangements and etiquette of a public café. Among the amusements of the evening were pantomimes, and acted tableaux. In these it was necessary that Hume should take a *rôle*, and as he was always willing to conform to established regulations, we find him seated as a sultan between two obdurate beauties, intending to strike his bosom, but aiming the blows at *le ventre*, and accompanying his acting with characteristic exclamations.

Hume's popularity in Paris appears to have somewhat disturbed Horace Walpole's equanimity. He was too good an artist to be very angry, or to express himself in terms of aggravated bitterness; but it is clear from occasional notices, that, notwithstanding his professed admiration of Scotsmen, it displeased him to find Hume the Scotsman sitting at the king's gate. Writing to Lady Hervey on 14th Sept. 1765, he says, "Mr. Hume, that is *the mode*, asked much about your ladyship." Then to Montague, on the 22d of the same month, and in allusion to the conversation of the dinner-table in Paris:

For literature, it is very amusing when one has nothing else to do. I think it rather pedantic in society: tiresome when displayed professedly; and, besides, in this country, one is sure it is only the fashion of the day. Their taste in it is the worst of all; could one believe, that when they read our authors, Richardson and Mr. Hume should be their favourites? The latter is treated here with perfect veneration. His History, so falsified in many points, so partial in as many, so very unequal in its parts, is thought the standard of writing.

Thus, and in the like strain, do the French suffer in his good opinion, for their offence in making an idol of Hume. So, on the 3d October, when writing to Mr. Chute, —

Their authors, who by the way are every where, are worse than their own writings, which I don’t mean as a compliment to either. In general, the style of conversation is solemn, pedantic, and seldom animated, but by a dispute. I was expressing my aversion to disputes: Mr. Hume, who very gratefully admires the tone of Paris, having never known any other tone, said with great surprise, “Why, what do you like, if you hate both disputes and whisk?”

Then, on the 19th of the same month, to Mr. Brand:

I assure you, you may come hither very safely, and be in no danger from mirth. Laughing is as much out of fashion as pantins and bilboquets. Good folks, they have no time to laugh. There is God and the king to be pulled down first; and men and women, one and all, are devoutly employed in the demolition. They think me quite profane for having any belief left. But this is not my only crime; I have told them, and am undone by it, that they have taken from us to admire the two dullest things we had — Whisk and Richardson. It is very true that they want nothing but George Grenville to make their conversations, or rather dissertations, the most tiresome upon earth. For Lord Lyttelton, if he would come hither, and turn freethinker once more, he would be reckoned the most agreeable man in France, — next to Mr. Hume, who is the only thing in the world that they believe implicitly, which they must do, for I defy them to understand any language that he speaks.

At this time Adam Smith was travelling in France, with his pupil, the young Duke of Buccleuch. On 5th July, 1764, he writes from Toulouse, requesting Hume to give him and his pupil introductions to distinguished Frenchmen, the Duc de Richelieu, the Marquis de Lorges, &c. He says, that Mr. Townsend had assured him of these and other introductions, from the Duc de Choiseul, but that none had made their appearance in that quarter. Smith seems to have been heartily tired of the glittering bondage of his tutorship, and to have sighed for the academic conviviality he had left behind him at Glasgow. He says: —

“The Duke is acquainted with no Frenchman whatever. I cannot cultivate the acquaintance of the few with whom I am acquainted, as I cannot bring them to our house, and am not always at liberty to go to theirs. The life which I led at Glasgow, was a pleasureable dissipated life in comparison of that which I lead here at present. I have begun to write a book, in order to pass away the time. You may believe I have very little to do. If Sir James would come and spend a month with us in his travels, it would not only be a great satisfaction to me, but he might, by his influence and example, be of great service to the Duke.”

There is little doubt that the book he had begun to write, was the “Wealth of Nations:” and we have here probably the earliest announcement of his employing himself in that work. On the 21st of October, he writes from Toulouse, stating that the letters of introduction had reached him, and that his noble pupil was well received. He says, “Our expedition to Bourdeaux, and another we have made since to Bagneres, has made a great change upon the Duke. He begins now to familiarize himself to French company; and I flatter myself I shall spend the rest of the time we are to live together, not only in peace and contentment, but in great amusement.”

Amidst the multiplied attractions of Paris, Hume’s thoughts were often turned to his native city, and the circle of kind friends and admirers he had there left behind him. Such reminiscences of home doings as are contained in the following letters, would doubtless ensure his warm attention. On 1st July, Blair writes:

Robertson has, of late, had worse health than usual, which has somewhat interrupted his studies. He talked once of a trip to France this season; but his want of the language is so discouraging, as seems to have made him lay aside thoughts of it for the present. It will be a twelvemonth more, I suppose, before his Charles V. shall see the light.

I dined this day with Sir James Macdonald, on whose praises I need not expatiate to you. Much conversation we had about you; and a great deal I heard of your flourishing state. You write concerning it yourself, like a philosopher and a man of sense. The first splendour and eclat of such situations soon loses its lustre, and often, as you found it, is burdensome. Ease and agreeable society are the only things that last and remain; and these, now that you are quite naturalized, and have formed habits of life, I imagine you enjoy in a very comfortable degree. The society at Paris, to one who has all your advantages for enjoying it in its perfection, is, I am fully convinced, from all that I have heard, the most agreeable in the whole world.

Our education here is at present in high reputation. The Englishes are crowding down upon us every season, and I wish may not come to hurt us at the last.

Jardine writes, on 1st August: —

I have attempted, four or five times, to write to you but this poor church has, for some time past, been in such danger, that I could never find time for it. She has employed all my thoughts and care for these twelve months past. The enemy had kindled such a flame, that the old burning bush was like to have been consumed altogether. I know it will give you pleasure to hear that my endeavours to preserve her have been crowned with success. She begins to shine forth with her ancient lustre; and will very soon be, not only fair as the sun, but, to all her enemies, terrible as an army with banners.

It is pleasing to find one whose name has been so much associated with the later school of our national literature, as Mrs. Cockburn, the early friend of Scott, enjoying the intimacy of the sages of the philosophical age of Scottish letters. This accomplished lady, well known as the authoress of one of the versions of “The Flowers of the Forest,” was a correspondent of Hume. A few of her letters have been preserved; and the following are her free and animated remarks on Hume’s flattering reception in France, — remarks written in the full assurance that neither adulation nor prosperity would diminish the regard of that simple manly heart, for the chosen friends he had left in his native soil.

From the bleak hills of the north, from the uncultured daughter of Caledon, will the adored sage of France deign to receive a few lines: they come from the *heart* of a friend, and will be delivered by the *hand* of an enemy. Which, O man of mode, is most indifferent to thee? Insensible thou art alike to gratitude or resentment; fit for the country that worships thee. Thou art equally insensible to love or hate. A momentary applause, ill begot, and worse brought up, — an abortion, a fame not founded on truth, — have bewitched thee, and thou hast forgot those who, overlooking thy errors, saved thy worth. Idol of Gaul, I worship thee not. The very cloven foot, for which thou art worshipped, I despise: yet I remember *thee* with affection. I remember that, in spite of vain philosophy, of dark doubts, of toilsome learning, God had stamped his image of benignity so strong upon thy *heart*, that not all the labours of thy head could efface it. Idol of a foolish people, be not puffed up; it is easy to overturn the faith of a multitude that is ready to do evil: an apostle of less sense might bring to that giddy nation — libertinism; liberty they are not born to. This will be sent to you by your good friend, Mr. Burnet; who goes much such an errand as you have given yourself through life, viz., in search of truth; and I believe both are equally impartial in the search; though, indeed, he has more visible interests for darkening it than ever you had.

Castlehill, Baird's Close, Aug. 20th, 1764.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Paris, 3d September, 1764.

"It is certain that nothing could be a greater inducement to me to continue my History, than your desiring so earnestly I should do so. I have so great reason to be satisfied with your conduct towards me, that I wish very much to gratify you in every thing that is practicable; and there want not other motives to make me embrace that resolution. For, though I think I have reason to complain of the blindness of party, which has made the public do justice to me very slowly, and with great reluctance, yet I find that I obtain support from many impartial people; and hope that I shall every day have more reason to be satisfied in that particular. But, in my present situation, it is impossible for me to undertake such a work; and I cannot break off from Lord Hertford, as long as he is pleased to think me useful to him. I shall not, however, lose sight of this object; and any materials that cast up, in this country, shall be carefully collected by me.

"I am glad you are satisfied with the publication of the new edition of my Essays. I shall be obliged to you if you will inform yourself exactly how many copies are now sold, both of that edition and of the octavo edition of my History. I think both these editions very correct. I did little more than see your friends, Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Wilson, at Paris, and present them to Lord Hertford. We returned not from Compiegne till a few days before they left Paris. . . . . . I think the Duchess of Douglas has chosen well in making Mallet one of her commissioners. I have no good opinion of that cause. Mrs. Mallet has retired into the forest of Fontainbleau with a Macgregor. I fancy she is angry with me, and thought herself neglected by me while in Paris. I heard of her thrusting herself every where into companies, who endeavoured to avoid her; and I was afraid she would have laid hold of me to enlarge her acquaintance among the French. I have not yet executed your commission with Mons^r^. le Roy, but shall not forget it. I am very glad that Mrs. Millar is so good as to remember me. I shall regard it as one agreeable circumstance attending my return to England, that you and she will have leisure to give more of your company to your friends; and I shall always be proud to be ranked in the number.

"The lowness of stocks surely proceeds not from any apprehension of war: never was a general peace established in Europe with more likelihood of its continuance; but I fancy your stocks are become at last too weighty, to the conviction of all the world. What must happen, if we go on at the same rate during another war? I am, with great sincerity, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant."

The course of correspondence with Elliot, which commences with the next following letter, relates, in a great measure, to the disposal of his two sons at Paris, and to their future training and education. There could be no better evidence of the reliance placed in Hume's honourable principles and knowledge of the world, by those friends who were sufficiently intimate with him, fully to appreciate his character; while his whole conduct in the transaction shows kindness of heart, with a warm attachment to friends, and an earnest disposition to serve them.

Gilbert Elliot *of Minto to* Hume.

My Dear Sir, — My departure from Paris was so very sudden, that I was obliged to leave many of my little schemes uncompleted; and, what was still more mortifying, to see the progress of all my growing attachments cruelly interrupted. I reached this place just in time, though not a little retarded by the Russian chancellor and his forty horses. Had I but foreseen this obstruction, I might as well have set out on Wednesday morning at two o'clock; and in that case, my dear philosopher, what a delicious evening should I have passed in your company.

Upon full deliberation I am determined to send you my boys, if a tolerable place can be found for their reception. I did not much like that talking professor, who undertakes so largely: if nothing better can be done, pray take the trouble to renew my negotiation with Madame Anson. Her house, though not just what I could wish, is, however, not much amiss. I must not lose this occasion of sending my children to France. I shall never find any other so favourable. It will be no small consolation to their mother, from whom they are now to be separated for the first time, to know that we are not without a friend in Paris, who will sometimes have an eye to their conduct. If I am not too partial, I think you will find in their character much native simplicity, and perhaps some little elevation of mind. Send them back to me, my dear sir, with the same qualities, tempered, if you will, but not impaired by the acquisition of some few of those graces which spread such an inexpressible charm through those societies where even you are not ashamed to pass so many precious hours.

If you should find no leisure to give them a moment's instruction, tell them at least to look up to the conduct and character of a young friend of ours at Paris. There they will find a model, which, without hoping to equal, it will, however, become them to copy. But, after all, what am I about? At Paris, to have children at all, is *de plus mauvais ton de monde*, and I forgot to inform myself, when one happens to have them, whether it be *permitted* to take any thought about them. I am impatient to hear from you at London. I shall not be long there. I desire you would take this important business into your hands and settle it for me entirely. I will send them over the moment you desire me, and consigned to whom you direct, — the sooner the better: you will settle all other particulars as you find proper. Before I conclude, allow me in friendship also to tell you, I think I see you at present upon the very brink of a precipice. One cannot too much clear their mind of all little prejudices, but partiality to one's country is not a prejudice. Love the French as much as you will. Many of the individuals are surely the proper objects of affection; but, above all, continue still an Englishman. You know, better than any body, that the active powers of our mind are much too limited to be usefully employed in any pursuit more general than the service of that portion of mankind which we call our country. General benevolence and private friendship will attend a generous mind and a feeling heart, into every country; but political attachment confines itself to one.

Mon *fils*, sur les humains que ton ame attendrie,
Habite l'univers, mais aime sa patrie.

I have not now leisure to trouble you with the few observations my too short stay at Paris had but imperfectly furnished me with. Irreconcileable to the principles of their government, I am delighted with the amenity and gentleness of their manners. I was even pleased to find that the severity and rigour of our English climate had not rendered me altogether insensible to the kind impressions of a milder sky. May I trouble you with my most cordial and sincere respects to Lord and Lady Hertford. Some French names, too, I could mention, but I am not vain enough to imagine that I can, upon so short an acquaintance, have a place in their remembrance. Believe me, very dear sir, yours very sincerely, and most affectionately,

Gilbert Elliot.

(I set out this moment.)

Brussels, 15th September, 1764.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“Paris, 22d Sept. 1764.

“As soon as I received yours from Brussels, I set on foot my inquiries. I spoke to Abbé Hooke, to Père Gordon, to Clairaut, to Madame de Pri, and to others, with a view of finding some proper settlement for your young gentlemen. Every body told me, as *they* did, of the difficulty of succeeding in my scheme; and nothing yet has been offered me, that I would advise you to accept of. I went to Madame Anson’s, and found that family a very decent, sensible kind of people. I came in upon them about seven o’clock, and found a company of eight or nine persons assembled, whose aspects pleased me very much. The only objection that occurred to me with regard to this family, is the quarter of the town, which is not only so unfashionable, that my coachman was astonished when I ordered him to drive thither, but, what is worse, it is far from all walks and places of exercise. However, it is near the university; and, consequently, it is in that quarter where all the youth of France are educated. If nothing better present itself, I shall conclude a bargain with this family for a thousand crowns a-year, without firing or washing, according to the terms proposed to you, which they said they could not depart from. The misfortune is, that I must go to Fontainbleau in about a fortnight, and, consequently, am straitened in my time of inquiry; but, in all cases, I shall certainly conclude with somebody before my departure. We stay six weeks at Fontainbleau, during which time, if you send your sons to Paris, I shall take a journey thither to receive them. In all cases, they must come immediately to the Hotel de Brancas, where they will not want friends.

“I do not like the talking man more than you do; and a flattering letter I have since received from him, does not augment my good opinion. I went to Monsieur Bastide, he who proposed the scheme for ten thousand livres a-year. He seems to be a genteel, well-bred man; lives in a very good house in an excellent quarter of the town; is well spoke of by D'Alembert and others; and has with him two very agreeable boys, Russian princes, who speak French very well. I should have given him the preference, had it not been the price. He asks ten thousand livres a-year for your two sons and their governor, without supplying them either with clothes or masters. You know his ten thousand a-piece included all expenses. If you can resolve to go so far in point of expense, it is the best place that occurs, or is likely to occur.

"Since I wrote the above, I went to see Mademoiselle L'Espinasse, D'Alembert's mistress, who is really one of the most sensible women in Paris. She told me that there could not be a worthier, honester, better man, than Bastide. I told her that I had entertained the same opinion, but was afraid his head-piece was none of the best. She owned that he did not excel on that side; and a proof of it was, that he had wrote several books, all of which were below middling. On my return home, I found the enclosed letter from him. I have promised him an answer by the return of the post from England. On the whole, the chief advantage, as it appears to me, which his house will have above Anson's, consists in the air and situation. It lies on the skirts of the town, in an open street near the rampart; but five thousand livres a-year is paying too dear for the advantage.

"I cannot imagine what you mean by saying I am on a precipice. I shall foretell to you the result of my present situation almost with as great certainty as it is possible to employ with regard to any future event. As soon as Lord Hertford's embassy ends, which probably may not continue long, some zealot, whom I never saw, and never could offend, finding me without protection, will instanter fly, with alacrity, to strike off that pension which the king and the ministry, before I would consent to accept of my present situation, promised should be for life. I shall be obliged to leave Paris, which I confess I shall turn my back to with regret. I shall go to Thoulouse or Montauban, or some provincial town in the south of France, where I shall spend, contented, the rest of my life, with more money, under a finer sky, and in better company than I was born to enjoy.

"From what human motive or consideration can I prefer living in England than in foreign countries? I believe, taking the continent of Europe, from Petersburg to Lisbon, and from Bergen to Naples, there is not one who ever heard of my name, who has not heard of it with advantage, both in point of morals and genius. I do not believe there is one Englishman in fifty, who, if he heard I had broke my neck to-night, would be sorry. Some, because I am not a Whig; some because I am not a Christian; and all because I am a Scotsman. Can you seriously talk of my continuing an Englishman? Am I, or are you, an Englishman? Do they not treat with derision our pretensions to that name, and with hatred our just pretensions to surpass and govern them? I am a citizen of the world; but if I were to adopt any country, it would be that in which I live at present, and from which I am determined never to depart, unless a war drives me into Switzerland or Italy.

"I must now inform you what passed with regard to my affair at L'ile-Adam. My friend showed me a letter, which she had lately received from Lord Tavistock, by which it appears he had fallen into great friendship, and bore a great regard to Lady Sarah Bunbury. I instantly forbade her to write to England a line about my affair. I bear too great a respect to her, to expose her to ask a favour, where there was so little probability of success: thus have vanished my best hopes of obtaining justice in this point. Here is surely no new ground of attachment to England."

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Hotel de Brancas, 30th Sept. 1764.

"After acknowledging that I received both your letters, that from Brussels, and that from Calais, I should be ashamed to appear before you with so late a letter. This day fortnight, Lord March and Selwin appointed to go off. I sent March a very long letter for you, and enjoined him, as he lived next door to you, to deliver it the moment he arrived; and having thus done my duty, I went very contentedly to L'ile-Adam, where I remained for four days. On my return to Paris, I was much surprised to hear that March, after his post-chaise was yoked, had changed his mind, and was still in Paris. When I appeared alarmed at this intelligence, I was told that he had sent off an express to London with letters, which composed my mind. Next day I saw him, and he fairly confessed, that from forgetfulness, he had not sent off my letter. I begged him to send it to me; he promised it, delayed it, promised again, and at last owns that he has lost it; which gives me great vexation, both on your account, and my own, for I spoke to you with great freedom, and am infinitely uneasy lest my letter should fall into bad hands. When I rail at March, I get no other reply than, 'God damn you! if your letter was of consequence, why the devil did you trust it to such a foolish fellow as me?' I am therefore obliged, in a great hurry, to give you some imperfect account of what I have done. I went to Ansons', who seem a discreet, sober set of people. I came in upon a mixed company, whose looks pleased me: the only objection is the quarter of the town, which is straitened; but it is near the University, and consequently where all the youth of France are educated. I do not like the talking man more than you; and a very flattering letter he wrote me, helped further to disgust me. La Bastide, the 10,000 livres man, I went to see: he seems an agreeable man, and is well spoke of; he lives in an agreeable house, and in a good air, and has two young Russian princes with him, who speak very good French; he offers to take your two boys and preceptor for 8000 livres on the whole, but without paying either clothes or master. I suppose you would not choose to pay 5000 livres a-year, merely for the advantage of better air. I have heard a very good character of one Eriot, professor of rhetoric in the Collège de Beauvais, who offers to take them: they would live in the house with him alone; but he proposes that they should go to all the classes of the university, where they would make acquaintance with French boys, and nobody would ever ask questions about their religion: But as I heard you declare against their going to the university, (which yet I should highly approve of,) I cannot make any bargain with Eriot. The misfortune is, I go to Fontainbleau to-morrow se’ennight, and must conclude a bargain without hearing from you, by this fine trick Lord March has played me. It is probable, therefore, it will be with Anson, because you yourself did not disapprove of that plan; and I should be afraid to depart from it considerably, without your authority. If you give me information in time, I shall come from Fontainbleau to settle your boys. In any case make them come immediately to the Hotel de Brancas, where they will not want friends if any of the family be in town.

“Since I wrote the above, one of my numerous scouts came to me, and told me, that within gunshot of the Hotel de Brancas, there was to be found all I could wish, and more than I could have imagined. It is called La Pension Militaire. I immediately went to see it. I found there an excellent airy house, with an open garden belonging to it. It is the best house but one in Paris; has a prospect and access into the large open space of the Invalids, and from thence into the fields. The number of boys is limited to thirty-five, whom I saw in the court, in a blue uniform with a narrow silver lace. They left off their play, and made me a bow with the best grace in the world, as I passed. I was carried to their master the Abbé Choquart, who appeared to me a sensible, sedate, judicious man, agreeable to the character I had received of him. He carried me through the boys' apartments, which were cleanly, light, spacious, and each lay in a small bed apart. I saw a large collection of instruments for experimental philosophy. I saw an ingenious machine for teaching chronology. There were plans of fortification. While I was considering these, I heard a drum beat in the court. It was the hour for assembling the boys for their military exercises. I went down. They had now all got on their belts, and had their muskets in their hands. They went through all the Prussian exercises with the best air and greatest regularity imaginable. Almost all were about your son's age, a year or two more or less. They are the youth of the best quality in France; their air and manners seemed to bespeak it. The master asked only about thirteen hundred livres a-year for each of your boys, five hundred for the preceptor. He supplies them with all masters, except those of dancing, music, and designing; for these they have masters that come in, who take only eight livres a-month, though they require from others three louis-d'ors. There is a riding master belonging to the house. Your sons need never go to mass unless they please, and nobody shall ever talk to them about religion; the master only requires, that you should write him a letter, which he will read to every body, by which you desire . . . ."

The following short letter was addressed to Mr. Elliot on the same day with the preceding one, for the reason which the letter itself states. The anxious care with which Hume endeavoured not only to be punctual and exact himself in the performance of the business he had undertaken, but to remedy the consequences of the absence of these qualities in others, may afford a useful reproof to those who demean themselves as above the exercise of these homely virtues; and shows that the practice of them has been, in one instance at least, considered not incompatible with the design and achievement of intellectual greatness.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Hotel de Brancas, 30th September, 1764.

"I have wrote you a long letter to London, a short one to Harrowgate, and now I write to you to Minto. Not to lose time, you must have a little implicit faith; without making further questions, give instantly orders that your sons be sent to me, and that they come instantly to the Hotel de Brancas. Within less than a gunshot of this, I have found a place which has all advantages beyond what your imagination could suggest; it is almost directly opposite to my friend the Marechale de Mirepoix's, by whose advice I act. I tell you this, lest your opinion of my discretion be not the highest in the world. There are there about thirty boys of the best families in France. The house is spacious, airy, clean, has a garden, opens into the fields; the board costs only thirteen hundred livres a-year for each boy, five hundred for the tutor; the boys have almost all masters for this sum. I have concluded the bargain for a quarter; the payment runs on from the first of October, because the course of studies begins then; there will be no question about religion or the mass. I have been more particular in my letter to London. Nothing was ever so fortunate for your purpose."

"Hotel de Brancas, 9th October, 1764.

"I go to Fontainbleau to-day; my Lady and Lord Beauchamp go also. Mr. Trail, the chaplain, and Mr. Larpent, my lord's secretary, follow in a few days. All these arrangements are unexpected; but the consequence is, that there will be nobody in the Hotel de Brancas for some weeks; but this need not retard a moment your sending the young gentlemen. I have spoke to the master of the academy, who says that the moment they arrive they shall be settled as well as if all their kindred were there. I have sent the enclosed letter to him, which the gentleman who attends them may deliver immediately on his arrival in Paris. Vive valeque."

In 1764, the Comte de Boufflers died, and his widow expected to be made Princess of Conti. Hume seems to have seen from the first that this expectation was likely to lead to manifold mortifications, and that it was the duty of a true friend to prepare her mind for disappointment. In this spirit he wrote her the following long and carefully considered letters, in answer to some communications from her, full of hopes and fears, and all a Frenchwoman's nervous agitations.

Hume *to the* Comtesse de Boufflers.

Wednesday, 28th of November, 1764.

You may believe that, ever since my return to Paris, I have kept my eyes and ears open with regard to every thing that concerns your affair. I find it is the general opinion of all those who think themselves the best informed, that a resolution is taken in your favour; and that the resolution will probably have place. But you do not expect surely, that so great an event will pass without censure. It would ill become my friendship to flatter you on this head. The envy and jealousy of the world would alone account for a repugnance in many. Nobody has been more generally known than you; both of late and in your early youth. Will so numerous an acquaintance be pleased to see you pass, from being their equal, to be so much their superior? Will they bear your uniting the decisive elevation of rank to the elevation of genius, which they feel, and which they would in vain contest? Be assured, that she is really and sincerely your friend, who can willingly yield you so great advantages.

But though I hear some murmurs of this kind, I have likewise the consolation to meet with several who entertain opposite sentiments. I was told of a man of superior sense, nowise connected with you, who maintained in a public company, that, if the report was true, nothing could give him a higher idea of the laudable and noble principles of your friend. The execution of his purpose, he said, could not only be justified, but seemed a justice due to you. The capital point is to interpose as few delays as possible. Time must create obstacles, and can remove none. While the matter seems in suspense, many will declare themselves with violence against you, and will render themselves irreconcilable enemies by such declarations. They might be the first to pay court to you, had no leisure been allowed them to display their envy and malignity.

On the whole, I am fully persuaded, from what I hear and see, that the matter will end as we wish. But in all cases, I foresee, that, let the event be what it will, you will reap from it much honour and much vexation. Alas! dear madam, the former is never a compensation for the latter: especially to you, whose delicate frame, already shaken by an incident of much less importance surely, is ill calculated to bear such violent agitations. Pardon these sentiments if you think them mean. They are dictated by my friendship for you. I am indeed so mean as to wish you alive and healthy and gay in any fortune. A fine consolation for us truly, to see the epithet of princess inscribed on your grave, while we reflect that it contains what was the most amiable in the world? I propose to pay my respects to you the beginning of next week.

10th December, 1764.

It is needless to inform you, how much you employed my thoughts in this great crisis of your fortune, of your health, of your life itself. You could perceive, by undoubted signs, that I partook sincerely of the violent anxieties, by which I found you agitated; and that, after having endeavoured in vain to appease the tumult of your passions, I was at last necessitated myself to take part in your distress. My sympathy is not abated by absence. I find myself incapable almost of other occupation or amusement.

You still recur to my memory. The chief relief I have is in writing to you, and throwing together some thoughts, which occur to me, on your subject.

They are mostly the same which occurred in conversation, and which I have already suggested to you. They will acquire no additional authority at present in writing, except by convincing you that they are the result of my most mature reflections.

Of all your friends, I, as a foreigner, am perhaps the least capable of giving you advice on so delicate a subject: I only challenge the preference, in the warmth of my affection and esteem towards you; and I am, as a foreigner, the farther removed from all suspicion of separate interests and regards.

I cannot too often repeat, what I inculcated on you with great earnestness, that, even if your friend should fix his resolution on the side least favourable to you, you ought to receive his determination without the least resentment. You know that princes, more than other men, are born slaves to prejudices, and that this tax is imposed on them, as a species of retaliation by the public. This prince in particular is in every view so eminent, that he owes some account of his conduct to Europe in general, to France, and to his family, the most illustrious in the world. It is expected, that men, in his station, shall not be actuated by private regards. It is expected, that with them friendship, affection, sympathy, shall be absorbed in ambition, and in the desire of supporting their rank in the world; and, if they fail in this duty, they will meet with blame from a great part of the public. Can you be surprised, that a person covetous of honour, should be moved by these considerations? If he neglected them, would not your grateful heart suggest to you, that he had taken an extraordinary step in your favour? And can you, with any grace, complain, that an extraordinary event has not happened, merely because you wished for it, and found it desirable?

I am fully sensible, madam, of the force of those arguments which you urged, not to justify your resentment, [from] which you declared you would ever be exempted, but to maintain the reasonableness of your expectations. I am fully sensible of the regard, the sacred regard, due to a long and sincere attachment, which, passing from love to friendship, lost nothing of its warmth, and acquired only the additional merit of reason and constancy. This regard, I own, is really honourable and virtuous; and may safely be opposed to the maxims of an imaginary honour, which, depending upon modes and prejudices, will always be regarded, by great minds, as a secondary consideration. I shall add, what your modesty would not allow you to surmise, or even, perhaps, to think, that an extraordinary step, taken in favour of extraordinary merit, will always justify itself; and will appear but an ordinary tribute. Allow me to do you this justice in your present melancholy situation. I know I am exempt from flattery: I believe I am exempt from partiality. The zeal and fervour which move me, are the effects, not the causes of my judgment.

But, my dear friend, the consideration, which is the most interesting, the most affecting, the most alarming, is the immediate danger of your health and life, from the violent situation into which fortune has now thrown you. You continued long to live, with tolerable tranquillity, though exposed to many vexations, in a state little befitting your worth and merit; and you still comforted yourself by reflecting that you could not change it, without withdrawing from a friendship dearer to you than life itself. You still could flatter yourself, that the person, for whose sake you made this sacrifice, if he had it in his power, would, at any price, repair your honour, and fortify his connexions with you. The unexpected death of M. de Boufflers has put an end to these illusions. It has at once brought you within reach of honour and felicity: and has thrown a poison on your former state, by rendering it still less honourable than before.

You cannot say, madam, that I do not feel, and with the most pungent sensation, the cruelty of your situation. I am sensible too, that time will scarcely bring any remedy to this evil.

The loss of a friend, of a dignity, of fortune, admits of consolation, if not from reason, at least from oblivion; and these sorrows are not eternal. But while you maintain your present connexions, your hopes, still kept alive, will still enliven your natural desire of that state to which you aspire, and your disgust towards that state in which you will find yourself. I foresee that your lively passions, continually agitated, will tear in pieces your tender frame: melancholy and a broken constitution may then prove your lot, and the remedy which could now preserve your health and peace of mind, may come too late to restore them.

What advice, then, can I give you, in a situation so interesting? The measure which I recommend to you requires courage, but I dread that nothing else will be able to prevent the consequences, so justly apprehended. It is, in a word, that after employing every gentle art to prevent a rupture, you should gradually diminish your connexion with the

Prince, should be less assiduous in your visits, should make fewer and shorter journeys to his country seats, and should betake yourself to a private, and sociable, and independent life at Paris. By this change in your plan of living, you cut off at once the expectations of that dignity to which you aspire; you are no longer agitated with hopes and fears; your temper insensibly recovers its former tone; your health returns; your relish for a simple and private life gains ground every day, and you become sensible, at last, that you have made a good exchange of tranquillity for grandeur. Even the dignity of your character, in the eyes of the world, recovers its lustre, while men see the just price you set upon your liberty; and that, however the passions of youth may have seduced you, you will not now sacrifice all your time, where you are not deemed worthy of every honour.

And why should you think with reluctance on a private life at Paris? It is the situation for which I thought you best fitted, ever since I had the happiness of your acquaintance. The inexpressible and delicate graces of your character and conversation, like the soft notes of a lute, are lost amid the tumult of company, in which I commonly saw you engaged. A more select society would know to set a juster value upon your merit. Men of sense, and taste, and letters, would accustom themselves to frequent your house. Every elegant society would court your company. And though all great alterations in the habits of living may, at first, appear disagreeable, the mind is soon reconciled to its new situation, especially if more congenial and natural to it. I should not dare to mention my own resolutions on this occasion, if I did not flatter myself that your friendship gives them some small importance in your eyes. Being a foreigner, I dare less answer for my plans of life, which may lead me far from this country; but if I could dispose of my fate, nothing could be so much my choice as to live where I might cultivate your friendship. Your taste for travelling might also afford you a plausible pretence for putting this plan in execution: a journey to Italy would loosen your connexions here; and, if it were delayed some time, I could, with some probability, expect to have the felicity of attending you thither.

Hume had the happiness of Madame de Boufflers sincerely at heart; and we find him, on 24th June, 1765, thus writing to his brother: —

“I had great hopes, all the winter, of seeing the Countess in a station suitable to her merit, and of paying my respects to her as part of the royal family. Several accidents have disappointed us; and the various turns of this affair have more agitated me than almost any event in which I was ever engaged."

The following correspondence exhibits a feature in Hume's character, which to many readers will be new, and perhaps unpleasing. It shows that he was by no means exempt from the passion of anger, and that when under its influence he was liable to be harsh and unreasonable. The general notion formed of his character is, that he passed through life unmoved and immovable, a placid mass of breathing flesh, on which the ordinary impulses which rouse the human passions into life might expend themselves in vain. We have seen that very early in life he had undertaken the task of bringing his passions and propensities under the yoke, and directing all his physical and mental energies to the accomplishment of his early and never fading vision of literary renown. From many indications which petty incidents in his life afford, it would appear that the ardour of his nature, if thus regulated, was not eradicated; and one cannot, in a general survey of his course and character, reject the conclusion, that his early resolution not to enter the lists as a controversial writer, mentioned in the following letter, was suggested by a profound self-knowledge, and a consciousness of his inability to preserve his temper as a controversialist.

The person against whom all the wrath of the following letter is directed, is the respectable author of the "Historical and Critical Inquiry into the Evidence produced by the Earls Murray and Morton against Mary Queen of Scots." That, assailed as he often was by attacks so much more vehement and unscrupulous, Hume should have taken so deep umbrage at this piece of free historical criticism, is a problem not easily to be explained. It is not a little remarkable that the bitterest remark on any contemporary contained in his published works, is a note to his History, in which he has abbreviated the purport of the letter.

Hume *to* Lord Elibank.

"My Lord, — As I am told that Dr. Robertson has wrote a few remarks, which he communicated to your lordship, as our common answer about the affair of Queen Mary, and has endeavoured to show you that it was contempt and not inability, which kept him from making a public reply; I thought it would not be amiss for me to imitate his example; and I did not indeed know a properer person, nor a more equal judge than your lordship, to whom I could submit the cause. For if, on the one hand, your lordship's regard to the memory of that princess might give you a bias to that side, I know, that the ancient and constant friendship, with which your lordship has always honoured me, both in public and private, would give you a strong bias on my side; and there was a good chance for your remaining neutral and impartial between these motives.

“I shall confine my apology to the account which I have given of the conference at Hampton court, as this is indeed the chief point, in which the answerer has thought proper to find fault with me.

“There are several places, in which I mention Mary’s refusal to give any reply to Murray’s charge, and have commonly said, that she annexed as a condition, her being admitted to Queen Elizabeth’s presence; as in page 496, line 20; page 501, line 12, line 21. I have not said that this condition was an unreasonable one, (the words which the answerer puts in my mouth,) but only that it was such a one as she did not expect to be granted; and that because Queen Elizabeth had formerly refused it, before any positive proofs of Mary’s guilt were produced, merely from the general rumour and opinion, which were unfavourable to her. Having thus clearly expressed myself on this head, when I have occasion afterwards, in the course of the narration, to mention the matter, I say once or twice simply, that Mary refused to give any answer, without expressing the condition annexed by her. My reasons were, that the position was sufficiently qualified by the preceding narration; and because a refusal, grounded on a condition which the person does not expect to be gratified, and which is accordingly denied, is certainly equivalent to a simple and absolute refusal.

“That your lordship may judge of the unfairness of the answerer, he picks out this simple and unqualified expression of mine, and omits the others, which explain it to the readers of the meanest capacity; and he opposes it by a passage cited with equal unfairness from Mr. Goodall’s appendix. He quotes a long passage from Goodall, , in which Queen Mary demands copies of her letters, and offers positively to give an answer without mentioning any conditions; and this detached passage he opposes to the detached passage from me, in which I assert that she absolutely refused to answer. He desires that this express contradiction between my narration and the records may be remarked. But, in the first place, the condition of being admitted to Queen Elizabeth, though not mentioned in that paper, is not relinquished, and it is even clearly implied; because Mary there refers to a former letter, which we find in Goodall, , line 2, from the bottom, page 289, line 13, and where it is positively insisted on. Secondly, we have in

Goodall, page 184, Queen Mary's commission to break up the conference, if that condition be not granted. Thirdly, Queen Elizabeth understands her meaning very well, as indeed it was very plain, and offers to her copies of the letters, if she will promise to answer without any condition; see Goodall, page 311, line 3, and this offer is not accepted of. Fourthly, in the very last paper of all, which closes the whole, the Bishop of Ross still insists on that condition; Goodall, page 390 about the middle.

"You see, therefore, my lord, the double trick practised. A mangled passage of my History is confronted with a mangled passage of Mr. Goodall's papers, and by this gross fraud a contradiction is pretended to be found between them. A single forgery would not do the business.

"I believe it will divert your lordship to observe, that when the answerer is employing these base artifices, this is the very moment he chooses to call me liar and rascal. But that trick is so frequently practised by thieves, pick-pockets, and controversial writers, (gentlemen whose morality are pretty much upon a footing,) that all the world has ceased to wonder, and wise men are tired of complaining of it.

"I do not find that even this gentleman has ventured to assert, that Queen Mary offered to answer Murray's accusation, though she should be refused access to Queen Elizabeth. Where then is the difference between us? He asserts, that she offered to answer, if admitted to that queen. I say that she refused to answer unless she was admitted, which are positive and negative propositions of the same import.

"For a proof that Queen Mary's commission was finally revoked, I beg your lordship to consult Goodall, , 311, 387, where it is plainly asserted. The last quotation is from the concluding paper of the whole collection.

"I hope your lordship, as my friend, will congratulate me on the resolution I took in the beginning of my life, that is, of my literary life, never to reply to any body. Otherwise this gentleman, I mean this author, might have insulted me on my silence. I am sure your lordship would have disowned me for ever as a friend, if I had entered the lists with such an antagonist. Mr. Goodall is no very calm or indifferent advocate in this cause; yet he disowns him as an associate, and confesses to me and all the world, that I am here right in my facts, and am only wrong in my inferences.

"There appear to me two infallible marks of our opposite parties, and as we may say proof charges, which, if a man can stand, there is no fear that any charge will ever burst him. A Whig who believes the popish plot, and a Tory who asserts Queen Mary’s innocence, are certainly fitted to go all lengths with their party. I am happy to think that such people are both equally my enemies; and still more happy, that I have no animosity at either.

“It is an old proverb, *Love me, love my dog*; but certainly it admits of many exceptions. I am sure, at least, that I have a great respect for your lordship, yet have none at all for this dog of yours. On the contrary, I declare him to be a very mangy cur; entreat your lordship to rid your hands of him as soon as possible, and think a sound beating, or even a rope too good for him.”

Lord Elibank’s answer does not appear to have been preserved. It can scarcely be supposed that the foregoing letter, or any one written in a like spirit, is the communication which Hume characterizes in the following letter as written “in a spirit of cordiality and amity,” and containing “every pathetic, every engaging sentiment and expression;” yet we afterwards find Lord Elibank sarcastically alluding to his having been so stupid as to mistake the spirit thus described, for one of a totally opposite tendency.

Hume *to* Lord Elibank.

“Fontainbleau, 3d Nov. 1764.

“My Lord, — In reply to the letter with which your lordship has honoured me, I shall endeavour to be as clear and as concise as possible. Your lordship should never have heard of the short and slight disgust between your brother and me, had he not told Sir James Macdonald that you was in such a passion against me, on account of my conduct towards him, that you intended instantly to compose a pamphlet against me, on the subject of Queen Mary, and to publish it as a full revenge upon me. You see that he insinuates the same thing in his letter, and he says that you was *formerly my friend*. But the whole story, I have now reason to see, was without foundation, both from the tenor of your lordship’s present letter, and from a letter of yours delivered to me by Mons. Calvet, and which is wrote in the usual friendly strain that had so long subsisted between us. But not doubting at that time of Mr. Murray’s story, I dreaded the consequence of a pamphlet composed and published by one of your lordship’s temper in a fit of rage, on a subject where you are naturally heated. I knew that it would be full of expressions of the utmost acrimony, which you yourself could not forgive, even were I disposed to do so; and I may now add, that this last letter proves you to be an excellent proficient in that style. I wrote my letter in a spirit of cordiality and amity, that I might prevent a rupture most disagreeable to me. I have no objection to the publishing any thing in opposition to my opinions. On the contrary, there is nothing I desire more than these discussions. I was far from threatening your lordship with the loss of my friendship, which I was sensible could never be of any consequence to you: I only foretold with infinite regret, that if you wrote against me in a heat, without allowing your temper to compose itself, it would be impossible for us to be any longer friends. I employed every pathetic, every engaging sentiment and expression to induce your lordship to embrace this way of thinking. I shall venture to say, that you have never in your life received a more friendly and more obliging letter. I leave your lordship to judge of the return it has met with.

“I composed my letter with great care, because I set a value on your lordship’s friendship. I was so much satisfied with it myself, that I read it to a friend, who told me, that it would be impossible for your lordship to resist so many mollifying expressions, and that they would certainly bring you back to our usual state of friendship. Under what power of fascination have your eyes lain, when you could see every thing in a light so directly opposite?

“I come now to the other ground of your complaint, my indifference in the case of Mr. Murray. When I arrived in Paris, the first question he asked me was, whether Lord Bute or Mr. Stuart Mackenzie had recommended him to Lord Hertford, that he might be received in the ambassador’s house like other British subjects. I asked my lord, who told me that neither of these persons had ever mentioned Mr. Murray to him; he wished they had; he desired to show all manner of civilities to Mr. Murray. But he was afraid, that a person against whom a public proclamation had been issued, and who had openly lived so many years with the Pretender, could not be received in his house, unless he had previously received some assurances, that the matter would give no offence. I told this to Mr Murray. He was entirely satisfied. He only said that he would write again to Mr. Stuart Mackenzie, who never wrote to Lord Hertford. In this affair, then, Mr. Murray received all the favour which he either desired or expected.

“But perhaps your lordship means, that I ought to have befriended him in his law-suit with Mrs. Blake, — I suppose, by taking his part in company. But who told you that I did not? I have frequently desired people in general to suspend their judgment; for as to any particular justification of him, I was not capable of it, because I was and still am ignorant of all particulars of his story. Whence could I learn them? From himself, or from his antagonist, or from both? I assure your lordship that I was otherwise employed, and more to my satisfaction, than in unravelling an intricate story, which the Parliament of Paris could not clear up in much less than two years, and which, it is pretended, they have not cleared up at last.

"But I need say no more on this head, since your brother a few days after I wrote you sent me a letter, in which he asked pardon for his former letter, acknowledged his error, and desired a return of my friendship. His only ground of quarrel, indeed, was a small negligence in returning his visits: an offence which, operating on a man of his vanity, has engaged him to do all this mischief.

"I have said that your lordship never received a letter more friendly and obliging than my former letter: I hope you will also acknowledge that this is wrote with sufficient temper and moderation. Adieu.

"I have the honour to be, with the greatest regard and consideration, my lord, your lordship's most obedient, and most humble servant."

Lord Elibank *to* Hume.

Balancrief, July 9th, 1765.

Dear Sir, — I have the pleasure to understand, by yours of the —— , that I have never been altogether in disgrace with you; I choose rather to pass for dull as mad, and it would have been the highest proof of the latter, if I had taken any thing ill of you, that I had not thought ill meant.

I own the compliment you say you intended me in your former letter, was too refined for my genius. I really mistook it for an intention to break with me; and as there is hardly any thing I set a greater value on than your friendship, and I was not conscious of having ever entertained a single idea inconsistent with it, I could not resign it without pain and resentment. Diffident of myself, I showed your letter to several of our common friends, who all understood it as I did. Had my affection for you been more moderate, my answer to yours would have been cool in proportion. I am still mortified to think you could suspect me of siding with my brother against you. I know the distinction between relationship and friendship. I have ever thought those connexions incompatible; and if I was dull enough to mistake the meaning of your letter, I have not more reason to blush, than you have for suspecting, that any thing my brother could say, was capable of influencing my sincere regard for a friend of thirty years' standing, or that my zeal for the reputation of any prince, dead or alive, could draw any sentiment or expression from me, inconsistent with that admiration of your talents, as an author, and merit as a man, I have constantly felt in myself, and endeavoured to excite in others. I am, dear sir, your sincerely obedient humble servant,

Elibank.

In fear lest the two letters to Elliot, printed above, might not have reached their destination, Hume wrote to him again on 17th November, repeating the substance of his engagement with the Abbé Choquart. The remainder of the letter follows:

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“As soon as I came from Fontainbleau, I went to the Pension Militaire, so it is called, where I had first a conversation with the Abbé. I found him exceedingly pleased with your boys: he told me that whenever his two young pupils arrived, he called together all the French gentlemen, who are to the number of thirty or thirty-two, and he made them a harangue; he then said to them, that they were all men of quality, to be educated to the honourable profession of arms; that all their wars would probably be with England; that France and that kingdom, were Rome and Carthage, whose rivality more properly than animosity never allowed long intervals of peace; that the chance of arms might make them prisoners of arms to Messrs Elliot, in which case it would be a happiness to them to meet a private friend in a public enemy; that he knew many instances of people whose lives were saved by such fortunate events, and it therefore became them, from views of prudence, and from the generosity for which the French nation was so renowned, to give the best treatment to the young strangers, whose friendship might probably endure, and be serviceable to them through life: he added, that the effect of this harangue was such, that, as soon as he presented your boys to their companions, they all flew to them and embraced them, and have ever since continued to pay them all courtship and regard, and to show them every mark of preference. Every one is ambitious to acquire the friendship of the two young Englishmen, who have already formed connexions more intimate than ever I observed among his other pupils. ‘*Ce que j’admire,*’ added he, ‘*dans vos jeunes amis est qu’ils ont non seulement de l’esprit, mais de l’âme. Ils sont véritablement attendris des témoinages d’amitié qu’on leur rend. Ils méritent d’être aimés, parce qu’ils savent aimer.*’

“When I came next to converse with your boys, I found all this representation exactly just: I believe they never passed fourteen days in their life so happily as they did the last. What I find strikes them much is the high titles of their companions: there is not one, says Hugh, that is not a marquis, or count, or chevalier at least. They are indeed all of them of the best families in France, a nephew of M. de Choiseul, two nephews of M. de Beninghen, &c. &c. They are frequently drawn out, and displayed after the Prussian manner. I saw them go through their exercises with the greatest exactness and best air. The Abbé remarked to me, that the marching, and wheeling, and moving under arms, is better than all the dancing schools in the world to give a noble carriage to youth. Gilbert is such a proficient, that the master is thinking already of advancing him to the first rank, if not of making him a corporal: all this is excellent for Hugh, and if Gilbert’s head be a little too full with military ideas, this inconvenience will easily be corrected, as far as it ought to be corrected.

“The Abbé tells me, that in the short time they have been with him, their accent is sensibly corrected, and he is persuaded that, in three months’ time, it will not be possible to distinguish them from Frenchmen. They are never to hear mass, but to attend at the ambassador’s chapel every Sunday. Such is the general account I have to give you; their preceptor will be more particular, and I shall visit them from time to time.”

CHAPTER XIV.

1765-1766. Æt. 54-55.

Hume's Sentiments as to the Popularity of his works — A letter to the Scottish Clergy — Correspondence with Elliot continued — Sir Robert Liston — Mallet — Hume appointed Secretary of Legation — Chargé d'Affaires at Paris — Proposal to appoint him Secretary for Ireland — Reasons of the Failure of the Project — Lord Hertford — Resumption of Communication with Rousseau — Rousseau in Paris — Notices of his History and Character — Hume's solicitude for his welfare — Return to Britain — Disposal of Rousseau — Death of Jardine.

Allusion has occasionally been made to the difficulty of satisfying Hume with any amount of literary success. His correspondence with Millar is a long grumble about the prejudices he has had to encounter, and their influence on the circulation of his works; while the bookseller, by the most glowing pictures of their popularity, is only able to elicit a partial gleam of content. The success of the History made worthy Mr. Millar very anxious that it should be continued, and Hume for a time acquiesced in the proposal. There is a letter from Millar on the 26th October, enlarging on the great and rapid sales: about 2500 complete sets of the quarto edition, and upwards of 3000 of the "History of the Stuarts," had been sold, along with near 2000 of the 8vo. edition. In continuation he says:

The Essays, 8vo, were only published in May; what has been sold of them, of all the different editions, I cannot recollect. I was asked that question at St. James's the other day, when I said, I considered your works as classics, that I never numbered the editions, as I did in books we wished to puff. This I said before many clergy. I am not a little surprised to see one of your excellent understanding and merit so anxious about the sale, when the booksellers entirely concerned never complained, but on the contrary would be ready to give you to your utmost wish any encouragement to proceed in your History; and in truth, considering the number of enemies, some particular Essays have risen from *interest*, bigotry, folly, and knavery, not less than a one hundred thousand, it is rather astonishing your works have sold so much. While *men* are *men* this is to be expected, and you are the last man I should ever thought could paid the least attention to such things.

On this Hume says:

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"Paris, 14th January, 1765.

"Dear Sir, — I am much obliged to you for your last letter, which is very friendly, and I shall not fail to pay the proper attention to it. The truth is, as I intend to continue my History, I could not possibly have taken a more proper step than to pay a visit to this country, and to make acquaintance here; for as France and England are so intermixed in all transactions since the Revolution, the history of one country must throw light upon the other; and I am now in a situation to have access to all the families which have papers relative to public affairs transacted in the end of the last and beginning of this century. The reason why I was anxious to know the sale of my History, was, that I might judge whether I could expect equal access and information in England. The rage and prejudice of parties frighten me; and above all, this rage against the Scots, which is so dishonourable, and indeed so infamous to the English nation. We hear that it increases every day without the least appearance of provocation on our part. It has frequently made me resolve never in my life to set foot on English ground. I dread, if I should undertake a more modern history, the impertinence and ill manners to which it would expose me; and I was willing to know from you whether former prejudices had so far subsided as to ensure me of a good reception."

The following very characteristic paper, which appears to have been enclosed to Dr. Blair, needs no introduction.

"Dear Doctor, — I am in debt to all my friends in letters, and shall ever be so. But what strikes me chiefly with remorse, are my great and enormous debts to the clergy. By this my neglect of my Protestant pastors, you will begin to suspect that I am turning Papist. But to acquit myself at once, allow me to write you a common letter, and to address a few words to every one of you.

Dr. Robertson.

"Your History has been very very well translated here, better than mine, as I am told. Its success has given me occasion to promise your acquaintance to several persons of distinction; the Duc de Nivernois, the Marquis de Puysieuls, President Hénault, Baron D'Holbach, &c. I wish you could speak French tolerably; you would find this place agreeable. The Marechal Broglio spoke of you to me with esteem the other day.

Dr. Carlyle.

"I consulted with the Chevalier Macdonald, (who, by the bye, is here in great vogue, not for his gallantries, like some others who shall be nameless, but for his parts and knowledge;) I say I consulted with the Chevalier about writing a common letter to Eglinton in favour of Wilson. He told me it would be quite useless. Eglinton would give that kirk and every thing else to the tenth cousin of the tenth cousin of a voter in the shire of Ayr, rather than to the most intimate friend he has in the world. Je baise les mains de Madame Carlyle avec tout l'empressement possible.

Dr. Ferguson.

"Who, by the bye, I believe is not a doctor, though highly worthy from his piety and learning to be one; then Mr. Ferguson, I think I have nothing in particular to say to you, except that I am glad of the change of your class, because you desired it, and because it fitted Russell. For otherwise I should have liked better the other science. The news of your great success in teaching has reached me in Paris, and has given me pleasure; but I fear for your health from all these sudden and violent applications. Ah, that you could learn something, dear Ferguson, of the courteous, and caressing, and open manners of this country. I should not then have been to learn for the first time, (as I did lately from General Clark,) that you have not been altogether ungrateful to me, and that you bear me some good will, and that you sometimes regret my absence. Why should your method of living with me have borne so little the appearance of those sentiments?

Dr. Blair.

"Many people who read English have got your dissertation on Fingal, which they admire extremely: a very good critic told me lately that it was incomparably the best piece of criticism in the English language; a self-evident truth to me. I met also with many admirers of Fingal; but many also doubt of its authenticity. The Chevalier Macdonald is of use to me in supporting the argument, from his personal knowledge of facts. I cannot, however, but allow that the whole is strange, passing strange.

"You seem to wish that I should give you some general accounts of this country. Shall I begin with the points in which it most differs from England, viz., the general regard paid to genius and learning; the universal and professed, though decent, gallantry to the fair sex; or the almost universal contempt of all religion among both sexes, and among all ranks of men? Or shall I mention the points in which the French begin to concur with the English, — their love of liberty, for instance? Or shall I give you some remarkable anecdotes of the great men who, at present, adorn French literature? Perhaps you would wish me to run over all these topics successively. Alas! there is not one that would not fill several sheets of paper with curious circumstances, and I am the most lazy writer of letters in the world: however, I must say something on these heads; and, first, of the first: —

“There is a very remarkable difference between London and Paris; of which I gave warning to Helvétius, when he went over lately to England, and of which he told me, on his return, he was fully sensible. If a man have the misfortune, in the former place, to attach himself to letters, even if he succeeds, I know not with whom he is to live, nor how he is to pass his time in a suitable society. The little company there that is worth conversing with, are cold and unsociable; or are warmed only by faction and cabal; so that a man who plays no part in public affairs becomes altogether insignificant; and, if he is not rich, he becomes even contemptible. Hence that nation are relapsing fast into the deepest stupidity and ignorance. But, in Paris, a man that distinguishes himself in letters, meets immediately with regard and attention. I found, immediately on my landing here, the effects of this disposition. Lord Beauchamp told me that I must go instantly with him to the Duchess de la Valieres. When I excused myself, on account of dress, he told me that he had her orders, though I were in boots. I accordingly went with him in a travelling frock, where I saw a very fine lady reclining on a sofa, who made me speeches and compliments without bounds. The style of panegyric was then taken up by a fat gentleman, whom I cast my eyes upon, and observed him to wear a star of the richest diamonds; — it was the Duke of Orleans. The Duchess told me she was engaged to sup in President Hénault’s, but that she would not part with me; — I must go along with her. The good president received me with open arms; and told me, among other fine things, that, a few days before, the Dauphin said to him, &c. &c. &c. Such instances of attention I found very frequent, and even daily. You ask me, if they were not very agreeable? I answer — no; neither in expectation, possession, nor recollection. I left that fireside, where you probably sit at present, with the greatest reluctance. After I came to London, my uneasiness, as I heard more of the prepossessions of the French nation in my favour, increased; and nothing would have given me greater joy than any accident that would have broke off my engagements. When I came to Paris, I repented heartily of having entered, at my years, on such a scene; and, as I found that Lord Hertford had entertained a good opinion and good will for Andrew Stuart, I spoke to Wedderburn, in order to contrive expedients for substituting him in my place. Lord Hertford thought, for some time, that I would lose all patience and would run away from him. But the faculty of speaking French returned gradually to me. I formed many acquaintance and some friendships. All the learned seemed to conspire in showing me instances of regard. The great ladies were not wanting to a man so highly in fashion: and, having now contracted the circle of my acquaintance, I live tolerably at my ease. I have even thoughts of settling at Paris for the rest of my life; but I am sometimes frightened with the idea that it is not a scene suited to the languor of old age. I then think of retiring to a provincial town, or returning to Edinburgh, or —— but it is not worth while to form projects about the matter. D'Alembert and I talk very seriously of taking a journey to Italy together; and, if Lord Hertford leave France soon, this journey may probably have place.

"I began this letter about two months ago; but so monstrously indolent am I that I have not had time to finish it. I believe I had better send it off as it is. Tell Robertson that La Chapelle, his translator, is very much out of humour, and with reason, for never hearing from him. I suppose some letter has miscarried. I am, &c.

"Paris, 6th April, 1765."

Mr. Elliot had expressed to Hume a fear lest the longer residence of his sons in France might "render them too much Frenchmen," while, speaking of their tutor, Mr. Liston, he says, "I own I am more apprehensive of the consequences of a Paris life upon a young man of his age than upon the boys, who are too young to enter into the full dissipation of a country, where, not to be dissipated, is hardly to have any existence." On this Hume writes:

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Paris, 14th April, 1765.

"My Dear Sir, — I have always had the pleasure of conversing, from time to time, with your sons, with Mr. Liston, and with the Abbé Choquart, and never found the least reason to alter the good opinion, which I had at first conceived of that academy, and of the conduct of every one concerned: but the tenor of your last letter made me apprehend, that you had discovered some ground of suspicion; and the more so as Mr. Larpent told me, that you had spoke to his father, to desire him to request of his son, that he should keep a watchful eye over the conduct of your sons, and of Mr. Liston, and inform him of all particulars. This it is impossible for Larpent to do, and, indeed, impossible for me to do, otherwise than by conversing with the Abbé Choquart and with your sons apart. I have done this very carefully, and find Mr. Liston's conduct not only irreproachable, but laudable. The Abbé tells me, that for the first three or four months, he scarce ever stirred out of the house, but conversed with him alone, and with the other masters, till he came to such perfection in the language, as to be taken for a Languedocian, or a Frenchman of some province. Since that time the Abbé tells me, he has made a few acquaintances among his countrymen, and goes out sometimes; but he uses this liberty with great moderation; and on the whole, the Abbé praises him (and with great reason as appears to me) for his reserve, his modesty, his good sense, his sobriety, and his virtue. As to your sons, he assures me, that though he has been employed nineteen years in instructing youth, he never knew any more happily formed, and they are the favourites of the whole school. The boys themselves seem to be extremely happy in their present situation. Gilbert speaks French almost like a Parisian, and Hugh follows fast after him. This is an advantage they have acquired, without interrupting the course of their other studies. The sociableness of their disposition has been called forth, by living among companions in a public school; and as they praise very much the civility and good humour of their fellow students, they may themselves be the more confirmed in their habits. But, pray, come hither yourself and judge of the matter.

"Two or three days ago, Lord Hertford wrote a very earnest letter to Mr. Grenville in my favour. I know well that, if you find an opportunity, you will second his application. The Saxon minister at the court, told my lord, that Mr. Wroughton was soon to leave Dresden. My lord has proposed that Bunbury be sent thither: if he refuses, it will be a proof that he is resolved to undertake no public service, but scandalously to live at home, and enjoy a large salary, which should belong to another. Surely if Mr. Grenville bore me never so little good-will, as a supposed Tory, he must allow this reasoning to be unanswerable.

“You have now with you Sir James Macdonald, who is too good for you, for I am afraid you will not know to value him. He leaves an universal regret behind him at Paris, among all who were acquainted with him, and in none more than myself. I am, dear sir, your faithful humble servant.”

In the following letter to Millar, we find Mallet and the Life of Marlborough, that had been promised and paid for, again the subject of speculation. Hume, though he had at one time been induced to believe that part of the work was written, seems to have on the whole indulged himself in scepticism, which, in this case at least, was well founded. The letter is dated 4th May.

“My Dear Sir, — As soon as I heard of poor Mallet’s death, my curiosity was excited to know, whether he had really proceeded any length in his work, or whether, as many people imagine, and as is somewhat my opinion, he had never wrote a line nor taken a note with regard to it. I beg you would make some inquiry upon that subject. The widow will be able to inform you. I should be glad to know whether any lights could be got from that quarter for the continuance of my work.”

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

“Paris, 12th May, 1765.

“Dear Sir, — I went, on Wednesday last, to be present at the examination of the Abbé Choquart’s school, with which I was very well satisfied; especially for the part your young folks had in it. There were several people present who came to hear their children and relations; and when Gilbert was going through some demonstrations of geometry, with a very good grace, I asked some who sat next me, whether they could perceive him to be a foreigner? They all declared that they could not; and were very much surprised when I told them that he had not yet been in the country six months. Hugh retains still a little of a foreign accent, but it is wearing out gradually. Mr. Liston speaks so well as to be able to pass himself for a Gascon!

“There was also one circumstance of your young gentlemen’s behaviour with which I was much pleased; but whether you will take the praise of it to yourself, or ascribe it partly to the imitation of French manners, I cannot determine. I arrived a little before the commencement of the examination; and, walking into the garden, I took shelter, from the heat, under some trees.

Your young gentlemen, as soon as they saw me, ran and brought me a chair, which they placed carefully in the most shady spot they could find. I doubt this attention would not be very common among mere English schoolboys.

"Lord Hertford has received, from George Grenville, a final answer to a very earnest, and very pressing letter he had wrote in my favour. Never was any refusal so decisive, so cold, so positive, so determined; not the least circumstance of apology, of good manners, or of regard: he even gives it as a reason why I cannot be appointed, because Sir Charles Bunbury has never yet desired to change his situation. In short, the letter is so different from all letters usually wrote on such occasions, and so different from those which Mr. Grenville was accustomed to write to Lord Hertford, that my lord concludes there is some particular reason of coldness, though he cannot conjecture what it is. But there are also, in the letter, some expressions which mark extreme animosity against me. Lord Hertford thinks, they will admit of another sense; and desires me to write to you, in order to ask whether you have ever perceived such sentiments in that gentleman. I know that I have affirmed, and, what is worse, have proved, that Queen Elizabeth's maxims of government were full as arbitrary as those of the Stuarts. I know that this proposition, though now an undoubted and acknowledged truth, is contrary to the principles of sound Whiggery. I know also, that Mr. Grenville, as a sound Whig, bore me no good will on that account; but I did not really think that his quarrel could have gone to such an extremity. You are sensible of the consequences which I apprehended, and which you did not, last summer, think so dangerous as I imagined. I have now, for the first time, explained to my lord the nature of my situation, which somewhat surprised him, being so contrary to the assurances given him by Mr. Grenville: but he told me that my interest was secure; for that he thought himself obliged to make me reparation from his private fortune, for any breach of faith which I might apprehend from the public. If this point were fixed, it would probably stop the malignity of my enemies, who will see that they can only do a small ill to Lord Hertford, instead of a great one which they might intend against me. However, my lord being desirous to know, from you, Mr. Grenville's sentiments, as far as you can discover them, I am engaged to enter into this detail, which otherwise I might have desired to avoid. I am, with great sincerity, my dear sir, your most obedient servant."

Hume *to* Mr. Oswald.

“Paris, 2d June, 1765.

“My Dear Sir, — There is a gentleman here, an Abbé, and a man of letters, who is willing to enter into a commerce, or mutual exchange with me, on every point of political and commercial knowledge. He has a great deal of very exact information, with regard to every thing that concerns these subjects; has great freedom of thought and speech, and has no connexions with any minister. As a sample, he has sent me the enclosed questions, which I could not exactly answer, and is willing to answer any of a like kind, which I could propose to him. I thought I could not do better than transmit them to you; and as I know you will also have questions to ask, I shall also transmit them to him, and you may depend on his answer as just and solid. I have left the margin large enough, to save you trouble. I know you are the most industrious and the most indolent man of my acquaintance; the former in business, the latter in ceremony. The present task I propose to you is of the former kind.

“You will hear that Sir Charles Bunbury is appointed Secretary for Ireland. Lord Hertford thinks it absolutely certain, that I am to succeed him; and I, too, think it very probable. My lord throws up immediately, if this demand is not complied with; yet, notwithstanding these favourable circumstances, I shall not be wonderfully surprised, in case of a disappointment. I know that I can depend on your good offices with Lord Halifax, and with every other person on whom you have influence. Lord Hertford writes this post to that noble lord. The present advantages I possess are so great, that it seems almost extravagant to doubt of success; and yet, in general, it appears to me almost incomprehensible how it should happen, that I, a philosopher, a man of letters, nowise a courtier, of the most independent spirit, who has given offence to every sect and every party, that I, I say, such as I have described myself, should obtain an employment of dignity, and a thousand a-year. This event is in general so strange, that I fancy, in the issue, it will not have place. I am, dear sir, yours sincerely.”

Hume had come to the conclusion, and certainly justly, that as he performed the functions of secretary of the embassy in France, he ought to possess the rank and emoluments of that office. He appears, however, to have been reluctant to take any steps personally for the accomplishment of this object; and his correspondence with his friends shows that some urgency was necessary to overcome his scruples. Having, however, finally decided on his course, he appears to have pursued it with great energy and perseverance, and to have moved every influence through which he was likely to accomplish his end.

On 24th June, 1765, Hume writes to his brother that he "has now been appointed secretary to the embassy, with the usual salary of £1200 a-year." He says, "The English ministry had intended not to appoint another secretary of the embassy, who they knew could not be received, but to suppress that office altogether from views of frugality." For the continuance of the office, and its bestowal on himself, he seems to have relied very much on the intervention of a foreign lady, his friend Madame de Boufflers; and, strange as it may seem to find such an influence effective in the councils of a British cabinet, he appears to have been convinced that, had the matter not been previously settled in his favour, her application would have brought it to a conclusion. Continuing his letter to his brother, he says, "Nobody can do more justice to the merit of my friend the Comtesse de Boufflers, than the Duke and Duchess of Bedford, who have indeed been essentially obliged to her in their family concerns. She wrote the duke about a fortnight ago, that the time was now come, and the only time that probably would ever come, of his showing his friendship to her, by assisting me in my applications; and she would rest on this sole circumstance all his professions of regard to her. He received her letter while in the country, but he wrote her back, that he would immediately hasten to town, and if he had any credit with the king or ministry, her solicitations should be complied with. He is not a man that ever makes vain professions, nor does he ever take a refusal. He would find the matter finished when he came to London; but it is a sensible pleasure to me, that I owe so great an obligation, to a person whom I love and esteem so sincerely as that lady."

In a letter to the Marquise de Barbantane, he gives the same account of the matter.

"Have you heard of the share which Madame de Boufflers had in this event? As soon as she heard that there was a vacancy, by means of the promotion of Sir Charles Bunbury, my predecessor, she wrote to the Duke of Bedford, entreating him, in the most earnest terms, to befriend me in my pretensions, and setting all my claims in the most favourable light. The duke answered her, that he would soon be in London; and if he had any credit or authority with the ministry, her friend should not fail of success. The duke is not a man that ever promises in vain, nor is he a man that is ever to be refused; so that, from this interest alone, I was sure to have prevailed. But happily the same post brought intelligence to the ambassador, that the affair was already finished. But do you not think, that I owe the same obligations to our friend? or will you tell me, that I seek only a pretence for indulging my inclinations?"

The statement is repeated in the following letter to Elliot.

Hume *to* Gilbert Elliot *of Minto*.

"Paris, 3d June, 1765.

"My Dear Sir, — Not finding your young gentlemen in church last Sunday, I went to see them, when I found them both confined to the house with a light fever, which has since turned out the measles in form, but with all the most favourable symptoms. I find Mr. Liston very attentive and very careful; the young gentlemen are attended by the physician of the academy. I use the freedom to tell Lady Hertford the way in which they are governed; she tells me she would not act otherwise in the case of her own children; so that Mrs. Murray, if you please to communicate to her this intelligence, can have no reason for anxiety. Gilbert has a greater quantity than Hugh, and greater strength to bear them.

"You know, I suppose, that I am appointed secretary to the embassy, though I have not yet received my credential letter: the present confusions in the court may perhaps retard them for some time; but Mr. Grenville has informed the ambassador that the matter is concluded, and the king has given his consent; so that in spite of Atheism and Deism, of Whiggism and Toryism, of Scoticism and Philosophy, I am now possessed of an office of credit, and of £1200 a-year: without dedication or application, from the favour alone of a person, whom I can perfectly love and respect. I find it has cost my lord a very hard pull; and when I consider the matter alone, without viewing the steps that led to it, I am sometimes inclined to be surprised how it has happened.

"Shall I tell you another circumstance that is not disagreeable to me; a certain lady, who is at present in London, hearing there was some delay, wrote in the most earnest terms to the Duke of Bedford, desiring his interest in my favour; he answered her he would soon be in London, and if he then possessed any credit or authority, she might depend upon the success of her friend. You know that he is not a man that makes vain professions, nor is he a man easy to be refused. If you guess the lady, you will conclude that it will not cost me a great effort to be grateful. The share you have also been pleased to take is not forgot, and strengthens our ancient friendship. I am, my dear sir, yours sincerely.”

It is probable that this appointment was impeded by more difficulties than Hume himself could see, or his friends make him aware of. His being a Scotsman of itself made it then unpopular, and in his case there were other reasons likely to weigh with statesmen who looked in the direction of popularity. We are told that “the printers of the *London Evening Post and Gazetteer* , were called before the House of Lords, on a complaint made by the Earl of Marchmont, for printing a letter (written by Wilkes,) reflecting on the Earl of Hertford, ambassador at Paris, for employing David Hume the historian as his secretary, and representing the embassy as totally of Scotch complexion.”

No sooner had this appointment been completed, than Lord Hertford was recalled, and Hume was left for a time chargé d’affaires at Paris.

The ambassador had been appointed by Lord Bute, but had chiefly acted during the administration of Grenville, with whom he and his connexions were not, as Hume’s correspondence has shown, on very friendly terms. In July, 1765, the Rockingham administration was formed, in connexion with which Lord Hertford became lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and his brother secretary of state with the leadership of the House of Commons. Hume had thus to perform the functions of British representative until the Duke of Richmond arrived as ambassador in October. Of the manner in which he performed the duties of his office, Lord Brougham says:

By Lord Aberdeen’s kindness I have been allowed to examine the correspondence of the embassy with Marshal Conway during these four months; and it is highly creditable to the philosopher’s business-like talents, and his capacity for affairs. The negotiations of which he had the sole conduct related to the important and interesting discussions of Canada; matters arising out of the cession by the peace of Paris; and to the demolition of the works at Dunkirk, also stipulated by that treaty. His despatches, some of them of great length, most of them in his own hand, are clearly and ably written. The course which he describes himself as pursuing with the very slippery and evasive ministers against whom he had to contend, particularly the Duc de Praslin, appears to have been marked by firmness and temper, as well as by quickness and sagacity. His memorials, of which two or three are given, show a perfect familiarity with diplomatic modes and habits, and they are both well written and ably reasoned. His information must have been correct; for he obtained a knowledge of the secret proceedings of the assembly of clergy, which, though convoked for the purpose of obtaining the usual *don gratuit*, chose to enter upon the discussion of all the clerical grievances; while they kept their deliberations carefully secret, and were opposed by the parliament of Paris as soon as their proceedings became known. Mr. Hume obtained a very early, though somewhat exaggerated account of these things, through two of the foreign ambassadors; and when he communicated it to the Bishop of Senlis, he was treated with contempt, as if nothing could be so wild, and as if some enemy of the church had invented the fable to discredit her. Marshal Conway appears by his despatches (which are also excellent) to have rested his hopes of these differences passing off, on the prevailing irreligious spirit in France, where "the Dauphin alone," he says, "has any care for such matters; and he has of late taken a military turn." In a short time the whole ferment was allayed by the prudent and able conduct of Brienne, Archbishop of Toulouse; the *don gratuit* was voted; and the assembly was prorogued to the following May. Mr. Hume praises Brienne very highly on this, as indeed he did on all occasions.

Hume's familiar letters make us fully acquainted with the feelings he experienced at this juncture.

Hume *to his Brother*.

"Compiègne, 14th July, 1765.

"Dear Brother, — There arrived yesterday a messenger from England with my commission under the great seal. My appointments, as I told you, are £1200 a-year. I have also £300 for my equipage, and three hundred ounces of plate for my table. This is the fair side of the picture. The misfortune is, that General Conway, the ambassador's brother, is secretary of state. The Duke of Grafton, his nephew, is the other secretary. You still say, better and better. Not at all. My Lord Hertford goes for England in a few days, and leaves the burden of the embassy upon me. Still you say, where is the harm of all this? You are come to years of discretion, and can govern yourself. Wait a little, dear brother. Lord Hertford goes lord-lieutenant to Ireland, and there is an end of the ambassador, and probably of the secretary.

"It is true I can count upon Lord Hertford's friendship as much as any man's in the world. One day last spring, he came into my room, and told me that he heard of many people who endeavoured by their caresses to persuade me that I ought to remain in France. But he hoped that I would embrace no scheme of life which would ever separate him and me. He now loved me as much as ever he esteemed me, and wished we might pass our lives together. He had resolved several times to have opened his breast so far to me; but being a man of few words and no professions, he had still delayed it, and he now felt himself much relieved by this declaration of his desires and intentions. I know that Lord Hertford will not go to Ireland unless he be allowed to name the secretary for that kingdom. Perhaps he may think his son, Lord Beauchamp, too young for that office; in which case I may very probably expect it, and it is an office of between £3000 and £4000 a-year, and stands next in dignity to all the great offices of the state. In all cases the lord-lieutenant for Ireland has many and great things to give, of which I should certainly expect one.

"Still you say, this is all better and better: Not at all! You know the fluctuation of English politics. Perhaps, before you receive this, the whole present system is overturned. Lord Hertford, who, while he remained here, was a man of no party, is involved with his friends. All is turned topsy-turvy: and before next winter, perhaps, I am at your fireside without office or employment! Here, indeed, I allow you to say, so much the better; for I never had much ambition, I mean for power and dignities, and I am heartily cured of the little I had. I believe a fireside and a book the best things in the world for my age and disposition. I write in some hurry, therefore can only add, that if the old ministry return, I can look upon the Duke of Bedford alone as my friend, by means of the lady I mentioned to you. If the ministry stand, I have, by Lord Hertford's means, many and great friends; and the king, I have been well assured, honours me particularly with his good opinion. In all cases it is a great point for me to have obtained this commission to a place of so much trust and credit and silences all objections against me, whether they arose from religion or politics. Direct your letters to me as *Secrétaire d'Ambassade d'Angleterre à Paris*. I hate any thing that disturbs so agreeable a settlement as I had obtained before these great events. My compliments to Mrs. Home and to Katy. Keep this letter to yourself, but write part of it to our sister."

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

"Compiègne, 20th July, 1765.

"Tell Dr. Robertson that the Dauphin asked Mr. Hume several questions the other day, about him and his History. That prince seems a reasonable man, but would be the better of being *roasted* sometimes in *The Poker* . If they will elect him a member, Mr. Hume will propose it to him. What does the doctor say at present to these great folding doors opened to all the chimeras of ambition? Alas! they may be thrown open much wider, if possible; none of these chimeras will enter. Philosophy, with her severe brows, guards the passage; while Indolence, in affright, is ready to throw herself out at the window. Mr. Hume recommends himself to Ferguson and Jardine, and John Adams and Mrs. Adams, and to all the Poker, and desires the prayers of the faithful for him on this occasion."

Hume had now actually before him the prospect of filling the high office of secretary to the lord-lieutenant of Ireland. Writing to his brother on 4th August, 1765, he again states that Lord Hertford, before his departure, had assured him that he would not accept of the lord-lieutenancy, unless he were allowed the naming of the secretary; and now adds, that the office is destined for himself, in conjunction with Lord Hertford's son, Lord Beauchamp; and that his own salary is to be about £2000 a-year. He continues:

"Thus you see a splendid fortune awaits me: Yet you cannot imagine with what regret I leave this country. It is like stepping out of light into darkness, to exchange Paris for Dublin. The most agreeable circumstance is the friendship and confidence of the lord-lieutenant; and if the present credit of that family continue, as it is likely to do, I shall probably have it in my power to do service to my friends — particularly to your young folks; for as to you and myself, it is long since we thought our fortunes entirely made."

He was not, however, destined to fill this office; and neither he himself, nor his best friends, appear to have regretted the circumstance; the fact being that he was but slenderly endowed with either of the qualifications then indispensable to an Irish statesman, — a capacity for hard drinking, and adroitness in bold political intrigues. The exercise of an official function, among a people where one sect of Christians enjoyed all offices, emoluments, and honours, while another, following the national religion, were scarcely allowed to live, must have shocked his sense of political justice; while it may be questioned if he was a sufficiently bold politician to have attempted any reform of this abuse. The project of his appointment, however, was brought so near its consummation, as to elicit certain applications for ecclesiastical preferment, in order that the reputation he had achieved, in other places, for influence in this department of patronage, might not be unacknowledged in Ireland.

In his letters to his friends, at this time, he describes these vicissitudes of fortune; and indulges in a feeling to which he was very prone, — an uncertainty as to his future projects, and an indolent disinclination to make up his mind how to act.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

“Paris, 23d August, 1765.

“All the literati of my friends, who understand English, think your Dissertation one of the finest performances in our language. A gentleman, of my acquaintance, has translated it for his own satisfaction. He could not publish it without publishing “Ossian” at the same time. My scepticism extends no farther, nor ever did, than with regard to the extreme antiquity of those poems; and it is no more than scepticism.

“You may, perhaps, have heard of the rapid whirl of my fortune backwards and forwards of late. I had scarce received my commission, as secretary to the embassy, when I knew that that situation, the most agreeable in which I could have been placed, was not to last. Lord Hertford must go to Ireland, and resolved to carry me over as secretary to that kingdom, in conjoint commission with his son. On his arrival at London, he found the cry so loud against the promotion of Scotsmen, that he was obliged to give it up; which he did the more easily, as he knew my great reluctance to that office and scene of life. He has now got a pension of £400 a-year settled on me; and as he has prepared an apartment for me in the castle of Dublin, I shall hurry thither as soon as I leave France, and shall be afterwards free for the rest of my life. I have not determined where I shall pass my latter days. This place should be the most agreeable to me; but a man who came late thither, and who is not supported by family connexions, may, perhaps, find himself misplaced, even in this centre of letters and good society. I have a reluctance to think of living among the factious barbarians of London; who will hate me because I am a Scotsman, and am not a Whig, and despise me because I am a man of letters. My attachment to Edinburgh revives as I turn my face towards it.”

Hume *to his Brother*.

“Dear Brother, — I am now to inform you of another pretty rapid change in my fortune. Lord Hertford, on his arrival in London, found great difficulty of executing his intentions in my favour. The cry is loud against the Scots; and the present ministry are unwilling to support any of our countrymen, lest they bear the reproach of being connected with Lord Bute. For this reason, Lord Hertford departed from his project; which he did the more readily, as he knew I had a great reluctance to the office of secretary for Ireland; which requires a talent for speaking in public, to which I was never accustomed. I must also have kept a kind of open house, and have drunk and caroused with the Irish, a course of living to which I am as little accustomed. The Duke of Bedford, to whom I mentioned these objections, thought them very solid. I think myself, at present, much better provided for, by a pension of £400 a-year for life, which Lord Hertford has procured me. He also writes me, that an apartment is fitting up for me in the castle of Dublin. I shall go thither as soon as I can leave France; which will not be till the end of October or beginning of November, on the arrival of the Duke of Richmond. Meanwhile, I am *Chargé des affaires d'Angleterre à la cour de France*, which is the title under which you must write to me, if you favour me with a letter.

"Lord Hertford had another additional project for my advantage, in Ireland. The keeper of the black rod is a very genteel office, which yields about £900 during the session. He proposed, as I cannot be present on the opening of the parliament, to give that office to another, who would officiate, and would be content with £300. But I declined this offer; not as unjust, but as savouring of greediness and rapacity.

"Please to write all these particulars to Katty, except the last, and seal and send her the enclosed. I am charmed with the accounts I hear of Josey, from all hands. Yours sincerely.

"There was a kind of fray in London, as I am told, upon Lord Hertford's declaring his intentions in my favour. The Princess Amelia said, that she thought the affair might be easily accommodated: why may not Lord Hertford give a bishopric to Mr. Hume?"

Writing an account of these transactions to Smith, in nearly the same words, on 5th November, he commences his letter with the observation, "I have been whirled about lately in a strange manner; but, besides that none of the revolutions have ever threatened me much, or been able to give me a moment's anxiety, all has ended very happily, and to my mind." He concludes thus: —

"As a new vexation to temper my good fortune, I am much in perplexity about fixing the place of my future abode for life. Paris is the most agreeable town in Europe, and suits me best; but it is a foreign country. London is the capital of my own country; but it never pleased me much. Letters are there held in no honour: Scotsmen are hated: superstition and ignorance gain ground daily. Edinburgh has many objections, and many allurements. My present mind, this forenoon, the 5th of September, is to return to France. I am much pressed here to accept of offers, which would contribute to my agreeable living; but might encroach on my independence, by making me enter into engagements with princes, and great lords, and ladies. Pray give me your judgment.

"I regret much I shall not see you. I have been looking for you every day these three months. Your satisfaction in your pupil gives me equal satisfaction."

He writes to Blair, on 28th December: —

"Dear Doctor, — After great wavering and uncertainty, between Paris and Edinburgh, (for I never allowed London to enter into the question,) I have, at last, fixed my resolution to remain some time longer in Paris. Perhaps I may take a trip to Rome next autumn. Had I returned to Edinburgh, I was sensible that I shut myself up, in a manner, for life; and I imagine that I am, even yet, too young and healthy, and in too good spirits, to come to that determination. If you please, therefore, you may continue in my house, which I am glad pleases you. If you leave it, as you thought you would, Nairne may have it for £35, as we agreed."

We have now to return to Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom we left, in 1762, seeking protection from the Earl Marischal at Neufchâtel. He finally took up his abode at Motiers Travers, a village on one of the passes of the Jura; where, now that some offensive associations connected with his character and writings have died away, the fame of his genius still lives, and has been no unprofitable commodity to the inhabitants. Here he had a wild rocky district to wander over, where he was not liable to encounter those dangerous impediments which beset the sojourners in the Alps. He had, at the same time, what was more to his purpose, a zealous priesthood and an intolerant populace surrounding him. That the outward manifestations of a morality, odious to his new neighbours, might not be wanting, he sent for his celebrated mistress, Thérèse la Vasseur, with whom he continued openly to live; and that the populace, thus exasperated, might be under no mistake as to the proper person to throw stones at, he adopted the garb of an Armenian.

It is much disputed whether he was really subjected to the attacks of which he afterwards complained; and it is said, that whatever tangible evidence of them was perceptible to other eyes than his own, was the doing of Mademoiselle la Vasseur, to drive him from a neighbourhood which she disliked. It will be found, however, that his story, as reported by Hume in the letters which follow, substantially coincides with the narrative in the "Confessions." This is in some measure a testimony to the sincerity of Rousseau's own conviction, that those hostile efforts were made against him; and indeed it would be useless to question the sincerity of his belief in any thing indicative of the malevolence of his fellow-beings. Having fled from Motiers, he lived for some time on the island of St. Pierre, in the lake of Bienne; and, driven from that asylum, he seems to have hesitated between England and Prussia as a place of refuge. He left the State of Bienne at the date at which his "Confessions" terminate, 29th October, 1765. He proceeded to Strasburg, where, by wearing his Armenian dress in the country where he had been proscribed, he certainly excited a considerable sensation. He appears to have held a sort of levée during his residence in that city, where his daily and hourly proceedings have been recorded with the precision of a court journal.

It was here that he received Hume's letter, agreeing to aid him in finding an asylum in England. The negotiation between them had been brought to a conclusion by Madame de Verdelin, who had spent some time with Rousseau at Motiers, and persuaded him to take advantage of the impression which the Earl Marischal and Madame de Boufflers had made in his favour.

Hume's heart was farther softened by a letter, full of miseries, which Rousseau had written to M. Clairaut. "I must own," says Hume, "I felt on this occasion an emotion of pity, mixed with indignation, to think a man of letters of such eminent merit, should be reduced, in spite of the simplicity of his manner of living, to such extreme indigence; and that this unhappy state should be rendered more intolerable by sickness, by the approach of old age, and the implacable rage of persecution." He was inclined even to sympathize with Rousseau's petulant rejection of proferred kindness; conceiving "that a noble pride, even though carried to excess, merited some indulgence in a man of genius, who, borne up by a sense of his own superiority, and a love of independence, should have braved the storms of fortune and the insults of mankind."

Leaving Strasburg, the wanderer proceeded to Paris, where he went about in his Armenian dress; was mobbed and stared at to his heart's content, wrote to his friends, complaining with bitter eloquence that people would allow him neither solitude nor rest, shut himself up, and went forth again to the world. Before he could have ventured to appear so publicly, in the capital where a writ had been issued for the seizure of his person, he must have received very strong assurances of protection. The arrêt of the Parliament, however, was not recalled; and his friends must have felt somewhat provoked by his pertinacious courtship of popular notice, accompanied by the pretence of a desire to avoid it, by adopting only what was simple and natural — by wearing, for instance, so simple a dress as the fur cap, caaftan, and vest of an Armenian, in the streets of Paris! Hume, who seems really to have had faith in his modesty, must still have felt it awkward that the representative of Britain should be closely allied with a person so conducting himself; and was anxious, whenever the state of public business might permit him, to see his charge safely across the Channel. It was thought, in the meantime, expedient to find for Rousseau an asylum within the privileged area of the Temple, of which his friend, the Prince of Conti, was Grand Prior. We must now allow Hume himself to describe his new companion, and their intercourse.

In continuation of the letter to Blair, of 20th December, above cited, he says:

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

"I must, however, be in London very soon, in order to give an account of my commission; to thank the King for his goodness to me, and to settle the celebrated Rousseau, who has rejected invitations from half of the kings and princes of Europe, in order to put himself under my protection. He has been at Paris about twelve days; and lives in an apartment prepared for him by the Prince of Conti, which, he says, gives him uneasiness, by reason of its magnificence. As he was outlawed by the Parliament, it behoved him to have the King's passport, which was at first offered him under a feigned name; but his friends refused it, because they knew that he would not submit even to that falsehood. You have heard that he was banished from Neufchâtel by preachers, who excited the mob to stone him.

"He told me that a trap was laid for him, with as much art as ever was employed against a fox or a polecat. In the night-time a great enormous stone was suspended above the door, in such a manner, that on opening it in the morning, the stone must have fallen and have crushed him to death. A man passing by early, perceived it, and called in to him at the window to be on his guard. He also told me, that last spring, when he went about the mountains amusing himself with botany, he came to a village at some distance from his own: a woman met him, who, surprised at his Armenian dress — for he wears, and is resolved to wear that habit during life — asked him what he was, and what was his name. On hearing it she exclaimed, ‘Are you that impious rascal, Rousseau? Had I known it, I should have waited for you at the end of the wood, with a pistol, in order to blow out your brains.’ He added, that all the women in Switzerland were in the same disposition, because the preachers had told them that he had wrote books to prove that women had no souls. He then turned to Madame de Boufflers, who was present, and said, — Is it not strange that I, who have wrote so much to decry the morals and conduct of the Parisian ladies, should yet be beloved by them; while the Swiss women, whom I have so much extolled, would willingly cut my throat? ‘We are fond of you,’ replied she, ‘because we know that, however you might rail, you are at bottom fond *of us* to distraction. But the Swiss women hate you, because they are conscious that they have not merit to deserve your attention.’

“On leaving Neufchâtel, he took shelter in a little island about half a league in circumference, in the midst of a lake near Berne. There lived in it only one German peasant, with his wife and sister. The council of Berne, frightened for his neighbourhood, on account of his democratic more than his religious principles, ordered him immediately to withdraw from their state. He wrote the letter of which I send you a copy, as it is very curious. The council, in answer, reiterated their orders for him to begone. He then applied to me. I have made an agreement with a French gardener in Fulham for boarding him. We set out together in a few days.

“It is impossible to express or imagine the enthusiasm of this nation in his favour. As I am supposed to have him in my custody, all the world, especially the great ladies, tease me to be introduced to him. I have had rouleaus thrust into my hand, with earnest applications that I would prevail on him to accept of them. I am persuaded that, were I to open here a subscription with his consent, I should receive £50,000 in a fortnight. The second day after his arrival, he slipped out early in the morning to take a walk in the Luxembourg gardens. The thing was known soon after. I am strongly solicited to prevail on him to take another walk, and then to give warning to my friends. Were the public to be informed, he could not fail to have many thousand spectators. People may talk of ancient Greece as they please; but no nation was ever so fond of genius as this, and no person ever so much engaged their attention as Rousseau. Voltaire and every body else are quite eclipsed by him.

"I am sensible that my connexions with him add to my importance at present. Even his maid La Vasseur, who is very homely and very awkward, is more talked of than the Princess of Morocco or the Countess of Egmont, on account of her fidelity and attachment towards him. His very dog, who is no better than a collie, has a name and reputation in the world. As to my intercourse with him, I find him mild, and gentle, and modest, and good humoured; and he has more the behaviour of a man of the world, than any of the learned here, except M. de Buffon; who, in his figure, and air, and deportment, answers your idea of a marechal of France, rather than that of a philosopher. M. Rousseau is of a small stature, and would rather be ugly, had he not the finest physiognomy in the world: I mean the most expressive countenance. His modesty seems not to be good manners, but ignorance of his own excellence. As he writes, and speaks, and acts, from the impulse of genius, more than from the use of his ordinary faculties, it is very likely that he forgets its force whenever it is laid asleep. I am well assured that at times he believes he has inspirations from an immediate communication with the Divinity. He falls sometimes into ecstasies, which retain him in the same posture for hours together. Does not this example solve the difficulty of Socrates' genius, and of his ecstasies? I think Rousseau in many things very much resembles Socrates. The philosopher of Geneva seems only to have more genius than he of Athens, who never wrote any thing, and less sociableness and temper. Both of them were of very amorous complexions; but a comparison in this particular, turns out much to the advantage of my friend. I call him such, for I hear, from all hands, that his judgment and affections are as strongly biassed in my favour as mine are in his. I shall much regret leaving him in England; but even if a pardon could be procured for him here, he is resolved, as he tells me, never to return; because he never will again be in the power of any man. I wish he may live unmolested in England. I dread the bigotry and barbarism which prevail there.

"When he came to Paris, he seemed resolved to stay till the 6th or 7th of next month. But at present the concourse about him gives him so much uneasiness that he expresses the utmost impatience to be gone. Many people here will have it that this solitary humour is all affectation, in order to be more sought after; but I am sure that it is natural and unsurmountable: I know that two very agreeable ladies breaking in upon him, discomposed him so much that he was not able to eat his dinner afterwards. He is short-sighted; and I have often observed, that while he was conversing with me in the utmost good-humour, (for he is naturally gay,) if he heard the door open, the greatest agony appeared on his countenance, from the apprehension of a visit; and his distress did not leave him, unless the person was a particular friend. His Armenian dress is not affectation. He has had an infirmity from his infancy, which makes breeches inconvenient for him; and he told me, that when he was chased into the mountains of Switzerland, he took up this new dress, as it seemed indifferent what habit he there wore. I could fill a volume with curious anecdotes regarding him, as I live in the same society which he frequented while in Paris. But I must not exhaust your patience. My kind compliments to Ferguson, Robertson, and all the brethren. I am," &c.

"Paris, 28th Dec. 1765."

"P.S. — Be not surprised that I am going to say in my postscript, the direct contrary to what I said in my letter. There are four days of interval between my writing the one and the other; and on this subject of my future abode, I have not these four months risen and gone to bed in the same mind. When I meet with proofs of regard and affection from those I love and esteem here, I swear to myself that I shall never quit this place. An hour after, it occurs to me that I have then for ever renounced my native country and all my ancient friends, and I start with affright. I never yet left any place but with regret: judge what it is natural for me to feel on leaving Paris, and so many amiable people with whom I am intimately connected, while it is in my power to pass my life in the midst of them. Were I not indispensably obliged to go to London, I know that it would be impossible for me to leave this place. But it is very probable that being once there, and fairly escaped from the cave of Circe, I may reconcile myself again to the abode of Ithaca. I left Edinburgh with great reluctance. To return to it, after having tripled my revenue in less than three years, can be no hardship. I must, therefore, fairly warn you to remove from my house at Whitsunday. I have taken a house at Paris; but I will have one also in Edinburgh, and shall deliberate in London which of them I shall occupy. I shall not go to Ireland. The arrival of the Duke of Richmond was late; and this engagement with

M. Rousseau protracts my return so long, that it will not be worth while to go to Dublin. Lord Hertford has been so good as to excuse me. You have heard of the great fortune of Trail, who is, I believe, your acquaintance, and a very honest fellow. Nothing is so agreeable to an irresolute man, says the Cardinal de Retz, as a measure which dispenses him from taking an immediate resolution. I am exactly in the case. I hope your resigning my house will be no hardship to you."

Hume, Rousseau, and M. de Luze of Geneva, a friend of the fugitive, left France early in January 1766. We have no account of their arrival, except Rousseau's statement in a letter to Malesherbes, that whenever he set foot on the land of liberty, he leaped on his illustrious friend's neck, embraced him without uttering a word, and covered his face with kisses and tears; a ceremony with which Hume would probably have dispensed, in the presence of "the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames." The first notice of their sojourn in Britain, is in a bulletin by Hume to Madame de Boufflers, dated London, 19th January, 1766. He says, —

My companion is very amiable, always polite, gay often, commonly sociable. He does not know himself when he thinks he is made for entire solitude. I exhorted him on the road to write his memoirs. He told me, that he had already done it with an intention of publishing them.

At present, says he, it may be affirmed, that nobody knows me perfectly, any more than himself; but I shall describe myself in such plain colours, that henceforth every one may boast that he knows himself, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. I believe, that he intends seriously to draw his own picture in its true colours: but I believe, at the same time, that nobody knows himself less. For instance, even with regard to his health, a point in which few people can be mistaken, he is very fanciful. He imagines himself very infirm. He is one of the most robust men I have ever known. He passed ten hours in the night-time, above deck, during the most severe weather, when all the seamen were almost frozen to death, and he caught no harm. He says that his infirmity always increases upon a journey; yet was it almost imperceptible on the road from Paris to London.

His wearing the Armenian dress is a pure whim; which, however, he is resolved never to abandon. He has an excellent warm heart; and, in conversation, kindles often to a degree of heat which looks like inspiration. I love him much, and hope that I have some share in his affections.

I find that we shall have many ways of settling him to his satisfaction; and as he is learning the English very fast, he will afterwards be able to choose for himself. There is a gentleman of the name of Townsend, a man of four or five thousand a-year, who lives very privately, within fifteen miles of London, and is a great admirer of our philosopher, as is also his wife. He has desired him to live with him, and offers to take any board he pleases. M. Rousseau was much pleased with this proposal, and is inclined to accept of it. The only difficulty is, that he insists positively on his gouvernante's sitting at table, — a proposal which is not to be made to Mr. and Mrs. Townsend.

This woman forms the chief encumbrance to his settlement. M. de Luze, our companion, says, that she passes for wicked and quarrelsome, and tattling; and is thought to be the chief cause of his quitting Neufchâtel. He himself owns her to be so dull, that she never knows in what year of the Lord she is, nor in what month of the year, nor in what day of the month or week; and that she can never learn the different value of the pieces of money in any country. Yet she governs him as absolutely as a nurse does a child. In her absence his dog has acquired that ascendant. His affection for that creature is beyond all expression or conception.

I have as yet scarce seen any body except Mr. Conway and Lady Aylesbury. Both of them told me, they would visit Jean Jacques, if I thought their company would not be disagreeable. I encouraged them to show him that mark of distinction. Here I must also tell you of a good action which I did; not but that it is better to conceal our good actions. But I consider not my seeking *your* approbation as an effect of vanity: your suffrage is to me something like the satisfaction of my own conscience. While we were at Calais, I asked him whether, in case the King of England thought proper to gratify him with a pension, he would accept of it. I told him, that the case was widely different from that of the King of Prussia; and I endeavoured to point out to him the difference, particularly in this circumstance, that a gratuity from the King of England could never in the least endanger his independence. He replied: "But would it not be using ill the King of Prussia, to whom I have since been much obliged? However, on this head (added he,) in case the offer be made me, I shall consult my father;" meaning Lord Marischal. I told this story to General Conway, who seemed to embrace with zeal the notion of giving him a pension, as honourable both to the king and nation. I shall suggest the same idea to other men in power whom I may meet with, and I do not despair of succeeding.

P. S. — Since I wrote the above, I have received your obliging letter, directed to Calais. M. Rousseau says, the letter of the King of Prussia is a forgery; and he suspects it to come from M. de Voltaire.

The project of Mr. Townsend, to my great mortification, has totally vanished, on account of Mademoiselle Le Vasseur. Send all his letters under my cover.

Hume writes again on the 12th, to state that he has succeeded in obtaining the promise of a pension from the king: “You know,” he says, “that our sovereign is extremely prudent and decent, and careful not to give offence. For which reason, he requires that this act of generosity may be an entire secret.” He states, that this information must be kept to herself and the Prince of Conti: and she in her answer, admires Hume’s generous and delicate conduct, and promises to keep the secret. In his postscript Hume announces the important fact, that Mademoiselle le Vasseur had arrived, and had found a companion to whom such a rag of celebrity was no small acquisition.

“P.S. — Since I wrote the above, I have seen General Conway, who tells me that the king has spoke to him on the same subject, and that the sum intended is a hundred pounds a-year: a mighty accession to our friend’s slender revenue.

“A letter has also come to me open from Guy the bookseller, by which I learn that Mademoiselle sets out post, in company with a friend of mine, a young gentleman, very good-humoured, very agreeable — and very mad! He visited Rousseau in his mountains, who gave him a recommendation to Paoli, the King of Corsica; where this gentleman, whose name is Boswell, went last summer, in search of adventures. He has such a rage for literature, that I dread some event fatal to our friend’s honour. You remember the story of Terentia, who was first married to Cicero, then to Sallust, and at last, in her old age, married a young nobleman, who imagined that she must possess some secret, which would convey to him eloquence and genius.”

Soon after, we find Hume writing as follows: —

Hume *to his Brother*.

“London, 2d February, 1766.

“As you know that I never left any place without regret, you may imagine that I did not leave Paris altogether willingly, after having been so long accustomed to it. I do not find this new scene near so much to my taste; and I shall be long ere I am reconciled to it. Perhaps Edinburgh may please me better; I promise myself at least some satisfaction in my nephews, of whom I hear a very good account; and it is surely more suitable to one of my years to seek a retreat in my native country, than to pass the dregs of life among the great, and among people who, though they seem to have a friendship for me, are still strangers. I accustom myself, therefore, to this idea without reluctance; and since I have crossed the seas, I find my regret for the good company I left behind me, less pungent and uneasy. . . . .

"You will have heard by this time, that I have brought over with me the famous Rousseau, the most singular man, surely, in the world. He applied to me last summer to take him under my protection in England, as he called it; but in the meanwhile, he was chased out of Switzerland, and came to Strasburg, with an intention of going to the King of Prussia, who pressed him earnestly to live with him. At Strasburg my letter reached him, making him an offer of all my services; upon which he turned short, and having obtained the King of France's passport, came and joined me at Paris. I have lived with him ever since. He is a very modest, mild, well-bred, gentle-spirited, and warm-hearted man, as ever I knew in my life. He is also to appearance very sociable. I never saw a man who seems better calculated for good company, nor who seems to take more pleasure in it. Yet is he absolutely determined to retire and board himself in a farmer's house among the mountains of Wales, for the sake of solitude. He has refused a pension from the King of Prussia, and presents from hundreds. I have been offered great sums for him, if I could have prevailed on him to accept of them. Yet, till within these three months, he was in absolute beggary. He has now about £70 a-year? which he has acquired by a bargain for his works. It is incredible the enthusiasm for him in Paris, and the curiosity in London. I prevailed on him to go to the play-house in order to see Garrick, who placed him in a box opposite the king and queen. I observed their majesties to look at him more than at the players. I should desire no better fortune than to have the privilege of showing him to all I please. The hereditary prince paid him a visit a few days ago; and I imagine the Duke of York called on him one evening when he was abroad. I love him much, and shall separate from him with much regret."

Hume writes to Dr. Blair on 11th February: —

“You have seen in the newspapers enow of particulars concerning my pupil, who has now left me and retired to Chiswick. He is impatient to get into the mountains of Wales. He is a very agreeable amiable man, but a great humorist. The philosophers of Paris foretold to me that I could not conduct him to Calais without a quarrel; but I think I could live with him all my life in mutual friendship and esteem. I am very sorry that the matter is not likely to be put to a trial! I believe one great source of our concord is, that neither he nor I are disputatious, which is not the case with any of them. They are also displeased with him because they think he overabounds in religion; and it is indeed remarkable, that the philosopher of this age who has been most persecuted, is by far the most devout. I do not comprehend such philosophers as are invested with the sacerdotal character. I am, dear doctor, yours *usque ad aras*.”

The first attempt to find a settlement for Rousseau, was with the French gardener at Fulham, already alluded to. The arrangement proposed by Hume was, that the gardener was to receive from fifty to sixty pounds a-year, as the consideration for boarding Rousseau and Mademoiselle, but that he was only to draw twenty-five pounds from Rousseau, from whom he was to keep the arrangement secret. Rousseau rejected this arrangement with disgust; and various other efforts to find him a suitable home were equally unsuccessful. Hume, who, as Rousseau himself tells Madame de Boufflers, was more anxious about his welfare than he was himself, appears to have spent week after week, in the vain pursuit of a resting place for the wanderer — no sooner framing a hopeful scheme than it was contemptuously rejected. It does not appear, however, that the inquiries were conducted precisely in the sphere in which Rousseau liked to act. It is clear that he had not come to Britain to negotiate with farmers at Chiswick, or French gardeners at Fulham. He undoubtedly expected much more distinguished titles to be mixed up with his arrangements; and we find that it was not till a rich man’s well kept country mansion was put at his disposal, that he deigned to be for a moment satisfied. A letter to Blair, contains a very full narrative of the subsequent proceedings.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

Lisle Street, Leicester Fields,
25th March, 1766.

Dear Doctor, — I had asked M. Rousseau the question you propose to me: He answered, that the story of his “Héloise” had some general and distant resemblance to reality; such as was sufficient to warm his imagination and assist his invention: but that all the chief circumstances were fictitious. I have heard in France, that he had been employed to teach music to a young lady, a boarder in a convent at Lyons; and that the master and scholar fell mutually in love with each other; but the affair was not attended with any consequences. I think this work his masterpiece; though he himself told me, that he valued most his *Contrat Social* ; which is as preposterous a judgment as that of Milton, who preferred the Paradise Regained to all his other performances.

This man, the most singular of all human beings, has at last left me; and I have very little hopes of ever being able, for the future, to enjoy much of his company, though he says, that if I settle either in London or Edinburgh, he will take a journey on foot every year to visit me. Mr. Davenport, a gentleman of £5000 or £6000 a-year, in the north of England, and a man of great humanity and of a good understanding, has taken the charge of him. He has a house called Wooton, in the Peake of Derby, situated amidst mountains and rocks and streams and forests, which pleases the wild imagination and solitary humour of Rousseau; and as the master seldom inhabited it, and only kept there a plain table for some servants, he offered me to give it up to my friend. I accepted, on condition that he would take from him £30 a-year of board for himself and his gouvernante, which he was so good-natured as to agree to. Rousseau has about £80 a-year, which he has acquired by contracts with his booksellers, and by a liferent annuity of £25 a-year, which he accepted from Lord Marischal. This is the only man who has yet been able to make him accept of money.

He was desperately resolved to rush into this solitude, notwithstanding all my remonstrances; and I foresee, that he will be unhappy in that situation, as he has indeed been always in all situations. He will be entirely without occupation, without company, and almost without amusement of any kind. He has read very little during the course of his life, and has now totally renounced all reading: He has seen very little; and has no manner of curiosity to see or remark: He has reflected, properly speaking, and studied very little; and has not indeed much knowledge: He has only *felt*, during the whole course of his life; and in this respect, his sensibility rises to a pitch beyond what I have seen any example of: but it still gives him a more acute feeling of pain than of pleasure. He is like a man who were stript not only of his clothes, but of his skin, and turned out in that situation to combat with the rude and boisterous elements, such as perpetually disturb this lower world. I shall give you a remarkable instance of his turn of character in this respect: It passed in my room, the evening before his departure.

He had resolved to set out with his gouvernante in a post-chaise; but Davenport, willing to cheat him and save him some money, told him that he had found a retour chaise for the place, which he might have for a trifle, and that luckily it set out the very day in which Rousseau intended to depart. His purpose was to hire a chaise, and make him believe this story. He succeeded at first, but Rousseau afterwards ruminating on the circumstances, began to entertain a suspicion of the trick. He communicated his doubts to me, complaining that he was treated like a child; that though he was poor, he chose rather to conform himself to his circumstances, than live like a beggar on alms; and that he was very unhappy in not speaking the language familiarly, so as to guard himself against these impositions. I told him that I was ignorant of the matter, and knew nothing more of it, than I was told by Mr. Davenport, but if he pleased I should make inquiry about it. “Never tell me that,” replied he, “if this be really a contrivance of Davenport’s, you are acquainted with it, and consenting to it; and you could not possibly have done me a greater displeasure.” Upon which he sat down very sullen and silent; and all my attempts were in vain to revive the conversation, and to turn it on other subjects; he still answered me very drily and coldly. At last, after passing near an hour in this ill-humour, he rose up and took a turn about the room. But judge of my surprise, when he sat down suddenly on my knee, threw his hands about my neck, kissed me with the greatest warmth, and bedewing all my face with tears, exclaimed, “Is it possible you can ever forgive me, my dear friend? After all the testimonies of affection I have received from you, I reward you at last with this folly and ill behaviour: but I have notwithstanding a heart worthy of your friendship; I love you, I esteem you, and not an instance of your kindness is thrown away upon me.” I hope you have not so bad an opinion of me as to think I was not melted on this occasion; I assure you I kissed him and embraced him twenty times, with a plentiful effusion of tears. I think no scene of my life was ever more affecting.

I now understand perfectly his aversion to company; which appears so surprising in a man well qualified for the entertainment of company, and which the greater part of the world takes for affectation. He has frequent and long fits of the spleen, from the state of his mind or body, call it which you please; and from his extreme sensibility of temper, during that disposition, company is a torment to him. When his spirits and health and good humour return, his fancy affords him so much and such agreeable occupation, that to call him off from it gives him uneasiness; and even the writing of books, he tells me, as it limits and restrains his fancy to one subject, is not an agreeable entertainment. He never will write any more; and never should have wrote at all, could he have slept a-nights. But he lies awake commonly; and to keep himself from tiring, he usually composed something, which he wrote down when he arose. He assures me, that he composes very slowly, and with great labour and difficulty.

He is naturally very modest, and even ignorant of his own superiority. His fire, which frequently rises in conversation, is gentle and temperate; he is never in the least arrogant and domineering, and is, indeed, one of the best bred men I ever knew. I shall give you such an instance of his modesty as must necessarily be sincere. When we were on the road, I recommended to him the learning of English, without which, I told him, he would never enjoy entire liberty, nor be fully independent, and at his own disposal. He was sensible I was in the right, and said, that he heard there were two English translations of his “Emile, or Treatise on Education;” he would get them as soon as he arrived in London; and as he knew the subject, he would have no other trouble, than to learn or guess the words: this would save him some pains in consulting the dictionary; and as he improved, it would amuse him to compare the translations and judge which was the best. Accordingly, soon after our arrival, I procured him the books, but he returned them in a few days, saying that they could be of no use to him. “What is the matter?” replied I. “I cannot endure them,” said he, “they are my own work; and ever since I delivered my books to the press, I never could open them, or read a page of them without disgust.” “That is strange,” said I, “I wonder the good reception they have met with from the world has not put you more in conceit with them.” “Why,” said he, “if I were to count suffrages, there are perhaps more against them than for them.” “But,” rejoined I, “it is impossible but the style, and eloquence, and ornaments must please you.” “To tell the truth,” said he, “I am not displeased with myself in that particular: but I still dread, that my writings are good for nothing at the bottom, and that all my theories are full of extravagance. Je crains toujours que je pèche par le fond, et que tous mes systèmes ne sont que des extravagances.” You see that this is judging of himself with the utmost severity, and censuring his writings on the side where they are most exposed to criticism. No feigned modesty is ever capable of this courage. I never heard —— reproach himself with the —— : nobody ever heard you express any remorse, for having put Ossian on the same footing with Homer!

Have I tired you, or will you have any more anecdotes of this singular personage? I think I hear you desire me to go on. He attempted once to justify to me the moral of his New Heloisa, which, he knew, was blamed, as instructing young people in the art of gratifying their passions, under the cover of virtue, and noble refined sentiments. “You may observe,” said he “that my Julia is faithful to her husband’s bed, though she is seduced from her duty during her single state; but this last circumstance can be of no consequence in France, where all the young ladies are shut up in convents, and have it not in their power to transgress: it might, indeed, have a bad effect in a Protestant country.” But notwithstanding this reflection, he told me, that he has wrote a continuation of his “Emilius,” which may soon be published. He there attempts to show the effect of his plan of education, by representing Emilius in all the most trying situations, and still extricating himself with courage and virtue. Among the rest, he discovers that Sophia, the amiable, the virtuous, the estimable Sophia, is unfaithful to his bed, which fatal accident he bears with a manly superior spirit. “In this work,” added he, “I have endeavoured to represent Sophia in such a light that she will appear equally amiable, equally virtuous, and equally estimable, as if she had no such frailty.” “You take a pleasure, I see,” said I, “to combat with difficulties in all your works.” “Yes,” said he, “I hate marvellous and supernatural *events* in novels. The only thing that can give pleasure in such performances is to place the personages in situations difficult and singular.” Thus, you see, nothing remains for him but to write a book for the instruction of widows! unless perhaps he imagines that they can learn their lesson without instruction. Adieu, dear doctor; you say that you sometimes read my letters to our common friends; but you must read this only to the initiated.

Almost the only other matter which appears conspicuously in Hume’s correspondence during his intercourse with Rousseau, is the death of a dear friend, often mentioned in his previous letters — Dr. Jardine. He was a man of strong judgment, and much sarcastic wit; but his articles in *The Edinburgh Review* of 1755, are almost the only specimens of his ability which he has left to posterity. He was born in Dumfries-shire on 3d January, 1716, and he was minister of the Tron Church parish when he died. The death was sudden; and Hume, overlooking the calamitous consequences of such events to surviving relatives, and in harmony with the opinions he had expressed on death in a still more appalling form, seems to have considered its suddenness as fortunate. He thus writes to Blair, on 5th June.

"I cannot begin my letter without lamenting most sincerely the death of our friend Dr. Jardine. I do not aggravate it by the circumstance of its being sudden, for that is very desirable. But surely we shall ever regret the loss of a very pleasant companion, and of a very friendly honest man. It makes a blank which you must all feel, and which I in particular will sensibly feel, when I come amongst you. I need not ask you whether the miscreants of the opposite party do not rejoice, for I take it for granted they do."

CHAPTER XV.

1766-1767. Æt. 55-56.

Rousseau at Wooton — Mr. Davenport — Negotiations as to Rousseau’s pension — Origin and rise of his excitement against Hume — Proper method of viewing the dispute — Incidents illustrative of Rousseau’s state of mind — His charges against Hume — Smith’s opinion — Opinion of the French friends — Hume’s conduct in the publication of the papers — Voltaire — Rousseau’s flight and wanderings — Hume’s subsequent conduct to him.

The place where Rousseau found a retreat, was the mansion of Wooton in Derbyshire, surrounded by scenery, not unlike that which he had left behind him in the Jura. It was a late addition to the extensive ancestral estates of its proprietor, Mr. Davenport of Davenport. How successful Hume had been, in finding a man of generous, warm, kindly nature, to be the protector of his exiled friend, some letters from Mr. Davenport, printed in the course of this narrative will attest.

That Rousseau might be induced to live in his house, it was necessary that Mr. Davenport should agree to accept of a sum of money in the shape of board, and he good-humouredly conceded to Hume, that the amount should be fixed at £30 a-year. “If it be possible,” says Hume, “for a man to live without occupation, without books, without society, and without sleep, he will not quit this wild and solitary place; where all the circumstances which he ever required, seem to concur for the purpose of making him happy. But I dread the weakness and inquietude natural to every man, and, above all, to a man of his character. I should not be surprised that he had soon quitted this retreat.” It appears that Mr. Davenport intended, if Rousseau became attached to Wooton, to leave him a life lease of the house.

Rousseau reached Wooton about the middle of March. On the 22d he wrote to his *cher Patron* Hume, informing him that his new place of residence was in every way delightful; and that its charms were enhanced by the reflection, that he owed all the happiness of his new position to his dear friend. Doubtless Hume, who must now have been a little tired of the caprices which had so constantly baffled his friendly exertions, felt this acknowledgment to be very gratifying. On the 29th he received a letter, still friendly and grateful, but not quite so warm, in which Rousseau, while he complains of the inconvenience of not being understood by the servants, congratulates himself on his ignorance of the English language, as saving him from the annoyance of communication with his neighbours.

While all seemed thus serene, dark thoughts were gathering in the exile's mind: and if Hume, relieved of his troublesome duties, and probably satisfied with his own conduct, had known the nicer tests of the state of that variable and tempestuous temper, he might have calculated, by some indications, that the storm was about to burst. The letter of Horace Walpole had, for some time, been lying at the bottom of Rousseau's mind, not forgotten, though hidden from view; and it seems to have formed the nucleus round which his diseased imaginations gathered, and put themselves into shape. On the 7th of April, Rousseau sent a letter to the editor of the *St. James's Chronicle* , in which it had appeared, denouncing it as a forgery concocted in Paris, and saying that it rent and afflicted his heart to say, that the impostor had his accomplices in England. That it was not then, or for many weeks before, that he first became acquainted with this *jeu d'esprit*, is clear from a letter to Madame de Boufflers, of 18th January, in which he states, that Hume had just informed him of its existence. He appears to have then attributed it to Voltaire. He afterwards imputed it, with great confidence, to D'Alembert; and the ultimate discovery, that it was not written by any literary rival and conspirator, but by an English gentleman partial to such wicked amusements, appears to have been the most galling circumstance connected with it.

It seems to have been believed, by some of those who knew Rousseau's character, that his brooding over Walpole's letter would have been insufficient to cause the commotions that followed, without the malicious assistance of Mademoiselle Le Vasseur. This woman, who seems to have possessed all the vices to which her sex is liable, without one of its virtues, — who had just enough of intellect to assist the cunning of her depraved heart, — is said to have had an influence over the philosopher of education, of which it is certainly difficult to credit the extent. It will be seen, in the letters of Mr. Davenport, that she had a dispute with his venerable housekeeper, concerning a kettle and cinders! What was the exact nature of the dispute, is now, it may be feared, buried in eternal oblivion; and we are left to conjecture whither an influential cause in a literary quarrel, which interested all Europe, may possibly have been a kettle and cinders. On the 12th of May, Rousseau wrote to General Conway, acknowledging the king's goodness in bestowing on him a pension; saying he thought himself armed against all disasters, but that a new and unimagined one had arisen, which so troubled his spirit, that he had not the necessary presence of mind to decide on the conduct he ought to adopt as to the pension. He expressed, at the same time, sorrow that he could not publicly acknowledge his obligations. This appeared to Hume and Conway to be an intimation, that the pension would not be accepted if it were to be secret.

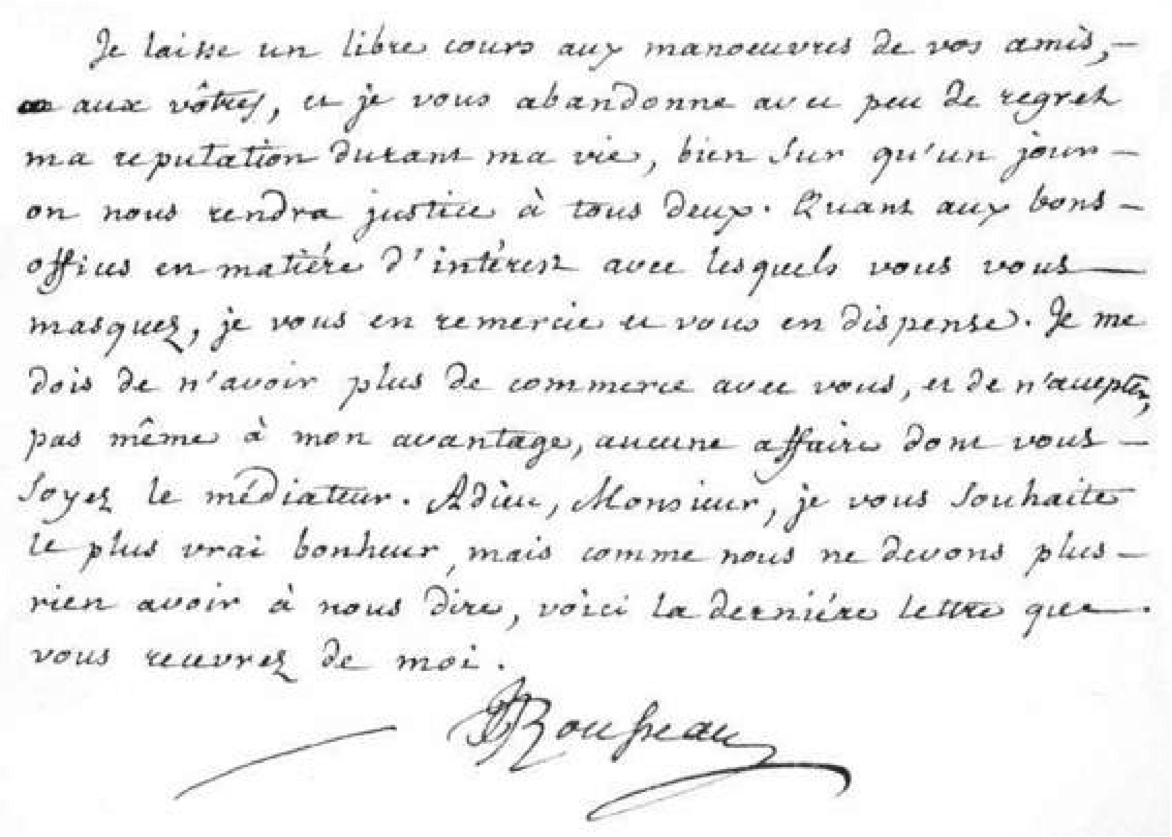
While his mind was thus blackening within, he preserved a cheerful exterior; and Mr. Davenport wrote to Hume, on 14th May, from Wooton: "I came on Friday, and had the satisfaction of finding M. Rousseau in perfect health. He seems to like the place; amuses himself with walking when the weather is fair; if raining, he plays upon the harpsichord and writes: is very sociable, and an excellent companion." There is evidence, however, that he had entertained all his evil thoughts of Hume at a much earlier period. His second letter to him, in the capacity of *Cher Patron*, is dated, as we have mentioned, 29th March. On the 31st he wrote to M. D'Ivernois, saying that he found Hume allied with his most dangerous enemies, and if he were not a rascal, he himself would owe him many reparations for unjust suspicions entertained of him.

Resolved to bring the matter of the pension to a conclusion, Hume wrote to Rousseau thus: —

"Lisle Street, Leicester Fields,
June 16, 1766.

"As I have not received any answer from you, sir, I conclude that you persevere in the resolution of refusing all marks of his majesty's goodness, as long as they must remain a secret. I have, therefore, applied to General Conway to have this condition removed; and I have been so fortunate as to obtain his promise, that he would speak to the king for that purpose. It will only be requisite, said he, that we know previously from M. Rousseau, whether he would accept of a pension publicly granted him, that his majesty may not be exposed to a second refusal. He gave me authority to write to you on the subject; and I beg to hear your resolution as soon as possible. If you give your consent, which I earnestly entreat you to do, I know that I can depend on the good offices of the Duke of Richmond to second General Conway's application; so that I have no doubt of success. I am, my dear sir, yours, with great sincerity."

This brought on the first gust of the storm. On 23d June, Rousseau wrote his celebrated letter, beginning with the observation, that his silence, interpreted by Hume's conscience, must have convinced the latter that the whole of his horrible designs were discovered. In this letter nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the frantic bitterness of the language, and the elaborate neatness of the penmanship, which, if handwriting conveyed a notion of character, would represent a calm, contented mind, gratifying itself by the exercise of the petty art of caligraphy. A fac-simile of the concluding paragraph is given, that the reader may have an opportunity of marking this singular contrast.



Je laisse un libre cours aux manoeuvres de vos amis, —
aux vôtres, et je vous abandonne avec peu de regret
ma reputation durant ma vie, bien sur qu'un jour —
on nous rendra justice à tous deux. Quant aux bons —
offices en matière d'interest avec lesquels vous vous —
masquez, je vous en remercie et vous en dispense. Je me
dois de n'avoir plus de commerce avec vous, et de n'accepter,
pas même à mon avantage, aucune affaire dont vous —
soyez le médiateur. Adieu, Monsieur, je vous souhaite
le plus vrai bonheur, mais comme nous ne devons plus —
rien avoir à nous dire, voici la dernière lettre que —.
vous recevrez de moi.

Rousseau

Hume, now thoroughly angry, wrote as follows: —

Hume *to* Rousseau.

"June 26, 1766.

“As I am conscious of having ever acted towards you the most friendly part, of having always given you the most tender and the most active proofs of sincere affection, you may judge of my extreme surprise on perusing your epistle. Such violent accusations, confined altogether to generalities, it is as impossible to answer, as it is impossible to comprehend them. But affairs cannot, must not, remain on that footing. I shall charitably suppose that some infamous calumniator has belied me to you. But, in that case, it is your duty, and, I am persuaded, it will be your inclination, to give me an opportunity of detecting him, and of justifying myself; which can only be done by your mentioning the particulars of which I am accused. You say, that I myself know that I have been false to you; but I say it loudly, and will say it to the whole world, that I know the contrary; that I know my friendship towards you has been unbounded and uninterrupted; and that though I have given you instances of it, which have been universally remarked both in France and England, the public as yet are acquainted only with the smallest part of it. I demand, that you name to me the man who dares assert the contrary; and, above all, I demand, that he shall mention any one particular in which I have been wanting to you. You owe this to me; you owe it to yourself; you owe it to truth, and honour, and justice, and to every thing deemed sacred among men. As an innocent man — for I will not say, as your friend; I will not say, as your benefactor; but I repeat it, as an innocent man, I claim the privilege of proving my innocence, and of refuting any scandalous falsehood which may have been invented against me. Mr. Davenport, to whom I have sent a copy of your letter, and who will read this before he delivers it, will, I am confident, second my demand, and tell you that nothing can be more equitable. Happily I have preserved the letter you wrote me after your arrival at Wooton; and you there express, in the strongest terms, in terms indeed too strong, your satisfaction in my poor endeavours to serve you. The little epistolary intercourse, which afterwards passed between us, has been all employed on my side to the most friendly purposes. Tell me, then, what has since given you offence. Tell me, of what I am accused. Tell me the man who accuses me. Even after you have fulfilled all these conditions to my satisfaction, and to that of Mr. Davenport, you will still have great difficulty to justify your employing such outrageous terms towards a man, with whom you have been so intimately connected, and who was entitled, on many accounts, to have been treated by you with more regard and decency.

"Mr. Davenport knows the whole transaction about your pension, because I thought it necessary that the person who had undertaken your settlement should be fully acquainted with your circumstances; lest he should be tempted to perform towards you concealed acts of generosity, which, if they accidentally came to your knowledge, might give you some grounds of offence. I am, sir," &c.

In here exhibiting a few of the prominent features of the quarrel between Hume and Rousseau, there is no intention of entering on a defence of Hume, or a full examination of the conduct of the parties. Viewing it as a picturesque incident in literary history, the reader will probably feel an interest in such new light as may be thrown upon it on the present occasion; but, it is presumed that few who have made themselves acquainted with the material circumstances of the dispute, as they have been already made known, will expect any thing to be said that can alter their appreciation of the conduct of the parties. Where there are personal disputes, there is no cause so hopelessly bad as to be without partisans; and when no other motive comes into action, a feeling of generosity towards one who seems to have forfeited the good opinion of his kind, calls forth a few vindicators and supporters. It was natural that Rousseau, a man of great genius, whose writings had produced a prodigious influence on his age, — one who had shown, in many instances, the outward manifestations of a kind unselfish disposition, and who had discarded, with an air of magnanimous scorn, all the grovelling ties that bind the human creature to the earth on which he crawls, — should have champions and supporters in any dispute in which he might be involved, be his conduct what it might. Thus he had a few vindicators, chiefly of the female sex, while he lived: but gradually, when feelings of personal sympathy had died away, the conduct of the disputants ceased to be weighed against each other in the same scales. People did not inquire which of them had acted more fairly and justly than the other; but, putting Rousseau's conduct out of the question as a criterion, they asked, whether that of Hume was kind and magnanimous towards the unfortunate monomaniac? Although this view is plainly to be traced in the sentiments of those who have fugitively touched on the dispute, it is to be gathered more from the general tone of their remarks, than from any direct avowal of belief, that Rousseau was a monomaniac. There is a majesty in genius, that makes us reluctant thus to ally it with the debasement of the human intellect. Yet, too often, some portion of the most brilliant mind is thus eclipsed, though the brightness of what is clear prevents our seeing easily the blackened spot. In Rousseau's case, there has been, perhaps, a disinclination to admit the "plea of insanity," on account of the wonderful practical sagacity that accompanied his aberrations. Though apparently surveying the world with a sick and careless eye, he occasionally penetrated into the depths of the human heart, and marked its secrets, with an accuracy that made the practised and systematic observer's survey seem but a superficial glance. He had a mind at times eminently practical, and suited to estimate men's conduct and character: and thus appearing before the world, there has been much hesitation to pronounce, that the sincerity of insanity accompanied all his vile charges against a man whose heart could not have been for one moment visited by the atrocities of which he is accused.

It is clear, that whatever had been Hume's conduct in the affair, Rousseau's rage was a storm predestined to burst upon him. Its elements were in the mind of "the self-torturing sophist," not in the conduct of any other person; and whoever was the object nearest to his thoughts at the moment, as being most associated with the circumstances in which he was placed, had to stand the shock. In this view, Hume's conduct is no more to be tested by that of Rousseau, than the keeper's by that of his patient. We are thus rid of the unpleasant employment of comparing things which cannot bear comparison; and of the sickening task of enumerating instances of kindness, attachment, persevering good offices, and charitable interpretations of conduct on the one side, met by black ingratitude, contempt, and deadly injury on the other.

If we look for that over-excited propensity which may have caused this mental disease, it appears, beyond doubt, that it was vanity. All Rousseau's avowed misfortunes are the calamities of celebrity. At one time he is the victim of princes and prime ministers; at another, of an assembled clergy; at another, of half the learned men of Europe. That he is neglected and forgotten is never among his ostensible complaints; though there is good reason to believe that it was at the bottom of his most conspicuous fits of fury. The English people, though they were at first somewhat curious about the remarkable stranger, did not incommode themselves about him, and obstinately abstained from following him into the wilderness. In his long letter of charges, he cannot help bitterly remarking the apathy of the public;

but he states it as an accusation against Hume, whom he supposes to have said, like Flavius,

I'll about
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
These growing feathers, pluck'd from Cæsar's wing,
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,
Who else would soar above the view of men,
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

Had the solitudes of Wooton been peopled by multitudes anxious to catch a passing glance of the "apostle of affliction," he would doubtless have let loose his half-appeased discontent in some querulous letters about the impossibility of his finding repose and solitude; but he would not have courted such a conflict as he rushed into in the bitterness of his solitude. Although his character stands without parallel in its own vast proportions, it is not without abundance of exemplifications on a smaller scale. There are few who have not, in their journey through life, encountered one or more small Rousseaus, in men of ravenous and insatiable vanity, who, unlike the ordinary good-natured vain men, are perpetually rejecting the incense offered to their appetite, and demanding some new form of worship. In these, as in the chimney-piece models of celebrated statues, may we view the proportions of the great self-tormenter's mind; and when it is found that the peculiarity is generally accompanied with some observable amount of intellectual acquirements, which place the individual a degree above those who surround him, the resemblance is the more complete. Vanity being its source, the shape assumed by his monomania was a dread of conspiracies in all shapes; and he was as sincere a believer in their existence, as any unfortunate inhabitant of bedlam has ever been in the creations of his diseased mind.

Hume had difficulty in extracting an answer to his letter of 26th June; and probably it would not have been opened without the intervention of Mr. Davenport. It was one of Rousseau's whims for some time not to receive any letters; he said they were one of the methods by which his enemies had persecuted him. On his first arrival he was to open none but those which passed through the hands of his *Cher Patron*; a convenient arrangement, as it afterwards enabled him to accuse Hume of tampering with his correspondence.

Two letters were received from Mr. Davenport, before Rousseau drew up his charge.

Mr. Davenport *to* Hume.

Davenport, June 30, 1766.

Dear Sir, — The receipt of your two last gave me much uneasiness, which was augmented by some letters received yesterday from Rousseau, along with yours, directed for me at Wooton. Surely there must have been some excessive great mistakes. It appears to me a heap of confusion, of which I can make neither head nor tail. His letter to you is perfectly astonishing: never any thing was so furious; so — I protest I don't know what to call it! I long to see him: he certainly will tell some reason or other that could induce him to write in that manner. Till I have seen him I can give no sort of answer to your queries, as he never spoke one syllable to me about any difference at all. I can't, possibly, before Saturday's post; as in this part of the country we have only three days in a week to send letters to town. You desired me to burn the duplicate after reading. That signifies nothing, for I can send you the other which I received yesterday from Wooton. Good God, he must be most excessively out of the way about this pension! In short, I have not patience to add one word more, till I hear what he can possibly have to say; and then I'll immediately acquaint you.

I can't help being troubled at seeing your uneasiness, and will with great pleasure do all in my power to assist in freeing you from it; at least I'll do my best endeavours. I am, your most obedient humble servant,

R. Davenport.

6th July, 1766.

Dear Sir, — I went over to Wooton on Tuesday: had a long conference with Mr. Rousseau on the subject of your last letters; gave into his hands yours addressed to him, (which he had not read before:) showed him those I received from you; and in the most earnest manner insisted upon his giving you an open answer to all your questions, which I told him you had certainly a right to ask, and he could not have any pretence whatever to refuse. His spirits seemed vastly fluttered. However, he told me a long history of the whole affair. I said, that as my knowledge of the French language was very imperfect, I might easily misrepresent things, so begged him to write down the whole matter. Before he began his discourse, I could not help speaking a deal to him on the subject of the pension, and expressed my astonishment at his even ever having had the least thought of refusing the favours of the greatest king in the world. To my infinite surprise, he directly returned this answer, That he never had refused, or any thing like it; spoke with the greatest respect and veneration of his majesty, and with all sort of acknowledgments of gratitude to General Conway, &c. You may well imagine my surprise increased. He then began his story: but that I entirely leave to his pen, as he has faithfully promised to perform. I am really sorry for him; he's uneasy, frets perpetually, and looks terribly. 'Tis almost impossible to conceive the oddness of his extreme sensibility; so that I conclude, when he's guilty of an error, his nerves are more in fault than his heart. Things vex him to the utmost extent of vexation, which would not even move such a dull soul as mine is. In short, I perceive his disorder is jealousy: he thinks you are fond of some *savans hommes*, whom he unfortunately calls his enemies. It will give me the greatest satisfaction to hear that you have received a satisfactory answer, and that every thing is set right again.

At last came the full outpouring of the long-treasured wrath, in a letter dated the 10th of July, as long as an ordinary pamphlet, and penned with the same neat precision as its predecessor. The reader will not expect a document so well known and easily accessible to be reprinted; and an abridgment would fail to give any notion of the rabid eloquence with which the most paltry incidents are made to assume the appearance of portentous charges; until, through vehemence of expression and multitude of powerful words, they seem for the moment to acquire substantial shape. Many of the charges contained in this "indictment" have been already alluded to. The document begins with a statement of its author's candour, and hatred of every kind of artifice; and no one can read the charges which follow, monstrously absurd as they are, without seeing that they are made in the perfect sincerity of a mind that saw all things through its own diseased medium. The following is one of the substantive charges: —

I was informed that the son of the quack Tronchin, my most mortal enemy, was not only the friend of Mr. Hume, and under his protection, but that they both lodged in the same house; and when Mr. Hume found that I knew this, he imparted it in confidence to me; assuring me that the son by no means resembled the father. I lodged a few nights myself, together with my governante, in the same house; and from the kind of reception with which we were honoured by the landladies, who are his friends, I judged in what manner either Mr. Hume, or that man, who, as he said, was by no means like his father, must have spoken to them both of her and me.

All these facts put together, added to a certain appearance of things on the whole, insensibly gave me an uneasiness, which I rejected with horror.

The description of the following scene must have been, to those who knew Hume personally, irresistibly ludicrous. The picture of the phlegmatic reserve of English manners, is made perfect by contrast. It appears from Hume's letter, that the scene arose out of the dispute about the return chaise.

One evening, after supper, as we were sitting silent by the fireside, I caught his eyes intently fixed on me, as indeed happened very often; and that in a manner of which it is very difficult to give an idea. At that time he gave me a steadfast, piercing look, mingled with a sneer, which greatly disturbed me. To get rid of my embarrassment, I endeavoured to look full at him in my turn; but, in fixing my eyes upon his, I felt the most inexpressible terror, and was soon obliged to turn them away. The speech and physiognomy of the good David are those of an honest man; but where, great God! did this honest man borrow those eyes which he fixes on his friends?

The impression of this look remained with me, and gave me much uneasiness. My trouble increased even to a degree of fainting; and if I had not been relieved by a flood of tears, I must have been suffocated. Presently after this I was seized with the most violent remorse: I even despised myself; till at length, in a transport, which I still remember with delight, I sprang on his neck, and embraced him eagerly; while, almost choked with sobbing, and bathed in tears, I cried out, in broken accents, “No, no, David Hume cannot be treacherous; if he be not the best of men, he must be the basest.” David Hume politely returned my embraces, and gently tapping me on the back, repeated several times, in a placid tone, “Why, what, my dear sir! Nay, my dear sir! Oh, my dear sir!” He said nothing more. I felt my heart yearn within me. We went to bed; and I set out the next day for the country.

There is another charge against Hume, of once muttering in his sleep the words *Je tiens J. J. Rousseau*; which he did not deny, saying, that he could not feel certain as to what he might or might not have done when asleep, though he doubted if it was his practice to dream in French. The proffered hospitalities and kindnesses of Hume are a running charge throughout; wound up with the conclusion, that as he must have seen that Rousseau was estranged from him, “If he supposed that in such circumstances I should have accepted his services, he must have supposed me to have been an infamous scoundrel. It was then in behalf of a man whom he supposed to be a scoundrel that he so warmly solicited a pension from his majesty.”

Hume’s answer to this charge was as follows:

Hume *to* Rousseau.

Lisle Street, Leicester Fields, July 22, 1766.

Sir, — I shall only answer one article of your long letter: it is that which regards the conversation we had the evening before your departure. Mr. Davenport had contrived a good-natured artifice, to make you believe that a retour chaise was ready to set out for Wooton; and I believe he caused an advertisement be put in the papers, in order the better to deceive you. His purpose only was to save you some expenses in the journey, which I thought a laudable project; though I had no hand either in contriving or conducting it. You entertained, however, a suspicion of his design, while we were sitting alone by my fireside; and you reproached me with concurring in it. I endeavoured to pacify you, and to divert the discourse; but to no purpose. You sat sullen, and was either silent, or made me very peevish answers. At last you rose up, and took a turn or two about the room, when all of a sudden, and to my great surprise, you clapped yourself on my knee, threw your arms about my neck, kissed me with seeming ardour, and bedewed my face with tears. You exclaimed, “My dear friend, can you ever pardon this folly? After all the pains you have taken to serve me, after the numberless instances of friendship you have given me, here I reward you with this ill-humour and sullenness. But your forgiveness of me will be a new instance of your friendship; and I hope you will find at bottom, that my heart is not unworthy of it.”

I was very much affected, I own; and I believe a very tender scene passed between us. You added, by way of compliment no doubt, that though I had many better titles to recommend me to posterity, yet perhaps my uncommon attachment to a poor, unhappy, and persecuted man, would not be altogether overlooked.

This incident was somewhat remarkable; and it is impossible that either you or I could so soon have forgot it. But you have had the assurance to tell me the story twice, in a manner so different, or rather so opposite, that when I persist, as I do, in this account, it necessarily follows, that either you are, or I am, a liar. You imagine, perhaps, that because the incident passed privately without a witness, the question will lie between the credibility of your assertion and of mine. But you shall not have this advantage or disadvantage, whichever you are pleased to term it. I shall produce against you other proofs, which will put the matter beyond controversy.

First, You are not aware, that I have a letter under your hand, which is tolerably irreconcilable with your account, and confirms mine.

Secondly, I told the story the next day, or the day after, to Mr. Davenport, with a view of preventing any such good-natured artifices for the future. He surely remembers it.

Thirdly, As I thought the story much to your honour, I told it to several of my friends here. I even wrote it to Madame de Boufflers at Paris. I believe no one will imagine that I was preparing beforehand an apology, in case of a rupture with you; which, of all human events, I should then have thought the most incredible, especially as we were separated, almost for ever, and I still continued to render you the most essential services.

Fourthly, The story, as I tell it, is consistent and rational: there is not common sense in your account. What! because sometimes, when absent in thought, (a circumstance common enough with men whose minds are intensely occupied,) I have a fixed look or stare, you suspect me to be a traitor, and you have the assurance to tell me of such black and ridiculous suspicions! For you do not even pretend that before you left London you had any other solid grounds of suspicion against me.

I shall enter into no detail with regard to your letter: you yourself well know that all the other articles of it are without foundation. I shall only add in general, that I enjoyed about a month ago an uncommon pleasure, in thinking that, in spite of many difficulties, I had, by assiduity and care, and even beyond my most sanguine expectations, provided for your repose, honour, and fortune. But that pleasure was soon imbittered, by finding that you had voluntarily and wantonly thrown away all those advantages, and was become the declared enemy of your own repose, fortune, and honour: I cannot be surprised after this that you are my enemy. Adieu, and for ever.

Hume did not profess to submit to these attacks with the meekness of the dove, as a few letters to his friends will show. Of the two following letters to Blair, the one was written before, the other after the reception of Rousseau’s “indictment.”

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

“Lisle Street, 1st July, 1766.

“You will be surprised, dear Doctor, when I desire you most earnestly never in your life to show to any mortal creature the letters I wrote you with regard to Rousseau. He is surely the blackest and most atrocious villain, beyond comparison, that now exists in the world, and I am heartily ashamed of any thing I ever wrote in his favour. I know you will pity me when I tell you that I am afraid I must publish this to the world in a pamphlet, which must contain an account of the whole transaction between us. My only comfort is, that the matter will be so clear as not to leave to any mortal the smallest possibility of doubt. You know how dangerous any controversy on a disputable point would be with a man of his talents. I know not where the miscreant will now retire to, in order to hide his head from this infamy. I am,” &c.

“15th July, 1766.

“Dear Doctor, — I go in a few hours to Woburn; so can only give you the outline of my history. Through many difficulties I obtained a pension for Rousseau. The application was made with his own consent and knowledge. I write him, that all is happily completed, and he need only draw for the money. He answers me, that I am a rogue and a rascal; and have brought him into England merely to dishonour him. I demand the reason of this strange language; and Mr. Davenport, the gentleman with whom he lives, tells him that he must necessarily satisfy me. To-day I received a letter from him, which is perfect frenzy. It would make a good eighteen-penny pamphlet; and I fancy he intends to publish it. He there tells me, that D’Alembert, Horace Walpole, and I, had, from the first, entered into a combination to ruin him, and had ruined him. That the first suspicion of my treachery arose in him while we lay together in the same room of an inn in France. I there spoke in my sleep, and betrayed my intention of ruining him. That young Tronchin lodged in the same house with me at London; and Annie Elliot looked very coldly at him as he went by her in the passage. That I am also in a close confederacy with Lord Lyttelton, who, he hears, is his mortal enemy. That the English nation were very fond of him on his first arrival; but that Horace Walpole and I had totally alienated them from him. He owns, however, that his belief of my treachery went no higher than suspicion, while he was in London; but it rose to certainty after he arrived in the country; for that there were several publications in the papers against him, which could have proceeded from nobody but me, or my confederate, Horace Walpole. The rest is all of a like strain, intermixed with many lies and much malice. I own that I was very anxious about this affair, but this letter has totally relieved me. I write in a hurry, merely to satisfy your curiosity. I hope soon to see you, and am," &c.

There could have been no incident better calculated than this to create a sensation in the coteries of Paris. Immediately on receiving the first angry letter, Hume sent an indignant account of the ingratitude and malevolence of Rousseau to the Baron D'Holbach, which proved a delightfully exciting morsel to a party assembled at his house; for the baron had told him, from the beginning, that he was warming a serpent in his bosom. The very rapid celebrity which the story received does not seem to have been anticipated by Hume, and he says, apologetically, to Madame de Boufflers,— "I wrote, indeed, to Baron D'Holbach, without either recommending or expecting secrecy: but I thought this story, like others, would be told to eight or ten people; in a week or two, twenty or thirty more might hear it, and it would require three months before it would reach you at Pougues. I little imagined that a private story, told to a private gentleman, could run over a whole kingdom in a moment. If the King of England had declared war against the King of France, it could not have been more suddenly the subject of conversation." Between the rupture and the publication of the narrative regarding it, Hume seems to have written very abundantly on the subject, to his friends in Paris. The following is one of his letters: —

Hume *to the* Abbé Le Blanc.

Lisle Street, Leicester Fields, 12th August, 1766.

My dear Sir, — I have used the freedom to send to you, in two packets, by this post, the whole train of my correspondence with Rousseau, connected by a short narrative. I hope you will have leisure to peruse it. The story is incredible, as well as inconceivable, were it not founded on such authentic documents. Surely never was there so much wickedness and madness combined in one human creature; nor did ever any one meet with such a return for such signal services as those I performed towards him. But I am told that he used to say to Duclos, and others, that he hated all those to whom he owed any obligation. In that case I am fully entitled to his animosity.

I am really at a loss what use to make of this collection. The story, I am told, is very much the object of conversation at Paris. Though my conduct has been entirely innocent, or rather, indeed, very meritorious, it happens, no doubt, as is usual in such ruptures, that I will bear a part of the blame;

from which a publication of these papers would entirely free me: yet I own I have an antipathy and reluctance to appeal to the public; and fear that such a publication would be the only blame I could incur in this affair. You know that nobody's judgment weighs farther with me than yours: think a little of the matter. If M$^{me.}$ De Dupré were in town, I would desire her to give these papers a perusal, and tell me her opinions. Unhappily M. Trudaine would only understand the French part, which is by far the most considerable. What would his friend Fontenelle have done in this situation?

I am as great a lover of peace as he, and have kept myself as free from all literary quarrels; but surely neither he nor any other person was ever engaged in a controversy with a man of so much malice, — of such a profligate disposition to lies, and such great talents. It is nothing to dispute my style or my abilities as an historian or philosopher; my books ought to answer for themselves, or they are not worth the defending; — to fifty writers who have attacked me on this head, I never made the least reply. But this is a different case; imputations are here thrown on my morals and my conduct; and, though my case is so clear as not to admit of the least controversy, yet it is only clear to those who know it; and I am uncertain how far the public in Paris are in this case. At London, a publication would be regarded as entirely superfluous.

I must desire you to send these papers to D'Alembert after you have read them: M. Turgot will get them from him. I should desire that *he* saw them before he sets out for his government.

Does not M$^{me.}$ de Montigny laugh at me, that I should have sent her, but a few weeks ago, the portrait of Rousseau, done from an original in my possession, and should now send you these papers, which prove him to be one of the worst men, perhaps, that ever existed, if his frenzy be not some apology for him. I beg my compliments to M. and M$^{me.}$ Fourqueux; and am, with great truth and sincerity, my dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant.

To Adam Smith, who was then in Paris, he wrote the following letter, without date: —

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"You may see in M. D'Alembert's hands, the whole narrative of my affair with Rousseau, along with the whole train of correspondence. Pray, is it not a nice problem, whether he be not an arrant villain, or an arrant madman, or both. The last is my opinion, but the villain seems to me to predominate most in his character. I shall not publish them unless forced, which you will own to be a very great degree of self-denial. My conduct in this affair would do me a great deal of honour, and his would blast him for ever, and blast his writings at the same time; for as these have been exalted much above their merit, when his personal character falls, they would of course fall below their merit. I am, however, apprehensive that in the end I shall be obliged to publish. About two or three days ago, there was an article in the *St. James's Chronicle* , copied from the *Brussels Gazette* , which pointed at this dispute. This may probably put Rousseau in a rage. He will publish something, which may oblige me for my own honour to give the narrative to the public. There will be no reason to dread a long train of disagreeable controversy. One publication begins and ends it on my side. Pray, tell me your judgment of my work, if it deserves the name. Tell D'Alembert I make him absolute master, to retrench or alter what he thinks proper, in order to suit it to the latitude of Paris.

"Were you and I together, dear Smith, we should shed tears at present for the death of poor Sir James Macdonald. We could not possibly have suffered a greater loss, than in that valuable young man. I am," &c.

There is a letter by Smith on the subject, kind and honest. It must be kept in view, that it was written not only before the series of documents, mentioned in Hume's letter, had been sent to France, and before the French friends had recommended Hume to publish, but before the date of Rousseau's indictment. We shall, hereafter, find that Smith seems to have withdrawn his objection to the publication.

Adam Smith *to* Hume.

Paris, 6th July, 1766.

My dear Friend, — I am thoroughly convinced that Rousseau is as great a rascal as you and as every man here believes him to be; yet let me beg of you, not to think of publishing any thing to the world, upon the very great impertinence which he has been guilty of to you. By refusing the pension which you had the goodness to solicit for him with his own consent, he may have thrown, by the baseness of his proceedings, some little ridicule upon you in the eyes of the court and the ministry. Stand this ridicule, expose his brutal letter, but without giving it out of your own hand, so that it may never be printed; and if you can, laugh at yourself, and I shall pawn my life, that before three weeks are at an end, this little affair, which at present gives you so much uneasiness, shall be understood to do you as much honour as any thing that has ever happened to you. By endeavouring to unmask before the public this hypocritical pedant, you run the risk of disturbing the tranquillity of your whole life. By letting him alone, he cannot give you a fortnight's uneasiness. To write against him is, you may depend upon it, the very thing he wishes you to do. He is in danger of falling into obscurity in England, and he hopes to make himself considerable, by provoking an illustrious adversary. He will have a great party: the Church, the Whigs, the Jacobites, the whole wise English nation, who will love to mortify a Scotchman, and to applaud a man who has refused a pension from the king. It is not unlikely, too, that they may pay him very well for having refused it, and that even he may have had in view this compensation. Your whole friends here wish you not to write — the Baron, D'Alembert, Madame Riccoboni, Mademoiselle Rianecourt, M. Turgot, &c. &c. M. Turgot, a friend every way worthy of you, desired me to recommend this advice to you in a particular manner, as his most earnest entreaty and opinion. He and I are both afraid that you are surrounded with evil counsellors, and that the advice of your English literati, who are themselves accustomed to publish all their little gossiping stories in newspapers, may have too much influence upon you. Remember me to Mr. Walpole, and believe me, &c.

Smith was thus in consultation on the subject with the excellent Turgot, who gave Hume his opinion at great length. On the 27th July, before he could have heard of the long "indictment," he wrote that he could trace the rage of Rousseau to two causes: first, Hume being the author of one of the sarcasms in Walpole's letter, a rumour which Turgot appears to have believed; and second, the interpreting the letter to Mr. Conway as a refusal of the pension, which it was not intended by Rousseau to be. If the latter was one of Rousseau's grievances, he did not make it a count in the indictment. Turgot was ignorant of the strength of provocation which Hume received. He says, that it is a mistake to suppose Rousseau's conduct the effect of deliberate design, — a view in which every one not in the vortex of the dispute must have coincided with him; and on the ground that no sensible person will believe that he is guilty of the charges his excited enemy may make against him, he advises Hume not to treat them seriously. He even hints that Hume should acknowledge that he misinterpreted the letter about the pension, and should endeavour to coax Rousseau back to good humour, as a public exposure would be unpleasant to both parties. On the 7th September, after having seen all the documents, he preserved the same tone in speaking of Rousseau; recommending forbearance towards him: but at the same time he expressed an opinion that Hume might find it necessary to publish a narrative of the transaction.

We find that Smith was also in communication with Madame de Boufflers, who wrote to Hume at considerable length, in the knowledge of the first angry letter, but not of the "indictment." She assumes a tone much the same as that of Turgot, when he wrote in the same circumstances. She expresses many regrets that Hume should have written so condemnatory a letter to the Baron D'Holbach. He is told that those who *profess* to be his friends in France will abet him, because he is proving himself to be a mere ordinary human being, instead of continuing to show his superiority to the common frailties of humanity. He is entreated to look compassionately on a man who has overwhelmed himself with calamities, and to treat one who is capable only of injuring himself with generous pity. While making these recommendations, she, as well as Turgot, believed that one of the sarcasms in Walpole's letter had been suggested by Hume. The same tone was taken up by Lord Marischal; who, writing on the 15th August from Potsdam, seems not to have perused the "indictment." "You did all in your power," says this kind old soldier, "to serve him; his écart afflicts me on his account more than yours, who have, I am sure, nothing to reproach yourself with. It will be good and humane in you, and like Le Bon David, not to answer."

D'Alembert was at first opposed to a publication, and to an exposure of the follies of the wise before "cette sotte bête appelée le public." So early, however, as the 21st of July, he communicates the solemn opinion of himself and other friends in Paris, that after the publicity which the dispute has acquired, it will be necessary for Hume to print a narrative. He states that this is the opinion of all intelligent people. He says at the same time, that he had been speaking with Adam Smith on the subject, and though his name is not among those of the committee who recommended the publication, it may be presumed that he had at length admitted it to be necessary.

In connexion with the letter from D'Alembert, Hume wrote thus to Walpole: —

Dear Sir, — When I came home last night, I found on my table a very long letter from D'Alembert, who tells me, that on receiving from me an account of my affair with Rousseau, he summoned a meeting of all my literary friends at Paris, and found them all unanimously of the same opinion with himself, and of a contrary opinion to me, with regard to my conduct. They all think I ought to give to the public a narrative of the whole. However, I persist still more closely in my first opinion, especially after receiving the last mad letter. D’Alembert tells me that it is of great importance for me to justify myself from having any hand in the letter from the King of Prussia. I am told by Crawford, that you had wrote it a fortnight before I left Paris, but did not show it to a mortal, for fear of hurting me; a delicacy of which I am very sensible. Pray recollect if it was so. Though I do not intend to publish, I am collecting all the original pieces, and I shall connect them by a concise narrative. It is necessary for me to have that letter and Rousseau’s answer. Pray, assist me in this work. About what time, do you think, were they printed? I am, &c.

Hume, afterwards, sent to Paris all the documents connected with Rousseau’s attack, to be published or not, at the discretion of his friends; and they were published. If it be asked how he permitted so cruel a thing to be done, the answer is, that he was human, and had been deeply injured; that he had a reputation to preserve, and did not consider himself bound to sacrifice it to the peace of his assailant. Rousseau had triumphantly written, hither and thither, that Hume dared not publish the “indictment.” He had said, that if he did not see David Hume exposed ere he died, he would cease to believe in Providence. He was occupied in writing his celebrated Confessions, and had significantly hinted to Hume that he would find himself pilloried there. It is possible to create an ideal image of a mind that would have calmly resisted all these impulses, and let the traducer proceed unnoticed in his frantic labours. It is probable that if he had adopted this course, Hume would in the end have been as completely absolved from the accusations of Rousseau, as he was by the publication of the accusation. Had he thus scorned to adopt the usual means of protecting his good name, his character would have appeared, to all who believed in his innocence, more magnanimous than it was. But it certainly would not have been so natural; and many of those who seemed to have expected that the metaphysician should be above the influence of ordinary human passions, appear to have forgotten, that there are few even of the men whose office it is to teach that those smitten on the one cheek should present the other, who would have shown even as much forbearance on the occasion as David Hume.

The editing of the French version of these documents was committed to Suard, the author of the *Mélanges de Littérature*. In answer to a letter of 2d November, announcing the publication, Hume wrote to him in the following terms, admitting, as the reader will perceive, that he had used harsh expressions, and approving of their being softened.

Hume *to* M. Suard.

I cannot sufficiently express, my dear sir, all the acknowledgments which I owe you for the pains you have taken in translating a work, which so little merited your attention, or the attention of the public. It is done entirely to my satisfaction; and the introduction in particular is wrote with great prudence and discretion in every point, except where your partiality to me appears too strongly. I accept of it, however, very willingly as a pledge of your friendship. You and M. D'Alembert did well in softening some expressions, especially in the notes; and I shall take care to follow these corrections in the English edition. My paper, indeed, was not wrote for the public eye; and nothing but a train of unforeseen accidents could have engaged me to give it to the press. I am not surprised, that those who do not consider nor weigh those circumstances, should blame this appeal to the public; but it is certain that if I had persevered in keeping silence, I should have passed for the guilty person, and those very people who blame me at present, would, with the appearance of reason, have thrown a much greater blame upon me. This whole adventure, I must regard as a misfortune in my life: and yet, even after all is past, when it is easy to correct any errors, I am not sensible that I can accuse myself of any imprudence; except in accepting of this man when he threw himself into my arms: and yet it would then have appeared cruel to refuse him. I am excusable for not expecting to meet with such a prodigy of pride and ferocity, because such a one never before existed. But after he had declared war against me in so violent a manner, it could not have been prudent in me to keep silence towards my friends, and to wait till he should find a proper time to stab my reputation. From my friends, the affair passed to the public, who interested themselves more in a private story, than it was possible to imagine; and rendered it quite necessary to lay the whole before them. Yet, after all, if any one be pleased to think, that by greater prudence I could have avoided this disagreeable extremity, I am very willing to submit. It is not surely the first imprudence I have been guilty of.

Among other distinctions, the publication of the controversy brought Hume a letter from Voltaire, in which the patriarch gave the history of his own grievances against Rousseau, with all his usual sarcasm; and said, of that absorbing vanity for which he might have had more fellow feeling, that Rousseau, believing himself worthy of a statue, thought one half of the world was occupied in raising it on its pedestal, and the other in pulling it down.

This little collection, bearing the title, "*Exposé succint de la contestation qui s'est élévée entre M. Hume et M. Rousseau, avec les pieces justificatives*," was soon afterwards published in English, under Hume's own superintendence. He judiciously observed, that a translation would undoubtedly appear, and that it was more honest, and at the same time more conducive to his reputation, that he should himself superintend the publication.

He had intimated, that as Rousseau would probably impugn the genuineness of the letters as they appeared in print, he would deposit the originals in a public library. In this view, he addressed the following letter to the librarian of the British Museum.

"Edinburgh, 23d Jan. 1767.

"Sir, — As M. Rousseau had wrote to several of his correspondents, that I never dared to publish the letters which he had wrote me; or if I published them they would be so falsified that they would not be the same, I was obliged to say in my preface, that the originals would be consigned in the Museum. I hope you have no objection to the receiving them. I send them by my friend M. Ramsay. Be so good as to give them the corner of any drawer. I fancy few people will trouble you by desiring a sight of them. All the world seems to be satisfied concerning the foundation of that unhappy affair. Yet notwithstanding, I own, that I never in my life took a step with so much reluctance as the consenting to that publication. But as it appeared absolutely necessary to all my friends at Paris, I could not withstand their united opinion. I have also sent the original of M. Walpole's letter to me, which enters into the collection. I am, sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant."

It appears that the trustees of the British Museum, for some one or other of the inscrutable reasons which occasionally sway the counsels of such bodies, declined to receive this very curious collection of documents. Dr. Maty, writing to Hume on 22d April, 1767, says, "I longed to have some conversation with you on the subject of the papers, which were remitted to me by the hands of Mr. Ramsay, and as our trustees did not think proper to receive them, to restore them into yours. With respect to these papers, give me leave to assure you, that I had never any doubt about the merits of the cause. I have long ago fixed my opinion about R — — ‘s character, and think madness is the only excuse that can be offered for his inconsistencies.”

Those original letters connected with the controversy, which were addressed to Hume, whether by Rousseau or others, are among the papers in possession of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. They bear marks of having been much handled. Of the letters addressed to Rousseau, which of course were written in French, it is to be presumed that Hume preserved the duplicates, which afterwards enabled him to show copies of the documents on both sides. The originals probably do not exist; for Rousseau, who held his own part in a controversy as the only important one, appears not to have kept the letters addressed to him, though he retained copies of his own.

The dispute with Rousseau very nearly produced a subsidiary discussion with Horace Walpole. He said, alluding to the advice which had been transmitted to Hume by D’Alembert, “Your set of literary friends are what a set of literary men are apt to be, exceedingly absurd. They hold a consistory to consult how to argue with a madman; and they think it very necessary for your character, to give them the pleasure of seeing Rousseau exposed; not because he has provoked you, but them. If Rousseau prints, you must; but I certainly would not, till he does.”

Walpole evidently looked on this quarrel as a small dispute between small people; — something on a par with the wrangling of country gentlemen about their preserves and their swing gates. Yet, when he found that his own name appeared to be connected with it, he thought it right to publish “a narrative of what passed relative to the quarrel of Mr. David Hume and J. J. Rousseau, as far as Mr. Horace Walpole was concerned in it.” He very distinctly absolves Hume from any connexion with the fictitious letter of the King of Prussia. The only wrong of which he had to complain was, that Hume published this exoneration, of which it seems a publication was not expected, though the letter contained the words, “You are at full liberty, dear sir, to make use of what I say in your justification, either to Rousseau or any body else;” and that, in printing the letter, the passage above cited, reflecting on the literary circle of Paris, had been, from motives of delicacy towards all parties, suppressed.

The only portion of Walpole’s pamphlet that appears to possess any interest, contains Hume’s remarks on his friend, D’Alembert. They were intended as an answer to Walpole’s spiteful sneers; but, though eulogistic, and apparently just, they by no means exhibit a violent encomiastic zeal.

D’Alembert is a very agreeable companion, and of irreproachable morals. By refusing great offers from the Czarina and the King of Prussia, he has shown himself above interest and vain ambition. He lives in an agreeable retreat at Paris, suitable to a man of letters. He has five pensions: one from the King of Prussia, one from the French King, one as member of the Academy of Sciences, one as member of the French Academy, and one from his own family. The whole amount of these is not six thousand livres a-year; on the half of which he lives decently, and gives the other half to poor people with whom he is connected. In a word, I scarce know a man, who, with some few exceptions, (for there must always be some exceptions,) is a better model of a *virtuous* and *philosophical* character.

You see I venture still to join these two epithets as inseparable, and almost synonymous, though you seem inclined to regard them almost as incompatible. And here I have a strong inclination to say a few words in vindication, both of myself and my friends; venturing even to comprehend you in the number. What new prepossession has seized you, to beat in so outrageous a manner your nurses of Mount Helicon, and to join the outcry of the ignorant multitude against science and literature? For my part, I can scarce acknowledge any other ground of distinction between one age and another, between one nation and another, than their different progress in learning and the arts. I do not say between one man and another, because the qualities of the heart and temper, and natural understanding, are the most essential to the personal character; but being, I suppose, almost equal among nations and ages, do not serve to throw a peculiar lustre on any. You blame France for its fond admiration of men of genius; and there may no doubt be, in particular instances, a great ridicule in these affectations; but the sentiment, in general, was equally conspicuous in ancient Greece; in Rome, during its flourishing period; in modern Italy; and even, perhaps, in England about the beginning of this century. If the case be now otherwise, it is what we are to lament and be ashamed of. Our enemies will only infer, that we are a nation which was once, at best, but half civilized; and is now relapsing fast into barbarism, ignorance, and superstition. I beg you also to consider the great difference, in point of morals, between uncultivated and civilized ages. But I find I am launching out insensibly into an immense ocean of commonplace. I cut the matter, therefore, short, by declaring it as my opinion, that if you had been born a barbarian, and had every day cooked your dinner of horse flesh, by riding on it fifty miles between your breech and the shoulder of your horse, you had certainly been an obliging, good-natured, friendly man; but, at the same time, that reading, conversation, and travel, have detracted nothing from these virtues, and have made a considerable addition of other valuable and agreeable qualities to them. I remain, not with ancient sincerity, which was only roguery and hypocrisy, but very sincerely, dear sir, &c.

Rousseau did not resign his pension, and made it be very distinctly known that he would insist upon his claims to be paid what had been promised; but he would not owe it to the intervention of David Hume. He continued to reside for several months at Wooton, where he made some progress in his renowned “Confessions.” “He is, I am sure,” says Mr. Davenport, in one of his letters, “busy writing; and it should be some large affair, from the quantity of paper he bought.” Like other mental patients, when long separated from his favourite excitement, his mind became attuned to less tumultuous movements; and he ceased, in some measure, to feel the want of notoriety. The visions of conspiracy and treachery gradually disappeared, and now we find him, in his letters, only saying; “Je n’ai rien à dire de M. Hume, sinon que je le trouve bien insultant pour un bon homme, et bien bruyant pour un philosophe.” He had a genuine love of nature and of rural pursuits; and he appears to have varied his literary labours, by joining in some projects of Mr. Davenport for the cultivation of forest lands.

Writing to Blair, on 14th February, 1767, Hume says: —

“General Conway told me, on my arrival, that Rousseau had made an application to him, through the canal of Mr. Davenport, to have his pension granted to him. The general’s answer was, that I was to be in town in a few days; and, without my consent, and even full approbation, he would take no step in that affair. You may believe that I exhorted him to do so charitable an action. I wish he may not find a difficulty with the King, who is very much prejudiced against Rousseau. This step of my old friend confirms the suspicion which I always entertained, that he thought he had interest enough to obtain the pension of himself; and that he had only picked a quarrel with me in order to free himself from the humiliating burden of gratitude towards me. His motives, therefore, were much blacker than many seem to apprehend them.

"A gentleman told me that he heard, from the French ambassador, that his most Christian Majesty had given an arrêt, prohibiting, under the severest penalties, the printing, vending, or dispersing, any paper of Rousseau, or his partisans, against me. I dine with the ambassador to-day, so shall know the truth of the matter, which scarce appears credible. It is surely very honourable for me; but yet will occasion that strange man to complain, that he is oppressed with power all over the world. I am," &c.

At length, on the 31st of April, 1767, Rousseau and Mademoiselle Le Vasseur suddenly disappeared from Wooton together. Hume thus describes the incident in a letter to Blair: —

"You may, perhaps, have heard that Rousseau has eloped from Mr. Davenport, without giving any warning; leaving all his baggage, except Mademoiselle, about thirty pounds in Davenport's hands, and a letter on the table, abusing him in the most violent terms, insinuating that he was in a conspiracy with me to ruin him. He took the road to London, but was missing for about a fortnight. At last he emerges at Spalding in Lincolnshire, whence he writes a letter to the Chancellor, informing him that the bad usage he had met with in England, made it absolutely necessary for him to evacuate the kingdom, and desiring his lordship to send him a guard to escort him to Dover — this being the last act of hospitality he will desire of the nation. He is plainly mad, though I believe not more than he has been all his life. The pamphlet you mention was wrote by one as mad as himself, and it was believed at first to be by Tristram Shandy, but proves to be [by] one Fuseli an engraver. He is a fanatical admirer of Rousseau, but owns he was in the wrong to me. The pamphlet I sent to you was wrote by an English clergyman, whom I never saw; a man of character, and rising in the church, for which reason it is more prudent in me to conceal his name. When would *you* have done so much for me."

As Rousseau did not favour the world in his "Confessions," with the adventures he encountered during this flight, it is of some interest, in the absence of a personal narrative, to mark the impression produced by the incident on an onlooker, whom it seems to have filled with mingled feelings of compassion and astonishment. The following are some extracts from Mr. Davenport's letters to Hume: —

Mr. Davenport *to* Hume.

Davenport, 13th May, 1767.

Dear Sir, — After all my inquiries, I can’t, for the life of me, find out to what part my wild philosopher is fled. I sent after him some papers, thinking they would most certainly find him in London. No such matter: he is not to be found there. They scarce took any thing along with them, but what they carried on their backs. All the trunks, &c. are at Wooton; and this odd man has just packed up his things, and left the keys dangling at the locks of his boxes. No sort of direction for me, though he knows I am in his debt between £30 and £40; and I want, of all things, to inform him what he has to do in relation to his majesty’s bounty, which I am sure he will with great satisfaction receive, because I have it so positively under his own hand. You shall have the joy of perusing his letter; but one dated about six days before must be added to it. At present my gout is too much upon me to write copies of them. Pray, if you hear where he is, do me the pleasure to inform me. I am, &c. &c.

P.S. — I protest I pity him more and more, as I certainly conclude that his head is not quite right.

Davenport, Monday 18th.

I can’t help giving you the trouble of this. Last night I received a most melancholy letter from poor Rousseau, dated Spalding in Lincolnshire. How, or on what account, he got to that place, I can’t for the life of me guess; but this I learn, that he is most excessively sick of his situation, and is returning to Wooton, as soon as, I suppose, he can well get there. He has been all the time at an inn in that town. Pray, was the place you mentioned to me in that county, any where near Spalding? I own to you, I was quite moved to read his mournful epistle. I am quite confirmed in my opinion of him: this last from him, is entirely different in style, from any I ever yet received. I have in my answer, desired he would write to some friend of his in town, to authorize him to receive his majesty’s bounty, as it becomes due. I have told him that his agent must apply, and show his letter to Mr. Lounds of the Treasury. Poor Rousseau writes of nothing but his misery, illness, afflictions; in a word, of his being the most unfortunate man that ever existed. Good God! most of those distresses are surely occasioned by his own unhappy temper, which I really believe is not in his power to alter! so, let him be where he will, I fear he is certain to be uneasy. His passion for Botany has, as I conjecture, almost left him. If I am right in my guess, I have no sort of doubt, but he will again take to his pen, as ’tis impossible for his imagination to remain idle. I am, &c.

Davenport, May 25, 1767.

Dear Sir,— ’Tis with the greatest satisfaction I hear, this poor unfortunate man will enjoy the pension. I am sure he lies under a thousand obligations to you, and am extremely glad he has wrote to General Conway. I hope he made use of at least some expressions of gratitude and respect to that gentleman, whose goodness of heart obtained this favour from his majesty.

I am sure you’ll do your endeavour to save him from the Bastile, or (which I more fear) the Archbishop of Paris’ prison.

He wrote me a letter from Spalding, dated 11th, in which he says, I have great reason to be offended at his manner of leaving Wooton. He says, —

Je préférois la liberté, au séjour de votre maison; ce sentiment est bien excusable. Mais je préfère infiniment le séjour de votre maison à tout autre captivité, et je préférerois toute captivité à celle où je suis, qui est horrible, et qui, quoiqu’il arrive ne sauroit durer. Si vous voulez bien Monsieur me recevoir derechef chez vous, je suis prêt à m’y rendre au cas qu’on m’en laisse la liberté, et quand j’y serois après l’expérience qui j’ai faite, difficilement serois-je tenté d’en ressortir pour chercher de nouveaux malheurs. Si ma proposition vous agrée, tâchez, Monsieur de me le faire savoir par quelque voie sûre, et de faciliter mon retour d’ici chez vous.

He repeats the same request of sending to him two or three times. This which he sent on the 11th, I received on the 17th. On the 18th I despatched a servant to Spalding: instead of staying for my answer, behold, on the 14th he set out for Dover, and on that morning wrote again by the post to me, in which he says, that if he had any assurance this letter of the 11th would come to me, and that I would agree to his proposals, and again receive him, he should certainly stay for an answer; but as he despaired of my receiving his, so he was determined to pass the Channel, and I should hear from him when he reached Calais, and quite sure of his liberty; that he would write from thence and make me a very singular proposition. He professes the greatest regard for me, &c. The next is dated, Dover, 18th May, where he says, that he chose to write to me from that place; that seeing the sea, and finding he was in reality a free man, and might either go or stay, — then, says he, I stopped, and intended to return to you; but by chance seeing in a public paper how my departure from Wooton was treated, caused him immediately to renounce that idea. He finishes with many compliments, but without telling me where to write to him, and I long to know how to address my letters. Before he left Wooton, he disposed of several long gowns amongst the poor people, went off in an old French dress, and got a blue coat made for him at Spalding. Pray, can you inform me who he has authorized to receive his majesty's bounty; because I think I may pay into their hands the money I have of his in mine. I should be pleased if you could be so kind as to inform me what date his letter bore, which he wrote to the Lord Chancellor. I am, dear sir, &c.

4th July, 1767.

This week I received a letter from Rousseau, dated, Fleury under Meudon, wrote with great complaisance; he returns a thousand thanks for all the civilities he received from me at Wooton; says that he is not fixed as to the place of his future residence, but that he will inform me as soon as he has made choice of one.

The style of this is vastly different from some of the last of those which he wrote in England; no mention of captivities, no wild imaginations of any kind, but entirely calm and composed. I heartily wish he may continue so, then sure he will be somewhat happy. I am, &c.

6th July, 1767.

The good woman who is called my housekeeper was my nurse, near ninety, and more than three parts blind. Mad^lle^ and she never could agree. I have heard something of the story of the kettle and cinders, but am inclinable to believe my philosopher's resolutions were determined before that fray happened. His governante has an absolute power over him, and without doubt more or less influences all his actions. You certainly guess right about the unaccountable quarrel with you, to whom he has so many and great obligations: nay, I am almost sure he very heartily repents and inwardly wants to be reconciled. He has desired to hear from me often, and promises to let me know how he goes on, as soon as ever he is the least fixed. What he was writing, is the same he mentioned to you, will be a large work, containing at least twelve volumes. I am positively certain that when I left him, he had not entirely finished one. There's nothing in it which in any shape relates to state affairs or to ministers of state.

You shall see his letter the first opportunity; but, God help him! I can't, for pity, give a copy; and 'tis so much mixed with his own poor little private concerns, that it would not be right in me to do it. . . . I am, dear sir, &c.

In the following letters, Hume narrates these events to his Northern friends, having been so frequently desired to give explanations of the rumours regarding Rousseau's escapades which occasionally reached Scotland, that he found it most expedient to answer miscellaneous inquiries by general chronological narratives.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

"27th May, 1767.

"Since you are curious to hear Rousseau's story, I shall tell you the sequel of it. A few days after his letter to the Chancellor, of which I informed you, I got a letter from Davenport, who told me that he had just received a letter from Rousseau, dated at Spalding, wherein that wild philosopher, as he calls him, appeared very penitent, and contrite, and melancholy; and expressed his purpose of returning immediately to his former retreat at Wooton. The same day, and nearly the same hour, General Conway received a long letter from him, dated at Dover, about two hundred miles distant from Spalding. This great journey he had made in two days; and had probably set out immediately after writing the letter above-mentioned to Davenport. This letter to General Conway is the most frenzical imaginable. He there supposes that he was brought into England by a plot of mine, in order to reduce him to infamy, derision, and captivity. That General Conway, and all the most considerable personages of the nation, and the nation itself, had entered into this conspiracy. That he is at present actually a state prisoner in General Conway's hands, and has been so ever since his arrival in the kingdom. He entreats him, however, to allow him the liberty of departing; warns him that it will not be safe to assassinate him in private; as he is unhappily too well known not to have inquiries made, if he should disappear on a sudden; and promises that if his request be granted, his memoirs shall never be printed to disgrace the English ministry and the English nation.

"He owns that he has wrote such memoirs, the chief object of which was to deliver a faithful account of the treatment he has met with in England; but he promises, that the moment he sets foot on the French shore, he shall write to the friend in whose hand the manuscript is deposited, to deliver it to the General, who may destroy it if he pleases. He adds, that as it may be objected, that after recovering his liberty he may do as he pleases, he offers, as a pledge of his sincerity, to accept of his pension; after which he thinks no one will imagine he could be so infamous as to write against the king's ministers or his people. Amidst all this frenzy, he employs these terms as if a ray of reason had for a moment broke into his mind. He says, speaking of himself in the third person, ‘Non-seulement il abandonne pour toujours le projet d’écrire sa vie et ses mémoires, mais il ne lui échappera jamais, ni de bouche ni par écrit, un seul mot de plainte sur les malheurs qui lui sont arrivés en Angleterre; il ne parlera jamais de M. Hume, ou il n’en parlera qu’avec honneur, et lorsqu’il sera pressé de s’expliquer sur quelques indiscrètes plaintes, qui lui sont quelquefois échappées dans le fort de ses peines, il les rejettera sans mystère, sur son humeur aigrie et portée à la défiance, et aux ombrages par ce malheureux penchant, ouvrage de ses malheurs, et qui maintenant y met le comble.’

“We hear that notwithstanding his imagined captivity, he has passed over to Calais; where he is likely to experience what real captivity is. I have, however, used my persuasion with Mons^{r} de Guerchi to represent him to his court as a real madman, more an object of compassion than of anger. We shall no doubt see his Memoirs in a little time: which will be full of eloquence and extravagance, though perhaps as reasonable as any of his past productions; for I do not imagine he was ever much more in his senses than at present. I think I may be entirely without anxiety concerning all his future productions.”

The following letters to Smith appear to have been intended as a comprehensive history of the flight of Rousseau. The reader will readily excuse the repetition of some incidents already mentioned, and may perhaps find an interest in comparing the impressions produced by the events as they were successively occurring, with this general retrospect of the whole.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“London, 8th October, 1767.

“Dear Smith, — I shall give you an account of the late heteroclite exploits of Rousseau, as far as I can recollect them. There is no need of any secrecy: they are most of them pretty public, and are well known to every body that had curiosity to observe the actions of that strange, undefinable existence, whom one would be apt to imagine an imaginary being, though surely not an *ens rationis*.

“I believe you know, that in spring last, Rousseau applied to General Conway to have his pension. The General answered to Mr. Davenport, who carried the application, that I was expected to town in a few days; and without my consent and approbation he would take no steps in that affair.

You may believe I readily gave my consent. I also solicited the affair, through the Treasury; and the whole being finished, I wrote to Mr. Davenport, and desired him to inform his guest, that he needed only appoint any person to receive payment. Mr. Davenport answered me, that it was out of his power to execute my commission: for that his wild philosopher, as he called him, had eloped of a sudden, leaving a great part of his baggage behind him, some money in Davenport's hands, and a letter on the table, as odd, he says, as the one he wrote to me, and implying that Mr. Davenport was engaged with me in a treacherous conspiracy against him! He was not heard of for a fortnight, till the Chancellor received a letter from him, dated at Spalding in Lincolnshire; in which he said that he had been seduced into this country by a promise of hospitality; that he had met with the worst usage; that he was in danger of his life from the plots of his enemies; and that he applied to the Chancellor, as the first civil magistrate of the kingdom, desiring him to appoint a guard at his own (Rousseau's) expense, who might safely conduct him out of the kingdom. The Chancellor made his secretary reply to him, that he was mistaken in the nature of the country; for that the first post-boy he could apply to, was as safe a guide as the Chancellor could appoint. At the very same time that Rousseau wrote this letter to the Chancellor, he wrote to Davenport, that he had eloped from him, actuated by a very natural desire, that of recovering his liberty; but finding he must still be in captivity, he preferred that at Wooton: for his captivity at Spalding was intolerable beyond all human patience, and he was at present the most wretched being on the face of the globe: he would therefore return to Wooton, if he were assured that Davenport would receive him.

"Here I must tell you, that the parson of Spalding was about two months ago in London, and told Mr. Fitzherbert, from whom I had it, that he had passed several hours every day with Rousseau, while he was in that place; that he was cheerful, good-humoured, easy, and enjoyed himself perfectly well, without the least fear or complaint of any kind. However this may be, our hero, without waiting for any answer, either from the Chancellor or Mr. Davenport, decamps on a sudden from Spalding, and takes the road directly to Dover; whence he writes a letter to General Conway, seven pages long, and full of the wildest extravagance in the world. He says, that he had endured a captivity in England, which it was impossible any longer to submit to. It was strange, that the greatest in the nation, and the whole nation itself, should have been seduced by one private man, to serve his vengeance against another private man: he found in every face that he was here the object of general derision and aversion, and he was therefore infinitely desirous to remove from this country. He therefore begs the General to restore him to his liberty, and allow him to leave England; he warns him of the danger there may be of cutting his throat in private; as he is unhappily a man too well known, not to have inquiries made after him, should he disappear of a sudden: he promises, on condition of his being permitted to depart the kingdom, to speak no ill of the king or country, or ministers, or even of Mr. Hume; as indeed, says he, I have perhaps no reason; my jealousy of him having probably arisen from my own suspicious temper, soured by misfortunes. He says, that he wrote a volume of Memoirs, chiefly regarding the treatment he has met with in England; he has left it in safe hands, and will order it to be burned, in case he be permitted to go beyond seas, and nothing shall remain to the dishonour of the king and his ministers.

"This letter is very well wrote, so far as regards the style and composition; and the author is so vain of it, that he has given about copies, as of a rare production. It is indeed, as General Conway says, the composition of a whimsical man, not of a madman. But what is more remarkable, the very same post, he wrote to Davenport, that, having arrived within sight of the sea, and finding he was really at liberty to go or stay, as he pleased, he had intended voluntarily to return to him; but seeing in a newspaper an account of his departure from Wooton, and concluding his offences were too great to be forgiven, he was resolved to depart for France. Accordingly, without any farther preparation, and without waiting General Conway's answer, he took his passage in a packet boat, and went off that very evening. Thus, you see, he is a composition of whim, affectation, wickedness, vanity, and inquietude, with a very small if any ingredient of madness. He is always complaining of his health; yet I have scarce ever seen a more robust little man of his years. He was tired in England; where he was neither persecuted nor caressed, and where, he was sensible, he had exposed himself. He resolved, therefore, to leave it; and having no pretence, he is obliged to contrive all those absurdities, which he himself, extravagant as he is, gives no credit to. At least, this is the only key I can devise to his character. The ruling qualities above-mentioned, together with ingratitude, ferocity, and lying, — I need not mention eloquence and invention, — form the whole of the composition.

"When he arrived at Paris, all my friends, who were likewise all his, agreed totally to neglect him. The public, too, disgusted with his multiplied and indeed criminal extravagancies, showed no manner of concern about him. Never was such a fall from the time I took him up, about a year and a half before. I am told by D'Alembert and Horace Walpole, that, sensible of this great alteration, he endeavoured to regain his credit by acknowledging to every body his fault with regard to me: but all in vain: he has retired to a village in the mountains of Auvergne, as M. Durand tells me, where nobody inquires after him. He will probably endeavour to recover his fame by new publications; and I expect with some curiosity the reading of his Memoirs, which will I suppose suffice to justify me in every body's eyes, and in my own, for the publication of his letters and my narrative of the case. You will see by the papers, that a new letter of his to M. D., which I imagine to be Davenport, is published. This letter was probably wrote immediately on his arrival at Paris; or perhaps is an effect of his usual inconsistence: I do not much concern myself which. Thus he has had the satisfaction, during a time, of being much talked of, for his late transactions; the thing in the world he most desires: but it has been at the expense of being consigned to perpetual neglect and oblivion. My compliments to Mr. Oswald; and also to Mrs. Smith. I am," &c.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"London, 17th October, 1767.

"Dear Smith, — I sit down to correct a mistake or two in the former account which I gave you of Rousseau. I saw Davenport a few days ago, who tells me, that the letter inserted in all the newspapers, was never addressed to him. He even doubts its being genuine; both because he knows it to be opposite to all his sentiments with regard to me, to whom he desires earnestly to be reconciled, and because it is too absurd and extravagant, and seems to be contrived rather as a banter upon him. Davenport added, that Rousseau was retired to some place in France, and had changed his name and his dress: but wrote to him that he was the most miserable of all beings; that it was impossible for him to stay where he was; and that he would return to his old hermitage, if Davenport would accept of him. Indeed, he has some reason to be mortified with his reception in France; for Horace Walpole, who has very lately returned thence, tells me, that though

Rousseau is settled at Cliché, within a league of Paris, nobody inquires after him, nobody visits him, nobody talks of him, every one has agreed to neglect and disregard him: a more sudden revolution of fortune than almost ever happened to any man — at least to any man of letters.

"I asked Mr. Davenport about those Memoirs, which Rousseau said he was writing, and whether he had ever seen them. He said, yes, he had; it was projected to be a work in twelve volumes; but he had as yet gone no farther than the first volume, which he had entirely composed at Wooton. It was charmingly wrote, and concluded with a very particular and interesting account of his first love, the object of which was a person whose first love it also was. Davenport, who is no bad judge, says, that these Memoirs will be the most taking of all his works; and, indeed, you may easily imagine what such a pen would make of such a subject as that I mentioned. Meanwhile it appears clearly, what I told you before, that he is no more mad at present, than he has been during the whole course of his life, and that he is capable of the same efforts of genius. I think I may wait in security his account of the transactions between us. But, however, this incident, which I foresaw, is some justification of me for publishing his letters, and may apologise for a step, which you, and even myself, have been inclined sometimes to blame, and always to regret."

So ended Rousseau's wild sojourn, in what he termed "l'heureuse terre, où sont nés David Hume et le Maréchal d'Ecosse." When the wounds inflicted on his benefactor by ungrateful actions and uncharitable interpretations had been healed by time, and the conduct of him who had occasioned them was seen no longer through the excited medium of lacerated feelings, the hour had come for the just understanding to aid the kind heart, in estimating the character of the assailant; for finding that, deep as were the wounds he might inflict on others, there was an arrow still more deeply buried in his own bosom; that commiseration should take the place of resentment; and that the wanderer's footsteps should be accompanied by the prayer, that peace might revisit his disturbed spirit. Hume felt, perhaps, what he could not have expressed so well as one whose mind had too much in common with that which he describes,

His life was one long war with self-sought foes;
Or friends by him self-banished; for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary, and chose,
For its own cruel sacrifice, the kind,

‘Gainst whom he raged with fury strange and blind.
But he was frenzied, — wherefore, who may know?
Since cause might be which skill could never find;
But he was frenzied by disease or woe,
To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show.

Hume was not a man given to the clamorous expression of contritions or regrets. It is in his silence and his subsequent acts that we find him desirous to compensate for the punishment he had inflicted on his assailant. The letters of his French friends, during the summer of 1767, show that he had earnestly exerted himself to protect Rousseau from the vengeance of the government; and there is all reason to believe, that it was through this intervention that the wanderer was permitted to pursue his course in peace. On the other hand, when the dark cloud had completely passed away, the monomaniac appears to have awakened to a distressing consciousness of what he had done. He afterwards attributed his conduct in England to our foggy atmosphere, which had filled his mind with gloom and discontent; and the work at which he laboured busily with the fierce excitement of him who forges a weapon to avenge his wrongs, stopped short at the very point where his narrative of injuries was to commence.

CHAPTER XVI.

1766-1770. Æt. 55-59.

Hume Under Secretary of State — Church Politics — Official abilities — Conduct as to Ferguson's book — Quarrel with Oswald — Baron Mure's sons — Project of continuing the History — Ministerial convulsions — Hume's conduct to his Family — His Brother — His Nephews — Baron Hume — Blacklock — Smollett — Church Patronage — Gibbon — Robertson — Elliot — Gilbert Stuart — The Douglas Cause — Andrew Stewart — Morellet — Return to Scotland.

The quarrel with Rousseau seems to have so fully occupied the attention of Hume, during its continuance, that he scarcely alluded to any other subject in his correspondence; and thus, though the preceding chapter is devoted entirely to that event, a very slight retrospect from the point of time reached at its conclusion, will suffice for whatever else, worthy of notice in his life or correspondence, has been preserved.

In the summer of 1766, he made a short visit to Scotland. "I returned," he says, in his "own life," "to that place, not richer, but with much more money, and a much larger income, by means of Lord Hertford's friendship, than I left it; and I was desirous of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency. But, in 1767, I received, from Mr. Conway, an invitation to be under-secretary; and this invitation, both the character of the person, and my connexions with Lord Hertford, prevented me from declining."

He was thus solicited to undertake the very responsible duties of this office, by one who had good opportunities of knowing his capacity for public business; and the simple fact of the appointment is a testimony to the ability with which he had performed the analogous functions of his office in France. He was indeed at all times a man of punctual habits, and his unwearied industry had not yet begun to slacken. He had a mind of that clear systematic order which was well fitted for the composition of official documents; and his triumphs in philosophical and historical literature never inflated him with the ambition of considering any business which he consented to undertake too insignificant to deserve his full attention. Some official documents, connected with the successive offices which he held, have been preserved, by collectors, as autographs of so celebrated a man: and they generally arrest the attention of every one who examines them, by the clearness and precision of the language, and not a little by the neatness of the handwriting.

After the resignation of the Marquis of Tweeddale, in 1746, there was no longer a principal secretary of state for Scotland; and it became usual to consult the Lord Advocate, or any other ministerial officer, locally connected with the north, as to the policy to be pursued in Scottish affairs. None of the principal members of the Grafton ministry were Scotsmen; and there can be little doubt that Hume must then have exercised a large influence in all affairs connected with his native country. He held his office until the 20th of July 1768, when General Conway was superseded by Lord Weymouth.

The following letter contains a brief sketch of the general current of his official life.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

“1st April, 1767.

“My way of life here is very uniform, and by no means disagreeable. I pass all the forenoon in the secretary’s house, from ten till three, where there arrive, from time to time, messengers, that bring me all the secrets of the kingdom, and, indeed, of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I am seldom hurried; but have leisure, at intervals, to take up a book, or write a private letter, or converse with any friend that may call for me; and from dinner to bed-time is all my own. If you add to this, that the person with whom I have the chief, if not only transactions, is the most reasonable, equal tempered, and gentleman-like man imaginable, and Lady Aylesbury the same, you will certainly think I have no reason to complain; and I am far from complaining. I only shall not regret when my duty is over; because, to me, the situation can lead to nothing, at least in all probability; and reading, and sauntering, and lounging, and dosing, which I call thinking, is my supreme happiness. I mean my full contentment.

“I thank you for the acquaintance you offer me of Mr. Percy; but it would be impracticable for me to cultivate his friendship, as men of letters have here no place of rendezvous; and are, indeed, sunk and forgot in the general torrent of the world. If you can therefore decline, without hardship, any letter of recommendation, it would save trouble both to him and me."

In the beginning of the year 1767, Ferguson published his "Essay on the History of Civil Society," a work which speedily acquired a wide reputation through Europe. The allusions which Hume has been found making to some work of a similar character, so early as 1759, probably refer to a particular portion of this book. Immediately before its publication, he recommended Ferguson's friends to prevail on him to suppress the work, as likely to be injurious to its author's literary reputation: one of the few instances, if it be not the only one, in which he discouraged a fellow-countryman, desirous of casting his lot into the competition for literary distinction. He ultimately found that his advice was erroneous, as the book soon obtained a high character. But, had his own opinion of its merits coincided with the suffrages of the public, it would not have been so honourable to his memory, as the satisfaction he expressed on the discovery that the verdict of the reading world was against him. Writing to Blair on 24th February, 1767, he says: —

"I happened yesterday to visit a person three hours after a copy of Ferguson's performance was opened, for the first time, in London. It was by Lord Mansfield. I accept this omen of its future success. He was extremely pleased with it; said it was very agreeable, and perfectly well wrote; assured me that he would not stop a moment till he had finished it; and recommended it strongly to the perusal of the Archbishop of York, who was present. I have wrote the same article of intelligence to Ferguson himself; but as he is the likeliest person in the world to suppress it, I thought it safest to put it into your hands, in order to circulate it."

Again: —

"I hear good things said of Ferguson's book every day. Lord Holderness showed me a letter from the Archbishop of York, where his Grace says, that in many things it surpasses Montesquieu. My friend, Mr. Dodwell, says that it is an admirable book, elegantly wrote, and with great purity of language. Pray, tell to Ferguson and to others all these things."

Again, writing to the same correspondent, on 1st April, he says: —

"The success of the book, dear Doctor, which you mention, gives me great satisfaction, on account of my sincere friendship for the author; and so much the rather, as the success was to me unexpected. I have since begun to hope, and even to believe, that I was mistaken; and in this persuasion have several times taken it up and read chapters of it. But, to my great mortification and sorrow, I have not been able to change my sentiments. We shall see, by the duration of its fame, whether or not I am mistaken. Helvétius and Saurin both told me at Paris, that they had been consulted by Montesquieu about his ‘Esprit des Loix.’ They used the freedom to tell him, as their fixed opinion, that he ought to suppress the book; which they foresaw would very much injure his reputation. They said to me that, no doubt, I thought they had reason to be ashamed of their judgment. But still, added they, you may observe that the public are very much returned from their first admiration of that book; and we are persuaded that they will daily return still more.

“I hope that I shall be found a false prophet as much as these gentlemen; for though the ‘Esprit des Loix,’ be considerably sunk in vogue, and will probably still sink farther, it maintains a high reputation, and probably will never be totally neglected. It has considerable merit, notwithstanding the glare of its pointed wit, and notwithstanding its false refinements, and its rash and crude positions. Helvétius and Saurin assured me, that this freedom of theirs never lost them any thing of Montesquieu’s friendship. I believe the like would be my case; but it is better not to put it to a trial. On that account, as well as others, I recommend to you secrecy, towards every person except Robertson.”

A letter from Adam Smith, desiring that his friend, Count Sarsfield, might be introduced to Hume’s circle of acquaintance, called forth the following narrative of a very amusing incident: —

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“London, 13th June, 1767.

“Dear Smith, — The Count de Sarsfield is a good acquaintance of mine, from the time I saw him at Paris; and as he is really a man of merit, I have great pleasure whenever I meet him here. My occupations keep me from cultivating his friendship as much as I should incline. I did not introduce him to Elliot, because I knew that this gentleman’s reserve and indolence would make him neglect the acquaintance; and I did not introduce him to Oswald, because I fear that he and I are broke for ever; at least he does not seem inclined to take any steps towards an accommodation with me.

“I am to tell you the strangest story you ever heard of. I was dining with him, above two months ago, where, among other company, was the Bishop of Raphoe. After dinner we were disposed to be merry. I said to the company, that I had been very ill used by Lord Hertford; for that I always expected to be made a bishop by him during his lieutenancy! but he had given away two sees from me, to my great vexation and disappointment. The right reverend, without any farther provocation, burst out into the most furious, and indecent, and orthodox rage that ever was seen: told me that I was most impertinent; that if he did not wear a gown, I durst not, no, I durst not, have used him so; that none but a coward would treat a clergyman in that manner; that henceforth he must either abstain from his brother's house, or I must; and that this was not the first time he had heard the stupid joke from my mouth. With the utmost tranquillity and temper I asked his pardon; assured him, upon my honour, that I did not mean him the least offence: if I had imagined he could possibly have been displeased, I never should have mentioned the subject; but the joke was not in the least against him, but entirely against myself, as if I were capable of such an expectation as that of being a bishop! my regard for himself, and still more for his brother, with whom I had long been more particularly connected, would certainly restrain me from either joke or earnest, which could be offensive to him; and that, if I had ever touched on the same topic before, I had entirely forgot it, and it must have been above a twelvemonth ago. He was nowise appeased; raved on in the same style for a long time. At last I got the discourse diverted, and took my leave, seemingly with great indifference and even good humour. I was nowise surprised nor concerned about his lordship; because I had, on other occasions, observed the same orthodox zeal swell within him, and it was often difficult for him to converse with temper when I was in the company.

"But what really surprised and vexed me was, that his brother kept silence all the time. I met him in the passage when I went away, and he made me no apology. He has never since called on me; and though he sees that I never come near his house, though formerly I used to be three or four times a-week with him, he never takes the least notice of it. I own this gives me vexation, because I have a sincere value and affection for him. It is only some satisfaction to me to find, that I am so palpably in the right as not to leave the least room for doubt or ambiguity. Dr. Pitcairne, who was in the company, says that he never saw such a scene in his lifetime. If I were sure, dear Smith, that you and I should not some day quarrel in some such manner, I should tell you that I am, yours very affectionately and sincerely."

The world levies certain penalties on the enjoyment of a character for good nature and kindness, and Hume seems to have paid them to their most ample extent, in the shape of executing commissions, and performing general petty services for his friends. We have witnessed the zeal with which he attended to the education of Mr. Elliot's two sons. A teacher of languages, possessing the distinguished name of Graffigny, and professing to be in the confidence of celebrated literary people in Paris, appears to have excited the suspicion of Baron Mure, whose sons he was employed to instruct. Hume undertook to make some inquiries regarding him; and his brief reports, from time to time, have some interest from their containing a few of his opinions on education.

Hume *to* Baron Mure.

"London, 1st July, 1767.

"Dear Baron, — I believe I told you, that D'Alembert disclaimed all sort of acquaintance with him. I have this moment received a letter from Helvétius, doing the same. It was in answer to one I wrote him at Lord Hertford's desire. I know not from what quarter we had heard that he had given to Lord Harcourt, or Lord Newnam, a good character of Graffigny: but it must have been a mistake; for to me he says, that he knows no such man; that his wife, who was niece to the famous Ma^{me} de Graffigny, and educated with her, never saw or heard of such a man: nor can they imagine who he may be. After this second imposture, it is certain that Lord Hertford will not put his sons to him; nor do I think it fit yours should longer remain. He is an empty, conceited fellow, full of chimeras and pretensions; and I think you are at no great loss for parting with him. The question [is,] what to do next?"

(*Undated.*)

"Dear Baron, — He is indeed a conceited man, full of whimseys and affectations, reasoning always in the clouds about the most obvious things, and hunting after novelties and singularities of which his genius is incapable. What, for instance, can be more whimsical than his method of teaching Latin? He gives his boys a long list of words, which they are to get by heart, like the muster-roll of a regiment, and a great heap of grammar rules, which are to them unintelligible. After he has laid this foundation of a language, as he imagines, he begins them with the most difficult of all the Latin poets; and for this plan of education, he will give you a galimatias of reasons, clothed in the smoothest language, and delivered with the softest accent.”

(*Undated.*)

“Dear Baron, — In my conversation with your young folks yesterday, I endeavoured to inform myself concerning their progress in Latin. I find that they are not taught any Latin grammar; they are only instructed in the sense of single detached words, which they learn, both in Greek and Latin, at once. Accordingly they told me water, aqua, and υδωρ; but though I tried them in about half a dozen more words, I could not find their learning extended so far. All this appears to me very whimsical; and I doubt a dead language can never be learned in this manner without grammar. In a living language, the continual application of the words and phrases teaches at the same time the sense of the words, and their reference to each other; but a list of words got by heart, without any connected sense, easily escapes the memory, and is but a small part of the language.”

There are several indications that Hume still retained the half-formed intention of continuing his History through a portion of the period succeeding the Revolution. In a brief undated letter, written to Smith in Paris, he says: —

“Some push me to continue my History. Millar offers me any price. All the Marlborough papers are offered me: and I believe nobody would venture to refuse me. But *cui bono*? Why should I forego idleness, and sauntering, and society, and expose myself again to the clamours of a stupid factious public? I am not yet tired of doing nothing; and am become too wise either to mind censure or applause. By and bye I shall be too old to undergo so much labour. Adieu.”

Smith’s opinion is thus reported by Andrew Millar, on 22d November, 1766.

“He is of opinion, with many more of your very good sensible friends, that the History of this country, from the Revolution, is not to be met with in books yet printed; but from MSS. in this country, to which he is sure you will have ready access, from all accounts he hears from the great here; and therefore you should lay the ground-work here, after your perusal of the MSS. you may have access to, and doing it below will be laying the wrong foundation. I think it my duty to inform you the opinion of your most judicious friends, and I think he and Sir John Pringle may be reckoned amongst that number.”

Millar, indeed, seems to have scarcely ever relaxed from urging this project; and perhaps it was his perseverance, and not any self-originating desire to pursue the task, that kept the design alive in Hume's mind. He had written to his worthy publisher on 8th October, 1766: —

"I shall probably do as you advise, and sketch out the outlines of the two or three subsequent reigns, which I may finish at London, after I find that there remains no farther obstacles to this work, and that it is favoured, I do not say by every body, (for that is impossible,) but by the generality of the world."

At a later date he thus expressed his views: —

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"London, 17th July, 1767.

"Dear Sir, — We are still in as unsettled a condition as when you left us. There will certainly be a considerable alteration in the ministry; and I do not at present reckon my principal's situation more precarious than that of any other minister. He speaks, however, like a man who is to be out of office in a few days. I have also taken the precaution to desire him to request of the king, in my name, the liberty, after my dismission, of inspecting all the public records, and all the papers in the Paper-office. His majesty was pleased to say, that he very willingly complied with my request, and was glad to hear of my intentions. But my chief view is to run over such papers as belong to the period which I have already wrote, in order to render that part of my History as little imperfect as possible. It would be folly to think of writing any more; and even as to correcting, were it not an amusement, to what purpose would it serve, since I shall certainly never live to see a new edition?"

On the same subject, and in the same tone, he writes to his brother, on 6th October: —

"As to myself, I pass my time, as I told you, in an agreeable enough kind of business, and not too much of it. My income, also, is at present very considerable — above £1100 a-year, of which I shall not spend much above the half. Notwithstanding, I sometimes wish to be out of employment, in order to prosecute my History, to which every body urges me. When Mr. Conway was on the point of resigning, I desired him to propose to the king that I might afterwards have the liberty of inspecting all the public offices for such papers as might serve to my purpose. His majesty said, that he was glad that I had that object in my eye; and I should certainly have all the assistance in his power. He was also pleased, some time after, to send to me the Baron Behr, minister for Hanover, to tell me that he had ordered over some papers from Hanover, to be put into my hands, because he believed they would be of use to me. I believe I have told you that the use of the Marlborough papers had been promised me by Lord and Lady Spencer; but Marchmont, who had some pretence of authority over them, as trustee, delayed giving them up, suspecting, I suppose, the use they intended to make of them."

Though it was as part of Lord Rockingham's administration that Conway became secretary of state, and his political connexions attached him to that leader, he had been prevailed on to retain office on the formation of the Grafton and Chatham cabinet, in August 1766. In the summer of 1767, that ministry seemed likely to be formidably assailed by the united efforts of the Rockingham and Bedford parties, whose meetings and resolutions at Newcastle House are matters well known in history. General Conway's resignation would have terminated Hume's tenure of office; and we find, in his correspondence, a few indications of interest in the political movements of the time; yet so calm and modified, that even the possession of office seems scarcely to have affected the stoic philosophy with which he contemplated ministerial revolutions.

He says to his friend Blair, on the 18th of June: —

"We are all again in confusion. Negotiations for a new ministry; the fatal month of July approaching; a new settlement to be made, which will be no settlement. I fancy I return, in a few weeks, to my former situation."

And to Smith, on 14th July: —

"Dear Smith, — I send you the enclosed, with a large packet for Count Sarsfield. This is the last ministerial act which I shall probably perform; and with this exertion I finish my functions. I shall not leave this country presently. Perhaps I may go over to France. Our resignation is a very extraordinary incident, and will probably occasion a total change of ministry. Are you busy?"

His official life, however, was not so near a conclusion as he thought it was. The following letter is more full and explicit, in regard to these matters: —

"London, 28th July, 1767.

"Dear Brother, — Were my present situation any object of anxiety, I should have been very unhappy of late: so uncertain has my continuance appeared every moment, and so near did my ministerial functions seem to draw towards their conclusion. But as the matter was very nearly indifferent to me, I neither felt anxiety for my past danger, nor do I experience any joy from my present establishment; for we are now established, for some time at least, and all apprehensions of a change are removed to a distance. The history of our late transactions is, in short, as follows: About this time twelvemonth, when the last revolution of ministry took place, Mr. Conway staid in, though Lord Rockingham, and most of his friends, were turned out: But it was with reluctance, and only on the earnest entreaties of the king and Lord Chatham, and on their giving him a promise that several of his friends and party should still continue to hold their places. This engagement was broke last winter. Some of these gentlemen were turned out; and Mr. Conway, after protesting against this usage, declared, that though he would keep his office during the session, not to disturb the king's business, he would resign as soon as the parliament should rise. He accordingly desired the king, about six weeks ago, to provide him a successor, and was entreated only to keep the seals till a proper person should be thought of. When the matter came to be discussed, it was found very difficult. The Duke of Grafton declared, that being deprived of Lord Chatham's support, he could not continue to serve without Mr. Conway: and a total dissolution of the ministry seemed to be the effect of the incident. Negotiations were accordingly set on foot with the leaders of the opposition, and a great meeting of them was held last week, at Bedford House. It was found that they could not, by any means, agree in their demands; and they separated in mutual discontent. Every body thinks that Mr. Conway has now satisfied, to the full, the point of honour, in which he is very scrupulous, and that he will cordially resume his functions, especially as he stands so well with the king and his fellow ministers, and has brought it within the choice of his old friends to accept of the ministry, if they had thought proper. I was beginning to wish for our dissolution; but upon this turn of affairs, I resume my occupations with cheerfulness."

The remainder of this letter is devoted to a matter in which we have already frequently found him taking interest — the education of his nephews. From his earliest to his latest days, his connexion with his elder brother was cordial and affectionate. On the 6th of October we find him writing, in a tone which indicates a sympathy with some domestic calamity which his brother must have suffered: —

"The time of your going to Edinburgh approaches, which makes a great change in your way of life, and will naturally make yourself, as well as all your friends, anxious about the issue of it. However, I cannot but think that you will there live more cheerfully, with all your children about you, than in the country, during the winter, when your boys were absent. At first only, as your spirits are not very strong at present, you may feel uneasy at the alteration, as you are at present somewhat apprehensive about it."

There was apparently but one point in which the two brothers differed; and it was a subject on which Hume seems to have been at war with all his clan. The Laird of Ninewells, notwithstanding all the lustre that had now gathered round the name of *Hume*, would not adopt it in place of that of *Home*, which his father had borne. He was a simple, single-hearted man, moderate in all his views and wishes, and neither ambitious of distinction nor of wealth. He passed his life as a retired country gentleman; and while Europe was full of his brother's name, he was so averse to notoriety, that he is known to have objected to the domestic events of births, marriages, and deaths, in his family, obtaining the usual publicity through the newspapers. His eldest son, Joseph, frequently mentioned in the following correspondence, succeeded him in his estate and retired habits, but not entirely in his disposition; for he indulged in many of the eccentricities and peculiarities so often exhibited by the Scottish gentry, — a characteristic they seem to derive from the circumstance, that, in the British empire, there is no person less liable to encounter an equal, and to be thwarted in his small exercise of absolute power, than a Scottish laird. It is evident from his uncle's letters, that Joseph obtained an excellent education. He was for some time placed under the charge of poor Blacklock, — an arrangement by which Hume sought to perform a double act of beneficence. Joseph died unmarried, on 14th February, 1832, and was succeeded by his brother David, whose career was more public and distinguished. He was born on 27th February, 1757, and died on 27th July, 1838. He was successively sheriff of the counties of Berwick and Linlithgow. He was professor of Scots law in the university of Edinburgh, and a principal clerk of Session. He subsequently resigned these offices, on his being appointed a Baron of the Scottish Exchequer. His works are of great authority in the practical departments of the law. While he taught in the university, his students zealously collected notes of his lectures; and, as he refused to permit any version of them to be published, the well preserved collections of these notes have been considered valuable treasuries of legal wisdom. In 1790, he published “Commentaries on the law of Scotland, respecting trials for crimes;” and, in 1797, “Commentaries on the law of Scotland respecting the description and punishment of crimes,” forming, in four quarto volumes, a comprehensive treatise on all the departments of the criminal law of Scotland, which has now passed through three editions. It has been justly remarked, that lawyers of the present generation, can, with difficulty, appreciate the merit of this work, because, from its having converted the whole subject it embraces into a system, the chaotic mass, from which the present comparatively orderly criminal code of Scotland was constructed, has disappeared.

Few literary reputations have been more unlike each other than those of the two David Humes, uncle and nephew. The former hated legal details and the jargon of technical phraseology; to the latter they were the breath of his literary life. The one, as a philosopher, saw, throughout a wide circumference of vision, the relations to each other of the most distant objects of human knowledge; the latter saw nothing beyond the bounds of the professional details before him; but these he noted with an unrivalled accuracy. The strength, clearness, and beauty of the philosopher’s language have been a lasting object of admiration; the lawyer’s diction was clumsy, rude, and ponderous, without being either strong or clear. On one point only did they agree — their political opinions; and yet, on this subject, they seem not always to have been in unison. From a very curious letter, which will be found a few pages farther on, it appears that Hume thought it necessary seriously to warn his nephew against republican principles. Few, who are only acquainted with the opinions of Baron Hume’s later life, will be inclined to believe that this danger could ever have been serious. He was a supporter of all those parts of the criminal law of Scotland, — in his day not a few, — which put the subject at the mercy of the crown and of the judges; and a warm admirer of his sagacity and learning, as a lawyer, cannot quit this subject without regretting that these qualities should have been brought to aid the promulgation of arbitrary principles.

The education of his nephews, occupies, as has been already stated, the remainder of the letter by Hume to his brother above cited.

“My present situation revives those reflections which have frequently occurred to me concerning the education of your sons, particularly of Josey, whose age now advances, and seems to approach towards a crisis. The question is, whether he had better continue his education in Scotland or in England. There are several advantages of a Scots education; but the question is, whether that of the language does not counterbalance them, and determine the preference to the English. He is now of an age to learn it perfectly; but if a few years elapse, he may acquire such an accent, as he will never be able to cure of. It is not yet determined what profession he shall be of: but it must always be of great advantage to speak properly: especially if it should prove, as we have reason to hope, that his good parts will open him the road of ambition. The only inconvenience is, that few Scotsmen, that have had an English education, have ever settled cordially in their own country; and they have been commonly lost ever after to their friends. However, as this consequence is not necessary, the superior recommendations of an English education ought not to be neglected. I have been making inquiries for some time, and on the whole I find Eton the best place for the education of youth. He would there be able to form connexions with many young people of distinction; though the whole expense would scarcely exceed £70 a-year, which I fancy is little more than he costs you at present. I suggest, therefore, this idea to you that you may weigh it at leisure, and determine upon it. I know you do not like to be hurried, and therefore the more time for reflection the better. His friend and companion, young Adam, is coming up soon, but is going to Westminster school, which is a place that I find some objections to.

"I hope Mrs. Home is perfectly recovered. I am glad to hear such good news of Jock. I had a letter from Davie last week, which gave me pleasure. I am, dear brother, yours sincerely."

On 13th October, in a letter of which a portion has been cited above, Hume writes further on the same subject:

"Dear Brother, — I never prognosticated well of Josey's genius for the mathematics, from his great slowness in learning arithmetic: and I am not surprised to find that his progress in Euclid has not been so great as might have been expected from his quickness and his capacity in other particulars. There is indeed something very unaccountable in his turn; so childish in many cases, and yet so manly, and quick, and sensible in others. The presence of strangers, above all, seems to make him recollect himself, and he is exceedingly taking among them. His address in particular, is remarkably good, and he seems to have a turn for the world and for company. However, I do not think him by any means deficient in his talents for literature. It appeared to me that he always read his books with a very good taste, Latin as well as French and English; and I imagine that he will make at least a very gentlemanlike scholar. I wish therefore he had a further trial of the Greek; and if that will not do, I think with you that the Italian is an easy and genteel acquisition, which will furnish him with occupation for this winter."

Hume expressed no high respect for the historical abilities of Dr. Smollett, nor could he have well expected credit for sincerity if he had done so. With the works in which the novelist let loose his native genius, it is not likely that the philosopher could have had much sympathy. But two letters addressed by him to Smollett, show that the successful and affluent man of letters was substantially kind and friendly to his less fortunate countryman.

Hume *to* Tobias Smollett.

"London, July 18, 1767.

"Dear Sir, — I have had a conversation with Lord Shelburne concerning your affairs: he told me that he had long been pre-engaged for the consulship of Nice to the Spanish ambassador, and could not possibly get free of that obligation. I then mentioned the consulship of Leghorn; but he said he was already engaged for that office to a friend of Mr. Dunning, the lawyer. On the whole, I cannot flatter you with any hopes of success from that quarter; even supposing his lordship were to remain in office, which is very uncertain, considering the present state of our ministry. For of all our annual confusions, the present seems to be the most violent, and to threaten the most entire revolution, and the most important events. As Lord Chatham's state of health appears totally desperate, and as Lord Shelburne's connexion is supposed to be chiefly, if not solely, with him, many people foretell a short duration to the greatness of the last named minister. Every thing is uncertain: there is a mighty combination to overpower the king. The force of the crown is great; but is not employed with that steadiness which its friends would wish. I pretend not to foresee, much less to foretell, the consequences. I am, dear sir, your most obedient, and most humble servant," &c.

It has been a matter of speculation, if not of dispute among ecclesiastical politicians, how far Hume had an influence in the dispensation of church patronage in Scotland. The following letters, having however a more immediate reference to state politics, may be held to afford some light on this question.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

“London, 13th August, 1767.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I am told that the minister of Kirkton, in the Presbytery of Jedburgh, is either dying, or is to be removed, and that the living is in the gift of the crown. I have spoke to General Conway desiring that, in case no unexpected difficulties occur, he may give it to my nephew’s tutor; and he has agreed to it. I have since heard, that the living, though it stands in our list as a crown presentation, is alternately in the gift of Sir John Elliot of Stobs, and Cavers Douglas. I shall be much obliged to you, if, without mentioning the reason, you could make inquiries, and give me information.

“You have heard, no doubt, that all our negotiations have vanished, and that our present ministry is settled on a firmer basis than ever. Mr. Conway’s delicacy of honour was satisfied, by bringing his old friends the Rockinghams to have an offer; and as it was impossible for them to concert a ministry, he has agreed to act cordially with the Duke of Grafton: the king is very happy that no changes are to have place. I do not reckon the change in Ireland for any thing, because Lord Bristol goes out at his own earnest and repeated desire. I am told that Lord Townsend openly ascribes his own promotion entirely to the friendship of Lord Bute. Charles Fitzroy lately, in a great meeting, proposed Lord Bute’s health in a bumper. It will be a surprise to you certainly, if that noble lord should again come into fashion, and openly avow his share of influence, and be openly courted by all the world. I am, dear Sir Gilbert, yours sincerely.”

“10th Sept. 1767.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — Lord North has refused the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer; though it was earnestly pressed upon him, and though he professed an entire satisfaction with every person in the administration. He dreads the labour of the office, especially as it obliges him to take so great a part in the business of the House of Commons. It will not probably be offered to any Scotsman, for fear of popular reflections concerning the influence of the Thane. The same objection, as well as others, lie against Dyson, who has been thought of. I see the ministry in some perplexity; perhaps this incident may draw on new resignations and negotiations, and cabals. I think one defect of the present situation of our government is, that nobody desires much to have any share in the administration, except adventurers, of whom the public is naturally distrustful. The pecuniary emoluments are of no consideration to men of rank and fortune. You have often more personal regard from being in the opposition. The protection of the law is at all times sufficient for your security; and by acquiring authority you are exposed to insults, instead of gaining the power to revenge them. Why, then, should a man of birth, fortune, and parts, sacrifice his fame and peace to an ungrateful public? Such is the defect that arises from the perfection of the most perfect government."

The next in the chronological order of Hume's letters, reverts to the prospect of his continuing his History.

Hume *to* Andrew Millar.

"19th October, 1767.

"Dear Sir, — The picture which Donaldson has done for me is a drawing; and, in every body's opinion, as well as my own, is the likest that has been done for me, as well as the best likeness. Since you still insist that an engraving should be made from it, we are [thus] more likely to have a good engraving made than by any other means. I shall, however, be glad to sit to Ferguson. I intend to give up all my leisure time to the correction of my History, and to contrive more leisure than I have possessed since I came into public office. I had run over four volumes; but I shall give them a second perusal, and employ the same, or greater accuracy in correcting the other four. I shall read carefully all the records in the Paper Office, as far back as they go, and shall leave nothing untried that may bestow the greatest exactness upon it. For this reason, as well as many others, I would not have you precipitate this edition, which is probably the last that I may have occasion to make. I would wish to leave that work as little imperfect as possible to posterity. I am," &c.

Gibbon tells us, in his amusing autobiography, that with the assistance of his friend Deyverdun, he had written in French a portion of a history of Switzerland, and that the opinions he heard expressed when a fragment of it was anonymously read before a society in London, prompted him to abandon the work, and burn the portion he had written. "I delivered," he says, "my imperfect sketches to the flames." Yet, singularly enough, he seems to have confounded the intention with the fulfilment, for they were discovered after his death, but were not thought worthy of being published by his literary executor, Lord Sheffield. Gibbon had endeavoured to find for his friend Deyverdun some employment in England, picturesquely observing, that his own "purse was always open, but it was often empty."

They wrote in company some numbers of a periodical, now very rare, called "*Mémoires Littéraires de La Grande Bretagne*," and Gibbon informs us that these specimens of their labours introduced them to the notice of Hume, in whose office Deyverdun held an appointment at the date of the following letter: —

Gibbon *to* Hume.

Baiton, 4th October, 1767.

Sir, — A six years' residence in Switzerland inspired me with the design of writing a general history of that brave and free people, so little known to the rest of Europe, but whom I had studied with some attention. This design was dropt almost as soon as conceived, from the almost insurmountable difficulty of procuring proper materials, as they were mostly in German, a language I am totally unacquainted with. A Swiss gentleman, and intimate friend of mine, has removed that difficulty. Mr. Deyverdun, who passed the summer with me in the country two years ago, approved very much my design, and offered to assist me by translating what was most difficult, himself, and by superintending a German translator, as to the remainder. He is now returning to London after a much shorter visit than I desired; and as he has the happiness of supporting some connexion with you, I flattered myself that you might indulge a wish, perhaps presumptuous, that I had conceived, and that you would condescend to glance your eye over the sheets of this History, which I had already drawn up in a language indeed foreign to an Englishman, but which the favourable reception of a former essay engaged me to make use of.

Give me leave, sir, to add, that I must beg you to consider this liberty as a proof of my respect; and that I shall consider your severity as a mark of your esteem. If you advise me to burn what I have already wrote, I shall immediately execute your sentence, with a full persuasion that it is just. Let me say, however, I have perhaps vanity enough to make so unlimited a sacrifice to no man in Europe but to Mr. Hume. I am, sir, with the greatest esteem, your most obedient humble servant,

E. Gibbon, Junior.

Hume *to* Gibbon.

"London, 24th October, 1767.

"Sir, — It is but a few days since Mr. Deyverdun put your manuscript into my hands; and I have perused it with great pleasure and satisfaction. I have only one objection, derived from the language in which it is written.

Why do you compose in French, and carry fagots into the wood, as Horace says, with regard to the Romans who wrote in Greek? I grant, that you have a like motive to those Romans, and adopt a language much more generally diffused than your native tongue: but have you not remarked the fate of those two ancient languages in following ages? The Latin, though then less celebrated, and confined to more narrow limits, has, in some measure, outlived the Greek, and is now more generally understood by men of letters. Let the French, therefore, triumph in the present diffusion of their tongue. Our solid and increasing establishments in America, where we need less dread the inundation of barbarians, promise a superior stability and duration to the English language.

"Your use of the French tongue has also led you into a style more poetical and figurative, and more highly coloured, than our language seems to admit of in historical productions: for such is the practice of French writers, particularly the more recent ones, who illuminate their pictures more than custom will permit us. On the whole, your History, in my opinion, is written with spirit and judgment; and I exhort you very earnestly to continue it. The objections that occurred to me on reading it were so frivolous, that I shall not trouble you with them, and should, I believe, have a difficulty to collect them. I am, with great esteem," &c.

Some remarks communicated to Dr. Robertson, on his "History of Charles V." while that work was passing through the press, have deservedly attracted notice by their unconstrained and natural playfulness.

Hume *to* Dr. Robertson.

I got yesterday from Strahan about thirty sheets of your History to be sent over to Suard, and last night and this morning have run them over with great avidity. I could not deny myself the satisfaction (which I hope also will not displease you) of expressing presently my extreme approbation of them. To say only that they are very well written, is by far too faint an expression, and much inferior to the sentiments I feel. They are composed with nobleness, with dignity, with elegance, and with judgment, to which there are few equals. They even excel, and, I think, in a sensible degree, your "History of Scotland." I propose to myself great pleasure in being the only man in England, during some months, who will be in the situation of doing you justice, — after which you may certainly expect that my voice will be drowned in that of the public.

You know that you and I have always been on the footing of finding in each other’s productions *something to blame, and something to commend*; and therefore you may perhaps expect also some seasoning of the former kind; but really neither my leisure nor inclination allowed me to make such remarks; and I sincerely believe you have afforded me very small materials for them. However, such particulars as occur to my memory, I shall mention. *Maltreat* is a Scoticism which occurs once. What the devil had you to do with that old fashioned dangling word *wherewith*? I should as soon take back *whereupon, whereunto,* and *wherewithal*. I think the only tolerable decent gentleman of the family is *wherein*; and I should not choose to be often seen in his company. But I know your affection for *wherewith* proceeds from your partiality to Dean Swift, whom I can often laugh with, whose style I can even approve, but surely can never admire. It has no harmony, no eloquence, no ornament; and not much correctness, whatever the English may imagine. Were not their literature still in a somewhat barbarous state, that author’s place would not be so high among their classics. But what a fancy is this you have taken of saying always *an hand, an heart, an head*? Have you *an ear*? Do you not know that this (n) is added before vowels to prevent the cacophony, and ought never to take place before (h) when that letter is sounded? It is never pronounced in these words; why should it be wrote? Thus, I should say, *a history,* and *an historian*; and so would you too, if you had any sense. But you tell me that Swift does otherwise. To be sure there is no reply to that; and we must swallow your *hath* too upon the same authority. I will see you d —— d sooner. But I will endeavour to keep my temper.

I do not like this sentence in page 149: *This step was taken in consequence of the treaty Wolsey had concluded with the Emperor at Brussels, and which had hitherto been kept secret.* Si sic omnia dixisses, I should never have been plagued with hearing your praises so often sounded, and that fools preferred your style to mine. Certainly it had been better to have said, *which* Wolsey, &c. That relative ought very seldom to be omitted; and is here particularly requisite to preserve a symmetry between the two members of the sentence. You omit the relative too often, which is a colloquial barbarism, as Mr Johnson calls it.

Your periods are sometimes, though not often, too long. Suard will be embarrassed with them, as the modish French style runs into the other extreme.

Turgot, at the instigation of some Italian friends, had applied to Hume to recommend a scholar, who would undertake to teach the English language and literature at Parma. He selected Robert Liston; but he had overlooked an objection which the enlightened promoters of the scheme in Italy appear to have considered too obvious to require preliminary explanation, that Liston was a Protestant! In returning thanks to Hume for the unavailing recommendation, Liston discovers the bent of his genius, by desiring that, if an opportunity should occur, Hume would recommend him as secretary of legation to any of the secondary embassies. The fate of the Parma scheme was thus communicated to Elliot.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

“London, 5th July, 1768.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I beg of you to direct the enclosed to poor Liston, who will be disappointed in the scheme for Parma: they will have nothing but a Papist. Such fools! Let the Pope excommunicate them on the one hand: I will do so on the other.

“I have seen a book newly printed at Edinburgh, called ‘Philosophical Essays:’ it has no manner of sense in it, but is wrote with tolerable neatness of style: whence I conjecture it to be our friend, Sir David’s. I am obliged to him for the treatment which he destines me, to be locked up for five years in a dungeon, and then to be hanged, and my carcass to be thrown out of Scotland. He supports himself, indeed, by the authority of Plato, whom I own to be truly divine. Pray, have you seen the book? Is it Sir David’s? I think it has not so many attempts at humour, as that pious gentleman would employ.

“We are all very quiet here; as quiet as you are at Minto, though perhaps not so busy. No more noise of Wilkes and Liberty. Lord Mansfield said to me, that it was impossible for him to condemn him to the pillory, because the attorney-general did not demand it. Yesterday he represented to the Spanish ambassador, that moderate sentence, as a refinement in politics, which reduced the scoundrel the sooner to obscurity. It would be a strange cause, which he could not find plausible reasons to justify.

“I beg to be remembered to Lady Elliot, and to any of your family who may be at Minto. I ever am, dear Sir Gilbert, yours sincerely.”

Sir Gilbert Elliot *to* Hume.

“Minto, 11th July, 1768.

“I am sorry, my dear sir, for poor Liston’s disappointment. I am told he thought himself secure. I have seen the book you mention; but you do injustice to our friend Sir David. He is not the author; but a very moral and worthy man, who, I believe, once had the honour to attend you in some of your writings before, — his name James Balfour — at least I am told so. The young feudal author, Gilbert Stewart, is just now in my neighbourhood; and, his father tells me, impatient, to a great degree, for your letter. It seems he is much your admirer. However, I hope my criticisms, on some parts of his work, may keep him from carrying his admiration, on some points, too far. Not that I mean to close with my friend, Mr. Balfour, in his candid proposition for treating you after the manner of the divine Plato. I rest entirely on you for politics, changes of ministry, foreign politics, and domestic occurrences. I have now no correspondents; and I did not think it prudent to engage with any ministerial men; as I might be led, in such a correspondence, to commit mistakes, which may be inconvenient next winter. Farming, I find, is very expensive — days’ wages now at a shilling; but our fields are green, and the hedges thrive. I hope to see your brother this autumn. He is very orthodox, I am told, so far as husbandry goes. I hope to hear your love affair, and your King William, are in a good way. My wife not yet arrived. Yours,” &c.

Gilbert Stuart, then unknown to fame, whether good or bad, and still possessed of any small portion of modesty he had ever been endowed with, was about to publish his little work on the British constitution, the temporary celebrity of which had so prejudicial an effect on his subsequent career. We shall afterwards have an opportunity of noticing him on an occasion when he seems to have thought that the relation which Hume and he bore to each other, in 1768, of humble admirer and distinguished patron, was reversed in his favour.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

“22d July, 1768.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I send you my letter enclosed to Mr. Stewart; which I hope is calculated to encourage a young man of merit. Without overstraining the compliment, it were better, however, for him, and for every body, to pursue, in preference to the idle trade of writing, some other lawful occupation, such as cheating like an attorney; quacking like a physician; canting and hypocrising like a parson, &c. &c. &c. It is for very little purpose to go out of the common track. Does he expect to make men wiser? a very pretty expectation truly!

"I fancy the ministry will remain; though surely their late remissness, or ignorance, or pusillanimity, ought to make them ashamed to show their faces, were it even at Newmarket. There are fine doings in America. O! how I long to see America and the East Indies revolted, totally and finally, — the revenue reduced to half, — public credit fully discredited by bankruptcy, — the third of London in ruins, and the rascally mob subdued! I think I am not too old to despair of being witness to all these blessings. I approve of your farming scheme, notwithstanding the expense; though your situation, as well for markets as means of improvement, is not advantageous. My brother's advice may be of use to you; but you are always to remember that he is of the sect of the *médecin tant pis*; had he possessed enterprise, proportioned to his industry and skill, he might have gone far in that way.

"I continue my parasitical practices; that is, of dining at all the great tables that remain in London. We are likely to be plagued with this King of Denmark; though not so much as formerly with Canute the Great. I have some thoughts of paying a visit to France this autumn; that is, if I can collect enough of resolution to leave the present place of abode.

"When I wrote last, I did not know that Lady —— had eloped; that practice continues very fashionable here; and it is to be hoped will spread itself more and more every day!

"I thought Sir David had been the only Christian that could write English on the other side of the Tweed. I did not think of Balfour. It is very true he would fain, I see, be candid, and civil, as in his other book; if his zeal for the house of the Lord would permit him.

"Lord Bute certainly sets out this day se'ennight, and, it is said, is in a very bad state of health.

"Lord Chatham is a greater paradox than ever: — is seen at home by no human creature; — absolutely by none! rides twenty miles every day, — is seen on the road, and appears in perfect good health; but will now speak to no creature he meets. I am much persuaded, all is quackery; — he is not mad; that is, no madder than usual."

Towards the end of the year 1768, poor Smollett, with his spirit crushed by the united calamities of a broken constitution and ruined fortunes, sought to retrieve his health, by travelling in Italy. Before commencing his journey, he wrote the following letter; in which the too apparent tone of despondency is yet insufficient to damp the kindly warmth of his feelings:—

Tobias Smollett *to* Hume.

London, 31st August, 1768.

Dear Sir, — Perhaps I overrate my own consequence when I presume to recommend to your acquaintance and good offices, the bearer, Captain Robert Stobo; a man whose very extraordinary services and sufferings in America, have merited, and obtained the most ample and honourable testimonials, which he will gladly submit to your perusal. I can safely say from my own knowledge, that he is not less modest and sensible in the conversation and occurrences of civil life, than enterprising and indefatigable in his military capacity. All these good qualities, united to an extensive knowledge of our American concerns, cannot fail to engage the friendship and regard of Mr. David Hume, from what quarter so ever they may come recommended.

With respect to myself, I am sorry I cannot have the pleasure of taking leave of you in person, before I go into perpetual exile. I sincerely wish you all health and happiness. In whatever part of the earth it may be my fate to reside, I shall always remember with pleasure, and recapitulate with pride, the friendly intercourse I have maintained with one of the best men, and undoubtedly the best writer of the age; if any judgment in distinguishing either character or capacity may be allowed to, dear sir, your very humble servant,

T^s Smollett.

Nos patriam fugimus: tu, Tityre, lentus in umbra,
Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas.

Hume *to* Tobias Smollett.

“Ragley, September 21, 1768.

“My dear Sir, — I did not see your friend, Captain Stobo, till the day before I left Cirencester, and only for a little time; but he seemed to be a man of good sense, and has surely had the most extraordinary adventures in the world. He has promised to call on me when he comes to London, and I shall always see him with pleasure.

“But what is this you tell me of your perpetual exile, and of your never returning to this country? I hope that as this idea arose from the bad state of your health, it will vanish on your recovery; which, from your past experience, you may expect from those happier climates to which you are retiring; after which the desire of revisiting your native country will probably return upon you, unless the superior cheapness of foreign countries prove an obstacle, and detain you there. I could wish that means had been fallen on to remove this objection; and that at least it might be equal to you to live any where, except where the consideration of your health gave the preference to one climate above another. But the indifference of ministers towards literature, which has been long, and indeed always, the case in England, gives little prospect of any alteration in this particular.

“I am sensible of your great partiality, in the good opinion you express towards me; but it gives me no less pleasure than if it were founded on the greatest truth, for I accept it as a pledge of your good will and friendship. I wish an opportunity of showing my sense of it may present itself during your absence. I assure you I should embrace it with great alacrity, and you need have no scruple, on every occasion, of having recourse to me. I am, my dear sir, with great esteem and sincerity, your most obedient, and most humble servant,” &c.

Of the following remarkable letter, the first paragraph, relating to the success of John Home’s new play, has already been published. The remainder will probably be as surprising to the reader as it is new. It is very evident that Hume exercised towards the great Chatham, Dr. Johnson’s virtue of honest hatred. There was indeed little love lost between these great contemporaries; for Chatham fiercely attacked the constitutional doctrines of the History of England, and Hume looked upon the national idol as an unprincipled demagogue. The words with which the observations on the Douglas cause conclude, are evidence of the contempt which, amidst all his Tory prepossessions, Hume preserved for merely hereditary rank, and indeed for all nominal and outward marks of distinction, which were not allied to intellectual superiority.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

“Park Place, London, 28th March, 1769.

“Dear Doctor,— ‘The Fatal Discovery’ succeeded, and deserved it. It has feeling, though not equal to ‘Douglas,’ in my opinion. The versification of it is not enough finished. Our friend escaped by lying concealed; but the success of all plays in this age is very feeble; and people now heed the theatre almost as little as the pulpit. History now is the favourite reading, and our other friend the favourite historian. Nothing can be more successful than his last production; nor more deservedly. I agree with you, it is beyond his first performance, as was indeed natural to be expected. I hope, for a certain reason, which I keep to myself, that he does not intend, in his third work, to go beyond his second, though I am damnably afraid he will, for the subject is much more interesting. Neither the character of Charles V., nor the incidents of his life, are very interesting; and, were it not for the first volume, the success of this work, though perfectly well writ, would not have been so shining.

“This madness about Wilkes excited first indignation, then apprehension; but has gone to such a height that all other sentiments with me are buried in ridicule. This exceeds the absurdity of Titus Gates and the Popish plot: and is so much more disgraceful to the nation, as the former folly, being derived from religion, flowed from a source which has from uniform prescription acquired a right to impose nonsense on all nations and all ages. But the present extravagance is peculiar to ourselves, and quite risible. However, I am afraid my mirth will soon be spoilt, and affairs become quite serious; for I am well assured that Lord Chatham will, after the holidays, creep out from his retreat and appear on the scene.

Depositis novus exuviis, nitidusque juventâ,
Volvitur ad solem et linguis micat ore trisulcis.

“I know not if I cite Virgil exactly, but I am sure I apply him right. This villain is to thunder against the violation of the Bill of Rights in not allowing the county of Middlesex the choice of its member! Think of the impudence of that fellow, and his quackery — and his cunning — and his audaciousness: and judge of the influence he will have over such a deluded multitude.

“I was struck with a very sensible indignation at the decision of the Douglas cause, though I foresaw it for some time. It was abominable with regard to poor Andrew Stuart, who had conducted that cause with singular ability and integrity; and was at last exposed to reproach, which unfortunately never can be wiped off. For the cause, though not in the least intricate, is so complicated, that it never will be reviewed by the public, who are besides perfectly pleased with the sentence; being swayed by compassion and a few popular topics. To one who understands the cause as I do, nothing could appear more scandalous than the pleadings of the two law lords. Such gross misrepresentation, such impudent assertions, such groundless imputations, never came from that place. But all was good enough for their audience; who, bating their quality, are most of them little better than their brethren the Wilkites in the streets.

"I am very much obliged to you for giving me the acquaintance of your cousin, Mr. Blair, who seems, indeed, to me, a very accomplished young man. The death of your brother-in-law is a great loss to you, and even to us all. I comprehend myself; for I intend to visit you soon, and for good and all. Indeed, I know not what detains me here, except that it is so much a matter of indifference where I live; and I am amused with looking on the scene, which really begins to be interesting. I had taken one of Allan Ramsay's houses; but gave it up again, on the representation of some of my friends in Edinburgh, who said that a house, on the north side of a high hill, in the 56th degree of latitude, could not be healthful. But I now repent it, though I have my old house to retreat to till I get a better. I am glad you like my nephew. He is, indeed, clever, though, I am afraid, a little giddy."

Andrew Stuart, who is noticed in the preceding letter, and has frequently been referred to in Hume's correspondence, was a man of great talent. His letters to Lord Mansfield, on the Douglas cause, remarkable for their solemn asperity, belong to a species of literature, of which the English language scarcely boasts of any other instance, — a systematic and serious arraignment of the conduct of a Judge in the highest court in the realm, by the law agent of a litigant! Stuart conducted the investigations in France, on which the evidence that the children said to be born to Lady Jane Douglas were spurious, was founded; and from the strange circumstances brought forward in the evidence, we can imagine that, if Stuart had left a diary of his adventures and inquiries, few works of fiction could be more interesting. His arraignment of the judge was accompanied by an act almost equally anomalous: his challenging the counsel on the other side — who was Mr. Wedderburn, afterwards Lord Loughborough — on account of the manner in which his conduct had been spoken of in the appeal case. The challenge was accepted; but neither party was wounded. From occasional allusions, in Hume's correspondence, he and Stuart appear to have been early friends; and many of the letters, which he preserved, within a few years of his death, are from Stuart, who, occasionally, appears to write in acknowledgment of pecuniary advances. Among Hume's papers, there is a letter, of which the address has not been preserved, but in which there is a note, in Baron

Hume's handwriting, that it was, "respecting his friend Stuart — Andrew, I suppose." The letter has a sufficient interest in itself. It is as follows: —

"My dear Sir, — Nothing can be more just than the sentiment you have expressed in your letter. I am to be envied for having had it in my power to contribute to the happiness of the best man, and the most intimate friend I have ever had in the world. There is nothing else in the possession of a fortune that deserves the least envy or the least consideration. Every man is independent who thinks himself so. But every man has not been blessed with such a friend, or with the power of showing, in some small degree, the value he puts upon worth, delicacy, attachment, and ability like his. It adds to my happiness not a little, that your sentiments coincide so entirely with mine. You have known Stuart enough to value him as much as I do; and he has too much discernment not to put the same high value upon you, which you have commanded from every one of your friends."

Hume received a letter from the Abbé Morellet, dated 15th May 1769, requesting him to accept of a copy of his forthcoming "*Prospectus d'un Nouveau Dictionnaire de Commerce*;" and to distribute some others among a list of names, including those of Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin. The comprehensive work of which the Abbé thus developed what he considered the proper principles, was never written by him. He was too much occupied with fugitive literature, and the absorbing politics of the time, to be able seriously to pursue a project involving so much steady industry. Hume answered as follows: —

Hume *to the* Abbé Morellet.

London, 10th July, 1769.

That part of your prospectus, in which you endeavour to prove that there enters nothing of human convention in the establishment of money, is certainly very curious, and very elaborately composed; and yet I cannot forbear thinking that the common opinion has some foundation. It is true, money must always be made of some materials, which have intrinsic value, otherwise it would be multiplied without end, and would sink to nothing. But, when I take a shilling, I consider it not as a useful metal, but as something which another will take from me; and the person who shall convert it into metal is, probably, several millions of removes distant. You know that all states have made it criminal to melt their coin; and, though this is a law which cannot well be executed, it is not to be supposed that, if it could, it would entirely destroy the value of the money, according to your hypothesis. You have a base coin, called billon, in France, composed of silver and copper, which has a ready currency, though the separation of the two metals, and the reduction of them to their primitive state, would, I am told, be both expensive and troublesome. Our shillings and sixpences, which are almost our only silver coin, are so much worn by use, that they are twenty, thirty, or forty per cent. below their original value; yet they pass currently; which can arise only from a tacit convention. Our colonies in America, for want of specie, used to coin a paper currency; which were not bank notes, because there was no place appointed to give money in exchange: yet this paper currency passed in all payments, by convention; and might have gone on, had it not been abused by the several assemblies, who issued paper without end, and thereby discredited the currency.

You mention several kinds of money, sheep, oxen, fish, employed as measures of exchange, or as money, in different parts of the world. You have overlooked that, in our colony of Pennsylvania, the land itself, which is the chief commodity, is coined, and passes in circulation. The manner of conducting this affair is as follows: — A planter, immediately after he purchases any land, can go to a public office and receive notes to the amount of half the value of his land; which notes he employs in all payments, and they circulate through the whole colony, by convention. To prevent the public from being overwhelmed by this fictitious money, there are two means employed — first, the notes issued to any one planter, must not exceed a certain sum, whatever may be the value of his land: secondly, every planter is obliged to pay back into the public office every year one-tenth part of his notes; the whole, of course, is annihilated in ten years; after which, it is again allowed him to take out new notes to half the value of his land. An account of this curious operation would enrich your dictionary; and you may have a more particular detail of it, if you please, from Dr. Franklin, who will be in Paris about this time, and will be glad to see you. I conveyed to him your prospectus, and he expressed to me a great esteem of it.

I see that, in your prospectus, you take care not to disoblige your economists, by any declaration of your sentiments; in which I commend your prudence. But I hope that in your work you will thunder them, and crush them, and pound them, and reduce them to dust and ashes! They are, indeed, the set of men the most chimerical and most arrogant that now exist, since the annihilation of the Sorbonne. I ask your pardon for saying so, as I know you belong to that venerable body. I wonder what could engage our friend, M. Turgot, to herd among them; I mean, among the economists; though I believe he was also a Sorbonnist.

I sent your prospectus to Dr. Tucker, but have not heard from him since. I shall myself deliver copies to Dr. Robertson and Mr. Smith, as I go to Scotland this autumn.

And now, my dear Abbé, what remains to me but to wish you success in your judicious labours? to embrace you, and through you, to embrace all our common friends, D'Alembert, Helvétius, Buffon, Baron d'Holbach, Suard, Mlle. L'Espinasse? Poor Abbé Le Bon is dead, I hear. The Abbé Galliani goes to Naples: he does well to leave Paris before I come thither; for I should certainly put him to death for all the ill he has spoken of England. But it has happened, as was foretold by his friend, Caraccioli; who said that the Abbé would remain two months in this country, would speak all himself, would not allow an Englishman to utter a syllable; and after returning would give the character of the nation during the rest of his life, as if he were perfectly well acquainted with them.

Pray make my compliments to M. Maletête. Tell him, that Prince Masserane says, that he has saved much effusion of blood to this country. It is certain that M. Maletête had a great curiosity to see a riot here, and yet was resolved to keep his person in safety. For this purpose, he hired a window; and proposed to be present at one of the mad elections of Wilkes, and to divert himself with the fray. Somebody got a hint of it, and put it into the newspapers; asking the freeholders if they were so degenerate as to make themselves a laughing stock, even to the French, their enemies, whom they despised. Prince Masserane alleges that this incident made that election so remarkably peaceable!

Are you acquainted with Crébillon? I am ashamed to mention his name. He sent me over his last work, with a very obliging letter: but as I must write to him in French, I have never answered him. If all the English were as impertinent as I am, the Abbé Galliani would have reason to abuse us. — I am, dear Abbé, after asking your blessing, yours sincerely.

"I returned to Edinburgh in 1769," says Hume in his "own Life," "very opulent, (for I possessed a revenue of £1000 a-year) healthy, and though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation." He had thus finally triumphed over the temptations which assailed him abroad, and resolved to spend the remainder of his days among the friends of his youth. He had received very strong solicitations from Madame de Boufflers and others, to take up his abode at Paris. In one letter she informs him that there is a house prepared for him in the Temple, and another with a large garden near the Bois de Boulogne. To these pressing offers he seems not to have trusted himself with rendering a direct answer, leaving his projects undefined, until, by returning to Edinburgh, he rendered the acceptance of such invitations impracticable. Fairly re-established in his old house in James's Court, and enjoying its magnificent prospect, we find him thus writing to Smith: —

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"James's Court, 20th August, 1769.

"Dear Smith, — I am glad to have come within sight of you, and to have a view of Kirkaldy from my windows: but as I wish also to be within speaking terms of you, I wish we could concert measures for that purpose. I am mortally sick at sea, and regard with horror, and a kind of hydrophobia, the great gulf that lies between us. I am also tired of travelling; as much as you ought naturally to be of staying at home. I therefore propose to you to come hither, and pass some days with me in this solitude. I want to know what you have been doing; and propose to exact a rigorous account of the method in which you have employed yourself during your retreat. I am positive you are in the wrong in many of your speculations, especially where you have the misfortune to differ from me. All these are reasons for our meeting, and I wish you would make me some reasonable proposal for that purpose. There is no habitation on the island of Inchkeith, otherwise I should challenge you to meet me on that spot, and neither of us ever to leave the place, till we were fully agreed on all points of controversy. I expect General Conway here to morrow, whom I shall attend to Roseneath, and I shall remain there a few days. On my return, I expect to find a letter from you, containing a bold acceptance of this defiance. I am, dear Smith, yours sincerely."

The letters addressed to Hume at this time, show that he had made inquiries with the view of continuing the education of his nephews at one of the English universities. The following letter explains the reason why this plan was not adopted.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

"Edinburgh, 16th October, 1769.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I am very much obliged to you for the pains you have taken to give me an account of your sons’ expenses and management at Oxford. I found my brother undetermined, or rather averse, to the project. He thinks his son rather inclines to be dissipated and idle; and believes that a year or two at Oxford would confirm him thoroughly in that habit, without any other advantage than the acquiring of a little better pronunciation; for this reason he seems rather inclined to try him a year in the Law College here, before he makes him so much his own master.

“I have been settled here two months, and am here body and soul, without casting the least thought of regret to London, or even to Paris. I think it improbable that I shall ever in my life cross the Tweed, except perhaps a jaunt to the north of England, for health or amusement. I live still, and must for a twelvemonth, in my old house in James’s Court, which is very cheerful, and even elegant, but too small to display my great talent for cookery, the science to which I intend to addict the remaining years of my life! I have just now lying on the table before me, a receipt for making *soupe à la reine*, copied with my own hand: for beef and cabbage, (a charming dish,) and old mutton, and old claret, nobody excels me. I make also sheep-head broth, in a manner that Mr. Keith speaks of it for eight days after; and the Duc de Nivernois would bind himself apprentice to my lass to learn it. I have already sent a challenge to David Moncreif: you will see that in a twelvemonth he will take to the writing of history, the field I have deserted; for as to the giving of dinners, he can now have no further pretensions. I should have made a very bad use of my abode in Paris, if I could not get the better of a mere provincial like him. All my friends encourage me in this ambition; as thinking it will redound very much to my honour.

“I am delighted to see the daily and hourly progress of madness, and folly, and wickedness in England. The consummation of these qualities are the true ingredients for making a fine narrative in history, especially if followed by some signal and ruinous convulsion, — as I hope will soon be the case with that pernicious people! He must be a very bad cook indeed, who cannot make a palatable dish from the whole. You see in my reflexions and allusions, I shall mix my old and new professions together. I am, dear Sir Gilbert, your most obedient humble servant,” &c.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

“Edinburgh, 5th February, 1770.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I do not know whether you be good for any thing, or at all worth the applying to; I rather suspect not: but in case you are, I make you the following application in favour of Christopher Tate, probationer, who was tutor to my nephews. You know I resigned my pretensions on the presentation of Humbie to your nephew’s tutor; but under promise, that you would assist me in a like case. This kirk is a king’s presentation; it is within your county, and I very earnestly desire success in this application, and trust much to your friendship in it.

“The last unexpected incident strikes us mute with astonishment; either the Duke of Grafton is much to blame for leaving us so abruptly in so very critical a time, or a greater than he, if he got any just cause for it. I carry my view to very dismal consequences, especially as I suspect the last to be the case. I fancy we shall have curious scenes, worthy the pen of the greatest historian. I am tired and disgusted with conjecture. My compliments to Lady Elliot. Believe me to be very sincerely, your affectionate humble servant,” &c.

To Smith, whose “Wealth of Nations” was now supposed to be nearly ready for the press, we find the following letter: —

“6th February, 1770.

“What is the meaning of this, dear Smith, which we hear, that you are not to be here above a day or two, on your passage to London? How can you so much as entertain a thought of publishing a book full of reason, sense, and learning, to those wicked abandoned madmen?

“I suppose you have not yet got over your astonishment at this most astonishing resignation. For my part, I knew not at first whether to throw the blame on the Duke or the King; but I now find it is entirely and completely the Duke’s own; and I think him dishonoured for ever.”

This refers to the Duke of Grafton’s resignation, of which he proceeds to quote an account from “a very good hand,” prophesying tranquillity and the restoration of confidence.

“So far my friend — whose prophecy I hope will be fulfilled; though, for my part, I am rather inclined to give myself up to despair. Nothing but a rebellion and bloodshed will open the eyes of that deluded people; though, were they alone concerned, I think it is no matter what becomes of them.”

In the following letter, we have a farther, and a very strong instance of Hume’s dislike of the English as a people. We find him again busy in sifting his History of all remains of popular principles; and there is a tone throughout the letter, as if it were satisfactory to him to be able to overturn the objects of popular idolatry, which a people he so heartily disliked had endeavoured to set up, in the alleged antiquity of their constitution.

Hume *to* Sir Gilbert Elliot.

“Edinburgh, 21st February, 1770.

“Dear Sir Gilbert, — I am glad of your victories; though I look upon them all as temporary and imperfect, like the fallacious recoveries of a hectic person, who is hastening to his dissolution. Our government has become a chimera, and is too perfect, in point of liberty, for so rude a beast as an Englishman; who is a man, a bad animal too, corrupted by above a century of licentiousness. The misfortune is, that this liberty can scarcely be retrenched without danger of being entirely lost; at least the fatal effects of licentiousness must first be made palpable, by some extreme mischief resulting from it. I may wish that the catastrophe should rather fall on our posterity; but it hastens on with such large strides, as leave little room for this hope.

“I am running over again the last edition of my History, in order to correct it still further. I either soften or expunge many villanous, seditious Whig strokes, which had crept into it. I wish that my indignation at the present madness, encouraged by lies, calumnies, imposture, and every infamous act usual among popular leaders, may not throw me into the opposite extreme. I am, however, sensible that the first editions were too full of those foolish English prejudices, which all nations and all ages disavow.

“The present firm conduct of the king, and his manly resentment, afford some glimpse of hope. We, at a distance, are not acquainted with these matters; and few even at London; but there still appears something mysterious in the Duke of Grafton’s resignation. I hope it proceeded only from his discontents with Bedford House.

“But I detain you too long. I shall only conclude, that, though I reckon myself among the *sepoliti*, I cannot forbear expressing my hearty good wishes to your cause and you. I am, very sincerely, dear Sir Gilbert, your obliged humble servant.”

“Edinburgh, 5th April, 1770.

“I am sorry to inform you, that all we statesmen in this town condemn loudly the conduct of you statesmen in London, especially in allowing those insolent rascals, the mayor and sheriffs, to escape with impunity. We were much disappointed not to find them impeached, and a bill of pains and penalties passed upon them. The tumults which might have ensued in London, we thought rather an advantage; as it would give government an opportunity of chastising that abominable rabble. But you have thought otherwise; and it is pretended that these lenient maxims are succeeding; that faction abates, the tide turns, and the heroes of opposition are in despair. I am heartily glad of it: but this is a new experiment to reconcile such extreme license with government; and if, in a case where popular complaints had not the smallest shadow of pretence, the king and parliament have prevailed, after a long struggle, and with much difficulty, what must it be, where there is some plausible appearance, and perhaps some real ground of complaint, such as it is natural to expect in all governments? However, I repeat it, I am glad of the present appearance of tranquillity; and, indeed, distant dangers are not to be too anxiously provided against. I am," &c.

Hume seems to have now commenced the building of the house, in the New Town of Edinburgh, in which he died. It was the commencement of the street leading southward from St. Andrew's Square, now called St. David Street.

Hume *to* Baron Mure.

"Edinburgh, 2d October, 1770.

"Dear Baron, — I am sorry that I should correspond so ill to your very obliging letter, by telling you, that I cannot propose to see you till you come to town next winter. I am engaged in the building a house, which is the second great operation of human life: for the taking a wife is the first, which I hope will come in time; and by being present, I have already prevented two capital mistakes, which the mason was falling into; and I shall be apprehensive of his falling into more, were I to be at a distance. I must therefore renounce the hopes of seeing you at your own house this autumn, which, I assure [you,] I do with much regret. My compliments to Mrs. Mure and the young ladies. Please tell Miss Kitty, that my coat is much admired, even before I tell that it is her livery. For her sake I shall be careful that it never meet with any such accident, as the last. I am, dear Baron, yours very sincerely.

"P.S. — Mr. Moore's verses are really very elegant."

CHAPTER XVII.

1771-1776. Æt. 60-65.

Hume's social character — His conversation — His disposition — Traditional anecdotes regarding him — Correspondence — Letter about the Pretender — Gilbert Stuart's quarrel with Dr. Henry — Commercial State of Scotland — Letter to his nephew on Republicanism — Smith's "Wealth of Nations" — Hume's illness — His Will — Smith appointed Literary Executor — Strahan substituted — His journey to England with Home — Prospects of Death — Communications with his Friends and Relations — His Death — General view of his influence on Thought and Action.

It is to the period from the year 1770 to his death, when he lived among his early friends in Edinburgh, that we ought to refer such traditional accounts of Hume's private life and social habits, as are not expressly connected with any known event in his history. He was, it is true, a distinguished man when he left his native city, in 1763. He had then, indeed, performed all the services which entitled him to immortality. But his foreign celebrity, and his official honours, had since added many ostensible glories to his name, and introduced him to a wider sphere of public notice than the substantial fruits of his genius and industry would have of themselves secured. When we remember that this was the most celebrated period of his life, and was the only one of which persons who are still, or who have lately been alive, could have any recollection, we naturally refer to it those traditional notices and incidents which have no distinct place.

The impression of Hume's character, acquired by one who has sought it in the tenor of his works, and the history of his literary career, is quite different from that which we derive from those who knew him, and were connected with the social circle in which he lived. The former is solitary, self-relying, and unimpressible even to sternness; the latter is good, easy, simple, social, and amenable to the sway of gentle impulses. These two representations are not without a harmony of principle. In all serious matters, in his projects of literary ambition, in the philosophy he taught mankind, in all that was to connect him with posterity and the intellectual destiny of the human race, he was resolute and uncompromising. But the exhibition of his strength was reserved for the arena of his triumphs; and in domestic and social intercourse he put aside his helmet, with its nodding plumes; feeling, that the intellectual exhibitions suited for *that* sphere, should spring from whatever Nature had bestowed on him of sweet, and peaceful, and kind, — whatever was fitted to drive rancour or angry emulation from the bosom, and to render life delightful. Hence, to appear in the social circle as an intellectual gladiator, does not appear to have been his wish; he was content if he gave himself and others pleasure.

This view of his character is confirmed by Mackenzie, who, when a young man, enjoyed the high distinction of mingling in that group, of which he was the principal figure.

But the most illustrious of that circle was David Hume, who had a sincere affection for his poetical namesake, — an affection which was never abated during the life of that celebrated man. The unfortunate nature of his opinions with regard to the theoretical principles of moral and religious truth, never influenced his regard for men who held very opposite sentiments on those subjects; subjects which he never, like some vain and shallow sceptics, introduced into social discourse: On the contrary, when at any time the conversation tended that way, he was desirous rather of avoiding any serious discussion on matters which he wished to confine to the graver and less dangerous consideration of cool philosophy. He had, it might be said, in the language which the Grecian historian applies to an illustrious Roman, two minds; one which indulged in the metaphysical scepticism which his genius could invent, but which it could not always disentangle; another, simple, natural, and playful, which made his conversation delightful to his friends, and even frequently conciliated men whose principles of belief his philosophical doubts, if they had not power to shake, had grieved and offended. During the latter period of his life, I was frequently in his company amidst persons of genuine piety, and I never heard him venture a remark at which such men, or ladies, still more susceptible than men, could take offence.

The late Lord Chief Commissioner Adam was another of the young men who were so fortunate as to be admitted to this circle. In a curious little collection of notices of eminent persons, called “The Gift of a Grandfather,” privately printed at his own press at Blair-Adam, he says of Hume:

He was an intimate friend and acquaintance: and in all the intercourse of life, and in all he said, and wrote, and did, when not employed in his unnecessary metaphysical scepticism (well named, by a friend of mine, intellectual rope-dancing,) was innocent, playful, and moral, and most natural in his conversation: equally pleasing and instructive to the young and old of both sexes. . . . .

His simple unaffected nature, and kindly disposition, exalted him as much as the singular powers of his mind, and his talents for expressing in writing what he contemplated — so well described by Gibbon, as careless inimitable beauties of style; which, when he read, he laid down the book in despair that he should ever be able to imitate them.

I have before shown that he never introduced, in conversation, his abstruse or sceptical speculations; that all his sentiments were moral and natural and pleasing, and even playful in the extreme. This is evinced by his letters, which are perfect in their kind. He could bring himself down, without effort, to the most familiar playfulness with young persons, and particularly delighted in the conversation of youthful females.

Mr. Hume was one of our constant visiters, making, as was the custom of those days, tea-time the hour of calling. In the summer he would often stroll to my father’s beautiful villa of North Merchiston. On one occasion — I was then a boy of thirteen — he, missing my mother, made his tea-drinking good with two or three young ladies of eighteen or nineteen, (his acquaintances,) who were my mother’s guests. I recollect perfectly how agreeably he talked to them; and my recollection has been rendered permanent by an occurrence which caused some mirth and no mischief.

When the philosopher was amusing himself in conversation with the young ladies, the chair began to give way under him, and gradually brought him to the floor.

The damsels were both alarmed and amused, when Mr. Hume, recovering himself, and getting upon his legs, said in his broad Scotch tone, but in English words, (for he never used Scotch,) “Young ladies, you must tell Mr. Adam to keep stronger chairs for heavy philosophers.”

This simple story is a good specimen of the man. He was above all affectation. I was a companion of his eldest nephew, and saw much of him when I was very young. As I grew up he used to invite me to dinner, and I took great delight in his conversation. I continued in and about Edinburgh long enough to be able to relish it, and perhaps to join in it. On one particular occasion I met him at tea at Professor Ferguson’s; it was at the period of my attending Dr. Blair’s class on rhetoric and belles lettres: their conversation became very interesting to me, as it bore upon subjects which had an affinity to what I was in the habit of hearing prelected upon. They discussed particularly the Henriade of Voltaire; they were not displeased with any want of brilliancy in the versification, but they condemned the choice of the subject. Mr. Hume said, “He should never choose for an epic poem history, the truth of which is well known; for no fiction can come up to the interest of the actual story and incidents of the singular life of Henry IV.;” and Professor Ferguson added, “What epic poet could improve upon the chivalrous life of Chevalier Bayard, or on the event of his extraordinary romantic death?”

“I always lived,” says James Boswell, in a passage where he has to record some of his great patron’s expressions of contempt and dislike, “on good terms with Mr. Hume, though I have frankly told him I was not clear that it was right of me to keep company with him; ‘but,’ said I, ‘how much better are you than your books!’ He was cheerful, obliging, and instructive. He was charitable to the poor; and many an agreeable hour have I passed with him.”

The testimony which Adam Smith bore to his character and disposition, in the letter which accompanies his autobiography, though so well known, must not here be omitted.

His temper seemed to be more happily balanced, if I may be allowed such an expression, than that perhaps of any other man I have ever known. Even in the lowest state of his fortune, his great and necessary frugality never hindered him from exercising, upon proper occasions, acts both of charity and generosity. It was a frugality founded, not upon avarice, but upon the love of independency. The extreme gentleness of his nature never weakened either the firmness of his mind, or the steadiness of his resolutions. His constant pleasantry was the genuine effusion of good nature and good humour; tempered with delicacy and modesty, and without even the slightest tincture of malignity, so frequently the disagreeable source of what is called wit in other men. It never was the meaning of his raillery to mortify; and, therefore, far from offending, it seldom failed to please and delight, even those who were the objects of it. To his friends, who were frequently the objects of it, there was not, perhaps, any one of all his great and amiable qualities which contributed more to endear his conversation. And that gaiety of temper, so agreeable in society, but which is so often accompanied with frivolous and superficial qualities, was, in him, certainly attended with the most severe application, the most extensive learning, the greatest depth of thought, and a capacity in every respect the most comprehensive. Upon the whole, I have always considered him, both in his lifetime, and since his death, as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as, perhaps, the nature of human frailty will permit.

Of any description of his character, his own account of it must form a material feature. The mere circumstance that a man should have thus written about himself, is a noticeable element in his mental history. He says, in his "own life:"

To conclude, historically, with my own character. I am, or rather was, (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments,) — I was, I say, a man of mild disposition, of command of temper, of an open, social, and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men, any wise eminent, have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked by her baleful tooth: and though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seemed to be disarmed, in my behalf, of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct: not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleared and ascertained.

We have here a generous testimony to the tolerant spirit of his age: And yet his history and correspondence show, that he did not always feel himself safe from the influence of political or polemical resentment. He seemed, however, to take a pride in contrasting his own personal reception, by the world, with that of his writings; the one being all courtesy, the other all prejudice and dislike. A late eminent judge remembered meeting him at dinner with Black, Smith, and others, a few months before his death. Smith was speaking of the ingratitude, perversity, and intolerance of human nature. Hume said he differed with him. There was he, who had written on history, on politics, and on morals — some said on divinity; yet, in discussing these exciting topics, he had not made a single enemy; unless, indeed, all the Whigs, and all the Tories, and all the Christians! As, in his playful conversation among his intimate friends, he was inclined to indulge in practical humour, he made the general unpopularity of his opinions a common theme of amusement; picturesquely exaggerating the more offensive features, and exhibiting them as bugbears to frighten the well-meaning. Asking his friend, Clephane, to look for lodgings for him in London, he represents the person who is to inhabit them as “a sober, discreet, virtuous, frugal, regular, quiet, good-natured man — of a bad character.” This “bad character,” he seems to have occasionally used as a method of gently alarming innocent females. A lady, of strictly evangelical principles, walking home from church, through a crowded part of Edinburgh, was rather surprised by the zealous attention with which he proffered his arm. After they had passed through the crowd, he gave his reason for being so obsequious — it was, that she might be congratulated, by her friends, on having been seen walking on Sunday with “Hume the Deist.” Mackenzie relates the following incident, which shows that he was not, however, always proof against the effect of jocular attacks on his principles by others.

In the same *bonhommie*, Mr. Hume bore with perfect good nature the pleasantries which humorous deductions from his theoretical scepticisms sometimes produced. Once, I have been told, he was in a small degree ruffled by a witticism of Mr. John Home’s, who, though always pleasant, and often lively, seldom produced what might be termed or repeated as wit. The clerk of an eminent banker in Edinburgh, a young man of irreproachable conduct, and much in the confidence of his master, eloped with a considerable sum with which he had been intrusted. The circumstance was mentioned at a dinner where the two Humes, the historian and the poet, and several of their usual friendly circle, were present. David Hume spoke of it as a kind of moral problem, and wondered what could induce a man of such character and habits as this clerk was said to possess, thus to incur, for an inconsiderable sum, the guilt and the infamy of such a transaction. “I can easily account for it,” said his friend, John Home, “from the nature of his studies, and the kind of books which he was in the habit of reading.” “What were they?” said the philosopher. “Boston’s Fourfold State,” rejoined the poet, “and Hume’s Essays.” David was more hurt by the joke than was usual with him; probably from the singular conjunction of the two works, which formed, according to his friend’s account, the library of the unfortunate young man.

As appropriate to his popularity among women and young people, the following anecdotes from the pen of one who has gained no little celebrity by her genius, cannot fail to give interest. They are contained in a letter by Lady Anne Lindsay, authoress of the song *Auld Robin Gray* , when she was a young lady living in her grandmother’s house in Edinburgh, to her sister Margaret: —

Dinners go on as usual, which, being monopolized by the divines, wits, and writers of the present day, are not unjustly called the Dinners of the Eaterati, by Lord Kellie, who laughs at his own pun till his face is purple.

Our friend, David Hume, along with his friend, Principal Robertson, continue to maintain their ground at these convivial meetings. To see the lion and the lamb lying down together, the deist and the doctor, is extraordinary; it makes one hope that some day Hume will say to him, “Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian.” He is a constant morning visiter of ours. My mother jested him lately on a circumstance which had a good deal of character in it.

When we were very young girls, too young to remember the scene, there happened to be a good many clever people at Balcarres at Christmas; and as a gambol of the season, they agreed to write each his own character, to give them to Hume, and make him show them to my father, as extracts he had taken from the pope’s library at Rome.

He did. My father said, “I don’t know who the rest of your fine fellows and charming princesses are, Hume; but if you had not told me where you got *this* character, I should have said it was that of my wife.”

“I was pleased,” said my mother, “with my lord’s answer, it showed that at least I had been an honest woman.”

“Hume’s character of himself,” said she, “was well drawn and full of candour; he spoke of himself as he ought;” but added, what surprised us all, that, “plain as his manners were, and apparently careless of attention, vanity was his predominant weakness. That vanity led him to publish his Essays, which he grieved over; not that he had changed his opinions, but that he thought he had injured society by disseminating them.”

“Do you remember the sequel of that affair?” said Hume.

“Yes, I do,” replied my mother, laughing: “you told me that, although I thought your character a sincere one, it was not so; there was a particular feature omitted that we were still ignorant of, and that you would add it; like a fool I gave you the manuscript, and you thrust it into the fire, adding, ‘Oh, what an idiot I had nearly proved myself to be, to leave such a document in the hands of a parcel of women!’”

“Villain!” said my mother, laughing, and shaking her head at him.

“Do you remember all this, my little woman?” said Hume to me.

“I was too young,” said I, “to think of it at the time.”

“How’s this? have not you and I grown up together?”

I looked surprised.

“Yes,” added he, “you have grown tall, and I have grown broad.”

It may give us some farther idea of the refined simplicity that made his conversation agreeable to intellectual and right thinking women, to observe the manner in which he was addressed in the following very lively letter from Lady Elliot Murray, the wife of his friend, Sir Gilbert.

Minto, 12th October, 1772.

I am resolved to take the reins of government into my own hands. I don’t know what has made me such a humble subservient animal hitherto. I will dictate from this time forth. I will give the law, and insist on an implicit obedience to my superior wisdom; for am I not wiser than the wisest? did I not foretell what has come to pass, that Mons. De Guigne would not reach Edinburgh before the middle of this week? and did I not prove my judgment surpassing that best of historians, who is a mere pedler in understanding to me? Had he taken my advice, he need not have jumbled himself seventy long miles over mountains and plains in one day, and left a family who were happy in his company, and exchanged the cheering blaze of a good coal fire, for the dreary glimpses of a clouded moon. But, however, he had the pleasure of gratifying a sense which few people are much troubled with, a delicacy and ardour in politeness; and as that is pretty near akin to benevolence, I believe the indulgence of it may be a full recompense for the trouble. But that last principle will lead you back the road you went; for you left three ladies mourning for your departure, and the good man of the house has been in a vexation ever since, and can only be contented by a renewal of your kind intentions towards us, of passing some quiet days under our roof. Sir Gilbert came home from Jedburgh, and had seen your brother there, who told him he would find you here when he came back.

Enter Sir Gilbert. Where is Mr. Hume? — Answer: He is gone. When did he come? — About one o’clock. And when did he go away? — About five. What! have you quarrelled? — Yes. He and I had some little difference about his *byeuks*, and I tried to persuade him to burn them all, and write the other way; for, as I said, I was sure he would be a shining light, and equal the author of the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” or Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, if he would only take the right side; and he flew in a passion and went away in a huff! How could you think he would be persuaded by you? Pooh! though I am but a simple woman, before it be long he may be convinced I can see farther into a millstone than he can do; and if he had taken my advice, he might have rested his bones here this night in quiet, in place of rumbling along in the dark in a post chaise; and so in other matters too, I might perhaps do him a service if he would be ruled by me. My dear, how can you be so wild? And, my dear, where is the harm in telling one’s mind, when you think you can do good by it, to a good worthy creature that is only a little mistaken or so? Good by it, what a chimera! but come, there is some other reason than this for his going away? None that I know; except a fine flim-flam letter that he received from the French Ambassador, saying, he expected to have the exquisite joy of beholding him at Edinburgh to-morrow. Ah, now I understand it. But when does he come back? Why he either comes back with Mons. De Guigne, or after he has done the last duties to him at Edinburgh. So you see, if you do not come, you will have brought me in for the lesser excommunication; for you will have been the cause of my deceiving my husband, and telling him a lie: although, for that matter, neither you nor I *lukelly* have any thing to fear now-a-days, for either the greater or lesser excommunication: For, as you justly observe, line 12, first page of your letter, how are things changed! Old prejudices are done away, but behold new ones arise; and the last errors I am afraid are worse than the first: but, for my own part, I would willingly have stood before the kirk-session, to have shown any respect and regard to Mons$^{r.}$ L'Ambassador, who is a man we all esteem in this house, and from whom we have always received every possible civility, of which we retain a grateful sense. But we perceive he is travelling in his public capacity, and unless Sir Gilbert had had it in his power to go to town to wait of him, and give him welcome from us to our house, should it suit his conveniency to rest here upon his road to England, we think any other invitation would appear improper and abrupt; and as it so happens he cannot possibly accomplish this at present, for we are to have company with us most part of this week; and after that we go to our visits, which will take us most of next week; and then we shall be chez nous till our journey southwards, when we will require from you to restore us your good society, else we shall verily believe your flying visit was all a hum, and we won't be *Humed* so!

Bless me, I thought I was writing to my poor good Harry. How does he do, sanctified soul? I have really hopes of you, now that he and you are come hand to fist at a conversation; as he tells me you are very often with him, and he really thinks you are a saint in your nature; and I say that is a great pity, for tho' I cannot deny the fact, I deplore it for the consequences of it; but give my best wishes to him, and tell him I long to hear of better prospects for him. I am really confounded, when I think what a parcel of nonsense I have wrote you: But learn to prefer the truth and sincerity of a Scots wife, to the pernicious flattery of Les Dames Françaises, of which you have had enough in your days; and so it is fit you should be made to hear on the other side of the head. And so wishing you all health and happiness, and clearness of understanding, I remain, sir, your well wisher, friend, and obedient servant,

Ag. Elliot Murray.

P.S. I don't think the quiet Euthanasia of England will happen in the year 1773, the mayoralty of J. W. Esq.

Hume had been for many years very corpulent. In a letter to Sir Harry Erskine, in 1756, he complains of this tendency to obesity. He occasionally alludes to his partiality for plain food, and to his being, to use his own sufficiently distinct expression, "a glutton, not an epicure." We have found him telling Sir Gilbert Elliot, that for beef and cabbage, which he calls "a charming dish," and old mutton, no one could excel him; and that the Duc de Nivernois would become apprentice to his "lass," to learn how she made sheeps'-head broth. The zest with which he returned to the simple food of his native country, after the diplomatic feasts of Paris, seems to have been characteristic of all his habits. Burke is said to have affirmed, that, "in manners he was an easy unaffected man, previous to going to Paris as secretary to Lord Hertford; but that the adulation and caresses of the female wits of that capital had been too powerful even for a philosopher, and the result was, he returned a literary coxcomb." But the saying is not in harmony with the characteristics noted by others; and it is not quite clear that it was ever uttered by Burke. All who speak as having been familiarly acquainted with him, concur in describing his manners as kind, simple, and polite. He had, as no one who has read his correspondence can fail to see, a good heart, ever ready to do benevolent acts where occasions for their performance came under his notice; and his exterior appearance and manner corresponded with this part of his character. One occasionally meets with venerable persons who remember having been dandled on Hume's knee, and the number of these reminiscences indicates that he was fond of children.

The broad Scottish pronunciation, in which, by all accounts, he indulged, was a rather singular habit in one who desired to throw off all marks of provincialism. Yet we are told that in this rude Doric garb he clothed a very pure English colloquial style. We must take this statement with allowances: He never probably in his most finished writings completely divested his style of Scotticisms; and the English he spoke must have been pure only in comparison with the language of his fellow countrymen. But it may be remarked, that provincial broadness of pronunciation in Scotland is far from being incompatible with a very pure and unprovincial style of language. It has often been observed, that in those parts of the country where the speech of the uneducated is most peculiar, English, when spoken at all, is found in greatest purity. Thus, an inhabitant of the border districts makes his southern tones, though hardly distinguishable from those of his English neighbours, the vehicle of intense Scotticisms; while beyond the Grampians, the deep broad Teutonic pronunciation sometimes gives voice to uncontaminated English, as established by literary and colloquial rules.

Hume had very clearly two kinds of conversation, one for strangers and the world at large, the other for his chosen friends with whom he was at ease, and who could understand the good humour of that jocularity which a contemporary pronounced to have something in it perfectly infantine. His friend John Home was somewhat renowned for a warlike and romantic pomp in his ideas, like those which pervade his own tragic personations. In Hume's conversation we may believe that there was nothing either heroic or enthusiastic. A good humoured sly application of the fugitive subjects of discussion, to the peculiarities of the guests; an occasional vigorous and apt remark; a fantastic wit sometimes let loose to wander where it pleased, and choose whatever it thought fit for its object, — seem to have constituted the charm of his society. Yet the tone of his thoughts sometimes rose to enthusiasm. Thus the son of his valued friend Ferguson, remembers his father saying, that, one clear and beautiful night, when they were walking home together, Hume suddenly stopped, looked up to the starry sky, and said, more after the manner of "Hervey's Meditations" than the "Treatise of Human Nature," "Oh, Adam, can any one contemplate the wonders of that firmament, and not believe that there is a God!"

In a late collection of casual reminiscences, there is the following notice of his social habits.

"Major M —— , with whom I dined yesterday, said that he had frequently met David Hume at their military mess in Scotland, and in other parties; that he was very polite and pleasant, though thoughtful in company, generally reclining his head upon his hand, as if in study; from which he would suddenly recover, however, with some indifferent question; extremely inquisitive, but quite easy to himself and all around him. One is glad to catch personal notices, however slight, of memorable men and of speculative philosophers. I know no one so memorable as Hume. He seems to have so far outstripped the spirit of the times in his original and profound researches, that the world is in no condition at present to do justice to his merits."

Those who know him solely by his philosophical reputation, will perhaps believe him to have been

Parcus deorum cultor et infrequens.

But this does not seem to have been the case, at least in his outward conduct. We find him, in writing home from France, casually mentioning his not having seen Elliot's sons "in church;" and on another occasion making a like allusion, indicative of his having been a pretty regular attendant at the ambassador's chapel. He is said to have been fond of Dr. Robertson's preaching, and not averse to that of his colleague and opponent, John Erskine. A lady, distinguished in literature, remembers that in a conversation with a respectable tradesman’s wife, who had been a servant to Hume, she said that her master one day asked her very seriously, why she was never seen in church, where he had provided seats for all his household. At that time there were very few of the humbler classes in Edinburgh, who did not belong to the Church of Scotland. The woman’s defence was, that she belonged to a dissenting congregation; and it was admitted to be quite satisfactory.

Social in his habits, and living the life of a wealthy bachelor, it was natural that Hume should connect himself with the societies, whether of a literary or convivial character, which brought the good company of Edinburgh together. He appears to have been a pretty active member of the Philosophical Society. In a letter, of which part has already been printed, and which would probably in strict chronological order belong to an earlier period, we find him with mild dignity enforcing the tolerance and philosophical equanimity, that ought to reign wherever men of different sentiments meet each other in intellectual discussion.

“Tuesday Forenoon.

“Sir, — I am so great a lover of peace, that I am resolved to drop this matter altogether, and not to insert a syllable in the Preface, which can have a reference to your Essay. The truth is, I could take no revenge but such a one as would have been a great deal too cruel, and much exceeding the offence: for, though most authors think, that a contemptuous manner of treating their writings is but slightly revenged by hurting the personal character and the honour of their antagonists, I am very far from that opinion. Besides, I am as certain as I can be of any thing, (and I am not such a sceptic as you may perhaps imagine,) that your inserting such remarkable alterations in the printed copy, proceeded entirely from precipitancy and passion, not from any formed intention of deceiving the Society. I would not take advantage of such an incident to throw a slur on a man of merit, whom I esteem, though I might have reason to complain of him.

“When I am abused by such a fellow as Warburton, whom I neither know nor care for, I can laugh at him. But if Dr. Stewart approaches any way towards the same style of writing, I own it vexes me; because I conclude, that some unguarded circumstance of my conduct, though contrary to my intention, had given occasion to it.

“As to your situation with regard to Lord Kames, I am not so good a judge. I only think that you had so much the better of the argument, that you ought, upon that account, to have been more reserved in your expressions. All raillery ought to be avoided in philosophical argument, both because it is unphilosophical, and because it cannot but be offensive, let it be ever so gentle. What, then, must we think with regard to so many insinuations of irreligion, to which Lord Kames’s paper gave not the least occasion? This spirit of the inquisitor is, in you, the effect of passion, and what a *cool* moment would easily correct. But where it predominates in the character, what ravages has it committed on reason, virtue, truth, liberty, and every thing that is valuable among mankind! I shall now speak a word as to the justness of your censure with regard to myself after these remarks on the manner of it. I have no scruple of confessing my mistakes. You see I have owned that I think Lord Kames is mistaken in his argument; and I would sooner give up my *own* cause than my *friend’s*, if I thought that imputation of any consequence to a man’s character. . . . .

“As I am resolved to drop this matter entirely from the Preface, so I hope to persuade Lord Kames to be entirely silent with regard to it in our meeting. But in case I should not prevail, or if any body else start the subject, I think it better that some of your friends should be there, and be prepared to mollify the matter. If I durst pretend to advise, I should think it better you yourself were absent, unless you bring a greater spirit of composition than you express in your letter. I am persuaded that whatever a person of Mr. Monro’s authority proposes will be agreed to: though I must beg leave to differ from his judgment in proposing to alter two pages. That chiefly removes the offence given to me; but what regards Lord Kames is so interwoven with the whole discourse, that there is not now any possibility of altering it. I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,” &c.

“P. S. — I hope you are very zealous in promoting the sale of Blacklock’s Poems. I will never be reconciled to you unless you dispose of at least a score of them; and make your friends Sir John Maxwell and Lord Buchan pay a guinea a piece for their copy.”

The Poker Club, occasionally mentioned in these pages, seems to have had no other direct and specific object but the consumption of claret. The duty laid on that national wine, by “the English statesman,” so pathetically commemorated by John Home, was a heavy blow and great discouragement to the club; but it rallied, and returned to its old esteemed beverage; and, indeed, it is a somewhat curious circumstance, that the national taste, created by the early intercourse with France and the consequent cheapness of French wines, still lingers in Scotland, where claret is much more generally consumed than in England. The club met in Fortune’s tavern every Friday. It was the practice, at each meeting, to name two to be, what were called, “attendant members;” an arrangement, probably, designed to form a nucleus round which those whose attendance was uncertain, but who might drop in occasionally in the course of the evening, could form themselves; and to prevent any general desertion of the club, or, what might be, perhaps, more calamitous, the accident of any individual finding himself, for the night, its sole and solitary representative. We find Hume duly taking his turn in these attendances, and keeping the minutes according to rotation. On the 20th January, 1775, there is this emphatic entry, in his handwriting, “As Mr. Nairne was one of the attendant members, and neglected his duty, the club sent him the bill.” The last meeting of the club, attended by Hume, appears to have been that of 8th December, 1775.

It does not appear to be necessary that traditional anecdotes, such as the few we possess of Hume, must either be authenticated, or excluded from such a work as the present. It seems to entitle them to a place, that they were current among those who knew his character and habits. They thus afford all that is expected from such sources — passing fancy sketches, recognised as likenesses. Like several others that have appeared in these pages, as mere traditions, the following anecdote, which is eminently natural and curious, has no farther authentication than the general belief, in Edinburgh, that it “was like the man.”

About the commencement of his last illness, a female member of the respectable Berean congregation, in Leith, presented herself at his door, with the information that she had been intrusted with a message to him from on High; and, becoming very urgent, succeeded in obtaining admission. “This is a very important matter, madam,” said the philosopher, “we must take it with deliberation; — perhaps you had better get a little temporal refreshment before you begin. ‘Lassie, bring this good lady a glass of wine.’” While she was preparing for the attack, Hume entered, good-humouredly, into conversation with her; and, discovering that her husband was a chandler, announced that he stood very much in want, at that time, of some temporal lights, and intrusted his guest with a very large order. This unexpected stroke of business at once absorbed all the good woman’s thoughts; and, forgetting her important mission, she immediately trotted home to acquaint her husband with the good news.

There is an anecdote, which has appeared in numerous collections of such literary scraps, which represents him as having slipped into the boggy ground at the base of the castle rock, and called to a woman to help him out. In his unwieldy and infirm state, during his latter years, the accident is not improbable. The anecdote proceeds to say, that the female called on had great doubts of the propriety of helping “Hume, the Deist,” out of that slough of despond into which it had pleased Providence to cast him. “But, my good woman, does not your religion as a Christian, teach you to do good, even to your enemies?” “That may be,” said she, “but ye shallna get out o’ that, till ye become a Christian yersell: and repeat the Lord’s Prayer and the Belief,” a feat which is said to have been very rapidly performed, much to the worthy catechist’s astonishment.

Some of his witticisms have a tone of sarcastic severity, which he does not appear to have been disposed to suppress, even when women were the victims, if it was called forth by affectation or folly. To a celebrated “fine woman” of his day, who said she was often pestered to tell her age, and desired his opinion what answer she should give: he is reported to have said, “Madam, say you are not yet come to years of discretion.” To the same lady, who, when crossing one of the ferries of the Firth of Forth, during a fresh breeze, was making a loud outcry about danger, he remarked, with much coolness, that they would probably soon be food for fishes; “and who,” said the frightened belle, probably a little confused by the horrors of their position, “who will they begin with?” The answer she received was, “Why, madam, those of them that are gluttons will begin with me; those that are epicures with your ladyship.”

We now resume Hume’s correspondence. The letters of the last five years of his life, which have been preserved, are comparatively few; a circumstance which may be accounted for from his living, during that period, among his correspondents. On 28th January, 1772, he writes to Smith, that he would be glad to receive a visit from him; but that his house would be rather dull, from his sister having fever. In continuation he says:—

“I shall not take an excuse from your own state of health; which I suppose only a subterfuge invented by indolence and love of solitude. Indeed, my dear Smith, if you continue to hearken to complaints of this nature, you will cut yourself out entirely from human society, to the great loss of both parties.

"P.S. — I have not yet read 'Orlando Inamorato;' but intend soon to do it. I am now in a course of reading the 'Italian Historians,' and am confirmed in my former opinion, that that language has not produced one author who knew how to write elegant correct prose, though it contains several excellent poets."

In the following letters, we find several details about that remarkable revulsion in the state of trade in Scotland, which, at the present day, is chiefly known by the quantity of decisions on points of bankruptcy law, with which it filled the Reports.

Hume *to* Adam Smith

"St. Andrew's Square, 27th June, 1772.

"We are here in a very melancholy situation, continual bankruptcies, universal loss of credit, and endless suspicions. There are but two standing houses in this place — Mansfields and the Coutses — for I comprehend not Cummin, whose dealings were always very narrow. Mansfield has paid away £40,000 in a few days: but it is apprehended that neither he nor any of them can hold out till the end of next week, if no alteration happen. The case is little better in London. It is thought that Sir George Colebroke must soon stop; and even the Bank of England is not entirely free from suspicion. Those of Newcastle, Norwich, and Bristol, are said to be stopped. The Thistle Bank has been reported to be in the same condition. The Carron Company is reeling, which is one of the greatest calamities of the whole, as they gave employment to near ten thousand people. Do these events any wise affect your theory, or will it occasion the revisal of any chapters?

"Of all the sufferers, I am the most concerned for the Adams, particularly John. But their undertakings were so vast, that nothing could support them. They must dismiss three thousand workmen, who, comprehending the materials, must have expended above £100,000 a-year. They have great funds; but if these must be disposed of in a hurry, and to disadvantage, I am afraid the remainder will amount to little or nothing. People's [compa]ssion I see was exhausted for John, in his last calamity, and every body asks why he incurred any more hazards. But his friendship for his brothers is an apology; though I believe he has a projecting turn of his own. To me the scheme of the Adelphi always appeared so imprudent, that my wonder is how they could have gone on so long.

"If Sir George Colebroke stop, it will probably disconcert all the plans of our friends, as it will diminish their patron's influence; which is a new misfortune.

"On the whole, I believe that the check given to our exorbitant and ill grounded credit, will prove of advantage in the long run, as it will reduce people to more solid, and less sanguine projects, and, at the same time, introduce frugality among the merchants and manufacturers: what say you? Here is food for your speculation."

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"St. Andrew's Square, 23d Nov. 1772.

"Dear Smith, — I should agree to your reasoning, if I could trust your resolution. Come hither for some weeks about Christmas; dissipate yourself a little; return to Kirkcaldy; finish your work before autumn: go to London; print it; return and settle in this town, which suits your studious independent turn, even better than London. Execute this plan faithfully, and I forgive you.

"Ferguson has returned, fat and fair, and in good humour, notwithstanding his disappointment, which I am glad of."

In 1772, Macpherson published a quarto volume, called "An Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland," of which Pinkerton, indignant at the Celtic spirit it displayed, said, "The empty vanity, shallow reading, vague assertion, and etymological nonsense, in this production, are truly risible." In a letter to Colonel Dow, we find Hume criticising this book in a rather less emphatic manner.

"My compliments to Ossian. He has given us a work last winter, which contains a great deal of genius and good writing; but I cannot assent to his system. I must still adhere to the common opinion regarding our origin, or rather your origin; for we are all plainly Danes or Saxons in the low countries. But these subjects I reserve to a discussion over an evening fire on your return. I charge you not to think of settling in London, till you have first seen our New Town, which exceeds any thing you have seen in any part of the world."

With the following letter, many readers may perhaps be familiar, but to those who have not already seen it, the curious historical incident it details, will give it much interest.

Hume *to* Sir John Pringle.

St. Andrew’s Square, Edinburgh,
Feb. 10, 1773.

My dear Sir, — That the present Pretender was in London, in the year 1753, I know with the greatest certainty; because I had it from Lord Marischal, who said, it consisted with his certain knowledge. Two or three days after his lordship gave me this information, he told me, that the evening before, he had learned several curious particulars from a lady, (who I imagined to be Lady Primrose,) though my lord refused to name her. The Pretender came to her house in the evening, without giving her any preparatory information; and entered the room when she had a pretty large company with her, and was herself playing at cards. He was announced by the servant under another name. She thought the cards would have dropped from her hands on seeing him. But she had presence enough of mind, to call him by the name he assumed; to ask him when he came to England, and how long he intended to stay there. After he and all the company went away, the servants remarked how wonderfully like the strange gentleman was to the prince’s picture, which hung on the chimney-piece, in the very room in which he entered. My lord added, (I think from the authority of the same lady,) that he used so little precaution, that he went abroad openly in day-light, in his own dress; only laying aside his blue riband and star; walked once through St. James’s, and took a turn in the Mall.

About five years ago, I told this story to Lord Holderness, who was secretary of state in the year 1753; and I added, that I supposed this piece of intelligence had at that time escaped his lordship. “By no means,” said he, “and who do you think first told it me? it was the king himself, who subjoined, ‘And what do you think, my lord, I should do with him?’” Lord Holderness owned that he was puzzled how to reply; for if he declared his real sentiments, they might savour of indifference to the royal family. The king perceived his embarrassment, and extricated him from it, by adding, “My lord, I shall just do nothing at all; and when he is tired of England, he will go abroad again.” I think this story, for the honour of the late king, ought to be more generally known.

But what will surprise you more, Lord Marischal, a few days after the coronation of the present king, told me, that he believed the young Pretender was at that time in London; or at least had been so very lately, and had come over to see the show of the coronation, and had actually seen it. I asked my lord the reason for this strange fact. “Why,” says he, “a gentleman told me so that saw him there; and that he even spoke to him, and whispered in his ears these words: ‘Your royal highness is the last of all mortals whom I should expect to see here.’— ‘It was curiosity that led me,’ said the other; ‘but I assure you,’ added he, ‘that the person who is the object of all this pomp and magnificence is the man I envy the least.’” You see this story is so near traced from the fountain head, as to wear a great face of probability. Query, What if the Pretender had taken up Dymock’s gauntlet? I find that the Pretender’s visit in England, in the year 1753, was known to all the Jacobites; and some of them have assured me, that he took the opportunity of formally renouncing the Roman Catholic religion, under his own name of Charles Stuart, in the new church in the Strand; and that this is the reason of the bad treatment he met with at the court of Rome. I own that I am a sceptic with regard to the last particulars.

Lord Marischal had a very bad opinion of this unfortunate prince; and thought there was no vice so mean or atrocious of which he was not capable; of which he gave me several instances. My lord, though a man of great honour, may be thought a discontented courtier; but what quite confounded me in the idea of that prince, was a conversation I had with Helvétius at Paris, which, I believe, I have told you. In case I have not, I shall mention a few particulars. That gentleman told me, that he had no acquaintance with the Pretender; but, some time after that prince was chased out of France, “a letter,” said he, “was brought me from him, in which he told me that the necessity of his affairs obliged him to be at Paris; and, as he knew me, by character, to be a man of the greatest probity and honour in France, he would trust himself to me, if I would promise to conceal and protect him. I own,” added Helvétius to me, “although I knew the danger to be greater of harbouring him at Paris than at London; and although I thought the family of Hanover not only the lawful sovereigns in England, but the only lawful sovereigns in Europe, as having the full and free consent of the people; yet was I such a dupe to his flattery, that I invited him to my house; concealed him there, going and coming, near two years; had all his correspondence pass through my hands; met with his partisans upon Pont Neuf; and found, at last, that I had incurred all this danger and trouble for the most unworthy of all mortals; insomuch that I have been assured, when he went down to Nantz, to embark on his expedition to Scotland, he took fright and refused to go on board; and his attendants, thinking the matter gone too far, and that they would be affronted for his cowardice, carried him, in the night time, into the ship, pieds et mains liés." I asked him, if he meant literally? "Yes," said he, "literally. They tied him and carried him by main force." What think you now of this hero and conqueror?

Both Lord Marischal and Helvétius agree, that with all this strange character, he was no bigot; but rather had learned, from the philosophers at Paris, to affect a contempt of all religion. You must know that both these persons thought they were ascribing to him an excellent quality. Indeed, both of them used to laugh at me for my narrow way of thinking in these particulars. However, my dear Sir John, I hope you will do me the justice to acquit me.

I doubt not but these circumstances will appear curious to Lord Hardwicke, to whom you will please to present my respects. I suppose his lordship will think this unaccountable mixture of temerity and timidity, in the same character, not a little singular. I am yours very sincerely.

If there should be any doubts of the genuineness of this letter, from its having first appeared, unauthenticated, in a periodical work, they will be removed by the perusal of the following answer by Sir John Pringle, printed from the original manuscript.

Sir John Pringle *to* Hume.

London, 5th November, 1773.

Dear Sir, — I was much obliged to you for your letter of the 10th ult., as it furnished me with sufficient means for maintaining my credit with Lord Hardwicke, a person I have not the honour to be well known to; and I had the more occasion for such a testimony as yours, as the other earl, mentioned in your letter, has thought proper, (I presume since he has once more become a courtier,) to deny his knowing any thing of the story, when one of the company, (where I told the anecdote to Lord Hardwicke,) inquired of him about it.

Lord Hardwicke, not being in town when yours came to hand, I charged his intimate friend, Mr. Wray, who was going to visit him, with it. Yesterday, that gentleman returned, and, with the letter, sent me a line, expressing his lordship's great satisfaction in the communication; and with many thanks to us both for it. I understand he is very curious in picking up such historical facts; and, if so, he certainly never met with any thing of that kind more suited to his genius. The most extraordinary circumstance is, that of the *pied et poing liés*; and yet your authority seems to be unexceptionable. What could be expected from an adventurer whom they had been obliged to treat in that humiliating manner? and whose timidity, they must believe, was every now and then to recur, to affront those that set him upon the enterprise? I know that *our* people were at great pains to decry his courage, after the battle of Culloden; but that I considered always as done upon a political, rather than an historical principle. I had good evidence for believing that, at Derby, he was, of the council of war, the person who stood longest out against the motion for returning, and not advancing to London. Again, he was for standing at the Spey; and, lastly, he did not retire from Culloden till his whole band was put to flight. It is true he never advanced nearer than the corps de réserve; but which corresponded to our second line, in which the Duke of Cumberland placed himself. I may add, that both of us have been informed, that he betrayed no unmanly concern, when he skulked so long with his female heroine; and then, surely, he was daily in the greatest danger of his life; had he been taken he would have met with no quarter. But, after all, these testimonies, in favour of his courage, must yield to such proofs as you bring to the contrary.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“St. Andrew’s Square, 24th Feb., 1773.

“Dear Smith, — There are two late publications here which I advise you to commission. The first is Andrew Stuart’s Letters to Lord Mansfield, which they say have met with vast success in London. Andrew has eased his own mind, and no bad effects are to follow. Lord Mansfield is determined, absolutely, to neglect them. The other is Lord Monboddo’s treatise on the Origin and Progress of Language, which is only part of a larger work. It contains all the absurdity and malignity which I expected; but is writ with more ingenuity and in a better style than I looked for.”

“St. Andrew’s Square, 10th April, 1773.

“To-day news arrived in town, that the Ayr Bank had shut up, and, as many people think, for ever. I hear that the Duke of Buccleuch is on the road. The country will be in prodigious distress for money this term. Sir G. Colebroke’s bankruptcy is thought to be the immediate cause of this event.

“Have you seen Macpherson’s Homer? It is hard to tell whether the attempt or the execution be worse. I hear he is employed by the booksellers to continue my History. But, in my opinion, of all men of parts, he has the most anti-historical head in the universe.

"Have you seen Sir John Dalrymple? It is strange what a rage is against him, on account of the most commendable action in his life. His collection is curious; but introduces no new light into the civil, whatever it may into the biographical and anecdotical history of the times.

"Have you seen 'Alonzo?' Very slovenly versification, some pathetic, but too much resembling 'Douglas.'"

We have found Gilbert Stuart deferentially courting Hume's notice of his earlier literary efforts. A few years of popularity as an author, and the command of a periodical work, had in the meantime changed the man's character, by developing all its arrogance, jealousy, conceit, and vindictiveness. He was one of those who indulge in the comfortable consciousness, that any comparison between their own genius and that of any other given person is supremely ludicrous; and as some one said of La Harpe, it might have proved a good speculation to buy him at what he was worth, and sell him at his own estimate of his value. Sick of the praises he heard bestowed on Robertson and the other eminent historians of his age, he thought it his duty to show the world how the lamp of such industrious drudges would grow pale before the lustre of true genius; and thus he favoured the public with some historical efforts, in which the curious reader of the present day, who takes them from forgotten shelves, is somewhat surprised to find how effectually well-turned periods, and a certain audacity of opinion, keep out of view the meagreness of the author's inquiries.

In 1773, Stuart began to edit the *Edinburgh Magazine and Review* . Periodical literature was the proper sphere for exhibiting his powers; which consisted in the ready acquisition of a superficial view of any subject, and a rapid, yet elegant style; occasionally magniloquent, and at other times descriptive or sarcastic. No other periodical work of that day equalled the *Edinburgh Magazine and Review* , in genius and originality. But the editor made it the vehicle of his tyrannical and vindictive spirit; and the purse and person of the proprietor — it might almost be said the peace of society, were endangered by so formidable a weapon remaining in such hands.

At this time, the Rev. Robert Henry was publishing his valuable History of Britain, volume by volume. Stuart had vowed that he would crush this work; and the critical columns he concentrated against it, do great credit to his ability as a tactician. Hume was promised the privilege of reviewing the book in *the Magazine,* and probably Stuart thought that to arm him against an interloper in his own province was excellent policy; but when the article was written, and put in proof, it was found not adapted to the editor’s purpose. We find him thus writing to a confederate:

David Hume wants to review Henry; but that task is so precious, that I will undertake it myself. Moses, were he to ask it as a favour, should not have it: yea, not even the man after God’s own heart. I wish I could transport myself to London, to review him for the *Monthly* : a fire there and in the *Critical* , would perfectly annihilate him. Could you do nothing in the latter? To the former I suppose David Hume has transcribed the criticism he intended for us. It is precious and would divert you. I keep a *proof* of it in my cabinet for the amusement of friends. This great philosopher begins to dote.

A review of Henry’s work *did* appear in *The Monthly Review* , but from a very different pen. The *proof*, however, which gave Stuart so much amusement, has fortunately been preserved. After giving a favourable analysis of Henry’s second volume, it concludes with the following sentences, in many respects remarkable.

The reader will scarcely find in our language, except in the works of the celebrated Dr. Robertson, any performance that unites together so perfectly the great points of entertainment and instruction. It is happy for the inhabitants of this metropolis, which has naturally a great influence on the country, that the same persons who can make such a figure in profane learning, are intrusted with the guidance of the people in their spiritual concerns, which are of such superior, and indeed of unspeakable importance. These illustrious examples, if any thing, must make the infidel abashed of his vain cavils, and put a stop to that torrent of vice, profaneness, and immorality, by which the age is so unhappily distinguished.

This city can justly boast of other signal characters of the same kind, whom learning and piety, taste and devotion, philosophy and faith, joined to the severest morals and most irreproachable conduct, concur to embellish. One in particular, with the same hand by which he turns over the sublime pages of Homer and Virgil, Demosthenes and Cicero, is not ashamed to open with reverence the sacred volumes; and with the same voice by which, from the pulpit, he strikes vice with consternation, he deigns to dictate to his pupils the most useful lessons of rhetoric, poetry, and polite literature.

Hume was an early friend of Benjamin Franklin, whom he was instrumental in introducing to his Parisian friends. The celebrated publication of the papers revealing the policy of the ascendency party, and the scene at the council board, of which Franklin so deeply cherished the memory, are thus alluded to in a letter to Smith, of 13th February, 1774: —

“Pray, what strange accounts are these we hear of Franklin’s conduct? I am very slow in believing that he has been guilty in the extreme degree that is pretended; though I always knew him to be a very factious man, and faction, next to fanaticism, is of all passions the most destructive of morality. How is it supposed he got possession of these letters? I hear that Wedderburn’s treatment of him before the council was most cruel, without being in the least blameable. What a pity!”

The following, among the very few letters which Hume appears to have written at this period of his life, is addressed to John Home.

“St. Andrew’s Square, 4th June, 1774.

“Dear John, — The enclosed came to hand to-day, and, as I take it to be directed to you, I have sent it you. If on opening it you find it otherwise, you may return it to me, that I may find the true owner.

“You have seen, no doubt, the specimen of a Scotch review. My first conjecture was that Carlyle was the author; but Dr. Blair has convinced me that it is much more probably the production of your spiritual guide, Tom Hepburn; but, whoever be the father, the child has a great deal of salt, and spirit, and humour. I wish he would continue, though at the hazard of my getting a rap over the knuckles from time to time; for I see in this hero the spirit of a Drawcansir, who spares neither friend nor foe. I think I can reckon about twenty people, not including the king, whom he has attacked in this short performance. I hope all his spleen is not exhausted. I should desire my compliments to him, were I not afraid that he would interpret the civility as paying black mail to him. I am, dear John, yours sincerely.”

The following appears to be the earliest letter in which Hume expresses himself conscious of some unpleasant feelings, systematic of a decay of the physical functions.

Hume *to* Colonel Edmondstoune.

“Edinburgh, 23d March, 1775.

“Caro Giuseppe, — No request can be more obliging than yours; and no party could have been proposed to any place, or with any company, more agreeable to me. But you remember what a plague I was to every body and to myself on my last journey; and you may recollect that I made a vow, in the bitterness of my distress, never more to leave my own house, nor lie out of my own bed. This vow I have religiously kept, except two or three days last autumn, when I went to my brother's; and though I could scarcely there esteem myself from home, I resolved never more to pay them a visit. You have not a bed cool enough for me, which proceeds not from any distemper or disorder, but from a peculiarity of constitution, that has been gradually increasing on me these last twelve years. I am in very good health: but let me tell you, that you express yourself strangely when you say I have been *complaining*. How could you imagine that I could ever complain, even though *fractus illabatur orbis*? I beseech you, know better the people to whom you speak, and the force of the terms you make use of. Miss Keiths desired me to tell you, that some time ago they had a letter from Sir Basil, by which they learn that your request with regard to Maillet's friend, is complied with.

"My compliments to Mrs. Edmondstoune; embrace Jean Jacques in my name. Dear Guidelianus, I am ever yours."

Colonel Edmondstoune's answer to these excuses is not a little curious.

Dear obstinate David,

Pravum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor *recta* jubentium
Non vultus instantis *Baronnæ*
Mente quatit *stolida*.

Will nothing move you, you obdurate philosopher? Your reasons are not worth a straw; and I'll prosecute you for scandalizing my house. The room next to your last is as cool as any room ought to be. It looks to the north, and you was put into a south room, merely because it was thought that the sun's vivifying ray would be of use to a man that had been worn out and so much epuisé in France. Besides, you scrub, have I not seen you basking for hours together in the sun, contemplating Shellie, and burning with envy at his prowess? and I heard nothing about your being heated till we came to Killin, and that was Crichen's doing, to season you for still a hotter place.

Hume *to his Nephew*.

"St. Andrew's Square, 30th August, 1775.

"Dear Davy, — Your letter gave me satisfaction, and I approve very much of your course of study. But I think you are unreasonably diffident of yourself with regard to the *copia verborum*: you are not wanting in that particular [consider]ing you as a beginner; and the course you take will tend very much to [produce] greater facility as well as correctness of expression.

Stylus est optimus [magis]ter eloquentiæ. These, if not the words, are the sense of Quinctilian, for I cite from memory. You know that the Roman stylus was the same as the pen.

"I had a letter to-day from Mr. Millar, who tells me that he expects to see you on the first Monday of November.

"I do not go to Inverara as soon as I proposed: it will be next week before I set out. I think I am the better for jaunting; though in the main I should like better to stay at home.

"My compliments to your mother; I am glad she has heard from Josey; but I wonder what has detained him so long at Paris.

"I fancy you and Jock are very happy at present in your field sports; and your father will not be displeased to see the favourable progress of the harvest. I am, dear Davy, your affectionate uncle."

Hume *to* John Home.

St. Andrew's Square, Sept. 20th, 1775.

Dear John, — Of all the vices of language, the least excusable is the want of perspicuity; for, as words were instituted by men, merely for conveying their ideas to each other, the employing of words without meaning is a palpable abuse, which departs from the very original purpose and intention of language. It is also to be observed, that any ambiguity in expression is next to the having no meaning at all; and is indeed a species of it; for while the hearer or reader is perplexed between different meanings, he can assign no determinate idea to the speaker or writer; and may, on that account, say with Ovid, "Inopem me copia fecit." For this reason, all eminent rhetoricians and grammarians, both ancient and modern, have insisted on perspicuity of language as an essential quality; without which, all ornaments of diction are vain and fruitless. Quinctilian carries the matter so far, as to condemn this expression, *vidi hominem librum legentem*; because, says he, legentem may construe as well with *librum* as *hominem*; though one would think that the sense were here sufficient to prevent all ambiguity. In conformity to this way of thinking, Vaugelas, the first great grammarian of France, will not permit that any one have recourse to the sense, in order to explain the meaning of the words; because, says he, it is the business of the words to explain the meaning of the sense — not of the sense to give a determinate meaning to the words; and this practice is reversing the order of nature; like the custom of the Romans (he might have added the Greeks,) in their Saturnalia, who made the slaves the masters; for you may learn from

Lucian that the Greeks practised the same frolic during the festival of Saturn, whom they called Χρονος.

Now, to apply, and to come to the use of this principle: I must observe to you, that your last letter, besides a continued want of distinctness in the form of the literal characters, has plainly transgressed the essential rule above-mentioned of grammar and rhetoric. You say that Coutts has complained to you of not hearing from me; had you said either James or Thomas, I could have understood your meaning. About two months ago, I heard that James complained of me in this respect; and I wrote to him, though then abroad, making an apology for my being one of the subscribers of a paper which gave him some offence. I was afraid he had not received mine. The letter of Thomas, I conceived to be only a circular letter, informing me of a change in the firm of the house: and having answered it a few days ago, by giving him some directions about disposing of my money, which proved that I intended to remain a customer to the shop; it happens, therefore, luckily, that I had obviated all objections to my conduct on both sides.

In turning over my papers, I find a manuscript journal of the last rebellion, which is at your service. I hope Mrs. Home is better, and will be able to execute her journey. Are you to be in town soon? Yours without ambiguity, circumlocution, or mental reservation.

Hume, though we have found him censuring the conduct of Franklin, was opposed to any attempt to coerce America. “I always thought,” says Sir John Pringle, when writing to him, “you were in the wrong, when you supposed these colonies wanted only a pretext to shake off their subjection.” This subjection he seems to have thought they were entitled to throw off; for he was far more tolerant of the sway of individuals over numbers, which he looked upon as the means of preserving order and civilization, than of the predominance of one territory over another, which he looked upon as subjugation. Unfortunately, few of his opinions on this subject can be better ascertained than by the reflex light of the letters addressed to him, in answer to his remarks. With Strahan, the eminent printer, he carried on an extensive correspondence on political matters, of which the letters on his own side have unfortunately been lost. The sentiments which Hume had expressed on the American war, are thus described, by contrast, in the words of that member of Parliament, to whom Franklin addressed his celebrated letter of defiance.

William Strahan *to* Hume.

I differ from you *toto cœlo* with regard to America. I am entirely for coercive methods with those obstinate madmen; and why should we despair of success? Why should we suffer the empire to be so dismembered, without the utmost exertions on our part? I see nothing so very formidable in this business, if we become a little more unanimous, and could stop the mouths of domestic traitors, from whence the evil originated. Not that I wish to enslave the colonists, or to make them one jot less happy than ourselves; but I am for keeping them subordinate to the British legislature; and their trade, in a reasonable degree, subservient to the interest of the mother country; an advantage she well deserves; but which she must inevitably lose, if they are emancipated, as you propose. I am really surprised you are of a different opinion. Very true, things look oddly at present; and the dispute hath, hitherto, been very ill managed; but so we always do at the commencement of every war. So we did, most remarkably, in the last. It is perhaps owing to the nature of our government, which permits not of those sudden and decisive exertions frequently made by arbitrary princes. But, so soon as the British lion is roused, we never fail to fetch up our lee-way, as the sailors say. And so I hope you will find it in this important case.

The following letter, which is not, however, written in a spirit of entire earnestness or sobriety, has some reference to his views on the American question.

Hume *to* Baron Mure.

“St. David’s Street, Oct. 27th, 1775.

“Oh! Dear Baron, — You have thrown me into agonies, and almost into convulsions, by your request. You ask what seems reasonable, — what seems a mere trifle; yet am I so unfit for it, that it is almost impossible for me to comply. You are much fitter yourself. That address, by which you gained immortal honour, was done altogether without my knowledge; I mean that after the suppression of the late rebellion. Here is Lord Home teazing me for an address from the Merse; and I have constantly refused him. Besides, I am an American in my principles, and wish we would let them alone to govern or misgovern themselves, as they think proper: the affair is of no consequence, or of little consequence, to us. If the county of Renfrew think it indispensably necessary for them to interpose in public matters, I wish they would advise the king, first to punish those insolent rascals in London and Middlesex, who daily insult him and the whole legislature, before he thinks of America. Ask him, how he can expect that a form of government will maintain an authority at three thousand miles' distance, when it cannot make itself be respected, or even be treated with common decency, at home. Tell him, that Lord North, though, in appearance, a worthy gentleman, has not a head for these great operations; and that, if fifty thousand men, and twenty millions of money, were intrusted to such a lukewarm coward as Gage, they never could produce any effect. These are objects worthy of the respectable county of Renfrew: not mauling the poor infatuated Americans in the other hemisphere."

It has already been said, that Hume appears to have suspected that his nephew, David, was imbibing republican principles. It is well worthy of remark, that he does not appear to have considered the training of his young nephews, in political opinions different from his own, as at all to be deprecated; and David, to whom the following letter is addressed, was boarded with Professor Millar, afterwards author of the "Historical View of the English Government," who had even then shown himself as one of the most powerful antagonists of Hume's constitutional doctrines. It must be regretted that the letter is much mutilated; but enough of it is preserved to show how lightly Hume's political opinions hung on him — how little they possessed the character of a creed — how tolerant he was of any system of politics which bore the air of philosophy, and how curiously he could let his reason vibrate between opinions of the most opposite character in practical politics.

Hume *to his* Nephew.

"Edinburgh, 8th December, 1775.

"Dear Davy, — All your letters, both to me and to your father, have [given] great satisfaction, particularly your last; and, in return, I must give you [the] satisfaction of telling you, that Mr. Millar is very well pleased with you, [ ] no less than you with him. He complains only of one thing, which [is not the] usual complaint of tutors against their pupils; to wit, that he is afraid you [apply too] close, and may hurt your health by too assiduous study. I should not men[tion this] if I had the least apprehension that a hint of this nature would m[ake you] relax too much. But I cannot forbear saying, that every day, fair or foul, [you] ought to use some exercise. Relaxation from [for?] amusement, you may use, [or not,] as you fancy; but that, for health, is absolutely necessary. When I was [of your] age, I was inclined to give in to excesses of the same kind; and I remember [an anecdote] told me by a friend, the present Lord Pitfour. A man was riding, with [great] violence, and running his horse quite out of wind. He stopt a moment to [ask when] he might reach a particular place. In two hours, replied the countryman, [if you] will go slower; in four if you be in such a hurry. Bad health, be[sides other] inconveniencies, is the greatest interrupter to study in the world.

"I cannot but agree with Mr. Millar, that the republican form of government is by far the best. The ancient republics were somewhat ferocious and torn [ ] by bloody factions; but they were still much preferable to the monarchies or [aristocracies] which seem to have been quite intolerable. Modern manners have corrected this abuse; and all the republics in Europe, without exception, are so well governed that one is at a loss to which we should give the preference. But what is this general subject of speculation to our purpose? For, besides that an established government [ ] without the most criminal imputation, be disjointed from any speculation, [ ] is only fitted for a small state; and any attempt towards it can, in our [ ] produce only anarchy, which is the immediate forerunner of despotism [ ] tell us what is that form of a republic which we must aspire to? Or [ ]stion be afterwards decided by the sword. [One] great advantage of a commonwealth over our mixed monarchy, is, that it [would consid]erably abridge our liberty; which is growing to such an extreme as to be incom[patible wi]th all. Such fools are they who perpetually cry out liberty, [and think to] augment it by shaking off the monarchy.

"I have not heard from Josey for some time, which, you may believe, has produced [ ] reflections in some of your friends. But to show you that you are not forgotten [ ] I showed Mr. Millar's letter to your mother. I am afraid, said she, that [ ] some symptoms of a consumption in poor Davy.

"[I a]m far from thinking Mr. Millar's demands in point of money unreas[onable.] On the contrary, I believe that I never laid out money to better purpose.

"[Ha]rrington is an author of genius, but chimerical. No laws, however rigorous, [would ma]ke his Agrarian practicable. And as the people have only a negative, the [ ] would perpetually gain ground upon them. You remember that Montesquieu says, that Harrington establishing his "Oceana" in opposition to the English constitution, is like the blind men who built Chalcedon on the opposite [ ] to the seat of Byzantium. I ask your pardon for not writing to you [sooner,] but beg the continuance of your correspondence. My compliments to [Mr. Millar,] to whom I owe a letter. I am, your affectionate uncle."

Hume *to* John Home.

"Edinburgh, 8th February, 1776.

"Dear Tyrtaeus, — It is a remark of Dr. Swift's, that no man in London ever complained of his being neglected by his friends in the country. Your complaint of me is the more flattering.

"Two posts ago, I received, under a frank of General Fraser's, a pamphlet, entitled *A letter from an officer retired* . It is a very good pamphlet; and I conjecture you to be the author. Sallust makes it a question, whether the writer or the performer of good things has the preference? and he ascribes the greater praise to the latter. It is happy for you, that you may rest your fame on either. I here allude to what you have done for Ferguson.

"But, pray, why do you say, that the post of Boston is like the camp of Pirna? I fancy our troops can be withdrawn thence without any difficulty.

"I make no doubt, since you sound the trumpet for war against the Americans, that you have a plan ready for governing them, after they are subdued: but you will not subdue them; unless they break in pieces among themselves — an event very probable. It is a wonder it has not happened sooner. But no man can foretell how far these frenzies of the people may be carried. Yours," &c.

The following letter exhibits a feeling of impatience for the appearance of the long promised "Wealth of Nations." It shows, in discussing some questions in political economy, that, with his usual sagacity, Hume predicted that the loss of British supremacy over America, would not have that dire effect on our commercial prosperity, which had been anticipated.

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

"Edinburgh, 8th Feb. 1776.

"Dear Smith, — I am as lazy a correspondent as you, yet my anxiety about you makes me write. By all accounts your book has been printed long ago: yet it has never yet been so much as advertised. What is the reason? If you wait till the fate of America be decided, you may wait long.

"By all accounts, you intend to settle with us this spring: yet we hear no more of it: What is the reason? Your chamber in my house is always unoccupied. I am always at home. I expect you to land here.

"I have been, am, and shall be probably in an indifferent state of health. I weighed myself t' other day, and find I have fallen five complete stones. If you delay much longer I shall probably disappear altogether.

"The Duke of Buccleuch tells me that you are very zealous in American affairs. My notion is that the matter is not so important as is commonly imagined. If I be mistaken, I shall probably correct my error when I see you, or read you. Our navigation and general commerce may suffer more than our manufactures. Should London fall as much in its size as I have done, it will be the better. It is nothing but a hulk of bad and unclean humours. Yours," &c.

It is not perhaps uncharitable to suppose, that the following eulogium would have been more warm, had the person it was addressed to not been one of "the barbarians who inhabit the banks of the Thames."

Hume *to* Gibbon.

Edinburgh, 18th March, 1776.

Dear Sir, — As I ran through your volume of history with a great deal of avidity and impatience, I cannot forbear discovering somewhat of the same impatience in returning you thanks for your agreeable present, and expressing the satisfaction which the performance has given me. Whether I consider the dignity of your style, the depth of your matter, or the extensiveness of your learning, I must regard the work as equally the object of esteem; and I own, that if I had not previously had the happiness of your personal acquaintance, such a performance, from an Englishman in our age, would have given me some surprise. You may smile at this sentiment; but as it seems to me that your countrymen, for almost a whole generation, have given themselves up to barbarous and absurd faction, and have totally neglected all polite letters, I no longer expected any valuable production ever to come from them. I know it will give you pleasure (as it did me,) to find that all the men of letters in this place concur in their admiration of your work, and in their anxious desire of your continuing it.

When I heard of your undertaking, (which was some time ago,) I own I was a little curious to see how you would extricate yourself from the subject of your two last chapters. I think you have observed a very prudent temperament; but it was impossible to treat the subject so as not to give grounds of suspicion against you, and you may expect that a clamour will arise. This, if any thing, will retard your success with the public; for in every other respect your work is calculated to be popular. But, among many other marks of decline, the prevalence of superstition in England, prognosticates the fall of philosophy and decay of taste; and though nobody be more capable than you to revive them, you will probably find a struggle in your first advances.

I see you entertain a great doubt with regard to the authenticity of the poems of Ossian. You are certainly right in so doing. It is, indeed, strange, that any men of sense could have imagined it possible, that above twenty thousand verses, along with numberless historical facts, could have been preserved by oral tradition during fifty generations, by the rudest, perhaps, of all European nations; the most necessitous, the most turbulent, and the most unsettled. Where a supposition is so contrary to common sense, any positive evidence of it ought never to be regarded. Men run with great avidity to give their evidence in favour of what flatters their passions, and their national prejudices. You are, therefore, over and above indulgent to us in speaking of the matter with hesitation.

I must inform you, that we are all very anxious to hear that you have fully collected the materials for your second volume, and that you are even considerably advanced in the composition of it. I speak this more in the name of my friends than in my own; as I cannot expect to live so long as to see the publication of it. Your ensuing volume will be more delicate than the preceding, but I trust in your prudence for extricating you from the difficulties; and, in all events, you have courage to despise the clamour of bigots. I am, with regard, &c.

At length appeared the long looked for work, in which the parent of the first elucidations of political economy was to see his own offspring eclipsed; and to see it with pride. One must be familiar with the unenvious friendship which Hume ever bestowed, on the fellow countrymen who joined him in the noble path of philosophical inquiry, to appreciate the genuine satisfaction with which he thus hailed the appearance of “The Wealth of Nations.”

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“Edinburgh, 1st April, 1776.

“Euge! Belle! Dear Mr. Smith, — I am much pleased with your performance; and the perusal of it has taken me from a state of great anxiety. It was a work of so much expectation, by yourself, by your friends, and by the public, that I trembled for its appearance, but am now much relieved. Not but that the reading of it necessarily requires so much attention, and the public is disposed to give so little, that I shall still doubt for some time of its being at first very popular. But it has depth, and solidity, and acuteness, and is so much illustrated by curious facts, that it must at last take the public attention. It is probably much improved by your last abode in London. If you were here at my fireside, I should dispute some of your principles. I cannot think that the rent of farms makes any part of the price of the produce, but that the price is determined altogether by the quantity and the demand. It appears to me impossible, that the King of France can take a seignorage of eight per cent upon the coinage. Nobody would bring bullion to the mint; it would be all sent to Holland or England, where it might be coined and sent back to France, for less than two per cent. Accordingly, Necker says, that the French king takes only two per cent of seignorage. But these and a hundred other points are fit only to be discussed in conversation; which, till you tell me the contrary, I still flatter myself with soon. I hope it will be soon; for I am in a very bad state of health, and cannot afford a long delay. I fancy you are acquainted with Mr. Gibbon. I like his performance extremely, and have ventured to tell him, that, had I not been personally acquainted with him, I should never have expected such an excellent work from the pen of an Englishman. It is lamentable to consider how much that nation has declined in literature during our time. I hope he did not take amiss the national reflection.

"All your friends here are in great grief at present, for the death of Baron Mure, which is an irreparable loss to our society. He was among the oldest and best friends I had in the world."

In April, 1776, the disease of which Hume subsequently died, had made alarming progress. The little autobiographical sketch, called "my own Life," was finished on the eighteenth of that month; and he there speaks of the rise and progress of his disorder, and of his feelings under the expectation of a speedy termination of his life, in the following terms: —

In spring, 1775, I was struck with a disorder in my bowels, which at first gave me no alarm, but has since, as I apprehend it, become mortal and incurable. I now reckon upon a speedy dissolution. I have suffered very little pain from my disorder; and what is more strange, have, notwithstanding the great decline of my person, never suffered a moment's abatement of my spirits; insomuch, that were I to name the period of my life which I should most choose to pass over again, I might be tempted to point to this latter period. I possess the same ardour as ever in study, and the same gaiety in company. I consider, besides, that a man of sixty-five, by dying, cuts off only a few years of infirmities; and though I see many symptoms of my literary reputation's breaking out at last with additional lustre, I knew that I could have but few years to enjoy it. It is difficult to be more detached from life than I am at present.

It was probably early in the year, and before the disease had made such progress, as to make his friends in general anticipate its fatal conclusion, that Dr. Black wrote the following undated letter on the subject to Smith: —

"I write at present, chiefly to acquaint you with the state of your friend David Hume's health, which is so bad that I am quite melancholy upon it, and as I hear that you intend a visit to this country soon, I wish if possible to hasten your coming, that he may have the comfort of your company so much the sooner. He has been declining several years, and this in a slow and gradual manner, until about a twelvemonth ago, since which the progress of his disorder has been more rapid. One of his distresses has been a sensation of excessive heat, chiefly in the night time, and which was only external, for it occasioned no internal distress, or anxiety, or thirst."

Black then proceeds to describe with more minuteness, than would be either pleasing or instructive to unscientific readers, a series of symptoms from which he infers that the most serious part of his patient's disorder, is a hemorrhage in the upper part of the intestines. He continues, —

"His mother, he says, had precisely the same constitution with himself, and died of this very disorder; which has made him give up any hopes of his getting the better of it." He concludes by saying, —

"Do not, however, say much on this subject to any one else; as he does not like to have it spoke of, and has been shy and slow in acquainting me fully with the state of his health."

In preparation for the event, which could not be far distant, he had executed a settlement of his estate, so early as the 4th of January. He left the bulk of his fortune to his brother, or, in the case of his predeceasing him, to his nephew David, burdened in the latter case with special legacies to his other nephews and his nieces. He left his sister £1200. Along with some legacies to a few obscure private friends and to his servants, he left £200 to D'Alembert, and the same sum to Adam Ferguson. He appointed Smith his literary executor, in the following terms: "To my friend Dr. Adam Smith, late Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow, I leave all my manuscripts without exception, desiring him to publish my ‘Dialogues on Natural Religion,’ which are comprehended in this present bequest; but to publish no other papers which he suspects not to have been written within these five years, but to destroy them all at his leisure. And I even leave him full power over all my papers, except the Dialogues above mentioned; and though I can trust to that intimate and sincere friendship, which has ever subsisted between us, for his faithful execution of this part of my will, yet, as a small recompense of his pains in correcting and publishing this work, I leave him two hundred pounds, to be paid immediately after the publication of it.”

Smith subsequently refused to receive payment of the legacy; and it was the cause of a long friendly discussion with Mr. Home of Ninewells, who, in opposition to his argument, that it was bequeathed as a remuneration for editorial labours, which by a subsequent alteration of the bequest did not require to be performed, urged such pleas as this, “My brother, knowing your liberal way of thinking, laid on you something as an equivalent, not imagining you would refuse a small gratuity from the funds it was to come from, as a testimony of his friendship.” But he pleaded in vain; and Smith continued to refuse the bequest, with all the firmness of his unmercenary nature.

Previous to his journey to Bath, which has to be presently narrated, Hume appears to have informed Smith of the desire expressed in his will, that he should undertake the publication of the “Dialogues on Natural Religion.” The intimation was probably verbal, as it does not form part of any letter among Hume’s papers. Elliot was opposed to the publication of this work. Blair pleaded strongly for its suppression; and Smith, who had made up his mind, that he would not edit the work, seems to have desired that the testamentary injunction laid on him might be revoked. Hume, however, before his death, took effectual steps to guard against its suppression.

Thus, after having good-naturedly abstained, for nearly thirty years, from the publication of a work, which might give pain and umbrage to his dearest friends; at the close of life, and when the lapse of time since it was written might have been supposed to render him indifferent to its fate, — because there appeared some danger of its final suppression, he took decided and well pondered steps to avert from it this fate. Such was the character of the man!

Hume *to* Adam Smith.

“London, 3d May, 1776.

“My dear Friend, — I send you enclosed an ostensible letter, conformably to your desire. I think, however, your scruples groundless. Was Mallet any wise hurt by his publication of Lord Bolingbroke? He received an office afterwards from the present king and Lord Bute, the most prudish men in the world; and he always justified himself by his sacred regard to the will of a dead friend. At the same time, I own that your scruples have a specious appearance. But my opinion is, that if upon my death you determine never to publish these papers, you should leave them sealed up with my brother and family, with some inscription that you reserve to yourself the power of reclaiming them whenever you think proper. If I live a few years longer, I shall publish them myself. I consider an observation of Rochefoucault, that a wind, though it extinguishes a candle, blows up a fire.

“You may be surprised to hear me talk of living years, considering the state you saw me in, and the sentiments which both I and all my friends at Edinburgh entertained on that subject. But though I cannot come up entirely to the sanguine notions of our friend John, I find myself very much recovered on the road, and I hope Bath waters and farther journeys, may effect my cure.

“By the little company I have seen, I find the town very full of your book, which meets with general approbation. Many people think particular points disputable; but this you certainly expected. I am glad that I am one of the number; as these points will be the subject of future conversation between us. I set out for Bath, I believe, on Monday, by Sir John Pringle’s directions, who says, that he sees nothing to be apprehended in my case. If you write to me (hem! hem!) I say if you write to me, send your letter under cover to Mr. Strahan, who will have my direction.”

The “ostensible letter” which was to serve as Smith’s justification, if he should decline to follow the injunctions of the will, is as follows: —

“London, 3d May, 1776.

“My dear Sir, — After reflecting more maturely on that article of my will by which I left you the disposal of all my papers, with a request that you should publish my ‘Dialogues concerning Natural Religion,’ I have become sensible that, both on account of the nature of the work, and of your situation, it may be improper to hurry on that publication. I therefore take the present opportunity of qualifying that friendly request. I am content to leave it entirely to your discretion, at what time you will publish that piece, or whether you will publish it at all.

"You will find among my papers a very inoffensive piece, called "my own Life," which I composed a few days before I left Edinburgh; when I thought, as did all my friends, that my life was despaired of. There can be no objection, that the small piece should be sent to Messrs. Strahan and Cadell, and the proprietors of my other works, to be prefixed to any future edition of them."

Smith did not absolutely refuse to edit the "Dialogues," but Hume saw pretty clearly that it was a task that would not be performed by him. That he was correct in this supposition, appears by a letter from Smith to Strahan after Hume's death, where he says:

"I once had persuaded him to leave it entirely to my discretion either to publish them at what time I thought proper, or not to publish them at all. Had he continued of this mind, the manuscript should have been most carefully preserved, and upon my decease restored to his family; but it never should have been published in my lifetime. When you have read it, you will perhaps think it not unreasonable to consult some prudent friend about what you ought to do."

By a codicil to his will, dated 7th August, he thus altered the arrangement referred to in these letters. "In my later will and disposition, I made some destinations with regard to my manuscripts: All these I now retract, and leave my manuscripts to the care of Mr. William Strahan of London, member of Parliament, trusting to the friendship that has long subsisted between us, for his careful and faithful execution of my intentions. I desire that my 'Dialogues concerning Natural Religion' may be printed and published, any time within two years after my death." After making the bequest to John Home which is mentioned farther on, leaving to Blair, Smith, Home, and Edmondstoune, "all of them persons very dear to me, and whose affection to me I know by repeated proofs to have been mutual," each a copy of the new edition of his works, and to Miss Ord, ten guineas to buy a ring, "as a memorial of his friendship and attachment to so amiable and accomplished a person," the codicil is signed. There is then a new paragraph appended as follows:

"I do ordain that if my 'Dialogues,' from whatever cause, be not published within two years and a half after my death, as also the account of my life, the property shall return to my nephew, David, whose duty in publishing them, as the last request of his uncle, must be approved of by all the world."

Both Hume and Smith seem to have thought that Strahan would undertake the publication as a mere matter of business. But this book, like the little hunchback in the "Arabian Nights," was a commodity which every one seemed anxious to transfer to his neighbour. Strahan declined to undertake the task, and the "Dialogues" did not appear until 1779, when they were published by their author's nephew.

Smith cheerfully agreed to undertake the superintendance of the new edition of his friend's works, then at press. They appear to have been all in a state of very finished preparation for the press, and an edition of the "Inquiries" and the miscellaneous essays was published in 1777, from a copy in which the author had completed that removal of passages of a democratic tendency, which has been so frequently alluded to.

By the entreaties of several friends, who believed that travelling might have a favourable influence on his health, Hume undertook a journey to London towards the end of April. At Morpeth he met with Adam Smith and John Home, on their way from London, to visit him in Edinburgh, in consequence of a letter which the former had received from Ferguson, who says, "David, I am afraid, loses ground. He is cheerful and in good spirits as usual; but I confess that my hopes, from the effects of the turn of the season towards spring, have very much abated."

Smith proceeded to Edinburgh, but Home went back to London with his friend, and fortunately preserved a diary of the journey, so very interesting, and containing so lively a picture of Hume's state of mind and habits, that, though already published, the reader would not excuse its omission on this occasion.

Note by Mr. John Home.

Soon after Mr. Home received the letter from Dr. Ferguson, he left London, and set out for Scotland with Mr. Adam Smith. They came to Morpeth on the 23d of April, 1776, and would have passed Mr. David Hume, if they had not seen his servant, Colin, standing at the gate of an inn. Mr. Home thinks that his friend, Mr. David Hume, is much better than he expected to find him. His spirits are astonishing: he talks of his illness, of his death, as matters of no moment, and gives an account of what passed between him and his physicians since his illness began, with his usual wit, or with more wit than usual.

He acquainted Mr. Adam Smith and me, that Dr. Black had not concealed the opinion he had of the desperateness of his condition, and was rather averse to his setting out. “Have you no reason against it,” said David, “but an apprehension that it may make me die sooner? — that is no reason at all.” I never saw him more cheerful, or in more perfect possession of all his faculties, his memory, his understanding, his wit. It is agreed that Smith shall go on to Scotland, and that I should proceed to Bath with David. We are to travel one stage before dinner, and one after dinner. Colin tells me that he thinks Mr. Hume better than when he left Edinburgh. We had a fine evening as we went from Morpeth to Newcastle. David seeing a pair of pistols in the chaise, said, that as he had very little at stake, he would indulge me in my humour of fighting the highwaymen. Whilst supper was getting ready at the inn, Mr. Hume and I played an hour at picquet. Mr. David was very keen about his card-playing.

Newcastle, Wednesday, 24th April.

Mr. Hume not quite so well in the morning — says, that he had set out merely to please his friends; that he would go on to please them; that Ferguson and Andrew Stuart, (about whom we had been talking,) were answerable for shortening his life one week a-piece; for, says he, you will allow Xenophon to be good authority; and he lays it down, that suppose a man is dying, nobody has a right to kill him. He set out in this vein, and continued all the stage in his cheerful and talking humour. It was a fine day, and we went on to Durham — from that to Darlington, where we passed the night.

In the evening Mr. Hume thinks himself more easy and light, than he has been any time for three months. In the course of our conversation we touched upon the national affairs. He still maintains, that the national debt must be the ruin of Britain; and laments that the two most civilized nations, the English and French, should be on the decline; and the barbarians, the Goths and Vandals of Germany and Russia, should be rising in power and renown. The French king, he says, has ruined the state by recalling the parliaments. Mr. Hume thinks that there is only one man in France fit to be minister, (the Archbishop of Toulouse,) of the family of Brienne. He told me some curious anecdotes with regard to this prelate; that he composed and corrected without writing; that Mr. Hume had heard him repeat an elegant oration of an hour and a quarter in length, which he had never written. Mr. Hume, talking with the Princess Beauvais about French policy, said that he knew but one man in France capable of restoring its greatness; the lady said she knew one too, and wished to hear if it was the same. They accordingly named each their man, and it was this prelate.

Thursday, 25th.

Left Darlington about nine o’clock, and came to Northallerton. The same delightful weather. A shower fell that laid the dust, and made our journey to Boroughbridge more pleasant. Mr. Hume continues very easy, and has a tolerable appetite; tastes nothing liquid but water, and sups upon an egg. He assured me, that he never possessed his faculties more perfectly; that he never was more sensible of the beauties of any classic author than he was at present, nor loved more to read. When I am not in the room with him he reads continually. The post-boys can scarcely be persuaded to drive only five miles an hour, and their horses are of the same way of thinking! The other travellers, as they pass, look into the chaise, and laugh at our slow pace. This evening the post-boy from Northallerton, who had required a good deal of threatening to make him drive as slow as we desired, had no sooner taken his departure to go home, than he set off at full speed. “*Pour se dédommager*,” said David.

Friday, 26th, Boroughbridge.

Mr. Hume this morning not quite so well. He observes, and I see it, that he has a good day and a bad one. His illness is an internal hemorrhage, which has been wasting him for a long time. He is so thin that he chooses to have a cushion under him when he sits upon an ordinary chair. He told me to-day, that if Louis XV. had died in the time of the regency, the whole French nation were determined to bring back the King of Spain to be King of France, — so zealous were they for preserving the line of succession. This evening Mr. Hume not quite so well, and goes to bed at a more early hour than he used to do.

Ferrybridge, Sunday, 28th.

Mr. Hume much better this morning. He told me, that the French nation had no great opinion of Cardinal Fleury; that the English had extolled him, in opposition to their own minister Sir Robert Walpole; but that Fleury was a little genius, and a cheat. Lord Marischal acquainted Mr. Hume with a piece of knavery which his lordship said nobody but a Frenchman and a priest could have been guilty of. The French ambassador at Madrid came to Lord Marischal one day, and told him, that he had a letter from the French minister at Petersburgh, acquainting him that General Keith was not pleased with his situation in Russia, and wished to return to the Spanish service, (where he had formerly been;) that it would be proper for Lord Marischal to apply to the court of Spain. Lord Marischal said nothing could be more agreeable to him than to have his brother in the same country with him; but that, as he had heard nothing from himself, he could not make any application in his name. The French minister still urged him to write to the Spanish minister, but in vain. When the brothers met, several years after, they explained this matter. Keith had never any intention of coming into the Spanish service again; and if Lord Marischal had applied to the court of Spain, measures were taken to intercept the letter, and send it to the court of Russia. General Keith, who commanded the Russian army in the field against the Swedes, would have been arrested, and sent to Siberia; and the moment he had left the army, the Swedes were to attack the Russians. Mr. Hume told me, talking of Fleury, that Monsieur Trudent, who was his eléve, acquainted him with an anecdote of that minister and the late French king, which he, Mr. Hume, believes Trudent had never ventured to tell to any body but him; and he (David) had never told it to any body but me. Now, since Fleury, Trudent, and Lewis, are all dead, it may be told. Trudent took the liberty of observing to Fleury, that the king should be advised to apply a little more to business, and take some charge of his own affairs. Fleury, the first time Trudent spoke to him upon this subject, made him no answer; but upon his speaking again on the same subject, he told him, that he had entreated the king to be a man of business, and assured him that the French did not like an inactive prince; that in former times, there had been a race of indolent princes who did nothing at all, and were called *Les Rois Fainéants*; that one of them had been put into a convent. The king made no reply; but some time afterwards, when Fleury resumed the subject, the king asked him, whether or no the prince that was put into the convent had a good pension allowed him?

Mr. Hume this day told me, that he had bought a piece of ground; and when I seemed surprised that I had never heard of it, he said it was in the New Church-yard, on the Calton Hill, for a burying-place; that he meant to have a small monument erected, not to exceed in expense one hundred pounds; that the inscription should be

David Hume.

I desired him to change the discourse. He did so; but seemed surprised at my uneasiness, which he said was very nonsensical. I think he is gaining ground; but he laughs at me, and says it is impossible; that the year (‘76,) sooner or later, he takes his departure. He is willing to go to Bath, or travel during the summer through England, and return to Scotland to die at home; but that Sir John Pringle, and the whole faculty, would find it very difficult to boat him, (formerly an usual phrase in Scotland for going abroad, that is, out of the island, for health.) This day we travelled by his desire three stages, and arrived with great ease at Grantham.

Monday, 29th.

From the treatment Mr. Hume met with in France, he recurred to a subject not unfrequent with him — that is, the design to ruin him as an author, by the people that were ministers, at the first publication of his History, and called themselves Whigs, who, he said, were determined not to suffer truth to be told in Britain. Amongst many instances of this, he told me one which was new to me. The Duke of Bedford, (who afterwards conceived a great affection for Mr. Hume,) by the suggestions of some of his party friends, ordered his son, Lord Tavistock, not to read Mr. Hume’s History of England; but the young man was prevailed upon by one of his companions (Mr. Crawford of Errol) to disobey the command. He read the History, and was extremely pleased with it.

Mr. Hume told me, that the Duke de Choiseul, at the time Lord Hertford was in France, expressed the greatest inclination for peace, and a good correspondence between France and Britain. He assured Lord Hertford, that if the court of Britain would relinquish Falkland Island, he would undertake to procure from the court of Spain the payment of the Manilla ransom. Lord Hertford communicated the proposal to Mr. Grenville, who slighted it. Lord Hertford told Mr. Hume the same day an extraordinary instance of the violence of faction. Towards the end of Queen Anne’s reign, when the Whig ministers were turned out of all their places at home, and the Duke of Marlborough still continued in the command of the army abroad, the discarded ministers met, and wrote a letter, which was signed by Lord Somers, Lord Townshend, Lord Sunderland, and Sir Robert Walpole, desiring the duke to bring over the troops he could depend on, and that they would seize the queen’s person, and proclaim the Elector of Hanover Regent. The Duke of Marlborough answered the letter, and said it was madness to think of such a thing. Mr. Horace Walpole, Sir R. Walpole’s youngest son, confirmed the truth of this anecdote, which he had heard his father repeat often and often; and Mr. Walpole allowed Mr. Hume to quote him as his authority, and make what use he pleased of it. When George I. came to England, he hesitated whether to make a Whig or a Tory administration; but the German minister, Bernstorf, determined him to take the side of the Whigs, who had made a purse of thirty thousand guineas, and given it to this German. George I. was of a moderate and gentle temper. — He regretted all his life, that he had given way to the violence of the Whigs in the beginning of his reign. Whenever any difficulty occurred in parliament, he used to blame the impeachment of the Tories,— “Ce diable de impeachment,” as he called it.

The Whigs, in the end of Queen Anne’s reign, bribed the Emperor’s ministers, not to consent to the peace, and to send over Prince Eugene with proposals to continue the war.

This anecdote from Lord Bath. Another anecdote Mr. Hume mentioned, but distrusted the authority, for it was David Mallet who told Mr. Hume, that he had evidence in his custody of a design to assassinate Lord Oxford.

Prior, after the accession, was reduced to such poverty by the persecution he met with, that he was obliged to publish his works by subscription. Lord Bathurst told Mr. Hume, that he was with Prior reading the pieces that were to be published, and he thought there was not enough to make two small volumes. He asked Prior if he had no more poems? He said, No more that he thought good enough.— “What is that,” said Bathurst, pointing to a roll of paper. “A trifle,” said Prior, “that I wrote in three weeks, not worthy of your attention or that of the public.” Lord Bathurst desired to see it. This neglected piece was *Alma* .

Tuesday, 30th.

Last night, when Mr. Hume was going to bed, he complained of cold. One part of his malady had been a continual heat, so that he could not endure a soft or warm bed, and lay in the night with a single sheet upon him; he desired to have an additional covering. Colin observed to him, that he thought it a good symptom. Mr. Hume said he thought so too, for it was a good thing to be like other people. This morning he is wonderfully well; which is visible in his countenance and colour, and even the firmness of his step. Talking of the state of the nation, which he continually laments, he mentioned an anecdote of the former war. He was at Turin with General Sinclair, after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and, considering the superiority which the French arms had gained, he could not conceive why France granted such good terms to Britain. He desired General Sinclair to touch upon that subject with the King of Sardinia. That prince, who was very familiar with the General, said he was at a loss to give any account of that matter; but, many years after, when Hume was minister in France, and lived in great intimacy with Monsieur Puysieux, Secretary of State, who had negociated the peace of Aix, Mr. Hume asked him the reason of the conduct of France at that time? Puysieux told him, that it was the king’s aversion to war; that he knew more of it than any man alive, for, the year before the peace, he was ordered by the king to propose pretty near the same terms. He remonstrated against making the offer; said that at least the proposal should come from England; and that there was always some advantage to be gained by receiving, rather than propounding terms. The king was impatient, and obliged Puysieux to write the letter, (which General Ligonier carried,) with those terms which next year were agreed to by the British court. Mr. John Home said he knew that the King of France promoted the peace of Paris from the aversion he had to war; and the peace was made at a time when it seemed impossible for Britain to carry on a war of such extent, and retain her scattered conquests. Mr. Hume mentioned another singular anecdote concerning the beginning of the last war. When a squadron of the English fleet attacked and took two French men of war, the Alcide and the Lys, Louis XV. was so averse to war, that he would have pocketed the insult; and Madame Pompadour said it was better to put up with the affront, than to go to war without any object but the point of honour. It is known, that neither the king nor the ministers of England wished for war. The French king abhorred the thought of war! — What then was the cause? Chiefly the fear of the popular clamour, and of the opposition, in the Duke of Newcastle’s mind. Mr. Hume thinks Lord North no great minister, but does not see a better; cannot give any reason for the incapacity and want of genius, civil and military, which marks this period. He looks upon the country as on the verge of decline. His fears seem rather too great, and things are not quite so bad as he apprehends; but certainly the first show of statesmen, generals, and admirals, is, without comparison, the worst that has been seen in this country. I said to Mr. Hume, that I thought the great consideration to be acquired by speaking in Parliament, was the cause of that want of every other quality in men of rank: they do speak readily, but there are many orators who can neither judge nor act well.

Wednesday, 31st April.

Arrived in London, where we saw Sir John Pringle, who thought Mr. Hume much better than he expected to see him, and in no immediate danger. We staid a few days in London, and then set out for Bath.

In travelling from London to Bath, we had occasion frequently to make our observations on the passengers whom we met, and on those who passed us, as every carriage continued to do. Nothing occurred worthy the writing down, except Mr. David's plan of managing his kingdom, in case Ferguson and I had been princes of the adjacent states. He knew very well, he said, (having often disputed the point with us,) the great opinion we had of military virtues as essential to every state; that from these sentiments rooted in us, he was certain he would be attacked and interrupted in his projects of cultivating, improving, and civilizing mankind by the arts of peace; that he comforted himself with reflecting, that from our want of economy and order in our affairs, we should be continually in want of money; whilst he would have his finances in excellent condition, his magazines well filled, and naval stores in abundance; but that his final stroke of policy, upon which he depended, was to give one of us a large subsidy to fall upon the other, which would infallibly secure to him peace and quiet, and after a long war, would probably terminate in his being master of all the three kingdoms. At this sally, so like David's manner of playing with his friends, I fell into a fit of laughing, in which David joined; and the people that passed us certainly thought we were very merry travellers.

We have the following account from his own pen of his sojourn at Bath.

Hume *to* Dr. Blair.

"Bath, 13th May, 1776.

"My dear Doctor, — You have frequently heard me complain of my physical friends, that they allowed me to die in the midst of them without so much as giving a Greek name to my disorder: a consolation which was the least I had reason to expect from them. Dr. Black, hearing this complaint, told me that I should be satisfied in that particular, and that my disorder was a hemorrhage, a word which it was easy to decompose into αιμος and ρηγνυμι. But Sir John Pringle says, that I have no hemorrhage, but a spincture in the colon, which it will be easy to cure. This disorder, as it both contained two Greek appellations and was remediable, I was much inclined to prefer; when, behold! Dr. Gustard tells me that he sees no symptoms of the former disorder, and as to the latter, he never met with it and scarcely ever heard of it. He assures me that my case is the most common of all Bath cases, to wit, a bilious complaint, which the waters scarcely ever fail of curing: and he never had a patient of whose recovery he had better hopes.

"Indeed the waters, in the short trial which I have made of them, (for I have been here only four days,) seem to agree very well with me; and two days ago I found myself so well, that, for the first time, I began to entertain hopes of a reprieve. Yesterday I was not so well, from a misunderstanding in new lodgings with regard to my bedding. My whimsicalness in this particular surprises Dr. Gustard, and he knows not what to make of it. By the by, this Dr. Gustard is an excellent kind of man, very friendly, and I believe very intelligent. He assures me, as do several others, that the summer is the best time for Bath waters: and if they continue to agree with me I shall probably pass here that season. I promised to General Conway, and Lady Aylesbury, that if I had recovered so much health as to venture myself in company, I should pass some weeks of the autumn at Park place. This is the only retardment I can foresee to my return to Scotland before winter. My wishes carry me thither; though the grievous loss we have suffered in friends makes the abode in that country less pleasing to my fancy than formerly.

"You must have heard of the agreeable surprise which John Home put upon me. We travelled up to London very cheerfully together, and thence to this place, where we found Mrs. Home almost quite recovered. Never was there a more friendly action, nor better placed; for what between conversation and gaming, (not to mention sometimes squabbling,) I did not pass a languid moment; and his company I am certain was the chief cause why my journey had so good an effect: of which, however, I suppose he has given too sanguine accounts, as is usual with him.

"Be so good as to read this letter to Dr. Black and to Mr. Ferguson. When I write to one, I suppose myself writing to all my friends: and I also wish to comprehend the Principal in the number. Pray tell him that Mrs. Macauley is settled in Bath, and though her muse seems now to be mute, she is, if not a more illustrious, yet a more fortunate historian than either of us. There is one Dr. Wilson, a man zealous for liberty, who has made her a free and full present of a house of £2000 value, has adopted her daughter by all the rites of Roman jurisprudence, and intends to leave her all his fortune, which is considerable.

"Two ladies of my acquaintance have laid a scheme of bringing Lady Huntingdon and me together, for her or my conversion. I wish I may have spirits to humour this folly."

On 10th June, Strahan wrote to Adam Smith, to say that he finds in a letter from Sir John Pringle, giving an account of Hume's health, "that all the good symptoms that attended his first trial of the Bath waters are now vanished. His distemper has returned with its usual violence, so he intends to leave that place and try Buxton." He seems not to have attempted this change, but returning straight from Bath, he sent, on the way, invitations to a party of his friends to meet him at dinner. The note addressed to Dr. Blair is as follows:

"Mr. John Hume, alias Home, alias The Home, alias the late Lord Conservator, alias the late minister of the gospel at Athelstaneford, has calculated matters so as to arrive infallibly with his friend in St. David's Street, on Wednesday evening. He has asked several of Dr. Blair's friends to dine with him there on Thursday, being the 4th of July, and begs the favour of the Doctor to make one of the number."

Thus did this knot of men, united in friendship by the greatness of their talents, and their superiority to all things small and mean, meet for the last time round the social board, to bid, as it were, a farewell to him who had been the chief ornament and distinction of their circle. The eyes of these affectionate friends sedulously and anxiously watched the expiring flame — their pens have recorded the last scenes of its existence, and leave to the ordinary biographer only the task of embodying their statements in deferential silence. Nothing, therefore, remains, but to put together, along with the few remaining letters by Hume himself, the accounts furnished us by those who had the best means of knowing the manner in which he spent the last few days of his life.

The following is his last letter to John Home.

"Edinburgh, 6th August, 1776.

"My dear John, — I shall begin with telling you the only piece of good news of the family, which is, that my nephew, in no more than two days that he has staid here, has recovered so surprisingly, that he is scarcely knowable, or rather is perfectly knowable, for he was not so on his first arrival. Such are the advantages of youth! His uncle declines, if not with so great rapidity, yet pretty sensibly. Sunday, ill; half of yesterday the same; easy at present; prepared to suffer a little to-morrow; perhaps less the day after. Dr. Black says, I shall not die of a dropsy, as I imagined, but of inanition and weakness. He cannot, however, fix, with any probability, the time, otherwise he would frankly tell me.

"Poor Edmondstoune and I parted to-day, with a plentiful effusion of tears; all those *Belzebubians* have not hearts of iron. I hope you met with every thing well at Foggo, and receive nothing but good news from Buxton. In spite of Dr. Black's caution, I venture to foretel that I shall be yours cordially and sincerely till the month of October next."

Next in date is the following affectionate and considerate letter to his nephew.

"Edinburgh, 15th August, 1776.

"Dear Davy, — You need not doubt but your company, as well as your father's, would have been very agreeable to me, especially at present, for the consolation of your company; but I see the immediate inconveniences that attend it. You cannot be well spared from Josey, whose state of health, I am sorry to find, is still somewhat precarious; and there is no immediate call for your being here. For besides that you would but pass a melancholy time with me, howeveection might cover it and relieve it, I am weakening very gradually, and am not threatened with any immediate incident. I shall probably have more warning, in which case I shall not fail to summon you; and I shall never die in satisfaction without embracing you. I doubt not but my name would have procured you friends and credit, in the course of your life, especially if my brother had allowed you to carry it, for who will know it in the present disguise? But as he is totally obstinate on this head, I believe we had better let him alone. I have frequently told him, that it is lucky for him he sees few things in a wrong light, for where he does he is totally incurable. I am very much at my ease to-day. I beg my compliments to all your family. Your affectionate uncle."

Of the manner in which he conducted himself when he had come near to the end of his days, Adam Smith tells us: —

His cheerfulness was so great, and his conversation and amusements run so much in their usual strain, that, notwithstanding all bad symptoms, many people could not believe he was dying. "I shall tell your friend, Colonel Edmondstoune," said Dr. Dundas to him one day, "that I left you much better, and in a fair way of recovery." "Doctor," said he, "as I believe you would not choose to tell any thing but the truth, you had better tell him, that I am dying as fast as my enemies, if I have any, could wish, and as easily and cheerfully as my best friends could desire." Colonel Edmondstoune soon afterwards came to see him, and take leave of him; and on his way home, he could not forbear writing him a letter, bidding him once more an eternal adieu, and applying to him, as to a dying man, the beautiful French verses in which the Abbé Chaulieu, in expectation of his own death, laments his approaching separation from his friend, the Marquis de la Fare. Mr. Hume's magnanimity and firmness were such, that his most affectionate friends knew that they hazarded nothing in talking or writing to him as to a dying man, and that so far from being hurt by this frankness, he was rather pleased and flattered by it. I happened to come into his room while he was reading this letter, which he had just received, and which he immediately showed me. I told him, that though I was sensible how very much he was weakened, and that appearances were in many respects very bad, yet his cheerfulness was still so great, the spirit of life seemed still to be so very strong in him, that I could not help entertaining some faint hopes. He answered, "Your hopes are groundless. An habitual diarrhœa of more than a year's standing, would be a very bad disease at any age: at my age it is a mortal one. When I lie down in the evening, I feel myself weaker than when I rose in the morning; and when I rise in the morning, weaker than when I lay down in the evening. I am sensible, besides, that some of my vital parts are affected, so that I must soon die." "Well," said I, "if it must be so, you have at least the satisfaction of leaving all your friends, your brother's family in particular, in great prosperity." He said that he felt that satisfaction so sensibly, that when he was reading, a few days before, Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead, among all the excuses which are alleged to Charon for not entering readily into his boat, he could not find one that fitted him; he had no house to finish, he had no daughter to provide for, he had no enemies upon whom he wished to revenge himself. "I could not well imagine," said he, "what excuse I could make to Charon in order to obtain a little delay. I have done every thing of consequence which I ever meant to do; and I could at no time expect to leave my relations and friends in a better situation than that in which I am now likely to leave them. I therefore have all reason to die contented." He then diverted himself with inventing several jocular excuses, which he supposed he might make to Charon, and with imagining the very surly answers which it might suit the character of Charon to return to them. "Upon further consideration," said he, "I thought I might say to him, 'Good Charon, I have been correcting my works for a new edition. Allow me a little time, that I may see how the public receives the alterations.’ But Charon would answer, ‘When you have seen the effect of these, you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat.’ But I might still urge, ‘Have a little patience, good Charon; I have been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfal of some of the prevailing systems of superstition.’ But Charon would then lose all temper and decency. ‘You loitering rogue, that will not happen these many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy loitering rogue.’”

But, though Mr. Hume always talked of his approaching dissolution with great cheerfulness, he never affected to make any parade of his magnanimity. He never mentioned the subject but when the conversation naturally led to it, and never dwelt longer upon it than the course of the conversation happened to require.

How much his mind continued to be occupied with all that it had taken interest in, in the days of his health and enjoyment, the following letter, written five days before his death, will show: —

Hume *to the* Comtesse de Boufflers.

“Edinburgh, 20th of August, 1776.

“Though I am certainly within a few weeks, dear madam, and, perhaps, within a few days of my own death, I could not forbear being struck with the death of the Prince of Conti — so great a loss in every particular. My reflection carried me immediately to your situation in this melancholy incident. What a difference to you in your whole plan of life! Pray write me some particulars; but in such terms that you need not care, in case of decease, into whose hands your letter may fall.

“My distemper is a diarrhœa, or disorder in my bowels, which has been gradually undermining me these two years; but, within these six months, has been visibly hastening me to my end. I see death approach gradually, without any anxiety or regret. I salute you, with great affection and regard, for the last time.”

Smith, proceeding with his narrative, says, “He had now become so very weak, that the company of his most intimate friends fatigued him; for his cheerfulness was still so great, his complaisance and social disposition were still so entire, that when any friend was with him, he could not help talking more, and with greater exertion, than suited the weakness of his body. At his own desire, therefore, I agreed to leave Edinburgh, where I was staying, partly upon his account, and returned to my mother’s house here, at Kirkaldy, upon condition that he would send for me whenever he wished to see me; the physician who saw him most frequently, Dr. Black, undertaking, in the mean time, to write me, occasionally, an account of the state of his health.

“On the 22d of August, the Doctor wrote me the following letter: —

“‘Since my last, Mr. Hume has passed his time pretty easily, but is much weaker. He sits up, goes down stairs once a-day, and amuses himself with reading, but seldom sees any body. He finds that even the conversation of his most intimate friends fatigues and oppresses him; and it is happy that he does not need it, for he is quite free from anxiety, impatience, or low spirits, and passes his time very well with the assistance of amusing books.’

“I received, the day after, a letter from Mr. Hume himself, of which the following is an extract.

‘Edinburgh 23d August, 1776.

‘My dearest Friend, — I am obliged to make use of my nephew’s hand in writing to you, as I do not rise to-day. . . . .

‘I go very fast to decline, and last night had a small fever, which I hoped might put a quicker period to this tedious illness; but, unluckily, it has, in a great measure, gone off. I cannot submit to your coming over here on my account, as it is possible for me to see you so small a part of the day; but Doctor Black can better inform you concerning the degree of strength which may, from time to time, remain with me. Adieu,’ &c.

“Three days after I received the following letter from Doctor Black: —

‘Edinburgh, Monday, 26th August, 1776.

‘Dear Sir, — Yesterday, about four o’clock, afternoon, Mr. Hume expired. The near approach of his death became evident in the night between Thursday and Friday, when his disease became excessive, and soon weakened him so much that he could no longer rise out of his bed. He continued, to the last, perfectly sensible, and free from much pain or feelings of distress. He never dropped the smallest expression of impatience; but, when he had occasion to speak to the people about him, always did it with affection and tenderness. I thought it improper to write to you to bring you over, especially as I heard that he had dictated a letter to you desiring you not to come. When he became very weak, it cost him an effort to speak; and he died in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it.’”

The world is fortunately in possession of an account of this event, by another scientific man of no less eminence, the great Dr. Cullen. From a letter which he wrote to Dr. Hunter, on 17th September, the following extracts are made:

You desire an account of Mr. Hume’s last days, and I give it you with some pleasure; for, though I could not look upon him in his illness without much concern, yet the tranquillity and pleasantry which he constantly discovered did, even then, give me satisfaction; and, now that the curtain is dropped, allows me indulge the less alloyed reflection. It was truly an example “des grands hommes qui sont morts en plaisantant;” and to me, who have been so often shocked with the horrors of the superstitious on such occasions, the reflexion on such a death is truly agreeable. For many weeks before his death, he was very sensible of his gradual decay; and his answer to inquiries after his health was, several times, that he was going as fast as his enemies could wish, and as easily as his friends could desire. He was not, however, without a frequent recurrence of pain and uneasiness; but he passed most part of the day in his drawing-room, admitted the visits of his friends, and with his usual spirit conversed with them upon literature, politics, or whatever else was accidentally started. In conversation he seemed to be perfectly at ease, and to the last abounded with that pleasantry, and those curious and entertaining anecdotes, which ever distinguished him. This, however, I always considered rather as an effort to be agreeable, and he at length acknowledged that it became too much for his strength. For a few days before his death, he became more averse to receive visits; speaking became more and more difficult for him; and, for twelve hours before his death, his speech failed altogether. His senses and judgment did not fail till the last hour of his life. He constantly discovered a strong sensibility to the attention and care of his friends, and, amidst great uneasiness and languor, never betrayed any peevishness or impatience. . . . . .

These are a few particulars, which may perhaps appear trifling, but to me no particulars seem trifling that relate to so great a man. It is perhaps from trifles that we can best distinguish the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the philosopher, at a time when the most part of mankind are under disquiet, anxiety, and sometimes even horror. I consider the sacrifice of the cock as a more certain evidence of the tranquillity of Socrates, than his discourse on immortality.

The death and burial of so distinguished a fellow citizen, were naturally the objects of much attention among the inhabitants of Edinburgh. On the one hand his unpopular opinions; on the other, the blameless character of his life and his great genius, excited conflicting opinions, and these giving zest to public attention and curiosity, attracted crowds to witness his funeral, and to look with mingled feelings, on the spot where his remains were, by the injunctions of his will, deposited.

On the declivity of the Calton Hill there is an old grave-yard, which seventy years ago was in the open country beyond the boundary of the city of Edinburgh, and even at the present day, when it is the centre of a wide circumference of streets and terraces, has an air of solitude, from its elevated site, and the abrupt rocky banks that separate it from the crowded thoroughfares. There, on a conspicuous point of rock, beneath a circular monument built after the simple and solemn fashion of the old Roman tombs, lies the dust of David Hume. Whither the immortal spirit that gave life to it is gone, let no man too presumptuously pronounce; but let us rather contemplate with respectful awe, that unseen essence which the Deity had imbued with so great a power over the intellects of men, and believe that this wide sway over the destinies of the human species had its own wise and beneficent design, and was no produce of malign influences or untoward accidents. Fallacies may be the brilliant insects of a day, but truth is eternal; and when the searcher in philosophy groping amid the darkness of man’s imperfect reason, produces falsehoods, they are speedily forgotten; but if he develop great truths, they live to bless his species for ever. There are few who will now deny that mankind have learned many valuable truths of David Hume. The wide influence of his mind over thought and action, during the last hundred years, is expressed in the mere naming of the systems of which he was the author or suggester.

His Metaphysical labours gave birth to two great schools of philosophy. The one rising at his own door, endeavoured by powerful and earnest efforts to reconstruct in a more rational and substantial form the old system which he had sapped — the other in a distant land, where new lights of science had begun to burn, sought to raise mental philosophy from its original elements, purified of the dross and rubbish that had rendered the old materials cumbrous and unsafe, and to endow the whole with fresh life and a new form and structure.

In Ethics he was the first to make an Utilitarian morality assume the aspect of a theoretical system, which it was the task of a great successor, aided by subordinate labourers, to apply to the practical operations of mankind, and to spread widely over the earth.

In History he was the first to divert attention from wars, treaties, and successions, to the living progress of the people, in all that increases their civilization and their happiness. The example thus set has been the chief service of the "History of England;" yet, with all the faults of its matter, its purely literary merits have been so great, that, as a classical and popular work, it has hitherto encountered no rival.

But his triumphs in Political Economy are those which, in the present day, stand forth with the greatest prominence and lustre. In no long time, a hundred years will have elapsed from the day when Hume told the world, what the legislature of this country is now declaring, that national exclusiveness in trade was as foolish as it was wicked; that no nation could profit by stopping the natural flood of commerce between itself and the rest of the world; that commercial restrictions deprive the nations of the earth "*of that free communication and exchange, which the author of the world has intended by giving them soils, climates, and geniuses, so different from each other*;" and that, like the healthy circulation of the blood in living bodies, Free Trade is the vital principle by which the nations of the earth are to become united in one harmonious whole. Those who, with a reverential eye, have marked the wonders of the animal structure, and discovered beauty, utility, and harmonious purpose, where presumptuous ignorance has found uselessness or deformity; or have seen the lower animals, each working in its own blind ignorance, gregariously constructing a fabric more perfect, on philosophical principles, than human science can create, — have thence drawn vivid pictures of the wisdom and goodness with which the world is ordered. May we not extend this harmony to the social economy of the globe, and say, that the spirit of activity and enterprise, harmonizing with the dispersal of the different bounties of Providence in the distant regions of the globe, are part of the same harmonious system; that the love of commerce and the desire of aggrandisement, which in the eye of a narrow philosophy assume the air of selfish and repulsive passions, represent themselves, when they are left to their legitimate course, as motives implanted in us for the great purposes of securing mutual dependance and kind offices, and their fruits, peace and good-will, throughout the great family of mankind. To be the first to teach that the earth is not doomed to the eternal curse of rivalry and strife, and to open up so wide a prospect of beneficence, may be an atonement for many errors, and in the eye of good taste may justify the brief assumption of conscious superiority, in which the subject of this memoir indulged, when he desired that the inscription on his monument should contain only his name, with the year of his birth and of his death. *Leaving it to posterity to add the rest.*

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY: DAVID HUME by John Malcolm Mitchell

From 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 13

DAVID HUME (1711-1776), English philosopher, historian and political economist, was born at Edinburgh, on the 26th of April (O.S.) 1711. His father, Joseph Hume or Home, a scion of the noble house of Home of Douglas (but see Notes and Queries, 4th ser. iv. 72), was owner of a small estate in Berwickshire, on the banks of the Whiteadder, called, from the spring rising in front of the dwelling-house, Ninewells. David was the youngest of a family of three, two sons and a daughter, who after the early death of the father were brought up with great care and devotion by their mother, the daughter of Sir David Falconer, president of the college of justice.

Of Hume’s early education little is known beyond what he has himself stated in his Life. He appears to have entered the Greek classes of the university of Edinburgh in 1723, and, he tells us, “ passed through the ordinary course of education with success.” From a letter printed in Burton’s Life (i. 30-39), it appears that about 1726 Hume returned to Ninewells with a fair knowledge of Latin, slight acquaintance with Greek and literary tastes decidedly inclining to “ books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors.” We do not know, except by inference, to what studies he especially devoted himself. It is, however, clear that from his earliest years he began to speculate upon the nature of knowledge in the abstract, and its concrete applications, as in theology, and that with this object he studied largely the writings of Cicero and Seneca and recent English philosophers (especially Locke, Berkeley and Butler). His acquaintance with Cicero is clearly proved by the form in which he cast some of the most important of his speculations. From his boyhood he devoted himself to acquiring a literary reputation, and throughout his life, in spite of financial and other difficulties, he adhered to his original intention.

A man of placid and even phlegmatic temperament, he lived moderately in all things, and sought worldly prosperity only so far as was necessary to give him leisure for his literary work. At first he tried law, but was unable to give his mind to a study which appeared to him to be merely a barren waste of technical jargon. At this time the intensity of his intellectual activity in the area opened up to him by Locke and Berkeley reduced him to a state of physical exhaustion. In these circumstances he determined to try the effect of complete change of scene and occupation, and in 1734 entered a business house in Bristol. In a few months he found “ the scene wholly unsuitable “ to him, and about the middle of 1734 set out for France, resolved to spend some years in quiet study. He visited Paris, resided for a time at Rheims and then settled at La Fleche, famous in the history of philosophy as the school of Descartes. His health seems to have been perfectly restored, and during the three years of his stay in France his speculations were worked into systematic form in the Treatise of Human Nature. In the autumn of 1737 he was in London arranging for its publication and polishing it in preparation for the judgments of the learned. In January 1739 appeared the first and second volumes of the Treatise of Human Nature, being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects, containing book i., Of the Understanding, and book ii., Of the Passions. The third volume, containing book iii., Of Morals, was published in the following year. The publisher of the first two volumes, John Noone, gave him -£50 and twelve bound copies for a first edition of one thousand copies. Hume’s own words best describe its reception. “ Never literary attempt was more unfortunate; it fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots.” “ But,” he adds, “ being naturally of a cheerful and sanguine temper, I very soon recovered the blow, and prosecuted with great ardour my studies in the country.” This brief notice, however, is not sufficient to explain the full significance of the event for Hume’s own life. The work undoubtedly failed to do what its author expected from it; even the notice, otherwise not unsatisfactory, which it obtained in the History of the Works of the Learned, then the principal critical journal, did not in the least appreciate the true bearing of the Treatise on current discussions. Hume naturally expected that the world would see as clearly as he did the connexion between the concrete problems agitating contemporary thought and the abstract principles on which their solution depended. Accordingly he looked for opposition, and expected that, if his principles were received, a change in general conceptions of things would ensue. His disappointment at its reception was great; and though he never entirely relinquished his metaphysical speculations, though all that is of value in his later writings depends on the acute analysis of human nature to which he was from the first attracted, one cannot but regret that his high powers were henceforth withdrawn for the most part from the consideration, of the foundations of belief, and expended on its practical applications. In later years he attributed his want of success to the immature style of his early exposition, to the rashness of a young innovator in an old and well-established province of literature. But this has little foundation beyond the irritation of an author at his own failure to attract such attention as he deems his due. None of the principles of the Treatise is given up in the later writings, and no addition is made to them. Nor can the superior polish of the more mature productions counterbalance the concentrated vigour of the more youthful work.

After the publication of the Treatise Hume retired to his brother's house at Ninewells and carried on his studies, mainly in the direction of politics and political economy. In 1741 he published the first volume of his Essays, which had a considerable and immediate success. A second edition was called for in the following year, in which also a second volume was published. These essays Butler, to whom he had sent a copy of his Treatise, but with whom he had failed to make personal acquaintance, warmly commended. The philosophical relation between Butler and Hume is curious. So far as analysis of knowledge is concerned they are in harmony, and Hume's sceptical conclusions regarding belief in matters of fact are the foundations on which Butler's defence of religion rests. Butler, however, retained, in spite of his destructive theory of knowledge, confidence in the rational proofs for the existence of God, and certainly maintains what may be vaguely described as an a priori view of conscience. Hume had the greatest respect for the author of the Analogy, ranks him with Locke and Berkeley as an originator of the experimental method in moral science, and in his specially theological essays, such as that on Particular Providence and a Future State, has Butler's views specifically in mind. (See Butler.) The success of the Essays, though hardly great enough to satisfy his somewhat exorbitant cravings, was a great encouragement to him. He began to hope that his earlier work, if recast and lightened, might share the fortunes of its successor; and at intervals throughout the next four years he occupied himself in rewriting it in a more succinct form with all the literary grace at his command. Meantime he continued to look about for some post which might secure him the modest independence he desired. In 1744 we find him, in anticipation of a vacancy in the chair of moral philosophy at Edinburgh university, moving his friends to advance his cause with the electors; and though, as he tells us, “ the accusation of heresy, deism, scepticism or theism, &c., &c., was started “ against him, it had no effect, “ being bore down by the contrary authority of all the good people in town.” To his great mortification, however, he found out, as he thought, that Hutcheson and Leechman, with whom he had been on terms of friendly correspondence, were giving the weight of their opinion against his election. The after history of these negotiations is obscure. Failing in this attempt, he was induced to become tutor, or keeper, to the marquis of Annandale, a harmless literary lunatic. This position, financially advantageous, was absurdly false (see letters in Burton’s Life, i. ch. v.), and when the matter ended Hume had to sue for arrears of salary.

In 1746 Hume accepted the office of secretary to General St Clair, and was a spectator of the ill-fated expedition to France in the autumn of that year. His admirable account of the transaction has been printed by Burton. After a brief sojourn at Ninewells, doubtless occupied in preparing for publication his Philosophical Essays (afterwards entitled An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding), Hume was again associated with General St Clair as secretary in the embassy to Vienna and Turin (1748). The notes of this journey are written in a light and amusing style, showing Hume’s usual keenness of sight in some directions and his almost equal blindness in others.

During his absence from England, early in the year 1748, the Philosophical Essays were published; but the first reception of the work was little more favourable than that accorded to the Treatise. To the later editions of the work Hume prepared an “ Advertisement “ referring to the Treatise, and desiring that the Essays “ may alone be regarded as containing his philosophical sentiments and principles.” Some modern critics have accepted this disclaimer as of real value, but in fact it has no significance; and Hume himself in a striking letter to Gilbert Elliott indicated the true relation of the two works. “ I believe the Philosophical Essays contain everything of consequence relating to the understanding which you would meet with in the Treatise, and I give you my advice against reading the latter. By shortening and simplifying the questions, I really render them much more complete. Addo dum rninuo. The philosophical principles are the same in both.” The Essays are undoubtedly written with more maturity and skill than the Treatise; they contain in more detail application of the principles to concrete problems, such as miracles, providence, immortality; but the entire omission of the discussion forming part ii. of the first book of the Treatise, and the great compression of part iv., are real defects which must always render the Treatise the more important work.

In 1749 Hume returned to Ninewells, enriched with “ near a thousand pounds.” In 1751 he removed to Edinburgh, where for the most part he resided during the next twelve years of his life. These years are the richest so far as literary production is concerned. In 1751 he published his Political Discourses, which had a great and well-deserved success both in England and abroad. It was translated into French by Mauvillon (1753) and by the Abbe le Blanc (1754). In the same year appeared the recast of the third book of the Treatise, called Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals, of which he says that “ of all his writings, philosophical, literary or historical, it is incomparably the best.” At this time also we hear of the Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, a work which Hume was prevailed on not to publish, but which he revised with great care, and evidently regarded with the greatest favour. The work itself, left by Hume with instructions that it should be published, did not appear till 1779.

In 1751 Hume was again unsuccessful in the attempt to gain a professor’s chair. In the following year he received, in spite of the usual accusations of heresy, the librarianship of the Advocates’ Library in Edinburgh, small in emoluments (40 a year) but rich in opportunity for literary work. In a playful letter to Dr Clephane, he describes his satisfaction at his appointment, and attributes it in some measure to the support of “ the ladies.” In 1753 Hume was fairly settled in Edinburgh, preparing for his History of England. He had decided to begin the History, not with Henry VII., as Adam Smith recommended, but with James I., considering that the political differences of his time took their origin from that period. On the whole his attitude in respect to disputed political principles seems not to have been at first consciously unfair. As for the qualities necessary to secure success as a writer on history, he felt that he possessed them in a high degree; and, though neither his ideal of an historian nor his equipment for the task of historical research would now appear adequate, in both he was much in advance of his time. “ But,” he writes in the well-known passage of his Life, “ miserable was my disappointment. I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation;. .. what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it.” This account must be accepted with reservations. It expresses Hume’s feelings rather than the real facts. In Edinburgh, as we learn from one of his letters, the book succeeded well, no fewer than 450 copies being disposed of in five weeks. Nor is there anything in Hume’s correspondence to show that the failure of the book was so complete as he declared. Within a very few years the sale of the History was sufficient to gain for the author a larger revenue than had ever before been known in his country to flow from literature, and to place him in comparative affluence. He seems to have received 400 for the first edition of the first volume, £700 for the first edition of the second and 0840 for the copyright of the two together. At the same time the bitterness of Hume’s feelings and their effect are of importance in his life. It is from the publication of the History that we date his virulent hatred of everything English, towards society in London, Whig principles, Whig ministers and the public generally (see Burton’s Life, ii. 268, 4 1 7, 434). He was convinced that there was a conspiracy to suppress and destroy everything Scottish.’ The remainder of the History became little better than a party pamphlet. The second volume, published in 1756, carrying on the narrative to the Revolution, was better received than the first; but Hume then resolved to work backwards, and to show from a survey of the Tudor period that his Tory notions were grounded upon the history of the constitution. In 1759 this portion of the work appeared, and in 1761 the work was completed by the history of the pre-Tudor periods. The numerous editions of the various portions - for, despite Hume’s wrath and grumblings, the book was a great literary success - gave him an opportunity of careful revision, which he employed to remove from it all the ‘ villainous seditious Whig strokes,” and “ plaguy prejudices of Whiggism “ that he could detect. In other words, he bent all his efforts toward making his History more of a party work than it had been, and in his effort he was entirely successful. The early portion of his History may be regarded as now of little or no value. The sources at Hume’s command were few, and he did not use them all. None the less, the History has a distinct place in the literature of England. It was the first attempt at a comprehensive treatment of historic facts, the first to introduce the social and literary aspects of a nation’s life as only second in importance to its political fortunes, and the first historical writing in an animated yet refined and polished style.2 While the History was in process of publication, Hume did not entirely neglect his other lines of activity. In 1757 appeared Four Dissertations: The Natural History of Religion, Of the Passions, Of Tragedy, Of the Standard of Taste. Of these the dissertation on the passions is a very subtle piece of psychology, containing the essence of the second book of the Treatise. It is remarkable that Hume does not appear to have been acquainted with Spinoza’s analysis of the affections. The last two essays are contributions of no great importance to aesthetics, a department of philosophy in which Hume was not strong. The Natural History of Religion is a powerful contribution to the deistic controversy; but, as in the case of Hume’s earlier work, its significance was at the time overlooked. It is an attempt to carry the war into a province hitherto allowed to remain at peace, the theory of the general development of religious ideas. Deists, though raising doubts regarding the historic narratives of the Christian faith, had never disputed the general fact that belief in one God was natural and primitive. Hume endeavours to show that polytheism was the earliest as well as the most natural form of religious belief, and that theism or deism is ‘ See Burton, ii. 265, 148 and 238. Perhaps our knowledge of Johnson’s sentiments regarding the Scots in general, and of his expressions regarding Hume and Smith in particular, may lessen our surprise at this vehemence.

2 Macaulay describes Hume’s characteristic fault as an historian: “ Hume is an accomplished advocate. Without positively asserting much more than he can prove, he gives prominence to all the circumstances which support his case; he glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it; his own witnesses are applauded and encouraged; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Everything that is offered on the other side is scrutinized with the utmost severity; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for argument and invective; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice; concessions even are sometimes made; but this insidious candour only increases the effect of the vast mass of sophistry.” - Miscell. Writings, “ History.” With this may be compared the more favourable verdict by J. S. Brewer, in the preface to his edition of the Student’s Hume. the product of

reflection upon experience, thus reducing the valiuity of the historical argument to that of the theoretical proofs.

In 1763 he accompanied Lord Hertford to Paris, doing the duties of secretary to the embassy, with the prospect of the appointment to that post. He was everywhere received “ with the most extraordinary honours.” The society of Paris was peculiarly ready to receive a great philosopher and historian, especially if he were known to be an avowed antagonist of religion, and Hume made valuable friendships, especially with D’Alembert and Turgot, the latter of whom profited much by Hume’s economical essays. In 1766 he left Paris and returned to Edinburgh. In 1767 he accepted the post of under-secretary to General Conway and spent two years in London.

He settled finally in Edinburgh in 1769, having now through his pension and otherwise an income of £1000 a year. The solitary incident of note in this period of his life is the ridiculous quarrel with Rousseau, which throws much light upon the character of the great sentimentalist. Hume certainly did his utmost to secure for Rousseau a comfortable retreat in England, but his usually sound judgment seems at first to have been quite at fault with regard to his protege. The quarrel which all the acquaintances of the two philosophers had predicted soon came, and no language had expressions strong enough for Rousseau’s anger. Hume came well out of the business, and had the sagacity to conclude that his admired friend was little better than a madman. In one of his most charming letters he describes his life in Edinburgh. The new house to which he alludes was built under his own directions at the corner of what is now called St David Street after him; it became the centre of the most cultivated society of Edinburgh. Hume’s cheerful temper, his equanimity, his kindness to literary aspirants and to those whose views differed from his own won him universal respect and affection. He welcomed the work of his friends (e.g. Robertson and Adam Smith), and warmly recognized the worth of his opponents (e.g. George Campbell and Reid). He assisted Blackwell and Smollett in their difficulties and became the acknowledged patriarch of literature.

In the spring of 1775 Hume was struck with a tedious and harassing though not painful illness. A visit to Bath seemed at first to have produced good effects, but on the return journey more alarming symptoms developed themselves, his strength rapidly sank, and, little more than a month later, he died in Edinburgh on the 25th of August 1776.

No notice of Hume would be complete without the sketch of his character drawn by his own hand: “ To conclude historically with my own character, I am, or rather was (for that is the style I must now use in speaking of myself, which emboldens me the more to speak my sentiments), - I was, I say, a man of mild dispositions, of command of temper, of an open, social and cheerful humour, capable of attachment, but little susceptible of enmity, and of great moderation in all my passions. Even my love of literary fame, my ruling passion, never soured my temper, notwithstanding my frequent disappointments. My company was not unacceptable to the young and careless, as well as to the studious and literary; and as I took a particular pleasure in the company of modest women, I had no reason to be displeased with the reception I met with from them. In a word, though most men anywise eminent have found reason to complain of calumny, I never was touched, or even attacked, by her baleful tooth; and, though I wantonly exposed myself to the rage of both civil and religious factions, they seem to be disarmed on my behalf of their wonted fury. My friends never had occasion to vindicate any one circumstance of my character and conduct; not but that the zealots, we may well suppose, would have been glad to invent and propagate any story to my disadvantage, but they could never find any which they thought would wear the face of probability. I cannot say there is no vanity in making this funeral oration of myself, but I hope it is not a misplaced one; and this is a matter of fact which is easily cleansed and ascertained.” The more his life has become known, the more confidence we place in this admirable estimate.

The results of Hume’s speculations may be discussed under two heads: - (t) philosophical, (2) economical.

t. The philosophical writings, which mark a distinct epoch in the development of modern thought, can here be considered in two Phlloa only of the many aspects in which they present themselves sophy. as of the highest interest to the historian of philosophy. In the Treatise of Human Nature, which is in every respect the most complete exposition of Hume’s philosophical conception, we have the first thorough-going attempt to apply the fundamental principles of Locke’s empirical psychology to the construction of a theory of knowledge, and, as a natural consequence, the first systematic criticism of the chief metaphysical notions from this point of view. Hume, in that work, holds the same relation to Locke and Berkeley as the late J. S. Mill held with his System of Logic to Hartley and James

Mill. In certain of the later writings, pre-eminently in the Dialogues on Natural Religion, Hume brings the result of his speculative criticism to bear upon the problems of current theological discussion, and gives in their regard, as previously with respect to general philosophy, the final word of the empirical theory in its earlier form. The interesting parallel between Hume and J. S. Mill in this second feature will not be overlooked.

In the first instance, then, Hume's philosophical work is to be regarded as the attempt to supply for empiricism in psychology a consistent, that is, a logically developed theory of knowledge. In Locke, indeed, such theory is not wanting, but, of all the many inconsistencies in the Essay on the Human Understanding, none is more apparent or more significant than the complete want of harmony between the view of knowledge developed in the fourth book and the psychological principles laid down in the earlier part of the work. Though Locke, doubtless, drew no distinction between the problems of psychology and of theory of knowledge, yet the discussion of the various forms of cognition given in the fourth book of the Essay seems to be based on grounds quite distinct from and in many respects inconsistent with the fundamental psychological principle of his work. The perception of relations, which, according to him, is the essence of cognition, the demonstrative character which he thinks attaches to our inference of God's existence, the intuitive knowledge of self, are doctrines incapable of being brought into harmony with the view of mind and its development which is the keynote of his general theory. To some extent Berkeley removed this radical inconsistency, but in his philosophical work it may be said with safety there are two distinct aspects, and while it holds of Locke on the one hand, it stretches forward to Kantianism on the other. Nor in Berkeley are these divergent features ever united into one harmonious whole. It was left for Hume to approach the theory of knowledge with full consciousness from the psychological point of view, and to work out the final consequences of that view so far as cognition is concerned. The terms which he employs in describing the aim and scope of his work are not those which we should now employ, but the declaration, in the introduction to the Treatise, that the science of human nature must be treated according to the experimental method, is in fact equivalent to the statement of the principle implied in Locke's Essay, that the problems of psychology and of theory of knowledge are identical. This view is the characteristic of what we may call the English school of philosophy.

In order to make perfectly clear the full significance of the principle which Hume applied to the solution of the chief philosophical questions, it is necessary to render somewhat more precise and complete the statement of the psychological view Theory which lies at the foundation of the empirical theory, and to distinguish from it the problem of the theory of knowledge upon which it was brought to bear. Without entering into details, which it is the less necessary to do because the subject has been recently discussed with great fulness in works readily accessible, it may be said that for Locke as for Hume the problem of psychology was the exact description of the contents of the individual mind, and the determination of the conditions of the origin and development of conscious experience in the individual mind. And the answer to the problem which was furnished by Locke is in effect that with which Hume started. The conscious experience of the individual is the result of interaction between the individual mind and the universe of things. This solution presupposes a peculiar conception of the general relation between the mind and things which in itself requires justification, and which, so far at least as the empirical theory was developed by Locke and his successors, could not be obtained from psychological analysis. Either we have a right to the assumption contained in the conception of the individual mind as standing in relation to things, in which case the grounds of the assumption must be sought elsewhere than in the results of this reciprocal relation, or we have no right to the assumption, in which case reference to the reciprocal relation can hardly be accepted as yielding any solution of the psychological problem. But in any case, - and, as we shall see, Hume endeavours so to state his psychological premises as to conceal the assumption made openly by Locke, - it is apparent that this psychological solution does not contain the answer to the wider and radically distinct problem of the theory of knowledge. For here we have to consider how the individual intelligence comes to know any fact whatsoever, and what is meant by the cognition of a fact. With Locke, Hume professes to regard this problem as virtually covered or answered by the fundamental psychological theorem; but the superior clearness of his reply enables us to mark with perfect precision the nature of the difficulty inherent in the attempt to regard the two as identical. For purposes of psychological analysis the conscious experience of the individual mind is taken as given fact, to be known, i.e. observed, discriminated, classified and explained in the same way in which any one special portion of experience is treated. Now if this mode of treatment be accepted as the only possible method, and its results assumed to be conclusive as regards the problem of knowledge, the fundamental peculiarity of cognition is overlooked. In all cognition, strictly so-called, there is involved a certain synthesis or relation of parts of a characteristic nature, and if we attempt to discuss this synthesis as though it were in itself but one of the facts forming the matter of knowledge, we are driven to regard this relation as being of the quite external kind discovered by observation among matters of knowledge. The difficulty of reconciling the two views is that which gives rise to much of the obscurity in Locke’s treatment of the theory of knowledge; in Hume the effort to identify them, and to explain the synthesis which is essential to cognition as merely the accidental result of external relations among the elements of conscious experience, appears with the utmost clearness, and gives the keynote of all his philosophical work. The final perplexity, concealed by various forms of expression, comes forward at the close of the Treatise as absolutely unsolved, and leads Hume, as will be pointed out, to a truly remarkable confession of the weakness of his own system.

While, then, the general idea of a theory of knowledge as based upon psychological analysis is the groundwork of the Treatise, it is a particular consequence of this idea that furnishes to Hume the characteristic criterion applied by him to all philosophical questions. If the relations involved in the fact of cognition are only those discoverable by observation of any particular portion of known experience, then such relations are quite external and contingent. The only necessary relation which can be discovered in a given fact of experience is that of non-contradiction (i.e. purely formal); the thing must be what it is, and cannot be conceived as having qualities contradictory of its nature. The universal test, therefore, of any supposed philosophical principle is the possibility or impossibility of imagining its contradictory. All our knowledge is but the sum of our conscious experience, and is consequently material for imagination. “ Let us fix our attention out of ourselves as much as possible; let us chase our imagination to the heavens or to the utmost limits of the universe; we never really advance a step beyond ourselves, nor can conceive any kind of existence, but those perceptions which have appeared in that narrow compass. This is the universe of the imagination, nor have we any idea but what is there produced.” (Works, ed. of 1854, i. 93, cf. i. 107.) The course of Hume’s work follows immediately from his fundamental principle, and the several divisions of the treatise, so far as the theoretical portions are concerned, are but its logical consequences. The first part of the first book contains a brief statement of the contents of mind, a description of all that observation can discover in conscious experience. The second part deals with those judgments which rest upon the formal elements of experience, space and time. The third part discusses the principle of real connexion among the elements of experience, the relation of cause and effect. The fourth part is virtually a consideration of the ultimate significance of this conscious experience, of the place it is supposed to occupy in the universe of existence, in other words, of the relations between the conscious experience of an individual mind as disclosed to observation and the supposed realities of self and external things.

In the first part Hume gives his own statement of the psychological foundations of his theory. Viewing the contents of mind as matter of experience, he can discover among them only and im- one distinction, a distinction expressed by the terms. impressions and ideas. Ideas are secondary in nature, copies of data supplied we know not whence. All that appears in conscious experience as primary, as arising from some unknown cause, and therefore relatively as original, Hume designates by the term impression, and claims to imply by such term no theory whatsoever as to the origin of this portion of experience. There is simply the fact of conscious experience, ultimate and inexplicable. Moreover, if we remain faithful to the fundamental conception that the contents of the mind are merely matters of experience, it is evident in the first place that as impressions are strictly individual, ideas also must be strictly particular, and in the second place that the faculties of combining, discriminating, abstracting and judging, which Locke had admitted, are merely expressions for particular modes of having mental experience, i.e. are modifications of conceiving (cf. i. 128 n., 137, 192). By this theory, Hume is freed from all the problems of abstraction and judgment. A comparative judgment is simplified into an isolated perception of a peculiar form, and a series of similar facts are grouped under a single symbol, representing a particular perception, and only by the accident of custom treated as universal (see i. 37, 38, loo).

Such, in substance, is Hume’s restatement of Locke’s empirical view. Conscious experience consists of isolated states, each of which is to be regarded as a fact and is related to others in a quite external fashion. It remains to be seen how knowledge can be explained on such a basis; but, before proceeding to sketch Hume's answer to this question, it is necessary to draw attention, first, to the peculiar device invariably resorted to by him when any exception to his general principle that ideas are secondary copies of impressions presents itself, and, secondly, to the nature of the substitute offered by him for that perception of relations or synthesis which even in Locke's confused statements had appeared as the essence of cognition. Whenever Hume finds it impossible to recognize in an idea the mere copy of a particular impression, he introduces the phrase " manner of conceiving." Thus general or abstract ideas are merely copies of a particular impression conceived in a particular manner. The ideas. of space and time, as will presently be pointed out, are copies of impressions conceived in a particular manner. The idea of necessary connexion is merely the reproduction of an impression which the mind feels itself compelled to conceive in a particular manner. Such a fashion of disguising difficulties points, not only to an inconsistency in Hume's theory as stated by himself, but to the initial error upon which it proceeds; for these perplexities are but the consequences of the doctrine that cognition is to be explained on the basis of particular perceptions. These external relations are, in fact, what Hume describes as the natural bonds of connexion among ideas, and, regarded subjectively as principles of association among the facts of mental experience, they form the substitute he offers for the synthesis implied in knowledge. These principles of association determine the imagination to combine ideas in various modes, and by this mechanical combination Hume, for a time, endeavoured to explain what are otherwise called judgments of relation. It was impossible, however, for him to carry out this view consistently. The only combination which, even in appearance, could be explained satisfactorily by its means was the formation of a complex idea out of simpler parts, but the idea of a relation among facts is not accurately described as a complex idea; and, as such relations have na basis in impressions, Hume is finally driven to a confession of the absolute impossibility of explaining them. Such confession, however, is only reached after a vigorous effort had been made to render some account of knowledge by the experimental method.

The psychological conception, then, on the basis of which Hume proceeds to discuss the theory of knowledge, is that of conscious experience as containing merely the succession of isolated impressions and their fainter copies, ideas, and as bound on. together by merely natural or external links of connexion, the principles of association among ideas. The foundations of cognition must be discovered by observation or analysis of experience so conceived. Hume wavers somewhat in his division of the various kinds of cognition, laying stress now upon one now upon another of the points in which mainly they differ from one another. Nor is it of the first importance, save with the view of criticizing his own consistency, that we should adopt any of the divisions implied in his exposition. For practical purposes we may regard the most important discussions in the Treatise as falling under two heads. In the first place there are certain principles of cognition which appear to rest upon and to express relations of the universal elements in conscious experience, viz. space and time. The propositions of mathematics seem to be independent of this or that special fact of experience, and to remain unchanged even when the concrete matter of experience varies. They are formal. In the second place, cognition, in any real sense of that term, implies connexion for the individual mind between the present fact of experience and other facts, whether past or future. It appears to involve, therefore, some real relation among the portions of experience, on the basis of which relation judgments and inferences as to matters of fact can be shown to rest. The theoretical question is consequently that of the nature of the supposed relation, and of the certainty of judgments and inferences resting on it.

Hume’s well-known distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact corresponds fairly to this separation of the formal and real problems in the theory of cognition, although that distinction is in itself inadequate and not fully representative of Hume’s own conclusions.

With regard, then, to the first problem, the formal element in knowledge, Hume has to consider several questions, distinct in nature and hardly discriminated by him with sufficient precision. For a complete treatment of this portion of the theory of knowledge, there require to be taken into consideration at least the following points: (a) the exact nature and significance of the space and time relations in our experience, (b) the mode in which the primary data, facts or principles, of mathematical cognition are obtained, (c) the nature, extent and certainty of such data, in themselves and with reference to the concrete material of experience, (d) the principle of inference from the data, however obtained. Not all of these points are discussed by Hume with the same fulness, and with regard to some of them it is difficult to state his conclusions. It will be of service, however, to attempt a summary of his treatment under these several heads, - the more so as almost all expositions of his philosophy are entirely defective in the account given of this essential portion. The brief statement in the Inquiry, § iv., is of no value, and indeed is almost unintelligible unless taken in reference to the full discussion contained in part ii. of the Treatise. (a) The nature of space and time as elements in conscious experience is considered by Hume in relation to a special problem, that of their supposed infinite divisibility. Evidently upon his and view of conscious experience, of the world of imagination, ti such infinite divisibility must be a fiction. The ultimate elements of experience must be real units, capable of being represented or imagined in isolation. Whence then do these units arise? or, if we put the problem as it was necessary Hume should put it to himself, in what orders or classes of impressions do we find the elements of space and time? Beyond all question Hume, in endeavouring to answer this problem, is brought face to face with one of the difficulties inherent in his conception of conscious experience.

For he has to give some explanation of the nature of space and time which shall identify these with impressions, and at the same time is compelled to recognize the fact that they are not identical with any single impression or set of impressions. Putting aside, then, the various obscurities of terminology, such as the distinction between the objects known, viz. " points " or several mental states, and the impressions themselves, which disguise the full significance of his conclusion, we find Hume reduced to the following as his theory of space and time. Certain impressions, the sensations of sight and touch, have in themselves the element of space, for these impressions (Hume skilfully transfers his statement to the points) have a certain order or mode of arrangement. This mode of arrangement or manner of disposition is common to coloured points and tangible points, and, considered separately, is the impression from which our idea of space is taken. All impressions and all ideas are received, or form parts of a mental experience only when received, in a certain order, the order of succession. This manner of presenting themselves is the impression from which the idea of time takes its rise.

It is almost superfluous to remark, first, that Hume here deliberately gives up his fundamental principle that ideas are but the fainter copies of impressions, for it can never be maintained that order of disposition is an impression, and, secondly, that he fails to offer any explanation of the mode in which coexistence and succession are possible elements, of cognition in a conscious experience made up of isolated presentations and representations. For the consistency of his theory, however, it was indispensable that he should insist upon the real, i.e. presentative character of the ultimate units of space and time.

(b) How then are the primary data of mathematical cognition to be derived from an experience containing space and time relations in Hume, in regard to this problem, distinctly separates geometry from algebra and arithmetic, i.e. he views extensive quantity as being cognized differently from number. With regard to geometry, he holds emphatically that it is an empirical doctrine, a science founded on observation of concrete facts. The rough appearances of physical facts, their outlines, surfaces and so on, are the data of observation, and only by a method of approximation do we gradually come near to such propositions as are laid down in pure geometry. He definitely repudiates a view often ascribed to him, and certainly advanced by many later empiricists, that the data of geometry are hypothetical. The ideas of perfect lines, figures and surfaces have not, according to him, any existence. (See Works, i. 66, 69, 73, 97 and iv. 180.) It is impossible to give any consistent account of his doctrine regarding number. He holds, apparently, that the foundation of all the science of number is the fact that each element of conscious experience is presented as a unit, and adds that we are capable of considering any fact or collection of facts as a unit. This manner of conceiving is absolutely general and distinct, and accordingly affords the possibility of an all-comprehensive and perfect science, the science of discrete quantity. (See Works, i. 97.) (c) In respect to the third point, the nature, extent and certainty of the elementary propositions of mathematical science, Hume’s utterances are far from clear. The principle with which he starts and from which follows his well-known distinction between relations of ideas and matters of fact, a distinction which Kant appears to have thought identical with his distinction between analytical and synthetical judgments, is comparatively simple. The ideas of the quantitative aspects of phenomena are exact representations of these aspects or quantitative impressions; consequently, whatever is found true by consideration of the ideas may be asserted regarding the real impressions. No question arises regarding the existence of the fact represented by the idea, and in so far, at least, mathematical judgments may be described as hypothetical. For they simply assert what will be found true in any conscious experience containing coexisting impressions of sense (specifically, of sight and touch), and in its nature successive. That the propositions are hypothetical in this fashion does not imply any distinction between the abstract truth of the ideal judgments and the imperfect correspondence of concrete material with these abstract relations. Such distinction is quite foreign to Hume, and can only be ascribed to him from an entire misconception of his view regarding the ideas of space and time. (For an example of such misconception, which is almost universal, see Riehl, Der philosophische Kriticismus, i. 96, 97.) (d) From this point onwards Hume’s treatment becomes exceedingly confused. The identical relation between the ideas of space and time and the impressions corresponding to them apparently leads him to regard judgments of continuous and discrete quantity as standing on the same footing, while the ideal character of the data gives a certain colour to his inexact statements regarding the extent and truth of the judgments founded on them. The emphatic utterances in the Inquiry (iv. 30, 186), and even at the beginning of the relative section in the Treatise (i. 95) may be cited in illustration. But in both works these utterances are qualified in such a manner as to enable us to perceive the real bearings of his doctrine, and to pronounce at once that it differs widely from that commonly ascribed to him. “ It is from the idea of a triangle that we discover the relation of equality which its three angles bear to two right ones; and this relation is invariable, so long as our idea remains the same “ (i. 95). If taken in isolation this passage might appear sufficient justification for Kant’s view that, according to Hume, geometrical judgments are analytical and therefore perfect. But it is to be recollected that, according to Hume, an idea is actually a representation or individual picture, not a notion or even a schema, and that he never claims to be able to extract the predicate of a geometrical judgment by analysis of the subject. The properties of this individual subject, the idea of the triangle, are, according to him, discovered by observation, and as observation, whether actual or ideal, never presents us with more than the rough or general appearances of geometrical quantities, the relations so discovered have only approximate exactness. “ Ask a mathematician what he means when he pronounces two quantities to be equal, and he must say that the idea of equality is one of those which cannot be defined, and that it is sufficient to place two equal quantities before any one in order to suggest it.

Now this is an appeal to the general appearances of objects to the imagination or senses " (iv. 180). " Though it (i.e. geometry) much excels, both in universality and exactness, the loose judgments of the senses and imagination, yet [it] never attains a perfect precision and exactness " (i. 97). Any exactitude attaching to the conclusions of geometrical reasoning arises from the comparative simplicity of the data for the primary judgments.

So far, then, as geometry is concerned, Hume's opinion is perfectly definite. It is an experimental or observational science, founded on primary or immediate judgments (in his phraseology, perceptions), of relation between facts of intuition; its conclusions are hypothetical only in so far as they do not imply the existence at the moment of corresponding real experience; and its propositions have no exact truth. With respect to arithmetic and algebra, the science of numbers, he expresses an equally definite opinion, but unfortunately it is quite impossible to state in any satisfactory fashion the grounds for it or even its full bearing. He nowhere explains the origin of the notions of unity and number, but merely asserts that through their means we can have absolutely exact arithmetical propositions (Works, i. 97, 98). Upon the nature of the reasoning by which in mathematical science we pass from data to conclusions, Hume gives no explicit statement. If we were to say that on his view the essential step must be the establishment of identities or equivalences, we should probably be doing justice to his doctrine of numerical reasoning, but should have some difficulty in showing the application of the method to geometrical reasoning. For in the latter case we possess, according to Hume, no standard of equivalence other than that supplied by immediate observation, and consequently transition from one premise to another by way of reasoning must be, in geometrical matters, a purely verbal process.

Hume's theory of mathematics - the only one, perhaps, which is compatible with his fundamental principle of psychology - is a practical condemnation of his empirical theory of perception. He has not offered even a plausible explanation of the mode by which a consciousness made up of isolated momentary impressions and ideas can be aware of coexistence and number, or succession. The relations. of ideas are accepted as facts of immediate observation, as being themselves perceptions or individual elements of conscious experience, and to all appearance they are regarded by Hume as being in a sense analytical, because the formal criterion of identity is applicable to them. It is applicable, however, not because the predicate is contained in the subject, but on the principle of contradiction. If these judgments are admitted to be facts of immediate perception, the supposition of their non-existence is impossible. The ambiguity in his criterion, however, seems entirely to have escaped Hume's attention.

A somewhat detailed consideration of Hume's doctrine with regard to mathematical science has been given for the reason that this portion of his theory has been very generally overlooked or misinterpreted. It does not seem necessary to endeavour to follow his minute examination of the principle of real cognition with the same fulness. It will probably be sufficient to indicate the problem as conceived by Hume, and the relation of the method he adopts for solving it to the fundamental doctrine of his theory of knowledge.

Real cognition, as Hume points out, implies transition from the present impression or feeling to something connected with it. As this thing can only be an impression or perception, and is not itself present, it is represented by its copy or idea. Now the supreme, all-comprehensive link of connexion between present feeling or impression and either past or future experience is that of causation. The idea in question is, therefore, the idea of something connected with the present impression as its cause or effect. But this is explicitly the idea of the said thing as having had or as about to have existence, - in other words, belief in the existence of some matter of fact. What, for a conscious experience so constituted as Hume will admit, is the precise significance of such belief in real existence ?

Clearly the real existence of a fact is not demonstrable. For whatever is may be conceived not to be. " No negation of a fact can involve a contradiction." Existence of any fact, not present as a perception, can only be proved by arguments from cause or effect. But as each perception is in consciousness only as a contingent fact, which might not be or might be other than it is, we must admit that the mind can conceive no necessary relations or connexions among the several portions of its experience.

If, therefore, a present perception leads us to assert the existence of some other, this can only be interpreted as meaning that in some natural, i.e. psychological, manner the idea of this other perception is excited, and that the idea is viewed by the mind in some peculiar fashion. The natural link of connexion Hume finds in the similarities presented by experience. One fact or perception is discovered by experience to be uniformly or generally accompanied by another, and its occurrence therefore naturally excites the idea of that other. But when an idea is so roused up by a present impression, and when this idea, being a consequence of memory, has in itself a certain vivacity or liveliness, we regard it with a peculiar indefinable feeling, and in this feeling consists the immense difference between mere imagination and belief. The mind is led easily and rapidly from the present impression to the ideas of impressions found by experience to be the usual accompaniments of the present fact. The ease and rapidity of the mental transition is the sole ground for the supposed necessity of the causal connexion between portions of experience. The idea of necessity is not intuitively obvious; the ideas of cause and effect are correlative in our minds, but only as a result of experience. Hobbes and Locke were wrong in saying that the mind must find in the relation the idea of Power. We mistake the subjective transition resting upon custom or past experience for an objective connexion independent of special feelings. All reasoning about matters of fact is therefore a species of feeling, and belongs to the sensitive rather than to the cogitative side of our nature. It should be noted that this theory of Causation entirely denies the doctrine of Uniformity in Nature, so far as the human mind is concerned. All alleged uniformity is reduced to observed similarity of process. The idea is a mere convention, product of inaccurate thinking and custom.

While it is evident that some such conclusion must follow from the attempt to regard the cognitive consciousness as made up of disconnected feelings, it is equally clear, not only that the result is selfcontradictory, but that it involves certain assumptions not in any way deducible from the fundamental view with which Hume starts. For in the problem of real cognition he is brought face to face with the characteristic feature of knowledge, distinction of self from matters known, and reference of transitory states to permanent objects or relations. Deferring his criticism of the significance of self and object, Hume yet makes use of both to aid his explanation of the belief attaching to reality. The reference of an idea to past experience has no meaning, unless we assume an identity in the object referred to. For a past impression is purely transitory, and, as Hume occasionally points out, can have no connexion of fact with the present consciousness. His exposition has thus a certain plausibility, which would not belong to it had the final view of the permanent object been already given.

The final problem of Hume’s theory of knowledge, the discussion of the real significance of the two factors of cognition, self and external things, is handled in the Treatise with great fulness and dialectical subtlety.

As in the case of the previous problem, it is unnecessary to follow the steps of his analysis, which are, for the most part, attempts to self substitute qualities of feeling for the relations of thought The . which appear to be involved. The results follow with the cognition utmost ease from his original postulate. If there is nothing in conscious experience save what observation can disclose, while each act of observation is itself an isolated feeling (an impression or idea), it is manifest that a permanent identical thing can never be an object of experience. Whatever permanence or identity is ascribed to an impression or idea is the result of association, is one of those “ propensities to feign “ which are due to natural connexions among ideas. We regard as successive presentations of one thing the resembling feelings which are experienced in succession. Identity, then, whether of self or object, there is none, and the supposition of objects, distinct from impressions, is but a further consequence of our “ propensity to feign.” Hume’s explanation of the belief in external things by reference to association is well deserving of careful study and of comparison with the more recent analysis of the same problem by J. S. Mill.

The weak points in Hume’s empiricism are so admirably realized Negative by the author himself that it is only fair to quote his own Negativ of summary in the Appendix to the Treatise. He confesses result that, in confining all cognition to single perceptions and. supplying no purely intellectual faculty for modifying, treatise recording and classifying their results, he has destroyed real knowledge altogether: “ If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions among distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only feel a connexion or determination of the thought to pass from one object to another. It follows, therefore, that the thought alone feels personal identity, when, reflecting on the train of past perceptions that compose a mind, the ideas of them are felt to be connected together and naturally introduce each other.

“ However extraordinary this conclusion may seem, it need not surprise us. Modern philosophers seem inclined to think that personal identity arises from consciousness, and consciousness is nothing but a reflected thought or perception. The present philosophy, therefore, has a promising aspect. But all my hopes vanish when I come to explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness. I cannot discover any theory which gives me satisfaction on this head... .

“ In short, there are two principles which I cannot render consistent, nor is it in my power to renounce either of them; viz. that all our distinct perceptions are distinct existences, and that the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct existences. Did our perceptions either inhere in something simple or individual, or did the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty in the case “ (ii. 551).

The closing sentences of this passage may be regarded as pointing to the very essence of the Kantian attempt at solution of the problem of knowledge. Hume sees distinctly that if conscious experience be taken as containing only isolated states, no progress in explanation of cognition is possible, and that the only hope of further development is to be looked for in a radical change in our mode of conceiving experience. The work of the critical philosophy is the introduction of this new mode of regarding experience, a mode which, in the technical language of philosophers, has received the title of transcendental as opposed to the psychological method followed by Locke and Hume. It is because Kant alone perceived the full significance of the change required in order to meet the difficulties of the empirical theory that we regard his system as the only sequel to that of Hume. The writers of the Scottish school, Reid in particular, did undoubtedly indicate some of the weaknesses in Hume’s fundamental conception, and their attempts to show that the isolated feeling cannot be taken as the ultimate and primary unit of cognitive experience are efforts in the right direction. But the question of knowledge was never generalized by them, and their reply to Hume, therefore, remains partial and inadequate, while its effect is weakened by the uncritical assumption of principles which is a characteristic feature of their writings.

The results of Hume’s theoretical analysis are applied by him to the problems of practical philosophy and religion. For the first of these the reader is referred to the article Ethics, where Theology Hume’s views are placed in relation to those of his pre- and ethics. decessors in the same field of inquiry. His position, as regards the second, is very noteworthy. As before said, his metaphysic contains in abstracto the principles which were at that time being employed, uncritically, alike by the deists and by their antagonists. There can be no doubt that Hume has continually in mind the theological questions then current, and that he was fully aware of the mode in which his analysis of knowledge might be applied to them. A few of the less important of his criticisms, such as the argument on miracles, became then and have since remained public property and matter of general discussion. But the full significance of his work on the theological side was not at the time perceived, and justice has barely been done to the admirable manner in which he reduced the theological disputes of the century to their ultimate elements. The importance of the Dialogues on Natural Religion, as a contribution to the criticism of theological ideas and methods, can hardly be over-estimated. A brief survey of its contents will be sufficient to show its general nature and its relations to such works as Clarke's Demonstration and Butler's Analogy. The Dialogues introduce three interlocutors, Demea, Cleanthes and Philo, who represent three distinct orders of theological opinion. The first is the type of a certain a priori view, then regarded as the safest bulwark against infidelity, of which the main tenets were that the being of God was capable of a priori proof, and that, owing to the finitude of our faculties, the attributes and modes of operation of deity were absolutely incomprehensible. The second is the typical deist of Locke's school, improved as regards his philosophy, and holding that the only possible proof of God's existence was a posteriori, from design, and that such proof was, on the whole, sufficient. The third is the type of completed empiricism or scepticism, holding that no argument, either from reason or experience, can transcend experience, and consequently that no proof of God's existence is at all possible. The views of the first and second are played off against one another, and criticized by the third with great literary skill and effect. Cleanthes, who maintains that the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God is hardly distinguishable from atheism, is compelled by the arguments of Philo to reduce to a minimum the conclusion capable of being inferred from experience as regards the existence of God. For Philo lays stress upon the weakness of the analogical argument, points out that the demand for an ultimate cause is no more satisfied by thought than by nature itself, shows that the argument from design cannot warrant the inference of a perfect or infinite or even of a single deity, and finally, carrying out his principles to the full extent, maintains that, as we have no experience of the origin of the world, no argument from experience can carry us to its origin, and that the apparent marks of design in the structure of animals are only results from the conditions of their actual existence. So far as argument from nature is concerned, a total suspension of judgment is our only reasonable resource. Nor does the a priori argument in any of its forms fare better, for reason can never demonstrate a matter of fact, and, unless we know that the world had a beginning in time, we cannot insist that it must have had a cause. Demea, who is willing to give up his abstract proof, brings forward the ordinary theological topic, man's consciousness of his own imperfection, misery and dependent condition. Nature is throughout corrupt and polluted, but " the present evil phenomena are rectified in other regions and in some future period of existence." Such a view satisfies neither of his interlocutors. Cleanthes, pointing out that from a nature thoroughly evil we can never prove the existence of an infinitely powerful and benevolent Creator, hazards the conjecture that the deity, though all-benevolent, is not all-powerful. Philo, however, pushing his principles to their full consequences, shows that unless we assumed (or knew) beforehand that the system of nature was the work of a benevolent but limited deity, we certainly could not, from the facts of nature, infer the benevolence of its creator. Cleanthes's view is, therefore, an hypothesis, and in no sense an inference.

The Dialogues ought here to conclude. There is, however, appended one of those perplexing statements of personal opinion (for Hume declares Cleanthes to be his mouthpiece) not uncommon among writers of this period. Cleanthes and Philo come to an agreement, in admitting a certain illogical force in the a posteriori argument, or, at least, in expressing a conviction as to God's existence, which may not perhaps be altogether devoid of foundation. The precise value of such a declaration must be matter of conjecture. Probably the true statement of Hume's attitude regarding the problem is the somewhat melancholy utterance with which the Dialogues close.

It is apparent, even from the brief summary just given, that the importance of Hume in the history of philosophy consists in the vigour and logical exactness with which he develops a particular metaphysical view. Inconsistencies, no doubt, are to be detected in his system, but they arise from the limitations of the view itself, and not, as in the case of Locke and Berkeley, from imperfect grasp of the principle, and endeavour to unite with it others radically incompatible. In Hume's theory of knowledge we have the final expression of what may be called psychological individualism or atomism, while his ethics and doctrine of religion are but the logical consequences of this theory. So far as metaphysic is concerned, Hume has given the final word of the empirical school, and all additions, whether from the specifically psychological side or from the general history of human culture, are subordinate in character, and affect in no way the nature of his results. It is no exaggeration to say that the later English school of philosophy represented by J. S. Mill made in theory no advance beyond Hume. In the logic of Mill, e.g., we find much of a special character that has no counterpart in Hume, much that is introduced ab extra, from general considerations of scientific procedure, but, so far as the groundwork is concerned, the System of Logic is a mere reproduction of Hume's doctrine of knowledge. It is impossible for any reader of Mill's remarkable posthumous essay on theism to avoid the reflection that in substance the treatment is identical with that of the Dialogues on Natural Religion, while on the whole the superiority in critical force must be assigned to the earlier work.

2. Hume's eminence in the fields of philosophy and history must not be allowed to obscure his importance as a political economist. Economics. Berkeley had already, in the Querist, attacked the mercantile theory of the nature of national wealth and the functions of money, and Locke had, in a partial manner, shown that political economy could with advantage be viewed in relation to the modern system of critical philosophy. But Hume was the first to apply to economics the scientific methods of his philosophy. His services to economics may be summed up in two heads: (I) he established the relation between economic facts and the fundamental phenomena of social life, and (2) he introduced into the study of these facts the new historical method. Thus, though he gave no special name to it, he yet describes the subject-matter, and indicates the true method, of economic science. His economic essays were published in the volumes entitled Political Discourses (1752) and Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects (1753); the most important are those on Commerce, on Money, on Interest and on the Balance of Trade, but, notwithstanding the disconnected form of the essays in general, the other less important essays combine to make a complete economic system. We have said that Berkeley and Locke had already begun the general work for which Hume is most important; in details also Hume had been anticipated to some extent. Nicholas Barbon and Sir Dudley North had already attacked the mercantile theory as to the precious metals and the balance of trade; Joseph Massie and Barbon had

anticipated his theory of interest. Yet when we compare Hume with Adam Smith, the advance which Hume had made on his predecessors in lucidity of exposition and subtlety of intellect becomes clear, and modern criticism is agreed that the main errors of Adam Smith are to be found in those deductions which deviate from the results of the Political Discourses. A very few examples must suffice to illustrate his services to economics.

In dealing with money, he refutes the Mercantile School, which had tended to confound it with wealth. “ Money,” said Hume, “ is none of the wheels of trade; it is the oil which renders the motion of the wheels more smooth and easy.” “ Money and commodities are the real strength of any community.” From the internal, as distinct from the international, aspect, the absolute quantity of money, supposed as of fixed amount, in a country, is of no consequence, while a quantity larger than is required for the interchange of commodities is injurious, as tending to raise prices and to drive foreigners from the home markets. It is only during the period of acquisition of money, and before the rise in prices, that the accumulation of precious metals is advantageous. This principle is perhaps Hume’s most important economic discovery (cf. F. A. Walker’s Money in its Relations to Trade and Industry, London, 1880, sqq.). He goes on to show that the variations of prices are due solely to money and commodities in circulation. Further, it is a misconception to regard as injurious the passage of money into foreign countries. “ A government,” he says, “ has great reason to preserve with care its people and its manufactures; its money it may safely trust to the course of human affairs without fear or jealousy.” Dealing with the phenomena of interest, he exposes the old fallacy that the rate depends upon the amount of money in a country; low interest does not follow on abundance of money. The reduction in the rate of interest must, in general, result from “ the increase of industry and frugality, of arts and commerce.” In connexion with this he emphasizes a too generally neglected factor in economic phenomena, “ the constant and insatiable desire of the mind for exercise and employment.” “ Interest,” he says in general, “ is the barometer of the state, and its lowness an almost infallible sign of prosperity,” arising, as it does, from increased trade, frugality in the merchant class, and the consequent rise of new lenders: low interest and low profits mutually forward each other. In the matter of free trade and protection he compromises. He says on Free the one hand, “ not only as a man, but as a British subject I pray for the flourishing commerce of

Germany, Spain, Italy and even France itself," and condemns " the numerous bars, obstructions and imposts which all nations of Europe, and none more than England, have put upon trade." On the other hand, he approves of a protective tax on German linen in favour of home manufactures, and of a tax on brandy as encouraging the sale of rum and so supporting our southern colonies. Indeed it has been fairly observed that Hume retains an attitude of refined mercantilism. With regard to taxation he takes very definite views. The best taxes, he says, are those levied on consumption, especially on Taxation luxuries, for these are least heavily felt. He denies that all taxes fall finally on the land. Superior frugality and industry on the part of the artisan will enable him to pay taxes without mechanically raising the price of labour.

Here, as in other points, he differs entirely from the physiocrats, and his criticism of contemporary French views are, as a whole, in accordance with received modern opinion. For the modern expedient of raising money for national emergencies by way of loan he has a profound distrust. He was convinced that what is bad for the individual credit must be bad for the state also. A national debt, he maintains, enriches the capital at the expense of the provinces; further, it creates a leisured class of stockholders, and possesses all the disadvantages of paper credit. " Either the nation must destroy public credit, or public credit will destroy the nation." To sum up, it may be said that Hume enunciated the principle that " everything in the world is purchased by labour, and our passions are the only causes of labour "; and further, that, in analysing the complex phenomena of commerce, he is superior sometimes to Adam Smith in that he never forgets that the ultimate causes of economic change are the " customs and manners " of the people, and that the solution of problems is to be sought in the elementary factors of industry.

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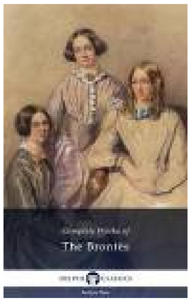

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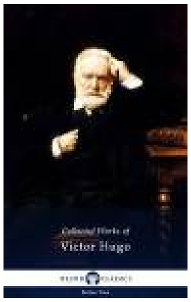
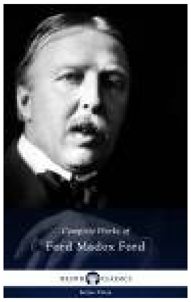
Virginia Woolf
Wilkie Collins
William Makepeace Thackeray



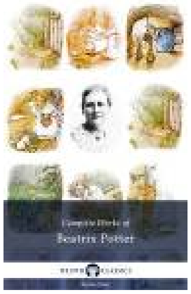
Series Two

Alexander Pushkin
Alexandre Dumas (English)
Andrew Lang
Anthony Trollope
Bram Stoker
Christopher Marlowe
Daniel Defoe
Edith Wharton
F. Scott Fitzgerald
G. K. Chesterton
Gustave Flaubert (English)
H. Rider Haggard
Herman Melville
Honoré de Balzac (English)
J. W. von Goethe (English)
Jules Verne
L. Frank Baum
Lewis Carroll
Marcel Proust (English)
Nathaniel Hawthorne
Nikolai Gogol
O. Henry
Rudyard Kipling
Tobias Smollett
Victor Hugo
William Shakespeare



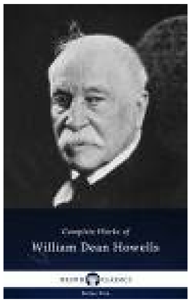
Series Three

Ambrose Bierce
Ann Radcliffe
Ben Jonson
Charles Lever
Émile Zola
Ford Madox Ford
Geoffrey Chaucer
George Gissing
George Orwell
Guy de Maupassant
H. P. Lovecraft
Henrik Ibsen
Henry David Thoreau
Henry Fielding
J. M. Barrie
James Fenimore Cooper
John Buchan
John Galsworthy
Jonathan Swift
Kate Chopin
Katherine Mansfield
L. M. Montgomery
Laurence Sterne
Mary Shelley
Sheridan Le Fanu
Washington Irving



Series Four

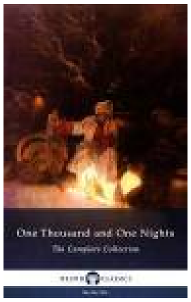
Arnold Bennett
Arthur Machen
Beatrix Potter
Bret Harte
Captain Frederick Marryat
Charles Kingsley
Charles Reade
G. A. Henty
Edgar Rice Burroughs
Edgar Wallace
E. M. Forster
E. Nesbit
George Meredith
Harriet Beecher Stowe
Jerome K. Jerome
John Ruskin
Maria Edgeworth
M. E. Braddon
Miguel de Cervantes
M. R. James
R. M. Ballantyne
Robert E. Howard
Samuel Johnson
Stendhal
Stephen Crane
Zane Grey



Series Five

Algernon Blackwood
Anatole France
Beaumont and Fletcher
Charles Darwin
Edward Bulwer-Lytton
Edward Gibbon
E. F. Benson

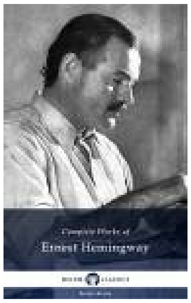
Frances Hodgson Burnett
Friedrich Nietzsche
George Bernard Shaw
George MacDonald
Hilaire Belloc
John Bunyan
John Webster
Margaret Oliphant
Maxim Gorky
Oliver Goldsmith
Radclyffe Hall
Robert W. Chambers
Samuel Butler
Samuel Richardson
Sir Thomas Malory
Thomas Carlyle
William Harrison Ainsworth
William Dean Howells
William Morris



Series Six

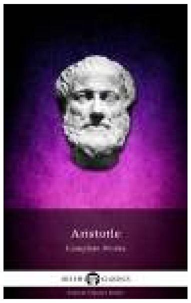
Anthony Hope
Aphra Behn
Arthur Morrison
Baroness Emma Orczy
Captain Mayne Reid
Charlotte M. Yonge
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
E. W. Hornung
Ellen Wood
Frances Burney
Frank Norris
Frank R. Stockton
Hall Caine
Horace Walpole
One Thousand and One Nights
R. Austin Freeman
Rafael Sabatini

Saki
Samuel Pepys
Sir Issac Newton
Stanley J. Weyman
Thomas De Quincey
Thomas Middleton
Voltaire
William Hazlitt
William Hope Hodgson



Series Seven

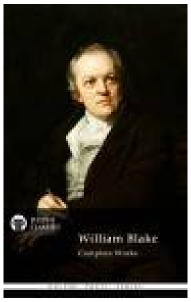
Adam Smith
Benjamin Disraeli
Confucius
David Hume
E. M. Delafield
E. Phillips Oppenheim
Edmund Burke
Ernest Hemingway
Frances Trollope
Galileo Galilei
Guy Boothby
Hans Christian Andersen
Ian Fleming
Immanuel Kant
Karl Marx
Kenneth Grahame
Lytton Strachey
Mary Wollstonecraft
Michel de Montaigne
René Descartes
Richard Marsh
Sax Rohmer
Sir Richard Burton
Talbot Mundy
Thomas Babington Macaulay
W. W. Jacobs



Ancient Classics

Achilles Tacitus
Aeschylus
Ammianus Marcellinus
Apollodorus
Appian
Apuleius
Apollonius of Rhodes
Aristophanes
Aristotle
Arrian
Augustine
Aulus Gellius
Bede
Cassius Dio
Cato
Catullus
Cicero
Clement of Alexandria
Demosthenes
Diodorus Siculus
Diogenes Laërtius
Euripides
Frontius
Herodotus
Hesiod
Hippocrates
Homer
Horace
Josephus
Julius Caesar
Juvenal
Livy
Longus
Lucan
Lucian
Lucretius
Marcus Aurelius

Martial
Nonnus
Ovid
Pausanias
Petronius
Pindar
Plato
Plautus
Pliny the Elder
Pliny the Younger
Plotinus
Plutarch
Polybius
Procopius
Propertius
Quintus Smyrnaeus
Sallust
Sappho
Seneca the Younger
Septuagint
Sophocles
Statius
Strabo
Suetonius
Tacitus
Terence
Theocritus
Thucydides
Tibullus
Virgil
Xenophon

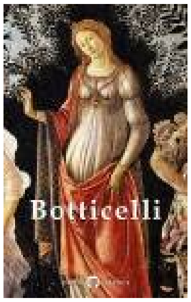


Delphi Poets Series

A. E. Housman
Alexander Pope
Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Algernon Charles Swinburne
Andrew Marvell

Beowulf
Charlotte Smith
Christina Rossetti
D. H Lawrence (poetry)
Dante Alighieri (English)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Delphi Poetry Anthology
Edgar Allan Poe (poetry)
Edmund Spenser
Edward Lear
Edward Thomas
Edwin Arlington Robinson
Ella Wheeler Wilcox
Elizabeth Barrett Browning
Emily Dickinson
Ezra Pound
Friedrich Schiller (English)
George Chapman
George Herbert
Gerard Manley Hopkins
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Isaac Rosenberg
Johan Ludvig Runeberg
John Clare
John Donne
John Dryden
John Keats
John Milton
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester
Joost van den Vondel
Leigh Hunt
Lord Byron
Ludovico Ariosto
Luís de Camões
Matthew Arnold
Michael Drayton
Percy Bysshe Shelley
Ralph Waldo Emerson
Robert Browning
Robert Burns
Robert Frost
Robert Southey
Rumi
Rupert Brooke
Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Sir Philip Sidney
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Sir Walter Raleigh
Thomas Chatterton

Thomas Gray
Thomas Hardy (poetry)
Thomas Hood
Torquato Tasso
T. S. Eliot
W. B. Yeats
Walter Savage Landor
Walt Whitman
Wilfred Owen
William Blake
William Cowper
William Wordsworth



Masters of Art

Albrecht Dürer
Amedeo Modigliani
Canaletto
Caravaggio
Caspar David Friedrich
Claude Monet
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
Diego Velázquez
Edgar Degas
Édouard Manet
Eugène Delacroix
Francisco Goya
Giotto
Gustave Courbet
Gustav Klimt
J. M. W. Turner
Johannes Vermeer
John Constable
Leonardo da Vinci
Michelangelo
Paul Cézanne
Paul Gauguin
Paul Klee
Peter Paul Rubens

Piero della Francesca
Pierre-Auguste Renoir
Sandro Botticelli
Raphael
Rembrandt van Rijn
Thomas Gainsborough
Titian
Vincent van Gogh
Wassily Kandinsky

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Old Calton Cemetery, Edinburgh — Hume's final resting place

Hume's mausoleum by Robert Adam, the leading neoclassical architect, interior designer and furniture designer.